

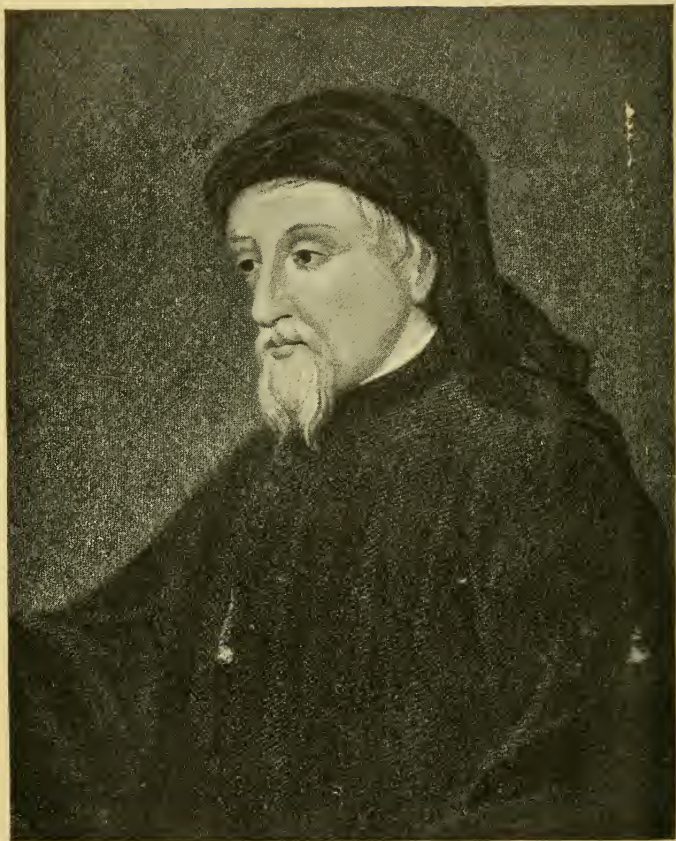








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GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

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# THE CANTERBURY TALES

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## INTRODUCTION.



ENGLISH literature, in the strict sense of the word, dates its beginning from the latter half of the fourteenth century. Not but an English literature had existed long previous to that period. Furthermore, it reckoned among its possessions works of value, and a few which in the opinion of some display genius. But though the name was the same, the thing was essentially different. A special course of study is required for any comprehension whatever of the productions of that earliest literature; and for the easy understanding of those written even but a half century or so before the period indicated, a mastery of many peculiar syntactical constructions is demanded, and an acquaintance with a vocabulary differing in a large number of words from that now in use.

But by the middle of the fourteenth century this state of things can hardly be said to exist any longer for us. Everything by that time had become ripe for the creation of a literature of a far higher type than had yet been produced. Furthermore, conditions prevailed which, though their results could not then be foreseen, were almost certain to render the literature thus created comparatively easy of comprehension to the modern reader. The Teutonic and Romanic elements that form the groundwork of our present vocabulary had at last become completely fused. Of the various dialects prevailing, the one spoken in the vicinity of the capital had gradually lifted itself up to a preëminence it was never afterward to lose. In this parent of the present literary speech, writers found for the first time at their command a widely accepted and comparatively flexible instrument of expression. As a consequence, the literature then produced fixed definitely for all time the main lines upon which both the grammar and the vocabulary of the English speech were to develop. The result is that it now presents few difficulties for its full comprehension and appreciation that are not easily surmounted. The most effective deterrent to its wide study is one formidable only in appearance. This is the unfamiliar way in which its words are spelled; for orthography then sought to represent pronunciation, and had not in consequence crystallized into fixed forms with constant disregard of any special value to be attached to the signs by which sounds are denoted.

Of the creators of this literature — Wycliffe, Langland, Chaucer, and Gower — Chaucer was altogether the greatest as a man of letters. This is no mere opinion of the present time; there has never been a period since he flourished in which it has not been fully conceded. In his own day, his fame swept beyond the narrow limits of country and became known to the outside world. At home his reputation was firmly

established, and seems to have been established early. All the references to him by his contemporaries and immediate successors bear witness to his universally recognized position as the greatest of English poets, though we are not left by him to doubt that he had even *thus* met detractors. Still the general feeling of the men of his time is expressed by his disciple Occleve, who terms him —

“The firstè finder<sup>1</sup> of our fair language.”

Yet not a single incident of his life has come down to us from the men who admired his personality, who enrolled themselves as his disciples, and who celebrated his praises. With the exception of a few slight references to himself in his writings, all the knowledge we possess of the events of his career is due to the mention made of him in official documents of various kinds and of different degrees of importance. In these it is taken for granted that whenever Geoffrey Chaucer is spoken of, it is the poet who is meant, and not another person of the same name. The assumption almost approaches absolute certainty; it does not quite attain to it. In those days it is clear that there were numerous Chaucers. Still, no one has yet risen to dispute his being the very person spoken of in these official papers. From these documents we discover that Chaucer, besides being a poet, was also a man of affairs. He was a soldier, a negotiator, a diplomatist. He was early employed in the personal service of the king. He held various positions in the civil service. It was a consequence that his name should appear frequently in the records. It is upon them, and the references to him in documents covering transactions in which he bore a part, that the story of his life, so far as it exists for us at all, has been mainly built. It was by them also that the series of fictitious events, which for so long a time did duty as the biography of the poet, had their impossibility as well as their absurdity exposed.

The exact date of Chaucer's birth we do not know. The most that can be said is that it must have been somewhere in the early years of the reign of Edward III. (1327-77). The place of his birth was in all probability London. His father, John Chaucer, was a vintner of that city, and there is evidence to indicate that he was to some extent connected with the court. In a deed dated June 19, 1380, the poet released his right to his father's former house, which is described as being in Thames Street. The spot, however unsuitable for a dwelling-place now, was then in the very heart of urban life, and in that very neighborhood it is reasonable to suppose that Chaucer's earliest years were spent.

The first positive information we have, however, about the poet himself, belongs to 1356. In that year we find him attached to the household of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, the third son of Edward III. He is there in the service of the wife of that prince, but in what position we do not know. It may have been that of a page. He naturally was in attendance upon his mistress during her various journeyings; but most of her time was passed at her residence in Hatfield, Yorkshire. Chaucer next appears as having joined the army of Edward III. in his last invasion of France. This expedition was undertaken in the autumn of 1359, and continued until the peace of Bretigny, concluded in May, 1360. During this campaign he was captured somewhere and somehow — we have no knowledge beyond the bare fact. It took place,

<sup>1</sup> Poet.

however, before the 1st of March, 1360; for on that date the records show that the King personally contributed sixteen pounds toward his ransom.

From the last-mentioned date Chaucer drops entirely out of our knowledge till June, 1367, when he is mentioned as one of the valets of the King's chamber. In the document stating this fact he is granted a pension — the first of several he received — for services already rendered or to be rendered. It is a natural inference from the language employed, that during these years of which no record exists he was in some situation about the person of Edward III. After this time his name occurs with considerable frequency in the rolls, often connected with duties to which he was assigned. His services were varied; in some instances certainly they were of importance. From 1370 to 1380 he was sent several times abroad to share in the conduct of negotiations. These missions led him to Flanders, to France, and to Italy. The subjects were diverse. One of the negotiations in which he was concerned was in reference to the selection of an English port for a Genoese commercial establishment; another was concerning the marriage of the young monarch of England with the daughter of the King of France. It is on his first journey to Italy of which we have any record — the mission of 1372-73 to Genoa and Florence — that everybody hopes and some succeed in having an undoubting belief that Chaucer visited Petrarch at Padua, and there heard from him the story of Griselda, which the Clerk of Oxford in "The Canterbury Tales" states that he learned from the Italian poet. Faith in this meeting has been rendered more difficult to accept, however, by the recently discovered fact that Chaucer was absent on this mission less than six months, instead of the eleven months with which he previously had been credited.

But Chaucer's activity was not confined to foreign missions or to diplomacy; he was as constantly employed in the civil service. In 1374 he was made controller of the great customs — that is, of wool, skins, and leather — of the port of London. In 1382 he received also the post at the same port of controller of the petty customs, that is, of wines, candles, and other articles. The regulations of this office required him to write the records with his own hand; and it is this to which Chaucer is supposed to refer in the statement he makes about his official duties in "The House of Fame." In this poem the messenger of Jupiter tells him that though he has done so much in the service of the God of Love, yet he has never received for it any compensation. He then goes on to add the following lines, which give a graphic picture of the poet and of his studious life: —

“Wherfor, as I seyde, y-wis,  
 Iupiter considereth this,  
 And also, beau sir, other thinges;  
 That is, that thou hast no tydinges  
 Of Loves folk, if they be glade,  
 Ne of noght elles that god made;  
 And noght only fro fer contree  
 That ther no tyding comth to thee,  
 But of thy verray neyghbores,  
 That dwellen almost at thy dores,  
 Thou herest neither that ne this;  
 For whan thy labour doon al is,

And hast y-maad thy rekeninges,  
 In stede of reste and neue thinges,  
 Thou gost hoom to thy hous anoon;  
 And, also domb as any stoon,  
 Thou sittest at another boke,  
 Til fully daswed is thy loke,  
 And livest thus as an hermyte,  
 Although thyn abstinence is lyte."

*The Hous of Fame*, ll. 641-660.

In 1386 Chaucer was elected to Parliament as knight of the shire for the county of Kent. In that same year he lost or gave up both his positions in the customs. The cause we do not know. It may have been due to mismanagement on his own part; it is far more likely that he fell a victim to one of the fierce factional disputes that were going on during the minority of Richard II. At any rate, from this time, he disappears for two years from our knowledge. But in 1389 he is mentioned as having been appointed clerk of the King's works at Westminster and various other places; in 1390 clerk of the works for St. George's chapel at Windsor. Both of these positions he held until the middle of 1391. In this last year he was made one of the commissioners to repair the roadway along the Thames, and at about the same time was appointed for-ester of North Pether-ton Park in Somerset, a post which he held till his death. After 1386 he seems at times to have been in pecuniary difficulties. To what cause they were owing, or how severe they were, it is the emptiest of speculations to form any conjectures in the obscurity that envelops this portion of his life. Whatever may have been his situation, on the accession of Henry IV. in September, 1399, his fortunes revived. The father of that monarch was John of Gaunt, the fourth son of Edward III. That nobleman had pretty certainly been from the outset the patron of Chaucer; it is possible — as the evidence fails on one side, it cannot be regarded as proved — that by his marriage with Katharine Swynford he became the poet's brother-in-law. Whatever may have been the relationship, if any at all, it is a fact that one of the very first things the new king did was to confer upon Chaucer an additional pension. But the poet did not live long to enjoy the favor of the monarch. On the 24th of December, 1399, he leased for fifty-three years, or during the term of his life, a tenement in the garden of St. Mary's Chapel, Westminster. But after the 5th of June, 1400, his name appears no longer on any rolls. There is accordingly no reason to question the accuracy of the inscription on his tombstone which represents him as having died October 25, 1400. He was buried in Westminster Abbey. He was the first, and still remains perhaps the greatest, of the English poets whose bones have there found their last resting-place.

This comprises all the facts of importance we know of Chaucer's life. Before leaving this branch of the subject, however, it may be well to say that many fuller details about his career can be found in all older accounts of the poet, and in spite of the repeated exposure of their falsity still crop up occasionally in modern books of reference. Some are objectionable only upon the ground of being untrue. Of these are such statements as that he was born in 1328; that he was a student of Oxford, to which Cambridge is sometimes added; that he was created poet-laureate; and that he was knighted. But others are objectionable not only on the ground of being false,

but of being slanderous besides. Of these the most offensive is the widely circulated and circumstantial story that he was concerned in the conflict that went on in 1382 between the city of London and the court in regard to the election of John of Northampton to the mayoralty; that in consequence of his participation in this contest he was compelled to seek refuge in the island of Zealand; that there he remained for some time, but on his return to England was arrested and thrown into the Tower; and that after having been imprisoned for two or three years, he was released at last on the condition of betraying his associates, which he accordingly did. All these details are fictitious. They were made up from inferences drawn from obscure passages in a prose work entitled "The Testament of Love." This was once attributed to the poet, but is now known not to have been written by him. Even had it been his, the statements derived from it and applied to the life of the poet would have been entirely unwarranted, as they come into constant conflict with the official records. Not being his, this piece of spurious biography has the additional discredit of constituting an unnecessary libel upon his character.

From Chaucer the man, and the man of affairs, we proceed now to the consideration of Chaucer the writer. He has left behind a body of verse consisting of more than thirty-two thousand lines, and a smaller but still far from inconsiderable quantity of prose. The latter consists mainly if not wholly of translations — one a version of that favorite work of the Middle Ages, the treatise of Boethius on the "Consolation of Philosophy"; another the tale of Melibeus in "The Canterbury Tales," which is taken directly from the French; thirdly, "The Persones Tale," derived probably from the same quarter, though its original has not as yet been discovered with certainty; and, fourthly, an unfinished treatise on the Astrolabe, undertaken for the instruction of his son Lewis. The prose of any literature always lags behind, and sometimes centuries behind, its poetry. It is therefore not surprising to find Chaucer displaying in the former comparatively little of the peculiar excellence which distinguishes his verse. In the latter but little room is found for hostile criticism. In the more than thirty thousand lines of which it is composed there occur, of course, inferior passages, and some positively weak; but taking it all in all, there is but little in it, considered as a whole, which the lover of literature as literature finds it advisable or necessary to skip. As Southey remarked, Chaucer, with the exception of Shakespeare, is the most various of all English authors. He appeals to the most diversified tastes. He wrote love poems, religious poems, allegorical poems, occasional poems, tales of common life, tales of chivalry. His range is so wide that any limited selection from his works — at best give but an inadequate idea of the variety and extent of his powers.

The canon of Chaucer's writings has now been settled with a reasonable degree of certainty. For a long time the fashion existed of imputing to him the composition of any English poem of the century following his death, which was floating about without having attached to it the name of any author. The consequence is that the older editions contain a mass of matter which it would have been distinctly discreditable for any one to have produced, let alone a great poet. This has now been gradually dropped, much to the advantage of Chaucer's reputation, though modern scholarship also refuses to admit the production by him of two or three pieces, such as "The Court of Love," "The Flower and the Leaf," "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale," none of which was unworthy of his powers. It is possible, indeed, that the poet himself may

have had some dread of being saddled with the responsibility of having produced pieces which he did not care to father. It is certainly suggestive that he himself took the pains on one occasion to furnish what it seems must have been at the time a fairly complete list of his writings. In the prologue to "The Legend of Good Women" he gave an idea of the work which up to that period he had accomplished. The God of Love, in the interview which is there described as having taken place, inveighs against the poet for having driven men away from the service due to his deity, by the character of what he had written. He says: —

"Thou mayst hit nat denye;  
For in pleyn text, with-outen nede of glose,  
Thou hast translated the Romaunce of the Rose,  
That is an heresyge ageyns my lawe,  
And makest wyse folk fro me withdrawe.  
And of Criseyde thou hast seyde as thee liste,  
That maketh men to wommen lasse triste,  
That ben as trewe as ever was any steel."

*The Legend of Good Women*, ll. 327-334.

Against this charge the queen Alcestis is represented as interposing to the god a defence of the poet, in which occurs the following account of Chaucer's writings: —

"Al be hit that he can nat well endyte,  
Yet hath he makid lewed folk delyte  
To serve you, in preysing of your name.  
He made the book that hight the Hous of Fame,  
And eek the Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse,  
And the Parlement of Foules, as I gesse,  
And al the love of Palamon and Arcyte  
Of Thebes, thogh the story is knowen lyte;  
And many an ympne for your halydayes,  
That highten Balades, Roundels, Virelayes;  
And, for to speke of other holynesse,  
He hath in prose translated Boëce,  
And mad the Lyf also of seynt Cecyle;  
He made also, goon sithen a greet whyl,  
Origenes upon the Maudeleyne;  
Him oghte now to have the lesse peyne;  
He hath mad many a lay and many a thing."

*The Legend of Good Women*, ll. 414-430.

This prologue is generally conceded to have been written between 1382 and 1385. Though it does not profess to furnish a complete list of Chaucer's writings, it can fairly be assumed that it included all which he then regarded as of importance, either on account of their merit or their length. If so, the titles given above would embrace the productions of what may be called the first half of his literary career. In fact, his disciple Lydgate leads us to believe that "Troilus and Criseyde" was a comparatively early production, though it may have undergone, and probably did undergo, revision before assuming its present form. "The Legend of Good Women" — in distinction from its prologue — would naturally occupy the time of the poet



during the opening period of what is here termed the second half of his literary career. The prologue is the only portion of it, however, that is of distinctly high merit. The work was never completed, and Chaucer pretty certainly came soon to the conclusion that it was not worth completing. It was in the taste of the times; but it did not take him long to perceive that an extended work, dealing exclusively with the sorrows of particular individuals, was as untrue to art as it was to life. It fell under the ban of that criticism which in "The Canterbury Tales" he puts into the mouth of the Knight, who interrupts the doleful recital of the tragical tales told by the Monk with these words:—

“ ‘Ho!’ quod the knight, ‘good sir, namore of this,  
 That ye han seyde is right y-nough, y-wis,  
 And mochel more; for litel hevynesse  
 Is right y-nough to mochel folk, I gesse.  
 I seye for me, it is a greet disese  
 Wher-as men han ben in greet welthe and ese,  
 To heren of hir sodeyn fal, allas!  
 And the contrarie is Ioie and greet solas,  
 As whan a man hath been in povre estaat,  
 And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat,  
 And ther abydeþ in prosperitee,  
 Swich thing is gladsom, as it thinketh me,  
 And of swich thing were goodly for to telle.’ ”

*The Canterbury Tales*, B, ll. 3957-3969.

Accordingly, from the composition of pieces of the one-sided and unsatisfactory character of those contained in "The Legend of Good Women," Chaucer turned to the preparation of his great work, "The Canterbury Tales." This gave him the fullest opportunity to display all his powers, and must have constituted the main literary occupation of his later life.

It will be noticed that two of the works mentioned in the prologue to "The Legend of Good Women" are translations, and are so avowed. One is of "The Romaunt of the Rose," and the other of the philosophical treatise of Boethius. In regard to the version of the former, which has come down, it is sufficient to say that there was not long ago a disposition to deny the genuineness of all of it. This now contents itself with denying the genuineness of part of it. The question cannot be considered here; it is enough to say that in the opinion of the present writer, while the subject is attended with certain difficulties, the evidence is very strongly in favor of Chaucer's composition of the whole. But setting aside discussion of this point, there can scarcely be any doubt that Chaucer began his career as a translator. At the period he flourished he could hardly have done otherwise. It was an almost inevitable method of procedure on the part of a man who found neither writers nor writings in his own tongue worthy of imitation, and who could not fail to be struck not merely by the excellence of the Latin classic poets, but also by the superior culture of the Continent. In the course of his literary development he would naturally pass from direct translation to adaptation. To the latter practice he assuredly resorted often. He took the work of the foreign author as a basis, discarded what he did not need or care for, and added as little or as much as suited his own convenience. In this way the

5704 lines of the "Filostrato" of Boccaccio became 8246 in the "Troilus and Criseyde" of Chaucer; but even of the 5704 of the Italian poet, 2974 were not used by the English poet at all, and the 2730 that were used underwent considerable compression. In a similar way he composes "The Knightes Tale," probably the most perfect narrative poem in our tongue. It was based upon the "Theseide" of Boccaccio. But the latter has 9896 lines, while the former comprises but 2250, and of these 2250 fully two-thirds are entirely independent of the Italian poem.

With such free treatment of his material, Chaucer's next step would be to direct composition, independent of any sources, save in that general way in which every author is under obligation to what has been previously produced. This finds its crowning achievement in "The Canterbury Tales," though several earlier pieces—such as "The Hous of Fame," "The Parlement of Foules," and the prologue to "The Legend of Good Women"—attest that long before he had shown his ability to produce work essentially original. But though in his literary development Chaucer worked himself out of this exact reproduction of his models, through a partial working over of them till he finally attained complete independence, the habit of a translator clung to him to the very end. Even after he had fully justified his claim to being a great original poet, passages occur in his writings which are nothing but the reproduction of passages found in some foreign poem in Latin, or French, or Italian, the three languages with which he was conversant. His translation of them was due to the fact that they had struck his fancy; his insertion of them into his own work was to please others with what had previously pleased himself. Numerous passages of this kind have been pointed out; and doubtless there are others which remain to be pointed out.

There is another important thing to be marked in the history of Chaucer's development. Not only was poetic material lacking in the tongue at the time of his appearance, but also poetic form. The measures in use, while not inadequate for literary expression, were incapable of embodying it in its highest flights. Consequently, what Chaucer did not find, he had either to borrow or to invent. He did both. In the lines which have been quoted he speaks of the "balades, roundels, and virelays," which he had composed. These were all favorite poetical forms in that Continental country with whose literature Chaucer was mainly conversant. There can be little question that he tried all manner of verse which the ingenuity of the poets of northern France had devised. As many of his shorter pieces have very certainly disappeared, his success in these various attempts cannot be asserted with positiveness. Still, what have survived show that he was a great literary artist as well as a great poet. His feats of rhyming, in particular in a tongue so little fitted for it as is ours, can be seen in his unfinished poem of "Anelida and Arcite," in "The Compleynt of Venus," and in the envoy which follows "The Clerkes Tale." In this last piece, though there are thirty-six lines, the rhymes are only three; and two of these belong to fifteen lines respectively.

But far more important than such attempts, which prove interest in versification rather than great poetic achievement, are the two measures which he introduced into our tongue. The first was the seven-line stanza. The rhyming lines in it are respectively the first and third; the second, fourth, and fifth; and the sixth and seventh. At a later period this was frequently called "rhyme royal," because the "Kingis

Quair" was written in it. For fully two centuries it was one of the most popular measures in English poetry. Since the sixteenth century, however, it has been but little employed. Far different has been the fate of the line of ten syllables, or rather of five accents. On account of its frequent use in "The Canterbury Tales" it was called for a long period, "riding rhyme"; but it now bears the title of "heroic verse." As employed by Chaucer, it varies in slight particulars from the way it is now generally used. With him the couplet character was never made prominent. The sense was not apt to end at the second line, but constantly tended to run over into the line following. There was also frequently with him an unaccented eleventh syllable; and this, though not unknown to modern verse, is not common. Still, the difference between the early and the later form are mere differences of detail, and of comparatively unimportant detail. The introduction of this measure into English may be considered Chaucer's greatest achievement in the matter of versification. The heroic verse may have existed in the tongue before he himself used it. If so, it lurked unseen and uninfluential. He was the first to employ it on a grand scale, if not to employ it at all, and to develop its capabilities. Much the largest proportion of his greatest work is written in that measure. Yet in spite of his example, it found for two centuries comparatively few imitators. It was not till the end of the sixteenth century that the measure started on a new course of life, and entered upon the great part it has since played in English versification.

The most important of what are sometimes called the minor works of Chaucer are "The Parlement of Foules," "The Hous of Fame," "Troilus and Criseyde," and "The Legend of Good Women." These are all favorable examples of his genius. But however good they may be in particular portions and in particular respects, in general excellence they yield place unquestionably to "The Canterbury Tales." It seems to have been very clearly the intention of the poet to embody in this crowning achievement of his literary life everything in the shape of a story he had already composed or was purposing to compose. Two of the pieces, the story of "Palemon and Arcite," and the "Life of St. Cecilia," as we know from the words of his already quoted, had appeared long before. The plan of the work itself was most happily conceived; and in spite of most painstaking efforts to find an original for it or suggestion of it somewhere else, there seems no sufficient reason for doubting that the poet himself was equal to the task of having devised it. No one can certainly question the felicity with which the framework for embodying the tales was constructed. All ranks and classes of society are brought together in the company of pilgrims who assemble at the Tabard Inn at Southwark to ride to the shrine of the saint at Canterbury. The military class is represented by the Knight, belonging to the highest order of the nobility, his son the Squire, and his retainer the Yeoman; the church by the Abbot, the Friar, the Parson, the Prioress with her attendant Nun, and the three accompanying Priests, and less distinctly by the Scholar, the Clerk of Oxford, and by the Pardoner and the Summoner. For the other professions are the Doctor of Physic and the Serjeant of Law; for the middle-class landholders, the Franklin; and for the various crafts and occupations, the Haberdasher, the Carpenter, the Weaver, the Dyer, the Upholsterer, the Cook, the Ploughman, the Sailor, the Reeve, the Manciple, and (joining the party in the course of the pilgrimage) the assistant of the alchemist, who is called the Canon's Yeoman. Into the mouths of these various personages were to be put tales befitting

their character and condition. Consequently, there was ample space for stories of chivalry, of religion, of love, of magic, and in truth of every aspect of social life in all its highest and lowest manifestations. Between the tales themselves were connecting links, in which the poet had the opportunity to give an account of the incidents that took place on the pilgrimage, the critical opinions expressed by the hearers of what had been told, and the disputes and quarrels that went on between various members of the party. So far as this portion of his plan was finished, these connecting links furnish some of the most striking passages in the work. In one of them—the prologue to “The Tale of the Wyf of Bathe”—the genius of the poet reaches along certain lines its highest development; while the general prologue describing the various personages of the party, though not containing the highest poetry of the work as poetry, is the most acute, discriminating, and brilliant picture of men and manners that can be found in our literature.

Such was the plan of the work. It was laid out on an extensive scale, perhaps on too extensive a scale ever to have been completed. Certain it is that it was very far from ever reaching even remotely that result. According to the scheme set forth in the prologue, the work when finished should have included over one hundred and twenty tales. It actually comprises but twenty-four. Even of these, two are incomplete: “The Cokes Tale,” which is little more than begun, and the romantic Eastern “Squieres Tale,” which, in Milton’s words, is “left half told.” To those that are finished, the connecting links have not been supplied in many cases. Accordingly, the work exists not as a perfect whole, but in eight or nine fragmentary parts, each complete in itself, but lacking a close connection with the others, though all are bound together by the unity of a common central interest. The value of what has been done makes doubly keen the regret that so much has been left undone. Politics, religion, literature, manners, are all touched upon in this wide-embracing view, which still never misses what is really essential; and added to this is a skill of portrayal by which the actors, whether narrating the tales, or themselves forming the heroes of the narration, fairly live and breathe before our eyes. Had the work been completed on the scale upon which it was begun, we should have had a picture of life and opinion in the fourteenth century more vivid and exact than has been drawn of any century before or since.

A common impression prevails that Chaucer is a very difficult author to read or understand. Nothing could be much farther from the truth. The belief is due, as has been remarked previously, to the unfamiliar orthography more than to any other one thing. It is strange; it looks uncouth, and therefore is deemed hard. But all difficulties arising from this source disappear after very brief study. On the other hand, Chaucer’s style, like that of all early writers of genius, is characterized by perfect simplicity and by consequent clearness of expression. There are very few sentences over which the reader who understands the words has to linger long in order to understand the meaning. Of course, like every early author, his language presents certain difficulties of its own. There are found in it words which have now gone out of use, and words which while still in use have changed their signification. But familiarity with all of these is a mere matter of detail and can be acquired with comparative ease.

Somewhat more serious difficulties belong to the grammar and to the metre. It

may be therefore worth while to specify the most frequently recurring variations from modern usage, that are apt at the outset to embarrass the one seeking acquaintance with the poet. There is first the general statement that the inflections are fuller than in the English of to-day. Thus the plural of the noun is usually *-es* instead of the simple *-s*. In a similar way in the case of the verb we find occasionally full forms for the preterit plural as *loveden* for *loved*. All such differences are so easily comprehended that it is only necessary here to call attention to the fact of their existence. There are, however, certain peculiar variations from modern grammar which occur constantly, and these it will be well to specify particularly.

In the case of the noun, a few, which are now regularly inflected, retained then the old plural in *-en*. Illustrations are *assen*, 'asses'; *been*, 'bees'; *ton, toon*, 'toes'; *fon*, 'foes'; and so forth.

In the case of the pronoun the plural of the pronoun of the third person is *they, hire* (variants *here, hir, her*), *hem*, instead of *they, their, them*. The nominative plural of the pronoun of the second person is always *ye*; *you* is invariably the objective. Also, *that—he, that—his*, and *that—him* constitute a relative equivalent to *who, whose, whom*. The dash indicates that a number of words intervene between the two parts of the compound relative. *That* is the ordinary relative, but before *oon* and *other* it is the definite article.

In the case of the adjective, *long* and *strong* have for their comparative *lenger* and *strenger*. A few adjectives also retain the old comparative form in *-re*, as *derre*, 'dearer'; *nerre* (*ner*), 'nearer'; *ferre*, 'farther'; *herre*, 'higher', and so forth.

In the case of the verb, the third person singular of the present tense, which regularly ends in *-th*, undergoes contraction in certain verbs whose root ends in *d* or *t*, and occasionally in *s*. Hence we have such forms as *bit*, 'bids'; *halt*, 'holds'; *rist*, 'rises'; *sit*, 'sits'; *stont*, 'stands'; and *writ*, 'writes'. The plural of the present tense occasionally ends in *-th* as *they loveth*. The imperative plural ends regularly in *-th*. The past participle of the strong verb frequently drops the final *n*, especially when preceded by the prefix *y* or *i*, as for illustration, *yfalle*, 'fallen'; *ydrawe*, 'drawn'; *yshake*, 'shaken.'

The general negative is *ne*, which is sometimes also equivalent to 'nor.' Connected with the verbs 'be' and 'have', *ne* gives us such forms as *nis*, 'is not'; *nas*, 'was not'; *nath*, 'hath not,' and *nadde* (*nad*), 'had not.' The double negative never has an affirmative sense; it always strengthens the negation. Finally, *as* is frequently an expletive, especially with the imperative, and cannot be rendered at all.

In regard to metre two general rules are to be observed. The first is that the final *-e* — the remnant of the old inflection — is to be pronounced when the next word begins with a consonant. On the other hand, it is not pronounced when that word begins with a vowel or *h* mute. To this rule there are occasional exceptions, a knowledge of which can only be gained by observation and practice. Still it may be helpful to add that certain very common words — such as *oure, youre*, and *hire* ('their') — rarely, if ever, have the final *-e* pronounced under any circumstances. Again, in certain very common words the *-e* is pronounced or not, according to the requirements of the verse. For instance, the preterit *hadde*, 'had,' may be treated as a monosyllable or as a disyllable.

The second rule is that a word is frequently accented on a different syllable from that which receives it in modern English. This syllable in Chaucer is usually the last, as may be seen in words like *honour*, *nature*, *governour*. In some dissyllabic words, however, the accent may be upon the first or second syllable to suit the requirements of the metre. To this it may be added that certain words consist of more syllables in Chaucer than in modern English. Thus *creature* is pronounced *cre-a-tur* with the principal accent on the final syllable. Similarly, *condition* is a word of four syllables, *con-dit-i-on*, — or *con-dic-i-oun* in Chaucer spelling, — the accent resting on the second and fourth syllables.

A few lines divided into feet are here given to illustrate some of the preceding statements. It is of course to be borne in mind that the second syllable of the foot is regularly the one accented.

"Whylom, | as old|e stor|ies tell|en us|,  
 Ther was | a duk | that hight|e Thes|eus|."  
*The Canterbury Tales*, A, ll. 859, 860.

"Why ne hadde (=nad) | I now | thy sen|tence and | thy lore|,  
 The Fri|day for | to chyde, | as did|en ye|?"  
*The Canterbury Tales*, B, ll. 4540, 4541.

"That lord | hath lit|el of | discrec|ioun|,  
 That in | swich cas | can no | divis|ioun|."  
*The Canterbury Tales*, A, ll. 1779, 1780.

"And bath|ed eve|ry veyne | in swich | licour|,  
 Of which | vertu | engend|red is | the flour|."  
*The Canterbury Tales*, A, ll. 3, 4.

"Souninge | in mor'al ver|tu was | his spech|e,  
 And glad|ly wolde | he lerne, | and glad|ly tech|e."  
*The Canterbury Tales*, A, ll. 307, 308.

"Noght grev|eth us | your glor|ie and your | honour|;  
 But we | bisek|en mer|cy and | socour|."  
*The Canterbury Tales*, A, ll. 917, 918.

In conclusion, it is never to be forgotten that Chaucer has no superior in the English tongue as a master of melody; and if a verse of his sounds inharmonious, it is either because the line is corrupt or because the reader has not succeeded in pronouncing it correctly.

THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY.

# THE CANTERBURY TALES.

## GROUP A. THE PROLOGUE.

HERE BIGINNETH THE BOOK OF THE  
TALES OF CAUNTERBURY.

WHAN that Aprille with his shoures sote  
The droghte of Marche hath perced to  
the rote,

And bathed every veyne in swich licour,  
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;  
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete  
breeth

Inspired hath in every holt and heeth  
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne  
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,  
And smale fowles maken melodye,

That slepen al the night with open yē, 10  
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages):  
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrim-  
ages

(And palmers for to seken straunge  
strondes)

To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;  
And specially, from every shires ende 15  
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,  
The holy blisful martir for to seke,  
That hem hath holpen, whan that they  
were seke.

Bifel that, in that seson on a day,  
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay 20  
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage  
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,  
At night was come in-to that hostelrye  
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,  
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle 25  
In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they  
alle,

That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;  
The chambres and the stables weren  
wyde,

And wel we weren esed atte beste.  
And shortly, whan the sonne was to  
reste, 30

So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,  
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,  
And made forward erly for to ryse,  
To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.  
But natheles, whyl I have tyme and  
space, 35

Er that I ferther in this tale pace,  
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,  
To telle yow al the condicioun  
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,  
And whiche they weren, and of what  
degree; 40

And eek in what array that they were  
inne:

And at a knight than wol I first biginne.  
A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy  
man,

That fro the tyme that he first bigan  
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye, 45  
Trouthe and honour, fredom and cur-  
teisy.

Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,  
And therto hadde he riden (no man  
ferre)

As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,  
And ever honoured for his worthi-  
nesse. 50

At Alisaundre he was, whan it was  
wonne;

Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne  
Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.

In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,  
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree. 55  
In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be  
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.

At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,  
 When they were wonne; and in the  
 Grete See

At many a noble aryve hadde he be. 60  
 At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,  
 And foughten for our feith at Tramis-  
 sene

In listes thryes, and ay slayn his foo.  
 This ilke worthy knight had been also  
 Somtyme with the lord of Palatye, 65  
 Ageyn another hethen in Turkye:  
 And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.  
 And though that he were worthy, he was  
 wys,

And of his port as meke as is a mayde.  
 He never yet no vileinye ne sayde 70  
 In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.  
 He was a verray parfit gentil knight.

But for to tellen yow of his array,  
 His hors were gode, but he was nat gay.  
 Of fustian he wered a gipoun 75  
 Al bismotered with his habergeoun;

For he was late y-come from his viage,  
 And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

With him ther was his sone, a yong  
 SQUYER,

A lovyere, and a lusty bacheler, 80  
 With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in  
 presse.

Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.  
 Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,  
 And wonderly deliver, and greet of  
 strengthe.

And he had been somtyme in chivachye,  
 In Flaundes, in Artoys, and Picardye, 86  
 And born him wel, as of so litel space,  
 In hope to stonden in his lady grace.

Embrouded was he, as it were a mede  
 Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.  
 Singinge he was, or floytinge, al the day;  
 He was as fresh as is the month of May.  
 Short was his goune, with sleeves longe  
 and wyde. 93

Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire  
 ryde.

He coude songes make and wel endyte,  
 Iuste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye  
 and wryte. 96

So hote he lovede, that by nightertale  
 He sleep namore than dooth a nightin-  
 gale.

Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,  
 And carf biforn his fader at the table. 100

A YEMAN hadde he, and servaunts  
 namo

At that tyme, for him liste ryde so;  
 And he was clad in cote and hood of  
 grene;

A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene  
 Under his belt he bar ful thriftily; 105  
 (Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:  
 His arwes drouped noght with fetheres  
 lowe),

And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.  
 A not-heed hadde he, with a broun vis-  
 age.

Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage.  
 Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer, 111  
 And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,  
 And on that other syde a gay daggere,  
 Harneised wel, and sharp as point of  
 spere;

A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene.  
 An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of  
 grene; 116

A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.  
 Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,  
 That of hir smyling was ful simple and  
 coy;

Hir gretteste ooth was but by seynt Loy;  
 And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.  
 Ful wel she song the service divyne,  
 Entuned in hir nose ful semely; 123

And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,  
 After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,  
 For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.  
 At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;  
 She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,  
 Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.  
 Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel  
 kepe, 130

That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.  
 In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.  
 Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,  
 That in hir cyppe was no ferthing sene  
 Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir  
 draughte. 135

Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,  
 And sikerly she was of greet disport,  
 And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port,  
 And peyned hir to countrefete chere  
 Of court, and been estatlich of manere,  
 And to ben holden digne of reverence.  
 But, for to speken of hir conscience, 142  
 She was so charitable and so pitous,  
 She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous



Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or  
bledde. 145

Of smale houndes had she, that she  
fedde

With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-  
breed.

But sore weep she if oon of hem were  
deed,

Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte :  
And al was conscience and tendre herte.

Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was; 151  
Hir nose tretys; hir eyen greye as glas;

Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe  
and reed;

But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;  
It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe;

For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.  
Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war. 156

Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar  
A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene;

And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful  
shene, 160

On which ther was first write a crowned A,  
And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.

Another NONNE with hir hadde she,  
That was hir chapeleyne, and PREESTES

three.  
A MONK ther was, a fair for the  
maistrye, 165

An out-rydere, that lovede venerye; ✕  
A manly man, to been an abbot able.)

Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in  
stable :

And, whan he rood, men mighte his  
brydel here

Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere, 170  
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-

belle,  
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.

The reule of seint Maure or of seint  
Beneit,

By-cause that it was old and som-dal  
streit,

This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace,  
And held after the newe world the

space. 176  
He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,

That seith, that hunters been nat holy  
men;

Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,  
Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees; 180

This is to seyn, a monk out of his  
cloistre.

But thilke text held he nat worth an  
oistre;

And I seyde, his opinioun was good.  
What sholde he studie, and make him-

selven wood, 184  
Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,  
Or swinken with his handes, and laboure,

As Austin bit? How shal the world be  
served?

Lat Austin have his swink to him  
reserved.

Therfore he was a pricasour aright;  
Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel

in flight; 190  
Of priking and of hunting for the hare  
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he

spare.  
I seigh his sleeves purfild at the hond

With grys, and that the fyneste of a  
lord;

And, for to festne his hood under his  
chin, 195

He hadde of gold y-wrought a curious  
pin :

A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther  
was.

His heed was balled, that shoon as any  
glas,

And eek his face, as he had been anoint.  
He was a lord ful fat and in good point;

His eyen stepe, and rollinge in his heed,  
That stemed as a forneys of a leed; 202

His botes souple, his hors in gret estat.  
Now certainly he was a fair prelat;

He was nat pale as a for-pyned goost.  
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.

His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.  
— A FRERE ther was, a wantown and a

merye,  
A limitour, a ful solempne man. 209

In alle the ordres foure is noon that can  
So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.

He hadde maad ful many a mariage  
Of yonge wommen, at his owne cost.

Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.  
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he 215

With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,  
And eek with worthy wommen of the

toun :  
For he had power of confessioun,

As seyde him-self, more than a curat,  
For his ordre he was licentiat. 220

Ful swetely herde he confessioun,

And plesaunt was his absolucioun;  
 He was an esy man to yeve penaunce  
 Ther as he wiste to han a good pitaunce;  
 For unto a povre ordre for to yive 225  
 Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive  
 For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,  
 He wiste that a man was repentaunt.  
 For many a man so hard is of his herte,  
 He may nat wepe al-thogh him sore  
 smierte. 230  
 Therefore, in stede of weping and  
 preyeres,  
 Men moot yeve silver to the povre  
 freres.  
 His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves  
 And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.  
 And certainly he hadde a mery note; 235  
 Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a  
 rote.  
 Of yeddinges he bar utterly the prys.  
 His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;  
 Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.  
 He knew the tavernes wel in every toun,  
 And everich hostiler and tappestere 241  
 Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;  
 For un-to swich a worthy man as he  
 Acorded nat, as by his facultee,  
 To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce.  
 It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce 246  
 For to delen with no swich poraille,  
 But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.  
 And over-al, ther as profit sholde aryse,  
 Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse. 250  
 Ther nas no man no-wher so vertuous.  
 He was the beste beggere in his hous;  
 [And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt;  
 Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his  
 haunt;] 252 b, c  
 For thogh a widwe hadde nought a sho,  
 So plesaunt was his "*In principio*,"  
 Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he  
 wente. 255  
 His purchas was wel bettre than his  
 rente.  
 And rage he coude, as it were right a  
 whelpe  
 In love-dayes ther coude he muchel  
 helpe.  
 For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,  
 With a thredbar cope, as is a povre  
 scoler, 260  
 But he was lyk a maister or a pope.  
 Of double worsted was his semi-cope,

That rounded as a belle out of the  
 presse.  
 Somwhat he lipped, for his wantownesse,  
 To make his English swete up-on his  
 tonge; 265  
 And in his harping, whan that he had  
 songe,  
 His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,  
 As doon the sterres in the frosty night.  
 This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.  
 A MARCHANT was ther with a forked  
 berd, 270  
 In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat,  
 Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat;  
 His botes clasped faire and fetisly.  
 His resons he spak ful solempnely,  
 Souninge alway thencrees of his win-  
 ning. 275  
 He wolde the see were kept for any  
 thing  
 Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.  
 Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes  
 selle.  
 This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;  
 Ther wiste no wight that he was in  
 dette, 280  
 So estatly was he of his governaunce,  
 With his bargaynes, and with his chevi-  
 saunce.  
 For sothe he was a worthy man with-  
 alle,  
 But sooth to seyn, I noot how men him  
 calle.  
 A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,  
 That un-to logik hadde longe y-go. 286  
 As lene was his hors as is a rake,  
 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake;  
 But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.  
 Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy;  
 For he had geten him yet no benefyce,  
 Ne was so worldly for to have offyce.  
 For him was lever have at his beddes  
 heed  
 Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,  
 Of Aristotle and his philosophye, 295  
 Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay  
 sautrye.  
 But al be that he was a philosopre,  
 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;  
 But al that he mighte of his freendes  
 hente,  
 On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,  
 And bisily gan for the soules preye 301

Of hem that yaf him wher-with to  
scoleye.

Of studie took he most cure and most  
hede.

Noght o word spak he more than was  
nede,

And that was seyde in forme and rever-  
ence, 305

And short and quik, and ful of hy sen-  
tence.

Souninge in moral vertu was his speche,  
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly  
teche.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and  
wys,

That often hadde been at the parvyys, 310  
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.

Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:  
He semed swich, his wordes weren so  
wyse.

Iustyce he was ful often in assyse, 314  
By patente, and by pleyn commissioun;

For his science, and for his heigh renoun  
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.

So greet a purchasour was no-wher  
noon.

Al was fee simple to him in effect, 319  
His purchasing mighte nat been infect.

No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,  
And yet he semed bisier than he was.

In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,  
That from the tyme of king William were  
falle.

Therto he coude endyte, and make a  
thing, 325

Ther coude no wight pinche at his  
wryting;

And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.  
He rood but humbly in a medlee cote

Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres  
smale;

Of his array telle I no lenger tale. 330

A FRANKLEYN was in his companye;  
Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesye.

Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.  
Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in  
wyn.

To liven in delyt was ever his wone, 335  
For he was Epicurus owne sone,

That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt  
Was verrailly felicitee parfyt.

An housholdere, and that a greet, was  
he;

Seint Iulian he was in his contree. 340  
His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon;

A bettre envyned man was no-wher  
noon.

With-oute bake mete was never his  
hous,

Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous,  
It snowed in his hous of mete and  
drinke, 345

Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.  
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,

So chaunged he his mete and his soper.  
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in  
mewe,

And many a breem and many a luce in  
stewe. 350

Wo was his cook, but-if his sauce  
were

Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his  
gere.

His table dormant in his halle alwey  
Stood redy covered al the longe day.

At sessionis ther was he lord and  
sire; 355

Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.  
An anlas and a gipser al of silk

Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk.  
A shirreve hadde he been, and a coun-  
tour;

Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour. 360

AN HABERDASSHER and a CARPENTER,  
A WEBBE, a DYERE, and a TAPICER,

Were with us eek, clothed in o liveree,  
Of a solempne and greet fraternitee.

Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked  
was; 365

Hir knyves were y-chaped noght with  
bras,

But al with silver, wrought ful clene and  
weel

Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel.  
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,

To sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys. 370

Everich, for the wisdom that he can,  
Was shaply for to been an alderman.

For catel hadde they y-nogh and rente,  
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;

And elles certein were they to blame. 375  
It is ful fair to been y-clept "*ma dame*,"

And goon to vigilyes al bifore,  
And have a mantel royalliche y-bore.

A Cook they hadde with hem for the  
nones,

To boille the chiknes with the mary-  
bones, 380  
And poudre-marchant tart, and galingale.  
Wel coude he knowe a draughte of  
London ale.

He coude roste, and sethe, and broille,  
and frye,

Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.  
But greet harm was it, as it thoughte  
me, 385

That on his shine a mormal hadde he;  
For blankmanger, that made he with the  
beste.

A SHIPMAN was ther, woning fer by  
weste :

For aught I woot, he was of Derte-  
mouthe.

He rood up-on a rouncy, as he couthe,  
In a gowne of falding to the knee. 391

A daggere hanging on a laas hadde he  
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.  
The hote somer had maad his hewe al  
broun;

And, certainly, he was a good felawe. 395  
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he  
y-drawe

From Burdeux-ward, whyl that the chap-  
man sleep.

Of nyce conscience took he no keep.

If that he faught, and hadde the hyer  
hond,

By water he sente hem hoom to every  
lond. 400

But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,  
His stremes and his daungers him  
bisydes,

His herberwe and his mone, his lode-  
menage,

Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to  
Cartage. 404

Hardy he was, and wys to undertake;

With many a tempest hadde his berd  
been shake.

He knew wel alle the havenes, as they  
were,

From Gootland to the cape of Finistere,  
And every cryke in Britayne and in  
Spayne;

His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne.

With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF  
PHISYK, 411

In al this world ne was ther noon him  
lyk

To speke of phisik and of surgerye;  
For he was grounded in astronomye.

He kepte his pacient a ful greet del 415  
In houres, by his magik naturel.

Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent  
Of his images for his pacient.

He knew the cause of everich maladye,  
Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or  
drye, 420

And where engendred, and of what  
humour;

He was a verrey parfit practisour.

The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the  
rote,

Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.

Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries, 425  
To sende him drogges and his letuaries,

For ech of hem made other for to  
winne;

Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.

Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,  
And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus, 430

Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;

Serapion, Razis, and Avicen;

Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn;

Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.

Of his diete mesurable was he, 435

For it was of no superfluitee,

But of greet norissing and digestible.

His studie was but litel on the Bible.

In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,

Lyned with taffata and with sendal; 440

And yet he was but esy of dispence;

He kepte that he wan in pestilence.

For gold in phisik is a cordial,

Therefore he lovede gold in special.

A good WYF was ther of bisyde

BATHE,

But she was som-del deaf, and that was  
scathe. 446

Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an  
haunt,

She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.

In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon

That to the offring bifore hir sholde

goon; 450

And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was  
she,

That she was out of alle charitee.

Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground;

I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound

That on a Sondag were upon hir heed.

Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed, 456

Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste  
and newe.  
Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of  
hewe.  
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,  
Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde  
fyve, 460  
Withouten other companye in youthe;  
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.  
And thryes hadde she been at Ierusalem;  
She hadde passed many a straunge  
stream;  
At Rome she hadde been, and at  
Boloigne, 465  
In Galice at saint Iame, and at Coloigne.  
She coude muche of wandring by the  
weye:  
Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.  
Up-on an amblere esily she sat,  
Y-wimplid wel, and on hir heed an hat  
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe; 471  
A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,  
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.  
In felawship wel coude she laughe and  
carpe.  
Of remedyes of love she knew per-  
chaunce, 475  
For she coude of that art the olde  
daunce.  
A good man was ther of religioun,  
And was a povre PERSON of a toun;  
But riche he was of holy thought and  
werk.  
He was also a lerned man, a clerk, 480  
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde  
preche;  
His parisschens devoutly wolde he teche,  
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,  
And in adversitee ful pacient;  
And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.  
Ful looth were him to cursen for his  
tythes, 486  
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,  
Un-to his povre parisschens aboute  
Of his offring, and eek of his substaunce.  
He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce.  
Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer  
a-sonder, 491  
But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,  
In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte  
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and  
lyte,  
Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf.

This noble ensample to his sheep he  
yaf, 496  
That first he wroghte, and afterward he  
taughte;  
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte;  
And this figure he added eek ther-to,  
That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?  
For if a preest be foul, on whom we  
truste, 501  
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;  
And shame it is, if a preest take keep,  
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.  
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,  
By his clenness, how that his sheep  
shold live. 506  
He sette nat his benefice to hyre,  
And leet his sheep encombred in the  
myre,  
And ran to London, un-to seynt Poules,  
To seken him a chaunterie for soules,  
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;  
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his  
folde, 512  
So that the wolf ne made it nat mis-  
carie;  
He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.  
And though he holy were, and vertuous,  
He was to sinful man nat despitous, 516  
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,  
But in his teching discreet and benigne.  
To drawn folk to heven by fairnesse  
By good ensample, was his bisnesse:  
But it were any persone obstinat, 521  
What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,  
Him wolde he snibben sharply for the  
nones.  
A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher  
noon is.  
He wayted after no pompe and rever-  
ence, 525  
Ne made him a spyced conscience,  
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,  
He taughte, and first he folwed it him-  
selve.  
X With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was  
his brother,  
That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a  
fother, 530  
A trewe swinker and a good was he,  
Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.  
God loved he best with al his hole herte  
At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or  
smerte,

And thanne his neighebour right as him-  
selfe. 535

He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and  
delve,

For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,  
Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might.

His tythes payed he ful faire and wel,  
Bothe of his propre swink and his catel.  
In a tabard he rood upon a mere. 541

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

X The MILLER was a stout carl, for the  
nones, 545

Ful big he was of braun, and eek of  
bones;

That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,  
At wastling he wolde have alwey the  
ram.

He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke  
knarre,

Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of  
harre, 550

Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.  
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,

And ther-to brood, as though it were a  
spade.

Up-on the cop right of his nose he hade  
A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of  
heres, 555

Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres;  
His nose-thirles blake were and wyde.

A swerd and bokeler bar he by his  
syde;

His mouth as greet was as a greet for-  
neys.

He was a Ianglere and a goliardeys, 560

And that was most of sinne and har-  
lotryes.

Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen  
thryes;

And yet he hadde a thombe of gold,  
pardee.

A whyt cote and a blew hood wered he.  
A baggepype wel coude he blowe and  
sowne, 565

And ther-with-al he broghte us out of  
towne.

X A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a  
temple,

Of which achatours mighte take exemple  
For to be wyse in bying of vitaille.

For whether that he payde, or took by  
taille, 570

Algate he wayted so in his achat,  
That he was ay biforn and in good stat.

Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,  
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace

The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?  
Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes

ten, 576

That were of lawe expert and curious;  
Of which ther were a doseyn in that  
hous,

Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and  
lond

Of any lord that is in Engelond, 580

To make him live by his propre good,  
In honour dettelees, but he were wood,

Or live as scarsly as him list desire;  
And able for to helpen al a shire

In any cas that mighte falle or happe;  
And yit this maunciple sette hir aller  
cappe. 586

The REVE was a sclendre colerik man,  
His berd was shave as ny as ever he can.

His heer was by his eres round y-shorn.  
His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.

Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,  
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene. 592

Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne;  
Ther was noon auditour coude on him  
winne.

Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the  
reyn, 595

The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.  
His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,

His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his  
pultrye,

Was hoolly in this reves governing, 599

And by his covenaunt yaf the rekening,  
Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age;

Ther coude no man bringe him in arrer-  
age.

Ther nas baillif, ne herde, ne other hyne,  
That he ne knew his sleighte and his  
covyne; 604

They were adrad of him, as of the deeth.  
His woning was ful fair up-on an heeth.

With grene treës shadwed was his place.  
He coude bettre than his lord purchace.

Ful riche he was astored prively,  
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly,

To yeve and lene him of his owne  
good, 611

And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.

In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister;

He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.  
This reve sat up-on a ful good stot, 615  
That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.  
A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,  
And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.  
Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,

Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.  
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute, 621  
And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.

A SOMNOUR was ther with us in that place,

That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynnes face,  
For sawcefleem he was, with eyen narwe.  
As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe; 626

With scalled browes blake, and piled berd;

Of his visage children were aferd.  
Ther nas quik-silver, litarge, ne brimston,

Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon, 630  
Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,  
That him mighte helpen of his whelkes whyte,

Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.

Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,

And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as blood. 635

Thanne wolde he speke, and crye as he were wood.

And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,

Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.

A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,  
That he had lerned out of som decree;

No wonder is, he herde it al the day; 641  
And eek ye knowen wel, how that a Iay

Can clepen 'Watte,' as well as can the pope.

But who-so coude in other thing him grope,

Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophy; 645

Ay 'Questio quid iuris' wolde he crye.  
He was a gentil harlot and a kinde;

A better felawe sholde men noght finde.  
He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,

A good felawe to have his concubyn 650  
A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle:

Ful prively a finch eek coude he pulle.  
And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,

He wolde techen him to have non awe,  
In swich cas, of the erchedeknes curs, 655

But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;  
For in his purs he sholde y-punished be.

'Purs is the erchedeknes helle,' seyde he.  
But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;

Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede — 660

For curs wol slee, right as assoilling saveth —

And also war him of a *significavit*.  
In daunger hadde he at his owne gyse

The yonge girles of the diocyse,  
And knew hir conseil, and was al hir

reed. 665

A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,  
As greet as it were for an ale-stake;

A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.  
With him ther rood a gentil PARDONER

Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer, 670

That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.

Ful loude he song, 'Com hider, love, to me.'

This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,  
Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.

This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex, 675

But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike of flex;

By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,

And ther-with he his shuldres overspradde;

But thinne it lay, by colpons oon and oon;

But hood, for Iolitee, ne wered he noon,  
For it was trussed up in his walet. 681

Him thoughte, he rood al of the newe Iet;

Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.

Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare. 684

A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe.

His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,  
Bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al  
hoot.

A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.  
No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,  
As smothe it was as it were late y-  
shave; 690

I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.  
But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,  
Ne was ther swich another pardoner.  
For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,  
Which that, he seyde, was our lady  
veyl: 695

He seyde, he hadde a gobet of the seyl  
That seynt Peter hadde, whan that he  
wente

Up-on the see, til Iesu Crist him hente.  
He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of  
stones,

And in a glas he hadde pigges bones. 700  
But with these relikes, whan that he fond  
A povre person dwelling up-on lond,  
Up-on a day he gat him more moneye  
Than that the person gat in monthes  
tweye.

And thus, with feyned flaterye and  
Iapes, 705  
He made the person and the peple his  
apes.

But trewely to tellen, atte laste,  
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.  
Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,  
But alderbest he song an offertorie; 710  
For wel he wiste, whan that song was  
songe,  
He moste preche, and wel affyle his  
tonge,

To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;  
Therefore he song so meriely and loude.

Now have I told you shortly, in a  
clause, 715  
Thestat, tharray, the nombre, and eek  
the cause

Why that assembled was this companye  
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,  
That highte the Tabard, faste by the  
Belle.

But now is tyme to yow for to telle 720  
How that we baren us that ilke night,  
Whan we were in that hostelrye aight.  
And after wol I telle of our viage,  
And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.  
But first I pray yow, of your curteisye,

That ye narette it nat my vileinye, 726  
Thogh that I pleyedly speke in this  
matere,

To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere;  
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes properly.  
For this ye knowen al-so wel as I, 730  
Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,  
He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,  
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,  
Al speke he never so rudeliche and  
large;

Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe,  
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes  
newe. 736

He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his  
brother;

He moot as wel seye o word as another.  
Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,  
And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it. 740  
Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him  
rede,

The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.  
Also I pray yow to foryeve it me,  
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree  
Here in this tale, as that they sholde  
stonde; 745

My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.  
Greet chere made our hoste us everi-  
chon,

And to the soper sette he us anon;  
And served us with vitaille at the beste.  
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke  
us leste. 750

A semely man our hoste was with-alle  
For to han been a marshal in an halle;  
A large man he was with eyen stepe,  
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:  
Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-  
taught, 755

And of manhood him lakkede right  
naught.

Eek therto he was right a mery man,  
And after soper pleyen he bigan,  
And spak of mirthe amonges othere  
things,

Whan that we hadde maad our reken-  
inges; 760

And seyde thus: 'Now, lordinges,  
trewely,

Ye been to me right welcome hertely:  
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,  
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a cor  
panye



At ones in this herberwe as is now. 765  
 Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I  
 how.  
 And of a mirthe I am right now bi-  
 thoght,  
 To doon yow ese, and it shal coste  
 noght.  
 Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow  
 spede,  
 The blisful martir quyte yow your  
 mede. 770  
 And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,  
 Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;  
 For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon  
 To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon;  
 And therefore wol I maken yow disport,  
 As I seyde erst, and doon yow som con-  
 fort. 776  
 And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,  
 Now for to stonden at my Iugement,  
 And for to werken as I shal yow seye,  
 To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the  
 weye, 780  
 Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,  
 But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn  
 heed.  
 Hold up your hond, withouten more  
 speche.  
 Our counseil was nat longe for to  
 seche;  
 Us thoughte it was noght worth to make  
 it wys, 785  
 And graunted him withouten more avys,  
 And bad him seye his verdit, as him  
 leste.  
 'Lordinges,' quod he, 'now herkneth  
 for the beste;  
 But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn;  
 This is the poynt, to speken short and  
 pleyn 790  
 That ech of yow, to shorte with your  
 weye,  
 In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,  
 To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,  
 And hom-ward he shal tellen othere  
 two,  
 Of adventures that whylom han bifalle.  
 And which of yow that bereth him best  
 of alle, 796  
 That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas  
 Tales of best sentence and most solas,  
 Shal have a soper at our aller cost  
 Here in this place, sitting by this post,

Whan that we come agayn fro Caunter-  
 bury. 801  
 And for to make yow the more mery,  
 I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,  
 Right at myn owne cost, and be your  
 gyde.  
 And who-so wol my Iugement with-  
 seye 805  
 Shal paye al that we spenden by the  
 weye.  
 And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,  
 Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo,  
 And I wol erly shape me therfore.  
 This thing was graunted, and our  
 othes swore 810  
 With ful glad herte, and preyden him  
 also  
 That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,  
 And that he wolde been our governour,  
 And of our tales Iuge and reportour,  
 And sette a soper at a certeyn prys; 815  
 And we wold reuled been at his devys,  
 In heigh and lowe; and thus, by oon  
 assent,  
 We been acorded to his Iugement.  
 And ther-up-on the wyn was fet anon;  
 We dronken, and to reste wente echon,  
 With-outen any lenger taryinge. 821  
 A-morwe, whan that day bigan to  
 springe,  
 Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,  
 And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,  
 And forth we riden, a litel more than  
 pas, 825  
 Un-to the watering of seint Thomas.  
 And there our host bigan his hors areste,  
 And seyde; 'Lordinges, herkneth, if yow  
 leste.  
 Ye woot your forward, and I it yow re-  
 corde.  
 If even-song and morwe-song acorde, 830  
 Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.  
 As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,  
 Who-so be rebel to my Iugement  
 Shal paye for al that by the weye is  
 spent.  
 Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer  
 twinne; 835  
 He which that hath the shortest shal bi-  
 ginne.  
 Sire knight,' quod he, 'my maister and  
 my lord,  
 Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord.

Cometh neer,' quod he, 'my lady prior-  
esse;

And ye, sir clerk, lat be your shamfast-  
nesse, 840

Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every  
man.'

Anon to drawen every wight bigan,  
And shortly for to tellen, as it was,

Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,

The sothe is this, the cut fil to \*the  
knight, 845

Of which ful blythe and glad was every  
wight;

And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,  
By forward and by composicioun,

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

As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes  
mo?

And whan this gode man saugh it was  
so, 850

As he that wys was and obedient

To kepe his forward by his free assent,

He seyde: 'Sin I shal biginne the game,  
What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes  
name!

Now lat us ryde, and herkneþ what I  
seye.' 855

And with that word we riden forth our  
weye;

And he bigan with right a mery chere  
His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

## THE KNIGHTES TALE.

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

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

WHYLOM, as olde stories tellen us,  
Ther was a duk that highte Theseus; 860  
Of Athenes he was lord and governour,  
And in his tyme swich a conquerour,  
That gretter was ther noon under the  
sonne.

Ful many a riche contree hadde he  
wonne;

What with his wisdom and his chival-  
rye, 865

He conquered al the regne of Femenye,  
That whylom was y-cleped Scithia;

And weddede the quene Ipolita,  
And broghte hir hoom with him in his  
contree

With muchel glorie and greet solempni-  
tee, 870

And eek hir yonge suster Emelye.  
And thus with victorie and with melodye

Lete I this noble duk to Athenes ryde,  
And al his hoost, in armes, him bisyde.

And certes, if it nere to long to  
here, 875

I wolde han told yow fully the manere,  
How wonnen was the regne of Femenye

By Theseus, and by his chivalrye;  
And of the grete bataille for the nones  
Bitwixen Athenès and Amazones; 880

And how asseged was Ipolita,  
The faire hardy quene of Scithia;

And of the feste that was at hir weddunge,  
And of the tempest at hir hoom-cominge;

But al that thing I moot as now for-  
bere. 885

I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere,  
And wayke been the oxen in my plough.

The remenant of the tale is long y-nough.  
I wol nat letten eek noon of this route;

Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute,  
And lat see now who shal the soper  
winne; 891

And ther I lefte, I wol ageyn biginne.

This duk, of whom I make mencion,  
When he was come almost unto the  
toun,

In al his wele and in his moste pryde, 895  
He was war, as he caste his eye asyde,

Wher that ther kneled in the hye weye  
A companye of ladies, tweye and tweye,

Ech after other, clad in clothes blake;

But swich a cry and swich a wo they  
make, 900

That in this world nis creature livinge,  
That herde swich another weymentinge;  
And of this cry they nolde never stenten,  
Til they the reynes of his brydel henten.

'What folk ben ye, that at myn hoom-  
cominge 905

Perturben so my feste with cryinge?'  
Quod Theseus, 'have ye so greet envye  
Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and  
crye?

Or who hath yow misboden, or offended?  
And telleth me if it may been amended;  
And why that ye ben clothed thus in  
blak?' 911

The eldest lady of hem alle spak,  
When she hadde swowned with a deedly  
chere,

That it was routhe for to seen and here,  
And seyde: 'Lord, to whom Fortune  
hath yiven 915

Victorie, and as a conquerour to liven,  
Noght greveth us your glorie and your  
honour;

But we biseken mercy and socour.  
Have mercy on our wo and our distresse.  
Som drope of pitee, thurgh thy gentil-  
lesse, 920

Up-on us wrecched women lat thou  
falle.

For certes, lord, ther nis noon of us alle,  
That she nath been a duchesse or a  
quene;

Now be we caitifs, as it is wel sene:  
Thanked be Fortune, and hir false  
wheel, 925

That noon estat assureth to be weel.  
And certes, lord, to abyden your presence,  
Here in the temple of the goddessse  
Clemence

We han ben waytinge al this fourteenight;  
Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy  
might. 930

I wrecche, which that wepe and waille  
thus,

Was whylom wyf to king Capaneus,  
That starf at Thebes, cursed be that day!  
And alle we, that been in this array,  
And maken al this lamentacioun, 935  
We losten alle our housbondes at that  
toun,

Why! that the sege ther-about lay,

And yet now the olde Creon, weylaway!  
That lord is now of Thebes the citee,

Fulfilde of ire and of inquitee, 940

He, for despyt, and for his tyrannye,  
To do the dede bodyes vileinye,

Of alle our lordes, whiche that ben slawe,  
Hath alle the bodyes on an heep y-drawe,  
And wol nat suffren hem, by noon  
assent, 945

Neither to been y-buried nor y-brent,  
But maketh houndes ete hem in despyt.'

And with that word, with-ouen more  
respyt,

They fillen gruf, and cryden pitously,  
'Have on us wrecched women som  
mercy, 950

And lat our sorwe sinken in thyn herte.'

This gentil duk down from his courser  
sterte

With herte pitous, whan he herde hem  
speke.

Him thoughte that his herte wolde breke,  
Whan he saugh hem so pitous and so  
mat, 955

That whylom weren of so greet estat.  
And in his armes he hem alle up hente,

And hem comforteth in ful good entente;  
And swoor his ooth, as he was trewe  
knight, 959

He wolde doon so ferforthly his might  
Up-on the tyraunt Creon hem to wreke,

That al the peple of Grece sholde speke  
How Creon was of Theseus y-served,

As he that hadde his deeth ful wel de-  
served. 964

And right anoon, with-ouen more abood,  
His baner he desplayeth, and forth rood

To Thebes-ward, and al his host bisyde;  
No neer Athenēs wolde he go ne ryde,

Ne take his ese fully half a day,  
But onward on his wey that night he  
lay; 970

And sente anoon Ipolita the quene,  
And Emelye hir yonge suster shene,

Un-to the toun of Athenēs to dwelle;  
And forth he rit; ther nis namore to  
telle.

The rede statue of Mars, with spere  
and targe, 975

So shyneth in his whyte baner large,  
That alle the feeldes gliteren up and  
doun;

And by his baner born is his penoun

Of gold ful riche, in which ther was  
y-bete

The Minotaur, which that he slough in  
Crete. 980

Thus rit this duk, thus rit this conquerour,  
And in his host of chivalrye the flour,  
Til that he cam to Thebes, and alighte  
Faire in a feeld, ther as he thoghte  
fighte.

But shortly for to speken of this thing, 985  
With Creon, which that was of Thebes  
king,

He faught, and slough him manly as a  
knight

In pleyn bataille, and putte the folk to  
flight;

And by assaut he wan the citee after,  
And rente adoun bothe wal, and sparre,  
and rafter; 990

And to the ladyes he restored agayn  
The bones of hir housbondes that were  
slayn,

To doon obsequies, as was tho the gyse.

But it were al to long for to devyse

The grete clamour and the wayment-  
inge 995

That the ladyes made at the brenninge

Of the bodies, and the grete honour

That Theseus, the noble conquerour,

Doth to the ladyes, whan they from him  
wente;

But shortly for to telle is myn entente. 1000

Whan that this worthy duk, this Theseus,  
Hath Creon slayn, and wonne Thebes thus,  
Stille in that feeld he took al night his  
reste,

And dide with al the contree as him leste.

To ransake in the tas of bodyes  
dede, 1005

Hem for to strepe of harneys and of  
wede,

The pilours diden bisnesse and cure,

After the bataille and disconfiture.

And so bifel, that in the tas they founde,

Thurgh-girt with many a grevous blody  
wounde, 1010

Two yonge knightes ligging by and by,

Bothe in oon armes, wrought ful richely,

Of whiche two, Arcita hight that oon,

And that other knight hight Palamon.

Nat fully quike, ne fully dede they  
were, 1015

But by hir cote-armures, and by hir gere,

The heraudes knewe hem best in special,  
As they that weren of the blood royal

Of Thebes, and of sustren two y-born.

Out of the tas the pilours han hem  
torn, 1020

And han hem caried softe un-to the tente

Of Theseus, and he ful sone hem sente

To Athenës, to dwellen in prisoun

Perpetually, he nolde no raunsoun.

And whan this worthy duk hath thus  
y-don, 1025

He took his host, and hoom he rood  
anon

With laurer crowned as a conquerour;

And there he liveth, in loye and in  
honour,

Terme of his lyf; what nedeth wordes  
mo?

And in a tour, in angwish and in wo, 1030

Dwellen this Palamoun and eek Arcite,

For evermore, ther may no gold hem  
quyte.

This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by  
day,

Til it fil ones, in a morwe of May,

That Emelye, that fairer was to sene 1035

Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene,

And fressher than the May with floures  
newe —

For with the rose colour stroof hir hewe,

I noot which was the fairer of hem two —

Er it were day, as was hir wone to do, 1040

She was arisen, and al redy dight;

For May wol have no slogardye a-night.

The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,

And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,

And seith, 'Arys, and do thyn obser-  
vaunce.' 1045

This maked Emelye have remembraunce

To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.

Y-clothed was she fresh, for to devyse;

Hir yellow heer was broyded in a tresse,

Behinde hir bak, a yerde long, I  
gesse. 1050

And in the gardin, at the sonne up-riste,

She walketh up and down, and as hir  
liste

She gadereth floures, party whyte and  
rede,

To make a sotil gerland for hir hede,

And as an aungel hevenly she song. 1055

The grete tour, that was so thikke and  
strong,

Which of the castel was the chief don-  
geoun,  
Ther-as the knightes weren in prisoun,  
Of whiche I tolde yow, and tellen shal)  
Was evene Ioynant to the gardin-wal, 1060  
Ther as this Emelye hadde hir pleyng.  
Bright was the sonne, and cleer that  
morweninge,  
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,  
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,  
Was risen, and romed in a chambre on  
heigh, 1065  
In which he al the noble citee seigh,  
And eek the gardin, ful of braunches  
grene,  
Ther-as this fresshe Emelye the shene  
Was in hir walk, and romed up and  
doun.  
This sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun,  
Both in the chambre, roming to and  
fro, 1071  
And to him-self compleyning of his wo;  
That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, 'alas!'  
And so bifel, by aventure or cas,  
That thurgh a window, thikke of many a  
barre 1075  
Of yren greet, and square as any sparre,  
He caste his eye upon Emelya,  
And ther-with-al he bleynte, and cryde  
'a!'  
As though he stongen were un-to the  
herte. 1079  
And with that cry Arcite anon up-sterte,  
And seyde, 'Cosin myn, what eyleth thee,  
That art so pale and deedly on to see?  
Why crydestow? who hath thee doon  
offence?  
Or Goddes love, tak al in pacience  
Our prisoun, for it may non other be; 1085  
Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.  
Som wikke aspect or disposicioun  
Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun,  
That yeven us this, al-though we hadde  
it sworn;  
So stood the heven whan that we were  
born; 1090  
Ye moste endure it: this is the short and  
pleyn.'  
This Palamon answerde, and seyde  
ageyn,  
Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinioun  
How hast a veyn imaginacioun.  
His prison caused me nat for to crye. 1095

But I was hurt right now thurgh-out myn  
yë  
In-to myn herte, that wol my bane be.  
The fairnesse of that lady that I see  
Yond in the gardin romen to and fro,  
Is cause of al my crying and my wo. 1100  
I noot wher she be womman or goddesse;  
But Venus is it, soothly, as I gesse.'  
And ther-with-al on kneës doun he fil,  
And seyde: 'Venus, if it be thy wil 1104  
Yow in this gardin thus to transfigure  
Bifore me, sorweful wrecche creature,  
Out of this prisoun help that we may  
scapen.  
And if so be my destinee be shapen  
By eterne word to dyen in prisoun,  
Of our linage have som compassioun, 1110  
That is so lowe y-brought by tyrannye.'  
And with that word Arcite gan espye  
Wher-as this lady romed to and fro.  
And with that sighte hir beautee hurte  
him so,  
That, if that Palamon was wounded  
sore, 1115  
Arcite is hurt as muche as he, or more.  
And with a sigh he seyde pitously:  
'The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly  
Of hir that rometh in the yonder place;  
And, but I have hir mercy and hir  
grace, 1120  
That I may seen hir atte leeste weye,  
I nam but deed; ther nis namore to seye.'  
This Palamon, whan he tho wordes  
herde,  
Dispitously he loked, and answerde:  
'Whether seistow this in earnest or in  
pley?' 1125  
'Nay,' quod Arcite, 'in earnest, by my  
fey!  
God help me so, me list ful yvele pleye.'  
This Palamon gan knitte his browes  
tweye:  
'It nere,' quod he, 'to thee no greet  
honour  
For to be fals, ne for to be traytour 1130  
To me, that am thy cosin and thy brother  
Y-sworn ful depe, and ech of us til other,  
That never, for to dyen in the peyne,  
Til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne,  
Neither of us in love to hindren other,  
Ne in non other cas, my leve brother;  
But that thou sholdest trewely forthren  
me 1137

In every cas, and I shal forthren thee.  
This was thyn ooth, and myn also, cer-  
teyn?

I wot right wel, thou darst it nat with-  
seyn. 1140

Thus artow of my counseil, out of doute.  
And now thou woldest falsly been aboute  
To love my lady, whom I love and serve,  
And ever shal, til that myn herte sterve.  
Now certes, fals Arcite, thou shalt nat  
so. 1145

I loved hir first, and tolde thee my wo  
As to my counseil, and my brother sworn  
To forthe me, as I have told biforn.  
For which thou art y-bounden as a knight  
To helpen me, if it lay in thy might, 1150  
Or elles artow fals, I dar wel seyn.'

This Arcitē ful proudly spak ageyn,  
'Thou shalt,' quod he, 'be rather fals  
than I;

But thou art fals, I telle thee utterly;  
For *par amour* I loved hir first er  
thow. 1155

What wiltow seyn? thou wistest nat yet  
now

Whether she be a womman or goddesse!  
Thyn is affeccioun of holinesse,  
And myn is love, as to a creature;

For which I tolde thee myn aventure 1160  
As to my cosin, and my brother sworn.

I pose, that thou lovedest hir biforn;  
Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,  
That 'who shal yeve a lover any lawe?'  
Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan, 1165  
Than may be yeve to any erthly man.

And therefore positif lawe and swich de-  
cree

Is broke al-day for love, in ech degree.  
A man moot nedes love, maugree his  
heed.

He may nat fleen it, thogh he sholde be  
deed, 1170

Al be she mayde, or widwe, or elles wyf.  
And eek it is nat lykly, al thy lyf,  
To stonden in hir grace; namore shal I;  
For wel thou woost thy-selven, verraily,  
That thou and I be dampned to pris-  
oun 1175

Perpetuelly; us gayneth no raunsoun.  
We stryve as dide the houndes for the  
boon,

They foughte al day, and yet hir part was  
noon;

Ther cam a kyte, whyl that they were  
wrothe,

And bar away the boon bitwixe hem  
bothe. 1180

And therefore, at the kinges court, my  
brother,

Ech man for him-self, ther is non other.  
Love if thee list; for I love and ay shal;  
And soothly, leve brother, this is al.

Here in this prisoun mote we en-  
dure, 1185

And everich of us take his aventure,  
Greet was the stryf and long bitwixe  
hem tweye,

If that I hadde leyser for to seye;  
But to theeffect. It happed on a day,  
(To telle it yow as shortly as I may) 1190

A worthy duk that highte Perotheus,  
That felawe was un-to duk Theseus  
Sin thilke day that they were children  
lyte,

Was come to Athenes, his felawe to  
visyte,

And for to pleye, as he was wont to  
do, 1195

For in this world he loved no man so:  
And he loved him as tendrely ageyn.  
So wel they loved, as olde bokes seyn,

That whan that oon was deed, sothly to  
telle,

His felawe wente and soghte him down  
in helle; 1200

But of that story list me nat to wryte.  
Duk Perotheus loved wel Arcite,

And hadde him knowe at Thebes yeer  
by yere;

And fynally, at requeste and preyere  
Of Perotheus, with-oute any raunsoun,  
Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoun,

Freely to goon, wher that him liste over-  
al, 1207

In swich a gyse, as I you tellen shal.  
This was the forward, pleyedly for ten-  
dyte,

Bitwixen Theseus and him Arcite: 1210  
That if so were, that Arcite were y-  
founde

Ever in his lyf, by day or night or stounde  
In any contree of this Theseus,  
And he were caught, it was acorded thus,  
That with a swerd he sholde lese his  
heed; 1215

Ther nas non other remedye ne reed,

But taketh his leve, and homward he him  
 spedde;  
 Let him be war, his nekke lyth to wedde!  
 How greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite!  
 The deeth he feleth thurgh his herte  
 smyte; 1220  
 He wepeth, wayleth, cryeth pitously;  
 To sleen him-self he wayteth prively.  
 He seyde, 'Allas that day that I was  
 born!  
 Now is my prison worse than biforn;  
 Now is me shape eternally to dwelle 1225  
 Nogh in purgatorie, but in helle.  
 Allas! that ever knew I Perotheus!  
 For elles hadde I dwelled with Theseus  
 Y-fetered in his prisoun ever-mo.  
 Than hadde I been in blisse, and nat in  
 wo. 1230  
 Only the sighte of hir, whom that I serve,  
 Thougth that I never hir grace may de-  
 serve,  
 Wolde han suffised right y-nough for me.  
 O dere cosin Palamon,' quod he, 1234  
 Thyn is the victorie of this aventure,  
 Ful blisfully in prison maistow dure;  
 In prison? certes nay, but in paradys!  
 Wel hath fortune y-turned thee the dys,  
 That hast the sighte of hir, and I thab-  
 sence.  
 For possible is, sin thou hast hir pres-  
 ence, 1240  
 And art a knight, a worthy and an able,  
 That by som cas, sin fortune is change-  
 able,  
 Thou mayst to thy desyr som-tyme atteyne.  
 But I, that am exyled, and bareyne  
 Of alle grace, and in so greet despeir, 1245  
 That ther nis erthe, water, fyr, ne eir,  
 Ne creature, that of hem maked is,  
 That may me helpe or doon confort in  
 this.  
 Wel oughte I sterve in wanhope and  
 distresse;  
 Farwel my lyf, my lust, and my glad-  
 nesse! 1250  
 Allas, why pleynten folk so in com-  
 mune  
 Of purveyaunce of God, or of fortune,  
 That yeveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse  
 Wel better than they can hem-self de-  
 vyse?  
 Som man desyreth for to han richesse,

That cause is of his mordre or greet sik-  
 nesse. 1256  
 And som man wolde out of his prison  
 fayn,  
 That in his hous is of his meynee slayn.  
 Infinite harmes been in this matere;  
 We witen nat what thing we preyen  
 here. 1260  
 We faren as he that dronke is as a mous;  
 A dronke man wot wel he hath an hous,  
 But he noot which the righte wey is  
 thider;  
 And to a dronke man the wey is slider.  
 And certes, in this world so faren we;  
 We seken faste after felicitee, 1266  
 But we goon wrong ful often, trewely.  
 Thus may we seyen alle, and namely I,  
 That wende and hadde a greet opinioun,  
 That, if I mighte escapen from prisoun,  
 Than hadde I been in loye and perfite  
 hele, 1271  
 Ther now I am exyled from my wele.  
 Sin that I may nat seen yow, Emelye,  
 I nam but deed; ther nis no remedye.'  
 Up-on that other syde Palamon, 1275  
 Whan that he wiste Arcite was agon,  
 Swich sorwe he maketh, that the grete  
 tour  
 Resouneth of his youling and clamour.  
 The pure fettres on his shines grete  
 Weren of his bittre salte teres wete. 1280  
 'Allas!' quod he, 'Arcite, cosin myn,  
 Of al our stryf, God woot, the fruyt is  
 thyn.  
 Thow walkest now in Thebes at thy  
 large,  
 And of my wo thou yevest litel charge.  
 Thou mayst, sin thou hast wisdom and  
 manhede, 1285  
 Assemblen alle the folk of our kinrede,  
 And make a werre so sharp on this  
 citee,  
 That by som aventure, or som trettee,  
 Thou mayst have hir to lady and to wyf,  
 For whom that I mot nedes lese my lyf.  
 For, as by wey of possibilitee, 1291  
 Sith thou art at thy large, of prison free,  
 And art a lord, greet is thyn avauntage,  
 More than is myn, that sterve here in a  
 cage. 1294  
 For I mot wepe and wayle, whyl I live,  
 With al the wo that prison may me  
 yive,

And eek with peyne that love me yiveth  
also,  
That doubleth al my torment and my  
wo.'

Ther-with the fy<sup>r</sup> of Ielousye up-sterete  
With-inne his brest, and hente him by  
the herte 1300

So woodyly, that he lyk was to biholde  
The box-tree, or the asschen dede and  
colde.

Tho seyde he; 'O cruel goddes, that  
governe

This world with binding of your word  
eterne, 1304

And wryten in the table of athamaunt  
Your parlement, and your eterne graunt,  
What is mankinde more un-to yow holde  
Than is the sheep, that rouketh in the  
folde?

For slayn is man right as another beste,  
And dwelleth eek in prison and areste,  
And hath siknesse, and greet adversitee,  
And ofte tymes giltelees, pardee! 1312

What governaunce is in this prescience,  
That giltelees tormenteth innocence?

And yet encreseth this al my penaunce,  
That man is bounden to his observaunce,  
For Goddes sake, to letten of his wille,  
Ther as a beest may al his lust fulfille.

And whan a beest is deed, he hath no  
peyne;

But man after his death moot wepe and  
pleyne, 1320

Though in this world he have care and  
wo:

With-ouen doute it may stonden so.  
The answer of this I lete to divynis,  
But wel I woot, that in this world gret  
pyne is.

Allas! I see a serpent or a thief, 1325  
That many a trewe man hath doon mes-  
cheef,

Goon at his large, and wher him list may  
turne.

But I mot been in prison thurgh Saturne,  
And eek thurgh Iuno, Ialous and eek  
wood, 1329

That hath destroyed wel ny al the blood  
Of Thebes, with his waste walles wyde.  
And Venus sleeth me on that other syde  
For Ielousye, and fere of him Arcite.'

Now wol I stinte of Palamon a lyte,  
And lete him in his prison stille dwelle,

And of Arcite forth I wol yow telle. 1336  
The somer passeth, and the nightes  
longe

Encresen double wyse the peynes stronge  
Bothe of the lover and the prisoner.

I noot which hath the wofullere mester.  
For shortly for to seyn, this Palamoun 1341

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

Yow loveres axe I now this questioun,  
Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamoun?  
That oon may seen his lady day by day,  
But in prison he moot dwelle alway. 1350  
That other wher him list may ryde or go,  
But seen his lady shal he never-mo.  
Now demeth as yow liste, ye that can,  
For I wol telle forth as I bigan.

*Explicit prima Pars. Sequitur pars  
secunda.*

Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen  
was, 1355

Ful ofte a day he swelte and seyde  
'allas,'

For seen his lady shal he never-mo.  
And shortly to concluden al his wo,

So muche sorwe had never creature  
That is, or shal, whyl that the world may  
dure. 1360

His sleep, his mete, his drink is him  
biraft,

That lene he wex, and drye as is a shaft.  
His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde;

His hewe falwe, and pale as asschen  
colde,

And solitarie he was, and ever allone,  
And wailling al the night, making his  
mone. 1366

And if he herde song or instrument,  
Then wolde he wepe, he mighte nat be  
stent;

So feble eek were his spirits, and so  
lowe,

And chaunged so, that no man coude  
knowe 1370

His speche nor his vois, though men it  
herde.

And in his gere, for al the world he  
ferde



Nat oonly lyk the loveres maladye  
 Of Hereos, but rather lyk manye  
 Endendred of humour malencolyk, 1375  
 Biforen, in his celle fantastyk.  
 And shortly, turned was al up-so-down  
 Bothe habit and eek disposicioun  
 Of him, this woful love-re daun Arcite.  
 What sholde I al-day of his wo endy-  
 dyte? 1380  
 When he endured hadde a yeer or two  
 This cruel torment, and this peyne and  
 wo,  
 At Thebes, in his contree, as I seyde,  
 Up-on a night, in sleep as he him leyde,  
 Him thoughte how that the winged god  
 Mercurie 1385  
 Biforn him stood, and bad him to be  
 murye.  
 His slepy yerde in hond he bar uprighte;  
 An hat he werede up-on his heres brighte.  
 Arrayed was this god (as he took keep)  
 As he was whan that Argus took his  
 sleep; 1390  
 And seyde him thus: 'To Athenes shaltou  
 wende;  
 Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende.'  
 And with that word Arcite wook and  
 sterte.  
 'Now trewely, how sore that me smerte,'  
 Quod he, 'to Athenes right now wol I  
 fare; 1395  
 Ne for the drede of death shal I nat spare  
 To see my lady, that I love and serve;  
 In hir presence I recche nat to sterve.'  
 And with that word he caughte a greet  
 mirour,  
 And saugh that chaunged was al his  
 colour, 1400  
 And saugh his visage al in another kinde.  
 And right anon it ran him in his minde,  
 That, sith his face was so disfigured  
 Of maladye, the which he hadde endured,  
 He mighte wel, if that he bar him  
 lowe, 1405  
 Live in Athenes ever-more unknowe,  
 And seen his lady wel ny day by day.  
 And right anon he chaunged his array,  
 And cladde him as a povre laborer,  
 And al allone, save oonly a squyer, 1410  
 That knew his privetee and al his cas,  
 Which was dysgyed povrely, as he was,  
 To Athenes is he goon the nexte way.  
 And to the court he wente up-on a day,

And at the gate he profreth his ser-  
 vyse, 1415  
 To drugge and drawe, what so men wol  
 devyse.  
 And shortly of this matere for to seyn,  
 He fil in office with a chamberleyn,  
 The which that dwelling was with Emelye.  
 For he was wys, and coude soon aspye  
 Of every servaunt, which that serveth  
 here. 1421  
 Wel coude he hewen wode, and water  
 bere,  
 For he was yong and mighty for the  
 nones,  
 And ther-to he was strong and big of  
 bones 1424  
 To doon that any wight can him devyse.  
 A yeer or two he was in this servyse,  
 Page of the chambre of Emelye the  
 brighte;  
 And 'Philostrate' he seide that he highte.  
 But half so wel biloved a man as he  
 Ne was ther never in court, of his de-  
 gree; 1430  
 He was so gentil of condicioun,  
 That thurghout al the court was his renoun.  
 They seyden, that it were a charitee  
 That Theseus wolde enhauncen his de-  
 gree, 1434  
 And putten him in worshipful servyse,  
 Ther as he mighte his vertu exercyse.  
 And thus, with-inne a whyle, his name is  
 spronge  
 Bothe of his dedes, and his goode tonge,  
 That Theseus hath taken him so neer  
 That of his chambre he made him a  
 squyer, 1440  
 And yaf him gold to mayntene his degree;  
 And eek men broghte him out of his  
 contree  
 From yeer to yeer, ful prively, his rente;  
 But honestly and slyly he it spente,  
 That no man wondred how that he it  
 hadde. 1445  
 And three yeer in this wyse his lyf he  
 ladde,  
 And bar him so in pees and eek in werre,  
 Ther nas no man that Theseus hath derre.  
 And in this blisse lete I now Arcite,  
 And speke I wol of Palamon a lyte. 1450  
 In derknesse and horrible and strong  
 prisoun  
 This seven yeer hath seten Palamoun,

Forpyned, what for wo and for distresse;  
Who feleth double soor and hevynesse  
But Palamon? that love destreyneth  
so, 1455

That wood out of his wit he gooth for wo;  
And eek therto he is a prisoner  
Perpetuelly, noight oonly for a yeer.  
Who coude ryme in English proprely  
His martirdom? for sothe, it am nat  
I; 1460

Therefore I passe as lightly as I may.

It fel that in the seventh yeer, in May,  
The thridde night, (as olde bokes seyn,  
That al this storie tellen more pleyn,)

Were it by aventure or destinee, 1465  
(As, whan a thing is shapen, it shal be,)  
That, sone after the midnight, Palamoun,  
By helping of a freend, brak his prisoun,  
And fleeth the citee, faste as he may go;  
For he had yive his gayler drinke so 1470

Of a clarree, maad of a certeyn wyn,  
With nercotikes and opie of Thebes fyn,  
That al that night, thogh that men wolde  
him shake,

The gayler sleep, he mighte nat awake;  
And thus he fleeth as faste as ever he  
may. 1475

The night was short, and faste by the day,  
That nedes-cost he moste him-selven  
hyde,

And til a grove, faste ther besyde,  
With dredful foot than stalketh Palamoun.  
For shortly, this was his opinioun, 1480  
That in that grove he wolde him hyde al  
day,

And in the night than wolde he take his  
way

To Thebes-ward, his freendes for to preye  
On Theseus to helpe him to werreye;  
And shortly, outhur he wolde lese his  
lyf, 1485

Or winnen Emelye un-to his wyf;  
This is theeffect and his entente pleyn.

Now wol I torne un-to Arcite ageyn,  
That litel wiste how ny that was his care,  
Til that fortune had broght him in the  
snare. 1490

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

The silver dropes, hanging on the leves.  
And Arcite, that is in the court royal  
With Theseus, his squyer principal,  
Is risen, and loketh on the myrie day.  
And, for to doon his observaunce to  
May, 1500

Remembring on the poynt of his desyr,  
He on a courser, sterting as the fyr,  
Is riden in-to the feeldes, him to pleye,  
Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye;  
And to the grove, of which that I yow  
tolde, 1505

By aventure, his wey he gan to holde,  
To maken him a gerland of the greves,  
Were it of wodebinde or hawethorn-leves,  
And loude he song ageyn the sonne shene:  
'May, with alle thy floures and thy  
grene, 1510

Wel-come be thou, faire fresshe May,  
I hope that I som grene gete may.'  
And from his courser, with a lusty herte,  
In-to the grove ful hastily he sterte,  
And in a path he rometh up and  
down, 1515

Ther-as, by aventure, this Palamoun  
Was in a bush, that no man mighte him  
see,

For sore afered of his deeth was he.  
No-thing ne knew he that it was Arcite:  
God wot he wolde have trowed it ful  
lyte. 1520

But sooth is seyde, gon sithen many yeres,  
That 'feeld hath eyen, and the wode hath  
eres.'

It is ful fair a man to bere him evene,  
For al-day meteth men at unset stevene.  
Ful litel woot Arcite of his felawe, 1525  
That was so ny to herknen al his sawe,  
For in the bush he sitteth now ful stille.

Whan that Arcite had romed al his  
fille,

And songen al the roundel lustily,  
In-to a studie he fil sodeynly, 1530  
As doon these loveres in hir queynte  
geres,

Now in the crophe, now down in the  
breres,

Now up, now down, as boket in a welle.  
Right as the Friday, soothly for to telle,  
Now it shyneth, now it reyneth faste,  
Right so can gery Venus overcaste 1536  
The hertes of hir folk; right as hir day  
Is gerful, right so chaungeth she array.

Selde is the Friday al the wyke y-lyke.  
 Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan  
 to syke, 1540  
 And sette him down with-outen any  
 more:  
 'Alas!' quod he, 'that day that I was  
 bore!  
 How longe, Iuno, thurgh thy crueltee,  
 Woltow werreyen Thebes the citee?  
 Allas! y-brought is to confusioun 1545  
 The blood royal of Cadme and Am-  
 phioun;  
 Of Cadmus, which that was the firste  
 man  
 That Thebes bulte, or first the toun  
 bigan,  
 And of the citee first was crowned king,  
 Of his linage am I, and his of-spring 1550  
 By verray ligne, as of the stok royal:  
 And now I am so caitif and so thral,  
 That he, that is my mortal enemy,  
 I serve him as his squyer povrely.  
 And yet doth Iuno me wel more shame,  
 For I dar nocht biknowe myn owne  
 name; 1556  
 But ther-as I was wont to highte Arcite,  
 Now highte I Philostrate, nocht worth a  
 myte.  
 Allas! thou felle Mars, allas! Iuno,  
 Thus hath your ire our kinrede al  
 fordo, 1560  
 Save only me, and wrecched Palamoun,  
 That Theseus martyreth in prison.  
 And over al this, to sleen me utterly,  
 Love hath his fyry dart so brenningly  
 Y-stiked thurgh my trewe careful  
 herte, 1565  
 That shapen was my deeth erst than my  
 sherte.  
 Ye sleen me with your eyen, Emelye;  
 Ye been the cause wherfor that I dye.  
 Of al the remenant of myn other care  
 Ne sette I nat the mountaunce of a  
 tare, 1570  
 So that I coude don aught to your ples-  
 aunce!'  
 And with that word he fil down in a  
 traunce  
 A longe tyme; and after he up-sterete.  
 This Palamoun, that thoughte that  
 thurgh his herte  
 He felte a cold swerd sodeynliche  
 glyde, 1575

For ire he quook, no lenger wolde he  
 byde.  
 And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,  
 As he were wood, with face deed and  
 pale,  
 He sterete him up out of the buskes  
 thikke,  
 And seyde: 'Arcite, false traitour  
 wikke, 1580  
 Now artow hent, that lovest my lady so,  
 For whom that I have al this peyne and  
 wo,  
 And art my blood, and to my counseil  
 sworn,  
 As I ful ofte have told thee heer-biforn,  
 And hast by-iaped here duk Theseus,  
 And falsly changed hast thy name  
 thus; 1586  
 I wol be deed, or elles thou shalt dye.  
 Thou shalt nat love my lady Emelye,  
 But I wol love hir only, and namo;  
 For I am Palamoun, thy mortal fo. 1590  
 And though that I no wepne have in  
 this place,  
 But out of prison am astert by grace,  
 I drede nocht thet outhter thou shalt dye,  
 Or thou ne shalt nat loven Emelye.  
 Chees which thou wilt, for thou shalt  
 nat asterte.' 1595  
 This Arcite, with ful despitous herte  
 Whan he him knew, and hadde his tale  
 herd,  
 As fiers as leoun, pulled out a swerd,  
 And seyde thus: 'by God that sit above,  
 Nere it that thou art sik, and wood for  
 love. 1600  
 And eek that thou no wepne hast in this  
 place  
 Thou sholdest never out of this grove  
 pace,  
 That thou ne sholdest dyen of myn hond.  
 For I defye the seurtee and the bond  
 Which that thou seyst that I have maad  
 to thee. 1605  
 What, verray fool, think wel that love is  
 free,  
 And I wol love hir, maugre al thy might!  
 But, for as muche thou art a worthy  
 knight  
 And wilnest to darreyne hir by batayle,  
 Have heer my trouthe, to-morwe I wol  
 nat fayle, 1610  
 With-outen witing of any other wight,

That here I wol be founden as a knight,  
And drinke harneys right y-nough for  
thee;

And chees the beste, and leve the worste  
for me.

And mete and drinke this night wol I  
bringe 1615

Y-nough for thee, and clothes for thy  
beddinge.

And, if so be that thou my lady winne,  
And slee me in this wode ther I am  
inne,

Thou mayst wel have thy lady, as for me.'  
This Palamon answerde: 'I graunte it  
thee.' 1620

And thus they been departed til a-  
morwe,

When ech of hem had leyd his feith to  
borwe.

O cupide, out of alle charitee!  
O regne, that wolt no felawe have with  
thee!

Ful sooth is seyde, that love ne lord-  
shipe 1625

Wol noght, his thankes, have no felawe-  
shipe;

Wel finden that Arcite and Palamon.  
Arcite is riden anon un-to the toun,

And on the morwe, er it were dayes  
light,

Ful prively two harneys hath he  
dight, 1630

Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne  
The bataille in the feeld betwix hem  
tweyne.

And on his hors, allone as he was born,  
He carieth al this harneys him biforn;

And in the grove, at tyme and place y-  
set, 1635

This Arcite and this Palamon ben met;  
Tho chaungen gan the colour in hir face;

Right as the hunter in the regne of  
Trace,

That stondeth at the gappe with a spere,  
Whan hunted is the leoun or the bere,

And hereth him come russhing in the  
greves, 1641

And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,  
And thinketh, 'heer cometh my mortel  
enemy,

With-oute faile, he moot be deed, or I ;  
For outhur I mot sleen him at the  
gappe, 1645

Or he mot sleen me, if that me mis-  
happe :'

So ferden they, in chaunging of hir hewe,  
As fer as everich of hem other knewe.

Ther nas no good day, ne no saluing;  
But streight, with-uten word or rehers-  
ing, 1650

Everich of hem halp for to armen other,  
As frendly as he were his owne brother;

And after that, with sharpe speres  
stronge

They foynen ech at other wonder longe.  
Thou mightest wene that this Palamoun

In his fighting were a wood leoun, 1656  
And as a cruel tygre was Arcite:

As wilde bores gonne they to smyte,  
That frothen whyte as foom for ire  
wood.

Up to the ancle foghte they in hir blood.  
And in this wyse I lete hem fighting  
dwelle; 1661

And forth I wol of Theseus yow telle.  
The destinee, ministre general,

That executeth in the world over-al  
The purveyaunce, that God hath seyn  
biforn, 1665

So strong it is, that, though the world  
had sworn

The contrarie of a thing, by ye or nay,  
Yet somtyme it shal fallen on a day

That falleth nat est with-inne a thousand  
yere.

For certainly, our appetytes here, 1670  
Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,  
Al is this reuled by the sighte above.

This mene I now by mighty Theseus,  
That for to honten is so desirous,

And namely at the grete hert in May, 1675  
That in his bed ther daweth him no day,  
That he nis clad, and redy for to ryde  
With hunte and horn, and houndes him  
bisyde.

For in his hunting hath he swich delyt,  
That it is al his Ioye and appetyt 1680

To been him-self the grete hertes bane;  
For after Mars he serveth now Diane.

Cleer was the day, as I have told er  
this,

And Theseus, with alle Ioye and blis,  
With his Ipolita, the fayre quene, 1685

And Emelye, clothed al in grene,  
On hunting be they riden royally.

And to the grove, that stood ful faste by,

In which ther was an hert, as men him  
tolde,  
Duk Theseus the streighte wey hath  
holde. 1690  
And to the launde he rydeth him ful right,  
For thider was the hert wont have his  
flight,  
And over a brook, and so forth on his  
weye.  
This duk wol han a cours at him, or  
tweye,  
With houndes, swiche as that him list  
comaunde. 1695  
And when this duk was come un-to the  
launde,  
Under the sonne he loketh, and anon  
He was war of Arcite and Palamon,  
That foughten breme, as it were bores  
two;  
The brighte swerdes wenten to and  
fro 1700  
So hidously, that with the leeste strook  
It seemed as it wolde felle an ook;  
But what they were, no-thing he ne woot.  
This duk his courser with his spores  
smoot,  
And at a stert he was bitwix hem two, 1705  
And pulled out a swerd and cryed, 'ho!  
Namore, up peyne of lesing of your heed.  
By mighty Mars, he shal anon be deed,  
That smyteth any strook, that I may  
seen!  
But telleth me what mister men ye  
been, 1710  
That been so hardy for to fighten here  
With-uten Iuge or other officere,  
As it were in listes royally?'  
This Palamon answerde hastily,  
And seyde: 'sire, what nedeth wordes  
mo? 1715  
We have the death deserved bothe two.  
Two woful wrecches been we, two cay-  
tyves,  
That been embred of our owne lyses;  
And as thou art a rightful lord and Iuge,  
Ne yeve us neither mercy ne refuge, 1720  
But slee me first, for seynte charitee;  
But slee my felawe eek as wel as me.  
Or slee him first; for, though thou knowe  
it lyte,  
This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,  
That for thy lond is banished on his  
heed, 1725

For which he hath deserved to be deed.  
For this is he that cam un-to thy gate,  
And seyde, that he highte Philostrate.  
Thus hath he laped thee ful many a yeer,  
And thou has makend him thy chief  
squyer; 1730  
And this is he that loveth Emelye.  
For sith the day is come that I shal dye,  
I make pleynly my confessioun,  
That I am thilke woful Palamoun,  
That hath thy prison broken wik-  
kedly. 1735  
I am thy mortal fo, and it am I  
That loveth so hote Emelye the brighte,  
That I wol dye present in hir sighte.  
Therefore I axe deeth and my Iuwyse;  
But slee my felawe in the same wyse, 1740  
For bothe han we deserved to be slayn.'  
This worthy duk answerde anon agayn,  
And seyde, 'This is a short conclusioun:  
Youre owne mouth, by your confessioun,  
Hath dampned you, and I wol it re-  
corde, 1745  
It nedeth noght to pyne yow with the  
corde.  
Ye shul be deed, by mighty Mars the  
rede!'  
The quene anon, for verray womman-  
hede  
Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye,  
And alle the ladies in the companye. 1750  
Gret pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,  
That ever swich a chaunce sholde falle;  
For gentil men they were, of greet estat,  
And no-thing but for love was this debat;  
And sawe hir blody woundes wyde and  
sore 1755  
And alle cryden, bothe lasse and more,  
'Have mercy, lord, up-on us wommen  
alle!'  
And on hir bare knees adoun they falle,  
And wolde have kist his feet ther-as he  
stood, 1759  
Til at the laste aslaked was his mood;  
For pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.  
And though he first for ire quook and  
sterte,  
He hath considered shortly, in a clause,  
The trespas of hem bothe, and eek the  
cause:  
And al-though that his ire hir gilt ac-  
cused, 1765  
Yet in his reson he hem bothe excused;

As thus: he thoughte wel, that every man  
 Wol helpe him-self in love, if that he can,  
 And eek delivere him-self out of prisoun;  
 And eek his herte had compassioun 1770  
 Of wommen, for they wepen ever in oon;  
 And in his gentil herte he thoughte anon,  
 And softe un-to himself he seyde: 'fy  
 Up-on a lord that wol have no mercy,  
 But been a leoun, bothe in word and  
 dede, 1775  
 To hem that been in repentaunce and  
 drede

As wel as to a proud despitous man  
 That wol maynteyne that he first bigan!  
 That lord hath litel of discrecioun,  
 That in swich cas can no divisoun, 1780  
 But weyeth pryde and humblesse after  
 oon.'

And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,  
 He gan to loken up with eyen lighte,  
 And spak thise same wordes al on  
 highte: —

'The god of love, a! *benedicite*, 1785  
 How mighty and how greet a lord is he!  
 Ayeins his might ther gayneth none  
 obstacles,

He may be cleded a god for his miracles;  
 For he can maken at his owne gyse  
 Of everich herte, as that him list de-  
 vyse. 1790

Lo heer, this Arcite and this Palamoun,  
 That quilty weren out of my prisoun,  
 And mighte han lived in Thebes royally,  
 And witen I am hir mortal enemy,  
 And that hir deeth lyth in my might  
 also, 1795

And yet hath love, maugree hir eyen two,  
 Y-brought hem hider bothe for to dye!  
 Now loketh, is nat that an heigh folye?  
 Who may been a fool, but-if he love?  
 Bihold, for Goddes sake that sit above,  
 Se how they blede! be they nocht wel  
 arrayed? 1801

Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, y-  
 payed

Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse!  
 And yet they wenen for to been ful wyse  
 That serven love, for aught that may  
 bifalle! 1805

But this is yet the beste game of alle,  
 That she, for whom they han this Iolitee,  
 Can hem ther-for as muche thank as me;  
 She woot namore of al this hote fare,

By God, than woot a cokkow or an  
 hare! 1810

But al mot been assayed, hoot and cold;  
 A man mot been a fool, or yong or old;  
 I woot it by my-self ful yore agoon:  
 For in my tyme a servant was I oon.

And therefore, sin I knowe of loves  
 peyne, 1815

And woot how sore it can a man dis-  
 treyne,  
 As he that hath ben caught ofte in his  
 las,

I yow foryeve al hoolly this trespas,  
 At requeste of the quene that kneleth  
 here,

And eek of Emelye, my suster dere. 1820  
 And ye shul bothe anon un-to me swere,  
 That never-mo ye shul my contree dere,  
 Ne make werre up-on me night ne day,  
 But been my freendes in al that ye may;  
 I yow foryeve this trespas every del.' 1825  
 And they him swore his axing fayre and  
 wel,

And him of lordshipe and of mercy  
 preyde,  
 And he hem graunteth grace, and thus  
 he seyde:

'To speke of royal linage and richesse,  
 Though that she were a quene or a prin-  
 cesse, 1830

Ech of yow bothe is worthy, doutelees,  
 To wedden whan tyme is, but nathelees  
 I speke as for my suster Emelye,  
 For whom ye have this stryf and Ielousye;  
 Ye woot your-self, she may not wedden  
 two 1835

At ones, though ye fighten ever-mo:  
 That oon of yow, al be him looth or leef,  
 He moot go pypen in an ivy-leef;  
 This is to seyn, she may nat now han  
 bothe, 1839

Al be ye never so Ielous, ne so wrothe.  
 And for-thy I yow putte in this degree,  
 That ech of yow shal have his destinee  
 As him is shape; and herkneth in what  
 wyse;

Lo, heer your ende of that I shal devyse.

My wil is this, for plat conclusioun,  
 With-uten any replicacioun, 1846  
 If that yow lyketh, tak it for the beste,  
 That everich of yow shal gon wher him  
 leste

Frely, with-uten raunson or daunger;

And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner, 1850  
Everich of yow shal bringe an hundred  
knightes,

Armed for listes up at alle rightes,  
Al redy to darreyne hir by bataille.

And this bihote I yow, with-ouen faille,  
Up-on my trouthe, and as I am a knight,  
That whether of yow bothe that hath  
might, 1856

This is to seyn, that whether he or thou  
May with his hundred, as I spak of now,  
Sleen his contrarie, or out of listes dryve,  
Him shal I yeve Emelya to wyve, 1860  
To whom that fortune yeveth so fair a  
grace.

The listes shal I maken in this place,  
And God so wisly on my soule rewe,  
As I shal even Iuge been and trewe.  
Ye shul non other ende with me maken,  
That oon of yow ne shal be deed or  
taken. 1866

And if yow thinketh this is wel y-sayd,  
Seyeth your avys, and holdeth yow apayd.  
This is your ende and your conclusioun.'

Who loketh lightly now but Pala-  
moun? 1870

Who springeth up for Ioye but Arcite?  
Who couthe telle, or who couthe it en-  
dyte,

The Ioye that is maked in the place  
Whan Theseus hath doon so fair a grace?  
But doun on knees wente every maner  
wight, 1875

And thanked him with al her herte and  
might,

And namely the Thebans ofte sythe.  
And thus with good hope and with herte  
blythe

They take hir leve, and hom-ward gonne  
they ryde 1879

To Thebes, with his olde walles wyde.

*Explicit secunda pars. Sequitur pars  
tercia.*

I trowe men wolde deme it necligence,  
If I foryete to tellen the dispence  
Of Theseus, that goth so bisily  
To maken up the listes royally;  
That swich a noble theatre as it was, 1885  
I dar wel seyn that in this world ther  
nas.

The circuit a myle was aboute,

Walled of stoon, and diche al with-  
oute. 1888

Round was the shap, in maner of compas,  
Ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty pas,  
That, whan a man was set on o degree,  
He letted nat his felawe for to see.

Est-ward ther stood a gate of marbel  
whyt,

West-ward, right swich another in the  
opposit. 1894

And shortly to concluden, swich a place  
Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space;  
For in the lond ther nas no crafty man,  
That geometrie or ars-metrik can,  
Ne purtreyour, ne kerver of images,  
That Theseus ne yaf him mete and  
wages 1900

The theatre for to maken and devyse.  
And for to doon his ryte and sacrificyse,  
He est-ward hath, up-on the gate above,  
In worship of Venus, goddesse of love,  
Don make an auter and an oratorie; 1905  
And west-ward, in the minde and in  
memorie

Of Mars, he maked hath right swich  
another,

That coste largely of gold a fother.  
And north-ward, in a touret on the wal,  
Of alabastre whyt and reed coral 1910

An oratorie riche for to see,  
In worship of Dyane of chastitee,  
Hath Theseus don wrought in noble wyse.

But yet hadde I foryeten to devyse

The noble kerving, and the portreitures,  
The shap, the countenance, and the  
figures, 1915

That weren in the temple of Mars

First in the temple of Mars

Wrought on the wall

The broken slep

The sacred teres, and the waymenting;

The fry strokes of the desiring, 1922

That loves servaunts in this lyf enduren;

The othes, that hir covenantys assuren;

Plesaunce and hope, desyr, fool-hardi-  
nesse, 1925

Beautee and youthe, bauderie, richesse,

Charmes and force, lesinges, flaterye,

Dispense, bisynesse, and Ielousye,

That wered of yelwe goldes a gerland,

And a cokkow sitting on hir hand; 1930

Festes, instruments, caroles, daunces,

Lust and array, and alle the circum-  
staunces

Of love, whiche that I rekne and rekne  
shal,

By ordre weren peynted on the wal, 1934  
And mo than I can make of mencion.

For soothly, al the mount of Citheroun,  
Ther Venus hath hir principal dwelling,  
Was shewed on the wal in portreyng,  
With al the gardin, and the lustynesse.

Nat was foryeten the porter Ydelnesse,  
Ne Narcisus the faire of yore agon, 1941  
Ne yet the folye of king Salamon,

Ne yet the grete strengthe of Hercules—  
Thenchauntements of Medea and Circes—  
Ne of Turnus, with the hardy fiers corage,  
The riche Cresus, caytif in servage. 1946  
Thus may ye seen that wisdom ne rich-

esse,  
Beautee ne sleighte, strengthe, ne hardi-  
nesse,

Ne may with Venus holde champartye;  
For as hir list the world than may she  
gye. 1950

Lo, alle thise folk so caught were in hir  
las,

Til they for wo ful ofte seyde 'allas!'  
Suffyceth heer ensamples oon or two,  
And though I coude rekne a thousand  
mo.

The statue of Venus, glorious for to  
see, 1955

Was naked floting in the large see,  
And fro the navel down all covered was  
With wawes grene, and brighte as any  
glas.

A citole in hir right hand hadde she, 1959  
And on hir heed, ful semely for to see,  
A rose gerland, fresh and wel smellinge;  
Above hir heed hir dowves flikeringe.

Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido,  
Up-on his shuldres wings hadde he two;  
And blind he was, as it is ofte sene;  
A bowe he bar and arwes brighte and  
kene. 1966

Why sholde I noght as wel eek telle  
yow al

The portreiture, that was up-on the wal  
With-inne the temple of mighty Mars the  
rede?

Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and  
brede, 1970

Lyk to the estres of the grisly place,

That highte the grete temple of Mars in  
Trace,

In thilke colde frosty regioun,  
Ther-as Mars hath his sovereyn man-  
sioun.

First on the wal was peynted a foreste,  
In which ther dwelleth neither man ne  
beste, 1976

With knotty knarry bareyn treës olde  
Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to biholde;  
In which ther ran a rumbel and a swough,  
As though a storm sholde bresten every  
bough: 1980

And downward from an hille, under a  
bente,  
Ther stood the temple of Mars armipo-  
tente,

Wroght al of burned steel, of which  
thentree

Was long and streit, and gastly for to see.  
And ther-out cam a rage and such a  
vese, 1985

That it made al the gates for to rese.  
The northren light in at the dores shoon,  
For windowe on the wal ne was ther  
noon,

Thurgh which men mighten any light dis-  
cerne.

The dores were alle of adamant eterne,  
Y-clenched overthwart and endelong 1991  
With iren tough; and, for to make it  
strong,

Every piler, the temple to sustene,  
Was tonne-greet, of iren bright and  
shene.

Ther saugh I first the derke imagin-  
ing 1995

Of felonye, and al the compassing;  
The cruel ire, reed as any glode;  
The pykepurs, and eek the pale drede;  
The smyler with the knyf under the cloke;  
The shepne brenning with the blake  
smoke; 2000

The treson of the mording in the bedde;  
The open werre, with woundes al bi-  
bledde;

Contek, with blody knyf and sharp man-  
ace;

Al ful of chirking was that sory place.  
The sleere of him-self yet saugh I ther,  
His herte-blood hath bathed al his  
heer; 2006

The nayl y-driven in the shode a-night;



The colde deeth, with mouth gaping up-  
right.

Amiddes of the temple sat meschaunce,  
With disconfort and sory contenaunce.  
Yet saugh I woodnesse laughing in his  
rage; 2011

Armed compleint, out-hees, and fiers out-  
rage.

The careyne in the bush, with throte y-  
corve :

A thousand slayn, and nat of qualm  
y-storve;

The tiraunt, with the prey by force  
y-raft; 2015

The toun destroyed, ther was no-thing  
laft.

Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppes-  
teres;

The hunte strangled with the wilde beres :  
The sowe frenen the child right in the  
cradel;

The cook y-scalded, for al his longe  
ladel. 2020

Noght was foryeten by the infortune of  
Marte;

The carter over-riden with his carte,  
Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun.  
Ther were also, of Martes divisioun,  
The barbour, and the bocher, and the  
smith 2025

That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his stith.  
And al above, depeynted in a tour,

Saw I conquest sitinge in grect honour,  
With the sharpe swerde over his heed

Hanging by a sotil twynes threed. 2030  
Depeynted was the slaughtre of Iulius,

Of grete Nero, and of Antonius;

Al be that thilke tyme they were unborn,  
Yet was hir deeth depeynted ther-biforn,

By manasinge of Mars, right by fig-  
ure; 2035

So was it shewed in that portreiture  
As is depeynted in the sterres above,

Who shal be slayn or elles deed for love.  
Suffyceth oon ensample in stories olde,

I may not rekne hem alle, thogh I  
wolde. 2040

The statue of Mars up-on a carte stood,  
Armed, and loked grim as he were wood;

And over his heed ther shynen two figures  
Of sterres, that ben cleped in scriptures,

That oon Puella, that other Rubeus. 2045  
This god of armes was arrayed thus :—

A wolf ther stood biforn him at his feet  
With eyen rede, and of a man he eet ;  
With sotil pencil was depeynt this storie,  
In redoutinge of Mars and of his glorie.

Now to the temple of Diane the  
chaste 2051

As shortly as I can I wol me haste,  
To telle yow al the descripcioun.

Depeynted been the walles up and doun  
Of hunting and of shamfast chastitee. 2055

Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee,  
Whan that Diane agreved was with here,

Was turned from a womman til a bere,  
And after was she maad the lode-sterre;

This was it peynt, I can say yow no  
ferre; 2060

Hir sone is eek a sterre, as men may  
see.

Ther saugh I Dane, y-turned til a tree,  
I mene nat the goddesse Diane,

But Penneus doughter, which that highte  
Dane.

Ther saugh I Attheon an hert y-maked,  
For vengeaunce that he saugh Diane al

naked; 2066  
I saugh how that his houndes have him

caught,  
And frenen him, for that they knewe him

naught.  
Yet peynted was a litel forther-moor,

How Atthalante hunted the wilde boor,  
And Meleagre, and many another mo,

For which Diane wroghte him care and  
wo. 2072

Ther saugh I many another wonder storie,  
The which me list nat drawn to mem-  
orie.

This goddesse on an hert ful hie  
seet, 2075

With smale houndes al aboute hir feet;  
And underne the hir feet she hadde a

mone,  
Wexing it was, and sholde wanie sone.

In gaude grene hir statue clothed was,  
With bowe in honde, and arwes in a

cas. 2080  
Hir eyen caste she ful lowe adoun,

Ther Pluto hath his derke regioun.  
A womman travailinge was hir biforn,

But, for hir child so longe was unborn,  
Ful pitously Lucyna gan she calle, 2085

And seyde, 'help, for thou mayst best of  
alle.'

Wel couthe he peynten lyfly that it  
wroghte,

With many a florin he the hewes boghte.

Now ben these listes maad, and Theseus,

That at his grete cost arrayed thus 2090

The temples and the theatre every del,

When it was doon, him lyked wonder  
wel.

But stinte I wol of Theseus a lyte,

And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

The day approacheth of hir retourn-  
inge, 2095

That everich sholde an hundred knightes  
bringe,

The bataille to darreyne, as I yow tolde;

And til Athenes, hir covenant for to holde,

Hath everich of hem broght an hundred  
knightes

Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes.

And sikerly, ther trowed many a man 2101

That never, sithen that the world bigan,

As for to speke of knightod of hir  
hond,

As fer as God hath maked see or lond,

Nas, of so fewe, so noble a com-  
panye. 2105

For every wight that lovede chivalrye,

And wolde, his thankes, han a passant  
name,

Hath preyed that he mighte ben of that  
game;

And wel was him, that ther-to chosen  
was.

For if ther fille to-morwe swich a  
cas, 2110

Ye knowen wel, that every lusty knight,

That loveth paramours, and hath his  
might,

Were it in Engelond, or elles-where,

They wolde, hir thankes, wilnen to be  
there.

To fighte for a lady, *benedicite!* 2115  
It were a lusty sighte for to see.

And right so ferden they with Palamon.

With him ther wenten knightes many  
oon;

Som wol ben armed in an habergeoun,

In a brest-plat and in a light gipoun;

And somme woln have a peyre plates  
large; 2121

And somme woln have a Puce sheld, or  
a targe;

Somme woln ben armed on hir legges  
weel,

And have an ax, and somme a mace of  
steel.

Ther nis no newe gyse, that it nas  
old. 2125

Armed were they, as I have you told,

Everich after his opinioun.

Ther maistow seen coming with Pala-  
moun

Ligurge him-self, the grete king of Trace;  
Blak was his berd, and manly was his  
face. 2130

The cercles of his eyen in his heed,

They gloweden bitwixe yelow and reed;

And lyk a griffon loked he aboute,

With kempe heres on his browes  
stoute;

His limes grete, his braunes harde and  
stronge, 2135

His shuldres brode, his armes rounde  
and longe.

And as the gyse was in his contree,

Ful hye up-on a char of gold stood he,

With foure whyte boles in the trays.

In-stede of cote-armure over his harnays,

With nayles yelwe and brighte as any  
gold, 2141

He hadde a beres skin, col-blak, for-old.

His longe heer was kembd bihinde his  
bak,

As any ravenes fether it shoon for-blak :

A wrethe of gold arm-greet, of huge  
wighte, 2145

Upon his heed, set ful of stones brighte,

Of fyne rubies and of dyamaunts.

Aboute his char ther wenten whyte  
alaunts,

Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,

To hunten at the leoun or the deer, 2150

And solwed him, with mosel faste y-  
bounde,

Colers of gold, and torets fyled rounde.

An hundred lordes hadde he in his  
route

Armed ful wel, with hertes sterne and  
stoute. 2154

With Arcita, in stories as men finde,

The grete Emetreus, the king of Inde,

Up-on a stede bay, trapped in steel,

Covered in cloth of gold diapred weel

Cam ryding lyk the god of armes, Mars.

His cote-armure was of cloth of Tars,

Couched with perles whyte and rounde  
and grete. 2161

His sadel was of brend gold newe y-  
bete;

A mantelet upon his shuldre hanginge  
Bret-ful of rubies rede, as fyr sparklinge.  
His criske heer lyk ringes was y-ronne,  
And that was yelow, and glitered as the  
sonne. 2166

His nose was heigh, his eyen bright  
citryn,

His lippes rounde, his colour was sang-  
wyn,

A fewe fraknes in his face y-spreynd,  
Betwixen yelow and somdel blak y-  
meynd, 2170

And as a leoun he his loking caste.

Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.

His berd was wel bigonne for to springe;  
His voys was as a trompe thunderinge.

Up-on his heed he wered of laurer  
grene 2175

A gerland fresh and lusty for to sene.

Up-on his hand he bar, for his deduyt,

An egle tame, as eny lillie whyt.

An hundred lordes hadde he with him  
there,

Al armed, sauf hir heddes, in al hir  
gere, 2180

Ful richely in alle maner thinges.

For trusteth wel, that dukes, erles,  
kinges,

Were gadered in this noble companye,  
For love and for encrees of chivalrye.

Aboute this king ther ran on every  
part 2185

Ful many a tame leoun and lepart.

And in this wyse thise lordes, alle and  
some,

Ben on the Sunday to the citee come  
Aboute pryme, and in the toun alight.

This Theseus, this duk, this worthy  
knight, 2190

Whan he had broght hem in-to his citee,  
And inned hem, everich in his degree,

He festeth hem, and dooth so greet  
labour

To esen hem, and doon hem al honour,  
That yet men weneth that no mannes  
wit 2195

Of noon estat ne coude amenden it.

The minstralcy, the service at the feste,

The grete yiftes to the moste and leste,

The riche array of Theseus paleys,  
Ne who sat first ne last up-on the deys,  
What ladies fairest been or best daun-  
singe, 2201

Or which of hem can dauncen best and  
singe,

Ne who most felingly speketh of love:  
What haukes sitten on the perche above,  
What houndes ligger on the floor  
adoun: 2205

Of al this make I now no mencion;  
But al theeffect, that thinketh me the  
beste;

Now comth the poynt, and herkneith if  
yow leste.

The Sunday night, er day bigan to  
springe,

When Palamon the larke herde singe,  
Although it nere nat day by houres  
two, 2211

Yet song the larke, and Palamon also.

With holy herte, and with an heigh  
corage

He roos, to wenden on his pilgrimage  
Un-to the blisful Citherea benigne, 2215

I mene Venus, honourable and digne.

And in hir houre he walketh forth a pas  
Un-to the listes, ther hir temple was,

And doun he kneleth, and with humble  
chere

And herte soor, he seyde as ye shul  
here. 2220

'Faireste of faire, o lady myn, Venus,  
Doughter to Iove and spouse of Vul-  
canus,

Thou glader of the mount of Citheroun,  
For thilke love thou haddest to Adoun,

Have pitee of my bittre teres smerte,  
And tak myn humble preyer at thyn  
herte. 2226

Allas! I ne have no langage to telle  
Theeffectes ne the tormentes of myn  
helle;

Myn herte may myne harmes nat bi-  
wreye;

I am so confus, that I can noight seye.  
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest  
weel 2231

My thought, and seest what harmes that  
I feel,

Considere al this, and rewe up-on my  
sore,

As wisly as I shal for evermore,

Emforth my might, thy trewe servant  
be, 2235

And holden werre alwey with chastitee;  
That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe.  
I kepe noght of armes for to yelpe,  
Ne I ne axe nat to-morwe to have victorie,  
2239

Ne renoun in this cas, ne veyne glorie  
Of pris of armes blowen up and down,  
But I wolde have fully possessioun  
Of Emelye, and dye in thy servyse;  
Find thou the maner how, and in what wyse.

I recche nat, but it may better be, 2245  
To have victorie of hem, or they of me,  
So that I have my lady in myne armes.  
For though so be that Mars is god of armes

Your vertu is so greet in hevене above,  
That, if yow list, I shal wel have my love.  
2250

Thy temple wol I worshiþe evermo,  
And on thyn auter, wher I ryde or go,  
I wol don sacrifice, and fyres bete.  
And if ye wol nat so, my lady swete,  
Than preye I thee, to-morwe with a spere  
2255

That Arcita me thurgh the herte bere.  
Thanne rekke I noght, whan I have lost my lyf,

Though that Arcita winne hir to his wyf.  
This is theeffect and ende of my preyere,  
Yif me my love, thou blisful lady dere.'

Whan thorisoun was doon of Palamon,  
His sacrifice he dide, and that anon 2262  
Ful pitously, with alle circumstaunces,  
Al telle I noght as now his observaunces.  
But atte laste the statue of Venus shook,  
2265

And made a signe, wher-by that he took  
That his preyere accepted was that day.  
For thogh the signe shewed a delay,  
Yet wiste he wel that graunted was his bone;

And with glad herte he wente him hoom  
ful sone. 2270

The thridde houre inequal that Palamoun

Bigan to Venus temple for to goon,  
Up roos the sonne, and up roos Emelye,  
And to the temple of Diane gan hye.

Hir maydens, that she thider with hir ladde,  
2275

Ful redily with hem the fyr they hadde,  
Thencens, the clothes, and the remenant al  
That to the sacrifice longen shal; 2278  
The hornes fulle of meth, as was the gyse;  
Ther lakked noght to doon hir sacrifice.  
Smoking the temple, ful of clothes faire,  
This Emelye, with herte debonaire,  
Hir body wessh with water of a welle;  
But how she dide hir ryte I dar nat telle,  
But it be any thing in general; 2285  
And yet it were a game to heren al;  
To him that meneth wel, it were no charge:

But it is good a man ben at his large.  
Hir bryghte heer was kempt, untressed al;  
A coroune of a grene ook cerial 2290  
Up-on hir heed was set ful fair and mete.  
Two fyres on the auter gan she bete,  
And dide hir thinges, as men may biholde  
In Stace of Thebes, and thise bokes olde.  
Whan kindled was the fyr, with pitous chere  
2295

Un-to Diane she spak, as ye may here.  
'O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,  
To whom bothe hevene and erthe and see is sene,

Quene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe,

Goddessse of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe  
2300

Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire,

As keep me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire,

That Attheon aboughte cruelly.  
Chaste goddessse, wel wostow that I  
Desire to be a mayden al my lyf, 2305  
Ne never wol I be no love ne wyf.

I am, thou woost, yet of thy companye,  
A mayde, and love hunting and venerye,  
And for to walken in the wodes wilde,  
And noght to been a wyf, and be with childe.  
2310

Noght wol I knowe companye of man.  
Now help me, lady, sith ye may and can,  
For tho thre formes that thou hast in thee.

And Palamon, that hath swich love to me,  
2314

And eek Arcite, that loveth me so sore,  
This grace I preye thee with-oute more,  
As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two;  
And fro me turne away hir hertes so,

That al hir hote love, and hir desyr,  
 And al hir busy torment, and hir fyr 2320  
 Be queynt, or turned in another place;  
 And if so be thou wolt not do me grace,  
 Or if my destinee be shapen so,  
 That I shal nedes have oon of hem two,  
 As sende me him that most desireth me.  
 Bihold, goddesse of clene chastitee, 2326  
 The bittre teres that on my chekes falle.  
 Sin thou are mayde, and keper of us  
 alle,  
 My maydenhede thou kepe and wel con-  
 serve,  
 And whyl I live a mayde, I wol thee  
 serve.' 2330

The fyres brenne up-on the auter clere,  
 Whyl Emelye was thus in hir preyere;  
 But sodeinly she saugh a sighte queynte,  
 For right anon oon of the fyres queynte,  
 And quiked agayn, and after that anon  
 That other fyr was queynt, and al agon;  
 And as it queynte, it made a whistelinge,  
 As doon these wete brondes in hir bren-  
 ninge, 2338

And at the brondes ende out-ran anon  
 As it were bloody drops many oon;  
 For which so sore agast was Emelye,  
 That she was wel ny mad, and gan to  
 crye,  
 For she ne wiste what it signified;  
 But only for the fere thus hath she  
 cryed,  
 And weep, that it was pitee for to  
 here. 2345

And ther-with-al Diane gan appere,  
 With bowe in hond, right as an hunter-  
 esse,  
 And seyde: 'Doghter, stint thyn hevi-  
 nesse.

Among the goddess hie it is affermed,  
 and by eterne word write and con-  
 fermed, 2350  
 Thou shalt ben wedded un-to oon of  
 tho

That han for thee so muchel care and  
 wo;

But un-to which of hem I may nat telle.  
 I swel, for I ne may no lenger dwelle.

The fyres which that on myn auter  
 brenne 2355

Shal thee declaren, er that thou go  
 henne

Thyn aventure of love, as in this cas.'

And with that word, the arwes in the  
 cas

Of the goddesse clateren faste and ringe.  
 And forth she wente, and made a van-  
 issinge; 2360

For which this Emelye astoned was,  
 And seyde, 'What amounteth this, allas!  
 I putte me in thy proteccioun,  
 Diane, and in thy disposicioun.'

And hoom she gooth anon the nexte  
 weye. 2365

This is theeffect, ther is namore to seye.

The nexte houre of Mars folwinge  
 this

Arcite un-to the temple walked is  
 Of fierse Mars, to doon his sacrificyse,  
 With alle the rytes of his payen  
 wyse. 2370

With pitous herte and heigh devocioun,  
 Right thus to Mars he seyde his orisoun:  
 'O stronge god, that in the regnes  
 colde

Of Trace honoured art, and lord y-holde,  
 And hast in every regne and every  
 lond 2375

Of armes al the brydel in thyn hond,  
 And hem fortunest as thee list devyse,  
 Accept of me my pitous sacrificyse.

If so be that my youthe may deserve,  
 And that my might be worthy for to  
 serve 2380

Thy godhede, that I may been oon of  
 thyne,

Than preye I thee to rewe up-on my  
 pyne.

For thilke peyne, and thilke hote fyr,  
 In which thou whylom brendest for  
 desyr,

Whan that thou usedest the grete  
 beautee 2385

Of fayre yonge fresshe Venus free,  
 And haddest hir in armes at thy wille,  
 Al-though thee ones on a tyme misfile  
 Whan Vulcanus had caught thee in his  
 las,

And fond thee liggig by his wyf,  
 allas! 2390

For thilke sorwe that was in thyn herte,  
 Have routhe as wel up-on my peynes  
 smerte.

I am yong and unkonning, as thou wost,  
 And, as I trowe, with love offended  
 most,

That ever was any lyves creature; 2395  
 For she, that dooth me al this wo  
 endure,  
 Ne reccheth never wher I sinke or flete.  
 And wel I woot, er she me mercy hete,  
 I moot with strengthe winne hir in the  
 place;  
 And wel I woot, withouten help or grace  
 Of thee, ne may my strengthe noght  
 availle. 2401  
 Than help me, lord, to-morwe in my  
 bataille,  
 For thilke fyr that whylom brente thee,  
 As wel as thilke fyr now brenneth me;  
 And do that I to-morwe have victorie.  
 Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the  
 glorie! 2406  
 Thy soverein temple wol I most honouren  
 Of any place, and alwey most labouren  
 In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes  
 stronge,  
 And in thy temple I wol my baner  
 honge, 2410  
 And alle the armes of my companye;  
 And evere-mo, un-to that day I dye,  
 Eterne fyr I wol biforn thee finde.  
 And eek to this avow I wol me binde:  
 My berd, myn heer that hongeth long  
 adoun, 2415  
 That never yet ne felte offensioun  
 Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yive,  
 And ben thy trewe servant whyl I live.  
 Now lord, have routhe up-on my sorwes  
 sore,  
 Yif me victorie, I aske thee namore.' 2420  
 The prayere stinte of Arcita the stronge,  
 The ringes on the temple-dore that  
 honge,  
 And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste,  
 Of which Arcita som-what him agaste.  
 The fyres brende up-on the auter  
 brighte, 2425  
 That it gan al the temple for to lighte;  
 And swete smel the ground anon up-yaf,  
 And Arcita anon his hand up-haf,  
 And more encens in-to the fyr he caste,  
 With othere rytes mo; and atte laste 2430  
 The statue of Mars bigan his hauberk  
 ringe.  
 And with that soun he herde a murmur-  
 inge  
 Ful lowe and dim, that sayde thus, 'Victo-  
 torie':

For which he yaf to Mars honour and  
 glorie.  
 And thus with Ioye, and hope wel to  
 fare, 2435  
 Arcite anon un-to his inne is fare,  
 As fayn as fowel is of the brighte sonne.  
 And right anon swich stryf ther is  
 bigonne  
 For thilke graunting, in the hevene  
 above,  
 Bitwixe Venus, the goddesse of love, 2440  
 And Mars, the sterne god arnipotente,  
 That Iupiter was bisy it to stente;  
 Til that the pale Saturnus the colde,  
 That knew so manye of adventures olde,  
 Fond in his olde experience an art, 2445  
 That he ful sone hath plesed every part.  
 As sooth is sayd, elde hath greet advantage;  
 In elde is bothe wisdom and usage;  
 Men may the olde at-renne, and noght at-  
 rede. 2449  
 Saturne anon, to stinten stryf and drede,  
 Al be it that it is agayn his kynde,  
 Of al this stryf he gan remedie fynde.  
 'My dere doghter Venus,' quod Saturne,  
 'My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,  
 Hath more power than wot any man. 2455  
 Myn is the drenching in the see so wan;  
 Myn is the prison in the derke cote;  
 Myn is the strangling and hanging by the  
 throte;  
 The murmure, and the cherles rebelling,  
 The groyning, and the pryvee empoysoun-  
 ing: 2460  
 I do vengeance and pleyn correccioun  
 Whyl I dwelle in the signe of the leoun.  
 Myn is the ruine of the hye halles,  
 The falling of the toures and of the walles  
 Up-on the mynour or the carpenter. 2465  
 I slow Sampson in shaking the piler;  
 And myne be the maladyes colde,  
 The derke tresons, and the castes olde;  
 My loking is the fader of pestilence.  
 Now weep namore, I shal doon dili-  
 gence 2470  
 That Palamon, that is thyn owne knight,  
 Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight.  
 Though Mars shal helpe his knight, yet  
 nathelees  
 Bitwixe yow ther moot be som tyme pees,  
 Al be ye noght of o complexioun, 2475  
 That causeth al day swich divisoun.  
 I am thin ayel, redy at thy wille;

Weep thou namore, I wol thy lust ful-  
fille.'

Now wol I stinten of the goddes above,  
Of Mars, and of Venus, goddesse of  
love, 2480

And telle yow, as pleyntly as I can,  
The grete effect, for which that I bigan.

*Explicit tercia pars. Sequitur pars  
quarta.*

Greet was the feste in Athenes that  
day,

And eek the lusty seson of that May  
made every wight to been in swich ple-  
saunce, 2485

That al that Monday Iusten they and  
daunce,

and spenden it in Venus heigh servyse.

But by the cause that they sholde ryse  
erly, for to seen the grete fight,

Unto hir reste wente they at night. 2490  
and on the morwe, whan that day gan  
springe,

Of hors and harneys, noyse and clateringe  
ther w's in hostelryes al aboute;

and to the paleys rood ther many a route  
of lordes, up-on stedes and palfreys. 2495

ther maystow seen devysing of herneys  
so uncouth and so riche, and wrought so  
weel

of goldsmithrie, of browding, and of  
steel;

the sheeldes brighte, testers, and trap-  
pures;

gold-hewen helmes, hauberks, cote-  
armures; 2500

lordes in paraments on hir courseres,  
knightes of retenue, and eek squyeres

naillinge the speres, and helmes boke-  
linge,

bigginge of sheeldes, with layneres lac-  
inge;

ther as need is, they weren no-thing  
ydel; 2505

the fomy stedes on the golden brydel  
gnawinge, and faste the armurers also

with fyle and hamer prikinge to and fro;  
wemen on fote, and communes many oon

with shorte staves, thikke as they may  
goon; 2510

types, trompes, nakers, clariounes,  
that in the bataille blowen bloody sounes;

The paleys ful of peples up and doun,  
Heer three, ther ten, holding hir ques-  
tioun,

Divyninge of this Thebane knightes  
two. 2515

Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal  
be so;

Somme helden with him with the blake  
berd,

Somme with the balled, somme with the  
thikke-herd;

Somme sayde, he loked grim and he  
wolde fighte;

He hath a sparth of twenty pound of  
wighte. 2520

Thus was the halle ful of divyninge,  
Longe after that the sonne gan to springe.

The grete Theseus, that of his sleep  
awaked

With minstrelcye and noyse that was  
maked,

Held yet the chambre of his paleys  
riche, 2525

Til that the Thebane knightes, bothe y-  
liche

Honoured, were into the paleys fet.

Duk Theseus was at a window set,  
Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.

The peple preesseth thider-ward ful  
sone 2530

Him for to seen, and doon heigh rever-  
ence,

And eek to herkne his hest and his sen-  
tence.

An heraud on a scaffold made an ho,  
Til al the noyse of the peple was y-do;

And whan he saugh the peple of noyse  
al stille, 2535

Tho showed he the mighty dukes wille.  
'The lord hath of his heigh discrecioun

Considered, that it were destruccioun  
To gentil blood, to fighten in the gyse

Of mortal bataille now in this emprise;  
Wherefore, to shapen that they shul not  
dye, 2541

He wol his firste purpos modifye.  
No man therfor, up peyne of los of lyf,

No maner shot, ne pollax, ne short knyf  
Into the listes sende, or thider bringe;

Ne short swerd for to stoke, with poynt  
bytinge, 2546

No man ne drawe, ne bere it by his syde.  
Ne no man shall un-to his felawe ryde

But o cours, with a sharp y-grounde  
 spere;  
 Foyne, if him list, on fote, him-self to  
 were. 2550  
 And he that is at meschief, shal be take,  
 And noght slayn, but be broght un-to  
 the stake  
 That shal ben ordeyned on either syde;  
 But thider he shal by force, and ther  
 abyde. 2554  
 And if so falle, the chieftayn be take  
 On either syde, or elles slee his make.  
 No lenger shall the turneyinge laste.  
 God spede yow; goth forth, and ley on  
 faste.  
 With long swerd and with maces fight  
 your fille.  
 Goth now your wey; this is the lordes  
 wille.' 2560  
 The voys of peple touchede the  
 hevене,  
 So loude cryden they with mery stevene:  
 'God save swich a lord, that is so good,  
 He wilneth no destruccioun of blood!'  
 Up goon the trompes and the melo-  
 dye. 2565  
 And to the listes rit the companye  
 By ordinaunce, thurgh-out the citee  
 large,  
 Hanged with cloth of gold, and nat with  
 sarge.  
 Ful lyk a lord this noble duk gan ryde,  
 Thise two Thebanes up-on either  
 syde; 2570  
 And after rood the/queene, and Emelye,  
 And after that another companye  
 Of oon and other, after hir degree.  
 And thus they passen thurgh-out the  
 citee, 2574  
 And to the listes come they by tyme.  
 It nas not of the day yet fully pryme,  
 Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hye,  
 Ipolita the quene and Emelye,  
 And other ladies in degrees aboute.  
 Un-to the seetes preesseth al the route.  
 And west-ward, thurgh the gates under  
 Marte, 2581  
 Arcite, and eek the hundred of his parte,  
 With baner reed is entred right anon;  
 And in that selve moment Palamon  
 Is under Venus, est-ward in the place,  
 With baner whyt, and hardy chere and  
 face. 2586

In al the world, to seken up and doun,  
 So even with-outen variacioun,  
 Ther nere swiche companyes tweye.  
 For ther nas noon so wys that coude  
 seye, 2590  
 That any hadde of other avauntage  
 Of worthinesse, ne of estaat, ne age,  
 So even were they chosen, for to gesse.  
 And in two renges faire they hem dresse.  
 Whan that hir names rad were ever-  
 ichoon, 2595  
 That in hir nombre gyle were ther noon,  
 Tho were the gates shet, and cryed was  
 loude: †  
 'Do now your devoir, yonge knightes  
 proude!'  
 The heraudes lefte hir priking up and  
 doun;  
 Now ringen trompes loude and clarioun;  
 Ther is namore to seyn, but west and  
 est 2601  
 In goon the speres ful sadly in arest;  
 In goth the sharpe spore in-to the syde.  
 Ther seen men who can Iuste, and who  
 can ryde;  
 Ther shiveren shaftes up-on sheeldes  
 thikke; 2605  
 He feleth thurgh the herte-spoon the  
 prikke.  
 Up springen speres twenty foot on  
 highte;  
 Out goon the swerdes as the silver  
 brighte.  
 The helmes they to-hewen and to-shrede;  
 Out brest the blood, with sterne stremes  
 rede. 2610  
 With mighty maces the bones they to-  
 breste.  
 He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng  
 gan threste.  
 Ther stomblen stedes stronge, and doun  
 goth al.  
 He rolleth under foot as dooth a bal.  
 He foyneth on his feet with his tron-  
 choun, 2615  
 And he him hurtleth with his hors  
 adoun.  
 He thurgh the body is hurt, and sithen  
 y-take,  
 Maugree his heed, and broght un-to the  
 stake,  
 As forward was, right ther he moste  
 abyde;



Another lad is on that other syde. 2620  
 And som tyme dooth hem Theseus to  
 reste,  
 Hem to refreshe, and drinken if hem  
 leste.  
 Ful ofte a-day han thise Thebanes two  
 Egidre y-met, and wrought his felawe  
 wo;  
 Jnhorsed hath ech other of hem tweye.  
 Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgo-  
 pheye, 2626  
 Whan that hir whelp is stole, whan it is  
 lyte,  
 so cruel on the hunte, as is Arcite  
 For Ielous herte upon this Palamoun:  
 Ne in Belmarye ther nis so fel leoun, 2630  
 That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,  
 Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,  
 As Palamoun to sleen his fo Arcite.  
 The Ielous strokes on hir helmes byte;  
 Out renneth blood on bothe hir sydes  
 rede. 2635  
 Som tyme an ende ther is of every  
 dede;  
 For er the sonne un-to the reste wente,  
 The stronge king Emetreus gan hente  
 this Palamoun, as he faught with Arcite,  
 And made his swerd depe in his flesh to  
 byte; 2640  
 And by the force of twenty is he take  
 Jnyolden, and y-drawe unto the stake.  
 And in the rescous of this Palamoun  
 The stronge king Ligurge is born adoun;  
 And king Emetreus, for al his strengthe,  
 is born out of his sadel a swerdes  
 lengthe, 2646  
 so hitte him Palamoun er he were take;  
 but al for noght, he was broght to the  
 stake.  
 His hardy herte mighte him helpe  
 naught;  
 He moste abyde, whan that he was  
 caught 2650  
 by force, and eek by composicioun.  
 Who sorweth now but woful Pala-  
 moun,  
 That moot namore goon agayn to fighte?  
 And whan that Theseus had seyn this  
 sighte, 2654  
 In-to the folk that foghten thus echoon  
 He cryde, 'Ho! namore, for it is doon!  
 wol be trewe Iuge, and no partye.  
 Arcite of Thebes shal have Emelye,

That by his fortune hath hir faire y-  
 wonne.'  
 Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne  
 For Ioye of this, so loude and heigh  
 with-alle, 2661  
 It semed that the listes sholde falle.  
 What can now faire Venus doon  
 above?  
 What seith she now? what dooth this  
 quene of love?  
 But wepeth so, for wanting of hir wille,  
 Til that hir teres in the listes fille; 2666  
 She seyde: 'I am ashamed, doutelees.'  
 Saturnus seyde: 'Doghter, hold thy  
 pees.  
 Mars hath his wille, his knight hath al  
 his bone,  
 And, by myn heed, thou shalt ben esed  
 sone.' 2670  
 The trompes, with the loude minstral-  
 cye,  
 The heraudes, that ful loude yolle and  
 crye,  
 Been in hir wele for Ioye of daun Arcite.  
 But herkne me, and stinteth now a  
 lyte,  
 Which a miracle ther bifel anon. 2675  
 This fiere Arcite hath of his helm  
 y-don,  
 And on a courser, for to shewe his face,  
 He priketh endelong the large place,  
 Loking upward up-on this Emelye;  
 And she agayn him caste a freendlich  
 yē, 2680  
 (For women, as to speken in comune,  
 They folwen al the favour of fortune,)  
 And she was al his chere, as in his herte.  
 Out of the ground a furie infernal sterte,  
 From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne,  
 For which his hors for fere gan to turne,  
 And leep asyde, and foundred as he leep;  
 And, er that Arcite may taken keep,  
 He pighte him on the pomel of his heed,  
 That in the place he lay as he were  
 deed, 2690  
 His brest to-brosten with his sadel-bowe.  
 As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,  
 So was the blood y-ronnen in his face.  
 Anon he was y-born out of the place  
 With herte soor, to Theseus paleys. 2695  
 Tho was he corven out of his harneys,  
 And in a bed y-brought ful faire and blyve,  
 For he was yet in memorie and alyve,

And alway crying after Emelye. 2699

Duk Theseus, with al his companye,  
Is comen hoom to Athenes his citee,  
With alle blisse and greet solempnitee.  
Al be it that this aventure was falle,  
He nolde nocht disconforten hem alle.  
Men seyde eek, that Arcite shal nat  
dye; 2705

He shal ben heled of his maladye.  
And of another thing they were as fayn,  
That of hem alle was ther noon y-slayn,  
Al were they sore y-hurt, and namely oon,  
That with a spere was thirled his brest-  
boon. 2710

To othere woundes, and to broken armes,  
Some hadden salves, and some hadden  
charmes;

Fermacies of herbes, and eek save  
They dronken, for they wolde hir limes  
have. 2714

For which this noble duk, as he wel can,  
Conforteth and honoureth every man,  
And made revel al the longe night,  
Un-to the straunge lordes, as was right.  
Ne ther was holden no disconfitinge,  
But as a lustes or a tourneyinge; 2720

For soothly ther was no disconfiture,  
For falling nis nat but an aventure;  
Ne to be lad with fors un-to the stake  
Unyolden, and with twenty knightes take,  
O persone allone, with-uten mo, 2725  
And haried forth by arme, foot, and to,  
And eek his stede driven forth with staves,  
With footmen, bothe yemen and eek  
knaves,

It nas aretted him no vileinye, 2729  
Ther may no man clepen it cowardye.

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

Ther was namore, but 'far wel, have good  
day!' 2740

Of this bataille I wol namore endyte,  
But speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the  
sore

Encreesseth at his herte more and more.  
The clothered blood, for any leche-  
craft, 2745

Corrupteth, and is in his bouk y-laft,  
That neither veyne-blood, ne ventusinge,  
Ne drinke of herbes may ben his help-  
inge.

The vertu expulsif, or animal,  
Fro thilke vertu cleped natural 2750  
Ne may the venim voyden, ne expelle.

The pypes of his longes gonne to swelle,  
And every lacerte in his brest adoun  
Is shent with venim and corrupcioun.  
Him gayneth neither, for to gete his  
lyf, 2755

Vomyt upward, ne downward laxatif;  
Al is to-brosten thilke regioun,  
Nature hath now no dominacioun.  
And certainly, ther nature wol nat wirche,  
Far-wel, phisyk! go ber the man to  
chirche! 2760

This al and som, that Arcita mot dye,  
For which he sendeth after Emelye,  
And Palamon, that was his cosin dere;  
Than seyde he thus, as ye shul after here  
Naught may the woful spirit in myn  
herte 2765

Declare o poynt of alle my sorwes smerte  
To yow, my lady, that I love most;  
But I biquethe the service of my gost  
To yow aboven every creature,  
Sin that my lyf may no lenger dure. 2770

Allas, the wo! alas, the peynes stronge,  
That I for yow have suffred, and so longe!  
Allas, the deeth! alas, myn Emelye!

Allas, departing of our companye!  
Allas, myn hertes quene! alas, myn  
wyf! 2775

Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!  
What is this world? what asketh men to  
have?

Now with his love, uow in his colde  
grave

Allone, with-uten any companye.  
Far-wel, my swete fo! myn Emelye! 2780  
And softe tak me in your armes tweye,  
For love of God, and herkneeth what I  
seye.

I have heer with my cosin Palamon  
Had stryf and rancour, many a day a-gon,  
For love of yow, and for my Ielousye. 2785  
And Iupiter so wis my soule gye,  
To speken of a servant proprely,

With alle circumstaunces trewely,  
 That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and  
 knightehede,  
 Wisdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh  
 kinrede, 2790  
 Freedom, and al that longeth to that art,  
 So Iupiter have of my soule part,  
 As in this world right now ne knowe I  
 non  
 So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,  
 That serveth yow, and wol don al his  
 lyf. 2795  
 And if that ever ye shul been a wyf,  
 Foryet nat Palamon, the gentil man.  
 And with that word his speche faille gan,  
 For from his feet up to his brest was come  
 The cold of deeth, that hadde him over-  
 come. 2800  
 And yet more-over, in his armes two  
 The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago.  
 Only the intellect, with-ouen more,  
 That dwelled in his herte syk and sore,  
 Jan failen, when the herte felte  
 deeth, 2805  
 Dusked his eyen two, and failed breath.  
 But on his lady yet caste he his yë;  
 His laste wor . was, 'mercy, Emelye!'  
 His spirit chaunged hous, and wente  
 ther, 2809  
 As I can never, I can nat tellen wher.  
 Therfor I stinte, I nam no divinistre;  
 Of soules finde I nat in this registre,  
 Ne me ne list thilke opiniouns to telle  
 Of hem, though that they wryten wher  
 they dwelle. 2814  
 Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gye;  
 Now wol I speken forth of Emelye.  
 Shrighte Emelye, and howleth Palamon,  
 And Theseus his suster took anon  
 Swowninge, and bar hir fro the corps  
 away. 2819  
 What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,  
 To tellen how she weep, bothe eve and  
 morwe?  
 For in swich cas wommen have swich  
 sorwe,  
 Whan that hir housbonds been from hem  
 ago,  
 That for the more part they sorwen so,  
 Or elles fallen in swich maladye, 2825  
 That at the laste certainly they dye.  
 Infinite been the sorwes and the teres  
 Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeres,

In al the toun, for deeth of this Theban;  
 For him ther wepeth bothe child and  
 man; 2830  
 So greet a weping was ther noon, certayn,  
 Whan Ector was y-brought, al fresh y-  
 slayn,  
 To Troye; allas! the pitee that was ther,  
 Cracching of chekes, rending eek of heer.  
 'Why woldestow be deed,' thise wommen  
 crye, 2835  
 'And haddest gold y-nough, and Emelye?'  
 No man mighte gladen Theseus,  
 Savige his olde fader Egeus,  
 That knew this worldes transmucioun,  
 As he had seyn it chaungen up and  
 doun, 2840  
 Ioye after wo, and wo after gladnesse:  
 And shewed hem ensamples and lyknesse.  
 'Right as ther deyed never man,' quod  
 he,  
 'That he ne livede in erthe in som  
 degree,  
 Right so ther livede never man,' he  
 seyde, 2845  
 'In al this world, that som tyme he ne  
 deyde.  
 This world nis but a thurghfare ful of wo,  
 And we ben pilgrimes, passinge to and  
 fro;  
 Deeth is an ende of every worldly sore.'  
 And over al this yet seyde he muchel  
 more 2850  
 To this effect, ful wysly to enhorte  
 The peple, that they sholde hem recon-  
 forte.  
 Duk Theseus, with al his bisy cure,  
 Caste now wher that the sepulture  
 Of good Arcite may best y-maked be, 2855  
 And eek most honourable in his degree.  
 And at the laste he took conclusioun,  
 That ther as first Arcite and Palamoun  
 Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,  
 That in that selve grove, swote and  
 grene, 2860  
 Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,  
 His compleynt, and for love his hote fires,  
 He wolde make a fyr, in which thoffice  
 Funeral he mighte al accomplice;  
 And leet comaunde anon to hakke and  
 hewe 2865  
 The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe  
 In colpons wel arrayed for to brenne;  
 His officers with swifte feet they renne

And ryde anon at his comaundement.  
 And after this, Theseus hath y-sent 2870  
 After a bere, and it al over-spradde  
 With clothe of gold, the richest that he  
 hadde.

And of the same suyte he cladde Arcite;  
 Upon his hondes hadde he gloves whyte;  
 Eek on his heed a crowne of laurer  
 grene, 2875  
 And in his hond a swerd ful bright and  
 kene.

He leyde him bare the visage on the bere,  
 Therwith he weep that pitee was to here.  
 And for the peple sholde seen him alle,  
 Whan it was day, he broghte him to the  
 halle, 2880

That roreth of the crying and the soun.

Tho cam this woful Theban Palamoun,  
 With flotery berd, and ruggy assy heres,  
 In clothes blake, y-dropped al with teres;  
 And, passing othere of weping, Em-  
 elye, 2885

The rewfulleste of al the companye.  
 In as muche as the service sholde be  
 The more noble and riche in his degree,  
 Duk Theseus leet forth three stedes  
 bringe, 2889

That trapped were in steel al gliteringe,  
 And covered with the armes of daun  
 Arcite.

Up-on these stedes, that weren grete and  
 whyte,

Ther seten folk, of which oon bar his  
 sheeld,

Another his spere up in his hondes heeld;  
 The thurde bar with him his bowe  
 Turkeys, 2895

Of brend gold was the cas, and eek the  
 harneys;

And riden forth a pas with sorweful chere  
 Toward the grove, as ye shul after here.  
 The nobleste of the Grekes that ther  
 were

Upon hir shuldres carieden the bere, 2900  
 With slakke pas, and eyen rede and wete,  
 Thurgh-out the citee, by the maister-strete,  
 That sprad was al with blak, and wonder  
 hye

Right of the same is al the strete y-wrye.  
 Up-on the right hond wente old  
 Egeus, 2905

And on that other syde duk Theseus,  
 With vessels in hir hand of gold ful fyn,

Al ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wyn;  
 Eek Palamon, with ful greet companye;  
 And after that cam woful Emelye, 2910  
 With fyr in honde, as was that tyme the  
 gyse,

To do thoffice of funeral servyse.

Heigh labour, and ful greet apparail-  
 linge  
 Was at the service and the fyr-makinge,  
 That with his grene top the heven  
 raughte, 2915

And twenty fadme of brede the armes  
 straughte;

This is to seyn, the bowes were so brode.  
 Of stree first ther was leyd ful many a  
 lode.

But how the fyr was makid up on heichte,  
 And eek the names how the trees  
 highte, 2920

As ook, firre, birch, asp, alder, holm, pop-  
 ler,

Wilow, elm, plane, ash, box, chasteyn,  
 lind, laurer,

Mapul, thorn, beech, hasel, ew, whippel-  
 tree,

How they weren feld, shal nat be told for  
 me;

Ne how the goddes ronnen up and  
 down, 2925

Disherited of hir habitacioun,

In which they woneden in reste and pees,  
 Nymphes, Faunes, and Amadrides;

Ne how the bestes and the briddes alle  
 Fledden for fere, whan the wode was  
 falle; 2930

Ne how the ground agast was of the  
 light,

That was nat wont to seen the sonne  
 bright;

Ne how the fyr was couched first with  
 stree,

And than with drye stokkes cloven a  
 three, 2934

And than with grene wode and spycerye,  
 And than with cloth of gold and with  
 perrye,

And gerlandes hanging with ful many a  
 flour,

The mirre, thencens, with al so greet  
 odour;

Ne how Arcite lay among al this,  
 Ne what richesse aboute his body is; 2940  
 Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,

Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse;  
 Ne how she swowned whan men made  
 the fyr,  
 Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desyr;  
 Ne what Ieweles men in the fyr tho  
 caste, 2945  
 Whan that the fyr was greet and brente  
 faste;  
 Ne how som caste hir sheeld, and som hir  
 spere,  
 And of hir vestiments, whiche that they  
 were,  
 And cuppes ful of wyn, and milk, and  
 blood, 2949  
 Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood;  
 Ne how the Grekes with an huge route  
 Thryës riden al the fyr aboute  
 Up-on the left hand, with a loud shout-  
 inge,  
 And thryës with hir speres clateringe;  
 And thryës how the ladies gonne  
 crye; 2955  
 Ne how that lad was hom-ward Emelye;  
 Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde;  
 Ne how that liche-wake was y-holde  
 Al thilke night, ne how the Grekes pleye  
 The wake-pleyes, ne kepe I nat to seye;  
 Who wrastleth best naked, with oille  
 enoynt, 2961  
 Ne who that bar him best, in no disioynt.  
 I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon  
 Hoom til Athenes, whan the pley is  
 doon;  
 But shortly to the poynt than wol I  
 wende, 2965  
 And maken of my longe tale an ende.  
 By processe and by lengthe of certeyn  
 yeres  
 Al stinted is the moorning and the teres  
 Of Grekes, by oon general assent.  
 Than semed me ther was a parlement 2970  
 At Athenes, up-on certeyn poynts and  
 cas;  
 Among the whiche poynts y-spoken was  
 To have with certeyn contrees alliaunce,  
 And have fully of Thebans obeisaunce.  
 For which this noble Theseus anon 2975  
 Leet senden after gentil Palamon,  
 Unwist of him what was the cause and  
 why;  
 But in his blake clothes sorwefully  
 He cam at his comaundement in hye.  
 Tho sente Theseus for Emelye. 2980

Whan they were set, and hust was al the  
 place,  
 And Theseus abiden hadde a space  
 Er any word cam from his wyse brest,  
 His eyen sette he ther as was his lest,  
 And with a sad visage he syked stille,  
 And after that right thus he seyde his  
 wille. 2986  
 'The firste moevere of the cause  
 above,  
 Whan he first made the faire cheyne of  
 love,  
 Greet was theeffect, and heigh was his  
 entente;  
 Wel wiste he why, and what ther-of he  
 mente; 2990  
 For with that faire cheyne of love he  
 bond  
 The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond  
 In certeyn boundes, that they may nat  
 flee;  
 That same prince and that moevere,  
 quod he,  
 'Hath stablissed, in this wrecched world  
 adoun, 2995  
 Certeyne dayes and duracioun  
 To al that is engended in this place,  
 Over the whiche day they may nat pace,  
 Al mowe they yet tho dayes wel abregge;  
 Ther needeth non auctoritee allegge, 3000  
 For it is preved by experience,  
 But that me list declaren my sentence.  
 Than may men by this ordre wel dis-  
 cerne,  
 That thilke moevere stable is and eterne.  
 Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool, 3005  
 That every part deryveth from his hool.  
 For nature hath nat take his beginning  
 Of no partye ne cantel of a thing,  
 But of a thing that parfit is and stable,  
 Descending so, til it be corruptable. 3010  
 And therefore, of his wyse purveyaunce,  
 He hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,  
 That speses of thinges and progressiouns  
 Shullen enduren by successiouns,  
 And nat eterne be, with-oute lye: 3015  
 This maistow understonde and seen at  
 yë.  
 'Lo the ook, that hath so long a nor-  
 isshinge  
 From tyme that it first biginneth springe,  
 And hath so long a lyf, as we may see,  
 Yet at the laste wasted is the tree. 3020

'Considereth eek, how that the harde  
 stoon  
 Under our feet, on which we trede and  
 goon,  
 Yit wasteth it, as it lyth by the weye.  
 The brode river somtyme wexeth dreye.  
 The grete tounes see we wane and  
 wende. 3025  
 Than may ye see that al this thing hath  
 ende.  
 'Of man and womman seen we wel  
 also,  
 That nedeth, in oon of this termes two,  
 This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age,  
 He moot ben deed, the king as shal a  
 page; 3030  
 Som in his bed, som in the depe see,  
 Som in the large feeld, as men may se;  
 Ther helpeth noght, al goth that ilke  
 weye.  
 Thanne may I seyn that al this thing  
 moot deye.  
 What maketh this but Iupiter the king?  
 The which is prince and cause of alle  
 thing, 3036  
 Converting al un-to his propre welle,  
 From which it is deryved, sooth to telle.  
 And here-agayns no creature on lyve  
 Of no degree availleth for to stryve. 3040  
 'Thanne is it wisdom, as it thinketh  
 me,  
 To maken vertu of necessitee,  
 And take it wel, that we may nat eschue,  
 And namely that to us alle is due.  
 And who-so gruccheth ought, he dooth  
 folye, 3045  
 And rebel is to him that al may gye.  
 And certainly a man hath most honour  
 To dyen in his excellence and flour,  
 Whan he is siker of his gode name;  
 Than hath he doon his freend, ne him,  
 no shame. 3050  
 And gladder oghte his freend ben of his  
 deeth,  
 Whan with honour up-yolden is his  
 breeth,  
 Than whan his name apalled is for age;  
 For al forgeten is his vasselage.  
 Than is it best, as for a worthy fame, 3055  
 To dyen whan that he is best of name.  
 The contrarie of al this is wilfulnesse.  
 Why grucchen we? why have we hevi-  
 nesse,

That good Arcite, of chivalrye flour  
 Departed is, with duetee and honour, 3060  
 Out of this foule prison of this lyf?  
 Why grucchen heer his cosin and his  
 wyf  
 Of his wel-fare that loved hem so weel?  
 Can he hem thank? nay, God wot, never  
 a deel,  
 That bothe his soule and eek hem-self  
 offende, 3065  
 And yet they mowe hir lustes nat  
 amende.  
 'What may I conclude of this longe  
 serie,  
 But, after wo, I rede us to be merie,  
 And thanken Iupiter of al his grace?  
 And, er that we departen from this  
 place, 3070  
 I rede that we make, of sorwes two,  
 O parfyt Ioye, lasting ever-mo;  
 And loketh now, wher most sorwe is  
 her-inne,  
 Ther wol we first amenden and biginne.  
 'Suster,' quod he, 'this is my fulle  
 assent, 3075  
 With al thavys heer of my parlement,  
 That gentil Palamon, your owne knight,  
 That serveth yow with wille, herte, and  
 might,  
 And ever hath doon, sin that ye first  
 him knewe,  
 That ye shul, of your grace, up-on him  
 rewe, 3080  
 And taken him for housbonde and for  
 lord:  
 Leen me your hond, for this is our acord.  
 Lat see now of your wommanly pitee.  
 He is a kinges brother sone, pardee; 3084  
 And, though he were a povre bacheler,  
 Sin he hath served yow so many a yeer,  
 And had for yow so greet adversitee,  
 It moste been considered, levethe me;  
 For gentil mercy oghte to passen right.'  
 Than seyde he thus to Palamon ful  
 right; 3090  
 'I trowe ther nedeth litel sermoning  
 To make yow assente to this thing.  
 Com neer, and tak your lady by the  
 hond.'  
 Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond,  
 That highte matrimoine or mariage, 3095  
 By al the counseil and the baronage.  
 And thus with alle blisse and melodye

Hath Palamon y-wedded Emelye.  
 And God, that al this wyde world hath  
 wrought,  
 Sende him his love, that hathe it dere  
 a-boght. 3100  
 For now is Palamon in alle wele,  
 Living in blisse, in richesse, and in  
 hele;

And Emelye him loveth so tendrely,  
 And he hir serveth al-so gentilly,  
 That never was ther no word hem  
 bitwene 3105  
 Of Ielouyse, or any other tene.  
 Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye;  
 And God save al this faire companye!—  
 Amen.

*Here is ended the Knightes Tale.*

## THE MILLER'S PROLOGUE.

*Here folwen the wordes bitwene the Host  
 and the Millere.*

WHAN that the Knight had thus his tale  
 y-told,  
 In al the route nas ther yong ne old 3110  
 That he ne seyde it was a noble storie,  
 And worthy for to drawn to memorie;  
 And namely the gentils everichoon.  
 Our Hoste lough and swear, 'so moot I  
 goon,  
 This gooth aright; unboked is the  
 male; 3115  
 Lat see now who shal telle another tale:  
 For trewely, the game is wel bigonne.  
 Now telleth ye, sir Monk, if that ye  
 conne,  
 Sumwhat, to quyte with the Knightes  
 tale.'  
 The Miller, that for-dronken was al  
 pale, 3120  
 So that unnethe up-on his hors he sat,  
 He nolde avalen neither hood ne hat,  
 Ne abyde no man for his curteisye,  
 But in Pilates vois he gan to crye,  
 And swear by armes and by blood and  
 bones, 3125  
 'I can a noble tale for the nones,  
 With which I wol now quyte the Knightes  
 tale.'  
 Our Hoste saugh that he was dronke  
 of ale,  
 And seyde: 'abyd, Robin, my leve  
 brother,  
 Som better man shal telle us first another:  
 Abyd, and lat us werken thriftily.' 3131  
 'By goddes soul,' quod he, 'that wol  
 nat I;

For I wol speke, or elles go my wey.'  
 Our Hoste answerde: 'tel on, a devel  
 wey!  
 Thou art a fool, thy wit is overcome.' 3135  
 'Now herkneth,' quod the Miller, 'alle  
 and some!  
 But first I make a protestacioun  
 That I am dronke, I knowe it by my  
 soun;  
 And therefore, if that I misspeke or  
 seye,  
 Wyte it the ale of Southwerk, I yow  
 preye; 3140  
 For I wol telle a legende and a lyf  
 Bothe of a Carpenter, and of his wyf,  
 How that a clerk hath set the wrightes  
 cappe.'  
 The Reve answerde and seyde, 'stint  
 thy clappe,  
 Lat be thy lewed dronken harlotrye. 3145  
 It is a sinne and eek a greet folye  
 To apeiren any man, or him diffame,  
 And eek to bringen wyves in swich fame.  
 Thou mayst y-nogh of other thinges  
 seyn.'  
 This dronken Miller spak ful sone  
 ageyn, 3150  
 And seyde, 'leve brother Osewold,  
 Who hath no wyf, he is no cokewold.  
 But I sey nat therfore that thou art  
 oon;  
 Ther been ful gode wyves many oon,  
 And ever a thousand gode ayeys oon  
 badde, 3155  
 That knowestow wel thy-self, but-if thou  
 madde.  
 Why artow angry with my tale now?  
 I have a wyf, pardee, as well as thou,

Yet nolde I, for the oxen in my plough,  
 Taken up-on me more than y-nogh, 3160  
 As demen of my-self that I were oon;  
 I wol beleve wel that I am noon.  
 An housbond shal nat been inquisitif  
 Of goddes privetee, nor of his wyf.  
 So he may finde goddes foyson there,  
 Of the remenant nedeth nat enquere.'

What sholde I more seyn, but this  
 Millere 3167

He nolde his wordes for no man forbere,  
 But tolde his cherles tale in his manere;  
 Me thinketh that I shal reherce it here.  
 And ther-fore every gentil wight I preye,  
 For goddes love, demeth nat that I seye  
 Of evel entente, but that I moot reherce

Hir tales alle, be they bettere or werse,  
 Or elles falsen som of my matere. 3175  
 And therefore, who-so list it nat y-here,  
 Turne over the leef, and chese another  
 tale;

For he shal finde y-nowe, grete and  
 smale,

Of storial thing that toucheth gentillesse,  
 And eek moralitee and holinesse; 3180  
 Blameth nat me if that ye chese amis.

The Miller is a cherl, ye knowe wel this;  
 So was the Reve, and othere many mo,  
 And harlotrye they tolden bothe two.

Avyseth yow and putte me out of blame;  
 And eek men shal nat make earnest of  
 game. 3186

*Here endeth the prologe.*

## THE MILLERES TALE.

*Here biginneth the Millere his tale.*

WHYLOM ther was dwellinge at Oxenford  
 A riche gnof, that gestes heeld to bord,  
 And of his craft he was a Carpenter.  
 With him ther was dwellinge a povre  
 scoler, 3190

Had lerned art, but al his fantasye  
 Was turned for to lerne astrologye,  
 And coude a certeyn of conclusiouns  
 To demen by interrogaciouns,  
 If that men axed him in certein houres,  
 Whan that men sholde have droghte or  
 elles shoures, 3196

Or if men axed him what sholde bifalle  
 Of every thing, I may nat rekene hem  
 alle.

This clerk was cleped hende Nicholas;  
 Of derne love he coude and of solas; 3200  
 And ther-to he was sleigh and ful privee,  
 And lyk a mayden meke for to see.  
 A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye  
 Allone, with-outen any companye,  
 Ful fetisly y-dight with herbes swote; 3205  
 And he him-self as swete as is the rote  
 Of licorys, or any cetewale.

His Almageste and bokes grete and  
 smale,

His astrelabie, longinge for his art,  
 His augrim-stones layen faire a-part 3210

On shelves couched at his beddes heed:  
 His presse y-covered with a falding reed.  
 And al above ther lay a gay sautrye,  
 On which he made a nightes melodye  
 So swetely, that al the chambre rong;  
 And *Angelus ad virginem* he song; 3216  
 And after that he song the kinges note;  
 Ful often blessed was his mery throte.  
 And thus this swete clerk his tyme spente  
 After his freendes finding and his rente.

This Carpenter had wedded newe a  
 wyf 3221

Which that he lovede more than his lyf;  
 Of eightetene yeer she was of age.

Ialous he was, and heeld hir narwe in  
 cage,

For she was wilde and yong, and he was  
 old, 3225

And demed him-self ben lyk a cokewold.  
 He knew nat Catoun, for his wit was  
 rude,

That bad man sholde wedde his simili-  
 tude.

Men sholde wedden after hir estaat, 3229  
 For youthe and elde is often at debaat.

But sith that he was fallen in the snare,  
 He moste endure, as other folk, his care.

Fair was this yonge wyf, and ther-  
 with-al

As any wesele hir body gent and smal.



A ceynt she werede barred al of silk, 3235  
 A barmclooth eek as whyt as morne  
 milk  
 Up-on hir lendes, ful of many a gore.  
 Whyt was hir smok, and brouded al  
 bifore  
 And eek bihinde, on hir coler aboute,  
 Of col-blak silk, with-inne and eek with-  
 oute. 3240  
 The tapes of hir whyte voluper  
 Were of the same suyte of hir coler;  
 Hir filet brood of silk, and set ful hye:  
 And sikerly she hadde a likerous yē.  
 Ful smale y-pulled were hir browes  
 two, 3245  
 And tho were bent, and blake as any  
 sloo.  
 She was ful more blisful on to see  
 Than is the newe pere-ionette tree;  
 And softer than the wolle is of a wether.  
 And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether  
 Tasseld with silk, and perled with la-  
 toun. 3251  
 In al this world, to seken up and down,  
 There nis no man so wys, that coude  
 thenche  
 So gay a popelote, or swich a wenche.  
 Ful brighter was the shyning of hir  
 hewe 3255  
 Than in the tour the noble y-forged  
 newe.  
 But of hir song, it was as loude and  
 yerne  
 As any swalwe sittinge on a berne.  
 Ther-to she coude skippe and make  
 game,  
 As any kide or calf folwinge his dame.  
 Hir mouth was swete as bragot or the  
 meeth, 3261  
 Or hord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.  
 Winsinge she was, as is a Ioly colt,  
 Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.  
 A brooch she baar up-on hir lowe coler,  
 As brood as is the bos of a bocler. 3266  
 Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hye;  
 She was a prymerole, a pigges-nye  
 For any lord to leggen in his bedde,  
 Or yet for any good yeman to wedde. 3270  
 Now sire, and eft sire, so bifel the cas,  
 That on a day this hende Nicholas  
 Fil with this yonge wyf to rage and  
 pleye,  
 Whyt that hir housbond was at Oseneye,

As clerkes ben ful subtile and ful  
 queynte; 3275  
 And prively he caughte hir by the  
 queynte,  
 And seyde, 'y-wis, but if ich have my  
 wille,  
 For derne love of thee, lemman, I spille.'  
 And heeld hir harde by the haunche-  
 bones,  
 And seyde, 'lemman, love me al at-ones,  
 Or I wol dyen, also god me save!' 3281  
 And she sprong as a colt doth in the  
 trave,  
 And with hir heed she wryed faste away,  
 And seyde, 'I wol nat kisse thee, by my  
 fey, 3284  
 Why, lat be,' quod she, 'lat be, Nicholas,  
 Or I wol crye out "harrow" and "allas."  
 Do wey your handes for your curteisye!'  
 This Nicholas gan mercy for to crye,  
 And spak so faire, and profred hir so  
 faste,  
 That she hir love him graunted atte  
 laste, 3290  
 And swoor hir ooth, by seint Thomas of  
 Kent,  
 That she wol been at his comandement,  
 Whan that she may hir leysur wel espye.  
 'Myn housbond is so ful of Ialousye,  
 That but ye wayte wel and been privee,  
 I woot right wel I nam but deed,' quod  
 she. 3296  
 'Ye moste been ful derne, as in this cas.'  
 'Nay ther-of care thee noght,' quod  
 Nicholas,  
 'A clerk had litherly biset his whyle,  
 But-if he coude a Carpenter bigyle.' 3300  
 And thus they been accorded and y-sworn  
 To wayte a tyme, as I have told biforn.  
 Whan Nicholas had doon thus everydeel,  
 And thakked hir aboute the lendes weel,  
 He kist hir swete, and taketh his sautrye,  
 And pleyeth faste, and maketh melodye.  
 Than fil it thus, that to the parish-  
 chirche, 3307  
 Cristes owne werkes for to wirche,  
 This gode wyf wente on an haliday;  
 Hir forheed shoon as bright as any day,  
 So was it wasshen whan she leet hir  
 werk. 3311  
 Now was ther of that chirche a parish-  
 clerk,  
 The which that was y-cleped Absolon.

Crul was his heer, and as the gold it  
shoon,

And strouted as a fanne large and  
brode; 3315

Ful streight and even lay his Ioly shode.  
His rode was reed, his eyen greye as  
goos;

With Powles window corven on his  
shoos,

In hoses rede he wente fetisly.

Y-clad he was ful smal and proprely, 3320  
Al in a kirtel of a light wachet;

Ful faire and thikke been the poyntes  
set.

And ther-up-on he hadde a gay surplys  
As whyt as is the blosme up-on the rys.

A mery child he was, so god me save,  
Wel coude he laten blood and clippe and  
shave, 3326

And make a chartre of lond or acquit-  
aunce.

In twenty manere coude he trippe and  
daunce

After the scole of Oxenforde tho, 3329  
And with his legges casten to and fro,

And pleyen songes on a small rubible;  
Ther-to he song som-tyme a loud quin-  
ible;

And as wel coude he pleye on his giterne.

In al the toun nas brewhous ne taverne  
That he ne visited with his solas, 3335  
Ther any gaylard tappestere was.

But sooth to seyn, he was somdel squay-  
mous

Of farting, and of speche daungerous.

This Absolon, that Iolif was and gay,  
Gooth with a sencer on the haliday, 3340

Sensinge the wyves of the parish faste;  
And many a lovely look on hem he caste,  
And namely on this carpenteres wyf.

To loke on hir him thoughte a mery lyf,  
She was so propre and swete and like-  
rous. 3345

I dar wel seyn, if she had been a mous,  
And he a cat, he wolde hir hente anon.

This parish-clerk, this Ioly Absolon,  
Hath in his herte swich a love-longinge,

That of no wyf ne took he noon offringe;  
For curteisye, he seyde, he wolde noon.

The mone, whan it was night, ful brighte  
shoon, 3352

And Absolon his giterne hath y-take,  
For paramours, he thoghte for to wake.

And forth he gooth, Iolif and amorous,  
Til he cam to the carpenteres hous 3356

A litel after cokkes hadde y-crowe;  
And dressed him up by a shot-windowe

That was up-on the carpenteres wal.  
He singeth in his vois gentil and smal,

‘Now, dere lady, if thy wille be, 3361  
I preye yow that ye wol rewe on me,’

Ful wel acordaunt to his giterninge.  
This carpenter awook, and herde him

singe,  
And spak un-to his wyf, and seyde  
anon, 3365

‘What! Alison! herestow nat Absolon  
That chaunteth thus under our boures

wal?’  
And she answerde hir housbond ther-  
with-al,

‘Yis, god wot, Iohn, I here it every-del.’  
This passeth forth; what wol ye bet

than wel? 3370

Fro day to day this Ioly Absolon  
So woweth hir, that him is wo bigon.

He waketh al the night and al the day;  
He kempte hise lokkes brode, and made

him gay;  
He woweth hir by menes and brocage,

And swoor he wolde been hir owne  
page; 3376

He singeth, brokkinge as a nightingale;  
He sente hir piment, meeth, and spyced

ale,  
And wafres, pyping hote out of the  
glede;

And for she was of toune, he profred  
mede. 3380

For som folk wol ben wonnen for rich-  
esse,

And som for strokes, and som for gentill-  
esse.

Somtyme, to shewe his lightnesse and  
maistrye,

He pleyeth Herodes on a scaffold hye.  
But what availleth him as in this cas?

She loveth so this hende Nicholas, 3386  
That Absolon may blowe the bukkes

horn;

He ne hadde for his labour but a scorn;  
And thus she maketh Absolon hir ape,

And al his earnest turneth til a Iape. 3390  
Ful sooth is this proverbe, it is no lye,

Men seyn right thus, ‘alwey the nye slye  
Maketh the ferre leve to be looth.’

For though that Absolon be wood or  
wrooth, 3394

By-cause that he fer was from hir sighte,  
This nye Nicholas stood in his lighte.

Now bere thee wel, thou hende Nich-  
olas!

For Absolon may waille and singe  
'allas.'

And so bifel it on a Saturday,  
This carpenter was goon til Osenay; 3400

And hende Nicholas and Alisoun  
Acorded been to this conclusioun,

That Nicholas shal shapen him a wyle  
This sely Ialous housbond to bigyle;

And if so be the game wente aright, 3405  
She sholde slepen in his arm al night,

For this was his desyr and hir also.  
And right anon, with-ouen wordes mo,

This Nicholas no lenger wolde tarie,  
But doth ful softe un-to his chambre

carie 3410  
Bothe mete and drinke for a day or  
tweye,

And to hir housbonde bad hir for to  
seye,

If that he axed after Nicholas,  
She sholde seye she niste where he was,

Of al that day she saugh him nat with  
yë; 3415

She trowed that he was in maladye,  
For, for no cry, hir mayde coude him

call;

He nolde answeye, for no-thing that  
michte falle.

This passeth forth al thilke Saterdag,  
That Nicholas stille in his chambre lay,

And eet and sleep, or dide what him  
leste, 3421

Til Sunday, that the sonne gooth to  
reste.

This sely carpenter hath greet mer-  
veyle

Of Nicholas, or what thing mighte him  
eyle,

And seyde, 'I am adrad, by seint Thomas,  
It standeth nat aright with Nicholas. 3426

God shilde that he deyde sodeynly!  
This world is now ful tikel, sikerly;

I saugh to-day a cors y-born to chirche  
That now, on Monday last, I saugh him

wirche. 3430  
Go up,' quod he un-to his knave  
anoon,

'Clepe at his dore, or knockke with a  
stoon,

Loke how it is, and tel me boldely.'

This knave gooth him up ful sturdily,  
And at the chambre-dore, whyl that he

stood, 3435  
He cryde and knockked as that he were  
wood:—

'What! how! what do ye, maister Nich-  
olay?

How may ye slepen al the longe day?'  
But al for noght, he herde nat a word;

An hole he fond, ful lowe up-on a bord,  
Ther as the cat was wont in for to

crepe; 3441  
And at that hole he looked in ful depe,  
And at the laste he hadde of him a

sighte.  
This Nicholas sat gaping ever up-righte,  
As he had kyked on the newe mone. 3445

Adoun he gooth, and tolde his maister  
sone

In what array he saugh this ilke man.  
This carpenter to bleesen him bigan,

And seyde, 'help us, seinte Frideswyde!  
A man woot litel what him shal bityde.

This man is falle, with his astromye, 3451  
In som woodnesse or in som agonye;

I thoghte ay wel how that it sholde be!  
Men sholde nat knowe of goddes prive-

tee.  
Ye, blessed be alwey a lewed man, 3455  
That noght but oonly his bileve can!

So ferde another clerk with astromye;  
He walked in the feeldes for to pry

Up-on the sterres, what ther sholde  
bifalle,

Til he was in a marle-pit y-falle; 3460  
He saugh nat that. But yet, by seint

Thomas,  
Me reweth sore of hende Nicholas.

He shal be rated of his studying,  
If that I may, by Iesus, hevене king!

Get me a staf, that I may underspore,  
Whyl that thou, Robin, hevest up the

dore. 3466  
He shal out of his studying, as I  
gesse'—

And to the chambre-dore he gan him  
dresse.

His knave was a strong carl for the  
nones,

And by the haspe he haf it up atones;

In-to the floor the dore fil anon. 3471  
 This Nicholas sat ay as stille as stoon,  
 And ever gaped upward in-to the eir.  
 This carpenter wende he were in de-  
 speir,  
 And hente him by the sholdres might-  
 ily, 3475  
 And shook him harde, and cryde spit-  
 ously,  
 'What! Nicholay! what, how! what loke  
 adoun!  
 Awake, and thenk on Cristes passioun;  
 I crouche thee from elves and fro  
 wightes!'  
 Ther-with the night-spel seyde he anon-  
 righes 3480  
 On foure halves of the hous aboute,  
 And on the threshold of the dore with-  
 oute: —  
 'Iesu Crist, and seynt Benedight,  
 Blesse this hous from every wikked  
 wight,  
 For nightes verye, the white *pater-nos-  
 ter!* 3485  
 Where wentestow, seynt Petres soster?'  
 And atte laste this hende Nicholas  
 Gan for to syke sore, and seyde, 'allas!  
 Shal al the world be lost eftsones now?'  
 This carpenter answerde, 'what seys-  
 tow? 3490  
 What! thenk on god, as we don, men  
 that swinke.'  
 This Nicholas answerde, 'fecche me  
 drinke;  
 And after wol I speke in privetee  
 Of certeyn thing that toucheth me and  
 thee;  
 I wol telle it non other man, certeyn.'  
 This carpenter goth doun, and comth  
 ageyn, 3496  
 And broghte of mighty ale a large quart;  
 And whan that ech of hem had dronke  
 his part,  
 This Nicholas his dore faste shette,  
 And doun the carpenter by him he  
 sette 3500  
 He seyde, 'Iohn, myn hoste lief and  
 dere,  
 Thou shalt up-on thy trouthe swere me  
 here,  
 That to no wight thou shalt this conseil  
 wreye;  
 For it is Cristes conseil that I seye,

And if thou telle it man, thou art for-  
 lore; 3505  
 For this vengauce thou shalt han ther-  
 fore,  
 That if thou wreye me, thou shalt be  
 wood!'  
 'Nay, Crist forbede it, for his holy  
 blood!'  
 Quod tho this sely man, 'I nam no  
 labbe,  
 Ne, though I seye, I nam nat lief to  
 gabbe. 3510  
 Sey what thou wolt, I shal it never  
 telle  
 To child ne wyf, by him that harwed  
 helle!'  
 'Now John,' quod Nicholas, 'I wol  
 nat lye;  
 I have y-founde in myn astrologye,  
 As I have loked in the mone bright,  
 That now, a Monday next, at quarter-  
 night, 3516  
 Shal falle a reyn and that so wilde and  
 wood,  
 That half so greet was never Noës flood.  
 This world,' he seyde, 'in lasse than in  
 an hour  
 Shal al be dreynt, so hidous is the  
 shour; 3520  
 Thus shal mankynde drenche and lese  
 hir lyf.'  
 This carpenter answerde, 'allas, my  
 wyf!  
 And shal she drenche? allas! myn  
 Alisoun!'  
 For sorwe of this he fil almost adoun,  
 And seyde, 'is ther no remedie in this  
 cas?' 3525  
 'Why, yis, for gode,' quod hende Nich-  
 olas,  
 'If thou wolt werken after lore and  
 reed;  
 Thou mayst nat werken after thyn owene  
 heed.  
 For thus seith Salomon, that was ful  
 trewe,  
 "Werk al by conseil, and thou shalt nat  
 rewe." 3530  
 And if thou werken wolt by good con-  
 seil,  
 I undertake, with-outen mast and seyl,  
 Yet shal I saven hir and thee and me.  
 Hastow nat herd how saved was Noë,

Whan that our lord had warned him  
 biforn 3535  
 That al the world with water sholde be  
 lorn?'  
 'Yis,' quod this carpenter, 'ful yore  
 ago.'  
 'Hastow nat herd,' quod Nicholas,  
 'also  
 The sorwe of Noë with his felawshipe,  
 Er that he mighte gete his wyf to  
 shipe? 3540  
 Him had be lever, I dar wel undertake,  
 At thilke tyme, than alle hise wetheres  
 Blake,  
 That she hadde had a ship hir-self  
 allone.  
 And ther-fore, wostou what is best to  
 done?  
 This asketh haste, and of an hastif  
 thing 3545  
 Men may nat preche or maken taryng.  
 Anon go gete us faste in-to this in  
 A kneding-trogh, or elles a kimelin,  
 For ech of us, but loke that they be  
 large,  
 In whiche we mowe swimme as in a  
 barge, 3550  
 And han ther-inne vitaille suffisant  
 But for a day; fy on the remenant!  
 The water chal aslake and goon away  
 Aboute pryme up-on the nexte day.  
 But Robin may nat wite of this, thy  
 knave, 3555  
 Ne eek thy mayde Gille I may nat save;  
 Axe nat why, for though thou aske me,  
 I wol nat tellen goddes privetee.  
 Suffiseth thee, but if thy wittes madde,  
 To han as greet a grace as Noë hadde.  
 Thy wyf shal I wel saven, out of doute,  
 Go now thy wey, and speed thee heer-  
 aboute. 3562  
 But whan thou hast, for hir and thee  
 and me,  
 Y-geeten us thise kneding-tubbes three,  
 Than shaltow hange hem in the roof ful  
 hye, 3565  
 That no man of our purveyaunce spye.  
 And whan thou thus hast doon as I have  
 seyde,  
 And hast our vitaille faire in hem y-leyde,  
 And eek an ax, to smyte the corde atwo  
 When that the water comth, that we  
 may go, 3570

And broke an hole an heigh, up-on the  
 gable,  
 Unto the gardin-ward, over the stable,  
 That we may frely passen forth our way  
 Whan that the grete shour is goon  
 away —  
 Than shaltow swimme as myrie, I un-  
 dertake, 3575  
 As doth the whyte doke after hir drake.  
 Than wol I clepe, "how! Alison! how!  
 John!  
 Be myrie, for the flood wol passe anon."  
 And thou wolt seyn, "hayl, maister  
 Nicholay!  
 Good morwe, I se thee wel, for it is  
 day." 3580  
 And than shul we be lordes al our lyf  
 Of al the world, as Noë and his wyf.  
 But of o thyng I warne thee ful right,  
 Be wel avysed, on that ilke night  
 That we ben entred in-to shippes  
 bord, 3585  
 That noon of us ne speke nat a word,  
 Ne clepe, ne crye, but been in his  
 preyere;  
 For it is goddes owne heste dere.  
 Thy wyf and thou mote hange fer a-  
 twinne,  
 For that bitwixe yow shal be no sinne  
 No more in looking than ther shal in  
 dede; 3591  
 This ordinance is seyde, go, god thee  
 spede!  
 Tomorwe at night, whan men ben alle  
 aslepe,  
 In-to our kneding-tubbes wol we crepe,  
 And sitten ther, abyding goddes grace.  
 Go now thy wey, I have no lenger  
 space 3596  
 To make of this no lenger sermoning.  
 Men seyn thus, "send the wyse, and sey  
 no-thing;"  
 Thou art so wys, it nedeth thee nat  
 teche;  
 Go, save our lyf, and that I thee bi-  
 seche.' 3600  
 This sely carpenter goth forth his  
 wey.  
 Ful ofte he seith 'allas' and 'weyl-  
 away,'  
 And to his wyf he tolde his privetee;  
 And she was war, and knew it bet than  
 he.

What al this queynte cast was for to  
seye. 3605

But nathelees she ferde as she wolde  
deye,

And seyde, 'allas! go forth thy wey  
anon,

Help us to scape, or we ben lost echon;  
I am thy trewe verray wedded wyf;

Go, dere spouse, and help to save our  
lyf.' 3610

Lo! which a greet thyng is affeccioun!

Men may dye of imaginacioun,

So depe may impressioun be take.

This sely carpenter biginneth quake;

Him thinketh verrailly that he may  
see 3616

Noës flood come walwing as the see

To drenchen Alisoun, his hony dere.

He wepeth, weyleth, maketh sory chere,

He syketh with ful many a sory swogh.

He gooth and geteth him a kneding-  
trogh, 3620

And after that a tubbe and a kimelin,

And prively he sente hem to his in,

And heng hem in the roof in privetee.

His owne hand he made laddres three,

To climben by the ronges and the  
stalkes 3625

Un-to the tubbes hanginge in the balkes,

And hem vitailed, bothe trogh and  
tubbe,

With breed and chese, and good ale in a  
Iubbe,

Suffysinge right y-nogh as for a day.

But er that he had maad al this array,

He sente his knave, and eek his wenche  
also, 3631

Up-on his nede to London for to go.

And on the Monday, whan it drow to  
night,

He shette his dore with-oute candel-  
light,

And dressed al thing as it sholde  
be. 3635

And shortly, up they clomben alle three;

They sitten stille wel a furlong-way.

'Now, *Pater-noster*, clom!' seyde  
Nicholay,

And 'clom,' quod John, and 'clom,' seyde  
Alisoun.

This carpenter seyde his devocioun, 3640

And stille he sit, and biddeth his preyere,

Awaytinge on the reyn, if he it here.

The dede sleep, for very bisnesse,

Fil on this carpenter right, as I gesse,

Aboute corfew-tyme, or litel more; 3645

For travail of his goost he groneth sore,

And eft he routeth, for his heed mislay.

Doun of the laddre stalketh Nicholay,

And Alisoun, ful softe adoun she spedde;

With-uten wordes mo, they goon to  
bedde 3650

Ther-as the carpenter is wont to lye.

Ther was the revel and the melodye;

And thus lyth Alison and Nicholas,

In bisnesse of mirthe and of solas,

Til that the belle of laudes gan to  
ringe, 3655

And freres in the chauncel gonne singe.

This parish-clerk, this amorous Ab-  
solon,

That is for love alway so wo bigon,

Up-on the Monday was at Oseneye

With companye, him to disporte and  
pleye, 3660

And axed up-on cas a cloisterer

Ful prively after Iohn the carpenter;

And he drough him a-part out of the  
chirche,

And seyde, 'I noot, I saugh him here nat  
wirche

Sin Saterdag; I trow that he be  
went 3665

For timber, ther our abbot hath him  
sent;

For he is wont for timber for to go,

And dwellen at the grange a day or two;

Or elles he is at his hous, certeyn;

Wher that he be, I can nat sothly  
seyn.' 3670

This Absolon ful Ioly was and light,

And thoghte, 'now is tyme wake al  
night;

For sikirly I saugh him nat stiringe

Aboute his dore sin day bigan to springe.

So moot I thryve, I shal, at cokkes  
crowe, 3675

Ful prively knocken at his windowe

That stant ful-lowe up-on his boures wal.

To Alison now wol I tellen al

My love-longing, for yet I shal nat misse

That at the leste wey I shal hir  
kisse. 3680

Som maner confort shal I have, parfay,

My mouth hath icched al this longe day;

That is a signe of kissing atte leste.

Al night me mette eek, I was at a feste.  
Therfor I wol gon slepe an houre or  
tweye, 3685

And al the night than wol I wake and  
pleye.'

Whan that the firste cok hath crowe,  
anon

Up rist this Ioly lover Absolon,  
And him arrayeth gay, at point-devys.  
But first he cheweth greyn and  
lycorys, 3690

To smellen swete, er he had kembd his  
heer.

Under his tonge a trewe love he beer,  
For ther-by wende he to ben gracious.  
He rometh to the carpenteres hous,  
And stille he stant under the shot-  
windowe; 3695

Un-to his brest it raughte, it was so lowe;  
And softe he cogheth with a semi-soun —  
'What do ye, hony-comb, swete Alisoun?  
My faire brid, my swete cinamome,  
Awaketh, lemman myn, and speketh to  
me! 3700

Wel litel thenken ye up-on my wo,  
That for your love I swete ther I go.  
No wonder is thogh that I swelte and  
swete;

I moorne as doth a lamb after the tete.  
Y-wis, lemman, I have swich love-  
longinge, 3705

That lyk a turtel trewe is my moorninge;  
I may nat ete na more than a mayde.'

'Go fro the window, Iakke fool,' she  
sayde,  
'As help me god, it wol nat be "com ha  
me,"

I love another, and elles I were to  
blame, 3710

Wel bet than thee, by Iesu, Absolon!  
Go forth thy wey, or I wol caste a ston,  
And lat me slepe, a twenty devel wey!'

'Allas,' quod Absolon, 'and weylaway!  
That trewe love was ever so yvel  
biset! 3715

Than kisse me, sin it may be no bet,  
For Iesus love and for the love of me.'

'Wiltow than go thy wey ther-with?'

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

'Thanne make thee redy,' quod she,  
'I come anon; 3720

And un-to Nicholas she seyde stille,  
'Now hust, and thou shalt laughen al thy  
fille.'

This Absolon doun sette him on his  
knees,

And seyde, 'I am a lord at alle degrees;  
For after this I hope ther cometh  
more! 3725

Lemman, thy grace, and swete brid, thyn  
ore!'

The window she undoth, and that in  
haste,

'Have do,' quod she, 'com of, and speed  
thee faste,

Lest that our neighebores thee espye.'  
This Absolon gan wyepe his mouth ful  
drye; 3730

Derk was the night as pich, or as the  
cole,

And at the window out she putte hir hole,  
And Absolon, him fil no bet ne wers,  
But with his mouth he kiste hir naked ers  
Ful savourly, er he was war of this. 3735

Abak he sterte, and thoghte it was  
amis,

For wel he wiste a womman hath no  
berd;

He felte a thing al rough and long y-herd,  
And seyde, 'fy! allas! what have I do?'

'Tehee!' quod she, and clapte the  
window to; 3740

And Absolon goth forth a sory pas.  
'A berd, a berd!' quod hende  
Nicholas,

'By goddes *corpus*, this goth faire and  
weel!'

This sely Absolon herde every deel,  
And on his lippe he gan for anger  
byte; 3745

And to him-self he seyde, 'I shal thee  
quyte!'

Who rubbeth now, who froteth now  
his lippes

With dust, with sond, with straw, with  
clooth, with chippes,

But Absolon, that seith ful ofte, 'allas!  
My soule bitake I un-to Sathanas, 3750

But me wer lever than al this toun,' quod  
he,

'Of this despyt awroken for to be!  
Allas!' quod he, 'allas! I ne hadde  
y-bleynt!'

His hote love was cold and al y-queynt;

For fro that tyme that he had kiste hir  
ers, 3755

Of paramours he sette nat a kers,  
For he was heled of his maladye;  
Ful ofte paramours he gan deffye,  
And weep as dooth a child that is y-bete.  
A softē paas he wente over the  
strete 3760

Un-til a smith men cleped daun Gerveys,  
That in his forge smithed plough-harneys;  
He sharpeth shaar and culter bisily.

This Absolon knokketh al esily,  
And seyde, 'undo, Gerveys, and that  
anon.' 3765

'What, who artow?' 'It am I,  
Absolon.'

'What Absolon! for Cristes swete tree,  
Why ryse ye so rathe, ey, *benedicite!*  
What eyleth yow? som gay gerl, god it  
woot,

Hath broght yow thus up-on the viri-  
toot; 3770

By sēynt Note, ye woot wel what I mene.'

This Absolon ne roghte nat a bene  
Of al his pley, no word agayn he yaf;  
He hadde more tow on his distaf

Than Gerveys knew, and seyde, 'freend  
so dere, 3775

That hote culter in the chimenee here,  
As lene it me, I have ther-with to done,  
And I wol bringe it thee agayn ful sone.'

Gerveys answerde, 'certes, were it  
gold,

Or in a poke nobles alle untold, 3780

Thou sholdest have, as I am trewe  
smith;

Ey, Cristes foo! what wol ye do ther-  
with?'

'Ther-of,' quod Absolon, 'be as be  
may;

I shal wel telle it thee to-morwe day'—  
And caughte the culter by the colde  
stele. 3785

Ful softē out at the dore he gan to stele,  
And wente un-to the carpenteres wal.

He cogheth first, and knokketh ther-  
with-al

Upon the windowe, right as he dide er.

This Alison answerde, 'Who is ther  
That knokketh so? I warante it a  
theef.' 3791

'Why, nay,' quod he, 'god woot, my  
swete leef,

I am thyn Absolon, my dereling!  
Of gold,' quod he, 'I have thee broght a  
ring; 3794

My moder yaf it me, so god me save,  
Ful fyn it is, and ther-to wel y-grave;  
This wol I yeve thee, if thou me kisse!'

This Nicholas was risen for to pisse,  
And thoghte he wolde amenden al the  
Iape,

He sholde kisse his ers er that he scape.  
And up the windowe dide he hastily 3801

And out his ers he putteth prively  
Over the buttok, to the haunche-bon;  
And ther-with spak this clerk, this Abso-  
lon,

'Spek, swete brid, I noot nat wher thou  
art.' 3805

This Nicholas anon leet flee a fart,  
As greet as it had been a thonder-dent,  
That with the strook he was almost  
y-blent;

And he was redy with his iren hoot,  
And Nicholas amidde the ers he smoot.

Of gooth the skin an hande-brede  
aboutē, 3811

The hote culter brende so his toute,  
And for the smert he wende for to dye.

As he were wood, for wo he gan to crye—  
'Help! water! water! help, for goddes  
herte!' 3815

This carpenter out of his slomber  
sterte,

And herde oon cryen 'water' as he were  
wood,

And thoghte, 'Allas! now comth Now-  
elis flood!'

He sit him up with-ouren wordes mo,  
And with his ax he smoot the corde a-  
two, 3820

And down goth al; he fond neither to  
selle,

Ne breed ne ale, til he cam to the selle  
Upon the floor; and ther aswowne he  
lay.

Up sterte hir Alison, and Nicholay,  
And cryden 'out' and 'harrow' in the  
strete. 3825

The neighebores, bothe smale and grete,  
In ronnen, for to gauren on this man,  
That yet aswowne he lay, bothe pale and  
wan;

For with the fal he brosten hadde his  
arm;



But stonde he moste un-to his owne  
harm. 3830  
For whan he spak, he was anon bore  
doun  
With hende Nicholas and Alisoun.  
They tolden every man that he was wood,  
He was agast so of 'Nowelis flood'  
Thurgh fantasye, that of his vanitee 3835  
He hadde y-boght him kneding-tubbes  
three,  
And hadde hem hanged in the roof  
above;  
And that he preyed hem, for goddes love,  
To sitten in the roof, *par companye*. 3839  
The folk gan laughan at his fantasye;  
In-to the roof they kyken and they gape,

And turned al his harm un-to a Iape.  
For what so that this carpenter answerde,  
It was for noght, no man his reson herde;  
With othes grete he was so sworn adoun,  
That he was holden wood in al the toun;  
For every clerk anon-right heeld with  
other. 3847  
They seyde, 'the man is wood, my leve  
brother;'  
And every wight gan laughen of this stryf.  
Thus swyved was the carpenteres wyf,  
For al his keping and his Ialousye;  
And Absolon hath kist hir nether yë;  
And Nicholas is scalded in the toute.  
This tale is doon, and god save al the  
route! 3854

*Here endeth the Millere his tale.*

## THE REEVE'S PROLOGUE.

*The prologe of the Reves tale.*

WHAN folk had laughen at this nyce cas  
Of Absolon and hende Nicholas, 3856  
Diverse folk diversely they seyde;  
But, for the more part, they loughe and  
pleyde,  
Ne at this tale I saugh no man him  
greve,  
But it were only Osewold the Reve, 3860  
By-cause he was of carpenteres craft.  
A litel ire is in his herte y-laft.  
He gan to grucche and blamed it a lyte.  
'So theek,' quod he, 'ful wel coude I  
yow quyte  
With blering of a proud milleres yë, 3865  
If that me liste speke of ribaudye.  
But ik am old, me list not pley for age;  
Gras-tyme is doon, my fodder is now  
forage,  
This whyte top wryteth myne olde yeres,  
Myn herte is al-so mowled as myne heres,  
But-if I fare as dooth an open-ers; 3871  
That ilke fruit is ever leng the wers,  
Til it be roten in mullok or in stree.  
We olde men, I drede, so fare we;  
Til we be roten, can we nat be rype; 3875  
We hopen ay, whyl that the world wol  
pype.  
For in oure wil ther stiketh ever a nayl,

To have an hoor heed and a grene tayl,  
As hath a leek; for thogh our might be  
goon,  
Our wil desireth folie ever in oon. 3880  
For whan we may nat doon, than wol we  
speke;  
Yet in our asshen olde is fyr y-reke.  
Foure gledes han we, whiche I shal  
devyse,  
Avaunting, lying, anger, coveityse;  
These foure sparkles longen un-to  
elde. 3885  
Our olde lemes mowe wel been unwelde,  
But wil ne shal nat failen, that is sooth.  
And yet ik have alwey a coltes tooth,  
As many a yeer as it is passed henne  
Sin that my tappe of lyf bigan to  
renne. 3890  
For sikerly, whan I was bore, anon  
Deeth drogh the tappe of lyf and leet it  
gon;  
And ever sith hath so the tappe y-ronne,  
Til that almost al empty is the tonne.  
The stream of lyf now droppeth on the  
chimbe; 3895  
The sely tonge may wel ringe and chimbe  
Of wrecchednesse that passed is ful yore;  
With olde folk, save dotage, is namore.'  
Whan that our host hadde herd this  
sermoning,

He gan to speke as lordly as a king; 3900  
 He seide, 'what amounteth al this  
 wit?  
 What shul we speke alday of holy  
 writ?  
 The devel made a reve for to preche,  
 And of a souter a shipman or a leche.  
 Sey forth thy tale, and tarie nat the  
 tyme, 3905  
 Lo, Depeford! and it is half-way pryme.  
 Lo, Grenewich, ther many a shrewe is  
 inne;  
 It were al tyme thy tale to biginne.'  
 'Now, sires,' quod this Osewold the  
 Reve,

'I pray yow alle that ye nat yow  
 greve, 3910  
 Thogh I answere and somdel sette his  
 howve;  
 For lefevel is with force force of-showve.  
 This dronke millere hath y-told us heer,  
 How that bigyled was a carpenteer,  
 Peraventure in scorn, for I am oon. 3915  
 And, by your leve, I shal him quyte  
 anoon;  
 Right in his cherles termes wol I speke.  
 I pray to god his nekke mote breke;  
 He can wel in myn yë seen a stalke,  
 But in his owne he can nat seen a  
 balke. 3920

### THE REVES TALE.

*Here biginneth the Reves tale.*

AT Trumpington, nat fer fro Cantebrigge,  
 Ther goth a brook and over that a brigge,  
 Up-on the whiche brook ther stant a  
 melle;  
 And this is verray soth that I yow telle.  
 A Miller was ther dwelling many a  
 day; 3925  
 As eny pekok he was proud and gay.  
 Pypen he coude and fissue, and nettes  
 bete,  
 And turne coppes, and wel wrastle and  
 shete;  
 And by his belt he baar a long panade,  
 And of a swerd ful trenchant was the  
 blade. 3930  
 A Ioly popper baar he in his pouche;  
 Ther was no man for peril dorste him  
 touche.  
 A Sheffield thwitel baar he in his hose;  
 Round was his face, and camuse was his  
 nose.  
 As piled as an ape was his skulle. 3935  
 He was a market-beter atte fulle.  
 Ther dorste no wight hand up-on him  
 legge,  
 That he ne swoor he sholde anon abegge.  
 A thief he was for sothe of corn and  
 mele,  
 And that a sly, and usaunt for to  
 stele. 3940

His name was hoten dëynous Simkin.  
 A wyf he hadde, y-comen of noble kin;  
 The person of the toun hir fader was.  
 With hir he yaf ful many a panne of  
 bras,  
 For that Simkin sholde in his blood  
 allye. 3945  
 She was y-fostred in a nonnerye;  
 For Simkin wolde no wyf, as he sayde,  
 But she were well y-norissed and a  
 mayde,  
 To saven his estaat of yomanrye.  
 And she was proud, and pert as is a  
 pye. 3950  
 A ful fair sighte was it on hem two;  
 On haly-dayes biforn hir wolde he go  
 With his tipet bounden about his heed,  
 And she cam after in a gyte of reed;  
 And Simkin hadde hosen of the  
 same. 3955  
 Ther dorste no wight clepen hir but  
 'dame.'  
 Was noon so hardy that wente by the  
 weye  
 That with hir dorste rage or ones pleye,  
 But-if he wolde be slayn of Simkin  
 With panade, or with knyf, or boyde-  
 kin. 3960  
 For Ialous folk ben perilous evermo,  
 Algate they wolde hir wyves wenden so.  
 And eek, for she was somdel smoterlich,  
 She was as digne as water in a dich;

And ful of hoker and of bisemare. 3965  
 Hir thoughte that a lady sholde hir spare,  
 What for hir kinrede and hir nortelrye  
 That she had lerned in the nonnerye.

A doghter hadde they bitwixe hem two  
 Of twenty yeer, with-outen any mo, 3970  
 Savinge a child that was of half-yeer  
 age;

In cradel it lay and was a propre page.  
 This wenche thikke and wel y-growen  
 was,

With camuse nose and yën greye as glas;  
 With buttokes brode and brestes rounde  
 and hye, 3975

But right fair was hir heer, I wol nat lye.  
 The person of the toun, for she was  
 feir,

In purpos was to maken hir his heir  
 Bothe of his catel and his messuage, 3979  
 And straunge he made it of hir mariage.  
 His purpos was for to bistowe hir hye  
 In-to som worthy blood of auncetrye;  
 For holy chirches good moot been de-  
 scended

On holy chirches blood, that is descended.  
 Therefore he wolde his holy blood hon-  
 oure, 3985

Though that he holy chirche sholde  
 devoure.

Gret soken hath this miller, out of  
 doute,

With whete and malt of al the land  
 aboute;

And nameliche ther was a greet collegge,  
 Men clepen the Soler-halle at Cante-  
 bregge, 3990

Ther was hir whete and eek hir malt  
 y-grounde.

And on a day it happed, in a stounde,  
 Sik lay the maunciple on a maladye;  
 Men wenden wisly that he sholde dye.

For which this miller stal bothe mele  
 and corn 3995

An hundred tyme more than biforn;  
 For ther-biforn he stal but curteisly,  
 But now he was a thief outrageously,

For which the wardeyn chidde and made  
 fare. 3999

But ther-of sette the miller nat a tare;  
 He craketh boost, and swoor it was nat  
 so.

Than were ther yonge povre clerkes  
 two,

That dwelten in this halle, of which I  
 seye.

Testif they were, and lusty for to pleye,  
 And, only for hir mirthe and revel-  
 rye, 4005

Up-on the wardeyn bisily they crye,  
 To yeve hem leve but a litel stounde  
 To goon to mille and seen hir corn  
 y-grounde;

And hardily, they dorste leye hir nekke,  
 The miller shold nat stele hem half a  
 pekke 4010

Of corn by sleighte, ne by force hem  
 reve;

And at the laste the wardeyn yaf hem  
 leve.

Iohn hight that oon, and Aleyn hight  
 that other;

Of o toun were they born, that highte  
 Strother,

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

This Aleyn maketh redy al his gere,  
 And on an hors the sak he caste anon.

Forth goth Aleyn the clerk, and also  
 Iohn,

With good swerd and with bokeler by  
 hir syde.

Iohn knew the wey, hem nedede no  
 gyde, 4020

And at the mille the sak adoun he  
 layth.

Aleyn spak first, 'al hayl, Symond, y-  
 fayth;

How fares thy faire doghter and thy  
 wyf?'

'Aleyn! welcome,' quod Simkin, 'by  
 my lyf,

And Iohn also, how now, what do ye  
 heer?' 4025

'Symond,' quod Iohn, 'by god, nede  
 has na peer;

Him boës serve him-selve that has na  
 swayn,

Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes sayn.  
 Our manciple, I hope he wil be deed,

Swa werkes ay the wanges in his  
 heed. 4030

And forthy is I come, and eek Alayn,  
 To grinde our corn and carie it ham  
 agayn;

I pray yow spede us hethen that ye  
 may.'

'It shal be doon,' quod Simkin, 'by  
 my fay;  
 What wol ye doon whyl that it is in  
 hande?' 4035  
 'By god, right by the hoper wil I  
 stande,'  
 Quod Iohn, 'and se how that the corn  
 gas in;  
 Yet saugh I never, by my fader kin,  
 How that the hoper wagges til and fra.'  
 Aleyn answerde, 'Iohn, and wiltow  
 swa, 4040  
 Than wil I be bynethe, by my croun,  
 And se how that the mele falles down  
 In-to the trough; that sal be my disport.  
 For Iohn, in faith, I may been of your  
 sort;  
 I is as ille a miller as are ye.' 4045  
 This miller smyled of hir nycetee,  
 And thoghte, 'al this nis doon but for a  
 wyle;  
 They wene that no man may hem bi-  
 gyle;  
 But, by my thrift, yet shal I blere hir  
 yē  
 For al the sleighte in hir philosophye.  
 The more queynte creakes that they  
 make, 4051  
 The more wol I stele whan I take.  
 In stede of flour, yet wol I yeve hem  
 bren.  
 "The gretteste clerkes been noght the  
 wysest men,"  
 As whylom to the wolf thus spak the  
 mare; 4055  
 Of al hir art I counte noght a tare.'  
 Out at the dore he gooth ful prively,  
 Whan that he saugh his tyme, softly;  
 He loketh up and down til he hath  
 founde  
 The clerkes hors, ther as it stood y-  
 bounde 4060  
 Bihinde the mille, under a levesel;  
 And to the hors he gooth him faire and  
 wel;  
 He strepeth of the brydel right anon.  
 And whan the hors was loos, he ginneth  
 gon  
 Toward the fen, ther wilde mares renne,  
 Forth with wehee, thurgh thikk and  
 thurgh thenne. 4066  
 This miller gooth agayn, no word he  
 seyde,

But dooth his note, and with the clerkes  
 pleyde,  
 Til that hir corn was faire and wel  
 y-grounde.  
 And whan the mele is sakked and y-  
 bounde, 4070  
 This Iohn goth out and fynt his hors  
 away,  
 And gan to crye 'harrow' and 'weyla-  
 way!  
 Our hors is lorn! Alayn, for goddes  
 banes,  
 Step on thy feet, com out, man, al at  
 anes!  
 Allas, our wardeyn has his palfrey lorn.'  
 This Aleyn al forgat, bothe mele and  
 corn, 4076  
 Al was out of his mynde his housbond-  
 ryre.  
 'What? whilk way is he geen?' he gan  
 to crye.  
 The wyf cam leping inward with a ren,  
 She seyde, 'allas! your hors goth to the  
 fen 4080  
 With wilde mares, as faste as he may go.  
 Unthank come on his hand that bond  
 him so,  
 And he that bettre sholde han knit the  
 reyne.'  
 'Allas,' quod Iohn, 'Aleyn, for Cristes  
 peyne,  
 Lay down thy swerd, and I wil myn  
 alswa; 4085  
 I is ful wight, god waat, as is a raa;  
 By goddes herte he sal nat scape us  
 bathe.  
 Why nadstow pit the capul in the lathe?  
 Il-hayl, by god, Aleyn, thou is a fonne!  
 This sely clerkes han ful faste y-ronne  
 To-ward the fen, bothe Aleyn and eek  
 Iohn 4091  
 And whan the miller saugh that they  
 were gon,  
 He half a busschel of hir flour hath  
 take,  
 And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake.  
 He seyde, 'I trowe the clerkes were  
 aferd; 4095  
 Yet can a miller make a clerkes berd  
 For al his art; now lat hem goon hir  
 weye.  
 Lo wher they goon, ye, lat the children  
 pleye;

They gete him nat so lightly, by my  
croun!

Thise sely clerkes rennen up and doun  
With 'keep, keep, stand, stand, Iossa,  
warderere, 4101

Ga whistle thou, and I shal kepe him  
here!

But shortly, til that it was verray night,  
They coude nat, though they do al hir  
might,

Hir capul cacche, he ran alwey so faste,  
Til in a dich they caughte him atte  
laste. 4106

Wery and weet, as beste is in the reyn,  
Comth sely Iohn, and with him comth  
Aleyn.

'Allas,' quod Iohn, 'the day that I was  
born!

Now are we drive til hething and til  
scorn. 4110

Our corn is stole, men wil us foles calle,  
Bathe the wardeyn and our felawes alle,  
And namely the miller; weylaway!

Thus pleyneth Iohn as he goth by the  
way

Toward the mille, and Bayard in his  
hond. 4115

The miller sitting by the fyr he fond,  
For it was night, and forther mighte  
they noght;

But, for the love of god, they him bi-  
soght

Of herberwe and of ese, as for hir peny.  
The miller seyde agayn, 'if ther be  
eny, 4120

Swich as it is, yet shal ye have your  
part.

Myn hous is streit, but ye han lerned  
art;

Ye conne by argumentes make a place  
A myle brood of twenty foot of space.  
Lat see now if this place may suffyse,  
Or make it roum with speche, as is youre  
gyse.' 4126

'Now, Symond,' seyde Iohn, 'by seint  
Cutberd,

Ay is thou mery, and this is faire an-  
swerd.

I have herd seyde, man sal taa of twa  
thinges

Slyk as he fyndes, or taa slyk as he  
bringes. 4130

But specially, I pray thee, hoste dere,

Get us som mete and drinke, and make  
us chere,

And we wil payen trewely atte fulle.  
With empty hand men may na haukes  
tulle;

Lo here our silver, redy for to spende.'  
This miller in-to toun his doghter  
sende 4136

For ale and breed, and rosted hem a  
goos,

And bond hir hors, it sholde nat gon  
loos;

And in his owne chambre hem made a  
bed

With shetes and with chalons faire y-  
spred, 4140

Noght from his owne bed ten foot or  
twelve.

His doghter hadde a bed, al by hir-selve,  
Right in the same chambre, by and by;  
It mighte be no bet, and cause why,

Ther was no roumer herberwe in the  
place. 4145

They soupen and they speke, hem to  
solace,

And drinken ever strong ale atte beste.  
Aboute midnight wente they to reste.

Wel hath this miller vernisshed his  
heed;

Ful pale he was for-dronken, and nat  
reed. 4150

He yexeth, and he speketh thurgh the  
nose

As he were on the quakke, or on the  
pose.

To bedde he gooth, and with him goth  
his wyf.

As any Iay she light was and Iolyf,  
So was hir Ioly whistle wel y-wet. 4155

The cradel at hir beddes feet is set,  
To rokken, and to yeve the child to  
souke.

And whan that dronken al was in the  
crouke, 4158

To bedde went the doghter right anon;  
To bedde gooth Aleyn and also Iohn;

Ther nas na more, hem nedede no dwale.  
This miller hath so wisly bidded ale,

That as an hors he snorteth in his sleep,  
Ne of his tayl bihinde he took no keep.

His wyf bar him a burdon, a ful strong,  
Men mighte hir routing here two fur-  
long; 4166

The wenche routeth eek *par companye*.

Aleyn the clerk, that herd this melodye,  
He poked Iohn, and seyde, 'slepewow?  
Herdestow ever slyk a sang er now? 4170  
Lo, whilk a compline is y-mel hem alle!  
A wilde fyr up-on thair bodyes falle!  
Wha herkened ever slyk a ferly thing?  
Ye, they sal have the flour of il ending.  
This lange night ther tydes me na  
reste; 4175

But yet, na fors; al sal be for the beste.  
For Iohn,' seyde he, 'als ever moot I  
thryve,

If that I may, yon wenche wil I swyve.  
Som esement has lawe y-shapen us;  
For Iohn, ther is a lawe that says  
thus, 4180

That gif a man in a point be y-greved,  
That in another he sal be releved.  
Our corn is stoln, shortly, it is na nay,  
And we han had an il fit al this day.  
And sin I sal have neen amendement, 4185  
Agayn my los I wil have esement.  
By goddes saule, it sal neen other be!'

This Iohn answerde, 'Alayn, avyse  
thee,

The miller is a perilous man,' he seyde,  
'And gif that he out of his sleep  
abreyde, 4190  
He mighte doon us bathe a vileinye.'

Aleyn answerde, 'I count him nat a  
flye;'

And up he rist, and by the wenche he  
crepte.

This wenche lay upright, and faste slepte,  
Til he so ny was, er she mighte  
espye, 4195

That it had been to late for to crye,  
And shortly for to seyn, they were at on;  
Now play, Aleyn! for I wol speke of  
Iohn.

This Iohn lyth stille a furlong-wey or  
two,

And to him-self he maketh routhe and  
wo: 4200

'Allas!' quod he, 'this is a wikked Iape;  
Now may I seyn that I is but an ape.  
Yet has my felawe som-what for his  
harm;

He has the milleris doghter in his arm.  
He aunted him, and has his nedes sped,  
And I lye as a draf-sek in my bed; 4206  
And when this Iape is tald another day,

I sal been halde a daf, a cokenay!

I wil aryse, and auntre it, by my fayth!  
'Unhardy is unsely," thus men  
sayth.' 4210

And up he roos and softely he wente  
Un-to the cradel, and in his hand it  
hente,

And baar it softe un-to his beddes feet.  
Sone after this the wyf hir routing leet,

And gan awake, and wente hir out to  
pisse, 4215

And gam agayn, and gan hir cradel  
misse,

And groped heer and ther, but she fond  
noon.

'Allas!' quod she, 'I hadde almost mis-  
goon;

I hadde almost gon to the clerkes bed.  
Ey, *benedicite!* thanne hadde I foule  
y-sped: 4220

And forth she gooth til she the cradel  
fond.

She gropeth alwey forther with hir hond,  
And fond the bed, and thoghte nought  
but good,

By-cause that the cradel by it stood,  
And niste wher she was, for it was  
derk; 4225

But faire and wel she creep in to the  
clerk,

And lyth ful stille, and wolde han caught  
a sleep.

With-inne a whyl this Iohn the clerk up  
leep,

And on this gode wyf he leyth on sore.  
So mery a fit ne hadde she nat ful  
yore; 4230

He priketh harde and depe as he were  
mad.

This Ioly lyf han thise two clerkes lad  
Til that the thridde cok bigan to singe.

Aleyn wex wery in the daweninge,  
For he had swonken al the longe  
night; 4235

And seyde, 'far wel, Malin, swete wight!  
The day is come, I may no lenger byde;  
But evermo, wher so I go or ryde,  
I is thyn awen clerk, swa have I seel!'

'Now dere lemman,' quod she, 'go,  
far weel! 4240

But er thou go, o thing I wol thee telle,  
Whan that thou wendest homward by  
the melle,

Right at the entree of the dore bihinde,  
 Thou shalt a cake of half a busshel finde  
 That was y-maked of thyn owne  
 mele, 4245  
 Which that I heelp my fader for to stele.  
 And, gode lemman, god thee save and  
 kepe!’  
 And with that word almost she gan to  
 wepe.

Aleyn up-rist, and thoughte, ‘er that it  
 dawe,  
 I wol go crepen in by my felawe;’ 4250  
 And fond the cradel with his hand anon,  
 ‘By god,’ thoghte he, ‘al wrang I have  
 misgon;

Myn heed is toty of my swink to-night,  
 That maketh me that I go nat aright.  
 I woot wel by the cradel, I have  
 misgo, 4255  
 Heer lyth the miller and his wyf also.’

And forth he goth, a twenty devel way,  
 Un-to the bed ther-as the miller lay.

He wende have copen by his felawe  
 Iohn;

And by the miller in he creep anon, 4260  
 And caughte hym by the nekke, and  
 softe he spak :

He seyde, ‘thou, Iohn, thou swynes-  
 heed, awak

For Cristes saule, and heer a noble game.  
 For by that lord that called is seint Iame,  
 As I have thryes, in this shorte night, 4265  
 Swyved the milleres doghter bolt-upright,  
 Whyl thow hast as a coward been agast.’

‘Ye, false harlot,’ quod the miller,  
 ‘hast?

A! false traitour! false clerk!’ quod he,  
 ‘Thou shalt be deed, by goddes dig-  
 nitee! 4270

Who dorste be so bold to disparage  
 My doghter, that is come of swich  
 linage?’

And by the throte-bolle he caughte  
 Alayn.

And he hente hym despitously agayn,  
 And on the nose he smoot him with his  
 fest. 4275

Doun ran the bloddy streem up-on his  
 brest;

And in the floor, with nose and mouth  
 to-broke,

They walwe as doon two pigges in a  
 poke.

And up they goon, and doun agayn  
 anon,  
 Til that the miller sporned at a  
 stoon, 4280

And doun he fil bakward up-on his wyf,  
 That wiste no-thing of this nyce stryf;  
 For she was falle aslepe a lyte wight  
 With Iohn the clerk, that waked hedde  
 al night.

And with the fal, out of hir sleep she  
 breyde — 4285  
 ‘Help, holy croys of Bromeholm,’ she  
 seyde,

*In manus tuas!* lord, to thee I calle!  
 Awak, Symond! the feend is on us falle,  
 Myn herte is broken, help, I nam but  
 deed;

There lyth oon up my wombe and up myn  
 heed; 4290

Help, Simkin, for the false clerkes fighte.’  
 This Iohn sterte up as faste as ever he  
 mighte,

And graspeth by the walles to and fro,  
 To finde a staf; and she sterte up also,  
 And knew the estres bet than dide this  
 Iohn, 4295

And by the wal a staf she fond anon,  
 And saugh a litel shimering of a light,  
 For at an hole in shoon the mone bright;  
 And by that light she saugh hem bothe  
 two,

But sikerly she niste who was who, 4300  
 But as she saugh a whyt thing in hir yē.  
 And whan she gan the whyte thing  
 espye,

She wende the clerk hadde wered a vol-  
 upeer.

And with the staf she drough ay neer and  
 neer,

And wende han hit this Aleyn at the  
 fulle, 4305

And smoot the miller on the pyled  
 skulle,

That doun he gooth and cryde, ‘harrow!  
 I dye!’

Thise clerkes bete him weel and lete him  
 lye;

And greythen hem, and toke hir hors  
 anon,

And eek hir mele, and on hir wey they  
 gon. 4310

And at the mille yet they toke hir cake  
 Of half a busshel flour, ful wel y-bake.

Thus is the proude miller wel y-bete,  
 And hath y-lost the grinding of the  
 whete,  
 And payed for the soper every-deel 4315  
 Of Aleyn and of Iohn, that bette him  
 weel.  
 His wyf is swyved, and his doghter als;  
 Lo, swich it is a miller to be fals!

And therefore this proverbe is seyde ful  
 sooth,  
 'Him thar nat wene wel that yvel  
 dooth; 4320  
 A gylour shal him-self bigyled be.'  
 And God, that sitteth heighe in magestee,  
 Save al this compagne grete and smale!  
 Thus have I quit the miller in my tale.

*Here is ended the Reves tale.*

## THE COOK'S PROLOGUE.

### *The prologe of the Cokes Tale.*

THE Cook of London, whyl the Reve  
 spak, 4325  
 For Ioye, him thoughte, he clawed him  
 on the bak,  
 'Ha! ha!' quod he, 'for Cristes pas-  
 sioun,  
 This miller hadde a sharp conclusioun  
 Upon his argument of herbergage!  
 Wel seyde Salomon in his langage, 4330  
 "Ne bringe nat every man in-to thyn  
 hous;"  
 For herberwing by nighte is perilous.  
 Wel oghte a man avysed for to be  
 Whom that he broghte in-to his privetee.  
 I pray to god, so yeve me sorwe and  
 care, 4335  
 If ever, sith I highte Hogge of Ware,  
 Herde I a miller bettre y-set a-werk.  
 He hadde a Iape of malice in the derk.  
 But god forbede that we stinten here;  
 And therefore, if ye vouche-sauf to  
 here 4340  
 A tale of me, that am a povre man,  
 I wol yow telle as wel as ever I can  
 A litel Iape that fil in our citee.'  
 Our host answerde, and seide, 'I  
 graunte it thee;  
 Now telle on, Roger, loke that it be  
 good; 4345

For many a pastee hastow laten blood,  
 And many a lakke of Dover hastow sold  
 That hath been twyes hoot and twyes  
 cold.  
 Of many a pilgrim hastow Cristes curs,  
 For of thy persly yet they fare the  
 wors, 4350  
 That they han eten with thy stubbel-  
 goos;  
 For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos.  
 Now telle on, gentil Roger, by thy name.  
 But yet I pray thee, be nat wrooth for  
 game,  
 A man may seye ful sooth in game and  
 pley.' 4355  
 'Thou seist ful sooth,' quod Roger,  
 'by my fey,  
 But "sooth pley, quaad pley," as the  
 Fleming seith;  
 And ther-fore, Herry Bailly, by thy feith,  
 Be thou nat wrooth, er we departen  
 heer,  
 Though that my tale be of an hos-  
 tileer. 4360  
 But nathelees I wol nat telle it yit,  
 But er we parte, y-wis, thou shalt be  
 quit.'  
 And ther-with-al he lough and made  
 chere,  
 And seyde his tale, as ye shul after  
 here.

*Thus endeth the Prologe of the Cokes tale*



## THE COKES TALE.

*Heer bigynneth the Cokes tale.*

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

For theste and riot, they ben conver-  
tible, 4395  
Al conne he pleye on giterne or ribible.  
Revel and trouthe, as in a low degree,  
They been ful wrothe al day, as men may  
see.  
This Ioly prentis with his maister  
bood, 4399  
Til he were ny out of his prentishood,  
Al were he snibbed bothe erly and late,  
And somtyme lad with revel to New-  
gate;  
But atte laste his maister him bithoghte,  
Up-on a day, whan he his paper soghte,  
Of a proverbe that seith this same word,  
'Wel bet is roten appel out of hord 4406  
Than that it rotie al the remenaunt.'  
So fareth it by a riotous servaunt;  
It is wel lasse harm to lete him pace,  
Than he shende alle the servants in the  
place. 4410  
Therefore his maister yaf him acquittance,  
And bad him go with sorwe and with  
meschance;  
And thus this Ioly prentis hadde his  
leve.  
Now lat him riote al the night or leve.  
And for ther is no theef with-oute a  
louke, 4415  
That helpeth him to wasten and to  
souke  
Of that he brybe can or borwe may,  
Anon he sente his bed and his array  
Un-to a compeer of his owne sort,  
That lovede dys and revel and disport,  
And hadde a wyf that heeld for counte-  
nance 4421  
A shoppe, and swyved for hir susten-  
ance.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Of this Cokes tale maketh Chaucer na more.*

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

## GROUP B.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE MAN OF LAW'S PROLOGUE.

*The wordes of the Hoost to the companye.*

OUR Hoste sey wel that the brighte  
sonne  
The ark of his artificial day had ronne  
The fourthe part, and half an houre, and  
more;  
And though he were not depe expert in  
lore,  
He wiste it was the eightetethe day 5  
Of April, that is messenger to May;  
And sey wel that the shadwe of every  
tree  
Was as in lengthe the same quantitee  
That was the body erect that caused it.  
And therfor by the shadwe he took his  
wit 10  
That Phebus, which that shoon so clere  
and brighte,  
Degrees was fyve and fourty clombe on  
highte;  
And for that day, as in that latitude,  
It was ten of the klokke, he gan con-  
clude,  
And sodeynly he plighte his hors aboute.  
'Lordinges,' quod he, 'I warne yow, al  
this route, 16  
The fourthe party of this day is goon;  
Now, for the love of god and of seint  
Iohn,  
Leseth no tyme, as ferforth as ye may;  
Lordinges, the tyme wasteth night and  
day, 20  
And steleth from us, what prively slep-  
inge,  
And what thurgh negligence in our wak-  
inge,  
As dooth the stream, that turneth never  
agayn,  
Descending fro the montaigne in-to  
playn. 24  
Wel can Senek, and many a philosopre  
Biwailen tyme, more than gold in cofre.  
"For los of catel may recovered be,  
But los of tyme shendeth us," quod he.  
It wol nat come agayn, with-outen drede,  
Na more than wol Malkins mayden-  
hede, 30

Whan she hath lost it in hir wantow-  
nesse;  
Lat us nat moulen thus in ydelnesse.  
'Sir man of lawe,' quod he, 'so have ye  
blis,  
Tel us a tale anon, as forward is;  
Ye been submitted thurgh your free  
assent 35  
To stonde in this cas at my Iugement.  
Acquiteth yow, and holdeth your biheste,  
Than have ye doon your devoir atte  
leste.'  
'Hoste,' quod he, '*depardieux* ich  
assente,  
To breke forward is not myn entente. 40  
Biheste is dette, and I wol holde fayn  
Al my biheste; I can no better seyn.  
For swich lawe as man yeveth another  
wight,  
He sholde him-selven usen it by right;  
Thus wol our text; but natheles cer-  
teyn 45  
I can right now no thrifty tale seyn,  
But Chaucer, though he can but lewedly  
On metres and on ryming craftily,  
Hath seyde hem in swich English as he  
can 49  
Of olde tyme, as knoweth many a man.  
And if he have not seyde hem, leve  
brother,  
In o book, he hath seyde hem in another.  
For he hath told of lovers up and doun  
Mo than Ovyde made of mencion  
In his Epistelles, that been ful olde. 55  
What sholde I tellen hem, sin they ben  
tolde?  
In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcion,  
And sithen hath he spoke of everichon,  
Thise noble wyves and thise lovers eke.  
Who-so that wol his large volume seke  
Clepeth the Seintes Legende of Cupyde,  
Ther may he seen the large woundes  
wyde 62  
Of Lucesse, and of Babilan Tisbee;  
The swerd of Dido for the false Enee;  
The tree of Phillis for hir Demophon; 65  
The pleinte of Dianire and Hermion,  
Of Adriane and of Isiphilee;

The bareyne yle standing in the see;  
 The dreynte Leander for his Erro;  
 The teres of Eleyne, and eek the wo 70  
 Of Brixseyde, and of thee, Ladamëa;  
 The crueltee of thee, queen Medëa,  
 Thy litel children hanging by the hals  
 For thy Iason, that was of love so  
 fals!

O Ypermistra, Penelopee, Alceste, 75  
 Your wyfhod he comendeth with the  
 beste!

But certainly no word ne wryteth he  
 Of thilke wikke ensample of Canacee,  
 That lovede hir owne brother sinfully;  
 Of swiche cursed stories I sey 'fy'; 80  
 Or elles of Tyro Apollonius,  
 How that the cursed king Antiochus  
 Birafte his doghter of hir maydenhede,  
 That is so horrible a tale for to rede,

When he hir threw up-on the pavement.  
 And therfor he, of ful avysement, 86  
 Nolde never wryte in none of his ser-  
 mouns

Of swiche unkinde abhominaciouns,  
 Ne I wol noon reherse, if that I may.

But of my tale how shal I doon this  
 day? 90

Me were looth be lykned, doutelees,  
 To Muses that men clepe Pierides —

*Metamorphoseos* wot what I mene: —  
 But nathelees, I recche nocht a bene  
 Though I come after him with hawe-  
 bake; 95

I speke in prose, and lat him rymes  
 make.'

And with that word he, with a sobre  
 chere,

Bigan his tale, as ye shal after here.

## THE PROLOGE OF THE MANNES TALE OF LAWE.

O HATEFUL harm! condicion of poverté!  
 With thurst, with cold, with hunger so  
 confounded! 100

To asken help thee shameth in thyn  
 herte;

If thou noon aske, with nede artow so  
 wounded,

That verray nede unwrappeth al thy  
 wounde hid!

Maugree thyn heed, thou most for indi-  
 gence

Or stele, or begge, or borwe thy de-  
 spence! 105

Thou blamest Crist, and seyst ful bit-  
 terly,

He misdeparteth richesse temporal;  
 Thy neighebour thou wytest sinfully,

And seyst thou hast to lyte, and he hath  
 al.

'Parfay,' seistow, 'somytyme he rekne  
 shal, 110

Whan that his tayl shal brennen in the  
 glede,

For he nocht helpeth needfulle in hir  
 nede.'

Herkne what is the sentence of the  
 wyse: —

'Bet is to dyën than have indigence;'  
 'Thy selve neighebour wol thee de-  
 spyse;'

If thou be povre, farwel thy reverence!  
 Yet of the wyse man tak this sentence: —

'Alle the dayes of povre men ben wikke;'  
 Be war therfor, er thou come in that  
 prikke!

'If thou be povre, thy brother hateth  
 thee, 120

And alle thy freendes fleen fro thee,  
 alas!'

O riche marchaunts, ful of wele ben ye,  
 O noble, o prudent folk, as in this cas!

Your bagges been nat filled with *ambes as*,

But with *sis cink*, than renneth for your  
 chance; 125

At Cristemasse merie may ye daunce!

Ye seken lond and see for your winninges,  
 As wyse folk ye knowen al thestaat

Of regnes; ye ben fadres of tydinges  
 And tales, bothe of pees and of debat.

I were right now of tales desolat, 131  
 Nere that a marchaunt, goon is many a

yere,  
 Me taughte a tale, which that ye shal  
 here.

## THE TALE OF THE MAN OF LAWE.

*Here beginneth the Man of Lawe his Tale.*

In Surrie whylom dwelte a companye  
Of chapmen riche, and therto sadde and  
trewe, 135

That wyde-wher senten her spycerye,  
Clothes of gold, and satins riche of hewe ;  
Her chaffar was so thrifty and so newe,  
That every wight hath deyntee to chaf-  
fare

With hem, and eek to sellen hem hir  
ware. 140

Now fel it, that the maistres of that sort  
Han shapen hem to Rome for to wende ;  
Were it for chapmanhode or for disport,  
Non other message wolde they thider  
sende,

But comen hem-self to Rome, this is the  
ende ; 145

And in swich place, as thoughte hem  
avantage

For her entente, they take her herber-  
gage.

Soiourned han thise marchants in that  
toun

A certain tyme, as fel to hir plesance.  
And so bifel, that the excellent renoun 150  
Of thempoures doghter, dame Cus-  
tance,

Reported was, with every circumstance,  
Un-to thise Surrien marchants in swich  
wyse,

Fro day to day, as I shal yow devyse.

This was the commune vois of every  
man— 155

‘ Our Emperour of Rome, god him see,  
A doghter hath that, sin the world bigan,  
To rekne as wel hir goodnesse as beautee,  
Nas never swich another as is she ;

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

In hir is heigh beautee, with-oute pryde,  
Yowthe, with-oute grenehede or folye ;

To alle hir werkes vertu is hir gyde,  
Hunblesse hath slayn in hir al tyrannye.  
She is mirour of alle curteisye ; 166

Hir herte is verray chambre of holi-  
nesse,

Hir hand, ministre of fredom for almesse.’

And al this vois was soth, as god is  
trewe,

But now to purpos lat us turne agayn ;  
Thise marchants han doon fraught hir  
shippes newe, 171

And, whan they han this blisful mayden  
seyn,

Hoom to Surrye been they went ful fayn,  
And doon her nedes as they han don  
yore,

And liven in wele ; I can sey yow no  
more. 175

Now fel it, that thise marchants stode in  
grace

Of him, that was the sowdan of Surrye ;  
For whan they came from any strange  
place,

He wolde, of his benigne curteisye,  
Make hem good chere, and bisily espye  
Tydings of sondry regnes, for to lere 181  
The wondres that they mighte seen or  
here.

Amonges othere thinges, specially  
Thise marchants han him told of dame  
Custance,

So gret noblesse in earnest, seriously, 185  
That this sowdan hath caught so gret  
plesance

To han hir figure in his remembrance,  
That al his lust and al his bisy cure  
Was for to love hir whyl his lyf may dure.

Paraventure in thilke large book 190  
Which that men clepe the heven, y-written  
was

With sterres, whan that he his birthe  
took,

That he for love shulde han his deeth,  
allas !

For in the sterres, clerer than is glas,

Is writen, god wot, who-so coude it  
rede, 195  
The death of every man, withouten  
drede.

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

This sowdan for his privee conseil sente,  
And, shortly of this mater for to pace,  
He hath to hem declared his entente, 206  
And seyde hem certain, 'but he mighte  
have grace  
To han Custance with-inne a litel space,  
He nas but deed;' and charged hem, in  
hye,  
To shapen for his lyf som remedye. 210

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

Than sawe they ther-in swich difficultee  
By wey of resoun, for to speke al playn  
By-cause that ther was swich diversitee  
Bitwene hir bothe lawes, that they sayn,  
They trowe 'that no Cristen prince wolde  
fayn 222  
Wedden his child under oure lawes swete  
That us were taught by Mahoun our  
prophete.'

And he answerde, 'rather than I lese 225  
Custance, I wol be cristned douteles ;  
I mot ben hires, I may non other chese.  
I prey yow holde your arguments in pees ;  
Saveth my lyf, and beeth noght recche-  
les 229  
To geten hir that hath my lyf in cure ;  
For in this wo I may not longe endure.'

What nedeth gretter dilatacioun ?  
I seye, by tretis and embassadrye,

And by the popes mediacioun,  
And al the chirche, and al the chiv-  
alrye, 235  
That, in destruccioun of Maumetrye,  
And in encrees of Cristes lawe dere,  
They ben acorded, so as ye shal here ;

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

Now wolde som men waiten, as I gesse,  
That I shulde tellen al the purveyance  
That themperour, of his grete noblesse,  
Hath shapen for his doghter dame  
Custance.

Wel may men knowe that so gret ordi-  
nance 250  
May no man tellen in a litel clause  
As was arrayed for so heigh a cause.

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

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

Allas ! what wonder is it though she  
wepte,  
That shal be sent to strange nacioun  
Fro freendes, that so tendrely hir kepte,

And to be bounden under subieccioun 270  
 Of oon, she knoweth not his condicioun.  
 Housbondes been alle gode, and han ben yore,  
 That knowen wyves, I dar say yow no more.

'Fader,' she sayde, 'thy wrecched child  
 Custance, 274  
 Thy yonge doghter, fostred up so softe,  
 And ye, my moder, my soverayn plesance  
 Over alle thing, out-taken Crist on-lofte,  
 Custance, your child, hir recomandeth ofte  
 Un-to your grace, for I shal to Surryë,  
 Ne shal I never seen yow more with yë. 280

Allas! un-to the Barbre nacioun  
 I moste anon, sin that it is your wille;  
 But Crist, that starf for our redempcioun,  
 So yeve me grace, his hestes to fulfille;  
 I, wrecche womman, no fors though I spille. 285  
 Wommen are born to thraldom and penance,  
 And to ben under mannes governance.'

I trowe, at Troye, whan Pirrus brak the wal  
 Or Ylion brende, at Thebes the citee,  
 Nat Rome, for the harm thurgh Hani-bal 290  
 That Romayns hath venquissed tymes thre,  
 Nas herd swich tendre weping for pitee  
 As in the chambre was for hir departinge;  
 Bot forth she moot, wher-so she wepe or singe.

O firste moevyng cruel firmament, 295  
 With thy diurnal sweigh that crowdest ay  
 And hurlest al from Est til Occident,  
 That naturelly wolde holde another way,  
 Thy crowding set the heven in swich array  
 At the beginning of this fiers viage, 300  
 That cruel Mars hath slayn this mariage.

Infortunat ascendent tortuous,  
 Of which the lord is helpes falle, alas!

Out of his angle in-to the derkest hous.  
 O Mars, O Atazir, as in this cas! 305  
 O feble mone, unhappy been thy pas!  
 Thou knittest thee ther thou art nat receyved,  
 Ther thou were weel, fro thennes artow weyved.

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

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

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

'Lordes,' quod she, 'ye knowen everichon, 330  
 How that my sone in point is for to lete  
 The holy lawes of our Alkaron,  
 Yeven by goddes message Makomete.  
 But oon avow to grete god I hete, 334  
 The lyf shal rather out of my body sterte  
 Than Makometes lawe out of myn herte!

What shulde us tyden of this newe lawe  
 But thraldom to our bodies and penance. 339  
 And afterward in hele to be drawe

For we reneyed Mahoun our cre-  
ance? 340

But, lordes, wol ye maken assurance,  
As I shal seyn, assenting to my lore,  
And I shall make us sauf for evermore?'

They sworn and assenten, every man,  
To live with hir and dye, and by hir  
stonde; 345  
And everich, in the beste wyse he can,  
To strengthen hir shal alle his freendes  
fonde;

And she hath this empryse y-take on  
honde,  
Which ye shal heren that I shal devyse,  
And to hem alle she spak right in this  
wyse. 350

'We shul first feyne us Cristendom to  
take,

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

O sowdanesse, rote of iniquitee,  
Virago, thou Semyram the secoude,  
O serpent under femininitee, 360  
Lyk to the serpent depe in helle  
y-bounde,

O feyned womman, al that may confoude  
Vertu and innocence, thurgh thy malyce,  
Is bred in thee, as nest of every vyce!

O Satan, envious sin thilke day 365  
That thou were chased from our heritage,  
Wel knowestow to wommen the olde  
way!

Thou madest Eva bringe us in servage.  
Thou wolt fordoon this Cristen mariage.  
Thyn instrument so, weylawey the  
whyle! 370  
Makestow of wommen, whan thou wolt  
begyle.

This sowdanesse, whom I thus blame and  
warie,  
Leet prively hir conseil goon <sup>his</sup> way.

What sholde I in this tale lenger tarie?  
She rydeth to the sowdan on a day, 375  
And seyde him, that she wolde reneye  
hir lay,  
And Cristendom of preestes handes  
fonge,  
Repenting hir she hethen was so longe,

Biseching him to doon hir that honour,  
That she moste han the Cristen men to  
feste; 380

'To plesen hem I wol do my labour.'  
The sowdan seith, 'I wol don at your  
heste,'

And kneling thanketh hir of that requeste.  
So glad he was, he niste what to seye;  
She kiste hir sone, and hoom she gooth  
hir weye. 385

*Explicit prima pars. Sequitur pars  
secunda.*

Arryved ben this Cristen folk to londe,  
In Surrie, with a greet solempne route,  
And hastily this sowdan sente his sonde,  
First to his moder, and al the regne  
aboute,

And seyde, his wyf was comen, out of  
doute, 390

And preyde hir for to ryde agayn the  
quene,

The honour of his regne to sustene.

Gret was the prees, and riche was tharray  
Of Surriens and Romayns met y-fere;  
The moder of the sowdan riche and gay,  
Receyveth hir with al-so glad a chere 396  
As any moder mighte hir doghter dere,  
And to the nexte citee ther bisyde  
A softe pas solempnely they ryde.

Noght trowe I the triumpe of Iulius, 400  
Of which that Lucan maketh swich a  
bost,

Was royaller, ne more curious  
Than was thassemblee of this blisful host.  
But this scorpioun, this wikked gost,  
The sowdanesse, for al hir flateringe, 405  
Caste under this ful mortally to stinge.

The sowdan comth him-self sone after  
this

So royally, that wonder is to telle,

And welcometh hir with alle Ioye and  
blis.

And thus in merthe and Ioye I lete hem  
dwelle. 410

The fruyt of this matere is that I telle.  
Whan tyme cam, men thoughte it for the  
beste

That revel stinte, and men goon to hir  
reste.

The tyme cam, this olde sowdanesse  
Ordeyned hath this feste of which I  
tolde, 415

And to the feste Cristen folk hem dresse  
In general, ye! bothe yonge and olde.  
Here may men feste and royalte biholde,  
And deyntees mo than I can yow devyse,  
But al to dere they boughte it er they  
ryse. 420

O sodeyn wo! that ever art successour  
To worldly blisse, spreynd with bitter-  
nesse;

Thende of the Ioye of our worldly labour;  
Wo occupieth the fyn of our gladnesse.  
Herke this conseil for thy sikernesse, 425  
Up-on thy glade day have in thy minde  
The unwar wo or harm that comth  
bihinde.

For shortly for to tellen at o word,  
The sowdan and the Cristen everichone  
Ben al to-hewe and stiked at the bord,  
But it were only dame Custance al-  
lone. 431

This olde sowdanesse, cursed crone,  
Hath with hir frendes doon this cursed  
dede,  
For she hir-self wolde al the contree lede.

Ne ther was Surrien noon that was con-  
verted 435

That of the conseil of the sowdan woot,  
That he nas al to-hewe er he asterted.  
And Custance han they take anon, foot-  
hoot,

And in a shippe al sterelees, god woot,  
They han hir set, and bidde hir lerne  
sayle 440

Out of Surrye agaynward to Itayle.

A certein tresor that she thider ladde,  
And, sooth to sayn, vitaille gret plentee

They han hir yeven, and clothes eek she  
hadde,

And forth she sayleth in the salte see. 445  
O my Custance, ful of benignitee,  
O emperoures yonge doghter dere,  
He that is lord of fortune be thy stere!

She blesseth hir, and with ful pitous voys  
Un-to the croys of Crist thus seyde  
she, 450

'O clere, o welful auter, holy croys,  
Reed of the lambes blood full of pitee,  
That wesch the world fro the olde iniqui-  
tee,

Me fro the feend, and fro his clawes kepe,  
That day that I shal drenchen in the  
depe. 455

Victorious tree, proteccioun of trewe,  
That only worthy were for to bere  
The king of heven with his woundes newe,  
The whyte lamb, that hurt was with the  
spere,

Flemer of feendes out of him and here 460  
On which thy limes feithfully extenden,  
Me keep, and yif me might my lyf  
tamenden.'

Yeres and dayes fleet this creature  
Thurghout the see of Grece un-to the  
strayte

Of Marrok, as it was hir aventure; 465  
On many a sory meel now may she bayte;  
After her deeth ful often may she wayte,  
Er that the wilde wawes wole hir dryve  
Un-to the place, ther she shal arryve.

Men mighten asken why she was not  
slayn? 470

Eek at the feste who mighte hir body  
save?

And I answer to that demaunde agayn,  
Who saved Daniel in the horrible cave,  
Ther every wight save he, maister and  
knave,

Was with the leoun frete er he as-  
terte? 475

No wight but god, that he bar in his  
herte.

God liste to shewe his wonderful miraclo  
In hir, for we sholde seen his mighty  
werkes;



Crist, which that is to every harm triacle,  
 By certein menes ofte, as knowen  
 clerkes, 480  
 Doth thing for certein ende that ful  
 derk is  
 To mannes wit, that for our ignorance  
 Ne conne not knowe his prudent pur-  
 veyance.

Now, sith she was not at the feste y-slawe,  
 Who kepte hir fro the drenching in the  
 see? 485

Who kepte Ionas in the fisshes mawe  
 Til he was spouted up at Ninivee?  
 Wel may men knowe it was no wight but  
 he  
 That kepte peple Ebraik fro hir drench-  
 inge,  
 With drye feet thurgh-out the see pass-  
 inge. 490

Who bad the foure spirits of tempest,  
 That power han tanoyen land and see,  
 'Bothe north and south, and also west  
 and est,  
 Anoyeth neither see, ne land, ne tree?'  
 Sothly, the comaundour of that was he,  
 That fro the tempest ay this womman  
 kepte 496  
 As wel whan [that] she wook as whan  
 she slepte.

Wher mighte this womman mete and  
 drinke have?  
 Three yeer and more how lasteth hir  
 vitaille?

Who fedde the Egipcien Marie in the  
 cave, 500  
 Or in desert? no wight but Crist, sans  
 faille.  
 Fyve thousand folk it was as gret mer-  
 vaille  
 With loves fyve and fisshes two to fede.  
 God sente his foison at hir grete nede.

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

The wille of Crist was that she shulde  
 abyde.

The constable of the castel down is fare  
 To seen this wrak, and al the ship he  
 soghte,  
 And fond this verry womman ful of care ;  
 He fond also the tresor that she broghte.  
 In hir langage mercy she bisoghte 516  
 The lyf out of hir body for to twinne,  
 Hir to delivere of wo that she was inne.

A maner Latin corrupt was hir speche,  
 But algates ther-by was she understonde ;  
 The constable, whan him list no lenger  
 seche, 521  
 This woful womman broghte he to the  
 londe;  
 She kneleth down, and thanketh goddes  
 sonde.  
 But what she was, she wolde no man  
 seye,  
 For foul ne fair, thogh that she shulde  
 deye. 525

She seyde, she was so mased in the see  
 That she forgat hir minde, by hir trouthe ;  
 The constable hath of hir so greet pitee,  
 And eek his wyf, that they wepen for  
 routhe,  
 She was so diligent, with-outen slouthe,  
 To serve and plesen everich in that  
 place, 531  
 That alle hir loven that loken on hir  
 face.

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

In al that lond no Cristen durste route,  
 Alle Cristen folk ben fled fro that con-  
 tree 541

Thurgh payens, that conquereden al  
aboute  
The plages of the North, by land and  
see;  
To walis fled the Cristianitee 544  
Of olde Britons, dwellinge in this yle;  
Ther was her refut for the mene whyle.

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

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

'In name of Crist,' cryde this blinde  
Britoun, 561  
'Dame Hermengild, yif me my sighte  
agayn.'  
This lady wex affrayed of the soun,  
Lest that hir housbond, shortly for to  
sayn,  
Wolde hir for Iesu Cristes love han  
slayn, 565  
Til Custance made hir bold, and bad hir  
werche  
The wil of Crist, as doghter of his  
chirche.

The constable wex abashed of that sight,  
And seyde, 'what amounteth al this  
fare?'  
Custance answerde, 'sire, it is Cristes  
might, 570  
That helpeth folk out of the feendes  
snare.'

And so ferforth she gan our lay declare,  
That she the constable, er that it were  
eve,  
Converted, and on Crist made him bi-  
leve.

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

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

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

Wery, for-waked in her orisouns,  
Slepeth Custance, and Hermengild also.  
This knight, thurgh Sathanas tempta-  
ciouns,  
Al softly is to the bed y-go,  
And kitte the throte of Hermengild  
a-two, 600  
And leyde the bloody knyf by dame  
Custance,  
And wente his wey, ther god yeve him  
meschance!  
Sone after comth this constable hoom  
agayn,

And eek Alla, that king was of that  
lond,

And saugh his wyf despitously y-slain,  
For which ful ofte he weep and wrong  
his hond, 606

And in the bed the bloody knyf he fond  
By dame Custance; allas! what mighte  
she seye?

For verray wo hir wit was al aweye.

To king Alla was told al this meschance,  
And eek the tyme, and where, and in  
what wyse 611

That in a ship was founden dame  
Custance,

As heer-biforn that ye han herd devyse.  
The kinges herte of pitee gan agryse,  
Whan he saugh so benigne a creature  
Falle in disese and in misaventure. 616

For as the lomb toward his deeth is  
brought,

So stant this innocent bifore the king;  
This false knight that hath this tresoun  
wroght

Berth hir on hond that she hath doon  
this thing. 620

But nathelees, ther was greet moorning  
Among the peple, and seyn, 'they can  
not gesse

That she hath doon so greet a wikked-  
nesse.

For they han seyn hir ever so vertuous,  
And loving Hermengild right as her lyf.  
Of this bar witness everich in that  
hous 626

Save he that Hermengild slow with his  
knyf.

This gentil king hath caught a gret mo-  
tyf

Of this witness, and thoghte he wolde  
enquere

Depper in this, a trouthe for to lere. 630

Allas! Custance! thou hast no cham-  
pioun,

Ne fighte canstow nought, so weyla-  
wey!

But he, that starf for our redemp-  
cioun

And bond Sathan (and yit lyth ther he  
lay)

So be thy stronge champioun this day!  
For, but-if Crist open miracle kythe, 636  
Withouten gilt thou shalt be slayn as  
swythe.

She sette her doun on knees, and thus  
she sayde,

'Immortal god, that savedest Susanne  
Fro false blame, and thou, merciful  
mayde, 640

Mary I mene, doghter to Seint Anne,  
Bifore whos child aungeles singe Osanne,  
If I be giltees of this felonye,  
My socour be, for elles I shal dye!'

Have ye nat seyn som tyme a pale  
face, 645

Among a prees, of him that hath be lad  
Toward his deeth, wher-as him gat no  
grace,

And swich a colour in his face hath had,  
Men mighte knowe his face, that was  
bistad,

Amonges alle the faces in that route: 650  
So stant Custance, and loketh hir aboute.

O quenes, livinge in prosperitee,  
Duchesses, and ye ladies everichone,  
Haveth som routhe on hir adversitee;  
An emperoures doghter stant allone; 655  
She hath no wight to whom to make hir  
mone.

O blood royal, that stondest in this drede,  
Fer ben thy freendes at thy grete nede!

This Alla king hath swich compassioun,  
As gentil herte is fulfild of pitee, 660  
That from his yën ran the water doun.

'Now hastily do fecche a book,' quod he,  
'And if this knight wol sweren how that  
she

This womman slow, yet wole we us avyse  
Whom that we wole that shal ben our  
lustyse.' 665

A Briton book, writen with Evangyles,  
Was fet, and on this book he swoor  
anoon

She gilty was, and in the mene whyles  
A hand him smoot upon the nekke-boon,  
That doun he fil atones as a stoon, 670  
And bothe his yën broste out of his face  
In sight of every body in that place.

A vois was herd in general audience,  
 And seyde, 'thou hast desclaundred  
 giltelees  
 The doghter of holy chirche in hey  
 presence; 675  
 Thus hastou doon, and yet holde I my  
 pees.'

Of this mervaille agast was al the prees;  
 As mased folk they stoden everichone,  
 For drede of wreche, save Custance  
 allone.

Greet was the drede and eek the repent-  
 ance 680

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

This false knight was slayn for his un-  
 trouthe

By Iugement of Alla hastify;  
 And yet Custance hadde of his deeth  
 gret routhe.

And after this Iesus, of his mercy, 690  
 Made Alla wedden ful solempnely  
 This holy mayden, that is so bright and  
 shene,  
 And thus hath Crist y-maad Custance a  
 quene.

But who was woful, if I shal nat lye,  
 Of this wedding, but Donegild, and na  
 mo, 695

The kinges moder, ful of tyrannye?  
 Hir thoughte hir cursed herte brast  
 a-two;

She wolde noght hir sone had do so;  
 Hir thoughte a despit, that he sholde  
 take

So strange a creature un-to his make. 700

Me list nat of the chaf nor of the stree  
 Maken so long a tale, as of the corn.

What sholde I tellen of the royaltee  
 At mariage, or which cours gooth biforn,  
 Who bloweth in a trompe or in an horn?  
 The fruit of every tale is for to seye; 706  
 They ete, and drinke, and daunce, and  
 singe, and playe.

They goon to bedde, as it was skile and  
 right;

For, thogh that wyves been ful holy  
 thinges,

They moste take in pacience at night 710  
 Swich maner necessaries as been ples-  
 inges

To folk that han y-wedded hem with  
 ringes,

And leye a lyte hir holinesse asyde  
 As for the tyme; it may no bet bityde.

On hir he gat a knave-child anoon, 715  
 And to a bishop and his constable eke

He took his wyf to kepe, whan he is  
 goon

To Scotland-ward, his fo-men for to seke;  
 Now faire Custance, that is so humble  
 and meke,

So longe is goon with childe, til that  
 stille 720

She halt hir chambre, abyding Cristes  
 wille.

The tyme is come, a knave-child she ber;  
 Mauricius at the font-stoon they him  
 calle;

This Constable dooth forth come a  
 messenger,

And wroot un-to his king, that cleped  
 was Alle, 725

How that this blisful tyding is bifalle,  
 And othere tydings speedful for to seye;  
 He takth the lettre, and forth he gooth  
 his weye.

This messenger, to doon his avantage, 729

Un-to the inges moder rydeth swythe,  
 And salueth hir ful faire in his langage,  
 'Madame,' quod he, 'ye may be glad and  
 blythe,

And thanke god an hundred thousand  
 sythe;

My lady quene hath child, with-uten  
 doute.

To Ioye and blisse of al this regne  
 aboute. 735

Lo, heer the lettres seled of this thing,  
 That I mot bere with al the haste I may;  
 If ye wol aught un-to your sone the  
 king,

I am your servant, bothe night and day.'

Donegild answerde, 'as now at this tyme,  
 nay; 740  
 But heer al night I wol thou take thy  
 reste,  
 Tomorwe wol I seye thee what me leste.'

This messenger drank sadly ale and wyn,  
 And stolen were his lettres prively  
 Out of his box, whyl he sleep as a swyn;  
 And countrefeted was ful subtilly 746  
 Another lettre, wrought ful sinfully,  
 Un-to the king direct of this matere  
 Fro his constable, as ye shul after here.

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

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

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

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

O Donegild, I ne have noon English  
 digne  
 Un-to thy malice and thy tyrannye!  
 And therfor to the feend I thee resigne,  
 Let him endyten of thy traitorye! 781  
 Fy, mannish, fy! o nay, by god, I lye,  
 Fy, *feendly* spirit, for I dar wel telle,  
 Though thou heer walke, thy spirit is in  
 helle!

This messenger comth fro the king agayn,  
 And at the kinges modres court he  
 lighte, 786  
 And she was of this messenger ful fayn,  
 And plesed him in al that ever she  
 mighte.  
 He drank, and wel his girdel underpighte.  
 He slepeth, and he snoreth in his gyse 790  
 Al night, un-til the sonne gan aryse.

Eft were his lettres stolen everichon  
 And countrefeted lettres in this wyse;  
 'The king comandeth his constable  
 anon,  
 Up peyne of hanging, and on heigh  
 Iuÿse, 795  
 That he ne sholde suffren in no wyse  
 Custance in-with his regne for tabyde  
 Thre dayes and a quarter of a tyde;

But in the same ship as he hir fond,  
 Hir and hir yonge sone, and al hir  
 gere, 800  
 He sholde putte, and croude hir fro the  
 lond,  
 And charge hir that she never eft come  
 there.'  
 O my Custance, wel may thy goost have  
 fere  
 And sleping in thy dreem been in pen-  
 ance,  
 When Donegild caste al this ordi-  
 nance! 805

This messenger on morwe, whan he wook,  
 Un-to the castel halt the nexte wey,  
 And to the constable he the lettre took;  
 And whan that he this pitous lettre sey,  
 Ful ofte he seyde 'allas!' and 'weyla-  
 wey!' 810  
 'Lord Crist,' quod he, 'how may this  
 world endure?  
 So ful of sinne is many a creature!

O mighty god, if that it be thy wille,  
 Sith thou art rightful Iuge, how may it  
 be  
 That thou wolt suffren innocents to  
 spille, 815  
 And wikked folk regne in prosperitee?  
 O good Custance, alas! so wo is me  
 That I mot be thy tormentour, or deye  
 On shames deeth; ther is noon other  
 weye!

Wepen bothe yonge and olde in al that  
 place, 820  
 When that the king this cursed lettre  
 sente,  
 And Custance, with a deedly pale face,  
 The ferthe day toward hir ship she  
 wente.  
 But natheles she taketh in good entente  
 The wille of Crist, and, kneling on the  
 stonde, 825  
 She seyde, 'lord! ay wel-com be thy  
 sonde!

He that me kepte fro the false blame  
 Why! I was on the londe amonges yow,  
 He can me kepe from harme and eek fro  
 shame  
 In salte see, al-though I se nat how. 830  
 As strong as ever he was, he is yet now.  
 In him triste I, and in his moder dere,  
 That is to me my seyl and eek my stere.'

Hir litel child lay weping in hir arm,  
 And kneling, pitously to him she  
 seyde, 835  
 'Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee non  
 harm.'  
 With that hir kerchef of hir heed she  
 breyde,  
 And over his litel yën she it leyde;  
 And in hir arm she lulleth it ful faste,  
 And in-to heven hir yën up she caste. 840

'Moder,' quod she, 'and mayde bright,  
 Marye,  
 Sooth is that thurgh wommannes egge-  
 ment  
 Mankind was lorn and damned ay to dye,  
 For which thy child was on a croys y-rent;  
 Thy blisful yën sawe al his torment; 845  
 Than is ther no comparisoun bitwene  
 Thy wo and any wo man may sustene.

Thou sawe thy child y-slayn bifor thyn  
 yën,  
 And yet now liveth my litel child, par-  
 fay!  
 Now, lady bright, to whom alle woful  
 cryën, 850  
 Thou glorie of wommanhede, thou faire  
 may,  
 Thou haven of refut, brighte sterre of  
 day,  
 Rewe on my child, that of thy gentillesse  
 Rewest on every rewful in distresse!

O litel child, alas! what is thy gilt, 855  
 That never wroughtest sinne as yet, par-  
 dee,  
 Why wil thyn harde fader han thee spilt?  
 O mercy, dere Constable!' quod she;  
 'As lat my litel child dwelle heer with  
 thee;  
 And if thou darst not saven him, for  
 blame, 860  
 So kis him ones in his fadres name!'

Ther-with she loketh bakward to the  
 londe,  
 And seyde, 'far-wel, housbond routh-  
 lees!'  
 And up she rist, and walketh doun the  
 stonde  
 Toward the ship; hir folweth al the  
 prees, 865  
 And ever she preyeth hir child to holde  
 his pees;  
 And taketh hir leve, and with an holy  
 entente  
 She blesseth hir; and in-to ship she  
 wente.

Vitailed was the ship, it is no drede,  
 Habundantly for hir, ful longe space, 870  
 And other necessities that sholde nede  
 She hadde y-nogh, heried be goddes  
 grace!  
 For wind and weder almighty god pur-  
 chace,  
 And bringe hir hoom! I can no bettre  
 seye;  
 But in the see she dryveth forth hir  
 weye. 875

*Explicit secunda pars. Sequitur pars  
 tercia.*

Alla the king comth hoom, sone after  
 this,  
 Unto his castel of the which I tolde, 877  
 And axeth wher his wyf and his child is.  
 The constable gan aboute his herte colde,  
 And pleynly al the maner he him tolde  
 As ye han herd, I can telle it no bettre,  
 And sheweth the king his seel and [eek]  
 his lettre,

And seyde, 'lord, as ye comaunded me  
 Up peyne of deeth, so have I doon, cer-  
 tein.'

This messenger tormented was til he 885  
 Moste biknowe and tellen, plat and plein,  
 Fro night to night, in what place he had  
 leyn.

And thus, by wit and subtil enqueringe,  
 Ymagined was by whom this harm gan  
 springe.

The hand was knowe that the lettre  
 wroot, 890

And al the venim of this cursed dede,  
 But in what wyse, certainly I noot.

Theffect is this, that Alla, out of drede,  
 His moder slow, that men may pleynly  
 rede,

For that she traitour was to hir li-  
 geaunce. 895

Thus endeth olde Donegild with mes-  
 chaunce.

The sorwe that this Alla, night and day,  
 Maketh for his wyf and for his child also,  
 Ther is no tonge that it telle may.

But now wol I un-to Custance go, 900  
 That fleteth in the see, in peyne and wo,  
 Fyve yeer and more, as lyked Cristes  
 sonde,

Er that hir ship approched un-to londe.

Under an hethen castel, atte laste,  
 Of which the name in my text nocht I  
 finde, 905

Custance and eek hir child the see up-  
 caste.

Almighty god, that saveth al mankinde,  
 Have on Custance and on hir child som  
 minde,

That fallen is in hethen land eft-sone,  
 In point to spille, as I shal telle yow  
 sone. 910

Doun from the castel comth ther many a  
 wight

To gauren on this ship and on Custance.  
 But shortly, from the castel, on a night,  
 The lordes styward — god yeve him mes-  
 chaunce! —

A theef, that had reneyed our cre-  
 aunce, 915

Com in-to ship allone, and seyde he  
 sholde

Hir lemman be, wher-so she wolde or  
 nolde.

Wo was this wrecched womman tho  
 bigon,

Hir child cryde, and she cryde pitously;  
 But blisful Marie heelp hir right  
 anon; 920

For with hir strugling wel and mightily  
 The theef fil over bord al sodeinly,  
 And in the see he dreynthe for ven-  
 geance;

And thus hath Crist unwemmed kept  
 Custance.

O foule lust of luxurie! lo, thyn  
 ende! *Auctor.*

Nat only that thou feyntest mannes  
 minde, 926

But verrailly thou wolt his body shende;  
 Thende of thy werk or of thy lustes  
 blinde

Is compleyning, how many-oon may men  
 finde

That nocht for werk som-tyme, but for  
 thentente 930

To doon this sinne, ben outhur sleyn or  
 shente!

How may this wayke womman han this  
 strengthe

Hir to defende agayn this renegat?  
 O Goliath, unmesurable of lengthe,  
 How mighte David make thee so mat,  
 So yong and of armure so desolat? 936  
 How dorste he loke up-on thy dredful  
 face?

Wel may men seen, it nas but goddes  
 grace!

Who yaf Iudith corage or hardinesse  
 To sleen him, Oloferus, in his tente, 940  
 And to deliveren out of wrecchednesse

The peple of god? I seye, for this entente,  
 That, right as god spirit of vigour sente  
 To hem, and saved hem out of mes-  
 chance,  
 So sente he might and vigour to  
 Custance. 945

Forth goth hir ship thurgh-out the  
 narwe mouth  
 Of Iubaltar and Septe, dryving ay, \* \* \*  
 Som-tyme West, som-tyme North and  
 South,  
 And som-tyme Est, ful many a very day,  
 Til Cristes moder (blessed be she  
 ay!) 950  
 Hath shapen, thurgh hir endeles good-  
 nesse,  
 To make an ende of al hir hevnesse.

Now lat us stinte of Custance but a  
 throwe,  
 And speke we of the Romain Emperour,  
 That out of Surrie hath by lettres  
 knowe 955  
 The slaughtre of Cristen folk, and dis-  
 honour  
 Don to his doghter by a fals traitour,  
 I mene the cursed wikked sowdanesse,  
 That at the feste leet sleen both more  
 and lesse.

For which this emperour hath sent  
 anon 960  
 His senatour, with royal ordinance,  
 And othere lordes, god wot, many oon,  
 On Surriens to taken heigh veñgeance.  
 They brennen, sleen, and bringe hem to  
 meschance  
 Ful many a day; but shortly, this is  
 thende, 965  
 Homward to Rome they shapen hem to  
 wende.

This senatour repaireth with victorie  
 To Rome-ward, sayling ful royally,  
 And mette the ship dryving, as seith the  
 storie,  
 In which Custance sit ful pitously. 970  
 No-thing ne knew he what she was, ne  
 why  
 She was in swich array; ne she nil seye  
 Of hir estaat, although she sholde deye.

He bringeth hir to Rome, and to his  
 wyf  
 He yaf hir, and hir yonge sone also; 975  
 And with the senatour she ladde her lyf.  
 Thus can our lady bringen out of wo  
 Woful Custance, and many another mo.  
 And longe tyme dwelled she in that  
 place,  
 In holy werkes ever, as was hir grace. 980

\* The senatoures wyf hir aunte was,  
 But for al that she knew hir never the  
 more;  
 I wol no lenger tarien in this cas,  
 But to king Alla, which I spak of yore,  
 That for his wyf wepeth and syketh  
 sore, 985  
 I wol retourne, and lete I wol Custance  
 Under the senatoures governance.

King Alla, which that hadde his moder  
 slayn,  
 Upon a day fil in swich repentance,  
 That, if I shortly tellen shal and plain,  
 To Rome he comth, to receyven his  
 penance; 991  
 And putte him in the popes ordinance  
 In heigh and low, and Iesu Crist bisoghte  
 Foryeve his wikked werkes that he  
 wroghte.

The fame anon thurgh Rome toun is  
 born, 995  
 How Alla king shal come in pilgrimage,  
 By herbergeours that wenten him biforn;  
 For which the senatour, as was usage,  
 Rood him ageyn, and many of his linage,  
 As wel to shewen his heighe magnifi-  
 cence 1000  
 As to don any king a reverence.

Greet chere dooth this noble senatour  
 To king Alla, and he to him also;  
 Everich of hem doth other greet honour;  
 And so bifel that, in a day or two, 1005  
 This senatour is to king Alla go  
 To feste, and shortly, if I shal nat lye,  
 Cstances sone wente in his companye.

Som men wolde seyn, at requeste of  
 Custance,  
 This senatour hath lad this child to  
 feste; 1010



I may nat tellen every circumstance,  
 Be as be may, ther was he at the leste.  
 But soth is this, that, at his modres  
 heste,  
 Biforn Alla, during the metes space,  
 The child stood, loking in the kinges  
 face. 1015

This Alla king hath of this child greet  
 wonder,  
 And to the senatour he seyde anon,  
 'Whos is that faire child that stondesth  
 yonder?'  
 'I moot,' quod he, 'by god, and by seint  
 Iohn!  
 A moder he hath, but fader hath he non  
 That I of woot'—but shortly, in a  
 stounde, 1021  
 He tolde Alla how that this child was  
 founde.

'But god wot,' quod this senatour also,  
 'So vertuous a livere in my lyf,  
 Ne saugh I never as she, ne herde of mo  
 Of worldly wommen, mayden, nor of  
 wyf; 1026  
 I dar wel seyn hir hadde lever a knyf  
 Thurgh-out her breste, than been a wom-  
 man wikke;  
 Ther is no man coude bringe hir to that  
 prikke.'

Now was this childe as lyk un-to  
 Custance 1030  
 As possible is a creature to be.  
 This Alla hath the face in remembrance  
 Of dame Custance, and ther-on mused he  
 If that the childes moder were aught  
 she  
 That was his wyf, and prively he sighte,  
 And spedde him fro the table that he  
 mighte. 1036

'Parfay,' thoghte he, 'fantome is in myn  
 heed!  
 I oghte deme, of skilful Iugement,  
 That in the salte see my wyf is deed.'  
 And afterward he made his argument—  
 'What woot I, if that Crist have hider  
 y-sent 1041  
 My wyf by see, as wel as he hir sente  
 To my contree fro thennes that she  
 wente?'

And, after noon, hoom with the senatour  
 Goth Alla, for to seen this wonder  
 chaunce. 1045

This senatour dooth Alla greet honour,  
 And hastily he sente after Custaunce.  
 But trusteth weel, hir liste nat to daunce  
 Whan that she wiste wherefor was that  
 sonde.

Unnethe up-on hir feet she mighte  
 stonde. 1050

When Alla saugh his wyf, faire he hir  
 grette,  
 And weep, that it was routhe for to see.  
 For at the firste look he on hir sette  
 He knew wel verraily that it was she.  
 And she for sorwe as domb stant as a  
 tree; 1055

So was hir herte shet in hir distresse  
 Whan she remembered his unkindnesse.

Twyës she swowned in his owne sighte;  
 He weep, and him excuseth pitously:—  
 'Now god,' quod he, 'and alle his halwes  
 brighte 1060

So wisly on my soule as have mercy,  
 That of your harm as giltelees am I  
 As is Maurice my sone so lyk your  
 face;  
 Elles the feend me fecche out of this  
 place!'

Long was the sobbing and the bitter  
 peyne 1065

Er that hir woful hertes mighte cesse;  
 Greet was the pitee for to here hem  
 pleyn,  
 Thurgh whiche pleintes gan hir wo en-  
 cresse.

I prey yow al my labour to relesse;  
 I may nat telle hir wo un-til tomorwe,  
 I am so wery for to speke of sorwe. 1071

But fynally, when that the sooth is wist  
 That Alla giltelees was of hir wo,  
 I trowe an hundred tymes been they  
 kist,

And swich a blisse is ther bitwix hem  
 two 1075

That, save the Ioye that lasteth evermo,  
 Ther is non lyk, that any creature  
 Hath seyn or shal, whyl that the world  
 may dure.

Tho preyde she hir housbond mekely,  
 In relief of hir longe pitous pyne, 1080  
 That he wold preye hir fader specially  
 That, of his magestee, he wolde enclyne  
 To vouche-sauf som day with him to  
 dyne;  
 She preyde him eek, he sholde by no  
 weye  
 Un-to hir fader no word of hir seye. 1085

Som men wold seyn, how that the child  
 Maurice  
 Doth this message un-to this emperour;  
 But, as I gesse, Alla was nat so nyce  
 To him, that was of so sovereyn honour  
 As he that is of Cristen folk the flour, 1090  
 Sente any child, but it is bet to deme  
 He wente him-self, and so it may wel  
 seme.

This emperour hath graunted gentilly  
 To come to diner, as he him bisoghte;  
 And wel rede I, he loked bisily 1095  
 Up-on this child, and on his doghter  
 thoghte  
 Alla goth to his in, and, as him oghte,  
 Arrayed for this feste in every wyse  
 As ferforth as his conning may suffyse.

The morwe cam, and Alla gan him  
 dresse, 1100  
 And eek his wyf, this emperour to  
 mete;  
 And forth they ryde in Ioye and in glad-  
 nesse.  
 And whan she saugh hir fader in the  
 strete,  
 She lighte doun, and falleth him to  
 fete.  
 'Fader,' quod she, 'your yonge child  
 Custance 1105  
 Is now ful clene out of your remem-  
 brance.

I am your doghter Custance,' quod she,  
 'That whylom ye han sent un-to Surrye.  
 It am I, fader, that in the salte see  
 Was put allone and dampned for to  
 dye. 1110  
 Now, gode fader, mercy I yow crye,  
 Send me namore un-to non hethenese,  
 But thanketh my lord heer of his kinde-  
 nesse.'

Who can the pitous Ioye tellen al  
 Bitwix hem three, sin they ben thus  
 y-mette? 1115  
 But of my tale made an ende I shal;  
 The day goth faste, I wol no lenger  
 lette.  
 This glade folk to diner they hem sette;  
 In Ioye and blisse at mete I lette hem  
 dwelle  
 A thousand fold wel more than I can  
 telle. 1120

This child Maurice was sithen emperour  
 Maad by the pope, and lived cristenly.  
 To Cristes chirche he dide greet honour;  
 But I lete al his storie passen by,  
 Of Custance is my tale specially. 1125  
 In olde Romayn gestes may men finde  
 Maurices lyf; I bere it noght in minde.

This king Alla, whan he his tyme sey,  
 With his Custance, his holy wyf so  
 swete,  
 To Engelond been they come the righte  
 wey, 1130  
 Wher-as they live in Ioye and in quiete.  
 But litel whyl it lasteth, I yow hete,  
 Ioye of this world, for tyme wol nat  
 abyde;  
 Fro day to night it changeth as the  
 tyde.

Who lived ever in swich delyt o day 1135  
 That him ne moeved outhur conscience,  
 Or ire, or talent, or som kin affray,  
 Envye, or pryde, or passion, or offence?  
 I ne seye but for this ende this sen-  
 tence, 1139  
 That litel whyl in Ioye or in plesance  
 Lasteth the blisse of Alla with Custance.

For deeth, that taketh of heigh and low  
 his rente,  
 When passed was a yeer, even as I  
 gesse,  
 Out of this world this king Alla he  
 hente,  
 For whom Custance hath ful gret hevi-  
 nesse. 1145  
 Now lat us preyen god his soule blesse!  
 And dame Custance, fynally to seye,  
 Towards the toun of Rome gooth hir  
 weye.

To Rome is come this holy creature,  
And fyndeth ther hir frendes hole and  
sounde: 1150

Now is she scaped al hir aventure;  
And whan that she hir fader hath y-  
founde,

Doun on hir kneës falleth she to  
grounde;

Weping for tendrenesse in herte blythe,  
She herieth god an hundred thousand  
sythe. 1155

*Here endeth the Tale of the Man of Lawe; and next foloweth the Shipmannes Prolog.*

In vertu and in holy almes-dede  
They liven alle, and never a-sonder  
wende;

Til deeth departed hem, this lyf they lede.  
And fareth now weel, my tale is at an  
ende.

Now Iesu Crist, that of his might may  
sende 1160

Ioye after wo, governe us in his grace,  
And kepe us alle that ben in this place!  
Amen.

### THE SHIPMAN'S PROLOGUE.

*Here biginneth the Shipmannes Prolog.*

OUR hoste up-on his stiropes stood anon,  
And seyde, 'good men, herkneth everich  
on;

This was a thrifty tale for the nones! 1165  
Sir parish prest,' quod he, 'for goddes  
bones,

Tel us a tale, as was thy forward yore.

I see wel that ye lerned men in lore  
Can moche good, by goddes dignitee!'

The Persone him answerde, '*benedi-  
cite!*' 1170

What eyleth the man, so sinfully to  
swere?'

Our hoste answerde, 'O Iankin, be ye  
there?'

I smelle a loller in the wind,' quod he.

'How! good men,' quod our hoste, 'herk-  
neth me;

Abydeth, for goddes digne passioun, 1175  
For we shal han a predicacioun;  
This loller heer wil prechen us som-  
what.'

'Nay, by my fader soule! that shal be  
nat,'

Seyed the Shipman; 'heer he shal nat  
preche,

He shal no gospel glosen heer ne  
teche. 1180

We leve alle in the grete god,' quod he,  
'He wolde sowen som difficultee,

Or springen cokkel in our clene corn;  
And therfor, hoste, I warne thee biforn,

My Ioly body shal a tale telle, 1185  
And I shal clinken yow so mery a belle,

That I shal waken al this companye;  
But it shal nat ben of philosophye,

Ne *physices*, ne termes queinte of lawe;  
Ther is but litel Latin in my mawe.' 1190

*Here endeth the Shipman his Prolog.*

### THE SHIPMANNES TALE.

*Here biginneth the Shipmannes Tale.*

A MERCHANT whylom dwelled at Seint  
Denys,

That riche was, for which men helde him  
wys;

A wyf he hadde of excellent beautee,  
And compaignable and revelous was

she,

Which is a thing that causeth more dis-  
pence 1195

Than worth is al the chere and reverence  
That men hem doon at festes and at  
daunces;

Swiche salutaciouns and contenaunces  
Passen as dooth a shadwe up-on the wal.

But wo is him that payen moot for  
al; 1200

The sely housbond, algate he mot paye;  
He moot us clothe, and he moot us  
arraye,

Al for his owene worship richely,  
In which array we daunce lolily.  
And if that he noght may, par-aven-  
ture, 1205

Or elles, list no swich dispence endure,  
But thinketh it is wasted and y-lost,  
Than moot another payen for our cost,  
Or lene us gold, and that is perilous.

This noble Marchant heeld a worthy  
hous, 1210

For which he hadde alday so greet re-  
pair

For his largesse, and for his wyf was  
fair,

That wonder is; but herkneth to my  
tale.

Amonges alle his gestes, grete and  
smale,

Ther was a monk, a fair man and a  
bold, 1215

I trowe of thritty winter he was old,  
That ever in oon was drawing to that  
place.

This yonge monk, that was so fair of  
face,

Aqueinted was so with the gode man,  
Sith that hir firste knoweliche bigan, 1220  
That in his hous as famulier was he  
As it possible is any freend to be.

And for as muchel as this gode man  
And eek this monk, of which that I  
bigan,

Were bothe two y-born in o village, 1225  
The monk him claimeth as for cosinage;  
And he again, he seith nat ones nay,  
But was as glad ther-of as fowel of day;  
For to his herte it was a greet plesaunce.  
Thus been they knit with eterne alli-  
aunce, 1230

And ech of hem gan other for tassure  
Of bretherhede, whyl that hir lyf may  
dure.

Free was daun Iohn, and namely of  
dispence,

As in that hous; and ful of diligence  
To doon plesaunce, and also greet cos-  
tage. 1235

He noght forgat to yeve the leeste page  
In al that hous; but, after hir degree,  
He yaf the lord, and sitthe al his meynee,

When that he cam, som maner honest  
thing;

For which they were as glad of his com-  
ing 1240

As fowel is fayn, whan that the sonne  
up-ryseth.

Na more of this as now, for it suffyseth.

But so bifel, this marchant on a day  
Shoop him to make redy his array  
Toward the toun of Brugges for to  
fare, 1245

To byën ther a porcioun of ware;  
For which he hath to Paris sent anon

A messenger, and preyed hath daun Iohn  
That he sholde come to Seint Denys to  
pleye

With him and with his wyf a day or  
tweye, 1250

Er he to Brugges wente, in alle wyse.

This noble monk, of which I yow de-  
vyse,

Hath of his abbot, as him list, licence,  
By-cause he was a man of heigh pru-  
dence,

And eek an officer, out for to ryde, 1255  
To seen hir graunges and hir bernes  
wyde;

And un-to Seint Denys he comth anon.  
Who was so welcome as my lord daun  
Iohn,

Our dere cosin, ful of curteisye?  
With him broghte he a Iubbe of Mal-  
vesye, 1260

And eek another, ful of fyn Vernage,  
And volatyl, as ay was his usage.

And thus I lete hem ete and drinke and  
pleye,

This marchant and this monk, a day or  
tweye.

The thridde day, this marchant up arys-  
eth, 1265

And on his nedes sadly him avyseth,  
And up in-to his countour-hous goth he  
To rekene with him-self, as wel may be,  
Of thilke yeer, how that it with him  
stood,

And how that he despended hadde his  
good; 1270

And if that he encessed were or noon.  
His bokes and his bagges many oon  
He leith biforn him on his counting-  
bord;

Ful riche was his tresor and his hord.

For which ful faste his countour-dore he  
shette ; 1275

And eek he nolde that no man sholde  
him lette

Of his accountes, for the mene tyme;  
And thus he sit til it was passed pryme.

Daun Iohn was risen in the morwe  
also,

And in the gardin walketh to and  
fro, 1280

And hath his thinges seyde ful curteisly.

This gode wyf cam walking prively  
In-to the gardin, ther he walketh softe,  
And him saleweth, as she hath don ofte.

A mayde child cam in hir companye, 1285  
Which as hir list she may governe and  
gye,

For yet under the yerde was the mayde.  
O dere cosin myn, daun Iohn,' she  
sayde,

What eyleth yow so rathe for to ryse ?'  
Nece,' quod he, 'it oghte y-nough  
suffyse 1290

Fyve houres for to slepe up-on a night,  
But it were for an old appalled wight,  
As been thise wedded men, that lye and  
dare

As in a forme sit a wery hare,  
Were al for-straught with houndes grete  
and smale. 1295

But dere nece, why be ye so pale ?  
trowe certes that our gode man

Iath yow laboured sith the night bigan,  
That yow were nede to resten hastily ?'

And with that word he lough ful merily,  
And of his owene thought he wex al  
reed. 1301

This faire wyf gan for to shake hir  
heed,

and seyde thus, 'ye, god wot al,' quod  
she;

Nay, cosin myn, it stant nat so with  
me.

'or, by that god that yaf me soule and  
lyf, 1305

n al the reme of France is ther no wyf  
that lasse lust hath to that sory pley.

'or I may singe "allas" and "weyla-  
wey,

that I was born," but to no wight,' quod  
she,

Dar I nat telle how that it stant with  
me. 1310

Wherefore I thinke out of this land to  
wende,

Or elles of my-self to make an ende,  
So ful am I of drede and eek of care.'

This monk bigan up-on this wyf to  
stare,

And seyde, 'allas, my nece, god for-  
bede 1315

That ye, for any sorwe or any drede,  
Fordo your-self; but telleth me your  
grief;

Paraventure I may, in your meschief,  
Conseille or helpe, and therefore telleth  
me

Al yow any, for it shal been secree; 1320  
For on my porthors here I make an ooth,  
That never in my lyf, for lief ne looth,  
Ne shal I of no conseil yow biwreye.'

'The same agayn to yow,' quod she,  
'I seye;

By god and by this porthors, I yow  
swere, 1325

Though men me wolde al in-to peces  
tere,

Ne shal I never, for to goon to helle,  
Biwreye a word of thing that ye me telle,  
Nat for no cosinage ne alliance,

But verraily, for love and affiance.' 1330  
Thus been they sworn, and heer-upon  
they kiste,

And ech of hem tolde other what hem  
liste.

'Cosin,' quod she, 'if that I hadde a  
space,

As I have noon, and namely in this  
place, 1334

Than wolde I telle a legende of my lyf,  
What I have suffred sith I was a wyf  
With myn housbonde, al be he your  
cosyn.'

'Nay,' quod this monk, 'by god and  
seint Martyn,

He is na more cosin un-to me

Than is this leef that hangeth on the  
tree! 1340

I clepe him so, by Seint Denys of  
Fraunce,

To have the more cause of aqueintaunce  
Of yow, which I have loved specially  
Aboven alle women sikerly;

This swere I yow on my professioun.  
Telleth your grief, lest that he come  
adoun, 1346

And hasteth yow, and gooth your wey anon.'

'My dere love,' quod she, 'o my daun Iohn,

Ful lief were me this conseil for to hyde,  
But out it moot, I may namore abyde.

Myn housbond is to me the worste man  
That ever was, sith that the world bigan.

But sith I am a wyf, it sit nat me  
To tellen no wight of our privete,

Neither a bedde, ne in non other place;  
God shilde I sholde it tellen, for his  
grace! 1356

A wyf ne shal nat seyn of hir housbonde  
But al honour, as I can understonde;

Save un-to yow thus muche I tellen shal;  
As help me god, he is noight worth at

al 1360

In no degree the value of a flye.

But yet me greveth most his nigardye;

And wel ye woot that wommen naturelly  
Desyren thinges sixe, as wel as I.

They wolde that hir housbondes sholde  
be 1365

Hardy, and wyse, and riche, and ther-to  
free,

And buxom to his wyf, and fresh a-bedde.

But, by that ilke lord that for us bledde,

For his honour, my-self for to arraye,

A Sondag next, I moste nedes paye 1370

An hundred frankes, or elles am I lorn.

Yet were me lever that I were unborn

Than me were doon a sclandre or  
vileinye;

And if myn housbond eek it mighte  
espye,

I nere but lost, and therefore I yow preye

Lene me this somme, or elles moot I  
deye. 1376

Daun Iohn, I seye, lene me thise hun-  
dred frankes;

Pardee, I wol nat faille yow my thanks,

If that yow list to doon that I yow  
praye.

For at a certein day I wol yow paye,

And doon to yow what plesance and  
servyce 1381

That I may doon, right as yow list  
devyse.

And but I do, god take on me ven-  
geance

As foul as ever had Geniloun of  
France!

This gentil monk answerde in this  
manere; 1385

'Now, trewely, myn owene lady dere,  
I have,' quod he, 'on yow so greta

routhe,

That I yow swere and plighte yow my  
trouthe,

That whan your housbond is to Flaun-  
dres fare,

I wol delivere yow out of this care; 1390

For I wol bringe yow an hundred  
frankes.'

And with that word he caughte hir by  
the flankes,

And hir embraceth harde, and kiste hir  
ofte.

'Goth now your wey,' quod he, 'al stille  
and softe,

And lat us dyne as sone as that ye may;

For by my chilindre it is pryme of day.

Goth now, and beeth as trewe as I shal  
be.'

'Now, elles god forbede, sire,' quod  
she,

And forth she gooth, as Iolif as a pye,  
And bad the cokes that they sholde hem

hye, 1400

So that men mighte dyne, and that anon.

Up to hir housbonde is this wyf y-gon,

And knokketh at his countour boldely.

'*Qui la?*' quod he. 'Peter! it am I,'

Quod she, 'what, sire, how longe wol ye  
faste? 1405

How longe tyme wol ye rekene and  
caste

Your sommes, and your bokes, and your  
thinges?

The devel have part of alle swiche reken-  
inges!

Ye have y-nough, pardee, of goddes  
sonde;

Come doun to-day, and lat your bagges  
stonde. 1410

Ne be ye nat ashamed that daun Iohn

Shal fasting al this day elenge goon?

What! lat us here a messe, and go we  
dyne.'

'Wyf,' quod this man, 'litel canstow  
devyne

The curious businesse that we have. 1415

For of us chapmen, al-so god me save,

And by that lord that cleped is Seint  
Yve,

Scarsly amonges twelve ten shul thryve,  
Continuelly, lastinge un-to our age.

We may wel make chere and good  
visage, 1420

And dryve forth the world as it may be,  
And kepen our estaat in privetee,  
Til we be deed, or elles that we pleye  
A pilgrimage, or goon out of the weye.

And therfor have I greet necessitee 1425  
Up-on this queinte world tavyse me;  
For evermore we mote stonde in drede  
Of hap and fortune in our chapmanhede.

To Flaundres wol I go to-morwe at  
day,

And come agayn, as sone as ever I may.  
For which, my dere wyf, I thee biseke,  
As be to every wight buxom and meke,  
And for to kepe our good be curious,  
And honestly governe wel our hous.

Thou hast y-nough, in every maner  
wyse, 1435

That to a thrifty houshold may suffyse.  
Thee lakketh noon array ne no vitaille,  
Of silver in thy purs shaltow nat faille.'  
And with that word his countour-dore he  
shette,

And doun he gooth, ne lenger wolde he  
lette, 1440

But hastily a messe was ther seyde,  
And spedily the tables were y-leyde,  
And to the diner faste they hem spedde;  
And richely this monk the chapman  
fedde.

At-after diner daun Iohn sobrelly 1445  
This chapman-took a-part, and prively  
He seyde him thus, 'cosyn, it standeth  
so,

That wel I see to Brugges wol ye go.  
God and seint Austin spede yow and  
gyde!

I prey yow, cosyn, wysly that ye ryde;  
Governeyth yow also of your diete 1451  
Atemprely, and namely in this hete.

Bitwix us two nedeth no strange fare;  
Fare-wel, cosyn; god shilde yow fro  
care.

If any thing ther be by day or night,  
If it lye in my power and my might, 1456  
That ye me wol comande in any wyse,  
It shal be doon, right as ye wol devyse.

O thing, er that ye goon, if it may be,  
I wolde prey yow; for to lene me 1460  
An hundred frankes, for a wyke or tweye,

For certein beestes that I moste beye,  
To store with a place that is oures.

God help me so, I wolde it were youres!  
I shal nat faille surely of my day, 1465  
Nat for a thousand frankes, a myle-way.  
But lat this thing be secree, I yow  
preye,

For yet to-night these beestes moot I  
beye;

And fare-now wel, myn owene cosin  
dere,

Graunt mercy of your cost and of your  
chere.' 1470

This noble marchant gentilly anon  
Answerde, and seyde, 'o cosin myn, daun  
Iohn,

Now sikerly this is a smal requeste;  
My gold is youres, whan that it yow  
leste.

And nat only my gold, but my chaf-  
fare; 1475

Take what yow list, god shilde that ye  
spare.

But o thing is, ye knowe it wel y-nogh,  
Of chapmen, that hir moneye is hir  
plogh.

We may creauce whyl we have a name,  
But goldlees for to be, it is no game. 1480  
Paye it agayn whan it lyth in your ese;  
After my might ful fayn wolde I yow  
plese.'

These hundred frankes he fette forth  
anon,

And prively he took hem to daun Iohn.  
No wight in al this world wiste of this  
lone, 1485

Savinge this marchant and daun Iohn  
allone.

They drinke, and speke, and rome a  
whyle and pleye,  
Til that daun Iohn rydeth to his abbeye.

The morwe cam, and forth this mar-  
chant rydeth

To Flaundres-ward; his prentis wel him  
gydeth, 1490

Til he cam in-to Brugges merily.  
Now gooth this marchant faste and bisily  
Aboute his nede, and byeth and creaun-  
ceth.

He neither pleyeth at the dees ne daun-  
ceth;

But as a marchant, shortly for to telle, 1495  
He let his lyf, and there I lete him dwelle.

The Sondag next this Marchant was  
agon,  
To Seint Denys y-comen is daun Iohn,  
With crowne and berd all fresh and newe  
y-shave.  
In al the hous ther nas so litel a  
knave, 1500  
Ne no wight elles, that he nas ful fayn,  
For that my lord daun Iohn was come  
agayn.  
And shortly to the point right for to gon,  
This faire wyf accorded with daun Iohn,  
That for thise hundred frankes he sholde  
al night 1505  
Have hir in his armes bolt-upright;  
And thise acord parfourned was in dede.  
In mirthe al night a bisy lyf they lede  
Til it was day, that daun Iohn wente his  
way,  
And bad the meynee 'fare-wel, have good  
day!' 1510  
For noon of hem, ne no wight in the  
toun,  
Hath of daun Iohn right no suspecion.  
And forth he rydeth hoom to his abbeye,  
Or where him list; namore of him I seye.  
This marchant, whan that ended was  
the faire, 1515  
To Seint Denys he gan for to repaire,  
And with his wyf he maketh feste and  
chere,  
And telleth hir that chaffare is so dere,  
That nedes moste he make a chevisaunce.  
For he was bounde in a reconissaunce 1520  
To paye twenty thousand sheeld anon.  
For which this marchant is to Paris gon,  
To borwe of certein frendes that he  
hadde  
A certein frankes; and somme with him  
he ladde.  
And whan that he was come in-to the  
toun, 1525  
For greet chertee and greet affeccion,  
Un-to daun Iohn he gooth him first, to  
pleye;  
Nat for to axe or borwe of him moneye,  
But for to wite and seen of his welfare,  
And for to tellen him of his chaffare, 1530  
As freendes doon whan they ben met  
y-ferre.  
Daun Iohn him maketh feste and mery  
chere;  
And he him tolde agayn ful specially,

How he hadde wel y-boght and gra-  
ciously,  
Thanked be god, al hool his marchan-  
dyse. 1535  
Save that he moste, in alle maner wyse,  
Maken a chevisaunce, as for his beste,  
And thanne he sholde been in Ioye and  
reste.  
Daun Iohn answerde, 'certes, I am  
fayn  
That ye in helear comen hoom agayn. 1540  
And if that I were riche, as have I blisse,  
Of twenty thousand sheeld shold ye nat  
misse,  
For ye so kindly this other day  
Lente me gold; and as I can and may,  
I thanke yow, by god and by seint  
Iame! 1545  
But natheles I took un-to our dame,  
Your wyf at hoom, the same gold ageyn  
Upon your bench; she woot it wel, cer-  
teyn,  
By certein tokenes that I can hir telle.  
Now, by your leve, I may no lenger  
dwelle, 1550  
Our abbot wol out of this toun anon;  
And in his companye moot I gon.  
Grete wel our dame, myn owene nece  
swete,  
And fare-wel, dere cosin, til we mete!'  
This Marchant, which that was ful war  
and wys, 1555  
Creaunced hath, and payd eek in Parys,  
To certeyn Lumbardes, redy in hir hond,  
The somme of gold, and gat of hem his  
bond;  
And hoom he gooth, mery as a papeiay.  
For wel he knew he stood in swich  
array, 1560  
That nedes moste he winne in that viage  
A thousand frankes above al his costage.  
His wyf ful redy mette him atte gate,  
As she was wont of old usage algate,  
And al that night in mirthe they  
bisette; 1565  
For he was riche and cleerly out of dette.  
Whan it was day, this marchant gan em-  
brace  
His wyf al newe, and kiste hir on hir  
face,  
And up he gooth and maketh it ful tough.  
'Namore,' quod she, 'by god, ye have  
y-nough!' 1570



And wantounly agayn with him she  
pleyde;

Til, atte laste, that this Marchant seyde,  
'By god,' quod he, 'I am a litel wrooth  
With yow, my wyf, al-though it be me  
looth.

And woot ye why? by god, as that I  
gesse, 1575

That ye han maad a maner straungenesse  
Bitwixen me and my cosyn daun Iohn.

Ye sholde han warned me, er I had gon,  
That he yow hadde an hundred frankes  
payed

By redy tokene; and heeld him yvel  
apayed, 1580

For that I to him spak of chevisaunce,  
Me semed so, as by his contenance.

But natheles, by god our hevене king,  
I thoghte nat to axe of him no-thing.

I prey thee, wyf, ne do namore so; 1585  
Tel me alwey, er that I fro thee go,

If any dettour hath in myn absence  
Y-payèd thee; lest, thurgh thy negligence,  
I mighte him axe a thing that he hath  
payed.'

This wyf was nat afered nor affrayed,  
But boldely she seyde, and that anon:  
'Marie, I defyte the false monk, daun  
Iohn!

I kepe nat of hise tokenes never a deel;  
He took me certain gold, that woot I  
weel!

What! yvel thedom on his monkes  
snoute! 1595

For, god it woot, I wende, withouten  
doute,

That he had yeve it me bycause of yow,  
To doon ther-with myn honour and my  
prow,

For cosinage, and eek for bele chere  
That he hath had ful ofte tymes here. 1600

But sith I see I stonde in this disioint,  
I wol answeere yow shortly, to the point.  
Ye han mo slakker dettours than am I!

For I wol paye yow wel and redily  
Fro day to day; and, if so be I faille, 1605

I am your wyf; score it up-on my taille,  
And I shal paye, as sone as ever I may.

For, by my trouthe, I have on myn array,  
And nat on wast, bistowed every deel.

And for I have bistowed it so weel 1610  
For your honour, for goddes sake, I seye,

As be nat wrooth, but lat us laughe and  
pleye.

Ye shal my Ioly body have to wedde;  
By god, I wol nat paye yow but a-bedde.

Forgive it me, myn owene spouse dere;  
Turne hiderward and maketh bettre  
chere.' 1616

This marchant saugh ther was no  
remedye,

And, for to chyde, it nere but greet folye,  
Sith that the thing may nat amended be.

'Now, wyf,' he seyde, 'and I foryeve it  
thee; 1620

But, by thy lyf, ne be namore so large;  
Keep bet our good, this yeve I thee in  
charge.'

Thus endeth now my tale, and god us  
sende

Taling y-nough un-to our lyves ende.  
Amen.

*Here endeth the Shipmannes Tale.*

## THE Prioress's PROLOGUE.

*Bihold the mery wordes of the Host to  
the Shipman and to the lady Prioressse.*

'WEL seyde, by *corpus dominus*,' quod  
our hoste, 1625

'Now longe moot thou sayle by the  
coste,

Sir gentil maister, gentil marineer!

God yeve this monk a thousand last quad  
yeer!

A ha! felawes! beth ware of swiche a  
lape!

The monk putte in the mannes hood an  
ape, 1630

And in his wyves eek, by seint Austin!  
Draweth no monkes more un-to your in.

But now passe over, and lat us seke  
aboute,

Who shal now telle first, of al this  
route,

Another tale;’ and with that word he  
sayde, 1635  
As curteisly as it had been a mayde,  
‘My lady Prioress, by your leve,  
So that I wiste I sholde yow nat greve,

I wolde demen that ye tellen sholde  
A tale next, if so were that ye wolde.  
Now wol ye vouche-sauf, my lady dere?’  
‘Gladly,’ quod she, and seyde as ye  
shal here.

*Explicit.*

## THE PRIORESSES TALE.

*The Prologe of the Prioresses Tale.*

*Domine, dominus noster.*

O LORD our lord, thy name how mer-  
veillous  
Is in this large worlde y-sprad — quod  
she : —  
For noght only thy laude precious 1645  
Parfourned is by men of dignitee,  
But by the mouth of children thy bountee  
Parfourned is, for on the brest soukinge  
Som tyme shewen they thyn heryinge.

Wherfor in laude, as I best can or  
may, 1650  
Of thee, and of the whyte lily flour  
Which that thee bar, and is a mayde alway,  
To telle a storie I wol do my labour ;  
Not that I may encresen hir honour ;  
For she hir-self is honour, and the rote  
Of bountee, next hir sone, and soules  
bote. — 1656

O moder mayde ! O mayde moder free !  
O bush unbrent, brenninge in Moyses  
sighte,  
That ravedest doun fro the deitee,  
Thurgh thyn humblesse, the goost that in  
thalighte, 1660  
Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte,  
Conceived was the fadres sapience,  
Help me to telle it in thy reverence !

dy ! thy bountee, thy magnificence,  
Thy vertu, and thy grete humilitee 1665  
Ther may no tonge expresse in no sci-  
ence ;  
For som-tyme, lady, er men praye to thee,  
Thou goost biforn of thy benignitee,

And getest us the light, thurgh thy  
preyere,  
To gyden us un-to thy sone so dere. 1670

My conning is so wayk, O blisful quene,  
For to declare thy grete worthinesse,  
That I ne may the weighte nat sustene,  
But as a child of twelf monthe old, or  
lesse,  
That can unnethes any word expresse,  
Right so fare I, and therfor I yow preyre,  
Gydeh my song that I shal of yow seye.

*Explicit.*

*Here beginneth the Prioresses Tale.*

Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,  
Amonges Cristen folk, a Iewerye,  
Sustened by a lord of that contree 1680  
For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,  
Hateful to Crist and to his companye ;  
And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde  
or wende,  
For it was free, and open at either ende.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood  
Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther  
were 1686  
Children an heep, y-comen of Cristen  
blood,  
That lerned in that scole yeer by yeer  
Swich maner doctrine as men used there,  
This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,  
As smale children doon in hir childhede.

Among thise children was a widwes sone,  
A litel clergeon, seven yeer of age,  
That day by day to scole was his wone,  
And eek also, wher-as he saugh  
thimage 1695

Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,  
As him was taught, to knele adoun and  
seye  
His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone  
y-taught  
Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere, 1700  
To worshiþe ay, and he forgat it naught,  
For sely child wol alday sone lere;  
But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,  
Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,  
For he so yong to Crist did reverence.  
1705

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,  
As he sat in the scole at his prymer,  
He *Alma redemptoris* herde singe,  
As children lerned hir antiphoner;  
And, as he dorste, he drough him ner and  
ner, 1710  
And herkned ay the wordes and the note,  
Till he the firste vers coude al by rote.

Noght wiste he what this Latin was to  
seye,  
For he so yong and tendre was of age;  
But on a day his felaw gan he  
preye 1715  
Texpounden him this song in his langage,  
Or telle him why this song was in  
usage;  
This preyde he him to construe and  
declare  
Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes bare.

His felaw, which that elder was than  
he, 1720  
Answerde him thus: 'this song, I have  
herd seye,  
Was maked of our blisful lady free,  
Hir to salue, and eek hir for to preye  
To been our help and socour whan we  
deye.  
I can no more expounde in this  
matere; 1725  
I lerne song, I can but smal grammere.'

'And is this song maked in reverence  
Of Cristes moder?' seyde this innocent;  
'Now certes, I wol do my diligence  
To conne it al, er Cristemasse is  
went; 1730

Though that I for my prymer shal be  
shent,  
And shal be beten thryës in an houre,  
I wol it conne, our lady for to honoure.'

His felaw taughte him homward prively,  
Fro day to day, til he coude it by  
rote, 1735  
And than he song it wel and boldely  
Fro word to word, acording with the  
note;  
Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte,  
To scoleward and homward whan he  
wente;  
On Cristes moder set was his  
entente. 1740

As I have seyde, thurgh-out the Iewerye  
This litel child, as he cam to and fro,  
Ful merily than wolde he singe, and crye  
*O Alma redemptoris* ever-mo.  
The swetnes hath his herte perced  
so 1745  
Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,  
He can nat stinte of singing by the weye.

Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,  
That hath in Iewes herte his waspes nest,  
Up swal, and seide, 'o Hebraik peple,  
allas! 1750  
Is this to yow a thing that is honest,  
That swich a boy shal walken as him lest  
In your despyt, and singe of swich  
sentence,  
Which is agayn your lawes reverence?'

Fro thennes forth the Iewes han con-  
spyred 1755  
This innocent out of this world to chace;  
An homicyde ther-to han they hyred,  
That in an aley hadde a privee place;  
And as the child gan for-by for to pace,  
This cursed Iew him hente and heeld  
him faste, 1760  
And kitte his throte, and in a pit him  
caste.

I seye that in a wardrobe they him threwe  
Wher-as these Iewes purgen hir entraille.  
O cursed folk of Herodes al newe,  
What may your yvel entente yow  
availle? 1765  
Mordre wol out, certain, it wol nat faille,

And namely ther thonour of god shal  
sprede,  
The blood out cryeth on your cursed  
dede.

'O martir, souted to virginitee,  
Now maystou singen, folwing ever in  
oon 1770

The whyte lamb celestial,' quod she,  
'Of which the grete evangelist, seint  
Iohn,

In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they  
that goon

Biforn this lamb, and singe a song al  
newe,

That never, fleshly, wommen they ne  
knewe.' 1775

This povre widwe awaiteth al that night  
After hir litel child, but he cam noght;  
For which, as sone as it was dayes light,  
With face pale of drede and bisy thought,  
She hath at scole and elles-wher him  
soght, 1780

Til finally she gan so fer espye  
That he last seyn was in the Iewerye.

With modres pitee in hir brest enclosed,  
She gooth, as she were half out of hir  
minde,

To every place wher she hath sup-  
posed 1785

By lyklihedde hir litel child to finde;  
And ever on Cristes moder meke and  
kinde

She cryde, and atte laste thus she  
wroghte,

Among the cursed Iewes she him soghte.

She frayneth and she preyeth pit-  
ously 1790

To every Iew that dwelte in thilke place,  
To telle hir, if hir child wente oght  
for-by.

They seyde, 'nay'; but Iesu, of his grace,  
Yaf in hir thought, inwith a litel space,  
That in that place after hir sone she  
cryde, 1795

Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.

O grete god, that parfournest thy laude  
By mouth of innocents, lo heer thy  
might!

This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,  
And eek of martirdom the ruby  
bright, 1800  
Ther he with throte y-corven lay upright,  
He '*Alma redemptoris*' gan to singe  
So loude, that al the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete  
wente,

In coomen, for to wondre up-on this  
thing, 1805

And hastily they for the provost sente;  
He cam anon with-ouren taryng,

And herieth Crist that is of heven king,  
And eek his moder, honour of mankinde,

And after that, the Iewes leet he  
binde. 1810

This child with pitous lamentacioun  
Up-taken was, singing his song alway;  
And with honour of greet processioun  
They carien him un-to the nexte abbay.  
His moder swowning by the bere  
lay; 1815

Unnethe might the peple that was there  
This newe Rachel bringe fro his bere.

With torment and with shamful deth  
echon

This provost dooth thise Iewes for to  
sterve

That of this mordre wiste, and that  
anon; 1820

He nolde no swich cursednesse observe.  
Yvel shal have, that yvel wol deserve.

Therfor with wilde hors he dide hem  
drawe,

And after that he heng hem by the lawe.

Up-on his bere ay lyth this innocent  
Biforn the chief auter, whyl masse laste,  
And after that, the abbot with his covent  
Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste;  
And whan they holy water on him caste,  
Yet spak this child, whan spreynd was  
holy water, 1830  
And song — '*O Alma redemptoris  
mater!*'

This abbot, which that was an holy man  
As monkes been, or elles oghten be,  
This yonge child to coniuere he bigan,  
And seyde, 'o dere child, I halse thee,

In vertu of the holy Trinitee, 1836  
Tell me what is thy cause for to singe,  
Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge?'

'My throte is cut un-to my nekke-boon,'  
Seyde this child, 'and, as by wey of  
kinde, 1840

I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon,  
But Iesu Crist, as ye in bokes finde,  
Wil that his glorie laste and be in minde,  
And, for the worship of his moder dere,  
Yet may I singe "O Alma" loude and  
clere. 1845

This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,  
I lovede alwey, as after my conninge;  
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,  
To me she cam, and bad me for to singe  
This antem verrailly in my deyinge, 1850  
As ye han herd, and, whan that I had  
songe,  
Me thoughte, she leyde a greyn up-on  
my tonge.

Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot certeyn  
In honour of that blisful mayden free,  
Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn;  
And afterward thus seyde she to me, 1856  
"My litel child, now wol I fecche thee  
y-take;  
Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake."'

*Here is ended the Prioresses Tale.*

This holy monk, this abbot, him mene  
I, 1860

His tonge out-caughte, and took a-wey  
the greyn,

And he yaf up the goost ful softely.

And whan this abbot had this wonder  
seyn,

His salte teres trikked down as reyn,

And gruf he fil al plat up-on the  
grounde, 1865

And stille he lay as he had been y-bounde.

The covent eek lay on the pavement

Weping, and herien Cristes moder dere,

And after that they ryse, and forth ben  
went,

And toke away this martir fro his  
bere, 1870

And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere

Enclosen they his litel body swete;

Ther he is now, god leve us for to  
mete.

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln, slayn also

With cursed Iewes, as it is notable, 1875

For it nis but a litel whyle ago;

Preye eek for us, we sinful folk un-  
stable,

That, of his mercy, god so merciabie

On us his grete mercy multiplie,

For reverence of his moder Marye.  
Amen. 1880

## PROLOGUE TO SIR THOPAS.

*Bihold the murye wordes of the Host to  
Chaucer.*

WHAN seyde was al this miracle, every  
man

As sobre was, that wonder was to se,

Til that our hoste Iapen tho bigan,

And than at erst he loked up-on me,

And seyde thus, 'what man artow?'  
quod he; 1885

'Thou lokest as thou woldest finde an  
hare,

For ever up-on the ground I see thee  
stare.

Approche neer, and loke up merily.

Now war yow, sirs, and lat this man have  
place;

He in the waast is shape as wel as I; 1890

This were a popet in an arm tenbrace

For any womman, smal and fair of  
face.

He semeth elvish by his contenance,

For un-to no wight dooth he daliaunce.

Sey now somewhat, sin other folk han  
said; 1895

Tel us a tale of mirthe, and that  
anoon;'

'Hoste,' quod I, 'ne beth nat yvel  
apayd,  
For other tale certes can I noon,  
But of a ryme I lerned longe agoon.'

'Ye, that is good,' quod he; 'now shul  
we here 1900  
Som deyntee thing, me thinketh by his  
chere.'

*Explicit.*

## SIR THOPAS.

*Here biginneth Chaucer's Tale of  
Thopas.*

LISTETH, lordes, in good entent,  
And I wol telle verrayment  
Of mirthe and of solas;  
Al of a knyght was fair and gent 1905  
In bataille and in tourneyment,  
His name was sir Thopas.

Y-born he was in fer contree,  
In Flaundes, al biyonde the see,  
At Popering, in the place; 1910  
His fader was a man ful free,  
And lord he was of that contree,  
As it was goddes grace.

Sir Thopas wex a doghty swayn,  
Whyt was his face as payndemayn, 1915  
His lippes rede as rose;  
His rode is lyk scarlet in grayn,  
And I yow telle in good certayn,  
He hadde a semely nose.

His heer, his berd was lyk saffroun, 1920  
That to his girdel raughte adoun;  
His shoon of Cordewane.  
Of Brugges were his hosen broun,  
His robe was of ciclatoun,  
That coste many a Iane. 1925

He coude hunte at wilde deer,  
And ryde an hauking for riveer,  
With grey goshawk on honde;  
Ther-to he was a good archeer,  
Of wrastling was ther noon his peer, 1930  
Ther any ram shal stonde.

Ful many a mayde, bright in bour,  
They moorne for him, paramour,  
Whan hem were bet to slepe;

But he was chast and no lechour, 1935  
And sweet as 'is the bremble-flour  
That bereth the rede hepe.

And so bifel up-on a day,  
For sothe, as I yow telle may,  
Sir Thopas wolde out ryde; 1940  
He worth upon his stede gray,  
And in his honde a launcegay,  
A long swerd by his syde.

He priketh thurgh a fair forest,  
Ther-inne is many a wilde best, 1945  
Ye, bothe bukke and hare;  
And, as he priketh north and est,  
I telle it yow, him hadde almost  
Bitid a sory care.

Ther springen herbes grete and smale,  
The lycorys and cetewale, 1951  
And many a clowe-gilofre;  
And notemuge to putte in ale,  
Whether it be moyste or stale,  
Or for to leye in cofre. 1955

The briddes singe, it is no nay,  
The sparhawk and the papeiay,  
That Ioye it was to here;  
The thrustelcok made eek his lay,  
The wodedowve upon the spray 1960  
She sang ful loude and clere.

Sir Thopas fil in love-longinge  
Al whan he herde the thrustel singe,  
And priked as he were wood:  
His faire stede in his prikinge 1965  
So swatte that men mighte him wringe,  
His sydes were al blood.

Sir Thopas eek so wery was  
For prikinge on the softe gras,  
So fiers was his corage, 1970

- That doun he leyde him in that plas  
To make his stede som solas,  
And yaf him good forage.
- 'O seinte Marie, *benedicite!*  
What eyleth this love at me  
To binde me so sore?  
Me dremed al this night, pardee,  
An elf-queen shal my lemman be,  
And slepe under my gore.
- An elf-queen wol I love, y-wis,  
For in this world no womman is  
Worthy to be my make  
In toune;  
Alle othere wommen I forsake,  
And to an elf-queen I me take  
By dale and eek by doune!'
- In-to his sadel he clamb anon,  
And priketh over style and stoon  
An elf-queen for tespye,  
Til he so longe had riden and goon  
That he fond, in a privee woon,  
The contree of Fairye  
So wilde;  
For in that contree was ther noon  
That to him dorste ryde or goon,  
Neither wyf ne childe.
- Til that ther cam a greet gaunt,  
His name was sir Olifaunt,  
A perilous man of dede;  
He seyde, 'child, by Termagaunt,  
But-if thou prike out of myn haunt,  
Anon I slee thy stede  
With mace.
- Heer is the queen of Fayërye,  
With harpe and pype and symphonye  
Dwelling in this place.'
- The child seyde, 'al-so mote I thee,  
Tomorwe wol I mete thee  
Whan I have myn armoure;  
And yet I hope, *par ma fay,*  
That thou shalt with this launcegay  
Abyen it ful soure;  
Thy mawe  
Shal I percen, if I may,  
Er it be fully pryme of day,  
For heer thou shalt be slawe.'
- Sir Thopas drow abak ful faste;  
This gaunt at him stones caste  
Out of a fel staf-slinge;  
But faire escapeth child Thopas,  
And al it was thurgh goddes gras,  
And thurgh his fair beringe.
- Yet listeth, lordes, to my tale  
Merier than the nightingale,  
For now I wol yow rounde  
How sir Thopas with heydes smale,  
Priking over hil and dale,  
Is come agayn to toune.
- His merie men comanded he  
To make him bothe game and glee,  
For nedes moste he fighte  
With a gaunt with heydes three,  
For paramour and Iolitee  
Of oon that shoon ful brighte.
- 'Do come,' he seyde, 'my minstrales,  
And gestours, for to tellen tales  
Anon in myn arminge;  
Of romances that been royales,  
Of popes and of cardinales,  
And eek of love-lykinge.'
- They fette him first the swete wyn,  
And mede eek in a maselyn,  
And royal spicerye  
Of gingebreed that was ful fyn,  
And lycorys, and eek comyn,  
With sugre that is so trye.
- He dide next his whyte lere  
Of clooth of lake fyn and clere  
A breech and eek a sherte;  
And next his sherte an aketoun,  
And over that an habergeoun  
For percinge of his herte;
- And over that a fyn hauberck,  
Was al y-wrought of Iewes werk,  
Ful strong it was of plate;  
And over that his cote-armour  
As whyt as is a lily-flour,  
In which he wol debate.
- His sheeld was al of gold so reed,  
And ther-in was a bores heed,  
A charbocke bisyde;

And there he swoor, on ale and breed,  
How that 'the geaunt shal be deed,  
Bityde what bityde!'

His Iambeux were of quirboilly, 2065

His swerdes shethe of yvory,  
His helm of laton bright;  
His sadel was of rewel-boon,  
His brydel as the sonne shoon,  
Or as the mone light. 2070

His spere was of fyn ciprees,  
That bodeth werre, and no-thing pees,  
The heed ful sharpe y-grounde;  
His stede was al dappel-gray,  
It gooth an ambel in the way 2075  
Ful softely and rounde

In londe.

Lo, lordes myne, heer is a fit!  
If ye wol any more of it,  
To telle it wol I fonde. 2080

[*The Second Fit.*]

Now hold your mouth, *par charitee*,  
Bothe knight and lady free,  
And herkneth to my spelle;

*Here the Host stinteth Chaucer of his Tale of Thopas.*

Of bataille and of chivalry,  
And of ladyes love-drury 2085  
Anon I wol yow telle.

Men speke of romances of prys,  
Of Horn child and of Ypotys,  
Of Bevis and sir Gy, 2090  
Of sir Libeux and Pleyndamour;  
But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour  
Of royal chivalry.

His gode stede al he bistrood,  
And forth upon his wey he glood  
As sparkle out of the bronde; 2095  
Up-on his crest he bar a tour,  
And ther-in stiked a lily-flour,  
God shilde his cors fro shonde!

And for he was a knight auntrous,  
He nolde slepen in non hous, 2100  
But liggen in his hode;  
His brighte helm was his wonger,  
And by him baiteth his dextrer  
Of herbes fyne and gode.

Him-selƿ drank water of the wel, 2105  
As did the knight sir Percivel,  
So worthy under wede,  
Til on a day—

## PROLOGUE TO MELIBEUS.

'No more of this, for goddes dignitee,'  
Quod oure hoste, 'for thou makest me  
So wery of thy verray lewednesse 2111  
That, also wisly god my soule blesse,  
Myn eres aken of thy drasty speche;  
Now swiche a rym the devel I biteche!  
This may wel be rym dogerel,' quod  
he. 2115  
'Why so?' quod I, 'why wiltow lette  
me  
More of my tale than another man,  
Sin that it is the beste rym I can?'  
'By god,' quod he, 'for pleynly, at a  
word,  
Thy drasty ryming is nat worth a tord;  
Thou doost nought elles but despendest  
tyme, 2121

Sir, at o word, thou shalt no lenger  
ryme.  
Lat see wher thou canst tellen aught in  
geste,  
Or telle in prose somewhat at the leste  
In which ther be som mirthe or som doc-  
tryne.' 2125  
'Gladly,' quod I, 'by goddes swete  
pyne,  
I wol yow telle a litel thing in prose,  
That oghte lyken yow, as I suppose,  
Or elles, certes, ye been to daungerous.  
It is a moral tale vertuous, 2130  
Al be it told som-tyme in sondry wyse  
Of sondry folk, as I shal yow devyse.  
As thus; ye woot that every evangelist,  
That telleth us the peyne of Iesu Crist,



Ne saith nat al thing as his felaw  
 dooth, 2135  
 But natheles, hir sentence is al sooth,  
 And alle acorden as in hir sentence,  
 Al be ther in hir telling difference.  
 For somme of hem seyn more, and somme  
 lesse, 2139  
 When they his pitous passioun expresse;  
 I mene of Marke, Mathew, Luk and Iohn;  
 But doutelees hir sentence is al oon.  
 Therfor, lordinges alle, I yow biseche,  
 If that ye thinke I varie as in my speche,  
 As thus, thogh that I telle som-what  
 more 2145

Of proverbes, than ye han herd bifore,  
 Comprehended in this litel tretis here,  
 To enforce with the theeffect of my  
 matere,  
 And thogh I nat the same wordes seye  
 As ye han herd, yet to yow alle I preye,  
 Blameth me nat; for, as in my sen-  
 tence, 2151  
 Ye shul not fynden moche difference  
 Fro the sentence of this tretis lyte  
 After the which this mery tale I wryte.  
 And therfor herkneth what that I shal  
 seye, 2155  
 And lat me tellen al my tale, I preye.'

*Explicit.*

## THE TALE OF MELIBEUS.

[The mark / denotes the lines.]

*Here biginneth Chaucers Tale of  
 Melibee.*

§ 1. A yong man called Melibeus,  
 mighty and riche, bigat up-on his  
 wyf that called was Prudence, a  
 doghter which that called was  
 Sophie. /

§ 2. Upon a day bifel that he for  
 his desport is went in-to the feeldes  
 him to pleye. / His wyf and eek  
 his doghter hath he left inwith his  
 hous, of which the dores weren fast  
 y-shette. / Thre of his olde foos  
 han it espyed, and setten laddres to  
 the walles of his hous, and by the  
 2160 windowes ben entred, / and betten  
 his wyf, and wounded his doghter  
 with fyve mortal woundes in fyve  
 sondry places; / this is to seyn, in  
 hir feet, in hir handes, in hir eres,  
 in hir nose, and in hir mouth; and  
 leften hir for deed, and wenten  
 away. /

§ 3. When Melibeus retourned  
 was in-to his hous, and saugh al  
 this meschief, he, lyk a mad man,  
 rendinge his clothes, gan to wepe  
 and crye. /

§ 4. Prudence his wyf, as ferforth  
 as she dorste, bisoghte him of his  
 weping for to stinte; / but nat for-  
 thy he gan to crye and wepen ever  
 lenger the more. / 2165

§ 5. This noble wyf Prudence re-  
 membered hir upon the sentence of  
 Ovide, in his book that cleped is  
 The Remedie of Love, wher-as he  
 seith; / 'he is a fool that destourb-  
 eth the moder to wepen in the deeth  
 of hir child, til she have wept hir  
 fille, as for a certein tyme; / and  
 thanne shal man doon his diligence  
 with amiable wordes hir to recon-  
 forte, and preyen hir of hir weping  
 for to stinte.' / For which resoun  
 this noble wyf Prudence suffred hir  
 housbond for to wepe and crye as  
 for a certein space; / and whan she  
 saugh hir tyme, she seyde him in  
 this wyse. 'Allas, my lord,' quod  
 she, 'why make ye your-self for to  
 be lyk a fool? / For sothe, it 2170  
 aperteneth nat to a wys man, to  
 maken swiche a sorwe. / Your  
 doghter, with the grace of god, shal  
 warisshe and escape. / And al  
 were it so that she right now were

deed, ye ne oghte nat as for  
hir deeth your-self to destroye. /  
Senek seith: "the wise man shal  
nat take to greet disconfort for the  
deeth of his children, / but certes  
he sholde suffren it in pacience, as  
wel as he abyde the deeth of his  
2175 owene propre persone." /

§ 6. This Melibeus answerde  
anon and seyde, 'What man,' quod  
he, 'sholde of his weping stinte,  
that hath so greet a cause for to  
wepe? / Iesu Crist, our lord, him-  
self wepte for the deeth of Lazarus  
his freend.' / Prudence answerde,  
'Certes, wel I woot, attempree  
weping is no-thing defended to him  
that sorweful is, amonges folk in  
sorwe, but it is rather graunted him  
to wepe. / The Apostle Paul un-to  
the Romayns wryteth, "man shal  
reioyse with hem that maken Ioye,  
and wepen with swich folk as  
wepen." / But thogh attempree  
weping be y-graunted, outrageous  
2180 weping certes is defended. / Mes-  
sure of weping sholde be considered,  
after the lore that techeth us  
Senek. / "Whan that thy freend  
is deed," quod he, "lat nat thyne  
eyen to moyste been of teres, ne to  
muche drye; althogh the teres  
come to thyne eyen, lat hem nat  
falle." / And whan thou hast for-  
goon thy freend, do diligence to  
gete another freend; and this is  
more wysdom than for to wepe for  
thy freend which that thou hast  
lorn; for ther-inne is no bote. /  
And therefore, if ye governe yow by  
sapience, put away sorwe out of  
your herte. / Remembre yow that  
Iesus Syrak seith: "a man that is  
Ioyous and glad in herte, it him  
conserveth florissing in his age;  
but soothly sorweful herte maketh  
2185 his bones drye." / He seith eek  
thus: "that sorwe in herte sleeth  
ful many a man." / Salomon seith:  
"that, right as motthes in the shepes  
flees anoyeth to the clothes, and the  
smale wormes to the tree, right so  
anoyeth sorwe to the herte." /

Wherfore us oghte, as wel in the  
deeth of our children as in the losse  
of our goodes temporels, have  
pacience. /

§ 7. Remembre yow up-on the  
patient Iob, whan he hadde lost his  
children and his temporel substance,  
and in his body endured and re-  
ceyved ful many a grevous tribu-  
lacioun; yet seyde he thus: / "our  
lord hath yeven it me, our lord hath  
biraft it me; right as our lord hath  
wold, right so it is doon; blessed be  
the name of our lord." / To thise 2190  
foreseide thinges answerde Melibeus  
un-to his wyf Prudence: 'Alle thy  
wordes,' quod he, 'been sothe, and  
ther-to profitable; but trewely myn  
herte is troubled with this sorwe so  
grevously, that I noot what to  
done.' / 'Lat calle,' quod Pru-  
dence, 'thy trewe freendes alle, and  
thy linage whiche that been wyse;  
telleth your cas, and herkneht what  
they seye in conseiling, and yow  
governe after hir sentence. / Sal-  
omon seith: "werk alle thy thinges  
by conseil, and thou shalt never  
repente." /

§ 8. Thanne, by the conseil of  
his wyf Prudence, this Melibeus leet  
callen a greet congregacioun of  
folk; / as surgiens, phisiciens, olde  
folk and yonge, and somme of hise  
olde enemyes reconciled as by hir  
semblaunt to his love and in-to  
his grace; / and ther-with-al ther 2195  
comen somme of hise neighebores  
that diden him reverence more for  
drede than for love, as it happeth  
ofte. / Ther comen also ful many  
subtile flatterers, and wyse advocats  
lerned in the lawe. /

§ 9. And whan this folk togidre  
assembled weren, this Melibeus in  
sorweful wyse shewed hem his cas; /  
and by the manere of his speche it  
semed that in herte he bar a cruel  
ire, redy to doon vengeaunce up-on  
hise foom, and sodeynly desired that  
the werre sholde biginne; / but  
natheles yet axed he hir conseil  
upon this matere. / A surgien, by 2200

licence and assent of swiche as weren wyse, up roos and un-to Melibeus seyde as ye may here. /

§ 10. 'Sir,' quod he, 'as to us surgians aperteneth, that we do to every wight the beste that we can, wher-as we been with-holde, and to our pacients that we do no damage; / wherfore it happeth, many tyme and ofte, that whan twey men han everich wounded other, oon same surgien heleth hem bothe; / wherfore un-to our art it is nat pertinent to norice werre ne parties to supporte. / But certes, as to the warisshinge of your doghter, al-be-it so that she perilously be wounded, we shullen do so ententif bisnesse fro day to night, that with the grace of god she shal be hool and sound, 2205 as sone as is possible.' / Almost right in the same wyse the phisi-ciens answerden, save that they seyden a fewe wordes more: / 'That, right as maladyes been cured by hir contraries, right so shul men warisshe were by vengeance.' / His neighebores, ful of envye, his feyned freendes that semeden reconciled, and his flatereres, / maden semblant of weping, and empeireden and agreggeden muchel of this matere, in praising greetly Melibee of might, of power, of richesse, and of freendes, despysinge the power of his adversaries, / and seiden outrely that he anon sholde wrenken him on his foos and biginne 2210 werre. /

§ 11. Up roos thanne an advocat that was wys, by leve and by conseil of othere that were wyse, and seyde: / 'Lordinges, the nede for which we been assembled in this place is a ful hevye thing and an heigh matere, / by-cause of the wrong and of the wikkednesse that hath be doon, and eek by resoun of the grete damages that in tyme cominge been possible to fallen for this same cause; / and eek by resoun of the grete richesse and power of the parties bothe; / for the whiche

resouns it were a ful greet peril to erren in this matere. / Wherfore, 2215 Melibeus, this is our sentence: we conseilte yow aboven alle thing, that right anon thou do thy diligence in kepinge of thy propre persone, in swich a wyse that thou ne wante noon espye ne wacche, thy body for to save. / And after that we conseilte, that in thyn hous thou sette suffisant garnisoun, so that they may as well thy body as thyn hous defende. / But certes, for to move werre, or sodeynly for to doon vengeance, we may nat demen in so litel tyme that it were profitable. / Wherfore we axen leyser and espace to have deliberacioun in this cas to deme. / For the commune proverbe seith thus: "he that sone demeth, sone shal repente." / And 2220 eek men seyn that thilke Iuge is wys, that sone understondeth a matere and Iuggeth by leyser. / For al-be-it so that alle taryng be anyoful, algates it is nat to repreve in yevinge of Iugement, ne in vengeance-taking, whan it is suffisant and resonable. / And that shewed our lord Iesu Crist by ensample; for whan that the womman that was taken in avoutrie was broght in his presence, to knowen what sholde be doon with hir persone, al-be-it so that he wiste wel him-self what that he wolde answer, yet ne wolde he nat answer sodeynly, but he wolde have deliberacioun, and in the ground he wroot twyes. / And by these causes we axen deliberacioun, and we shal thanne, by the grace of god, conseilte thee thing that shal be profitable.' /

§ 12. Up stirten thanne the yonge folk at-ones, and the moste partie of that companye han scorned the olde wyse men, and bigonnen to make noyse, and seyden: that, / 2225 right so as whyl that iren is hoot, men sholden smyte, right so, men sholde wrenken hir wronges wyle that they been fresshe and newe;

and with loud voys they cryden,  
 'werre! werre!' /

Up roos tho oon of these olde  
 wyse, and with his hand made con-  
 tenaunce that men sholde holden  
 hem stille and yeven him audience. /  
 'Lordinges,' quod he, 'ther is ful  
 many a man that cryeth "werre!  
 werre!" that woot ful litel what  
 werre amounteth. / Werre at his  
 biginning hath so greet an entree  
 and so large, that every wight may  
 entre whan him lyketh, and lightly  
 finde werre. / But, certes, what  
 ende that shal ther-of bifalle, it is  
 nat light to knowe. / For sothly,  
 whan that werre is ones bigonne,  
 ther is ful many a child unborn of  
 his moder, that shal sterve yong by-  
 cause of that ilke werre, or elles live  
 in sorwe and dye in wrecchednesse. /  
 And ther-fore, er that any werre  
 biginne, men moste have greet con-  
 seil and greet deliberacioun.' / And  
 whan this olde man wende to en-  
 forcen his tale by resons, wel ny  
 alle at-ones bigonne they to ryse for  
 to breken his tale, and beden him  
 ful ofte his wordes for to abregge. /  
 For soothly, he that precheth to  
 hem that listen nat heren his wordes,  
 his sermon hem anoyeth. / For  
 Iesus Syrak seith: that "musik in  
 wepinge is anoyous thing;" this is  
 to seyn: as muche availleth to  
 speken bifore folk to whiche his  
 speche anoyeth, as dooth to singe  
 biforn him that wepeth. / And  
 whan this wyse man saugh that him  
 wanted audience, al shamefast he  
 sette him doun agayn. / For Sal-  
 omon seith: "ther-as thou ne mayst  
 have noon audience, enforce thee  
 nat to speke." / 'I see wel,' quod  
 this wyse man, 'that the commune  
 proverbe is sooth; that "good con-  
 seil wanteth whan it is most  
 nede."' /

§ 13. Yet hadde this Melibeus in  
 his conseil many folk, that prively  
 in his ere conseilled him certeyn  
 thing, and conseilled him the con-  
 trarie in general audience. /

Whan Melibeus hadde herd that  
 the gretteste partie of his conseil  
 weren accorded that he sholde  
 maken werre, anon he consented  
 to hir consailing, and fully affermed  
 hir sentence. / Thanne dame Pru-  
 dence, whan that she saugh how  
 that hir housbonde shoop him for  
 to wreken him on his foos, and to  
 biginne werre, she in ful humble  
 wyse, when she saugh hir tyme,  
 seide him these wordes: / 'My lord,'  
 quod she, 'I yow biseche as hertely  
 as I dar and can, ne haste yow nat  
 to faste, and for alle guerdons as  
 yeveth me audience. / For Piers  
 Alfonse seith: "who-so that dooth  
 to that other good or harm, haste  
 thee nat to quyten it; for in this  
 wyse thy freend wol abyde, and  
 thyn enemy shal the lenger live in  
 drede." / The proverbe seith:  
 "he hasteth wel that wysely can  
 abyde;" and in wikked haste is no  
 profit.' /

§ 14. This Melibee answerde  
 un-to his wyf Prudence: 'I pur-  
 pose nat,' quod he, 'to werke by thy  
 conseil, for many causes and resouns.  
 For certes every wight wolde holde  
 me thanne a fool; / this is to seyn,  
 if I, for thy consailing, wolde  
 chaungen things that been orde-  
 yned and affermed by so manye  
 wyse. / Secoundly I seye, that  
 alle wommen been wikke and noon  
 good of hem alle. For "of a thou-  
 sand men," seith Salomon, "I fond  
 a good man: but certes, of alle  
 wommen, good womman fond I  
 never." / And also certes, if I  
 governed me by thy conseil, it  
 sholde seme that I hadde yeve to  
 thee over me the maistrie; and god  
 forbode that it so were. / For  
 Iesus Syrak seith; "that if the wyf  
 have maistrie, she is contrarious to  
 hir housbonde." / And Salomon  
 seith: "never in thy lyf, to thy wyf,  
 ne to thy child, ne to thy freend, ne  
 yeve no power over thy-self. For  
 bettre it were that thy children aske  
 of thy persone thinges that hem

nedeth, than thou see thy-self in the  
 2250 handes of thy children." / And  
 also, if I wolde werke by thy conseilling,  
 certes my conseilling moste som tyme  
 be secree, til it were tyme that it moste  
 be knowe; and this ne may nought be.  
 / [For it is writen, that "the Ianglerie  
 of women can hyden thinges that they  
 witen noght." / Furthermore, the philo-  
 sophre seith, "in wikked conseil wommen  
 venquisshe men;" and for this resoun  
 I ne owe nat usen thy conseil."] /

§ 15. Whanna dame Prudence,  
 ful debonairly and with greet pacience,  
 hadde herd al that hir housbonde lyked  
 for to seye, thanne axed she of him  
 licence for to speke, and seyde in this  
 wyse. / 'My lord,' quod she, 'as to your  
 firste resoun, certes it may lightly been  
 answered. For I seye, that it is no folie  
 to chaunge conseil whan the thing is  
 chaunged; or elles whan the thing  
 semeth otherweyes than  
 2255 it was biforn. / And more-over I seye,  
 that though ye han sworn and bihight  
 to perfourne your emprise, and natheles  
 ye weyve to perfourne thilke same  
 emprise by Iuste cause, men sholde  
 nat seyn therefore that ye were a lyer  
 ne forsworn. / For the book seith,  
 that "the wyse man maketh no lesing  
 whan he turneth his corage to the  
 bettre." / And al-be-it so that your  
 emprise be establised and ordeyned by  
 greet multitude of folk, yet thar ye  
 nat accomplice thilke same ordinaunce  
 but yow lyke. / For the trouthe of  
 thinges and the profit been rather  
 founden in fewe folk that been wyse  
 and ful of resoun, than by greet  
 multitude of folk, ther every man  
 cryeth and clatereth what that him  
 lyketh. Soothly swich multitude is  
 nat honeste. / As to the seconde  
 resoun, where-as ye seyn that "alle  
 wommen been wikke," save your  
 grace, certes ye despysen alle women  
 in this wyse; and "he that alle  
 despyseth alle displeseth," as

seith the book. / And Senek seith  
 2260 that "who-so wole have sapience,  
 shal no man dispreise; but he shal  
 gladly techen the science that he can,  
 with-outen presumpcioun or pryde.  
 / And swiche thinges as he nought  
 ne can, he shal nat been ashamed to  
 lerne hem and enquere of lasse folk  
 than him-self." / And sir, that ther  
 hath been many a good womman,  
 may lightly be preved. / For certes,  
 sir, our lord Iesu Crist wolde never  
 have descended to be born of a  
 womman, if alle wommen hadden  
 ben wikke. / And after that, for the  
 grete bountee that is in wommen,  
 our lord Iesu Crist, whan he was  
 risen fro deeth to lyve, appeared  
 rather to a womman than to his  
 apostles. / And though that  
 2265 Salomon seith, that "he ne fond  
 never womman good," it folweth  
 nat therfore that alle wommen  
 ben wikke. / For though that he  
 ne fond no good womman, certes,  
 ful many another man hath  
 founden many a womman ful good  
 and trewe. / Or elles per-aventure  
 the entente of Salomon was this;  
 that, as in sovereyn bountee, he  
 fond no womman; / this is to seyn,  
 that ther is no wight that hath  
 sovereyn bountee save god alone;  
 as he him-self recordeth in his  
 Evaungelie. / For ther nis no  
 creature so good that him ne  
 wanteth somewhat of the perfeccioun  
 of god, that is his maker. / Your  
 2270 thridde resoun is this: ye seyn  
 that "if ye governe yow by my  
 conseil, it sholde seme that ye  
 hadde yeve me the maistrie and the  
 lordshipe over your persone." / Sir,  
 save your grace, it is nat so. For  
 if it were so, that no man sholde  
 be conseilled but only of hem that  
 hadden lordshipe and maistrie of  
 his persone, men wolden nat be  
 conseilled so ofte. / For soothly,  
 thilke man that asketh conseil of a  
 purpos, yet hath he free chois,  
 wheither he wole werke by that  
 conseil or noon. / And as to your  
 fourthe resoun, ther ye seyn

that "the Ianglerie of wommen hath hid thinges that they woot nocht," as who seith, that "a womman can nat hyde that she woot;" / sir, thise wordes been understonde of wommen that been Iangleresses and wikked; / of whiche wommen, men seyn that "three thinges dryven a man out of his hous; that is to seyn, smoke, dropping of reyn, and wikked wyves;" / and of swiche wommen seith Salomon, that, "it were bettre dwelle in desert, than with a womman that is riotous." / And sir, by your leve, that am nat I; / for ye han ful ofte assayed my grete silence and my gret pacience; and eek how wel that I can hyde and hele thinges that men oghte secreely to hyde. / And soothly, as to your fifthe resoun, wher-as ye seyn, that "in wikked conseil wommen venquisshe men;" god woot, thilke resoun stant here in no stede. / For understond now, ye asken conseil to do wikkednesse; / and if ye wole werken wikkednesse, and your wyf restreyneth thilke wikked purpos, and overcometh yow by resoun and by good conseil; / certes, your wyf oghte rather to be preised than y-blamed. / Thus sholde ye understonde the philosophie that seith, "in wikked conseil wommen venquisschen hir housbondes." / And ther-as ye blamen alle wommen and hir resouns, I shal shewe yow by manye ensamples that many a womman hath ben ful good, and yet been; and hir conceils ful hoolsome and profitable. / Eek som men han seyl, that "the conseillinge of wommen is outhere to dere, or elles to litel of prys." / But al-be-it so, that ful many a womman is badde, and hir conseil vile and nocht worth, yet han men founde ful many a good womman, and ful discrete and wise in conseillinge. / Lo, Iacob, by good conseil of his moder Rebekka, wan the benisoun of Ysaak his fader, and the lordshipe over alle his

bretheren. / Iudith, by hir good conseil, delivered the citee of Bethulie, in which she dwelled, out of the handes of Olofernus, that hadde it biseged and wolde have al destroyed it. / Abigail delivered Nabal hir housbonde fro David the king, that wolde have slayn him, and apayed the ire of the king by hir wit and by hir good conseilling. / Hester 2290 by hir good conseil enhaunced greetly the peple of god in the regne of Assuerus the king. / And the same bountee in good conseilling of many a good womman may men telle. / And moreover, whan our lord hadde creat Adam our forme-fader, he seyde in this wyse: / "it is nat good to been a man allone; make we to him an help semblable to himself." / Here may ye se that, if that wommen were nat goode, and hir conceils goode and profitable, / our lord god of hevene 2295 wolde never han wrought hem, ne called hem help of man, but rather confusoun of man. / And ther seyde ones a clerk in two vers: "what is bettre than gold? Iaspre. What is bettre than Iaspre? Wisdom. / And what is bettre than wisdom? Womman. And what is bettre than a good womman? Nothing." / And sir, by manye of othre resons may ye seen, that manye wommen been goode, and hir conceils goode and profitable. / And therefore sir, if ye wol triste to my conseil, I shal restore yow your doghter hool and sound. / And eek I wol do to yow so muche, that ye shul have honour in this cause.' / § 16. Whan Melibee hadde herd the wordes of his wyf Prudence, he seyde thus: / 'I see wel that the word of Salomon is sooth; he seith, that "wordes that been spoken discreetly by ordinaunce, been honycombes; for they yeven swetnesse to the soule, and hoolsomnesse to the body." / And wyf, by-cause of thy swete wordes, and eek for I have assayed and preved thy grete

sapience and thy grete trouthe, I wol governe me by thy conseil in alle thing.' /

§ 17. 'Now sir,' quod dame Prudence, 'and sin ye vouche-sauf to been governed by my conseil, I wol enforme yow how ye shul governe your-self in chesinge of your  
2305  
conseillours. / Ye shul first, in alle your werkes, mekely biseken to the heighe god that he wol be your conseillour; / and shapeth yow to swich entente, that he yeve yow conseil and confort, as taughte Thobie his sone. / "At alle tymes thou shalt blesse god, and preyre him to dresse thy weyes"; and looke that alle thy conseils been in him for evermore. / Seint Iame eek seith: "if any of yow have nede of sapience, axe it of god." / And afterward thanne shul ye taken conseil in your-self, and examine wel your thoughtes, of swich thing as yow thinketh that is best for your  
2310  
profit. / And thanne shul ye dryve fro your herte three things that been contrariouse to good conseil, / that is to seyn, ire, covetise, and hastifnesse. /

§ 18. First, he that axeth conseil of him-self, certes he moste been with-ouen ire, for manye causes. / The firste is this: he that hath greet ire and wratthe in him-self, he weneth alwey that he may do thing that he may nat do. / And secondely, he that is irous and wroth,  
2315  
he ne may nat wel deme; / and he that may nat wel deme, may nat wel conselle. / The thridde is this; that "he that is irous and wroth," as seith Senek, "ne may nat speke but he blame thinges;" / and with his vicious wordes he stireth other folk to angre and to ire. / And eek sir, ye moste dryve covetise out of your herte. / For the apostle seith, that "covetise is rote of alle harmes." / And trust  
2320  
wel that a covetous man ne can noght deme ne thinke, but only to fulfillle the ende of his covetise; /

and certes, that ne may never be accompliced; for ever the more habundaunce that he hath of richesse, the more he desyreth. / And sir, ye moste also dryve out of your herte hastifnesse; for certes, / ye ne may nat deme for the beste a sodeyn thought that falleth in youre herte, but ye moste avyse yow on it ful ofte. / For as ye herde biforn, the commune proverbe is this, that "he that sone demeth, sone repenteth." /

§ 19. Sir, ye ne be nat alwey in lyke disposicioun; / for certes, som thing that sontyme semeth to yow that it is good for to do, another tyme it semeth to yow the contrarie. /

§ 20. Whan ye han taken conseil in your-self, and han demed by good deliberacion swich thing as you semeth best, / thanne rede I yow, that ye kepe it secree. / Biwrey nat your conseil to no persone, but-if so be that ye wenen sikerly that, thurgh your biwreying, your condicioun shal be to yow the more profitable. / For Iesus Syrak  
2330  
seith: "neither to thy foo ne to thy freend discovere nat thy secree ne thy folie; / for they wol yeve yow audiece and loking and supportacioun in thy presence, and scorne thee in thyn absence." / Another clerk seith, that "scarsly shaltou finden any persone that may kepe conseil secreely." / The book seith: "whyl that thou kepest thy conseil in thyn herte, thou kepest it in thy prisoun; / and whan thou biwreyest thy conseil to any wight, he holdeth thee in his  
2335  
snare." / And therefore yow is better to hyde your conseil in your herte, than praye him, to whom ye han biwreyed your conseil, that he wole kepen it cloos and stille. / For Seneca seith: "if so be that thou ne mayst nat thyn owene conseil hyde, how darstou prayen any other wight thy conseil secreely to kepe?" / But natheles, if thou

wene sikerly that the biwreying of thy conseil to a persone wol make thy condicioun to stonden in the bettre plyt, thanne shaltou tellen him thy conseil in this wyse. / First, thou shalt make no semblant whether thee were lever pees or werre, or this or that, ne shewe him nat thy wille and thyn entente; / for trust wel, that comunly these  
 2340 conseillours been flatereres, / namely the conseillours of grete lordes; / for they enforcen hem alway rather to speken plesante wordes, enclynge to the lordes lust, than wordes that been trewe or profitable. / And therefore men seyn, that "the riche man hath sold good conseil but-if he have it of him-self." / And after that, thou shalt considere thy freendes and thyn enemys. / And as touchinge thy freendes, thou shalt considere whiche of hem been most feithful and most wyse, and eldest and most approved in con-  
 2345 seiling. / And of hem shalt thou aske thy conseil, as the caas requireth. /

§ 21. I seye that first ye shul clepe to your conseil your freendes that been trewe. / For Salomon seith: that "right as the herte of a man delyteth in savour that is sote, right so the conseil of trewe freendes yeveth swetenesse to the soule." / He seith also: "ther may no-thing be lykned to the trewe freend." / For certes, gold  
 2350 ne silver beth nat so muche worth as the gode wil of a trewe freend. / And eek he seith, that "a trewe freend is a strong deffense; who-so that it findeth, certes he findeth a greet tresour." / Thanne shul ye eek considere, if that your trewe freendes been discrete and wyse. For the book seith: "axe alway thy conseil of hem that been wyse." / And by this same resoun shul ye clepen to your conseil, of your freendes that been of age, swiche as han seyn and been expert in manye thinges, and been approved in conseillinges. / For the

book seith, that "in olde men is the sapience and in longe tyme the prudence." / And Tullius seith: that "grete thinges ne been nat ay accomplished by strengthe, ne by delivrenesse of body, but by good conseil, by auctoritee of persones, and by science; the whiche three thinges ne been nat feble by age, but certes they enforcen and en-  
 2355 creesen day by day." / And thanne shul ye kepe this for a general reule. First shul ye clepen to your conseil a fewe of your freendes that been especiale; / for Salomon seith: "manye freendes have thou; but among a thousand chese thee oon to be thy conseillour." / For al-be-it so that thou first ne telle thy conseil but to a fewe, thou mayst afterward telle it to mo folk, if it be nede. / But loke alway that thy conseillours have thilke three condiciouns that I have seyde bifore; that is to seyn, that they be trewe, wyse, and of old experience. / And werke nat alway in every nede by oon conseillour allone; for som-  
 2360 tyme bihoveth it to been consealed by manye. / For Salomon seith: "salvaciou of thinges is wher-as ther been manye conseillours." /

§ 22. Now sith that I have told yow of which folk ye sholde been counseilled, now wol I teche yow which conseil ye oghte to eschewe. / First ye shul eschewe the conseiling of foles; for Salomon seith: "taak no conseil of a fool, for he ne can noight conseille but after his owene lust and his affecciou." / The book seith: that "the propretee of a fool is this; he troweth lightly harm of every wight, and lightly troweth alle bountee in him-self." / Thou shalt eek eschewe the con-  
 2365 seiling of alle flatereres, swiche as enforcen hem rather to preise your persone by flaterye than for to telle yow the sothfastnesse of thinges. /

§ 23. Wherefore Tullius seith: "amonges alle the pestilences that been in freendshipe, the gretteste



is flaterye." And therefore is it more nede that thou eschewe and drede flatereres than any other peple. / The book seith: "thou shalt rather drede and flee from the swete wordes of flateringe preiseres, than fro the egre wordes of thy freend that seith thee thy sothes." / Salomon seith, that "the wordes of a flaterere is a snare to cacche with innocents." / He seith also, that "he that speketh to his freend wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce, setteth a net biforn his feet to cacche him." / And therefore seith Tullius: "encline nat thyne eres to flatereres, ne taketh no conseil of wordes of flaterye." / And Caton seith: "avyse thee wel, and eschewe the wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce." / And eek thou shalt eschewe the conseilling of thyne olde enemys that been reconciled. / The book seith: that "no wight retourneth saufully in-to the grace of his olde enemy." / And Isope seith: "ne trust nat to hem to whiche thou hast had somtyme werre or enmitee, ne telle hem nat thy conseil." / And Seneca telleth the cause why. "It may nat be," seith he, "that, where greet fyr hath longe tyme endured, that ther ne dwelleth som vapour of warmnesse." / And therefore seith Salomon: "in thyn olde foo trust never." / For sikerly, though thyn enemy be reconciled and maketh thee chere of humilitee, and louteth to thee with his heed, ne trust him never. / For certes, he maketh thilke feyned humilitee more for his profit than for any love of thy persone; by-cause that he demeth to have victorie over thy persone by swich feyned contenance, the which victorie he mighte nat have by stryf or werre. / And Peter Alfonse seith: "make no felawshipe with thyne olde enemys; for if thou do hem bountee, they wol perverten it in-to wikkednesse." / And eek thou most

eschewe the conseilling of hem that been thy servants, and beren thee greet reverence; for peraventure they seyn it more for drede than for love. / And therefore seith a 2380  
philosophre in this wyse: "ther is no wight parfitly trewe to him that he to sore dredeth." / And Tullius seith: "ther nis no might so greet of any emperour, that longe may endure, but-if he have more love of the peple than drede." / Thou shalt also eschewe the conseiling of folk that been dronkelewe; for they ne can no conseil hyde. / For Salomon seith: "ther is no privetee ther-as regneth dronkenesse." / Ye shul also han in suspect the conseilling of swich folk as conseille yow a thing prively, and conseille yow the contrarie openly. / For Cassidorie seith: 2385  
that "it is a maner sleighte to hindre, whan he sheweth to doon a thing openly and werketh prively the contrarie." / Thou shalt also have in suspect the conseilling of wikked folk. For the book seith: "the conseilling of wikked folk is alwey ful of fraude." / And David seith: "blisful is that man that hath nat folwed the conseilling of shrewes." / Thou shalt also eschewe the conseilling of yong folk; for hir conseil is nat rype. /

§ 24. Now sir, sith I have shewed yow of which folk ye shul take your conseil, and of which folk ye shul folwe the conseil, / 2390  
now wol I teche yow how ye shal examine your conseil, after the doctrine of Tullius. / In the examininge thanne of your conseilour, ye shul considere manye thinges. / Alderfirst thou shalt considere, that in thilke thing that thou purposest, and upon what thing thou wolt have conseil, that verrey trouthe be seyde and conserved; this is to seyn, telle trewely thy tale. / For he that seith fals may nat wel be conseilled, in that cas of which he lyeth. / And after

2395 this, thou shalt considere the  
 things that acorden to that thou  
 purposest for to do by thy conseil-  
 lours, if resoun accorde therto; /  
 and eek, if thy might may atteine  
 ther-to; and if the more part and  
 the bettre part of thy conseilours  
 acorde ther-to, or no. / Thanne  
 shaltou considere what thing shal  
 folwe of that conseilling; as hate,  
 pees, werre, grace, profit, or dam-  
 age; and manye othere thinges. /  
 And in alle these thinges thou shalt  
 chese the beste, and weyve alle  
 othere thinges. / Thanne shaltow  
 considere of what rote is engendred  
 the matere of thy conseil, and what  
 fruit it may conceyve and engen-  
 dre. / Thou shalt eek considere  
 alle these causes, fro whennes they  
 been sprongen. / And whan ye  
 2400 han examined your conseil as I  
 have seyde, and which partie is the  
 bettre and more profitable, and hast  
 approved it by manye wyse folk  
 and olde; / thanne shaltou consid-  
 ere, if thou mayst parfourne it  
 and maken of it a good ende. /  
 For certes, resoun wol nat that any  
 man sholde biginne a thing, but-if  
 he mighte parfourne it as him  
 oghte. / Ne no wight sholde take  
 up-on hym so hevy a charge that he  
 mighte nat bere it. / For the prover-  
 2405 be seith: "he that to muche  
 embraceth, distreyneth litel." /  
 And Catoun seith: "assay to do  
 swich thing as thou hast power to  
 doon, lest that the charge oppresse  
 thee so sore, that thee bihoveth to  
 weyve thing that thou hast big-  
 onne." / And if so be that thou  
 be in doute, whether thou mayst par-  
 fourne a thing or noon, chese rather  
 to suffre than biginne. / And  
 Piers Alphonce seith: "if thou  
 hast might to doon a thing of which  
 thou most repente thee, it is bettre  
 'nay' than 'ye';" / this is to seyn,  
 that thee is bettre holde thy tonge  
 stille, than for to speke. / Thanne  
 may ye understonde by strenger  
 resons, that if thou hast power to

parfourne a werk of which thou  
 shalt repente, thanne is it bettre  
 that thou suffre than biginne. / 2410  
 Wel seyn they, that defenden every  
 wight to assaye any thing of which  
 he is in doute, whether he may  
 parfourne it or no. / And after,  
 whan ye han examined your conseil  
 as I have seyde biforn, and knowen  
 wel that ye may parfourne youre  
 emprise, conferme it thanne sadly  
 til it be at an ende. /

§ 25. Now is it resoun and tyme  
 that I shewe yow whanne, and  
 wherfore, that ye may change  
 your conseil with-outen your re-  
 preve. / Soothly, a man may  
 chaungen his purpos and his con-  
 seil if the cause cesseth, or whan  
 a newe caas bitydeth. / For the  
 lawe seith: that "upon thinges  
 that newly bityden bihoveth newe  
 conseil." / And Senek seith: 2415  
 "if thy conseil is comen to the ers  
 of thyn enemy, change thy con-  
 seil." / Thou mayst also change  
 thy conseil if so be that thou finde  
 that, by errour or by other cause,  
 harm or damage may bityde. /  
 Also, if thy conseil be dishonest, or  
 elles cometh of dishoneste cause,  
 change thy conseil. / For the  
 lawes seyn: that "alle bihestes  
 that been dishoneste been of no  
 value." / And eek, if it so be  
 that it be impossible, or may nat  
 goodly be parfourned or kept. / 2420

§ 26. And take this for a general  
 reule, that every conseil that is  
 affirmed so strongly that it may  
 nat be changed, for no condicioun  
 that may bityde, I seye that thilke  
 conseil is wikked. /

§ 27. This Melibeus, whanne he  
 hadde herd the doctrine of his wyf  
 dame Prudence, answerde in this  
 wyse. / 'Dame,' quod he, 'as  
 yet in-to this tyme ye han wel and  
 covenably taught me as in general,  
 how I shal governe me in the  
 chesinge and in the withholdinge  
 of my conseilours. / But now  
 wolde I fayn that ye wolde conde-

scende in especial, / and telle me how lyketh yow, or what semeth yow, by our conseilours that we han chosen in our present nede.' / 2425  
 § 28. 'My lord,' quod she, 'I biseke yow in al humbiesse, that ye wol nat wilfully replye agayn my resouns, ne destempre your herte thogh I speke thing that yow displese. / For god wot that, as in myn entente, I speke it for your beste, for your honour and for your profite eke. / And soothly, I hope that your benignitee wol taken it in pacience. / Trusteth me wel,' quod she, 'that your conseil as in this caas ne sholde nat, as to speke properly, be called a conseilling, but a mocion or a moevyng of folye; / in which conseil ye han erred in many a sondry wyse.' / 2430

§ 29. First and forward, ye han erred in thassenblinge of your conseilours. / For ye sholde first have cleped a fewe folk to your conseil, and after ye mighte han shewed it to mo folk, if it hadde been nede. / But certes, ye han sodeynly cleped to your conseil a greet multitude of peple, ful chargeant and ful anoyous for to here. / Also ye han erred, for there-as ye sholden only have cleped to your conseil your trewe freendes olde and wyse, / ye han y-cleped straunge folk, and yong folk, false flatereres, and enemys reconciled, and folk that doon yow reverence with-ouen love. / 2435 And eek also ye have erred, for ye han broght with yow to your conseil ire, covetise, and hastifnesse; / the whiche three things been contrariouse to every conseil honeste and profitable; / the whiche three things ye han nat anientissed or destroyed hem, neither in your-self ne in your conseilours, as yow oghte. / Ye han erred also, for ye han shewed to your conseilours your talent, and your affeccion to make werre anon and for to do vengeance; /

they han espyed by your wordes to what thing ye been enclyned. / 2440  
 And therfore han they rather conseilled yow to your talent than to your profit. / Ye han erred also, for it semeth that yow suffyseth to han been conseilled by these conseilours only, and with litel avys; / wher-as, in so greet and so heigh a nede, it hadde been necessarie mo conseilours, and more deliberacioun to parfourne your emprise. / Ye han erred also, for ye han nat examined your conseil in the forseide manere, ne in due manere as the caas requireth. / Ye han erred also, for ye han maked no divisioun bitwixe your conseilours; this is to seyn, bitwixen your trewe freendes and your feyned conseilours; / ne 2445 ye han nat knowe the wil of your trewe freendes olde and wyse; / but ye han cast alle hir wordes in an hochepot, and enclyned your herte to the more part and to the gretter nombre; and ther been ye condescended. / And sith ye wot wel that men shal alwey finde a gretter nombre of foles than of wyse men, / and therfore the conseils that been at congregaciouns and multitudes of folk, ther-as men take more reward to the nombre than to the sapience of persones, / ye see wel that in swiche conseilinges foles han the maistrie,' / 2450 Melibeus answerde agayn, and seyde: 'I graunte wel that I have erred; / but ther-as thou hast told me heer-biforn, that he nis nat to blame that chaungeth hise conseilours in certein caas, and for certein Iuste causes, / I am al redy to change my conseilours, right as thou wolt devyse. / The proverbe seith: that "for to do sinne is mannish, but certes for to persevere longe in sinne is werk of the devel.'" /

§ 30. To this sentence answerde anon dame Prudence, and seyde: / 2455 'Examineth,' quod she, 'your conseil, and lat us see the whiche of

hem han spoken most resonably,  
 and taught yow best conseil. / And  
 for-as-muche as that the examina-  
 cioun is necessarie, lat us biginne  
 at the surgiens and at the phisiciens,  
 that first spoken in this matere. /  
 I sey yow, that the surgiens and  
 phisiciens han seyde yow in your  
 conseil discreetly, as hem oughte; /  
 and in hir speche seyden ful wysly,  
 that to the office of hem aperteneth  
 to doon to every wight honour and  
 profit, and no wight for to anoye; /  
 and, after hir craft, to doon greet  
 diligence un-to the cure of hem  
 whiche that they han in hir govern-  
 2460 aunce. / And sir, right as they han  
 answered wysly and discreetly, /  
 right so rede I that they been  
 heighly and sovereynly guerdoned  
 for hir noble speche; / and eek for  
 they sholde do the more ententif  
 businesse in the curacioun of your  
 doghter dere. / For al-be-it so  
 that they been your freendes, ther-  
 fore shal ye nat suffren that they  
 serve yow for noght; / but ye oghte  
 the rather guerdone hem and shewe  
 2465 hem your largesse. / And as touch-  
 inge the proposicioun which that  
 the phisiciens entreteden in this  
 caas, this is to seyn, / that, in mala-  
 dyes, that oon contrarie is warissed  
 by another contrarie, / I wolde  
 fayn knowe how ye understonde  
 thilke text, and what is your sen-  
 tence. / 'Certes,' quod Melibeus,  
 'I understonde it in this wyse: /  
 that, right as they han doon me a  
 contrarie, right so sholde I doon  
 2470 hem another. / For right as they  
 han venged hem on me and doon  
 me wrong, right so shal I venge me  
 upon hem and doon hem wrong; /  
 and thanne have I cured oon con-  
 trarie by another.' /

§ 31. 'Lo, lo!' quod dame Prudence,  
 'how lightly is every man  
 enclnyed to his owene desyr and to  
 his owene plesaunce! / Certes,'  
 quod she, 'the wordes of the phisi-  
 ciens ne sholde nat han been under-  
 stonden in this wyse. / For certes,

wikkednesse is nat contrarie to wik-  
 kednesse, ne vengeaunce to ven-  
 geaunce, ne wrong to wrong; but  
 they been semblable. / And ther-  
 2475 fore, o vengeaunce is nat warissed  
 by another vengeaunce, ne o wrong  
 by another wrong; / but everich  
 of hem encreesceth and aggreggeth  
 other. / But certes, the wordes of  
 the phisiciens sholde been under-  
 stonden in this wyse: / for good  
 and wikkednesse been two contra-  
 ries, and pees and werre, venge-  
 aunce and suffraunce, discord and  
 accord, and manye othere thinges. /  
 But certes, wikkednesse shal be war-  
 issed by goodnesse, discord by ac-  
 cord, werre by pees, and so forth of  
 othere thinges. / And heer-to ac-  
 2480 cordeth Seint Paul the apostle in  
 manye places. / He seith: "ne  
 yeldeth nat harm for harm, ne wik-  
 ked speche for wikked speche; /  
 but do wel to him that dooth thee  
 harm, and blesse him that seith to  
 thee harm." / And in manye oth-  
 ere places he amonesteth pees and  
 accord. / But now wol I speke to  
 yow of the conseil which that was  
 yeven to yow by the men of lawe  
 and the wyse folk, / that seyden  
 2485 alle by oon accord as ye han herd  
 bifore; / that, over alle thynges, ye  
 sholde doon your diligence to kepen  
 your persone and to warnestore  
 your hous. / And seyden also, that  
 in this caas ye oghten for to werken  
 ful avysely and with greet delibera-  
 cioun. / And sir, as to the firste  
 point, that toucheth to the keping  
 of your persone; / ye shul under-  
 stonde that he that hath werre shal  
 evermore mekely and devoutly  
 preyen biforn alle thinges, / that  
 2490 Iesus Crist of his grete mercy wol  
 han him in his proteccioun, and  
 been his sovereyn helping at his  
 nede. / For certes, in this world  
 ther is no wight that may be con-  
 seilled ne kept suffisantly withouten  
 the keping of our lord Iesu Crist. /  
 To this sentence accordeth the  
 prophete David, that seith: / "if

god ne kepe the citee, in ydel wak-  
 eth he that it kepeth." / Now sir,  
 thanne shul ye committe the keping  
 of your persone to your trewe  
 freendes that been approved and  
 2495 y-knowe; / and of hem shul ye  
 axen help your persone for to kepe.  
 For Catoun seith: "if thou hast  
 nede of help, axeit of thy freendes; /  
 for ther nis noon so good a phisi-  
 cien as thy trewe freend." / And  
 after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow  
 fro alle straunge folk, and fro lyeres,  
 and have alwey in suspect hir com-  
 panye. / For Piers Alfonse seith:  
 "ne tak no companye by the weye  
 of a straunge man, but-if so be that  
 thou have knowe him of a lenger  
 tyme. / And if so be that he falle  
 in-to thy companye paraventure  
 2500 withouten thyn assent, / enquere  
 thanne, as subtilly as thou mayst, of  
 his conversacioun and of his lyf bi-  
 fore, and feyne thy wey; seye that  
 thou goost thider as thou wolt nat  
 go; / and if he bereth a spere, hold  
 thee on the right syde, and if he  
 bere a swerd, hold thee on the list  
 syde." / And after this, thanne  
 shul ye kepe yow wysely from alle  
 swich manere peple as I have seyde  
 bifore, and hem and hir conseil es-  
 chewe. / And after this, thanne  
 shul ye kepe yow in swich manere,  
 that for any presumpcioun of your  
 strengthe, that ye ne dispysse nat ne  
 acounte nat the might of your ad-  
 versarie so litel, that ye lete the  
 keping of your persone for your  
 2505 presumpcioun; / for every wys man  
 dredeth his enemy. / And Salo-  
 mon seith: "weleful is he that of  
 alle hath drede; / for certes, he  
 that thurgh the hardinesse of his  
 herte and thurgh the hardinesse of  
 him-self hath to greet presumpcioun,  
 him shal yvel bityde." / Thanne  
 shul ye evermore countreyayte em-  
 bussgements and alle espaille. /  
 For Senek seith: that "the wysse  
 man that dredeth harmes escheweth  
 2510 harms; / ne he ne falleth in-to per-  
 ils, that perils escheweth." / And al-

be-it so that it seme that thou art in  
 siker place, yet shaltow alwey do thy  
 diligence in kepinge of thy per-  
 sone; / this is to seyn, ne be nat nec-  
 ligent to kepe thy persone, nat only  
 fro thy gretteste enemys but fro thy  
 leeste enemy. / Senek seith: "a  
 man that is wel avysed, he dredeth  
 his leste enemy." / Ovide seith:  
 that "the litel wesele wol slee the  
 grete bole and the wilde hert." / 2515  
 And the book seith: "a litel thorn  
 may prikke a greet king ful sore;  
 and an hound wol holde the wilde  
 boor." / But natheles, I sey nat  
 thou shalt be so coward that thou  
 doute ther wher-as is no drede. /  
 The book seith: that "somme folk  
 han greet lust to deceyve, but yet  
 they dreden hem to be deceyved." /  
 Yet shaltow drede to been empois-  
 oned, and kepe yow from the com-  
 panye of scorneres. / For the book  
 seith: "with scorneres make no  
 companye, but flee hir wordes as  
 venom." / 2520

§ 32. Now as to the seconde  
 point, wher-as your wyse conseil-  
 lours conseyled yow to warnestore  
 your hous with gret diligence, / I  
 wolde fayn knowe, how that ye  
 understonde thilke wordes, and  
 what is your sentence. /

§ 33. Melibeus answerde and  
 seyde, 'Certes I understande it in  
 this wise; that I shal warnestore  
 myn hous with toures, swiche as  
 han castelles and othere manere  
 edifices, and armure and artel-  
 leries, / by whiche thinges I may  
 my persone and myn hous so kepen  
 and defenden, that myne enemys  
 shul been in drede myn hous for to  
 approche.' /

§ 34. To this sentence answerde  
 anon Prudence; 'warnestoring,'  
 quod she, 'of heighe toures and  
 of grete edifices apperteneth som-  
 tyme to pryde; / and eek men 2525  
 make heighe toures and grete edi-  
 fices with grete costages and with  
 greet travaille; and whan that they  
 been accompliced, yet be they nat

worth a stree, but-if they be defended by trewe freendes that been olde and wyse. / And understand wel, that the gretteste and strongeste garnison that a riche man may have, as wel to kepen his persone as hise goodes, is / that he be biloved amonges his subgets and with hise neighebores. / For thus seith Tullius: that "ther is a maner garnison that no man may venquise ne disconfite, and that is, / a lord to be biloved of hise citezeins and of his peple." /

2530 § 35. Now sir, as to the thridde point; wher-as your olde and wise conseeillours seyden, that yow ne oghte nat sodeynly ne hastily proceden in this nede, / but that yow oghte purveyen and apparailen yow in this caas with greet diligence and greet deliberacioun; / trewely, I trowe that they seyden right wysly and right sooth. / For Tullius seith, "in every nede, er thou biginne it, apparaille thee with greet diligence." / Thanne seye I, that in vengeance-taking, in werre, in bataille, and in warnestoring, / er thow biginne, I rede that thou apparaille thee ther-to, and do it with greet deliberacioun. / For Tullius seith: that "long apparailing biforn the bataille maketh short victorie." / And Cassidorus seith: "the garnison is stronger when it is longe tyme avysed." /

2540 § 36. But now lat us speken of the conseil that was accorded by your neighebores, swiche as doon yow reverence withouten love, / your olde enemys reconciled, your flatereres / that conseeilled yow certeyne thinges prively, and openly conseeilleden yow the contrarie; / the yonge folk also, that conseeilleden yow to venge yow and make werre anon. / And certes, sir, as I have seyde biforn, ye han greetly erred to han cleped swich maner folk to your conseil; / which conseeillours been y-nogh reprieved by the resouns afore-seyd. But na-

theles, lat us now descende to the special. Ye shuln first procede after the doctrine of Tullius. / 2545 Certes, the trouthe of this matere or of this conseil nedeth nat diligently enquire; / for it is wel wist whiche they been that han doon to yow this trespas and vileinye, / and how manye trespassours, and in what manere they han to yow doon al this wrong and al this vileinye. / And after this, thanne shul ye examine the seconde condicioun, which that the same Tullius addeth in this matere. / For Tullius put a thing, which that he clepeth "consentinge," this is to seyn; / who been they and how manye, and whiche been they, that consenteden to thy conseil, in thy wilfulnesse to doon hastif vengeance. / And lat us considere also who been they, and how manye been they, and whiche been they, that consenteden to your adversaries. / And certes, as to the firste poynt, it is wel known whiche folk been they that consenteden to your hastif wilfulnesse; / for trewely, alle tho that conseeilleden yow to maken sodeyn werre ne been nat your freendes. / Lat us now considere whiche been they, that ye holde so greetly your freendes as to your persone. / For 2555 al-be-it so that ye be mighty and riche, certes ye ne been nat but allone. / For certes, ye ne han no child but a doghter; / ne ye ne han bretheren ne cosins germayns, ne noon other neigh kinrede, / wherfore that your enemys, for drede, sholde stinte to plede with yow or to destroye your persone. / Ye knowen also, that your riches moten been dispended in diverse parties; / and whan that every 2560 wight hath his part, they ne wollen taken but litel reward to venge thy death. / But thyne enemys been three, and they han manie children, bretheren, cosins, and other ny kinrede; / and, though so were

that thou haddest slayn of hem two or three, yet dwellen ther y-nowe to wreken hir deeth and to slee thy persone. / And though so be that your kinrede be more siker and stedefast than the kin of your adversarie, / yet natheles your kinrede nis but a fer kinrede; they  
 2565 been but litel sib to yow, / and the kin of your enemys been ny sib to hem. And certes, as in that, hir condicioun is bet than youres. / Thanne lat us considere also if the conseilling of hem that conseilleden yow to taken sodeyn vengeance, whether it accorde to resoun? / And certes, ye knowe wel "nay." / For as by right and resoun, ther may no man taken vengeance on no wight, but the Iuge that hath the Iuridiccioun of it, / whan it is graunted him to take thilke vengeance, hastily or attempely, as  
 2570 the lawe requireth. / And yet more-over, of thilke word that Tullius clepeth "consenting," / thou shalt considere if thy might and thy power may consenten and suffyse to thy wilfulnesse and to thy conseillours. / And certes, thou mayst wel seyn that "nay." / For sikerly, as for to speke proprely, we may do no-thing but only swich thing as we may doon rightfully. / And certes, rightfully ne mowe ye take no vengeance as of your propre auctoritee. / Thanne mowe ye  
 2575 see, that your nat ne consenteth nat ne accordeth nat with your wilfulnesse. / Lat us now examine the thridde point that Tullius clepeth "consequent." / Thou shalt understonde that the vengeance that thou purposet for to take is the consequent. / And ther-of folweth another vengeance, peril, and werre; and othere damages with-oute nombre, of whiche we be nat war as at this tyme. / And as touchinge the fourthe point, that Tullius clepeth "engendinge," / thou shalt considere, that  
 2580 this wrong which that is doon to

thee is engendred of the hate of thyne enemys; / and of the vengeance-takinge upon that wolde engendre another vengeance, and muchel sorwe and wastinge of richesses, as I seyde. /

§ 37. Now sir, as to the point that Tullius clepeth "causes," which that is the laste point, / thou shalt understonde that the wrong that thou hast received hath certeine causes, / whiche that clerkes clepen *Oriens* and *Efficiens*, and *Causa longinqua* and *Causa propinqua*; this is to seyn, the fer cause and the ny cause. / The fer  
 2585 cause is almighty god, that is cause of alle thinges. / The neer cause is thy three enemys. / The cause accidental was hate. / The cause material been the fyve woundes of thy doghter. / The cause formal is the manere of hir werkinge, that broghten laddres and cloumben in at thy windowes. / The cause final  
 2590 was for to slee thy doghter; it letted nat in as muche as in hem was. / But for to speken of the fer cause, as to what ende they shul come, or what shal finally bityde of hem in this caas, ne can I nat deme but by coniectinge and by supposinge. / For we shul suppose that they shul come to a wikked ende, / by-cause that the Book of Decrees seith: "selden or with greet peyne been causes y-brought to good ende whanne they becn baddely bigonne." /

§ 38. Now sir, if men wolde axe me, why that god suffred men to do yow this vileinye, certes, I can nat wel answere as for no sothfastnesse. / For thapostle seith, that  
 2595 "the sciences and the Iuggementz of our lord god almighty been ful depe; / ther may no man comprehende ne serchen hem suffisantly." / Natheles, by certeyne presumpciouns and coniectinges, I holde and bileve / that god, which that is ful of Iustice and of rightwisnesse, hath suffred

this bityde by Iuste cause resonable. /

2600 § 39. Thy name is Melibee, this is to seyn, "a man that drinketh hony." / Thou hast y-dronke so muchel hony of swete temporel riches and delices and honours of this world, / that thou art dronken ; and hast forgeten Iesu Crist thy creatour ; / thou ne hast nat doon to him swich honour and reverence as thee oughte. / Ne thou ne hast nat wel y-taken kepe to the wordes of Ovide, that seith : / "under the hony of the godes of the body is hid the venim that sleeth the soule." / And Salomon seith, "if thou hast founden hony, etc of it that suffyseth ; / for if thou etc of it out of mesure, thou shalt spewe," and be nedey and povre. / And peraventure Crist hath thee in despit, and hath turned away fro thee his face and hise eres of misericorde ; / and also he hath suffred that thou hast been punisshed in the manere that thou hast y-trespased. / Thou hast doon sinne agayn our lord Crist ; / for certes, 2605 the three enemys of mankinde, that is to seyn, the flessch, the feend, and the world, / thou hast suffred hem entre in-to thyn herte wilfully by the windowes of thy body, / and hast nat defended thy-self suffisantly agayns hir assautes and hir temptaciouns, so that they han wounded thy soule in fyve places ; / this is to seyn, the deedly synnes that been entred in-to thyn herte by thy fyve wittes. / And in the same manere our lord Crist hath wold and suffred, that thy three enemys been entred 2610 in-to thyn hous by the windowes, / and han y-wounded thy doghter in the fore-seyde manere.' /

2615 § 40. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I see wel that ye enforce yow muchel by wordes to overcome me in swich manere, that I shal nat venge me of myne enemys ; / shewing me the perils and the yvels that mighten falle of this vengeance. / But

who-so wolde considere in alle vengeances the perils and yveles that mighte sewe of vengeance-takinge, / a man wolde never take vengeance, and that were harm ; / 2620 for by the vengeance-takinge been the wikked men dissevered fro the gode men. / And they that han wil to do wikkednesse restreyne hir wikked purpos, when they seen the punissinge and chastysinge of the trespassours.' / [And to this answerde dame Prudence : 'Certes,' seyde she, 'I graunte wel that of vengeance cometh muchel yvel and muchel good ; / but vengeance-taking aperteneth nat unto everichoon, but only unto Iuges and unto hem that han Iurisdiccoun upon the trespassours.] / And yet seye I more, that right as a singuler persone sinneth in takinge vengeance of another man, / right so 2625 sinneth the Iuge if he do no vengeance of hem that it han deserved. / For Senek seith thus : "that maister," he seith, "is good that proveth shrewes." / And as Cassidore seith : "A man dredeth to do outrages, whan he woot and knoweth that it displeseth to the Iuges and sovereyns." / And another seith : "the Iuge that dredeth to do right, maketh men shrewes." / And Seint Paule the apostle seith in his epistle, whan he wryteth un-to the Romayns : that "the Iuges beren nat the spere with-outen cause ;" / but they 2630 beren it to punisse the shrewes and misdoeres, and for to defende the gode men. / If ye wol thanne take vengeance of your enemys, ye shul retourne or have your recours to the Iuge that hath the Iurisdiccoun up-on hem ; / and he shal punisse hem as the lawe axeth and requyreth.' /

§ 41. 'A!' quod Melibee, 'this vengeance lyketh me no-thing. / I bithenke me now and take hede, how fortune hath norissed me fro my childhede, and hath holpen me



2635 to passe many a strong pas. /  
Now wol I assayen hir, trowinge,  
with goddes help, that she shal  
helpe me my shame for to venge. /

§ 42. 'Certes,' quod Prudence,  
'if ye wol werke by my conseil, ye  
shul nat assaye fortune by no wey; /  
ne ye shul nat lene or bowe unto  
hir, after the word of Senek: / for  
"things that been folily doon, and  
that been in hope of fortune, shullen  
never come to good ende." / And  
as the same Senek seith: "the  
more cleer and the more shyning  
that fortune is, the more brotil and

2640 the sonner broken she is." / Trust-  
eth nat in hir, for she nis nat stide-  
fast ne stable; / for whan thow  
trowest to be most seur or siker of  
hir help, she wol faille thee and  
deceyve thee. / And wher-as ye  
seyen that fortune hath norissed yow  
fro your childhede, / I seye, that in  
so muchel shul ye the lasse truste in  
hir and in hir wit. / For Senek  
seith: "what man that is norissed  
by fortune, she maketh him a greet

2650 fool." / Now thanne, sin ye desyre  
and axe vengeance, and the ven-  
geance that is doon after the lawe  
and bifore the Iuge ne lyketh yow  
nat, / and the vengeance that is  
doon in hope of fortune is perilous  
and uncertein, / thanne have ye  
noon other remedie but for to have  
your recours unto the sovereyn Iuge  
that vengeth alle vileinyes and  
wronges; / and he shal venge yow  
after that him-self witnesseth, wher-  
as he seith: / "leveth the ven-  
geance to me, and I shal do it." /

2650 § 43. Melibee answerde, 'if I ne  
venge me nat of the vileinye that  
men han doon to me, / I sompne  
or warne hem that han doon to me  
that vileinye and alle othere, to do  
me another vileinye. / For it is  
writen: "if thou take no ven-  
geance of an old vileinye, thou  
sompnest thyne adversaries to do  
thee a newe vileinye." / And also,  
for my suffrance, men wolden do to  
me so muchel vileinye, that I mighte

neither bere it ne sustene; / and so  
sholde I been put and holden over  
lowe. / For men seyn: "in 2655  
muchel suffringe shul manye thinges  
falle un-to thee whiche thou shalt  
nat mowe suffre." /

§ 44. 'Certes,' quod Prudence,  
'I graunte yow that over muchel  
suffraunce nis nat good; / but yet  
ne folweth it nat ther-of, that every  
persone to whom men doon vileinye  
take of it vengeance; / for that  
aperteneth and length al only to  
the Iuges, for they shul venge the  
vileinyes and iniuries. / And ther-  
fore tho two auctoritees that ye han  
seyd above, been only understonden  
in the Iuges; / for whan they suf- 2660  
fren over muchel the wronges and  
the vileinyes to be doon withouten  
punisshinge, / they sompne nat a  
man al only for to do newe wronges,  
but they comanden it. / Also a  
wys man seith: that "the Iuge that  
correcteth nat the sinnere comand-  
eth and biddeth him do sinne." /  
And the Iuges and sovereyns  
mighten in hir land so muchel suffre  
of the shrewes and misdoeres, /  
that they sholden by swich suffrance,  
by proces of tyme, wexen of swich  
power and might, that they sholden  
putte out the Iuges and the sover-  
eyns from hir places, / and atte 2665  
laste maken hem lesen hir lord-  
shipes. /

§ 45. But lat us now putte, that  
ye have leve to venge yow. / I  
seye ye been nat of might and  
power as now to venge yow. / For  
if ye wole maken comparisoun un-  
to the might of your adversaries, ye  
shul finde in manye thinges, that I  
have shewed yow er this, that hir  
condicioun is bettre than youre. /  
And therfore seye I, that it is good  
as now that ye suffre and be pa-  
cient. / 2670

§ 46. Forther-more, ye knowen  
wel that, after the comune sawe, "it  
is a woodnesse a man to stryve with  
a strengier or a more mighty man  
than he is him-self; / and for

to stryve with a man of evene strengthe, that is to seyn, with as strong a man as he, it is peril; / and for to stryve with a weyker man, it is folie." / And therefore sholde a man flee stryvinge as muchel as he mighte. / For Salomon seith: "it is a greet worship to a man to kepen him fro noyse and stryf." / And if it so bifalle or happe that a man of gretter might and strengthe than thou art do thee grevaunce, / studie and bisie thee rather to stille the same grevaunce, than for to venge thee. / For Senek seith: that "he putteth him in greet peril that stryveth with a gretter man than he is him-self." / And Catoun seith: "if a man of hyer estaat or degree, or more mighty than thou, do thee any or grevaunce, suffre him; / for he that ones hath greved thee may another tyme releve thee and helpe." / Yet sette I caas, ye have bothe might and licence for to venge yow. / I seye, that ther be ful manye thinges that shul restreyne yow of vengeance-takinge, / and make yow for to encline to suffre, and for to han pacience in the thinges that han been doon to yow. / First and foreward, if ye wole considere the defautes that been in your owene person, / for whiche defautes god hath suffred yow have this tribulacioun, as I have seyd yow heer-biforn. / For the poete seith, that "we oghte patiently taken the tribulacions that comen to us, whan we thinken and consideren that we han deserved to have hem." / And Seint Gregorie seith: that "whan a man considereth wel the nombre of hise defautes and of his sinnes, / the peynes and the tribulaciouns that he suffreth semen the lesse un-to hym; / and in-as-muche as him thinketh hise sinnes more hevye and grevous, / in-so-muche semeth his peyne the lighter and the esier un-to him." / Also ye owen to encline and bowe

your herte to take the pacience of our lord Iesu Crist, as seith seint Peter in hise epistles: / "Iesu Crist," he seith, "hath suffred for us, and yeven ensample to every man to folwe and sewe him; / for he dide never sinne, ne never cam ther a vileinous word out of his mouth: / whan men cursed him, he cursed hem noght; and whan men betten him, he manaced hem noght." / Also the grete pacience, which the seintes that been in paradys han had in tribulaciouns that they han y-suffred, with-outhe hir desert or gilt, / oghte muchel stiren yow to pacience. / Forthermore, ye sholde enforce yow to have pacience, / consideringe that the tribulaciouns of this world but litel whyle endure, and sone passed been and goon. / And the Ioye that a man seketh to have by pacience in tribulaciouns is perdurable, after that the apostle seith in his epistle: / "the Ioye of god," he seith, "is perdurable," that is to seyn, everlastinge. / Also troweth and bivelveth stedefastly, that he nis nat wel y-norissed ne wel y-taught, that can nat have pacience or wol nat receyve pacience. / For Salomon seith: that "the doctrine and the wit of a man is knownen by pacience." / And in another place he seith: that "he that is pacient governeth him by greet prudence." / And the same Salomon seith: "the angry and wrathful man maketh noyses, and the pacient man atempreth hem and stilleth." / He seith also: "it is more worth to be pacient than for to be right strong; / and he that may have the lordshipe of his owene herte is more to preyse, than he that by his force or strengthe taketh grete citees." / And therefore seith seint Iame in his epistle: that "pacience is a greet vertu of perfeccioun." /

§ 47. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I graunte yow, dame Prudence, that pacience is a greet vertu of perfec-

cioun; / but every man may nat  
 have the perfeccioun that ye seken; /  
 ne I nam nat of the nombre of right  
 2710 parfite men, / for myn herte may  
 never been in pees un-to the tyme  
 it be venged. / And al-be-it so  
 that it was greet peril to myne ene-  
 mys, to do me a vileinye in takinge  
 vengeance up-on me, / yet token  
 they noon hede of the peril, but ful-  
 filleden hir wikked wil and hir cor-  
 age. / And therefore, me thinketh  
 men oghten nat repreve me, though  
 I putte me in a litel peril for to venge  
 me, / and though I do a greet ex-  
 cesse, that is to seyn, that I venge  
 2715 oon outrage by another.' /

§ 48. 'A!' quod dame Prudence,  
 'ye seyn your wil and as yow lyk-  
 eth; / but in no caas of the world  
 a man sholde nat doon outrage ne  
 excuse for to vengen him. / For  
 Cassidore seith: that "as yvel doth  
 he that vengeth him by outrage, as  
 he that doth the outrage." / And  
 therefore ye shul venge yow after the  
 ordre of right, that is to seyn by the  
 lawe, and noght by excesse ne by  
 outrage. / And also, if ye wol  
 venge yow of the outrage of your  
 adversaries in other maner than  
 2720 right comandeth, ye sinnen; / and  
 therefore seith Senek: that "a man  
 shal never vengen shrewednesse by  
 shrewednesse." / And if ye seye,  
 that right axeth a man to defenden  
 violence by violence, and fighting  
 by fighting, / certes ye seye sooth,  
 whan the defense is doon anon with-  
 outen intervalle or with-outen tary-  
 ing or delay, / for to defenden him  
 and nat for to vengen him. / And  
 it bihoveth that a man putte swich  
 2725 attemperance in his defence, / that  
 men have no cause ne matere to  
 repreven him that defendeth him  
 of excesse and outrage; for elles  
 were it agayn resoun. / Pardee,  
 ye knowen wel, that ye maken no  
 defence as now for to defende yow,  
 but for to venge yow; / and so  
 seweth it that ye han no wil to do  
 your dede attemprely. / And ther-

fore, me thinketh that pacience is  
 good. For Salomon seith: that  
 "he that is nat pacient shal have  
 greet harm." /

§ 49. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I  
 graunte yow, that whan a man is  
 impacient and wroth, of that that  
 toucheth him noght and that aper-  
 teneth nat un-to him, though it  
 harme him, it is no wonder. / For 2730  
 the lawe seith: that "he is coupable  
 that entremetteth or medleth  
 with swich thyng as aperteneth nat  
 un-to him." / And Salomon seith:  
 that "he that entremetteth him of  
 the noyse or stryf of another man,  
 is lyk to him that taketh an hound  
 by the eres." / For right as he  
 that taketh a straunge hound by  
 the eres is outhewhyle biten with  
 the hound, / right in the same wyse  
 is it resoun that he have harm, that  
 by his impacience medleth him of  
 the noyse of another man, wher-as  
 it aperteneth nat un-to him. / But  
 ye knowen wel that this dede, that  
 is to seyn, my grief and my disese,  
 toucheth me right ny. / And ther- 2735  
 fore, though I be wroth and impacient,  
 it is no merveille. / And  
 savinge your grace, I can nat seen  
 that it mighte greetly harme me  
 though I toke vengeance; / for I  
 am richer and more mighty than  
 myne enemys been. / And wel  
 knowen ye, that by moneye and by  
 havinge grete possessions been all  
 the thinges of this world governed. /  
 And Salomon seith: that "alle thinges  
 obeyen to moneye." /

§ 50. Whan Prudence hadde herde  
 hir housbonde avanten him of his  
 richesse and of his moneye, dis-  
 preisinge the power of hise adversa-  
 ries, she spak, and seyde in this  
 wyse: / 'certes, dere sir, I graunte  
 yow that ye been rich and mighty, /  
 and that the riches been goode to  
 hem that han wel y-geten hem and  
 wel conne usen hem. / For right  
 as the body of a man may nat liven  
 with-oute the soule, namore may it  
 live with-outen temporel goodes. /

2745 And by richesses may a man gete him grete freendes. / And therefore seith Pamphilles: "if a netherdes doghter," seith he, "be riche, she may chesen of a thousand men which she wol take to hir housbonde; / for, of a thousand men, oon wol nat forsaken hir ne refusen hir." / And this Pamphilles seith also: "if thou be right happy, that is to seyn, if thou be right riche, thou shalt find a greet nombre of felawes and freendes. / And if thy fortune change that thou wexe povre, farewell freendshipe and felaweshipe; / for thou shalt be allone with-outen any companye, but-if it be the companye of povre folk." / And yet seith this Pamphilles moreover: that "they that been thralle and bonde of linage shullen been maad worthy and noble by the richesses." / And right so as by richesses ther comen manye goodes, right so by poverte come ther manye harmes and yveles. / For greet poverte constreyneth a man to do manye yveles. / And therefore clepeth Cassidore poverte "the moder of ruine," / that is to seyn, the moder of overthrowinge or fallinge

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doun. / And therefore seith Piers Alfonce: "oon of the gretteste adversitees of this world is / whan a free man, by kinde or by burthe, is constreyned by poverte to eten the almesse of his enemy." / And the same seith Innocent in oon of hise bokes; he seith: that "sorweful and mishappy is the condicioun of a povre begger; / for if he axe nat his mete, he dyeth for hunger; / and if he axe, he dyeth for shame; and algates necessitee constreyneth

him to axe." / And therefore seith Salomon: that "bet it is to dye than for to have swich poverte." / And as the same Salomon seith: "bette it is to dye of bitter deeth than for to liven in swich wyse." / By thise resons that I have seid un-to yow, and by manye othere resons that I coude seye, / I graunte

yow that richesses been goode to hem that geten hem wel, and to hem that wel usen tho richesses. / And therefore wol I shewe yow how ye shul have yow, and how ye shul bere yow in gaderinge of richesses, and in what manere ye shul usen hem. /

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§ 51. First, ye shul geten hem with-outen greet desyr, by good leyser sokingly, and nat over hastily. / For a man that is to desyringe to gete richesses abaundoneth him first to thefte and to alle other yveles. / And therefore seith Salomon: "he that hasteth him to bisily to wexe riche shal be noon innocent." / He seith also: that "the richesse that hastily cometh to a man, sone and lightly gooth and passeth fro a man; / but that richesse that cometh litel and litel wexeth alwey and multiplyeth." / And

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sir, ye shul geten richesses by your wit and by your travaille un-to your profit; / and that with-outen wrong or harm-doinge to any other persone. / For the lawe seith: that "ther maketh no man himselfen riche, if he do harm to another wight;" / this is to seyn, that nature defendeth and forbedeth by right, that no man make him-self riche un-to the harm of another persone. / And Tullius seith: that "no sorwe ne no drede of deeth, ne no-thing that may falle un-to a man / is so muchel agayns nature, as a man to encressen his owene profit to the harm of another man. / And though the grete men and the mighty men geten richesses more lightly than thou, / yet shaltou nat been ydel ne slow to do thy profit; for thou shalt in alle wyse flee ydelnesse." / For Salomon seith: that "ydelnesse techeth a man to do manye yveles." / And the same Salomon seith: that "he that travailleth and bisieth him to tilien his land, shal eten breed; / but he that is ydel and casteth him to no bisi-nesse ne occupacioun, shal falle in-to poverte, and dye for hun-

ger." / And he that is ydel and slow can never finde covenable tyme for to doon his profit. / For ther is a versifiour seith: that "the ydel man excuseth hym in winter, by cause of the grete cold; and in somer, by enchesoun of the hete." / For these causes seith Caton: "waketh and enclyneth nat yow over muchel for to slepe; for over muchel reste norisseth and causeth manye vices." / And therfore seith seint Ierome: "doth somme gode dedes, that the devel which is our enemy ne finde yow nat unoccupied." / For the devel ne taketh nat lightly un-to his werkinge swiche as he findeth occupied in gode werkes." /

§ 52. Thanne thus, in getinge riches, ye mosten flee ydelnesse. / And afterward, ye shul use the riches, whiche ye have geten by your wit and by your travaille, / in swich a manere, that men holde nat yow to scars, ne to sparinge, ne to fool-large, that is to seyn, over-large a spender. / For right as men blamen an avaricious man by-cause of his scarsetee and chincherye, / in the same wyse is he to blame that spendeth over largely. / And therfore seith Caton: "use," he seith, "thy riches that thou hast geten / in swich a manere, that men have no matere ne cause to calle thee neither wrecche ne chinche; / for it is a greet shame to a man to have a povere herte and a riche purs." / He seith also: "the goodes that thou hast y-geten, use hem by mesure," that is to seyn, spende hem mesurably; / for they that folily wasten and despenden the goodes that they han, / whan they han namore propre of hir owene, they shapen hem to take the goodes of another man. / I seye thanne, that ye shul flee avarice; / usinge your riches in swich manere, that men seye nat that your riches been y-buried, / but that ye have

hem in your might and in your weeldinge. / For a wys man re-  
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 preveth the avaricious man, and seith thus, in two vers: / "wherto and why burieth a man hise goodes by his grete avarice, and knoweth wel that nedes moste he dye; / for deeth is the ende of every man as in this present lyf." / And for what cause or enchesoun Ioyneth he him or knitteth he him so faste un-to hise goodes, / that alle his wittes mowen nat disseveren him or departen him from hise goodes; / and  
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 knoweth wel, or oghte knowe, that whan he is deed, he shal no-thing bere with him out of this world. / And therfore seith seint Augustin: that "the avaricious man is likned un-to helle; / that the more it swelweth, the more desyr it hath to swelwe and devoure." / And as wel as ye wolde eschewe to be called an avaricious man or chinche, / as wel sholde ye kepe yow and governe yow in swich a wyse that men calle yow nat fool-large. / Therfore seith Tul-  
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 lius: "the goodes," he seith, "of thyn hous ne sholde nat been hid, ne kept so cloos but that they mighte been opened by pitee and debonairetee;" / that is to seyn, to yeven part to hem that han greet nede; / "ne thy goodes shullen nat been so opene, to been every mannes goodes." / Afterward, in getinge of your riches and in usinge hem, ye shul alway have three things in your herte; / that is to seyn, our lord god, conscience, and good name. / First, ye shul  
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 have god in your herte; / and for no richesse ye shullen do no-thing, which may in any manere displese god, that is your creatour and maker. / For after the word of Salomon: "it is bettre to have a litel good with the love of god, / than to have muchel good and tresour, and lese the love of his lord god." / And the prophete seith: that "bettre it is to been a good

2820 man and have litel good and tresour, / than to been holden a shrewe and have grete richesse." / And yet seye I ferthermore, that ye sholde alwey doon your bisnesse to gete yow richesces, / so that ye gete hem with good conscience. / And thaPOSTle seith: that "ther nis thing in this world, of which we sholden have so greet Ioye as whan our conscience bereth us good wittnesse." / And the wyse man seith: "the substance of a man is ful good, whan sinne is nat in mannes conscience." / Afterward,

2825 in getinge of your richesces, and in usinge of hem, / yow moste have greet bisnesse and greet diligence, that your goode name be alwey kept and conserved. / For Salomon seith: that "bette it is and more it availeth a man to have a good name, than for to have grete richesces." / And therefore he seith in another place: "do greet diligence," seith Salomon, "in keepinge of thy freend and of thy gode name; / for it shal lenger abide with thee than any tresour, be it never so precious." / And certes

2830 he sholde nat be called a gentil man, that after god and good conscience, alle things left, ne dooth his diligence and bisnesse to kepen his good name. / And Cassidore seith: that "it is signe of a gentil herte, whan a man loveth and desyareth to han a good name." / And therefore seith saint Augustin: that "ther been two things that arn necessarie and nedefulle, / and that is good conscience and good loos; / that is to seyn, good conscience to thyn owene persone inward, and good loos for thy

2835 neigebore outward." / And he that trusteth him so muchel in his gode conscience, / that he displeth and setteth at nocht his gode name or loos, and rekketh nocht though he kepe nat his gode name, nis but a cruel cherl. /

§ 53. Sire, now have I shewed

yow how ye shul do in getinge richesces, and how ye shullen usen hem; / and I se wel, that for the trust that ye han in youre richesces, ye wole moeve werre and bataille. / I conseilte yow, that ye biginne no werre in trust of your richesces; for they ne sufysen nocht werres to mayntene. / And therefore seith a

2840 philosopre: "that man that desyareth and wole algates han werre, shal never have suffisaunce; / for the richer that he is, the gretter despenses moste he make, if he wole have worship and victorie." / And Salomon seith: that "the gretter richesces that a man hath, the mo despendours he hath." / And dere sire, al-be-it so that for your richesces ye mowe have muchel folk, / yet bihoveth it nat, ne it is nat good, to biginne werre, where-

2845 as ye mowe in other manere have pees, un-to your worship and profit. / For the victories of batailles that been in this world, lyen nat in greet nombre or multitude of the peple ne in the vertu of man; / but it lyth in the wil and in the hand of our lord god almighty. / And therefore Iudas Machabeus, which was goddes knight, / whan he sholde fighte agayn his adversarie that hadde a greet nombre, and a gretter multitude of folk and strenger than was this peple of Machabee, / yet he reconforted his litel companye, and seyde right in

2850 this wyse: / "als lightly," quod he, "may our lord god almighty yeve victorie to a fewe folk as to many folk; / for the victorie of bataile cometh nat by the grete nombre of peple, / but it cometh from our lord god of hevене." / And dere sir, for as muchel as there is no man certein, if he be worthy that god yeve him victorie, [namore than he is certein whether he be worthy of the love of god] or naught, after that Salomon seith, / therefore every man sholde greetly drede werres to biginne. / And by-cause that in

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batailles fallen manye perils, / and happeth outhere-while, that as sone is the grete man sleyn as the litel man; / and, as it is written in the seconde book of Kinges, "the dedes of batailles been aventureuse and nothing certeyne; / for as lightly is oon hurt with a spere as another." / And for ther is gret peril in werre, therfore sholde a man flee and eschewe werre, in as muchel as a man may goodly. / For Salomon seith: "he that loveth peril shal falle in peril." /

§ 54. After that Dame Prudence hadde spoken in this manere, Melibee answerde and seyde, / "I see wel, dame Prudence, that by your faire wordes and by your reasons that ye han shewed me, that the werre lyketh yow no-thing; / but I have nat yet herd your conseil, how I shal do in this nede." /

§ 55. 'Certes,' quod she, 'I conseilte yow that ye accorde with youre adversaries, and that ye have pees with hem. / For seint Iame seith in hise epistles: that "by concord and pees the smale richesses wexen grete, / and by debaat and discord the grete richesses fallen doun." / And ye knowen wel that oon of the gretteste and most sovereyn thing, that is in this world, is unitee and pees. / And therfore seyde oure lord Iesu Crist to hise apostles in this wyse: / "wel happy and blessed been they that loven and purchacen pees; for they been called children of god." / "A!" quod Melibee, 'now se I wel that ye loven nat myn honour ne my worshipe. / Ye knowen wel that myne adversaries han bigonnen this debaat and brige by hir outrage; / and ye see wel that they ne requeren ne preyen me nat of pees, ne they asken nat to be reconciled. / Wol ye thanne that I go and meke me and obeye me to hem, and crye hem mercy? / For sothe, that were nat my worship. / For right as men seyn, that "over-greet hom-

linesse engendreth dispreysinge," so fareth it by to greet humylitee or mekenesse.' /

§ 56. Thanne bigan dame Prudence to maken semblant of wratthe, and seyde, / "certes, sir, sauf your grace, I love your honour and your profit as I do myn owene, and ever have doon; / ne ye ne noon other syen never the contrarie. / And yit, if I hadde seyde that ye sholde han purchaced the pees and the reconciliacioun, I ne hadde nat muchel mistaken me, ne seyde amis. / For the wyse man seith: "the dissensioun biginneth by another man, and the reconciling bi-ginneth by thy-self." / And the prophete seith: "flee shrewednesse and do goodnesse; / seke pees and solwe it, as muchel as in thee is." / Yet seye I nat that ye shul rather pursue to your adversaries for pees than they shuln to yow; / for I knowe wel that ye been so hard-herted, that ye wol do no-thing for me. / And Salomon seith: "he that hath over-hard an herte, atte laste he shal mishappe and mistyde." /

§ 57. Whanne Melibee hadde herd dame Prudence maken semblant of wratthe, he seyde in this wyse, / "dame, I prey yow that ye be nat displeed of thinges that I seye; / for ye knowe wel that I am angry and wrooth, and that is no wonder; / and they that been wrothe witen nat wel what they doon, ne what they seyn. / Therefore the prophete seith: that "troubled eyen han no cleer sighte." / But seyeth and conseileth me as yow lyketh; for I am redy to do right as ye wol desyre; / and if ye repreve me of my folye, I am the more holden to love yow and to preyse yow. / For Salomon seith: that "he that repreveth him that doth folye, / he shal finde gretter grace than he that deceyveth him by swete wordes." /

§ 58. Thanne seide dame Pru-

dence, 'I make no semblant of wratthe ne anger but for your grete profit. / For Salomon seith: "he is more worth, that repreveth or chydeth a fool for his folye, shewing him semblant of wratthe, / than he that supporteth him and preyseth him in his misdoinge, and laugheth at his folye." / And this same Salomon seith afterward: that "by the sorweful visage of a man," that is to seyn, by the sory and hevye countenance of a man, / "the fool correcteth and amendeth himself." /

2900 § 59. Thanne seyde Melibee, 'I shal nat conne answere to so manye faire resouns as ye putten to me and shewen. / Seyeth shortly your wil and your conseil, and I am al ready to fulfillle and parfourne it.' /

2905 § 60. Thanne dame Prudence discovered al hir wil to him, and seyde, / 'I conseilte yow,' quod she, 'aboven alle thinges, that ye make pees bitwene god and yow; / and beth reconciled un-to him and to his grace. / For as I have seyde yow heer-biforn, god hath suffred yow to have this tribulacioun and disese for your sinnes. / And if ye do as I sey yow, god wol sende your adversaries un-to yow, / and maken hem fallen at your feet, redy to do your wil and your comandements. / For Salomon seith: "whan the condicioun of man is plesaunt and likinge to god, / he chaungeth the hertes of the mannes adversaries, and constreyneth hem to biseken him of pees and of grace." / And I prey yow, lat me speke with your adversaries in privee place; / for they shul nat knowe that it be of your wil or your assent. / And thanne, whan I knowe hir wil and hir entente, I may conseilte yow the more seurlly.' /

2910 § 61. 'Dame,' quod Melibee, 'dooth your wil and your lykinge, / for I putte me hoolly in your disposicion and ordinaunce.' /

2915 § 62. Thanne Dame Prudence, whan she saugh the gode wil of her

housbonde, delibered and took avys in hir-self, / thinkinge how she mighte bringe this nede un-to a good conclusioun and to a good ende. / And whan she saugh hir tyme, she sente for these adversaries to come un-to hir in-to a privee place, / and shewed wysly un-to hem the grete goodes that comen of pees, / and the grete harmes and perils that been in werre; / and seyde to hem in a goodly manere, how that hem oughte have greet repentaunce / of the iniurie and wrong that they hadden doon to Melibee hir lord, and to hir, and to hir doghter. /

2920 § 63. And whan they herden the goodliche wordes of dame Prudence, / they weren so surprised and ravished, and hadden so greet Ioye of hir, that wonder was to telle. / 'A! lady!' quod they, 'ye han shewed un-to us "the blessinge of swetnesse," after the sawe of David the prophete; / for the reconcilinge which we been nat worthy to have in no manere, / but we oghte requeren it with greet contricioun and humilitee, / ye of your grete goodnesse have presented unto us. / Now see we wel that the science and the conninge of Salomon is ful trewe; / for he seith: that "swete wordes multiplen and encresen freendes, and maken shrewes to be debonaire and meke." /

2930 § 64. 'Certes,' quod they, 'we putten our dede and al our matere and cause al hoolly in your goode wil; / and been redy to obeye to the speche and comandement of my lord Melibee. / And therefore, dere and benigne lady, we preyen yow and biseke yow as mekely as we conne and mowen, / that it lyke un-to your grete goodnesse to fulfillen in dede your goodliche wordes; / for we consideren and knowlichen that we han offended and greved my lord Melibee out of mesure; / so ferforth, that we be nat of power to maken hise



amendes. / And therefore we oblige and binden us and our freendes to doon al his wil and hise comandements. / But peraventure he hath swich hevynesse and swich wratthe to us-ward, by-cause of our offence, / that he wole enioyne us swich a peyne as we mowe nat here ne sustene. / And therefore, noble lady, we biseke to your wommanly pitee, / to taken swich avysement in this nede, that we, ne our freendes, be nat desherited ne destroyed thurgh our folye.' /

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§ 65. 'Certes,' quod Prudence, 'it is an hard thing and right perilous, / that a man putte him al outrely in the arbitracioun and Iuggement, and in the might and power of hise enemys. / For Salomon seith: "leveth me, and yeveth credence to that I shal seyn; I seye," quod he, "ye peple, folk, and governours of holy chirche, / to thy sone, to thy wyf, to thy freend, ne to thy brother / ne yeve thou never might ne maistrice of thy body, whyl thou livest." / Now sithen he defendeth, that man shal nat yeven to his brother ne to his freend the might of his body, / by a strengier resoun he defendeth and forbedeth a man to yeven him-self to his enemy. / And natheles I conseille you, that ye mistruste nat my lord. / For I woot wel and knowe verraily, that he is debonaire

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and meke, large, curteys, / and nothing desyrous ne covetous of good ne richesse. / For ther nis no-thing in this world that he desyreth, save only worship and honour. / Forther-more I knowe wel, and am right seur, that he shal no-thing doon in this nede withouten my conseil. / And I shal so werken in this cause, that, by grace of our lord god, ye shul been reconciled un-to us.' /

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§ 66. Thanne seyden they with o vois, 'worshipful lady, we putten us and our goodes al fully in your wil and disposicioun; / and been redy

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to comen, what day that it lyke un-to your noblesse to limite us or assigne us, / for to maken our obligacioun and bond as strong as it lyketh un-to your goodnesse; / that we mowe fulfillle the wille of yow and of my lord Melibee.' /

§ 67. Whan dame Prudence hadde herd the answeres of these men, she bad hem goon agayn prively; / and she retourned to hir lord Melibee, and tolde him how she fond hise adversaries ful repentant, / knowledgeinge ful lowely hir sinnes and trespas, and how they were redy to suffren al peyne, / requiringe and preyinge him of mercy and pitee. /

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§ 68. Thanne seyde Melibee, 'he is wel worthy to have pardoun and fortyfnesse of his sinne, that excuseth nat his sinne, / but knowlecheth it and repenteth him, axinge indulgence. / For Senek seith: "ther is the remissioun and fortyfnesse, where-as confessioun is;" / for confession is neighebere to innocence. / And he seith in another place: "he that hath shame for his sinne and knowlecheth it, is worthy remissioun." And therefore I assente and conferme me to have pees; / but it is good that we do it nat with-outen the assent and wil of our freendes.' /

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§ 69. Thanne was Prudence right glad and Ioyeful, and seyde, / 'Certes, sir,' quod she, 'ye han wel and goodly answered. / For right as by the conseil, assent, and help of your freendes, ye han been stired to venge yow and maken werre, / right so with-outen hir conseil shul ye nat accorden yow, ne have pees with your adversaries. / For the lawe seith: "ther nis no-thing so good by wey of kinde, as a thing to been unbounde by him that it was y-bounde.'" /

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§ 70. And thanne dame Prudence, with-outen delay or taryinge, sente anon hir messages for hir kin, and for hir olde freendes whiche

that were trewe and wyse, / and tolde hem by ordre, in the presence of Melibee, al this matere as it is  
 2975 aboven expressed and declared; / and preyden hem that they wolde yeven hir avys and conseil, what best were to doon in this nede. / And whan Melibees freendes hadde taken hir avys and deliberacioun of the forseide matere, / and hadden examined it by greet bisinesse and greet diligence, / they yave ful conseil for to have pees and reste; / and that Melibee sholde receyve  
 2980 with good herte hise adversaries to foryiffnesse and mercy. /

§ 71. And whan dame Prudence hadde herd the assent of hir lord Melibee, and the conseil of hise freendes, / accorde with hir wille and hir entencioun, / she was wonderly glad in hir herte, and seyde: / 'ther is an old proverbe,' quod she, 'seith: that "the goodnesse that thou mayst do this day, do it; / and abyde nat ne delaye it nat til  
 2985 to-morwe." / And therefore I conseilte that ye sende your messages, swiche as been discrete and wyse, / un-to your adversaries; tellinge hem, on your bihalve, / that if they wole trete of pees and of accord, / that they shape hem, with-oute delay or taryng, to comen un-to us.' / Which thing parfourned  
 2990 was in dede. / And whanne these trespassours and repentine folk of hir folies, that is to seyn, the adversaries of Melibee, / hadden herd what these messagers seyden un-to hem, / they weren right glad and loyeful, and answereden ful mekely and benignely, / yeldinge graces and thankinges to hir lord Melibee and to al his companye; / and shopen hem, with-oute delay, to go with the messagers, and obeie to the comandement of hir lord Meli-  
 2995 bee. /

§ 72. And right anon they token hir way to the court of Melibee, / and token with hem somme of hir trewe freendes, to maken feith for

hem and for to been hir borwes. / And whan they were comen to the presence of Melibee, he seyde hem these wordes: / 'it standeth thus,' quod Melibee, 'and sooth it is, that ye, / causeless, and with-oute skile and resoun, / han doon grete iniuries and wronges to me and to my wyf Prudence, and to my doghter also. / For ye han entred in-to myn hous by violence, / and have doon swich outrage, that alle men knowen wel that ye have deserved the deeth; / and therefore wol I knowe and wite of yow, / whether ye wol putte the punissement and the chastysinge and the vengeance of this outrage in the wil of me and of my wyf Prudence; or ye wol nat?' /

§ 73. Thanne the wyseste of hem three answerde for hem alle, and seyde: / 'sire,' quod he, 'we knowen wel, that we been unworthy to comen un-to the court of so greet a lord and so worthy as ye been. / For we han so greetly mistaken us, and han offended and agilt in swich a wyse agayn your heigh lordshipe, / that trewely we han deserved the deeth. / But yet, for the grete goodnesse and nobelair-ete that all the world witnesseth of your persone, / we submitten us to  
 3010 the excellence and benignitee of your gracious lordshipe, / and been redy to obeie to alle your comandements; / bisekinge yow, that of your merciable pitee ye wol considere our grete repentaunce and lowe submissioun, / and graunten us foryevenesse of our outrageous trespas and offence. / For wel we knowe, that your liberal grace and mercy stretchen hem ferther in-to goodnesse, than doon our outrageous giltes and trespas in-to wikkednesse; / al-be-it that cursedly  
 3015 and dampnably we han agilt agayn your heigh lordshipe.' /

§ 74. Thanne Melibee took hem up fro the ground ful benignely, / and receyved hir obligaciouns and

hir bondes by hir othes up-on hir plegges and borwes, / and assigned hem a certeyn day to retourne un-to his court, / for to accepte and receyve the sentence and Iugement that Melibee wolde comande to be doon on hem by the causes afore-seyd; / whiche thinges ordeyned, every man returned to his hous. /

§ 75. And whan that dame Prudence saugh hir tyme, she freyned and axed hir lord Melibee, / what vengeance he thoughte to taken of hise adversaries? /

§ 76. To which Melibee answered and seyde, 'certes,' quod he, 'I thinke and purpose me fully / to desherite hem of al that ever they han, and for to putte hem in exile for ever.' /

§ 77. 'Certes,' quod dame Prudence, 'this were a cruel sentence, and muchel agayn resoun. / For ye been riche y-nough, and han no nede of other mennes good; / and ye mighte lightly in this wyse gete yow a covetous name, / which is a vicious thing, and oghte been eschewed of every good man. / For after the sawe of the word of the apostle: "covetise is rote of alle harmes." / And therefore, it were better for yow to lese so muchel good of your owene, than for to taken of hir good in this manere. / For better it is to lesen good with worshippe, than it is to winne good with vileinye and shame. / And every man oghte to doon his diligence and his businesse to geten him a good name. / And yet shal he nat only bisie him in kepinge of his good name, / but he shal also enforcen him alwey to do som-thing by which he may renovelle his good name; / for it is written, that "the olde good loos or good name of a man is sone goon and passed, whan it is nat newed ne renovelled." / And as touchinge that ye seyn, ye wole exile your adversaries, / that thinketh me muchel agayn resoun and out of mesure, / considered the

power that they han yeve yow up-on hem-self. / And it is written, that "he is worthy to lesen his privilege that misuseth the might and the power that is yeven him." / And I sette cas ye mighte enioyne hem that peyne by right and by lawe, / which I trowe ye mowe nat do, / I seye, ye mighte nat putten it to execucioun per-aventure, / and thanne were it lykly to retourne to the werre as it was biforn. / And therefore, if ye wole that men do yow obeisance, ye moste demen more curteisly; / this is to seyn, ye moste yeven more esy sentences and Iugements. / For it is written, that "he that most curteisly comandeth, to him men most obeyen." / And therefore, I prey yow that in this necessitee and in this nede, ye caste yow to overcome your herte. / For Senek seith: that "he that overcometh his herte, overcometh twyes." / And Tullius seith: "ther is no-thing so comendable in a greet lord / as whan he is debonaire and meke, and appeseth him lightly." / And I prey yow that ye wole forbere now to do vengeance, / in swich a manere, that your goode name may be kept and conserved; / and that men mowe have cause and matere to preyse yow of pitee and of mercy; / and that ye have no cause to repente yow of thing that ye doon. / For Senek seith: "he overcometh in an yvel manere, that repenteth him of his victorie." / Wherefore I pray yow, lat mercy been in your minde and in your herte, / to theeffect and entente that god almighty have mercy on yow in his laste Iugement. / For seint Iame seith in his epistle: "Iugement withouten mercy shal be doon to him, that hath no mercy of another wight." /

§ 78. Whanne Melibee hadde herd the grete skiles and resouns of dame Prudence, and hir wise informaciouns and techinges, / his herte gan encline to the wil of his wyf,

consideringe hir trewe entente; /  
and conformed him anon, and as-  
sented fully to werken after hir con-  
seil; / and thonked god, of whom  
procedeth al vertu and alle good-  
nesse, that him sente a wyf of so  
greet discrecioun. / And whan the  
day cam that hise adversaries sholde  
apperen in his presence, / he spak  
unto hem ful goodly, and seyde in  
3065 this wyse: / ‘al-be-it so that of your  
pryde and presumpcioun and folie,  
and of your necligence and uncon-  
ninge, / ye have misborn yow and  
trespassed un-to me; / yet, for as  
much as I see and biholde your grete  
humilitee, / and that ye been sory  
and repentant of your giltes, / it

constreyneth me to doon yow grace  
and mercy. / Therefore I receyve 3070  
yow to my grace, / and foryeve yow  
outruly alle the offences, iniuries,  
and wronges, that ye have doon  
agayn me and myne; / to this effect  
and to this ende, that god of his  
endelees mercy / wole at the tyme  
of our dyinge foryeven us our giltes  
that we han trespassed to him in  
this wrecched world. / For doute-  
lees, if we be sory and repentant of  
the sinnes and giltes whiche we han  
trespassed in the sighte of our lord  
god, / he is so free and so merci- 3075  
able, / that he wole foryeven us our  
giltes, / and bringen us to his blisse  
that never hath ende. Amen.’ /

*Here is ended Chaucers Tale of Melibee and of Dame Prudence.*

## THE MONK'S PROLOGUE.

*The mery wordes of the Host to the  
Monk.*

WHAN ended was my tale of Melibee,  
And of Prudence and hir benignitee, 3080  
Our hoste seyde, ‘as I am faithful man,  
And by the precious *corpus Madrian*,  
I hadde lever than a barel ale  
That goode lief my wyf hadde herd this  
tale! 3084

For she nis no-thing of swich pacience  
As was this Melibee wyf Prudence.

By goddes bones! whan I bete my  
knaves,

She bringth me forth the grete clobbed  
staves,

And cryeth, “slee the dogges everich-  
oon,

And brek hem, bothe bak and every  
boon.” 3090

And if that any neighebor of myne  
Wol nat in chirche to my wyf enclyne,

Or be so hardy to hir to trespace,  
Whan she comth hoom, she rampeth  
in my face,

And cryeth, “false coward, wreak thy  
wyf, 3095

By *corpus* bones! I wol have thy knyf,  
And thou shalt have my distaf and go  
spinne!”

Fro day to night right thus she wol bi-  
ginne; —

“Allas!” she seith, “that ever I was  
shape 3099

To wedde a milksop or a coward ape,  
That wol be overlad with every wight!

Thou darst nat stonden by thy wyves  
right!”

This is my lyf, but-if that I wol fighte;  
And out at dore anon I moot me dighte,

Or elles I am but lost, but-if that I 3105  
Be lyk a wilde leoun fool-hardy.

I woot wel she wol do me slee som day  
Som neighebor, and thanne go my wey.

For I am perilous with knyf in honde,  
Al be it that I dar nat hir withstonde,

For she is big in armes, by my feith, 3111  
That shal he finde, that hir misdooth or  
seith.

But lat us passe away fro this matere.  
My lord the Monk,’ quod he, ‘be mery  
of chere;

For ye shul telle a tale trewely. 3115

Lo! Rouchestre stant heer faste by!

Ryd forth, myn owene lord, brek nat our  
game,  
But, by my trouthe, I knowe nat your  
name,  
Wher shal I calle yow my lord dan Iohn,  
Or dan Thomas, or elles dan Albon? 3120  
Of what hous be ye, by your fader kin?  
I vow to god, thou hast a ful fair skin,  
It is a gentil pasture ther thou goost;  
Thou art nat lyk a penaunt or a goost.  
Upon my feith, thou art som officer, 3125  
Som worthy sexteyn, or som celerer,  
For by my fader soule, as to my doom,  
Thou art a maister whan thou art at  
hoom;  
No povre cloisterer, ne no novys,  
But a governour, wyly and wys. 3130  
And therwithal of brawnes and of bones  
A wel-faring persone for the nones.  
I pray to god, yeve him confusioun  
That first thee broghte un-to religioun;  
Thou woldest han been a trede-foul  
aright. 3135  
Haddestow as greet a leve, as thou hast  
might  
To parfourne al thy lust in engen-  
drure,  
Thou haddest bigeten many a creature.  
Alas! why werestow so wyd a cope?  
God yeve me sorwe! but, and I were a  
pope, 3140  
Not only thou, but every mighty man,  
Thogh he were shorn ful hye upon his  
pan,  
Sholde have a wyf; for al the world is  
lorn!  
Religioun hath take up al the corn  
Of treading, and we borel men ben  
shrimpes! 3145  
Of feble trees ther comen wrecched  
impes.  
This maketh that our heires been so  
sclendre

And feble, that they may nat wel engen-  
dre.  
This maketh that our wyves wol assaye  
Religious folk, for ye may bettre paye  
Of Venus payements than mowe we; 3151  
God woot, no lussheburghes payen ye!  
But be nat wrooth, my lord, for that I  
pleye;  
Ful ofte in game a sooth I have herd  
seye.' 3154  
This worthy monk took al in pacience,  
And seyde, 'I wol doon al my diligence,  
As fer as souneth in-to honestee,  
To telle yow a tale, or two, or three.  
And if yow list to herkne hiderward,  
I wol yow seyn the lyf of seint Edward;  
Or elles first Tragedies wol I telle 3161  
Of whiche I have an hundred in my  
celle.  
Tragedie is to seyn a certeyn storie,  
As olde bokes maken us memorie,  
Of him that stood in greet prosperitee  
And is y-fallen out of heigh degree 3166  
Into miserie, and endeth wrecchedly.  
And they ben versifyed comunly  
Of six feet, which men clepe *exametron*.  
In prose eek been endyted many oon,  
And eek in metre, in many a sondry  
wyse. 3171  
Lo! this declaring oughte y-nough suf-  
fise.  
Now herkne, if yow lyketh for to  
here;  
But first I yow biseke in this matere,  
Though I by ordre telle nat thise  
thinges, 3175  
Be it of popes, emperours, or kinges,  
After hir ages, as men writen finde,  
But telle hem som bifore and som bi-  
hinde,  
As it now comth un-to my remem-  
braunce; 3179  
Have me excused of myn ignoraunce.'

*Explicit.*

## THE MONKES TALE.

*Here biginneth the Monkes Tale, de  
Casibus Virorum Illustrium.*

I WOL biwayle in maner of Tragedie  
The harm of hem that stode in heigh  
degree,  
And fillen so that ther nas no remedie  
To bringe hem out of hir adversitee;  
For certein, whan that fortune list to  
flee, 3185  
Ther may no man the cours of hir with-  
holde;  
Lat no man truste on blind prosperitee;  
Be war by thise ensamples trewe and  
olde.

## LUCIFER.

At Lucifer, though he an angel were,  
And nat a man, at him I wol biginne;  
For, thogh fortune may non angel dere,  
From heigh degree yet fel he for his sinne  
Doun in-to helle, wher he yet is inne.  
O Lucifer! brightest of angels alle,  
Now artow Sathanas, that maist nat  
twinne 3195  
Out of miserie, in which that thou art  
falle.

## ADAM.

Lo Adam, in the feld of Damassene,  
With goddes owene finger wroght was  
he,  
And nat bigeten of mannes sperme un-  
clene,  
And welte al Paradys, saving o tree. 3200  
Had never worldly man so heigh degree  
As Adam, til he for misgovernance  
Was drive out of his hye prosperitee  
To labour, and to helle, and to mes-  
chaunce.

## SAMPSON.

Lo Sampson, which that was annunciat  
By thangel, longe er his nativitee, 3206  
And was to god almighty consecrat,  
And stood in noblesse, whyl he mighte  
see.

Was never swich another as was he,  
To speke of strengthe, and therewith  
hardnesse; 3210  
But to his wyves tolde he his secree,  
Through which he slow him-self, for  
wrechednesse.

Sampson, this noble almighty champioun,  
Withouten wepen save his hondes tweye,  
He slow and al to-rente the leoun, 3215  
Toward his wedding walking by the  
weye.  
His false wyf coude him so plesse and  
preye  
Til she his foos his conseil knew, and she untrew  
Un-to his foos his conseil gan biwrewe,  
And him forsook, and took another  
newe. 3220

Three hundred foxes took Sampson for  
ire,  
And alle hir tayles he togider bond,  
And sette the foxes tayles alle on fire,  
For he on every tayl had knit a brond;  
And they brende alle the cornes in that  
lond, 3225  
And alle hir oliveres and vynes eek,  
A thousand men he slow eek with his  
hond,  
And had no wepen but an asses cheek.

Whan they were slayn, so thursted him  
that he  
Was wel ny lorn, for which he gan to  
preye 3230  
That god wolde on his peyne han som  
pitee,  
And sende him drinke, or elles moste he  
deye;  
And of this asses cheke, that was drewe,  
Out of a wang-tooth sprang anon a welle,  
Of which he drank y-nogh, shortly to  
seye, 3235  
Thus heelp him god, as *Iudicum* can telle.

By verray force, at Gazan, on a night,  
Maugree Philistiens of that citee,  
The gates of the toun he hath up-plaint,  
And on his bak y-caried hem hath he

Hye on an hille that men mighte hem  
see. 3241

O noble almighty Sampson, leef and dere,  
Had thou nat told to wommen thy secree,  
In al this worlde ne hadde been thy pere!

This Sampson never sicer drank ne wyn,  
Ne on his heed cam rasour noon ne  
shere, 3246

By precept of the messenger divin,  
For alle his strengthes in his heres were;  
And fully twenty winter, yeer by yere,  
He hadde of Israel the gouernaunce.  
But sone shal he wepen many a tere, 3251  
For wommen shal him bringen to mes-  
chaunce!

Un-to his lemman Dalida he tolde  
That in his heres al his strengthe lay,  
And falsly to his fo-men she him solde.  
And sleping in hir barme up-on a day  
She made to clippe or shere his heer  
away, 3257

And made his fo-men al his craft espyen;  
And whan that they him fonde in this  
array,  
They bounde him faste, and putten out  
his yën. 3260

But er his heer were clipped or y-shave,  
Ther was no bond with which men might  
him binde;

But now is he in prisoun in a cave,  
Wher-as they made him at the querne  
grinde.

O noble Sampson, strongest of man-  
kinde, 3265

O whylom Iuge in glorie and in richesse,  
Now maystow wepen with thyn yën  
blinde,

Sith thou fro wele art falle in wrecched-  
nesse.

Thende of this caytif was as I shal seye;  
His fo-men made a feste upon a day, 3270  
And made him as hir fool bifore hem  
pleye,

And this was in a temple of greet array.  
But atte laste he made a foul affray;  
For he two pilers shook, and made hem  
falle,

And down fil temple and al, and ther it  
lay, 3275

And slow him-self, and eek his fo-men  
alle.

This is to seyn, the princes everichoon,  
And eek three thousand bodies wer ther  
slayn

With falling of the grete temple of stoon.  
Of Sampson now wol I na-more seyn.

Beth war by this ensample old and  
playn 3281

That no men telle hir conseil til hir  
wywes

Of swich thing as they wolde han secree  
fayn,

If that it touche hir limmes or hir lyves.

#### HERCULES.

Of Hercules the sovereyn conquerour  
Singen his workes laude and heigh re-  
noun; 3286

For in his tyme of strengthe he was the  
flour.

He slow, and rafte the skin of the leoun;  
He of Centauros leyde the boost adoun;

He Arpies slow, the cruel briddes  
felle; 3290

He golden apples rafte of the dragoun;  
He drow out Cerberus, the hound of  
helle:

He slow the cruel tyrant Busirus,  
And made his hors to frete him, flesh  
and boon;

He slow the firy serpent venimous; 3295  
Of Achelois two hornes, he brak oon;

And he slow Cacus in a cave of stoon;  
He slow the geaunt Antheus the stronge;

He slow the grisly boor, and that anoon,  
And bar the heven on his nekke  
longe. 3300

Was never wight, sith that the world  
bigan,

That slow so many monstres as dide he.  
Thurgh-out this wyde world his name  
ran,

What for his strengthe, and for his heigh  
bountee,

And every reaume wente he for to  
see. 3305

He was so strong that no man mighte  
him lette;

At bothe the worldes endes, seith Tro-  
phee,  
In stede of boundes, he a piler sette.

A lemman hadde this noble champioun,  
That highte Dianira, fresh as May; 3310  
And, as thise clerkes maken menciou, n  
She hath him sent a sherte fresh and gay.  
Allas! this sherte, allas and weylaway!  
Envenimed was so subtilly with-alle,  
That, er that he had wered it half a  
day, 3315  
It made his flesh al from his bones falle.

But nathelees somme clerkes hir excusen  
By oon that highte Nessus, that it maked;  
Be as he may, I wol hir noght accusen;  
But on his bak this sherte he wered al  
naked, 3320  
Til that his flesh was for the venim  
blaked.

And whan he sey noon other remedye,  
In hote coles he hath him-selven raked,  
For with no venim deynd him to dye.

Thus starf this worthy mighty Hercules;  
Lo, who may truste on fortune any  
throwe? 3326  
For him that folweth al this world of prees,  
Er he be war, is ofte y-leyd ful lowe.  
Ful wys is he that can him-selven knowe.  
Beth war, for whan that fortune list to  
glose, 3330  
Than wayteth she hir man to overthrowe  
By swich a wey as he wolde leest suppose.

#### NABUGODONOSOR (NEBUCHADNEZZAR).

The mighty trone, the precious tresor,  
The glorious ceptre and royal magestee  
That hadde the king Nabugodonosor,  
With tonge unnethe may discryved be.  
He twyes wan Jerusalem the citee;  
The vessel of the temple he with him  
ladde.

At Babiloyne was his sovereyn see,  
In which his glorie and his delyt he  
hadde. 3340

The fairest children of the blood royal  
Of Israel he leet do gelde anoon,  
And maked ech of hem to been his  
thral.

Amonges othere Daniel was oon, 3344  
That was the wysest child of everichoon;  
For he the dremes of the king expouned,  
Wher-as in Chaldey clerk ne was ther  
noon

That wiste to what fyn his dremes  
sounded.

This proude king leet make a statue of  
golde, 3349  
Sixty cubytes long, and seven in brede,  
To which image bothe yonge and olde  
Comaunded he to loute, and have in  
drede;

Or in a fourneys ful of flambes rede  
He shal be brent, that wolde noght  
obeye. 3354

But never wolde assente to that dede  
Daniel, ne his yonge felawes tweye.

This king of kinges proud was and elaat,  
He wende that god, that sit in magestee,  
Ne mighte him nat bireve of his estaat:  
But sodeynly he loste his dignitee, 3360  
And lyk a beste him semed for to be,  
And eet hay as an oxe, and lay ther-  
oute;

In reyn with wilde bestes walked he,  
Til certein tyme was y-come aboute.

And lyk an egles fetheres waxe his  
heres, 3365  
His nayles lyk a briddes clawes were;  
Til god relessed him a certein yeres,  
And yaf him wit; and than with many a  
tere

He thanked god, and ever his lyf in  
fere

Was he to doon amis, or more trespace,  
And, til that tyme he leyd was on his  
bere, 3371

He knew that god was ful of might and  
grace.

#### BALTHASAR (BELSHAZZAR)

His sone, which that highte Balthasar,  
That heeld the regne after his fader  
day, 3374

He by his fader coude nought be war,  
For proud he was of herte and of array;  
And eek an ydolastre was he ay.  
His hye estaat assured him in pryde.



But fortune caste him doun, and ther he  
lay,  
And sodeynly his regne gan divyde. 3380

A feste he made un-to his lordes alle  
Up-on a tyme, and bad hem blythe be,  
And than his officeres gan he calle —  
'Goth, bringeth forth the vessels,' [tho]  
quod he, 3384  
'Which that my fader, in his prosperitee,  
Out of the temple of Ierusalem birafte,  
And to our hye goddes thanke we  
Of honour, that our eldres with us lafte.'

His wyf, his lordes, and his concubynes  
Ay dronken, whyl hir appetytes laste,  
Out of this noble vessels sundry wyne ;  
And on a wal this king his yēn caste,  
And sey an hond armlees, that wroot ful  
faste,  
For fere of which he quook and syked  
sore. 3394

This hond, that Balthasar so sore agaste,  
Wroot *Mane, techel, phares*, and na-more.

In al that lond magicien was noon  
That coude expoune what this lettre  
mente ;  
But Daniel expouned it anoon, 3399  
And seyde, 'king, god to thy fader lente  
Glorie and honour, regne, tresour, rente :  
And he was proud, and no-thing god ne  
dradde,  
And therfor god gret wreche up-on him  
sente,  
And him birafte the regne that he  
hadde.

He was out cast of mannes companye,  
With asses was his habitacioun, 3406  
And eet hey as a beste in weet and drye,  
Til that he knew, by grace and by resoun,  
That god of heven hath dominacioun  
Over every regne and every creature ;  
And thanne had god of him compassioun,  
And him restored his regne and his  
figure.

Eek thou, that art his sone, art proud  
also,  
And knowest alle thise thinges verrailly,  
And art rebel to god, and art his fo. 3415  
Thou drank eek of his vessels boldely ;

Thy wyf eek and thy wenches sinfully  
Dronke of the same vessels sondry wyne,  
And heriest false goddes cursedly ;  
Therfor to thee y-shapen ful gret pyne  
is. 3420

This hand was sent from god, that on  
the walle  
Wroot *mane, techel, phares*, truste me ;  
Thy regne is doon, thou weyest noght at  
alle ;  
Divyded is thy regne, and it shal be  
To Medes and to Perses yeven,' quod he.  
And thilke same night this king was  
slawe,  
And Darius occupyeth his degree,  
Thogh he therto had neither right ne  
lawe.

Lordinges, ensample heer-by may ye  
take 3429  
How that in lordshipe is no sikernesse ;  
For whan fortune wol a man forsake,  
She bereth away his regne and his  
richesse,  
And eek his freendes, bothe more and  
lesse ;  
For what man that hath freendes thurgh  
fortune, 3434  
Mishap wol make hem enemys, I gesse :  
This proverbe is ful sooth and ful  
commune.

#### CENOBIA (ZENOBIA).

Cenobia, of Palimerie quene,  
As writen Persiens of hir noblesse,  
So worthy was in armes and so kene,  
That no wight passed hir in hardinesse,  
Ne in linage, ne in other gentillesse.  
Of kinges blode of Perse is she de-  
scended ;  
I seye nat that she hadde most fair-  
nesse,  
But of hir shape she mighte nat been  
amended.

From hir childhede I finde that she  
fledde 3445  
Office of wommen, and to wode she  
wente ;  
And many a wilde hertes blood she  
shedde

With arwes brode that she to hem  
sente.

She was so swift that she anon hem  
hente,

And whan that she was elder, she wolde  
kille 3450

Leouns, lepardes, and beres al to-rente,  
And in hir armes welde hem at hir wille.

She dorste wilde beestes dennes seke,  
And rennen in the montaignes al the  
night,

And slepen under a bush, and she coude  
eke 3455

Wrastlen by verray force and verray  
might

With any yong man, were he never so  
wight ;

Ther mighte no-thing in hir armes  
stonde.

She kepte hir maydenhod from every  
wight,

To no man deigned hir for to be  
bonde. 3460

But atte laste hir frendes han hir married  
To Odenake, a prince of that contree,

Al were it so that she hem longe taried ;  
And ye shul understonde how that he

Hadde swiche fantasies as hadde she,  
But nathelees, whan they were knit in-

ferre, 3466

They lived in Ioye and in felicitee ;  
For ech of hem hadde other leef and

dere.

Save o thing, that she never wolde  
assente

By no wey, that he sholde by hir lye 3470  
But ones, for it was hir pleyn entente

To have a child, the world to multiplie ;  
And al-so sone as that she mighte

espye

That she was nat with childe with that  
dede,

Than wolde she suffre him doon his  
fantasye 3475

Eft-sone, and nat but ones, out of drede.

And if she were with childe at thilke  
cast,

Na-more sholde he pleyen thilke game  
Til fully fourty dayes weren past ;

Than wolde she ones suffre him do the  
same. 3480

Al were this Odenake wilde or tame,  
He gat na-more of hir, for thus she

seyde,

'It was to wyves lecherye and shame  
In other cas, if that men with hem

Two sones by this Odenake hadde she,  
The whiche she kepte in vertu and let-  
trure ; 3486

But now un-to our tale turne we.  
I seye, so worshipful a creature,

And wys therwith, and large with me-  
sure,

So peñible in the werre, and curteis  
eke, 3490

Ne more labour mighte in werre endure,  
Was noon, thogh al this world men

sholde seke.

Hir riche array ne mighte nat be told  
As wel in vessel as in hir clothing ;

She was al clad in perree and in gold,  
And eek she laste noght, for noon hunt-

ing, 3496

To have of sondry tonges ful knowing,  
Whan that she leyser hadde, and for to

entende

To lernen bokes was al hir lyking,  
How she in vertu mighte hir lyf dis-

pende. 3500

And, shortly of this storie for to trete,  
So doughty was hir housbonde and eek

she,

That they conquered many regnes grete  
In the orient, with many a fair citee,

Apertenaunt un-to the magestee 3505  
Of Rome, and with strong hond helde

hem ful faste ;

Ne never mighte hir fo-men doon hem  
flee,

Ay whyl that Odenakes dayes laste.

Hir batailes, who-so list hem for to  
rede,

Agayn Sapor the king and othere mo,  
And how that al this proces fil in

dede, 3511  
Why she conquered and what title had  
therto,

And after of hir meschief and hir wo,  
How that she was biseged and y-take,  
Let him un-to my maister Petrark go,  
That writ y-nough of this, I undertake.

When Odenake was deed, she mightily  
The regnes heeld, and with hir propre  
honde

Agayn hir fofs she faught so cruelly,  
That ther nas king ne prince in al that  
londe 3520

That he nas glad, if that he grace fonde,  
That she ne wolde up-on his lond wer-  
rewe;

With hir they made alliaunce by bonde  
To been in pees, and lete hir ryde and  
pleye.

The emperour of Rome, Claudius, 3525  
Ne him bifore, the Romayn Galien,  
Ne dorste never been so corageous,  
Ne noon Ermyne, ne noon Egipcien,  
Ne Surrien, ne noon Arabien,  
Within the feld that dorste with hir  
fichte 3530

Lest that she wolde hem with hir hondes  
slen,  
Or with hir meynee putten hem to  
flighte.

In kinges habit wente hir sones two,  
As heires of hir fadres regnes alle,  
And Hermanno, and Thymalaö 3535  
Her names were, as Persiens hem calle.  
But ay fortune hath in hir hony galle;  
This mighty quene may no whyl endure.  
Fortune out of hir regne made hir falle  
To wrecchednesse and to misaventure.

Aurelian, whan that the governaunce  
Of Rome cam in-to his hondes tweye,  
He shoop up-on this queen to do ven-  
geaunce,

And with his legiouns he took his  
weye

Toward Cenobie, and, shortly for to  
seye, 3545

He made hir flee, and atte laste hir  
hente,

And fettred hir, and eek hir children  
tweye,

And wan the lond, and hoom to Rome  
he wente.

Amonges othere thinges that he wan,  
Hir char, that was with gold wrought  
and perree, 3550

This grete Romayn, this Aurelian,  
Hath with him lad, for that men sholde  
it see.

Biforen his triumpe walketh she  
With gilte cheynes on hir nekke hang-  
ing; 3554

Coroungd was she, as after hir degree,  
And ful of perree charged hir clothing.

Allas, fortune! she that whylom was  
Dredful to kinges and to emperoures,  
Now gaureth al the peple on hir, alas!  
And she that helmed was in starke  
stoures, 3560

And wan by force tounes stronge and  
toures,

Shal on hir heed now were a vitremyte;  
And she that bar the ceptre ful of  
floures

Shal bere a distaf, hir cost for to quyte.

(NERO follows in T. ; see p. 591.)

#### DE PETRO REGE ISPANNIE.

O noble, o worthy Petro, glorie of  
Spayne, 3565

Whom fortune heeld so hy in magestee,  
Wel oughten men thy pitous deeth com-  
playne!

Out of thy lond thy brother made thee  
flee;

And after, at a sege, by subtiltee,  
Thou were bitrayed, and lad un-to his  
tente, 3570

Wher-as he with his owene hond slow  
thee,

Succeeding in thy regne and in thy rente.

The feeld of snow, with thegle of blak  
ther-inne,

Caught with the lymrod, coloured as the  
glede,

He brew this cursednes and al this  
sinne. 3575

The 'wikked nest' was werker of this  
nede;

Noght Charles Oliver, that ay took hede  
Of trouthe and honour, but of Armorique  
Genilon Oliver, corrupt for mede,

Broughte this worthy king in swich a  
brike. 3580

DE PETRO REGE DE CIPRO.

O worthy Petro, king of Cypre, also,  
That Alisaundre wan by heigh maistrye,  
Ful many a hethen wroghtestow ful wo,  
Of which thyn owene liges hadde envye,  
And, for no thing but for thy chivalrye,  
They in thy bedde han slayn thee by the  
morwe. 3586  
Thus can fortune hir wheel governe and  
gye,  
And out of Ioye bringe men to sorwe.

DE BARNABO DE LUMBARDIA.

Of Melan grete Barnabo Viscounte,  
God of delyt, and scourge of Lumbardye,  
Why sholde I nat thyn infortune acounte,  
Sith in estaat thou clombe were so hye?  
Thy brother sone, that was thy double  
allye,  
For he thy newew was, and sone-in-lawe,  
With-inne his prisoun made thee to dye;  
But why, ne how, noot I that thou were  
slawe. 3596

DE HUGELINO, COMITE DE PIZE.

Of the erl Hugelyn of Pyse the langour  
Ther may no tonge telle for pitee;  
But litel out of Pyse stant a tour,  
In whiche tour in prisoun put was he,  
And with him been his litel children  
three. 3601  
The eldeste scarsly fyf yeer was of age.  
Allas, fortune! it was greet crueltee  
Swiche briddes for to putte in swiche a  
cage!

Dampned was he to deye in that pris-  
oun, 3605  
For Roger, which that bisshop was of  
Pyse,  
Hadde on him maad a fals suggestioun,  
Thurgh which the peple gan upon him  
ryse,  
And putten him to prisoun in swich  
wyse  
As ye han herd, and mete and drink he  
hadde 3610

So smal, that wel unnethe it may suffyse,  
And therwith-al it was ful povre and  
badde.

And on a day bifil that, in that hour,  
Whan that his mete wont was to be  
brought, 3614  
The gayler shette the dores of the tour.  
He herde it wel,—but he spak right  
nought,  
And in his herte anon ther fil a thocht,  
That they for hunger wolde doon him  
dyen.  
'Allas!' quod he, 'alias! that I was  
wroght!' 3619  
Therwith the teres fillen from his yën.

His yonge sone, that three yeer was of  
age,  
Un-to him seyde, 'fader, why do ye  
wepe?  
Whan wol the gayler bringen our  
potage,  
Is ther no morsel breed that ye do kepe?  
I am so hungry that I may nat slepe.  
Now wolde god that I mighte slepen  
ever! 3626  
Than sholde nat hunger in my wombe  
crepe;  
Ther is no thing, save breed, that me  
were lever.'

Thus day by day this child bigan to crye,  
Til in his fadres barme adoun it lay, 3630  
And seyde, 'far-wel, fader, I moot dye,'  
And kiste his fader, and deyde the same  
day.  
And whan the woful fader deed it sey,  
For wo his armes two he gan to byte,  
And seyde, 'allas, fortune! and weyla-  
way! 3635  
Thy false wheel my wo al may I wyte!'

His children wende that it for hunger  
was  
That he his armes gnaw, and nat for wo,  
And seyde, 'fader, do nat so, allas!  
But rather eet the flesh upon us two;  
Our flesh thou yaf us, tak our flesh us  
fro 3641  
And eet y-nough:' right thus they to  
him seyde,  
And after that, with-in a day or two,

They leyde hem in his lappe adoun, and  
deyde.

Him-self, despeired, eek for hunger  
starf; 3645

Thus ended is this mighty Erl of Pyse;  
From heigh estaat fortune away him  
carf.

Of this Tragedie it oghte y-nough suf-  
fyse.

Who-so wol here it in a lenger wyse,  
Redeth the grete poete of Itaille, 3650  
That highte Dant, for he can al devyse  
Fro point to point, nat o word wol he  
faillie.

NERO.

Al-though that Nero were as vicious  
As any feend that lyth ful lowe adoun,  
Yet he, as telleth us Swetonius, 3655  
This wyde world hadde in subieccioun,  
Both Est and West, South and Septem-  
trioun;

Of rubies, saphires, and of perles whyte  
Were alle his clothes brouded up and  
doun; 3659  
For he in gemmes greetly gan delyte.

More delicat, more pompous of array,  
More proud was never emperour than  
he;

That ilke cloth, that he had wered o day,  
After that tyme he nolde it never see.

Nettes of gold-thred hadde he gret  
plentee 3665

To fische in Tybre, whan him liste pleye.  
His lustes were al lawe in his decree,  
For fortune as his freend him wolde  
obeye.

He Rome brende for his delicacye;  
The senatours he slow up-on a day. 3670  
To here how men wolde wepe and crye;  
And slow his brother, and by his sister  
lay.

His moder made he in pitous array;  
For he hir wombe slitte, to biholde  
Wher he conceyved was; so weilaway!  
That he so litel of his moder tolde! 3676

No tere out of his yën for that sighte  
Ne cam, but seyde, 'a fair womman was  
she.'

Gret wonder is, how that he coude or  
mighte

Be domesman of hir dede beautee. 3680  
The wyn to bringen him comaunded he,  
And drank anon; non other wo he  
made.

Whan might is Ioyned un-to crueltee,  
Allas! to depe wol the venim wade!

In youthe a maister hadde this emperour,  
To teche him letterure and curteisye,  
For of moralitee he was the flour,  
As in his tyme, but-if bokes lye;  
And whyl this maister hadde of him  
maistrye,

He makid him so conning and so souple  
That longe tyme it was er tirannye 3691  
Or any vyce dorste on him uncouple.

This Seneca, of which that I devyse,  
By-cause Nero hadde of him swich drede,  
For he fro vyces wolde him ay chastyse  
Discretly as by worde and nat by  
dede; — 3696  
'Sir,' wolde he seyn, 'an emperour moot  
nede

Be vertuous, and hate tirannye' —  
For which he in a bath made him to  
blede 3699  
On bothe his armes, til he moste dye.

This Nero hadde eek of acustumaunce  
In youthe ageyn his maister for to ryse,  
Which afterward him thoughte a gret  
grevaunce;

Therfor he made him deyen in this wyse.  
But natheles this Seneca the wyse 3705  
Chees in a bath to deye in this manere  
Rather than han another tormentyse;  
And thus hath Nero slayn his maister  
dere.

Now fil it so that fortune list no lenger  
The hye pryde of Nero to cheryce; 3710  
For though that he were strong, yet was  
she strengere;

She thoughte thus, 'by god, I am to nyc  
To sette a man that is fulfild of vyce  
In heigh degree, and emperour his  
calle.

By god, out of his sete I wol him tryce,  
When he leest weneth, sonest shal he  
falle.' 3716

The peple roos up-on him on a night  
 For his defeaute, and whan he it espyed,  
 Out of his dores anon he hath him dight  
 Alone, and, ther he wende han ben allyed,  
 He knocked faste, and ay, the more he  
 cryed, 3721

The faster shette they the dores alle;  
 Tho wiste he wel he hadde him-self mis-  
 gyed,  
 And wente his wey, no lenger dorste he  
 calle.

The peple cryde and rombled up and  
 down, 3725

That with his eres herde he how they  
 seyde,

'Wher is this false tyraunt, this Ne-  
 roun?'

For fere almost out of his wit he breyde,  
 And to his goddes pitously he preyde  
 For socour, but it mighte nat bityde. 3730  
 For drede of this, him thoughte that he  
 deyde,  
 And ran in-to a gardin, him to hyde.

And in this gardin fond he cherles tweye  
 That seten by a fyr ful greet and reed,  
 And to thise cherles two he gan to  
 preye 3735

To sleen him, and to girden of his heed,  
 That to his body, whan that he were  
 deed,

Were no despyt y-doon, for his defame.  
 Him-self he slow, he coude no better  
 reed,  
 Of which fortune lough, and hadde a  
 game. 3740

#### DE OLOFERNO (HOLOFERNES).

Was never capitayn under a king  
 That regnes no putte in subieccioun,  
 Ne strengre was in feeld of alle thing,  
 As in his tyme, ne gretter of renoun,  
 Ne more pompous in heigh presump-  
 cioun 3745

Than Oloferne, which fortune ay kiste  
 So likerously, and ladde him up and  
 down  
 Til that his heed was of, er that he wiste.

Nat only that this world hadde him in  
 awe

For lesinge of richesse or libertee, 3750  
 But he made every man reneye his lawe.  
 'Nabugodonosor was god,' seyde he,  
 'Noon other god sholde adoured be.'  
 Ageyns his heste no wight dar trespace  
 Save in Bethulia, a strong citee, 3755  
 Wher Eliachim a prest was of that place.

But tak kepe of the deeth of Olofern;  
 Amidde his host he dronke lay a night,  
 With-inne his tente, large as is a bern,  
 And yit, for al his pompe and al his  
 might, 3760

Iudith, a womman, as he lay upright,  
 Sleping, his heed of smoot, and from his  
 tente

Ful prively she stal from every wight,  
 And with his heed unto hir toun she  
 wente.

#### DE REGE ANTHIOCHO ILLUSTR.

What nedeth it of King Anthiochus 3765  
 To telle his hye royal magestee,  
 His hye pryde, his werkes venimous?  
 For swich another was ther noon as he.  
 Rede which that he was in Machabee,  
 And rede the proude wordes that he  
 seyde, 3770  
 And why he fil fro heigh prosperitee,  
 And in an hill how wrechedly he deyde.

Fortune him hadde enhaunched so in  
 pryde

That verrailly he wende he mighte attayne  
 Unto the sterres, upon every syde, 3775  
 And in balance weyen ech montayne,  
 And alle the flodes of the see restrayne.  
 And goddes peple hadde he most in  
 hate,

Hem wolde he sleen in torment and in  
 payne,

Wening that god ne mighte his pryde  
 abate. 3780

And for that Nichanor and Thimothee  
 Of Iewes weren venquissshed mightily,  
 Unto the Iewes swich an hate hadde he  
 That he bad greithe his char ful hastily,  
 And swoor, and seyde, ful despitously,  
 Unto Ierusalem he wolde eft-sone, 3786  
 To wreken his ire on it ful cruelly;  
 But of his purpos he was let ful sone.

God for his manace him so sore smoot  
 With invisible wounde, ay incurable, 3790  
 That in his guttes carf it so and boot  
 That his peynes weren importable.  
 And certainly, the wreche was resonable,  
 For many a mannes guttes dide he peyne;  
 But from his purpos cursed and dampna-  
 ble 3795  
 For al his smert he wolde him nat re-  
 streyne;

But bad anon apparailen his host,  
 And sodeynly, er he of it was war,  
 God daunted al his pride and al his bost.  
 For he so sore fil out of his char, 3800  
 That it his limes and his skin to-tar,  
 So that he neither mighte go ne ryde,  
 But in a chayer men aboute him bar,  
 Al for-brused, bothe bak and syde.

The wreche of god him smoot so  
 cruelly 3805  
 That thurgh his body wikked wormes  
 crepte;  
 And ther-with-al he stank so horribly,  
 That noon of al his meynee that him  
 kepte,  
 Whether so he wook or elles slepte,  
 Ne mighte nocht for stink of him en-  
 dure. 3810  
 In this meschief he wayled and eek  
 wepte,  
 And knew god lord of every creature.

To al his host and to him-self also  
 Ful wlatson was the stink of his careyne;  
 No man ne mighte him bere to ne fro. 3815  
 And in this stink and this horrible peyne  
 He starf ful wrecchedly in a monteyne.  
 Thus hath this robbour and this homi-  
 cyde,  
 That many a man made to wepe and  
 pleyne, 3819  
 Swich guerdon as bilongeth unto pryde.

## DE ALEXANDRO.

The storie of Alisaundre is so comune,  
 That every wight that hath discrecioun  
 Hath herd somewhat or al of his fortune.  
 This wyde world, as in conclusioun,  
 He wan by strength, or for his hye re-  
 noun 3825

They weren glad for pees un-to him  
 sende.  
 The pryde of man and beste he leyde  
 adoun,  
 Wher-so he cam, un-to the worldes ende.

Comparisoun might never yit be maked  
 Bitwixe him and another conquerour;  
 For al this world for drede of him hath  
 quaked, 3831  
 He was of knighthode and of fredom  
 flour;  
 Fortune him made the heir of hir honour;  
 Save wyn and wommen, no-thing mighte  
 aswage  
 His hye entente in armes and labour; 3835  
 So was he ful of leonyn corage.

What preys were it to him, though I yow  
 tolde  
 Of Darius, and an hundred thousand mo,  
 Of kinges, princes, erles, dukes bolde,  
 Whiche he conquered, and broghte hem  
 in-to wø? 3840  
 I seye, as fer as man may ryde or go,  
 The world was his, what sholde I more  
 devyse?  
 For though I write or tolde you evermo  
 Of his knighthode, it mighte nat suffyse.

Twelf yeer he regned, as seith Macha-  
 bee; 3845  
 Philippes sone of Macedoyne he was,  
 That first was king in Grece the con-  
 tree.  
 O worthy gentil Alisaundre, allas!  
 That ever sholde fallen swich a cas!  
 Emposioned of thyn owene folk thou  
 were; 3850  
 Thy *sys* fortune hath turned into *as*,  
 And yit for thee ne weep she never a  
 tere!

Who shal me yeven teres to compleyne  
 The deeth of gentillesse and of fraun-  
 chyse,  
 That al the world welded in his  
 demeyne, 3855  
 And yit him thoughte it mighte nat  
 suffyse?  
 So ful was his corage of heigh empryse.  
 Allas! who shal me helpe to endyte  
 False fortune, and poison to despyse,

The whiche two of al this wo I  
wyte? 3860

DE IULIO CESARE.

By wisdom, manhede, and by greet  
labour

Fro humble bed to royal magestee,  
Up roos he, Iulius the conquerour,  
That wan al thoccident by lond and  
see,

By strengthe of hond, or elles by  
treetee, 3865

And un-to Rome made hem tributarie;  
And sithe of Rome the emperour was  
he,

Til that fortune wex his adversarie.

O mighty Cesar, that in Thessalye 3869

Ageyn Pompeius, fader thyn in lawe,  
That of thorient hadde al the chivalrye  
As fer as that the day biginneth lawe,  
Thou thurgh thy knighthode hast hem  
take and slawe,

Save fewe folk that with Pompeius  
fledde,

Thurgh which thou puttest al thorient in  
awe. 3875

Thanke fortune, that so wel thee spedde!

But now a litel whyl I wol biwaille  
This Pompeius, this noble governour  
Of Rome, which that sleigh at this  
bataille; 3879

I seye, oon of his men, a fals traitour,  
His heed of smoot, to winnen him favour  
Of Iulius, and him the heed he broghte.  
Allas, Pompey, of thorient conquerour,  
That fortune unto swich a fyn thee  
broghte!

To Rome ageyn repaireth Iulius 3885

With his triumphe, laureat ful hye,  
But on a tyme Brutus Cassius,  
That ever hadde of his hye staat envye,  
Ful prively hath maad conspiracye  
Ageins this Iulius, in subtil wyse, 3890

And cast the place, in whiche he sholde  
dye

With boydekins, as I shal yow devyse.

This Iulius to the Capitolie wente  
Upon a day, as he was wont to goon,

And in the Capitolie anon him  
hente 3895

This false Brutus, and his othere foon,  
And stikede him with boydekins anoon  
With many a wounde, and thus they lete  
him lye;

But never gronte he at no strook but  
oon,  
Or elles at two, but-if his storie lye. 3900

So manly was this Iulius at herte  
And so wel lovede estaatly honestee,  
That, though his deedly woundes sore  
smerte,

His mantel over his hippes casteth he,  
For no man sholde seen his privitee. 3905  
And, as he lay on deying in traunce,  
And wiste verraily that deed was he,  
Of honestee yit hadde he remembraunce.

Lucan, to thee this storie I recomende,  
And to Sweton, and to Valerie also, 3910  
That of this storie wryten word and ende,  
How that to these grete conqueroures  
two

Fortune was first freend, and sithen fo.  
No man ne truste up-on hir favour longe,  
But have hir in awayt for ever-mo. 3915  
Witnesse on alle these conqueroures  
stronge.

CRESUS.

This riche Cresus, whylom king of Lyde,  
Of whiche Cresus Cyrus sore him dradde,  
Yit was he caught amidde al his pryde,  
And to be brent men to the fyr him  
ladde. 3920

But swich a reyn doun fro the welkne  
shadde

That slow the fyr, and made him to  
escape;

But to be war no grace yet he hadde,  
Til fortune on the galwes made him  
gape.

Whan he escaped was, he can nat stente  
For to biginne a newe werre agayn. 3926  
He wende wel, for that fortune him  
sente

Swich hap, that he escaped thurgh the  
rayn,

That of his foos he mighte nat be slayn;



And eek a sweven up-on a night he  
mette, 3930  
Of which he was so proud and eek so  
fayn,  
That in vengeance he al his herte sette.

Up-on a tree he was, as that him  
thoughte,  
Ther Iuppiter him wesh, bothe bak and  
syde,  
And Phebus eek a fair towaille him  
broughte 3935  
To drye him with, and ther-for wex his  
pryde;  
And to his doghter, that stood him bisyde,  
Which that he knew in heigh science  
habounde,  
He bad hir telle him what it signifyde,  
And she his drem bigan right thus  
expounde. 3940

'The tree,' quod she, 'the galwes is to  
mene,  
And Iuppiter bitokneth snow and reyn,

And Phebus, with his towaille so clene,  
Tho ben the sonne stremes for to  
seyn;  
Thou shalt anhanged be, fader, cer-  
teyn; 3945  
Reyn shal thee wasshe, and sonne shal  
thee drye;'  
Thus warned she him ful plat and ful  
pleyn,  
His doghter, which that called was  
Phanye.

Anhanged was Cresus, the proude king,  
His royal trone mighte him nat  
availle. — 3950  
Tragedie is noon other maner thing,  
Ne can in singing crye ne biwaille,  
But for that fortune alwey wol assaille  
With unwar strook the regnes that ben  
proude;  
For when men trusteth hir, than wol she  
faillie, 3955  
And covere hir brighte face with a  
cloude.

*Explicit Tragedia.*

*Here stinteth the Knight the Monk of his Tale.*

## THE PROLOGUE OF THE NONNE PRESTES TALE.

*The prologue of the Nonne Preestes  
Tale.*

'Ho!' quod the knight, 'good sir, na-  
more of this,  
That ye han seyde is right y-nough, y-wis,  
And mochel more; for litel hevinesse  
Is right y-nough to mochel folk, I  
gesse. 3960  
I seye for me, it is a greet disese  
Wher-as men han ben in greet welthe  
and ese,  
To heren of hir sodeyn fal, alas!  
And the contrarie is Ioie and greet solas,  
As whan a man hath been in povre es-  
taat, 3965  
And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat,  
And ther abyde in prosperitee,  
Swich thing is gladsom, as it thinketh  
me,

And of swich thing were goodly for to  
telle.'  
'Ye,' quod our hoste, 'by Seint Poules  
belle, 3970  
Ye seye right sooth; this monk, he  
clappeth loude,  
He spak how "fortune covered with a  
cloude"  
I noot never what, and als of a "Trage-  
die"  
Right now ye herde, and parde! no rem-  
edie  
It is for to biwaille, ne compleyne 3975  
That that is doon, and als it is a peyne,  
As ye han seyde, to here of hevinesse.  
Sir monk, na-more of this, so god yow  
blesse!  
Your tale anyeth al this companye;  
Swich talking is nat worth a boterflye;  
For ther-in is ther no desport ne game.

Wherfor, sir Monk, or dan Piers by  
 your name,  
 I preye yow hertely, telle us somwhat  
 elles,  
 For sikerly, nere clinking of your belles,  
 That on your brydel hange on every  
 syde, 3985  
 By heven king, that for us alle dyde,  
 I sholde er this han fallen down for slepe,  
 Although the slough had never been so  
 depe;  
 Than had your tale al be told in vayn.  
 For certainly, as that thise clerkes seyn,  
 "Wher-as a man may have noon audi-  
 ence, 399I  
 Noght helpeth it to tellen his sentence."  
 And wel I woot the substance is in me,  
 If any thing shal wel reported be.  
 Sir, sey somwhat of hunting, I yow  
 preye.' 3995  
 'Nay,' quod this monk, 'I have no lust  
 to pleye;  
 Now let another telle, as I have told.'

Than spak our host, with rude speche  
 and bold,  
 And seyde un-to the Nonnes Preest  
 anon,  
 'Com neer, thou preest, com hider, thou  
 sir Iohn, 4000  
 Tel us swich thing as may our hertes  
 glade,  
 Be blythe, though thou ryde up-on a  
 Iade.  
 What though thyn hors be bothe foule  
 and lene,  
 If he wol serve thee, rekke nat a bene;  
 Look that thyn herte be mery evermo.'  
 'Yis, sir,' quod he, 'yis, host, so mote I  
 go, 4006  
 But I be mery, y-wis, I wol be  
 blamed:' —  
 And right anon his tale he hath at-  
 tamed,  
 And thus he seyde un-to us everichon,  
 This swete preest, this goodly man, sir  
 Iohn. 4010

*Explicit.*

## THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

*Here Biginneth the Nonne Preestes  
 Tale of the Cok and Hen, Chaun-  
 tecleer and Pertelote.*

A POVRE widwe, somdel stape in age,  
 Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cot-  
 age,  
 Bisyde a grove, standing in a dale.  
 This widwe, of which I telle yow my  
 tale,  
 Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,  
 In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf, 4016  
 For litel was hir catel and hir rente;  
 By housbondrye, of such as God hir  
 sente,  
 She fond hir-self, and eek hir doghtren  
 two.  
 Three large sowes hadde she, and namo,  
 Three kyn, and eek a sheep that highte  
 Malle. 4021  
 Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir  
 halle,

In which she eet ful many a sclendre  
 meel.  
 Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a  
 deel.  
 No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir  
 throte; 4025  
 Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.  
 Repleccioun ne made hir never syk;  
 Attempree dyete was al hir phisyk,  
 And exercyse, and hertes suffisaunce.  
 The goute lette hir no-thing for to  
 daunce, 4030  
 Napoplexye shente nat hir heed;  
 No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne  
 reed;  
 Hir bord was served most with whyt and  
 blak,  
 Milk and broun breed, in which she fond  
 no lak,  
 Seynd bakoun, and somtyme an ey or  
 tweye, 4035  
 For she was as it were a maner deye.

A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute  
 With stikkes, and a drye dich with-oute,  
 In which she hadde a cok, high Chaunte-  
 cleer,  
 In all the land of crowing nas his peer.  
 His vois was merier than the mery or-  
 gon 4041  
 On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon;  
 Wel sikerer was his crowing in his  
 logge,  
 Than is a klokke, or an abbey orlogge.  
 By nature knew he ech ascencioun 4045  
 Of equinoxial in thilke toun;  
 For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,  
 Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben  
 amended.  
 His comb was redder than the fyn coral,  
 And batailed, as it were a castel-wal. 4050  
 His bile was blak, and as the Ieet it  
 shoon;  
 Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon;  
 His nayles whytter than the lillie flour,  
 And lyk the burned gold was his colour.  
 This gentil cok hadde in his govern-  
 aunce 4055  
 Sevene hennes, for to doon al his ples-  
 aunce,  
 Whiche were his sustres and his para-  
 mours,  
 And wonder lyk to him, as of colours.  
 Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir  
 throte  
 Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote.  
 Curteys she was, discreet, and debon-  
 aire, 4061  
 And compaignable, and bar hir-self so  
 faire,  
 Sin thilke day that she was seven night  
 old,  
 That trewely she hath the herte in hold  
 Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith;  
 He loved hir so, that wel was him ther-  
 with. 4066  
 But such a Ioye was it to here hem  
 singe,  
 Whan that the brighte sonne gan to  
 springe,  
 In swete accord, 'my lief is faren in  
 londe.'  
 For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,  
 Bestes and briddes coude speke and  
 singe. 4071  
 And so bifel, that in a daweninge,

As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle  
 Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,  
 And next him sat this faire Pertelote,  
 This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his  
 throte, 4076  
 As man that in his dreem is drecched  
 sore.  
 And whan that Pertelote thus herde him  
 rore,  
 She was agast, and seyde, 'O herte dere,  
 What eyleth yow, to grone in this  
 manere? 4080  
 Ye been a verray sleper, fy for shame!'  
 And he answerde and seyde thus,  
 'madame,  
 I pray yow, that ye take it nat a-grief:  
 By god, me mette I was in swich mes-  
 chief  
 Right now, that yet myn herte is sore  
 afright. 4085  
 Now god,' quod he, 'my swevene recche  
 aright,  
 And keep my body out of foul prisoun!  
 Me mette, how that I romed up and  
 down  
 Withinne our yerde, wher-as I saugh a  
 beste,  
 Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad  
 areste 4090  
 Upon my body, and wolde han had me  
 deed.  
 His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;  
 And tipped was his tail, and bothe his  
 eres,  
 With blak, unlyk the remenant of his  
 heres;  
 His snowte smal, with glowinge eyen  
 tweye. 4095  
 Yet of his look for fere almost I deye;  
 This caused me my groning, doutelees.'  
 'Avoy!' quod she, 'fy on yow, herte-  
 lees!  
 Allas!' quod she, 'for, by that god above,  
 Now han ye lost myn herte and al my  
 love; 4100  
 I can nat love a coward, by my feith.  
 For certes, what so any womman seith,  
 We alle desyren, if it mighte be,  
 To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and  
 free,  
 And secree, and no nigard, ne no fool,  
 Ne him that is agast of every tool, 4106  
 Ne noon avauntour, by that god above!

How dorste ye seyn for shame unto your  
love,  
That any thing mighte make yow aferd?  
Have ye no mannes herte, and han a  
berd? 4110  
Allas! and conne ye been agast of  
swevenis?  
No-thing, god wot, but vanitee, in sweven  
is.  
Swevenes engendren of replecciouns,  
And ofte of fume, and of complecciouns,  
Whan humours been to habundant in a  
wight. 4115  
Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-  
night,  
Cometh of the grete superfluitee  
Of youre rede *colera*, pardee,  
Which causeth folk to dreden in here  
dremes  
Of arwes, and of fyr with rede lemes,  
Of grete bestes, that they wol hem  
byte, 4121  
Of contek, and of whelpes grete and  
lyte;  
Right as the humour of malencolye  
Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,  
For fere of blake beres, or boles  
blake, 4125  
Or elles, blake develes wole hem take.  
Of othere humours coude I telle also,  
That werken many a man in sleep ful wo;  
But I wol passe as lightly as I can.  
Lo Catoun, which that was so wys a  
man, 4130  
Seyde he nat thus, ne do no fors of  
dremes?  
Now, sire,' quod she, 'whan we flee fro  
the bemes,  
For Goddes love, as tak som laxatyf;  
Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,  
I counseille yow the beste, I wol nat  
lye, 4135  
That bothe of colere and of malencolye  
Ye purge yow; and for ye shul nat tarie,  
Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,  
I shal my-self to herbes techen yow,  
That shul ben for your hele, and for your  
prow; 4140  
And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,  
The whiche han of hir propretee, by  
kinde,  
To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.  
Forget not this, for goddes owene love!

Ye been ful colerik of compleccioun. 4145  
Ware the sonne in his ascencioun  
Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours  
hote;  
And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,  
That ye shul have a fevere terciane,  
Or an agu, that may be youre banc. 4150  
A day or two ye shul have digestyves  
Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,  
Of lauriol, centaure, and fumetere,  
Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,  
Of catapuce, or of gaytres beryis, 4155  
Of erbe yve, growing in our yerd, that  
mery is;  
Pekke hem up right as they growe, and  
ete hem in.  
Be mery, housbond, for your fader kin!  
Dredeth no dreem; I can say yow na-  
more.'  
'Madame,' quod he, '*graunt mercy* of  
your lore. 4160  
But nathelees, as touching daun Catoun,  
That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,  
Though that he bad no dremes for to  
drede.  
By god, men may in olde bokes rede  
Of many a man, more of auctoritee 4165  
Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,  
Than al the revers seyn of his sentence,  
And han wel founden by experience,  
That dremes ben significaciouns,  
As wel of Ioye as tribulaciouns 4170  
That folk enduren in this lyf present.  
The nedeth make of this noon argu-  
ment;  
The verray preve sheweth it in dede.  
Oon of the gretteste auctours that  
men rede  
Seith thus, that whylom two felawes  
wente 4175  
On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente;  
And happed so, thay come into a toun,  
Wher-as ther was swich congregacioun  
Of peple, and cek so streit of herbergage,  
That they ne founde as muche as o  
cotage, 4180  
In which they bothe mighte y-logged be.  
Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,  
As for that night, departen compaignye;  
And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,  
And took his logging as it wolde falle.  
That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,  
Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;

That other man was logged wel y-nough,  
 As was his aventure, or his fortune,  
 That us governeth alle as in commune.  
 And so bifel, that, longe er it were  
 day, 4191  
 This man mette in his bed, ther-as he lay,  
 How that his felawe gan up-on him calle,  
 And seyde, 'allas! for in an oxes stalle  
 This night I shal be mordred ther I  
 lye. 4195  
 Now help me, dere brother, er I dye;  
 In alle haste com to me,' he sayde.  
 This man out of his sleep for fere  
 abrayde;  
 But whan that he was wakned of his  
 sleep,  
 He turned him, and took of this no  
 keep; 4200  
 Him thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee.  
 Thus twyës in his sleping dremed he.  
 And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe  
 Cam, as him thoughte, and seide, 'I am  
 now slawe;  
 Bihold my bloddy woundes, depe and  
 wyde! 4205  
 Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,  
 And at the west gate of the toun,' quod  
 he,  
 'A carte ful of donge ther shaltow see,  
 In which my body is hid ful prively;  
 Do thilke carte aresten boldely. 4210  
 My gold caused my mordre, sooth to  
 sayn;'  
 And tolde him every poynt how he was  
 slayn,  
 With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.  
 And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful  
 trewe;  
 For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,  
 To his felawes in he took the way; 4216  
 And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,  
 After his felawe he bigan to calle.  
 The hostiler answered him anon,  
 And seyde, 'sire, your felawe is agon, 4220  
 As sone as day he wente out of the toun.'  
 This man gan fallen in suspeciuon,  
 Remembring on his dremes that he mette,  
 And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he  
 lette,  
 Unto the west gate of the toun, and  
 fond 4225  
 A dong-carte, as it were to donge lond,  
 That was arrayed in the same wyse

As ye han herd the dede man devyse;  
 And with an hardy herte he gan to crye  
 Vengeaunce and Iustice of this fel-  
 onye:— 4230  
 'My felawe mordred is this same night,  
 And in this carte he lyth gaping upright.  
 I crye out on the ministres,' quod he,  
 'That sholden kepe and reulen this citee;  
 Harrow! allas! her lyth my felawe  
 slayn!' 4235  
 What sholde I more un-to this tale sayn?  
 The peple out-sterte, and caste the cart  
 to grounde,  
 And in the middel of the dong they  
 founde  
 The dede man, that mordred was al newe.  
 O blisful god, that art so Iust and  
 trewe! 4240  
 Lo, how that thou biwreyest mordre  
 alway!  
 Mordre wol out, that see we day by day.  
 Mordre is so wlatson and abhominable  
 To god, that is so Iust and resonable,  
 That he ne wol nat suffre it heled be; 4245  
 Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,  
 Mordre wol out, this my conclusiuon.  
 And right anoon, ministres of that toun  
 Han hent the carter, and so sore him  
 pyned,  
 And eek the hostiler so sore engyned, 4250  
 That thay biknewe hir wikkednesse  
 anoon,  
 And were an-hanged by the nekke-boon.  
 Here may men seen that dremes been  
 to drede.  
 And certes, in the same book I rede,  
 Right in the nexte chapitre after this, 4255  
 (I gabbe nat, so have I Ioye or blis,)  
 Two men that wolde han passed over see,  
 For certeyn cause, in-to a fer contree,  
 If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,  
 That made hem in a citee for to  
 tarie, 4260  
 That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde.  
 But on a day, agayn the even-tyde,  
 The wind gan change, and blew right as  
 hem leste.  
 Iolif and glad they wente un-to hir reste,  
 And casten hem ful erly for to saille; 4265  
 But to that oo man fil a greet mervaille.  
 That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,  
 Him mette a wonder dreem, agayn the  
 day;

Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes  
 syde,  
 And him comaunded, that he sholde  
 abyde, 4270  
 And seyde him thus, 'if thou to-morwe  
 wende,  
 Thou shalt be dreynt; my tale is at an  
 ende.'  
 He wook, and tolde his felawe what he  
 mette,  
 And preyde him his viage for to lette;  
 As for that day, he preyde him to  
 abyde. 4275  
 His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,  
 Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful  
 faste.  
 'No dreem,' quod he, 'may so myn herte  
 agaste,  
 That I wol lette for to do my thinges.  
 I sette not a straw by thy dreminges, 4280  
 For swevenes been but vanitees and Iapes.  
 Men dreme al-day of owles or of apes,  
 And eke of many a mase therwithal;  
 Men dreme of thing that nevere was ne  
 shal.  
 But sith I see that thou wolt heer  
 abyde, 4285  
 And thus for-sleuthen wilfully thy tyde,  
 God wot it reweth me; and have good  
 day.'  
 And thus he took his leve, and wente his  
 way.  
 But er that he hadde halfe his cours  
 y-seyled,  
 Noot I nat why, ne what mischaunce it  
 eyled, 4290  
 But casuelly the shippes botme rente,  
 And ship and man under the water wente  
 In sighte of othere shippes it byside,  
 That with hem seyled at the same tyde.  
 And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere, 4295  
 By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,  
 That no man sholde been to recchelees  
 Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,  
 That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede.  
 Lo, in the lyf of seint Kenelm, I  
 rede, 4300  
 That was Kenulphus sone, the noble  
 king  
 Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a  
 thing;  
 A lyte er he was mordred, on a day,  
 His mordre in his avisioun he say.

His norice him expounded every del 4305  
 His sweven, and bad him for to kepe  
 him wel  
 For traisoun; but he nas but seven yeer  
 old,  
 And therfore litel tale hath he told  
 Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.  
 By god, I hadde lever than my sherte 4310  
 That ye had rad his legende, as have I.  
 Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,  
 Macrobeus, that writ the avisioun  
 In Affrike of the worthy Cipiou, n  
 Affermeth dremes, and seith that they  
 been 4315  
 Warning of thinges that men after seen.  
 And forther-more, I pray yow loketh  
 wel  
 In the olde testament, of Daniel,  
 If he held dremes any vanitee.  
 Reed eek of Ioseph, and ther shul ye  
 see 4320  
 Wher dremes ben somtyme (I sey nat  
 alle)  
 Warning of thinges that shul after falle.  
 Loke of Egypt the king, daun Pharao,  
 His bakere and his boteler also,  
 Wher they ne felte noon effect in  
 dremes. 4325  
 Who-so wol seken actes of sondry remes,  
 May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.  
 Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde  
 king,  
 Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,  
 Which signified he sholde anhanged  
 be? 4330  
 Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores wyf,  
 That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,  
 She dremed on the same night biforn,  
 How that the lyf of Ector sholde be  
 lorn,  
 If thilke day he wente in-to bataille; 4335  
 She warned him, but it mighte nat availle;  
 He wente for to fighte nathelees,  
 But he was slayn anon of Achilles.  
 But thilke tale is al to long to telle,  
 And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle.  
 Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun, 4341  
 That I shal han of this avisioun  
 Adversitee; and I seye forther-more,  
 That I ne telle of laxatyves no store,  
 For they ben venimous, I woot it  
 wel; 4345  
 I hem defye, I love hem never a del.

Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte  
al this;

Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,  
Of o thing god hath sent me large grace;  
For whan I see the beautee of your  
face, 4350

Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yën,  
It maketh al my drede for to dyen;  
For, also siker as *In principio*,  
*Mulier est hominis confusio*; 4354

Madame, the sentence of this Latin is —  
Womman is mannes Ioye and al his blis.  
For whan I fele a-night your softe syde,  
Al-be-it that I may nat on you ryde,  
For that our perche is maad so narwe,  
alas!

I am so ful of Ioye and of solas 4360  
That I defyte bothe sweven and dreem.’  
And with that word he fley doum fro the  
beem,

For it was day, and eek his hennes alle;  
And with a chuk he gan hem for to  
calle,

For he had founde a corn, lay in the  
yerd. 4365

Royal he was, he was namore aferd;  
He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,  
And trad as ofte, er that it was pryme.  
He loketh as it were a grim leoun;  
And on his toos he rometh up and doum,  
Him deynd not to sette his foot to  
grounde. 4371

He chukkeþ, whan he hath a corn  
y-founde,  
And to him rennen thanne his wyves  
alle.

Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,  
Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture;  
And after wol I telle his aventure. 4376

Whan that the month in which the  
world bigan,  
That highte March, whan god first maked  
man,

Was complet, and [y]-passed were also,  
Sin March bigan, thritty dayes and two,  
Bifel thar Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,  
His seven wyves walking by his syde,  
Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,  
That in the signe of Taurus hadde y-ronne  
Twenty degrees and oon, and somewhat  
more; 4385

And knew by kynde, and by noon other  
lore,

That it was pryme, and crew with blisful  
stevene.

‘The sonne,’ he sayde, ‘is clomben up on  
hevene

Fourty degrees and oon, and more, y-wis.  
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,  
Herkneth thise blisful briddes how they  
singe, 4391

And see the fresshe floures how they  
springe;

Ful is myn herte of revel and solas.’  
But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas;  
For ever the latter ende of Ioye is wo.  
God woot that worldly Ioye is sone  
ago; 4396

And if a rethor coude faire endyte,  
He in a cronique saully mighte it wryte,  
As for a sovereyn notabiltee.

Now every wys man, lat him herkne me;  
This storie is al-so trewe, I undertake,  
As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,  
That wommen holde in ful gret rever-  
ence.

Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.  
A col-fox, ful of sly iniquitee, 4405

That in the grove hadde woned yeres  
three,

By heigh imaginacioun forn-cast,  
The same night through-out the hegges  
brast

Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the  
faire

Was wont, and eek his wyves, to re-  
paire; 4410

And in a bed of wortes stille he lay,  
Til it was passed undern of the day,  
Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to  
falle,

As gladly doon this homicydes alle,  
That in awayt liggen to mordre men.  
O false mordrer, lurking in thy den!

O newe Scariot, newe Genilon! 4417  
False dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,

That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe!  
O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,  
That thou into that yerd slough fro the  
bemes! 4421

Thou were ful wel y-warned by thy  
dremes,

That thilke day was perilous to thee.  
But what that god forwoot mot nedes be,  
After the opinioun of certeyn clerkis.  
Witnessse on him, that any perfit clerk is,

That in scole is gret altercacioun 4426  
In this matere, and greet disputioun,  
And hath ben of an hundred thousand  
men.

But I ne can not bulte it to the bren,  
As can the holy doctour Augustyn, 4431  
Or Boece, or the bishop Bradwardyn,  
Whether that goddes worthy forwiting  
Streyneth me nedely for to doon a thing,  
(Nedely clepe I simple necessitee);  
Or elles, if free choys be graunted me  
To do that same thing, or do it noght,  
Though god forwoot it, er that it was  
wroght;

Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del  
But by necessitee condicionel. 4440  
I wol not han to do of swich matere;  
My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,  
That took his conseil of his wyf, with  
sorwe,

To walken in the yerd upon that morwe  
That he had met the drem, that I yow  
tolde. 4445

Wommennes counceils been ful ofte  
colde;

Wommannes conseil broghte us first to  
wo,

And made Adam fro paradys to go,  
Ther-as he was ful mery, and wel at ese.  
But for I noot, to whom it mighte dis-  
plese, 4450

If I conseil of women wolde blame,  
Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.

Rede auctours, wher they trete of swich  
matere,

And what thay seyn of wommen ye may  
here.

Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat  
myne; 4455

I can noon harm of no womman divyne.  
Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,

Lyth Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by,  
Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so  
free

Song merier than the mermayde in the  
see; 4460

For Physiologus seith sikerly,  
How that they singen wel and merily.

And so bifel that, as he caste his yë,  
Among the wortes, on a boterflye,  
He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.  
No-thing ne liste him thanne for to  
crowe, 4466

But cryde anon, 'cok, cok,' and up he  
sterste,

As man that was affrayed in his herte.  
For naturelly a beest desyreth flee  
Fro his contrarie, if he may it see, 4470  
Though he never erst had seyn it with  
his yë.

This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him  
espye,

He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon  
seyde, 'Gentil sire, allas! wher wol ye  
gon?

Be ye affrayed of me that am your  
freend? 4475

Now certes, I were worse than a feend,  
If I to yow wolde harm or vileinye.

I am nat come your counceil for tespye;  
But trewely, the cause of my cominge  
Was only for to herkne how that ye  
singe. 4480

For trewely ye have as mery a stevene  
As eny aungel hath, that is in hevene;  
Therwith ye han in musik more felinge  
Than hadde Boece, or any that can  
singe.

My lord your fader (god his soule  
blesse!) 4485

And eek your moder, of hir gentillesse,  
Han in myn hous y-been, to my gret  
ese;

And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow  
plese.

But for men speke of singing, I wol saye,  
So mote I brouke wel myn eyen tweye,  
Save yow, I herde never man so singe,  
As dide your fader in the morweninge;  
Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.

And for to make his voys the more  
strong,

He wolde so peyne him, that with bothe  
his yën 4495

He moste winke, so loude he wolde  
cryen,

And stonden on his tiptoon ther-with-al,  
And strecche forth his nekke long and  
smaal.

And eek he was of swich discrecioun,  
That ther nas no man in no regioun  
That him in song or wisdom mighte  
passe. 4501

I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Assse,  
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,  
For that a precestes sone yaf him a knok



Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and  
 nyce, 4505  
 He made him for to lese his benefyce.  
 But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun  
 Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun  
 Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.  
 Now singeth, sire, for seinte Charitee,  
 Let see, conne ye your fader countre-  
 fete?' 4511  
 This Chauntecleer his winges gan to  
 bete,  
 As man that coude his tresoun nat  
 espye,  
 So was he ravished with his flaterye.  
 Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour  
 Is in your courtes, and many a losen-  
 geour, 4516  
 That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,  
 Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow  
 seith.  
 Redeth Ecclesiaste of flaterye;  
 Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye. 4520  
 This Chauntecleer stood hye up-on his  
 toos,  
 Streeching his nekke, and heeld his eye-  
 cloos,  
 And gan to crowe loude for the nones;  
 And daun Russel the fox sterte up at  
 ones,  
 And by the gargat hente Chauntecleer,  
 And on his bak toward the wode him  
 beer, 4526  
 For yet ne was ther no man that him  
 sewed.  
 O destinee, that mayst nat been es-  
 chewed!  
 Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the  
 bemes!  
 Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes!  
 And on a Friday fil al this mes-  
 chaunce. 4531  
 O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,  
 Sin that thy servant was this Chaunte-  
 cleer,  
 And in thy service dide al his poweer,  
 More for deylt, than world to multiplye,  
 Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to  
 dye? 4536  
 O Gaufred, dere mayster soverayn,  
 That, whan thy worthy king Richard was  
 slayn  
 With shot, compleynedest his deth so  
 sore,

Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and  
 thy lore, 4540  
 The Friday for to chyde, as diden ye?  
 (For on a Friday soothly slayn was he.)  
 Than wolde I shewe yow how that I  
 coude pleyne  
 For Chauntecleres drede, and for his  
 peyne.  
 Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun 4545  
 Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun  
 Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite  
 swerd,  
 Whan he hadde hent king Priam by the  
 berd,  
 And slayn him (as saith us *Eneyaas*),  
 As maden alle the hennes in the clos, 4550  
 Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the  
 sighte.  
 But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrigh-  
 te,  
 Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf,  
 Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his  
 lyf,  
 And that the Romayns hadde brend  
 Cartage; 4555  
 She was so ful of torment and of rage,  
 That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,  
 And brende hir-selven with a stedfast  
 herte.  
 O woful hennes, right so cryden ye,  
 As, whan that Nero brende the citee 4560  
 Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves,  
 For that hir housbondes losten alle hir  
 lyves;  
 Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.  
 Now wol I torne to my tale agayn:—  
 This sely widwe, and eek hir doghtres  
 two, 4565  
 Herden these hennes crye and maken wo,  
 And out at dores sterten they anoon,  
 And synen the fox toward the grove goon,  
 And bar upon his bak the cok away;  
 And cryden, 'Out! harrow! and weyla-  
 way! 4570  
 Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him they  
 ran,  
 And eek with staves many another man;  
 Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and  
 Gerland,  
 And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand;  
 Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray  
 hogges 4575  
 So were they fered for berking of the  
 dogges

And shouting of the men and wimmen  
eke,  
They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte  
breke.

They yelleden as feendes doon in helle;  
The dokes cryden as men wolde hem  
quelle; 4580

The gees for fere flowen over the trees;  
Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;  
So hidous was the noyse, a! *benedicite!*  
Certes, he Iakke Straw, and his meynee,  
Ne made never shoutes half so shrille,  
Whan that they wolden any Fleming  
kille, 4586

As thilke day was maad upon the fox.  
Of bras thay broghten bemes, and of box,  
Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe  
and pouped,

And therwithal thay shryked and they  
houped; 4590

It semed as that heven sholde falle.  
Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth  
alle!

Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly  
The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!  
This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,  
In al his drede, un-to the fox he  
spak, 4596

And seyde, 'sire, if that I were as ye,  
Yet sholde I seyn (as wis god helpe  
me),

Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!  
A verray pestilence up-on yow falle! 4600  
Now am I come un-to this wodes syde,  
Maugree your heed, the cok shal heer  
abyde;

I wol him ete in feith, and that anon.' —  
The fox answerde, 'in feith, it shal be  
don,' —

And as he spak that word, al sodeinly  
This cok brak from his mouth de-  
liverly, 4606

And heighe up-on a tree he fleigh anon.

And whan the fox saugh that he was  
y-gon,  
'Allas!' quod he, 'O Chauntecleer,  
allas!

I have to yow,' quod he, 'y-doon tres-  
pas, 4610

In-as-muche as I maked yow aferd,  
Whan I yow hente, and broghte out of  
the yerd;

But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente;  
Com down, and I shal telle yow what I  
mente.

I shal seye sooth to yow, god help me  
so.' 4615

'Nay than,' quod he, 'I shrewe us bothe  
two,

And first I shrewe my-self, bothe blood  
and bones,

If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.  
Thou shalt na-more, thurgh thy flaterye,

Do me to singe and winke with myn yē.  
For he that winketh, whan he sholde  
see, 4621

Al wilfully, god lat him never thee!'  
'Na,' quod the fox, 'but god yeve him  
meschaunce,

That is so undiscreet of governaunce,  
That Iangleth whan he sholde holde his  
pees.' 4625

Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees,  
And necligent, and truste on flaterye.  
But ye that holden this tale a folye,

As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,  
Taketh the moralitee, good men. 4630

For seint Paul seith, that al that writen is,  
To our doctryne it is y-write, y-wis.

Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be  
stille.

Now, gode god, if that it be thy wille,  
As seith my lord, so make us alle good  
men; 4635

And bringe us to his heighe blisse.  
Amen.

*Here is ended the Nonne Preestes Tale.*

## EPILOGUE TO THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

'SIR Nonnes Preest,' our hoste seyde  
 anoon,  
 'Y-blessed be thy breche, and every  
 stoon!  
 This was a mery tale of Chauntecleer.  
 But, by my trouthe, if thou were secu-  
 ler, 4640  
 Thou woldest been a trede-foul a-right  
 For, if thou have corage as thou hast  
 night,  
 Thee were nede of hennes, as I wene,  
 Ya, mo than seven tymes seventene.

See, whiche braunes hath this gentil  
 Preest, 4645  
 So greet a nekke, and swich a large  
 breest!  
 He loketh as a sperhawk with his yen;  
 Him nedeth nat his colour for to dyen  
 With brasil, ne with greyn of Portin-  
 gale.  
 Now sire, faire falle yow for youre  
 tale!' 4650  
 And after that he, with ful mery chere,  
 Seide to another, as ye shullen here.

## GROUP C.

## THE PHISICIENS TALE.

*Here folweth the Phisiciens Tale.*

THER was, as telleth Titus Livius,  
 A knight that called was Virginius,  
 Fulfuld of honour and of worthinesse,  
 And strong of freendes and of greet  
 richesse.  
 This knight a doghter hadde by his  
 wyf, 5  
 No children hadde he mo in al his lyf.  
 Fair was this mayde in excellent beautee  
 Aboven every wight that man may see;  
 For nature hath with sovereyn diligence  
 Y-formed hir in so greet excellence, 10  
 As though she wolde seyn, 'lo! I, Na-  
 ture,  
 Thus can I forme and peynte a creature,  
 Whan that me list; who can me countre-  
 fete?  
 Pigmalion noght, though he ay forge and  
 bete,  
 Or grave, or peynte; for I dar wel  
 seyn, 15  
 Apelles, Zanzis, sholde werche in veyn,  
 Outher to grave or peynte or forge or  
 bete,  
 If they presumed me to countrefete.  
 For he that is the former principal  
 Hath maked me his vicaire general, 20  
 To forme and peynten erthely creaturis

Right as me list, and ech thing in my  
 cure is  
 Under the mone, that may wane and  
 waxe,  
 And for my werk right no-thing wol I  
 axe;  
 My lord and I ben ful of oon accord; 25  
 I made hir to the worship of my lord.  
 So do I alle myne othere creatures,  
 What colour that they han, or what  
 figures.'—  
 Thus semeth me that Nature wolde seye.  
 This mayde of age twelf yeer was and  
 tweye, 30  
 In which that Nature hadde swich delyt.  
 For right as she can peynte a lillie whyt  
 And reed a rose, right with swich peyn-  
 ture  
 She peynted hath this noble creature  
 Er she were born, up-on hir limes  
 free, 35  
 Wher-as by right swiche colours sholde  
 be;  
 And Phebus dyed hath hir tresses grete  
 Lyk to the stremes of his burned hete.  
 And if that excellent was hir beautee,  
 A thousand-fold more vertuuous was  
 she. 40  
 In hir ne lacked no condicioun,  
 That is to preyse, as by discrecioun.

As wel in goost as body chast was she;  
 For which she floured in virginitee  
 With alle humilitee and abstinence, 45  
 With alle attemperaunce and pacience,  
 With mesure eek of bering and array.  
 Discreet she was in answering alway;  
 Though she were wys as Pallas, dar I  
 seyn,  
 Hir facound eek ful wommanly and  
 pleyn, 50  
 No countrefeted termes hadde she  
 To seme wys; but after hir degree  
 She spak, and alle hir wordes more and  
 lesse  
 Souninge in vertu and in gentillesse.  
 Shamfast she was in maydens shamfast-  
 nesse, 55  
 Constant in herte, and ever in bisnesse  
 To dryve hir out of ydel slogardye.  
 Bacus hadde of hir mouth right no mais-  
 trye;  
 For wyn and youthe doon Venus encrece,  
 As men in fyr wol casten oile or  
 grece. 60  
 And of hir owene vertu, unconstreyned,  
 She hath ful ofte tyme syk hir feyned,  
 For that she wolde fleen the companye  
 Wher lykly was to treten of folye,  
 As is at festes, revels, and at daunces, 65  
 That been occasions of daliaunces.  
 Swich thinges maken children for to be  
 To sone rype and bold, as men may see,  
 Which is ful perilous, and hath ben yore.  
 For al to sone may she lerne lore 70  
 Of boldnesse, whan she woxen is a wyf.  
 And ye maistresses in your olde lyf,  
 That lordes doghtres han in gov-  
 ernauce,  
 Ne taketh of my wordes no disple-  
 aunce;  
 Thinketh that ye ben set in govern-  
 inges 75  
 Of lordes doghters, only for two thinges;  
 Outher for ye han kept your honestee,  
 Or elles ye han falle in freletee,  
 And knowen wel y-nough the olde  
 daunce,  
 And han forsaken fully swich mes-  
 chaunce 80  
 For evermo; therefore, for Cristes sake,  
 To teche hem vertu loke that ye ne  
 slake.  
 A thief of venisoun, that hath forlaft

His likerousnesse, and al his olde craft,  
 Can kepe a forest best of any man. 85  
 Now kepeth hem wel, for if ye wol, ye  
 can;  
 Loke wel that ye un-to no vice assente,  
 Lest ye be dampned for your wikke en-  
 tente;  
 For who-so doth, a traitour is certeyn.  
 And taketh kepe of that that I shal  
 seyn; 90  
 Of alle tresons sovereyn pestilence  
 Is whan a wight bitrayseth innocence.  
 Ye fadres and ye modres eek also,  
 Though ye han children, be it oon or  
 two,  
 Your is the charge of al hir surveyaunce,  
 Whyl that they been under your gov-  
 ernauce.  
 Beth war that by ensample of your liv-  
 inge, 97  
 Or by your negligence in chastisinge,  
 That they ne perisse; for I dar wel seye,  
 If that they doon, ye shul it dere abeye.  
 Under a shepherde softe and negligent  
 The wolf hath many a sheep and lamb  
 to-rent.  
 Suffyseth oon ensample now as here,  
 For I mot turne agayn to my matere.  
 This mayde, of which I wol this tale  
 expresse, 105  
 So kepte hir-self, hir neded no mais-  
 tresse;  
 For in hir living maydens mighten rede,  
 As in a book, every good word or dede,  
 That longeth to a mayden vertuous; 109  
 She was so prudent and so bountevous.  
 For which the fame out-sprong on every  
 syde  
 Bothe of hir beautee and hir bountee  
 wyde;  
 That thurgh that land they preysed hir  
 echone,  
 That loved vertu, save envye allone,  
 That sory is of other mennes wele, 115  
 And glad is of his sorwe and his unhele;  
 (The doctour maketh this descripcioun).  
 This mayde up-on a day wente in the  
 toun  
 Toward a temple, with hir moder dere,  
 As is of yonge maydens the manere. 120  
 Now was ther thanne a iustice in that  
 toun,  
 That governour was of that regioun.

And so bifel, this Iuge his eyen caste  
 Up-on this mayde, avysinge him ful  
     faste, 124  
 As she cam forby ther this Iuge stood.  
 Anon his herte chaunged and his mood,  
 So was he caught with beautee of this  
     mayde ;  
 And to him-self ful prively he sayde,  
 'This mayde shal be myn, for any man.'  
     Anon the feend in-to his herte ran,  
 And taughte him sodeynly, that he by  
     slyghte 131  
 The mayden to his purpos winne mighte.  
 For certes, by no force, ne by no mede,  
 Him thoughte, he was nat able for to  
     spede ;  
 For she was strong of freendes, and eek  
     she 135  
 Confermed was in swich soverayn bountee,  
 That wel he wiste he mighte hir never  
     winne  
 As for to make hir with hir body sinne.  
 For which, by greet deliberacioun, 139  
 He sente after a cherl, was in the toun,  
 Which that he knew for subtil and for  
     bold,  
 This Iuge un-to this cherl his tale hath  
     told  
 In secree wyse, and made him to ensure,  
 He sholde telle it to no creature, 144  
 And if he dide, he sholde lese his heed.  
 Whan that assented was this cursed reed,  
 Glad was this Iuge and maked him greet  
     chere,  
 And yaf hym yiftes preciose and dere.  
     Whan shapen was al hir conspiracye  
 Fro point to point, how that his lecherye  
 Parfourned sholde been ful subtilly, 151  
 As ye shul here it after openly,  
 Ioom gooth the cherl, that highte Clau-  
     dius.  
 This false Iuge that highte Apius, 154  
 So was his name, (for this is no fable,  
 But knowen for historial thing notable,  
 The sentence of it sooth is, out of doute),  
 This false Iuge gooth now faste aboute  
 To hasten his delyt al that he may.  
 And so bifel sone after, on a day, 160  
 This false Iuge, as telleth us the storie,  
 As he was wont, sat in his consistorie,  
 And yaf his domes up-on sondry cas.  
 This false cherl cam forth a ful greet  
     pas, 164

And seyde, 'lord, if that it be your wille,  
 As dooth me right up-on this pitous  
     bille,  
 In which I pleyne up-on Virginius.  
 And if that he wol seyn it is nat thus,  
 I wol it preve, and finde good witesse,  
 'That sooth is that my bille wol expresse.'  
     The Iuge answerde, 'of this, in his  
     absence, 171  
 I may nat yeve diffinitif sentence.  
 Lat do him calle, and I wol gladly here ;  
 Thou shalt have al right, and no wrong  
     here.'  
     Virginius cam, to wite the Iuges wille,  
 And right anon was rad this cursed  
     bille ; 176  
 The sentence of it was as ye shul here.  
     'To yow, my lord, sire Apius so dere,  
 Sheweth your povre servant Claudius,  
 How that a knight, called Virginius, 180  
 Agayns the lawe, agayn al equitee,  
 Holdeth, expres agayn the wil of me,  
 My servant, which that is my thral by  
     right,  
 Which fro myn hous was stole up-on a  
     night,  
 Whyl that she was ful yong ; this wol I  
     preve 185  
 By witesse, lord, so that it nat yow  
     greve.  
 She nis his doghter nat, what so he  
     seye ;  
 Wherefore to yow, my lord the Iuge, I  
     preye,  
 Yeld me my thral, if that it be your  
     wille.'  
 Lo! this was al the sentence of his  
     bille. 190  
     Virginius gan up-on the cherl biholde,  
 But hastily, er he his tale tolde,  
 And wolde have preved it, as sholde a  
     knight,  
 And eek by witnessing of many a wight,  
 That it was fals that seyde his adversarie,  
 This cursed Iuge wolde no-thing tarie,  
 Ne here a word more of Virginius, 197  
 But yaf his Iugement, and seyde thus :—  
     'I deme anon this cherl his servant  
     have ;  
 Thou shalt no lenger in thyn hous hir  
     save. 200  
 Go bring hir forth, and put hir in our  
     warde,

The cherl shal have his thral, this I  
awarde.'

And when this worthy knight Vir-  
ginius,  
Thurgh sentence of this Iustice Apius,  
Moste by force his dere doghter yiven  
Un-to the Iuge, in lecherye to liven, 206  
He gooth him hoom, and sette him in  
his halle,

And leet anon his dere doghter calle,  
And, with a face deed as asshen colde,  
Upon hir humble face he gan biholde,  
With fadres pitee stiking thurgh his  
herte, 211

Al wolde he from his purpos nat con-  
verte.

'Doghter,' quod he, 'Virginia, by thy  
name,

Ther been two weyes, outhere deeth or  
shame,

That thou most suffre ; allas ! that I was  
bore ! 215

For never thou deservedest wherfore  
To dyen with a swerd or with a knyf.  
O dere doghter, ender of my lyf,  
Which I have fostred up with swich  
plesaunce,

That thou were never out of my remem-  
braunce ! 220

O doghter, which that art my laste wo,  
And in my lyf my laste loye also,  
O gemme of chastitee, in pacience  
Take thou thy deeth, for this is my sen-  
tence.

For love and nat for hate, thou most be  
deed ; 225

My pitous hand mot smyten of thyn heed.  
Allas ! that ever Apius thee say !

Thus hath he falsly Iuged thee to-day'—  
And tolde hir al the cas, as ye bifore

Han herd ; nat nedeth for to telle it  
more. 230

'O mercy, dere fader,' quod this mayde,  
And with that word she both hir armes  
layde

About his nekke, as she was wont to do :  
The teres broste out of hir eyen two,

And seyde, 'gode fader, shal I dye ? 235  
Is ther no grace ? is ther no remedye ?'

'No, certes, dere doghter myn,' quod  
he.

'Thanne yif me leyser, fader myn,'  
quod she,

'My deeth for to compleyne a litel  
space ;

For pardee, Iepte yaf his doghter grace  
For to compleyne, er he hir slow, allas !

And god it woot, no-thing was hir trespas,  
But for she ran hir fader first to see,

To welcome him with greet solempnitee.'  
And with that word she fil aswowne  
anon, 245

And after, when hir swowning is agon,  
She ryseth up, and to hir fader sayde,

'Blessed be god, that I shal dye a  
mayde.

Yif me my deeth, er that I have a  
shame ;

Doth with your child your wil, a goddes  
name !' 250

And with that word she preyed him  
ful ofte,

That with his swerd he wolde smyte  
softe,

And with that word aswowne doun she  
fil.

Hir fader, with ful sorweful herte and  
wil,

Hir heed of smoot, and by the top it  
hente, 255

And to the Iuge he gan it to presente,  
As he sat yet in doom in consistorie.

And when the Iuge it saugh, as seith the  
storie,

He bad to take him and anhange him  
faste.

But right anon a thousand peple in  
thraste, 260

To save the knight, for routhe and for  
pitee,

For knowen was the false inquitee.  
The peple anon hath suspect of this  
thing,

By manere of the cherles chalanging,  
That it was by the assent of Apius ; 265

They wisten wel that he was lecherous.  
For which un-to this Apius they gon,

And caste him in a prison right anon,  
Wher-as he slow him-self ; and Claudius,  
That servant was un-to this Apius, 270

Was demed for to hange upon a tree ;  
But that Virginius, of his pitee,

So preyde for him that he was exyled ;  
And elles, certes, he had been bigyled.

The remenent were anhanged, more and  
lesse, 275,

That were consentant of this cursed-  
nesse. —

Heer men may seen how sinne hath  
his meryte!

Beth war, for no man woot whom god  
wol smyte

In no degree, ne in which maner  
wyse

The worm of conscience may agryse 280  
Of wikked lyf, though it so privee be,  
That no man woot ther-of but god and he.  
For be he lewed man, or elles lered,  
He noot how sone that he shal been  
afered.

Therefore I rede yow this conseil take, 285  
Forsaketh sinne, er sinne yow forsake.

*Here endeth the Phisiciens tale.*

## WORDS OF THE HOST.

*The wordes of the Host to the Phisicien  
and the Pardoner.*

OUR Hoste gan to swere as he were  
wood,

'Harrow!' quod he, 'by nayles and by  
blood!

This was a fals cherl and a fals Iustyse!  
As shamful deeth as herte may devyse 290

Come to thise Iuges and hir advocas!

Algate this sely mayde is slayn, allas!

Allas! to dere boghte she beautee!

Wherfore I seye al day, as men may see,  
That yiftes of fortune or of nature 295

Ben cause of deeth to many a creature.

Hir beautee was hir deeth, I dar wel  
sayn;

Allas! so pitously as she was slayn!

Of bothe yiftes that I speke of now 299  
Men han ful ofte more harm than prow.

But trewely, myn owene mayster dere,

This is a pitous tale for to here.

But natheles, passe over, is no fors;

I prey to god, so save thy gentil cors,

And eek thyne urinals and thy Ior-  
danes, 305

Thyn Ypocras, and eek thy Galianes,

And every boist ful of thy letuarie;

God blesse hem, and our lady seinte  
Marie!

So mot I theen, thou art a propre man,  
And lyk a prelat, by seint Ronyan! 310  
Seyde I nat wel? I can nat speke in  
terme;

But wel I woot, thou doost my herte to  
erme,

That I almost have caught a cardiacle.

By corpus bones! but I have triacle,

Or elles a draught of moyste and corny  
ale, 315

Or but I here anon a mery tale,

Myn herte is lost for pitee of this mayde.

Thou bel amy, thou Pardoner,' he seyde,

'Tel us som mirthe or Iapes right anon.'

'It shall be doon,' quod he, 'by seint  
Ronyan! 320

But first,' quod he, 'heer at this ale-  
stake

I wol both drinke, and eten of a cake.'

But right anon thise gentils gonne to  
crye,

'Nay! lat him telle us of no ribaudye;

Tel us som moral thing, that we may  
lere 325

Som wit, and thanne wol we gladly  
here.'

'I graunte, y-wis,' quod he, 'but I mot  
thinke

Up-on som honest thing, whyl that I  
drinke.'

## THE PROLOGUE OF THE PARDONERS TALE.

*Here foloweth the Prologe of the Pardoners Tale.*

*Radix malorum est Cupiditas: Ad Thimotheum, sexto.*

'LORDINGS,' quod he, 'in chirches whan  
I preche,  
I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche,  
And ringe it out as round as gooth a  
belle, 331  
For I can al by rote that I telle.  
My theme is alwey oon, and ever was —  
"Radix malorum est Cupiditas."  
First I pronounce whennes that I  
come, 335  
And than my bulles shewe I, alle and  
somme.  
Our lige lordes seel on my patente,  
That shewe I first, my body to warente,  
That no man be so bold, ne preest ne  
clerk,  
Me to destourbe of Cristes holy werk;  
And after that than telle I forth my  
tales, 341  
Bulles of popes and of cardinales,  
Of patriarkes, and bishoppes I shewe;  
And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,  
To saffron with my predicacioun, 345  
And for to stire men to devocioun.  
Than shewe I forth my longe cristal  
stones,  
Y-crammed ful of cloutes and of bones;  
Reliks been they, as wenen they echoon.  
Than have I in latoun a sholder-boon  
Which that was of an holy Iewes  
shepe, 351  
"Good men," seye I, "tak of my wordes  
kepe;  
If that this boon be wasshe in any  
welle,  
If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle  
That any worm hath etc, or worm y-  
stonge, 355  
Tak water of that welle, and wash his  
tonge,  
And it is hool anon; and forthermore,  
Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every  
sore

Shal every sheep be hool, that of this  
welle  
Drinketh a draughte; tak kepe eek what  
I telle 360  
If that the good-man, that the bestes  
oweth,  
Wol every wike, er that the cok him  
croweth,  
Fastinge, drinken of this welle a  
draughte,  
As thilke holy Iewe our eldres taughte,  
His bestes and his stoor shal multiplye.  
And, sirs, also it heleth Ialousye; 366  
For, though a man be falle in Ialous  
rage,  
Let maken with this water his potage,  
And never shal he more his wyf mis-  
triste,  
Though he the sooth of hir defeaute  
wiste; 370  
Al had she taken preestes two or three.  
Heer is a miteyn eek, that ye may see.  
He that his hond wol putte in this mit-  
cyn,  
He shal have multiplying of his greyn,  
Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or  
otes, 375  
So that he offre pens, or elles grottes.  
Good men and wommen, o thing  
warne I yow,  
If any wight be in this chirche now,  
That hath doon sinne horrible, that he  
Dar nat, for shame, of it y-shriven be,  
Or any woman, be she yong or old, 381  
That hath y-maad hir housbond coke-  
wold,  
Swich folk shul have no power ne no  
grace  
To offren to my reliks in this place.  
And who-so findeth him out of swich  
blame, 385  
He wol com up and offre in goddes  
name,  
And I assoille him by the auctoritee  
Which that by bulle y-graunted was to  
me."  
By this gaude have I wonne, yeer by  
yeer,



An hundred mark sith I was Pardoner.  
 I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet, 391  
 And whan the lewed peple is down y-set,  
 I preche, so as ye han herd bifore,  
 And telle an hundred false Iapes more.  
 Than peyne I me to strecche forth the  
 nekke, 395  
 And est and west upon the peple I  
 bekke,  
 As doth a dowve sitting on a berne.  
 Myn hondes and my tonge goon so  
 yerne,  
 That it is loye to see my bisnesse.  
 Of avaryce and of swich cursednesse 400  
 Is al my preching, for to make hem  
 free  
 To yeve her pens, and namely un-to me.  
 For my entente is nat but for to winne,  
 And no-thing for correccioun of sinne.  
 I rekke never, whan that they ben  
 beried, 405  
 Though that her soules goon a-blake-  
 beried!  
 For certes, many a predicacioun  
 Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun;  
 Som for plesaunce of folk and flaterye,  
 To been avaunced by ipocryse, 410  
 And som for veyne glorie, and som for  
 hate.  
 For, whan I dar non other weyes de-  
 bate,  
 Than wol I stinge him with my tonge  
 smerte  
 In preching, so that he shal nat asterte  
 To been defamed falsly, if that he 415  
 Hath trespassed to my brethren or to me.  
 For, though I telle noght his propre  
 name,  
 Men shal wel knowe that it is the same  
 By signes and by othere circumstances.  
 Thus quyte I folk that doon us displas-  
 ances; 420  
 Thus spitte I out my venim under hewe  
 Of holynesse, to seme holy and trewe.  
 But shortly myn entente I wol devyse;  
 I preche of no-thing but for covetyse.  
 Therfor my theme is yet, and ever  
 was— 425

“*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*”  
 Thus can I preche agayn that same vyce  
 Which that I use, and that is avaryce.  
 But, though my-self be gilty in that  
 sinne,  
 Yet can I maken other folk to twinne  
 From avaryce, and sore to repente. 431  
 But that is nat my principal entente.  
 I preche no-thing but for covetyse;  
 Of this matere it oughte y-nogh suffyse.  
 Than telle I hem ensamples many  
 oon 435  
 Of olde stories, longe tyme agoon :  
 For lewed peple loven tales olde;  
 Swich thinges can they wel reporte and  
 holde.  
 What? trowe ye, the whyles I may  
 preche,  
 And winne gold and silver for I teche,  
 That I wol live in povert wilfully? 441  
 Nay, nay, I thoghte it never trewely!  
 For I wol preche and begge in sondry  
 londes;  
 I wol not do no labour with myn  
 hondes,  
 Ne make baskettes, and live therby, 445  
 Because I wol nat beggen ydelly.  
 I wol non of the apostles counterfete;  
 I wol have money, wolle, chese, and  
 whete,  
 Al were it yeven of the povrest page,  
 Or of the povrest widwe in a village, 450  
 Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.  
 Nay! I wol drinke licour of the vyne,  
 And have a loly wenche in every toun.  
 But herketh, lordings, in conclusioun;  
 Your lyking is that I shal telle a tale. 455  
 Now, have I dronke a draughte of corny  
 ale,  
 By god, I hope I shal yow telle a thing  
 That shal, by resoun, been at your lyk-  
 ing.  
 For, though myself be a ful vicious man,  
 A moral tale yet I yow telle can, 460  
 Which I am wont to preche, for to  
 winne.  
 Now holde your pees, my tale I wol be-  
 ginne.

## THE PARDONERS TALE.

*Here biginneth the Pardoners Tale.*

IN Flaundes whylom was a companye  
 Of yonge folk, that haunteden folye,  
 As ryot, hasard, stewes, and tavernes, 465  
 Wher-as, with harpes, lutes, and giternes,  
 They daunce and pleye at dees bothe  
 day and night,  
 And ete also and drinken over hir might,  
 Thurgh which they doon the devel  
 sacrificyse  
 With-in that develes temple, in cursed  
 wyse, 470  
 By superfluitee abhominable;  
 Hir othes been so grete and so dampna-  
 ble,  
 That it is grisly for to here hem swere;  
 Our blissed lordes body they to-tere;  
 Hem thoughte Jewes rente him noght  
 y-nough; 475  
 And ech of hem at otheres sinne lough.  
 And right anon than comen tombesteres  
 Fetys and smale, and yonge fruytesteres,  
 Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,  
 Whiche been the verray develes offi-  
 cers 480  
 To kindle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,  
 That is annexed un-to glotonye;  
 The holy writ take I to my witsnesse,  
 That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.  
 Lo, how that dronken Loth, un-  
 kindely, 485  
 Lay by his doghtres two, unwittingly;  
 So dronke he was, he niste what he  
 wroghte.  
 Herodes, (who-so wel the stories  
 soghte),  
 When he of wyn was replet at his feste,  
 Right at his owene table he yaf his  
 heste 490  
 To sleen the Baptist Iohn ful giltelees.  
 Senek seith eek a good word doutelees;  
 He seith, he can no difference finde  
 Bitwix a man that is out of his minde  
 And a man which that is dronkelewe, 495  
 But that woodnesse, y-fallen in a shrewe,  
 Persevereth lenger than doth dronken-  
 esse.

O glotonye, ful of cursednesse,  
 O cause first of our confusioun,  
 O original of our dampnacioun, 500  
 Til Crist had boght us with his blood  
 agayn!  
 Lo, how dere, shortly for to sayn,  
 Aboght was thilke cursed vileinye;  
 Corrupt was al this world for glotonye!  
 Adam our fader, and his wyf also, 505  
 Fro Paradys to labour and to wo  
 Were driven for that vyce, it is no drede;  
 For whyl that Adam fasted, as I rede,  
 He was in Paradys; and whan that he  
 Eet of the fruyt defended on the tree, 510  
 Anon he was out-cast to wo and peyne.  
 O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne!  
 O, wiste a man how many maladyes  
 Folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,  
 He wolde been the more mesurable 515  
 Of his diete, sittinge at his table.  
 Allas! the shorte throte, the tendre  
 mouth,  
 Maketh that, Est and West, and North  
 and South,  
 In erthe, in cir, in water men to-swinke  
 To gete a glotoun deyntee mete and  
 drinke! 520  
 Of this matere, o Paul, wel canstow trete,  
 'Mete un-to wombe, and wombe eek  
 un-to mete,  
 Shal god destroyen bothe,' as Paulus  
 seith.  
 Allas! a foul thing is it, by my feith,  
 To seye this word, and fouler is the  
 dede, 525  
 Whan man so drinketh of the whyte and  
 rede,  
 That of his throte he maketh his privee,  
 Thurgh thilke cursed superfluitee.  
 The apostel weping seith ful pitously,  
 'Ther walken many of whiche yow told  
 have I, 530  
 I seye it now weping with pitous voys,  
 That they been enemys of Cristes croys,  
 Of whiche the ende is deeth, wombe is  
 her god.'  
 O wombe! O bely! O stinking cod,  
 Fulfid of donge and of corrupcioun! 535

At either ende of thee foul is the soun.  
How greet labour and cost is thee to  
finde!

These cokes, how they stampe, and  
streyn, and grinde,  
And turnen substaunce in-to accident,  
To fulfille al thy likerous talent! 540  
Out of the harde bones knocke they  
The mary, for they caste noght a-wey  
That may go thurgh the golet softe and  
swote;

Of spicerye, of leef, and bark, and rote  
Shal been his sauce y-maked by delyt,  
To make him yet a newer appetyt. 546  
But certes, he that haunteth swich  
delyces

Is deed, whyl that he liveth in tho vyces.  
A lecherous thing is wyn, and dronk-  
enesse

Is ful of stryving and of wrecchednesse.  
O dronke man, disfigured is thy face, 551  
Sour is thy breath, foul artow to embrace,  
And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the  
soun

As though thou seydest ay 'Sampsoun,  
Sampsoun';

And yet, god wot, Sampsoun drank  
never no wyn. 555

Thou fallest, as it were a stiked swyn;  
Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honest  
cure;

For dronkenesse is verray sepulture  
Of mannes wit and his discrecioun. 559  
In whom that drinke hath dominacioun,  
He can no conseil kepe, it is no drede.  
Now kepe yow fro the whyte and fro the  
rede,

And namely fro the whyte wyn of Lepe,  
That is to selle in Fish-strete or in Chepe.  
This wyn of Spayne crepeth subtilly 565

In othere wynes, growing faste by,  
Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee,  
That whan a man hath dronken  
draughtes three,

And weneth that he be at hoom in  
Chepe,

He is in Spayne, right at the toune of  
Lepe, 570

Nat at the Rochel, ne at Burdeux toun;  
And thanne wol he seye, 'Sampsoun,  
Sampsoun.'

But herkneþ, lordings, o word, I yow  
preye,

That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,  
Of victories in the olde testament, 575  
Thurgh verray god, that is omnipotent,  
Were doon in abstinence and in preyere;  
Loketh the Bible, and ther ye may it  
lere.

Loke, Attila, the grete conquerour,  
Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dis-  
honour, 580

Bleding ay at his nose in dronkenesse;  
A capitayn shoulde live in sobrenesse.

And over al this, avyseth yow right wel  
What was comaunded un-to Lamuel—  
Nat Samuel, but Lamuel, seye I— 585  
Redeth the Bible, and finde it expresly  
Of wyn-veyving to hem that han Iustye.  
Na-more of this, for it may wel suffyse.

And now that I have spoke of  
glotonye,

Now wol I yow defenden hasardrye. 590  
Hasard is verray moder of lesinges,  
And of deceite, and cursed forsweringes,  
BlaspHEME of Crist, manslaughter, and  
wast also

Of catel and of tyme; and forthermo,  
It is repreve and contrarie of honour 595

For to ben holde a commune hasardour.  
And ever the hyer he is of estaat,

The more is he holden desolaat.  
If that a prince useth hasardrye,

In alle governaunce and policye 600  
He is, as by commune opinioun,

Y-holde the lasse in reputacioun.

Stilbon, that was a wys embassadour,  
Was sent to Corinthe, in ful greet hon-  
our, 604

Fro Lacidomie, to make hir alliaunce.  
And whan he cam, him happede, par  
chance,

That alle the grettest that were of that  
lond,

Pleyinge atte hasard he hem fond.  
For which, as sone as it mighte be, 609

He stal him hoom agayn to his contree,  
And seyde, 'ther wol I nat lese my name;

Ne I wol nat take on me so greet de-  
fame,

Yow for to allye un-to none hasardours.  
Sendeth othere wyse embassadours; 614

For, by my trouthe, me were lever dye,  
Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye.

For ye that been so glorious in honours  
Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours

As by my wil, ne as by my tretee.'  
 This wyse philosophre thus seyde he. 620  
 Loke eek that, to the king Demetrius  
 The king of Parthes, as the book seith  
 us,  
 Sente him a paire of dees of gold in  
 scorn,  
 For he hadde used hasard ther-biforn;  
 For which he heeld his glorie or his re-  
 noun 625  
 At no value or reputacioun.  
 Lordes may finden other maner pley  
 Honeste y-nough to dryve the day away.  
 Now wol I speke of othes false and  
 grete  
 A word or two, as olde bokes trete. 630  
 Gret swering is a thing abhominable,  
 And false swering is yet more reprevable.  
 The heighe god forbad swering at al,  
 Witnesse on Mathew; but in special  
 Of swering seith the holy Ieremye, 635  
 'Thou shalt seye sooth thyn othes, and  
 nat lye,  
 And swere in dome, and eek in right-  
 wisesse;'  
 But ydel swering is a cursednesse.  
 Bihold and see, that in the firste table  
 Of heighe goddes hestes honourable, 640  
 How that the seconde heste of him is  
 this —  
 'Tak nat my name in ydel or amis.'  
 Lo, rather he forbedeth swich swering  
 Than homicyde or many a cursed thing;  
 I seye that, as by ordre, thus it stond-  
 eth; 645  
 This knowen, that his hestes understond-  
 eth,  
 How that the second heste of god is  
 that.  
 And forther over, I wol thee telle al  
 plat,  
 That vengeance shal nat parten from his  
 hous,  
 That of his othes is to outrageous. 650  
 'By goddes precious herte, and by his  
 nayles,  
 And by the blode of Crist, that it is in  
 Hayles,  
 Seven is my chauce, and thyn is cink  
 and treye;  
 By goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,  
 This dagger shal thurgh-out thyn herte  
 go' — 655

This fruyt cometh of the bicched bones  
 two,  
 Forswering, ire, falsnesse, homicyde.  
 Now, for the love of Crist that for us  
 dyde,  
 Leveth your othes, bothe grete and  
 smale; 659  
 But, sirs, now wol I telle forth my tale.

THISE ryotoures three, of whiche I telle,  
 Longe erst er pryme rong of any belle,  
 Were set hem in a taverne for to drinke;  
 And as they satte, they herde a belle  
 clinke 664  
 Biforn a cors, was caried to his grave;  
 That oon of hem gan callen to his knave,  
 'Go bet,' quod he, 'and axe redily,  
 What cors is this that passeth heer forby;  
 And look that thou reporte his name  
 wel.'  
 'Sir,' quod this boy, 'it nedeth never-  
 a-del. 670  
 It was me told, er ye cam heer, two  
 houres;  
 He was, pardee, an old felawe of youres;  
 And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-night,  
 For-dronke, as he sat on his bench up-  
 right;  
 Ther cam a privee theef, men clepeth  
 Deeth, 675  
 That in this contree al the peple sleeth,  
 And with his spere he smoot his herte  
 a-two,  
 And wente his wey with-uten wordes  
 mo.  
 He hath a thousand slayn this pesti-  
 lence:  
 And, maister, er ye come in his pres-  
 ence, 680  
 Me thinketh that it were necessarie  
 For to be war of swich an adversarie:  
 Beth redy for to mete him evermore.  
 Thus taughte me my dame, I sey na-  
 more.'  
 'By seinte Marie,' seyde this taverner,  
 'The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn  
 this year, 686  
 Henne over a myle, with-in a greet vil-  
 lage,  
 Both man and womman, child and hyne,  
 and page.  
 I trowe his habitacioun be there;  
 To been avysed greet wisdom it were.

Er that he dide a man in dishonour.' 691  
 'Ye, goddes armes,' quod this ryotour,  
 'Is it swich peril with him for to mete?  
 I shal him seke by wey and eek by strete,  
 I make a vow to goddes digne bones!

Herkneth, felawes, we three been al  
 ones; 696

Lat ech of us holde up his hond til  
 other,

And ech of us bicomen othes brother,  
 And we wol sleen this false traytour  
 Deeth;

He shal be slayn, which that so many  
 sleeth, 700

By goddes dignitee, er it be night.'

Togidres han these three her trouthes  
 plight,

To live and dyen ech of hem for other,  
 As though he were his owene y-boren  
 brother.

And up they sterte al dronken, in this  
 rage, 705

And forth they goon towards that vil-  
 lage,

Of which the taverner had spoke biforn,  
 And many a grisly ooth than han they  
 sworn,

And Cristes blessed body they to-rente —  
 'Deeth shal be deed, if that they may  
 him hente.' 710

Whan they han goon nat fully half a  
 myle,

Right as they wolde han troden over a  
 style,

An old man and a povre with hem mette.  
 This olde man ful mekely hem grette,

And seyde thus, 'now, lordes, god yow  
 see!' 715

The proudest of these ryotoures three  
 Answerde agayn, 'what? carl, with sory  
 grace,

Why artow al forwrapped save thy  
 face?

Why livestow so longe in so greet age?'  
 This olde man gan loke in his vis-  
 age, 720

And seyde thus, 'for I ne can nat finde  
 A man, though that I walked in-to Inde,  
 Neither in citee nor in no village,  
 That wolde change his youthe for myn  
 age;

And therefore moot I han myn age stille,  
 As longe time as it is goddes wille. 726

Ne deeth, allas! ne wol nat han my  
 lyf;

Thus walke I, lyk a resteles caityf,  
 And on the ground, which is my modres  
 gate,

I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and  
 late, 730

And seye, "leve moder, leet me in!  
 Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and  
 skin!

Allas! whan shul my bones been at  
 reste?

Moder, with yow wolde I change my  
 cheste,

That in my chambre longe tyme hath  
 be, 735

Ye! for an heyre clout to wrappe me!"  
 But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,  
 For which ful pale and welked is my  
 face.

But, sirs, to yow it is no curteisye  
 To speken to an old man vileinye, 740

But he trespasse in worde, or elles in  
 dede.

In holy writ ye may your-self wel rede,  
 "Agayns an old man, hoor upon his  
 heed,

Ye sholde aryse;" wherfor I yeve yow  
 reed,

Ne dooth un-to an old man noon harm  
 now, 745

Na-more than ye wolde men dide to  
 yow

In age, if that ye so longe abyde;  
 And god be with yow, wher ye go or  
 ryde.

I moot go thider as I have to go.'

'Nay, olde cherl, by god, thou shalt  
 nat so,' 750

Seyde this other hasardour anon;  
 'Thou partest nat so lightly, by seint  
 Iohn!

Thou spak right now of thilke traitour  
 Deeth,

That in this contree alle our frendes  
 sleeth.

Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his  
 aspye, 755

Tel wher he is, or thou shalt it abyde,  
 By god, and by the holy sacrament!

For soothly thou art oon of his assent,  
 To sleen us yonge folk, thou false  
 theef!

'Now, sirs,' quod he, 'if that yow be  
 so leef 760  
 To finde Deeth, turne up this coked  
 wey,  
 For in that grove I lafte him, by my fey,  
 Under a tree, and ther he wol abyde;  
 Nat for your boost he wol him no-thing  
 hyde.  
 See ye that ook? right ther ye shul him  
 finde. 765  
 God save yow, that boghte agayn man-  
 kinde,  
 And yow amende!'—thus seyde this  
 olde man.  
 And everich of thise ryoutoures ran,  
 Til he cam to that tree, and ther they  
 founde  
 Of florins fyne of golde y-coyned rounde  
 Wel ny an eighte busshels, as hem  
 thoughte. 771  
 No lenger thanne after Deeth they  
 soughte,  
 But ech of hem so glad was of that  
 sighte,  
 For that the florins been so faire and  
 brighte,  
 That doun they sette hem by this prec-  
 ious hord. 775  
 The worste of hem he spake the firste  
 word.  
 'Brethren,' quod he, 'tak kepe what I  
 seye;  
 My wit is greet, though that I bourde  
 and pleye.  
 This tresor hath fortune un-to us yiven,  
 In mirthe and Iolitee our lyf to liven, 780  
 And lightly as it comth, so wol we  
 spende.  
 Ey! goddes precious dignitee! who wende  
 To-day, that we sholde han so fair a grace?  
 But mighte this gold be caried from this  
 place  
 Hoom to myn hous, or elles un-to youres—  
 For wel ye woot that al this gold is  
 oures— 786  
 Than were we in heigh felicitee.  
 But trewely, by daye it may nat be;  
 Men wolde seyn that we were theves  
 stronge, 789  
 And for our owene tresor doon us hongre.  
 This tresor moste y-caried be by nighte  
 As wysly and as slyly as it mighte.  
 Wherefore I rede that cut among us alle

Be drawe, and lat se wher the cut wol  
 falle;  
 And he that hath the cut with herte  
 blythe 795  
 Shal renne to the toune, and that ful  
 swythe,  
 And bringe us breed and wyn ful prively.  
 And two of us shul kepen subtilly  
 This tresor well; and, if he wol nat tarie,  
 Whan it is night, we wol this tresor  
 carie 800  
 By oon assent, wher-as us thinketh best.  
 That oon of hem the cut broughte in his  
 fest,  
 And bad hem drawe, and loke wher it  
 wol falle;  
 And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle;  
 And forth toward the toun he wente  
 anon. 805  
 And al-so sone as that he was gon,  
 That oon of hem spak thus un-to that  
 other,  
 'Thou knowest wel thou art my sworne  
 brother,  
 Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.  
 Thou woost wel that our felawe is agon;  
 And heer is gold, and that ful greet  
 plentee, 811  
 That shal departed been among us three.  
 But natheles, if I can shape it so  
 That it departed were among us two,  
 Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to  
 thee?' 815  
 That other answerde, 'I noot how that  
 may be;  
 He woot how that the gold is with us  
 tweye,  
 What shal we doon, what shal we to him  
 seye?'  
 'Shal it be conseil?' seyde the firste  
 shrewe,  
 'And I shal tellen thee, in wordes fewe,  
 What we shal doon, and bringe it wel  
 aboute.' 821  
 'I graunte,' quod that other, 'out of  
 doute,  
 That, by my trouthe, I wol thee nat  
 biwreye.'  
 'Now,' quod the firste, 'thou woost  
 wel we be tweye,  
 And two of us shul strengre be than  
 oon. 825  
 Look whan that he is set, and right anon

Arys, as though thou woldest with him  
 pleye;  
 And I shal ryve him thurgh the sydes  
 tweye  
 Whyl that thou strogelest with him as in  
 game,  
 And with thy dagger look thou do the  
 same; 830  
 And than shal al this gold departed be,  
 My dere freend, bitwixen me and thee;  
 Than may we bothe our lustes al fulfille,  
 And pleye at dees right at our owene  
 wille.  
 And thus acorded been these shrewes  
 tweye 835  
 To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me  
 seye.  
 This yongest, which that wente un-to  
 the toun,  
 Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and doun  
 The beautee of these florins newe and  
 brighte.  
 'O lord!' quod he, 'if so were that I  
 mighte 840  
 Have al this tresor to my-self allone,  
 Ther is no man that liveth under the  
 trone  
 Of god, that sholde live so mery as I!'  
 And atte laste the feend, our enemy,  
 Putte in his thought that he shold poyson  
 beye, 845  
 With which he mighte sleen his felawes  
 tweye;  
 For-why the feend fond him in swich  
 lyvinge,  
 That he had leve him to sorwe bringe,  
 For this was outrely his fulle entente  
 To sleen hem bothe, and never to re-  
 pente. 850  
 And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he  
 tarie,  
 Into the toun, un-to a pothecarie,  
 And preyed him, that he him wolde selle  
 Som poyson, that he mighte his rattes  
 quelle;  
 And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe,  
 That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde  
 y-slawe, 855  
 And fayn he wolde wreke him, if he  
 mighte,  
 On vermin, that destroyed him by nighte.  
 The pothecarie answerde, 'and thou  
 shalt have

A thing that, al-so god my soule save, 860  
 In al this world ther nis no creature,  
 That ete or dronke hath of this confiture  
 Noght but the mountance of a corn of  
 whete,  
 That he ne shal his lyf anon forlete;  
 Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lasse  
 whyle 865  
 Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a  
 myle;  
 This poyson is so strong and violent.'  
 This cursed man hath in his hond  
 y-hent  
 This poyson in a box, and sith he ran  
 In-to the nexte strete, un-to a man, 870  
 And borwed [of] him large botels three;  
 And in the two his poyson poured he;  
 The thridde he kepte clene for his  
 drinke.  
 For al the night he shoop him for to  
 swinke 874  
 In caryinge of the gold out of that place.  
 And whan this ryotour, with sory grace,  
 Had filled with wyn his grete botels three,  
 To his felawes agayn repaireth he.  
 What nedeth it to sermone of it more?  
 For right as they had cast his deeth  
 bifore, 880  
 Right so they han him slayn, and that  
 anon.  
 And whan that this was doon, thus spak  
 that oon,  
 'Now lat us sitte and drinke, and make  
 us merie,  
 And afterward we wol his body berie.'  
 And with that word it happed him, par  
 cas, 885  
 To take the botel ther the poyson was,  
 And drank, and yaf his felawe drinke  
 also,  
 For which anon they storven bothe two.  
 But, certes, I suppose that Avicen  
 Wroot never in no canon, ne in no fen,  
 Mo wonder signes of empoisoning 891  
 Than hadde these wrecches two, er hir  
 ending.  
 Thus ended been these homicydes two,  
 And eek the false empoysoner also.  
 O cursed sinne, ful of cursednesse! 895  
 O traytours homicyde, o wikkednesse!  
 O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye!  
 Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileinye

And othes grete, of usage and of pryde!  
 Allas! mankinde, how may it bityde, 900  
 That to thy creatour which that thee  
 wroghte,  
 And with his precions herte-blood thee  
 boghte,  
 Thou art so fals and so unkinde, allas!  
 Now, goode men, god forgeve yow  
 your trespas,  
 And ware yow fro the sinne of avaryce, 905  
 Myn holy pardoun may yow alle wayce,  
 So that ye offre nobles or sterlinges,  
 Or elles silver broches, spones, ringes,  
 Boweth your heed under this holy bulle!  
 Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of your  
 wolle! 910  
 Your name I entre heer in my rolle  
 anon;  
 In-to the blisse of hevene shul ye gon;  
 I yow assoile, by myn heigh power,  
 Yow that wol offre, as elene and eek as  
 cleer  
 As ye were born; and, lo, sirs, thus I  
 preche. 915  
 And Iesu Crist, that is our soules leche,  
 So graunte yow his pardon to receyve;  
 For that is best; I wol yow nat deceyve.  
 But sirs, o word forgot I in my tale,  
 I have relikes and pardon in my  
 male, 920  
 As faire as any man in Engelond,  
 Whiche were me yeven by the popes  
 hond.  
 If any of yow wol, of devocioun,  
 Offren, and han myn absolucioun,  
 Cometh forth anon, and kneleth heer  
 adoun, 925  
 And mekely receyveth my pardoun:  
 Or elles, taketh pardon as ye wende,  
 Al newe and fresh, at every townes ende,  
 So that ye offren alwey newe and newe  
 Nobles and pens, which that be gode and  
 trewe. 930  
 It is an honour to everich that is heer,  
 That ye mowe have a suffisant pardoneer  
 Tassoille yow, in contree as ye ryde,  
 For aventures which that may bityde.  
 Peraventure ther may falle oon or  
 two 935  
 Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke  
 atwo.

Look which a seuretee is it to yow alle  
 That I am in your felaweship y-falle,  
 That may assoille yow, bothe more and  
 lasse,  
 Whan that the soule shal fro the body  
 passe. 940  
 I rede that our hoste heer shal biginne,  
 For he is most envoluped in sinne.  
 Com forth, sir hoste, and offre first anon,  
 And thou shalt kisse the reliks everichon,  
 Ye, for a grote! unbokel anon thy  
 purs.' 945  
 'Nay, nay,' quod he, 'than have I  
 Cristes curs!  
 Lat be,' quod he, 'it shal nat be, so  
 theech!  
 Thou woldest make me kisse thyn old  
 breech,  
 And swere it were a relik of a seint,  
 Thogh it were with thy fundement de-  
 print! 950  
 But by the croys which that seint Eleyne  
 fond,  
 I wolde I hadde thy coillons in myn hond  
 In stede of relikes or of seintuarie;  
 Lat cutte hem of, I wol thee helpe hem  
 carie;  
 They shul be shryned in an hogges  
 tord.' 955  
 This pardoner answerde nat a word;  
 So wrooth he was, no word ne wolde he  
 seye.  
 'Now,' quod our host, 'I wol no lenger  
 pleye  
 With thee, ne with noon other angry  
 man.'  
 But right anon the worthy knight  
 bigan, 960  
 Whan that he saugh that al the peple  
 lough,  
 'Na-more of this, for it is right y-nough;  
 Sir pardoner, be glad and mery of  
 chere;  
 And ye, sir host, that been to me so  
 dere,  
 I prey yow that ye kisse the par-  
 doner. 965  
 And pardoner, I prey thee, drawe thee  
 neer,  
 And, as we diden, lat us laughe and  
 pleye.'  
 Anon they kiste, and riden forth hir weye.

*Here is ended the Pardoners Tale.*



## GROUP D.

## THE WIFE OF BATH'S PROLOGUE.

*The Prologe of the Wyves Tale of Bathe.*

'EXPERIENCE, though noon auctoritee  
 Were in this world, were right y-nough  
 to me  
 To speke of wo that is in mariage;  
 For, lordinges, sith I twelf yeer was of  
 age,  
 Thonked be god that is eterne on lyve, 5  
 Housbondes at chirche-dore I have had  
 fyve;  
 For I so ofte have y-wedded be;  
 And alle were worthy men in hir degree.  
 But me was told certeyn, nat longe agon  
 is,  
 That sith that Crist ne wente never but  
 onis 10  
 To weddynge in the Cane of Galilee,  
 That by the same ensample taughte he  
 me  
 That I ne sholde wedded be but ones.  
 Herke eek, lo! which a sharp word for  
 the nones  
 Besyde a welle Iesus, god and man, 15  
 Spak in repreve of the Samaritan:  
 "Thou hast y-had fyve housbondes,"  
 quod he,  
 "And thilke man, the which that hath  
 now thee,  
 Is noght thyn housbond;" thus seyde he  
 certeyn;  
 What that he mente ther-by, I can nat  
 seyn; 20  
 But that I axe, why that the fifthe man  
 Was noon housbond to the Samaritan?  
 How manye mighte she have in mariage?  
 Yet herde I never tellen in myn age  
 Upon this nombre diffinicioun; 25  
 Men may devyne and glosen up and  
 down.  
 But wel I woot expres, with-oute lye,  
 God had us for to wexe and multiplye;  
 That gentil text can I wel understonde.  
 Eek wel I woot he seyde, myn hous-  
 bonde 30  
 Sholde lete fader and moder, and take me;  
 But of no nombre mencion made he,  
 Of bigamye or of octogamye;

Why sholde men speke of it vileinye?  
 Lo, here the wyse king, dan Salo-  
 mon; 35  
 I trowe he hadde wyves mo than oon;  
 As, wolde god, it lefeul were to me  
 To be refresshed half so ofte as he!  
 Which yifte of god hadde he for alle his  
 wyvis!  
 No man hath swich, that in this worlde  
 alyve is. 40  
 God woot, this noble king, as to my wit,  
 The firste night had many a mery fit  
 With ech of hem, so wel was him on  
 lyve!  
 Blessed be god that I have wedded fyve!  
 Welcome the sixte, whan that ever he  
 shal. 45  
 For sothe, I wol nat kepe me chast in  
 al;  
 Whan myn housbond is fro the world  
 y-gon,  
 Som Cristen man shal wedde me anon;  
 For thanne thapostle seith, that I am free  
 To wedde, a goddes half, wher it lyketh  
 me. 50  
 He seith that to be wedded is no sinne;  
 Bet is to be wedded than to brinne.  
 What rekketh me, thogh folk seye  
 vileinye  
 Of shrewed Lameth and his bigamye?  
 I woot wel Abraham was an holy man, 55  
 And Iacob eek, as ferforth as I can;  
 And ech of hem hadde wyves mo than  
 two;  
 And many another holy man also.  
 Whan saugh ye ever, in any maner age,  
 That hye god defended mariage 60  
 By expres word? I pray you, telleth me;  
 Or wher comanded he virginitee?  
 I woot as wel as ye, it is no drede,  
 Thapostel, whan he speketh of mayden-  
 hede;  
 He seyde, that precept ther-of hadde he  
 noon. 65  
 Men may conseilte a womman to been  
 oon,  
 But conseilting is no comandement;  
 He putte it in our owene lugement.

For hadde god comanded maydenhede,  
 Thanne hadde he dampned wedding  
 with the dede; 70

And certes, if ther were no seed y-sowe,  
 Virginitee, wher-of than sholde it growe?  
 Poul dorste nat comanden atte leste  
 A thing of which his maister yaf noon  
 heste.

The dart is set up for virginitee; 75  
 Cacche who so may, who renneth best  
 lat see.

But this word is nat take of every  
 wight,

But ther as god list give it of his might.  
 I woot wel, that thapostel was a mayde;  
 But natheless, thogh that he wroot and  
 sayde, 80

He wolde that every wight were swich as  
 he,

Al nis but conseil to virginitee;  
 And for to been a wyf, he yaf me leve  
 Of indulgence; so it is no repreve  
 To wedde me, if that my make dye, 85  
 With-oute excepcioun of bigamy.

Al were it good no womman for to  
 touche,

He mente as in his bed or in his couche;  
 For peril is bothe fyr and tow tasseble;  
 Ye knowe what this ensample may re-  
 semble. 90

This is al and som, he heeld virginitee  
 More parfit than wedding in freletee.  
 Freeltee clepe I; but-if that he and she  
 Wolde leden al hir lyf in chastitee.

I graunte it wel, I have noon envye, 95  
 Thogh maydenhede preferre bigamy;  
 Hem lyketh to be clene, body and goost,  
 Of myn estaat I nil nat make no boost.  
 For wel ye knowe, a lord in his hous-  
 hold,

He hath nat every vessel al of gold; 100  
 Somme been of tree, and doon hir lord  
 servyse.

God clepeth folk to him in sondry wyse,  
 And everich hath of god a propre yifte,  
 Som this, som that, — as him lyketh  
 shifte.

Virginitee is greet perfeccioun, 105  
 And continence eek with devocioun.  
 But Crist, that of perfeccioun is wel,  
 Bad nat every wight he sholde go selle  
 All that he hadde, and give it to the  
 pore,

And in swich wyse folwe him and his  
 fore. 110

He spak to hem that wolde live parfitly;  
 And lordinges, by your leve, that am  
 nat I.

I wol bistowe the flour of al myn age  
 In the actes and in fruit of mariage.

Telle me also, to what conclusioun 115  
 Were membres maad of generacioun,  
 And for what profit was a wight y-wrought?  
 Trusteth right wel, they wer nat maad  
 for noght.

Glose who-so wole, and seye bothe up  
 and down,

That they were maked for purgacioun 120  
 Of urine, and our bothe thinges smale  
 Were eek to knowe a femele from a  
 male,

And for noon other cause: sey ye no?  
 The experience woot wel it is noght so;  
 So that the clerkes be nat with me  
 wrothe, 125

I sey this, that they maked been for  
 bothe,

This is to seye, for office, and for ese  
 Of engendrure, ther we nat god displese.  
 Why sholde men elles in hir bokes sette,  
 That man shal yelde to his wyf hir  
 dette? 130

Now wher-with sholde he make his paye-  
 ment,

If he ne used his sely instrument?  
 Than were they maad up-on a creature,  
 To purge uryne, and eek for engendrure.

But I seye noght that every wight is  
 holde, 135

That hath swich harneys as I to yow  
 tolde,

To goon and usen hem in engendrure;  
 Than sholde men take of chastitee no  
 cure.

Crist was a mayde, and shapen as a man,  
 And many a seint, sith that the world  
 bigan, 140

Yet lived they ever in parfit chastitee.  
 I nil envye no virginitee;

Lat hem be breed of pured whete-seed,  
 And lat us wyves hoten barly-breed;  
 And yet with barly-breed, Mark telle  
 can, 145

Our lord Iesu refreshed many a man.  
 In swich estaat as god hath cleped us  
 I wol persevere, I nam nat precious.

In wyfhode I wol use myn instrument  
 As frely as my maker hath it sent. 150  
 If I be daungerous, god yeve me sorwe!  
 Myn housbond shal it have bothe eve  
 and morwe,  
 Whan that him list com forth and paye  
 his dette.  
 An housbonde I wol have, I nil nat lette,  
 Which shal be bothe my dettour and my  
 thral 155  
 And have his tribulacioun with-al  
 Up-on his flesh, whyl that I am his wyf.  
 I have the power duringe al my lyf  
 Up-on his propre body, and noight he.  
 Right thus the apostel tolde it un-to  
 me; 160  
 And bad our housbondes for to love us  
 weel.  
 Al this sentence me lyketh every-deel' —  
 UP sterte the Pardoner, and that anon,  
 'Now dame,' quod he, 'by god and by  
 saint Iohn,  
 Ye been a noble prechour in this cas!  
 I was aboute to wedde a wyf; alas! 166  
 What sholde I bye it on my flesh so  
 dere?  
 Yet hadde I lever wedde no wyf to-yere!'  
 'Abyde!' quod she, 'my tale is nat  
 bigonne;  
 Nay, thou shalt drinken of another tonne  
 Er that I go, shal savoure wors than  
 ale. 171  
 And whan that I have told thee forth my  
 tale  
 Of tribulacioun in mariage,  
 Of which I am expert in al myn age,  
 This to seyn, my-self have been the  
 whippe; — 175  
 Than maystow chese whether thou wolt  
 sippe  
 Of thilke tonne that I shal abroche.  
 Be war of it, er thou to ny approche;  
 For I shal telle ensamples mo than ten.  
 Who-so that nil be war by othere men,  
 By him shul othere men corrected be.  
 The same wordes wryteth Ptholomee;  
 Rede in his Almageste, and take it  
 there.'  
 'Dame, I wolde pray yow, if your wil  
 it were,'  
 Seyde this Pardoner, 'as ye bigan, 185  
 Telle forth your tale, spareth for no man,

And teche us yonge men of your prak-  
 tike.'  
 'Gladly,' quod she, 'sith it may yow  
 lyke.  
 But yet I praye to al this companye,  
 If that I speke after my fantasye, 190  
 As taketh not a-grief of that I seye;  
 For myn entente nis but for to pleye.  
 Now sires, now wol I telle forth my  
 tale.—  
 As ever mote I drinken wyn or ale,  
 I shal seye sooth, tho housbondes that I  
 hadde, 195  
 As three of hem were gode and two were  
 badde.  
 The three men were gode, and riche,  
 and olde;  
 Unnethe mighte they the statut holde  
 In which they were bounden un-to me.  
 Ye woot wel what I mene of this, par-  
 dee! 200  
 As help me god, I laughe whan I thinke  
 How pitously a-night I made hem  
 swinke;  
 And by my fey, I tolde of it no stoor.  
 They had me yeven hir gold and hir  
 tresoor;  
 Me neded nat do lenger diligence 205  
 To winne hir love, or doon hem rever-  
 ence.  
 They loved me so wel, by god above,  
 That I ne tolde no deyntee of hir love!  
 A wys womman wol sette hir ever in oon  
 To gete hir love, ther as she hath noon.  
 But sith I hadde hem hoolly in myn  
 hond, 211  
 And sith they hadde me yeven all hir  
 lond,  
 What sholde I taken hede hem for to  
 plese,  
 But it were for my profit and myn ese?  
 I sette hem so a-werke, by my fey, 215  
 That many a night they songen "weila-  
 wey!"  
 The bacoun was nat fet for hem, I trowe,  
 That som men han in Essex at Dun-  
 mowe.  
 I governed hem so wel, after my lawe,  
 That ech of hem ful blisful was and  
 fawe 220  
 To bringe me gaye thinges fro the fayre.  
 They were ful glad whan I spak to hem  
 fayre;

For god it woot, I childe hem spitously.

Now herkneth, how I bar me proprely,  
Ye wyse wyves, that can understonde.

Thus shul ye speke and bere hem  
wrong on honde; 226

For half so boldely can ther no man  
Swere and lyen as a womman can.

I sey nat this by wyves that ben wyse,  
But-if it be whan they hem misavyse. 230  
A wys wyf, if that she can hir good,  
Shal beren him on hond the cow is  
wood,

And take wisse of hir owene mayde  
Of hir assent; but herkneth how I sayde.

'Sir olde kaynard, is this thyn array?

Why is my neighebores wyf so gay? 236

She is honoured over-al ther she goth;

I sitte at hoom, I have no thrifty cloth.

What dostow at my neighebores hous?

Is she so fair? artow so amorous? 240

What rowneye with our mayde? *benedicite!*

Sir olde lechour, lat thy Iapes be!

And if I have a gossib or a frend,

With-outen gilt, thou chydest as a fend,

If that I walke or pleye un-to his hous!

Thou comest hoom as dronken as a  
mous, 246

And prechest on thy bench, with yvel  
preef!

Thou seist to me, it is a greet meschief

To wedde a povre womman, for costage;

And if that she be riche, of heigh parage,

Than seistow that it is a tormentrye 251

To suffre hir pryde and hir malencolye.

And if that she be fair, thou verray  
knave,

Thou seyst that every holour wol hir  
have;

She may no whyle in chastitee abyde,

That is assailed up-on ech a syde. 256

Thou seyst, som folk desyre us for  
richesse,

Somme for our shap, and somme for our  
fairnesse;

And som, for she can outhir singe or  
daunce,

And som, for gentillesse and daliaunce;

Som, for hir handes and hir armes  
smale; 261

Thus goth al to the devel by thy tale.

Thou seyst, men may nat kepe a castel-  
wyl;

It may so longe assailed been over-al.

And if that she be foul, thou seist that  
she 265

Coveiteth every man that she may se;

For as a spaynel she wol on him lepe,

Til that she finde som man hir to chepe;

Ne noon so grey goos goth ther in the  
lake,

As, seistow, that wol been with-oute  
make. 270

And seyst, it is an hard thing for to  
welde

A thing that no man wol, his thanks,  
helde.

Thus seistow, lorel, whan thou goost to  
bedde;

And that no wys man nedeth for to  
wedde, 274

Ne no man that entendeth un-to hevене.

With wilde thonder-dint and firy levene

Mote thy welked nekke be to-broke!

Thow seyst that dropping houses, and  
eek smoke,

And chydng wyves, maken men to flee

Out of hir owene hous; a! *benedicite!*

What eyleth swich an old man for to  
chyde? 281

Thow seyst, we wyves wol our vyces  
hyde

Til we be fast, and than we wol hem  
shewe;

Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewe!

Thou seist, that oxen, asses, hors, and  
houndes, 285

They been assayed at diverse stoundes;

Bacins, lavours, er that men hem bye,

Spones and stoles, and al swich hous-  
bondrye,

And so been pottes, clothes, and array;

But folk of wyves maken noon assay 290

Til they be wedded; olde dotard shrewe!

And than, seistow, we wol oure vices  
shewe.

Thou seist also, that it displeseth me

But-if that thou wolt preyse my beautee,

And but thou poure alwey up-on my  
face, 295

And clepe me "faire dame" in every  
place;

And but thou make a feste on thilke day

That I was born, and make me fresh and  
gay,

And but thou do to my norice honour

And to my chamberere with-inne my  
bour, 300

And to my fadres folk and his allyes; —  
Thus seistow, olde barel ful of lyes!

And yet of our apprentice Ianekyn,  
For his crisp heer, shyninge as gold so fyn,  
And for he squiereth me bothe up and  
doun, 305

Yet hastow caught a fals suspecioun;  
I wol hym noght, thogh thou were deed  
to-morwe.

But tel me this, why hydestow, with  
sorwe,

The keys of thy cheste away fro me?  
It is my good as wel as thyn, pardee. 310  
What wenestow make an idiot of our  
dame?

Now by that lord, that called is seint Iame,  
Thou shalt nat bothe, thogh that thou  
were wood,

Be maister of my body and of my good;  
That oon thou shalt forgo, maugree thyne  
yën; 315

What nedeth thee of me to enquere or  
spyën?

I trowe, thou woldest loke me in thy  
chiste!

Thou sholdest seye, "wyf, go wher thee  
liste,

Tak your disport, I wol nat leve no talis;  
I knowe yow for a trewe wyf, dame  
Alis." 320

We love no man that taketh kepe or  
charge

Wher that we goon, we wol ben at our  
large.

Of alle men y-blessed moot he be,  
The wyse astrologien Dan Ptholome,  
That seith this proverbe in his Alma-  
geste, 325

"Of alle men his wisdom is the hyeste,  
That rekketh never who hath the world  
in honde."

By this proverbe thou shalt understonde,  
Have thou y-nogh, what thar thee recche  
or care

How merily that othere folkes fare? 330  
For certeyn, olde dotard, by your leve,

Ye shul have queynte right y-nough at eve.  
He is to greet a nigard that wol werne  
A man to lighte his candle at his lanterne;  
He shal have never the lasse light,  
pardee; 335

Have thou y-nough, thee thar nat pleyne  
thee.

Thou seyst also, that if we make us gay  
With clothing and with precious array,  
That it is peril of our chastitee;

And yet, with sorwe, thou most enforce  
thee, 340

And seye thise wordes in the apostles  
name,

"In habit, maad with chastitee and  
shame,

Ye wommen shul apparaille yow," quod  
he,

"And noght in tressed heer and gay  
perree, 344

As perles, ne with gold, ne clothes riche;"  
After thy text, ne after thy rubriche  
I wol nat wirche as muchel as a gnat.

Thou seydest this, that I was lyk a cat;  
For who-so wolde senge a cattes skin,  
Thanne wolde the cat wel dwellen in his  
in; 350

And if the cattes skin be slyk and gay,  
She wol nat dwelle in house half a day,  
But forth she wole, er any day be dawed,  
To shewe hir skin, and goon a-cater-  
wawed;

This is to seye, if I be gay, sir shrewe, 355  
I wol renne out, my borel for to shewe.

Sire olde fool, what eyleth thee to  
spyën?

Thogh thou preye Argus, with his hun-  
dred yën,

To be my warde-cors, as he can best,  
In feith, he shal nat kepe me but me  
lest; 360

Yet coude I make his berd, so moot I  
thee.

Thou seydest eek, that ther ben thinges  
three,

The whiche thinges troublen al this erthe,  
And that no right ne may endure the  
ferthe;

O leve sir shrewe, Iesu shorte thy lyf! 365  
Yet prechestow, and seyst, an hateful wyf  
Y-rekened is for oon of thise meschances.  
Ben ther none othere maner resem-  
blances

That ye may lykne your parables to,  
But-if a sely wyf be oon of tho? 370

Thou lykenest wommanes love to helle,  
To bareyne lond, ther water may not  
dwelle.

Thou lyknest it also to wilde fyr;  
 The more it brenneth, the more it hath  
 desyr  
 To consume every thing that brent wol  
 be. 375  
 Thou seyst, that right as wormes shende  
 a tree,  
 Right so a wyf destroyeth hir housbonde;  
 This knowe they that been to wyves  
 bonde.  
 Lordinges, right thus, as ye have un-  
 derstonde,  
 Bar I stifly myne olde housbondes on  
 honde, 380  
 That thus they seyden in hir dronkenesse;  
 And al was fals, but that I took wisse  
 On Ianekin and on my nece also.  
 O lord, the peyne I dide hem and the wo,  
 Ful giltelees, by goddes swete pyne! 385  
 For as an hors I coude byte and whyne.  
 I coude pleyne, thogh I were in the gilt,  
 Or elles often tyme hadde I ben spilt.  
 Who-so that first to mille comth, first  
 grint; 389  
 I pleynd first, so was our werre y-stint.  
 They were ful glad to excusen hem ful  
 blyve  
 Of thing of which they never agilte hir  
 lyve.  
 Of wenchis wolde I beren him on  
 honde,  
 When that for syk unnethes mighte he  
 stonde.  
 Yet tikled it his herte, for that he 395  
 Wende that I hadde of him so greet  
 chiertee.  
 I swoor that al my walkinge out by nighte  
 Was for tespye wenchis that he dighte;  
 Under that colour hadde I many a mirthe.  
 For al swich wit is yeven us in our  
 birthe; 400  
 Deceite, weping, spinning god hath yive  
 To wommen kindly, whyl they may live.  
 And thus of o thing I avaunte me,  
 Atte ende I hadde the bettre in ech de-  
 gree,  
 By sleighte, or force, or by som maner  
 thing, 405  
 As by continuel murmur or grucching;  
 Namely a-bedde hadden they mes-  
 chaunce,  
 Ther wolde I chyde and do hem no  
 plesaunce;

I wolde no lenger in the bed abyde,  
 If that I felte his arm over my syde, 410  
 Til he had maad his raunson un-to me;  
 Than wolde I suffre him do his nycetee.  
 And ther-fore every man this tale I telle,  
 Winne who-so may, for al is for to selle.  
 With empty hand men may none haukes  
 lure; 415  
 For winning wolde I al his lust endure,  
 And make me a feyned appetyt;  
 And yet in bacon hadde I never delyt;  
 That made me that ever I wolde hem  
 chyde.  
 For thogh the pope had seten hem  
 biside, 420  
 I wolde nat spare hem at hir owene bord.  
 For by my trouthe, I quitte hem word for  
 word.  
 As help me verray god omnipotent,  
 Thogh I right now sholde make my  
 testament,  
 I ne owe hem nat a word that it nis quit.  
 I broghte it so aboute by my wit, 426  
 That they moste yeve it up, as for the  
 beste;  
 Or elles hadde we never been in reste.  
 For thogh he loked as a wood leoun,  
 Yet sholde he faille of his conclusioun. 430  
 Thanne wolde I seye, 'gode lief, tak  
 keep  
 How mekely loketh Wilkinoure sheep;  
 Com neer, my spouse, lat me ba thy  
 cheke!  
 Ye sholde been al pacient and meke,  
 And han a swete spyced conscience. 435  
 Sith ye so preche of lobes pacience.  
 Suffreth alwey, sin ye so wel can preche;  
 And but ye do, certain we shal yow teche  
 That it is fair to have a wyf in pees.  
 Oon of us two moste bowen, doutelees;  
 And sith a man is more resonable 441  
 Than womman is, ye moste been suffra-  
 ble.  
 What eyleth yow to grucche thus and  
 grone?  
 Is it for ye wolde have my queynte allone?  
 Why taak it al, lo, have it every-deel; 445  
 Peter! I shrewe yow but ye love it weel!  
 For if I wolde selle my *bele chose*,  
 I coude walke as fresh as is a rose;  
 But I wol kepe it for your owene tooth.  
 Ye be to blame, by god, I sey yow  
 sooth.' 450

Swiche maner wordes hadde we on  
honde.

Now wol I speken of my fourthe hous-  
bonde.

My fourthe housbonde was a revelour,  
This is to seyn, he hadde a paramour;  
And I was yong and ful of ragerye, 455  
Stiborn and strong, and Ioly as a pye.  
Wel coude I daunce to an harpe smale,  
And singe, y-wis, as any nightingale,  
Whan I had dronke a draughte of swete  
wyn.

Metellius, the foule cherl, the swyn, 460  
That with a staf birafte his wyf hir lyf,  
For she drank wyn, thogh I hadde been  
his wyf,

He sholde nat han daunted me fro drinke;  
And, after wyn, on Venus moste I thinke:  
For al so siker as cold engendreth hayl,  
A likerous mouth moste han a likerous  
tayl. 466

In womman vinolent is no defence,  
This knowen lechours by experience.

But, lord Crist! whan that it remem-  
breth me

Up-on my yowthe, and on my Iolitee, 470  
It tikleth me aboute myn herte rote.

Unto this day it dooth myn herte bote  
That I have had my world as in my tyme.  
But age, allas! that al wol envenyme,  
Hath me biraft my beautee and my  
pith; 475

Lat go, fare-wel, the devel go therwith!  
The flour is goon, ther is na-more to  
telle,

The bren, as I best can, now moste I  
selle;

But yet to be right mery wol I fonde.  
Now wol I tellen of my fourthe hous-  
bonde. 480

I seye, I hadde in herte greet despyt  
That he of any other had delyt.  
But he was quit, by god and by seint Iocé!  
I made him of the same wode a croce;  
Nat of my body in no foul manere, 485  
But certainly, I made folk swich chere,  
That in his owene grece I made him  
frye

For angre, and for verray Ialousye.  
By god, in erthe I was his purgatorie,  
For which I hope his soule be in glorie.  
For god it woot, he sat ful ofte and  
song 491

Whan that his shoo ful bitterly him  
wrong.

Ther was no wight, save god and he, that  
wiste,

In many wyse, how sore I him twisté.  
He deyde whan I cam fro Ierusalem,  
And lyth y-grave under the rode-beem,  
Al is his tombe noght so curious 497  
As was the sepulcre of him, Darius,  
Which that Appelles wroghte subtilly;  
It nis but wast to burie him preciously.  
Lat him fare-wel, god yeve his soule  
reste, 501

He is now in the grave and in his cheste.  
Now of my fifthe housbond wol I telle.

God lete his soule never come in helle!  
And yet was he to me the moste shrewe;  
That fele I on my ribbes al by rewe, 506  
And ever shal, un-to myn ending-day.  
But in our bed he was so fresh and gay,  
And ther-with-al so wel coude he me  
glose,

Whan that he wolde han my *bele chose*, 510  
That thogh he hadde me bet on every  
boon,

He coude winne agayn my love anon.  
I trowe I loved him beste, for that he  
Was of his love daungerous to me.

We wommen han, if that I shal nat lye,  
In this matere a queynte fantasye; 516  
Wayte what thing we may nat lightly  
have,

Ther-after wol we crye al-day and crave.  
Forbede us thing, and that desyren we;  
Prees on us faste, and thanne wol we  
flee. 520

With daunger oute we al our chaffare;  
Greet prees at market maketh dere ware,  
And to greet cheep is holde at litel prys;  
This knoweth every womman that is wys.

My fifthe housbonde, god his soule  
blesse! 525  
Which that I took for love and no  
richesse,

He som-tyme was a clerk of Oxenford,  
And had left scole, and wente at hoom  
to bord

With my gossib, dwellinge in oure toun,  
God have hir soule! hir name was Ali-  
soun. 530

She knew myn herte and eek my privetee  
Bet than our parisshe-preest, so moot I  
thee!

To hir biwreyed I my conseil al.  
 For had myn housbonde pissed on a wal,  
 Or doon a thing that sholde han cost his  
 lyf, 535  
 To hir, and to another worthy wyf,  
 And to my nece, which that I loved weel,  
 I wolde han told his conseil every-deel.  
 And so I dide ful often, god it woot,  
 That made his face ful often reed and  
 hoot 540  
 For verray shame, and blamed him-self  
 for he  
 Had told to me so greet a privetee.  
 So and so bifel that ones, in a Lente,  
 (So often tymes I to my gossib wente,  
 For ever yet I lovede to be gay, 545  
 And for to walke, in March, Averille, and  
 May,  
 Fro hous to hous, to here sondry talis),  
 That Iankin clerk, and my gossib deme  
 Alis,  
 And I my-self, in-to the felde wente.  
 Myn housbond was at London al that  
 Lente; 550  
 I hadde the bettre leyser for to pleye,  
 And for to see, and eek for to be seye  
 Of lusty folk; what wiste I wher my  
 grace  
 Was shapen for to be, or in what place?  
 Therefore I made my visitaciouns, 555  
 To vigilies and to processions,  
 To preching eek and to thise pilgrimages,  
 To pleyes of miracles and mariages,  
 And wered upon my gaye scarlet gytes.  
 Thise wormes, ne thise motthes, ne thise  
 mytes, 560  
 Upon my peril, frete hem never a deel;  
 And wostow why? for they were used  
 weel.  
 Now wol I tellen forth what happed  
 me.  
 I seye, that in the feeldes walked we,  
 Til trewely we hadde swich daliance, 565  
 This clerk and I, that of my purveyance  
 I spak to him, and seyde him, how that  
 he,  
 If I were widwe, sholde wedde me.  
 For certainly, I sey for no bobance,  
 Yet was I never withouten purveyance  
 Of mariage, nof othere thinges eek. 571  
 I holde a mouses herte nat worth a leek,  
 That hath but oon hole for to sterte to,  
 And if that faille, thanne is al y-do.

I bar him on honde, he hadde en-  
 chanted me; 575  
 My dame taughte me that souiltee.  
 And eek I seyde, I mette of him al night;  
 He wolde han slayn me as I lay up-right,  
 And al my bed was ful of verray blood,  
 And yet I hope that he shal do me good;  
 For blood bitokeneth gold, as me was  
 taught. 581  
 And al was fals, I dremed of it right  
 naught,  
 But as I folwed ay my dames lore,  
 As wel of this as of other thinges more.  
 But now sir, lat me see, what I shal  
 seyn? 585  
 A! ha! by god, I have my tale ageyn.  
 Whan that my fourthe housbond was  
 on bere,  
 I weep algate, and made sory chere,  
 As wyves moten, for it is usage,  
 And with my coverchief covered my vis-  
 age; 590  
 But for that I was purveyed of a make,  
 I weep but smal, and that I undertake.  
 To chirche was myn housbond born  
 a-morwe  
 With neighebores, that for him maden  
 sorwe;  
 And Iankin oure clerk was oon of tho  
 As help me god, whan that I saugh him  
 go 596  
 After the bere, me thoughte he hadde a  
 paire  
 Of legges and of feet so clene and faire,  
 That al myn herte I yaf un-to his hold.  
 He was, I trowe, a twenty winter old,  
 And I was fourty, if I shal seye sooth;  
 But yet I hadde alwey a coltes tooth.  
 Gat-tothed I was, and that bicam me  
 weel; 604  
 I hadde the prente of seynt Venus seel.  
 As help me god, I was a lusty oon,  
 And faire and riche, and yong, and wel  
 bigoon;  
 And trewely, as myne housbondes tolde  
 me,  
 I had the beste *quoniam* mighte be.  
 For certes, I am al Venerien  
 In felinge, and myn herte is Marcien. 610  
 Venus me yaf my lust, my likerousnesse,  
 And Mars yaf me my sturdy hardinesse.  
 Myn ascendent was Taur, and Mars ther-  
 inne.



Allas! alas! that ever love was sinne!  
 I folwed ay myn inclinacioun 615  
 By vertu of my constellacioun;  
 That made me I coude noght withdrawe  
 My chambre of Venus from a good  
 felawe.

Yet have I Martes mark up-on my face,  
 And also in another privee place. 620  
 For, god so wis be my savacioun,  
 I ne loved never by no discrecioun  
 But ever folwede myn appetyt,  
 Al were he short or long, or blak or  
 whyt;

I took no kepe, so that he lyked me, 625  
 How pore he was, ne eek of what degree.

What sholde I seye, but, at the  
 monthes ende,

This Ioly clerk Iankin, that was so hende,  
 Hath wedded me with greet solempnitee,  
 And to him yaf I al the lond and fee 630  
 That ever was me yeven ther-bifore;  
 But afterward repented me full sore.  
 He nolde suffre nothing of my list.

By god, he smoot me ones on the list,  
 For that I rente out of his book a leef,  
 That of the strook myn ere wex al deaf.  
 Stiborn I was as is a leonesse, 637

And of my tonge a verray Iangleresse,  
 And walke I wolde, as I had doon bi-  
 forn,

From hous to hous, al-though he had it  
 sworn. 640

For which he often tymes wolde preche,  
 And me of olde Romayn gestes teche,  
 How he, Simplicius Gallus, lefte his  
 wyf,

And hir forsook for terme of al his lyf,  
 Noght but for open-headed he hir say  
 Lokinge out at his dore upon a day. 646

Another Romayn tolde he me by name,  
 That, for his wyf was at a someres game  
 With-oute his witing, he forsook hir eke.  
 And than wolde he up-on his Bible seke  
 That ilke proverbe of Ecclesiaste, 651  
 Wher he comandeth and forbedeth faste,  
 Man shal nat suffre his wyf go roule  
 aboute;

Than wolde he seye right thus, with-ouden  
 doute,

“Who-so that buildeth his hous al of  
 salwes, 655  
 And priketh his blinde hors over the  
 falwes,

And suffreth his wyf to go seken halwes,  
 Is worthy to been hanged on the  
 galwes!”

But al for noght, I sette noght an hawe  
 Of his proverbes nos of his olde sawe, 660  
 Ne I wolde nat of him corrected be.

I hate him that my vices telleth me,  
 And so do mo, god woot! of us than I.  
 Thus made him with me wood al outrely;  
 I nolde noght forbere him in no cas. 665

Now wol I seye yow sooth, by seint  
 Thomas,

Why that I rente out of his book a leef,  
 For which he smoot me so that I was  
 deaf.

He hadde a book that gladly, night  
 and day,

For his desport he wolde rede alway. 670  
 He cleped it Valerie and Theofraste,  
 At whiche book he lough alwey ful  
 faste.

And eek ther was som-tyme a clerk at  
 Rome,

A cardinal, that highte Seint Ierome,  
 That made a book agayn Iovinian; 675  
 In whiche book eek ther was Tertulan,  
 Crisippus, Trotula, and Helowys,

That was abbesse nat fer fro Parys;  
 And eek the Parables of Salomon,  
 Ovydes Art, and bokes many on, 680

And alle these wer bounden in o volume.  
 And every night and day was his custume,  
 Whan he had leyser and vacacioun  
 From other worldly occupacioun, 684

To reden on this book of wikked wyves.  
 He knew of hem mo legendes and lyves  
 Than been of gode wyves in the Bible.

For trusteth wel, it is an impossible  
 That any clerk wol speke good of wyves,  
 But-if it be of holy seintes lyves, 690

Ne of noon other womman never the mo.  
 Who peyntede the leoun, tel me who?

By god, if women hadde writen stories,  
 As clerkes han with-inne hir oratories,  
 They wolde han writen of men more wik-  
 kednesse 695

Than all the mark of Adam may redresse.  
 The children of Mercurie and of Venus

Been in hir wirking ful contrarious;  
 Mercurie loveth wisdom and science,  
 And Venus loveth ryot and dispence. 700  
 And, for hir diverse disposicioun,  
 Ech falleth in others exaltacioun;

And thus, god woot! Mercurie is desolat  
 In Pisces, wher Venus is axaltat;  
 And Venus falleth wher Mercurie is  
 reysed; 705  
 Therefore no womman of no clerk is  
 preysed.  
 The clerk, whan he is old, and may  
 noght do  
 Of Venus werkes worth his olde sho,  
 Than sit he doun, and writ in his dotage  
 That wommen can nat kepe hir mariage!  
 But now to purpos, why I tolde thee 711  
 That I was beten for a book, pardee.  
 Up-on a night Iankin, that was our syre,  
 Redde on his book, as he sat by the fyre,  
 Of Eva first, that, for hir wikkednesse, 715  
 Was al mankinde broght to wrecched-  
 nesse.  
 For which that Iesu Crist him-self was  
 slayn,  
 That boghte us with his herte-blood  
 agayn.  
 Lo, here expres of womman may ye finde,  
 That womman was the los of al man-  
 kinde. 720  
 Tho redde he me how Sampson loste  
 his heres,  
 Slepinge, his lemman kitte hem with hir  
 sheres;  
 Thurgh whiche tresoun loste he bothe  
 his yën.  
 Tho redde he me, if that I shal nat  
 lyen,  
 Of Hercules and of his Dianyre, 725  
 That caused him to sette himself a-fyre.  
 No-thing forgot he the penaunce and  
 wo  
 That Socrates had with hise wyves two;  
 How Xantippa caste pisse up-on his  
 heed;  
 This sely man sat stille, as he were  
 deed; 730  
 He wyped his heed, namore dorste he  
 seyn  
 But "er that thonder stinte, comth a  
 reyn."  
 Of Phasipha, that was the quene of  
 Crete,  
 For shrewednesse, him thoughte the tale  
 swete;  
 Fy! spek na-more — it is a grisly thing —  
 Of hir horrible lust and hir lyking. 736  
 Of Clitemistra, for hir lecherye,

That falsly made hir housbond for to dye,  
 He redde it with ful good devocioun.  
 He tolde me eek for what occasioun  
 Amphiorax at Thebes loste his lyf; 741  
 Myn housbond hadde a legende of his  
 wyf,  
 Eriphilem, that for an ouche of gold  
 Hath prively un-to the Grekes told  
 Wher that hir housbonde hidde him in a  
 place, 745  
 For which he hadde at Thebes sory grace.  
 Of Lyma tolde he me, and of Lucye,  
 They bothe made hir housbondes for to  
 dye;  
 That oon for love, that other was for  
 hate;  
 Lyma hir housbond, on an even late, 750  
 Empoysoned hath, for that she was his fo.  
 Lucya, likerous, loved hir housbond so,  
 That, for he sholde alwey up-on hir  
 thinke,  
 She yaf him swich a mañer love-drinke,  
 That he was deed, er it were by the  
 morwe; 755  
 And thus algates housbondes han sorwe.  
 Than tolde he me, how oon Latumius  
 Compleyned to his felawe Arrius,  
 That in his gardin growed swich a tree,  
 On which, he seyde, how that his wyves  
 three 760  
 Hanged hem-self for herte despitous.  
 "O leve brother," quod this Arrius,  
 "Yif me a plante of thilke blissed tree,  
 And in my gardin planted shal it be!"  
 Of latter date, of wyves hath he red,  
 That somme han slayn hir housbondes in  
 hir bed, 766  
 And lete hir lechour dighte hir al the  
 night  
 Whyl that the corps lay in the floor up-  
 right.  
 And somme han drive nayles in hir brayn  
 Whyl that they slepte, and thus they han  
 hem slayn. 770  
 Somme han hem yeve poysoun in hir  
 drinke.  
 He spak more harm than herte may  
 bitinke.  
 And ther-with-al, he knew of. mo pro-  
 verbes  
 Than in this world ther growen gras or  
 herbes.  
 "Bet is," quod he, "thyn habitacioun 775

Be with a leoun or a foul dragoun,  
Than with a womman usinge for to chyde.  
Bet is," quod he, "hye in the roof abyde  
Than with an angry wyf down in the  
hous;

They been so wikked and contrarious;  
They haten that hir housbondes loveth  
ay." 781

He seyde, "a womman cast hir shame  
away,

Whan she cast of hir smok;" and  
forther-mo,

"A fair womman, but she be chaast also,  
Is lyk a gold ring in a sowes nose." 785  
Who wolde wenen, or who wolde sup-  
pose

The wo that in myn herte was, and pyne?  
And whan I saugh he wolde never  
fyne

To reden on this cursed book al night,  
Al soodeynly three leves have I plight  
Out of this book, right as he radde, and  
eke, 791

I with my fist so took him on the cheke,  
That in our fyr he fil bakward adoun.  
And he up-stirte as dooth a wood leoun,  
And with his fist he smoot me on the  
heed, 795

That in the floor I lay as I were deed.  
And when he saugh how stille that I lay,  
He was agast, and wolde han fled his  
way,

Til atte laste out of my swogh I breyde:  
"O! hastow slayn me, false theef?" I  
seyde, 800

"And for my land thus hastow mordred  
me?

Er I be deed, yet wol I kisse thee."  
And neer he cam, and kneled faire  
adoun,

And seyde, "dere suster Alisoun,  
As help me god, I shal thee never  
smyte; 805

That I have doon, it is thy-self to wyte.  
Foryeve it me, and that I thee biseke"—  
And yet eft-sones I hitte him on the  
cheke,

And seyde, "theef, thus muchel am I  
wreke;

Now wol I dye, I may no lenger speke."  
But atte laste, with muchel care and wo,  
We fille acorded, by us selven two. 812  
He yaf me al the byrdel in myn hond

To han the governaunce of hous and  
lond,

And of his tonge and of his hond also,  
And made him brenne his book anon  
right tho. 816

And whan that I hadde geten un-to me,  
By maistrie, al the soveraynetee,  
And that he seyde, "myn owene trewe  
wyf,

Do as thee lust the terme of al thy lyf,  
Keep thyn honour, and keep eek myn  
estaat"— 821

After that day we hadden never debaat.  
God help me so, I was to him as kinde  
As any wyf from Denmark un-to Inde,  
And also trewe, and so was he to me.  
I prey to god that sit in magestee, 826  
So blesse his soule, for his mercy dere!  
Now wol I seye my tale, if ye wol here.'

*Biholde the wordes between the Somnour  
and the Frere.*

The Frere lough, whan he hadde herd  
al this,

'Now, dame,' quod he, 'so have I Ioye or  
blis, 830

This is a long preamble of a tale!  
And whan the Somnour herde the Frere  
gale,

'Lo!' quod the Somnour, 'goddess  
armes two!

A frere wol entremette him ever-mo.  
Lo, gode men, a flye and eek a frere 835

Who falle in every dish and eek matere.  
What spekestow of preambulacioun?

What! amble, or trotte, or pees, or go  
sit down;

Thou lettest our disport in this manere.'  
'Ye, woltow so, sir Somnour?' quod  
the Frere, 840

'Now, by my feith, I shal, er that I go,  
Telle of a Somnour swich a tale or two,  
That alle the folk shal laughen in this  
place.'

'Now elles, Frere, I bishrewe thy  
face,'

Quod this Somnour, 'and I bishrewe me,  
But-if I telle tales two or thre 846

Of freres er I come to Sidingborne,  
That I shal make thyn herte for to  
morne;

For wel I woot thy pacience is goon.  
 Our hoste cryde 'pees! and that  
 anon!' 850  
 And seyde, 'lat the womman telle hir  
 tale.  
 Ye fare as folk that dronken been of  
 ale.

Do, dame, tel forth your tale, and that is  
 best.'  
 'Al redy, sir,' quod she, 'right as yow  
 lest,  
 If I have licence of this worthy Frere.'  
 'Vis, dame,' quod he, 'tel forth, and I  
 wol here.' 856

*Here endeth the Wyf of Bathe hir Prologe.*

## THE TALE OF THE WYF OF BATHE.

*Here biginneth the Tale of the Wyf of  
 Bathe.*

IN tholde dayes of the king Arthour,  
 Of which that Britons spoken greet hon-  
 our,  
 Al was this land fulfilled of fayerye. 859  
 The elf-queen, with hir Ioly companye,  
 Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede;  
 This was the olde opinion, as I rede.  
 I speke of manye hundred yeres ago;  
 But now can no man see none elves mo.  
 For now the grete charitee and pray-  
 eres 865  
 Of limitours and othere holy freres,  
 That serchen every lond and every stream,  
 As thikke as motes in the sonne-beem,  
 Blessinge halles, chambres, kichenes,  
 boures,  
 Citees, burghes, castels, hye toures, 870  
 Thropes, bernes, shipnes, dayeryes,  
 This maketh that ther been no fayeryes.  
 For ther as wont to walken was an elf,  
 Ther walketh now the limitour him-self  
 In undermeles and in morweninges, 875  
 And seyth his matins and his holy thinges  
 As he goth in his limitacioun.  
 Wommen may go saufly up and down,  
 In every bush, or under every tree;  
 There is noon other incubus but he, 880  
 And he ne wol doon hem but dishonour.  
 And so bifel it, that this king Arthour  
 Hadde in his hous a lusty bachelor,  
 That on a day cam rydinge fro river;  
 And happed that, allone as she was  
 born, 885  
 He saugh a mayde walkinge him biforn,  
 Of whiche mayde anon, maugree hir heed,  
 By verray force he rafte hir maydenheed;

For which oppressioun was swich clamour  
 And swich pursute un-to the king Ar-  
 thour, 890  
 That dampned was this knight for to be  
 deed  
 By cours of lawe, and sholde han lost his  
 heed  
 Paraventure, swich was the statut tho;  
 But that the quene and othere ladies mo  
 So longe preyeden the king of grace, 895  
 Til he his lyf him graunted in the place,  
 And yaf him to the quene al at hir  
 wille,  
 To chese, whether she wolde him save or  
 spille.  
 The quene thanketh the king with al  
 her might,  
 And after this thus spak she to the  
 knight, 900  
 Whan that she saugh hir tyme, up-on a  
 day:  
 'Thou standest yet,' quod she, 'in swich  
 array,  
 That of thy lyf yet hastow no suretee.  
 I grante thee lyf, if thou canst tellen me  
 What thing is it that wommen most de-  
 syren? 905  
 Be war, and keep thy nekke-boon from  
 yren.  
 And if thou canst nat tellen it anon,  
 Yet wol I yeve thee leve for to gon  
 A twelf-month and a day, to seche and  
 lere  
 An answer suffisant in this matere. 910  
 And suretee wol I han, er that thou  
 pace,  
 Thy body for to yelden in this place.'  
 Wo was this knight and sorwefully he  
 syketh;

But what! he may nat do al as him lyk-  
eth.

And at the laste, he chees him for to  
wende, 915

And come agayn, right at the yeres ende,  
With swich answeere as god wolde him  
purveye;

And taketh his leve, and wendeth forth  
his weye.

He seketh every hous and every place,  
Wher-as he hopeth for to finde grace, 920

To lerne, what thing wommen loven most;  
But he ne coude arryven in no cost,

Wher-as he mighte finde in this matere  
Two creatures accordinge in-fere.

Somme seyde, wommen loven best  
richesse, 925

Somme seyde, honour, somme seyde,  
Iolynesse;

Somme, riche array, somme seyden, lust  
abedde,

And ofte tyme to be widwe and wedde.

Somme seyde, that our hertes been  
most esed,

Whan that we been y-flatered and  
y-pled. 930

He gooth ful ny the sothe, I wol nat lye;  
A man shal winne us best with flaterye;

And with attendance, and with bisnesse,  
Been we y-lymed, bothe more and lesse.

And somme seyn, how that we loven  
best 935

For to be free, and do right as us lest,  
And that no man repreve us of our vyce,

But seye that we be wyse, and no-thing  
nyce.

For trewely, ther is noon of us alle, 939  
If any wight wol clawe us on the galle,

That we nil kike, for he seith us sooth;  
Assay, and he shal finde it that so dooth.

For be we never so vicious with-inne,  
We wol been holden wyse, and clene of  
sinne.

And somme seyn, that greet delyt han  
we 945

For to ben holden stable and eek secree,  
And in o purpos stedefastly to dwelle,

And nat biwreye thing that men us telle.  
But that tale is nat worth a rake-stele;

Pardee, we wommen conne no-thing  
hele; 950

Witnesse on Myda; wol ye here the tale?  
Ovyde, amonges othere thinges smale,

Seyde, Myda hadde, under his longe heres,  
Growinge up-on his heed two asses eres,  
The which vyce he hidde, as he best  
mighte, 955

Ful subtilly from every mannes sighte,  
That, save his wyf, ther wiste of it na-mo.

He loved hir most, and trusted hir also;  
He preyede hir, that to no creature

She sholde tellen of his disfigure. 960  
She swoor him 'nay, for al this world  
to winne,

She nolde do that vileinye or sinne,  
To make hir housbond han so foul a  
name;

She nolde nat telle it for hir owene  
shame.'

But nathelees, hir thoughte that she  
dyde, 965

That she so longe sholde a conseil hyde;  
Hir thoughte it swal so sore aboute hir  
herte,

That nedely som word hir moste asterte;  
And sith she dorste telle it to no man,

Doun to a mareys faste by she ran; 970  
Til she cam there, hir herte was a-fyre,  
And, as a bitore bombleth in the myre,

She leyde hir mouth un-to the water  
doun:

'Biwreye me nat, thou water, with thy  
soun,'

Quod she, 'to thee I telle it, and  
namo; 975

Myn housbond hath longe asses eres two!  
Now is myn herte all hool, now is it oute;

I mighte no lenger kepe it, out of doute.'  
Heer may ye se, thogh we a tyme abyde,

Yet out it moot, we can no conseil  
hyde; 980

The remenant of the tale if ye wol here,  
Redeth Ovyde, and ther ye may it lere.

This knight, of which my tale is spe-  
cially,

Whan that he saugh he mighte nat come  
therby,

This is to seye, what wommen loven  
moost, 985

With-inne his brest ful sorweful was the  
goost;

But hoom he gooth, he mighte nat so-  
iourne.

The day was come, that hoomward moste  
he tourne,

And in his wey it happed him to ryde,

In al this care, under a forest-syde, 990  
 Wher-as he saugh up-on a daunce go  
 Of ladies foure and twenty, and yet mo;  
 Toward the whiche daunce he drow ful  
 yerne,  
 In hope that som wisdom sholde he  
 lerne.  
 But certainly, er he came fully there, 995  
 Vanissed was this daunce, he niste  
 where.  
 No creature saugh he that bar lyf,  
 Save on the grene he saugh sittinge a  
 wyf;  
 A fouler wight ther may no man devyse.  
 Agayn the knight this olde wyf gan  
 ryse, 1000  
 And seyde, 'sir knight, heer-forth ne  
 lyth no wey.  
 'Tel me, what that ye seken, by your fey?  
 Paraventure it may the better be;  
 Thise olde folk can muchel thing,' quod  
 she.  
 'My leve mooder,' quod this knight  
 certeyn, 1005  
 'I nam but deed, but-if that I can seyn  
 What thing it is that women most  
 desyre;  
 Coude ye me wisse, I wolde wel quyte  
 your hyre.'  
 'Plichte me thy trouthe, heer in myn  
 hand,' quod she,  
 'The nexte thing that I requere thee, 1010  
 Thou shalt it do, if it lye in thy might;  
 And I wol telle it yow er it be night.'  
 'Have heer my trouthe,' quod the knight,  
 'I grante.'  
 'Thanne,' quod she, 'I dar me wel  
 avante, 1014  
 Thy lyf is sauf, for I wol stonde therby,  
 Up-on my lyf, the queen wol seye as I.  
 Lat see which is the proudeste of hem  
 alle,  
 That wereth on a coverchief or a calle,  
 That dar seye nay, of that I shal thee  
 teche;  
 Lat us go forth with-ouen lenger speche.'  
 Tho rounded she a pistel in his ere, 1021  
 And bad him to be glad, and have no  
 fere.  
 Whan they be comen to the court, this  
 knight  
 Seyde, 'he had holde his day, as he  
 hadde hight,

And redy was his answe,' as he sayde.  
 Ful many a noble wyf, and many a  
 mayde, 1026  
 And many a widwe, for that they ben  
 wyse,  
 The quene hir-self sittinge as a Iustyse,  
 Assembled been, his answe for to here;  
 And afterward this knight was bode  
 appere. 1030  
 To every wight comanded was silence,  
 And that the knight sholde telle in audi-  
 ence,  
 What thing that worldly wommen loven  
 best.  
 This knight ne stood nat stille as doth a  
 best,  
 But to his questioun anon answerde 1035  
 With manly voys, that al the court it  
 herde :  
 'My lige lady, generally,' quod he,  
 'Wommen desyren to have sovereyntee  
 As wel over hir housbond as hir love,  
 And for to been in maistrie him above;  
 This is your moste desyr, thogh ye me  
 kille, 1041  
 Doth as yow list, I am heer at your wille.'  
 In al the court ne was ther wyf ne  
 mayde,  
 Ne widwe, that contraried that he sayde,  
 But seyden, 'he was worthy han his lyf.'  
 And with that word up stirte the olde  
 wyf, 1046  
 Which that the knight saugh sittinge in  
 the grene :  
 'Mercy,' quod she, 'my sovereyn lady  
 quene!  
 Er that your court departe, do me right.  
 I taughte this answe un-to the knight;  
 For which he plichte me his trouthe  
 there, 1051  
 The firste thing I wolde of him requere,  
 He wolde it do, if it lay in his might.  
 Bifore the court than preye I thee, sir  
 knight,'  
 Quod she, 'that thou me take un-to thy  
 wyf; 1055  
 For wel thou wost that I have kept thy  
 lyf.  
 If I sey fals, sey nay, up-on thy fey!'  
 This knig at answe, 'allas! and  
 weylawey!  
 I woot right wel that swich was my  
 biheste.

For goddes love, as chees a newe re-  
queste; 1060

Tak al my good, and lat my body go.'

'Nay than,' quod she, 'I shrewe us  
bothe two!

For thogh that I be foul, and old, and  
pore,

I nolde for al the metal, ne for ore,

That under erthe is grave, or lyth  
above, 1065

But-if thy wyf I were, and eek thy love.'

'My love?' quod he; 'nay, my  
dampnacioun!

Allas! that any of my nacioun

Sholde ever so foule disparaged be!'

But al for noght, the ende is this, that  
he 1070

Constreyned was, he nedes moste hir  
wedde;

And taketh his olde wyf, and gooth to  
bedde.

Now wolden som men seye, paravente-  
ture,

That, for my negligence, I do no cure

To tellen yow the Ioye and al tharray

That at the feste was that ilke day. 1076

To whiche thing shortly answer I shal;

I seye, ther nas no Ioye ne feste at al,

Ther nas but hevynesse and muche sorwe;

For prively he wedded hir on a morwe,

And al day after hidde him as an  
oule; 1081

So wo was him, his wyf looked so foule.

Greet was the wo the knight hadde in  
his thoght,

Whan he was with his wyf a-bedde  
y-broght;

He walweth, and he turne'h to and fro.

His olde wyf lay smylinge evermo, 1086

And seyde, 'o dere housbond, *benedicite!*

Fareth every knight thus with his wyf as  
ye?

Is this the lawe of king Arthures hous?

Is every knight of his so dangerous? 1090

I am your owene love and eek your wyf;

I am she, which that saved hath your lyf;

And certes, yet dide I yow never unright;

Why fare ye thus with me this firste  
night?

Ye faren lyk a man had losid his wit; 1095

What is my gilt? for goddes love, tel me  
it,

And it shal been amended, if I may.'

'Amended?' quod this knight, 'allas!  
nay, nay!

It wol nat been amended never mo!

Thou art so loothly, and so old also, 1100

And ther-to comen of so lowe a kinde,

That litel wonder is, thogh I walwe and  
winde.

So wolde god myn herte wolde breste!'

'Is this,' quod she, 'the cause of your  
unreste?'

'Ye, certainly,' quod he, 'no wonder  
is.' 1105

'Now, sire,' quod she, 'I coude amende  
al this,

If that me liste, er it were dayes three,

So wel ye mighte bere yow un-to me.

But for ye speken of swich gentillesse

As is descended out of old richesse, 1110

That therefore sholden ye be gentil men,

Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.

Loke who that is most vertuouse alway,

Privee and apert, and most entendeth ay

To do the gentil dedes that he can, 1115

And tak him for the grettest gentil man.

Crist wol, we clayme of him our gen-  
tillesse,

Nat of our eldres for hir old richesse.

For thogh they yeve us al hir heritage,

For which we clayme to been of heigh  
parage, 1120

Yet may they nat biquethe, for no-thing,

To noon of us hir vertuouse living,

That made hem gentil men y-called be;

And bad us folwen hem in swich degree.

Wel can the wyse poete of Florence,

That highte Dant, speken in this sen-  
tence; 1126

Lo in swich maner rym is Dantes tale:

"Ful selde up ryseth by his branches  
smale

Prowesse of man, for god, of his good-  
nesse,

Wol that of him we clayme our gen-  
tillesse;" 1130

For of our eldres may we no-thing clayme

But temporel thing, that man may hurte  
and mayme.

Eek every wight wot this as wel as I,

If gentillesse were planted naturelly

Un-to a certeyn linage, doun the lyne,

Privee ne apert, than wolde they never  
fyne 1136

To doon of gentillesse the faire offyce;

They mighte do no vileinye or vyce.

Tak fyr, and ber it in the derkeste  
hous

Bitwix this and the mount of Caucasus,  
And lat men shette the dores and go  
thenne; 1141

Yet wol the fyr as faire lye and brenne,  
As twenty thousand men mighte it bi-  
holde;

His office naturel ay wol it holde,  
Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye. 1145

Heer may ye see wel, how that gen-  
terye

Is nat annexed to possessioun,  
Sith folk ne doon hir operacioun  
Alwey, as dooth the fyr, lo! in his kinde.  
For, god it woot, men may wel often  
finde 1150

A lordes sone do shame and vileinye;  
And he that wol han prys of his gentrye  
For he was boren of a gentil hous,  
And hadde hise eldres noble and vertuous,  
And nil him-selven do no gentle dedis,  
Ne folwe his gentil auncestre that deed  
is, 1156

He nis nat gentil, be he duk or erl;  
For vileyns sinful dedes make a cherl.  
For gentillesse nis but renomce  
Of thyne auncestres, for hir heigh boun-  
tee, 1160

Which is a strange thing to thy persone.  
Thy gentillesse cometh fro god allone;  
Than comth our verray gentillesse of  
grace,  
It was no-thing biquethe us with our  
place.

Thenketh how noble, as seith Valerius,  
Was thilke Tullius Hostilius, 1166  
That out of povert roos to heigh noblesse.  
Redeth Senek, and redeth eek Boëce,  
Ther shul ye seen expres it that no drede  
is,

That he is gentil that doth gentil dedis;  
And therefore, leve housbond, I thus con-  
clude, 1171

Al were it that myne auncestres were  
rude,

Yet may the hye god, and so hope I,  
Grante me grace to liven vertuously.  
Thanne am I gentil, whan that I biginne  
To liven vertuously and weye sinne.

And ther-as ye of povert me repreve,  
The hye god, on whom that we bileve,

In wilful povert chees to live his lyf. 1179  
And certes every man, mayden, or wyf,  
May understonde that Iesus, hevenc king,  
Ne wolde nat chese a vicious living.

Glad povert is an honest thing, certeyn;  
This wol Senek and othere clerkes seyn.  
Who-so that halt him payd of his pov-  
erte, 1185

I holde him riche, al hadde he nat a  
sherte.

He that coveyteth is a povre wight,  
For he wolde han that is nat in his  
might.

But he that noght hath, ne coveyteth  
have,

Is riche, al-though ye holde him but a  
knave. 1190

.Verray povert, it singeth proprely;  
Juvenal seith of povert merily:

"The povre man, whan he goth by the  
weye,

Bifore the theves he may singe and  
pleye."

Povert is hateful good, and, as I gesse,  
A ful greet bringer out of bisnesse;  
A greet amender eek of sapience 1197  
To him that taketh it in pacience.

Povert is this, although it seme elenge:  
Possessioun, that no wight wol chalenge.  
Povert ful ofte, whan a man is lowe,  
Maketh his god and eek him-self to  
knowe. 1202

Povert a spectacle is, as thinketh me,  
Thurgh which he may his verray frendes  
see.

And therefore, sire, sin that I noght yow  
greve, 1205

Of my povert na-more ye me repreve.

Now, sire, of elde ye repreve me;  
And certes, sire, thogh noon auctoritee  
Were in no book, ye gentils of honour  
Seyn that men sholde an old wight doon  
favour, 1210

And clepe him fader, for your gentillesse;  
And auctours shal I finden, as I gesse.

Now ther ye seye, that I am foul and  
old,

Than drede you noght to been a coke-  
wold; 1214

For filthe and elde, al-so moot I thee,  
Been grete wardeyns up-on chastitee.  
But nathelees, sin I knowe your delyt,  
I shal fulfille your worldly appetyt.



Chees now,' quod she, 'oon of thise  
things tweye, 1219  
To han me foul and old til that I deye,  
And be to yow a trewe humble wyf,  
And never yow displese in al my lyf,  
Or elles ye wol han me yong and fair,  
And take your aventure of the repair  
That shal be to your hous, by-cause of  
me, 1225  
Or in som other place, may wel be.  
Now chees your-selven, whether that  
yow lyketh.'  
This knight avyseth him and sore  
syketh,  
But atte laste he seyde in this manere,  
'My lady and my love, and wyf so dere,  
I put me in your wyse governance; 1231  
Cheseth your-self, which may be most  
plesance,  
And most honour to yow and me also.  
I do no fors the whether of the two;  
For as yow lyketh, it suffiseth me.' 1235  
'Thanne have I gete of yow maistrye,'  
quod she,  
'Sin I may chese, and governe as me  
lest?'  
'Ye, certes, wyf,' quod he, 'I holde it  
best.'  
'Kis me,' quod she, 'we be no lenger  
wrothe;  
For, by my trouthe, I wol be to yow  
bothe, 1240

This is to seyn, ye, bothe fair and good.  
I prey to god that I mot sterven wood,  
But I to yow be al-so good and trewe  
As ever was wyf, sin that the world was  
newe.  
And, but I be to-morn as fair to sene  
As any lady, emperyce, or quene, 1246  
That is bitwixe the est and eke the west,  
Doth with my lyf and deeth right as yow  
lest.  
Cast up the curtin, loke how that it is.'  
And whan the knight saugh verrailly  
al this, 1250  
That she so fair was, and so yong ther-to,  
For Ioye he hente hir in his armes two,  
His herte bathed in a bath of blisse;  
A thousand tyme a-rewhe he gan hir  
kisse.  
And she obeyed him in everything 1255  
That mighte doon him plesance or lyk-  
ing.  
And thus they live, un-to hir lyves  
ende,  
In parfit Ioye; and Iesu Crist us sende  
Housbondes meke, yonge, and fresshe  
a-bedde,  
And grace toverbyde hem that we  
wedde. 1260  
And eek I preye Iesu shorte hir lyves  
That wol nat be governed by hir wyves;  
And olde and angry nigardes of dispence,  
God sende hem sone verray pestilence.

*Here endeth the Wyves Tale of Bathe.*

## THE FRIAR'S PROLOGUE.

*The Prologe of the Freres tale.*

THIS worthy limitour, this noble Frere  
He made alwey a maner louring chere  
Upon the Somnour, but for honestee 1267  
No vileyns word as yet to him spak he.  
But atte laste he seyde un-to the Wyf,  
'Dame,' quod he, 'god yeve yow right  
good lyf! 1270  
Ye han heer touched, al-so moot I thee,  
In scole-matere greet difficultee;  
Ye han seyde muchel thing right wel, I  
seye;  
But dame, here as we ryden by the weye,

Us nedeth nat to speken but of  
game, 1275  
And lete auctoritees, on goddes name,  
To preching and to scole eek of clergie.  
But if it lyke to this companye  
I wol yow of a somnour telle a game.  
Pardee, ye may wel knowe by the  
name, 1280  
That of a somnour may no good be  
sayd;  
I pray that noon of you be yvel apayd.  
A somnour is a renner up and doun  
With mandements for fornicacioun,  
And is y-bet at every tounes ende.' 1285

Our host tho spak, 'a! sire, ye sholde  
be hende

And curteys, as a man of your estaat;  
In company we wol have no debaat.  
Telleth your tale, and lat the Somnour be.'

'Nay,' quod the Somnour, 'lat him  
seye to me 1290

What so him list; whan it comth to my  
lot,

By god, I shal him quyten every grot.  
I shal him tellen which a greet honour  
It is to be a flateringe limitour;  
And his offyce I shal him telle, y-wis.'

Our host answerde, 'pees, na-more of  
this.' 1296

And after this he seyde un-to the Frere,  
'Tel forth your tale, leve meister  
deere.'

*Here endeth the Prologe of the Frere.*

## THE FRERES TALE.

*Here biginneth the Freres tale.*

WHILOM ther was dwellinge in my con-  
tree

An erchedeken, a man of heigh degree,  
That boldely dide execucioun 1301

In punisshinge of fornicacioun,  
Of wicchecraft, and eek of bauderye,

Of diffamacioun, and avoutrye,  
Of chirche-reves, and of testaments, 1305

Of contractes, and of lakke of sacraments,  
And eek of many another maner cryme

Which nedeth nat rehercen at this tyme;  
Of usure, and of symonye also.

But certes, lechours dide he grettest  
wo; 1310

They sholde singen, if that they were  
hente;

An smale tytheres weren foule y-shent.  
If any persone wolde up-on hem pleyne,

Ther mighte asterte him no pecunial  
peyne 1314

For smale tythes and for smal offringe,  
He made the peple pitously to singe.

For er the bisshop caughte hem with his  
hook,

They weren in the erchedeknes book.  
Thanne hadde he, thurgh his Iurisdic-  
cioun,

Power to doon on hem correccioun. 1320

He hadde a Somnour redy to his hond,  
A slyer boy was noon in Engelond;

For subtilly he hadde his espiaille  
That taughte him, wher that him mighte  
availle. 1324

He coude spare of lechours oon or two,

To techen him to foure and twenty mo.  
For thogh this Somnour wood were as an  
hare,

To telle his harlotrye I wol nat spare;  
For we been out of his correccioun;

They han of us no Iurisdiccioun, 1330  
Ne never shullen, terme of alle hir lyves.

'Peter! so been the wommen of the  
styves,'

Quod the Somnour, 'y-put out of my  
cure!'

'Pees, with mischance and with mis-  
aventure,'

Thus seyde our host, 'and lat him telle  
his tale. 1335

Now telleth forth, thogh that the Som-  
nour gale,

Ne spareth nat myn owene maister dere.'  
This false thief, this Somnour, quod  
the Frere,

Hadde alwey baudes redy to his hond,  
As any hauk to lure in Engelond, 1340

That tolde him al the secree that they  
knewe;

For hir acqueyntance was nat come of-  
newe.

They weren hise approwours prively;  
He took him-self a greet profit therby;

His maister knew nat alwey what he  
wan. 1345

With-outen mandement, a lewed man  
He coude somne, on peyne of Cristes  
curs,

And they were gladde for to fille his  
purs,

And make him grete festes atte nale.

And right as Judas hadde purses smale,  
 And was a theef, right swich a theef was  
 he; 1351  
 His maister hadde but half his duëtee.  
 He was, if I shal yeven him his laude,  
 A theef, and eek a Somnour, and a  
 baude. 1354  
 He hadde eek wenches at his retenue,  
 That, whether that sir Robert or sir Huwe,  
 Or lakke, or Rauf, or who-so that it were,  
 That lay by hem, they told it in his ere;  
 Thus was the wenche and he of oon assent.  
 And he wolde fecche a feyned mande-  
 ment, 1360  
 And somme hem to the chapitre bothe  
 two,  
 And pile the man, and lete the wenche  
 go.  
 Thanne wolde he seye, 'frend, I shal for  
 thy sake  
 Do stryken hir out of our lettres blake;  
 Thee thar na-more as in this cas tra-  
 vaille; 1365  
 I am thy freend, ther I thee may availle.'  
 Certeyn he knew of bryberyes mo  
 Than possible is to telle in yeres two.  
 For in this world nis dogge for the bowe,  
 That can an hurt deer from an hool  
 y-knowe, 1370  
 Bet than this Somnour knew a sly lechour,  
 Or an avouter, or a paramour.  
 And, for that was the fruit of al his rente,  
 Therefore on it he sette al his entente.  
 And so bifel, that ones on a day 1375  
 This Somnour, ever waiting on his pray,  
 Rood for to somne a widwe, an old rible,  
 Feynyng a cause, for he wolde brybe.  
 And happed that he saugh bifore him ryde  
 A gay yeman, under a forest-syde. 1380  
 A bowe he bar, and arwes brighte and  
 kene;  
 He hadde up-on a courtepy of grene;  
 An hat up-on his heed with frenges blake.  
 'Sir,' quod this Somnour, 'hayl! and  
 wel a-take!'  
 'Wel-come,' quod he, 'and every good  
 felawe! 1385  
 Wher rydestow under this grene shawe?'  
 Seyde this yeman, 'wiltow fer to day?'  
 This Somnour him answerde, and seyde,  
 'nay;  
 Heer faste by,' quod he, 'is myn entente  
 To ryden, for to reysen up a rente 1390

That longeth to my lordes duëtee.  
 'Artow thanne a bailly?' 'Ye!' quod  
 he.  
 He dorste nat, for verray filthe and shame,  
 Seye that he was a somnour, for the name.  
 'Depardieux,' quod this yeman, 'dere  
 brother, 1395  
 Thou art a bailly, and I am another.  
 I am unknowen as in this contree;  
 Of thyn aqueyntance I wolde praye thee,  
 And eek of brotherhede, if that yow leste.  
 I have gold and silver in my cheste; 1400  
 If that thee happe to comen in our  
 shyre,  
 Al shal be thyn, right as thou wolt desyre.'  
 'Grantmercy,' quod this Somnour, 'by  
 my feith!'  
 Everich in otheres hand his trouthe leith,  
 For to be sworne bretheren til they  
 deye. 1405  
 In daliance they ryden forth hir weye.  
 This Somnour, which that was as ful of  
 Iangles,  
 As ful of venim been these wariangles,  
 And ever enquering up-on every thing,  
 'Brother,' quod he, 'where is now your  
 dwelling, 1410  
 Another day if that I sholde yow seche?'  
 This yeman him answerde in softe  
 speche,  
 'Brother,' quod he, 'fer in the north con-  
 tree,  
 Wher, as I hope, som-tyme I shal thee  
 see.  
 Er we departe, I shal thee so wel  
 wisse, 1415  
 That of myn hous ne shaltow never misse.'  
 'Now, brother,' quod this Somnour, 'I  
 yow preye,  
 Teche me, whyl that we ryden by the  
 weye,  
 Sin that ye been a baillif as am I,  
 Som subtiltee, and tel me feithfully 1420  
 In myn offyce how I may most winne;  
 And spareth nat for conscience ne sinne,  
 But as my brother tel me, how do ye?'  
 'Now, by my trouthe, brother dere,'  
 seyde he,  
 'As I shal tellen thee a feithful tale, 1425  
 My wages been ful streite and ful smale.  
 My lord is hard to me and daungerous,  
 And myn offyce is ful laborous;  
 And therefore by extorcions I live.

For sothe, I take al that men wol me  
yive; 1430

Algate, by sleyghte or by violence,  
Fro yeer to yeer I winne al my dispence.  
I can no bettre telle feithfully.'

'Now, certes,' quod this Somnour, 'so  
fare I;

I spare nat to taken, god it woot, 1435  
But-if it be to hevy or to hoot.

What I my gete in conseil prively,  
No maner conscience of that have I;  
Nere myn extorcioun, I mighte nat liven,  
Ne of swiche Iapes wol I nat be  
shriven. 1440

Stomak ne conscience ne knowe I noon;  
I shrewe thise shrifte-fadres everichoon.

Wel be we met, by god and by seint Iame!  
But, leve brother, tel me than thy name,'

Quod this Somnour; and in this mene-  
whyle, 1445

This yeman gan a litel for to smyle.  
'Brother,' quod he, 'wiltow that I thee  
telle?

I am a feend, my dwelling is in helle.  
And here I ryde about my purchasing,  
To wite wher men wolde yeve me any  
thing. 1450

My purchas is theeffect of al my rente.  
Loke how thou rydest for the same en-  
tente,

To winne good, thou rekkest never how;  
Right so fare I, for ryde wolde I now  
Un-to the worldes ende for a preye.' 1455

'A,' quod this Somnour, '*benedicite*,  
what sey ye?

I wende ye were a yeman trewely.  
Ye han a mannes shap as wel as I;  
Han ye figure than determinat  
In helle, ther ye been in your estat?' 1460

'Nay, certainly,' quod he, 'ther have  
we noon;

But whan us lyketh, we can take us oon,  
Or elles make yow seme we ben shape  
Som-tyme lyk a man, or lyk an ape;  
Or lyk an angel can I ryde or go. 1465

It is no wonder thing thogh it be so;  
A lousy Iogelour can deceyve thee,  
And pardee, yet can I more craft than he.'

'Why,' quod the Somnour, 'ryde ye  
thanne or goon 1469

In sondry shap, and nat alwey in oon?'

'For we,' quod he, 'wol us swich formes  
make

As most able is our preyes for to take.'

'What maketh yow to han al this  
labour?'

'Ful many a cause, leve sir Somnour,'  
Seyde this feend, 'but alle thing hath  
tyme. 1475

The day is short, and it is passed pryme,  
And yet ne wan I no-thing in this day.

I wol entende to winnen, if I may,  
And nat entende our wittes to declare.

For, brother myn, thy wit is al to bare. 1480  
To understonde, al-though I tolde hem thee.

But, for thou axest why labouren we;  
For, som-tyme, we ben goddes instru-  
ments,

And menes to don his comandements,  
Whan that him list, up-on his creatures,

In divers art and in divers figures. 1486  
With-outen him we have no might, cer-  
tayne,

If that him list to stonden ther-agayn.  
And som-tyme, at our prayere, han we  
leve

Only the body and nat the soule greve;  
Witnessse on Iob, whom that we diden  
wo. 1491

And som-tyme han we might of bothe two,  
This is to seyn, of soule and body eke.

And somtyme be we suffred for to seke  
Up-on a man, and doon his soule un-  
reste, 1495

And nat his body, and al is for the beste.  
Whan he withstandeth our temptacioun,

It is a cause of his savacioun;  
Al-be-it that it was nat our entente

He sholde be sauf, but that we wolde  
him hente. 1500

And som-tyme be we servant un-to man,  
As to the erchebisshop Seint Dunstan,  
And to the apostles servant eek was I.'

'Yet tel me,' quod the Somnour, 'feith-  
fully,

Make ye yow newe bodies thus alway 1505  
Of elements?' the feend answerde, 'nay;

Som-tyme we feyne, and som-tyme we  
aryse

With dede bodies in ful sondry wyse,  
And speke as renably and faire and wel

As to the Phitonissa dide Samuel. 1510  
And yet wol som men seye it was nat he;

I do no fors of your divinitee.  
But o thing warne I thee, I wol nat Iape,  
Thou wolt algates wite how we ben shape;

Thou shalt her-afterward, my brother  
dere, 1515  
Com ther thee nedeth nat of me to lere.  
For thou shalt by thyn owene experience  
Conne in a chy-er rede of this sentence  
Bet than Virgyle, whyl he was on lyve,  
Or Dant also; now lat us ryde blyve. 1520  
For I wol holde companye with thee  
Til it be so, that thou forsake me.'

'Nay,' quod this Somnour, 'that shal  
nat biteye;

I am a yeman, knownen is ful wyde;  
My trouthe wol I holde as in this cas. 1525  
For though thou were the devel Sathanas,  
My trouthe wol I holde to my brother,  
As I am sworn, and ech of us til other  
For to be trewe brother in this cas;  
And bothe we goon abouten our purchas.  
Tak thou thy part, what that men wol  
thee yive, 1531

And I shal myn; thus may we bothe live.  
And if that any of us have more than  
other,

Lat him be trewe, and parte it with his  
brother.'

'I graunte,' quod the devel, 'by my  
fey.' 1535

And with that word they ryden forth hir  
wey.

And right at the entring of the tounes  
ende,

To which this Somnour shoop him for to  
wende,

They saugh a cart, that charged was with  
hey,

Which that a carter droof forth in his  
wey. 1540

Deep was the wey, for which the carte  
stood.

The carter smoot, and cryde, as he were  
wood,

'Hayt, Brok! hayt, Scot! what spare ye  
for the stones?

The feend,' quod he, 'yow fecche body  
and bones,

As ferforthly as ever were we foled! 1545  
So mucche wo as I have with yow tholed!

The devel have al, bothe hors and cart  
and hey!'

This Somnour seyde, 'heer shal we  
have a pley;'

And near the feend he drough, as nought  
ne were,

Ful prively, and rouned in his ere: 1550  
'Herkne, my brother, herkne, by thy  
feith;

Herestow nat how that the carter seith?  
Hent it anon, for he hath yeve it thee,  
Bothe hey and cart, and eek hise caples  
three.'

'Nay,' quod the devel, 'god wot, never  
a deel; 1555

It is nat his entente, trust me weel.  
Axe him thy-self, if thou nat trowest me,  
Or elles stint a while, and thou shalt  
see.'

This carter thakketh his hors upon the  
croupe,

And they bigonne drawn and to-stoupe;  
'Heyt, now!' quod he, 'ther Iesu Crist  
yow blesse, 1561

And al his handwerk, bothe more and  
lesse!

That was wel twight, myn owene lyard  
boy!

I pray god save thee and sēynt Loy!  
Now is my cart out of the slow, pardee!'

'Lo! brother,' quod the feend, 'what  
tolde I thee? 1566

Heer may ye see, myn owene dere brother,  
The carl spak oo thing, but he thoghte  
another.

Lat us go forth abouten our viage;  
Heer winne I no-thing up-on cariage.'

Whan that they comen som-what out  
of toun, 1571

This Somnour to his brother gan to  
roune,

'Brother,' quod he, 'heer woneth an old  
rebekke,

That hadde almost as lief to lese hir  
nekke

As for to yeve a peny of hir good. 1575  
I wol han twelf pens, though that she be  
wood,

Or I wol sompne hir un-to our offyce;  
And yet, god woot, of hir knowe I no  
vyce.

But for thou canst nat, as in this contree,  
Winne thy cost, tak heer ensample of  
me.' 1580

This Somnour clappeth at the widwes  
gate.

'Com out,' quod he, 'thou olde viritrate!  
I trowe thou hast som frere or preest with  
thee!'

'Who clappeth?' seyde this widwe,  
'*benedicite!*

God save you, sire, what is your swete  
wille?' 1585

'I have,' quod he, 'of somonce here a  
bille;

Up deyne of cursing, loke that thou be  
To-morn bifore the erchedeknes knee  
Tenswere to the court of certeyn thinges.'

'Woe, lord,' quod she, 'Crist Iesu, king  
of kinges, 1590

So wisely helpe me, as I ne may.  
I have been syk, and that ful many a day.  
I may nat go so fer,' quod she, 'ne ryde,  
But I be deed, so priketh it in my syde.  
May I nat axe a libel, sir Somnour, 1595  
And answer there, by my procutour,  
To swich thing as men wol opposen me?'

'Yis,' quod this Somnour, 'pay anon,  
lat se,

Twelf pens to me, and I wol thee acqyute.  
I shall no profit han ther-by but lyte; 1600  
My maister hath the profit, and nat I.  
Com of, and lat me ryden hastily;

Yif me twelf pens, I may no lenger tarie.'

'Twelf pens,' quod she, 'now lady  
Seinte Marie

So wisely help me out of care and sinne,  
This wyde world thogh that I sholde  
winne, 1606

Ne have I nat twelf pens with-inne myn  
hold.

Ye knowen wel that I am povre and old;  
Kythe your almesse on me povre wrecche.'

'Nay than,' quod he, 'the foule feend  
me fecche 1610

If I thexcuse, though thou shul be spilt!'

'Alas,' quod she, 'god woot, I have no  
gilt.'

'Pay me,' quod he, 'or by the swete  
seinte Anne,

As I wol bere away thy newe panne  
For dette, which that thou owest me of  
old, 1615

Whan that thou madest thyn housbond  
cokewold,

I payde at hoom for thy correccioun.'

'Thou lixt,' quod she, 'by my sava-  
cioun!

Ne was I never er now, widwe ne wyf,  
Somoned un-to your court in al my lyf;  
Ne never I nas but of my body trewe! 1621  
Un-to the devel blak and rough of hewe

Yeve I thy body and my panne also!'

And whan the devel herde hir cursen so  
Up-on hir knees, he seyde in this man-  
ere, 1625

'Now Mabely, myn owene moder dere,  
Is this your wil in earnest, that ye seye?'

'The devel,' quod she, 'so fecche him  
er he deye,

And panne and al, but he wol him re-  
pente!'

'Nay, olde stot, that is nat myn en-  
tente,' 1630

Quod this Somnour, 'for to repente me,  
For any thing that I have had of thee;  
I wolde I hadde thy smok and every  
clooth!'

'Now, brother,' quod the devel, 'be  
nat wrooth;

Thy body and this panne ben myne by  
right. 1635

Thou shalt with me to helle yet to-night,  
Where thou shalt knowen of our pri-  
vetee

More than a maister of divinitee:'

And with that word this foule feend him  
hente; 1639

Body and soule, he with the devel wente  
Wher-as that somnours han hir heri-  
tage.

And god, that maked after his image  
Mankinde, save and gyde us alle and  
some;

And leve this Somnour good man to  
bicome!

Lordinges, I coude han told yow, quod  
this Frere, 1645

Hadde I leyser for this Somnour here,  
After the text of Crist [and] Poul and  
Iohn,

And of our othere doctours many oon,  
Swiche peynes, that your hertes mighte  
agryse,

Al-be-it so, no tonge may devyse, 1650  
Thogh that I mighte a thousand winter  
telle,

The peyne of thilke cursed hous of  
helle.

But, for to kepe us fro that cursed place,  
Waketh, and preyeth Iesu for his grace  
So kepe us fro the temptour Sathanas.  
Herketh this word, beth war as in this  
cas; 1656

The leoun sit in his await alway

To slee the innocent, if that he may.  
 Disposeth ay your hertes to withstonde  
 The feend, that yow wolde make thral  
 and bonde. 1660  
 He may nat tempten yow over your  
 might;

For Crist wol be your champion and  
 knight.  
 And prayeth that thise Somnours hem  
 repente  
 Of hir misdedes, er that the feend hem  
 hente. 1664

*Here endeth the Freres tale.*

## THE SOMNOUR'S PROLOGUE.

### *The prologe of the Somnours Tale.*

THIS Somnour in his stiropes hye stood;  
 Up-on this Frere his herte was so wood,  
 That lyk an aspen leef he quook for yre.  
 'Lordinges,' quod he, 'but o thing I  
 desyre;  
 I yow biseke that, of your curteisye,  
 Sin ye han herd this false Frere lye, 1670  
 As suffereth me I may my tale telle!  
 This Frere bosteth that he knoweth  
 helle,  
 And god it woot, that it is litel wonder;  
 Freres and feendes been but lyte a-sonder.  
 For pardee, ye han ofte tyme herd  
 telle, 1675  
 How that a frere ravished was to helle  
 In spirit ones by a visioun;  
 And as an angel ladde him up and down,  
 To shewen him the peynes that ther  
 were,  
 In al the place saugh he nat a frere; 1680  
 Of other folk he saugh y-nowe in wo.  
 Un-to this angel spak the frere tho:  
 "Now, sir," quod he, "han freres  
 swich a grace  
 That noon of hem shal come to this  
 place?"  
 "Yis," quod this angel, "many a mil-  
 lioun!" 1685  
 And un-to Sathanas he ladde him down.

"And now hath Sathanas," seith he, "a  
 tayl  
 Brodder than of a carrik is the sayl.  
 Hold up thy tayl, thou Sathanas!" quod  
 he,  
 "Shewe forth thyn ers, and lat the frere  
 see 1690  
 Wher is the nest of freres in this place!"  
 And, er that half a furlong-vey of  
 space,  
 Right so as bees out swarmen from an  
 hyve,  
 Out of the develes ers ther gonne dryve  
 Twenty thousand freres in a route, 1695  
 And thurgh-out helle swarmeden aboute;  
 And comen agayn, as faste as they may  
 gon,  
 And in his ers they crepten everichon.  
 He clapte his tayl agayn, and lay ful  
 stille.  
 This frere, whan he loked hadde his  
 fille 1700  
 Upon the torments of this sory place,  
 His spirit god restored of his grace  
 Un-to his body agayn, and he awook;  
 But natheles, for fere yet he quook,  
 So was the develes ers ay in his minde,  
 That is his heritage of verray kinde. 1706  
 God save yow alle, save this cursed  
 Frere;  
 My prologe wol I ende in this manere.'

*Here endeth the Prologe of the Somnours Tale.*

## THE SOMNOURS TALE.

*Here biginneth the Somonour his Tale.*

LORDINGES, ther is in Yorkshire, as I  
gesse, 1709

A mersshy contree called Holdernesse,  
In which ther wente a limitour aboute,  
To preche, and eek to begge, it is no  
doute.

And so bifel, that on a day this frere  
Had preched at a chirche in his manere,  
And specially, aboven every thing, 1715  
Excited he the peple in his preching,

To trentals, and to yeve, for goddes sake,  
Wher-with men mighten holy houses  
make,

Ther as divyne service is honoured,  
Nat ther as it is wasted and devoured, 1720  
Ne ther it nedeth nat for to be yive,  
As to possessioners, that mowen live,  
Thanked be god, in wele and habun-  
daunce.

'Trentals,' seyde he, 'deliveren fro pen-  
aunce 1724

Hir freendes soules, as wel olde as yonge,  
Ye, whan that they been hastily y-songe;  
Nat for to holde a preest Ioly and gay,  
He singeth nat but o masse in a day;  
Delivereth out,' quod he, 'anon the  
soules;

Ful hard it is with fleshhook or with  
oules 1730

To been y-clawed, or to brenne or bake;  
Now spede yow hastily, for Cristes sake.'  
And whan this frere had seyde al his en-  
tente,

With *qui cum patre* forth his wey he  
wente.

Whan folk in chirche had yeve him  
what hem leste, 1735

He wente his wey, no lenger wolde he  
reste,

With scrippe and tipped staf, y-tukked  
hye;

In every hous he gan to poure and pryde,  
And beggeth mele, and chese, or elles  
corn.

His felawe hadde a staf tipped with  
horn, 1740

A peyre of tables al of yvory,  
And a poyntel polished fetisly,  
And wroot the names alwey, as he stood,  
Of alle folk that yaf him any good  
Ascaunces that he wolde for hem  
preye. 1745

'Yeve us a bussel whete, malt, or reye,  
A goddes kechil, or a trip of chese,  
Or elles what yow list, we may nat  
chese;

A goddes halfpenny or a masse-penny,  
Or yeve us of your brawn, if ye have  
eny; 1750

A dagon of your blanket, leve dame,  
Our suster dere, lo! here I write your  
name;

Bacon or beef, or swich thing as ye finde.  
A sturdy harlot wente ay hem bihinde,  
That was hir hostes man, and bar a  
sak, 1755

And what men yaf hem, leyde it on his  
bak.

And whan that he was out at dore anon,  
He planed away the names everichon  
That he biforn had writen in his tables;  
He served hem with nyfles and with  
fables. 1760

'Nay, ther thou lixt, thou Somnour,'  
quod the Frere.

'Pees,' quod our Host, 'for Cristes  
moder dere;

Tel forth thy tale and spare it nat at al.'  
So thryve I, quod this Somnour, so I  
shall.—

So longe he wente hous by hous, til  
he 1765

Cam til an hous ther he was wont to be  
Refreshed more than in an hundred  
placis.

Sik lay the gode man, whos that the  
place is;

Bedrede up-on a couche lowe he lay.  
'*Deus hic,*' quod he, 'O Thomas, freend,  
good day,' 1770

Seyde this frere curteisly and softe.  
'Thomas,' quod he, 'god yelde yow! ful  
ofte

Have I up-on this bench faren ful weel.



Here have I eten many a mery meel';  
And fro the bench he droof away the  
cat, 1775

And leyde adoun his potente and his  
hat,

And eek his scrippe, and sette him softe  
adoun.

His felawe was go walked in-to toun,  
Forth with his knave, into that hostelrye  
Wher-as he shoop him thilke night to  
lye. 1780

'O dere maister,' quod this syke man,  
'How han he fare sith that March bigan?  
I saugh yow noght this fourtenight or  
more.'

'God woot,' quod he, 'laboured have I  
ful sore;

And specially, for thy savacioun 1785  
Have I seyde many a precious orisoun

And for our othere frendes, god hem  
blesse!

I have to-day been at your chirche at  
messe,

And seyde a sermon after my simple wit,  
Nat al after the text of holy writ; 1790

For it is hard to yow, as I suppose,  
And therefore wol I teche yow al the  
glose.

Glosinge is a glorious thing, certeyn,  
For lettre sleeth, so as we clerkes seyn.

Ther have I taught hem to be charita-  
ble, 1795

And spende hir good ther it is resonable,  
And ther I saugh our dame; a! wher is  
she?'

'Yond in the yerd I trowe that she be,'  
Seyde this man, 'and she wol come anon.'

'Ey, maister! wel-come be ye, by seint  
Iohn!' 1800

Seyde this wyf, 'how fare ye hertely?'

The frere aryseth up ful curteisly,  
And hir embraceth in his armes narwe,  
And kiste hir swete, and chirketh as a  
sparwe

With his lippes: 'dame,' quod he, 'right  
weel, 1805

As he that is your servant every deel.  
Thanked be god, that yow yaf soule and  
lyf,

Yet saugh I nat this day so fair a wyf  
In al the chirche, god so save me!'

'Ye, god amende defautes, sir,' quod  
she, 1810

'Algates wel-come be ye, by my fey!'

'Graunt mercy dame, this have I founde  
alwey.

But of your grete goodnesse, by your leve,  
I wolde prey yow that ye nat yow  
greve,

I wol with Thomas speke a litel throwe.  
These curats been ful necligent and  
slove 1816

To grope tendrely a conscience.  
In shrift, in preching is my diligence,  
And studie in Petres wordes, and in  
Poules.

I walke, and fische Cristen mennes  
soules, 1820

To yelden Iesu Crist his propre rente;  
To sprede his word is set al myn en-  
tente.'

'Now, by your leve, o dere sir,' quod  
she,

'Chydeh him weel, for seinte Trinitee.  
He is as angry as a pissemyre, 1825

Though that he have al that he can  
desyre.

Though I him wrye a-night and make  
him warm,

And on hym leye my leg outhur myn  
arm,

He groneth lyk our boor, lyth in our sty.  
Other desport right noon of him have I;

I may nat plese him in no maner  
cas.' 1831

'O Thomas! *Ie vous dy*, Thomas!  
Thomas!

This maketh the feend, this moste ben  
amended.

Ire is a thing that hye god defended  
And ther-of wol I speke a word or  
two.' 1835

'Now maister,' quod the wyf, 'er that  
I go,

What wol ye dyne? I wol go ther-  
aboute.'

'Now dame,' quod he, '*Ie vous dy*  
*sanz doute*,

Have I nat of a capon but the livere  
And of your softe breed nat but a  
shivere, 1840

And after that a rosted pigges heed,  
(But that I nolde no beest for me were  
deed),

Thanne hadde I with yow hoomly suffis-  
aunce.

I am a man of litel sustenance. 1844  
 My spirit hath his fostring in the Bible.  
 The body is ay so redy and penyble  
 To wake, that my stomak is destroyed.  
 I prey yow, dame, ye be nat anoyed,  
 Though I so frendly yow my conseil  
 shewe;  
 By god, I wolde nat telle it but a fewe.'  
 'Now, sir,' quod she, 'but o word er  
 I go; 1851  
 My child is deed with-inne thise wykes  
 two,  
 Sone after that ye wente out of this  
 toun.'  
 'His deeth saugh I by revelacioun,'  
 Seith this frere, 'at hoom in our dor-  
 tour. 1855  
 I dar wel seyn that, er that half an hour  
 After his deeth, I saugh him born to  
 blisse  
 In myn avisioun, so god me wisse!  
 So dide our sexteyn and our fermerer,  
 That han been trewe freres fifty yeer;  
 They may now, god be thanked of his  
 lone, 1861  
 Maken hir Iubilee and walke allone.  
 And up I roos, and al our covent eke,  
 With many a tere triking on my cheke,  
 Withouten noyse or clateringe of belles;  
*Te deum* was our song and no-thing  
 elles, 1866  
 Save that to Crist I seyde an orisoun,  
 Thankinge him of his revelacioun.  
 For sir and dame, trusteth me right weel,  
 Our orisons been more effectueel, 1870  
 And more we seen of Cristes secree  
 thinges  
 Than burel folk, al-though they weren  
 kinges.  
 We live in povert and in abstinence,  
 And burel folk in richesse and despence  
 Of mete and drinke, and in hir foul  
 delyt. 1875  
 We han this worldes lust al in despyt.  
 Lazar and Dives liveden diversly,  
 And diverse guerdon hadden they ther-  
 by.  
 Who-so wol preye, he moot faste and be  
 clene,  
 And fatte his soule and make his body  
 lene. 1880  
 We fare as seith thapostle; cloth and  
 fode

Suffysen us, though they be nat ful gode.  
 The clenness and the fastinge of us  
 freres  
 Maketh that Crist accepteth our preyeres.  
 Lo, Moyses fourty dayes and fourty  
 night 1885  
 Fasted, er that the heighe god of might  
 Spak with him in the mountain of Sinay.  
 With empty wombe, fastinge many a  
 day,  
 Receyved he the lawe that was writen  
 With goddess finger; and Elie, wel ye  
 witen, 1890  
 In mount Oreb, er he hadde any speche  
 With hye god, that is our lyves leche,  
 He fasted longe and was in contem-  
 plaunce.  
 Aaron, that hadde the temple in gov-  
 ernance, 1894  
 And eek the othere preestes everichon,  
 In-to the temple whan they sholde gon  
 To preye for the peple, and do servyse,  
 They nolden drinken, in no maner wyse,  
 No drinke, which that mighte hem  
 dronke make,  
 But there in abstinence preye and  
 wake 1900  
 Lest that they deyden; tak heed what I  
 seye.  
 But they be sobre that for the peple  
 preye,  
 War that I seye, — namore! for it suffys-  
 eth.  
 Our lord Iesu, as holy writ devyseth,  
 Yaf us ensample of fastinge and prey-  
 eres. 1905  
 Therfor we mendinants, we sely freres,  
 Been wedded to povert and continence,  
 To charitee, humblesse, and abstinence,  
 To persecucion for rightwisnesse,  
 To wepinge, misericorde, and clen-  
 nesse. 1910  
 And therfor may ye see that our prey-  
 eres —  
 I speke of us, we mendinants, we  
 freres —  
 Ben to the hye god more acceptable  
 Than youres, with your festes at the  
 table.  
 Fro Paradys, first, if I shal nat lye, 1915  
 Was man out chaced for his glotonye;  
 And chaast was man in Paradys, cer-  
 teyn.

But herkne now, Thomas, what I shall  
seyn.  
I ne have no text of it, as I suppose,  
But I shall finde it in a maner glose, 1920  
That specially our swete lord Iesus  
Spak this by freres, whan he seyde thus:  
"Blessed be they that povre in spirit  
been."  
And so forth al the gospel may ye seen,  
Wher it be lyker our professioun, 1925  
Or hirs that swimmen in possessioun.  
Fy on hir pompe and on hir glotonye!  
And for hir lewednesse I hem diffye.  
Me thinketh they ben lyk Iovinian,  
Fat as a whale, and walkinge as a  
swan; 1930  
Al vinolent as botel in the spence.  
Hir preyer is of ful gret reverence;  
Whan they for soules seye the psalm of  
Davit,  
Lo, "buf!" they seye "*cor meum eruc-  
tavit!*"  
Who folweth Cristes gospel and his  
fore, 1935  
But we that humble been and chast and  
pore,  
Werkers of goddes word, not auditours?  
Therefore, right as an hauk up, at a sours,  
Up springeth in-to their, right so prayeres  
Of charitable and chaste bisy freres 1940  
Maken hir sours to goddes eres two.  
Thomas! Thomas! so mote I ryde or  
go,  
And by that lord that clepid is seint  
Yve,  
Nere thou our brother, sholdestou nat  
thryve!  
In our chapitre praye we day and  
night 1945  
To Crist, that he thee sende hele and  
might,  
Thy body for to welden hastily.'  
'God woot,' quod he, 'no-thing ther-of  
fele I;  
As help me Crist, as I, in fewe yeres,  
Han spended, up-on dyvers maner  
freres, 1950  
Ful many a pound; yet fare I never the  
bet.  
Certeyn, my good have I almost biscet.  
Farwel, my god! for it is al ago!'  
The frere answerde, 'O Thomas,  
dostow so?

What nedeth yow diverse freres  
seche? 1955  
What nedeth him that hath a parfit  
leche  
To sechen othere leches in the toun?  
Your inconstance is your confusioun.  
Holde ye than me, or elles our covent,  
To praye for yow ben insufficient? 1960  
Thomas, that Iape nis nat worth a myte;  
Your maladye is for we han to lyte.  
"A! yif that covent half a quarter  
otes!"  
"A! yif that covent four and twenty  
grotes!"  
"A! yif that frere a peny, and lat him  
go!" 1965  
Nay, nay, Thomas! it may no-thing be  
so.  
What is a ferthing worth parted in  
twelve?  
Lo, ech thing that is oned in him-selve  
Is more strong than whan it is to-scat-  
tered.  
Thomas, of me thou shalt nat been y-  
flatered; 1970  
Thou woldest han our labour al for  
nought.  
The hye god, that al this world hath  
wrought,  
Seith that the werkman worthy is his  
hyre.  
Thomas! nought of your tresor I desyre  
As for my-self, but that al our covent  
To preye for yow is ay so diligent, 1976  
And for to builden Cristes owene chirche.  
Thomas! if ye wol lernen for to wirche,  
Of buildinge up of chirches may ye  
finde  
If it be good, in Thomas lyf of  
Inde. 1980  
Ye lye heer, ful of anger and of yre,  
With which the devel set your herte  
a-fyre,  
And chyden heer this sely innocent,  
Your wyf, that is so meke and pacient.  
And therfor, Thomas, trowe me if thee  
leste, 1985  
Ne stryve nat with thy wyf, as for thy  
beste;  
And ber this word away now, by thy  
feith,  
Touchinge this thing, lo what the wyse  
seith:

"With-in thyn hous ne be thou no  
leoun ;

To thy subgits do noon oppres-  
sion ; 1990

Ne make thyne aqueyntances nat to  
flee."

And Thomas, yet eft-sones I charge thee,  
Be war from hir that in thy bosom  
slepeth ;

War fro the serpent that so slyly crepeth  
Under the gras, and stingeth sub-  
tilly. 1995

Be war, my sone, and herkne paciently,  
That twenty thousand men han lost hir  
lyves,

For stryving with hir lemmans and hir  
wyves.

Now sith ye han so holy and meke a  
wyf,

What nedeth yow, Thomas, to maken  
stryf ? 2000

Ther nis, y-wis, no serpent so cruel,  
Whan man tret on his tayl, ne half so  
fel,

As woman is, whan she hath caught an  
ire ;

Vengeance is thanne al that they desyre.  
Ire is a sinne, oon of the grete of  
sevene, 2005

Abhominable vn-to the god of hevене ;  
And to him-self it is destruccion.

This every lewed viker or person  
Can seye, how Ire engendreth homicyde.  
Ire is, in sooth, executour of pryde. 2010

I coude of Ire seye so muche sorwe,  
My tale sholde laste til to-morwe.

And therfor preye I god bothe day and  
night,

An irous man, god sende him litel might !  
It is greet harm and, certes, gret pitee,  
To sette an irous man in heigh de-  
gree. 2016

Whilom ther was an irous potestat,  
As seith Senek, that, duringe his estaat,  
Up-on a day out riden knyghtes two,  
And as fortune wolde that it were so, 2020  
That oon of hem cam hoom, that other  
noght.

Anon the knight bifore the Iuge is broght,  
That seyde thus, 'thou hast thy felawe  
slayn,

For which I deme thee to the deeth, cer-  
tain.'

And to another knight comanded he, 2025  
'Go lede him to the deeth, I charge thee.'

And happed, as they wente by the weye  
Toward the place ther he sholde deye,  
The knight cam, which men wenden had  
be deed.

Thanne thoughte they, it was the beste  
reed, 2030

To lede hem bothe to the Iuge agayn.  
They seiden, 'lord, the knight ne hath  
nat slayn

His felawe; here he standeth hool alyve.'  
'Ye shul be deed,' quod he, 'so moot I  
thryve!

That is to seyn, bothe oon, and two, and  
three!' 2035

And to the firste knight right thus spak  
he,

'I dampned thee, thou most algate be  
deed.

And thou also most nedes lese thyn heed,  
For thou art cause why thy felawe deyth.'  
And to the thridde knight right thus he  
seyth, 2040

'Thou hast nat doon that I comanded  
thee.'

And thus he dide don sleen hem alle  
three.

Irous Cambyses was eek dronkelewe,  
And ay delyted him to been a shrewe.

And so bifel, a lord of his meynee 2045  
That lovede vertuuous moralitee,  
Seyde on a day bitwix hem two right  
thus:

'A lord is lost, if he be vicious;  
And dronkenesse is eek a foul record  
Of any man, and namely in a lord. 2050  
Ther is ful many an eye and many an ere  
Awaiting on a lord, and he noot where.  
For goddes love, drink more attemprely;  
Wyn waketh man to lesen wrecchedly  
His minde, and eek his limes everichon.'

'The revers shaltou se,' quod he,  
'anon; 2056

And preve it, by thyn owene experience,  
That wyn ne dooth to folk no swich  
offence.

Ther is no wyn bireveth me my might  
Of hand ne foot, ne of myn eyen sight' —  
And, for despyt, he drank ful muchel  
more 2061

An hondred part than he had doon bifore;  
And right anon, this irous cursed wrecche

Leet this knightes sone bifore him fecche,  
Comandinge him he sholde bifore him  
stonde. 2065

And sodeynly he took his bowe in honde,  
And up the streng he pulled to his ere,  
And with an arwe he slow the child right  
there :

'Now whether have I a siker hand or  
noon?'

Quod he, 'is al my might and minde  
agoon? 2070

Hath wyn bired me myn eyen sight?'  
What sholde I telle thanswere of the  
knight?

His sone was slayn, ther is na-more to  
seye.

Beth war therfor with lordes how ye  
pleye.

Singeth *Placebo*, and I shal, if I can, 2075  
But if it be un-to a povre man.

To a povre man men sholde hise vyces  
telle,

But nat to a lord, thogh he sholde go to  
helle.

Lo irous Cirus, thilke Percien,  
How he destroyed the river of Gysen, 2080  
For that an hors of his was dreynt ther-  
inne,

Whan that he wente Babiloigne to winne.  
He made that the river was so smal,  
That women mighte wade it over al.

Lo, what seyde he, that so wel teche can?  
"Ne be no felawe to an irous man, 2086  
Ne with no wood man walke by the weye,  
Lest thee repente;" ther is na-more to  
seye.

Now Thomas, leve brother, lef thyn ire;  
Thou shalt me finde as Iust as is a  
squire. 2090

Hold nat the develes knyf ay at thyn  
herte;

Thyn angre dooth thee al to sore smerte;  
But shewe to me al thy confessioun.'

'Nay,' quod the syke man, 'by Seint  
Simoun!

I have be shriven this day at my curat;  
I have him told al hoolly myn estat; 2096  
Nedeth na-more to speke of it,' seith he,  
'But if me list of myn humilitee.'

'Yif me thanne of thy gold, to make  
our cloistre,'

Quod he, 'for many a muscle and many  
an oistre, 2100

Whan other men han ben ful wel at eyse,  
Hath been our fode, our cloistre for to  
reyse.

And yet, god woot, unnethe the funde-  
ment

Parfourned is, ne of our pavement 2104  
Nis nat a tyle yet with-inne our wones;  
By god, we owen fourty pound for stones!  
Now help, Thomas, for him that harwed  
helle!

For elles moste we are bokes selle.  
And if ye lakke our predicacioun,  
Than gooth the world al to destruccioun.  
For who-so wolde us fro this world  
bireve, 2111

So god me save, Thomas, by your leve,  
He wolde bireve out of this world the  
sonne.

For who can teche and werchen as we  
conne?

And that is nat of litel tyme,' quod he;  
'But sith that Elie was, or Elisee, 2116  
Han freres been, that finde I of record,  
In charitee, y-thanked be our lord.

Now Thomas, help, for seinte charitee!'  
And doun anon he sette him on his  
knee. 2120

This syke man wex wel ny wood for  
ire;

He wolde that the frere had been on-fire  
With his false dissimulacioun.

'Swich thing as is in my possessioun,'  
Quod he, 'that may I yeven, and non  
other. 2125

Ye sey me thus, how that I am your  
brother?'

'Ye, certes,' quod the frere, 'trusteth  
weel;

I took our dame our lettre with our seel.'  
'Now wel,' quod he, 'and som-what  
shal I yive

Un-to your holy covent whyl I live, 2130  
And in thyn hand thou shalt it have  
anoon;

On this condicioun, and other noon,  
That thou departe it so, my dere brother,  
That every frere have also muche as other.  
This shaltou swere on thy professioun,  
With-ouen fraude or cavillacioun.' 2136

'I swere it,' quod this frere, 'upon my  
feith!'

And ther-with-al his hand in his he  
leith:

'Lo, heer my feith! in me shal be no lak.'

'Now thanne, put thyn hand down by my bak,' 2140

Seyde this man, 'and grope wel bihinde; Bynethe my buttoke ther shaltow finde A thing that I have hid in privetee.'

'A!' thoghte this frere, 'this shal go with me!'

And down his hand he launcheth to the clifte, 2145

In hope for to finde ther a yifte.

And whan this syke man felte this frere Aboute his tuwel grope there and here, Amidde his hand he leet the frere a fart. Ther nis no capul, drawinge in a cart, 2150 That mighte have lete a fart of swich a soun.

'The frere up stirte as doth a wood leoun:

'A! false cherl,' quod he, 'for goddes bones,

This hastow for despyt doon, for the nones!

Thou shalt abyge this fart, if that I may!'

His meyne, whiche that herden this affray, 2156

Cam lepinge in, and chaced out the frere;

And forth he gooth, with a ful angry chere,

And fette his felawe, ther-as lay his stoor. He looked as it were a wilde boor; 2160 He grinte with his teeth, so was he wrooth.

A sturdy pas down to the court he gooth, Wher-as ther woned a man of greet honour,

To whom that he was alwey confessour; This worthy man was lord of that village.

This frere cam, as he were in a rage, 2166 Wher-as this lord sat eting at his bord.

Unnethes mighte the frere speke a word, Til atte laste he seyde: 'god yow see!'

This lord gan loke, and seide, '*benedicite!*' 2170

What, frere Iohn, what maner world is this?

I see wel that som thing ther is amis. Ye loken as the wode were ful of thevis, Sit down anon, and tel me what your greef is,

And it shal be amended, if I may.' 2175

'I have,' quod he, 'had a despyt this day,

God yelde yow! adoun in your village, That in this world is noon so povre a page,

That he nolde have abhominacioun 2179 Of that I have receyved in your toun.

And yete ne greveth me no-thing so sore, As that this olde cherl, with lokkes here, Blasphemed hath our holy covent eke.'

'Now, maister,' quod this lord, 'I yow biseke.'

'No maister, sire,' quod he, 'but servitour, 2185

Thogh I have had in scole swich honour. God lyketh nat that "Raby" men us calle,

Neither in market ne in your large halle.'

'No fors,' quod he, 'but tel me al your grief.'

'Sire,' quod this frere, 'an odious meschief 2190

This day bitid is to myn ordre and me, And so *per consequens* to ech degree Of holy chirche, god amende it sone!'

'Sir,' quod the lord, 'ye woot what is to done.

Distempere yow noght, ye be my confessour; 2195

Ye been the salt of the erthe and the savour.

For goddes love your pacience ye holde; Tel me your grief:' and he anon him tolde,

As ye han herd biforn, ye woot wel what.

The lady of the hous ay stille sat, 2200 Til she had herd al what the frere seyde: 'Ey, goddes moder,' quod she, 'blisful mayde!

Is ther oght elles? telle me feithfully.'

'Madame,' quod he, 'how thinketh yow her-by?'

'How that me thinketh?' quod she; 'so god me speede, 2205

I seye, a cherl hath doon a cherles dede. What shold I seye? god lat him never thee!

His syke heed is ful of vanitee, I hold him in a maner frenesyce.'

'Madame,' quod he, 'by god I shal nat lye; 2210

But I on other weyes may be wreke, I shal diffame him over-al ther I speke,

This false blasphemour, that charged  
me  
To parte that wol nat departed be, 2214  
To every man y-liche, with meschaunce!  
The lord sat stille as he were in a  
traunce,  
And in his herte he rolled up and down,  
'How hadde this cherl imaginacioun  
To shewe swich a probleme to the frere?  
Never erst er now herde I of swich  
matere; 2220  
I trowe the devel putte it in his minde.  
In ars-metryke shal ther no man finde,  
Biforn this day, of swich a questioun.  
Who sholde make a demonstracioun,  
That every man sholde have y-liche his  
part 2225  
As of the soun or savour of a fart?  
O nyce proude cherl, I shrewe his face!  
'Lo, sires,' quod the lord, with harde  
grace,  
'Who ever herde of swich a thing er  
now?  
To every man y-lyke? tel me how? 2230  
It is an impossible, it may nat be!  
Ey, nyce cherl, god lete him never thee!  
The rumblinge of a fart, and every soun,  
Nis but of eir reverberacioun, 2234  
And ever it wasteth lyte and lyte awaye.  
Ther is no man can demen, by my fey,  
If that it were departed equally.  
What, lo, my cherl, lo, yet how shrewedly  
Un-to my confessour to-day he spak!  
I holde him certeyn a demoniak! 2240  
Now ete your mete, and lat the cherl go  
pleye,  
Lat him go hongre himself, a devel weye!  
Now stood the lordes squyer at the  
bord,  
That carf his mete, and herde, word by  
word,  
Of alle thinges of which I have yow  
sayd. 2245  
'My lord,' quod he, 'be ye nat yvel  
apayd;  
I coude telle, for a goune-clooth,  
To yow, sir frere, so ye be nat wrooth,  
How that this fart sholde even deled be  
Among your covent, if it lyked me.' 2250  
'Tel,' quod the lord, 'and thou shalt  
have anon  
A goune-cloth, by god and by Seint  
Iohn!'

'My lord,' quod he, 'whan that the  
weder is fair,  
With-outen wind or perturbinge of air,  
Lat bringe a cartwheel here in-to this  
halle, 2255  
But loke that it have his spokes alle.  
Twelf spokes hath a cartwheel comunly.  
And bring me than twelf freres, woot  
ye why?  
For thrittene is a covent, as I gesse.  
The confessour heer, for his worthinesse,  
Shal parfourn up the nombre of his  
covent. 2261  
Than shal they knele down, by oon  
assent,  
And to every spokes ende, in this  
manere,  
Ful sadly leye his nose shal a frere.  
Your noble confessour, ther god him  
save, 2265  
Shal holde his nose upright, under the  
nave.  
Than shal this cherl, with bely stif and  
tought  
As any labour, hider been y-brought;  
And sette him on the wheel right of  
this cart,  
Upon the nave, and make him lete a  
fart. 2270  
And ye shul seen, up peril of my lyf,  
By preve which that is demonstratif,  
That equally the soun of it wol wende,  
And eek the stink, un-to the spokes  
ende;  
Save that this worthy man, your con-  
fessour, 2275  
By-cause he is a man of greet honour,  
Shal have the firste fruit, as reson is;  
The noble usage of freres yet is this,  
The worthy men of him shul first be  
served; 2279  
And certainly, he hath it weel deserved.  
He hath to-day taught us so muchel  
good  
With preching in the pulpit ther he  
stood,  
That I may vouche-sauf, I sey for me,  
He hadde the firste smel of fartes three,  
And so wolde al his covent hardily; 2285  
He bereth him so faire and holily.'  
The lord, the lady, and ech man, save  
the frere,  
Seyde that Iankin spak, in this matere,

As wel as Euclide or [as] Ptholomee.  
 Touchinge this cherl, they seyde, sub-  
 tiltee 2290  
 And heigh wit made him speken as he  
 spak;

He nis no fool, ne no demoniak.  
 And Iankin hath y-wonne a newe  
 goun. —  
 My tale is doon; we been almost at  
 toune. 2294

*Here endeth the Somnours Tale.*

## GROUP E.

### THE CLERK'S PROLOGUE.

*Here folweth the Prologe of the Clerkes  
 Tale of Oxenford.*

'SIR clerk of Oxenford,' our hoste sayde,  
 'Ye ryde as coy and stille as dooth a  
 mayde,  
 Were newe spoused, sitting at the bord;  
 This day ne herde I of your tonge a word.  
 I trowe ye studie aboute som sophyme, 5  
 But Salomon seith, "every thing hath  
 tyme."

For goddes sake, as beth of better chere,  
 It is no tyme for to studien here.

Telle us som mery tale, by your fey;  
 For what man that is entred in a pley, 10  
 He nedes moot unto the pley assente.  
 But precheth nat, as freres doon in Lente,  
 To make us for our olde sinnes wepe,  
 Ne that thy tale make us nat to slepe.

Telle us som mery thing of aven-  
 tures; — 15

Your termes, your colours, and your fig-  
 ures,  
 Kepe hem in stoor til so be ye endyte  
 Heigh style, as whan that men to kinges  
 wryte.

Speketh so pleyn at this tyme, I yow  
 preye,

That we may understonde what ye seye.' 20

This worthy clerk benignely answerde,  
 'Hoste,' quod he, 'I am under your yerde;  
 Ye han of us as now the governaunce,  
 And therfor wol I do yow obeisaunce,  
 As fer as reson axeth, hardily. 25

I wol yow telle a tale which that I

Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,  
 As preved by his wordes and his werk.  
 He is now deed and nayled in his cheste,  
 I prey to god so yeve his soule reste! 30  
 Fraunceys Petrark, the laureat poete,  
 Highte this clerk, whos rethoryke sweete  
 Enlumined al Itaille of poetrye,  
 As Linian dide of philosophye  
 Or lawe, or other art particular; 35  
 But death, that wol nat suffre us dwellen  
 heer

But as it were a twinkling of an yë,  
 Hem bothe hath slayn, and alle shul we  
 dyë.

But forth to tellen of this worthy man,  
 That taught me this tale, as I bigan, 40  
 I seye that first with heigh style he en-  
 dyteth,

Er he the body of his tale wryteth,  
 A proheme, in the which discryveth he  
 Pemonde, and of Saluces the contree,  
 And speketh of Apennyn, the hilles hye, 45  
 That been the boundes of West Lum-  
 bardye,

And of Mount Vesulus in special,  
 Where as the Poo, out of a welle smal,  
 Taketh his firste springing and his sours,  
 That estward ay encresseth in his cours, 50  
 To Emelward, to Ferrare, and Venyse:  
 The which a long thing were to devyse.  
 And trewely, as to my Iugement,  
 Me thinketh it a thing impertinent,  
 Save that he wol conveyen his matere: 55  
 But this his tale, which that ye may  
 here.'



## THE CLERKES TALE.

*Here biginneth the Tale of the Clerk of Oxenford.*

THER is, at the west syde of Itaille,  
Doun at the rote of Vesulus the colde,  
A lusty playne, habundant of vitaille,  
Wher many a tour and toun thou mayst  
biholde, 60  
That founded were in tyme of fadres olde,  
And many another delitable sighte,  
And Saluces this noble contree sighte.

A markis whylom lord was of that londe,  
As were his worthy elders him bifore; 65  
And obeisant and redy to his honde  
Were alle his liges, bothe lasse and more.  
Thus in delyt he liveth, and hath don yore,  
Biloved and drad, thurgh favour of fortune,  
Bothe of his lordes and of his commune. 70

Therwith he was, to speke as of linage,  
The gentilleste y-born of Lumbardy,  
A fair persone, and strong, and yong of  
age,  
And ful of honour and of curteisye;  
Discreet y-nogh his contree for to gye, 75  
Save in somme thinges that he was to  
blame,  
And Walter was this yonge lordes name.

I blame him thus, that he considereth  
nogh  
In tyme cominge what mighte him bityde,  
But on his lust present was al his thoght, 80  
As for to hauke and hunte on every syde;  
Wel ny alle othere cures leet he slyde,  
And eek he nolde, and that was worst of  
alle,  
Wedde no wyf, for nogh that may bifalle.

Only that point his peple bar so sore, 85  
That flokmele on a day they to him wente,  
And oon of hem, that wysest was of lore,  
Or elles that the lord best wolde assente  
That he sholde telle him what his peple  
mente,  
Or elles coude he shewe wel swich mat-  
ere, 90  
He to the markis seyde as ye shul here.

'O noble markis, your humanitee  
Assureth us and yeveth us hardinesse,  
As ofte as tyme is of necessitee  
That we to yow mowe telle our hevi-  
nesse; 95  
Accepteth, lord, now for your gentillesse,  
That we with pitous herte un-to yow  
pleyne,  
And lete your eres nat my voys disdeyne.

Al have I nogh to done in this matere  
More than another man hath in this  
place, 100  
Yet for as muche as ye, my lord so dere,  
Han alwey shewed me favour and grace,  
I dar the better aske of yow a space  
Of audience, to shewen our requeste,  
And ye, my lord, to doon right as yow  
leste. 105

For certes, lord, so wel us lyketh yow  
And al your werk and ever han doon,  
that we  
Ne coude nat us self devysen how  
We mighte liven in more felicitee,  
Save o thing, lord, if it your wille be, 110  
That for to been a wedded man yow  
leste,  
Than were your peple in sovereyn hertes  
reste.

Boweth your nekke under that blisful yok  
Of soveraynetee, nogh of servyse,  
Which that men clepeth spousaille or  
wedlok; 115  
And thenketh, lord, among your thoghtes  
wyse,  
How that our dayes passe in sondry wyse;  
For though we slepe or wake, or rome,  
or ryde,  
Ay fleeth the tyme, it nil no man abyde.

And though your grene youthe floure as  
yit, 120  
In crepeth age alwey, as stille as stoon,  
And deeth manaceth every age, and smit  
In ech estaat, for ther escapeth noon:  
And al so certain as we knowe echoon  
That we shul deye, as uncerteyn we alle

Been of that day whan deeth shal on us  
falle. 126

Accepteth than of us the trewe entente,  
That never yet refuseden your heste,  
And we wol, lord, if that ye wol assente,  
Chese yow a wyf in short tyme, atte  
leste, 130

Born of the gentilleste and of the meste  
Of al this lond, so that it oghte seme  
Honour to god and yow, as we can deme.

Deliver us out of al this bisy drede,  
And tak a wyf, for hye goddes sake; 135  
For if it so bifelle, as god forbede,  
That thurgh your deeth your linage sholde  
slake,  
And that a straunge successour sholde  
take

Your heritage, o! wo were us alyve!  
Wherfor we pray you hastily to wyve.' 140

Hir meke preyere and hir pitous chere  
Made the markis herte han pitee.  
'Ye wol,' quod he, 'myn owene peple  
dere,  
To that I never erst thoghte streyne me.  
I me rejoysed of my libertee, 145  
That selde tyme is founde in mariage;  
Ther I was free, I moot been in servage.

But natheles I see your trewe entente,  
And truste upon your wit, and have don  
ay;  
Wherfor of my free wil I wol assente 150  
To wedde me, as sone as ever I may.  
But ther-as ye han profred me to-day  
To chese me a wyf, I yow relesse  
That choys, and prey yow of that profre  
cesse.

For god it woot, that children ofte been  
Unlyk her worthy eldres hem bifore; 156  
Bountee comth al of god, nat of the  
streen  
Of which they been engendred and  
y-bore;  
I truste in goddes bountee, and therefore  
My mariage and myn estaat and reste 160  
I him bitake; he may don as him leste.

Lat me alone in chesinge of my wyf,  
That charge up-on my bak I wol endure;

But I yow preye, and charge up-on your  
lyf,

That what wyf that I take, ye me assure  
To worshipe hir, whyl that hir lyf may  
dure, 166

In word and werk, bothe here and every-  
where,

As she an emperoures doghter were.

And forthermore, this shal ye swere, that  
ye

Agayn my choys shul neither grucche'ne  
stryve; 170

For sith I shal forgoon my libertee  
At your requeste, as ever moot I thryve,  
Ther as myn herte is set, ther wol I wyve;  
And but ye wole assente in swich manere,  
I prey yow, speketh na-more of this  
matere.' 175

With hertly wil they sworn, and assenten  
To al this thing, ther seyde no wight nay;  
Biseking him of grace, er that they  
wenten,

That he wolde graunten hem a certain  
day

Of his spousaille, as sone as ever he  
may; 180

For yet alwey the peple som-what dredde  
Lest that this markis no wyf wolde wedde.

He graunten hem a day, swich as him  
leste,

On which he wolde be wedded sikerly,  
And seyde, he dide al this at hir re-  
queste; 185

And they, with humble entente, buxomly,  
Knellinge up-on her knees ful reverently  
Him thanken alle, and thus they han an  
ende

Of hir entente, and hoom agayn they  
wende.

And heer-up-on he to his officeres 190  
Comaundeth for the feste to purveye,  
And to his privee knightes and squyeres  
Swich charge yaf, as him liste on hem leye;  
And they to his comandement obeye,  
And ech of hem doth al his diligence 195  
To doon un-to the feste reverence.

*Explicit prima pars.*

*Incipit secunda pars.*

Noght fer fro thilke paleys honourable  
 Ther-as this markis shoop his mariage,  
 Ther stood a throp, of site delitable,  
 In which that povre folk of that village  
 Hadden hir bestes and hir herbergage, 201  
 And of hir labour took hir sustenance  
 After that the erthe yaf hem habundance.

Amonges thise povre folk ther dwelte a  
 man

Which that was holden povrest of hem  
 alle; 205

But hye god som tyme senden can

His grace in-to a litel oxes stalle:

Ianacula men of that throp him calle.

A doghter hadde he, fair y-nogh to  
 sighte, 209

And Grisildis this yonge mayden highte.

But for to speke of vertuous beautee,  
 Than was she oon the faireste under  
 sonne;

For povreliche y-fostred up was she,

No likerous lust was thurgh hir herte  
 y-ronne; 214

Wel offer of the welle than of the tonne  
 She drank, and for she wolde vertu plesse,  
 She knew wel labour, but non ydel ese.

But thogh this mayde tendre were of age,  
 Yet in the brest of hir virginitee

Ther was enclosed rype and sad corage;

And in greet reverence and charitee 221

Hir olde povre fader fostred she;

A fewe sheep spinning on feeld she kepte,

She wolde noght been ydel til she slepte.

And whan she hoomward cam, she wolde  
 bringe 225

Wortes or othere herbes tymes ofte,

The whiche she shredde and seeth for  
 hir livinge,

And made hir bed ful harde and no-thing  
 softe;

And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf on-lofte

With everich obeisaunce and diligence

That child may doon to fadres reverence.

Up-on Grisilde, this povre creature, 232

Ful ofte sythe this markis sette his yē

As he on hunting rood paraventure;

And whan it fil that he mighte hir  
 espye, 235

He noght with wantoun lokyng of folye

His yē caste on hir, but in sad wyse

Up-on hir chere he wolde him ofte avyse,

Commending in his herte hir womman-  
 hede,

And eek hir vertu, passing any wight 240

Of so yong age, as wel in chere as dede.

For thogh the peple have no greet insight

In vertu, he considered ful right

Hir bountee, and disposed that he wolde

Wedde hir only, if ever he wedde

sholde. 245

The day of wedding cam, but no wight  
 can

Telle what womman that it sholde be;

For which merveille wondred many a  
 man,

And syden, whan they were in privetee,

‘Wol nat our lord yet leve his vanitee? 250

Wol he nat wedde? allas, allas the whyle!

Why wol he thus him-self and us bigyle?’

But natheles this markis hath don make

Of gemmes, set in gold and in asure,

Broches and ringes, for Grisildis sake, 255

And of hir clothing took he the mesure

By a mayde, lyk to hir stature,

And eek of othere ornamentes alle

That un-to swich a wedding sholde falle.

The tyme of undern of the same day 260

Approcheth, that this wedding sholde be;

And al the paleys put was in array,

Bothe halle and chambres, ech in his de-  
 gre;

Houses of office stuffed with plentee 264

Ther maystow seen of deynteous vitaille,

That may be founde, as fer as last Itaille.

This royal markis, richely arrayed,

Lordes and ladyes in his companye,

The whiche unto the feste were y-prayed,

And of his retenue the bachelrye, 270

With many a soun of sondry melodye,

Un-to the village, of the which I tolde,

In this array the righte wey han holde.

Grisilde of this, god woot, ful innocent,

That for hir shapen was al this array, 275

To fecchen water at a welle is went,  
And cometh hoom as sone as ever she  
may.

For wel she hadde herd seyde, that thilke  
day

The markis sholde wedde, and, if she  
mighte,

She wolde fayn han seyn som of that  
sighte. 280

She thoghte, 'I wol with othere maydens  
sonde,

That been my felawes, in our dore, and  
see

The markisesse, and therfor wol I fonde  
To doon at hoom, as sone as it may be,  
The labour which that longeth un-to me;  
And then I may at leysur hir biholde, 286  
If she this wey un-to the castel holde.'

And as she wolde over hir threshfold  
goon,

The markis cam and gan hir for to calle;  
And she sette down hir water-pot anon

Bisyde the threshfold, in an oxesstalle, 291  
And down up-on hir knees she gan to  
falle,

And with sad contenance kneleth stille  
Til she had herd what was the lordes  
wille.

This thoughtful markis spak un-to this  
mayde 295

Ful sobroly, and seyde in this manere,  
'Wher is your fader, Grisildis?' he sayde,

And she with reverence, in humble chere,  
Answerde, 'lord, he is al redy here.'

And in she gooth with-uten lenger lette,  
And to the markis she her fader fette. 301

He by the hond than took this olde man,  
And seyde thus, whan he him hadde  
asyde,

'Ianicula, I neither may ne can 304  
Lenger the plesance of myn herte hyde.

If that thou vouche-sauf, what-so bityde,  
Thy doghter wol I take, er that I wende,

As for my wyf, un-to hir lyves ende.

Thou lovest me, I woot it wel, certeyn,  
And art my feithful lige man y-bore; 310

And al that lyketh me, I dar wel seyn  
It lyketh thee, and specially therfore

Tel me that poynt that I have seyde bifore,  
If that thou wolt un-to that purpos drawe,  
To take me as for thy sone-in-lawe?' 315

This sodeyn cas this man astoned so,  
That reed he wex, abayst, and al quaking

He stood; unnethes seyde he wordes mo,  
But only thus: 'lord,' quod he, 'my will-

ing  
Is as ye wole, ne ayeines your lyking 320  
I wol no-thing; ye be my lord so dere;

Right as yow lust governeth this matere.'

'Yet wol I,' quod this markis softly,  
'That in thy chambre I and thou and she

Have a collacion, and wostow why? 325  
For I wol axe if it hir wille be

To be my wyf, and reule hir after me;  
And al this shal be doon in thy presence,

I wol noght speke out of thyn audience.'

And in the chambre whyl they were  
aboute 330

Hir tretis, which as ye shal after here,  
The peple cam un-to the hous with-

oute,  
And wondred hem in how honest manere  
And tentify she kepte hir fader dere.

But outerly Grisildis wondre mighte, 335  
For never erst ne saugh she swich a sighte.

No wonder is thogh that she were astoned  
To seen so greet a gest come in that

place;  
She never was to swiche gestes woned, 339  
For which she loked with ful pale face.

But shortly forth this tale for to chace,  
Thise arn the wordes that the markis

sayde  
To this benigne verray feithful mayde.

'Grisilde,' he seyde, 'ye shul wel under-  
stonde

It lyketh to your fader and to me 345  
That I yow wedde, and eek it may so

stonde,  
As I suppose, ye wol that it so be.  
But thisse demandes axe I first,' quod he,

'That, sith it shal be doon in hastif wyse,  
Wol ye assente, or elles yow avyse? 350

I seye this, be ye redy with good herte  
To al my lust, and that I frely may,

As me best thinketh, do yow laughe or  
 smerte,  
 And never ye to grucche it, night ne  
 day?  
 And eek whan I sey "ye," ne sey nat  
 "nay," 355  
 Neither by word ne frowning contenance;  
 Swer this, and here I swere our alliance.'

Wondring upon this word, quaking for  
 drede,  
 She seyde, 'lord, undigne and unworthy  
 Am I to thilke honour that ye me bede;  
 But as ye wol your-self, right so wol I. 361  
 And heer I swere that never willingly  
 In werk ne thought I nil yow disobeye,  
 For to be deed, though me were looth to  
 deye.'

'This is y-nogh, Grisilde myn!' quod  
 he. 365  
 And forth he gooth with a ful sobre  
 chere  
 Out at the dore, and after that cam she,  
 And to the peple he seyde in this manere,  
 'This is my wyf,' quod he, 'that standeth  
 here.  
 Honoureth hir, and loveth hir, I preye,  
 Who-so me loveth; ther is na-more to  
 seye.' 371

And for that no-thing of hir olde gere  
 She sholde bringe in-to his hous, he bad  
 That wommen sholde dispoilen hir right  
 there;  
 Of which these ladyes were nat right glad  
 To handle hir clothes wher-in she was  
 clad. 376  
 But natheles this mayde bright of hewe  
 Fro foot to heed they clothed han al  
 newe.

Hir heres han they kembd, that lay un-  
 tressed  
 Ful rudely, and with hir fingres smale 380  
 A corone on hir heed they han y-dressed,  
 And sette hir ful of nowches grete and  
 smale;  
 Of hir array what sholde I make a tale?  
 Unnethe the peple hir knew for hir fair-  
 nesse,  
 Whan she translated was in swich rich-  
 esse. 385

This markis hath hir-spoused with a ring  
 Broght for the same cause, and than hir  
 sette  
 Up-on an hors, snow-whyte and wel  
 ambling,  
 And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,  
 With Ioyful peple that hir ladde and  
 mette, 390  
 Conveyed hir, and thus the day they  
 spende  
 In revel, til the sonne gan descende.

And shortly forth this tale for to chace,  
 I seye that to this newe markissee  
 God hath swich favour sent hir of his  
 grace, 395  
 That it ne semed nat by lyknesse  
 That she was born and fed in rudenesse,  
 As in a cote or in an oxe-stalle,  
 But norished in an emperoures halle.

To every wight she woxen is so dere 400  
 And worshipful, that folk ther she was  
 bore  
 And from hir birthe knewe hir yeer by  
 yere,  
 Unnethe trowed they, but dorste han  
 swore  
 That to Ianicle, of which I spak bifore,  
 She doghter nas, for, as by coniecture,  
 Hem thoughte she was another creature.

For thogh that ever vertuuous was she,  
 She was encressed in swich excellence  
 Of thewes gode, y-set in heigh bountee,  
 And so discreet and fair of eloquence,  
 So benigne and so digne of reverence,  
 And coude so the peples herte embrace,  
 That ech hir lovede that loked on hir  
 face.

Noght only of Saluces in the toun  
 Publiced was the bountee of hir name,  
 But eek bisyde in many a regioun, 416  
 If oon seyde wel, another seyde the  
 same;  
 So spradde of hir heigh bountee the fame,  
 That men and wommen, as wel yonge as  
 olde,  
 Gon to Saluce, upon hir to biholde. 420

Thus Walter lowly, nay but royally,  
 Wedded with fortunat honestete,

In goddes pees liveth ful esily  
 At hoom, and outward grace y-nogh had  
 he; 424  
 And for he saugh that under low degree  
 Was ofte vertu hid, the peple him helde  
 A prudent man, and that is seyn ful  
 selde.

Nat only this Grisildis thurgh hir wit  
 Coude al the feet of wyfly hoomlinesse,  
 But eek, whan that the cas requyred it,  
 The commune profit coude she redresse.  
 Ther nas discord, rancour, ne heviness  
 In al that lond, that she ne coude apese,  
 And wysly bringe hem alle in reste and  
 ese.

Though that hir housbonde absent were  
 anoon, 435  
 If gentil men, or othere of hir contree  
 Were wrothe, she wolde bringen hem  
 atoon;  
 So wys and rype wordes hadde she,  
 And Iugements of so greet equitee,  
 That she from heven sent was as men  
 wende, 440  
 Peple to save and every wrong tamende.

Nat longe tyme after that this Grisild  
 Was wedded, she a doughter hath y-bore,  
 Al had hir lever have born a knave  
 child.  
 Glad was this markis and the folk ther-  
 fore; 445  
 For though a mayde child come al bifore,  
 She may unto a knave child atteyne  
 By lyklihed, sin she nis nat bareyne.

*Explicit secunda pars.*

*Incipit tercia pars.*

Ther fil, as it bifalleth tymes mo,  
 Whan that this child had souked but a  
 throwe, 450  
 This markis in his herte longeth so  
 To tempte his wyf, hir sadnessse for to  
 knowe,  
 That he ne mighte out of his herte throwe  
 This merveillous desyr, his wyf tassaye,  
 Needless, god woot, he thoughte hir for  
 taffraye. 455

He hadde assayed hir y-nogh bifore,

And fond hir ever good; what neded it  
 Hir for to tempte and alwey more and  
 more?

Though som men preise it for a subtil  
 wit,

But as for me, I seye that yvel it sit 460  
 Tassaye a wyf whan that it is no nede,  
 And putten her in anguish and in drede.

For which this markis wroghte in this  
 manere;

He cam alone a-night, ther as she lay,  
 With sterne face and with ful trouble  
 chere, 465

And seyde thus, 'Grisild,' quod he, 'that  
 day

That I yow took out of your povre array,  
 And putte yow in estaat of heigh no-  
 blesse,

Ye have nat that forgeten, as I gesse.

I seye, Grisild, this present dignitee, 470  
 In which that I have put yow, as I  
 trowe,

Maketh yow nat foryetful for to be  
 That I yow took in povre estaat ful lowe  
 For any wele ye moot your-selven knowe.  
 Tak hede of every word that I yow  
 seye, 475

Ther is no wight that hereth it but we  
 tweye.

Ye woot your-self wel, how that ye cam  
 here

In-to this hous, it is nat longe ago,  
 And though to me that ye be lief and  
 dere,

Un-to my gentils ye be no-thing so; 480  
 They seyn, to hem it is greet shame and  
 wo

For to be subgets and ben in servage  
 To thee, that born art of a smal village.

And namely, sith thy doghter was y-bore,  
 Thise wordes han they spoken doute-  
 lees; 485

But I desyre, as I have doon bifore,  
 To live my lyf with hem in reste and  
 pees;

I may nat in this caas be recchelees.  
 I moot don with thy doghter for the  
 beste, 489

Nat as I wolde, but as my peple leste.

And yet, god wot, this is ful looth to  
me;  
But natheles with-oute your witing  
I wol nat doon, but this wol I, quod he,  
'That ye to me assente as in this thing.  
Shewe now your pacience in your werk-  
ing 495  
That ye me highte and swore in your  
village  
That day that maked was our mariage.'

Whan she had herd al this, she noght  
ameved  
Neither in word, or chere, or counte-  
naunce;  
For, as it semed, she was nat agreved:  
She seyde, 'lord, al lyth in your ple-  
saunce, 501  
My child and I with hertly obeisaunce  
Ben youres al, and ye mowe save or  
spille  
Your owene thing; werketh after your  
wille.

Ther may no-thing, god so my soule  
save, 505  
Lyken to yow that may displese me;  
Ne I desyre no-thing for to have,  
Ne drede for to lese, save only ye;  
This wil is in myn herte and ay shal be.  
No lengthe of tyme or deeth may this  
deface, 510  
Ne change my corage to another place.'

Glad was this markis of hir answering,  
But yet he feyned as he were nat so;  
Al drery was his chere and his loking  
Whan that he sholde out of the chambre  
go. 515  
Sone after this, a furlong wey or two,  
He prively hath told al his entente  
Un-to a man, and to his wyf him sente.

A maner sergeant was this privee man,  
The which that feithful ofte he founden  
hadde 520  
In thinges grete, and eek swich folk wel  
can  
Don execucioun on thinges badde.  
The lord knew wel that he him loved  
and dradde;  
And whan this sergeant wiste his lordes  
wille

In-to the chambre he stalked him ful  
stille. 525

'Madame,' he seyde, 'ye mote foryeve it  
me,  
Thogh I do thing to which I am con-  
streyned;  
Ye ben so wys that ful wel knowe ye  
That lordes hestes mowe nat been  
y-feyned;  
They mowe wel been biwailed or com-  
pleyned, 530  
But men mot nede un-to her lust obeye,  
And so wol I; ther is na-more to seye.

This child I am comanded for to take'—  
And spak na-more, but out the child he  
hente  
Despitously, and gan a chere make 535  
As though he wolde han slayn it er he  
wente.  
Grisildis mot al suffren and consente;  
And as a lamb she sitteth meke and  
stille,  
And leet this cruel sergeant doon his  
wille.

Suspecious was the diffame of this  
man, 540  
Suspect his face, suspect his word also;  
Suspect the tyme in which he this bigan.  
Allas! hir doghter that she lovede so  
She wende he wolde han slawen it right  
tho. 544  
But natheles she neither weep ne syked  
Consenting hir to that the markis lyked.

But atte laste speken she bigan,  
And mekely she to the sergeant preyde,  
So as he was a worthy gentil man,  
That she moste kisse hir child er that it  
deyde; 550  
And in her barm this litel child she  
leyde  
With ful sad face, and gan the child to  
kisse  
And lulled it, and after gan it blisse.

And thus she seyde in hir benigne voys,  
'Far weel, my child; I shall thee never  
see; 555  
But, sith I thee have marked with the  
croys,

Of tilke fader blessed mote thou be,  
That for us deyde up-on a croys of tree.  
Thy soule, litel child, I him bitake,  
For this night shaltow dycn for my  
sake.' 560

I trowe that to a norice in this cas  
It had ben hard this rewthe for to se;  
Wel mighte a mooder than han cryed  
'allas!'

But nathelees so sad stedfast was she,  
That she endured all adversitee, 565  
And to the sergeant meckly she sayde,  
'Have heer agayn your litel yonge mayde.

Goth now,' quod she, 'and dooth my  
lordes heste,  
But o thing wol I preye yow of your  
grace,

That, but my lord forbad yow, atte  
leste 570

Burieth this litel body in som place  
That bestes ne no briddes it to-race.'  
But he no word wol to that purpos seye,  
But took the child and wente upon his  
weye.

This sergeant cam un-to his lord ageyn,  
And of Grisildis wordes and hir chere 576  
He tolde him point for point, in short  
and playn,

And him presenteth with his doghter  
dere.

Somwhat this lord hath rewthe in his  
manere;

But nathelees his purpos heeld he stille,  
As lordes doon, when they wol han hir  
wille; 581

And bad his sergeant that he prively  
Sholde this child ful softe winde and  
wrappe

With alle circumstancens tendrely,  
And carie it in a cofre or in a lappe;

But, up-on peyne his heed of for to  
swappe, 586

That no man sholde knowe of his entente,  
Ne whenne he cam, ne whider that he  
wente;

But at Boloigne to his suster dere,  
That tilke tyme of Panik was count-  
esse, 590

He sholde it take, and shewe hir this  
matere,

Bisekinge hir to don hir businesse  
This child to fostre in alle gentillesse;

And whos child that it was he bad hir  
hyde

From every wight, for oght that may  
bityde. 595

The sergeant gooth, and hath fulfild this  
thing;

But to this markis now retourne we;  
For now goth he ful faste imagining

If by his wyves chere he mighte see,  
Or by hir word aperceyve that she 600

Were chaunged; but he never hir coude  
finde

But ever in oon y-lyke sad and kinde.

As glad, as humble, as bisy in servyse,  
And eek in love as she was wont to be,

Was she to him in every maner wyse;  
Ne of hir doghter nought a word spak  
she. 606

Non accident for noon adversitee  
Was seyn in hir, ne never hir doghter  
name

Ne nempned she, in earnest nor in game.

*Explicit tercijs pars. Sequitur pars  
quarta.*

In this estaat ther passed been foure  
yeer 610

Er she with childe was; but, as god  
wolde,

A knave child she bar by this Walter,  
Ful gracious and fair for to biholde.

And whan that folk it to his fader tolde,  
Nat only he, but al his contree, merie 615

Was for this child, and god they thanke  
and herie.

Whan it was two yeer old, and fro the  
brest

Departed of his norice, on a day  
This markis caughte yet another lest 619

To tempte his wyf yet ofter, if he may.  
O needles was she tempted in assay!

But wedded men ne knowe no mesure,  
Whan that they finde a pacient creature.

'Wyf,' quod this markis, 'ye han herd  
er this,



My peple sikly berth our mariage 625  
 And namely, sith my sone y-boren is,  
 Now is it worse than ever in al our  
 age.

The murmur sleeth myn herte and my  
 corage;

For to myne eres comth the voys so  
 smerte,

That it wel ny destroyed hath myn  
 herte. 630

Now sey they thus, "whan Walter is  
 agoon,

Then shal the blood of Ianicle succede  
 And been our lord, for other have we  
 noon;'

Swiche wordes seith my peple, out of  
 drede.

Wel oughte I of swich murmur taken  
 hede; 635

For certainly I drede swich sentence,  
 Though they nat pleyn speke in myn  
 audience.

I wolde live in pees, if that I mighte;  
 Wherfor I am disposed outerly,  
 As I his suster served by nighte, 640  
 Right so thanke I to serve him prively;  
 This warne I yow, that ye nat sodeynly  
 Out of your-self for no wo sholde out-  
 raye;

Beth pacient, and ther-of I yow preye.'

'I have,' quod she, 'seyd thus, and ever  
 shal, 645

I wol no thing, ne nil no thing, certayn,  
 But as yow list; noght greveth me at al,  
 Thogh that my doghter and my sone be  
 slayn,

At your comendement, this is to sayn.

I have noght had no part of children  
 tweyne 650

But first siknesse, and after wo and  
 peyne.

Ye been our lord, doth with your owene  
 thing

Right as yow list; axeth no reed at  
 me.

For, as I lefte at hoom al my clothing,  
 Whan I first cam to yow, right so,' quod  
 she, 655

'Left I my wil and al my libertee,

And took your clothing; wherfor I  
 yow preye,  
 Doth your plesaunce, I wol your lust  
 obeye.

And certes, if I hadde prescience  
 Your wil to knowe er ye your lust me  
 tolde, 660

I wolde it doon with-outen negligence;  
 But now I woot your lust and what ye  
 wolde,

Al your plesaunce ferme and stable I  
 holde;

For wiste I that my deeth wolde do yow  
 ese, 664

Right gladly wolde I dyen, yow to ples-

seth may noght make no comparisoun  
 Un-to your love: and, whan this markis  
 sey

The constance of his wyf, he caste  
 adoun

His yën two, and wondreth that she  
 may

In pacience suffre al this array. 670

And forth he gooth with drery conte-  
 naunce,

But to his herte it was ful greet ples-  
 aunce.

This ugly sergeant, in the same wyse  
 That he hir doghter caughte, right so he,  
 Or worse, if men worse can devyse, 675  
 Hath hent hir sone, that ful was of  
 beautee.

And ever in oon so pacient was she,  
 That she no chere made of hevinesse,  
 But kiste hir sone, and after gan it  
 blesse;

Save this; she preyed him that, if he  
 mighte, 680

Hir litel sone he wolde in erthe grave,  
 His tendre limes, delicat to sighte,  
 Fro foules and fro bestes for to save.

But she non answer of him might have.  
 He wente his wey, as him no-thing ne  
 roghte; 685

But to Boloigne he tendrely it broghte.

This markis wondreth ever lenger the  
 more

Up-on hir pacience, and if that he

Ne hadde soothly knowen ther-bifore,  
 That parfitly hir children lovede she, 690  
 He wolde have wend that of som subtiltee,  
 And of malice or for cruel corage,  
 That she had suffred this with sad visage.

But wel he knew that next him-self,  
 certayn,  
 She loved hir children best in every wyse. 695  
 But now of wommen wolde I axen fayn,  
 If these assayes mighte nat suffyse?  
 What coude a sturdy housbond more devyse  
 To preve hir wyfhod and hir stedfastnesse, 699  
 And he continuing ever in sturdinesse?

But ther ben folk of swich condicioun,  
 That, whan they have a certein purpos take,  
 They can nat stinte of hir entencioun,  
 But, right as they were bounden to a stake,  
 They wol nat of that firste purpos slake.  
 Right so this markis fulliche hath purposed 706  
 To tempte his wyf, as he was first disposed.

He waiteth, if by word or contenance  
 That she to him was changed of corage;  
 But never coude he finde variance; 710  
 She was ay oon in herte and in visage;  
 And ay the forther that she was in age,  
 The more trewe, if that it were possible,  
 She was to him in love, and more penible.

For which it semed thus, that of hem two 715  
 Ther nas but o wil; for, as Walter leste,  
 The same lust was hir plesance also,  
 And, god be thanked, al fil for the beste.  
 She shewed wel, for no worldly unreste  
 A wyf, as of hir-self, no-thing ne sholde  
 Wille in effect, but as hir housbond wolde. 721

The sclandre of Walter ofte and wyde spradde,

That of a cruel herte he wikkedly,  
 For he a povre womman wedded hadde,  
 Hath mordred bothe his children prively.  
 Swich murmur was among hem comunly.  
 No wonder is, for to the peples ere 727  
 Ther cam no word but that they mordred were.

For which, wher-as his peple ther-bifore  
 Had loved him wel, the sclandre of his diffame 730  
 Made hem that they him hatede therfore;  
 To be a mordrer is an hateful name.  
 But natheles, for earnest ne for game  
 He of his cruel purpos nolde stente; 734  
 To tempte his wyf was set al his entente.

Whan that his doghter twelf yeer was of age,  
 He to the court of Rome, in subtil wyse  
 Enformed of his wil, sente his message,  
 Comaunding hem swiche bulles to devyse  
 As to his cruel purpos may suffyse, 740  
 How that the pope, as for his peples reste,  
 Bad him to wedde another, if him leste.

I seye, he bad they sholde countrefete  
 The popes bulles, making mencioun  
 That he hath leve his firste wyf to lete,  
 As by the popes dispensacioun; 746  
 To stinte rancour and dissencioun  
 Bitwix his peple and him; thus seyde  
 the bulle,  
 The which they han publiced atte fulle.

The rude peple, as it no wonder is, 750  
 Wenden ful wel that it had been right so;  
 But whan this tydinges cam to Grisildis,  
 I deme that hir herte was ful wo.  
 But she, y-lyke sad for evermo,  
 Disposed was, this humble creature, 755  
 Thadversitee of fortune al tendure.

Abyding ever his lust and his plesauce,  
 To whom that she was yeven, herte and al,  
 As to hir verray worldly suffisaunce;  
 But shortly if this storie I tellen shal, 760  
 This markis writen hath in special

A lettre in which he sheweth his entente,  
And secrely he to Boloigne it sente.

To the erl of Panik, which that hadde  
tho

Wedded his suster, preyde he specially  
To bringen hoom agayn his children  
two 766

In honourable estaat al openly.  
But o thing he him preyede outerly,  
That he to no wight, though men wolde  
enquere,

Sholde nat telle, whos children that  
they were, 770

But seye, the mayden sholde y-wedded  
be

Un-to the markis of Saluce anon.  
And as this erl was preyed, so dide he;  
For at day set he on his wey is goon 774  
Toward Saluce, and lordes many oon,  
In riche array, this mayden for to gyde;  
Hir yonge brother ryding hir bisyde.

Arrayed was toward hir mariage  
This fresshe mayde, ful of gemmes clere;  
Hir brother, which that seven yeer was  
of age, 780

Arrayed eek ful fresh in his manere.  
And thus in greet noblesse and with  
glad chere,

Toward Saluces shaping hir Iourney,  
Pro day to day they ryden in hir wey.

*Explicit quarta pars. Sequitur quinta  
pars.*

Among al this, after his wikke usage, 785  
This markis, yet his wyf to tempte more  
To the uttereste preve of hir corage,  
Fully to han experience and lore  
If that she were as stedfast as bifore,  
He on a day in open audience 790  
Ful boistously hath seyde hir this sentence :

‘Certes, Grisilde, I hadde y-nough ple-  
saunce

To han yow to my wyf for your goodnesse,  
As for your trouthe and for your obei-  
saunce,

Nought for your linage ne for your rich-  
esse ; 795

But now knowe I in verray soothfastnesse

That in gret lordshipe, if I wel avyse,  
Ther is gret servitude in sondry wyse.

I may nat don as every plowman may;  
My peple me constreyneth for to take 800  
Another wyf, and cryen day by day;  
And eek the pope, rancour for to slake,  
Consenteth it, that dar I undertake;  
And troweliche thus muche I wol yow  
seye,

My newe wyf is coming by the weye. 805

Be strong of herte, and voyde anon hir  
place,

And thilke dower that ye broghten me  
Tak it agayn, I graunte it of my grace;  
Retourneth to your fadres hous, quod he;  
‘No man may alwey han prosperitee; 810  
With evene herte I rede yow tendure  
The strook of fortune or of aventure.’

And she answerde agayn in pacience,  
‘My lord,’ quod she, ‘I woot, and wiste  
alway

How that bitwixen your magnificence 815  
And my poverte no wight can ne may  
Maken comparison; it is no nay.

I ne heeld me never digne in no manere  
To be your wyf, no, ne your chamberere.

And in this hous, ther ye me lady  
made — 820

The heighe god take I for my witesse,  
And also wisly he my soule glade —

I never heeld me lady ne maistresse,  
But humble servant to your worthinesse,  
And ever shal, whyl that my lyf may  
dure, 825

Aboven every worldly creature.

That ye so longe of your benignitee  
Han holden me in honour and nobleye,  
Wher-as I was noght worthy for to be,  
That thonke I god and yow, to whom I  
preye 830

Foryelde it yow; there is na-more to  
seye.

Un-to my fader gladly wol I wende,  
And with him dwelle un-to my lyves  
ende.

Ther I was fostred of a child ful smal,  
Til I be deed, my lyf ther wol I lede 835

A widwe clene, in body, herte, and al.  
 For sith I yaf to yow my maydenhede,  
 And am your trewe wyf, it is no drede,  
 God shilde swich a lordes wyf to take  
 Another man to housbonde or to  
 make. 840

And of your newe wyf, god of his grace  
 So graunte yow wele and prosperitee :  
 For I wol gladly yelden hir my place,  
 In which that I was blisful wont to be,  
 For sith it lyketh yow, my lord,' quod  
 she, 845  
 'That whylom weren al myn hertes reste,  
 That I shal goon, I wol gon whan yow  
 leste.

But ther-as ye me profre swich dowaire  
 As I first broghte, it is wel in my minde  
 It were my wrecched clothes, no-thing  
 faire, 850  
 The which to me were hard now for to  
 finde.

O gode god! how gentil and how kinde  
 Ye semed by your speche and your visage  
 The day that maked was our mariage!

But sooth is seyde, algate I finde it  
 trewe — 855

For in effect it preved is on me —  
 Love is noght old as whan that it is newe.  
 But certes, lord, for noon adversitee,  
 To dyen in the cas, it shal nat be .  
 That ever in word or werk I shal re-  
 pente 860  
 That I yow yaf myn herte in hool en-  
 tente.

My lord, ye woot that, in my fadres place,  
 Ye dede me strepe out of my povre wede,  
 And richely me cladden, of your grace.  
 To yow broghte I noghte elles, out of  
 drede, 865  
 But feyth and nakednesse and mayden-  
 hede.  
 And here agayn my clothing I restore,  
 And eek my wedding-ring, for evermore.

The remenant of your Iewels redy be  
 In-with your chambre, dar I saufully  
 sayn; 870  
 Naked out of my fadres hous,' quod she,  
 'I cam, and naked moot I turne agayn.

Al your plesaunce wol I folwen fayn;  
 But yet I hope it be nat your entente  
 That I smoklees out of your paleys  
 wente. 875

Ye coude nat doon so dishoneste a thing,  
 That thilke wombe in which your children  
 leye  
 Sholde, biforn the peple, in my walking,  
 Be seyn al bare; wherfor I yow preye,  
 Let me nat lyk a worm go by the  
 weye. 880  
 Remembre yow, myn owene lord so dere,  
 I was your wyf, though I unworthy were.

Wherfor, in guerdon of my maydenhede,  
 Which that I broghte, and noght agayn  
 I bere,  
 As voucheth sauf to yeve me, to my  
 mede, 885  
 But swich a smok as I was wont to were,  
 That I therwith may wrye the wombe of  
 here  
 That was your wyf; and heer take I my  
 leve  
 Of yow, myn owene lord, lest I yow  
 greve.'

'The smok,' quod he, 'that thou hast on  
 thy bak, 890  
 Lat it be stille, and ber it forth with thee.'  
 But wel unnethes thilke word he spak,  
 But wente his wey for rewthe and for  
 pitee.  
 Biforn the folk hir-selven strepeth she,  
 And in hir smok, with heed and foot al  
 bare, 895  
 Toward hir fader hous forth is she fare.

The folk hir folwe wepinge in hir weye,  
 And fortune ay they cursen as they goon;  
 But she fro weping kepte hir yēn dreye,  
 Ne in this tyme word ne spak she  
 noon. 900  
 Hir fader, that this tyding herde anon,  
 Curseth the day and tyme that nature  
 Shoop him to been a lyses creature.

For out of doute this olde povre man  
 Was ever in suspect of hir mariage; 905  
 For ever he demed, sith that it bigan,  
 That whan the lord fulfild had his corage,  
 Him wolde thinke it were a dispage

To his estaat so lowe for talighte,  
And voyden hir as sone as ever he  
mighte. 910

Agayns his doghter hastilich goth he,  
For he by noyse of folk knew hir cominge,  
And with hir olde cote, as it mighte be,  
He covered hir, ful sorwefully wepinge;  
But on hir body mighte he it nat  
bringe. 915  
For rude was the cloth, and more of age  
By dayes fele than at hir mariage.

Thus with hir fader, for a certeyn space,  
Dwelleth this flour of wyfly pacience,  
That neither by hir wordes ne hir face 920  
Biforn the folk, ne eek in hir absence,  
Ne shewed she that hir was doon offence;  
Ne of hir heigh estaat no remembraunce  
Ne hadde she, as by hir countenaunce.

No wonder is, for in hir grete estaat 925  
Hir goost was ever in pleyn humylitee;  
No tendre mouth, non herte delicaat,  
No pompe, no semblant of royaltee,  
But ful of patient benignitee,  
Discreet and prydeles, ay honourable, 930  
And to hir housbonde ever meke and  
stable.

Men speke of Iob and most for his hum-  
blesse,  
As clerkes, whan hem list, can wel en-  
dyte,  
Namely of men, but as in soothfastnesse,  
Thogh clerkes preye wommen but a  
lyte, 935  
Ther can no man in humblesse him acypte  
As womman can, ne can ben half so trewe  
As wommen been, but it be falle of-newe.

[*Pars Sexta.*]

Fro Boloigne is this erl of Panik come,  
Of which the fame up-sprang to more  
and lesse, 940  
And in the peples eres alle and some  
Was couth eek, that a newe markisesse  
He with him broghte, in swich pompe  
and richesse,  
That never was ther seyn with mannes yð  
So noble array in al West Lumbardye. 945

The markis, which that shoop and knew  
al this,  
Er that this erl was come, sente his mes-  
sage  
For thilke sely povre Grisildis;  
And she with humble herte and glad  
visage,  
Nat with no swollen thoght in hir corage,  
Cam at his heste, and on hir knees hir  
sette, 951  
And reverently and wysly she him grette.

'Grisild,' quod he, 'my wille is outerly,  
This mayden, that shal wedded been to  
me,  
Receyved be to-morwe as royally 955  
As it possible is in myn hous to be.  
And eek that every wight in his degree  
I have his estaat in sitting and servyse  
And heigh plesaunce, as I can best  
devyse.

I have no wommen suffisaunt certayn 960  
The chambres for tarraye in ordinaunce  
After my lust, and therfor wolde I fayn  
That thyn were al swich maner govern-  
aunce;  
Thou knowest eek of old al my plesaunce;  
Though thyn array be badde and yvel  
biseye, 965  
Do thou thy devoir at the leeste weye.'

'Nat only, lord, that I am glad,' quod she,  
'To doon your lust, but I desyre also  
Yow for to serve and plese in my degree  
With-outen feynting, and shal evermo.  
Ne never, for no wele ne no wo, 971  
Ne shal the gost with-in myn herte  
stente  
To love yow best with al my trewe en-  
tente.'

And with that word she gan the hous to  
dighte,  
And tables for to sette and beddes make;  
And peyned hir to doon al that she  
mighte, 976  
Preying the chambereres, for goddes sake,  
To hasten hem, and faste swepe and  
shake;  
And she, the moste servisable of alle,  
Hath every chambre arrayed and his  
halle. 980

Abouten undern gan this erl alighte,  
 That with him broghte these noble chil-  
 dren tweye,  
 For which the peple ran to seen the sighte  
 Of hir array, so richely biseye;  
 And than at erst amonges hem they seye,  
 That Walter was no fool, thogh that him  
 leste 986  
 To change his wyf, for it was for the  
 beste.

For she is fairer, as they demen alle,  
 Than is Grisild, and more tendre of age,  
 And fairer fruit bitwene hem sholde falle,  
 And more plesant, for hir heigh lin-  
 age; 991  
 Hir brother eek so fair was of visage,  
 That hem to seen the peple hath caught  
 plesaunce,  
 Commending now the markis govern-  
 aunce. —

*Auctor.* 'O stormy peple! unsad and  
 ever untrewel! 995  
 Ay undiscreet and chaunging as a vane,  
 Delyting ever in rumbel that is newe,  
 For lyk the mone ay wexe ye and wane;  
 Ay ful of clapping, dere y-nogh a lare;  
 Your doom is fals, your constance yvel  
 preveth, 1000  
 A ful greet fool is he that on yow leveth!'

Thus seyden sadde folk in that citee,  
 Whan that the peple gazed up and down,  
 For they were glad, right for the noveltee,  
 To han a newe lady of hir toun. 1005  
 Na-more of this make I now mencion;  
 But to Grisilde agayn wol I me dresse,  
 And telle hir constance and hir bisi-  
 nesse. —

Ful bisy was Grisilde in every thing  
 That to the feste was apertinent; 1010  
 Right noght was she abayst of hir clothing,  
 Though it were rude and somdel eek to-  
 rent.  
 But with glad chere to the yate is went,  
 With other folk, to grete the markisesse,  
 And after that doth forth hir bisi-  
 nesse. 1015

With so glad chere his gestes she receyv-  
 eth,

And conningly, everich in his degree,  
 That no defaute no man aperceyveth;  
 But ay they wondren what she mighte be  
 That in so povre array was for to see, 1020  
 And coude swich honour and rever-  
 ence;  
 And worthily they preisen hir prudence.

In al this mene whyle she ne stente  
 This mayde and eek hir brother to com-  
 mende  
 With al hir herte, in ful benigne entente,  
 So wel, that no man coude hir prys  
 amende. 1026  
 But atte laste, whan that these lordes  
 wende  
 To sitten down to mete, he gan to calle  
 Grisilde, as she was bisy in his halle.

'Grisilde,' quod he, as it were in his  
 pley, 1030  
 'How lyketh thee my wyf and hir beau-  
 tee?'  
 'Right wel,' quod she, 'my lord; for, in  
 good fey,  
 A fairer say I never noon than she.  
 I prey to god yeve hir prosperitee;  
 And so hope I that he wol to yow  
 sende 1035  
 Plesance y-nogh un-to your lyves ende.'

O thing biseke I yow and warne also,  
 That ye ne prikke with no tormentinge  
 This tendre mayden, as ye han don mo;  
 For she is fostred in hir norishinge 1040  
 More tendrely, and, to my supposinge,  
 She coude nat adversitee endure  
 As coude a povre fostred creature.'

And whan this Walter say hir pacience,  
 Hir glade chere and no malice at al, 1045  
 And he so ofte had doon to hir offence,  
 And she ay sad and constant as a wal,  
 Continuing ever hir innocence overal,  
 This sturdy markis gan his herte dresse  
 To rewen up-on hir wyfly stedfastnesse.

'This is y-nogh, Grisilde myn,' quod  
 he, 1051  
 'Be now na-more agast ne yvel apayed;  
 I have thy feith and thy benignitee,  
 As wel as ever womman was, assayed,  
 In greet estaat, and povreliche arrayed.'

Now knowe I, dere wyf, thy stedfast-  
 nesse, — 1056  
 And hir in armes took and gan hir kesse.

And she for wonder took of it no keep;  
 She herde nat what thing he to hir seyde;  
 She ferde as she had stert out of a  
 sleep, 1060  
 Til she out of hir masednesse abreyde.  
 'Grisilde,' quod he, 'by god that for us  
 deyde,  
 Thou art my wyf, ne noon other I have,  
 Ne never hadde, as god my soule save!

This is thy doghter which thou hast sup-  
 posed 1065  
 To be my wyf; that other feithfully  
 Shal be myn heir, as I have ay purposed;  
 Thou bare him in thy body trewely.  
 At Boloigne have I kept hem prively;  
 Tak hem agayn, for now maystow nat  
 seye 1070  
 That thou hast lorn non of thy children  
 tweye.

And folk that otherweyes han seyde of me,  
 I warne hem wel that I have doon this  
 dede  
 For no malice ne for no crueltee,  
 But for tassaye in thee thy wommanhede,  
 And nat to sleen my children, god for-  
 bede! 1076  
 But for to kepe hem prively and stille,  
 Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy wille.'

Whan she this herde, aswowne doun she  
 falleth  
 For pitous Ioye, and after hir swowninge  
 She bothe hir yonge children un-to hir  
 calleth, 1081  
 And in hir armes, pitously wepinge,  
 Embraceth hem, and tendrely kysinge  
 Ful lyk a mooder, with hir salte teres  
 She batheth bothe hir visage and hir  
 heres. 1085

O, which a pitous thing it was to see  
 Hir swowning, and hir humble voys to  
 here!  
 'Grauntmercy, lord, that thanke I yow,'  
 quod she,  
 'That ye han saved me my children  
 dere!

Now rekke I never to ben deed right  
 here; 1090  
 Sith I stonde in your love and in your  
 grace,  
 No fors of deeth, ne whan my spirit pace!

O tendre, o dere, o yonge children myne,  
 Your woful mooder wende stedfastly  
 That cruel houndes or som foul ver-  
 myne 1095  
 Hadde eten yow; but god, of his mercy,  
 And your benigne fader tendrely  
 Hath doon yow kept; and in that same  
 stounde  
 Al sodeynly she swappte adoun to grounde.

And in her swough so sadly holdeth she  
 Hir children two, whan she gan hem tem-  
 brace, 1101  
 That with greet sleighte and greet diffi-  
 cultee  
 The children from hir arm they gonne  
 arace.  
 O many a teer on many a pitous face  
 Doun ran of hem that stoden hir bi-  
 syde; 1105  
 Unnethe abouten hir mighte they abyde.

Walter hir gladeth, and hir sorwe slaketh;  
 She ryseth up, abaysed, from hir traunce,  
 And every wight hir Ioye and feste mak-  
 eth,  
 Til she hath caught agayn hir conta-  
 nance. 1110  
 Walter hir dooth so feithfully plesaunce,  
 That it was deyntee for to seen the chere  
 Bitwixe hem two, now they ben met  
 y-fere.

These ladyes, whan that they hir tyme say,  
 Han taken hir, and in-to chambre goon,  
 And strepen hir out of hir rude array, 1116  
 And in a cloth of gold that brighte shoon,  
 With a coroune of many a riche stoon  
 Up-on hir hede, they in-to halle hir broghte,  
 And ther she was honoured as hir  
 oghte. 1120

Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,  
 For every man and womman dooth his  
 might  
 This day in murthe and revel to dispende  
 Til on the welkne shoon the sterres light.

For more solempne in every mannes  
sight 1125  
This feste was, and gretter of costage,  
Than was the revel of hir mariage.

Ful many a yeer in heigh prosperitee  
Liven these two in concord and in reste,  
And richely his doghter married he 1130  
Un-to a lord, oon of the worthieste  
Of al Itaille; and than in pees and reste  
His wyves fader in his court he kepeth,  
Til that the soule out of his body crepeth.

His sone succedeth in his heritage 1135  
In reste and pees, after his fader day;  
And fortunat was eek in mariage,  
Al putte he nat his wyf in greet assay.  
This world is nat so strong, it is no nay,  
As it hath been in olde tymes yore, 1140  
And herkneth what this auctour seith  
therefore.

This storie is seyde, nat for that wyves  
sholde  
Folwen Grisilde as in humilitee,  
For it were importable, though they wolde;  
But for that every wight, in his de-  
gree, 1145  
Sholde be constant in adversitee  
As was Grisilde; therfor Petrark wryteth  
This storie, which with heigh style he  
endyteth.

For, sith a womman was so pacient  
Un-to a mortal man, wel more us oghte  
Receyvenal in gree that god us sent; 1151  
For greet skile is, he prove that he wroghte.  
But he ne tempteth no man that he boghte,  
As seith seint Iame, if ye his pistel rede;  
He preveth folk al day, it is no drede, 1155

And suffreth us, as for our excercyse,  
With sharpe scourges of adversitee

Ful ofte to be bete in sondry wyse;  
Nat for to knowe our wil, for certes he,  
Ere we were born, knew al our frele-  
tee; 1160  
And for our beste is al his governaunce;  
Lat us than live in vertuous suffraunce.\*

But o word, lordinges, herkneth er I go: —  
It were ful hard to finde now a dayes  
In al a toun Grisildes three or two; 1165  
For, if that they were put to swiche assayes,  
The gold of hem hath now so badde alayes  
With bras, that though the coyne be fair at  
yē,  
It wolde rather breste a-two than plye.

For which heer, for the wyves love of  
Bathe, 1170  
Whos lyf and al hir secte god mayntene  
In heigh maistrye, and elles were it scathe,  
I wol with lusty herte fresshe and grene  
Seyn yow a song to glade yow, I wene,  
And lat us stinte of earnestful matere: —  
Herkneth my song, that seith in this man-  
ere. 1176

*Envoy de Chaucer.*

Grisilde is deed, and eek hir pacience,  
And bothe atones buried in Itaille;  
For which I crye in open audience, 1179  
No wedded man so hardy be tassaille  
His wyves pacience, in hope to finde  
Grisildes, for in certein he shall faille!

O noble wyves, ful of heigh prudence,  
Lat noon humilitee your tonge naille,  
Ne lat no clerk have cause or diligence  
To wryte of yow a storie of swich mer-  
vaille 1186

As of Grisildis pacient and kinde;  
Lest Chichevache yow swelwe in hir  
entraill!

Folweth Ekko, that holdeth no silence,

\* It seems to have been Chaucer's intention, in the first instance, to end this Tale here. Hence, we find, in MSS. E. Hn. Cm. Dd., the following genuine, but rejected stanza, suitable for insertion at this point: —

*Bihold the merye wordes of the Hoste.*

This worthy Clerk, whan ended was his tale,  
Our hoste seyde, and swoor by goddes bones,

'Me were lever than a barel ale  
My wyf at hoom had herd this legende  
ones;  
This is a gentil tale for the nones,  
As to my purpos, wiste ye my wille;  
But thing that wol nat be, lat it be stille.'

*Here endeth the Tale of the Clerk of  
Oxenford.*



But evere answereth at the countre-  
taille; 1190

Beth nat bidaffed for your innocence,  
But sharply tak on yow the governaille.  
Emprinteth wel this lesson in your minde  
For commune profit, sith it may availle.

Ye archewyves, stondeth at defence, 1195  
Sin ye be stronge as is a greet camaille;  
Ne suffreth nat that men yow doon  
offence.

And splendre wyves, feble as in bataille,  
Beth egre as is a tygre yond in Inde;  
Ay clappeth as a mille, I yow con-  
saillle. 1200

Ne dreed hem nat, do hem no rever-  
ence;

For though thyn housbonde armed be in  
maillle,

The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence  
Shal perce his brest, and eek his aven-  
taille;

In Ialousye I rede eek thou him binde,  
And thou shalt make him couche as  
dooth a quaille. 1206

If thou be fair, ther folk ben in presence  
Shew thou thy visage and thyn appar-  
aille;

If thou be foul, be free of thy dispence,  
To gete thee freendes ay do thy trav-  
aillle; 1210

Be ay of chere as light as leef on linde,  
And lat him care, and wepe, and wringe,  
and waille!

*Here endeth the Clerk of Oxonford his Tale.*

## THE MERCHANT'S PROLOGUE.

*The Prologe of the Marchantes Tale.*

\* WEPING and wayling, care, and other  
sorwe

I know y-nogh, on even and a-morwe,  
Quod the Marchaunt, 'and so don othere  
mo 1215

That wedded been, I trowe that it be so.  
For, wel I woot, it fareth so with me.

I have a wyf, the worste that may be;  
For though the feend to hir y-coupled  
were,

She wolde him overmacche, I dar wel  
swere. 1220

What sholde I yow reherce in special  
Hir hye malice? she is a shrewe at al.

Ther is a long and large difference  
Bitwix Grisildis grete pacience

And of my wyf the passing crueltee. 1225  
Were I unbounden, al-so moot I thee!

I wolde never eft comen in the snare.

We wedded men live in sorwe and care;  
Assaye who-so wol, and he shal finde

I seye sooth, by seint Thomas of Inde,  
As for the more part, I sey nat alle. 1231  
God shilde that it sholde so bifalle!

A! good sir hoost! I have y-wedded  
be

These monthes two, and more nat, pardee;  
And yet, I trowe, he that all his lyve

Wyflees hath been, though that men  
wolde him ryve 1236

Un-to the herte, ne coude in no manere  
Tellen so muchel sorwe, as I now here

Coude tellen of my wyves cursednesse!  
'Now,' quod our hoost, 'Marchaunt,

so god yow blesse, 1240

Sin ye so muchel knowen of that art,  
Ful hertely I pray yow telle us part.'

'Gladly,' quod he, 'but of myn owene  
sore,  
For sory herte, I telle may na-more.'

## THE MARCHANTES TALE.

*Here biginneth the Marchantes Tale.*

WHYLOM ther was dwellinge in Lum-  
bardye 1245

A worthy knight, that born was of Pavye,  
In which he lived in greet prosperitee;  
And sixty yeer a wyfles man was he,  
And folwed ay his bodily delyt

On women, ther-as was his appetyt, 1250  
As doon this foles that ben seculer.

And whan that he was passed sixty yeer,  
Were it for holinesse or for dotage,  
I can nat seye, but swich a greet corage  
Hadde this knight to been a wedded  
man, 1255

That day and night he dooth al that he  
can

Tespyen where he mighte wedded be;  
Preyinge our lord to granten him, that  
he

Mighte ones knowe of thilke blisful lyf  
That is bitwixe an housbond and his  
wyf; 1260

And for to live under that holy bond  
With which that first god man and  
womman bond.

'Non other lyf,' seyde he, 'is worth a  
bene;

For wedlok is so esy and so clene,  
That in this world it is a paradys.' 1265  
Thus seyde this olde knight, that was so  
wys.

And certainly, as sooth as god is king,  
To take a wyf, it is a glorious thing,  
And namely whan a man is old and  
hoor;

Thanne is a wyf the fruit of his tresor.  
Than sholde he take a yong wyf and a  
feir, 1271

On which he mighte engendren him an  
heir,

And lede his lyf in Ioye and in solas,  
Wher-as thise bacheleres singe 'allas,'  
Whan that they finden any adversitee  
In love, which nis but childish vanitee.

And trewely it sit wel to be so, 1277  
That bacheleres have often payne and  
wo;

On brotel ground they builde, and  
brotelnesse 1279

They finde, whan they wene sikernesse.  
They live but as a brid or as a beste,  
In libertee, and under non areste,  
Ther-as a wedded man in his estaat  
Liveth a lyf blisful and ordinaat,  
Under the yok of mariage y-bounde;  
Wel may his herte in Ioye and blisse  
habounde. 1286

For who can be so buxom as a wyf?  
Who is so trewe, and eek so ententyf  
To kepe him, syk and hool, as is his  
make?

For wele or wo, she wol him nat for-  
sake. 1290

She nis nat very him to love and serve,  
Thogh that he lye bedrede til he sterve.  
And yet somme clerkes seyn, it nis nat so,  
Of whiche he, Theofraste, is oon of tho.  
What force thogh Theofraste liste lye?  
'Ne take no wyf,' quod he, 'for hous-  
bondrye, 1296

As for to spare in houshold thy dis-  
pence;

A trewe servant dooth more diligence,  
Thy good to kepe, than thyn owene  
wyf. 1299

For she wol clayme half part al hir lyf;  
And if that thou be syk, so god me save,  
Thy verray frendes or a trewe knave  
Wol kepe thee bet than she that waiteth  
ay

After thy good, and hath don many a day.'  
And if thou take a wyf un-to thyn hold,  
Ful lightly maystow been a cokewold.

This sentence, and an hundred thinges  
worse, 1307

Wryteth this man, ther god his bones  
corse!

But take no kepe of al swich vanitee;  
Deffye Theofraste and herke me. 1310

A wyf is goddes yifte verrailly;  
Alle other maner yiftes hardily,  
As londes, rentes, pasture, or commune,  
Or moebles, alle ben yiftes of fortune, 1314  
That passen as a shadwe upon a wal.  
But dredelees, if pleynly speke I shal,

A wyf wol laste, and in thyn hous endure,  
Wel lenger than thee list, paraventure.

Mariage is a ful gret sacrament;  
He which that hath no wyf, I holde him shent; 1320

He liveth helples and al desolat,  
I speke of folk in seculer estaat.  
And herke why, I sey nat this for noght,  
That womman is for mannes help y-wroght.

The hye god, whan he hadde Adam maked, 1325

And saugh him ai allone, bely-naked,  
God of his grete goodnesse seyde than,  
'Lat us now make an help un-to this man

Lyk to him-self;' and thanne he made him Eve.

Heer may ye se, and heer-by may ye preve, 1330

That wyf is mannes help and his confort,  
His paradys terrestre and his disport.  
So buxom and so vertuuous is she,  
They moste nedes live in unitee.

O flesh they been, and o flesh, as I gesse, 1335  
Hath bot on herte, in wele and in distresse.

A wyf! a! Seinte Marie, *benedicite!*  
How mighte a man han any adversitee  
That hath a wyf? certes, I can nat seye.  
The blisse which that is bitwixe hem tweye 1340

Ther may no tonge telle, or herte thinke.  
If he be povre, she helpeth him to swinke;

She kepeth his good, and wasteth never a deel;

Al that hir housbonde lust, hir lyketh weel;

She seith not ones 'nay,' whan he seith 'ye.' 1345

'Do this,' seith he; 'al redy, sir,' seith she.

O blisful ordre of wedlok precious,  
Thou art so mery, and eek so vertuuous,  
And so commended and appreved eek,  
That every man that halt him worth a leek, 1350

Up-on his bare knees oghte al his lyf  
Thanken his god that him hath sent a wyf;

Or elles preye to god him for to sende  
A wyf, to laste un-to his lyves ende. 1354  
For thanne his lyf is set in sikernesse;  
He may nat be deceyved, as I gesse,  
So that he werke after his wyves reed;  
Than may he boldly beren up his heed,  
They been so trewe and ther-with-al so wyse;

For which, if thou wolt werken as the wyse, 1360

Do alwey so as wommen wol thee rede.  
Lo, how that Iacob, as thise clerkes rede,

By good conseil of his moder Rebekke,  
Bond the kides skin aboute his nekke;  
Thurgh which his fadres benisoun he wan. 1365

Lo, Iudith, as the storie eek telle can,  
By wys conseil she goddes peple kepte,  
And slow him, Olofernus, whyl he slepte.

Lo Abigayl, by good conseil how she Saved hir housbond Nabal, whan that he Sholde han be slayn; and loke, Ester also 1371

By good conseil delivered out of wo  
The peple of god, and made him, Mar-dochee,

Of Assuere enhanced for to be. 1374  
Ther nis no-thing in gree superlatyf,  
As seith Senek, above an humble wyf.

Suffre thy wyves tonge, as Caton bit;  
She shal comande, and thou shalt suffren it;

And yet she wol obeye of curteisye.  
A wyf is keper of thyn housbondrye; 1380  
Wel may the syke man biwaille and wepe,

Ther-as ther nis no wyf the hous to kepe.

I warne thee, if wysly thou wolt wirche,  
Love wel thy wyf, as Crist loveth his chirche.

If thou lovest thy-self, thou lovest thy wyf; 1385

No man hateth his flesh, but in his lyf  
He fostreth it, and therefore bidde I thee,

Cherisse thy wyf, or thou shalt never thee.

Housbond and wyf, what so men Iape or pleye, 1389

Of worldly folk holden the siker weye;

They been so knit, ther may noon harm  
bityde;

And namely, up-on the wyves syde.  
For which this Ianuarie, of whom I  
tolde,

Considered hath, inwith his dayes olde,  
The lusty lyf, the vertuous quite, 1395  
That is in mariage hony-swete;  
And for his freendes on a day he sente,  
To tellen hem theeffect of his entente.

With face said, his tale he hath hem  
told;

He seyde, 'freendes, I am hoor and old,  
And almost, god wot, on my pittes  
brinke; 1401

Up-on my soule somewhat moste I thinke.  
I have my body folily despended;  
Blessed be god, that it shal been  
amended!

For I wol be, certeyn, a wedded man,  
And that anon in al the haste I can,  
Un-to som mayde fair and tendre of age.  
I prey yow, shapeth for my mariage  
Al sodeynly, for I wol nat abyde; 1409  
And I wol fonde tespyen, on my syde,  
To whom I may be wedded hastily.

But for-as-muche as ye ben mo than I,  
Ye shullen rather swich a thing espyen  
Than I, and wher me best were to allyen.

But o thing warne I yow, my freendes  
dere, 1415

I wol non old wyf han in no manere.  
She shal nat passe twenty yeer, certayn;  
Old fish and yong flesh wolde I have ful  
fayn.

Bet is, quod he, 'a pyk than a pikerel;  
And bet than old boef is the tendre veel.  
I wol no womman thritty yeer of age,  
It is but bene-straw and greet forage.

And eek thise olde widwes, god it woot,  
They conne so muchel craft on Wades  
boot,

So muchel broken harm, whan that hem  
leste, 1425  
That with hem sholde I never live in  
reste.

For sondry scoles maken sotil clerkis;  
Womman of manye scoles half a clerk is.  
But certeynly, a yong thing may men  
gye,

Right as men may warm wex with handes  
plye. 1430

Wherfore I sey yow pleynly, in a clause,

I wol non old wyf han right for this  
cause.

For if so were, I hadde swich mis-  
chaunce,

That I in hir ne coude han no plesaunce,  
Thanne sholde I lede my lyf in avoutrye,  
And go streight to the delvel, whan I  
dye. 1436

Ne children sholde I none up-on hir  
geten;

Yet were me lever houndes had me eten,  
Than that myn heritage sholde falle  
In straunge hand, and this I tell yow  
alle. 1440

I dote nat, I woot the cause why  
Men sholde wedde, and forthermore wot  
I,

Ther speketh many a man of mariage,  
That woot na-more of it than woot my  
page,

For whiche causyn man sholde take a  
wyf. 1445

If he ne may nat liven chast his lyf,  
Take him a wyf with greet devocioun,  
By-cause of leveful procreacioun  
Of children, to thonour of god above,  
And nat only for paramour or love; 1450  
And for they sholde lecherye eschue,  
And yelde hir dettes whan that they ben  
due;

Or for that ech of hem sholde helpen  
other

In meschief, as a suster shal the brother;  
And live in chastitee ful holily. 1455  
But sires, by your leve, that am nat I.

For god be thanked, I dar make avaunt,  
I fele my limes stark and suffisaunt  
To do al that a man bilongeth to;

I woot my-selven best what I may do. 1460  
Though I be hoor, I fare as dooth a tree  
That blosmeth er that fruyt y-woxen be;  
A blosmy tree nis neither drye ne deed.

I fele me nowher hoor but on myn heed;  
Myn herte and alle my limes been as  
grene 1465

As laurer thurgh the yeer is for to sene.  
And sin that ye han herd al myn entente,  
I prey yow to my wil ye wole assente.'

Diverse men diversely him tolde  
Of mariage manye ensamples olde. 1470  
Somme blamed it, somme preysed it, cer-  
teyn;

But atte laste, shortly for to seyn,

As al day falleth altercacioun  
 Bitwixen freendes in disputisoun, 1474  
 Ther fil a stryf bitwixe his bretheren two,  
 Of whiche that oon was cleped Placebo,  
 Iustinus soothly called was that other.

Placebo seyde, 'o Ianuarie, brother,  
 Ful litel nede had ye, my lord so dere,  
 Conseil to axe of any that is here; 1480  
 But that ye been so ful of sapience,  
 That yow ne lyketh, for your heighe  
 prudence,

To weyven fro the word of Salomon.  
 This word seyde he un-to us everichon :  
 "Wirk alle thing by conseil," thus seyde  
 he, 1485  
 "And thanne shaltow nat repente thee."  
 But though that Salomon spak swich a  
 word,

Myn owene dere brother and my lord,  
 So wisly god my soule bringe at reste,  
 I hold your owene conseil is the  
 beste. 1490

For brother myn, of me tak this motyf,  
 I have now been a court-man al my lyf.  
 And god it woot, though I unworthy be,  
 I have stonden in ful greet degree  
 Abouten lordes of ful heigh estaat; 1495  
 Yet hadde I never with noon of hem de-  
 baat.

I never hem contraried, trewely;  
 I woot wel that my lord can more than I.  
 What that he seith, I holde it ferme and  
 stable; 1499

I seye the same, or elles thing semblable.  
 A ful gret fool is any conseilour,  
 That serveth any lord of heigh honour,  
 That dar presume, or elles thenken it,  
 That his conseil sholde passe his lordes  
 wit.

Nay, lordes been no foles, by my fay; 1505  
 Ye han your-selven shewed heer to-day  
 So heigh sentence, so holly and weel,  
 That I consente and conferme every-deel  
 Your wordes alle, and your opinion. 1509  
 By god, ther nis no man in al this toun  
 Nin al Itaille, that coude bet han sayd;  
 Crist halt him of this conseil wel apayd.  
 And trewely, it is an heigh corage  
 Of any man, that stopen is in age, 1514  
 To take a yong wyf; by my fader kin,  
 Your herte hangeth on a Ioly pin.  
 Doth now in this matere right as yow  
 leste,

For finally I holde it for the beste.'

Iustinus, that ay stille sat and herde,  
 Right in this wyse to Placebo answerde :  
 'Now brother myn, be pacient, I preye;  
 Sin ye han seyde, and herkneth what I  
 seye. 1522

Senek among his othere wordes wyse  
 Seith, that a man oghte him right wel  
 avyse,  
 To whom he yeveth his lond or his  
 catel. 1525

And sin I oghte avyse me right wel  
 To whom I yeve my good away fro me,  
 Wel muchel more I oghte avysed be  
 To whom I yeve my body; for alwey  
 I warne yow wel, it is no childes pley 1530  
 To take a wyf with-oute avyusement.

Men moste enquere, this is myn assent,  
 Wher she be wys, or sobre, or dronkelewe,  
 Or proud, or elles other-weys a shrewe;  
 A chydester, or wastour of thy good, 1535  
 Or riche, or poore, or elles mannish wood.  
 Al-be-it so that no man finden shal  
 Noon in this world that trotteth hool in al,  
 Ne man ne beest, swich as men coude  
 devyse;

But nathelees, it oghte y-nough suffise 1540  
 With any wyf, if so were that she hadde  
 Mo gode thewes than hir vyces badde;  
 And al this axeth leyser for tenquere.  
 For god it woot, I have wept many a  
 tere

Ful prively, sin I have had a wyf. 1545  
 Preyse who-so wole a wedded mannes lyf,  
 Certain, I finde in it but cost and care,  
 And observances, of alle blisses bare.  
 And yet, god woot, my neighebores  
 aboute, 1549

And namely of women many a route,  
 Seyn that I have the moste stedefast wyf,  
 And eek the mekeste oon that bereth lyf.  
 But I wot best wher wringeth me my sho.  
 Ye mowe, for me, right as yow lyketh do;  
 Avyseth yow, ye been a man of age, 1555  
 How that ye entren in-to mariage,  
 And namely with a yong wyf and a fair.  
 By him that made water, erthe, and air,  
 The yongest man that is in al this route  
 Is bisy y-nogh to bringen it aboute 1560  
 To han his wyf allone, trusteth me.  
 Ye shul nat plesse hir fully yeres three,  
 This is to seyn, to doon hir ful plesaunce.  
 A wyf axeth ful many an observaunce.

I prey yow that ye be nat yvel apayd.' 1565  
'Wel,' quod this Ianuarie, 'and hastow  
sayd ?

Straw for thy Senek, and for thy prov-  
erbes,

I counte nat a panier ful of herbes  
Of scole-termes; wyser men than thow,  
As thou hast herd, assenteden right  
now 1570

To my purpos; Placebo, what sey ye ?'  
'I seye, it is a cursed man,' quod he,  
'That letteth matrimoine, sikerly.'

And with that word they rysen sodeynly,  
And ben assented fully, that he sholde  
Be wedded whanne him list and wher he  
wolde. 1576

Heigh fantasye and curious businesse  
Fro day to day gan in the soule impresse  
Of Ianuarie aboute his mariage. 1579  
Many fair shap, and many a fair visage  
Ther passeth thurgh his herte, night by  
night.

As who-so toke a mirour polished bright,  
And sette it in a commune market-place,  
Than sholde he see many a figure pace  
By his mirour; and, in the same wyse, 1585  
Gan Ianuarie inwith his thought devyse  
Of maydens, whiche that dwelten him  
bisyde.

He wiste nat wher that he mighte abyde.  
For if that oon have beaute in hir face,  
Another stant so in the peples grace 1590  
For hir sadnesse, and hir benignitee,  
That of the peple grettest voys hath she.  
And somme were riche, and hadden  
badde name.

But natheless, bitwixe earnest and game,  
He atte laste apoynted him on oon, 1595  
And leet alle othere from his herte goon,  
And chees hir of his owene auctoritee;  
For love is blind al day, and may nat see.  
And whan that he was in his bed y-brought,  
He purtreied, in his herte and in his  
thoght, 1600

Hir fresshe beautee and hir age tendre,  
Hir myddel smal, hir armes longe and  
sclendir,

Hir wyse governaunce, hir gentillesse,  
Hir wommanly beringe and hir sadnesse.  
And whan that he on hir was conde-  
scended, 1605

Him thoughte his chois mighte nat ben  
amended.

For whan that he him-self concluded  
hadde,  
Him thoughte ech other mannes wit so  
badde,

That impossible it were to replye  
Agayn his chois, this was his fan-  
tasye. 1610

His freendes sente he to at his instance,  
And preyed hem to doon him that  
plesaunce,

That hastily they wolden to him come;  
He wolde abregge hir labour, alle and  
some.

Nedeth na-more for him to go ne  
ryde, 1615  
He was apoynted ther he wolde abyde.  
Placebo cam, and eek his freendes  
sone,

And alderfirst he bad hem alle a bone,  
That noon of hem none argumentes  
make

Agayn the purpos which that he hath  
take; 1620

'Which purpos was plesant to god,'  
seyde he,

'And verray ground of his prosperitee.'  
He seyde, ther was a mayden in the  
toun,

Which that of beautee hadde greet re-  
noun,

Al were it so she were of smal  
degree; 1625

Suffyseth him hir youthe and hir beautee.  
Which mayde, he seyde, he wolde han to  
his wyf,

To lede in ese and holinesse his lyf.  
And thanked god, that he mighte han  
hire al,

That no wight of his blisse parten  
shal. 1630

And preyde hem to labouren in this nede,  
And shapen that he faille nat to spede;  
For thanne, he seyde, his spirit was at  
ese.

'Thanne is,' quod he, 'no-thing may me  
displese,

Save o thing priketh in my con-  
science, 1635

The which I wol reherce in your pres-  
ence.

I have,' quod he, 'herd seyde, ful yore  
ago,

Ther may no man han parfite blisses two,

'This is to seye, in erthe and eek in  
hevene.

For though he kepe him fro the sinnes  
sevene, 1640

And eek from every branche of thilke  
tree,

Yet is ther so parfite felicitee,

And so greet ese and lust in mariage,

That ever I am agast, now in myn age,

That I shal lede now so mery a lyf, 1645

So delicat, with-outen wo and stryf,

That I shal have myn hevene in erthe  
here.

For sith that verray hevene is boght so  
dere,

With tribulacioun and greet penaunce,

How sholde I thanne, that live in swich  
plesaunce 1650

As alle wedded men don with hir wyvis,

Come to the blisse ther Crist eterne on  
lyve is?

This is my drede, and ye, my bretheren  
tweye,

Assoilthe me this questioun, I preye.'

Iustinus, which that hated his  
folye, 1655

Answerde anon, right in his Iaperye;

And for he wolde his longe tale abregge,

He wolde noon auctoritee allegge,

But seyde, 'sire, so ther be noon obstacle  
Other than this, god of his hye mir-  
acle 1660

And of his mercy may so for yow wirche,

That, er ye have your right of holy  
chirche,

Ye may repente of wedded mannes lyf,

In which ye seyn ther is no wo ne stryf.

And elles, god forbede but he sente 1665

A wedded man him grace to repente

Wel ofte rather than a sengle man!

And therefore, sire, the beste reed I can,

Dispeire yow noght, but have in your  
memorie,

Paraunter she may be your purga-  
torie! 1670

She may be goddes mene, and goddes  
whippe;

Than shal your soule up to hevene skippe  
Swifter than dooth an arwe out of the  
bowe!

I hope to god, her-after shul ye knowe,

That their nis no so greet felicitee 1675

In mariage, ne never-mo shal be,

That yow shal lette of your savacioun,

So that ye use, as skile is and resoun,

The lustes of your wyf attemprely,

And that ye plesse hir nat to amor-  
ously, 1680

And that ye kepe yow eek from other  
sinne.

My tale is doon: — for my wit is thinne.

Beth nat agast her-of, my brother dere.' —

(But lat us waden out of this matere.

The Wyf of Bathe, if ye han under-  
stonde, 1685

Of mariage, which we have on honde,

Declared hath ful wel in litel space). —

'Fareth now wel, god have yow in his  
grace.'

And with this word this Iustin and his  
brother

Han take hir leve, and ech of hem of  
other. 1690

For whan they sawe it moste nedes be,

They wroghten so, by sly and wys trettee,

That she, this mayden, which that Maius  
highte,

As hastily as ever that she mighte,

Shal wedded be un-to this Ianuarie. 1695

I trowe it were to longe yow to tarie,

If I yow tolde of every scrit and bond,

By which that she was feffed in his lond;

Or for to herkennen of hir riche array.

But finally y-comen is the day 1700

That to the chirche bothe be they went

For to receyve the holy sacrament.

Forth comth the preest, with stole aboute  
his nekke,

And bad hir be lyk Sarra and Rebekke,

In wisdom and in trouthe of ma-  
riage; 1705

And seyde his orisons, as is usage,

And crouched hem, and bad god sholde  
hem blesse,

And made al siker y-nogh with holinesse.

Thus been they wedded with solemp-  
nitee,

And at the feste sitteth he and she 1710

With other worthy folk up-on the deys.

Al ful of Ioye and blisse is the paleys,

And ful of instruments and of vitaille,

The moste deyntevous of al Itaille.

Biforn hem stode swiche instruments of  
soun, 1715

That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphioun,

Ne maden never swich a melodye.

At every cours than cam loud min-  
straleye,  
That never tromped Ioab, for to here,  
Nor he, Theodomas, yet half so clere, 1720  
At Thebes, whan the citee was in doute.  
Bacus the wyn hem skinketh al aboute,  
And Venus laugheth up-on every wight.  
For Ianuarie was bicome hir knight,  
And wolde bothe assayen his corage 1725  
In libertee, and eek in mariage;  
And with hir fyrbrond in hir hand aboute  
Daunceth biforn the bryde and al the  
route.  
And certainly, I dar right wel seyn this,  
Ymenëus, that god of wedding is, 1730  
Saugh never his lyf so mery a wedded  
man.  
Hold thou thy pees, thou poete Marcian,  
That wrytest us that ilke wedding murie  
Of hir, Philologye, and him, Mercurie,  
And of the songes that the Muses  
songe. 1735  
To smal is bothe thy penne, and eek thy  
tonge,  
For to descryven of this mariage.  
Whan tendre youthe hath wedded stoup-  
ing age,  
Ther is swich mirthe that it may nat be  
writen;  
Assayeth it your-self, than may ye witen  
If that I lye or noon in this matere. 1741  
Maius, that sit with so benigne a  
chere,  
Hir to biholde it semed fayëryë;  
Queene Ester loked never with swich an  
yë 1744  
On Assuer, so meke a look hath she.  
I may yow nat devyse al hir beautee;  
But thus muche of hir beautee telle I  
may,  
That she was lyk the brighte morwe of  
May,  
Fulfilde of alle beautee and plesaunce.  
This Ianuarie is ravissed in a trauunce  
At every time he loked on hir face; 1751  
But in his herte he gan hir to manace,  
That he that night in armes wolde hir  
streyne  
Harder than ever Paris dide Eleyne.  
But nathelees, yet hadde he greet  
pitee, 1755  
That thilke night offenden hir moste he;  
And thoughte, 'allas! o tendre creature!

Now wolde god ye mighte wel endure  
Al my corage, it is so sharp and kene;  
I am agast ye shul it nat sustene. 1760  
But god forbede that I dide al my might!  
Now wolde god that it were woxen night,  
And that the night wolde lasten evermo.  
I wolde that al this peple were ago.  
And finally, he doth al his labour, 1765  
As he best mighte savinge his honour,  
To haste hem fro the mete in subtil wyse.  
The tyme cam that reson was to ryse;  
And after that, men daunce and drinken  
faste,  
And spyces al aboute the hous they  
caste; 1770  
And ful of Ioye and blisse is every man;  
All but a squyer, highte Damian,  
Which carf biforn the knight ful many a  
day.  
He was so ravissed on his lady May,  
That for the verray peyne he was ny  
wood; 1775  
Almost he swelte and swowned ther he  
stood.  
So sore hath Venus hurt him with hir  
brond,  
As that she bar it daunsinge in hir hond.  
And to his bed he wente him hastily;  
Na-more of him as at this tyme speke I.  
But ther I lete him wepe y-nough and  
pleyne, 1781  
Til fresshe May wol rewen on his peyne.  
O perilous fyr, that in the bedstraw  
bredeth! *Auctor.*  
O famulier foo, that his servyce bedeth!  
O servant traitour, false hoomly hewe,  
Lyk to the naddre in bosom sly un-  
trewe, 1786  
God shilde us alle from your aqueynt-  
aunce!  
O Ianuarie, dronken in plesaunce  
Of mariage, see how thy Damian,  
Thyn owene squyer and thy borne man,  
Entendeth for to do thee vileinye. 1791  
God graunte thee thyn hoomly fo tespye.  
For in this world nis worse pestilence  
Than hoomly foo al day in thy presence.  
Parfourned hath the sonne his ark  
diurne, 1795  
No lenger may the body of him soiurne  
On thorisonte, as in that latitude.  
Night with his mantel, that is derk and  
rude,



Gan oversprede the hemisperie aboute;  
For which departed is this lusty route  
Fro Ianuarie, with thank on every  
syde. 1801

Hom to hir houses lustily they ryde,  
Wher-as they doon hir thinges as hem  
leste,

And whan they sye hir tyme, goon to reste.  
Sone after that, this hastif Ianuarie 1805  
Wolde go to bedde, he wolde no lenger  
tarie.

He drinketh ipocras, clarree, and vernage  
Of spyces hote, tencresen his corage;  
And many a letuarie hadde he ful fyn,  
Swiche as the cursed monk dan Con-  
stantyn 1810

Hath writen in his book *de Coitu*;  
To eten hem alle, he nas no-thing eschu.  
And to his privee freendes thus seyde he :  
'For goddes love, as sone as it may be,  
Lat voyden al this hous in curteys wyse.'  
And they han doon right as he wol de-  
vyse 1816

Men drinken, and the travers drawe anon;  
The bryde was broght a-bedde as stille  
as stoon;

And whan the bed was with the preest  
y-blessed.

Out of the chambre hath every wight him  
dressed. 1820

And Ianuarie hath faste in armes take  
His fresshe May, his paradys, his make.  
He lulleth hir, he kisseth hir ful ofte  
With thikke bristles of his berd unsofte,  
Lyk to the skin of houndfish, sharp as  
brere, 1825

For he was shave al newe in his manere.  
He rubbeth hir aboute hir tendre face,  
And seyde thus, 'allas! I moot trespace  
To yow, my spouse, and yow gretly  
offende,

Er tyme come that I wil doun de-  
scende. 1830

But nathelees, considereth this,' quod he,  
'Ther nis no werkman, what-so-ever he  
be,

That may bothe werke wel and hastily;  
This wol be doon at leyser parfitly. 1834

It is no fors how longe that we pleye;  
In trewe wedlok wedded be we tweye;  
And blessed be the yok that we been  
inne,

For in our actes we mowe do no sinne.

A man may do no sinne with his wyf,  
Ne hurte him-selven with his owene  
knyf; 1840

For we han leve to pleye us by the  
lawe.'

Thus laboureth til that the daygan dawe;  
And than he taketh a sop in fyn clarree,  
And upright in his bed than sitteth he,  
And after that he sang ful loude and  
clere, 1845

And kiste his wyf, and made wantoun  
chere.

He was al coltish, ful of ragerye,  
And ful of largon as a flekked pye.  
The slakke skin aboute his nekke  
shaketh,

Why! that he sang; so chaunteth he and  
craketh. 1850

But god wot what that May thoughte in  
hir herte,

Whan she him saugh up sittinge in his  
sherte,

In his night-cappe, and with his nekke  
lene;

She preyseth nat his pleying worth a  
bene.

Than seide he thus, 'my reste wol I  
take; 1855

Now day is come, I may no lenger  
wake.'

And doun he leyde his heed, and sleep  
til pryme.

And afterward, whan that he saugh his  
tyme,

Up ryseth Ianuarie; but fresshe May  
Holdeth hir chambre un-to the fourthe  
day, 1860

As usage is of wyves for the beste.  
For every labour som-tyme moot han  
reste,

Or elles longe may he nat endure;  
This is to seyn, no lyves creature,

Be it of fish, or brid, or beest, 'or  
man. 1865

Now wol I speke of woful Da-  
mian, *Auctor.*

That languisheth for love, as ye shul  
here;

Therefore I speke to him in this manere :  
I seye, 'O sely Damian, alas!

Answer to my demaunde, as in this  
cas, 1870

How shaltow to thy lady fresshe May

Telle thy wo? She wole alwey seye  
"nay";

Eek if thou speke, she wol thy wo  
biwreye;

God be thyn help, I can no better seye.'

This syke Damian in Venus fyr 1875

So brenneth, that he dyeth for desyr;

For which he putte his lyf in aventure

No lenger mighte he in this wyse endure;

But prively a penner gan he borwe,

And in a lettre wroote he al his sorwe, 1880

In manere of a compleynt or a lay,

Un-to his faire fresshe lady May.

And in a purs of silk, heng on his sherte,

He hath it put, and leyde it at his herte.

The mone that, at noon, was, thilke  
day 1885

That Ianuarie hath wedded fresshe May,

In two of Taur, was in-to Cancre gliden;

So longe hath Maius in hir chambre

biden,

As custume is un-to thise nobles alle.

A bryde shal nat eten in the halle, 1890

Til dayes foure or three dayes atte leste

Y-passed been; than lat hir go to feste.

The fourthe day compleet fro noon to

noon,

Whan that the heighe masse was y-doon,

In halle sit this Ianuarie, and May 1895

As fresh as is the brighte someres day.

And so bifel, how that this gode man

Remembred him upon this Damian,

And seyde, 'Seinte Marie! how may

this be,

That Damian entendeth nat to me? 1900

Is he ay syk, or how may this bityde?'

His squyeres, whiche that stoden ther

bisyde,

Excused him by-cause of his siknesse,

Which letted him to doon his businesse;

Noon other cause mighte make him

tarie. 1905

'That me forthinketh,' quod this Ianu-

arie,

'He is a gentil squyer, by my trouthe!

If that he deyde, it were harm and

rourthe;

He is as wys, discreet, and as secree

As any man I woot of his degree; 1910

And ther-to manly and eek servisable,

And for to been a thrifty man right able.

But after mete, as sone as ever I may,

I wol my-self visyte him and eek May,

To doon him al the confort that I can.'

And for that word him blessed every

man, 1916

That, of his bountee and his gentillesse,

He wolde so conforten in siknesse

His squyer, for it was a gentil dede.

'Dame,' quod this Ianuarie, 'tak good

hede, 1920

At-after mete ye, with your women

alle,

Whan ye han been in chambre out of

this halle,

That alle ye go to see this Damian;

Doth him disport, he is a gentil man;

And telleth him that I wol him visyte,

Have I no-thing but rested me a lyte;

And spede yow faste, for I wole abyde

Til that ye slepe faste by my syde.' 1928

And with that word he gan to him to

calle

A squyer, that was marchal of his halle,

And tolde him certeyn thinges, what he

wolde. 1931

This fresshe May hath streight hir wey

y-holde,

With alle hir wommen, un-to Damian.

Doun by his beddes syde sit she than,

Confortinge him as goodly as she may.

This Damian, whan that his tyme he

say, 1936

In secree wise his purs, and eek his

bille,

In which that he y-writen hadde his

wille,

Hath put in-to hir hand, with-outen

more,

Save that he syketh wonder depe and

sore, 1940

And softely to hir right thus seyde he:

'Mercy! and that ye nat discovere me;

For I am deed, if that this thing be

kid.'

This purs hath she inwith hir bosom hid,

And wente hir wey; ye gete namore of

me. 1945

But un-to Ianuarie y-comen is she,

That on his beddes syde sit ful softe.

He taketh hir, and kisseth hir ful ofte,

And leyde him down to slepe, and that

anon.

She feyned hir as that she moste gon

Ther-as ye woot that every wight mot

nede. 1951

And whan she of this bille hath taken  
 hede,  
 She rente it al to cloutes atte laste,  
 And in the privee softely it caste.  
 Who studieth now but faire fresshe  
 May? 1955  
 Adoun by olde Ianuarie she lay,  
 That sleep, til that the coughe hath him  
 awaked;  
 Anon he preyde hir strepen hir al  
 naked;  
 He wolde of hir, he seyde, han som ple-  
 saunce,  
 And seyde, hir clothes dide him encom-  
 braunce, 1960  
 And she obeyeth, be hir lief or looth.  
 But lest that precious folk be with me  
 wrooth,  
 How that he wroghte, I dar nat to yow  
 telle;  
 Or whether hir thoughte it paradys or  
 helle;  
 But here I lete hem werken in hir wyse  
 Til evensong rong, and that they moste  
 aryse. 1966  
 Were it by destinee or aventure,  
 Were it by influence or by nature,  
 Or constellation, that in swich estat  
 The hevене stood, that tyme fortunat  
 Was for to putte a bille of Venus werkes  
 (For alle thing hath tyme, as seyn thise  
 clerkes) 1972  
 To any womman, for to gete hir love,  
 I can nat seye; but grete god above,  
 That knoweth that non act is causelees,  
 He deme of al, for I wol holde my pees.  
 But sooth is this, how that this fresshe  
 May  
 Hath take swich impression that day,  
 For pitee of this syke Damian, 1979  
 That from hir herte she ne dryve can  
 The remembraunce for to doon him ese.  
 'Certeyn,' thoughte she, 'whom that this  
 thing displese,  
 I rekke nocht, for here I him assure,  
 To love him best of any creature,  
 Though he na-more hadde than his  
 sherte.' 1985  
 Lo, pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.  
 Heer may ye se how excellent fran-  
 chyse  
 In women is, whan they hem narwe  
 avyse.

Som tyrant is, as ther be many oon,  
 That hath an herte as hard as any stoon,  
 Which wolde han lete him sterven in the  
 place 1991  
 Wel rather than han graunted him hir  
 grace;  
 And hem reioysen in hir cruel pryde,  
 And rekke nat to been an homicyde.  
 This gentil May, fulfilled of pitee, 1995  
 Right of hir hande a lettre made she,  
 In which she graunteth him hir verray  
 grace;  
 Ther lakketh nocht but only day and  
 place,  
 Wher that she mighte un-to his lust  
 suffyse:  
 For it shal be right as he wol devyse.  
 And whan she saugh hir time, up-on a  
 day, 2001  
 To visite this Damian goth May,  
 And sotilly this lettre down she threste  
 Under his pilwe, rede it if him leste.  
 She taketh him by the hand, and harde  
 him twiste 2005  
 So secrely, that no wight of it wiste,  
 And bad him been al hool, and forth she  
 wente  
 To Ianuarie, whan that he for hir sente.  
 Up ryseth Damian the nexte morwe,  
 Al passed was his siknesse and his  
 sorwe. 2010  
 He kembeth him, he proyneth him and  
 pyketh,  
 He dooth al that his lady lust and  
 lyketh;  
 And eek to Ianuarie he gooth as lowe  
 As ever dide a dogge for the bowe.  
 He is so plesant un-to every man, 2015  
 (For craft is al, who-so that do it can)  
 That every wight is fayn to speke him  
 good;  
 And fully in his lady grace he stood.  
 Thus lete I Damian aboute his nede,  
 And in my tale forth I wol procede. 2020  
 Somme clerkes holden that felicitee  
 Stant in delyt, and therefor certeyn he,  
 This noble Ianuarie, with al his might,  
 In honest wyse, as longeth to a knight,  
 Shoop him to live ful deliciously. 2025  
 His housinge, his array, as honestly  
 To his degree was maked as a kinges.  
 Amonges othere of his honest thinges,  
 He made a gardin, walled al with stoon;

So fair a gardin woot I nowher noon. 2030  
 For out of doute, I verraily suppose,  
 That he that wroote the Romance of the  
 Rose

Ne coude of it the beautee wel devyse;  
 Ne Priapus ne mighte nat suffyse,  
 Though he be god of gardins, for to  
 telle 2035

The beautee of the gardin and the welle,  
 That stood under a laurer alwey grene.  
 Ful ofte tyme he, Pluto, and his quene,  
 Proserpina, and al hir fayërye  
 Disporten hem and maken melodye 2040  
 Aboute that welle, and daunced, as men  
 tolde.

This noble knight, this Ianuarie the  
 olde,  
 Swich deintee hath in it to walke and  
 pleye,  
 That he wol no wight suffren bere the  
 keye

Save he him-self; for of the smale wiket  
 He bar alwey of silver a smal cliket, 2046  
 With which, whan that him leste, he it  
 unshette.

And whan he wolde paye his wyf hir dette  
 In somer seson, thider wolde he go,  
 And May his wyf, and no wight but they  
 two; 2050

And thinges whiche that were nat doon  
 a-bedde,  
 He in the gardin parfourned hem and  
 spedde.

And in this wyse, many a mery day,  
 Lived this Ianuarie and fresshe May.  
 But worldly Ioye may nat alwey dure 2055  
 To Ianuarie, ne to no creature.

O sodeyn hap, o thou fortune in-  
 stable, *Auctor.*

Lyk to the scorioun so deceivable,  
 That flaterest with thyn heed when thou  
 wolt stinge;

Thy tayl is deeth, thurgh thyn evenim-  
 inge. 2060

O brotil Ioye! o swete venim queynte!  
 O monstre, that so subtilly canst peynte  
 Thy yiftes, under hewe of stedfastnesse,  
 That thou deceyvest bothe more and lesse!  
 Why hastow Ianuarie thus deceyved, 2065  
 That haddest him for thy ful frend re-  
 ceived?

And now thou hast biraft him bothe hise  
 yën,

For sorwe of which desyareth he to dyen.  
 Allas! this noble Ianuarie free,  
 Amidde his lust and his prosperitee, 2070  
 Is woxen blind, and that al sodeynly.  
 He wepeth and he wayleth pitously;  
 And ther-with-al the fyr of Ialousye,  
 Lest that his wyf sholde falle in som  
 folye,

So brente his herte, that he wolde fayn  
 That som man bothe him and hir had  
 slayn. 2076

For neither after his deeth, nor in his lyf,  
 Ne wolde he that she were love ne wyf,  
 But ever live as widwe in clothes blake,  
 Soul as the turtle that lost hath hir  
 make. 2080

But atte laste, after a monthe or tweye,  
 His sorwe gan aswage, sooth to seye;  
 For whan he wiste it may noon other be,  
 He paciently took his adversitee;  
 Save, out of doute, he may nat for-  
 goon 2085

That he nas Ialous evermore in oon;  
 Which Ialousye it was so outrageous,  
 That neither in halle, nin noon other hous,  
 Ne in noon other place, never-the-mo,  
 He nolde suffre hir for to ryde or go, 2090  
 But-if that he had hand on hir alway;  
 For which ful ofte wepeth fresshe May,  
 That loveth Damian so benignely,  
 That she mot outhur dyen sodeynly,  
 Or elles she mot han him as hir leste; 2095  
 She wayteth whan hir herte wolde breste.

Up-on that other syde Damian  
 Bicomen is the sorwefullest man  
 That ever was; for neither night ne day  
 Ne mighte he speke a word to fresshe  
 May, 2100

As to his purpos, of no swich matere,  
 But-if that Ianuarie moste it here,  
 That hadde an hand up-on hir evermo.

But nathelees, by wryting to and fro  
 And privee signes, wiste he what she  
 mente; 2105

And she knew eek the fyn of his entente.

O Ianuarie, what mighte it thee  
 availle, *Auctor.*

Thou mightest see as fer as shippes saille?  
 For also good is blind deceyved be,  
 As be deceyved whan a man may se. 2110  
 Lo, Argus, which that hadde an hondred  
 yën,

For al that ever he coude poure or pryen,

Yet was he blent; and, god wot, so ben  
mo,

That went wisly that it be nat so.

Passé over is an ese, I sey na-more. 2115

This fresshe May, that I spak of so yore,  
In warme wex hath emprented the cliket,  
That Ianuarie bar of the smale wiket,  
By which in-to his gardin ofte he wente.  
And Damian, that knew al hir entente,  
The cliket countrefeted prively; 2121  
Ther nis na-more to seye, but hastily  
Som wonder by this cliket shal bityde,  
Which ye shul heren, if ye wole abyde.

O noble Ovyde, ful sooth seystou, god  
woot!

What sleighte is it, thogh it be long and  
hoot, 2126

That he nil finde it out in som manere?  
By Pirus and Tesbee may men lere;  
Thogh they were kept ful longe streite  
overal,

They ben accorded, rouninge thurgh a  
wal, 2130

Ther no wight coude han founde out  
swich a sleighte.

But now to purpos; er that dayes eighte  
Were passed, er the monthe of Iuil, bifil  
That Ianuarie hath caught so greet a wil,  
Thurgh egging of his wyf, him for to  
pleye 2135

In his gardin, and no wight but they  
tweye,

That in a morwe un-to this May seith he:  
'Rys up, my wyf, my love, my lady free;  
The turtles vois is herd, my douve swete;  
The winter is goon, with alle his reynes  
wete; 2140

Com forth now, with thyn eyen columbyn!  
How fairer been thy brestes than is wyn!  
The gardin is enclosed al aboute;

Com forth, my whyte spouse; out of doute,  
Thou hast me wounded in myn herte, o  
wyf! 2145

No spot of thee ne knew I al my lyf.  
Com forth, and lat us taken our disport;  
I chees thee for my wyf and my confort.'

Swiche olde lewed wordes used he;  
On Damian a signe made she, 2150

That he sholde go biforen with his cliket:  
This Damian thanne hath opened the  
wiket,

And in he stirte, and that in swich man-  
ere,

That no wight mighte it see neither  
y-here;

And stille he sit under a bush anon. 2155

This Ianuarie, as blind as is a stoon,  
With Maius in his hand, and no wight mo,  
In-to his fresshe gardin is ago,  
And clapte to the wiket so deynly.

'Now, wyf,' quod he, 'heer nis but thou  
and I, 2160

That art the creature that I best love.  
For, by that lord that sit in heven above,  
Lever ich hadde dyen on a knyf,  
Than thee offende, trewe dere wyf!

For goddes sake, thank how I thee  
chees, 2165

Noght for no coveityse, doutelees,  
But only for the love I had to thee.

And thogh that I be old, and may nat  
see,

Beth to me trewe, and I shal telle yow  
why.

Three thinges, certes, shul ye winne  
ther-by; 2170

First, love of Crist, and to your-self hon-  
our,

And al myn heritage, toun and tour;  
I yeve it yow, maketh chartres as yow  
leste;

This shal be doon to-morwe er sonne  
reste. 2174

So wisly god my soule bringe in blisse,  
I prey yow first, in covenant ye me kisse.  
And thogh that I be Ialous, wyte me  
noght.

Ye been so depe enprented in my thought,  
That, whan that I considere your beautee,  
And ther-with-al the unlykly elde of  
me, 2180

I may nat, certes, thogh I sholde dye,  
Forbere to been out of your companye  
For verray love; this is with-outen doute.  
Now kis me, wyf, and lat us rome aboute.'

This fresshe May, whan she these  
wordes herde, 2185

Benignely to Ianuarie answerde,  
But first and forward she bigan to wepe,  
'I have,' quod she, 'a soule for to kepe  
As wel as ye, and also myn honour, 2189

And of my wyfhod thilke tendre flour,  
Which that I have assured in your hond,  
Whan that the preest to yow my body  
bond;

Wherfore I wole answer in this manere

By the leve of yow, my lord so dere : 2194  
I prey to god, that never dawe the day  
That I ne sterve, as foule as womman  
may,

If ever I do un-to my kin that shame,  
Or elles I empeyre so my name,  
That I be fals; and if I do that lakke,  
Do strepe me and put me in a sakke, 2200  
And in the nexte river do me drenche.  
I am a gentil womman and no wenche.  
Why speke ye thus ? but men ben ever  
untrewe,

And wommen have repreve of yow ay  
newe.

Ye han non other contenance, I leve, 2205  
But speke to us of untrust and repreve.}

And with that word she saugh wher  
Damian

Sat in the bush, and coughen she bigan,  
And with her finger signes made she, 2209  
That Damian sholde climbe up-on a tree,  
That charged was with fruit, and up he  
wente ;

For verrailly he knew al hir entente,  
And every signe that she coude make  
Wel bet than Ianuarie, hir owene make  
For in a lettre she had told him al 2215  
Of this matere, how he werchen shal.

And thus I lete him sitte up-on the pyrie,  
And Ianuarie and May rominge myrie.

Bright was the day, and blew the fir-  
mament, 2219

Phebus of gold his stremes doun hath sent,  
To gladen every flour with his warmnesse.

He was that tyme in *Geminis*, as I gesse,  
But litel fro his declinacioun

Of Cancer, Iovis exaltacioun. 2224

And so bifel, that brighte morwe-tyde,  
That in that gardin, in the ferther syde,

Pluto, that is the king of fayërye,  
And many a lady in his companye,

Folwinge his wyf, the quene Proserpyne,  
Ech after other, right as any lyne — 2230

Whil that she gadered floures in the mede,  
In Claudian ye may the story rede,

How in his grisly carte he hir fette : —  
This king of fairye thanne adoun him sette

Up-on a bench of turves, fresh and grene,  
And right anon thus seyde he to his  
quene. 2236

‘ My wyf,’ quod he, ‘ ther may no wight  
sey nay ;

Thexperience so preveth every day

The treson whiche that wommen doon to  
man.

Ten hondred thousand [stories] telle I  
can 2240

Notable of your untrouthe and brotilnesse.  
O Salomon, wys, richest of richesse,

Fulfuld of sapience and of worldly glorie,  
Ful worthy been thy wordes to memorie

To every wight that wit and reson  
can. 2245

Thus preiseth he yet the bountee of man :  
“ Amonges a thousand men yet fond I

oon,  
But of wommen alle fond I noon.”

Thus seith the king that knoweth your  
wikkednesse ;

And Iesus *filius Syrak*, as I gesse, 2250  
Ne speketh of yow but selde reverence.

A wilde fyr and corrupt pestilence  
So falle up-on your bodies yet to-night !

Ne see ye nat this honourable knight,  
By-cause, allas ! that he is blind and

old, 2255  
His owene man shal make him cokewold ;

Lo heer he sit, the lechour, in the tree.  
Now wol I graunten, of my magestee,

Un-to this olde blinde worthy knight  
That he shal have ayeyn his eyen sight,

Whan that his wyf wold doon him vil-  
einye ; 2261

Than shal he knowen al hir harlotrye  
Both in repreve of hir and othere mo.’

‘ Ye shal,’ quod Proserpyne, ‘ wol ye so ;  
Now, by my modres sires soule I

swere, 2265  
That I shal yeven hir suffisant answee,

And alle wommen after, for hir sake ;  
That, though they be in any gilt y-take,

With face bold they shulle hem-self ex-  
cuse,

And bere hem doun that wolden hem ac-  
cuse. 2270

For lakke of answer, noon of hem shal  
dyen.

Al hadde man seyn a thing with bothe  
his yën,

Yit shul we wommen visage it hardily,  
And wepe, and swere, and chyde subtilly,

So that ye men shul been as lewed as  
gees. 2275

What rekketh me of your auctoritees ?  
I woot wel that this Iew, this Salomon,

Fond of us wommen foles many oon.

But though that he ne fond no good  
womman,  
Yet hath ther founde many another man  
Wommen ful trewe, ful gode, and vertu-  
ous. 2281  
Witnesse on hem that dwelle in Cristes  
hous,  
With martirdom they preved hir con-  
stance.  
The Romayn gestes maken remembrance  
Of many a verray trewe wyf also. 2285  
But sire, ne be nat wrooth, al-be-it so,  
Though that he seyde he fond no good  
womman,  
I prey yow take the sentence of the man;  
He mente thus, that in sovereyn bontee  
Nis noon but god, that sit in Trini-  
tee. 2290  
Ey! for verray god, that nis but oon,  
What make ye so muche of Salomon?  
What though he made a temple, goddes  
hous?  
What though he were riche and glorious?  
So made he eek a temple of false god-  
dis, 2295  
How mighte he do a thing that more for-  
bode is?  
Pardee, as faire as ye his name emplastre,  
He was a lechour and an ydolastre;  
And in his elde he verray god forsook.  
And if that god ne hadde, as seith the  
book, 2300  
Y-spared him for his fadres sake, he  
sholde  
Have lost his regne rather than he wolde.  
I sette noght of al the vileinye,  
That ye of women wryte, a boterflye.  
I am a womman, nedes moot I speke,  
Or elles swelle til myn herte breke. 2306  
For sithen he seyde that we ben Iangle-  
resses,  
As ever hool I mote brouke my tresses,  
I shal nat spare, for no curteisye,  
To speke him harm that wolde us vil-  
einye.' 2310  
'Dame,' quod this Pluto, 'be no  
lenger wrooth;  
I yeve it up; but sith I swoor myn ooth  
That I wolde graunten him his sighte  
ageyn,  
My word shal stonde, I warne yow,  
certeyn.  
I am a king, it sit me noght to lye.' 2315

'And I,' quod she, 'a queene of  
fayërye.  
Hir answer shal she have, I under-  
take;  
Lat us na-more wordes heer-of make.  
For sothe, I wol no lenger yow con-  
trarie.' 2319  
Now lat us turne agayn to Ianuarie,  
That in the gardin with his faire May  
Singeth, ful merier than the papeiay,  
'Yow love I best, and shal, and other  
noon.'  
So longe aboute the aleyes is he goon,  
Til he was come agaynes thilke pyrie,  
Wher-as this Damian sitteth ful myrie  
An heigh, among the fresshe leves grene.  
This fresshe May, that is so bright and  
shene,  
Gan for to syke, and seyde, 'allas, my  
syde!  
Now sir,' quod she, 'for aught that may  
bityde,' 2330  
I moste han of the peres that I see,  
Or I mot dye, so sore longeth me  
To eten of the smale peres grene.  
Help, for hir love that is of hevене  
quene! 2334  
I telle yow wel, a womman in my plyt  
May han to fruit so greet an appetyt,  
That she may dyen, but she of it have.'  
'Allas!' quod he, 'that I ne had  
heer a knave  
That coude climbe; allas! allas!' quod  
he,  
'That I am blind.' 'Ye, sir, no fors,'  
quod she: 2340  
'But wolde ye vouche-sauf, for goddes  
sake,  
The pyrie inwith your armes for to  
take,  
(For wel I woot that ye mistruste me)  
Thanne sholde I climbe wel y-nogh,'  
quod she,  
'So I my foot mighte sette upon your  
bak.' 2345  
'Certes,' quod he, 'ther-on shal be no  
lak,  
Mighte I yow helpen with myn herte  
blood.'  
He stoupeth doun, and on his bak she  
stood,  
And caughte her by a twiste, and up  
she gooth.

Ladies, I prey yow that ye be nat  
wrooth; 2350  
I can nat glose, I am a rude man.  
And sodeynly anon this Damian  
Gan pullen up the smok, and in he  
throng.  
And whan that Pluto saugh this grete  
wrong,  
To Ianuarie he gaf agayn his sighte, 2355  
And made him see, as wel as ever he  
michte.  
And whan that he hadde caught his  
sighte agayn,  
Ne was ther never man of thing so fayn.  
But on his wyf his thought was evermo;  
Up to the tree he caste his eyen two,  
And saugh that Damian his wyf had  
dressed 2361  
In swich manere, it may nat ben ex-  
pressed  
But if I wolde speke uncurteisly:  
And up he yaf a roing and a cry  
As doth the moder whan the child shal  
dye: 2365  
'Out! help! allas! harrow!' he gan to  
crye,  
'O stronge lady store, what dostow?'  
And she answerde, 'sir, what eyleth  
yow?  
Have pacience, and reson in your  
minde,  
I have yow holpe on bothe your eyen  
blinde. 2370  
Up peril of my soule, I shal nat lyen,  
As me was taught, to hele with your yën,  
Was no-thing bet to make yow to see  
Than strugle with a man up-on a tree.  
God woot, I dide it in ful good entente.'  
'Strugle!' quod he, 'ye, algate in it  
wente! 2376  
God yeve yow bothe on shames deeth  
to dyen!  
He swyded thee, I saugh it with myne yën,  
And elles be I hanged by the hals.'  
'Thanne is,' quod she, 'my medicine  
al fals; 2380  
For certainly, if that ye mighte see,  
Ye wolde nat seyn these wordes un-to me;  
Ye han som glimsing and no parfit sighte.'  
'I see,' quod he, 'as wel as ever I  
mighte,

Thonked be god! with bothe myne  
eyen two, 2385  
And by my trouthe, me thoughte he  
dide thee so.'  
'Ye maze, maze, gode sire,' quod she,  
'This thank have I for I have maad yow  
see;  
Allas!' quod she, 'that ever I was so  
kinde!'  
'Now, dame,' quod he, 'lat al passe  
out of minde. 2390  
Com down, my lief, and if I have mis-  
sayd,  
God help me so, as I am yvel apayd.  
But, by my fader soule, I wende han  
seyn,  
How that this Damian had by thee  
leyn,  
And that thy smok had leyn up-on his  
breast.' 2395  
'Ye, sire,' quod she, 'ye may wene as  
yow lest;  
But, sire, a man that waketh out of his  
sleep,  
He may nat sodeynly wel taken keep  
Up-on a thing, ne seen it parfitly,  
Til that he be adawed verraily; 2400  
Right so a man, that longe hath blind  
y-be,  
Ne may nat sodeynly so wel y-see,  
First whan his sighte is newe come  
ageyn,  
As he that hath a day or two y-seyn. 2404  
Til that your sighte y-satled be a while,  
Ther may ful many a sighte yow bigyle.  
Beth war, I prey yow; for, by hevене  
king,  
Ful many a man weneth to seen a thing,  
And it is al another than it semeth.  
He that misconceyveh, he misdemeth.'  
And with that word she leep down for  
the tree. 2411  
This Ianuarie, who is glad but he?  
He kisseth hir, and clippeth hir ful ofte,  
And on hir wombe he stroketh hir ful  
softe, 2414  
And to his palays hoom he hath hir lad.  
Now, gode men, I pray yow to be glad.  
Thus endeth heer my tale of Ianuarie;  
God blesse us and his moder Seinte  
Marie!

*Here is ended the Marchantes Tale of Ianuarie.*



## EPILOGUE TO THE MARCHANTES TALE.

'Ey! goddes mercy!' seyde our Hoste  
tho,  
'Now swich a wyf I pray god kepe me  
fro! 2420  
Lo, whiche sleightes and subtilitees  
In wommen been! for ay as bisy as bees  
Ben they, us sely men for to deceyve,  
And from a sothe ever wol they weyve;  
By this Marchautes Tale it preveth  
weel. 2425  
But doutelees, as trewe as any steel  
I have a wyf, though that she povre be;  
But of hir tonge a labbing shrewe is she,  
And yet she hath an heap of vyces mo;

Ther-of no fors, lat alle swiche thinges  
go. 2430  
But, wite ye what? in conseil be it seyde,  
Me reweth sore I am un-to hir teyd.  
For, and I sholde rekenen every vyce  
Which that she hath, y-wis, I were to  
nyce, 2434  
And cause why; it sholde reported be  
And told to hir of somme of this meynce;  
Of whom, it nedeth nat for to declare,  
Sin wommen connen outen swich chaf-  
fare;  
And eek my wit suffyseth nat ther-to  
To tellen al; wherfor my tale is do.' 2440

## GROUP F.

## THE SQUIERES TALE.

## [THE SQUIRE'S PROLOGUE.]

'SQUIER, com neer, if it your wille be,  
And sey somewhat of love; for, certes, ye  
Connen ther-on as muche as any man.'  
'Nay, sir,' quod he, 'but I wol seyde as I  
can  
With hertly wille; for I wol nat rebelle 5  
Agayn your lust; a tale wol I telle.  
Have me excused if I speke amis,  
My wil is good; and lo, my tale is this.

*Here biginneth the Squieres Tale.*

At Sarray, in the land of Tartarye,  
Ther dwelte a king, that werreyed  
Russye, 10  
Thurgh which ther deyde many a doughty  
man.  
This noble king was cleped Cambinskan,  
Which in his tyme was of so greet renoun  
That ther nas no-where in no regioun  
So excellent a lord in alle thing; 15  
Him lakked noght that longeth to a  
king.

As of the secte of which that he was  
born  
He kepte his lay, to which that he was  
sworn;  
And ther-to he was hardy, wys, and  
riche,  
And piëtous and iust, alwey y-liche. 20  
Sooth of his word, benigne and honour-  
able,  
Of his corage as any centre stable;  
Yong, fresh, and strong, in armes desir-  
ous  
As any bachelor of al his hous.  
A fair persone he was and fortunat, 25  
And kepte alwey so wel royal estat,  
That ther was nowher swich another  
man.  
This noble king, this Tartre Cambinskan  
Hadde two sones on Elpheta his wyf,  
Of whiche the eldeste highte Algarsyf, 30  
That other sone was cleped Cambalo.  
A doghter hadde this worthy king also,  
That yongest was, and highte Canacee.  
But for to telle yow al hir beautee, 34  
It lyth nat in my tonge, nin my conning;

I dar nat undertake so heigh a thing.  
 Myn English eek is insufficient;  
 It moste been a rethor excellent,  
 That coude his colours longing for that  
 art,  
 If he sholde hir discryven every part. 40  
 I am non swich, I moot speke as I can.  
 And so bifel that, whan this Cam-  
 binskan  
 Hath twenty winter born his diademe,  
 As he was wont fro yeer to yeer, I deme,  
 He leet the feste of his nativitee 45  
 Don cryen thurghout Sarray his citee,  
 The last Idus of March, after the yeer.  
 Phebus the sonne ful Ioly was and cleer;  
 For he was neigh his exaltacioun  
 In Martes face, and in his mansioun 50  
 In aries, the colerik hote signe.  
 Ful lusty was the weder and benigne,  
 For whiche the foules, agayn the sonne  
 shene,  
 What for the seson and the yonge grene,  
 Ful loude songen hir affeccions; 55  
 Him semed han geten hem protecciouns  
 Agayn the swerd of winter kene and  
 cold.  
 This Cambinskan, of which I have yow  
 told,  
 In royal vestiment sit on his deys,  
 With diademe, ful heighe in his paleys, 60  
 And halt his feste, so solempne and so  
 riche  
 That in this world ne was ther noon it  
 liche.  
 Of which if I shal tellen al tharray,  
 Than wolde it occupye a someres day;  
 And eek it nedeth nat for to devyse 6  
 At every cours the ordre of hir servyse.  
 I wol nat tellen of hir strange sewes,  
 Ne of hir swannes, ne of hir heronsewes.  
 Eek in that lond, as tellen knightes olde,  
 Ther is som mete that is ful deyntee  
 holde, 70  
 That in this lond men recche of it but  
 smal;  
 Ther nis no man that may reporten al.  
 I wol nat tarien yow, for it is pryme,  
 And for it is no fruit but los of tyme;  
 Un-to my firste I wol have my recours. 75  
 And so bifel that, after the thridde  
 cours,  
 Whyl that this king sit thus in his no-  
 bleye,

Herkninge his minstralles hir thinges  
 pleye  
 Biforn him at the bord deliciously,  
 In at the halle-dore al sodeynly 80  
 Ther cam a knight up-on a stede of  
 bras,  
 And in his hand a brood mirour of glas.  
 Upon his thombe he hadde of gold a  
 ring,  
 And by his syde a naked swerd hanging;  
 And up he rydeth to the heighe bord. 85  
 In al the halle ne was ther spoke a word  
 For merveille of this knight; him to bi-  
 holde  
 Ful bisily ther wayten yonge and olde.  
 This strange knight, that cam thus  
 sodeynly,  
 Al armed save his heed ful richely, 90  
 Saluëth king and queen, and lordes alle,  
 By ordre, as they seten in the halle,  
 With so heigh reverence and obeisaunce  
 As wel in speche as in contenance,  
 That Gawain, with his olde curteisye, 95  
 Though he were come ageyn out of  
 Fairye,  
 Ne coude him nat amende with a word.  
 And after this, biforn the heighe bord,  
 He with a manly voys seith his message,  
 After the forme used in his langage, 100  
 With-ouen vyce of sillable or of lettre;  
 And, for his tale sholde seme the bettre,  
 Accordant to his wordes was his chere,  
 As techeth art of speche hem that it  
 lere;  
 Al-be-it that I can nat sounne his  
 style, 105  
 Ne can nat climben over so heigh a  
 style,  
 Yet seye I this, as to commune entente,  
 Thus muche amounteth al that ever he  
 mente,  
 If it so be that I have it in minde.  
 He seyde, 'the king of Arabie and of  
 Inde, 110  
 My lige lord, on this solempne day  
 Saluëth yow as he best can and may,  
 And sendeth yow, in honour of your  
 feste,  
 By me, that am al redy at your heste,  
 This stede of bras, that esily and wel 115  
 Can, in the space of o day naturel,  
 This is to seyn, in foure and twenty  
 houres,

Wher-so yow list, in droghte or elles  
shoures,

Beren your body in-to every place  
To which your herte wilneth for to  
pace 120

With-ouTEN wem of yow, thurgh foul or  
fair;

Or, if yow list to fleen as hye in the air  
As doth an egle, whan him list to sore,  
This same stede shal bere yow ever-more  
With-ouTEN harm, til ye be ther yow  
leste, 125

Though that ye slepen on his bak or  
reste;

And turne ayeyn, with wrything of a pin.  
He that it wroghte coude ful many a gin;  
He wayted many a constellacioun

Er he had doon this operacioun; 130  
And knew ful many a seel and many a  
bond.

This mirour eek, that I have in myn  
hond,

Hath swich a might, that men may in it  
see

Whan ther shal fallen any adversitee  
Un-to your regne or to your-self also; 135  
And openly who is your freend or foo.

And over al this, if any lady bright  
Hath set hir herte on any maner wight,  
If he be fals, she shal his treson see,

His newe love and al his subtiltee 140  
So openly, that ther shal no-thing hyde.  
Wherfor, ageyn this lusty someres tyde,  
This mirour and this ring, that ye may  
see,

He hath sent to my lady Canacee,  
Your excellent doghter that is here. 145

The vertu of the ring, if ye wol here,  
Is this; that, if hir lust it for to were  
Up-on hir thombe, or in hir purs it bere,  
Ther is no foul that fleeth under the  
hevene

That she ne shal wel understonde his  
stevene, 150

And knowe his mening openly and pleyn,  
And answeere him in his langage ageyn.

And every gras that groweth up-on rote  
She shal eek knowe, and whom it wol do  
bote,

Al be his woundes never so depe and  
wyde. 155

This naked swerd, that hangeth by my  
syde,

Swich vertu hath, that what man so ye  
smyte,

Thurgh-out his armure it wol kerve and  
byte,

Were it as thikke as is a branched ook;  
And what man that is wounded with the  
strook 160

Shal never be hool til that yow list,  
of grace,

To stroke him with the platte in thilke  
place

Ther he is hurt: this is as muche to  
seyn,

Ye mote with the platte swerd ageyn  
Stroke him in the wounde, and it wol  
close; 165

This is a verray sooth, with-ouTEN glose,  
It filleth nat whyl it is in your hold.'

And whan this knight hath thus his  
tale told,

He rydeth out of halle, and doun he  
lighte.

His stede, which that shoon as sonne  
brigte, 170

Stant in the court, as stille as any stoon.  
This knight is to his chambre lad anon,  
And is unarmed and to mete y-set.

The presentes ben ful royally y-fet,  
This is to seyn, the swerd and the  
mirour, 175

And born anon in-to the heighe tour  
With certeine officers ordeyned therfore;  
And un-to Canacee this ring was bore  
Solempnely, ther she sit at the table.

But sikerly, with-ouTEN any fable, 180  
The hors of bras, that may nat be re-  
mewed,

It stant as it were to the ground y-glewed.  
Ther may no man out of the place it  
dryve

For noon engyn of windas or polyve;  
And cause why, for they can nat the  
craft. 185

And therefore in the place they han it  
laft

Til that the knight hath taught hem the  
manere

To voyden him, as ye shal after here.

Greet was the prees that swarmeth to  
and fro, 189

To gauren on this hors that stondesth so;  
For it so heigh was, and so brood and  
long,

So wel proporcioned for to ben strong,  
 Right as it were a stede of Lumbardye;  
 Ther-with so horsly, and so quik of yē  
 As it a gentil Poileys courser were. 195  
 For certes, fro his tayl un-to his ere,  
 Nature ne art ne coude him nat amende  
 In no degree, as al the peple wende.  
 But evermore hir moste wonder was,  
 How that it coude goon, and was of

bras; 200

It was of Fairye, as the peple semed.  
 Diverse folk diversely they demed;  
 As many hedes, as many wittes ther  
 been.

They murmureden as dooth a swarm of  
 been,

And maden skiles after hir fantasies, 205  
 Rehersinge of this olde poetrys,  
 And seyden, it was lyk the Pegasee,  
 The hors that hadde wings for to flee;  
 Or elles it was the Grekes hors Synon,  
 That broghte Troye to destruccion, 210  
 As men may in these olde gestes rede.  
 'Myn herte,' quod oon, 'is evermore in  
 drede;

I trowe som men of armes been ther-  
 inne,

That shapen hem this citee for to winne.  
 It were right good that al swich thing  
 were knowe.' 215

Another rownded to his felawe lowe,  
 And seyde, 'he lyeth, it is rather lyk  
 An apparence y-maad by som magyk,  
 As Iogelours pleyen at these festes grete.'  
 Of sondry doutes thus they Iangle and  
 trete, 220

As lewed peple demeth comunly  
 Of things that ben maad more subtilly  
 Than they can in her lewednes compre-  
 hende;

They demen gladly to the badder ende.  
 And somme of hem wondred on the  
 mirour, 225

That born was up in-to the maister-tour,  
 How men mighte in it swiche thinges  
 see.

Another answerde, and seyde it mighte  
 wel be

Naturelly, by composicionis  
 Of angles and of slye reflexiouns, 230  
 And seyden, that in Rome was swich oon.  
 They speken of Alocen and Vitulon,  
 And Aristotle, that writen in hir lyves

Of queynte mirours and of prospectyves,  
 As knowen they that han hir bokes  
 herd. 235

And othere folk han wondred on the  
 swerd

That wolde percen thurgh-out every-  
 thing;

And fille in speche of Thelophus the  
 king,

And of Achilles with his queynte spere,  
 For he coude with it bothe hele and  
 dere, 240

Right in swich wyse as men may with  
 the swerd

Of which right now ye han your-selven  
 herd.

They speken of sondry harding of metal,  
 And speke of medicynes ther-with-al,  
 And how, and whanne, it sholde y-harded  
 be; 245

Which is unknowe algates unto me.

Tho speke they of Canaceës ring,  
 And seyden alle, that swich a wonder  
 thing

Of craft of ringes herde they never non,  
 Save that he, Moyses, and king Salo-  
 mon 250

Hadde a name of konning in swich art.  
 Thus seyn the peple, and drawn hem  
 apart.

But natheles, somme seyden that it was  
 Wonder to maken of fern-asshen glas,  
 And yet nis glas nat lyk asshen of  
 fern; 255

But for they han y-knowen it so fern,  
 Therefore cesseth her Iangling and her  
 wonder.

As sore wondren somme on cause of  
 thonder,

On ebbe, on flood, on gossomer, and on  
 mist,

And alle thing, til that the cause is  
 wist. 260

Thus Iangle they and demen and devyse,  
 Til that the king gan fro the bord aryse.

Phebus hath laft the angle meridional,  
 And yet ascending was the beest royal,  
 The gentil Leon, with his Aldiaan 265

Whan that this Tartre king, this Cambin-  
 skan,

Roos fro his bord, ther that he sat ful  
 hye.

Toforn him gooth the loude minstralcye,

Til he cam to his chambre of parements,  
 Ther as they sownen diverse instruments,  
 That it is lyk an heven for to here. 271  
 Now dauncen lusty Venus children dere,  
 For in the Fish hir lady sat ful hye,  
 And loketh on hem with a freendly yē.

This noble king is set up in his  
 throne. 275

This strange knight is fet to him ful sone,  
 And on the daunce he gooth with Cana-  
 ce.

Heer is the revel and the Iolitee  
 That is nat able a dul man to devyse.

He moste han knowen love and his ser-  
 vyse, 280

And been a festlich man as fresh as May,  
 That sholde yow devysen swich array.

Who coude telle yow the forme of  
 daunces,

So uncouth and so fresshe contenaunces,  
 Swich subtil loking and dissimulinges 285  
 For drede of Ialouse mennes aperceyv-  
 inges?

No man but Launcelot, and he is deed.  
 Therefor I passe of al this lustiheed;

I seye na-more, but in this Iolynesse

I lete hem, til men to the soper dresse. 290

The styward bit the spyces for to hye,  
 And eek the wyn, in al this melodye.

The usshers and the squyers ben y-goon;  
 The spyces and the wyn is come anon.

They ete and drinke; and whan this  
 hadde an ende, 295

Un-to the temple, as reson was, they  
 wende.

The service doon, they soupen al by  
 day.

What nedeth yow rehercen hir array?

Ech man wot wel, that at a kinges feeste  
 Hath plentee, to the moste and to the  
 leeste, 300

And deyntees mo than been in my know-  
 ing.

At-after soper gooth this noble king  
 To seen this hors of bras, with al the  
 route

Of lordes and of ladyes him aboute.

Swich wondring was ther on this hors  
 of bras 305

That, sin the grete sege of Troye was,  
 Ther-as men wondreden on an hors also,

Ne was ther swich a wondring as was tho.  
 But fynally the king axeth this knight

The vertu of this courser and the might,  
 And preyede him to telle his gover-  
 naunce. 311

This hors anon bigan to trippe and  
 daunce,

Whan that this knight leyde hand up-on  
 his reyne,

And seyde, 'sir, ther is na-more to seyne,  
 But, whan yow list to ryden any-  
 where, 315

Ye moten trille a pin, stant in his ere,  
 Which I shall telle yow bitwix vs two.

Ye mote nempne him to what place also  
 Or to what contree that yow list to ryde.

And whan ye come ther as yow list  
 abyde, 320

Bidde him descende, and trille another  
 pin,

For ther-in lyth the effect of al the gin,  
 And he wol down descende and doon  
 your wille;

And in that place he wol abyde stille,  
 Though al the world the contrarie hadde  
 y-swore; 325

He shal nat thennes ben y-drawe ne  
 y-bore.

Or, if yow liste bidde him thennes goon,  
 Trille this pin, and he wol vanishe anon

Out of the sighte of every maner wight,  
 And come agayn, be it by day or night, 330

When that yow list to clepen him ageyn  
 In swich a gyse as I shal to yow sey

Bitwixe yow and me, and that ful sone.  
 Ryde whan yow list, ther is na-more to  
 done.'

Enformed whan the king was of that  
 knight, 335

And hath conceyved in his wit aright  
 The maner and the forme of al this thing,  
 Thus glad and blythe, this noble doughty  
 king

Repeireth to his revel as biforn.  
 The brydel is un-to the tour y-born, 340

And kept among his Iewels leve and dere.  
 The hors vanished, I noot in what man-  
 ere,

Out of hir sighte; ye gete na-more of me.  
 But this I lete in lust and Iolitee

This Cambynskan his lordes festeynge,  
 Til wel ny the day bigan to springe. 346

*Explicit prima pars. Sequitur pars  
 secunda.*

The norice of digestioun, the slepe,  
 Gan on hem winke, and bad hem taken  
 kepe,  
 That muchel drink and labour wolde han  
 reste;

And with a galping mouth hem alle he  
 keste, 350

And seyde, 'it was tyme to lye adoun,  
 For blood was in his dominacioun;  
 Cherissheth blood, natures freend,' quod  
 he.

They thanken him galpinge, by two, by  
 three,

And every wight gan drawe him to his  
 reste, 355

As slepe hem bad; they toke it for the  
 beste.

Hir dremes shul nat been y-told for me;  
 Ful were hir hedes of fumositee,  
 That causeth dreem, of which ther nis no  
 charge. 359

They slepen til that it was pryne large,  
 The moste part, but it were Canacee;  
 She was ful mesurable, as wommen be.

For of hir fader hadde she take leve  
 To gon to reste, sone after it was eve;  
 Hir liste nat appalled for to be, 365

Nor on the morwe unfestlich for to see;  
 And slepte hir firste sleep, and thanne  
 awook.

For swich a Loye she in hir herte took  
 Both of hir queynte ring and hir mirour,  
 That twenty tyme she changed hir col-  
 our; 370

And in hir slepe, right for impressioun  
 Of hir mirour, she hadde a visioun.

Wherfore, er that the sonne gan up glyde,  
 She cleped on hir maistresse hir bisyde,  
 And seyde, that hir liste for to ryse. 375

These olde women that been gladly  
 wyse,

As is hir maistresse, answerde hir anon,  
 And seyde, 'madame, whider wil ye goon  
 Thus erly? for the folk ben alle on reste.'  
 'I wol,' quod she, 'aryse, for me leste 380  
 No longer for to slepe, and walke aboute.'

Hir maistresse clepeth wommen a gret  
 route,

And up they rysen, wel a ten or twelve;  
 Up ryseth fresshe Canacee hir-selve,  
 As rody and bright as dooth the yonge  
 sonne, 385

That in the Ram is four degrees up-ronne;

Noon hyer was he, whan she reddy was;  
 And forth she walketh esily a pas,  
 Arrayed after the lusty seson sote  
 Lightly, for to pleye and walke on  
 fote; 390

Nat but with fyve or six of hir meynee;  
 And in a trench, forth in the park, goth  
 she.

The vapour, which that fro the erthe glood,  
 Made the sonne to seme rody and brood;  
 But nathelees, it was so fair a sighte 395  
 That it made alle hir hertes for to lighte,  
 What for the seson and the morweninge,  
 And for the foules that she herde singe;  
 For right anon she wiste what they mente  
 Right by hir song, and knew al hir en-  
 tente. 400

The knotte, why that every tale is told,  
 If it be taried til that lust be cold  
 Of hem that han it after herked yore,  
 The savour passeth ever lenger the more,  
 For fulsomnesse of his prolixitee. 405  
 And by the same reson thinketh me,  
 I sholde to the knotte condescende,  
 And maken of hir walking sone an ende.

Amidde a tree fordrye, as whyt as chalk,  
 As Canacee was pleying in hir walk, 410  
 Ther sat a faucon over hir heed ful hye,  
 That with a pitous voys so gan to crye  
 That all the wode resounded of hir cry.

Y-beten hath she hir-self so pitously  
 With bothe hir wings, til the rede  
 blood 415

Ran endelong the tree ther-as she stood.  
 And ever in oon she cryde alwey and  
 shrighthe,

And with hir beek hir-selven so she  
 prighthe,

That ther nis tygre, ne noon so cruel  
 beste,

That dwelleth either in wode or in  
 foreste 420

That nolde han wept, if that he wepe  
 coude,

For sorwe of hir, she shrighthe alwey so  
 loude.

For ther nas never yet no man on lyve —  
 If that I coude a faucon wel discryve —  
 That herde of swich another of fairnesse,  
 As wel of plumage as of gentillesse 426  
 Of shap, and al that mighte y-rekened  
 be.

A faucon peregryn than semed she

Of fremde land; and evermore, as she  
stood,  
She swoneth now and now for lakke of  
blood, 430  
Til wel neigh is she fallen fro the tree.

This faire kinges doghter, Canacee,  
That on hir finger bar the queynte ring,  
Thurgh which she understood wel every  
thing  
That any foul may in his ledene seyn, 435  
And coude answer him in his ledene  
ageyn,  
Hath understonde what this faucon  
seyde,  
And wel neigh for the rewthe almost  
she deyde.

And to the tree she gooth ful hastily,  
And on this faucon loketh pitously, 440  
And heeld hir lappe abrood, for wel  
she wiste

The faucon moste fallen fro the twiste,  
When that it swowned next, for lakke of  
blood.

A longe while to wayten hir she stood  
Till atte laste she spak in this manere 445  
Un-to the hawk, as ye shul after here.

'What is the cause, if it be for to telle,  
That ye be in this furial pyne of helle?'  
Quod Canacee un-to this hawk above.  
'Is this for sorwe of deeth or los of  
love? 450

For, as I trowe, thise ben causes two  
That causen moost a gentil herte wo;  
Of other harm it nedeth nat to speke.  
For ye your-self upon your-self yow  
wreke,

Which proveth wel, that either love or  
drede 455

Mot been encheson of your cruel dede,  
Sin that I see non other wight yow  
chace.

For love of god, as dooth your-selven  
grace

Or what may ben your help; for west  
nor eest 459

Ne sey I never er now no brid ne beest  
That ferde with him-self so pitously.  
Ye slee me with your sorwe, verraily;  
I have of yow so gret compassioun.

For goddes love, com fro the tree adoun;  
And, as I am a kinges doghter trewe, 465  
If that I verraily the cause knewe  
Of your disese, if it lay in my micht,

I wolde amende it, er that it were night,  
As wisly helpe me gret god of kinde!  
And herbes shal I right y-nowe y-finde  
To hele with your hurtes hastily.' 471

Tho shrighthe this faucon more pitously  
Than ever she dide, and fil to grounde  
anoon,  
And lyth aswowne, deed, and lyk a  
stoon,

Til Canacee hath in hir lappe hir take 475  
Un-to the tyme she gan of swough  
awake.

And, after that she of hir swough gan  
breyde,  
Right in hir haukes ledene thus she  
seyde:—

'That pitee renneth sone in gentil herte,  
Feling his similitude in peynes smerte,  
Is preved al-day, as men may it see, 481  
As wel by werk as by auctoritee;

For gentil herte kytheth gentillesse.  
I see wel, that ye han of my distresse  
Compassioun, my faire Canacee', 485

Of verray wommanly benignitee  
That nature in your principles hath set.  
But for non hope for to fare the bet,  
But for to obeye un-to your herte free,  
And for to maken other be war by me, 490  
As by the whelp chasted is the leoun,  
Right for that cause and that conclu-  
sioun,

Whyl that I have a leyser and a space,  
Myn harm I wol confessen, er I pace.'  
And ever, whyl that oon hir sorwe tolde,  
That other weep, as she to water wolde,  
Til that the faucon bad hir to be stille;  
And, with a syk, right thus she seyde  
hir wille.

'Ther I was bred (allas! that harde  
day!) 499

And fostred in a roche of marbul gray  
So tendrely, that nothing eyed me,  
I niste nat what was adversitee,  
Til I coude flee ful hye under the sky.

Tho dwelte a tercelet me faste by,  
That semed welle of alle gentillesse; 505  
Al were he ful of treson and falsnesse,  
It was so wrapped under humble chere,  
And under hewe of trouthe in swich  
manere,

Under plesance, and under bisy peyne,  
That no wight coude han wend he coude  
feyne, 510

So depe in greyn he dyed his coloures.  
 Right as a serpent hit him under floures  
 Til he may seen his tyme for to byte,  
 Right so this god of love, this ypocryte,  
 Doth so his cerimonies and obeisaunces,  
 And kepeth in semblant alle his obser-  
 vances 516

Than sowneth in-to gentillesse of love.  
 As in a tounge is al the faire above,  
 And under is the corps, swich as ye woot,  
 Swich was this ypocryte, bothe cold and  
 hoot, 520

And in this wyse he served his entente,  
 That (save the feend) non wiste what he  
 mente.

Til he so longe had wopen and com-  
 pleyned,  
 And many a yeer his service to me  
 feyned,

Til that myn herte, to pitous and to nyce,  
 Al innocent of his crowned malice, 526  
 For-fered of his deeth, as thoughte me,  
 Upon his othes and his seuretee,  
 Graunted him love, on this condicioun,  
 That evermore myn honour and renoun  
 Were saved, bothe privee and apert; 531  
 This is to seyn, that, after his desert,  
 I yaf him al myn herte and al my  
 thought—

God woot and he, that otherwyse  
 nought—

And took his herte in chaunge for myn  
 for ay. 535

But sooth is seyde, gon sithen many a  
 day,

“A trew wight and a theef thenken nat  
 oon.”

And, whan he saugh the thing so fer  
 y-gooun,

That I had graunted him fully my love,  
 In swich a gyse as I have seyde above, 540

And yeven him my trewe herte, as free  
 As he swoor he his herte yaf to me;

Anon this tygre, ful of doublenesse,  
 Fil on his knees with so devout hum-  
 bllesse,

With so heigh reverence, and, as by his  
 chere, 545

So lyk a gentil lovere of manere,  
 So ravished, as it semed, for the Ioye,

That never Iason, ne Parys of Troye,  
 Iason? certes, ne non other man,

Sin Lameth was, that alderfirst bigan 550

To loven two, as writen folk biforn,  
 Ne never, sin the firste man was born,  
 Ne coude man, by twenty thousand part,  
 Countrefete the sophimes of his art;  
 Ne were worthy unbokete his galoche, 555  
 Ther doublenesse or feyning sholde ap-  
 proche,

Ne so coude thanke a wight as he did me:  
 His maner was an heven for to see

Til any womman, were she never so wys;  
 So peynted he and kembde at point-devys

As wel his wordes as his contenance. 561  
 And I so lovede him for his obeisaunce,  
 And for the trouthe I demed in his herte,

That, if so were that any thing him  
 smerte, 564

Al were it never so lyte, and I it wiste,  
 Me thoughte, I felte deeth myn herte

twiste.

And shortly, so ferforth this thing is went,  
 That my wil was his willes instrument;

This is to seyn, my wil obeyed his wil  
 In alle thing, as fer as reson fil, 570

Keping the boundes of my worship ever.  
 Ne never hadde I thing so leef, ne lever,

As him, god woot! ne never shal na-mo.

This lasteth lenger than a yeer or two,  
 That I supposed of him nought but good.

But fynally, thus atte laste it stood, 576  
 That fortune wolde that he moste twinne  
 Out of that place which that I was inne.

Wher me was wo, that is no questioun;  
 I can nat make of it discripcioun; 580

For o thing dar I tellen boldely,  
 I knowe what is the peyne of deth ther-

by;  
 Swich harm I felte for he ne mighte bi-

leve.

So on a day of me he took his leve, 584  
 So sorwefully eek, that I wende verrailly

That he had felt as muche harm as I,  
 Whan that I herde him speke, and saugh

his hewe.  
 But natheles, I thoughte he was so

trewe,  
 And eek that he repaire sholde ageyn

With-inne a litel whyle, sooth to seyn;  
 And reson wolde eek that he moste go 590

For his honour, as ofte it happeth so,  
 That I made vertu of necessitee,

And took it wel, sin that it moste be.  
 As I best mighte, I hidde fro him m

sorwe, 599



And took him by the hond, seint Iohn to  
 borwe,  
 And seyde him thus: "lo, I am youres  
 al;  
 Beth swich as I to yow have been, and  
 shal."  
 What he answerde, it nedeth noght re-  
 herce,  
 Who can sey bet than he, who can do  
 werse? 600  
 Whan he hath al wel seyde, thanne hath  
 he doon.  
 "Therefor bihoveth him a ful long spoon  
 That shal ete with a feend," thus herde I  
 seye.  
 So atte laste he moste forth his weye,  
 And forth he fleeth, til he cam ther him  
 leste. 605  
 Whan it cam him to purpos for to reste,  
 I trowe he hadde thilke text in minde,  
 That "alle thing, repeiring to his kinde,  
 Gladeth him-self"; thus seyn men, as I  
 gesse;  
 Men loven of propre kinde newfangel-  
 nesse, 610  
 As briddes doon that men in cages fede.  
 For though thou night and day take of  
 hem hede,  
 And strawe hir cage faire and softe as  
 silk,  
 And yeve hem sugre, hony, breed and  
 milk, 614  
 Yet right anon, as that his dore is uppe,  
 He with his feet wol spurne adoun his  
 cuppe,  
 And to the wode he wol and wormes ete;  
 So newfangel been they of hir mete,  
 And loven novelryes of propre kinde;  
 No gentillesse of blood [ne] may hem  
 binde. 620  
 So ferde this tercelet, allas the day!  
 Though he were gentil born, and fresh  
 and gay,  
 And goodly for to seen, and humble and  
 free,  
 He saugh up-on a tyme a kyte flee,  
 And sodeynly he loved this kyte so, 625  
 That al his love is clene fro me ago,  
 And hath his trouthe falsed in this wyse;  
 Thus hath the kyte my love in hir seryyse,  
 And I am lorn with-outen remedye!  
 And with that word this faucon gan to  
 crye, 630

And swowned eft in Canaccës barme.  
 Greet was the sorwe, for the haukes  
 harme,  
 That Canacee and alle hir wommen  
 made;  
 They niste how they mighte the faucon  
 glade. 634  
 But Canacee hom bereth hir in hir lappe,  
 And softely in plastres gan hir wrappe,  
 Ther as she with hir beek had hurt hir-  
 selve.  
 Now can nat Canacee but herbes delve  
 Out of the grounde, and make salves  
 newe 639  
 Of herbes precious, and fyne of hewe,  
 To helen with this hawk; fro day to  
 night  
 She dooth hir businesse and al hir might.  
 And by hir beddes heed she made a  
 mewe,  
 And covered it with veluëttes blewe,  
 In signe of trouthe that is in wommen  
 sene. 645  
 And al with-oute, the mewe is peynted  
 grene,  
 In which were peynted alle these false  
 foules,  
 As beth these tidifs, tercelets, and oules,  
 Right for despyt were peynted hem  
 bisyde, 649  
 And pyes, on hem for to crye and chyde.  
 Thus lete I Canacee hir hawk keping;  
 I wol na-more as now speke of hir ring,  
 Til it come eft to purpos for to seyn  
 How that this faucon gat hir love ageyn  
 Repentant, as the storie telleth us, 655  
 By mediacioun of Cambalus,  
 The kinges sone, of whiche I yow tolde.  
 But hennes-forth I wol my proces holde  
 To speke of adventures and of batailles,  
 That never yet was herd so grete mer-  
 vailles. 660  
 First wol I telle yow of Cambinskan,  
 That in his tyme many a citee wan;  
 And after wol I speke of Algarsyf,  
 How that he wan Theodora to his wyf,  
 For whom ful ofte in greet peril he  
 was, 665  
 Ne hadde he ben holpen by the stede of  
 bras;  
 And after wol I speke of Cambalo,  
 That faught in listes with the bretheren  
 two

For Canacee, er that he mighte hir winne.  
And ther I lefte I wol ageyn biginne. 670

*Explicit secunda pars. Incipit pars  
tercia.*

Appollo whirleth up his char so hye,  
Til that the god Mercurius hous the  
slye —

\* \* \* \* \*

*Here folwen the wordes of the Frankelin  
to the Squier, and the wordes of the  
Host to the Frankelin.*

'In feith, Squier, thou hast thee wel  
y-quit,  
And gentilly I preise wel thy wit,'  
Quod the Frankeleyn, 'considering thy  
youth, 675  
So feelingly thou spekest, sir, I allow  
the!

As to my doom, there is non that is here.  
Of eloquence that shal be thy pere,  
If that thou live; god yeve thee good  
chaunce, 679

And in vertu sende thee continuaunce!  
For of thy speche I have greet deyntee.  
I have a sone, and, by the Trinitee,  
I hadde lever than twenty pound worth  
lond,  
Though it right now were fallen in myn  
hond,

He were a man of swich discrecioun 685  
As that ye been! fy on possessioun  
But-if a man be vertuous with-al.  
I have my sone snibbed, and yet shal,  
For he to vertu listeth nat entende;  
But for to pleye at dees, and to de-  
spende, 690

And lese al that he hath, is his usage.  
And he hath lever talken with a page  
Than to comune with any gentil wight  
Ther he mighte lerne gentillesse aright.'

'Straw for your gentillesse,' quod our  
host; 695  
'What, frankeleyn? pardee, sir, wel  
thou wost

That eche of yow mot tellen atte leste  
A tale or two, or breken his biheste.'  
'That knowe I wel, sir,' quod the  
frankeleyn;

'I prey yow, haveth me nat in desdeyn  
Though to this man I speke a word or  
two.' 701

'Telle on thy tale with-uten wordes  
mo.'

'Gladly, sir host,' quod he, 'I wol  
obeye  
Un-to your wil; now herkneth what I  
seye.

I wol yow nat contrarien in no wyse 705  
As fer as that my wittes wol suffyse;  
I prey to god that it may plesen yow,  
'Than woot I wel that it is good y-now.'

[*The Frankleyn's Prologue follows immediately.*]

## THE FRANKLIN'S PROLOGUE.

*The Prologe of the Frankeleyns Tale.*

THISE olde gentil Britons in hir dayes  
Of diverse adventures maden layes, 710  
Rymeyed in hir firste Briton tonge;  
Which layes with hir instruments they  
songe,  
Or elles reddden hem for hir plesaunce;  
And oon of hem have I in remem-  
braunce,  
Which I shal seyn with good wil as I  
can. 715

But, sires, by-cause I am a burel man,  
At my biginning first I yow biseche

Have me excused of my rude speche;  
I lerned never rethoryk certeyn;  
Thing that I speke, it moot be bare and  
pleyn. 720

I sleep never on the mount of Pernaso,  
Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Cithero.  
Colours ne knowe I none, with-uten  
drede,

But swiche colours as growen in the  
mede,

Or elles swiche as men dye or peynte. 725  
Colours of rethoryk ben me to queynte;  
My spirit feleth noght of swich matere.  
But if yow list, my tale shul ye here.

## THE FRANKELEYNS TALE.

*Here biginneth the Frankeleyns Tale.*

In Armorik, that called is Britayne,  
 Ther was a knight that loved and dide his  
 payne 730  
 To serve a lady in his beste wyse;  
 And many a labour, many a greet em-  
 pryse  
 He for his lady wroghte, er she were  
 wonne.  
 For she was oon, the faireste under  
 sonne,  
 And eek therto come of so heigh kin-  
 rede, 735  
 That wel unnethes dorste this knight, for  
 drede,  
 Telle hir his wo, his peyne, and his dis-  
 tresse.  
 But atte laste, she, for his worthinesse,  
 And namely for his meke obeysaunce,  
 Hath swich a pitee caught of his pen-  
 aunce, 740  
 That prively she fil of his accord  
 To take him for hir housbonde and hir  
 lord,  
 Of swich lordshipe as men han over hir  
 wyves;  
 And for to lede the more in blisse hir  
 lyves,  
 Of his free wil he swoor hir as a  
 knight, 745  
 That never in al his lyf he, day ne night,  
 Ne sholde up-on him take no maistrye  
 Agayn hir wil, ne kythe hir Ialouslye,  
 But hir obeye, and folwe hir wil in al  
 As any lovere to his lady shal; 750  
 Save that the name of soveraynetee,  
 That wolde he have for shame of his de-  
 gree.  
 She thanked him, and with ful greet  
 humblesse  
 She seyde, 'sire, sith of your gentillesse  
 Ye profre me to have so large a reyne, 755  
 Ne wolde never god bitwixe us tweyne,  
 As in my gilt, were outhere werre or stryf.  
 Sir, I wol be your humble trewe wyf,  
 Have heer my trouthe, til that myn herte  
 breste.'

Thus been they bothe in quiete and in  
 reste. 760

For o thing, sires, sauflly dar I seye,  
 That frendes everich other moot obeye,  
 If they wol longe holden companye.  
 Love wol nat ben constreyned by mais-  
 trye;

Whan maistrie comth, the god of love  
 anon 765  
 Beteth hise winges, and farewell! he is  
 gon!

Love is a thing as any spirit free;  
 Wommen of kinde desiren libertee,  
 And nat to ben constreyned as a thral;  
 And so don men, if I soth seyen shal. 770  
 Loke who that is most pacient in love,  
 He is at his avantage al above.

Pacience is an heigh vertu certeyn;  
 For it venquisseth, as thise clerkes seyn,  
 Things that rigour sholde never att-  
 teyne. 775

For every word men may nat chyde or  
 pleyne.

Lerneth to suffre, or elles, so moot I  
 goon,

Ye shul it lerne, wher-so ye wole or  
 noon.

For in this world, certein, ther no wight is,  
 That he ne dooth or seith som-tyme  
 amis. 780

Ire, siknesse, or constellacioun,  
 Wyn, wo, or chaungeinge of complexioun  
 Causeth ful ofte to doon amis or speken.  
 On every wrong a man may nat be wroken;  
 After the tyme, moste be temperaunce 785  
 To every wight that can on governaunce.

And therefore hath this wyse worthy knight,  
 To live in ese, suffrance hir bihight,  
 And she to him ful wisly gan to swere  
 That never sholde ther be defaulte in  
 here. 790

Heer may men seen an humble wys  
 accord;

Thus hath she take hir servant and hir  
 lord,

Servant in love, and lord in mariage;  
 Than was he bothe in lordship and ser-  
 vage;

Servage? nay, but in lordshipe above,  
 Sith he hath bothe his lady and his love;  
 His lady, certes, and his wyf also,  
 The which that lawe of love acordeth to.  
 And when he was in this prosperitee,  
 Hoom with his wyf he gooth to his con-  
 tree, 800  
 Nat fer fro Penmark, ther his dwelling  
 was,

Wher-as he liveth in blisse and in solas.  
 Who coude telle, but he had wedded  
 be,

The Joye, the ese, and the prosperitee  
 That is bitwixe an housbonde and his  
 wyf? 805

A yeer and more lasted this blisful lyf,  
 Til that the knight of which I speke of  
 thus,

That of Kayrrud was cleped Arveragus,  
 Shoop him to goon, and dwelle a yeer or  
 tweyne

In Engelond, that cleped was eek Brit-  
 eyne, 810

To seke in armes worship and honour;  
 For al his lust he sette in swich labour;  
 And dwelled ther two yeer, the book  
 seith thus.

Now wol I stinte of this Arveragus,  
 And speken I wole of Dorigene his wyf,  
 That loveth hir housbonde as hir hertes  
 lyf. 816

For his absence wepeth she and syketh,  
 As doon thise noble wyves whan hem  
 lyketh.

She moorneth, waketh, wayleth, fasteth,  
 pleyneth;

Desyr of his presence hir so distreyneth,  
 That al this wyde world she sette at  
 noght. 821

Hir frendes, whiche that knewe hir hev-  
 thoght,

Conforten hir in al that ever they may;  
 They prechen hir, they telle hir night  
 and day, 824

That causeles she sleeth hir-self, alas!  
 And every confort possible in this cas  
 They doon to hir with al hir businesse,  
 Al for to make hir leve hir hevnesse.

By proces, as ye knowen everichoon,  
 Men may so longe graven in a stoon, 830  
 Til som figure ther-inne emprented be.  
 So longe han they comforted hir, til she  
 Receyved hath, by hope and by resoun,

The emprenting of hir consolacioun,  
 Thurgh which hir grete sorwe gan  
 aswage; 835

She may nat alwey duren in swich rage.  
 And eek Arveragus, in al this care,  
 Hath sent hir lettres hoom of his wel-  
 fare,

And that he wol come hastily agayn;  
 Or elles hadde this sorwe hir herte slayn.  
 Hir frendes sawe hir sorwe gan to  
 slake, 841

And preyede hir on knees, for goddes  
 sake,

To come and romen hir in companye,  
 Awey to dryve hir derke fantasye.

And finally, she graunted that requeste;  
 For wel she saugh that it was for the  
 beste. 846

Now stood hir castel faste by the see,  
 And often with hir frendes walketh she  
 Hir to disporte up-on the bank an heigh,  
 Wher-as she many a ship and barge  
 seigh 850

Seilinge hir cours, wher-as hem liste go;  
 But than was that a parcel of hir wo.

For to hir-self ful ofte 'allas!' seith she,  
 'Is ther no ship, of so manye as I sec,  
 Wol bringen hom my lord? than were  
 myn herte 855

Al warissed of his bittre peynes smerte.'  
 Another tyme ther wolde she sitte and  
 thinke,

And caste hir eyen downward fro the  
 brinke.

But whan she saugh the grisly rokkes  
 blake,

For verray fere so wolde hir herte quake,  
 That on hir feet she mighte hir noght  
 sustene. 861

Than wolde she sitte adoun upon the  
 grene,

And pitously in-to the see biholde,  
 And seyn right thus, with sorweful sykes  
 colde:

'Eterne god, that thurgh thy purvey-  
 aunce 865

Ledest the world by certein governaunce,  
 In ydel, as men seyn, ye no-thing make;  
 But, lord, thise grisly feendly rokkes  
 blake,

That semen rather a foul confusioun  
 Of werk than any fair creacioun 870  
 Of swich a parfit wys god and a stable,

Why han ye wrought this werk unresonable?  
 For by this werk, south, north, ne west,  
 ne eest,  
 Ther nis y-fostred man, ne brid, ne  
 beest;  
 It dooth no good, to my wit, but annoy-  
 eth. 875  
 See ye nat, lord, how mankinde it de-  
 stroyeth?  
 An hundred thousand bodies of man-  
 kinde  
 Han rokkes slayn, al be they nat in  
 minde,  
 Which mankinde is so fair part of thy  
 werk  
 That thou it madest lyk to thyn owene  
 merk. 880  
 Than semed it ye hadde a greet chiertee  
 Toward mankinde; but how than may  
 it be  
 That ye swiche menes make it to de-  
 stroyen,  
 Whiche menes do no good, but ever  
 anoyen?  
 I woot wel clerkes wol seyn, as hem  
 leste, 885  
 By arguments, that al is for the beste,  
 Tho I ne can the causes nat y-knowe.  
 But thilke god, that made wind to blowe,  
 As kepe my lord! this my conclusioun;  
 To clerkes lete I al disputisoun. 890  
 But wolde god that alle these rokkes  
 blake  
 Were sonken in-to helle for his sake!  
 These rokkes sleen myn herte for the  
 fere.  
 Thus wolde she seyn, with many a pitous  
 tere.  
 Hir freendes sawe that it was no dis-  
 port 895  
 To romen by the see, but discomfort;  
 And shopen for to pleyen somwher  
 elles.  
 They leden hir by riveres and by welles,  
 And eek in othere places delitable;  
 They dauncen, and they pleyen at ches  
 and tables. 900  
 So on a day, right in the morwe-tyde,  
 Un-to a gardin that was ther bisyde,  
 In which that they had maad hir ordi-  
 naunce  
 Of vaille and of other purveyaunce,

They goon and pleye hem al the longe  
 day. 905  
 And this was on the sixte morwe of May,  
 Which May had peynted with his softe  
 shoures  
 This gardin ful of leves and of floures;  
 And craft of mannes hand so curiously  
 Arrayed hadde this gardin, trewely, 910  
 That never was ther gardin of swich  
 prys,  
 But-if it were the verray paradys.  
 The odour of floures and the fresshe  
 sighte  
 Wolde han maad any herte for to lighte  
 That ever was born, but-if to gret sik-  
 nesse, 915  
 Or to gret sorwe helde it in distresse;  
 So ful it was of beautee with plesaunce.  
 At-after diner gonne they to daunce,  
 And singe also, save Dorigen allone,  
 Which made alwey hir compleint and hir  
 mone; 920  
 For she ne saugh him on the daunce go,  
 That was hir housbonde and hir love  
 also.  
 But nathelees she moste a tyme abyde,  
 And with good hope lete hir sorwe slyde.  
 Up-on this daunce, amonges othere  
 men, 925  
 Daunced a squyer biforen Dorigen,  
 That fressher was and Iolyer of array,  
 As to my doom, than is the monthe of  
 May.  
 He singeth, daunceth, passinge any man  
 That is, or was, sith that the world  
 bigan. 930  
 Ther-with he was, if men sholde him  
 discryve,  
 Oon of the beste faringe man on-lyve;  
 Yong, strong, right vertuous, and riche  
 and wys,  
 And wel biloved, and holden in gret  
 prys.  
 And shortly, if the sothe I tellen shal,  
 Unwiting of this Dorigen at al, 936  
 This lusty squyer, servant to Venus,  
 Which that y-cleped was Aurelius,  
 Had loved hir best of any creature  
 Two yeer and more, as was his aventure,  
 But never dorste he telle hir his grev-  
 aunce; 941  
 With-outhe coppe he drank al his pen-  
 aunce.

He was despeyred, no-thing dorste he  
 seye,  
 Save in his songes somwhat wolde he  
 wreye  
 His wo, as in a general compleyning; 945  
 He seyde he lovede, and was biloved  
 no-thing.  
 Of swich matere made he manye layes,  
 Songes, compleintes, roundels, virelayes,  
 How that he dorste nat his sorwe telle,  
 But languissheth, as a furie dooth in  
 helle; 950  
 And dye he moste, he seyde, as dide  
 Ekko  
 For Narcisus, that dorste nat telle hir  
 wo.  
 In other manere than ye here me seye,  
 Ne dorste he nat to hir his wo biwreye;  
 Save that, paraventure, som-tyme at  
 daunces, 955  
 Ther yonge folk kepen hir observaunces,  
 It may wel be he loked on hir face  
 In swich a wyse, as man that asketh  
 grace;  
 But no-thing wiste she of his entente.  
 Nathelees, it happed, er they thennes  
 wente, 960  
 By-cause that he was hir neighebour,  
 And was a man of worship and honour,  
 And hadde y-knowen him of tyme yore,  
 They fille in speche; and forth more and  
 more  
 Un-to his purpos drough Aurelius, 965  
 And whan he saugh his tyme, he seyde  
 thus:  
 'Madame,' quod he, 'by god that this  
 world made,  
 So that I wiste it mighte your herte  
 glade,  
 I wolde, that day that your Arveragus  
 Wente over the see, that I, Aurelius, 970  
 Had went ther never I sholde have come  
 agayn;  
 For wel I woot my service is in vayn.  
 My guerdon is but bresting of myn  
 herte;  
 Madame, reweth upon my peynes smerte;  
 For with a word ye may me sleen or  
 save, 975  
 Heer at your feet god wolde that I were  
 grave!  
 I ne have as now no leyser more to  
 seye;

Have mercy, swete, or ye wol do me  
 deye!'

She gan to loke up-on Aurelius:  
 'Is this your wil,' quod she, 'and sey ye  
 thus? 980  
 Never erst,' quod she, 'ne wiste I what  
 ye mente.  
 But now, Aurelie, I knowe your entente,  
 By thilke god that yaf me soule and lyf,  
 Ne shal I never been untrewed wyf  
 In word ne werk, as fer as I have  
 wit: 985  
 I wol ben his to whom that I am knit;  
 Tak this for fynal answer as of me.'  
 But after that in pley thus seyde she:  
 'Aurelie,' quod she, 'by heighe god  
 above,  
 Yet wolde I graunte yow to been your  
 love, 990  
 Sin I yow see so pitously complayne;  
 Loke what day that, endelong Britayne,  
 Ye remoeve alle the rokkes, stoon by stoon,  
 That they ne lette ship ne boot to goon —  
 I seye, whan ye han maad the coost so  
 clene 995  
 Of rokkes, that ther nis no stoon y-sene,  
 Than wol I love yow best of any man;  
 Have heer my trouthe in al that ever I  
 can.'  
 'Is ther non other grace in yow,' quod  
 he.  
 'No, by that lord,' quod she, 'that  
 maked me! 1000  
 For wel I woot that it shal never bityde.  
 Lat swiche folies out of your herte slyde.  
 What deyntee sholde a man han in his  
 lyf  
 For to go love another mannes wyf,  
 That hath hir body whan so that him  
 lyketh?' 1005  
 Aurelius ful ofte sore syketh;  
 Wo was Aurelie, whan that he this herde,  
 And with a sorweful herte he thus  
 answerde:  
 'Madame,' quod he, 'this were an  
 impossible!  
 Than moot I dye of sodein deth hor-  
 rible.' 1010  
 And with that word he turned him anon.  
 Tho come hir othere freendes many oon,  
 And in the aleyes romeden up and down,  
 And no-thing wiste of this conclusioun,  
 But sodeinly bigonne revel newe 1015

Til that the brighte sonne loste his hewe;  
For thorisonte hath rest the sonne his  
light;

This is as muche to seye as it was  
hoom.

And hoom they goon in Ioye and in  
solas,

Save only wrecche Aurelius, allas! 1020  
He to his hous is goon with sorweful  
herte;

He seeth he may nat fro his deeth  
asterte.

Him semed that he felte his herte colde;  
Up to the hevене his handes he gan  
holde,

And on his knowes bare he sette him  
doun, 1025

And in his raving seyde his orisoun.

For verray wo out of his wit he breyde.  
He niste what he spak, but thus he  
seyde;

With pitous herte his pleynt hath he  
bigonne

Un-to the goddess, and first un-to the  
sonne: 1030

He seyde, 'Appollo, god and gov-  
ernour

Of every plaunte, herbe, tree and flour,  
That yevest, after thy declinacioun,  
To ech of hem his tyme and his sesoun,  
As thyn herberwe chaungeth lowe or  
hye, 1035

Lord Phebus, cast thy merciabie yē  
On wrecche Aurelie, which that am but  
lorn.

Lo, lord! my lady hath my deeth y-sworn  
With-oute gilt, but thy benignitee

Upon my dedly herte have som pitee!  
For wel I woot, lord Phebus, if yow  
lest, 1041

Ye may me helpen, save my lady, best.  
Now voucheth sauf that I may yow  
devyse

How that I may been holpe and in what  
wyse.

Your blisful suster, Lucina the shene,  
That of the see is chief goddesse and  
quene, 1046

Though Neptunus have deitee in the  
see,

Yet emperesse aboven him is she:  
Ye knowen wel, lord, that right as hir  
desyr

Is to be quiked and lightned of your  
fyr, 1050

For which she folweth yow ful bisily,  
Right so the see desyareth naturelly  
To folwen hir, as she that is goddesse  
Bothe in the see and riveres more and  
lesse.

Wherfore, lord Phebus, this is my re-  
queste — 1055

Do this miracle, or do myn herte breste —  
That now, next at this opposicioun,

Which in the signe shal be of the Leoun,  
As preyeth hir so greet a flood to bringe,  
That fyve fadme at the leeste it over-  
springe 1060

The hyste rokke in Armorik Briteyne;  
And lat this flood endure yeres tweyne;  
Than certes to my lady may I seye:

"Holdeth your heste, the rokkes been  
aweeye."

Lord Phebus, dooth this miracle for  
me; 1065

Preye hir she go no faster cours than ye;  
I seye, preyeth your suster that she go  
No faster cours than ye thise yeres two.

Than shal she been evene atte fulle alway,  
And spring-flood laste bothe night and  
day. 1070

And, but she vouche-sauf in swiche  
manere

To graunte me my sovereyn lady dere,  
Prey hir to sinken every rok adoun

In-to hir owene derke regioun  
Under the ground, ther Pluto dwelleth  
inne, 1075

Or never-mo shal I my lady winne.

Thy temple in Delphos wol I barefoot  
seke;

Lord Phebus, see the teres on my cheke,  
And of my peyne have som compas-  
sioun.'

And with that word in swowne he fil  
adoun, 1080

And longe tyme he lay forth in a  
traunce.

His brother, which that knew of his  
penaunce,

Up caughte him and to bedde he hath  
him broght.

Dispeyred in this torment and this thoght  
Lete I this woful creature lye; 1085

Chese he for me, whether he wol live or  
dye.

Arveragus, with hele and greet honour,  
 As he that was of chivalrye the flour,  
 Is comen hoom, and othere worthy men.  
 O blisful artow now, thou Dorigen, 1090  
 That hast thy lusty housbonde in thyne  
 armes,  
 The fresshe knight, the worthy man of  
 armes,  
 That loveth thee, as his owene hertes  
 lyf.  
 No-thing list him to been imaginatyf  
 If any wight had spoke, whyl he was  
 oute, 1095  
 To hire of love; he hadde of it no  
 doute.  
 He noght entendeth to no swich matere,  
 But daunceth, Iusteth, maketh hir good  
 chere;  
 And thus in Ioye and blisse I lete hem  
 dwelle, 1099  
 And of the syke Aurelius wol I telle.  
 In langour and in torment furious  
 Two yeer and more lay wrecche Aurelius,  
 Er any foot he mighte on erthe goon;  
 Ne confort in this tyme hadde he noon,  
 Save of his brother, which that was a  
 clerk; 1105  
 He knew of al this wo and al this werk.  
 For to non other creature certeyn  
 Of this matere he dorste no word seyn.  
 Under his brest he bar it more secree  
 Than ever dide Pamphilus for Galathec.  
 His brest was hool, with-oute for to sene,  
 But in his herte ay was the arwe kene.  
 And wel ye knowe that of a sursanure  
 In surgerye is perilous the cure,  
 But men mighte touche the arwe, or  
 come therby. 1115  
 His brother weep and wayled prively,  
 Til atte laste him fil in remembrance,  
 That whyl he was at Orlens in Fraunce,  
 As yonge clerkes, that been likerous  
 To reden artes that been curious, 1120  
 Seken in every halke and every herne  
 Particuler sciences for to lerne,  
 He him remembred that, upon a day,  
 At Orlens in studie a book he say  
 Of magik naturel, which his felawe, 1125  
 That was that tyme a bachelor of lawe,  
 Al were he ther to lerne another craft,  
 Had prively upon his desk y-laft;  
 Which book spak muchel of the opera-  
 ciouns,

Touchinge the eichte and twenty man-  
 siouns 1130  
 That longen to the mone, and swich  
 folye,  
 As in our dayes is nat worth a flye;  
 For holy chirches feith in our bileve  
 Ne suffreth noon illusion us to greve.  
 And whan this book was in his remem-  
 braunce, 1135  
 Anon for Ioye his herte gan to daunce,  
 And to him-self he seyde prively:  
 'My brother shal be warissshed hastily;  
 For I am siker that ther be sciences, 1139  
 By whiche men make diverse apparences  
 Swiche as thise subtil tregetoures pleye.  
 For ofte at festes have I wel herd seye,  
 That tregetours, with-inne an halle large,  
 Have maad come in a water and a barge,  
 And in the halle rowen up and down.  
 Somtyme hath semed come a grim  
 leoun; 1146  
 And somtyme floures springe as in a  
 mede;  
 Somtyme a vyne, and grapes whyte and  
 rede;  
 Somtyme a castel, al of lym and stoon;  
 And whan hem lyked, voyded it anoon.  
 Thus semed it to every mannes sighte.  
 Now than conclude I thus, that if I  
 mighte 1152  
 At Orlens som old felawe y-finde,  
 That hadde this mones mansions in  
 minde,  
 Or other magik naturel above, 1155  
 He sholde wel make my brother han his  
 love.  
 For with an apparence a clerk may  
 make  
 To mannes sighte, that alle the rokkes  
 blake  
 Of Britaigne weren y-voyled everichon,  
 And shippes by the brinke comen and  
 gon, 1160  
 And in swich forme endure a day or  
 two;  
 Than were my brother warissshed of his  
 wo.  
 Than moste she nedes holden hir biheste,  
 Or elles he shal shame hir atte leste.'  
 What sholde I make a lenger tale of  
 this? 1165  
 Un-to his brotheres bed he comen is,  
 And swich confort he yaf him for to gon



To Orliens, that he up stirte anon,  
And on his wey forthward thanne is he  
fare,

In hope for to been lissed of his care.

Whan they were come almost to that  
citee. 1171

But-if it were a two furlong or three,  
A yong clerk rominge by him-self they  
mette,

Which that in Latin thriftily hem grette,  
And after that he seyde a wonder thing:  
'I knowe,' quod he, 'the cause of your  
coming'; 1176

And er they ferther any fote wente,  
He tolde hem al that was in hir entente.

This Briton clerk him asked of felawes  
The whiche that he had knowe in olde  
dawes; 1180

And he answerde him that they dede  
were,

For which he weep ful ofte many a tere.

Doun of his hors Aurelius lighte  
anon,

And forth with this magicien is he gon  
Hoom to his hous, and made hem wel at  
ese. 1185

Hem lakked no vitaille that mighte hem  
plese;

So wel arrayed hous as ther was oon  
Aurelius in his lyf saugh never noon.

He shewed him, er he wente to sopeer,  
Forestes, parkes ful of wilde deer; 1190  
Ther saugh he hertes with hir hornes

hye,  
The gretteste that ever were seyn with  
yë.

He saugh of hem an hondred slayn with  
houndes,

And somme with arwes blede of bittre  
woundes.

He saugh, whan voided were these wilde  
deer, 1195

These fauconers upon a fair river,  
That with hir haukes han the heron  
slayn.

Tho saugh he knightes Iusting in a  
playn;

And after this, he dide him swich ple-  
saunce,

That he him shewed his lady on a  
daunce 1200

On which him-self he daunced, as him  
thoughte.

And whan this maister, that this magik  
wroughte,  
Saugh it was tyme, he clapte his handes  
two,

And farewell! al our revel was ago.

And yet remoeved they never out of the  
hous, 1205

Why! they saugh al this sighte merveil-  
lous,

But in his studie, ther-as his bookes be,  
They seten stille, and no wight but they  
three.

To him this maister called his squyer,  
And seyde him thus: 'is redy our  
soper? 1210

Almost an houre it is, I undertake,  
Sith I yow bad our soper for to make,  
Whan that these worthy men wenten  
with me

In-to my studie, ther-as my bookes be.'

'Sire,' quod this squyer, 'whan it lyketh  
yow, 1215

It is al redy, though ye wol right now.'  
'Go we than soupe,' quod he, 'as for the  
beste;

This amorous folk som-tyme mote han  
reste.'

At-after soper fille they in trettee,  
What somme sholde this maistres guer-  
don be, 1220

To remoeven alle the rokkes of Britayne,  
And eek from Gerounde to the mouth of  
Sayne.

He made it straunge, and swoor, so  
god him save,

Lasse than a thousand pound he wolde  
nat have,

Ne gladly for that somme he wolde nat  
goon. 1225

Aurelius, with blisful herte anon,  
Answerde thus, 'fy on a thousand pound!  
This wyde world, which that men seye is  
round,

I wolde it yeve, if I were lord of it.

This bargayn is ful drive, for we ben  
knit. 1230

Ye shal be payed trewely, by my trouthe!  
But loketh now, for no necligence or  
slouthe,

Ye tarie us heer no lenger than to-  
morwe.'

'Nay,' quod this clerk, 'have heer my  
feith to borwe.'

To bedde is goon Aurelius whan him  
 leste, 1235  
 And wel ny al that night he hadde his  
 reste;

What for his labour and his hope of  
 blisse,  
 His woful herte of penaunce hadde a  
 lisse.

Upon the morwe, whan that it was day,  
 To Britaigne toke they the righte way,  
 Aurelius, and this magicien bisyde, 1241  
 And been descended ther they wolde  
 abyde;

And this was, as the bokes me remembre,  
 The colde frosty seson of Decembre.

Phebus wex old, and hewed lyk latoun,  
 That in his hote declinacioun 1246  
 Shoon as the burned gold with stremes  
 bryghte;

But now in Capricorn adoun he lighte,  
 Wher-as he shoon ful pale, I dar wel  
 seyn. 1249

The bittre frostes, with the sleet and reyn,  
 Destroyed hath the grene in every yerd.  
 Ianus sit by the fyr, with double berd,  
 And drinketh of his bugle-horn the wyn.  
 Biforn him stant braun of the tusked  
 swyn,

And "Nowel" cryeth every lusty man.  
 Aurelius, in al that ever he can, 1256

Doth to his maister chere and reverence,  
 And preyeth him to doon his diligence  
 To bringen him out of his peynes smerte,  
 Or with a swerd that he wolde slitte his  
 herte. 1260

This subtil clerk swich routhe had of  
 this man,

That night and day he spedde him that  
 he can,

To wayte a tyme of his conclusioun;

This is to seye, to make illusioun,  
 By swich an apparence or Iogelrye, 1265

I ne can no termes of astrologye,  
 That she and every wight sholde wene  
 and seye,

That of Britaigne the rokkes were aweye,  
 Or elles they were sonken under grounde.

So atte laste he hath his tyme y-founde  
 To maken his Iapes and his wrecched-  
 nesse 1271

Of swich a superstitious cursednesse.  
 His tables Toletanes forth he broght,

Ful wel corrected, ne ther lakked noght,

Neither his collect ne his expans yeres,  
 Ne his rotes ne his othere geres, 1276  
 As been his centres and his arguments,  
 And his proporcionels convenients

For his equacions in every thing.  
 And, by his eighte spere in his wirking,  
 He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was  
 shove 1281

Fro the heed of thilke fixe Aries above  
 That in the ninthe speere considered is;  
 Ful subtilly he calculated al this.

Whan he had founde his firste man-  
 sioun, 1285

He knew the remenant by proporcoun;  
 And knew the arysing of his mone weel,  
 And in whos face, and terme, and every-  
 deel;

And knew ful weel the mones mansioun  
 Acordaunt to his operacioun, 1290

And knew also his othere observaunces  
 For swiche illusiouns and swiche mes-  
 chaunces

As hethen folk used in thilke dayes;  
 For which no lenger maketh he delayes,  
 But thurgh his magik, for a wyke or  
 tweye, 1295

It semed that alle the rokkes were  
 aweye.

Aurelius, which that yet despeired is  
 Wher he shal han his love or fare amis,  
 Awaiteth night and day on this miracle;  
 And whan he knew that ther was noon  
 obstacle, 1300

That voided were these rokkes everichon,  
 Doun to his maistres feet he fil anon,

And seyde, 'I woful wrecche, Aurelius,  
 Thanke yow, lord, and lady myn Venus,  
 That me han holpen fro my cares colde: '

And to the temple his wey forth hath he  
 holde, 1306

Wher-as he knew he sholde his lady see.  
 And whan he saugh his time, anon-right  
 he,

With dredful herte and with ful humble  
 chere,

Saledwed hath his sovereyn lady dere:

'My righte lady,' quod this woful  
 man, 1311

'Whom I most drede and love as I best  
 can,

And lothest were of al this world dis-  
 plese,

Nere it that I for yow have swich disese.

That I moste dyen heer at your foot  
 anon, 1315  
 Noght wolde I telle how me is wo bigon;  
 But certes outhere moste I dye or pleyne;  
 Ye slee me giltelees for verray peyne.  
 But of my deeth, thogh that ye have no  
 routhe,  
 Avyseth yow, er that ye breke your  
 trouthe. 1320  
 Repenteth yow, for thilke god above,  
 Er ye me sleen by-cause that I yow love.  
 For, madame, wel ye woot what ye han  
 hight;  
 Nat that I chalange any thing of right 1324  
 Of yow my sovereyn lady, but your grace;  
 But in a gardin yond, at swich a place,  
 Ye woot right wel what ye bihighten me;  
 And in myn hand your trouthe plighen ye  
 To love me best, god woot, ye seyde so,  
 Al be that I unworthy be therto. 1330  
 Madame, I speke it for the honour of  
 yow,  
 More than to save myn hertes lyf right  
 now;  
 I have do so as ye comanded me;  
 And if ye vouche-sauf, ye may go see.  
 Doth as yow list, have your biheste in  
 minde, 1335  
 For quik or deed, right ther ye shul me  
 finde;  
 In yow lyth al, to do me live or deye; —  
 But wel I woot the rokkes been awaye!  
 He taketh his leve, and she astonied  
 stood,  
 In al hir face nas a drope of blood; 1340  
 She wende never han come in swich a  
 trappe:  
 ‘Alas!’ quod she, ‘that ever this sholde  
 happe!  
 For wende I never, by possibilitee,  
 That swich a monstre or merveille mighte  
 be!  
 It is agayns the proces of nature’: 1345  
 And hoom she gooth a sorweful creature.  
 For verray fere unnethe may she go,  
 She wepeth, wailleth, al a day or two,  
 And swowneth, that it routhe was to  
 see; 1349  
 But why it was, to no wight tolde she;  
 For out of toune was goon Arveragus.  
 But to hir-self she spak, and seyde thus,  
 With face pale and with ful sorweful chere,  
 In hir comelynt, as ye shul aiter here:

‘Allas,’ quod she, ‘on thee, Fortune,  
 I pleyne, 1355  
 That unwar wrapped hast me in thy  
 cheyne;  
 For which, tescapen, woot I no socour  
 Save only deeth or elles dishonour;  
 Oon of these two bihoveth me to chese.  
 But nathelees, yet have I lever to lese 1360  
 My lyf than of my body have a shame,  
 Or knowe my-selven fals, or lese my name,  
 And with my deth I may be quit, y-wis.  
 Hath ther nat many a noble wyf, er this,  
 And many a mayde y-slayn hir-self, alas!  
 Rather than with hir body doon trespas?  
 Yis, certes, lo, these stories beren wit-  
 nesse;  
 Whan thretty tyraunts, ful of cursed-  
 nesse,  
 Had slayn Phidoun in Athenes, atte  
 feste, 1369  
 They comanded his doghtres for taresten,  
 And bringen hem biforn hem in despyt,  
 Al naked, to fulfille hir foul delyt,  
 And in hir fadres blood they made hem  
 daunce  
 Upon the pavement, god yeve hem mis-  
 chaunce!  
 For which these woful maydens, ful of  
 drede, 1375  
 Rather than they wolde lese hir mayden-  
 hede,  
 They prively ben stirt in-to a welle,  
 And dreynthe hem-selven, as the bokes  
 telle.  
 They of Messene lete enquire and  
 seke  
 Of Lacedomie fifty maydens eke, 1380  
 On whiche they wolden doon hir lech-  
 erye;  
 But was there noon of al that companye  
 That she nas slayn, and with a good  
 entente  
 Chees rather for to dye than assente  
 To been oppressed of hir mayden-  
 hede. 1385  
 Why sholde I thanne to dye been in  
 drede?  
 Lo, eek, the tiraunt Aristocledes  
 That loved a mayden, heet Stimphalides,  
 Whan that hir fader slayn was on a night,  
 Un-to Dianes temple goth she right, 1390  
 And hente the image in hir handes two,  
 Fro which image wolde she never go.

No wight ne mighte hir handes of it  
arace,

Til she was slayn right in the selve place.  
Now sith that maydens hadden swich  
despyt 1395

To been defouled with mannes foul  
delyt,

Wel oghte a wyf rather hir-selven slee  
Than be defouled, as it thinketh me.

What shal I seyn of Hasdrubales wyf,  
That at Cartage birafte hir-self hir  
lyf? 1400

For whan she saugh that Romayns wan  
the toun,

She took hir children alle, and skipte  
adoun

In-to the fyr, and chees rather to dye  
Than any Romayn dide hir vileinye.

Hath nat Lucesse y-slayn hir-self,  
allas! 1405

At Rome, whanne she oppressed was  
Of Tarquin, for hir thoughte it was a  
shame

To liven whan she hadde lost hir name?  
The sevene maydens of Milesie also

Han slayn hem-self, for verray drede and  
wo, 1410

Rather than folk of Gaule hem sholde  
opresse.

Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse,  
Coude I now telle as touchinge this  
matere.

Whan Habradate was slayn, his wyf so  
dere

Hirselven slow, and leet hir blood to  
glyde 1415

In Habradates woundes depe and wyde,  
And seyde, "my body, at the leeste way,  
Ther shal no wight defoulen, if I may."

What sholde I no ensamples heer-of  
sayn,

Sith that so manye han hem-selven  
slayn 1420

Wel rather than they wolde defouled be?  
I wol conclude, that it is bet for me

To sleen my-self, than been defouled  
thus.

I wol be trewe un-to Arveragus,  
Or rather sleen my-self in som manere,

As dide Demociones doghter dere, 1426  
By-cause that she wolde nat defouled be.

O Cedasus! it is ful greet pitee,  
To reden how thy doghtren deyde, allas!

That slowe hem-selven for swich maner  
cas. 1430

As greet a pitee was it, or wel more,  
The Theban mayden, that for Nichanore  
Hir-selven slow, right for swich maner  
wo.

Another Theban mayden dide right so;  
For oon of Macedoine hadde hir op-  
pressed, 1435  
She with hir deeth hir maydenhede re-  
dressed.

What shal I seye of Nicerates wyf,  
That for swich cas birafte hir-self hir  
lyf?

How trewe eek was to Alcebiades  
His love, that rather for to dyen  
chees 1440

Than for to suffre his body unburied be!  
Lo which a wyf was Alceste,' quod she.

'What seith Omer of gode Penelopee?  
Al Grece knoweth of hir chastitee.

Pardee, of Laodomya is writen  
thus, 1445

That whan at Troye was slayn Prothese-  
laus,

No lenger wolde she live after his day.  
The same of noble Porcia telle I

may;  
With-oute Brutus coude she nat live,

To whom she hadde al hool hir herte  
yive. 1450

The parfyt wyfhod of Arthemesyne  
Honoured is thurgh al the Barbarye.

O Teuta, queen! thy wyfly chastitee  
To alle wyves may a mirour be.

The same thing I seye of Bilia, 1455  
Of Rodogone, and eek Valeria.'

Thus playned Dorigene a day or tweye,  
Purposing ever that she wolde deye.

But nathelees, upon the thridde night,  
Hom cam Arveragus, this worthy

knight, 1460  
And asked hir, why that she weep so  
sore?

And she gan wepen ever lenger the  
more.

'Allas!' quod she, 'that ever was I  
born!

Thus have I seyde,' quod she, 'thus have  
I sworn'—

And told him al as ye han herd bi-  
fore; 1465

It nedeth nat reherce it yow na-more.

This housbond with glad chere, in  
freendly wyse,  
Answerde and seyde as I shal yow de-  
vyse:

'Is ther oght elles, Dorigen, but this?'  
'Nay, nay,' quod she, 'god help me so,  
as wis; 1470

This is to mucho, and it were goddes  
wille.'

'Ye, wyf,' quod he, 'lat slepen that is  
stille;

It may be wel, paraventure, yet to-day.  
Ye shul your trouthe holden, by my fay!  
For god so wisly have mercy on me, 1475  
I hadde wel lever y-stiked for to be,  
For verray love which that I to yow  
have,

But-if ye sholde your trouthe kepe and  
save.

Trouthe is the hyeste thing that man may  
kepe': —

But with that word he brast anon to  
wepe, 1480

And seyde, 'I yow forbede, up peyne of  
death,

That never, whyl thee lasteth lyf ne  
breeth,

To no wight tel thou of this aventure.  
As I may best, I wol my wo endure,

Ne make no contenance of hevi-  
nesse, 1485

That folk of yow may demen harm or  
gesse.'

And forth he cleped a squyer and a  
mayde:

'Goth forth anon with Dorigen,' he  
sayde,

'And bringeth hir to swich a place  
anon.'

They take hir leve, and on hir way they  
gon; 1490

But they ne wiste why she thider wente.  
He nolde no wight tellen his entente.

Paraventure an heep of yow, y-wis,  
Wol holden him a lewed man in this,

That he wol putte his wyf in lupar-  
tye; 1495

Herkneth the tale, er ye up-on hir crye.  
She may have bettre fortune than yow  
semeth;

And whan that ye han herd the tale,  
demeth.

This squyer, which that highte Aurelius,

On Dorigen that was so amorous, 1500  
Of aventure happed hir to mete  
Amidde the toun, right in the quikkest  
strete,

As she was boun to goon the way forth-  
right

Toward the gardin ther-as she had hight.  
And he was to the gardinward also; 1505  
For wel he spyed, whan she wolde go  
Out of hir hous to any maner place.

But thus they mette, of aventure or  
grace;

And he saleweth hir with glad entente,  
And asked of hir whiderward she  
wente? 1510

And she answerde, half as she were  
mad,

'Un-to the gardin, as myn housbond bad,  
My trouthe for to holde, allas! allas!'

Aurelius gan wondren on this cas,  
And in his herte had greet compassioun  
Of hir and of hir lamentacioun, 1516

And of Arveragus, the worthy knight,  
That bad hir holden al that she had  
hight,

So looth him was his wyf sholde breke  
hir trouthe;

And in his herte he caughte of this greet  
routhe, 1520

Consideringe the beste on every syde,  
That fro his lust yet were him lever  
abyde

Than doon so heigh a cherlish wrecched-  
nesse

Agayns franchyse and alle gentillesse;  
For which in fewe wordes seyde he thus:

'Madame, seyth to your lord Arvera-  
gus, 1526

That sith I see his grete gentillesse  
To yow, and eek I see wel your distresse,

That him were lever han shame (and  
that were routhe)

Than ye to me sholde breke thus your  
trouthe, 1530

I have wel lever ever to suffre wo  
Than I departe the love bitwix yow two.

I yow relese, madame, in-to your hond  
Quit every surement and every bond,

That ye han maad to me as heer-biforn,  
Sith thilke tyme which that ye were  
born. 1536

My trouthe I plighte, I shal yow never  
repreve

Of no biheste, and here I take my leve,  
 As of the treweste and the beste wyf  
 That ever yet I knew in al my lyf. 1540  
 But every wyf be-war of hir biheste,  
 On Dorigene remembreth atte leste.  
 Thus can a squyer doon a gentil dede,  
 As well as can a knight, with-outen  
 drede.'

She thonketh him up-on hir knees al  
 bare, 1545  
 And hoom un-to hir housbond is she fare,  
 And tolde him al as ye han herd me  
 sayd;

And be ye siker, he was so weel apayd,  
 That it were impossible me to wryte;  
 What sholde I lenger of this 'cas endyte?

Arveragus and Dorigene his wyf 1551  
 In sovereyn blisse leden forth hir lyf.  
 Never eft ne was ther angre hem bi-  
 twene;

He cherisseth hir as though she were a  
 quene; 1554

And she was to him trewe for evermore.  
 Of these two folk ye gete of me na-more.

Aurelius, that his cost hath al forlorn,  
 Curseth the tyme that ever he was born:  
 'Allas,' quod he, 'allas! that I bihighte  
 Of pured gold a thousand pound of  
 wighte 1560

Un-to this philosophre! how shal I do?  
 I see na-more but that I am fordo.

Myn heritage moot I nedes selle,  
 And been a begger; heer may I nat  
 dwelle,

And shamen al my kinrede in this  
 place, 1565

But I of him may gete bettre grace.

But nathelees, I wol of him assaye,  
 At certeyn dayes, yeer by yeer, to paye,  
 And thanke him of his grete curteisye;  
 My trouthe wol I kepe, I wol nat lye.'

With herte soor he gooth un-to his  
 cofre, 1571

And broghte gold un-to this philosophre,  
 The value of fyve hundred pound, I  
 gesse,

And him bisecheth, of his gentillesse,  
 To graunte him dayes of the remenaunt,  
 And seyde, 'maister, I dar wel make  
 avaunt, 1576

I failed never of my trouthe as yit;  
 For sikerly my dette shal be quit  
 Towardes yow, how-ever that I fare

To goon a-begged in my kirtle bare. 1580  
 But wolde ye vouche-sauf, up-on seurtee,  
 Two yeer or three for to respyten me,  
 Than were I wel; for elles moot I selle  
 Myn heritage; ther is na-more to telle.'

This philosophre sobrely answerde,  
 And seyde thus, whan he these wordes  
 herde: 1586

'Have I nat holden covenant un-to  
 thee?'

'Yes, certes, wel and trewely,' quod he.  
 'Hastow nat had thy lady as thee  
 lyketh?'

'No, no,' quod he, and sorwefully he  
 syketh. 1590

'What was the cause? tel me if thou  
 can.'

Aurelius his tale anon bigan,  
 And tolde him al, as ye han herd bifore;  
 It nedeth nat to yow reherce it more.

He seide, 'Arveragus, of gentillesse,  
 Had lever dye in sorwe and in dis-  
 tresse 1596

Than that his wyf were of hir trouthe  
 fals.'

The sorwe of Dorigen he tolde him  
 als,

How looth hir was to been a wikked  
 wyf,

And that she lever had lost that day hir  
 lyf, 1600

And that hir trouthe she swoor, thurgh  
 innocence:

'She never erst herde speke of appar-  
 ence;

That made me han of hir so greet pitee.  
 And right as frely as he sente hir me,

As frely sente I hir to him ageyn. 1605  
 This al and som, 'ther is na-more to  
 seyn.'

This philosophre answerde, 'leve  
 brother,

Everich of yow dide gentilly til other.  
 Thou art a squyer, and he is a knight;

But god forbede, for his blisful might, 1610  
 But-if a clerk coude doon a gentil dede  
 As wel as any of yow, it is no drede!

Sire, I relese thee thy thousand pound,  
 As thou right now were copen out of  
 the ground,

Ne never er now ne haddest knowen  
 me. 1615

For sire, I wol nat take a peny of thee

For al my craft, ne noight for my tra-  
 uaille.

Thou hast y-payed wel for my vitaille;  
 It is y-nogh, and farewel, have good day : '  
 And tooke his hors, and forth he gooth  
 his way. 1620

*Here is ended the Frankeleyns Tale.*

## GROUP G.

### THE SECONDE NONNES TALE.

#### THE PROLOGE OF THE SECONDE NONNES TALE.

THE ministre and the norice un-to vyces,  
 Which that men clepe in English ydel-  
 nesse,  
 That porter of the gate is of delyces,  
 To eschue, and by hir contrarie hir op-  
 presse,  
 That is to seyn, by leueful bisnesse, 5  
 Wel oghten we to doon al our entente,  
 Lest that the feend thurgh ydelnesse us  
 hente.

For he, that with his thousand cordes  
 slye  
 Continuelly us waiteth to biclappe,  
 Whan he may man in ydelnesse espye, 10  
 He can so lightly cacche him in his  
 trappe,  
 Til that a man be hent right by the  
 lappe,  
 He nis nat war the feend hath him in  
 honde;  
 Wel oughte us werche, and ydelnes with-  
 stonde.

And though men dradden never for to  
 dye, 15  
 Yet seen men wel by reson doutelees,  
 That ydelnesse is roten slogardye,  
 Of which ther never comth no good en-  
 crees;  
 And seen, that slouthe hir holdeth in a  
 lees  
 Only to slepe, and for to ete and drinke,  
 And to deuouren al that othere swinke. 21

Lordinges, this question wolde I aske  
 now,  
 Which was the moste free, as thinketh  
 yow?  
 Now telleth me, er that ye ferther wende.  
 I can na-more, my tale is at an ende.

And for to putte us fro swiche ydelnesse,  
 That cause is of so greet confusioun,  
 I have heer doon my feithful bisnesse,  
 After the legende, in translacioun 25  
 Right of thy glorious lyf and passioun,  
 Thou with thy gerland wrought of rose  
 and lilie;  
 Thee mene I, mayde and martir, seint  
 Cecilie !

#### *Inuocacio ad Mariam.*

And thou that flour of virgines art alle,  
 Of whom that Bernard list so wel to wryte,  
 To thee at my biginning first I calle; 31  
 Thou comfort of us wrecches, do me en-  
 dyte  
 Thy maydens deeth, that wan thurgh hir  
 meryte  
 The eternal lyf, and of the feend victorie,  
 As man may after redem in hir storie. 35  
 Thou mayde and mooder, doghter of thy  
 sone,  
 Thou welle of mercy, sinful soules cure,  
 In whom that god, for bountee, chees to  
 wone,  
 Thou humble, and heigh over every crea-  
 ture,  
 Thou nobledest so ferforth our nature, 40  
 That no desdeyn the maker hadde of  
 kinde,  
 His sone in blode and flesh to clothe and  
 winde.

Withinne the cloistre blisful of thy  
 sydes

Took mannes shap the eternal love and  
pees,  
That of the tryne compas lord and gyde  
is, 45  
Whom erthe and see and heven, out of  
relees,  
Ay herien; and thou, virgin wemmelees,  
Bar of thy body, and dweltest mayden  
pure,  
The creatour of every creature.

Assembled is in thee magnificence 50  
With mercy, goodnesse, and with swich  
pitee  
That thou, that art the sonne of excel-  
lence,  
Nat only helpest hem that preyen thee,  
But ofte tyme, of thy benignitee,  
Ful frely, er that men thyn help bi-  
seche, 55  
Thou goost biforn, and art hir lyves leche.

Now help, thou meke and blisful fayre  
mayde,  
Me, flemed wrecche, in this desert of  
galle;  
Think on the womman Cananee, that  
sayde  
That whelpes eten somme of the crommes  
alle 60  
That from hir lordes table been y-falle;  
And though that I, unworthy sone of  
Eve,  
Be sinful, yet accepte my bileve.

And, for that feith is deed with-outen  
werkes,  
So for to werken yif me wit and space, 65  
That I be quit fro thennes that most derk  
is!  
O thou, that art so fayr and ful of grace,  
Be myn advocat in that heighe place  
Ther-as withouten ende is songe 'Osanne,'  
Thou Cristes mooder, doghter dere of  
Anne! 70

And of thy light my soule in prison lighte,  
That troubled is by the contagioun  
Of my body, and also by the wighte  
Of erthly luste and fals affeccioun;  
O haven of refut, o salvacioun 75  
Of hem that ben in sorwe and in distresse,  
Now help, for to my werk I wol me dresse.

Yet preye I yow that reden that I wryte,  
Foryeve me, that I do no diligence  
This ilke storie subtilly to endyte; 80  
For both have I the wordes and sentence  
Of him that at the seintes reverence  
The storie wroot, and folwe hir legende,  
And prey yow, that ye wol my werk  
amende.

*Interpretacio nominis Cecilie, quam ponit  
frater Iacobus Ianuensis in Legenda  
Aurea.*

First wolde I yow the name of seint Ce-  
cilie 85  
Expoune, as men may in hir storie see,  
It is to seye in English 'hevenes lilie,'  
For pure chastnesse of virginitee;  
Or, for she whytnesse hadde of honestee,  
And grene of conscience, and of good  
fame 90  
The sote savour, 'lilie' was hir name.

Or Cecile is to seye 'the wey to blinde,'  
For she ensample was by good techinge;  
Or elles Cecile, as I writen finde,  
Is ioyned, by a maner conioingne 95  
Of 'hevene' and 'Lia'; and heer, in fig-  
urunge,  
The 'heven' is set for thoght of holinesse,  
And 'Lia' for hir lasting bisnesse.

Cecile may eek be seyde in this manere,  
'Wanting of blindnesse,' for hir grete  
light 100  
Of sapience, and for hir thewes clere;  
Or elles, lo! this maydens name bright  
Of 'hevene' and 'leos' comth, for which  
by right  
Men mighte hir wel 'the heven of peple'  
calle,  
Ensample of gode and wyse werkes  
alle. 105

For 'leos' 'peple' in English is to seye,  
And right as men may in the hevene see  
The sonne and mone and sterres every  
weye,  
Right so men gostly, in this mayden free,  
Seyen of feith the magnanimittee, 110  
And eek the cleernesse hool of sapience,  
And sondry werkes, brighte of excel-  
lence.



And right so as thise philosophres wryte  
 That heven is swift and round and eek  
 brenninge, 114  
 Right so was fayre Cecilie the whyte  
 Ful swift and bisy ever in good werkinge,  
 And round and hool in good persever-  
 inge,  
 And brenning ever in charitee ful  
 brighte;  
 Now have I yow declared what she  
 highte.

*Explicit.*

HERE BIGINNETH THE SECONDE NONNES  
 TALE, OF THE LYF OF SEINTE CECILE.

THIS mayden bright Cecilie, as hir lyf  
 seith, 120  
 Was comen of Romayns, and of noble  
 kinde,  
 And from hir cradel up fostred in the  
 feith  
 Of Crist, and bar his gospel in hir minde;  
 She never cessed, as I writen finde,  
 Of hir preyere, and god to love and  
 drede, 125  
 Biseking him to kepe hir maydenhede.

And when this mayden sholde unto a  
 man  
 Y-wedded be, that was ful yong of age,  
 Which that y-cleped was Valerian,  
 And day was comen of hir mariage, 130  
 She, ful devout and humble in hir corage,  
 Under hir robe of gold, that sat ful fayre,  
 Had next hir flesh y-clad hir in an heyre.

And whyl the organs maden melodye,  
 To god alone in herte thus sang she; 135  
 'O lord, my soule and eek my body gye  
 Unwemmed, lest that I confounded be.'  
 And, for his love that deyde upon a tree,  
 Every seconde or thridde day she faste,  
 Ay biddinge in hir orisons ful faste. 140

The night cam, and to bedde moste she  
 gon  
 With hir housbonde, as ofte is the manere,  
 And prively to him she seyde anon,  
 'O swete and wel biloved spouse dere,  
 Ther is a conseil, and ye wolde it  
 here, 145

Which that right fain I wolde unto yow  
 seye,  
 So that ye swere ye shul me nat biwreye.'

Valerian gan faste unto hir swere,  
 That for no cas, ne thing that mighte be,  
 He sholde never-mo biwreyen here; 150  
 And thanne at erst to him thus seyde  
 she,  
 'I have an angel which that loveth me,  
 That with greet love, wher-so I wake or  
 slepe,  
 Is redy ay my body for to kepe.

And if that he may felen, out of drede, 155  
 That ye me touche or love in vileinye,  
 He right anon wol slee yow with the  
 dede,  
 And in your yowthe thus ye shulden dye;  
 And if that ye in clene love me gye,  
 He wol yow loven as me, for your clen-  
 nesse, 160  
 And shewen yow his Loye and his bright-  
 nesse.'

Valerian, corrected as god wolde,  
 Answerde agayn, 'if I shal trusten thee,  
 Lat me that angel se, and him biholde;  
 And if that it a verray angel be 165  
 Than wol I doon as thou hast preyed  
 me;  
 And if thou love another man, for sothe  
 Right with this swerd than wol I slee  
 yow bothe.'

Cecile answerde anon right in this wyse,  
 'If that yow list, the angel shul ye  
 see, 170  
 So that ye trowe on Crist and yow bap-  
 tyse.  
 Goth forth to Via Apia,' quod she,  
 'That fro this toun ne stant but myles  
 three,  
 And, to the povre folkes that ther dwelle,  
 Sey hem right thus, as that I shal yow  
 telle. 175

Telle hem that I, Cecile, yow to hem  
 sente,  
 To shewen yow the gode Urban the olde,  
 For secree nedes and for good entente.  
 And whan that ye seint Urban han bi-  
 holde,

Telle him the wordes whiche I to yow  
tolde; 180  
And whan that he hath purged yow fro  
sinne,  
Thanne shul ye see that angel, er ye  
twinne.'

Valerian is to the place y-gon,  
And right as him was taught by his lern-  
inge,  
He fond this holy olde Urban anon 185  
Among the seintes buriels lotinge.  
And he anon, with-ouen taryinge,  
Dide his message; and whan that he it  
tolde,  
Urban for Ioye his hondes gan up holde.

The teres from his yën leet he falle — 190  
'Almighty lord, o Iesu Crist,' quod he,  
'Sower of chast conseil, herde of us alle,  
The fruit of thilke seed of chastitee  
That thou hast sowe in Cecile, tak to  
thee!  
Lo, lyk a bisy bee, with-ouen gyle, 195  
Thee serveth ay thyn owene thral Cecile!

For thilke spouse, that she took but now  
Ful lyk a fiers leoun, she sendeth here,  
As meke as ever was any lamb, to yow!  
And with that worde, anon ther gan  
appere 200  
An old man, clad in whyte clothes clere,  
That hadde a book with lettre of golde in  
honde,  
And gan biforn Valerian to stonde.

Valerian as deed fil doun for drede  
Whan he him saugh, and he up hente  
him tho, 205  
And on his book right thus he gan to  
rede —  
'Oo Lord, oo feith, oo god with-ouen  
mo,  
Oo Cristendom, and fader of alle also,  
Aboven alle and over al everywhere' —  
These wordes al with gold y-written  
were. 210

Whan this was rad, than seyde this olde  
man,  
'Levestow this thing or no? sey ye or  
nay.'  
'I leve al this thing,' quod Valerian,

'For sother thing than this, I dar wel  
say,  
Under the hevene no wight thinke  
may.' 215  
Tho vanished the olde man, he niste  
where,  
And pope Urban him cristened right  
there.

Valerian goth hoom, and fint Cecilie  
With-inne his chambre with an angel  
stonde;  
This angel hadde of roses and of lilie 220  
Corones two, the which he bar in honde;  
And first to Cecile, as I understonde,  
He yaf that oon, and after gan he take  
That other to Valerian, hir make.

'With body clene and with unwemmed  
thought 225  
Kepeth ay wel thise corones,' quod he;  
'Fro Paradys to yow have I hem broght,  
Ne never-mo ne shal they roten be,  
Ne lese her sote savour, trusteth me;  
Ne never wight shal seen hem with his  
yë, 230  
But he be chaast and hate vileinyë.

And thou, Valerian, for thou so sone  
Assentedest to good conseil also,  
Sey what thee list, and thou shalt han  
thy bone.'  
'I have a brother,' quod Valerian tho, 235  
'That in this world I love no man so.  
I pray yow that my brother may han  
grace  
To knowe the trouthe, as I do in this  
place.'

The angel seyde, 'god lyketh thy re-  
queste,  
And bothe, with the palm of martir-  
dom, 240  
Ye shullen come unto his blisful feste.'  
And with that word Tiburce his brother  
com.

And whan that he the savour undernom  
Which that the roses and the lilies caste,  
With-inne his herte he gan to wondre  
faste, 245

And seyde, 'I wondre, this tyme of the  
yeer,

Whennes that sote savour cometh so  
Of rose and lilies that I smelle heer.  
For though I hadde hem in myn hondes  
two, 249  
The savour mighte in me no depper go.  
The sote smel that in myn herte I finde  
Hath chaunged me al in another kinde.'

Valerian seyde, 'two corones han we,  
Snow-whyte and rose-reed, that shynen  
clere,  
Whiche that thyn yën han no might to  
see; 255  
And as thou smellest hem thurgh my  
preyere,  
So shaltow seen hem, leve brother dere,  
If it so be thou wolt, withouten slouthe,  
Bilve aright and knowen verray trouthe.'

Tiburce answerde, 'seistow this to me 260  
In soothnesse, or in dreem I herkne this?'  
'In dremes,' quod Valerian, 'han we be  
Unto this tyme, brother myn, y-wis.  
But now at erst in trouthe our dwelling is.'  
'How woostow this,' quod Tiburce, 'in  
what wyse?' 265  
Quod Valerian, 'that shal I thee devyse.'

The angel of god hath me the trouthe  
y-taught  
Which thou shalt seen, if that thou wolt  
reneye  
The ydoles and be clene, and elles  
naught.' — 269  
And of the miracle of these corones tweye  
Seint Ambrose in his preface list to seye;  
Solempnely this noble doctour dere  
Commendeth it, and seith in this  
manere :

The palm of martirdom for to receyve,  
Seinte Cecile, fulfild of goddes yifte, 275  
The world and eek hir chambre gan she  
weyve;  
Witnes Tyburces and Valerians shrifte,  
To whiche god of his bountee wolde  
shifte  
Corones two of floures wel smellinge,  
And made his angel hem the corones  
bringe: 280

The mayde hath broght these men to  
blisse above;

The world hath wist what it is worth,  
certeyn,  
Devocioun of chastitee to love. —  
Tho shewede him Cecile al open and  
pleyn  
That alle ydoles nis but a thing in veyn;  
For they been dombe, and therto they  
been deve, 286  
And charged him his ydoles for to leve.

'Who so that troweth nat this, a beste  
he is,'  
Quod tho Tiburce, 'if that I shal nat  
lye.'  
And she gan kisse his brest, that herde  
this, 290  
And was ful glad he coude trouthe  
espye.  
'This day I take thee for myn allye,'  
Seyde this blisful fayre mayde dere;  
And after that she seyde as ye may here :

'Lo, right so as the love of Crist,' quod  
she, 295  
'Made me thy brotheres wyf, right in  
that wyse  
Anon for myn allye heer take I thee,  
Sin that thou wolt thyn ydoles despyse.  
Go with thy brother now, and thee  
baptyse,  
And make thee clene; so that thou  
mowe biholde 300  
The angels face of which thy brother  
tolde.'

Tiburce answerde and seyde, 'brother  
dere,  
First tel me whider I shal, and to what  
man?'  
'To whom?' quod he, 'com forth with  
right good chere,  
I wol thee lede unto the pope Urban.'  
'Til Urban? brother myn Valerian,' 306  
Quod tho Tiburce, 'woltow me thider  
lede?  
Me thinketh that it were a wonder dede.

Ne menestow nat Urban,' quod he tho,  
'That is so ofte dampned to be deed, 310  
And woneth in halkes alwey to and fro,  
And dar nat ones putte forth his heed?  
Men sholde him brennen in a fyr so  
reed

If he were founde, or that men mighte  
him spye;  
And we also, to bere him companye —

And whyl we seken thilke divinitee 316  
That is y-hid in hevene prively,  
Algate y-brend in this world shul we  
be!

To whom Cecile answerde boldely, 319  
'Men mighten dreden wel and skilfully  
This lyf to lese, myn owene dere brother,  
If this were livinge only and non other.

But ther is better lyf in other place,  
That never shal be lost, ne drede thee  
noght,  
Which goddes sone us tolde thurgh his  
grace; 325  
That fadres sone hath alle thinges  
wroght;  
And al that wroght is with a skilful  
thought,  
The goost, that fro the fader gan procede,  
Hath sowled hem, withouten any drede.

By word and by miracle goddes sone, 330  
Whan he was in this world, declared  
here

That ther was other lyf ther men may  
wone.'

To whom answerde Tiburce, 'o suster  
dere,

Ne seydestow right now in this manere,  
Ther nis but o god, lord in soothfast-  
nesse; 335

And now of three how maystow bere  
witnessen?'

'That shal I telle,' quod she, 'er I go.  
Right as a man hath sapiences three,  
Memorie, engyn, and intellect also,  
So, in o being of divinitee, 340  
Three persones may ther right wel be.'  
Tho gan she him ful bisily to preche  
Of Cristes come and of his peynes teche,

And many pointes of his passioun;  
How goddes sone in this world' was  
withholde, 345

To doon mankinde pleyn remissioun,  
That was y-bounde in sinne and cares  
colde:

Al this thing she unto Tiburce tolde.

And after this Tiburce, in good entente,  
With Valerian to pope Urban he wente,

That thanked god; and with glad herte  
and light 351

He cristned him, and made him in that  
place

Parfit in his lerninge, goddes knight.

And after this Tiburce gat swich grace,  
That every day he saugh, in tyme and  
space, 355

The angel of god; and every maner  
bone

That he god axed, it was sped ful sone.

It were ful hard by ordre for to seyn  
How many wondres Iesus for hem  
wroghte;

But atte laste, to tellen short and pleyn,  
The sergeants of the toun of Rome hem  
soghte, 361

And hem biforn Almache the prefect  
broghte,

Which hem apposed, and knew al hir  
entente,

And to the image of Iupiter hem sente,

And seyde, 'who so wol nat sacrificyse,  
Swap of his heed, this is my sentence  
here.' 366

Anon these martirs that I yow devyise,  
Oon Maximus, that was an officere

Of the prefectes and his corniculere,

Hem hente; and whan he forth the  
seintes ladde, 370

Him-self he weep, for pitee that he  
hadde.

Whan Maximus had herd the seintes lore,  
He gat him of the tormentoures leve,  
And ladde hem to his hous withoute  
more; 374

And with hir preching, er that it were eve,  
They gonnen fro the tormentours to reve,  
And fro Maxime, and fro his folk echone  
The false feith, to trowe in god allone.

Cecilie cam, whan it was woxen night,  
With preestes that hem cristned alle  
y-fere; 380

And afterward, whan day was woxen  
light,

Cecile hem seyde with a ful sobre chere,

'Now, Cristes owene knightes leve and  
dere,  
Caste alle away the werkes of derknesse,  
And armeth yow in armure of bright-  
nesse. 385

Ye han for sothe y-doon a greet bataille,  
Your cours is doon, your feith han ye  
conserved,  
Goth to the corone of lyf that may nat  
faill;  
The rightful Iuge, which that ye han  
served,  
Shall yeve it yow, as ye han it deserved.'  
And whan this thing was seyde as I de-  
vyse, 391  
Men ladde hem forth to doon the sacri-  
fyse.

But whan they weren to the place broght,  
To tellen shortly the conclusioun,  
They nolde encense ne sacrifice right  
noht, 395  
But on hir knees they setten hem adoun  
With humble herte and sad devocioun,  
And losten bothe hir hedes in the place.  
Hir soules wenten to the king of grace.

This Maximus, that saugh this thing bi-  
tyde, 400  
With pitous teres tolde it anon-right,  
That he hir soules saugh to heven glyde  
With angels ful of cleernesse and of light,  
And with his word converted many a  
wight;  
For which Almachius dide him so to-  
bete 405  
With whippe of leed, til he his lyf gan  
lete.

Cecile him took and buried him anoon  
By Tiburce and Valerian softly,  
Withinne hir burying-place, under the  
ston.  
And after this Almachius hastily 410  
Bad hir ministres fecchen openly  
Cecile, so that she mighte in his presence  
Doon sacrifice, and Jupiter encense.

But they, converted at hir wyse lore,  
Wepten ful sore, and yaven ful credence  
Unto hir word, and cryden more and  
more, 416

'Crist, goddes sone withouten difference,  
Is verray god, this is al our sentence,  
That hath so good a servant him to serve;  
This with o voys we trowen, thogh we  
sterve!' 420

Almachius, that herde of this doinge,  
Bad fecchen Cecile, that he might hir  
see,  
And alderfirst, lo! this was his axinge,  
'What maner womman artow?' tho quod  
he.  
'I am a gentil womman born,' quod  
she. 425  
'I axe thee,' quod he, 'thogh it thee greve,  
Of thy religioun and of thy bileve.'

'Ye han bigonne your question folily,'  
Quod she, 'that wolden two answeres con-  
clude  
In oo demande; ye axed lewedly.' 430  
Almache answerde unto that similitude,  
'Of whennes comth thyn answering so  
rude?'  
'Of whennes?' quod she, whan that she  
was freyned,  
'Of conscience and of good feith un-  
feyned.'

Almachius seyde, 'ne takestow non hede  
Of my power?' and she answerde him  
this — 436  
'Your might,' quod she, 'ful litel is to  
drede;  
For every mortal mannes power nis  
But lyk a bladdre, ful of wind, y-wis.  
For with a nedles poynt, whan it is  
blowe, 440  
May al the boost of it be leyde ful lowe.'

'Ful wrongfully bigonne thou,' quod he,  
'And yet in wrong is thy perseveraunce;  
Wostow nat how our mighty princes free  
Han thus comanded and maad ordi-  
naunce, 445  
That every cristen wight shal han pen-  
aunce  
But-if that he his cristendom withseye,  
And goon al quit, if he wol it reneye?'

'Your princes erren, as your nobley dooth,'  
Quod tho Cecile, 'and with a wood sen-  
tence 450

Ye make us gilty, and it is nat sooth ;  
 For ye, that knowen wel our innocence,  
 For as muche as we doon a reverence  
 To Crist, and for we bere a cristen name,  
 Ye putte on us a cryme, and eek a blame.

But we that knowen thilke name so 456  
 For vertuous, we may it nat withseye.'  
 Almache answerde, 'chees oon of these  
 two,

Do sacrifice, or cristendom reneye,  
 That thou mowe now escapen by that  
 weye.' 460

At which the holy blisful fayre mayde  
 Gan for to laughe, and to the Iuge seyde,

'O Iuge, confus in thy nycetee,  
 Woltow that I reneye innocence,  
 To make me a wikked wight?' quod  
 she; 465

'Lo! he dissimuleth here in audience,  
 He stareth and woodeth in his adver-  
 tence!'

To whom Almachius, 'unsely wrecche,  
 Ne woostow nat how far my might may  
 strecche?

Han noght our mighty princes to me  
 yeven, 470

Ye, bothe power and auctoritee  
 To maken folk to dyen or to liven?

Why spekestow so proudly than to me?'  
 'I speke noght but stedfastly,' quod she,  
 'Nat proudly, for I seye, as for my  
 syde, 475

We haten deedly thilke vyce of pryde.

And if thou drede nat a sooth to here,  
 Than wol I shewe al openly, by right,  
 That thou hast maad a ful gret lesing  
 here.

Thou seyst, thy princes han thee yeven  
 might 480

Bothe for to sleen and for to quiken a  
 wight;

Thou, that ne mayst but only lyf bireve,  
 Thou hast non other power ne no leve!

But thou mayst seyn, thy princes han thee  
 maked

Ministre of deeth; for if thou speke of  
 mo, 485

Thou lyst, for thy power is ful naked.'

'Do wey thy boldnes,' seyde Almachius  
 tho,

'And sacrifice to our goddes, er thou go;  
 I recche nat what wrong that thou me  
 profre,

For I can suffre it as a philosopre; 490

But thilke wronges may I nat endure  
 That thou spekest of our goddes here,'  
 quod he.

Cecile answerede, 'o nyce creature,  
 Thou seydest no word sin thou spak to  
 me

That I ne knew therwith thy nycetee; 495  
 And that thou were, in every maner  
 wyse,

A lewed officer and a veyn Iustyse.

Ther lakketh no-thing to thyn utter yën  
 That thou nart blind, for thing that we  
 seen alle

That it is stoon, that men may wel es-  
 pyen, 500

That ilke stoon a god thou wolt it calle.  
 I rede thee, lat thyn hand upon it falle,

And taste it wel, and stoon thou shalt it  
 finde,

Sin that thou seest nat with thyn yën  
 blinde.

It is a shame that the peple shal 505  
 So scorne thee, and laughe at thy folye;

For comunly men woot it wel overal,  
 That mighty god is in his hevenes hye,

And these images, wel thou mayst espye,  
 To thee ne to hem-self mowe nought

profyte, 510

For in effect they been nat worth a  
 myte.'

These wordes and swiche othere seyde  
 she,

And he weex wroth, and bad men sholde  
 hir lede

Hom til hir hous, 'and in hir hous,'  
 quod he,

'Brenne hir right in a bath of flambes  
 rede.' 515

And as he bad, right so was doon in  
 dede;

For in a bath they gonne hir faste shetten,  
 And night and day greet fyr they under  
 betten.

The longe night and eek a day also,  
 For al the fyr and eek the bathes hete,  
 She sat al cold, and felede no wo, 521  
 It made hir nat a drope for to swete.  
 But in that bath hir lyf she moste lete;  
 For he, Almachius, with ful wikke en-  
 tente 524  
 To sleen hir in the bath his sonde sente.

Three strokes in the nekke he smoot hir  
 tho,  
 The tormentour, but for no maner chaunce  
 He mighte nocht smyte al hir nekke  
 a-two;  
 And for ther was that tyme an ordi-  
 nauce,  
 That no man sholde doon man swich  
 penaunce 530  
 The ferthe strook to smyten, softe or sore,  
 This tormentour ne dorste do na-more.

But half-deed, with hir nekke y-corven  
 there,  
 He lefte hir lye, and on his way is went.  
 The Cristen folk, which that aboute hir  
 were, 535

With shetes han the blood ful faire  
 y-hent.  
 Thre dayes lived she in this torment,  
 And never cessed hem the feith to teche;  
 That she hadde fostred, hem she gan to  
 preche;

And hem she yaf hir moebles and hir  
 thing, 540  
 And to the pope Urban bitook hem tho,  
 And seyde, 'I axed this at hevene king,  
 To han respyt thre dayes and na-mo,  
 To recomende to yow, er that I go,  
 These soules; lo! and that I mighte do  
 werche 545  
 Here of myn hous perpetuely a cherche.'

Seint Urban, with his deknes, prively  
 The body fette, and buried it by nighte  
 Among his othere seintes honestly.  
 Hir hous the chirche of seint Cecilie  
 highte; 550  
 Seint Urban halwed it, as he wel mighte;  
 In which, into this day, in noble wyse,  
 Men doon to Crist and to his seint ser-  
 vyse.

*Here is ended the Seconde Nonnes Tale.*

## THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S PROLOGUE.

*The prologe of the Chanons Yemannes  
 Tale.*

WHAN ended was the lyf of seint Cecyle,  
 Er we had riden fully fyve myle, 555  
 At Boghton under Blee us gan atake  
 A man, that clothed was in clothes blake,  
 And undernethe he hadde a whyte sur-  
 plys.  
 His hakeney, that was al pomely grys,  
 So swatte, that it wonder was to see; 560  
 It semed he had priked myles thre.  
 The hors eek that his yeman rood upon  
 So swatte, that unnethe mighte it gon.  
 Aboute the peytrel stood the foom ful  
 hye,  
 He was of fome al flekked as a pye. 565  
 A male tweyfold on his croper lay,

It semed that he caried lyte array.  
 Al light for somer rood this worthy man,  
 And in myn herte wondren I bigan  
 What that he was, til that I understood  
 How that his cloke was sowed to his  
 hood; 571  
 For which, when I had longe avysed me,  
 I demed him som chanon for to be.  
 His hat heng at his bak down by a laas,  
 For he had riden more than trot or  
 paas; 575  
 He had ay priked lyk as he were wood.  
 A clote-leef he hadde under his hood  
 For swoot and for to kepe his heed from  
 hete.  
 But it was Ioye for to seen him swete!  
 His forheed dropped as a stillatorie, 580  
 Were ful of plantain and of paritorie.

And whan that he was come, he gan to crye,  
 'God save,' quod he, 'this Ioly companye!  
 Faste have I priked,' quod he, 'for your sake,  
 By-cause that I wolde yow atake, 585  
 To ryden in this mery companye.'  
 His yeman eek was ful of curteisye,  
 And seyde, 'sires, now in the morwe-tyde  
 Out of your hostelrye I saugh you ryde,  
 And warned heer my lord and my soverayn, 590  
 Which that to ryden with yow is ful fayn,  
 For his desport; he loveth daliaunce.'  
 'Freend, for thy warning god yeve thee good chaunce,'  
 Than seyde our host, 'for certes, it wolde seme  
 Thy lord were wys, and so I may wel deme; 595  
 He is ful Iocund also, dar I leye,  
 Can he oght telle a mery tale or tweye,  
 With which he glade may this companye?'  
 'Who, sire? my lord? ye, ye, withouten lye,  
 He can of murthe, and eek of Iolitee 600  
 Nat but ynough; also sir, trusteth me,  
 And ye him knewe as wel as do I,  
 Ye wolde wondre how wel and craftily  
 He coude werke, and that in sondry wyse.  
 He hath take on him many a greet empyre, 605  
 Which were ful hard for any that is here  
 To bringe aboute, but they of him it lere.  
 As homely as he rit amonges yow,  
 If ye him knewe, it wolde be for your prow; 609  
 Ye wolde nat forgoon his aqueyntaunce  
 For mochel good, I dar leye in balaunce  
 Al that I have in my possessioun.  
 He is a man of heigh discrecioun,  
 I warne you wel, he is a passing man.'  
 'Wel,' quod our host, 'I pray thee, tel me than, 615  
 Is he a clerk, or noon? tel what he is.'  
 'Nay, he is gretter than a clerk, y-wis,'  
 Seyde this yeman, 'and in wordes fewe,  
 Host, of his craft som-what I wol yow shewe. 619

I seye, my lord can swich subtilitee —  
 (But al his craft ye may nat wite at me;  
 And som-what helpe I yet to his werk-  
 ing) —  
 That al this ground on which we been ryding,  
 Til that we come to Caunterbury toun,  
 He coude al clene turne it up-so-doun,  
 And pave it al of silver and of gold.' 626  
 And whan this yeman hadde thus y-told  
 Unto our host, he seyde, '*benedicite!*  
 This thing is wonder merveillous to me,  
 Sin that thy lord is of so heigh prudence,  
 By-cause of which men sholde him reverence, 631  
 That of his worship rekketh he so lyte;  
 His oversloppe nis nat worth a myte,  
 As in effect, to him, so mote I go!  
 It is al baudy and to-tore also. 635  
 Why is thy lord so sluttish, I thee preye,  
 And is of power better cloth to beye,  
 If that his dede accorde with thy speche?  
 Telle me that, and that I thee biseche.'  
 'Why?' quod this yeman, 'wherto axe ye me? 640  
 God help me so, for he shal never thee!  
 (But I wol nat avowe that I seye,  
 And therfor kepe it secree, I yow preye).  
 He is to wys, in feith, as I bileve;  
 That that is overdoon, it wol nat preve  
 Aright, as clerkes seyn, it is a vyce. 646  
 Wherfor in that I holde him lewed and nyce.  
 For whan a man hath over-greet a wit,  
 Ful oft him happeth to misusen it;  
 So dooth my lord, and that me greveth sore. 650  
 God it amende, I can sey yow na-more.'  
 'Ther-of no fors, good yeman,' quod our host;  
 'Sin of the conning of thy lord thou wost,  
 Tel how he dooth, I pray thee hertely,  
 Sin that he is so crafty and so sly. 655  
 Wher dwellen ye, if it to telle be?'  
 'In the suburbes of a toun,' quod he,  
 'Lurkinge in hernes and in lanes blinde,  
 Wher-as these robbours and these theves by kinde  
 Holden hir privee fereful residence, 660  
 As they that dar nat shewen hir pres-  
 ence;



So faren we, if I shal seye the sothe.  
 'Now,' quod our host, 'yit lat me talke  
 to the;  
 Why artow so discoloured of thy face?'  
 'Peter!' quod he, 'god yeve it harde  
 grace, 665  
 I am so used in the fyr to blowe,  
 That it hath chaunged my colour, I  
 trowe.  
 I am nat wont in no mirour to pryde,  
 But swinke sore and lerne multiplye.  
 We blondren ever and pouren in the fyr,  
 And for al that we fayle of our desyr, 671  
 For ever we lakken our conclusioun.  
 To mochel folk we doon illusioun,  
 And borwe gold, be it a pound or two,  
 Or ten, or twelve, or many sommes mo,  
 And make hem wenen, at the leeste  
 weye, 676  
 That of a pound we coude make tweye!  
 Yet it is fals, but ay we han good hope  
 It for to doon, and after it we grope.  
 But that science is so fer us biforn, 680  
 We mowen nat, al-though we hadde it  
 sworn,  
 It overtake, it slit away so faste;  
 It wol us maken beggers atte laste.'  
 Why! this yeman was thus in his talk-  
 ing,  
 This chanoun drough him neer, and herde  
 al thing 685  
 Which this yeman spak, for suspecioun  
 Of mennes speche ever hadde this  
 chanoun.  
 For Catoun seith, that he that gilty is  
 Demeth al thing be spoke of him, y-wis.  
 That was the cause he gan so ny him  
 drawe 690  
 To his yeman, to herkennen al his sawe.

And thus he seyde un-to his yeman tho,  
 'Hold thou thy pees, and spek no wordes  
 mo,  
 For if thou do, thou shalt it dere abyde;  
 Thou sclaudrest me heer in this com-  
 panye, 695  
 And eek discoverest that thou sholdest  
 hyde.'  
 'Ye,' quod our host, 'telle on, what so  
 bityde;  
 Of al his threting rekke nat a myte!'  
 'In feith,' quod he, 'namore I do but  
 lyte.'  
 And whan this chanon saugh it wolde  
 nat be, 700  
 But his yeman wolde telle his privitee,  
 He fledde away for verray sorwe and  
 shame.  
 'A!' quod the yeman, 'heer shal aryse  
 game,  
 Al that I can anon now wol I telle.  
 Sin he is goon, the foule feend him  
 quelle! 705  
 For never her-after wol I with him mete  
 For peny ne for pound, I yow bihete!  
 He that me broghte first unto that game,  
 Er that he dye, sorwe have he and  
 shame!  
 For it is ernest to me, by my feith; 710  
 That fele I wel, what so any man seith.  
 And yet, for al my smert and al my grief,  
 For al my sorwe, labour, and meschief,  
 I coude never leve it in no wyse.  
 Now wolde god my wit mighte suffyse  
 To tellen al that longeth to that art! 716  
 But natheles yow wol I tellen part;  
 Sin that my lord is gon, I wol nat spare;  
 Swich thing as that I knowe, I wol de-  
 clare. —

*Here endeth the Prologe of the Chanouns Yemannes Tale.*

## THE CHANOUNS YEMANNES TALE.

HERE BIGINNETH THE CHANOUNS YE-  
 MAN HIS TALE.

[*Prima pars.*]

WITH this chanoun I dwelt have seven  
 year, 720  
 And of his science am I never the neer.

Al that I hadde, I have y-lost ther-by;  
 And god wot, so hath many mo than I.  
 Ther I was wont to be right fresh and  
 gay  
 Of clothing and of other good array, 725  
 Now may I were an hose upon myn  
 heed;

And wher my colour was bothe fresh and  
reed,

Now is it wan and of a leden hewe;  
Who-so it useth, sore shal he rewe.

And of my swink yet blered is myn yë,  
Lo! which avantage is to multiplie! 731  
That slyding science hath me maad so  
bare,

That I have no good, wher that ever I  
fare;

And yet I am endetted so ther-by  
Of gold that I have borwed, trewely, 735  
That whyl I live, I shal it quyte never.

Lat every man be war by me for ever!  
What maner man that casteth him  
ther-to,

If he continue, I holde his thrift y-do.  
So helpe me god, ther-by shal he nat  
winne, 740

But empte his purs, and make his wittes  
thinne.

And whan he, thurgh his madnes and  
folye,

Hath lost his owene good thurgh Iu-  
partye,

Thanne he excyteth other folk ther-to,  
To lese hir good as he him-self hath do.

For unto shrewes Ioye it is and ese 746  
To have hir felawes in peyne and dis-  
ese;

Thus was I ones lerned of a clerk.  
Of that no charge, I wol speke of our  
werk.

Whan we been ther as we shul exer-  
cyse 750

Our elvish craft, we semen wonder wyse,  
Our termes been so clerghial and so  
queynte.

I blowe the fyr til that myn herte feynte.

What sholde I tellen ech proporcioun  
Of thinges whiche that we werche upon,  
As on five or sixe ounces, may wel be,

Of silver or som other quantite, 757

And bisie me to telle yow the names  
Of orpiment, brent bones, yren squames,  
That into poudre grounden been ful  
smal? 760

And in an erthen potte how put is al,  
And salt y-put in, and also papeer,  
Biforn thise poudres that I speke of  
heer,

And wel y-covered with a lampe of glas,

And mochel other thing which that ther  
was? 765

And of the pot and glasses enluting,  
That of the eyre mighte passe out no-  
thing?

And of the esy fyr and smart also,  
Which that was maad, and of the care  
and wo

That we hadde in our matires sublyming,  
And in amalgaming and calcening 771  
Of quik-silver, y-clept Mercurie crude?  
For alle our sleightes we can nat con-  
clude.

Our orpiment and sublymed Mercurie,  
Our grounden litarge eek on the por-  
phurie, 775

Of ech of thise of ounces a certeyn  
Nought helpeth us, our labour is in veyn.  
Ne eek our spiritres ascencioun,

Ne our materes that lyen al fixe adoun,  
Mowe in our werking no-thing us avayle.  
For lost is al our labour and travayle, 781  
And al the cost, a twenty devel weye,  
Is lost also, which we upon it leye.

Ther is also ful many another thing  
That is unto our craft apertening; 785  
Though I by ordre hem nat reherce  
can,

By-cause that I am a lewed man,  
Yet wol I telle hem as they come to  
minde,

Though I ne can nat sette hem in hir  
kinde;

As bole armoniak, verdegrees, boras, 790  
And sondry vessels maad of erthe and  
glas,

Our urinales and our descensories,  
Violes, croslets, and sublymatories,  
Cucurbites, and alembykes eek, 794

And other swiche, dere y-nough a leek.  
Nat nedeth it for to reherce hem alle,

Watres rubifying and boles galle,  
Arsenik, sal armoniak, and brimstoon;  
And herbes coude I telle eek many oon,

As egreimoine, valerian, and lunarie, 800  
And other swiche, if that me liste tarie.  
Our lampes brenning bothe night and day,  
To bringe aboute our craft, if that we  
may.

Our fourneys eek of calcinacioun,  
And of watres albificacioun, 805

Unslekked lym, chalk, and gleyre of an  
ey,

Poudres diverse, asshes, dong, pisse, and  
 cley,  
 Cered pokets, sal peter, vitriole;  
 And divers fyres maad of wode and cole;  
 Sal tartre, alkaly, and sal preparat, 810  
 And combust materes and coagulat,  
 Cley maad with hors or mannes heer,  
 and oile  
 Of tartre, alum, glas, berm, wort, and  
 argoile,  
 Resalgar, and our materes enbibing;  
 And eek of our materes encorporing, 815  
 And of our silver citrinacioun,  
 Our cementing and fermentacioun,  
 Our ingottes, testes, and many mo.  
 I wol yow telle, as was me taught also,  
 The foure spirites and the bodies sevene,  
 By ordre, as ofte I herde my lord hem  
 nevene. 821  
 The first spirit quik-silver called is,  
 The second orpiment, the thridde, y-wis,  
 Sal armoniak, and the ferthe brimstoon.  
 The bodies sevene eek, lo! hem heer  
 anoon: 825  
 Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe,  
 Mars yren, Mercurie quik-silver we clepe,  
 Saturnus leed, and Iupiter is tin,  
 And Venus coper, by my fader kin!  
 This cursed craft who-so wol exercyse,  
 He shal no good han that him may  
 suffyse; 831  
 For al the good he spendeth ther-about, e,  
 He lese shal, ther-of have I no doute.  
 Who-so that listeth outhen his folye,  
 Lat him come forth, and lerne multiplye;  
 And every man that oght hath in his  
 cofre, 836  
 Lat him appere, and wexe a filosofre.  
 Ascaunce that craft is so light to lere?  
 Nay, nay, god woot, al be he monk or frere,  
 Preest or chanoun, or any other wight,  
 Though he sitte at his book bothe day  
 and night, 841  
 In lernyng of this elvish nyce lore,  
 Al is in veyn, and parde, mochel more!  
 To lerne a lewed man this subtiltee, 844  
 Fy! spek nat ther-of, for it wol nat be;  
 Al conne he letterure, or conne he noon,  
 As in effect, he shal finde it al oon.  
 For bothe two, by my savacioun,  
 Concluden, in multiplicacioun,  
 Y-lyke wel, whan they han al y-do; 850  
 This is to seyn, they faylen bothe two.

Yet forgat I to maken rehersaille  
 Of watres corosif and of limaille,  
 And of bodyes mollificacioun,  
 And also of hir induracioun, 855  
 Oiles, ablucions, and metal fusible,  
 To tellen al wolde passen any bible  
 That o-wher is; wherfor, as for the  
 beste,  
 Of alle thise names now wol I me reste.  
 For, as I trowe, I have yow told y-nowe  
 To reyse a feend, al loke he never so  
 rowe. 861  
 A! nay! lat be; the philosophres  
 stoon,  
 Elixir clept, we sechen faste echoon;  
 For hadde we him, than were we siker  
 y-now. 864  
 But, unto god of heven I make avow,  
 For al our craft, whan we han al y-do,  
 And al our sleighte, he wol nat come us  
 to.  
 He hath y-maad us spenden mochel good,  
 For sorwe of which almost we wexen  
 wood, 869  
 But that good hope crepeth in our herte,  
 Supposinge ever, though we sore smerte,  
 To be releved by him afterward;  
 Swich supposing and hope is sharp and  
 hard;  
 I warne yow wel, it is to seken ever;  
 That futur temps hath maad men to dis-  
 sever,  
 In trust ther-of, from al that ever they  
 hadde. 876  
 Yet of that art they can nat wexen sadde,  
 For unto hem it is a bitter swete;  
 So semeth it; for nadde they but a shete  
 Which that they mighte wrappe hem inne  
 a-night, 880  
 And a bak to walken inne by day-light,  
 They wolde hem selle and spenden on  
 this craft;  
 They can nat stinte til no-thing be laft.  
 And evermore, wher that ever they goon,  
 Men may hem knowe by smel of brim-  
 stoon; 885  
 For al the world, they stinken as a goot;  
 Her savour is so rammish and so hoot,  
 That, though a man from hem a myle be,  
 The savour wol infecte him, trusteth  
 me;  
 Lo, thus by smelling and threedbare  
 array, 890

If that men liste, this folk they knowe  
may.

And if a man wol aske hem prively,  
Why they been clothed so unthriftily,  
They right anon wol rownen in his ere,  
And seyn, that if that they espyed were,  
Men wolde hem slee, by-cause of hir  
science; 896

Lo, thus this folk bitrayen innocence!

Passe over this; I go my tale un-to.  
Er than the pot be on the fyr y-do,  
Of metals with a certein quantite, 900  
My lord hem tempreth, and no man but  
he —

Now he is goon, I dar seyn boldely —  
For, as men seyn, he can don craftily;  
Algate I woot wel he hath swich a  
name,

And yet ful oft he renneth in a blame;  
And wite ye how? ful ofte it happeth  
so, 906

The pot to-breketh, and farewel! al is  
go!

Thise metals been of so greet violence,  
Our walles mowe nat make hem resist-  
ence,

But if they weren wroght of lym and  
ston; 910

They percen so, and thurgh the wal  
they goon,

And somme of hem sincken in-to the  
ground —

Thus han we lost by tymes many a  
pound —

And somme are scatered al the floor  
aboute,

Somme lepe in-to the roof; with-outen  
doute, 915

Though that the feend nought in our  
sighte him shewe,

I trowe he with us be, that ilke shrewe!  
In helle wher that he is lord and sire,

Nis ther more wo, ne more rancour ne  
ire.

Whan that our pot is broke, as I have  
sayd, 920

Every man chit, and halt him yvel  
apayd.

Som seyde, it was long on the fyr-  
making,

Som seyde, nay! it was on the blowing;  
(Than was I fered, for that was myn  
office);

‘Straw!’ quod the thridde, ‘ye been  
lewed and nyce, 925

It was nat tempred as it oghte be.’

‘Nay!’ quod the ferthe, ‘stint, and  
herkne me;

By-cause our fyr ne was nat maad of  
beech,

That is the cause, and other noon, so  
theech!’

I can nat telle wher-on it was long, 930  
But wel I wot greet stryf is us among.

‘What!’ quod my lord, ‘ther is na-  
more to done,

Of this perils I wol be war eft-son; I  
am right siker that the pot was crased.

Be as be may, be ye no-thing amased;  
As usage is, lat swepe the floor as  
swythe, 936

Plukke up your hertes, and beth gladd  
and blythe.’

The mullok on an hepe y-sweped was,  
And on the floor y-cast a canevas, 939

And al this mullok in a sive y-throwe,  
And sifted, and y-piked many a throwe.

‘Pardee,’ quod oon, ‘somwhat of our  
metal

Yet is ther heer, though that we han nat  
al.

Al-though this thing mishapped have  
as now,

Another tyme it may be wel y-now, 945  
Us moste putte our good in aventure;

A marchant, parde! may nat ay endure,  
Trusteth me wel, in his prosperitee;

Somtyme his good is drenched in the  
see,

And somtym comth it sauf un-to the  
londe.’ 950

‘Pees!’ quod my lord, ‘the next tyme  
I wol fopde

To bringe our craft al in another plyte;  
And but I do, sirs, lat me han the wyte;

Ther was defaute in som-what, wel I  
woot.’

Another seyde, the fyr was over  
hoot: — 955

But, be it hoot or cold, I dar seye this,  
That we concluden evermore amis.

We fayle of that which that we wolden  
have,

And in our madnesse evermore we rave.  
And whan we been togidres everichoon,

Every man semeth a Salomon. 961

But al thing which that shyneth as the  
gold  
Nis nat gold, as that I have herd it  
told;  
Ne every appel that is fair at yē  
Ne is nat good, what-so men clappe or  
crye. 965  
Right so, lo! fareth it amonges us;  
He that semeth the wysest, by Iesus!  
Is most fool, whan it cometh to the  
preef;  
And he that semeth trewest is a theef;  
That shul ye knowe, er that I fro yow  
wende, 970  
By that I of my tale have maad an ende.

*Explicit prima pars. Et sequitur pars  
secunda.*

Ther is a chanoun of religioun  
Amonges us, wolde infecte al a toun  
Though it as greet were as was Ninivee,  
Rome, Alisaundre, Troye, and othere  
three. 975  
His sleightes and his infinit falsnesse  
Ther coude no man wryten, as I gesse,  
Though that he mighte liven a thousand  
yeer.  
In al this world of falshede nis his  
peer;  
For in his termes so he wolde him  
winde, 980  
And speke his wordes in so sly a kinde,  
Whan he commune shal with any wight,  
That he wol make him doten anon right,  
But it a feend be, as him-selven is. 984  
Ful many a man hath he bigyled er this,  
And wol, if that he live may a whyle;  
And yet men ryde and goon ful many a  
myle  
Him for to seke and have his aqueynt-  
aunce,  
Noght knowinge of his false gover-  
naunce.  
And if yow list to yeve me audience, 990  
I wol it tellen heer in your presence.  
But worshipful chanouns religious,  
Ne demeth nat that I sclaudre your  
hous,  
Al-though my tale of a chanoun be.  
Of every ordre som shrewe is, parde, 995  
And god forbede that al a compagne  
Sholde rewe a singuler mannes folye.

To sclaudre yow is no-thing myn  
entente,  
But to correcten that is mis I mente.  
This tale was nat only told for yow, 1000  
But eek for othere mo; ye woot wel  
how  
That, among Cristes apostelles twelve,  
Ther nas no traytour but Iudas him-  
selve.  
Than why sholde al the remenant have  
blame  
That gilltees were? by yow I seye the  
same. 1005  
Save only this, if ye wol herkne me,  
If any Iudas in your covent be,  
Remeveth him bitymes, I yow rede,  
If shame or los may causen any drede.  
And beth no-thing displeyd, I yow  
preye, 1010  
But in this cas herkne what I shal seye.

In London was a preest, an annue-  
leer,  
That therin dwelled hadde many a  
yeer, 1014  
Which was so plesaunt and so servisable  
Unto the wyf, wher-as he was at table,  
That she wolde suffre him no-thing for  
to paye  
For bord ne clothing, wente he never  
so gaye;  
And spending-silver hadde he right  
y-now. 1018  
Therof no fors; I wol procede as now,  
And telle forth my tale of the chanoun,  
That broghte this preest to confusioun.  
This false chanoun cam up-on a day  
Unto this preestes chambre, wher he  
lay,  
Biseching him to lene him a certeyn  
Of gold, and he wolde quyte it him  
ageyn. 1025  
'Lene me a mark,' quod he, 'but dayes  
three,  
And at my day I wol it quyten thee.  
And if so be that thou me finde fals,  
Another day do hange me by the hals!'  
This preest him took a mark, and that  
a swysthe, 1030  
And this chanoun him thanked ofte  
sythe,  
And took his leve, and wente forth his  
weye,

And at the thridde day broghte his  
 moneye,  
 And to the preest he took his gold  
 agayn,  
 Wherof this preest was wonder glad and  
 fayn. 1035  
 'Certes,' quod he, 'no-thing anoyeth  
 me  
 To lene a man a noble, or two or three,  
 Or what thing were in my possessioun,  
 Whan he so trewe is of condicioun, 1039  
 That in no wyse he breke wol his day;  
 To swich a man I can never seye nay.'  
 'What!' quod this chanoun, 'sholde  
 I be untrewed?  
 Nay, that were thing y-fallen al of-newe.  
 Trouthe is a thing that I wol ever kepe  
 Un-to that day in which that I shal  
 crepe 1045  
 In-to my grave, and elles god forbede;  
 Bileveth this as siker as is your crede.  
 God thanke I, and in good tyme be it  
 sayd, 1048  
 That ther was never man yet yvel apayd  
 For gold ne silver that he to me lente,  
 Ne never faldede in myn herte I mente.  
 And sir,' quod he, 'now of my privetee,  
 Sin ye so goodlich han been un-to me,  
 And kythed to me so greet gentillesse,  
 Somwhat to quyte with your kindenesse,  
 I wol yow shewe, and, if yow list to lere,  
 I wol yow teche pleyntly the manere, 1057  
 How I can werken in philosophye.  
 Taketh good heed, ye shul wel seen at  
 yē,  
 That I wol doon a maistrie er I go.' 1060  
 'Ye,' quod the preest, 'ye, sir, and wol  
 ye so?  
 Marie! ther-of I pray yow hertely!'  
 'At your comandement, sir, trewely,'  
 Quod the chanoun, 'and elles god for-  
 bede!'  
 Lo, how this thief coude his servyse  
 bede! 1065  
 Ful sooth it is, that swich profred ser-  
 vyse  
 Stinketh, as witnessen thise olde wyse;  
 And that ful sone I wol it verifeye  
 In this chanoun, rote of al trecherye,  
 That ever-more delyt hath and glad-  
 nesse — 1070  
 Swich feendly thoughtes in his herte im-  
 presse —

How Cristes peple he may to meschief  
 bringe;  
 God kepe us from his fals dissimulinge!  
 Noght wiste this preest with whom  
 that he delte,  
 Ne of his harm cominge he no-thing  
 felte. 1075  
 O sely preest! O sely innocent!  
 With covetise anon thou shalt be blent!  
 O gracelees, ful blind is thy conceit,  
 No-thing ne artow war of the deceit  
 Which that this fox y-shapen hath to  
 thee! 1080  
 His wyly wrenches thou ne mayst nat  
 flece  
 Wherfor, to go to the conclusioun  
 That refereth to thy confusioun,  
 Unhappy man! anon I wol me hye  
 To tellen thyn unwit and thy folye, 1085  
 And eek the falsnesse of that other  
 wrecche,  
 As ferforth as that my conning may  
 strecche.  
 This chanoun was my lord, ye wolden  
 wene?  
 Sir host, in feith, and by the hevenes  
 quene,  
 It was another chanoun, and nat he, 1090  
 That can an hundred fold more subtiltee!  
 He hath bitrayed folkes many tyme;  
 Of his faldede it dulleth me to ryme.  
 Ever whan that I speke of his faldede,  
 For shame of him my chekes wexen  
 rede; 1095  
 Algates, they biginnen for to glowe,  
 For reednesse have I noon, right wel I  
 knowe,  
 In my visage; for fumes dyverse  
 Of metals, which ye han herd me re-  
 herce,  
 Consumed and wasted han my reednesse.  
 Now tak heed of this chanouns cursed-  
 nesse! 1101  
 'Sir,' quod he to the preest, 'lat your  
 man gon  
 For quik-silver, that we it hadde anon;  
 And lat him bringen ounces two or  
 three;  
 And whan he comth, as faste shul ye see  
 A wonder thing, which saugh never er  
 this.' 1106  
 'Sir,' quod the preest, 'it shal be doon,  
 y-wis.'

He bad his servant fecchen him this  
 thing,  
 And he al redy was at his bidding,  
 And wente him forth, and cam anon  
 agayn 1110  
 With this quik-silver, soothly for to sayn,  
 And took these ounces three to the chan-  
 oun;  
 And he hem leyde fayre and wel adoun,  
 And bad the servant coles for to bringe,  
 That he anon mighte go to his werk-  
 inge. 1115  
 The coles right anon weren y-fet,  
 And this chanoun took out a crosselet  
 Of his bosom, and shewed it the preest.  
 'This instrument,' quod he, 'which that  
 thou seest,  
 Tak in thyn hand, and put thy-self ther-  
 inne 1120  
 Of this quik-silver an ounce, and heer  
 biginne,  
 In the name of Crist, to wexe a philoso-  
 fre.  
 Ther been ful fewe, whiche that I wolde  
 profre  
 To shewen hem thus muche of my  
 science.  
 For ye shul seen heer, by experience,  
 That this quik-silver wol I mortifye 1126  
 Right in your sighte anon, withouten  
 lye,  
 And make it as good silver and as fyn  
 As ther is any in your purs or myn,  
 Or elleswher, and make it malliable; 1130  
 And elles, holdeth me fals and unable  
 Amonges folk for ever to appere!  
 I have a poudre heer, that coste me dere,  
 Shal make al good, for it is cause of al  
 My conning, which that I yow shewen  
 shal. 1135  
 Voydeth your man, and lat him be ther-  
 oute,  
 And shet the dore, whyls we been aboute  
 Our privetee, that no man us espye  
 Whyls that we werke in this philoso-  
 phye.'  
 Al as he bad, fulfilled was in dede, 1140  
 This ilke servant anon-right out yede,  
 And his maister shette the dore anon,  
 And to hir labour speedily they gon.  
 This preest, at this cursed chanouns  
 bidding,  
 Up-on the fyr anon sette this thing, 1145

And blew the fyr, and bisied him ful  
 faste;  
 And this chanoun in-to the croslet caste  
 A poudre, noot I wher-of that it was  
 Y-maad, other of chalk, other of glas,  
 Or som-what elles, was nat worth a flye,  
 To blynde with the preest; and bad him  
 hye 1151  
 The coles for to couchen al above  
 The croslet, 'for, in tokening I thee  
 love,'  
 Quod this chanoun, 'thyn owene hondes  
 two  
 Shul werche al thing which that shal  
 heer be do.' 1155  
 'Graunt mercy,' quod the preest, and  
 was ful glad,  
 And couched coles as the chanoun bad.  
 And whyle he bisy was, this feendly  
 wrecche,  
 This fals chanoun, the foule feend him  
 fecche!  
 Out of his bosom took a bechen cole, 1160  
 In which ful subtilly was maad an hole,  
 And ther-in put was of silver lymaille  
 An ounce, and stopped was, with-uten  
 fayle,  
 The hole with wex, to kepe the lymail in.  
 And understondeth, that this false  
 gin 1165  
 Was nat maad ther, but it was maad  
 bifore;  
 And othere thinges I shal telle more  
 Herafterward, which that he with him  
 broghte;  
 Er he cam ther, him to bigyle he thoghte,  
 And so he dide, er that they wente  
 a-twinne; 1170  
 Til he had terved him, coude he not  
 blinne.  
 It dulleth me whan that I of him speke,  
 On his falshede fayn wolde I me wreke,  
 If I wiste how; but he is heer and ther:  
 He is so variaunt, he abit no-wher. 1175  
 But taketh heed now, sirs, for goddes  
 love!  
 He took his cole of which I spak above,  
 And in his hond he baar it prively.  
 And whyls the preest couchede busily  
 The coles, as I tolde yow er this, 1180  
 This chanoun seyde, 'freend, ye doon  
 amis;  
 This is nat couched as it oghte be;

But sone I shal amenden it,' quod he.  
'Now lat me medle therewith but a whyle,  
For of yow have I pitee, by seint  
Gyle! 1185

Ye been right hoot, I see wel how ye  
swete,  
Have heer a cloth, and wye away the  
wete.'

And whyles that the preest wyped his  
face,  
This chanoun took his cole with harde  
grace,  
And leyde it above, up-on the midde-  
ward 1190

Of the croslet, and blew wel afterward,  
Til that the coles gonne faste brenne.

'Now yeve us drinke,' quod the chan-  
oun thenne,

'As swythe al shal be wel, I undertake;  
Sitte we doun, and lat us mery  
make.' 1195

And whan that this chanounes bechen  
cole

Was brent, al the lymaille, out of the  
hole,

Into the croslet fil anon adoun;  
And so it moste nedes, by resoun,  
Sin it so even aboven couched was; 1200  
But ther-of wiste the preest no-thing,  
alas!

He demed alle the coles y-liche good,  
For of the sleighte he no-thing under-  
stood.

And whan this alkamistre saugh his tyme,  
'Rys up,' quod he, 'sir preest, and stond-  
'eth by me; 1205

And for I woot wel ingot have ye noon,  
Goth, walketh forth, and bring us a chalk-  
stoon;

For I wol make oon of the same shap  
That is an ingot, if I may han hap.  
And bringeth eek with yow a bolle or a  
panne, 1210

Ful of water, and ye shul see wel thanne  
How that our businesse shal thryve and  
preve.

And yet, for ye shul han no misbileve  
Ne wrong conceit of me in your absence,  
I ne wol nat been out of your pres-  
ence, 1215

But go with yow, and come with yow  
ageyn.'

The chambre-dore, shortly for to seyn,

They opened and shette, and wente hir  
weye.

And forth with hem they carieden the  
keye, 1219

And come agayn with-outen any delay.  
What sholde I tarien al the longe day?

He took the chalk, and shoop it in the  
wyse

Of an ingot, as I shal yow devyse.  
I seye, he took out of his owene sleve,  
A teyne of silver (yvele mote he  
cheve!) 1225

Which that ne was nat but an ounce of  
weighte;

And taketh heel now of his cursed  
sleighte!

He shoop his ingot, in lengthe and eek  
in brede,

Of this teyne, with-outen any drede, 1229  
So slyly, that the preest it nat espyde;  
And in his sleve agayn he gan it hyde;

And fro the fyr he took up his matere,  
And in thingot putte it with mery chere,  
And in the water-vessel he it caste

Whan that him luste, and bad the preest  
as faste, 1235  
'Look what ther is, put in thyn hand and  
grope,

Thow finde shalt ther silver, as I hope;  
What, devel of helle! sholde it elles be?  
Shaving of silver silver is, pardee!'

He putte his hond in, and took up a  
teyne 1240

Of silver fyn, and glad in every veyne  
Was this preest, whan he saugh that it  
was so.

'Goddess blessing, and his modres also,  
And alle halwes have ye, sir chanoun,'  
Seyde this preest, 'and I hir mali-  
soun, 1245

But, and ye vouche-sauf to techen me  
This noble craft and this subtilitee,  
I wol be youre, in al that ever I may!'

Quod the chanoun, 'yet wol I make  
assay

The second tyme, that ye may taken  
hede 1250

And been expert of this, and in your  
nede

Another day assaye in myn absence  
This disciplyne and this crafty science.

Lat take anotner ounce,' quod he tho,  
'Of quik-silver, with-outen wordes mo,



And do ther-with as ye han doon er this  
With that other, which that now silver is.'

This preest him bisieith in al that he  
can

To doon as this chanoun, this cursed man,  
Comanded him, and faste he blew the  
fyr, 1260

For to come to theeffect of his desyr.  
And this chanoun, right in the mene  
whyle,

Al redy was, the preest eft to bigyle,  
And, for a countenance, in his hande he  
bar 1264

An holwe stikke (tak keep and be war!)  
In the ende of which an ounce, and na-  
more,

Of silver lymail put was, as bifore  
Was in his cole, and stopped with wex  
weel

For to kepe in his lymail every deel.  
And whyl this preest was in his bi-  
nesse, 1270

This chanoun with his stikke gan him  
dresse

To him anon, and his pouder caste in  
As he did er; (the devel out of his skin  
Him terve, I pray to god, for his fals-  
hede;

For he was ever fals in thoght and  
dede); 1275

And with this stikke, above the croslet,  
That was ordeyned with that false get,  
He stired the coles, til relente gan

The wex agayn the fyr, as every man,  
But it a fool be, woot wel it mot nede, 1280

And al that in the stikke was out yede,  
And in the croslet hastily it fel.

Now gode sirs, what wol ye bet than  
wel?

Whan that this preest thus was bigyled  
ageyn,

Supposing noght but trouthe, soth to  
seyn, 1285

He was so glad, that I can nat expresse  
In no manere his mirthe and his glad-  
nesse;

And to the chanoun he profred eftson  
Body and good; 'ye,' quod the chanoun  
sone,

'Though povre I be, crafty thou shalt me  
finde; 1290

I warne thee, yet is ther more bihinde.  
Is ther any coper her-inne?' seyde he.

'Ye,' quod the preest, 'sir, I trowe wel  
ther be.'

'Elles go by us som, and that as swythe,  
Now, gode sir, go forth thy wey and hy  
the.' 1295

He wente his wey, and with the coper  
cam,

And this chanoun it in his handes nam,  
And of that coper weyed out but an  
ounce.

Al to simple is my tonge to pronounce,  
As ministre of my wit, the double-  
nesse 1300

Of this chanoun, rote of al cursednesse.  
He semed frendly to hem that knewe  
him noght,

But he seendly bothe in herte and  
thoght.

It werieth me to telle of his falsnesse,  
And natheles yet wol I it expresse, 1305  
To thentente that men may be war therby,  
And for noon other cause, trewely.

He putte his ounce of coper in the  
croslet,

And on the fyr as swythe he hath it set,  
And caste in poudre, and made the preest  
to blowe, 1310

And in his werking for to stoupe lowe,  
As he dide er, and al nas but a Iape;  
Right as him liste, the preest he made  
his ape;

And afterward in the ingot he it caste,  
And in the panne putte it at the  
laste 1315

Of water, and in he putte his owene  
hond.

And in his sleeve (as ye biforn-hond  
Herde me telle) he hadde a silver teyne.  
He slyly took it out, this cursed heyne —

Unwiting this preest of his false  
craft — 1320

And in the pannes botme he hath it  
laft;

And in the water rombled to and fro,  
And wonder prively took up also

The coper teyne, noght knowing this  
preest,  
And hidde it, and him hente by the  
breest, 1325

And to him spak, and thus seyde in his  
game,

'Stoupeth adoun, by god, ye be to blame,  
Helpeth me now, as I dide yow whyl-er,

Putte in your hand, and loketh what is ther.'

This preest took up this silver teyne anon, 1330

And thanne seyde the chanoun, 'lat us gon

With these three teynes, which that we han wrought,

To som goldsmith, and wite if they been oght.

For, by my feith, I nolde, for myn hood, But-if that they were silver, fyn and good, 1335

And that as swythe preved shal it be.'

Un-to the goldsmith with these teynes three

They wente, and putte these teynes in assay

To fyr and hamer; mighte no man sey nay,

But that they weren as hem oghte be. 1340

This sotted preest, who was gladder than he?

Was never brid gladder agayn the day, Ne nightingale, in the sesoun of May,

Nas never noon that luste bet to singe; Ne lady lustier in carolinge 1345

Or for to speke of love and womman-hede,

Ne knight in armes to doon an hardy dede

To stonde in grace of his lady dere, Than had this preest this sory craft to lere;

And to the chanoun thus he spak and seyde, 1350

'For love of god, that for us alle deyde, And as I may deserve it un-to yow,

What shal this receit coste? telleth now!'

'By our lady,' quod this chanoun, 'it is dere,

I warne yow wel; for, save I and a frere, 1355

In Engelond ther can no man it make.'

'No fors,' quod he, 'now, sir, for goddes sake,

What shal I paye? telleth me, I preye.'

'Y-wis,' quod he, 'it is ful dere, I seye; Sir, at o word, if that thee list it have, 1360

Ye shul paye fourty pound, so god me save!

And, nere the freendship that ye dide er this

To me, ye sholde paye more, y-wis.'

This preest the somme of fourty pound anon

Of nobles fette, and took hem ever-ichon 1365

To this chanoun, for this ilke receit; Al his werking nas but fraude and deceit.

'Sir preest,' he seyde, 'I kepe han no loos

Of my craft, for I wolde it kept were cloos;

And as ye love me, kepeth it secree; 1370

For, and men knewe al my subtilitee, By god, they wolden han so greet envye

To me, by-cause of my philosophye, I sholde be deed, ther were non other weye.'

'God it forbede!' quod the preest, 'what sey ye?' 1375

Yet hadde I lever spenden al the good Which that I have (and elles wexe I wood!)

Than that ye sholden falle in swich mescheef.'

'For your good wil, sir, have ye right good preef,'

Quod the chanoun, 'and far-wel, grant mercy!' 1380

He wente his wey and never the preest him sy

After that day; and whan that this preest sholde

Maken assay, at swich tyme as he wolde, Of this receit, far-wel! it wolde nat be!

Lo, thus byiaped and bigyled was he! 1385

Thus maketh he his introduccioun To bringe folk to hir destruccioun.—

Considereth, sirs, how that, in ech estaat,

Bitwixe men and gold ther is debaat

So ferforth, that unnethes is ther noon. 1390

This multiplying blent so many oon, That in good feith I trowe that it be

The cause grettest of swich scarsetee. Philosophers speken so mistily

In this craft, that men can nat come therby, 1395

For any wit that men han now a-dayes.

They mowe wel chiteren, as doon this  
Iayes,  
And in her termes sette hir lust and  
peyne,  
But to hir purpos shul they never atteyne,  
A man may lightly lerne, if he have  
aught, 1400  
To multiplie, and bringe his good to  
naught!  
Lo! swich a lucre is in this lusty game,  
A mannes mirthe it wol torne un-to  
grame,  
And empten also grete and hevy purses,  
And maken folk for to purchasen  
curses 1405  
Of hem, that han hir good therto y-lent.  
O! fy! for shame! they that han been  
brent,  
Allas! can they nat flee the fyres hete?  
Ye that it use, I rede ye it lete,  
Lest ye lese al; for bet than never is  
late. 1410  
Never to thryve were to long a date.  
Though ye prolle ay, ye shul it never  
finde;  
Ye been as bolde as is Bayard the blinde,  
That blundreth forth, and peril casteth  
noon;  
He is as bold to renne agayn a stoon 1415  
As for to goon besydes in the weye.  
So faren ye that multiplie, I seye.  
If that your yën can nat seen aright,  
Loke that your minde lakke nought his  
sight.  
For, though ye loke never so brode, and  
stare, 1420  
Ye shul nat winne a myte on that chaf-  
fare,  
But wasten al that ye may rape and renne.  
Withdrawe the fyr, lest it to faste brenne;  
Medleth na-more with that art, I mene,  
For, if ye doon, your thrift is goon ful  
clene. 1425  
And right as swythe I wol yow tellen  
here,  
What philosophres seyn in this matere.  
Lo, thus seith Arnold of the Newe  
Toun,  
As his Rosarie maketh mencion;  
He seith right thus, with-outen any  
lye, 1430  
'Ther may no man Mercurie mortifye,  
But it be with his brother knowleching.

How that he, which that first seyde this  
thing,  
Of philosophres fader was, Hermes;  
He seith, how that the dragoun, doute-  
lees, 1435  
Ne deyeth nat, but-if that he be slayn  
With his brother; and that is for to sayn,  
By the dragoun, Mercurie and noon other  
He understood; and brimstoon by his  
brother,  
That out of *sol* and *luna* were y-drawe.  
And therfor,' seyde he, 'tak heed to my  
sawe, 1441  
Let no man bisy him this art for to seche,  
But-if that he thentencioun and speche  
Of philosophres understande can;  
And if he do, he is a lewed man. 1445  
For this science and this conning,' quod  
he,  
'Is of the secree of secrees, parde.'  
Also ther was a disciple of Plato,  
That on a tyme seyde his maister to,  
As his book Senior wol bere witness,  
And this was his demande in soothfast-  
nesse: 1451  
'Tel me the name of the privy stoon?'  
And Plato answerde unto him anoon,  
'Tak the stoon that Titanos men name.'  
'Which is that?' quod he. 'Magnesia  
is the same,' 1455  
Seyde Plato. 'Ye, sir, and is it thus?  
This is *ignotum per ignotius*.  
What is Magnesia, good sir, I yow  
preye?'  
'It is a water that is maad, I seye,  
Of elementes foure,' quod Plato. 1460  
'Tel me the rote, good sir,' quod he tho,  
'Of that water, if that it be your wille?'  
'Nay, nay,' quod Plato, 'certe in, that I  
nille.  
The philosophres sworn were everichoon,  
That they sholden discovere it un-to  
noon, 1465  
Ne in no book it wryte in no manere;  
For un-to Crist it is so leef and dere  
That he wol nat that it discovered be,  
But wher it lyketh to his deitee  
Man for tenspyre, and eek for to defende  
Whom that him lyketh; lo, this is the  
ende.' 1471  
Thanne conclude I thus; sith god of  
hevene  
Ne wol nat that the philosophres nevene

How that a man shal come un-to this  
 stoon,  
 I rede, as for the beste, lete it goon. 1475  
 For who-so maketh god his adversarie,  
 As for to werken any thing in contrarie

Of his wil, certes, never shal he thryve,  
 Thogh that he multiplye terme of his lyve.  
 And ther a poynt; for ended is my tale;  
 God sende every trewe man bote of his  
 bale! — Amen. 1481

*Here is ended the Chanouns Yemannes Tale.*

## GROUP H.

### THE MANCIPLE'S PROLOGUE.

*Here folweth the Prologe of the Maunciples Tale.*

WITE ye nat wher ther stant a litel toun  
 Which that y-cleped is Bob-up-and-doun,  
 Under the Blee, in Caunterbury weye?  
 Ther gan our hoste for to Iape and pleye,  
 And seyde, 'sirs, what! Dun is in the  
 myre! 5  
 Is ther no man, for preyere ne for hyre,  
 That wol awake our felawe heer bihinde?  
 A theef mighte him ful lightly robbe and  
 binde.  
 See how he nappeth! see, for cokkes  
 bones,  
 As he wol falle from his hors at ones. 10  
 Is that a cook of Londoun, with mes-  
 chaunce?  
 Do him come forth, he knoweth his pen-  
 aunce,  
 For he shal telle a tale, by my fey!  
 Al-though it be nat worth a botel hey.  
 Awake, thou cook,' quod he, 'god yeve  
 thee sorwe, 15  
 What eyleth thee to slepe by the morwe?  
 Hastow had fleen al night, or artow  
 dronke,  
 Or hastow with som quene al night  
 y-swonke,  
 So that thou mayst nat holden up thyn  
 heed?'  
 This cook, that was ful pale and no-  
 thing reed, 20  
 Seyde to our host, 'so god my soule  
 blesse,  
 As ther is falle on me swich hevinesse,  
 Noot I nat why, that me were lever slepe  
 Than the beste galoun wyn in Chepe.'

'Wel,' quod the maunciple, 'if it may  
 doon ese 25  
 To thee, sir cook, and to no wight dis-  
 plese  
 Which that heer rydeth in this companye,  
 And that our host wol, of his curteisey,  
 I wol as now excuse thee of thy tale;  
 For, in good feith, thy visage is ful pale,  
 Thyn yën daswen cek, as that me think-  
 eth, 31  
 And wel I woot, thy breeth ful soure  
 stinketh,  
 That sheweth wel thou art not wel dis-  
 posed;  
 Of me, certein, thou shalt nat been  
 y-glosed.  
 Se how he ganeth, lo, this dronken wight,  
 As though he wolde us swolwe anon-  
 right. 36  
 Hold cloos thy mouth, man, by thy fader  
 kin!  
 The devel of helle sette his foot ther-in!  
 Thy cursed breeth infecte wol us alle;  
 Fy, stinking swyn, fy! foule moot thee  
 falle! 40  
 A! taketh heed, sirs, of this lusty man.  
 Now, swete sir, wol ye Iusten atte fan?  
 Ther-to me thinketh ye been wel y-  
 shape!  
 I trowe that ye dronken han wyn ape,  
 And that is whan men pleyen with a  
 straw.' 45  
 Aud with this speche the cook wex  
 wrooth and wraw,  
 And on the maunciple he gan nodde faste  
 For lakke of speche, and doun the hors  
 him caste,  
 Wher as he lay, til that men up him took;

This was a fayr chivachee of a cook! 50  
 Allas! he nadde holde him by his ladel!  
 And, er that he agayn were in his sadel,  
 Ther was greet showving bothe to and  
 fro,

To lifte him up, and muchel care and wo,  
 So unwelody was this scry palled gost. 55  
 And to the maunciple thanne spak our  
 host,

'By-cause drink hath dominacioun  
 Upon this man, by my savacioun  
 I trowe he lewedly wolde telle his tale.  
 For, were it wyn, or old or moysty  
 ale, 60

That he hath dronke, he speketh in his  
 nose,  
 And fneseth faste, and eek he hath the  
 pose.

He hath also to do more than y-nough  
 To kepe him and his capel out of slough;  
 And, if he falle from his capel eft-  
 sone, 65

Than shul we alle have y-nough to done,  
 In lifting up his hevly dronken cors.  
 Telle on thy tale, of him make I no fors.

But yet, maunciple, in feith thou art to  
 nyce,

Thus openly repreve him of his vyce. 70  
 Another day he wol, peraventure,  
 Reclayme thee, and bringe thee to lure;  
 I mene, he speke wol of smale thinges,  
 As for to pinchen at thy rekeninges,  
 That wer not honeste, if it cam to  
 preef.' 75

'No,' quod the maunciple, 'that were  
 a greet mescheef!  
 So mighte he lightly bringe me in the  
 snare.

Yet hadde I lever payen for the mare  
 Which he rit on, than he sholde with me  
 stryve;

I wol nat wratthe him, al-so mote I  
 thryve! 80

That that I spak, I seyde it in my  
 bourde;

And wite ye what? I have heer, in a  
 gourde,

A draught of wyn, ye, of a rype grape,  
 And right anon ye shul seen a good  
 lape.

This cook shal drinke ther-of, if I  
 may; 85

Up peyne of deeth, he wol nat seye me  
 nay!'

And certainly, to tellen as it was,  
 Of this vessel the cook drank faste,  
 allas!

What neded him? he drank y-nough  
 biforn.

And whan he hadde pouped in this  
 horn, 90

To the maunciple he took the gourde  
 agayn;

And of that drinke the cook was wonder  
 fayn,

And thanked him in swich wyse as he  
 coude.

Than gan our host to laughen wonder  
 loude,

And seyde, 'I see wel, it is necessarie, 95  
 Wher that we goon, good drink we with  
 us carie;

For that wol turne rancour and disese  
 Tacord and love, and many a wrong  
 apese.

O thou Bachus, y-blessed be thy name,  
 That so canst turnen earnest in-to game!

Worship and thank be to thy deitee! 101  
 Of that matere ye gete na-more of me.

Tel on thy tale, maunciple, I thee preye.'

'Wel, sir,' quod he, 'now herkneth  
 what I seye.'

*Thus endeth the Prologe of the Maunciple.*

## THE MAUNCIPLES TALE.

*Here biginneth the Maunciples Tale of  
 the Crowe.*

WHAN Phebus dwelled here in this erthe  
 adoun, 105

As olde bokes maken mencion,

He was the moste lusty bachiler  
 In al this world, and eek the beste  
 archer;

He slow Phitoun, the serpent, as he lay  
 Slepinge agayn the sonne upon a  
 day; 110

And many another noble worthy dede  
He with his bowe wroghte, as men may  
rede.

Pleyen he coude on every minstralcye,  
And singen, that it was a melodye,  
To heren of his clere vois the soun. 115  
Certes the king of Thebes, Amphion,  
That with his singing walled that citee,  
Coude never singen half so wel as he.  
Therto he was the semelieste man  
That is or was, sith that the world  
bigan. 120

What nedeth it his fetures to discryve?  
For in this world was noon so fair on  
lyve.

He was ther-with fulfild of gentillesse,  
Of honour, and of parfit worthinesse.

This Phebus, that was flour of bachel-  
rye, 125

As wel in fredom as in chivalrye,  
For his desport, in signe eek of victorie  
Of Phitoun, so as telleth us the storie,  
Was wont to beren in his hand a bowe.

Now had this Phebus in his hous a  
crowe, 130

Which in a cage he fostred many a day,  
And taughte it speken, as men teche a  
lay.

Whyt was this crowe, as is a snow-whyt  
swan,

And countrefete the speche of every man  
He coude, whan he sholde telle a  
tale. 135

Ther-with in al this world no nightingale  
Ne coude, by an hondred thousand deel,  
Singen so wonder merily and weel.

Now had this Phebus in his hous a  
wyf, 139

Which that he lovede more than his lyf,  
And night and day dide ever his dili-  
gence

Hir for to plesen, and doon hir reverence,  
Save only, if the sothe that I shal sayn,  
Ialous he was, and wolde have kept hir  
fayn;

For him were looth by-iaped for to  
be. 145

And so is every wight in swich degree;  
But al in ydel, for it availleth nought.

A good wyf, that is clene of work and  
thoght,

Sholde nat been kept in noon await, cer-  
tainy;

And trewely, the labour is in vayn 150  
To kepe a shrewe, for it wol nat be.  
This holde I for a verray nycetee,  
To spille labour, for to kepe wyves;  
Thus writen olde clerkes in hir lyves.

But now to purpos, as I first bigan: 155  
This worthy Phebus dooth all that he  
can

To plesen hir, weninge by swich ple-  
saunce,

And for his manhede and his gover-  
naunce,

That no man sholde han put him from  
hir grace.

But god it woot, ther may no man em-  
brace 160

As to destreyne a thing, which that na-  
ture

Hath naturelly set in a creature.

Tak any brid, and put it in a cage,  
And do al thyn entente and thy corage  
To fostre it tendrely with mete and  
drinke, 165

Of alle deyntees that thou canst bithinke,  
And keep it al-so clenly as thou may;

Al-though his cage of gold be never so  
gay,

Yet hath this brid, by twenty thousand  
fold,

Lever in a forest, that is rude and cold,  
Gon ete wormes and swich wrecched-  
nesse. 171

For ever this brid wol doon his bisnesse  
To escape out of his cage, if he may;

His libertee this brid desireth ay.

Lat take a cat, and fostre him wel with  
milk, 175

And tendre flesh, and make his couche  
of silk,

And lat him seen a mous go by the wal;  
Anon he weyveth milk, and flesh, and al,

And every deyntee that is in that hous,  
Swich appetyt hath he to ete a mous.

Lo, here hath lust his dominacioun, 181  
And appetyt flemeth discrecioun.

A she-wolf hath also a vileins kinde;  
The lewedeste wolf that she may finde,

Or leest of reputacion wol she take, 185  
In tyme whan hir lust to han a make.

Alle these ensamples speke I by these  
men

That been untrewen, and no-thing by  
wommen.

For men han ever a likerous appetyt  
On lower thing to parfourne hir delyt 190  
Than on hir wyves, be they never so  
faire,

Ne never so trewe, ne so debonaire.  
Flesh is so newefangel, with meschaunce,  
That we ne conne in no-thing han ple-  
saunce

That souneth in-to vertu any whyle. 195  
This Phebus, which that thoghte upon  
no gyle,

Deceyved was, for al his Iolitee;  
For under him another hadde she,  
A man of litel reputacioun, 199  
Noght worth to Phebus in comparisoun.  
The more harm is; it happeth ofte so,  
Of which ther cometh muchel harm and  
wo.

And so bifel, whan Phebus was absent,  
His wyf anon hath for hir lemman sent,  
Hir lemman? certes, this is a knavish  
speche! 205

Foryeveth it me, and that I yow biseche.  
The wyse Plato seith, as ye mey rede,  
The word mot nede accorde with the  
dede.

If man shal telle proprely a thing,  
The word mot cosin be to the werking.  
I am a boistous man right thus, seye I,  
Ther nis no difference, trewely, 212

Bitwixe a wyf that is of heigh degree,  
If of hir body dishonest she be,  
And a povre wenche, other than this —  
If it so be, they werke bothe amis — 216

But that the gentile, in estaat above,  
She shal be cleped his lady, as in love;  
And for that other is a povre womman,  
She shal be cleped his wenche, or his  
lemman. 220

And, god it woot, myn owene dere  
brother,  
Men leyn that oon as lowe as lyth that  
other.

Right so, bitwixe a titleles tiraunt  
And an outlawe, or a thief erraunt, 224  
The same I seye, ther is no difference.  
To Isaundre told was this sentence;  
That, for the tyrant is of gretter might,  
By force of meynee for to sleen doun-  
right,

And brennen hous and hoom, and make  
al plain,  
Lo! therfor is he cleped a capitain; 230

And, for the outlawe hath but smal  
meynee,  
And may nat doon so greet an harm as  
he,

Ne bringe a contree to so greet mes-  
cheef,

Men clepen him an outlawe or a thief.  
But, for I am a man noght textuel, 235  
I wol noght telle of textes never a del;  
I wol go to my tale, as I bigan.

Whan Phebus wyf had sent for hir  
lemman,  
Anon they wroghten al hir lust volage.

The whyte crowe, that heng ay in the  
cage, 240  
Biheld hir werk, and seyde never a word.  
And whan that hoom was come Phebus,  
the lord,

This crowe sang 'cokkow! cokkow!  
cokkow!'

'What, brid?' quod Phebus, 'what  
song singestow?

Ne were thow wont so merily to singe  
That to myn herte it was a reioisinge 246  
To here thy vois? allas! what song is  
this?'

'By god,' quod he, 'I singe nat amis;  
Phebus,' quod he, 'for al thy worthi-  
nesse, 249

For al thy beautee and thy gentilesse,  
For al thy song and al thy minstralcye,  
For al thy waiting, blered is thyn yē

With oon of litel reputacioun,  
Noght worth to thee, as in comparisoun,  
The mountance of a gnat; so mote I  
thryve! 255

For on thy bed thy wyf I saugh him  
swyve.'

What wol ye more? the crowe anon  
him tolde,

By sadde tokens and by wordes bolde,  
How that his wyf had doon hir lecherye,  
Him to gret shame and to gret vileinye;  
And tolde him ofte, he saugh it with his  
yēn. 261

This Phebus gan awayward for to wryen,  
Him thoughte his sorweful herte brast  
a-two;

His bowe he bente, and sette ther-inne a  
flo,

And in his ire his wyf thanne hath he  
slayn. 265

This is theffect, ther is na-more to sayn;

For sorwe of which he brak his minstral-  
cye,  
Bothe harpe, and lute, and giterne, and  
sautrye;  
And eek he brak his arwes and his bowe.  
And after that, thus spak he to the  
crowe: 270  
'Traitor,' quod he, 'with tonge of  
scorpioun,  
Thou hast me broght to my confusioun!  
Allas! that I was wrought! why nere I  
deed?  
O dere wyf, o gemme of lustiheed,  
That were to me so sad and eek so  
trewe, 275  
Now lystow deed, with face pale of hewe,  
Ful giltelees, that dorste I swere, y-wis!  
O rakel hand, to doon so foule amis!  
O trouble wit, o ire recchelees,  
That unavysed smytest giltelees! 280  
O wantrust, ful of fals suspecioun,  
Where was thy wit and thy discrecioun?  
O every man, be-war of rakelnesse,  
Ne trowe no-thing with-outen strong  
witness;  
Smyt nat to sone, er that we witen why,  
And beeth avysed wel and sobrelly 286  
Er ye doon any execucioun,  
Up-on your ire, for suspecioun.  
Allas! a thousand folk hath rakel ire  
Fully fordoon, and broght hem in the  
mire. 290  
Allas! for sorwe I wol my-selven slee!'  
And to the crowe, 'o false thief!'  
seyde he,  
'I wol thee quyte anon thy false tale!  
Thou songe whylom lyk a nightingale;  
Now shaltow, false thief, thy song for-  
gon, 295  
And eek thy whyte fetheres everichon,  
Ne never in al thy lyf ne shaltow speke.  
Thus shal men on a traitour been  
awreke;  
Thou and thyn of-spring ever shul be  
blake,  
Ne never swete noise shul ye make, 300  
But ever crye agayn tempest and rayn,  
In tokeninge that thurgh thee my wyf is  
slayn.'  
And to the crowe he stirte, and that anon,  
And pulled his whyte fetheres everichon,  
And made him blak, and reft him al his  
song, 305

And eek his speche, and out at dore him  
slong  
Un-to the devel, which I him bitake;  
And for this caas ben alle crowes  
blake. —  
Lordings, by this ensample I yow  
preye,  
Beth war, and taketh kepe what I  
seye: 310  
Ne telleth never no man in your lyf  
How that another man hath dight his  
wyf;  
He wol yow haten mortally, certeyn.  
Daun Salomon, as wyse clerkes seyn,  
Techeth a man to kepe his tonge  
wel; 315  
But as I seyde, I am noght texuel.  
But nathelees, thus taughte me my dame:  
'My sone, think on the crowe, a goddes  
name;  
My sone, keep wel thy tonge and keep  
thy freend.  
A wikked tonge is worse than a feend.  
My sone, from a feend men may hem  
blesse; 321  
My sone, god of his endeles goodnesse  
Walled a tonge with teeth and lippes eke,  
For man sholde him avyse what he speke.  
My sone, ful ofte, for to muche speche,  
Hath many a man ben spilt, as clerkes  
teche; 326  
But for a litel speche avysely  
Is no men shent, to speke generally.  
My sone, thy tonge sholdestow restreyne  
At alle tyme, but whan thou doost thy  
peyne 330  
To speke of god, in honour and preyere.  
The firste vertu, sone, if thou wolt lere,  
Is to restreyne and kepe wel thy tonge. —  
Thus lerne children whan that they ben  
yonge. —  
My sone, of muchel speking yvel-avysed,  
Ther lasse speking hadde y-nough suf-  
fysed, 336  
Comth muchel harm, thus was me told  
and taught.  
In muchel speche sinne wanteth naught.  
Wostow wher-of a rakel tonge serveth?  
Right as a swerd forcutteth and for-  
kerveth 340  
An arm a-two, my dere sone, right so  
A tonge cutteth frendship al a-two.  
A langler is to god abhominable;



Reed Salomon, so wys and honorable;  
 Reed David in his psalmes, reed Sen-  
 ekke. 345  
 My sone, spek nat, but with thyn heed  
 thou bekke.  
 Dissimule as thou were deaf, if that thou  
 here  
 A Iangler speke of perilous matere.  
 The Fleming seith, and lerne it, if thee  
 leste,  
 That litel Iangling causeth muchel  
 reste. 350  
 My sone, if thou no wikked word hast  
 seyde,  
 Thee thar nat drede for to be biwreyd;  
 But he that hath misseyde, I dar wel  
 sayn,

He may by no wey clepe his word  
 agayn.  
 Thing that is seyde, is seyde; and forth it  
 gooth, 355  
 Though him repente, or be him leef or  
 looth.  
 He is his thral to whom that he hath  
 sayd  
 A tale, of which he is now yvel apayd.  
 My sone, be war, and be non auctour  
 newe  
 Of tydinges, whether they ben false or  
 trewe. 360  
 Wher-so thou come, amonges hye or  
 lowe,  
 Kepe wel thy tonge, and think up-on  
 the crowe.

*Here is ended the Maunciples Tale of the Crowe.*

## GROUP I.

### THE PARSON'S PROLOGUE.

*Here foloweth the Prologe of the Persones  
 Tale.*

By that the maunciple hadde his tale al  
 ended,  
 The sonne from the south lyne was de-  
 scended  
 So lowe, that he nas nat, to my sighte,  
 Degreës nyne and twenty as in highte.  
 Foure of the klokke it was tho, as I  
 gesse; 5  
 For eleven foot, or litel more or lesse,  
 My shadwe was at thilke tyme, as there,  
 Of swich feet as my lengthe parted were  
 In six feet equal of proporcioun.  
 Ther-with the mones exaltacioun, 10  
 I mene Libra, alwey gan ascende,  
 As we were entringe at a thropes ende;  
 For which our host, as he was wont to  
 gye,  
 As in this caas, our Ioly companye,  
 Seyde in this wyse, 'lordings everich-  
 oon, 15  
 Now lakketh us no tales mo than oon.  
 Fulfild is my sentence and my decree;  
 I trowe that we han herd of ech degree.

Almost fulfild is al myn ordinaunce;  
 I prey to god, so yeve him right good  
 chaunce, 20  
 That telleth this tale to us lustily.  
 Sir preest,' quod he, 'artow a vicary?  
 Or art a person? sey sooth, by thy fey!  
 Be what thou be, ne breke thou nat our  
 pley;  
 For every man, save thou, hath told his  
 tale, 25  
 Unbokel, and shewe us what is in thy  
 male;  
 For trewely, me thinketh, by thy chere,  
 Thou sholdest knitte up wel a greet  
 matere.  
 Tel us a tale anon, for cokkes bones!'  
 This Personne him answerde, al at  
 ones, 30  
 'Thou getest fable noon y-told for me;  
 For Paul, that wryteth unto Timothee,  
 Repreveth hem that weyven soothfast-  
 nesse,  
 And tellen fables and swich wrecched-  
 nesse.  
 Why sholde I sowen draf out of my  
 fest, 35

Whan I may sowen whete, if that me  
lest?  
For which I seye, if that yow list to  
here  
Moralitee and vertuuous matere,  
And thanne that ye wol yeve me audi-  
ence,  
I wol ful fayn, at Cristes reverence, 40  
Do yow plesaunce leefful, as I can.  
But trusteth wel, I am a Southren man,  
I can nat geste — rum, ram, ruf — by  
lettre,  
Ne, god wot, rym holde I but litel  
bette;  
And therfor, if yow list, I wol nat glose. 45  
I wol yow telle a mery tale in prose  
To knitte up al this feeste, and make an  
ende.  
And Iesu, for his grace, wit me sende  
To shewe yow the wey, in this viage,  
Of thilke parfit glorious pilgrimage 50  
That highte Ierusalem celestial.  
And, if ye vouche-sauf, anon I shal  
Biginne upon my tale, for whiche I preye  
Telle your avys, I can no better seye.  
But natheles, this meditacioun 55

*Explicit prohemium.*

I putte it ay under correccioun  
Of clerkes, for I am nat textuel;  
I take but the sentens, trusteth wel.  
Therfor I make protestacioun  
That I wol stonde to correccioun.' 60  
Up-on this word we han assented  
sone,  
For, as us semed, it was for to done,  
To enden in som vertuuous sentence,  
And for to yeve him space and audi-  
ence;  
And bede our host he sholde to him  
seye, 65  
That alle we to telle his tale him preye.  
Our host hadde the wordes for us  
alle:—  
'Sir preest,' quod he, 'now fayre yow  
bifalle!  
Sey what yow list, and we wol gladly  
here'—  
And with that word he seyde in this  
manere— 70  
'Telleth,' quod he, 'your meditacioun.  
But hasteth yow, the sonne wol adoun;  
Beth fructuous, and that in litel space,  
And to do wel god sende yow his grace!'

## THE PERSONES TALE.

HERE BIGINNETH THE PERSONES  
TALE.

*Ier. 6°. State super vias et videte  
et interrogate de viis antiquis, que  
sit via bona; et ambulate in ea, et  
inuenietis refrigerium animabus vestris,  
&c.*

§ I. Our swete lord god of hevene,  
that no man wole perisse, but wole  
that we comen alle to the knowel-  
eche of him, and to the blisful lyf  
75 that is perdurable, / amonesteth us by  
the prophete Ieremie, that seith in  
this wyse: / 'stondeth upon the  
weyes, and seeth and axeth of olde  
pathes (that is to seyn, of olde sen-  
tences) which is the goode wey; /

and walketh in that wey, and ye shul  
finde refresshinge for your soules,  
&c. / Manye been the weyes espir-  
ituels that leden folk to oure Lord  
Iesu Crist, and to the regne of glorie. /  
Of whiche weyes, ther is a ful noble  
wey and a ful covenable, which may  
nat faile to man ne to womman, that  
thurgh sinne hath misgoon fro the  
righte wey of Ierusalem celestial; / 80  
and this wey is cleped Penitence, of  
which man sholde gladly herknen and  
enquere with al his herte; / to witen  
what is Penitence, and whennes it is  
cleped Penitence, and in how manye  
maneres been the accions or werk-  
inges of Penitence, / and how manye  
spyces ther been of Penitence, and  
whiche thir ges apertenen and bihoven

to Penitence, and whiche thinges de-  
stourben Penitence. /

§ 2. Seint Ambrose seith, that  
'Penitence is the pleyninge of man  
for the gilt that he hath doon, and  
na-more to do any thing for which  
him oghte to pleyne.' / And som  
doctour seith: 'Penitence is the way-  
mentinge of man, that sorweth for his  
sinne and pyneth him-self for he hath  
85 misdoon.' / Penitence, with certeyne  
circumstances, is verry repentance of  
a man that halt him-self in sorwe and  
other payne for hise giltes. / And  
for he shal be verry penitent, he shal  
first biwailen the sinnes that he hath  
doon, and stidefastly purposen in his  
herte to have shrift of mouthe, and to  
doon satisfaccioun, / and never to  
doon thing for which him oghte more  
to biwayle or to compleyne, and to  
continue in goode werkes: or elles  
his repentance may nat availle. /  
For as seith seint Isidre: 'he is a  
Iaper and a gabber, and no verry  
repentant, that eftsoone dooth thing,  
for which him oghte repente.' /  
90 Wepinge, and nat for to stinte to  
doon sinne, may nat avaylle. / But  
nathelees, men shal hope that every  
tyme that man falleth, be it never so  
ofte, that he may arise thurgh Peni-  
tence, if he have grace: but certainly  
it is greet doute. / For as seith Seint  
Gregorie: 'unnethe aryseth he out of  
sinne, that is charged with the charge  
of yvel usage.' / And therefore repen-  
tant folk, that stinte for to sinne,  
and forlete sinne er that sinne forlete  
hem, holy chirche holdeth hem siker  
of hir savacioun. / And he that sin-  
neth, and verrailly repenteth him in  
his laste ende, holy chirche yet hopeth  
his savacioun, by the grete mercy of  
oure lord Iesu Crist, for his repent-  
ance; but tak the siker wey. /

§ 3. And now, sith I have declared  
yow what thing is Penitence, now shul  
ye understonde that ther been three  
95 accions of Penitence. / The firste ac-  
cion of Penitence is, that a man be  
baptized after that he hath sinned. /  
Seint Augustin seith: 'but he be

penitent for his olde sinful lyf, he may  
nat biginne the newe clene lif.' / For  
certes, if he be baptized withouten  
penitence of his olde gilt, he receiv-  
eth the mark of baptisme, but nat the  
grace ne the remission of his sinnes,  
til he have repentance verry. / An-  
other defaute is this, that men doon  
deedly sinne after that they han re-  
ceived baptisme. / The thridde de-  
faute is, that men fallen in venial  
sinnes after hir baptisme, fro day to  
day. / Ther-of seith Seint Augustin, 100  
that 'penitence of goode and humble  
folk is the penitence of every day.' /

§ 4. The spyces of Penitence been  
three. That oon of hem is solempne,  
another is commune, and the thridde  
is privee. / Tilke penance that is  
solempne, is in two maneres; as to be  
put out of holy chirche in lente, for  
slaughtre of children, and swich  
maner thing. / Another is, whan a  
man hath sinned openly, of which  
sinne the fame is openly spoken in  
the contree; and thanne holy chirche  
by Iugement destreinet him for to  
do open penaunce. / Commune pena-  
unce is that preestes enioinen men  
comunly in certeyn caas; as for to  
goon, peraventure, naked in pilgrim-  
ages, or bare-foot. / Privee penaunce 105  
is tilke that men doon alday for  
privee sinnes, of whiche we shryve  
us prively and receyve privee pen-  
aunce. /

§ 5. Now shaltow understande  
what is bihovely and necessarie to  
verry parfit Penitence. And this  
stant on three thinges; / Contricioun  
of herte, Confessioun of Mouth, and  
Satisfaccioun. / For which seith Seint  
Iohn Crisostom: 'Penitence destreyn-  
eth a man to accepte benignely every  
payne that him is enioyned, with  
contricion of herte, and shrift of mouth,  
with satisfaccion; and in werkinge  
of alle maner humilitee.' / And this  
is fruitful Penitence agayn three  
things in whiche we wratthe our  
lord Iesu Crist: / this is to seyn, by 110  
delyt in thinkinge, by recchelesnesse  
in spekinge, and by wikked sinful

werkinge. / And agayns this wik-  
kede giltes is Penitence, that may be  
lykned un-to a tree. /

§ 6. The rote of this tree is Con-  
tricion, that hydeth him in the herte  
of him that is verray repentant, right  
as the rote of a tree hydeth him in  
the erthe. / Of the rote of Contri-  
cion springeth a stalke, that bereth  
braunches and leves of Confession,  
and fruit of Satisfaccion. / For which  
Crist seith in his gospel: 'dooth digne  
fruit of Penitence'; for by this fruit  
may men knowe this tree, and nat by  
the rote that is hid in the herte of man,  
ne by the braunches ne by the leves  
115 of Confession. / And therefore oure  
Lord Iesu Crist seith thus: 'by the  
fruit of hem ye shul knowen hem.' /  
Of this rote eek springeth a seed of  
grace, the which seed is moder of  
sikernesse, and this seed is egre and  
hoot. / The grace of this seed  
springeth of god, thurgh remem-  
brance of the day of dome and on  
the peynes of helle. / Of this mat-  
ere seith Salomon, that 'in the drede  
of god man forleteth his sinne.' / The  
hete of this seed is the love of god,  
and the desiring of the Ioye perdur-  
120 able. / This hete draweth the herte  
of a man to god, and dooth him haten  
his sinne. / For soothly, ther is no-  
thing that savoureth so wel to a child  
as the milk of his norice, ne no-thing  
is to him more abhominable than  
thilke milk when it is medled with  
other mete. / Right so the sinful  
man that loveth his sinne, him sem-  
eth that it is to him most swete of  
any-thing; / but fro that tyme that  
he loveth sadly our lord Iesu Crist,  
and desireth the lif perdurable, ther  
nis to him no-thing more abhomi-  
nable. / For soothly, the lawe of god  
is the love of god; for which David  
the prophete seith: 'I have loved thy  
lawe and hated wikkednesse and  
125 hate'; he that loveth god kepeth his  
lawe and his word. / This tree saugh  
the prophete Daniel in spirit, up-on  
the avision of the king Nabugodo-  
nosor, whan he conseiled him to do

penitence. / Penance is the tree  
of lyf to hem that it receiven, and he  
that holdeth him in verray penitence  
is blessed; after the sentence of Salo-  
mon. /

§ 7. In this Penitence or Contricion  
man shal understonde foure thinges,  
that is to seyn, what is Contricion: and  
whiche been the causes that moeven a  
man to Contricion: and how he sholde  
be contrit: and what Contricion avail-  
eth to the soule. / Thanne is it thus:  
that Contricion is the verray sorwe that  
a man receiveth in his herte for his  
sinnes, with sad purpos to shryve him,  
and to do penance, and nevermore to  
do sinne. / And this sorwe shal been  
in this manere, as seith seint Bernard:  
'it shal been hevvy and grevous, and  
ful sharpe and poinant in herte.' / 130  
First, for man hath agilt his lord and  
his creatour; and more sharpe and  
poinant, for he hath agilt his fader  
celestial; / and yet more sharpe and  
poinant, for he hath wrathed and agilt  
him that boghte him; which with his  
precious blood hath delivered us fro  
the bondes of sinne, and fro the cruel-  
tee of the devel and fro the peynes of  
helle. /

§ 8. The causes that oghte movee a  
man to Contricion been six. First, a man  
shal remembre him of hise sinnes; /  
but loke he that thilke remembrance  
ne be to him no delyt by no wey, but  
greet shame and sorwe for his gilt.  
For Iob seith: 'sinful men doon werkes  
worthy of Confession.' / And there-  
fore seith Ezechie: 'wol remembre  
me alle the yeres of my lyf, in bitter-  
nesse of myn herte.' / And god seith 135  
in the Apocalips: 'remembreth yow  
fro whennes that ye been falle'; for  
bifrom that tyme that ye sinned, ye  
were the children of god, and limes of  
the regne of god; / but for your sinne  
ye been woxen thral and foul, and  
membres of the feend, hate of aungels,  
sclaundre of holy chirche, and fode of  
the false serpent; perpetuel matere  
of the fyr of helle. / And yet more  
foul and abhominable, for ye tres-  
passen so ofte tyme, as doth the hound

that retourneth to eten his spewing. /  
 And yet be ye fouler for your longe  
 continuing in sinne and your sinful  
 usage, for which ye be roten in your  
 sinne, as a beest in his dong. / Swiche  
 manere of thoughtes maken a man to  
 have shame of his sinne, and no delyt,  
 140 as god seith by the prophete Ezechiel. /  
 'Ye shal remembre yow of youre weyes,  
 and they shuln displese yow.' Sothly,  
 sinnes been the weyes that leden folk  
 to helle. /

§ 9. The seconde cause that oghte  
 make a man to have desdeyn of sinne  
 is this: that, as seith seint Peter,  
 'who-so that doth sinne is thral of  
 sinne'; and sinne put a man in greet  
 thraldom. / And therefore seith the  
 prophete Ezechiel: 'I wente sorweful  
 in desdayn of my-self.' And certes,  
 wel oghte a man have desdayn of  
 sinne, and withdrawe him from that  
 thraldom and vileinye. / And lo,  
 what seith Seneca in this matere. He  
 seith thus: 'though I wiste that neither  
 god ne man ne sholde nevere knowe  
 it, yet wolde I have desdayn for to  
 do sinne.' / And the same Seneca  
 also seith: 'I am born to gretter  
 thinges than to be thral to my body,  
 or than for to maken of my body a  
 145 thral.' / Ne a fouler thral may no  
 man ne womman maken of his body,  
 than for to yeven his body to sinne. /  
 Al were it the fouleste cherl, or the  
 fouleste womman that liveth, and  
 leest of value, yet is he thanne more  
 foule and more in servitude. / Evere  
 fro the hyer degree that man falleth,  
 the more is he thral, and more to god  
 and to the world vile and abhominable.  
 / O gode god, wel oghte man  
 have desdayn of sinne; sith that,  
 thurgh sinne, ther he was free, now  
 is he made bonde. / And therefore  
 seyth Seint Augustin: 'if thou hast  
 desdayn of thy servant, if he agilte or  
 sinne, have thou thanne desdayn that  
 150 thou thy-self sholdest do sinne.' /  
 Take reward of thy value, that thou  
 ne be to foul to thy-self. / Allas!  
 wel oghten they thanne have desdayn  
 to been servauntz and thralles to

sinne, and sore been ashamed of  
 hem-self, / that god of his endeless  
 goodnesse hath set hem in heigh es-  
 taat, or yeven hem wit, strengthe of  
 body, hele, beautee, prosperitee, /  
 and boghte hem fro the deeth with  
 his herte blood, that they so un-  
 kindly, agayns his gentillesse, quyten  
 him so vileinsly, to slaughtre of hir  
 owene soules. / O gode god, ye  
 women that been of so greet  
 beautee, remembreth yow of the  
 proverbe of Salomon, that seith: / 155  
 'he lyketh a fair womman, that  
 is a fool of hir body, lyk to a ring  
 of gold that were in the groyn of a  
 sowe.' / For right as a sowe wroteth  
 in everich ordure, so wroteth she hir  
 beautee in the stinkinge ordure of  
 sinne. /

§ 10. The thridde cause that oghte  
 moeve a man to Contricion, is drede  
 of the day of dome, and of the horri-  
 ble peynes of helle. / For as seint  
 Ierome seith: 'at every tyme that me  
 remembreth of the day of dome, I  
 quake; / for whan I ete or drinke,  
 or what-so that I do, evere semeth  
 me that the trompe sowneth in myn  
 ere: / riseth up, ye that been dede, 160  
 and cometh to the Iugement.' / O  
 gode god, muchel oghte a man to  
 drede swich a Iugement, 'ther-as we  
 shullen been alle,' as seint Poul seith,  
 'biforn the sete of oure lord Iesu  
 Crist'; / wher-as he shal make a  
 general congregacion, wher-as no  
 man mayn be absent. / For certes,  
 there availleth noon essoyne ne excu-  
 sacion. / And nat only that oure de-  
 fautes shullen be iuged, but eek that  
 alle oure werkes shullen openly be  
 knowe. / And as seith Seint Ber- 165  
 nard: 'ther ne shal no pleding  
 availle, ne no sleighte; ye shullen  
 yeven rekeninge of everich ydel  
 word.' / Ther shul we han a Iuge  
 that may nat been deceived ne cor-  
 rupt. And why? For, certes, alle  
 our thoughtes been discovered as to  
 him; ne for preyere ne for mede he  
 shal nat been corrupt. / And there-  
 fore seith Salomon: 'the wratthe of

god ne wol nat spare no wight, for preyere ne for yifte'; and therefore, at the day of doom, ther nis noon hope to escape. / Wherefore, as seith Seint Anselm: 'ful greet angwissh shul the sinful folk have at that tyme; / ther shal the sterne and wrothe Iuge sitte above, and under him the horrible put of helle open to destroyen him that moot biknowen hise sinnes, whiche sinnes openly shewed biforn god and biforn every creature. / And on the left syde, mo develes than herte may bithinke, for to harie and drawe the sinful soules to the pyne of helle. / And with-inne the hertes of folk shal be the bytinge conscience, and with-out-forth shal be the world al brenninge. / Whider shal thanne the wrecched sinful man flee to hyden him? Certes, he may nat hyden him; he moste come forth and shewen him.' / For certes, as seith seint Ierome: 'the erthe shal casten him out of him, and the see also; and the eyr also, that shal be ful of thonder-clappes and lightnings.' / Now sothly, who-so wel remembreth him of these thinges, I gesse that his sinne shal nat turne him in-to delyt, but to greet sorwe, for drede of the peyne of helle. / And therefore seith Iob to god: 'suffre, lord, that I may a while biwaille and wepe, er I go with-oute returninge to the derke lond, covered with the derknesse of deeth; / to the lond of misese and of derknesse, where-as is the shadwe of deeth; where-as ther is noon ordre or ordinance, but grisly drede that evere shal laste.' / Lo, here may ye seen that Iob preyde respyt a while, to biwepe and waille his trespas; for soothly oon day of respyt is bettre than al the tresor of the world. / And for-as-muche as a man may acquiten him-self biforn god by penitence in this world, and nat by tresor, therefore sholde he preyde to god to yeve him respyt a while, to biwepe and biwailen his trespas. / For certes, al the sorwe that a man

mighte make fro the beginning of the world, nis but a litel thing at regard of the sorwe of helle. / The cause why that Iob clepeth helle 'the lond of derknesse'; / under-stondeth that he clepeth it 'londe' or erthe, for it is stable, and nevere shal faille; 'derk,' for he that is in helle hath defaute of light material. / For certes, the derke light, that shal come out of the fyr that evere shal brenne, shal turne him al to peyne that is in helle; for it sheweth him to the horrible develes that him tormenten. / 'Covered with the derknesse of deeth': that is to seyn, that he that is in helle shal have defaute of the sighte of god; for certes, the sighte of god is the lyf perdurable. / 'The derknesse of deeth' been the sinnes that the wrecched man hath doon, whiche that destourben him to see the face of god; right as doth a derk cloude bitwixe us and the sonne. / 'Lond of misese': by-cause that ther been three maneres of defautes, agayn three thinges that folk of this world han in this present lyf, that is to seyn, honours, delycles, and richesses. / Agayns honour, have they in helle shame and confusion. / For wel ye woot that men clepen 'honour' the reverence that man doth to man; but in helle is noon honour ne reverence. For certes, na-more reverence shal be doon there to a king than to a knave. / For which god seith by the prophete Ieremye: 'thilke folk that me despysen shul been in despyt.' / 'Honour' is eek cleped greet lordshipe; ther shal no man serven other but of harm and torment. 'Honour' is eek cleped greet dignitee and heighnesse; but in helle shul they been al fortroden of develes. / And god seith: 'the horrible develes shulle goon and comen up-on the hevedes of the dampned folk.' And this is for-as-muche as, the hyer that they were in this present lyf, the more shulle they been abated and defouled in helle. / Agayns the richesses of this world, shul they han misese of pov-

erte; and this poverte shal been in foure thinges: / in defaute of tresor, of which that David seith; 'the riche folk, that embraceden and oneden al hir herte to tresor of this world, shul slepe in the slepinge of deeth; and no-thing ne shul they finden in hir handes of al hir tresor.' / And more-over, the miseise of helle shal been in defaute of mete and drinke. / For god seith thus by Moyses; 'they shul been wasted with hunger, and the briddes of helle shul devouren hem with bitter deeth, and the galle of the dragon shal been hir drinke, and the venim of the dragon hir morsels.' / And forther-over, hir miseise shal been in defaute of clothing: for they shulle be naked in body as of clothing, save the fyr in which they brenne and othere filthes; / and naked shul they been of soule, of alle manere vertues, which that is the clothing of the soule. Where been thanne the gaye robes and the softe shetes and the smale shertes? / I.o, what seith god of hem by the prophete Isaye: 'that under hem shul been strawed motthes, and hir covertures shulle been of wormes of helle.' / And forther-over, hir miseise shal been in defaute of freendes; for he nis nat povre that hath goode freendes, but there is no freend; / for neither god ne no creature shal been freend to hem, and everich of hem shal haten other with deedly hate. / 'The sones and the doghtren shullen rebellen agayns fader and mooder, and kinrede agayns kinrede, and chyden and despysen everich of hem other,' bothe day and night, as god seith by the prophete Michias. / And the lovinge children, that whylom loveden so fleshly everich other, wolden everich of hem eten other if they mighte. / For how sholden they love hem togidre in the peyne of helle, whan they hated ech of hem other in the prosperitee of this lyf? / For truste wel, hir fleshly love was deedly hate; as seith the prophete David: 'who-so

that loveth wikkednesse he hateth his soule.' / And who-so hateth his owene soule, certes, he may love noon other wight in no manere. / And therefore, in helle is no solas ne no frendshipe, but evere the more fleshly kinredes that been in helle, the more cursinges, the more chydinges, and the more deedly hate ther is among hem. / And forther-over, they shul have defaute of alle manere delycles; for certes, delycles been after the appetytes of the fyve wittes, as sighte, heringe, smellinge, savoringe, and touchinge. / But in helle hir sighte shal be ful of derknesse and of smoke, and therfore ful of teres; and hir heringe, ful of waymentinge and of grintinge of teeth, as seith Iesu Crist; / hir nosethirles shullen be ful of stinkinge stink. And as seith Isaye the prophete: 'hir savoring shal be ful of bitter galle.' / And touchinge of al hir body, y-covered with 'fyr that nevere shal quenche, and with wormes that nevere shul dyen,' as god seith by the mouth of Isaye. / And for- as-muche as they shul nat wene that they may dyen for peyne, and by hir death flee fro peyne, that may they understonden by the word of Iob, that seith: 'ther-as is the shadwe of deeth.' / Certes, a shadwe hath the lyknesse of the thing of which it is shadwe, but shadwe is nat the same thing of which it is shadwe. / Right so fareth the peyne of helle; it is lyk deeth for the horrible anguiss, and why? For it peyneth hem evere, as though they sholde dye anon; but certes they shal nat dye. / For as seith Seint Gregorie: 'to wrecche caytives shal be deeth with-oute deeth, and ende with-uten ende, and defaute with-oute failinge. / For hir deeth shal alway liven, and hir ende shal everemo biginne, and hir defaute shal nat faille.' / And therfore seith Seint Iohn the Evangelist: 'they shullen folwe deeth, and they shul nat finde him; and they shul desyren to dye, and deeth shal flee fro hem.' / And eek Iob seith: that 'in helle is

noon ordre of rule.' / And al-be-it so that god hath creat alle thinges in right ordre, and no-thing with-ouen ordre, but alle thinges been ordeyned and nombred; yet natheles they that been dampned been no-thing in ordre, ne holden noon ordre. / For the erthe ne shal bere hem no fruit. / For, as the prophete David seith: 'god shal destroie the fruit of the erthe as fro hem;' ne water ne shal yeve hem no moisture; ne the eyr no refresshing, ne fyr no light. / For as seith seint Basile: 'the brenninge of the fyr of this world shal god yeven in helle to hem that been dampned; / but the light and the cleernesse shal be yeven in hevenc to hise children'; right as the gode man yeveth flesh to hise children, and bones to hise houndes. / And for they shullen have noon hope to escape, seith seint Iob atte laste: that 'ther shal horroure and grisly drede dwellen with-ouen ende.' / Horroure is alwey drede of harm that is to come, and this drede shal evere dwelle in the hertes of hem that been dampned. And therefore han they lorn al hir hope, for sevene causes. / First, for god that is hir Iuge shal be with-ouen mercy to hem; ne they may nat plesse him, ne noon of hise halwes; ne they  
 220 ne may yeve no-thing for hir raunson; / ne they have no vois to speke to him; ne they may nat flee fro peyne; ne they have no goodnesse in hem, that they mowe shewe to delivere hem fro peyne. / And therefore seith Salomon: 'the wikked man dyeth; and whan he is deed, he shal have noon hope to escape fro peyne.' / Who-so thanne wolde wel understande these peynes, and bithinke him weel that he hath deserved thilke peynes for his sinnes, certes, he sholde have more talent to syken and to wepe than for to singen and to pleye. / For as that seith Salomon: 'who-so that hadde the science to knowe the peynes that been establised and ordeyned for sinne, he wolde make sorwe.' / 'Thilke science,' as seith seint Au-

gustin, 'maketh a man to waymenten in his herte.' /

230

§ 11. The fourthe point, that oghte maken a man to have contricion, is the sorweful remembrance of the good that he hath left to doon here in earthe; and eek the good that he hath lorn. / Soothly, the gode werkes that he hath left, outhere they been the gode werkes that he wroghte er he fel in-to deedly sinne, or elles the gode werkes that he wroghte while he lay in sinne. / Soothly, the gode werkes, that he dide biforn that he fil in sinne, been al mortified and astoned and dilled by the ofte sinning. / The othere gode werkes, that he wroghte whyl he lay in deedly sinne, they been outrely dede as to the lyf perdurable in hevenc. / Thanne thilke gode werkes that been mortified by ofte sinning, whiche gode werkes he dide whyl he was in charitee, ne mowe nevere quiken agayn with-ouen veray penitence. / And  
 235 ther-of seith god, by the mouth of Ezechiel: that, 'if the rightful man returne agayn from his rightwisnesse and werke wikkednesse, shal he live?' / Nay; for alle the gode werkes that he hath wroght ne shul nevere been in remembrance; for he shal dyen in his sinne. / And up-on thilke chapitre seith seint Gregorie thus: 'that we shulle understonde this principally; / that whan we doon deedly sinne, it is for nought thanne to rehercen or drawn in-to memorie the gode werkes that we han wroght biforn.' / For certes, in the werkinge of the deedly sinne, ther is no trust to no good werk that we han doon biforn; that is to seyn, as for to have therby the lyf perdurable in hevenc. /  
 240 But natheles, the gode werkes quiken agayn, and comen agayn, and helpen, and availen to have the lyf perdurable in hevenc, whan we han contricion. / But soothly, the gode werkes that men doon whyl they been in deedly sinne, for-as-muche as they were doon in deedly sinne, they may nevere quiken agayn. / For certes,



thing that nevere hadde lyf may nevere quikene; and nathelees, albe-it that they ne availle noght to han the lyf perdurable, yet availen they to abregge of the peyne of helle, or elles that god wole the rather enlumine and lightne the herte of the sinful man to have repentance; / and eek they availen for to usen a man to doon gode werkes, that the feend  
 245 have the lasse power of his soule. / And thus the curteis lord Iesu Crist wole that no good werk be lost; for in somewhat it shal availle. / But for-as-muche as the gode werkes that men doon whyl they been in good lyf, been al mortified by sinne followinge; and eek, sith that alle the gode werkes that men doon whyl they been in dedly synne, been outrelly dede as for to have the lyf perdurable; / wel may that man, that no good werke ne dooth, singe thilke newe Frenshe song: "*Iay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour.*" / For certes, sinne bireveth a man bothe goodnesse of nature and eek the goodnesse of grace. / For soothly, the grace of the holy goost fareth lyk fyr, that may nat been ydel; for fyr failleth anon as it forleteth his wirkinge, and right so grace fayleth anon  
 250 as it forleteth his werkinge. / Than leseth the sinful man the goodnesse of glorie, that only is bihight to gode men that labouren and werken. / Wel may he be sory thanne, that oweth al his lif to god as longe as he hath lived, and eek as longe as he shal live, that no goodnesse ne hath to paye with his dette to god, to whom he oweth al his lyf. / For trust wel, 'he shal yeven acountes,' as seith seint Bernard, 'of alle the godes that han be yeven him in this present lyf, and how he hath hem depended; / in so muche that ther shal nat perisse an heer of his heed, ne a moment of an houre ne shal nat perisse of his tyme, that he ne shal yeve of it a rekening.' /

§ 12. The fifthe thing that oghte

moeve a man to contricion, is remembrance of the passion thatoure lord Iesu Crist suffred for our sinnes. / 255  
 For, as seith seint Bernard: 'whyl that I live, I shal have remembrance of the travailles thatoure lord Crist suffred in preching; / his wearinesse in travailling, hise temptacions whan he fasted, hise longe wakings whan he preyde, hise teres whan that he weep for pitee of good peple; / the wo and the shame and the filthe that men seyden to him; of the foule spitting that men spitte in his face, of the buffettes that men yaven him, of the foule mowes, and of the repreves that men to him seyden; / of the nayles with whiche he was nailed to the croys, and of al the remenant of his passion that he suffred for my sinnes, and no-thing for his gilt.' / And ye shul understonde, that in mannes sinne is every manere of ordre or ordinance turned up-so-doun. / 260  
 For it is sooth, that god, and reson, and sensualitee, and the body of man been so ordeyned, that everich of these foure things sholde have lordshipe over that other; / as thus: god sholde have lordshipe over reson, and reson over sensualitee, and sensualitee over the body of man. / But sothly, whan man sinneth, al this ordre or ordinance is turned up-so-doun. / And therfore thanne, for-as-muche as the reson of man ne wol nat be subget ne obeisant to god, that is his lord by right, therefore leseth it the lordshipe that it sholde have over sensualitee, and eek over the body of man. / And why? For sensualitee rebelleth thanne agayns reson; and by that way leseth reson the lordshipe over sensualitee and over the body. / For 265  
 right as reson is rebel to god, right so is bothe sensualitee rebel to reson and the body also. / And certes, this disordinance and this rebellionoure lord Iesu Crist aboghte up-on his precious body ful dere, and herketh in which wyse. / For-as-muche thanne as reson is rebel to god, therefore is man worthy to have sorwe and

to be deed. / This suffred oure lord Iesu Crist for man, after that he hadde be bitraysed of his disciple, and distreyned and bounde, 'so that his blood brast out at every nail of hise handes,' as seith seint Augustin. / And forther-over, for-as-muchel as reson of man ne wol nat daunte sensualitee whan it may, therefore is men worthy to have shame; and this suffred oure lord Iesu Crist for man, whan they  
 270 spetten in his visage. / And forther-over, for-as-muchel thanne as the caitif body of man is rebel bothe to reson and to sensualitee, therefore is it worthy the deeth. / And this suffred oure lord Iesu Crist for man upon the croys, where-as ther was no part of his body free, with-uten greet payne and bitter passion. / And al this suffred Iesu Crist, that nevere forfeted. And therefore resonably may be seyde of Iesu in this manere: 'to muchel am I peyned for the thinges that I nevere deserved, and to muche defouled for shend-shipe that man is worthy to have.' / And therefore may the sinful man wel seye, as seith seint Bernard: 'acursed be the bitterness of my sinne, for which ther moste be suffred so muchel bitterness.' / For certes, after the diverse discordances of oure wikkednesses, was the passion of Iesu Crist ordeyned in diverse thinges, / as thus.  
 275 Certes, sinful mannes soule is bitraysed of the devel by coveitise of temporel prosperitee, and scorned by deceite whan he cheseth fleshly delyces; and yet is it tormented by impaciense of adversitee, and bispet by servage and subieccion of sinne; and atte laste it is slayn fynally. / For this disordinaunce of sinful man was Iesu Crist first bitraysed, and after that was he bounde, that cam for to unbynden us of sinne and payne. / Thanne was he biscorned, that only sholde han been honoured in alle thinges and of alle thinges. / Thanne was his visage, that oghte be desired to be seyn of al man-kinde, in which visage aungels desyren to looke, vileynsly

bispet. / Thanne was he scourged that no-thing hadde agilt; and fynally, thanne was he crucified and slayn. / 280  
 Thanne was acompliced the word of Isaye: 'he was wounded for oure misdeds, and defouled for oure felonies.' / Now sith that Iesu Crist took up-on him-self the payne of alle oure wikkednesses, muchel oghte sinful man wepen and biwayle, that for hise sinnes goddes sone of hevене sholde al this payne endure. /

§ 13. The sixte thing that oghte moeve a man to contricion, is the hope of three thynges; that is to seyn, foryifnesse of sinne, and the yifte of grace wel for to do, and the glorie of hevене, with which god shal guerdone a man for hise gode dedes. / And for-as-muche as Iesu Crist yeveth us these yiftes of his largesse and of his sovereyn bountee, therefore is he cleped *Iesus Nazarenus rex Judeorum*. / Iesus is to seyn 'saveour' or 'salvacion,' on whom men shul hope to have foryifnesse of sinnes, which that is proprely salvacion of sinnes. / 285  
 And therefore seyde the aungel to Ioseph: 'thou shalt clepen his name Iesus, that shal shaven his peple of hir sinnes.' / And heer-of seith seint Peter: 'ther is noon other name under hevене that is yeve to any man, by which a man may be saved, but only Iesus.' / *Nazarenus* is as muche for to seye as 'florisslinge,' in which a man shal hope, that he that yeveth him remission of sinnes shal yeve him eek grace wel for to do. For in the flour is hope of fruit in tyme cominge; and in foryifnesse of sinnes hope of grace wel for to do. / 'I was atte dore of thyn herte,' seith Iesus, 'and cleped for to entre; he that openeth to me shal have foryifnesse of sinne. / I wol entre in-to him by my grace, and soupe with him,' by the goode werkes that he shal doon; whiche werkes been the foode of god; 'and he shal soupe with me,' by the grete Ioye that I shal yeven him. / Thus shal man 290  
 hope, for hise werkes of penaunce,

that god shall yeven him his regne; as he bihoteth him in the gospel. /

§ 14. Now shal a man understonde, in which manere shal been his contricion. I seye, that it shal been universal and total; this is to seyn, a man shal be verray repentant for alle hise sinnes that he hath doon in delyt of his thought; for delyt is ful perilous. / For ther been two manere of consentinges; that oon of hem is cleped consentinge of affeccion, when a man is moeved to do sinne, and delyteth him longe for to thinke on that sinne; / and his reson aperceyveth it wel, that is is sinne agayns the lawe of god, and yet his reson refreyneth nat his foul delyt or talent, though he se wel apertly that it is agayns the reverence of god; al-though his reson ne consente noght to doon that sinne in dede, / yet seyn somme doctours that swich delyt that dwelleth longe, it is ful perilous, al be it nevere so  
295 lite. / And also a man sholde sorwe, namely, for al that evere he hath desired agayn the lawe of god with perfitt consentinge of his reson; for ther-of is no doute, that it is deedly sinne in consentinge. / For certes, ther is no deedly sinne, that it nas first in mannes thought, and after that in his delyt; and so forth in-to consentinge and in-to dede. / Wherefore I seye, that many men ne repenten hem nevere of swiche thoghtes and delytes, ne nevere shryven hem of it, but only of the dede of grete sinnes outward. / Wherefore I seye, that swiche wikked delytes and wikked thoghtes been subtille bigyleres of hem that shullen be dampned. / More-over, man oghte to sorwe for hise wikkede wordes as wel as for hise wikkede dedes; for certes, the repentance of a singuler sinne, and nat repente of alle hise othere sinnes, or elles repenten him of alle hise othere sinnes, and nat of  
300 a singuler sinne, may nat availle. / For certes, god almighty is al good; and ther-fore he foryeveth al, or elles right noght. / And heer-of seith

seint Augustin: 'I woot certainly / that god is enemy to everich sinnere'; and how thanne? He that observeth o sinne, shal he have foryifnesse of the remenaunt of hise othere sinnes? Nay. / And forther-over, contricion sholde be wonder sorweful and anguissous, and therefore yeveth him god pleylnly his mercy; and therefore, whan my soule was anguissous with-inne me, I hadde remembrance of god that my preyere mighte come to him. / Forther-over, contricion moste be continuel, and that man have stedefast purpos to shryven him, and for to amenden him of his lyf. / For  
305 soothly, whyl contricion lasteth, man may evere have hope of foryifnesse; and of this comth hate of sinne, that destroyeth sinne bothe in him-self, and eek in other folk, at his power. / For which seith David: 'ye that loven god hateth wikkednesse.' For trusteth wel, to love god is for to love that he loveth, and hate that he hateth. /

§ 15. The laste thing that man shal understonde in contricion is this; wher-of avayleth contricion. I seye, that somtyme contricion delivereth a man fro sinne; / of which that David seith: 'I seye,' quod David, that is to seyn, 'I purposed fermely to shryve me; and thow, Lord, relesedest my sinne.' / And right so as contricion availleth noght, with-uten sad purpos of shrifte, if man have oportunittee, right so litel worth is shrifte or satisfaccion with-uten contricion. /  
310 And more-over, contricion destroyeth the prison of helle, and maketh wayk and feble alle the strengthes of the develes, and restoreth the yiftes of the holy goost and of alle gode vertues; / and it clenseth the soule of sinne, and delivereth the soule fro the peyne of helle, and fro the companye of the devel, and fro the servage of sinne, and restoreth it to alle godes espirituels, and to the companye and communion of holy chirche. / And forther-over, it maketh him that whylom was sone of ire to be sone

of grace; and alle these things been proved by holy writ. / And therefore, he that wolde sette his entente to these things, he were ful wys; for soothly, he ne sholde nat thanne in al his lyf have corage to sinne, but yeven his body and al his herte to the service of Iesu Crist, and ther-of doon him hommage. / For soothly, oure swete lord Iesu Crist hath spared us so debonairly in our folies, that if he ne hadde pitee of mannes soule, a  
315 sory song we mighten alle singe. /

*Explicit prima pars Penitentie; et sequitur secunda pars eiusdem.*

§ 16. The seconde partie of Penitence is Confession, that is signe of contricion. / Now shul ye understonde what is Confession, and whether it oghte nedes be doon or noon, and whiche things been covenable to verray Confession. /

§ 17. First shaltow understonde that Confession is verray shewing of sinnes to the preest; / this is to seyn 'verray,' for he moste confessen him of alle the condicions that bilongen to his sinne, as ferforth as he can. / Al moot be seyde, and no thing excused ne hid ne forwrapped, and noght  
320 avaunte him of his gode werkes. / And farther over, it is necessarie to understonde whennes that sinnes springen, and how they encreasen, and whiche they been. /

§ 18. Of the springinge of sinnes seith seint Paul in this wise: that 'right as by a man sinne entred first in-to this world, and thurgh that sinne deeth, right so thilke deeth entred in-to alle men that sinneden.' / And this man was Adam, by whom sinne entred in-to this world whan he brak the comaundement of god. / And therefore, he that first was so mighty that he sholde not have dyed, bicam swich oon that he moste nedes dye, whether he wolde or noon; and all his progenie in this world that in thilke man sinneden. / Loke that in thestaat of innocence, when Adam

and Eve naked weren in paradys, and no-thing ne hadden shame of hir nakednesse, / how that the serpent, that  
325 was most wyly of alle othere bestes that god hadde made, seyde to the womman: 'why comaunded god to yow, ye sholde nat eten of every tree in paradys?' / The womman answerde: 'of the fruit,' quod she, 'of the trees in paradys we feden us; but soothly, of the fruit of the tree that is in the middel of paradys, god forbade us for to ete, ne nat touchen it, lest per-aventure we should dyen.' / The serpent seyde to the womman: 'nay, nay, ye shul nat dyen of deeth; for sothe, god woot, that what day that ye eten ther-of, youre eyen shul opene, and ye shul been as goddes, knowinge good and harm.' / The womman thanne saugh that the tree was good to feding, and fair to the eyen, and delytable to the sighte; she tok of the fruit of the tree, and eet it, and yaf to hir housbonde, and he eet; and anon the eyen of hem bothe openedden. / And whan that they knewe that they were naked, they sowed of fige-leves a manere of breches to hiden hir membres. /  
330 There may ye seen that deedly sinne hath first suggestion of the feend, as sheweth here by the naddre; and afterward, the delyt of the flesh, as sheweth here by Eve; and after that, the consentinge of resoun, as sheweth here by Adam. / For trust wel, thogh so were that the feend tempted Eve, that is to seyn the flesh, and the flesh hadde delyt in the beautee of the fruit defended, yet certes, til that resoun, that is to seyn, Adam, consented to the etinge of the fruit, yet stood he in thestaat of innocence. / Of thilke Adam toke we thilke sinne original; for of him fleshly descended be we alle, and engendred of vile and corrupt matere. / And whan the soule is put in our body, right anon is contract original sinne; and that, that was erst but only peyne of concupiscence, is afterward bothe peyne and sinne. / And therefore be we

alle born sones of wratthe and of dampnacion perdurable, if it nere baptesme that we receyven, which binimeth us the culpe; but for sothe, the peyne dwelleth with us, as to temptacion, which peyne highte concupiscence. /

335 Whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man, it maketh him coveite, by coveitise of flesh, fleshly sinne, by sighte of hise eyen as to erthely thinges, and coveitise of hynesse by pryde of herte. /

§ 19. Now as for to speken of the firste coveitise, that is, concupiscence after the lawe of oure membres, that weren lawefulliche y-maked and by rightful Iugement of god; / I seye, for-as-muche as man is nat obeisaunt to god, that is his lord, therfore is the flesh to him disobeisaunt thurgh concupiscence, which yet is cleped norissinge of sinne and occasion of sinne. / Therefore, al the whyle that a man hath in him the peyne of concupiscence, it is impossible but he be tempted somtyme, and moeved in his flesh to sinne. / And this thing may nat faille as longe as he liveth; it may wel wexe feble and faille, by vertu of baptesme and by the grace of god

340 thurgh penitence; / but fully ne shal it nevere quenche, that he ne shal somtyme be moeved in him-self, but-if he were al refreyded by sickness, or by malefice of sorcerie or colde drinks. / For lo, what seith seint Paul: 'the flesh coveiteth agayn the spirit, and the spirit agayn the flesh; they been so contrarie and so stryven, that a man may nat alwey doon as he wolde.' / The same seint Paul, after his grete penaunce in water and in lond (in water by night and by day, in greet peril and in greet peyne, in lond, in famine, in thirst, in cold and clothlees, and ones stoned almost to the deeth) / yet seyde he: 'allas! I, caytif man, who shal deliver me fro the prisoun of my caytif body?' / And seint Ierome, whan he longe tyme hadde woned in desert, where-as he hadde no companye but of wilde bestes, where-as he ne hadde no mete but herbes

and water to his drinke, ne no bed but the naked erthe, for which his flesh was blak as an Ethiopen for hete and ny destroyed for cold, / yet seyde 345 he: that 'the brenninge of lecherie boiled in al his body.' / Wherfore I woot wel sikerly, that they been deceived that seyn, that they ne be nat tempted in hir body. / Witsnesse on Seint Iame the Apostel, that seith: that 'every wight is tempted in his owen concupiscence'; that is to seyn, that everich of us hath matere and occasion to be tempted of the norissinge of sinne that is in his body. / And therfore seith Seint Iohn the Evaungelist: 'if that we seyn that we beth with-oute sinne, we deceyve usselve, and trouthe is nat in us.' /

§ 20. Now shal ye understonde in what manere that sinne wexeth or encreseth in man. The firste thing is thilke norissinge of sinne, of which I spak biforn, thilke fleshly concupiscence. / And after that comth 350 the subieccion of the devel, this is to seyn, the develes bely, with which he bloweth in man the fyr of fleshly concupiscence. / And after that, a man bithinketh him whether he wol doon, or no, thilke thing to which he is tempted. / And thanne, if that a man withstonde and weyve the firste entysinge of his flesh and of the feend, thanne is it no sinne; and if it so be that he do nat so, thanne feleth he anon a flambe of delyt. / And thanne is it good to be war, and kepen him wel, or elles he wol falle anon in-to consentinge of sinne; and thanne wol he do it, if he may have tyme and place. / And of this matere seith Moyses by the devel in this manere: 'the feend seith, I wole chace and pursue the man by wikked suggestion, and I wole hente him by moevynge or stiringe of sinne. I wol departe my pryse or my praye by deliberacion, and my lust shal been accompliced in delyt; I wol drawe my swerd in consentinge: ' / for 355 certes, right as a swerd departeth a thing in two peces, right so consent-

inge departeth god fro man: 'and thanne wol I sleen him with myn hand in dede of sinne'; thus seith the feend. / For certes, thanne is a man al deed in soule. And thus is sinne accompliced by temptacion, by delyt, and by consentinge; and thanne is the sinne cleped actual. /

§ 21. For sothe, sinne is in two maneres; outhere it is venial, or deedly sinne. Soothly, whan man loveth any creature more than Iesu Crist oure creatour, thanne is it deedly sinne. And venial synne is it, if man love Iesu Crist lasse than him oghte. / For sothe, the dede of this venial sinne is ful perilous; for it amenuseth the love that men sholde han to god more and more. / And therefore, if a man charge himself with manye swiche venial sinnes, certes, but-if so be that he som tyme discharge him of hem by shrifte, they mowe ful lightly amenuse in him al the love that he hath to Iesu Crist; / and in this wise skippeth venial in-to deedly sinne. For certes, the more that a man chargeth his soule with venial sinnes, the more is he enclyned to fallen in-to deedly sinne. / And therefore, let us nat be negligent to discharge us of venial sinnes. For the proverbe seith: that manye smale maken a greet. / And herkne this ensample. A greet wawe of the see comth som-tyme with so greet a violence that it drencheth the ship. And the same harm doth som-tyme the smale dropes of water, that entren thurgh a litel crevace in-to the thurrok, and in-to the botme of the ship, if men be so negligent that they ne discharge hem nat by tyme. / And therefore, al-though ther be a difference bitwixe these two causes of drenchinge, algates the ship is dreynt. / Right so fareth it somtyme of deedly sinne, and of anoyouse veniale sinnes, whan they multiplie in a man so greetly, that thilke worldly thinges that he loveth, thurgh whiche he sinneth venially, is as greet in his herte as the love of god, or more. /

And therefore, the love of every thing, that is nat biset in god ne doon principally for goddes sake, al-though that a man love it lasse than god, yet is it venial sinne; / and deedly sinne, whan the love of any thing weyeth in the herte of man as muchel as the love of god, or more. / 'Deedly sinne,' as seith seint Augustin, 'is, whan a man turneth his herte fro god, which that is verray sovereyn bountee, that may nat change, and yeveth his herte to thing that may change and flitte'; / and certes, that is every thing, save god of hevене. For sooth is, that if a man yeve his love, the which that he oweth al to god with al his herte, un-to a creature, certes, as muche of his love as he yeveth to thilke creature, so muche he bireveth fro god; / and therefore doth he sinne. For he, that is dettour to god, ne yeldeth nat to god al his dette, that is to seyn, al the love of his herte. /

§ 22. Now sith man understandeth generally, which is venial sinne, thanne is it covenable to tellen specially of sinnes whiche that many a man per-aventure ne demeth hem nat sinnes, and ne shryveth him nat of the same thinges; and yet nathelees they been sinnes. / Soothly, as thise clerkes wryten, this is to seyn, that at every tyme that a man eteth or drinketh more than suffyseth to the sustenaunce of his body, in certain he dooth sinne. / And eek whan he spekeh more than nedeth, it is sinne. Eke whan he herkneth nat benignely the compleint of the povre. / Eke whan he is in hele of body and wol nat faste, whan othere folk faste, withouten cause resonable. Eke whan he slepeth more than nedeth, or whan he comth by thilke enchesoun to late to chirche, or to othere werkes of charite. / Eke whan he useth his wyf, withouten sovereyn desyr of engendrure, to the honour of god, or for the entente to yelde to his wyf the dette of his body. / Eke whan he wol nat visite

the sike and the prisoner, if he may. Eke if he love wyf or child, or other worldly thing, more than resoun requyreth. Eke if he flater or blandishe more than him oghte for any necessitee. / Eke if he amenuse or withdrawe the almesse of the povre. Eke if he apparailleth his mete more deliciously than nede is, or ete it to hastily by likerousnesse. / Eke if he tale vanitees at chirche or at goddes service, or that he be a talker of ydel wordes of folye or of vileinye; for he shal yelden accountes of it at the day of dome. / Eke whan he bihetteth or assureth to do thinges that he may nat perfourne. Eke whan that he, by lightnesse or folie, misseyeth or scorneth his neighebores. / Eke whan he hath any wikked suspencion of thing, ther he ne woot of it no  
380 soothfastnesse. / These thinges and mo with-oute nombre been sinnes, as seith seint Augustin. /

Now shal men understonde, that al-be-it so that noon erthely man may eschue alle venial sinnes, yet may he refreyne him by the brenninge love that he hath to oure lord Iesu Crist, and by preyeres and confession and othere gode werkes, so that it shal but litel greve. / For, as seith seint Augustin: 'if a man love god in swiche manere, that al that evere he doth is in the love of god, and for the love of god verrailly, for he brenneth in the love of god: / loke, how muche that a drope of water that falleth in a fourneys ful of fyr anoyeth or greveth, so muche anoyeth a venial sinne un-to a man that is parfit in the love of Iesu Crist.' / Men may also refreyne venial sinne by receyvinge worthily of the  
385 precious body of Iesu Crist; / by receyvinge eek of holy water; by almesdede; by general confession of *Confiteor* at masse and at complin; and by blessinge of bisshopes and of preestes, and by othere gode werkes. /

*Explicit secunda pars Penitentie.*

*Sequitur de Septem Peccatis Mortalibus et eorum dependenciis circumstantiis et speciebus.*

§ 23. Now is it bihovely thing to telle whiche been the deedly sinnes; this is to seyn, chieftaines of sinnes; alle they renne in o lees, but in diverse maneres. Now been they cleped chieftaines for-as-muche as they been chief, and springers of alle othere sinnes. / Of the roote of these sevene sinnes thanne is Pryde, the general rote of alle harmes; for of this rote springen certein braunches, as Ire, Envye, Accidie or Slewthe, Avarice or Coveitise (to commune understonding), Glotonye, and Lecherye. / And everich of these chief sinnes hath hise braunches and hise twigges, as shal be declared in hir chapitres folwinge.

*De Superbia.*

§ 24. And thogh so be that no man can outrelly telle the nombre of the twigges and of the harmes that cometh of Pryde, yet wol I shewe a partie of hem, as ye shul understonde. /  
390 Ther is Inobedience, Avauntinge, Ipocrisie, Despyt, Arrogance, Impudence, Swellinge of herte, Insolence, Elacion, Impacience, Strif, Contumacie, Presumpcion, Irreverence, Pertinacie, Veyne Glorie; and many another twig that I can nat declare. / Inobedient, is he that disobeyeth for despyt to the comandements of god and to hise sovereyns, and to his goostly fader. / Avauntour, is he that bosteth of the harm or of the bountee that he hath doon. / Ipo-  
395 crite, is he that hydeth to shewe him swiche as he is, and sheweth him swiche as he nocht is. / Despitous, is he that hath desdeyn of his neighebores, that is to seyn, of his evenecristene, or hath despyt to doon that him oghte to do. / Arrogant, is he that  
395 thinketh that he hath thilke bountees in him that he hath nocht, or weneth that he sholde have hem by hise desertes; or elles he demeth that he

be that he nis nat. / Impudent, is he that for his pride hath no shame of hise sinnes. / Swellinge of herte, is whan a man reioyseth him of harm that he hath doon. / Insolent, is he that despyseth in his Iugement alle othere folk as to regard of his value, and of his conning, and of his speaking, and of his bering. / Elacion, is whan he ne may neither suffre to have maister ne felawe. / Impacient, is he that wol nat been y-taught ne undernome of his vyce, and by stryf werreiethe trouthe witingly, and defendeth his folye. / *Contumax*, is he that thurgh his indignacion is agayns everich auctoritee or power of hem that been hise sovereyns. / Presumpcion, is whan a man undertaketh an emprise that him oghte nat do, or elles that he may nat do; and that is called Surquidrie. Irreverence, is whan men do nat honour there-as hem oghte to doon, and waiten to be revered. / Pertinacie, is whan man deffendeth his folye, and trusteth to muchel in his owene wit. / Veyne glorie, is for to have pompe and delyt in his temporel hynesse, and glorifie him in this worldly estaat. / Ianglinge, is whan men speken to muche biforn folk, and clappen as a mille, and taken no kepe what they seye. /

405 § 25. And yet is ther a privee spece of Pryde, that waiteth first to be salewed er he wole salewe, al be he lasse worth than that other is, per-aventure; and eek he waiteth or desyreth to sitte, or elles to goon above him in the wey, or kisse pax, or been encensed, or goon to offring biforn his neighebores, / and swiche semblable thinges; agayns his duetee, per-aventure, but that he hath his herte and his entente in swich a proud desyr to be magnified and honoured biforn the peple. /

§ 26. Now been ther two maneres of Pryde; that oon of hem is withinne the herte of man, and that other is with-oute. / Of whiche soothly thise forseide thinges, and mo than I have seyde, apertenen to pryde that is

in the herte of man; and that othere spesces of pryde been with-oute. / 410 But natheles that oon of these spesces of pryde is signe of that other, right as the gaye leefsel atte taverne is signe of the wyn that is in the celer. / And this is in manye thinges: as in speche and countenance, and in outrageous array of clothing; / for certes, if ther ne hadde be no sinne in clothing, Crist wolde nat have noted and spoken of the clothing of thilke riche man in the gospel. / And, as seith Seint Gregorie, that precious clothing is coupable for the derthe of it, and for his softnesse, and for his strangenesse and degysinesse, and for the superfluitee, or for the inordinat scantnesse of it. / Allas! may men nat seen, as in oure dayes, the sinful costlewe array of clothinge, and namely in to muche superfluitee, or elles in to desordinat scantnesse? / 415

§ 27. As to the firste sinne, that is in superfluitee of clothinge, which that maketh it so dere, to harm of the peple; / nat only the cost of embroudinge, the degyse endentinge or baringe, oundinge, palinge, windinge, or bendinge, and semblable wast of clooth in vanitee; / but ther is also costlewe furringe in hir gounes, so muche pounsoninge of chisels to maken holes, so muche dagginge of sheres; / forth-with the superfluitee in lengthe of the forseide gounes, trailinge in the dong and in the myre, on horse and eek on fote, as wel of man as of womman, that al thilke trailing is verrailly as in effect wasted, consumed, thredbare, and roten with donge, rather than it is yeven to the povre; to greet damage of the forseide povre folk. / And that in sondry wyse: this is to seyn, that the more that clooth is wasted, the more it costeth to the peple for the scantnesse; / and forther-over, if so be 420 that they wolde yeven swich pounsoned and dagged clothing to the povre folk, it is nat convenient to were for hir estaat, ne suffisant to bete hir necessitee, to kepe hem fro



the distemperance of the firmament. / Upon that other syde, to speken of the horrible disordinat scantnesse of clothing, as been thise cutted sloppes or hainselins, that thurgh hir shortnesse ne covere nat the shameful membres of man, to wikked entente. / Alias! somme of hem shewen the boce of hir shap, and the horrible swollen membres, that semeth lyk the maladie of hirnias, in the wrapping of hir hoses; / and eek the buttokes of hem faren as it were the hindre part of a she-ape in the fulle of the mone. / And more-over, the wretched swollen membres that they shewe thurgh the degysinge, in departing of hir hoses in whyt and reed, semeth that half hir shameful

425 privee membres weren flayn. / And if so be that they departen hire hoses in othere colours, as is whyt and blak, or whyt and blew, or blak and reed, and so forth; / thanne semeth it, as by variance of colour, that half the partie of hir privee membres were corrupt by the fyr of seint Antony, or by cancre, or by other swich meschaunce. / Of the hindre part of hir buttokes, it is ful horrible for to see. For certes, in that partie of hir body ther-as they purgen hir stinkinge ordure, / that foule partie shewe they to the peple proudly in despyt of honestetee, the which honestetee that Iesu Crist and hise freendes observede to shewen in hir lyve. / Now as of the outrageous array of wommen, god woot, that though the visages of somme of hem seme ful chaast and debonaire, yet notifie they in hir array of atr likerousnesse and pryde. / I sey nat

430 that honestetee in clothinge of man or womman is uncovenable, but certes the superfluttee or disordinat scantitee of clothinge is reprevable. / Also the sinne of aornement or of appaillie is in thinges that apertenen to rydinge, as in to manye delicat horses that been holden for delyt, that been so faire, fatte, and costlewe; / and also to many a vicious

knave that is sustened by cause of hem; in to curious harneys, as in sadeles, in crouperes, peytrels, and brydles covered with precious clothing and riche, barres and plates of gold and of silver. / For which god seith by Zakarie the prophete, 'I wol confounde the ryderes of swiche horses.' / This folk taken litel reward of the rydinge of goddes sone of hevene, and of his harneys whan he rood up-on the asse, and ne hadde noon other harneys but the povre clothes of hise disciples; ne we ne rede nat that evere he rood on other beest. / I speke this for the sinne

435 of superfluttee, and nat for reasonable honestetee, whan reson it requyret. / And forther, certes pryde is greetly notified in holdinge of greet meinee, whan they be of litel profit or of right no profit. / And namely, whan that meinee is felonous and damageous to the peple, by hardnesse of heigh lordshipe or by wey of offices. / For certes, swiche lordes sellen thanne hir lordshipe to the devel of helle, whanne they sustenen the wikkednesse of hir meinee. / Or elles whan this folk of lowe degree, as thilke that holden hostelries, sustenen the thefte of hir hostilers, and that is in many manere of deceites. / Thilke manere of folk been

440 the flies that folwen the hony, or elles the houndes that folwen the careyne. Swiche forseide folk stranglen spiritually hir lordshipes; / for which thus seith David the prophete, 'wikked deeth mote come up-on thilke lordshipes, and god yeve that they mote descend in-to helle al down; for in hir houses ben inquitees and shrewednesses,' and nat god of hevene. / And certes, but-if they doon amendement, right as god yaf his benison to Laban by the service of Iacob, and to Pharao by the service of Ioseph, right so god wol yeve his malison to swiche lordshipes as sustenen the wikkednesse of hir servaunts, but-if they come to amendement. / Pryde of the table appereth eek ful ofte; for

certes, riche men been cleped to festes, and povre folk been put away and rebuked. / Also in excesse of diverse metes and drinkes; and namely, swiche manere bake metes and dish-metes, brenninge of wilde fyr, and peynted and castelled with papir, and semblable wast; so that it  
 445 is abusion for to thinke. / And eek in to greet preciousnesse of vessel and curiositee of minstralcie, by whiche a man is stired the more to delycles of luxurie, / if so be that he sette his herte the lasse up-on oure lord Iesu Crist, certain it is a sinne; and certainly the delycles mighte been so grete in this caas, that man mighte lightly falle by hem in-to deedly sinne. / The especes that sourden of pryde, soothly whan they sourden of malice ymaged, avysed, and forncast, or elles of usage, been deedly synnes, it is no doute. / And whan they sourden by freletee unavysed sodeinly, and sodeinly withdrawen ayein, al been they grevouse sinnes, I gesse that they ne been nat deedly. / Now mighte men axe wher-of that Pryde sourdeth and springeth, and I seye: somtyme it springeth of the goodes of nature, and som-tyme of the goodes of fortune, and som-tyme  
 450 of the goodes of grace. / Certes, the goodes of nature stonden outhur in goodes of body or in goodes of soule. / Certes, goodes of body been hele of body, as strengthe, delivernesse, beautee, gentrye, franchise. / Goodes of nature of the soule been good wit, sharp understondynge, subtil engin, vertu naturel, good memorie. / Goodes of fortune been riches, highe degrees of lordshipes, preisings of the peple. / Goodes of grace been science, power to suffre spiritual travaille, benignitee, vertuous contemplacion, withstondinge of  
 455 temptacion, and semblable thinges. / Of whiche forseide goodes, certes it is a ful greet folye a man to pryden him in any of hem alle. / Now as for to spoken of goodes of nature, god woot that som-tyme we han

hem in nature as muche to oure damage as to oure profit. / As, for to spoken of hele of body; certes it passeth ful lightly, and eek it is ful ofte encheson of the siknesse of oure soule; for god woot, the flesh is a ful greet enemy to the soule: and therefore, the more that the body is hool, the more be we in peril to falle. / Eke for to pryde him in his strengthe of body, it is an heigh folye; for certes, the flesh coveiteth agayn the spirit, and ay the more strong that the flesh is, the sorier may the soule be: / and, over al this, strengthe of body and worldly hardinesse causeth ful ofte many a man to peril and meschaunce. / Eek for to pryde him  
 460 of his gentrye is ful greet folye; for ofte tyme the gentrye of the body binimeth the gentrye of the soule; and eek we ben alle of o fader and of o moder; and alle we been of o nature roten and corrupt, both riche and povre. / For sothe, o manere gentrye is for to preise, that apparailleth mannes corage with vertues and moralitees, and maketh him Cristes child. / For truste wel, that over what man sinne hath maistrie, he is a verray cherl to sinne. /

§ 28. Now been ther generale signes of gentillesse; as eschewing of vyce and ribaudye and servage of sinne, in word, in werk, and contenance; / and usinge vertu, curteisye, and clennessse, and to be liberal, that is to seyn, large by mesure; for thilke that passeth mesure is folye and sinne. / An-  
 465 other is, to remembre him of bountee that he of other folk hath receyved. / Another is, to be benigne to hise goode subgetis; wherfore, as seith Senek, 'ther is no-thing more covenable to a man of heigh estaat than debonairetee and pitee. / And therefore these flies that men clepeth bees, whan they maken hir king, they chesen oon that hath no prikke wherwith he may stinge.' / Another is, a man to have a noble herte and a

diligent, to attayne to heighe vertuose things. / Now certes, a man to pryde him in the goodes of grace is eek an outrageous folye; for thilke yiftes of grace that sholde have turned him to goodnesse and to medicine, turneth him to venim and to confusion, as seith seint Gregorie. / Certes also, who-so prydeth him in the goodes of fortune, he is a ful greet fool; forsom-tyme is a man a greet lord by the morwe, that is a caitif and a wrecche er it be night: / and somtyme the richesse of a man is cause of his deeth; somtyme the delycles of a man is cause of the grevous maladye thurgh which he dyeth. / Certes, the commendacion of the peple is somtyme ful fals and ful brotel for to triste; this day they preyse, tomorwe they blame. / God woot, desyr to have commendacion of the peple hath caused deeth to many a bisy man. /

*Remedium contra peccatum Superbie.*

§ 29. Now sith that so is, that ye han understonde what is pryde, and whiche been the speses of it, and whennes pride sourdeth and springeth; / now shul ye understonde which is the remedie agayns the sinne of pryde, and that is, humilitee or mekenesse. / That is a vertu, thurgh which a man hath verray knoweleche of him-self, and holdeth of him-self no prys ne deyn-tee as in regard of hise desertes, consideringe evere hise freletee. / Now been ther three maneres of humilitee; as humiltee in herte, and another humilitee in his mouth; the thridde is, in hise werkes. / The humilitee in herte is in foure maneres: that oon is, whan a man holdeth him-self as noght worth biforn god of hevене. Another is whan he ne despyseth noon other man. / The thridde is, whan he rekketh nat thogh men holde him noght worth. The ferthe is, whan he nis nat sory of his humiliacion. / Also, the humilitee of mouth is in foure thinges: in

attempree speche, and in humblesse of speche, and whan he biknoweth with his owene mouth that he is swich as him thinketh that he is in his herte. Another is, whan he preiseth the bountee of another man, and nothing ther-of amenuseth. / Humilitee eek in werkes is in foure maneres: the firste is, whan he putteth othere men biforn him. The seconde is, to chese the loweste place over-al. The thridde is, gladly to assente to good conseil. / The ferthe is, to stonde gladly to the award of hise sovereyns, or of him that is in hyer degree; certain, this is a greet werk of humilitee. /

*Sequitur de Invidia.*

§ 30. After Pryde wol I speken of the foule sinne of Envye, which is, as by the word of the philosopre, sorwe of other mannes prosperitee; and after the word of seint Augustin, it is sorwe of other mannes wele, and Ioye of other mennes harm. / This foule sinne is platly agayns the holy goost. Al-be-it so that every sinne is agayns the holy goost, yet nathelees, for as muche as bountee aperteneth proprely to the holy goost, and Envye comth proprely of malice, therefore it is proprely agayn the bountee of the holy goost. / Now hath malice two speses, that is to seyn, hardnesse of herte in wikkednesse, or elles the flesh of man is so blind, that he considereth nat that he is in sinne, or rekketh nat that he is in sinne; which is the hardnesse of the devel. / That other spece of malice is, whan a man werreyeth trouthe, whan he woot that it is trouthe. And eek, whan he werreyeth the grace that god hath yeve to his neigheboore; and al this is by Envye. / Certes, thanne is Envye the worste sinne that is. For soothly, alle othere sinnes been som-tyme only agayns o special vertu; / but certes, Envye is agayns alle vertues and agayns alle good-

nesses; for it is sory of alle the bountees of his neighebores; and in this manere it is divers from alle other sinnes. / For wel unnethe is ther any sinne that it ne hath som delyt in itself, save only Envye, that evere hath in itself anguish and sorwe. / The speses of Envye  
 490 been thise: ther is first, sorwe of other mannes goodnesse and of his prosperitee; and prosperitee is kindly matere of Ioye; thanne is Envye a sinne agayns kinde. / The seconde spece of Envye is Ioye of other mannes harm; and that is proprely lyk to the devel, that evere reioyseth him of mannes harm. / Of thise two speses comth bakbyting; and this sinne of bakbyting or detraction hath certeine speses, as thus. Som man preiseth his neighebores by a wikke entente; / for he maketh alwey a wikked knotte atte laste ende. Alwey he maketh a 'but' atte laste ende, that is digne of more blame, than worth is al the preisinge. / The seconde spece is, that if a man be good and dooth or seith a thing to good entente, the bakbyter wol turne all thilke goodnesse up-  
 495 soun to his shrewed entente. / The thridde is, to ameneuse the bountee of his neighebores. / The fourthe spece of bakbyting is this; that if men speke goodnesse of a man, thanne wol the bakbyter seyn, 'parfey, swich a man is yet bet than he'; in dispreisinge of him that men preise. / The fiftte spece is this; for to consente gladly and herkne gladly to the harm that men speke of other folk. This sinne is ful greet, and ay encreseth after the wikked entente of the bakbyter. / After bakbyting cometh grucching or murmuration; and somtyme it springeth of incapience agayns god, and somtyme agayns man. / Agayns god it is, whan a man gruccheth agayn the peynes of helle, or agayns poverte, or los of catel, or agayn reyn or tempest;

or elles gruccheth that shrewes han prosperitee, or elles for that goode men han adversitee. / And alle  
 500 thise thinges sholde men suffre patiently, for they comen by the rightful Iugement and ordinance of god. / Som-tyme comth grucching of avarice; as Iudas gruced agayns the Magdaleyne, whan she enoynte the heved of oure lord Iesu Crist with hir precious oynement. / This maner murmure is swich as whan man gruccheth of goodnesse that him-self dooth, or that other folk doon of hir owene catel. / Som-tyme comth murmure of pryde; as whan Simon the Pharisee gruced agayn the Magdaleyne, whan she approached to Iesu Crist, and weep at his feet for hir sinnes. / And somtyme grucching sourdeth of Envye; whan men discovereth a mannes harm that was privee, or bereth him on hond thing that is fals. /  
 505 Murmure eek is ofte amonges servaunts, that grucchen whan hir sovereyns bidden hem doon levelful thinges; / and, for-as-muche as they dar nat openly withseye the commaundements of hir sovereyns, yet wol they seyn harm, and grucche, and murmure prively for verray despyt; / whiche wordes men clepen the develes *Pater-noster*, though so be that the devel ne hadde nevere *Pater-noster*, but that lewed folk yeven it swich a name. / Som tyme grucching comth of ire or prive hate, that norisseth rancour in herte, as afterward I shal declare. / Thanne cometh eek bitternesse of herte; thurgh which bitternesse every good dede of his neighebor semeth to him bitter and unsavory. / Thanne cometh  
 510 discord, that unbindeth alle manere of frendshipe. Thanne comth scorninge, as whan a man seketh occasion to anoyen his neighebor, al do he never so weel. / Thanne comth accusinge, as whan man seketh occasion to anoyen his neighebor, which that is lyk to the craft of the devel, that waiteth bothe

night and day to accusen us alle. /  
 Thanne comth malignitee, thurgh  
 which a man anoyeth his neighebor  
 prively if he may; / and if he  
 nocht may, algate his wikked wil  
 ne shal nat wante, as for to brennen  
 his hous prively, or empoysone or  
 sleen hise bestes, and semblable  
 thinges. /

*Remedium contra peccatum Inuidie.*

§ 31. Now wol I speke of the  
 remedie agayns this foule sinne of  
 Envye. First, is the love of god prin-  
 cipal, and loving of his neighebor as  
 him-self; for soothly, that oon ne may  
 nat been with-oute that other. / And  
 515 truste wel, that in the name of thy  
 neighebor thou shalt understonde  
 the name of thy brother; for certes  
 alle we have o fader fleshly, and o  
 moder, that is to seyn, Adam and Eve;  
 and eek o fader espirituel, and that is  
 god of hevenc. / Thy neighebor  
 artow holden for to love, and wilne  
 him alle goodnesse; and therefore  
 seith god, 'love thy neighebor as  
 thy-selve,' that is to seyn, to salvacion  
 bothe of lyf and of soule. / And  
 more-over, thou shalt love him in  
 word, and in benigne amonestinge,  
 and chastysinge; and conforten him  
 in hise anoyes, and preye for him with  
 al thyn herte. / And in dede thou  
 shalt love him in swich wyse, that thou  
 shalt doon to him in charitee as  
 thou woldest that it were doon to  
 thyn owene persone. / And ther-  
 fore, thou ne shalt doon him no dam-  
 age in wikked word, ne harm in his  
 body, ne in his catel, ne in his soule,  
 520 by entysing of wikked ensample. /  
 Thou shalt nat desyren his wyf, ne  
 none of hise thinges. Understond  
 eek, that in the name of neighebor  
 is comprehended his enemy. / Cer-  
 tes man shal loven his enemy by the  
 comandement of god; and soothly  
 thy frend shaltow love in God. / I  
 seye, thyn enemy shaltow love for  
 goddes sake, by his comandement.  
 For if it were reson that a man sholde

haten his enemy, for sothe god nolde  
 nat receiven us to his love that been  
 hise enemys. / Agayns three man-  
 ere of wronges that his enemy dooth  
 to hym, he shal doon three thinges,  
 as thus. / Agayns hate and rancour  
 of herte, he shal love him in herte.  
 Agayns chydng and wikkede wordes,  
 he shal preye for his enemy. And  
 agayn the wikked dede of his enemy,  
 he shal doon him bountee. / For 525  
 Crist seith, 'loveth youre enemys,  
 and preyeth for hem that speke yow  
 harm; and eek for hem that yow  
 chacen and pursewen, and doth boun-  
 tee to hem that yow haten.' Lo, thus  
 comaundeth us oure lord Iesu Crist,  
 to do to oure enemys. / For soothly,  
 nature dryveth us to loven oure  
 freendes, and parfey, oure enemys  
 han more nede to love than oure  
 freendes; and they that more nede  
 have, certes, to hem shal men doon  
 goodnesse; / and certes, in thilke  
 dede have we remembrance of the  
 love of Iesu Crist, that deyde for hise  
 enemys. / And in-as-muche as thilke  
 love is the more grevous to perfourne,  
 in-so-muche is the more gretter the  
 merite; and therefore the lovinge of  
 oure enemy hath confounded the  
 venom of the devel. / For right as  
 the devel is disconfited by humilitee,  
 right so is he wounded to the deeth  
 by love of oure enemy. / Certes, 530  
 thanne is love the medicine that  
 casteth out the venom of Envye fro  
 mannes herte. / The speses of this  
 pas shullen be more largely in hir  
 chapitres folwinge declared. /

*Sequitur de Ira.*

§ 32. After Envye wol I discryven  
 the sinne of Ire. For soothly, who-  
 so hath envye upon his neighebor,  
 anon he wole comunly finde him a  
 matere of wratthe, in word or in dede,  
 agayns him to whom he hath envye. /  
 And as wel comth Ire of Pryde, as of  
 Envye; for soothly, he that is proude  
 or envious is lightly wrooth. /

§ 33. This sinne of Ire, after the

discryving of seint Augustin, is wikked wil to been avenged by word or  
 535 by dede. / Ire, after the philosphre, is the fervent blood of man y-  
 quiked in his herte, thurgh which he wole harm to him that he hateth. /  
 For certes the herte of man, by eschaufinge and moevinge of his blood,  
 wexeth so trouble, that he is out of alle Iugement of resoun. / But ye  
 shal understonde that Ire is in two maneres; that oon of hem is good,  
 and that other is wikked. / The gode Ire is by Ialousye of goodnesse,  
 thurgh which a man is wrooth with wikkednesse and agayns wikked-  
 nesse; and therfore seith a wys man, that 'Ire is bet than pley.' / This  
 Ire is with debonairetee, and it is wrooth withouten bitternesse; nat  
 wrooth agayns the man, but wrooth with the misdede of the man; as seith  
 the prophete David, *Irascimini et*  
 540 *nolite peccare.* / Now understondeth, that wikked Ire is in two man-  
 eres, that is to seyn, sodeyn Ire or hastif Ire, withouten avisement and  
 consentinge of resoun. / The mening and the sens of this is, that the  
 resoun of man ne consente nat to thilke sodeyn Ire; and thanne it is  
 venial. / Another Ire is ful wikked, that comth of felonye of herte avysed  
 and cast biforn; with wikked wil to do vengeance, and therto his resoun  
 consenteth; and soothly this is deedly sinne. / This Ire is so displeasnt to  
 god, that it troubleth his hous and chaceth the holy goost out of mannes  
 soule, and wasteth and destroyeth the lyknesse of god, that is to seyn,  
 the vertu that is in mannes soule; / and put in him the lyknesse of the devel,  
 and binimeth the man fro god that is  
 545 his rightful lord. / This Ire is a ful greet plesaunce to the devel; for it  
 is the develes fourneys, that is eschaufed with the fyr of helle. / For  
 certes, right so as fyr is more mighty to destroyen erthely thinges than any  
 other element, right so Ire is mighty to destroyen alle spirituel thinges. /  
 Loke how that fyr of smale gledes,

that been almost dede under asshen, wollen quike agayn whan they been  
 touched with brimstoon; right so Ire wol everemo quiken agayn, whan it is  
 touched by the pryde that is covered in mannes herte. / For certes fyr ne  
 may nat comen out of no-thing, but-if it were first in the same thing natur-  
 elly; as fyr is drawn out of flintes with steel. / And right so as pryde  
 is ofte tyme matere of Ire, right so is rancour notice and keper of Ire. / 550  
 Ther is a maner tree, as seith seint Isidre, that whan men maken fyr of  
 thilke tree, and covere the coles of it with asshen, soothly the fyr of it wol  
 lasten al a yeer or more. / And right so fareth it of rancour; whan it is  
 ones conceyved in the hertes of som men, certein, it wol lasten peraventure  
 from oon Estre-day unto another Estre-day, and more. / But certes,  
 thilke man is ful fer fro the mercy of god al thilke while. /

§ 34. In this forseide develes fourneys ther forgen three shrewes:  
 Pryde, that ay bloweth and encreseth the fyr by chydinge and wikked  
 wordes. / Thanne stant Envye, and holdeth the hote iren upon the herte  
 of man with a peire of longe tonges of long rancour. / And thanne stant 555  
 the sinne of contumelie or stryf and cheeste, and batereth and forgeth by  
 vileyns reprevinges. / Certes, this cursed sinne anoyeth bothe to the  
 man him-self and eek to his neighbor. For soothly, almost al the harm  
 that any man dooth to his neighebor comth of wratthe. / For certes, out-  
 rageous wratthe doth al that evere the devel him comaundeth; for he  
 ne spareth neither Crist, ne his swete mooder. / And in his outrageous  
 anger and Ire, allas! allas! ful many oon at that tyme feleth in his herte  
 ful wikkedly, bothe of Crist and of alle hise halwes. / Is nat this a  
 cursed vice? Yis, certes. Allas! it binimeth from man his wit and his  
 resoun, and al his debonaire lyf spirituel that sholde kepen his soule. / 560  
 Certes, it binimeth eek goddes due

lordshipe, and that is mannes soule, and the love of hise neighebores. It stryveth eek alday agayn trouthe. It reveth him the quiete of his herte, and subverteth his soule. /

§ 35. Of Ire comen thise stinkinge engendrures: first hate, that is old wratthe; discord, thurgh which a man forsaketh his olde freend that he hath loved ful longe. / And thanne cometh werre, and every manere of wrong that man dooth to his neighebores, in body or in catel. / Of this cursed sinne of Ire cometh eek manslaughtre. And understonde wel, that homicyde, that is manslaughtre, is in dyverse wyse. Som manere of homicyde is spirituel, and som is bodily. / Spirituel manslaughtre is in six thinges. First, by hate: as seint Iohn seith, 'he that  
565 hateth his brother is homicyde.' / Homicyde is eek by bakkytinge; of whiche bakbyteres seith Salomon, that 'they han two swerdes with whiche they sleen hir neighebores.' For soothly, as wikke is to binime his good name as his lyf. / Homicyde is eek, in yevinge of wikked conseil by fraude; as for to yeven conseil to areysen wrongful custumes and tailages. / Of whiche seith Salomon, 'Leon rorynge and bere hongry been lyke to the cruel lordshipes,' in withholdinge or abregginge of the shepe (or the hyre), or of the wages of servaunts, or elles in usure or in withdrawinge of the almesse of povre folk. / For which the wyse man seith, 'fedeth him that almost dyeth for honger'; for soothly, but-if thou fede him, thou sleest him; and alle these been deedly sinnes. / Bodily manslaughtre is, whan thow sleest him with thy tonge in other manere; as whan thou comandest to sleen a man, or elles yevest him conseil to  
570 sleen a man. / Manslaughtre in dede is in foure maneres. That oon is by lawe; right as a Iustice dampneth him that is coupable to the death. But lat the Iustice be war that he do it rightfully, and that he

do it nat for delyt to spille blood, but for kepinge of rightwisnesse. / Another homicyde is, that is doon for necessitee, as whan o man sleeth another in his defendaunt, and that he ne may noon otherwise escape from his owene deeth. / But certainly, if he may escape withouten manslaughtre of his adversarie, and sleeth him, he doth sinne, and he shal bere penance as for deedly sinne. / Eek if a man, by caas or aventure, shete an arwe or caste a stoon with which he sleeth a man, he is homicyde. / Eek if a womman by negligence overlyeth hir child in hir sleping, it is homicyde and deedly sinne. / Eek whan man  
575 destourbeth concepcion of a child, and maketh a womman outhere bareyne by drinkinge venemouse herbes, thurgh which she may nat conceyve, or sleeth a child by drinkes wilfully, or elles putteth certeine material thinges in hir secree places to slee the child; / or elles doth unkindely sinne, by which man or womman shedeth hir nature in manere or in place ther-as a child may nat be conceived; or elles, if a womman have conceived and hurt hir-self, and sleeth the child, yet is it homicyde. / What seye we eek of wommen that mordren hir children for drede of worldly shame? Certes, an horrible homicyde. / Homicyde is eek if a man approacheth to a womman by desir of lecherye, thurgh which the child is perished, or elles smyteth a womman witingly, thurgh which she leseth hir child. Alle these been homicydes and horrible deedly sinnes. / Yet comen ther of Ire manye mo sinnes, as wel in word as in thoght and in dede; as he that arretteth upon god, or blameth god, of thing of which he is him-self guilty; or despyseth god and alle hise halwes, as doon these cursede hasardours in diverse contrees. / This cursed sinne  
580 doon they, whan they felen in hir hertes ful wikkedly of god and of hise halwes. / Also, whan they treten unreverently the sacrament of the

auter, thilke sinne is so greet, that unnethe may it been relesed, but that the mercy of god passeth alle hise werkes; it is so greet and he so benigne. / Thanne comth of Ire attray angre; whan a man is sharply amonested in his shrifte to forleten his sinne, / than wole he be angry and answeren hokerly and angrily, and deffenden or excusen his sinne by unstedefastnesse of his flesh; or elles he dide it for to holde companye with hise felawes, or elles, he seith, the fend entyced him; / or elles he dide it for his youthe, or elles his complexion is so corageous, that he may nat forbere; or elles it is his destinee, as he seith, unto a certein age; or elles, he seith, it cometh him of gentillesse of hise auncestres; and semblable things. / Alle this manere of folk so wrappen hem in hir sinnes, that they ne wol nat delivere hem-self. For soothly, no wight that excuseth him wilfully of his sinne may nat been delivered of his sinne, til that he mekely biknoweth his sinne. / After this, thanne cometh swering, that is expres agayn the comandement of god; and this bifalleth ofte of anger and of Ire. / God seith: 'thou shalt nat take the name of thy lord god in veyn or in ydel.' Also oure lord Iesu Crist seith by the word of seint Mathew: '*Nolite iurare omnino*: / ne wol ye nat swere in alle manere; neither by hevене, for it is goddes trone; ne by erthe, for it is the bench of his feet; ne by Ierusalem, for it is the citee of a greet king; ne by thyn heed, for thou mayst nat make an heer whyt ne blak. / But seyeth by youre word, "ye, ye," and "nay, nay"; and what that is more, it is of yvel,' seith Crist. / For Cristes sake, ne swereth nat so sinfully, in dismembriunge of Crist by soule, herte, bones, and body. For certes, it semeth that ye thinke that the cursed Iewes ne dismembred nat y-nough the precieuse persone of Crist, but ye dismembere him more. / And if so be that the lawe compelle yow to

swere, thanne rule yow after the lawe of god in youre swering, as seith Ieremye *quarto capitulo*, '*Iurabis in veritate, in iudicio et in iusticia*: thou shalt kepe three condicions; thou shalt swere in trouthe, in doom, and in rightwisnesse.' / This is to seyn, thou shalt swere sooth; for every lesinge is agayns Crist. For Crist is verry trouthe. And think wel this, that every greet swerere, nat compelled lawefully to swere, the wounde shal nat departe from his hous whyl he useth swich unleveful swering. / Thou shalt sweren eek in doom, whan thou art constreynd by thy domesman to witnessen the trouthe. / Eek thou shalt nat swere for envye ne for favour, ne for mede, but for rightwisnesse; for declaracioun of it to the worship of god and helping of thyne evene-cristene. / And therefore, every man that taketh goddes name in ydel, or falsly swereth with his mouth, or elles taketh on him the name of Crist, to be called a Cristene man, and liveth agayns Cristes livinge and his techinge, alle they taken goddes name in ydel. / Loke eek what seint Peter seith, *Actuum quarto capitulo*, '*Non est aliud nomen sub celo*,' &c. 'Ther nis noon other name,' seith seint Peter, 'under hevене, yeven to men, in which they mowe be saved;' that is to seyn, but the name of Iesu Crist. / Take kepe eek how that the precious name of Crist, as seith seint Paul *ad Philipenses secundo*, '*In nomine Iesu*, &c.: that in the name of Iesu every knee of hevently creatures, or erthely, or of helle sholden bowe'; for it is so heigh and so worshipful, that the cursed feend in helle sholde tremblen to heren it y-nempned. / Thanne semeth it, that men that sweren so horribly by his blessed name, that they despise him more boldly than dide the cursed Iewes, or elles the devel, that trembleth whan he hereth his name. /

§ 36. Now certes, sith that swering, but-if it be lawefully doon, is so



highly deffended, muche worse is  
600 forswering falsly, and yet nedelees. /

§ 37. What seye we eek of hem  
that delyeten hem in swering, and  
holden it a gentrie or a manly dede  
to swere grete othes? And what of  
hem that, of verray usage, ne cesse  
nat to swere grete othes, al be the  
cause nat worth a straw? Certes,  
this is horrible sinne. / Sweringe  
sodeynly with-oute avyement is eek  
a sinne. / But lat us go now to  
thilke horrible swering of adiuracioun  
and coniuriacioun, as doon thise false  
enchautours or nigromanciens in  
bacins ful of water, or in a bright  
swerd, in a cercle, or in a fyr, or in a  
shulder-boon of a sheep. / I can  
nat seye but that they doon cursedly  
and damnably, agayns Crist and al  
the feith of holy chirche. /

§ 38. What seye we of hem that  
bileven in divynailes, as by flight or  
by noyse of briddes, or of bestes, or  
by sort, by geomancie, by dremes, by  
chirkinge of dores, or crakkinge of  
houses, by gnawynge of rattes, and  
605 swich manere wrecchednesse? /  
Certes, al this thing is deffended by  
god and by al holy chirche. For  
which they been acursed, til they  
come to amendement, that on swich  
filthe setten hir bileve. / Charmes  
for woundes or maladye of men, or of  
bestes, if they taken any effect, it  
may be peraventure that god suffreth  
it, for folk sholden yeve the more  
feith and reverence to his name. /

§ 39. Now wol I speken of les-  
inges, which generally is fals signifi-  
cacioun of word, in entente to deceyven  
his evene-cristene. / Som lesinge is  
of which ther comth noon advantage  
to no wight: and som lesinge turneth  
to the ese or profit of o man, and to  
dise and damage of another man. /  
Another lesinge is for to saven his  
lyf or his catel. Another lesinge  
comth of delyt for to lye, in which  
delyt they wol forge a long tale, and  
peynten it with alle circumstaunces,  
where al the ground of the tale is  
610 fals. / Som lesinge comth, for he

wole sustene his word; and som  
lesinge comth of recchelesnesse,  
with-oute avyement; and semblable  
thinges. /

§ 40. Lat us now touche the vyce  
of flateringe, which ne comth nat  
gladly but for drede or for coveitise. /  
Flaterye is generally wrongful preis-  
inge. Flatereres been the develes  
nories, that norissen hise children  
with milk of losengerie. / For sothe,  
Salomon seith, that 'flaterie is wors  
than detraccioun.' For som-tyme  
detraccion maketh an hautein man be  
the more humble, for he dredeth de-  
traccion; but certes flaterye, that  
maketh a man to enhauncen his herte  
and his countenance. / Flatereres  
been the develes enchautours; for  
they make a man to wene of him-self  
be lyk that he nis nat lyk. / They 615  
been lyk to Iudas that bitraysed [god;  
and thise flatereres bitraysen] a man  
to sellen him to his enemy, that is,  
to the devel. / Flatereres been the  
develes chapelleyens, that singen  
evere *Placebo*. / I rekene flaterye  
in the vyces of Ire; for ofte tyme,  
if o man be wrooth with another,  
thanne wol he flaterer som wight to  
sustene him in his querele. /

§ 41. Speke we now of swich curs-  
inge as comth of irous herte. Mali-  
soun generally may be seyde every  
maner power or harm. Swich  
cursinge bireveth man fro the  
regne of god, as seith seint Paul. /  
And ofte tyme swich cursinge  
wrongfully retorneth agayn to him  
that curseth, as a brid that retorneth  
agayn to his owene nest. / And 620  
over alle thing men oghten eschewe  
to cursen hir children, and yeven to  
the devel hir engendrure, as forforth  
as in hem is; certes, it is greet peril  
and greet sinne. /

§ 42. Lat us thanne speken of  
chydinge and reproche, whiche been  
ful grete woundes in mannes herte;  
for they unsowen the semes of frend-  
shipe in mannes herte. / For certes,  
unnethes may a man pleyntly beer ac-  
corded with him that hath him openly

revyled and repreved in disclaundre. This is a ful grisly sinne, as Crist seith in the gospel. / And tak kepe now, that he that repreveth his neighebor, outhere he repreveth him by som harm of peyne that he hath on his body, as 'mesel,' 'coked harlot,' or by som sinne that he dooth. / Now if he reprove him by harm of peyne, thanne turneth the reprove to Iesu Crist; for peyne is sent by the rightwys sonde of god, and by his suffrance, be it meselric, or maheym, or maladye. / 625 And if he reprove him uncharitably of sinne, as, 'thou holour,' 'thou dronkelewe harlot,' and so forth; thanne aperteneth that to the reioysing of the devel, that evere hath Ioye that men doon sinne. / And certes, chydinge may nat come but out of a vileyns herte. For after the habundance of the herte speketh the mouth ful ofte. / And ye shul understonde that loke, by any wey, whan any man shal chastyse another, that he be war from chydinge or reprevinge. For trewely, but he be war, he may ful lightly quiken the fyr of angre and of wratthe, which that he sholde quenche, and per-aventure sleeth him which that he mighte chastyse with benignitee. / For as seith Salomon, 'the amiable tonge is the tree of lyf,' that is to seyn, of lyf espirituel: and sothly, a deslavee tonge sleeth the spiritues of him that repreveth, and eek of him that is repreved. / Lo, what seith seint Augustin: 'ther is no-thing so lyk the develes child as he that ofte chydeth.' Seint Paul seith eek: 'I, servant of god, bihove nat to chyde.' / 630 And how that chydinge be a vileyns thing bitwixe alle manere folk, yet it is certes most uncovenable bitwixe a man and his wyf; for there is nevere reste. And therefore seith Salomon, 'an hous that is uncovered and droppinge, and a chydinge wyf, been lyke.' / A man that is in a droppinge hous in many places, though he eschewe the droppinge o place, it droppeth on him in another place; so fareth it by a chydinge wyf.

But she chyde him in o place, she wol chyde him in another. / And therefore, 'bette is a morsel of breed with Ioye than an hous ful of delycles, with chydinge,' seith Salomon. / Seint Paul seith: 'O ye wommen, be ye subgetes to youre housbondes as bihoveth in god; and ye men, loveth youre wyves.' *Ad Colossenses, tertio.* /

§ 43. Afterward speke we of scorninge, which is a wikked sinne; and namely, whan he scorneth a man for hise gode werkes. / For certes, 635 swiche scorneres faren lyk the foule tode, that may nat endure to smelle the sote savour of the vyne whanne it florisseth. / These scorneres been parting felawes with the devel; for they han Ioye whan the devel winneth, and sorwe whan he leseth. / They been adversaries of Iesu Crist; for they haten that he loveth, that is to seyn, salvacion of soule. /

§ 44. Speke we now of wikked conseil; for he that wikked conseil yeveth is a traytour. For he deceyveth him that trusteth in him, *ut Achitofel ad Absolonem*. But natheless, yet is his wikked conseil first agayn him-self. / For, as seith the wyse man, every fals livinge hath this propertee in him-self, that he that wole anoye another man, he anoyeth him-self. / And men shul under- 640 stonde, that man shal nat taken his conseil of fals folk, ne of angry folk, or grevous folk, ne of folk that loven specially to muchel hir owene profit, ne to muche worldly folk, namely, in conseilinge of soules. /

§ 45. Now comth the sinne of hem that sowen and maken discord amonges folk, which is a sinne that Crist hateth outrelly; and no wonder is. For he deyde for to make concord. / And more shame do they to Crist, than dide they that him crucifyede; for god loveth bettre, that frendshipe be amonges folk, than he dide his owene body, the which that he yaf for unitee. Therefore been they lykned to the devel, that evere been aboute to maken discord. /

§ 46. Now comth the sinne of double tonge; swiche as speken faire biforn folk, and wikkedly bihinde; or elles they maken semblant as though they speke of good entencioun, or elles in game and pley, and yet they speke of wikked entente. /

§ 47. Now comth biwreying of conseil, thurgh which a man is defamed; certes, unnethe may he restore the damage. /

Now comth manace, that is an open folye; for he that ofte manaceth, he threteth more than he may perfourne ful ofte tyme. /

Now cometh ydel wordes, that is with-ouen profit of him that speketh tho wordes, and eek of him that herkneith tho wordes. Or elles ydel wordes been tho that been nedelees, or with-ouen entente of naturel profit. / And al-be-it that ydel wordes been som tyme venial sinne, yet sholde men douten hem; for we shul yeve rekeninge of hem bifore god. /

Now comth Iangling, that may nat been withoute sinne. And, as seith Salomon, 'it is a sinne of apert folye.' / And therefore a philosophre seyde, whan men axed him how that men sholde plesse the peple; and he answerde, 'do many gode werkes, and speke fewe Iangles.' /

After this comth the sinne of Iaperes, that been the develes apes; for they maken folk to laughe at hir Iaperie, as folk doon at the gaudes of an ape. Swiche Iaperes deffendeth seint Paul. / Loke how that vertuose wordes and holy conforten hem that travaillen in the service of Crist; right so conforten the vileyns wordes and knakkes of Iaperis hem that travaillen in the service of the devel. / These been the sinnes that comen of the tonge, that comen of Ire and of othere sinnes mo. /

*Sequitur remedium contra peccatum Ire.*

§ 48. The remedye agayns Ire is a vertu that men clepen Mansuetude, that is Debonairetee; and eek an-

other vertu, that men callen Pacience or Suffrance. /

§ 49. Debonairetee withdraweth and refreyneth the stiringes and the moevynges of mannes corage in his herte, in swich manere that they ne skippe nat out by angre ne by Ire. / Suffrance suffreth swetely alle the anoyaunces and the wronges that men doon to man outward. / Seint Ierome seith thus of debonairetee, that 'it doth noon harm to no wight, ne seith; ne for noon harm that men doon or seyn, he ne eschaufeth nat agayns his resoun.' / This vertu somtyme comth of nature; for, as seith the philosophre, 'a man is a quik thing, by nature debonaire and trefable to goodnesse; but whan debonairetee is enformed of grace, thanne is it the more worth.' /

§ 50. Pacience, that is another remedye agayns Ire, is a vertu that suffreth swetely every mannes goodnesse, and is nat wrooth for noon harm that is doon to him. / The philosophre seith, that 'pacience is thilke vertu that suffreth debonairely alle the outrages of adversitee and every wikked word.' / This vertu maketh a man lyk to god, and maketh him goddes owene dere child, as seith Crist. This vertu disconfiteth thyn enemy. And therefore seith the wyse man, 'if thou wolt venquisse thyn enemy, lerne to suffre.' / And thou shalt understonde, that man suffreth foure manere of grevances in outward thinges, agayns the whiche foure he moot have foure manere of paciences. /

§ 51. The firste grevance is of wikkede wordes; thilke suffrede Iesu Crist with-ouen grucching, ful patiently, whan the Iewes despyssed and repreved him ful ofte. / Suffre thou therefore patiently; for the wyse man seith: 'if thou stryve with a fool, though the fool be wrooth or though he laughe, algate thou shalt have no reste.' / That other grevance outward is to have damage of thy catel. Ther-agayns suffred Crist ful patiently,

whan he was despoyled of al that he hadde in this lyf, and that nas but  
 665 hise clothes. / The thridde grevance is a man to have harm in his body. That suffred Crist ful patiently in al his passioun. / The fourthe grevance is in outrageous labour in werkes. Wherefore I seye, that folk that maken hir servants to travaillen to grevously, or out of tyme, as on halydayes, soothly they do greet sinne. / Heer-agayns suffered Crist ful patiently, and taughte us pacience, whan he bar up-on his blissed shulder the croys, up-on which he sholde suffren despitous deeth. / Heer may men lerne to be pacient; for certes, noght only Cristen men been pacient for love of Iesu Crist, and for guerdoun of the blisful lyf that is perdurable; but certes, the olde payens, that nevere were Cristene, commendede and usede the vertu of pacience. /

§ 52. A philosophre up-on a tyme, that wolde have beten his disciple for his grete trespas, for which he was greatly amoved, and broghte a yerde  
 670 to scourge the child; / and whan this child saugh the yerde, he seyde to his maister, 'what thanke ye to do?' 'I wol bete thee,' quod the maister, 'for thy correccion.' / 'For sothe,' quod the child, 'ye oghten first correcte youre-self, that han lost al youre pacience for the gilt of a child.' / 'For sothe,' quod the maister al wepinge, 'thou seyst sooth; have thou the yerde, my dere sone, and correcte me for myn incapience.' / Of Pacience comth Obedience, thurgh which a man is obedient to Crist and to alle hem to whiche he oghte to been obedient in Crist. / And understond wel that obedience is perfit, whan that a man doth gladly and hastily, with good herte entierly, al that he sholde do. /  
 675 Obedience generally, is to performe the doctrine of god and of his sovereyns, to whiche him oghte to ben obeisaunt in alle rightwysnesse. /

*Sequitur de Accidia.*

§ 53. After the sinnes of Envie and of Ire, now wol I speken of the sinne of Accidie. For Envye blindeth the herte of a man, and Ire troubleth a man; and Accidie maketh him hevye, thoughtful, and wrawe. / Envye and Ire maken bitternesse in herte; which bitternesse is moder of Accidie, and binimeth him the love of alle goodnesse. Thanne is Accidie the anguiss of a trouble herte; and seint Augustin seith: 'it is anoy of goodnesse and Ioye of harm.' / Certes, this is a dampnable sinne; for it doth wrong to Iesu Crist, in-as-muche as it binimeth the service that men oghte doon to Crist with alle diligence, as seith Salomon. / But Accidie dooth no swich diligence; he dooth alle thing with anoy, and with wrawnesse, slaknesse, and excusacioun, and with ydelnesse and unlust; for which the book seith: 'acursed be he that doth the service of god negligently.' / Thanne is Accidie enemy  
 680 to everich estaat of man; for certes, the estaat of man is in three maneres. / Outher it is thestaat of innocence, as was thestaat of Adam biforn that he fil into sinne; in which estaat he was holden to wirche, as in herynge and adouringe of god. / Another estaat is the estaat of sinful men, in which estaat men been holden to laboure in preyinge to god for amendement of hir sinnes, and that he wole graunte hem to arysen out of hir sinnes. / Another estaat is thestaat of grace, in which estaat he is holden to werkes of penitence; and certes, to alle these thinges is Accidie enemy and contrarie. For he loveth no bisnesse at al. / Now certes, this foule sinne Accidie is eek a ful greet enemy to the lyfode of the body; for it ne hath no purveaunce agayn temporel necessitee; for it forsloweth and forsluggeth, and destroyeth alle goodes temporeles by recchelesnesse. /  
 685

§ 54. The fourthe thinge is, that Accidie is lyk to hem that been in the

peyne of helle, by-cause of hir slouthe and of hir hevynesse; for they that been dampned been so bounde, that they ne may neither wel do ne wel thinke. / Of Accidie comth first, that a man is annoyed and encombred for to doon any goodnesse, and maketh that god hath abhominacion of swich Accidie, as seith seint Iohan. /

§ 55. Now comth Slouthe, that wol nat suffre noon hardnesse ne no penaunce. For soothly, Slouthe is so tendre, and so delicat, as seith Salomon, that he wol nat suffre noon hardnesse ne penaunce, and therefore he shendeth al that he dooth. / Agayns this roten-herted sinne of Accidie and Slouthe sholde men exercise hem-self to doon gode werkes, and manly and vertuously cacchen corage wel to doon; thinkinge that oure lord Iesu Crist quyeth every good dede, be it never so lyte. / Usage of labour is a greet thing; for it maketh, as seith seint Bernard, the laborer to have stronge armes and harde sinwes; and Slouthe maketh hem feble and tendre. / Thanne comth drede to biginne to werke any gode werkes; for certes, he that is enclined to sinne, him thinketh it is so greet an emprise for to undertake to doon werkes of goodnesse, / and casteth in his herte that the circumstaunces of goodnesse been so grevous and so charge-aunt for to suffre, that he dar nat undertake to do werkes of goodnesse, as seith seint Gregorie. /

§ 56. Now comth wanhope, that is despair of the mercy of god, that comth somtyme of to muche outrageous sorwe, and somtyme of to muche drede; imagininge that he hath doon so muche sinne, that it wol nat availen him, though he wolde repenten him and forsake sinne: / thurgh which despair or drede he abaundoneth al his herte to every maner sinne, as seith seint Augustin. / Which dampnable sinne, if that it continue un-to his ende, it is cleped sinning in the holy gost. / This horrible sinne is so perilous, that he that is despaired,

ther nis no felonye ne no sinne that he douteth for to do; as shewed wel by Iudas. / Certes, aboven alle sinnes thanne is this sinne most displeasnt to Crist, and most adversarie. / Soothly, he that despeireth him is lyk the coward champioun recreant, that seith creant withoute nede. Allas! allas! nedeles is he recreant and nedeles despeired. / Certes, the mercy of god is evere redy to every penitent, and is aboven alle hise werkes. / Allas! can nat a man bithinke him on the gospel of seint Luk, 15., where-as Crist seith that 'as wel shal ther be Ioye in hevене upon a sinful man that doth penitence, as up-on nynete and nyne rightful men that nedden no penitence?' / 700 Loke further, in the same gospel, the Ioye and the feste of the gode man that hadde lost his sone, whan his sone with repentaunce was retourned to his fader. / Can they nat remembre hem eek, that, as seith seint Luk *xxiii<sup>o</sup> capitulo*, how that the thief that was hanged bisyde Iesu Crist, seyde: 'Lord, remembre of me, whan thou comest in-to thy regne?' / 'For sothe,' seyde Crist, 'I seye to thee, to-day shaltow been with me in Parady.' / Certes, ther is noon so horrible sinne of man, that it ne may, in his lyf, be destroyed by penitence, thurgh vertu of the passion and of the deeth of Crist. / Allas! what nedeth man thanne to been despeired, sith that his mercy so redy is and large? Axe and have. / Thanne 705 cometh Sompnolence, that is, sluggy slombringe, which maketh a man be hevly and dul, in body and in soule; and this sinne comth of Slouthe. / And certes, the tyme that, by wey of resoun, men sholde nat slepe, that is by the morwe; but-if ther were cause resonable. / For soothly, the morwe-tyde is most covenable, a man to seye his preyeres, and for to thinke on god, and for to honoure god, and to yeven almesse to the povre, that first cometh in the name of Crist. / Lo! what seith Salomon: 'who-so

wolde by the morwe awaken and seke me, he shal finde.' / Thanne cometh Negligence, or recchelesnesse, that rekketh of no-thing. And how that ignoraunce be moder of alle harm,  
 710 certes, Negligence is the norice. / Negligence ne doth no fors, whan he shal doon a thing, whether he do it weel or baddely. /

§ 57. Of the remedie of these two sinnes, as seith the wyse man, that 'he that dredeth god, he spareth nat to doon that him oghte doon.' / And he that loveth god, he wol doon diligence to plesse god by his werkes, and abaundone him-self, with al his might, wel for to doon. / Thanne comth ydelnesse, that is the yate of alle harmes. An ydel man is lyk to a place that hath no walles; the develes may entre on every syde and sheten at him at discover, by temptacion on every syde. / This ydelnesse is the thurrok of alle wikked and vileyns thoghtes, and of alle Iangles,  
 715 truffes, and of alle ordure. / Certes, the hevene is yeven to hem that wol labouren, and nat to ydel folk. Eek David seith: that 'they ne been nat in the labour of men, ne they shul nat been whipped with men,' that is to seyn, in purgatorie. / Certes, thanne semeth it, they shul be tormented with the devel in helle, but-if they doon penitence. /

§ 58. Thanne comth the sinne that men clepen *Tarditas*, as whan a man is to latrede or tarynge, er he wole turne to god; and certes, that is a greet folye. He is lyk to him that falleth in the dich, and wol nat aryse. / And this vyce comth of a fals hope, that he thinketh that he shal live longe; but that hope faileth ful ofte. /

§ 59. Thanne comth *Lachesse*; that is he, that whan he biginneth any good werk, anon he shal forleten it and stinten; as doon they that han any wight to governe, and ne taken of him na-more kepe, anon as they  
 720 finden any contrarie or any anoy. / These been the newe shepherdes, that leten hir sheep witingly go renne

to the wolf that is in the breres, or do no fors of hir owene governaunce. / Of this comth poverté and destruc-cioun, bothe of spirituel and temporel thinges. Thanne comth a manere coldnesse, that freseth al the herte of man. / Thanne comth undevoicioun, thurgh which a man is so blent, as seith Seint Bernard, and hath swiche langour in soule, that he may neither rede ne singe in holy chirche, ne here ne thinke of no devocioun, ne travaille with hise handes in no good werk, that it nis him unsavory and al apalled. / Thanne wexeth he slow and slombry, and sone wol be wrooth, and sone is encloned to hate and to envye. / Thanne comth the sinne of worldly sorwe, swich as is cleped *tristicia*, that sleeth man, as seint Paul seith. / For certes, swich sorwe  
 725 werketh to the deeth of the soule and of the body also; for ther-of comth, that a man is anoyed of his owene lyf. / Wherefore swich sorwe shorteth ful ofte the lyf of a man, er that his tyme be come by wey of kinde. /

*Remedium contra peccatum Accidie.*

§ 60. Agayns this horrible sinne of Accidie, and the branches of the same, ther is a vertu that is called *Fortitudo* or Strengthe; that is, an affecciou thurgh which a man despyseth anoyous thinges. / This vertu is so mighty and so vigorous, that it dar withstonde mightily and wysely kepen him-self fro perils that been wikked, and wrastle agayn the assautes of the devel. / For it enhaunceth and enforceth the soule, right as Accidie abateth it and maketh it feble. For this *Fortitudo* may endure by long suffraunce the tra-  
 730 vailles that been covenable. /

§ 61. This vertu hath manye spesces; and the firste is cleped *Magnanimité*, that is to seyn, greet corage. For certes, ther bihoveth greet corage agayns Accidie, lest that it ne swolve the soule by the sinne of sorwe, or destroye it by wanhope. / This vertu

maketh folk to undertake harde thinges and grevouse thinges, by hir owene wil, wysely and resonably. / And for as muchel as the devel fighteth agayns a man more by queyntise and by sleighte than by strengthe, therefore men shal withstonden him by wit and by resoun and by discrecioun. / Thanne arn ther the vertues of feith, and hope in god and in hise seintes, to acheve and acomplise the gode werkes in the whiche he purposeth fermely to continue. / Thanne comth seuretee or sikernesse; and that is, whan a man ne douteth no travaille in tyme cominge of the gode werkes that a man hath bigonne. / 735 Thanne comth Magnificence, that is to seyn, whan a man dooth and perfourneth grete werkes of goodnesse that he hath bigonne; and that is the ende why that men sholde do gode werkes; for in the acomplissinge of grete goode werkes lyth the grete guerdoun. / Thanne is ther Constauce, that is, stableness of corage; and this sholde been in herte by stedefast feith, and in mouth, and in beringe, and in chere and in dede. / Eke ther been mo speciale remedies agains Accidie, in diverse werkes, and in consideracioun of the peynes of helle, and of the Ioyes of hevене, and in trust of the grace of the holy goost, that wole yeve him might to perfourne his gode entente. /

*Sequitur de Auaricia.*

§ 62. After Accidie wol I speke of Avarice and of Coveitise, of which sinne seith saint Paule, that 'the rote of alle harmes is Coveitise': *Ad Timotheum, sexto capitulo.* / For soothly, whan the herte of a man is confounded in it-self and troubled, and that the soule hath lost the confort of god, thanne seketh he an ydel 740 solas of worldly thinges. /

§ 63. Avarice, after the descripcion of saint Augustin, is likerousnesse in herte to have erthely thinges. / Som other folk seyn, that Avarice is, for to purchacen manye erthely thinges,

and no thing yeve to hem that han nede. / And understand, that Avarice ne stant nat only in lond ne catel, but somtyme in science and in glorie, and in every manere of outrageous thing is Avarice and Coveitise. / And the difference bitwixe Avarice and Coveitise is this. Coveitise is for to coveite swiche thinges as thou hast nat; and Avarice is for to withholde and kepe swiche thinges as thou hast, withoute rightful nede. / Soothly, this Avarice is a sinne that is ful dampnable; for al holy writ curseth it, and speketh agayns that vyce; for it dooth wrong to Iesu Crist. / For it bireveth 745 him the love that men to him owen, and turneth it bakward agayns alle resoun; / and maketh that the avaricious man hath more hope in his catel than in Iesu Crist, and dooth more observance in kepinge of his tresor than he dooth to service of Iesu Crist. / And therefore seith saint Paul *ad Ephesios, quinto*, that 'an avaricious man is in the thraldom of ydolatrie.' /

§ 64. What difference is bitwixe an ydolastre and an avaricious man, but that an ydolastre, per aventure, ne hath but o mawmet or two, and the avaricious man hath manye? For certes, every florin in his cofre is his mawmet. / And certes, the sinne of Mawmetrye is the firste thing that God deffended in the ten comaundments, as bereth witnessse *Exodi, capitulo xx.* / 'Thou shalt have no 750 false goddes bfore me, ne thou shalt make to thee no grave thing.' Thus is an avaricious man, that loveth his tresor biforn god, an ydolastre, / thurgh this cursed sinne of Avarice. Of Coveitise comen these harde lordshipes, thurgh whiche men been distreynd by tailages, custumes, and cariages, more than hir duetee or resoun is. And eek they taken of hir bonde-men ameriments, whiche mighten more resonably ben cleped extorciouns than ameriments. / Of whiche ameriments and raunsoninge of bondemen, somme lordes stywardes

seyn, that it is rightful; for-as-muche as a cherl hath no temporel thing that it ne is his lordes, as they seyn. / But certes, these lordshipes doon wrong, that bireven hir bonde-folk things that they nevere yave hem: *Augustinus de Civitate, libro nono.* / Sooth is, that the condicioun of thraldom and the firste cause of thraldom

755 is for sinne; *Genesis, quinto.* /

§ 65. Thus may ye seen that the gilt disserveth thraldom, but nat nature. / Wherefore these lordes ne sholde nat muche glorifyen hem in hir lordshipes, siththat by naturel condicion they been nat lordes of thralles; but for that thraldom comth first by the desert of sinne. / And forther-over, ther-as the lawe seith, that temporel godes of bonde-folk been the godes of hir lordshipes, ye, that is for to understonde, the godes of the emperour, to deffenden hem in hir right, but nat for to robben hem ne reven hem. / And therefore seith Seneca: 'thy prudence sholde live benignely with thy thralles.' / 'Thilke that thou clepest thy thralles been goddes peple; for humble folk been Cristes freendes; they been contubernial with the lord.' /

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§ 66. Think eek, that of swich seed as cherles springeth, of swich seed springen lordes. As wel may the cherl be saved as the lord. / The same deeth that taketh the cherl, swich deeth taketh the lord. Wherefore I rede, do right so with thy cherl, as thou woldest that thy lord dide with thee, if thou were in his plyt. / Every sinful man is a cherl to sinne. I rede thee, certes, that thou, lord, werke in swiche wyse with thy cherles, that they rather love thee than drede. / I woot wel ther is degree above degree, as reson is; and skile it is, that men do hir devoir ther-as it is due; but certes, extorcions and despit of youre underlinges is dampnable. /

§ 67. And forther-over understand wel, that these conquerours or tiraunts maken ful ofte thralles of hem, that

been born of as royal blood as been they that hem conqueren. / This 765 name of thraldom was nevere erst couth, til that Noe seyde, that his sone Canaan sholde be thral to hise bretheren for his sinne. / What seye we thanne of hem that pilen and doon extorcions to holy chirche? Certes, the swerd, that men yeven first to a knight whan he is newe dubbed, signifyeth that he sholde deffenden holy chirche, and nat robben it ne pilen it; and who so dooth, is traitour to Crist. / And, as seith seint Augustin, 'they been the develes wolves, that stranglen the sheep of Iesu Crist'; and doon worse than wolves. / For soothly, whan the wolf hath ful his wombe, he stinteth to strangle sheep. But soothly, the pilours and destroyours of goddes holy chirche ne do nat so; for they ne stinte nevere to pile. / Now, as I have seyde, sith so is that sinne was first cause of thraldom, thanne is it thus; that thilke tyme that al this world was in sinne, thanne was al this world in thraldom and subieccioun. / But certes, sith 770 the tyme of grace cam, god ordeyned that som folk sholde be more heigh in estaat and in degree, and som folk more lowe, and that everich sholde be served in his estaat and in his degree. / And therefore, in somme contrees ther they byen thralles, whan they han turned hem to the feith, they maken hir thralles free out of thraldom. And therefore, certes, the lord oweth to his man that the man oweth to his lord. / The Pope calleth him-self servant of the servaunts of god; but for-as-muche as the estaat of holy chirche ne mighte nat han be, ne the commune profit mighte nat han be kept, ne pees and reste in erthe, but-if god hadde ordeyned that som men hadde hyer degree and som men lower: / therefore was sovereyntee ordeyned to kepe and mayntene and deffenden hir underlinges or hir subgets in resoun, as ferforth as it lyth in hir power; and nat to destroyen hem ne confounde. /



Wherfore I seye, that thilke lordes that been lyk wolves, that devouren the possessiouns or the catel of povre folk wrongfully, with-outen mercy or  
 775 mesure, / they shul receyven, by the same mesure that they han mesured to povre folk, the mercy of Iesu Crist, but-if it be amended. / Now comth deceite bitwixe marchand and marchand. And thow shalt understonde, that marchandyse is in two maneres; that oon is bodily, and that other is goostly. That oon is honeste and leweful, and that other is deshoneste and unleweful. / Of thilke bodily marchandyse, that is leweful and honeste, is this; that, there-as god hath ordeyned that a regne or a contree is suffisaunt to him-self, thanne is it honeste and leweful, that of habundance of this contree, that men helpe another contree that is more nedy. / And therefore, ther mote been marchants to bringen fro that o contree to that other hire marchandyses. / That other marchandise, that men haunten with fraude and trecherie and deceite, with lesinges and false  
 780 othes, is cursed and dampnable. / Spirituel marchandyse is properly Symonye, that is, ententif desyr to byen thing espirituel, that is, thing that aperteneth to the seintuarie of god and to cure of the soule. / This desyr, if so be that a man do his diligence to parfournen it, al-be-it that his desyr ne take noon effect, yet is it to him a deedly sinne; and if he be ordred, he is irreguler. / Certes, Symonye is cleped of Symon Magus, that wolde han boght, for temporel catel, the yifte that god hadde yeven, by the holy goost, to seint Peter and to the apostles. / And therefore understond, that bothe he that selleth and he that byeth thinges espirituels, been cleped Symonials; be it by catel, be it by procuringe, or by fleshly preyere of hise freendes, fleshly freendes, or espirituel freendes. / Fleshly, in two maneres; as by kinrede or othere freendes. Soothly, if they praye for him that is nat worthy and

able, it is Symonye if he take the benefice; and if he be worthy and able, ther nis noon. / That other  
 785 manere is, when a man or womman preyen for folk to avauncen hem, only for wikked fleshly affeccion that they have un-to the persone; and that is foul Symonye. / But certes, in service, for which men yeven thinges espirituels un-to hir servants, it moot been understonde that the service moot been honeste, and elles nat; and eek that it be with-outen bargayninge, and that the persone be able. / For, as seith Seint Damascie, 'alle the sinnes of the world, at regard of this sinne, arn as thing of noght'; for it is the gretteste sinne that may be, after the sinne of Lucifer and Antecrist. / For, by this sinne, god forleseth the chirche, and the soule that he boghte with his precious blood, by hem that yeven chirches to hem that been nat digne. / For they putten in theves, that stelen the soules of Iesu Christ and destroyen his patrimoine. / By  
 790 swiche undigne preestes and curates han lewed men the lasse reverence of the sacraments of holy chirche; and swiche yeveres of chirches putten out the children of Crist, and putten in-to the chirche the develes owene sone. / They sellen the soules that lambes sholde kepen to the wolf that strangleth hem. And therefore shul they nevere han part of the pasture of lambes, that is, the blisse of hevене. / Now comth hasardrye with hise apurtenaunces, as tables and raffles; of which comth deceite, false othes, chydinges, and alle ravines, blaspheminge and reneyinge of god, and hate of hise neighebores, wast of godes, misspendinge of tyme, and somtyme manslaughtre. / Certes, hasardours ne mowe nat been with-outen greet sinne whyles they haunte that craft. / Of avarice comen eek lesinges, thefte, fals witness, and false othes. And ye shul understonde that thise been grete sinnes, and expres agayn the comaundements of god, as I have seyd. / Fals witness is in word and  
 795

eek in dede. In word, as for to bireve thy neighebores goode name by thy fals witnessing, or bireven him his catel or his heritage by thy fals witnessing; whan thou, for ire or for mede, or for envye, berest fals witesse, or accusest him or excusest him by thy fals witesse, or elles excusest thy-self falsly. / Ware yow, questemongereres and notaries! Certes, for fals witnessing was Susanna in ful gret sorwe and peyne, and many another mo. / The sinne of thefte is eek expres agayns goddes heste, and that in two maneres, corporel and espirituel. / Corporel, as for to take thy neighebores catel agayn his wil, be it by force or by sleighte, be it by met or by mesure. / By steling eek of false enditements upon him, and in borwinge of thy neighebores catel, in entente nevere to payen it agayn, and semblable thinges. / Espirituel thefte is Sacrilege, that is to seyn, hurtinge of holy thinges, or of thinges sacred to Crist, in two maneres; by reson of the holy place, as chirches or chirche hawes, / for which every vileyns sinne that men doon in swiche places may be cleped sacrilege, or every violence in the semblable places. Also, they that withdrawn falsly the rightes that longen to holy chirche. / And pleynly and generally, sacrilege is to reven holy thing fro holy place, or unholy thing out of holy place, or holy thing out of unholy place. /

*Relevacio contra peccatum Avaricie.*

§ 68. Now shul ye understonde, that the relievinge of Avarice is misericorde, and pitee largely taken. And men mighten axe, why that misericorde and pitee is relievinge of Avarice? / Certes, the avaricious man sheweth no pitee ne misericorde to the nedeful man; for he delyteth him in the kepinge of his tresor, and nat in the rescowinge ne relievinge of his evene-cristene. And therefore speke I first of misericorde. / Thanne is misericorde, as seith the philoso-

phre, a vertu, by which the corage of man is stired by the misese of him that is misese. / Up-on which misericorde folweth pitee, in parfourninge of charitable werkes of misericorde. / And certes, thise thinges moeven a man to misericorde of Iesu Crist, that he yaf him-self for oure gilt, and suffred deeth for misericorde, and forgaf us oure originale sinnes; / and therby relessed us fro the peynes of helle, and amened the peynes of purgatorie by penitence, and yeveth grace wel to do, and atte laste the blisse of hevene. / The spes of misericorde been, as for to lene and for to yeve and to foryeven and relesse, and for to han pitee in herte, and compassion of the meschief of his evene-cristene, and eek to chastyse there as nede is. / Another manere of remedie agayns Avarice is resonable largesse; but soothly, here bihoveth the consideracioun of the grace of Iesu Crist, and of hise temporel goodes, and eek of the godes perdurables that Crist yaf to us; / and to han remembrance of the deeth that he shal receyve, he noot whanne, where, ne how; and eek that he shal forgon al that he hath, save only that he hath depended in gode werkes. /

§ 69. But for-as-muche as som folk been unmesurable, men oghten eschue fool-largesse, that men clepen wast. / Certes, he that is fool-large ne yeveth nat his catel, but he leseth his catel. Soothly, what thing that he yeveth for veyne glorie, as to ministrals and to folk, for to beren his renoun in the world, he hath sinne ther-of and noon almesse. / Certes, he leseth foule his good, that ne seketh with the yifte of his good nothing but sinne. / He is lyk to an hors that seketh rather to drinken drovy or trouble water than for to drinken water of the clere welle. / And for-as-muchel as they yeven ther as they sholde nat yeven, to hem aper-tenteth thilke malisoun that Crist shal yeven at the day of dome to hem that shullen been dampned. /

*Sequitur de Gula.*

§ 70. After Avarice comth Glotonye, which is expres eek agayn the comandement of god. Glotonye is unmesurable appetyt to ete or to drinke, or elles to doon y-nogh to the unmesurable appetyt and desordeynece coveityse to eten or to drinke. / This sinne corrupted al this world, as is wel shewed in the sinne of Adam and of Eve. Loke eek, what seith seint Paul of Glotonye. / 'Manye,' seith seint Paul, 'goon, of whiche I have ofte seyde to yow, and now I seye it wepinge, that they been the enemys of the croys of Crist; of whiche the ende is deeth, and of whiche hir wombe is hir god, and hir glorie in confusioun of hem that so savenen erthely thinges.' / He that is usant to this sinne of Glotonye, he ne may no sinne withstonde. He moot been in servage of alle vyces, for it is the develes hord ther he hydeth him and resteth. / This sinne hath manye spes. The firste is dronkenesse, that is the horrible sepulture of mannes resoun; and therefore, whan a man is dronken, he hath lost his resoun; and this is deedly sinne. / But soothly, whan that a man is nat wont to strong drinke, and peraventure ne knoweth nat the strengthe of the drinke, or hath feblesse in his heed, or hath travailed, thurgh which he drinketh the more, al be he sodeynly caught with drinke, it is no deedly sinne, but venial. / The seconde spece of Glotonye is, that the spirit of a man wexeth al trouble; for dronkenesse bireveth him the discrecioun of his wit. / The thridde spece of Glotonye is, whan a man devoureth his mete, and hath no  
825 rightful manere of etinge. / The fourthe is whan, thurgh the grete habundaunce of his mete, the humours in his body been destempred. / The fifthe is, foryetelnesse by to muchel drinkinge; for which somtyme a man foryeteth er the morwe what he dide at even or on the night biforn. /

§ 71. In other manere been distinct the spes of Glotonye, after seint Gregorie. The firste is, for to ete biforn tyme to ete. The seconde is, whan a man get him to delicat mete or drinke. / The thridde is, whan men taken to muche over mesure. The fourthe is curiositee, with greet entente to maken and appaillen his mete. The fifthe is, for to eten to gredily. / These been the fyve fingres of the develes hand, by whiche he draweth folk to sinne. / 830

*Remedium contra peccatum Gule.*

§ 72. Agayns Glotonye is the remedie Abstinence, as seith Galien; but that holde I nat meritorie, if he do it only for the hele of his body. Seint Augustin wole, that Abstinence be doon for vertu and with pacience. / Abstinence, he seith, is litel worth, but-if a man have good wil ther-to, and but it be enforced by pacience and by charitee, and that men doon it for godes sake, and in hope to have the blisse of hevene. /

§ 73. The felawes of Abstinence been Attemperaunce, that holdeth the mene in alle thinges: eek Shame, that eschueth alle deshonestee: Suffisance, that seketh no riche metes ne drinks, ne dooth no fors of to outrageous apparailinge of mete. / Mesure also, that restreyneth by resoun the deslavee appetyt of etinge: Sobrenesse also, that restreyneth the outrage of drinke: / Sparinge also, that restreyneth the delicat ese to sitte longe at his mete and softly; wherfore som folk stonden of hir owene wil, to eten at the lasse leyser. / 835

*Sequitur de Luxuria.*

§ 74. After Glotonye, thanne comth Lecherie; for these two sinnes been so ny cosins, that ofte tyme they wol nat departe. / God woot, this sinne is ful displeasunt thing to god; for he seyde himself, 'do no lecherie.' And therefore he putte

grete peynes agayns this sinne in the olde lawe. / If womman thral were taken in this sinne, she sholde be beten with staves to the death. And if she were a gentil womman, she sholde be slayn with stones. And if she were a bisschoppes doghter, she sholde been brent, by goddes comanement. / Forther over, by the sinne of Lecherie, god dreynte al the world at the diluge. And after that, he brente fyve citees with thonderleyt, and sank hem in-to helle. /

840 § 75. Now lat us speke thanne of thilke stinkinge sinne of Lecherie that men clepe Avoutrie of wedded folk, that is to seyn, if that oon of hem be wedded, or elles bothe. / Seint John seith, that avoutiers shullen been in helle in a stank brenninge of fyr and of brimston; in fyr, for the lecherie; in brimston, for the stink of hir ordure. / Certes, the brekinge of this sacrament is an horrible thing; it was maked of god him-self in paradys, and conformed by Iesu Crist, as witnesseth seint Mathew in the gospel: 'A man shal lete fader and moder, and taken him to his wyf, and they shullen be two in o flesh.' / This sacrament bitokneth the knittinge togidre of Crist and of holy chirche. / And nat only that god forbad avoutrie in dede, but eek he comanded that thou sholdest nat coveite thy neighebores wyf. / In this heeste, seith seint Augustin, is forboden alle manere covetise to doon lecherie. Lo what seith seint Mathew in the gospel: that 'who-so seeth a womman to covetise of his lust, he hath doon lecherie with hir in his herte.' / Here may ye seen that nat  
845 only the dede of this sinne is forboden, but eek the desyr to doon that sinne. / This cursed sinne anoyeth grevousliche hem that it haunten. And first, to hir soule; for he oblygeth it to sinne and to peyne of death that is perdurable. / Un-to the body anoyeth it grevously also, for it dreyeth him, and wasteth, and shent him, and of his blood he maketh sacrificye to

the feend of helle; it wasteth his catel and his substaunce. / And certes, if it be a foul thing, a man to waste his catel on wommen, yet is it a fouler thing whan that, for swich ordure, women dispenden up-on men hir catel and substaunce. / This sinne, as seith the prophete, bireveth man and womman hir gode fame, and al hir honour; and it is ful pleasaunt to the devel; for ther-by winneth he the moste partie of this world. / 850 And right as a marchant delyteth him most in chaffare that he hath most avantage of, right so delyteth the feend in this ordure. /

§ 76. This is that other hand of the devel, with fyve fingres, to cacche the peple to his vileinye. / The firste finger is the fool lookinge of the fool womman and of the fool man, that sleeth, right as the basilicok sleeth folk by the venim of his sighte; for the covetise of eyen fulweth the covetise of the herte. / The seconde finger is the vileyns touchinge in wikkede manere; and ther-fore seith Salomon, that who-so toucheth and handleth a womman, he fareth lyk him that handleth the scorioun that stingeth and sodcynty sleeth thurgh his envenyminge; as who-so toucheth warm pich, it shent hise fingres. / The thridde, is foule wordes, that fareth lyk fyr, that right anon brenneth the herte. / 855 The fourthe finger is the kissinge; and trewely he were a greet fool that wolde kisse the mouth of a brenninge ovne or of a fourneys. / And more foles been they that kissen in vileinye; for that mouth is the mouth of helle: and namely, thise olde dotardes holours, yet wol they kisse, though they may nat do, and smatre hem. / Certes, they been lyk to houndes; for an hound, whan he comth by the roser or by othere [busshes], though he may nat pisse, yet wole he heve up his leg and make a contenance to pisse. / And for that many man weneth that he may nat sinne, for no likerousnesse that he doth with his wyf; certes, that

opinion is fals. God woot, a man may sleen him-self with his owene knyf, and make him-selven dronken of his owene tonne. / Certes, be it wyf, be it child, or any worldly thing that he loveth bi<sup>o</sup>rn god, it is his maumet, and he is  
 860 his wyf by discrecioun, patiently and atemprely; and thanne is she as though it were his suster. / The fifthe finger of the develes hand is the stynkinge dede of Lecherie. / Certes, the fyve fingres of Glotonie the feend put in the wombe of a man, and with hise fyve fyingres of Lecherie he gripeth him by the reynes, for to thrown him in-to the fourneys of helle; / ther-as they shul han the fyr and the wormes that evere shul lasten, and wepinge and wailinge, sharp hunger and thirst, and grimnesse of develes that shullen al to-trede hem, with-ouen respit and with-ouen ende. / Of Lecherie, as I seyde, sourden diverse spes; as fornicacioun, that is bitwixe man and womman that been nat maried; and this  
 865 is deedly sinne and agayns nature. / Al that is enemy and destruccioun to nature is agayns nature. / Parfay, the resoun of a man telleth eek him wel that it is deedly sinne, for-as-muche as god forbad Lecherie. And seint Paul yeveth hem the regne, that nis dewe to no wight but to hem that doon deedly sinne. / Another sinne of Lecherie is to bireve a mayden of hir maydenhede; for he that so dooth, certes, he casteth a mayden out of the hyste degree that is in this present lyf, / and bireveth hir thilke precious fruit that the book clepeth 'the hundred fruit.' I ne can seye it noon other weyes in English, but in Latin it highte *Centesimus fructus*. / Certes, he that so dooth is cause of manye damages and vileinyes, mo than any man can rekene; right as he som-tyme is cause of alle damages that bestes don in the feeld, that breketh the hegge or the closure; thurgh which he destroyeth  
 870 that may nat been restored. / For

certes, na-more may maydenhede be restored than an arm that is smiten fro the body may retourne agayn to wexe. / She may have mercy, this woot I wel, if she do penitence; but nevere shal it be that she nas corrupted. / And al-be-it so that I have spoken somewhat of Avoutrie, it is good to shewen mo perils that longen to Avoutrie, for to eschue that foule sinne. / Avoutrie in Latin is for to seyn, approchinge of other mannes bed, thurgh which tho that whylom weren o flesh abaundone hir bodyes to othere persones. / Of this sinne, as seith the wyse man, folwen manye harmes. First, brekinge of feith; and certes, in feith is the keye of Cristendom. / And whan that feith is  
 875 broken and lorn, soothly Cristendom stant veyn and with-ouen fruit. / This sinne is eek a thefte; for thefte generally is for to reve a wight his thing agayns his wille. / Certes, this is the fouleste thefte that may be, whan a womman steleth hir body from hir housbonde and yeveth it to hire holour to defoulen hir; and stleth hir soule fro Crist, and yeveth it to the devel. / This is a fouler thefte, than for to breke a chirche and stele the chalice; for thise Avoutiers breken the temple of god spiritually, and stelen the vessel of grace, that is, the body and the soule, for which Crist shal destroyen hem, as seith Seint Paul. / Soothly of this thefte douted gretly Ioseph, whan that his lordes wyf preyed him of vileinye, whan he seyde, 'lo, my lady, how my lord hath take to me under my warde al that he hath in this world; ne no-thing of hise thinges is out of my power, but only ye that been his wyf. / And how sholde I  
 880 thanne do this wikkednesse, and sinne so horribly agayns god, and agayns my lord? God it forbede.' Allas! al to litel is swich trouthe now y-founde! / The thridde harm is the filthe thurgh which they breken the comandement of god, and defoulen the auctour of matrimoine,

that is Crist: / For certes, in-so-muche as the sacrament of mariage is so noble and so digne, so muche is it gretter sinne for to breken it; for god made mariage in paradys, in the estaat of Innocence, to multiplie man-kinde to the service of god. / And therefore is the brekinge ther-of more grevous. Of which brekinge comen false heires ofte tyme, that wrongfully occupyen folkes heritages. And therefore wol Crist putte hem out of the regne of hevenc, that is heritage to gode folk. / Of this brekinge comth eek ofte tyme, that folk unwar wedden or sinnen with hir owene kinrede; and namely thilke harlottes that haunten bordels of thise fool wommen, that mowe be lykned to a commune gonge, where-as  
 885 men purgen hir ordure. / What seye we eek of putours that liven by the horrible sinne of putrie, and constreyned wommen to yelden to hem a certeyn rente of hir bodily puterie, ye, somtyme of his owene wyf or his child; as doon this baudes? Certes, thise been cursede sinnes. / Understonde eek, that avoutrie is set gladly in the ten comandements bitwixe thefte and manslaughtre; for it is the gretteste thefte that may be; for it is thefte of body and of soule. / And it is lyk to homicide; for it kerveth a-two and breketh a-two hem that first were maked o flesh, and therefore, by the olde lawe of god, they sholde be slayn. / But natheles, by the lawe of Iesu Crist, that is lawe of pitee, whan he seyde to the womman that was founden in avoutrie, and sholde han been slayn with stones, after the wil of the Iewes, as was hir lawe: 'Go,' quod Iesu Crist, 'and have na-more wil to sinne'; or, 'wille na-more to do sinne.' / Soothly, the vengeance of avoutrie is awarded to the peynes of helle, but-if so be  
 890 that it be destourbed by penitence. / Yet been ther mo spesces of this cursed sinne; as whan that oon of hem is religious, or elles bothe; or of

folk that been entred in-to ordre, as subdekne or dekne, or preest, or hospitaliers. And evere the hyer that he is in ordre, the gretter is the sinne. / The thinges that gretly agreggen hir sinne is the brekinge of hir avow of chastitee, whan they received the ordre. / And forther-over, sooth is, that holy ordre is chief of al the tresorie of god, and his especial signe and mark of chastitee; to shewe that they been ioyned to chastitee, which that is most precious lyf that is. / And thise ordred folk been specially tytled to god, and of the special meynee of god; for which, whan they doon deedly sinne, they been the special traytours of god and of his peple; for they liven of the peple, to preye for the peple, and whyle they been suche traitours, hir prayers availen nat to the peple. / Preestes been angeles, as by the dignitee of hir misterye; but for sothe, seint Paul seith, that 'Sathanas transformeth him in an aungel of light.' /  
 895 Soothly, the preest that haunteth deedly sinne, he may be lykned to the aungel of derknesse transformed in the aungel of light; he semeth aungel of light, but for sothe he is aungel of derknesse. / Swiche preestes been the sones of Helie, as sheweth in the book of Kinges, that they weren the sones of Belial, that is, the devel. / Belial is to seyn 'with-outen Iuge'; and so faren they; hem thinketh they been free, and han no Iuge, na-more than hath a free bole that taketh which cow that him lyketh in the toun. / So faren they by wommen. For right as a free bole is y-nough for al a toun, right so is a wikked preest corrupcioun y-nough for al a parisshe, or for al a contree. / Thise preestes, as seith the book, ne conne nat the misterie of preesthode to the peple, ne god ne knowe they nat; they ne helde hem nat apayd, as seith the book, of soden flesh that was to hem offred, but they toke by force the flesh that is rawe. / Certes, so  
 900 thise shrewes ne holden hem nat

apayed of rosted flesh and sode flesh, with which the peple fedden hem in greet reverence, but they wole have raw flesh of folkes wyves and hir doghtres. / And certes, these women that consenten to hir harlotrie doon greet wrong to Crist and to holy chirche and alle halwes, and to alle soules; for they bireven alle these him that sholde worshipe Crist and holy chirche, and preye for cristene soules. / And therefore han swiche preestes, and hir lemmanes eek that consenten to hir lecherie, the malisoun of al the court cristen, til they come to amendement. / The thridde spece of avoutrie is som-tyme bitwixe a man and his wyf; and that is whan they take no reward in hir assemblinge, but only to hire fleshly delyt, as seith seint Ierome; / and ne rekken of no-thing but that they been assembled; by-cause that they been married, al is good y-nough, as thinketh to

905 hem. / But in swich folk hath the devel power, as seyde the aungel Raphael to Thobie; for in hir assemblinge they putten Iesu Crist out of hir herte, and yeven hem-self to alle ordure. / The fourthe spece is, the assemblee of hem that been of hire kinrede, or of hem that been of oon affinitee, or elles with hem with whiche hir fadres or hir kinrede han deled in the sinne of lecherie; this sinne maketh hem lyk to houndes, that taken no kepe to kinrede. / And certes, parentele is in two maneres, outhur goostly or fleshly; goostly, as for to delen with hise godsibbes. / For right so as he that engendreth a child is his fleshly fader, right so is his godfader his fader espirituel. For which a womman may in no lasse sinne assemblen with hir godsib than with hir owene fleshly brother. / The fifthe spece is thilke abhominable sinne, of which that no man unnethe oghte speke ne wryte, natheless it is openly rehersed

910 in holy writ. / This cursednesse doon men and women in diverse entente and in diverse manere; but though

that holy writ speke of horrible sinne, certes, holy writ may not been defouled, na-more than the sonne that shyneth on the mixen. / Another sinne aperteneth to lecherie, that comth in slepinge; and this sinne cometh ofte to hem that been maydenes, and eek to hem that been corrupt; and this sinne men clepen pollucioun, that comth in foure maneres. / Somtyme, of languissinge of body; for the humours been to ranke and habundaunt in the body of man. Somtyme of infermetee; for the feblesse of the vertu retentif, as phisik maketh mencion. Som-tyme, for surfeet of mete and drinke. / And somtyme of vileyns thoghtes, that been enclosed in mannes minde whan he goth to slepe; which may nat been with-oute sinne. For which men moste kepen hem wysely, or elles may men sinnen ful gresously. /

*Remedium contra peccatum Luxurie.*

§ 77. Now comth the remedie agayns Lecherie, and that is, generally, Chastitee and Contynence, that restreyneth alle the desordeyne moevinges that comen of fleshly talentes. / And evere the gretter merite

915 shal he han, that most restreyneth the wikkede eschaufinges of the ordure of this sinne. And this is in two maneres, that is to seyn, chastitee in mariage, and chastitee of widwehode. / Now shaltow understonde, that matrimoine is lefful assemblinge of man and of womman, that receyven by vertu of the sacrament the bond, thurgh which they may nat be departed in al hir lyf, that is to seyn, whyl that they liven bothe. / This, as seith the book, is a ful greet sacrament. God maketh it, as I have seyde, in paradys, and wolde him-self be born in mariage. / And for to halwen mariage, he was at a weddinge, where-as he turned water in-to wyn; which was the firste miracle that he wroghte in erthe biforn hise disciples. / Trewe effect of mariage

clenseth fornicacioun and replenisset holy chirche of good linage; for that is the ende of mariage; and it chaungeth deedly sinne in-to venial sinne bitwixe hem that been y-wedded, and maketh the hertes al oon of hem that  
 920 been y-wedded, as wel as the bodies. / This is verray mariage, that was established by god er that sinne bigan, whan naturel lawe was in his right point in paradys; an dit was ordyned that o man sholde have but o womman, and o womman but o man, as seith Seint Augustin, by manye reasons. /

§ 78. First, for mariage is figured bitwixe Crist and holy chirche. And that other is, for a man is heved of a womman; algate, by ordinaunce it sholde be so. / For if a womman had mo men than oon, thanne sholde she have mo hevedes than oon, and that were an horrible thing biforn god; and eek a womman ne mighte nat plesse to many folk at ones. And also ther ne sholde nevere be pees ne reste amonges hem; for everich wolde axen his owene thing. / And forther-over, no man ne sholde knowe his owene engendrure, ne who sholde have his heritage; and the womman sholde been the lasse biloved, fro the time that she were conioynt to many men. /

§ 79. Now comth, how that a man sholde bere him with his wyf; and namely, in two thinges, that is to seyn in suffraunce and reverence, as shewed  
 925 Crist whan he made first womman. / For he ne made hir nat of the heved of Adam, for she sholde nat clayme to greet lordshipe. / For ther-as the womman bath the maistrie, she maketh to muche desray; ther neden none ensamples of this. The experience of day by day oghte suffyse. / Also certes, god ne made nat womman of the foot of Adam, for she ne sholde nat been holden to lowe; for she can nat pacintly suffre: but god made womman of the rib of Adam, for womman sholde be felawe un-to man. / Man sholde bere him to his

wyf in feith, in trouthe, and in love, as seith seint Paul: that 'a man sholde loven his wyf as Crist loved holy chirche, that loved it so wel that he deyde for it.' So sholde a man for his wyf, if it were nede. /

§ 80. Now how that a womman sholde be subget to hir housbonde, that telleth seint Peter. First, in obedience. / And eek, as seith the de- 930  
 cree, a womman that is a wyf, as longe as she is a wyf, she hath noon auctoritee to swere ne bere witnessse with-oute leve of hir housbonde, that is hir lord; algate, he sholde be so by resoun. / She sholde eek serven him in alle honestee, and been attempree of hir array. I wot wel that they sholde setten hir entente to plesen hir housbondes, but nat by hir queyntise of array. / Seint Ierome seith, that wyves that been apparailled in silk and in precious purple ne mowe nat clothen hem in Iesu Crist. What seith seint Iohn eek in this matere? / Seint Gregorie eek seith, that no wight seketh precious array but only for veyne glorie, to been honoured the more biforn the peple. / It is a greet folye, a womman to have a fair array outward and in hir-self be foul inward. / A wyf sholde eek be mes- 935  
 urable in lokinge and in beringe and in laughinge, and discreet in alle hir wordes and hir dedes. / And aboven alle worldly thing she sholde loven hir housbonde with al hir herte, and to him be trewe of hir body; / so sholde an housbonde eek be to his wyf. For sith that al the body is the housbondes, so sholde hir herte been, or elles ther is bitwixe hem two, as in that, no parfit mariage. / Thanne shal men understonde that for three thinges a man and his wyf fleshly mowen assemble. The firste is in entente of engendrure of children to the service of god, for certes that is the cause fynal of matrimoine. / Another cause is, to yelden everich of hem to other the dette of hir bodies, for neither of hem hath power over his owene body. The thridde is, for to eschewe lecherye



and vileinye. The ferthe is for sothe  
 940 deedly sinne. / As to the firste, it is  
 meritorie; the seconde also; for, as  
 seith the decree, that she hath merite  
 of chastitee that yeldeth to hir hous-  
 bonde the dette of hir body, ye, though  
 it be agayn hir lykinge and the lust of  
 hir herte. / The thridde manere is  
 venial sinne, and trewely scarsly may  
 ther any of these be with-oute venial  
 sinne, for the corrupcion and for the  
 delyt. / The fourthe manere is for to  
 understonde, if they assemble only for  
 amorous love and for noon of the for-  
 seyde causes, but for to accomplice  
 thilke brenninge delyt, they rekke  
 nevere how ofte, sothly it is deedly  
 sinne; and yet, with sorwe, somme  
 folk wol peynen hem more to doon  
 than to hir appetyt suffyseth. /

§ 81. The seconde manere of chas-  
 titee is for to be a clene widewe, and  
 eschue the embracings of man, and  
 desyren the embracinge of Iesu Crist. /  
 These been tho that han been wyves  
 and han forgoon hir housbondes,  
 and eek women that han doon le-  
 cherie and been releevyd by Peni-  
 945 tence. / And certes, if that a wyf  
 coude kepen hir al chaast by licence  
 of hir housbonde, so that she yeve  
 nevere noon occasion that he agylte,  
 it were to hire a greet merite. /  
 These manere women that observen  
 chastitee moste be clene in herte as  
 well as in body and in thought, and  
 mesurable in clothinge and in conte-  
 nance; and been abstinent in etinge  
 and drinkinge, in spekinge, and in  
 dede. They been the vessel or the  
 boyste of the blissed Magdelene, that  
 fulfilleth holy chirche of good odour. /  
 The thridde manere of chastitee is vir-  
 ginitee, and it bihoveth that she be  
 holy in herte and clene of body;  
 thanne is she spouse to Iesu Crist,  
 and she is the lyf of angeies. / She  
 is the preisinge of this world, and she  
 is as thise martirs in egalitee; she  
 hath in hir that tonge may nat telle  
 ne herte thinke. / Virginitee baar  
 950 him-selve. /

§ 82. Another remedie agayns  
 Lecherie is, specially to withdrawen  
 swiche thinges as yeve occasion to  
 thilke vileinye; as ese, etinge and  
 drinkinge; for certes, whan the pot  
 boyleth strongly, the beste remedie is  
 to withdrawe the fyr. / Slepinge  
 longe in greet quiete is eek a greet  
 norice to Lecherie. /

§ 83. Another remedie agayns  
 Lecherie is, that a man or a wom-  
 man eschue the companye of hem by  
 whiche he douteth to be tempted;  
 for al-be-it so that the dede is with-  
 stonden, yet is ther greet temp-  
 tacioun. / Soothly a whyt wal,  
 al-though it ne brenne noght fully  
 by stikinge of a candele, yet is the  
 wal blak of the leyt. / Ful ofte tyme  
 I rede, that no man truste in his  
 owene perfeccioun, but he be stronger  
 than Sampson, and holier than David,  
 and wyser than Salomon. / 955

§ 84. Now after that I have de-  
 clared yow, as I can, the sevene  
 deedly sinnes, and somme of hir  
 braunches and hir remedies, soothly,  
 if I coude, I wolde telle yow the ten  
 comandements. / But so heigh a  
 doctrine I lete to divines. Nathelees,  
 I hope to god they been touched in  
 this tretice, everich of hem alle. /

#### *De Confessione.*

§ 85. Now for-as-muche as the  
 second partie of Penitence stant in  
 Confessioun of mouth, as I bigan  
 in the firste chapitre, I seye, seint Au-  
 gustin seith: / sinne is every word  
 and every dede, and al that men cov-  
 eiten agayn the lawe of Iesu Crist;  
 and this is for to sinne in herte, in  
 mouth, and in dede, by thy fyve wittes,  
 that been sighte, heringe, smellinge,  
 tastinge or savouringe, and felling. /  
 Now is it good to understonde that  
 that agreggeth muchel every sinne. / 960  
 Thou shalt considere what thou art  
 that doost the sinne, whether thou be  
 male or femele, yong or old, gentil  
 or thral, free or servant, hool or syk,  
 wedded or sengle, ordred or unordred,

wys or fool, clerk or seculer; / if she be of thy kinrede, bodily or goostly, or noon; if any of thy kinrede have sinned with hir or noon, and manye mo thinges. /

§ 86. Another circumstaunce is this; whether it be doon in fornicacioun, or in avoutrie, or noon; incest, or noon; mayden, or noon; in manere of homicyde, or noon; horrible grete sinnes, or smale; and how longe thou hast continued in sinne. / The thridde circumstaunce is the place ther thou hast do sinne; whether in other mennes hous or in thyn owene; in feeld or in chirche, or in chirche-hawe; in chirche dedicat, or noon. / For if the chirche be halwed, and man or womman spille his kinde inwith that place by wey of sinne, or by wikked temptacion, the chirche is entredited til it be reconciled by the bishop; / and the preest that dide swich a vileinye, to terme of al his lyf, he sholde na-more singe masse; and if he dide, he sholde doon deedly sinne at every tyme that he so songe masse. / The fourthe circumstaunce is, by whiche mediators or by whiche messagers, as for entycement, or for consentement to bere companye with felawshipe; for many a wrecche, for to bere companye, wil go to the devel of helle. / Wherfore they that eggen or consenten to the sinne been parteners of the sinne, and of the dampnacioun of the sinner. / The fifthe circumstaunce is, how manye tymes that he hath sinned, if it be in his minde, and how ofte that he hath falle. / For he that ofte falleth in sinne, he despiseth the mercy of god, and encreeseth his sinne, and is unkinde to Crist; and he wexeth the more feble to withstonde sinne, and sinneth the more lightly, / and the latter aryseth, and is the more eschew for to shryven him, namely, to him that is his confessour. / For which that folk, when they falle agayn in hir olde folies, outhet they forleten hir olde confessours al outrely, or elles they departen

hir shrift in diverse places; but soothly, swich departed shrift deserveth no mercy of god of hise sinnes. / The sixte circumstaunce is, why that a man sinneth, as by whiche temptacioun; and if him-self procure thilke temptacioun, or by the excytinge of other folk; or if he sinne with a womman by force, or by hir owene assent; / or if the womman, maugree hir heed, hath been afforced, or noon; this shal she telle; for covetise, or for poverté, and if it was hir procuringe, or noon; and swiche manere harneys. / The seventhe circumstaunce is, in what manere he hath doon his sinne, or how that she hath suffred that folk han doon to hir. / 975 And the same shal the man telle pleynly, with alle circumstaunces; and whether he hath sinned with comune bordel-wommen, or noon; / or doon his sinne in holy tymes, or noon; in fasting-tymes, or noon; or biforn his shrifte, or after his latter shrifte; / and hath, per-aventure, broken therfore his penance enioyned; by whos help and whos conseil; by sorcerie or craft; al moste be told. / Alle these thinges, after that they been grete or smale, engreggen the conscience of man. And eek the preest that is thy Iuge, may the bettre been avysed of his Iugement in yevinge of thy penance, and that is after thy contricioun. / For understand wel, that after tyme that a man hath defouled his baptesme by sinne, if he wole come to salvacioun, ther is noon other wey but by penitence and shrifte and satisfaccioun; / 980 and namely by the two, if ther be a confessour to which he may shryven him; and the thridde, if he have lyf to parfournen it. /

§ 87. Thanne shal man looke and considere, that if he wole maken a trewe and a profitable confessioun, ther moste be foure condiciouns. / First, it moot been in sorweful bitternesse of herte, as seyde the king Ezekias to god: 'I wol remembre me alle the yeres of my lyf in bitternesse

of myn herte.' / This condicioun of bitternesse hath fyve signes. The firste is, that confessioun moste be shamefast, nat for to covere ne hyden his sinne, for he hath agilt his god and defouled his soule. / And herof seith seint Augustin: 'the herte travaillith for shame of his sinne'; and for he hath greet shamefastnesse, he is digne to have greet mercy of  
 985 god. / Swich was the confession of the publican, that wolde nat heven up hise eyen to hevене, for he hadde offended god of hevене; for which shamefastnesse he hadde anon the mercy of god. / And ther-of seith seint Augustin, that swich shamefast folk been next foryevnesse and remissioun. / Another signe is humilitee in confessioun; of which seith seint Peter, 'Humbleth yow under the might of god.' The hond of god is mighty in confession, for ther-by god foryeveth thee thy sinnes; for he alone hath the power. / And this humilitee shal been in herte, and in signe outward; for right as he hath humilitee to god in his herte, right so sholde he humble his body outward to the preest that sit in goddes place. / For which in no manere, sith that  
 Crist is sovereyn and the preest mene and mediatour bitwixe Crist and the sinnere, and the sinnere is  
 990 the laste by wey of resoun, / thanne sholde nat the sinnere sitte as heighe as his confessour, but knele biforn him or at his feet, but-if maladie destourbe it. For he shal nat taken kepe who sit there, but in whos place that he sitteth. / A man that hath trespassed to a lord, and comth for to axe mercy and maken his accord, and set him doun anon by the lord, men wolde holden him outrageous, and nat worthy so sone for to have remissioun ne mercy. / The thridde signe is, how that thy shrift sholde be ful of teres, if man may; and if man may nat wepe with hise bodily eyen, lat him wepe in herte. / Swich was the confession of seint Peter; for after that he

hadde forsake Iesu Crist, he wente out and weep ful bitterly. / The fourthe signe is, that he ne lette nat for shame to shewen his confessioun. / Swich was the confessioun  
 995 of the Magdelene, that ne spared, for no shame of hem that weren atte feste, for to go to oure lord Iesu Crist and biknowe to him hir sinnes. / The fifthe signe is, that a man or a womman be obeisant to receyven the penaunce that him is enioyned for hise sinnes; for certes Iesu Crist, for the giltes of a man, was obedient to the deeth. /

§ 88. The seconde condicion of verray confession is, that it be hastily doon; for certes, if a man hadde a deedly wounde, evere the lenger that he tariet to warissh him-self, the more wolde it corrupte and haste him to his deeth; and eek the wounde wolde be the wors for to hele. / And right so fareth sinne, that longe tyme is in a man unshewed. / Certes, a man oghte hastily shewen hise sinnes for manye causes; as for drede of deeth, that cometh ofte sodenly, and is in no certeyn what tyme it shal be, ne in what place; and eek the drecching of o synne draweth in another; /  
 1000 and eek the lenger that he tarieth, the ferther he is fro Crist. And if he abyde to his laste day, scarsly may he shryven him or remembre him of hise sinnes, or repenten him, for the grevous maladie of his deeth. / And for-as-muche as he ne hath nat in his lyf herkned Iesu Crist, whanne he hath spoken, he shal crye to Iesu Crist at his laste day, and scarsly wol he herkne him. / And understand that this condicioun moste han foure thinges. Thy shrift moste be purveyed bifore and avysed; for wikked haste doth no profit; and that a man conne shryve him of hise sinnes, be it of pryde, or of envye, and so forth of the spesces and circumstances; / and that he have comprehended in his minde the nombre and the greetnesse

of hise sinnes, and how longe that he hath leyn in sinne; / and eek that he be contrit of hise sinnes, and in stedefast purpos, by the grace of god, nevere eft to falle in sinne; and eek that he drede and countrewaite him-self, that he flee the occasiouns of sinne to whiche he is enclyned. / Also thou shalt shryve thee of alle thy sinnes to o man, and nat a parcel to o man and a parcel to another; that is to understonde, in entente to departe thy confessioun as for shame or drede; for it nis but stranglinge of thy soule. / For certes, Iesu Crist is entierly al good; in him nis noon imperfeccioun; and therefore outhere he foryeveth al parfitly or never a deel. / I seye nat that if thou be assigned to the penitauncer for certein sinne, that thou art bounde to shewen him al the remenaunt of thy sinnes, of whiche thou hast be shriven to thy curat, but-if it lyke to thee of thyn humilitee; this is no departinge of shrifte. / Ne I seye nat, ther-as I speke of divisioun of confessioun, that if thou have lycence for to shryve thee to a discreet and an honeste preest, where thee lyketh, and by lycence of thy curat, that thou ne mayst wel shryve thee to him of alle thy sinnes. / But lat no blotte be bihinde; lat no sinne been untold, as fer as thou hast remembrance. / And when thou shalt be shriven to thy curat, telle him eek alle the sinnes that thou hast doon sin thou were last y-shriven; this is no wikked entente of divisioun of shrifte. /

1010 § 89. Also the verray shrifte axeth certein condiciouns. First, that thou shryve thee by thy free wil, nocht constreyned, ne for shame of folk, ne for maladie, ne swiche thinges; for it is resoun that he that trespasseth by his free wil, that by his free wil he confesse his trespass; / and that noon other man telle his sinne but he him-self, ne he shal nat nayte ne denye his sinne,

ne wratthe him agayn the preest for his amonestinge to leve sinne. / The seconde condicioun is, that thy shrift be laweful; that is to seyn, that thou that shryvest thee, and eek the preest that hereth thy confessioun, been verrailly in the feith of holy chirche; / and that a man ne be nat despeired of the mercy of Iesu Crist, as Cayn or Iudas. / 1015 And eek a man moot accusen himself of his owene trespas, and nat another; but he shal blame and wyten him-self and his owene malice of his sinne, and noon other; / but natheless, if that another man be occasioun or entyce of his sinne, or the estaat of a persone be swich thurgh which his sinne is agregged, or elles that he may nat pleylnly shryven him but he telle the persone with which he hath sinned; thanne may he telle; / so that his entente ne be nat to bakbyte the persone, but only to declaren his confessioun. /

§ 90. Thou ne shalt nat eek make no lesinges in thy confessioun; for humilitee, per-aventure, to seyn that thou hast doon sinnes of whiche that thou were nevere gilty. / For Seint Augustin seith: if thou, by cause of thyn humilitee, makest lesinges on thy-self, though thou ne were nat in sinne biforn, yet artow thanne in sinne thurgh thy lesinges. / Thou 1020 most eek shewe thy sinne by thyn owene propre mouth, but thou be wexe doubte, and nat by no lettre; for thou that hast doon the sinne, thou shalt have the shame therfore. / Thou shalt nat eek peynte thy confessioun by faire subtile wordes, to covere the more thy sinne; for thanne bigylestow thyself and nat the preest; thou most tellen it pleylnly, be it nevere so foul ne so horrible. / Thou shalt eek shryve thee to a preest that is discreet to conseilte thee, and eek thou shalt nat shryve thee for veyne glorie, ne for ypocrisye, ne for no cause, but only for the doute of

Iesu Crist and the hele of thy soule. /  
 Thou shalt nat eek renne to the  
 preest sodeynly, to tellen him lightly  
 thy sinne, as who-so telleth a lape  
 or a tale, but avysely and with greet  
 devocioun. / And generally, shryve  
 thee ofte. If thou ofte falle, ofte  
 1025 thou aryse by confessioun. / And  
 thogh thou shryve thee ofter than  
 ones of sinne, of which thou hast  
 be shriven, it is the more merite.  
 And, as seith seint Augustin, thou  
 shalt have the more lightly relesing  
 and grace of god, bothe of sinne  
 and of peyne. / And certes, ones  
 a yere atte leeste wey it is lawfull  
 for to been housled; for certes ones  
 a yere alle thinges renovellen. /

*Explicit secunda pars Penitencie;  
 et sequitur tercia pars eiusdem, de  
 Satisfaccione.*

§ 91. Now have I told you of  
 verray Confessioun, that is the sec-  
 onde partie of Penitence. /

The thridde partie of Penitence  
 is Satisfaccion; and that stant  
 most generally in almesse and in  
 bodily peyne. / Now been ther  
 three manere of almesses; contri-  
 cion of herte, where a man offreth  
 himself to god; another is, to han  
 pitee of defeaute of hise neighebores;  
 and the thridde is, in yevinge of  
 good conseil goostly and bodily,  
 where men han nede, and namely  
 1030 in sustenance of mannes fode. /  
 And tak keep, that a man hath  
 need of these thinges generally; he  
 hath need of fode, he hath nede of  
 clothing, and herberwe, he hath  
 nede of charitable conseil, and  
 visitinge in prisone and in maladie,  
 and sepulture of his dede body. /  
 And if thou mayst nat visite the  
 nedeful with thy persone, visite him  
 by thy message and by thy yiftes. /  
 These been generally almesses or  
 werkes of charitee of hem that han  
 temporel richesses or discrecioun in  
 conseilinge. Of these werkes shal-  
 tow heren at the day of dome. /

§ 92. These almesses shaltow  
 doon of thyne owene propre thinges,  
 and hastily, and prively if thou  
 mayst; / but nathelees, if thou  
 mayst nat doon it prively, thou shalt  
 nat forbere to doon almesse though  
 men seen it; so that it be nat  
 doon for thank of the world  
 but only for thank of Iesu  
 Crist. / For as witnesseth Seint 1035  
 Mathew, *capitulo quinto*, 'A citee  
 may nat been hid that is set on a  
 montoyne; ne men lighte nat a  
 lanterne and put it under a bussel;  
 but men sette it on a candle-stikke,  
 to yeve light to the men in the  
 hous. / Right so shal youre light  
 lighten bifore men, that they may  
 seen youre gode werkes, and glorifie  
 youre fader that is in hevene.' /

§ 93. Now as to speken of bodily  
 peyne, it stant in preyeres, in wak-  
 inges, in fastinges, in vertuose  
 techinges of orisouns. / And ye  
 shul understonde, that orisouns or  
 preyeres is for to seyn a pitous wil  
 of herte, that redresseth it in god  
 and expresseth it by word outward,  
 to remoeven harmes and to han  
 thinges espirituel and durable, and  
 somtyme temporel thinges; of  
 whiche orisouns, certes, in the  
 orisoun of the *Pater-noster*, hath  
 Iesu Crist enclosed most thinges. /  
 Certes, it is privileged of three  
 thinges in his dignitee, for which it  
 is more digne than any other  
 preyere; for that Iesu Crist him-  
 self maked it; / and it is short, for 1040  
 it sholde be coud the more lightly,  
 and for to withholden it the more  
 esily in herte, and helpen him-self  
 the ofter with the orisoun; / and  
 for a man sholde be the lasse very  
 to seyn it, and for a man may nat  
 excusen him to lerne it, it is so  
 short and so esy; and for it com-  
 prehendeth in it-self alle gode  
 preyeres. / The expositioun of  
 this holy preyere, that is so excel-  
 lent and digne, I bitake to these  
 maistres of theologie; save thus  
 muchel wol I seyn: that, whan thou

prayest that god sholde foryewe thee thy giltes as thou foryevest hem that agilten to thee, be ful wel war that thou be nat out of charitee. / This holy orisoun amenuseth eek venial sinne; and therefore it aperteneth specially to penitence. /

1045 § 94. This preyere moste be trewely seyde and in verray feith, and that men preyre to god ordynatly and discreetly and devoutly; and alwey a man shal putten his wil to be subget to the wille of god. / This orisoun moste eek been seyde with greet humblesse and ful pure; honestly, and nat to the anoynce of any man or woman. It moste eek been continued with the werkes of charitee. / It avayleth eek agayn the vyces of the soule; for, as seith seint Ierome, 'By fastinge been saved the vyces of the flesh, and by preyere the vyces of the soule.' /

§ 95. After this, thou shalt understonde, that bodily peyne stant in wakinge; for Iesu Crist seith, 'waketh, and preyeth that ye ne entre in wikked temptacioun.' / Ye shul understanden also, that fastinge stant in three thinges; in forberinge of bodily mete and drinke, and in forberinge of worldly Iolitee, and in forberinge of deedly sinne; this is to seyn, that a man shal kepen him for deedly sinne with al his might. /

1050 § 96. And thou shalt understanden eek, that god ordeyned fastinge; and to fastinge appertenen foure thinges. / Largenesse to povre folk, gladnesse of herte espirituel, nat to been angry ne annoyed, ne grucche for he fasteth; and also resonable houre for to ete by mesure; that is for to seyn, a man shal nat ete in untyme, ne sitte the lenger at his table to ete for he fasteth. /

§ 97. Thanne shaltow understonde, that bodily peyne stant in disciplyne or techinge, by word or by wrytinge, or in ensample. Also in weriage of heyres or of stamin, or

of haubergeons on hir naked flesh, for Cristes sake, and swiche manere penances. / But war thee wel that swiche manere penances on thy flesh ne make nat thyn herte bitter or angry or annoyed of thy-self; for better is to caste away thyn heyre, than for to caste away the sikernesse of Iesu Crist. / And therfore seith seint Paul: 'Clothe yow, as they that been chosen of god, in herte of misericorde, debonairetee, suffraunce, and swich manere of clothinge'; of whiche Iesu Crist is more apayed than of heyres, or haubergeons, or hauberkes. /

§ 98. Thanne is disciplyne eek in knockinge of thy brest, in scourginge with yerdes, in knelinges, in tribulacions; / in suffringe patiently 1055 wronges that been doon to thee, and eek in pacient suffraunce of maladies, or lesinge of worldly catel, or of wyf, or of child, or othere freendes. /

§ 99. Thanne shaltow understonde, whiche thinges destourben penaunce; and this is in foure maneres, that is, drede, shame, hope, and wanhope, that is, desperacion. / And for to speke first of drede; for which he weneth that he may suffre no penaunce; / ther-agayns is remedie for to thinke, that bodily penaunce is but short and litel at regard of the peyne of helle, that is so cruel and so long, that it lasteth with-outen ende. /

1060 § 100. Now again the shame that a man hath to shryven him, and namely, thise ypocrites that wolden been holden so parfite that they han no nede to shryven hem; / agayns 1060 that shame, sholde a man thinke that, by wey of resoun, that he that hath nat been ashamed to doon foule thinges, certes him oghte nat been ashamed to do faire thinges, and that is confessiouns. / A man sholde eek thinke, that god seeth and woot alle hise thoghtes and alle hise werkes; to him may no thing been hid ne covered. / Men

sholden eek remembren hem of the shame that is to come at the day of dome, to hem that been nat penitent and shriven in this present lyf. / For alle the creatures in erthe and in helle shullen seen apertly al that they hyden in this world. /

1065 § 101. Now for to speken of the hope of hem that been negligent and slowe to shryven hem, that stant in two maneres. / That oon is, that he hopeth for to live longe and for to purchacen muche richesse for his delyt, and thanne he wol shryven him; and, as he seith, him semeth thanne tymely y-nough to come to shrifte. / Another is, surquidrie that he hath in Cristes mercy. / Agayns the firste vyce, he shal thinke, that oure lyf is in no sikernes; and eek that alle the riches in this world ben in aventure, and passen as a shadwe on the wal. / And, as seith seint Gregorie, that it aperteneth to the grete rightwisnesse of god, that nevere shal the peyne stinte of hem that nevere wolde withdrawn hem fro sinne, hir thanks, but ay continue in sinne; for thilke perpetuel wil to do sinne shul they han perpetuel peyne. /

1070 § 102. Wanhope is in two maneres: the firste wanhope is in the mercy of Crist; that other is that they thinke, that they ne mighte nat longe persevere in goodnesse. / The firste wanhope comth of that he demeth that he hath sinned so greetly and so ofte, and so longe leyn in sinne, that he shal nat be saved. / Certes, agayns that cursed wanhope sholde he thinke, that the passion of Iesu Crist is more strong for to unbinde than sinne is strong for to binde. / Agayns the seconde wanhope, he shal thinke, that as ofte as he falleth he may aryse agayn by penitence. And thogh he never so longe have leyn in sinne, the mercy of Crist is alwey redy to receiven him to

mercy. / Agayns the wanhope, that he demeth that he sholde nat longe persevere in goodnesse, he shal thinke, that the feblesse of the devel may no-thing doon but-if men wol suffren him; / and eek he shal han strengthe of the help of god, and of al holy chirche, and of the proteccioun of aungels, if him list. / 1075

§ 103. Thanne shal men understonde what is the fruit of penaunce; and, after the word of Iesu Crist, it is the endeles blisse of hevne, / ther Ioye hath no contrariouste of wo ne grevaunce, ther alle harmes been passed of this present lyf; ther-as is the sikernes fro the peyne of helle; ther-as is the blisful companye that reioysen hem everemo, everich of otheres Ioye; / ther-as the body of man, that whylom was foul and derk, is more cleer than the sonne; ther-as the body, that whylom was syk, freele, and feble, and mortal, is immortal, and so strong and so hool that ther may no-thing apeyren it; / ther-as ne is neither hunger, thurst, ne cold, but every soule replenished with the sighte of the parfite knowinge of god. / This blisful regne may men purchase by poverté espirituel, and the glorie by lowenesse; the plentee of Ioye by hunger and thurst, and the reste by travaille; and the lyf by deeth and mortificacioun of sinne. / 1080

*Here taketh the makere of this booke his leve.*

§ 104. Now preye I to hem alle that herkne this litel tretis or rede, that if ther be any thing in it that lyketh hem, that ther-of they thanken oure lord Iesu Crist, of whom procedeth al wit and al goodnesse. / And if ther be any thing that displese hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of myn unconninge, and nat to my wil, that wolde ful fayn have seyð bettre if I hadde had

conninge. / For oure boke seith,  
 'al that is writen is writen for oure  
 doctrine'; and that is myn ente-  
 tente. / Wherefore I biseke yow  
 mekely for the mercy of god, that  
 ye preye for me, that Crist have  
 mercy on me and foryeve me my  
 giltes: / — and — namely, of my  
 translacions and endytinges of  
 worldly vanitees, the whiche I re-  
 1085 voke in my retracciouns: / as is  
 the book of Troilus; The book also  
 of Fame; The book of the nyne-  
 tene Ladies; The book of the  
 Duchesse; The book of seint Val-  
 entynes day of the Parlement of  
 Briddes; The tales of Caunterbury,  
 thilke that sounen in-to sinne; /  
 The book of the Leoun; and many  
 another book, if they were in my  
 remembrance; and many a song  
 and many a lecherous lay; that  
 Crist for his grete mercy foryeve

me the sinne. / But of the trans-  
 lacion of Boece de Consolacione,  
 and othere bokes of Legendes of  
 seintes, and omelies, and moralitee,  
 and devocioun, / that thanke I  
 oure lord Iesu Crist and his blisful  
 moder, and alle the seintes of hev-  
 ene; / bisekinge hem that they  
 from hennes-forth, un-to my lyves  
 ende, sende me grace to biwayle  
 my giltes, and to studie to the sal-  
 vacioun of my soule: — and graunte  
 me grace of verray penitence, con-  
 fessioun and satisfaccioun to doon  
 in this present lyf; / thurgh the 1090  
 benigne grace of him that is king  
 of kinges and preest over alle  
 preestes, that boghte us with the  
 precious blood of his herte; / so  
 that I may been oon of hem at the  
 day of dome that shulle be saved:  
*Qui cum patre, &c.* 1092

*Here is ended the book of the Tales of Caunterbury, compiled by Geffrey  
 Chaucer, of whos soule Iesu Crist have mercy. Amen.*

## APPENDIX TO GROUP A.

### THE TALE OF GAMELYN.

LITHETH, and lesteneth · and herkeneth  
 a right,  
 And ye schulle heere a talking · of a  
 doughty knight;  
 Sire Iohan of Boundys · was his righte  
 name,  
 He cowde of norture y-nough · and  
 mochil of game.  
 Thre sones the knight hadde · that with  
 his body he wan; 5  
 The eldest was a moche schrewe · and  
 sone he bigan.  
 His bretheren loved wel here fader · and  
 of him were agast,  
 The eldest deserved his fadre's curs · and  
 had it at the last.

The goode knight his fader · livede so  
 yore,  
 That deth was comen him to · and hand-  
 dled him ful sore. 10  
 The goode knight cared sore · syk ther he  
 lay,  
 How his children scholde · liven after his  
 day.  
 He hadde ben wyde-wher · but non hous-  
 bond he was,  
 Al the lond that he hadde · it was verrey  
 purchas.  
 Fayn he wolde it were · dressed among  
 hem alle, 15  
 That ech of hem hadde his part · as it  
 mighte falle.



Tho sente he in-to cuntre · after wyse  
 knightes,  
 To helpe delen his londes · and dresen  
 hem to-rightes.  
 He sente hem word by lettres · they schul-  
 den hye blyve,  
 If they wolde speke with him · whyl he  
 was on lyve. 20  
 Tho the knightes herden · syk that he  
 lay,  
 Hadde they no reste · nother night ne  
 day,  
 Til they comen to him · ther he lay  
 stille  
 On his deth-bedde · to abyde goddes  
 wille.  
 Than seyde the goode knight · syk ther  
 he lay, 25  
 ‘Lordes, I you warne · for soth, withoute  
 nay,  
 I may no lenger liven · heer in this  
 stounde;  
 For thurgh goddes wille · deth draweth  
 me to grounde.’  
 Ther nas non of hem alle · that herde  
 him aright,  
 That they ne hadden reuthe · of that  
 ilke knight, 30  
 And seyde, ‘sir, for goddes love · ne dis-  
 may you nought ;  
 God may do bote of bale · that is now  
 y-wrought.’  
 Than spak the goode knight · syk ther  
 he lay,  
 ‘Boote of bale god may sende · I wot it  
 is no nay ;  
 But I byseke you, knightes · for the love  
 of me, 35  
 Goth and dresseth my lond · among my  
 sones three.  
 And sires, for the love of god · deleth  
 hem nat amis,  
 And forgetith nat Gamelyn · my yonge  
 sone that is.  
 Taketh heed to that on · as wel as to that  
 other ;  
 Selde ye see ony eyr · helpen his brother.’  
 Tho leete they the knight lyen · that  
 was nought in hele, 41  
 And wenten in-to counsel · his londes for  
 to dele ;  
 For to delen hem alle · to oon, that was  
 her thought,

And for Gamelyn was yongest · he schulde  
 have nought.  
 Al the lond that ther was · they dalten  
 it in two, 45  
 And leeten Gamelyn the yonge · withoute  
 lone go,  
 And ech of hem seyde · to other ful lowde,  
 His bretheren mighte yeve him lond ·  
 whan he good cowde.  
 Whan they hadde deled · the lond at here  
 wille,  
 They comen ayein to the knight · ther he  
 lay ful stille, 50  
 And tolden him anon-right · how they  
 hadden wrought ;  
 And the knight ther he lay · lyked it  
 right nought.  
 Than seyde the knight · ‘by seynt Mar-  
 tyn,  
 For al that ye have y-doon · yit is the  
 lond myn ;  
 For goddes love, neyheours · stondesth  
 alle stille, 55  
 And I wil dele my lond · right after my  
 wille.  
 Iohan, myn eldeste sone · schal have  
 plowes fyve,  
 That was my fadres heritage · whyl he was  
 on lyve ;  
 And my middleste sone · fyve plowes  
 of lond,  
 That I halp for to gete · with my righte  
 hond ; 60  
 And al myn other purchas · of londes  
 and leedes,  
 That I biquethe Gamelyn · and alle my  
 goode steedes.  
 And I biseke yow, goode men · that lawe  
 conne of londe,  
 For Gamelynes love · that my queste  
 stonde.’  
 Thus dalte the knight · his lond by his  
 day, 65  
 Right on his deth-bedde · syk ther he lay ;  
 And sone aftirward · he lay stoon-stille,  
 And deyde whan tyme com · as it was  
 Cristes wille.  
 And anon as he was deed · and under  
 gras y-grave,  
 Sone the elder brother · gyled the yonge  
 knave ; 70  
 He took into his hond · his lond and his  
 leede,

And Gamelyn himselfe · to clothen and  
 to feede.  
 He clothed him and fedde him · yvel and  
 eek wrothe,  
 And leet his londes for-fare · and his  
 houses bothe,  
 His parkes and his woodes · and dede  
 nothing wel ; 75  
 And seththen he it aboughte · on his faire  
 fel.  
 So longe was Gamelyn · in his brotheres  
 halle,  
 For the strengest, of good wil · they  
 doutiden him alle;  
 Ther was non ther-inne · nowther yong  
 ne old,  
 That wolde wraththe Gamelyn · were he  
 never so bold. 80  
 Gamelyn stood on a day · in his brotheres  
 yerde,  
 And bigan with his hond · to handlen his  
 berde;  
 He thoughte on his londes · that layen  
 unsawe,  
 And his faire okes · that down were  
 y-drawe;  
 His parkes were y-broken · and his deer  
 bireved; 85  
 Of alle his goode steedes · noon was him  
 bileved;  
 His howses were unhiled · and ful yvel  
 dight;  
 Tho thoughte Gamelyn · it wente nought  
 aright.  
 Afterward cam his brother · walkinge  
 thare,  
 And seyde to Gamelyn · ‘is our mete yare?’  
 Tho wraththed him Gamelyn · and swor  
 by goddes book, 91  
 ‘Thou schalt go bake thy-self · I wil  
 nought be thy cook!’  
 ‘How? brother Gamelyn · how answerest  
 thou now?  
 Thou spake never such a word · as thou  
 dost now.’  
 ‘By my faith,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘now me  
 thinketh neede, 95  
 Of alle the harmes that I have · I tok  
 never ar heede.  
 My parkes ben to-broken · and my deer  
 bireved,  
 Of myn armure and my steedes · nought  
 is me bileved;

Al that my fader me biquath · al goth to  
 schame,  
 And therfor have thou goddes curs ·  
 brother by thy name!’ 100  
 Than bispak his brother · that rape was  
 of rees,  
 ‘Stond stille, gadeling · and hold right  
 thy pees;  
 Thou schalt be fayn for to have · thy mete  
 and thy wede;  
 What spekest thou, Gamelyn · of lond  
 other of leede?’  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · the child that  
 was ying, 105  
 ‘Cristes curs mot he have · that clepeth  
 me gadeling!  
 I am no worse gadeling · ne no worse  
 wight,  
 But born of a lady · and geten of a  
 knight.’  
 Ne durste he nat to Gamelyn · ner a-foote  
 go,  
 But clepide to him his men · and seyde to  
 hem tho, 110  
 ‘Goth and beteth this boy · and reveth  
 him his wit,  
 And lat him lerne another tyme · to an-  
 swere me bet.’  
 Thanne seyde the child · yonge Gamelyn,  
 ‘Cristes curs mot thou have · brother art  
 thou myn!  
 And if I schal algate · be beten anon, 115  
 Cristes curs mot thou have · but thou be  
 that oon!’  
 And anon his brother · in that grete hete  
 Made his men to fette staves · Gamelyn  
 to bete.  
 Whan that everich of hem · a staf hadde  
 y-none,  
 Gamelyn was war anon · tho he seigh  
 hem come; 120  
 Tho Gamelyn seigh him come · he loked  
 over-al,  
 And was war of a pestel · stood under a  
 wal;  
 Gamelyn was light of foot · and thider  
 gan he lepe,  
 And drof alle his brotheres men · right on  
 an hepe.  
 He loked as a wilde lyoun · and leyde on  
 good woon; 125  
 Tho his brother say that · he bigan to  
 goon;

He fley up in-til a loft · and schette the  
 dore fast;  
 Thus Gamelyn with the pestel · made hem  
 alle agast.  
 Some for Gamelynes love · and some for  
 his eye,  
 Alle they drowe by halves · tho he gan to  
 pleye. 130  
 ‘What! how now?’ seyde Gamelyn ·  
 ‘evel mot ye thee!  
 Wil ye biginne kontek · and so sone  
 flee?’  
 Gamelyn soughte his brother · whider he  
 was flowe,  
 And saugh wher he loked · out at a win-  
 dowe.  
 ‘Brother,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘com a litel  
 ner, 135  
 And I wil teche thee a play · atte boke-  
 ler.’  
 His brother him answerde · and swor by  
 seynt Richer,  
 ‘Whyl the pestel is in thin hond · I wil  
 come no neer:  
 Brother, I wil make thy pees · I swere by  
 Cristes ore;  
 Cast away the pestel · and wraththe thee  
 no-more.’ 140  
 ‘I mot neede,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘wraththe  
 me at oones,  
 For thou wolde make thy men · to breke  
 myne boones,  
 Ne hadde I had mayn · and might in myn  
 armes,  
 To have y-put hem fro me · they wolde  
 have do me harmes.’  
 ‘Gamelyn,’ sayde his brother · ‘be thou  
 nought wroth, 145  
 For to seen thee have harm · it were me  
 right loth;  
 I ne dide it nought, brother · but for a  
 fonging,  
 For to loken if thou were strong · and  
 art so ying.’  
 ‘Com a-down than to me · and graunte  
 me my bone  
 Of thing I wil thee aske · and we schul  
 saughte sone.’ 150  
 Doun than cam his brother · that fikil was  
 and fel,  
 And was swithe sore · agast of the pestel.  
 He seyde, ‘brother Gamelyn · aske me  
 thy boone,

And loke thou me blame · but I graunte  
 sone.’ 154  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · ‘brother, y-wis,  
 And we schulle ben at oon · thou most  
 me graunte this:  
 Al that my fader me biquath · whyl he  
 was on lyve,  
 Thou most do me it have · yif we schul  
 nat stryve.’  
 ‘That schalt thou have, Gamelyn · I swere  
 by Cristes ore!  
 Al that thy fader thee biquath · though  
 thou woldest have more; 160  
 Thy lond, that lyth laye · ful wel it schal  
 be sowe,  
 And thyn howses reysed up · that ben  
 leyd so lowe.’  
 Thus seyde the knight · to Gamelyn with  
 mowthe,  
 And thoughte eek of falsnes · as he wel  
 couthe.  
 The knight thoughte on tresoun · and  
 Gamelyn on noon, 165  
 And wente and kiste his brother · and,  
 whan they were at oon,  
 Allas! yonge Gamelyn · nothing he ne  
 wiste  
 With which a false tresoun · his brother  
 him kiste!  
 Litheth, and lesteneth · and holdeth  
 your tonge,  
 And ye schul heere talking · of Gamelyn  
 the yonge. 170  
 Ther was ther bisyden · cryed a wrastling,  
 And therfor ther was set up · a ram and a  
 ring;  
 And Gamelyn was in good wil · to wende  
 therto,  
 For to preven his might · what he cowthe  
 do.  
 ‘Brother,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘by seynt  
 Richer, 175  
 Thou most lene me to-night · a litel  
 courser  
 That is freisch to the spore · on for to  
 ryde;  
 I most on an erande · a litel her bisyde.’  
 ‘By god!’ seyde his brother · ‘of steedes  
 in my stalle  
 Go and chese thee the best · and spare non  
 of alle 180  
 Of steedes or of coursers · that stonden  
 hem bisyde;

And tel me, goode brother · whider thou  
wolt ryde.<sup>7</sup>  
 ‘Her bisyde, brother · is cryed a wras-  
tling,  
 And therfor schal be set up · a ram and a  
ring;  
 Moche worschip it were · brother, to us  
alle, 185  
 Might I the ram and the ring · bring home  
to this halle.<sup>7</sup>  
 A steede ther was sadeled · smertely and  
skeet;  
 Gamelyn did a paire spores · fast on his feet.  
 He sette his foot in the styrop · the steede  
he bistrood,  
 And toward the wrasteling · the yonge  
child rood. 190  
 Tho Gamelyn the yonge · was ride out at  
the gat,  
 The false knight his brother · lokked it  
after that,  
 And bisoughte Iesu Crist · that is heven  
king,  
 He mighte breke his nekke · in that  
wrasteling.  
 As sone as Gamelyn com · ther the place  
was, 195  
 He lighte doun of his steede · and stood  
on the gras,  
 And ther he herd a frankeleyn · waylo-  
way singe,  
 And bigan bitterly · his hondes for to  
wringe.  
 ‘Goode man,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘why  
makestow this fare?  
 Is ther no man that may · you helpe out  
of this care?’ 200  
 ‘Allas!’ seyde this frankeleyn · ‘that ever  
was I bore!  
 For tweye stalworthe sones · I wene that  
I have lore;  
 A champion is in the place · that hath  
y-wrought me sorwe,  
 For he hath slayn my two sones · but-if  
god hem borwe.  
 I wold yeve ten pound · by Iesu Crist!  
and more, 205  
 With the nones I fand a man · to han-  
delen him sore.<sup>7</sup>  
 ‘Goode man,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘wilt thou  
wel doon,  
 Hold myn hors, whyl my man · draweth  
of my schoon,

And help my man to kepe · my clothes  
and my steede,  
 And I wil into place go · to loke if I may  
speede.<sup>7</sup> 210  
 ‘By god!’ sayde the frankeleyn · ‘anon  
it schal be doon;  
 I wil my-self be thy man · and drawn of  
thy schoon,  
 And wende thou into the place · Iesu  
Crist thee speede,  
 And drede not of thy clothes · nor of thy  
goode steede.<sup>7</sup>  
 Barfoot and unger · Gamelyn in cam,  
 Alle that weren in the place · heede of  
him they nam, 216  
 How he durste aunte him · of him to  
doon his might  
 That was so doughty champion · in  
wrastling and in fight.  
 Up sterte the champion · rapely and  
anoon,  
 Toward yonge Gamelyn · he bigan to  
goon, 220  
 And sayde, ‘who is thy fader · and who  
is thy sire?  
 For sothe thou art a gret fool · that thou  
come hire!’  
 Gamelyn answerde · the champion tho,  
 ‘Thou knewe wel my fader · whyl he  
couthe go,  
 Whyles he was on lyve · by seint Martyn!  
 Sir Iohan of Boundys was his name · and  
I Gamelyn.’ 226  
 ‘Felaw,’ seyde the champion · ‘al-so  
mot I thryve,  
 I knew wel thy fader · while he was on  
lyve;  
 And thysel, Gamelyn · I wil that thou it  
heere,  
 Whyl thou were a yong boy · a moche  
schrewe thou were.’ 230  
 Than seyde Gamelyn · and swor by Cristes  
ore,  
 ‘Now I am older woxe · thou schalt me  
finde a more!’  
 ‘By god!’ sayde the champion · ‘wel-  
come mote thou be!  
 Come thou ones in myn hond · schalt thou  
never thee.<sup>7</sup>  
 It was wel withinne the night · and the  
moone schon, 235  
 Whan Gamelyn and the champion · to-  
gider gonne goon.

The champion caste tornes · to Gamelyn  
that was prest,  
And Gamelyn stood stille · and bad him  
doon his best.  
Thanne seyde Gamelyn · to the cham-  
pion,  
'Thou art faste aboute · to bringe me  
adoun; 240  
Now I have y-proved · many tornes of  
thyne,  
Thow most,' he seyde, 'proven · on or  
two of myne.'  
Gamelyn to the champion · yede smertely  
anon,  
Of all the tornes that he cowthe · he  
schewed him but oon,  
And caste him on the lefte syde · that  
three ribbes to-brak, 245  
And ther-to his oon arm · that yaf a gret  
crak.  
Thanne seyde Gamelyn · smertely anon,  
'Schal it be holde for a cast · or elles for  
noon?'  
'By god!' seyde the champion · 'whether  
that it be,  
He that cometh ones in thin hand · schal  
he never thee!' 250  
Than seyde the frankeleyn · that had his  
sones there,  
'Blessed be thou, Gamelyn · that ever  
thou bore were!'  
The frankeleyn seyde to the champion ·  
of him stood him noon eye,  
'This is yonge Gamelyn · that taughte  
thee this pleye.'  
Agein answerd the champion · that lyked  
nothing wel, 255  
'He is a lither mayster · and his pley is  
right fel;  
Sith I wrastled first · it is y-go ful  
yore,  
But I was nevere in my lyf · handeled so  
sore.'  
Gamelyn stood in the place · allone with-  
oute serk,  
And seyde, 'if ther be eny mo · lat hem  
come to werk; 260  
The champion that peyned him · to  
werke so sore,  
It semeth by his continaunce · that he  
wil no-more.'  
Gamelyn in the place · stood as stille as  
stoon,

For to abyde wrasteling · but ther com  
noon;  
Ther was noon with Gamelyn · wolde  
wrestle more, 265  
For he handled the champion · so won-  
derly sore.  
Two gentil-men ther were · that yemed  
the place,  
Comen to Gamelyn · (god yeve him goode  
grace!)  
And sayde to him, 'do on · thyn hosen  
and thy schoon,  
For sothe at this tyme · this feire is  
y-doon.' 270  
And than seyde Gamelyn · 'so mot I wel  
fare,  
I have nought yet halven-del · sold up my  
ware.'  
Tho seyde the champion · 'so brouke I  
my sweere,  
He is a fool that ther-of byeth · thou sell-  
est it so deere.'  
Tho seyde the frankeleyn · that was in  
moche care, 275  
'Felaw,' he seyde · 'why lakkest thou  
his ware?  
By seynt Iame in Galys · that many man  
hath sought,  
Yet it is to good cheep · that thou hast  
y-bought.'  
Tho that wardeynes were · of that wras-  
teling  
Come and broughte Gamelyn · the ram  
and the ring, 280  
And seyden, 'have, Gamelyn · the ring  
and the ram,  
For the beste wrasteler · that ever here  
cam.'  
Thus wan Gamelyn · the ram and the ring,  
And wente with moche Loye · home in  
the morning.  
His brother seih wher he cam · with the  
grete rowte, 285  
And bad schitte the gate · and holde him  
withoute.  
The porter of his lord · was ful sore  
agast,  
And sterte anon to the gate · and lokked  
it fast.  
Now litheth, and lesteneth · bothe  
yonge and olde,  
And ye schul heere gamen · of Gamelyn  
the bolde. 290

Gamelyn come ther-to · for to have comen  
 in,  
 And thanne was it y-schet · faste with a  
 pin;  
 Than seyde Gamelyn · ‘porter, undo the  
 yat,  
 For many good mannes sone · stondesth  
 ther-at.’  
 Than answerd the porter · and swor by  
 goddes berde, 295  
 ‘Thow ne schalt, Gamelyn · come into  
 this yerde.’  
 ‘Thow lixt,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘so browke  
 I my chin!’  
 He smot the wiket with his foot · and  
 brak away the pin.  
 The porter seyh tho · it might no better  
 be,  
 He sette foot on erthe · and bigan to flee.  
 ‘By my faith,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘that tra-  
 vail is y-lore, 301  
 For I am of foot as light as thou · though  
 thou haddest swore.’  
 Gamelyn overtook the porter · and his  
 teene wrak,  
 And gerte him in the nekke · that the  
 bon to-brak,  
 And took him by that oon arm · and  
 threw him in a welle, 305  
 Seven fadmen it was deep · as I have  
 herd telle.  
 Whan Gamelyn the yonge · thus hadde  
 pleyd his play,  
 Alle that in the yerde were · drewen hem  
 away;  
 They dredden him ful sore · for werkes  
 that he wroughte,  
 And for the faire company · that he thider  
 broughte. 310  
 Gamelyn yede to the gate · and leet it up  
 wyde;  
 He leet in alle maner men · that gon in  
 wolde or ryde,  
 And seyde, ‘ye be welcome · withouten  
 eny greeve,  
 For we wiln be maistres heer · and aske  
 no man leve. 314  
 Yestirday I lefte’ · seyde yonge Gamelyn,  
 ‘In my brother seller · fyve tonne of wyn;  
 I wil not that this compaignye · parten  
 a-twinne,  
 And ye wil doon after me · whyl eny sope  
 is thrinne,

And if my brother grucche · or make foul  
 cheere,  
 Other for spense of mete or drink · that  
 we spenden heere, 320  
 I am oure catour · and bere oure allere  
 purs,  
 He schal have for his grucching · seint  
 Maries curs.  
 My brother is a niggoun · I swer by  
 Cristes ore,  
 And we wil spende largely · that he hath  
 spared yore;  
 And who that maketh grucching · that  
 we here dwelle, 325  
 He schal to the porter · into the draw-  
 welle.’  
 Seven dayes and seven night · Gamelyn  
 · held his feste,  
 With moche mirth and solas · that was  
 ther, and no cheste;  
 In a little toret · his brother lay y-steke,  
 And sey hem wasten his good · but durste  
 he not speke. 330  
 Erly on a morning · on the eighte day,  
 The gestes come to Gamelyn · and wolde  
 gon here way.  
 ‘Lordes,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘wil ye so hye?  
 Al the wyn is not yet dronke · so brouke  
 I myn yē.’  
 Gamelyn in his herte · was he ful wo, 335  
 Whan his gestes took her leve · from him  
 for to go;  
 He wolde they had lenger abide · and  
 they seyde ‘nay,’  
 But bitaughte Gamelyn · god, and good  
 day.  
 Thus made Gamelyn his feest · and  
 broughte it wel to ende,  
 And after his gestes · took leve to wende.  
 Litheth, and lesteneth · and holdeth  
 youre tonge, 341  
 And ye schul heere gamen · of Gamelyn  
 the yonge;  
 Herkeneth, lordinges · and lesteneth  
 a right,  
 Whan alle gestes were goon · how Game-  
 lyn was dight.  
 Al the whyl that Gamelyn · heeld his  
 mangerye, 345  
 His brother thoughte on him be wreke ·  
 with his treccherye.  
 Tho Gamelyns gestes · were riden and  
 y-goon,

Gamelyn stood allone · frendes had he  
 noon;  
 Tho after ful soone · withinne a litel  
 stounde,  
 Gamelyn was y-taken · and ful harde  
 y-bounde. 350  
 Forth com the false knight · out of the  
 soleer,  
 To Gamelyn his brother · he yede ful  
 neer,  
 And sayde to Gamelyn · ‘who made thee  
 so bold  
 For to stroye my stoor · of myn hous-  
 hold?’  
 ‘Brother,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘wraththe  
 thee right nought, 355  
 For it is many day y-gon · siththen it was  
 bought;  
 For, brother, thou hast y-had · by seynt  
 Richer,  
 Of fiftene plowes of lond · this sixtene yer,  
 And of alle the beestes · thou hast forth  
 bred,  
 That my fader me biquath · on his deth-  
 bed; 360  
 Of al this sixtene yeer · I yeve thee the  
 prow,  
 For the mete and the drink · that we have  
 spended now.’  
 Thanne seyde the false knight · (evel  
 mot he thee!)  
 ‘Herkne, brother Gamelyn · what I wol  
 yeve thee;  
 For of my body, brother · heir geten have  
 I noon, 365  
 I wil make thee myn heir · I swere by  
 seint Iohan.’  
 ‘*Par ma foy!*’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘and if it  
 so be,  
 And thou thenke as thou seyst · god yelde  
 it thee!’  
 Nothing wiste Gamelyn · of his brotheres  
 gyle;  
 Therefore he him bigyled · in a litel  
 whyle. 370  
 ‘Gamelyn,’ seyde he · ‘o thing I thee  
 telle;  
 Tho thou threwe my porter · in the draw-  
 welle,  
 I swor in that wraththe · and in that grete  
 moot,  
 That thou schuldest be bounde · bothe  
 hand and foot;

Therefore I thee biseche · brother Game-  
 lyn, 375  
 Lat me nought be forsworen · brother art  
 thou myn;  
 Lat me binde thee now · bothe hand and  
 feet,  
 For to holde myn avow · as I thee bi-  
 heet.’  
 ‘Brother,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘al-so mot I  
 thee!  
 Thou schalt not be forsworen · for the  
 love of me.’ 380  
 Tho made they Gamelyn to sitte · mighte  
 he nat stonde,  
 Til they hadde him bounde · bothe foot  
 and honde.  
 The false knight his brother · of Gamelyn  
 was agast,  
 And sente aftir feteres · to feteren him  
 f. t.  
 His brother made lesinges · on him ther  
 he stood, 385  
 And tolde hem that comen in · that  
 Gamelyn was wood.  
 Gamelyn stood to a post · bounden in  
 the halle,  
 Tho that comen in ther · lokede on him  
 alle.  
 Ever stood Gamelyn · even upright;  
 But mete ne drink had he non · neither  
 day ne night. 390  
 Than seyde Gamelyn · ‘brother, by myn  
 hals,  
 Now I have aspyed · thou art a party  
 fals;  
 Had I wist that tresoun · that thou had-  
 dest y-founde,  
 I wolde have yeve thee strokes · or I had  
 be bounde!’  
 Gamelyn stood bounden · stille as eny  
 stoon; 395  
 Two dayes and two nightes · mete had he  
 noon.  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · that stood  
 y-bounde stronge,  
 ‘Adam spenser · me thinkth I faste to  
 longe;  
 Adam spenser · now I byseche thee,  
 For the mochel love · my fader loved  
 thee, 400  
 If thou may come to the keyes · lese me  
 out of bond,  
 And I wil parte with thee · of my free lond.’

Thanne seyde Adam · that was the  
 spencer,  
 'I have served thy brother · this sixtene  
 yeer,  
 If I leete thee goon · out of his bour, 405  
 He wolde say afterward · I were a tray-  
 tour.'  
 'Adam,' sayde Gamelyn · 'so brouke I  
 myn hals!  
 Thou schalt finde my brother · atte laste  
 fals;  
 Therfor, brother Adam · louse me out of  
 bond,  
 And I wil parte with thee · of my free  
 lond.' 410  
 'Up swich a forward' · seyde Adam,  
 'y-wis,  
 I wil do therto · al that in me is.'  
 'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'al-so mot I  
 thee,  
 I wol holde thee covenant · and thou wil  
 me.'  
 Anon as Adames lord · to bedde was  
 y-goon, 415  
 Adam took the keys, and leet · Gamelyn  
 out anoon;  
 He unlokked Gamelyn · bothe handes  
 and feet,  
 In hope of avauncement · that he him  
 biheet.  
 Than seyde Gamelyn · 'thanked be god-  
 des sonde! 419  
 Now I am loosed · bothe foot and honde;  
 Had I now eten · and dronken aright,  
 Ther is noon in this hous · schulde binde  
 me this night.'  
 Adam took Gamelyn · as stille as ony  
 stoon,  
 And ladde him in-to spence · rapely and  
 anon,  
 And sette him to soper · right in a privee  
 stede, 425  
 He bad him do gladly · and Gamelyn so  
 dede.  
 Anon as Gamelyn hadde · eten wel and  
 fyn,  
 And therto y-dronke wel · of the rede wyn,  
 'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'what is now thy  
 reed?  
 Wher I go to my brother · and girde of  
 his heed?' 430  
 'Gamelyn,' seyde Adam · 'it schal not be  
 so.

I can teche thee a reed · that is worth  
 the two.  
 I wot wel for sothe · that this is no nay,  
 We schul have a mangery · right on  
 Soneday; 434  
 Abbotes and priours · many heer schal be,  
 And other men of holy chirche · as I telle  
 thee;  
 Thow schalt stonde up by the post · as  
 thou were hond-fast,  
 And I schal leve hem unloke · away thou  
 may hem cast.  
 Whan that they have eten · and wasschen  
 here hondes,  
 Thou schalt biseke hem alle · to bring  
 thee out of bondes; 440  
 And if they wille borwe thee · that were  
 good game,  
 Then were thou out of prisoun · and I  
 out of blame;  
 And if everich of hem · say unto us  
 'nay,'  
 I schal do an other · I swere by this day!  
 Thou schalt have a good staf · and I wil  
 have another, 445  
 And Cristes curs have that oon · that fail-  
 eth that other!'  
 'Ye, for gode!' sayde Gamelyn · 'I say  
 it for me,  
 If I fayle on my syde · yvel mot I thee!  
 If we schul algate · assoile hem of here  
 sinne,  
 Warne me, brother Adam · whan I schal  
 biginne.' 450  
 'Gamelyn,' seyde Adam · 'by seynte  
 Charite,  
 I wil warne thee biforn · whan that it  
 schal be;  
 Whan I twinke on thee · loke for to goon,  
 And cast away the feteres · and com to  
 me anoon.'  
 'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'blessed be thy  
 bones! 455  
 That is a good counseil · yeven for the  
 nones;  
 If they werne me thanne · to bringe me  
 out of bendes,  
 I wol sette goode strokes · right on here  
 lendes.'  
 Tho the Sonday was y-come · and folk  
 to the feste,  
 Faire they were welcomed · both leste  
 and meste; 460



And ever atte halle-dore · as they comen  
in,  
They caste their eye · on yonge Gamelyn.  
The false knight his brother · ful of  
trechery,  
Alle the gestes that ther were · atte  
mangery,  
Of Gamelyn his brother · he tolde hem  
with mouthe 465  
Al the harm and the schame · that he  
telle couthe.  
Tho they were served · of messes two or  
three,  
Than seyde Gamelyn · ‘how serve ye me?  
It is nought wel served · by god that al  
made!  
That I sitte fasting · and other men make  
glade.’ 470  
The false knight his brother · ther that  
he stood,  
Tolde alle his gestes · that Gamelyn was  
wood;  
And Gamelyn stood stille · and answerde  
nought,  
But Adames wordes · he held in his  
thought.  
Tho Gamelyn gan speke · dolfully with-  
alle 475  
To the grete lordes · that saten in the  
halle:  
‘Lordes,’ he seyde · ‘for Cristes pas-  
sioun,  
Helpeth bringe Gamelyn · out of prisoun.’  
Than seyde an abbot · sorwe on his  
cheeke!  
‘He schal have Cristes curs · and seynte  
Maries eeke,’ 480  
That thee out of prisoun · beggeth other  
borwe,  
But ever worthe hem wel · that doth thee  
moche sorwe.’  
After that abbot · than spak another,  
‘I wold thin heed were of · though thou  
were my brother!  
Alle that thee borwe · foule mot hem  
falle!’ 485  
Thus they seyden alle · that weren in the  
halle.  
Than seyde a priour · yvel mot he thryve!  
‘It is moche scathe, boy · that thou art  
on lyve.’  
‘Ow!’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘so brouke I my  
bon!

Now I have aspyed · that freendes have  
I non. 490  
Cursed mot he worthe · bothe fleisch and  
blood,  
That ever do priour · or abbot ony  
good!’  
Adam the spencer · took up the cloth,  
And loked on Gamelyn · and say that he  
was wroth;  
Adam on the pantrye · litel he thoughte,  
But two goode staves · to halle-dore he  
broughte, 496  
Adam loked on Gamelyn · and he was  
war anoon,  
And caste away the feteres · and he  
bigan to goon:  
Tho he com to Adam · he took that oo staf,  
And bigan to worche · and goode strokes  
yaf. 500  
Gamelyn cam in-to the halle · and the  
spencer bothe,  
And loked hem aboute · as they had be  
wrothe;  
Gamelyn sprengeth holy-water · with an  
oken spire,  
That some that stoode upright · fellen in  
the fire.  
There was non lewed man · that in the  
halle stood, 505  
That wolde do Gamelyn · eny thing but  
good,  
But stood bisyden · and leet hem bothe  
werche,  
For they hadde non rewthe · of men of  
holy cherche;  
Abbot or priour · monk or chanoun,  
That Gamelyn overtok · anon they yeeden  
doun. 510  
Ther was non of hem alle · that with his  
staf mette,  
That he ne made him overthrowe · and  
quitte him his dette.  
‘Gamelyn,’ seyde Adam · ‘for seynte  
Charite,  
Pay large liverey · for the love of me,  
And I wil kepe the dore · so ever here I  
masse! 515  
Er they ben assoyled · there shal noon  
passe.’  
‘Dowt thee nought,’ seyde Gamelyn ·  
‘whyl we ben in-feere,  
Kep thou wel the dore · and I wol werche  
heere;

Stere thee, good Adam · and lat ther  
 noon flee,  
 And we schul telle largely · how many that  
 ther be.' 520  
 'Gamelyn,' seyde Adam · 'do hem but  
 good;  
 They ben men of holy chirche · draw of  
 hem no blood,  
 Save wel the croune · and do hem non  
 harmes,  
 But brek bothe her legges · and siththen  
 here armes.'  
 Thus Gamelyn and Adam · wroughte  
 right fast, 525  
 And pleyden with the monkes · and  
 made hem agast.  
 Thider they come ryding · Iolily with  
 swaynes,  
 And hom ayen they were y-lad · in cartes  
 and in waynes.  
 Tho they hadden al y-don · than seyde a  
 gray frere,  
 'Allas! sire abbot · what dide we now  
 here? 530  
 Tho that we comen hider · it was a cold  
 reed,  
 Us hadde ben better at home · with water  
 and with breed.'  
 Why! Gamelyn made ordres · of monkes  
 and frere,  
 Ever stood his brother · and made foul  
 chere;  
 Gamelyn up with his staf · that he wel  
 knew, 535  
 And gerte him in the nekke · that he  
 overthrew;  
 A litel above the girdel · the rigge-bon  
 to-barst;  
 And sette him in the feteres · ther he sat  
 arst.  
 'Sitte ther, brother' · sayde Gamelyn,  
 'For to colen thy blood · as I dide myn.'  
 As swythe as they hadde · y-wroken hem  
 on here foon, 541  
 They askeden watir · and wisschen  
 anoon,  
 What some for here love · and some for  
 here awe,  
 Alle the servants served hem · of the beste  
 lawe.  
 The scherreve was thennes · but a fyve  
 myle, 545  
 And al was y-told him · in a litel whyle,

How Gamelyn and Adam · had doon a  
 sory rees,  
 Bounden and y-wounded men · ayen the  
 kinges pees;  
 Tho bigan some · stryf for to wake,  
 And the scherref was aboute · Gamelyn  
 for to take. 550  
 Now lytheth and lesteneth · so god yif  
 you good fyn!  
 And ye schul heere good game · of yonge  
 Gamelyn.  
 Four and twenty yonge men · that heelden  
 hem ful bolde,  
 Come to the schirref · and seyde that  
 they wolde  
 Gamelyn and Adam · fetten, by her fay;  
 The scherref yaf hem leve · soth as I you  
 say; 556  
 They hyeden faste · wold they nought  
 bilinne,  
 Til they come to the gate · ther Gamelyn  
 was inne.  
 They knocked on the gate · the porter  
 was ny,  
 And loked out at an hol · as man that  
 was sly. 560  
 The porter hadde biholde · hem a litel  
 whyle,  
 He lovel wel Gamelyn · and was adrad  
 of gyle,  
 And leet the wicket stonden · y-steke ful  
 stille,  
 And asked hem withoute · what was here  
 wille.  
 For al the grete company · thanne spak  
 but oon, 565  
 'Undo the gate, porter · and lat us in  
 goon.'  
 Than seyde the porter · 'so brouke I my  
 chin,  
 Ye schul sey your erand · er ye comen  
 in.'  
 'Sey to Gamelyn and Adam · if here  
 wille be,  
 We wil speke with hem · wordes two or  
 thre.' 570  
 'Felaw,' seyde the porter · 'stond there  
 stille,  
 And I wil wende to Gamelyn · to witen  
 his wille.'  
 In wente the porter · to Gamelyn anoon,  
 And seyde, 'Sir, I warne you · her ben  
 come your foon;

The scherreves meyne · ben atte gate,  
 For to take you bothe · schulle ye nat  
 scape.' 576  
 'Porter,' seyde Gamelyn · 'so moot I wel  
 thee!  
 I wil allowe thee thy wordes · whan I my  
 tyme see;  
 Go agayn to the yate · and dwel with hem  
 a whyle,  
 And thou schalt see right sone · porter, a  
 gyle.  
 Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'looke thee to  
 goon;' 581  
 We have foo-men atte gate · and frendes  
 never oon;  
 It ben the schirrefes men · that hider ben  
 y-come,  
 They ben swore to-gidere · that we schul  
 be nome.'  
 'Gamelyn,' seyde Adam · 'hye thee right  
 blyve,' 585  
 And if I faille thee this day · evel mot I  
 thryve!  
 And we schul so welcome · the scherreves  
 men,  
 That some of hem schul make · here  
 beddes in the fen.'  
 Atte posterne-gate · Gamelyn out wente,  
 And a good cart-staf · in his hand he  
 hente; 590  
 Adam hente sone · another gret staf  
 For to helpen Gamelyn · and goode strokes  
 yaf.  
 Adam felde tweyne · and Gamelyn felde  
 thre,  
 The other setten feet on erthe · and bi-  
 gonne fle.  
 'What?' seyde Adam · 'so ever here I  
 masse!' 595  
 I have a draught of good wyn! · drink er  
 ye passe!  
 'Nay, by god!' sayde thay · 'thy drink  
 is not good,  
 It wolde make mannes brayn · to lyen in  
 his hood.'  
 Gamelyn stood stille · and loked him  
 aboute,  
 And seihe the scherreve come · with a  
 gret route. 600  
 'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'what be now  
 thy reedes?  
 Here cometh the scherreve · and wil  
 have oure heedes.'

Adam sayde, 'Gamelyn · my reed is now  
 this,  
 Abyde we no lenger · lest we fare amis:  
 I rede that we to wode goon · ar that we  
 be founde,' 605  
 Better is us ther loos · than in town  
 y-bounde.'  
 Adam took by the hond · yonge Gamelyn;  
 And everich of hem two · drank a  
 draught of wyn,  
 And after took her cours · and wenten  
 her way;  
 Tho fond the scherreve · nest, but non  
 ay. 610  
 The scherreve lighte adoun · and went  
 in-to the halle,  
 And fond the lord y-fetered · faste with-  
 alle.  
 The scherreve unfetered him · sone, and  
 that anoon,  
 And sente after a leche · to hele his rigge-  
 boon.  
 Lete we now this false knight · lyen in  
 his care, 615  
 And talke we of Gamelyn · and loke how  
 he fare.  
 Gamelyn in-to the woode · stalkede stille,  
 And Adam the spenser · lykede ful ille;  
 Adam swor to Gamelyn · by seynt  
 Richer, 619  
 'Now I see it is mery · to be a spenser,  
 That lever me were · keyes for to bere,  
 Than walken in this wilde woode · my  
 clothes to tere.'  
 'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'dismaye thee  
 right nought;  
 Many good mannes child · in care is  
 y-brought.'  
 And as they stode talking · bothen in-  
 feere, 625  
 Adam herd talking of men · and neyh,  
 him thought, they were.  
 Tho Gamelyn under the woode · lokede  
 aright,  
 Sevene score of yonge men · he saugh wel  
 a-dight;  
 Alle satte atte mete · in compas aboute.  
 'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'now have we  
 no doute,' 630  
 After bale cometh boote · thurgh grace  
 of god almight;  
 Me thinketh of mete and drink · that I  
 have a sight.'

Adam lokede tho · under woode-bowgh,  
And whan he seyh mete · he was glad  
y-nough;

For he hopede to god · for to have his deel,  
And he was sore alonged · after a good  
meel. 636

As he seyde that word · the mayster out-  
lawe

Saugh Gamelyn and Adam · under wood-  
schawe.

'Yonge men,' seyde the maister · 'by the  
goode roode,

I am war of gestic · god sende us non but  
goode; 640

Yonder ben two yonge men · wonder wel  
a-dight,

And paraventure ther ben mo · who-so  
lokede aright.

Ariseth up, ye yonge men · and fetteth  
hem to me;

It is good that we witen · what men they  
be.'

Up ther sterten sevene · fro the diner,  
And metten with Gamelyn · and Adam  
spenser. 646

Whan they were neyh hem · than seyde  
that oon,

'Yeldeth up, yonge men · your bowes and  
your floon.'

Thanne seyde Gamelyn · that yong was of  
elde,

'Moche sorwe mot he have · that to you  
hem yelde! 650

I curse non other · but right my-selve;  
They ye fette to yow fyve · thanne ye be  
twelve!'

Tho they herde by his word · that might  
was in his arm,

Ther was non of hem alle · that wolde do  
him harm,

But sayde unto Gamelyn · mildely and  
stille, 655

'Com afore our maister · and sey to him  
thy wille.'

'Yonge men,' sayde Gamelyn · 'by your  
lewte,

What man is your maister · that ye with  
be?'

Alle they answerde · withoute lesing,  
'Oure maister is y-crowned · of outlawes  
king.' 660

'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'go-we in Cristes  
name;

He may neyther mete nor drink · werne  
us, for schame.

If that he be hende · and come of gentil  
blood,

He wol yeve us mete and drink · and  
doon us som good.'

'By seynt Iame!' seyde Adam · 'what  
harm that I gete, 665

I wil aunte to the dore · that I hadde  
mete.'

Gamelyn and Adam · wente forth in-  
feere,

And they grette the maister · that they  
founde there.

Than seide the maister · king of outlawes,  
'What seeke ye, yonge men · under  
woode-schawes?' 670

Gamelyn answerde · the king with his  
croune,

'He moste needes walke in woode · that  
may not walke in towne.

Sire, we walke not heer · noon harm for  
to do,

But-if we meete with a deer · to scheete  
ther-to,

As men that ben hungry · and mow no  
mete finde, 675

And ben harde bistad · under woode-  
linde.'

Of Gamelynes wordes · the maister hadde  
routhe,

And seyde, 'ye schal have y-nough · have  
god my trouthe!'

He bad hem sitte ther adoun · for to take  
reste;

And bad hem ete and drinke · and that  
of the beste. 680

As they sete and eeten · and dronke wel  
and fyn,

Than seyde that oon to that other ·  
'this is Gamelyn.'

Tho was the maister outlawe · in-to coun-  
seil nome,

And told how it was Gamelyn · that  
thider was y-come.

Anon as he herde · how it was bifalle,  
He made him maister under him · over  
hem alle. 686

Within the thridde wyke · him com tyding,  
To the maister outlawe · that tho was her  
king,

That he schulde come hom · his pees was  
y-mad;

And of that goode tyding · he was tho ful  
 glad. 690  
 Tho seyde he to his yonge men · ‘soth  
 for to telle,  
 Meben comen tydinges · I may no lenger  
 dwelle.’  
 Tho was Gamelyn anon · withoute taryng,  
 Maad maister outlawe · and crouned here  
 king.  
 Tho was Gamelyn crouned · king of  
 outlawes, 695  
 And walked a whyle · under woode-  
 schawes.  
 The false knight his brother · was scher-  
 reve and sire,  
 And leet his brother endite · for hate and  
 for ire.  
 Tho were his bonde-men · sory and noth-  
 ing glad,  
 When Gamelyn her lord · ‘wolves-heed’  
 was cryed and maad; 700  
 And sente out of his men · wher they  
 might him finde,  
 For to seke Gamelyn · under woodelinde,  
 To telle him tydinges · how the wind was  
 went,  
 And al his good reved · and his men schent  
 When they had him founde · on knees  
 they hem sette, 705  
 And a-doun with here hood · and here  
 lord grette;  
 ‘Sire, wraththe you nought · for the goode  
 roode,  
 For we have brought you tydinges · but  
 they be nat goode.  
 Now is thy brother scherreve · and hath  
 the baillye,  
 And he hath endited thee · and ‘wolves-  
 heed’ doth thee crye.’ 710  
 ‘Allas!’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘that ever I  
 was so slak  
 That I ne hadde broke his nekke · tho I  
 his rigge brak!  
 Goth, greteth hem wel · myn housbondes  
 and wyf,  
 I wol ben atte nexte schire · have god  
 my lyf!’  
 Gamelyn com wel redy · to the nexte  
 schire, 715  
 And ther was his brother · bothe lord and  
 sire.  
 Gamelyn com boldelich · in-to the moot-  
 halle,

And putte a-doun his hood · among the  
 lordes alle;  
 ‘God save you alle, lordinges · that now  
 here be!  
 But broke-bak scherreve · evel mot thou  
 thee! 720  
 Why hast thou do me · that schame and  
 vilonye,  
 For to late endite me · and ‘wolves-heed’  
 me crye?’  
 Tho thoughte the false knight · for to ben  
 awreke,  
 And leet take Gamelyn · moste he no  
 more speke;  
 Might ther be no more grace · but Game-  
 lyn atte laste 725  
 Was cast in-to prisoun · and fetered ful  
 faste.  
 Gamelyn hath a brother · that highte  
 sir Ote,  
 As good a knight and hende · as mighte  
 gon on foote.  
 Anon ther yede a messenger · to that  
 goode knight,  
 And tolde him al-togidere · how Gamelyn  
 was dight. 730  
 Anon as sire Ote herde · how Gamelyn  
 was a-dight,  
 He was wonder sory · was he no-thing  
 light,  
 And leet sadle a steede · and the way he  
 nam,  
 And to his tweyne bretheren · anon-right  
 he cam.  
 ‘Sire,’ seyde sire Ote · to the scherreve tho,  
 ‘We ben but thre bretheren · schul we  
 never be mo; 736  
 And thou hast y-prisoned · the beste of  
 us alle;  
 Swich another brother · yvel mot him  
 bifalle!’  
 ‘Sire Ote,’ seide the false knight · ‘lat be  
 thy curs;  
 By god, for thy wordes · he schal fare the  
 wurs; 740  
 To the kinges prisoun · anon he is  
 y-nome,  
 And ther he schal abyde · til the Iustice  
 come.’  
 ‘Parde!’ seyde sir Ote · ‘better it schal  
 be;  
 I bidde him to maynpris · that thou  
 graunte him me

Til the nexte sitting · of deliver-  
 aunce, 745  
 And thanne lat Gamelyn · stande to his  
 chaunce.’  
 ‘Brother, in swich a forward · I take him  
 to thee;  
 And by thy fader soule · that thee bigat  
 and me,  
 But-if he be redy · whan the Iustice sitte,  
 Thou schalt bere the Iuggement · for al  
 thy grete witte.’ 750  
 ‘I graunte wel,’ seide sir Ote · ‘that it so  
 be.  
 Let deliver him anon · and tak him to  
 me.’  
 Tho was Gamelyn delivered · to sire Ote  
 his brother,  
 And that night dwellede · that on with  
 that other.  
 On the morn seyde Gamelyn · to sire Ote  
 the hende, 755  
 ‘Brother,’ he seide, ‘I moot · for sothe,  
 from thee wende,  
 To loke how my yonge men · leden here  
 lyf,  
 Whether they liven in Ioye · or elles in  
 stryf.’  
 ‘By god!’ seyde sire Ote · ‘that is a cold  
 reed,  
 Now I see that al the cark · schal fallen  
 on myn heed; 760  
 For when the Iustice sitte · and thou be  
 nought y-founde,  
 I schal anon be take · and in thy stede  
 y-bounde.’  
 ‘Brother,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘dismaye thee  
 nought,  
 For by seint Iame in Gales · that many  
 man hath sought,  
 If that god almighty · holde my lyf and  
 wit, 765  
 I wil be ther redy · whan the Iustice sit.’  
 Than seide sir Ote to Gamelyn · ‘god  
 schilde thee fro schame;  
 Com whan thou seest tyme · and bring us  
 out of blame.’  
 Litheth, and lesteneth · and holdeth  
 you stille,  
 And ye schul here how Gamelyn · hadde  
 al his wille. 770  
 Gamelyn wente ayein · under woode-rys,  
 And fond there pleyng · yonge men of  
 prys.

Tho was yong Gamelyn · glad and blithe  
 y-nough,  
 Whan he fond his mery men · under  
 woode-bough.  
 Gamelyn and his men · talkeden in-  
 feere, 775  
 And they hadde good game · here maister  
 to heere;  
 They tolden him of adventures · that they  
 hadde founde,  
 And Gamelyn hem tolde ayein · how he  
 was fast y-bounde.  
 Whyl Gamelyn was outlawed · hadde he  
 no cors;  
 There was no man that for him · ferde  
 the wors, 780  
 But abbotes and priours · monk and  
 chanoun;  
 On hem left he no-thing · whan he mighte  
 hem nom.  
 Whyl Gamelyn and his men · made  
 merthes ryve,  
 The false knyght his brother · yvel mot he  
 thryve!  
 For he was fast aboute · bothe day and  
 other, 785  
 For to hyre the quest · to hangen his  
 brother.  
 Gamelyn stood on a day · and, as he bi-  
 heeld  
 The woodes and the schawes · in the  
 wilde feeld,  
 He thoughte on his brother · how he him  
 beheet  
 That he wolde be redy · whan the Iustice  
 seet; 790  
 He thoughte wel that he wolde · withoute  
 delay,  
 Come afore the Iustice · to kepen his  
 day,  
 And seide to his yonge men · ‘dighteth  
 you yare,  
 For whan the Iustice sitte · we moote be  
 thare,  
 For I am under borwe · til that I come,  
 And my brother for me · to prisoun schal  
 be nome.’ 796  
 ‘By seint Iame!’ seyde his yonge men ·  
 ‘and thou rede therto,  
 Ordeyne how it schal be · and it schal be  
 do.’  
 Whyl Gamelyn was coming · ther the  
 Iustice sat,

The false knight his brother · foryat he  
 nat that, 800  
 To hyre the men on his quest · to  
 hangen his brother;  
 Though he hadde nough that oon · he  
 wolde have that other.  
 Tho cam Gamelyn · fro under woode-rys,  
 And broughte with him · his yonge men  
 of prys.  
 ‘I see wel,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘the  
 Iustice is set; 805  
 Go aforn, Adam · and loke how it spet.’  
 Adam wente into the halle · and loked al  
 aboute,  
 He seyh there stonde · lordes grete and  
 stoute,  
 And sir Ote his brother · fetered wel  
 fast;  
 Tho went Adam out of halle · as he were  
 agast. 810  
 Adam said to Gamelyn · and to his felawes  
 alle,  
 ‘Sir Ote stant y-fetered · in the moot-  
 halle.’  
 ‘Yonge men,’ seide Gamelyn · ‘this ye  
 heeren alle;  
 Sire Ote stant y-fetered · in the moot-  
 halle.  
 If god yif us grace · wel for to doo, 815  
 He schal it abegge · that broughte him  
 ther-too.’  
 Thanne sayde Adam · that lokkes hadde  
 hore,  
 ‘Cristes curs mote he have · that him  
 bond so sore!  
 And thou wilt, Gamelyn · do · after my  
 reed,  
 Ther is noon in the halle · schal bere  
 away his heed.’ 820  
 ‘Adam,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘we wiln nought  
 don so,  
 We wil slee the giltif · and lat the other  
 go.  
 I wil into the halle · and with the Iustice  
 speke;  
 On hem that ben gultif · I wil ben  
 awreke.  
 Lat non scape at the dore · take, yonge  
 men, yeme; 825  
 For I wil be Iustice this day · domes for  
 to deme.  
 God spede me this day · at my newe  
 werk!

Adam, com on with me · for thou schalt  
 be my clerk.’  
 His men answered him · and bade him  
 doon his best,  
 ‘And if thou to us have neede · thou  
 schalt finde us prest; 830  
 We wiln stande with thee · whyl that we  
 may dure,  
 And but we werke manly · pay us non  
 hure.’  
 ‘Yonge men,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘so mot I  
 wel thee!  
 As trusty a maister · ye schal finde of  
 me.’  
 Right there the Iustice · sat in the  
 halle, 835  
 In wente Gamelyn · amonges hem  
 alle.  
 Gamelyn leet unfetere · his brother out  
 of bende.  
 Thanne seyde sire Ote · his brother that  
 was hende,  
 ‘Thou haddest almost, Gamelyn · dwelled  
 to longe,  
 For the quest is oute on me · that I  
 schulde honge.’ 840  
 ‘Brother,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘so god yif  
 me good rest!  
 This day they schuln ben hanged · that  
 ben on thy quest;  
 And the Iustice bothe · that is the Iugge-  
 man,  
 And the scherreve bothe · thurgh him it  
 bigan.’  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · to the Ius-  
 tise, 845  
 ‘Now is thy power y-don · thou most  
 nedes arise;  
 Thow hast yeven domes · that ben yvel  
 dight,  
 I wil sitten in thy sete · and dresen hem  
 aright.’  
 The Iustice sat stille · and roos nought  
 anoon;  
 And Gamelyn cleved · [a-two] his cheeke-  
 boon; 850  
 Gamelyn took him in his arm · and no  
 more spak,  
 But threw him over the barre · and his  
 arm to-brak.  
 Durste non to Gamelyn · seye but good,  
 For ferd of the company · that withoute  
 stood.

Gamelyn sette him doun · in the Iustices  
 seet, 855  
 And sire Ote his brother by him · and  
 Adam at his feet.  
 Whan Gamelyn was y-set · in the Iustices  
 stede,  
 Herkneth of a bourde · that Gamelyn  
 dede.  
 He leet fetre the Iustice · and his false  
 brother,  
 And dede hem come to the barre · that  
 oon with that other. 860  
 Tho Gamelyn hadde thus y-doon · hadde  
 he no reste,  
 Til he had enquered · who was on the  
 queste  
 For to deme his brother · sir Ote, for to  
 honge;  
 Er he wiste which they were · him  
 thoughte ful longe.  
 But as sone as Gamelyn · wiste wher they  
 were, 865  
 He dede hem everichone · feteren in-  
 feere,  
 And bringen hem to the barre · and sette  
 hem in rewe;  
 ‘By my faith!’ seyde the Iustice · ‘the  
 scherreve is a schrewe!’  
 Than seyde Gamelyn · to the Iustise,  
 ‘Thou hast y-yeve domes · of the wors  
 assise; 870  
 And the twelve sisours · that weren of  
 the queste,  
 They schul ben hanged this day · so have  
 I good reste!’  
 Thanne seide the scherreve · to yonge  
 Gamelyn,  
 ‘Lord, I crye the mercy · brother art  
 thou myn.’  
 ‘Therefore,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘have thou  
 Cristes curs, 875  
 For, and thou were maister · yit I schulde  
 have wors.’  
 For to make short tale · and nought to  
 tarie longe,  
 He ordeyned him a queste · of his men  
 so stronge;

The Iustice and the scherreve · bothe  
 honged hie,  
 To weyven with the ropes · and with the  
 winde drye; 880  
 And the twelve sisours · (sorwe have that  
 rekke!)  
 Alle they were hanged · faste by the  
 nekke.  
 Thus ended the false knight · with his  
 treccherye,  
 That ever hadde y-lad his lyf · in falsnes  
 and folye.  
 He was hanged by the nekke · and nought  
 by the purs; 885  
 That was the meede that he hadde · for  
 his fadres curs.  
 Sire Ote was eldest · and Gamelyn was  
 ying,  
 They wenten with here · frendes even to  
 the king;  
 They made pees with the king · of the  
 best assise.  
 The king loved wel sir Ote · and made  
 him Iustise. 890  
 And after, the king made Gamelyn ·  
 bothe in est and west,  
 Chief Iustice · of al his free forest;  
 Alle his wighte yonge men · the king  
 foryaf here gilt,  
 And sitthen in good office · the king hem  
 hath y-pilt.  
 Thus won Gamelyn · his lond and his  
 leede, 895  
 And wrak him of his enemys · and quitte  
 hem here meede;  
 And sire Ote his brother · made him his  
 heir,  
 And sitthen wedded Gamelyn · a wyf  
 bothe good and feyr;  
 They livenen to-gidere · whyl that Crist  
 wolde,  
 And sitthen was Gamelyn · graven under  
 molde. 900  
 And so schal we alle · may ther no man  
 flee:  
 God bringe us to the Ioye · that ever  
 schal be!



## GLOSSARIAL INDEX.



The Tales are referred to by the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, the various groups into which the Tales are divided. Thus, C 8 indicates Group C, line 8.

**Abbreviations.** — The grammatical abbreviations *s.*, *adj.*, and *adv.*, for substantive, adjective, and adverb, will be readily understood. Special abbreviations are *v.*, verb in the infinitive; *pr. s.* (and *pt. s.*) mean the *third* person singular of the present (and past) tense, except when 1 or 2 (first person or second person) is prefixed; *pr. pl.* (and *pt. pl.*) mean likewise the *third* person plural of the present (and past) tense; *imp. s.* means second person singular of the imperative mood; and *imp. pl.* second person plural of the same.

### A.

**A**, *art.* a; *al a*, the whole of a, E 1165.  
**A**, *prep.* on, in, for; *a-night*, in the night, by night, G 880; *now a dayes*, now in these days, E 1164; *a-morwe*, A 822; *a Goddes name*, in God's name, A 854.  
**Abak**, *adv.* backwards, B 2017.  
**Abashed**, *pp.* ashamed, disconcerted, B 568.  
**Abayst**, **Abaysed**, *pp.* abashed, disconcerted, E 317; amazed, E 1108.  
**Abbay**, *s.* abbey, B 1814.  
**Abegge**, *v.* atone for, A 3938.  
**Abhominaciouns**, *s. pl.* abominations, horrible occurrences, B 88.  
**Abit**, *pr. s.* (*for* abideth), abides, G 1175.  
**Able**, *adj.* fit, capable, adapted, A 167.  
**Ablucions**, *s. pl.* ablutions, washings, G 856.  
**Aboght**. See **Abye**.  
**Abood**, *s.* abiding, delay, A 965.  
**Abouten**, *prep.* about, around, near, E 1106.  
**Aboven**, *prep.* above, E 826.  
**Abrayde**. See **Abreyde**.  
**Abreyde**, *pt. s.* started, awoke, E 1061.  
**Abroche**, *v.* broach, D 177.  
**Abrood**, *adv.* abroad, *i.e.* wide open, F 441.  
**Abusioun**, *s.* deceit, B 214.  
**Abyde**, *v.* to remain, wait, E 1106; **Abydeth**, *imp. pl.* B 1175; **Abyding**, *pr. pt.* awaiting, E 757.  
**Abye**, *v.* pay for, C 756; **Aboght**, *pp.* redeemed, atoned for, C 503.  
**Accident**, *s.* unusual appearance, E 607; outward appearance, C 539.  
**Accidie**, *s.* moral sloth, I 677.  
**Accordaunt**, *adj.* agreeable to, A 37.  
**Accorde**, *pr. s. subj.* may agree, G 638.  
**Achat**, *s.* buying, A 571.

**Achatours**, *s.* buyers, A 568.  
**Acorden**, *pr. pl.* agree, B 2137; **Acording**, *pr. pt.* agreeing, B 1737. See **Accorde**.  
**Acoute**, *v.* consider, B 3591.  
**Acquyte**, *v.* acquit one's self, E 936; **Acquiteth**, *imp. pl.* B 37.  
**Acustomaunce**, *s.* system of habits, habitual method of life; *had of acustomaunce*, was accustomed, B 3701.  
**Adamant**, *s.* ironstone, A 1990.  
**Adoun**, *adv.* at the bottom, G 779; down, B 3630.  
**Advertence**, *s.* attention, G 467.  
**Aferd**, *pp.* afraid, A 628.  
**Affecioun**, *s.* desire, A 1158.  
**Affray**, *s.* fear, terror, B 1137.  
**Affyle**, *v.* polish, A 712.  
**After**, *prep.* in expectation of, for, B 467; *after me*, according to my command, E 327; *after the year*, according to the time of year, F 47.  
**Agayn**, *prep.* against, B 580; near, G 1279; to meet, B 391; **Ageyn**, against, F 142.  
**Agayns**, *prep.* towards, to meet, E 911; before, in presence of, C 743.  
**Agaynward**, *adv.* back again, B 441.  
**Ages**, *pl.* times, periods, B 3177.  
**Aggreggeth**, *v.* aggravates, B 2477; **Agreggeden**, *pp.* aggravated, B 2209.  
**Agoon**, *pp.* passed away, dead, E 631; **Agon**, *pp.* gone away, C 810; **Agoon**, *pp. as adv.* ago, C 436.  
**Agrieved**, *pp.* aggrieved, E 500.  
**Agrief**, *adv.* sorrowfully, B 4083.  
**Aken**, *pr. pl.* ache, B 2113.  
**Aketoun**, *s.* a short sleeveless tunic, worn under the hauberk, B 2050.

- Al**, *adv.* completely, B 3215; *al blood*, completely covered with blood, B 1967.  
**Al**, *adj.* all; *al a*, the whole of, G 996; *at al*, in every respect, E 1222; wholly, C 633; *Alle*, *pl.* B 118; *alle and some*, one and all, E 941.  
**Al**, *conj.* whether, G 846; although, E 99; *al so* as, H 80.  
**Alaunts**, *s.* boarhounds, A 2148.  
**Alayes**, *s. pl.* alloy, E 1167.  
**Albificacioun**, *s.* albification, whitening, G 805.  
**Alday**, *adv.* continually, F 481; always, B 1702.  
**Ale and breed**, drink and meat, B 2062.  
**Alembyses**, *pl.* alembics, G 794.  
**Alestake**, *s.* a stake projecting from an alehouse by way of a sign, A 667.  
**Aley**, *s.* an alley, B 1758.  
**Algate**, *adv.* at any rate, C 292; G 318; in all respects, E 855.  
**Algates**, *adv.* at any rate, in every way, wholly, F 246; nevertheless, all the same, at any rate, B 520; G 1096.  
**Alkamistre**, *s.* alchemist, G 1204.  
**Aller**, *gen. pl.* of *Al*, A 823.  
**Alliaunce**, *s.* marriage, espousal, E 357.  
**Allow**, 1 *pr. s.* I approve, I applaud, F 676.  
**Allye**, *s.* relative, B 3593.  
**Almesse**, *s.* alms, B 168.  
**Almest**, *adv.* almost, B 1948.  
**Al-so**, *conj.* as, B 396; H 80.  
**Alswa**, *adv.* also, A 4085.  
**Alwey**, *adv.* continually, always, E 458; ceaselessly, F 422; I 11.  
**Am**, *it am I*, it is I, B 1109.  
**Amadrides**, *s. pl.* hamadryads, A 2928.  
**Amalgaming**, *s.* the formation of an amalgam, G 771.  
**Amased**, *pp.* amazed, G 935.  
**Ambel**, *s.* amble; *an ambel*, in an amble, at an ambling pace, B 2075.  
**Ambes as**, double axes, B 124.  
**Amblere**, *s.* easy-paced horse, A 469.  
**Amende**, *v.* to improve, F 197; *Amended*, *pp.* surpassed, B 3444.  
**Amenuse**, *v.* diminish, I 360; depreciate, I 496.  
**Amerciments**, *s. pl.* fines, I 752.  
**Ameved**, *pt. s.* moved, changed; *nought ameved*, changed not, altered not, E 498; *Amoeved*, *pp.* perturbed, I 670.  
**Amidde**, *prep.* amid, in the midst of, F 409.  
**Amis**, *adv.* wrongly, B 3370.  
**Amonesten**, *v.* warn, admonish, I 76.  
**Amonges**, *prep.* amongst, B 3344; G 608.  
**Amounteth**, *pr. s.* means, B 569; amounts to, F 108.  
**Amy**, *s.* friend, C 318.  
**An**, a; *an eighte bussshels*, a quantity equal to eight bushels, C 771.  
**And**, *conj.* if, E 2433.  
**Anhanged**, *pp.* hung, B 3945, 3949.  
**Anientissed**, *pp.* annihilated, B 2438.  
**A-night**, *adv.* by night, at night, E 464.  
**Anlas**, *s.* dagger, A 357.  
**Annexed**, *pp.* attached, C 482.  
**Annueleer**, *s.* a priest who received annual payments, a chaplain, G 1012.  
**Annunciat**, *pp.* pre-announced, *i.e.* whose birth was foretold, B 3205.  
**Anon**, *adv.* immediately, forthwith, B 34, 326; C 864.  
**Anon-right**, *adv.* immediately, G 1141.  
**Anoyeth**, *pr. s. impers.* it annoys, vexes, G 1036.  
**Answerde**, *pt. s.* answered, E 21.  
**Antem**, *s.* anthem, B 1850.  
**Antiphoner**, *s.* anthem-book, B 1709.  
**Aornement**, *s.* adornment, I 432.  
**Appalled**. See *Appalled*.  
**Aparaile**. See *Apparaile*.  
**Aperceyve**. See *Aperceyve*.  
**Apayd**, **Apayed**, *pp.* pleased, satisfied; *evel apayd*, ill-pleased, G 921.  
**Apayre**. See *Apeyren*.  
**Apayse**. See *Apese*.  
**Ape**, *s.* dupe, G 1313.  
**Apeiren**. See *Apeyren*.  
**Aperceyve**, *v.* to perceive, E 600; *Aperceyveth*, *pr. s.* E 1018.  
**Aperceyvinges**, *pl.* perceptions, observations, F 286.  
**Apert**, **Aperte**, *adv.* openly, F 531.  
**Apertenant**, *adj.* belonging to, such as belongs to; *Apertenaut*, B 3505.  
**Apertenen**, *v.* belong to, I 410.  
**Apertening**, *pr. pt.* appertaining, G 785.  
**Apertinent**, *adj.* appertaining, suitable, E 1010.  
**Apertly**, *adv.* openly, clearly, I 294.  
**Apese**, **Apeise**, *v.* appease, pacify, E 433; H 98.  
**Apeyren**, *v.* impair, depreciate, I 1078; A 3147.  
**Apeyse**. See *Apese*.  
**Apposed**. See *Apposed*.  
**Apostelles**, *s. pl.* apostles, G 1002.  
**Appalled**, *pp.* made pale or feeble, F 365; B 1292.  
**Apparaile**, *s.* apparel, attire, E 1208.  
**Apparence**, *s.* appearance, seeming, F 218.  
**Appese**. See *Apese*.  
**Apposed**, *pt. s.* questioned, G 363.  
**Approved**, *pp.* approved, E 1349.  
**Approwours**, *s. pl.* informers, D 1343.  
**Apyked**, *pp.* trimmed, A 365.  
**Arace**, *v.* eradicate, tear away, E 1103.  
**Aray**, *s.* order, E 262; ordinance, E 670.  
**Arayed**, *pp.* dressed, F 389; arranged, ordered, B 252.  
**Arches**. See *Ark*.  
**Archwyvves**, *s. pl.* archwives, ruling wives, E 1195.

Arest, *s.* socket of a spear, A 2602.  
 Arette, *v.* account, attribute, A 726; Aretted, *pp.* A 2729.  
 Arewē, *adv.* in a row, D 1254.  
 Argoile, *s.* potter's clay, G 813.  
 Argumenten, *pr. pl.* argue, B 212.  
 Aright, *adv.* rightly, properly, F 694.  
 Arist, *pr. s.* arises, B 265.  
 Ark, *s.* arc, referring to the arc of the horizon extending from sunrise to sunset, B 2.  
 Arminge, *s.* arming, putting on of armor, B 2037.  
 Armipotente, *adj.* mighty in arms, A 2441.  
 Armlees, *adj.* armless, without an arm, B 3393.  
 Armoniak, *adj.* ammoniac; applied to *bole*, G 790, and *sal*, G 798.  
 Armoure, Armure, *s.* armor, B 2009.  
 Arn, *pr. pl.* are, E 342.  
 Arrace. See Arace.  
 Array, Arraye. See Aray, Arayed.  
 Arrette. See Arette.  
 Ars-metrik, *s.* arithmetic, A 1898.  
 Art, *s.* kind, sort, E 1241.  
 Arwes, *pl.* arrows, A 107.  
 As, like, B 1864; expletive, expressing a wish; *as have*, may He have, B 1061; *as lat*, pray let, B 859; *as after*, according to, B 3555; *as in*, *i.e.* for, B 3688; *as now*, at this time, F 652; on the present occasion, G 944; for the present, with the matter on hand, G 1019; *as to*, with reference to, F 107; as soon as, F 615; *as ferforth as*, as far as, B 19. *As* is short for *Also*.  
 As, *s.* an ace, B 3851; *ambes as*, double aces, B 124.  
 Assay. See Assay.  
 Ascaunce, *adv.* perhaps, G 838.  
 Ascencioun, *s.* ascension, rising up, G 778.  
 Ascende, *v.* ascend, rise (a term in astrology), I 11; *pr. pt.* ascending, in the ascendant, *i.e.* near the eastern horizon, F 264.  
 Ascendent, *s.* ascendant, A 417. The ascendent is (properly) that point of the zodiacal circle which is seen to be just ascending above the horizon at a given moment.  
 Asken, *v.* to ask, B 101.  
 Aslake, *v.* abate, A 3553; *pp.* A 1760.  
 Asonder, *adv.* asunder, apart, B 1157.  
 Asp, *s.* aspen, A 2921.  
 Aspye, *s.* spy, C 755.  
 Assaille, *v.* to assail, attack, B 3953.  
 Assay, *s.* trial, D 290; Assayes, *pl.* trials, E 697.  
 Assaye, *imp. s.* let him try, E 1229; Assayed, *pp.* tried, E 1054.  
 Asseged, *pp.* besieged, A 881.  
 Assembled, *pp.* united, G 50.  
 Assendent. See Ascendent.  
 Assent, *s.* consent, conspiracy, C 758.  
 Assente, *v.* agree to, A 374; Assenten, *pr. pl.* assent, agree, E 176.

Assoilen, *pr. s.* absolve, pardon, C 913.  
 Assailing, *s.* absolution, A 661.  
 Assured, *pt. s.* confirmed, B 3378.  
 Assyse, *s.* assize, A 314.  
 Asterted, *pt. s.* escaped, B 437.  
 Astonied, *pt. s.* astonished, E 316.  
 Astored, *pp.* stored, provided, A 609.  
 Astromye, *s.* astronomy, A 3451.  
 Asure, azure, blue, E 254.  
 Aswage, *v.* to assuage, B 3834.  
 Aswowne, in a swoon, E 1079.  
 At, *prep.* at; *at me*, with me, with respect to me, B 1975; from, E 653; from, of, G 542, 621.  
 At-after, *prep.* after, F 302.  
 Atake, *v.* to overtake, G 556.  
 Atazir, *s.* evil influence, B 305.  
 Atones, *adv.* at once, at one and the same time, B 670.  
 Atoon, *adv.* at one, E 437.  
 At-rede, *v.* outwit, surpass in advice, A 2449.  
 At-renne, *v.* outrun, A 2449.  
 Attamed, *pp.* broached, B 4008.  
 Atte; *atte fulle*, at the full, in completeness, B 203; *atte laste*, at the last, B 506; *atte leste*, at the least, at least, E 130.  
 Atteyne, *v.* to attain, E 447.  
 Attry, *adj.* venomous, I 583.  
 Atwinne, *adv.* apart, G 1170.  
 A-two, *adv.* in two, asunder, B 600.  
 Auctor. See Auctour.  
 Auctoritee, *s.* authority, especially of an esteemed writer, D 1.  
 Auctour, *s.* author, E 1141.  
 Audience, *s.* audience, B 3991; hearing, E 329.  
 Aught, *adv.* by any chance, in any way, B 1034; at all, G 597.  
 Augrim stones, arithmetical counters, A 3210.  
 Aunted, *pt. s.* adventured, A 4205.  
 Auntrous, *adj.* adventurous, B 2099.  
 Autour. See Auctour.  
 Avale, *v.* doff, A 3122.  
 Advantage, *s.* convenience, profit; *to don his advantage*, to suit his own interests, B 729; *as adj.* advantageous, B 146.  
 Avaunce, *v.* profit, A 246; Avaunced, *pp.* advanced, C 410.  
 Avaunt, *s.* vaunt, boast, A 227.  
 Aventure, *s.* peril, B 1151; Aventures, *pl.* adventures, E 15; accidents, C 934.  
 Avys, *s.* opinion, I 54.  
 Avyse, *v. refl.* consider, B 664.  
 Await, *s.* watch, H 149; *have hir in awayt*, watch her, B 3915.  
 Awaiteth, *pr. s.* waits, watches, B 1776.  
 Awaytes. See Await.  
 Awen, *adj.* own, A 4239.  
 Aweye, *adv.* away, gone; from home, B 593; astray, B 609.

Awroken, *pp.* avenge, A 3752.  
 Ayeins, *prep.* against, E 320.  
 Ayel, *s.* grandfather, A 2477.

## B.

Ba, *imp. s.* kiss, A 3709.  
 Bachelrye, *s.* company of young men, E 270.  
 Bad, *pt. s.* bade, E 373. See Bidde.  
 Badde, *adj.* bad; Badder, F 224.  
 Bak, *s.* cloth for the back, coarse mantle, cloak, G 881.  
 Bake, *pp.* baked, B 95.  
 Balkes, *s. pl.* beams; the transverse beams beneath the roof, A 3626.  
 Balled, *adj.* bald, A 198.  
 Banes, *pl.* bones, A 4073.  
 Bar. See Bere.  
 Barbre, *adj.* barbarian, B 281.  
 Bareyne, *adj.* barren, B 68; E 448.  
 Barm-clooth, *s.* apron, A 3236.  
 Barme, *s. dat.* bosom, lap, B 3256, 3630.  
 Baronage, *s.* company of barons, retinue of lords, B 329.  
 Barres, *s. pl.* cross-stripes, A 329.  
 Barringe, *s.* cross-striping, I 417.  
 Basilicok, *s.* basilisk, I 853.  
 Bataille, *s.* battle, B 3879; G 386.  
 Batailled, *pp.* battlemented, indented, B 4050.  
 Bathe, *adj.* both, A 4087.  
 Bauderie, *s.* gayety, A 1926.  
 Baudy, *adj.* dirty, G 635.  
 Bawdrik, *s.* baldrick, belt, A 116.  
 Bayard, a horse's name, G 1413.  
 Bayte, *v.* to bait, feed, eat, B 466; Baiteth, *pr. s.* feeds, B 2103.  
 Bechen, *adj.* made of beech, G 1160.  
 Bed, *s.* station, B 3862.  
 Bede, *v.* offer, proffer, G 1065; 1 *pt. pl.* directed, I 65. *Pt. pl. and pp. of* Bidde. See Bidde.  
 Bedes, *pl.* beads, A 159.  
 Bedrede, *adj.* bedridden, E 1292.  
 Beek, *s.* beak, F 418.  
 Been, *pl.* bees, F 204.  
 Beest, *s.* beast, F 460; *beest roial*, royal beast, *i.e.* Leo, F 264.  
 Beggestere, *s.* beggar (female beggar), A 242.  
 Bekke, 1 *pr. s.* I nod, C 396.  
 Bel amy, *i.e.* good friend, fair friend, C 318.  
 Bely, *s.* bellows, I 351.  
 Bely-naked, *adj.* stark naked, E 1326.  
 Bemes, *s. pl.* trumpets, B 4588.  
 Ben, Been, *v. be*; Beth, *imp. pl.* be ye, C 683.  
 Bendinge, *s.* slant-striping, I 417.  
 Bene, *s.* bean, B 94.  
 Benedicite, bless ye, B 1170.  
 Bent, *s.* grassy slope; Bente, *dat.* A 1981.  
 Berafte. See Bireve.

Berd, *s.* beard, A 332; *make a berd*, outwit, A 4096.  
 Bere, *v.* bear, carry, B 3564; transport, F 119; to carry about, F 148; Bereth, *pr. s.* B 2091; Berth, *sickly berth*, take with ill will, dislike, E 625; *berth hir on hond*, bears false witness against her, B 620; Ber, *pt. s.* bore, B 722.  
 Bireve. See Bireve.  
 Berie, *v.* bury, C 884.  
 Beringe, *s.* bearing, behavior, B 2022.  
 Berm, *s.* barm, *i.e.* yeast, G 813.  
 Bern, Berne, *s.* barn, B 3759; C 397.  
 Besy. See Bisy.  
 Bete, *pp.* beaten; Beten, B 1732.  
 Bete, *v.* kindle, A 2253; Betten, *pt. pl.* kindled, G 518.  
 Beth, *pr. pl.* arc, B 2350.  
 Beye, *v.* buy, C 845.  
 Bibbed, *pp.* drunk, A 4162.  
 Bible, *s.* book, G 857.  
 Bi-bledde, *pp.* bloodied, A 2002.  
 Bicched bones, *s. pl.* dice, C 656.  
 Bi-clappe, *ger.* to clasp, ensnare, G 9.  
 Bidaffed, *pp.* befooled, E 1191.  
 Bidde, *v.* to bid, F 327; *pp.* bidden, commanded, B 440.  
 Biddinge, *pr. pt.* praying, G 140.  
 Biden, *pp. of* Byde.  
 Bifalle, *pr. s. subj.* may befall, I 68; *pp.* befallen, B 726; Bifalleth, *pr. s.* happens, E 449; Bifel, *pt. s.* it came to pass, F 42; Bifil, B 3613; Bifelle, *pt. s. subj.* were to befall, E 136.  
 Biforn, *adv.* before, B 704; before, in anticipation, B 1668; beforehand, B 1184; of old time, F 551; Bifore, first, E 446.  
 Biforn, *prep.* before, B 997; C 665; in front of, G 680; Biforen, B 3553.  
 Biforn-hond, *adv.* beforehand, G 1317.  
 Bigan, *pt. s.* began, B 98, 1883.  
 Bigyle, *v.* to beguile, deceive, E 252.  
 Bigyleres, *pl.* beguilers, I 299.  
 Biheste, *s.* promise, B 37; F 698.  
 Bihete, *v.* promise; 1 *pr. s.* I promise, G 707. See Bihote.  
 Biholde, *pp.* beheld, G 179.  
 Bihote, *v.* promise, A 1854.  
 Bijaped, *pp.* tricked, A 1585.  
 Biknowe, *v.* acknowledge, B 886.  
 Bile, *s.* beak, B 4051.  
 Bileve, *s.* belief, faith, G 63.  
 Bileve, *v.* to remain, stay behind, F 583.  
 Bileveth, *imp. pl.* believe ye, G 1047.  
 Biraft. See Bireve.  
 Bireve, *v.* bereave, B 3359; take away, G 482; Biraft, *pt. s.* bereft, took away, B 3386.  
 Biseged, *pp.* besieged, B 3514.  
 Biseke, *v.* beseech, B 3174; Bisekinge, beseeching, E 178, 592.

**Bisemare**, *s.* abusiveness, A 3965.  
**Bisette**, *pt. s.* employed, A 279.  
**Biseye**, *pp.* displayed, made apparent; *yvel biseye*, ill-looking, E 965; *richely biseye*, rich-looking, splendid, E 984.  
**Bisie**, *v.* to trouble, busy; *bisie me*, employ myself, G 758.  
**Bisily**, *adv.* busily, F 88.  
**Bisnesse**, *s.* diligence, E 1008; busy endeavor, G 24; *Bisynesse*, F 642. See **Busnesse**.  
**Bismotered**, *pp.* soiled, A 76.  
**Bistad**, *pp.* hard bestead, greatly imperilled, B 649.  
**Bistrood**, *pt. s.* bestrode, B 2093.  
**Bisy**, *adj.* busy, attentive, F 509.  
**Bisyde**, *prep.* beside, E 777, 1105; F 374.  
**Bit**, *pr. s.* bids, F 291.  
**Bitake**, 1 *pr. s.* commend, commit, E 161; *Bitook*, *pt. s.* delivered, gave, committed (to the charge of), G 541.  
**Biteche**, *pr. s.* commit to, B 2114.  
**Bitid**, *pp.* befallen, B 1949. See **Bityde**.  
**Bitokneth**, *pr. s.* betokens, signifies, B 3942.  
**Bitook**. See **Bitake**.  
**Bitore**, *s.* bittern, D 972.  
**Bitrayed**, *pp.* betrayed, B 3570.  
**Bitwixen**, *prep.* between, C 832; *Bitwixe*, B 3830; *Bitwix*, F 317.  
**Bityde**, *v.* befall, E 79; happen, arrive, B 3730; *pr. s. subj.* may betide, E 306; *bityde what bityde*, let that happen that may, whatever may happen, B 2064.  
**Bitymes**, *adv.* betimes, soon, G 1008.  
**Biwailen**, *v.* to bewail, lament, B 26; *Biwaille*, B 3952; *Biwailed*, *pp.* E 530.  
**Biwreye**, *v.* to bewray, unfold, reveal, B 3219; *Biwreyen*, betray, G 150; *Biwreyest*, dis-closest, B 773.  
**Bladdre**, *s.* bladder, G 439.  
**Blake**, *adj. pl.* black, G 557.  
**Blakeberied**, *a*, a-blackberrying, *i.e.* a-wandering at will, astray, C 406.  
**Blaked**, *pp.* blackened, rendered black, B 3321.  
**Blankmanger**, *s.* blanc-mange, A 387.  
**Blere**, *v.* blind, A 4049.  
**Blered**, *adj.* bleared, G 730.  
**Blesseth hir**, *pr. s.* crosses herself, B 449.  
**Blinne**, *v.* stop, cease, G 1171.  
**Blisful**, *adj.* blessed, B 845; happy, merry, E 844, 1121.  
**Blisse**, *v.* bless, E 553.  
**Blondren**. See **Blundreth**.  
**Blood**, *s.* progeny, offspring, E 632.  
**Blowe**, *pp.* blown, filled out with wind, G 440.  
**Blundreth**, *pr. s.* runs heedlessly, G 1414; *Blondren*, 1 *pr. pl.* we fall into confusion, we confuse ourselves, become mazed, G 670.

**Blynde with**, *ger.* to blind (the priest) with, G 1151.  
**Bobance**, *s.* presumption, boast, D 569.  
**Bocher**, *s.* butcher, A 2025.  
**Boden**, *pp.* of *Bede*.  
**Body**, *s.* principal subject, E 42; my body, myself, B 1185; *pl.* metallic bodies (metals), answering to celestial bodies (planets), G 820.  
**Boes**, *pr. s.* it behooves, A 4027.  
**Boist**, *s.* box, C 307.  
**Boistous**, *adj.* rough, H 211.  
**Boistously**, *adv.* loudly, E 791.  
**Bokeler**, *s.* buckler, A 112, 3266.  
**Bokes**, *pl.* books, B 3499.  
**Boket**, *s.* bucket, A 1533.  
**Bole armoniak**, Armenian clay, G 790.  
**Bolle**, *s.* a bowl, G 1210.  
**Bond**, *s.* a band, F 131.  
**Boon**, *s.* bone, B 3090.  
**Boor**, *s.* boar, B 3299.  
**Boost**, *s.* boast, pride, B 3289. See **Bost**.  
**Boot**, *pt. s.* bit, B 3791.  
**Boot**, *s.* boat, E 1424.  
**Boras**, *s.* borax, A 630; G 790.  
**Bord**, *s.* table, B 430; board, *i.e.* meals, G 1017.  
**Bordels**, *s. pl.* brothels, I 885.  
**Bore**, *pp.* born, E 401; borne, carried, F 178; *Born*, borne, E 444; carried, F 176; worn, F 43.  
**Bore**, **Boren**, *pp.* of *Bere*.  
**Borel**, *adj.* coarse, common, B 3145.  
**Bores**. See **Boor**.  
**Borwe**, *v.* borrow, B 105.  
**Bost**, *s.* pride, swelling, G 441. See **Boost**.  
**Bote**, *s.* safety, salvation, B 1656; relief, G 1481.  
**Botel**, *s.* bottle (of hay), H 14.  
**Boterflye**, *s.* butterfly, B 3980.  
**Botme**, *s. dat.* bottom, G 1321.  
**Bought**, **Boughte**, *pt. s.* bought; *boughte agayn*, redeemed, C 766.  
**Bouk**, *s.* body, A 2746.  
**Bour**, *s.* inner room, B 4022.  
**Bourde**, *s.* jest, H 81.  
**Boydekins**, *s. pl.* poniards, lit. bodkins, B 3892.  
**Bracer**, *s.* arm-guard, A 111.  
**Bragot**, *s.* ale and mead, A 3261.  
**Brak**, *pt. s.* broke, B 288. *Pt. t.* of *Breken*.  
**Branched**, *adj.* full of branches, F 159.  
**Brast**, **Braste**. See **Breste**.  
**Braun**, *s.* muscle, A 546.  
**Brayde**. See **Breyde**.  
**Brede**, *s.* breadth, B 3350.  
**Breech**, *s.* breeches, B 2049; C 948.  
**Breed**, *s.* bread, B 3624; F 614.  
**Breke**, *v.* break, C 936; *breke his day*, fail to pay at the appointed time, G 1040; *Breke*, *imp. s.* interrupt, I 24.  
**Breme**, *adv.* fierce, A 1699.

Bren, *s.* bran, A 4053.  
 Brest, *s.* breast, E 617.  
 Breste, *v.* burst, break, E 1169; Braste, *pl.* B 671.  
 Bret-ful, *adj.* brimful, A 687.  
 Bretherhed, *s.* brotherhood, religious order, A 511.  
 Brew, *pt. s.* brewed, contrived, B 3575.  
 Breyde, *v.* start suddenly, awake, F 477; *pt. s.* started, went (out of his wits), B 3728; drew, B 837.  
 Brige, *s.* quarrel, B 2870.  
 Brighte, *adv.* brightly, B 11, 2034.  
 Brike, *s.* a perilous state, ruin, downfall, B 3580.  
 Bringen, *v.* bring, B 3623.  
 Brocage, *s.* brokery, jobbery, A 3375.  
 Brode, *adj. pl.* broad, thick, B 3448. See Brood.  
 Brode, *adv.* broadly; wide awake, G 1420.  
 Broken. See Breke.  
 Brokkinge, *pr. pl.* warbling, A 3377.  
 Brond, *s.* fire brand, B 3224; Bronde, *dat.* a piece of hot metal on the anvil, B 2095.  
 Brood, *adj.* broad, thick, large, F 82. See Brode.  
 Brosten. See Breste.  
 Brouded, *pp.* embroidered, B 3659.  
 Brouke, *v.* enjoy, use, B 4490.  
 Browdinge, *s.* embroidery, A 2498.  
 Bryberyes, *s. pl.* rascalities, D 1367.  
 Brydel, *s.* bridle, F 340.  
 Buk, *s.* buck; Bukke, B 1946; *blow the bukkes horn*, have trouble for nothing, A 3387.  
 Bulle, *s.* papal bull, C 909.  
 Bulte, *v.* sift, B 4430; *pt. s.* built, A 1548.  
 Burdown, *s.* bass, A 673.  
 Burel, *adj.* coarse, common, D 1872.  
 Buriels, *s. pl.* burial-places, *i.e.* the catacombs, G 186.  
 Busnesse, *s.* business, industry, G 5. See Busnesse.  
 Busk, *s.* bush, *pl.* A 1579.  
 Buxom, *adj.* obedient, B 1432.  
 Buxomly, *adv.* obediently, E 186.  
 By, *v.* to buy; *go by*, go to buy, G 1294. See Beye.  
 By and by, *adv.* side by side, in order, A 1011.  
 Byte, *v.* bite, B 3634; to sting, F 513; to cut deeply, F 158.

## C.

Cacche, *v.* catch, G 11.  
 Cake, *s.* loaf, C 322.  
 Calcening, *s.* calcination, G 771.  
 Calcinacioun, *s.* calcination, G 804.  
 Calle, *s.* head-dress, D 1018.  
 Cam, *pt. s.* came, F 81.  
 Camaille, *s.* camel, E 1196.

Camuse, *adj.* flat, A 3934.  
 Canevas, *s.* canvas, G 939.  
 Canon, *s.* the "Canon," the title of a book by Avicenna, C 890.  
 Canstow, *for* Canst thou, B 632.  
 Cantel, *s.* portion, A 3008.  
 Capel, *s.* horse, nag, H 64.  
 Capitayn, *s.* captain, C 582.  
 Cardiacle, *s.* pain about the heart, C 313.  
 Care, *s.* anxiety, trouble, B 514.  
 Care, *v.* feel anxiety, E 1212.  
 Carf, *pt. s.* carved, cut, B 3647.  
 Carie, *v.* to carry, E 585; Carien, *pr. pl.* carry, B 1814; Carieden, *pt. pl.* carried, G 1219.  
 Carl, *s.* churl, country fellow, C 717.  
 Carpe, *v.* chatter, A 194.  
 Carrik, *s.* ship of burden, D 1688.  
 Cas, *s.* case, occasion, B 36; circumstance, state, condition, B 123; chance, hap, E 316; *to deyen in the cas*, though death were the result, E 859.  
 Casteth, *pr. s.* considers, G 1414; *refl.* casts himself, devotes himself, G 738; Casten, *pr. pl.* cast about, debate, B 212.  
 Catel, *s.* chattels, A 373.  
 Caughte, *pt. s.* took, conceived, E 619; Caught, *pp.* obtained, E 1110.  
 Cause, *s.* reason, B 252; *cause why*, the reason why is this, E 2435.  
 Causen, *pr. pl.* cause, F 452.  
 Caytif, *s.* wretch, wretched or unfortunate man, B 3269.  
 Celerer, *s.* keeper of a cellar, B 3126.  
 Ceptre, *s.* sceptre, B 3334.  
 Cered, *pp. as adj.* waxed, G 808.  
 Cerial ook, *s.* holm oak, A 2290.  
 Cerimonies, *s. pl.* ceremonious acts, acts of courtship, F 515.  
 Ceriously, *adv.* minutely, with full details, B 185.  
 Certain, *adj.* a certain quantity of; *certain gold*, a stated sum of money, B 242; *certain tresor*, a quantity of treasure, B 442; *Certeyn*, a certain sum, a fixed quantity, G 776.  
 Certes, *adv.* certainly, G 1478.  
 Ceruce, *s.* white lead, A 630.  
 Cese. See Cesse.  
 Cesse, *v.* cease, B 1066.  
 Cetewale, *s.* either, (1) zedoary, or (2) the herb valerian, B 1951.  
 Ceynt, *s.* girdle, A 2335.  
 Chaffare, *s.* merchandise; *hence*, matter, subject, E 2438.  
 Chaffare, *ger.* to trade, barter, deal, traffic, B 139.  
 Chalk-stoon, *s.* a piece of chalk, G 1207.  
 Chalons, *s.* coverlets from Chalons, A 4140.  
 Chamberere, *s.* maidservant, chambermaid, E 819.

- Champartye**, *s.* partnership, A 1949.  
**Chanon**, *s.* canon, G 573; Chanoun, G 972.  
**Chapeleyne**, *s.* nun who said minor offices, A 164.  
**Chapmanhode**, *s.* trade, barter, B 143.  
**Chapmen**, *s. pl.* traders, merchants, B 135.  
**Char**, *s.* car, chariot, F 671.  
**Charbocle**, *s.* carbuncle (a precious stone), B 2061.  
**Charge**, *s.* responsibility, E 163; *of that no charge*, for that no matter, it is of no importance, G 749.  
**Chargeant**, *adj.* burdensome, B 2433.  
**Chasted**, *pp.* chastened, taught, F 491.  
**Chasteyn**, *s.* chestnut, A 1921.  
**Chastyse**. See **Chasted**.  
**Chance**, *s.* luck, G 593; "chance," a technical term in the game of hazard, C 653.  
**Change**, *s.* change, exchange, F 535.  
**Chaunterie**, *s.* endowment for singing masses for the dead, A 510.  
**Cheek**, *s.* cheek, *i.e.* cheekbone, B 3228.  
**Chees**, *pt. s.* chose, B 3706.  
**Cheeste**, *s.* strife, I 556.  
**Cherche**, *s.* a church, G 546.  
**Chere**, *s.* entertainment, B 180; show, E 678; kindly expression, E 1112.  
**Cherl**, *s.* churl, C 289.  
**Cheryce**, *v.* cherish; Cherisheth, *imp. pl.* cherish ye, F 353.  
**Chesinge**, *s.* choosing, choice, E 162.  
**Cheste**, *s.* coffin, E 29.  
**Chevauchee**. See **Chivachee**.  
**Cheve**, *v.*; *yvel mote he cheve*, ill may he end, or ill may he thrive, G 1225.  
**Chiertee**, *s.* dearness, B 1526; affection, F 881.  
**Chiknes**, *pl.* chickens, A 380.  
**Child**, *s.* child, a term of address to a young man, B 2000.  
**Childhede**, *s. dat.* childhood, B 1691.  
**Chilindre**, *s.* pocket sun-dial, B 1396.  
**Chimbe**, *s.* rim of the barrel, A 3895.  
**Chirche**, *s.* church, A 460.  
**Chirche-hawes**, *s. pl.* churchyards, I 801.  
**Chirkeith**, *pr. s.* twitters, D 1804.  
**Chirking**, *s.* murmuring, A 2004.  
**Chit**, *pr. s.* chides, G 921.  
**Chiteren**, *v.* chatter, prattle, G 1397.  
**Chivachee**, *s.* feat of horsemanship, H 50.  
**Chivachye**, *s.* expedition, A 85.  
**Chivalrye**, *s.* chivalry, company of knights, B 235; troops of horse, cavalry, B 3871.  
**Choy**, *s.* choice, E 170.  
**Chyde**, *v.* chide, complain, F 649.  
**Ciclatoun**, *s.* a costly kind of thin cloth, B 1924.  
**Cink**, *num.* cinque, five, C 653.  
**Cipres**, *s.* cypress; Ciprees, B 2071.  
**Citee**, *s.* city, F 46.  
**Citole**, *s.* stringed instrument of music, A 1959.  
**Citrinacioun**, *s.* citronizing, the turning to the color of citron, a process in alchemy, G 816.  
**Clamb**, *pt. s.* climbed, B 1987.  
**Clappe**, *pr. pl.* chatter, prattle, G 965; Clappeth, *imp. pl.* make a constant clatter, keep chattering, E 1200; *pr. s.* talks fast, B 3971.  
**Clapping**, *s.* chatter, idle talk, E 999.  
**Clarre**, *s.* wine mixed with honey and spices, and afterwards strained till it was clear, A 1471.  
**Clause**, *s.* sentence, B 251.  
**Clawe**, *v.* rub, scratch, A 4326; D 940.  
**Cleernesse**, *s.* clearness, brightness, glory, G 403.  
**Clene**, *adj.* clean, pure, unmixed, B 1183.  
**Clene**, *adv.* entirely, F 626.  
**Clepen**, *v.* call, F 331; Clepeth, *pr. s.* calls, F 382; *men clepe*, people call, E 115.  
**Clere**, *adj.* clear, bright, E 779.  
**Clergeon**, *s.* a chorister-boy, B 1693.  
**Clergial**, *adj.* clerkly, learned, G 752.  
**Clerk**, *s.* clerk, learned man, student, E 1.  
**Clew**, *pt. t.* of *Clawen*.  
**Cley**, *s.* clay, G 807.  
**Cliket**, *s.* latch-key, E 2046.  
**Clinke**, **Clinken**, *v.* to ring, sound, clink, tingle, B 1186; C 664.  
**Clinking**, *s.* tinkling, B 3984.  
**Clippe**, *v.* clip, cut, B 3257.  
**Clobbed**, *adj.* clubbed, B 3088.  
**Cloisterer**, *s.* a cloister-monk, B 3129.  
**Clokke**, *s.* clock; *of the clock*, by the clock, B 14.  
**Clom**, *interj.* hush, A 3638.  
**Clombe**. See **Clymben**.  
**Cloos**, *adj.* close, secret, G 1369.  
**Clos**, a pen, enclosure, B 4550.  
**Clote-leef**, *s.* a leaf of the burdock or clote-bur, G 577.  
**Clothred**, *pp.* clotted, A 2745.  
**Clout**, *s.* a cloth, C 736; Cloutes, *pl.* cloths, portions of a garment, rags, C 348.  
**Clowe-gilofre**, *s.* clove, spice, B 1952.  
**Clymben**, *v.* to climb, F 106; Clymbeth, *pr. s.* B 3966; *Clombe*, *pp.* B 12; *were clombe*, hadst climbed, B 3592.  
**Coagulat**, *pp.* coagulated, clotted, G 811.  
**Cod**, *s.* bag, C 534.  
**Cofre**, *s.* coffer, money-box, G 836.  
**Coillons**, *pl.* testicles, C 952.  
**Cokenay**, *s.* milksop, A 4208.  
**Cokes**, *s. pl.* cooks, C 538.  
**Cokewold**, *s.* cuckold, A 3152.  
**Cokkel**, *s.* cockle, *i.e.* the corn-cockle, B 1183.  
**Cokkes**, corruption of *Goddes*, H 9; I 29.  
**Col-blak**, *adj.* coal-black, A 2142.  
**Colde**, *v.* grow cold, B 879.

Colerik, *adj.* choleric, F 51.  
 Coles, *s. pl.* coals, G 1114.  
 Col-fox, *s.* brant-fox, B 4405.  
 Collacioun, *s.* conference, E 325.  
 Collect, *s.* table of planetary motions, F 1275.  
 Colour, *s.* color, outward appearance; Coloures, *pl.* colors, pretences (a pun), F 511.  
 Colpons, *pl.* shreds, A 679.  
 Columbyn, *adj.* dove-like, E 2141.  
 Comandour, *s.* commander, B 495.  
 Combust, *pp.* burnt up, G 811.  
 Come, *s.* coming, G 343.  
 Come, *v.* come; *come thereby*, come by it, acquire it, G 1395; *Comth, pr. s.* comes, B 407; *Comen, pp.* come, B 260; *ben comen*, are come, B 1130; *Coomen, pt. pl.* came, B 1805.  
 Commune, *adj.* general, common, B 155; E 431.  
 Commune, *s.* the commons, E 70.  
 Commune, *v.* commune, converse, G 982.  
 Companye, *s.* company, B 134.  
 Compas, *s.* enclosure, continent; *tryne compas*, the threefold world, containing earth, sea, and heaven, G 45.  
 Composiciouns, *s. pl.* suitable arrangements, F 229.  
 Comprehende, *v.* take in (in the mind), F 223.  
 Comunly, *adv.* commonly, E 726.  
 Comyn, *s.* cummin, B 2045.  
 Conclude, *v.* draw a conclusion, B 14; include, put together, G 429; attain to a successful result, G 773.  
 Conclusioun, *s.* result, successful end of an experiment, G 672; reason, F 492.  
 Confiture, *s.* composition, C 862.  
 Confounde, *pp.* overwhelmed, B 100; destroyed in soul, G 137.  
 Confus, *pp. as adj.* convicted of folly, G 463.  
 Conioingie, *s.* conjunction, G 95.  
 Conne, *v.* con, learn, B 1730; *1 pr. pl.* we can, are able, B 483; *pr. s. subj.* he may know; *al conne he*, whether he may know, G 846.  
 Conning, *adj.* skilful, B 3690.  
 Conningly, *adv.* skilfully, E 1017.  
 Conseil, *s.* council, B 204; counsel, B 425.  
 Consistorie, *s.* judgment-seat, C 162.  
 Conspiracye, *s.* plot, B 3889.  
 Constable, *s.* governor, B 512.  
 Constablesse, *s.* constable's wife, B 539.  
 Constance, *s.* constancy, E 668, 1000, 1008.  
 Constellacioun, *s.* constellation, cluster of stars, F 129.  
 Constreyneth, *pr. s.* constrain, E 800.  
 Kontek, *s.* strife, A 2003.  
 Contenance, *s.* pretence, appearance, G 1264; demeanor, E 924; self-possession, E 1110.  
 Contrarie, *adj.* contrary, B 3964; *in contrarie*, in contradiction, G 1477.  
 Contrarien, *v.* to go contrary to, oppose, F 705.

Contubernial, *s.* fellow-soldier, I 760.  
 Conveyen, *v.* convey, introduce, E 55; *Conveyed, pt. pl.* accompanied, went as convoy, E 391.  
 Coomen, *pt. pl.* came, B 1805. See *Come*.  
 Coper, *s.* copper, G 829.  
 Coppe, *s.* cup, A 134.  
 Corage, *s.* courage, B 1970; will, E 907; feeling, disposition, E 220; *of his corage*, in his disposition, F 22.  
 Cordewayne, *s.* Cordovan leather, B 1922.  
 Corfew-tyme, *s.* curfew-time, about 8 P.M., A 3645.  
 Corn, *s.* grain, C 863; *Cornes, pl.* cornfields, pieces of standing corn, B 3225.  
 Corniculere, *s.* registrar, secretary, G 369.  
 Corny, *adj.* applied to ale, strong of the corn or malt, C 315, 456.  
 Corone, *s.* crown, garland, E 381.  
 Corosif, *adj.* corrosive, G 853.  
 Coroured, *pp.* crowned, B 3555.  
 Corps, *s.* dead body, F 519.  
 Corpus, *s.* body; *Corpus Dominus*, false Latin for *corpus Domini*, the body of the Lord, B 1625; *Corpus Madrian*, the body of St. Mathurin, B 3082; *Corpus bones*, an intentionally nonsensical oath, composed of "corpus Domini," the Lord's body, and "bones," C 314.  
 Correccioun, *s.* correction, I 60.  
 Corruptable, *adj.* corruptible, A 3010.  
 Corrupted, *pt. s.* corrupted, I 819.  
 Cors, *s.* corpse, C 665.  
 Corve. See *Kerve*.  
 Cost, *s.* cost, B 3564.  
 Costage, *s.* cost, expense, outlay, E 1126.  
 Coste, *s.* the coast, B 1626.  
 Cote, *s.* a cot, E 398.  
 Cote, *s.* a coat, outer garment, used of a part of a woman's apparel, E 913.  
 Cote-armour, *s.* coat with armorial bearings, B 2056.  
 Couche, *v.* to cower, E 1206.  
 Countour, *s.* auditor, A 359.  
 Countre-taille, *s.* counter-tally, E 1190.  
 Countrewayte, *v.* watch against, B 2509.  
 Courtepy, *s.* cape, A 290.  
 Couth, *pp.* known, E 942.  
 Coveityse, *s.* covetousness, C 424.  
 Coveenable, *adj.* suitable, I 80.  
 Covent, *s.* conventual body, the monks composing the conventual body, B 1827; convent, G 1007.  
 Coverchiefs, *s. pl.* kerchiefs, A 453.  
 Covered, *pt. s.* covered, 914.  
 Coward, *adj.* cowardly, B 3100.  
 Coy, *adj.* or *adv.* quiet, E 2.  
 Coyn, *s.* coin, E 1168.  
 Crabbed, *adj.* shrewish, cross, bitter, E 1203.



Cracching, *s.* scratching, A 2834.  
 Cradel, *s.* cradle, G 122.  
 Craft, *s.* skill, way of doing a thing, F 185; secret power, might, B 3258; subtle contrivance, F 249.  
 Craftily, *adv.* cunningly, skilfully, B 48.  
 Crafty, *adj.* skilful, clever, G 1290.  
 Craketh, *pr. s.* sings hoarsely, E 1850.  
 Crased, *pp.* cracked, G 934.  
 Creatour, *s.* Creator, C 901.  
 Creauce, *s.* creed, B 915; Creance, object of faith, B 340.  
 Creauce, *v.* get credit, B 1479; creanced, *pp.* raised on credit, B 1556.  
 Crede, *s.* creed, belief, G 1037.  
 Crekes, *s. pl.* devices, A 4051.  
 Crepe, *v.* creep, B 3627; Crepeth, *pr. s.* E 1134.  
 Cristal, *adj.* crystal, C 347.  
 Cristemasse, *s.* Christmas, B 126, 1730.  
 Cristen, *adj.* Christian, B 222.  
 Cristendom, *s.* the Christian religion, B 351; Christianity, G 447.  
 Cristenly, *adv.* in a Christian manner, B 1122.  
 Christianitee, *s.* company of Christians, B 544.  
 Cristned, *pp.* baptized, B 226; G 352.  
 Cristofre, *s.* image of St. Christopher worn as an amulet, A 115.  
 Crommes, *s. pl.* crumbs, G 60.  
 Crone, *s.* crone, hag, B 432.  
 Copen, *pp.* crept, A 4259.  
 Croper, *s.* crupper, G 566.  
 Croslet, *s.* a crucible, G 1147; Crosselet, G 1117.  
 Crouche, *pr. s.* sign with the cross, A 3479.  
 Croude, *v.* crowd, push; Crowdest, *2 pr. s.* dost press, dost push, B 296.  
 Crouke, *s.* crock, A 4158.  
 Crowned, *pp.* crowned, *i.e.* supreme, F 526. See Coroued.  
 Crowding, *s.* pressure, motive power, B 299.  
 Croweth, *pr. s. refl.*; *him croweth*, crows, C 362.  
 Croys, *s.* cross, B 450; C 532; E 556.  
 Crul, *adj. pl.* curly, A 81.  
 Cucurbites, *s. pl.* flasks for distilling, G 794.  
 Culpe, *s.* guilt, I 336.  
 Cure, *s.* care, endeavor, B 188; *honest cure*, care for honorable things, C 557; *in cure*, in her care, in her power, B 230.  
 Cures, *s. pl.* cares, pursuits, E 82.  
 Cursedly, *adv.* wickedly, abominably, B 3419.  
 Cursednesse, *s.* malice, B 1821; wickedness, B 3575; shrewishness, E 1239.  
 Curteisly, *adv.* courteously, B 1636.  
 Curteisye, *s.* courtesy, refinement, B 3686; E 74; F 95.  
 Cut, *s.* a lot, C 793.

## D.

Daf, *s.* fool, A 4208.  
 Dagginge, *s.* slitting, I 418.  
 Dagon, *s.* fragment, D 1751.  
 Daliance, Daliaunce, *s.* playful demeanor; *he doth daliaunce*, he behaves playfully and good-naturedly, B 1894.  
 Dame, *s.* mother, C 684.  
 Dampnable, *adj.* damnable, C 472.  
 Dampnacioun, *s.* damnation, C 500.  
 Dan. See Daun.  
 Dare, *v.* daze, D 1294.  
 Darreyne, *v.* contest, A 1609.  
 Darst, *2 pr. s.* darest, B 860; Dorste, *pt. s.* durst, B 753.  
 Daswen, *pt. pl.* daze, are dazed, are dazzled, H 31.  
 Date, *s.* a date, term, period, G 1411.  
 Daun, *s.* lord, sir, A 1379; Dan, B 3982.  
 Daunce, *v.* to dance, B 126; Dauncen, *pr. pl.* F 272.  
 Daungerous, *adj.* difficult to please, B 2129.  
 Dawe, *v.* to dawn, 3872.  
 Day, *s.* day; also, an appointed day for the payment of a sum of money, G 1040; day, time, B 3374; Dayes, *pl.* days, lifetime, B 118; *now a dayes*, now-a-days, at this time, E 1164.  
 Debaat, *s.* strife, G 1389.  
 Debat, *s.* debate, strife, war, B 130.  
 Debate, *v.* to fight, war, B 2058.  
 Declaring, *s.* declaration, B 3172.  
 Dede, *pp.* dead, A 942. See Deed.  
 Dede; *in dede*, indeed, in reality, B 3511.  
 Deduyt, *s.* delight, A 2177.  
 Deed, *pp. as adj.* dead, B 209; *pp.* dead, F 287.  
 Deedly, *adv.* deadly, mortally, G 476.  
 Deef, *adj.* deaf, A 446.  
 Deel. See Del.  
 Deer, *s. pl.* animals, B 1926.  
 Dees, *s. pl.* dice, F 690.  
 Deeth, *s.* death, B 3567; E 36, 510.  
 Deface, *v.* to obliterate, E 510.  
 Defame, *s.* dishonor, C 612. See Diffame.  
 Defaute, *s.* defect, E 1018; default, fault, wickedness, B 3718; fault, sin, C 370.  
 Defenden, *v.* to forbid, C 590.  
 Degyse, *adj.* fashionable, I 417.  
 Degree, *s.* rank, A 1168.  
 Degrees, *s. pl.* degrees of the zodiac, F 386.  
 Deknes, *s. pl.* deacons, G 547.  
 Del, *s.* part; *every del*, every whit, entirely, G 1269.  
 Deliver, *adj.* active, A 84.  
 Deliverly, *adv.* adroitly, B 4606.  
 Delivernesse, *s.* agility, I 452.  
 Delte, *pt. s.* dealt, G 1074.  
 Delve, *v.* to dig up, F 638.

- Delyces, *s. pl.* delights, pleasures, C 547; G 3.  
 Delyting, *pr. pt.* delighting, E 997.  
 Demands, *s. pl.* questions, E 348.  
 Demande, *s.* demand, question, B 472.  
 Deme, *v.* suppose, B 1038; give a verdict, G 595; Demeth, *pr. s.* fancies, G 689; *imp. pl.* suppose ye, G 993; Demen, to give judgment, B 1639; *v.* judge, B 3045.  
 Demeyne, *s.* dominion, B 3855.  
 Depardieux, *interj.* on the part of God, by God's help, B 39.  
 Departe, *v.* part, separate; Departed, *pt. s.* parted, B 1158; divided, C 812.  
 Depe, *adv.* deeply, B 4.  
 Depe, *adj.* deep, B 3988.  
 Depe, *s.* the deep, the sea, B 455.  
 Depper, *adv. comp.* deeper, B 630.  
 Dere, *adj.* dear; *pl. F* 272.  
 Dere, *adv.* dearly; to *dere*, too dearly, C 293.  
 Dere, *v.* injure, wound, harm, F 240.  
 Dereling, *s.* darling, A 3793.  
 Derkest, *adj. superl.* darkest, B 304.  
 Derne, *adj.* secret, A 3200.  
 Derre, *adv. comp.* more dearly, A 1448.  
 Descensories, *s. pl.* vessels for extracting oil, G 792.  
 Desclaundred, *pp.* slandered, B 674.  
 Desert, *s.* desert, deserving, merit, F 532.  
 Desirous, *adj.* ardent, F 23.  
 Deslavee, *adj.* unbridled, I 629.  
 Desolaat, *adj.* deserted, alone; *holden desolaat*, shunned, C 598.  
 Desolat, *adj.* desolate, *i.e.* void of, lacking in, B 131.  
 Desordeyne, *adj.* inordinate, I 818.  
 Desordinat, *adj.* disorderly, I 415.  
 Despeired, *pp.* filled with despair, B 3645.  
 Despence, *s.* expenses, expenditure, money for expenses, B 105. See *Dispence*.  
 Spendest, 2 *pr. s.* spendest, wastest, B 2121.  
 Despit, *s.* spite, B 591; vexation, dishonor, B 699.  
 Despitously, *adv.* despitefully, maliciously, B 605.  
 Desport, *s.* amusement, sport, G 592. See *Disport*.  
 Despyse, *v.* to despise, B 115.  
 Despyt, *s.* despise, a deed expressive of contempt, B 3738; *in your despyt*, in spite of you, in contempt of you, B 1753.  
 Desray, *s.* disarray, confusion, I 927.  
 Destourbe, *v.* to disturb; *destourbe of*, to disturb in, C 340.  
 Destreyneth, vexes, constrains, A 1455.  
 Deve, *adj. pl.* deaf, G 286.  
 Devoir, *s.* duty, B 38; E 966.  
 Devyse, *ger.* 'o relate, tell, B 154; to describe, F 65; to plan, E 698; to frame, E 739; Devy-  
 sen, *v.* imagine, E 108; Devyse, 1 *pr. s.* I tell, B 3693; *pr. pl.* imagine, discourse, F 261.  
 Dextrer, *s.* a courser, war-horse, B 2103.  
 Deye, *v.* die; Deyen, *v.* die, E 665; Deyde, *pt. s.* died, C 580; Deyeth, *pr. s.* dies, G 1436; Deyed, *pp.* B 1841.  
 Deyinge, *s.* dying, death, B 1850.  
 Deyneth, *impers. pr. s.*; *deyned him, pt. s.* it deigned him, *i.e.* he deigned, B 3324.  
 Deyntee, *s.* pleasure, B 139; F 681; Deyntees, *pl.* dainties, F 301.  
 Deyntee, *adj.* dainty, pleasant, rare, B 1901; C 520; E 1112; F 70.  
 Deynteuous, *adj.* dainty, E 265.  
 Deys, *s.* dais, F 59.  
 Dide, *pt. s.* put on, B 2047; *dide hem drawe*, caused to be drawn, B 1823. See *Doon*.  
 Diffame, *s.* evil name, ill report, E 540, 730. See *Defame*.  
 Dighte, *v.* dight, prepare; *dighte me*, prepare myself to go, B 3104.  
 Digne, *adj.* worthy, noble, B 1175; worthy, honored, C 695; suitable, B 778.  
 Dignitee, *s.* dignity, rank, E 470.  
 Dilatacioun, *s.* diffuseness, B 232.  
 Discover, *v.* to reveal, G 1465.  
 Discripcioun, *s.* description, F 580.  
 Discryveth, *pt. s.* describes, E 43.  
 Disdeyn, *s.* disdain, contempt, F 700.  
 Disdeyne, *v.* to disdain, E 98.  
 Disese, *s.* discomfort, source of pain, distress, B 3961; misery, F 467; lack of ease, trouble, distress, misery, B 616; G 747; H 97.  
 Disparage, *s.* disparagement, disgrace, E 908.  
 Dispence, *s.* expense, expenditure, E 1209. See *Despence*.  
 Dispende, *v.* to spend, B 3500.  
 Displeasances, *s. pl.* displeasures, annoyances, C 420.  
 Dispoilen, *v.* to despoil, *i.e.* strip, E 374.  
 Disport, *s.* pleasure, B 143. See *Desport*.  
 Disposed, *pp.* inclined; *wel disposed*, in good health (the converse of *indisposed*), H 33.  
 Dissever, *ger.* to part, G 875.  
 Dissimuleth, *pr. s.* dissimulates, acts foolishly, G 466.  
 Dissimuling, *s.* dissembling, G 1073.  
 Dissively, *adv.* in different ways, F 202.  
 Divyn, *adj.* divine, B 3247.  
 Do. See *Doon*.  
 Dogerel, *adj.* doggerel, B 2115.  
 Dogges, *s. pl.* dogs, B 3089.  
 Dokked, *pp.* cropped, A 590.  
 Dolve. See *Delve*.  
 Dome, *s.* judgment, C 637.  
 Dominacioun, *s.* domination, supremacy, chiefest influence, F 352; dominion, C 560; power, H 57.

**Dominus.** See **Corpus.**  
**Don, Done.** See **Doon.**  
**Doom,** s. judgment, opinion, B 3127; F 677.  
**Doon,** v. do, G 166; act, B 90; make, B 3507; cause, B 3618; *doon us honge*, cause us to be hung, C 790; *leet don cryen*, cause to be cried, F 46; **Doon,** *pp.* completed, G 387; *doon make*, caused to be made, E 253; *hath doon you kept*, hath caused you to be kept, E 1098; **Do,** v. cause, B 3107; **Do,** *imp. s.* make, H 12; cause, G 32; *do hange*, cause me to be hung, G 1029; *do fecche*, cause to be fetched, B 662; *do wey*, put away, lay aside, G 487; **Do come,** *imp. s.* cause to come, B 2035; **Do kepe,** 2 *pr. pl.* cause to be kept, B 3624; **Done,** *ger. for to done*, a fit thing to do, I 62; **Doost,** 2 *pr. s.* makest, C 312; **Dooth,** *imp. pl.* do ye, C 745; **do,** E 568; *as dooth*, pray do, F 458; **Dooth, doth,** B 23; **Doth forth,** *pr. s.* continues, E 1015.  
**Dore,** s. a door, E 282; F 615.  
**Dote,** v. dote; **Doten,** grow foolish, act foolishly, G 983.  
**Doublenesse,** s. duplicity, G 1300.  
**Doughter,** s. daughter, B 151; E 608.  
**Doughty,** *adj.* doughty, strong, F 338; warlike, F 11.  
**Doun,** *adv.* down, F 323; *up and down*, in all directions, in all ways, B 53. See **Adoun.**  
**Doune,** s. down, hill (*dat.*), B 1986.  
**Doute,** s. doubt; *out of doute*, doubtless, B 390.  
**Doutelees,** *adv.* doubtless, without doubt, certainly, C 492; without hesitation, B 226.  
**Doutes,** s. *pl.* fears, F 220.  
**Dowaire,** s. dower, E 848.  
**Dowve,** s. dove, pigeon, C 397.  
**Dradde,** *pt. s.* dreaded, feared, B 3402; *dradde him*, was afraid, B 3918; **Drad,** *pp.* dreaded, E 69; **Dradden,** *pt. pl. subj.* should dread, should fear, G 15. See **Drede.**  
**Draf,** s. draff, refuse, chaff, I 35.  
**Drasty,** *adj.* filthy, worthless, trashy, B 2113.  
**Drawe,** *pp.* drawn, moved; *drawe him*, withdraw himself, F 355; *drawen hem*, *pr. pl.* withdraw themselves, F 252; **Draweth,** *imp. pl.* invite, B 1632.  
**Drecched,** *pp.* harassed, B 4077.  
**Drede,** s. fear, G 204; doubt, C 507; *it is no drede*, there is no doubt, B 869; *out of drede*, out of doubt, certainly, E 634.  
**Drede,** 1 *pr. s.* I dread, fear, E 636; **Dreed,** *imp. s.* dread, fear, E 1201; **Dreden,** v. to fear, G 320; *to drede*, *ger.* to be feared, G 437.  
**Dredful,** *adj.* terrible, B 3558.  
**Drenche,** v. drown; **Drenchen,** to be drowned, B 455.  
**Drenching,** s. drowning, B 485.  
**Drery,** *adj.* sad, E 514.

**Dresse,** v. address, prepare, E 1049; v. *refl.* address himself, G 1271; *dresseth hir*, *pt. s. refl.* prepares herself, B 265; **Dressen,** *pr. pl.* prepare themselves, set forward, B 263; **Dresse,** *pr. pl. refl.* direct themselves, *i. e.* take their places in order, B 416.  
**Dreye,** *adj.* dry, B 3233.  
**Dreynt.** See **Drenche.**  
**Drive,** *pp.* driven, B 3203.  
**Drogges,** s. *pl.* drugs, A 426.  
**Dronke,** *pt. pl.* drank, B 3418; **Dronken,** B 3390.  
**Dronkelewe,** *adj.* drunken, overcome with drink, C 495.  
**Dronkenesse,** s. drunkenness, B 771; C 484.  
**Drope,** s. drop, G 522.  
**Drough,** *pt. s. refl.* drew himself, approached, B 1710.  
**Droughte,** s. drought, F 118.  
**Drovy,** *adj.* turbid, I 816.  
**Drugge,** v. drudge, A 1416.  
**Dryve,** v. drive; *dryve the day away*, pass the time, C 628.  
**Duk,** s. duke, A 860.  
**Dul,** *adj.* dull, F 279.  
**Dulleth,** *pr. s.* makes dull, stupefies, G 1172.  
**Dun,** s. the dun horse, H 5.  
**Dwale,** s. sleeping-draught, A 4161.  
**Dyed,** *pt. s.* dyed, steeped, F 511.  
**Dyen,** v. die, B 114. See **Deye.**

## E.

**Ebbe,** s. ebb, low water, F 259.  
**Eek,** *adv.* eke, also, B 59, 70; moreover, also, B 140.  
**Eet,** *pt. s.* ate, C 510; *imp. s.* eat, B 3640. See **Ete.**  
**Effect,** s. deed, reality; *in effect*, in fact, in reality, G 511.  
**Eft,** *adv.* again, G 1263.  
**Eftsonne,** *adv.* soon after, G 1288; soon after this, H 65; hereafter, G 933; again, B 909.  
**Eggement,** s. instigation, incitement, B 842.  
**Egre,** *adj.* eager, sharp, fierce, E 1199.  
**Egreimoine,** s. agrimony, G 800.  
**Eighte,** *num.* eight, C 771.  
**Eightetethe,** *ord. adj.* eighteenth, B 5.  
**Eir,** s. air, A 1246.  
**Ekko,** s. echo, E 1189.  
**Elaat,** *adj.* elate, B 3357.  
**Elder,** *adj. comp.* older, B 1720, 3450.  
**Eldres,** s. *pl.* elders, forefathers, B 3388.  
**Elenge,** *adj.* wretched, B 1412.  
**Elf-queen,** s. fairy queen, B 1978.  
**Ellebor,** s. hellebore, B 4154.  
**Elles;** *adv.* else, otherwise; *elles god forbede*, God forbid it should be otherwise, G 1046.  
**Elleswher,** *adv.* elsewhere, G 1130.

**Elvish**, *adj.* lit. elvish, imp-like, mysterious; but used in the sense of foolish, G 751; elf-like, abstracted, G 842.

**Embassadrye**, *s.* embassy, negotiation, B 233.

**Emeraude**, *s.* emerald, B 1799.

**Empireden**, *pt. pl.* made worse, B 2205.

**Empeyre**, *pr. s.* impair, E 2198.

**Emplastre**, *pr. pl.* plaster over, "whitewash," E 2297.

**Empoisoned**, *pp.* poisoned, B 3850.

**Empoisoning**, *s.* poisoning, C 891.

**Empoysoner**, *s.* poisoner, C 894.

**Emprinteth**, *imp. pl.* imprint, impress, E 1193.

**Empryse**, *s.* enterprise, undertaking, G 605.

**Empte**, *v.* empty, make empty, G 741; Empten, G 1404.

**Enbibing**, *s.* imbibition, absorption, G 814.

**Encens**, *s.* incense, A 2938.

**Encense**, *v.* to offer incense, G 395, 413.

**Encheson**, *s.* occasion, cause, F 456; Enchesoun, B 2783.

**Encorporing**, *s.* incorporation, G 815.

**Encrees**, *s.* increase, B 237; G 18.

**Encrese**, *v.* increase; Encrease, B 1068; Encresen, B 1654; Encresseth, *pr. s.* E 50; Encressed, *pp.* E 408.

**Ende**, *s.* end, result, B 481.

**Endelees**, *adj.* endless, B 951.

**Endelong**, *prep.* down along, F 416.

**Endenting**, *s.* scalloping, I 417.

**Endetted**, *pp.* indebted, G 734.

**Endure**, *v.* last, B 3538.

**Endyte**, *v.* indict, B 3858; Endyted, *pp.* composed, B 3170; Endyten, *v.* indite, write, B 781.

**Informed**, *pp.* informed, E 738; F 335.

**Engendred**, *pp.* engendered, begotten, E 158.

**Engreggen**, *pr. pl.* weigh upon, I 979.

**Engyn**, *s.* gin, machine, F 184; genius, skill, G 339.

**Enlumined**, *pt. s.* illumined, E 33.

**Enluting**, *s.* securing with "lute," daubing with clay, etc., to exclude air, G 766.

**Enquere**, *v.* inquire, search into, B 629.

**Enqueringe**, *s.* inquiry, B 888.

**Entencioun**, *s.* intention, intent, C 408.

**Entende**, *ger.* to direct one's attention, apply one's self, B 3498; to attend, dispose one's self, F 689.

**Entente**, *s.* will, B 824; design, B 3835; plan, B 147, 206; endeavor, G 7; wish, E 189; mind, B 1740; *in good entent*, with good will, B 1902; *as to commune entente*, with reference to its common (*i.e.* plain) meaning, *i.e.* in plain, intelligible language, F 107.

**Entraille**, *s.* entrails, inside, E 1188.

**Entredited**, *pp.* under an interdict, I 905.

**Entringe**, *pr. pt.* entering, I 12.

**Envenimed**, *pp.* envenomed, poisoned, B 3314.

**Envoluped**, *pp.* wrapped up, enveloped, involved, C 942.

**Envye**, *s.* envy, jealousy, B 3584.

**Envyned**, *pp.* supplied with wine, A 342.

**Equitee**, *s.* equity, justice, E 439.

**Er**, *adv.* before, B 420; G 1273.

**Er**, *conj.* ere, B 119; F 130; *er now*, ere now, F 460; *er that*, before, E 178.

**Er**, *prep.* before, C 892; *er that*, before that, G 375.

**Erchedeken**, *s.* archdeacon, D 1300.

**Ere**, *s.* ear, F 196, 316.

**Erl**, *s.* earl, B 3597, 3646.

**Erme**, *v.* feel sad, grieve, C 312.

**Ernestful**, *adj.* serious, E 1175.

**Ers**, *s.* buttocks, A 3734.

**Erst**, *adv.* first, at first; *at erst*, for the first time, B 1884; G 151; *long erst er*, long first before, C 662. See **Er**.

**Eschue**, *v.* to eschew, avoid, shun, G 4.

**Ese**, *s.* ease, E 217; pleasure, G 746; ease, relief, H 25.

**Espye**, *v.* inquire about, B 180.

**Essoyne**, *s.* excuse for absence, I 164.

**Est**, *s.* east, B 297, 493, 3657

**Estaat**, *s.* rank, B 973; estate, condition, rank, B 3592; way, E 610.

**Estatlich**, *adj.* stately, A 140.

**Ete**, *v.* eat, F 617.

**Evangyles**, *s. pl.* gospels, B 666.

**Eve**, *s.* eve, evening, F 364; G 375.

**Evel**, *adv.* ill, B 1897.

**Evene**, *adj.* even, E 811.

**Everich**, every one, E 1017; either of the two, B 1004.

**Everichon**, every one, B 330.

**Exaltacioun**, *s.* exaltation (a term in astrology), I 10.

**Exametron**, *s.* a hexameter, B 3169.

**Expans**, *adj.* separate, F 1275.

**Expert**, *adj.* experienced, B 4; skilful in performing an experiment, experienced, G 1251.

**Expoune**, *v.* to expound, explain, B 3398; G 86; Expounded, *pt. s.* B 3399.

**Extenden**, *pr. pl.* are extended, B 461.

**Ey**, *interj.* eh! what! C 782.

**Ey**, *s.* egg, G 806.

**Eyleth**, *pr. s.* ails, B 1171; aileth, H 16; Eyled, *pt. s. impers.* ailed, F 501.

**Byre**, *s.* air, gas, G 767.

## F.

**Face**, *s.* face; a technical term in astrology, signifying the third part of a sign (of the zodiac); a part of the zodiac ten degrees in extent, F 50.

**Fader**, *s.* father; *fader day*, father's day, fath-

- er's time, B 3374; *Fadres*, fathers, ancestors, E 61; parents, originators, B 129; *fader kin*, father's race, ancestry, G 829.
- Fairnes**, *Fairnesse*, *s.* fairness, beauty, E 384.
- Fairy**, *s.* fairyland, F 96; fairy contrivance, magic, F 201.
- Falding**, *s.* coarse cloth, A 391.
- Falle**, *v.* happen, light, E 126; suit, E 259; *pp.* happened, E 938; *Fallen*, *v.* happen, F 134; accidentally placed, F 684; *Fil*, *pt. s.* fell, C 804; *Fel*, befell, B 141. See *Fil*.
- Fals**, *adj.* false, B 74.
- False**, *v.* deceive, be untrue to; *Falsed*, *pp.* falsified, broken (faith), F 627.
- False get**, cheating contrivance, G 1277.
- Falshede**, *s.* falsehood, G 979.
- Faltren**, *pr. pl.* falter, fail, B 772.
- Falwes**, *s. pl.* fallows, D 656.
- Fame**, *s.* good report, E 418.
- Fan**, *s.* vane, quintain, H 42.
- Fantastyk**, *adj.* imaginative, A 1376.
- Fare**, *s.* business, goings on, B 569.
- Fare**, 1 *pr. s.* go, G 733; am, B 1676; *pp.* gone, B 512; *Fareth*, *pr. s.* it turns out, G 966; it fares, it is, E 1217; *Faren*, 1 *pr. pl.* we fare, live, G 662; *Far well*, *imp. s.* farewell, B 116.
- Farewel**, *interj.* farewell! it is all over, G 907.
- Faste**, *adv.* quickly, G 245; *as faste*, very quickly, G 1235; *faste by*, close at hand, B 3116.
- Faster**, *adv.* closer, B 3722.
- Faucon**, *s.* falcon, F 411, 424.
- Fauconers**, *s. pl.* falconers, F 1196.
- Faught**, *pt. s.* fought, B 3519.
- Fayn**, *adv.* gladly, willingly, B 41; *wolde fayn*, would fain, would be glad to, E 696.
- Fayn**, *adj.* glad, H 92.
- Feeble**, *adj.* feeble, weak, E 1198.
- Fecche**, *v.* to fetch, B 1857; *Fecchen*, E 276. See *Fet*.
- Feeld**, *s.* field, in an heraldic sense, B 3573; *Feld*, *dat.* field, plain, B 3197.
- Feend**, *s.* the fiend, F 522.
- Feet**, *s.* performance, E 429.
- Feffed in**, *pp.* invested with, E 1698.
- Fel**, *pt. s.* befell, happened, B 141. See *Falle*.
- Fel**, *adj.* fell, cruel, terrible, B 2019.
- Feld**. See *Feeld*.
- Fele**, *adj.* many, E 917.
- Felle**. See *Fel*.
- Felonye**, *s.* crime, B 643.
- Femenye**, *s.* womankind, A 866.
- Femininitee**, *s.* feminine form, B 360.
- Fen**, *s.* chapter, or subdivision of Avicenna's book, called the Canon, C 890.
- Fend**. See *Feend*.
- Fer**, *adj.* far, B 508, 658.
- Ferde**, *pt. s.* fared, *i.e.* behaved, E 1060. See *Fare*.
- Fere**, *s. dat.* fear, B 3369.
- Fered**, *pp.* terrified, afraid, G 924.
- Ferforth**, *adv.* far, *as ferforth as*, as far as, B 1099; *so ferforth*, to such a degree, G 40. See *Fer*.
- Ferly**, *adj.* wonderful, A 4173.
- Fermacies**, *s. pl.* pharmacies, medicines, A 2713.
- Ferme**, *adj.* firm, E 663.
- Fermerere**, *s.* keeper of the infirmary, D 1859.
- Fern**, *adv.* long ago; *so fern*, so long ago, F 256.
- Fern-assen**, *s. pl.* fern-ashes, ashes produced by burning ferns, F 254.
- Ferre**. See *Fer*.
- Ferreste**, *adj. super.* farthest, A 494.
- Ferthe**, fourth, B 823; G 531.
- Ferther**, *adj.* further, B 1686.
- Ferthing**, *s.* morsel, A 134.
- Fest**, *s.* first, C 802.
- Feste**, *s.* feast, festival; *to feste*, to the feast, at a feast, B 1007; *han to feste*, to invite, B 380.
- Festeyinge**, *pr. pt.* feasting, entertaining, F 345.
- Festlich**, *adj.* festive, fond of feasts, F 281.
- Festne**, *v.* fasten, A 195.
- Fet**, *pp.* fetched, B 667.
- Fete**, *s. pl. dat.* feet; *to fete*, at his feet, B 1104.
- Fetis**, *adj.* well-made, neat, graceful, C 478.
- Fetisly**, *adv.* neatly, skilfully, A 273.
- Fetted**, *pt. s.* fettered, B 3547.
- Fey**, *s.* faith, C 762.
- Feyne**, *v.* feign, speak falsely; *Feyned*, *pp.* pretended, F 524; *feyne us*, pretend as regards ourselves, B 351.
- Feyning**, *s.* pretending, cajolery, F 556.
- Feynting**, *s.* fainting, failing, E 970.
- Figures**, *s. pl.* figures of speech, E 16.
- Figuringe**, *s.* similitude, figure, G 96.
- Fil**, *pt. s.* fell, occurred, happened, B 1865; *as fer as reason fil*, as far as reason extended, F 570; *Fillen*, fell, B 3183. See *Falle*.
- Fingres**, *s. pl.* fingers, E 380.
- Firste**, *adj. used as a s.*; *my firste*, my first narration, F 75.
- Fish**, *s.* the sign Pisces, F 273.
- Fit**, *s.* a "fyt" or "passus," a portion of a song, B 2078.
- Fithele**, *s.* fiddle, A 296.
- Fix**, **Fixe**, *pp.* fixed, solidified, G 779.
- Flambes**, *s. pl.* flames, B 3353; G 515.
- Flayn**, *pp.* flayed, I 425.
- Flee**, *v.* fly, F 503.
- Fleen**, *s. pl.* fleas, H 17.
- Fleet**, *pr. s.* floats, B 463.
- Fleigh**, *pt. s.* fled, B 3879.
- Flekked**, *pp.* spotted, G 565.
- Flemer**, *s.* banisher, driver away, B 460.
- Flemeth**, *pr. s.* chases away, H 182; *Flemed*, *pp.* banished, G 58.

Flex, *s.* flax, A 676.  
 Flo, *s.* dart, H 264.  
 Flokmele, *adv.* in a flock, in a great number, E 86.  
 Flood, *s.* flood, flowing of the sea, F 259.  
 Flotery, *adj.* dishevelled, A 2883.  
 Flour, *s.* choice, pattern, E 919.  
 Floure, *pr. s. subj.* flower, flourish, E 120.  
 Floytinge, *pres. pt.* fluting, A 91.  
 Fneseth, *pr. s.* breathes heavily, puffs, snorts, H 62.  
 Foison, *s.* abundance, B 504.  
 Folwen, *pr. pl.* follow, C 514; Folweth, *imp. pl.* follow, imitate, E 1189.  
 Foly, Folye, *s.* folly, E 236.  
 Fome. See Foom.  
 Fonde, *v.* try to persuade, B 347; attempt, try, E 283. See Founde.  
 Fonge, *v.* to receive, B 377.  
 Fonne, *s.* fool, A 4089.  
 Font-full water, fontful of water, B 357.  
 Fontstoon, *s.* font, B 723.  
 Fool, *s.* a fool, employed to make sport, B 3271.  
 Foom, *s.* foam, G 564; Fome, *dat.* G 565.  
 Foo-men, *s. pl.* foes, B 3255, 3507.  
 Foot-hot, *adv.* instantly, on the spot, B 438.  
 For, *conj.* in order that, B 478; F 102.  
 For, *prep.*; *for me*, by my means, F 357.  
 Forage, *s.* forage, food, B 1973.  
 Forbad, *pt. s.* forbade, E 570; Forbedeth, *pr. s.* forbids, C 643.  
 Force. See Fors.  
 Fordoon, *v.* to do for, to destroy, B 369.  
 For-dronke, *pp.* very drunk, C 674.  
 Fordrye, *adj.* very dry, exceedingly dry, withered up, F 409.  
 Fore, *s.* course, D 1935.  
 For-fered, *pp.* exceedingly afraid; *forfered of*, very afraid for, F 527.  
 Forgoon, *v.* forgo, G 610.  
 Forlete, *v.* to leave, yield up, B 1848; to give up, C 864.  
 Forme-fader, first father, B 2293.  
 Forncast, *pp.* planned, I 448.  
 Forneys, *s.* furnace, A 559.  
 Fors, *s.*; *make no fors*, take no heed, H 68.  
 Forsake, *v.* to forsake, leave, B 3431.  
 Forsleuthen, *v.* over tarry, B 4286.  
 For-sleweth, *pr. s.* is over-slothful, I 685.  
 For-sluggeth, *pr. s.* is over-sluggish, I 685.  
 Forster, *s.* forester, A 117.  
 For-straight, *pp.* exhausted, B 1295.  
 Forth, *adv.* forth, F 605; *used as v.* go forth, F 604.  
 Forthermo, *adv.* moreover, C 594.  
 Forther over, *adv.* furthermore, moreover, C 648.  
 Forth-right, *adv.* straight, directly, F 1503.

Forthward, *adv.* forward, B 263.  
 For-thy, *adv.* therefore, A 1841.  
 Fortunen, *v.* presage, A 417.  
 For-waked, *pp.* weary through watching, B 596.  
 Forward, *s.* promise, B 40.  
 Forwiting, *s.* foreknowledge, B 4433.  
 Forwrapped, *pp.* wrapped up, C 718.  
 Foryetful, *adj.* forgetful, E 472.  
 Fostred, *pp.* nurtured, brought (up), G 122; nurtured in the faith, G 539; nurtured, kept, E 1043.  
 Fote, *s.* a foot; *on fote*, on foot, F 390.  
 Fother, *s.* cartload, A 530.  
 Foul, *adj.* foul, bad; *for foul ne fair*, by foul means or fair, B 525; *foule*, *adj.* poor, wretched, B 4003.  
 Founden, *pp.* provided, B 243.  
 Foundred, *pt. s.* fell, A 2687.  
 Foure, four, B 491.  
 Fournays, *s.* furnace, B 3353.  
 Foynen, *pres. pl.* thrust, A 1654.  
 Foyson, *s.* abundance, A 3165.  
 Fraknes, *s. pl.* freckles, A 2169.  
 Frankeleyn, *s.* franklin, F 675.  
 Fraught, *pp.* freighted, B 171.  
 Fraunchyse, *s.* liberality, B 3854.  
 Frayneth, *pr. s.* prays, beseeches, B 1790.  
 Freendes, *s. pl.* friends, B 269.  
 Freletee, *s.* frailty, E 1160.  
 Fremde, foreign, F 429.  
 Frete, *pp.* eaten, devoured, B 475; Freten, *pp.* devoured, A 2068.  
 Freynd, *pp.* asked, questioned, G 433.  
 Froteth, *pr. s.* rubs, A 3747.  
 Fructuous, *adj.* fruitful, I 73.  
 Fruyt, *s.* result (lit. fruit), B 411.  
 Fruytesteres, *s. pl. fem.* fruit-sellers, C 478.  
 Ful, *adj.* full, B 86.  
 Ful, *adv.* very, B 3506; *ful many*, very many, F 128.  
 Fulfuld, *pp.* fulfilled, E 596; completed, fully performed, I 17.  
 Fulliche, *adv.* fully, E 706.  
 Fulsomnesse, *s.* satiety, profuseness, F 405.  
 Fumetere, *s.* the herb fumitory, B 4153.  
 Fumositee, *s.* fumes arising from drunkenness, C 567; F 358.  
 Furial, *adj.* tormenting, F 448.  
 Fusible, *adj.* fusible, capable of being fused, G 856.  
 Fyf, five, B 3602.  
 Fyn, *s.* end, purpose, result, B 3348, 3884.  
 Fyne, *adj. pl.* fine, good, F 640.  
 Fyr, *s.* fire, B 3734.

## G.

Gadrede, *pt. s.* gathered, A 824.

Gaillard, Gaylard, *adj.* gay, merry, A 4367, 3336.  
 Gale, *v.* cry out, D 832.  
 Galianes, *s. pl.* medicines, C 306.  
 Galingale, *s.* sweet cypress root, A 381.  
 Galle, *s.* gall, B 3537; G 58, 797.  
 Galoche, *s.* a shoe, F 555.  
 Galoun, *s.* gallon, H 24.  
 Galping, *pres. pl.* gaping, F 350.  
 Galwes, *s. pl.* gallows, B 3924, 3941.  
 Game, *s.* joke, E 733.  
 Ganeth, *pr. s.* yawneath, H 35.  
 Gargat, *s.* throat, B 4525.  
 Garnisoun, *s.* garrison, B 2217.  
 Gas, goes, A 4037.  
 Gat-tothed, *adj.* goat-toothed, lascivious, A 468.  
 Gaude, *s.* trick, course of trickery, C 389.  
 Gauren, *ger.* to gaze, stare, B 912; Gaureth, *pr. s.* gazes, stares, B 3559.  
 Gayler, *s.* jailer, B 3615.  
 Gayneth, *pr. s.* availeth, A 1787.  
 Gaytres beryies, berries of the dogwood tree, B 4155.  
 Geaunt, *s.* giant, B 1997.  
 Gent, *adj.* refined, exquisite, noble, B 1905. Short for *gentil*.  
 Gentil, *adj.* gentle, worthy, B 1627; excellent, B 3123; compassionate, F 483; Gentils, *pl.* people of gentle birth, "the noble folk," C 323; E 480.  
 Gentillesse, *s.* kindness, G 1054; condescension, B 853; nobleness, B 3441; F 483, 505; nobility, B 3854; worth, E 96; slenderness, symmetry, F 426; delicate nurture, E 593.  
 Gentilleste, *adv.* noblest, E 72.  
 Gentilly, *adv.* courteously, B 1093; in a frank or noble manner, frankly, F 674.  
 Geomancie, *s.* divination by figures made on the earth, I 605.  
 Gere, *s.* gear, property, B 800; gear, clothing, E 372.  
 Gerland, *s.* garland, G 27.  
 Gery, *adj.* changeable, A 1536.  
 Gesse, *1 pr. s.* suppose, B 246.  
 Geste, *s.* a stock story; *in geste*, like the common stock stories, B 2123; Gestes, *pl.* stories, B 1126; F 211.  
 Gestours (*g as j*), *pl.* story-tellers, B 2036.  
 Get, *s.* contrivance, G 1277.  
 Geten, *pp. han geten hem*, to have acquired for themselves, F 56.  
 Gif, *conj.* if, A 4181.  
 Gigginge, *pres. pt.* strapping, A 2504.  
 Giltlees, *adj.* guiltless, B 643; Gilteles, B 1062.  
 Gin, *s.* snare, contrivance, G 1165.  
 Gingebread, *s.* gingerbread, B 2044.  
 Gipoun, *s.* short vest, A 75.

Girdel, *s.* a girdle, B 1921.  
 Girden, *v.* to strike, B 3736.  
 Giternes, *s. pl.* guitars, C 466.  
 Glade, *v.* to make glad, comfort, cheer, B 4001.  
 Gladly, *adv.* willingly, F 224; *that been gladly wyse*, that wish to be thought wise, F 376.  
 Gladslom, *adj.* pleasant, B 3968.  
 Glas, *s.* glass, F 254.  
 Glede, *s.* a burning coal, B 111, 3574.  
 Glee, *s.* entertainment, B 2030.  
 Gleyre, *s.* white (of an egg), G 806.  
 Glood, *pt. s.* glided, went quickly, B 2094.  
 Glose, *s.* glosing, comment, F 166.  
 Glose, *v.* to flatter, B 3330; I 45; Glosen, to comment upon, B 1180.  
 Glyde, *v.* glide; *up glyde*, to rise up gradually, F 373; to glide, ascend, G 402. See Glood.  
 Gnow, *pt. s.* gnawed, B 3638.  
 Goddes, *gen. sing.* God's, B 1166.  
 Golet, *s.* throat, gullet, C 543.  
 Gon, *v.* go, proceed, F 200; Gooth, *pr. s.* goes, B 385; Goost, *2 pr. s.* goest, walkest about, B 3123; Goon, *pr. pl.* go, proceed, E 898; Goon, *pp.* gone, B 17; *goon is many a yere*, many a year ago, B 132; Go, *2 pr. pl.* ye walk, go on foot, C 748. See Goon.  
 Gonne, *pt. pl.* did; *gonne arace*, did tear away, removed, E 1103. See Gan.  
 Good, *s.* goods, property, wealth, G 831.  
 Goodlich, *adj.* kind, bountiful, G 1053.  
 Goodly, *adj.* good, proper, pleasing, right, B 3969; good-looking, portly, B 4010.  
 Good-man, *s.* master of the house, C 361.  
 Goon, *v.* go; *lete it goon*, let it go, neglect it, G 1475. See Gon.  
 Goost. See Gon.  
 Goost, *s.* a ghost, B 3124; the Holy Ghost, B 1660; *yaf up the goost*, died, B 1862. See Gost.  
 Goot, *s.* a goat, G 886.  
 Gossomer, *s.* gossamer, F 259.  
 Gost, *s.* ghost (ironically), H 55; the Holy Ghost, G 328. See Goost.  
 Gost. See Goon.  
 Gostly, *adv.* spiritually, mystically, G 109.  
 Goth, *imp. pl.* go, B 3384. See Gon.  
 Governaille, *s.* management, mastery, E 1192.  
 Governance, *s.* government, B 287; providence, E 1161; arrangement, plan, E 994; Governauce, rule, government, C 600; sovereignty, B 3541; *his governauce*, the way to manage him, F 311.  
 Gouverne, *v.* govern, control, B 3587; Governeth, *imp. pl.* arrange, E 322.  
 Governour, *s.* governor, master, principal, B 3130.  
 Grace, *s.* favor, kindness, F 458; favor, G 1348; *hir grace*, her favor (*i.e.* that of the blessed

Virgin), B 980; pardon, B 647; *of grace*, out of favor, in kindness, F 161.  
**Gracelees**, *adj.* void of grace, unfavored by God, G 1078.  
**Grant mercy**, much thanks, G 1380.  
**Gras**, *s.* grace, B 2021. See **Grace**.  
**Gras**, *s.* grass, F 153.  
**Graunten**, *v.* grant, fix, name, E 179; **Graunted**, *pt. s.* E 183.  
**Grave**, *v.* bury, E 681.  
**Grayn**, *s.* dye; *in grayn*, in dye, *i.e.* dyed of a fast color, B 1917. See **Greyn**.  
**Gree**, *s.* gratitude, good part, E 1151.  
**Grene**, *adj.* as *s.* greenery, greenness, F 54; greenness, living evidence, G 90.  
**Grenehede**, *s.* greenness, wantonness, B 163.  
**Gret**, *adj.* great, F 463.  
**Gretter**, *adj. comp.* greater, E 1126.  
**Grevauunce**, *s.* grievance, hardship, B 3703.  
**Greve**, *v.* to grieve, vex, B 1638; **Greveth**, *pr. s.* *impers.* it vexes, it grieves, E 647.  
**Greyn**, *s.* a grain, B 1852; *in greyn*, in grain, *i.e.* of a fast color, F 511.  
**Grisly**, *adj.* terrible, awful, B 3299; grewsome, C 473.  
**Gronte**, *pt. s.* groaned, B 3899.  
**Grotes**, *s. pl.* groats, fourpenny pieces, C 376.  
**Grucche**, *v.* to murmur, E 170; *grucche it*, to murmur at it, E 354.  
**Gruf**, *adv.* grovellingly, all along, flat down, B 1865.  
**Grys**, *s.* gray, G 559.  
**Gyde**, *s.* ruler, G 45.  
**Gyde**, *imp. s.* may (He) guide, B 245.  
**Gye**, *v.* guide, rule, B 3587; *ger.* to guide, regulate, I 13.  
**Gyse**, *s.* guise, wise, way, manner, F 332; *in his gyse*, as he was wont, B 790.

## H.

**Haberdassher**, *s.* seller of hats, A 361.  
**Habergeoun**, *s.* a habergeon, hauberk, A 2119.  
**Habounde**, *v.* to abound, B 3938.  
**Habundant**, *adj.* abundant, E 59.  
**Haf**, *pt. s.* heaved, A 3470.  
**Hainselins**, *s. pl.* smocks, I 422.  
**Hakeney**, *s.* hack-horse, hackney, G 559.  
**Halp**, *pt. s.* helped, B 3236.  
**Halse**, *1 pr. s.* I conjure, B 1835.  
**Halt**, *pr. s.* holdeth, holds, B 807; F 61.  
**Halwed**, *pt. s.* consecrated, hallowed, G 551.  
**Halwes**, lit. holy ones, B 1060; *gen. pl.* of (all) saints, G 1244.  
**Halydayes**, *pl.* holy days, festivals, A 3952; I 667.  
**Han**, *v.* keep, retain, C 725; take away, C 727; obtain, G 234.

**Hande-brede**, *s.* hand-breadth, A 3811.  
**Hap**, *s.* luck, B 3928; G 1209.  
**Happeth**, *pr. s.* chances, F 592; **Happede**, *pt. s.* happened, C 606.  
**Harde**, *adj. def.* hard, cruel, F 499.  
**Hardily**, *adv.* boldly, without doubting, without question, E 25.  
**Hardinesse**, *s.* boldness, B 3210.  
**Harding**, *s.* hardening, tempering, F 243.  
**Hardy**, *adj.* bold, sturdy, F 19.  
**Haried**, *pp.* taken as a prisoner, A 2726.  
**Harlot**, *s.* rascal, A 647; D 1754.  
**Harlotryes**, *s. pl.* ribaldries, A 561.  
**Harme**, *s.* harm, injury, suffering (*dat.*), F 632.  
**Harneised**, *pp.* equipped, A 114.  
**Harneys**, *s.* armor, gear, furniture, harness, A 1006, 2896.  
**Harre**, *s.* hinge, A 550.  
**Harrow**, *interj.* alas! C 288.  
**Harwed**, *pp.* harrowed, devastated, A 3512; D 2107.  
**Hasard**, *s.* the game of hazard, C 591.  
**Hasardour**, *s.* gamester, G 596.  
**Hasardrye**, *s.* gaming, playing at hazard, C 590.  
**Hasteth**, *imp. pl. refl.* hasten, make haste, I 72.  
**Hastif**, *adj.* hasty, E 349.  
**Hastilich**, *adv.* quickly, E 911.  
**Hauberk**, *s.* coat of mail, B 2053. See **Habergeoun**.  
**Hauking**, *s.* hawking; *an hauking*, a-hawking, B 1927.  
**Haunt**, *s.* practice, A 447; abode, B 2001.  
**Haunteth**, *pr. s.* practises, C 547; **Haunteden**, *pt. pl.* practised, C 464; **Haunten**, *pr. pl.* I 780.  
**Hauteyn**, *adj.* loud, C 330.  
**Have**, *v.* have, B 114; *imp. s.* hold, consider, F 7; receive, E 567; **Haveth**, *imp. pl.* hold, F 700.  
**Hawe**, *s.* haw, yard, enclosure, C 855.  
**Hawe**, *s.* haw; *with harwe bake*, with baked haws, with coarse fare, B 95.  
**He**, *used for it*, G 867, 868.  
**Hede**, *s.* heed, care, B 3577.  
**Hedes**, *s. pl.* heads, F 203; **Hevedes**, B 2032; *maugree thyn heed*, in spite of thy head, in spite of all thou canst do, B 104.  
**Heeld**, *1 pt. s.* held, considered, E 818; *pt. s.* held, esteemed, C 625; possessed, B 3518; **Helde**, *pl.* held, B 3506.  
**Heep**, *s.* heap, assembly, host, A 575.  
**Heer**, *adv.* here, B 1177.  
**Heigh**, *adj.* high, lofty, B 3192.  
**Hele**, *v.* to heal, F 240.  
**Helle**, *dat.* hell, B 3292.  
**Helmed**, *pp.* provided with a helmet, B 3560.  
**Henne**, *adv.* hence, C 687.  
**Hente**, *pt. s.* seized, took forcibly, E 534; took



- in hunting, B 3449; caught away, B 1144; raised, lifted, G 205; *pr. s. subj.* may seize, G 7.
- Hepe**, *s. hip*, B 1937.
- Her**, *pron. poss.* their, B 138, 140.
- Heraud**, *s. herald*, A 2533.
- Herbergage**, *s. lodging, abode*, B 147.
- Herbergeours**, *s. pl. harbingers, providers of lodging*, B 997.
- Herberwe**, *lodging, inn, harbor*, A 403, 765.
- Her-biforn**, *adv. herebefore*, B 613.
- Herd**, *pp. haired*, A 2518.
- Here**, *pron. her*, B 460.
- Here**, *v. hear*; **Herd**, *pp. heard*, B 613.
- Heré**. See **Heer**.
- Herieth**, *pr. s. praiseth*, B 1115; *praises*, B 1808; *Heriest*, 2 *pr. s. praiseth, worshippeth*, B 3419; *Herie*, *pr. pl. E* 616; *Herien*, G 47; *Hered*, *pp. B* 872.
- Herkne**, *ger. to hearken, listen to*, B 3159; *Herk-neth, imp. pl. hearken ye*, C 454; *Herkeneth, imp. pl. to hearken, listen to*, B 1164; *Herk-ned, pt. s. B* 1711; *Herkning, pres. part. listening to*, F 78; *Herkned after, pp. listened for, expected*, F 403.
- Hernes**, *s. pl. corners*, G 658.
- Heronsewes**, *s. pl. hernshaws, young herons*, F 68.
- Herte-blood**, *heart's blood*, C 902.
- Hertelees**, *without heart, cowardly*, B 4098.
- Hertes**, *s. gen. hart's*, B 3447.
- Herte-spoon**, *s. "the concave part of the breast, where the ribs unite with the cartilago ensiformis," A* 2606.
- Hertly**, *adj. hearty, lit. heart-like*, E 502; F 5.
- Her-to**, *adv. for this purpose*, B 243.
- Herynge**, *p. pres. praising*, B 1649.
- Heste**, *s. behest, command*, B 382, 3754.
- Hete**, *s. heat*, G 1408.
- Hethen**, *adj. heathen*, B 904.
- Hethenesse**, *s. heathen lands*, B 1112.
- Hething**, *s. mockery*, A 4110.
- Heven**, *s. heaven, the celestial sphere*, B 3300; *a supreme delight*, F 558.
- Hewe**, *s. pretence*, C 421; *hue, appearance, mien*, E 377.
- Hewe**, *s. domestic servant*, E 1785.
- Hey**, *s. hay*, H 14.
- Heyne**, *s. a worthless person*, G 1319.
- Heyre**, *adj. hair, made of hair*, C 736.
- Hiderward**, *adv. hither, in this direction*, B 3159.
- Highte**, 2 *pt. pl. promised*, E 496.
- Highte**, *s. height*, B 12.
- Hindrete**, *hindmost*, A 622.
- Hipes**, *pl. hips*, A 472.
- Hir**, *pron. poss. their*, B 112; *her*, B 65, 164.
- Hir**, *pron. pers. her*, B 162.
- His**, *its*, E 263; F 405.
- Hit**, *pr. s. hides*, F 512.
- Ho**, *interj. halt!* B 3957.
- Hoker**, *s. mockery*, A 3965.
- Hokerly**, *adv. scornfully*, I 584.
- Hold**, *s. fort, castle*, B 507; *hold, grasp*, F 167.
- Holde**, *v. keep to*; *hold, keep*, B 41; *to keep to*, F 658 (see **Proces**); *considered to be*, F 70; *Holden, pp. considered*, E 205; *Holde*, 1 *pr. s. I consider, deem*, G 739.
- Hole**, *adj. pl. whole, hale; hole and sounde, safe and sound*, B 1150.
- Holour**, *s. lecher*, D 254.
- Holpen**, *pp. helped, aided*, F 666. *Pp. of Helpen*.
- Holt**, *s. wood, grove*, A 6.
- Holwe**, *adj. hollow*, G 1265.
- Hom**, *adv. home, homewards*, F 635.
- Homicyde**, *s. homicide, assassin*, B 1757; *manslaughter, murder*, C 644.
- Hond**, *s. hand*, B 3506; *on honde*, *in hand*, B 343.
- Honest**, *adj. honorable, worthy*, B 1751; *honorable, seemly, decent*, C 328.
- Honestee**, *s. honor, dignity*, B 3157.
- Honestete**, *s. honorableness, honor*, E 422.
- Honestly**, *adv. honorably*, G 549.
- Honge**, *v. to hang*, C 790. See **Doon**.
- Hony**, *s. honey*, B 3537; F 614.
- Hool**, *adj. well*, F 161; *whole, perfect*, G 111, 117.
- Hoom**, *adv. homewards*, B 3548.
- Hoomlinesse**, *s. homeliness, domesticity*, E 429.
- Hoor**, *adj. hoary, gray*, C 743.
- Hoot**. See **Hote**.
- Hope**, *s. hope, expectation*, G 870.
- Hoppeteres**, *s. pl. dancers*, A 2017.
- Hord**, *s. hoard, treasure*, C 775.
- Horn**, *s. horn (musical instrument)*, H 90.
- Hors**, *s. a horse*, B 15.
- Horsly**, *adj. horse-like, like all that a horse should be*, F 194.
- Hose**, *s. hose, old stocking*, G 726; *Hosen, pl. B* 1923.
- Hoste**, *s. host*, B 1, 39; E 1.
- Hostelrye**, *s. hostelry*, G 589.
- Hostiler**, *s. innkeeper*, A 241.
- Hote**, *adj. hot, an epithet of Aries, as supposed to induce anger and heat of blood*, F 51.
- Houndes**, *s. pl. dogs*, E 1095.
- Houndfish**, *s. shark*, E 1825.
- Houped**, *pt. pl. whooped*, B 4590.
- Housbound**, *s. husband*, B 863.
- Housbondrye**, *s. economy*, A 4077.
- Housled**, *pp. having received the Eucharist*, I 1027.
- Humanitee**, *s. kindness*, E 92.
- Hurlest**, 2 *pr. s. dost hurl, dost whirl*, B 297.
- Hyde**, *v. hide, i. e. lie concealed*, F 141.

Hye, *ger.* to hasten; *hy the*, hasten thyself, be quick, G 1295.  
 Hye, *adv.* high, aloft, B 3592.  
 Hyne, *s.* hind, peasant, C 688.

I (*for I and Y*).

Iade, *s.* a jade, *i. e.* a miserable hack, B 4002.  
 Ialouslye, *s.* jealousy, C 366.  
 Iambeux, *s. pl.* leggings, leg-armor, B 2065.  
 Iane, *s.* a small coin, properly of Genoa, B 1925; E 999.  
 Iangle, *pr. pl.* talk, prate, F 220.  
 Ianglere, *s.* prater, babbler, A 560.  
 Ianglest, *2 pr. s.* chatterest, B 774.  
 Iangling, *s.* prating, idle talking, disputing, F 257; Ianglinge, I 649.  
 Iape, *s.* a trick, B 1629.  
 Iape, *ger.* to jest, H 4; Iapen, *v.* to jest, B 1883.  
 Ich, *pers. pron.* I, B 39.  
 Idus, *s. pl.* ides, F 47.  
 Ieet, *s.* jet, B 4051.  
 Iet, *s.* fashion, mode, A 682.  
 Iewerye, *s.* Jewry, Jews' quarter, B 1679.  
 Ignotum, *s.* an unknown thing, G 1457.  
 Ik, *pron.* I, A 3867.  
 Il-hayl, ill-luck to you, A 4089.  
 Impertinent, *adj.* not pertinent, irrelevant, E 54.  
 Importable, *adj.* intolerable, insufferable, E 1144.  
 Impresse, *pr. pl.* force themselves (upon), make an impression (upon), G 1071.  
 Impressioun, *s.* impression, remembrance, F 371.  
 In, *prep.* into, B 119.  
 In, *s.* inn, lodging, B 1097.  
 Induracioun, *s.* hardening, G 855.  
 Infect, *pp.* invalidated, A 320.  
 Infortunat, *adj.* unfortunate, inauspicious, B 302.  
 Infortune, *s.* misfortune, B 3591.  
 Ingot, *s.* an ingot, a mould for pouring metal into, G 1206.  
 Inne, *adv.* in, B 3193; within, G 880.  
 Inne, *prep.* in, F 578.  
 Inned, *pp.* housed, A 2192.  
 In-with, *prep.* within, B 1794; E 870.  
 Ioie, *s.* joy, B 3964. See Ioye.  
 Iolif, *adj.* joyful, A 3355.  
 Iolitee, joviality, C 780; F 278; amusement, B 2033; enjoyment, F 344.  
 Iolynesse, *s.* festivity, F 289.  
 Iordanes, *s. pl.* chamber-pots, C 305.  
 Ioye, *s.* joy. See Ioie.  
 Irous, *adj.* passionate, D 2086.  
 Iubbe, *s.* jug, A 3628.  
 Iugement, *s.* opinion, B 1038.  
 Iusten, *v.* joust, H 42.  
 Iuysse, *s.* justice, judgment, B 795.

## K.

Karf. See Kerve.  
 Kechil, *s.* cake, D 1747.  
 Kembde, *pt. s.* combed, F 560; Kembd, *pp.* E 379.  
 Kempe, *adj.* shaggy, A 2134.  
 Kene, *adj.* bold, B 3439; F 57.  
 Kepe, *s.* heed, E 1058; *taken kepe*, take heed, F 348.  
 Kepe, *v.* keep, preserve; *I kepe han*, I care to have, G 1368; Kepte, *pt. s.* kept, E 223; *pt. pl.* regarded, tended, B 269; Kepeth, *imp. pl.* keep ye, B 764; *pr. s.* keeps, E 1133; observes, F 516; Keping, *pres. part.* keeping, tending, F 651; Kept, *pp.* E 1098.  
 Kerchef, *s.* kerchief, B 837.  
 Kerve, *v.* to carve, cut, F 158.  
 Kerver, *s.* carver, A 1899.  
 Kesse, *v.* to kiss, E 1057; Keste, *pt. s.* kissed, F 350; Kiste, E 679. See Kist.  
 Kid. See Kythe.  
 Kimelin, *s.* brewing-tub, A 3548.  
 Kin, *s.* kindred, race, G 829; *som kin*, of some kind, B 1137.  
 Kist, kissed; *been they kist*, they have kissed each other, B 1074.  
 Kitte, *pt. s.* cut, B 600, 1761.  
 Knarre, *s.* a knotted, thick-set fellow, A 549.  
 Knarry, *adj.* gnarled, A 1977.  
 Knave, *s.* boy, servant-lad, B 474; boy, male, E 444; *knave child*, man-child, boy, E 612; *Knaves, pl.* boys, lads, B 3087; *Knave, as adj.* male, B 722.  
 Knitte, *ger.* to knit, I 47; Knittest thee, *2 pr. s. refl.* knittest thyself, joinest thyself, art in conjunction, B 307; *Knit, pp.* knit, B 3224.  
 Knokked, *pt. s.* knocked, B 3721.  
 Knotte, *s.* knot, principal point of a story, gist of a tale, F 401, 407.  
 Knowe, *pp.* known, F 215; Knowen, *2 pr. pl.* ye know, B 128; Knowestow, knowest thou, B 367.  
 Knowe, *s.* knee; Knowes, *pl.* B 1719.  
 Knowleching, *s.* knowing, knowledge, G 1432.  
 Konning, *s.* cunning, skill, F 251.  
 Kyked, *pt. s.* peeped, A 3445.  
 Kyte, *s.* kite (bird), F 624.  
 Kythe, *pr. s. subj.* may show, B 636; Kythed, *pp.* shown, G 1054.

## L.

Laas, *s.* lace, band, G 574.  
 Labbing, *pres. part.* blabbing, babbling, E 2428.  
 Labour, *s.* endeavor, B 381.  
 Lacerte, *s.* muscle, A 2753.  
 Lachesse, *s.* negligence, I 720.

- Ladde, *pt. s.* conducted, B 3747.  
 Lafte, *pt. s.* ceased, B 3496; 1 *pt. s.* I left, C 762.  
 Lake, *s.* a kind of fine white linen cloth, B 2048.  
 Lakked, *pt. s.* wanted, lacked; *him lakked*, there lacked to him, *i.e.* he lacked, F 16; Lakketh, *pr. s.* lacks, G 498.  
 Lampe, *s.* lamina, thin plate, G 764.  
 Langour, *s.* languishment, slow starvation, B 3597.  
 Lappe, *s.* lap, fold of the dress, F 441; skirt or lappet of a garment, G 12; a wrapper, E 585.  
 Lasse, *adj.* less, C 602; *adj. pl.* smaller, of less rank; *lasse and more*, smaller and greater, *i.e.* all, E 67.  
 Last, *s. pl.* lasts, *i.e.* burdens, loads, B 1628.  
 Lat, let; *lat take*, let us take, G 1254.  
 Late, *adj.* late; *bet than never is late*, G 1410.  
 Latitude, *s.* latitude (in an astronomical sense), B 13.  
 Laton, *s.* latten, or latoun, a mixed metal, closely resembling brass, B 2067.  
 Latoun, *s.* a kind of brass, C 350.  
 Launcegay, *s.* a kind of lance, B 1942.  
 Laureat, *adj.* laureate, crowned with laurel, B 3886; E 31.  
 Lay, *s.* song, lay, B 1959; religious belief, faith, creed, B 572; F 18.  
 Lazar, *s.* leper, A 242.  
 Lede, *v.* to govern, B 434; *pr. s. subj.* may bring, B 357. See Ladde.  
 Leden, *adj.* leaden, G 728.  
 Ledene, *s. dat.* language, talk, F 435.  
 Leed, *s.* lead, G 406; leaden vessel, A 202.  
 Leef, *adj.* dear, precious, G 1467; *yow so leef*, so dear to you, so desired by you, C 760. See Leve.  
 Leef, *adv.* dear; Lever, *comp.* dearer, liefer, F 572.  
 Leef, *s.* a leaf, E 1211.  
 Leefful, *adj.* lawful, I 41.  
 Leefsel, *s.* bower, I 411.  
 Leek, *s.* leek, *i.e.* thing of small value, G 795.  
 Lees, *s.* leash, G 19.  
 Leet, *pt. s.* let, caused (to be), B 959; *imp. s.* let, C 731; *pt. s.* let, E 82; caused, as in *leet don cryen*, caused to be proclaimed, F 45; *leet make*, caused to be made, B 3349; *leet binde*, caused to be bound, B 1810. See Lat, Lete.  
 Lefte, 1 *pt. s.* I left off, F 670.  
 Lemman, *s.* lover; lit. dear man, B 917; sweet-heart, B 3253.  
 Lendes, *s. pl.* loins, A 3237.  
 Lene, *adj.* lean, B 4003.  
 Lene, *ger.* to lend, G 1024, 1037.  
 Lenger, *adv. comp.* longer; *ever lenger the more*, the longer, the more, E 687; F 404.  
 Lente, *s.* Lent, E 12.  
 Leos, *s. pl.* people, G 103, 106.  
 Leoun, *s.* lion, B 475; G 178.  
 Lepardes, *s. pl.* leopards, B 3451.  
 Lepe, *pr. pl.* leap, G 915.  
 Lere, *s.* flesh, skin, B 2047.  
 Lere, *v.* learn, B 1702; *pr. pl.* learn, F 104; *ger.* to learn, B 181; *pr. s. subj.* may learn, G 607.  
 Lerne, *ger.* to teach, G 844; Lerved of, taught by, G 748.  
 Lerved, *pp. as adj.* learned, B 1168.  
 Lerninge, *s.* instruction, G 184.  
 Lesinge, *s.* losing, loss; *for lesinge*, for fear of losing, B 3750.  
 Lest, *s.* desire, E 619.  
 Leste, *adj. superl. as s.* least; *atte leste*, at the least, at least, B 38.  
 Let, *pt. s.* caused, permitted, B 373. See Lat.  
 Lete, *v.* let, B 3524; forsake, B 325; 1 *pr. s.* I leave, B 96. See Lat, Leet.  
 Lette, *v.* to hinder, delay; *used intrans.* to cause delay, B 1117; to hinder, B 2116; to oppose, stay, B 3306; *pt. s. intrans.* delayed, E 389.  
 Lette, *s.* let, impediment, hindrance, delay, E 300.  
 Letterure, *s.* literature, B 3686; literature, book-lore, G 846.  
 Lettres, *s. pl.* letters, B 736.  
 Letuarie, *s.* electuary, C 307.  
 Leve, *v.* believe; Levestow, believest thou, G 212.  
 Leve, *v.* to leave, give up, E 250; *ger.* to forsake, G 287.  
 Leve, 3 *imp. s.* (God) grant, B 1873.  
 Leve, *adj. voc.* beloved, G 257; *pl.* dear, valued, F 341. See Leef.  
 Leveful, *adj.* permissible, praiseworthy, allowable, G 5.  
 Lever, *adj. comp.* liefer, dearer, more desirable, B 3628; rather; *me were lever*, it would be dearer to me, I had rather, C 615.  
 Levesel, *s.* leafy bower, A 4061.  
 Lewedly, *adv.* ignorantly, B 47; ignorantly, ill, G 430; H 59.  
 Leye, *v.* to lay a wager, bet, G 596; 1 *pr. pl.* we lay out, we expend, G 783; Leyden forth, *pt. pl.* brought forward, B 213.  
 Leyt, *s.* flame, lightning, I 839.  
 Lia, *put for* Lat. Lia, *i.e.* Leah in the book of Genesis, G 96.  
 Libel, *s.* bill of complaint, D 1595.  
 Licentiat, one licensed by the Pope to hear confessions, independently of the local ordinaries, A 220.  
 Liche, *adj.* like; *it liche*, like it, F 62.  
 Liche-wake, *s.* corpse-watch, A 2958.  
 Licour, *s.* juice, C 452.

Lief, *adj.* dear, cherished, E 479; *goode lief my wyf*, my dear good wife, B 3084. See Leef.

Ligeance, *s.* allegiance, B 895.

Liggen, *v.* to lie, lie down, B 2101.

Likerous, *adj.* gluttonous, dainty, greedy, C 540.

Limitour, *s.* licensed beggar, A 209.

Linage, *s.* lineage, kindred, B 999.

Lind, *s.* lime-tree, A 2922.

Linde, *s.* linden-tree, E 1211.

Lipsed, *pt. s.* lisped, A 264.

List, *s.* ear, D 634.

Listen, *pr. pl.* list, choose, B 2234.

Listeth, *imp. pl.* listen ye, B 1902, 2023.

Litarge, *s.* litharge, G 775.

Lite, *adj.* little, B 109. See Lyte.

Litherly, *adv.* badly, A 3299.

Liverie, *s.* livery, A 363.

Livestow, *for* livest thou, C 719.

Lixt, *liet*, D 1618.

Lode, *s.* load, A 2918.

Lodemenage, *s.* pilotage, A 403.

Lode-sterre, *s.* lodestar, A 2059.

Lofte, *s. dat.* air; *on lofte*, in the air, B 277.

Logge, *s.* a lodging, B 4043.

Lokeden, *pt. pl.* looked; *Loked, pt. s.* looked, E 340; *Loketh, imp. pl.* look ye, behold, G 1329; search ye, C 578.

Loken, *pp.* locked, enclosed, B 4065.

Lokkes, locks of hair, A 81.

Loller, *s.* a loller, a lollard, B 1173.

Lond, *s.* land; country, B 3548; Londe, land, B 522.

Lone, *s.* loan, D 1861.

Long, *prep.*; the phrase *wher-on . . . long* = *long on wher*, along of what, G 930; *long on*, along of, because of, G 922.

Longe, *adv.* long, a long while, B 1626, 3300.

Longes, *s. pl.* lungs, A 2752.

Longing for, *i.e.* belonging to, suitable for, F 39.

Loos, *s.* praise, G 1368.

Looth, *adj.* loath, displeasing; *me were looth*, it would be displeasing to me, B 91.

Lordings, *s. pl.* sirs, B 573; C 329; I 15.

Lore, *s.* study, G 842; lore, learning, experience, knowledge, B 4, 1168; E 87, 788.

Lorel, *s.* rascal, D 273.

Los, *s.* loss, B 27, 28; F 450.

Los. See Loos.

Losengerie, *s.* flattery, false praise, I 613.

Losten, *pt. pl.* lost, G 398.

Lotinge, *pres. part.* lurking, G 186.

Loude, *def. adj.* loud, F 268.

Lough, *pt. s.* laughed, B 3740.

Louke, *s.* fellow-rascal, A 4415.

Loute, *v.* to bow down, B 3352.

Loveden, *pt. pl.* loved; *Lovede, pt. s.* loved, E 413; *Loveth, imp. pl.* love ye, E 370.

Love-drury, *s.* affection, B 2085.

Lovere, *s.* a lover, F 546.

Loves, *s. pl.* loaves, B 503.

Lovyere, *s.* lover, A 80.

Lowe, *adv.* in a low voice, F 216.

Luce, *s.* pike, A 350.

Lucre, *s.* lucre, gain; *lucre of vilanye*, villainous lucre, vile gain, B 1681; profit, G 1402.

Lulleth, *pr. s.* lulls, soothes, B 839.

Luna, *s.* the moon, G 826; a name for silver, G 1440.

Lunatic, *s.* lunary, moon-wort, G 800.

Lure, *s.* a hawk's lure, the bait by which a hawk was tempted to return to the fowler's hand, H 72.

Lust, *pr. s. impers.* it pleases, E 322; *Luste, pers.* was pleased, desired, G 1344.

Lustier, *adj. comp.* more joyous, G 1345.

Lustinesse, *s.* pleasure, A 1939.

Lusty, *adj.* jocund, F 272; lusty, H 41.

Lyard, *adj.* gray, D 1563.

Lycorys, *s.* licorice, B 1951, 2045.

Lyf, *s.* life; *his lyf*, during his life, B 3369.

Lyfly, *adv.* in a lifelike way, A 2087.

Lyk. See Liche.

Lyke, to please; Lyken, *v.* to please, B 2128; *Lyketh, pr. s.* it pleases, E 311; *us lyketh yow*, it pleases us with respect to you, E 106; *how lyketh thee my wyf*, how does it please you with respect to my wife, E 1031; *Lykned, pp.* likened, compared, B 91.

Lyking, *s.* pleasure, liking, delight, B 3499.

Lyklihede, *s.* likelihood, probability, B 1786.

Lym, *s.* lime, G 910.

Lymaille, *s.* filings of any metal, G 1162; *Lymail*, G 1164.

Lymrod, *s.* lime-rod, lime-twig, B 3574.

Lyte, *adv.* in a small degree, G 632, 699. See Lite.

Lyve, *dat. from* Lyf, whence *on lyve*, during life, *i.e.* alive, F 423.

Lyves, *s. pl. gen.* souls', lives', G 56; *Lyves, gen. sing. used as adv.* living, E 903.

Lyvinge, *s.* manner of life, C 847.

## M.

Maad, *pp.* made, B 3607.

Mace, *s.* a mace, club, B 2003.

Maille, *s.* mail, ringed armor, E 1202.

Maister, *s.* master, B 1627, 3128.

Maister-tour, *s.* principal tower, F 226.

Maistres, *s. pl.* masters, B 141.

Maistrye, *s.* mastery, victory, B 3582; governance, control, B 3689; *Maistrie*, a masterly operation, G 1060.

Make, *s.* mate, wife, B 700; husband, G 224.

Maked, *pt. s.* made, B 3318; *pp.* B 1722; *Maad*, B 3607; *Makestow, i.e.* makest thou, B 371.

- Male, *s.* bag, wallet, C 920; G 566.  
 Malefice, *s.* evil-doing, I 341.  
 Malisoun, *s.* curse, G 1245.  
 Malliable, *adj.* malleable, such as can be worked by the hammer, G 1130.  
 Man, *s.* man, esp. a devoted servant, one who has vowed homage, B 3331; *used for* one, B 43.  
 Manace, *s.* menace, A 2003.  
 Manasinge, *s.* threatening, A 2035.  
 Manere, *s.* manner; *of manere*, in his behavior, F 546; *maner pley*, kind of game, C 627; *maner chaunce*, kind of luck, G 527.  
 Mannish, *adj.* man-like, *i.e.* unwomanly, B 782.  
 Mansioun, *s.* mansion (a term in astrology), F 50.  
 Manye, *s.* mania, A 1374.  
 Marbul, *s.* marble, F 500.  
 Marbul-stones, *s. pl.* blocks of marble, B 1871.  
 Marchaunt, *s.* merchant, B 132.  
 Marie, *interj.* marry, *i.e.* by St. Mary, G 1062.  
 Married, *pt. s. trans.* he caused to be married, E 1130.  
 Mark, *s.* a piece of money, of the value of 13 s. 4 d. in England, G 1026; Mark, *pl. i.e.* marks, C 390.  
 Market-beter, *s.* bully at fairs, A 3936.  
 Markis, *s.* a marquis, E 64.  
 Markisesse, *s.* a marchioness, E 394.  
 Mary, *s.* marrow, C 542.  
 Mary-bones, *s. pl.* marrow-bones, A 380.  
 Masednesse, *s.* amaze, E 1061.  
 Maselyn, *s.* a kind of drinking-cup, B 2042.  
 Mat, *adj.* struck dead, defeated utterly, B 935.  
 Materes, *pl.* materials (of a solid character), G 779; *Matires, gen. pl.* of the materials, G 770.  
 Maugree, *prep.* in spite of; *maugree Philistiens*, in spite of the Philistines, B 3238.  
 Maumetrye, *s.* Mahometanism, B 236.  
 Maunciple, *s.* manciple, H 25; I 1.  
 Mawe, *s.* maw, stomach, B 486.  
 May, *s.* maiden, B 851.  
 Mayde, *s.* maid, maiden, B 1636.  
 Maydenhede, *s.* maidenhood, G 126.  
 Mayntene, *pr. s. imp.* may he maintain, E 1171.  
 Maistrye. See Maistrye.  
 Mede, *s.* mead, drink, B 2042.  
 Mede, *s.* reward, a bribe, B 3579.  
 Medle, *v.* meddle, take part in, G 1184; *Medleth, imp. pl.* meddle, G 1424.  
 Medlee, *adj.* of mixed stuff, A 328.  
 Meel, *s.* meal, B 466.  
 Meiny. See Meynee.  
 Memorie, *s.* mention, remembrance, B 3164.  
 Mendinants, *s. pl.* begging friars, D 1906.  
 Menestow, meanest thou, G 309.  
 Mening, *s.* meaning, intent, F 151.  
 Mere, *s.* mare, A 541.  
 Meridional, *adj.* southern, F 263.  
 Merier, *adj.* pleasanter, B 2024.  
 Mervaille, *s.* marvel, wonder, E 1186; *Merveille*, E 248; *merveille of*, wonder at, F 87.  
 Merveillous, *adj.* marvellous, B 1643.  
 Meschaunce, *s.* misery, a miserable condition, B 3204; *with meschaunce*, with ill luck (to him), H 11.  
 Mescheef, *s.* tribulation, trouble, H 76; *Mescheef*, misfortune, B 3513.  
 Mesel, *s.* leper, I 624.  
 Messenger, *s.* messenger, B 6.  
 Messe, *s.* mass, B 1413.  
 Meste, *adj. superl.* most, *i.e.* highest in rank, most considerable, E 131.  
 Mester, *s.* occupation, A 1340.  
 Mesurable, *adj.* moderate, C 515; F 362.  
 Met, *s.* measure, I 799.  
 Metamorphoseos, *gen. s.* (the book) of Metamorphosis; it should be *pl. Metamorphoseon*, B 93.  
 Mete, *s.* food, meat, F 173, 618.  
 Meth, *s.* mead, a drink, A 2279.  
 Meynee, *s.* followers, army, B 3532; attendants, suite, F 391.  
 Milksop, *s.* a piece of bread sopped in milk; hence, anything soft, especially a weak, effeminate man, B 3100.  
 Minde, *dat.* memory, B 527; *in minde*, in remembrance, B 1843.  
 Ministre, *s.* minister, B 168.  
 Minstralcye, *s.* minstrelsy, a playing upon instruments of music, the sound made by a band of minstrels, F 268.  
 Miracle, *s.* miraculous story, legend, B 1881.  
 Mirre, *s.* myrrh, A 2938.  
 Mirthe, *s.* pleasure, amusement, A 766.  
 Mis, *adj.* amiss, wrong, blameworthy, G 999.  
 Misbileve, *s.* belief of trickery, suspicion, G 1213.  
 Misboden, *pp.* abused, harmed, A 909.  
 Misdeparteth, *pr. s.* parts or divides amiss, B 107.  
 Misdooth, *pr. s.* doeth amiss to, ill-treats, B 3112.  
 Misgovernance, *s.* misconduct, B 3202.  
 Misgyed, *pp.* misguided, misconducted, B 3723. See Gye.  
 Mishap, *s.* ill luck, B 3435.  
 Mislay, *pl. s.* lay awry, A 3647.  
 Mister, *s.* craft, A 613; *what mister men*, what manner of men. A 1710.  
 Mistriste, *v.* mistrust, C 369.  
 Miteyn, *s.* mitten, glove, C 372.  
 Mo; *tymes mo*, at more times, at other times, E 449; *mo*, more than her, others, E 1039; *othere mo*, others besides, G 1000; *na mo*, no more, none else, B 695. See More.

Moche, *adj.* much, G 611; many, G 673.  
 Modres, *gen.* mother's, C 729; G 1243.  
 Moebles, *s. pl.* movable goods, personal property, G 540.  
 Moeved, *pt. s.* moved, disturbed, B 1136.  
 Moevere, *s.* mover, A 2987.  
 Mollificacioun, *s.* mollifying, softening, G 854.  
 Mone, *gen.* moon's, B 2070; Mones, *gen.* moon's, 1 10.  
 Monstres, *s. pl.* monsters, B 3302.  
 Moorning, *s.* mourning, B 621.  
 Moot. See Mot.  
 Moralitee, *s.* morality, B 3687; moral tale, I 38.  
 Mordred, *pp.* murdered, E 725.  
 Mordring, *s.* murdering, A 2001.  
 More, *pl.* more and lesse, greater and lesser, all alike, B 3433.  
 More, *adv.* more, further, in a greater degree, B 3745.  
 Mormal, *s.* cancer, sore, or gangrene, A 386.  
 Morne, *adj.* morning, A 358.  
 Morsel, *s.* a morsel; *morsel breed*, morsel of bread, B 3624.  
 Mortifye, *v.* to mortify; lit. to kill; used of producing change by chemical action, G 1431.  
 Mortreux, a kind of soup or pottage, A 384.  
 Morwe, *s.* morrow, morning; *by the morwe*, in the morning, early in the day, H 16.  
 Mosel, *s.* muzzle, A 2151.  
 Mot; *mot I thee*, may I thrive, C 309; *foule moot thee falle*, foully (*i.e.* ill) may it happen to thee, H 40; *Moste, us moste*, it must be for us, *i.e.* it should be our resolve, G 946; Moot, 1 *pr. s.* I must, E 872; Mote, *subj. ; mote I thee*, may I thrive, B 2007.  
 Mottelee, *s.* motley, A 271.  
 Motyf, *s.* motive, incitement, B 628.  
 Moulén, *v.* moulder, B 32.  
 Mountance, *s.* amount, quantity, C 863.  
 Mowled, *pp.* grown mouldy, A 3870.  
 Moyste, *adj.* fresh, new, B 1954.  
 Moysty, *adj.* new (applied to ale), H 60.  
 Muchel, *adj.* much, a great deal of, F 349.  
 Mullok, *s.* rubbish, refuse, confused heap of materials, G 938, 940.  
 Multiplicacioun, *s.* multiplying, *i.e.* the art of alchemy, G 849.  
 Multiplie, *v.* to make gold and silver by the arts of alchemy, G 669, 731.  
 Murthe, *s.* mirth, joy, E 1123.  
 Murye, *adj.* merry, A 1386.  
 Myle, *s. pl.* miles, G 555.  
 Myn, *poss.* mine, my (used before a vowel), B 40; (used after a name), E 365.  
 Mynour, *s.* miner, A 2465.  
 Myte, *s.* mite, thing of no value, G 511, 633.

## N.

Naddre, *s.* adder, E 1786.  
 Nadstow, hadst thou not, A 4088.  
 Naille, *imp. s. 3 p.* let it nail, let it fasten, E 1184.  
 Naked, *pp. as adj.* destitute, void, weak, G 486.  
 Nakers, *s. pl.* drums, A 2511.  
 Nale; *atte nale*, at the ale-house, D 1349.  
 Nam, *pt. s.* took, G 1297.  
 Namely, *adv.* especially, C 402.  
 Na-mo, *for* Na mo, no more, F 573; Na-more, F 289.  
 Nappeth, *pr. s.* naps, slumbers, nods, H 9.  
 Nart, *for* Ne art, art not, G 499.  
 Nat, *for* Ne at, nor at, B 290.  
 Nath, *for* Ne hath, hath not, A 923.  
 Naught, *adv.* not, B 1701; not so, G 269.  
 Nay, *opposed to* yea, E 355; *answers a direct question*, B 1793; *it is no nay*, there is no denying it, B 1956.  
 Nayles, *s. pl.* nails, B 3366.  
 Nayte, *v.* say no to, deny, I 1013.  
 Ne, *adv.* not; *ne dooth*, do ye not, C 745.  
 Nede, *adv.* necessarily, needs, G 1280.  
 Nede, *v.* to be necessary, B 871; Nedeth, *pr. s.* it needs it, it needs, F 65; Neded, *pt. s.* it needed, E 457.  
 Nedes, *s. pl.* necessary things, business, B 174; needs, G 178.  
 Nedes-cost, *adv.* of necessity, A 1477.  
 Nedles, *s. gen.* needle's, G 440.  
 Needles, *adv.* needlessly, E 621; Needless, without a cause, E 455.  
 Neen, *adj.* none, no, A 4185.  
 Neer, *adj.* nearer, G 721.  
 Neet, *s.* neat, cattle, A 597.  
 Neigh, *adj.* near, high, F 49.  
 Nekke-boon, *s.* nape of the neck, lit. neck-bone, B 669, 1839.  
 Nempnen, *v.* to name, B 507; Nempne, *v.* to name, tell, F 318.  
 Ner, *adv. comp.* nearer; *ner and ner*, nearer and nearer, B 1710.  
 Nercotikes, *s. pl.* narcotics, A 1472.  
 Nere, *pt. s. subj.* were not (*put for ne were*), B 547.  
 Nest, *s.* nest; *wikked nest*, *i.e.* mau ni, or Mauny, B 3576.  
 Nevene, *pr. pl. subj.* may name, may mention, G 1473.  
 Never, *adv.* never, B 87; *never the neer*, never the nearer, none the nearer, G 721.  
 Neveradel, *adv.* not a bit, C 670.  
 Newew, *s.* nephew, B 3594.  
 Newfangel, *adj.* newfangled, taken with novelty, F 618.  
 New-fangelnesse, *s.* fondness for novelty, F 610.

Nexste, *adj. sup.* nearest, B 1814.  
 Nigard, *s.* niggard, B 4105.  
 Nighter-tale, the night-time, A 97.  
 Nigromanciens, *s. pl.* magicians, I 603.  
 Nil, *1 pr. s.* I desire not, I dislike, E 646.  
 Nin, *for* Ne in, nor in, F 35.  
 Nobles, *pl.* nobles (the coin worth 6s. 8d.), C 907.  
 Noblesse, *s.* nobility, magnificence, B 3438; high honor, B 3208.  
 Nobly, *s.* nobility, assembly of nobles, G 449; state, F 77.  
 Noght, *adv.* not, B 94, 112.  
 Nombre, *s.* number, A 716.  
 Nome, *pp.* of *Nimen*.  
 Nones, *for* the, for the once, for this special occasion, for the nonce, B 1165.  
 Nonnes, *s. pl. gen.* nuns', B 3999.  
 Noon, *adj.* none, B 102; *pl.* B 89.  
 Noot, *for* Ne wot, *1 pr. s.* I know not, B 892.  
 Norishinge, *s.* nurture, bringing up, E 1040.  
 Nortelrye, *s.* good manners, A 3967.  
 Nose-thirles, *pl.* nostrils, A 557.  
 Not. See Noot.  
 Notabilitee, *s.* a thing worthy to be known, B 4399.  
 Notable, *adj.* notorious, B 1875.  
 Note, *s.* note (of music), B 1737.  
 Note, *s.* need, business, A 4068.  
 Notemuge, *s.* nutmeg, B 1953.  
 Not-head, *s.* crop-head, A 109.  
 No-thing, *adv.* in no respect, B 575; not at all, C 404.  
 Notified, *pp.* made known, proclaimed, B 256.  
 Nouth, now; *as* *nouth*, at present, A 462.  
 Now and now, *adv.* at times, from time to time, occasionally, F 430.  
 Nowches, *s. pl.* jewels, E 382.  
 Ny, *adv.* nigh, nearly; *wel ny*, almost, E 82.  
 Nyce, *adj.* foolish, weak, B 1088.  
 Nycetee, *s.* folly, G 463.

## O.

O, *adj.* one, B 52. See Oo.  
 Obeisant, *adj.* obedient, E 66.  
 Obeisaunce, *s.* obedience, E 24, 502; obedient act, E 230; Obeisaunces, *pl.* submissive acts, acts expressing obedient attention, F 515.  
 Observe, *v.* to give countenance to, favor, B 1821.  
 Occident, *s.* West, B 297.  
 Occyppe, *v.* to occupy, take up, F 64; Occu-  
 pieth, *pr. s.* takes up, dwells in, B 424.  
 Octogamy, *s.* marrying eight times, D 33.  
 Of, *adv.* off, away, B 3748.  
 Of, *prep.* during, B 510; with, G 626; by, E 70; with, for, B 1779; E 33; as regards, with re-

spect to, B 90; *of* *grace*, by his favor, out of his favor, E 178.  
 Offensioun, offence, damage, A 2416.  
 Office, *s.* duty, employment, B 3446; *houses of office*, servants' offices, pantries, larders, etc., E 264.  
 Offreth, *imp. pl. 2 p.* offer ye, C 910.  
 Of-newe, *adv.* newly, lately, E 938.  
 Of-taken, *pp.* taken off, taken away, B 1855.  
 Ofte, *adv.* often, B 278; Ofter, oftener, E 215.  
 Ofte, *adj. pl.* many, frequent, E 226.  
 Oghte, *pt. s.* became; *as* *him oghte*, as it became him, B 1097; *pt. s. subj.* it should behove us, E 1150. See Oughte.  
 Oistre, *s.* oyster, A 182.  
 Oliveres, *s. pl.* olive yards, B 3226.  
 On, *prep.* upon, concerning, B 48; on, in, at; *on eve*, in the evening; *on morwe*, in the morning, E 1214; *on reste*, at rest, F 379.  
 On, *adj.* one; *everich on*, every one, B 1164. See O, Oon.  
 Ones, *adv.* once, B 588; of one mind, united in design, C 696; *at ones*, at once, H 10.  
 On-lofte, *adv.* aloft, *i. e.* still above ground, E 229.  
 Oo, *adj.* one, G 207. See O, Oon.  
 Oon; one and the same, C 333; *that oon*, the one, C 666; the same, B 2142; the same thing, alike, F 537; *oon the faireste*, one who was the fairest, one of the fairest, E 212; *ever in oon*, continually alike, constantly in the same manner, E 602; *many oon*, many a one, E 775.  
 Open-ers, *s. pl.* medlars, A 3871.  
 Open-headed, *pp.* bareheaded, D 645.  
 Oppresse, *v.* to put down, G 4.  
 Or, *adv.* ere, before, G 314.  
 Ordenaunce, *s.* ordaining, governance, arrangement, B 763; provision, B 250.  
 Ordeyned, *pp.* appointed, F 177.  
 Ordre, *s.* order, class, G 995.  
 Organs, *s. pl.* "organs," the old equivalent of organ, G 134.  
 Orient, the East, B 3504.  
 Orpiment, *s.* orpiment, G 759, 774, 823.  
 Osanne, *i. e.* Hosannah, B 642.  
 Otes, *s. pl.* oats, C 375.  
 Other, *adj. pl.* other, B 3344; Other, *sing.*; *whence* that other = the other, *answering to* that oon = the one, F 496.  
 Others, *pron. sing.* each other's, lit. of the other, C 476.  
 Otherweyes, *adv.* otherwise, E 1072.  
 Otherwyse, *adv.* on any other condition, F 534.  
 Othes, *s. pl.* oaths, C 472; F 528.  
 Ouche, *s.* jewel, D 743.  
 Oughte, *pt. s. subj.* it would become, *as in* oughte us = it would become us, it would

be our duty, G 14; Oghten, 1 *pl.* we ought, G 6; Oghte, *pt. s. indic.* it was fit, it was due, E 1120.

Oules, *s. pl.* awls, D 1730.

Ounces, *s. pl.* small pieces, A 677.

Out-caughte, *pl. s.* caught out, drew out, B 1861.

Outen, *v.* to come out with, utter, display, exhibit, E 2438; G 834.

Outerly, *adv.* utterly, entirely, G 335.

Out-hees, *s.* hue and cry, A 2012.

Outrageous, *adj.* violent, excessive, C 650.

Outraye, *v.* pass beyond control, E 643.

Outrely, *adv.* utterly, C 849.

Out-taken, *pp.* excepted (lit. taken out), B 277.

Oversloppe, *s.* upper garment, G 633.

Owene, *adj.* own, B 3198; *pl.* B 3584.

Oweth, *pr. s.* owneth, owns, possesses, C 361.

Oxes, *gen. sing.* ox's, E 207.

Oxe-stalle, *s.* ox-stall, E 398.

Oynement, *s.* ointment, A 631.

Oynons, *s. pl.* onions, A 634.

## P.

Paas, *s.* pace, step, G 575; *goon a paas*, go at a footpace, C 866.

Pace; *to pace of*, to pass from, B 205; 1 *pr. s. subj.* er I pace = ere I depart, ere I die, F 494; *pr. s. subj.* may pass away, may depart, E 1092.

Palinge, *s.* the making a perpendicular stripe, I 417.

Palled, *adj.* enfeebled, languid, H 55.

Pan, *s.* brain-pan, skull, A 1165.

Panade, *s.* knife, A 3929.

Panne, *s.* a pan, G 1210.

Papeer, *s.* pepper, G 762.

Papeiay, *s.* a popinjay, a parrot, B 1957.

Paradys, *s.* paradise, heaven, B 3200.

Parameters, *s. pl.* rich array, A 2501.

Paramour, *i. e. par amour*, for love, B 2033.

Paraventure, *adv.* peradventure, perhaps, B 190; by chance, E 234.

Parde! *interj.* answering to F. *par Dieu*; Pardee, B 1977; E 1234.

Pardoner, *s.* seller of indulgences, A 543.

Parfay, *interj.* by my faith, B 110; by my faith, verily, B 849.

Parfit, *adj.* perfect, G 353.

Parfournest, 2 *pr. s.* performest, B 1797; Parfourned, *pp.* B 1646.

Parissshens, *s. pl.* parishioners, A 482.

Paritorie, *s.* pellitory, *Parietaria officinalis*, G 581.

Parlement, *s.* parliament, deliberation, A 1306.

Parting-felawes, *s. pl.* partners, I 637.

Party, *s.* part, portion, B 17.

Parvys, *s.* church-porch, A 310.

Pas, *s.* pace, B 399; Pas, *pl.* paces, movements, B 306. See Paas.

Passant, *adj.* surpassing, A 2107.

Passe, *imp. s. or pl.* pass (over), go (on), proceed, B 1633; Passe of, 1 *pr. s.* pass by, F 288; Passeth, *pr. s.* passes away, F 404; Passed, *pp.* past, spent, E 610; Passing, *pres. part.* surpassing, extreme, E 240. See Pace.

Passing, *adj.* surpassing, excellent, G 614.

Passioun, *s.* passion, suffering, B 1175.

Pax, *s.* a painted tablet kissed during the celebration of mass, I 407.

Payens, *pl.* pagans, B 534.

Payndemayn, *s.* bread of a peculiar whiteness, B 1915.

Pecunial, *adj.* pecuniary, D 1314.

Pees, *s.* peace, B 130; *in pees*, in silence, B 228.

Pees, *interj.* peace! hush! B 836; G 951.

Pekke, to pick, B 4157.

Penaunt, *s.* a penitent, one who does penance, B 3124.

Penible, *adj.* painstaking, careful to please, E 714.

Penner, *s.* pen-case, E 1879.

Penoun, a pennant or ensign borne at the end of a lance, A 978.

Pens, *s. pl.* pence, C 402.

Peraventure, *adv.* perhaps, perchance, C 935. See Paraventure.

Perce, Percen, *v.* to pierce, B 2014.

Percinge, *s.* piercing; *for percinge*, to prevent any piercing, B 2052.

Perdurable, *adj.* lasting, I 75.

Pere, *s.* peer, equal, B 3244; F 678.

Peregryn, *adj.* peregrine, *i. e.* foreign, F 428.

Pere-ionette, *s.* pear-tree, A 3248.

Perfit, *adj.* perfect, A 1271. See Parfit.

Perissed, *pp.* destroyed, I 579.

Perree, *s.* jewelry, precious stones, gems, B 3495.

Pers, of a sky-blue color, A 439.

Perseveraunce, *s.* continuance, G 443.

Persevereth, *pr. s.* lasteth, C 497.

Perseveringe, *s.* perseverance, G 117.

Person, *s.* parson, I 23; Persone, B 1170; Persoun, A 478.

Perturben, *pres. pl.* disturb, A 906.

Peter, *interj.* by St. Peter, G 665.

Peyne, *s.* pain, suffering, B 2134; trouble, care, F 509; *upon peyne*, under a penalty, E 586.

Peyne, 1 *pr. s. refl.* I peyne me = I take pains, C 330; Peyned hir, *pt. s. refl.* took pains, E 976; Peyneth hir, *pr. s. refl.* endeavors, B 320.

Peyre, *s.* pair, A 2121.

Peytre, *s.* properly, the breastplate of a horse in armor, G 564.

Pigges-nye, *s.* pig's eye, a term of endearment, A 3268.



- Pighte, *pt. s.* pitched, A 2689. *Pt. t. of* Picchen.  
 Pilours, *s. pl.* plunderers, A 1007.  
 Pilwe-beer, *s.* pillow-case, A 694.  
 Pin, *s.* pin, small peg, F 127, 316.  
 Pinchen, *ger.* to find fault, H 74.  
 Pissemyre, *s.* ant, D 1825.  
 Pistel, *s.* epistle, E 1154.  
 Pitaunce, *s.* portion of food, A 224.  
 Pite, *s.* pity; Pitee, B 292.  
 Pitously, *adv.* piteously, sadly, pitifully, B 3729.  
 Place, *s.* manor-house, residence of a chief person in a village or small town, B 1910.  
 Plages, *s. pl.* regions, B 543.  
 Plastres, *s. pl.* plasters, F 636.  
 Plat, *adv.* flat, B 1865; flatly, bluntly, B 3947.  
 Plate, *s.* stiff iron defence for a hauberk, B 2055.  
 Platte, *adj. dat.* flat, flat side (of a sword), F 162.  
 Play. See Pley.  
 Playn, *adj.* plain; *in short and playn*, in brief plain terms, E 577.  
 Playn, *s.* a plain, B 24; Playne, E 59.  
 Pleinte, *s.* complaint, lament, B 66.  
 Plesance, *s.* pleasing behavior, F 509; Ple-saunce, pleasure, will, E 501; kindness, E 1111.  
 Plese, *v.* please; Plesen, F 707.  
 Pley, *s.* play, sport, diversion, E 10, 1030.  
 Pleye, *v.* to amuse one's self, B 3524, 3666; Pleying, *pres. pt.* amusing herself, F 410.  
 Pleyn, *adj.* plain, clear, B 324.  
 Pleyn, *adv.* plainly, B 3947; openly, E 637.  
 Plighte, *pp.* pledged, C 702.  
 Plighte, *pp.* plucked, D 790; *pt. s.* pulled, B 15.  
 Plye, *v.* bend, E 1169.  
 Point, *s.* point; *fro point to point*, from beginning to end, B 3652; *point for point*, exactly, in every detail, E 577.  
 Point-devys, *s.* point-device, F 560.  
 Poke, *s.* pocket, bag, A 3780.  
 Pokets, *s. pl.* pockets, *i. e.* little bags, G 808.  
 Pokkes, *s. pl.* pocks, pustules, C 358.  
 Polcat, *s.* polecat, C 855.  
 Polycay, *s.* public business, C 600.  
 Pollax, *s.* pole-axe, A 2544.  
 Polyve, *s.* pulley, F 184.  
 Pomel, *s.* crown, top, A 2689.  
 Pomely, *adj.* dapple; Pomely-gris, dapple-gray, G 559.  
 Popelote, *s.* puppet, A 3254.  
 Popet, *s.* poppet, puppet, doll; spoken ironically, and here applied to a corpulent person, B 1891.  
 Popper, *s.* dagger, A 3931.  
 Poraille, *s.* poor folk, A 247.  
 Porphurie, *s.* porphyry, a slab of porphyry used as a mortar, G 775.  
 Porthors, *s.* breviary, B 1321.  
 Pose, *s.* cold in the head, H 62.  
 Possessioners, *s. pl.* members of endowed orders, D 1772.  
 Possessioun, *s.* large property, wealth, F 686.  
 Post, *s.* pillar, support, A 214.  
 Potage, *s.* broth, C 368.  
 Potestat, *s.* potentate, D 2017.  
 Pothecharie, *s.* apothecary, C 852.  
 Poudre, *s.* powder, G 760.  
 Poudre-marchaunt, *s.* flavoring powder, A 381.  
 Pound, *pl.* pounds, F 683.  
 Pounsoninge, *s.* puncturing, I 418.  
 Pouped, *pp.* blown, H 90.  
 Pouren, *1 pr. s.* we pore, gaze steadily, G 670.  
 Poverte, *s.* poverty, B 99; Povert, C 441.  
 Povre, *adj.* poor, B 116, 120.  
 Povre, *adv.* poorly, E 1043.  
 Povreliche, *adv.* poorly, in poverty, E 213.  
 Povrely, *adv.* poorly, A 1412.  
 Povrest, *adj. superl.* poorest, C 449.  
 Poynaunt, *adj.* pungent, A 352.  
 Poyntel, *s.* a stop, G 1480.  
 Poyntel, *s.* pencil, stylus, D 1742.  
 Practisour, *s.* practitioner, A 422.  
 Preche, *v.* to preach, B 1179; Prechen, B 1177; Precheth, *imp. pl.* E 12.  
 Predicacioun, *s.* preaching, sermon, C 345, 407.  
 Prefe, *s.* test, proof, G 968; the test, H 75.  
 Preferre, *pr. s. subj.* surpass, D 96.  
 Preise, *1 pr. s.* I praise, F 674.  
 Prescience, *s.* foreknowledge, E 659.  
 Presence, *s.* presence; *in presence*, in company, in a large assembly, E 1207.  
 Prest, *s.* priest, B 1166.  
 Prove, *v.* prove; bide the test, G 645; to prove to be right, to succeed when tested, G 1212; Preved, *pp.* tested, G 1336; approved, E 28; exemplified, E 856; shown, F 481.  
 Preyed, *pp.* prayed, E 773; Preye, *pr. s.* pray, B 3995.  
 Preyere, *s.* prayer, G 256.  
 Pricasour, *s.* hard rider, A 189.  
 Prighte, *pl. s.* pricked, F 418.  
 Priked, *pp.* spurred, G 561; Prighte, *pt. s.* F 418; Prike, *2 p. s. subj.* B 2001; Prikke, prick, goad, torture, E 1038.  
 Prikinge, *s.* spurring, hard riding, B 1965.  
 Prikke, *s.* prick, point, critical condition, B 119.  
 Privee, *adj.* secret, privy, closely attendant, E 192; privy, private, secret, B 204.  
 Privee, *adv.* privately, secretly, F 531.  
 Prively, *adv.* secretly, B 21.  
 Privetee, *s.* secret counsel, secrecy, B 548.  
 Proces, *s.* narrative, history, occurrence of events, B 3511: *proces holde*, keep close to my story, F 658.  
 Profre, *2 pr. s. subj.* mayst proffer, mayst offer, G 489; Profred, *pp.* offered, E 152.

- Proheme, *s.* a proem, prologue, E 43.  
 Prolle, 2 *pr. pl.* ye prowl, prowl about, search widely, G 1412.  
 Porporcioned, *pp.* made in proportion, F 192.  
 Propre, *adj.* fine, handsome, C 309; own, peculiar, B 3518; *of propre kinde*, by their own natural bent, F 610.  
 Prospecyves, *s. pl.* perspective glasses, lenses, F 234.  
 Prow, *s.* profit, advantage, C 300; G 609.  
 Prye, *v.* to pry, look, peer, G 668.  
 Pryme, *s.* the time between 6 and 9 A.M., B 1278, 4387; *fully pryme*, the end of the period of prime, *i.e.* nine o'clock, B 2015; *pryme large*, just past nine o'clock, F 360.  
 Prymerole, *s.* primrose, A 3268.  
 Prys, *s.* price, value, estimation, B 2087; fame, A 67.  
 Pryvee, *adj.* secret, A 2460.  
 Pulle, *v.* pluck; *pulle a finche*, pluck a pigeon, cheat a novice, A 652; Pulled, plucked, A 177.  
 Pultrye, *s.* poultry, A 598.  
 Purchase, *imp. s.* may (He) provide, B 873; *Purchasen, ger.* to purchase, acquire, G 1405.  
 Purchasing, *s.* prosecuting, A 320.  
 Purchasour, *s.* conveyancer, A 318.  
 Purfiled, *pp.* embroidered, fringed, A 193.  
 Purged, *pp.* absolved, cleansed (by baptism), G 181.  
 Purpos, *s.* purpose, design, B 170; *it cam him to purpos*, he purposed, F 606.  
 Purs, *s.* purse, F 148.  
 Purtreye, *v.* draw, A 96.  
 Purveyance, *s.* equipment, B 247; providence, B 483.  
 Putours, *s. pl.* whoremongers, I 886.  
 Pykepurs, *s.* pick-purse, A 1998.  
 Pyne, *s.* suffering, B 1080; pain, suffering, the passion, B 2126; woe, torment, B 3420.  
 Pype, *s.* pipe, musical instrument, B 2005.  
 Pyric, *s.* pear-tree, E 2217.

## Q.

- Quad, *adj.* bad, B 1628.  
 Quaille, *s.* quail, E 1206.  
 Quaking, *pres. part.* quaking, E 317; Quaked, *pp.* B 3831; Quook, *pt.* s. quaked, shook, B 3394.  
 Quakke, *s.* hoarseness, A 4152.  
 Quelle, *v.* to kill, C 854; *imp. s.* may (he) kill, G 705.  
 Quern, *s.* hand-mill, B 3264.  
 Questemonger, *s. pl.* holders of inquests, I 797.  
 Queynte, *adj.* quaint, curious, F 369.  
 Queynte, *pt. s.* was quenched, A 2334.  
 Queyntise, *s.* elegance, I 932; contrivance, I 733.

- Quiken, *ger.* to make alive, quicken, G 481.  
 Quinible, *s.* a part sung a fifth above the air, A 3332.  
 Quirboilly, *s.* boiled leather, B 2065.  
 Quit, *See* Quayte.  
 Quilty, *adv.* freely, A 1792.  
 Quook, *See* Quaking.  
 Quayte, *v.* to acquit, free; *hir cost for to quayte*, to pay for her expenses, B 3564; *Quyten, v.* repay (lit. quit), G 1027; *quyte with*, to repay . . . with, G 1055; to satisfy, pay in full, B 354; *quyte hir whyle*, requite her time or trouble, lit. repay her time, *i.e.* her occupation, pains, trouble, B 584; 1 *pr. s.* I requite, C 420; *Quit, pp.* freed, G 66.

## R.

- Raa, *s.* roe, A 4086.  
 Rad, *pp.* read, G 211. *See* Rede.  
 Rafte, *pt. s.* raft, B 3288. *Pt. t.* and *pp.* of *Reven.*  
 Rage, *s.* a raging wind, A 1985.  
 Rage, *v.* play, toy wantonly, A 257.  
 Raked, *pp.* raked, B 3323.  
 Rake-stele, *s.* rake handle, D 949.  
 Ram, *s.* the ram, the sign Aries, F 386.  
 Rammish, *adj.* ramlike, strong-scented, G 887.  
 Rampeth, *pr. s.* (lit. ramps, romps, rears, but here) rages, acts with violence, B 3094.  
 Rancour, *s.* rancor, ill-feeling, H 97; rancor, malice, E 432, 747.  
 Rape, *v.* snatch up; *rape and renne*, seize and plunder, G 1422. *See* Renne.  
 Rasour, *s.* razor, B 3246.  
 Raughte, *pt. s.* reached, B 1921.  
 Raunsoun, *s.* ransom, A 1024.  
 Rave, 1 *pr. pl.* we rave, we speak madly, G 959.  
 Ravines, *s. pl.* rapines, I 793.  
 Ravynsedest, 2 *pt. s.* didst ravish, didst draw (down), B 1659; Ravished, *pp.* ravished, overjoyed, F 547.  
 Reaume, *s.* realm, kingdom, B 3305.  
 Rebekke, *s.* abusive term for an old woman, D 1573.  
 Recche, *v.* care, reckon; *recche of it*, care for it, F 71.  
 Reccheles, *adj.* careless, indifferent, B 229.  
 Receipt, *s.* receipt; *i.e.* recipe for making a mixture, G 1353.  
 Receyved, *pp.* accepted (as congenial), acceptable, B 307; *Receyven, v.* to receive, E 1151.  
 Reclayne, *v.* to reclaim, as a hawk by a lure, *i.e.* check, H 72.  
 Recomandeth, *pr. s. refl.* commends (herself), B 278; *Recomende, ger.* to commend, commit, G 544.  
 Reconforte, *v.* to comfort, A 2852.

- Recorde**, *i pr. s.* remember, remind, A 829.  
**Recours**, *s.* recourse; *I wol have my recours*, I will return, F 75.  
**Rede**, to read; **Redeth**, *imp. pl.* read, B 3650; **Rad**, *pp.* read, G 211.  
**Rede**, *adj. as s.* red, *i.e.* the blood, B 356; red wine, C 526, 562; **Rede**, *pl.* red, G 1095.  
**Redily**, *adv.* quickly, C 667.  
**Redoutinge**, *s.* glorifying, A 2050.  
**Redresse**, *v.* to set right, E 431.  
**Redy**, *adj.* ready, E 299; F 114; dressed, F 387.  
**Reed**, *adj.* red, B 452.  
**Reednesse**, *s.* redness, G 1097.  
**Reflexiouns**, *s. pl.* reflections by means of mirrors, F 230.  
**Refuseden**, *pt. pl.* refused, E 128.  
**Regne**, *s.* kingdom, realm, dominion, reign, B 389, 392, 735; **Regnes**, *pl.* B 129; governments, B 3954  
**Regned**, *pt. s.* reigned, B 3845.  
**Rehersaille**, *s.* enumeration, G 852.  
**Reioysed**, *i pt. s. refl.* I rejoiced, E 145.  
**Rekne**, *v.* to reckon, account, B 110; *ger.* to reckon, B 158; **Rekenen**, reckon, count, E 2433.  
**Reles**, *s.* relaxation, ceasing; *out of reles*, without ceasing, G 46.  
**Relente**, *v.* melt, G 1278.  
**Relesse**, *v.* to relieve, relax, B 1069; *i pr. s.* I release, E 153; **Relessed**, *pt. s.* forgave, B 3367.  
**Releved**, *pp.* made rich again, G 872.  
**Reme**, *s.* realm, B 1306.  
**Remeveth**, *imp. pl. 2 p.* remove ye, G 1008.  
**Remewed**, *pp.* removed, F 181.  
**Ren**, *s.* run, A 4079.  
**Renably**, *adv.* reasonably, D 1509.  
**Rending**, *s.* tearing, A 2834.  
**Renegat**, *s.* renegade, apostate, B 932.  
**Reneye**, *v.* renounce, deny, abjure, B 376.  
**Renges**, *s. pl.* ranks, A 2594.  
**Renne**, *ger.* to run; *renneith for*, runs in favor of, B 125; **Ronne**, *pp.* B 2.  
**Renne**, *v.* to ransack, plunder; *but only in the phrase* rape and renne, seize and plunder, G 1422. See **Rape**.  
**Renovellen**, *pres. pl.* renew, I 1027.  
**Rente**, *s.* rent, *i.e.* revenue, B 3401.  
**Repaire**, *v.* repair, return, F 589; **Repaireth**, *pr. s.* returns, F 339; goes, B 3885; **Repeiring**, *pres. part.* returning, F 608.  
**Repentaunce**, *s.* penitence, A 1776.  
**Repentaunt**, *adj.* penitent, B 228.  
**Replet**, *adj.* full, replete, C 489.  
**Reportour**, *s.* reporter, A 814.  
**Reprevable** (to), *adj.* reprehensible, C 632.  
**Repreve**, *s.* reproof, shame, C 595.  
**Resalgar**, *s.* realgar, G 814.  
**Rese**, *v.* shake, A 1986.  
**Resoun**, *s.* reason, B 3408.  
**Resounded**, *pt s.* resounded, F 413.  
**Respyt**, *s.* respite, delay (of death), G 543.  
**Reste**, *s.* rest, F 355.  
**Restelees**, *adj.* restless, C 728.  
**Retenue**, *s.* retinue, suite, E 270.  
**Rethor**, *s.* orator, F 38.  
**Rethoryke**, *s.* rhetoric, E 32.  
**Retourneth**, *imp. pl.* return, E 809.  
**Retracciouns**, *s. pl.* recantations, I 1085.  
**Reule**, *v.* to rule; *reule hir*, guide her conduct, E 327.  
**Reve**, *s.* steward, bailiff, A 542.  
**Reve**, to bereave, rob of. See **Rafte**.  
**Revel**, *s.* revelry, E 392.  
**Revelous**, *adj.* sportive, B 1194.  
**Reverence**, *s.* reverence, respect, honor, E 196; *thy reverence*, the respect shown to thee, B 116.  
**Rewe**, *v.* to suffer for, do penance for, G 997; **Rewen**, *v.* to rue, have pity, E 1050.  
**Rewel-boon**, *s.* (perhaps) rounded bone; or else, rock-crystal, B 2068.  
**Rewful**, *adj.* sorrowful, sad, B 854.  
**Rewfulleste**, *adj. sup.* most sorrowful, A 2886.  
**Rewthe**, *s.* pity, ruth, E 579; a pitiful sight, lit. ruth, E 562.  
**Reyn**, *s.* rain, B 1864. 3363.  
**Reysed**, *ger.* to raise, G 861; **Reysed**, *pp.* made an inroad or military expedition, A 54.  
**Ribaudye**, *s.* ribaldry, ribald jesting, C 324.  
**Ribble**, *s.* fiddle, A 4396.  
**Ribybe**, *s.* old woman, D 1377.  
**Riche**, *adj. pl.* rich, B 122.  
**Richely**, *adv.* richly, F 90.  
**Richesse**, *s.* riches, B 107.  
**Riden**, *pp.* ridden, B 1990; *pt. pl.* rode, C 968.  
**Right**, *adv.* precisely, just, exactly, F 193.  
**Right**, *s. dat.* right; *by right*, by rights, B 44.  
**Rightwisnesse**, *s.* righteousness, C 637.  
**Ring**, *s.* ring, concourse; **Ringes**, *pl.* E 255.  
**Roche**, *s.* rock, F 500.  
**Rode**, *s.* complexion, B 1917.  
**Rody**, *adj.* ruddy, F 385.  
**Rombel**. See **Rumbel**.  
**Rombled**, *pt. s.* rummaged, fumbled, G 1322.  
**Rombled**, *pt. s.* made a murmuring noise, rumbled, buzzed, muttered, B 3725.  
**Romen**, *v.* to roam, B 558.  
**Ronnen**, *pt. pl.* ran; **Ronne**, *pp.* run, B 2. See **Renne**.  
**Rood**, *pt. s.* rode, E 234; **Riden**, *pp.* B 1990.  
**Roof**, *pt. t.* of *Ryven*.  
**Roost**, *s.* a roast, A 206.  
**Rose-reed**, *adj.* red as a rose, G 254.  
**Roste**, *v.* roast, A 383.  
**Rote**, *s.* a stringed instrument, A 236.

Rote; an astrological term for the epoch of a nativity, B 314; the radix, the fundamental principle, G 1461; root, source, B 358.  
 Rote, *s.* rote; *by rote*, by heart, B 1712.  
 Roten. *adj.* rotten, G 17.  
 Rouketh. *pr. s.* cowers, huddles, A 1308.  
 Rouncy, *s.* hackney, A 390.  
 Rounde, *adv.* roundly, fully, melodiously, C 331.  
 Rounē, *v.* whisper, B 2025; Rowned, *pt. s.* whispered, F 216.  
 Route, *s.* rout, crowd, company, band, B 387, 650, 776.  
 Route, *v.* to assemble in a company, B 540.  
 Rownen, *v.* to whisper, G 824.  
 Rowthe. See Rewthe.  
 Rubible. *s.* kind of fiddle, A 3331.  
 Rubifying. *s.* rubefaction, reddening, G 797.  
 Rude. *adj.* common, rough, poor, E 916.  
 Rudeliche. *adv.* rudely, A 734.  
 Rudenesse, *s.* rusticity, E 397.  
 Ruggy, *adj.* unkempt, rugged, rough, A 2883.  
 Rumbel, *s.* moaning wind, A 1979.  
 Rum, ram, ruf, nonsense words, to imitate alliteration, I 43.  
 Ryden, *pr. pl.* ride, E 784; Rood, *pt. s.* E 234; Riden, *pp.* B 1990.  
 Rym. *s.* rime (commonly misspelt *rhyme*), I 44.  
 Ryme. *v.* tell in rhyme (*or* rime), put into poetry, B 2122.  
 Ryming. *s.* the art of riming, B 48. See Rym.  
 Ryotoures, *s. pl.* rioters, roysterers, C 661.  
 Rys, *s.* twig, A 3324.  
 Ryse. *v.* to arise, get up, F 375; Rysen, *pr. pl.* rise, F 383; Roos, *pt. s.* B 3717.  
 Ryve, *v.* rive, pierce, C 828; tear, E 1236.

## S.

Sad. *adj.* sedate, fixed, constant, unmoved, settled, E 693; sober, E 220; Sadde, *pl.* discreet, grave, E 1002.  
 Sadly, *adv.* in a settled manner, *i.e.* deeply, unstintingly, B 743; firmly, tightly, E 1100.  
 Sadnesse, *s.* constancy, patience, E 452.  
 Saffron with, to tinge with saffron, to color, C 345.  
 Saffroun. *s.* like saffroun, of a bright yellowish color, B 1920.  
 Sal armoniak. *s.* sal ammoniac, G 798.  
 Sal peter, *s.* saltpetre, G 808.  
 Sal preparat, *s.* prepared salt, G 810.  
 Sal tartre, *s.* salt of tartar, G 810.  
 Salte, *adj. pl.* salt, E 1084.  
 Salue, *v.* salute, greet, B 1723; Salewed, *pp.* F 1310.  
 Salwes, *s. pl.* willows, D 655.  
 Sangwyn, *adj.* red, A 333.  
 Sans, *prep.* without, B 501.  
 Saphires, *s. pl.* sapphires, B 3658.  
 Sapiencie, *s.* wisdom, G 101; *pl.* kinds of intelligence, G 338.  
 Sarge, *s.* serge, A 2568.  
 Sauf, *adj.* safe, B 343; G 950.  
 Saufly. *adv.* certainly, E 870.  
 Saule, *s.* soul, A 4187.  
 Sautrye, *s.* psaltery, small harp, A 296.  
 Save, *prep.* save, except, B 3214.  
 Save, *s.* sage (the herb), A 2713.  
 Save, *v.* to save, keep, E 683; 3 *imp. s.* may He save, E 505, 1064; Saved, *pp.* kept inviolate, F 531.  
 Savour, *s.* smell, G 887; pleasantness, F 404.  
 Sawcefleem, *adj.* pimpled, A 625.  
 Sawe, *s.* discourse, G 691.  
 Scabbe, *s.* scab, a disease of sheep, C 358.  
 Scalled, *adj.* scabby, A 627.  
 Scaped. *pp.* escaped, B 1151.  
 Scarsetee, *s.* scarcity, G 1393.  
 Scarsly. *adv.* scarcely, B 3602.  
 Scattered, *pp.* scattered, G 914.  
 Scathe, *s.* scathe, harm, pity, E 1172.  
 Science, *s.* learning, learned writing, B 1666.  
 Sclaundre, *s.* ill fame, E 722.  
 Slendre, *adj. pl.* slender, E 1198.  
 Scole, *s.* school, B 1685, 1694.  
 Scoleward; *to scoleward*, toward school, B 1739.  
 Scoleye, *ger.* to study, A 302.  
 Scourges, *s. pl.* scourges, whips, plagues, E 1157.  
 Seche. *ger.* to seek, A 784.  
 Secree, *s.* a secret, B 3211; *secree of secrees*, secret of secrets, Lat. *Secreta Secretorum* (the name of a book), G 1447.  
 Secreenesse, *s.* secrecy, B 773.  
 Secrely, *adv.* secretly, E 763.  
 Secte, *s.* sect, company, E 1171; religion, faith (lit. following), F 17.  
 See, *s.* seat of empire, B 3339.  
 See, *ger.* to see, look on; Sey, *pt. s.* saw, B 1, 7; Seyn, *pp.* seen, B 1863; See, 3 *imp. s.* may (He) behold, *or* protect, B 156.  
 Seel, *s.* happiness, A 4239; seal, B 882.  
 Seen, *v.* see, B 182.  
 Seeth, *pt. s.* seethed, boiled, E 227.  
 Seint, *s.* saint, B 1631; Seintes. *gen. pl.* B 61.  
 Seintuarie, *s.* sanctuary, I 781.  
 Seistow, sayest thou, B 110.  
 Seke, *v.* search through, B 60; Seken, *ger.* to seek, *i.e.* a matter for search, G 874.  
 Seldē, *adj. pl.* seldom, few; *selde tyme*, few times, E 146.  
 Selde, *adv.* seldom, E 427.  
 Seled, *pp.* sealed, B 736.

- Selle, *v.* give, sell, A 278.
- Selve, *adj.* very; *thy selve neighbour*, thy very neighbor, B 115.
- Sely, good, innocent, B 1702; holy, B 682; innocent, C 292; silly, simple, G 1076.
- Semblable, *adj.* like, I 408.
- Semblant, *s.* outward show, semblance, E 928.
- Seme, *v.* seem, appear, F 102; Semed, *pt. s.* *impers.* it seemed, E 396; *him semed*, it appeared to them, they supposed, F 56; *the peple semed*, it seemed to the people, the people supposed, F 201.
- Semely, *adj.* seemly, comely, B 1919.
- Semicope, *s.* a short cope, A 262.
- Seminge, *s.* appearance; *to my seminge*, as it appears to me, B 1838.
- Semisoun, *s.* low noise, A 3697.
- Sencer, *s.* censer, A 3340.
- Sendal, *s.* a thin silk, A 440.
- Sendeth, 2 *imp. pl.* send ye, C 614; Sente, *pt. s.* *subj.* would send, B 1091.
- Sene, *adj.* apparent, F 645.
- Sentence, *s.* opinion, B 113, 3992; meaning, subject, result, B 1753; judgment, order, I 17; verdict, G 366; general meaning, I 58.
- Septemtrioun, *s.* north, B 3657.
- Sepulture, *s.* sepulchre, C 558.
- Sergeant, *s.* sergeant, officer, E 519.
- Sermone, *ger.* to preach, speak, C 879.
- Sermouns, *s. pl.* writings, B 87.
- Servage, *s.* servitude, thraldom, bondage, A 1946; B 368.
- Servisable, *adj.* serviceable, useful, E 979.
- Servitude, *s.* servitude, E 798.
- Servyse, *s.* service, serving, E 603.
- Sesoun, *s.* season, G 1343.
- Set, *pp.* placed, put, B 440; Seten, *pt. pl.* sat, B 3734; *sette hir*, sat, B 329; *sette her on knees*, cast herself on her knees, B 638; *sette hem*, seated themselves, C 775; *setten hem adoun*, set themselves, G 396.
- Setewale. See Cetewale.
- Sethe, *v.* boil, seethe, A 383.
- Seurtee, *s.* security, surety, B 243.
- Sewed, *pt. s.* pursued, B 4527.
- Sewes, *s. pl.* lit. juices, gravies; prob. used here for seasoned dishes, delicacies, F 67.
- Sexteyn, *s.* sacristan, B 3126.
- Seyl, *s.* sail, A 696.
- Seyn, *v.* say; Seyd, *pp.* B 49; Seydestow, saidst thou, G 334.
- Seyn, *pp.* seen, B 1863.
- Seynd, *pp.* singed, broiled, B 4035.
- Shadde, *pt. s.* shed, poured, B 3921.
- Shadwe, *s.* shadow, B 7, 10.
- Shal, 1 *pr. s.* I shall (do so), F 688; Shaltow, shalt thou, A 3575; Shul, 1 *pr. pl.* we must, E 38.
- Shamefast, *adj.* modest, shy; Shamfast, A 2055; C 55.
- Shames; *shames deth*, death of shame, *i.e.* shameful death, B 819.
- Shamfastnesse, *s.* modesty, A 840.
- Shap, *s.* shape, form, G 44.
- Shape, *v.* planned, E 275; prepared, B 249; appointed, B 253; Shapen hem, *pr. pl.* dispose themselves, intend, F 214.
- Sharpe, *adv.* sharply, B 2073.
- Shaving, *s.* a thin slice, G 1239.
- Shedde, *pt. s.* shed, B 3447.
- Sheeldes, *s. pl.* French crowns, A 278.
- Shefe, *s.* sheaf; Sheef, A 104.
- Sheld, *s.* shield, A 2122.
- Shendeth, *pr. s.* ruins, confounds, B 28.
- Shendshipe, *s.* ignominy, I 273.
- Shene, *adj.* showy, fair, B 692; bright, F 53.
- Shepne, *s. pl.* sheep-folds, A 2000.
- Shere, *v.* to shear, cut, B 3257.
- Shere, *s.* shear, a cutting instrument, scissors, B 3246.
- Sherte, *s.* shirt, B 2049.
- Shet, *pp.* shut, A 2597.
- Shete, *s.* sheet, G 879.
- Shethe, *s.* sheath, B 2066.
- Shetten, *v.* to shut, enclose; *gonne shetten*, did enclose, G 517.
- Shifte, *v.* to apportion, assign, G 278.
- Shilde, 3 *imp. s.* may He shield, may He defend, B 2093.
- Shine, *s.* shin, leg, A 386.
- Shipman, *s.* shipman, skipper, B 1179.
- Shipnes, *s. pl.* stables, D 871.
- Shirreve, *s.* governor (reeve) of a shire or county, A 359.
- Shiten, *pp.* befouled, A 504.
- Sho, *s.* shoe, A 253.
- Shode, *s.* the temple (of the head), A 2007.
- Sholde, 1 *pt. s.* should, B 56; *pt. s.* would, B 3627; had to, was to, G 1382; I 65.
- Shonde, *s.* shame, disgrace, B 2098.
- Shoon, *pt. s.* shone, B 11. *Pt. t.* of Shynen.
- Shoop, *pt. s.* plotted, lit. shaped, B 3543; prepared for, E 198; created, E 903; contrived, E 946.
- Shot-windowe, *s.* window with a bolt, A 3358.
- Showing, *s.* shoving, pushing, H 53.
- Shredde, *pt. s.* shred, cut, E 227.
- Shrewe, *s.* a shrew, peevish woman, E 1222, 2428; evil one, G 917; an ill-tempered (male) person, C 496; Shrewes, *pl.* wicked men, rascals, C 835.
- Shrewe, *adj.* evil, wicked, G 995.
- Shrighte, *pt. s.* shrieked, F 417.
- Shullen, 2 *pr. pl.* ye shall, G 241; Shulde, 1 *pt. s.* I should, I ought to, B 247.
- Sicer, *s.* strong drink, B 3245.

- Sik, *adj.* sick, A 1600.  
 Siker, *adj.* certain, G 1047; safe, G 864.  
 Sikerly, *adv.* certainly, assuredly, surely, B 3984.  
 Sikirnesse, *s.* security, safety, B 425.  
 Sikly, *adv.* ill, with ill will, E 625.  
 Similitude, *s.* comparison; *hence*, proposition, statement, G 431.  
 Simphonye, *s.* an instrument of music, B 2005.  
 Sin, *conj.* since, B 56; E 448.  
 Singuler, *adj.* a single, G 997.  
 Sinwes, *s. pl.* sinews, I 690.  
 Sir, *s.* sir, a title of respectful address; *sir* man of lawe, B 33; *sir* parish prest, B 1166; *sir* gentil maister, B 1627.  
 Sis cink, *i.e.* six-five or eleven, a throw with two dice, which often proved a winning one in the game of "hazard," B 125.  
 Site, *s.* site, situation, E 199.  
 Sith, *adv.* afterwards, C 869.  
 Sithen, *adv.* since, afterwards, B 58.  
 Sithe, *conj.* since, B 3867.  
 Sive, *s.* sieve, G 940.  
 Skile, *s.* reason; *gret skile*, good reason, E 1152; Skiles, *pl.* reasons, reasonings, arguments, F 205.  
 Skilful, *adj.* discerning, B 1038.  
 Skilfully, *adv.* reasonably, with good reason, G 320.  
 Slake, *v.* to slacken, desist from, E 705; to cease, E 137; to end, E 802; Slaketh, *pr. s.* assuages, E 1107.  
 Slawe, *pp.* slain, B 2016; Slawen *pp.* E 544; Slayn, *pp.* B 3708; Sleen, *v.* to slay, B 3736; *ger.* E 1076; Sleeth, *pr. s.* slays, E 628; Slow, *pt. s.* slew, B 3212; extinguished, B 3922.  
 Sleere, *s.* slayer, A 2005.  
 Sleighte, *s.* contrivance, E 1102; craft, skill, G 867; Sleightes, *pl.* tricks, E 2421; devices, G 773.  
 Slen, *v.* to slay, B 3531.  
 Slepe, *s.* sleep, F 347.  
 Slepen, *v.* to sleep, B 2100; Slepte, *pt. s.* slept, E 224.  
 Slepy, *adj.* causing sleep, A 1387.  
 Slewthe. See Slouthe.  
 Slit, short for slideth. See Slyde.  
 Slogardye, *s.* sloth, sluggishness, G 17.  
 Slough, *s.* mud, mire, H 64.  
 Slouthe, *s.* sloth, B 530.  
 Sluttish, *adj.* slovenly, G 636.  
 Slyde, *v.* pass, go away, E 82. See Slit.  
 Slyding, *adj.* unstable, slippery, G 732.  
 Slye, *adj.* artfully contrived, F 230.  
 Slyk, *adj.* sleek, D 351.  
 Slyk, *adj.* such, A 1430.  
 Slyly, *adv.* prudently, wisely, A 1444.  
 Smal, *adj.* little, B 1726; Smale, *adj. pl.* E 380.  
 Smal, *adv.*; *but smal*, but little, F 71.  
 Smart, *adj.* brisk (said of a fire), G 768.  
 Smerte, *v.* to smart, to feel grieved, E 353; *pt. s. subj. impers.* grieved, T 564; *i pr. pl. subj.* may smart, may suffer, G 871. Short for *smerteth*.  
 Smerte, *s.* smart, dolor, F 480.  
 Smerte, *adv.* smartly, sorely, E 629.  
 Smit, *pr. s.* smites, E 122; Smoot, *pt. s.* smote, struck, B 669. See Smyte.  
 Smok, *s.* smock, E 890.  
 Smoking, *pres. pt.* perfuming, A 2281.  
 Smoklees, *adj.* without a smock, E 875.  
 Smoot, *pt. s.* of Smyte.  
 Smoterlich, *adj.* smutty, A 3963.  
 Smyte, *2 pr. pl.* ye smite, F 157. See Smit.  
 Snewed, *pt. s.* snowed, abounded, A 345.  
 Snibbed, *pp.* snubbed, reprov'd, F 688.  
 Snow, *s.* snow; *i.e.* argent in heraldry, white, B 3573.  
 Sobre, *adj.* sober, sedate, B 97.  
 Sodeyn, *adj.* sudden, B 421.  
 Sodeynliche, *adv.* suddenly, A 1575.  
 Sodeynly, *adv.* suddenly, B 15.  
 Softe, *adv.* softly, E 583; tenderly, B 275.  
 Softe, *adj.* gentle, slow, B 399.  
 Softely, *adv.* softly, F 636; quietly, G 408.  
 Soken, *s.* toll, A 3987.  
 Sokingly, *adv.* gently, B 2766.  
 Sol, Sol (the sun), G 826.  
 Solas, *s.* rest, relief, B 1972; diversion, B 1904; comfort, solace, pleasure, B 3964.  
 Solempne, *adj.* magnificent, illustrious, B 387; grand, festive, E 1125; superb, F 61; illustrious, F 111.  
 Solempnely, *adv.* with pomp, with state, B 317.  
 Solempnitee, *s.* feast, festivity, A 870.  
 Som, *indef. pron.* some, B 1182; one, a certain man, G 922; *som shrewe is*, some one (at least) is wicked, G 995.  
 Somdel, *adv.* partially, lit. some deal, E 1012  
 Someres, *s. gen.* summer's, B 554.  
 Somme, *s.* sum, chief point; Sombres, *pl.* G 675.  
 Somne, *v.* summon, D 1377.  
 Sommour, *s.* an officer employed to summon delinquents to appear in ecclesiastical courts, apparitor, A 543.  
 Somtyme, *adv.* at some time, some day, at a future time, B 110.  
 Sond, *s.* sand, B 509.  
 Sonde, *s.* sending, message, B 388, 1049; dispensation of providence, visitation, B 760, 826; trial, B 902; message (*or* messenger), G 525.  
 Sone, *s.* son, F 688; Sones, *pl.* F 29.  
 Sone, *adv.* soon, B 769.  
 Sone-in-law, *s.* son-in-law, E 315.  
 Sonest, *adv. superl.* soonest, B 3716.  
 Sonne, *s.* sun, G 52; Sonne, *gen.* sun's, B 3944.

- Soor, *adj.* sore, F 1571.  
 Sooth, *s.* truth, B 3971; Sothe, *dat.* B 1939.  
 Sooth, *adj.* true; *used as adv.* truly, C 636.  
 Soothfastnesse, *s.* truth, E 796.  
 Soothly, *adv.* verily, E 689.  
 Soper, *s.* supper, F 290.  
 Sophyme, *s.* a sophism, trick of logic, E 5.  
 Sore, *ger.* to soar, mount aloft, F 123.  
 Sore, *s.* sore, misery, E 1243.  
 Sore, *adv.* sorely; *bar so sore*, bore so ill, E 85.  
 Sorwe, *s.* sorrow, grief, sympathy, compassion, F 422.  
 Sorwefully, *adv.* sorrowfully, F 585.  
 Sory, *adj.* sad, unfortunate, B 1949; ill, C 876; miserable, H 55.  
 Sote, *adj.* sweet, A 1; F 389.  
 Soth, *adj.* true, B 169. See Sooth.  
 Sothe. See Sooth.  
 Sother, *adj. comp.* truer, G 214.  
 Sothfastnesse, *s.* truth, B 2365.  
 Sotil, *adj.* thin, subtle, A 2030.  
 Sotted, *adj.* besotted, befooled, G 1341.  
 Souded, *pp.* attached, devoted, B 1769.  
 Souked, *pp.* sucked, been at the breast, E 450;  
     *Soukinge, pres. part.* sucking, B 1648.  
 Soun, *s.* sound, musical sound, E 271.  
 Soune, *v.* sound; imitate in sound, speak like, F 105; *Souneth, pr. s.* tends (to), is consonant (with), B 3157.  
 Soupen, *pr. pl. sup.* F 297.  
 Souple, *adj.* subtle, obedient, yielding, B 3690.  
 Sourden, *pres. pl.* rise from, I 448.  
 Sours, *s.* source, origin, E 49.  
 Souter, *s.* cobbler, A 3904.  
 Sowdan, *s.* sultan, B 177.  
 Sowdanesse, *s.* sultaness, B 358.  
 Sowen, *v.* to sow, B 1182.  
 Sowled, *pp.* endowed with a soul, G 329.  
 Sownen, *pr. pl.* sound, *i.e.* play, F 270; *Sowneth, pr. pl.* tend (to), are consonant (with), F 517; *Souned, pt. pl.* tended, B 3348. See Soune.  
 Space, *s.* opportunity, I 64.  
 Spare, *v.* to refrain; abstain from, A 192.  
 Sparre, *s.* bar, bolt, A 990.  
 Sparwe, *s.* sparrow, A 626.  
 Spece, *s.* species, kind, class, I 407.  
 Speche, *s. dat.* speech, elocution, oratory, F 104.  
 Special, *adj.*; *in special*, specially, A 444.  
 Spedde, *pt. s.* prospered, made to prosper, B 3876.  
 Speedful, *adj.* advantageous, B 727.  
 Speke, *v.* speak; *Spak, pt. s.* E 295.  
 Spekestow, *speakest* thou, G 473.  
 Spelle, *s. dat.* a spell, relation, story, B 2083.  
 Spence, *s.* a battery, D 1031.  
 Spending-silver, *s.* silver to spend, money in hand, G 1018.  
 Spere, *s.* sphere, F 1280.  
 Spicerye, *s.* mixture of spices, B 2043.  
 Spilt, *pp.* killed, B 857.  
 Spirites, *s. pl.* the (four) spirits in alchemy, G 820.  
 Spitously, *adv.* angrily, A 3476.  
 Spones, *pl.* spoons, C 908.  
 Spores, *pl.* spurs, A 473.  
 Spousaille, *s.* espousal, wedding, E 180.  
 Spoused, *pp.* espoused, wedded, E 3, 386.  
 Spouted, *pp.* vomited, B 487.  
 Spradde, *pt. s.* spread, E 418.  
 Spreynd, *pp.* sprinkled, B 1830. See Springen.  
 Springe, *v.* rise, dawn, F 346.  
 Springen, *v.* sprinkle, scatter, sow broadcast, B 1183; *Spreynd, pp.* sprinkled, B 1830.  
 Springing, *s.* beginning, source, E 49.  
 Spurne, *v.* spurn, kick, F 616.  
 Spyces, *s. pl.* spices, F 291.  
 Squames, *s. pl.* scales, G 759.  
 Squaymous, *adj.* squeamish, A 3337.  
 Squyer, *s.* squire, A 79; *Squyeres, pl.* E 192.  
 Stable, *adj.* constant, E 931.  
 Stablißed, *pp.* established, A 2995.  
 Staf-slinge, *s.* a staff-sling, B 2019.  
 Stalke, *v.*; *Stalked* him, *pt. s.* walked slowly, E 525.  
 Stampe, *pr. pl.* stamp, bray in a mortar, C 538.  
 Stank, *s.* a pool, I 841.  
 Stant, *pr. s.* is, B 3116.  
 Stape, Stapen, *pp.* advanced, B 4011.  
 Starf, *pt. s.* died, B 283. *Pt. t. of Sterven.* See Sterve.  
 Starke, *adj. pl.* severe, B 3560.  
 Stede, *s.* steed, F 81.  
 Stede; *in stede of*, in stead of, B 3308.  
 Stedfastnesse, *s.* steadfastness, firmness, E 699.  
 Stedfastly, *adv.* assuredly, E 1094.  
 Steer, *s.* a yearling bullock, A 2149.  
 Stele, *s.* handle, A 3785.  
 Stele, *v.* to steal, B 105; *Steleth, pr. s.* steals away, B 21; *Stal, pt. s.* stole away, B 3763.  
 Stemed, *pt. s.* shone, A 202.  
 Stente, *v.* to cease, stint, leave off, B 3925.  
 Stepe, *adj. pl.* bright, glittering, A 201.  
 Stere, *s.* pilot, helmsman, B 448.  
 Sterelees, *adj.* rudderless, B 439.  
 Sterlinges, *pl.* sterling coins, C 907.  
 Sterres, *gen. pl.* of the stars, E 1124.  
 Sterte, *v.* pass away, B 335; *pr. pl.* start, rise quickly, C 705.  
 Sterve, *v.* die of famine, C 451; *Starf, pt. s.* died, B 3325.  
 Stevene, *s.* voice, language, F 150.  
 Stewe, *s.* a fish-pond, A 350.  
 Stiborn, *adj.* stubborn, D 456  
 Stiked, *pt. s.* stuck, fixed, B 2097; *Stikede*,

- pierced, B 3897; Stiked, *pp.* stabbed, B 430; *a stiked swyn*, a stuck pig, C 556.
- Stillatorie, *s.* still, vessel used in distillation, G 580.
- Stire, *v.* to stir, move, C 346.
- Stiropes, *s. pl.* stirrups, B 1163.
- Stith, *s.* anvil, A 2026.
- Stoke, *v.* stab, A 2546.
- Stonde, *v.* stand; be understood, be fixed, E 346; be set in view (as a prize at a game), B 1931; Stode, stood, B 176.
- Stongen, *pp.* stung, A 1079.
- Stoor, *s.* store, farm-stock, C 365.
- Stopen, *pp.* advanced, E 1514.
- Store, *adj.* stubborn, E 2367.
- Storie, *s.* tale, history, B 3900.
- Stot, *s.* stallion, A 615.
- Stounde, *s.* short time, B 1021.
- Stoupe, *ger.* to stoop, G 1311.
- Stoures, *s. pl.* battles, combats, B 3560.
- Stout, *adj.* strong, A 545.
- Strange, *def. adj.* strange, F 89.
- Straughte, *pt. s.* stretched, A 2916.
- Straunge, *adj.* strange, foreign, A 13.
- Straw, *interj.* a straw! F 695.
- Strawe, *2 pr. s. subj.* strew, F 613.
- Strayte, *s.* strait, B 464.
- Stream, *s.* stream, river, A 464.
- Streen, *s.* strain, *i.e.* stock, progeny, race, E 157.
- Streit, *adj.* narrow, A 174.
- Streite, *pp. as adj. def.* drawn, B 4547.
- Stremes, *pl.* streams, rays, beams, B 3944.
- Strenger, *adj. comp.* stronger, B 3711.
- Strengthes, *pl.* sources of strength, B 3248.
- Strepth, *pr. s.* strips, E 894; Strepn, *pl.* E 1116.
- Streyne, *v.* constrain, E 144.
- Strike, *s.* hank (of flax), A 676.
- Strogelest, *2 pr. s.* strugglest, C 829.
- Stronde, *s.* shore, B 825.
- Stroof, *pt. s.* strove, A 1038.
- Strook, *s.* a stroke, B 3899.
- Strouted, *pt. s.* spread, A 3315.
- Stryve, *v.* to strive, oppose, E 170.
- Stubbes, *s. pl.* stumps, A 1978.
- Studien, *v.* to study, E 8; Studie, *2 pr. pl.* E 5.
- Sturdinesse, *s.* sternness, E 700.
- Sturdy, *adj.* cruel, stern, E 698, 1049.
- Style, *s.* stile, gate to climb over, C 712; F 106.
- Style, *s.* style, mode of writing, E 18, 41.
- Styves, *s. pl.* stews, brothels, D 1332.
- Styward, *s.* steward, B 914.
- Subgets, *s. pl.* subjects, E 482.
- Subieccioun, *s.* subjection, obedience, B 270; subjection, governance, B 3656.
- Sublymatories, *s. pl.* vessels for sublimation, G 793.
- Sublymed, *pp.* sublimed, sublimated, G 774.
- Sublyming, *s.* sublimation, G 770.
- Submitted; *ye ben submitted*, ye have submitted, B 35.
- Subtilly, *adv.* subtly, F 222.
- Subtiltee, *s.* skill, craft, G 844; Subtiltee, subtilty, craft, secret knowledge, G 620.
- Suffisant, *adj.* able, sufficient, B 243.
- Suffraunce, *s.* endurance, patience, E 1162.
- Suffyse, *v.* suffice, B 3648.
- Suggestioun, *s.* a criminal charge, B 3607.
- Sugre, *s.* sugar, B 2046.
- Superfluitee, *s.* superfluity, excess, C 471.
- Surcote, *s.* upper coat, A 617.
- Surement, *s.* surety, pledge, F 1534.
- Surplys, *s.* surplice, G 558.
- Surquidrie, *s.* arrogance, over-confidence, I 403.
- Sursanure, *s.* surface-healed wound, F 1113.
- Suspecious, *adj.* suspicious, ominous of evil, E 541.
- Suspect, *s.* suspicion, E 905.
- Sustenance, *s.* support, living, E 202.
- Swa, *adv.* so, A 4040.
- Swal, *pt. s.* swelled; *up swal*, swelled up, was puffed up with anger, B 1750; Swollen, *pp.* proud, E 950.
- Swappe, *v.* to swap, strike, E 586; Swapte, *pt. s.* fell suddenly, E 1099; Swap, *imp. s.* strike off, G 366.
- Swatte, *pt. s.* sweated, G 560.
- Swayn, *s.* lad, young man, B 1914.
- Sweigh, *s.* sway, motion, B 296.
- Swelwe, *pr. s. subj.* swallow, E 1188.
- Swerd, *s. dat.* sword, B 64.
- Swere, *v.* swear, B 1171; Swoor, *pt. s.* B 2062; Sworen, *pl.* E 176; Swore, *pp.* sworn, E 403; Sworn, bound by oath, F 18.
- Swering, *s.* swearing, C 631.
- Swete, *adj.* sweet, H 42.
- Swete, *ger.* to sweat, G 522; Swatte, *pt. s.* G 560.
- Sweven, *s.* dream, B 3930.
- Swich, *adj.* such; *swich a*, such a, B 3921; *swich oon*, such an one, F 231; Swiche, *pl.* B 88.
- Swink, *s.* labor, toil, A 188; G 730.
- Swinke, *v.* labor, toil, A 186; G 669; *ger.* labor, toil, C 874; *pr. pl.* gain by labor, work for, G 21; Swonken, *pp.* toiled, A 4235.
- Swinker, *s.* laborer, A 531.
- Swollen, *pp.* swollen, *i.e.* proud, E 950.
- Swolwe, *v.* to swallow, H 36.
- Swonken. See Swinke.
- Swoot, *s.* sweat, G 578.
- Swote, *adj.* See Sote, Swete.
- Swowneth, *pr. s.* swoons, F 430; Swowned, *pt. s.* swooned, F 443; Swowning, *pres. part.* B 181.



Swowninge, *s.* swooning, swoon, E 1080.  
 Swyn, *s.* swine, A 598.  
 Swythe, *adv.* quickly; *as swythe*, as quickly as possible, B 637; G 936.  
 Swyve, *v.* have sexual intercourse with, A 4178.  
 Sy, *pt. s.* saw, G 1381.  
 Sye, Seyen, *pt. s.* saw, E 1804; G 110.  
 Syk, *s.* sigh, F 498.  
 Syked, *pt. s.* sighed, B 3394; Syketh, *pr. s.* sigheth, sighs, B 985; Sighthe, *pt. s.* sighed, B 1035.  
 Sys, six, B 3851.  
 Sythe, *pl. times*, B 733; *ofte sythe*, many times, G 1031; *ful ofte sythe*, full oftentimes, E 233.

## T.

T', before a verb beginning with a vowel, to; *as* Tacord, etc.  
 Taa, *v.* take, A 4129.  
 Tabard, *s.* short coat for a herald, A 20; for a laborer, A 541.  
 Table, *s.* board; *at table*, at board, *i.e.* entertained as a lodger, G 1015.  
 Tabyde, *for* To abide, B 797.  
 Tacord, *for* To accord, *i.e.* to agreement, H 98.  
 Taffata, *s.* fine silk, A 440.  
 Taffraye, *for* To affraye, to frighten, E 455.  
 Taillages, *s. pl.* taxes, I 567.  
 Taille, *s.* a tally, credit, A 570.  
 Tak, *imp. s.* receive, B 117; Take me, *1 pr. s.* offer myself, betake myself, B 1985; Takestow, *2 pr. s.* takest thou, G 435.  
 Takel, *s.* tackle, arrow, A 106.  
 Tale, *s.* a long story, E 383; Tales, *pl.* B 130.  
 Talent, *s.* desire, appetite, C 540.  
 Talighte, *for* To alighte, *i.e.* to alight, E 909.  
 Taling, *s.* story-telling, B 1624.  
 Tamende, *for* To amende, to redress, E 441.  
 Tanoyen, *for* To anoyen, to injure, B 492.  
 Tapicer, *s.* upholsterer, A 362.  
 Tappestere, *s.* barmaid, tapster, A 241.  
 Tarien, *v.* tarry, B 983; delay (used actively), F 73; Taries, *pp.* delayed, F 402.  
 Tarraye, *for* To arraye, to array, arrange, E 961.  
 Tartre, *s.* tartar, G 813.  
 Tas, *s.* heap, A 1005.  
 Tassaile, *for* To assaile, *ger.* to assail; Tassaile, E 1180.  
 Tassaye, *for* To assaye, to try; to test, prove, try, E 454, 1075.  
 Tassoille, *for* To assoile, to absolve, C 933.  
 Taste, *imp. s.* feel, G 503.  
 Taverner, *s.* inn-keeper, C 685.  
 Tavyse, *for* To avyse, to deliberate, B 1426.  
 Teche, *v.* teach, A 308; B 1180.  
 Teer, *s.* a tear, E 1104; Teres, *pl.* E 1084.

Tellen, *v.* tell, relate, B 56; Tel, *imp. s.* B 1167.  
 Tembrace, *for* To embrace, E 1101.  
 Temple, *s.* inn of court, A 567.  
 Tempred, *pp.* tempered, G 926.  
 Temps, *s.* tense; *futur temps*, future tense, futurity, time to come, G 875.  
 Tenbrace, *for* To embrace, to embrace, B 1891.  
 Tendure, *for* To endure, E 756, 811.  
 Tenspyre, *for* To enspyre, *i.e.* to inspire, G 1470.  
 Tentifly, *adv.* attentively, E 334.  
 Tercelet, *s.* male falcon, F 504, 621; Tercelets, *pl.* male birds of prey, F 648.  
 Tere, *s.* a tear, B 3852.  
 Terme, *s.* period, space of time; *in terme*, in set terms or phrases, C 311; *terme of his lyve*, for the whole period of his life, G 1479; Termes, *pl.* set terms, pedantic expressions, G 1398.  
 Terved, *pp.* stripped, G 1171.  
 Tespye, *for* To espye, to espy, B 1989.  
 Testers, *s. pl.* head-pieces, A 2499.  
 Testes, *s. pl.* vessels for assaying metals, G 818.  
 Testif, *adj.* headstrong, A 4004.  
 Texpounden, *for* To expounden, *i.e.* to expound, to explain, B 1716.  
 Text, *s.* text, quotation from an author, B 45.  
 Textuel, *adj.* literal, keeping strictly to the letter of the text, I 57.  
 Teyd, *pp.* tied, bound, E 2432.  
 Teyne, *s.* a thin plate of metal, G 1225, 1229.  
 Th', before substantives beginning with a vowel, the; *as* Theffect *for* the effect.  
 Thadvrsitee, *s.* the adversity, E 756.  
 Thakked, *pp.* stroked, A 3304.  
 Thalighte, *for* Thee alighte; *in thee alighte*, alighted in thee, B 1660.  
 Than, *adv.*; *er than*, sooner than, before, G 899.  
 Danke, *1 pr. s.* I thank, E 1088.  
 Tharray, *for* The array, F 63.  
 That, *conj.* as, as well as, B 1036; *rel. pron.* with reference to whom, G 236.  
 Thavys, the advice, A 3076.  
 The, *pron.* thee, F 676.  
 Thee, *v.* prosper, thrive, G 641; *also mote I thee*, so may I thrive, B 2007.  
 Theffect, *for* The effect; the moral, B 2148.  
 Thegle, *for* The egle, the eagle, B 3573.  
 Theme, *s.* text, thesis of a sermon, C 333.  
 Themperour, *for* The emperour, the emperor, B 248; Themperoures, the emperor's, B 151.  
 Thenche, *v.* think, A 3253.  
 Thende, *for* The ende, the end, B 423, 3269.  
 Thenke, *1 pr. s.* I think, I intend, E 641.  
 Thennes, *adv.* thence, B 308; *used as s.* the place that, G 66.  
 Thennes-forth, *adv.* thenceforth, B 1755.  
 Thentencioun, the intention, G 1443.

- Thentente**, *for* The entente, purpose, end, G 1306.  
**Ther**, *adv.* there, B 62; *ther that*, where, F 267.  
**Ther-about**, *adv.* thereupon, therein, G 832.  
**Ther-bifore**, *adv.* beforehand, E 689, 729.  
**Ther-biforn**, *adv.* beforehand, before the event, B 197; C 624.  
**Ther-fore**, *adv.* on that account, E 445; on that point, E 1141; for that purpose, F 177.  
**Ther-inne**, *adv.* therein, in it, B 1945, 3573.  
**Ther-of**, *adv.* with respect to that, to that end, E 644.  
**Ther-on**, *adv.* thereupon, thereof, F 3.  
**Ther-oute**, *adv.* out there, out in the open air, B 3362; outside there, G 1136.  
**Therto**, *adv.* besides, moreover, F 19.  
**Therwith**, *adv.* besides, at the same time, B 3210.  
**Therwith-al**, *adv.* besides all that, as well, B 3131, 3612.  
**Thestaat**, *for* The staat, the state, condition, B 128.  
**Thewes**, *pl.* qualities, E 409; virtues, good qualities, G 101.  
**The excellent**, the excellent, B 150.  
**Thider**, *adv.* thither, B 144; C 749.  
**Thikke**, *adj.* thick, F 159.  
**Thilke**, that very, that same, C 753; that sort of, I 50.  
**Thimage**, the image, B 1695.  
**Thing**, *pl.* possessions, G 540; Things, pieces of music, F 78.  
**Thingot**, the ingot, G 1233.  
**Thinketh**, *pr. s. impers.*; *me thinketh*, it seems to me, B 1901.  
**Thinne**, *adj.* thin, poor, scanty, limited, G 741.  
**Thise**, *pl. of* This, *but a monosyllable*, B 59.  
**Thoccident**, *for* The Occident, B 3864.  
**Thought**, *s. care, anxiety*, B 1779; E 80.  
**Tholed**, *pp.* suffered, D 1546.  
**Thombe**, *s. thumb*, F 83, 148.  
**Thonder**, *s. thunder*, F 258.  
**Thonke**, 1 *pr. s.* I thank, E 830.  
**Thorient**, *for* The Orient, B 3871, 3883.  
**Thoughte**, *pt. s. impers.* seemed, B 146; *thoughte hem*, it seemed to them, C 475.  
**Thral**, *s. thrall, slave, servant*, B 3343.  
**Thraldom**; *s. bondage, slavery*, B 286.  
**Threpe**, 1 *pr. pl.* we call, assert to be, G 826.  
**Threshold**, *s. threshold*, E 288, 291.  
**Threste**, *v. thrust*, A 2612.  
**Threting**, *s. threatening, menace*, G 698.  
**Thrift**, *s. success, prosperity in money-making*, G 739, 1425.  
**Thriftly**, *adj.* profitable, B 1165.  
**Thrittene**, thirteen, D 2259.  
**Throf**, *pt. s. of Thryve*.
- Throp**, *s. thorpe, small village*, E 199; *Thropes, s. gen. village's*, I 12.  
**Throwe**, *s. a short space of time, a little while*, B 953; E 450.  
**Thrustel**, *s. a throstle, thrush*, B 1963; *Thrustel-cok*, B 1959.  
**Thryve**, *v. thrive, prosper*, E 172.  
**Thurgh**, *prep.* through, by help of, B 1669; by, F 11.  
**Thurgh-girt**, *pp.* pierced through, A 1010.  
**Thurghout**, *prep.* throughout, F 46; all through, B 256, 464; quite through, C 655.  
**Thurrok**, *s. hold of a ship, sink*, I 363, 715.  
**Thurst**, *s. thirst*, B 100.  
**Thursted him**, *pt. s. impers.* he was thirsty, B 3229.  
**Thwitel**, *s. knife*, A 3933.  
**Tid**, *pp. of Tyden*.  
**Tidifs**, *s. pl. small birds*, F 648.  
**Tikel**, *adj.* frail, A 3428.  
**Til**, *prep.* to, G 306.  
**Tirannye**, *s. tyranny*, B 165.  
**To**, *adv.* too, B 2129; overmuch, G 1423; *to dere*, too dearly, C 293; *to and fro*, all ways, H 53.  
**To**, *prep.* to (used after its case), G 1449.  
**To**, *s. toe*, A 2726.  
**To-bete**, *v. beat severely*, G 405.  
**To-breketh**, *pr. s. breaks in twain*, G 907.  
**Tode**, *s. toad*, I 636.  
**Toght**, *adj.* taut, D 2267.  
**To-gider**, *adv.* together, B 3222; *Togidres*, C 702.  
**To-hewe**, *pp.* hewn in pieces, B 430.  
**Tokening**, *s. token, proof*, G 1153.  
**Tolde**, *pt. t. of Tellen*.  
**Tollen**, *v. take toll*, A 562.  
**Tombesteres**, *s. pl. fem. dancing girls, lit. female tumblers*, C 477.  
**Tonges**, *pl. languages*, B 3497.  
**Tonne-greet**, *adj.* great as a tun, A 1994.  
**Took**, *pt. s. took, had*, B 192.  
**To-race**, *pr. pl. subj.* may scratch to pieces, E 572.  
**Tord**, *s. excrement*, C 955.  
**To-rent**, *pp.* torn to pieces, E 1012; *To-rente, pt. s. rent in twain*, B 3215.  
**Torets**, *pl. small rings or swivels*, A 2152.  
**Tormentinge**, *s. torture*, E 1038.  
**Tormentour**, *s. tormentor, i.e. executioner*, B 818.  
**Tormentyse**, *s. torment*, B 3707.  
**Torn**, *s. turn*, C 815.  
**Torne**, *v. to turn*, G 1403; *Terve*, 3 *imp. s.* may he turn, G 1274; *Terved, pp. turned, i.e. "turned him round his finger,"* G 1171.  
**Tortuous**, *adj.* oblique, a technical term in astrology, used of the six of the zodiacal signs which ascend most obliquely, B 302.  
**To-swinke**, *pr. pl. labor greatly*, C 519.

To-tar, *pt. s.* lacerated, B 380r.  
 To-tere, *pr. pl.* rend, tear in pieces, C 474; To-  
 tore, *pp.* torn in pieces, G 635.  
 Toty, *adj.* dizzy, A 4253.  
 Touche, *pr. s. subj.* affect, concern, B 3284.  
 Tour, *s.* tower; in B 2096, it means that his crest  
 was a miniature tower, with a lily projecting  
 from it.  
 Touret, *s.* turret, A 1909.  
 Tournament, *s.* a tournament, B 1906.  
 Toute, *s.* backside, A 3812.  
 Toverbyde, to outlive, D 1260.  
 Towaille, *s.* towel, B 3935, 3943.  
 Trad, *pt. s.* trod, B 4368.  
 Traiterye, *s.* traitorye, B 781.  
 Trappures, *pl.* trappings of a horse, A 2499.  
 Trave, *s.* frame for unruly horses, A 3282.  
 Trede-foul, *s.* treader of fowls, B 3135.  
 Trench, *s.* a hollow walk, alley, F 392.  
 Trentals, *s.* series of masses for the dead, D 1717.  
 Tresor, *s.* treasure, wealth; Tresour, B 3401.  
 Trespace, *v.* trespass, transgress, sin, B 3370.  
 Trete, *pr. pl.* discourse, treat, C 630.  
 Tretee, *s.* treaty, B 3865.  
 Tretis, *s.* treatise, document, B 2147.  
 Tretys, *adj.* long, well-proportioned, A 152.  
 Trewe, *pl. used as s.* the faithful, B 456.  
 Treweliche, *adv.* truly, E 804.  
 Trewe love, *s.* condiment to sweeten breath,  
 A 3692.  
 Triacle, *s.* a sovereign remedy, B 479.  
 Trille, *v.* turn, F 316.  
 Trippe, *v.* to trip, to move briskly with the feet,  
 F 312.  
 Troden, *pp.* stepped, C 712.  
 Trompe, *s.* trumpet, B 705.  
 Tronchoun, *s.* broken shaft of a spear, A 2615.  
 Trone, *s.* throne (of God), heaven, C 842.  
 Trouble, *adj.* troubled, gloomy, E 465.  
 Trouthe, *s.* truth, G 238; troth, truth, B 527.  
 Trufes, *s. pl.* trifles, I 715.  
 Tryce, *v.* pull away, B 3715.  
 Trye, *adj.* choice, excellent, B 2046.  
 Tryne compas, the threefold world, containing  
 earth, sea, and heaven, G 45.  
 Tulle, *v.* lure, A 4134.  
 Twelf, twelve, E 736.  
 Tweyfold, *adj.* twofold, double, G 566.  
 Twinkling, *s.* momentary blinking, E 37.  
 Twinne, *ger.* to separate, B 517; to depart  
 (from), C 430.  
 Twiste, *v.* to twist, wring, torment, F 566.  
 Twiste, *s. dat.* twig, spray, F 442.  
 Twyes, *adv.* twice, B 1738.  
 Tyde, *s.* season, F 142.  
 Tyden, *v.* befall, B 337.  
 Tyding, *s.* tidings, news, B 726.  
 Tyme, *s.* time, B 19.

## U.

Unbokele, *v.* unbuckle, F 555.  
 Unbounden, *pp.* unbound, unwedded, divorced,  
 E 1226.  
 Unbrent, *pp.* unburnt, B 1658.  
 Uncouple, *v.* to ~~lo~~ loose, B 3692.  
 Uncouth, *adj. pl.* strange, F 284.  
 Undergrowe, *pp.* undergrown, A 156.  
 Undermeles, *s. pl.* morning meal-time, D 875.  
 Undern, *s.* a particular period of the day, gener-  
 ally from 9 A.M. to midday; it here probably  
 means the beginning of that period, or a little  
 after 9 A.M., E 260, 981.  
 Undernom, *pt. s.* perceived, G 243.  
 Underpyghte, *pt. s.* stuffed, filled underneath,  
 B 789.  
 Underspore, *v.* lever up, A 3465.  
 Understonde, *v.* to understand, E 20; Under-  
 stondeth, *pr. pl.* understand, C 646.  
 Undertake, *v.* to affirm, E 803; *i pr. s.* I am  
 bold to say, B 3516.  
 Undigne, *adj.* unworthy, E 359.  
 Unfestlich, *adj.* unfestive, jaded, F 366.  
 Unhele, *s.* misfortune, sickness, C 116.  
 Unkinde, *adj.* unnatural, B 88.  
 Unkindely, *adv.* unnaturally, C 485.  
 Unkindenesse, *s.* unkindness, B 1057.  
 Unnethe, *adv.* scarcely, hardly, with difficulty,  
 B 1050, 1816.  
 Unsad, *adj.* unsettled, E 995.  
 Unset, *adj.* unappointed, A 1524.  
 Unslekked, *adj.* unslacked, G 806.  
 Unthriftily, *adv.* poorly, G 893.  
 Untrewe, *adj.* untrue, false, B 3218.  
 Untrouthe, *s.* untruth, B 687.  
 Unwar, *adj.* unexpected, B 427.  
 Unweldy, *adj.* unwieldy, difficult to move,  
 H 55.  
 Unwemmed, *pp.* unspotted, spotless, G 137,  
 225.  
 Unyolden, without yielding, A 2642.  
 Up-haf, *pt. s.* uplifted, A 2428.  
 Upright, *adv.* flat on the back, A 4194.  
 Up-so-doun, *adv.* upside down, A 1377.  
 Upsterte, *pt. s.* upstarted, arose, A 1080.  
 Up-yaf, *pt. s.* yielded up, A 2427.

## V.

Vane, *s.* weather-vane, E 996.  
 Variaunt, *adj.* varying, changing, changeable,  
 fickle, G 1175.  
 Vavasour, *s.* landholder, A 360.  
 Veluettes, *pl.* velvets, F 644.  
 Venerye, *s.* hunting, A 166, 2308.  
 Venim, *s.* venom, poison, A 2751.  
 Ventusinge, *s.* cupping, A 2747.

Verdegrees, *s.* verdigris, G 791.  
 Verdit, *s.* verdict, A 787.  
 Vermyne, *s.* vermin, E 1095.  
 Vernage, *s.* white wine, B 1261.  
 Vernicle, *s.* copy of the handkerchief with the impression of the face of the Saviour, A 685.  
 Verray, *adj.* very, true; *verray force*, main force, B 3237.  
 Verrayment, *adv.* truly, B 1903.  
 Vertu, *s.* virtue, F 593; *vertu plese*, satisfy virtue, be virtuous, E 216; magic power, magic influence, F 146, 157.  
 Veye, guard (?), A 3485.  
 Vese, *s.* a rush of wind, draught, gush, A 1985.  
 Vessel, *s.* (collectively) vessels, plate, B 3338.  
 Vestiment, *s.* clothing, robes, F 59.  
 Veyn, *adj.* vain, empty, powerless, silly, G 497.  
 Veyne-blood, *s.* blood of the veins, A 2747.  
 Viage, *s.* journey, voyage, B 259.  
 Vicary, *s.* victor, I 22.  
 Vilanye, *s.* evil-doing, B 1681.  
 Vileinye, *s.* discourtesy, C 740; licentiousness, G 231.  
 Violes, *s.* *pl.* vials, phials, G 793.  
 Virtrate, *s.* hag, D 1582.  
 Vitaile, *s.* victuals, food; Vitaille, E 59, 265.  
 Vitaile, *v.* provide with victuals; Vitailed, *pp.* provisioned, B 869.  
 Vitremyte, *s.* woman's cap, B 3562.  
 Voluper, *s.* cap, A 3241.  
 Voyden, *v.* to get rid of, E 910; F 188; *imp. s.* depart from, E 806; Voydeth, *imp. pl.* send away, G 1136.  
 Voys, *s.* voice, F 99; rumor, E 629.

## W.

Waast, *s.* waist, B 1890.  
 Wacht, *s.* blue cloth, A 3321.  
 Wafereres, *s.* *pl.* makers of *gaufres* or wafer-cakes, confectioners, C 479.  
 Waiteth, *pr. s.* watches, E 708.  
 Waken, *v. act.* to awake, B 1187.  
 Wakinge, *s.* a keeping awake, period of wakefulness, B 22.  
 Wal, *s.* wall, E 1047.  
 Wan, *pt. s.* won, B 3337.  
 Wanges, *s.* *pl.* cheek-teeth, A 4030.  
 Wang-tooth, *s.* molar tooth, B 3234.  
 Wanhope, *s.* despair, A 1249.  
 Wanie, *v.* wane A 2078.  
 Wantown, *adj.* wanton, free, unrestrained, A 208; Wantoun, E 236.  
 Wantownesse, *s.* wantonness, A 264.  
 Wantrust, *adj.* distrustful, H 281.  
 War, *adj.* aware; *be war*, beware, take heed, B 119; *beth ware*, B 1629.  
 War, *imp. s. as pl.*; *war yow*, take care of yourselves, make way, B 1889.  
 Wardecors, *s.* bodyguard, D 359.  
 Warderere, look out behind, A 4101.  
 Wardrobe, *s.* privy, B 1762.  
 Ware, *adj.* aware. See War.  
 Ware, *imp.* beware, B 4146.  
 Ware, *s.* merchandise, B 140.  
 Warente, *v.* to warrant, protect, C 338.  
 Wariables, *s.* *pl.* butcher birds, D 1408.  
 Warie, 1 *pr. s.* I curse, B 372.  
 Warisshe, *v.* recover, B 2172.  
 Warissinghe, *s.* healing, B 2205.  
 Warne, 1 *pr. s.* I warn, I bid you take heed, B 16, 1184. See Werne.  
 Warnestore, *ger.* to garrison, B 2521.  
 Waryce, *v.* heal, cure, C 906.  
 Wasshe, *pp.* washed, C 353.  
 Wast, *s.* waste, B 1609.  
 Wastel-breed, *s.* cake of fine flour, A 147.  
 Wawe, *s.* wave, B 508; Wawes, *pl.* B 468.  
 Wayk, *adj.* weak, B 1671.  
 Wayten, *v.* to watch, F 444; Wayteth, *pr. s.* B 3331.  
 Webbe, *s.* weaver, A 362.  
 Wedde, *s. dat.* pledge, A 1218.  
 Wede, *s.* a "weed," a garment, A 1006; B 2102.  
 Weder, *s.* weather, F 52.  
 Weel. See Wel.  
 Weet, *s.* wet, B 3407.  
 Weex, *pt. s.* waxed, grew, G 513.  
 Wel, *adv.* well, B 25; very, as in *wel royal*, very royal, F 26; about (used with numbers), F 383; certainly, by all means, E 635.  
 Welde, *s.* rule, D 271.  
 Welde, *v.* wield; *pt. s.* wielded, overpowered, B 3452.  
 Wele, *s.* prosperity, B 175.  
 Welful, *adj.* full of weal, blessed, B 451.  
 Wel-faring, *adj.* well-faring, thriving, prosperous, B 3132.  
 Welked, *pp.* withered, C 738.  
 Welte, *pt. s.* wielded, *i.e.* lorded it over, possessed for use, B 3200.  
 Wem, *s.* injury, hurt, F 121.  
 Wemmelees, *adj.* stainless, G 47.  
 Wende, *v.* go; Wente him, *pt. s.* turned himself, *i.e.* went his way, G 1110; Went, *pp.* gone; *ben went*, are gone, B 173; *is went*, is gone, G 534.  
 Weneth, *pr. s.* imagines, C 569.  
 Wente. See Wende.  
 Wepen, *pr. pl.* weep, B 820; Wepte, *pt. s.* wept, B 267.  
 Werche, *v.* to work, make, do, perform, B 566; G 14.  
 Wered, *pp.* worn, B 3315.  
 Werk, *s.* work, *i.e.* reality, practice, F 482.

Werking, *s.* work, mode of operation, G 1367.  
 Werreyed, *pt. s.* made war upon, warred against,  
 F 10.  
 Werte, *s.* wart, A 555.  
 Wery, *adj.* weary, B 2111.  
 Wesh, *pt. s.* washed, B 3934. See Wasshe.  
 West, *s. as adv.* in the west, F 459.  
 Wete, *s.* wet, perspiration, G 1187.  
 Wex, *s.* wax, G 1164, 1268.  
 Wey, *s.* way; *a furlong wey*, a small distance,  
 a short time, E 516; *Weye, dat.* on (his) way,  
 F 604.  
 Weyve, *v.* forsake, G 276.  
 Whete, *s.* wheat, I 36.  
 Why1-er, *adv.* formerly, G 1328.  
 Widwe, *s.* widow, C 450.  
 Wight, *s.* man, creature, person, B 656.  
 Wike, *s.* week, C 362.  
 Wiltow, *for* Wilt thou, *i.e.* wishest thou, B  
 2116.  
 Windas, *s.* windlass, F 184.  
 Winsinge, *adj.* lively, A 3263.  
 Wlatsom, *adj.* loathsome, B 4243.  
 Wol, *pr. s.* permits, H 28; *wol adoun*, is about  
 to set, I 72; *Wole, pr. pl.* will, B 468; *Wol-*  
*tow*, wilt thou, G 307.  
 Wombe, *s.* the belly, C 522.  
 Wommanhede, *s.* womanhood, B 851.  
 Wonger, *s.* pillow, B 2102.  
 Woodeth *pr. s.* plays the madman, acts madly,  
 G 467.  
 Woodnesse, *s.* madness, C 496.  
 Wopen, *pp.* wept, F 523.  
 Wort, *s.* unfermented beer, wort, G 813.  
 Wortes, *s. pl.* roots, vegetables, E 226.  
 Worth; *worth upon*, gets upon, B 1941.  
 Wrak, *s.* wreck, B 513.  
 Wraw, *adj.* savage, fierce, angry, H 46.  
 Wreek, *imp. s.* wreak, avenge, B 3095.  
 Wrenches, *s. pl.* frauds, stratagems, tricks, G  
 1081.  
 Wroteth, *pr. s.* digs with the snout, I 157.  
 Wyflees, *adj.* wifeless, E 1236.  
 Wyfly, *adj.* wifelike, E 429.

## Y.

Y-, prefix to past participles. See below.  
 Y-blessed, *pp.* blessed, H 99.  
 Y-bleynt, *pp.* blenched, started aside, A 3753.  
 Y-boren, *pp.* born, C 704.  
 Y-chaped, having *chapes* or caps of metal at the  
 end of a sheath, A 366.  
 Y-clad, *pp.* clothed, G 133.

Y-cleped, *pp.* called, H 2; Y-clept, G 772.  
 Y-corven, *pp.* cut, G 533.  
 Y-coupled, *pp.* coupled, wedded, E 1219.  
 Y-coyned, *pp.* coined, C 770.  
 Y-cristned, *pp.* baptized, B 240.  
 Ydel, *adj.* idle, E 217.  
 Ydolastre, *s.* an idolater, B 3377.  
 Yeddinges, *pl.* songs, A 237.  
 Yede, *pt. s.* went, G 1141.  
 Yelden, *v.* to yield, E 843.  
 Yeldhalle, *s.* guild-hall, A 370.  
 Yelding, *s.* produce, yielding, A 596.  
 Yelleden, *pt. pl.* yelled, B 4579.  
 Yelpe, *v.* boast, A 2238.  
 Yeman, *s.* yeoman, A 101.  
 Yexeth, *pr. s.* hiccoughs, A 4151.  
 Y-fet, *pp.* fetched, G 1116.  
 Y-fetered, *pp.* fettered, A 1229.  
 Y-glewed, *pp.* glued, fixed tight, F 182.  
 Y-glosed, *pp.* flattered, H 34.  
 Y-hent, *pp.* seized, caught, C 868.  
 Y-herd, *pp.* haired, A 3738.  
 Y-holde, *pp.* considered, C 602.  
 Yilden. See Yelden.  
 Y-korven, *pp.* cut, B 1801.  
 Y-lad, *pp.* carried (in a cart), A 530.  
 Y-maad, *pp.* made, caused, F 218.  
 Y-mette, *pp.* met, B 1115.  
 Y-meynd, *pp.* mingled, mixed, A 2170.  
 Y-now, *adv.* enough, G 864.  
 Yolden, *pp.* yielded, A 3052.  
 Yolle, *pr. pl.* yell, A 2672.  
 Youling, *s.* yelling, A 1278.  
 Y-piked, *pp.* picked over, G 941.  
 Ypocras, Hippocrates; *hence*, a kind of cordial,  
 C 306.  
 Y-prayed, *pp.* bidden, invited, E 269.  
 Y-preved, *pp.* proved to be, A 485.  
 Y-reke, *pp.* spread about, A 3882.  
 Yren, *adj.* iron, G 759.  
 Yren, *s.* iron, G 827.  
 Y-rent, *pp.* rent, torn, B 844.  
 Y-schette, *pp.* shut, B 560.  
 Y-set, *pp.* set down, F 173.  
 Y-seyled, *pp.* sailed, B 4289.  
 Y-shapen, *pp.* shaped, contrived, G 1080.  
 Y-slawe, *pp.* slain, B 484.  
 Y-sprad, *pp.* spread, B 1644.  
 Y-spreyned, *pp.* sprinkled, A 2169.  
 Y-stiked, *pp.* stabbed, F 1476.  
 Y-stonge, *pp.* stung, C 355.  
 Y-storve, *pp.* dead, A 2014.  
 Y-sweped, *pp.* swept, G 938.  
 Yvel, *adv.* ill, E 460.

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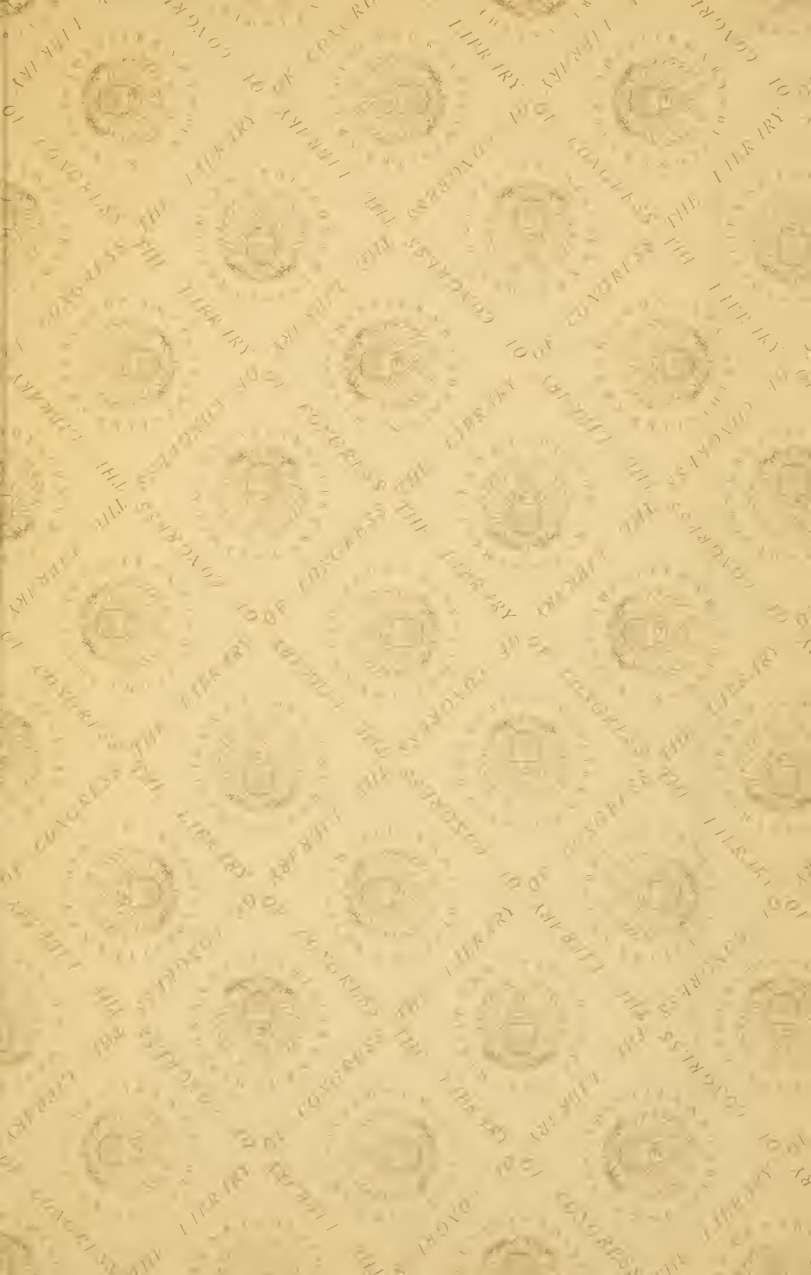
Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: Feb. 2009

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