

BELL'S EDITION.
The POETS of GREAT BRITAIN
COMPLETE FROM
CHAUCER to BURCHFIELD.



CHAUCER VOL. VI.
Under the wide Skaues?
Yeats: Ganselen answered
The color that in Chaucer's time

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
GEOFF. CHAUCER.

IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES.

THE MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

From Urry's Edition 1721,

THE CANTERBURY TALES

From Tyrwhitt's Edition 1775.

Crete well CHAUCER whan ye mete----

Of ditect and of longes glade,

The which he---made,

The londs fulfilled is over all.

GOWER.

My maister CHAUCER---chiefe poete of Bretayne----

Whom all this londschulde of ryght preferre,

Sith of our langage he was the lode-sterre----

That made first to dyfilye and rayne

The gold dewe dropys of speche and eloquence

Into our tunge thugh his excellence.

LYDGATE.

The honour of English tong is dede----

My maytter CHAUCER, floure of eloquence,

Mirroure of fructuous ententment,

Univerfel fadir in science----

This londis verray tresour and richesse----

The firste fynder of our fayre langage.

OCCLEVE.

Venerabil CHAUCER, principall poete but pere,

Hevinly trumpet, orlege and regulere,

In eloquence balme, condict and diall,

My lky fountane, clere strand, and rois riall,

Of fresche endite throw Albioun iland braid.

DOUGLAS.

O reverend CHAUCER! rose of rethouris all,

As in oure toung flour imperial

That raise in Brittane evir, quha reidis right

Thou beiris of Makers the triumphs royall,

The fresche enamilt termes celestiall:

This mater couth haifilluminit full bricht,

Was thou nocht, of our Inglis all the light,

Sarmounting every toung terrestriall

As far as Mayi's morrow dois midnight.

DUNBAR.

VOL. VI.

EDINBURG:

AT THE Apollo Press, BY THE MARTINS.

Anno 1782.

Library THE *Magak*
POETICAL WORKS
OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

VOL. VI.
CONTAINING HIS

687

CANTERBURY TALES, viz.

THE COKE'S TALE OF GAMEL. || THE PARDON. AND TAPST.
THE PLOWMAN'S TALE, || THE MARCH. SECOND TALE,
Ec. Ec. Ec.

But natheles certain
I can right now no thrifty Tale sain,
But CHAUCER, (though he can but lewedly
On metres and on ryming 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 head-roll worthy to be fil'd----
Old Dan Geoffrey, in whose gentle spright
The pure well-head of poetry did dwell----
He whilst he lived was the foveraigne 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:

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Anno 1782.

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

THE COKE'S TALE OF GAMELYN.

Now lithin and listinith, and
Herkinith you aright,
And ye shullin herè me tell
You of a doughti knight.

Sir Johan of Boundis clepid was
This ilkè knight's name;
Wele coudin he of noriture,
And eke of mochil game.

5

The Coke's Tale of Gamelyn] So many of the mss. have this Tale that I can hardly think it could be unknown to the former editors of this poet's Works; nor can I think of a reason why they neglected to publish it. Possibly they met only with those mss. that had not this Tale in them, and contented themselves with the number of Tales they found in those mss. If they had any of those mss. in which it is I cannot give a reason why they did not give it a place amongst the rest, unless they doubted of its being genuine; but because I find it in so many mss. I have no doubt of it, and therefore make it publick, and call it the fifth Tale. In all the mss. it is called *The Coke's Tale*, and therefore I call it so in like manner: but had I found it without an inscription, and had been left to my fancy to have bestowed it on which of the pilgrims I had pleased, I should certainly have adjudged it to the Squire's Yeoman, who though as minutely described by Chaucer and characterized in the third place, yet I find no Tale of his in any of the mss.: and because I think there is not any one that would fit him so well as this, I have ventured to place his picture before this Tale, tho' I leave the Cook in possession of the title. *Urry.*

Thre sonnis this knight had, and with
His bodi he them wan ;
The eldest was a mochè shrew,
And sonè he began.

10

His brotherin lov'd thir fadir,
And of him were agast ;
Th' eldist deserv'd his fadir's curse,
And had it at the last.

15

The godè knighte his fadir did
Ylive so long and yore,
That Deth was comin him unto,
And handlid him full fore.

20

The godè knight ycarid moch,
Sore fike there as he lay,
How that his childerin shuldè
Lyvin after his day.

He haddè ben widè where, but
Noon hufbondè he was ;
Allè the londe which that he had
It was verray purchas ;

25

And fayn he woldè that it were
Dressid among them all,
That everich of them had his part
As it mightè befall.

30

Tho sent he into the contrè
Aftir wisè knightis,
To helpin dele his londis, and
Dressin them to rightis.

35

He sent them word by letteris
That they shuld hye blyve
If that they wol spekin with him
While that he was on live.

40

Sone as those knightis herdin how
Thus sekè that he lay,
Tho haddè they no mannir rest
Nothir by night nor day

Tyll that they comin unto him,
There as he layd him still,
Upon his deth'is bedde for to
Abidin Godd'is will.

45

Thus then saidin the godè knight,
Sekè there as he lay,
Lordis, I warnè you forsothe,
Withoutin any nay,

50

I may no lengir livin here
In this forowful stound,
For thorough Godd'is will supreme
Dethe drawith me to ground.

55

There ne was no one of them alle,
That herdin him aright,
That thei ne haddè mochil routh
Upon that ilkè knight;

60

And feidè, Sir, for Godd'is love
Ne dismayin you nought,
God may don botè of balè
Which that is now ywrought.

Then answerid them the gode knight, 65
Sikè there as he lay,
Botè of balè God may send,
I wote it is no nay.

But I besekè you knightis,
Al for the love of me, 70
Goith and dresth my londis
Among my sonis thre.

And, frendis, for the love of God
Delith them nat amys,
And forgettith not Gamelyn, 75
My yongè sone that is.

Takith hedè unto that one
As well as to that other ;
Seldome ye sein any heir
That helpè woll his brother. 80

Tho lettin they the knighte liggin
Which that was not in hele,
And in thei wentin to counsaile
His londis for to dele ;

For to delin them all to oon 85
That was ther only thought,
And for that Gamelyn yongist was
He shuldè havin nought.

Al the londè which that there was
They deltin it in two, 90
And letè Gamelyn the yonge
Withoutin londè go.

And evèrich of them feidin
Till othir fullè loude,
His bretherin mowe give him londe 95
Whan that he godis koude

Whan they had delid the londis
Aftir their owne will,
Tho camin they unto the knight
There as he lay full still, 100

And toldin unto him anon
How that they hadd ywrought,
And the knight there as he seke lay
Ylikid it right nought.

Then feidè the knight angrily, 105
I fware by Seint Martyn
For all that which ye have ydone
Yet is the londè myn.

For Godd'is love, my neighbouris,
Standith ye allè still, 110
And I woll delin my londe
Aftir myn ownè will.

Johan myn eldist sone shall
Y havè plowis five,
That was my fadir's heritage 115
While that he was on live ;

And my middillift sone shall
Five plowis have of lond
That I holpe for to gettin
With myn own rightè hond ; 120

And all myn othir purchasis
Of landis and of ledes,
That I bequethè Gamèlyn,
And allè my gode stedes.

And I besekè you, gode men,
That lawis con of lond,
For Gamèlyn'is love that
Thus my bequest may stond.

125

Thus delid hath the gode knightè
His londè be his dai,
Right upon his deth'is beddè,
Sore fike there as he lay :

130

And sone aftirwerdis he
Lay as a stonè still,
And dyid whan the tymè came,
As it was Crist'is will.

135

Anon aftir that he was dede.
And undir grafs ygrave,
Tho sonè the eldir brothir
Begylid the yongè knave.

140

He token into his hondis
His londis and his lede,
And also Gamèlyn himself
To clothin and to fede.

He clothid him and feddè him
Evil and ekè wroth,
And letin his londis for fare,
And als his housis both ;

145

His parkis eke, and his wodis,
And diddè nothyng wel, 150
And fithin he it aboughtè
On^h his own feire fell.

So longè tyme was Gamèlyn
In his brother's Hall,
For the strengist of godè will 155
They doutidin him all.

There ne was none wight in that place,
Nothir yongè ne olde,
That woldè wrathin Gamèlyn
Were he nevir so bold. 160

Gamelyn fode upon a day
In his brother's yerde,
And he began with his hondè
To handilin his berde.

He thoughtin upon his londis, 165
That layin long unfawe,
And also of his feire okis,
That dounè were ydraw.

His parkis werin al brokin,
And al his deir reved; 170
Of allè his gode stedis noon
Was there with him beleved;

His housis werein unhelid
And full evilly dight;
Tho thought this yongè Gamèlyn 175
It wentè not aright.

Aftir camè his brothir in
Ywalkyng statelich thare,
And feidè unto Gamèlyn,
What ? is our metè yare ?

180

Tho Gamèlyn ywrothid hym,
And swore by Godd's boke,
Thou shalt y-go bake, luke, thy self;
I wol not be thy coke.

How, brothir Gamèlyn, quod he,
Thus answerist me thou ?
Thou spakist nevir soche a word
Yet as thou doist now.

185

By my faith, feidè Gamèlyn,
Now me it thinkith nede ;
Of all the harmis that I have
I nevir yit toke hede.

190

My parkis ben y brokin, and
My deir ben yrevèd ;
Of myn harnis and my ftedis
Noght is there me beleved.

195

Al that my fadir me bequethe
Al goith now to shame,
And therefore have thou Godd's curse,
Brothir John by thy name.

200

Than thus bespakin his brothir,
That rapè was of vees,
Stondith stillè, thou gadiling,
And holdith right thy pees :

Thou shaltè ben full faign to have 205
 Thy metè and thy wede.
 What spekiſt thou, thou gadiling,
 Of lond othir of lede?

Then feidè to him Gamèlyn,
 The childè that was yinge, 210
 Chriſt'is curſè mote he havin
 That clepith me Gadlyng.

I am no wors gadlyng than the,
 Parde ne no wors wight,
 But born I was of a lady, 215
 And gottin of a knyght.

Ne durſt he not to Gamèlyn
 Not oo fote ferthir go,
 But clepid to him his meinè,
 And feidè to them tho; 220

Goith and betith wele this boy,
 And ravith him his wit,
 And let him lere anothir time
 To anſwerin me bett.

Then feid the chyld, yong Gamèlyn, 225

.....
 Chriſt'is curſè mote thou havin
 What? brother art thou myn.

And if that I ſhall algatis
 Y betin be anon,
 Chriſt'is curſè mote thou havin 230
 But that thou be that one.

And right anon his brothir did,
In that his gretè hete,
Makin his meinè fett stavis,
This Gamèlyn to bete.

235

Whan everich of them had a staff
Into his hond nomin,
Gamèlyn was aware tho,
He forsaugh them comin.

Tho Gamèlyn fough them comin
He lokid ovir all,
And was warè of a pestil
Stodè undir the wall.

240

And Gamèlyn was fully light,
And thidir gan he lepe,
And droffe alle his brother's men
Right fonè on an hepe.

245

He lokid like a wild lion,
And laidin on gode wone;
Tho whan his brothir feyè that
He begannè to gonne.

250

He fleigh up untill a lofte,
And shet the dorè fast:
Thus Gamèlyn with his pestil
Madè them all agast.

255

Somè for Gamèlyn's love,
And some for his envie,
Allè withdrowin them to halves
Tho he began to pleie:

What now? seide Gamelyn; brothir,
Evil motè ye the;
Wollè ye beginnin contek
And than so fonè fle?

260

Gamelyn sought his brothir tho
Whithir he was yflowe,
And saugh where that he lokid out
At a solere windowe.

265

Brothir, tho seidè Gamelyn,
Comith a litil nere,
And I woll techin the a plaie
Attè the bokillere.

270

His brothir to hym answerid,
And swore by Seint Richere,
While the pestil is in thyn honde
I woll comin no nere.

275

Brothir, I woll makin the pece,
I swere by Crist's ore;
Castith away the pestil tho,
And wrathè the na more.

I mot nedis, seide Gamelyn,
Wrathè me at onys,
For that thou woldist make thy men
To brekin my bonis.

280

Ne had I haddin meyn and might,
In myn ownè twey armes,
To have y pushin them fro me
They would have done me harmes.

285

To Gamèlyn tho feidin his
Brothir; Be thou not wrothe,
For to fein the havin harme
Me werin rightè lothe. 290

I ne did it not, my brothir,
But right for a fending,
For to lokin if thou were strong,
And art so very ying. 295

Come adoun then to me, quod he,
And grauntè me my bone,
Of oo thing I woll askin the,
And we shull faughtè sone.

Adoun then camin his brothir, 300
That fikill was and fell,
And was fwithè right fore aghast
Of that ilkè pestil.

He feidè, Brothir Gamèlyn;
Askè me now thy bone, 305
And loke that you me blamè, but
I grauntè it full sone.

Tho feidin yongè Gamèlyn;
Brothir mynè, I wifs
And if we shullè ben at one 310
Thou must me grauntè this:

Al that my fadir me bequethe,
While that he was on live,
Thou mustè do me it to have,
If that we shull not strive. 315

That thou shalt havè, Gamèlyn,
If were by Crist's ore,
Al that thy fadir the bequethe,
Though thou woldist have more.

Thy londè, that now lyith lie, 320
Full well it shall be fowe,
And thyne housis yraisid up
That now ben layd full lowe.

Thus seide the knight to Gamèlyn,
But only with his mouth, 325
And thoughtè but of falsèness,
As he right welè couth.

The knightè thoughtin on traïson,
But Gamèlyn on noon,
And went and kistid his brothir, 330
And then they were at oon.

Alas for yongè Gamèlyn!
Nothing at all he wist
With swichè falsè traïson
His brothir hath him kist. 335

Lithinith and lestinith, and
Holdith you stille your tonge,
And ye shall herin straunge talking
Of Gamèlyn the yonge.

There happid to be there beside 340
Tryid a wraustiling,
And therefore there was ysettin
A ram and als a ring.

And Gamelyn was in a will
To wendè thereunto, 345
For to previn his mighte, and se
What that he couthè do.

Now brothir myne, quod Gamelyn,
By holie Seint Richere
Thou mustè nedis lene to night 350
Me a litil courfere,

That is freshè to the sporis,
Upon him for to ride;
I mustin on an errand go
A littil here beside. 355

Be God, feidè his brothir tho,
Of stedis in my stall
Goith and chesith the the best,
And sparith none of alle,
Of stedis or of courferis, 360
That stondith 'hem beside,
And tellith me, my gode brothir,
Whithur thou wiltè ride.

Herè besidis, brothir, is
Y cryid a wraffling, 365
And therefore shallè ben y sett
A ram and als a ring.

Mochè worship it were sothly,
Brothir, unto us all
Might I the ram and als the ring 370
Bringin home to the Hall.

A stedè there was sadilid,
Smarth was it and eke flete;
Gamèlyn diddin a peire of
Sporis fast on his fet. 375

He sat his fote in the stirrop,
The stedè he hestrode,
And towardis the wrastring
The yongè childè rode.

Tho Gamèlyn the yongè was 380
Riddin out at the gate
The falsè knight his own brothir
Lokkid it astir thate.

And he besoughtin Jesu Christ,
That is of hevin king, 385
That he mightè brekin his nek
In that ilk wrastring.

Affone as Gamèlyn cam there
The wrastring placè was
He lightid down of the stede 390
And stod in on the gras.

And ther he herd a frankelyn
Weloway for to sing,
And began in all bittirly
His handis for to wring. 395

Godè man, seidè Gamèlyn,
Why makist thou this fare?
Is there no man that may you help
Out of this nicè care?

Alas! feidè this frankèlyn,
That evir I was bore!
For tweiè stalworthè sonis
I wene I have forlore.

400

A champion is in the place
That has wroughtin me forow,
For he hath slayn my too sonis
But if that God them borrow.

405

I woldè givin ten poundis,
Be Jesu Crist, and more,
With the nonis-I fond a man
To handilin him fore.

410

Godè man, feidè Gamèlyn,
Wilt thou this welè done?
Holdè my hors while that my man
Ydrawith of my shone.

415

And help my man also to kepe
My clothis and my stede,
And I woll into the place gon
And loke how I may spede.

By God, feidè the frankelyn,
It shall right so be don,
I woll my filfin be thy man
To drawin of thy shone.

420

And wendè you into the place,
Swete Jesu Crist the spede,
And dredè noght of thy clothis
Nor of thy godè stede.

425

Barefote and ungert Gamelyn

Into the ringe came,

Allè that werin in the place

430

Hedin of him the name,

How he durstin aventure him

On him to doȝ his might

That was so doughti a champion

In wraſtling and in fight.

435

Upitertè tho the champion

Full rapely right anon,

Towardis yongè Gamelyn

He tho began to gon,

And feidè, Who is thy fadir,

440

And who is eke thy fire ?

Forsothè thou art a gret ſole

For that thou camist hire.

Anon Gamelyn anſwerid

The ſtout champion tho,

445

Thou knewist full wele my fadir

Whilè that he couthè go :

Whilis that he was on live,

I ſwere by Seint Martyn,

Sir John of Boundis was his name,

450

And I am Gamelyn.

Felawe, feidè the champion,

So evir mote I thrive,

I knew right welè thy fadir

While that he was on live ;

455

And thy felfin, yonge Gamèlyn,
I wil that thou it here,
Whilis thou wert a yongè boy
A mochè fhrew thou were.

Then feidè yongè Gamèlyn,
And fwore bi Crift'is ore,
Now am I oldir vox thou shalt
Y findin me a more.

460

Be God, feidè the champion,
Welcome motè thou be ;
Come thou onys in my honde
Shaltin thou nevir the.

465

It was welè within the night,
And bright the mone fhone,
Whan Gamèlyn and the champion
Togidir gan to gon.

470

The champion caftè tornis
To Gamèlyn that was preft,
And Gamèlyn ftodin fillè,
And bad him don his beft.

475

Then feiden yongè Gamèlyn
Unto the champion,
Now that I have fully provid
Many tornis of thine,
Thou moftin, feidè Gamèlyn,
Prove oon or two of myn.

480

Gamèlyn to the champion
Yede smartily anon,
Of all the tornis that he coude
He shewid him but one ;

485

And kest him on the listè side
That thre ribbis to brak,
And thereunto his left armè,
That gaf a grettè crak.

Then seidè yongè Gamèlyn

490

Smertly to him anon,
Shall it be holdin for a cast,
Or ellis go for none ?
Bi God, seidè the champion,
Whedir so that it be,

495

He that ones comith in thyn hand
Shallin he nevir the.
Than seidè the frankèlyn, that
Thre sonis there had lore,
Blessid be thou, yonge Gamèlyn,

500

That evir thou were bore !
For now unto the champion
This have I for to seie,
This is the yongè Gamèlyn
That taughtè the to pleie.

505

Ayen answerde the champion,
That likid nothyng well,
He is allè their maistir, and
His pleiè is right fell.

Sithin that I wraflilid first 510
It is agon full yore,
But I was nevir in my life
Handilid so before.

Yonge Gamèlyn stode in the place
Allone withoutin ferk, 515
And seide, If there be any mo
Let them comè to werk.

The champion which that painid
Him to workin so fore,
It semith by his countinaunce 520
That he willè no more.

Gamèlyn in the placè stode
Stillè as any stone
For to abidin wrafliling,
But there ycomith none. 525

There ne was none with Gamèlyn
That woldè wraflle more,
For he handilid the champion
So wonderoufly fore.

Two gentilmeinë that owned the place 530
Come to Gamelyn, God geve them grace!
And seidè to him, Have done on
Thy hofin and thy shone;
Forsothè at this timè all
This faire it is ydone. 535

Tho seidè to them Gamèlyn,
So mote I well yfare,
I havè not yet halvindele
Yfoldè all my ware.

Than seide the champion so broke, 540
I may it welè syvere
He is a sole that thereof bieth,
Thou sellest it so dere.

Tho seide to him the frankèlyn,
That was in mochill care, 545
Fellow, he saidè, whi lakkist
Thou so moche of his ware ?

Be Seint Jame, that in Galis is,
That many man has fought,
Yet it is moche too godè chepe 550
That thou hastin ybought.

Tho that the wardinis werin
Of that ilk wraffiling
Comin forth, and brought Gamèlyn
The ram and als the ring. 555

And thus wann yongè Gamèlyn
The ram and eke the ring,
And wentè forth with mochil joy
Homeward in the morning.

His brothir se where that he come 560
With all the grettè rout,
And bad the porter shute the gate,
And holdin him without.

The porter of his lord's word
Was so right fore agast, 565
And stert anon unto the gate
And lokkid it full fast.

Now lithinith and lestinith
Bothè yongè and old,
And ye shullin herè gamin 570
Of Gamèlyn the bold.

Gamèlyn comith thereunto
For to have comin in;
But all in vaine; the dore then was
Y shitt fast with a pyn. 575

Than seidè yongè Gamèlyn,
Porter, undo the yate,
For many a godè mann'is
Sonnè stondith thereat.

Then answerid him the porter, 580
And swore by Godd'is berde,
Thou ne shalt, frendè Gamèlyn,
Comin into this yerde.

Thou lyist, seidè Gamèlyn,
So broukin I my chynne: 585
He smote the wikit with his fote,
And brak away the pyn.

The porter streightwey saughè tho
It might no bettir be,
He sette fote on erthè, and 590
Fast he began to fle.

Bi my faith, feidè Gamèlyn,
That travaile is ylore,
For I am on fote as light as
Thow, though thow had yswore. 595

Gamelyn ovirtoke the porter,
And his teenè ywrak,
And gert him full upon the nek,
That he the bon to brak; 600

And toke him by that oon armè,
And threw him in a well;
Seven hundrid fadom it was depe,
As I have herdè telle.

Whan Gamèlyn the yongè thus
Had yplayid his play, 605
Allè that in the yerdè were
Withdrewin them away,

That dredin him full forè for
The wreke that he wrought,
And for the fayir cumpany 610
That he had thithir brought.

Yong Gamèlyn yede to the gate
And letè it up wide,
He letin in allè the rout
That gon woldin or ride; 615

And feidè, Ye ben ywelcome
Withoutin any greve,
For we wol ben maisteris here,
And askè no man leve.

It n'as but yesterdai I last, 620
Seide yonge Gamelyn,
In my brother's feleris
Five tonn of right gode wyne.

I willè not this company
Partyn with me on twyn, 625
And if ye will don astir me,
Whil any sope is inn :

And if my brothir grutchith us,
Or makith foulè chere,
Othir for spence of mete and drink 630
That we shull spendin here,

I am the ovircatorir,
And bere our althir purse,
He shallè have for his grutching
Sancta Maria's curse. 635

My brothir is but a nigon,
I fwere by Crist's ore,
And we well spendè largily
That he hath sparid yore.

And whofo, that makith grutching 640
That we do here ydwell,
He shall go unto the porter
Into the drawè well.

Sevin dayis and sevin nightes
Gamelyn held his fest, 645
With mochè solace that there was,
And eke no mannir helle.

All in a litil torrit his
Brothir laydè ysteke,
And saugh him waftin his godis,
But durstè not to speke. 650

Right erli in a morrowning,
Upon the eightè day,
The gestis come to Gamèlyn,
And woldè gon thir way. 655

Lordis, tho seidè Gamèlyn,
And wollin ye fo hie?
Allè the wyne is not yet dronk,
So broukin I mine eye.

Yonge Gamèlyn in his hertè 660
Was sorowfull and wo
Whan that his gestis toke their leve
And fro him woldè go.

He woldè that they had dwellid
Lengir, and they seide Nay, 665
But bitaught Gamèlyn to God,
And bad him have gode dai.

Thus madè Gamèlyn his feste,
And brought it well to end,
And aftirward his gestis toke 670
Levè their way to wend.

Now lithinith and listinith,
And holdith you your tonge,
And ye shullin herè gamin
Of Gamèlyn the yonge. 675

Herkynith, Lordilingis, and
Lislinith you aright,
Whan al the gestis werin gon
How Gamelyn was dight.

Allè the while that Gamelyn 680
Had hold his mangerie
His brothir thought on him bewreke
With his false trecherie;

Tho whan that Gamelyn's gesses 685
Y ridin were and gon
Gamelyn stode anon alone,
Frendè tho had he none.

Tho astir this full sone it fell,
Within a littil stound,
That Gamelyn was takin, and 690
Full hardly was he bound.

Than forth comith the falsè knight
Out of the folerè,
And to Gamelyn his brothir
He goith fullè nere, 695

And seidin unto Gamelyn,
Who made the so bold
For to destroyin and waste
The store of my household?

Brothir, answerid Gamelyn, 700
Now wrathè the right noght,
For it is many day agon
Sithins it was ybought:

For, brothir, thou hastin haddè,
I fwere by Seint Richere, 705
Of fiftene plowis of londè
This full fixtenè yere ;

And of allè the bestis which
Thou hastè forth ybredd,
That my fadir to me bequethe 710
Upon his deth'isbedd :

Of allè this full fixtene yere
I gevè the the prow,
For the metè and the drinkè
That we have spendid now. 715

Than thus seidè the falsè knight,
(Full evil mote he the)
Herkinith, brothir Gamelyn,
What I woll gevin the ;

For of my body, brothir, heir 720
Y gettin have I none ;
I wollè makin the my heir,
I swerè by Seint John.

Par mafay, seidè Gamelyn,
And if that it so be, 725
And thou thinkist as thou seyist,
May God yeldin it the !

Nothing wistè yong Gamelyn
Of his brother'is gile,
And therefore he him begilid 730
In verry littil while.

Gamèlyn, seiden he, o thing
I nedis must the tell,
Tho whan thou threwè my porter
Into the drawè well,

735

I sworè in that wrathè, and
In that my gretè mote,
That thou shuldift ybondè be
Both hondè and eke fote :

And therefore I besechè the,
My brothir Gamèlyn,
Letith thou noght me be forsworn,
As brothir art thou mine ;

740

But letith me ybindin the
Both hondè and eke fote,
For me to holdin myne avough,
Right as I the behote.

745

Brothir, tho seide Gamèlyn,
As so motin I the,
Thou shaltè not ben forsworin
For the love of me.

750

Tho madin thei this Gamèlyn
To fitte, might he not stand,
Tyll that he him ybondin had
Both fote and also hand.

755

The falsè knight his brothir of
Gamèlyn was agast,
And sentè astir fetteris
To fetterin him fast.

His brothir madè lesingis 760
On him ther as he stode,
And toldè them that comin in
That Gamèlyn was wode.

Gamèlyn stode to a post
Y bondin in the Hall, 765
And tho that ther ycomin in
Lokid upon him all.

Evir stodè yong Gamèlyn
Evin boltè upright,
But mete nor drink ne had he none 770
Nowthir by day ne night.

Tho seidè yongè Gamèlyn,
Brothir myn, by my hals
Now I have wele espyid that
Thou art a parti fals. 775

Had I but wistè that treson
That thou haddist yfond
I woldin have gevin strokis
Or I had ben ybound.

Gamèlyn stodè thus bondin 780
As still as any stonc
For too dayis and too nightis,
And metè had he none.

Then seide at last this Gamèlyn,
That stodè boundin strong, 785
Adam Spencer, methinkith that
I fastè al to long ;

Therefore, Adam le Dispencer,
Now I besechè the,
For the mochè lovè with which
My fadir lovid the, 790

If thou may comin to the kaies,
Lefith me out of bond,
And for-thi I wollè departin
With the of my fre lond. 795

Than him answerid this Adam,
Which that was the Spencer,
I have yservid thy brothir
This full fixtenè yere,
And if I shuldè letin you 800
To gon out of his boure
He woldin aftirwardis seye
That I were a traytour.

Adam, answerid Gamelyn,
So broukin I myn hals, 805
Thou shaltè findin my brothir
At the last rightè fals;

And therefore, brothir Adam, me
Lofè out of my bonds,
And I wollè departin with 810
The of myn own fre londs.

Upon so gode a forewardè
Saidin Adam, I wis
I wollè doin thereunto
Allè that in me is. 815

Adam, tho feidè Gamèlyn,
As fo mowin I the,
I woll holdè the covènaunt,
An thou too wollè me.

Anon as Adam his lordè 820
To beddè was ygone,
Adam tokè the kaies, and lat
Gamèlyn out anon.

He unlokid yonge Gamèlyn 825
Both hondis and eke fete,
On hope of the avauncement
Which that he him bèhete.

Then feidè yongè Gamèlyn,
Thankid be Godd'is sonde,
For now that I am ylofid 830
Both fote and also hond !

Had I but etin a litil,
And thereto dronk aright,
There is none in this housè that
Shuld bindè me this night. 835

Tho Adam tokè Gamèlyn,
As still as any stonè,
And haddin him into the spence
Right rapily anon ;

And settin him to his sroupere 840
Right in a privie stede,
And badin hym do gladily,
And Gamèlyn fo dede.

Anon affone as Gamèlyn
Had etin wel and fine, 845
And thereunto had ydrankin
Well of the reddè wyne,

Adam, feide yongè Gamèlyn,
Tell what is now thy rede ;
For me to go to my brothir, 850
And gerdin of his hede ?

No, Gamèlyn, feidin Adam,
It shallè not be so,
But I can tellè the a rede
That is yworth the too. 855

I wotè wele forsothè that
(And this it is no nay)
We shullin have a mangerie
Rightè upon Sondag ;

Of abbotis and priouris 860
Full many here shal be,
And othir men of holie cherch,
As I can tellè the :

Thou shaltè stond up by the post,
As thou were hondè fast, 865
And I shall them leve unlok, that
Away thou may them cast :

And whan that they have y etin,
And washin have their hondes,
Tho thou shalt bespekin them all 870
To bring the out of bondes :

And if that they will borrow the
 That werin a gode game,
 Than werin thou out of prisson
 And I als out of blame ; 875

But if that evèrich of them
 Sayè unto us Nay,
 I shullè don anothir thing,
 I swerè by this day.

Thou shallè have a godè stasse, 880
 And I woll have another,
 And Crist'is cursè have that con
 That failè shall that othir.

Ye, for God, seidè Gamèlyn,
 I say it right for me 885
 If that I failin on my fide
 Than evil mote I the.

If that we shullin algatis
 Affoile them of thire synne ;
 Warnith me, my brothir Adam, 890
 Whan that we shall begynn.

Now Gamèlyn, seidin Adam,
 By Seintè Charitè
 I wollè warnè the befor
 Whan that the time shall be. 895

Whan that I twinkin upon the
 Lokè for to be gon,
 And cast away the fetteris,
 And come to me anon.

Adam, seidè yong Gamèlyn,
Y blissid be thy bones!
'That is a rightè gode counsaile
Y gevin for the nones.

If that they shullin wernè me
To bring the out of bendes
I wellè settin gode strokis
Full right upon their lendes.

Tho the Soudy was ycomin,
And these folk to the feste;
Faire they werein ywelcomid
Bothè the leste and meste.

And evir as they at the Hall
Dorè were comin in
They evèrich castin an eie
On yongè Gamèlyn.

The fallè knight his own brothir,
So full of trecherie,
Allè the gestis that there were
At that ilk mangerie

Of Gamèlyn his own brothir
He toldin them with mouth
Allè the harmis and the shame
That e're he tellè couth.

Tho they werein yservid streit
Of messis too or thre;
Than seidè yongè Gamèlyn,
How do ye servè me?

It ne is not wele yservid,
 Be God that allè made,
 That I shold sittin here fasting
 And othir men make glade. 930

The falsè knightè his brothir,
 Thereas that he ystode,
 Toldin to allè his gestis
 That Gamèlyn was wode. 935

And Gamèlyn there stodè still,
 And answerid right noght,
 But of Adam's wordis he
 Heldè still in his thought.

Tho Gamèlyn began to speke,
 Right doulefully withall,
 Unto the grette lordis that
 Ysatyn in the Hall : 940

My Lordlingis, tho seidin he,
 For Crist's passon
 Helpin to bringè Gamèlyn
 Out of thilkè prison. 945

Than seidè to him an abbot,
 (Sorow upon his cheke!)
 He shallin have Crist's curse
 And Seintè Maries eke, 950

That shall the out of this prison
 Beggin owthir borow,
 But evir worthè hym full wele
 That doth the mykil sorow. 955

And anon aftir that abbot
Than spakin anothir,
I woldè that thyn hede were of
Though thou were my brothir.

Allè that the shall borrowin 960
More them foulè fall;
And thus yfeidin allè they
That werin in the Hall.

Than seidè to him a priour,
Evil mowin he thrive! 965
It is grettè sorow and care,
Boy, that thou art on live.

On, on, seidè yonge Gamelyn,
So broukin I my bone,
Now that I havin espyd 970
That frendis have I none.

A curfid mot he worthè be,
Bothè fleshe and blode.
That evir doth to priouris
Or abbotes any gode. 975

Anon Adam the Dispencer
Takin up hath the cloth,
And lokid unto Gamelyn,
And saugh that he was wroth.

Adam of the pantrie at thilk 980
Timè litil he thought,
And too godè flavis unto
The Hallè dore he brought.

Adam lokid on Gamèlyn,
 And he was war anon, 985
 And cast awaie the fetteris,
 And began for to gon.

Tho he camin unto Adam,
 He toke to the one staff,
 And begannin to werkè wele, 990
 And gode strokis he gaff.

Gamèlyn came into the Hall,
 And Adam Spencer both,
 And lokid them all aboutin
 As they haddè ben wroth. 995

Gamèlyn sprenith holi watir
 All with an okin spire,
 That some of them that stode upright
 Fillin into the fire.

There was no mannir lewdè man 1000
 That in the Hallè stode
 That woldè doin Gamèlyn
 Any thingè but gode.

But thei stodè besidin, and
 Letè them bothè werch, 1005
 For thei ne haddè no routhè
 Of men of holi cherch.

Of abbot or of priour, or
 Of monk or of canon,
 That Gamèlyn hath ovirtoke, 1010
 Anon they yedin down.

There ne was none of them allè
That with his staff ymette
That he made them ovirthrowe,
And quyttè them his dette.

8
1015

Tho Gamèlyn, seidè Adam,
For Seintè Charite
Payth, I pray, gode liveray,
And for the love of me;

And I wollè kepin the dore;
Se evir here I masse
Er that they ben affoilyd
Ther shallè noon ypassè.

1020

Doutè the noght, seide Gamèlyn,
While that we ben in fere;
But kepè thou welè the dore
And I woll werkin here;

1025

Besturrih the, gode Adam, and
No lettith none yfle,
And we shall tellè largily
How many here there be.

1030

To Gamèlyn seidin Adam,
Doith them all bur gode,
For thei ben men of holi cherch;
Drawith of them no blode :

1035

Savith right wele the coroune,
And doith them no harmes,
But brekith bothè their leggis,
And sithin here thir armes.

Thus Gamelyn and Adam hath
Y wroughtin rightè fast,
And pleidin with the monkis tho,
And madè them agast. 1040

Forth hidir they comè riding
Full jolily with swaines,
But home agen they werin ledde
In cartis and in waines. 1045

Tho as they haddin all ydone
Than seidin a gray frere,
Alas! alas! my Lord Abbot,
What diddè we now here? 1050

Tho that we hithir did ycome
It was a coldè rede;
Us had far bettir ben at home
With watir and with brede. 1055

While Gamelyn made orderis
Of monkis and of frere
Evir stodè his brothir stille,
And madè foulè chere.

Tho Gamelyn up with his staff,
That he full welè knew,
And grettin him upon the nek,
That he him overthrewe, 1060

A litil above the girdil
The riggin bone to braft,
And sett him in the fetteris
There as he sattin arst. 1065

Sittith thou there, my brothir John,
Tho seidè Gamèlyn,
For to colin thy hotte bodie,
As I did colè myn. 1070

And swithe as they yhaddè wele
Wrekin them on their fone,
They askid for the watir, and
They within them anon. 1075

What some of them for their lovè,
And somè for their awe,
Allè the fervauntis fervid
Them of the bestè law.

The shereff was thennis away 1080
But about a five myle,
And all was toldin unto him
Within a littil whyle.

How Gamèlyn and Adam had
Ydon a forry res, 1085
Boundin and woundin many men
Agen the king's pece.

Estsonis tho begannin fone
Striffè for to awake,
And the shiregereve about did 1090
Cast Gamèlyn to take.

Now lithinith and leslinith,
So God geve you gode fine,
And ye shull herin a gode game
Of yongè Gamèlyne. 1095

Now four-and-twenty yongè men,
That holdin them full bold,
Comin unto the shiregereve,
And seidè that they wold

Both Gamèlyn and eke Adam 1100
Yfettè be the way;
The shiregereve gafè them leve
Tho soth as I you say.

Thes yongè meinè hidin them
Fast, woldè they not lynne 1105
Tyll that they comin to the gate
There Gamèlyn was inne.

Thy knockidin upon the gate,
The porter tho was nye,
And lokid forth out at an hole, 1110
As man that was full flye.

The porter had beholdin them
But for a litil while,
He lovid welè Gamèlyn,
And was adrad of gile, 1115

And forthi letè the wicket
Y stondin fullè still,
And askid them that stant without
What ywas their will?

For allè the gret company 1120
Than spake bot one alone,
Undo the gatis, porter, and
Latè us in ygone.

Then feidè to them the porter,
So broukin I my chynne 1125
Ye shullè sayin your errand
Or that ye comin inne.

Say to Gamèlyn and Adam,
If that their wille it be,
We wollè spekin here with them 1130
Two wordis othir thre.

Fellaw, feidè the porter tho,
Stondith thou ther ystill,
And I woll wend to Gamèlyn
To wetin of his wille. 1135

And in wentè the porter tho
To Gamèlyn anon,
And feidè, Sire, I warnè you
That here be come your fone;

For lo ! the shiregerev'is men 1140
Now ben all at the gate
For to ytekin you bothè;
Shallè ye not escape.

Porter, tho feidè Gamèlyn,
So mote I welè the, 1145
I woll allowè the thy wordes
Whan I my timè se.

Go ageyn, porter, to the gate,
And dwell with them a while,
Awaitin, and thou shaltè se 1150
Right fone, porter, a gile.

Adam. tho feidè Gamèlyn,
Lokè the to be gon,
We havè foomen at the gate,
And frendis nevir one.

1155

It ben the shiregerev'is men
That hithir ben comin,
They ben yfwore togideris,
That we shull be nomin.

To Gamèlyn feidè Adam,
Hiè the righte belyve,
And if I failè the this day
Than evil mote I thryve.

1160

And we shullin so welcomè
The shiregerev'is men,
That some of them I trow shall make
Their beddis in the fen.

1163

Then thorough the posternè gate
Yong Gamèlyn out went,
And a gode sturdie cartè staffe
In his hondè he hent.

1170

And Adam Spencer hentè sone
Anothir grettè staffe
For to helpè yong Gamèlyn,
And gode strokis he gaffe.

1173

Adam yfellið bath his tweyne,
And Gamèlyn felled thre,
The tothir settè fete on erth,
And fast began to fle.

What ? feidin Adam Spencer tho, 1180
 So evir hire I maffie
 I havè right gode reddè wyne,
 Pray drinkith er ye paffe.

Nai, nai! by God, feidè they tho,
 Thy drink is nothing gode, 1185
 It woldè makin mann'is brayne
 To lyin in his hode.

Yong Gamèlyn tho stodè still,
 And lokid him about,
 And faide, The shiregereve comith 1190
 With a full grettè rout.

Adam Spencer, feid Gamèlyn,
 My rede it is now this,
 Abidin we not lengir here
 Lest we farin amys. 1195

I rede that we to wode ygonn
 Er that we be yfound;
 Betir is there lose for to gonn
 Than in the toune ybound.

Adam then tokè by the hond 1200
 This yongè Gamèlyn,
 And echè of them to the othir
 Drankin a draft of wyne,

And affirwardis toke their course,
 And wentè streight their way; 1205
 Tho fond the shiregereve the nest,
 But in it was none ay.

The shiregereve lightid adoun,
 And went into the Hall,
 And fond the lord yfetterid
 Full fastè therewithall. 1210

The shireve tho unfetterid
 Him rightè sone anon,
 And sentin astir a gode leche
 To hele his riggè bon. 1215

Letè we now this falsè knight
 Lie in his mochill care,
 And tellè we of Gamèlyn,
 And lokè how he fare.

Gamèlyn into the wild wode
 Ystalkid is full stille,
 And Adam le Dispencer it
 Ylikid but right ille. 1220

Tho Adam swore to Gamèlyn,
 And that be Seint Richere,
 Now I say that it is mery
 To ben a dispencer; 1225

That muchè levire me werin
 The kayis for to bere,
 Than walkin in this wildè twode
 My clothis all to tere. 1230

Adam, seidè yong Gamèlyn,
 Disinayè the right noght,
 For many a gode mann's child
 In carè is ybrought. 1235

As they thus in the wode stodin,
Ytalking both in fere,
Adam herdè talking of men,
And nigh them thought they were.

Tho Gamèlyn undir the wild 1240
Wodè lokid aright,
Full fevin score of yongè men
He saugh right wel ydight;

Allè were fattè at their mete
In a compas about; 1245
Adam, tho feidè Gamèlyn,
Now havin ye no doute,

For astir balè comith bote,
Thorough Godd'is grete might;
Methinkith of mete and of drink 1250
That I havin a sight.

Adam le Dispencer lokid
Tho undir wodè bowe,
And whan that he the metè saugh
Tho he was glad inowe; 1255

For now he hopid unto God
For to havin his dele,
And he was full fore alongid
Aftir a godè mele.

Anon as he feide that word 1260
Streight the maistir outlawe
Saughe Gamèlyn and Adam both
Undir the wodè shaw.

Lo! yongè men, feide the maistir
 Outlaw, by the gode rode 1265
 I am aware of some gestis,
 Pray God fendin us gode! 687

Loke! yondir be two yongè men
 That ben right, wel adight,
 A! peradventure they ben mo, 1270
 Whofo lokid aright.

Arifeth up quick yongè men,
 And fettè them to me,
 For it is gode that we wetin
 What meinè that they be. 1275

Up thei stertin quik at that word,
 Sevin fro the dinnere,
 And they mettin with Gamèlyn
 And Adam Dispencere.

Whan that they werin ney to them 1280
 Than feidè thus that one,
 Yeldith up to us, yongè men,
 Your bowis and your flone.

Than feidè to them Gamèlyn,
 That yongè was of elde, 1285
 Full mochil sorow mote they have
 That unto you shall yelde:

I cursè woll none othir wight
 But right mine ownè selve
 Tho ye may fettin unto you 1290
 Fyve, and than be ye twelve.

They herdin by his wordis that
Gret might was in his arme,
And forthi there was none of them
That woldè don him harme,

1295

But feidin unto Gamèlyn
Right mildily and still,
Comith aforin our maistir,
And say to him thy will.

Yongè man, seidè Gamèlyn,
Upon your leaute
Tellirh what man your maister is
Which that ye with ybe.

1300

Tho allè they answerid him
At ones without lesing,
Our maister is ycorounid
Of Outlawis the King.

1305

Adam, feide yongè Gamèlyn,
Go we in Crist's name,
He may nothir metè nor drink
Y wernè us for shame ;

1310

And if that he be hendè, and
Comin of gentil blode,
He woll geve us both mete and drink,
And doin us some gode.

1315

By Seintè Jame, feide Adam tho,
What harme so that I gete
I will adventure me to the
Dorè that I had mete.

Tho Gamèlyn and Adam both
Y wentè forth in fere,
And they both gretè the maistr
Which that they fondè there.

1320

Than seidè to them the maistr,
That King was of Outlawes,
What do ye feke, ye yongè men,
Undir the wodè shawes ?

1325

Yong Gamèlyn answerid tho
The King with his coroune,
He mustè nedis walk in wodes
That may not walk in toune.

1330

Sire, we walkè not here in wodes
Non harmè for to do,
But if peradventure we mete
A dere to shete thereto,

1335

As meinè that ben right hungry,
And mow no metè fynd,
And very hardè ben bellad
Undir the wodè lynd.

Of Gamèlyn's wordis tho
The maistr haddè routhè,
And seidè to them, Ye shall have
Inow, have God my trouthe.

1340

Anon he baddè them sittin
Dounè for to takè rest,
And baddè them etin and drink,
And that too of the best.

1345

As they were eting and drinking
Of the best wele and fine,
Than seide the ton to the tothir
This is yonge Gamelyne. 1350

Tho was the maister of outlawes
Into counsaile nomin,
And told how it was Gamelyn
That thichir was comin. 1355

Anon as he had herdin all
How that it was befall,
He madè Gamelyn maistir
Undir him o're them all.

Within the third weke afir this
To him comith tiding,
To the maistir of outlawis,
Which that now was their king,
That he shuldè ycomin home,
For that his pees was made; 1365
And of that joyfull tiding he
Was wonderously glade.

Tho seide he to his yongè men,
The sothè for to tell,
To me be comin tidingis
I may no lengir dwell. 1370

Tho was yong Gamelyn anon,
Withoutin tarying,
Made maistir of outlawis, and
Y corounid their king : 1375

Tho was yong Gamelyn crounid
The King of the Outlawes,
And among them walkid a while
Undir the wodè shawes.

The falsè knight his brothir now 1380
Was shiregereve and Sire,
And lete his brothir be endite
For hatè and for ire.

Tho werin all his bondmeinë
Sory and nothing glad 1385
Whan that Gamelyn their lordè
Wolves Hede was cryed and made,

And sentin outè his meinè
Where they mightin him fynd,
For to sekin yonge Gamelyn 1390
Undir the wodè lynd,

To tellè to him tidingis
The winde was ywent,
And allè his gode revid was,
And all his men yshent. 1395

Whan that they haddè hym foundin
On kneys they them sette,
And adoun with their hodè, and
Gamelyn their lord grette.

They seiden, Sire, now wrathè not 1400
You for the godè rode,
For we have brought you tidingis,
But they be nothing gode.

Now is thy brothir shiregereve,
 And he hath the baillie, 1405
 And thereto hath enditid the,
 And Wolves Hede doth the crie.

Allas ! tho seidè Gamèlyn,
 That e're I was so flak,
 That I ne hadd brokin his nek 1410
 Whan I his riggè brak.

Goith, and gretith you welè
 My housbondis an wif,
 I wollè ben at the next shire,
 So havè God my lif. 1415

Gamèlyn camè well redy
 Unto the nextè shire,
 And there the false knight his brothir
 Was bothè Lord and Sire.

Gamèlyn camè boldilich 1420
 Into the Motè Hall,
 And put adoun his hode among
 The lordilingis all.

God savè you, Lordilingis !
 Which that now herè be ; 1425
 But as for the, brokebak shereve,
 Evil motè thou the !

Why hastè thou doin to me
 That shame and villonie
 Fer to latin enditè me, 1430
 And Wolf'is Hede me crie ?

Tho thought the falsè knight on him
For to have ben awreke,
And letè takin Gamèlyn ;
Must he no more yspeke.

1435

Mightè there be no mannir grace,
But Gamèlyn at last
Was into prisoun ycastin,
And fetterid full fast.

This Gamèlyn hath a brothir
That cleped was Sir Ote ;
As gode and hend a knight he was
As mightin gon on fote.

1440

Right anon yede a messager
Unto that gode knight,
And toldin him altogethir
How Gamèlyn was dight.

1445

Anon as Sir Ote herdin had
How Gamèlyn was dight,
He was right passin fory tho,
Ne he was nothing light :

1450

And letè saddle him a stede,
And streit the weie he name,
And unto his tweie bretherin
Right sonè there he came.

1455

Sir, seide this Sir Ote unto
The shiregerevè tho,
We ben but only thre brethren,
Shall we be nevir mo,

And thus hast thou yprifoundid 1460
The bestè of us all ;
Soche anothir brothir as thou
Evil mote him befall !

Sir Ote, seidè the falsè knight,
Now letè be thy curs ; 1465
By God for these thi wordis he
Shallè farin the wors.

Now to the king'is prifoun he
Is lesfully ynome,
And there he shall abidin 1470
Untill the justice come.

But parde, seidè Sir Ote tho,
Bettir it shall ybe
I biddin him unto maynprise,
And that thou grauntè me, 1475

Untill the nextè sitting shall
Come of deliveraunce,
And than lete Gamèlyn fairely
Ysfondin to his chaunce.

Brothir, in soche a forewardè 1480
I takin him to the,
And by thy fadir'is foulè,
That the begat and me,

If that he be not right redy
Whan that the justice fitte 1485
Thou shaltè berin the judgement,
For all thy grettè witt.

I grauntin it wele, seide Sir Ote,
That it shall so ybe;
Letith delivir him anon, 1490
And takin him to me.

Tho Gamelyn was delivered
To Sir Ote his brothir,
And that night ydwellid in fere
The ton with the tothir. 1495

On the morow seide Gamelyn
Unto Sir Ote the hend,
My brothir, he seidè, forsothe
I motè from the wend,
To lokin how my yongè men 1500

In wode ledin their lif,
And whethir that they livin now
In joie or elles in strif.

Be God, tho answerid Sir Ote,
That is a coldè rede, 1505
Now I se that alle the cark
Shall fallin on my hede;

For whan that the justice sittith,
And thou be not yfound
I shall anon be takin, and 1510
In thy stede be ybound.

Brothir, tho seidè Gamelyn,
Dismayè the right noght,
For be Seintè Jame in Galis,
That many man hath sought, 1515

If so that God Almighty hold
Me my lif and my wit
I wollè ben there right redy
Whan that the justice sit.

0

Than seide Sir Ote to Gamelyn,
God sheldè the fro shame!
Comith whan that thou seist tyme,
And bring us out of blame.

1520

Now lithinith and lestinith,
And holdith you right still,
And ye shullè herin how that
Gamelyn had his will.

1525

Anon Gamelyn wentin his
Way undir the wode rife,
And he yfondè there playing
His yongè men of prife.

1530

Tho was this yongè Gamelyn
In hert right glad inow
Whan that he fond his yongè men
Undir the wode bow.

1535

Gamelyn and his yongè men
Ytalkidin in fere,
And they all haddè right gode game
Their maistir for to here.

His men told him of adventures
Which that they had yfound,
And Gamelyn told them agen
How he was fast ybound.

1540

All the while that Gamelyn was
Outlaw had he no curs; 1545

There ne was no man that for him
Yferid ought the wois,

But abbotis and priouris,
And monkis, and chanon;
In them forsothe ne last he noght 1550

Whan er he might them nom.

While Gamelyn and his yong men
Y made mirthis ryve,
The falsè knight his own brothir,
Evil motè he thryve! 1555

For all this while he waft about,
Both one day and othir,
On purpose for to hire the quest
To hangin his brothir.

Gamelyn stodin on a day, 1560
And round him he beheld
The wild wodis and the shawis
Within the wildè feld;

He thoughtin upon his brothir,
How that he him behete 1565
That he ywoldin be redy
Whan that the justice fete;

He thoughtin welè that he wolde,
Withoutin more delay,
Y comin afore the justice 1570
For to kepin his day;

And seide to his yongè men,
Now dightith you full yare,
For whan that the justice sittith
We mote nedis be there;

0
1575

For I am undir a borow
Until that I comin,
And my brothir instede of me
To prison shall be nomin.

Be Seint Jame, seide his yongè men,
And that thou rede thereto,
Ordeinith how it shallè be,
And it shall so be do.

1580

While Gamelyn was ycoming
There that the justice satt
The falsè knight his own brothir
Forgattin he not that,

1585

To hire the meinè on his quest
To hangin his brothir,
And though thei haddè not that oon
He wolde han that othir.

1590

Tho comith yongè Gamelyn
From undir the wode rise,
And he broughtin along with him
His yongè men of prise.

1595

I se wele, seide Gamelyn,
The justice is ysette;
Go thou afor us, Adam, and
Lokè how that it spette.

Adam wentè into the Hall, 1600
And lokid all about,
And he saugh there yflondè tho
Lordingis grette and flout,

And Sir Ote, Gamèlyn's brothir,
Yfetterid wele fast; 1605
Tho wentin Adam out of Hall
As he werin agast.

Adam seidè to Gamèlyn,
And to his felawes all,
Sir Ote yflondith fetterid 1610
Within the Motè Hall.

Seide Gamèlyn, If God geve us
Gracè wel for to do
He shallin it abegge anon
That him broughtin thereto. 1615

Then seidin Adam Dispencer,
That lokkis haddin hore,
Christ's curse motè he havin
That boundin him so fore.

And if thou wiltè, Gamèlyn, 1620
Doin astir my rede,
There is none in the Hallè that
Shall bere aweie his hede.

Adam, tho seidè Gamèlyn,
We wollè not do so; 1625
We woll fle only the giltif,
And lat the othir go.

I will my selve into the Hall,
And hire the justice speke,
And on all them that ben giltif
I wollè ben awreke. 1630

Lat none escapin at the dore;
Take, yongè meinè. yeme,
For I wollè ben the justice
This day domis to deme. 1635

Pray God spedè me this ilk dai
At this my newè werke!
And Adam, comith thou with me,
For thou shalt be my clerke.

His meinè all answerid him, 1640
And bad hym don his best,
And if thou to us havè nede
Then shalt fyndin us prest:

For we wollè stondin with the
Whilis that we may dure, 1645
And but that we werkin manly
Payith us then no hure.

Yongè men. seidè Gamèlyn,
So mot I wele y the,
As ye a right trusty maistrir 1650
Shulè findin of me

And rightè thereat the justice
Yfattin in the Halle,
In wentè tho yong Gamèlyn
Boldly amonges them all. 1655

Gamelyn letè unfettir
His brothir out of bend;
Than seidè to him Sir Otis,
His brothir that was hende,
Thou haddist almost, Gamelyn, 1660
Dwellid away to long,
For the questè is ygon out
On me that I shulde honge.

Brothir, tho seidè Gamelyn,
God gevè me gode rest, 1665
This gode day they shull ben hongid
That ben upon the quest;

And thereto the justice bothè,
That is the juggè man,
And eke the slieriff our brothir, 1670
For through him it began.

Than seidè yongè Gamelyn
Unto the false justice,
Now is thi powir at an end,
You must nedis arise. 1675

Thou hast ygevin domis that
Ben evil allè dight;
I wollè settin in thi sete,
And dreslin them aright.

But the justice sattin stillè, 1680
And roosè not anon,
And Gamelyn with his swerdè
Clevid his chekè bone.

Yonge Gamelyn toke him in his
Armis, and no more spak, 1685
But threw him ovir the barrè,
And his armè to brak.

Durst no one unto Gamelyn
Sayè nothing but godè,
For fere of the gret cumpany 1690
That withoutin yfode.

Gamelyn sattè him adoun
In the justic'is stede,
(Herkenith now of the bourdè
That Gamelyn tho dede) 1695

And Sir Ote by him he fatte,
And Adam at his fete.
And whan Gamelyn the yong was
Satte in the justice sete,

He letè fettè the justice 1700
And his false brothir,
And letè them come to the barre
The ton with that othir.

Whan Gamelyn had thus ydone
Haden he tho no rest 1705
Till that he had enquerid who
Werin upon the quest,

For to demin his brothir dere,
Sir Ote, for to be honge,
Er that he wiste which they were 1710
It thoughte him full longe.

But al so fone as Gamelyn
Wiste where that thei were
He didde them everichone
Fetterin fast in fere,

1715

And bringè them unto the barre,
And settè them in vewe :
By my faith, seidè the juslice,
The sheriff is a shrewe.

Than seidè yongè Gamelyn
Unto the false justice,
Thou hastè gevè thy domis
Al of the worst assise ;

1720

And the twelve sisouris that
Werin of the inquest
They shulle ben hongid this day,
So God geve me gode rest.

1725

Than seide the sheriff pitoufly
To yongè Gamelyn,
My Lord, I crie the mercie,
Brothir artè thou myn.

1730

Therefore, seidè yonge Gamelyn,
Havè you Crist's curse,
For if thou werin maistir yet
Shuldin I farè worse.

1735

But for to makè short my Tale,
And not to tary longe,
He ordeynid him there a quest
Of his own men so strong.

The false justice and the sheriff
Bothè were hongid hie,
To weyvin there with the ropis,
And with the winde drie.

1740

And als the twelvè sifouris,
Sorow havè that rekk,
Allè they werin yhongid
Full fastè by the nekk.

1745

Thus endid hath the falsè knight
With all his trechèrie,
That evir haddè lad his life
In falseness and folie.

1750

He was hongid up by the nek,
And nought by the purse,
That was the mede that he had haddè
From his fadir's curse.

1755

Sir Ote was the eldist tho,
And Gamèlyn was yonge,
They wentin with their frendis, and
Passidin to the king.

They madin pece with the kingè
Of the bestè assise;
The king lovid Sir Otè wele,
And made him a justice.

1760

Aftir the king made Gamèlyn,
Bothè in est and west,
The chese justice and ridere of
Allè his fre forest.

1765

Alle his wight yonge men the king
Forgafin them their gilt,
And fithen in gode office the king 1770
Hath allè them ypilt.

Thus has wan yongè Gamèlyn
His londè and his lede,
And wrake of him his enemies,
And quytè them their mede. 1775

And Sir Otè, his brothir dere,
Ymade him hath his heir,
And fithin weddid Gamèlyn
A wife both gode and faire.

They lividin togidir wele 1780
Whilis that Christè wolde,
And fithin that was Gamèlyn
Ygravin undir molde :

And so shallè we allè here ;
May there no man yfle 1785
God bringin us unto the joie
That evir shall ybe ! 1787

*Thus endith the legend of Gamèlyn, called The Coke's Tale
in all the mss. that I have seen and have this Tale.*

HERE BEGINNETH

THE PLOWMAN'S PROLOGUE.

THE Plowman pluckid up his plowe
 Whan midfomer mone was comen' in,
 And saied his bestes shoulde ete inowe,
 And lige in grasse up to the chin :
 Thei ben feble both oxe and cowe,
 Of 'hem n'is left but bone and skinne;
 He shoke of there, and coulter' off drowe,
 And honged his harnis on a pinne.

1945†

He toke his tabarde and staffe eke,
 And on his hedde he set his hat,
 And saied he would Sainct Thomas seke.
 On pilgrimage he goth forth plat;
 In scrippe he bare bothe bred and lekes;
 He was forswonke and all forswat :
 Men might have sene through both his chekes,
 And every wang tothe where it fat.

1950

1955

The Plowman's Prologue] This and the Tale is in none of the mss. that I have seen, nor in any of the first printed books. Caxton and Pynsent, I presume, durst not publish it; the former printed this poet's Works in Westminster-abbey, and both before the abolition of Popery; and the mss. being before that, I fancy the scribes were prohibited transcribing it, and enjoined to subscribe an instrument at the end of *The Canterbury Tales* called his *Retraction*: so that if this Tale had not been carefully collected and preserved in Master Stowe's library, as the editor of Halliwell's 1602 book says he has seen it in a hand of near to Chaucer's time for antiquity, in all likelihood it had been lost. Urry.

† From this line to the end of the Work the verses are numbered according to Urry's edit. of 1721, on account of the various references to that edit. in the Notes and Glossary to this edit. of 1782.

Our Hoste behelde well all about,
 And sawe this man was sunne ibrent;
 He knewe well by his singid snout,
 And by his clothes, that were to rent, 1960
 He was a man wont walke about,
 He n'as not aye in cloister pent,
 Ne couthe religiousliche lout,
 And therefore was he full ill shent.

Our Hoste him axed, What man art thou? 1965
 Sire Hoste, (quod he) I am an hine,
 For I am wont to go to plow,
 And erne my mete yer that I dine:
 To swette and swinke I make avowe,
 My wife and babes therewith to finde, 1970
 And fervin God and I wiſt how,
 But we leude men yben full blinde:

For clerkes saie we shullin be fain
 For ther livedod to swette and swinke,
 And thei right nought us give again 1975
 Neither to ete ne yet to drinke;
 Thei mowe by lawe, as that thei fain,
 Us curse and dampne to hell'is brinke;
 And thus thei puttin us to pain
 With candlis queint and bell'is clinke. 1980

Thei make us thrallis at ther lust,
 And fain we mowe not els be faved;
 Thei have the corne and we the dust;
 Who gainfayes them they saye he raved.
 What, man! (quod our Hoste) canst thou preche?
 Come nere and tel some holy thing. 1986

Sir, quod he, I herd onis teche
A preeft in pulpit gode preching.

Saie on, quod he, I the beseche.

Sir, I am redy at your bidding.

1990

I praie that no man me reproche

While that I am my Tale telling.

Thus endeth the Prologue.

HERE FOLOWETH

THE FIRST PART OF THE TALE.

A Full sterne strief is stirid newe,
In many stedis in a stounde,
Of sondry sedis that ben sewe;
It semith that some ben unsounde,
For some be grete growin on grounde,
Some ben fouble, simple and small:
Whether of 'hem is falsir founde
The falsir foule mote him bifall.

1995

2000

That one side is that I of tell
Popis, cardinals, and prelates,
Parsons, monkis, and freris fell,
Priours, abbotes, of grete estates;
Of heven and hell thei kepe the yeates,
And Peter's succeffours ben all,
And this is demid by old dates;
But falsshed foule mote it befall.

2005

The Plowman's Tale] A complaint against the pride and covetousness of the clergy, made no doubt by Chaucer, says the editor of Chaucer's Works printed for *Ad. Islip* at London, A.D. 1602. Urry.

The othir side ben pore and pale,
 And peple yput out of prese, 2010
 And femin caitiffes fore a cale,
 And'er in one without encrese
 Iclepid Lollers and Londlese;
 Who toteth on 'hem thei ben untall;
 Thei ben arayid all for pece, 2015
 But falsshed foule mote it befall.

Many a countrey have I fought
 To knowe the falsir of these two,
 But aye my travaile was for nought
 All so ferre as I have ygo, 2020
 But as I wandrid in a wro,
 Within a wode beside a wall,
 Two foulis sawe I fitting tho,
 The falsir foule mote him befall.

That one did plete on the Pepe's side, 2025
 A Griffon of a grimme stature;
 A Pellicane withoutin pride
 To these Lollers ylaied his lure;
 He mused his mattir in mesure
 To counsaile, Christ ay gan he call; 2030
 The Griffon shewed as sharpe as fire,
 But falsshed foule mote it befall.

The Pellicane began to preche
 Bothe of mercie and of mekenesse,
 And saied that Christ so gan us teche, 2035
 And meke and merciabie gan blese:

The' Evangely berith witnesse
A lambe he likeneth Christ ovre' all,
In tokening that he mekist was
Sith pride was out of hevin fall.

2040

And so should every Christened be,
Priestis and Peter's successeurs,
Beth lowliche and of lowe degre,
And usin none yerthly honours,
Ne croune ne curious covertours,
Ne pilloure ne othir proude pall,
Ne to cofrin up grete trefours,
For falschad foule mote it befall.

2045

Priestis should for no cattill plede,
But chaustin 'hem in charite,
Ne to no battaile should men lede
For inhaunfing ther owne degre,
Nat willin sittinges in hie se,
No soverainte in hous ne hall,
Worldly worship desie and fle;
Who willeth highnes foule shall fall.

2050

2055

Alas! who maie soche sainctis call
That wilnith welde yerthly honour?
Lowe as Lucifere soche shall fall,
In balefull blacknesse build ther boure
That eggith peple to erreure,
And makith them unto 'hem thrall;
To Christ I holde soche one traitour;
Lowe as Lucifer soche shall fall,

2060

That willith to be kingis peres, 2065
And higher than the Emperour,
And some that werin but pore freres
Now wollin waxe a warriour;
God ne is not ther governour
That holdith none his permagall, 2070
While cove'tise is ther counfaiour;
All soche falskede mote nedis fall,
That hie on horse willith to ride
In glitterande golde of grete araie,
Paintid and portrid all in pride, 2075
No common knight maie go so gaie,
Chaunge of clothing evèry daie,
With goldin girdils grete and small,
As boistous as is bere at baie;
All soche falsked mote nedis fall. 2080
With pride punisshith thei the pore,
And some one thei sustein with sale,
Of holie churche makith an hore,
And fill ther wombe with wine and ale;
With money fille thei many a male, 2085
And chaffrin churchis when thei fall,
And telle the peple a leude tale;
Soche false faitours foule 'hem befall.
Thei fede of many manir metes,
With song and solas sitting long, 2090
And filleth ther wombe, and fast fretes,
And from the mete unto the gong,

And aſtir mete with harpe and ſong,
 And eche man mote 'hem Lordis call,
 And hote ſpiciſ evir among;

2095

Soche falſe faitours foule 'hem befall.

Miters thei werin mo than two
 Iperfid as the quen'is hedde,
 A ſtaffe of golde, and pirrie lo!

As hevie as' it were made of ledde;

2100

With clothe of gold bothe newe and redde,

With glitterande gold as grene as gall,

By dome thei dampne men to be dedde;

All ſoche faitours foule 'hem befall.

And Chriſt'is peple proudly carſe

2105

With brodè boke and braying bell,

And to put pennies in ther purſe

Thei woll ſell bothe hevin and hell:

In ther ſentence and thou wilt dwell

'Thei willin geſſe in ther gaie hall,

2110

And though the ſoth thou of 'hem tell

In the grete curſing ſhalt thou fall.

That is ybleſſid that thei bleſſe,

And curſid that thei curſan woll,

And thus the peple thei oppreſſe,

2115

And have ther lordſhippis at full:

And many be marchauntes of woll,

And to purſ pennies woll come thrall,

The pore peple thei al to pull;

Suche falſe faitours foule 'hem befall.

2120

Lordis also mote to 'hem loute,
 Obeysaunt to ther brode blessing,
 Thei ridin with ther royal route
 On a coursir as' it were a king,
 With sadle of golde glittering, 2125
 With curious harneis quaintly crallit,
 Stioppis gaie of golde maffling;
 All suche falsshed foule may befall it.

Cristes Ministers clepid thei bene,
 And rulin al in robberie, 2130
 But Antichriste thei servin clene,
 Attirid al in tirannie,
 Witnesse of John his prophecie;
 Antichriste is ther admirall,
 Tiffelers attired in trecherie; 2135
 Al suche faitours foule 'hem befall.

Who saith that some of 'hem may sinne
 He shal be domid to be ded;
 Some of 'hem wollin gladly winne
 Al ayenst that whiche God forbed. 2140
 Al Holiest they clepe ther hed,
 That of ther rule is full regall;
 Alas that evir thei ete bred!
 For al such falsshed wol foule fall.

Ther hed covitith al honour, 2145
 To be worshipped in worde and dede,
 Kingis mote to him knele and coure,
 To the' apostles that Christ forbede:

To Popis heste such take more hede
 Than to kepe Christes commaundement, 2130
 Of gold and silvir ben ther wede,
 Thei holde him hole omnipotent.

He ordaineth by his ordinaunce
 To parishe priestis a powere,
 To' anothir a gretir avaunce, 2155
 A gretir point to his mistere;
 But for he' is highist in erth here
 To him reserveth he many' a point,
 But unto Christ, that hath no pere,
 Reservith he no pin no joynt. 2160

So semith he abovin all,
 And Christ abovin him nothinge,
 Whan that he sittith in his stall
 Dampnith and savith as him thinke;
 Suche pride tofore hie God doth stinke: 2165
 An angel bad John to' him not knele,
 Only to God do his bowinge;
 Soche worship-willers mote ill fele.

Thei ne clepe Christ but *Sanctus Deus*,
 And clepe ther hed *Sanctissimus*; 2170
 All they that suche a secle sewis
 I trowe thei taken 'hem amisse:
 In erth here they havin ther blisse,
 Ther hie mastir is Beliall;
 Christ his pore peple from 'hem wisse, 2175
 For al suche false will soule befall.

They mowin both ybinde and lose,
 And all is for ther holy life;
 To save or dampne they mowen chose;
 Betwene 'hem now is a grete strife;
 Many' a man is killed with a knife
 To wete which havin lordship shall;
 For suche Christ suffrid woundis five,
 For all suche falsshed will foule fall.

2180

Christ said, *Qui gladio percutit*
 With swerdè surely he shall die;
 He bad his priestis pece and grith,
 And bad 'hem not drede for to die,
 And bad them be both simple' and lye,
 And carkè not for no cattell,
 And truste on God that sitteth on hie,
 For al false shal full foule befall.

2185

2190

These wollin makè men to swere
 Ayenst Christ's commaundement,
 And Christ's members al to tere,
 On rode as he were newe yrent;
 Suche lawes thei maken by assent,
 Eche on it throwith as a ball,
 And thus the pore be fully shent,
 But falsshed foule it shulle befall.

2195

2200

Ne usin thei no simonie,
 But selle churchis and priories,
 Ne they usin to none envie,
 But cursin al 'hem contraries,

And hirith men by daies and yeres 2205
With strength to hold 'hem in ther stall,
And culle all ther adversaries,
Therefore falslied foule thou them fall.

With purse they purchase personage,
With purse thei payin 'hem to plede, 2210
And men of warre thei wollin wage
To bring ther enemies to dede,
And lordis livis they wol lede,
And muchil take, and give but small,
But he' it so get from it shal shede, 2215
And make suche false right foule yfall.

They halowe nothing but for hire,
Ne churche, ne font, ne vestiment,
And make orders in every shire,
But priestis pay for the parchment : 2220
Of riatours they taken rent,
'Therwith they smere the shep'is skall,
For many churches ben suspent ;
All suche falslied foule it befall.

Some livith not in lecherie, 2225
But haunte wenchis, widows, and wives,
And punish the pore for putre,
Themselfe it useth al ther lives ;
And but a man to them him shrives
To hevin come he nevir shall, 2230
He shal be cursed as be catives ;
To hel thei saine that he shal fall.

There was more mercy' in Maximine,
And Nero, that never was gode,
Than there is now in some of them 2235
Whan he hath on his furrid hode;
They folowe Christ that shede his blode

To heven, as bucket to the wall;
Suche wrechis yben worse than wode,
And al suche faitours foule 'hem fall. 2240

They give ther almis to the riche,
To mainteynours and men of lawe,
For to lordis they wol be liche,
An harlottes sonne not worth an hawe;
Sothfastnesse alle suche han flawe; 2245

They kembe ther crokettes with cristall,
And drede of God they have doune drawe;
Al suche faitours foule 'hem befall.

They make parsons for the pennie,
And canons and their cardinals; 2250

Unnethe amongst 'hem al is any
That ne hath glosed the gospel fals,
For Christ made ner no cathedrals,

Ne with him was no cardinall
With a redde hatte, as use ministrals; 2255

But falsshed foule mote it befall.

Ther tithing and ther offring bothe

They clemith by possession,
Ne therof n'il they none forgo,

But robbin men as a raunsome : 2260

The tithing of *turpe lucrum*
With these maisters is veniall ;
Tithinge of bribry and larson
Will make falsshed full foule to fall.

They takin to ferme ther sompnours 2265
To harme the peple what they may,
To pardoners and false faitours
Thei sell ther seles I dare well say,
And all to holdin gret arraie,
To multiplie 'hem more metall, 2270
They drede ful litel dom'is day,
Whan al suche falsshed shal foule fall.

Suche harlottes shul men disclaunder,
For that they shullin make them gre,
And ben as proud as Alexander, 2275
And fain to the pore Wo be ye !
By yere eche priest shal paie his fe
For to encrese his lemmans call ;
Suche herdis shul wel ilvil the,
And al suche false shal foule befall. 2280

And if a man be falsely famed,
And wol ymake purgacioun,
Than wol the' officers be agramed,
And assign him fro toun to toun ;
So nede he must payin raunsome, 2285
Though he be clene as is cristall,
And than have an absolution ;
But al suche false shal foule befall,

Though he be giltie of the dede,
And that he may the money paie, 2290
Al the while his purse wol yblede
He may use it fro day to day.

The biſhopes officers gone gay,
And this game they use ovir all,
The pore to pil is al their pray; 2295
But al ſuche false ſhul foule befall.

Alas! God ordained no ſuche lawe,
Ne no ſuche craſte of covetiſe,
But he forbad it by his lawe;
Suche rulers mowen of God a griſe, 2300
For al his rulis ben rightwiſe:

Theſe newe pointis ben pure papall,
And Godd'is lawe they all diſpice,
And al ſuche faitours ſhul foule fall.

They ſaine that Peter had the key 2305
Of heven and hel, to have and holde;
I trowe Peter toke no money
For no finnis that he yſolde:

Suche ſuccellours yben to bolde,
In winning all ther witte they wraſt, 2310
Ther conſcience is waxin colde,
And al ſuche faitours foul 'hem fal.

Peter was ner ſo grete a ſole
To leve his key with ſuche a lorell,
Or take ſuche curſid ſoc or tole, 2315
He was adviſid nothing well;

I trowe they have the key of hell,
 Their maistris is of that marshall,
 For there thei dreslin' hem to dwell,
 And with false Lucifer to fall. 2320

Thei ben as proude as Lucifarre,
 As angry and as envious;
 From a gode faith they ben ful farre;
 In cove'tise they ben curious;
 To catche catil as covitous 2325
 As hounde that for hungre wol yall,
 Ungodly and ungracious;
 And nedely suche false shal foule fall.

The Pope, and he were Peter's heire,
 Me thinke he errith in this case, 2330
 Whan choise of bishop's in dispaire
 To chosin' hem in divers place,
 A lorde shal write to him for grace,
 For his clerke anon pray he shal,
 So shal he sped in his purchase; 2335
 And al suche false foule' hem befall.

Although he can ne manir gode
 A lord's prayir shal be spedde,
 Though he be wilde of wil or wode,
 Nat understanding what men redde, 2340
 A leude bossir, that God forbedde,
 As gode a bishoppe' is my horse Ball;
 Suche a Pope is full foule bestede,
 And at the lasse wol foule yfall.

He makith priestes for erthly thanke, 2345
And not at all for Christ's sake ;
Suche that yben ful fat and ranke,
To soul's hele none hede they take ;
Al is wel done what er they make,
For they shal answere ones for all ; 2350
For world's thank such worch and wake,
And al suche false shal foule befall.

Suche that can nat yfay ther crede
With prayir shul be made prelates,
Nothir canne thei the gospell rede, 2355
Suche shul now weldin hie estates ;
The hiè godes frendship 'hem makes,
Thei totith on ther summe totall ;
Suche bere the keyes of hell's yates,
And all suche false shal foule befall. 2360

Thei forsakin for Christ's love
Travaile, and hungre, thurst, and colde ;
They ben ordrid or al above
Out of youthed til they ben olde ;
By the' dore they go nat to the folde, 2365
To helpe ther shepe they nought traval,
For hirid men al suche I holde,
And al suche false foule 'hem befall.

For Christ our King thei wol forsake,
And knowe him nought for his poverté, 2370
For Christ's love they wol awake,
And drinke piement ale aperte :

Of God they seme nothing aferde,
As lusty live as Lamual,
And drive ther shepe into desert ; 2375
Al suche false faitours shul foule fal.

Christ yhad xii apostles here,
Nowe say they There may be but one
That may not erre in no manere,
Who leve not this ben lost echone : 2380
Peter errid, so did not John ;
Why is he cleped the Principall ?
Christe cleped him Peter, not the Stone ;
Al false faitours foule 'hem befal.

Why cursin they the croisery 2385
Christ'is Christian creturis ?
For bytwene them is now envy
To be enhaunsid in honours ;
Christin livers with ther labours,
For they levin on no mortal, 2390
Ben do to deth with dishonours,
And al suche false foule 'hem befal.

What knoweth a tilloure at the plowe
The Pop'is name, and what he hate ?
His crede suffiseth to 'him inowe, 2395
And knoweth a cardi'nal by his hatte.
Rough is the pore unrightly latte,
That knowith Christ his God royal ;
Suche maters be not worth a gnatte,
But suche false faitours foule 'hem fal. 2400

A king shal knele and kisse his showe,
 Christ let a sinful kisse his fete,
 Me thinke he holdeth him hie inowe,
 So Lucifer did, that hie set :

Suche one me thinke himselfe foryet, 2405
 Or to the trouth he was nat cal :
 Christe that suffrid woundis wete,
 Shall make all suche falsshed foule fall.

They layith out ther largè nettes
 For to takin silvir and golde, 2410
 Thei fillin coffers, and sackes fettes
 There as they foulis catchin sholde ;
 Ther servauntes be to them unholde,
 But they can doublin ther rentall ;
 To bigge 'hem castles bigge 'hem holde ; 2415
 And al suche false foule 'hem befall.

*Here endeth the first parte of this Tale, and hereafter
 foloweth the seconde parte.*

To accorde what this wordè fall
 No more Englishe ne can I finde,
 Shewin anothir nowe I shall,
 For I have moche to faye behinde, 2420
 How priestis han the peple pinde,
 As curteis Christe yhath me kinde,
 And put this matter in my minde,
 To make this manir men amende.

Shortely to shende 'hem, and shewe nowe 2425
 How wrongfully they werche and walke,
 Of hie God nothing tell, ne howe,
 But in Goddes worde tell many a balke,
 In harnis holde 'hem and in halke,
 And prechen' of tithis and offrende, 2430
 And untruely of the gospel talke;
 For his mercy God it amende!

What els is Antichriste to saie
 But even Christ'is aduersarie?
 Suche hath now ben many a daie 2435
 To Christ'is bidding ful contrarie,
 That from the trouthe clene ywarry;
 Out of the way they ben ywende,
 And Christ'is peple' untruely cary;
 God for his pitie it amende! 2440

They live contrary to Christes life,
 In hie pride against mekenesse,
 Against suffraunce they usin strife,
 And angre ayenst sobrenesse,
 Ayenst wisdom wilfulnesse; 2445
 To Christ'is talis lital tende,
 Against mesure outragiousnesse;
 But whan God wol it may amende.

Lordely life ayenst lowlinesse,
 And demin al without mercy, 2450
 And covetise ayenst largesse,
 Ayenst trouthe trechery,

And ayenist almeſſe envy;
Ayenist Chriſt they comprehend,
For chaſtite mainteine leche'ry;
God for his grace this amende! 2455

Against penaunce thei use delights,
Ayenist ſuffraunce ſtrong defence,
Ayenist God they uſin ill rightes,
Ayenist pitie puniſhmentes, 2460
Open' evil ayenist continence;
Ther wickid winning worſe diſpende,
Sobirneſſe ſette in to diſpence;
God for his godeneſſe it amende!

Why cleimin they holy' his powere, 2465
And wranglin ayenist al his heſtes?
His living folowe thei nought here,
But livin worſe than witleſſe beſtes:
Of fiſhe and fleſhe they levin feſtes;
As lordis thei ben brode ikende; 2470
Of Godd'is pore thei hatin geſtes;
God for his mercy this amende!

With Dives ſuche ſhal have ther dome,
That ſaine that they be Chriſt'is frendes,
And do nothing as they ſhould done, 2475
Al ſuche ben falſir than ben fendes:
On the peple they ley ſuche bendes
As God in erth they han offende;
Succour for ſuch Chriſte now ſend us,
And for his mercy this amende! 2480

A token' of Antichrist they be ;
His careckes ben now wide iknowe,
Receved to preche shal no man be
Without token of him I trowe :
Eche Christin priest to prechin owe, 2485
From God above thei ben yfende
Goddess word to al folke for to showe,
And sinful man for to amende.

Christ sent the pore for to preche,
The royal riche he did not so, 2490
Now dare no pore the peple teche,
For Antichrist is al ther foe ;
Among the peple he mote go,
He hath biddin al suche suspende,
Some hath he hent, and thinketh yet mo ; 2495
But al this God may wel amende.

Al tho that han the worlde forsake,
And livin lowly, as God badde,
Into ther prison shulle be take,
Betin and boundin, and forth ladde : 2500
Hereof I rede no man be dradde,
Christ said that his should be yfende;
Eche man ought hereof to be gladde,
For God ful wel it wol amende.

They take on 'hem royall power, 2505
And say they havin swerdis two,
One curse to hel, one fle men here :
At his taking Christ had no mo,

Yet Peter had but one of tho,
And Christ to him smite gan defende, 2510
And into the' sheth badde put it tho;
And al suche mischeves God amende!

Christ bad Peter to kepe his shepe,
And with his sworde forbade' hem smite;
Swerde is no tole with shepe to kepe, 2515
But to shepherdes that shepe wol bite;
Me thinke suche shepherdes ben to wite
Who'ayen ther shepe with swerde contende;
They drive ther shepe with grete dispite;
But al this God may well amende. 2520

Peter's successeoures be thei nought
Whom Christ ymade his chese pastoure;
A swerde no shepherde usin ought
But he would fle as a bochoure:
Who so were Peter's successeoure 2525
Should bere his shepe til his backe bende,
And shadowe 'hem from every shoure;
And al this God may wel amende.

Successeours to Peter ben these
In that, that Peter Christe forsoke, 2530
That levir had God's love to lese
Than shepherde had to lese his hoke;
He culleth the shepe as doth the coke;
Of 'hem takin they woll untrende,
And falsely glose the Gospell boke; 2535
God for his mercy them amende!

Whan Christ had take Peter the kay
Christ saide he must ydie for man;
That Peter to Christ gan withsay,
Christe bad him Go behinde, Sathan :
Suche counfaiours many' of these han,
For world'is wele God to offende;
Peter's successours they ben than;
But al suche God may wel amende.

2540

For Sathan is to say no more
But he that contrary to Christ is,
In this they lernin Peter's lore,
They sewin him whan he did misse;
They folowe him forsoth in this
That Christ would Peter reprehende,
But nat that longith to' hevin blisse;
God for his mercy 'hem amende!

2545

Thei none apostle sewen, in case
Of ought that I can understonde,
But him that betraied Christ, Judas,
That bare the purse in every londe,
And al that he might sette on honde
He hidde and stole, and it mispende :
His rule these traitours han in honde;
Almighty God all suche amende!

2550

2555

2560

And at the last his lorde gan tray
Curfidly through false covetie,
So would these traine him for money
And they ywistin in what wise;

They be sikre' of the fele ensife. 2565

From all sothnesse they ben yfrende,
And covetise chaunge with quentise;
Almighty God al fuche amende!

Were Christ upon erth, here este sone,
These wouldin dampne him to die; 2570

All his hestis they han fordone,
And faine his sawes ben heresie;
Ayenst his commaundementes they crie,
And dampnin all his to be brende,
For thei ne like fuche losengrie; 2575

God Almighty all fuche amende!

These han more might in Englande here
Than hath the king and all his lawe,
They han purchasid fuche powere
To takin 'hem whom list not knawe, 2580

And say that heresie' is ther sawe,
And so to prifon wol 'hem fende;

It was not so by eldir dawe;
God for his mercy it amende!

The king'is lawe wol no man deme 2585

Angerliche withoutin answere,
But if any man these misqueme

He shall be baightid as a bere,

And yet wel worse they wol him tere,

And in prifon wollin him pende 2590

In ginis, and in othir gere;

Whan that God woll it may amende.

The king ne taxith nat his men
But by assent of the commi'nalte,
But these eche yere wol raunsom 'hem 2595
Maistirfully, more than dothe he :
Ther felis by yere bettir be
Than is the king'is in extende,
Ther officers han gretir fe;
But aile this mischefe God amende ! 2600

Who so wol prove a testament
That is nat al worth tennè pounce,
He shal paye for the parchement
The thirde of the money all rounde;
Thus the pore peple is ransounde, 2605
They say fuche parte t'em shold apende,
'There as they gripen' it goeth to grounde;
God for his mercy it amende !

A simple fornication
Twenty shillingis he shal pay, 2610
And than have absolucion
And al the yere use it he may :
Thus thei lettin 'hem go astray;
Thei recke nat though the soule be brende;
These kepin evill Peter's kay; 2615
And al fuche sheperdes God amende !

Wondir is that the parliamente,
And al the lordis of this londe,
Here to takin so lite entente
'To helpe the peple' out of ther honde, 2620

For thei ben hardir in ther bonde,
 Worfe bete, and cruellir ybrende,
 Than to the king is understand;
 God him helpe this for to amende!

What bihoppes, what religions, 2625
 Han in this lande as muche lay fe,
 Lordeshippis and possessions,
 More than lordis it semith me;
 That makith 'hem lese charite:
 They mowin not to God attende, 2630
 In erth thei have so highe degre;
 God for his mercy it amende!

The Empe'rour yafe the Pope somtime
 So highè lordeship him about,
 That at the last the fely kime 2635
 The proudè Pope yput him out,
 So of this relme is in grete dout;
 But, Lordes, beware, and them defende,
 For nowe these folke be wondir stoute;
 The king and lords now this amende. 2640

*Thus endeth the seconde parte of this Tale, and hereafter
 foloweth the thirde.*

Morres lawe forbode it tho
 That prestis should no lordshippes welde,
 Christ's gospel biddith also
 That they should no lordshippis helde;
 Christes apostels were ner so bolde, 2645
 No suche lordshippes to 'hem enbrace,

But sklere ther shepe and kepe ther folde ;
May God amende 'hem for his grace !

For thei ne ben but counterfete,
Men may yknow 'hem by ther fruite, 2650
Ther greteneffe maketh 'hem God foryete,
And take his mekenesse in dispite ;
And thei were pore and had but lite
Thei n'old nat demen' aftir the face,
Norishe ther shepe, and 'hem nat bite ;
May God amende 'hem for his grace ! 2656

Griffon.

What canst thou preche ayenst chanons
That men yclepin Seculere ?

Pellican.

Thei ben curates of many tonnes,
On yerth they havin grete powere, 2660
They have grete prebendis and dere,
Some two or thre, and some have mo,
A parsonage to ben playing fere,
And yet thei serve the king also,

And let to ferme all that fare 2665
To whom that wol moste give therfore,
Some wollin spende, and some woll spare,
And some wol laye it up in store ;
A cure of soule they care not fore,
So that they mowin money take ; 2670
Whethir ther soules be wonne or lore
Ther profites they woll not forsake.

They have a gederung procuratour,
That can the pore peple enplede,
And robbe 'hem as a ravinour, 2675
And to his lorde the mony lede,
And catche of quicke and eke of dede,
And richin him and his lorde eke,
And to robbe the pore give gode rede
Of olde and younge, of hole and sicke. 2680

Therwith they purchase 'hem lay fe
in londe, there as 'hem likith best,
And buildin brode as a cite
Both in the est and in the west;
To purchase thus they ben ful prest, 2685
But on the pore they woll nought spende,
Ne no gode give to Godd's gest,
Ne sende him some that all hath sende.

By ther service soche wollin live,
And trust that othir to trefure; 2690
Though all ther parishe die unshrive
Thei woll nat givin a rose floure;
Ther life should be as a mirrour
Both to lerid and leude also,
And teche the folke ther lele labour; 2695
Soche mister men ben all misgo.

Some of 'hem yben full harde nigges,
And some of 'hem ben proude and gaie,
Some spendin ther gode upon gigges;
And findin 'hem of grete araie. 2700

Alas! what thinke these men to saie
 That thus dispendin Godd'is gode?
 At the grete dredefull dom'is daie
 Soche wretchis shull be worse than wode.

Some ther churchis nevir ne fie, 2705
 Ne ner o penie thidir sende;
 Though that the pore for hungir die,
 O penie' on 'hem will thei not spende:
 Have thei receiving of the rente
 Thei recke ner of the remenaunt; 2710
 Alas! the devill hath clene 'hem blente;
 Soche one is Sathanes sojournant.

And use horedome and harlottrie,
 And covetise, and pompe, and pride,
 And slothe, and wrathe, and eke envie, 2715
 And sewin sinne by every side;
 Alas! where thinkin soche t' abide?
 How woll thei ther accomptis yeld?
 From hie God thei mowe 'hem not hide;
 Soche willers witte' is not worth a nelde. 2720

Thei ben so rotid in richeffe
 That Christ'is povert is foryet;
 Yservid with so many messe
 Hem thinke that manna is no mete:
 All is gode that thei mowin gete; 2725
 Thei wene to livin evirmore;
 But whan that God at dome is fete
 Soche trefour is a feble store.

Unnethis mote thei matins saie
For counting and for courtholding, 2730
And yet he jangilith as jaie,
And understont himself nothing;
He woll yserve bothe erle and king
For his finding and for his fe,
And hide his tithing and offring; 2735
This is a feble charite.

Othir thei ben proude or cove'tous,
Or elles thei ben hard or hungrie,
Or thei ben libe'rall or lecherous,
Or els medlers with marchandrie, 2740
Maintainers of men with maistrie,
Or stewardes, countours, or pledours,
And serve God in ypocrisie;
Soche priestis ben Christes false traitours.

Thei ben false, thei ben vengeable, 2745
And begile men in Christ's name; -
Thei ben unstedfast and unstable;
To traie ther Lorde 'hem thinke no shame;
To servin God thei ben full lame;
Godd'is thevis, and falsely flele, 2750
And falsely Godd'is worde defame;
In winning is ther world'is wele.

Antichrist these priestis serve all,
I prae the who maie sayin Naie?
With Antichrist soche shullin fall, 2755
Thei folowen him in dede and saie;

Thei servin him in riche araie,
To servin Christ soche falsely fain;
Why at the dredfull dom'is daie
Shull thei not folowe him to pain?

2760

That knowen hem self that thei doen ill
Ayenst Christ's commaundement,
And amende hem ner ne will,
But serve Sathan by one assent.
Who sayith sothe he shall be shent,
Or speketh ayenst ther false living,
Who so well livith shall be brent,
For soche ben gretir than the king.

2765

Popis, bishops, and cardinals,
Chanons, and parsons, and vicare,
In Goddes service I trowe ben fals
That sacramentis sellin here,
And ben as proude as Lucifere:
Eche man loke whethir that I lie;
Who so spekith ayenst ther powere
It shall be holdin herefie.

2770

2775

Lokith how many orders take
Onely of Christ for his service,
That the world's godis forsake;
Who so take ordirs othir wise
I trowe that thei shall fore agrise,
For all the glosè that thei conne,
All ne sewin not this assise;
In evill time thei thus begonne.

2780

Loke how many emong hem all
Ne holdin not this hië waie 2785

With Antichrist thei shullin fall,
For that thei wollin God betraie:
God amende 'hem, that best ymaie!
For many men thei makin shende; 2790

Thei wetin well the sethe I saie,
But the devill hath foule 'hem blende.

Some of 'hem on ther churchis dwell
Apparailled porcly; proude of porte;
The seven sacramentes thei doen sell; 2795
In cattell catching' is ther comfort:

Ofeche mattir thei wollin mell;
To doen 'hem wrong is ther disport;
To' afraie the peple thei ben fell,
And hold 'hem lower than doeth the lorde. 2800

And for the tithing of a ducke,
Or of an apple or an aie,
Thei make men swere upon a boke;
Lo! thus thei foulin Christ'is saie:
Soche berin evill hevin kaie; 2805

Thei mowin affoile, thei mowe thrive,
With mennis wivis strongly plaie,
And with true tillers flurte and strive,

At the wresling and at the wake,
And the chief chauntour at the nale, 2810
Market beters, and medling make,
Hoppen' and houtin with heve and hale;

At faire freshe, and at winè stale,
Thei dine and drinke, and make debate,
The seven sacramentes set a faile;
Kepe soche the kaies of hevin gate?

2815

Mennis wivis thei wollin hold,
And though that thei ben right fory,
To speke thei shull not be so bold,
For sompning to' the consistory,
And make 'hem saie with mouthe I lie;
Though thei it sawin with ther eye
His lemman holdin opinly
No man so harde to aske why.

2820

He woll have tithing and offring
Maugre whosoever it grutche,
And twise on the daie he woll sing:
Godd'is priestis ne were none soche;
He mote go hunte with dogge and biche,
And blowen his horne and cryin Hey,
And forcerie usen as a'witche;
Soche kepin evill Peter's key.

2825

2830

Yet thei mote have some stocke or ston
Gaily paintid and proudly dight,
To makin men livin upon,
And saie that it is full of might,
About soche men set up grete light,
Other soche stockes shull stande therby
As darke as if it were midnight,
For it maie makin no mastreie.

2835

2840

That it the leude peple se mowe,
Thou Mary, thou worchest wondir thinges,
About that that men offrin to
Hongin brochis, ouchis, and ringes;
The priest purchasith the offringes, 2845
But he n'ill offir to' none image:
Wo is the foule that he forfinges
That prechith for soche pilgrimage!

To men and women that ben pore,
Which that ben Christ's owne likeneffe, 2850
Men shullin offir at ther dore,
That suffre hungir and distresse,
And to soche image offir lesse,
That mowe not fele ne thirste ne cold;
The pore in spirite gan Christ blesse, 2855
Therefore offirith to feble' and old.

Buckilers brode and fwerdis long,
Baudrike, with baselardis kene,
Soche toles about ther necke thei hang:
With Antichrist soche priestis ben; 2860
Upon ther dedes it is well sene
Whom thei servin, whom thei honouren;
Antichrist's thei ben all clene,
And Godd's godes falsly devouren.

Of scarlet and grene gaie gounes, 2865
That mote be shapin for the newe,
To clippin and kiffin in tounes
The damoseles that to the daunce sewe,

Cuttid clothes to sewe ther hewe,
With longè pikis on ther shone : 2870
Our Godd'is gospell is not true ;
Eithir thei serve the devill or none.

Now ben the priestis pokes so wide
Men must enlarge the vestiment,
The holy gospell thei doen hide 2875
For the contrarien in raiment ;
Soche priestes of Lucifer ben sent :
Like conquerours thei ben araied,
The proude pendautes at ther ars pent,
Falsely the trueth thei han betraied. 2880

Shrift silvir soche wollin askeis,
And wollin men crepe to the crouche ;
None of the sacramentes save askis
Withoutin mede shall no man touche ;
On ther bishop ther warant vouche, 2885
That is a lawe of the decre :
With mede and money thus thei mouche,
And thus thei sain is charite.

Within the middis of ther masse
Thei n'ill have no man but for hire, 2890
And full shortly let forth ypasse ;
Soche shall men findin in eche shire
That parsonages for gaine desire
To live in liking and in lustes ;
I dare not sain *sans qse jeo dire* 2895
That soche ben Antichrist'is priestes.

Or thei yef the biſhoppis why,
Or thei mote ben in his ſervice,
And holdin forth ther harlottrie,
Soche prelates ben of feble' empriſe; 2900
Of Godd'is grame ſoche men agrife,
For ſoche mattirs that takin mede,
How thei' excuſe 'hem, and in what wiſe,
Methinkith thei ought gretely drede.

Thei ſain that it to no man longeth 2905
To reprove them though that thei erre,
But falſly Godd'is godes thei ſongeth,
And therwith maintein wo and werre;
Ther dedes ſhould be as bright as ſterre,
Ther living leude mann'is light: 2910
Thei ſaie The Pope ne maie not erre;
Nede muſt that paſſin mann'is might.

'Though' a prieſt lie with his lemman' al night,
And tellen his felowe and he him,
He goith to maſſe anon right, 2915
And ſaieth he ſingeth out of finne;
His birde abideth him at his inne,
And dighteth his diner the mene while,
He ſingeth his maſſe for he would winne,
And ſo he wenith God begile. 2920

'Hem thinkith long till thei be met,
And that thei uſe forth all the yere;
Emong the folke whan he is ſet
He holdith no man half his pere:

Of the biſhop he hath powere 2925
To ſoile men, or els thei ben lore,
His abſolucion maketh them ſkere;
Wo is the foule that he ſingeth for!

The Griffon began for to threte,
And ſaid, Of monkis canſt thou ought? 2930
The Pelli' can ſaid, Thei ben full grete,
And in this world moche wo hath wrought;
Saint Benet, that ther ordir brought,
Ne made 'hem ner in ſoche manere,
I trowe it came ner in his thought 2935
That thei ſhould uſe ſo grete powere.

That a man ſhould a monke Lorde call,
Ne ſerve him on knees as a king;
He is as proude as prince in pall,
In mete and drinke, and in all thing: 2940
Some weren a miter and ring,
With double worſtid well idight,
With roiall mete and richè drinke,
And ride on courſer as a knight.

With haukis and with houndis eke, 2945
With broche or ouchis on his hode;
Some ſaie no maſſe in all a weke;
Of deinties is ther moſtè fode
With lordſhippis and with bondmen;
This is a roiall regioun; 2950
Saint Benet made ner non of 'hem
To have lordſhip of man ne toun.

Now thei ben queint and curious,
With fine clothe clad and servid clene,
Proude, and angrie, and envious, 2955
Malice is mochil that thei mene;
In catching craftie and covetous,
Lordly livin in grete liking;
This living' is not religious
According to Benet's living. 2960

Thei ben clerkes, and courts ovir se,
Ther pore tenaunce fully thei flite;
The hier a man amercid be
The gladlyir thei woll it write:
This is farre from Christes poverté, 2965
For all with cove'tise thei endite;
On the pore thei have no pite,
Ne ner 'hem cherishe but or bite.

And comminly soche ben comen
Of pore peple', and of 'hem begete, 2970
That this perfection han inomen:
Ther fathirs ride but on ther fete,
And travaile fore for that thei ete,
In povert livith yong and old;
Ther fathirs suffreth drought and wete, 2975
Many hungrie meles, thurste, and cold.

And all this the monkes han forsake
For Christ's love and Sainct Benete,
To pride and ese have 'hem betake;
This religion is ill besete: 2980

Had thei ben out of religion
Thei must have hangid at the plowe,
Threshid and diked fro toune to toune,
With sorie mete not halfe inowe.

Therefore thei han this all forsake,
2985
And take to riches, pride, and ese;
Full fewe for God wol monkes 'hem make,
Lite is soche ordir for to praise;
Sainct Benet ordained it not so,
But bad 'hem to be chereliche,
2990
In churliche manir live and go,
Boistous in yerth, and not lordliche.

Thei disclaunderin Sainct Benet,
Therefore thei have his holy curse;
Sainct Benet with 'hem nevir met
2995
But if thei thought to robbe his purse.
I can no more here of 'hem tell
But that thei ben like tho before,
And clene serve the devill of hell,
And ben his trefure and his store;
3000

And all soche othir counterfaitours,
Chanons, canons, and soche disgised,
Ben Godd's enemies and traitours,
His religion han soule disgised;
And of freris I have before
3005
Told in a makin of a crede,
And yet I could tell worse and more,
But men would werien it to rede.

As Goddes godenes no man tell might,
 Ne write ne speke, ne thinke in thought, 3010
 So ther falsshed and ther unright
 Maie no man tell that ere God wrought.

The Griffon saied, Thou canst no gode,
 Thou came ner of no gentill kinde;
 Othir I trowe thou waxist wode 3015
 Or ellis thou hast losse thy minde.

Should holy churche yhave no hedde
 Who should ybe her governaile,
 Who should her rule, who should her redde,
 Who should her forthren, who availe? 3020
 Eche man shall live by his travaile;
 Who best doith shall have most mede:
 With strength if men the churche assaile
 With strength men must defende her nede.

And if the Pope were purely pore 3025
 And nedy, and nothing ne had,
 He shuld be drive from dore to dore;
 The wickid of him n'olde not drad:
 Of soche an hedde men would be fader,
 And sinfully liven' as 'hem lust; 3030
 With strength amendis soche be made,
 With wepin wolves from shepe be wust.

If that the Pope and prelates would
 So begge and bid, bowe and borowe,
 Holy churche should ystande full cold, 3035
 Her servauntes sit and soupe sorowe;

And thei were noughtie, foule, and horowe;
To worship God men would wlate
Both on evin and on morowe :
Sochè harlotrie men would hate.

3040

And therfore men of holy churche
Shou'din be honeste in all thing,
And worshipfull God's workis werche;
So semeth it to serve Christ ther king
In honest and in clene clothing,
With vessels of gold and clothes riche
To God honestly to' make offring,
For to his lordship none is liche.

3045

The Pellican cast an hounge crie,
And saied, Alas! why saiest thou so?
Christ is our hedde that sitteth on hie,
Heddis ne ought we have no mo;
We ben his membres bothe also,
Fathir he taught us call him als,
Maisters to call forbad he tho;
All maisters ben wickid and fals

3050

3055

That takith maistrise in his name
Ghostly, and to win yerthly gode;
Kingis and lordes should lordship have,
And rule the peple with milde mode,
But Christ, for us that shed his blode,
Bad his priests no mastirship have,
Ne carke not for clothis ne fode;
From all mischief he woll 'hem save:

3060

Ther riche clothes shall be rightwisnesse, 3065
Ther trefure a true life shall be,
Charite shall be ther richesse,
Ther lordship shall be unite,
And hope in God ther honeste,
Ther vessell a clene conscience; 3070
Pore in sprite, and humilite,
Shall be holy church's defence.

What! saied the Griffon, maie the greve
That othir folkis faren wele?
What hast thou to doin with ther live? 3075
Thy falsshed every man maie fele,
For thou ne canst no cattell gete,
But livest in londe as a lorell,
With glosing gettist thou thy mete;
So farith the devil in hell. 3080

He would that eche man there should dwell,
For he livith in clene envie,
So with the tales that thou doest tell
Thou wouldest othir peple destrie
With your glose and your heresie, 3085
For ye can live no bettir life
But clene in fals hypocrisie,
And bringist the in wo and strife.

And therwith have ye not to doen,
For ye ne havin here no cure; 3090
Ye serve the devill, not God ne man,
And he shall payin you your hire;

For ye wol farin well at festes,
And be warm clothid for the cold,
Therfore ye glosin Godd'is hestes, 3095
And begile peple yong and old.

And all the sevin sacramentes
Ye speke ayenst as ye were flie,
Tithings, offringes, with your ententes,
And on your Lord'is body lie : 3100
All this ye doen to live in ese,
As who sayith Ther ben none soche,
And sain The Pope' is not worth a pese,
To make the peple' ayen him groche.

And this ycommith in by fendes 3105
To bring the Christin in distaunce,
For thei would that no man were frendes,
Levith thy chattring with mischaunce!
If thou live well what wilt thou more?
Let othir men live as 'hem list, 3110
Spendin ther gode or kepe in store;
Othir mennes conscience ner thou n'ist.

Ye han no cure to answere fore;
What meddle' ye that han not to doen?
Let men live as thei han doen yore, 3115
For thou shalt answere for no man.
'The Pellican sayid, Sir, naie,
I ne dispisid not the Pope
Ne no sacrament, sothe to saie,
But speke in charite' and gode hope : 3120

But I dispise ther hiè pride,
Ther welthe that shoud be pore in sprite;
Ther wickidnesse is knowe so wide,
Thei seruin God in false habite,
And tournin mekenesse into pride, 3125
And lowlineffe into' hie degre,
And Godd'is wordis tourne and hide,
And I am moved by charite

To lettin men to livin so
With all my conning and my might, 3130
And to warnin men of ther wo,
And to tellin 'hem trouth and right.

The sacramentes be foul'is hele
If thei ben usid in gode use;
Ayenst that speke I ner a dele, 3135
For than ne were I nothing wise;

But thei that use 'hem in misse manere,
Or set 'hem up to any sale,
I trowe thei shall abie 'hem dere;
This is my reson, this my tale: 3140

Who so taketh 'hem unrightfulliche
Ayenst the ten commaundementes,
Or elles by glase wrechidliche
Selleth any of the sacramentes,

I trowe thei doe the devill homage, 3145
In that thei wetin thei doe wrong,
And therto I dare well to wage
Thei serve Sathan for all ther song.

To tithen' and offre' is holfome life,
 So it be doen in due manere, 3150
 A man to houfelin and to thrive,
 Wedding, and all othir in fere.

So it be nother folde ne bought,
 Ne takè ne give for covetise,
 And it be so taken' it is nought; 3155
 Who selleth him so maie fore agrise:
 On our Lordes body' I doe not lie,
 I saie the sothe thorough true rede,
 His fleshe and blode, through his misterie,
 Is there all in the forme of brede. 3160

How it is there it nedeth not strive,
 Whethre' it be subget or accident,
 But as Christ was whan he' was on live
 So is he there in verament.

If Pope or cardinall live gode live, 3165
 As Christ us bad in his gospel,
 Ayenst that ne woll I not strive,
 But me thinkith thei live not well;

For if the Pope lived as God bedde,
 Pride and highnesse he should dispise, 3170
 Richesse, covetise, and croune on hedde;
 Mekenesse and poverté he should use.
 The Griffon saied he should abie,
 Thou shall be brent in balefull fire,
 And all thy sect I shall distrie; 3175
 Ye shall be hangid by the swire.

Ye shulle be hangid and to drawe :
Who givith you leve for to preche,
Or spekin against Godd'is lawe,
And the peple thus falsely teche?
Thou shalt be curfed with boke and bell,
And dissevered from holie churche,
And clene idampnid into hell,
Othirwise but ye wollin worche.

3180

The Pelli'can saied, That I ne drede;
Your cursing is of lite value;
Of God I hope to have my mede,
For it is falsshed that ye shewe,
For ye ben out of charite,
And wilne vengeance, as did Nero :
To sufferin I woll redy be;
I drede not all that thou canst do.

3185

Christ bad ones suffre for his love,
And so he taught all his servauntes,
But thou' amende for his sake above;
I drede not all thy maintenaunce;
For if I drede the world'is hate
Me thinkith I were lite to praise :
I drede nothing your hie estate,
Ne I ne drede not your disese.

3190

3195

3200

Wollin ye tourne and leve your pride,
And your hie porte and your richeffe,
Your cursing should not go so wide;
God bring you into rightwisenesse!

For I drede not your tirannie, 3205
For nothing that ye can ydoen;
To suffre I am all redie,
Sikir I recke nevir how fone.

The Griffon grinned as he were wode,
And lokid lovely as an owle, 3210
And swore by cock's herte and blode
He wold him tere every doule:
Holy churche thou disclaundrist foule;
For thy speche I woll the to race,
And make thy fleshe to rote and moule; 3215
Lofell, thou shalt have hardè grace.

The Griffon flewe forth on his waie,
The Pellican did sit and wepe,
And to himself he gan to saie,
God would that any of Christes shepe 3220
Had herdin, and itaken kepe
Eche a word that here sayid was,
And would it write and well ikepe;
God would it were all for his grace!

Plowman.

I answerid, and saied I would, 3225
If for my travaile one would pey.

Pellican.

He saied yes; these ther God han sold,
For thei han grete flore of money.

Plowman.

I sayid, Tell me and thou maie,
Why tellist thou menn's trespase? 3230

Pellican.

He said, To' amende 'hem in gode fay,
If God woll give me any grace;

For Christ himself is liken to me,
That for his peple died on rode;

Asfere I right so farith he,

3235

He fedith his birdes with his blode :

But these doen evill ayenst Gode,

And ben his foen undir frendes face ;

I told 'hem how ther living fode,

And God amende 'hem for his grace!

3240

Plowman.

What ailith the Griffon, tell why

That he holdith on the' othir side,

For thei two yben likily

And with kindis yrobin wide.

Pellican.

The foulè betokinith pride,

3245

As Lucifer that high flewe was,

And sith he did him in ill hide,

For he agiltid Godd'is grace.

As birde flyith up in the aire,

And livith by birdes that ben meke,

3250

So these ben flowe up in dispaire,

And shendin fely foulis eke;

The foulis that ben in sinnes eke

He culleth 'hem; knele therfore, alas!

For bribrie Godd'is forbode breke;

3255

But God amende it for his grace!

The hinder parte is a lioun,
 A robber and a raviner,
 That robbeth the peple in yerth doune,
 And in yerth holdith none his pere :
 So fareth this foule both ferre and nere,
 With tempo'rel strength the peple chafe
 As a lion proude in yerth here ;
 May God amende 'hem for his grace !

3260

Pellican.

He flewe forth with his wingis twain
 All drouping, and dafid, and dull,
 But sone the Griffon came again,
 Of his foulis the yerth was full ;
 The Pelli'can he had cast to pull,
 So grete nombre ner sene there was,
 What manir of foules telle I woll,
 If God wol give me of his grace.

3265

3270

With the Griffon come foulis fele,
 Ravins, rokis, crowis, and pie,
 And graie foulis, agadrid wele,
 Igurde above they wouldin hie,
 Gledis and bofardes weren 'hem by,
 White molles and puttockes toke ther place,
 And lapwinges, that wel conith lie ;
 'This company' han forlete ther grace.

3275

3280

Long while the Pellican was oute,
 But at last he commith againe,
 And brought with him the phenix stoute ;
 The Griffon would have flow ful faine,

His foulis fiewen as thicke as raine,
The phenix tho began 'hem chace,
To fle from him it was in vaine,
For he did vengeance and no grace.

He flewe 'hem doune without mercy;
There estarte neither fre ne thrall;
On him they cast a rufull crie
Whan that the Griffon doun was fall;
He bete him not, but flewe 'hem all:
Where he 'hem drove no man may trace:
Under the erth me thought they yall;
Alas, they had a feble grace!

The Pellican then axid right
For my writing if I have blame
Who then wol for me fight of flight?
Who shullin sheldè me from shame?
He that yhad a maide to dame,
And the Lambè that slaine ywas,
Shal sheldin me from gostly blame,
For erthely harme is Godd'is grace.

Therefore I pray evèry man
Of my writing have me excused,
This writing writeth the Pellican,
That thus these peple hath dispised;
For I am freshe fully advised
In ill not mainteine his menace,
For the devill is ofte disguised
To bring a man to evil grace.

Witith the Pelli'can and not me,
 For herof I n'il not avowe
 In hie ne lowe, ne no degre, 3315
 But as fable take it ye mowe.
 To holy churche I will me bowe;
 Eche man to' amende him Christe fende space!
 And for my writing me alowe
 He that' is almighty for his grace. 3320

Here endeth The Plowman's Tale.

THE PROLOGUE;

*Or, The mery adventure of the Pardonere and Tapstere at
the inn at Canterbury.*

W^HEN all this fresh feleshipe were come to Cantirbury,
 As ye have herde to fore, with Talys glad and merry,

The Prologue] This Prologue and the Tale (History of Beryn) which follows it were never before printed, and are taken out of a ms. borrowed from the Honourable Lady Thinn's, and not to be met with in any of the other mss. which Mr. Urry had perused; so that if the sense and measure of the verse are not so perfect here as in the other Tales it must be attributed to the want of ms. upon the authority of which all the other corrections are chiefly grounded. The verse in all probability is of the same kind with that of Gamelyn, and were it to be found in as many mss. might no doubt be as easily compleated, but having no other besides the forementioned, the reader must be content with only a faithfull transcript of it out of that ms. Urry.

Som of sotill sentence of vertue and of lore,
And som of othir mirthis, for them that hold no flore
Of wifdom, ne of holynes, ne of chivalry, 5
Nethir of vertuouse matere, but to foly
Leyd wit and lustis all to such japis

As hurlewaynes meyne in every hegg that rapes
Thorough unstabill mynde, ryght as the levis grene
Stondewn ageyn the wedir, ryght so by them I mene:
But no more hereof nowe at this ilche tyme, 11
In saving of my sentence, my Prolog, and my ryme.
They toke their in, and loggit them at mydmorowe
I trowe,

Alle cheker of the hope that many a man doth knowe;
Their Hooft of Southworke, that with them went, as
ye have herde to fore, 15
That was reowler of them al, of las and eke of more,
Ordeyned their dyner wisely or they to chirch went,
Such vitailis as he fonde in town, and for noon othir
sent.

The Pardonere behelde the besynes, how statis wer
iservid,

Diskennyng hym al prively, and a syde swervid: 20
The hostelere was so halowid fro o plase to another
He toke his staffe to the Tapstere: Welcom myne own
brother,

Quod she, with a frendly loke, al redy for to kys;
And he, as a man ilerned of such kyndnes, 24
Bracyd hir by the myddyll, and made hir gladly chere,
As thoughe he had iknowen hir al the rathir yeer:

She halid hym into the tapstrey there hir bed was makid;
 Lo, here I ligg, (quod she) myself al nyght al nakid,
 Without manny's company syn my love was dede,
 Jenkyn Harpour, yf ye hym knewe: from fete to the
 Was not a lustier persone to daunce ne to lepe [hede
 Then he was, thoughe I it sey: and therewith to wepe
 She made, and with hir napron feir and white ywask
 She wyped soft hir eyen for teris that she out lask
 As grete as any mylstone: upward gon they stert 35
 For love of her swetyng, that sat so nighe hir hert:
 She wept and waylid, and wrong her hondis, and made
 much to done,

For they that loven so passyngly such trowes they
 have echon:

She snyffith, sighith, and shoke hire hede, and made
 rouful cher:

Benedicite! quod the Pardonere, and toke hir by the
 fwere, 40

Yee make sorowe inowgh, quod he, your life though
 ye shuld lese.

It is no wondir, quod she than; and therewith she gan
 to sneise.

Aha! al hole, quod the Pardonere; your pennaunce is
 somewhat passid. [lassid;

God forbede it els! quod she, but it were somewhat
 I myght nat lyve els, thowe wotist, and it shuld long
 endure: 45

Now blessid be God of mendement of hele and eke
 of cure!

Quod the Pardonere tho anoon, and toke hir by the
chynne,

And sayd to hir these wordistho; Alas that love is syn!

So kynd a lover as yee be oon, and so trew of herte,

For be my trewe conscience yit for yewe I smerte, 50

And shall this month hereafter, for your soden disese;

Now wele wer hym ye lovid so he coud you plesse;

Idurstwere upon a book that trewe he shuld yewe fynd,

For he that is so yore dede is grene in your mynd. 54

Ye made me a fory man; I dred ye wold have stervid.

Graunt mercy, gentil Sir, quod she, that yee una servid:

Yee be a nobile man, iblessid mut yee be:

Sit down; ye shul drynk. Nay I wis (quod he)

I am fastyng yit, myne own hert'is rote.

Fastyng yit, alafs! quod she; therof I can gode bote.

She stert into the town and and fet a py al hote, 61

And set to fore the Pardonere; Jenken, I ween I n'ote

Is that your name I yow prey. I wis, myne own sustir,

So was I enformyd of them that did me fostir.

And what is yowrs? Kitt, iwis; so cleped me my dame.

And Godd'is blessing have thow, Kitt; now broke wel

thy name;

And privylich unlasid his both eyen liddes,

And lokid hir in the visage paramour amyddis,

And sighed there with a litil time that she it here

myghte,

And gan to rown and feyn this song, *Now, love, then*

do me righte.

70

Etc and be merry, quod she; why breke ye nowt your
 To wait more feleship it were but work in waste. [fall?
 Whi make ye so dull chere? for your love at home?
 Nay, forsooth, myne own hert, it is for you aloon. 74
 For me? alafs! what sey ye? that wer a simple prey.
 Trewlich yit, quod the Pardonere, it is as I yewe sey.
 Ye, etith and beth mery; we wol speke thereof sone;
Brennyd cat dredith feir: it is mery to be aloon;
 For by our Lady Mary, that bare Jesus on hir arm,
 I coud nevir love yit but it did me harm, 80
 For evir my manere hath be to love ovirmuch. [such!
 Now Crist's blessing, quod the Pardonere, go with al
 Lo! how the clowdis worchyn ech man to mete his
 For trewly, gentil Cristlian, I use the same tach, [mach
 And have ydo many a yer: I may it nat forbere, 85
 For *Kynd woll have his cours* though men the contrary
 swere:

And therewith he stert up smertly and cast down a
 grote.

What shal this do, gentil Sir? Nay, Sir, for my cote
 I n'old ye payd a peny her and so sone pas.

The Pardonere swore his grett othe he wold pay no las.
 I wis, Sir, it is ovir do, but sith it is yowr will 91

I woll putt it in my purse lest yee it take in ill
 To refuse your curtesy: and therwith she gan to bowe.
 Now trewly, quod the Pardonere, yeur maners been
 to lowe,

For had ye countid freytly, and nothing left behind,
 I might have wele ydemed that ye be unkind, 96

And eke untrewē of hert, and sooner me forgete,
 But ye list be my tresorer, for we shall offer mete.
 Now certen, quod the Tapster, ye have a rede ful even,
 As wold to God ye couth as wele undo my sweven
 That I my self did mete this nyght that is ypaffid,
 How I was in a chirch when it was all ymassid, 102
 And was in my devocioune tyl service was al doon,
 Tyl the preeft and the clerk boyftly bad me goon,
 And put me out of the chirch with an egir mode.

Now Seynt Daniel, quod the Pardonere, your swevyn
 turn to gode, 106

And I woli halfow it to the best, have it in yeur mynd,
 For comynly of these swevyngs the contrary men shul
 Ye have be a lover glad, and litil joy yhad; [fynd.
 Plick up a lusty hert, and be mery and glad, 110
 For ye shul have an husbond that shall yewe wed to
 That shal love yewe as hertly as his own lyve. [wyve,
 The preeft that put yew out of chirch shall lede you
 in ageyne,

And helpe to yeur mariage with al his might and main.
 This is the sweven al and som Kit; how likith the?
 Be my trowith wondir wele, blessid mut thowe be!
 Then toke he leve at that tyme, tyll he com effitone,
 And went to his feleship (as it was to doon) [tere,
 Thoughe it be no grete holynes to prech this ilk ma-
 And that som list to her it, yit, Sirs, ner the latter 120
 Endurith for a while and suffrith them that woli, [pull
 And ye shull her how the Tapster made the Pardonere

Garlik all the long nyghte til it was ner end day;
For the more chere she made of love the falser was
her lay :

But litil charge gaff she therof, tho she acquit his while,
For ethir is thought and tent was othir to begile,
As ye shul here hereaftir, when tyme comith and spafe
To meve such matere.—But now a litil spafe
I wol return me ageyn to the company,

The Knyghte and al the feleshyp, and nothing for to ly.
Whan they wer al yloggite, as skil wold and reson,
Everich aftir his degre, to churche then was feson
To pas and to wend to make their offringis,
Richte as their devocioun was, of silver broch and
Then at churche dorr the curtesy gan to ryse [ryngis;
Tyl the Knyght, of gentilnes that knewe right wele
the guyse,

Put forth the prelatiſ, the Parſon, and hiſ fere,
A Monk that took the ſpryngill with a manly chere,
And did as the manere iſ, moilid al their patiſ
Everich aſtir othir, righte as they were of ſtatiſ: 140
The Frer ſeynyd ſetouſly the ſpryngill for to hold
To ſpryng oppon the remnaunt, that for hiſ cope he
n'old

Have last that occupacione in that holy plase,
So longid his holy conscience to se the Nonn'is safe.
The Knyght went with his compers toward the holy
shryne

To do that they wer com for, and aftir for to dyne:

The Pardoner and the Miller, and othir lewde fotes,
Sought 'hem self in the chirch right as lewd gotes,
Pyrid fast and pourid high upon the glase,
Counterfetyng gentilmen the armys for to blase, 150
Diskynering fast the peyntur, and for the story mour-
And a red al so right as rammys hornyd. [nid,
Heberith a balstaff, quod the toon, and els a rakid end;
Thow failest, quod the Miller, thow hast nat wel thy
mynd; 154

It is a spere, yf thow canst se, with a prik tofore, [bore:
To push a down his enmy, and through the shoulder
Pese, quod the Hooft of Southwork; let stond the wyn-
dow glasid;
Goith up and doith your offerynge; ye semith half
amafid:

Sith ye be in company of honest men and good 159
Worchith somwhat aftir them, and let the kynd of
Pas for a tyme; I hold it for the best, [brode
For who doith aftir company may live the bet in rest.
Then passid they forth boyssly gogling with their hedis,
Knelid adown to fore the shrine, and hertlich their bedis
They preyd to Seint Thomas in such wyse as they
couth; 165

And sith the holy relikes ech man with his mowith
Kissid, as a goodly monk the names told and taught,
And sith to othir places of holynes they raught,
And wer in their devocioune tyl service wer al doon,
And sith they drowgh to dynerward as it drew to noon,

Then, as manere and custum is, signes there they
bought, 171

For men of contre shuld know whome they had fought.
Eche man set his silver in such thing as they likid,
And in the meen while the Miller had ypikid
His bosom ful of signys of Caunterbury brochis, 175
Though the Pardoner and he pryvely in hir pouchis
They put them afterwards, that noon of them it wist,
Save the Sompner seid somwhat, and seyde to he list
Halff part, quod he, prively rownyng on their ere;
Husht! pees, quod the Miller, seist thou nat the Frere,
How he lowrith undir his hood with a doggish eye?
Hit shuld be a privy thing that he coud nat aspy; 182
Of every craft he can somwhat, our Lady give hym
forowe!

Amen, tho quod the Sompner, on eve and eke on mo-
rowe:

So cursid a Tale he told of me the devill of hell hym
spede, 185

And me, but yf I pay him wele and quyte wele his
Yf it hap homward that ech man tell his Tale, [mede.
As we did hiderward, though we shuld set at sale
All the shrewdnes that I can, I woll hym nothing spare,
That I n'ol touch his takerd somwhat of his care. 190
They set their signys upon their hedes, and som op-
pon their capp,

And sith to the dynerward they gan for to stapp.
Every man in his degre wissh and toke his sete,
As they wer went to doon at soper and at mete,

And wer in silence for a tyme tyl good ale gan arise,
And then, as nature axith, as these old wise 196
Knownen wele, when veynys been somewhat replete,
The spirits wol flere, and also metis swete
Causen oft myrthis for to be ymevid,

And eke it was no tyme tho for to be ygrevid: 200
Every man in his wyse made hertly chere,
Telling his felowe of sportys and of chere,
And of othir mirthis that fellyn by the wey,
As custom is of pylgryms, and hath been many a dey.
The Hooft leid to his ere, of Southworke as ye knowe,
And thenkid al the company both high and lowe, 206
So wele kepeing the covenaut in Southwork that
was made,

That every man shuld by the wey with a Tale glade
All the whole company in shorting of the wey; 209
And al is wele performed: but than now thus I sey,
That we must so homeward ech man tel anothir.
Thus we wer accordit, and I shuld be a rathir
To set yewe in governaunce by right ful jugement.
Trewly Hooft, quod the Frer, that was all our assent,
With a litil more that I shall sey therto: 215

Yee graunted of your curtesy that we shuld also
All the hole company sope with yewe at nyght:
Thus I trow that it was; what sey you, Sir Knyght?
It shal nat nede, quod the Hooft, to axe no witnes;
Your record is good I now; and of your gentilnes
Yit I prey yew efft ageyn; for by Seynt Thomas shryne
And ye woll hold covenaut I woll hold myne. 222

Now trewly Hooft, quod the Knyght, ye have right
wel yseyd;

And as towching my persone I hold me payde;
And so I trowe that al doith: Sirs, what sey yee? 225
The Monk and eke the Marchaunte and al seid Ye.
Then al this aftir-mete, I hold it for the best,

To sport and pley us, quod the Hooft, eche man as hym
And go by tyme to soper and to bed also, [left,
So mowe we erly ryfen our journey for to do. 230

The Knight arose therewithal, and cast on a fresher
And his sone anothir, to walk in the town, [gown,
And so did all the remnaunt that wer of that aray,
That had their chaungis with them, they made them
fresh and gay,

Sortid them togidir, right as their lustis lay, 235
As they were more usid travelling by the way.

The Knyght with his meyne went to se the walle
And the wards of the town, as to a knyght befall,
Devising ententiflich the strengthis al about,
And apointid to his sone the perell and the dout 240
For shot of arblast and of bowe, and eke for shot of
gonne,

Unto the wardis of the town, and how it might be
And al defence ther ageyn aftir his intent [wone;
He declarid compendiously, and al that evir he ment
He sone perseyvid every poynt, as he was full abil.
To armes and to travaile and persone covenabill 246
He was of all factur aftir fourm of kynd, [mynd
And for to deme his governaunce it semed that his

Was much in his lady that he lovid best, [rest.
That made hym oft to wake when he shuld have his
The Clerk that was of Oxenforth onto the Sompnore
seyd, 251

Me semeth of grete clerge that thow art amayde,
For thou puttest on the Frer in maner of repress,
That he knoweth falskede, vice, and eke a theff;
And I it hold vertuouse and right commendabill 255
To have very knowlech of things reprovabill;
For who so may eschew it, and let it pas by,
And els he myght fall theron unward and sodenly.
And thoughe the Frer told a Tale of a Sompnour,
Thow oughtist for to take it for no dishonour, 260
For of al craftis and of eche degre

They be not al perfite, but som nyce be.
Lo! what is worthy, seyde the Knight, for to be a clerk;
To sommon among us them this mocionne was ful
I comend his wittis and eke his clerge, [derke:
For of ether parte he saveth honeste. 266

The Monk toke the Parfone then and the grey Frer,
And preyd them for curtesy for to go in fere:
I have ther acquaintaunce that al this yeris thre
Hath preyd hym by his lettris that I hym wold se;
And ye my brothir in habit and in possessiounne, 271
And now I am here methinketh it is to doon,
To preve it in dede what chere he wold me make,
And to yew my frende also for my sake.

They went forth togidir talking of holy matere, 273
But woot ye wele in certeyn they had no mind on
watere

To drynk at that tyme, when they wer met in fere,
For of the best that myght be founde, and therewith
mery chere,

They had, it is no doubte; for spycys and eke wine
Went round about the galtoyn and eke the ruyne. 280
The Wyfe of Bath was so wery she had no wyl to walk,
She toke the Prioress by the honde; Madam, wol ye
Pryvely into the garden to se the herbis growe, [stalk
And aftir with our host's wife in hir parlour rowe?
I wol gyve yewe the wyne and ye shul me also, 285
For tyl we go to soper we have naught ellis to do.

The Prioress, as woman taught of gentil blood and
hend,

Affentid to hir counsel, and forth gon they wend,
Passyng forth sofftly into the herbery,

For many a herb grewe for fewe and furgery, 290
And all the aleys feir, and parid, and raylid, and yma-
The savige and the isope yfrethid and ystakid, [kid,
And othir beddis by and by fresh ydight,

For comer to the hooster righte a sportful sight. [Reve,
The Marchaunt and the Mancipill, the Miller and the
And the Clerk of Oxenforth, to townward gan they
meve, 296

And al the othir meyne, and lastt noon at home [goon
Save the Pardoner, that pryvelich when al they wer

Stalkid into the tapstry ; for nothing wold he leve
 To make his covenante in certeyn that same eve ;
 He wold be loggit with hir, that was his hole enten-
 tioune. 301

But hap and eke Fortune, and all the constellacioune,
 Was clere hym ageyns, as ye shul astir here ;

For hym had better be yloggit al nyght in a myere
 Then he was the same nyght or the sun was up ; 305

For such was his fortune he drank without the cupp ;
 But thereof wist he no delay ; ne *No man of us alle*
May have that bigb connyng to know what shal befall.

He stappid into the tapstry wondir pryvely,
 And fond hir ligging liryng with half slopy eye, 310
 Pourid fellich undir hir hood, and sawe al his comyng,
 And lay ay still, as naught she knewe, but feynid hir
 slepyng.

He put his hond to hir brest ; Awake, quod he, awake.
 A, *benedicite !* Sir, who wist yew her ? out tho I myght
 Prisoner, quod the Tapstere, being al aloon ; [be take
 And therwith breyd up in a frite, and began to groon.
 Now sith ye be my prisoner yeld yew now, quod he.
 I must nedis, quod she, I may nothyng fle ;

And eke I have no strengith, and am but yong of age,
 And also *It is no mastery to catch a mouse in a cage* 320
That may no where stert out, but closid wondir fast ;

And eke, Sir, I tell yew though I had grete hast
 Ye shuld have coughed when ye com. Wher lern you
 curtesy ?

Now trewlich I must chide, for of right pryvety

Women ben som tyme of day when they be aloon.
 Wher coud I yew prey when ye com effisone? 326
 Nowe mercy, dere swetyng! I wol do so no more;
 I thank you an hundrit sithis; and also by your lore
 I wol do hereaftir in what plase that I com:
 But lovers, Kitt, ben evil avyfid full oft, and to lom;
 Wherfor I prey you hertlich hold me excused, 331
 And I behote yew trewly it shall no more be usid.
 But now to our purpose: how have ye fare
 Sith I was wyth you last? that is my most care;
 For yf yee eylid eny thing othir wise then good 335
 Trewly it wold chaunge my chere and my blood.
 I have farid the wers for yewe, quod Kitt: do ye no
 God that is above? and eke ye had no nede [drede
 For to congir me, God woot, wyth your nygromancy,
 That have no more to vaunte me but oonly my body,
 And yf it were disteynid then wer I ondo: 341
 I wis I trowe, Jenkyn, ye be nat to trust to;
 For evir more ye clerkis con so much in book
 Yee wol wynn a woman at first look
 Thought the Pardonere, this goth wele, and made his
 beter chere, 345
 And axid of hir softly, Love! who shall ligg here
 This nyght that is to comyng? I prey yewe tell me.
 I wis it is grete nede to tell yewe, quod she:
 Make it nat overqueynt though you be a clerk;
 Ye knowe wele inough iwis by loke, by word, by
 work. 350

Shal I com than, Christian, and fese away the cat ?
Shal ye com ? *per benedicite* ! what question is that ?
Wherfor I prey you hertly to be my counsail ;
Comyth somwhat late, and for nothing fail ;
The dorr shall stond thar up ; put it from yew soft,
But be wele avysid ye wake nat them on lofft. 356
Care ye nat, quod Jenkin, I can theron at best ;
Shal no man for my stepyng be wakid of his rest.
Anoon they dronk the beverage, and wer of oon accord,

As it semed by their chere and also by their word :
And al a staunce she lovid hym wele, she toke hym
by the swere, 361

Asthough he had lernyd cury favel of som old frere.
The Pardoner plukkid out of his purs ! trow the dowry,
And toke it Kitt in hir hond, and bad her pryvely
To orden a rere sopor for them both to, 365
Acawdell ymade with swete wyne and with sugir also,
For trewly I have no talent to ete in yeur absence,
So longith my hert toward yew to be in yewr presence.
[wer,

He toke his leve, and went his wey asthough nothing
And met wyth al the felfship ; but in what plase ne
wher 370

He spake no word therof, but held hym close and syllyl,
As he that hopid fikirlich to have had al his wyll,
And thought many a mery thought by hymself aloon :
I am a loggit, thought he best, how so evir it goon ;

And thoughe it have costid me, yit wol I do my peyn
For to pike hir purs to nyghte and win my cost ageyn.
Now leve I the Pardonere tyll that it be eve, 377

And wol returne me ageyn righte ther as I did leve.
Whan al wer com togider in their herbergage
The Hooft of Southwork, as ye knowe, that had no
spice of rage, 380

Eut al thing wrought prudencially, as fobir man and
wife;

Now wol we to the soup, Sir Knyght, seith yeur avyse,
Quod the Hooft ful curteysly, and in the same wise.
The Knyght answer'd him ageyn, Sir as ye devyse
I must obey, ye woot wele; but yf I faill wytt 385
Then takith these prelatys to yewe, and wasshith and
go sit;

For I woll be yewr Marchall and serve yewe, ech one,
And then the officers and I to soper shall we gone.
They wissh, and sett right as he bad, eche man wyth
his fere,

And begonne to talk of sportis and of chere 390
That they had the aftir-mete whiles they wer out,
For othir occupacioun tyll they wer servid about
They had nat at that tyme, but every man kitt a leff;
But the Pardonere kept hym close, and told nothing of
The myrth and hope that he had, but kept it for
hymself; [solve

And thoughe he did it is no fors, for he had nede to
Long or it wer mydnyght, as ye shul her sone, 397
For he met with his love in crokeing of the moon.

They wer yservyd honestly, and eche man held hym
payde,

For of o manere of service their soper was araide, 400
As skill wold and reson, fith the lest of all

Payid ylike much, for growing of the gall: [freight,
But yit as curtesy axith, though it wer som dele
The statisthat wer above had of the seyrest endreyte;
Wherfor they did their gentilnes ageyn to all the rout,
They dronken wyne at their cost onys round about.

Now pass I lightly ovir. When they soupid had 407
Tho that were of governaunce, as wyse men and sad,
Went to their rest, and made no more to doon,

But Miller and the Coke dronken by the moon 410
Twyes to eche othir in the repenyng;

And when the Pardoner them espy'd anon he gan to
Deubill me this bourden, chokelyng in his throte, [sing
For the Tapster shuld here of his mery note:

He clepid to hym the Sompnour, that was his own dis-
The Yeman and the Reve, and the Mancipill, [cipill,
And stoden so holowyng; for nothing wold they leve
Tyl the tyme that it was well within eve.

The Hooft of Southwork herd them wele, and the
Marchaunt both, 419

As they wer at a countis, and wexen somewhat wroth,
But yet they preyd them curteysly to rest for to wend,
And so they did all the rout; they dronk and made
an end.

And eche man droughe to *cusky* to slepe and take his
rest

Save the Pardoner, that drew apart, and weytid by a
For to hide hymself tyl the candill wer out: [cheffe
And in the meen while, have ye no doute, 426
The Tapster and hir paramour, and the hosteler of
the house,

Sitt togidir pryvelich, and of the best gouse
That was yfound in town and yset at sale 429
They had there of sufficiaunt, and dronk but litill ale;
And sit and ete the cawdell for the Pardoner that was
made, [bade:

With sugir and with fwete wyne, right as hymself
So he that payd for all in feer had not a twynt,
For offit is more better ymerkid then ymynt:

And so farid he ful right as ye have yherd, 435

But *Who is that a woman could not make his berd,*
And she wer therabout, and set hir wytt therto?

Ye woot wele I ly nat, and wher I do or no
I wol nat here termyn it, lest ladies stond in plase
Or els gentil women, for lesing of my grace 440
Of daliaunce and of sportis and of goodly chere;
Therfor anenst their estatys I wol in no manere
Deme ne determyn, but of lewd kitts,

As tapsters, and othir such that hath wyly wyttis,
To pike mennys pursis, and eke to bler their eye;
So wele they make seme soth when they falsest by.
Now of Kitt Tapster, and of hir paramour, 447
And the hosteler of the house, that sit in Kittis bour,

When they had ete and dronk right in the same plase,
Kit began to rendir out all thing as it was; 450
The wowing of the Pardoner, and his cost also,
And how he hopid for to lygg al nyght wyth hir also;
But therof he shall be fikir as of God's cope; [sclope
And sodeynly kissid her paramour, and feyd, We shul
Togidir hul by hul, as we have many a nyght, 455
And yf he com and make noyse, I prey yewe dub hym
Knyght.

Yes, Dame, quod hir paramour, be thou not agast;
This is his own staff thou seyft, therof he shall atast.
Now trewly, quod the hosteler, and he com by my lot
He shall drink for Kittis love wythout cup or pot;
And he be so hardy to wake eny gift [mist;
I make a vowe to the peacock there shal wake a foul
And arose up therewithal and toke his leve anon:
It was a shrewid company; they had servid so many
oon. 464

With such manere of feleship ne kepe I never to dele,
Ne no man that lovith his worship and his hele.
Quod Kitt to hir paramour, Ye must wake a whyle,
For trewlich I am fikir that within this myle
The Pardoner wol be comyng, his hete to aswage,
But loke ye pay hym redelich to kele his corage; 470
And therfor, love, dischance yewe not tyll this chek
No, for God, Kitt, that wol I no. [be do.
Then Kitt went to bed, and blewe out all the light,
And by that tyme it was ner hond quarter nyght.

Whan all was still the Pardoner gan to walk, 475
As glad as eny goldfynch that he herd no man talk,
And drowghe to Kittis dorward to herken and to list,
And went to have fōnd the dor up; but the hasp and
Held hym out a whils, and the lok also; [eke the twilt
Yit trowid he no gile, but went ner to, 480

And scrapid the dorr welplich, and wynyd wyth his
Aftir a doggis lyden, as nere as he couith. [mowith
Awey, dog, with evill deth! quod he that was within,
And made hym all redy the dorr to unpin.

Al thought the Pardoner, tho I trow my berd be made;
The Tapster hath a paramour, and hath made them
glade 486

With the cawdell that I ordeyned for me, as I gues;f;
Now the devill hir spede, such oon as she is. [rowe;
She seid I had ycongerid hir; our Lady gyve hir so-
Now wold to God she wer in stokis tyl I shuld hir
borowe, 490

For she is the falsest that evir yit I knewe; [trewe.
To pik the mony out of my purs, Lord! she made hir
And therewyth he caught a cardiakill and a cold sot,
For who have love longing, and is of corage hote,
He hath ful many a myry thought tofore his delyte;
And right so had the Pardoner, and was in evil plight;
For fayling of his purpose he was nothing in ese, 497
Wherfor he fill sodenlich into a wood rese,
Entryng wondir fast into a frensy
For pur very angir and for jelousy; 500

For when he herd a man within he was almost wood,
And becaufe the coft was his no marvel tho the moud
Wer turned into vengauce, yf it myght be:

But this was the myfchief; all fo ftrong as he
Was he that was within, and lighter man alfo, 505
As provid wele the bataile betwene them both to.

The Pardonere fcrapid eftt ageyn; for nothyng wold
he blyn,

So feyn he wold have herd more of hym that was
within. [ere?

What dog is that? quod the paramour; Kit, wolt thou
Have God my trowith, quod fhe, it is the Pardonere.

The Pardonere, with myfcheff! God gyve hym evil
Sir, fhe feid, by my trowith he is the fame theff. [preff!

Therof thou lieft, quod the Pardonere, and might nat
long forbere.

A thy fals body! quod he; the devil of hell the tere!
For by my trowith a falsfher fawe I nevir noon, 515

And nempnid hir namys many mo then oon,

Though to rech hir wer noon honefte

Among men of good worfhip and degre.

But, fhortly to conclude; when he had chid inowe

He axid his flaff spitouflich, with wordis fharpe and
rowe. 520

Goto bed, quod he within; no more noyfe thou make;
Thy flaff fhall be redy to morowe I undertake.

In foth, quod he, I wol nat fro the dorr wend

Tyl I have my flaff. Thow bribour, then have the
todir end,

Quod he that was within ; and leyd it on his bak,
Right in the same plase as chapmen berith their pak;
And so he did to mo, as he coud a rede, 527
Graspyng aftir with the staff in length and eke in
And fond hym othir whyle redlich inoughe [brede;
With the staffys end high upon the browe. 530
The hosteler ley oppon his bed and herd of this affray,
And stert hym up lightlich, and thought he wold a say:
He toke a staff in his hond, and highed wondir blyve
Tyl he wer with the feleship that shuld nevir thryve.
What be yee ? quod the hosteler ; and knew them both
wele. 535

Hyust ! pefe, quod the paramour : Jak, thow must be
Ther is a theff, I tell the, within this hall dorr. [fele;
A theff ! quod Jak ; this is is a nobill chere
That thou hym hast yfound, yf wee hym myght catch.
Yis, yis, care the nought ; with hym we shul mach
Wele inowe or he be go, yf so we had lighte, 541
For we to be strong inowe with o man for to fighte.
The devil of hell, quod Jak, breke this thev'is bonis !
The key of the kitchen, as it wer for the nonys,
Is above with our dame ; and she hath such usage, 545
And she be wake of her slepe, she fallith in such a rage
That al the weke aftir there may no man hir pefe,
So she sterith aboute this house in a wood rese.
But now I am avisid bet how we shul have lyte ;
I have too gyltis within that this same nyght 550
Sopid in the halle, and had a litill feir :
Go up, quod Jak, and loke, and in the as this pire,

And I wol kepe the dorr; he shall not stert out.

Nay, for God that wol I nat, lest I catch a clout, 554

Seid the todir to Jak, for thou knowist bettir then I

All the estris of this house; go up thyself and spy.

Nay, for soth, quod Jak, that were grete unrighte

To aventur oppon a man that with hym did not fighte:

Sithens thou hast hym bete and with thy staff ypilt,

Me thinkith it wer no reson that I shuld bere the gilt;

For by the blyfing of the cole he myght se myne hede,

And lightly lene me such a stroke my hond to be dede.

Then wol we do by common assent sech hym al about;

Who that metith hym first pay him on the snout; 564

For methought I herd hym here last among the pannys.

Kepe thou the toder side, but ware the watir cannys,

And if he be herein ryght sone we shull hym fynde,

And we to be strong inowghe o thesse for to hynde.

Aha ha! thought the Pardoner, beth the pannysaryn?

And drowghe oppon that side, and thought oppon a

gynne; 570

So at last he fond oon, and set it on his hede,

For as the case was fall ther' to he had grete nede:

But yit he graspit ferthirmore to have somewhat in

And fond a grete ladill right as he was gonde, [honde,

And thought for to sterte out betwene them both to

And waytid wele the paramour that had doon hym

woo, 576

And set him with the ladill on the gruscill on the nose,

That all the week after he had such a pose,

That both his eyin waterid erlich by the morowe,
 But she that was the cause of it had ther' of no sorowe.
 But now to the Pardoner As he wold stert away 581
 The hosteler met with hym, but nothyng to his pay:
 The Pardoner ran so swith the pan fill him fro,
 And Jak hosteler astir hym as blyve as he myght go,
 And slapid oppon a brondeal unware, 585
 That hym had bin beter to have goon more asware,
 For the egg of the pann met with his shynne,
 And karff atoo a veyn and the next syn:
 But whils that it was grene he thought litil on, 589
 But when the greneness was apast the greff sat ner the
 Yit Jak leyd to his hond to grope wher it sete, [bone;
 And when he fond he was yhurt the Pardoner he
 gan to threte,

And swore by Seynt Amyas that he shuld abigg
 With stroks hard and fore even oppon the rigg; 594
 Yf he hym myght fynd he nothyng wold hym spare.
 That herd the Pardoner wele, and held hym bettir a
 And thought that he had strokis ryght inough. [square,
 Wytnes on his armys, his bak, and his browe.
 Jak then, quod the paramour, where is the theff ago?
 In'cte, quod tho Jak; right now he lepte me fro, 600
 That Crist's curs go with hym, for I have harm and
 spite:

Be my trowith and I also and he goith nat al quyte:
 But and we myght hym fynd we wold aray hym so
 That he shuld have legg ne foot to morowe on to go,

But how shull we hym fynd? the moon is adown, 605
(As grace was for the Pardoner) and eke when they
did roun

He herd them evir wele inowe, and went the more
asyde,

And drew him evir bakward, and let the strokis glide.

Jak, quod the paramour, I hold it for the best,

Sith the moon is down, for to go to rest, 610

And make the gatis fast; he may not then astert,

And eke of his own staff he berith a redy mark,

Wherby thou mayest him knowe among all the route,

And thou ber a redy ey, and weyt wele aboute

Tomorowe when they shul wend; this is the best rede:

Jak, what seyest thou therto? is this wele yseyd? 616

Thy wit is clere, quod Jak; thy wit mut nedis stond.

He made the gatis fast; ther is no more to doon.

The Pardoner stode aside, his chekis ron and bled,

And was ryght evil at ese al nyght in his hede: 620

He must of force lige lyke a colyn swerd,

Yit it mevid him wondir fore for making of his berd;

He payd at full ther'fore through a womans art

For wyne and eke for cawdill, and had ther'of no part:

He ther'for preyd Seynt Juliane, as ye mowe onder-

stonde, 625

That the devill her shulde spede on watir and on

londe,

So to disseive a travellyng man of his herbergage,

And coude not els save curs his angir to aswage;

And was diftract of his wit, and in grete despayr,
 Forastir his hete he caught a cold through the nyght's
 eyr, 630

That he was ner afoundit, and coud none othir help :
 But as he fought his loggyng he happid oppon a
 That ley undir a steyir, a grete Walssh dog, [whelp
 That bare about his neck a grete huge clog;
 Because that he was spetouse, and wold sone bite,
 The clog was hongit about his nek, for men shuld
 nat wite 636

Nothyng the dogg's maister yf he did eny harm,
 So for to excuse them both it was a wyly charm.
 The Pardonere wold have loggit hym ther, and lay
 somwhat nigh,

The warrok was awakid and caught hym by the thigh,
 And bote hym wondir spetously, defending wele his
 couch, 641

That the Pardonere myght nat ne hym nether touch,
 But held hym a square by that othir side,
 As holfom was at that tyme for tereing of his hyde :
 He coud noon othir help, but leyd adown his hede
 In the dogg's littir, and wisshid astir brede 646

Many a time and oft, the dog for to please,
 To have yle ymore nere for his own ese :
 But wif what he wold his fortune seyde Ney ;
 So trewly for the Pardonere it was a dismal dey. 650
 The dog ley evir grownyng, redy for to snache,
 Wher' for the Pardonere durst nat with hym mache,

But ley as still as eny stone, remembryng his foly,
 That he wold trust a Tapster of a common hostry;
 For commonly for the most part they ben wyly echon.
 But now to alle the company a morrow whan they
 shuld gon 656

Was noon of all the feleship half so sone ydlight
 As was the gentil Pardoner; for al tyme of the nyght
 He was aredy in his aray, and had nothing to doon
 Sasse shake alite his eris, and trus and be goone. 660
 Yet or he cam in company he wissh away the blood,
 And bond the forys to his hede with the typet of his
 And made lightsom chere, for men shuld nat spy hood,
 Nothyng of his turment ne of his luxury;
 And the hosteler of the house, for nothyng he coud pry,
 He coud nat knowe the Pardoner among the company
 Amorowe when they shuld wend, for ought that they
 coud pour, 667

So wysely went the Pardoner out of the degg's bour,
 And blynched from the hosteler, and turned offt about,
 And evir more beheld hym amyward of the rout, 670
 And was evir syngyng to make al thyng good;
 But yit his notis wer somewhat low for aking of his
 So at that tyme he had no more grame, [hede:
 But held hym to his hapynes to scape shame. 674

The Knyght and al the feleship forward gon they
 Passyng forth merely to the town's end; [wend,
 And by that tyme they wer ther the day began to rype,
 And the son merely upward gan he pike,

Pleying undir the egge of the firmament. 679
Now, quod the Hooft of Southwork, and to the sele-
Who sawe evir so feyr or so glad a day, [ship bent,
And how sote this seson is entring into May? [nyng,
The thrustelis and the thrushis, in this glad mor-
The ruddok and the goldfynch; but the nyghtyngale
His ameraus notis lo how he twynyth small! [thing
Lo how the trees grenyth that nakid wer, and no-
Bare this month afore but their sommer clothing!
Lo how Nature makith for them evirichone!
And as many as ther be he forgettith noone!
Lo how the seson of the yere and Averell shouris 690
Doith the busshis burgyn out bloffoms and flouris!
Lo the pryme rosis how fresh they ben to sene!
And many othir flouris among the gras is grene
Lo how they spryng, and sprede, and of divers hue!
Beholdith, and seith both rede, white, and blue! 695
That lusty bin and comfortabill for mann'ys sight!
For I sey for my self it makith my hert to light.
Now sith Almighty Soveryn hath sent so feir a dey
Let se now, as covenant is, in shorting of the wey,
Who shall be the first that shall unlace his male 700
In comfort of us al, and gyn some mery Tale;
For and we shuld now begyn to draw lot
Peraventure it myght fal ther it ought not,
On som unlusty persone that wer not wele awakid,
Or semyhoufy ovyr eve, and had ysong and crakid

Somwhat ovir much : how shuld he than do ? 706

For *Who shuld tell a Tale he must have good wyll therto.*

And eke som men fastyng beth glewid and ybound
In their tongis ; and some fastyng beth nothyng jo-
cound ;

And som in the morning their mouthis beth adoun ;
Tyll that they be charmyd their wordis woll not foun.

So thys is my conclusioun and my last knot,

It wer grete gentilnes to tell without lot.

By the rood of Bromholm, quod the Marchant tho,

As fer as I have sailed, riden and ygo, 715

Sawe I nevir man yet tofore this ilk day

So wele coud rule a company as our Host, in say ;

His wordis ben so comfortabill, and comyth so in se-

That my wit is ovircome to make eny reson [son,

Contrary to his counsaill at myn ymagynacioun, 720

Wher'for I woll tell a Tale to your consolacioun,

In ensampill, to yowe that when that I have do

Another be right redy then for to tell, ryght so

To fulfyll our Host's wyll and his ordinaunce. 724

There shall no sawte be found in me : gode wyl shal be

With this I be excusid of my rudines, [my chaunce :

Altho' I cannot peynt my Tale, but tell it as it is,

Lepying ovir no sentence, as ferforth as I may,

But tell yewe the yolke and put the white away. 729

THE MERCH. SECOND TALE;

OR, THE HISTORY OF BERYN.

WHILOM yeris passid in the old dawis
 When rightfullich by reson governyd wer the lawis,
 And pryncipally in the cete of Rome, that was so rich,
 And worthiest in his dayes, and noon to hym ilich
 Of worship ne of wele, ne of governaunce, 5
 For alle londis christened ther'of had doraunce,
 And all othir natiouns, of what feith they were,
 Whils the Emperour was hole, and in his paleys there
 I mainteyned in honour; and in Pop'is se
 Rome was then obeied of all Cristiante. 10
 But it farith ther'by as it doith by othir thingis;
 For though nethir cete, regioun, ne kyngis.
 Beth nat now so worthy as wer by old tyme,
 As we fynd in romaunces, in gestis, and in ryme,
 For *All things deith wast, and eke mann'ys lyff* 15
Is more shorter then it was; and our wittis fyve
 Mowe nat comprehende now in our dietes
 As som tyme myght these old wise poetes.
 But sith that terrene things ben nat perdurabill,
 No mervaile is though Rome be somwhat variabill 20
 Fro honour and fro wele sith his frendis passid;
 As many anothir town is payrid and ylassid
 Within these few yeris, as we mowe se at eye;
 Lo! Sirs, here fast by Wynchelse and Ry.

But yit the name is evir oon of Rome as it was
groundit 25

After *Remus* & *Romulus*, that first that cete foundit,
That brethren weren both to, as old bokis writen ;
But ofther les and governaunce I wol nat now enditen,
But of othir mater that fallith to my mynd ;
Wher'for, gentill Sirs, ye that beth behind 30
Drawith somwhat nere thikker to a rout,
That my wordis may soune to ech man about.

Aftir these 2 brethren *Romulus* and *Remus*
Julius Cæsar was Emperour, that rightful was of
This cete he governed nobilich wele, [*Domus.*
And conquered many a regioun, as cronicull doth
us telle ; 36

For, shortly to conclude, al tho wer adversaryes
To Rome in his dayis he made them tributaries ;
So had he in subjeccioun both frend and foon,
Of which I tell yew trewly Englonde was oon. 40
Yit aftir *Julius Cæsar*, and sith that *Crist* was bore,
Rome was governed as wele as it was before,
And namelich in that tyme and in the same yeris
When it was governed by the *Doseperis* ;
As semeth wele by reson, who so can entend, 45
That *O mann's wytt ne wyll may not comprehend*
The boucheff and the myscheff, as may many bedis ;
Ther'forther operaciouns, ther domes, and ther dedes,
Were so egallich ydoon ; for in all *Cristen londis*
Was noon that they sparid for to mend wrongis. 50

Then Constantyne the Third, aftir these Dosiperis,
 Was Emperour of Rome, and regnyd many yeris.
 So, shortly to pas ovir, after Constantyn's dayis.
 Phūs Augustinus, as songen is in layes,
 That Constantyn's son, and of plener age, 55
 Was Emperour ychose, as fill by heritage,
 In whose tyme fikerlich the 7 Sages were
 In Rome dwellyng decently; and yf yee lust to lere
 How they were yclepid, or I ferther goon
 I woll tell you the names of them everichone, 60
 And declare yeu the cause why they ther namys bere.
 The first was ycleped Sother Legifeer,
 This is thus much for to sey, as *man bering the lawe:*
 And so he did trewly; for levir he had be sclawe
 Then do or sey eny thing that sownyd out of reson, 65
 So cleen was his conscience yset in trowith and reson.
 Marcus Stoycus the second, so pepill hym highte,
 That is to mene in our consert, a *keper of the right:*
 And so he did full trewe; for the record and the ples
 He wrote them evir trewly, and took noon othir fees
 But such as was ordynid to take by the yere: 71
 Now, Lord God! in Cristendom I wold it were so clere.
 The third Craffus Afulus among men clepid was,
An house of rest, and ese, and counsail, in every case:
 For to onderstond that was his name full right, 75
 Forevirmore the counsails he helpid wyth al his myght.
 Antonius Judens the ferth was yclepid, [pid,
 That was as much to meen, as wele me myght have cle-

As any pposid of all the long yere, [chere,
 That myght have made hym fory or chongit onys
 But evirmore rejoycing, what that evir betid, 81
 For his hert was evir mery, right as the somer bridd.
 Summus Philopater was the fift'is name,
 That thoughe men wold flee hym, or do hym al the
 Angir, or disese, as evil as men couthe, [shame,
 Yet wold he love them nevir the wers in hert ne in
 mowith. 86

His will was cleen undir his foot, and nothing hym
 Ther'for he was clepid *Fathir of perfite love*. [above,
 The 6 and the 7 of these Sevin Sages
 Was Stypio and Sithero, as thes word Astrolages 90
 Was sirname to them both astir their sciences;
 For of astronomy fikerlich the cours and all the fences
 Bothe they knowhit wele inoughe, and wer right sotil
 But now to othir purpose, for her I woll depart [of art.
 As lightly as I can, and draw to my matere. 95

In that same tyme that these Sages were
 Dwellyng thus in Room, a litill without the walles,
 In the subarbis of the town, of chambris and of hallis,
 And all other howseing that to a lord belongit,
 Was noon wythyn the cete, ne noon so wele behongit
 With docers of highe pryse, ne wallid so aboute, 101
 As was a Senatours hous wythyn and eke wythoute.

Favinus was his name, a worthe man and rich;
 And, for to sey thortlych, in Room was noon hym lyche.
 His portis and his estris were full evenaunte 105
 Of tresour and of lordshyp; also the most vailant

He was, and eke ycom of high lynage :
 And at last he toke a wyff like to his peerage ;
 For *Noriture and connyng, beaute and parentyne,*
Wer tho countid more worth than gold or sylvir fyne. 110
 But now it is al othir in many mann'ys thought,
 For *Muk ys now ymarried and vertu set at nought.*
 Fawnus and his worthy wyff wer to gidir aloon
 Fyveteene wyntir fullliche, and issu had they noon,
 Wher'for ther joyis wer nat half perfitte, 115
 For uttirlich to have a child was al ther delite, [nour,
 That myght enjoy ther heritage and weld their ho-
 And eke when they were febill to their trew focoure.
 Their fastyng and their preyir, and all that evir they
 wrought,
 As pilgrimage and almsded, ever they besought 120
 That God would of his goodnes som fruyte betwene
 them send :
 Fro gynnynge of their spoufaill, the myddil, and the end,
 This was their most besynes, and all othir delites,
 And eke this world'is rychis, they set at litil price.
 So at last, as God wold, it fill oppon a dey, 125
 As this lady fro chirchward went in the wey,
 A child gan stere in her womb, as Godd'is wyl was,
 Wher'of she gan to mervill, and made shortir pas,
 Wyth colour pale and eke wanne, and full in hevynes,
 For she had nevir tofore that day such manere sekene.
 The wymmen that with her were gon to behold 131
 The lady and her chere, but nothing they told,

But feir and soft wyth ese homward they her led:

For her soden sekenes full fore they were adred,

For she was inlich gentil, kynd and amyabill, 135

And eke trewe of hert, and nothyng variabill.

Shelovid God above all thing, and dred syn and shame,

And Agea likerly was her rightfull name.

So aftir, in breff tyme, when it was purseyvyd

That she had done a womans dede, and had a child

conseyvyd, 140

The joy that she made ther may no tung tell;

And al so much, or more, yf I ne ly shell,

Favinus made in his behalf for this glad tyding,

That I trowe I leve the emperour ne the kyng

Made no bettir cher to wyff, ne no more myrth, 145

Then Fawnus to Agea. And when the tyme of birth

Nyghid ner and ner, aftir cours of kynd,

Wetith wele in certen that all the wyt and mynd

Of Fawnus was continuell of feir delyveraunce

Betwene Agea and his child, and made grete orde-

naunce 150

Ageyn the tyme it shuld be bore, as it was for to doon.

So as God wold whan tyme cam Agea had a son;

But joy that Fawnus made was dobil tho to fore

When that he knew in certen she had a son ybore,

And sent anoon for nursis four, and no less, 155

To reule this child. Afterward as yeris did pas

The child was kept so tenderly that it throff wel the

For what the norishes axit anoon it was yfett. [bet,

In his chambir it norished was; to town it mut nat go:
 Fawnus lovid it so cherely hit myght nat part hym fro.
 It was so feyr a creature as myght be on lyve 161
 Of lymys and of fetours, and growe wondir blyve.
 This child that I of tell, Berinus was his name,
 Was ovir much cherished, which turned hym into
 grame, 164

As yee shull here aftir, when time comyth and spase;
 For *Aftir swete the soure comyth full oft in many a plase*:
 For as sone as he coud go and also speke
 All that he set his ey on, or aftir list to beke,
 Anoon he shuld it have, for no man hym wernyd.
 But it had be well bettir he had be wele ylernyd 170
 Noriture and gentilnes, and had yhad some hey;
 For it fill so aftir wyth what child he did pley
 Yf the pley ne likid hym he wold breke his hede,
 Or wyth a knyff hym hurt ryght nygh hond to be dede:
 For ther nas knyght ne squyer in his fadirs house, 175
 That thought his owne persone moste corajouse,
 That did or seyde eny thing Berinus to displese
 That he n'old spetously anoon oppon him rese;
 Wher'of his fadir had joy and his modir also:
 Yit it semeth to many a man it was nat wisely do. 180
 When Beryn passid was 7 yere, and grew in more age,
 He wrought ful many an evil chek; for such was his
 That there he wist or might do eny evill dede [corage
 He wold nevir sese for ought that men him seid,
 Wher'for many a pore man ful oft was agrevid; 185
 But Fawnus and Agea ful light theron belevid:

And though he men wold pleyneful short it shuld auaile,
 For Fawnus was so myghty, and cheff of all counsaill
 With Augustyn the Emperour, that all men hym drad,
 And lete pas ovir mischefe and harmys that they had.

Berinus ferthermore lovid wel the dise, 191

And for to pley at hazard, and held ther' of grete pryse,
 And all othir gamys that losery was in,
 And evirmore he lost, and nevyr myght wyn.

Berynus at hazard many a nyght he wakid, 195

And oft tyme it fill so that he cam hom al nakid :

And that was all his joy, for right wele he knew

That Agea his modir wold cloth hym newe.

Thus Berynus lyvid, as I have told to fore,

Tyll he was of the age of 18 yere or more. 200

But othir whyls amongis for pleyntis that were grete

Fawnus made amendis, and put them in quiete :

So was the fadir cause the sone was so wyld ;

And so have many mo such of his own child

Be cause of his undoyng, al we mowe se al day ; 205

For *Thing ytake is hard to put away,*

As hors that evir trottid, trewlich I yew telle,

It were hard to make hym astir to ambill welle :

Ryght so by Beryn ; when he had his lust and wyll

when he was lite

It shuld be hevvy afterward to reve his old delite, 210

Save the whele of Fortune, that no man may with-

For every man on lyve ther' on he is gond ; [flonde,

O spoke she turnyd bakward, righte at high noone,

All ageyn Berinus, as ye shull here sone.

Agea his modir fell in grete sekenes, 215
 And sent aftir hufbond wyth wordis hire to lis,
 And for she wold tell hym hir hole hert'is wyll
 Er she out of the world partid, as it was right and skil.
 When Fawnus was ycome, and saw so rodylese
 Hys wyff that was so dere, that for love he chese, 220
 No mervell though his hert wer in grete mourning,
 For he purfeyvyd fullich she drewe to hir endyng:
 Yit made he othir chere then in his hert was
 'To put away discomfort, dissimilyng wyth his fase
 The hevynes of his hert: wyth chere he did it close,
 For such a manner craft ther is wyth them can glose;
 Save that tournyth all to cautele: but Fawnus did nat so,
 For wetith wele in certeyn his hert was full of wo
 For his wyff Agea; and yit for craft he couth
 The teris fro his eyin ran down by his mowith: 230
 When he saw the pangis of deth comyng so fast
 Oppon his wyff Agea almost his hert to braist.
 Agea lyfft up hir eyen, and beheld the chere
 Of hir hufbond Fawnus, that was so trew a fere,
 And seyde, Sir, why do ye thus? this is an elying fare
 In comfort of us both, yf yee might spare 236
 And put away thys hevynes whyle that yee and I
 Myght speke of othir thyngis, for Deth me nyghith
 For to bodyne to soule this vailyth nat a karfe. [nygh,
 Now tellyth on, quod Fawnus, and I wol lete it pas
 For the time of talkyng as wele as I may, 241
 But out of my remembraunce onto my endyng day

Yeur deth woll nevir, I woot it wele, but evir be in
my mynd.

Then, good Sir, quod Agea, beth to my soule kynd
When my body is out of sight, for therto have I nede,
For truer make then yee be in word ne in dede 246
Had nevir woman, ne more kyndnes

Hath shewed unto his make, I know right wele iwis :
Now wold ye so her after in hert be as trewe,
To lyve wythout make, and on yeur sone rewe, 250
That litill hath ylernid fithens he was bore :

Let hym have no stepmodir, for children have tofore
Comelich they lovith nat : wherfor wyth hert I prey
Have chere onto yeur sone aftir my endyng day ;

For so God me help and I lafft yew behynd 255
Shuld nevir man on lyve bryng it in my mynd
To be no more yweddit, but lyve soule aloon.

Now yee know all my wyll, good Sir, think ther'on.
Certis, quod Fawnus, whils I have wyttis fyve
I think nevir aftir yew to have another wyff. 260

The preest was com therwythall for to do hir rightis;
Fawnus toke his leve, and all the othir knyghtis,
Hir kyndrid and frendis kiffed hir echone :

It is no nede to axc wher ther was dole or noon.

Agea cast her ey up, and lokid all aboute, 265
And wold have kiffid Beryn, but then was he wyth-
Pleying to the hazard, as he was wont to doon, [oute,
For as sone as he had ete he wold ren out anoon ;

And when she saw he was not ther that she thought
most on

Hire sekenes and hire mourning berst her hert anoon.

A damfell tofore that was ron into the toun 271

For to seche Beryn, that pleyed for his gowne,

And had almost lost it, right as the damfell cam,

And swore and starid as he was wood, as longit to
the game.

The damfell seyde to Beryn, Sir, ye must com home,

For but ye hygh blyve that yee wer ycome 276

Your mothir woll be dede; she is yit on lyve:

Yf ye wol speke wyth her yee must hygh blyve.

Who bad so, lewd Kitt? Your fadir, Sir, quod she.

Go home, lewd visenag, that evil mut thow the! 280

Quod Beryne to the damfell, and gan her fray and feer,

And bad the devill of hell hir should to tere.

Hast thow ought els to do but let me of my game?

Now by God in bevin, by Peter, and by Jame,

Quoth Beryn in grete angir, and swore be book and
bell, 285

Reherfing many namys mo than me lyst to tell,

N'er thow my fadirs messenger wer thou shuldist
nevir ete brede:

I had levir my modir and also thou wer dede

Then I shuld lese the game that I am nowgh in;

And smote the damfell undir the ere, the weet gon
upward spyn: 290

The death of Agea he set at litill pryse;

So in that wrath frolick Beryn threw the dysc,

And lost wyth that same cast al was leyde adown,
 And stert up in a wood rage, and ballid on his crown,
 And so he did the remnaunt, as many as wold abyde;
 But for drede of Fawnus his felawisgan to hyde, 296
 And nevir had wyll, ne list, wyth Beryn for to fyght,
 But evir redy to pley and wyn what they myght.
 The deth of Agea sprang about the towne,
 And every man that herd the bell for her sowne 300
 Bemony'd her full fore; salf Beryn toke none hede,
 But fought another feleshyp, and quyklich to them yede,
 To such manner company as shuld nevir thryve,
 For such he lovid bettir then his modir's lyve; [drawe,
 And evirmore it shuld be nyght or he wold home
 For of his fadir in certeyn he had no manner awe;
 For evir in his yowith he had al his wyll, 307
 And was ypassid chastising but men wold hym kyll.
 Fawnus for Agea, as it was well fitting,
 Made grete ordenaunce for hir burying, 310
 Of prelatis and of preeftis, and of al othir thyng,
 As thoughe she had be a wyff of a worthy king
 It myght nat have be mendit; such was his gentilnes,
 For at hir enteryng was many a worthy messe.
 For four weeks full, or he did her intere, 315
 She ley in lede wythyn his house; but Beryn cam not
 Namelich into the place where his modir ley, [there,
 Ne onys wold he a *Pater noster* for hir soule sey:
 His thought was all in unthryft, lechery, and dyse,
 And drawyng all to foly, for *Yowith is reches* 320
 O iij

But ther it is refreyned and bath fom manere eye:
 And ther'fore methinkith that I may wele fey
 A man ypassid yowith, and is wythout lore,
 May be wele ylikened to a tre wythout more, [wast:
 That may nat bowe ne bere fruyte, but root and ever
 Ryght so by yowith farith that no man list to chaste.
 This mowe we know verely by experience, 327
 That *Yerd makith vertu and benevolence.*
In childhode for to growe, as provith ymagynacioun:
 A plant whils it is grene, or it have dominacioun, 330
 A man may wyth his fyngers ply it wher hym lyst,
 And make ther'of a shakill, a with, or a twist;
 But let the plant stond, and yeris ovirgrowe,
 Men shall not wyth both his hondis unnethis make it
 bowe:

No more myght Fawnus make his sone Beryn, 335
 When he grew in age, to his lore enclyne;
 For every day when Beryn rose unwash he wold dyne,
 And draw hym to his feleship as even as a lyne,
 And then com home and ete, and soop, and slepe at
 nyght:

This was al his besynes but yf that he did fight; 340
 Wber'for his fadir's hert Fawnus gan for to blede,
 That of his modir that ley at home he toke no more
 hede:

And so did all the pepill that dwellid in the town
 Of Beryn's wildnes gon speke and eke roun.
 Fawnus oppon a dey, when Beryn cam at eve, 345
 Was set oppon a purpose to make his sone leve

All his shrewd taichis wyth goodnes if he myght,
 And taught hym feir and soft, but Beryn toke it light,
 And countid at litill pryse al his fadir's tale. 349

Fawnus saw it wold nat; with colour wan and pale
 He partid from his sone, and wyth a sorowfull hert.

I ne can write halfyndele how fore he did smert
 The disobeying of his sone and his wyf's deth,
 That, as the book tellith, he wisshed that his breth
 Had ybeen above the serkill celestyne, 355

So fervent was his sorowe, his angir, and his pyne.
 So, shortly to conclude, Agea was interid,

And Fawnus livid wyfles 3 yere wer ywerid,
 Wher'of ther was grete speche for his high honour;
 Tyll at last word cam onto the Emperour 360
 That Fawnus was without wyfe, and feld was jo-
 counde,

But mournyng for Agea that he was to ybound,
 And lyvid as an hermyte, soule and destitute,
 Wythout consolacioun, pensyff oft and mute:
 Wher'for Augustinus, of Rome the Emperour, 365
 Was inwardlich fory, and in grete dolour.

Wyth that the 7 Sagis and Senatouris all
 Were assemblid, to discryve what shuld ther'of fall;
 The wych seyde shortly, For a molestatioun
 Ther was noon othir remedy but a consolacioun, 370
 For *Whoso wer in eny thing displeid or agrevid*
Must by a like thing egall be remeid.

And when the Emperour knew all their determina-
 Quicklich in his mynd he had imaginacioun [cioun,

That Fawnus for Agea was in high distres, 375
 And must ycurid be wyth passyng gentilnes
 Of som lusty lady, that of pulchritude
 Were excellent al othir : so, shortly to conclude,
 The Emperour had a love tofore he had a wyf
 That he lovid as hertlich as his own lyf, 380
 As was as feir a creature as sone myght beshyne;
 So excellent of bewte that she myght be shryne
 To all othir wymmen that wer tho lyvand :
 But for the Emperour had a wyf ye shul wele onder-
 He cam nat in hir company to have his delite; [stond
 For Cristendome and conscience was tho more perfite
 Then it is now adayis, yf I durst tell : 387
 But I wol leve at this tyme. Than Fawnus al so swell
 Was astir sent in hast, of seknes to be curyd;
 So what for drede and ellis they wer both enfuryd 390
 In presence of the Emperour, so Fawnus myght nat
 flee;
 It was the Emperours wyll, it myght noon othir be.
 So wythin a tyme Agea was forgete,
 For Fawnus thought litill on that he hir behight :
 For as the 7 Sagis had afore declarid 395
 It cam all to purpos; for Fawnus litil carid
 For eny thing at all save his wyff to plesse,
 That Rame was yclepid; for rest nethir ese
 Fawnus nevir had but of her presence :
 So was his hert on her yset that he coud no defence, 400
 Save evirmore be wyth hir, and stare on hir visage,
 That the most part of Room held it for dotage,

And had much marvell of his variaunce :

But *What is that Fortune cannot put in chance?* 404

For ther n'as man on lyve on woman more bedotid

Then Fawnus was in Rame, ne half so much yfotid.

Wyth that Rame had knowlech that Fawnus was
ysmyt

Wyth the dart of Love : yee mowe ryght wele it wyt

That all that evir she coud cast or ythynck

Was all ageyn Berynus, for many a fotill wrench 410

She thought and wrought day by day, as meny we-
men doon,

Tyll they have of their desire the full conclusioun :

For the more that Fawnus of Rame did made

The more dangerous was Rame and of chere fade,

And kept wele hir purpose undir covirture : 415

She was the las to blame ; it grew of nature. [alle

But though that Rame wrought so, God forbede that

Wer of that condicioun. Yet touch no man the gall,

It is my plein counsell, but doith as othir doith :

Take your part as it comith of roughe and eke of
smoothe. 420

Yit noritur, wit and gentilnes, reson and persite
mynde,

Doth all these worthy women to worch agenys kynde,

That thoughe they be agrevid they suffir and endure,

And passith ovir for the best, and folowith nothing
nature.

But now to Rame's purpose, and what was hir desire.
 Shortly to conclude, to make debate and ire 426
 Betwene the fadir and the sone, as it was likely tho;
 What for his condicioune, and what for love also
 That Fawnus owt to his wyff, the rathir he must hir
 leve,

And grant for to mend, yf ought hir did greve. 430
 Berinus evir wrought right as he did before,
 And Rame made hym chere of love, ther myght no
 woman more,

And gaff hym gold and clothing evir as he did lese,
 Of the best that he coud ought wher in town chese,
 And speke full feir wyth hym, to make al thyng dede;
 Yit wold she have yete his hert wythout salt or brede:
 She hid so hir felony, and spak so in covert,
 That Beryn myght nat spy it but lite of Ram'ys hert.
 So, shortly to pas ovir, it fill oppon a nyghte, 439
 When Fawnus and his fresh wyf wer to bed ydight,
 He toke hir in his armys and made hir hertly chere,
 Ther myght no man betir make to his fere,
 And feyd, Myn ertly joy, myn hertis full plesauce,
 My wele, my woo, my paradise, my lyv'is sustenaunce!
 Why ne be ye mery, why be ye so dull, 445
 Sith ye know I am your own right as your hert woll?
 Now tell on love, myn own hert! yf ye eylith ought,
 For and it be in my power anoon it shall be wrought.
 Rame wyth that gan fighe, and wyth a wepeing chere
 Undid the bagg of trechery, and seide in this manere:

No mervell though myn hert be fore and full of dele,
 For when I to yew weddit was wrong went my whele.
 But who may be ageyns hap and aventure?

Therfor as wele as I may myne I mut endure.

Wyth many sharp wordis she fet his hert on feir 455

To purchase with hir practik that she did desire :

But hoolich all hir wordis I cannot wele reherse,

Ne write ne endite how she did perce

Through Fawny's hert and his scull also;

For more petouse compleynt of sorowe and of woo

Made nevyr woman, ne more petoufly, 461

Then Rame made to Fawnys : she smote full bitterly

Into the veyn, and through his hert blood;

She bloderit so and wept, and was so high on mode,

That unneth she myght speke but othir while among

Wordis of discomfort, and hir hondis wrong; 466

For alas and woo the tyme that she weddit was!

Wasevir more the frefreit when she myght have spafe.

I am yweddit; ye, God woot best in what maner and
 how!

For yf it wer so fall I had a child by you, 470

Lord! how shuld he lyve, how shuld he com away?

Sith Beryn is your first sone, and heir after your day?

But yf that he had grace to scoole for to goo,

To have som maner conning that he myght trust to,

For as it now stondeth it were the best rede, 475

For, so God me help, I had levir he wer dede

Than wer of such condicionne or of such lore

As Beryn your sone is; it wer bett he wer unbore,

For he doith nat ellis save at hazard pley,
 And comyth home al nakid ech othir dey; 480
 For within this month that I have wyth yeu be
 Fiftene fithis, for verry grete pite
 I have yclothid hym al new when he was to tore,
 For evirmore he seyde the old were ylore.
 Now and he wer my sone I had levir he were ylod,
 For and he pley so long half our lyvelode 486
 Wold-scarfly suffise hymself oon,
 And n'ere yee wold be grevid, I swere he Seynt John
 He shuld aftir this dey be clothid no more for me,
 But he wold kepe them bettir and draw fro nycete.
 Now gentill wyff, grāmcy of yeur wife tale, 491
 I thynk wel the more that I sey no fale;
 For towchyng my grevaunce, that Beryn goith al na-
 Treulich that grevaunce is somewhat asclakid: [kid,
 Let hym aloon, I prey yew, and I woll con yew thank,
 For in such losery he hath lost many a frank. 496
 The devil hym spede that rech yf he be to tore,
 And he use it hereaftir as he hath doon to fore.
 Beryn arose a morowe, and cried wondir fast,
 And axid aftir clothis, but it was all in wast; 500
 Ther was no man tendant for hym in all the house;
 The whele was ychaungit into anothir cours.
 Fawnus herd his sone wele how he began to cry,
 And rose up anoon and to hym did high,
 And had forgete nothyng that Rame had yseyde, 505
 For he boillid so his hert he was nat well apayde.

He went into the chambir ther his sone ley,
 And set hym down in a chair, and thus he gan to sey:
 My gentil sone Beryn, now feir I wol ye teche;
 Rew oppon thy self, and be thyne own leche. 510
 Manhode is ycom now, myne own dere sone,
 It is tyme thow be aweynynd of thyn old wone:
 And thow art 20 wynters, and naught hast of doctryne;
 Yit woldist thow draw to perfite the worship wold be
 thyne,

To noritur and goodshipp, and al honest thing, 515
 Ther myght com to myn hert no more glad tyding.
 Leve now al thy foly and thy rebawdry,
 As tablis and mervellis, and the hazardry,
 And draw the to the company of honest men and good,
 Els leve thow me as wele as Criste died on the rode;
 And for al menkynd his ghost pas lete, 521
 Thow shalt for me heraftir stond on thyn own fete,
 For I woll no longir suffir this aray
 To clothe the al new eche othir dey. [draw,
 Yf thow wolt draw the to wit, and rebawdry with-
 Offuch good as God have sent yn parthave shalt thow:
 And yf thow wolt nat, my sone, do as I the tell,
 Of me shalt thow naught have, trust me right well.
 Wenyft thow wyth thy dise-pleying hold myn ho-
 noure

Aftir my deth dey? Then Beryn gan to loure, 530
 And seide, Is this a sermon or a prechément?
 Ye were nat wont herto; how is this ywent?

Sendith for some clothing that I wer ago;
 My felawis lokith aftir me, I woot well they do so:
 I woll nat leue my feleship ne my rekelagis, 535
 Ne my dise-pleying, for all your heretages:
 Doith your best wyth them by your lyf day,
 For when they fall to me I wol do as I may.
Benedicite! fadir, who hath enformyd you,
 And set you into ire, to make me chere rowe? 540
 But I know wele inough whens this counsaill cam;
 Trewlich of your own wyfe, that evil dame:
 Com oppon hir body that fals putaigne, [seyne.
 For trewlich, fadir, yee dote on hir, and so all men
Alas that evir a man skuld, that is of high counsaile, 545
Set all his wysdom on his wyv's taile!
 Yee lovith hir so much she hath benome your wyt,
 And I may curs the tyme that evir ye wer yknyt,
 For now I am in certen I have a stepmodir:
 They been shrewis, som ther been, but few, othir. 550
 Vel Fikil Flaptail, such oon as she ys,
 For all my pleying at dise yit do yee more amys:
 Yee have ylost your name, your worship, and your
 So dote ye on hir, and levith all she sayith. [seith,
 Fawnus wyth the same word gaff the chayir a but,
 And lepe out of the chambir, as who seyde Cut, 556
 And swore in verrey woodnes be God omnipotent
 That Beryn of his wordis shuld sore repent.
 Beryn set nought ther'of, with a proude hert
 Answerd his fadir, and axid a new shert. 560

He gropid al about to have found oon,
 As he was wont tofore, but ther was noon.
 Then toke he such willokis as he fond ther,
 And beheld hymself what man he wer;
 For when he was arayde then gan he first be wrothe;
 For his womb lokid out and his rigg both. 566
 He stert astir his fadir, and he began to cry,
 For seth myn aray, for the villany
 Ys as wele yours as it is myne.

Fawnus let him clatir and cry wel and fyne, 570
 And passid forth still and spak nat a word.

Then Beryn gan to think it was nat al bord
 That his fadir seyde when he wyth hym was,

And gan to think all about, and therwyth seid Alas!
 Now know I wele forsoth that my modir is dede;

For tho gan he to glow first a fory mann'ys hede. 576
 Now kepe thy cut, Beryn, for thou shalt have a fit,

Somwhat of the world to lern betir wit;
 For and thow wist fikerly what ys for to com

Thow woldist wish astir thy deth full oft and ylome;
 For *Ther n'ys betying half so sore wyth staff nethir sward*

As man to be bete with his own yerd. 582

The pyry is yblowe, hop, Beryn, hop,
 That ripe wol herastir and on thyn hede drop:

Thou tokist noon hede whils it shoon hoot, 585
 Ther'for wynter the nyghith asay by thy cote.

Beryn for shame to town durst he nat go, [his foo.
 He toke his wey to churchward; his frend was made

For angir, forowe, and shame, and hevynes, that he
Unneth he might speke, but stode half as mad. [had,
O alas! quod Beryn, what wyt had I 591

That coud nat tofore this dey know fikerly
That my modir dede was? but now I know to fore,
And dredemore that ech dey hereaftir more and more
I shall know and fele that my modir is dede. 595

Alas! I smote the messangere, and toke of hir noon
Alas! I am right pore; alas! that I am nakid: [hede:
Alas! I slept to fast, tyl forowe now hath me wakid:
Alas! I hungir sore; alas! for dole and peyn,
For ech man me seith hath me in disdeyn. 600

This was all his mirth to the churchward
That of his modir Agea he toke so litill reward.
When Beryn was within the chirch then gan he wers
As sone as he saw the tomb where his modir lay [fray:
His colour gan to chaunge into a dedely hew: 605

Alas, gentil modir! so kynd you wer and trew,
It is no mervell for thy deth though I fore smert.
But therewythal the forowe so fervent smote his hert
That sodenly he fil down stan dede in fwowe: 609
That he had part of forowe methinkith that myght I
Beryn lay so long or he myght awake, [avowe.
For al his fyve wittis had clene hym forsake,

Wel myght he by hymself, when reson ycom were,
Undirfond that Fortune had a sharp spere,
And eke grete power among high and lowe, 613
Som to avaunce and som to ovirthrowe.

So at last when Beryn a litill wakid were
 He trampelid fast with his fete, and al to tare his ere
 And his visage both, right as a wodeman,
 With many a bitir tere that from his eyen ran, 620
 And sighid many a fore sigh, and had much hevynes,
 And evirmore he cursid his grete unkyndnes
 To foreyit his modir whils she was alyve,
 And lenyd to hir tombe upon histore sclyve,
 And wishid a thowfand sithis he had ybe hir by, 625
 And beheld hir tombe with a petouse eye. [of nought,
 Now, glorious God! quod Beryn, that al thing madist
 Heven anderth, man and beste, sith I am myf wrought
 Of yewe I axe mercy, focour, and help, and grace,
 For my mysdede and foly, unthryffe and trespase: 630
 Set my sorowe and peyn somwhat in mesure
 Fro dispeir and myscheff as I may endure.
 Lord of all lordis! though Fortune be my foo
 Yit is thy myght above to turn hym to and fro.
 First my modirs lyfe Fortune hath me berevid, 635
 And sith my fadirs love, and nakid also me levid.
 What may he do more? Yis, take away my lyfe;
 But for that wer myn ese, and end of al stryfe,
 Ther'for he doith me lyve for my wers I sey,
 That I shuld evirmore lyve and nevir for to dey. 640
 Now leve I Beryn with his modir tyl I com aye,
 And wol return me to Rame, that of hir sotilte
 Bethoughte hir al aboute, when Beryn was agoon
 That it shuld be wittid hir, wher'for she anoon 644

In this wise feyd to Fawnus : Sir, what have ye do,
 Althoughe I speke a mery word, to suffir your sone go
 Nakid into the town ? it was nat my counsaile.
 What wol be feyd ther'of ? sikir without faile,
 For I am his stepmodir, that I am cause of alle
 The violence, the wrath, the angir, and the gall, 650
 That is betwene yew both, it wol be wit me ;
 Wher'for I prey you hertly doith hym com hom aye.
 Nay, by trowith, quod Fawnus, for me comyth he nat
 Sithe he of my wordis so litil prife set [yit ;
 As litil shall I charge his estate also : 655
 Sorowe have that rechith though he nakid go,
 For every man knowith that he is nat wise ;
 Wher'for may be supposid his pleying at dise
 Is cause of his aray, and nothyng yee, my wyff.
 Yes, iwis, quod Rame, the tale woll be ryff 660
 Of me and of noon othir, I know right wel asyne ;
 Wher'for I prey you, gentil Sir, and for love myn,
 That he wer yset hom, and that in grete hast,
 And let a fay offit ageyn with feirnes hym to chaffe ;
 And send Beryn clothis and a new shert ; 665
 And made al wele in eche side, and kept close her hert.
 Now sith it is your wyll, quod Fawnus tho anon,
 That Beryn shall home com, for your sake aloon
 I woll be the messager to put your hert in ese ;
 And els, so God me help, wer it nat yew to plese 670
 The gras shuld grow on pavement or I hym home bryng.
 Yet nethirles forth he went, wyth too or thre riding,

From o ſtrete to anothir, enqueryng to and fro
 Aftir Beryn in every plaſe wher he was wont to go,
 Seeking eviry halk howris too or thre, 675
 With hazardours, and othir ſuch, ther as he was wont
 to be,

And fond hym nat ther; but to chirch went echone,
 And at dorr they ſtode a while and herd Beryn made
 his mone:

They herd all his compleynt, that petouſe waſt to here.
 Fawnus into the chirch pryvelych gan pire, 680

But al ſo ſone as he beheld wher Agea lay
 His teris ran down be his chekis, and thus he gan to

A, Agea! myn old love, and my new alſo! [ſey:
 Alas, that evir our hertis ſhuld depart atoo!

For in your graciouſe dayis of hert'is trobilnes 685
 I had nevyr knowlech, but of all gladnes;

Remembryng in his hert, and evir gan renewe
 The goodnes betwene them both, and hir hert trewe,

And drew hym ner to Beryn with an hevy mode.

But as ſone as Beryn knew and ondirſtode 690

That it was his fadir he wold no longir abide,

But anon he voidit by the todir ſide, [ſought

And Fawnus hym encountrid, and ſeyd, We have the

Through the town, my gentil ſone, and ther'for void
 the nought.

Though I ſeyd a word or two, as me thought for the
 the beſt 695

For thyne erudicioune, to draw the onto lyfe honeſt,

Thou shuldift nat so fervently have take it to thyn hert;
 But sith I know my wordis doith the so fore smert
 Shall no more hereaftir; and eche dey our diete
 Shall be mery and solase, and this shall be forgete; 700
 For wele I woot for thy modir that thou art to tore,
 Also thou hast grete sorowe, but onys nedith, and no
 more:

And ther'for, sone, on my blessing to put sorowe away;
 Drawe the nowe heraftir to honest myrth and pley.
 Lo ther is clothing for yewe, and your hors ydight
 Wyth harneys all freshe new; and if yee list be knyght
 I shall yit or eve that bergeyn undirtake, [make;
 That the Emperour for my love a knyght shall you
 And what that evir ye nede anon it shall be bought,
 For whilst that I have eny thing ye shall lak naught. 710
 Graunt mercy! quod Beryn with an hevy chere,
 Of your worshipfull profir that ye have proferid me
 But ordi of knyghthodetotake is nat my liking: [here;
 And sith your will is for to do somewhat my plesing,
 Ye have a wyfe ye love wele, and so tendirlich, 715
 That and she have childrin I know right fikerlich
 All that she can devyse both be nyght and dey
 Shall be to make her childryn heirs of that she may,
 And eke sowe sedis of infelicite, [me;
 Wher'of wold growe devysioune betwene yewe and
 For yf ye spend on me your good, and thus riallich
 Levith wele, in certen your wyfe woll fikerlich 720
 Eche dey for angir her tuskis whet, [set
 And to smyte with her tunge, your hert in wrath to

Toward me from dey to dey, but ye wold aply 725
 Somwhat to hir purpose and astir hir yew guy;
 She wold wex so ovirtwart and of so lither tach,
 And evir lour undir her hood a redy for to snache;
 She wold be shortyng of your lyfe, and that desire I
 naught:

Wher'for to plesse all about, my purpose and my
 thought 730

Is for to be a Marchaunte, and leve myne heritage,
 And relese it for evir, for shyppis fyve of flage
 Full of marchaundise the best of all this londe:
 And yf ye wol so, fadir, quyk let make the bonde.
 Fawnus was right well apayd that ilk word outstert,
 But yit he seyde to Beryn, I mervell in myn hert 736
 Wher haddist thou this counsaile to leve thyne honour,
 And lyve in grete aventure and in grete labour;
 And rid so forth talkyng a soft esy pafe
 Homward to his plase ther that Rame was. 740

And as sone as Fawnus was ylight adown,
 And highid fast to his wyfe, and with hir gan to rown,
 And told hir all the purpose, and made Fawnus chere,
 She did hym nat half so much the tyme she was his fere.
 She hullid hym, and mollid hym, and toke hym about
 the nekk, 745

And went low for the kite, and made many a bekk;
 And seyde, Sir, by your spech now right well I here
 That yf ye list ye mowe do thing that I most desire;

And that is this, your heritage there ye best likid
That ye myght gyve: and evir among the brushh a-
wey she pikid

From hir clothis here and there, and sighid therwith-
Fawnus of his gentilnes by hir myddil smale [all.

Hertlich hir bracyd, and feyd; I woll nat leve,
I fuyr yew my trowith that onys or it be eve

That I shall do my deuoir without feintise 755
For to please your hert fullich in all wyse. [mekely,

Graunt mercy! myn own soverene, quod Rame tho
And made protestatioune that she shuld fikerly

All the dayis of hir lyfe be to hym as hende

As euer woman was to man, as ferforth as hir mynd
And wit hir wold serue, and made grete othe. 761

Fawnus bood no longir, but forth therwith he goith.
A! precious God in heven, Kyng of majeste!

So plentivouſe this world is of inquite!

Why is to yfuffrid that trowith is brought adown 765
Wyth trechery and falskede in feld and eke in town? [met

But now to Fawnus and his entent. When he his fone
Hetoke hym soft by the hond; his tung he gan to whet,

Sotilly to engyne him. First he gan to preche, 769
Leve thy foly, my dere sone, and do as I the teche:

Sith thou hast wit and reson, and art of mann'ys age,
What nedith the be Marchaunt and shal have heri-
tage?

For and thy good wer ylost the forowe wold be myne,
To tell the soth, right nigh peregall to thyne;

And yf that I were dede whils thow wer oute 775
 Lond and rent, and all my good, have thou no doute,
 It wold be plukkid from the ; thy part wold be left :
 And also ferthermore, I make oon beheest,
 That I trowe my moblis wol nat suffise
 To charge fyve shippis ful of marchandise 780
 But yf I leyd in mortgage my lond and eke my rent,
 And that I leve be nat thy wyll ne thyn entent :
 Yit nethirles yf thy hert be so inly set
 For to be a Marchaunt, for nothing woll I let
 That I n'yl do thy plesauce as ferforth as I mey 785
 Togoryght nygh myn own estate, but levir I had nay.
 Their wordis ne their dedis, ne matters them betwene,
 I wol nat tary now ther'on my perchemen to spene :
 But fynallich, to the end of their accordement,
 Fawnus had so goon about, yturned and ywent, 790
 That he had brought his sone tofore the Emperour,
 To relese his heritage and al his honour,
 That he shuld have astir his dey, for shippis fyve, and
 Yled of marchaundise of lynnyn and of wool, [full
 And of othir thingis that wer yusid tho. 795
 Engrosid was the covenaut betwene them to
 Yn presence of the Emperour, in opyn and no rown,
 Tofore the gretist Cenators and eldest of the town.
 So when the relese selid was with a fyde bonde
 They wer yleyd both in a meen honde 800
 Into the tyme that Beryn fullich selid were
 In the fyve shippis that I yew told ere.

But who was glad but Fawnus? and to his wyff went
 And seyde, Now, my hert'is swete! all thyn hole entent
 Ys uttirlich perfourmyd; us lakkiþ now no more
 But marchaundise and shippis, as I told tofore. 8c6
 That shall not faill, quod Rame, and began to daunce,
 And aftirward they speken of the purveaunce.

Alas! this jals world, so ful of trechery!

In whom shuld the sone have trust and feith sikirly 810

If his fadir saylid hym? whether myght he go

For to fynd a sikir frend that he myght trust to?

So when these 5 shippis wer rayid and dight

Fawnus and his sone to the Emperour ful right 814

They went, and many a grete man for the same cause,

To see both in possessioun, as their covenante was.

Beryn first was sesid in the shippis fyve,

And Fawnus had the relese, and bare it to his wyff;

And eche held them payde, and Rame best of all,

For she had conquerd thing that causid most hir gall.

Now leve I Fawnys and his wyff, and of the governaunce

Of Beryn I wol speke, and also of his chaunce. 822

When lodismen and maryneris in al thing redy was

This Beryn into Alisaunder, yf God wold send hym

grace

That wynde hym wold serve, he wold: so on a day

The wynd was good, and they seyld on their wey

Too dayis fullich, and a nyght therwythal, 827

And had wedir at wyll, tyll at last gan fall

Such a myst among them that no man myght se othir,

That wele was hym that had ther the blessing of his

modir.

830

For thre dayis incessantly the derknes among them
was,

That no shipp myght se othir; wherfor full oft Alas!
They seyde, and to the high God they made their
preyere,

That he wold of his grace them govern and stere
So that their lyvis myght ysavid be, 835

For they were cleen in dispeyr, because they myght
nat se

The loder, wherby these shipmen ther courstoke ech-
So at last, the serth dey, making thus hir mone, [one.

The dey gan clere; and then such wynd arose
That blew their shippis elswere then was their first
purpose. 840

The tempest was so huge and so strong also,
That wele was hym that coude bynde or ondo
Any rope within the shipp that longit to the craft;
Every man shewid his connyng to fore the shipp and
bassit. [fore,

The wynd a wook the see to brast, it blew so gressly
That Beryn and all his company of synnyssas and more
Eche man round about shroff hymself to othir, [thir;
And put in Godd's gowernaunce lyf, shipp, and stro-
Forther was shippis meyne, for owght they coud hale,
That myght abate of the shipp the thiknes of a scale:
The wedir was so fervent of wynd and eke of thundir
That every shipp from othir was blowe of sight a-
fondir,

And durid so al day and nyght, tyll on the morowe
I trow it was no questioune wher they had joy or so-
rowe. 854

Soaftirward, as God wold, the wynd was somwhat soft,
Beryne clepid a maryner, and bad hym sty on loft,
And weyte aftir our four shippis aftir us doith dryve,
For it is but grace of God yf they be alyve.

A maryner anoon wyth that, right as Beryn bad,
Styed into the top castell, and brought hym tydings
glad: 860

Sir, he seith, beth mery; yeur shippis comith echone
Saff and sound sailing, as ye shul se anoon;
And eke, Sir, ferthermore, lond also I sigh,
Let draw our corseftward, thys tyde woll bryng usny.
Blessed be God! quod Beryn, then wer our shippis com,
We have no nede to dout werr ne molestatioune,
For there n'ys wythin our shippis no thyng of spolia-
tioune, 867

But al trew marchaundise; wherefor for lodisman
Stere onys into the costis as well as thou can;
When our shippis be ycom, that we mowe pas in fere,
Lace on a bonnet or tweyn, that we mowe faile nere.
And when they wer the costis nygh was noon of them
alle

That wist what lond it was: then Beryn gan to calle
Out of every ship anoon a maryner or tweyne
For to take counsell, and thus he gan to feyne: 875
The fronntis of this ilk town been wondir feir wythall,
Methinkith it is the best rede, what that evir befall,

That I my self aloon walk into the towne, 878
 And here and se both her and there, upward and
 And enquire fullich of their governaunce. [downe,
 What sey ye Sirs? woll ye sent to this ordenaunce?
 All they accordit well therto and held it for the best,
 For thus yf it be profitabill we mowe abide and rest,
 And yf it be othirwise the rathir shall we go,
 For astir that the spede we woll work and do. 885
 But nowe mowe ye her right a wondir thing:
 In all the world wyde so fals of their lyvyng
 Was no pepill undir sone, ne none so disseyvabill,
 As was the pepill of this town, ne more unstabill,
 And had a curfed usage of sotill ymaginacioune, 890
 That yf so wer the shippis of any straunge nacioune
 Were com into the port, anon they wold them hide
 Within their own howfis, and no man go ne ryde
 In no frete of alle the town; ascaunce that they wer
 lewde, [shrewde,
 And coud no skill of marchandise, a skill it was a
 As ye shall here astir of their wrong and falskede;
 But yit it fill, as worthy was, oppon their own hede.
 Beryn arayd hym freshly, as to a Marchand longith,
 And set hym on a palfrey wel be sey and hongit,
 And a page rennyng by his hors fete: 900
 He rode endlong the town, but no man coud he meet;
 The dorrys wer yclosid in both too fidis,
 Wherof he had mervell: yet ferthermore he ridis,

And waytid on his right hond a mancipil's plase
All fresh and new, and thidir gan he pase: 905

The gatis wer wyde up, and thidir gan he go,
For throughout the long town he found so no mo.
Ther in dwellid a burgeyse the most scliper man
Of all the town throughout, and what so he wan
With trechery and gile, as doith som freris, 910
Right so must he part with his comperis.

Beryn light down on his hors, and inward gan he dres,
And foud the good man of the house pleying at ches
With his neyghbour, as trewe as he, that dwellid hym
fast by.

But as sone as this burgeyse on Beryn cast his eye 915
Sodenly he stert up, and put the ches hym fro,
And toke Beryn by the hond, and seyde these wordis
tho; [here?

Benedicite! what manere wynd hath ybrought you
Now wold to God I had wherof, or coud make yew
chere! 919

But ye shull lowe my good wyll, and take such as ther
And of yeur gentil paciens suffir that is amys. [is,
For well he wist by his aray and by his countenaunce
That of the shippis that wer ycom he had som go-
vernaunce,

Wherfor he made hym chere semeyng amaybill,
Icolerid all with cautelis, and wondir disseyvabill:
He bracyd hym by the myddil, and preyde hym sit a-
doun, 926

And lowly with much worshipp drestid his coshon.

Lord God! seyde this burgeyse, I thank this ilk dey
That I shuld see yew hole and found here in my con-
tray;

And yf ye list to tell the cause of yewr comyng, 930
And yf he have nede to any manere thing,

And it be in my power, and thoughe I shuld it seech,
It shuld go right wonder streyte, I sey yew likerlich,
But yee it had in haste, therwith yew please, 934

For now I see yew in my house my hert is in grete ese.
The todir burgeyse rose hym up for to make rouse,
And axid of his felaw, that lord was of the house,
Whens is this worshipfull man? with wordis hend
and low,

For it semith by the manere that ye hym shuld knowe,
And have sey hym tofore this tyme. I have sene, quod
the todir, 940

Ye ywis an ico sithis, and right as to my brodir

I wol do hym pleaseunce in al that evir I can,

For trewlich in his contray he is a worshipful man:

Forsoth, Sir, and for your love, a thousand in this town

Wold do hym worship, and be right seyne and bown

To please hym, and avail to have thonk of you: 946

I woot wele, God them yeld, so have they oft er now.

And arose up therwithall, and with his felaw spak

Of such manere mater that saylid nevir of lakk.

So when their counsell was ydo this burgeyse preyd
his sere 950

To sit a down be Beryn, and do hym sport and chere,

And in the while I wol fe to his hors,
 For every gentil hert, afore his own cors
 Desirith that his riding best be servid and ydight,
 Rathir than hymself; wherfor wyth all my myght 955
 I woll have an eye therto; and sich parte wyyn
 Wich tonne or pipe is best and most fyne.

Beryn was all abashid of his foden chere,
 But nethirles the burgeyse sat hym somwhat nere,
 And preyd hym of his gentilnes his name for to tell,
 His contrey and his lynnage: and he answer'd snell,
 Berinus I am ynamid, and in Rome ybore,
 And have fyve shippis of myn own, las and more,
 Full of marchaundise, ligging tofore the town;
 But much marvaile have I the good man is so boun
 To serve me and plesse, and how it might be. 966

Sir, seyde the burgeyse, no mervelle it is to me,
 For many a tyme and oft, I cannot sey how lome,
 He hath be in your marchis; and as I trow in Room
 Also he was ybore, yf I ne ly shall. 970

Yf it be so, quod Beryn, no mervelle it is at all
 Thoughe he me have yfey, and eke his gentill chere
 Previth it all opynly; but be hym that bought me dere
 I have ther'of no knowlech, as I am now avysid.

With that cam in the good man with countenaunce
 disgisid, 975

And had enqueryd of the child that with Beryn cam
 Fro gynnnyng to the endyng, and told his mastris name,

And of Agea his modir, and all thing as it was, [cas;
Wher-through he was ful perfite to answere to every
Soentryng into the hall the burgeys spak anoon, 980

A! my gentill Beryn, alas! that under stonne
Myne own hert Agea, thy modir leff and dere!
Now God affoyl hir soule, for nevir bettir chere
Had I of frend woman, ne nevir half so good.

Benedicite! a Marchaunt comyng ovir flood! 985
Who brought yew in this purpos, and beth your fa-
dir's heir?

Now by my trew conscience ryght nygh in dispeyr
I wax for your sake, for now frendlese
Ye mowe wele sey that ye been; but yit for nethirles
Yee mut endure fortune, and hevynes put away; 990
Ther is noon othir wisdom. Also your shippis gey,
That been ycom in favete, ought to amend your mode,
The wich when we have dyned, I fwere for by the
rood,

We wol se them trewly within and eke without,
And have wyne wyth us and drynk al about. 995
They set and wish, and fed them, and had wherof
plente; [deynte.

The burgeyse was a stuffid man, ther lakkid noon
So when they had ydined the cloth was up ytake,
A chese ther was ybrought forth, but tho gan sorowe
to wake. 999

The ches was all of ivory, the meyne fresch and new,
I pulshid and ypikid of white, asure, and blew.

Beryn beheld the cheker, it semed passyng feir;
 Sir, quod the burgeyse, ye shul fynd her a payr
 That woll mate yew trewly in las than half a myle,
 And was yseyd of sotilte Beryn to begile. 1005

Now in soth, quod Beryn, it myght wel hap nay,
 And n'er I must my shippis se els I wold assay.

What nedith that, quod the burgeyse? trewlich I wol
 nat glose,

They been nat yit ysetelid ne fixid in the wofe;
 For I have sent thries sith ye hithir cam 1010

To wait oppon their governaunce; wher'for let set o
 And I shall be the first that shall yew atast. [game,

The meyne wer yset up, and gon to pley fast.
 Beryn wan the first, the second, and the third,

And at fourth game' in the ches amyd 1015
 The burgeyse was ymatid; but that lust him wele;

And all was doon to bryng hym yn, as ye shul her snel.
 Sir, then, seyde Beryn, ye woot well how it is,

Me list no more to pley, for yee know this,
 Wher is noon comparisoun, of what thing so it be,

Lust and liking fallith ther: as it semeth me 1020
Ne myrth is nat commendabill that ay is by o side,

But it rebound to the tothir; wherfor tyme is to ryde;
 And as many thonkis as I can or may

Of my sport and chere, and also of your pley. 1025
 Nay iwis, gentill Beryn, I woot ye wol nat go,

For noritur wol it nat for to part so,
 And eke my condicioune; but I ley somthing

Is no more to pley then who so shoke a ryng 1030

Ther no man is wythyn the ryngyng to answere;
 To shete a fethirles bolt almost as good me were:
 But and ye wold this next game som manir wager legg,
 And let the trowith on both fidis be morgage and
 That whofo be ymatid graunt and assent [yplegg,
 To do the todirs bidding, and whofo do repent 1035
 Drynk all the watir that salt is of the see.

Beryn belevid that he coud pley betir than he,
 And sodinly assentid, with hond in hond assurid.
 Men that stode besides, ycappid and yhurid.

Wist wele that Beryn shuld have the wers mes, 1040
 For the burgeyse was the best pleyer at ches
 Of all the wyde marchis, or many a myle about;
 But that ne wyft Beryn of, ne cast ther' of nō doute:
 He set the meyne efft ageyn, and toke betir hede
 Then he did tofore; and so he had nede. 1045

The burgeyse toke avisement long on every draught,
 So wyth an hour or too Beryn he had ycaught
 Somwhat oppon the hipp, that Beryn had the wers.
 And albeit his mynd and wyll was for to curs,
 Yit must he dure his fortune when he was so fer ygo;
 For *Who is that that Fortune may alway undo?* 1051
 And namelich stout even in eche side

Of *pro* and *contra*: but God help down woll he glide.
 But now a word of philosophy that fallith to my mynd;
Who take hede of the begynnyng what fal shall of the end
He leyth a bussh tofore the gap ther Fortune wold in ryde.
 But comynlich yowith forgetith that throughout the
 world wyde. 1057

Right so be Beryn I may wele sey that confaillis in
rakid, [nakid.

Likly to lese his marchaundise, and go hymself al
Beryn studied in the ches, although it nought availid;
The burgeyse in the mene while with othir men con-
faillid 1061

To fech the sergauntis in the town for thing he had
So when they com were they walkid to and fro [ado,
Up and down in the hall, as skaunce they knew nought;
And yit of all the purpose, wit, and mynd, and thought,
Of the untrew burgeyse, by his messengeris 1066
They wer ful enformyd: wherfor with eye, and eris,
They lay await full doggidly Beryn to arest, [and hest,
Forther'for they wer astir sent, and was their charge.
Lord! how shuld ofely lomb among wolvis weld, 1070
And scape unyharmyd? it hath been seyn feld.

Kepe thy cut now, Beryn, for thow art in the case.
The hall was full of pepill, the serjauntis shewid their
Beryn kast uphishede, and was ful fore amayid, [mase;
For then he was in certen the burgeyse had hym be-
trayde. 1075

Draw on, seyde the burgeyse; Beryn, ye have the wers;
And every man to othir the covenaut gan reherse.
The burgeys, whils that Beryn was in hevvy thought,
The next draught astir he toke a rock for nought.
Beryn swat for angir, and was in hevvy plight, 1080
And drede full fore in hert; for wele he wist al quyt

He shuld nat escape, and was in high distrefs;
 And pryvelich in his hert that evir he saw the ches
 He cursid the day and tyme: but what awaylid that?
 For wele he wist then that he shuld be mate: 1085
 He gan to chaunge his colour both pale and wan.
 The burgeysefeith; Conyith nere, ye shul se this man
 How he shuld be matid with what man me list.
 He droughe and seyde, Chek mate. The serjauntiswer
 full prest,

And seid Beryn by the seleve, and seyde, Sirs, what
 think ye for to do, 1090

Quod Beryn to the serjauntis, that ye me hondith so?
 Or what have I offendit? or what have I seide?

Trewlich, quod the serjauntis, it vaylith nat to breyde;
 Wyth us ye must a while wher ye wol or no

To fore the steward of this town: aryse, and trus and go;
 And ther it shal be openyd how wisely thow hast
 wrought: 1096

This is the end of our tale, make it nevir so tought.
 Sirs, farith feir, ye have no nede to hale.

Pas forth, quod the serjauntis, we wol nat her thy tale.

Yis, Sirs, of your curtesy I prey yew of o word: 1100

Although my gentill hoost hath pleyed with me in

And ywon a wager, ye have naught to doon: [borde,

That is between hym and me; ye have nothyng to doon.

The hoost made an hidouse cry, in gesolreut the haut,

And set his hand in kene bowe, he lakid nevir a faute.

Weynst thow, seid he to Beryn, for to scorn me? 1106

What evir thow speke, or stroute, certis it woll nat be.

Of me shalt thou have no wrong : pas forth a betir pafe;
In prefence of our steward I woll tell my cafe.

Why, hooft, fey yee this in ernest or in game? 1119

Ye know my contray, and my modir, my lynnage,
and my name;

And thus ye have yseyd me. X fith on this dey.

Ye, what though I seyde so? I know wele it is nay:

Ther lyth no more ther'to. But anothir tyme 1114

Leve me so much the les when thou comest by me;

For all that evir I seyde was to bryng the in care,

And now I have my purpose I woll nothyng the spare.

Thus janglyng to ech othir, endenting every pafe,

They entrid both into the hall ther the steward was:

Evandir was his name, that sotill was, and so fell,

He must be well avised tofore hym shuld tell. 1121

Anothir burgeyse wyth hym was, provost of the cete,

That Hanybald was yclepid, but of sotilte

He passid many anothir, as ye shul here sone.

Berynus hooft gan to tell al thyng as it was doon 1125

Fro gynnyng to the endyng, the wordis wyth the dede,

And how they made their covenaut, and wager how

they leyde. [tale,

Now Beryn, quod the steward, thou hast yherd this

How and in what manere thou art ybrought in bale;

Thow must do his byddyng, thow maist yn no wyse

Or drynk all the watir that salt is in the see: [flee,

Of these too thingis thow must chese the toon;

Now be well avysid, and sey thy will anon.

To do yee both law I may no betir fey, 1134

For thou shalt have no wrong, as ferforth as I mey:
Chese the self right as the list, and wit thou nothing me
Though thou chese the wers and let the betir be.

Beryn stode astonyd, and no mervail was,
And preyd the steward of a dey to answere to the case;
For I might lightlich in som word be ycaught, 1140
And eke it is right herd to chese of to that beth right
naught: [morowe

But and it wer your likyng to graunt me day tyl to
I wold answer through Godd's help. Then must thou
fynd a borowe,

Seyd the steward to Beryn, and yit it is of grace.
Now herith me, quod Hanybald, I preya litil spase:
He hath 5 shippis ondir the town, lyggyng on the
The wich been sufficient yfesid in our hond, [strond,
By me that am your provost to execute the law. [saw.
He must assent. Quod Evander, Let us onys here his
I graunt wele, quod Beryn, sith it may be noon othir.
Then Hanybald arose hym up to sese both ship and
strothir, 1151

And toke Beryn wyth hym: so talkyng on the wey,
Beryn, quod Hanybald, I suyr the be my fey
That thou art much ybound to me this ilk dey,
So is thy ple amendit by me; and eke of such a wey
I am avysid in thy cause, yf thou wolt do by rede,
That lite ornought by my counsaill ought the to drede.
Yee know wele to morowe the dey of ple is set
That ye mut nedis answere, or els wythout lett 1159

I must yeld them your shippis; I may in no wyse blyn;
 So have I undirtake: but the merchaundise wythin
 Is nat in my charge, ye knowe as wele as I,
 To make ther'of no livery: wher'for now wysely
 Worch, and do astir rede: let all your marchaundise
 Be voidit of your shippis, and at hiest prise 1165
 I wol have it every dele in covenaut; yf ye list
 To semyne house here onystofore, I hold it for the best,
 Wher ye shull se of divers londis, housis to or thre
 Full of marchaundise, that through this grete cete
 Is no such in preve, I may right well avowe. 1170
 So when ye have all seyn, and I have your also,
 Let som bargin be ymade betwene us both too.
 Graunt mercy! Sir, quod Beryn, your profit is feir and
 Feyn wold I do ther'astir yf I ondirstood [good;
 I myght wythout blame of breking of arest. 1175
 Yis, quod Hanybald, at my perell me trust.
 So to Hanybald's house togidir both they rode,
 And fond, as Hanybald had yseyd, an houghe house,
 long and brode,
 Full of marchaundise as rich as it may be, 1179
 Passyng all the marchantis that dwellid in that cete.
 Thus when all was shewid they dronk and toke their
 To se Beryn's shippis in hast they gon to meve: [leve,
 And when that Hanybald was avysid what charge the
 shippis bere 1183
 He gan to speke, in his wyse ascaunce, he rought nere

Whethir he bargeynynd or no, and feyd thus: Beryn,
frend, [an end

Your marchaundife is feir and good, now let us make
If yee list; I can no more; yee knowith how it is. [mys,
Com, of short let tuk them yn, methinkith I fey nat
And then your meyne and ye, and I, to my house shall
we go,

And of the marchaundife I saw I wol nat part therfro;
Chese of the best of that ye find there 1191

Throughout the long house, ther shall no man yeudere,
And therwith shall your shippis be fillid all fyve:

I can fey no betir: yf ye list to dryve
This bargeyn to the end counsellith with your men;
I may nat long tary, I must nedis hen. 1196

Beryn clepid his meyne counsell for to take;
But his first mocionne was of the woo and wrake,
And all the tribulacionne, for pleying at ches,
That he had; every dele his shame and his dures 1200
Fro poynt to poynt, and how it stode, he told how it
was,

And then he axid counsaill what best was in the case,
To chaunge with the burgeyse or els for to leve?
Eche man feyd his avise; but al that they did meve
It wer to long a tale for to tell it here: 1205

But fynally, at end, they cordit al in fere
That the chaunge shuld stond, for as the case was fall
They held it clerely for the best, and went forth wyth-
all

The next wey that they couth to Hanybald's plase.
 But now shull ye here the most sotill fallace 1210
 Thatevirman wrought till othir, and highest trechery,
 Wich Hanybald had wrought hymself to this com-
 pany.

Go in, quod Hanybald, and chese, as thy covenaut is.
 In goon these Romeyns ech oon, and fond amys;
 For there was nothing that eny man might se 1215
 Saff the wall and tyle stonys, and tymbir made of tre;
 For Hanybald had do void it of all thing that was there;
 Whils he was at the shippis his men away it here.
 When Beryn saw the house ler that ful was ther'tofore
 Of riche marchaundise, alas! thought he, I am lore,
 I am in this world; and wittith well his hert 1221
 Was nat al in likeing; and outward gan he stert
 Like half a wodeman, and bete both his lippis,
 And gan to hast fast towards his own shippis,
 To kepe his good within wyth al that evir he myght,
 That it were nat dischargit, as hym thought verrey
 But al for naught was his hast, for 300 men, [right.
 As fast as they myght, they bare the good then, [tofore
 Through ordenaunce of Hannybald, that pryvelich
 Had purposid and ycast shuld be out ybore. 1230
 Beryn made a swyff pafe; ther myght no man hym let;
 But Hanybald was ware inough, and with Beryn met:
 All for nought: Beryn, thou knowist well and syne
 The shippis ben areistid, and the good is myne. 1234
 What woldest thou do ther? thou hast ther nowght
 I wol hold thy covenaut and thou myne also. [to do;

For yit saw I nevyr man that was of thy manere;
 Sometyme thou wolt avaunte, and some tyme arere:
 Now thou wolt, and now thou n'olt. Wher shul men
 the fynd?

Now sey oon, and sith anothir. So variant of mynd
 Saw I nevyr tofore this dey man so variabill. 1241
 Sith I the fynd in such plyte, our bargin for to stabill,
 We woll tofore the steward, ther we both shull have
 Nay, forsoth, quod Beryn. Yistreulich the tite, [right.
 Quod Hanybald, wher thou wolt or no; and so I the
 charge 1245

Asprovost: know that yf me list my warant is so large,
 And thou make any diffence, to bynym thy lyffe.
 Take thyn hors; it gaynyth nat for to make stryffe.
 So wyth sorowfull hert Beryn toke his hors, 1249
 And softly seyde to his men, Of me, quod he, no fors,
 But wend to your shippis; I wol com when I may;
 Ye seth well everichone I may no bet away.

Now here by this same Tale both fre and bond
 Mow sele in their wittis; and eke ondirstonde

That *Litill wailith wysdom or els governaunce* 1255

Ther Fortune evir werrith, and eke Hap and Chaunce:

Or what availeth bounte, beute, or riches,

Frendship, or sotilte, or els hardines,

Gold, good, or catell, wyt, or by lynage,

Lond, or lordis service, or els high peerage? 1260

What may all this awayle ther Fortune is a foe?

I wis right litill, or nevyr a dele: full oft it fallith so.

So, shortly to pas ovir, they fill to such an end
 That Beryn shuld have day ageyn a morowe, and so to
 He fet hym in ful purpose to his shippis ward: [wend
 But yit or he cam ther he fond the passage hard;
 For how he was begiled throughout all the towne
 Ther and ther a coupill gan to speke and to roun;e;
 And every man his purpose was to have parte [art.
 With falsnes, and with sotiltees; they coud noon othir
 Beryn rode forth in his wey, his page ran hym by,
 Full fore adred in hert, and cast about his eye 1272
 Up and down, even long the strete, and for angir swet,
 And er he had riden a stone's cast a blynd man with
 him met,

And spak no word, but sefid hym fast by the lap,
 And cried out and harowe, and nere hym gan to flap.
 All for nought, quod this blynd; what! wenyft thou
 for to skape? [be jape.

Beryn had thought to prik forth, and thought it had
 The blynd man cast away his staff, and set on both
 his hondis; [londis,

Nay, thou shalt nat void, quod he, for all thy rich
 Tyll I of the have reson, lawe, and eke righte, 1281
 For trewlich I may wit it the that I have lost my sight.
 So for ought that Beryn coud othir speke or prey
 He myght in no wyse pas; ful fore he gan to may,
 And namelich for the pepill throng hym so about,
 Andechemangan hym hond, and seyde, Without doute

Ye must nedis stond, and rest, and bide the lawe,
 Be ye nevir so grete a man. So wold I wondir fawe,
 Quod Beryn, yf yee had cause, but I know noon.
 No, thow shalt know or thow go thow hast nat al
 ydoon, 1290

The blynd man seyde to Beryn. Tell on then, quod he.
 Here is no place to plete, the blynd man seyde age,
 Also we have no jure here of autorite ;
 But Evandir the steward shall deme both the and me.
 When I my tale have told, and thow hast made an-
 swere, 1295

By that tyme men shull know how thow canst the
 Now, sovereyn God ! I thank the of this ilk dey ; [clere.
 Then I may preve the, be my lyve, of word and eke
 of fay

Fals, and eke untrew of covenant thow hast ymakid.
 But litill is thy charge now though that I go nakid
 That sometyme wer partinere, and rekenyd I nevyr it ;
 But thou shalt bere or we depart ther' of a litill witt,
 For, aftir comyn seyng, Ewir atte ende 1303

The trowith wold be provid how so men ewir trend.
 Thus they talkid to eche othir tyl they com into the
 And wer yentrid in the hall ther the steward was. [plase,
 The blynd man first gan to spake : Sir Steward, for
 Godd' is sake

Herith me a litill while, for her I have ytake
 He that hath do me wrong most of man of mold ;
 Be my help, as law wold, for hym that Judas fold. 1310

Ye know wele that oft tyme I have to yew ypleynid
 How I was betrayed, and how I was ypeynid,
 And how a man some tyme and I our yen did chaunge;
 This is the same persone, though that he make it
 fraunge: 1314

I toke them hym but for a tyme, and wenyd trewly
 Myne to have yhad ageyn; and so both he and I
 Were enfurid uttirlich, and was our both will;
 But for myne the bettir were wrongfullich and ille
 He hath them kept hidirto, wyth much sorowe and
 pyne 1319

To me, as ye wele knowith; because I have nat myne
 I may nat se with his; wher'for me is ful woo:
 And evirmore ye seyde that ye myght nothing do
 Without presence of the man that wrought me this
 unquert:

Now sith he is tofore you now let hym nat astert;
 For many tyme and oft yee behete me 1325
 And he myght be take he shuld do me gre.
 Sith ye of hym be sefid, howevir so yee tave,
 Let hym nevir pas tyl I myn yen have.

Beryn, quod Evandir, herist thow nat thy selve
 How sotilly he pletith, and ware by eche halve? 1330
 Beryn stode all maüt, and no word he spake;
 And that was tho his grace; ful sone he had be take
 And he had myffeyd onys, or els yffeyd nay;
 For then he had been negatyff, and undo for ay:
 For they were grete Sevilious, and usid probat law,
 Where evirmore affirmatyf shuld preve his own saw:

Wher'for they wer so querelouse of all myght com in
mynd, [wold fynd

Though it wer nevir in dede ydo; such matere they
To benym a man his good through som manir gile;
For the blynd man wist right wele he shuld have lost
his whyle 1340

To make his pleynt on Beryn, and suyd oppon his good,
For shippis and eke marchaundise in a balaunce stode;
Ther'for he made his chalenge his yen for to have,
Or els he shuld for them fyne yf he wold them have,
And ligg for them in hostage tyll the fynauce cam:
This was all the fofilte of the blynd man. 1346

Beryn stode all muët, and no word he spak.
Beryn, quod Evander, lest thou be ytake
In defeaute of answere thou myghtist be condempnyd,
Be right wele avysid, sith thou art examenyd. 1350
Sir, seyde Beryn, it wold litill availe

To answere thus aloon without good counsaill;
And also ferthermore, full litill I shuld be levid,
Whatevir I answerd, thus stonyd and reprevid;
And eke my wit doith faille; and no wondir is; 1355

Wher'for I wold prey yew, of yewr gentilnes,
To graunt me dey tyll to morowe I might be avysid
To answere forth, wyth othir that on me been surmy-
Deperdeux! quod the steward, I graunt wel it beso. [sid.
Beryn toke his leve, and hopid to pas and go: 1360
But as sone as Beryn was on his hors ryding
He met a woman and a child wyth sad chere comyng.

That toke hym by the reyn, and held hym wondir fast;
 And seid, Sir, voidith nat yit, vailith nat to haste;
 Ye mow in no wyse scape; ye must nedis abyde;
 For though ye list to know me nat, yit lien by your side
 I have ful many a tyme, I can nat tell yew lome.

Come tofore the steward, ther shall ye here your dome
 Of thing that I shall put on yew, and no word fortoly:
 To leve me thus aloon it is your villany. 1370

Alas the day and tyme that evir I was your make!
 Much have I endurid this too yere for your sake;
 But now it shall be know who is in the wronge.

Beryn was all abashid, the pepill so thik thronge
 About him in eche side: for ought that he couth peyn
 He must to the steward of fyne fors ageyn. 1376

Now shall ye here how sotillich this woman gan hir tale
 In presence of the steward. With colour wan and pale
 Petously she gan to tell; and seid, Sir, to yew

Full oft I have compleynynd in what manere and how
 My child's fadir left me, by myself aloon, 1381

Wythout help or comforte, as grete as I myght goon
 Wyth my son here and his, that shame it is to tell

The penury that I have yhad, that afors fell
 I must nedis myne aray, wher me list or lothe, 1385

Or els I must have beggit for to fynd us both;
 For there was nevir woman I leve, as I ges,

For lak of hede of lyvelode that lyvid in more distres
 Then I my self for oft tyme for lak of mete and drink;

And yit I trow no creature was feyner for to swinke

My lyff to sustene: but as I mut nede 1391
 Above all othir thingis to his child take hede,
 That wondir is and mervaile that I am alyve;
 For the fokyng of his right as it were a knyve
 It ran into my hert; so low I was of mode 1395
 That well I woot in certen with percell of my blode
 His child I have ynorishid; and that is by me seen;
 For my rede colour is turnid into grene:
 And he that cause is of all here he stondith by me;
 To pay for the fosteryng methinkith it is tyme. 1400
 And sith he is my husbond, and hath on me no rowith,
 Let hym make amendis in saving of his trowith.
 And yf he to any word onys can say nay
 Lo! here my gage, al redy to preve all that I sey.
 The stewarde toke the gage, and spak in soft wyse;
 Of this petouse compleynt a mann'ys hert may grise,
 For I know in percell hir tale is nat all lese, 1407
 For many a time and oft this woman that here is
 Hath ybe tofore me, and pleynid of hir greffe,
 But wythout a party hir cause myght nat preffe. 1410
 Now thou art here present that she plenyth on
 Make thy defence now, Beryn, as wele as thou con.
 Beryn stode all muët, and no word he spak.
 Beryn, quod the steward, doist thou slepe or wake?
 Sey onys oon or othir: is it soth or nay 1415
 As she hath declarid? tell on saunce delay.
 Lord God! quod Beryn, what shuld it me availe
 Among so many wise, without right good counsaill,

To tell eny tale? full litil as I ges :

Wher'for I wold prey you of your gentilnes 1420

Graunt me day tyl to morowe to answer forth with
othir.

I graunt wele, quod the steward, but for fadir and mo-
Thow getist no lenger tyme pleynty I the tell. [dir,

Beryn toke his leve; his hert gan to swell 1424

For pure verrey anguyssh; and no mervail was;

And who is that that n'old and he wer in such case?

For al his trist and hope in eny worldlich thing [kyng;

Was cleen from hym passid, fave sorowe and mysly-

For body, good, and catell, and lyff, he set at nought,

So was his hert ywoundit for angir and for thought.

Beryn passyd softly, and to his hors gan go; 1431

And when he was without the gatis he lokid to and fro,

And coud noon othir countenaunce; but to his page

he feyd,

Preciouse God in heven! how falsly am I betrayd!

I trow no man alyve slont in wers plight, 1435

And all is for my synne, and for my yong delite;

And pryncipally above all thyng for grete unkyndnes

That I did to my modir; for littil hede iwis

I toke of hir, this know I wele, whils she was alyve,

Therfor al this turment is sent to me so ryve: 1440

For ther was nevyr woman kynder to hir child

Then she was; and ther ageyns nevyr thing so wyld

Ne so evil thewid as I was my self,

Ther'for sorowe and happs environ me by eche helve,

That I n'ote whider ryde nethir up ne down, 1445
 Ther been so many devillis dwellyng in this town,
 And so ful of gile and trechery also,

That well I woot in certeyn they woll me ondo.
 Now wold to God in hevyn what is my best rede!
 He toke his hors to his page, and thus to hym he sayd,
 Lede my hors to shipward, and take it to some man,
 And I woll go on foot as pryvely as I can, 1452

And assay yf I may in eny manere wise
 Escape unarrested more in such manner wise.
 The child toke his maistir's hors, and last hym there
 Walking forth on foot, making oft his moon; [aloon,
 And in his most musing, I can nat sey how lome,
 He wosshid nakid as he was bore he had be in Room.

And no mervail was it as the case stode,
 For he drad more to lese his eyen than he did his ship-
 pis or his good. 1460

Now yee that listith to dwell and here of aventure,
 How petously Dame Fortune, Beryn to inure,
 Turnyth hir whele about in the wers side; [ride.
 With hap of sorowe and anguyssh she gynyth for to
 Beryn passid toward the strond ther his shippis were,
 But yee mow ondirstond his hert was ful of fere; 1466

Yet nethirles he sat hym down softly on a stall,
 Semy'ryfe for sorowe, and lenyd to the wall
 For turment that he had, so wery he was and feynt,
 And to God above thus he made his pleynt: 1470

Glorious God in heven! that al thing madist of nought,
 Why sufferist thow these cursid men to stroy me for
 nought, 1472

And knowest well myn innocent, that I have no gilt
 Of al that they pursu me or on me is pilt?

And in the meen whils that Beryn thus gan pleyn
 A cachepoll stode besidis, his name was Machaign,
 And herd all the wordis, and knew also tofore
 How Beryn was turmented both with las and more:
 It was ysprong through the town; so was he full en-
 senfid 1479

How he hym would engyne as he had propensid,
 And had araid hym sotillich as man of contempla-
 cioune,

In a mantell wyth the list, with fals dissimulacioune,
 And a staff in his honde, as thoughe he febill were,
 And drow hym toward Beryn, and seid in this ma-
 nere : 1484

The high God of heven, that al thing made of nought,
 Bles yew, gentil Sir, for many an hevy thought
 Me thinkith that ye have, and no wondir is:

But, good Sir, dismay yew nat, but levith yewr hevi-
 And yf ye list to tell me somwhat of yeur distres [nes,
 I hope to God Almighty in party it redres 1490

Through my pore counsaill, and so I have many oon,
 For I have pete on yew be God and by Seint Jön:
 And eke pryvy hevines doith eche man apeir
 Sodenly or he be ware, and fall in dispeir; 1494

And who be in that plage that man is incurabill,
 For consequent comyth astrir sekenes abominabill;
 And, ther'for, Sir, diskeverith yewe, and be nothing
 adrad. 1497

Graunt mercy! Sir, quod Beryn, ye seme trew and sad;
 But othing lyith in myn hert, I n'ote to whom to trust,
 For tho that dynded me to dey ordeyned me to arest.

A Sir! be yew that man? of yew I have yherd. 1501

Gentill Sir, doutith nat, ne be nothing aferd
 Of me, for I shall counsell yew as well as I can,
 For trewlich in the cete dwellith many a fals man,
 And asyn litil els but falshode, wrong, and wyle, 1505
 And how they might straungers with trechery begile:
 But ye shul do right wisely somewhat be my counsaill.

Speke with the steward; that may you most avail;
 For ther is a comyn byword, yf ye it herd havith,

Wele setith be his peny that the pound savith. 1510

The steward is a covetouse man, that long hath disirid
 A knyff I have in keping, wherwith his hert I wirid;
 Shall be yew to help, in covenante that yee

Shall give me five mark your treu frend to be. 1514

The knyff is feir, I tell yew; yit nevir tofore this day
 Myght the steward have it for aught he coud prey,

The wich ye shuld gyve hym, the betir for to spede,
 And behothe hym 20 l. to help yew in your nede;

And yf he grauntith, trustith wele ye stond in good
 plight;

For betir is then lese all the las the more quyt. 1520

And I woll go wyth yew straight to his plase,
 And knele down and speke first to amend yewr case,
 And sey yee be my cofin; the betir shul ye spede;
 And when that I have all ytold the knyff to hym yee
 bede. 1524

Beryn thankid hym hertlich, and on hym gan trust,
 With hond in hond enfurid, and all for the best;
 Beryn thought noon othir, al that it othir was.
 Machaign hym comfortid, talkyng of their case,
 And passid forth styilly toward the steward blyve
 Beryn and Machaign; but Beryn bare the knyff, 1530
 And trust much in his felawe to have som help:
 But or they departed were they had no cause to yelp
 Of no manir comfort, as ye shull here anon;
 For as sone as Machaigne tofore the steward com
 He fill plat to the erth: a grevous pleynt and an huge
 He made; and seyde, Sir Steward, now be a trew juge
 Ageyns this fals treytour that flondith me besyde;
 Let take of hym good hede, els he woll nat abide.
 Now mercy gode Steward, for yee have herd me yere
 For my fadir Melan pleynt to you ful fore, 1540
 That with 7 dromedarys, as I have told yew lome,
 With marchandise chargit went toward Rome,
 And it is 7 yere ago and a litill more
 Of hym or of his gooddis that I herd les or more;
 And yit I have enquerid as bysely as I couthe, 1545
 And met nevir man yit that me coud tell with mowth
 Any tyding of hym onto this same day;
 But now I know too much, alas! I may wel sey.

When Beryn herd these wordis he kist down his hede;
 Allas! he thought in hert, alas! what is my rede? 1550
 And would fayn have voidit, and outward ganto flapp,
 But Machaigne arose and sefid by the lapp:
 Nay, thow shalt nat void, he seid; my tale is nat ydo;
 For be trowith of my body yf thou scapidist fo
 I shuld nevir have mery whils I wer on lyve, 1555
 And set hond fast on Beryn's othir sleve,
 And seid, Good Sir Steward, my tale to the end
 I prey ye wold here, for wend how men wend
 There may no man hele murdir, but it will out at last:
 The same knyff my fadir bere when he of contre past
 Let serch wele this felon, ther ye shul hym find;
 I know the knyff wele inough, it is nat out of my
 mynd: [knyff,
 The cotelere dwellith in this toun that made the same
 And for to preve the trowith he shall be here as blyve.
 Beryn swat for angir, his hert was full of fere; 1565
 He toke the knyff to the steward or he serchid were.
 The steward onto Beryn, My frend, lo! quod he,
 And thow think the well about this is foule plee:
 I can know noon othir but thow must or thow go
 Yeld the body of Melan and his good also. 1570
 Now be well avysid ageyn to morowe day, [to say.
 Then shalt thou have thy jugement; ther is no more
 When Beryn fro the steward thus departid was,
 And was without the gate, he lokid oppon the plase,
 And cursid it wondir bitterly in a fervent ire, 1575
 And wisshid many tymes it had been a fire;

For I trowe that man of lyve was nevyr wors betrayid
 Then I am; and therewithall my hert is cleen difmayid,
 For here I have no frendship, but am all counfelles,
 And they been falsher then Judas, and eke mercyles.
 A, Lord God in hevyn! that my hert is woo; 1581
 And yit fuyrly I mervel nat though that it be so,
 For yit in all my lyve fithe I ought undirstode
 Had I nevyr wyl for to lern good:

Poly I hauntid it evir, ther myght no man me let,
 And now he hath ypaid me, he is cleen out of my
 dett; 1586

For whils I had tyme wyfdom I myght have lernyd,
 But I drow me to foly and wold nat be governed,
 But had al myne own wyll, and of no man aferd,
 For I was nevyr chastifid; but now myne own yerd
 Betith me to fore; the strokis been to hard; 1591
 For these devillis of this town takith but litil reward
 To sclee my body to have my good. The day is set to
 morowe; [sorowe.

Now wold to God I wer in grave, for it wer end of
 I was iwis to much a sole; for hate I had to Rame
 I wold forsake myn heritage, ther'for sorowe and
 Is oppon me fall, and right wele deservid, [shame
 For I toke none maner hede when my modir stervid,
 And disobeyid my fadir, and set hym at naught also;
 What wondir is it than though that I have woo?
 Fortune and eke Wisdom have werrid with me evir,
 And I with them in all my lyf, for Fortune was me
 levir 1602

Then eny wit or governaunce, for them too I did hate;
And though I wold be at oon now it is to late.

O myghtfull God in heven! wher was evir man
That wrought hymself more foly than I my self did
than? 1606

A curfid be the tyme that I out of Rome went!
That was my fadir's right heir of lyvelode and of rent,
And al the riall lordship that he hath in the town.
Had I had wit and grace, and hold me low and boun,
It wer my kynd now among my baronage 1611

To hauk and to hunt, and eke to pley and rage
With feir freshe ladies, and daunce when me list;
But now it is to late to speke of Had I wist.
But I fare like the man that for to swele his flyes
He stert into the bern, and astir fire he hies, 1616
And goith about the wallis with a brennyng wafe,
Tyll it was at last that the leem and blafe
Entrid into the chynys where the wheate was,
And kiffid so the evefe that brent was all the plafe;
But first in the begynnyng, tyll feer smote in the
rastris, 1621

He toke no manere kepe, and thought of nothing astir
What perell there myght fall; ne more did I ywis,
That wold forsake myn honour for the unkyndnes
Of Rame, that was my slepmodir; for yf I shall nat ly
They beth foure; wherfor the more wisely 1626
I shuld have wrought, had I had wit, and suffrid for
a tyme,

And astir com to purpose wel inowghe of myne;

But evil avengit he is deol that for a litil mode 1629
 And angir to his neybour fellith away his good,
 And goith hymself a beggyng : astir in breff tyme
 He mut be countid a lewd man in all manere ryme.
 So have I wrought and wers, for I dout of my lyve,
 How that it shal stond, for plukking of my seleve
 The knyff that was me take, as ye have herd tofore;
 And yit it grevith mine hert also much more 1636
 Of myn own pepill, that no disese aservid. [vyd
 I wote wele astir pleding ryght nought woll be refer-
 To sustene their lyvis : I trow ryght nought or lite,
 And peraventur lightly stond in wors plight. 1640
 Of me it is no fors though I be thus arayed,
 But it is dole and pete that they shull be betrayid
 That hath nought aservid but for my gilt aloon.
 And when that Beryn in this wise had ymade his mone
 A crepill he saw comyng with grete spede and haste
 Oppon a stilt ondir his kne bound woudir fast, 1646
 And a crouch undir his armys, with hondis al for-
 skramyd;

Alas! quod this Beryn, shall I be more examenyd?
 And gan to turn aside onto the see stonde, 1649
 And the cripill astir, and wan oppon hym londe.
 Tho began Beryn to drede inwardlich fore, [more?
 And thought thus in his hert, shall I be comberid
 And it wer Godd's wyll my sorowe for to cese 1653
 Methinkith I have inowghe. The cripill began to
 preche,

And had yraught nere hond Beryn by the scleve :
 Beryn turnyd as an hare, and gan to ren blyve ;
 But the cripill knew betir the pathis smale and grete
 Then Beryn, so tofore hym he was, and gan hym mete.
 When Beryn saw it vaylid naught to renne ne to lepe,
 What for dole and and anguysli no word myght he
 speke, 1660

But stode still amafid, and starid fast about :
 The cripill began to speke ; Sir, to drede or to dout
 Of me wold ye right lichte, and ye knew myne hert,
 So where ye like well or ill fro me shall ye nat part
 Tyl I have tretid with yew, and ye with me also,
 Of all your soden happis, your myscheff, and your wo ;
 For by the tyme that I have knowlech of your case,
 Your rennyng, and your trotting into an esy pas,
 I shall turn or that we twyn, so ye astir my stole
 Woll do, and as I rede yew ; for yee wer a sole 1670
 When ye cam first alonde, ye had met with me,
 For I wold have ensensid yew all the iniquite
 Of thes fals marchauntes that dwellen in this town,
 And outid all your chaffare without gruch or groun ;
 For had ye dwellid within your shippis, and nat go
 them among, [wrong
 Then had ye been undaungerid, and quyt of all their
 On yew that been surmysid through fals suggestioun.
 Beryn gan to sigh, unneth he might soune
 Saf o word or tweyn, and Mercy was the first, 1679
 Preying with all his hert that he myght have his rest,

And be no more enpledit, but pas fro hym quyte.
 Good Sir, quod Beryn, doith me no more dispite,
 And suffir me to pas, and have on me routhe,
 And I suyр yew feithfully, have here my trowith,
 To morowe when I have pledit, and eny thing be last
 Of ship or marchaundise, afore the ship or bast, 1686
 I woll shew yew all ifere, and opyn every chest,
 And put it in yewr grace to do what ye lest.

And in the meen while that Beryn gan to clapp
 The crypill nyghid hym nere and nere, and hent hym
 by the lap; 1690

And as sone as Beryn knew that he was in honde
 He unlacyd his mantell for drede of some command,
 And pryvelich ovir his shuldris let hym down glide,
 And had levir lese his mantell then abide.

The cripill all perceyvid, and hent hym by the scleve
 Of his nethir surcote. Alas! now mut I strive, 1696
 Thought Beryn by hymself, now I am yhent,
 There helpith naught save strengith; therwith the
 scleve to rent

Beryn gan; to scappe he sparid for no cost.

Alas! thought this cripill, this man woll be lost,
 And be ondo for evir, but he counsell have; 1701

Iwis thoughe he be lewde my contremen to save:

Yit will I my besines do and peyn that I may,

Sith he is of Room, for that is my contray.

This cripill was an hundrit yere full of age, 1705

With a long thik berd, and a trew visage

He had; and manly and july was he,
 And Geffrey was his name yknow in that contre.
 Alas! thought this Geffrey, this man hath gretedrede
 Of me, that by my power wold help hym in his nede:
 I wis though he be nyce, untaught and unwise, 1711
 I woll nat for his foly leve myne enpryse;
 And lept aftir Beryn, and that in right good spede.
 Beryn was so fore agast he toke no maner hede
 To look onys bakward tyll he to the watir cam,
 Then lokid he behynd and saw Sir Clekam 1716
 Commaund wondir fast with staff and with his stilt.
 Allas! thought Beryn, I now am yspilt,
 For I may no ferthir without I wold me droune,
 In'ote wich were the betir, or go ageyn to toune.
 Geffrey was so nigh com that Beryn myght nat fle:
 Good Sir, quod this Geffrey, why do yee void me?
 For by heven quene, that bare Crist in hir barme,
 But right as to my self I woll yew no more harme.
 Sittith down here by me oppon this see stronde,
 And yf ye drede any thing clepe yewr men to londe,
 And let them be here with us all our speche tyme,
 For I woll nat feyn oon word, as makers doon to ryme,
 But counfell yew as prudently as God woll send me
 grace:
 Take comfort to yew, and herk a litill spase. 1730
 And when that Beryn had yherd his tale to the end,
 And how goodly as Geffrey spak, as he were his
 frende,

None obstant his drede, yet part of sapience
 Stremyd into his hert for his eloquence,
 And feyd; God me counsaill for his high mercy!
 For I have herd this same dey men as sotilly 1736
 Speke, and of yeur semblant, and in such manere,
 And byhete me frendship outward by their chere,
 But inward it was contrary their intellectuone,
 Wherfor the blame isles, though I suspectioun 1740
 Have of yewr wordis, lest othir be yewr entent,
 For I n'ote whom to trust by God omnipotent; [me
 Wit nethirles yf your will is to com into the ship with
 I woll somwhat do by yeur rede how so it evir be.
 Then, quod Geffrey, if it be so that I in yewr powere
 Entir into your shippis, and yew help in yewr my-
 here, [fyde,
 That yee ageyn yewr adversaryes shull have the betir
 And gyve yow such counsell to bate down their pride,
 And that yee wyne in every pleynt, al so much or
 more [ybore,
 As they purpose to have of yew; yf they be down
 And ye have amendis for their iniquite, 1751
 And I yew bring to this end, what shall my guerdon
 In verrey soth, quod Beryn, yf I yew may trust [be?
 I woll quyte yew trewly, I make yew behest.
 In feith then, quod Geffray, I woll with yew wende.
 What is yewr name, seid Beryn, though my frende?
 Gefferey, he scid; but in these marchis I was nat bore,
 But I have dwellid in this cete yeeris heretofore

Ful many, and turmented wers then wer yee,
 And endurid for my trowith much adverfite, 1760
 For I wold in no wife fuffir their falshedes,
 For in all the world fo corrupt of their dedis
 Been noon men alyve, I myght ryght well avow,
 For they fet all their wittis in wrong all that they
 mowe; 1764

Wher'for full many a tyme the grettift of them and I
 Have ftonden in altercacioun for their trechery;
 For I had in valew in trew marchaundise
 A M. l. all have they take in fuch maner wife:
 So ferforth to fave my blode no longer myght I dryve
 dure; 1769

For drede of wors thus thought I my felf to diffigure,
 And have among them 12 yere go right in this plight,
 And evir have had in memory how I myght them
 And fo I hope now, as fottill as they be, [quyte;
 With my wit engine them and help yew and me.
 My lymes been both hole and found, me nedith ftilt
 ne crouch. 1775

He caft afyde them both, and lepe oppon an huche
 And adown ageynes, and walkid to and fro,
 Up and down, within the fhip, and fhewid his hondis
 tho,

Stretching forth his fingris in fight and all about
 Without knot or knor, or eny fign of goute, 1780
 And dyght them eftt ageyns right difetirly,
 Som to ride ech othir, and fom aweward wry.

Geffrey was right myghty, and wele his age did bere,
 For natur was more substantiall when tho dayis wer
 Then now in our tyme; for all thing doith waste
 Saff vile and curfid lyving, that growith all to faste.
 What shuld I tell more? But Geffrey sat hym down,
 And Beryn hym besydis; the Romeyns gan to rown,
 And mervelled much in Geffrey of his disgisenes,
 And Beryn had anothis thought, and spak of his dis-
 stres. 1790

Now Geffrey, seid this Beryn, and I darst trust in yewe
 That and ye knewe eny man that is alyve anowe
 That had of discrecioune so much influence
 To make my party good to morowe in my defence,
 And delivir me of sorowe, as ye behote have, 1795
 I wold become his legeman, as God my soule save.
 That wer to much, quod Gefferey; that woll I yew
 relese;

But I desire of othis thing to have yewr promes,
 That and I bryng yewr enmyes into such a traunce
 To make for yewr wrong is to your right highfenaunce,
 And so declare for you that with you pas such dome,
 That yee oppon your feith bryng me at Rome, 1802
 Yf God wol send yew wedir and grace to repase.
 Quod Beryn, But I grant yew I wer lewder then an
 But or I fullich trust yew holdith me excusid; [asse,
 I woll go counsell with my men lest they it refusid.
 Beryn drew asyde, and spak with his meyne, 1807
 And expressid every word in what plight and degre

That he stode from poynt to poynt, and of his fals
areftis :

His meyne were astonyd, and starid forth as bestis.
Spekith som word, quod Beryn, sith I am betrayd ;
Yee have yherd what Geffrey to me hath sayd. 1812
These Romeyns stode alle still ; o word ne coud they
meve ;

And eke it passid their wittis. Then Beryn gan releve,
And to Geffrey est ageyn, and mercy hym besought.
Help me, Sir, quod Beryn, for his love that us bought
Dying on the rood, and wept full tendirly ; 1817
For but ye help, quod Beryn, ther is no remedy,
For comfort nethir counsaill of my men have I noon :
Help me, as God yew help, and els I am undoon.
When Geffrey saw this Beryn so distraſt and wept,
Pite into eche veyn of his hert crept.

Allas ! quod Geffrey, I might nat do a more synful
dede,

I leve by my trowith, then fayl yew in this nede ;
Faill me God in heven yf that I yew faill ! 1825
That I shall do my besines, my peyn, and my travaile,
To help yew be my power ; I may no ferther goo.
Yis, yee behete me more, seid Beryn, tho,
That yee wold help me at all that I shuld stond cler.
Beryn gan to wepe and make wers chere. 1830
Stillith yew, quod Geffrey, for how so evir ye tire
More than my power ye ought nat desire,

For thorough the grace of God ye shul be help welc;
 I have ther'of no dout; but trewlich I you tele
 That ye woll hold me covenante and I woll yew also,
 To bryng me at Rome when it is all ydo. 1836
 In signe of trowith of both sidis of our acordment
 Eche of us kys othir of our comyn assent; [wyne;
 And all was do. And aftirward Beryn commaundit
 They dronk, and then Geffrey seid; Sir Beryne, 1840
 Yee mut declare yeur maters to myne intelligence,
 That I may the bet perseyve all inconvenience,
 Dout, pro, contra, and ambiguite,
 Thorough your declaratioune, and enformyd be;
 And with the help of our Soveren Lord celestiale
 They shall be behynd, and we shull have the ball,
 For now the tyme approachith for their cursidnes
 To be somwhat rewardit; and cause of yeur distres
 Hath my hert yfetlid and fixid them a nye,
 As trowith woll and reson, for their trechery: 1850
 For many a man tofore this day they have do out of
 Distroid and turmentid thorough their fals law; [daw,
 For they think litill ellis, and all their wyttis fyve,
 Save to have a mann'ys good, and to benym his lyve;
 And hath a cursid custom, all ageyns reson, 1855
 That what man they enpeche they have noon encheson
 Thoughe it be as fals a thing as God hymself is trewe:
 And it touche a straunger that is com of newe
 Atte first mocioune that he begynneth to meve
 Ther flondith up an hundrit hym to repreve. 1860

The lawes of the cete stont in probacy;
 They usen noon enquestis the wrongis for to try:
 And yf thow haddist eny wrong, and woldist pleyn the,
 And were as trewe a cause as eny myght be, 1864
 Thow shuldist nat find o man to bere the witnes,
 Though every man in the town knew it more or les;
 So burrithe they togidir, and holdith with eche othir,
 That as to counterplede them, though ye wer my bro-
 thir, 1868

I wold gyve yew no counsaill, ne their empechement
 In no word to deny, for that wer combirment; [anoon,
 For then wer they in the affirmatyf, and wold preve
 And to yew that wer negatyff the law wold graunt
 So for to plede ageyn them it wold litill availl, [anoon;
 And yit to every mann'ys wit it ought be grete mer-
 vaile, 1874

For their lawes been so streyt, and peynous ordinaunce
 Is stallid for their falsshede; for this is their synaunce,
 To lese their lyff for lesing, and lsope it may knowe,
 That lord is riall of the town, and holdith them so lowe,
 Wherfor they have a custom a shrewid for the nonys,
 Yf eny of them sey a thing they cry all at onys, 1880
 And ferm it for a soth, and it bere any charge; [large;
 Thus of the danger of lsope they kepe them ever at
 And therfor wisdom weer, whofo might eschewe,
 Nevir to dele with them; for wer it wrong or trewe
 It shuld litill availl ageyns their falsshedes, 1885
 For they been acursid, and so been their dedes;

Wherfor we must, with all our wit sensibill,
 Such answers us purvey that they been insolibill,
 To morowe at our aparaunce, and shall be responfail,
 For of wele and ellis it is thy day fynall. 1890

Now Soveren Lord celestiale! with many sorowful
 Seyd Beryn to Geffray, ymmemorat of lyes, [sighis,
 Graunt me grace to morowe, so that God be plesid
 Make so myne answer, and I somewhat y-esid
 By the that art my counsaill, for othir help is noon.
 Reherce me then, quod Geffrey, the causis of thy soon
 Fro poynt to poynt, al in fere, on the is surmysid,
 Wherthorough I myght to morowe the betir be avisd.
 Now in soth, quod Beryn, thoughe I shuld dy
 I cannat tell the tenyth part of their trechery, 1900
 What for sorowe and angir that they to me have
 wrought;

So stond I clene desperat but ye con help ought.
 Deperdeux! seid Geffrey, and I the woll nat fail,
 Sith I have ensurid the to be of thy counsaill;
 And so much the more that thou art nat wise, 1905
 And canst nat me enform of no maner avise;
 Here ther'fore a while, and tend wel to my lore.
 The lord that dwellith in this town, whose name I
 Hope, efft reherfid, is so inly wise [told tofore,
 That no man alyve can his pas devise, 1910
 And is so grow in yeris that lx year ago
 He sawe nat for age; and yit it stondith so

That thorough his wit, and wisdom, and his gover-
 naunce, [much or prauce,
 Who makith a fray of, or strywith aught, or mel to
 Within the same cete, that he n'ys take anoon, 1915
 And hath his pennance forthwith, for pardon usith
 he noon :

For ther n'ys pore ne riche, ne what state he be,
 That he ny's undirfote for his inquite ;
 And it be previd on hym ther shall no gold hym quyte,
 Right as the forfete axith moch or lite, 1920
 For geys his commaundment is noon so hardy quek,
 So hard setith he his fote in every mann'ys nek ;
 For undir sky and sterris this day is noon alyve
 That coud amend hym in o poynt, al thing to distryve.
 The 7 Sages of Rome, though al ageyn hym were,
 The shuld be insufficient to make his answere, 1926
 For he can all langagis, Greek, Hebrew, and Latyne,
 Caldey, Frensch, and Lombard, ye know well fyne,
 And all maner that men in bokis write ;
 In poyse and philosophie also he can endite : 1930
 Cevile and canoune, and al maner lawis,
 Seneca and Sydrak, and Salamon'ys sawys,
 And the 7 sciences, and eke law of armys,
 Experimentis and pompery, and all maner charmys,
 As ye shul here astir er that I depart, 1933
 Of his imaginaciouns and of his sotill art ;
 For he is of age 300 yere and more,
 Wherfor of all sciences he hath the more lore.

In Denmark he was gotten and ybore also, 1939
 And in Grece ynorished tyl he coud speke and go;
 Ther was he put to scole, and lernyd wondir fast,
 For such was his grace that all othir he past:
 But first in his begynnyng litil good he had,
 But lernyd evir passyngly, and was wise and sad:
 Of stature and of feture ther was noon hym like 1945
 Thorough the lond of Grece though men wold hym
 seke.

A kyng ther was in tho yeris that had noon heir male
 Saff a doughter, that he lovid as his own saal;
 Ifope was his servaunt, and did hym such plesaunce
 That he made hym his heir, and did hym so avaunce
 To wed his doughter, and astir hym to bere crowne,
 Thorough prowes and his port so low he was and boun;
 So as Fortune wold, that was Ifope's frend, 1953
 This worthy king that same yere made his carnel end.
 That 27 yere is passid that Ifope thus hath reigned,
 And yit was ther nevir for wrong on hym compleyned
 For no jugement that he gaff; yit som ageyn hym wylid
 A grete part of his pepil, and wold have hym exilid;
 But his grete wisdom, and his manfulnes, 1959
 His governaunce, with his bounte and his rightfulnes,
 Hath evir yit preserved hym unto this ilk day,
 And woll whyle that he lyvith for aught that men can
 For who hath eny quarel or cause for to wonde [say:
 Within this fame cete, quiklich woll he fond,

And it be sotill matir, to Ifope for to fare, 1965
 Fro gynnynge to the end his quarrell to declare; [rowe;
 And eve afore, as custome is, peple shall be on the mo-
 But whosoly he scapith nat wythout shame or sorowe.
 Beryn, thow must go thidir, wher thyn enpechement
 Shull be ymevid, and therfor pas nat thens 1970
 Tyll thou have herd them alle, and report them wele
 To me, that am thy counsell, and repeir snele.
 But so rial mancioune as Ifope dwellith in
 Ther is noon in the world, ne so queynt of gyn,
 Wherfore be well avised how I enform the 1975
 Of the wondir wayis and of the pryvyte
 That been wythyn his paleyse, that thou must pas by;
 And when thow approchist, and art the castell nygh,
 Blench fro the brode gate, and enter thow nat there,
 For ther been men to keep it; yit have thow no fere;
 Pas down on the right hond by the castell walle 1981
 Tyll thou fynd a wyndow, and what so the byfall
 Entir ther yf thow may, and be nothyng agast,
 But walk forth in that entre: then shalt thou see in
 A portcolyse the tofore; pas in boldly [haste
 Tyll thou com to an hall the feyryst undir sky: 1986
 The wallis been of marbill, yjoynid and yclosid,
 And the pilours of crystall, grete and wele proposid;
 The keveryng of bove is of selondyn,
 And the pament beneth of gold and asure fyne. 1990
 But whoso passith thorough this hall hath nede to ren
 Or els he myght be disware of his own lyve, [blyve,

For ther wythin liith a stoon that is so hote of kynd
 That what thing com for by anoon it woll atend,
 As bryght as eny kandell leem, and consume anoon;
 And so wold the hall also n'er coldnes of a stoon 1996
 That is yclepid Dionyse, that set is hym ageyn;
 So and thow lepe lightly thou shalt have no peyn,
 For ethir ston in kynd proportioned they be,
 Of hete and eke of coldnes of oon equalite. 2000
 Thow must pas thorough the hall, but tary nat I rede,
 For thou shalt fynd a dur up right afore thyn hede:
 When thow art entrid ther, and the dore apast,
 Whatso thow se ligg or stond be thow nat agast;
 And yf thow drede eny thing do no more fass blowe,
 But yit I rede the beware that it be somewhat lowe;
 Ther been to libardis loos and untyed, 2007
 If that thy blowing of that othir in eny thing be spied
 Anoon he rakith on the to sese the by thy pate,
 For ther n'ys thing in erth that he so much doith hate
 As breth of mann'ys mowith; wherfore refreyn the,
 And blow but fair and soft, and when that nede be.
 When thow art passid this hall anoon then shalt thow
 Into the fayrest garden that is in Christendom, [com
 The wich thorough his clergy is made of such devise
 That a man shall ween he is in Paradise, 2016
 At his first comyng in, for melody and song,
 And othir glorious thingis and delectabill among,
 The wich Tholomeus, that somtyme Paynym was,
 That of astronomy knew ev'ry poynt and case, 2020

Did it so devise, thorough his high connyng,
 That ther n'ys best in erth ne bird that doith sing
 That he n'ys there in figur in gold and sylvir fyne,
 And mow, as they wer quyk, know the sotill engyne.
 In mydward of this gardyn stant a feir tre 2025

Of al maner levis that undir sky be,
 Yforgit and yfourmit eche in his degre
 Of sylvir and of gold fyne that lusty been to see.
 This gardeyn is evir grene, and full of May flowris,
 Of rede, white, and blew, and othir fresh colouris,
 The wiche been so redolent, and sentyn so about, 2031
 That he must be right lewde therin shuld route.

These monstrefull thingis I devise to the
 Because thow shuldist nat of them abaschid be.
 When that thow comyst there, so thow be strong in
 thought, 2035

And do be my counsell, drede the right nought,
 For ther beth viii tregetours that this gardyn kepith,
 Four of them doith waak whils the four slepith,
 The wiche been so perfite of nygramance,
 And of the art of apparene and of tragetrie, 2040

That they make semen as to a mann'ys fight
 Abominabill wormys, that fore ought be afright
 The hertiest man on erth, but he warnyd were
 Of the grisly fightis that he shuld see there.

Among all othir there is a lyon white 2045
 That and he be a straungir he rampith for to bite,

And hath tofore this tyme 500 men and mo
 Devourid and yete, that thereforth have ygo :
 Yit shalt thou pas fuyrly so thou do as I tell.
 The tre I told tofore, that round as eny bell 2050
 Berith bow and braunche, traylyng to the ground,
 And thou touch oon of them thou art saff and found;
 The tre hath such vertu there shall nothing the dere :
 Loke that be the first when thou comyst there.
 Then shalt thou fe an entre by the ferther side; 2055
 Thoughe it be fleyte tofore, inner large and wyde
 It growith more and more, and as a dentour wryith;
 Yit woll that wey the bryng there that Ilope liith,
 Into the feyrift chambir that evir man saw with eye.
 When thou art there wythyn govern the wisely,
 For there shalt thou here al thyn enpechement 2061
 Opynly declarid in Ilop's present.
 Report them wele and kepe them in thy mynd,
 And astir thy relaciously we shall so turn and wend,
 Thorough help of God above, such help for to make
 That they shall be acombrit, and we right well to scape.
 Now in soth, quod Beryn, a mann's hert may grise
 Of such wondir weyis, for al my marchandise
 I had levir lese then oppon me take
 Such a wey to pas. Then, Sir, for your sake 2070
 I woll my self, quod Geffrey: sith I am ensuryd
 To help the with my power thou shalt be amyrid
 As ferforth as I may; that I woll do my peyn
 To bryng yow plefaunt tyding, and retourn ageyn

Yit or the cok crow ; and ther'for let me se 2075
Whils I am out how mery ye can be.

Geffrey toke his leve ; but who was fory tho
But Beryn and his company ? for when he was go
Thei had no maner joy, but dout and hevynes,
For of his repeyryng thei had no sikernes; 2080
So every man to othir made his compleynt,
And wisshid that of felony they had been atteynt,
And so them thought betir to end hevynes
Then every day to lak brede atte first mes;
For when our good is go what shall fal of us ? 2085
Evir to be their thrallis, and peraventure wers,
To lese our lyf astir yf we displese them ought.
Astir Geffrey went this was all their thought
Throughout the nyght tyl cokkis gan to sing ; 2089
But then encrefid anguisshe ; their hondis gan to wryng,
And cursid wynd and watir that them brought ther,
And wisshid many tymes that he had been in bere,
And were apassid and entrid into dispeyr,
In as much as Geffrey did nat repeir :
Eche man seyde to othir it myght nat be ynayid 2095
But Geffray had uttirlich falsly them betrayid
Thoroughout all the long nyght.

.....
Tho went they to counsell a litill tofore the day,
And were all acordit for to sayl away ;
And so them thought betir, and leve their good ther,
Then abyde theroppon, and have more fere. 2101

They made their takelyng redy, and wend the fail
 For to save their lyvis, and set nat of their los; [acros,
 So fore they wer adred to be in servitute, 2104

And hopid God above wold send them som refute
 By som othir costis ther wynd them wold bryng :
 And therwithall cam Geffrey on his stilt lepeing,
 And cried wondir fast by the watir syde.

When Beryn herd Geffrey he bid his men abyde,
 And to launch out a bote and bryng Geffrey in, 2110
 For he may more avayl me now then al my kyn,
 And he be trew and trusty, as myn hope is;
 But yit ther'of had Beryn no full sikernes.

These Romeyns set in Geffrey with an hevy chere,
 For they had levir faill forth then put them in weer
 Both lyve and goodis: and evill suspicioune 2116
 They had of this Geffrey; wherfore they gon rounne,
 Talkyng to eche othir, This man woll us betray.

Geffrey wist well inowghe he was nat to their pay,
 And for verry angir he threw into the see 2120
 Both stilt and eke his crouch, that made wer of tre,
 And gan them to comfort, and seid in this manere:
Benedicite! Beryn, why make ye such chere?

For and yee wex hevy what shall yewr men do
 But take ensampill of yew? and have no cause to; 2125
 For yit or it be eve yewr adversaryes all
 I shall make them spurn and have a fore fall,
 And yee go quyte, and all yewr good, and have of
 And they to be right feign for to scape so [theirs too,

Wythout more daungir, and yewr wyl be; 2130
 For of the lawys her such is the equitye
 That *Who pursueth hir and his pleynt be wrong*
He shall make amendis be he never so strong;
 Right as shuld the t'odir yf he condempned were,
 Right so shall the pleyntiff right as I yew here: 2135
 And that shall preve by them, have ye no doute,
 Yit or it be eve right low to yew to loute,
 And submit them to yew, and put them in yewr grace
 By that tyme I have ymade all my wanlase;
 And in hope to spede well let shape us for to dyne.
 Geffrey axid watir, and sith brede and wyne, 2141
 And seit, It is holsom to breke our fast betyme,
 For the steward woll to the court at hour of pryme.
 The sonne gan to shyne and shope a feir dey;
 But for aught that Geffrey coude do or sey 2145
 These Romeyns spekyn fast all the dyner while,
 That Geffrey with his sotill wordis wold them begile.
 So when they had ydyned they ryfen up echoone,
 And drew them to counsell what was best to doon:
 Som seyde the best rede that we do may, 2150
 To throw Geffrey ovir the bord, and seyll forth our
 But for drede of Beryn som wold nat so, [way:
 Yit the more party assentid wele therto.
 Geffrey and Beryn, and worthy Romeyns tweyn,
 Stood a part within the ship, so Geffrey gan to seyn,
 Beryn, beth avifid; your men beth in distaunce: 2156
 Sith ye been her soveren put them in governaunce;

For methinkith they holdith contrary opynyoun,
 And *Grace faylith comynlich wber is divisioun.*
 In the meen whyle that they gan thus to slyve 2160
 Hanybald was up, and ycom as blyve
 To the brigg of the town ther the shippis rood,
 And herd much noyse; but litil while he bood,
 For when he saw the faylis stond all acros, 2164
 Alas! quod this Hanybald, here growith a smert los
 To me that am provost, and have in charge and hest
 All these fyve shippis undir myn arest;
 And ran into the town, and made an hidouse cry,
 And chargit all the cetezins to armys for to hy 2169
 From o strete tyl anothir, and rerid up al the town,
 And made the trompis blowe up and the bellis soun,
 And seyde that the Romeyns wer in poynt to pas,
 Tyl ther wer a thowfand, rathir mo then les,
 Men y-armyd cleen, walkyng to the stronde 2174
 When Beryn them aspied; Now, Geffrey, in thy honde
 Stont lyf and goodis; doth with us what the list,
 For all our hope is on the, comfort, help, and trift;
 For we must bide aventure, such as God wolle shape,
 For now I am in-certen we mow in no wise scape.
 Haveno doubt, quod Geffrey; beth mery; let me aloon;
 Getith a peir sisours, sherith my berd anoon, 2181
 And aftirwerd lete top my hede hastylich and blyve.
 Som went to with sesours, som wyth a knyffe,
 So what for sorowe and hast, and for lewd tole,
 Ther was no man alyve bet like to a sole 2185

Then Geffrey was by that tyme they had al ydo.
 Hanybald clepid out Beryn, to Mote Hall for to go,
 And stode upon the brigg with an huge route.
 Geffrey was the first to Hanybald gan to loute,
 And lokid out a fore ship: God bles yew! Sir, quod he.
 Wher art thou now, Beryn? com forth, behold and se,
 Her is an huge pepill yrayd and ydight; 2192
 All these been my children that been in armys bryght;
 Yistirdey I gat them: is nat mervail
 That they been hidir ycom to be of our counsaill,
 And to stond by us, and help us in our ple? 2196
 A! myne own chidryn, blessid mut ye be!
 Quod Geffrey, with an high voise, and had a nyce vi-
 And gan to daunce for joy in the fore stage. [sage,
 Hanybald lok'd on Geffrey as he wer amafid, 2200
 And beheld his countenaunce, and how he was yrasid,
 But evirmore he thought that he was a sole
 Naturell of kynde, and had noon othir tool,
 As femed by his wordis and his visage both,
 And thought it had been foly to wex with hym wroth,
 And gan to bord ageyn, and axid hym in game, 2206
 Sith thou art our fadir who is then our dame?
 And how and in what plase were we begete?
 Yistirday, quod Geffrey, pleyng in the strete
 At a gentil game that clepid is the Quek, 2210
 A long peny halter was cast about my nek,
 And yknet fast with a riding knot,
 And cast ovir a perch, and hale along my throte.

Was that a game, quod Hanybald, for to hang thy selfe?
 So they feyd about me, a thousand eche by hymself.
 How scapiddist thou, quod Hanybald, that thou wer
 Therto can I answer without any rede; [nat dede?
 I bare thre dise in myn own purs,

For I go nevir without, fare I betir or wers;
 I kist them forth all thre, and too fill am'ys ase, 2220
 But here now what fill astir, right a mervelouse case;
 Ther cam a mowse lepe forth, and ete the third boon,
 That puffid out her skyn as grete as she myght goon;
 And in this maner wise of the mowse and me

All ye be ycom my children fair and fre; 2225

And yit or it be eve fall woll such a chaunce
 To stond in my power yew all to avaunce,
 For and we plede well to day we shall beriche inowghe.
 Hanybald of his wordis hertlich loughe,

And so did all that herd hym, as they myght wele,
 And had grete joy wyth hym for to tell, 2231

For they knew hym noon othir but a sole of kynd, [end.

And all this was his discreciune, and that provid the

Thus whils Geffrey japid to make their hertis light

Beryn and his company were rayid and ydight, 2235

And londit them in botis, ferefull how to spede,

For all their thoughtis in balance stode betwene hope
 and drede:

But yit they did their peyn to make lightsome chere,

As Geffrey them had enfourmed, of port and all ma-
 nere

Of their governaunce all the long day 2240
 Tyll their plee wer endit; so went they forth their way
 To the court with Hanybald. Then Beryn gan to sey,
 What nedith this, Sir Hanybald, to make such aray,
 Sith we been pese-marchantis, and use no spoliacioun?
 For soth, Sir, quod Hanybald, to me was made rela-
 cioun 2245

Yee wer in poynt to void; and yef yee had do so
 Yee had lost yewr lyvis, without wordis mo.
 Beryn held hym styll. Geffrey spak anoon;
 No les wed then lyvis? Whi so, good Sir Jon?
 That wer somwhat to much as it semeth me; 2250
 But ye be ovirwise that dwell in this cete;
 For ye have begonne a thing makith you right bold,
 And yit or it be eve as folis shull yee be hold:
 And eke yee devyne for shipmanny's craft, [bassit,
 And wotith litill what longith to afore the ship and
 And namelich in the dawnyng when shipmen first a-
 rise. 2256

My good frend, quod Hanybald, in a scornynge wise,
 Yee must onys enfourm me thorough yowr discre-
 But first yee must answer to a questioun; [cioun,
 Why make men crof-sail in myddis of the mast? 2260

For to talow the ship and sech more blast.

Why goon the yemen to bote ankirs to hale?

For to make them redy to walk to the ale.

Why hale they up stonys by the crane lyne?

To make the tempest sese and the sonne shyne.

2265

Why close they the port with the see bord?

For the mastir shuld awake at first word.

Thow art a redy reve, quod Hanybald, in fay.

Yee, Sir, trewly, for sothe is that yew sey.

Geffrey evir clappid as doith a watir myll, 2270

And made Hanybald to laugh al his hert fyll.

Beryn, quod this Geffrey, retourn thy men ageyn;

What shull they do with the at court? no man on
them pleyen.

Plede thy case thy selve right as thow hast ywrought;

To bide with the shippis my purpose is and thought.

Nay, forsoth, quod Hanybald, thow shalt abyde on
lond, 2276

Wee have no folis but the; and toke hym by the hond,

For thow art wise in law to plede all the case. [plase.

That can I betir, quod Geffrey, then eny man in this

What seyest thow therto, Beryn? shall I tell thy tale?

Hanybald likid his wordis wele, and forward gan hym

Beryn made hym angry, and sighid wondir fore, [hale.

For Geffrey hym had enfourmid of every poynt tofore,

How he hym shuld govern all the long day.

Geffrey chafid hym ageyn; Sey me ye or nay; 2285

Mayst'owe nat here speke some maner word?

Leve thy blab, lewd sole, me likith nat thy bord:

I have anothir thought, quod Beryn, wherof thow
carist lite. [the wite:

Clepeist thow me a Fole, quod Geffrey? al that I may

But first when we out of Rome faillid both in fere

Tho I was thy felawe and thy partincere, 2291

For tho the marchandise was more then half myne,
 And sith that thou com hidir thou takist all for thyne.
 But yit or it be eve I wol make oon behest,
 But thou have my help thy part shall be lest. 2295
 Thyn help, quod Beryn; lewde sole, thou art more
 then masid;

Dres the to the shippis ward with thy crown yrasid,
 For I myght nevirs pare the bet: trus and be agoo. [no,
 I woll go with the, quod Geffrey, wher thou wolt or
 And lern to plede law to wyn both howse and lond.
 So thou shalt, quod Hanybald, and led hym by the
 hond, [yknow
 And leyd his hond oppon his nek: but and he had
 Whom he had led, in sikernes he had well levir in
 snowe

Have walkid xl myle, and rathir then fail more;
 For he wisshid that Geffrey had ybe unbore 2305
 Full oft tyme in that day or the ple wer do,
 And so did all that wrought Beryn sham and woo.
 Now yee that list abide and here of sotilte
 Mowe know how that Beryn sped in his ple,
 And in what aray to the court he went, 2310
 And how Hanybald led Geffrey, disware of his entent;
 But yet he axid of Geffrey, What is thy name I pray?
 Gylhochet, quod Geffrey, men clepid me yistirday.
 And wher weer thou ybore? I n'ote I make a vow,
 Seyd Geffrey to this Hanybald, I axe that of yew,
 For I can tell no more but here I stond now. 2316
 Hanybald of his wordis hertlich lowghe,

And held hym for a passyng sole to serve eny lord.
 Thus they romyd janglyng into the court ward,
 But or they com ther the steward was yfet, 2320
 And the grettist of the town a company ymet,
 And gon to stryve fast who shuld have the good
 That com was with Beryn ovir the salt flood.
 Som seyde oon and som seyde anothir; 2324
 Som wold have the shippis, the parell, and the rothir;
 Som his eyen, som his lyf wold have, and no les,
 Or els he shuld for them fyne or he did pas;
 And in the mene whils they wer in this afay
 Beryn and these Romeyns wer com, in good aray
 As myght be made of woll, and of colour graynyd;
 They toke a syde bench that for them was ordeynyed.
 When all was husht and still Beryn arose anoon,
 And stode in the myddis of the hall tofore them
 everichone,

And seyde, Sir Steward, in me shall be no let;
 I am ycom to answer as my day is set: 2335
 Do me ryght and reson; I axe yew no more.
 So shall I, quod the steward, for ther'to I am swore.
 He shall have right, quod Geffrey, wher thow wolt
 For and thow mys onys thy jugement ondo. [or no,
 I woll to the Emperour of Rome my cosyn, 2340
 For of o cup he and I full oft have dronk the wyne,
 And yit we shull herastir as oft as we mete,
 For he is long the gladder when I send hym to grete.
 This Geffrey stode upon a fourm, for he wold be sey
 Above all othir the shoultris and the cry, 2345

And starid al about with his lewd berd,
 And was yhold a very fole of ech man hym herd.
 The steward, and the officers, and the burgeyfis all,
 Laughid at hym hertlich; the criour gan to call
 The burgeyse that had pleyd with Beryn at ches, 2350
 And he arose quiklich, and gan hym for to dres
 Afore the steward at barr, as the maner is;
 He gan to tell his tale wyth grete redines:
 Here me, Sir Steward, this day is me set
 To have right and refon; I axe yew no bet, 2355
 Of Beryn that here stondith, that with me yistirday
 Made a certen covenant, and at ches we did pley,
 That whofo were ymatid of us both-too
 Shuld do the todir's bidding, and yf he wold nat so
 He must drink all the watir that salt wer in the se:
 Thus I to hym surid and he also to me. 2361
 To preve my tale trew I am nat all aloon:
 Up rose io burgeyfis quyklich anoon,
 And affermyd eviry word of his tale soth,
 And made them all redy for to do their othe. 2365
 Evander the steward, Beryn, now, quod he,
 Thow most answere nede; it woll noon othir be:
 Take thy counsell to the: spede on; I have doon.
 Beryn held hym styll: Geffrey spak anoon; [yew
 Now be my trowith, quod Geffrey, I mervell much of
 To bid us go to counsell, and knowith me wise
 inowghe, 2371
 And evir full avifid, in twynkelyng of an eye,
 To make a short answer but yf my mowith be dry.

Shuld we go to counsell for o word or tweyn?
 Be my trowith we n'yll; let se mo that pleyne; 2375
 And but he be yanswer'd, and that right anoon,
 I geve yew leve to rise and walk out everychoon,
 And aspy redily yf ye fynd me there,
 In the meen whils I woll abyde here:
 Nay, I tell trewly, I am wiser then ye ween, 2380
 For ther n'yis noon of you woot redely what I meen.
 Every man gan laughe all his hert fill
 Of Geffrey and his wordis; but Beryn held hym still,
 And was cleen astonyd; but yit ner the lattir
 He held it nat al foly that Geffrey did clattir, 2385
 But wisely hym governyd, as Geffrey hym taught,
 For percell of his wisdom he had tofore smaught.
 Sir Steward, quod Beryn, I undirstond wele
 The tale of this burgeyse; now let anothir tell,
 That I may take counsell and answer all at onys. 2390
 I graunt, quod the steward; then axing for the nonys,
 Sith thow wolt be rewlid by the fol'is rede,
 For he is right a wise man to help the in thy nede.
 Up aros the accusours queyntlich anoon;
 Hanybald was the first of them everichoon, 2395
 And gan to tell his tale with a proud chere.
 Yistirday, Soverens, when I was here
 Beryn and thes burgeyse gon to plede fast
 For playng at ches; so ferforth at last,
 Thorough vertu of myn office, that I had in charge
 Beryn's fyve shippis, for to go at large, 2401

And to be in answer her this same day; [wey
 So walkyng to the strondward we bargeynyed by the
 That I shuld have the marchandise that Beryn with
 hym brought,

Wherof I am fefid, as ful sold and bought, 2405

In covenante that I shuld his shippis fill ageyn
 Of my marchandise, such as he tofore had feyn
 In myn own plase, howfis to or thre,
 Full of marchandise as they myght be;

And I am evir redy, whensoever he woll, 2410

Let hym go or sende, and charge his shippis full
 Of such marchandise as he findith there,
 For in such wordis we acordit were.

Up rose x burgeyfis, not tho that rose tofore,
 But othir, and made them redy to have swore 2415
 That every word of Hanybald, from the begynnyng
 to the end,

Was soth and eke trewe, and with their mende
 Full prest they wer to preve; and seyde they wer pre-
 At covenant making by God omnipotent. [sent

It shall nat nede, quod Geffrey, whils that I here stond,
 For I woll preve it my self with my right honde,

For I have been in four batellis heretofore, 2422

And this shall be the fist, and therfor I am swore.

Beholdith, and seith, and turnyd hym about;

The steward and the burgeyse gamyd all about; 2425

The Romeyns held them still, and lawghid but a lite.

Wyth that cam the blynd man his tale to endite,

That God hym grant wyunnyng right as he hath
 Beryn and his company stood all astryvyd [aservyd.
 Betwene hope and drede, right in high distres, 2430
 For of wele or of woo they had no sikernes.

Beryn, quod this blynd, thoughe I may nat see
 Stond nere yit the barr, my comyng is for the,
 That wrongfullich thow withholdist my both to eyen,
 The wich I toke the for a tyme, and quyklich to me
 hijen, 2435

And take them me ageyn, as our covenant was.
 Beryn, I take no reward of othir mennys case,
 But oonlich of myn oon; that stont me most an hond.
 Now bleffid be God in heven that brought the to this
 lond!

For sith our last parting many bitir teris 2440
 Have I lete for thy love, that som tyme partineris
 Of wyunnyng and of lesing were yeris fele,
 And evir I fond the trewe, tyl at the last thow didist
 Away wyth my too eyen that I toke to the [stele
 To se the tregetours pley and their sotilte, 2445
 As yistirday here in this same plase

Tofore yew, Sir Steward, reherfid as it was.
 Full trew is that byword, *A man to serve sabill*
Ledith oft Beyard from his own stabill. 2449

Beryn, by the I meen, though thow make it straunge,
 For thow knowist trewly that I made no chaunge
 Of my good eyen for thyn that badder were.
 Therwith stode up burgeyse four witnes to bere,

Beryn held hym flyll, and Geffrey spak anoon; 2454
 Now of thy lewd compleynt, and thy masid moon,
 By my trowith, quod Geffrey, I have grete mervail,
 For though thou haddist eyen-sight it shuld litill
 availe;

Thou shuldist nevir fare the bet, but the wors, in fay,
 For al thing may be still now for the in house and way,
 And yf thou haddist thyn eyen thou woldist no coun-
 sell hele; 2460

I know wele by thy sifnamy thy kynd wer to stele:
 And eke it is thy profite and thyn ese also
 To be blynd as thou art; for now wherso thou go
 Thou hast thy lyvlode whils thou art alyve, 2464
 And yf thou myghtist se thou shuldist nevir thryve.
 Al the house throughout save Beryn and his feris
 Lawghid of Geffrey, that watir on their leris
 Ran down from their eyen for his masid wit.
 Wythat cam the woman, hir tung was nat sclyt,
 Wyth 15 burgeyfis, and women also fele, 2470
 Her quarel for to preve, and Beryn to apele,
 With a feir knave child yloke wythin their armys,
 And gan to tel her tale of wrongis and of harmys,
 And eke of unkyndnes, untrowith, and falskede,
 That Beryn had ywrought to hir, that quyntlich from
 hir yede 2475

Anoon oppon her wedding, when he his wyll haddoon,
 And brought hir wyth chyld, and lete hir sit aloon

Wythout help and comfort from that day, and nowith
 He proferid me nat to kys onys with his mowith,
 As yiftirday, Sir Steward, afore yew eche word 2480
 Was reherfid here, my pleynt is of record,
 And this dey is me fet for to have reson.
 Let hym make amendis, or els tell encheson
 Why hym ought nat fynd, as man ought, his wyf.
 These fiftene burgeyfis quyklich al so blyve, 2485
 And as fele wymen as stode by hir ther,
 Seyd that they were present when they weddit were,
 And that every word that the woman seyde
 Was trew, and eke Beryn had hir so betray'd. 2489
Benedicite! quod Geffrey, Beryn, hast thow a wyf?
 Now have God my trowith the dayis of my lyf
 I shall trust the the les thow toldist me nat to fore
 As wele of thy wedding and of thy sone ybore. 2493
 Go to, and kys them both, thy wyf and eke thyn heir:
 Be thow nat ashamyd, for they both be feyr. [couthe:
 This wedding was right privy, but I shall make it
 Behold thy sone, it semith crope out of thy mowith,
 And eke of thy condicioun both soft and some.
 Now am I glad thyn heir shall with us to Rome,
 And I shall teche hym, as I can, whilst that he is young,
 Every day by the strete to gadir houndis dung 2501
 Tyll it be abill of prentyse to craft of *Taverner* taury,
 And aftir I shall teche hym for to cache a fly,
 And to mend mytens when they been to tore,
 And aftir to cloute shoun when he is elder more;

Yit for his parentyne to pipe as doith a mowse 2506
 I woll hym teche, and for to pike a snayl out of his
 howse,

And to berk as doith an hound, and sey Baw, baw,
 And turn round about as a cat doith wyth a straw,
 And to blete as doith a shepe, and ney as doith an hors,
 And to low as doith a cow; and as myn own corps
 I woll cherissh hym every day for his modirs sake:
 And gan to flappe ner the child, to have ytake,
 As semed by his countenance, although he thought
 nat so: 2514

But modir was evir ware, and blenchid to and fro,
 And leyd hir hond betwene, and lokid somwhat wroth,
 And Geffrey in pur wrath beshrewid them all both;
 For by mytrowith, quod Geffrey, wel masid is thy pan,
 For I woll teche thy sone the craftis that I can,
 That he in tyme to come myght win his lyvlode,
 To wex therfor angry thow art verry wood. 2521
 Of husbond, wyff, and sone, by the Trynyte
 I n'ote wich is the wifest of them all thre.

No, sothly, quod the steward; it liith all in thy noll
 Both wit and wyfdom, and previth by thy poll:
 For all be that Geffrey wordit sotilly, 2526
 The steward and the burgeyfis held it for foly
 All that evir he seyde, and toke it for good game,
 And had full litill knowleche he was Geffrey the lame.
 Beryn and his company stode still as ston 2530
 Betwene hope and drede, disware how it shuld goon,

Saff Beryn trist in party that Geffrey wold hym help,
 But yit into that hour he had no cause to yelp; [pete.
 Wherfor they made much sorowe, that dole was and
 Geffrey herd hym sigh fore: What devil is yew? quod
 What nede yew be sory whils I stond here? [he:
 Have I nat enfourmid yew how and in what manere
 That I yew wold help, and bryng them in the snare?
 Yf ye coud plede as well as I full litill wold ye care.
 Pluk up thy hert, quod Geffrey, Beryn, I speke to the.
 Leve thy blab lewd, quod Beryn to hym age; 2541
 It doith no thing availl that sorowe com on thy hede;
 It is nat worth a fly al that thow hast seyde.
 Have we nat els now for to think oppon
 Saff here to jangill? Machyn rose anoon, 2545
 And went to the barr, and gan to tell his tale;
 He was as fals as Judas, that set Criste at sale.
 Sir Steward, quod this Machyn, and the burgeyfisall,
 Knowith wele how Melan with purpill and with pall,
 And othir marchandise, seven yere ago 2550
 Went toward Rome, and how that I also
 Have enquired sith, as reson woll and kynde,
 Sith he was my fadir, to know of his ende;
 For yit sith his departing tyl it was yistirday
 Met I nevyr creature that me coud wissh or say 2555
 Reedynes of my fadir, dede othir alyve;
 But, blessid be God in heaven! in this thev'is sclyve
 The knyff I gaff my fadir was yistirday yfound:
 Sith I hym apele let hym be fast ybound.

The knyf I know wel inowe ; also the man stont here,
And dwellith in this town, and is a cotelere, 2561

That made the same knyf wyth his too hondis,
That wele I woot there is noon like to sech al Cristen
For 3 preciouſe ſtonys been wythin the haſt [londis ;
Perſectlich ycouchit, and ſotillich by craft 2565

Endendit in the haſt, and that right coriouſly,
A ſaphir, and a ſalidone, and a rich ruby.

The cotelere cam lepeing forth with a bold chere,
And ſeyd to the ſteward that Machyn told now here
Every word is trew, ſo beth the ſtonys ſet ; 2570
I made the knyf my ſelf, who myght know it bet ?

And toke the knyff to Machyn, and he me pay'd wele ;
So is this felon gilty ; there is no more to tell.

Up aroſe burgeyſis by 2 by 3 by 4, 2574
And ſey'd they wer preſent the ſame tyme and hour
When Machyn wept ſore, and brought his ſadir's
gownd,

And gaf hym the ſame knyff oppon the ſee ſtrond.
Beth ther eny mo pleyntifs of record ? 2578

Quod Geffrey to the ſteward : and he ageynward ;
How ſemeth the, Gylhochet, beth ther nat inowghe ?
Make thyn anſwer, Beryn, caſe that thou mowe,
For oon or othir thou muſt ſey, although it nat
availle,

And but thou leſe or thou go methinkith grete mer-
Beryn goith to counſell and his company, [vaill.
And Geffrey bode behinde to her more and ſe, 2585

And to shew the burgeyse somewhat of his hert;
 And seyde, But I make the pleyntifs for to smert,
 And alle that them meynenith, for aught that is yseyd,
 I woll grant yew to kut the eris fro my hede. 2589
 My maister is at counsell, but counsell hath he noon,
 For but I hym help he is cleen undoon; [also
 But I woll help hym al that I can, and meyntene hym
 By my power and connyng, so I am bound ther'to;
 For I durst wage battell wyth yew, though yee be
 strong, [wrong;
 That my maister is in the trowith and ye be in the
 For and we have lawe I ne hold yew but distroied
 In yewr own falsheede, so be yee now aspiid; 2597
 Wherfor yit or eve I shal abate yewr pride, [hide.
 That som of yew shall be right feyn to flynk away and
 The burgeyses gon to lawgh, and scornyd hym ther'to.
 Gylhochet, quod Evander, and thow cowdist so
 Bryng it thus about it were a redy wey.
 He is a good fool, quod Hanybald, in fay,
 To put hymself aloon in strengith and eke in wit
 Ageyns all the burgeyses that on this bench sit. 2605
 What clatir is this, quod Machyn, al day with a sole?
 Tyme is now to worch with som othir tole,
 For I am certeyn of their answer that they wol fail,
 And lyf for lyf of my fadir what may that avail?
 Wher'for beth avifid, for I am in no doute 2610
 The goodis been sufficient to part al aboute,
 So may every party pleyntif have his part.
 That is reson, quod the blind; a trew man thow art;

And eke it were untrowith and eke grete fyn
 But eche of us that pleynith myght somwhat wyn.
 Hanybald bote his lippis, and herd them both wele;
 Towching the marchandise o tale I shall yew tell,
 And eke make a vow, and hold my behest, 2618
 That of the marchandise yewr part shall be left;
 For I have made a bargeyn that may nat be undo;
 I woll hold his covenaut and he shal myn also.
 Up roos quicklich the burgeyse Syrophanes;
 Hanybald, quod he, the law goith by nolans,
 But hold ferth the streyt wey, even as doith a lyne;
 For yistirday when Beryn with me did dyne 2625
 I was the first person that put hym in arest; [hest
 And for he wold go large thow haddist in charge and
 To sese both ship and goodis til I were answerid;
 Then must I first be servid, this knowith al men
 ylerid. 2629

The woman stode besidis, and cried wondir fast,
 Ful soth is that byword, *To pot who comyth last*
He worst is servid: and so it farith by me:
 Yit nethirles, Sir Steward, I trust to yewr lentè,
 That knowith best my cause and my trew entent;
 I axe yew no more but rightful jugèment: 2635
 Let me have part with othir sith he my husbond is:
 Good Sir, beth avisid; I axe yew nat amys.
 Thus they gon to stryve, and wer of high mode
 For to depart emong them othir mennys good,
 Wher they tofore had nevir properte, 2640
 Ne nevir shuld thereaftir by doom of equyte;

But they had othir cause then they had tho.

Beryn was at counfell, his hert was full woo,

And his meyny fory, distrakt, and al amayide,

For tho they levid noon othir but Geffrey had be-
trayide; 2645

Because he was so long they coud no maner rede,

But everich by hymself wished he had be dede.

O myghtful God! they seyde, I trow tofore this day

Was nevir gretter trefon, fere, ne affray, 2649

Ywrought onto mankind then now is to us here,

And namelich by this Geffrey with his sotil chere;

So feithful he made it he wold us help echone,

And now we be ymyryd he letith us sit aloon.

Of Geffrey, quod Beryn, be as it be may;

We mut answer nede, ther is noon othir way; 2655

And ther'for let me know your wit and your counsaile.

They wept, and wrong their hondis, and gan to waille

The tyme that they wer bore, and shortly of the lyve

They wishid that they wer. With that came Geffrey

Passing them towards, and began to smyle. [blive,

Beryn axid Geffrey wher he had be al the while?

Have mercy oppon us, and help us as thow hight.

I wol help yow right wele through grace of Godd's
might; 2663

And I can tell yow tiding of their governaunce.

They stond in altercacioun and stryfe in poynt to prauce

To depart your goodis, and levith verrily

That it wer impossibill yew to remedy;

But their high pride and their presumpcioune
 Shal be yit or eve their confusioune;
 And to make amendis ech man for his pleynt, 2670
 Let se ther'for your good avise how they might be
 ateynt.

The Romeyns stode still, as who had shor their hede.
 In feith, quod Beryn, we can no maner rede,
 But in God and yew we submit us all,
 Body, lyf, and goodis, to stond or to fall, 2675
 And nevir for to travers o word that thow seyist;
 Help us, good Geffrey, as welc as thou mayist.
 Deperdeux ! quod Geffrey, and I woll do me peyn
 To help yow as my connyng woll strech and ateyn.
 The Romeyns went to barr, and Geffrey altofore
 With a nice countenaunce, barefote, and to tore,
 Pleying with a yerd he bare in his honde, 2682
 And was evir wistlyng at every pase comaunde.
 The steward and the burgeyfis had game inowghe
 Of Geffrey's nice comyng, and hertlich lowghe;
 And eche man seyde, Gylhochet, com nere; 2686
 Thow art right welcome, for thow makist us chere.
 The same welcom, quod Geffrey, that yee woll us
 Fall oppon yewr hedis, I pray to God, and wers.
 They held hym for a verry sole, but he held them
 wel more; 2690
 And so he made them in breff tyme, all though they
 wer nat shore.

Styntith now, quod Geffrey, and let make pefe;
 Of myrthis and of japis tyme is now to cefe,
 And speke of othir mater that we have to doon,
 For and we hew amys eny maner stone 2695
 We know wele in certeyn what pardon we shul have;
 The more is our nede us to defend and save.
 My master hath be at counsell, and ful avifid is
 That I shall have the wordis, speke I wele or mys;
 Wherfor, Sir Steward, and ye burgeyfis all, 2700
 Sittith upright, and writith nat, for aventuristhat may
 For and ye deme untrewly, or do us eny wrong, [fall;
 Ye shull be refourmyd, be ye nevir so strong, 2703
 Of every poynt and injury, and that in grete haste,
 For he is nat unknowe to us that may yow chaste:
 Hold forth the right wey, and by no fide lanys.
 And as towching the first pleyntif Syrophanes,
 That pleyd with my master yiftirday at ches, 2708
 And made a certeyn covenante, who that had the
 In the last game, al thoughe I wer nat there, [wers
 Shuld do the todir's bidding, whatsoevir it wer,
 Or drynk all the watir that salt wer in the see;
 Thus I trowe, Sir Steward, ye woll record the ple,
 And yf I have ymissid in lettir or in word
 The lawe, wol I be rewlid aftir yewr record; 2715
 For we be ful avifid in this wise to answere.
 Evander the steward, and al men that wer there,
 Had mervil much of Geffrey, that spak so redely,
 Whose wordis tofore femyd al foly,

And wer astonyed cleen, and gan for to drede, 2720
 And ev'ry man tyl othir lenyd with his hede,
 And seyde he reported the tale right formally ;
 He was no sole in certen, but wise, ware, and scly,
 For he hath but yjapid us and scornyd heretofore,
 And we have hold hym a sole, but we be wel more.
 Thus they stodied on Geffrey, and laughid tho right
 naught. 2726

When Geffrey had aspied they wer in such thought,
 And their hertis trobelid, pensyf, and anoyed,
 Hym lyst to dryve in bet the nayl, till they were fully
 Soveren Sirs, he seyde, fith that it so is [cloyid.
 That in reporting of our ple ye fynd nothing amys,
 As provith wele yowr seilence, eke ye withseyth nat
 O word of our tale, but clene without spot, 2733
 Then to our answer I prey yow take hede,
 For we wol sey al the trowith right as it is in dede ;
 For this is soth and certen, it may nat be withseyd,
 That Beryn that here stondith was thus ovirpleid
 In the last game, when wagir was opon ;
 But that was his sufferaunce, as ye shull here anon,
 For in all this cete ther n'ys no maner man 2740
 Can pley betir at ches then my mastir can ;
 Ne bet then I, though I it sey, can nat half so much ;
 Now how he lost it by his wyll the cause I woll teche ;
 For ye wend and ween that ye had hym engyned,
 But ye shul fele in every veyn that ye be undirmined,

And ybrought at ground, and eke ovirmufid. 2746

And agenst the first that Beryn is acufid

Herith now ententyflich. When we wer on the feg

Such a tempeft on us fill that noon myght othir fe

Of thundir, wynd, and lightenyng, and ftormys ther

Fiftene dayis during the tempeft was fo ftong [among.

That eche man till othir began hym for to fhryve,

And made their avowis, yf they myght have the lyve,

Som to fe the fepulkir, and fom to othir plafe, 2754

To ftech holy feyntis for help and for grace;

Som to faft and do pennaunce, and fom do almyfdede;

Tyl at laft, as God wold, a voife to us feyd,

In our moft turment, and desperat of mynd,

That yf we wold be favid my maifter muft hym bynd

Be feith and eke be vow, when he cam to lend, 2760

To drink al the falt watir within the fee ftroond,

Without drinking eny fope of the frefsh watir; [nere

And taught hym al the fotilte how and in what ma-

That he fhuld wurch by engyne and by a fotill charm,

To drink all the falt watir and have hymfelf no harm,

But ftop the frefsh rivers by every coft fide, 2766

That they entir nat in the fe thorough the world wyde.

The voife we herd but naught we faw; fo wer our

witts ravid,

For this was end fynally, yf we luft be favid. 2769

Wher'for my maifter Beryn, when he cam to this port,

To his avow and promys he made his firft refort,

Or that he wold bergeyn eny marchandise,
 And right doith these marchandis in the same wise
 That maken their avowis in saving of their lyv'is,
 They completyn their pilgremagis or they fe their
 wyvis. 2775

So mowe ye ondirflond that my maister Beryn
 Of fre will was ymatid, as he that was a pilgrym,
 And myght nat perfourm by many thowfand part
 His avow and his hest wythout right sotil art,
 Without help and strengith of many mennys myght.
 Sir Steward, and Sir Burgeyse, if we shul have right
 Sirophanes must do cost and aventure 2782
 To stop al the fresh ryvers into the see that entir,
 For Beryn is redy in al thing hym to quyte,
 So he be in defaute must pay for the wite.
 Sith ye been wise al what nede is much clatir?
 Ther was no covenante them betwene to drink fresh
 watir. 2787

When Sirophanes had yherd al Geffrey's tale
 He stode al abashtid, with colour wan and pale,
 And lokid oppon the steward with a rewful chere,
 And on othir frendship and neyghbours he had there,
 And preyd them of counsell the answere to reply.
 These Romeyns, quod the steward, been wondirfely,
 And eke right ymmagytyf, and of sotil art,
 That I am in grete dowte how yee shul depart 2795
 Without harm in oon side: our lawis, well thow wolt,
 Is to pay damagis, and eke also the cost,

Of every party plentyf that fallith in his pleynt:
 Let hym go quyt I counsell, yf it may so be queynt,
 I merveil, quod Sirophanes, of their sotilte, 2800
 But sith that it so stondith, and may noon othir be,
 I do woll be counsell, and grauntid Beryn quyte.
 But Geffrey thought anothir, and without respite,
 Sirs, he seyde, me wetith wele that ye wol do us right,
 And so ye must nedis, and so ye have us highte;
 And therfore, Sir Steward, ye occupy our plase,
 And ye know wele what law wol in this case; 2807
 My mastir is redy to perfourm his avow.
 But natheles, quod the steward, I cannat wete how
 To stop all the fresh watir were possibilite. 2810
 Yis, in soth, quod Geffrey, who had of gold plente
 As man coud wisch and it myght well be do:
 But that is nat our defeaute, he hath no trefour to.
 Let hym go to in haste, or find us suerte 2814
 To make amendis to Beryn for his iniquite, [oune,
 Wrong, and harm, and trespass, and undewe wexaci-
 Lost of sale, and marchandise, disese, and tribulaci-
 oune,

That we have sustenyd thorough his iniquite.
 What vaylith it to tary us? for though ye sotil pry
 We shull have reson wher ye wol or no, 2820
 So woll we that ye knowe what that we woll do;
 In certen full avysid to lsope for to pase,
 And declare every poynt, the more and eke the lase,

That of yeur opyn errours hath pleyn correctioun,
 And ageyns his jugement is noon protectioun:
 He is yewr lord riall, and soveren jugge and lele,
 That and ye work in eny poynt to hym liith our apele.
 So when the steward had yherd, and the burgeyfis alle,
 How Geffrey had ysteryd, that went so nighe the gall,
 What for shame, and drede of more harm, and re-
 presse, 2830

They made Sirophanes, weer hym looth or leffe,
 To take Beryn gage, and plegg find also,
 To byde the ward and jugement of that he had mysdo.
 Now ferthermore, quod Geffrey, sith that it so is
 That of the first pleyntyf we have sikernes, 2835
 Now to the Marchant we must nedis answere,
 That bergeyned with Beryn al that his shippis bere,
 In covaunte that he shuld his shippis fill ageyn
 Of othir marchandise that he tofore had feyn
 In Hanybald's plase, howfis to or thre, 2840
 Full of marchandise as they might be;
 Let us pas thidir, yf eny thing be there
 At our lust and liking, as they accordit were.
 I graunt wele, quod Hanybald, thow axist but righte;
 Up arose these burgeyfis, Thow axist but right. 2845
 The steward and his comperis entrid first the howse,
 And saw nothing within, straw, ne leff, ne mowse,
 Save tymbir, and the tyle stonys, and the wallis white.
 I trow, quod the steward, the wyunnyng woll be but
 lite 2849

That Beryn woll now get in Hanybald's pleynte,
 For I can se noon othir but they woll be ateynt,
 And clepid them in echone, and went out hymselfe.
 As sone as they were entrid they saw no maner selve,
 For foris of their hert, but, as tofore is seyde, 2854
 The howse was cleen yswept; then Geffrey feir they
 To help yf he coud. Let me aloon, quod he, [preyde
 Yit shul they have the wers as sotil as they be.

Evander the steward in the mene while
 Spak to the burgeyse, and began to smyle;
 Though Sirophanes be yhold thes Romeyns for to
 curs, 2860

Yit I trow that Hanybald woll put hym to the wers,
 For I am fuyr and certeyn within they shul nat fynd.
 What sey ye be my pleynt, Sirs, quod the blynd?

For I make a vow I woll nevyr cese
 Tyl Syrophanes have of Beryn a pleyn relese, 2865
 And to make hym quyte of his submissioun,
 Els wol I have no pete of his contritioun,
 But folow hym al so ferly as I can or may
 Tyll I have his eyen both to away.

Now in feith, quod Machyn, and I wol have his lyffe,
 For though he scape yew all with me woll he nat
 stryffe, 2871

But be right feyn in hert all his good forsake
 For to scape wyth his lyf, and to me it take.
 Beryn and his feleship wer within the house, 2874
 And spoken of their answer, and made but litill rouse,

But evir preyd Geffrey to help yf he coud ought.
 I woll nat fail, quod Geffrey, and was tofore be-
 Of too botirfliis, as white as eny snowe; [thought
 He lete them flee within the house, that astir on the
 wowe

They clevid wonder fast, as their kynd woll, 2880
 Astir they had flew to rest anothir pull.
 When Geffrey saw the botirfliis cleving on the wall
 The steward and the burgeyse in he gan call;
 Lo! Sirs, he sayd, whofo evir repent,
 We have chose marchandise most to our talent 2885
 That we fynd herein. Behold, Sir Hanybal,
 The yondir botirfliis that clevith on the wall;
 Of such ye must fill our shippis al fyve.
 Pluk up thy hert Beryn, for thow most nedis thryve;
 For when we out of Rome in marchantfare went,
 To purchase botirfliis was our most entent; 2891
 Yit woll I tell the cause especial and why:
 There is a leche in Room that hath ymade a cry
 To make an oyntement to cure all tho ben blynde,
 And al maner infirmytees that growith in mankynde.
 The day is short; the work is long: Sir Hanyball, ye
 mut hy. 2896

When Hanybald herd this tale he seyde pryvely
 In counsell to the steward; In soth I have the wers,
 For I am sikir by this pleynt that shall I litil purs. 2899
 So me semeth, quod the steward, for in the world
 So many botirfliis wold nat be founde [rounde

I trow o ship to charge; wher'for me thinkith best
 Let hym have his good ageyn, and be in pefe and rest,
 And yit is an aventure and thow scape so
 Thy covenaut to relese without more ado. 2903
 The burgeyfis everichone, that were of that cete,
 Were anoyid fore when they herd of this plee;
 Geffrey with his wisdom held them hard and streyte,
 That they were acombrit in their own distreyte.
 When Hanybald with his frendis had spoke of this
 matere 2910

They drow them towards Beryn, and seid in this ma-
 Oonly for botirfliis ye com fro your contrey, [nere:
 And we you tell in sikirnes and opon our sey,
 That so many botirflyes we shul nevir gete, 2914
 Wherefore we be aviid othirwise to trete; [kid,
 That Hanybald shall relese his covenaut that is ma-
 And-delyver the good ageyn that from you was ran-
 And wexe you no more, but let you go in pefe. [fakid,
 Nay forsoth, quod Geffrey, us nedith no relese; 2919
 Ye shall hold our covenaut and we shall yours also,
 For we shall have reson wher ye woll or no
 Whils lsope is alyve; I am nothing aferd,
 For I can wipe all this plec cleen from your berd,
 And ye blench onys out of the high wey. [ley.
 Thei proferid hym plegg and gage without more de-
 Now ferthirmore, quod Geffrey, us ought to procede,
 For to the blynd mann'ys poynt we must answer nede;
 That, for to tell trowith, he lyvith all to long
 For his own sawte and his own wrong 2929

On Beryn he hath surmysid, as previth by his plee,
 And that ye shull opynlich know wele and see;
 For as I undirstode hym he seyde that fele yeris
 Beryn, that here stondith, and he were pertyneris
 Of wynnyng and of lesyng, as men it use and doith,
 And that they chaungit eyen, and yit this is sothe :
 But the cause of chaunging yit is to yow onknow,
 Wher'fore I wold declare it both to high and lowe.
 In that same tyme that this burgeyse blynd, 2938
 And my master Beryn, as fast as feith might hynde,
 Were marchaundis in comyn of al that they myght
 Saff of lyf and lym, and of dedely syn, [wyn,
 Ther fill in tho marchis of al thing such a derth
 That joy, comfort, and solas, and al maner myrth,
 Was exilid cleen, saff oonly molestatioune,
 That abood continuel—desperatioune : 2945
 So when that the pepil wer in most myscheffe
 God that is above, that al thing doith releve,
 Sent them such plente of mony, fruyte, and corn,
 Wich turnid al to joy their mournyng al to forn;
 Then gaf they them to mirth, revel, pley, and song,
 And thankid God above evir more among 2951
 Of their relevacioune from woo into gladnes,
 For *Aftir four when swete is com it is a pleasant mes.*
 So in the meen while of this prosperite
 Ther cam such a pleyer into the same contre 2955
 That nevir thertofore was seyn such anothir,
 That wele was the cature that born was of his modir

That myght fe the mirthis of this jogeloure,
 For of the world wide tho dayis he bare the floure,
 For there n'as man ne woman in that regioun 2960
 That fet of hymself the flore of a boten.
 Yf he had not sey his myrthis and his game.
 So oppon a tyme this pleyer did proclame
 That al manere of papill his pleyis wold fe 2964
 Shuld com oppon a certen dey to the grete cete:
 Then among othir my maister here, Beryn,
 And this fame blynd, that pledith now with hym,
 Made a certen covenaut that they wold fe
 The mervellis of this pleyer and his sotilte:
 So what for hete of somir, age, and febilnes, 2970
 And eke also the long way, this blynd for werryne
 Fill flat adown to the erth; o fote ne myght he go;
 Wher'for my maister Beryn in hert was full woo,
 And seyde, My frende, how now? mow ye no ferther
 No, he seyde, by hym that first made mas; [pas?
 And yit I had levir, as God my soule save, 2976
 Se thes wondir pleyis then all the good I have.
 I cannat els, quod Beryn, but yf it may nat be
 But that ye and I mut retourn age
 Aftir ye be refreshid of your werynes, 2980
 For to leve yew in this plite it wer no gentilnes.
 Then seyde this blynd, I am avisid bet;
 Beryn, ye shull wend thidir without eny let,
 And have myn eyen with yew that they the pley mow
 And I woll have yours tyll ye come age. [te,

Thus was their covenannt made, as I to yow report,
 For ese of this blynd, and most for his comfort.
 But wotith wele the whole science of all surgery
 Was unyd or the chaunge was made of Loth eye 2989
 With many sotill enchantours and eke nygramancers,
 That sent were for the nonys mastiris and scoleris.
 So when all was complete my mastir went his wey
 With this mann'ys eyen and saw all the pley,
 And hastily retourned into that plase age, 2994
 And fond this blynd seching on hondis and on kne,
 Grasping all aboute to fynd that he had lore,
 Beryn his both eyen that he had tofore.
 But as sone as Beryn had pleyn knowleche 2998
 That his eyen were ylost, unneth he myght areche
 O word, for pure anguysh that he toke sodenly,
 And from that day till now ne myght he nevyr spy
 This man in no plase ther law was ymevid;
 But now in his presence the soth is full yprevid,
 That he shall make amendis or he hens pas
 Right as the lawe wol deme, ethir more or las: 3003
 For my mastir'is eyen were betir and more clere
 Then these that he hath now to se both fer and nere;
 So wold he have his own, that proper were of kynd,
 For he is evir redy to take to the blynde 3009
 The eyen that he had of hym, as covenannt was,
 So he woll do the same. Now, Soverens, in this case
 Ye mut take hede for to deme right,
 For it wer nq reson my mastir shuld lese his sight

For his trew hert and his gentilnes.

Beryn, quod the blind, tho I woll the relese 3015

My quarell and my cause, and fall fro my pleynt.

Thow mut nede, quod Geffrey, for thow art ateynt,

So mut thow profir gage, and borowis fynd also,

For to make amendis, as othir have ydo. 3019

Sir Steward, do us law, fith we desire but right:

As we been pese marchandis us longith nat to fight,

But pleynt us to the law, yf so we be agrevid.

Anoon opon that Geffrey these wordis had ymevid

The blynd man fond borowis for all his maletalent,

And were yentrid in the court to byde the jugement;

For thoughe that he blynde were yit had he good

plente, 3026

And more wold have wonne through his iniquite.

Now herith, Sirs, quod Geffrey: thre pleyntifs been

assurid;

And as anenst the ferth this woman hath arerid, 3029

That pleyntith here on Beryn, and seyth she is his wyfe,

And that she hath many a dey led a peynous lyfe,

And much sorow endurid his child to sustene,

And al is soth and trew. Now rightfullich to deme

Whether of them both shall othir obey, 3034

And folowe will and lustis, Sir Steward, ye mut sey.

And therewith Geffrey lokid aside on this woman

How she chaungit colours, pale and eke wan.

All for nought, quod Geffrey, for ye mut with us go,

And endure with your hufbond both wele and woo:

And wold have take her by the hond, but she away
 did breyde, 3040

And with a grete fighing these wordis she seyde;
 That ageyns Beryn she wold plede no more,
 But gaged with too borowis, as othir had do tofore.

The steward sat as still as who had thor his hede,
 And specially the pleyntifs were in much drede: 3045

Geffrey set his wordis in such maner wise
 That wele they wist they myght nat scape in no wise
 Without losse of goodis for damage and for cost,
 For such wer their lawis wher pleyntis wer ylost. 3049

Geffrey had full perseyte of their encombriment,
 And eke he was in certen that the jugement
 Shuld pas with his mastir; wherfor he anon,
 Soveren Sirs, he seyde, yit must we ferthir goon, [his
 And answere to this Machyn, that seith the knife is
 That found was on Beryn; ther'of he seith nat amys:
 And for more prefe he seith in this manere 3056

That here stondith present the same cotelere
 That the knyfe made, and the precious stonys thre
 Within the haft been couchid, that in Crystyanite,
 Thoughe men wold of purpose make serch and seche,
 Men shuld nat fynd in al thing a knyfe that were it
 liche; 3061

And more opyn prefe than mann'ys own knowleche
 Men of law ne clerkis con nat tell ne teche.

Now sith we be in this manere thus ferforth ago, [to
 Then were spedfull for to know how Beryn cam first

Have possessioun of the knyfe that Machyn seith is
his: 3066

To yew unknowe I shall enfourm the trowith as it is.
Now 7 yere and passid, opon a Tuyfday
In the Passioun-week, when men leuen pley,
And use more devocioun, fastyng, and preyer, 3070
Then in othir tyme or seson of the yere,
This Beryn's fadir erlich wold arise,
And barefote go to chirch to Godd'is servise,
And lay hymself aloon from his own wyfe, 3074
In reverence of the tyme, and mending of his lyfe:
So on the same Tuyfday that I tofore nempt [went,
This Beryn rose and rayd hym, and to the chirch
And mervelid in his hert his fadir was nat there,
And homward went ageyn with drede and eke fere.
Into his fadir's chambir sodenlich he rakid, 3080
And fond hym ligg stan dede oppon the straw al na-
And the clothis halid from the bed away. [kid,
Out, alas! quod Beryn, that evir I saw this dey!
The meyne herd the noyse, how Beryn cried alas,
And cam into the chambir al that therein was; 3085
But the dole, and the sorowe, and anguysh, that was
It vaylich nat at this tyme to declare it here; [there
But Beryn had most of all, have ye no doute:
And anoon they ferchid the body al aboute, 3089
And fond this same knyfe, the poynt right at his hert
Of Beryn's fadir, whose teres gan outflert
When he drowgh out the knyfe of his fadir's wound;
Then standede I saw hym fall down to the ground

In sight of the most part that beth with hym nowe
here, 3094

And they affermyd it for soth, as Geffrey did them here:
And yit had I nevyr suspecioun from that day tyll
noweth [moweth

Who ded that cursed dede, tyll Machyn with his
Afore yew hath knowleched that the knyfe is his;
So mut he nedis answer for his deth ywis.

When Machyn had yherd all Geffrey's tale 3100

He rose of bench sodenly with colour wan and pale,
And seyde unto Beryn, Sir, ageyn the

I woll plete no more, for it wer gret pete

To combir yew with actions that beth of nobill kynde.

Graunt mercy! Sir, quod Geffrey; but yit ye shull fynde

Borowis or ye pas, amendis for to make 3106

For our undewe vexacioun, and gage also us take

In sign of submyssioun for your injury,

As law woll and reson, for we woll uttirly

Procede tyll we have jugement finall; 3110

And ther'for, Sir Steward, what that evir fall

Delay us no longer but gyve us jugement,

For tristith ye noon othir but we be fullich bent

To llope for to wend, and in his high presence

Reherce al our ples, and have his sentence; 3115

Then shull ye make fynys, and highlich be agrevid.

And as sone as the steward herd thes wordis mevid,

Reson, ryght, and law, seyde the steward tho,

Ye mut nedis have wher I woll or no;

And to preve my full wyll, or we ferther goon, 3120
 Quicklich he commaundit, and sparid nevir oon,
 24 burgeyfis in law best ylerid,

Reherfying them the plices, and how Geffrey answerid,
 And on lyf and lym, and forfetur of good, 3124
 And as they wold nat lese the ball within their hood,
 To draw a-part togidir, and by their all assent
 Spare no man on lyve to gyve trew jugement.

And when thes 24 burgeyfis had yherd
 The charge of the steward, right fore they wer aferd
 To lese ther own lyvis but they demed trowith; 3130
 And eke of their neybours they had grete rowith,
 For they perseyvid clerelich in the plee throughout
 Their frendis had the wors side, ther'of they had no
 dout,

And yf we deme trewly they woll be fore anoyid,
 Yit it is betir then we be shamyd and distroyid. 3135
 And anon they wer acordit, and seyd with Beryn,
 And demed every pleyntif to make a grete fyne
 With Beryn, and hym submyt hoolich to his grace
 Body, good, and catell, for wrong and their trespass;
 So ferforth, tyll at last it was so bout ybore 3140
 That Beryn had the doubill good that he had tofore,
 And wyth joy and myrth, wyth all his company,
 He droughe hym to his shippis ward wyth song and
 melody.

The steward and the burgeyse from the court bent
 Into their own placis, and evir as they went 3145

They talkid of the Romeyns, how sotill they wer]
 To aray hym like a fole that for them shuld answer.
 What vylith it, quod Hanybald, to angir or to curs?
 And yit I am in certen I shall fare the wers
 All the dayis of my lyfe for this day's pleding, 3150
 And so shal al the remnaunt; and their hondis wryng,
 Both Syrophanes, and the blynd, the woman, and
 And be bet avifid er they estsonys pleyne, [Machyn,
 And al othir personys wythyn this cete 3154
 Mell the les wyth Romeyns whils they here be;
 For such anothir fole was nevyr yit yborn,
 For he did naught ellis but evir with us scorn
 Tyll he had us caught even by the shyn,
 With his sotill wittis in our own grene.
 Now woll I retourn to Beryn ageyn, 3160
 That of his grete lukir in hert was right feyne,
 And so was all his meyne, as them ought wele,
 That they wer so delyverid from turment like to hell,
 And graciussly relevid out of ther grete myschef,
 And yfet above in comfort and bouchef. 3165
 Now in soth, quod Beryn, it may nat be denied
 N'ad Geffrey and his witt be we had be distroyid:
 Ithankid be Almyghty God omnipotent
 That for our consolacionne Geffrey to us sent!
 And in protest opynly, here among yew alle, 3170
 Half my good, whils that I lyve, whatevir me befall,
 I graunt it here to Geffrey, to gyve or to sell,
 And nevyr to part from me, yf it wer his wyl,
 Z iij

And fare as well as I a morrow and eke on eve, 3174
 And nevyr for man on lyve his company for to leve.
 Graunt mercy! Sir, quod Geffrey, yewr profir is fair
 But I desire no more but as ye me behete, [and grete,
 To bryng me at Room, for this is covenante. 3178
 It shall be do, quod Beryn, and all the remnaunt.
 Deperdeux! quod Geffrey, ther'of we shall wele do.
 He rayid hym othirwise; and without wordis mo
 They went to the dyner the hole company, 3182
 With pipis and wyth trompis, and othir melody:
 And in the myddis of their mete gentil women fyve,
 Maidens fresh atirid as myght be on lyve, 3185
 Com from the Duke Ifope, lord of that regioun,
 Everich wyth a present, and that of grete renown:
 The first bare a cup of gold, and of asure fyne,
 So corouse and so nobill that I can nat devyne; 3189
 The second brought a sward yshethid, wyth seyntur
 Ifretid all with perelis orient and pure;
 The third had a mantell of lusty fresh colour,
 The uttir part of purpill, yfurrid with pelour;
 The ferth a cloth of gold, a worthy and a riche,
 That nevyr man tofore saw cloith it liche; 3195
 The fift bare a palme that stode tofore the deyse
 In tokyn and sign of trowith and pefe,
 For that was the custum through all the contray;
 The message was the levyr and more plesant to pay.
 The cup was uncoverid, the sward was out ybrayid,
 The mantell was unfold, the cloth along ylayid;

They knelid adown echone right tofore Beryn; [fyne:
 The first did the message, that taught was wel and
 I hope, she seyde, Sir Beryn, that is our lord riall,
 And gretith yew, and fendith yew these presentis all,
 And joy hath of yewr wisdom and of yewr gover-
 naunce, 3206

And preyd you to com and have with hym plesaunce
 To morowe, and se his palyse, and to sport you there,
 Yee and all your company. Beryn made noon answer,
 But sat styll, and beheld the women and the fondis;
 And astirward avisely the fwerd first he hondis
 And commaundit therewith all the wymmen washt
 and sit, 3212

And pryvelich chargit officers that with al their wit
 To serve them of the best, and make them hertly chere
 Resseyving al the presentis in worshipful manere.

I cannat wele exprefs the joy that they had,
 But I suppose tofore that day that they were nat so glad
 That they wer so ascapid fortune and myschese,
 And thonkid God above that al thing doith relesse;
 For *Aftir mysty cloudis ther comith a cler sonne,* 3220
So aftir bale comyth bate, who so byde conne. [mete

The joy and nobley that they had whils they wer at
 It vaylith nat at this tyme ther'of long to trete:
 But Geffrey sat with Beryn, as he had servid wele;
 Their hedis they leyd togidir, and begon to tell
 In what maner the wymen shuld be answered. 3226
 Geffrey evir avisid Beryn ther'of he leryd,

And of othir thingis how he hym shuld govern;
 Beryn faverid wele ther'on, and fast he gan to lern.
 When all wer up the wymmen cam to take their leue;
 Beryn, as fat hym wele of blode, them toward gan re-
 And prey'd them hertly hym to recommend [leve,
 Unto the worthy lordship of Ifope, that you send
 To me that am unworthy, save of his grete nobley,
 And thank hym of his gyftis as ye can best, and sey,
 To morow I woll be redy his hest to fulfill, 3236
 With this I have save condit I may com hym tyll,
 For me and al my feleship fass to com and go,
 Trusting in his discrecioun that thoughe I ax so
 He wol nat be displeid; for in my contray 3240
 It hath evir be the custom, and is into this day,
 That ys a lord riall desirith for to see
 Eny maner persone that is of las degre,
 Er he approche his presence he wol have in his honde
 A fass condit enselid, or els som othir bonde, 3245
 That he may com and pas without disturbaunce;
 Throughout all our marchis it is the observaunce.
 Thes wymmen toke their leve without wordis mo,
 Repeyryng onto Ifope, and al as it was do
 They reherfid redely, and saylid nevyr a word, 3250
 To Ifope with his baronage ther he sat at his borde,
 Talkyng fast of Romainys, and of their high prudence,
 That in so many daungers made so wise defence.
 But as sone as Ifope had pleylichly herd 3254
 Of Beryn's governaunce, that first sefid the swerd

Afore al othir presentis, he demed in hys minde
 That Beryn was ycom of som nobill kynde. [forgete;
 The nyght was past; the morowe cam; Ifope had nat
 He chargit barons twelf with Beryn for to mete
 To cond hym saff and his meyne; and al perfourmyd
 was. 3260

Thre dayis ther they sportid hym in myrth and solas,
 That throughe the wise instructioun of Geffrey nyght
 Beryn plesid Ifope with wordis al to pay, [and dey
 And had hym so in port and in governaunce
 Of all honest myrthis and witty daliaunce, 3265
 That Ifope cast his chere to Beryn so groundly,
 That at last ther was no man with Ifope so pryvy,
 Resorting to his shippis, comyng to and fro,
 Thoroughe the wit of Geffrey, that eche day it fil so
 That Ifope coude no wher chere when Beryn was ab-
 So Beryn must nedis eche day be aftir sent: [sent;
 And chese he was of counsell within the first yere,
 Thoroughe the wit of Geffrey, that eche dey did hym
 lere. 3273

This Ifope had a doughtir betwene hym and his wyfe
 That was as feir a creature as myght bere lyfe,
 Wyfe, and eke bountevouse, and benyng with all,
 That heir shuld be aftir his dey of his lordshippis alle;
 So, shortly to conclude, the mariage was made
 Betwene hir and Beryn, many a man to glade, 3279
 Saff the burgeyfis of the town, of falsshede that were
 But they wer evir hold so low ondir fote [rote:

That they might nat regne, but at last fawe
To leve their condicioune and their fals lawe.
Beryn and Geffrey made them so tame
That they amendit eche dey, and gat a betir na
Thus Geffrey made Beryn his enemyes to ovir
And brought hym to worship thoroughe his wy
Now God us graunt grace to fynde such a frend
When we have nede! and thus I make an ende.

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