GEOFFREY CHAUCER.
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 then met detractors. Still the general feeling of the men of his time is expressed by his disciple Occleve, who terms him —

"The firstè finder 1 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,

1 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 amber. 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:

"Wherfore, as I seyde, y-wis,
    Jupiter 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 neygebores,
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 newe thinges,
Thou gost hoom to thy hous anoon;
And, also domb as any soon,
Thou sittest at another boke,
Til fully daswed is thy loke,
And livest thus as an hermyte,
Although thy 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 forester of North Petherton 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 Meliboeus 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 heresy ageyns my lawe,
And makest wyse folk fro me withdrawe.
And of Criseyde thou hast sayd 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 maked 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 knownen lyte;
And many an ympe 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.
INTRODUCTION.

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 seyd is right y-nough, y-wis,
And mochel more; for litel hevinesse
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, allass!
And the contrarie is loie and greet solas,
As whan a man hath been in povre estaat,
And eymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat,
And ther abybeth in prosperitee,
Swich thing is gladsom, as it thinketh me,
And of swich thing were goody for to telle.'"

The Canterbury Tales, B, II. 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 virelayes," 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
INTRODUCTION.

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-ture* with the principal accent on the final syllable. Similarly, *condition* is a word of four syllables, *con-dit-i-on*, — or *con-di-c-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|.


"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|.


"And bath|ed eve|ry veyne | in swich | licour|,
Of which | vertu | engend|red is | the flour|.


"Souninge | in mor|al ver|tu was | his spech|e,
And glad|ly wolde | he lerne, | and glad|ly tech|e|.


"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 yé,
(5
So priketh fowles 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
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 Southwerck at the Tabard as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At nat he was come in-to that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
Of sondry folk, by aventyre y-falle
In felawship, and pilgrims were they
alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolde ryde;
The chambres and the stables weren
wyde,
And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to
reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,
That I was of hir felawship 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,
Er that I furthe in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acoordaunt to resoun,
To telle you al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what
degree;
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,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curt-
eise.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And thereto hadde he riden (no man
ferre)
As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthi-
ness.
At Alisaundre he was, when 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.
In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarge.
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,  
Whan 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 Tramisse- 
sene  
In listes thryes, and ay slayn his foo.  
This ilke worthy knight had been also  
Somtyme with the lord of Palatyne,  65  
Ageyn another heten 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 vileiynue ne saide 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  
SQUER,  
A loyvere, and a lusty bacheler,  
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  
strength.  
And he had been somtyme in chivachye,  
In Flaundres, in Artoes, and Picardy,  
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 florues, whyte and rede.  
Singeing he was, or floytinge, al the day;  
He was as fresh as is the month of May.  
Short was his goune, with sleves longe  
and wyde. 93  
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire- 
ryde.  
He coude songes make and wel endyte,  
Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtrye  
and wyre.  
So hote he lovede, that by nightertale  
He sleep namore than dooth a nighting- 
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 shee of pecok-arwes brighte and kene  
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily;  105  
(Wel coude he dresse his takel yemany;  
His arwes drooped 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,  
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;  
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.  
That was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,  
For the smyngel was ful simple and  
coy;  
Hir greteste ooth was but by seynyt Loy;  
And she was cleped madame Eglyentyne.  
Ful wel she song the service divyne,  
Entuned in hir nose ful semely;  
And French she spak ful faire and fetsily,  
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,  
For French of Paris was to hir unkonwe.  
At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;  
She lect no morsel from hir lippes falle,  
Ne wette hir finges in hir sauce depe.  
Wel coude she care a morsel, and wel  
kepe,  
That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.  
In curteisy was set ful muche hir lest.  
Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,  
That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene  
Of grece, whan she drunken hadde hir  
draughte.  
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 countretete chere  
Of court, and been estatlich of manere,  
And to ben holden digne of reverence.  
But, for to spoken of hir conscience,  
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.

Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde
With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-bread.

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 treyts; 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 towre;
For, hardly, she was nat undergrowne.
Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war. 156
Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A peire of bedes, gaudied al with grene;
And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene,

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,
An out-rydere, that lovede venerye; 165
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-del streit,
This ilke monk lect olde things pace,
And held after the newe world the space.

He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,
That seith, that hunters been nat holy men;
Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterles,
Is lykned til a fish that is waterles; 180
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloiste.

But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre;
And I seyde, his opiniou was good.
What sholde he studie, and make himselfen wood,

Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,
Or swunken 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;
Of priking and of hunting for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleves purifled at the hond
With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;
And, for to festne his hood under his chin,

He hadde of gold y-wroght 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 forney of a leed; 202
His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.
Now certeinly 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 browns 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 dailiunce 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-selfe, more than a curat,
For his ordre he was licentiat.

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  
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 smerte.  

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 certeinly he hadde a mery note;  
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  
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 aqueytaunce.  
It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce  
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.  
Ther nas no man no-ther 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;]  

For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,  
So plesaunt was his "In principio,"  
Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente.  
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,  
But he was lyk a maister or a pope.  
Of double worsted was his semi-cope,  

That rounded as a belle out of the press.  
Somwhat he lipsed, for his wantownesse,  
To make his English swete up-on his tonge;  
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,  
In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat,  
Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat;  
His botes clasped faire and fetsil.  
His resons he spak ful solemnely,  
Souninge alway thencrees of his winning.  
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,  
So estatyis 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.  
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 benevyce,  
Ne was so worldly for to have office.  
For him was lever have at his beddes heed  
Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,  
Of Aristotle and his philosophye,  
Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrye.  
But al be that he was a philosophre,  
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;  
But al that he mighte of his frendes hente,  
On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,  
And bisily gan for the soules preye.
A. THE PROLOGUE.

Of hem that yaf him wher-with to sюleye.
Of studie took he most cure and most heed.
Noght o word spak he more than was neede,
And that was seyd in forme and reverrence, 305
And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.
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 parvys, 310
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:
He semed swich, his wordes were so wyse.
Justycy 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,
Ther coude no wight pinche at his wryting;
And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
He rood but boomy in a medlee cote
Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;
Of his array telle I no lenger tale. 330
A Frankeleyn was in his companye;
Whyt was his berd, as is the daysye.
Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.
Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn.
To liven in deylty was ever his wonne, 335
For he was Epicurus owne sone,
That heeld opinion, that pleyn deylty
Was verraily 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 envynd man was no-wher noon.
With-oute bake mete was never his hous,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteuous,
It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke, 345
Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.
After the sondry sesons of the yer,
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 alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessiouns 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 countour;
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 gery apyked was; 365
Hir knyves were y-chaped noht with bras,
But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel
Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel.
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,
To sitten in a yeildhalle 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 bifoere,
And have a mantel royalliche y-bore.
A Cook they hadde with hem for the nones,
To boille the chinnes with the mary-bones, 380
And poudre-marchant tart, and galangale.
Wel coude he knowe a draughte of London ale.
He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,
Maken morteux, 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 Dertemouth.
He rood up-on a rousy, as he couthe,
In a gowne of falcing 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, certeiny, he was a good felawe. 395
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawe
From Burdeux-ward, whyl that the chapman sleep.
Of nyce conscience took he no keep.
If that he fought, and hadde the hyre hond,
By water he sente hem hoon to every lond.
400
But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
His stremes and his daungeres 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 berrd 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-cleppe was the Maudelayne.
With us ther was a Doctor 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 anatomye.
He kepte his pacient a ful greet del 415
In howres, 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 leturaries,
For ech of hem made other for to winne;
Hir friendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.
Wel knew he the olde Esclapius,
And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus, 430
Old Yporcas, 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 superfllute,
But of greet norisssing 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,
Therfore he lovded gold in special.
A good Wyf was ther of bisyde
Bathe,
But she was som-del deef, and that was scathe. 446
Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.
In al the parsisse wyf ne was ther noon
That to the offeringe before 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 Sunday were upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of syn scarlet reed, 456
Ful streite y-tyed, and shoos ful moiste and newe.  
Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.  
She was a worthy woman al hir lyve,  
Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve;  
Withouten other companye in youthe;  
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.  
And thyres hadde she been at Jerusalem;  
She hadde passed many a straungue streem;  
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,  
In Galice at seint Iane, and at Coloigne.  
She coude muche of wandering 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;  
A foot-mantel aboute hir hips large,  
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.  
In felaschip wel coude she laughe and carpe.  
Of remedies of love she knew perchaunce,  
For she coude of that art the olde daunce.  
A good man was ther of religioun,  
And was a povre Persoun of a toun;  
But riche he was of holy thoght and werk.  
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,  
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;  
His parisshe's devoutly wolde he teche,  
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,  
And in adversee ful pacient;  
And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.  
Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes,  
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,  
Un-to his povre parisshe's aboute  
Of his offering, and eek of his subsaunce.  
He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce.  
Wyld was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder,  
But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,  
In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte  
The ferrest in his parisshe, Muche and lyte,  
Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf.  

This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,  
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 iredo?  
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,  
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 oughte a preest ensample for to yive,  
By his clenessse, how that his sheep shold live.  
He sette nat he's benefice to hyre,  
And leet his sheep encombed in the myre,  
And ran to London, un-to seynant Poules,  
To seken him a chaunterie for soules,  
Or with a brethered to been withholde;  
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,  
So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie;  
He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.  
And though he holy were, and vertuous,  
He was to sinful man nat despitous,  
Ne of his speche daungersyn ne digne,  
But in his teching discreet and benigne.  
To drawen folk to heven by fairenesse  
By good ensample, was his business:  
But it were any persone obstinat,  
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 reverence,  
Ne made him a spyced conscience,  
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,  
He taughte, and first he folwed it himselfe.  
With him ther was a Plowman, was his brother,  
That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,  
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 tyymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,
And thanne his neighboour right as himselfe.  
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 payde he ful faire and wel,  
Bothe of his propre swink and his catel.  
In a tabard he rood upon a mere.  
Ther was also a Reve and a Millere,  
A Somnour and a Pardoner also,  
A Maunciple, and my-self; ther were namo.  

The MILLER was a stout carl, for the nones,  
Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones;  
That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,  
At wrastling he wolde have alwaye the ram.  
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,  
Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,  
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,  
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 forneys.  
He was a Ianglere and a goliardeys,  
And that was most of sinne and harlotryes.  
Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen thryes;  
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.  
A whyt cote and a bleed hood wered he,  
A baggepype wel coude he blowe and sowne,  
And ther-with-al he broghte us out of towne.  

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 taile,  
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 wilt shal pase  
The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?  
Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten,  
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,  
To make him live by his propre good,  
In honoure detteles, 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.  

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 dukked lyk a preest biforn.  
Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,  
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no cal y-sene.  
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,  
The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.  
His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayere,  
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye,  
Was hoolly in this reves governing,  
And by his covenaut 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;  
They were adrad of him, as of the deeth.  
His woning was ful fair up-on an heeth,  
With grene treés shadwed was his place.  
He coude bettre than his lord purchase.  
Ful riche he was astored privel,  
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly,  
To yeve and lene him of his owne good,
A. THE PROLOGUE.

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 had, 620
And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I tellle,
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 thor with us in that place,
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubinnes face,
For sawcesleem he was, with eyen narwe.
As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe; 626
With scaled browes blake, and piled berd;
Of his visage children were aferd.
Ther nas quik-silver, litarge, ne brimstoon,
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 sitinge 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 Jay
Can clepen 'Watte,' as well as can the pope.
But who-so coude in other thing him grope,
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye; 645
Ay 'Quod quid in ris' wolde he crye.
He was a gentil harlot and a kinde;
A bettre felawe sholde men noght finde.
He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,
A good felawe to have his concubyn 650
A twelph-month, and excuse him atte fulle:
Ful privelly a finch eek coude he pulle.
And if he fond o-ther a good felawe,
He wolde techen him to have non awei,
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,' sayde he.
But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;
Of cursing oghte ech giltty man him drede— 660
For curs wol slee, right as assoiling 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 counsell, 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 PARSONER
Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer, 670
That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
Ful loute he song, 'Com hider, love, to me.'
This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,
Was never trompe of halfe so greet a soun.
This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wax, 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 hooft, for Iolitee, ne wereth 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 wale 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, 695
Which that, he seyde, was our lady veyl:
He seyde, he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That séynt 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 thise reliques, whan that he fond
A povre person dwelling up-on lond,
Up-on a day he gat him more money
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.
And thus, with fayne flaterye and Iapes,
He made the person and the peple his apes.
But trewely to telle, 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 assyle 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 alight.
And after wol I telle of our viage,
And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.
But first I pray yow, of your curt esiye,
That ye narette it nat my vileinye, 726
Thogh that I pleylnly speke in this materc,
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 rudeleche and large;
Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewre,
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe.
He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his brother;
He mooot 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
Eck Plato seith, who-so that can him rede,
The wordes mote be cosin to the deede.
Also I prey yow to foryeye 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 everychon,
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 burgesys 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 rekeninges; 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 saughe 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 nocht.
Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow spede,
The blissful martir quyte yow your mede. 770
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the wye,
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;
For trelwe, confort ne mirthe is noon
To ryde by the wye doumb as a stoon;
And therfore wol I maken yow disport,
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort. 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, when ye ryden by the wye,
Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,
But ye be merye, I wol yewe 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 lest.
' Lordinges,' quod he, 'now herkneth for the beste;
But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
This is the poynct, to speken short and pleyn
That ech of yow, to shorte with your wye,
In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,
Of aventure that whylom han bifle.
And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,
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 Cauterbury. 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 wye.
And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo,
And I wol ery shape me therfore.'
This thing was graunted, and our othes swore 810
With ful glad herte, and preyden him also
That he wolde vouche-sauf for to do so,
And that he wolde been our governor,
And of our tales luge and reportour,
And sette a soper at a certeyn prys; 815
And we wolde 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, when 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 hros areste,
And seyde; ' Lordinges, herkneth, if yow leste.
Ye woot your forward, and I it yow recorde.
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 wye 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 began,
And shortly for to tellyn, 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
Knightes Tale.

THE KNIGHTES TALE.

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

[Statius, 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-
ye, 865
He conquered al the regne of Femenye,
That whylom was y-cleped Scithia;
And weddede the quene Ipolita,
And broughte hir hoom with him in his
contree
With muchel glorie and greet solemni-
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 bisye.
And certes, if it were to longe to
here, 875
I wolde han told yow fully the manere,
How wonnen was the regne of Femenye

As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes
mo?
And whan this gode man saugh it was
so,
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 herkneth what I
seye.' 855
And with that word we riden forth our
weye;
And he began with right a mery chere
His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

By Theseus, and by his chivalrye;
And of the grete bataille for the nones
Bitwixen Athenes and Amazones; 880
And how asseged was Ipolita,
The faire hardy quene of Scithia;
And of the feste that was at hir weddinge,
And of the tempest at hir hoom-cominge;
But all that thing I moot as now for-
bere.
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
wonne; 891
And ther I lefte, I wol ageyn biginne.
This duk, of whom I make mencioun,
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 kneeld in the hye weye
A companions of ladies, twye and tweye,
Ech after other, clad in clothes Blake;
But swich a cry and swich a wo they make,
That in this world his creature livinge,
That herde swich another weymemtinge;
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?'
   The eldest lady of hem alle spak,
When she hadde sowned with a deadly chere,
That it was routhe for to seen and here,
And seyde: 'Lord, to whom Fortune hath yiven
Victorie, and as a conquerour to live,
Nought greveth us your glorie and your honour;
But we bœeken mercy and socour.
Have merci on our wo and our distresse.
Som drope of pitee, thurgh thy gentil lesse,
   Up-on us wrecchen wommen 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,
That noon estat assureth to be weel.
And certes, lord, to abyden your presence,
   Here in the temple of the goddess Clemence
We han ben waytynge al this fourtenight;
Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy might.
   I wrecche, which that wepe and waille thus,
Was whylom wyf to king Capanes,
That starf at Thebes, cursed be that day!
And alle we, that been in this array,
And maken al this lamentacion,
We losten alle our housbondes at that towne.
   Whyl that the sege ther-aboute lay,
And yet now the olde Creon, weylaway!
That lord is now of Thebes the citee,
Fulfilld of ire and of iniquitye,
He, for despyt, and for his tirannye,
   To do the dede bodyes vilenye,
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,
   Neither to been y-buried nor y-brent,
But maketh houndes ete hem in despyt.'
And with that word, with-outen more respyt,
They fillen gruf, and cryden pitously,
   'Have on us wrecchen wommen som mercy,
   And lat our sorwe sinken in thyn herte.'
   This gentil duk doun from his course sterte
With herte pitous, when he herde hem speke.
Him thoughte that his herte wolde breke,
   Whan he saugh hem so pitous and so mat,
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,
   He wolde doun so ferforthly his might
Up-on the tyrant Creon hem to wreke,
That al the peple of Greece sholde speke
   How Creon was of Theseus y-served,
As he that hadde his deeth ful wel deserved.
   And right anoon, with-outen more abood,
His baner he desplayeth, and forth rood
To Thebes-ward, and al his host biseyd;
No neer Athenês wolde he go ne ryde,
   Ne take his ese fully half a day,
But onward on his waye that night he lay;
   And sente anoon Ipolita the quene,
And Emelye hir yonge suster shene,
Un-to the town of Athenês to dwelle;
And forth he rit; ther nis namore to telle.
The rede statue of Mars, with spere and targe,
   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 thoughte fighte.
But shortly for to speken of this thing, 985
With Creon, which that was of Thebes king,
He gaught, and slough him manly as a knight
In pleyn bataille, and putte the folk to flight;
And by assau he wan the crite after,
And rente adoun bothe wal, and sparre, and rafter; 990
And to the ladys he restored agayn
The bones of hir housbondes that were slayn,
To doon obsequies, as was tho the gyse.
But it were al to longe for to devyse
The grete clamoure and the waymentinge 995
That the ladys made at the brenninge
Of the bodyes, and the grete honour
That Theseus, the noble conquerour,
Doth to the ladys, when they from him wente;
But shortly for to telle is myn entente. 1000
When 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 harneyes and of wede,
The pilours idid bisiness and cure,
After the bataille and discomfiture.
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, wroght 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 Athenês, to dweluen in prisoun
Perpetuely, he noldo 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 til 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 heve,
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 observaunce.’ 1045
This made Emelye have remembrancue
To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.
Y-cloathed was she fresh, for to devyse;
Hir yelow 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 doun, and as hir liste
She gadereth floures, party whyte and rede,
To make a soltul gerland for hir hede,
And as an aungel hevenly she song. 1055
The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
But I was hurt right now thurgh-out myn yë
In-to myn herte, that wol my bane be.
The faireness of that lady that I see
Yond in the gardin roemen to and fro,
Is cause of al my crying and my wo. 1100
I noot wher she be woman or goddesse;
But Venus is it, soothly, as I gesse.'
And ther-with-al on kneès doun he fil,
And seyde: 'Venus, if it be thy wil 1104
Yow in this gardin thus to transfigure
Befor me, sorweful wreccche 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 ligneage have som compasoun, 1110
That is so lowe y-brought by tiranjyn.'
And with that word Arcite gan espye
Wher-as this lady romed to and fro.
And with that sighte hir beatute hurte
him so,
That, if that Palamon was wounded sore,
1115
Arcite is hurt asmuch as he, or more.
And with a sigh he seyde pitously:
'The freshe beatute sleeth me sodcynly
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 ernest or in
pley?' 1125
'Nay, quod Arcite, 'in ernest, 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 cosyn and thy brother
Y-sworne ful depe, and ech of us til other,
That never, for to dyen in the peyne,
Til that the deeth departed 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

Which of the castel was the chief don-
geoun,
Ther-as the knightes weren in prisoun,
Of whiche I tolde yow, and tellen shal)
Vas eveñ en Ioynente o the gardin-wal, 1060
Ther as this Emelye hadde hir pleyinge.
Bight was the sonne, and creer that
morweninge,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his won, by leve of his gayler,
Vas risen, and romed in a chambre on
heigh, 1065
in whiche al the noble citee seigh,
And eek the gardin, ful of braunches
grene,
Ther-as this fresshe Emelye the shene
Vas in hir walk, and romed up and
doun.
His sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun,
 both in the chambres, roming to and
fro, 1071
and to him-self compleyning of his wo;
ha 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 stoghen were un-to the
herte. 1079
and with that cry Arcite anon up-sterte,
nd seyde, 'Cosin myn, what eyleth thee,
hat art so pale and deedly on to see?
Why crydestow? who hath thee doon
offence?
or Goddes love, tak al in pacience
ur prisoun, for it may non other be; 1085
ortune hath yeven us this adversitee.
om wikke aspect or disposicion
f Satanere, by sum constellacioun,
ath yeven us this, al-though we hadde
it sworn;
o stood the heven whan that we were
born;
1090
Ve moste endure it: this is the short and
pleyn.'
This Palamon answerde, and seyde
ageyn,
Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinioun
hou hast a veyn imaginacioun.
his prison caused me nat for to crye. 1095
In every cas, and I shal forthen thee. 
This was thyn oath, and myn also, certeyn;
I wot right wel, thou darst it nat withseyn.

Thus arrow of my counsel, 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.

I loved hir first, and tolde thee my wo
As to my counsel, 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, or elles artow fals,
I dar wel seyn.'

This Arcite 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.

What wiltow seyn? thou wistest nat yet now
Whethor she be a womman or goddesse!
Thyn is affeccion of holinessse,
And myn is love, as to a creature;
For which I tolde thee myn aventure
As to my cosyn, 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 greter lawe, by my pan,
Than may be yeve to any erthly man.
And therefore positif lawe and swich decre
Is broke al-day for love, in ech degree.
A man moot nedes love, maungree his heed.
He may nat flee, thogh he sholde be deed,
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, verrailly,
That thou and I be dampeded to prisoun
Perpetuely; 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.

And therfore, 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 endure,

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)
A worthy duk that highe 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 playe, as he was wont to do,

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;
But of that story list me nat to wryte.
Duk Perotheus loved wel Arcite,
And hadde him knowe at Thebes yeer
by yere;
And synally, at requeste and prayere
Of Perotheus, with-oute any raunsoun,
Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoun,
Freely to goon, wher that him liste over-al,

In swich a gyse, as I you tellin shal.
This was the forward, pleyly for ten-dye,
Bitwixen Theseus and him Arcite:
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;

Ther nas non other remedye re ne reed,
But taketh his leve, and homeward 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;  
Ye wepeth, wayleth, cryeth pitously;  
To seene him-self he wayteoth 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  
Noght in purgatorie, but in helle.  
Allas! that ever knew I Pherotheus!  
For elles hadde I dwelled with Theseus  
A-fetered in his prison ever-mo.  
Than hadde I been in blisse, and nat in wo.  
Only the sighte of hir, whom that I serve,  
Though that I never hir grace may serve,  
Wolde han suffised right y-nough for me.  
D dere cosin Palamon,' quod he,  
Thyn is the victorie of this aventure,  
Ful blissfully 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 presence,  
And art a knight, a worthy and an able,  
That by som cas, sin fortune is chaungable,  
Thou mayst to thy desyr som-tyme atteyne.  
But I, that am exyled, and bareyn  
Of alle grace, and in so greet despeir,  
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 gladnesse!  
Allas, why pleynen folk so in commune  
Of purveyance of God, or of fortune,  
That yeveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse  
Wel bettre than they can hem-self deve?  
Som man desyreth for to han richesse,
That cause is of his mordre or greet siknesse.  
And som man wolde out of his prison fayn,  
That in his hous is of his meynee slayn.  
Infinite harms been in this matere;  
We witen nat what thing we preyen here.  
We faren as he that drome is as a mous;  
A drome man wol wel he hath an hous,  
But he nought which the righte way is thider;  
And to a drome man the way is slider.  
And certes, in this world so faren we;  
We seken faste after felicitee,  
But we goon wrong ful often, trewely.  
Thus may we seyen alle, and namely I,  
That wende and hadde a greet opinion,  
That, if I mighte escapen from prison,  
Than hadde I been in Ioye and perfite  
hele,  
Ther now I am exyled fro my wele.  
Sin that I may nat seen yow, Emelye,  
I nam but deed; ther nis no remedye.'  
Up-on that other syde Palamon,  
Whan that he wiste Arcite was agen,  
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 terces wete.  
'Allas!' quod he, 'Arcita, 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.  
Thow mayst, sin thou hast wisdom and manhede,  
Assemblen alle the folk of our kinrede,  
And make a werre so sharp on this citee,  
That by som aventure, or som tretie,  
Thow mayst have hir to lady and to wyf,  
For whom that I mot nedes lese my lyf.  
For, as by wey of possibilitee,  
Sith thou art at thy large, of prison free,  
And art a lord, greet is thyn avantage,  
More than is myn, that sterve here in a cage.  
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 fyf of Ielousye up-sterte
Withinne his brest, and hente him by the herte
So wooldly, that he lyk was to biholde
The box-tree, or the ashen dede and colde.
Tho seyde he; 'O cruel goddes, that governe
This world with binding of your word eterne,
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 foldes?
For slayn is man right as another beste,
And dwelleth eek in prison and areste,
And hath siknesse, and greet adversitee,
And oft tymes gilteles, parde! 1312
What governaunce is in this prescience,
That gilteles tormenteth innocençe?
And yet encreseth this al my pennaunce,
That man is bounden to his observaunce,
For Goddes sake, to letten of his wille,
Ther as a beest may al his lust fylle.
And whan a beest is deede, he hath no peyne;
But man after his deeth moot wepe and pleyne,
Though in this world he have care and wo:
With-outen doute it may stonden so.
The answere of this I lete to dyvynis,
But well I woot, that in this world gret pyne is.
Allas! I see a serpent or a theef,
That many a trewe man hath doon mescheyf,
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,
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 Arcita forth I wol yow telle. 1336
The somer passeth, and the nightes longe
Encresen double wyse the peynes stronge
Bothe of the loveres and the prisoner.
I noot which hath the wofullere mester.
For shortly for to scyn, this Palamoun 1341
Perpetually is dampned to prisoun,
In cheynes and in fettres to ben deede;
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 prisoun 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,
Ful ofte a day he swelte and seyde 'allas,' 1355
For seen his lady shal he never mo.
And shortly to concluuden al his wo,
So muche sorwe had never creature
That is, or shal, whyl that the world may dure.
His sleep, his mete, his drink is him birait,
That lene he wex, and drye as is a shaft.
His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde;
His hewe falwe, and pale as asshen colde,
And solitarie he was, and ever allone,
And wailing al the night, making his mone.
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.
His speche nor his vois, though men it herde.
And in his gere, for al the world he ferde.
And at the gate he profreth his servyse, 1415
To druggre and drawe, what so men wol devyse.
And shortly of this materre 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.
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 yer or two he was in this servyse,
Page of the chambr of Emelye the brighte;
And ‘Philostrate’ he seide that he highte.
But half so wel bilowed a man as he
Ne was ther never in court, of his degree;
1430
He was so gentil of condicioun,
That thurghout al the court was his renoun.
They seyden, that it were a charitie
That Theseus wolde enhauenc his degree,
And putten him in worshipful servyse,
Ther as he mighte his vertu excercyse.
And thus, with-inne a whylle, his name is spronge
Bothe of his dedes, and his goode tonge,
That Theseus hath taken him so neer
That of his chambr he made him a squyer, 1440
And yaf him gold to maytene his degree;
And eek men broghte him out of his contree
From yeer to yeer, ful privelle, 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,
That wood out of his wit he gooth for wo;
And eek thereto he is a prisoner
Perpetually, noght oonly for a yer.
Who coude ryme in English proprely
His martirdom? for sotho, it am nat 1
Therefore I passe as lightly as I may.

It fel that in the seveth yeer, in May,
The thridle night, (as olde bokes seyn,
That al this stori tellen more pleyn,)
Were it by aventure or destine, 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 claree, maad of a certeyn wyn,
With nercotikes and opie of Thebes syn,
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 dreudful foot than stalketh Palamoun.
For shortly, this was his opinoun, 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, outhere he wolde lese his lyf, 1485
Or winne Emelye un-to his wyf;
This is the effect 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, messager of day,
Salueth in hir song the morwe gray;
And fyry Phebus ryseth up so brighte,
That al the orient laughteth of the lighte,
And with his sternes dryeth in the graves 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

Remembiring on the poyn of his desyr,
He on a courser, sterting as the fyrr
Is ridden 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 hawethorne-leves,
And lounde he song ageyn the sonne shene:
'May, with alle thy flores and thy grene, 1510
Wel-come be thou, faire freshe 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 doun, 1515
Ther-as, by aventure, this Palamoun
Was in a bush, that no man mighte him see,
For sore afere 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 seyd, 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 herken 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 sodelynly. 1530
As doon thise loveres in hir queynte geres,
Now in the croppe, now doun in the bernes,
Now up, now doun, 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 1535
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 doun with-outen any
more:
  'Alas! quod he, 'that day that I was
bore!
How longe, Iuno, thurgh thy crueltie,
Woltow werreyen Thebes the citee?
Allas! y-brought is to confusion 1545
The blood royal of Cadme and Amphioun;
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 lineage am I, and his of-spring 1550
By verray ligne, as of the stok royal:
And now am I so caitif and so thrall,
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 my owne
name; 1556
But ther-as I was wont to highte Arcite,
Now highte I Philostrate, noght 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 prisoun.
And over al this, to sleen me utterly,
Love hath his fyry dart so brenningly
Y-stiked thurgh my trewe careful
herte,
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 remenan of myn other care
Ne sette I nat the mountaunce of a
tare, 1570
So that I coude don aught to your ples-
ance!' 1575
And with that word he fil doun in a
traunce:
A longe tyme; and after he up-sterte.
This Palamoun, that thoughte that
thurgh his herte
He felte a cold swerd sodeynliche
glyde,
That here I wol be founden as a knight,
And bringen 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
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.'
And thus they been departed til a-morwe,
When ech of hem had leyd his feithe to borwe.
O cupide, out of alle charitee!
O regne, that wolt no felawe have with thee!
Ful sooth is seyd, that love ne lord-shipes
Wol noght, his thankses, have no felawe-shipes;
Wel finden that Arcite and Palamoun.
Arcite is riden anon un-to the toun,
And on the morwe, er it were dayes light,
Ful privelie two harneys hath he dight,
Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne
The bataille in the feeld betwix hem twayne.
And on his hors, alle as he was born,
He carieth al this harneys him biforn;
And in the grove, at tyme and place y-set,
This Arcite and this Palamon ben met;
Tho chaunget gan the colour in hir face;
Right as the hunter in the regne of Trace,
That stondeth at the gappe with a spere,
When hunted is the leoun or the bere,
And hereth him come rushing in the greves,
And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,
And thinketh, 'heer cometh my mortel enemy,
With-oute faile, he moot be deed, or I;
For outher I mot slean him at the gappe,
Or he mot slean 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-outen word or rehersing,
Everich of hem halp for to armen other,
As freendly as he were his owne brother;
And after that, with sharpe spere stronge
They foynten ech at other wonder longe.
Thou mightest wene that this Palamoun
In his fighting were a wood leoun,
And as a cruel tygre was Arcite:
As wilde bores gonne they to smyte,
That frothen whyte as foon for ire wood.
Up to the ancle fougthe they in hir blood.
And in this wyse I let hem fighting dwelle;
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,
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 eft with-inne a thousand yere.
For certeinly, our appetites here,
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,
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 biseyle.
For in his hunting hath he swich deltyt,
That it is al his Ioye and appetyt
To been him-self the grete hertes bane;
For after Mars he servythe now Diane.
Cleer was the day, as I have told er this,
And Theseus, with alle Ioye and bliss,
With his Ipolita, the fayre quene,
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 comande.
And whan 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 curser with his spores smoot,
And at a stert he was bitwix hem two, 1705
And pull 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-outen Iuge or other officere,
As it were in listes royally?' 1715
This Palamon answerde hastily,
And seyde: 'sire, what nedeth wordes mo?
We have the deeth deserved bothe two.
Two woful wrecches been we, two caytynes,
That been encombred of our owne lyves;
And as thou art a rightful lord and Iuge,
Ne yeve us neither mercy ne refuge, 1720
But slay me first, for seynte charitee;
But sle 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 fro 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 Iaped thee ful many a yer,
And thou has maked him thy chief squyer;
And this is he that loveth Emelye.
For sith the day is come that I shal dye,
I make pleyny my confession,
That I am thilke woful Palamoun,
That hath thy prison broken wikedly.
I am thy mortal fo, and it am I
That loveth so hote Emelye the brighte,
That I wol dye present in hir sighte.
Therfore 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 confession,
Hath damped you, and I wol it recorde,
It nedeth nught to pyne yow with the corde.
Ye shal be deed, by mighty Mars the rede!
The quene anon, for verray woman-hede
Gan for to wepe, and so dice Emelye,
And alle the ladies in the companye. 1750
Gret pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,
That ever swich a chaunce sholde fall;
For gentil men they were, of greet estat,
And no-thing but for love was this debat;
And sawe hir blody wounds wyde and sore
And alle cryden, bothe lasse and more,
'Have mercy, lord, up-on us wommen alle!'
And on hir bare kneees adoun they fall,
And wolde have kist his feet ther-as he stood,
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 accused,
Yet in his reson he hem bothe excused;
As thus: he thoghte 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 compassion "1770
Of wommen, for they wepen ever in oon;
And in his gentil herte he thoghte anoon,
And softe un-to himself he syde: '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 mayntenye 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 cleped a god for his miracles;
For he can maken at his owne gyse
Of everich herte, as that him list de-
vysye. "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 enemye,
And that hir deeth lyth in my might
also, "1795
And yet hath love, maugree hir eyen two,
Y-broght hem hider bothe for to dye!
Now loketh, is nat that an heigh folye?
Who may been a fool, but-if he love?
Biholde, for Goddes sake that sit above,
Se how they blede! be they noght wel
arrayed? "1801
Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, y-
payed
Hir wages and hir fees for hir servysye!
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 therfore, 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 requese 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 syde:
'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 speake 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 shall 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-outen any replicacioun, "1840
If that yow lyketh, tak it for the beste,
That everich of yow shal gon wher him
leste
Frely, with-outen 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-outen 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 shal 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-
yde,
The Ioye that is maken 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 foryte to tellyn 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 without.
1888
Round was the shap, in maner of compas,
Ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty pas,
That, when 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 geometric or ars-metrik can,
Ne purtreyp, 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 sacrificye,
He est-ward hath, up-on the gate above,
In worship of Venus, godesse of love,
Don make an auter and an oratorie; 1905
And west-ward, in the minde and in
memorie
Of Mars, he maken 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 wroght in noble wyse.
But yet hadde I foryteyen to devyse
The noble kerving, and the portreitures,
The shap, the countenance, and the
figures,
That weren in the
First in the the
see
Wroght on the
Wodgment;
The sacred teres,
The fyry strokes of the desiring, 1922
That loves serveants in this lyf endure;
The othes, that hir covenantes 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-
stantes
Of love, whiche that I rekne and rekne
shal,
By ordre weren peynted on the wal, 1934
And mo than I can make of mencioun.
For soothe, the mount of Citheroun,
Ther Venus hath hir principal dwelling;
Was shewed on the wal in portreying,
With al the gardin, and the lustinesse.
Nat was foryeten the porter Ydnelnesse,
Ne Narcissus the faire of yore agon, 1941
Ne yet the folye of king Salomon,
Ne yet the grete strengthe of Hercules—
Theenchaments of Medea and Circes—
Ne of Turnus, with the hardy fiers corage,
The riche Cesus, catif in servage. 1946
Thus may ye seen that wisdom ne rich-
esse,
Beautee ne sleightee, strengthe, ne hardi-
nesse,
Ne may with Venus holde champartye;
For as hir list the world than may she
gye. 1950
Lo, alle this folk so caught were in hir
las,
Til they for wo ful ofte sayde '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 fleting in the large see,
And fro the navele doun all covered was
With wawes grene, and brighte as any
glas.
A citoie in hir right hand hadde she, 1959
And on hir heed, ful semely for to see,
A rose gerland, fresh and wel smelilinge;
Above hir heed hir dowses flikeringe.
Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido,
Up-on his shuldres wingses 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 hidosus to biholde;
In which ther ran a rumbel and a sough,
As though a storm sholde bresten ebery
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 resce.
The northen 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 overthrowthwart 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 glede;
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 mordring 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 icycle in the shode a-night;
The colde deeth, with mouth gaping up-right.
Amiddes of the temple sat meschaunce,
With discomort and sory contenaunce.
Yet saugh I woodnesse laughing in his rage; 2011
Armed compleint, out-hees, and fiers outrage.
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 hoppesteres;
The hunte strangled with the wilde beres:
The sowe freten the child right in the cradel;
The cook y-scaled, for al his longe ladel. 2020
Noght was forycyen by the infortune of Marte;
The carter over-riden with his carte,
Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adown.
Ther were also, of Martes diuision,
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 sittinge in greet honour,
With the sharpe swerde over his heed Hanginge by a solit twynes thred. 2030
Depeynted was the slaughter of Iulius,
Of grete Nero, and of Antonius;
Al be that thilke tyme they were unborne,
Yet was hir deeth depeynted ther-biforn,
By manasinge of Mars, right by figure; 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 shyen 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 solit pencel was depeynt this storie,
In redoutinge of Mars and of his glory.
Now to the temple of Diane the chaste 2051
As shortly as I can I wol me haste,
To telle yow al the descriptioun.
Depeynted been the walles up and doun Of hunting and of shamfast chasiti. 2055
Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee,
Whan that Diane a greved was with here,
Was turned from a woman til a bere,
And after was she maad the lode-sterre;
Thus 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 daughter, 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 freten him, for that they knewe him naught.
Yet peynted was a litel forthier-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 whiche me list nat drawen to memoric.
This goddesse on an hert ful hye seet, 2075
With smale houndes al aboute hir feet;
And undernethe 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 arves in a cas. 2080
Hir eyen caste she ful lowe adown,
Ther Pluto hath his derke regioun.
A womman travailinge was hir biforn,
But, for hir child so longe was unborne,
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 heves boghte.
Now been thise listes maad, and Theseus,
That at his grete cost arrayed thus 2090
The temples and the theatre every del,
Whan it was doon, him lyked wonder wel.
But stinte I wol of Theseus a lyte,
And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

The day approcheth of hir retourninge,
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 knigthod of hir hond,
As fer as God hath maked see or lond,
Nas, of so fewe, so noble a companye.

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,
Ye knownen wel, that every lusty knight,
That loveth paramours, and hath his might,
Were it in Engelond, or elles-where,
They wolde, hir thankes, wilten to be there.

To fighete 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 brete-plat and in a light gipoun;
And somme woln have a peyre plates large;
And somme woln have a Prece sheld, or a targe;

Somme woln ben armed on hir legges wel,
And have an ax, and somme a mace of steel.
Ther nis no newe gyse, that it nas old.
Armed were they, as I have you told,
Everich after his opinoun.

Ther maistow seen coming with Palamoun
Ligurge him-self, the grete king of Trace;
Blak was his berd, and manly was his face.
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,
His shuldres brode, his armes rounde and longe.

And as the gyse was in his contree,
Ful hie up-on a char of gold stood he,
With foure whyte boles in the frays.
In-stede of cote-armure over his harnays,
With nyales yelwe and brighte as any gold,
He hadde a heres 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,
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 folwed 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.

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.

His sadel was of brend gold newe y-bete;
A mantelet upon his shuldre hangeinge
Bret-ful of rubies rede, as fyr sparklinge.
His crispe heer lyk ringes was y-ronne,
And that was yelow, and glittered as the sonne.

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,
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
A gerland fresh and lusty for to sene.
Up-on his hand he bar, for his deduyt,
An egle tame, as eny lilie whyt.
An hundred lordes hadde he with him there,
Al armed, sauf hir heddes, in al hir gere,
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
Ful many a tame leoun and lepert.
And in this wyse thise lordes, alle and some,
Ben on the Sunday to the citte come
Aboute pryme, and in the toun alight.

This Theseus, this duk, this worthy knight,
Whan he had broght hem in-to his citee,
And inned hem, everich in his degrees,
He festeth hem, and dooth so greet labour
To esen hem, and doon hem al honour,
That yet men weneth that no mannes wit
Of noon estat ne coude amenden it.

The minstralcye, the service at the feste,
The grete yiftes to the moste and leste,
The riche array of Theseus paleys,
Ne who eat first ne last up-on the deys,
What ladies fairest been or best daunt-singe,
Or which of hem can dauncen best and singe,
Ne who most felingly speketh of love:
What haukes sitten on the perce above,
What houndes liggen on the floor adoun:
Of al this make I now no mencion;
But al theffect, that thinketh me the beste;
Now comth the poyn, and herkneth if now lest.
The Sunday night, er day began to springe,
When Palamon the larke herde singe,
Although it nere nat day by houres two,
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,
I mene Venus, honorable 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.

Fairier of faire, o lady myn, Venus,
Doughter to Iove and spouse of Vulcanus,
Thou glader of the mount of Citheron,
For thilke love thou haddest to Adoun,
Have pitee of my bittre teres smerte,
And tak myn humble preyer at thyne herte.

Allas! I ne have no langage to telle
Theffectes ne the tormentes of myn helle;
Myn herte may myne harmes nat bivreye;
I am so confus, that I can noght seye.
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest weel
My thought, and seest what harmes that I feel,
Consider 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 were 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,
Ne renoun in this cas, ne veyne glorie
Of pris of armes blowen up and doun,
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 bettre 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 hevene above,
That, if yow list, I shal wel have my love. 2250
Thy temple wol I worship evermo,
And on thyn auter, wher I ryde or go,
I wol don sacrific, and fyres bete.
And if ye wol nat so, my lady swete,
Than preye I thee, to-morwe with a spere
That Arcite me thurgh the herte bere.
Thanne rekke I noght, whan I have lost my lyf,
Though that Arcite winne hir to his wyf.
This is the effeect and ende of my preyre,
Yif me my love, thou blissful lady dere.’
When thorisou was doon of Palamon,
His sacrific 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,
And made a signe, wher-by that he took
That his preyre accepted was that day.
For thogh the signe shewed a delay,
Yet wiste he wel that granted was his bone;
And with glad herte he wente him hoom ful sone.
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,
Ful redily with hem the fyre they hadde,
Thencens, the clothes, and the remenant al
That to the sacrific longen shal; 2278
The hornes full of meth, as was the gyse;
Ther lakked noght to doon hir sacrific.
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 brighte heer was kempt, untressed al;
A coroune of a grene ooke carial 2290
Up-on hir heed was set ful fair and mete.
Two fyres on the auter gan she bete,
And dide hir things, as men may biholde
In Stace of Thebes, and thise bokes old.
Whan kindled was the fyre, with pitous chere 2295
Un-to Diane she spak, as ye may her.
‘O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,
To whom bothe hevene and erte and see is sene,
Quene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe,
Goddesse 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 goddesse, wel wostow that I
Desire to been 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 the thre formes that thou hast in thee.
And Palamon, that hath swich love to me,
And eek Arcite, that loveth me so sore,
This grace I preye thee withoute more,
As sende love and pees bitwix hem two;
And fro me turne awey hir hertes so,
And with that word, the arwes in the cas
Of the goddesse clateren faste and ringe.
And forth she wente, and made a van-
ishinge; 2360
For which this Emelye astoneth was,
And seyde, ‘What amounteth this, alas!
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 sierse Mars, to doon his sacrifysse,
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 sacrifysse.
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 payne, 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 thyl wille,
Al-though thee ones on a tyme misfille
Whan Vulcanus had caught thee in his
las,
And fond thee ligging by his wyf,
alas! 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 recetheth never wher I sinke or flote.
And wel I woot, er she me mercy hethe,
I moot with strengthe winne hir in the place;
And wel I woot, withouten help or grace
Of thee, ne may my strengthe night availle.
2401
Than help me, lord, to-morwe in my bataille,
For thilke fyr that whylom breneth thee,
As wel as thilke fyr now brenmeth me;
And do that I to-morwe have victorie.
Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the glorie!
2406
Thy soverain temple wol I most honoure
Of any place, and alway most labore
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 beryd, myn heer that hongeth long adoun,
That never yet ne felte offensioun
Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yive,
And ben thy trewe servant whil I live.
Now lord, have routhe up-on my sorwes sore,
Yif me victorie, I aske thee namore.’
2420
The preyer 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 ather brighte,
2425
That it gan al the temple for to lighet;
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 hauberke ringe.
And with that soune he herde a murmuring
Ful lowe and dim, that sayde thus, ‘Victorie’: 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 sayn as fowle 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 armipotent,
That Jupiter was bisy it to stente;
Til that the pale Saturnus the golde,
That knew so manye of aventures olde,
Fond in his olde experience an art, 2445
That he ful some 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-red:
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 throate;
The murmure, and the cherles rebelling,
The groyning, and the prywe empoysoning:
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 Sampsoun in shaking the piler;
And myne be the maladies colde,
The derke tresons, and the castes olde;
My lokynge is the fader of pestilence,
Now weep namore, I shall doon diligence.
2470
That Palamon, that is thyn owne knight,
Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight.
Though Mars shal helpe his knight, yet natheles.
Bitwixe yow ther moot be som tympe pyes,
Al be ye noght of o complexioun, 2475
That causeth al day swich divisiou.
I am thin ayel, redy at thy wille;
Weep thou namore, I wol thy lust ful-lish.
Now wol I stinten of the goddes above,
Of Mars, and of Venus, goddess love,
And telle yow, as pleynly as I can,
The grete effect, for which that I began.

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 pleasure,
That al that Monday Iusten they and daunce,
And spenden it in Venus heigh servyse.
But by the cause that they sholde ryse
Early, for to seen the grete fight,
Into hire reste wente they at night.
And on the morwe, whan that day gan springe,
Of hors and harneys, noyse and clateringe
Her w-s in hostelyres al aboute;
And to the paleys rood ther many a route
Of lorde, up-on stedes and palfreyes.
Their maystow seen deysing of herneys
So uncouth and so riche, and wrought so well
Of goldsmithrie, of browding, and of steel;
He sheeldes brighte, testers, and trap-pures;
Fold-hewn helmes, hauberkes, cote-armures;
ordes in paraments on hire courseres,
Knightes of retenue, and eek squyernes
Railinge the spere, and helmes boke-linge,
Rigginge of sheeldes, with layneres lac-inge;
Her as need is, they werehen no-thing ydel;
The fomy stedes on the golden brydel
Sawinge, and faste the armourers also
With fyle and hammer prikinge to and fro;
emen on fotre, and communes many oon
With shorte staves, thikke as they may goon;
YPES, trompes, nakers, clarioune,
That in the bataille blowen blody sounes;
The paleys ful of pepleys up and doun,
Heer three, ther ten, holding hire ques-tioun,
Divyninge of these Thebane knightes two.
Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal be so;
Somme helden with hem with the blake bercy;
Somme with the balled, somme with the thikke-herd;
Somme sayde, he lokd grim and he wolde fighte;
He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte.
Thus was the halle ful of divyninge,
Longe after that the sonne gan to springe.
The grete Theseus, that of his sleep awakened
With minstralcye and noyse that was maked,
Held yet the chambr of his paleys riche,
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 presseth thider-ward ful sone
Him for to seen, and doon heigh rever-ence,
And eek to herkne his hest and his sen-
tence.
An heraund on a scaffold made an ho,
Til al the noyse of the peple was y-do;
And when he saugh the peple of noyse al stille,
Tho showed he the mighty dukes wille.
"The lord hath of his heigh discresiouen
Considered, that it were destruccioun"
To gentil blood, to fighten in the gyse
Of mortall bataille now in this empriye;
Wherfore, to shapen that they shul not dye,
He wol his firste purpos modifiye.
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 poyn-
tyinge,
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 chietfayn 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 will.' 2560
The voys of peple touchede the hevenc,
So loude cryden they with mery stevene:
'God save swich a lord, that is so good,
He wilneth no destruccioun of blood!' 2565
Up goon the trompes and the melodie.
And to the listes rit the companye
By ordinance, 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,
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 queene and Emelye,
And other ladies in degrees aboute.
Un-to the sectes preesseth al the route.
And westward, 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
Another lad is on that other syde. 2620
And som tyme dooth hem Theseus to reste,
Hem to refresshe, and drinken if hem leste.
Ful ofte a-day han thise Thebanes two
Pognidre y-met, and wrought his felawe wo;
Unhorsed 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 Iclous herte upon this Palamoun:
Ve in Belmarve ther nis so fel leoun, 2630
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
Ve of his praye desireth so the blood,
As Palamon to slean his fo Arcite.
The Iclous strokes on hir helmes by.
But rеннeth blood on bothe hir sydes rede.
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 Palamon, as he fought with Arcite,
And made his sword depe in his flesh to byte;
And by the force of twenty is he take
Inyolden, 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,
So hitte him Palamon er he were take;
But al for noght, he was broght to the stake.
His hardy herte mighte him helpe naught;
In the sonne abye, when that he was caught
By force, and eek by composicioun.
Who sorweth now but woful Palamoun,
That moot namore goon agayn to fighte?
And whan that Theseus had seyn this sighte
In-to the folk that foughen thus echeone
Ie crye, 'Ho! namore, for it is doon!
Wol be trewe Iuge, and no partye.
Arcite of Thebesshal have Emelye,
That by his fortune hath hir faire y-wonne.'
Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne
For Ioye of this, so loud and heigh
with-alle,
It semed that the listes sholde falre.
What can now faire Venus doon above?
What seith she now? what dooth this queene of love?
But wepeth so, for wanting of hir wille,
'Il that hir teres in the listes fille; 2660
She seyde: 'I am ashamed, douteles.'
Saturnus seyde: 'Doughter, hold thy pees.
Mars hath his wille, his knight hath al his bone,
And, by myn heed, thou shalt ben esed sone.'
The trompes, with the loude minstral-
The heraudes, that ful lounde yolde and crye,
Been in hir wele for Ioye of daun Arcite.
But herknethe me, and stintheth now a lyte,
Which a miracle ther bifel anon. 2675
This fiers 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 freundlich ye,
(For womanes, as to spoken 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,
His brest to-brosten with his sadel-bowe.
As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,
So was the blood y-ronne 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 allye,
And alway crying after Emelye. 2699

Duk Theseus, with al his company,
Is comen hoom to Athenes his citee,
With alle blisse and greet solempnitie.
Al be it that this aventure was falle,
He nolde noght disconforten hem alle.
Men seyde eek, that Arcite shal nat
dye;
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. 2705
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 strange lorde, as was right.
Ne ther was holden no disconftinge,
But as a lustes or a tourneyinge; 2720
For soothly ther was no disconflure,
For falling nis nat but an aventure;
Ne to be lad with fors un-to the stake
Unyolden, and with twenty knyghtes take,
O persone allone, with-outen 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 stinton ale rancour and enveye,
The gree as wel of o syde as of other,
And either syde y-lyk, as othres 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 tournee 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
Encreeseth at his herte more and more.
The clothered blood, for any leche-
craft,
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 gone to swelle,
And every lacerte in his brest adoun
Is shent with venim and corrupcioun.
Him gayncr neither, for to gete his
lyf, 2755
Vomyt upward, ne dounward laxatif;
Al is to-brosten thilke regioun,
Nature hath now no dominacioun.
And certeynly, 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 poynct of alle my sorwe 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! allas, the pynes stronge,
That I for yow have suffred, and so lenger!
Allas, the deeth! allas, myn Emelye!
Allas, departing of our companye!
Allas, myn hertes quene! allas, my
wyf! 2775
Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!
What is this world? what asketh men to
have?
Now with his love, now in his colde
grave
Allone, with-outen any companye.
Far-wel, my swete so! myn Emelye! 2780
And softe tak me in your armes tweye,
For love of God, and herkneth what I
seye.
I have heer with my cosyn Palamon
Had stryf and rancour, many a day a-gon,
For love of yow, and for my Ielousye. 2785
And Jupiter so wis my soule gye,
To spoken of a servant propery,
With alle circumstaunces trewely,
That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and
knighthede,
Wisdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh
kinrede,
Fredom, and al that longeth to that art,
So Jupiter have of my sole part,
As in this world right now ne knowe I
non
So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,
That serveth you, and wol don al his
lyf.
And if that ever ye shul been a wyf,
For yet 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.
And yet more-over, in his armes two
The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago.
Only the intellect, with-outen more,
That dwelled in his herte syk and sore,
Can faillen, when the herte felte
deeth,
Dusked his eyen two, and failled breath.
But on his lady yet caste he his yé;
His laste wor was, 'mercy, Emelye!'
His spirit chaunged hous, and wente
ther,
As I cam 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 opinious to telle
Of hem, though that they wryten wher
they dwelle.
Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gye;
Now wol I spoken forth of Emelye.
Shrighte Emelye, and howleth Palamon,
And Theseus his suster took anon
Swowninge, and bar hir fro the corps
away.
What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,
To telle 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 maladie,
That at the laste certeiny 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;
So greet a weeping was ther noon, certayn,
Whan Ector was y-broght, al fresh y-
slayn,
To Troye; alas! the pitee that was ther,
Crackching of chokes, rending eek of heer.
'Why woldestow be deed,' this wommen
crye,
'And haddest gold y-nough, and Emelye?'
No man mighte gladen Theseus,
Savinge his olde fader Egeus,
That knew this worldes transmutaciuon,
As he had seyn it chaungyn up and
doun,
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,
'In al this world, that som tyme he ne
deyde.
This world us 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
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-made be,
And eek most honorable in his degree.
And at the laste he took conclusion,
That ther as first Arcite and Palamoun
Hadden for love the bataill hem bitwene,
That in that selve grove, swote and
grene,
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
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 commaundement,  
And after this, Theseus hath y-sent 2870 
After a bare, and it al over-spradde  
With cloth 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 heead a crowne of laurier  
grene, 2875 
And in his hond a swered 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 broughte him to the  
halle, 2880 
That roreth of the crying and the soone.  
Tho cam this woful Theban Palamoun,  
With flotery berd, and ruggy ashy heres,  
In clothes blake, y-dropped al with teres;  
And, passing othere of weping, Emelye, 2885 
The rewulleste 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 thiese stedes, that weren grete and  
whyte,  
Ther seten folk, of which oon bar his  
sheld,  
Another his sperre up in his hondes heeld;  
The thridde bar with him his bowe  
Turkeys, 2895 
Of brend gold was the cas, and eek the  
harneyes;  
And riden forth a pas with sorweiful chere  
Toward the grove, as ye shul after here.  
The nobleste of the Grekes that ther  
were  
Upon hir shulders 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 cometuye;  
And after that cam woful Emelye, 2910 
With fyrr in honde, as was that tyme the  
gyse,  
To do thoffice of funeral servyse.  
Heigh labour, and ful greet apparaillinge  
Was at the service and the fyrr-makinge,  
That with his gyre the heven raftenge, 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  
loste.  
But how the fyrr was maked up on heighte;  
And eek the names how the trees  
highte, 2920 
As ook, sirre, birch, asp, alder, holm, pop-
ner;  
Wilow, elm, plane, ash, box, chasteyn,  
lim, laurer,  
Mapul, thorn, beech, hazel, ew, whippel-
tree,  
How they weren feld, sal nat be told for  
me;  
Ne how the goddes ronnen up and  
doun, 2925 
Disherited of hir habitacioun,  
In which they woneden in reste and pees,  
Nymphes, Faunes, and Anadrides;  
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 snee  
bright;  
Ne how the fyrr was couched first with  
stree,  
And than with drye stokkes cloven a  
three, 2934 
And than with grene wode and spycere,  
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 swounded whan men made the fyr,
Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desyr;
Ne what Ieweles men in the fyr tho caste,

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,

Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood;
Ne how the Grekes with an huge route Thryes ridden al the fyr aboute
Up-on the left hand, with a loud shoutinge,
And thryes with hir spere clateringe;
And thryes how the ladies gonne crye;

Ne how that lad was hom-ward Emelye;
Ne how Arcite is brent to ashen colde;
Ne how that liche-wake was y-holde
Al thilke nighte, ne how the Grekes pleye
The wake-pleyes, ne kepe I nat to seye;
Who wrastleth best naked, with oille enoynt,

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 poynyt than wol I wende,

And maken of my longe tale an ende.
By processe and by lengthe of certeyn yeres
Al stinted is the moorning and the terys
Of Grekes, by oon general assent.
Than semed me ther was a parlement
At Athenes, up-on certeyn poynnts and cas;
Among the whiche poynnts y-spoken was
To have with certeyn contrees aliaunce,
And have fully of Thebans obeiaunce.
For which this noble Theseus anon
Leet senden after gentil Palamon,
Unwist of him what was the cause and why;
But in his blake clothes sorwefully
He cam at his comandement in hye.
Tho sente Theseus for Emelye.

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 will.

‘The firste moevere of the cause above,
Whan he firste made the faire cheyne of love,
Greet was theffect, and heigh was his entente;
Wel wiste he why, and what ther-Of he mente;
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 stablisshed, in this wretched world adoun,
Certeyne dayes and duracioun
To al that is engendred in this place,
Over the whiche day they may nat pace,
Al mowe they yet tho dayes wel abregge;
Ther needeth non auctoritee allegge, for it is preved by experience,
But that me list declare my sentence.
Than may men by this ordre wel discerne,
That thilke moevere stable is and eterne.
Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool
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 corrompable.
And therfore, of his wyse purveyaunce,
He hath so wel bised his ordinauce,
That speces of thinges and progressiouns
Shullen enduren by successiouns,
And nat eterne be, with-oute lye:
This maistow understonde and seen at yé.

‘Lo the ook, that hath so long a norishinge
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.'
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 sountyme 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 thise termes two,
This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age,
He moot ben deed, the king as shal a
page;
Som in his bed, som in the depe see,
Som in the large feeld, as men may se;
Ther helpeth noght, al goth that ikle
weye.
Thanne may I seyn that al this thing
moot deye.
What maketh this but Jupiter the king?
The which is prince and cause of alle
thing,
Converting al un-to his propre welle,
From which it is dervyed, 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,
And rebel is to him that al may gye.
And certeiny a man hath most honour
To dyen in his excellence and flour,
When 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,
When with honour up-yolden is his
breeth,
Than when his name apalled is for age;
For al forgotten 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 wilfulness.
Why grucchen we? why have we hevi-
nesse,
That good Arcite, of chivalrye flour
Departed is, with due 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 Jupiter 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,
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, leveth me;
For gentil mercy oghte to passen right.' 3090
Than seyde he thus to Palamon ful
right;
'I trowe ther nedeth litel sermoning
To make yow assente to this thing.
Com neer, and tak your lady by the
hond.' 3095
Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond,
That highte matrimoine or mariage,
By al the counsell and the baronage.
And thus with alle blisse and melodye
Hath Palamon y-wedded Emelye.  
And God, that al this wyde world hath wroght,  
Sende him his love, that hathe it dere a-boght.  
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  
Of Telousye, or any other tene.  
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye;  
And God save al this faire companye! — Amen.

_Here is ended the Knightes Tale._

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**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  
That he ne seyde it was a noble storie,  
And worthy for to drawen to memorie;  
And namely the gentils everichoon.  
Our Hoste lough and swoor, 'so moot I goon,  
This gooth aight; unbokeled is the male;  
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,  
So that unnethe up-on his hors he sat,  
He nolde avalen neither hoode ne hat,  
Ne abyde no man for his curteisye,  
But in Pilates vois he gan to crye,  
And swoor by armes and by blood and bones,  
'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 bettre man shal telle us first another:  
Abyd, and lat us werken thriftilly.'  
'By goddes soul,' quod he, 'that wol nat I;  
For I wole speke, or elles go my wey,'  
Our Hoste answerde: 'tel on, a devel wye!'  
Thou art a fool, thy wit is overcome.'  
'Now herkneth,' quod the Miller, 'alle and some!'  
But first I make a protestacioun  
That I am dronke, I knowe it by my soune;  
And therfore, if that I misspeke or seye,  
Wyte it the ale of Southwerk, I yow preye;  
For I wole telle a legende and a lyf  
Bothe of a Carpenter, and of his wyf,  
How that a clerk hast set the wightes cappe.'

The Reve answerde and seyde, 'stint thy clappe,  
Lat be thy lewed dronken harlotrye.  
It is a sinne and eek a greet folye  
To aperien any man, or him diface,  
And eek to bringen wyves in swich fame.  
Thou mayst y-nogh of othre thinges seyn.'

This dronken Miller spak ful sone ageyn,  
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 ayeyns oon bade,  
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 plogh, 3180
Taken up-on me more than y-noght, 3180
As demen of my-self that I were oon; 3190
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 enquire.'

What sholde I more seyn, but this
Millere 3167
He nolde his worde for no man forbere,
But tolde his cherles tale in his manere;
Me thinketh that I shal reheere it here.
And therfore every gentil wight I preye,
For goddes love, demeth nat that I seye
Of evel entente, but that I moost reheere

Hir tales alle, be they bettre or worse,
Or elles falsen som of my mater. 3175
And therfore, who-so list it nat y-here,
Turne over the leef, and cheue 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 ernest of game. 3186

Here endeth the prologue.

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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 povere
scoler, 3190
Had lerned art, but al his fantasye
Was turned for to lerne astrologye,
And coude a certeyn of conclusiones
To demen by interrogacions,
If that men axed him in certein houres,
When 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 to 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 sautyre,
On which he made a nightes melodye
So swetyly, 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 frendes finding and his rente.
This Carpenter had wedde 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 similitude.
Men sholde wedde 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 3230
As any wesele hir body gent and smal.
A ceynt she werede barred al of silk, 3235
A barmclooth eek as whyt as morn milk
Up-on hir lendes, ful of many a gore.
Whyt was hir smok, and broouded al biforn
And eek bihinde, on hir coler aboute,
Of col-blak silk, with-inne and eek withoute.
The tapes of hir whyte volaper
Were of the same suyte of hir coler;
Hir filct brood of silk, and set ful hye:
And sikerly she hadde a likerous yé.
Ful smale y-pulled were hir brouses two,
And tho were bent, and blake as any sloo.
She was ful more blissful 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.
In al this world, to seken up and doun,
There nis no man so wys, that coude thenche
So gay a popelote, or swich a wench.
Ful brighter was the shyning of hir hewe
Than in the tour the noble y-forged newe.
But of hir song, it was as loud 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,
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 boeler. 3266
Hir shoes were laced on hir legges yhe;
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 biefel the cas,
That on a day this hende Nicholas
Fil with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye,
Wyl that hir housbond was at Oseneye,
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 curwen on his shoes,
In hoses rede he wente fetisly.
Y-cled he was ful smal and proprely, 3320
Al in a kirtel of a light wacchet;
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,
And make a chartre of lond or acquit-ance.
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 songs 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 tavere
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 daunegours.
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,
And Absolon his giterne hath y-take, 3352
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 cockes 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 giteringe.
This carpenter awook, and herde him singe,
And spak un-to his wyf, and seyde anon, 3365
'What! Alison! herestow nat Absolon
That chaunte eth thus under our boures wal?'.
And she anwerde 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 his 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 lighnesse and maistrye,
He pleyeth Herodes on a scaffold hye.
But what availeth him as in this cas?
She lovethe so this hende Nicholas, 3386
That Absolon may blowe the bukses horn;
He ne hadde for his labour but a scorn;
And thus she maketh Absolon hir ape,
And al his ernest turneth til a Iape. 3390
Ful sooth is this proverbe, it is no lye,
Men seyn right thus, 'alwey the nyslye
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 Nicholas!
For Absolon may waille and singe 'allas.'
And so bifel it on a Saterday, This carpenter was goon til Osenay; 3400
And hende Nicholas and Alisoun
Acorded been to this conclusiou, 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-ouoten 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 yé; 3415
She trowed that he was in maladye,
For, for no cry, hir mayde coude him calle;
He nolde anserwe, for no-thing that mighte falle.
This passeth forth al thilke Saterday,
That Nicholas stille in his chambre lay,
And eet and sleep, or dide what him este,
Til Sunday, that the sonne gooth to reste. 3421
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 tike, sikely;
I saugh to-day a cors y-born to cirche
That now, on Monday last, I saugh him wircche.
Go up,' quod he un-to his knave anoon,
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 despeir,
And hente him by the sholdres mightily,
And shook him harde, and cryde spittously.
‘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-
rightes
On foure halves of the hous aboute,
And on the threshold of the dore withoute:—
‘Iesu Crist, and seynt Benedight,
Blesse this hous from every wikke wight,
For nightes verye, the white pater-noster!’
Where westow, 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 seystow?’
What! thenk on god, as we don, men that swinke.’
This Nicholas answerde, ‘fecche me drinke;
And after wol I speke in privete
Of certeyn thing that toucheth me and thee;
I wol telle it non other man, certeyn.’
This carpenter goth down, and comth ageyn,
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
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;
For this vengance thou shalt han therfore,
That if thou wreye, 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.
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-fonde in myn astrologye,
As I have loked in the mone bright,
That now, a Monday next, at quarter-night,
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 dreyn, so hidous is the shour;
Thys shal mankynde drenche and lese hir lyf.’
This carpenter answerde, ‘allas, my wyf!
And shal she drenche? alas! myn Alisoun!’
For sorwe of this he fil almost adoun,
And seyde, ‘is ther no remedie in this cas?’
‘Why, yis, for gode,’ quod hende Nicholas,
‘If thou wol 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.”
And if thou werken wol by good conseil,
I undertake, with-ousten mast and seyl,
Yet shal I saven hir and thee and me.
Hastow nat herd how saved was Noë,
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,
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."
And than shul we be lordes al our lyf
Of al the world, as Noe and his wyf.
But of o thyne I warne thee ful right,
Be wel avysed, on that ilke night
That we ben entred in-to shippes bord,
That noon of us ne speke nat a word,
Ne clepe, ne crye, but been in his
preyre;
For it is goddes owne heste dere.
Thy wyf and thou mote hanget fer a-
twinne,
For that bitwixe yow shal be no sinne
No more in looking than ther shal in
dede;
This ordinance is seyd, go, god thee
spede!
Tomorwe at night, when men ben alle
aslepe,
In-to our kneding-tubbes wol we crepe,
And sitten ther, abyding goddes grace.
Go now thy wyf, I have no lenger
space
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,'
This sely carpenter goth forthe his
wey.
Ful ofte he seith 'allas' and 'weyl-
awy,'
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 impression 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, wyleth, maketh sory chere,
He syketh with ful many a sory swhogh.
He gooth and geteth him a kneading-trogh, 3620
And after that a tubbe and a kimelin,
And privly he sethe hem to his in,
And heng hem in the roof in privattee.
His owne hand he made ladders three,
To climben by the ronges and the stalkes
Un-to the tubbes hanginge in the balkes,
And hem vitailled, bothe trogh and tubbe,
With breed and chese, and good ale in a tubbe,
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 dor with-oute candellight,
And dressed al thing as it sholde be. 3635
And shortly, up they clomben alle three;
They sitten stille wyl 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 bisinesse,
Fil on this carpenter right, as I gesse,
Aboute corfew-tyme, or litel more; 3645
For travail of his goost he goneth sore,
And eft he routeth, for his heed mislay.
Doun of the laddre stalketh Nicholay,
And Alisoun, ful softe adoun she spedde;
With-outen 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 Alisoun and Nicholas,
In bisinesse 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 Absolon,
That is for love alwey so wo bigon,
Up-on the Monday was at Oseneye
With companye, him to disporte and playe, 3660
And axed up-on cas a cloisterer
Ful privly after John the carpenter;
And he drouthe him a-part out of the chirche,
And seyde, 'I noot, I saugh him here nat wirche
Sin Saterday; I trow that he be went
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 tym brave al night;
For sikirly I saugh him nat stiringe
Aboute his dor sin day begyn to springe.
So moot I thrype, I shal, at kokkes crowe,
Ful privly knobken at his windowe
That stant ful lowe up-on his boures wal.
To Alison now wol I tellen al 3675
My love-longsing, for yet I shal nat misse
That at the laste wey I shal hir kisse.
Som maner confort shal I have, parfay,
My mouth hath icched al this longe day;
That is a signe of kising atte neste.
Al night 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 firste he cheweth greyn and
lycorn, 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 cogheith with a semi-soun—
'What do ye, hony-comb, swete Alisoun?
My faire brid, my swete cinamome,
Awaketh, lemmam 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 thoght that I swelte and
swete;
I moorne as doth a lamb after the tete.
Y-wis, lemmam, 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, Jakké fool,' she
sayde,
'As help me god, it wol nat be "com ha
me,"
I love another, and elles I were to
blame,
Wel bet than thee, by Jesu, Absolon!
Go forth thy wey, or I wol caste a ston,
And lat me slepe, a twenty devel wey!'
'Alas,' quod Absolon, 'and weylawey!
That trewe love was ever so yvel
biset!' 3715
Than kisse me, sin it may be no bet,
For Jesus love and for the love of me.'
'Wiltow than go thy wey ther-with?' quod she.
'Ye, certes, lemmam,' quod this
Absolon.
'Thanne make thee redy,' quod she,
'I come anon;' 3720
And un-to Nicholas she seyde stille,
'Now hyst, 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 undoeth, and that in
haste,
'Have do,' quod she, 'com of, and speed
thee faste,
Lest that our neighebores thee espyle.'

This Absolon gan wyte 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 thougte 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! alas! what have I do?'
'Thee!' quod she, and clamphe the
window to; 3740
And Absolon goth forth a sory pas.
'A berd, a berd!' quod hende
Nicholas,
'By goddes corpus, this g ethanolde and
weel!'

This sely Absolon herde every deel,
And on his lippe han gan for anger
byte; 3745
And to him-self he seyde, 'I shal thee
quyte!'

Who rubbethe now, who froteth now
his lippes
With dust, with sond, with straw, with
clooth, with chippes,
But Absolon, that scith full ofte, 'allas!
My soule biteake I un-to Sathanas, 3750
But me wer lever than al this toun,' quod
he,
'Of this despyt awroken for to be!
Alas!' 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 defey, And weep as dooth a child that is y-bete. A softe paes he wente over the strete 3760
Un-til a smith men cleped daun Gerveys, That in his forge smithed plough-harneys; He sharpe th shaar and culter bisily. This Absolon knokketh al esily, And seyde, ‘undo, Gerveys, and that anon.’ 3765
‘What, who artow?’ ‘I am I, Absolon.’ ‘What Absolon! for Cristes swete tree, Why ryse ye so rathe, ey, benedicite! What eylith yow? som gay gerl, god it woot,
Hath broght yow thus up-on the virtoot; 3770
By seynt 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 he may;
I shal wel telle it thee to-morwe day’—
And caughte the culter by the colde stele. 3785
Ful softe 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 died er. This Alison anserwe, ‘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 kisses!’
This Nicholas was risen for to pisse, And thoughte he wolde amenden al the tape,
He shold keisse his ers er that he scape,
And up the windowe dide he hastily 3801
And out his ers he puttheth prively Over the buttok, to the haunch-bon;
And ther-with spak this clerk, this Absolon,
‘Spek, swete brid, I noot nat wher thow art.’
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 smowth.
Of gooth the skin an hande-brede aboute,
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!’
This carpenter out of his slomber sterte,
And herde oon cryen ‘water’ as he were wood,
And thoughte, ‘Allas! now comth Now-clis flood!’
He sit him up with-ouen wordes mo,
And with his ax he smoot the corde a-two,
And doun goth al; he fond neither to selle,
Ne breed ne ale, til he cam to the selle
Upon the floor; and ther aswonne he lay.
Up sterte hir Alison, and Nicholay,
And cryden ‘out’ and ‘harrow’ in the strete.
3825
The neighebores, bothe smale and grete,
In roonien, for to gauren on this man,
That yet aswonne he lay, bothe pale and wan;
For with the fal he brosten hadde his arm;
But stonde he mooste un-to his owne harm. 3830
For whan he spak, he was anon borne doun
With hende Nicholas and Alisoun.
They tolde 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 laughen 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 town;
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 jalousye;
And Absolon hath kist hir nether ye;
And Nicholas is scared 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 prologue of the Reeve 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-cas he was of carpenteres craft.
A litel ire is in his herte y-lait.
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 ye, 3865
If that me liste speke of ribaudye.
But ilk am old, me list not play for age;
Gras-tyme is doon, my fodder is now forage,
This whyle top wryteth myne olde yeres,
Myn herte is al-so mowled as myne heres,
But-if I fare as dooth an open-eers; 3871
That ilke fruit is ever leng the wers,
Til it be roten in mullock or in stree.
We olde men, I drede, so fare we;
Til we be roten, can we nat be rype; 3875
We hoppen 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 ashen olde is fyre y-reke.
Foure gledes han we, whiche I shal devyse,
Awaunting, lying, anger, coveytise;
Thise foure sparkles longen un-to elde. 3885
Our olde lemes mowe wel been unwelde,
But wil ne shal nat faillen, that is sooth.
And yet ik have alwey a coltes tooth,
As many a yere 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 streem 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 shrewes 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 leveful is with force force of-showwe.
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 ye 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
mele;
And this is verray soth that I yow telle.
A Miller was ther dwelling many a
day; 3925
As eny pecok he was proud and gay.
Pypen he coude and fisses, 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 skulke. 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 theef he was for sothe of corn and
mele,
And that a sly, and usaunt for to
stele. 3940

His name was hoten deynous 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 hal-ayes 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 dignye as water in a dich;
And ful of hoker and of bismare. 3965
Hir thoughte that a lady sholde hir spare,
What for hir kinrede and hir nortelrye
That she had lerned in the nonnere.
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 yen 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 strangue he made it of hir mariage.
His purpos was for to bistowe hir hye
In-to som worthy blood of aucnerye;
For holy chirches good moot been de-spended
On holy chirches blood, that is descended.
Therfore he wolde his holy blood honoure, 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 wair hir whete and eek hir malt
Of corn by sleighe, 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?'
'Symond,' quod Iohn, 'by god, nede has na peer;
Him boes serve him-selve that has na swayn,
Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes sayn.
Our maniple, I hope he wil be deed,
Swa werkes ay the wanges in his head. 4030
And forthy is I come, and eek Alayn,
To grinde our corn and carie it ham agayn;
I pray yow sped us hethen that ye may.'
"It shal be doon," quod Simkin, "by my fay;
What wol ye doon whyl that it is in hande?"

'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?'
Aleyne answerde, 'Iohn, and wiltow swa,
Than wil I be bynethe, by my croun,
And se how that the mele falles doun
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.'

This miller smyled of hir nyctee,
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 ye
For al the sleighte in hir philosophye.
The more queynte crekes that they make,
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;
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 doun til he hath founde
The clerkes hors, ther as it stood y-bounde
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 los, he ginneth gon
Toward the fen, ther wilde mares renne,
Forth with weche, thurgh thikk and thurgh thenne.

This miller gooth agayn, no word he seyde,
They gete him nat so lightly, by my coun!'  
Thise sely clerkes rennen up and doun  
With 'keep, keep, stand, stand, Iossa, wardereere, 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 Alexyn.  
'Alas,' 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 soles 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 bis-oght  
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 suffys,  
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 seyd, man sal taa of twa things  
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 trewey 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 goa loos;  
And in his owne chambe 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-selwe,  
Right in the same chambe, by and by;  
It mighte he 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 spekeththurgh 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 rokkeen, 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 Alexyn and also Iohn;  
Ther nas na more, hem nededo 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.*

Aley the clerk, that herd this melodye,
He poked Iohn, and sayde, 'slepestow?
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;
But yet, na fors; al sal be for the best.
For Iohn,' sayde he, 'als ever moot I thrype,
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,
That gif a man in a pointe 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 amendeamment, 4185
Agayn my los I wil have esement.
By goddes saule, it sal neen other be!'
This Iohn answere, 'Aaley, avse thee,
The miller is a perilous man,' he sayde,
'And gif that he out of his sleep abreyde,
He mighte doon us bathe a vileynye.'
Aley answere, '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,
That it had been to late for to crye,
And shortly for to seyn, they were at on;
Now pley, Aley! for I wol speke of Iohn.
This Iohn lyth stille a furlong-wey or two,
And to him-self he maketh routhe and wo;
'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 dogther in his arm.
He aunteed 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 aunte it, by my fayth!
"Unhardy is unsely," thus men sayth.'
And up he roos and softly he wente
Un-to the cradel, and in his hand it hente,
And baar it softe un-to his beddes feet.
Some after this the wyf hir routing leet,
And gan awake, and wente hir out to pisse,
And gan agayn, and gan hir cradel mise,
And groped heer and ther, but she fond noon.
'Allas!' quod she, 'I hadde almost mis-foon;
I hadde almost gon to the clerkes bed.
Ey, *benefcite!* thanne hadde I foule y-sped:'
And forth she gooth til she the cradel fond.
She gropeth alwey forther with hir hond,
And fond the bed, and thoghte noght but good,
By-cause that the cradel by it stood,
And niste wher she was, for it was derk;
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;
He priketh harde and depe as he were mad.
This Ioly lyf han thise two clerkes lad
Til that the thriddle cox bigan to singe.
Aley wex dere in the daweninge,
For he had swoken al the longe night;
And sayde, 'far wel, Malin, swete wight!
The day is come, I may no lenger byde;
But evermo, wher so I go or ryde,
I is thy waten clerk, swa have I seel!'
'Now dere lemem,' quod she, 'go, far wel!' 4240
But er thou go, o thing I wol thee telle,
Whan that thou wenest homward by the melle,
Right at the entree of the dore bihinde,  
Thou shalt a cake of half a busshel finde  
That was y-made of thyn owne mele,  
Which that I heelp my fader for to steale.  
And, gode leman, god thee save and kepe!  
And with that word almost she gan to wepe.  

Aleyun up-rist, and thoughte, 'er that it dawe,  
I wol go crepen in by my felawe;'  
And fonde the cradel with his hand anon,  
'By god,' thoughte 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,  
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 cropen by his felawe Iohn;  
And by the miller in he creep anon, 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,  
Swyved the milleres doghter bolt-upright,  
Whyl thou 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 dignitee!  
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.  
Doun ran the blody streem up-on his brest;  
And in the floor, with nose and mouth to-broke,  
They walwe as doon two pigges in a poke.
Thus is the proude miller wel y-bete,
And hath y-lost the grinding of the wheate,
And payed for the soper every-deel 4315 Of Aleyne and of Iohn, that bette him weel.
His wyf is sywved, and his doghther als;
Lo, swich it is a miller to be fals!

The prologue 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 sayde 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 broughte in-to his privetee.
I pray to god, so yeve me sorwe and care,
If ever, sithe I highte Hogge of Ware,
Herde I a miller bettre y-set a-werk.
He hadde a lape of malice in the derk.
But god forbede that we stinten here;
And therfore, if ye vouche-sauff to here
A tale of me, that am a povre man,
I wol yow telle as wel as ever I can
A litél lape that fil in our citee.’

Our host answerde, and seide, ‘I graunte it thee;
Now telle on, Roger, loke that it be good;

And therfore this proverbe is seyd ful sooth,
‘Him thar nat wene wel that yvel dooth; 4320
A gy lure shal him-self bigyled be.’
And God, that sitteth heighe in magessee,
Save al this companye grete and smale!
Thus have I quit the miller in my tale.

Here is ended the Reves tale.

The Cook’s Prologue.

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 therfore, Herry Bailly, by thy feith,
Be thou nat wrooth, er we departen heer,
Though that my tale be of an hostileer. 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 Prologue 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 vitaillers 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 meenee of his sort
To hoppe and singe, and maken swich disportex.
And ther they settyn steyven 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 dispence, 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 haunteith dys, riot, or paramour,
His maister shal it in his shoppe abye,
Al have he no part of the minstralcye;
For thefte and riot, they ben conver-
tible, 4395
Al conne he pleye on giterne or ribile.
Revel and trouthe, as in a low degree,
They ben 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 at the remenaunt.’
So fareth it by a riotous servaunt;
It is wel lasse harm to leti him pace,
Than he shende alle the servants in the place. 4410
Therfore 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 at the night or leve.
And for ther is no theft with-out a louke, 4415
That helpeth him to wasen and to souke
Of that he brybe can or borwe may,
Anon he sente his bed and his array
Un-to a compere of his owne sort,
That lovede dys and revel and disportex,
And hadde a wyf that heeld for counten-
ance 4421
A shoppe, and swyved for hir susten-
ance.

Of this Cokes tale maked 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 company.

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 eightsete the day
Of April, that is messager 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
That Phebus, which that shoon so clere and brighte,
Degrees was fyve and fourtye clombe on highte;
And for that day, as in that latitude,
It was ten of the clokke, he gan conclude,
And sodeynly he plighte his hors aboute.
‘Lordinges,’ quod he, ‘I warne yow, al this route,
The fourthe party of this day is goon;
Now, for the love of god and of seint John,
Leseth no tyme, as ferforth as ye may;
Lordinges, the tyme wasteth night and day,
And steleth from us, what privly slepinge,
And what thurgh necligence in our wakinge,
As dooth the streem, that turneth never agayn,
Descending fro the montaigne in-to playn.
Wel can Senek, and many a philosophre
Bivailen 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 maydenhede,

| When she hath lost it in hir wantownesse;                  | Whan she hath lost it in hir wantownesse;                  |
| Lat us nat moulen thus in ydelnesse.                      | Lat us nat moulen thus in ydelnesse.                      |
| ‘Sir man of lawe,’ quod he, ‘so have ye blis,             | ‘Sir man of lawe,’ quod he, ‘so have ye blis,             |
| Tel us a tale anon, as forward is;                        | Tel us a tale anon, as forward is;                        |
| Ye been submitted thrugh your free assent                | Ye been submitted thrugh your free assent                |
| To stonde in this cas at my Iugement.                     | To stonde in this cas at my Iugement.                     |
| Acquiteth yow, and holdmeth your biheste,                 | Acquiteth yow, and holdmeth your biheste,                 |
| Than have ye doon your devoir atte lest.’                  | Than have ye doon your devoir atte lest.’                  |
| ‘Hoste,’ quod he, ‘deparDieux ich assente,’               | ‘Hoste,’ quod he, ‘deparDieux ich assente,’               |
| To breke forward is not myn entente.                      | To breke forward is not myn entente.                      |
| Biheste is dette, and I wol holde fayn                    | Biheste is dette, and I wol holde fayn                    |
| Al my biheste; I can no better seyn.                       | Al my biheste; I can no better seyn.                       |
| For swich lawe as man yeveth another wight,               | For swich lawe as man yeveth another wight,               |
| He sholde him-selfen usen it by right;                    | He sholde him-selfen usen it by right;                    |
| Thus wol our text; but natheles certeyn                   | Thus wol our text; but natheles certeyn                   |
| I can right now no thirsty tale seyn,                     | I can right now no thirsty tale seyn,                     |
| But Chaucer, though he can but lewdely                     | But Chaucer, though he can but lewdely                     |
| On metres and on ryming craftily,                         | On metres and on ryming craftily,                         |
| Hath seyd hem in swich English as he can                   | Hath seyd hem in swich English as he can                   |
| Of olde tyme, as knoweth many a man.                      | Of olde tyme, as knoweth many a man.                      |
| And if he have not seyd hem, leve brother,                | And if he have not seyd hem, leve brother,                |
| For he hath told of loveres up and doun                   | For he hath told of loveres up and doun                   |
| Mo than Ovyde made of mencioun                             | Mo than Ovyde made of mencioun                             |
| In his Epistelles, that been ful olde.                     | In his Epistelles, that been ful olde.                     |
| What sholde I tellen hem, sin they ben tolde?              | What sholde I tellen hem, sin they ben tolde?              |
| In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcion,                      | In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcion,                      |
| And sithen hath he spoke of everichon, Thise noble wyves and thise loveres eke. Who-so that wol his large volume seke Cleped the Seintes Legende of Cupyde, Ther may he seen the large woundes wyde 62 | And sithen hath he spoke of everichon, Thise noble wyves and thise loveres eke. Who-so that wol his large volume seke Cleped the Seintes Legende of Cupyde, Ther may he seen the large woundes wyde 62 |
| Of Lucresse, and of Babilan Tisbee;                        | Of Lucresse, and of Babilan Tisbee;                        |
| The sword of Dido for the false Enee;                     | The sword of Dido for the false Enee;                     |
| The tree of Phillis for hir Demophon; 65                   | The tree of Phillis for hir Demophon; 65                   |
| The pleinte of Dianire and Hermion,                        | The pleinte of Dianire and Hermion,                        |
| Of Adriane and of Isiphilee;                               | Of Adriane and of Isiphilee;                               |
The bareyn eyle stonding in the see;
The dreynote Leander for his Erro;
The teres of Eleyne, and eek the wo 70
Of Brixseyde, and of thee, Ladomëa;
The crueltie of thee, queen Medëa,
Thy litel children hanging by the hals
For thy lason, that was of love so fals!
O Ypermistra, Penelopee, Alceste, 75
Your wyfhod he comendeth with the beste!
But certeynly no word ne wrytheth he
Of thilke wikke ensample of Canace,
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 dogther 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 wyte in none of his sermons
Of swiche unkinde abominacionious,
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 natheliees, I recche noght a bene
Though I come after him with hawebake;
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! condicioun of povertie!
With thurst, with cold, with hunger so confounded!
To asken help thee shameth in thyn herte;
If thou noon aske, with nede artow so wounded,
That verray nede unswappeth al thy wounde hid!
Maugree thyn heed, thou most for indigence
Or stelde, or begge, or borwe thy despence! 105
Thou blamest Crist, and seyst ful bitterly,
He misdeparteth richesse temporal;
Thy neighebour thou wytest sinfully,
And seyst thou hast to lyte, and he hath al.
‘Parfay,’ seistow, ‘somtyme he rekne shal,
Whan that his tayl shal brennen in the glede,
For he noght 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 despysie;’ 115
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,
And alle thy frendes 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 six cink, than renneth for your chauce; 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 ladres of tydinges
And tales, bothe of peas 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,
That wyde- wher senten her spycerye,
Clothes of gold, and satins riche of hewe;
Her chafiar was so thryfite and so newe,
That every wight hath deyntee to chaff-
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 certein tyme, as fel to hir plesance.
And so bifel, that theexcellent renoun
Of themperoures doghter, dame Cas-
tance,
Reported was, with every circumstance,
Un-to thise Surrijen marchants in swich
wyse,
Fro day to day, as I shal yow devyse.

This was the commune vois of every
man—
'Our Emperour of Rome, god him see,
A doghter hath that, sin the world bikan,
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-outryde,
Yowthe, with-outre grenehede or folye;
To alle hir werkes vertu is hir gyde,
Humblesse hath slayn in hir al tirannye.
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, when 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
The wondres that they mighte seen or
here.

Amonges othere things, specially
Thise marchants han him told of dame
Custance,
So grete noblesse in erneste, cerisiously,
That this sowdan hath caught so grete
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
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,
The deeth of every man, withouten drede.

In sterres, many a winter ther-biforn, Was writen the deeth of Ector, Achilles, Of Pompey, Iulus, er they were born; The stratf of Thebes; and of Ercules, Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates The deeth; but mennes wittes been so dull, 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 certein, '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 sayden; They argumenten, casten up and doun; Many a subtil resoun forth they leyden, They spoken of magik and abuisioun; But finally, as in conclusioun, 215 They can not seen in that non advente, Ne in non other wey, save mariage.

Than saue they ther-in swich difficultee By wey of resoun, for to speke al playn By-cause that ther was swich diversite Bitwene hir bothe lawes, that they sayn, They trowe 'that no Cristen prince wolde fayn 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 doutelees; I mot ben hires, I may non other chese. I prey yow holde your arguments in pees; Saveth my lyf, and beeth noght recchelees 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 mediacion, And al the chirche, and al the chivalry,
That, in destruccioun of Maumetrye, And in encrees of Cristes lawe dere.

How that the sowdan and his baronage And alle his liges shulde y-cristned be,
And he shal han Custance in mariage, And certein gold, I noot what quantitee, And her-to founden suffisant seurtee; This same accord was sworn on eyther syde;

Now, faire Custance, almyghty god thee gyde! 245

Now wolde som men waiten, as I gesse, That I shulde tellen al the purveyance That themperour, of his gret noblesse, Hath shapen for his doghter dame Custance.

Wel may men knowe that so gret ordinance May no man tellen in a litel clause As was arrayed for so heigh a cause.

Bishopes ben shapen with hir for to wende, Lordes, ladyes, knightes of renoun, And other folk y-nowe, this is the ende;
And notified is thurgh-out the toun That every wight, with gret devocioun, Shulde preyen Crist that he this mariage Receyve in gree, and sped this viage.

The day is comen of hir departinge, 260 I sey, the woful day fatal is come, That ther may be no lenger taryinge, But forthward they hem dressen, alle and some;

Custance, that was with sorwe al over- come, Ful pale arist, and dresseth hir to wende;
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 subjeccioun.

Of oon, she knoweth not his condiccioun.

Housbondes been alle gode, and han ben yore,

That knownen wyves, I dar say yow no more.

‘Fader,’ she sayde, ‘thy wrecched child

Custance,

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 Surrye,

Ne shal I never seen yow more with yé.

Allas! un-to the Barbré nacioun

I moste anon, sin that it is your wille;

But Crist, that starf for our redempcioun,

So yeve me grace, his hestes to fulille;

I, wrecche womman, no fors though I spille.

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

That Romayns hath venquished tymes thre,

Nas herd swich tendre weeping for pitee

As in the chambre was for hir departinge;

Bot forth she moot, wher-so she wepe or singe.

O firste moevyng cruel fírmament,

With thy diurnal sweigh that crowdest ay

And hurlest al from Est til Occident,

That naturelly rolde holde another way,

Thy crowding set the heven in swich array

At the beginning of this fiers viage,

That cruel Mars hath slayn this mariage.

Infortunat ascendent tortuous,

Of which the lord is helples falle, allas!

Out of his angle in-to the derkest hous,

O Mars, O Atazir, as in this cas!

O feble mone, unhappy been thy pas!

Thou knittest thee ther thou art nat receyved,

Ther thou were wel, fro thennes artow weyved.

Imprudent emperour of Rome, allas!

Was ther no philosophre in all thy toun?

Is no tyme bet than other in swich cas?

Of viage is ther noon eleccioun,

Namely to folk of heigh condiçioun,

Nat whan a rote is of a birthe y-knowe?

Allas! we ben to lewed or to slowe.

To shippe is brought this woful faire mayde

Solempnely, with every circumstance.

‘Now Jesu Crist be with yow alle,’ she sayde;

Ther nis namore but ‘farewel! faire Custance!’

She peyneth hir to make good countenance,

And forth I let hir sayle in this manere,

And turne I wol agayn to my mater.

The moder of the sowdan, welle of vyces,

Espyéd hath hir sones pleyn entente,

How he wol let his olde sacrifycles,

And right anon she for hir conseil sente;

And they ben come, to knowe what she mente.

And when assembled was this folk infaire,

She sette hir doun, and sayde as ye shal here.

‘Lordes,’ quod she, ‘ye known everichon,

How that my sone in point is for to lete

The holy lawes of our Alkaron,

Yeve by goddes message Makomete.

But oon avow to grete god I hete,

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 penan.

And afterward in hele to be drawe.


For we reneyed Mahoun our cre-

ance?

But, lordes, wol ye maken assurance,
As I shal seyn, assenting to my lore,
And I shal make us sauf for evermore?'

They sworn and assenten, every man,
To live with hir and dye, and by hir stonde;
And everich, in the beste wyse he can,
To strengthen hir shal alle his frendes 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.

'Ve shal 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,
She shal have nede to washe awey the rede,
Thogh she a font-ful water with hir lede.'

O sowdanesse, rote of iniquitee,
Virago, thou Semyram the secounde,
O serpent under femininitee,
Lyk to the serpent depe in helle y-bounde,
O feyned womman, al that may confounde
Vertu and innocence, thurgh thy malyce,
Is bred in thee, as nest of every wyce!

O Satan, envious sin thilke day
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 mariaghe.
Thyn instrument so, weylawey the whyle!
Makestow of wommen, whan thou wolt begyly.

This sowdanesse, whom I thus blame and warie,
Leet privly hir conseil goon hir way.

What sholde I in this tale lenger tarie?
She rydeth to the sowdan on a day,
And sayde 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;
'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.

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 sayde, his wyf was comen, out of doute,
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-ferre;
The moder of the sowdan riche and gay,
Recceyveth hir with al so glad a chere
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 Tullius,
Of which that Lucan maketh swich a host,
Was royaller, ne more curious
Than was thassemblie of this blisful host.
But this scorpioun, this wikked gost,
The sowdanesse, for al hir flateringe,
Caste under this ful mortality 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 let hem dwelle.
The fruyt of this materie is that I telle.
Whan tymte cam, men thoughte it for the beste
That revel stinte, and men goon to hir reste.

The tymte cam, this olde sowdanesse
Ordeyned hath this feste of which I tolde,
And to the feste Cristen folk hem dresse
In general, ye! bothe yonge and olde.
Here may men feste and royaltie biholde,
And deynte mo than I can yow devyse,
But al to dere they bougethe it er they ryse.

O sodeyn wo! that ever art successour
To worldly blisse, spreynyd with bitternesse;
Thende of the Ioye of our worldly labour;
Wo occupieth the fyn of our gladnessse.
Herke this conseil for thy sikernesse,
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 stiket at the bord,
But it were only dame Custance al-lone.
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 converted
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 stereles, god woot,
They han hir set, and bidde hir lerne sayle
Out of Surrye agaynward to Itayle.

A certein tresor that she thider ladde,
And, sooth to sayn, vitaille gret plente

They han hir yeven, and clothes eek she hadde,
And forth she sayleth in the salte see.
O my Custance, full of benignitee,
O emperoures yonge doghter dere,
He that is lord of fortune be thy stere!

She blesseth hir, and with ful pitous voyes
Un-to the crowys of Crist thus seyde she,
'O clere, o welful auter, holy crowys,
Reed of the lambes blood full of pitee,
That wesh the world fro the olde iniquitee,
Me fro the feend, and fro his clawes kepe,
That day that I shal drenchen in the depe.

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
On which thy tymes faithfully 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 Marrék, as it was hir aventure;
On many a sory meel now may she bayte;
After her deeth ful often may she wayte,
Er that the wilde wawes wole hir drywe
Un-to the place, ther she shal arryve.

Men mighten asken why she was not slayn?
Eek at the feste who mighte hir body save?
And I answere 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 asterte?

No wight but god, that he bar in his herte.

God liste to shewe his wonderful miraco
In hir, for we sholde seen his mighty werkes;
Crist, which that is to every harm triacle, 480
By certein menes ofte, as knownen clerkes,
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-slave,
Who kepte hir fro the drenching in the see? 485
Who kepte Ionas in the fisses mawe
Til he was spouted up at Ninive?
Wel may men knowe it was no wight but he
That kepte peple Ebraik fro hir dren-
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
As wel whan [that] she wook as whan 
she slept.

Wher mighte this womman mete and 
drine 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 fisses two to fede.
God sente his foison at hir grete nede.

She dryveth forth in-to our oceean 505
Thurgh-out our wilde see, til, atte laste,
Under an hold that nempen I ne can,
Fer in Northumberlond the wave 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 doun is fare
To seen this wrak, and al the ship he 
soghte,
And fond this very 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 doun, and thanketh goddes 
sonde.
But what she was, she wolde no man 
sye,
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 sloute,
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 soioured 
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 plaghes of the North, by land and see;
To walys 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 privatee
Honoured Crist, and hethen folk bygyled;
And ny the castel swiche ther dwelten three. 550
That oon of hem was blind, and mighte nat see
But it were with thilke y'en 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 y'en faste y-shette.

'In name of Crist,' cryde this blinde Britoun,
'Dame Hermengild, yif me my sighte agayn.'
This lady wax affrayed of the soun,
Lest that hir housbond, shortly for to sayn,
Wolde hir for Iesu Cristes love han slayn,
Til Custance made hir bold, and bad hir werche
The wil of Crist, as doghter of his chirche.

The constable wax abasshed of that sight,
And seyde, 'what amounteth al this fare?'
Custance answerde, 'sire, it is Cristes might,
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 believe.

This constable was no-thing lord of this place
Of which I speke, ther he Custance fond,
But kepe 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 well here,
But turne I wol agayn to my mater.

Sathan, that ever us waiteth to bigyle,
Saugh of Custance al hir perchicioun,
And caste anon how he myghte quyte hir whyle,
And made a yong knight, that dwelte in that toun,
Love hir so hote, of foul affeccioun,
That verraily him thoughte he shulde spille
But he of hir myghte ones have his wille.

He woweth hir, but it availleth goth,
She wolde do no sinye, 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 aweye,
And prayly, up-on a night, he crepte
In Hermengildes chambr whyl she slepte. 595

Wery, for-waked in her orisouns,
Slepeth Custance, and Hermengild also.
This knight, thurgh Sathanas temptaciouns,
Al softely is to the bed y-go,
And kitte the throte of Hermengild a-two,
And leyde the blody knyf by dame Custance,
And wente his wey, ther god yeve him meschance!

Sone after comth this constable hoom agayn,
And eek Alle, that king was of that land, had his wyf despitously yslain, for which he full ofte weep and wrong.

And the man the blody kyf he found in the bed the blody kyf he fond by dame Custance, alle, what mighte she saye?

For verrey wher was at awaye.

She sette her downe on knes and thus sayde,

Immortal god, that savest Susanne, Mary, mine doctowe to Saint Anne.

For false blame, and thus meekly.

And eek the tym, and where, and in what wyse Alle was tolde of this mancheon.

Blod, christen, and that ofte chykenge angelle singe Osanne.

My soure be, for elles I shal dye!"
A vois was herd in general audience,
And seyde, 'thou hast desclaundered
gilteles
The dochter of holy chirche in hey presence;
Thus hastou doon, and yet holde I my pees.'
Of this mervaille agast was al the pees;
As mased folk they stoden everichone,
For drede of wrecche, save Custance allove.

Greet was the drede and eek the repentance
Of hem that hadden wrong suspicioun
Upon this sely innocent Custance;
And, for this miracle, in conclusioun,
And by Custances mediacioun,
The king, and many another in that place,
Converted was, thanked be Cristes grace!

This false knight was slayn for his untrouthe
By Jugeement of Alla hastifly;
And yet Custance hadde of his deeth gret routhe.
And after this Iesus, of his mercy,
Made Alla wedden ful solemnely
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 weddung but Donegild, and namo,
The kinges moder, ful of tirannye?
Hir thoughte hir cursed herte brast a-two;
She wolde noght hir sone had do so;
Hir thoughte a despit, that he holde take
So strange a creature un-to his make.

Me list nat of the chaf nor of the stre.
Maken so long a tale, as of the corn.
What sholde I tellen of the royaltie
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;
They ete, and drinke, and daunce, and singe, and pleye.

They goon to bedde, as it was skile and right;
For, thogh that wyves been ful holy things,
They moste take in paciencie at night
Swich maner necessaries as been plesinges
To folk that han y-wedded hem with rings,
And leye a lyte hir holinesse asyde
As for the tyme; it may no bet bityde.

On hir he gat a knave-child anoon,
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
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 wrooth un-to his king, that cleped was Alle,
How that this blisful tyding is bifalle,
And othere tydings speedfull for to seye;
He taketh the lettre, and forth he gooth his weye.

This messenger, to doon his avantage,
Un-to the inges moder rydeth swythe, And saluet 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-outen doute.
To Ioye and blisse of al this regne aboute.

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;’

But heer al night I wol thou take thy reste,
Tomorwe wol I seye thee what me lest.’

This messager drank sadly ale and wyn,
And stolen were his lettres privelv
Out of his box, whyl he sleep as a swyn;
And countrefeted was ful subtilly

Another lettre, wroght ful sinfully,
Un-to the king direct of this materse
Fro his constable, as ye shul after here.

The lettre spak, ‘the queen delivered was
Of so horrible a feendly creature,
That in the castel noon so hardy was
That any whyle dorchte ther endure.
The moder was an elf, by aventure
Y-come, by charmes or by sorcerye,
And every wight hateth hir companyc.’

Wo was this king when he this lettre
had seyn,
But to no wighte he tolde his sorwes sore,
But of his owene honde he wrooth ageyn,
‘Welcome the sonde of Crist for evermore
To me, that am now lerned in his lore;
Lord, welcome be thy lust and thy plesaunce,
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;
Crist, whan him list, may sende me an heir
More agreable than this to my lykinge.’
This lettre he seleth, privelv weepingne,
Which to the messager was take sone,
And forth he gooth; ther is na more to done.

O messager, fulfild of dronkenesse,
Strong is thy breeth, thy limes faltren ay,
And thou biwreyest alle secreenesse.
Thy mind is lorn, thou Ianglest as a Lay,
Thy face is turned in a newe array!
Ther dronkenesse regneth in any route,
There is no conseil hid, with-uten doute.

O Donegild, I ne have noon English digne
Un-to thy malice and thy tirannye!
And therfor to the feend I thee resigne,
Let him endytten of thy traitorye
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 messager comth fro the king agayn,
And at the kinges modres court he lighte,
And she was of this messager ful sayn,
And plese him in al that ever she mighte.
He drank, and wel his girdel underpighte.
He slepeth, and he snoreth in his gyse
Al night, un-till 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 
That he ne sholde suffren in no wyse
Custance in-with his regne for tabye
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,
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 penance,
When Donegild caste al this ordinaunce!

This messager 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-vey!’
‘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 suffer innocent to spille,  
And wikked folk regne in prosperiteit?  
Thou glorie of wommanhede, thou faire may,  
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,  
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 stronde,  
She seyde, 'lord! ay wel-com be thy sonde!  

He that me kepte fro the false blame  
Whyl I was on the londe amonges yow,  
He can me kepe from harme and eek fro shame  
In salte see, al-thogh I se nat how.  
As strong as ever he was, he is yet now.  
In him triste I, and in his moder dere,  
That is to me seyl and eek my stere.'  

Hir litel child lay weping in hir arm,  
And kneling, pitously to hir she seyde,  
'Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee non harm.'  
With that hir kerchef of hir heed she breyde,  
And over hir litel yen she it leyde;  
And in hir arm she lulleth it ful faste,  
And in-to heven hir yen up she caste.  

'Moder,' quod she, 'and maybe 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 yen sawe al his torment;  
Thy wo and any wo man may sustene.  

Thou sawe thy child y-slayn bifor thy yen,  
And yet now liveth my litel child, par-fay!  
Now, lady bright, to whom alle woful cryen,  
Thou haven of refut, brighte sterre of day,  
Rewe on my child, that of thy gentillesse  
Rewest on every refulful in distresse!  

O litel child, alasar! what is thy gilte,  
That never wroughtest sinne as yet, par-dee,  
Why wil thy harde fader han thee spilt?  
'As lat my litel child dwelle heer with thee;  
And if thou darst not saven him, for blame,  
So kis him ones in his fadres name!'  

Ther-with she loketh bakward to the londe,  
And seyde, 'far-wel, housbond routhe-les!'  
And up she rist, and walketh doun the stronde  
Toward the ship; hir folweth al the prees,  
And ever she preyeth hir child to holde his prees;  
And taketh hir leve, and with an holy entente  
She blisseth hir; and in-to ship she wente.  

Vitailled was the ship, it is no drede,  
Habundantly for hir, ful longe space,  
And other necessaries that sholde nede  
She hadde y-nogh, heried be goddes grace!  
For wind and weder almighty god purchace,  
And bringe hir hoom! I can no bettre seye;  
But in the see she dryveth forth hir weye.  

Explicit secunda pars. Sequitur pars tercia.
Alla the king cometh hoon, some 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 commaunded me Up payne of deeth, so have I doon, certein.'

This messer 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, Imagined was by whom this harm gan springe.

The hand was knowe that the lettre wrooth, 890 And al the veniam of this cursed dede, But in what wyse, certeinly I noot. The effect is this, that Alla, out of drede, His moder slow, that men may pleinly rede, For that she traitor 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 tongue that it telle may. But now wol I un-to Custance go, 900 That fleteth in the see, in payne 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 noght I finde, 905 Custance and [EEK] hir child the see upcaste. 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 cometh 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 thief, that had reneyed our cre-aunce, 915 Com in-to ship allone, and seyde he sholde Hir leman be, wher-so she wolde or nodle.

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 thief fil over bord al sodeinly, And in the see he dreyned for venge-ance; And thus hath Crist unwemmed kept Custance.

O foule lust of luxurie! lo, thyn ende! Auctor.
Nat only that thou fyntest mannes minde, 926 But verraily thou wilt his body shende; Thende of thy werk or of thy lustes blinde Is compleyning, how many-oon may men finde That noght for werk som-tyme, but for thentente 930 To doon this sinne, ben outher sleyn or shente!

How may this wayke womman han this strengthe Hir to defende agayn this renegat? O Golias, 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 dreadfull face? Wel may men seen, it nas but goddes grace!

Who yaf Judith corage or hardinesse To slee him, Olofernus, in his tente, 940 And to deliveren out of wrecchednesse
The peple of god? I seye, for this entente, 945
That, right as god spirit of vigour sente 950
To hem, and saved hem out of mescance, 955
So sente he might and vigour to 960
Custance. 965

Forth goth hir ship thurgh-out the narwe mouth 970
Of Lubaltr and Septe, dryving ay, 975
Som-tyme West, som-tyme North and South, 980
And som-tyme Est, ful many a very day, 985
Til Cristes moder (blessed be she ay!) 990
Hath shapen, thurgh hir endeles goodnesse, 995
To make an ende of al hir hevinesse.

Now lat us stinte of Custance but a throwe, 1000
And speke we of the Romain Emperour, 1005
That out of Surrie hath by lettres knowe 1010
The slauthre of Cristen folk, and dishonour 1015
Don to his doghter by a fals traitour, 1020
I mene the cursed wikked sowdanesse, 1025
That at the feste leet sleen both more and lesse.

For which this emperour hath sent anoon 1030
His senatour, with royal ordinance, 1035
And other lorde, god wot, many oon, 1040
On Surriens to taken heigh vengeance. 1045
They brennen, sleen, and bringe hem to mescance 1050
ful many a day; but shortly, this is thende, 1055
Homward to Rome they shapen hem to wende.

This senatour repaireth with victorie 1060
To Rome-ward, sayling ful royally, 1065
And mette the ship dryving, as seith the storie, 1070
In which Custance sit ful pitously. 1075
No-thing ne knew he what she was, ne why 1080
She was in swich array; ne she nil seye 1085
Of hir estaat, althogh she sholde deye.

He bringeth hir to Rome, and to his wyf 1090
He yaf hir, and hir yonge some also; 1095
And with the senatour she ladde her lyf. 1100
Thus can our lady bringen out of wo Woful Custance, and many another mo. 1105
And lange tyme dwelled she in that place, 1110
In holy werkes ever, as was hir grace. 1115

* The senautes wyf hir aunte was, 1120
But for al that she knew hir never the more; 1125
I wol no longer tarien in this cas, 1130
But to king Alla, which I spak of yore, 1135
That for his wyf wepeth and syketh sore, 1140
I wol retourne, and lete I wol Custance Under the senautes governance.

King Alla, which that hadde his moder slayn, 1145
Upon a day fil in swich repentance, 1150
That, if I shortly tellen shal and plain, 1155
To Rome he comth, to receyven his penance; 1160
And putte him in the popes ordinance 1165
In heigh and low, and Iesu Crist bisoghte 1170
Foryeve his wikked werkes that he wroghte.

The fame anon thurgh Rome toun is born, 1175
How Alla king shal come in pilgrimage, 1180
By herbergeours that wenten him biforn; 1185
For which the senatour, as was usage, 1190
Rood him ageyn, and many of his linage, 1195
As wel to shewen his heighge magnificence 1200
As to don any king a reverence.

Greet chere dooth this noble senatour 1205
To king Alla, and he to him also; 1210
Everich of hem doth other greet honour; 1215
And so bifen that, in a day or two, 1220
This senatour is to king Alla go 1225
To feste, and shortly, if I shal nat lye, 1230
Custances sone wente in his companye.

Som men wolde seyn, at requeste of Custance, 1235
This senatour hath lad this child to feste; 1240

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I may nat tellen every circumstance,
Be as be may, ther was he at the lest.
But soth is this, that, at this 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 seye anon,
‘Whos is that faire child that stondeth 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 wylf;
I dar wel seyn hir hadde lever a kynf
Thurgh-out her breste, than been a woman wikked;
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 museth 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,’ thoghhte he, ‘fantome is in myn heed! 
I ogthe deme, of skilful Jugement,
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
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 Custance.
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 looke 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
When she remembred his unkindenesse.

Twyês she sownded in her owne sighte;
He weep, and him excuseth pitously: —
‘Now god,’ quod he, ‘and alle his halwes brighte
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 fecnde 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 pleyne,
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 very for to speke of sorwe. 1071

But finally, 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.
Thou prayest she her husband meekly,
In relief of her long pitiful praise, 1080
That he would pray for her father specially
That, of his majesty, he would enclenye
To vouchsafe some day with him to dyne;
She prayest him eek, he shold be by no weye
Unto his father no word of her seye. 1085

Some men wold seyn, how that the child
Maurice
Doth this message un-to this emperor;
But, as I gesse, Alla was nat so nyce
To him, that was of so sovereign honour
As he that is of Christian folk the flour, 1090
Sente any child, but it is bet to deme
He went hym-self, and so it may wel serme.

This emperor hath graunted gentilly
To come to dinner, as he him bisoght;
And wel rede I, he loked bisily 1095
Up-on this child, and on his doghter
thought
Alla goth to his in, and, as him oghte,
Arrayed for this feste in every wyse
As ferforth as his conning may suffye.

The morwe cam, and Alla gan him dressy, 1100
And eek his wyf, this emperour to mete;
And forth they rye in Ioye and in gladnessy.
And whan she saughe his father in the strete,
She lighte doun, and falleth him to fete.
‘Fader,’ quod she, ‘your yonge child
 Custance 1105
Is now full clene out of your remembrance.

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.
Now, gode fader, mercy I yow crye,
Send me namore un-to non hethenesse,
But thonketh my lord heer of his kinde-
nesia.’

Who can the pitious 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 lete hem
dwelle
A thousand fold wel more than I can telle. 1120

This child Maurice was sithen emperour
Maad by the pope, and lived cristynly.
To Cristes chirche he dide greet honour;
But I lete al his storie passed 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, of tyme wol nat abyde;
Fro day to night it changeth as the tyde.

Who lived ever in swich delty o day 1135
That him ne mooved other conscience,
Or ire, or talent, or som kin affray,
Envye, or pryde, or passion, or offence?
I ne seye but for this ende this sentence,
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 grete heviness.
1145
Now lat us preyen god his soule blesse!
And dame Custance, fynally to seye,
Towards the toun of Rome gooth his weye.
To Rome is come this holy creature, And fyndeth ther hir frienches hole and sounde: 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. 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 Ioye after wo, governe us in his grace, And kepe us alle that ben in this place! Amen.

Here endeth the Tale of the Man of Lawe; and next folweth the Shipmannes Prolog.

THE SHIPMAN’S PROLOGUE.

Here biginneth the Shipmannes Prolog.

Our hoste up-on his stiropes stood anon, And seyde, ‘good men, herketh everich on; This was a thrifty tale for the nones! 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, ‘benedicite!’ 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, ‘herketh me; Abydeth, for goddes digne passioun, For we shal han a predicacioun; This loller heer wil prechen us somwhat.’ ‘Nay, by my fader soule! that shal be nat,’ Seyed the Shipman; ‘heer he shal nat preche, He shal no gospel golen heer ne techte. We leve alle in the grete god,’ quod he, ‘He wolde soven som difficultee, Or springen kokkel in our clene corn; And thurfor, hoste, I warne thee biforn, My Ioly body shal a tale telle, And I shal clinnen yow so mery a belle, That I shal waken al this companye; But it shal nat ben of philosophye, Ne physics, ne terms quente of lawe; Ther is but litel Latin in my mawe.’

Here endeth the Shipman his Prolog.

THE SHIPMANNES TALE.

Here biginneth the Shipmannes Tale.

A Marchant 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 dispence 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 shadow up-on the wal. But wo is him that payen moot for al;
When that he cam, som maner honest thing;
For which they were as glad of his coming
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 town of Brugges for to fare,
To byen 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,
Er he to Brugges wente, in alle wyse.
This noble monk, of which I yow de-vye,
Hath of his abbot, as him list, licence,
By-cause he was a man of heigh prudence,
And eek an officer, out for to ryde, To seen hir graunge 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 Tubbe of Mal-
vesy, And eek another, ful ofsyn Vernage, And volaty, 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 aryseth,
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 yee, howat that it with him stood,
And how that he despeded hadde his good ;
And if that he encressed 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;  
And eek he nolde that no man sholde him lettre  
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,  
And hath his thinges seyd 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,  
Which as hir list she may governe and gye,  
For yet under the yerde was the mayde.  
O dere cosyn myn, daun Iohn,' she sayde,  
What eyleth yow so rathe for to ryse?  
Nece,' quod he, 'it oghte y-nough suffysye  
Fyve houre for to slepe up-on a night,  
But it were for an old appalld wight,  
As been thise wedded men, that lye and dare  
As in a forme sit a very bare,  
Were al for-straught with houndes grete and smale.  
But dere nece, why be ye so pale?  
Trowe certes that our gode man  
Hath 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.  
This faire wyf gan for to shake hir heed,  
And seyde thus, 'ye, god wol al,' quod she;  
Nay, cosyn myn, it stant nat so with me.  
or, by that god that yaf me soule and lyf,  
Al the reme of France is ther no wyf  
hat lasse lust hath to that sory pley.  
or I may singe "allas" and "weyla-wey,  
hat I was born," but to no wight, quod she,  
Dar I nat telle how that it stant with me.  
Wherfore I thynke 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 seye, 'allas, my nece, god for-bede  
That ye, for any sorwe or any drede,  
For do your-self; but telleth me your grief;  
Paraventure I may, in your meschief,  
Conseille or helpe, and therfore telleth me  
Al your anoy, for it shal been secree;  
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 you,' quod she,  
'I seye;  
By god and by this porthors, I yow swere,  
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 verrayly, for love and aifiance.'  
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,  
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 cosyn un-to me  
Than is this leef that hangeth on the tree!  
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 wommen sikerly;  
This swere I yow on my professioune.  
Telleth your grief, lest that he come adoun,
And hasteth yow, and gooth your wey anon.'

'My dere love,' quod she, 'o my daun John,
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 telen no wight of our privatree,
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 housbond
But al honour, as I can understonde;
Save un-to yow thus muche I tellen shal;
As help me god, he is noght 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
Desyen thinges sixe, as well as I.
They wolde that hir housbondes sholde be
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 Sunday 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 sclaundre or vilein ye;
And if myn housbond eek it mighte espye,
I nere but lost, and therfore I yow preye
Lene me this somme, or elles moot I deye.
Daun John, I seye, lene me thes hundred frankes;
Pardee, I wol nat faille yow my thankes,
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 vengeance
As foul as ever had Geniloun of France!' 1347-1417.

This gentil monk answerde in this manere;
'Now, trewely, myn owene lady dere,
I have,' quod he, 'on yow so greet a routh,
That I yow swere and plighte yow my trouthe,
That when your housbond is to Flaunderes 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 wyf,' quod he, 'al stille and softe,
And lat us dyne as sone as that ye may;
For by my chilindre it is pryne of day.
Goth now, and beeth as trewe as I shal be.'

'Now, elles god forbode, sire,' quod she,
And forth she gooth, as Iolif as a pye,
And bad the cokes that they sholde hem hye,
So that men mighte dyne, and that anon.
Up to hir housbond is this wyf y-gon,
And knokketh at his countour boldly.
'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 things?
The devel have part of alle swiche rekeninges!
Ye have y-nough, parde, of goddes sonde;
Come doun to-day, and lat your bagges stonde. 1410
Ne be ye nat ashamed that daun John
Shal fastinge al this day clenche goon?
What! lat us here a messe, and go we dyne.'

'Wyf,' quod this man, 'litel canstow devyne
The curious bisinesse 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 thrive,
Continuely, lastinge un-to our age.
We may wel make chere and good
visage,
As drye and forthe the world as it may be,
And kep our estaat in privetee,
Til we be deed, or elles that we pleye
A pilgrimage, or goon out of the weye.
And therfore have I greet necesitee
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,
That to a thrifty houshold may suffysye.
Thee lakketh noon array ne no vitaille,
Of silver in thy purs shalrow nat faille.'
And with that word his countour-dore he shette,
And doun he gooth, ne lenger wolde he lette,
But hastily a messe was ther seyd,
And spedily the tables were y-leyd,
And to the diner faste they hem spedde;
And richely this monk the chapman fedde.
At-after diner daun Iohn sobrely
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 sped yeow and gyde!
I prey youow, cosyn, wysly that ye ryde;
Governeth youow also of your diete
Atemprely, and namely in this het.
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, 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
An hundred frankes, for a wyke or tweye,
For certein beestes that I moste bye,
To store with a place that is owres.
God help me so, I wolde it were yours!
I shal nat faille surely of my day,
Nat for a thousand frankes, a myle-way.
But lat this thing be secre, I yow preye,
For yet to-night this beestes moot I bye;
And fare-now wel, myn owene cosin dere,
Graunt mercy of your cost and of your chere.'
This noble marchant gentilly anon
Answerde, and seyde, 'o cosyn myn, daun Iohn,
Now sikery this is a smal requeste;
My gold is youres, whan that it yow lestee.
And nat only my gold, but my chaffare;
Take what yow list, god shilde that ye spare.
But o thing is, ye knowe it wel y-nogh,
Of chapmen, that hir moneyy is hir plogh.
We may creadnce whyl we have a name,
But golldees for to be, it is no game.
Paye it agayn whan it lyth in your ese;
After my might ful fayn wolde I yow plese.'
Thise hundred frankes he fette forth anon,
And prively he took hem to daun Iohn.
No wight in al this world wiste of this lone,
Saving this marchant and daun Iohn allone.
They drinke, and speke, and rume a whyle and pleye,
Til that daun Iohn rydeth to his abbeye.
The morwe cam, and forth this marchant rydeth
To Flaundres-ward; his prentis wel him gydeth,
Til he cam in-to Brugges merily.
Now gooth this marchant faste and bisily
Aboute his nede, and byeth and creadncesthe.
He neither pleyseth at the dees ne dauenceth;
But as a marchant, shortly for to telle,
He let his lyf, and there I lete him dwelle.
The Sunday 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 this acoerd 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 meyné "fare-wel, have good day!" 1510
For noon of hem, ne no wight in the town,
Hath of daun Iohn right no suspicioun.
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 maken a chevauscie.
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 town, 1525
For greet chertee and greet assecioun,
Un-to daun Iohn he gooth him first, to playe;
Nat for to axe or borwe of him monyee,
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-fere.
Daun Iohn him maketh feste and mery chere;
And he him tolde agayn ful specially,
How he hadde wel y-boght and graciously,
Thanked be god, al hool his marchandise.
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 anserwe, "certes, I am fayn
That ye in hele ar comen hoom agayn. 1540
And if that I were riche, as have I blisse,
Of twenty thousand sheeld ye nat missye,
For ye so kindely this other day
Lente me gold; and as I can and may,
I thanke yow, by god and by seint Iame! 1545
But nathelees I took un-to our dame,
Your wyf at hoom, the same gold ageyn
Upon your bench; she woot it wel, certeyn,
By certein tokens that I can hir telle.
Now, by your leve, I may no lenger dwelle, 1550
Our abbot wol out of this town anon;
And in his companye moot I gon.
Grete wel our dame, myn owene nece swete,
And fare-wel, dere cosyn, til we mete!"
This Marchant, which that was ful war and wys, 1555
Creunceath, 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 hem atte gate,
As she was wont of old usage algate,
And al that night in mirthe they bisete; 1565
For he was riche and clerely out of dette.
Whan it was day, this marchant gan embrase
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 wantonely 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-thogh it be me looth.
And woot ye why? by god, as that J 1575
That ye han maad a maner straungenenesse
Bitwixen me and my cosyn daun John.
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,
For that I to him spak of chevisacunce,
Me semed so, as by his contenaunce.
But natheelles, by god our hevene king,
I thoghte nat to axe of him no-thing.
I prey thee, wyf, ne do namore so; 1585
Tel me alway, er that I fro thee go,
If any dettour hath in myn absence
Y-payéd thee; lest, thurgh thy neeligence,
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 deyfe the false monk, daun John!
I kep nat of his tokens ever a deel;
He took me certein gold, that woot I weel!
What! yvel thedom on his monkes snoute!
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 ful ofte tymes here. 1600
But sith I see I stonde in this disioint,
I wol answere 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 hinderward a make bettre chere.’

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 Prioresse.

‘Wel seyd, 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,
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 Prioresse, 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-saft, my lady dere?' 1695
'Gladly,' quod she, and seyde as ye shal here.

Explicit.

THE PRIORESSES TALE.

The Prologue of the Prioresse Tale.

Domine, dominus noster.

O LORD our lord, thy name how mer-
veillous
Is in this large worlde y-spad — 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 theyn thy n 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 ravisdest doun fro the deitee,
Thurgh thy n humblesse, the goost that in
thalighte,
Of whos vertu, whan he thy n herte lighte,
Conceived was the faders 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 benigneetee,

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 unnethe any word expresse,
Right so fare I, and therfor I yow preye,
Gydeth my song that I shal of yow seye.

Explicit.

Here biginneth the Prioresse Tale.

Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,
Amonges Cristen folk, a Lewereye,
Sustened by a lord of that contree 1680
For foule useure and lucre of vilanye,
Hateful to Crist and to his companye,
And thurgh the strete men migthye 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 yeere
Swich maner doctrine as men used there,
This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,
As smale children doon in hir childehede.

Among thise children was a widwessone,
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  
sye 
His Ave Marie, as he goth by the weye.  

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone  
y-taught 
Our blissful lady, Cristes moder dere, 1700  
To worshiphe ay, and he forgot it naught,  
For sely child wol alday sone lere;  
But ay, when I remembre on this mater,  
Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,  
For he so yong to Crist did reverence.  

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,  
As he sat in the scale at his prymer,  
He Alma redemptoris herde singe,  
As children lerned hir antiphoner;  
And, as he dorste, he drough his 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 preye 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 blissful 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  
mater; 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 thryes 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 boldly  
Fro word to word, acordering with the  
ote;  
Twyes 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 seyd, 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 sweetnes 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 despity, and singe of swich  
sentence,  
Which is agayn your lawes reverence?’  

Fro thennes forth the Iewes han con-  
spyreth 1755  
This innocent out of this world to chace;  
An homicyde ther-to han they hyred,  
That in an aley hadde a prive 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, certein, it wol nat faille,
And namely ther thonour of god shal sprede,
The blood out cryeth on your cursed dede.

'O martir, souded to virginitee,
Now maystou singen, folwing ever in oon

The whyte lamb celestial,' quod she,
Of which the grete evangelist, seint John,
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.'

This povre widwe awaiteth al that night
After hir litel child, but he cam nught;
For which, as sone as it was dayes light,
With face pale of drede and bisy thoght,
She hath at scole and elles-where him soght,
Til finally she gan so fer esp ye
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
By lyklihede hir litel child to finde;
And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde
She cryde, and atte laste thys she wroghte,
Among the cursed Iewes she him soghte.

She frayneth and she preyth pitously
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,
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,
Ther he with throte y-corven lay uprigh,
He 'Alma redemptoris' gan to singe
So loude, that al the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurg th stret wente,
In coomen, for to wondre up-on this thing,
And hastily they for the provost sente;
He cam anon with-oute tarying,
And herieth Crist that is of heven king,
And eek his moder, honour of mankinde,
And after that, the Iewes leet he binde.

This child with pitous lamentacioun
Up-taken was, singing his song alway;
And with honour of greet processiou
They carien hir un-to the neste abbay.
His moder swowning by the bere lay;

Unnethe might the peple that was there
This newe Rachel bringe fro his bere.

With torment and with shamful deth echn
This provost dooth thise Iewes for to sterve
That of this mordre wiste, and that anon;
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 hime 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 buriyen him ful faste;
And whan they holy water on him caste,
Yet spak this child, whan spreyned was holy water,
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 conjure he bigan,
And seyde, 'o dere child, I halse thee,
PROLOGUE TO SIR THOPAS.

Bihold the murye wordes of the Host to Chaucer.

Whan seyd 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;

'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 contenaunce,
For un-to no wight dooth he daliaunce.
Sey now somwhat, sin other folk han sayd;
'Tel us a tale of mirthe, and that anoon:'—

This holy monk, this abbot, him mene I,
His tonge out-caughte, and took a-wey the greyn,
And he yaf up the goost ful softly.
And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn,
His salte teres trikled doun as reyn,
And gruf he fil al plat up-on the grounde,
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 awaye this martir fro his bere,
And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere
Enclosed 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 merciable
On us his grete mercy multiplye,
For reverence of his moder Marye.
Amen. 1880

Here is ended the Prioresses Tale.

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,
I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon,
But Jesu Crist, as ye in bokes finde,
Wil that his glorie laste and be in minde,
And, for the worshipping of his moder dere,
Yet may I singe "O Alma" loude and clere.

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 verraily 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
Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge y-take;
Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake."

Here is ended the Prioresses Tale.
'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
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
In bataille and in tourneyment,
His name was sir Thopas.

Y-born he was in fer contree,
In Flaudres, al biyonde the see,
At Popering, in the place;
His fader was a man ful free,
And lord he was of that contree,
As it was goddes grace.

Sir Thopas waxe a doghty swayn,
Whyt was his face as payndemayn,
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,
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.

He coude hunte at wilde deer,
And ryde an hauking for riveer,
With grey goshauk on honde;
Ther-to he was a good archeer,
Of wrastling was ther noon his peer,
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,
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;
He worth upon his stede gray,
And in his honde a launcegray,
A long swerd by his syde.

He priketh thurgh a fair forest,
Ther-inne is many a wilde best,
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,
And many a clowe-gilofre;
And notemuge to putte in ale,
Whether it be moyste or stale,
Or for to leye in cofre.

The briddes singe, it is no nay,
The sparhawk and the papeiay,
That Ioye it was to here;
The thurstelcoke made eek his lay,
The wodedowve upon the spray
She sang ful loude and clere.

Sir Thopas fil in love-longinge
Al whan he herde the thurstel singe,
And priked as he were wood:
His faire stede in his prikinge
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,
1971–2061.]

B. SIR THOPAS. 89

That doun he leyde him in that plas
To make his stede som solas,
And yaf him good forage.

'O seinte Marie, benedict(e)!
What eyleth this love at me
To binde me so sore?
Me dremed al this night, pardee,
An elf-queen shal my leman 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 anoon,
And priketh over style and stoon
An elf-queen for tespye,
Til he so longe had ridden and goon
That he fond, in a privee woon,
The contree of Faerye
So wilde;
For in that contree was ther noon
That to him dorste ryde or goon,
Neither wyf ne chylde.

Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,
His name was sir Olifaunt,
A perilous man of dede;
He seyde, 'child, by Termagaunt,
But-if thou priketh out of myn haunte,
Anon I shal thy stede
With mace.
Heer is the queen of Fayerye,
With harpe and pype and simphonye
Dwelling in this place.'

The child seyde, 'al-so mote I thee,
Tomorwe wol I mete thee
When I have myn armoure;
And yet I hope, par ma fay,
That thou shalt with this launcegay
Abeyn 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 geaunt 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 rouned
How sir Thopas with sydes smale,
Priketh 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 geaunt with hevedes three,
For paramoun and Iolitee
Of oon that shoon ful brighte.

'Do come,' he seyde, 'my minstrelis,
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 spicerie
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-wroght 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 charbocle bisyde;
And there he svoor, on ale and breed,
How that 'the gaunt shal be deed,
Bityde what bityde!'

His lambeux were of quirboilly,
His swerdes shethe of yvory,
His helm of laton bright;
His sadel was of reweel-boon,
His brydel as the sonne shoon,
Or as the mone light.

His spere was of fyn ciprees,
That bodeth wre, and no-thing pees,
The heed ful sharpe y-grounde;
His stede was al dappel-gray,
It gooth an ambel in the way
Ful softly and rounde
In londe.
Lo, lorde myne, heer is a fit!
If ye wol any more of it,
To telle it wol I fonde.

[The Second Fit.]
Now hold your mouth, par charitee,
Bothe knight and lady free,
And herkneth to my spele;

Here the Host stinteth Chaucer of his Tale of Thopas.

PROLOGUE TO MELIBEUS.

'Sir, at o word, thou shalt no lenger
ryme.
Lat see wher thou canst tellen aught in
geste,
Or telle in prose somwhat at the leste
In which ther be som mirthe or som doc-
tryne.'

'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,
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

Explicit.

THE TALE OF MELIBEUS.

[The mark / denotes the lines.]

Here biginneth Chauncers Tale of Melibe.

§ 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 bifen that he for his desport is went in-to the feeldes him to pleye. / His wyf and eek his doghter hath he left inwit his hous, of which the dores weren fast y-shet. / Thre of his olde foos han it espyed, and setten laddres to the walles of his houe, and by the windowes ben entred, / and betten his wyf, and wounded his doghter with fyve mortal wondes 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 awey. /
§ 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 weeping for to stinte; / but nat forthy he gan to crye and wepen ever lenger the more./ 2165
§ 5. This noble wyf Prudence remembered 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 destourbeth the moder to wepen in the death 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 reconforte, and preyen hir of hir weping for to stinte.' / For which resoun this noble wyf Prudence suffred hir houbond for to wepe and crye as for a certein space; / and whan she saugh hir tyme, she seyd him in this wyse. 'Allas, my lord,' quod she, 'why make ye your-self for to be lyk a fool? / For sothe, it 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
vat take to greet disconfort for
the deeth of his children; / but certes
he sholde suffren it in pacience, as
wel as he abydeth the deeth of his
owene propre persone."'

§ 6. This Melibeus answerde
anon and seyde, 'What man,' quod
he, 'sholde of his weeping stinte,
that hath so greet a cause for to
wepe? / Jesu Crist, our lord, him-
self wepte for the deeth of Lazarus
his freend;/ Prudence answerde,
'Certes, wel I woot, attempte
weeping is no-thing defended to him
that sorweful is, amongst folk in
sorwe, but it is rather grunted him
to wepe. / The Apostle Paul un-to
the Romays wryteth, "man shal
rejoyse with hem that maken Ioye,
and wepen with swich folk as
wepen."' But thogh attempte
weeping be y-graunted, outrageous
weeping certes is defended. / Mes-
ure of weeping 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; although the teres
come to thyn 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 therfore, if ye governe yow by
sapience, put away sorwe out of
your herte. / Remembre yow that
Iesus Syrak seith: "a man that is
Joyous and glad in herte, it him
conserveth florishing in his age;
but soothly sorweful herte maketh
his bones drye." / He seith eek
thus: "that sorwe in herte sleeth
ful many a man." / Salomon seith:
"that, right as mothes 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
pacient Iob, whan he hadde lost his
children and his temporel substance,
and in his body endurer and re-
ceyved ful many a grevous tribu-
lacioun; yet seyde he thus: / "our
lord hath yeven it me, our lord hath
bairf it me; right as our lord hath
wold, right so it is doon; blessed be
the name of our lord." / To thise
foresaid things 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
greyously, that I noot what to
done.' / 'Lat calle,' quod Pru-
dence, 'thy trewe freendes alle, and
thy lineage whiche that been wyse;
telleyth your cas, and herkneth what
they seye in conseiling, and yow
governe after hir sentence. / Sal-
omon seith: 'werk alle thy things
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 surgienz, phisicen, olde
folk and yonge, and somme of hise
olde enimys reconised as by hir
semblaunt to his love and in-to
his grace; / and ther-with-al ther
comen somme of hise neighebores
that diden him reverence more for
drede than for love, as it happeth
ofte. / Ther komen also ful many
subtile flatterers, and wyse advocats
lerned in the lawe. /

§ 9. And whan this folk togidire
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 foes, and sodeynly desired that
the werre sholde biginne; / but
nathelees yet axed he hir conseil
upon this matere. / A surgien, by
licensure 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 surgens apertemeth, 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 happeneth, many tyme and ofte, that whan twey men han everich wounded other, oon same surgien helth hem bothe ; / wherefore un-to our art it is nat pertinent to noircce 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 businesse fro day to night, that with the grace of god she shal be hool and sound, as sone as is possible.' / Almost right in the same wyse the phisi-enciens answerden, save that they seyden a fewe wordes more : / 'That, right as maladyes been cured by hir contraries, right so shul men warisssh be by vengeance.' / His neighbores, ful of envye, his feyned frendes that semeden recon-сильд, and his flatereres, / maden semblant of weping, and empeiren and agreggeden muchel of this matere, in preising greely Melibee of myght, of power, of richesse, and of freendes, despyinge the power of his adversaries, / and seiden outrely that he anon sholde wreken him on his foes and biginne werre. / 
§ 11. Up roos thanne an advocat that was wyse, 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 hevy 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, Melibeus, this is our sentence: we conseille 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 conseille, that in thyn hous thou sette suffisant garnisoun, so that they may as well thy body as thyn hous defende. / But certes, for to moeve werre, or sodeynly for to doon ven-geauence, 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 pro-verbe seith thus: "he that none demeth, none shal repente." / And eek men seyn that thilke Iuge is wy, that sone understondeth a matere and Juggleth by leyser. / For al-be-it so that alle tarying be anoyful, algates it is nat to repreve in yevinge of Juge ment, ne in ven-geance-taking, whan it is suffisant and resonable. / And that shewed our lord Iesu Crist by ensample; for whan that the woman that was taken in avoutrie was broght in his presence, to known what sholde be doon with hir persone, al-be-it so that he wiste wel him-self what that he wolde answere, yet ne wolde he nat answere sodeynly, but he wolde have deliberacioun, and in the ground he wroth tweys. / And by thise causes we axen deliberacioun, and we shal thanne, by the grace of god, conseille thee thing that shal be profita-ble. / 
§ 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, / right so as whyl that ired is hoot, men sholden Smyte, right so, men sholde wreken hir wronges whyle that they been fresshe and newe;
and with loud voys they cryden, 'werre! werre!' / Up roos tho oon of thise olde wyse, and with his hand made contenaunce 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 beginnig hath so greet an entree and so large, that every wight may entre when 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 sterwe yong by-cause of that ilke werre, or elles live in sorwe and dye in wrecchednesse. / And ther-forre, er that any werre biginne, men moste have greet conseil and greet deliberacion. / And whan this olde man wende to enforcen 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 Jesus Syrak seith: that "musik in wepinge is anoysous thing;" this is to seyn: as muche availleth to spokens before folk to whiche his speche anoyeth, as dooth to singe biform him that wepeth. / And whan this wyse man saughe that him wanted audience, al shamefast he sette him doun agayn. / For Solomon seith: "ther-as thou ne mayst have noon audience, enforce thee nat to spake." / 'I see wel,' quod this wyse man, 'that the commune proverbe is sooth; that "good conseil wanteth when it is most nede."' / § 13. Yet hadde this Melibeus in his conseil many folk, that prively in his ere conseilleth hem certeyn thing, and conseilleth him the contrarie in general audience. / Whan Melibeus hadde herd that the gretteste partie of his conseil weren accorded that he sholde maken werre, anoon he consented to hir conseillng, and fully affermed hir sentence. / Thanne dame Prude-
netheth, than thou see thy-self in the handes of thy children." / And also, if I wolde werke by thy conselling, certes my conselling moste som tyme be secrete, til it were tyme that it moste be knowe; and this ne may nought be. / [For it is writen, that "the Ianglerie of wommen can hyden thinges that they witen noght." / Furthermore, the philosophre seith, "in wikked conseil wommen venquishe men;" and for thise resouns I ne owe nat usen thye conseil.'] /  

§ 15. Whanna dame Prudence, ful debonairly and with greet patience, 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 when the thing is chaunged; or elles when the thing semeth otherwythes than it was biforn. / And more-over I seye, that though ye han sworn and bihtight to perfunre your emprise, and nathelesse ye weyve to perfunre 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 correge to the bettre." / And al-be-it so that your emprise be establisshed and ordeyned by greet multitude of folk, yet thar ye nat accomplice thilke same ordauncauce 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 wommen in this wyse; and "he that alle despyseth alle displeseth," as seith the book. / And Senek seith that "who-so wolde 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, appeered rather to a womman than to his apostles. / And though that 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 allone; as he him-self recordeth in his Evangeliel. / For ther nis no creature so good that him ne wanteth somewhat of the perfeccioun of god, that is his maker. / Your thridde resoun is this: ye seyn that "if ye governe yow by my conseil, it sholde sene that ye hadde yeve me the maistrie and the lordshippe 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 lordshippe 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, whether he wole werke by that conseil or noon. / And as to your fourthe resoun, ther ye seyn
that "the langlerie of wommen hath hid thinges that they woot noght," as who seith, that "a womman can nat hyde that she woot;" / sir, this wordes was undestande of wommen that been langleresses 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 paciencie; and eek how wel that I can hyde and hele thinges that men oughte secreely to hyde. / And soothly, as to your fytthe 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 restreyyneth thilke wikked purpos, and overcometh yow by resoun and by good conseil; / certes, your wyf oughte rather to be preised than y-blamed. / Thus sholde ye understonde the philosophre that seith, "in wikked conseil wommen venquisshe men and 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 conseil ful hoolsome and profitable. / Eek som men han seyd, that "the conseilinge of wommen is outher 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 noght worth, yet han men founde ful many a good womman, and ful discrete and wise in conseilinge. / Lo, Jacob, by good conseil of his moder Rebecka, 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 besieged and wolde have al destroyed it. / Abigail delivered Nabal hir housbond fro David the king, that wolde have slan him, and apaysed the ire of the king by hir wit and by hir good conseilling. / Hester by hir good conseil enhanced greetly the peple of god in the regne of Asserus 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 alone; make we to him an help semblable to himself." / Here may ye se that, if that wommen were nat goode, and hir conseils goode and profitable, / our lord god of hevene wolde never han wroght hem, ne called hem help of man, but rather confusion 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 ben goode, and hir conseils goode and profitable. / And therfore sir, if ye wol triste to my conseil, I shal restore yow your dochter hool and sound. / And eek I wol do to yow so muche, that ye shal 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-sauff to been governed by my conseil, I wol environ ye how ye shul governe your-self in chesinge of your conseillours. / Ye shul first, in alle your werkes, mekely biseken to the heigh god that he wol be your conseilour; / and shapeth yow to swich entente, that he yeve yow conseil and confort, as taughte Thobie his sone. / "At alle tyme thou shalt blesse god, and preye him to dresse thy weyes"; and looke that alle thy consel been in him for evermore. / Seint Iame eek seith: ‘if any of yow haue 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 profit. / And thanne shul ye dryve fro your herte three thinges that been contrariouse to good conseil, / that is to seyn, ire, coveitise, and hastifnesse."

§ 18. First, he that axeth conseil of him-self, certes he moste been with-outen ire, for manye causes. / The firste is this: he that hath greet ire and wratethe in him-self, he weneth alwey that he may do thing that he may nat do. / And secondely, he that is iours and wroth, he ne may nat wel deme; / and he that may nat wel deme, may nat wel conseilze. / The thridde is this: that "he that is iours and wrooth," as seith Senek, "ne may nat speke but he blame thinges;" / and with his visouse wordes he stireth other folk to angre and to ire. / And eek sir, ye moste dryve coveitise out of your herte. / For the apostle seith, that "coveitise is rote of alle harms." / And trust wel that a coveitous man ne can nought deme ne thinke, but only to fulfille the ende of his coveitise; / and certes, that ne may never be accomplished; for ever the more habundance 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, some thing that somtyme 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 secre. / Biwrey nat your conseil to no persone, but-if so be that ye wenen sikerly that, thurgh your biwreyng, your condicion shal be to yow the more profitable. / For Iesus Syrak seith: "neither to thy foo ne to thy freend discovere nat thy secre ne thy folie; / for they wol yewe yow audience and lokiung and sup-portacioun in thy presence, and scorne thee in thyn absence." / Another clerk seith, that "scarsly shaltou finde any persone that may kepe conseil secreelly." / The book seith: "whyth that thou keppest 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 snare." / And therefore yow is bettre to hyde your conseil in your herte, thane praye him, to whom ye han biwreyed your conseil, that he wol kep 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 secreelly to kepe?" / But nathelees, if thou
wene sikerly that the biwreyng of thy conseil to a persone wol make thy condicioun to stonden in the bettre plyt, thanne shaltout tellen him thy conseil in this wyse. / First, thou shalt make no semblant whether thee were lever peas or werre, or this or that, ne shewe him nat thy will and thynt entente; / for trust wel, that comunly thys conseillours been flaterees, / namely the conseillours of grete lordes; / for they enforcen hem alwey rather to spoken plesante wordes, enclyninge to the lordes lust, than wordes that been trewe or profitable. / And theryfore men seyn, that "the riche man hath seld good conseil but-if he have it of him-self." / And after that, thou shalt considere thy freendes and thyne enemys. / And as touchinge thy freendes, thou shalt considere whiche of hem been most feithful and most wyse, and eldest and most approved in conseilling. / And of hem shalt thou ask 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 deltyeth in savour that is sote, right so the conseil of trewe freendes yeveth sweetenesse to the soule." / He seith also: "ther may no-thing be lykned to the trewe freend." / For certes, gold 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 thy trewe freendes been discrete and wyse. For the book seith: "axe alwey 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 tym the prudence." / And Tullius seith: that "grete thinges ne been nat ay accomplied by strengethe, ne by deliverenesse 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 encreesen day by day." / And thanne shul ye kepe this for a general rule. 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 conseilour." / 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 alwey that thy conseillours have thilke three condiciouns that I have seyd bifoire; that is to seyn, that they be trewe, wyse, and of old experience. / And werke nat alwey in every nede by oon conseilour allone; for som-tyme bihoveth it to been conseilled by manye. / For Salomon seith: "salvacioun of thinges is wher-asser been manye conseillours." / § 22. Now sith that I have told yow of which folk ye sholde been counselled, now wol I teche yow which conseil ye oghte to eschewe. / First ye shul eschewe the conseilling of foles; for Salomon seith: "taak no conseil of a fool, for he ne can noght conseille but after his owene lust and his affeccioun." / The book seith: that "the propreetee of a fool is this; he brotheth lightly harm of every wight, and lightly brotheth alle bountee in him-self." / Thou shalt eek eschewe the conseilling of alle flatereres, swiche as enforcen hem rather to preise your persone by flaterye than for to telle yow the soothfastnes of thinges. / § 23. Wherfore Tullius seith: "amonges alle the pestilences that been in freendshiphe, the gretteste
is 'flatterye.' And thercfore is it more neede that thou eschewe and drede flatereres than any other peple. / The boke seith: "thou shalt rather drede and flee fro the swete wordes of flateringe preisers, 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 innocens." / He seith also, that "he that speketh to his freend wordes of sweitnesse and of plesaunce, seteth a net biforn his feet to cacche him." / And therfore seith Tullius: "encylyne nat thyn enemys to flatereres, ne taketh no conseil of wordes of flaterere." / And Caton seith: "avys thee wel, and eschewe the wordes of sweitnesse and of plesaunce." / And eek thou shalt eschewe the conseiling of thyne olde enemys that been reconsiled. / The boke seith: that "no wight retourneth saufly in-to the grace of his olde enemy." / And Isole seith: "ne trust nat to hem to whiche thou hast had somtyme werre or enmite, 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 warmnnesse." / And therfore seith Salomon: "in thyne olde foo trust never." / For sikelyr, though thyne enemy be reconsiled and maketh thee chere of humilitie, and loueth to thee with his heed, ne trust him never. / For certes, he maketh thilke fyned humilitie more for his profit than for any love of thy persone; by-caus that he demeth to have victorie over thy persone by swich fyned conteinance, the which victorie he mighte nat have by stryf or werre. / And Peter Alfonce seith: "make no felawshiphe 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 therfore seith a philosophre in this wyse: "ther is no wight parfitly trewe to him that he to sore drede." / And Tullius seith: "ther nis no moight so greet of any emperour, that londe may endure, but-if he have more love of the peple than drede." / Thou shalt also eschewe the conseilling of folk that been dronkelywe; 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 privelie, and conseille yow the contrarie openly. / For Cassidorie seith: that "it is a maner sleighte to hindre, whan he sheweth to doon a thing openly and werketh privelie the contrarie." / Thou shalt also have in suspect the conseilling of wikked folk. For the boke 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, / now wol I teche yow how ye shal examine your conseil, after the doctrine of Tullius. / In the examininge thanne of your conseil-lour, 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 verray trouthe be seyd and conserved; this is to seyn, telle trewely thy tale. / For he that seith fals may nat wel be conselled, in that cas of which he lyeth. / And after
this, thou shalt considere the things that acorden to that thou purposest for to do by thy conseil-lours, if resoun accordre thereto; / and eek, if thy might may atteyne ther-to; and if the more part and the bettre part of thy conseil-lours acorde ther-to, or no. / Thanne shaltou considere what thing shal folwe of that consilling; as hate, pees, werre, grace, profitt, or damage; and manye othre things. / And in alle thise things thou shalt chese the beste, and weyve alle othre things. / Thanne shaltow considere of what rote is engendred the mater of thy conseil, and what fruit it may conceyve and engendre. / Thou shalt eek considere alle thise causes, fro whennes they been sprongen. / And whan ye han examined your conseil as I have seyd, and which partie is the bettre and more profitable, and hast approved it by manye wyse folk and olde; / thanne shaltow considere, if thou mayst parfournre it and maken of it a good ende. / For certes, resoun wol nat that any man sholde biginne a thing, but-if he mighte parfournre it as him oghte. / Ne no wight sholde take up-on hym so hevy a charge that he mighte nat bære it. / For the pro-verbe seith: “he that to muche embraceth, distrayneth 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 bivoveth to weyve thing that thou hast bigonne.” / And if so be that thou be in doute, whether thou mayst parfournre a thing or noon, chese rather to suffre than biginne. / And Piers Alphonse 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

parfournre a werk of which thou shalt repente, thanne is it bettre that thou suffre than biginne. / Wel seyn they, that defenden every wight to assaye any thing of which he is in doute, whether he may parfournre it or no. / And after, whan ye han examined your conseil as I have seyd biforn, and knownen wel that ye may parfournre 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 chaunge your conseil with-outen your re-preve. / Soothly, a man may chaunggen his purpos and his conseil if the cause cesseth, or whan a newe caas bitydeth. / For the lawe seith: that “upoun things that newlye bityden bivoveth newe conseil.” / And Senek seith: “if thy conseil is comen to the eres of thyne enemy, chaunge thy conseil.” / Thou mayst also chaunge thy conseil if so be that thou finde that, by errorr or by other cause, harm or damage may bityde. / Also, if thy conseil be dishonest, or elles cometh of dishoneste cause, chaunge 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. / § 26. And take this for a general reule, that every conseil that is afermed so strongly that it may nat be chaunged, for no condicioun that may bityde, I seye that thilke conseil is wikked.’ / § 27. This Melibecus, whanne he hadde herd the doctrine of his wyf dame Prudence, anserwe 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 conseil-lours. / But now wolde I fayn that ye wolde conde-
they han espyed by your wordes to what thing ye been enclyned. / And therfore han they rather conseilled yow to your talent than to your profit. / Ye han erred also, for it semeth that yow suffyseth han been conseilled by thise conseillours only, and with litel avys; / wher-as, in so greet and so heigh a nede, it hadde been necessarie mo conseillours, and more deliberacion to parourney your empresse. / Ye han erred also, for ye han nat examined your conseil in the forseyde manere, ne in due manere as the caas requireth. / Ye han erred also, for ye han maked no division bitwixe your conseilours; this is to seyn, bitwixen your trewe freendes and your fyned conseillours; / ne ye han nat knowe the wil of your trewe freendes olde and wyse; / but ye han cast alle hir wordes in an hochehot, 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 conseil that been at congregacions 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 conseillinges foles han the maistrie,’ / Melibeus anserwe 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 hime conseillours in certein caas, and for certeine luste causes, / I am al reedy to chaunge my conseillours, right as thow wolt devyse. / The proverbe seith: that “for to do sinne is mannis, but certes for to persevere longe in sinne is werk of the devel.”’ /

§ 30. To this sentence anserwe anon dame Prudence, and seyde: / ‘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 examination is necessarie, lat us biginne at the surgens and at the phisicians, that first spokien in this matere. / I sey yow, that the surgens and phisicians han seyed 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-

and, that been your freendes, therefore shal ye nat suffren that they serve yow for noght; / but ye oghte the rather guerdon hem and shewe hem your largesse. / And as touchinge the proposicion which that the phisicians entreteden in this caas, this is to seyn, / that, in maldyes, that oon contrarie is warisshed by another contrarie, / I wolde fayn knowe how ye understonde thilke text, and what is your sentence. / 'Certes,' quod Melibeus, 'I understonde it in this wyse: / that, right as they han doon me a contrarie, right so sholde I doon 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 contrarie by another.' /

§ 31. 'Lo, lo!' quod dame Prudence, 'hau lightely is every man enclayned to his owene desyre and to his owene plesaunce! / Certes,' quod she, 'the wordes of the phisicians ne sholde nat han been understoneden in this wyse. / For certes, wikkednesse is nat contrarie to wikkednesse, ne vengeaunce to vengeance, ne wrong to wrong; but they been semblable. / And therefore, o vengeaunce is nat warisshed by another vengeaunce, ne o wrong by another wrong; / but everich of hem encreceseth and aggrecgeth other. / But certes, the wordes of the phisicians sholde been understoneden in this wyse: / for good and wikkednesse been two contraries, and pees and werre, vengeaunce and suffraunce, discord and accord, and manye othere things. / But certes, wikkednesse shal be warisshed by goodnesse, discord by accord, werre by pees, and so forth of othere things. / And hear-to accordeth Seint Paul the apostle in manye places. / He seith: 'ne yeldeth nat harm for harm, ne wikked speche for wikked speche; / but do wel to him that dooth thee harm, and blesse thin that seith to thee harm.' / And in manye othere 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 alle by oon accord as ye han herd afore; / that, over alle thynge, ye sholde doon your diligence to kepen your persone and to warrenstore your hous. / And seyden also, that in this caas ye oghten for to werken ful avysely and with greet deliberacion. / And sir, as to the firste point, that toucheth to the keping of your persone; / ye shal understonde that he that hath werre shal evermore mckely and devoutly preyen bifore alle thinges, / that Jesus Crist of his grete mercy wol han him in his protecioun, and been his soveryn helping at his nede. / For certes, in this world ther is no wight that may be conseilled ne kept suffisantly withouten the keping of our lord Jesu Crist. / To this sentence accordeth the prophete David, that seith: 'if
god ne kepe the citee, in ydel waketh he that it kepeth." Now sir, thanne shul ye committe the keping of your persone to your trewe frendes that been approved and y-knowe; and of hem shul ye axen help for your persone to kepe. For Catoun seith: "if thou hast neede of help, axed 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 companye. For Piers Alfone 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 paravantage withouten thy assent, enquire thanne, as subtilly as thou mayst, of his conversacions and of his lyf before, 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 sword, hold thee on the lift syde." And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow wysely from alle swich manere peple as I have seyd before, and hem and hir conseil eschewe. And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow in swich manere, that for any presumpcioun of your strength, that ye ne dispysye nat ne acounte nat the might of your adversarie so litel, that ye lete the keping of your persone for your presumpcioun; for every wys man dreedeth his enemy. And Salomon seith: "welyful is he that of alle hale 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 bytyde." Thanne shul ye evermore countrewaye embussheaments and alle espiaile. For Senek seith: that "the wyse man that dreedeth harmes eschethe harmes; ne he ne falleth in-topere-
ils, that perils eschethe." And al-

...
worth a strete, but-if they be defended by trewe freendes that been olde and wyse. / And understond wel, that the gretteste and strongeste garnison that a riche man may have, as wel to kepyn his persone as hys goodes, is / that he be biloved amongst his subgetes and with hys neighebores. / For thus seith Tullius: that "ther is a maner garnison that no man may ven- quisse ne discontite, and that is, / a lord to be biloved of hys cite- zeins and of his peple." /

§ 35. Now sir, as to the thridde point; wher-as your olde and wise conseilours seyden, that yow ne oghte nat sodeynly ne hastily pro- ceden in this nede, / but that yow oghte purveyen and apparaillen yow in this caas with greet dilligence and greet deliberacion; / trewe, I trowe that they seyden right wysly and right sooth. / For Tullius seith, "in every nede, er thou biginne it, apparaile thee with greet dilligence." / Thanne seye I, that in vengeance-taking, in werre, in bataille, and in warnes- toring, / er thou biginne, I rede that thou apparaile thee ther-to, and do it with greet deliberacion. / For Tullius seith: that "long apparailling biforn the bataille maketh short victorie." / And Cassidorus seith: "the garnison is stronger when it is longe tyme avysed." /

§ 36. But now lat us spoken of the conseil that was accorded by your neighebores, swiche as doun yow reverence withouten love, / your olde enimys reconciled, your flatereres / that conseilled yow cer- tayne thinges prively, and openly conseilled yow the contrarie; / the yonge folk also, that conseil- led yow to venge yow and make werre anon. / And certes, sir, as I have seyden biforn, ye han greetly erred to han cleped swich maner folk to your conseil; / which conseilours been y-nogh reprived by the resouns afore-seyden. But na-

theeles, lat us now descende to the special. Ye shuln first procede after the doctrine of Tullius. / Certes, the trouthe of this materie or of this conseil nedeth nat dili- gently enquire; / for it is wel wist whiche they been that han doon to yow this trespas and vileinye, / and how manye trespasours, 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 con- dicion, which that the same Tullius addeth in this materie. / 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 ven- geance. / And lat us considere also who been they, and how manye been they, and whiche been they, that consenteden to thy adversaries. / And certes, as to the firste poyn, it is wel knowne whiche folk been they that con- senteden to your hastif wilful- nesse; / for trewe, alle tho that conseilled 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 al-be-it so that ye be mighty and riche, certes ye ne been nat but alone. / 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 enimys, for drede, sholde stinte to pledge with yow or to destroye your persone. / Ye knowen also, that your richesses moten been dispended in diverse parties; / and whan that every wight hath his part, they ne wollen taken but litel reward to venge thy deeth. / But thynen enimys 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 wrekyn hir deeth and to sley thy persone. / And though so be that your kinrede be more siker and stedefast than the kin of your adversarie, / yet nathelees your kinrede nis but a fer kinrede; they been but litel sib to yow, / and the kin of your enemys been ny sib to hem. And certes, as in that, hir condiccion is bet than your. / Thanne lat us considere also if the conseiling of hem that conseilleden yow to taken sodeyn vengeaunce, 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 Iurisdiccioun of it, / whan it is granted him to take thilke vengeance, hastily or attemprely, as the lawe requireth. / And yet more-over, of thilke word that Tullius clepeth "consentinge," / thou shalt considere if thy might and thy power may consenten and suffysye 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 doen rightfully. / And certes, rightfully ne movye ye take no vengeance as of your propre auctoritee. / Thanne movye ye seen, that your power 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 vengeaunce that thou purposest for to take is the consequent. / And ther-of folweth another vengeaunce, peril, and were; and othere dam-ages with-oute nombre, of whiche we be nat war as at this tyme. / And as touchinge the fourthe point, that Tullius clepeth "engend-ringe," / thou shalt considere, that this wrong which that is doon to thee is engendred of the hate of thyne enemys; / and of the vengeaunce-takinge upon that wolde engendre another vengeaunce, and muchel sorwe and wastinge of richesses, as I sayde. / § 37. Now sir, as to the point that Tullius clepeth "causes," which that is the laste point, / thou shalt understande that the wrong that thou hast receyved hath certeine causes, / whiche that clerkes cle- pen Oriens and Efficiens, and Causa longinqua and Causa pro-pinqua; this is to seyn, the fer cause and the ny cause. / The fer cause is almighty god, that is cause of alle things. / 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 ladders and cloumiben in at thy windowes. / The cause final was for to sley thy doghter; it letted nat in as muche as in hem was. / But for to spoken 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 been baddely bi-gonne." / § 38. Now sir, if men wolde axe me, why that god suffred men to do yow this vileinye, certes, I can nat wel answerwe as for no sotfastnesse. / For thapostle seith, that the sciences and the fuggementz of our lord god almighty been ful depe; / ther may no man compreheunde ne serchen hem suffi-santly." / Nathelees, by certeyne presumpcions and coniectinges, I holde and blyve / that god, which that is ful of Justice and of rightwisnesse, hath suffred
this bityde by Iust cause resonable. / 

§ 39. Thy name is Melibee, this 3 to seyn, "a man that dranketh hony." / Thou hast y-dronke so muchel hony of swete temporel richesses and delices and honours of this world, / that thou art dronken; and hast forgotten 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, ete of it that suffyseth; / for if thou ete of it out of mesure, thou shalt spewe," and be niedy and povre. / And peraventure Crist hath thee in despit, and hath turned awery fro thee his face and hise eres of misericorde; / and also he hath suffred that thou hast been punished in the manere that thou hast y-trespassed. / Thou hast doon sinne agayn our lord Crist; / for certes, the three enemys of mankinde, that is to seyn, the flessh, 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 temp-taciouns, so that they han wounded thy soule in fyve places; / this is to seyn, the deedly sinnes 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 in-to thyn hous by the windowes, / and han y-wounded thy doghter in the fore-seyde manere. / 

§ 40. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I see well that ye enforce you muchel by wordes to overme me in swich manere, that I shal nat venge me of myne enemys; / shewinge me the perils and the yvels that mighten falle of this venence. / 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; / 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, whan they seen the punissinge and chastysinge of the trespassours. / [And to this answerde dame Prudence: 'Certes,' seyde she, 'I graunte wele that of vengeaunce cometh muchel yvel and muchel good; / but vengeaunce-takinge aperteneth nat unto everichoon, but only unto Iuges and unto hem that han Jurisdiccioun upon the trespassours.] / And yet seye I more, that right as a singuler persone sinneth in takinge venenge of another man, / right so sinneth the Iuge if he do no venenge of hem that it han deserved. / For Senek seith thus: "that maister," he seith, "is good that proveth shrewes." / And as Cassi-dore 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-uten cause;" / but they ben 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 shal retourne or have your recours to the Iuge that hath the Jurisdiccion 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 norisshed me fro my childhede, and hath holpen me
to passe many a strong pas. / Now wol I assayen hir, trovinge, 
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 folliy doon, and 
that been in hope of fortune, shullen 
ever come to good ende.” / And 
as the same Senek seith: “the 
more cleer and the more shynyng 
that fortune is, the more brotil and 
the sonner broken she is.” / Trust-
eth nat in hir, for she nis nat stide-
fast ne stable; / for whan thou 
trowest to be most seur or siker of 
hir help, she wol faile thee and 
deceyve thee. / And wher-as ye 
seyen that fortune hath norissed yow 
fró 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 
fool.” / Now thanne, sin ye desyre 
and axe vengeance, and the ven-
geance that is doon after the lawe 
and before 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 vilenies and 
wronges; / and he shal venge yow 
after that him-self witneseth, wher-
as he seith: “leveth the ven-
geance to me, and I shal do it.”’” / 
§ 43. Melibee answerde, ‘if I ne 
venghe me nat of the vilenye that 
men han doon to me, / I sompne 
or warne hem that han doon to me 
that vilenye and alle othere, to do 
me another vilenye. / For it is 
written: “if thou take no ven-
geance of an old vilenye, thou 
sompnest thyne adversaries to do 
thee a newe vilenye.”’ / And also, 
for my suffrance, men wolden do to 
me so muchel vilenye, that I mighte 
neither bere it ne sustene; / and so 
sholde I been put and holdeen over 
lowe. / For men seyn: “in 
muchel suffringe shul manye things 
ffele un-to thee whiche thou shalt 
mat noe suffre.”’” / 
§ 44. ‘Certes,’ quod Prudence, 
‘I graunte yow that over muchel 
sufraunce nis nat good; / but yet 
ne folweth it nat ther-of, that every 
per persone to whom men doon vilenye 
take of it vengeance; / for that 
aperteneth and longeth al only to 
the Iuges, for they shul venge the 
vilenies and injuries. / And there-
fore tho two auctorites that ye han 
seyd above, been only understanden 
in the Iuges; / for whan they suf-
fer over muchel the wronges and 
the vilenies to be doon withouten 
punissinge, / 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 
laste maken hem lesen hir lord-
ships. / 
§ 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 wol maken comparisoun un-
to the might of your adversaries, ye 
shul finde in manye things, that I 
have shewed yow er this, that hir 
condicioun is bettre than youreys. / 
And therfore seye I, that it is good 
as now that ye suffre and be pa-
cient. / 
§ 46. Further-more, ye knowen 
wel that, after the comune sawe, “it 
is a woodnesse a man to stryve with 
a strenger 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 therfore sholde a man flee stryvinge as muchel as he mighte. / For Salomon seith: “it is a greet worship to a man to kepeth him fro noysel

2675 and stry.” / 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 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 anoy 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 restrayne yow of vengeance-takinge, / and make yow for to enclyne 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 tribulauncion, as I have seyd yow heer-biforn. / For the poet seith, that “we ogthe paciently taken the tribulauncions 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 his defautes and of his sinnes, / the peynes and the tribulauncions that he suffreth semen the lesse un-to hym; / and in-as-muche as him thinketh his sinnes more hevy and grevous, / in-so-muche semeth his peyne the lighter and the esier un-to him.” / Also ye owen to enclyne and bowe

your herte to take the pacience of our lord Iesu Crist, as seith seint Peter in his epistles: / “Iesu Crist,” he seith, “hath suffred for us, and yeven ensample to every man to solwe 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 para- dys han had in tribulauncions that they han y-suffred, with-outen hir desert or gilt, / oghte muchoch stiren yow to pacience. / Furthermore, ye sholde enforce yow to have pacience, / consideringe that the tribulauncions of this world but litle whyle endure, and some passed been and goon. / And the Ioye that a man seketh to have by pacience in tribulauncions is perdurable, after that the apostle seith in his epistle: / “the Ioye of god,” he seith, “is perdurable,” that is to seyn, ever-lastinge. / Also trouweth and bi- leveth 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 known 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 atem-preth 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 cites.” / And therfore seith seint Iame in his epistle: that “pacience is a greet vertu of, perfeccioun.” / § 47. ‘Cortes,’ 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 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 therfore, me thinketh men oughten 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 oon outrage by another. / § 48. 'A!' quod dame Prudence, 'ye seyn your wil and as yow lyk-
eth; / but in no caus of the world a man sholde nat doon outrage ne excesse for to vengen him. / For Cassidore seith: that "as yvel doth he that vengeth him by outrage, as he that doth the outrage." / And therfore ye shul venge yow after the ordre of right, that is to seyn by the lawe, and nought by excesse ne by outrage. / And also, if ye wol venge yow of the outrage of your adversaries in other maner than right comandeth, ye sinnen; / and therfore seith Senek: that "a man shall 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 without 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 attemperation 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 knownen 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 aperteneth nat un-to him, though it harme him, it is no wonder. / For the lawe seith: that "he is coupable that entremetteth or meddeth with swich thyng as aperteneth nat un-to him." / And Salomon seith: that "he that entremetteth him of the noysse 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 outerwhyle biten with the hound, / right in the same wyse is it resoun that he have harm, that by his inpacience medleth him of the noysse of another man, wher-as it aperteneth nat un-to him. / But ye knownen wel that this dede, that is to seyn, my grief and my disease, toucheth me right ny. / And ther-
fore, though I be wroth and inpa-
cient, it is no merveille. / And savinge your grace, I can nat seen that it mighte greetly harme me though I toke vengeaunce; / for I am richer and more mighty than myne enemys been. / And wel knownen ye, that by moneye and by hagine grete possessions been all the things of this world governed. / And Salomon seith: that "alle things obeyen to moneye." / § 50. Whan Prudence hadde herde hir houesbonde avanten him of his richesse and of his moneye, dispresinge the power of his adversa-
ries, she spak, and seyde in this wyse: / 'certes, dere sir, I graunte yow that ye been rich and mighty; / and that the richesses 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-outen the soule, namore may it live with-outen temporel goodes. /
And by riches may a man gete him grete frendes, / And thercfere seith Pamphilles: 
"if a netherdes doghter," seith he, 
"be riche, she may chese of a thousand men 
which she wol take to hir houssbonde; / for, of a thousand men, oon 
wo nat forsaken hir ne refusen hit." / 
And this Pamphilles seith also: 
"if thou be right happy, that is to seyn, 
if thou be right riche, thou shalt find 
a gret nombre of felawes and frendes. / And if thy fortune 
change that thou weepe povre, fare-
wel frendesheip and felawesheip; / 
for thou shalt be alone with-outen any companye, but-if it be the com-
panye of povre folk." / 
And yet seith this Pamphilles moreover: 
that "they that been thralle and 
bonde of lineage shullen been maad 
worthy and noble by the rich-
esse." / And right so as by riches 
ther comen manye goddes, 
right so by povre come ther manye 
harnes and yveles. / For greet poverte 
constreyeth a man to do manye yveles. / 
And thercfere elep-
eth Cassidore poverte "the moder 
of ruine," / that is to seyn, the 
moder of overthrowinge or fallinge 
doun. / And thercfere seith Piers 
Alfonc: "oon of the gretestese ad-
versities of this world is / when a 
free man, by kinde or by burthe, is 
constreyed by poverte to eten the 
almesse of his enemy." / 
And the same seith Innocent in oon of hise 
bokes; he seith: that "soweful 
and mishappy is the condicion 
of a povre beger; / for if he axe nat 
his mete, he dyeth for hunger; / 
and if he axe, he dyeth for shame; 
and algates neecessite constreyeth 
him to axe." / 
And thercfere 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 you, and by manye other res-
sons that I coude seye, / I graunte 
yow that riches was goode to hem 
that geten hem wel, and to hem that 
wel usen tho richesses. / And 
therfore 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. / 
§ 51. First, ye shul geten hem 
with-outen greet desyr, by good 
leyser sokingly, and nat over hast-
tily. / For a man that is to desyr-
inge to gete richesses abandoneth 
him first to thefte and to alle other 
yveles, / And thercfere seith Salo-
mon: "he that hasteth him to bisily 
to xewe riche shal be noon inno-
cent." / He seith also: that "the 
richesse that hastily cometh to a 
man, sone and lightly gooth and 
passeth fro a man; / but that rich-
esse that cometh litle and litle wex-
eth alwey and multiplyth." / 
And sir, ye shul geten richesses by your 
wit and by your travaile un-to your 
profit; / and that with-outen wrong 
or harm-doinge to any other per-
sone. / 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 forbidth by 
right, that no man make him-self 
riche un-to the harm of another per-
sone. / And Tullius seith: that 
"no sorwe ne no drode 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 ydel-
nesse." / For Salomon seith: that 
ydelnesse techech a man to do 
manye yveles." / And the same 
Salomon seith: that "he that tra-
vaileth and bisicheth him to tilien 
his land, shal eten breed; / but he that 
is ydel and casteth him to no bisi-
nes ne occupacions, shal faile 
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 versioun seith: that "the ydel man excuseth hym in winter, by cause of the grete cold; and in somer, by enchesoun of the hete." / For thise causes seith Caton: "waketh and encyneth 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 richeses, ye mosten fle ydelnesse. / And afterward, ye shul use the richeses, whiche ye have geten by your wit and by your travalle, / in swich a manere, that men holde nat yow to scars, ne to sparinge, ne to foo-large, that is to seyn, over-large a spornder. / For right as men blamen an avaricious man by-cause of his scarssee and chinchere, / in the same wyse is he to blame that spendeth over largelie. / And ther-fore seith Caton: "use," he seith, "thy richeses that thou hast geten / in swich a manere, that men have no matere ne cause to calle thee neither wrecche ne chinchin; / for it is a greet shame to a man to have a povere herte and a riche purs." / He seith also: "the goodness that thou hast y-geten, use hem by measure," that is to seyn, spende hem mesurably; / for they that folly wasten and despenden the goods that they han, / than when they han namore propre of hir owene, they shapen hem to take the goods of another man. / I seye thanne, that ye shul fleen avarice; / usinge your richeses in swich manere, that men seye nat that your richeses been y-buried, / but that ye have hem in your might and in your weeldinge. / For a wys man re- 2800 2805 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 disoveren him or de-parthen him from hise goodes; / and knoweth wel, or oghte knowe, that whan he is deed, he shal no-thing bere with hym out of this world. / And ther-fore 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 shulde ye kepe yow and Governe yow in swich a wyse that men calle yow nat fool-large. / Therfore seith Tul- 2810 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 debonairetec; / 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 richeses and in usinge hem, ye shul alwaye have three thinges in your herte; / that is to seyn, our lord god, conscience, and good name. / First, ye shul 2815 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 "bettle it is to been a good
man and have litel good and tre-
sour, that to been holden a
shrew and have grete richesse." And yet seye I furthermore, that ye sholde alwey doon your bisnesse to
gete yow richesse, 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 when
our conscience bereth us good
witenesse." And the wyse man
seith: "the substance of a man is
ful good, whan sinne is nat in
mannes conscience." Afterward,
in getinge of your richesse, and in
using of hem, yow moste have
greet bisnesse and greet dillige-
ence, that your goode name be
alwey kept and conserved. For
Salomon seith: that "bette it is
and more it availleth a man to have
a good name, than for to have grete
richesses." And therefor he
seith in another place: "do greet
diligence," seith Salomon, "in kep-
ing 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
sholde nat be called a gentil
man, that after god and good con-
science, alle thinges left, ne dooth
his diligence and bisinesse to kepen
his good name. And Cassidore
seith: that "it is signe of a gentil
herte, whan a man loveth and
desyreth to han a good name." And
therefor seith seint Augustin: that
"ther been two thinges that
arn necessarie and nedeful, and
that is good conscience and good
loos; that is to seyn, good con-
science to thy owene persone in-
ward, and good loos for thy
neighebore outward." And he
that trusteth him so muchel in his
gode conscience, that he dis-
pleseth and setteth at noht his
gode name or loos, and rekketh
noghth though he kepe nat his gode
name, nis but a cruel cherel.

§ 53. Sire, now have I shewed

yow how ye shul do in getinge
richesses, and how ye shullen usen
hem; and I se wel, that for the
trust that ye han in youre richesse,
ye wole moeve werre and bataille.
I conseille yow, that ye biginne no
werre in trust of your richesse;
for they ne suffysen noght werres to
maytene. And thapostle seith a
philosophre: "that man that desy-
reth and wolde 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 richesse a man hath,
the mo despondours he hath." And
dere sire, al-be-it so that for
your richesse yow move have muchel
folk, yet bihoveth it nat, ne it is
nat good, to biginne werre, where-
as ye move in other manere have
pees, un-to your worship and prof.
For the victories of bat-
ailes 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, when
he sholde fylte agayn his adver-
sarie that hadde a greet nombre,
and a gretter multitude of folk and
stronger than was this peple of
Machabee, yet he reconforted his
litel companie, and seyde right in
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 hevene." And dere sir,
for as muchel as there is no man
certien, 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, thapostle
every man sholde greetly drede werres to
biginne. And by-cause that in

THE CANTERBURY TALES.
batailles fallen manye perils, / and happeth outher-while, that as sone is the grete outher as the litel man; / and, as it is written in the seconde book of Kingses, “the dedes of batailles been aventureus and nothing certeyne; / for as lightly is oon hurt with a spere as another.” / And for the is gret peril in werre, therfore sholed a man flee and eschewe werre, in as muchel as a man may goodly. / For Salomon seith: “he that loveth peril shall falie 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 resons that ye han shewed me, that the werre lyketh yow no-thing; / but I have nat yerd your conseil, how I shal do in this nede.’ /

§ 55. ‘Certes,’ quod she, ‘I conselle yow that ye accorde with youre adversaries, and that ye haue pees with hem. / For seint Iame seith in his epistles: that “by concord and pees the smale richeses waxen grete, / and by debaat and discord the grete richeses 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 therefore seyde oure lord Iesu Crist to hisepostles in this wyse: “wil happy and blessed been the they that love 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 worshiphe. / Ye knowen wel that myne adversaries han bigonnen this debaat and brige by her 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 make me and obeye me to hem, and crye hem mercy? / For sothe, that were nat my worshiphe. / For right as men seyn, that “over-greet homelinesse engendreth displeysinge;” so farth it by to greet humylitee or mekenesse.’ /

§ 56. Thanne bigan dame Prudence to maken semblant of wrathe, 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 seyd that ye sholed han purchased the pees and the reconciliacioun, I ne hadde nat muchel mistaken me, ne seyd amis. / For the wyse man seith: “the dissensioum biginneth by another man, and the reconciliing bi-ginneth by thy-self.” / And the prophete seith: “flee shrewednesse and do goodnesse; / seke pees and folwe 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-hereted, 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 wrathe, he seyde in this wyse, ‘dame, I prey yow that ye be nat displeased of things 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. / Therfore 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 preye yow. / For Salomon seith: that “he that repreveth him that doth folye, / he shall finde gretter grace than he that deceyveth him by swete wordes.”'
dence, 'I make no semblant of wrath the ne anger but for your grete profit. / For Salomon seith: “he is more worth, that reprehend or chydeth a fool for his follye, shewing him semblant of wrathethe, than he that supporteth him and preseth in his disdoinage, and laugheth at his follye.” / And this same Salomon seith afterward: that “by the sorweful visage of a man,” that is to seyn, by the sory and hevy countenaunce of a man, / “the fool correcteth and amendeth himself.”’ /

§ 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 fulfille and parfournye it.’ /

§ 60. Thanne dame Prudence discovered al hir wil to him, and seyde, / ‘I conseille yow,’ quod she, ‘abovene alle thinges, that ye make pees bitwene god and yow; / and beth reconsiled un-to hir and to his grace. / For as I have seyd yow heer-biform, god hath suffred yow to have this tribulacioun and disce 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 herettes of the mannes adversaries, and constreyndeth hem to biseken hir of pees and of grace.”’ / And I prey yow, lat me speke with your adversaries in privye place; / for they shul nat knowe that it be of your wil or your assent. / And thanne, when I knowe hir wil and hir entente, I may conseille yow the more seurly.’ /

§ 61. ‘Dame,’ quod Melibee, ‘dooth your wil and your lykinge, / for I putte me hooly in your dispositioun and ordinaunce.’ /

§ 62. Thanne Dame Prudence, when she saught the gode wil of her housbonde, delivered and took avys in hir-sel, / thinkinge how she mighte bringe this nede un-to a good conclusiou and to a good ende. / And when she saught hir tyme, she sente for thise adversaries to come un-to hir in-to a privye place, / and shewed wysly un-to hem the grete goodes that comen of pees, / and the grete harms and perils that been in werre; / and seyde to hem in a goodly manere, how that hem oughte have greet repentauce / of the injurie and wrong that they hadden doon to Melibee hir lord, and to hir, and to hir dogther. /

§ 63. And when they herden the godliche wordes of dame Prudence, / they weren so surprised and ravished, and hadden so great Ioye of hir, that wonder was to telle. / ‘A! lady!’ quod they, ‘ye han shewed un-to us “the blessinge of sweetnesse,” after the sawe of David the prophete; / for the reconsilinge which we been nat worthy to have in no manere, / but we oughte 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 multiplyen and encresen freendes, / and maken shrewes to be debonaire and meke.”’ /

§ 64. ‘Cer特斯,’ quod they, ‘we putten our dede and al our materie and cause al hooly in your goode wil; / and been redy to obeye to the speche and comandement of my lord Melibee. / And thersfo, dere and benigne lady, we preyen yow and biseke yow as mekely as we conne and mowan, / that it lyke un-to your grete goodnesse to fulfillen in dede your godliche wordes; / for we consideren and knowlichen that we han offended / and greved my lord Melibee out of mesure; / so fyrtheron, that we 2935 be nat of power to maken hise
amendes. / And therfore we oblige and binden us and our freendes to doon al his wil and hise comandes. / But peraventure he hath swich hevinesse 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 therfore, noble lady, we biseke to your wommanly pitee, / to taken swich ayvusement in this nede, that we, ne our freendes, be nat desherited ne destroyed thurgh our folye. / § 65. 'Certes,' quod Prudence, 'it is an hard thing and right perilous, / that a man putte him al outrely in the arbitracioun and Iuggage, and in the might and power of hise enemys. / For Salomon seith: "leve me, and yeve credence to that I shall 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 maistrie 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 strenger resoun he defendeth and forbedeth a man to yeven him-self to his enemy. / And nathelees I consiclle you, that ye mistruste my lord. / For I woot wel and knowe verrailly, that he is debonnaire and meke, large, curteys, / and nothing dyserous ne coucious of good ne richesse. / For ther nis no-thing in this world that he desyreth, save only worship and honour. / Further-more I knowe wel, and am right seur, that he shal no-thing doon in this nede without my conseil. / And I shal so werken in this cause, that, by grace of our lord god, ye shul been recon-siled un-to us.' / § 66. Thanne seyden they with ouvois, 'worshipful lady, we putten us and our goodes al fully in your wil and disposicioun; / and been redy 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 fulfille the wille of yow and of my lord Melibee.' / § 67. Whan dame Prudence hadde herd the answeres of this men, she bad hem goon agayn prively; / and she returned to his lord Melibee, and tolde him how she fond hise adversaries ful repentant, / knowleching ful lowely hir sinnes and trespasses, and how they were redy to sufren al peyne, / requireinge and preyinge him of mercy and pitee. / § 68. Thanne seyde Melibee, 'he is wel worthy to have pardoun and forfyfinesse of his sinne, that excuseth nat hys sinne, / but knowlecheth it and repenteth him, axinge indulgence. / For Senek seith: "ther is the remissioun and forfyfinesse, where-as confessioun is;" / for confession is neihebore to innocence. / And he seith in another place: "he that hath shame for his sinne and knowlecheth it, is worthy remissioun." And therfore I assente and conferme me to have pees; / but it is good that we do it nat without the assent and wil of our freendes.' / § 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 wy of kinde, as a thing to been unbounde by him that it was y-bounde."' / § 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 materie as it is 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 frendes hadde taken hir avys and delibeacion of the forside materie, and hadden examined it by greet businesse and greet diligence, they yave ful conseil for to have pees and reste; and that Melibee sholde receyve with good herte hise adversaries to foryifnesse and mercy.

§ 71. And whan dame Prudence hadde herd the assent of hir lord Melibee, and the conseil of hir frendes, accord with hir wille and hir entencion; 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, doi; and abyde nat ne delaye it nat til to-morwe."' And therefore I conseille that ye sende your messages, swiche as been discrete and wyse, un-to your adversaries; tellinge hem, on your bhalve, that if they wole trete of pees and of accord, that they shape hem, with-outen delay or tarying, to komen un-to us.' Which thing parfourned was in dede. And whanne thise trespassours and repentinge folk of hir folies, that is to seyn, the adversaries of Melibee, hadden herd what thise messagers seyden un-to hem, they weren right glad and Joyful, and answereden ful mekely and benignely, yeldinge graces and thankinges to hir lord Melibee and to al his companye; and shopen hem, with-outen delay, to go with the messagers, and obeye to the comandement of hir lord Melibee.

§ 72. And right anon they token hir wy to the court of Melibee, and token with hem somme of hir trewe frendes, to maken feith for hem and for to been hir borwes. And whan they were comen to the presence of Melibee, he seyde hem thise wordes: 'it standeth thus,' quod Melibee, 'and sooth it is, that ye, causeless, and with-outen skile and resoun, han doon grete injuries 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 known wel that ye have deserved the deeth; and therfore wol I knowe and wite of yow, whether ye wol putte the punissemement and the chastysinge and the vengeance of this outrageous in the wil of me and of my wyf Prudence; or ye wol nat?'

§ 73. Thanne the wyseste of hem three anwerde for hem alle, and seyde: 'sire,' quod he, 'we known wel, that we been unworthy to komen 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 debonair-etye that all the world witnesseth of your persone, we submitten us to the excellence and benignitye of your gracious lordshipe, and been redy to obeie to alle your comandements; bisekinge yow, that of your merciable pitee ye wol consider our grete repentance and lowe submission, and grauent us foryevenesse of our outrageous trespass and offence. For wel we knowe, that your liberal grace and mercy strechen hem fether in-to goodnesse, than doon our outrageous giites and trespass in-to wikkednesse; al-be-it that cursedly and dannably we han agilt agayn your heigh lordshipe.'

§ 74. Thanne Melibee took hem up fro the ground ful benignely, and receyved hir obligaciouns and
hir bonds by hir othes up-on hir plegges and borwes, / and assigned hem a certeyn day to retournre un-to his houres, / for to acceyte and receyve the sentence and Iugement that Melibe wolde comande to be doon on hem by the causes afore-seyd; / whiche things ordeyned, every man retourned to his houres. / § 75. And whan that dame Prudence saughe hir tyme, she freynded and axed hir lord Melibe, / what vengeance he thoughte to taken of hise adversaries? /

§ 76. To which Melibe answered and semyd, ‘certes,’ quod he, ‘I thinke and purpose me fully / to desherite hem of al that ever they han, and for to putte hem in exil 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 othen mennes good; / and ye myghte lightly in this wyse gete yow a coveitise name, / which is a vicious thing, and oghte been eschewed of every good man. / For after the sawe of the word of the apostle: “coveitise is rote of alle harmes.” / And thercfore, it were bette for yow to lesse so muchel good of your owene, than for to taken of hir good in this manere. / For bette it is to lesen good with worshepe, than it is to winne good with vileine and shame. / And every man oghte to doon his diligence and his bisnesse to geten hime a good name. / And yet shal he nat only bisie hime in kepinge of his good name, / but he shal also enforcen hime alwey to do som-thing by which he may renovelle his good name; / for it is writen, that “the olde good los or good name of a man is sone goon and passed, when 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 writen, that “he is worthy to lesen his privilege that misuseth the mighte and the power that is yeven him.” / And 3030 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 executicion per-aventure, / and thanne were it lykly to retourn to the werre as it was biforn. / And thercfore, 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 writen, that “he that moste curteisly comandeth, to him men moste obeyen.” / And thercfore, 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 mater in 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.” / Wherfore I pray yow, lat mercy been in your minde and in your herte, / to theeffct 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 Melibe hadde herd the grete skiles and resouns of dame Prudence, and hir wise informaciouns and techinges, / his herte gan enclyne to the wil of his wyf,
consideringe hir trewe entente; / and conformed him anon, and assented fully to werken after hir conseil; / and thonked god, of whom procedeth al vertu and alle goodness, that him sente a wyf of so greet discrecion. / And whan the day cam that these adversaries sholde apperen in his presence, / he spak unto hem ful goodly, and sedyde in this wyse; ‘al-be-it so that of your pryde and presumptiou and folie, and of your negligence and unconninge, / ye have misborn yow and trespassed un-to me; / yet, for as much as I see and biholde your grete humilitie, / and that ye been sory and repentant of your giltes, / it constreyneth me to doon yow grace and mercy. / Therfore I receyve yow to my grace, / and foruye yow outrely alle the offences, injuries, and wronges, that ye have doon agayn me and myne; / to this effect and to this ende, that god of his endelesse mercy wolte at the tyme of our dyeinge foryeven us our giltes that we han trespassed to him in this wretched world. / For douteles, 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 able, / that he wolte 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. 

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**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 benignete, 3080 Our hoste sedyde, ‘as I am faithful man, And by the precious *corpus Madrian,* I hadde lever than a barel ale That goode lif ym wyf hadde herd this tale! 3084 For she nis no-thing of swich pacience As was this Melibeus wyf Prudence. By goddes bones! when I bete my knaves, She bringth me forth the grete clobbed staves, And cryeth, “slee the dogges everichoon, And brek hem, bothe bak and every boon.” 3090 And if that any neighebor of myne Wol nat in chirche to my wyf encline, Or be so hardy to hir to trespace, Whan she comth hoom, she rampeth in my face, And cryeth, “false coward, wreek 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

To wedde a milksop or a coward ape, That wol be overlaid 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 feithe, 3111 That shal he finde, that hir misdoot or seith.

But lat us passe awery fro this mater; My lord the Monk,’ quod he, ‘be mery of chere;

For ye shul telle a tale trevely. 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,
Wheer 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 pasturce 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 confusion
That first thee braghte un-to religiou;n;
Thou woldest haue been a trede-foul aright. 3135
Haddestow as greet a leve, as thou hast might
To parfoure al thy lust in engendrure,
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 haue a wyf; for al the world is lorn!
Religioun hath take up al the corn
Of treding, 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 engendre.
This maketh that our wyves wol assaye
Religious folk, for ye may bettre paye
Of Venus payement than mowe we; 3151
God woot, no lussheburghes payen ye!
But be nat wrooth, my lord, for that I playe;
Ful ofte in game a sooth I have herd seye.' 3154
This worthy monke took al in pacience,
And seyde, 'I wol doon al my diligence,
As fer as southe 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 prosperite
And is y-fallen out of heigh degree 3166
Into miserie, and endeth wrecchedly.
And they ben versifeyd comunly
Of sixe feete, which men clepe exametron.
In prose cek 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 things, 3175
Be it of popes, emperours, or kinges,
After hir ages, as men writen finde,
But telle hem som before and som bi-
hinde,
As it now comth un-to my remembranbraunce; 3179
Have me excused of myn ignoraunce.'

Explicit.
THE MONKES TALE.

Here biginneth the Monkes Tale, de Casibus Virorum Illustrium.

I wol biwayne 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 adversee;
For certein, whan that fortune list to flee,
Ther may no man the cours of hir withholde;
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
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 unclene,
And welte al Paradys, saving o tree. 3200
Had never worldly man so heigh degree
As Adam, til he for misgovernaunce
Was drive out of his hye prosperitee
To labour, and to helle, and to meschaunce.

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 therwith hardinesse;
But to his wyves tolde he his secreet,
Through which he slow him-self, for wrecchednesse.

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 plese and preye
Til she his conseil knew, and she untrewed
Un-to his foos his conseil gan biwreye,
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 knat a brond;
And they brende alle the cornes in that lond,
3225
And alle hir oliveres and vinees eek,
A thousand men he slow eek with his bond,
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
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 wangle-tooth sprang anon a welle,
Of which he drank y-nogh, shortly to seye,
3235
Thus heelp him god, as Iudicium can telle.

By verrye force, at Gazan, on a night,
Maugree Philistiens of that citee,
The gates of the tooun he hath up-plight,
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 secre, 3246
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, 3251
By precept of the messager divyn,
For alle his strengthes in his heres were;
And fully twenty winter, yeer by yere,
He hadde of Israel the governance.
But sone shal he wepen many a tere, 3256
For wommen shal him bringen to mes-
chaunce!

Un-to his leman 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 awye, 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 yên. 3260

But er his heer were clipped or y-shave,
Ther was no bond with which men mighte
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 glorye and in richesse,
Now maystow wepen with thyne yên
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 before hem
pleye,
And this was in a temple of grete array.
But atte laste he made a foul affray;
For he two pilers shook, and made hem
falle,
And doun 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 ot 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
wyves
Of swich thing as they wolde han secre
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 briddles
felle; 3290
He golden apples rafte of the dragoun;
He drow out Cerberus, the hound of
helie:

He slow the cruel tyrant Busirius,
And made his hors to frete him, flesh
and boon;
He slow the firy serpent venimous; 3295
Of Acheolos two horses, he brak oon;
And he slow Cacus in a cage 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 dine 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 Trophée,
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 mencion,
She hath him sent a sherte fresh and gay.
Alas! this sherte, alas and welayway!
Envenimed was so subtily with-alle,
That, er that he had wered it half a day,
It made his flesh al from his bones falle.

But natheles 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,
Til that his flesh was for the venim blaked.
And whan he sey noon other remedye,
In hote colcs he hath him-selven raked,
For with no venim deyned him to dye.

Thus starf this worthy mighty Hercules;
Lo, who may truste on fortune any throwe?
For him that folweth al this world of pres,
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,
Than wayteth she hir man to overthrowe
By swich a wy 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 unneth the 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 deylt he hadde.

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 expounded,
Wher-as in Chaldey clerk ne was ther noon
That wiste to what fyn his dremes sounded.

This pride king leet make a statue of golde, 3349
Sixty cunbys 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 kingse proud was and elaat,
He wende that god, that sit in magestee,
Ne mighte him nat birev of his estaat:
But sodeynly he loste his digniteit, 3360
And lyk a beste him sene for to be,
And cet 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 wexe his heres, 3365
His nayles lyk a briddles clawes were;
Til god releesed 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,
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 divide. 3380

A feste he made un-to his lordes alle
Up-on a tyne, and bad hem blythe be,
And than his oficercs gan he calle—
'Goth, bringeth forth the vessels,' [tho]
quod he, 3384
'Which that my fader, in his prosperitee,
Out of the temple of Jerusalem biraft, 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 appetites laste,
Out of thys noble vessels sundry wynes;
And on a wal this king his y'en caste,
And sey an hond armlees, that wroth ful faste,
For fere of which he quook and syked sore.

This hond, that Balthasar so sore agaste,
Wroot Mane, techet, phares, and na-more.

In al that lond magicien was noon
That coude expoune what this lettre mente;
But Daniel expounded 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 biraft the regne that he hadde.

He was out cast of mannes companye,
With asses was his habitation, 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 thysse thinges verraily,
And art rebel to god, and art his fo. 3415
Thou drank eek of his vessels boldely;

Thy wyf eek and thy wenchyns sinfully
Dronke of the same vessels sondry wynes,
And heriist false goddes cursedly;
Therfor to thee y-shapen ful gret pyne is.

This hand was sent from god, that on the walle
Wroot mane, techet, 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 occupyth his degree,
Thogh he therto had neither right ne lawe.

Lordinges, ensample heer-by may ye take
How that in lordship is no sikernesse;
For whan fortune wol a man forsake,
She bereth awey his regne and his riches,
And eek his freendes, bothe more and lesse;
For what man that hath freendes thurgh fortune,
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 gentiliesse.
Of kinges blode of Perse is she descended;
I seye nat that she hadde most fairnesse,
But of hir shape she mighte nat been amended.

From hir childhede I finde that she fledde
Office of wommen, and to wode she wente;
And many a wyle hertes blood she shedde
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 pleyde.'

Two sones by this Odenake hadde she,
The whiche she kepte in vertu and letrure; 3486
But now un-to our tale turne we.
I seye, so worshipful a creature,
And wys therwith, and large with mesure,
So penible 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 lasste noght, for noon hunting, 3496
To have of sondry tongues 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 dispended. 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 other 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 biseaged 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 foos she sought so cruelly,
That ther nas king ne prince in al that
londe
That he nas glad, if that he grace fonde,
That she ne wolde up-on his lond wer-
reye;
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 bifo, the Romayn Galien,
Ne dorste never been so corageous,
Ne noon Ermyn, ne noon Egipcien,
Ne Surrien, ne noon Arabien,
Within the feld that dorste with hir
fighte 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 governance
Of Rome cam in-to hir 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 things 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 triumphe walketh she
With golde cheynes on hir nekke hang-
ing; 3554
Corouned was she, as after hir degree,
And ful of perree charged hir clothing.

Allas, fortune! she that whylom was
Dreadful to kinges and to emperoures,
Now gaureth al the peple on hir, allass!
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 cepre 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
nedee;
Noght Charles Oliver, that ay took hede
Of trouthe and honour, but of Armorike
Genilon Oliver, corrupt for mede,
Broghte 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 deylt, and scourge of Lumbardye,
Why sholde I nat thyn infortune acontue,
Sith in eestat thou clombe were so hye?
Thy brother sone, that was thy double allye,
For he thy neyew 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 prisoun,
For Roger, which that bisshopp 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 suffye,
And therwith-al it was ful povre and badde.
And on a day biffil that, in that hour,
Whan that his mete wont was to be broght, 3614
The gayler shette the dores of the tour.
He herde it wel,—but he spak right noght,
And in his herte anon ther fil a thoght,
That they for hunger wolde doon him dyn.
‘Allas!’ quod he, ‘alias! that I was wroght!’ 3619
Therwith the teres fillen from his yen.

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!
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 weylaway!’ 3635
Thy false wheel my wo al may I wyte!’

His children wende that it for hunger was
That he his armes snow, and nat for wo,
And seyde, ‘fader, do nat so, alias!
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 estat fortune awey 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
faille.

NERO.
Al-though that Nero were as viscous
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-
trionu;
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 holde it never see.
Nettes of gold-thred hadde he gret
plente 3665
To fishe 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
Whe he conceyved was; so weilaweey!
That he so litel of his moder tolde! 3676

No tere out of his yen 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 beataee. 3680
The wyn to bringen him comandet he,
And drank anon; non other wo he
made.
Whan might is Joyned un-to crueltee,
Alas! to depe wol the venim wade!

In youthe a maister hadde this emperour,
To teche him letterure and curteisy,
For of moralitee he was the flour,
As in his tyme, but-if bokes lye;
And whyl this maister hadde of him
maistrye,
He maked him so conning and so souple
That longe tyme it was er tirannye 3691
Or any vycse dorste on him uncouple.

This Seneca, of which that I devyse,
By-causae Nero hadde of him swich drede,
For he fro vycses volde him ay chastyse
Discreetly 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
bled
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 greet
grevaunce;
Therfor he made him deyen in this wyse,
But nathelesse 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 strenger;
She thoughte thus, ‘by god, I am to nyc
To sette a man that is fulfild of vycse
In heigh degree, and emperour his
calle.
By god, out of his sete I wol him trype,
When he leest wencheth, sonest shal he
faile.’ 3716
The peple roos up-on him on a night
For his defaute, and whan he it espayed,
Out of his dores anon he hath him dight
Alone, and, ther he wende han ben allyed,
He knokked faste, and ay, the more he cried,
The faster shette they the dores alle;
Tho wiste he wel he hadde him-self mis-gyed,
And wented his wey, no lenger dorste he calle.

The peple cryde and rumbled up and doun,
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.
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
To sleeuen, and to girden of his heed,
That to his body, whan that he were deed,
Were no despit y-doon, for his defame.
Him-self he slow, he coude no better reed,
Of which fortune lough, and hadde a game.

DE OLOFERNO (HOLOFERNES).

Was never capitayn under a king
That regnes mo putte in subieccioun,
Ne strenger was in feeld of alle thing,
As in his tyme, ne gretter of renoun,
Ne more pompous in heigh presump-cioun
Than Oloferne, which fortune ay kiste
So likerously, and ladde him up and doun
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,
But he made every man reneye his lawe.
'Nabugodonosor was god,' seyde he,
'Noon other god sholde adoured be,'
Ageyns his neste no wight dar trespace
Save in Bethulia, a strong citee,
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,
Iudith, a womman, as he lay upriynt,
Sleeping, his heed of smoot, and from his tente
Ful prively she stal from every wight,
And with his heed unto his toun she wente.

DE REGE ANTHIOCHO ILLUSTRI.

What nedeth it of King Anthiochus
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,
And why he fil fro heigh prosperitee,
And in an hill how wretchedly he deyde.

Fortune him hadde enhaunched so in pryde
That verraily he wende he mighte attayne
Unto the sterres, upon every syde,
And in balance weyen ech montayne,
And alle the fodes 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.

And for that Nichanor and Thimothee
Of Iewes weren venquisshed mightily,
Unto the Iewes whiche an hate hadde he
That he bad greith his char ful hastily,
And swoor, and seyde, ful despitously,
Unto Jerusalem he wolde eff-sone,
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 pynes were not importable.  
And certeinly, the wrecche was resonable,  
For many a mannes guttes did he peyne.  
But from his purpos cursed and damnable  
For al his smert he wolde him nat restrayne;  
But bad anon apparaillen 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 wrecche of god him smoot so cruelly  
That thurgh his body wikked wormes crepte;  
And ther-with-al he stank so horribly,  
That noon of al his meyne that him kepte,  
Whether so he wook or elles slepte,  
Ne mighte noght for stink of him endure.  
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 wlat som 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 homicyde,  
That many a man made to wepe and pleyne,  
Swich guerdon as bilongeth unto pryde.

DE ALEXANDRO.

The storie of Alisaundre is so comune,  
That every wight that hath discrecioun  
Hath herd somwhat or al of his fortune.  
This wyde world, as in conclusioun,  
He wan by strengthe, or for his hye renown  
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,  
Which he conquered, and broghte hem in-to wo? 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 suffye.

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 schwyt a cas!  
Empoisoned of thyn owene folk thou were; 3850  
Thy syr 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 fraunchysse,  
That al the world welded in his demeyne, 3855  
And yit him thoughte it mighte nat suffye?  
So ful was his corage of heigh empysse.  
Allas! who shal me helpe to endyse  
False fortune, and poison to depysye,
The whiche two of al this wol 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 loud and see,
By strengthe of hond, or elles by trecce, 3865
And un-to Rome made hem tributarie;
And sitthe 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 dawe,
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 litle whyl I wol biwaille
This Pompeius, this noble governour
Of Rome, which that felegh 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.
Alas, Pompey, of thorient conquerour,
That fortune unto swich a syn thee broghte!

To Rome ageyn repaireth Iulius 3885
With his triumpe, laureat ful hye,
But on a tyme Brutus Cassius,
That ever hadde of his hye estaat envye,
Ful privelie 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 fourne,
And stikede him with boydekins anoon
With many a wunde, 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 hipples 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 remembranuce.

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 thise grete conquereours two
Fortune was first freend, and sithen fo.
No man ne truste up-on hir favour longe,
But have hir in away for ever-mo. 3915
Witness on alle thise conquereours strange.

CREUS.

This riche Cresus, whylom king of Lyde,
Of whiche Cresus Cyrus sore him dradde,
Yit was he caught amiddes 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.

When he escaped was, he can nat stente
For to biginne a newe were 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,
Of which he was so proud and eek so fayn,
That in vengeaunce 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
To drye him with, and ther-for wex his pryde;
And to his doghter, that stood him hisyde,
Which that he knew in heigh science habounde,
He bad hir telle him what it signifyde,
And she his dreem bigan right thus expounde.

The tree,’ quod she, ‘the galwes is to mene,
And Iuppiter bitokneth snow and reyn,

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 seyd is right y-nough, y-wis,
And mochel more; for litel hevinesse
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, alaas!
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 abydheth in prosperitee,
Swich thing is gladsom, as it thinketh me,

And Phebus, with his towaille so clene,
Tho ben the sonne stremes for to seyn;
Thou shalt anhanged be, fader, certeyn;
Reyn shall thee wasse, and sonne shall thee drye;
Thus warned she him ful plat and ful pleyn,
His daughter, which that called was Phanye.

Anhanged was Cresus, the loudke king,
His royal trone mighte him nat availle.—
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 faille,
And covere hir brighte face with a cloude.

And of swich thing were goodly for to telle.'
'Ye,' quod our hoste, 'by Seint Poules belle,
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 "Tragedie"
Right now ye herde, and parde! no remedie
It is for to biwaille, ne compleyne
That that is done, and als it is a peyne,
As ye han seyd, to here of hevinesse.
SIR monk, na-more of this, so god yow blesse!
Your tale anoyeth al thi 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 somewhat elles,
For sikerly, nere clinking of your belles,
That on your brydel hange on every syde,
By heven king, that for us alle dyde,
I sholde er this han fallen doun for slepe,
Although the slough had never been so depe;
Than had your tale al be told in vayn,
For certeiny, as that thise clerkes seyn,
"Wher-as a man may have noone audience,
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.
'Nay,' quod this monk, 'I have no lust to pleye;
Now let another telle, as I have told.'

Explicit.

THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

Here Biginneth the Nonne Preestes Tale of the Cok and Hen, Chauntecleer and Pertelote.

A POVR widwe, somdel stape in age,
Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cottage,
Bisyde a grove, stonding 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,
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.
Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,

In which she eet ful many a scendre meel.
Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.
No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte;
Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.
Repleccioun ne made hir never syk;
Attemptee dyete was aile hir phisyk,
And exercyse, and hertes suffisaunce.
The goute lette hir no-thinge for to daunche,
Napoplexe 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 bacoun, and somtyme an ey or tweye,
For she was as it were a maner deye.
A yard she had, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dic with-oute,
In which she hadde a cok, hight Chauntecleer,
In all the land of crowing nas his peer.
His vois was merier than the mery orgon

On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon;
Wel sikerer was his crowing in his logge,
Than is a clocke, or an abbey orlogge.
By nature knew he ech ascensioun
Of equinoxial in thilke toun;
For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,
Thanne crew he, that it mighete nat ben amended.
His comb was redder than the syn coral,
And batailed, as it were a castel-wal.
His bile was blak, and as the Feet it shoon;
Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon;
His nayles whytter than the lilie flour,
And lyk the burned gold was his colour.
This gentil cok hadde in his governance

Sevene hennes, for to doon al his pleasure,
Whiche were his sustres and his paramours,
And wonder lyk to him, as of colours.
Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
Was clesped faire damoysele Pertelote.
Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,
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 therwith.
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 understande,
Bestes and briddles coude speke and singe.
And so bifel, that in a daweninge,

As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
Sat on his perch, that was in the halle,
And next him sat this faire Pertelote,
This Chauntecleer gan groenen in his throthe,

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?'
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 meschief

Right now, that yet myn herte is sore afoire.
Now god,' quod he, 'my swevene recche aright,
And keep my body out of foul prisoun!
Me mette, how that I romed up and doun
Withinne our yerde, wher-as I saugh a beste,
Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areste
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.
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;
I can nat love a coward, by my feith.
For ceres, what so any womman seith,
We alle desyren, if it mighete be,
To han housbondes hardly, wyse, and free,
And secree, and no nigard, ne no fool,
Ne him that is agast of every tool,
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 berrd?  
4110  
Allas! and conne ye been agast of swevenis?  
No-thing, god wot, but vanitee, in sweven is.  
Swevenes engendren of replzczeouns,  
And ofte of fume, and of complzczeouns,  
Whan humours been to habundant in a wight.  
4115  
Certes this dreme, which ye han met to-night,  
Cometh of the grete superfuitee  
Of youre rede colera, pardee,  
Which causeth folk to drenen 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 lye;  
Right as the humour of malencolye  
Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,  
For fere of blake heres, or holes blake,  
4125  
Or elles, blake develes wolde 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 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 prov;  
4140  
And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,  
The whiche han of hir propretey, 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 replact of humours hote;  
And if it do, I dar wel lye a grote,  
That ye shul have a severe terrciane,  
Or an agu, that may be youre bane. 4150  
A day or two ye shul have digestyves  
Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,  
Of laurio, centaure, and fumetere,  
Or elles of ellebor, that growth there,  
Of catapuce, or of gaytres beryis, 4155  
Of erbe yye, growing in our yerd, that mery is;  
Pekke hem up right as they grewe, and ete hem in.  
Be mery, housbond, for your fader kin!  
Dredeth no dreme; I can say yow na-more.'  
'Madame,' quod he, 'graunt mercy of your lore.  
4160  
But nathelesse, 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 rever 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.  
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;  
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, they come into a toun,  
Wher-as ther was swich congregacion  
Of peple, and eek 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,  
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.  
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;  
Him thoughte his drem nas but a vanite;  
Thus twyès in his sleping dremed he.  
And atte thridle tyme yet his felawe  
Cam, as him thoughte, and seide, ‘I am  
now slawe;  
Bihold my blody woundses, depe and  
wylde!  
Ar ys 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 boldly.  
My gold caused my mordre, sooth to  
sayn;’  
And tolde him every poynht how he was  
slayn,  
With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.  
And truste wel, his drem he fond ful  
trewes;  
For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,  
To his felawes in he took the way;  
And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,  
After his felawe he bogan to calle.  

The hoslyer answered him anon,  
And seyde, ‘sire, your felawe is apon,  
As sone as day he wente out of the toun.’  
This man gan fallen in suspicioun,  
Remembrynge on his dremes that he mette,  
And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he  
lette,  
Unto the west gate of the toun, and  
fond  
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 Justice of this fel- 
onye: —  

‘My felawe mordred is this same night,  
And in this carte he lyth gapinge upright.  
I crye out on the ministres,’ quod he,  
‘That sholden kepe and reulen this citee;  
Harow! allas! her lyth my felawe  
slayn!’  
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 blissful god, that art so lust and  
trewes!  
Lo, how that thou biwreyest mordre  
alway!  
Mordre wol out, that see we day by day.  
Mordre is so watsom and abominable  
To god, that is so lust and resounable,  
That he ne wol nat sufre it heled he:  
Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,  
Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.  
And right anoon, ministres of that toun  
Han hent the carter, and so sore him  
pyned,  
And eek the hoslyer so sore engyned,  
That they 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,  
(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,  
That stood ful mery upon an havens-syte.  
But on a day, agayn the even-tyde,  
The wind gan chaunge, and blew right as  
hem leste.  
Iolif and glad they wente un-to hir reste,  
And casten hem ful erly for to saille;  
But to that oo man fil a greet mervaille.  
That oo of hem, in sleping as he lay,  
Him mette a wonder drem, agayn the  
day;
Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes syde,
And him comaunded, that he sholde abyde,
And seyde him thus, 'if thou to-morwe wende,
Thou shalt be dreyn; 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.
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 things.
I sette not a straw by thy dreeminges,
For swevenes been but vanities 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,
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,
But casuely the shippes botme rente,
And ship and man under the water wente
In sights of othere shippes it byside,
That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere,
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 dere.
Lo, in the lyf of seint Kenelm, I rede,
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 avioun 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 yer 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 avioun
In Afrike of the worthy Cipioun,
Aftermeth dremes, and seith that they been 4315
Warning of things 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 things that shul after falle.
Loke of Egipt 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 dreme 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 anoon 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 conclusion, 4341
That I shal han of this avioun
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 mirth, and stinte al this;
Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
Of o thing god hath sent me large grace;
For when I see the beautye of your face,
Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yén,
It maketh al my drede for to dyen;
For, also siker as _In principio_,
_Mulier est hominis confusion_
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
That I defye bothe sweven and dreem.'
And with that word he fley doun 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.
Royal he was, he was namore aserd;
He fethered Pertelote twentye 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 doun,
Him deyned not to sette his foot to grounde.
He chukketh, whan he hath a corn y-founde,
And to him renne thanne his wyves alle.
Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pastoure;
And after wol I telle his aventure.
Whan that the month in which the world bigan,
That highte March, whan god first maked man,
Was compet, and [y]-passed were also,
Sin March bigan, thirtye dayes and two,
Bifel thar Chauntecleer, in al his pryede,
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;
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,
Herkeneth this blisful briddes how they singe,
And see the fresshe flouris how they springe;
Ful is myn herte of revel and solas,'
But sodeinly him fill a sorwefull cas;
For ever the latter ende of Ioye is wo.
God woot that worldly Ioye is sone ago;
And if a rethor coude faire edynte,
He in a cronique saufly mighte it wryte,
As for a sovereyn notabilitee.
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 reverence.
Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.
A col-fox, ful of sly iniquitee,
That in the grove hadde woned yeres three,
By heigh imaginacioun forn-cast,
The same night throug-out the hegges brast
Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
Was wont, and eek his wyves, to re-paire;
And in a bed of wortes stille he lay,
Thil it was passed undern of the day,
Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,
As gladly doon thise homicydes alle,
That in awayt liggen to mordre men.
O false mordrer, lurking in thy den!
O newe Scariot, newe Genilon!
False dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,
That brughtest Troye al outre to sorwe!
O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,
That thou into that yerd floughe fro the bemes!
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 opinion of certeyn clerkis.
Witnesse on him, that any perfite clerk is,
That in scole is gret altercacioun
In this materie, and gret disputacion,
And hath ben of an hundred thousand
men.

But I ne can not bulte it to the bren,
As can the holy doctour Augustyn,
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, or that it was
wroght;

Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del
But by necessitee condicioned.
I wol not han to do of swich materie;
My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,
That took his counsell of his wyf, with
sorwe,

To walken in the yerde upon that morwe
That he had met the dreem, that I yow
told.

Wommennes counsels been ful ofte
colde;
Wommannes counsell 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 nout, to whom it mighte dis-
plesse,

If I counsell of wommen wolde blame,
Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.
Kede auctours, wher they tret of swich
materie,

And what thay seyn of wommen ye may
here.
Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat
myne;
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 Chaunteleer so
free

Song merier than the mermayde in the
see;

For Phisiologus seith sikerly,
How that they singen wel and merily.
And so bifel that, as he caste his yē,
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,

But cryde anon, 'cok, cok,' and up he
sterte,
As man that was affrayed in his herte.
For naturecly a beest desyreth flee
Fro his contrarie, if he may it see,
Though he never erst had seyn it with
his yē.

This Chaunteleer, 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?'

Now certes, I were worse than a feend,
If I to yow wolde harm or vileinuy.
I am nat come your counsell for trespoye;
But treweyl, the cause of my cominge
Was only for to herkene how that ye
singe.

For treweyl ye have as mery a stevene
As eny aungell 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!)
And eek your moder, of hir gentylesse,
Han in myn hous y-been, to my gret
ese;
And certes, sire, ful sayn wolde I yow
plese.

But for men speke of singing, I wol saye,
So mote I brouke wel myn eyn twye
Save yow, I herde never man so singe,
As dide your fader in the morweningle;
Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.
And for to make his voys the more
strong,
He wolde so payne him, that with bothe
his yē
He moste winke, so loude he wolde
cryen,
And stonden on his tiptoon ther-with-al,
And stredden forth his nekke long and
smal.
And eek he was of swich discrecioun,
That ther nas no man in no regioun
That him in song or wisdom mighte
passe.

I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Asse,
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
For that a preestes sonne yaf him a knok
Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and
nyce,
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 subtitlee.

Now singeth, sire, for scinte Charitee,
Let see, conne ye your fader countre-
fete?  

This Chauntecleer his winges gan to
bete,
As man that coude his tresoun nat
espyle,
So was he ravisshed with his flaterye.

Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour
Is in your courtes, and many a losen-
geour,
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.  

This Chauntecleer stood hye up-on his
toos,
Streching his nekke, and heeld his eyen
cloos.

And gan to crowe loud for the nones;
And daun Russel the fox stere up at
ones,
And by the gargat hente Chauntecleer,
And on his bak toward the wode him
beer,
For yet ne was ther no man that him
sewed.

O destinee, that mayst nat been es-
chewed!

Allas, that Chauntecleer sleigh fro the
bemes!

Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes!
And on a Friday fil al this mes-
chauncé.

O Venus, that art goddessse of plesaunce,
Sin that thy servant was this Chaunte-
cleer,
And in thy service dide al his powere,

More for delty, than world to multiplye,
Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to
dye?

O Gaufred, dere maister 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,
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 crye ne lamentacioun
Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun
Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite
sword,
Whan he hadde hent king Priam by the
berd,
And slayn him (as saith us Eneyaos),
As maden alle the hennes in the clos,  

Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the
sighte.

But sovereynly dame Pertelote shryghte,
Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf,
Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his
lyf,
And that the Romayns hadde brend
Cartage;

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
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,

Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo,
And out at dores sterthen they anon,

And syen the fox toward the grove goon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away;

And cryden, ‘Out! harrow! and weylay-
way!’

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 verry
hogges

So were they fered for berking of the
dogges
And shouting of the men and women 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 meynée, 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 therewithal thrysked and they houpéd; 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 cheles alle!
A verray pestilence up-on yow falle! 4600
Now am I come un-to this wodes syde,
Maugree your heed, the cok shal hir 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-

And then the fox saugh that he was y-gon,
'Allas!' quod he, 'O Chauntecleer, alas!
I have to yow,' quod he, 'y-doon tres-
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 doun, 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
If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.
Thou shalt na-more, thurgh thy flaterye,
Do me to singe and winke with myn ye.
For he that winketh, when he sholde see,
Al wilfully, god lat him never thee!' 4621
'Na,' quod the fox, 'but god yeve him meschaunce,
That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
That Iangleth whan he sholde holde his pees.'
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 wil,
As seith my lord, so make us alle good men; 4635
And bringe us to his heighe blisse.
Amen.

Here is ended the Nonne Freestes Tale.
EPILOGUE TO THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

'Sir Nonnes Preest,' our hoste seyde anoon,
'Y-blessed be thy breche, and every

This was a mery tale of Chauntecleer.
But, by my trouthe, if thou were secu-

Thou woldest been a trede-foul a-right
For, if thou have corage as thou hast

Thee were nede of hennes, as I wene,
Ya, no than seven tymes seventene.

See, whiche braunes hath this gentil
Preest,
So greet a nekke, and swich a large
breest!
He loketh as a sperhauk 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!' 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,
Fulfil of honour and of worthinesse,
And strong of freendes and of greet
richesse.
This knight a doghter hadde by his
wyf,
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,
As though she wolde seyn, 'lo! I, Na-
ture,

Thus can I forme and peynte a creature,
Whan that me list; who can me countrefete?
Pigmalion noght, though he aye forge and
bete,
Or grave, or peynte; for I dar wel
seyne,
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,
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;
I made hir to the worship of my lord.
So do I alle myne othre creatures,
What colour that they han, or what
figures.'—
Thus semeth me that Nature wolde seye.
This mayde of age twelw yeer was and
tweye,
In which that Nature hadde swich delyt.
For right as she can peynte a lilie 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,
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 vertuous was
she.
In hir ne lakked no condicioun,
That is to preyse, as by discrecioun.
As wel in goost as body chast was she; For which she floured in virginitie With alle humilitie and abstinance, With alle attemperance 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,
No countrefeted termes hadde she To some wys; but after his degree She spak, and alle hir wordes more and lesse Souninge in vertu and in gentillesse. Shamfast she was in maydens shamfastnesse,
Constant in herte, and ever in businesse To dryve hir out of ydel slogardlye. Bacus hadde of hir mouth right no maistrye;
For wyn and youthe doon Venus encrece, As men in fyr wol casten oile or grece. 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. That been occasions of daliaunces. Swich things make 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 Of boldnesse, whan she wuxen is a wyf.
And ye maistresses in your olde lyf, That lordes doghtres han in governaunce, Ne taketh of my wordes no displaesauce; Thancketh that ye ben set in governinges Of lordes doghtres, only for two things; Outher for ye han kept your honestee, Or elles ye han falle in freletee, Andknown wel y-nough the olde daunce, And han forsaken fully swich meschaunce
For evermo; therefore, for Cristes sake, To teche hem vertu loke that ye ne slake. A theef of venisoun, that hath forlaf His likerousnesse, and al his olde craft, Can kepe a forest best of any man. Now keepeth hem wel, for if ye wol, ye can;
Loke wel that ye un-to no vice assente, Lest ye be damped for your wikkentente; For who-so doth, a traitoure is certeyn, And taketh kepe of that I shal seyn;
Of alle tresons soveryn pestilence Is whan a wight bitrayseth innocencc. 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 governaunce. Beth war that by ensample of your living, Or by your necligence 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 necligent 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, So kepte hir-self, hir neded no maistrasse; For in hir living maydens mighten rede, As in a book, every good word or dede, That longeth to a mayden vertuous; She was so prudent and so bounteoues. For which the fame out-sprong on every syde Bothe of hir beautee and hir bountee wyde:
That thurgh that land they presyd hir echone, That loved vertu, save enyeye alone, That sory is of other mennes wele, And glad is of his sorwe and his unhele; (The doctour maketh this descripicioun. This mayde up-on a day wente in the tour Toward a temple, with hir moder dere, As is of yonge maydens the manere. Now was ther thanne a Justice in that tour, That governour was of that regioun.
C. THE PHISICIENS TALE.

And so bifel, this Iuge his eyen caste
Up-on this mayde, avysinge him ful faste,
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 privly 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 slighte
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
Confermed was in-swich soverayn bountee,
That wel he wiste he mighhte ir never winne
As for to make hir with hir body sinne.
For which, by greet deliicterioun, He sente after a cherl, was in the toun,
Which that he knewe for subtild for bold
This Iuge un-to this cherl his tale hath told
In secre wyse, and made him to ensure,
He sholde telle it to no creature, 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 preciouse and dere.
Whan shapen was al hir conspiracye
Fro point to point, how that his lecherye
Parfourned sholde been ful subtilly,
As ye shul here it after openly,
Hoom gooth the cherl, that highte Claudius.
This false Iuge that highte Apius,
So was his name, (for this is no fable,
But knownen for historial thing notable,
The sentence of it soothe is, out of doute),
This false Iuge gooth now faste aboute
To hasten his delty al that he may.
And so bifel sone after, on a day,
This false Iuge, as telleth us the storie,
As he was won't, sat in his consistorie,
And yaf his domes up-on sondry cas.
This false cherl cam forth a ful greet pas,
And seyde, 'lord, if that it be your wil,
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 witnesse,
That soothe is that my bille wol expresse.'
The Iuge answerde, 'of this, in his absence,
I may nat yeve disinitif 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;
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 knyght, called Virginius,
Agayns the lawe, agayn al equitee,
Holdeth, expres agayn the wil of me,
My servant, which that is my thrall by right,
Which fro myn hous was stole up-on a night,
Whyl that she was ful yong; this wol I preve
By witnesse, lord, so that it nat yow greve.
She nis his doghter nat, what so he seye;
Wherfore to yow, my lord the Iuge, I preye,
Yeld me my thrall, if that it be your wille.'
Lo! this was al the sentence of his bille.
Virginius gan up-on the cherl biholde,
But hastily, er he his tale tolde,
And wolde have preved it, as sholde a knyght,
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,
But yaf his jugement, and seyde thus:
'I deme anon this cherl his servant have;
Thou shalt no lenger in thyn hous hir save.
Go bring hir forth, and put hir in our warde,
The cherl shall have his thral, this I awarde.'
And whan this worthy knight Virginia,
Thurgh sentence of this Justice Apius,
Moste by force his dere doghter yiven
Unto the Iuge, in lecherie to liven, 260
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 convert.
'Doghter,' quod he, 'Virginia, by thy name,
Ther been two weyes, outhere deeth or shame,
That thou most suffre; alasse! that I was bore!
For never thou deservedest wherfore
To dyeen with a sword 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 remembrance!
O doghter, which that art my laste wo,
And in my lyf my laste loye also,
O gemme of chastitie, in patience
Take thou thy deeth, for this is my sentence.
For love and nat for hate, thou most be deed;
My pitous hand mot Smyten of thyn heed.
Alasse! that ever Apius thee say!
Thus hath he falsly Iuged thee to-day—
And tolde hir al the cas, as ye biffer
Han herd; nat nedeth for to telle it more.
'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 yf me leyser, fader myn,' quod she,
'My deeth for to compleyne a litel space;
For pardee, Ipepte yaf his doghter grace
For to compleyne, er he hir slow, alasse!
And god it woot, no-thing was hir trespas,
But for she ran hir fader first to see,
To welcome him with greet solemnpitee.'
And with that word she fil aswonne anon, 245
And after, whan hir swowing is agon,
She ryseth up, and to hir fader sayde,
'Blessed be god, that I shal dye a mayde.
Yf me my deeth, er that I have a shame;
Doth with your child your wil, a goddes name!'
And with that word she preyed him ful ofte,
That with his sword he wolde smyte softe,
And with that word aswonne doun she fil.
Hir fader, with ful sorweful herte and wil,
Hir heed of smoot, and by the top it hente,
And to the Iuge he gan it to presente,
As he sat yet in doom in consistorie.
And whan the Iuge it saugh, as seith the storie,
He bad to take him and anhange him haste.
But right anon a thousand peple in thraste, 260
To save the knight, for routhe and for pitee,
For knownen was the false iniquitee.
The peple anon hath suspect of this thing,
By manere of the cherles chalanng.
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 Virginia, 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,
The words 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 Iustye!
As shamful deeth as herte may devyse
Come to thise Iuges and hir advocas!
Algate this sely mayde is slayn, allass!
Allas! to dere boghte she beautee!
Wherfore I seye al day, as men may see,
That yiftes of fortune or of nature
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
Men han ful ofte more harm than prow.
But trewey, wyn 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 Iordanes.
Thyn Ypocras, and eek thy Galianes,
And every boist ful of thy letuarie;
God blesse hem, and our lady seinte Marie!

The worm of conscience may agryse
Of wikked lyf, though it so prive he,
That no man woot ther-of but god and he.
For be he lawed man, or elles lered,
He noot how sone that he shal been afered.
Therfore I rede yow this conseil take,
Forsaketh sinne, er sinne yow forsake.

Here endeth the Phisiciens tale.

WORDS OF THE HOST.

So mot I theen, thou art a propre man,
And lyk a prelat, by seint Ronyan!
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,
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 done,’ quod he, ‘by seint Ronyon!’
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 tell us of no ribaudye;
Tel us som moral thing, that we may lere.
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 folweth the Prologue of the Pardoners Tale.

Radix malorum est Cupiditas: Ad Thimotheum, sexto.

"LORDINGS," quod he, ' in chirches when I preche,
I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche,
And ringe it out as round as gooth a belle,
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,
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,
Bulles of popes and of cardinales,
Of pariarkes, and bishoppes I shewe;
And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,
To salfron with my predicacion
And for to stire men to devocioun.
Than shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,
Y-crammed ful of clotutes 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.

"Good men," seye I, "tak of my wordes kepe;
If that this boon be washe in any welle,
If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle
That any worm hath ete, or worm y-stonge,
Tak water of that welle, and wash his tonge,
And it is hool anon; and furthermore,
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
If that the good-man, that the bestes oweth,
Wol every wike, er that the cok him croweth,
Fastinge, drinkeyn of this welle a draughte,
As thilke holy Iewe our eldres taughte,
His bestes and his stoor shal multiplye.
And, sirs, also it helceth falousyc;
For, though a man be falle in falous rage,
Let maken with this water his potage,
And never shal he more his wyf mistrise,
Though he the sooth of hir defaute wiste;
Al had she taken preestes two or three. 
Heer is a miteyn eek, that ye may see,
He that his bond wol putte in this miteyn,
He shal have multiplying of his greyn,
When he hath sownen, be it whete or otes,
So that he ofre pens, or elles grotes.

Good men and wommen, o thing warme I yow,
If any wight he in this chirche now,
That hath doon sinne horrible, that he
Dar nat, for shame, of it y-shriven he,
Or any womman, be she yong or old
That hath y-maad hir housbond cokewold,
Swich folk shul have no power ne no grace
To offferen to my reliks in this place.
And who-so findeth him out of swich blame,
He wol com up and offfere in goddes name,
And I asoille him by the auctoritee
Which that by bulle y-graunted was to me."
By this gaudye have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
An hundred mark sith I was Pardoner,
I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
And whan the lewed peple is doun y-set,
I preche, so as ye han herd biforn,
And telle an hundred false tapes more.
Than peyne I me to strecche forth the
nekke,
And est and west upon the peple I
bekke,
As doth a downe sitting on a berne.
Myn hondes and my tonge goon so
yerne,
That it is lyo to see my businesse.
Of avaryce and of swich cursednesse
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, when that they ben
beried,
Though that her soules goon a-blak-beried!
For certes, many a predicacioun
Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun;
Som for plesaunce of folk and flaterye,
To been avanced by ipoerisye,
And som for veyne glorie, and som for
hate.
For, when I dar non other wyes de-
bate,
Than wol I stinge him with my tonge
smerte
In preching, so that he shal nat asterete
To been defamed falsy, if that he
Hath trespased 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 disples-
ances;
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 covetisey.
Therfor my theme is yet, and ever
was—

“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.
But that is nat my principal entente.
I preche no-thing but for covetisey;
Of this materie it oughte y-nogh sufflyse.
Than telle I hem ensamples many
oon
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?
Nay, nay, I thoughte it never trewey!
For I wol preche and begge in sondry
londes;
I wol not do no labour with myn
hondes,
Ne make baskettes, and live therby,
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,
Al sholde hir children sterve for famynce.
Nay! I wol drinke licour of the vyne,
And have a loly wenche in every toun.
But herknewth, lordingis, in conclusioun;
Your lyking is that I shal telle a tale.
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 ly-
ing.
For, though myself be a ful vicious man,
A moral tale yet I yow telle can,
Which I am wont to preche, for to
winne.
Now holde your peas, my tale I wol be-
ginne.
THE PARDONERS TALE.

Here biginneth the Pardoners Tale.

In Flaundres 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 playe at dees bothe day and night, And ete also and drinken over hir might, Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrifice With-in that devesle temple, in cursed wyse, 470 By superfliuite abominable; Hir othes been so grete and so dampan-able, That it is grisly for to here hem swere; Our blissed lordes body they to-tere; Hem thoughte Jewes rente him nought y-nough; 475 And ech of hem at othere sinne lough, And right anon than komen tombesteres Fetys and smale, and yonge fruytesteres, Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres, Whiche been the verray devesle ofci-eres That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse. Lo, how that dronken Loth, un-kindely, Lay by his doghtres two, unwittingly; So dronke he was, he niste what he wroghte.

Herodes, (who-so wel the stories soghte), Whan 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 is 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 dampnacions, 500 Til Crist had boght us with his blood agayn!

Lo, how dere, shortly for to sayn, Aboght was thilke cursed vilenye; 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 yvyce, 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 pleye!

O, wiste a man how many maladies 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 deyneth mete and drinke!

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,

When man so drinketh of the whyte and rede,

That of his throte he maketh his privee, Thurgh thilke cursed superfliuitee.
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 croyss, Of whiche the ende is deeth, wombe is her god.'

O wombe! O bely! O stinking cod, Fulfiled of donge and of corrupcioun!
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, Atilla, the grete conquerour,
Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dishonour, 580
Bledinge ay at his nose in dronkenesse;
A capitayn shoulde live in sobrenesse.
And over al this, avyseth yow right wel
What was commaunded un-to Lamuel —
Nat Samuel, but Lamuel, seye I — 585
Redeth the Bible, and finde it expressly
Of wyn-yeving to hem that hau lustysye.
Na-more of this, for it may wel suffye.

And now thai have spoke of glotonye,
Now wol I yow defenden hasardrye. 590
Hasard is verray molder of lesinges,
And of deceite, and cursed forsweringes,
Blaspheyme of Crist, manslaughtre, 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 desolat.
If that a prince useth hasardrye,
In alle governaunce and policye 600
He is, as by commune opinione,
Y-holde the lasse in reputacioun.
Stilbon, that was a wys embassadour,
Was sent to Corinthe, in ful greet honou,
Fro Lacidomie, to make hir alliaunce.
And when he cam, him happede, par chaunce,
That alle the gretttest thai were of that lond,
Pleyinge atte hasard he hem fond.

For which, as some 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 thai been so glorious in honours
Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours.
As by my wil, ne as by my tretée.'
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 hastard ther-biforn;
For which he held his glorie or his renown
At no value or reputacioun.
Lorde 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 abominable,
And fals swering is yet more repreveable.
The heighe god forbad swering at al, Witnesse on Mathew; but in special
Of swering seith the holy Jeremye, 635
'Thou shalt seye sooth thyne othes, and nat lye,
And swere in dome, and eek in rightwisnesse;'
But ydel swering is a cursednesse.
Bihold and see, that in the firste table
Of heighe goddes hestes honurable, 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 homicdye or many a cursed thing; I seye that, as by ordre, thus it stondeth;
This knowen, that his hestes understandeth,
How that the second heste of god is that.
And forther over, I wol thee telle al plat,
That vengeanceshal nat parten from his hous,
That of his othes is to outrageous. 650
'By goddes precious herte, and by his nayles,
And by the blope of Crist, that it is in Hayles,
Seven is my chaunce, and thyn is cink and treye;
By goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,
This dagger shall thurgh-out thyne herte go,'—

This fruyt cometh of the biched bones two,
Forswering, ire, falsnesse, homicdye.
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
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 repore his name wel.'
'Sir,' quod this boy, 'it nedeth never-a-del.
It was me told, er ye cam heer, two hours;
He was, pardee, an old felawe of yours;
And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-night,
For-dronke, as he sat on his bench up-right;
Ther cam a privy theif, men clepeth Deeth,
That in this contree al the peple sleeth,
And with his spere he smoot his herte a-two,
And wente his wey with-outen wordes mo.
He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence:
And, maister, er ye come in his presence,
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 yere,
Henne over a myle, with-in a greet village,
Both man and womman, child and hyne,
I trowe his habitacioun be there;
To been avysete 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 bicomem otheres 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 thise 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-

age, Of which the taverner had spoke biform, 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 When 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 thise ryotoures thre 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 chaunge his youthe for myn age; And therfore 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 resteeles caityf, And on the ground, which is my modres gate, I nokkke 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 chaunge 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 curteisy 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, "Agaysns an old man, hoor upon his heed, Ye sholde arye;" wherfore I yeve you 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.' 750 'Nay, olde cherl, by god, thou shalt nat so,' Seyde this other hasardour anon; 'Thou partest nat so lightly, by seint John! 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 soothe thou art oon of his assent, To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theft!'
To finde Deeth, turne up this croked 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.
God save yow, that boghte agayn man-kinde,
And yow amende!’—thus seye this olde man.
And everich of thise ryotoures ran,
Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde
Of florins fyne of golde y-coyned rounde
Wel ny an eighte bussheles, as hem thoughte.
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 precious hord.
The worsste 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 Iolithee our lyf to liven, 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 fro this place
Hoom to myn hous, or elles un-to youryes—
For wel ye woot that al this gold is ouris—
Than were we in heigh felicitee.
But treweley, by daye it may nat be;
Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge,
And for our owene tresor doon us honge.
This tresor moste y-caried be by nighte
As wysly and as slyly as it mighte.
Wherfore 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
Shal renne to the toune, and that ful swythe,
And bringe us breed and wyn ful privelie.
And two of us shul kepen subtilly
This tresor well; and, if he wol nat tarie,
Whan it is nighte, we wol this tresor carie
By oon assent, wher-as we thinketh best.’
That oon of hem the cut brouthe 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.
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 gret plente.
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 frendes torn to thee?’
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 shrewes,
‘And I shal tellen thee, in wordes fewe,
What we shal doon, and bringe it wel aboute.’
‘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 strenger be than oon.
Look whan that he is set, and right anon
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
Noghth 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 poysen is so strong and violent.'
This cursed man hath in his hond y-hent
This poysen 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 poysen poured he;
The thridde he kepe cleene 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 rytour, with sory grace,
Had filled with wyn his grete botels three,
To his felawe agayn repaireth he.
What nedeth it to sermone of it more?
For right as they had cast his deeth before, 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 happep him, par cas, 885
To take the botel ther the poysen 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 canoon, ne in no fen,
Mo wonder signes of empoysoning 891
Than hadde thise wrecches two, er hir ending.
Thus ended been thise 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 precious herte-blood thee 
boghte,
Thou art so fals and so unkinde, allas!
Now, goode men, god forgeve yow 
your trespass,
And ware yow fro the sinne of ava-
ryce. 905
Myn holy pardoun may yow alle waryce,
So that ye ofre 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 hear in my rolle 
onon;
In-to the blisse of hevene shul ye gon;
I yow assoile, by myn heigh power,
Yow that wol ofre, as cleene and eek as 
cleer
As ye were born; and, lo, sirs, thus I 
preeche. 915
And Iesu Crist, that is our soules leche,
So grannte 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 reliques and pardon in my 
male,
As faire as any man in Engelond,
Whiche were me yeven by the popes 
hond.
If any of yow wol, of devocioun,
Ofren, and han myn absolucion,
Cometh forth anon, and kucleth hear 
adoun, 925
And mekely receyveth my pardoun:
Or elles, taketh pardon as ye wende,
Al newe and fresh, at every tonnes ende,
So that ye ofren alwey newe and newe
Nobles and pens, which that be gode and 
trewewe.
It is an honour to everich that is hear,
That ye mowe have a sulsuant pardoneer
Tassoille yow, in contree as ye ryde,
For aventures which that may bityde.
Peraventure ther may falle oon or 
two
Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke 
atwo.

Look which a surectee is it to yow alle 
That I am in your felaweship y-falle,
That may assoile yow, bothe more and 
lasse,
When that the soule shal fro the body 
passe. 940
I rede that our hoste hear shal biginne,
For he is most enveloped in sinne.
Com forth, sir hoste, and ofre first anon,
And thou shalt kisse the reliks everichon,
Ye, for a grete! unboked anon thy 
purse.' 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-
point! 950
But by the croys which that seint Elye 
fond,
I wolde I hadde thy coillons in myn 
hond
In stede of reliques or of seintuarie;
Lat cutte hem of, I wol thee helpe hem 
carie;
They shul be shryned in an hogges 
tord.' 955
This pardoner ansernde 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
When 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 
pardoner. 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 Pardoner’s Tale.
GROUP D.

THE WIFE OF BATH'S PROLOGUE.

The Prolouge 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 churche-dore I have had fvye;
For I so ofte have y-wedded he;
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 once
To wedding in the Cane of Galilee,
That by the same ensample taughte he me
That I ne sholde wedded he but ones.
Herke eek, lo! which a sharp word for the nones
Besyde a welle Jesus, god and man,
Spak in repree of the Samaritan:
"Thou hast y-had fyve housbondes," quod he,
"And thilke man, the which that hath
Now thee,
Is noght thy housbond;" thus seyde he certeyn;
What that he mente ther-by, I can nat seyn;
But that I axe, why that the fift he 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 dissiniciouson;
Men may devyne and glossen up and doun.
But wel I woot expres, with-oute lye,
God had us for to weye and multiplye;
That gentil text can I wel understonde.
Eek wel I woot he seyde, myn housbondes
Sholde lete fader and moder, and take me;
But of no nombre mencion made he,
Of bigamy or of octogamy;

Why sholde men speke of it vileiney?
Lo, here the wyse king, dan Salomon;
I trowe he hadde wyves mo than oon;
As, wolde god, it leynful were to me.
To be refreshed half so ofte as he!
Which yyte of god hadde he for alle his wyvis!
No man hath swich, that in this worlde alyve is.
God woot, this noble king, as to my wit,
The firste night had manny a mery fit
With eech of hem, so wel was him on lyve!
Blessed be god that I have wedded fyve!
Welcome the sixte, whan that ever he shal.
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.
He seith that to be wedded is no sinne;
Bet is to be wedded than to brinne.
What reketh me, thogh folk seye vileiney.
Of shrewed Lameth and his bigamy?
I woot wel Abraham was an holy man,
And Jacob eek, as farforth as I can;
And eech 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 marage
By expres word? I pray you, telleth me;
Or wher comanded he virginitee?
I woot as wel as ye, it is no rede,
Thapostel, whan he speketh of maydenhede;
He seyde, that precept ther-of hadde he noon.
Men may conseille a womman to been oon,
But conseille is no comandement;
He putte it in our owene lugement.
For hadde god comandeth maydenhede,
Thanne hadde he dammed wedding with the dede;
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;
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 the apostel was a mayde;
But natheless, thogh that he wroot and sayde,
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 is it no repreve
To wedde me, if that my make dye,
With-out eexcepioun of bigamye.
Al were it good no woman for to touche,
He mente as in his bed or in his couche;
For peril is bothe fyr and tow tassemble;
Ye knowe what this ensample may resemble.
This is al and som, he heeld virginitee
More perfit than wedding in freelitee.
Freelite clepe I; but-if that he and she
Wolde leden al hir lyf in chastitee.
I graunte it wel, I have noon envye,
Thogh maydenhede preferre bigamye;
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 household,
He hath nat every vessel al of gold;
Somme been of tree, and doon hir lord servyse.
God clepeth folk to him in sondry wyse,
And everich hath of god a propre yfte;
Som this, som that, — as him lyketh shifte.
Virginitee is greet perfeccioun,
And contineence eek with devocioun.
But Crist, that of perfeccioun is welle,
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.
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
Were membres maad of generacioun,
And for what profit was a wight y-wroght?
Trusteth right wel, they wer nat maad for nought.
Glose who-so wole, and seye bothe up and down,
That they were maked for purgacioun
Of urine, and our bothe thinges smale
Were eek to knowe a female 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.
I say this, that they maked been for bothe,
This is to seye, for office, and for ese
Of engendrure, ther we nat god displesse.
Why sholde men elles in hir bokes sette,
That man shal yelde to his wyf hir dette?
Now wher-with sholde he make his payement,
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,
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 scint, sith that the world began,
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 parfly-breed;
And yet with parfly-breed, Mark telle can,
Our lord Jesu refreshed many a man.
In swich estaat as god hath cleped us
I wol persevere, I nam nat precious.
In wyfode I wol use myn instrument
As frely as my maker hath it sent. 150
If I be daungurous, 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 dettoure and my
thral 155
And have his tribulacioun with-al
Up-on his flesh, whyl that I am his wyf.
I have the power durninge al my lyf
Up-on his propre body, and noght 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
seint 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 correcte be.
The same wordes wryteth Ptholomee;
Rede in his Almageste, and take it
there,' 180
'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 prac-
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 rich, 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 when I thinke
How pitously a-night I made hem
swinke;
And by my fey, I tolde of it no stoo.
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 woman wol sette hir euer 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 when 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 understande.
Thus shul ye speke and bere hem
wrong on honde; 226
For half soboldely can ther no man
Swere and lyen as a womman can.
I say nat this by wyves that ben wyse,
But-if it be than they hem misawyse. 230
A wys wyf, if that she can hir good,
Shal beren him on hond the cow is
wood,
And take winnes 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 honoure 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 rown eye with our mayde? benedicite!
Sir olde lechour, lat thy Iapes be!
And if I have a gossib or a freend,
With-outen gilt, thou chydest as a feend,
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 seyst to me, it is a greet meschief
To wedde a pover womman, for costage;
And if that she be riche, of heigh pearge,
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 assailecl 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 outhere singe or
daunce,
And som, for gentilesse and dalaunce;
Som, for hir handes and hir armes
smale; 261
Thus goth al to the deel by thy tale.
Thou seyst, men may nat kepe a castel-
wal;
It may so longe assailecl been over-al.
And if that she be foule, thou seist that
she 265
Coveiteth every man that she may se;
For as a spayncel she wol on him lepe,
Til that she finde som man hir to chepe;
Ne noon so grey goos gath ther in the
lake,
As, seystow, that wol been with-oute
make. 270
And seyst, it is an hard thing for to
wolde
A thing that no man wol, his thankes,
hehle.
Thus seystow, loren, thanow goost to
bedde;
And that no wys man nedeth for to
wolde, 274
Ne no man that entendeth un-to hevene.
With wilde thonder-dint and firy levene
Mote thy welked nekke be to-broke!
Thow seyst that dropping houses, and
eek smoke,
And chyding 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 wyves
hyde
Til we be fast, and than we wol hem
shewe;
Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewe!
Thow seist, that oxen, asses, hors, and
houndes, 285
They been assayed at diverse stoundes;
Bacins, favours, er that men hem bye,
Spones and stoles, and al swich hou-
bondrye,
And so been pottes, clothes, and array;
But folk of wyves maken noon assay 290
Til they be wedde; olde dotard shrewe!
And than, seistow, we wol oure vices
shewe.
Thow seist also, that it displeseth me
But-if that thou wolt preye 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 chamberer 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 Ianekeyn,
For his crisp heer, shyninge as gold so fyne,
And for he squiereth me bothe up and doun, 305
Yet hastow caught a fals suspicioun;
I wol hym noght, thogh thou were deed to-morwe.

But tel me this, why hydestow, with sorwe,
The keyes of thy cheste awaye fro me?
It is my good as wel as thyyn, pardee. 310
What wenestow make an idiot of our dame?

Now by that lord, that called is scint Iame,
Thou shalt nat bothe, thogh that thou were wood,
Be maister of my body and of my good;
That oon thou shalt forgo, maugee thyne yen; 315
What nedeth thee of me to enquere or spyen? I trowe, thou woldest loke me in thy chiste!
Thou sholdost seye, "wyf, go wher thee liste,
Tak thy disport, I wol nat leve no talis;
I knowe yow for a trewe wyf, dame Alis."
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 Phtholome,
That seith this proverbe in his Almagest, 325
"Of alle men his wisdom is the hyeste,
That reketh never who hath the world in bonde."

By this proverbe thou shalt understande,
Have thou y-nogh, what thane thee recche or care
How merily that other folkes fare? 330
For certeyn, olde dotard, by your leve,
Ye shul have queynte right y-nough at eve.
He is to greet a nighard that wol werneth
A man to lighte his candle at his lanterne;
He shal have never the lasse light, pardee; 335

I 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 this wordes in the apostles name,
"In habit, maad with chastitee and shame,
Ye wommen shul apparaillie yow," quod he,
"And noght in tressed heer and gay perree, 345
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 seyst this, that I was lyk a cat;
For who-so wolde senge a cattles skin,
Thanne wolde the cat wel dwellen in his in;

And if the cattles skin be slyk and gay,
She wol nat dwelle in house half a day,
But forth she wolde, er any day be dawed,
To shewe hir skin, and goon a-cater-wawed;
This is to seye, if I be gay, sir shrewes, 355
I wol renne out, my borel for to shewe.
Sire olde fool, what eyleth thee to spyen?

Thogh thou preye Argus, with his hundred yen,
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 herd, so moot I thee.
Thou seyst eek, that ther ben thinges three,
The whiche thinges troublen al this erthe,
And that no wight ne may endure the ferthe;
O leve sir shrewes, Iesu shorte thy lyf! 365
Yet prechestow, and seyst, an hateful wyf
Y-rekene is for oon of thise meschances.
Been ther none othere maner resemb-
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 lykest it also to wilde fyr; 375
The more it brennethe, the more it hath
desyr
To consume every thing that brenet wol
be,
Thou seyst, that right as wormes shende
a tree,
Right so a wyf destroyeth hir hirsonde;
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 seyd in hir dronkenesse;
And al was fals, but that I took witnesse
On Ianekin and on my nece also.
O lord, the payne I diem hem and the wo,
Ful gitleles, by goddes sweete pyne! 385
For as an hors I coude byte and whyne.
I coude pleyne, thogh I were in the gylt,
Or elles often tyme hadde I ben spilt.
Who-so that first to mille comth, first
grint; 389
I pleyned first, so was our werre y-stint.
They were ful glad to excusen hem ful
blyve
Of thing of which they never agylte hir
lyve.
Of wenches wolde I beren him on
honde,
Whan that for syk unnethes mighte he
stonde.
Yet tikled it his herte, for that he 395
Wende that I hadde of him so greet
chierete.
I swoor that al my wakinge out by nighte
Was for tespye wenches that he dighte;
Under that colour hadde I many a mirth;
For al swych wit is yeven us in our
birthe; 400
Deeite, weeping, spinning god hath yive
To wommen kindely, whyl they may live.
And thus of o thing I avaunte me,
Atte ende I hadde the bettre in ech de-
gree,
By sleighth, or force, or by som maner
thing, 405
As by continuel murmure or gruccing;
Namely a-bedde hadden they mes-
chaunce,
Ther wolde I chyde and do hem no
blesaunce;
I wolde no lenger in the bed abyde,
If that I feltte his arm over my syde, 410
Til he had maad his raunson un-to me;
Than wolde I suffre him do his nyckete. 415
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;
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
chye.
For thogh the pope had seten hem
baside, 420
I wolde nat spare hem at hir owene bord.
For by my trouthe, I quitte hem word for
word.
As help me verry god omnipotent,
Thogh I right now sholde make my
testament,
I ne owe hem nat a word that it nis quit.
I brughte it so aboute by my wit, 426
That they moste yeve it up, as for the
beset;
Or elles hadde we never been in reste.
For thogh he loked as a wood leoun,
Yet sholde he faile of his conclusiou.
Than wolde I seye, 'gode lief, tak
keep
How mekele loketh Wilkin oure sheep;
Com neer, my spouse, lat me ba thy
chek!
Ye sholde been al pacient and meke,
And han a sweete spyced conscience. 435
Sith ye so preche of Iobes pacience.
Suffreth alwey, sin ye so wel can preche;
And but ye do, certein we shal yow teche
That it is fayr to have a wyf in pees.
Oon of us two moste bowen, doutelees;
And sith a man is more resonable 440
Than womman is, ye moste been suffra-le.
What eyeleth yow to grucce thus and
grone?
Is it for ye wolde have my queyte allone?
Why taak it al, lo, have it every-deel; 445
Peter! I shrew yow but ye love it weel!
For if I wolde selle my bele chose,
I coude shrew yow as fresh as is a rose;
But I wol kepe it for your ownene tooth.
Ye be to blame, by god, I sey yow
doath.'
Swiche maner wordes hadde we on honde.
Now wol I spoken of my fourthe housbonde.
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 biraftte his wyf hir lyf,
For she drank wyf, thogh I hadde been his wyf,
He sholde nat han daunted me fro drinke;
And, after wyf, on Venus moiste I thynke:
For al so siker as cold engendreth haylor,
A likerous mouth mooste han a likerous tayl.
466
In womman violente is no defence,
This knowen lechours by experience.
But, lord Crist! whan that it remembreth me
Up-on my yowthe, and on my Iolitee, 470
It tikeleth me aboute myn herte rote.
Unto this day it dooth myn herte bothe
That I have had my world as in my tyme.
But age, alas! 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 mooste I selle;
But yet to be right mery wol I fonded.
Now wol I tellen of my fourthe housbonde.
480
I seye, I hadde in herte greet despyt
That he of any other had deltyt.
But he was quit, by god and by seint Ioce!
I made him of the same wode a croce;
Nat of my body in no foul manere, 485
But certeiny, I made folk swich chere,
That in his owene grece I made him frye
For anгре, and for verray lalousye.
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 shouful bitterly him wrong.
Ther was no wight, save god and he, that wiste,
In many wyse, how sore I him twiste.
He deyde whan I cam fro Jerusalem,
And lyth y-grave under the rode-beem,
Al is his tombe night 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 five the housbond wol I telle.
God lete his soule never come in helle!
And yet was he to me the moste shrewse;
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-withal 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 anoon.
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 mater a queynete 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 five the 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 scote, and vente at hoom to bord
With my gossib, dwellinge in oure toun,
God have hir soule! hir name was Alisoun.
530
She knew myn herte and eek my privetee
Bet than our parisse-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 did ful often, god it woot,
That made his face ful often reed and hoot
540
For verry shame, and blamed him-self for he
Had told to me so greet a privatee.
And so bifel that ones, in a Lente,
(So often tymes I to my gossip wente,
For ever yet I lovede to be gay,
And for to walke, in March, Averille, and May,
Fro hous to hous, to here sondry talis),
That Iankin clerk, and my gossip deme Alis,
And I my-self, in-to the feldes 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 visitacions,
555
To vigilis and to processions,
To preching eek and to thise pilgrimages,
To pleyes of miracles and mariages,
And wereed upon my gaye scarlet gytes.
This wormes, ne thise motthes, ne thise mytes,
560
Upon my peril, frete hem never a deal;
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 certeinly, I sey for no bohance,
Yet was I never withouten purveyance
Of mariage, nóf 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 enchanted me;
My dame taughte me that soutiltee.
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 verry 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 fourth housbond was on bere,
I weep algate, and made sory chere,
As wyves moten, for it is usage,
And with my coverchief covered my visage;
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 twente 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 scynt 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 likenousnesse,
And Mars yaf me my sturdy hardinesse.
Myn ascendent was Taur, and Mars therinne.
That, And lookinge in the yeare, 640
With-oute any conceyninge,
My chambre of Venus from a good
felawe.
Yet have I Martes mark up-on my face,
And also in another privy place. 620
For, god so wis be my savacioun,
I ne loved never by no discrecioun
But ever folwed wyne 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 holy clerk Iankin, that was so hende,
Hath wedde me with greet solemniti,
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 holde suffre nothing of my list.
By god, he smoothe me ones on the list,
For that I rente out of his book a leafe,
That of the strook myn ere wex al deef.
Stiborn I was as is a leonesse, 637
And of my tonge a verray Iangleresse,
And walke I wolde, as I had doen bi-
born,
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-heeded 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 witinge, he forsook hir eke.
And than wolde he up-on his Bible seke
That ilk proverbe of Ecclesiaste, 651
When he comadeth and forbeth faste,
Man shal nat suffre his wyf go roule
aboute;
Than wolde hir seye right thus, with-outen
doute,
"Who-so that buildest hir hous al of
salwes, 655
And priketh his blinde hors over the
falwes,
And thus, god woot! Mercurie is desolat
In Pisces, wher Venus is axaltat;
And Venus falleth wher Mercurie is
reyesed; 705
Therfore no womman of no clerk is
preyed.
The clerk, whan he is old, and may
nought do
Of Venus werkes worth his olde sho,
Than sit he doun, and writ in his dotage
That wommen can nat kepe hir mariag!
But now to purpos, why I tolde thee 711
That I was beten for a book, pardee.
Up-on a night Inkin, 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-
ness.
For which that Iesu Crist him-self was
slyn,
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 loseth
his heres,
Slepinge, his leman kitte hem with hir
sheres;
Thurgh whiche tresoun loseth he bothe
his yen.
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 forgat he the penaunce and
wo
That Socrates had with his 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 queene 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 privately 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 alwye up-on hir
thinke,
She yaf him swich a manier 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 Latumiue
Compleyned to his felawe Arrius,
That in his gardin growed swich a tree,
On which, he seyde, how that hir 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 let hir lechour dighte hir al the
night
Wyl that the corps lay in the floor up-
right.
And somme han drive nayles in hir brayn
Wyl that they slepte, and thus they han
hem slayn. 770
Somme han hem yeve poysoun in hir
drine.
He spak more harm than herte may
bithinke.
And ther-with-al, he kneved of mo pro-
verbes
Than in this world ther growen gras or
herbes.
"Bet is," quod he, "thyne habitacioun 775
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 sayde, "myn owene trewe wyf,
Do as thee lust the terme of al thy lyf,
Keep thyng honour, and keep eek myn estaat"— 821
After that day we hadde 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 prayed to god that sit in majestee, 826
So blesse his soule, for his mercy dere!
Now wol I seye my tale, if ye wol here?

Biholde the wordes between the Somnonour 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 when the Somnour herde the Frere gale,
'Lo!' quod the Somnour, 'goddes armes two!
A frere wol entremette him ever-mo.
Lo, gode men, a flye and eek a frere 835
Who fulle in every dish and eek materie.
What spekestow of preambulacioun?
What! amble, or trott, or pees, or go sit dow;
Thou lettest our disport in this manere.'
'Ye, wolde I se, 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 bishrewye thy face,'
Quod this Somnour, 'and I bishrewye me,
But-if I telle tales two or thre 846
Of freres er I come to Sidingborne,
That I shal make thyng herte for to morne;

Be with a leoun or a foul dragoun,
Than with a woman usinge for to chyde.
Bet is," quod he, "hye in the roof abyde
Than with an angry wyf doyen in the hous;
They been so wikked and contrarious;
They haten that hir housbondes loveth ay." 781
He seyde, "a woman cast hir shame away,
Whan she cast of hir smok;" and forther-mo,
"A fair woman, 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 pync?
And when I saugh he wolde never fyne
To reden on this cursed book al night,
Al sodeynly 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 we 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 sogh I breyde:
"O! hastow slayn me, false thief?" 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 kneele faire adoun,
And seyde, "dere suster Alisoun,
As help me god, I shal thee never smyte;
That I have doon, it is thy-self to wyte.
Foryeve it me, and that I thee biseke"— 805
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 brydel in myn hond
For wel I woot thy pacience is goon, ’
Our hoste cryde ‘pees! and that anoon!’ 850
And seyde, ‘lat the womman telle hir tale.
Ye fare as folk that dronken been of ale.

Here endeth the Wyf of Bathe her Prologue.

THE TALE OF THE WYF OF BATHE.

Here biginneth the Tale of the Wyf of Bathe.

In thokle dayes of the king Arthour,
Of which that Britons spoken greet honou-
or, 859
Al was this land fulfild 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 spake of manye hundred yere;
But now can no man see none elyes mo.
For now the grete charitee and prayeres 865
Of limitours and othere holy freres,
That serchen every lond and every streem,
As thikke as motes in the somme-beem,
Blessinge halles, chambers, kichenes,
boures, 870
Citees, burghes, castels, hye toures,
Thropes, bernes, shippes, dayerayes,
This maketh that ther been no fayeryes.
For ther as wonto to walken was an elf,
Ther walketh now the limitour him-self
In underneles and in morweninges,
And sayth his matins and his holy thinges
As he goth in his limitacioun.
Wommen may go saufly up and doun,
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 bise I, that this king Arthour
Hadde in his hous a lustye bachelor,
That on a day cam rydinge fro river;
And happed that, alone as she was born,
885
He saugh a mayde walkinge him biforn,
Of whiche mayde anon, maugree hir heed,
By verry force he rafte hir maydenheede;
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.’
‘Yis, dame,’ quod he, ‘tel forth, and I wol here.’ 856

For which oppressiouen was swich clamour
And swich pursute un-to the king Ar-

That damned was this knight for to be deed 890
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 graunten 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
When that she saugh hir tyme, up-on a day:
‘Thou standestyet,’ 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 answere suffisant in this materie. 910
And surette 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 lyketh.
And at the laste, he chees him for to wende,
And come agayn, right at the yeres ende,
With swich answere as god wolde him pureye;
And taketh his leve, and wendeth forth his weye.
He seketh every hous and every place,
Wher-as he hopeth for to finde grace,
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-ferre.
Somme seyde, wommen loven best richesse,
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-pleased.
He gooth ful ny the sothe, I wol nat lye;
A man shal winne us best with flaterye;
And with attendance, and with businesse,
Been we y-lymed, bothe more and lesse.
And somme seyn, how that we loven best
For to be free, and do right as us lest,
And that no man repreve of us our vyce,
But seye that we be wyse, and no-thing nyce.
For trewely, ther is noon of us alle,
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 clen of sinne.
And somme seyn, that greet delty han we
For to ben holden stable and eek secre,
And in o purpos stedefastly to dwelle,
And nat biwreye thing that men us telle.
But that tale is nat worth a rake-stele;
Pardée, we wommen conne no-thing hele;
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,
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.
She swoor him ' nay, for al this world to winne,
She nolde do that vileinye or sinne,
To make hir housbond han so fould a name;
She nolde nat telle it for hir owene shame.'
But nathelees, hir thoughte that she dyde,
That she so longe sholde a conseil hyde;
Hir thoughte it swal so sore aboute hir herte,
That nedely som word hir moste asterete;
And sith she dorste telle it to no man,
Doun to a mareys faste by she ran;
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;
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;
The remenant of the tale if ye wol here,
Redeth Ovyde, and ther ye may it lere.
This knight, of which my tale is specially,
Whan that he saugh he mighte nat come therby,
This is to seye, what wommen loven moost,
With-inne his brest ful sorweful was the goost;
But hoom he gooth, he mighte nat sojourn;
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 certeynly, er he came fully there, 995
Vanished was this daunce, he nyste 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,
And seyde, 'sir knight, heer-forth ne lyth no wey.
Tel me, what that ye seken, by your fey?
Paraventure it may the bettre be;
This olde folk can muchel thing,' quod she.
'My leve mooder,' quod this knight certeyn,
'I nam but deed, but-if that I can seyn
What thing it is that wommen most desyre;
Coude ye me wisse, I wolde wel quyte your hyre.'
'Plighte me thy trouthe, heer in myn hand,' quod she,
'The nexte thing that I requere thee,
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,
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-outen lenger speche.'
Tho rouned she a pistel in his ere,
And bad him to be glad, and have no fere.
When they be comen to the court, this knight
Seyde, 'he had holde his day, as he hadde hight,
And redy was his answere,' as he sayde.
Ful many a noble wyf, and many a mayde,
And many a widwe, for that they ben wyse,
The quene hir-self sittinge as a Jestyse,
Assembled been, his answere for to here;
And afterward this knight was bode appere.
To every wight comand was silence,
And that the knight sholde telle in audience,
What thing that worldly wommen loven best.
This knight ne stood nat stille as doth a best,
But to his questioun anon answerde
With manly voys, that al the court it herde:
'My lige lady, generally,' quod he,
'Wommen desyre 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,
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,
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 answere un-to the knight;
For which he plighte me his trouthe there,
The firste thing I wolde of him requere,
He wolde it do, if it lay in his might.
Bfore the court than preye I thee, sir knight,'
Quod she, 'that thou me take un-to thy wyf;
For wel thou wost that I have kept thy lyf.
If I sey fals, sey nay, up-on thy fey!' This knight answerde, '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 shrowe us
bothe two!
For thogh that I be foule, and old, and
pore,
I nolde for al the metal, ne for ore,
That under erthe is grave, or lyth
above,
But-if thy wyf I were, and eek thy love.
‘My love?’ quod he; ‘nay, my
damnacioun!
Alias! 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, paraven-
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 answere I shal;
I seye, ther nas no Ioye ne feste at al,
Ther nas but hevinesse 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’th 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 lost his wit; 1095
What is my giit? for goddes love, tel me
it,
And it shal been amended, if I may.’

‘Amended?’ quod this knight, ‘allas!
ny, ny, ny!
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 alwe 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 amend
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 therfore sholden ye be gentil men,
Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.
Loke who that is most vertuous alway,
Privee and apter, 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 yve 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 vertuous 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, spoken in this
sentence; 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,
Prive ne apert, than wolde they never
fyne 1136
To doon of gentillesse the faire office;
They mighte do no vileinye or vyce.  
Tak fyr, and ber it in the derkesteyn hous  
Bitwix this and the mount of Caucasus, 
And lat men shette the dorcs and go thenne;  
Yet wol the fyr as faire lye and breyne, 
As twenty thousand men mighte it biholde;  
His office naturel ay wol it holde, 
Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye.  
Heer may ye see wel, how that genterrye  
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 ofte finde  
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,  
He nis nat gentil, be he duk or erl;  
For vileyns sinful dedes make a cherl.  
For gentilisses nis but renomee  
Of thynce auncestres, for hir heigh bontee,  
Which is a strange thing to thy persone. 
Thy gentilisses cometh fro god alon;  
Than comth our verray gentilisses of grace,  
It was no-thing biquetee us with our place.

Thenketh how noble, as seith Valerius,  
Was thilke Tullius Hostilius;  
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 therfore, leve housbond, I thus conclud,  
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 bilee,

In wilful povert chees to live his lyf.  
And certes every man, mayden, or wyf,  
May understonde that Jesus, hevene king,  
Ne wolde nat cheese 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 poverte,  
I holde him riche, al hadde he nat a sherte.  
He that coveyeteth is a povre wight,  
For he wolde han that is nat in his might.  
But he that noght hath, ne coveyeteth have,  
Is riche, al-though ye holde him but a knave.  
Valerius, it singeth proprely;  
Juvenal seith of povert merily:  
"The povre man, whan he goth by the weye,  
Bfore the theves he may singe and pleye."  
Povert is hateful good, and, as I gesse,  
A ful greet bringer out of bisinesse;  
A greet amender eek of sapience  
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.  
Povert a spectacle is, as thinketh me,  
Thurgh which he may his verray frenstes see.  
And therfore, sire, sin that I nought yow greve,  
Of my povert na-more ye me repreeve.  
Now, sire, of elde ye me repreeve:  
And certes, sire, thogh noon auctoritee  
Were in no book, ye gentils of honour  
Seyn that men shold a old wight doon favour,  
And elepe him fader, for your gentilisses;  
And auctors shal I finden, as I gesse.  
Now ther ye seye, that I am foul and old,  
Than drede you noght to been a cokewold;  
For filthe and elde, al-so moot I thee,  
Been grete wardeyns up-on chastitee.  
But natheees, sin I knowe your delty,  
I shal fulfille your worldly appetyt.
Chees now,' quod she, 'oon of thise thinges tweye,
To han me fould and old til that I deye,
And be to yow a trewe humble wyf,
And never yow displesse in al my lyf,
Or elles ye wol han me yong and fair,
And take your aventur of the repair
That shal be to your hous, by-cause of me,
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 my 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

Here endeth the Wyves Tale of Bathe.

The Prolage of the Freres tale.

This worthy limitour, this noble Frere
He made alwey a maner louring chere
Upon the Somnour, but for honstee 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 scale-materie greet difficulthe;
Ye han seyd muchel thing right wel, I seye;
But dame, here as we ryden by the weye,

This is to seyn, ye, bothe fair and good.
I pray 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 verrayl
al this,
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-rew he gan hir
tsesse.
And she obeyed him in everything 1255
That mighte doon him plesance or lyking.
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 nigrades of dispence,
God sende hem sone verray pestilence.

Us nedeth nat to spoken but of game,
1275
And let auctoritees, on goddes name,
To preaching and to scole eek of cleruye.
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 fornicaicoun,
And is y-bet at every townes ende.' 1285
Our host tho spak, ‘a! sire, ye sholde be hende
And curteys, as a man of your estaat;
In companye we wol have no debaat.
Telleth your tale, and lat the Somnour be.’
‘Nay,’ quod the Somnour, ‘lat him seye to me
What so him list; whan it comth to my lot,
By god, I shal him quyten every grot.
I shal him telleth which a greet honour
It is to be a flateringe limitour;
And his offfyce I shal him telle, y-wis.’
Our host answerde, ‘pees, na-more of this.’
And after this he seyde un-to the Frere,
‘Tel forth your tale, leve meister deere.’

Here endeth the Prologue 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
In punishshinge of fornicacioun,
Of wicchecraft, and eek of bauderye,
Of diffamacioun, and avoutrye,
Of chirche-reves, and of testaments,
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;
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
For smale tythes and for smal offringe,
He made the peple pitously to singe.
For er the bissopp caughte hem with his hook,
They weren in the erchedeknes book,
Thanne hadde he, thurgh his Iurisdiccioun,
Power to doon on hem correccioun.
He hadde a Somnour redy to his hond,
A slyer boy was noon in Engelond;
For subtily he hadde his espiaile
That taughte him, wher that him mighte avail.
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.
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-
venture,’
Thus seyde our host, ‘and lat him telle his tale.’
Now telleth forth, thogh that the Som-
nour gale,
Ne spareth nat myn owene maister dere.’
This false theef, this Somnour, quod the Frere,
Hadde alwey baudes redy to his hond,
As any hauk to lure in Engelond.
That tolde him al the secrete that they knewe;
For hir acqueyntance was nat come of-
newe.
They weren his approwours prively;
He took him-self a greet profit therby;
His maister knew nat alwey what he wan.
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 Iudas hadde purses smale,
And was a theef, right swich a theef was he; 1351
His maister hadde but half his dutee.
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 retuen,
That, whether that sir Robert or sir Huwe,
Or Iakke, 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 feche a feyned manende-
And somne 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 sryken hir out of our lettres blake;
Thee thar na-more as in this cas travaile;
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,
Bet than this Somnour knew a sly lechour,
Or an avouter, or a paramour.
And, for that was the fruit of al his rente,
Therfore on it he seete al his entente.
And so bifcl, that ones on a day 1375
This Somnour, ever waiting on his pray,
Rood for to somne a widwe, an old rible,
Feynynge a cause, for he wolde brybe.
And happed that he saugh before 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 lorde duetee.
'Artow thanne a bailly?' 'Ye!' quod he.
He dorste nat, for verray filthe and shame,
Seyde that he was a somnour, for the name.
'Depardieux,' quod this yeman, 'dere brother,
Thou art a bailly, and I am another.
I am unknownen as in this contree;
Of thyn aquestance 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 thyng, right as thou wolst 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 wye.
This Somnour, which that was as ful of Iangles,
As ful of venim been thise wariangles,
And ever enquering up-on every thing,
'Brother,' quod he, 'where is now your dwelling,
Another day if that I sholde yow seche?'
This yman him answerde in softe speche,
'Brother,' quod he, 'fer in the north contree,
Wher, as I hope, som-tyme I shal thee see.
Er we departe, I shal thee so wel wisse,
That of myn hous ne shalow never misse.' 1415
'Now, brother,' quod this Somnour, 'I yow preye,
Teche me, whyl that we ryden by the wye,
Sin that ye been a baillif as am I,
Som subtilite, and tel me feithfully 1420
In myn offise 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,'
sayde 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 offise is ful laborous;
And therfore by extorcions I live.
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.
The day is short, and it is passed pryne,
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. To understande, al-thogh I tolde hem thee.
But, for thou axest why laboure we;
For, som-tyme, we ben goddes instrument,
And menes to don his commandements,
Whan that him list, up-on his creatures,
In divers art and in divers figures.
With-outen him we have no might, certain,
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;
Witness on Job, whom that we diden wo.
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 unreste,
And nat his body, and al is for the beste.
When 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.
And som-tyme be we servant un-to man,
As to the erchebissop Seint Dunstan,
And to the apostles servant eek was I;
Yet tel me,' quod the Somnour, 'feithfully,
Make ye yow newe bodies thus alway
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.
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,
Com ther thee nedeth nat of me to lere.
For thou shalt by thy owene experience
Conne in a chy're rede of this sentence
Bet than Virgyle, whyl he was on lyve,
Or Dant also; now lat us rye dere blyve.
For I wol holde companye with thee
Til it be so, that thou forgedake.

‘Nay,’ quod this Somnour, ‘that shal nat bityde;
I am a yeman, knownen is ful wyde;
My trouthe wol I holde as in this cas.
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,
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.
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.

Deep was the wey, for which the carte stood.
The carter smoot, and cryde, as he were wood,
‘Heyt, Brok! hayt, Scot! what spare ye for the stones?
The feend,’ quod he, ‘yow fecche body and bones,
As ferforth as ever we were foled! So muche 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 neer the feend he drought, as noght ne were,

Ful privelly, and rouned in his ere: ‘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 his caples three.’

‘Nay,’ quod the devel, ‘god wot, never a deel;
It is nat his entente, trust me weel.
Axe him thyself, 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 drawen and to-stoupe;
‘Heyt, now!’ quod he, ‘ther Iesu Crist yow blesse,
And al his handwerk, bothe more and lesse!
That was wel twight, myn owene lyard boy!
I pray god save thee and sëynt Loy!
Now is my cart out of the slow, pardee!’

‘Lo! brother,’ quod the feend, ‘what tolde I thee? 
Heer may ye see, myn owene dere brother,
The carl spak oo thing, but he thoughte another.
Lat us go forth abouten our viage;
Heer winne I no-thing up-on cariage.’

When that they comen som-what out of toune,
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.
I wol han twelf pens, though that she be wood,
Or I wol sompne hir un-to our office;
And yet, god woot, of hir knowe I no vyce.
But for thou canst nat, as in this contree,
I trowe thou hast som frere or preest with thee!’
Yeve I thy body and my panne also!
And whan the devel herd hir cursen so
Up-on hir knees, he seyde in this manere,

Now Mabely, myn owene moder dere,
Is this thy wil in ernest, that ye seye?
'The devel,' quod she, 'so fecche him er he deye,
And panne and al, but he wol him repente!'

'Nay, olde stot, that is nat myn entente,' 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.'

Thou shalt with me to helle yet to-night,
Where thou shalt knownen of our privatee
More than a maister of divinitee:'
And with that word this foule feend him hente;

Body and soule, he with the devel wente
Wher-as that somnours han hir heritage.

And god, that maked after his image
Mankinde, save and gyde us alle and some;
And leve this Somnour good man to become!

Lordinges, I coude han told yow, quod this Frere,

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 tongue may devyse, 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;

The leoun sit in his await alway

'Who clappeth?' sayde this widewe,
'beneficite!' God save you, sire, what is your swete wille?'
'I have,' quod he, 'of somonche here a bille;
Up deyne of cursing, loke that thou be
To-morn bfore the erchedeknes knee
Tenswere to the court of certeyn thinges.'
'Now, lord,' quod she, 'Crist Iesu, king of kinges,
So wisly 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 prikeh it in my syde.
May I nat axe a libel, sir Somnour, And answere 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 acquyte.
I shall no profit han ther-by but lyte; 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 wisly help me out of care and sinne,
This wyde world thogh that I sholde winne,
Ne have I nat twelf pens with-inne myn hold.
Ye knopen wel that I am povre and old;
Kythe your almesse on me povre wrecche.'
'Nay than,' quod he, 'the foule feend me fecche
If I thexuse, 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 awye thy newe panne
For dette, which that thou owest me of old,
Whan that thou madest thy housbond cokewold,
I payde at hoom for thy correccioun.'
'Thou lixt,' quod she, 'by my savacioun!
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! Un-to the devel blak and rough of hewe
To slee the innocent, if that he may.
Dispose th ay your hertes to withstonde
The feend, that yow wolde make thral
and bonde.
And 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 misdeses, er that the feend hem
hente.

Here endeth the Freres tale.

THE SOMNOUR'S PROLOGUE.

The prologue 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 curteisy,
Sine 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 doun,
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 doun.

"And now hath Sathanas," seith he, "a
tayl
Broder than of a carrik is the sayl.
Hold up thy tayl, thow Sathanas!" quod
he,
"Shewe forth thy 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 come agayn, as faste as they may
gon,
And in his ers they crepeth everichon.
He clapte his tayl agayn, and lay ful
stille.
This frere, whan he loked hadde his
fille 1700
Upon the tormentes 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 prologue wol I ende in this manere.'

Here endeth the Prologue of the Somnours Tale.
THE SOMNOURS TALE.

Here biginneth the Somonour his Tale.

LORDINGES, ther is in Yorkshire, as I gesse, 1709
A mershy contree called Holdernesses,
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 rentals, 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 habundaunce.
‘Trentals,’ sayde 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 seyd al his entente,
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 hyc;
In every hous he gan to poure and prye,
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 wrooth 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 busshel whete, malt, or reye,
A goddes kechil, or a trip of chese,
Or elles what yow list, we may nat chese;
A goddes halfpeny or a masse-penye,
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 thrive 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
Refresshed 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 yelede 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 awey 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 Have I syed many a precious orisoun
And for our othere frendes, god hem blesse!
I have to-day been at your chirche at messe,
And seyd 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 therfore 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 charitabile,
And spende hir hir 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 John!' 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,
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.
This curats been ful negligent and slowe 1816
To grope tendrely a conscience.
In shrift, in preching is my diligence,
And studie in Petres wordes, and in
Poules.
I walke, and fishe Cristen mennes soules, 1820
To yelden Iesu Crist his propre rente;
To sprede his word is set al myn entente.'

'Now, by your leve, o dere sir,' quod she,
'Cychdeth him weel, for seint Trinitee.
He is as angry as a pissemyle, 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 outhre myn arm,
He groweth 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! Je 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, 'Je vous dy sans 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;
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 dortour.
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,
Maken hir Jubilee and walke allone.
And up I roos, and al our covert eke,
With many a tere trikling on my cheke,
Withouten noyse or clateringe of belles;
Te deum was our song and no-thing elles,
Save that to Crist I seyde an orisoun,
Thankinge him of his revelacioun.
For sir and dame, trusteth me right weil,
Our orisons been more effectueel,
And more we seen of Cristes secre things
Than burel folk, al-though they weren kings.
We live in povert and in abstinence,
And burel folk in richesse and despense
Of mete and drinke, and in hir foul delyty.
We han thise worlds lust al in despyt.
Lazar and Dives liveden diversely,
And diverse guerdon hadden they therby.
Who-so wol prey, he moot faste and be clene,
And fatte his soule and make his body lene.
We fare as seith thapostle; cloth and fode
Suffysen us, though they be nat ful gode.
The clennessse and the fastinge of us freres
Maketh that Crist accepteth our preyeres.
Lo, Moyses fourty dayes and fourty night
Fasted, er that the heighge god of might
Spak with him in the mountain of Sinay.
With empty wombe, fastinge many a day,
Recceyved he the lawe that was writen
With goddess finger; and Elie, wel ye witen,
In mount Oreb, er he hadde any speche
With hye god, that is our lyves leche,
He fasted longe and was in contemplaunce.
Aaron, that hadde the temple in governaunce,
And cek the othere preestes everichon,
In-to the temple whan they sholdon gon
To prey for the peple, and do servyse,
They nolden drinke, in no maner wyse,
No drinke, which that mighte hem dronke make,
But there in abstinence preye and wake
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 suffyseth.
Our lord Iesu, as holy writ devyseth,
Yaf us ensample of fastinge and preyeres.
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 clennesse.
And therfor may ye see that our preyeres —
I speke of us, we mendinants, we freres —
Ben to the hye god more acceptable
Than youre, 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, certeyn.
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 sweete lord Iesus
Spak this by freres, when he seyde thus:
"Blessed be they that povere in spirit
been."
And so forth al the gospel may ye seen,
Wher it be lyker our profession, 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 violeantz 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 eructavit!"
Who folweth Cristes gospel and his fore, 1935
But we that humble been and chast and pore,
Werkers of goddes word, not auditours?
Therfore, right as an hauk up, at a sour,
Up springeth in-to their, right so prayeres
Of charitable and chaste bisy freres 1940
Maken hir souris 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 thrive!
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-thynge 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 bisct.
Farwel, my gold! for it is al ago!'
The frere answerde, "O Thomas, dostow so?"
"With-in thyn hous ne be thou no leveoun;
To thy substigs do noon oppression;
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 subtly.
Be war, my sone, and herkne paciently,
That twenty thousand men han lost hir lives,
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?
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 desire,
Ire is a sinne, oon of the grete of sevne,
Abhominable un-to the god of hevene;
And to him-self it is destruccon.

This every lewed viker or person
Can seye, how Ire engendreth homycide.
Ire is, in sooth, executour of pryde.
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, grete pitee,
To sette an irous man in heigh degree.

Whilom ther was an irous potestat,
As seith Senek, that, during his estaat,
Up-on a day out riden knightes two,
And as fortune wolde that it were so,
That oon of hem cam hoom, that other noght.
Anon the knight before the Iuge is broght,
That seye thus, 'thou hast thy felawe slayn,
For which I deme thee to the deeth, certyn.'

And to another knight comanded he,
'Go lede him to the deeth, I charge thee.
And happed, as they wente by the weye
Toward the place ther he sholde dye,
The knight cam, which men wenden had be deed.
Thanne thoughte they, it was the beste reed,
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!' And to the firste knight right thus spak he,
'I dampeed thee, thou most algate be deed.
And thou also most nedes lese thyn heed,
For thou art cause why thy felawe deth.'

And to the thridde knight right thus he seyth,
'Thou hast nat doon that I comanded thee.'
And thus he dide don slean hem alle three.

Irous Cambyses was eek dronkelewe,
And ay delyted him to been a shrewe.
And so bifel, a lord of his menee
That lovede vertuous moralitee,
Seyde on a day bitwix hem two right thus:
'A lord is lost, if he be vicious;
And dronkennesse is eek a foul record
Of any man, and namely in a lord.' 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 reveres shaltou se,' quod he, 'anon;'

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
An hundred part than he had doon biforn;
And right anon, this irous cursed wrecche
Leet this knightes sone before him fecche, 2065
Comandinge him he sholde before him stonde.
And sodeynly he took his bowe in honde, 2070
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 a-goon?
Hath wyn bireved me myn eyen sight?’ 2075
What sholde I telle thanswere of the knight?

His sone was slayn, ther is na-more to seye.
Beth war therfor with lorde how ye pleye.
Singeth Placebo, and I shal, if I can, 2080
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 ivers Cirus, thilke Percien,
How he destroyed the river of Gysen, 2085
For that an hors of his was dreyn therinne,
Whan that he wente Babiloigne to winne.
He made that the river was so smal,
That wommen mighte wade it over al.
Lo, what seyde he, that so wel teche can?

Ne be no felawe to an ivers man, 2086
Ne with no wood man walke by the wye,
Lest thee repente;’ ther is na-more to seye.

Now Thomas, leve brother, let thyne ire; 2090
Thou shalt me finde as Just as is a squire.
Hold nat the develes knyf ay at thyne herte;
Thyn angre dooth thee al to sore smerte;
But shewe to me al thy confessioun.’

‘Nay,’ quod the syke man, ‘by Seint Simoun! 2095
I have be shrinen this day at my curat;
I have him told al hooly myn estat; 2096
Nedeth na-more to speke of it,’ seith he,
‘But if me list of myn humilitie.’

‘Yif me thanne of thy gold, to make our cloistre,’ 2100
Quod he, ‘for many a muscle and many

When other men han ben ful wel at eysye, 2104
Hath been our fode, our cloistre for to reysye.
And yet, god woot, unnethe the fundamment
Parfourned is, ne of our pavement
Nis nat a tyle yet with inne our wones;
By god, we ouden 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,

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 charitie!’
And doun anon he sette him on his knee.

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 yeve, and non other.

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, 2129
And in thyne hand thou shalt it have anon;
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 profession,
With-outen fraude or cavillacioun.’ 2136

‘I swere it,’ quod this frere, ‘upon my feith!’

And ther-with-al his hand in his he leith:
And doun his hand he launcheth to the clifie, 2145

In hope for to finde ther a yfte. 2156

And whan this syke man fetel this frere
Aboute his tuwel grope there and here,
Amidde his hand he leet the frere a fart.
Ther is 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 abyde this fart, if that I may!'
His meyne, whiche that herden this affray,
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 doun to the court he gooth,
Wher-as ther woned a man of greet honour,
To whom that he was alwey confessor;
This worthy man was lord of that village.
This frere cam, as he were in a rage, 2166
Wher-as this lord sat etting at his bord.
Unnethes mighte the frere speke a word,
Til atte lashe 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 doun 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 holde have abhominacioun 2179
Of that I have receyved in your toun.
And yet ne greveth me no-thing so sore,
As that this olde cherl, with lokkes hore,
Blasphemed hath our holy covent eke.'

'Now, maister,' quod this lord, 'I yow biseke.'

'No maister, sire,' quod he, 'but servitour,
Thogh I have had in scule 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.
Distempre yow noght, ye be my confessor; 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 sayde:
'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 frenese.'

'Madame,' quod he, 'by god I shal nat lye;
But I on other wyes may be wreke,' 2210
I shal disfame 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 doun,
‘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 shewe his face!
‘Lo, sires,’ qued 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 away.
Ther is no man can demean, by my fye,
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
pyleye,
Lat him go honge himself, a devel weye!‘
Now stood the lorde squier at the
bord,
That carf his mete, and herde, word by
word,
Of alle things 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-clooth, by god and by Seint
John!’

‘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.
Twelw spokes hath a cartwheel comunly.
And bring me than twelw freres, woot
ye why?
For thrittene is a covent, as I gesse.
The confessour heer, for his worthinesse,
Shal parfourne up the nombre of his
covent. 2261
Than shal they knele doun, by oon
assent,
And to every spokes ende, in this
manere,
Ful sadly leyhe 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
toght
As any tabour, hider been y-broght;
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 certeine, he hath it wel deserved.
He hath to-day taught us so muchel
good
With preching in the pulpit ther he
stood,
That I may vouche-sauf, I see for me,
He hadde the firste smel of fartes three,
And so wolde al his covent hardly;
2285
He bereth him so faire and holily.’
The lord, the lady, and ech man, save
the frere,
Seyde that lankin spak, in this matere,
As wel as Euclide or [as] Pholeomiee.
Touchinge this cherl, they seyde, sub-
telte 2290
And heigh wit made him speken as he
spak;

He nis no fool, ne no demoniak.
And Iankin hath y-wonne a newe
goune. —
My tale is doon; we been almost at
toune. 2294

Here endeth the Somnours Tale.

GROUP E.

THE CLERK’S PROLOGUE.

Here folweth the Proluge 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 tromwe ye studie aboute som sopheyme, 5
But Salomon seith, “every thing hath
tyme.”
For goddes sake, as beth of bettre chere,
It is no tymo 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; —
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, hardly,
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
Frauncys 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 particulere;
But deeth, that wol nat sufere us dwellen
heer
But as it were a twinkling of an yë,
Hem bothe hath slayn, and alle shul we
dyë.
But forth to telle of this worthy man,
That taught me this tale, as I bigan, 40
I seye that first with heigh style he en-
dytethe,
Er he the body of his tale wrytethe,
A proheme, in the which discryveth he
Pemond, and of Saluces the contree,
And speketh of Apennyn, the hilles hye, 45
That been the boundes of West Lumb-
dyre,
And of Mount Vesulus in special,
Where as the Poo, out of a welle smal,
Taketh his firste springing and his sour,
That estward ay encesseth in his cours 50
To Emelward, to Ferrare, and Venys:
The whic a long thing were to devyse.
And treweyly, as to my Iugement,
Me thinketh it a thing impertinent,
Save that he wol conveyen his materie: 55
But this his tale, which that ye may
here.’
THE CLERKES TALE.

Here biginneth the Tale of the Clerk of Oxenford.

There 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 bholde, That founded were in tyme of fadres olde, And many another delitable sighte, And Saluces this noble contree highte.

A markis whylom lord was of that londe, As were his worthy eldres him biforn; 65 And obeisant and redy to his honde Were alle his liges, bothe lasse and more. Thus in delty he liveth, and hath don yore, Biloved and drad, thurgh favour of fortune, Bothe of his lorde and of his commune. 70

Therwith he was, to speke as of linage, The gentillesse y-born of Lumbardye, 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 lorde name.

I blame him thus, that he considereth noght In tyme cominge what mighte him bityde, But on his lust present was al his thoght, So as for to hauke and hunte on every syde; Wel ny alle othere cures leet he syde, And eek he nolde, and that was worst of alle, Wedde no wyf, for noght 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 wasest 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 matere, 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 move telle our hevinnesse; 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 noght to done in this matere More than another man hath in this place, 100 Yet for as mucho as ye, my lord so dere, Han alwye shewed me favour and grace, I dar the better aske of yow a space Of audience, to shewn our requeste, And ye, my lord, to doon right as yow leste.

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, noght 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 youghte flore as yit, 120 In crepethe age alwye, as stille as stoon, And deeth manaceth every age, and smit In ech estaat, for ther escapeth noon: And al so certein as we knowe eechoon That we shul deye, as uncerteyn we alle
That what wyf that I take, ye me assure
To worship hir, whyl that hir lyf may dure,
In word and Werk, bothere here and every-where,
As she an emperoures doghter were.

And furthermore, this shal ye swere, that
Agayn my choys shul neither grucche'ne stryve;
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 wolde assente in swich manere,
I prey yow, speketh na-more of this matere.'

With hertly wil they sweren, and assenten
To al this thing, ther seyde no wight nay;
Bisekinge him of grace, er that they wenten,
That he wolde graunten hem a certein day
Of his spousaille, as sone as ever he may;
For yet alwey the peple som-what dreadde
Lest that this markis no wyf wolde wedde.

He graunte hem a day, swich as him lest,
On which he wolde be wedde sikerly,
And seyde, he didde al this at hir requeste;
And they, with humble entente, buxomly,
Knelinge 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
Comandeth for the feste to purveye,
And to his prive 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
To doen un-to the feste reverence.

Explicit prima pars.
Incipit secunda pars.

Noght fer fro thilke paleys honorable
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:
Ianicula men of that throp him calle.
A doghter hadde he, fair y-nogh to
sighte, 209
And Grisildis this yonge mayden higte.

But for to speke of vertuous beauete,
Than was she oon the faireste under
sonne;
For povreliche y-fostred up was she,
No likerous lust was thrugh hir herte
y-ronne; 214
Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne
She drank, and for she wolde vertu plese,
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 shedde and seeth for
hir livinge,
And made hir bed ful harde and no-thingsofter;
And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf on-lofte
With everich obeisance and diligence
That child may doon to fadres reverence.

Up-on Grisilde, this povre creature, 232
Ful ofte sythe this markis sette his yê
As he on hunting rood paraventure;

And whan it fil that he mighte hir
espye, 235
He noght with wantoun loking of folye
His yên caste on hir, but in sad wyse
Up-on hir chere he wolde him ofte ayvyse,
Commending in his herte hir womman-
hede,
And eek hir vertu, passing any wight 240
Of so yonge 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 seyden, whan they were in privete,
' Wol nat oure lord yeve his vanitee? 250
Wol he nat wedde? alias, alias 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 rings, for Grisildis sake, 255
And of hir clothing took he the mesure
By a mayde, lyrk 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-
gree;
Houses of office stuffed with plente
Ther maystow seen of deynteus vitalle,
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 whiche 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 hoon as sone as ever she may.
For wel she hadde herd seyd, that thilke day
The markis sholde wedde, and, if she mighte,
She wolde fin han seyn som of that sighte. 280

She thoghte, 'I wol with othere maydens stonde,
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 leyser hir biholde, 286
If she this wey un-to the castel holde.'

And as she wolde over hir threshold goon,
The markis cam and gan hir for to calle;
And she sette doon hir water-pot anon
Bisyde the threshold, in an oxesstalle, 291
And doon up-on hir knees she gan to falle,
And with sad contenance kneleth stille
Til she had herd what was the lorde's will.

This thoughtful markis spak un-to this mayde
Ful sobrely, and seyd in this manere,
'Wher is your fader, Grisildis?' he seyd,
And she with reverence, in humble chere,
Answerde, 'lord, he is al redy here.'
And in she gooth with-outen lenger lette,
And to the markis she her fader fette. 301

He by the hond than took this olde man,
And seyd thus, whan he him hadde asyde,
'Ianicula, I neither may ne can
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 seyd bfore,
If that thou wol 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 seye he wordes me,
But only thys: '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 you lust governeth this matere.'

'Yet wol I,' quod this markis softlye,
'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 withoute,
And wondred hem in how honest manere
And tentifly she kepte hir fader dere.
But outery Grisildis wonders 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,
This arn the wordes that the markis sayde
To this benigne verray feithful mayde.

'Grisilde,' he seyd, 'ye shul wel understonde
It lyketh to your fader and to me
That I yow wedde, and eek it may so stonde,
As I suppose, ye wol that it so be.
But this 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, 371
And never ye to grucche it, night ne day?
And eek when I sey "ye," ne sey nat "nay," 376
Neither by word ne frowning contenante; 355
But 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.' And heer I swere that never willingly
In werk ne thougth I nil yow disobeye,
For to be deed, though me were looth to dееy.'

'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 pople he seyde in this manere,
'This is my wyf,' quod he, 'that standeth here.
Hounoureth hir, and loveth hir, I preye,
Who-so me loveth; ther is na-more to seye.'

And for that no-thing of hir olde gere
She shold bringe in-to his hous, he bad That wommen shold be dispoilen hir right there;
Of which thise ladyes were nat right glad To handle hir clothes wher-in she was clad.
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 fairnesse,
Whan she translated was in swich richesse.

This markis hath hir spoused with a ring
Broght for the same cause, and than hir sette
Up-on an hors, snow-whyt and wel ambling,
And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,
With Ioyful peple that hir ladde and mette,
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 markisesse
God hath swich favour sent hir of his grace,
That it ne semed nat by lyklinessse
That she was born and fed in rudennesse,
As in a cote or in an ox-stalle,
But norished in an emperoures halle.

To every wight she woon is so dere
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 Tancle, of which I spak bifoire,
She doghter nas, for, as by coniecture,
Hem thoughte she was another creature.

For thoght that ever vertuous was she,
She was encressed in swich excellency
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 reijoun, 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 honestetee,
In goddes pees liveth ful esily
At hoom, and outward grace y-nogh had he;
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 thugh 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 hevinesse
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,
If gentil men, or other of hir contree
Were wrothe, she wolde bringen hem atoon;
So wyse and rype wordes hadde she,
And lugements of so greet equiteit,
That she from heven sent was as men wende,
Peple to save and every wrong tamende.

Nat longe tyme after that this Grisild
Was wedded, she a daughter hath y-bore,
Al had hir lever have born a knave child.
Glad was this markis and the folk thersore;
For though a mayde child come al before,
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,
This markis in his herte longeth so
To tempte his wyf, hir sadnesse for to knowe,
That he ne mighte out of his herte throwe
This mervellous desyr, his wyf tassaye,
Needless, god woot, he thoughte hir for taffraye.

He hadde assayed hir y-nogh bfore,
And fond hir ever good; what neded it
Hir for to tempte and alwey more and more?
Though som men preise it for a subtill wit,
But as for me, I seye that yvel it sit
Tassaye a wyf whan that it is no nede,
And putten hir 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,
And seyde thus, 'Grisild,' quod he, 'that day
That I yow took out of your povre array,
And putte yow in estaat of heigh noblesse,
Ye have nat that forgeten, as I gesse.

I seye, Grisild, this present dignitee,
In which that I have put yow, as I trowe,
Maketh yow nat foryetfull for to be
That I yow took in povre estaat ful lowe.
For any wele ye moost your-selven knowe.
Tak hede of every word that I yow seye,
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;
They seyn, to hem it is great shame and wo
For to be subgetts 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 doutellees;
But I desyre, as I have doon bfore,
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,
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
That ye me highte and swore in your village
That day that maked was our mariage.'

When she had herd al this, she noght ameved
Neither in word, or chere, or countenaunce;
For, as it semed, she was nat agreved:
She seyde, 'lord, al lyth in your ple-
saunce,
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,
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,
Ne chaunge my corage to another place.'

Glad was this markis of hir answering,
But yet he feyned as he were nat so;
Al drey was his chere and his looking
Whan that he sholde out of the chambre

Sone after this, a furlong whey or two,
He privelie 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
In thinges grete, and eek swich folk wel can
Don executioun on thinges badde.
The lord knew wel that he him loved and dradde;
And whan this sergeant wiste his lorde
wille

In-to the chambre he stalked him ful stille.

'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 estes mowe nat been y-feyned;
They mowe wel been biwaillé or com-
pleyned,
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

As though he wolde han slayn it er he 
went,
Grisildis mot al suffren and consente;
And as a lamb she sitteth meke and still,
And leet this cruel sergeant doon his wille.

Suspicious was the diffame of this man,

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.

But natheles she neither weep ne syked
Consenting hir to that the markis lyked.

But atte laste spoken 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 
deye;
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;
But, sith I thee have marked with the 
croys,
Of thilke 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 dyen for my sake.' 560

I trowe that to a noircise in this cas
It had ben hard this rewthe for to se;
Wel mighte a moorder than han cryed
'allas!' 561
But nathelesse so sad stedfast was she,
That she endured all adversitee,
And to the sergeant meekly she sayde,
'I have heer agayn your litel yonge mayde.

Goth now,' quod she, 'and dooth my lordes neste,
But o thing wol I preye yow of your grace,
That, but my lord forbaid yow, atte leste
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 nathelesse his purpos heeld he stille,
As lordes doon, whan they wol han hir wille; 581

And bad his sergeant that he prively
Sholde this child ful softe winde and wrappe
With alle circumstances tendrely,
And carie it in a cofre or in a lappe;
But, up-on peyne his heed of for to swappe,
That no man sholde knowe of his entente,
Ne whenne he cam, ne whider that he wente;
But at Bologn to his suster dere,
That thilke tyme of Panik was countesse,
My peple sikly berth our mariage
And namely, sith my sone y-boren is,
Now is it worse than ever in al our age.
The murmure sleeth myn herte and my corage;
For to myne eres comth the voyes so smerte,
That it wel ny destroyed hath myn herte.

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 murmure taken hede;
For certeyn I drede swich sentence,
Though they nat pleyn spake in myn audience.

I wolde live in pees, if that I mighte;
Wherfor I am disposed outely,
As I his suster served by nighte,
Right so thenke I to serve hym privel; This warne I yow, that ye nat sodeynly Out of your-self for no wo shoilde outraye; Beth pacient, and ther-of I yow preye.'

'I have,' quod she, 'seyd thus, and ever shal,
I wol no thing, ne nil no thing, certayn,
But as you list; noght greveth me al, Thogh that my doghter and my sone be slayn,
At your comandement, this is to sayn. I have noght had no part of children twyne
But first siknesse, and after wo and peye.

Ye been our lord, doth with your owene thing
Right as you list; axeth no reed at me.
For, as I lefte at hoom al my clothing,
When I first cam to yow, right so,' quod she,
'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,
I wolde it doon with-outen necligence;
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,
Right gladly wolde I dyen, yow to plesse.

Deth may noght make no comparisoun
Un-to your love: ' and, when this markis sey
The constance of his wyf, he caste adoun
His yên two, and wondreth that she may
In pacience suffire al this array.
And forth he gooth with drery contenaunce,
But to his herte it was ful greet plesaunce.

This ugly sergeant, in the same wyse
That he hir doghter caughte, right so he,
Or worse, if men worse can devyse,
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,
Hir litle 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; 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 knownen ther-bifore,  
That parthly hir children lovede she,  
He wolde have wend that of som subtilite,  
And of malice or for cruel corage,  
That she hadde suffred this with sad visage.

But wel he knew that next him-self,  
certainyn,  
She loved hir children best in every wyse.  
But now of wommen wolde I axen fayn,  
If thise assayes mighte nat suffysye?  
What coude a sturdy housbond more devyse  
To preve hir wyf and hir stedfastnesse,  
And he continuing ever in sturdiness?  

But ther ben folk of swich condiicion,  
That, when they have a certain 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  
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;  
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  
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.  

The slaundre 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 privly.  
Swich murmure was amonge hem comunly.  
No wonder is, for to the peples ere  
Ther cam no word but that they mordred were.

For which, wher-as his peple ther-bifore  
Had loved him wel, the slaundre of his diffame  
Made hem that they him hatede therfore;  
To been a mordrer is an hateful name.  
But natheles, for ernest ne for game  
He of his cruel purpos wolde stente;  
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 swiche bulles to devyse  
As to his cruel purpos may suffysye,  
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 mencion  
That he hath leve his firste wyf to lete,  
As by the popes dispensacioun,  
To stinte rancour and dissencioun  
Bitwixe his peple and him; thus seyde  
The bulle,  
The which they han publiced atte fulle.

The rude peple, as it no wonder is,  
Wenden ful wel that it had been right so;  
But whan thise tydinges cam to Grisildis,  
I deme that hir herte was ful wo.  
But she, y-lyke sad for evermo,  
Disposed was, this humble creature,  
Thadversitee of fortune al tendure.

Abyding ever his lust and his plesaunce,  
To whom that she was yeven, herte and al,  
As to hir verray worldly suffi saunce;  
But shortly if this storie I tellen shal,  
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 
Wedded his suster, preyde he specially 
To bringen hoom agayn his children 
To Toward Saluce, and lordes many oon, 
In riche array, this mayden to gyde; 
His yonge brother ryding his bisyde.

Arrayed was toward hir mariage 
This fresshe mayde, ful of gemmes clere; 
Hir brother, which that seven yeer was 
of age, 
Arrayed eek ful fresh in his manere, 
And thus in greet noblesse and with 
glad chere, 
Toward Saluces shaping hir Journey, 
Fro day to day they ryden in hir wey.

Explicit quarta pars. Sequitur quinta pars.

Among al this, after his wikke usage, 
This markis, yet his wyf to tempete more 
To the uttereste preyve of hir corage, 
Fuly to han experience and lore 
If that she were as stedfast as before, 
He on a day in open audience 
Ful boystously hath seyd hir this sentence:

‘Certes, Grisilde, I hadde y-nough pleasance 
To han yow to my wyf for your goodnesse, 
As for your trouthe and for your obeisance, 
Nought for your linage ne for your richesse; 
But now knowe I in verry soothfastnesse 
That in gret lordshippe, if I wel avyse, 
Ther is gret servitute in sondry wyse.

I may nat don as every plowman may; 
My pele me constreynteth for to take 
Another wyf, and cryen day by day; 
And eek the pope, rancour for to skale, 
Consenteth it, that dar I undertake; 
And treweliche thus muche I wol yow seye, 
My newe wyf is coming by the weye. 

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; 
With eve ne herte I rede yow tendorde 
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 
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 — 
The heighe god take I for my wittes, 
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, 
Aboven every worldly creature.

That ye so longe of your benigne 
Han holden me in honour and nobelye, 
Wher-as I was noght worthy for to be, 
That thonke I god and yow, to whom I preye 
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 deede, my lyf ther I lede.
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 lorde 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 when yow lest.

But ther-as ye me profe swich dowaire 
As I first broghte, it is wel in my minde 
It were my wrecched clothes, no-thing faire, 
The which to me were hard now fer 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 seyd, 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 renpente. 
That I yow yaf myn herte in hool entente.

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 maydenhede, 
And here agayn my clothing I restore, 
And eek my wedding-ring, for evermore. 

The remenant of your Jewels redy be 
In-with your chambre, dar I sauly sayn; 870
Naked out of my fadres hous,' quod she, 
'Fame, and naked moot I turne agayn.

Al your plesaunce wol I solwen sayn; 
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, thogh 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, 
Lat it be stille, and ber it forth with thee.' 
But wel unnethes thilke word he spak, 
But wente his wyf 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 weeping in hir weye, 
And fortune ay they cursed as they goon; 
But she fro weping kepeth hir yên dreye, 
Ne in this tyme word ne spak she noon. 900
Hir fader, that this tyding herde anoon, 
Curseth the day and tyme that nature 
Shoopt him to been a lyves 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 thynke it were a disparage
To his estat so lowe for talighte,  
And voyden hir as sone as ever he  
mighte.  

Agayn 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 sorwefullly wepinge;  
But on hir body mighte he it nat bringe.  

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 wylye pacience,  
That neither by hir wordes ne hir face  
Biforn the folk, ne eek in hir absence,  
Ne shewed she that hir was doon offence;  
Ne of hir heigh estat no remembraunce  
Ne hadde she, as by hir countenaunce.

No wonder is, for in hir grete estat  
Hir goost was ever in pleyn humylitee;  
No tendre mouth, non herte delicaat,  
No pompe, no semblant of royaltie,  
But ful of pacient benignitee,  
Discreet and prydeles, ay honourable,  
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 soothisfastnesse,  
Thogh clerkes preyse wommen but a  
lyte,  
Ther can no man in humblesse him acquyte  
As womman can, ne can ben halfe 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-sprung to more  
and lesse,  
And in the peples eres alle and some  
Was coutn eek, that a newe markisesse  
He with him broghte, in swich pompe  
and richesse,  
That never was ther seyn with mannes ye  
So noble array in al West Lombardye.
Abouten undern gan this erl alighte,
That with him broghte thise 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
To chaunge his wyf, for it was for the
beste.

For she is fairer, as they demen alle,
Than is Grisilde, and more tendre of age,
And fairer fruit bitwene hem sholde falle,
And more plesant, for hir heigh lin-
age;
Hir brother eek so fair was of visage,
That hem to seen the peple hath caught
plesaunce,
Commending now the markis govern-
ance.—

Auctor. ‘O stormy peple! unsad and
ever untrewel! Ay underscreet 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 fait;
Your doom is fals, your constance yvel
preveth,
A ful greet fool is he that on yow leveth!’

Thus sayden sadde folk in that ciate,
Whan that the peple gazed up and doun,
For they were glad, right for the novelte,
To han a newe lady of hir toun.
Na-more of this make I now mencioun;
But to Grisilde agayn wol I me dresse,
And telle hir constance and hir busi-
nesse.—

Ful bisy was Grisilde in every thing
That to the feste was apertinent; 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 busi-
nesse.

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 povere array was for to see,
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.

But atte laste, whan that thise lordes
wende
To sitten doun to mete, he gan to calle
Grisilde, as she was bisy in his halle.

‘Grisilde,’ quod he, as it were in his
pley,
‘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
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.
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,
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 rewem up-on hir wyfly stedfastnesse.

‘This is y-nogh, Grisilde myn,’ quod
he,
‘Be now na-more agast ne yvel apayd; I have thy feith and thy benignitee,
As wel as ever womman was, assayed,
In greet estaat, and povrelieh arrayed.

With so glad chere his gestes she receyv-
eth,
Now knowe I, dere wyf, thy stedfastnesse; —
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 sryde;
She ferde as she had stert out of a sleep,
Til she out of hir masednesse abryde.

"Grisilde," quod he, "by god that for us deyde,
Thou art my wyf, ne noon other that I have,
Ne never hadde, as god my soule save!

This is thy doghter which thou hast sup-posed
To be my wyf; that other faithfully
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.

That thou hast lorn non of thy children tweye.

And folk that otherwayes han seyd of me,
I warne hem wel that I have doon this dede
For no malice ne for no crueltee,
But for tassay in thee thy wommanhede;
And nat to slyen my children, god for-bede!

But for to kepe hem prively and stille,
Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy wille.'

When she this herde, aswowne doun she falleth
For pitous Ioye, and after hir swowninge
She bothe hir yonge children un-to hir calleth,
And in hir armes, pitously wepinge,
Embraceth hem, and tendrely kissinge
I'lylk a mooder, with hir salte teres
She batheth bothe hir visage and hir heres.

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;
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

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 swapte adoun to grounde.

And in her swough so sadly holdeth she
Hir children two, whan she gan hem tem-brace,
That with greet sleighte and greet difficultee
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;

Unnethe abouten hir mighte they abyde.

Walter hir gladeth, and hir sorwe slaketh;
She ryseth up, abayesd, from hir traunce,
And every wight hir Ioye and feste mak-eth,
Til she hath caught agayn hir conte-naunce.

Walter hir dooth so faithfully plesaunce,
That it was deyntee for to seen the chere
Bitwixe hem two, now they ben met y-ferre.

Thise ladyes, whan that they hir tyme say,
Han taken hir, and in-to chambre goon,
And strepen hir out of hir rude array.
And in a cloth of gold that brighte shoon,
With a coronne of many a riche stoon
Up-on hir hede, they in-to halle hir broghte,
And ther she was honoured as hir oghte.

Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,
For every man and womman dooth his might
This day in murthe and revel to dispewe
Til on the welkne shoon the sterres light.
For more solemne in every mannes sight
This feste was, and gretter of costage,
Than was the revel of hir mariage.

Ful many a yer in heigh prosperitee
Liven thise two in concord and in reste,
And richely hir dothgter married he
Un-to a lord, oon of the worthieste
Of al Itaille; and thon 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
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,
And herkneth what this auctour seith therfore.

This storie is seyd, nat for that wyves sholde
Folwen Grisilde as in humilitie,
For it were importable, though they wolde;
But for that every wight, in his degree,
Sholde be constant in adversitee
As was Grisilde; therfor Petrark wryteth
This storie, which with heigh style he endytheth.

For, sith a woman was so pacient
Un-to a mortal man, wel more us oghte
Receyven al in gree that god us sent;
For greet skile is, be preve that he wroghte.
But he netempteth no man that he boghte,
As seith scint Tame, if ye his pistel rede;
He preveth folk al day, it is no drede,
And suffreth us, as for our excercyse,
With sharpe scourges of adversitie

Ful ofte to be bete in sondry wyse;
Nat for to knowe our wil, for certes he,
Ere we were born, knew al our freletee;
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 town Grisildes three or two;
For, if that they were put to swiche assayes,
The gold of hem hath now so badde alayes
With bras, that thogh the coyne be far at ye,
It wolde rather breste a-two than plye.

For which heer, for the wyves love of Bathe,
Whos lyf and al hir secte god mayntene
In heigh maistrice, and elles were it scathec,
I wol with lusty herte freshe and grene
Seyn yow a song to glade yow, I wene,
And lat us stinte of ernestful matere:
— Herkneth my song, that seith in this manere.

Lenvoy de Chaucer.
Grisilde is deed, and eek hir pacience,
And bothe atones buried in Itaille;
For which I crye in open audience,
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 prudente,
Lat noon humilitie your tonge naille,
Ne lat no clerk have cause or diligence
To wryte of yow a storie of swich mer-
vaille
As of Grisildis pacient and kinde;
Lest Chichevache yow swelwe in hir entraille!
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 myere 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 ere answerest at the countre-taille;
Beth nat bidaffed for your innocenc;
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, Sin ye be stronge as is a greet camaille;
Ne suffreth nat that men yow doon offence.
And scendre wyves, feble as in bataille,
Ay clappeth as a mille, I yow consaille.

Ne dreed hem nat, do hem no reverence;

For though thyn housbonde armed be in maille,
The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence
Shal perce his brest, and eek his aventure;
In Ialousye I rede eek thou him binde,
And thou shalt make him couche as dooth a quaille.

If thou be fair, ther folk ben in presence
Shew thou thy visage and thy apparail;
If thou be foul, be free of thy dispence,
To gete thee freendes ay do thy travaile;

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.

*Weping* and wayling, care, and other sorwe
I know y-nogh, on even and a-morwe,'
Quod the Marchaunt, 'and so don othere mo

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 thogh the feended to hir y-coupled were,
She wolde him overmacche, I dar wel swere.

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. Were I unbounden, al-so moost 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.

God shilde that it sholde so bifalle!
A! good sir hoost! I have y-wedded be
Thise monthes two, and more nat, pardee;
And yet, I trowe, he that all his lyve
Wylles hath been, though that men

Un-to the herte, ne coude in no manere
Tellen so muchel sorwe, as I now here
Coude tellyn of my wyves cursednesse!'

'Sow,' quod our hoost, 'Marchaunt, so god yow blesse,
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 dwelling in Lumbardye

A worthy knight, that born was of Pauye,
In which he lived in greet prosperitee;
And sixty yeer a wyflees man was he,
And folwed ay his bodily delyt
On wommen, ther-as was his appetyt,

As doon thise 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
Haddhe this knight to been a wyde man,

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 blisfull lyf
That is bitwixe an housbond and his wyf;

And for to live under that holy bond
With which that first god man and womman bond.
‘Non other lyf,’ sayde he, ‘is worth a bene;
For wedlok is so esy and so clene,
That in this world it is a paradys.’

Thus sayde this olde knight, that was so wys.

And certeiny, 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,

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 adverstee
In love, which nis but childish vanitee.
And treweley it sit wel to be so,

That bacheleres have ofte peyne and wo;

On brotel ground they builde, and brotelnesse

They finde, whan they wene sikerness.
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 blisfull and ordinaat,
Under the yok of mariage y-bound;
Wel may his herte in Ioye and blisse habounde.

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 forsake.

She nis nat wery 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 though Theofraste liste lye?
‘Ne take no wyf,’ quod he, ‘for houbondrye,

As for to spare in houshold thy dispence;
A trewe servant dooth more diligence,
Thy good to kepe, than thy owene wyf.

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 thyh hold,
Ful lightly maystow been a cokewold.

This sentence, and an hundred thinges worse,

Wryteth this man, ther god his bones corse!
But take no kepe of al swich vanitee;
Deffye Theofraste and herke me.

A wyf is goddes yfite verrayly;
Alle other maner yiftes hardily,
As londes, rentes, pasture, or commune,
Or moebles, alle ben yiftes of fortune,

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 longer than thee list, paraventure.
Mariage is a ful gret sacrement;
He which that hath no wyf, I holde him shent;
He liveth helples and al desolat,
I spoke of folk in seculer estaat.
And herke why, I sey nat this for night,
That womman is for mannes help y-wroght.
The hye god, whan he hadde Adam maked,
And saugh him ai alone, bely-naked,
God of his gret 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,
That wyf is mannes help and his confort,
His paradys terestre and his disport.
So buxom and so vertuous is she,
They moste nedes live in unitee.
O flesh they been, and o flesh, as I gesse,
Hath but 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 is that bitwixe hym tweye
Ther may no tounge 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.'
'Do this,' seith he; 'al redy, sir,' seith she.
O blissful ordre of wedlok precious,
Thou art so mery, and eek so vertuous,
And so commended and approved eek,
That every man that halt him worth a leek,
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 sikerness;
He may nat be deceived, 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,
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.
Lo, Judith, 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
By good conseil delivered out of wo
The peple of god, and made him, Mar-dochee,
Of Assuere enhanched for to be.
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 loveth thy-self, thou lovest thy wyf;
No man hateth his flesh, but in his lyf
He fostreeth it, and therfore bidde I thee,
Cherisse thy wyf, or thou shalt never thee.
Housbond and wyf, what so men Iape or pleye,
Of worldly folk holden the siker wyse;
They been so knit, ther may noon harm bityde;
And namely, up-on the wyves syde.
For which this Januarie, of whom I tolde,
Considered hath, inwith his dayes olde,
The lusty lyf, the vertuous quiete, 1395
That is in mariage hony-swete;
And for his frendes on a day he sente,
To tellen hem the effect of his entente.

With face said, his tale he hath hem told;
He seyde, 'frendes, I am hoor and old,
And almost, god wot, on my pitte brinke;'
Up-on my soule somewhat moiste I thinke.
I have my body folly despended;
Blessed be god, that it shal been amended!

For I wol be, certeyn, a wedded man,
And that anoon in al the haste I can,
Unto som mayde fair and tendre of age.
I prey yow, shapeth for my mariage
Al soleyne, 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 espypen
Than I, and wher me best were to allyen.
But o thing warne I yow, my frendes dere,
I wol non old wyf han in no manere.
She shal nat passe twenty yeer, certeyn;
Old fish and yong flesh wolde I have ful fayn.
Bet is, quod he, 'a pylk than a pikerel;
And bet then old boef is the tendre veel.
I wol no womman thrifty yeer of age,
It is but bene-straw and greet forage.
And eek thise olde widwes, god it woot,
They cone so muchel craft on Wades boot,
So muchel broken harm, whan that hem lest,
That with hem sholde I never live in reste.
For sondry scoles maken sotil clerkis;
Wommen of manye scoles half a clerk is.
But certeynly, a yong thing may men gye,
Right as men may warm wex with handes plye.
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 mischaunce,
That I in hir ne coude han no plesaunce,
Thanne sholde I lede my lyf in avoutrye,
And go streight to the devel, whan I dye.

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.

I dote nat, I woot the cause why
Men sholde wedde, and furthermore wot I,
Ther speketh many a man of mariage,
That woot na-more of it than woot my page,
For whiche causes man sholde take a wyf.
If he ne may nat liven chast his lyf,
Take him a wyf with greet devocioun,
By-cause of levely 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 sister 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-selfen best what I may do.
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
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 wolde assente.' 1465
Diverse men diversely him tolde
Of mariage manye ensamples olde.
Somme blamed it, somme preysed it, certeyn;
But atte laste, shortly for to seyn,
As al day falleth altercacioun
Bitwenx freendes in disputisoun, 1474
Ther fil a stryf bitwixe his bretheren two,
Of whiche that oon was cleped Placebo,
Justinus soothingly called was that other.
Placebo seyde, 'o Ianuarie, brother,
Ful litel nede ha 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 heigh
prudence,
To weyven fro the word of Salomon.
This word seyde he un-to us everichon:
"Wirk alle thinge by conseil," thus seyde he,
"And thanne shaltow nat repent 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.

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;
I seyde the same, or elles thinge semblable.
A ful gret foole is any conseilour,
That serveth any lord of heigh honour,
That dar presume, or elles theken it,
That his conseil sholde passe his lordes
wit.
Nay, lordes been no folies, 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 hult him of this conseil wel apayd.
And trewely, it is an heigh corage
Of any man, that stopen is in age,
To take a yong wyf; by my fader kin,
Your herte hangeth on a loly pin.
Doth now in this mateure right as yow
leste,
For finally I holde it for the beste.'
Justinus, that ay stille sat and herde,
Right in this wyse to Placebo answerte:
'Now brother myn, be pacient, I preye,
Sin ye han seyd, and herkneth what I
seye.
Senek among his othere wordes wyse
Seith, that a man oghte him right wel
avysse,
To whom he yeveth his lond or his
catel.
And sin I oghte avysse 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
To take a wyf withoute avysement.
Men moste enquere, this is myn assent,
Wheres he be wys, or sobre, or dronkelewe,
Or proud, or elles other-weisys a shrew;
A eydsyder, or wastour of thy good,
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
devysse;
But nathelesse, it oghte y-nough suffise
With any wyf, if so were that she hadde
Mo gode thewes than hir wyces badde;
And al this axeth leyser for tenquere.
For god it woot, I have wept many a
tere
Ful privelly, sin I have had a wyf.
Preyse who-so woole a wedded mannes lyf,
Cerwine, I finde in it but cost and care,
And observances, of alle blisses bare.
And yet, god woot, my neighbores
aboute,
And namely of wommen many a route,
Seyn that I have the moste stedfast wyf,
And eek the mekest 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,
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
To han his wyf alone, trusteth me.
Ye shul nat plese 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 proverbs,
I counte nat a panier ful of herbes
Of scale-terms; wyser men than thou,
As thou hast herd, assenteden right now 1570
To my purpos; Placebo, what sey ye?'
'I seyce, it is a cursed man,' quod he,
'That lasteth matrimoine, sikerly.'

And with that word they rysen sodeynly,
And been 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 thoought devyse
Of maydens, whiche that dwelten him bisyde.

He wiste nat wher that he mighte abyde.
For if that oon have beauté in hir face,
Another stant so in the peples grace 1590
For hir sadnesse, and hir benignite,
That of the peples grettest voyis hath she.
And somme were riche, and hadden badde name.

But nathelees, bitwixe ernest and game,
He atte laste apoyned 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-broght,
He purtreyed, in his herte and in his thoght, 1600
Hir fresshe beautee and hir age tendre,
Hir myddel smal, hir armes longe and sclendre,
Hir wyse governaunce, hir gentillesse,
Hir wommanly beringe and hir sadnesse.
And whan that he on hir was condescended, 1605
Him thoughte his chois mighte nat ben amended.

For whan that he him-self concluded hadde,
Him thoughte ech other mannis wit so badde,
That impossible it were to replye
Agayn his chois, this was his fantasye. 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,
He was apoyned ther he wolde abyde. 1615
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 laboureyn 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 conscience, 1635
The which I wol reheerde in your presence.
I have,' quod he, 'herd seyd, 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,
And eek from every branche of thilke tree,
Yet is ther so parfit felicitee,
And so greet esse and lust in mariage,
That ever I am agast, now in myn age,
That I shal lede now so mery a lyf,
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
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,
Assoilleth me this questioun, I preye.'
Justinus, which that hated his folye,
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 miracle
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 forbade but he sente
A wedded man him grace to repente
Wel ofte rather than a singele man!
And therfore, sire, the beste reed I can,
Dispeire yow noght, but have in your memorie,
Paraunter she may be your purgatorie!
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
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 plese hir nat to amorously,
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 understonde,
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 Justin and his brother
Han take hir leve, and ech of hem of other.
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 Januarie.
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 herknen of hir riche array.
But finally y-comen is the day
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 mariage;
And seyde his orisons, as is usage,
And crouched hem, and bad god sholde hem blesse,
And made al siker y-noghe with holinesse.
Thus been they wedded with solep-nitee,
And at the feste sitteth he and she
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.
Biform hem stoode swiche instruments of soun,
That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphion,
Ne maden never swich a melodye.
At every cours than cam loud min-
stralaye,
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 become hir knight,
And wolde bothe assayen his corage 1725
In libertee, and eek in mariage;
And with hir fybrond in hir hand aboute
Daunceth biforn the bryde and al the
route.
And certeinly, 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 pee, 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 mariadge.
Whan tendre youtuie hath wedded stou-
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 materie. 1741
 Maius, that sit with so benigne a
chere,
Hir to biholde it semed fayerye;
Quene Ester loketh never with swich an
ye 1744
On Assuer, so meke a look hath she.
I may yow nat devyse al hir beauete;
But thus muche of hir beauete telle I
may,
That she was lyk the brighte morwe of
May,
Fulfilde of alle beauete and plesaunce.
This Ianuarie is ravished in a trauce
At every time he loketh 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 nathelesse, 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 drincken
faste,
And spyces al aboute the hous they
caste; 1770
And ful of Joye and bliss is every man;
All but a squyer, highte Damian,
Which carf biforn the knight ful many a
day.
He was so ravished 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,
Til fresshe May wol rewe on his peyne.
O perilous fyr, that in the bedstraw
bredeth! 1781
Auctor.
O famulier foo, that his servyce bedeth!
O servant traitour, false hoomly hewe,
Lyk to the naddre in bosom sly
utrewre, 1786
God shilde us alle from your aqueynt-
auce!
O Ianuarie, dronken in plesaunce
Of mariadge, see how thy Damian,
Thyn owene squyer and thy borne man,
Entendeth for to do thees vileynye. 1791
God graunte thee thyln hoomly fo tespys.
For in this world wis 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 soire
On thorisonte, as in that latitude.
Night with his mantel, that is derk and
rude,
A man may do no sinne with his wyf,
Ne hurte him-selven with his owene
knyst; 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 clarce,
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 Iargon as a flekked pye.
The slakke skin aboute his nekke
shaketh,
Whyl that he sang; so chaunteth he and
craketh. 1850
But god wot what that May thoughte in
hir herte,
When she him saugh up sittinge in his
sherte,
In his night-cappe, and with his nekke
lune;
She preyseth nat his pleying worth a
bene.
Than seide he thus, 'my reste wol I
take;
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 freshe May
Holdeth hir chambre un-to the fourthe
day,
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 spoke of woful Da-
mian,
That languissheth for love, as ye shul
here;
Therfore I spoke to him in this manere:
I seye, 'O sely Damian, alias!
Answere to my demaunde, as in this
cas,
How shaltow to thy lady freshe 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 Januarie, 'tak good hede, 1920 At-after mete ye, with your wommen alle, When 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 sped ye faste, for I wolde 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 things, 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 secrete 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 syde 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 wende hir wey; ye gete namore of me. 1945 But un-to Januarie y-comen is she, That on his beddes syde sit ful softe. He taketh hir, and kisseth hir ful ofte, And leyde him doun 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 softly it caste.  
Who studieth now but faire fresshe May?  
Adoun by olde Ianuarie she lay,  
That sleep, til that the cough he him awaked;  
Anon he preyde hir strepen hir al naked;  
He wolde of hir, he seyde, han som pleasure,  
And seyde, hir clothes dide him encombraunce,  
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.  
Were it by destinee or aventure,  
Were it by influence or by nature,  
Or constellacion, that in swich estat  
The hevene stood, that tyme fortunat  
Was for to putte a bille of Venus werkes  
(For alle thing hath tyme, as seyn thise clerkes)  
To any woman, for to gete hir love,  
I can nat seye; but grete god above,  
That knoweth that non act is causelesse,  
He deme of al, for I wol holde my peas.  
But sooth is this, how that this fresshe May  
Hath take swich impression that day,  
For pitee of this syke Damian,  
That from hir herte she ne dryve can  
The remembralence for to doon him ese.  
'Certeyn,' thougthe she, 'whom that this thing disples,  
I rekke noght, for here I him assure,  
To love him best of any creature,  
Though he na-more hadde than his sherte.'  
Lo, pitee renneth some in gentil herte.  
Heer may ye se how excellent franchise  
In wommen is, when 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  
Wel rather than han graunted him hir grace;  
And hem rejoysey in hir cruel pryde,  
And rekke nat to been an homicyde.  
This gentil May, fulfilled of pitee,  
Right of hir hande a lettre made she,  
In which she graunted hir verray grace;  
Ther lakketh noght but only day and place,  
Wher that she mighte un-to his lust suffise:  
For it shall be right as he wol devyse.  
And whan she saugh hir time, up-on a day,  
To visite this Damian goth May,  
And sotilly this lettre doun she threste  
Under his pilwe, rede it if him leste.  
She taketh him by the hand, and marde him twiste  
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.  
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,  
(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.  
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.  
His housinge, his array, as honestly  
To his degree was makead as a kinges.  
Amonges othere of his honest thinges,  
He made a gardin, walled al with stool;
So fair a gardin woot I newher noon. 2030
For out of doute, I verraily suppose,
That he that wrooth 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 fayere
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 lest, 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 instable,
Auctor.
Lyk to the scorpioun so deceivable,
That flaterest with thyne heed when thou
wolt stinge;
Thy tayl is deeth, thurgh thyne envenim-
inge. 2060
O brotil Ioye! o swete venim queythe!
O monstre, that so subtilly canst peyne
Thy yiftes, under hewe of stedfastnesse,
That thou deceyveth bothe more and lesse!
Why hastow Ianuarie thus deceyved, 2065
That haddest him for thy ful frend re-
ceyved?
And now thou hast biraft him bothe hise
yen,
For sowe of which desyreth 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 breneth his herte, that he wolde sayn
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 twayne,
Ihis sorwe gan aswage, sooth to seeye;
For whan he wiste it may noon other be,
He paciently took his adverstee;
Save, out of doute, he may nat for-
goon
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 noldhe 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 outher dyen sodeynly,
Or elles she mot han hir as hir lest;
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 speake a word to fresshe
May, 2100
As to his purpos, of no swich materre,
But-if that Ianuarie moiste it here,
That hadde an hand up-on hir evermo.
But nathelesse, 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 shipes saile?
For also good is blind deceyved be,
As be deceyved when a man may se. 2110
Lo, Argus, which that hadde an hundered
yen,
For al that ever he coude poure or pryen,
Yet was he blent; and, god wot, so ben mo,
That wenen wisly that it be nat so.
Passe over is an ese, I sey na-more. 2115
This fresshe May, that I spak of so yore,
In warne wex hath embrapt the cliket,
That Januarie bar of the smale wikit,
By which in-to his gardin ofte he wente.
And Damian, that knew al his entrante,
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,
That he nil finde it out in som manere?
By Piramus and Tesbee may men lere;
Thogh they were kept ful longe strete overal,
They been accorded, rouninge thurg a val,
Ther no wight coude han founde out
swich a sleighte.
But now to purpos; er that dayes eighte
Were passed, er the monthe of Iul, bifil
That Januarie hath caught so greet a wil,
Thurgh egging of his wyf, him for to pleye,
In his gardin, and no wight but they twewe,
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 wete;
The winter is goon, with alle his reynes wete; 2135
Com forth now, with thy eyen colymbyn!
How fairer been thy brestes than is wyn!
The gardin is enclosed al aboute;
Com forth, my whyte spouse; out of doule,
Thou hast me wounded in myn herte, o wyf! 2140
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.' 2145
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 wikit,
And in he stirte, and that in swich manere,
That no wight mighte it see neither y-heres;
And stille he sit under a bush anoon. 2155
This Januarie, as blind as is a stoon,
With Maius in his hand, and no wight mo,
In-to his fresshe gardin is again,
And clape to the wikit sodeunly.
'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 yden on a knyf,
Than thee offende, trewe dere wyf! 2165
For goddes sake, thenk how I thee chees,
Noght for no coveityse, doutelees,
But only for the love I had to thee.
And though that I be old, and may nat see,
Beth to me trewe, and I shall telle yow why.
Three thinges, certes, shul ye winne ther-by; 2170
First, love of Crist, and to your-self honour,
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 pray yow first, in covenant ye me kisse.
And thogh that I be Falous, wyte me noght.
Ye been so depe enprenyte in my thoght,
That, whan that I considere your beautee,
And ther-with-ali 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 doule,
Now kiss me, wyf, and lat us rome aboute.' 2185
This fresshe May, when she thise wordes herde,
Benignely to Januarie anwerde,
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 anwerde in this manere
By the leve of yow, my lord so dere: 2194
I pray 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 drench.
I am a gentil womman and no wenche.
Why speke ye thus? but men ben ever untrewes,
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 clime up-on a tree,
That charged was with fruit, and up he wente;
For verraily he knew al hir entente,
And every signe that she coude make
Wel bet than Januarie, hir owene make
For in a lettre she had told him al 2215
Of this matere, how he werench shal.
And thus I lette him sitte up-on the pyrie,
And Januarie and May rominge myrie.
Bright was the day, and blew the fir-mament,
Phebus of gold his strenes doun hath sent,
To gladen every flour with his warmnesse.
He was that tyme in Gemini, 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 flourues 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 sayde he to his quene. 2236
'My wyf,' quod he, 'ther may no wight
sey nay;
The experience so preveth every day
The treson whiche that wommen doon to man.
Ten hondred thousand [stories] telle I can
Notable of your untrouthe and brothilnesse.
O Salomon, wys, richest of richesse,
Fulfild of sapience and of worldly glorie,
Ful worthy been thy wordes to memorie
To every wight that wit and reson can.
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, alas! that he is blind and old,
His owene man shal make him kokewold;
Lo heer he sit, the lechour, in the tree.
Now wol I graunten, of my magnestee,
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 answere,
And alle wommen after, for hir sake;
That, though they be in any gilt y-take,
With face bold they shulle hem-self excuse,
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 yên,
Yit shul we wommen visage it hardly,
And wepe, and swere, and chyde subtily,
So that ye men shul been as lewed as gees. 2275
What reketh 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, 2280
Yet hath ther founde many another man
Wommen ful trewe, ful gode, and vertuous. 2281
Witness 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 wommen wryte, a boterye.
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 shall nat spare, for no curteisy,
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 graunte him his sighte
My word shall stonde, I warn yow, cer-
eyn.
I am a king, it sit me noght to lye.' 2315

'And I,' quod she, 'a queene of fayërye.
Hir answere shal she have, I underta-
ke;
Lat us na-more wordes heer-of make.
For sothe, I wol no lenger yow con-
trarie.' 2319
Now lat us turne agayn to Januarie,
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 agaynys 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,
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 hevene
quene!
I telle yow wel, a womman in my plyn
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 hir by a twiste, and up
she gooth.
Ladies, I prey yow that ye be nat wrooth; 2350
I can nat gloze, I am a rude man.
And sodeynly anen this Damian
Gan pullen up the smok, and in he throng.
And whan that Pluto saugh this grete wrong,
To Januarie he gaf agayn his sighte, 2355
And made him see, as wel as ever he mighte.
And whan that he hadde caught his sighte agayn,
Ne was ther never man of thing so fayn.
But on his wyf his thoght 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 expressed.
But if I wolde speke uncurteisly:
And up he yaf a roring and a cry
As doth the moder whan the child shal dye: 2365
‘Out! help! allas! harrow!’ he gan to cry,
‘O stronge lady store, what dostow?’
And she anserde, ‘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 lyn,
As me was taught, to hele with your yen,
Was no-thing bet to make yow to see
Than struggle with a man up-on a tree.
God woot, I did it in ful good entente.
‘Struggle!’ quod he, ‘ye, algate in it wente!’
God yeve yow bothe on shames deeth
to dyen!
He swyved thee, I saugh it with myne yen,
And elles be I hanged by the hals!’
‘Thanne is,’ quod she, ‘my medicyne al fals; 2380
For certeinely, if that ye mighte see,
Ye wolde nat seyn thise wordes un-to me;
Ye han som glimsging 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 doun, 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 brest.’ 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 verrailly; 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 whyle,
Ther may ful many a sighte yow bigyle.
Beth war, I prey yow; for, by hevene king,
Ful many a man wenth to seen a thing,
And it is al another than it semeth.
He that misconceyveth, he misdemeth.’
And with that word she leep doun fro the tree. 2411
This Januarie, 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 Januarie;
God blesse us and his moder Seinte Marie!

Here is ended the Marchantes Tale of Januarie.
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 subtiles
tIn 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 Marchauntes Tale it preveth weel.
But doubtles, as trewe as any steel
I have a wyf, though that she povere be;
But of hir tonge a labbyng shrew 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 seyd,
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,
And cause why; it sholde reported be
And told to hir of somme of this meyne;
Of whom, it nedeth nat for to declare,
Sin wommen connen outen swich chaffare;
And eek my wyf slyfyseth 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 somwhat of love; for, certes, ye
Connen ther-on as muche as any man.'

'Nay, sir,' quod he, 'but I wol seye as I can
With hertly wille; for I wol nat rebelle
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-ther 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 piétsous and Just, alwey y-liche. 20
Sooth of his word, benigne and honur-able,
Of his corage as any centre stable;
Yong, fresh, and strong, in armes desir-ous
As any bacheler 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
Haddde two sones on Elpheta his wyf,
Of whiche the eldste 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 Cambinskan
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 asecciousions; 55
Him semed han geten hem proteccions
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 someries day;
And eek it nedeth nat for to devyse 6
At every cours the ordre of hir servyse.
I wol nat telle of hir strange sewes,
Ne of hir swannes, ne of hir heronsewes.
Eek in that lond, als 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 things
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 heigh 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
Salueth 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 contenaunce,
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 heigh bord,
He with a manly voys seith his message,
After the forme used in his langage, 100
With-outen 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 soune his
style, 105
Ne can nat climben over so heigh a
style,
Yet seye I this, as to commune entente,
Thus mucho amounteth al that ever he
mente,
If it so be that I have it in minde.
He seye, ‘theking of Arabie and of
Inde, 110
My lige lord, on this solempne day
Salueth 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
With-outen wem of yow, thurgh foul or fair;
Or, if yow list to fleen as hyme in the air
As doth an egle, whan him to sore,
This same stede shal bere yow ever-more
With-outen harm, til ye be ther yow leste,
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;
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
When ther shal fallen any adversitee
Un-to your regne or to your-self also;
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
And openely, 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 excellente doghter that is here.
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 understande hir stevene,
And knowe his mening openly and pleyn,
And answere 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.
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 ooke;
And what man that is wounded with the strook
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;
This is a verry sooth, with-outen close,
It failleth 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 brighte,
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 presente ben ful royally y-fet,
This is to seyn, the swerd and the mirour,
And born anon in-to the heighe tour
With certeine officers ordeynaed therfore;
And un-to Canacee this ring was bore
Solempnely, ther she sit at the table.
But sikerly, with-outen any fable,
The hors of bras, that may nat be remewed,
It stant as it were to the ground y-glewed.
Ther may no man out of the place it drye
For noon engyn of windas or polyve;
And cause why, for they can nat the craft.
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,
To gauren on this hors that stondeth so;
For it so heigh was, and so brood and long,
So wel proportioned for to ben strong,
Right as it were a stede of Lumbardye;
Ther-with so horsly, and so quik of yé
As it a gentil Poilys 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;
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 thise olde poetries,
And seyden, it was lyk the Pegasee,
The hors that hadde winges for to flee;
Or elles it was the Grekes hors Synon,
That broghte Troye to destruccion, 210
As men may in thise olde gestes rede.
‘Myn herte,’ quod oon, ‘is evermore in
drede;
I trowe som men of armes been ther-
ine,
That shapen hem this citée for to winne.
It were right good that al swich thing
were knowe.’  215
Another rowned to his felawe lowe,
And seyde, ‘he lyeth, it is rather lyk
An apparence y-maad by som magyk,
As Iogelours pleyen at thise festes grete.’
Of sondry doutes thus they Iangle and
trete, 220
As lewed peple demeth comunly
Of thinges that ben maad more subtill
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 things
see.
Another anserde, and seyde it mighte
wel be
Naturally, by composicions
Of angles and of slye reflexions, 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 prospectives,
As knowen they that 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 spoken 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 Canaceês rings,
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 drawen hem
apart.
But nathelesse, 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,
Therfore 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 best 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 minstralaye,
And 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,
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,
Bidde him descende, and trille another pin,
For ther-in lyth the effect of al the gin,
And he wol doun descende and doun your wille;
And in that place he wol abyde stille,
Though al the world the contrarie hadde y-swoere;
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 anoon
Out of the sighte of every maner wight,
And come agayn, be it by day or night,
When that yow list to clepen him ageyn
In swich a gyse as I shal to yow seyn
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,
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, And kept among his Jewels leve and dere.
The hors vanished, I noot in what man-ere,
Out of his sighte; ye gete na-more of me.
But this I lete in lust and Iolitee
This Cambynskan his lوردes festeyeinge,
Til wol ny the day bigan to springe.

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;  
And seyde, ‘it was tyme to lye adoun,  
For blood was in his dominacioun;  
Cherissheth blood, natures frezend,’ quod he.  
They thanken him galpinge, by two, by three,  
And every wight gan drawe him to his reste,  
As slepe hem bad; they toke it for the beste.  
Hir dremes shul nat been y-told for me;  
Ful were hir heodes of fumosite,  
That causeth dream, of which ther nis no charge.  
They slepen til that it was pryme large,  
The moste part, but it were Canacee;  
She was ful mesurabe, 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,  
Nor on the morwe unstellich for to see;  
And slepte hir firste sleep, and thanne awook.  
For swich a Ioye she in hir herte took  
Both of hir queynte ring and hir mirour,  
That twenty tyme she changed hir col-our;  
And in hir slepe, right for impressioun  
Of hir mirour, she hadde a visioun.  
Wherfore, er that the sonne gan up glye,  
She cleped on hir maistresse hir bisyde,  
And seyde, that hir liste for to ryse.  
Thise olde wommen that been gladly wyse,  
As is hir maistresse, answerde hir anoon,  
And seyde, ‘madame, whider wil ye goon  
Thus erly? for the folk ben alle on reste,’  
‘I wol,’ quod she, ‘aryse, for me leste  
No lenger for to slepe, and walke aboute.’  
Hir maistresse clepeth wommen a gret  
route,  
And up they ryson, wel a ten or twelve;  
Up ryseth fresshe Canacee hir-selve,  
As rody and bright as dooth the yonge sonne,  
That in the Ram is four degrees up-ronne;  

Noon hyer was he, whan she redy was;  
And forth she walketh esily a pas,  
Arrayed after the lusty seson sote  
Lightly, for to pleye and walke on fote;  
Nat but with fyve or six of hir meyne;  
And in a trench, forth in the park, goth she.  
The vapour, which that fro the erthe good,  
Made the sonne to seme rody and brood;  
But nathelees, it was so fair a sighte  
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.  
The knotte, why that every tale is told,  
If it be taried til that lust be cold  
Of hem that han it after herkned yore,  
The savour passeth ever lenger the more,  
For fulsomnesse of his prolitixe.  
And by the same reson thinketh me,  
I sholde to the knotte condesendde,  
And maken of hir walking sone an ende.  
Amidde a tree fordrye, as whyt as chalk,  
As Canacee was pleying in hir walk,  
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 winges, til the rede blood  
Ran endelong the tree ther-as she stood,  
And ever in oon she crye alwey and shrighete,  
And with hir beek hir-selven so she prighte,  
That ther nis tygre, ne noon so cruel beste,  
That dwelleth either in wode or in foreste  
That nolde han wept, if that he wepe coude,  
For sorwe of hir, she shrighete 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 fairnisse,  
As wel of plumage as of gentillesse  
Of shap, and al that mighte y-rekened be.  
A faucon peregryn than semed she
Of fremde land; and evermore, as she stood,
She swowneth now and now for lakke of blood,
Til wel neig is she fallen fro the tree.
This faire kinges doghter, Canacee,
That on hir finger bar the queynte ring,
Thurgh which she understood wel everthing
That any foul may in his ledene seyn,
And coude answere him in his ledene ageyn,
Hath understonde what this faucon seyd,
And wel neig for the rewthe almost she deyd.
And to the tree she gooth ful hastily,
And on this faucon loketh pitously,
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
Un-to the hauke, 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 hauk above.
‘Is this for sorve of deeth or los of love?’
For, as I trawe, thise ben causes two
That caussen moost a gentil herte wo;
Of other harm it nedeth nat to speke.
For ye your-self upon your-self you wroke,
Which proveth wel, that either love or drede
Mot been encheson of your cruel dede,
Sin that I see non other wight you chace.
For love of god, as dooth your-selven grace
Or what may ben your help; for west nor east
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 grete compassioun.
For goddes love, com fro the tree adoun;
And, as I am a kinges doghter trewe,
If that I verraily the cause knewe
Of your disese, if it lay in my might,
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.’
Tho shrivthe 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
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,
Felinge his similitude in peynes smerte,
Is preved al-day, as men may it see,
As wel by werke as by auctoritee;
For gentil herte kytheth gentillesse.
I see wel, that ye han of my distresse
Compassioun, my faire Canacee,
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,
As by the whelp chasted is the leoun,
Right for that cause and that conclusioun,
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!)’
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 termelet me faste by,
That semed welle of alle gentillesse;
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,
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 kepth in semblant alle his observ-
vances

Than sooweth in-to gentillesse of love,
As in a toume is al the faire above,
And under is the corps, swich as ye woot,
Swich was this ypocryte, bothe cold and
hooth,

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,
For-fered of his deeth, as thoughte me,
Upon his othes and his seuretee,
Granuted him love, on this condiicon,
That evermore myn honour and renoun
Were saved, bothe privee and apert;
This is to seyn, that, after his desert,
I yaf him al myn herte and al my
thought—

God woot and he, that otherwise
nought—
And took his herte in change for myn
for ay.

But sooth is seyd, gon sithen many a
day,

"A trew wight and a theef thenken nat
oon."

And, whan he saugh the thing so fer
y-goone,
That I had granuted him fully my love,
In swich a gyse as I have seyd above,

And yeven him my trewe herte, as free
As he svoor he his herte yaf to me;
Anon this tygre, ful of doublenesse,
Fil on his knees with so devout hum-
blesse,
With so heigh reverence, and, as by his
chere,
So lyk a gentil love of manere,
Soo 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

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 unbokele his galoche,
Ther doublenesse or feynyngh shoide 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 kemblde at point-devys
As wel his wordes as his contenaunce.

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,

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 fill,
Keping the boundes of my worship ever.
Ne never hadde I thing so leef, ne lefer,
As him, god woot! ne never shal na-mo.

This lasteth lenger than a yeer or two,
That I supposed of hym noght but good.
But synally, thus atte laste it stooed,
That fortune wolde that he moste twinne
Out of that place which that I was inne.
Wher me was wo, that is no quesometown;
I can nat make of it discriscioun;

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-
leave.

So on a day of me he took his leve,
So sorwefull yeeke, that I wende verrailly
That he had felt as muche harm as I,
Whan that I herde him speke, and saught
his hewe.

But nathelees, I thoughte he was so
trewwe,
And eek that he repaire sholdye ageyn
With-inne a litel whyle, sooth to seyyn;
And resoun wolde eek that he moste go
For his honour, as ofte it happeth so,
That I made vertu of neccesitee,
And took it wel, sin that it moste be.
As I best mighte, I hidde fro hym m
sorwe,
And took him by the hond, saint Iohn to borwe,  
And seyde him thus: “lo, I am youres al;  
Beth swich as I to yow have been, and shal.”  
What he anserwde, it nedeth noght re-herce,  
Who can sey bet than he, who can do worse?  
Whan he hath al wel seyd, thanne hath he doon.  
“Therefor bihoveth him a ful long spoon  
That shal ete with a feend,” thus herde I seyde.  
So atte laste he moste forth his weye,  
And forth he fleeth, til he cam ther him reste.  
Whan it cam 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 newfangelness,  
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,  
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 novelries of propre kinde;  
No gentillesse of blood [ne] may hem binde.  
So ferde this tercelet, alias 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,  
That al his love is clene fro me ago,  
And hath his trouth falsed in this wyse;  
Thus hath the kyte my love in hir servyse,  
And I am lorn with-outen remedye!”  
And with that word this faucon gan to crye,  
And sowened eft in Canaccês barne.  
Greet was the sorwe, for the haukes barme,  
That Canacee and alle hir wommen made;  
They niste how they mighte the faucon glade;  
But Canacee hom bereth hir in hir lappe,  
And softly 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.  
Of herbes precious, and fyne of hewe,  
To helen with this hauk; fro day to night  
She dooth hir businesse and al hir might.  
And by hir beddes heede she made a mewe,  
And covered it with veluetttes blewe,  
In signe of trouthe that is in wommen sene.  
And al with-oute, the mewe is peynted grene,  
In which were peynted alle thise false foules,  
As beth thise tidifs, tercelets, and oules,  
Right for despyt were peynted hem bisyde,  
And pyes, on hem for to crye and chyde.  
Thus lete I Canacee hir hauk keping;  
I wol na-more as now spoke 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,  
By mediacioun of Cambalus,  
The kingse sone, of whiche I yow tolde.  
But hennes-forth I wol my proces holde  
To speke of aventures and of batalles,  
That never yet was herd so grete mer-vailles.  
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,  
Ne hadde he ben holpen by the stede of bras;  
And after wol I speke of Cambalo,  
That taught 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 sle—

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
youthe,
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,
And in vertu sende thee continuaunce!
For of thy speche I have greet deyntee.
I have a sonne, and, by the Trinitee,
I hadde lever than twenty pound worth
lond,
Though it right now were fallen in myn
hond,

[The Frankleyn’s Prologue follows immediately.]

THE FRANKLIN’S PROLOGUE.

The Prologue of the Frankeleyns Tale.

Thise olde gentil Britons in hir dayes
Of diverse aventures maden layes, 710
Rymed in hir firste Briton tonge;
Which layes with hir instruments they
songe,
Or elles reden hem for hir plesaunce;
And oon of hem have I in remembraunce,
Which I shal seyn with good wil as I
can.

But, sires, by-cause I am a burel man,
At my biginning first I yow biseche

He were a man of swich discrecioun
As that ye been! fy on possessioun
But-if a man be vertuous withal.
I have my sonne snibbed, and yet shal,
For he to vertu listeth nat entendre;
But for to pleye at dees, and to de-
spende,
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;
‘What, frankeleyn? pardee, sir, wel
thou wost
That eche of yow mot tellen atte leste
A tale or two, or breken his biaste.’
‘That knowe I wel, sir,’ quod the
frankeleyn;
‘I prey yow, haveth me nat in desleyn
Though to this man I speke a word or
two.’
‘Telle on thy tale with-outen 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 wye
As fer as that my wittes wol suftse;
I prey to god that it may plesen yow,
Than woot I wel that it is good y-now.’

Have me excused of my rude speche;
I lerned never rethoryk certeyn;
Thing that I speke, it moot be bare and
pleyn.
I sleep never on the mount of Pernaso,
Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Cithero.
Colours ne knowe I none, with-outen
drede,
But swiche colours as growen in the
mede,
Or elles swiche as men dye or peynte.
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 beginneth the Frankeleys Tale.

In Armorik, that called is Britayne, 730
Ther was a knight that loved and dide his payne
To serve a lady in his beste wyse;
And many a labour, many a greet empryse
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,
That wel unnethes dorste this knight, for drede,
Telle hir his wo, his payne, and his distresse.
But atte laste, she, for his worthinesse,
And namely for his meke obesyaunce,
Hath swich a pitee caught of his pen-aunce,
That privelie she fil of his accord
To take him for hir housbonde and hir lord,
Of swich lordshiphe 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,
That never in al his lyf he, daye ne night,
Ne sholde up-on him take no maistrye
Agayn hir wil, ne kythe hir Ialousye,
But hir obeye, and folwe hir wil in al
As any lover to hir lady shal;
Save that the name of soveraynetee,
That wolde he have for shame of his degree.
She thanked him, and with ful greet humblesse
She sayde, 'sire, sith of your gentillesse
Ye profore me to have so large a reyne,
Ne wolde never god bitwixe us tweyne,
As in my gilt, were outhere were 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, saufly dar I seye,
That frenedes everich other moot obeye,
If they wol longe holden companye.
Love wol nat ben constreyned by maistrye;
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 atteyne. 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 wol dark 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 chaunginge of complexioun
Causteth ful ofte to doon amis or spoken.
On every wrong a man may nat be wreken;
After the tyme, moste be temperaunce 785
To every wight that can on governaunce.
And therfore hath this wyse worthy knight,
To live in ese, suffrancce hir bighight,
And she to him ful wisly gan to swere
That never sholde ther be defaute 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 servage;
Servage? nay, but in lordship above,
Sith he hath bothe his lady and his love;
His lady, certes, and his wyf also,
The which that lawe of love accordeth 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 Ioyc, the ese, and the prosperitee.
That is bitwixe an housbonde and his wyf? 805
A yer 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 yer 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 dwelle ther two yer, the book seith thus.
Now wol I stinte of this Arveragus,
And spoken I wole of Dorigene his wyf,
That loveth hir housbonde as hir hertes lyf.
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 hevy thought,
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 bisinesse,
Al for to make hir leve hir heviness.
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 conforted hir, til she
Receyved hath, by hope and by resoun,
The emprenting of hir consolacion,
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 hir 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,
Away 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 hank 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 see,
Wol bringen hom my lord? than were
myn herte 855
Al warisshed of his bitte 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 sorueful sykes
colde:
'Eterne god, that thurgh thy purvey-
ance 865
Ledest the world by certein governance,
In ydel, as men seyn, ye no-thing make;
But, lord, thise grisly feendly rokkes
blake,
That semen rather a foul confusion
Of werk than any fair creacioun 870
Of swich a parfit wys god and a stable,
They goon and pleye hem al the longe day.
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,
That never was ther gardin of swich pryse,
But-if it were the verray paradyse.
The odour of floures and the fresshe sighte
Wolde han maad any herte for to lighte
That ever was born, but-if to gret sickenes,
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 alone,
Which made alwey hir compleint and hir mone;
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 let hir sorwe slyde.
Up-on this daunce, amonges othere men,
Daunced a squyer biforn 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 began.
Ther-with he was, if men sholde him discoyve,
Oon of the beste faringe man on-lyve;
Yong, strong, right vertuous, and riche and wys,
And wel biloved, and holden in gret pryse.
And shortly, if the sothe I tellen shal,
Unwiting of this Dorigen at al,
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 greuance;
With-outen coppe he drank al his pen-
He was despeyred, no-thing dorste he seye,
Save in his songes somewhat wolde he wrye.
His wo, as in a general compleyning: 945
He seye he lovede, and was biloved no-thing.
Of swich matere made he manye layes,
Songes, compleinates, roundels, virelayes,
How that he dorste nat his sorwe telle,
But languisseth, as a furie dooth in helle;
950
And dyce he mooste, 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 biwryeye;
Save that, paraventure, som-tyme at daunces,
Ther yonge folk kepen hir observaunces,
It may wel be he lokked on hir face
In swich a wyse, as man that asketh grace;
But no-thing wiste she of his entente.
Natheelees, it happed, er they thennes wente,
960
By-cause that he was hir neighboour,
And was a man of worship and honour,
And hadde y-knownen him of tyme yore,
They fille in speche; and forth more and more
Un-to his purpos drough Aurelius,
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 feete 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?’
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 untrewere wyf
In word ne werk, as fer as I have wite:
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 heighge 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!’
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?’
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 horrible.’
And with that word he turned him anoone.
Tho come hir othere freendes many oon,
And in the aleyes romeden up and doun,
And no-thing wiste of this conclusion,
But sodeinly bigonne revel newe.
Til that the brighte sonne loste his hewe;  
For thorisonte hath reft the sonne his light;  
This is as muche to seye as it was night.  
And hoom they goon in Ioye and in solas,  
Save only wrecche Aurelius, alas!  
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 hevene his handes he gan holde,  
And on his knowes bare he sette him down,  
And in his raving seye his orisoun.  
For verray wo out of his wit he breyde.  
He niste what he spak, but thus he seye;  
With pitous herte his pleynth hath he bigonne  
Un-to the goddes, and first un-to the sonne:  
He seye, ‘Appollo, god and governour  
Of every plaunte, herbe, tree and flour,  
That yest, after thy declinacioun,  
To ech of hem his tyme and his sesoun,  
As thyn herberwe chaungeth lowe or hye,  
Lord Phebus, cast thy merciable yē  
On wrecche Aurelie, which that am but lorn.  
Lo, lord! my lady hath my deeth y-sworn  
With-oute gilt, but thy benigneit  
Upon my dedly herte have som pitee!  
For wel I woot, lord Phebus, if yow lest,  
Ye may me helpen, save my lady, best.  
Now voucheh 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,  
Though Neptunus have deiete in the see,  
Yet emperesse aboven him is she:  
Ye knownen wel, lord, that right as hir desyr

Is to be quiked and lightned of your fyr,  
For which she folweth yow ful bisily,  
Right so the see desyreth naturely  
To folwen hir, as she that is goddesse  
Bothe in the see and riveres more and lesse.  
Wherfore, lord Phebus, this is my requeste —  
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 overspringe  
The hyeste rokke in Armorik Briteyne;  
And lat this flood endure yeres twyne;  
Than certes to my lady may I seye:  
“Holdeth your heste, the rokkez been aweye.”  
Lord Phebus, dooth this miracle for me;  
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 full alway,  
And spring-flood laste bothe night and day.  
And, but she vouche-sauff 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 dwellzeth inne,  
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 compasioun.’  
And with that word in swowne he fil adoun,  
And longe tyme he lay forth in a trauence.  
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;  
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 houbonde in thyne armes,
The fresehe 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 materie, 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 tymde helle noo, 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 materie he dorste no word seyn. Under his brest he bar it more secre That ever dide Pamphilus for Galathee.
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 myghte touche the arwe, or come therby. 1115 His brother weep and wayled privel, Til atte laste him fil in remembrance, That whyl he was at Orliens in Fraunce, As yonge clerkes, that been likerous To reden artes that been curious, 1120 Seken in every halke and every herne Particular sciences for to lerne,
He him remembred that, upon a day, At Orliens 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 privel upon his desk y-laf; Which book spak muchel of the operaciouns,

Touchinge the eighte and twenty man-
sious 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 when 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 warissched hastily;
For I am siker that ther he sciences, 1139 By whiche men make diverse apparences Swiche as thisse subtile tresgetours playe. For ofte at festes have I wel herd seye, That tresgetours, with-inne an halle large, Have maad come in a water and a barge, And in the halle rowen up and doun.
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 Orliens som old felawe y-findeth, 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-voyded everichon, And shippes by the brinke komen and gon, 1160 And in swich forme endure a day or two;
Than were my brother warished of his wo.
Than moste she nedes holden hir bihest, Or elles he shal shame hir atte lest;' What sholde I make a lenger tale of this? 1165 Un-to his brotheres bed he komen 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.

But-if it were a two surlong or three,
A yong clerk rominge by him-self they mette,
Which that in Latin thriftilly hem grette,
And after that he seyde a wonder thing:
"I knowe," quod he, "the cause of your coming?"

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;

And he answerde him that they dede were,
For which he wepe 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.

Hem lakked no vitaille that mightem plese;
So wel arrayed hous as ther was oon
Aurelius in his lyf saugh never noon.
He shewed him, ere he wente to sopeer,
Forestes, parkes ful of wilde deer;
Ther saugh he hertes with hir hornes hye,
The gretteste that ever were seyn with ye.
He saugh of hem an hondred slayn with houndes,
And somme with arwes blede of bittre woundes.
He saugh, whan voided were thise wilde deer,
Thise faunconers upon a fair river,
That with hir haukes han the heron slayn.
Tho saugh he knihtes Iusting in a playn;
And after this, he dide him swich ple-
saunec,
That he him shewed his lady on a
daunce
On which him-self he daunched, 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 remooved they never out of the hous,

Whyl they saugh al this sighte merveil-
ous,
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 super?
Almost an hour is, I undertake,
Sith I yow bad our soper for to make,
Whan that thise worthy men wenten with me
In-to my studie, ther-as my bookes be.'
'Sire,' quod this squyer, 'whan it lyketh yow,
It is al redy, though ye wol right now.'
'Go we than soupe,' quod he, 'as for the beste;
This amorous folk som-tyme moten han reste.'
At-after soper sille they in trettee,
What somme shold this maistres guerdon be,
To remoeven alle the rokkes of Britayne,
And eek from Gerounde to the mouth of Sayne.
He made it strangue, and swoor, so god him save,
Lasse than a thousand pound he wolde nat have,
Ne gladly for that somme he wolde nat goon,
Aurelius, with blisful herte anoon,
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.
Ye shal be payed trewely, by my trouthe!
But loketh now, for no negligence 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 peneunce 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.
Phesus wax old, and hewed lyk latoun,
That in his hote declinacioun 1246
Shoon as the burned gold with stremes
brighte;
But now in Capricorn adoun he lighte,
Wher-as he shoon ful pale, I dar wel
seyyn. 1249
The bittre frostes, with the sleet and reyn,
Destroyed hath the grene in every yerd.
Janus sit by the fyr, with double berd,
And drinketh of his bugle-horn the wyn.
Biforn him stant braun of the tucked
swyn,
And “Nowel” cryeth every lusty man.
Aurelius, in al that ever he can, 1256
Doth to his maister chere and reverence,
And preyth him to doon his diligence
To bringen him out of his peyneys 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 illusion,
By swich an apparence or Jogelrye, 1265
I ne can no termes of astrologye,
That she and every wight sholde wene
and seye,
That of Britaigne the rokes were aweye,
Or elles they were sonken under grounde.
So atte laste he hath his tyme y-founde
To maken his Tapes and his wretched-
nesse 1271
Of swich a supersticious cursednesse.
His tables Toletanes forth he broght,
Ful wel corrected, ne ther lakked noht,

Neither his collect ne his expans yeres,
Ne his rotes ne his othere geres, 1276
As been his centres and his arguments,
And his proporcioenls convenient
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 spere considered is;
Ful subtily he calculated al this.

When he had founde his firste man-
sioun, 1285
He knew the remenant by proporciooun;
And knew the arysing of his mone weel,
And in whos face, and terme, and every-
deel;
And knew ful weel the mones manioun
Acordaunt to his operacioun, 1290
And knew also his othere observaunces
For swiche illusionouns and swich mes-
chaunces
As hethen folk used in thilke dayes;
For which no lenger made he delays,
But thurgh his magik, for a wyke or
tweye, 1295
It semed that alle the rokes were
aweye.

Aurelius, which that yet despeir is
Wher he shal han his love or fare amis,
Awaiteth night and day on this miracle;
And when he knew that ther was noon
obstacle, 1300
That voided were thise rokes everichon,
Doun to his maistes 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 when he saugh his time, anon-right
he,
With dredful herte and with ful humble
chere,
Salowed 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-
plesse,
Nere it that I for yow have swich disese.
That I moste dyen heer at your foot anon, 1315
Nogh wolde I telle how me is wo bigon;
But certes outhere moste I dye or pleyne;
Ye slee me giltelees for verray pleyne.
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 trouthes plighten 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 dye;
But wel I woot the rokkes been aweye!
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 Inever, by possibilitee,
That swich a monstre or mereveille mighte be!
It is agayns the proces of nature’: 1345
And hoom she gooth a sorwefull creature.
For verray fere unnethet may she go,
She wepeth, waileth, al a day or twos,
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-selh she spak, and seyde thus,
With face pale and with ful sorwefull chere,
In hir compleyt, as ye shul atten here:

‘Alas,’ quod she, ‘on thee, Fortune, 1355
I pleyne,
That unwar wrapped hast me in thy cheyne;
For which, tescape, woot I no socour
Save only deeth or elles dishonour;
Oon of thise two biphoveth me to chese.
But natheelles, 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, allass!
Rather than with hir body doon trespas?
Yis, certes, lo, thise stories beren witnesse;
Whan thretty tyraunte, ful of cursed-
ness,
Had slayn Phidoun in Athenes, atte feste, 1369
They comanded his doghtres for tarest,
And bringen hem biforn hem in despyt,
Al naked, to fulfille hir foul deylt,
And in hir fadres blood they made hem daunce
Upon the pavement, god yeve hem mis-
chaunce!
For whiche thise woful maydens, ful of drede, 1375
Rather than they wolde lese hir mayden-
hede,
They privelie ben stirt in-to a welle,
And dreynete hemy-selven, as the bokestelle.
They of Messene lete enquire and seke
Of Lacedomie fifty maydens eke, 1380
On whiche they wolden doon hir lecher-
eye;
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 tirault Aristoclides
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 biraft 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 Lucresse 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 seveue maydens of Milesie also
Han slayn hem-self, for verray drede and
wo, 1410
Rather than folk of Gaule hem sholde
oppressse.
Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse,
Coude I now telle as touchinge this
matere.
Whan Habradate was slayn, his wyf so
dere
Hirseveln 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 mo 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 slayn my-self, than been defouled
thus.
I wol be trewe un-to Arveragus,
Or rather seyen 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 thoy doghtren deyde, allas!

That slowe hem-selven for swich maner
cas.
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 died right so;
For oon of Macedoine hadde hir
oppressed,
She with hir deeth hir mayndenhede
redressed.
What shal I seye of Nicerates wyf,
That for swich cas biraft hir-self hir
lyf?
How trewe eek was to Alcibiades
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 Penalopee?
Al Grece knoweth of hir chastitee.
Pardee, of Laodomya is written
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 parfit wyfhod of Arthèmesye
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 pleyed Dorigene a day or tweye,
Purposinge ever that she wolde dyee.
But natheles, 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 seyd,’ 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 devyse:  
'Is ther oght elles, Dorigen, but this?'  
'Nay, nay,' quod she, 'god help me so, as wis;  
This is to muche, 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,  
I hadde wel lever y-stikke 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,  
And seyde, 'I yow forbede, up payne of deeth,  
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 heviness,  
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 wey they gon;  
But they ne wiste why she theder 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 Iupartye;  
Herkneth the tale, er ye up-an 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,  
Of aventure happed hir to mete  
Amidde the toun, right in the quikkest strete,  
As she was boun to goon the wey forthright  
Toward the gardin ther-as she had hight.  
And he was to the gardinward also;  
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 salweth hir with glad entente,  
And asked of hir whiderward she wente?  
And she answerde, half as she were mad,  
'Un-to the gardin, as myn housbond bad,  
My trouthe for to holde, allass! allass!'  
Aurelius gan wondren on this cas,  
And in his herte had greet compassion  
Of hir and of hir lamentacioun,  
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,  
Consideringe the beste on every syde,  
That fro his lust yet were him lever abyde  
Than doon so heigh a cherlish wrecchednesse  
Agayns franchise and alle gentillesse;  
For which in fewe wordes seyde he thus:  
'Madame, seyth to your lord Arveragus,  
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,  
I have wel lever ever to suffre wo  
Than I departe the love bitwix yow two.  
I yow relese, madame, in-to your sond  
Quit every surement and every bond,  
That ye han maad to me as heer-biforn,  
Sith thylke tyme which that ye were born.  
My trouthe I plighte, I shal yow never repreve
Of no bieste, and here I take my leve, 1540
As of the treweste and the beste wif 1545
That ever yet I knew in al my lyf.  
But every wyf be-war of hir bieste, 1550
On Dorigene remembreth atte leste.  
Thus can a squyer doon a gentil cade, 1555
As well as can a knight, with-outen dere.'  

She thonketh him up-on hir knees al bare, 1560
And hoom un-to hir housbond is she fare, 1565
And tolde him al as ye han herd me sayd;  
And be ye siker, he was so wel apayd, 1570
That it were impossible to wryte;  
What sholde I lenger of this cas endye?  
Arveragus and Dorigene his wyf 1575
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; 1580
And she was to him trewe for evermore.  
Of thise two folk ye gete of me na-more.  
Aurelius, that his cost hath al forlon, 1585
Curseth the tyme that ever he was born:  
'Allas,' quod he, 'allas! that I bihighte  
Of pured gold a thousand pound of wighte  
Un-to this philosophre! how shal I do?  
I see ma-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,  
But I of him may gete bettre grace.  
But natheless, I wol of him assaye,  
At certeyn dayes, yeer by yeeer, 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 cofer,  
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, 1590
I faillte never of my trouthe as yit;  
For sikerly my dette shal be quit  
Towards yow, how-ever that I fare  
To goon a-beggod in my kirtle bare. 1595
But wolde ye vouche-sauf, up-on seurte,  
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 sobreyly answere,  
And seyde thus, when he thise wordes herde: 1600
'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.  
'What was the cause? tel me if thou can.'  

Aurelius his tale anon bigan,  
And tolde him al, as ye han herd bifoire; 1605
It nedeth nat to yow reheere it more.  
He seide, 'Arveragus, of gentillesse,  
Had lever dye in sorwe and in distresse  
Than that his wyf were of hir trouthe fals.'  
The sorwe of Dorigene he tolde him als,  
How looth hir was to been a wikked wyf,  
And that she lever had lost that day hir lyf,  
And that hir trouthe she swoor, thurgh innocence:  
'She never erst herde speke of apparence;  
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,  
This al and som, 'ther is na-more to seyn.'  

This philosophre answere, 'leve brother,  
Everich of you dide gentilly til other.  
Thou art a quyer, and he is a knight;  
But god forbede, for his blisful might;  
But-if a clerke coude doon a gentil dede  
As wel as any of yow, it is no dredre!  
Sire, I relesse thee thy thousand pound,  
As thou right now were cropen out of the ground,  
Ne never er now ne haddest knowne me.  
For sire, I wol nat take a peney of thee
For al my craft, ne nought for my travaile,
Thou hast y-paid wel for my vitaille;
It is y-nogh, and farewell, have good day:
And toke his hors, and forth he gooth his way. 1620

Lordinges, this question wolde I aske now,
Which was the moste free, as thinketh yow?
Now telleth me, er that ye further wende,
I can na-more, my tale is at an ende.

Here is ended the Frankeleyns Tale.

GROUP G.

THE SECONDE NONNES TALE.

The Prologue of the Seconde Nonnes Tale.
The ministre and the noircs un-to vyces,
Which that men clepe in English ydelnesse,
That porter of the gate is of delyces,
To eschue, and by hir contrarie hir op-presse,
That is to seyn, by leveful bisinesse,
Wel oughte we to doon al our entente,
Lest that the feend thurgh ydelnesse us hente.

For he, that with his thousand cordes slye
Continuell us waiteth to biclappe,
Whan he may man in ydelnesse espye,
He can so lightly cacche him in his trappe,
Til that a man be hert right by the lappe,
He nis nat war the feend hath him in honde;
Wel oughte us werche, and ydelnes withstande.

And though men dradden never for to dye,
Yet seen men wel by reson doutelees,
That ydelnesse is roten slogardye,
Of which ther never comth no good encrees;
And seen, that slouthe hir holdseth in a lees
Only to slepe, and for to ete and drinke,
And to devouren al that otther swinke. 21

And for to putte us fro swiche ydelnesse,
That cause is of so greet confusion,
I have heer doon my faithful bisinesse,
After the legende, in translaclion 25
Right of thy glorious lyf and passioun,
Thou with thy gerland wroght 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 beginning first I calle; 31
Thou comfort of us wrecches, do me endyte
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 creature,
Thou nobledest so ferforth our nature, 40
That no deseyn 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,
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
With mercy, goodnesse, and with swich pitee
That thou, that art the sonne of excellence,
Nat only helped hem that preyen thee,
But ofte tyme, of thy benigneitee,
Ful frely, er that men thyn help bi-
Thou goost biform, and art hir lyves leche.

Now help, thou meke and blissful 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
That from hir lordes table been y-falle;
And though that I, unworthy sone of Eve,
Be sinful, yet acceyte my bilee.

And, for that feith is deed-withouten werkes,
So for to werkyn yif me wit and space,
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 heighge place
Ther-as withouten ende is songe ‘Osanne,’
Thou Cristes mooder, dochter dere of Anne!

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 afeccion;
O haven of refut, o salvacioun
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 subtily to endyte;
For both have I the wordes and sentence
Of him that at the seeantes reverence
The storie wroth, and folwe hir legende,
And prey yow, that ye wol my werk amende.

Interpretacio nominis Cecilie, quam ponit frater Iacobus Ianiuensis in Legenda Aurea.

First wolde I yow the name of seint Cecilie
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
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 conioininge
Of ‘hevene’ and ‘Lia’; and heer, in figureinge,
The ‘heven’ is set for thouht of holinesse,
And ‘Lia’ for hir lasting businesse.

Cecile may eek be seyd in this manere,
‘Wanting of blinnesse,’ for hir grete light
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.

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 magnanimithe,
And eek the cleernesse hool of sapience,
And sondry werkes, brighte of excellence.
And right so as thise philosophres wryte
That heven is swift and round and eek
brenninge,
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,
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
dred,
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,
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;
'O lord, my soule and eek my body gye
Unwemmed, lest that I confounded be:'
And, for his love that dreyde upon a tree,
Every seconde or thridde day she faste,
Ay biddinge in hir orisons ful faste.

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,

Which that right fain I wolde unto yow
seye,
So that ye swere ye shul me nat biwreye.'

Valerian gan feste unto hir swere,
That for no cas, ne thing that mighte be,
He sholde never-mo biwreyen here;
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,
That ye me touche or love in vileinye,
He right anon wol slee yow with the
dede,
And in yow the thus ye shulden dye;
And if that ye in clene love me gye,
He wol yow loven as me, for your clsen-
nesse,
And shewen yow his Ioye 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
Than wol I doon as thou hast prayed
me;
And if thou love another man, for sothe
Right with this swerd than wol I slee
yow bothe.'

Cecile answorde anon right in this wyse,'*'
'If that yow list, the angel shul ye
see,
So that ye trowe on Crist and yow bap-
tyse.
Goth forth to Via Apia,' quod she,
'That fro this towne ne stant but myles
three,
And, to the povre folkes that ther dwelle,
Sey hem right thus, as that I shal yow
telle.

Telle hem that I, Cecile, yow to hem
sente,
To shewen yow the gode Urban the olde,
For secrey nedes and for good entente.
And whan that ye seint Urban han bi-
holde,
Telle him the wordes whiche I to yow tolde;
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 lerninge,
He fond this holy olde Urban anon Among the seintes buryels lotinge.
And he anon, with-outen 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 — 'Almighty lord, o Iesu Crist,' quod he, 'Sower of chast conseil, herde of us alle, The fruit of thilke seed of chastitte' That thou hast sowe in Cecile, tak to thee!
Lo, lyk a bisy bee, with-outen gylke, 195 Thee serveth ay thyn owene thrall 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 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 doune 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-outen mo, Oo Cristendom, and fader of alle also, Aboven alle and over al everywhere' — Thise wordes al with gold y-writen were.

When 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.' 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 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 thoght 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 ye, But he be chaast and hate vileinÿe.

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 martirdom, Ye shullen come unto his blissful feste.' And with that word Tiburce his brother com. And whan that he the savour undersnom Which that the roses and the lilies caste, With-inne his herte he gan to wondere faste,

And seyde, 'I wondre, this tymre of the year,
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 thereto they 
been deve, 
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, 
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, 
'Made me thy brotheres wyf, right in 
that wyse 
Anon for myn allye heer take I thee, 
Sin that thou wolt thyn ydoles despysye. 
Go with thy brother now, and thee 
baptysye, 
And make thee clene; so that thou 
mowe biholde 
The angels face of which thy brother 
tolde.'

Tiburce answere 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 damped to be deed, 310 
And woneth in hales 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 divinitie 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 drenten 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;
That fadres sone hath alle things wroght;
And al that wroght is with a skilful thoght,
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 Tiburse, 'o suster dere,
Ne seydestow right now in this manere,
Ther nis but o god, lord in soothfastnesse;
And now of three how maystow bere witenes?'

'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 divinitie, 340
Three persones may ther right wel be.'
Tho gan she him ful bisily to preche
Of Cristes comne and of his peynes teche,
And many pointes of his passioun;
How goddes sone in this world was withholde,
To doon mankinde pleyn remissiou,
That was y-bound in sinne and cares cold:
Al this thing she unto Tiburse tolde.

And after this Tiburse, in good entente,
With Valerian to pope Urban he wente,
That thanked god; and with glad herte and light
He cristned him, and made him in that place
Parfit in his lerninge, goddes knight.
And after this Tiburse gat swich grace,
That every day he saughe, in tyme and space,
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 Jesus for hem wroghte;
But atte laste, to tellen short and pleyn
The sergeants of the town of Rome hem soghte,
And hem biforn Almache the prefect broghte,
Which hem apposed, and knew al hir entente,
And to the image of Jupiter hem sente,
And seyde, 'who so wol nat sacrificye,
Swap of his heed, this- is my sentence here.'
Anon thise martirs that I yow devyse,
Oon Maximus, that was an officere
Of the prefectes and his corniculere,
Hem hente; and whan he forth the seintes ladde,
Him-self he weep, for pitee that he hadde.

Whan Maximus had herd the seintes lore,
He gat hym of the tormentoures leve,
And ladde hym to his hous withoute more;
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;
And afterward, whan day was woxen light,
Cecile hem seyde with a ful sobre chere,
Now, Cristes owene knightes leve and dere,
Caste alle awaye the werkes of derknesse,
And armeth yow in armure of brightnesse.

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 faille;
The rightful Iuge, which that ye han served,
Shall yeve it yow, as ye han it deserved.'
And whan this thing was seyd as I devise,
Men ladde hem forth to doon the sacrificye.

But whan they weren to the place broght,
To tellen shortly the conclusion,
They nolde encense ne sacrifice right noght,
But on hir knees they settin 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 saughe this thing biyde,
With pitous teres tolde it anon-right,
That he hir soules saughe 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
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 stoon.
And after this Almachius hastily
Bad his ministres fecchen openly
Cecile, so that she mighte in his presence
doon sacrificye, 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,

'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 twen, thoghe we sterve!'

Almachius, that herde of this doinge,
Bad fecchen Cecile, that he might hir see,
And alderfirst, lo! this was his axinge,
'What manner womman artow?' tho quod he.
'I am a gentil womman born,' quod she.
'I axe thee,' quod he, 'thogh it thee greve,
Of thy religiouen and of thy blyeve.'

'Ye han bigonne your question folily,'
Quod she, 'that wolden two answeres conclude
In oo demande; ye axed lewedely.'
Almache anwerde 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 unfeyned.'

Almachius seyde, 'ne takestow non hede
Of my power?' and she anwerde him this—
'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, when it is blowe,
May al the boost of it be leyd 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 ordinauce,
That every cristen wight shal han pen-
aunce
But-if that he his cristendom withsye,
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
Ye make us guilty, and it is nat sooth;
For ye, that known 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 cek a blame.

But we that known thilke name so
For vertuous, we may it nat withsye.'
Almache answerde, 'chees oon of thise two,
Do sacrifyce, or cristendom renye,
That thou mowe now escapen by that weye.'
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;
'Lo! he dissimuleth here in audience,
He stareth and woodeth in his advers-
tence!'
To whom Almachi, 'unsely wrecche,
Ne woostow nat how far my might may streche?

Han noght our mighty princes to me yeven,
Ye, bothe power to dyen or to liven?
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,
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
micht
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,
Thou lyest, for thy power is ful naked.'

'Do wey thy boldnes,' seyde Almachius tho,
'And sacrifyce to our goddes, er thou go;
I recche nat what wrong that thou me profre,
For I can suffre it as a philosophre;'

But thilke wronges may I nat endure
That thou spekest of our goddes here,' quod he.
Cecile answerede, 'o nyce creature,
Thou seyst 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,
That ilke stoon a god thou wolt it calle.
I rede thee, lat thyn hand upon it falle,
And taste it wel, and soon thou shalt it finde,
Sin that thou seest nat with thyn yën blinde.

It is a shame that the peple shal
So scorne thee, and laughe at thy folye;
For comunly men woot it wel overal,
That mighty god is in his hevenes hye,
And thise images, wel thou mayst espyle,
To thee ne to hem-self mowe nought
profyte,
For in effect they been nat worth a myte.'

Thise 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.'

And as he bad, right so was doon in dede;
For in a bath they gone 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 het,
She sat al cold, and felede 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 entente 524
To sleen hir in the bath his sonde sente.

Three strokes in the neke he smoot hir tho,
The tormentour, but for no maner chaunce
He mighte noght smyte al hir nekke a-two;
And for ther was that tyme an ordinaunce,
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 lyf, and on his wey 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 three dayes and na-mo,
To recomende to yow, er that I go,
Thisse soules, lo! and that I mighte do weryche,
Here of myn hous perpetuellly a cherche.'
Seint Urban, with his deknes, privelie
The body fette, and buried it by nighte
Among his othere seintes honestly.
Hir hous the chiche of seint Cecylie highte;
Seint Urban halwed it, as he wel highte;
In which, into this day, in noble wyse,
Men doon to Crist and to his seint servys.

Here is ended the Seconde Nonnes Tale.

THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S PROLOGUE.

The prologue of the Chanons Yemannes Tale.

Whan ended was the lyf of seint Cecyle,
Er we had ridden fully fuye myle, 555
At Boghton under Blee us gan atake
A man, that clothed was in clothes Blake,
And undernethe he hadde a whyte suplys.
His hakeney, that was al pomely grys,
So swatte, that it wonder was to see; 560
It semed he had priked myles three.
The hors eek that his yeman rood upon
So swatte, that unnethe mighte it gon.
Aboute the peytril stood the foom ful hye,
He was of some al flekked as a pye. 565
A male twyfold 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 hooe;
For which, when I had longe avysed me,
I demed him som chanon for to be.
His hat heng at his bak doun by a laas,
For he had ridden more than trot or paas;
He had ay priked lyk as he were wood.
A clote-leef he hadde under his hoode
For swoote and for to kepe his heed from hete.
But it was Ioye for to seen him swete!
His forheed dropped as a stillatorie,
Were ful of plantaine 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 hostelye I saugh you ryde,
And warned heer my lord and my soverayn,
Which that to ryden with yow is ful fayn,
For his despore; he loveth daliance.'
'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;
He is ful Iocund also, dar I leye,
Can he oght telle a mery tale or twayne,
With which he glade may this companye?
'Who, sire? my lord? ye, ye, withouten lye,
He can of murthe, and eek of Iolitee
Nat but ynown; also sire, trusteth me,
And ye him knewe as wel as do I,
Ye wolde wonde how wel and craftily
He coude werke, and that in sondry wyse.
He hath take on him many a greet emprye,
Which were ful hard for any that is here
To bringe aboute, but they of him it lere.
As homely as he rit amongs yow,
If ye him knewe, it wolde be for your prov;
Ye wolde nat forgoen his aqueyntaunce
For mochel good, I dar leye in balance
Al that I have in my possessoun.
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,
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 rever-
ence,
That of his worship reketh he so lyte;
His overslope nis nat worth a myte,
As in effect, to him, so mote I go!
It is al baudi and to-tore also.
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 bische.'
'Why?' quod this yeman, 'wherto axe ye me?
God help me so, for he shal never thee!
(But I wol nat avoate that I seye,
And therfor kepe it secree, I yow preye).
He is to wys, in feith, as I bilee;
That that is overdoon, it wol nat preve
Aright, as clerkes seyn, it is a vyce. 646
Werfor in that I holde him lewed and nyce.
For whan a man hath over-greet a wit,
Ful oft him happeneth to misusen it;
So dooth my lord, and that me greveth sore.
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
Wer dwellen ye, if it to telle be?'
'In the suburbs of a toun,' quod he,
'Lurkinge in hernes and in lanes blinde,
Wer-as thise robbours and thise 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 discouled of thy face?’
‘Peter!’ quod he, ‘god yeve it harde
grace, 665
I am so used in the fyr to blowe,
That it hath chauengey my colour, I
trowe.
I am nat wont in no mirour to prye,
But swinke sore and lerne multiplye.
We blonden ever and pouren in the fyr,
And for al that we fayle of our desyr, 671
For ever we laken 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 is it fals, but ay we han good hope
It for to doon, and after we grope.
But that science is so fer us biforn, 680
We mowen nat, al-though we hadde it
sworn,
It overtake, it slit awaye so faste;
It wol us maken beggers atte laste.’
Whyl this yeman was thus in his talke,
This chanoun drough him neer, and herde
al thing 685
Which this yeman spak, for suspicioun
Of mennes speche ever hadde this chanoun.
For Catoun seith, that he that gyly is
Demeth al thing be spoke of him, y-wis.
That was the cause he gan so ny him
drawe
To his yeman, to herken al his sawe.

And thus he seyde un-to his yeman thoy,
‘Hold thou thy pees, and spek no wordes
mo,
For if thou do, thou shalt it dere aby;
Thow sclaunderest 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 thretynge 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 awye 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 penye 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 mithe suffyse
To tellen al that longth 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 Prologue 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
yre, 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 wane and of a leden hew:  
Who-so it useth, sore shal he rewe.
And of my swink yet bledred is myne yet,
Lo! which advantage is to multyple!  731
That sfylwing 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 whil 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 thrist y-do.
So helpe me god, ther-by shal he nat winne,
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 dise;
Thus was I ones lerned of a clerk.
Of that no charge, I wol speke of our wark.
Whan we been ther as we shul exercise
Our elvish craft, we semen wonder wyse,
Our termes been so clerigial 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 quantitie, 757
And bisie me to telle yow the names
Of orpiment, bren bone, 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 mочel 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 matieres sublyming,
And in amalgaming and calcingen 771
Of quik-silver, y-clept Mercurie crude?
For alle our sleightes we can nat conclude.
Our orpiment and sublymed Mercurie,
Our grounden litarge eek on the porphurie,
Of ech of thise of ounces a certeyn
Nought helpeth us, our labour is in veyn.
Ne eek our spirites ascencioun,
Ne our materes that lynen al fixe adoun,
Mowe in our werkng no-thing us avayle.
For lost is al our labour and travayle, 781
And al the cost, a twenty dewe weye,
Is lost also, which we upon it leye.
Ther is al also ful many another thing
That is unto our craft apertening; 785
Though I by ordre hem nat rehere 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 descensorsies,
Violes, croslets, and sublymatoryes,
Cucurbites, and alembyses eek, 794
And othere 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 egremoine, valerian, and lunarie, 800
And othere 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, beren, 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 fourre spirites and the bodies sevne,  
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 sevne eek, lo! hem heer anoon: 825  
Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe,  
Mars yren, Mercurie quik-silver we clepe,  
Saturnus leed, and Jupiter is tin,  
And Venus coper, by my fader kin!  

This cursed craft who-so wol exersye,  
He shal no good han that him may suffysye; 831  
For al the good he spendeth ther-about,  
He lese shall, ther-of have I no doute.  
Who-so that listeth outen 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 philosophre.  
Ascancne that craft is so light to lere?  
Kay, kay, 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 lernynge of this elvish nyce lore,  
Al is in veyn, and parde, mochel more!  
To lerne a lewed man this subtilte, 844  
Fy! spek nat ther-of, for it wol nat be;  
Al conce he letterure, or conce he noon,  
As in effect, he shal finde it al oon.  
For bothe two, by my savacioun,  
Concluend, in multiplicacioun,  
Y-lyke wel, when they han al y-do; 850  
This is to seyn, they faylen bothe two.  
    
Yet forgot I to maken reherisaille  
Of watres corosif and of limaille,  
And of bodyes molficacioun,  
And also of hir induracioun,  
Oiles, ablucions, and metal fusible,  
To tellen al wolde passen any bible  
That o-ther is; wherfor, as for the beste,  
Of alle thes names now wol I me reste.  
For, as I trowe, I have yow told y-nowe  
To reye 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, when 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 xen 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 seeke ever;  
That futur temps hath maad men to dis-seeuer,  
In trust ther-of, from al that ever they hadde. 876  
Yet of that art they can nat xen wood,  
For unto hem it is a bitter sweete;  
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 lant.  
And evermore, wher that ever they goon,  
Men may hem knowe by smel of brimstoone; 885  
For al the world, they stinken as a goat;  
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 smelinge and threedbare array,
If that men liste, this folk they knowe may.
And if a man wol aske hem privly, Why they been clothed so unthriftilly, 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 reyneth in a blaine; And wite ye how? ful ofte it happest so, 906
The pot to-breketh, and farewell! al is go! Thise metals been of so greet violence, Our walles move nat make hem resistence, But if they weren wroght of lym and stoon; 910
They percen so, and thurg the wal they goon, And somme of hem sinken 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 feende noght in our sighte him shewe, I trowe he with us be, that ilke shrew! 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); 925
'Straw!' quod the thridde, 'ye been lewed and nyce, It was nat tempred as it oghte be.'
'Nay!' quod the ferthe, 'stint, and herkue 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 wol greet stryf is us among.
'What!' quod my lord, 'ther is na-more to done,
Of thise perils I wol be war eft-sone;
I am right siker that the pot was erased. 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 gladde 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, pardee! may nat ay endure, Trusteth me wel, in his prosperitee;
Somtyme his good is drenched in the see,
And somtyme comth it sauf un-to the londe.'
'Pees!' quod my lord, 'the next tyme I wol fonde
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 concluen 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.
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 yé
Ne is nat good, what-so men clappe or crye.
Right so, lo! fareth it amonges us;
He that semeth the wysest, by Jesus!
Is most fool, whan it cometh to the preef;
And he that semeth trewest is a thief;
That shul ye knowe, er that I fro yow wende,
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 Ninive,
Rome, Alisaundre, Troye, and othere three.
His sleightes and his infinit falsnesse
Ther coude no man wyten, as I gesse,
Thogh that he mighte liven a thousand yeer.
In al this world of falshe ded his peer;
For in his termes so he wolde him winde,
And speke his wordes in so sly a kinde,
Whan he commune shel with any wight,
That he wol make him doten anon right,
But it a feend be, as him-selven is.
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-ance,
Noght knowinge of his false govern-ance.
And if yow list to yeve me audience, I wol it tellen heer in your presence.
But worshipful chanouns religious,
Ne demeth nat that I sclaundre your hous,
Al-though my tale of a chanoun be.
Of every ordre som shrewese is, parde,
And god forbade that al a companye
Sholde rewe a singuler mannes folye.

To sclaundre 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 himselfe.
Than why sholde al the remenant have blame
That giltees were? by yow I seye the same.

Save only this, if ye wol herkne me,
If any Iudas in your cowte be,
Remeveth him bitymes, I yow rede,
If shame or los may causen any drede.
And beth no-thing displeased, I yow preye,
But in this cas herkneth what I shal seye.

In London was a priest, an annueler,
That therin dwelled hadde many a yeer,
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.

Therof no fors; I wol procede as now,
And telle forth my tale of the chanoun,
That broghte this preest to confusion.

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.

‘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 swyste,
And this chanoun him thanked ofte sythe,
And took his leve, and wente forth his weye,
And at the thriddle day broghte his moneye,
And to the preest he took his gold agayn,
Wherof this preest was wonder glad and sayn. 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. 1045
' What! ' quod this chanoun, 'sholde I be untrewe?

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 1048

In-to my grave, and elles god forbede;
Bileveth this as sikere as is your crede.
God thanke I, and in good tyme be it sayd,
That ther was never man yet yvel apayd
For gold ne silver that he to me lente,
Ne never falschede in myn herte I mente. 1057
And sir,' quod he, 'now of my privete,
Sin ye so goodlich han been un-to me,
And kythed to me so greet gentilnesse,
Somwhat to quyte with your kindenesse,
I wol yow shewe, and, if yow list to lere,
I wol yow teche pleyonly the manere,
How I can werken in philosophye.
Taketh good heed, ye shul wel seen at ye,
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, trewey,'
Quod the chanoun, 'and elles god forbede!'

Lo, how this theef coude his servyse bede! 1065

Ful sooth it is, that swich profred servyse
Stinketh, as witnesse thise olde wyse;
And that ful sone I wol it verifiye
In this chanoun, rote of al trecherye,
That ever-more delty hath and gladnesse— 1070
Swich feendly thoughtes in his herte impresse—
He bad his servant fecchen him this thing, 1108
And he al redy was at his bidding, 1109
And wente him forth, and cam anon agayn 1110
With this quik-silver, soothly for to sayn, 1110
And took thys ounces three to the chanoun; 1110
And he hem leyde payre and wel adoun, 1110
And bad the servant coles for to bringe, 1110
That he anon mighte go to his workinge. 1110

The coles right anon weren y-set, 1110
And this chanoun took out a crosletof his bosom, and shewed it the preest. 1110
'This instrument,' quod he, 'which that thou seest, 1110
Tak in thy hand, and put thy-self therinne. 1110
Of this quik-silver an ounce, and heer biginne, 1110
In the name of Crist, to wexe a philoso- fre. 1110

Ther been ful fewe, whiche that I wolde profre 1111
To shewen hem thus muche of my science. 1111
For ye shul seen heer, by experience, 1111
That this quik-silver wol I mortifye. 1111
Right in your sighte anon, withouten lye, 1111
And make it as good silver and as fyn 1111
As ther is any in your purs or myn, 1111
Or elleswher, and make it malliable; 1111
And elles, holdeth me fals and unable 1111
Amonges folk for ever to appere! 1111
I have a poudre heer, that coste me dere, 1111
Shal make al good, for it is cause of al 1111
My conning, which that I yow shewen shal. 1111
Voydeth your man, and lat him be ther-oute, 1111
And shet the dore, whyls we been aboute 1111
Our privathe, that no man us espys 1111
Whys that we werke in this philosophye.' 1111
Al as he bad, fulfilled was in dede, 1111
This ilke servant anon-right out yede, 1111
And his maister shette the dore anon, 1111
And to hir labour speedilily they gon. 1111
This preest, at this cursed chanouns bidding, 1111
Up-on the fyr anon sette this thing, 1111

And blew the fyr, and bisied him ful faste; 1112
And this chanoun in-to the croslet caste 1112
A poudre, noot I wher-of that it was 1112
Y-maad, other of chalk, other of glas, 1112
Or som-what elles, was nat worth a fyle, 1112
To blynde with the preest; and bad him hye 1112
The coles for to couchen al above 1112
The croslet, 'for, in tokening I thee love,' 1112
Quod this chanoun, 'thy owene hondes two 1112
Shul werche al thing which that shal heer be do.' 1112
'Graunt mercy,' quod the preest, and was ful glad, 1112
And couched coles as the chanoun bad. 1112
And whyle he bisy was, this feendly wrecche, 1112
This fals chanoun, the foule feede him fecche! 1112
Out of his bosom took a bechen cole, 1112
In which ful subtilly was maad an hole, 1112
And ther-in put was of silver lymaille 1112
An ounce, and stopped was, with-uten fayle, 1112
The hole with wex, to kep the lymail in. 1112
And understondeth, that this false gin 1112
Was nat maad ther, but it was maad bifoire; 1112
And othere things I shal telle more 1112
Hereafterward, which that he with him broghte; 1112
Er he cam ther, him to bigyle he thoghte, 1112
And so he dide, er that they wente a-twine; 1112
Til he had terved him, coude he not blinne. 1112
It dulleth me whan that I of him speke, 1112
On his falsheye fayen wolde I me wreke, 1112
If I wiste how; but he is heer and ther: 1112
He is so variaunt, he abit no-wher. 1112
But taketh heed now, sirs, for goddes love! 1112
He took his cole of which I spak aboue, 1112
And in his hond he baar it prively. 1112
And whyls the preest couchede busily 1112
The coles, as I tolde you er this, 1112
This chanoun seyde, 'freend, ye doon amis; 1112
This is nat couched as it oghte be;
But sone I shal amenden it,' quod he.  
'Now lat me medle therwith but a whyle,  
For of yow have I pitee, by seint  
Gyle!'  

Ye been right hoot, I see wel how ye  
swete,  
Have heer a cloth, and wype awey 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 middle-  
ward  
Of the croslet, and blew wel afterward,  
Til that the colesgone faste brenne.  
'Now yeve us drinke,' quod the chan-  
oun thenne,  
'As sythe al shal be wel, I undertake;  
Sitte we doun, and lat us mery  
make.'  
And whan that this chanounes bechen  
cole  
Was brent, al the lynaille, out of the  
hole,  
Into the croslet fil anon adoun;  
And so it moste nedes, by resoun,  
Sin it so even aboven coughed was;  
But ther-of wiste the preest no-thing,  
 alas!  
He demed ale the coles y-liche good,  
For of the sleighte he no-thing  
understood.  
And whan this alkamistre saugh his tyme,  
'Rsus up,' quod he, 'sir preest, and stond-  
eth by me;'  
And for I woot wel ingot have ye noon,  
Goth, walketh forth, and bring us a chalk-  
stonoon;  
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,  
Ful of water, and ye shul see wel thanne  
How that our bisinesse shal thrive and  
prevye.  
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,  
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,  
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 (yvelle mote he  
cheve!)  
Which that ne was nat but an ounce  
of weighte;  
And taketh heeld now of his cursed  
sleighte!  
He shoop his ingot, in lengthe and eek  
in brede,  
Of this teyne, with-outen any drede,  
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 materie,  
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,  
'Look what ther is, put in thyn hand and  
grope,  
Thow finde shalt ther silver, as I hope;  
What, deyel of helle! sholde it elles be?  
Shaving of silver silver is, pardee!'  
He putte his hond in, and took up a  
teyne  
Of silver fyn, and glad in every veyne  
Was this preest, when he saugh that it  
was so.  
'Goddes blessing, and his modres also,  
And alle halwes have ye, sir chanoun,'  
Seyde this preest, 'and I hir mali- 
soun,  
But, and ye vouche-sauff to techen me  
This noble craft and this subtilite,  
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  
And been expert of this, and in your  
nede  
Another day assaye in myn absence  
This disciplyn and this crafty science,  
Lat take anotner ounce,' quod he tho,  
'Of quik-silver, with-outen wordes mo,
The preest his bisieth in al that he can
to doon as this chanoun, this cursed man,
Comanded him, and faste he blew the fyr,
And to come to the effect of his desyr.
This chanoun, right in the mene while,
An holwe stikke (tak keep and be war!)
Of silver lymail put was, as before
Was in his cole, and stopped with wax well
For to kepe in his lymail every deel.
And whyl this preest was in his business,
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
His terve, I pray to god, for his fals-hede;
For he was ever fals in thoght and dede);
And with this stikke, above the croslet,
That was ordeyned with that false get,
He stired the coles, til relente gan
The wax agayn the fyr, as every man,
But it a fool be, woot wel it mot nede,
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,
He was so glad, that I can nat expresse
In no manere his mirthe and his gladnesse;
And to the chanoun he profred eftsones
Body and good; 'ye,' quod the chanoun sone,
'Though povre I be, crafty thou shalt me finde;
I warne thee, yet is ther more bihinde.
Is ther any coper her-inne?' sayde 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.'
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 tongue to pronounce,
As ministre of my wit, the doublenesse
Of this chanoun, rote of al cursednesse.
He semed frendly to hem that knewe him noght,
But he was feendly bothe in herte and thoght.
It werieth me to telle of his falsnesse,
And natheleeles yet wol I it expresse.
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,
And in his werking for to stoupe lowe,
As he did er, and al nas but a lape;
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
Of water, and in he putte his owene hond.
And in his sleve (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—
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,
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 tayne anonym, 1330
And thanne sayde the chanoun, 'lat us gon
With thys three tynes, which that we han wroght,
To som goldsmith, and wite if they been ought.
For, by my feith, I nolde, for myn hood,
But-if that they were silver, syn and good, 1335
And that as swythe the preved shal it be.'
Un-to the goldsmith with thys tynes three
They wente, and putte thys tynes in assay
To fryr and hamer; mighte no man sey nay,
But that they weren as hem ought be. 1340
This sotted preest, who was gladder than he?
Was never brid gladder agayn the day,
Ne nightingale, in the season of May,
Nas never noon that luste bet to singe;
Ne lady lustir in carolinge 1345
Or for to speke of love and woman-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 prye.'
'Y-wis,' quod he, 'it is ful dere, I seye;
Sir, at o word, if that thee list it have, 1360
Ye shal paye fourty pound, so god me save!'

And, nere the freendship that ye dide er this
To me, ye sholde paye more, y-wis.' 1365
This preest the somme of fourty pound
Of nobles fette, and took hem ever-ichon
To this chanoun, for this ilke receit;
Al his werkynge nas but fraud 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
I'or, 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 fordebe!' quod the preest, 1375
'what sey ye?'
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 byiapec and bigyled was he! 1385
Thus maketh he his introduccioun
To bringe folk to hir destruccion.—

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 troue that it be
The cause grettest of swich scarsetee.
Philosophres speken so mistily
In this craft, that men can nat come therby,
For any wit that men han now a-dayes.
They mowe wel chitteren, as doon thise
Tayes,
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
ought, 1400
To multiplye, and bringe his good to
naught!
Lo! swich a luce 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 lesse 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 blundereth forth, and peril casteth
noon;
He is as bold to renne agayn a stool 1415
As for to goon besydes in the weye.
So faren ye that multiplye, I seye.
If that your yen 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 chaff-
fare,
But wasten al that ye may rape and renne.
Withdrew the fyr, lest it to faste brenne;
Medleth na-more with that art, I mene,
For, if ye doon, your thrist 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 mortiyye,
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 sloyn
With his brother; and that is for to sayn,
By the dragoun, Mercurie and noon other
He understood; and brimstoyn 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 thentenciou and speche
Of philosophes understande can;
And if he do, he is a lewed man. 1445
For this science and this conning, quod
he,
'Is of the secre of secrees, pardre,'
Also ther was a disciple of Plato,
That on a tymse seyde his maister to,
As his book Senior wol bere witnesse,
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 discouere 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 neyene
How that a man shal come un-to this toon,
I rede, as for the beste, lete it goo. 1475
For who-so maketh god his adversarie,
As for to werken any thing in contrarie

Here is ended the Chanouns Yemannes Tale.

GROUP H.

THE MANCIPLE'S PROLOGUE.

*Here folweth the Prologue 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!

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.
Is that a cook of Londoun, with meschaunce?
Do him come forth, he knoweth his penance,
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,
What eyleth thee to slepe by the morwe?
Hastow had fleen al night, or artow dronke,
Or hastow with som quene al night y-swonne,
So that thou mayst nat holden up thyn heed?'

This cook, that was ful pale and no-thing reed,
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.'

Of his wil, certes, never shal he thrive,
Thogh that he multiplye terme of his lyve.
And ther a poynct; for ended is my tale;
God sende every trewe man bote of his bale! — Amen. 1481

'Wel,' quod the maunciple, 'if it may doon ese
To thee, sir cook, and to no wight displese
Which that heer rydeth in this companye,
And that our host wol, of his curteisy,
I wol as now excuse thee of thy tale;
For, in good feith, thy visage is ful pale,
Thyn y'en daswen eek, as that me thinketh,
And wel I woot, thy breeth ful sourc stinketh,
That sheweth wel thou art not wel disposed;
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.
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!
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 wrav,
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;
H. THE MAUNCIPLES TALE.

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 gret showeing bothe to and fro,
To lifte him up, and muchel care and wo,
So unweldy was this sure palled gost. 55
And to the maunciple thanne spak our host,
"By-casen drink hath dominacioun
Upon this man, by my savacioun
I trowe he lewedel wolde telle his tale.
For, were it wyn, or old or moysty ale,
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,
Than shul we alle have y-nough to done,
In lifting up his hevy dronken cors.
Telle on thy tale, of make him 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.'
"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;
Thus endeth the Prologue of the Manciple.

THE MAUNCIPLES TALE.

Here biginneth the Maunciples Tale of the Crowe.

Whan Phebus dwelled here in this erthe adoun,
As olde bokes maken mencioun,
I wol nat wrathe the him, al-so mote I thryve!
That that I spak, I seyte 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 iape.
This cook shal drinke ther-of, if I may;
Up peyne of deeth, he wol nat seye me nay!'
And certeinly, to tellen as it was,
Of this vessel the cook drank faste, alas!
What neded him? he drank y-nough biforn.
And whan he hadde pouped in this horn,
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,
Wher that we goon, good drink we with us carie;
For that wol turne rancour and disease
Tacord and love, and many a wrong apese.
O thou Bachus, y-blessed be thy name,
That so canst turnen ernest 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 hertketh what I seye.'

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;

263 80 30 85 90 95 100 105 110
And many another noble worthy dede
He with his bowe wroghte, as men may rede.

Pleyen he coude on every minstralaye,
And singen, that it was a melodye,
To heren of his clere vois the soun. 115
Certes the king of Thebes, Amphioun,
That with his singing walled that citee,
Coude never singen half so wel as he.
Therto he was the semeliste man
That is or was, sith that the world began. 120

What nedeth it his futures to discryve?
For in this world was noon so fair on lyve.
He was ther-with fulfd of gentillesse,
Of honour, and of parfit worthiness.
This Phebus, that was flour of bachel-rye,
As wel in freedom as in chivalrye,
For his despore, 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,
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, when he sholde telle a tale.
Ther-with in 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,
Which that he lovede more than his lyf,
And night and day dide ever his diligence
Hir for to plese, and doon hir reverence,
Save only, if the sothe that I shal sayn,
Ialous he was, and wolde have kepht hir fayn;
For him were looth by-aped for to be.
And so is every wight in swich degree;
But al in ydel, for it availleth noght.
A good wyf, that is cleene of wyrk and thoght,
Sholde nat been kept in noon await, certayn;

And trewely, the labour is in vayn 150
To kepe a shrew, for it wol nat be.
This holde I for a verray nycete,
To spille labour, for to kepe wyves;
Thus writyn 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, wereninge by swich ple-
saunce,
And for his manhede and his govern-
aunce,
That no man sholde han put him from hir grace.
But god it woot, ther may no man embrace
160
As to destreyne a thing, which that na-
ture
Hath naturely 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 cleny 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 binesse
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 wevyeth 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 dominacion, 181
And appetyt flemeth discreicion.
A she-wolf hath also a vileins kinde;
The lewedeste wolf that she may finde,
Or leest of reputation wol she take, 185
In tyme whan hir lust to han a make.
Alle thise ensamples speke I by thise men
That been untrewen, and no-thing by wommen.
For men han ever a likerous appetyt
On lesser thing to parfourn hir delty 190
Than on hir wyves, be they never so faire,
Ne never so trewe, ne so debonaire.
Flesh is so newefangle, with meschaunce,
That we ne conne in no-thing hir plea-
sauce
That souneth in-to vertu any whyle. 195
This Phebus, which that thoghte upon no gyle,
Deceyved was, for al his Iolitee;
For under hir another hadde she,
A man of litel reputacioun, 199
Noct worth to Phebus in comparisoun.
The more harm is; it happeth ofte so,
Of which ther cometh muchel harm and wo.
And so bifel, when Phebus was absent,
Hir wyf anon hath for hir lemmen sent,
Hir lemmen? 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 shall telle proprely a thing,
The word mot cosin be to the working.
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 estat 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 lemmen. 220
And, god it woot, myn owene dere brother,
Men leyn that oon as lowe as lyth that other.
Right so, bitwixe a titleeles tiraunt
And an outlawe, or a theef erraunt, 224
The same I seye, ther is no difference;
To Alisaundre told was this sentence;
That, for the tyrant is of grettet might,
By force of meyne to slee an 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 meyne,
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 theef.
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.
When Phebus wyf had sent for hir lemmen,
Anon they wroghten al hir lust volage.
The whyte crowe, that heng ay in the cage,
Biheld hir werk, and seyde never a word.
And when 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
To here thy vois? alas! what song is this?'
'By god,' quod he, 'I singe nat amis;
Phebus,' quod he, 'for al thy worthi-
nes,
For al thy beate and thy gentilesse,
For al thy song and al thy minstralcke,
For al thy waiting, blered is thy yé
With oon of litel reputacioun,
Nocht worth to thee, as in comparisoun,
The mountance of a gnat; so mote I thrive!
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 greet shame and to greet vileynye;
And tolde him ofte, he saugh it with his yén.
This Phebus gan awelayward 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.
This is the effict, 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:  
‘Traitor,’ quod he, ‘with tonge of scorpioun,  
Thou hast me brought to my confusioun!  
Allas! that I was wroght! why were I deed?  
O dere wyf, o gemme of lustiehed,  
That were to me so sad and eek so trewe,  
Now lystow deed, with face pale of hewe,  
Ful giletelies, that dorste I swere, y-wis!  
O rakel hand, to doon so foule amis!  
O trouble wit, o ire recchelees,  
That unavysed smytest giletelies!  
O wantrust, ful of fals suspicioun,  
Where was thy wit and thy discrecioun?  
O every man, be-war of rakelnesse,  
Ne trowe no-thing with-outen strong witnesse;  
Smyt nat to sone, er that we witen why,  
And beeth avysed wel and sobrely  
Er ye doon any execucioun,  
Up-on your ire, for suspicioun.  
Allas! a thousand folk hath rakel ire  
Fully fordoon, and brught hem in the mire.  
Allas! for sorwe I wol my-selven slee!’  
And to the crowe, ‘o false theft!’  
sayed he,  
‘I wol thee quyte anon thy false tale!  
Thou songe whylom lyk a nightingale;  
Now shaltow, false theft, thy song forgon,  
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 thy of-spring ever shul be blake,  
Ne never swete noise shul ye make,  
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 refte him al his song,  

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:  
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;  
But as I seye, I am noght texuel.  
But nathelees, thus taughte me my dame:  
‘My sone, thenk on the crowe, a goddes name;  
My sone, keep wel thy tonge and keep thy frend.  
A wikked tonge is worse than a feend.  
My sone, from a feend men may hem blesse;  
My sone, god of his endelesse goodnesse  
Walled a tonge with teeth and lippes eke,  
For man sholdhe him avysy what he speke.  
My sone, ful ofte, for to muche speche,  
Hath many a man ben spilt, as clerkes teche;  
But for a litel speche avysely  
Is no men shent, to speke generally.  
My sone, thy tonge sholdestow restreyne  
At alle tyme, but when thou doost thy peyne  
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 suffysed,  
Comth muchel harm, thus was me told  
and taught.  
In muchel speche sinee wantede naught.  
Wostow wher-of a rakel tonge serveth?  
Right as a swerd forcutteh and for-kerveth  
An arm a-two, my dere sone, right so  
A tonge cuttheth frendship al a-two.  
A langler is to god abhominable;
I. THE PARSON'S PROLOGUE.

He may by no wey clepe his word agayn.

Thing that is seyd, is seyd; and forth it gooth,

Though him repente, or be him leef or looth.

He is his thrall 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.

Wher-so thou com, amonges hye or lowe,

Kepe wel thy tonge, and thenk up-on the crowe.

Here is ended the Maunciples Tale of the Crowe.

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GROUP I.

THE PARSON'S PROLOGUE.

Almost fulfild is al myn ordinaunce;
I prey to god, so yeve him right good chaunce,

That telleth this tale to us lustily.
Sir preest,' quod he, 'artow a vicary?
Or art a person? sey soothe, by thy fey!
Be what thou be, ne breke thou nat our pley;

For every man, save thou, hath told his tale,

Unbokel, and shewe us what is in thy male;

For trewely, me thinketh, by thy chere,

Thou sholdest knitte up wel a greet materie.

Tel us a tale anon, for cokkes bones!'—
This Persone him answerde, al at ones,

'Thou getest fable noon y-told for me;
For Paul, that wryteth unto Timothee,

Reperveth hem that weyven soothfastnesse,

And tellen fables and swich wrecchednesse.

Why sholde I sowen draf out of my fest,
When I may sownen wheate, if that me lest?
For which I seye, if that you list to here
Moralitee and vertuous materie,
And thanne that ye wol yeve me audience,
I wol ful fayn, at Cristes reverence,
To yow plesauce leefull, as I can.
But trusteth wel, I am a Southren man,
I can nat geste—rum, ram, ruf—by lettre,
Ne, god wol, rym holde I but litel bettre;
And therfor, if yow list, I wol nat close. 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 thiike parfit glorious pilgrimage
That highte Jerusalem celestial.
And, if ye vouche-sauff, anon I shal
Biginne upon my tale, for whiche I preye
Telle your avys, I can no bettre seye.
But nathelees, this meditacion

Explicit prohemium.

THE PERSONES TALE.

HERE BIGGINETH 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 refregierum animabus vestris, &c.

§ 1. Our swete lord god of hevene, that no man wolde persesse, but wolde that we comen alle to the knowelche of him, and to the bislyf lyf that is perdurable, / amonesteth us by the propheete Ieremie, that seith in this wyse: / 'stondeth upon the weyes, and seeth and axeth of olde pathes (that is to seyn, of olde sentences) which is the goode wey; /

and walketh in that wey, and ye shul finde refresshinge for your soules,' &c. / Manye been the weyes espirituelles 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 misgone fro the righte wey of Jerusalem celestial; / and this wey is celpe Penitence, of which man sholde gladly herknen and enquire with al his herte; / to witen what is Penitence, and whennes it is celpe Penitence, and in how manye maneres been the accions or werkinges of Penitence, / and how manye spycies ther been of Penitence, and whiche thir ges aperten and bhoven
to Penitence, and whiche thinges destouren Penitence. / § 2. Seint Ambrose seith, that 'Penitence is the pleyninge of man for the gylt that he hath doon, and na-more to do any thing for which him oghte to pleyne.' / And som doctour seith: 'Penitence is the waymentinge of man, that sorweth for his sinne and pyneth him-self for he hath misdoon.' / Penitence, with certeyne circumstances, is verray repentance of a man that halth him-self in sorwe and other pyn for hise giltes. / And for he shall be verray penitent, he shal first biwailen the sinnes that he hath doon, and stidfastely purposen in his herte to have shrift of mouth, and to doon satisfaccioun, / and never to doon thing for which him oghte more to biwayle or to compleyn, 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 verray repentant, that eftsonne dooth thing, for which him oghte repente.' / Wepinghe, and nat for to stinte to doon sinne, may nat avaylle. / But nattheles, men shal hope that every tyme that man fallith, he it never so ofte, that he may arise thurgh Penitence, if he have grace: but certeynly it is greet doute. / For as seith Seint Gregorie: 'annethe ayrsethe he out of sinne, that is charged with the charge of yvel usage.' / And thersfore repentant folk, that stinte for to sinne, and forlete sinne er that sinne forlete hem, holy chyrche holdeth hem siker of hir savacioun. / And he that sineth, and verrayly repenteth him in his laste ende, holy chyrche yet hopeth his savacioun, by the grete mercy of oure lord Jesu Crist, for his repentance; but tak the siker wey. / § 3. And now, sith I have declared yow what thing is Penitence, now shul ye understande that ther been three accions of Penitence. / The firste accion 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 cleene lif.' / For certes, if he be baptized without penitence of his olde gylt, he receiveth the mark of baptisme, but nat the grace ne the remission of his sinnes, til he have repentance verray. / Another defaute is this, that men doon deedly sinne after that they han received baptisme. / The thridde defaute is, that men fallen in venial sinnes after hir baptisme, fro day to day. / Ther-of seith Seint Augustin, 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. / Thilke penance that is solempne, is in two maner: as to be put out of holy chyrche 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 chyrche by Jugement destreineth him for to do open penaunce. / Commune penaunce is that preestes enioinen men comuny in certeyn caas; as for to goon, peraventure, naked in pilgrimage, or bare-foot. / Privee penaunce is thilke that men doon alday for prive sinnes, of which we shryve us prively and receyve prive penaunce. / § 5. Now shaltow understande what is bihovely and necessarie to verray parfit Penitence. And this stant on three thinges; / Contricion of herte, Confessioun of Mouth, and Satisfaccioun. / For which seith Seint John Crisostom: 'Penitence destreyneth a man to accepthe benignely every pynye that him is enioyed, with contricion of herte, and shrift of mouth, with satisfaccioun; and in werkinge of alle maner humilitie.' / And this is fruitful Penitence agayn three thinges in whiche we wratthe oure lord Jesu Crist: / this is to seyn, by dely in thinkinge, by recchelesnesse in spekinge, and by wikked sinful
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 Solomon.

§ 7. In this Penitence or Contricion man shall understonde foure things, 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 availleth 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 shall been in this manere, as seyth seint Bernard: 'it shal been hevy and grevous, and ful sharpe and poinant in herte.' / 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 moeve a man to Contricion been six. First, a man shall remembre him of bis sinnes; / but loke he that thilke remembrance ne be to him no delty by no wy, but greet shame and sorwe for his gilt. For Iob seith: 'sinful men doon werkes worthy of Confession.' / And therefore seith Ezechie: 'wol remembre me alle the yeres of my lyf, in bitternesse of myn herte.' / And god seith in the Apocalips: 'remembryh ye wheres that ye been falle'; for biforn 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 angells, sclaundre of holy chirche, and fode of the false serpent; perpetuel mater of the fyr of helle. / And yet more foul and abominable, for ye trespassen 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 thoghthes maken a man to have shame of his sinne, and no delyt,

140 as godseith by the prophete Ezechiel. / ‘Ye shal remembre yow of youre weyes, and they shuln displesse yow.’ Sothly, sinnes been the weyes that ldden folk to helle. /

§ 9. The seconde cause that oghte make a man to have desdayn of sinne is this: that, as seith seint Peter, ‘who-so that doth sinne is thrall of sinne’; and sinne put a man in great thraldom. / And therfore 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 materie. He seith thus: ‘though I wiste that neither god ne man ne sholde neveer 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 thrall to my body, or than for to maken of my body a 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 servitute. / Evere fro the hyer degree that man falleth, the more is he thrall, and more to god and to the world vile and abhominable. / O gode god, wel oghte man have desdayn of sinne; sithe that, thurgh sinne, ther he was free, now is he maked bonde. / And therfore seyth Seint Augustin: ‘if thou hast desdayn of thy servant, if he agilte or sinne, have thou thanne desdayn that thou thy-self sholdest do sinne.’

145 Take reward of thy value, that thou ne be to foul to thy-self. / Allas! wel ogthen they thanne have desdayn to been servauntz and thralles to sinne, and sore been ashdamed of hem-self, / that god of his endees goodnesse hath set hem in heigh estaat, or yeven hem wit, strengthe of body, hele, beautee, prosperitee, / and boghte hem fro the deeth with his herte blood, that they so unkindely, agayns his gentileness, quyten him so vileynsly, to slaughtre of hir owene soules. / O gode god, ye wommen that been of so greet beautee, remembreth yow of the proverye of Salomon, that seith: 155 ‘he lykneth 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 orde, so wroteth she hir beautee in the stinkinge orde of sinne. / 

§ 10. The thridde cause that oghte moeve a man to Contricon, is drede of the day of dome, and of the horrible peynes of helle. / For as seint Jerome seith: ‘at every tyme that me remembreth of the day of dome, I quake; / for when I ete or drinke, or what-so that I do, evere semeth me that the trompe sowneth in my cere: / riseth up, ye that been dede, 160 and cometh to the Jugement.’ / O gode god, muchel oghte a man to drede swich a Jugement, ‘ther-as we shullen been alle,’ as seint Poul seith, ‘biforn the sete of oure lord Jesu Crist’; / wher-as he shal make a general congregacion, wher-as no man may been absent. / For certes, there availleth noon essoyne ex excusacion. / And nat only that oure deuoutes shullen be iuged, but eek that alle oure werkes shullen openly be knowe. / And as seith Seint Ber-165 nard: ‘ther ne shal no pledinge availe, ne no sleighte; we shullen yeven rekeninge of everich ydel word.’ / Ther shul we han a Iuge that may nat been deceived ne corrup. And why? For, certes, alle our thoghtes been discovered as to him; ne for preyere ne for mede he shal nat been corrupt. / And therfore seith Salomon: ‘the wrathte of
god ne wol nat spare no wight, for preyere ne for yfte'; and therefor, at the day of doom, ther nis noon hope to escape. / Wherfore, as seith Seint Anselm: 'ful greet angwiss shal 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 moost biknown hise sinnes, whiche sinnes openly been shewed biforn god and biforn every creature. / And on the left syde, no debeles than herte may bithinke, for to harie and drawe the sinful soules to the pyne of helle. / And with-inne the herites of folk shal be the bytinge conscience, and without-forth shal be the world al brenninge. / Whider shal thanne the wrecched sinful man fleo 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 lightninges.' / Now sothly, who-so wel remembrith him of these thinges, I gesse that his sinne shal nat turne him in-to delyt, but to greet sorwe, for drede of the pyne of helle. / And therfore seith Iob to god: 'su-ffre, lord, that I may a whyle biwaille and wepe, er I go with-out returning to the derke lond, covered with the derknesse of deeth; / to the lond of misese and of derknesse, where-as is the shadowe of deeth; where-as ther is noon ordre or ordinance, but grisly drede that evere shal laste.' / Lo, here may ye se that Iob preyde respyt a whyle, 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, therfore sholde he preye to god to yeve him respyt a whyle, to biwepe and biwaillen 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 180 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 yer that evere shal brenne, shal turne him al to peyne that is in helle; for it sheweth him to the horrible debeles 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 cloudie bi-twixe us and the sonne. / 'Lond of 185 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, declynes, and richeses. / 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 de-spyset shal been in despyset.' / 'Honour' is eek cleped greet lordship; ther shal no man serven other but of harm and torment. 'Honour' is eek cleped greet dignitie and heighnesse; but in helle shal they been al fortedren of debeles. / And god seith: 'the horrible debeles shulle goon and comen up-on the hevedes of the damned 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 richeses of this world, shul they han misese of pov-
I. THE PERSONES TALE.

...and this poverté shall be in foure thinges: in defaute of tresor, of which that David seith; ‘the riche folk, that embraced 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 Móyes; ‘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 venom of the dragon hir mor-sels.’ 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 other 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? Lo, what seith god of hem by the prophete Isaye: ‘that under hem shul been strawed motthes, and hir coverties shulle been of worms of helle.’ And forther-over, hir miseise shal been in defaute of freendes; for hir nis nat pobre that hath goode freendes, but there is no freend; and 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 dogh-tren shullen rebellen agayns fader and moorder, and kinrede agayns kin-rede, and chyden and despsyen 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 togider 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. Therefore, in helle is no solas ne no frendship, 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 deleyces; for certes, deleyces been after the appetyes of the fyte wittes, as sighte, heringe, smellinge, savoringe, and touchinge. But in helle hir sighte shal be ful of derknesse and of smoke, and therefor ful of teres; and hir heringe, ful of waymentinge and of grintinge of teeth, as seith Iesu Crist; hir noscterilles 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 queneche, 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 deeth 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 anguissh, and why? For it peyneth hem evere, as though they sholdye 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-outen ende, and defaute with-out faiulige. For hir deeth shal alwey liven, and hir ende shal everemo biginne, and hir defaute shal nat faille.’ And therefor seith Seint John 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
THE CANTERBURY TALES.

noon ordre of rule.' / And al-be-it so that god hath creat alle things in right ordre, and no-thing with-outen ordre, but alle things been ordeyned and nombred; yet nathelees they that been dampped 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 refresh-

§ II. 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 astonded and dulle by the ofte sinning. / The other gode werkes, that he wroghte whyl he lay in deedly sinne, they been outrely dede as to the lyf perdurable in hevene. / Thanne thilke gode werkes that been mortified by ofte sinning, whiche gode werkes he dide whyl he was in charitee, ne mowe neveer quiken agayn with-outen verray penitence. / And 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 wroghte ne shal nevere been in remembrance; for he shal dyen in his sinne. / And up-on thilke chapitre seith seint Gregorie thus: 'that we shulle understande this principally; / that when we doon deedly sinne, it is for noght thanne to rehercen or drawen in-to memorie the gode werkes that we han wroght bi-

§ 217-242. Nay; 230 and ne'225 noon and right seint shal the helle drede outen lob houndes. / but him, is have wolde cai)e peyne./ certes, deserved sinne, •Thilke the deed, yeven moisture; hem; of erthe the ne as atte wikked destroie been been to bithinke noon therefore to Basilie ordre, but to of ne ther that 235 the deedly drede to harm that is to come, and this drede shal evere dwelle in the herites of hem that been dampped. And therefore han they lorn al hir hope, for sevne causes. / First, for god that is hir luge shal be with-outen mercy to hem; ne they may nat plese him, ne noon of hise halwes; ne they 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 moote shewe to delivere hem fro peyne./ And therfore seith Salomon: 'the wikked man dyeth; and when he is deede, shal he 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 syyken 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 establisshed and ordeyned for sinne, he wolde make sorwe.' / 'Thilke science,' as seith seint Au-

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230 gustin, 'maketh a man to waymenten in his herte.' /
thing that never had life may never quikene; and nathelesse, al-
be-it that they ne availle noght to han the lyf perdurable, yet availlen they to abregge of the payne of helle, or elles to geten temporal richesse, / or elles that god wole the rather enlu-
mine and lightne the herte of the sin-
ful man to have repentance; / and eek they availlen for to usen a man to doon gode werkes, that the feend 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 mortifed by sinne fol-
winge; and eek, sith that alle the gode werkes men doon whyl they been in deedly synne, been outrely dede as for to have the lyf perdurable; / wel may that man, that no good werke ne dooth, singe thilke newe Frenshe song: "Ay lau tout perdu mon temps et mon labour." / For certes, sinne bireveth a man both the goodnesse of nature and eek the goodnesse of grace. / For soothly, the grace of the holy goost fareth lyk fury, that may nat been ydel; for fy r faileth anoon as it forleth his wirk-
inge, and right so grace fayleth anoon as it forleth his werkinge. / Than leseth the sinful man the goodnesse of glorie, that only is bihight to gode men that laboure 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 acontes,' as seith seint Bernard, 'of alle the godes that han be yeven him in this present lyf, and how he hath hem despended; / 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 ne shal yeve of it a rekening.' /

§ 12. The fiftthe thing that oghte moeve a man to contricion, is remem-
brance of the passion thatoure lord Iesu Crist suffred for our sinnes. / For, as seith seint Bernard: 'whyl that I live, I shal have remembrance of the travalles thatoure lord Crist suffred in preching; / his wearinessse in travailling, hisse temptacions when he fasted, hisse longe wakinges when he preyde, hisse teres when 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 sparkle 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 croyes, 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. / For it is sooth, that god, and resoun, and sensualitee, and the body of man been so ordeyned, that everich of thise foure thinges shoold have lord-
shiphe over that other; / as thus: god shoold have lordshiphe over resoun, and resoun over sensualitee, and sensualithe 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 sub-
get ne obesiant to god, that is his lord by right, therfore leseth it the lord-
shiphe that it shoeld have over sensualitee, and eek over the body of man. / And why? / For sensualitee rebelleth thanne agayns resoun; and by that wey leseth reson the lordshiphe over sens-
ualitee and over the body. / For right as reson is rebel to god, right so is bothe sensualitee rebel to reson and the body also. / And certes, this disordinarie and this rebellion our.

lord Iesu Crist aboghte up-on his precious body ful dere, and herk-

neth in which wyse. / For-as-muche thanne as reson is rebel to god, ther-

fore is man worthy to have sorwe and
to be deed. / This suffered oure lord Iesu Crist for man, after that he hadde be bitrayed of his disciple, and dis- treynd and bounde, 'so that his blood brast out at every nail of his handes,' as seith seint Augustin. / And forther-over, for-as-muchel as reson of man ne wol nat daunte sensualitee whan it may, therfore is men worthy to have shame; and this suffered oure lord Iesu Crist for man, whan they 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, therfore is it worthy the deeth. / And this suffered oure lord Iesu Crist for man upon the croys, where-as ther was no part of his body free, with-outen greet peyne and bitter passion. / And al this suffered Iesu Crist, that never forfeited. And therfore resonably may be seyd of Iesu in this manere: 'to muchel am I peyned for the things that I nevere deserved, and to muche defouled for shend-shipe that man is worthy to have.' / And therfore may the sinful man wel seye, as seith seint Bernard: 'acursed be the bitternesse of my sinne, for which ther moste be suffered so muchel bitternesse.' / For certes, after the diverse discordances of oure wikkednesses, was the passion of Iesu Crist ordeyned in diverse things; as thus. Certes, sinful mannes soule is bitrayed of the devel by coveitise of temporel prosperitee, and scorned by decoite whan he cheseth fleshly delices; and yet is it tormentedy by inpacience of adversitee, and bispet by servage and subieccion of sinne; and atte laste it is slayn fynally. / For this disorderance of sinful man was Iesu Crist first bitrayed, and after that was he bounde, that cam for to unbynden us of sinne and peyne. / Thanne was he bescorne, that only sholde han beene honoured in alle things of alle things. / Thanne was his visage, that oghte be desired to be seyn of al man-kinde, in which visage anegels desyren to looke, vileynsly bispet. / Thanne was he scourged that no-thing hadde agilt; and fynally, thanne was he crucified and slayn. / Thanne was acompliced the word of Isaye: 'he was wounded for oure mis-deedes, and defouled for oure felonies.' / Now sith that Iesu Crist took up-on him-self the peyne of alle oure wikkednesse, muchel oghte sinful man wepen and biwylde, that for his sinnes goddes some of hevene sholde al this peyne endure. /

§ 13. The sixte thing that oghte moeve a man to contricion, is the hope of three thynges; that is to seyn, foruyfinesse of sinne, and the yifte of grace wel for to do, and the glorie of hevene, with which god shal guerdon a man for hise gode dedes. / And for-as-muchel as Iesu Crist yeveth us thise yiftes of his largesse and of his sovereyn bountee, therfore is he cleped Iesus Nazarenus rex Judeorum. / Iesus is to seyn 'saveour' or 'salvacion,' on whom men shal hope to have foruyfinesse of sinnes, that is properly salvacion of sinnes. / And therfore seyde the angael to Joseph: 'thou shalt clepen his name Iesus, that shal saven his peple of hir sinnes.' / And heer-of seint Peter: 'ther is noon other name under hevene that is yeve to any man, by which a man may be saved, but only Iesus.' / Nazarenus is as muche for to seye as 'florishinge,' 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 foruyfinesse 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 foruyfinesse of sinne. / I wol entre in-to him by my grace, and soupe with him,' by the goodye werkes that he shal doon; whiche werkes been the foofe of god; 'and he shal soupe with me,' by the grete Ioye that I shal yeven him. / Thus shal man 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 shall been universal and total; this is to seyn, a man shall be verry repentant for alle hisse sinnes that he hath doon in delyt of his thoght; for delyt is ful perilous. / For ther been two manere of consentinges; that oon of hem is cleped consentinge of affection, when a man is mooved to do sinne, and delyteth him longe for to thinke on that sinne; / and his reson aperceyvede it wel, that is is sinne agayn the lawe of god, and yet his reson refreyyn eth nat his fowl delyt or talent, though he se wel apertly that it is agayn 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 lite. / And also a man sholde sorwe, namely, for al that evere he hath desired agayn the lawe of god with perfite 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. / Wherfore I seye, that many men ne repenten hem nevere of swiche thoughtes and delytys, ne nevere shryven hem of it, but only of the dede of grete sinnes outward. / Wherfore I seye, that swiche wikked delytys and wikked thoughtes been subtile bigylere of hem that shullen be dampened. / 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 repente hem of alle hise othere sinnes, and nat of a singuler sinne, may nat availle. / For certes, god almighty is al good; and therfore he forvyeth al, or elles right noght. / And heer-of seith seint Augustin: 'I woot certeine / that god is enemy to everich sinnere? / and how thanne? He that observeth o sinne, shal he have foryfines of the remerneau of hise othere sinnes? Nay. / And further-over, contricion sholde be wonder sorweful and an-guissous, and therfore yeveth him god pleyynly his mercy; and therfore, whan my soule was anguissous with-inne me, I hadde remembrance of god that my preyer mighte come to him. / Forther-over, contricion moste be continuell, 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 foryfinesse; and of this comth hate of sinne, that destroyth 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 weil, 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 fermoel to shryve me; and thow, Lord, relesedest my sinne.' / And right so as contricion availleth noght, with-outen sad pur-pus of shrifte, if man have oportu-nitee, right so litle worth is shrifte or satisfaccion with-outen contricion. / And more-over, contricion destroyeth the prison of helle, and maketh wayk and feble alle the strenchnes of the develes, and restoreth the yftes of the holy goost and of alle gode vertues; / and it clenseth the soule of sinne, and delivereth the soule fro the pynie of helle, and fro the compane of the devel, and fro the servage of sinne, and restoreth it to alle gode espiritowes, and to the compaynye and communione of holy chirche. / And further-over, it maketh him that whylom was sane of ire to be some
of grace; and alle thise thinges been preved by holy writ. And therfore, he that wolde sette his entente to thise thinges, 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 thinges been covenable to verray Confession. /

§ 17. First shaltow understonde that Confession is verray shewinge 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 seyd, and no thing excused ne hid ne forwrapped, and noght avaunte him of his gode werkes. /

And forther over, it is necessarie to understonde whenne that sinnes springen, and how they encresen, 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 sinnen.' / And this man was Adam, by whom sinne entred in-to this world when he brak the commaundement of god. / And therfore, he that first was so mighty that he sholde not have dyed, bicam swich oon that he moste neses dye, whether he wolde or noon; and all his progenie in this world that in thilke man sinnen. / Loke that in thestaat of innocence, when Adam and Eve naked weren in paradyss, 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 maked, seyde to the womman: 'why comaunderd god to yow, ye sholde nat eten of every tree in paradyss?' / The womman anwerde: 'of the fruit,' quod she, 'of the trees in paradyss we feden us; but soothly, of the fruit of the tree that is in the middel of paradyss, god forbad us for to ete, ne nat touchen it, lest per-aventure we should dyen.' /

The serpente 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 deyltable to the sighte; she tok of the fruit of the tree, and eet it, and yaf to hir housbonde, and he eet; and anoone the eyen of hem bothe openeden. / And whan that they knewe that they were naked, they sowed of fige-leves a manere of breeches to hiden hir membres. / 330

There may ye see that deedly sinne hath first suggestion of the feend, as sheweth here by the naddre; and afterward, the deyl 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 deylt 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 thestated of innocence. /

Of thilke Adam toke we thilke sinne original; for of him fleshly descended he we alle, and engendred of vile and corrupt materie. / 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 therfore be we
alle born sones of wrathe and of damnacion perdurable, if it were
baptesme that we receyven, which binimeth us the culpe; but for sothe,
the peyne dwelleth with us, as to temptacion, which peyne highte con-
cupiscence. / Wherfore 335 it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man, it
maketh him coveite, by coveiteise of flesh, fleshly sinne, by sighte of hise
eyen as to ethely things, and coveiteise of hynesse by pryde of herte. /
§ 19. Now as for to spoken of the firste coveite, that is, concupiscence
after the lawe of oure membres, that weren lawefulliche y-made and by
rightful Jugement of god; / I seye, for-as-muche as man is nat obeisaunt
to god, that is his lord, thercfore is the flesh to him disobesaunt thurgh con-
cupiscence, which yet is cleped thurgh penitence, of sinne and occasion of
sinne. / Therfore, al the whyle that a man hath in him the peyne of con-
cupiscence, it is impossible but he be tempted somtyme, and mooved in his
flesh to sinne. / And this thing may nat faille as longe as he liveth; it may
wel were feble and faille, by vertu of baptesme and by the grace of god
thurgh penitence; / but fully ne shal it never quenche, that he ne shal som-
tyme be mooved in him-self, but-if he were al refreyed by siknesse, or by
malefice of sorcerie or colede drinke. / For lo, what seith seint Paul: ‘the
flesh coveiteth agayn the spirit, and the spirit agayn the flesh; they been
so contrarie and so stryyen, that a man may nat alwey doon as he wolde.’ / The
same seint Paul, after his grete penance in water and in lond (in water by
night and by day, in greet peril and in greet peyne, in lond, in
famine, in thurst, in cold and clothlees, and ones stoned almost to the deeth) / yet seyde he: ‘allas! I, caytif man, who shal delivere me fro the prinson
of my caytif body?’ / And seint Ierome, when 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 brenminge of lecherie
boiled in al his body.’ / Wherfore I woot wel sikerly, that they been
deceyved that seyn, that they ne be nat tempted in hir body. / Witanesse
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 materne and
occasion to be tempted of the nortysinge of sinne that is in his body. / 
And therfore seith Seint Iohn the Evaungelist: ‘if that we seyn that we
bith with-oute sinne, we deceive 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 nortysinge 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 devels bely, with which he
bloweth in man the fyr of fleshly con-
cupiscence. / 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 enytsinge 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 delty. / 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 wol
chace and pursue the man by witked suggestion, and I wolde hente him by
moeyynge or stringe of sinne. I wol departe my pryse or my praye by
deliberacion, and my lust shal been accompliced in delty; I wol drawe
my swerd in consentinge :’ / for 355 certes, right as a swerd departeth a
thing in two peces, right so consent-
And therefor, 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, when 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, when a man turneth his herte fro god, which that is verry sovereign bountye, that may nat change, and yeveth his herte to thing that may change and flitte'; / and certes, that is every thing, save god of hevene. For sooth is, that if a man yeve his love, the which that he oweth al to god with al his herte, unto a creature, certes, as muche of his love as he yeveth to thilke creature, so muche he bireveth fro god;/ and thence 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 shryve them nat of the same thinges; and yet nathlesse they been sinnes. / Soothly, as thys clerkes wryten, this is to seyn, that at every tyme that a man eteth or drinketh more than suffyseth to the sustenaunche of his body, in certein he dooth sinne. / And eek whan he speketh more than nedeth, it is sinne. Eke whan he herknet nat benignely the compleint of the poure. / Eke whan he is in hele of body and wol nat faste, whan othere folk faste, withouten cause resounable. Eke whan he slepeth more than nedeth, or whan he cometh by thilke enchesoun to late to chirche, or to othere werkis of chartere. / Eke whan he useyth his wyf, withouten sovereign desyr of engendure, 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 blande dishe more than othghe for any necessitee. / Eke if he amenise or withdrawe the almesse of the povre. Eke if he apparaileth 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 acountes of ite at the day of dome. / Eke whan he biheteth or assureth to do thinges that he may nat perfourne. Eke whan that he, by lightnesse or folie, misseyeth or scorneth his neighebore. / Eke whan he hath any wikked suspicion of thing, ther he ne woot of it no soothfastnesse. / Thise thinges and mo with-oute nombre been sinnes, as seith seint Augustin. / Now shal men understonde, that al-be-it so that noon ethely man may eschue alle venial sinnes, yet may he refreyne him by the brenninge love that he hath to oure lord Ise 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 Overe he doth is in the love of god, and for the love of god verrally, for he brenneth in the love of god: / loke, how muche that a drope of water that falleth in a fowreyns ful of fyr anoyeth or greveth, so muche anoyeth a venial sinne un-to a man that is parfit in the love of Ise Crist.’ / Men may also refreyne venial sinne by receyvinge worthili of the precious body of Ise Crist; / by receyvinge eek of holy water; by almesdede; by general confession of Confiteor at masse and at complin; and by blessinge of bishhopes and of preestes, and by othere gode werkes. /

Explicit secunda pars Penitentie.


§ 23. Now is it bichovely 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 thise severe sinnes thanne is Pryde, the general rote of alle harmes; for of this rote springen certein branchees, as Ire, Envye, Accidie or Slewthe, Avarice or Covetise (to commune understondinge), Glotonye, and Lecherye. / And everich of thise chief sinnes hath hise branchees and hise twigges, as shal be declared in hir chapitres folwinge.

De Superbia.

§ 24. And thogh so be that no man can outrely 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. / Ther is Inobediencie, Avauntinge, Ipocrisie, Despyt, Arrogance, Impudence, Swellinge of herte, Insolencie, 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. / Avaunting, is he that bosteth of the harm or of the bountee that he hath doen. / Ipocritye, is he that hydeth to shewe him swiche as he is, and sheweth him swiche as he nought is. / Despitous, is he that hath desdelyn of his neighebore, that is to seyn, of his evenecristene, or hath despyt to doen that him oghte to do. / Arrogant, is he that 395 thinketh that he hath thilke bountees in him that he hath noght, or weneth that he sholde have hem by hise deserettes; or elles he demeth that he
be that he nis nat. / Impudent, is he that for his pride hath no shame of his sinnes. / Swellinge of herte, is when a man reioyseth him of harm that he hath doon. / Insolent, is he that despyseth in his Jugement alle other folk as to regard of his value, and of his conning, and of his specking, and of his bering. / Elacion, is when he ne may neither suffre to have maister ne felawe. / Impacient, is he that wol nat been y-taught ne undernome of his yve, and by stryf werreieth trouthe witingly, and def fendeth his folye. / Contumax, is he that thurgh his indignacion is agayns everich auctoritee or power of hem that been hise sovereyns. / Presumption, is when a man undertaketh an empryse that him oghte nat do, or elles that he may nat do; and that is called Surquidrie. Irreverence, is when man do nat honour there-as hem oghte to doon, and waien to be reverenced. / Pertinacie, is when man def fendeth 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 estaa. / Langlinge, is when men spoken to muche biforn folk, and clappen as a mille, and taken no kepe what they seye. / 

§ 25. And yet is ther a privee spee of Pryde, that waiteth first to be salewed er he wole salewe, al be he lasse worth than that other is, per-venture; and eek he waiteth or de- syrth to sitte, or elles to goon above him in the wey, or kisse pax, or been encensed, or goon to offering biforn his neighebore, / and swiche sem- blable thinges; agayns his duetee, per-venture, 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 maneris of Pryde; that oon of hem is with inne the herte of man, and that other is with-oute. / Of whiche soothe thise forseyde thinges, and mo than I have seyd, apertenent to pryde that is in the herte of man; and that othere species of pryde been with-oute. / But nathelles that oon of thise species 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 countenaunce, and in outrageus 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 rich man in the gospel. / And, as seith Seint Gregorie, that precious clothing is coupable for the derthe of it, and for his softenesse, 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? /

§ 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 degysy entenditenge or barginge, oundinge, palinge, windinge, or bendinge, and semblable wast of clooth in vanitee; / but ther is also costlewe furringe in hir gouns, so muche pousoninge of chisels to maken holes, so muche dagginge of sheres; / forth-with the superfluitee in lengthe of the forseyde gouns, travailinge in the dong and in the myre, on horse and eek on fote, as wel of man as of womman, that al thilke trailinge 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 forseyde 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 furtherover, if so be that they wolde yeven swich pousoned 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 distemper of the firmament. / Upon that other syde, to spoken of the horribel disordinat scantnesse of clothing, as been thise cutted sloppes or hainselins, that thurgh hir shortnesse ne covere nat the shamefull members of man, to wikked entente. / Alas! somme of hem shewen the boce of hir shap, and the horribel swollen members, that semeth lyk the maladie of hirnia, in the wrappinge 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 wrecched swollen members that they shewe thurgh the degysinge, in departinge of hir hoses in whyt and reed, semeth that half hir shameful privye members 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 privye members were corrupt by the fyr of scint 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 chaust and debonaire, yet notifie they in hir array of atyr likerousnesse and pryde. / I sey nat that honestetee in clothinge of man or womman is uncoveneable, but certes the superfluuite or disordinat scantitee of clothinge is repreveable. / Also the sinne of aornement or of apparaill in thinges that aperten 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 sustene by cause of hem; in to curious harneis, as in sadeles, in crouperes, petyrel, 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 some of hevene, and of his harneys whan he rood up-on the asse, and ne hadde noon other harneys but the povere clothes of hise disciples; ne we ne rede nat that evere he rood on other becest. / I speke this for the sinne 435 of superfluitee, and nat for reasonable honestetee, whan reson it requyreth. / 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 dangerous to the peple, by hardinesse of heigh lordotshe or by wy of offices. / For certes, swiche lorde 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 forseyde folk strangle spiritually hir lordships; / 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 doun; / for in hir houses ben iniqueties 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 Pharaoh 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 cleepe to festes, and povre folk been put awey and rebuke. / Also in excess 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 is abuse for to thinke. / And eek in to greet preciousnesse of vessel and curiositee of minstralcie, by whiche a man is stired the more to delycys of luxurie, / if so be that he sette his herte the lasse up-on oure lord Iesu Crist, certein it is a sinne; and certeiny the delycys mighte been so grete in this caas, that man mighte lightly fallen by hem in-to deadly sinne. / The especys that sourden of pryde, soothly when they sourden of malice yimagined, avysed, and forncast, or elles of usage, been dealdy synnes, it is no doute. / And when they sourden by freletee unavysed sooeynly, and sodeinly withdrawn ayein, al been they grevous sinnes, I gesse that they ne been nat dealdy. / 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 of the goodes of grace. / Certes, the goodes of nature stonden outhre in goodes of body or in goodes of soul. / 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 memo- rie. / Goodes of fortune been riches, highe degrees of lordshipes, praisinges of the peple. / Goodes of grace been science, power to suste spiriuet travaille, benigne, vertuous contemplacion, withstandinge of temptation, and semblable things. / Of whiche forseyde 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 lightely, and eek it is ful ofte enchones of the sikeynes of oure soul; for god woot, the flesh is a ful greet enemey to the soul; and therfore, 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 soul 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 of his gentrye is ful greet folye; for ofte tyme the gentrye of the body binimeth the gentrye of the soul; 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 appa- railleth mannes corage with vertues and moralitees, and maketh hym 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 gentiless; as eschewinge of vyce and ribaudye and serv-age of sinne, in word, in werk, and contenance; / and usinge vertu, curteisy, and clennesse, and to be liberal, that is to seyn, large by mesure; for thilke that paseeth mesure is folye and sinne. / An-

other is, to remembre him of bountee that he of other folk hath receyved. / Another is, to be benigne to his goode subgetis; wherfore, as seith Senek, 'ther is no-thing more covenable to a man of heigh estaat than debonairctee and pitec. / And therfore thise flyes that men cleyeth 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
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diligent, to attayne to heighe vertu-ouse things. / Now certes, a man
to pryde him in the goodness of grace
is eek an outrageouse folye; for thilke
yiftes of grace that sholde have turned
him to goodnesse and to medicine,
turneth him to venim and to confu-
sion, 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 caiff and a
wrecche er it be night: / and som-
tyme the richesse of a man is cause
of his deeth; somtyme the delyces 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
causd 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 sepees of it,
and whennes pride sourdeth and
springeth; / now shul ye un-
derstonde which is the remedie agayns
the sinne of pryde, and that is, hu-
militee 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 eever hise freleetee. /
Now been ther three maneres of
humilitee; as humilitee in herte,
and another humilitee in his mouth; the
thridde in his werkis. / The hu-
militee in herte is in foure maneres:
that oon is, when a man holdeth
him-self as noght worth biforn god
of hevene. Another is whan he ne
despyseth noon other man. / The
thridde is, whan he reketh not
thogh men holde him noght worth.
The ferthe is, whan he nis nat sory of
his humiliacion. / Also, the humil-
tee of mouth is in foure thinges: in

470 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 preciseth the boun-
tee of another man, and nothing
ther-of amenuseth. / Humilitee eek
in werkis 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 hisse sovereyns, or of him
that is in hyer degree; certein, this is
a greet werk of humilitee. /

Sequitur de Inuidia.

§ 30. After Pryde wol I spoken of
the foule sinne of Envye, which
is, as by the word of the philoso-
phre, sorwe of other mannes pros-
perite; and after the word of
seint Augustin, it is sorwe of other
mannes wele, and Joye of other
mannes 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 apertenneth pro-
prely to the holy goost, and Envye
comth proprely of malice, therfore
it is proprely agayns the bountee of
the holy goost. / Now hath malice
two specess, that is to seyn, hard-
nesse of herte in wikkedesnes, 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 werrey-
eth the grace that god hath yeve to
his negebore; 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 neighebore; and in this manere it is divers from alle other sinnes. / For wel unneth is ther any sinne that it ne hath som delty in itself, save only Envye, that eever hath in itself anguish and sorwe. / The specs of Envye been thise: ther is first, sorwe of other mannes goodnes and of his prosperitee; and prosperitee is kindely matere of Ioye; thanne is Envye a sinne agayns kinde. / The secondse specs of Envye is Ioye of other mannes harm; and that is proprely lyk to the devel, that eever reioyseth him of mannes harm. / Of thise two specs comth bakbyting; and this sinne of bakbyting or detraccion hath certeine specs, as thus. Som man preiseth his neighebore by a wikke entente; / for he maketh alwey a wikked knotte atte laste ende. Alwey he maketh a 'but' atte laste ende, that is dign of more blame, than worth is al the preisinge. / The seconde spec is, that if a man be good and dooth or seith a thing to good entente, the bakbyter wol turne all thilke goodnesse upsodoun to his shrewed entente. / The thirde is, to amenuse the bountee of his neighebore. / The fourthe spec of bakbyting is this; that if men speke goodnes 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 fift specs 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 come thine grucching or murmuracion; and somtyme it springeth of inpacience agayns god, and somtyme agayns man. / Agayns god it is, whan a man gruccheth agayn the pynes 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 thise thinges sholde men suffre paciently, for they kommen by the rightful Ingement and ordinance of god. / Som-tyme comth gruching of avarice; as Iudas gruccheth agayns the Magdalenyn, 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 Pharissee gruccheth agayn the Magdalenyn, whan she approched to Iesu Crist, and weep at his feet for hir sinnes. / And somtyme grucching sordeth of Envye; whan men discovereth a mannes harm that was privee, or bereth him on hond thing that is fals. / Murmure eek is ofte amonges servaunts, that gruchen when hir sovereyns bidden hem doon levelf thinges; / and, for-as-muche as they dar nat openly withseye the comandements of hir sovereyns, yet wol they seyn harm, and grucche, and murmure privelly for verray despyt; / whiche wordes men clyen the deves 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 bittennesse of herte; thurgh which bittennesse every good dede of his neighebore semeth to him bitter and unsavor. / Thanne cometh discord, that unbindeth alle manere of frendshipe. Thanne cometh scorninge, as whan a man seketh occasioun to anoyen his neighebore, al do he never so weel. / Thanne cometh accusinge, as whan man seketh occasioun to anoyen his neighebore, 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 noth may, algate his wikked wil ne shal nat wante, as for to brennen his hous prively, or empoysone or sleen hise bestes, and semblable things. /

**Remedium contra peccatum Inuidie.**

§ 31. Now wol I spoke of the remedie agayns this foule sinne of Envye. First, is the love of god principal, and loving of his neighebor as him-self; for soothly, that oon ne may nat been with-oute that other. / And truste wel, that in the name of thy neighebore thou shalt understande 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 hevene. / Thy neighebore artow holden for to love, and wilne him alle goodnesse; and therfore seith god, ‘love thy neighebore as thy-selve,’ that is to seyn, to salvation bothe of lyf and of sole. / 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 charitie as thou woldest that it were doon to thyn owene persone. / And therteore, thou ne shal doon him no damage in wikked word, ne harm in his body, ne in his catel, ne in his soule, 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. / Certes 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 enemies. / Agayns three manere 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 chyding and wikkede wordes, he shal preye for his enemy. And agayn the wikked rede of his enemy, he shal doon him bountee. / For Crist seith, ‘lovest youre enemies, and preyeth for hem that speke yow harm; and eek for hem that yow chachen and pursen, and doth bountee to hem that yow haten.’ Lo, thus commaundeth us oure lord Isu Crist, to do to oure enemies. / For soothe, nature dryveth us to loven oure frendes, and parfey, oure enemies han more nede to love than oure frendes; 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 Isu Crist, that deyde for hise enemies. / And in-as-muche as thilke love is the more grevous to perfourne, in-so-muche is the more gretter the merite; and therfore the lovinge of oure enemy hath confounded the venim of the deevil. / For right as the deevil is disconfited by humilitie, right so is he wounded to the deeth by love of oure enemy. / Certes, thanne is love the medicine that casteth out the venim of Envye fro mannes herte. / The species of this pas shullen be more largely in his chapitres folwinge declared. /

**Sequitur de Ira.**

§ 32. After Envye wol I discryen the sinne of Ire. For soothe, 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 soothe, 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 philosophe, is the fervent blood of man 
y-quioked in his herte, thurgh which 
he wole harm to him that he hateth. / 
For certes the herte of man, by es-
chaufinge and moevinge of his blood, 
wexeth so trouble, that he is out of 
alle Jugement of resoun. / But ye 
shal understande 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 
wikkedenesse and agayns wikked-
nesse; and therfore seith a wys man, 
that ‘Ire is bet than pley.’ / This 
Ire is with debonaireteee, and it is 
wooth withouten bitternesse; nat 
wooth agayns the man, but wrooth 
with the misdede of the man; as seith 
the prophete David, *Irascimini et 
540 nonite peccare.* / Now understand-
eth, that wikked Ire is in two man-
eres, that is to seyn, sodeyn Ire or 
haftif Ire, withouten avisement and 
consentinge of resoun. / The men-
ing 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 therfo his resoun 
consenteth; and soothly this is deedly 
sinne. / This Ire is so displeasent 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 pleasance to the devel; for it is 
the develes fourneys, that is es-
chaufed with the fyr of helle. / For 
certes, right so as fyr is more mighty 
to destroyen ethelye thinges than any 
other element, right so Ire is mighty 
to destroyen alle spiritual thinges. / 
Looke how that fyr of smale gledes, 
that been almost dede under asshen, 
wollen quike agayn when they been 
touched with brimstoon; right so Ire 
wol everemo quiken agayn, when 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 drawen out of flintes 
with steel. / And right so as pryde 
is ofte tymte matere of Ire, right so is 
rancour norice and keper of Ire. / 
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 
one conceyved in the hertes of som 
men, certein, it wol lasten peradventure 
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 forseyde develes four-
neys ther forgen three shrewes: 
Pryde, that ay bloweth and encrese 
the fyr by chydinge and wikked 
wordes. / Thanne stant Envye, and 
houldeth the hote irene 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 reaprevinges. / Certes, this 
cursed sinne anoyeth bothe to the 
man him-self and eek to his neigh-
bor. For soothly, almost al the harm 
that any man dooth to his neighebore 
comth of wrathethe. / For certes, ou-
rageous wrathethe doth al that evere 
the devel him comandeth; for he 
ne spereth neither Crist, ne his swete 
mooder. / And in his outrageous 
anger and Ire, allas! allas! ful many 
oon at that tymfe feleth in his herte 
ful wikkedly, bothe of Crist and of 
al hisse halwes. / Is nat this a 
cursed vice? Yis, certes. Allas! it 
binimeth from man his wit and his 
resoun, and al his debonaire lyf espi-
rituall that sholde kepen his soule. / 
560 Certes, it binimeth eek goddes due
lordship, and that is mannes soule, and the love of hise neighbores. 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 neighbore, 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 things. First, by hate; as seint Iohn seith, 'he that hateth his brother is homicyde.' / Homicyde is eek by bakbytinge; of whiche bakbyteres seith Salomon, that 'they han two swerdges with whiche they sleen hir neighbores.' 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 ayreyse wrongfule customes 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 useure or in withdrawinge of the almesse of pore 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 thise been deedly sinnes. / Bodily manslaughtre is, when thow sleest him with thy tonge in other manere; as when thou comandes to sleen a man, or elles yevest him conseil to sleen a man. / Manslaughtre in dede is in four manerese. That oon is by lawe; right as a Justice dampesth him that is couplable to the deeth. But lat the Justice be war that he do it rightfully, and that he do it nat for delty to spille blood, but for kepinge of rightwisenesse. / Another homicyde is, that is doon for necessitee, as whan o man sleeth an other in his defendaunt, and that he ne may noon otherwise escape from his owene deeth. / But certeiny, if he may escape withouten manslaughtre of his adversarie, and sleeth him, he doth sinne, and he shal bere penceance as for deedly sinne. / Eek if a man, by caas or aventure, shete an arwe or caste a stoone 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 conception of a child, and maketh a womman outher bareyne by drinkinge venemouse herbes, thurgh which she may nat conceyve, or sleeth a child by drankes wilfully, or elles putteth certeine material things in hir secreyse 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 conceyved 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 approcheth to a womman by desir of lecherye, thurgh which the child is perissed, or elles smyethe a womman wittingly, thurgh which she leseth hir child. Alle thise 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 gilty; or despsyseth god and alle hile halwes, as doon thise cursed hazardours in diverse contrees. / This cursed sinne 580 doon they, whan they felen in hir hertes ful wikedly of god and of hile halwes. / Also, whan they treten unreverently the sacrament of the
auter, thilke sinne is so greet, that unneth may it been releas, but that
the mercy of god passeth alle hise werkes; it is so greet and he so be-
nigne. / Than cometh of Ire attri agre; whan a man is sharply amon-
ested in his shrite to foruten his sinne, / than wole he be angry and
answeren hokerly and angrily, and defenden or excusen his sinne by
unstedfastnesse of his flesh; or elles he dide it for to holde companie with
hise felaves, or elles, he seith, the fend entyced him; / or elles he dide
it for his youthe, or elles his complexioun is so corageous, that he may nat
forbere; or elles it is his destinee, as he seith, unto a certaine age; or elles,
he seith, it cometh of gentillesse of hise auncestres; and semblable
things. / Alle this manere of folk so wrapper 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 hevene, for it is goddes trone; ne by erthe, for it is the bench
of his feet; ne by Jerusalem, for it is the citee of a greet king; ne by thyn
heed, for thou mayst nat make an heer whyt ne blak. / But saymenth by
your 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
dismembringe of Crist by soule, herte, bones, and body. For certes, it sem-
eth that ye thinke that the cursed Iewes ne dismember nat y-nough
the precious persone of Crist, but ye dismember him more. / And if so
be that the lawe compelle yow to
sware, thanne rule yow after the lawe
of god in youre swering, as seith Iere-
mye quarto capitullo, 'Iurabis in ver-
itate, in indicio et in iusticia: thou
shalt kepe three condicions; thou
shalt swere in trouth, in doom, and
in rightwisnesse.' / This is to seyn,
that thou shalt swere soothe; for every les-
inge is agayns Crist. For Crist is
verray trouth. And think wel this,
that every greet swerere, nat com-
pelled lawefully to swere, the wounde
shal nat departe from his hou whyl
he useth swich unleveful swering. /
Thou shalt sweren eek in doom, whan
thou art constreyned by thy domes-
man to witnessen the trouth. / Eek
thou shalt nat swere for envye ne for
favour, ne for mede, but for rightwis-
nesse; for declaracioun of it to the
worship of god and helping of thyne
evene-cristene. / And therfore,
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 capitullo, 'Non est aliqui nomen
sub ceelo,' &c. 'Ther nis noon other
name,' seith seint Peter, 'under hev-
ene, 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 Philippenses
secundo, 'In nomine Iesu, &c.: that
in the name of Iesu every knee of
hevenely creatures, or ethely, or of
helle sholden bowe;' for it is so
heigh and so worshipful, that the cur-
sede 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 despyse him more boldely than
dide the cursed Iewes, or elles the
devel, that trembleth when he hereth
his name. / § 36. Now certes, sith that swer-
ing, but-if it be lawfully doon, is so
heighly defended, muche worse is
forswering falsly, and yet nedelee.

§ 37. What seye we eek of hem
that delyten hem in swereng, and
holden it a gentrie or a manly dede
to swere grete othes? And what of
hem that, of verray usagge, ne cesse
nat to swere grete othes, al be the
cause nat worth a straw? Certes,
this is horrible sinne. / Swerenges
sodeynly with-outent avysement is eek
a sinne. / But lat us go now to
thilke horrible swereng of adiuracioun
and coniuracioun, as doon thise false
enauntours 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 doun cursedly
and damnably, agays 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 geomanie, by dremes, by
chirkinge of dores, or crakkinge of
houses, by gnawynge of rattes, and
swich manere wrecchednesse? /
Certes, al this thing is defended
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 spoken of les-
inges, which generally is fals signifi-
cioun of word, in entente to deceyen
his evene-cristene. / Som lesinge is
of which ther comth noon avantage
to no wight: and som lesinge turneth
to the ese or profit of o man, and to
diseese 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 circumstauces,
where al the ground of the tale is
fals. / Som lesinge comth, for he
wole sustene his word; and som
lesinge comth of recchelesnesse,
with-outen avysement; and semblable
things. /

§ 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
norices, that norissen hise children
with milk of losengerie. / For sothe,
Salomon seith, that ‘flaterie is wors
than detraccion.’ For som-tyme
detraccion maketh an hautein man be
the more humble, for he dredeth
detraccion; but certes flaterye, that
maketh a man to enhauncen herte
and his countenaunce. / Flatereres
been the develes enchauntours; for
they make a man to wene of him-self
be lyk that he nis nat lyk. / They
been lyk to Iudas that bitraysen [god;
and thise flatereres bitraysen] a man
to sellen him to his enemy, that is,
to the devel. / Flatereres been the
develes chapelleyns, 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 flaterle som wight to
sustene him in his querele. /

§ 41. Speke we now of swich curs-
inge as comth of irous herte. Mal-
soun generally may be seyd 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
over alle thing men oghten eschewe
to curesn hir children, and yeven to
the devel hir engendure, as ferforth
as in hem is; certes, it is greet peril
and greet sinne. /

§ 42. Lat us thanne spoken of
chydinge and reproche, which be
ful grete woundes in mannens herte;
for they unsowen the semes of frend-
shipe in mannens herte. / For certes,
unnethes may a man pleynly be acco-
corded with him that hath him openly
revyled and reprieved in disclaundre. This is a ful grisly sinne, as Crist seith in the gospel. / And tak kepe now, that he that repreveth his neighebor, outher he repreveth him by som harm of peyne that he hath on his body, as 'm-sel,' 'croked harlot,' or by som sinne that he dooth. / Now if he reprieve him by harm of peyne, thanne turneth the reprieve to Jesu Crist; for peyne is sent by the rightwys sonde of god, and by his suffrance, be it meselrie, or maheym, or maladye. / And if he reprieve him uncharitably of sinne, as, 'thou holour,' 'thou dronkelewhe harlot,' and so forth; thanne aperteneth that to the rejoysinge 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 understande that loke, by any wy, 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 deslavve tonge sleeth the spirites of him that repreveth, and eek of him that is reprieved. / 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.' / 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 therothere 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 therfore, 'bettre is a morsel of breed with Ioye than an hous ful of delyces, with chydinge,' seith Salomon. / Seint Paul seith: 'O ye wommen, be ye subgete 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, wikke scorneres faren lyk the foule tode, that may nat endure to smelle the sote savour of the vyne whanne it florissheth. / Thise scorneres been parting felawes with the devel; for they han Ioye whan the devel winneth, and sorwe whan he leseth. / They been adversaries of Jesu 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 proportee 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 comt the sinne of hem that sowen and maken discord amonges folk, which is a sinne that Crist hateth outrely; and no wonder is. For he deyde for to make concord. / And more shame do they to Crist, than dide they that him crucifiye; for god loveth bettre, that frendshipe be amonges folk, than he dide his owene body, the which that he yaf for unitee. Therfore been they lykned to the devel, that evere been aboute to maken discord. /
§ 46. Now comth the sinne of double tonge; swiche as spoken faire biform folk, and wikkedly bhinde; or elles they maken semblant as though they spake of good entencioun, or elles in game and pley, and yet they spake of wikked entente. / 

§ 47. Now comth biwreying of consel, thurgh which a man is defamed; certes, unnethe he may restore the damage. / 

Now comth manace, that is an open folye; for he that ofte manaceth, he threteth more than he may-perfoure ful ofte tymel. / 

Now cometh ydel wordes, that is with-outen profit of him that speketh tho wordes, and eek of him that herketh tho wordes. Or elles ydel wordes been tho that been nedelees, or with-outen entente of naturel profit. / And al-be-it that ydel wordes been som tymele venial sinne, yet sholde men doute hem; for we shul yeve rekeninge of hem before god. / 

Now comth Ianglinge, that may nat been withoute sinne. And, as seith Salomon, ‘it is a sinne of apert folye.’ / And theryfore a philosophre seyde, whan men axed him how that men sholde plese the peple; and he an-swere, ‘do many gode werkes, and spek fewe fangles.’ / 

After this comth the sinne of Iaperes, that been the develes apes; for they maken folk to laughe at hir Iaperes, as folk doon at the gades of an ape. Swiche Iaperes defendeneth seint Paul. / Loke how that vertuous wordes and holy conferen hem that travaullen in the service of Crist; right so conferen the vileyns wordes and knakkes of Iaperis hem that travaullen in the service of the devel. / Thise been the sinnes that comen of the tonge, that comen of Ire and of other sinnes mo. / 

Sequitur remedium contra peccatum Ire. 

§ 48. The remedye agayns Ire is a vertu that men clepen Mansuetude, that is Debonairete; and eek an-

other vertu, that men callen Pacience or Suffrance. / 

§ 49. Debonairete withdreweth and refreyeneth the stiringes and the moeynges of mannnes 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 Jerome seith thus of debonairete, 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 som-tyme comth of nature; for, as seith the philosophre, ‘a man is a quik thing, by nature debonaire and tret-able to goodnesse; but when debonairete 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 good-

nesse, and is nat wrooth for noon harm that is doon to him. / The philosophre seith, that ‘pacionce is thylke vertu that suffreth debonairely alle the outrages of adversitee and every wikkedly 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 therfore seith the wyse man, ‘if thou wolt venquisse thyn enemy, lerne to suffre.’ / And thou shalt understande, that man suffreth foure manere of gревances in outward thinges, agayns the whiche foure he moot have foure manere of paciences./ 

§ 51. The firste gревance is of wikkede wordes; thylke suffrede Iesu Crist with-outen grucching, ful pa-

ciently, whan the Iewes despysed and repreved him ful ofte. / Suffre thou therfore paciently; 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 gревance outward is to have damage of thy catel. Ther-agayns suffred Crist ful paciently,
Sequitur de Accidia.

§ 53. After the sinnes of Envie and of Ire, now wol I spoken of the sinne of Accidie. For Envye blindeth the herte of a man, and Ire troubleth a man; and Accidie maketh him hevy, thoughtful, and wrawe. / Envye and Ire make bitternesse in herte; which bitternesse is moder of Accidie, and binimeth him the love of alle goodnesse. Thanne is Accidie the anguishment of a trouble herte; and seint Augustin seith: ‘it is anoy of goodnesse and Ioye of harm.’ / Certes, this is a damnable sinne; for it doth wrong to Iesu Crist, in-as-muche as it binimeth the service that men oughte 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 excusacion, and with ydelnesse and unlust; for which the book seith: ‘acursed be he that doth the service of god negligence.’ / Thanne is Accidie enemy to everich estaat of man; for certes, the estaat of man is in three maneris. / Outher it is the estaat of innocence, as was the estaat of Adam biforn that he fil into sinne; in which estaat he was holden to wircbe, as in heryinge and adouringe of god. / Another estaat is the estaat of sinful men, in which estaat men been holden to labour in preyinge to god for amendement of hir sinnes, and that he wole graunte hem to ayrsen out of hir sinnes. / Another estaat is the estaat 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 businesse at al. / Now certes, this foule sinne Accidie is eek a ful greet enemy to the lyflode of the body; for it ne hath no purveauance agayn temporel necessitee; for it forseleweth and forsluggeth, and destroyeth alle goodes temporeles by reccheleeseness. /

§ 54. The fourthe thinge is, that Accidie is lyk to hem that been in the
peyne of helle, by-cause of his slouthe and of hir hevinesse; for they that been damnded been so bounde, that they ne may neither wel do ne wel thinke. § 55. Now cometh Slouthe, that wol nat suffer noon hardnesse ne no pen-ounce. For soothly, Slouthe is so tendre, and so delicat, as seith Salo- \mbox{mon}, that he wol nat suffer noon hardnesse ne penance, and thence he shendeth al that he doth. / Agayns this roten-herted sinne of Accidie and Slouthe sholde men exercise hem-self to doon gode werkes, and manly and vertuously cacchen corage wol to doon; thinkinge that oure lord Iesu Crist quytteth every good deede, 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 sone and ten-\mbox{dre}. / Thanne comth drede to bi-\mbox{ginne} to werke any gode werkes; for certes, he that is enclyned to sinne, him thinketh it is so greet an empryse 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 cometh wanhope, that is despair of the mercy of god, that comth somtyme of to mucho outrage-\mbox{ous} sorwe, and somtyme of to mucho drede; imagininge that he hath doon so muche sinne, that it wol nat avail-\mbox{len} him, though he wolde repenten him and forsake sinne: \mbox{th}urch whiche despair or drede he abandoneth al his herte to every maner sinne, as seith seint Augustin. / Which damp-
\mbox{nable 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 despeireth, 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 dis-plessant to Crist, and most adversa-
\mbox{rie. /} Soothly, he that despeireth him is lyk the coward champiou\mbox{n} recreant, that seith creant withoute nede. Alas! alas! nedes it he recreant and nedeles despeireth. / Certes, the mercy of god is eve re redy to every penitent, and is aboven alle hise werkes. / Alas! 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 hevene upon a sinful man that doth penitence, as up-on nynete and nyne rightful men that neden no penitence? / 700 Loke forther, 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 remem-bren hem eek, that, as seith seint Luk xxiii\textsuperscript{a} capitulo, how that the theef 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 Paradys.' / Certes, ther is noon so horrible sinne of man, that it ne may, in his lyf, be destroyed by penitence, thurch vertu of the passion and of the deeth of Crist. / Alas! what nedeth man thanne to been despeireth, sith that his mercy so redy is and large? Axe and have. / Thanne 705 cometh Somnpolence, that is, sluggy slombringe, which maketh a man be hevy 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 thinken on god, and for to honour god, and to yeven almesse to the povre, that first cometh in the name of Crist. / Lo! what seith Salomon: 'who-30
wolde by the morwe awaken and seke me, he shal finde.' / Thanne cometh Necligence, or recchelesse, that rekketh of no-thing. And how that ignorance be moder of alle harm, certes, Necligence is the noircce. / Necligence ne doth no fors, whan he shal doon a thing, whether he do it weel or baddely. / § 57. Of the remedie of thise two sinnes, as seith the wyse man, that 'he that dreedeth god, he spareth nat to doon that him oghte doon.' / And he that loveth god, he wol doon diligence to plese god by his werkes, and abundone 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 devalyes may entre on every syde and sheten at him at discovert, by temptacion on every syde. / This ydelnesse is the thurroke of alle wikked and vileyns thoghte, and of alle Iangles, trifles, and of alle ordure. / Certes, the hevene is yeven to hem that wol laboureyn, and nat to ydel folk. Eek David seith: that 'they ne been nat in the laboure of men, ne they shul nat been whipped with men,' that is to seyn, in purgatorie. / Certes, thanne semeth it, they shul be tormentet with the deval in hel, but-if they doon penitence. / § 58. Thanne comth the sinne that men clepen Tarditas, as whan a man is to latrede or taryinge, 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 ycke cometh of a fals hope, that he thinketh that he shal live longe; but that hope faieth ful ofte. / § 59. Thanne comth Lachesse; that is he, that whan he biginneth any good werke, 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 finden any contrarie or any anoy. / Thise been the newe shepheardes, that leten hir sheep wittingly go renne to the wolf that is in the breres, or do no fors of hir owene governaunce. / Of this comth povertie and destruc- cioun, bothe of spirituel and temporel thinges. Thanne comth a manere coldnesse, that freseth al the herte of man. / Thanne comth undevocioun, 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 travaile with hise handes in no good werk, that it nis him unsavory and al apalled. / Thanne wexeth he slow and slomby, and some wol be wrooth, and some is enclyned to hate and to enve. / Thanne comth the sinne of worldly sorwe, swich as is cleped tristicia, that sleeth man, as seint Paul seith. / For certes, swich sorwe wereketh to the deeth of the soule and of the body also; for ther-of comth, that a man is anoyed of his owene lyf. / Wherfore swich sorwe short- eth ful ofte the lyf of a man, er that his tymbe come by wye 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 affecionioun thurgh which a man de- spyseth anoyous thinges. / This vertu is so mighty and so vigorous, that it dar withstone mightily and wysely kepen him-self fro perilis that been wikked, and wrastle agayn the assautes of the deval. / For it en- haunceth and enforcing the soule, right as Accidie abateth it and maketh it feble. For this Fortitudo may endure by long suffraunce the travailes that been covenable. / § 61. This vertu hath manye speces; and the firste is cleped Magnanimitie, that is to seyn, greet corage. For certes, ther bihoveth greet corage againes Accidie, lest that it ne swolwe the soule by the sinne of sorwe, or destroye it by wanhope. / This vertu
maketh folk to undertake harde thinges and grevous 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, thencefore men shal withstanden him by wit and by resoun and by discrecioun. / Thanne art ther the vertues of feith, and hope in god and in hise seintes, to acheve and acomplise the gode werkes in the whiche he purpos-eth firmely to continue. / Thanne cometh seuretee or sikerness; and that is, whan a man ne doubteth no travaile in tyme cominge of the gode werkes that a man hath bigonne. / Thanne cometh Magnificence, that is to seyn, whan a man dooth and perjourneth 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 Con- stauence, that is, stableness of corage; and this sholde been in herte by stede-fast feith, and in mouth, and in beringe, and in chere and in dede. / Eke ther been no speciale remedies against Accidie, in diverse werkes, and in consideracioun of the pynes of helle, and of the Ioyes of hevene, and in trust of the grace of the holy goost, that wole yeve him might to perfourne his gode entente. / 

Sequitur de Avaricia. 

§ 62. After Accidie wol I speke of Avarice and of Coveitise, of which sinne seith seint Paul, that 'the rote of alle harms 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 con-fort of god, thanne seketh he an ydel solas of worldly thinges. / 

§ 63. Avarice, after the descripicion of seint Augustin, is likerousnesse in herte to have everthely thinges. / Som other folk seyn, that Avarice is, for to purchase anye ethely thinges, and no thing yeve to hem that han nede. / And understand, that Avarice ne stant nat only in lord ne catel, but somtyme in science and in glorye, and in every manere of outrageous thing is Avarice and Coveitise. / And the difference bitwixe Avarice and Covei-tise 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 damnable; for al hir wryt curseth it, and speketh agayns that yvce; for it dooth wrong to Iesu Crist. / For it bireveth 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 seint Paul ad Ephesios, quinto, that an avaricious man is in the thrldom of ydolatrie. / 

§ 64. What difference is bitwixe an ydolastre and an avaricious man, but that an ydolastre, per aventuer, ne hath but o mawmet or two, and the avaricious man hath manye? For certes, every florin in his coffre is his mawmet. / And certes, the sinne of Mawmetyre is the firste thing that God defended in the ten commaundments, as bereth witnesse Exodi, capitulo xx:o: / ‘Thou shalt have no 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 thise harte lord-shipes, thurgh whiche men been dis-treynd by tailages, custumes, and cariages, more than hir duette or resoun is. And eek they taken of hir bonde-men amerciments, whiche mighten more resonably ben cleped extorciions than amerciments. / Of whiche amerciments 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, thise lordshipes done wrong, that bireven hir bonde-folk thinges that they nevere yave hem: Augustinus de Civitate, libro nono. / Sooth is, that the condicon of thraldome and the firste cause of thraldom

755 is for sinnen; Genesis, quint. /

§ 65. Thus may ye seen that the gilt disserveth thraldom, but nat nature. / Wherfore thise lordes ne sholde nat mucho glorifyen hem in hir lordshipes, siththat by naturel condicon they been nat lordes of thrallales; but for that thraldom comth first by the desert of sinnen. / And fortherover, 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 defenden hem in hir right, but nat for to robben hem ne reven hem. / And therfore 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 contuber-

760 nial with the lord. /

§ 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. Wherfore 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 sinnen. 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 fortherover understand wel, that thise conquerours or tiraunts maken ful ofte thralles of hem, that been born of as royal blood as been they that hem conqueren. / This name of thraldom was neverne erst couth, til that Noe seye, that his sone Canaan sholde be thrall to hise brethren for his sinnen. / 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, signifieth that he sholde defenden 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 Jesu 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 pilre. / Now, as I have seyd, sith so is that sinnen was first cause of thraldom, thanne is it thus; that thilke tyne that al this world was in sinnen, thanne was al this world in thraldom and subiiciou. / But certes, sith the tyne 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 therfore, in somme contrees ther they byen thrallales, whan they han turned hem to the feith, they maken hir thralles free out of thraldom. And therfore, 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-much 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: / therfore was sovereignty ordeyned to kepe and maytene and defenden hir underlinges or hir subjets in resoun, as ferforth as it lyth in hir power; and nat to destroyen hem ne confounde. /
I. THE PERSONES TALE.

Wherfore I seye, that thilke lorde that been lyk wolves, that devoure the possessionis or the catel of povre folk wrongfully, with-outen mercy or mesure, they shul receive, by the same mesure that they han mesure d to povre folk, the mercy of Iesu Crist, but-if it be amended. Now comth decite bitwixe marchant and marchant. And thow shalt understonde, that marchandyse is in two maneres; that oon is bodily, and that other is goostly. That oon is honeste and leveful, and that other is deshoneste and unleveful. Of thilke bodily marchandyse, that is leveful and honeste, is this; that, there-as god hath ordeyned that a regne or a contree is suffisaunt to hym-self, thanne is it honeste and leveful, that of habundance of this contree, that men helpe another contree that is more nedy. And therfore, ther mote been mar chants to bringen fro that o contree to that other hire marchandyse. That other marchandyse, that men haunten with fraude and trecherie and deceite, with lesinges and false othes, is cursed and damnable. Espirituel marchandyse is proprely 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 deadly sinne; and if he be ordred, he is irreguler. Certes, Symonye is cleped of Symon Magus, that wolde han boght, for temporel catel, the yffe that god hadde yeven, by the holy goost, to seint Peter and to the apostles. And therfore understond, that bothe he that selleth and he that byeth thinges espirituelles, 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 manere is, whan a man or womman prayen for folk to avauncen hem, only for wikked fleshly affeccioun that they have un-to the persone; and that is foul Symonye. But certes, in service, for which men yeven thinges espirituelles 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 Damasie, 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 dignes. For they putten in theves, that stelen the soules of Iesu Christ and destroyen his patrimonie. By 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 devles owene sone. They sellen the soules that lambes sholde kepen to the wolf that strangleth hem. And therfore shul they nevere han part of the pasture of lambes, that is, the blisse of hevene. Now comth hasardrye with hise aprtenaunces, as tables and rafles; of which comth deceite, false othes, chydinges, and alle ravines, blaspheminge and reneyinge of god, and hate of hise neighebores, wast of godes, mispendinge 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 witnesse, and false othes. And ye shul understonde that thise been grete sinnes, and expres agayn the commaundements of god, as I have seyd. Fals witnesse is in word and
eek in dede. In word, as for to bireve thy neighbores gode 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 enve, berest fals witnesse, or accusest him or excusest him by thy fals witnesse, or elles excusat thesis falsly. / Ware yow, questemongeres and notaries! Certes, for fals witnessing was Susanna in ful gret sorwe and peyne, and many another mo. / The sinne of thefe is eek expres agayns goddes heste, and that in two maneres, corporel and espirituel. / Corporel, as for to take thy neighbores catel agayn his wil, be it by force or by sleighe, be it by met or by mesure. / By steling eek of false enditements upon him, and in borwinge of thy neighbores catel, in entente neve to payen it agayn, and semblable things. / Esquituel 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 withdrew falsly the rightes that longen to holy chirche. / And pleyly and generally, sacrilege is to reyen 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 understande, that the relevinge of Avarice is misericorde, and pitee largely taken. And men mighten axe, why that misericorde and pitee is relevinge 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 relevinge of his evene-cristene. And therfore 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 charitabile werkes of misericorde. / And certes, thise things moeven a man to misericorde of Jesu Crist, that he yaf him-self for oure gil, and suffred deeth for misericorde, and forgaf us oure originale sinnes; / and thereby releessed us fro the peynes of helle, and amenused the peynes of purgatorie by penitence, and yeveth grace wel to do, and atte laste the blisse of hevene. / The species of misericorde been, as for to lene and for to yve and to foryeven and releesse, and for to han pitee in herte, and compassioun 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 bioveth the consideracioun of the grace of Jesu 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 desponded in gode werkes. / § 69. But for-as-muche as som folk been unmesurable, men oughten eshue 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 yevne glorie, as to minstrals and to folk, for to beren his renoun in the world, he hath sinne ther-of and noon aimesse. / Certes, he leseth foule his good, that ne seketh with the yfite 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 aperthenneth 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 desordeynee coveityse to eten or to drinke. / This sinne corrupmed 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 seyd to yow, and now I seye it wpinge, that they been the enemys of the croyes 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 saueren erthely thynge.’ / He that is usaunt 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 speces. The firste is dronkenesse, that is the horrible sepulture of mannes resoun; and therfore, whan a man is dronken, he hath lost his resoun; and this is deedly sinne. / But soothe, 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 head, 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 rightful manere of etinge. / The fourthe is whan, thurgh the grete habundaunce of his mete, the humours in his body been destempered. / The fiftie is, foryetelnessse 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 disting the species 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 apparaillen his mete. The fiftie is, for to eten to gredily. / Thise been the fuye finges of the develes hand, by whiche he draweth folk to sinne.

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 paciene. / Abstinence, he seith, is litel worth, but-if a man have good wil ther-to, and but it be enforced by paciene and by charitee, and that men doon it for godes sake, and in hope to have the blisse of hevene.

§ 73. Thelawes 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 restreyneith by resoun the deslavee appetyt of etinge: Sobrenesse also, that restreyneith 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.

Sequitur de Luxuria.

§ 74. After Glotonye, thanne comth Lecherie; for thes 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 seye himself, ‘do no lecherie.’ And therfore he putte
grete peynes agayns this sinne in the olde lawe. / If womman thrall were taken in this sinne, she shold be beten with staves to the deeth. And if she were a gentil womman, she shold be slayn with stones. And if she were a bishoppes doghter, she sholde been bren, by goddes com- alement. / Forther over, by the sinne of Lecherie, god dreynete al the world at the diluge. And after that, he brente fyeve citees with thonder- leyt, and sank hem in-to helle. / § 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 avouters 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 ordue. / Certes, the brekinge of this sacrament is an horrible thing; it was made of god him-self in paradys, and confermed 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 neighbores wyf. / In this heeste, seith seint Augustyn, is forboden alle manere coveite to doon lecherie. Lo what seith seint Mathew in the gospel: that 'whoso seeth a womman to coveite of his lust, he hath doon lecherie with hir in his herte.' / Here may ye seen that nat only the deede of this sinne is forboden, but eek the desyr to doon that sinne. / This cursed sinne anoynet hevyous- liche hem that it haunten. And first, to hir soule; for he oblygeth it to sinne and to peyne of deeth that is perdurable. / Un-to the body ano- eth it hevyously also, for it dreyeth him, and wasteth, and shent him, and of his blood he maketh sacrieffe to the feend of helle; it wasteth his catel and his subsaunce. / And certes, if it be a foul thing, a man to waste his catel on wommen, yet is it a fouler thing than that, for swich ordue, wommen dispenden up-on men hir catel and subsaunce. / This sinne, as seith the prophete, bireveth man and womman hir gode fame, and al hir honour; and it is ful pleas- aunte to the deel; for ther-by winneth he the moste partie of this world. / And right as a marchant delyteth him most in chaffare that he hath most advantage of, right so delyteth the feend in this ordue. / § 76. This is that other hand of the deel, with fyeve finges, 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 basilick sleeth folk by the venim of his sighte; for the covitise of yeven folweth the covitise of the herte. / The seconde finger is the vileyns touchinge in wikkele manere; and ther-fore seith Salomon, that who-so toucheth and handlet a womman, he fareth lyk him that handlet the scorpion that stinge and sodeynly sleeth thurgh his enveniminge; as who-so toucheth warm pich, it shent hise finges. / The thridde, is foule wordes, that fareth lyk fyr, that right anon brenneth the herte. / The fourthe finger is the kissinge; and trewely he were a greet fool that wolde kisse the mouth of a brenninge ovene or of a fourneys. / And more fooles 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 [bushes], though he may nat pisse, yet wol he heve up his leg and make a contenaunce 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 his-elevn dronken of his owene tonne. / Certes, be it wyf, be it child, or any worldly thing that he loveth bitorn god, it is his maumet, and he is an ydolastre. / Man sholde loven his wyf by discreicioun, paciently and atemprely; and thanne is she as though it were his suster. / The fifthe finger of the deevles hand is the stinkainge dede of Lecherie. / Certes, the fyve fingres of Glotonie the feend put in the wombe of a man, and with hise fyve fyngres of Lecherie he gripeth him by the reynes, for to throwen him in-to the fourncys of helle; / ther-as they shul han the fyr and the wormes that evere shul lasten, and wepinge and wallinge, sharp hunger and thurst, and grimnesse of deevles that shullen al to-trede hem, with-outen respit and with-outen ende. / Of Lecherie, as I seyde, sourden diverse speces; as fornicacioun, that is bitwixe man and womman that been nat maried; and this is deedly sinne and agayns nature./ Al that is enemy and destrucciou 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 his dewe to no wight but to hem that doon deedly sinne. / Another sinne of Lecherie is to bireve a mayden of hir mayndenhede; for he that so dooth, certes, he casteth a mayden out of the hyepest 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 Englis, 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; rigth 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 that may nat been restored. / For certes, na-more may mayndenhede be restored than an arm that is smitten fro the body may returne agayn to weaxe. / She may have mercy, this woot I wel, if she do penitence; but nevere shal it be that she nas corrup. / And al-be-it so that I have spoken somwhat of Avoutrie, it is good to shewen mo perils that longen to Avoutrie, for to escheue that foule sinne. / Avoutrie in Latin is for to seyn, approchinge of other mannes bed, thurgh which tho that thyllum weren o flessh abaundone hir bodys to othre persones. / Of this sinne, as seith the wyse man, folwen manye harms. First, brekinge of feith; and certes, in feith is the keye of Cristendom. / And whan that feith is broken and lorn, soothe Cristendom stant veyn and with-outen fruit. / This sinne is eek a thefte; for this 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 steleth 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 broken the temple of god spirituallly, 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 doubted gretly Josephan, whan that his lorde wyf preyed hir 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 thanne do this wikkednese, 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 de-foulen the auctour of matrimoine,
that is Crist: / For certes, in-so-muche as the sacrament of mariage is so noble and so digne, so mucho is it gretter sinne for to breken it; for god made mariage in paradys, in the estaat of Innocence, to multiply man-kinde to the service of god. / And theryfore is the brekinge ther-of more grevous. Of which brekinge comen false heires of tyne, that wrongfully occupyen folkes heritages. And theryfore wyl Crist putte hem out of the regne of hevene, that is heritage to gode folk. / Of this brekinge comth eek ofte tyne, that folk unwar wedden or sinnen with his owene kinrede; and namely thilke harlottes that haunten bordels of thise fool wommen, that movye be lykned to a commune gonge, where-as

885 men purgen hir ordre. / What seye we eek of putours that liven by the horrible sinne of putrie, and constreyne wommen to yelden to hem a certeyn rente of hir bodily puterie, ye, somtyne of his owene wyf or his child; as doon this baudes? Certes, thisen been cursede sinnes. / Under-stand eek, that avovurie is set gladly in the ten comandements bitwixt 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 homicyde; for it kereth a-two and breketh a-two hem that first were maked o flesh, and therefor, by the olde lawe of god, they sholde be slayn. / But nathelees, by the lawe of Iesu Crist, that is lawe of pitee, whan he seyde to the womman that was founden in avovurie, 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 vengeaunce of avovurie is awarded to the peynes of helle, but-if so be

890 that it be destourbeyd by penitence. / Yet been ther mo species 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 things that gretely agreggen hir sinne is the brekinge of hir avow of chastitee, whan they receyved the ordre. / And further-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 this ordrered folk been specially tylted 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 preyers avallen 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 angel of light.' /

895 Soothly, the preest that haunteth deedly sinne, he may be lykned to the angel of derknesse transformed in the angel of light; he semeth angel of light, but for sothe he is angel of derknesse. / Swiche preestes been the sones of Helie, as sheweth in the book of Kings, that they weren the sones of Belial, that is, the deval. / Belial is to seyn 'with-outen fuge'; and so faren they; hem thinketh they been free, and han no fuge, 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 connen nat the misterie of preesthode to the peple, ne god ne knowe they nat; they ne hekeli hem nat apayd, as seith the book, of soden flesh that was to hem offerd, 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, thise wommen that consenten to hir harlotrie doon greet wrong to Crist and to holy chyrche and alle halwes, and to alle soules; for they bireven all thise him that sholde worship Crist and holy chyrche, and preye for cristene soules. / And therfore han swiche preestees, and hir lemanes eek that consenten to hir lecherie, the malisoun of al the court cristen, til they come to amendement. / The thridde spee of avoiturie is som-tyme bitwixe a man and his wyf; and that is when 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 manied, al is good y-nough, as thinketh to hem. / But in swich folk hath the devel power, as seyde the anguel Raphael to Thobie; for in hir assemblinge they putten Iesu Crist out of hir herte, and yeven hem-self to alle ordure. / The fourth spee is, the assemblée of hem that been of hire kinredre, or of hem that been of oon afinittee, or elles with hem with which hir fadres or hir kinredre han deled in the sinne of lecherie; this sinne maketh hem lyk to houndes, that taken no kepe to kinredre. / And certes, parentele is in two maneres, uther 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 god-sib than with hir owene fleshly brother. / The fiththe spee is thilke abominable sinne, of which that no man unnethe oghte speke ne wryte, nathelyes it is openly reherced in holy writ. / This cursednesse doon men and wommen 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 cometh in slepinge; and this sinne cometh ofte to hem that been maydenes, and eek to hem that been corrupted; and this sinne men clepen pollucioun, that cometh in fourne maneres. / Som-tyme, of languissinge of body; for the humours been to ranke and habundaunt in the body of man. Som-tyme of infermetee; for the feblesse of the vertu retentif, as phisik maketh mencion. Som-tyme, for surfeet of mete and drinke. / And som-tyme of vileyns thoghtes, that been enclosed in mannes minde whan he goth to slepe; which may nat been with-out sinne. For which men moste kepen hem wysely, or elles may men sinnen ful grevously. / 

Remedium contra peccatum Luxurie.

§ 77. Now comth the remedie agayns Lecherie, and that is, generally, Chastitee and Continence, that restreyndeth alle the desordeynee moevinges that comen of fleshly talentes. / And evere the gretter merite shal he han, that most restreyndeth the wikkeede eschaufinges of the ordure of this sinne. And this is in two maneres, that is to seyn, chastitee in mariage, and chastitee of widwe-hode. / Now shaltow understonde, that matrimoine is leefull assemblinge of man and of womman, that receeven by vertu of the sacrement 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 sacrement. God maked it, as I have seyd, 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 replenisseth holy chirche of good linage; for that is the ende of mariagen; and it chaungeth deadly sinne in-to venial sinne bitwixe hem that been y-wedded, and maketh the hertes al oon of hem that been y-wedded, as weal as the bodies. / This is verry marige, that was establisshed by god er that sinne bigan, whan nature lawe was in his right point in paradys; an dit was ordyned that o man sholde have but o woman, and o woman but o man, as seith Seint Augustin, by manye resouns. /

§ 78. First, for marige is figured bitwixe Crist and holy chirche. And that other is, for a man is heved of a woman; algate, by ordinaunce it sholde be so. / For if a woman had mo men than oon, thanne sholde she have mo hevedes than oon, and that were an horrible thing biforn god; and eek a womanne ne mighte nat pleso to many folk at ones. And also ther ne sholde neveere 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 woman sholde been the lasse biloved, fro the time that she were coniour in many men. /

§ 79. Now comth, how that a man sholde bere him with his wyf; and namely, in two things, that is to seyn in suffraunce and reverence, as shewed Crist whan he made first woman. / For he ne made hir nat of the heved of Adam, for she sholde nat clayme to greet lordshiphe. / For ther-as the womman hath the maistrie, she makaeth to muche desray; ther neden none enamples of this. The experience of day by day oghte suffysse. / 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 suffyr: 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 deiye for it.’ So sholde a man for his wyf, if it were nede. /

§ 80. Now how that a woman sholde be subget to hir housbonde, that telleth seint Peter. First, in obedience. / And eek, as seith the de-390 cree, a woman that is a wyf, as longe as she is a wyf, she hath noon auctoritee to swere ne bere witnesse 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 attemptee of hir array. I wot wel that they sholde setten hir entente to plesen hir housbondes, but nat by hir queyntise of array. / Seint Jerome seith, that wyves that been apparrayled in silk and in precious purpre ne mowe nat cloten 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 woman to have a fair array outward and in hir-self be foul inward. / A wyf sholde eek be mesureable in lokinge and in beringe and in lauginge, 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 marige. / Thanne shal men understonde that for three thinges a man and his wyf fleshy 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 lechere
and vileinyc. The sterh is for sothedeedly sinne. / As to the firste, it is meritorie; the seconde also; for, as seith the decree, that she hath merite of chastitie that yeldeth to hir housbonde the dette of hir body, ye, though it be agayn hir lykinge and the lust of hir herte. / The thriddle manere is venial sinne, and trewely scarcely may ther any of thise be with-out venial sinne, for the corrupcion and for the deylt. / The fourthe manere is for to understonde, if they assemble only for amorous love and for noon of the forseyde causes, but for to accomplis thilke brenninge deylt, they rekke never how ofte, sothly it is deedly sinne; and yet, with sorwe, somme folk wol peyten hem more to doon than to hir appetyt suffyseth. / 

§ 81. The seconde manere of chas-titee is for to been a cleene widewe, and eschue the embracing of man, and desyren the embracinge of Iesu Crist. / Thise been tho that han been wyves and han forgoon hir housbondes, and eek woomen that han doon lecherie and been relieved by Peni-tence. / And certes, if that a wyf coude kepen hir al chaast by licence of hir housbonde, so that she yeve never noon occasion that he agilte, it were to hire a greet merite. / Thise manere woomen that observen chastithee moste be cleene in herte as well as in body and in thoht, and mesurable in clothinge and in conte-naunce; and been abstinent in etinge and drinkinge, in spekinge, and in dede. They been the vessel or the boyste of the blissed Magdelene, that fulfilithe holy chirche of good odour. / The thriddle manere of chastitie is virginitie, and it bikhoveth that she be holy in herte and cleene of body; thanne is she spouse to Iesu Crist, and she is the lyf of angiesies. / She is the preisinge of this world, and she is as thise martirs in egalitie; she hath in hir that tonge may nat tell ne herte thinke. / Virginitie baure lord Iesu Crist, and virgine was

§ 82. Another remedie agayns Lecherie is, specially to withdrawn swiche thinges as yeve occasion to thilke vileinyc; as ese, etinge and drinkinge; for certes, whan the pot boyleth strongly, the beste remedie is to withdrewe 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 womman eschue the companye of hem by whiche he dounteth 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 brene noght fully by stikinge of a candele, yet is the wal blak of the leyt. / Ful ofte tym thai rede, that no man truste in his owene perfeccioun, but he be stronger than Sampson, and holier than David, and wyser than Salomon. / 

§ 84. Now after that I have declared yow, as I can, the seve 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. Natelees, I hope to god they been touched in this tretice, everich of hem alle. / 

De Confessione.

§ 85. Now for-as-muche as the second parte of Penitence stant in Confessioun of mouth, as I bigan in the firste chapitre, I seye, seint Augustin 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 felinge. / Now is it good to understonde that that agreggeth muchel every sinne. / 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; / or 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 avostrie, 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 chircye, or in chircye-hawe; in chircye dedi-cat, or noon. / For if the chircye be halwed, and man or womman spille his kinde inwith that place by wey of sinne, or by wikked temptacion, the chircye is entredited til it be recon-ciled by the bishop; / and the preest that dide swich a vileynye, to terme of al his lyf, he sholde na-more singe masse; and if he dide, he sholde doon deadely sinne at every tyme that he so songe masse. / The fourth circumstaunce is, by whiche media-tours or by whiche messagers, as for entycement, or for consentement to bere companye with felaweshipe; for many a wrecche, for to bere companye, wil go to the deel of helle. / Wher-fore they that eggen or consenten to the sinne been parteners of the sinne, and of the dampancioun of the sinner. / The fift circum-staunce 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 de-spiseth the mercy of god, and en-creesseth his sinne, and is unkinde to Crist; and he wexeth the more feble to withstonde sinne, and sinneth the hir shrift in diverse places; but soothe, 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 coveite, or for poverete, 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 pleylyn, with alle circumstauncess, 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-venture, broken ther-fore his penance en-joyned; by whos help and whos conseil; by sorcerie or craft; al moste be told. / Alle thysse thinges, after that they been grete or smale, en-greggen the conscience of man. And eek the preest that is thy Iuge, may the bettre been avysed of his Iuge-ment in yevinge of thy penaunce, and that is after thy contricioun. /

For understond wel, that after tyme that a man hath defouled his baptesme by sinne, if he wolde come to salvacioun, ther is noon other wey but by peniten-cence and shrifte and satisfaccioun; / 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 wolde make a trewe and a profitable confessioun, ther moste be foure condicionys. / First, it mout been in sorweful bittersnesse of herte, as seyde the king Ezekias to god: 'I wol remembre me alle the yeres of my lyf in bittersnesse
of myn herte. / This condicioun of bitterness hath fuye 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 her-of seith seint Augustin: 'the herte travaileth for shame of his sinne'; and for he hath greet shamefastnesse, he is digne to have greet mercy of god. / Swich was the confessioun of the publican, that wolde nat heven up hise eyen to hevene, for he hadde offended god of hevene; for which shamefastnesse he hadde anon the mercy of god. / And ther-of seith seint Augustin, that swich shamefast folk been next foroyvenesse and remissioun. / Another signe is humilitie in confessioun; of which seith seint Peter, 'Humbleth yow under the might of god.' The hond of god is mighty in confessioun, for ther-by god foryeveth thee thy sinnes; for he al-lone hath the power. / And this humilitie shal been in herte, and in signe outward; for right as he hath humilitie to god in his herte, right so sholdhe 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 the haste 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 kele 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 confessioun 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 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 fiftthe 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 condicioun of verray confessioun is, that it be hastily doon; for certes, if a man hadde a deedly wounde,evere the lenger that he taried to warisse 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 farerth 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 drecchinge of o synne draweth in another; / and eek the lenger that he tarieth, the futher he is fro Crist. And if he abyde to his laste day, scarcly may he shryven him or remembre him of hise sinnes, or repenent 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 understond that this condicioun moste han foure things. Thy shrift moste be purveyed bifoire 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 species and circumstances; / and that he have comprehended in his minde the nombre and the greetnesse
of his sinnes, and how longe that he hath leyn in sinne; and eek that he be contrit of his sinnes, and in stedefast purpos, by the grace of god, neuer eft to falle in sinne; and eek that he drede and countrewaite him-self, that he fle 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 under- stonde, in entente to departhe thy confessioun as for shame or drede; for it nis but straunglinge of thy soule. / For certes, Iesu Crist is entierly al good; in him nis noon imperfeccioun; and thereforthe utter he for- yeveth al partity or never a deel. / I seye nat that if thou be assigned to the penitaunce for certein sinne, that thou art bounde to shewen him al the remenants of thy sinnes, of whiche thou hast be shryven to thy curat, but-if it lyke to thee of thyn humilitie; this is no departinge of shryfte. / Ne I seye nat, ther-as I speke of divisioon 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 remem- braunce. / And when thou shalt be shryven to thy curat, telle thee eek alle the sinnes that thou hast doon sin thou were last y-shryven; this is no wikend entente of divisioon of shryfte. / § 89. Also the verry shryfte axeth certeine condicions. First, that thou shryve thee by thy fre wil, noght constreynd, ne for shame of folk, ne for maladie, ne swiche thnges; for it is resoun that he that trespasseth by his free wil, that by his free wil he confessa his tres- pas; / 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 lawful; 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 Caym or Iudas. / 1015 And eek a man moot accusen himself of his owene trespass, and nat another; but he shal blame and wyten him-self and his owene malice of his sinne, and noon other; / but natheles, if that another man be occasioun or en- tycer of his sinne, or the estaat of a persone be swich thurgh which his sinne is agregged, or elles that he may nat plenyly shriven 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 humilitie, per-aventure, to seyn that thou hast doon sinnes of whiche that thou were nevere giylty. / For Seint Augustin seith: if thou, by cause of thyn humilitie, makest lesinges on thy-self, though thou ne were nat in sinne biforn, yet artow thanne in sinne thurgh thy lesinges. / Thou most eek shewe thy sinne by thy owene propre mouth, but thou be wexed doumb, and nat by no lettre; for thou that hast doon the sinne, thou shalt have the shame there- fore. / 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 pleynly, be it never so foul ne so horrible. / Thou shalt eek shryve thee to a preest that is discreet to conseille thee, and eek thou shalt nat shryve thee for veyne glorie, ne for ypocrisye, ne for no cause, but only for the doute of
Iesus Crist and the hele of thy soule. / Thou shalt nat eek renne to the preest sodeynly, to telleth 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 ayrse 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 releasing and grace of god, bothe of sinne and of peyne. / And certes, ones a yere atte leeste wey it is lawful for to been housled; for certes ones a yere alle thinges renovellen. /

Explicit secunda pars Penitencie; et sequitur tercia pars eiusdem, de Satisfaccioun.

§ 91. Now have I told you of verry Confessioun, that is the seconde partie of Penitence. / The thridde partie of Penitence is Satisfaccioun; and that stant most generally in almeses and in bodily peyne. / Now been ther three manere of almeses; contri- cion of herte, where a man offreth himself to god; another is, to han pitee of defaute of hise neighebores; and the thridde is, in yevinge of good conseil googstly and bodily, where men han nede, and namely 1030 in sustenance of mannes fode. / And tak keep, that a man hath need of thise thinges generally; he hath need of fode, he hath neede of clothing, and herberwe, he hath neede of charitable conseil, and visitinge in prisoine 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. / Thise been generally almeses or werkes of charitee of hem that han temporel richesse or discrecioun in conselinge. Of thise werkes shal- tow heren at the day of dome. / 

§ 92. Thiese almeses shal-tow doon of thyne owene prope things, and hastily, and privelly if thou mayst; / but natheelees, if thou mayst nat doon it privelly, 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 Iesus Crist. / For as witnesses seint Mathew, capitulio quinto, 'A citie 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 biforn men, that they may seen youre gode werkes, and glorifie youre fader that is in hevene.' /  

§ 93. Now as to spoken of bodily peyne, it stant in preyeres, in wak-inges, in fastinges, in vertuouse 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 remooeven harmes and to han thinges espirituel and durable, and somtyne temporel thinges; of whiche orisouns, certes, in the orisoun of the Pater-noster, hath Iesus Crist enclosed most thinges. / Certes, it is privileged of three thinges in his dignitee, for which it is more dignee than any other preyere; for that Iesus Crist him-self made 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 wery to seyen it, and for a man may nat excuse him to lerne it, it is so short and so esy; and for it compreheundeth in it-self alle gode preyeres. / The exposicioun of this holy preyere, that is so excellent and dignee, I bitake to thise maistres of theologie; save thus mushel wol I seyn: that, whan thou
prayest that god sholde foryeve 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 therofter it aperteneth specially to penitence. /

§ 94. This prerey moste be trewely seyd and in verray feith, and that men pryeys to god ordinatly 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 seyd with greet humblesse and ful pure; honestly, and nat to the anoyunce of any man or woman. It moste eek been continued with the werkes of charitee. / It avayleth eek agayn the yvces of the soule; for, as seith seint Jerome, ‘By fastinge been saved the yvces of the flesh, and by prerey the yvces of the soule.’ /

§ 95. After this, thou shalt understande, that bodily peyne stant in wakinge; for Jesu Crist seith, ‘waketh, and preyeth that ye ne entre in wikked temptacioun.’ / Ye shal understanden also, that fastinge stant in three thinges; in forberinge of bodily mete and drinke, and in forberinge of worldly loitelie, and in forberinge of deedly sinne; this is to seyn, that a man shal kopen him fro deedly sinne with al his might. /

§ 96. And thou shalt understanden eek, that god ordene thy fastinge; and to fastinge apperten fourte thinges. / Largenesse to povere folk, gladnesse of herte espirituel, nat to been angrye ne anoyed, 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 understande, that bodily peyne stant in disciplyne or techinge, by word or by wrytinge, or in ensembler. Also in wermeg 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 thyne herte bitter or angry or anoyed of thy-self; for bettre is to caste awaye thyne heyre, than for to caste away the sikernesse of Jesu Crist. / And therofter seith seint Paul: ‘Clothe youw, as they that been chosen of god, in herte of misericorde, debonairete, suffraunce, and swich manere of clothinge’; of whiche Jesu Crist is more apayed than of heyres, or haubergeons, or hauberkes. /

§ 98. Thanne is disciplyne eek in knokkinge of thy brest, in scourginge with yerdes, in knelinges, in tribulacions; in suffring patiently wronges that been doon to thee, and eek in pacient suffraunce of maladies, or leisinge of worldly catel, or of wyl, or of child, or othere freendedor. /

§ 99. Thanne shaltow understande, whiche thinges destourben penence; 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 wene that he may sufre no penance; / ther-agayns is remedie for to thinke, that bodily penance is but short and litel at regard of the peyne of helle, that is so cruel and so long, that it lasteth with-ouen ende. /

§ 100. Now againe the shame that a man hath to shryven him, and namely, thise ypcrites that wolden been holden so parfitte that they han no nede to shryven hem; / agayns that shame, sholde a man thinke that, by wy of resoun, that he that hath nat been ashamed to doon foule thinges, certe him oghte nat been ashamed to do faire thinges, and that is confessioun. / A man sholde eek thinke, that god seeth and woot alle his thoghtes and alle his 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. 

§ 101. Now for to spoken of the hope of hem that been necligent and slowe to shriven hem, that stant in two maneres. That oon is, that he hopeth for to live longe and for to purchacen muche richesse for his deyl, and thanne he wol shriven him; and, as he seith, him semeth thanne tymely y-nought 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 sikerne; and eek that alle the richesses in this world ben in aventure, and passen as a shadowe 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 thankes, but ay continue in sinne; for thikke perpetuel wil to do sinne shul they han perpetuel peyne. 

§ 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 conteth of that he demeth that he hath sinned so greetyl and so ofte, and so longe leyn in sinne, that he shal nat be saved. Certes, agayns that cursed wanhope shold he thinke, that the passion of Iesu Crist is more strong for to unbinthe than sinne is strong for to binte. 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 alway redy to receiven him to mercy. Agayns the wanhope, that he demeth that he shold nat longe persever 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. 

§ 103. Thanne shal men understonde what is the fruit of penance; and, after the word of Iesu Crist, it is the endelcès blysse of hevene, ther Ioye hath no contrarioustee of wo ne grevance, ther alle harmes been passed of this present lyf; ther-as is the sikernesse fro the peyne of helle; ther-as is the blissful companye that reioysen hem everemo, everich of otheres Ioye; ther-as the body of man, that wynom was foul and derk, is more clearer than the sonne; ther-as the body, that wynom 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, thirst, ne cold, but every soule replenissed with the sighte of the parfit knowinge of god. This blissful regne may men purchase by poverte espirituell, and the glorie by lowenesse; the plente of Ioye by hunger and thirst, and the reste by travaille; and the lyf by deeth and mortification of sinne. 

Here taketh the makere of this book 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 disples 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 seyd bettre if I hadde had
conninge. / For our boke seith, 'al that is writen is writen for our doctrine'; and that is myn en-
tente. / Wherfore I biseke you mekhely 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-
voke in my retracciouns: / as is 
the book of Troilus; The book also of 
Fame; The book of the nyn-
tene Ladies; The book of the 
Duchesse; The book of seint Val-
entynes day of the Parlement of 
Bridges; The tales of Caunterbury, 
thilke that souenen 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 Bocce de Consolacione, 
and othere bokes of Legendes of 
seintes, and ometalies, 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 doen 
in this present lyf; / thurgh the 1090 
benigne grace of him that is king 
of kinges and preest over alle 
preestes, that boghite 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 Geoffrey 
Chaucer, of whos soule Iesu Crist have mercy. Amen.

APPENDIX TO GROUP A.

THE TALE OF GAMELYN.

LITETH, and lesteneth · and herkeneth 
aright, 
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 schrew · and 
sone he bigan. 
His brethren 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 han-
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 cunte r after wyse knightes,
To helpe delen his londes and dressen hem to-rightes.
He sente hem word by letteres they schul-
den hye blyve,
If they wolde speke with him whyl he was on lyve.
Tho the knightes herden syk that he lay,
Hadd he 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,
‘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 reuth of that ilke knight;
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 nay;
But I byseke you knightes for the love of me,
Goth and dresseth my lond among my sones three.
And sires, for the love of god deleth hem nat amis,
And forgeth nat Gamelyn my yonge sone that is.
Taketh heed to that on as wel as to that other;
Selde ye see ony eyr helpen his brother.
Tho leete they the knight lyen that was nought in hele,
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,
And leeten Gamelyn the yonge withoute londe go,
And ech of hem seyde to other ful lowde;
His bretheren mighte yeve him lond when he good cowde.
When they hadde deled the lond at here wille,
They comen ayen to the knight ther he lay ful stille,
And tolden him anon-right how they badden wrought;
And the knight ther he lay lyked it right nought.
Than seyde the knight ‘by seynt Martyn,
For al that ye have y-doon yit is the lond myn;
For goddes love, neyhebours stondeth alle stille,
And I wil dele my lond right after my wille.
Iohan, myn eldeste sone schal have plowes fyle,
That was my fadres herbage whyl he was on lyve;
And my middelest sone fyve plowes of lond,
That I halp for to gete with my righte hond;
And al myn other purchas of londes and leedes,
That I biquethe Gamelyn and alle my goode steedes.
And I byseke yow good men that lawe conne of londe;
For Gamelynes love that my queste stonde.’
Thus dalte the knight his lond by his day,
Right on his deth-bedde syk ther he lay;
And sone afterward he lay stoon-stille,
And dye whan tymecom as it was Cristes wille.
And anon as he was deed and under gras y-grave,
Sone the elder brother gyled the yonge knave;
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;
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.
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;
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,
'Thou schalt go bake thy-self I wil nought be thy cook!'
'How? brother Gamelyn how answerest thou now?
Thou speake never such a word as thou dost now.'
'By my faith, seyde Gamelyn 'now me thinketh neede,
Of alle the harmes that I have I tok never ar 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 thypees;
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,
'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,
'Goth and beteth this boy and reveth him his wit,
And lat him lerne another tyme to answer me bet.'
Thanne seyde the child yonge Gamelyn,
'Cristes curs mot thou have brother art thou myn!
And if I schal algate be beten anon, 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-nome,
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;
Tho his brother say that he bigan to goon;
He sley up in-til a loft · and schette the dore fast;
Thus Gamelyn with the pestel · made hem alle agast.
Some for Gamelyn's love · and some for his eye,
Alle they drowe by halves · tho he gan to playe.
What! how now? sayde Gamelyn ·
evel mot ye thee!
Wil ye biginne contek · and so sone flee?
Gamelyn soughte his brother · whider he was flowe,
And saugh wher he loked · out at a window.
Brother, sayde Gamelyn · com a litel ner,
And I wil teche thee a play · atte boke-ler.
His brother him answere · and swor by seynt Richer,
Why! 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 wrathme thee no-more.
I mot neede, sayde Gamelyn · wrathme 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 harmses.
Gamelyn, sayde his brother · be thou nought wroth,
For to seen thee have harm · it were me right loth;
I ne dide it nought, brother · but for a fonding,
For to loken if thou were strong · and art so ying.
Com a-doun than to me · and graunte me my bone
Of thing I wil thee aske · and we schul saughte sone.
Doun than cam his brother · that fikil was and fel,
And was swithe sore · agast of the pestel. He sayde, · brother Gamelyn: ask me thy boone,
And tel me, goode brother · whider thou wolt ryde.'

'Her bisyde, brother · is cryed a wrastling,
And therfor schal be set up · a ram and a ring;
Moche worship it were · brother, to us alle,
Might I the ram and the ring · bring home to this halle.'
A steede ther was sadeled · smertely and skreet;
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.
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 mighthe breke his nekke · in that wrasteling.
As sone as Gamelyn com · ther the place was,
He lighted doun of his steede · and stood on the gras,
And ther he herd a frankeleyn · waylow-way singe,
And bigan bitterley · his hondes for to wringe.

'Goode man,' sayde Gamelyn · 'why makestow this fare?
Is ther no man that may · you helpe out of this care?'

'Allas!' sayde this frankeleyn · 'that ever was I bore!
For tweye stwalworthe sones · I wene that I have lorne;
A champiou as 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,
With the nones I fand a man · to handelen him sore.'

'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.'

'By god!' sayde the frankeleyn · 'anon it schal be doon;
I wil my-self be thy man · and drawen of thy schoon,
And wende thou into the place · Iesu Crist thee speede,
And drede not of thy clothes · nor of thy goode steede.'
Barfoot and ungert · Gamelyn in cam,
Alle that weren in the place · heede of him they nam,
How he durste auntre him · of him to doon his might
That was so doughty champioun · in wrastling and in fight.
Up sterte the champioun · rapely and anoon,
Toward yonge Gamelyn · he bigan to goon,
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 champioun tho,
'Thou kneue 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.'

'Felow,' sayde the champiou · 'al-so mot I thrype,
I knew wel thy fader · while he was on lyve;
And thyself, Gamelyn · I wil that thou it heere,
Whyl thou were a yong boy · a moche schrewo thou were.'
Than sayde Gamelyn · and swor by Cristes ore,
'Now I am older woxe · thou schalt me finde a more!'

'By god!' sayde the champiou · 'welcom mote thou be!
Come thou ones in myn hond · schalt thou never thee.'
It was wel withinne the night · and the moone schon,
Whan Gamelyn and the champioun · togider gone goon.
The champioun caste tornes to Gamelyn
that was prest,
And Gamelyn stood stille and bad him
doon his best.
Thanne seyde Gamelyn to the champioun,
‘Thou art faste aboute to bringe me
adoun;
Now I have y-proved many tornes of
thyne,
Thow most,’ he seyde, ‘proven on or
two of myne.’
Gamelyn to the champioun 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,
And ther-to his oon arm that yaf a gret
krak.
Thanne seyde Gamelyn smertely anon,
‘Schal it be holde for a cast or elles for
noon?’
‘By god!’ seyde the champioun ‘whether
that it be,
He that cometh ones in thin hand schal
he never thee!’
Than seyde the frankeleyn that had his
sones there,
‘Blessed be thou, Gamelyn that ever
thou bore were!’
The frankeleyn seyde to the champioun
of him stood him noo eye,
‘This is yonge Gamelyn that taughte
thee this pleye.’
Agein answerd the champioun that lyked
nothing wel,
‘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
without serk,
And seyde, ‘if ther be eny mo lat hem
come to werk;
The champioun that peyned him to
werke so sore,
It semeth by his contynance 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
wrastle more,
For he handleth the champioun so won-
derly sore.
Two gentil-men ther were that yemede
the place,
Comen to Gamelyn (god yeve him goode
grace!)
And seyde to him, ‘do on thyn hosen
and thy schoon,
For sothe at this tyme this feire is
y-doon.’
And than seyde Gamelyn ‘so mot I wel
fare,
I have nought yet halven-del sold up my
ware.’
Tho seyde the champioun ‘so brouke I
my sweere,
He is a fool that ther-of byeth thou self-
est it so deere.’
Tho seyde the frankeleyn that was in
moche care,
‘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,
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 Ioye home in the
morning.
His brother seih wher he cam with the
grete rowte,
And bad schitte the gate and holde him
withoute.
The porter of his lord was ful sore
agast,
And sterre 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.
Gamelyn come ther-to for to have komen in,
And thanne was it y-schet faste with a pin;
Than seyde Gamelyn ‘porter, undo the yat,
For many good mannes sone stondeth ther-at.’

Than answerd the porter and swor by goddes berde,
‘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 awey the pin.
The porter seydh tho it might no better be,
He sette foot on erthe and bigan to flee.
‘By my faith,’ seyde Gamelyn ‘that travaill is y-lore,
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.

Seven fadmen it was deep as I have herd telle.
When 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.
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 wil be maistres heer and aske no man leve.

Yesterday I lefte seyde yonge Gamelyn,
‘In my brother seller fuye tonne of wyn;
I wil not that this compaignye parten a-twine,
And ye wil doon after me whyl eny sope is thrinne,

And if my brother grucche or make foule cheere,
Other for spense of mete or drink that we spenden heere,
I am our catour and bere our alle 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,
He schal to the porter into the draw-elle.

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.

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 browke I myne yé.’
Gamelyn in his herte was he ful wo,
When his gestes took her leve from him for to go;
He wolde they had lenger abide and they seyde ‘nay,’
But bitauhte 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 lestene th and holdeth youre tonge,
And ye schul heere gamen of Gamelyn the yonge;
Herkeneth, lordinges and lestene th aright,
When alle gestes were goon how Gamelyn was dight.
Al the whyl that Gamelyn heeld his mangerye,
His brother thoughte on him be wreke with his treochere.
Tho Gamelyns gestes were riden and y-goon,
Gamelyn stood alone: frendes had he noon;  
Tho after ful soone withinne a litel stounde,  
Gamelyn was y-taken and ful harde y-bounde.  
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 household?'

'Brother,' sayde Gamelyn 'wraththe thee right nought,  
For it is many day y-gon sitthen 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;  
Of al this sixtene yer I yeve thee the prow,  
For the mete and the drink that we have spended now.'

Thanne sayde 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,  
I wil make thee myn heir I swere by seint Johan.'

'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 litle whyle.  
'Gamelyn, sayde he 'o thing I thee telle;  
Tho thou thenke my porter in the drawwelle,  
I swor in that wraththe and in that grete moot,  
That thou schuldest be bounde bothe hand and foot;

Therfore I thee biseche brother Game-lyn,  
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 biheet.'

'Brother,' sayde Gamelyn 'al-so mot I thee!  
Thou schalt not be forsworen for the love of me.'

Tho made they Gamelyn to sitte mighte he nat stonde,  
Til they hadde him bounde bothe foot and hone.  
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,  
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.  
Than sayde Gamelyn 'brother, by myn hals,  
Now I have aspyed thou art a party fals;  
Had I wist that tresoun that thou haddest y-founde,  
I wolde have yeve thee strokes or I had be bounde!'

Gamelyn stood bounden stille as eny soon;  
Two dayes and two nightes mete had he noon.  
Thanne sayde 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,  
If thou may come to the keyes lese me out of bond,  
And I wil parte with thee of my free lond.'
Thanne sayde Adam 'that was the spencer,' 415
'I have served thy brother 'this sixtene yeer,
If I leete thee goon 'out of his hourly, 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, 4-wis,
I wil do therto 'al that in me is,'
('Adam,' sayde Gamelyn 'al-so mot I thee,
I wol holde thee covenant 'and thou wil me.'

Anon as Adames lord 'to bedde was y-goone, 415
Adam took the keyes, and leet 'Gamelyn out anoon;
He unlokked Gamelyn 'bothe handes
and feet, In hope of avauncement 'that he him biheet.

Than sayde Gamelyn 'thanked be goddes 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 privacy stede,
He bad him do gladly 'and Gamelyn so dede.

Anon as Gamelyn hadde 'eten wel and fyne,
And therto y-dronke wel 'of the rede wyn,
'Adam,' sayde Gamelyn 'what is now thy reed?
Wher I go to my brother 'and girde of his heed?'

'Gamelyn,' sayde 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
Abottes and priours 'many hear schal be,
And other men of holy chirche 'as I telle thee;
Thow schalt stonde up by the post 'as thou were fond-fast,
And I schal leve hem unloke 'awey thou may hem cast.

Whan that they have eten 'and wasschen here hondes,
Thou schalt biseke hem alle 'to bring thee out of bondes;
And if they will '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-eeth 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 'when I schal biginne.' 450

'Gamelyn,' sayde Adam 'by seynte Charite,
I wil warne thee biform 'when that it schal be;
When I twinke on thee 'loke for to goon,
And cast away the feteres 'and com to me anoon.'

'Adam,' sayde Gamelyn 'blessed be thy bones! 455
That is a good counsell 'yeven for the nones;
If they were 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

CANTERBURY TALES.
And ever atte halle-dore as they comen in,
They caste their eye on yonge Gamelyn.
The false knight his brother full of trechery,
Alle the gestes that ther were atte mangery,
Of Gamelyn his brother he tolde hem with mouthe
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 dolfullly with-alle
To the grete lordes that saten in the halle:
Lords, he seyde for Cristes passioun,
Helpeth bringe Gamelyn out of prisoun.
Than seyde an abbot sorwe on his cheeke!
He schal have Cristes curs and seynte
Maries eke,
That thee out of prisoun beggeth other borwe,
But ever worth the 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!
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.
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,
Adam loked on Gamelyn and he was war anoon,
And caste aweye 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.
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 stode upright fallen in the fire.
There was no lewed man that in the halle stood,
That wolde do Gamelyn eny thing but good,
But stood bisyden and leet hem bothe werche,
For they hadde no rewthe of men of holy cherche;
Abbot or priour monk or chanoun,
That Gamelyn overtok anon they yeeden doun.
Ther was non of hem alle that with his staf mette,
That he ne made him overthrowe and quite him his dette.
Gamelyn seyde Adam for seynte Charite,
Pay large livery for the love of me,
And I wil kepe the dore so ever here I masse!
Er they ben assoyled there shall noon passe.
Dowt thee nought seyde Gamelyn whyl we ben in-seere,
Kep thou wel the dore and I wol werche heere;
How Gamelyn and Adam had doon a sory rees,
Bounden and y-wounded men ayein the kinges pees;
Tho bigan some stryf for to wake,
And the scherref was aboute Gamelyn for to take.
Now lytheth and lestenen' 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 setten, by her fay;
The scherref yaf hem leve soth as I you say;
They hyeden faste 'wold they nought bilinne,
Til they come to the gate ther Gamelyn was inne.
They knokked on the gate the porter was ny,
And loked out at an hol as man that was sly.
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 all the grete company thanne spak
but oon,
'Undo the gate, porter and lat us in goon,'
Than sedyde the porter 'so brouke I my chin,
Ye schul sedye your erand er ye kommen in.'
'Sey to Gamelyn and Adam if here wille be,
We wil spake with hem wordes two or thre.'
'Felaw, sedyde the porter 'stond there stille,
And I wil wende to Gamelyn to witen his wille.'
In wente the porter to Gamelyn anon,
And sedyde, 'Sir, I warne you her ben
come your foon;
The scherreves meyne · ben atte gate,  
For to take you bothe · schulle ye nat  
scape.'  

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,  
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.  
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,  
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,  
'Now I see it is mery · to be a spencer,  
That lever me were · keyes for to bere,  
Than walken in this wilde woode · my  
clothes to tere.'  
'Adam,' sayde Gamelyn · 'dismaye thee  
right nought;  
Many good mannes child · in care is  
y-brought.'  
And as they stoode talking · bothen in-  
feere,  
Adam herd talking of men · and neyb,  
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 compass aboute.  
'Adam,' sayde Gamelyn · 'now have we  
no doute,  
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 sayde that word · the maister out-lawe
Saugh Gamelyn and Adam · under woode-schawe.

Yonge men, sayde the maister · 'by the goode roode,
I am war of gestes · 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 goode that we witen · what men they be.'
Up ther sterten sevne · fro the diner, 
And metten with Gamelyn · and Adam spenser. 646
When they were neyh hem · than sayde that oon, 
'Yeldeth up, yonge men · your bowes and your floon.'
Thanne sayde Gamelyn · that yong was of elde,
'Moch sorwe mot he have · that to you hem yelde! 
I curse non other · but right my-selfe;
They ye fette to yow fyve · thanne ye be twelve!' 650
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, 
'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 answerd · withoute lesing, 
'Oure maister is y-crouned · of outlawes king,' 660
'Adam,' sayde 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.' 665
'By seynt lame!' sayde Adam · 'what harm that I gete,
I wil auntre 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?'
Gamelyn answerd · the king with his crowne,
'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 mette with a deer · to scheete ther-to,
As men that ben hungry · and mow no mete finde, 675
And ben harde bistad · under woode-linse.'
Of Gamelynse wordes · the maister hadde routhe,
And sayde, '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
Than seyde that oon to that other ·
 'this is Gamelyn.'
Tho was the maister outlawe · in-to coun-sell 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 thridd 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 seye he to his yonge men 'soth for to telle,
Me ben comen tydinges 'I may no lenger dwelle.'
Tho was Gamelyn anon 'withoute taryng,
Maad maister outlawe ' and crowned here king.
Tho was Gamelyn crowned 'king of outlawes,
And walked a whyle 'under woodeschaves.
The false knight his brother 'was scherreve and sire,
And leet his brother endite ' for hate and for ire.
Tho was his bonde-men ' sory and nothing glad,
When Gamelyn her lord 'wolves-heed' was cryed and maad;
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,
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.' 700
'Allas!' seye 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,
And ther was his brother ' bothe lord and sire.
Gamelyn com boldelich ' in-to the moothalle,
And putte a-doun his hood ' among the lorde alle;
'God save you alle, lordinges ' that now here be!
But broke-bak scherreve ' evel mot thou thee!
Why hast thou do me ' that schame and viloye,
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
Was cast in-to prisoun ' and fetere d ful haste.
Gamelyn hath a brother ' that highte sir Ote,
As good a knight and hende ' as mighte gon on foote.
Anon ther yede a messager ' to that goode knight,
And tolde him al-togidere ' how Gamelyn was dight.
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 twyne bretheren ' anon-right he cam.
'Sire,' seye sire Ote ' to the scherreve tho,
'We ben but three bretheren ' schul we never be mo;
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 wurz;
To the kinges prisoun ' anon he is y-nome,
And ther he schal abyde ' til the Justice come.'
'Parde!' seye sir Ote ' better it schal be;
I bidde him to maynpris ' that thou graunte him me
Til the nexte sitting of deliverance, 745
And thanne let 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 Justice sitte,
Thou schalt bere the Tuggement for al thy grete witte.' 750
'I graunte wel, seide sire 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;
For when the Justice sitte and thou be nought y-bounde,
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 Justice sit.'

Than seide sire 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 wil.
Gamelyn wente ayein under woode-rys,
And fond there pleying yonge men of prys.

Tho was yong Gamelyn glad and blithe y-nough,
When 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 aventures 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 knight his brother yvel mot he thrive!
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 biheeld
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 Justice seet; 790
He thoughte wel that he wolde withoute delay,
Come afore the Justice to kepen his day,
And seide to his yonge men 'dighteth you yare,
For whan the Justice 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 Justice sat,
Adam, com on with me for thou shalt be my clerk.’  
His men answereden him and bade him doon his best,  
‘And if thou to us have neede thou shalt finde us prest;  
We wiln stande with thee whyl that we may dure,  
And but we werke manly pay us non hure.’  
‘Yonge men,’ seide Gamelyn ‘so mot I wel thee!  
As trusty a maister ye schal finde of me.’  
Right there the Iustice sat in the halle,  
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.’  
‘Brother,’ seide 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 Iustise,  
‘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 dressen hem aright.’  
The Iustice sat stille and roos nought anoon;  
And Gamelyn cleved [a-two] his cheekeboon;  
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.

The false knight his brother foryat he nat that,  
To hyvre 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 boughte with him his yonge men of prys.  
‘I see wel,’ seide Gamelyn ‘the Iustice is set;  
Go afor, Adam and loke how it speit.’  
Adam wente into the halle and loked aboute,  
He seyther stonde lordes grete and stoute,  
And sir Ote his brother fetered wel fast;  
Tho went Adam out of halle as he were agast.  
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,  
He schal it abegge that broughte him ther-too.’  
Thanne seyde 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.’  
‘Adam,’ seide 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;  
For I wil be Iustice this day domes for to deme.  
God sped me this day at my newe werk!

800-854.] THE TALE OF GAMelyn.
Gamelyn sette him doun ' in the Justices seet,
And sire Ote his brother by him 'and Adam at his feet.
Whan Gamelyn was y-set ' in the Justices stede,
Herkneth of a bourde 'that Gamelyn dede.
He leet fetre the Justice 'and his false brother,
And ded hem come to the barre 'that oon with that other. 860
Tho Gamelyn hadde thus y-doone 'hadded 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,
He ded hem everichone 'feteren infeere,
And bringen hem to the barre 'and sette hem in rewe;
'By my faith! ' seyde the Justice 'the scherreve is a scherreve!'
Than seyde Gamelyn 'to the Justise,
'Thou hast y-yeve domes 'of the wors assise;
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.'
'Therfore,' seyde Gamelyn 'have thou Cristes curs,
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 Justice and the scherreve 'bothe honged hye,
To weyven with the ropes 'and with the winde drye;
And the twelve sisours ' (sorwe we have that rekke!)
Alle they were hanged 'faste by the nekke.
Thus ended the false knight 'with his trecherye,
That ever hadde y-lad his lyf 'in falsnes and folye.
He was hanged by the nekke 'and nought by the purs;
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 Justise.
And after, the king made Gamelyn 'bothe in est and west,
Chief Justise 'of al his free forest;
Alle his wighte yonge men 'the king foryaf here gilt,
And sitten in good office 'the king hem hath y-pilt.
Thus won Gamelyn 'his lond and his leede,
And wrak him of his enemys 'and quitte hem here neede;
And sire Ote his brother 'made him his heir,
And siththen wedded Gamelyn 'a wyf bothe good and feyr;
They livened to-gidere 'whyl that Crist wolde,
And sitten was Gamelyn 'graven under molde.
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.
Abasshed, pp. ashamed, disconcerted, B 568.
Abayse, Abaysed, pp. ashamed, disconcerted, E 317; amazed, E 1108.
Abbey, 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.
Ablutions, 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.
Abreyde. See Abreyde.
Abreyde, pt. s. started, awoke, E 1061.
Abroche, v. broach, D 177.
Abrood, adv. abroad, i.e. wide open, F 441.
Abusioum, 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 530.
Accidie, s. moral sloth, I 677.
Accoarant, 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 3391.
Acquyte, v. acquit one’s self, E 936; Acquitet, imp. pl. B 37.
Acustamaunce, s. system of habits, habitual method of life; had of acustomaunce, was accustomed, B 307.
Adamant, s. ironstone, A 1990.
Adoun, adv. at the bottom, G 779; down, B 3630.
Adverture, adv. attention, G 467.
Aferd, pp. afraid, A 628.
Affeccioun, 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 yeer, 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 443.
Ages, pl. times, periods, B 3177.
Aggregeth, 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.
Agreveed, 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. alley, E 1167.
Albificiacion, s. albification, whitening, G 805.
Alday, adv. continually, F 481; always, B 1702.
Ale and bread, drink and meat, B 2602.
Alemykes, pl. alembics, G 794.
Alestake, s. a stake projecting from an al-house by way of a sign, A 667.
Aley, s. an alley, B 1758.
Amenuse, v. diminish, I 360; depreciate, I 436.
Amerciments, s. pl. fines, I 752.
Ameved, pt. s. moved, changed; noughtameved, changed not, altered not, E 498; Amoeved, pp. perturbed, I 670.
Amiddé, prep. amid, in the midst of, F 409.
Amis, adv. wrongly, B 3370.
Amonesten, v. warn, admonish, I 76.
Aonges, prep. amongst, B 3344; G 608.
Aomounteth, pr. s. means, B 569; amounts to, F 108.
Amy, s. friend, C 318.
An, a: an eighte busskels, a quantity equal to eight bushels, C 771.
And, conj if, E 2433.

Anhanged, pp. hung, B 3945, 3949.
Anienttised, pp. annihilated, B 2438.
A-night, pp. by night, at night, E 464.
Anlas, s. dagger, A 357.
Annexed, pp. attached, C 482.
Annuleer, 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.
Apalled. See Appalled.
Aparaile. See Apparaile.
Apraceyeve. See Aperceyve.
Apayd, Apayed, pp. pleased, satisfied; evel apayd, ill-pleased, G 921.
Apayre. See Apeyren.
Apayse. See Apeose.
Apey, s. dupe, G 1313.
Apeiren. See Apeyren.
Aperceyve, v. to perceive, E 600; Aperceyveth, pr. s. E 1018.
Apercyevinges, pl. perceptions, observations, F 286.
Apert, Aperte, adv. openly, F 531.
Apertenant, adj. belonging to, such as belongs to; Apertaunant, B 3505.
Apertenen, v. belong to, I 410.
Apertening, pr. pt. appertaining, G 785.
Apertinent, adj. appertaining, suitable, E 1010.
Aperty, adv. openly, clearly, I 294.
Apese, Apeise, v. appease, pacify, E 433; H 98.
Apeyren, v. impair, depreciate, I 1078; A 3147.
Apeyse. See Apeose.
Aposed. 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 Apeose.
Apposed, pt. s. questioned, G 363.
Appreved, 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.
Archewyves, s. pl. archwives, ruling wives, E 1195.
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Arest, s. socket of a spear, A 2602.
Arette, v. account, attribute, A 726; Arettred, pp. A 2799.
Arew, 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.
Armless, adj. armless, without an arm, B 3393.
Armorial, adj. ammoniac; applied to bole, G 799, and sal, G 798.
Armoure, Armure, s. armor, B 2009.
Arn, pr. pl. are, E 342.
Arrace. See Arrace.
Array, Arraye. See Aray, Arayed.
Arret. See Arette.
Ars-metrik, s. arithmetic, A 1898.
Art, s. kind, sort, E 1241.
Arwes, pl. arrows, A 107.
As, like, B 1864; expiety, 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 622; on the present occasion, G 444; for the present, with the matter on hand, G 1019; as to, with reference to, F 107; as soon as, F 615; as forth as, as far as, B 19. As is short for Also.
As, s. an ace, B 3851; ambes as, double aces, B 124.
Asay. See Assay.
Ascance, 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 ascend-ent 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.
Asoner, 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 607.
Assaye, imp. s. let him try, E 1229; Assayed, pp. tried, E 1054.
Asseged, pp. besieged, A 881.
Assembled, pp. united, G 50.
Ascendent. 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.
Assoiling, s. absolution, A 661.
Assured, pt. s. confirmed, B 3378.
Assyse, s. assize, A 314.
Asterted, pt. s. escaped, B 437.
Astoned, pt. s. astonished, E 316.
Astored, pp. stored, provided, A 609.
Astronomy, 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 falle, at the full, in completeness, B 203; atte laste, at the last, B 506; atte leste, at the least, at least, E 720.
Atteyne, v. to attain, E 447.
Attr, 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 3901; hearing, E 329.
Aught, adv. by any chance, in any way, B 1034 at all, G 597.
Augrim stones, arithmetical counters, A 3210.
Auntred, pt. s. adventured, A 4205.
Auntrous, adj. adventurous, B 2099.
Auteur. See Auctour.
Aval, 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.
Await, s. watch, H 149; have hir in awayt, watch her, B 3915.
Awaiteth, pr. v. 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.
Baked, pp. baked, B 95.
Balkes, s. pl. beams; the transverse beams beneath the roof, A 3626.
Balled, adj. bald, A 198.
Banes, Barres, Bauderie, Batailled, Bataille, Bawdrik, Bechen, Bayte, Bed, Beek, Bedes, Bede, Beest, Beggestere, Bekke, Bel amy, Bely, Beley-naked, Bemes, Ben, Been, Bene, Benedictice, Bent, Berafte.

Berd, s. beard, A 332; make a berth, 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 in on hand, bears false witness against her, B 620; Ber, pt. s. bore, B 722.
Bereve. See Bireve.
Berle, v. bury, C 884.
Beringe, s. bearing, behavior, B 2022.
Bern, s. barn, i.e. yeast, G 813.
Birne, s. barn, B 3759; C 397.
Bisy. See Bisy.
Bete, pp. beaten; Beten, B 1732.
Bete, v. kindle, A 2953; Betten, pt. pl. kindled, G 518.
Beth, pr. pl. are, B 2350.
Beye, v. buy, C 845.
Bibbed, pp. drunk, A 462.
Bible, s. book, G 857.
Bicched bones, s. pl. dice, C 656.
Bi-clappe, ger. to clasp, ensnare, G 9.
Bidaffe, pp. befooled, E 1191.
Biddinge, pr. pl. praying, G 140.
Biden, pp. of Byde.
Bifalle, pr. s. subj. may befall, I 68; pp. beenfallen, B 726; Bifalleth, pr. s. happens, E 449.
Bifel, pp. it came to pass, F 42; Bifil, B 3613; Bifelle, pt. s. subj. were to befall, E 136.
Biform, adv. before, B 704; before, in anticipation, B 2668; beforehand, B 1184; of old time, F 551; Bifore, first, E 446.
Biform, prep. before, B 997; C 665; in front of, G 680; Biforen, B 3553.
Biform-hōnd, adv. beforehand, G 1317.
Bigan, pt. s. began, B 96, 1883.
Bigyle, v. to beguile, deceive, E 252.
Bigyleres, pl. beguilers, I 299.
Bihete, s. promise, B 37; F 698.
Bihete, v. promise; i 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 4091.
Bileve, s. belief, faith, G 63.
Bileve, v. to remain, stay behind, F 583.
Bileveth, imp. pl. believe ye, G 1047.
Birafte. See Bireve.
Bireve, v. bereave, B 3359; take away, G 482; Birafte, 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.
Bisie, v. to trouble, busy; bisie me, employ myself, G 758.
Bisily, adj. busily, F 88.
Bisinesse, s. diligence, E 1008; busy endeavor, G 24; Bisynesse, F 642. See Business.
Bismoterod, pt. pp. soiled, A 76.
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 91.
Bitake, t pr. s. commend, commit, E 161; Bitook, pt. s. delivered, gave, committed (to the charge of), G 541.
Biteche, pt. pp. commit to, B 2114.
Bitid, p t. beenfallen, B 1949. See Bityde.
Bitokneth, pr. s. betokens, signifies, B 3942.
Bitook. See Bitake.
Bitore, s. bittren, 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.
Bytymes, adv. betimes, soon, G 1008.
Biwailen, v. to bewail, lament, B 26; Biwaille, B 3952; Biwailled, pt. s. E 530.
Biwreye, v. to bewray, unfold, reveal, B 3219; Biwreyen, betray, G 150; Biwreyest, disclosest, 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 hit, pr. s. crosses herself, B 449.
Binne, 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, t 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 185; pt. metallic bodies (metals), answering to celestial bodies (planets), G 820.
Boes, pr. s. it behoves, 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 3829. See Bost.
Boot, pt. s. bit, B 3791.
Boot, s. boat, E 1424.
Boras, s. borax, A 630; G 750.
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.
Braye. See Breyde.
Brayde. See Breyde.
Bred, 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.
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Cacache, v. catch, G 11.
Cake, s. loaf, C 322.
Calcening, s. calcination, G 771.
Calcinaicoun, 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 393.
Canon, s. the “Canons,” 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.
Carè, v. feel anxiety, E 1212.
Carf, pt. s. carved, cut, B 3647.
Carie, v. to carry, E 585; Carien, pr. pl. carry, B 384; 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; certein gold, a stated sum of money, B 242; certein tresor, a quantity of treasure, B 442; Certeyn, a certain sum, a fixed quantity, G 776.
Certes, adv. certainly, G 1478.
Cervece, 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 3235.
Chaflasse, s. merchandise; hence, matter, subject, E 2438.
Chaflasse, 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.
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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 261.
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.
Chaucne, s. luck, G 593; "chance," a technical term in the game of hazard, C 653.
Chaunge, 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; Cherissheth, 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.
Chierete, s. dearness, B 1526; affection, F 881.
Chinkes, 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.
Chirketh, pr. s. twitters, D 1804.
Chirking, s. murmuring, A 2004.
Chit, pr. s. chides, G 921.
Chiteren, v. chatter, prattle, G 1397.
Chivachee, s. feast of horsemanship, H 50.
Chivachye, s. expedition, A 85.
Chivalrye, s. chivalry, company of knights, B 235; troops of horse, cavalry, B 3871.
Choys, s. choice, E 170.
Chyde, v. chide, complain, F 649.
Ciclatouen, s. a costly kind of thin cloth, B 1924.
Cink, num. cinque, five, C 563.
Cipres, s. cypress; Ciprees, B 2071.
Citee, s. city, F 46.

Citole, s. stringed instrument of music, A 1959.
Citrinaciuon, s. citronizing, the turning to the color of citron, a process in alchemy, G 816.
Clappe, pr. pl. chatter, prattle, G 965; Clappeth, imp. pl. make a constant clatter, keep clattering, E 1200; pr. s. talks fast, B 3971.
Clapping, s. chatter, idle talk, E 999.
Clarre, Clarree, s. wine mixed with honey and spices, and afterwards strained till it was clear, A 1471.
Clausë, s. sentence, B 251.
Clawe, v. rub, scratch, A 4326; D 940.
Cleerness, 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. Clark, learned, G 752.
Clerk, s. clerk, learned man, student, E 1.
Clew, pt. of Claven.
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.
Clocke, s. clock; of the clock, by the clock, B 14.
Clom, interj. hush, A 3638.
Clombe. See Clymen.
Cloos, adj. close, secret, G 1369.
Clos, a pen, enclosure, B 4550.
Clote-leaf, s. a leaf of the burdock or clote-bur, G 577.
Clothered, pp. clotted, A 2745.
Clout, s. a cloth, C 736; Cloutes, pl. cloths, portions of a garment, rags, C 348.
Clowe-gilfbre. See Clymen.
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, G 952.
Cokenay, s. milk sop, A 4208.
Cokes, s. pl. cooks, C 538.
Cokewold, s. buckold, 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.
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Glycosus, s. pl. delights, pleasures, C 547; G 3.

Gleyting, pr. pl. delighting, E 997.

Demandes, s. pl. questions, E 348.

Demande, s. demand, question, B 472.

Dem, 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.

Demoine, 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.

Dep, adv. deeply, B 4.

Dep, adv. deep, B 3988.

Dep, s. the deep, the sea, B 455.

Depper, adv. comp. deeper, B 630.

Dere, adv. dear; pl. F 272.

Dere, adv. dearly; to dere, too dearly, C 293.

Dere, v. injure, wound, harm, F 240.

Dereeling, s. darling, A 3793.

Derkest, adj. superl. darkest, B 304.

Derne, adj. secret, A 3200.

Derre, adv. comp. more dearly, A 1448.

Descensors, s. pl. vessels for extracting oil, G 792.

Desclaunderd, pp. slandered, B 674.

Desert, s. desert, deserving, merit, F 532.

Desirous, adj. ardent, F 23.

Delslavee, adj. unbridled, I 629.

Desolaat, adj. deserted, alone; holden desolaat, shunned, C 598.

Desolat, adj. desolate, i.e. void of, lacking in, B 131.

Desorseyne, adj. inordinate, I 818.

Desordinat, adj. disorderly, I 415.

Despetred, pp. filled with despair, B 3645.

Despence, s. expenses, expenditure, money for expenses, B 105. See Dispence.

Despendest, 2 pr. s. spendest, wastest, B 2121.

Despit, s. spite, B 591; vexation, dishonor, B 609.

Despitously, adv. despitefully, maliciously, B 605.

Desport, s. amusement, sport, G 592. See Disport.

Despyse, v. to despise, B 115.

Despyt, s. despite, 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.

Destreyeth, vexes, constrains, A 1455.

Deve, adj. pl. deaf, G 286.

Devoir, s. duty, B 38; E 966.

Devysse, ger. ‘o relate, tell, B 154: to describe, F 65; to plan, E 698; to frame, E 739; Devy-
Dooms. See Corpus. Don, Done. See Doon.
Doom, s. judgment, opinion, B 3127; F 677.
Doom, v. do, G 166; act, B 90; make, B 3507; cause, B 3618; doom us hunge, cause us to be hung, C 790; leed don cryen, cause to be cried, F 46; Doon, pp. completed, G 387; doon make, caused to be made, E 253; hath doon you kep, 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 1039; 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 68; 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.
Douné, 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 Drade.
Draf, s. draft, refuse, chaff, I 35.
Drasty, adj. filthy, worthless, trashy, B 2113.
Drawe, pp. drawn, moved; drawe him, withdrew himself, F 355; drawen hem, pr. pl. withdrew themselves, F 252; Draweth, imp. pl. invite, B 1632.
Dreched, 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, i 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.
Drenchen, s. drowning, B 485.
Dreynt. See Drenche.
Drive, pp. driven, B 3203.
Droges, s. pl. drugs, A 426.
Droonke, pt. pl. drank, B 3418; Drunken, B 3390.
Dronklewe, adj. drunken, overcome with drink, C 495.
Dronkenesse, s. drunkenness, B 771; C 484.
Drope, s. drop, G 522.
Drought, pt. s. refl. drew himself, approached, B 1710.
Droughtte, 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.
Et, 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.
Eftson, 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.
Egremoine, s. agrimony, G 800.
Eighte, num. eight, C 771.
Eightetethe, ord. adj. eighteenth, B 5.
Eir, s. air, A 1246.
Ekkö, s. echo, E 1189.
Elaat, adj. elate, B 3357.
Elder, adj. comp. older, B 1720, 3450.
Elfreds, s. pl. elders, forefathers, B 3388.
Elelge, adj. wretched, B 1412.
Elf-queen, s. fairy queen, B 1798.
Ellebor, s. hellebore, B 4754.
Elles, adv. else, otherwise; elles god forbade, 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.

Empeiraden, pr. pl. made worse, B 2205.

Empyre, pr. s. impair, E 2198.

Emplastre, pr. pl. plaster, “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.

Empyrse, s. enterprise, undertaking, G 605.

Empte, v. empty, make empty, G 741; Emptem, G 1404.

En-bibing, s. imbibition, absorption, G 814.

Encens, s. incense, A 2938.

Encense, v. to offer incense, G 395, 413.

Enchesoun, s. occasion, cause, F 456; Enchesoun, B 2783.

En-corporing, s. incorporation, G 815.

Encrees, s. increase, B 237; G 78.

Encresse, v. increase; Encresse, B 1668; Encresen, B 1654; Encresseth, pr. s. E 50; Encressed, pp. E 408.

Ende, s. end, result, B 481.

Endelee, adj. endless, B 951.

Endelong, prep. down along, F 416.

Endentinge, 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.

Enformed, 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. illuminated, E 33.

Enluting, s. securing with “lute,” daubing with clay, etc., to exclude air, G 766.

Enquire, v. inquire, search into, B 629.

Enquiringe, 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 entente, 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.

Entraîlle, 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 947.

Envy, s. envy, jealously, 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; or 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.

ErII, 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.

Esé, s. case, E 217; pleasure, G 746; ease, relief, H 25.

Essye, 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 1807.

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.

Expounge, v. to expound, explain, B 3308; 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.

Ey leth, pr. s. ails, B 1171; aileth, H 16; Eyled, pt. s. impers. ailed, F 501.

Eyre, s. air, gas, G 767.

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; Dadres, fathers, ancestors, E 61; parents, originators, B 129; 
father’s race, ancestry, G 829.
Fairnes, Fairness, s. fairness, beauty, E 384.
Fairye, s. fairyland, F 96; fairy contrivance, 
magic, F 201.
Falding, s. coarse cloth, A 391.
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, going 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 
fores, it is, E 1217; Faren, 1 pr. pl. we fare, 
live, G 662; Fare well, imp. s. farewell, B 116.
Farewel, interj. farewell! it is all over, G 907.
Faste, adv. quickly, G 245; as fast, 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. falcons, 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.
Feble, 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 4713.
Fermacies, s. pl. pharmacies, medicines, A 2713.
Ferme, adj. firm, E 663.
Ferverere, s. keeper of the infirmary, D 1859.
Fern, adv. long ago; so fern, so long ago, F 
256.
Fern-asshen, s. pl. fern-ashes, ashes produced 
by burning ferns, F 254.
Ferre. See Fer.
Ferroste, adj. super. farthest, A 494.
Ferthe, fourth, B 823; G 532.
Fether, adj. further, B 1686.
Ferthing, s. morsel, A 134.
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Hoor, adj. hoary, gray, C 743.

Hoot. See Hote.

Hope, s. hope, expectation, G 870.

Hoppesteres, 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.

Hurest, a pr. s. dost hure, dost whirl, B 297.

Hyde, v. hide, i.e. lie concealed, F 141.
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I (for I and ?).

| **Iade, s.** a jade, *i.e.* a miserable hack, B 4002. |
| **Ialousye, 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. |
| **Iangiere, 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 1692. |
| **Iape, ger.** to jest, H 4; Iapen, v. to jest, B 1883. |
| **Ich, pers. pron. I.** B 39. |
| **Idus, s. pl.** ides, F 47. |
| **Feet, s.** jet, B 4051. |
| **Iet, s.** fashion, mode, A 682. |
| **Iewere, s.** Jewry, Jews' quarter, B 1679. |
| **Ignomtum, s.** an unknown thing, G 1457. |
| **Ik, pron. I.** A 3867. |
| **Il-hayl, ill-luck to you, A 4089.** |

Pertinent, *adj.* not pertinent, irrelevant, E 54.

Importable, *adj.* intolerable, insufferable, E 1144.

Impresse, *pr. pl.* force themselves (upon), make an impression (upon), G 1071.

Impression, *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 *Ioie.*

**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.

**Ioie, s. joy.** See *Ioie.*

**Irous, adj.** passionate, D 2086.

**Iubbe, s.** jug, A 3628.

**Iugement, s. opinion, B 1038.**

**Iusten, v.** joust, H 42.

**Iuyse, s.** justice, judgment, B 795.

---

**K.**

**Karf.** See *Kerve.*

**Kechil, s.** cake, D 1747.


**Kempe, adj.** shaggy, A 2134.

**Kene, adj.** bold, B 3493; F 57.

**Kepe, s.** heed, E 1058; *taken kepe*, take heed, F 348.


**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.

**Knaves, s.** boy, servant-lad, B 474; boy, male, E 444; *knav 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; Knownen, 2 *pr. pl.* ye know, B 128; Knowestow, knowest thou, B 267.

**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.

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**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; Lak-keth, pr. s. lacks, G 498.
Lampé, 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.
Lett, 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.
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Leef, adj. dear, precious, G 1467; you 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.
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Lees, s. leash, G 19.
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Lette, i pt. s. I left off, F 670.
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Lendes, s. pl. loins, A 3237.
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Lenger, adv. comp. longer; ever lenger the more, the longer, the more, E 687; F 404.
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Leos, s. pl. people, G 103, 106.
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Lerninge, s. instruction, G 184.
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Lete, v. let, B 3524; forsake, B 352; 1 pr. s. I leave, B 96. See Lat, Leet.
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Lettres, s. pl. letters, B 736.
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Lever, adj. comp. liever, 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 4601.
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; Leydenth, pr. 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.
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Ligeance, s. allegiance, B 895.
Liggen, v. to lie, lie down, B 2101.
Likeros, adj. glutinous, dainty, greedy, C 540.
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Limage, s. lineage, kindred, B 999.
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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, C 358.
Sowen, v. to sow, B 1182.
Sowied, pp. endued with a soul, G 329.
Sownen, pr. pl. sound, i.e. play, F 270; Sowneth, pr. pl. tend (to), are consonant (with), F 517; Sowden, pr. 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.
Specie, s. species, kind, class. I 407.
Specche, 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 1071.
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, wedsed, 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 231.
Squares, s. pl. scales, G 759.
Squamous, adj. squeamish, A 3337.
Squyer, s. squire, A 79; Squyeres, pl. E 192.
Stable, adj. constant, E 931.
Stablisshed, 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, Stapan, pp. advanced, B 4011.
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.
Steire, v. to cease, stunt, leave off, B 3925.
Stepe, adj. pl. bright, glittering, A 201.
Ster, s. pilot, helmsman, B 448.
Stereel, 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.
Stikede, pt. s. stuck, fixed, B 2097; Stikede,
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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 345; 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 1574.
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, pl. s. stretched, A 2916.
Strauge, adj. strange, foreign, A 13.
Straw, interj. a straw! F 695.
Strawe, 2 pr. s. subj. drew, F 613.
Strayte, s. strait, B 464.
Streem, s. stream, river, A 464.
Streen, s. strain, i.e. stock, progeny, race, E 157.
Streit, adj. narrow, A 174.
Striteit, pp. as adj. def. drawn, B 4547.
Stremes, pl. streams, rays, beams, B 3944.
Stronger, adj. comp. stronger, B 3711.
Strengthes, pl. sources of strength, B 3248.
Strepheth, pr. s. strips, E 894; Strepen, 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.
Strvye, v. to strive, oppose, E 170.
Stubbes, s. pl. stumps, A 1978.
Studien, v. to study, E 8; Studie, 2 pr. pl. E 5.
Sturdiness, 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.
Subiecioun, s. subjection, obedience, B 270; subjection, governance, B 3656.
Sublymatories, s. pl. vessels for sublimation, G 793.

Sublymed, pp. sublimed, sublimated, G 774.
Sublymping, s. sublimation, G 770.
Submitted; ye ben submitted, ye have submitted, B 35.
Subtilly, adv. subtly, F 222.
Subtilitee, s. skill, craft, G 844; Subtilitee, 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.
Surlys, s. surprize, G 558.
Surquidrie, s. arrogance, over-confidence, I 403.
Sursanure, s. surface-healed wound, F 1113.
Suspicious, 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; np 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.
Sweweigh, s. sway, motion, B 296.
Swelwe, pr. s. subj. swallow, E 1188.
Swerd, s. dat. sword, B 64.
Swere, v. swear, B 1711; Swoor, pt. s. B 2062; Sworen, pl. E 176; Swoore, 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 oor, 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.
Swoolen, pp. swollen, i.e. proud, E 950.
Swoolve, v. to swallow, H 36.
Swonnen. See Swinke.
Swoot, s. sweat, G 578.
Swote, adj. See Sote, Swete.
Swowneth, pr. s. swoons, F 430; Swoowied, pt. s. swooned, F 443; Swowning, pres. part. B 181.
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.

Tabye, 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.

Taiilages. 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; Taried, pp. delayed, F 402.

Tarrye, for To arraye, to array, arrange, E 961.

Tartre, s. tartar, G 813.

Tas, s. heap, A 1005.

Tassaye, for To assail, ger. to assail; Tassaile, E 1180.

Tassaye, for To assaye, to try; to test, prove, try, E 454, 1075.

Tassaille, for To assoile, to absolve, C 933.

Taste, imp. s. feel, G 503.

Taverner, s. inn-keeper, C 685.

Tavysse, 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.

Tenbracne, for To embrace, to embrace, B 1891.

Tendure, for To endure, E 756, 811.

Tenspyre, for To espysye, i.e. to inspire, G 1470.

Tentily, 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; termes 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 espy, 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.

Thadversitee, s. the adversity, E 756.

Thakked, pp. stroked, A 3304.

Thalighte, for Thee alighte; in thee alighte, alighted in thee, B 1660.

Than, adv.; or than, sooner than, before, G 890.

Thanke, 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 323.

Themperour, for The emperor, the emperor, B 248; Themperours, 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.
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To-tar, pt. s. lacerated, B 3801.
To-tere, pr. pl. rend, tear in pieces, C 474; To-tore, pp. torn in pieces, G 635.
Totty, adj. dizzy, A 4353.
Touche, pr. s. subj. affect, concern, B 3284.
Tour, s. tower; in B 2066, it means that his crest was a miniature tower, with a lily projecting from it.
Touret, s. turret, A 1909.
Tournement, s. a tournament, B 1906.
Toute, s. backside, A 3812.
Toverbyde, to outline, D 1260.
Towaille, s. towel, B 3935; 3943.
Trad, pt. s. trod, B 4368.
Traitye, 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; Tresor, B 3401.
Trespace, v. trespass, transgress, sin, B 3370.
Trete, pr. pl. discourse, treat, C 630.
Tretce, s. tracy, B 3865.
Tretis, s. treatise, document, B 2147.
Tretys, adj. long, well-proportioned, A 152.
Tewe, pl. used as s. the faithful, B 456.
Treweliche, adv. truly, E 804.
Trew 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.
Trufles, 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.
Twickling, 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. unbook, F 555.
Unbounden, pp. unbound, unwedded, divorced, E 1226.
Unbrent, pp. unburnt, B 1658.
Uncouplè, v. to let loose, B 2692.
Uncouthe, adj. strange, F 284.
Undergrowe, pp. undergrown, A 156.
Undermeles, s. pl. morning meal-time, D 875.
Undern, s. a particular period of the day, generally 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; Understonde, pr. pl. understand, C 646.
Undertake, v. to affirm, E 803; 1 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.
Unkindeness, 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.
Untrewere, 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. unsotted, 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 plesa, satisfy virtue, be virtuous, E 216; magic power, magic influence, F 146, 157.
Vereye, 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.
Viriristrate, 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: imp. s. depart from, E 856; Voydeth, imp. pl. send away, G 1136.
Voys, s. voice, F 99; rumor, E 629.

W.

Waast, s. waist, B 1890.
Wachet, 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.
Wanttrust, adj. distrustful, H 281.
War, adj. aware; be war, beware, take heed, B 119; beth ware, B 1629.

War, imp. s. as pl.; war you, 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.
Wariangles, s. pl. butcher birds, D 1408.
Warie, i pr. s. I curse, B 372.
Warisshe, v. recover, B 2172.
Warisshinge, s. healing, B 2205.
Warne, i 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.
Wave, s. wave, B 508; Waves, 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.
Wedé, s. a “weed,” a garment, A 1006; B 2102.
Weder, s. weather, F 52.
Weel. See Weil.
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. larded 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, arc 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, & work, i.e. reality, practice, F 482.
| Werking, s. | work, mode of operation, G 1367. |
| Werrayd, pp. | made war upon, warred against, F 10. |
| Werte, s. | wart, A 555. |
| Wery, adj. | weary, B 2111. |
| Wesh, pt. s. | washed, B 3934. See Washe. |
| 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 way, 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. |
| Whyll-er, adv. | formerly, G 1328. |
| Widwe, s. | widow, C 450. |
| Wight, s. man, creature, person, B 656. |
| Wike, s. week, C 362. |
| Wilto, for | Wilt thou, i.e. wishest thou, B 2116. |
| Windas, s. | windlass, F 184. |
| Winsinge, adj. | lively, A 3263. |
| Watsom, adj. | loathsome, B 4243. |
| Wol, pr. s. | permits, H 28; vol adown, is about to set, I 72; Wole, pr. pl. will, B 468; Woltow, wilt thou, G 307. |
| Wombe, s. | the belly, C 522. |
| Wommanheide, s. | womanhood, B 851. |
| Woner, 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. |
| Wruk, s. | wreak, B 513. |
| Wraw, adj. | savage, fierce, angry, H 46. |
| Wreek, imp. s. | wreak, avenge, B 3095. |
| Wrenches, s. pl. | frauds, stratagems, tricks, G 1081. |
| Wrotheth, 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-blynt, pp. | blenchted, started aside, A 3753. |
Y-boren, pp. | born, C 704. |
Y-chaped, having shapes or caps of metal at the end of a sheath, A 366. |
Y-clad, pp. | clothed, G 133. |
Y-clep, 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 idoler, B 3377. |
Yeddenges, pl. | songs, A 237. |
Yede, pt. s. | went, G 1141. |
Yelden, v. | to yield, E 843. |
Ydellhalle, s. | guild-hall, A 370. |
Yielding, 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-glose, pp. | flattened, H 34. |
Y-hent, pp. | seized, caught, C 868. |
Y-herd, pp. | haired, A 3738. |
Y-holde, pp. | considered, C 602. |
Yildden. 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 3672. |
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-scette, pp. | shut, B 560. |
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-swepe, pp. | swept, G 938. |
Yvel, adv. ill, E 460. |