

THIRD EDITION.
 THE PLACES OF GREAT BRITAIN
 DESCRIBED FROM
 MAPS OF THE REIGN OF



CHARLES A. VICTOR, M.A.

For the sake of the King, and the good of the
 Country, and the safety of the Kingdom.

Printed by J. B. Bell, in the Strand.

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
GEOFF. CHAUCER.

IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

From Urry's Edition 1721,

THE CANTERBURY TALES

From Tyrwhitt's Edition 1775.

Grete well CHAUCER whan ye mete----
Of dities and of songes glade,
The which he---made,
The londe fullfilled is over all.

GOWER.

My maister CHAUCER---chiefe poete of Breteyne---
Whom all this londe schulde of ryght preferre,
Sith of our laggage he was the lode-sterre---
That made first to dysstyle and rayne
The gold dewe dropys of speche and eloquence
Into our tunge thurgh his excellence.

LYDGATE.

The honour of English tong is dede---
My mayster CHAUCER, floure of eloquence,
Mirrour of fructuous entendement,
Universel fadir in science---

This londis verray tresour and richesse---
The firste fynder of our fayre langage.

OCCLEVE.

Venerabill CHAUCER, principall poete but pere,
Hevinly trumpet, orlege and regulere,
In eloquence balme, condict and diall,
Myky fountane, clere strand, and rois riall,
Of fresche endite throw Albion iland braid.

DOUGLAS.

O reverend CHAUCER! rose of rethouris all,
As in oure tounge flour imperial
That raise in Brittain evir, quha reidis right
Thou beiris of Makars the triumphs royall,
The fresche enamilt termes celestiall:
This mater couth haif illuminit full bricht,
Was thou nocht, of our Inglis all the light,
Surmounting every tounge terrestriall
As far as Mayi's morrow dois midnight.

DUNBAR.

VOL. XI.

EDINBURG:

AT THE Apollo Press, BY THE MARTINS.

Anno 1782.

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER.
VOL. XI.

CONTAINING HIS
MISCELLANEOUS PIECES, *viz.*

DREAMES,
ASSEMBLE OF FOULES,
PYTE IS DEDE,

|| CUCKOWE & NIGHTINGALE,
GODE COUNSAILE,
A, B, C,
&c. &c. &c.

But natheles certain
I can right now no thrifty Tale sain,
But CHAUCER, (though he can but lewedly
On metres and on riming craftily)
Hath sayd hem in swiche English as he can
Of olde time, as knoweth many a man;
And if he have not sayd hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath sayd hem in another----
Who so that wol his large Volume seke. *TALES, ver. 4465.*

Dan CHAUCER, well of English undefil'd,
On Fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be fil'd----
Old Dan Geffrey, in whose gentle spright
The pure well-head of poetry did dwell----
He whilst he lived was the soveraigne head
Of shepherds all-----

SPENSER.

Old CHAUCER, like the morning star,
To us discovers day from far;
His light those mists and clouds dissolv'd
Which our dark nation long involv'd;
But he descending to the shades
Darkness again the age invades.

DENHAM.

CHAUCER, him who first with harmony inform'd
The language of our fathers---His legends blithe
He sang of love or knighthood, or the wiles
Of homely life, thro' each estate and age
The fashions and the follies of the world
With cunning hand portraying-----
Him who in times-----

Dark and untaught began with charming verse
To tame the rudeness of his native land.

AKENSIDE.

EDINBURG:
AT THE Apollo Press, BY THE MARTINS,
Anno 1782.

MISCELLANIES.

CHAUCER'S DREAME,

*New before the year 1597 printed, that which heretofore
hath gone under the name of his Dreame is The Book of the
Duchesse, or, The Death of Blanch Duchesse of Lancaster.*

WHEN Flora the quene of Pleasaunce,
Had whole achievid th' obeysaunce
Of the fresh and the new feson
Therew out evèry region,
And with her mantle whole covert 5
That wintir made had discovert,
Of avinture withoutin light
In May I lay upon a night
Alone, and on my lady thought,
And how the Lord that her ywrought 10

Chaucer's Dreame] This Dreame, devised by Chaucer, seemeth to be a covert report of the mariage of John of Gaunt, the king's sonne, with Blanch the daughter of Henry Duke of Lancaster, who after long love (during the time wherof the poet faineth them to be dead) were in the end by consent of friends happily married, figured by a bird bringing in her bill an hearbe which restored them to lyfe againe. Here also is shewed Chaucer's match with a certain gentlewoman, who although she was a stranger was notwithstanding so well liked and loved of the Lady Blanch and her lord, as Chaucer himselfe also was, that gladly they concluded a marriage betweene them. *Urry.*

Couth well entayle in imagery,
And shewid had grete maistiry,
When he in so litil a space
Made such a body and a face,
So grete beautie with swich fetures,
More than in othir creätures;
And in my thoughtis as I lay
Within a lodge out of the way,
Beside a well in a forest,
Where astir hunting I toke rest, 20
Nature and kind so in me wrought
That halfe on slepe they me ybrought,
And gan to dreame to my thinking
With mind of knowliche like making,
For what I dremid, as me thought, 25
I saw it, and I sleptin nought,
Wherefore is yet my full beleve
That some gode spirit that ilke eve,
By mene of some curious port,
Bare me where I saw payue and sport; 30
But whether it were I woke or slept
Well wot I oft I lough and wept;
Wherefore I woll in remembraunce
Put whole the payne and the plesaunce,
Which was to me axin and hele; 35
Would God ye wist it everydele,
Or at the lest ye might o night
Of such apothir have a sight,

Although it were to you a payne,
Yet on the mo'row ye would be fayne,
And wish that it might long endure,
Then might ye say ye had gode cure,
For he that dremes and wenes he se
Mock'it the better yet maie he
Ywit what, and of whom, and where,
And eke the lasse it woll hindere
To thinke I se this with mine eene,
Iwis this may not dremè kene,
But signe or a signifiunce
Of hasty thing souning plesaunce;
For on this wise upon a night,
As ye have herd, withoutin light,
Not all wakyng ne full on slepe,
About such hour as lovirs wepe
And crie astir ther ladies grace,
Befell me tho this wondir cace,
Which ye shall here, and all the wise,
So wholly as I can devise:
In playne English evill writtin,
For slepe writir, well ye wittin,
Excusid is though he do mis
More than one whiche that waking is,
Wherefore here of your gentilnesse
I you requyre my boistousnesse
Ye lettin passe as thinge rude,
And herith what I woll conclude,

And of the' endityng taketh no hede,
 Ne of the termes, so God you spede,
 But let all passe as nothing were,
 For thus befell, as you shall here.

Within an yle methought I was
 Where wall and yate was all of glasse,
 And so was closid round about
 That levelesse none come in ne out,
 Uncouth and straungè to behold, 75
 For evèry yate of fine gold
 A thousand fanis aie turning
 Entunid had, and briddes singing
 Divers, and on eche fane a paire
 With opin mouth again the aire; 80
 And of a fute were all the toures,
 Subtily corvin astir floures,
 Of uncouth colours during aye,
 That nevir ben none sene in May,
 With many a small turret hie; 85
 But man on live could I non sie,
 Ne creturis, save ladies play,
 Which werin such of ther array
 That as me thought of godelihed
 They passeden all and womanhed, 90
 For to behold them daunce and sing
 It semid like none erthly thing,
 Such was ther uncouth countinaunce
 In every play of right usaunce,

And of one age everichone 95
They semid all save onely one,
Which had of yeris suffisaunce,
For she might neythir sing ne daunce,
But yet her countenaunce was so glad,
As she so few yeris had had 100
As any ladie that was there,
And as litil it did her dere
Of lustines to laugh and tale
As she had full stuffid a male
Of disportis and new playis; 105
Faire had she ben in her dayis,
And maistresse semid well to be
Of all that lusty companie,
And so she might, I you ensure,
For one the conningist creture 110
She was, and so said everichone,
That er her knew, there failid none,
For she was sober, and well avised,
And from every fault disguised,
And nothing used but faith and truth; 115
That she n'as young it was grete ruth,
For every where and in ech place
She govirnid her, that in grace
She stode alway with pore and riche,
That at a word was none her liche, 120
Ne halfe so' able maistres to be
To such a lusty companie.

Befell me so, when I avised
Yhad the yle that me suffised,
And whole th' estate evèry where
That in the lusty yle was there,
Which was more wondir to devise
Than is the joyous paradise,
I dare well say, for floure ne tre,
Ne thing wherein plesaunce might be,
There saylid none, for every wight,
Had they desirid day and night
Richis and hele, beauty and ese,
With every thing that them might plesse,
But thinke and have, it cost no more;
In such a country there before
Had I not ben ne herdin tell
That livis creäture might dwell.
And when I had thus all about
The yle avisid thoroughout
The state, and how they were arayed,
In my hert I wexe well appayed,
And in my selfe I me assured
That in my body' I was well ured,
Sithin I might have such a grace
To se the ladies and the place,
Which were so faire, I you ensure,
That to my dome though that Nature
Would evir strive and do her paine
She should not con ne mow attaine

The left feture for to amend,
Though she would all her conning spende,
That unto beauteie might availe,
It were but paine and lost travaile,
Such part in ther nativitie 155
Was then alargid of beauteie;
And eke they had a thing notable
Unto ther deeth ay durable,
And was, that ther beauty should dure,
Which was never fene in cature, 160
Save only there (as I trow)
It ne bath not be wist ne know,
Wherefore I praise with ther conning
That during beauteie, richè thing,
Had they ben of ther lives certaine 165
They had ben quite of every paine.
And when I wend thus all have fene
The state, the riches, that might bene,
That me thought impossible were
To se one thing more than was there 170
That to beauteie or glad conning
Serve or availe might any thing,
All sodainly as I there stode
This lady, that couth so much gode,
Unto me came with smiling chere, 175
And said, *Benedicite!* this yere
Saw I never man here but you;
Tell me how ye come hidir now,

And your name, and where that ye dwell,
And whom ye seke eke mote ye tell, 180
And how ye come be to this place;
The soth well told may cause you grace,
And ellis ye mote prisoner be
Unto the ladies here and me
That have the governaunce of this yle; 185
And with that word she gan to smile,
And so did all the lusty rout
Of ladies that stode her about.
Madame, (quod I) this night ypast
Lodgid I was and slepte fast 190
In a forest beside a well,
And now am here, how should I tell?
Wot I not by whose ordinance,
But onely Fortune's purveiance,
Which puttith many, as I gesse, 195
To travaile, paine, and businesse,
And lettith nothing for ther truth,
But some sleeth eke, and that is ruth,
Wherefore I doubt her brittilnes,
Her variance and unstedfastnes, 200
So that I am as yet afraid,
And of my beyng here amaid,
For wondir thing it semith me
Thus many fresh ladies to se
So faire, so cunning, and so yong, 205
And no man dwelling them among;

Not I not how I hidir come,
 Madame, (quod I) this all and some :
 What should I faine a long proceffe
 To you, that seme such a princeffe ? 210
 What plesith you commaund or say,
 Here I am redy to obay
 To my powir, and all fulfill,
 And prision bide at your will,
 Till you duly enformid be 215
 Of every thing ye aske me.

This lady there right well apaid
 Me by the hande ytoke, and said,
 Welcome, prisoner adventurus,
 Right glad am I ye have said thus, 220
 And for ye doubt me to displese
 I will assay to do you ese :
 And with that word, ye, right anon,
 She and the ladies everichon
 Assenblid, and to counsaile went, 225
 And astir that sone for me sent,
 And to me said on this manere,
 All word for word, as ye shall here :

To se you here us thinke marvaile,
 And how withoutin bote or faile, 230
 By any subtilty or wyle,
 Ye get have entre in this yle,
 But not for that yet shall ye se
 That we gentill women ybe.

Loth to displein any wight,
Notwithstanding our gretè right;
And for ye shall well undirstond
The oldè custome of this lond,
Which hath continued many yere,
Ye shall well wete that with us here
Ye may not bide, for causis twaine
Which we be purposed you to faine.

235

240

The one is this; our ordinance,
Which is of long continuance,
Ne woll not, sothly we you tell,
That no man here among us dwell,
Wherefore ye mote nedis retourne;
In no wise may you here sojourne.

245

The othir is eke, that our quene
Out of the relme, as ye maie sene,
Is, and may be to us a charge
If we let goe you here at large,
For whichè cause the more we doubt
To doe a fault while she is out,
Or suffir that may be noyfance
Againe our old accustomance.

250

255

And when I had these causis twaine
Yherd, o God! what mochil paine
All sodainly about mine hert
There came at onis, and how smert!
In creping soft as who should stele
Or doe me robbe of all mine hele,

260

And made me in my thought so fraid
That in courage I stode dismaid;
And standing thus, as was my grace,
265 A lady came more than apace,
With a huge preise her about,
And told how that the quene without
Was arivid, and would come in;
Well were they that hidir might twin;
270 They hied so they would not abide
The bridiling ther horse to ride,
By five, by sixe, by two, by thre;
There was not one abode with me;
The quene to mete everichone
275 They went, and bode with me not one;
And I went astir a soft pafe,
Imagining how to purchase
Grace of the quene there to abide
Till gode fortune some happy guide
280 Me sendin might, that would me bring
Where I was borne, to my wonning,
For way ne fote ne knew I none,
Ne whithirward I n'ist to gone,
For all was se about the yle;
285 No wondir though me list not smile,
Seing the case uncouth and straunge;
And so in like a perilous chaunge,
Imagi'ning thus walking alone
I saw the ladies everichone, 290

So that I might fomewhat offer,
Sone aftir that I drew me nere,
And tho I was ware of the quene,
And how the ladies on ther knene
With joyous words gladly advised 295
Her welcomed so that it fuffised
Though she the princes whole had be
Of all environed is with fe;
And thus avising with chere sad
All sodainly I was right glad, 300
That gretir joy, as mote I thrive,
I trow had nevir man on live
Than I tho, ne an hert more light,
When of my lady I had sight,
Which with the quene ycome was there, 305
And in one clothing both they were;
A knight also there well befene
I saw that come was with the quene,
Of whom the ladies of that yle
Had hugè wondir a long while, 310
Till at the last right sobirly
The quene her self full cunningly,
With softè wordis in gode wise,
Said to the ladies yong and nise,
My sistirs, how it hath befall 315
I trow ye know it one and all
That of long time here have I bene
Within this yle biding as quene,

Living at ese, that nevyr wight
More parfit joy havyn ne might, 320
And to you ben of govynance
Such as you found in whole plesance,
In evèry thing as ye know
Aftir our custome and our low,
Which how they first yfoundyn were 325
I trow ye wote all the manere;
And who the quene is of this yle,
As I have ben this longè while,
Ech fevin yeres mote of usage
Vifit the hevenly armitage 330
Which on a rock so high ystonds,
In strangè se out from all londs,
That to makin the pilgrimage
Is called a long peri'lous viage,
For if the wind be not gode frend 335
The journey duris to the end
Of him whiche that it undirtakes;
Of twenty thousand one not scapes;
Upon which rock growith a tre
That certaine yeres beres applis thre, 340
Which thre applis who so may have
Ben from all displeaunce ysave
That in the fevin yere may fall,
This wote ye well bothe one and all,
For the first apple and the hext 345
Which ygrowith unto you next

Yhath thre vertues notable,
And kepith youth aie durable,
Beauty and loke evir in one,
And is the best in everichone.

350

The second apple red and grene,
Onely with lokis of your yene
You nourishis in grete plesaunce
Bettir than partridge or fesaunce,
And fedis every liv'is wight
Plesantly onely with the sight.

355

And the third apple of the thre,
Which growith lowist on the tre,
Who it beris ne may not faile
That to his plesaunce may availe,
So your plesure and beauty rich
Your during youth evir yliche,
Your truth, your cunning, and your wele,
Hath aye flourid, and your gode hele,
Without sicknes or displesaunce,
Or thing that to you was noysaunce,
So that you have as goddeffes
Livid above all princeffes:
Now is befall, as ye may se,
To gathir these said applis thre,
I have not failed againe the day
Thithirwardis to take the way,
Wening to spede as I had oft;
But when I come I find aloft

360

365

370

My listir, which that here ystandis, 375
Having those applis in her hands,
Avising them, and nothing said,
But lokid as she were well paid;
And as I stode her to behold,
Thinking how my joyis were cold 380
Sith I those applis have ne might,
Evin with that so came this knight,
And in his armes of me aware
Me toke, and to his ship me bare,
And said, though him I ner had sene 385
Yet had I long his lady ben,
Wherefore I shoud with him ywend,
And he would to his liv'is end
My servant be, and gan to sing
As one that had wonne a rich thing: 390
Tho were my spirits fro me gone
So sodainly evèrichone
That in me apperid but deth,
For I felt neithir life ne breth,
Ne gode ne harmè none I knewe; 395
The sodaine paine me was so new,
That had not the hasty grace be
Of this lady, that fro the tre
Of her gentilnesse so hyid
Me to comfort I had dyid, 400
And of her thre applis she one
Into mine hand there put anone,

Which brought againe my mind and breth,
And me recovered from the deth;
Wherefore to her so am I hold 405
That for her all things do I wold,
For she was lech of all my smert,
And from grete paine so quite mine hert,
And, as God wote, right as ye here
Me to comfort with frendly chere 410
She did her prowesse and her might;
And truly eke so did this knight
In that he couth, and oftin said
That of my wo he was ill paid,
And cursed the ship that them there brought, 415
The mast, the mastir that it wrought:
And as ech thing mote have an end,
My sistir here, your brothir frend,
Con with her words so womanly
This knight entrete and conningly, 420
For mine honour and his also,
And said that with her we should go
Both in her ship, where she was brought,
Which was so wondirfully wrought,
So clene, so rich, and so araid, 425
That we were both content and paid;
And me to comfort and to plesse,
And mine hert for to put at ese,
She toke grete paine in litil while,
And thus hath brought us to this yle, 430

As ye may se; wherfore echone

I pray you thanke her one and one

As hertly as ye can devise

Or imagine in any wise.

At once there tho men mightin seen

435

A world of ladies fall on kneen

'Fore my lady, that there about

Was left neȝe standing in the rout,

But altogether they went at ones

To knele; they spared not for the stones,

440

Ne for estate, ne for ther blode;

Well shewid there they couth much gode:

To my lady they made such fest,

And with such wordis, that the lest

So frendly and so faithfully

445

Ysaïd was and so cunningly,

That wondir was, seing ther youth,

To here the language that they couth,

And wholly how they governed were

In thanking of my lady there,

450

And saïd by will and maundement

They were at her commaundement,

Which was to me as grete a joy

As winning of the toune of Troy

Was to the hardy Grekis strong

455

When they it wan with siegè long,

To se my lady' in such a place,

And so recevid as she was.

And when they talkid had a while
Of this and that, and of the yle, 460
My lady and the ladies there,
Altogithir as they ywere,
The quene her self began to play,
And to the agid lady say,
Now semith you not gode it were, 465
Sith we be altogithir here,
To ordaine and devise the best
To set this knight and me at rest,
For *Woman is a feble wight*
To vere a warre against a knight; 470
And sith he here is in this place,
At my lest in dangir or grace,
It were to me grete villany
To do him any tiranny;
But faine I would, now will ye here, 475
In his owne country that he were,
And I in pece and he at ese;
This were a way us both to plesse;
If it might be I you beseche
With him hereof you fall in speche. 480
This lady tho began to smile,
Avising her a litil while,
And with glad chere she said anone,
Madam, I will unto him gone,
And with him speke, and oftin fele 485
What he desiris every dele:

And fobirly this lady tho
Her felfe, and othir ladies two
She toke with her, and with sad chere
Said to the knight on this manere ; 490
Sir, the grete princes of this yle,
Whom for your plesance many a mile
Ye fought have, as I undirstond,
Till at the last ye have her fond,
Me sent hath here, and ladies twaine, 495
To herin all thing that ye faine ;
And for what cause ye have her fought
Faine would she wote, and whole your thought,
And why you do her all this wo,
And for what cause you be her fo, 500
And why of every wight unaware
By force ye to your ship her bare,
That she so nigh ywas agone
That mind ne spech ne had she none,
But as a painfull creature 505
Dying abode, her advinture,
That her to se indure that paine
Here we all say unto you plaine
Right on your felfe ye did amisse,
Seing how she a princes is. 510
This knight, the which ycowth his gode,
Right of his truth mevid his blode,
That pale he woxe as any led,
And lok't as tho he wold be ded ;

Blode was there none in nothir cheke,
Wordlesse he was, and semid sicke;
And so it provid well he was,
For without moving any paas,
All sodainly as thing dying,
He fell at onis downe fowning;
That for his wo this lady fraid
Unto the quene her hyed, and said,
Cometh on anon, as have you blisse,
But ye be wise; thing is amisse;
This knight is ded or will be sone,
Lo! where he lyith in a fwone
Withoutin word or answiring
To that I have said any thing;
Wherefore I doubt moche that the blame
Might be hindiring to your name,
Which flourid hath so many yere,
So longè that for nothing here
I would in no wise that he dyed,
Wherefore it gode were that ye hyed,
His life to favin at the lest;
And aftir that his wo be cest
Commaundith him to voide or dwell,
For in no wise dare I more mell
Of thing wherein such perill is
As like is now to fall of this.
This quene right tho, full of grete fere,
With all the ladies present there,

515

520

525

530

535

540

Unto the knight came where he lay,
 And made a lady to him say,
 Lo! here the quene; awake, for shame! 545
 What will you doe? is this gode game?
 Why lye you here? what is your mind?
 Now is well sene your wit is blind,
 To se so many ladies here
 And ye to make none othir chere; 550
 But as ye set them all at nought
 Arise for his love that you bought.
 But what she said a word not one
 He spake, ne answere gave her none.
 The quene of very pittty tho, 555
 Her worship and his life also
 To savin, there she did her paine,
 And quoke for fere, and gan to saine,
 For woe, alas! what shall I doe!
 What shall I say this man unto? 560
 If he die here lost is my name:
 How shal I play this perillous game?
 If any thing be here anisse
 It shall be said it rigour is,
 Whereby my name impayrin might; 565
 And like to die eke is this knight:
 And with that word her hand she laid
 Upon his brest, and to him said,
 Awake, my knight! lo! it am I
 That to you speke: now tell me why 570

Ye fare thus, and this paine endure,
Seing you be in country sure,
Among such frends that would you hele,
Your hert'is ese eke and your wele?
And if I wist what you might ese, 575
Or know the thing that you might plese,
I you ensure it should not faile
That to your hele you might availe;
Wherefore with all my hert I pray
Ye rise, and let us talke and play: 580
And se how many ladies here
Be comin for to make gode chere!
All was for nought, for still as stone
He lay, and word ne spoke he none;
Long while was or he might braid; 585
And of all that the quene had said
He wist no word; but at the last
O mercy! twise he cryid fast,
That pittie was his voice to here,
Or to behold his painefull chere, 590
Which was not feined was well to seyn
Both by his visage and his cyn,
Which on the quene at once he cast,
And fighid as he would to brast,
And astir that eke he shright so 595
That wondir was to se his wo,
For sithin that payne was first named
Was nex more wofull payne attained,

For with voyce ded he gan to plaine,
And to himselfe these wordis saine; 600
I, wofull wight full of malure,
Am worse than ded, and yet I dure,
And maugre any paine or deth
Against my will I fele my breth:
Why n'am I ded, sith I ne serve, 605
And sith my lady will me sterve?
Where art thou, Deth? art thou agast?
Well shall we mete yet at the last
Though thou the hide it is for nought,
For where thou dwelst thou shalt be sought: 610
Maugre thy subtill double face
Here will I die right in this place.
To thy dishonour and myne ese
Thy mannir is no wight to plesse:
What nedis the, sith I the seche, 615
So the to hide, my payne to eche?
And well wost thou I will not live
Who would me all this world here give,
For I have with my cowardise
Lost joy, and hele, and my servise, 620
And made my soveraigne lady so
That while she lives I trow my fo
She will be evir to her end;
Thus have I neithir joy ne frend.
Wote I not whethir hast or sloth 625
Hath causid this now by my troth,

For at the hermitage full hie,
When I her saw first with myne eye,
I hyid till I was aloft,
And made my pacè small and soft, 630
Till in mine armes I had her fast,
And to my ship bare at the last,
Whereof she was displeid so
That endles there semid her wo,
And I thereof had so grete fere 635
That me repent that I come there,
Which hast I trow gan her displese,
And is the cause of my disese.
And with that word he gan to cry,
Now Deth, Deth, come, twyis or thry, 640
And motrid I n'ot what of slouth :
And even with that the quene of routh
Him in her armis toke, and sayd,
Now, mine owne knight ! be' not ill apayd
That I a lady to you sent 645
'To have knowledge of your entent,
For in gode faith I men't but well,
And would ye wist it every dele,
Nor will not do to you ywis ;
And with that word she gan him kisse, 650
And prayed him rise, and said she would
His welfare by her truth, and told
Him how she was for his disese
Right fory, and faine would him plese,

His lyfe to fave. Thefe wordis tho
655 She faid to him, and many mo,
In comforting, for from the paine
She would he were delivered faine.
The knight tho up ycaft his een,
And when he faw it was the quene 660
That to him had thefe wordis faid,
Right in his wo he gan to braid,
And him up drefsis for to knele,
The quene avifing wondir wele;
But as he rofe he ovirthrew, 665
Wherefore the quene yet eft anew
Him in her armis anone toke,
And pitiously gan on him loke;
But for all that nothyng ſhe fayd,
Ne ſpake not like ſhe were well payd, 670
Ne no chere made nor fad ne light,
But all in one to every wight
There was fene conning with eftate
In her without noyſe or debate,
For fave onely a loke piteous 675
Of womenhed undispiteous,
That ſhe ſhowid in countenance,
Far ſemed her hert from obeifance,
And not for that ſhe did her reine
Him to recovir from the peine, 680
And his hert for to put at large,
For her entent was to his barge

Him for to bryng agaynst the eve,
With certaine ladies, and take leve,
And pray him of his gentilnesse 685
To suffir her thenceforth in pece,
As othir princis had before,
And from thenceforth for evirmore
She would him worship in all wise
That gentilnesse ymight devise, 690
And payne her wholly to fulfill
In honour his plesure and will.
And during thus this knightis wo,
Present the queene and othir mo,
My lady' and many' an othir wight, 695
Ten thousand shippis at a sight
I saw come oer the wawy flode
With sayle and ore, that as I stode
Them to behold I gan marvaile
From whom might come so many' a faile, 700
For sith the tyme that I was bore
Such a navie there ne're before
Had I not sene, ne so arayed,
That for the sight my hert yplayed
Aye to and fro within my brest 705
For joy; long was or it would rest;
For there was saylis full of floures,
Astir castils with hugè toures,
Yfeming full of armis bright,
That wondir lusty was the sight, 710

With large toppis and mastis long,
Richly depeint, and reare among
At certaine timis gan repayre
Smalè birdis doune from the aire,
And on the shippis bounds about 715
Yfate and song with voyce full out
Ballades and layes right joyously,
As they couth in ther harmony,
That you to write that I there se
Mine excuse is it may not be; 720
For why? the mattir were to long
To name the birds and write ther song;
Whereof anon the tydings there
Unto the quene sone brought ywere,
With many' alas and many' a doubt, 725
Shewing the shippis there without:
Tho gan the agid lady wepe,
And said, Alas! our joy on slepe
Sone shal be brought, ye, long or night,
For we discried hen by this knight, 730
For certes it may none othir be
But he is of yond companie,
And they be come him here to seche;
And with that word her faylid speche.
Without reme'dy we be destroid, 735
Full oft said all, and gan conclude
Wholy at onis at the last
That best was shait ther yatis fast,

And arme them all in gode langage,
As they had done of old ufage, 740
And of fayre wordis make ther fhote;
This was ther counsaile and the knot,
And othir purpofe toke they none,
But armed thus forth they all gone
Toward the wallis of the yle; 745
But or they comin there long while
They mettin the grete lord of bove
That callid is the god of Love,
That them avifid with fuch chere,
Right as he with them angry were: 750
Avayled them not ther wals of glaffe;
This mighty lord let not to paffe,
The fhutting of ther yatis fast;
All they had ordained was but wast;
For when his fhips had foundin land 755
This lord anon, with bow in hand,
Into this yle with hugè prefe
Yhyd fast, and would not cefe
Till he came there the knight ylay:
Of quene ne lady by the way 760
Toke he no hede, but forth he pafte,
And yet all followed at the lafte.
And when he came where lay the knight
Well fhewid he he had grete might,
And forth the quene callid anone 765
And all the ladies everichone,

And to them said, Is not this routh,
To se my fervaunt for his trouth
Thus lene, thus sicke, and in this payne,
And wot not unto whom to playne, 770
Save onely one withoutin mo,
Which might him hele, and is his fo?
And with that word his hevy brow
He shewed the quene, and lokid row.
This mighty lord forth tho anone 775
With o loke her faultis echone
He can her shew in litil spech,
Commaunding her to be his lech.
Withoutin more, shortly to say,
He thought the quene sone should obay, 780
And in his hond he shoke his bow,
And said right sone he would be know;
And for she had so long refused
His service, and his lawes not used,
He let her wit that he was wroth, 785
And bent his bow, and forth he goth
A pace or two, and evin there
A large draught up to his ere
He drew, and with an arrow ground
Bothe sharpe and new the quene a wound 790
He gave that perfed unto the hert,
Which astirward full sore gan smert,
And was not whole of many yere;
And even with that Be of gode chere,

My knight, quod he; I will the hele,
And the restore to parfite wele,
And for ech payne thou hast endured
To have two joies thou art enured:
And forth he passid by the rout,
With sobir chere walking about, 800
And what he said I thought to here;
Well wist he which his servaunts were
And as he passed anon he fond
My lady', and her toke by the hond,
And made her chere as a goddes, 805
And of Beaute called her Princes,
Of Bounty eke gave her the name,
And sayd there was nothyng to blame
In her, but she was vertuous,
Saving she would no pity use, 810
Which was the cause that he her sought
To put that far out of her thought;
And sithin she had whole richesse
Of womanhed and frendlinesse,
He said it was nothing fitting 815
To void Pity his owne leggyng;
And gan her prech and with her play,
And of her beauty told her aie,
And said she was a creäture
Of whom the namè shold endure, 820
And in bokis full of plesaunce
Be put for er in remembraunce;

And as me thought in more frendly,
Unto my lady and godelily
He spake than any that was there; 825
And for the' applis I trow it were
That she had in possession,
Wherefore long in proceffion
Many a pace arme undir other
He welke, and so did with none other: 830
But what he would commaund or say
Forthwith nedis all must obay,
And what he desired at the lest
Of my lady was by request:
And when they long together had bene 835
He brought my lady to the quene,
And to her said, So God you spede
Shew grace, and consent, that is nede.
My lady tho full conningly,
Right well avised and womanly, 840
Downe gan to knele upon the floures
Which Aprill nourished had with shoures,
And to this mighty lord gan say,
That plesith you I woll obay,
And me restraine from othir thought; 845
As ye woll all thyng shall be wrought:
And with that word kneling she quoke.
That mighty lord in armes her toke,
And said, You have a servaunt, one
That truir living is there none, 850

Wherefore gode were, feing his trouth,
That on his painis ye had routh,
And purpofe you to here his fpeech,
Fully avisid him to lech,
For of one thyng ye may be fure, 855
He will be yours while he may dure.
And with that word right on his game
Me thought he lough, and told my name,
Which was to me marvaile and fere,
That what to do I ne wift there, 860
Ne whethir was me bet or none
There to abide or thus to gone,
For well wend I my lady wold
Imagin or deme I had told
My counsaile whole, or made complaint 865
Unto that lord, that mighty faint,
So verily ech thing unfought
He faid as he had knowne my thought,
And told my trouth and mine unefe
Bet than I couth have for mine efe, 870
Though I had ftudied all a weke:
Well wift that lord that I was feke,
And would be lechid wondir faine;
No man me blame, mine was the paine.
And when this lord had all yfaid, 875
And long while with my lady plaid,
She gan to fmile with fpirit glade;
This was the anfwere that fhe made,

Which put me there in double peine,
 That what to do ne what to feine 880
 Wist I not, ne what was the best;
 Ferre was my hert then fro his rest,
 For as I thought that smiling signe
 Was token that the hert encline
 Would to requestis resonable, 885
 Because *Smiling is favorable*
To every thing that shal thrive,
 So thoughtin I tho anon blive
 That *Worldlesse answere in no toun*
Was tane for obligacioun, 890
 Ne callid surety in no wise
 Amongst them that callid ben wise:
 Thus was I in a joyous dout,
 Sure and unfurist of that rout;
 Right as mine hert ythought it were 895
 So more or lesse wexin my fere,
 That if one thought ymade it wele
 Anothir shent it everydele,
 Till at the last I couth no more,
 But purposed as I did before 900
 To serve truly my lyv'is space,
 Awaiting er the yere of grace,
 Which may yfall yet or I sterve,
 If that it plesse her that I serve,
 And servid have, and woll do ever, 905
 For thyng is none that me is lever

Than is her service, whose presence
Mine heven is whole, and her absence
An hell all full of divers paines,
Whych to the deth full oft me straines. 913
Thus in my thoughtis as I stode,
That unneth felt I harme ne gode,
I saw the quene a litil paas
Come where this mighty lord ywas, 915
And knelid downe in presence there
Of all the ladies that there were,
With sobir countinaunce avised,
In few wordis that well suffised,
And to this lord anon present
A bill, wherein whole her entent 920
Was writtin, and how she besought,
As he knew every will and thought,
That of his godhed and his grace
He would forgyve all old trespase,
And undisplefed be of time past, 925
For she would evir be stedfast,
And in his service to the deth
Use every thought while she had breth,
And sight and wept, and said no more,
Within was writtin all the fore : 930
At whychè bill the lord gan smyle,
And said he would within that yle
Be lord and fyre both est and west,
And cal'd it there his new conquest,

And in grete councell toke the quene;
935 Long were the talis them betwene:
And ovir her bill he red thrise,
And wondir gladly gan devise
Her fetures faire and her visage,
And bad gode thrift on that image,
940 And saied he trowid her compleint
Should astir cause her be corseint;
And in his sleve he put the bill,
Was there none that yknew his will,
And forth he walke apace about,
945 Beholding all the lusty rout,
Halfe in a thought with smiling chere,
Till at the last, as ye shall here,
He turned unto the quene ageine,
And said, To morne here in this pleine
950 I woll that ye be and all yours,
That purposid ben to were flours,
Or of my lusty colour use,
It may not be to you excuse,
Ne to none of yours in no wise,
955 That able be to my servise;
Foras I said have here before
I will be lord for evirmore
Of you, and of this yle, and all,
And of all yours that havin shall
960 Joy, pece, or ese, or in plesaunce
Your livis use without noysaunce;

Here will I in flate be yfene,
And turned his visage to the quene,
And you give knowledge of my will, 963
And a full answere of your bill.

Was there no nay, ne wordis none,
But very' obeysaunt semed echone;
The quene and othir that were there
Well semid it they had grete fere, 970

And there toke lodging every knight,
Was none departid of that night,
And some to rede old romances
Them occupied for ther plesances,
Some to make verelaies and laies, 975

And some to othir diverse plaies,
And I to me a romance toke,
And as I reding was the boke
Methought the spherè had so run
That it was rising of the sun, 980

And such a pres into the plaine
Assemble gone. that with grete paine
One might for othir go ne stand,
Ne none take othir by the hand,
Withoutin they distourbid were, 985
So huge and gret the pres was there.

And astir that within two houres
This mighty lord clad all in floures
Of divers colours many' a paire
In his estate up in the aire 990

Well nigh two fathom, as his hight,
 He set him there in all ther sight,
 And for the quene and for the knight,
 And for my lady' and every wight,
 In hast he sent, so that ner one 995
 Was there absent, but come echone:
 And when they thus assemblid were,
 As ye have heerd me say you here,
 Without more tarrying on hight,
 There to be fene of every wight, 1000
 Up stode among the pres above
 A counsaylir, seruaunt of Love,
 Which semid well of gret estate,
 And shewid there how no debate
 Othir then godely might be used 1005
 In gentilnesse and be excused,
 Wherefore he said his lord's will
 Was every wight there shoud be still
 And in pees, and of one accord,
 And thus commaundid at a word, 1010
 And can his tongue to swiche language
 To turne, that yet in all mine age
 Herd I nevir so conningly
 Man speke, ne halfe so faithfully,
 For evèry thing he said there 1015
 Semid as it infelid were,
 Or approvid for very trew:
 Swiche was his cunning language newe,

And well according to his chere,
That where I be me thinke I here IC20
Him yet alway, when I mine one
In any place may be alone :
First con he of the lusty yle
All the astate in lityl whyle
Reherse, and wholly every thing IC25
That causid there his lord's comming,
And every wele and every wo,
And for what cause eche thing was so
Well shewed he there in esie spech,
And how the sicke had nede of lech ; IC30
And that whiche whole was and in grace
He told plainly why ech thing was,
And at the last he con conclude,
Voidid evèry language rude,
And said, That prince, that mighty lord, IC35
Or his departing would accord
All the parties were there present,
And was the fine of his entent,
Witnesse his presence in your sight,
Which fits among you in his night ; IC40
And knelid downe withoutin more,
And not o word yspake he more.

Tho gan this mighty lord him dresse,
With chere avised, to do largesse,
And said unto this knight and me, IC45
Ye shall to joy restorid be,

And for ye have ben true ye twaine
 I graunt you here for every paine
 A thousand joies every weke,
 And loke ye be no lengir seke, 1050
 And both your ladies, lo 'hem here!
 Take ech his own; beth of gode chere,
 Your happie day is new began
 Sith it was rising of the sun,
 And to all othir in this place 1055
 I graunt wholly to stand in grace
 That servith truely without flouth,
 And to avauncid be by trowth.
 Tho gan this knight and I downe knele,
 Wening to doin wondir wele, 1060
 Seing, O lord! your grete mercy
 Us hath enriched so opinly
 That we deserve may nevir more
 The lestè part, but evirmore
 With foule and body truely serve 1065
 You and yours till that we ysterve:
 And to ther ladies there they stode
 This knight, that *couth so mikil gode*,
 Ywent in hast, and I also;
 Joyous and glad werin we tho, 1070
 And al so rich in every thought
 As he that all hath and ought nought,
 And them besought in humble wise
 Us to accept to ther service,

And shew us of ther frendly cheres, 1075
Which in ther tresure many yeres
They keptin had, us to grete paine,
And told how ther servauntis twaine
We were, would be, and so had ever,
And to the deth chaunge would we never, 1080
Ne doe offence, ne thinke like ill,
But fill ther ordinance and will;
And made our othis freshe and new,
Our old service for to renew,
And wholly ther's for evirmore 1085
We there become; what might we more?
And well awaiting that in flouth
We made no fault ne in our trowth,
Ne thought not do, I you ensure,
With our will, whilis we may dure. 1090
This seson past, againe an eve
This lord of the quene toke his leve,
And said he would hastely returne,
And at gode leisure there sojourne,
Both for his honour and his ese, 1095
Commaunding fast the knight to plesse,
And gave his statutes in papirs,
And orderit divers officirs,
And forth to ship the samè night
He went, and sone was out of sight. 1100
And on the morow when the aire
Attemprid was and wondir faire,

Erly at rising of the sun,
After the night away was run,
Yplaying us on the rivage, 1105
My lady spake of her voyage,
And said she madin small journies,
And held her in straunge counteries,
And forthwith to the quenè went,
And shewed her wholly her entent, 1110
And toke her leve with chere weping,
That pitty was to se that parting;
For to the quene it was a paine,
As to a martyr new yflaine,
That for her woe, and she so tender, 1115
Yet I wepe oft when I remember:
She offerid there to resigne
To my lady eight times or nine
Th' astate, the yle, shortly to tell,
If it might plese her there to dwell, 1120
And said, for evir her lineage
Should to my lady doe homage,
And hers be whole withoutin more,
Ye, and all thers for evirmore.
Nay, God forbid! my lady eft, 1125
With many conning word and soft,
Said, that evir such a thing should bene
That I consent should that a quene
Of your estate, and so well named,
In any wise should be attamed, 1130

But would be faine with all my hert,
What so befell or how me smert,
To doin thing that you might plesse
In any wise or be your ese,
And kissid there and bad gode night, II 35
For which leve wept many a wight.
There might men here my lady praised,
And such a name of her araised,
What of cunning and frendlineffe,
What of beauty with gentilnesse, II 40
And what of glad and frendly cheres
That she used in all her yeres,
That wondir was here every wight
To say well how they did ther might,
And with a pres upon the morow II 45
To ship her brought, and what a sorow
They made when she shoud undir saile,
That and ye wist ye would mervaile.
Forth goeth the ship, out goeth the sond,
And I as a wode man unbond, II 50
For doubt to be left behind there,
Into the se withoutin fere
Anon I ran, till with a waw
All sodenly I was oerthraw,
And with the watir to and fro II 55
Backward and forward travailed so
That mind and breth nigh was ygone,
For gode ne harme ne knew I none,

Til at the last with hokis tweine
Men of the ship with mikil peine 1160
To save my life did such travaile
That and ye wist ye would mervaile,
And in the ship me drewe on hie,
And saidin all that I would die,
And laid me long downe by the mast, 1165
And of ther clothis on me cast;
And there I made my testament,
And wist my selfe not what I ment,
But when I said had what I would,
And to the mast my wo all told, 1170
And tane my leve of every wight,
And closed mine eyen and lost my sight,
Avised to die without more spech,
Or any remedy to fech
Or grace new, as was grete nede, 1175
My lady of my paine toke hede,
And her bethought how that for trouth
To se me die it were grete routh,
And to me came in sobir wise,
And softly said, I pray you rise; 1180
Come on with me; let be this fare;
All shall be wel; have ye no care;
I will obey ye and fulfill
Wholly in al that lordis will
That you and me not long ago 1185
Aftir his list commaundid so,

That there againe no resistance
May be withoutin gret offence,
And therefore now loke what I say,
I am and will be frendly aye; 1190
Rise up, behold this avauntage,
I grauntin you in heritage
All peceably withoutin strive
During the dayis of your live;
And of her applis in my fleve 1195
One she yput, and toke her leve
In wordis few, and said, Gode hele
He that all made you send, and wele!
Wherewith my painis all at ones
Token such leve, that all my bones, 1200
For the new durense plesauce,
So as they couth desired to daunce,
And I as whole as any wight
Up rose with joyous hert and light,
Whole and unsicke, right wele at ese, 1205
And all forget had my disese,
And to my lady where she plaid
I went anone, and to her said;
He that all joies persons to plesse
First ordainid with parfite ese, 1210
And every plesure can depart,
Send you, Madame, as large a part,
And of his godis such plenty,
As he has done you of beauty,

With hele, and all that may be thought, 1215
He fend you all as he all wrought.

Madame, (quod I) your servaunt trew
Have I ben long, and yet will new,
Withoutin chaunge or repentaunce
In any wise or variaunce, 1220

And so will do, as thrive I ever,
For thing is none that me is lever
Than you to plesse how er I fare,
Mine hert's lady and my welfare,
My life, mine hele, my lech also 1225

Of every thing that doth me wo,
My helpe at nede, and my surete
Of every joy that longs to me,
My succours whole in allè wise
That may be thought or man devise, 1230

Your grace, Madame, such have I found,
Now in my nede, that I am bound
To you for er, so Christ me save,
For hele and live of you I have,
Wherefore is resoun I you serve 1235

With due obeisaunce till I sterve,
And ded and quicke be evir yours,
Late, erly, and at allè hours.

Tho came my lady small alite,
And in plaine English con confite, 1240
In wordis few whole her entent

She shewed me there, and how she ment

To me ward in every wise,
Wholly she came at ther devise,
Without processe or long travell, 1245
Charging me to kepin counsell,
As I would to her grace attaine,
Of which commaundement I was faine;
Wherefore I passe oer at this time,
For counsell cords not well in rime, 1250
And eke the oth that I have swore
To breke me were bettir unbore;
Why? for untrue for evirmore
I should be hold, that nevirmore
Of me in place should be report 1255
Thing that availe might, or comfort
To mewardis in any wise,
And eche wight wouldin me dispise
In that they couth, and me repreve,
Which were a thing fore for to greve, 1260
Wherefore hereof more mencion
Make I not now ne long sermon,
But shortly thus I me excuse,
To rime a counsell I refuse.
Sailing thus two dayis or thre 1265
My lady towards her countre,
Ovir the wavis high and grene,
Which werin large and depe betwene,
Upon a time me called and said,
That of my hele she was well paid, 1270

And of the quene and of the yle
She talkid with me a long while,
And of all that she there had fene,
And of th' estate and of the quene,
And of the ladies name by name, 1275
Two houres or mo this was her game,
Till at the last the wind can rise,
And blew so fast and in such wise
The ship, that every wight can say
Madame, er eve be of this day, 1280
And God tofore, ye shall be there
As ye would fainist that ye were,
And doubtith not within fixe hours
Ye shall be there as all is yours :
At which wordis she gan to smile, 1285
And said that was no longè while
That they her set ; and up she rose,
And all about the ship she gose,
And made gode chere to every wight,
Till of the land she had a sight, 1290
Of whichè sight glad, God it wot,
She was abashid and abote,
And forth goeth, shortly you to tell,
Where she accustomed was to dwell,
And recevid was, as gode right, 1295
With joyous chere and hert'is light,
And as a glad new avinture
Plesant to evèry cature ;

With which landing tho I awoke,
And found my chambir full of smoke, 1300
My chekis eke unto the eres,
And all my body, wet with teres,
And all so feble' and in such wise
I was. that unneth might I rise,
So far travaillid and so faint, 1305
That neithir knew I kirke ne faint,
Ne what was what ne who was who,
Ne avised what way I would go;
But by an adventurous grace
I rise and walkt, fought pace and pace, 1310
Till I a winding staire yfound,
And held the vice aye in my hond,
And upward softly so can crepe
Till I came where I thought to slepe
More at mine ese, and out of prece, 1315
At my gode leisure and in pece,
Till somwhat I recomfort were
Of the travill and the grete fere
That I endurid had before,
This was my thought withoutin more; 1320
And as a wight witleffe and faint,
Without more, in a chambir paint
Full of stories old and divers,
More than I can as now reherse,
Unto a bed full sobirly, 1325
So as I mightin, full southly,

Peace after other, and nothing said,
Till at the last downe I me laid,
And as my mind would give me leve
All that I dremid had that eve 1330
Before that all I can reherse,
Right as a child at schole his verse
Doth after that he thinketh to thrive,
Right so did I for all my live,
I thought to have in remembraunce 1335
Both the paine and eke the plesaunce,
The Dreame whole as it me befell,
Which was as ye herin me tell :
Thus in my thoughtis as I lay
That happy or unhappy day, 1340
Ne wot I not, so have I blame,
Of the two which shulde be the name,
Befell me so that there a thought
By processe new on slepe me brought,
And me governed so in a while 1345
That ones againe within the yle
Me thought I was, where of the knight
And of the ladies I had sight,
And were assemblid on a grene,
Bothe knight and lady with the queene, 1350
At which assembly there was said
How that they all content and paid
Werin wholly as in that thing
That the knight there should be the king,

And they would all for sure witnesse 1355
Yweddid be both more and lesse,
In remembraunce, withoutin more,
Thus they consent for evirmore,
And was concludid that the knight
Departin should the samè night, 1360
And forthwith there toke his voiage
To journey for his marriage,
And returnin with such an host
That weddid might be lest and most :
This was concluded, written and seled, 1365
That it ne might not be repeled
In no wise, but continue firme,
And all should be within a terme,
Without more excusation,
Both fest and coronation. 1370
This knight, which had thereof the charge,
Anon into a little barge
Ybrought was late against an eve,
Where of all he ytoke his leve,
Which barge was as a man's thought 1375
Aftir his plesure to him brought,
The quene her selfe accustomed aye
In the same barge oft for to play,
It nedith neithir mast ne rothir,
I have not herd of such another, 1380
No maistir for the govirnaunce,
He saylid by thought and plesaunce,

Withoutin labour est and west,
All ywas one calme or tempest,
And I went with at his request, 1385
And was the first praied to the fest.
When he came into his countre,
And passid had the wavy fe,
In an havin bothe depe and large
He left his rich and noble barge, 1390
And to the court, shortly to tell,
He went where he was wont to dwell,
And was recevid, as gode right,
As heire, and for a worthy knight,
With all the statis of the lond, 1395
Which came anon at his first sond,
With glad spiritis full of trouth,
Loth to do fault, or with a slouth
Attaint to be in any wise,
Ther richis was ther old servise, 1400
Which evir trew had ben yfond
Sith first inhabit was the lond;
And so recevid thei ther king
That forgottin ywas no thing
That ought to be done ne might plese, 1405
Ne ther sovèraine lord do ese;
And with them so, shortly to say,
As they of custome had done aye,
For sevin yere past was and more,
The father, the old, wife, and hore, 1410

King of the land, ytoke his leve
Of all his barons on an eve,
And told them how his dayis past
Were all, and comin was the last,
And hart'ily prayed 'hem to remember 1415
His sonnè, which yong was and tender,
That borne ywas ther prince to be,
If he returne to that countre
Might by adventure or by grace
Within any shorte time or space, 1420
And to be true and frendly aye,
As they to him had ben alway:
Thus he them prayd withoutin more,
And toke his leve for evirmore.
Knowin was how tendir in age 1425
This yongè prince a grete viage
Uncouth and straung, honours to seche,
Ytoke in hond with lityl speche,
Which was to sekin a princes
That he desired more than riches, 1430
For her grete name that flourid so
That in that time there was no mo
Of her estate, ne so well named,
For borne was none that er her blamed,
Of which princes somwhat before 1435
Here have I spoke, and some will more.
So thus befell as ye shall here;
Unto ther lord they made such chere

That joy was there to be present
To se ther troth and how they ment; 1440
So very glad they were ech one
That them among there was no one
Whiche that desirid more riches
Than for ther lord such a princes
That they might plese, and that were faire, 1445
For fast desirid they an heire,
And said grete surety were ywis.
And as they were speking of this
The prince himselfin him avised,
And in plaine English undisguised 1450
Them shewid wholly his journey,
And of ther counsell can them prey,
And told how he enfurid was,
And how his day he might not passe
Withoutin diffame and grete blame, 1455
And to him for evir a shame;
And of ther counsell and avise
There he prayith them once or twise,
And that they would within ten daies
Avise and ordaine him such waies, 1460
So that it were no displeaunce,
Ne to this relme oer grete grievaunce,
And that he might have to his fest
Sixty thousand gestes at the lest,
For his intent within short while 1465
Was to returne unto this yle

That he came fro, and kepe his day;
For nothing would he be away.
To counsaile tho the lords anon
Into a chambir everychone 1470
Togithir went, them to devise
How they might best and in what wise
Purvey for their lord's plesaunce,
And the relm's continuance
Of honor, which in it before 1475
Had continuid evirmore:
So at the last they found the waies,
How that within the next ten daies
All might with paine and diligence
Be done, and cast what the dispence 1480
Might draw, and, in conclusion,
Made for ech thing provision.
When this was done, wholly tofore
The prince the lordis all before
Come, and shewid what they had done, 1485
And how they couth by no reson
Findin that within the ten daies
He might departin by no waies,
But would he fittene at the lest
Or he retorne might to his fest; 1490
And shewed him every reson why
It might not be so hastily
As he desirid, ne his day
He might not kepe by no way,

For divers causis wondir grete ;
Which when he herd in such an hete
He fell for forow, and was feke,
Still in his bed whole that weke,
And nigh the tothir for the shame,
And for the doubt and for the blame
That mightin on him be aret,
And oft upon his brest he bet,
And said, Alas! mine honour for aye
Have I here lost clenely this day ;
Ded would I be ; alas! my name
Shall aye be more henceforth in shame,
And I dishonoured and repreved,
And nevir more shall be beleved :
And made swich forow, that in trouth
Him to behold it was grete routh ;
And so endured the dayes siftenes,
Till that the lords on an even
Him come and told they redy were,
And shewid in few wordis there
How and what wife they had purvey'd
For his estate, and to him said,
That twenty thousand knights of name,
And fourty thousand without blame,
All come of noble ligine,
Togidir in a compane,
Were lodgid on a river's side,
Him and his plesure there t'abide.

The prince tho for joy up arofe,
And where they lodgid were he goes
Withoutin more that samè night, 1525
And these his suppir made to dight,
And with them bode till it was dey,
And forthwith to take his journey,
Leving the streight, holding the large,
Till he came to his noble barge : 1530
And when this prince, this lustie knight,
With his peple in armis bright
Was comin where he thought to pas,
And knew well none abiding was
Behind, but all were there present, 1535
Forthwith anon all his intent
He told them there, and made his cries
Thorough his hostè that day twise,
Commaunding every livis wight
There being present in his sight 1540
To be the' morow on the rivage,
Where he begin would his viage.
The morow come, the cry was kept,
But few was there that night that slept,
But trussed and purveid for the morow, 1545
For fault of ships was all ther sorrow,
For save the barge and othir two
Of shippis there saw I no mo :
Thus in ther doubtis as they stode,
Waxing the se, comming the fode, 1550

Was cried To ship goe every wight,
 Then was but hie that hie him might;
 And to the barge me thought echone
 They went, without was left not one,
 Ne horse ne male, trusse ne baggage, 1555
 Salad ne spere, gardbrace ne page,
 But was lodgid, and rome ynough;
 At which shipping me thought I lough,
 And gan to marvaile in my thought
 How evir such a ship was wrought, 1560
 For what peple that can encrese,
 Ne ner so thicke might be the prese,
 But all had romè at ther will,
 There was not one was lodgid ill;
 For as I trowe my felse the last 1565
 Was one, and lodgid by the mast,
 And where I loked I saw such rome
 As all were lodgid in a towne.
 Forth goth the ship, said was the crede,
 And on ther knees for ther gode spede 1570
 Downe knelid every wight a while,
 And prayid fast that to the yle
 They mightin comin in safety,
 The prince and all the company,
 With worship and withoutin blame, 1575
 Or disclaundir of his gode name,
 Of the promise he shoud retourne,
 Within the time he did sojourne,

In his lordè bidding his host,
This was ther prayir lest and most : 1580
To kepe the day it might not ben
That he' appointid had with the quene
To returnin withoutin flouth,
And so assurid had his trowth,
For which default this prince, this knight, 1585
During the time slept not a night,
Such was his wo and his disese,
For doubt he should the quene displese.
Forth goith the ship with such spede
Right as the prince for his grete nede 1590
Desirin would afir his thought,
'Till it unto the yle him brought,
Where all in hast upon the sand
He and his peple toke the land
With hertis glad and cherè light, 1595
Wening to be in heven that night;
But or they passid had a while,
Entring in towardis that yle,
All clad in blacke, with chere piteous,
A lady which ner dispiteous 1600
Had be in all her life tofore
With fory chere and hert to tore
Unto this prince where he gan ride
Ycome and said, Abide, abide,
And have no hast, but fast retourne, 1605
No reson is ye here sojourne,

For your untruth hath us discried;
Wo worth the time we us allied
With you, that are so sone untrew;
Alas the day that we you knew! 1610
Alas the time that ye were bore!
For all this lond by you is lore;
Accursed be he you hidir brought!
For all our joy is turnd to nought;
Your acquaintance we may complaine, 1615
Which is the cause of all our paine.
Alas! Madame, quod tho this knight,
And with that from his horse he light,
With colour pale and chekis lene,
Alas! what is this for to mene? 1620
What have ye said? why be ye wroth?
You to displese I would be loth:
Knowe ye not full well the promesse
Which I made have to your princeſſe,
Which to perfourme is mine intent, 1625
So mote I ſpede as I have ment,
And as I am her very trew,
Withoutin change or thoughtis new,
And al ſo fully her ſervand
As creäture or man livand 1630
May be to lady or princeſſe,
For ſhe mine heven and whole richeſſe
Is, and the lady of mine hele,
My worldis joy and all my wele.

What may this be, whence coms this spech? 1635
Telle me, Madame, I you besech,
For sith the first of my living
Was I so ferefull of nothing
As I am now to here you speke,
For doubt I fele mine hert to breke: 1640
Say on, Madame, tell me your will;
'The remnaunt is it gode or ill?
Alas (quod she) that ye were bore!
For for your love this land is lore;
'The quene is ded, and that is ruth, 1645
For sorow of your gret untruth:
Of two partes of the lusty rout
Of ladies that were there about,
That wont werin to talk and play,
Now are thei ded and clene away, 1650
And undir earth tane lodging newe;
Alas that er ye were untrew!
For when the time ye set was past
The quene toke counsaile sone in hast
What was to doe, and said Grete blame 1655
Your acquaintaunce cause would and shame,
And the ladies of ther avise
Prayid, for nede was to be wise,
In eschewing talis and songs,
That by them makin would ill tongs, 1660
And sey they were lightly conquest,
And prayid to a pore fest,

And foully had ther worship weved,
When so unwisely they conceived
Ther richè trefour and ther hele, 1665
Ther famous name and ther wele
To put in such an avinture,
Of which the selaundir evir dure
Was like, without helpe of appele,
Wherefore they nede had of counsele, 1670
For every wight of them would say,
Ther closid yle an opin way
Was become to evèry wight,
And well apprevyd by a knight,
Which he, alas! without payfaunce 1675
Had sone achevid th' obeisaunce :
All this was moved at counsell thrise,
And was concludid daily twise,
That bet was die withoutin blame
Than lose the riches of ther name ; 1680
Wherefore the deth'is acquaintaunce
They chese, and lest have ther plesaunce,
For doubt to livin as reprieved,
In that they you so sone beleved,
And made ther othes with one accord, 1685
That ete ne drinke, ne speke o word,
They shoud nevir, but er weping
Bide in a place without parting,
And use ther dayis in penaunce,
Without desire of allegaunce, 1690

Of which the truth anon con preve ;
For why ? the quene forthwith her leve
Toke at them all that were present,
Of her defaults fully repent,
And dyid there withoutin more, 1695
Thus are we lost for evirmore ;
What should I more hereof reherse ?
Comin within, come se her herse,
Where ye shall se the piteous sight
That er yet was shewin to knight, 1700
For ye shall sein ladies stond
Ech with a grete rod in her hond,
Yclad in black with visage white,
Redy ech othir for to smite ;
If any be that will not wepe, 1705
Or who that makes counte' nance to slepe,
They be so bet, that all so blew
They be as cloth that died is new,
Such is their parfite repentance,
And thus they kepe ther ordinance, 1710
And will do evir to the deth,
While them enduris any breth.

This knight tho in his armis twaine
This lady toke, and gan her faine,
Alas my birth ! wo worth my life ! 1715
And even with that he drew a knife,
And thorough gown, doublet, and shert,
He made the blode come from his hert,

And set him doune upon the grene,
And full repent closid his ene, 1720
And save that ones he drew his breth
Without more thus he toke his deth;
For whichè cause the lusty host,
Which in a battaile on the cost
At once for sorrow such a cry 1725
Gan rere thorow the company,
That to the heven herd was the fowne,
And undir th' erth als fer adowne,
That wildè bestis for the fere
So sodainly afrayid were, 1730
That for the doubt while they might dure
They ran, as of their lives unsure
From the wodis unto the plaine,
And from valleys the high mountaine
They fought, and ran as bestis blind 1735
That clene forgottin had ther kind.
This wo not cefed, to counsaile went
These lords, and for that lady sent,
And of avise what was to done
They her besought she say would sone. 1740
Weping full fore, all clad in blake,
This lady softly to them spake,
And said, My Lordis, by my trouth
This mischefe it is of your flouth,
And if ye had that judge would right 1745
A prince that were a very knight,

Ye that ben of astate echone
Die for his fault should one and one;
And if he hold had the promesse,
And done that longs to gentilnesse, 1730
And fulfilled the princes behest,
This hastie farme had ben a fest,
And now is unrecoverable,
And us a flaundir aye durable,
Wherefore I say, as of counsaile 1735
In me is none that may availe,
But if ye list for remembraunce
Purvey and make such ordinaunce
That the quene whiche that was so meke,
With all her women dede or seke, 1760
Might in your land a chappill have,
With some remembraunce of her grave,
Shewing her end with the pity
In some notable old city,
And nigh unto an highè way, 1765
Where every wight might for her pray,
And for all hers that have ben trew:
And even with that she changid hew,
And twise wishid aftir the deth,
And sight, and thus passid her breth. 1770
Then said the lordis of the host,
And so concludid lest and most,
That they would in housis of thacke
Ther livis lede, and were but blacke,

And forfake all ther plesaunces, 1775
And turne all joy to penaunces,
And bere the ded prince to the barge,
And namid them should have the charge;
And to the herse where lay the quene
The remnaunt went, and doune on knene, 1780
Holding ther honds, on high con crie,
Mercy, mercy! evèrich thrie,
And cursed the time that evir slouth
Should have soche mastirdome of trouth,
And to the barge a longè mile 1785
They bare her forth, and in a while
Allè the ladies one and one
By companies were brought echone,
And past the se and toke the land,
And in new herfis on a sand, 1790
Put and brought werin all anon
Unto a city closed with stone,
Where it yhad ben usid aye
The kingis of the land to lay,
Aftir they raigned in honours, 1795
And writ was which were conquerours,
In an abbey of nunnis blake,
Which accustomid were to wake,
And of usage rise ech a night
To pray for every livis wight: 1800
And so befell, as is the guise,
Ordeint and said was the servise

Of the prince and eke of the quene
So devoutly as might yben,
And aftir that about the herfes 1805
Full many orisons and verses
Withouthin note full softly
Said were, and that full hertily,
That all the night till it was day
The peple in the church con pray 1810
Unto the holy Trinitie
Of those soules to have pitie.

And when the night ypast and ronnc
Was, and the newè day begonne,
The yong morow with rayis red, 1815
Which from the sonne oer all con spred,
Atempirid clere was and faire,
And made a tyme of wholsome aire,
Befell a wondir case and strange
Among the peple, and gan change 1820
Sone the word and evèry wo
Unto a joy, and some to two;
A bird all fedrid blew and grene,
With bright rayis like gold betwene,
As small thred ovir every joynt, 1825
All full of colour strange and coint,
Uncouth, and wondirfull to sight,
Upon the quen'is herse con light,
And song full low and softly
Thre songis in her harmony, 1830

Unlettid of evèry wight,
Till at the last an agid knight,
Which semid a man in grete thought,
Like as he set all thing at nought,
With visage and ein all forwept, 1835
And pale, as a man long unslept,
By the herfis as he yfode
With hasty hondling of his hode
Unto a prince that by him past
Ymade the bridde somwhat agast, 1840
Wherefore she rose and left her song,
And departid from us among,
And spred her wingis for to passe
By the place where he entrid was,
And in his hast, shortly to tell, 1845
Him hurt, that backward downe he fell
From a window richly ypeint
With lives of many divers feint,
And bet his wingis and bled fast,
And of the hurt thus died and past, 1850
And lay there well an hour and more,
Till at the last of briddes a score
Come and assemblid at the place
Where the window ybrokin was,
And made swiche wamentacioun 1855
That pity was to here the soun,
And the warblis of ther throtis
And the complaint of ther notis,

Which from joy clene ywas reverfed;
And of them one the glas sone perfed, 186b
And in his boke of colours nine
An herbe he brought flourelesse, all grene,
All full of small levis and plaine,
Swart, and long with many a vaine,
And where his fellow lay this dede 186c
This herbe he down laid by his hede,
And dressid it full softly,
And hong his hed and stode thereby,
Which herb in lesse than half an houre
Can oer all knit, and astir floure 187a
Full out, and wexin ripe the fede,
And right as one anothir fede
Would, in his beke he toke the graine,
And in his fellowes beke certaine
It put, and thus within the third 187b
Up stode and pruned him the bird
Which ded had be in all our sight,
And both togethir forth ther flight
Toke, singin from us, and ther leve
Was none disturb 'hem would ne greve. 188a
And when they partid were and gone
Th' abbess the fedis sone echone
Gathrid had, and in her hand
The herbe she toke, well avisaund
The lese, the fede, the stalke, the floure, 188b
And said it had a gode favour,

And was no common herb to find,
 And well approved of uncouth kind,
 And than othir more vertuouse;
 Who so have it might for to use 1890
 In his nede flowre, or lese, or graine,
 Of ther hele might ybe certaine;
 And laid it downe upon the herse
 Where lay the quene, and gan reherse
 Echone to' othir that they had sene; 1895
 And taling thus the fede wex grene,
 And on the drie herse gan to spring,
 Which me thought was a wondrous thing,
 And astir that floure and new fede,
 Of which the peple all toke hede, 1900
 And said it was some grete miracle,
 Or medicine fine more than triacle,
 And were well done there to assay
 If it might ese in any way
 The corsis, which with torchè light 1905
 They wakid had there all that night:
 Sone did the lordis there consent,
 And all the peple' thereto content
 With, ese words and litil fare,
 And made the quen'is visage bare, 1910
 Which shewid was to all about,
 Wherefore in swone fell whole the rout,
 And were so sory most and lest
 That long of weping they not cest,

For of ther lord the remembraunce 1913
 Unto them was such displeaunce
 That for to live they called a paine,
 So were they very true and plaine.
 And after this the gode abbesse
 Of the graine gan to chese and dresse 1920
 Thre, with her fingirs clene and smale,
 And in the quen's mouth by tale
 One aftir othir esily
 She put 'hem and full conningly,
 Which shewid sonè such vertue 1925
 That previd was the medi'cine true,
 For with a smiling countinaunce
 The quene uprofe, and of usaunce,
 As she was wont to every wight,
 She made gode chere, for whichè sight 1930
The peple kneeling on the stones
Thought they in heven were soule and bones ;
 And to the prince where he ylay
 They went to make the same assay,
 And when the quene it undirfode, 1935
 And how the medicine was gode,
 She prayid she might have the graines
 To relevin him from the paines
 Which she and he had both endured,
 And to him went and so him cured, 1940
 That streight within a litil space
 Lusty and fresh on live he was,

And in gode hele, and whole of spech,
 And lough, and said, Gramercy, lech!
 For which the joy throughout the town 1945
 So gret was that the bellis sown
 Afraied the peple a journey
 About the citie every way,
 And come and askid cause and why
 They rongin were so statily? 1950
 And astir that the quene, th' abbesse,
 Made diligence or they would cesse,
 Such that of ladies sone a rout
 Sewing the quene was all about,
 And called by name echone and told, 1955
 Was none forgettin young ne old;
 There mightin men se joyis new
 When the medicine fine and trew
 Thus restorid had every wight,
 So well the quenè as the knight, 1960
 Unto full perfit joy and hele,
 That fleting they were in such wele
 As folke that wouldin in no wise
 Desire more parfit paradise.
 And thus when passed was the sorow, 1965
 With mikil joye sone on the morow
 The king, the quene, and every lord,
 With all the ladies, by' one accord
 Helde a generall assembly:
 Gret cry was made through the country, 1970

The which after as ther intent
Was turnid to a parliament,
Where was ordainid and avised
Every thing and wel devised
That plesin might to most and lest, 1975
And there concludid was the fest
Within the yle for to behold
With full consent of young and old,
All in the same wise as before, 1980
As thing should be withoutin more,
And thei shippid and thithur went,
And into straunge relmis sent,
To kingis, queenes, and duchesies,
To divers princes and princeesses,
Of ther linage, and can them pray 1985
That it might like them at that day
Of mariage, for ther disport,
Come se the yle and them disport,
Where should be joustis and turnaies,
And armis done in othir waies, 1990
Signifying oer all the day
After Aprilis within May,
And was avised that ladies tweine,
Of gode estate and well beseine,
With certaine knightis and squiers, 1995
And of the quen's officers,
In mannir of an embassade,
With certain lettirs closed and made,

Should take the barge and depart,
And seke my lady every part 2000
Till they her found for any thing
Both chargid have the quene and king,
And as ther lady and maistres
Her to beseke of gentilnes
At the day there for to yben, 2005
And oft her recommaund the quene,
And prayis for all loves to hast,
For but she come all woll be wast,
And the fest but a businesse
Withoutin joy or lustinesse, 2010
And toke them tokins, and gode spede
Praid God send 'hem astir ther nede.
Forth went the ladies and the knights,
And were out fourtene daies and nights,
And brought my lady in ther barge, 2015
And had well sped and done ther charge;
Whereof the quene so herti'ly glad
Was, that in soth such joy she had
When that the ship approchid lond
That she my lady on the fond 2020
Met, and in armis so constraine,
That wondir was behold them twaine,
Which to my dome during twelve houres
Neithir for hete ne watry shoures
Departid not no company 2025
Saving themselfe, but none them by,

But gave them layfour at ther ese
To reherfin joy and difese
Aftir the plesure and couragie
Of ther young and tendir agis; 2030
And aftir with many a knight
Brought thei were where as for that night
They partid not, for to plesaunce
Content was hert and countinaunce
Both of the quene and my maistresse; 2035
This was that night ther businesse;
And on the morow with huge rowt
This prince of lordis him about
Come, and unto my lady said,
Of her comming glad and well paid 2040
He was, and full right conningly
Her thankid and full hertily,
And lough and smiled, and said, Ywis
That was in doubt in safety is;
And commaundid do diligence, 2045
And spare for neithir gold ne spence,
But make redy, for on the morow
Yweddid, with Saint John to borow,
He would ybe withoutin more,
And let them wite this lese and more. 2050
The morow come, and the service
Of mariage in such a wise
Ysaid was, that with more honour
Was nevir prince ne conquerour

Ywedde, ne with such company
Of gentilnesse in chivalry,
Ne of ladies so gretè routs,
Ne so beseen as all abouts
They werin there, I certifie
You on my life, withoutin lie. 2055 2060

And the fest hold was in tentis,
As to tell you mine entent is,
In a rome in a largè plaine,
Undir a wode in a champaine,
Betwixt a rivir and a well, 2065
Where nevir had abbay ne fell
Yben, ne kirke, house, ne village,
In time of any man's age,
And durid thre moniths the fest
In one estate, and nevir cest 2070
From erly rising of the sonne
Till the day spent was and yronne
In justing, dauncing, lustinesse,
And all that fowned to gentilnesse.

And as me thought the second morow, 2075
Whan endid was all oldè forow,
And in surety evèry wight
Had with his lady slept a night,
The prince, the quene, and all the rest,
Unto my lady made request, 2080
And her besought oftin and praied
To mewardes to be well apaied,

And confidir mine oldè trouth,
And on my painis havin routh,
And me accept to her servise 2085
In such formè and in such wise
That we both mightin be as one;
Thus praied the quene and everichone;
And for there shoud ne be no nay
They stintin justing all a day 2090
To pray my lady, and requere
To be content and out of fere,
And with gode hert make frendly chere,
And said it was a happy yere;
At which she smiled, and said, Ywis 2095
I trow well he my servaunt is,
And would my welfare, as I trist,
So would I his, and would he wist
How and I knewè that his trouth
Continue would withoutin slouth, 2100
And be such as ye here report,
Restraining both courage and sport,
I couth consent at your request
To be ynamid of your fest,
And doin astir your usaunce 2105
In obeying of your plesaunce:
At your request this I consent,
To plesin you in your entent,
And eke the foveraine above,
Commandid hath me for to love, 2110

And before othir him prefer,
Against which prince may be no wer,
For his powir ovir all raigneth,
That othir would for nought him paineth;
And sith his will and yours is one 2115
Contrary in me shall be none:
Tho (as me thoughtin) the promise
Of marriage before the mese
Desirid was of every wight
To be madin the samè night, 2120
To put away all manir doubts
Of every wight thereabouts;
And so was do: and on the morow,
When every thought and every sorrow
Dislodgid was out of mine hert, 2125
With every wo and every smert,
Unto a tent prince and princes
Me thought brought me and my maistres,
And said we werin at full age
There to conclude our marriage, 2130
With ladies, knightis, and squiers,
And a gret host of ministers,
With instruments and sounes diverse,
That long werin here to reherse;
Which tent was church parochiall, 2135
Ordaint was in especiall
For the fest and for the sacre,
Where archbishop and archdiacre

Yfongin full out the servise
Aftir the custome and the guise 2140
And holie church'is ordinaunce :
And aftir that to dine and daunce
Brought were we, and to divers plaies,
And for our spedè ech wight praies,
And merry was both most and lest, 2145
And said amendid was the fest,
And were right glad lady and lord
Of the marriage and th' accord,
And wishid us hert'is plesauce,
In joy and hele continuaunce, 2150
And to the minstrils made request
That in encrefing of the fest
They wouldin touchin ther cordis,
And with some new joyeux accordis
Ymove the peple to gladnesse, 2155
And praidin of all gentilnesse
Ech to painin them for the day
To shew his cunning and his play :
Tho began fownis mervelous,
Entunid with accords joyous, 2160
Round about and in all the tents,
With thousandis of instruments,
That every wight to daunce them pained;
To be merry was none that fayned;
Which fowne me troublid in my slepe, 2165
That fro my bed anone I lepe,

Wening to have be at the fest,
But when I woke all was yfest,
For there n'as lady ne cature,
Save on the wals old portraiture 2170
Of horsmen, haukis, and houndis,
And hurt dere all full of woundis,
Some like bittin, some hurt with shot,
And as my Dreme semed that was not.
And when I wake and knew the trouth, 2175
And ye had seen, of very routh
I trow ye would have wept a weke,
For nevir man yet halfe so seke
Iwent escapid with the life,
And was for fault that sword ne knife 2180
I find ne might my life t'abridge,
Ne thing that kervid ne had edge,
Wherewith I might my wofull pains
Have voidid with bloding of vains.
Lo, here my blisse! lo, here my paine! 2185
Which to my lady' I do complaine,
And grace and mercy her requere
To end my wo and busie fere,
And me accept to her servise,
And to her service in such wise, 2190
That of my Dremè the substaunce
Might turnin once to cognisaunce,
And cognisaunce to very preve,
By full consent and by gode leve;

Or els withoutin more I pray 2195
 That this same night or it be day
 I mote unto my Dreame retourne,
 And sleping so forthe aie sojourne
 Aboutin the yle of plesaunce
 Undir my ladie's obeisaunce, 2200
 In her service, and in such wise
 As it plesse her may to devise,
 And grace onis to be accept
 Like as I dremid when I slept,
 And dure a thousand yere and ten 2205
 In her gode will. Amen, Amen!

L'ENVOY.

Fairist of faire, and godelyist on live!
 All my secre to you I plaine and thrive,
 Requiring grace, and of my fore complaint
 To be be helid or martired as a saint, 2210
 For by my trowth I swere, and by this boke,
 Ye may both hele and fle me with a loke.

Go forth, mine ownè true hert innocent,
 And with humbleness do thine observaunce,
 And to thy lady on thy knees present 2215
 Thy service new, and think how grete plesaunce
 It is to live undir the obeisaunce
 Of her which that may with her lokis soft
 Give the the blisse that thou desirist oft,

Be diligent, awake, obey, and drede, 2220
 And be not to wild of thy countinaunce,
 But meke and glad, and thy nature yfede
 To do ech thing that may her doe plesauce;
 When thou shalt slepe have aie in remembraunce
 Th' image of her which may with lokis soft 2225
 Give the the blisse that thou desirist oft.

And if so be that thou her namè find
 Writtin in boken, or ellis upon wall,
 Loke that thou do, as servaunt true and kind,
 Thine obeisaunce as she were therewithall: 2230
 Fayning in love is breeding of a fall
 From the grace of her whose lokis soft
 May give the blisse that thou desirist oft.

Ye which that this ballade yredin shall
 I pray you that you kepe you fro the fall. 2235

THE DREME OF CHAUCER.

I Have grete wonder, by this light,
 Howe that I lyve, for daye ne night
 I maye not slepin welny nought;
 I have so many' an ydle thought,
 Purely for the defaute of slepe, 5
 That by my trowth I take no kepe

The Dreme of Chaucer] By the perion of a mourning knight
 sitting under an oak is meant John of Gaunt, Duke of Lanca-
 ster, greatly lamenting the death of one whom he entirely lo-
 ved, supposed to be Blanch the Dutcheß. *Urry.*

Of nothing howe it cometh or gothe,
Ne me n'ys nothing lese nor lothe;

Al is ilichè gode to me

Joye or sorowe where so it be,

10

For I have felinge in nothing,

But as it were a masid thing

Al day in pointe to fall adoun,

For sorowful ymaginacioun

Is alway wholly in my minde.

15

And well ye wote that againste kinde

It were to livin in this wise,

For Nature ne wolde not suffise

Unto none erthy creàture

Not longè tymè to endure

20

Withoutin slepe and be in sorowe,

And I ne may ne night ne morowe

Slepin, and this melancolye

And drede I havin for to die;

Defaute of slepe and heviness

25

Hath slaine my spirite of quicknesse,

That I have lost al lustihed;

Soche fantasies ben in mine hed

So I n'ot what is best to do:

But men might askin me whi so

30

I may not slepe, and what me is?

But nathèles who askith thys

Lefeth his askyng trewily;

My selvin can not tellin why

The sothe, but trewly, as I gesse,
 I holde it be a sikèness 35

That I have suffrid this eyght yere,
 And yet my bote is ner the nere,
 For there is phisicien but one
 That may me hele; but that is done;
 Passin we ovir until este; 40

That wil not be mote nedes be leste:
 Our first matir is gode to kepe.

So whan sawe I might not slepe
 Til now of late this othir night 45
 Upon my bedde I fate upright,
 And bade one rechin me a boke,
 A romauncè, and it me toke
 To rede, and drive the night away;
 For why? me thought it betir play 50
 Than play either at chesse or tables.

And in this boke were writtin fables
 That clerkis had in oldè time
 And othir poetes put in rhyme
 To rede, and for to be in minde, 55
 While men lovid the lawe of kinde:

This boke ne spake but of soche thinges
 Of quenis livis and of kinges,
 And many othir thingis smale;
 Amonge al this I fonde a tale 60

Whiche that me thought a wondir thing.

This was the tale: There was a king

H ij

That hight Ceix, and had a wife
The best that mightin berin lyfe,
And this quenè hight Alcyone; 65
So it befil thereaftir sone
This king wol wendin ovir se :
To tellin shortly, whan that he
Was in the se thus in this wise
Soche a tempest began to ryse 70
That brake ther maste and made it ⁶sal,
And clesste ther ship and dreint 'hem al,
That nevir was founde, as it telles,
Ne borde ne man, ne nothing elles:
Right thus this king ylosse his life. 75

Nowe for to spekin of his wife.
This ladie that was lefte at home
Hath wondir that the kinge ne come
Home, for it was a longè terme;
Anon her herte began to yerne, 80
And for that her thought evirmo
It was not wele, her thoughtin so,
She longid so aftir the king,
That certes it were a pitous thing
To tell her hertely sorowful lyfe 85
Whiche that she had this noble wife,
For him she lovid aldirbest;
Anon she sent both est and west
To seke him, but they founde him nought.
Alas (quod she) that I was wrought! 90

And where my lorde my love he ded
 Certis I n'yl nevir ete bred,
 I make a vowe to my God here,
 But I mowe of my lordè here.

Soche sorowe this lady to' her toke
 That trewly I, that made this boke,
 Yhad soche pite and soche routhe
 To rede her sorowe, that by my trouthe
 I farid the worfe al the morowe
 Aftir to thinkin on her sorowe.

95

100

So whan that she coude here no worde
 That no man myghtin finde her lorde
 Ful ofte she fwouned, and faide Alas!
 For sorow ful nigh wode she was,
 Ne she ne coude no rede but one,
 But downe on knees she fate anone
 And wept, that pite was to here.

105

A! mercy, my swete lady dere!
 Quod she to Juno, her goddesse,
 Helpith me out of this distresse,
 And yeve me grace my lorde to se
 Sone, or to wete where so he be,
 Or howe he fareth, or in what wise,
 And I shal make you sacrifice,
 And wholly yours become I shal,
 With gode wil, body, herte, and al;
 And but thou wolte this, lady swete!
 Sendin me grace to slepe, and mete

110

115

In my slepe some certaine swevin
Where through that I may knowe evin 120
Whethir my lorde be quicke or ded.

With that worde she hinge down the hed,
And fel in a swoone as colde as stone;
Her women caught her up anone,
And broughtin her in bed al naked, 125
And she forwepid and forwaked
Was wery, and thus the ded slepe
Yfel on her or she toke kepe,
Through Juno that had herde her bone,
That madin her to slepè sone; 130
For as she praide right so was don
In dede, for Juno right anon
Ycallid thus her messangere
To do' her eraunde, and he come nere:
Whan he was come she bad him thus; 135

Go bet (quod Juno) to Morpheus,
Thou knowest him wel, the god of Slepe;
Nowe understande wel, and take kepe,
Say thus on my behalfe, that he
Go fast into the gretè se, 140
And bid him that on allè thinge
He take up Ceix body the kinge,
That lieth ful pale and nothinge rody;
Byd him crepin into the body,
And do it gone to Alcyone 145
The quene there she lyith alone,

And shewe her shortely' it is no nay
Howe it was dreint this othir day,
And do the body speke right so
Right as it was wonnid to do 150
The whilis that it was alyve :
Goith nowe fast, and hye the blive.

This messanger toke leve and went
Upon his way, and nevre' he stente
Tyl he came to the darke valey 155
That stante betwixtin rockis twey,
There nevir yet grewe corne ne gras,
Ne tre, ne nothing that ought was,
Ne best ne man, ne nothing elles,
Save that there werin a fewe welles 160
Came renning fro the clyffes adowne
That made a dedly flepinge sowne,
And rennin downe right by a cave
That was undir a rocke ygrave
Amyd the valey wondir depe 165
There as these goddis lay a flepe,
Morpheus and Eclympasteire,
That was the god of Slep'is heire,
That slepte and did none othir werke.

This cave ywas also as derke 170
As hel pitte; ovir all aboute
They had gode leysir for to route
To vye who mightin slepè best;
Some hinge ther chinne upon ther brest,

And slepte upright ther hed yhed, 175
And some lay nakid in ther bed,
And sleptin whiles their dayis last.

This messaunger come renning fast,
And cried, Ho, ho! awake anone!
It was for naught; there herde him none: 180
Awake, (quod he) who lyith there?
And blewe his horne right in ther ere,
And cried Awakith! wondir hie.

This god of Slepe with his one eye
Cast up, and asked Who clepith there? 185
It am I, (quod this messangere)
Juno bade that thou shouldist gone,
And toldin him what he should done
As I have tolde you here before,
It is no nede reherse it more, 190
And wente his way whan he had saide.
Anone this god of Slepe abraide
Out of his slepe and gan to go,
And did as he had bidde him do;
He toke up the ded body sone, 195
And bare it forthe to Alcyone
His wife, the quene, there as she lay,
Right even a quartir before day,
And stode right at her bedd'is fete,
And callid her right as she hete 200
By name, and said; My swetè wife!
Awake, let be your sorowful lyfe,

For in your sorow there lyth no rede,
For certes, swete love! I am but dede;
Ye shall me ner on lyve yse: 205
But, gode swete herte! I praye that ye
Bury my body; soche a tide
Ye mowe it finde the se beside:
And farewel swete! my world's blisse!
I pray that God your sorowe lyffe: 210
To lytel while our blisse ylasteth.

With that her eyin up she casteth,
And sawe naught. Alas! for sorowe
She died within the thirde morowe.

But what she said more in that swowe 215
I may nat tellin you as now;
It were to longè for to dwel:
My first matere I wil you tel
Wherfore I have ytolde this thinge
Of Alcyone and Ceix the kinge. 220

For thus moche dare I sayin well,
I had be dolvin everidel,
And ded, right through defaute of slepe,
Yf I ne had red and take kepe
Of this ilke talè next before, 225
And I wil tellin you wherfore,
For I ne might for bote ne bale
Slepin or I had redde this tale
Of this ydreinte Ceix the kinge,
And of the goddis of Slepinge. 230

Whan I had red this talè wele,
And ovrloked it everidele,
Me thought wondir if it were so,
For I had ner herde speke or tho
Of no goddis that couldin make 235
Men for to slepe ne for to wake,
And I ne knewe ner God but one,
And in my game I said anone,
(And yet me lyst right il to pley) c
Rathir than that I shuldin dey 240
Thorough defaute of slepinge thus
I woldin gyve thilke Morpheus,
Or that goddesie hight Dame Juno,
Or some wight els, I ne rought who,
To make me slepe and have some rest 245
I will give him the althir best
Yeste that er he abode his lyve,
And hereonwarde right now as blyve,
If he woll make me slepe a lite,
Of downe of purè dovis white 250
I wol yeve him a fethir bed
Rayid with gold, and right wel cled
In fine blacke sattin doutremere,
And many' a pilowe', and every bere c
Of clothe of Raines to slepe on softe, 255
Him thare not nede to turnin ofte;
And I wol yeve him al that falles
To his chambre and to his halles,

I wol do painte 'hem with pure golde,
And tapite 'hem ful many folde ; 260
Of one sute this shal he yhave,
If that I wiste where were his cave,
If he can make me slepin sone,
As did the goddesse Quene Alcyone;
And thus this ylke god Morpheus 265
May winnin of me mo fees thus
Than er he wanne; and to Juno
'That 'is his goddesse I shall so do,
I trowe that she shal holde her paide.

I had unneth that worde isaide, 270
Right thus as I have toldin you,
Than sodeinly, I ne wiste howe,
Soche a luste anone me ytoke
To slepe, that right upon my boke
I fel aslepe, and therwith even 275
Me mette so inly soche a sweven,
So wondirfull, that nevir yet
I trowe no man ne had the wit
To connin wel my swevin rede,

No, nought Joseph withoutin drede 280
Of Egypt, he which that rad so
The king'is metinge Pharaa,
No more than coude the leste of us,
Ne nat fearfly Macrobeus,
He that wrote al the' avision 285
Whiche that he met Kinge Scipion,

The noble man, the Affrican,
 Soche mervailis fortunid than
 I trowe, arede my dremis even ;
 Lo ! thus it was, this was my sweven : 290

Me thoughtin thus, that it was Maye,
 And in the dawning there I lay
 Me met thus in my bed al naked,
 And lokid forthe, for I was waked
 With smale foulis a gret hepe, 295

That had afraied me' out of my flepe
 Through noise and swetnesse of ther songe;
 And as me met they fate amonge
 Upon my chambre rose without,
 Upon the tyles ovre' al about, 300
 And evèriche songe in his wise

The moſte ſwete and ſolempne ſerviſe
 By note that evir man I trowe
 Had herde, for ſome of 'hem ſonge lowe,
 Some high, and al of one accorde : 305

To tellin ſhortly, at o worde,
 Was nevir herde ſo ſwete a ſteven,
 But it had be a thinge of heaven,
 So merie' a ſowne, ſo ſwete entunes,
 That certis for the towne of Tewnes 310
 I n'olde but I had herde 'hem ſinge,
 For al my chambre gan to ringe
 Through ſinging of ther harmony,
 For inſtrument nor melody

Was no where herde yet halfe so swete, 315
Nor of acordè halfe so mete,
For there was none of 'hem that fained
To singe, for eche of 'hem him pained
To finde out many crafty notes,
They ne ysparid nat ther throtes; 320
And, soth to saine, my chambre was
Ful wel depaintid, and with glas
Were al the windowes wel yglased
Ful clere, and nat an hole ycrased,
That to beholde it was grete joy, 325
For wholly al the story' of Troy
Was in the glaissinge ywrought thus,
Of Hector and Kinge Priamus,
Achilles and Kinge Lamedon,
And eke Medea and Jason, 330
Of Paris, Heleine and Lavine;
And al the walles with colours fine
Were paintid, bothè texte and glose,
And al The Romaunte of the Rose:
My wyndowes werin shet ech one, 335
And through the glasse the sunne yshone
Upon, my bed with bright bemis,
With many glad gildy strems;
And eke the welkin was so faire,
Blewe, bright, and clere, ywas the ayre, 340
And ful attempre', in sothe it was,
For neithir colde ne hote it n'as,

Ne' in al the welkin was no clowde.

And as I lay thus, wondir lowde
Me thought I herde an huntir blowe 345
T' assay his gret horne, and to knowe
Whethre' it was clere or horse of fowne;

And I herde goynge up and downe
Men, horfis, houndes, and othir thinge,
And al men spekin of huntinge, 350
How they wolde fle the harte with strenght,
And how the harte had upon length
So moche enbofed, I n'ot nowe what.

Anon right whan I herdin that,
How that they wolde on huntinge gone, 355
I was right glad, and up anone
I toke my horse, and forth I wente
Out of chambre; I nevir stente
Tyl I come to the felde without,
There ovirtoke I a grete rout 360
Of huntirs and of foresters,
And many relaies and limers,
That hied 'hem to the forest fast,
And I with 'hem: so at the last
I askid one lad, a lymere, 365
Say, felowe, who shal huntin here?
(Quod I) and he answered ayen,
Sir, the Emperour Ostonyen,
(Quod he) and he is here faste by.

A goddes halfe, in gode tyme, (quod I) 370

Than go we fast, and gan to ride:
 Whan we come to the forest side
 Evèry man ydyd right sone
 As unto huntinge fel to done.

The maistrir hunte anone fote hote 375

With his clere horne yblewe thremote
 At the uncouplinge of his houndis.
 Within a while the harte founde is:

I halowed and rêthasid fast

A longe time: and so at the last 380

This harte rousid and stale away
 Fro al the houndes a privy way.

The houndes had òvirshot him all,
 And were on a defaulte yfal,

Therwith the hont full wondir fast 385

Yblewe a forloyn at the laste:

I was go walkid fro my tre,

And as I went there came by me

A whelpe, that fawned me as I stode,

That had folowed and coude no gode; 390

It came and crepte to me as lowe,

Right as it had me wele yknowe,

Helde down his hed and joyned his eres,

And laide al smothe adowne his heres.

I wolde have caught it up anone; 395

It fled, and was fro me ygone:

As I folowed and it forth went,

Downe by a floury grene it went

Ful thick of grasse ful fofte and fwete,
With flouris fele fare undir fete, 400
And lytil used, it semid thus,
For bothe Flora and Zephyrus,
They two that makin flouris growe,
Had made ther dwelling there I trowe,
For it was on for to beholde 405
As though the erthe there envye wolde
To be gayir than is the heven,
To havin mo flouris foche seven
As in the welkin fterris be,
It had forget the povirte 410
Of Wintir, through his coldè morowes
That made it fuffre, and his sorowes
Al was forieten, and that was sene,
For all the wode was woxin grene,
Swetneffe of dewe had made it waxe. 415

It is no nede eke for to axe
Where there were many grene greves,
Or thicke of trees so ful of leves,
And every tree fode by him felve
Fro othir wel ten fote or twelwe, 420
So grete trees and so huge of ftrength,
Of fourty' or fifthy fadome length,
All clene withoutin bowe or flicke,
With croppis brode, and eke as thicke,
They werin not an ynche afonder, 425
That it was fhadde ovir all under ;

And many' an hart and many' an hinde
Was both before me and behinde,
Of fawnis, fowirs, buckis, does,
Was ful the wodde, and many roes, 430
And many squirrilis, that sete
Ful high upon the trees and etc,
And in ther manir madin feltes :
Shortly, it was so ful of bestes
That though Aȝus the noble countour 435
Yfate to rekin in his countour,
And rekin with his figures ten,
For by tho figures newe al ken
If they be crafty, reken and nombre,
And tel of every thing the nombre, 440
Yet shulde he faile to rekin even
The wonders me met in my sweven :
But forthe I romed right wondir faste
Downe through the wode; so at the laste
I was ware of a man in blacke, 445
That fate, and had yturned his backe
Unto an ooke and hugè tre;
Lord ! tho thought I, who may that be ?
What eylith him to sittin here ?
And anon right I went him nere; 450
Than founde I fitte evin upright
A wondir faire welfaring knight,
By the manir me thoughtin so
Of gode mokil, right yonge therto,

Of the' age of foure-and-twenty yere, 455
Upon his berde but litil here,
And he was clothid al in blacke;
I stalkid even unto his backe;
And there I stode as stil as ought,
The sothe to say he saw me nought; 460
For why? he hinge his hed adowne,
And with a dedly sorowful sowne
He made of rime ten verses or twelve
Of a complainte unto himselfe,
The moste pite and the most routhe 465
That evir I herde, for by trouthe
It was grete wondir that Nature
Might suffre any creäture
To have soche sorow' and he not ded;
Ful pitous pale, and nothing red, 470
He said a lay, a manir songe,
Withoutin note, withoutin songe,
And was this, for ful wel I can
Reherse it; right thus it began:
I have of sorowe so grete wone, 475
That joye ne get I nevir none,
Nowe that I se my lady bright,
Which I have loved with all my might,
Is fro me ded, and is agone,
And thus in sorowe' leste me alone: 480
Alas! o Dethe! what eylith the
That thou n'oldist have takin me

Whan that thou toke my lady fwete?
 Of all godenes she had none mete,
 That was so faire, so freshe, so fre,
 So gode, that men may wel yse.

485

Whan he had made thus his complainte
 His sorowful hert gan fast fainte,
 And his spiritis wexin dede,
 The blode was fledde for purè drede
 Downe to his herte to maken him warme,
 For wel it feled the herte had harme,
 To wete eke why it was adradde,
 By kinde, and for to make it gladde,
 For it is membre principal
 Of the body, and that made al
 His hewe ychaunge, and wexin grene
 And pale for there no blode is sene
 Within no manir lymme of his.

490

495

Anon therwith, whan I sawe this,
 He farde thus yvil there he sete,
 I went and stode right at his sete,
 And grette him, but he spake right nought,
 But arguid with his owne thought,
 And in his witte disputid faste
 Bothe why and howe his lyfe might laste,
 Him thought his sorowes were so smerte,
 And lay so colde upon his herte.

500

505

So through his sorowe' and holy thought
 Made him that he ne herde me nought,

510

For he had welnye lost his minde,
Though Pan, that men clepe god of Kinde,
Were for his sorowes ner so wrothe.

But at the last, to faine right sothe,
He was ware of me howe I stode 515
Before him and did of my hode,
And had gret him as I best coude
Debonairly and nothing loude;
He said, I pray the be not wrothe,
I herde the not, to faine the sothe, 520
Ne I sawe the not, Sir, truely.

Ah, gode Sir! tho no force (quod I)
I am right sory' if I have ought
Distroublid you out of your thought;
Forieue me if I have myfletake. 525

Yes, the amendes is light to make,
(Quod he) for there lithè non therto;
There is nothing misfaide nor do.

Lo howe godely yspake this knight,
As it had be anothir wight, 530
And made it neithir tough ne queint!
And I sawe that, and gan me' aqueint
With him, and founde him so trefable,
Right wondir skylful and reso'nable,
As me thoughtin, for all his bale, 535
Anon right I gan finde a tale
To him, to loke where I might ought
Have more knowleging of his thought.

Sir, (quod I) this game is ydone,
I holde that this hart be ygone, 540
These huntis can him no where se.

I do no force therof, (quod he)
My thought is theron ner a dele.
By' our Lorde (quod I) I trowe you wele,
Right so me thinkith by your chere; 545
But, Sir, o thing wollin ye here?
Me thinketh in gret forowe' I you se,
But certis, Sir, and if that ye
Wolde aught discovir me your wo
I wolde, as wif God helpe me so, 550
Amende it if I can or may,
Ye mowin prove it by assay,
For by my trouthe, to make you whole
I wol do al my powir whole;
And telleth me of your sorowes smert, 555
Paraunter it may ese your herte,
That semeth ful fyke undir your side.

With that he loked on me aside,
As who saithe nay, that n'yl not be.

Graunt mercy, my gode frende! (quod he) 560
I thanke the that thou woldist so,
But it may ner the rather be do;
No man ne may my sorowe glade,
That maketh my hewe to fal and fade,
And hath myn understanding lorne, 565
That me is wo that I was borne;

May nought make my sorowis flyde,
Not all the rem'edies of Ovide,
Ne Orpheus, god of Melodie,
Ne Dædalus, with his playes flye, 570
Ne hele me may no physicien,
Nought Hippocrates ne Galen;
Me' is wo that I live houris twelve;
But whofo wol assaye him selve
Whether his hert can have pite 575
Of any sorowe let him se me,
I wretche, that dethe hath made al naked
Of al the blisse that er was maked,
I wrothe, the werste of allè wightes,
That hate my dayis and my nightes; 580
My lyfe, my lustis, be me lothe,
For allè fare and I be wrothe;
The pure deth is so ful my foe
That I wolde die it wil not foe,
For whan I folowe' it it wil flye, 585
I wold have him it n'il not me;
And this is paine withoutin rede,
Alway dyinge and be not dede,
That Sisyphus that lyeth in hel
Nay may not of more sorowe tel; 590
And who so wiste al, by my trouthe,
All my sorowe, but he hadde routhe
And pyte of my sorowes smerte
That man yhath a fendely herte,

For whoſo ſeeth me firſt on morowe 595

May ſayne that he hath met with Sorowe,

For I am Sorowe', and Sorowe' is I;

Alas! and I wyl tel the why,

My ſorowe' is tournid to playnyng,

And al my laughtir to weping, 600

My glad thoughtis to hevineſſe,

In travaile is myn ydleneſſe,

And eke my reſt, my wele is wo,

My gode is harme, and evirmo

In wrathe is tournid my playing, 605

And my delite in ſorowing,

Myn hele is turned into ſickenneſſe,

In drede is al my ſyckerneſſe,

To derke is turnid al my lyght,

My wytte is foly, my day night, 610

My love is hate, my ſlepe wakyng,

My mirth and mclis is faſting,

My countinaunce is nicete,

And al abawed where ſo I be,

My pece is pleding, and in werre, 615

Alas, howe might I fare in werre!

My boldeneſſe is turnid to ſhame,

For falſe Fortune hath played a game

At cheſſe with me, alas the while!

The traytereſſe falſe and ful of gyle, 620

That al behoteth and nothing halte,

She gothe upright and yet ſhe halte,

That baggith foule and lokith fayre,
The dispitous and debonaire,
That scornith many a creture; 625
An ydole of false purtraiture
Is she, for she wol sonè wryen;
She is the monstri's hed ywryen,
As filthe, ovir ystrowed with floures,
Her mostè worship, and her floures, 630
To lyen, for that is her nature,
Withoutin faith, lawe, or mesure,
She false is, and evir laughing
With one eye, and that othir weping,
That is brought up she set al downe; 635
I likin her to the scoriowne,
That is a false and flateryng best,
For with his hed he makith fest,
But al amynd his flatiringe
With his taile he wil sorely slynge, 640
And envenim, and so wil she;
She is the envious Charite,
That is aye false and semith wele,
So turnith she her false whele
About, for it is nothing stable, 645
Nowe by the fyre nowe at the table;
Ful many' one hath she thus yblent;
She is playe of enchauntement,
That semith one and is not so:
The false thefe what hath she do 650

Trowest thou? by' our Lorde I wil the say.

At chesse with me she gan to play;

With her false draughtis ful divers

She stale on me, and toke my fers;

And whan I sawe my fers away,

655

Alas! I couth no lengir play,

But sayid, Farewel swete! ywis,

And farewel al that er there is;

Therwith Fortune ysayid Cheke here,

And mate in the' myd poynt of the' checkere 660

With a paunè errant. Alas!

Ful craftyir to play she was

Than Athalus, that made the game

First of the chesse, so was his name;

But God wolde I had ones or twise

665

Iconde and knowe the jcoperdise

That coude the Greke Pythagores,

I shulde have plaide the bet at ches,

And kept my fers the bet therby;

And though wherto? for trewily

670

I holde that wishe not worthe a fre,

It had be ner the bet for me,

For Fortune can so many' a wyle

Ther be but fewe can her begile,

And eke she is the lasse to blame,

675

My selfe I wolde have do the same,

Before God, had i ben as she,

She ought the more excusid be;

For this I say yet more therto,
Had I be God, and might have do 680
My wyl, whan she my fers ycaught
I wolde have drawn the samè draught,
For al so wise God gyve me resse
I dare wel swere she toke the beste,
But throughe that draught I have ylorne 685
My blyffe, alas that I was berne!
For evirmore I trowe trewly,
For al my wil, my luste wholly
Is turne, but wote ye what to done?
By' our Lorde it is to dyin sone, 690
For nothings I ne leve it nought
But lyve and dye right in this thought;
'There n'ys planet in firmamente,
Ne' in ayre ne' in erthe none elemente,
'That they ne yeve me' a yeste echone 695
Of wepyng whan I am alone,
For whan that I advise me wele,
And bethinke me evèrydele
How that there lieth in rekininge
In my sorowis for nothings, 700
And howe there livith no gladnesse
May gladdin me of my distresse,
And howe I have losse suffisaunce,
And therto I have no plesaunce,
Than may I say I have right nought; 705
And whan al this falleth in my thought,

Alas! than am I ovrcome,
 For that is done this not to come:
 I have more sorowe than Tantale.

And whan I herde him tel this tale 710
 Thus pitoufly as I you tell,
 Unnethis myght I lengir dwell,
 It did myn herte so mochill wo.

A, gode Sir! (quod I) say nat so,
 Have some pite on your nature, 715
 That fourmid you to a creture;
 Remembrith you of Socrates,
 For he ne countith not thre fiores
 Of nought that Fortune coude ydo.

No, (quod he) I ne can not so. 720
 Why, gode Sir, yes parde, (quod I)
 Ne say not so, for truily
 Though ye had lost the ferfis twelve,
 And for sorowe murdrid your selve,
 Ye shulde be dampnid in this case, 725
 By as gode right as Medea was,
 That slough her childrin for Jafon,
 And Phyllis for Demophoon,
 That hing her self, so welaway!
 For he had brokin his terme day 730
 To come to her. Anothir rage
 Had Dido, the Quene of Carthage,
 That slough her self for Æneas
 Was false, for whiche a sole she was:

And Echo dyed for Narcissus 735
Ne wolde nat love her; and right thus
Hath many' an othir foly done,
And for Dalila died Sampson,
That sloughe him selfe with a pilere;
But there is no man alive here 740
Wolde for ther feris make this wo.

Why so? (quod he) it is not so,
Thou wotest ful lytil what thou meneest,
For I have losse more than thou wenest.
And howe may that ybe? (quod I) 745
Gode Sir, tellith me al wholly
In what wise, howe, why, and wherfore,
That ye have thus your blisse ylore.

Blithely, (quod he;) come, sit the down;
I tel the on condicioun 750
Thou shalte wholly with all thy wit
Do thyne entente to herkin it.

Yes, Sir. Than swere thy trouthe therto,
Gladly to holdin the hereto.
I shal right blithe, so God me save, 755
Wholly with all the witte I have
Here you as wel as er I can.

A Godde's halfe, (quod he) and began.

Sir, (quod he) sithins firste I couthe
Have any manir witte fro youthe, 760
Or kindly understandinge
To comprehende in any thinge

What love was in mine ownè wit,
 'Dredileffe I have evir yet
 Be tributary and yeve rente 765
 To Love wholly, with gode entente,
 And through plesaunce become his thral
 With gode wil, body, herte, and al;
 Al this I put in his servage
 As to my lorde, and dyd homage; 770
 And full devoutly' I praide hym tho
 He shulde beset myne hertè so
 That it plesaunce unto him were
 And worship to my lady dere.

And this was long and many' a yere 775
 (Er that min hert was set o where)
 That I dyd thus, and ne wist why,
 I trowe it came me kindly;
 Paraunter I was therto most able
 As a white wal or a table, 780
 For it' is redy to catche and take
 Al that men wollin therin make,
 Whethir men will portrey or painte,
 Be the werkis nevir so quainte.

And thilke tyme I farid right so, 785
 I was able to' have lernid tho,
 And to have conde as wel or better
 Parauntir eithir arte or lettir,
 But for love came first in my thought
 Therfore I ne forgate it nought; 790

I chees love to be my first crafte,
And therefore it is with me laste;
For why? I toke' it of so yonge age
That malice ne had my corage,
Not that time turnid to nothing 795
Thorough to mokil knowleging,
For that tyme Youth my maistresse
Governid me in ydilnesse,
For it was in my firstè youth,
And though ful litil gode I couthe, 800
For al my werkis were flitting
That time, and al my thought varying,
Al thinges were to me yliche gode,
That knewe I tho, but thus it stode:

It happed that I came on a day 805
In to a place there that I sey
Trewly the fairist companie
Of ladies that er man with eye
Had sene toghithers in o place;
Shal I clepe it happe eithir grace? 810
That brought me there? nought but Fortune,
That is to lyin ful comune,
The falsè traitresse perverse,
God wolde that I coulde clepe her werse,
For now she worchith me ful wo, 815
And I wol tel the sone why so.

Amonges these ladies thus echone,
The sothe to sayin, I sawe one

That ne was lyke none of the route,
For I dare swere, withoutin doute, 820
That as the sommer's sonnè bright
Is fairer, clerer, and hath more lyght,
Than any other planet in heven,
The monè or the sterris seven,
For al the worlde right so had she, 825
Surmountin 'hem al of beaute,
Of manir, and of comlynesse
Of stature, and wel set gladnesse,
Of godelyhede, and so wel besey,
Shortly, what shal I more ysey? 830
By God and by his holowes twelve
It was my swete right al her selve;
She had so stedfast countenaunce,
So noble porte and maintenaunce,
And Love, that wel yherde my bone, 835
Yhad espyid me thus sone
That she fill sonè in my thought;
As helpe me God so was I cought
So sodainly, that I ne toke
No maner counsaile but at her loke 840
And at min herte; for why? her eyen
So gladly I trowe myn herte seyne,
That purely tho min ownè thought
Said it were bet serve her for nought
Than with anothir to be wele; 845
And it was sothe, for every dele

I wil anone right tel the why :

I sawe her daunce so comily,
Carol and sing so swetily,
And laugh and play so womanly, 850
And lokin so debonairly,
So godely speke and so frendely,
That certes I trowe that evirmore
N'as sene so blisful a trefore ;
For evëry here on her hed, 855
The sothe to say, it was not red,
Ne neithir yelowë ne browne it n'as,
Me thought mosse like to golde it was ;
And whiche eyin my lady had,
Debonaire, gode, and glad, and sad, 860
Simple', of gode mokil, not to wide ;
Therto her loke n'as not aside,
Ne ovirthwart, but beset so wele
It drewe and toke up everydele
Al whiche that on her gan beholde ; 865
Her eyin semed anone she wolde
Have mercy, Folly wendin so,
But it was ner the rathir do ;
It n'as no counterfetid thinge,
It was her ownë pure loking, 870
Whiche that the goddesse Dame Nature
Had made 'hem opin by mesure
And close, for were she ner so glad
Her loking was not folishe sprad

Ne wildily though that she plaide,
But er me thought her eyin saide
By God my wrathe is al forieue;
Therwith her liste so well to live
That Dulneffe was of her adrad;
She n'as to sobre ne to glad;
In allè thingis more mesure
Ne had nevir I trowe cature;
But many' one 'with her loke she herte,
And that fate her full lyte at herte,
For she knewe nothinge of ther thought;
But wher she knewe or knewe it nought
Algate she ne' rought of 'hem a stre;
To get her love no nere n'as he
That woned at home than he in Inde;
The formist was alway behinde;
But gode folke ovir al othir
She loved as man may his brothir,
Of whiche love she was wondir large
In skilful placis that bere charge;
But whiche a visage had she therto!
Alas! my herte is wondir wo
That I ne can discrivin it,
Me lackith bothe Englishe and wit
For to undo it at the ful,
And eke my spirites ben so dull
So gret a thinge for to devise;
I have no wyt that can suffyse

875

880

885

890

895

900

To comprehendin her Beaute ;
But thus moche I dare faine, that she
Was white, rody, freshe, lifely hewed, 905
And every day her Beaute newed ;
And nyghe her face was aldirbeste,
For certis Nature had soche leste
To make that faire, that trewly she
Was her chefe patron of Beaute, 910
And chefe ensample of al her werke^e
And monstre, for be' it ner so derke
Me thinketh I se her evirmo ;
And yet moreovir, though al tho
That ever lived were now a lyve 915
Ne wolde thei have founde to discrive
In al her face a wickid signe,
For it was sad, simple', and benigne.

And soche a godely swete speche
Yhad that swete, my lyv'is leche, 920
So frendely, and so well ygrounded,
Upon reson so wel ifounded,
And so trefable to al gode,
That I dare swere wel by the rode
Of eloquence was nevir fonde 925
So swete a sowning and faconde,
Ne trewir tonged, ne scornid lasse,
Ne bet coude hele, that by the masse
I durste swere, though the Pope it songe,
That ther was ner yet through her tonge 930

Man ne woman gretly harmid,
 As for her was al harme yhid,
 Ne lasse flatiring in her worde,
 That purely her simple recorde
 Was founde as trewe as any bonde 935
 Or trouthe of any mann'is honde.

Ne chide she coulde nevir a dele,
 That knowith al the worlde ful wele.
 But soche a fairenesse of a necke
 Yhad that swete, that bone nor brecke 940
 N'as there none sein that missefatte,
 It was white, smothe, streight, and pure flatte,
 Withoutin hole or canel bone,
 And by feming she ne had none.

Her throte, as I have nowe memoire, 945
 Semed as a rounde tour of yvoire,
 Of gode gretnesse, and not to grete;
 And Fairè White ywas she hete,
 That was my ladies namè right,
 And she was therto faire and bright; 950
 She ne had not her namè wronge:
 Right faire sholdirs and body longe
 She had, and armis evir lith,
 Fattishe, fleshy, nat grete ther with;
 Right white handis, and nailis rede; 955
 Rounde bressis; and of a gode brede
 Her hippis were; a streight flatte backe,
 I knewe on her none othir lacke,

That al her limmis n'ere pure sewing,
In as ferre as I had knowing :

960

Therto she coude so wel yplaye
What that her lyst, that I dare saye
That she was lyke to torchè bright,
That every man may take of light
Ynough, and it hath ner the lesse
Of manir and of comlynesse.

965

Right so farid my lady dere,
For every wight of her manere
Moght catche ynough if that he wolde,
Yf he had eyen her to beholde,
For I dare swere wel if that she
Had among tenne thousande ybe
She woldin have be at the beste
A chese myroure of al the fesse,
Though they had flondin in a rowe
To mennis eyen that coude have knowe;
For where so men had plaide or waked
Me thought the felowshippe as naked
Withoutin her that I sawe ones
As a corowne withoutin stones;
Trewily she was to min eye
The' solein phœnix of Arabye,
For there livith nevir but one,
Ne suche as she ne knowe I none :
'To speke of godenesse, trewly she
Had as mochil debonaire

970

975

980

985

As er had Hester in the Bible,
And more, if more were possible;
And, sothe to sayin, therwithal
She hadde a witte so general, 990
So whole enclinid to al gode,
That al her witte was sette by the' rode
Without malyce, upon gladnesse;
And therto' I sawe ner yet a lesse
Harmful than she was in doing; 995
I say not that she n' hadde knowyng
What harme ywas, or ellis she
Had coude no gode, so thinkith me;
And trewly for to speke of trouthe,
But she had had it had be routhe, 1000
Therof she had so moche her dele,
And I dare saine and swere it wele,
That Trouthe him selfe over al and al
Had chose his manor principal
In her, that was his resting place; 1005
Therto she had the moste grace
To have stedfaste perseveraunce,
And esy' attempre govirnaunce,
That &vir I knewe or wiste yet,
So pure sufferaunt was her wit; 1010
And reson gladly she' understode,
It folowid wel she coude gode;
She usid gladly to do wele:
These were her manirs every dele.

Therwith she lovid so wel right
She wronge do wouldin to no wight;
No wight ne might do her no shame,
She lovid so wel her owne name. 1015

Her lust to holde no wight in honde,
Ne be thou fiker she wolde not fonde 1020
To holdin no wight in balaunce
By halfe worde ne by countinaunce,
But if men wolde upon her lye,
Ne sende men into Walakye,
To Pruise and to Tartarie, 1025
To Alisaundrie ne Turkye,
And bidde him fast anon that he
Go hodelesse into the drie se,
And come home by the Carrenare;
And, Sir, be ye now full ryght ware 1030
That I may of you here men faine
Wurshippe or that ye come againe.

She ne used no soche knackis smale:
But therfore that I tel my tale,
Right on this fame, as I have saide, 1035
Was wholly al my love ylaide,
For certis she was that swete wife,
My suffisaunce, my luste, my life,
Min hope, min hele, and al my blesse,
My worlde's welfare and my goddesse, 1040
And I wholly' hers, and every dele.

By' our Lorde! (quod I) I trowe you wele,

Hardly your love was wel beset,
In'ot howe it might have do bet.

Bettir! ne not so wel (quod he.) 1045
I trowe it, Sir, (quod I) parde.

Nay leve it wel. Sir, so do I;
I leve you wel that trewily
You thought that she ywas the best,
And to beholde the alderfairest, 1050
Who so had loked her with your eyen.

With myn! nay, al whiche that her feyen
Sayid and swore that it was so,
And though they ne had I wolde tho
Have lovid best my lady fre 1055

Though I had had al the beaute
That er had Alcibiades,
And al the strenght of Hercules,
And thereto had the worthinesse
Of Alisaundre', and al the' richeffe 1060

That evir was in Babyloine,
In Carthage or in Macedoine,
Or in Rome or in Ninive,
And therto al so hardy be
As was Hector, so have I joye, 1065

That Achilles ysloough at Troye,
And therfore was he slayne also
In a temple, for bothè two
Were slaine, he' and Antilegius,
And so saithe Dares Fregius, 1070

For the love of Polyxena,
Or ben as wise as Minerva,
I wolde evir withoutin drede
Have lovid her, for I muste nede.

Nede! nay, trewly I gabbè now; 1075
Nought nede, and I wol tellin howe,
For of gode wil min herte it wolde,
And eke to love her I was holde,
As for the fairist and the beste;
She was as gode, so have I reſte, 1080
As was Penelope of Grece,
Or as the noble wife Lucrece,
That was the beste, he tellith thus
The Romane Titus Livius,
She was as gode, and nothing like, 1085
Though ther stories be autentike,
Algate she was as trewe as she.

But wherfore that I tellin the,
Whan that I first my lady fey
I was right yonge, the sothe to fey, 1090
And ful gret nede I had to lerne,
Whan that myn hertè woldin yerne;
To love it was a gret emprise,
But as my wite wolde beste suffise;
Aftir my yonge and childely wit 1095
Withoutin drede I beset it
To lovin her in my beste wise,
To do her wurship and the servise

Whiche that I coude tho, by my trouthe,
 . Withoutin faining eithir flouthe, 1100
 For wondir faine I wolde her se;
 So mokill it amendid me,
 That whan I sawe her a morowe
 I was warished of al my sorowe
 Of al day aftir tel' it were eve; 1105
 Me thoughtin nothings might me greve
 Were my sorowes nevir so smerte,
 And yet she fyt so in min herte
 That by my trouthe I n'oldè nought
 For al this worlde out of my thought 1110
 Yleve my lady; no trewly.

Nowe by my trouthe, Sir, (quod I)
 Me thinkith ye have soche a chaunce
 As shrifte withoutin repentaunce.

Repentaunce! nay, nay; fye! (quod he) 1115
 Shuldin I nowe repentin me
 To love? nay, certes, than were I wel
 Worse than ywas Achitophel
 Or Antenor, so have I joye,
 The traitour that betrayid Troye, 1120
 Or than the false Ganelion,
 He that purchasid the traïson
 Of Roulande and of Oliver: :
 Nay, while that I am alive here
 I n'yl foriet her nevirmo. 1125

Nowe, gode Sir, quod I to him tho,

Ye have wel tolde me here before,
It' is no nede to reherse it more,
Howe that ye sawe her first, and where,
But wolde ye tel me the manere 1130
To her whiche was your firste speche,
Therof I woldè you beseche,
And howe that she knewe first your thought,
Whethir ye lovid her or nought,
And telleth me eke what ye have lorè; 1135
I herde you tellin here before,
Ye saide thou n'otist what thou menest,
For I have losse more than thou wenest?
And what losse is that? (quod I tho;)
N'il she not love you? is it so? 1140
Or havin ye ought done amis,
That she hath leste you? is it this?
For Godd'is love tellith me al.

Before God (quod he) and I shal.
I say right as I have ysaide, 1145
On her was al my love ylaide,
And yet she n'iste it ner a dele
Not longè tyme, levith it wele,
For be right fykir I durst nought
For al this worlde tel her my thought, 1150
Ne' I wolde have wrathid her trewly;
For wost thou why? she was lady
Of the body that had the herte,
And whofo' hath that may not asterte.

But for to kepe me fro' ydlenesse 1155
 Trewly I dyd my busynesse
 To make songis as I best coude,
 And oftin time I songe'hem loude,
 And made songis this a grete dele,
 Although I coude nat make so wele 1160
 Songis, ne knewe the arte so al,
 As coude Lamek'is sone Tubal,
 That founde out first the arte of songe,
 For as his brothir's hamirs ronge
 Upon his anvelt up and downe 1165
 Therof he toke the firste sowne.

But Grekes saine of Pythagoras
 That he the first findir ywas
 Of the' arte, Aurora tellith so;
 But therof no force of 'hem two; 1170
 Algatis songis thus I made
 Of my felyng, min herte to glade,
 And lo! this was the althir first,
 In'ot whethir it were the werst:

Lorde! it makith min hertè light 1175
 Whan that I thinke on that swete wight
 That is so semely on to se,
 And wilhe to God it might so be
 That she wolde holde me for her knight,
 My lady, that' is so faire and bright. 1180

Nowe have I tolde the, soth to say,
 My firste songe. Upon a day

I bethought me what mochil wo
And sorowe that I suffrid tho
For her, and yet she wiste it nought; 1185
Ne tel her durst I not my thought:
Alas! thaught I, I can no rede,
And but I tel her I' am but dede,
And if I tel her, to say sothe,
I am adradde she wol be wrothe: 1190
Alas! what shal I than ydo?

In this debate I was so wo
Me thought myne hertè braft atwaine,
So at the lasse, sothe for to saine,
I bethought me that Dame Nature 1195
Ne formid nevir in cature
So mochil beaute trewily
And bountie withoutin mercy.

In hope of that my tale I tolde
With sorowe, as that I ner sholde 1200
For nedis, and maugre myne hed
I must have tolde her or be ded.
In'ot wel howe that I began,
Ful yvil reherce it I can,
And eke, as helpe me God withal, 1205
I trowe it was in the dismal,
'That was the ten woundes of Egypte,
For many' a worde I ovirskipte
In telling my tale, for pure fere
Lest that my wordis mysseset were; 1210

With sorowful hert and woundes dede,
 Softely, and quaking for pure drede
 And shame, and stinting in my tale
 For ferde, and min hewe allè pale;
 Ful ofte I wexte bothe pale and red,
 Bowing to her I hinge the hed;
 I durst not onis loke her on,
 For wit, manir, and al, was gone;
 I faide, Mercy, swete! and no more:
 It n'as no game; it fate me fore.

1215

1220

So at the laste, the sothe to saine,
 Whan that myne herte was come againe,
 To tellin shortly al my speche,
 With whole herte I gan her beseche
 That she wolde be my lady swete,
 And swore and hertely gan her hete
 Evir to be stedfaste and trewe,
 And love her alway freshly newe,
 And nevir othir lady have,
 And all her worship for to save
 As I beste coude, I swere her this,
 For yours is al that er ther is,
 For gvirmore, myne hertè swete!
 And ner to false you but I mete
 In'yl, as wise God helpe me so.

1225

1230

1235

And whan I had my tale ydo
 God wote she' acomptid not a flre
 Of al my tale, so thoughtin me:

To tel shortly, right as it is,
Trewly her answere it was this; 1240
I can not now wel countrefete
Her wordis, but this was the grete
Of her answere: she sayid Nay
Al utterly. Alas that day
The sorowe' I suffrid and the wo!
That trewly Cassandra, that so 1245
Bewaylid the distruccion
Of Troye and of ilion
Had ner soche sorowe as I tho;
I durstin no more say therto 1250
For pure fere, but ystale away,
And thus I lyved ful many' a day,
That trewily I had no nede
Ferthir than at my bedd'is hede
Nevir a day to sechin sorowe, 1255
I founde it redy every morowe;
For why? I loved her in no gere.
So it befell an othir yere
I thought onis I wouldin fonde
To doe her knowe and undirstonde 1260
My wo; and she well undirstode
That I ne wilnid thyng but gode
And worship, and to kepe her name
Ovir all thynges, and drede her shame,
And was so busie her to serve, 1265
And pitie were I shouldin sterve,

Sithe that I wilned none harme iwis.

•• So when my ladie knewe all this,

My ladie yave me all whollie

The noble yest of her mercie,

1270

Savyng her worship by al waies;

Dredelesse I mene none othir waies,

And therewith she yave me a ryng,

I trowe it was the firste thyng :

But if myne hertè was iwaxe

1275

Glad that it is no nede to axè.

As helpe me God I was as blive

Yraifid as fro deth to live,

Of all happis the aldirbest,

The gladdist and the moſte at rest,

1280

For truilie that ſwetè wight,

When I had wrong and ſhe the right,

She wouldin alwaie ſo godelie

Foryeve me ſo debonairlie;

In all my youth, in allè chaunce,

1285

She toke me in her govirnaunce;

Therewith ſhe was alwaie ſo true,

Our joye was evir iliche newe;

Our hertis werne ſo even a paire,

That nevir n'as that one contraire

1290

Unto that othir for no wo,

For ſothe iliche thei ſuffrid tho.

O bliſſe, and eke o ſorowe bothe!

Iliche thei were bothe glad and wrothe.

All was us one withoutin were ;
And thus we lived full many' a yere
So well I can not tellin how. 1295

Sir, (quod I) and where is she now ?
Now ! quod he, and yfinte anone,
Therewith he woxe as dedde as stone,
And faied, Alas that I was bore ! 1300
That was the losse that here before
I tolde the that I had ylorne.

Bethinke the how I faied beforne
Thou woste full lityl what thou menest,
For I have losse more then thou wenest. 1305

God wot, alas ! right that was she.
Alas, Sir ! how ? what maie that be ?
She is dedde ! Naie ! Yes, by my trouthe.

Is that your losse ? by God it' is routhe. 1310

And with that wordè right anone
Thei gan to strake forthe ; all was done
For that tymè the hart huntynge.

With that me thoughtin that this kyng
Began homewardis for to ride 1315

Unto a place was there beside,
Whiche that was from us but a lite,
A long castill with wallis white,
By Sainct John, on a richè hill,
As me mette ; but thus it befill : 1320

Right thus me mette, as I you tell,
That in the castell there was a bell,

As it had smittin' houreis twelve,
 And therewith I awoke my felve,
 And found me lying in my bedde, 1325
 And the boke whiche that I had redde
 Of Alcyone and Ceix the kyng,
 And of the goddis of Slepynge,
 I found it in myne hond ful evin;
 Thought I this is so queint a fwevin 1330
 That I would by proceffe of tyme
 Fonde to put this fwevin in rime
 As I can best, and that anon:
 This was was my fwevin, now it' is doen. 1334

Explicit.

This seems an envoy to the Duke of Lancaster after his loss of Blanch.

My master, &c. When of Christ our kyng
 Was askid, What is trothe or sothfastnesse,
 He not a worde answerde to that askyng,
 As who saieth, no manne is all true I gesse;
 And therefore though I hight for to expresse
 The sorowe' and wo that is in mariage
 I dare not writen of it no wickidnesse,
 Lest I my self fall est in soche dotage. 2

I woll not saie how that it is the chaine
 Of Sathanas on whiche he knawith ever,
 But I dare faine were he out of his paine

As by his will he would be boundin never;
 But thilkè dotid fole that eft hath lever
 Ichainid be than out of prisone crepe,
 God let hym nevir fro his woe discever,
 Ne no man hym bewailin though he wepe. 16

But yet lesse thou do worse takith a wife;
Bet is to wedde than brennin in worse wife:
 But thou shalt have sorowe on thy fleshe thy life,
 And ben thy wiv'is thralle, as saine these wife;
 And if that holy writte maie not suffise
 Experience shall the teche, so maie happe:
 Take the waie levir to be taken in Frise
 Then eft to fall of weddyng in the trappe. 24

This lityl writte, proverbis or figure,
 I sende you, takith kepe of it I rede;
Unwife is he that can no wele endure:
If thou be sikir put the not in drede
 The Wife of Bathe I praie you that ye rede
 Of this matter which that we have on honde:
 God grauntin you your life frely to lede
 In fredome, for foule is it to be bonde. 32

Explicit.

THE ASSEMBLE OF FOULES.

All Fowles are gathered before Nature on St. Valentine's Day to chuse their mates. A female eagle being beloved of three tercelles requireth a year's respite to make her choice, upon this triall, Qui bien aime tard oublie, be that loveth well is slow to forget.

THE life so short, the craft so long to lerne,
The assaye so hard, so sharp the conquering,
The dredefull joy, alwaie that flit so yerne,
All this mene I by Love, that my felyng
Astonieth with his wondirfull werkyng
So sore iwis, that when I on him thinke
Naught wete I well whether I flete or sink. 7

For all be that I knowe not Love in dede,
Ne wot how that he quitith folke ther hire,
Yet happith me full ofte in bokis rede
Of his miraclis and his cruill ire,
There rede I well he woll be lorde and sire:
I dare not saie his strokis be so fore,
But God save soche a lorde! I can no more. 14

Of usage, what for lust and what for lore,
On bokis rede I oft, as I you tolde,
But wherfore that I speke all this, naught yore
Agon it happid me for to beholde
Upon a boke i writte with lettirs old,
And thereupon a certain thing to lerne,
The longè daie full fast I radde and yerne; 21

For out of the olde feldis, as men saieth,
Comith all this newe corne fro yere to yere,
And out of oldè bokis, in gode saieth,
Comith all this newe science that men lere :
But now to purpose : as of this mattere
To redin forthe, it gan me so delite
That all that daie me thought it but a lite. 28

This boke of whiche I makin mencion
Entitlid was right thus, as I shall tell,
'Tullius of the Drame of Scipion;
Chapiters seven it had of heven and hell,
And yerth, and foulis that therein do dwell,
Of whiche, as shortly as I can it trete,
Of this sentence I woll you saine the grete. 35

Firſt tellith it when Scipion was come
In Affrike how he metith Maſſiniſſe,
That hym for joie in armis hath inome ;
'Then tellith he her ſpeche, and all the bliſſe
That was betwixt 'hem til the daie gan miſſe,
And how his aunceſter Affrikan ſo dere
Gan in his ſlepe that night till hym appere : 42

Then tellith it that from a ſterrie place
How Affrikan hath hym Carthage yſhewed,
And warnid hym beforne of all his grace,
And ſaid hym, What man, lerid eithir leude,
'That lovith common profite well itheude,
He ſhould into a bliſfull place ywende,
There as joye is that laſt withoutin epde : 49

Then askid he if folke that here ben dede
 Have life and dwellyng in an othir place?
 And Affrikan saied Ye, withoutin drede,
 And how our present worldly liv'is space
 N'is but a manir deth, what waie we trace,
 And rightfull folke shull gon aftir thei die
 To heven, and shewid hym the Galaxie: 56

Then shewed he him the little yerth that here is
 To regarde of the hevin's quantite,
 And after shewid he hym the nine speris,
 And aftir that the melodie herd he
 That comith of thilke speris thryis thre,
 That welles of musike ben and melodie
 In this worlde here and cause of harmonie: 63

Then saied he him, Sens that yerth was so lite,
 And full of tourment and of hardè grace,
 That he ne shuld hym in this worlde delite;
 Then tolde he him in certain yeris space
 That every sterre should come into his place
 There it was first, and all should out of mind
 That in this worlde is doen of all mankynd: 70

Then praied hym Scipion to tell hym all
 The waie to come into that hevin blisse;
 And he saied, First knowe thy self immortall,
 And loke aie busely that thou werche and wisse
 To common profite, and thou shalt not misse
 To come swiftly unto that placè dere
 That full of blisse is and of soulis clere. 77

And brekirs of the lawe, the sothe to faine,
 And likerous folke aftir that thei ben dede,
 Shull whirle about the world alwaie in pain
 Till many' a worlde be passid, out of drede,
 And then foryevin all ther wickid dede;
 Then shullin thei come to that blisfull place,
 To whiche to comin God sendin the grace.

84

The daie gan failin, and the darkè night,
 That revith bestis from ther businesse,
 Beraistè me my boke for lacke of light,
 And to my bedde I gan me for to dresse,
 Fulfilled of thought and busie hevinesse,
 For bothe I had thyng whiche that I ne wolde,
 And eke I ne had that thyng that I wolde.

91

But, finally, my spirite at the laste,
 For werie of my labour all that daie,
 Toke rest, that madin me to slepin faste,
 And in my slepe I met as that I laie
 How Affrikan, right in the self araie
 That Scipion hym sawe before that tide,
 Was come, and stode right at my bedd'is side.

98

The werie huntir slepyng in his bedde
 The wodde ayen his minde goith anone,
 The judge ydremith how his plices be spedde,
 The cartir dremith how his cartis gone,
 The rich of gold, the knight fight with his sone,
 The sicke ymette he drinkith of the tonne,
 The lovir mette he hath his ladie wonne.

105

Can I not faine if that the cause ywere
For I had radde of Affrikan beforne
That madin me to mete that he stode there,
But thus said he; Thou hast the so wel borne
In loking of myne olde boke all to torne,
Of whiche Macrobie ne raught not a lite,
That somedele of thy labour would I quite. 112

Thou Citherea, blisfull ladie swete!
That with thy fire brond dauntist when the lest,
That madist me this swevin for to mete,
Be thou my helpe in this, for thou maist best,
As wisely as I feigh the north north west
When I began my swevin for to write,
So yeve me might to rime it and endite. 119

This foresaid Affrikan me hent anone,
And forthe with hym unto a gate ybrought
Right of a parke ywallid with grene stone,
And oer the gate with lettirs large ywrought
There werin versis writtin, as me thought,
On eithir halfe, of full grete difference,
On which I shall you saie the plain sentence. 126

Through me men gon into that blisful place
Of hertis hele and dedly woundis cure,
Through me men gone into the well of grace,
There grene and lustie Maie shall er endure;
This is the waie to all gode avinture:
Be glad, thou reder, and thy sorowe' of cast,
All open am I; passe in, and spede the fast. 133

Through me men gon, then spake that othir side,
 Unto the mortall strokis of the spere,
 Of whiche Disdain and Daungir is the gide,
 There nevir tre shall fruiet ne levis bere;
 This streame you ledith to the sorowfull were
 There as the fishe in prison is all drie;
 The' eschewyng is onely the remedie.

140

These versis of gold and asure writte were,
 Of whiche I gan astonied to beholde,
 For with that one encrefid all my fere,
 And with that othir gan my herte to bolde;
 That one me het, that othir did me colde:
 No wit had I for errour for to chese
 To entre' or flie, or me to save or lese.

147

Right as betwixtin adamantis two
 Of evin weight a pece of yron set
 Ne hath no might to movin to ne fro,
 For what that one maie hale that othir let;
 So fared I, that I n'ist where me was bet
 To entre' or leve, til Affrican my gide
 Me hent, and shove in at the gatis wide,

154

And saied, It standith writtin in thy face
 Thyne errour, though thou tell it not to me,
 But dred the not to come into this place,
 For this writyng is nothyng mente by the,
 Ne by none but he Lov'is servaunt be,
 For thou of love hast lost thy tast I gesse,
 As sicke man hath of swete and bittirnesse.

161

But nathèles, although that thou be dull,
 That which thou canst not doe yet maiest thou fe,
 For many' a man that maie not stande a pull
 Yet liketh it hym at wrestlyng for to be,
 And demith whethir he doe bet or he;
 And if thou haddist connyng for t' endite
 I shall the shewin mattir of to write. 168

With that my hand in his he toke anon,
 Of whiche I comfort caught, and went in fast;
 But Lorde! so I was glad and well begon!
 For ovir all where I myne eyin cast
 Were treis clad with leves that aie shal last,
 Eche in his kinde, with colour freshe and grene
 As emeraude, that joie it was to sene. 175

The bildir oke, and eke the hardie ashe,
 The pillir elme, the coffir unto caraine,
 The boxe pipetre, the holme to whippis lashe,
 The sailing firre, the cypres deth to plaine,
 The shotir ewe, the aspe for shaftis plaine,
 The' olive of pece, and eke the dronkin vine,
 The victor palme, the laurir to divine. 182

A gardein sawe I full of blofomed bowis
 Upop a rivir in a grenè mede
 There as swetenesse evirmore inough is,
 With flouris white and blewe, yelow and rede,
 And colde and clere wellestremis nothyng dede,
 That swommin full of smale fishis light,
 With finnis rede and scalis silvir bright. 189

On every bough the birdis herd I syng
With voice of angell in ther harmonie,
That busied 'hem ther birdis forthe to bryng,
The little pretie conies to ther plaie gan hie,
And furthir all about I gan espie
The dredfull roe, the buck, the hart, and hind,
Squirils, and bestis small of gentle kind.

196

Of instrumentes of stringis in accorde
Herd I so plaie a ravishyng swetnesse
That God, that makir is of all and lorde,
Ne herd nevir a bettir, as I gesse,
Therewith a winde, unneth it might be lesse,
Made in the levis grene a noisè soft
Accordant to the Foulis song on loft.

203

The aire of the place so attempre was
That ner was ther grevaunce of hot ne cold,
There was eke every wholsome spice and gras,
Ne no man maie there waxin fike ne old;
Yet was there morè joie a thousande fold
Then I can tell, or evir could or might;
There is evir clere daie and nevir night.

210

Undir a tre beside a well I feye
Cupide our lorde his arrowes forge and file,
And at his fete his bowe all redie laye,
And well his doughtir temprid all the while
The heddis in the well, and with her wile
She couchid 'hem aftir as thei should serve,
Some for to flea, and some to wound and carve.

217

'Tho was I ware of Plesance anon right,
• And of Arraie, Luste, Beaute', and Curtisie,
And of the craft that can yhave the might
To doen by force a wight to doen folie,
Disfigurid was she, I will not lie,
And by hymself, undir an oke I gesse,
Sawe I Delite, that stode with Gentilnesse: 224

Then sawe I Beautie with a nice atire,
And Youth, all full of game and jolite,
Fole Hardinesse, Flattirie, and Desire,
Messagerie, and Mede, and othir thre,
'Ther namis shall not here be tolde for me,
And upon pillirs grete of jaspir long
I sawe a temple' of brasse ifoundid strong: 231

And about the temple dauncid alwaie
Women inow, of which some there ywere
Faire of 'hemself, and some of 'hem were gaie;
In kirtils all disheveled went thei there,
That was ther office er fro yere to yere;
And on the temple sawe I white and faire
Of doves sittynge many' a thousande paire. 238

Before the temple dore full sobirlye
Dame Pece yfat, a curtaine in her honde,
And her besidis wondir discretlye
Dame Pacience ysittynge there I fonde,
With face pale, upon an hill of sonde,
And althir nexte, within and eke without,
Behest and Arte, and of ther folke a rout. 245

Within the temple' of fighis hote as fire
 I herd a fwough that gan about to ren,
 Whiche fighis were engendrid with desire
 That madin every hertè for to bren
 Of newè flambe; and well espied I then
 That all the cause of sorowes that thei drie
 Come of the bittir goddis Jelousie.

252

The god Priapus sawe I as I went
 Within the temple' in soveraine place ystonde
 In soche arraie as when the alle hym shent
 With crie by night, and with sceptre in honde;
 Full busilie men gan assaie and fonde
 Upon his hedde to set of fondrie hewe
 Garlandis full of freshe flouris newe:

259

And in a privie corner in disport
 Founde I Venus and her portir Richeffe,
 That was full noble' and hautin of her port;
 Darke was that place, but aftirward lightnesse
 I sawe a lite, unnethes it might be lesse,
 And on a bed of golde she laie to reste
 Till that the hote sonne began to weste.

266

Her gildid heris with a goldin threde
 Iboundin were, untressid as she laie,
 And nakid from the brest unto the hede
 Men might her se, and, sothly for to saie,
 The remenaunt covired well to my paie
 Right with a lityl kerchefe of Valence;
 There n'as no thickir clothe of no defence.

273

The placè gave a thousand favours fote,
 And Bacchus, god of Wine, fate her beside,
 And Ceres next, that doeth of hunger bote,
 And, as I saied, amiddis laie Cypride,
 To whom on kneis the yong folkis cride
 To be ther helpe: but thus I let her lie,
 And farthir in the temple' I gan espie, 280

That in dispite of Diana the chaste
 Full many a bowe ibroke hing on the wall
 Of maidins, soche as gone ther tymis walle
 In her service, and paintid ovir all
 Of many' a storie', of whiche I touchin shall
 A fewe, as of Calilo' and Atalante,
 And many' a maide of which the name I want, 287

Semiramis, Candace', and Hercules,
 Biblis, Dido, Phisbe, and Pyramus,
 Tristram, Iseude, Paris, and Achilles,
 Helaine, Cleopatra, and Troilus,
 Scylla, and eke the mother of Romulus;
 All these were paintid on that othir side,
 And all ther love, and in what plite thei dide. 294

When I was comen ayen into the place
 That, I of spake, that was so fote and grene,
 Forthe walked I tho my selvin to solace,
 Tho was I ware where there yfate a quene,
 That as of light the sommir sonnè shene
 Passith the sterre, right so ovir mesure
 She fairir was then any other creature. 301

And in a launde, upon a hill of floures,
Was set this quene, this noble goddesse Nature;
Of braunchis were her hallis and her boures
Iwrought after her craft and her mesure;
Neither n'as Foule that cometh of engendrure
That there ne were yprest in her presence
To take her dome and yeve her audience; 308

For this was on Sainct Valentin's daie,
When every Foule comith to chese her make
Of every kinde that men ythinkin maie,
And that so huge a noise gan thei to make
The yerth, the se, and tre, and every lake,
So full was, that unnethis there was space
For me to stande, so full was all the place. 315

And right as Alaine in The Plaint of Kinde
Devisech Nature of soche araie and face,
In soche araie men mightin her there finde.
This noble empresse, full of allè grace,
Bad evèry Foule takin her owne place
As thei were wont alwaie fro yere to yere
On Sainct Valentines daie to standin there: 322

That is to saie, the Foulis of ravine
Were highist set, and then the Foulis smale,
That etin as them Nature would encline,
As worme or thing, of whiche I tell no tale,
And watirfoule fate lowist in the dale,
And Foules that liveth by fede sat on the grene,
And that so fele that wondir was to sene. 329

There mightin men the roiall egle finde,
 That with his sharpe loke persith the son,
 And othir eglis of a lowir kinde,
 Of whiche that clerkis well devisin con;
 There was the tiraant with his fethirs don
 And grene, I mene the goshaunce, that doth pine
 To birdes for his outragious ravine; 336

The gentle faucon, that with his fete distreineth
 The kyng's hand, the hardie sperhauke eke,
 The qual's foe, the merlion, that peineth
 Hymself full oft, the larkè for to seke,
 There was the dove, with her eyin so meke,
 The jelous swan, ayenst his deth that singeth,
 The oule eke, that of deth the bode ybringeth; 343

The crane, the geant, with his tromp's sounne,
 The thief the chough, and eke the chattring pie,
 The scornynge jaie, the ele's foe the heroune,
 The false lapwing, alle full of trechirie,
 The starling, that the counsaile can bewrie,
 The tame ruddocke, and the cowarde kite,
 The cocke, that horiloge is of thropes lite; 350

The sparow, Venus son, the nightingale,
 That clepith forthe the freshè levis newe,
 The swalowe, murdrer of the beis smale,
 That maken honie of flouris freshe of hewe,
 The weddid turtell with his hertè true,
 The pecocke with his angell fethirs bright,
 The fesaunt, scornir of the cocke by night; 357

The waker gose, the cuckowe, er unkinde,
The popingeie, full of delicafie,
The drake, destroyir of his ownè kinde,
The storke, the wrekir of advoutèrie,
The hote cormèraunt, full of glotonie,
The ravin wife, the crowe, with voice of care,
The throstill olde, and frostie feldèfare. 364

What should I saie? of Foules of every kind
That in this worlde have fethirs and stature
Men mightin in that place assemblid finde
Before that noble goddesse of Nature,
And eche of them ydid his busie cure
Benignèlie to chese or for to take
By her accorde his formell or his make. 371

But to the poinct. Nature held on her hond
A formell egle', of shape the gentillest
That evir she emong her workis fonde,
The moste benigne and eke the godeliest;
In her was every vertue at his rest
So farforthe, that Nature her self had blisse
To loke on her, and oft her becke to kisse. 378

Nature, the vicare of the' almightie Lorde,
That hote and colde, hevie, light, moiste, and drie,
Hath knit by evin nombir of accorde,
In esie voice began to speke and saie,
Foulis, take hede of my sentence I prairie,
And for your ese, in fordring of your nede,
As fast as I maie speke I will me spede. 385

Ye know well how on S. Valentine's daie,
 By my statute and through my govirnaunce,
 Ye chese your makes, and astir flie awaie
 With 'hem as I doe pricke you with plesaunce,
 But nathelesse, as by rightfull ordinaunce,
 Maie I not let, for all this worlde to win,
 But he that moſte worthieſt is ſhall begin.

392

The tercell egle, as ye knowe full wele,
 The Foule roiall, above you' all in degre,
 The wiſe and worthie, ſecret, true as ſtele,
 The whiche I have formid, as ye maie ſe,
 In every parte as it beſt likith me,
 It nedith not his ſhape you to deviſe,
 He ſhall firſt cheſe and ſpekin in his giſe.

399

And after hym by ordir ſhall ye cheſe
 Aſtir your kinde, everiche as you likith,
 And as your hap is ſhall ye win or leſe,
 But which of you that love moſt entrikith
 God ſende hym her that foreſt for hym ſikith;
 And therwithall the tercell gan ſhe call,
 And ſaied, My ſonne, the choiſe is to the fall.

406

But nathelesse in this condicion
 Muſte be the choice of everiche that is here,
 That ſhe agre to his eleccion,
 Who ſo he be, that ſhould yben her ſere;
 This is our uſage aye fro yere to yere,
 And who ſo maie at this time have his grace
 In bliſfull tyme he came into this place.

413

N iij

With hed enclined and with full humble chere
This roiall tercell spake, and taried nought,
Unto my soveraine ladie', and not my fere,
I chose and chese with will, and hert, and thought,
The formell on your hand so well iwrought,
Whose I am all, and evir will her serve,
Doe what her luste to doe me live or sterve; 420

Besechyng her of mercie and of grace,
As she that is my ladie soverain,
Or let me die here present in this place,
For certis long maie I not live in pain,
For in my herte is corvin every vain,
Havyng regarde onily to my trouthe :
My dere herte! havith on my wo some routh. 427

And if that I be founde to her untrue,
Disobeisfaunt, or wilfull negligent,
Avauntour, or in proceffe love anewe,
I praie to you this be my judgèment,
That with these Foulis I be all to rent
That ilkè daie that she me evir finde
To her untrue or in my gilte unkinde. 434

And sith none lovith her so well as I,
Although she nevir of love me behet,
Then ought she to be mine through her mercie,
For othir bonde can I none on her knet,
For for wele nor wo nevir shall I let
To servin her, how far so that she wende:
Saie what you liste, my tale is at an ende. 441

Full right as the fote and freshe redde rose newe
Against the sommir sunne ycoloured is,
Right so for shame all waxin gan the hewe
Of this formell when that she herd all this;
Neithir she answerde well ne saied amis,
So fore abashed was she, till that Nature
Saied, Doughtir, drede you not, I you assure. 448

An othir tercell egle spake anon
Of lowir kind, and saied that should not be;
I love her bet then ye doe by Sainct John,
Or at the lest I love as well as ye,
And lengir have served her in my degre,
And if she should have loved for long lovyng
To me alone had be the guerdonyng. 455

I dare eke saie, if she me findin false,
Unkinde, jangler, rebell, in any wise,
Or jelous, doe me hangin by the halfe;
And but I berin me in her servise
As well aye as my wit can me suffise
Fro poinct to poinct, her honour for to save,
Take she my life and all the gode I have. 462

The thirde tercell egle answerid tho,
Now, Sirs, ye se the lityl lesir here,
For every Foule crieth out to be ago
Forth with his make or with his lady dere,
And eke Nature her self ne will not here,
For taryng her, not half that I would seie,
And but I speke I must for sorowe deie. 469

Of longe service avaunt I me nothing,
But as possible' is me to die to day
For wo as he that hath be languishing
This twenty wintre', and wel it happin may
A man may serve bettir and more to pay
In halfe a yere, although it were no more,
Than some man doth that hath servid ful yore. 476

I say not this by me, for I ne can
Do no servise that may my lady plesse,
But I dare say I am her trewist man,
As to my dome, and fainist wolde her plesse:
At shortè wordis, til that dethe me cese
I wil be hers whethir I wake or winke,
And trewe in al that hertè may bethinke. 483

Of al my lyfe syth that day I was borne
So gentle ple in love or othir thinge
Ne herdin nevir no man me besorne,
Who so that had right lesir and conninge
For to reherse ther chere and ther spekyng,
And from the morowe gan this spechè laste
Till downward went the sonnè wondir faste. 490

The noise of Foulis for to be deliverde
So loudè range, Have don and let us wende,
That wel wende I the wode had all to shiverd:
Come of, they cried; alas! ye wil us shende;
Whan shal your cursid pleding have an ende?
How shulde a judge on eithir partie leve
For ye or nay withoutin any preve? 497

The goſe, the cuckowe, and the ducke alſo,
 So cryid Keke, keke, Cuckow, Queke, queke, hye,
 Thorough myne eris the noyſe wente tho;
 The goſe ſayd than, Al this n'ys worthe a flye,
 But I can ſhape herof a remedye,
 And wil yſay my verdite faire and ſwithe
 For watir Foule, who ſo be wrothe or blithe. 504

And I for worme Foule, ſaid the ſole cuckow,
 For I wil of min owne authorite,
 For common ſpede, take on me the charge now
 For to deliver us is grete charite,
 Ye may abydin a while yet perde.
 (Quod the turtel) If that it be your wil
 A wight may ſpeke it were as gode be ſtil. 511

I am a fede Foule, one the unworthyeſt,
 That wote I wel, and the leſt of connyng,
 But bettir is that a wight'is tonge reſt
 Than entremetin him of ſoche doyng
 Of whiche he neither redin can nor ſinge,
 And who ſo' it doth ful foule him ſelf acloyeth,
 For *Office uncommittid ofte anoyeth.* 518

Nature, whiche that alway yhad an ere
 To murmure of the leudeneſſe behinde,
 With ſaconde voice ſaid, Hold your tongis there,
 And ſhal ſone I hope a counſaile finde
 You to deliver and fro this noyſe unbynde:
 I charge of every flocke ye ſhall one cal
 To ſay the verdite of you Foulis all. 525

Affentid were to this conclusyon
The birdis al, and Foulis of ravine
Have chosin first by plaine election,
The tercelet of the faucon to define,
Al ther sentence, and as him lust to termine,
And to Nature him gan they to presente,
And she acceptith him with glad entente.

532

The tercelet sayd than in this manere:
Ful harde it were to preve it by reson
Who lovith best this gentil formel here,
For everiche hath soche replicacion
That by skillis may non be brought adoun;
I cannat se that argumentes availe,
Than semith it there must be a battaile.

539

Al redy, quod these egles tercelles tho.
Nay, Sirs, (quod he) if that I durst it say
Ye do me wronge, my tale is not ydo;
For, Sirs, ne takith nat a grese I pray,
It may not be as ye wolde in this way;
Ours is the voice that have the charge in hande,
And to the judg'is dome ye muste ystande;

546

And therfore pece: I say as to my wit
Me woldin thinke how that the worthiest
Of knyghthode, and lengist had usid it,
Most of estate, of blode the gentillest,
Were fittingest for her, if that her lest,
And of these thre she wote her selfe I trowe
Whiche that he be, for it is light to knowe.

553

The watir Foulis have ther hedis laide

• Togidir, and of shorte avisement,
Whan evèriche had his verdite ysaide,
They saidin sothely al by one assent
Howe that the gose, with the facondè gent,
That so desirith to pronounce our nede,
Shal tel our tale, and prayed to God her spede. 560

And for these watir Foulis tho began
The gose to speke, and in her cakelynge
She said, Pece nowe, take kepe evèry man,
And herken whiche a reson I shal forth bring;
My witte is sharpe; I love no tarying;
I say I rede him, tho he were my brother,
But she wil love him let him love another. 567

Lo here a parfite reson of a gose!
Tho (quod the sperhauke) nevir mote she the;
Lo soche a thing it' is to have a tonge lose!
Nowe parde sole yet were it bet for the
Have holde thy pece than shewde thy nicete;
It lyeth nat in his wit nor in his wil,
But sothe is saide, *A sole can nat be still.* 574

The laughtir arose of gentil Foulis al,
And right anone the fede Foules chosin had
The turtel trewe, and gan her to 'hem call,
And prayid her to say the sothè sad
Of this matir, and askid what she rad?
And she answered that plainly her entent
She woldè shewe, and sothly what she ment. 581

Nay, God forbode a lovir shuldè chaunge,
 The turtel said, and wexte for shame al rede;
 Though that his lady evirmore be siraunge,
 Yet let him serve her ay tyl he be dede;
 Forsothe I ne praisè not the gos's rede,
 For tho she dyed I wold none othir make;
 I wil be her styl that the dethe me take. 588

Wel ybourdid (quod the ducke) by my hat;
 That men shouldin love alway causèlesse
 Who can a reson finde or wit in that?
 Dauncith he mery that is mirthèlesse?
 Who shuldin recke of that is rechèlesse?
 Ye queke yet (quod the ducke) ful wel and faire,
There be no sterres in the skye than a paire. 595

Nowe fye, churle! (quod the gentil tercèlet)
 Out of the donghil came that word aright;
 Thou canst not se which thinge is wel beset;
 Thou farest by love as owlis do by light,
 The day 'hem blindeth, ful wel they se by night;
 Thy kinde is of so lowe a wretchidnesse
 That what love is thou canst not se nor gesse. 602

Tho gan the cuckow put him forthe in prece
 For Foule that etith worme, and sayid blyve,
 So I (quod he) may have my make in pece
 I ne retche nought howe longè that ye survive;
 Let eche of 'hem be soleine al ther lyve:
 This is my rede, sens they may nat acorde;
 This shorte lesson nedith not recorde. 609

Ye, have the glutton filde inow his paunche,
Then are we wel, sayid the emerlon,
Thou murdrir of the heisugge, on the braunche,
That brought the forth, thou most rufull glutton,
Live thou solein, wormis corrupcion!
For no force is of lacke of thy nature;
Go, leude be thou while that the world may dure! 616

Nowe pece (quod Nature) I commaundin here,
For I have herde al your opinion,
And in effecte yet be we ner the nere;
But, finally, this is my concludion,
That she her selfe shal have her election
Of whom her list, who so be wroth or blithe,
Him that she cheseth he shal her have as swithe: 623

For sithe it may not here discussid be
Who loveth her best, as said the tercèlet,
Than wol I done this favour to' her, that she
Shal have right him on whom her hert is set,
And he her that his hert hath on her knet;
This judge I Nature, for I may not lye,
To none estate I have none othir eye. 630

But as for counsayle for to chose a make,
Yf I were Reson, certis than woulde I
Counsaillin you the royal tercel take,
As sayd the tercèlet ful skilfully,
As for the gentilist and most worthy,
Which I have wrought so wel to my plesaunce
That to you it ought ben a suffisaunce. 637

With dredfull voice the formell her answerde;
 My rightfull lady, goddesse of Nature,
 Soth is that I am er undir your yerde,
 As is als' evèriche othir creture,
 And must be yours while that my life may dure,
 And therfore grauntith me my firstè bone,
 And myne entent you wol I say right sone. 644

I graunt it you (quod she.) And right anone
 This formel egle spake in this degre;
 Almighty quene! unto this yere be done
 I aske respite for to avyfin me,
 And astir that to have my choyce all fre:
 This al and some that I wold speke and sey;
 Ye get no more although ye do me dey: 651

I wol not servin Venus ne Cupide
 Forsothe as yet by no manir of way.
 Nowe sens it may none othir wayes betide
 (Quod Dame Nature) here is no more to say;
 Than wolde I that these Foulis were away
 Eche with his make for tarying lengir here,
 And said 'hem thus, as ye shal astir here: 658

To you speke I, ye tercelet, (quod Nature)
 Bethe of gode herte, and servith allè thre,
 A yere is not so longe for to endure,
 And eche of you paine him in his degre
 For to do wel, for God wote quit is she
 Fro you this yere, what astir so befall;
 This entremes is dressid for you all. 665

And whan this werk ybrought was to an ende
 To evèry Foule Nature yave his make
 By even acorde, and on ther way they wende,
 And Lorde the blisse and joye which that they make!
 For ech gan othir in his wingis take,
 And with ther neckis eche gan othir winde,
 Thankynge aye the noble goddesse of Kinde. 672

But first were chosin Foulis for to singe,
 As yere by yere was alway ther usaunce,
 To singe a roundel at ther departing,
 To do to Nature honour and plesaunce;
 The note I trowe ymakid was in Fraunce;
 The wordis were soche as ye may here find
 The nextè vers, as I nowe have in minde, 679

Qui bien aime tard oublie.

Now welcom somir! with thy sonnys soft,
 That haste this wintir wethirs ovirshake;
 Saint Valentine! thou arte full hye on losfe,
 Which drivist away the longe nightis blake,
 Thus singin smalè Foulis for thy sake;
 Well havin they cause for to gladin ofte
 Sens eche of 'hem recovered hath his make,
 Ful blisful maie they sing when they awake. 687

And with the shouting when ther songe was do
 That the Foulis made at ther flight away
 I woke, and othir bokis toke me to
 To rede upon, and yet I rede alway;
 I hope ywis to redin so some day
 That I shal metin some thinge for to fare
 The bet, and thus to rede I n'il not spare. 694

Explicit.

OF THE
CUCKOWE & THE NIGHTINGALE.

*Chaucer dreameth that he beareth the Cuckow and the Night-
ingale contend for excellency in singing.*

THE god of Love, ah, *benedicite* !
Howe mighty and howe gret a lorde is he !
For he can makin of lowe hertis hie,
And of hye lowe and lykè for to die,
And hardè hertis he can makin fre :

5

He can makin within a litil ffounde
Of sickè folkè whole, and freshe, and ffounde,
And of the whole he can ymakè feke ;
He can ybindin and unbindin eke
That he wol have yboundin or unbounde.

10

To tel his might my wit may not suffise,
For he can makin of wise folke ful nice,
For he may do al that he wol device,
And lithy folkè to distroyin vice,
And proudè hertis he can make agrise.

15

Shortly, al that evir he wol he may ;
Against him there dare no wight say naye,
For he can glad and greve whom him lykith,
And who that he wol he loweth or sikith,
And most his might he shedith er in May ;

20

For evèry true gentle hertè fre,
 That with him is or thinkith for to be,
 Against May nowe shal have some sferinge,
 Or to joye or ellis to some mourning,
 In no selson so moche, as thinkith me: 25

For whan that they may here the birdis singe,
 And se the flouris and the levis springe,
 That bringith into ther remembèraunce
 A manir ese ymedlid with grevaunce,
 And lusty thoughtis ful of grete longing; 30

And of that longing comith hevinesse,
 And therof growith oft grete sikènesse,
 And for the lacke of that that they desire;
 And thus in May ben hertis set on fire,
 So that they brennin forth in gret distresse. 35

I spekè this of feling trewily:
 What! tho that I be olde and unlusty
 Yet I have felte of the sickenesse through May
 Bothe hote and cold, and axis every day,
 How fore iwis there wote no wight but I. 40

I am so shakin with the fevirs white
 Of al this May ne slepe I but a lite;
 And also it is not lyke unto me
 That any hertè shouldin slepy be
 In whom that Love his firy darte wol smite. 45

But as I lay this othir night waking
 I thought howe lovirs had a tokining,
 And amonge 'hem it was a commune tale
 That it were gode to here the Nightingale
 Moche rathir than the leudè Cuckowe finge. 50

And than I thought anon as it was day
 I woldè faine go fomwhere to affay
 If that I might a Nightingale yhere,
 For yet had I none herde of al that yere,
 And it was tho the thirde night of May. 55

And right anon as I the day aspide
 No lengir would I in my bedde abide,
 But unto a wodde that was me fast by
 I went forthe my self alone boldily,
 And helde the way downe by a brokè fide 60

Tyl I came to a launde of white and grene,
 So faire an one had I nevir in bene;
 The grounde was grene, ypoudrid with daifye,
 The flouris and the grevis alike hie,
 Al grene and white, was nothing ellis fene. 65

There fate I downe among the faire flouris,
 And sawe the birdes trippe out of ther bowris
 There as they restid 'hem had al the night;
 They were so joyful of the day's lyght
 They began of Maye for to done honouris: 70

They coudin wel that service al by rote,
 And there was many a full lovely note;
 Some songin loudè as they had yplained,
 And some in othir manir voice yfained,
 And some songin al out with the ful throte. 75

They proynid 'hem and madin 'hem right gay,
 And daunfidin and leptin on the spray,
 And evirmore were two and two in fere,
 Right so as they had chofin 'hem to yere
 In Feverere on Saint Valentine's day. 80

And the rivir whiche that I sat upon
 It madin foche a noisè as it ron,
 Accordaunt with the birdis armony,
 Me thought that it was the best melody
 That mightin ben yherde of any mon. 85

And for delyte, I ne wotte nevir howe,
 I fel in foche a flombre and a fwowe,
 Nat al aslepe ne fully awaking,
 And in that fwowe me thought I herdè singe
 The sory birde, I mene the leude Cuckowe, 90

And that was upon a tre right fast by;
 But who was than evil apaide but I?
 Now God (quod I) that dyid on the crois
 Yeve sorowe on the and on thy leude vois!
 Ful litil joye have I now of thy crie. 95

And as I with the Cuckow thus gan chide
 I herdin in the nextè bush beside
 A Nyghtingale so lustily yfinge
 That with her clerè voice she madin ringe,
 Ecchoing thorough al the grene wode wide. 100

Ah ! gode swete Nightingale ! (quod I) then,
 A litil hast thou ben to longè hen,
 For here hath ben the leude sory Cuckow,
 And songin songis rathir than hast thou ;
 I pray to God that evil fire her bren ! 105

But now I wol you tel a wondre thing ;
 As long as I ylay in that swouning
 Me thought I wist what that the birdis ment,
 And what they sayd, and what was ther entent,
 And of ther speche I had full gode knowing. 110

There herdin I the Nightingale yfay,
 Now, gode Cuckow ! goith some where awaye,
 And let us that can singin dwellin here,
 For every wight eschevith the to here,
 Thy songis ben so elenge, in gode fay. 115

What, (quod she) what may the aylin as nowe ?
 It thinkith me I singe as wel as thou,
 For my songè is both true and eke plaine,
 And though I can not crakil so in vaine
 As thou dost in thy throte, I wot ner how. 120

And every wight may undirstandin me;
 But, Nightingale, so may they not done the,
 For thou hast many a nice queintè crie;
 I have the herdè faine Ocy, ocy:
 Howe might I knowin what that should ybe? 125

Ah, sole! (quod she) wost thou not what it is?
 Whan that I say Ocy, ocy, ywys
 Than menin I that I would wondre faine
 That al they werin shamfully yflaine
 That menin ought against love amis; 130

And also' I would that al tho had the dede
 That thinkin not in love ther life to lede,
 For who so wol not the god of Love serve
 I dare wel say he is worthy to sterue,
 And for that stil Ocy, ocy, I grede. 135

Eye! (quod the Cuckow) this is a queint lawe,
 That every wight shal love or be to draw;
 But I forfakin al soche company,
 For myne entent ne is not for to die,
 Noner while I live on Love's yoke to draw; 140

For lovirs ben the folke that ben on lyve
 That most disese yhave and most unthrive,
 And most endurin sorow, wo, and care,
 And that the lest yfelin of welfare;
 What nedith it ayenist trowth to strive? 145

What! (quod she) thou art alle out of thy minde;
 How might thou in thy churlinesse yfynde
 To speke of Lov'is servauntes in this wise?
 For in this world is none so gode service
 To every wight that gentle is of kinde;

150

For therof truly comith al godenesse,
 Therof al honour and al gentilnesse,
 Thereof worship, ese, and al hert'is lust,
 And parfite joye and ful assurid trust,
 And jolytie, and plesaunce, and freshenesse,

155

And lowlyhed, largeesse, and curtisye,
 And femelyhed, and trew company,
 And drede of shamè for to done amys,
 For he that truly Lov'is servaunt is
 Were lothir to be shamid than to die.

160

And that thys is the sothe whiche that I sey
 In that beleve I wil bothe live and dey;
 And, Cuckow, so I rede thou do ywys.
 Than (quod he) let me nevir havin blisse
 Yf evir I to that counsaile obey.

165

Nyghtingale, thou yspekist wondre faire,
 But for al that is the soth contrayre,
 For Love ne is in yongè folke but rage,
 And is in oldè folke a grete dotage;
 Who most it usith he most shal enpaire;

170

For therof commeth disese and hevinesse,
 So sorow', and care, and many' a grete likenesse,
 Despite, debate, and angre, and envy,
 Depraving, shame, untrust, and jelousie,
 Pride, mischefe, povertie, and wodenesse. 175

Loving is aye an office of dispaire,
 And one thing is therin that is not faire,
 For who that getteth of Love a litil blisse,
 But if he be alwaie therewith, iwis
 He maie full sone of age yhave his haire: 180

And, Nightingale, therefore hold the nie,
 For leve me well, for all thy queintè crie,
 If thou be ferre or longè fro thy make
 Thou shalt be as othir that ben forsake,
 And then thou shalt yhotin as do I. 185

Fie! (quod she) on thy namè and on the,
 The god of Love ne let the nevir the,
 For thou art worse a thousandfolde than wode,
 For many' one is full worthie and full gode
 That had be naught ne haddin Love ibee; 190

For evirmore Love his servauntes amendeth,
 And from all evill tachis 'hem defendeth,
 And makith 'hem to brenne right in a fire
 In trouthe and in worshipfull desire,
 And when him likith joy inough 'hem sendeth. 195

Thou, Nightingale, he sayid, be still,
 For Love have no reson but it is will,
 For oft tymis untrue folke he esith
 And true folke so bittirly displeith
 That for defaute of courage he let 'hem spill. 200

Then toke I of the Nightingale kepe
 How that she cast a sigh out of her depe,
 And saied, Alas that evir I was bore!
 I can for tene not saie one wordè more;
 And right with that worde she braut out to wepe. 205

Alas! (quod she) my hertè woll to breke,
 To herin thus this lendè birdè speke
 Of Love, and of his worshipfull service;
 Now god of Love, thou helpe me in some wise
 That I maie on this Cuckowe ben awreke. 210

Me thoughtin then that he sterte up anon,
 And glad was I tho that he was agon,
 And evirmore the Cuckowe as he flaie
 Ysayid, Farewell, farewell, poppingaie,
 As though he had yscornid me alone. 215

And then ycame the Nightingale to me,
 And sayid, Frende, forsoth I thankè the
 That thou hast likid me for to rescowe,
 And one avowe to Love ymake I now,
 That all this Maie I woll thy singir be. 220

I thankid her, and was right well apaied.

Ye, (quod she) and ne be thou not dismaied
Tho thou have herd the Cuckow erst than me,
For if I live it shall amendid be

The nextè Maie, if I be not affraied. 225

And one thing I woll redin the also,
Ne leve thou not the Cuckow ne' his loves so,
For all that he hath saied is strong lesyng.
Naie, (quod I) thereto shall nothing me bryng
For love, and it hath do me mochil wo. 230

Ye, hath it? Use (quod she) this medicine,
Every daie this Maie or that thou dine
Go lokin upon the freshe daïsie,
And though thou be for woe in poinct to die
That shall full gretly lessen the of thy pine. 235

And loke alwaie that thou be gode and true,
And I woll sing one of the songis newe
For love of the, as loude as I maie crie;
And then she began this songè full hie,
I shrewe all 'hem that ben of love untrue. 240

And when she had ysong it to the ende,
Now farewell, (quod she) for I motè wende,
And god of Love, that can right well and may,
As mochil joyè sendè the this daie
As any yet lovir he evir sende, 245

Thus taketh the Nightingale her leve of me,
 I praie to God alwaie with her to be,
 And joye of love he sende her evirmore,
 And shilde us fro the Cuckowe and his lore!
 For there is not so false a birde as he. 250

Forthe she yflewe the gentill Nightingale
 To all the birdis that were in that dale,
 And gate 'hem all into a place in fere,
 And befoughtin 'hem that they wouldin here
 Her disese; and thus she began her tale: 255

The Cuckowe, well it is not for to hide
 How the Cuckowe and I fast havin chide
 Evir sithin that it ywas daie light;
 I praie you all that ye doin me right
 Of that foule, and false, and unkindè, bride. 260

Then speke o birde for all by one assent;
 This mattir askith gode avisement,
 For we ben allè birdis here in fere,
 And sothe it is the Cuckowe is not here,
 And therefore we woll have a parliment; 265

And thereat shall the egle be our lorde,
 And othir peris that ben of recorde,
 And the Cuckowe shall be astir ysent,
 And there shall be yevin the judgèment,
 Or els we shall finally make accorde. 270

And this shall be ydone withoutin naie
 The morowe aftir Sainct Valentine's daie
 Undir a maple that is faire and grene
 Before the chambir windowe of the quene
 At Wodèstocke upon the grenè laie.

275

She thankid 'hem, and then her levè toke,
 And flew into an hauthorne by that broke,
 And there she fate and song upon that tre,
 For terme of life love hath withholdè me,
 So loudè, that I with that song awoke.

280

Explicit.

O leudè boke! with thy foule rudènessè,
 Sithe thou hast neithir beaute ne' eloquence
 Who hath the caused or yeve the hardinessè
 For to appere in my ladie's presence?
 I' am ful sikir thou knowest her benevo'lence,
 Full agreable to all her abiyng,
 For of all gode she is the best livyng.

287

Alas! that thou ne haddist worthinessè
 To shewin to her some plefaunt sentence,
 Sith that she hath thorough her gentillesse
 Acceptid the servaunt to' her digne reve'rence.
 O! me repentith that I ne' had science
 And leisir als to make the more florishyng,
 For of all gode she is the best livyng.

294

P ij

Beseche her mekely with all lowlinesse,
 Though that I be ferre from her in absence,
 To thinke on my trouth to' her and stedfastnesse,
 And to' abridge of my sorowes the vio'lence
 Which caused is, wherof knowith your sapience,
 She like emong to notifie me' her liking,
 For of all gode she is the best living.

301

L' ENVOYE.

Aurore of gladnesse, daie of lustinesse,
 Lucerne anight with hevenlie influence
 Illumined, rote of beautie and godenesse,
 Suspiris, whiche I effunde in silence,
 Of grace I beseche aledge let your writyng,
 Now of all gode sith ye be best livyng.

307

Explicit.

HEREAFTER FOLOWETH

HOW PYTE IS DEDE

AND BURIED IN GENTYLE HERTE.

Pyte, that I have sought so yore ago
 With hertè sore, and full of besy paine,
 That in this worlde was never wight so wo
 Withoutin dethe, and yf I shal nat faine
 My purpose was to Pite to complaine
 Upon the crueltie and tyrannye
 Of Love, that for my trouth doth me to die,

7

And whan that I by length of certaine yeres
 Had evir in one fought a time to speke,
 To Pite ran I all bespreint with teres
 To prayin her on Cruelte me' a-wreke;
 But or I might with any worde out breke,
 Or tel her any of my painis smerte,
 I found her ded and buried in an herte.

14

A downe I fel whan that I saw the herse
 Ded as a stone while that the swonne me lasse,
 But up I rose with coloure ful diverse,
 And pitously on her myne eyen I cast,
 And nerir the corse I gan presin fast,
 And for the soule I shope me for to pray;
 I was but lorne; there was no more to say.

21

Thus am I flaine sith that Pite is ded;
 Alas that day that evir it shulde fall!
 What manir man dare nowe hold up his hed,
 To whom shal now any foro'wfull hert call,
 Nowe Cruelte hath cast to fle us al,
 In ydle hope folke reddelesse of paine,
 Sith she is ded, to whom shal we complaine?

28

But yet encrefith me this wondir newe,
 That no wight wote that she is ded but I,
 So many men as in her tyme her knewe,
 And yet she dyid all so sodainly,
 For I have fought her er full besily
 Sithins that I had firste witte or mind,
 But she was ded er that I coude her find.

35

Aboute her herse there stod in lustily,
 Withoutin any mo as thoughtin me,
 Bountie, perfetely well armed and richely,
 And freshe Beaute, and Lust, and Jolite,
 Affurid Manir, Youthe, and Honeste,
 Wisdome, Estate, with Drede and Governauce,
 Confedrid both by bonde and aliaunce.

42

A compleinte had I writin in my honde
 To have yput to Pyte as a byl,
 But I there al this company yfonde
 That rathir wouldin all my causè spill
 Then do me help, I held my plaintè still,
 For to those folke withoutin any faile
 Without Pite there maie no bill availe.

49

Then leave all vertues save onely Pitie,
 Keping the corse, as ye have herd me saine,
 Confedrid by bonde unto Crueltie,
 And be assentid when I shall be flaine,
 And I have put my compleinte up againe,
 For to my foes my bill I dare not shewe
 The' effect, which sayith thus in wordis fewe :

56

Humblist of herte, hyist of reverence,
 Flowir benigne, coroune of vertues alle!
 Shewith unto your roiall excellence
 Your servaunt, if I durstin me so call,
 His mortall harme in which he is ifall,
 And nought all onely for his wofull fare
 But for your renome, as he shall declare.

63

It standeth thus; that your contary' Crueltie
 Allyid is ayenst your regalie,
 Undir colour of womanly beautie,
 For men shouldin not knowe her tyrannie,
 With Bountie, Gentilleffe, and Curtesie,
 And hath deprivid you thus of your place,
 That is hie Beaute', apertenant to your grace: 70

For kindly by your heritage and right
 Ye be annexid evir to Bountie,
 And verily ye ought to doe your might
 To helpin Trouthe in his adversitie;
 Ye be also the coroune of Beautie,
 And certis if that ye want in these twaine
 The worlde is lore; there is no more to saine. 77

Eke what availeth manir and gentilleffe
 Withoutin you, o most benigne cature!
 Shall Crueltie ybe your governess?
 Alas! what hertè maie it long endure?
 Wherefore but ye rathir ytakin cure
 To brekin that perillous aliaunce
 Ye sleen 'hem that ben in your obeisaunce. 84

And furthir ovir, if ye suffir this
 All your renome is fordoe in a throwe,
 There shall no man ywete what pitie is;
 Alas that your renome is fall so lowe!
 Ye be' also fro your heritage ithrowe
 By Crueltie, that occupieth your place,
 And we dispairid that sekin your grace. 91

Have merceie on me, thou herenus quene,
 That you have fought so tendirly and fore,
 O let some streame of light on me be sene,
 That love and drede you er longir the more!
 For, sothily to faine, I bere so fore;
 And though I be not connyng for to plaine
 For God's love have mercie on my paine. 98

My paine is this, that what so I desire
 That have I not, ne nothyng like thereto,
 And evir setteth desire mine herte on fire;
 Eke on that othir side, where that I go
 What manir thing that may encrese my wo
 That have I redy unfought every where;
 Me lackith but my deth and then my bere. 105

What nedith to shewe percel of my paine,
 Sith every wo that herte maie bethinke
 I suffir, and yet dare not to you plaine?
 For well I wote though that I wake or winke
 Ye recke not whethir that I flete or sinke;
 And nathelesse yet my trouth I shall susteine
 Unto my deth, and that shall well be sene: 112

This is to faine, that I will be yours ever,
 Though ye me flea by Crueltie your so,
 Algate my spirite shall nevir discevir
 Fro your service for any paine or wo,
 Sith ye be dedde, alas that it is so!
 Thus for your deth I maie wepin and plain
 With herte fore and full of besie pain. 119

Explicit.

*These Verses next folowing were compiled by Geff. Chauser,
and in the written copies folowe at the ende of The Com-
plainte of Pite.*

THE longè nyghtis, when every creture
Shuld have ther rest in somewhat as by kind,
Or ellis ne may ther life not longe endure,
It fallith moſte into my woful minde
How I ſo farre have brought my ſelf behind,
That ſafe the deth ther may nothing me liſſe,
So diſpairid I am from allè bliſſe.

7

This ſame thought me laſtith til the morow,
And from the morowe forth til it be eve;
There nedith me no care for to borow,
For both I have gode laiſir and gode leve;
There is no wight that will my wo byreve,
To wepe enough and wailin all my ſyll;
The ſorè ſparke of peine now doth me ſpil.

14

This Love, that hath me ſet in ſoche a place
That my deſire he wil nevir fulfyl,
For neithir Pite, Mercy, neithir Grace,
Can I not find, and yet my wofull herte
For to be dede I can it not arace,
The more I love the more ſhe doth me ſmerte,
Thorowe whiche I ſe withoute remedie
That from the deth I may no wiſe aſerte.

22

Now sothly what she hight I wol reherse;
Her name is Bountie, set in womanhed,
Sadnes in youth, and beautie pridèlesse,
And plesaunce undir govirnaunce and drede,
And her surname is eke faire Ruthèlesse,
The wisè knit unto gode avinture,
That for I love her she fleth me gillelesse;
Her love I best, and shall while I may dure:

Bett than my selfe a hundrid thousand dele,
Than al this world'is richis or cature;
Now hath not Love me bestowid wel,
To lovin there I nevir shal have parte?
Alas, right thus is turnid me the whele!
Thus am I flaine with Lov'is furious darte:
I can but love her best my swetè so,
Love hath me taught no morè of his arte
But servin alwaye and stint for no wo.

Within my trewè carefull herte ther is
So mochil wo and eke so litil blisse
That wo is me that evir I was bore!
For al that thinge which I desire I misse,
And al that evir I wolde not iwis
That finde I redy to me evirmore;
And of all this I n'ot to whom me plaine,
For she that might me out of this ybring
Ne rechith nought whethir I wepe or sing,
So litil routh hath she upon my paine!

Alas! whan slepinge tyme is then I wake,
Whan I shuld daunce for fere lo than I quake;
This hevy life I lede, lo! for your sake,
Though ye therof in no wise hedè take,
Myn hert'is lady and whole my live's quene!
For truly durst I say as that I fele
Me semith that your swetè herte of stels
Is whettid now againist me to kene.

57

My derè herte and best beloved fo!
Why lykith you to do me al this wo?
What have I don that grevith you or saide?
But for I serve and love you and no mo,
And whilest I live I wil evir do so,
And therefore, swete! ne bethe not il apaide;
For so gode and so faire as that ye be
It wer a right gret wondir but ye had
Of al servauntis both of gode and badde,
And best worthy of al them I am he.

67

But nevir the lesse, my righte lady swete!
Though that I be unkonninge and unmete
To serve as I coud best aye your highnes,
Yet is ther none fainir, that would I hete,
Than I to do you ese or ellis bete,
What so I wist that were to your highnes;
And had I might as gode as I have wil,

Than shuld ye fele wher it were so or none,
For in this world livinge than is ther none
That fainir wolde your hert'is wil fulfil.

77

For both I love and eke drede you so sore,
And algates mote and have don you ful yore,
That bettir loved is non ne nevir shal,
And yet I would beseche you of no more
But lovith wel, and be not wroth therfore,
And let me serve you forth, lo! this is al;
For I am nought so hardy ne so wode
For to desire that ye should lovin me,
For wel I wotte, alas! that may not be,
I am so litil worthy' and ye so gode,
For ye be one the worthyist on live,
And I the most unlikely for to thrive.

89

Yet for al this wetith ye full righte wel
That ye ne should me from your servyce drive,
That I ne wil aye with my witis five
Serve you truly what wo so that I fele,
For I am set so hy upon your whele
That though ye nevir wil upon me rewe
I must you love, and bene evir as trewe
As any man ycan or maye on live.

97

But the more that I love you, godely fre!
The lassè finde I that ye lovin me:

Alas! whan shal that hardè wit amende?

Wher is now al your womanly pite,

Your gentilnes and your debonairte?

Wil ye nothings therof upon me spend,

And so whole, swete! as I am youris all,

And so grete wil as I have to you serve?

Now certis and ye let me thus ysterve

Yet have ye wonnin therupon but small,

107

For at my knowing I do nothing why:

And thus I wil besече you hertily,

That if evir ye finde whilis ye live

A truir servaunte to you than am I

Levith than, and fleith me hardily,

And I my deth to you wil al forgive;

And yf ye finde no trewir verily,

Wollin ye suffir than that I thus spil,

And for no manir gilt but my gode will?

As gode were than untrue as true to be.

117

Explicit.

GODE COUNSAILE OF CHAUCER.

FLIE fro the prese and dwell with Sothfastnesse;
Suffise unto thy gode though it be small,
For horde hath hate, and climbyng tikilnesse,
Prece hath envie, and wele is blent oer all;
Savour no more then the behovin shall;
Rede well thy self, that othir folke canst rede,
And trouthe the shall delivir it' is no drede. 7

Paine the not eche crokid to redresse
In trust of her that tournith as a balle;
Grete rest standith in litil businesse;
Beware also to spurne again a nalle;
Strive not as doith a crocke with a walle;
Demith thy self that demist othir's dede,
And trouthe the shall deliver it' is no drede. 14

That the is sent receve in buxomenesse;
The wrastring of this worlde askith a fall;
Here is no home, here is but wildirnesse;
Forthe pilgrim, forthe o best out of thy stall;
Loke up on high, and thanke thy God of all;
Weivith thy luste and let thy ghost the lede,
And trouthe the shall delivir it' is no drede. 21

Explicit.

CHAUCER'S A, B, C,

CALLED LA PRIERE DE NOSTRE DAME.

*Chaucer's A, B, C, called La Priere de nostre Dame, made,
as some say, at the request of Blanch Duchesse of Lanca-
ster, as a praier for her private use, being a woman in
her religion very devout.*

A.

ALMIGHTIE and allmerciable Quene!
To whom all this world fleith for soccour,
To have relese of sinne, of sorow, of tene,
Glorious Virgine! of all flouris flour,
To the I fle, confoundid in errour;
Helpe and releve, almightie debonaire!
Have mercy of mine perillous langour,
Venquish me hath my cruill adversaire.

B.

Bountie so fixe hath in my hert his tent,
That well I wote thou wilt my succour be;
Thou canst not warnin that with gode entent
Axith thyne helpe, thine hert is aye so fre,
Thou art largeffe of plaine felicite,
Havin and refute of quiete and rest;
Lo how that thevis sevin chasyn me;
Helpe, Ladie bright! or that mine ship to brest.

Qij

C.

Comfort is none but in you, Lady dere!
For lo! mine sinne and mine confusioun,
Which ought not in thin presence for to' apere,
Han taken on me a grevous actioun,
Of veray right and disperatioun,
And as by right they mightin well sustene
That I were worthy mine damnatioun,
Ne were it of thy mercy, blisfull Quene!

D.

Dout is there none, o Quene of mise'ricord!
That thou n'art cause of grace and mercy here,
God vouchidesafe throughe with us to' accord;
For certis, Christ'is blisfull modir dere!
Were now the bow ybent in swiche manere
As it was first of justice and of ire
The righfull God would of no mercy here;
But through the han we grace as we desire.

E.

Ever' hath mine hope of refute in the be,
For here besorne full oft in many' a wise
Unto mercy hast thou recevid me,
But mercy, Lady! at the gret assise,
When we shall come before the High Justise,
So litil freut shall then in me ben found
That but thou or that day correctin me
Of very right mine werke will me confound.

F.

Flying I fle for succour to thine tent,
 Me for to hide fro tempest full of drede,
 Beseking you that ye you not absent,
 Though I be wicke: o help yet at this nede!
 All have I ben a best in wit and dede,
 Yet, Lady! thou me close with thine owne grace;
 Thine enemye and mine (Lady, take hede)
 Unto mine deth in point is me to chafe.

48

G.

Gracious maid and modir! which that never
 Were bittir nor in erth nor in the se,
 But full of swetenesse and of mercy ever,
 Helpe, that mine Fadir be not wroth with me;
 Speke thou, for I ne dare him not yse:
 So have I done in erth, alas the while!
 That certis but if thou mine succour be
 To sinke eterne he will mine ghost exile.

56

H.

He vouchidesafe, tell him, as was his will,
 Become a man as for our alliaunce,
 And with his blode he wrote that blisfull bill
 Upon the crosse as generall acquitaunce
 To every penitent in full cryaunce;
 And therefore, Lady bright! thou for us prey,
 Then shalt thou stentin allè his grevaunce,
 And maken our foe to saylin of his prey.

64

Qij

I.

I wotè well thou wilt ben our succour,
 Thou art so full of boantie in certaine,
 For when a soulè fallith in errour
 Thine pitie goeth and halith him againe,
 Then makist thou his pece with his Soverain,
 And bringist him out of the crokid strete :
 Whoso the lovith shall not love in vaine,
 That shall he find as he the life shall lete.

72

K.

Kalendis enluminid ben they
 That in this world ben lightid with thine name,
 And who so goith with the the right wey
 Him dar not dredin in soule to ben lame.
 Now Quene of comfort ! sith thou art the same
 To whom I sechin for my medicine
 Let not mine so no more mine wound entame,
 Mine hele into thine hond all I refine.

80

L.

Lady ! thine sorrow can I not portrey
 Undir the crosse, ne his grevous pennaunce ;
 But for your bothis peine I you do prey
 Let not our aldir so make his bostaunce
 That he hath in his leftis, with mischaunce !
 Convid that that ye both han bought so dere :
 As I said erst, thou ground of all substaunce !
 Continue' on us thin pitous eyin clere.

88

M.

Moyſes, that ſaw the boſh of ſlambis rede
 Brenning, of which then nevir a ſticke brend,
 Was ſigne of thine unwemmid maidinhede;
 Thou art the boſh on which there can deſcend
 The Holy Ghoſt, the which that Moyſes wend
 Had ben on fire; and this was in figure;
 Now Lady! fro the fire us defend
 Which that in hell eternally ſhall dure.

96

N.

Noble Princeſſe! that nevir haddiſt pere,
 Certis if any comfort in us be
 That commith of the, Chriſtis modir dere!
 We han none othir melodie ne gle
 Us to rejoyce in our adverſite,
 Ne advocat that will and dare ſo prey
 For us, and that for as lite hire as ye,
 That helpin for an Ave'mary or twey.

104

O.

O very light of eyin tho ben blind!
 O very luſt of labour and diſtreſſe!
 O treſorere of bountie to mankind!
 The whom God cheſe to moder for humbleſſe,
 From his ancille he made the maiſtèreſſe
 Of heven and erth, our bill up for to hede,
 This world awatith ay on thine godenes,
 For thou ne failed'eſt nevir wight at nede.

112

P.

Purpose I have sometime for to enquire
 Wherefore and why the Holy Ghost the sought;
 When Gabriel's voice come to thine ere
 He not to werre us swich a wondir wrought,
 But for to save us that he sithin bought;
 Then nedith us no wepon us to save,
 But onely there we did not as us ought
 Do penitence, and mercy aske and have.

120

Q.

Quene of comfort! right when I me bethinke
 That I agiltid have both him and the,
 And that mine soule is worthy for to sinke,
 Alas! I caitife, whedir shall I fle?
 Who shall unto thine sonne mine menè be?
 Who but thine selfe, that art of pitie well?
 Thou hast more routh on our adversite
 Than in this world might any tonguè tell.

128

R.

Redresse me, modir! and eke me chastise,
 For certainly my Fadir's chastising
 Ne dare I not abidin in no wise,
 So hideous is his full reckining.
 Modir! of whom our joy began to spring,
 Be ye mine judge and eke my soul's lech,
 For ay in you is pitie abounding
 To each that will of pity you besech.

136

S.

Soth is that he ne grauntith no pite
 Withoutin the, for God of his godenesse
 Forgivith none but it like unto the:
 He hath the made vicaire and maistèresse
 Of all this world, and eke govirnereffe
 Of hevin, and repressith his justise
 Astir thine will, and therefore in witnesse
 He hath the crownid in so royall wise.

144

T.

Temple devout! ther God chese his wonning,
 Fro which these misbeleved deprivid ben,
 To you mine foulè penitent I bring;
 Receve me, for I can no ferthir fleen.
 With thornis venemous, o hevin Quene!
 For which the erth accursid was full yore,
 I am so woundid, as ye may well sene,
 That I am lost almost, it smert so fore.

152

V.

Virgine! that art so noble' of apparaile,
 That ledist us into the highè toure
 Of Paradise, thou me wise and counsaile
 How I may have thy grace and thy succour,
 All have I ben in filth and in errour:
 Lady! on that countrey thou me adjourne
 That clepid is thine bench of freshe flour,
 There as that mercy evir shall sojourne.

160

X.

Xpen thine sonne, that in this world alight
 Upon a crosse to suffer his passioun,
 And suffered eke that Longeus his hert pight,
 And made his hert's blodè renne adoun,
 And all this was for my salvatioun;
 And I to him am fals and eke unkind,
 And yet he will not mine dampnatioun;
 This thanke I you, succour of all mankind! 168

Y.

Ysaac was figure of his deth certaine,
 That so ferreforth his fadir would obey
 That him ne rought nothing for to be flaine;
 Right so thy sonnè list a lambe to dey:
 Now Lady full of mercy! I you prey,
 Sith he his mercy furid me so large,
 Be ye not scant, for all we sing or say,
 That ye ben fro vengeance alway our targe. 176

Z.

Zacharie you clepith the opin well
 That wisht his sinfull soule out of his guilt,
 Therefore this lessoun out I will to tell,
 That n'ere thine tendir hert we werin spilt.
 Now Lady bright! sith that thou canst and wilt,
 Ben to the sede of Adam merciablen;
 Bring us unto that paleis that is built
 To penitents, that ben to mercie able. 184

Explicit.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Chaucer's Dreame,	5
The Dreame of Chaucer,	85
The Assemble of Foules,	135
The Cuckowe and the Nightingale,	160
Pyte is dede,	172
These Verses next folowing, &c.	177
ode Counsaile of Chaucer,	182
Chaucer's A, B, C,	183

From the APOLLO PRESS,
by the MARTINS;
Feb. 22. 1783.

END OF VOLUME ELEVENTH.