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THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

EDITED, FROM NUMEROUS MANUSCRIPTS

BY THE

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* * * * *

THE CANTERBURY TALES: TEXT

?Let every felawe telle his tale aboute,
And lat see now who shal the soper winne?
The Knightes Tale; A 890

SECOND EDITION

Oxford

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

M DCCCC

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[Illustration: _Frontispiece_. CAMBRIDGE MS. (Gg. 4. 27). Prol. 326-342]

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INTRODUCTION

§ 1. THE PRESENT TEXT.

The text of the 'Canterbury Tales,' as printed in the present volume, is an entirely new one, owing nothing to the numerous printed editions which have preceded it. The only exceptions to this statement are to be found in the case of such portions as have been formerly edited, for the Clarendon Press, by Dr. Morris and myself. The reasons for the necessity of a formation of an absolutely new text will appear on a perusal of the text itself, as compared with any of its predecessors.

On the other hand, it owes everything to the labours of Dr. Furnivall for the Chaucer Society, but for which no satisfactory results could have been obtained, except at the cost of more time and toil than I could well devote to the subject. In other words, my work is entirely founded upon the splendid 'Six-text' Edition published by that Society, supplemented by the very valuable reprint of the celebrated 'Harleian' manuscript in the same series. These Seven Texts are all exact reproductions of seven important MSS., and are, in two respects, more important to the student than the MSS. themselves; that is to say, they can be studied simultaneously instead of separately, and they can be consulted and re-consulted at any moment, being always accessible. The importance of such opportunities is obvious.

§ 2. THE MANUSCRIPTS.

The following list contains all the MSS. of the existence of which I am

aware. As to their types, see § 7. [viii]

I. MSS. IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

1. Harl. 7334; denoted here by HL. By Tyrwhitt called ?C.? A MS of the B-type (see below). Printed in full for the Chaucer Society, 1885. Collated throughout.

A MS. of great importance, but difficult to understand or describe. For the greater clearness, I shall roughly describe the MSS. as being of the A-type, the B-type, the C-type, and the D-type (really a second C-type). Of the A-type, the best example is the Ellesmere MS.; of the B-type, the best example is the Harleian MS. 7334; of the C-type, the Corpus and Lansdowne MSS.; the D-type is that exhibited by Caxton and Thynne in the early printed editions. They may be called the ?Ellesmere,? ?Harleian,? ?Corpus,? and ?Caxton? types respectively. These types differ as to the arrangement of the Tales, and even MSS. of a similar type differ slightly, in this respect, among themselves. They also frequently differ as to certain characteristic readings, although many of the variations of reading are peculiar to one or two MSS. only.

MS. HL. contains the best copy of the Tale of Gamelyn, for which see p. 645; this Tale is not found in MSS. of the A-type. Moreover, Group G here precedes Group C and a large part of Group B, whereas in the Ellesmere MS. it follows them. In the Monk?s Tale, the lines numbered B 3565-3652 (containing the Tales called the ?modern instances?) immediately follow B 3564 (as in this edition), whereas in the Ellesmere MS. these lines come at the end of the Tale.

The ?various readings? of this MS. are often peculiar, and it is difficult to appraise them. I take them to be of two kinds: (i) readings which are better than those of the Six-text, and should certainly be preferred, such as _halfe_ in A 8, _cloysterlees_ in A 179, _a_ (not _a ful_) in A 196, and the like; and (2) readings due to a terrible blundering on the part of the scribe, such as _fleyng_ for _flikeinge_ in A 1962, _greene_ for _kene_ in A 1966, and the like. It is, in fact, a most dangerous MS. to trust to, unless constantly corrected by others, and is not at all fitted to be taken as the _basis_ of a text. For further remarks, see the description of Wright?s printed edition at p. xvi.

As regards age, this MS. is one of the oldest; and it is beautifully written. Its chief defect is the loss of eight leaves, so that ll. 617-1223 in Group F are missing. It also misses several lines in various places; as A 2013-8, 2958, 3721-2, 4355, 4358, 4375-6, 4415-22; B 417, 1186-90, 1355, 1376-9, 1995, 3213-20, 4136-7, 4479-80; C 299, 300, 305-6, 478-9; D 575-584, 605-612, 619-626, 717-720; E 2356-7; F 1455-6, 1493-8; G 155, 210-216; besides some lines in Melibee and the Persones Tale. Moreover, it has nine spurious lines, D 2004 _b_, _c_, 2012 _b_, _c_, 2037 _b_, _c_ 2048 _b_, _c_, F 592. These imperfections furnish an additional reason for not founding a text upon this MS.

2. Harl. 7335; by Tyrwhitt called ?A.? Of the B-type. Very imperfect, especially at the end. A few lines are printed in the Six-text edition to

fill up gaps in various MSS., viz. E 1646-7, F 1-8, 1423-4, 1433-4, G 158, 213-4, 326-337, 432-3, 484. Collated so far.

[ix] 3. Harl. 7333; by Tyrwhitt called 'E'. Of the D-type. One of Shirley's MSS. Some lines are printed in the Six-text edition, viz. B 4233-8, E 1213-44, F 1147-8, 1567-8, G 156-9, 213-4, 326-337, 432. It also contains some of the Minor Poems; see the description of MS. 'Harl.' in the Introduction to those poems in vol. i.[1]

4. Harl. 1758, denoted by HARL. at p. 645; by Tyrwhitt called 'F'. In Urry's list, i. Of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn. Many lines are printed in the Six-text, including the whole of 'Gamelyn'. It is freely used to fill up gaps, as B 1-9, 2096-2108, 3049-78, 4112, 4114, 4581-4636, &c.

5. Harl. 1239; in Tyrwhitt, 'I'. In Urry's list, ii. Imperfect both at beginning and end.

6. Royal 18 C II; denoted by RL.; in Tyrwhitt, 'B'. In Urry, vii. Of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn. Used to fill up gaps in the Six-text; e.g. in B 1163-1190 (Shipman's Prologue, called in this MS. the Squire's Prologue), 2109-73, 3961-80, E 65, 73, 81, 143, G 1337-40, I 472-511. The whole of 'Gamelyn' is also printed from this MS. in the Six-text.

7. Royal 17 D xv; in Tyrwhitt, 'D'. In Urry, viii. Of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn. Used to fill up gaps in the Six-text; e.g. in B 2328-61, 3961-80, 4112, 4114, 4233-8, 4637-51, D 609-612, 619-626, 717-720, E 1213-44, F 1423-4, 1433-4, H 47-52; and in the Tale of Gamelyn.

8. Sloane 1685; denoted by SL. In Tyrwhitt, 'G'. In Urry, iii. Of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn. In two handwritings, one later than the other. Imperfect; has no Sir Thopas, Melibee, Manciple, or Parson. Very frequently quoted in the Six-text, to fill up rather large gaps in the Cambridge MS.; e.g. A 754-964, 3829-90, 4365-4422, &c. Gamelyn is printed from this MS. in the Six-text, the gaps in it being filled up from MS. 7 (above).

9. Sloane 1686; in Tyrwhitt, 'H'. In Urry, iv. Of the C-type; containing Gamelyn. A late MS., on paper. Imperfect; no Canon's Yeoman or Parson.

10. Lansdowne 851; denoted by LN. In Tyrwhitt, 'W', because at that time in the possession of P. C. Webb, Esq. Used by Mr. Wright to fill up the large gap in Hl., viz. F 617-1223, and frequently consulted by him and others. Printed in full as [x] the sixth MS. of the Six-text. Of the C-type; containing Gamelyn. Not a good MS., being certainly the worst of the six; but worth printing owing to the frequent use that has been made of it by editors.

11. Additional 5140; in Tyrwhitt, 'Ask. _2_', as being one of two MSS. lent to him by Dr. Askew. It has in it the arms of H. Deane, Archbp. of Canterbury, 1501-3. Of the A-type. Quoted in the Six-text to fill up gaps; e.g. B 3961-80, 4233-8, 4637-52, D 2158-2294, E 1213-44, 1646-7, 2419-40, F 1-8, 673-708, G 103, I 887-944, 1044-92.

12. Additional 25718. A mere fragment. A short passage from it, C 409-427, is quoted in the Six-text, to fill up a gap in Ln.

13. Egerton 2726; called the 'Haistwell MS.'; in Tyrwhitt denoted by 'HA,' and formerly belonging to E. Haistwell, Esq. Of the A-type, but imperfect. The Six-text quotes F 679, 680: also F 673-708 in the Preface.

II. MSS. IN OXFORD.

14. Bodley 686; no. 2527 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B'?.? A neat MS., with illuminations. Of the A-type; imperfect. The latter part of the Cook's Tale is on an inserted leaf (leaf 55), and concludes the Tale in a manner that is not Chaucer's. After the Canterbury Tales occur several poems by Lydgate.

15. Bodley 414; not noticed by Tyrwhitt. Given to the library by B. Heath in 1766. A late MS. of the D-type, and imperfect. No Cook, Gamelyn, Squire, or Merchant.

16. Laud 739: no. 1234 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B'?.? A poor and late MS. of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn; imperfect at the end; ends with Sir Thopas, down to B 2056.

17. Laud 600; no. 1476 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B'?.? Imperfect; several leaves 'restored.' Apparently, of the B-type; but Group D and the Clerk's Tale follow Gamelyn. Some extracts from it are given in the Six-text, viz. B 2328-61, D 717-20 (no other Oxford MS. has these scarce lines), F 673-708.

18. Arch. Selden B 14; no. 3360 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B'?.? Perhaps the best and earliest of the Bodleian MSS., but not very good. Sometimes here quoted as SELD. Apparently of the A-type, having no copy of Gamelyn; but it practically [xi] represents a transition-state between the A and B types, and has one correction of prime importance, as it is the only MS. which links together all the Tales in Group B, making the Shipman follow the Man of Law. Frequent extracts from it occur in the Six-text; e.g. A 1-72, B 1163-1190, &c. In particular, a large portion of the Parson's Tale, I 290-1086, is printed from this MS. in the same.

19. Barlow 20; no. 6420 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B'?.? A clearly written MS. of the D-type, including Gamelyn; imperfect after Sir Thopas, but contains a portion of the Manciple's Tale. It contains the somewhat rare lines F 679, 680, which are quoted from it in the Six-text.

20. Hatton, Donat. 1 (not the same MS. as Hatton 1); no. 4138 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B'?.? The Tales are in great disorder, the Man of Law being thrust in between the Reeve and the Cook, as in no other MS. It contains Gamelyn. Lines F 679, 680 are quoted from it in the Six-text; and a few lines are again quoted from it at the end of the Parson's Tale.

21. Rawlinson Poet. 149. Apparently of the D-type, but it is very

imperfect, having lost several leaves in various places. A late MS.

22. Rawlinson Poet. 141. Not a bad MS., but several Tales are omitted, and the Shipman follows the Clerk. Groups C and G do not appear at all. The Latin side-notes are numerous.

23. Rawlinson Poet. 223; the same as that called Rawl. Misc. 1133 in the Six-text ?Trial-table.? No copy of Gamelyn. The Tales are strangely misplaced. Slightly imperfect here and there.

24. Corpus Christi College (Oxford), no. 198; denoted by CP. The best of the Oxford MSS., printed in full as the fourth MS. in the Six-text edition. Of the C-type; collated throughout. It contains a copy of Gamelyn, which is duly printed. It is rather imperfect from the loss of leaves in various places; the gaps being usually supplied from the Selden MS. (no. 18 above).

25. Christ Church (Oxford), no. 152. Contains Gamelyn. The Tales are extraordinarily arranged, but the MS. is nearly perfect, except at the end. A large part of the Parson?s Tale, after l 550, being lost from the Hengwrt MS., the gap is supplied, in the Six-text, from this MS. and Addit. 5140. The Second Nun follows the Shipman. Of the A-type.

[xii] 26. New College (Oxford), no. 314; called ?NC? in Tyrwhitt. Of the D-type; imperfect at the beginning. No copy of Gamelyn.

27. Trinity College (Oxford), no. 49; containing 302 leaves; formerly in the possession of John Leche, temp. Edw. IV. It contains Gamelyn. The Tales are misplaced; the Pardoner and Man of Law being thrust into the middle of Group B, after the Prioress.

III. MSS. AT CAMBRIDGE.

28. University Library, Gg. 4. 27, not noticed by Tyrwhitt; here denoted by CM. Also denoted, in vol. iii., by C.; and in vol. i., by GG. A highly valuable and important MS. of the A-type, printed as the third text in the Six-text edition. The best copy in any public library. See the description of ?Gg.? in vol. i.; and the full description in the Library Catalogue.

29. University Library, Dd. 4. 24; in Tyrwhitt, ?C 1.? Quoted as DD. A good MS. of the A-type, much relied upon by Tyrwhitt, who made good use of it. Has lost several leaves. The whole of the Clerk?s Tale was printed from this MS. by Mr. Aldis Wright. The passage in B 4637-52 occurs only in this MS. and a few others, viz. Royal 17 D xv, Addit. 5140, and the Chr. Ch. MS. It also contains the rare lines D 575-84, 609-12, 619-26, 717-20, all printed from this MS. in the Six-text. Lines E 1213-44 are also quoted, to fill a gap in Cm.

30. University Library, li. 3. 26; in Tyrwhitt, ?C 2.? Of the D-type, including Gamelyn; but the Franklin?s Tale is inserted after the Merchant. Contains many corrupt readings.

31. University Library, Mm. 2. 5. The arrangement of the Tales is very unusual, but resembles that in the Petworth MS., than which it is a little more irregular. A complete MS. of the D-type, including Gamelyn.

32. Trinity College (Cambridge), R. 3. 15; in Tyrwhitt, ?Tt.? In quarto, on paper. Some leaves are missing, so that the Canon?s Yeoman, Prioress, and Sir Thopas are lost. Of the D-type, without Gamelyn.

N.B. This MS. also contains the three poems printed as Chaucer?s (though not his) in the edition of 1687, and numbered 66, 67, and 68, in my Account of ?Speght?s edition? in vol. i. It also contains the best MS. of Pierce the Ploughman?s Crede, edited by me from this MS. in 1867.

[xiii] 33. Trinity College (Cambridge), R. 3. 3; in Tyrwhitt, ?T.? A folio MS., on vellum; of the D-type, without Gamelyn; but several Tales are misplaced.

IV. IN OTHER PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

34. Sion College, London. A mere fragment, containing only the Clerk?s Tale and Group D.

35. Lichfield Cathedral Library; quoted as LICH. or LI. Of the D-type, omitting Gamelyn. The Tale of Melibee is missing. As the Hengwrt MS. has no Canon?s Yeoman?s Tale, lines G 554-1481 are printed from this MS. in the Six-text.

36. Lincoln Cathedral Library; begins with A 381. Resembles no. 42.

37. Glasgow; in the Hunterian Museum. Begins with A 353; dated 1476.

38. MS. at Paris, mentioned by Dr. Furnivall. Of the B-type.

39. MS. at Naples, mentioned by Dr. Furnivall.[2]

V. MSS. IN PRIVATE HANDS.

These include some of the very best.

40. The ?Ellesmere? MS., in the possession of the Earl of Ellesmere; denoted by E. It formerly belonged to the Duke of Bridgewater, and afterwards to the Marquis of Stafford. The finest and best of all the MSS. now extant. Of the A-type; printed as the first of the MSS. in the Six-text, and taken as the basis of the present edition.

It contains the curious coloured drawings of 23 of the Canterbury Pilgrims which have been reproduced for the Chaucer Society. At the end of the MS. is a valuable copy of Chaucer?s Balade of ?Truth?; see vol. i. At the beginning of the MS., in a later hand, are written two poems printed in Todd?s Illustrations of Gower, &c., pp. 295-309, which Todd absurdly attributed to Chaucer! They are of slight value or interest. It may suffice to say that, at the beginning of the former poem, we find _revyved_ rimed with _meved_, and many of the lines in it are too long; e.g.??I supposed yt to have been some noxiall fantasy.? In the latter poem, a compliment to the family of Vere, _by_ rimes with _auncestrye_, and _quarter_ with _hereafter_ ; and the lines are of

similar over-length, e.g. Of whom prophesies of antique makyth mencion.?

41. The 'Hengwrt' MS., no. 154, belonging to Mr. Wm. W. E. Wynne, of Peniarth; denoted by HN. A valuable MS.; [xiv] it is really of the A-type, though the Tales are strangely misplaced, and the Canon's Yeoman's Tale is missing. The readings frequently agree so closely with those of E. (no. 40) that it is, to some extent, almost a duplicate of it. Printed as the second MS. in the Six-text. It also contains Chaucer's Boethius (imperfect).

42. The 'Petworth' MS., belonging to Lord Leconfield; denoted by PT. A folio MS., on vellum, of high value. Formerly in the possession of the Earl of Egremont (Todd's Illustrations, p. 118). Of the D-type, including Gamelyn; but the Shipman and Prioress wrongly precede the Man of Law. Printed as the fifth MS. in the Six-text.

43. The 'Holkham' MS., noted by Todd (Illustrations, p. 127) as then belonging to Mr. Coke, of Norfolk, and now belonging to the Earl of Leicester. The Tales are out of order; perhaps the leaves are misarranged. Imperfect in various places; has no Parson's Tale.

44. The 'Helmingham' MS., at Helmingham Hall, Suffolk, belonging to Lord Tollemache. On paper and vellum; about 1460 A.D. For a specimen, see the Shipman's Prologue, printed in the Six-text, in the Preface, p. ix*. Either of the C-type or the D-type.

45-48. Four MSS. in the collection of the late Sir Thos. Phillipps, at Cheltenham, viz. nos. 6570, 8136, 8137, 8299.

Two of these are mentioned in Todd's Illustrations, p. 127, as being 'now [in 1810] in the collection of John P. Kemble, Esq., and in that belonging to the late Duke of Roxburghe; the latter is remarkably beautiful, and is believed to have been once the property of Sir Henry Spelman.' No. 8299 contains the Clerk's Tale only.

49-52. Four MSS. belonging to the Earl of Ashburnham; numbered 124-127 in the Appendix. Of these, no. 124 wants the end of the Man of Law's Tale and the beginning of the Squire's, and therefore belongs to either the C-type or D-type. Nos. 125 and 126 are imperfect. No. 127 seems to be complete.

53. A MS. belonging to the Duke of Devonshire, at Chatsworth; and formerly to Sir N. L'Estrange. (Of the A-type.)

54. A MS. belonging to Sir Henry Ingilby, of Ripley Castle, Yorkshire. (Of the A-type.)

55. A MS. belonging to the Duke of Northumberland, at Alnwick; and formerly to Mrs. Thynne. (Of the A-type.)

[xv] 56. A MS. now (in 1891) in the possession of Lady Cardigan.

57-59. Tyrwhitt uses the symbol 'Ask. 1' to denote a MS. lent to him by the late Dr. Askew. He also uses the symbols 'Ch.' and 'N.' to denote 'two MSS. described in the Preface to Urry's edition, the one as belonging to Chas.

Cholmondeley, Esq. of Vale Royal, in Cheshire, and the other to Mr. Norton, of Southwick, in Hampshire. Of these, 'Ch.' is now Lord Delamere's MS., described by Dr. Furnivall in Notes and Queries, 4 Ser. ix. 353. The others I cannot trace.

§ 3. THE PRINTED EDITIONS.

In the first five editions, the Canterbury Tales were published separately.

1. Caxton; about 1477-8, from a poor MS. Copies are in the British Museum, Merton College, and in the Pepysian Library (no. 2053).

2. Caxton; about 1483, from a better MS. A perfect copy exists in St. John's College Library, Oxford. Caxton bravely issued this new edition because he had found that his former one was faulty.

3. Pynson; about 1493. Copied from Caxton's 2nd edition.

4. Wynkyn de Worde; in 1498. In the British Museum.

5. Pynson; in 1526. Copied from Caxton's 2nd edition.

After this the Canterbury Tales were invariably issued with the rest of Chaucer's Works, until after 1721. Some account of these editions is given in the Preface to the Minor Poems, in vol. i.; which see. They are:

Thynne's three editions, in 1532, 1542, and 1550 (the last is undated); Stowe's edition, 1561; Speght's editions, in 1598, 1602, and 1687; Urry's edition, in 1721.

Two modernised editions of the Canterbury Tales were published in London in 1737 or 1740, and in 1741.

Next came: 'Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, to which is added, an Essay on his Language and Versification; an introductory discourse; notes, and a glossary. By Thomas Tyrwhitt, London, 1775-8, 8vo, 5 vols.' A work of high literary value, to which I am greatly indebted for many necessary notes. Reprinted in 1798 in 4to, 2 vols., by the University of Oxford; and again, at London, in 1822, in post 8vo, 5 vols.; (by Pickering) in 1830, 8vo, 5 vols.; [xvi] and (by Moxon) in 1845, in 1 vol. imp. 8vo. The last of these adds poor texts of the rest of Chaucer's Works, from old black-letter editions, with which Tyrwhitt had nothing to do. In Tyrwhitt's text, the number of grammatical errors is very large, and he frequently introduces words into the text without authority. For some account of the later editions of Chaucer's Works, see the Introduction to the Legend of Good Women, in vol. iii. I may note, by the way, that the editions by Wright, Bell, and Morris are all founded on MS. Harl. 7334, a very unsafe MS. in some respects; see p. viii (above).

It is necessary to add here a few words of warning. Wright's edition, though it has many merits, turns out, in practice, to be dangerously untrustworthy. He frequently inserts words, borrowed from Tyrwhitt's edition (which he heartily condemns as being full of errors in grammar), without the least indication that they are _not in the MS._ This becomes the more serious when we find, upon examination, that

Tyrwhitt had likewise no authority for some of such insertions, but simply introduced them, by guess, to fill up a line in a way that pleased him. For example, A 628 runs thus, in all the seven MSS.:

Of his visage children were aferd. It is quite correct; for viság-e is trisyllabic. Tyrwhitt did not know this, and counted the syllables as *_two_* only, neglecting the final *_e_*. The line seemed then too short; so he inserted *_sore_* before *_aferd_*, thus ruining the scansion. Wright follows suit, and inserts *_sore_*, though it is not in his MS.; giving no notice at all of what he has done. Bell follows suit, and the word is even preserved in Morris; but the latter prints the word in italics, to shew that it is not in the MS. Nor is it in the Six-text.

I shall not adduce more instances, but shall content myself with saying that, until the publications of the Chaucer Society appeared, no reader had the means of knowing what the best MS. texts were really like. All who have been accustomed to former (complete) editions have necessarily imbibed hundreds of false impressions, and have necessarily accepted numberless theories as to the scansion of lines which they will, in course of due time, be prepared to abandon. In the course of my work, it has been made clear to me that Chaucer's text has been manipulated and sophisticated, frequently in most cunning and plausible ways, to a far greater extent than I could have believed to be possible. This is not a pleasant subject, and I only mention it for the use of scholars. Such variations fortunately seldom affect the sense; but they vitiate the scansion, the grammar, and the etymology in many cases. Of course it will be understood that I am saying no more than I can fully substantiate.

It is absolutely appalling to read such a statement as the following in Bell's edition, vol. i. p. 60. "All deviations, either from Mr. Wright's edition, or from the original MS., are pointed out in the footnotes for the ultimate satisfaction of the reader." For the instances in which this is really done are very rare indeed, in spite of the large number of such deviations.

Of Tyrwhitt's text, it is sufficient to remark that it was hardly possible, at [xvii] that date, for a better text to have been produced. The rules of Middle English grammar had not been formulated, so that we are not surprised to find that he constantly makes the past tense of a weak verb monosyllabic, when it should be dissyllabic, and treats the past participle as dissyllabic, when it should be monosyllabic: which makes wild work with the scansion. It is also to be regretted that he based his text upon the faulty black-letter editions, though he took a great deal of pains in collating them with various MSS.

On the other hand, his literary notes are full of learning and research; and the number of admirable illustrations by which he has efficiently elucidated the text is very great. His reputation as one of the foremost of our literary critics is thoroughly established, and needs no comment.

Mr. Wright's notes are likewise excellent, and resulted from a wide reading. I have also found some most useful hints in the notes to

Bell's edition. Of all such sources of information I have been only too glad to avail myself, as is more fully shewn in the succeeding volume.

§ 4. PLAN OF THE PRESENT EDITION.

The text of the present edition of the *Canterbury Tales* is founded upon that of the Ellesmere MS. (E.) It has been collated throughout with that of the other six MSS. published by the Chaucer Society. Of these seven MSS., the Harleian MS. 7334 (Hl.) was printed separately. The other six were printed in the valuable 'Six-text' edition, to which I constantly have occasion to refer, in parallel columns. The six MSS. are: E. (Ellesmere), Hn. (Hengwrt), Cm. (Cambridge, Gg. 4. 27), Cp. (Corpus Coll., Oxford), Pt. (Petworth), and Ln. (Lansdowne). MSS. E. Hn. Cm. represent the earliest type (A) of the text; Hl., a transitional type (B); Cp. and Ln., a still later type (C); and Pt., the latest of all (D), but hardly differing from C.

In using these terms, 'earliest,' &c., I do not refer to the age of the MSS., but to the type of text which they exhibit.

In the list of MSS. given above, Hl. is no. 1; E., Hn., Cm., are nos. 40, 41, and 28; and Cp., Pt., Ln., are nos. 24, 42, and 10 respectively.

Of all the MSS., E. is the best in nearly every respect. It not only gives good lines and good sense, but is also (usually) grammatically accurate and thoroughly well spelt. The publication of it has been a very great boon to all Chaucer students, for which Dr. Furnivall will be ever gratefully remembered. We must not omit, at the same time, to recognise the liberality and generosity of the owner of the MS., who so freely permitted such full use of it to be made; the same remark applies, equally, to the [xviii] owners of the Hengwrt and the Petworth MSS. The names of the Earl of Ellesmere, Mr. Wm. W. E. Wynne of Peniarth, and Lord Leconfield have deservedly become as 'familiar as household words' to many a student of Chaucer.

This splendid MS. has also the great merit of being complete, requiring no supplement from any other source, except in the few cases where a line or two has been missed. For example, it does not contain A 252 b-c (found in Hn. only); nor A 2681-2 (also not in Hn. or Cm.); nor B 1163-1190 (also not in Hn. or Cm.); nor B 1995 (very rare indeed).

It is slightly imperfect in B 2510, 2514, 2525, 2526, 2623-4, 2746, 2967. It drops B 3147-8, C 103-4, C 297-8 (not in Hn. Cm. Pt.), E 1358-61, G 564-5; and has a few defects in the Parson's Tale in l 190, 273, &c. In the Tale of Melibeus, the French original shews that all the MSS. have lost B 2252-3, 2623-4, which have to be supplied by translation.

None of the seven MSS. have B 4637-4652; these lines are genuine, but were probably meant to be cancelled. They only occur, to my knowledge, in four MSS., nos. 7, 11, 25, and 29; though found also in the old black-letter editions.

On the other hand, E. preserves lines rarely found elsewhere. Such are A 3155-6, 3721-2, F 1455-6, 1493-9; twelve genuine lines, none of which are

in Tyrwhitt, and only the first two are in Wright. Observe also the stanza in the footnote to p. 424; with which compare B 3083, on p. 241.

The text of the Ellesmere MS. has only been corrected in cases where careful collation suggests a desirable improvement. Every instance of this character is invariably recorded in the footnotes. Thus, in A 8, the grammar and scansion require *_half-e_*, not *_half_*; though, curiously enough, this correct form appears in Hl. only, among all the seven MSS. In very difficult cases, other MSS. (besides the seven) have been collated, but I have seldom gained much by it. The chief additional MSS. thus used are Dd.= Cambridge, Dd. 4. 24 (no. 29 above); Slo. or Sl. = Sloane 1685 (no. 8); Roy. or Rl. = Royal 18 C 2 (no. 6); Harl. = Harleian 1758 (see p. 645); Li. or Lich. = Lichfield MS. (no. 35), for the Canon's Yeoman's Tale; and others that are sufficiently indicated.

I have paid especial attention to the suffixes required by Middle-English grammar, to the scansion, and to the pronunciation; and I suppose that this is the first complete edition in which the [xix] spelling has been tested by phonetic considerations. With a view to making the spelling a little clearer and more consistent, I have ventured to adopt certain methods which I here explain.

In certain words of variable spelling in E., such as *_whan_* or *_whanne_*, *_than_* or *_thanne_*, I have adopted that form which the scansion requires; but the MS. is usually right.

E. usually has *_hise_* for *_his_* with a plural sb., as in l. 1; I use *_his_* always, except in prose. E. has *_hir_*, *_here_*, for *her*, *their*; I use *_hir_* only, except at the end of a line.

E. uses the endings *_-ight_* or *_-yght_*, *_-inde_* or *_-ynde_*; I use *_-ight_* *_-inde_* only; and, in general, I use *_i_* to represent short *_i_*, and *_y_* to represent long *_i_*, as in *_king_*, *_wyf_*. Such is the usual habit of the scribe, but he often changes *_i_* into *_y_* before *_m_* and *_n_*, to make his writing clearer; such a precaution is needless in modern printing. Thus, in l. 42, I replace the scribe's *_bigynne_* by *_biginne_*; and in l. 78, I replace his *_pilgrymage_* by *_pilgrimage_*. This makes the text easier to read.

For a like reason, where equivalent spellings occur, I select the simpler; writing *_couthe_* (as in Pt.) for *_kowthe_*, *_sote_* for *_soote_*, *_sege_* for *_seege_*, and so on. In words such as *_our_* or *_oure_*, *_your_* or *_youre_*, *_hir_* or *_hire_*, *_neuer_* or *_neuere_*, I usually give the simpler forms, without the final *_-e_*, when the *_-e_* is obviously silent.

For consonantal *_u_*, as in *_neuer_*, I write *_v_*, as in *_never_*. This is usual in all editions. But I could not bring myself to use *_j_* for *_i_* consonant; the anachronism is too great. *_Never_* for *_neuer_* is common in the fifteenth century, but *_j_* does not occur even in the first folio of Shakespeare. I therefore usually keep the capital *_i_* of the MSS. and of the Elizabethan printers, as in *_loye_* (= *_joye_*) where initial, and the small *_i_*, as in *_enioinen_* (= *_enjoinen_*) elsewhere. Those who dislike such conservatism may be comforted by the reflection that the sound rarely occurs.

The word _eye_ has to be altered to _yë_ at the end of a line, to preserve the rimes. The scribes usually write _eye_ in the middle of a line, but when they come to it at the end of one, they are fairly puzzled. In l. 10, the scribe of Hn. writes _lye_, and that of Ln. writes _yhe_; and the variations on this theme are most curious. The spelling _ye_ (= _yë_) is, however, common; as in A 1096 (Cm., Pt.). I print it ?yë? to distinguish it from _ye_, the pl. pronoun.

These minute variations are, I trust, legitimate, and I have not recorded them. They cause trouble to the editor, but afford ease [xx] to the reader, which seems a sufficient justification for adopting them. But the scrupulous critic need not fear that the MS. has been departed from in any case, where it could make any phonetic difference, without due notice. Thus, in l. 9, where I have changed _foweles_ into _fowles_ as being a more usual form, the fact that _foweles_ is the Ellesmere spelling is duly recorded in the footnotes. And so in other cases.

The footnotes do not record various readings where E. is correct as it stands; they have purposely been made as concise as possible. It would have been easy to multiply them fourfold without giving much information of value; this is not unfrequently done, but the gain is slight. With so good a MS. as the basis of the text, it did not seem desirable.

The following methods for shortening the footnotes have been adopted.

1. Sometimes only the readings of _some_ of the MSS. are given. Thus at l. 9 (p. 1), I omit the readings of Cp. and of Cm. As a fact, neither of these MSS. contain the line; but it was not worth while to take up space by saying so. At l. 10 (p. 1), I again omit the readings of Cp. and of Cm., for the same reason; also of Ln., which is a poor MS., though here it agrees with Hl. (having _yhe_); also of Pt., which has _eyghe_, a spelling not here to be thought of. At l. 12, I just note that E. has _pilgrimage_ (by mistake); of course this means that it should have had _pilgrimages_ in the plural, as in other MSS., and as required by the rime.

2. At l. 23 (p. 2), the remark ?_rest_ was? implies that all the rest of the seven MSS. specially collated have ?was? The word ?_rest_? is a convenient abbreviation.

3. When, as at l. 53, I give _nacions_ as a rejected reading of E. in the footnote, it will be understood that _naciouns_ is a better spelling, justified by other MSS., and by other lines in E. itself. E.g., _naciouns_ occurs in Hl. and Pt., and Cm. has _naciounnys_.

4. I often use ?_om._? for ?_omit_? or ?_omits_? as in the footnote to l. 188 (p. 6).

5. At l. 335 (p. 11), I give the footnote: ??ever] Hl. al.? This means that MS. Hl. has _al_ instead of the word _ever_ of the other MSS. It seemed worth noting; but _ever_ is probably right.

6. At l. 520 (p. 16), the note is: ??_All but_ Hl. this was.? That is,

Hi. has _was_, as in the text; the rest have _this was_, where the addition of _this_ sadly clogs the line.

With these hints, the footnotes present no difficulty.

As a rule, I have refrained from all emendation; but, in B 1189, I have ventured to suggest _physices_[3], for reasons explained in the Notes. Those who prefer the reading _Phislyas_ can adopt it.

For further details regarding particular passages, I beg leave to refer the reader to the Notes in vol. v.

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§ 5. TABLE OF SYMBOLS DENOTING MSS.

Cm.?Cambridge Univ. Lib. Gg. 4. 27 (Ellesmere type). No. 28 in list.

Cp.?Carpus Chr. Coll., Oxford, no. 198. No. 24.

Dd.?Cambridge Univ. Lib. Dd. 4. 24 (Ellesmere type). No. 29.

E.?Ellesmere MS. (basis of the text). No. 40.

Harl.?Harl. 1758; Brit. Mus.; see p. 645. No. 4.

Hi.?Harl. 7334; British Museum. No. 1.

Hn.?Hengwrt MS. no. 154. No. 41.

Li. _or_ Lich.?Lichfield MS.; see pp. 533-553. No. 35.

Ln.?Lansdowne 851; Brit. Mus. (Corpus type). No. 10.

Pt.?Petworth MS. No. 42.

Rl. _or_ Roy.?Royal 18 C. II; Brit. Mus.; see p. 645. No. 6.

Seld.?Arch. Selden, B. 14; Bodleian Library. No. 18.

Sl. _or_ Slo.?Sloane 1685; Brit. Mus.; see p. 645. No. 8.

§ 6. TABLE SHEWING THE VARIOUS WAYS OF NUMBERING THE LINES.

SIX-TEXT (as here) TYRWHITT. WRIGHT.

A?1-4422	1-4420[4]	1-4420[4]
B?1-1162	4421-5582	4421-5582
B?1163-2156	12903-13894[5]	14384-15374[6]
B?2157-3078[7]	Prose; not counted[8].	Prose; not counted.
B?3079-3564	13895-14380	15375-15860
B?3565-3652	14685-14772	15861-15948
[xxii]		
B?3653-3956	14381-14684	15949-16262

B?3957-4652	14773-15468	16253-16932[9]
Spurious; see p.	11929-11934	13410-13415
289, note.		
C?1-968	11935-12902	13416-14383
D (2294 lines); E	5583-11928[10]	5583-11928
(2440); F(1624)		
G?1-1481	15469-16949	11929-13409
H?(362); I 1-74	16950-17385	16933-17368

Hence, to obtain the order of the lines in Tyrwhitt, see A-B 1162; D, E, F; p. 289, footnote; C; B 1163-2156, 3079-3564, 3653-3956, 3565-3652, 3957-4652; G, H, I.

Or (by pages), see pp. 1-164, 320-508, 289 (footnote), 290-319, 165-256 (which includes Melibeus), 259-268, 256-258, 269-289, 509-end.

To facilitate reference, the numbering of the lines in Tyrwhitt's text is marked at the top of every page, preceded by the letter 'T.'; lines which Tyrwhitt omits are marked '[T. om.]', as on p. 90; and his paragraphs (all numbered in this edition) are carefully preserved in Melibeus and the Parson's Tale, which are in prose. In the Prologue, after l. 250, his numbering is given within marks of parenthesis.

The lines in every piece are also numbered separately, within marks of parenthesis, as (10), (20), on p. 26. This numbering (borrowed from Dr. Murray) agrees with the references given in the New English Dictionary. It also gives, in most cases, either exactly or approximately, the references to Dr. Morris's edition, who adopts a similar method, with a few variations of detail. The lines in Bell's edition are not numbered at all.

To obtain the order in Wright's edition, see pp. 1-164, 320-554, 289 (footnote), 290-319, 165-289, 555-end. The variations are fewer.

Some may find it more convenient to observe the names of the Tales.

[xxiii] Tyrwhitt's order of the Tales is as follows[11]: Prologue, Knight, Miller, Reeve, Cook?Man of Lawe?Wife, Friar, Somnour?Clerk, Merchant?Squire, Franklin?Doctor (Physician), Pardoner?Shipman, Prioress, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk[12], Nun?s Priest?Second Nun, Canon?s Yeoman?Manciple?Parson.

§7. THE FOUR LEADING TYPES OF THE MSS.

The four leading types of MSS. usually exhibit a variation in the order of the Tales, as well as many minor differences. I only note here the former (omitting Gamelyn, which is absent from MSS. of the A-type, and from some of the D-type).

- A.?1. Prologue, Knight, Miller, Reeve, Cook.
2. Man of Lawe.
3. Wife of Bath, Friar, Sompnour.
4. Clerk, Merchant.
5. Squire, Franklin.
6. Doctor, Pardoner.

7. Shipman, Prioress, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk, Nun?s Priest.
8. Second Nun, Canon?s Yeoman.
9. Manciple, (_slightly linked to_) Parson.

B.?Places 8 before 6. Order: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 6, 7, 9.

C.?Not only places 8 before 6 (as B), but splits 5 into 5 _a_ (Squire) and 5 _b_ (Franklin), and places 5 _a_ before 3. Order: 1, 2, 5 _a_, 3, 4, 5 _b_, 8, 6, 7, 9.

D.?As C, but further splits 4 into 4 _a_ (Clerk), and 4 _b_ (Merchant), and places 4 _b_ after 5 _a_. Order: 1, 2, 5 _a_, 4 b, 3, 4 _a_, 5 _b_, 8, 6, 7, 9. (D. is really a mere variety of C., with an external difference.)

Observe the position of the Franklin. Thus: A. Squire, Franklin, Doctor. B. Squire, Franklin, Second Nun. C. Merchant, Franklin, Second Nun. D. Clerk, Franklin, Second Nun.

For further remarks on this subject, see vol. v.

[xxiv] ERRATA

N.B. The following are all the Errata that I have observed. Those marked with an asterisk should be noticed. The rest are unimportant.

P. 14. A 467. Perhaps the full stop at the end of the line should be a colon.

P. 15. Footnote to A 503. For ?HI. _alone_? _read_ ?Tyrwhitt.?

P. 85. A 3016. _For_ eye _read_ yë

*P. 110. A 3822. _For_ celle _read_ selle

*P. 131. B 59, 60. _For_ eek _and_ seek _read_ eke _and_ seke

P. 133. B 115. Insert marks of quotation at the beginning and end of the line.

P. 133. B 120, 121. Insert marks of quotation at the beginning of l. 120 and at the end of l. 121.

P. 134. In the headline; _for_ T. 4454 _read_ T. 4554.

P. 146. B 540, 541, 547. _For_ cristen _read_ Cristen

P. 146. B 544 _For_ cristianitee _read_ Cristianitee. So also at p. 525; G 535.

P. 194. B 2043. _Dele_;; _after_ spicerye

P. 202. B 2222. _For_ yevynge _read_ yevinge

P. 205. B 2253. _For_ owe _read_ ow

P. 207. B 2303. _For_ se _read_ see

P. 219, footnotes. _For_ 2251 and 2252 _read_ 2551 and 2552

*P. 222. B 2624. _For_ lurisdicctioun _read_ lurisdiccioun

P. 232, ll. 9, 10. _Dele the quotation-mark after_ certeyne, _and insert it after_ another.

*P. 245. B 3230. _For_ my _read_ ny

*P. 253. B 3490. _For_ warre _read_ werre

P. 271. B 4011. _For_ stope _a better reading is_ stape

P. 285. B 4510. _For_ charitee _perhaps read_ Charitee

P. 285. B 4541. _For_ chide _read_ chyde

P. 299. C 291. _Either read_ advocas, _or note that the_ t _in_ advocats _is silent_.

*P. 309. C 601. _For_ opinoun _read_ opinioun

P. 318. C 955. _For_ Thay _read_ They

P. 338. In the headline; _for_ 6225 _read_ 6235.

P. 339. In the headline; for 6226 _read_ 6236.

P. 344. D 846. _For_ But if _read_ But-if

P. 345. D 859. _For_ All _read_ Al

P. 354. Footnotes; last line. _For_ 1205 _read_ 1204

P. 355. D 1219, 1227. _For_ Chese _and_ chese _read_ Chees _and_ chees.

P. 363. D 1436. _For_ But if _read_ But-if

P. 387. D 2242. _Perhaps insert a comma after_ himself

P. 419. E 994. _For_ gouernance _read_ governance

P. 428. E 1304, 1306. Insert quotation-mark at the end of l. 1304, instead of the end of l. 1306.

P. 438. E 1635. _For_ Saue _read_ Save

P. 444. E 1866. _Insert_ Auctor _opposite this line_.

P. 449. E 2058. _For_ scorpion _read_ scorioun; _as the last syllable

is accented_.

P. 459. E 2418. _For_ bless _read_ blesse

P. 461. F 20. After all, the right reading probably is that given by E. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl., but with the form _pietous_ for _pitous_ as in Troilus, iii. 1444, and v. 451. Read?And piëtous and lust, alwey y-liche.

P. 468. F 266. _For_ Cambynskan _read_ Cambinskan. So also at p. 480, first line.

P. 474. F 462. _For_ sle _read_ slee

P. 505, footnotes. _For_ 1527 _read_ 1526

P. 527. G 558, footnote. _The real reading of_ E _is_?

And vndernethe he wered a surplys

P. 543. G 1107. _For_ shall _read_ shal

*P. 545. G 1171. _For_ torned _read_ terved. [_The reading in_ E is _really_ terued=terved, i.e. stripped, flayed. The _reading_ torned _is_ a poor substitution_.]

*P. 548. G 1274. _For_ torne, _read_ terve,

*P. 560. H 144. _For_ hept _read_ kept

P. 626. Footnotes; last line. _For_ E. Seld. Ln. beauteis; _read_ E. Seld. Ln. beautees;

P. 634. I 955. _For_ Daniel, _read_ David. [N.B. MSS. E. Cm. Danyel; _the rest_, Daud. Probably Chaucer wrote ?Daniel? at first, and afterwards corrected it (by the original) to ?David.? Nevertheless, ?Daniel? is a good reading.]

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[xxv]

ADDITIONS

TO

?THE MINOR POEMS? IN VOL. I.

* * * * *

[Further researches have brought to light some more of Chaucer?s Minor Poems. I first met with the excellent Balade on ?Womanly Noblesse? in MS. Phillipps 9030 (now MS. Addit. 34360) on June 1, 1894; and on the following

day I noticed in MS. Harl. 7578 (partly described in vol. i. p. 58) two Complaints that may perhaps be attributed to our author. As, from the nature of the case, they could not be included in Vol. i, they are inserted here.]

* * * * *

XXIV. WOMANLY NOBLESSE.

* * * * *

BALADE THAT CHAUCIER MADE.

So hath my herte caught in rémembraunce
Your beautè hool, and stedfast governaunce,
Your vertues allè, and your hy noblesse,
That you to serve is set al my plesaunce;
So wel me lykth your womanly contenaunce, 5
[xxvi]
Your fresshe fetures and your comlinessse,
That, whyl I live, my herte to his maistresse,
You hath ful chose, in trew perséveraunce,
Never to chaunge, for no maner distresse.

From MS. Addit. 34360, fol. 21, back (with ascription by Shirley); hitherto unprinted. Rejected readings of the MS. are here given.

1. hert. 2. Yowre (_throughout_); hoole; stidefast. 3. al; hie.
4. yow; sette. 5. likith; _for_ womanly _perhaps read_ wyfly. 6:
comlynesse. 7: whiles; myn hert; maystresse. 8: triev.

And sith I [you] shal do this observaunce 10
Al my lyf, withouten displesaunce,
You for to serve with al my besinesse,
[Taketh me, lady, in your obeisaunce,]
And have me somewhat in your souvenaunce.
My woful herte suffreth greet duresse; 15
And [loke] how humbl[el]y, with al simplesse,
My wil I cónforme to your ordenaunce,
As you best list, my peynes to redresse.

10: _I insert_ you. 11: (_Accent on_ Al); live. 12: besynesse.
13. _Dr. Furnivall supplies this lost line_; cf. Complaint to Pity, l.
84. 15. hert suffrith grete. 16: _I supply_ loke; humbly. 17:
ordynaunce. 18: for to (_I omit_ for).

Considring eek how I hange in balaunce
In your servysè; swich, lo! is my chaunce, 20
Abyding grace, whan that your gentilnesse
Of my gret wo list doon allegeaunce,
And with your pitè me som wyse avaunce,
In ful rebating of my hevinesse;
And thinkth, by reson, wommanly noblesse 25
Shuld nat desyre for to doon outrance

Ther-as she findeth noon unbuxumnesse.

19: eke. 20: service suche loo. 21: (_Perhaps omit_ that). 22: grete woo; do. 23: wise. 24: rebatyng; myn hevynesse. 25: And thynkith be raison that (_too long_). 26: desire; for til do the (_I omit_ the). 27: fyndith non vn-

Lenvoye.

Auctour of norture, lady of plesaunce,
Soveraine of beauté, flour of wommanhede,
Take ye non hede unto myn ignoraunce, 30
But this receyveth of your goodlihede,
Thinking that I have caught in remembraunce
Your beauté hool, your stedfast governaunce.

29. Soueraigne; floure. 31. receyvith; goodelyhede. 32. Thynkyng.
33. hole; stidefast.

[xxvii]

* * * * *

XXV. COMPLAINT TO MY MORTAL FOE.

* * * * *

Al hoolly youres, withouten otheres part!
Wherefore? y-wis, that I ne can ne may
My service chaungen; thus of al suche art
The lerninge I desyre for ever and ay.
And evermore, whyl that I live may, 5
In trouthe I wol your servant stille abyde,
Although my wo encresè day by day,
Til that to me be come the dethes tyde.

From MS. Harl. 7578, fol. 15. At the bottom of fol. 14, back, is the last line of Chaucer's Complaint to Pity, beneath which is written ?Balade.? But the present poem is really a Complaint, like the preceding one. Rejected readings of the MS. are here given. There is no title in the MS. except ?Balade.?

1. holly; others parte. 2. I wisse. 3. By (_surely an error for_ My); arte. 4. lernynge; desire; euer (_and_ u _for_ v _often_). 5. while; leue. 6. trought (_sic_); youre; abide. 7. be (_for_ by).

Seint Valentyne! to you I rénovele
My woful lyf, as I can, compleyninge; 10
But, as me thinketh, to you a quarele
Right greet I have, whan I, rememberinge
Bitwene, how kinde, ayeins the yeres springe,
Upon your day, doth ech foul chese his make;
And you list not in swich comfórt me bringe, 15
That to her grace my lady shulde me take.

9. valentine; Renouele. 10. compleynyng. 12. grete; whanne;
remembringe. 13. Bytwene howe kende. 14. Vppon youre; doith eche
foule. 15. lyste; suche comforte.

[xxviii]

Wherfor unto you, Cupide, I beseche,
Furth with Venús, noble lusty goddessse,
Sith ye may best my sorowe lesse and eche;
And I, your man, oppressed with distresse, 20
Can not crye ?help!? but to your gentilnesse:
So voucheth sauf, sith I, your man, wol dye,
My ladies herte in pitè folde and presse,
That of my peyne I finde remedye.

21. cry helpe; vnto (_for_ to); gentelnesse. 22. safe. 24. peine;
fynde I may (_for_ I finde); remydie.

To your conning, my hertes right princesse, 25
My mortal fo, whiche I best love and serve,
I recommaunde my boistous lewednesse.
And, for I can not altherbest deserve
Your grace, I preye, as he that wol nat swerve,
That I may fare the better for my trouthe; 30
Sith I am youre, til deth my herte kerve,
On me, your man, now mercy have and routhe.

25. konnyngge; princes. 26. foo. 27. leudenesse. 29. prey;
swerue. 30. trouth. 31. herte wol kerue (_I omit_ wol). 32. haue;
routh.

[xxix]

* * * * *

XXVI. COMPLAINT TO MY LODE-STERRE.

* * * * *

Of gretter cause may no wight him compleyne
Than I; for love hath set me in swich caas
That lasse loye and more encrees of peyne
Ne hath no man; wherfore I crye ?allas!?
A thousand tyme, whan I have tyme and space. 5
For she, that is my verray sorowes grounde,
Wol with her grace no wyse my sorowes sounde.

From MS. Harl. 7578, fol. 15, back. No title but ?Balade?; but it is
really a Complaint. Rejected readings of the MS. are here given.

2. y (_for_ I); hath me sette in swiche. 3. encrease. 5. whenne;
haue. 6. sheo; werry (_for_ verray). 7. Wolle; wise; (sounde
means heal).

And that, shulde be my sorowes hertes leche,
Is me ageins, and maketh me swich werre,
That shortly, [in] al maner thought and speche, 10
Whether it be that I be nigh or ferre,
I misse the grace of you, my lode-sterre,
Which causeth me on you thus for to crye;
And al is it for lakke of remedye.

9. Ys; swide (_miswritten for_ swiche). 10. _I supply_ in; alle manere. 11. Whethr_e_. 12. mys; loode-. 13. Whiche. 14. alle; remydie.

My soverain loye thus is my mortal fo; 15
She that shulde causen al my lustynesse
List in no wyse of my sorowes saye ?ho!
[xxx]
But let me thus darraine, in hevynesse,
With woful thoughtes and my grete distresse,
The which she might right wele, [at] every tyde, 20
If that her liste, out of my herte gyde.

15. souu_er_aine; foo. 16. alle; lustynesse. 17. Liste; wise; say hoo. 18. lete; hevynesse. 19. wooful; grette. 20. sheo; _I supply_ at; eu_ery_. 21. oute; guyde.

But it is so, that her list, in no wyse,
Have pitè on my woful besynesse;
And I ne can do no maner servyse
That may me torne out of my hevynesse; 25
So woldè god, that she now wolde impresse
Right in her herte my trouthe and eek good wille;
And let me not, for lakke of mercy, spille.

22. liste; wise. 23. Haue pitèe. 24. kanne; manere service. 25. be (_for_ me); oute; hevynesse. 26. sheo nowe. 27. herre (_for_ her); trough (_sic_); eke. 28. lette; lake.

Now wele I woot why thus I smerte sore;
For couthe I wele, as othere folkes, feyne, 30
Than neded me to live in peyne no more,
But, whan I were from you, unteye my reyne,
And, for the tyme, drawe in another cheyne.
But woldè god that alle swich were y-knowe,
And duely punisshed of hye and lowe. 35

29. woote; why that I thus smerte so sore (_two syllables too much_). 30. couth; sayne (_for_ feyne). 31. Thanne nedes; lyue. 32. whenne; vnteye. 33. into (_for_ in); a-nothre. 35. punisshede both of high (_I omit_ both).

Swich lyf defye I, bothe in thoughte and worde,
For yet me were wel lever for to sterve
Than in my herte for to make an horde

Of any falshood; for, til deth to-kerve
My herte and body, shal I never swerve 40
From you, that best may be my fynal cure,
But, at your liste, abyde myn aventure;

36. Swiche; defie. 37. yette; sterue. 38. Thanne; hoorde. 39.
falshode; til deth the kerue (_but see note on_ p. xxxii). 40.
neu_er_e swerue. 41. youre (_for_ my). 42. atte youre; abide.

And preye to you, noble seint Valentyne,
My ladies herte that ye wolde embrace,
[xxxii]
And make her pitè to me more enclyne 45
That I may stonden in her noble grace
In hasty tyme, whyl I have lyves space:
For yit wiste I never noon, of my lyve,
So litel hony in so fayre hyve.

43. prey; sainte valentine. 45. pitee. 46. here. 47. whiles; haue
lyues. 48. yitte; neuere none; lyfe. 49. hiue.

* * * * *

NOTES TO THE PRECEDING POEMS.

* * * * *

XXIV.?I take the title from l. 25; cf. Troil. i. 287.

The metre exhibits the nine-line stanza, as in *Anelida*, 211-9; but the same rimes recur in all three stanzas. The six-line Envoy, with the rime-formula *_a b a b a a_*, is unique in Chaucer. There are nineteen lines ending in *_-aunce_*, twelve in *_-esse_*, and two in *_-ede_*.

1. Note how ll. 1 and 2 are re-echoed in ll. 32, 33. For a similar effect, see *Anelida*, 211, 350.

8. *_ful chose_*, fully chosen; parallel to *_ful drive_* in C. T., F 1230.

14. *_souvenance_*, remembrance; not found elsewhere in Chaucer.

16. *_humblely_* is trisyllabic; see Leg. 156, Troil. ii. 1719, v. 1354.

20. *_lo_* emphasises *_swich_*; cf. *_lo, this_*, T. v. 54; *_lo, which_*, T. iv. 1231.

22. *_allegeaunce_*, *_alleviation_*; the verb *_allegge_* is in the Glossary.

26. *_outrance_*, extreme violence, great hurt; see Godefroy.

27. *_unbuxumnesse_*, unsubmitiveness; cf. *_buxumnesse_*, Truth, 15.

XXV.?I take the title from l. 26; cf. Compl. to his Lady, 41, 64.

1. Cf. Amorous Complaint, 87; Troil. v. 1318, i. 960.
3. ?Love hath me taught no more of his art,? &c.; Compl. to his Lady, 42-3.
9. Cf. Compl. of Mars, 13, 14; p. xxx above, l. 43; Parl. Foules, 386-9; Amorous Complaint, 85-6.

19. _eche_, augment; ?hir sorwes _eche_,? T. i. 705.

27. ?And to your trouthe ay I me recomaunde;? T. v. 1414. ?I am a _boistous_ man;? C. T., H 211.

XXVI. ?I take the title from l. 12; see T. v. 232, 638, 1392.

7. _sounde_, heal, cure; as in Anelida, 242.

8. Perhaps read _hertes sorwes leche_; see T. ii. 1066.

10. Cf. ?as _in_ his speche;? T. ii. 1069.

26. _impresse_; cf. T. ii. 1371.

[xxxii] 28. _spille_; cf. Compl. to his Lady, 121.

32. _reyne_, bridle. For this image, cf. Anelida, 184.

39. MS. _deth the kerue_. As _e_ and _o_ are constantly confused, the prefix _to_ (written apart) may have looked like _te_, and would easily be altered to _the_. Cf. _forkerveth_ in the Manc. Tale, H 340.

47. Here _spac-e_ rimes with _embrac-e_, but in l. 5 it rimes with _allas_. This variation is no worse than the riming of _embrace_ with _compas_ in Proverbs, 8 (vol. i. p. 407). Cf. _plac-e_ in C.T., B 1910, with its variant _plas_, B 1971.

N.B. The Complaints numbered XXV and XXVI are obviously by the same author; compare XXV. 26 with XXVI. 15; XXV. 9 with XXVI. 43; and XXV. 29-31 with XXVI. 39, 40. They were probably written nearly at the same time.

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[1: T. 1-22.]

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

* * * * *

GROUP A. THE PROLOGUE.

HERE BIGINNETH THE BOOK OF THE TALES OF CAUNTERBURY.

Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote
 The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,
 And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
 Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
 Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth 5
 Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
 The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
 Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
 And smale fowles maken melodye,
 That slepen al the night with open yë, 10
 (So priketh hem nature in hir corages):
 Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
 (And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)
 To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;
 And specially, from every shires ende 15
 Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
 The holy blisful martir for to seke,
 That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.

HEADING. From E. 1. E. hise; rest his. 8. Hl. halfe; rest
 half. 9. Hl. fowles; Pt. Ln. foules; E. Hn. foweles. 10. Hl. yhe;
 Hn. lye; E. eye. 12. Pt. Ln. Than; E. Thanne. E. pilg_ri_mage (by
 mistake_). 13. Pt. Hl. palmers; E. Palmeres. 16. Hn. Caunter-; E.
 Cauntur-. 18. E. seeke.

Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
 In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay 20
 Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
 To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
 [2: T. 23-58.]
 At night was come in-to that hostelrye
 Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
 Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle 25
 In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
 That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;
 The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
 And wel we weren esed atte beste.
 And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste, 30
 So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,
 That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
 And made forward erly for to ryse,
 To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.

19. Hn. Bifel; E. Bifil. 23. E. were; rest was. 24. E. Hn.
 compaignye. 26, 32. E. felawship_e_. Hl. pilgryms; E. pilgrimes.
 34. E. oure.

But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space, 35
 Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
 Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,
 To telle yow al the condicioun
 Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
 And whiche they weren, and of what degree; 40

And eek in what array that they were inne:
And at a knight than wol I first biginne.

35. E. Hn. nathelees. 40. Hl. weren; _rest_ were, weere.

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man, =Knight.=
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye, 45
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre)
As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse. 50

49. Hn. Hl. as; _rest_ as in.

At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree. 55
In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,
[3: T. 59-92.]
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See
At many a noble aryve hadde he be. 60
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for our feith at Tramissene
In listes thryes, and ay slayn his foo.
This ilke worthy knight had been also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye, 65
Ageyn another hethen in Turkye:
And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vileinye ne sayde 70
In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors were gode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian he wered a gipoun 75
Al bismotered with his habergeoun;
For he was late y-come from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

53. E. naciouns. 56. E. seege. 60. Hl. ariue; Cm. aryue; E. Hn.
armee; Cp. Ln. arme. 62. E. oure. 64. Pt. had; _rest_ hadde. 67.
E. -moore. 68. E. Hn. Cm. were; _rest_ was. 74. E. Pt. weren; Hl.
Ln. was; _rest_ were. Hl. Hn. he ne was.

With him ther was his sone, a yong SQUYER, =SQUYER.=
A lovyere, and a lusty bachelor, 80
With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.

Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
And wonderly deliver, and greet of strengthe.
And he had been somtyme in chivachye, 85
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,
And born him wel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.

Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede. 90
Singing he was, or floytinge, al the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May.

[4: T. 93-127.]

Short was his gounne, with sleeves longe and wyde.
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.
He coude songes make and wel endyte, 95
luste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryte,
So hote he lovede, that by nightertale
He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale.
Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,
And carf biforn his fader at the table. 100

83. Ln. euen; _rest_ euene. 84. Hl. Ln. delyuer; _rest_ delyuere.
E. Hn. of greet; Cm. of gret; _rest_ gret of. 85. Ln. had. 87. E.
weel. 89, 90. E. meede, reede. 92. E. fressh. E. in; _rest_ is.
E. Hn. Monthe; Cp. month; Hl. Pt. Ln. moneth; Cm. monyth. 96. E.
weel. 98. Hl. Cp. sleep; _rest_ slepte. E. -moore. 99. Hl. Cp.
Ln. lowly; E. Hn. Pt. lowely.

A YEMAN hadde he, and servaunts namo =Yeman=
At that tyme, for him liste ryde so;
And he was clad in cote and hood of grene;
A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily; 105
(Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:
His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),
And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.

A not-heed hadde he, with a broun visage.
Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage. 110
Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,
And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
And on that other syde a gay daggere,
Harneised wel, and sharp as point of spere;
A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene. 115
An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene;
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

101. E. seruantz. 102. E. soo. 104. Hl. Cp. Pt. Ln. pocok. Cm.
bryghte; _rest_ bright. 107. E. Hise. 108, 111. E. baar. 113. E.
oother. 115. Hn. Cristofre; E. Cristophere. E. sheene.

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE, =Prioress=
That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy;
Hir gretteste ooth was but by sēynt Loy; 120
And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.

Ful wel she song the service divyne,
 Entuned in hir nose ful semely;
 And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,
 After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe, 125
 For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.
 At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;
 [5: T. 128-161.]
 She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
 Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
 Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe, 130
 That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.
 In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.
 Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,
 That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene
 Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte. 135
 Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,
 And sikerly she was of greet disport,
 And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port,
 And peyned hir to countrefete chere
 Of court, and been estatlich of manere, 140
 And to ben holden digne of reverence.
 But, for to speken of hir conscience,
 She was so charitable and so pitous,
 She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous
 Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde. 145
 Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde
 With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-breed.
 But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,
 Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte:
 And al was conscience and tendre herte. 150
 Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was;
 Hir nose tretys; hir eyen greye as glas;
 Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed;
 But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
 It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe; 155
 For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
 Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war.
 Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
 A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene;
 And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene, 160
 On which ther was first write a crowned A,
 [6: T. 162-195.]
 And after, *_Amor vincit omnia._*

122. E. soong. 123. E. semeely. 131. Cm. brest; E. Hn. brist.
 132. Cp. moche; Cm. meche; E. Hn. muchel. Hl. lest; E. Hn. Cm.
 list. 134. Hl. was; *_rest_* ther was. 137. E. Hn. desport; *_rest_*
 disport. 140. E. to been; Hl. Hn. *_omit_* to. 144. Hl. Hn. Cp. Ln.
 sawe; E. saugh; Cm. seye. 146. Pt. Ln. had; *_rest_* hadde. 148. Ln.
 wepped; *_rest_* wepte; *_read_* weep; *_cf_*. l. 2878. E. any; *_rest_* oon,
 on, one. 151. E. semyly. E. wympul; Hn. wympel. 160. E. Hn. brooch;
rest broche.

Another NONNE with hir hadde she, =Nonne.=

That was hir chapeleyne, and PREESTES three. =3 Preestes.=

A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrye, =Monk.=
An out-rydere, that lovede venerye; 166
A manly man, to been an abbot able.
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable:
And, whan he rood, men mighte his brydel here
Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere, 170
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-belle,
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.
The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,
By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,
This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace, 175
And held after the newe world the space.
He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,
That seith, that hunters been nat holy men;
Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,
Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees; 180
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre.
But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre;
And I seyde, his opinioun was good.
What sholde he studie, and make him-selven wood,
Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure, 185
Or swinken with his handes, and laboure,
As Austin bit? How shal the world be served?
Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.
Therefore he was a pricasour aright;
Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in flight; 190
Of priking and of hunting for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleeves purfild at the hond
With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;
And, for to festne his hood under his chin, 195
[7: T. 196-231.]
He hadde of gold y-wroght a curious pin:
A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face, as he had been anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good point; 200
His eyen stepe, and rollinge in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed;
His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.
Now certainly he was a fair prelat;
He was nat pale as a for-pyned goost. 205
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

170. Hl. Cp. whistlyng; E. whistlynge. E. Cm. als; Ln. al-so; Hl. so;
rest as. 176. E. Hn. heeld; Cm. held. 178. Hn. Hl. been; E.
beth. 179. Hl. cloysterles; E. Hn. recchelees; Cp. Pt. Ln. recheles;
Cm. rekeles (Ten Brink _proposes_ recetlees). 182. E. Hn. heeld; Cm.
held. 188. E. his owene; _rest_ om. owene. 190. Hl. swifte; _rest_
swift. 193. Hl. Hn. purfild; Cm. purfilid; E. ypurfild. 196. Hl.
a; _rest_ a ful. 196, 218. Ln. had; _rest_ hadde. 199. E. it;

rest he. 203, 4. E. staat, prelaat.

A FRERE ther was, a wantown and a merye, =Frere.=
A limitour, a ful solempne man.
In alle the ordres foure is noon that can 210
So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen, at his owne cost.
Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he 215
With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,
And eek with worthy wommen of the toun:
For he had power of confessioun,
As seyde him-self, more than a curat,
For of his ordre he was licentiat. 220
Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun;
He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
Ther as he wiste to han a good pitaunce;
For unto a povre ordre for to yive 225
Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive.
For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.
For many a man so hard is of his herte,
He may nat wepe al-thogh him sore smerte. 230
Therefore, in stede of weping and preyeres,
[8: T. 232-265.]
Men moot yeve silver to the povre freres.
His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves
And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.
And certainly he hadde a mery note; 235
Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a rote.
Of yeddinges he bar utterly the prys.
His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;
Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.
He knew the tavernes wel in every toun, 240
And everich hostiler and tappestere
Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;
For un-to swich a worthy man as he
Acorded nat, as by his facultee,
To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce. 245
It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce
For to delen with no swich poraille,
But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.
And over-al, ther as profit sholde aryse,
Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse. 250
Ther nas no man no-wher so vertuous.
He was the beste beggere in his hous;
[And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt; 252 b
Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his haunt;] 252 c
For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,
So plesaunt was his ?_In principio_,?
Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente. 255
His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.

And rage he coude, as it were right a whelpe.
 In love-dayes ther coude he muchel helpe. (260)
 For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,
 With a thredbar cope, as is a povre scoler, 260
 But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
 Of double worsted was his semi-cope,
 That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
 [9: T. 266-300.]
 Somwhat he lipsed, for his wantownesse,
 To make his English swete up-on his tonge; 265
 And in his harping, whan that he had songe,
 His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,
 As doon the sterres in the frosty night. (270)
 This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

208. E. wantowne. 211. Hn. muche; E. muchel. 213. Hl. owne; E. owene. 215. E. And; _rest_ Ful. 217. Hl. Hn. eek; _rest_ omit_. 224. Hl. Cm. han; E. haue. 229. E. harde. 231. E. wepyng. 232. E. Hn. moote; _see note_. 234. E. yonge; _rest_ faire. 235. Hl. mery; E. murye. 237. E. baar. Pt. vttirly; Hl. vtturly; E. Hn. outrelly. 240. E. al the; _rest_ euery. 245. E. Hn. Cm. sike; Pt. Ln. seke; see l. 18. 246. Cm. honest; E. honeste. 248. E. selleres. 250. E. lowely. _After_ l. 252, Hn. _alone inserts_ ll. 252 _b_ and 252 _c_. 259. Hl. Cm. cloysterer; E. Hn. Cloystrer. 260. _So all the_ MSS. (_but with_ -bare); _cf_. l. 290. 262. _All_ worstede (_badly_). 266. Pt. Ln. had; _rest_ hadde.

A MERCHANT was ther with a forked berd, =Marchant.=
 In mottelee, and hys on horse he sat, 271
 Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat;
 His botes clasped faire and fetisly.
 His resons he spak ful solempnely,
 Souninge alway thencrees of his winning. 275
 He wolde the see were kept for any thing
 Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.
 Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle. (280)
 This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;
 Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette, 280
 So estatly was he of his governaunce,
 With his bargaynes, and with his chevisaunce.
 For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,
 But sooth to seyn, I noot how men him calle.

271. Ln. motteley; Hl. motteleye; E. Hn. motlee. 272. E. beu_er_e.
 273. Cp. Pt. clapsed; Hl. clapsud. 274. E. Hise. 281. Cp. statly.

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also, =Clerk.=
 That un-to logik hadde longe y-go. 286
 As lene was his hors as is a rake,
 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake; (290)
 But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.
 Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy; 290
 For he had geten him yet no benefyce,
 Ne was so worldly for to have offyce.

For him was lever have at his beddes heed
 Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
 Of Aristotle and his philosophye, 295
 Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrye.
 But al be that he was a philosophre,
 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre; (300)

[10: T. 301-336.]
 But al that he mighte of his freendes hente,
 On bokes and on lerninge he it spente, 300
 And bisily gan for the soules preye
 Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye.
 Of studie took he most cure and most hede.
 Noght o word spak he more than was nede,
 And that was seyde in forme and reverence, 305
 And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.
 Souninge in moral vertu was his speche,
 And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche. (310)

287. E. And; Hl. Al so; _rest_ As. 289. E. Hn. sobrelly; _rest_ soburly. 290. _All_ -bare. Hl. ouerest; E. Hn. Cm. ouereste. 291. Cp. Ln. had; _rest_ hadde. 293. Cp. Ln. Hl. leuer; _rest_ leuere. 300. E. Hl. his; _rest_ on.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and wys, =Man of Lawe.=
 That often hadde been at the parvys, 310
 Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
 Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:
 He semed swich, his wordes weren so wyse.
 lustyce he was ful often in assyse,
 By patente, and by pleyn commissioun; 315
 For his science, and for his heigh renoun
 Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
 So greet a purchasour was no-wher noon. (320)
 Al was fee simple to him in effect,
 His purchasing mighte nat been infect. 320
 No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
 And yet he semed bisier than he was.
 In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,
 That from the tyme of king William were falle.
 Therto he coude endyte, and make a thing, 325
 Ther coude no wight pinche at his wryting;
 And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
 He rood but hoonly in a medlee cote (330)
 Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;
 Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

324. E. yfalle; _rest_ falle. 326. E. Hn. pynchen; _rest_ pynche, pinche.

A FRANKELEYN was in his companye; =Frankeleyn.=
 Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesye.
 Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.
 Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn.
 [11: T. 337-370.]

To liven in delyt was ever his wone, 335
 For he was Epicurus owne sone,
 That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt
 Was verraily felicitee parfyt.
 An housholdere, and that a greet, was he; (340)
 Seint Iulian he was in his contree.
 His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon;
 A bettre envyned man was no-wher noon.
 With-oute bake mete was never his hous,
 Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous,
 It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke, 345
 Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.
 After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
 So chaunged he his mete and his soper. (350)
 Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,
 And many a breem and many a luce in stewe. 350
 Wo was his cook, but-if his sauce were
 Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.
 His table dormant in his halle alway
 Stood redy covered al the longe day.
 At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire; 355
 Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.
 An anlas and a gipser al of silk
 Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk. (360)
 A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour;
 Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour. 360

332. E. heed; _rest_ berd, berde. E. a; _rest_ the. 335. ever] Hl.
 al. 336. E. Hn. Cm. owene; _rest_ owne. 338. Hl. verraily; _rest_
 verray, verrey, uery. 340. E. was he; _rest_ he was. 341. Cm. Ln.
 alwey; Hl. alway; E. Hn. Cp. always. 342. Hl. Pt. nowher; Cm. nower:
 rest neuere; _cf_. l. 360. 349, 350. E. Hn. muwe, stuwe. 357. E.
 Hn. anlaas; Hl. Cm. anlas. 358. E. Hn. heeng. 359. E. Hn. Cm. _om._
 a.

An HABERDASSHER and a CARPENTER, =Habaerdassher.=
 A WEBBE, a DYERE, and a TAPICER, =Carpenter.=
 Were with us eek, clothed in o liveree, =Webbe. Dyere.=
 Of a solempne and greet fraternitee. =Tapicer.=
 Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked was; 365
 Hir knyves were y-chaped noght with bras,
 But al with silver, wrought ful clene and weel,
 Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel. (370)
 [12: T. 371-406.]
 Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,
 To sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys. 370
 Everich, for the wisdom that he can,
 Was shaply for to been an alderman.
 For catel hadde they y-nogh and rente,
 And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
 And elles certein were they to blame. 375
 It is ful fair to been y-clept ?_ma dame_,?
 And goon to vigilyës al bifore,
 And have a mantel royalliche y-bore. (380)

363. _So_ Hl.; _rest_ And they were clothed alle. 364. _All but_ Hl.
and a. 366. Hl. l-chapud; Cm. chapid; _rest_ chaped. 370. E.
yeldehalle. 376. E. Hn. ycleped; Hl. clept; _rest_ cleped, clepid.
380. Hl. _om. 1st_ the.

A COOK they hadde with hem for the nones, =Cook.=
To boille the chiknes with the mary-bones, 380
And poudre-marchant tart, and galingale.
Wel coude he knowe a draughte of London ale.
He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,
Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.
But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me, 385
That on his shine a mormal hadde he;
For blankmanger, that made he with the beste. (389)

383. E. Hl. boille; Cm. boyle; _rest_ broille, broile. 388. E.
wonyng; Hn. wonyng.

A SHIPMAN was ther, woning fer by weste: =Shipman.=
For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.
He rood up-on a rouncy, as he couthe, 390
In a gowne of falding to the knee.
A daggere hanging on a laas hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hote somer had maad his hewe al broun;
And, certeinly, he was a good felawe. 395
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawe
From Burdeux-ward, whyl that the chapman sleep.
Of nyce conscience took he no keep. (400)
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sente hem hoom to every lond. 400
But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
His stremes and his daungers him bisydes,
His herberwe and his mone, his lodemenage,
Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.
[13: T. 407-441.]
Hardy he was, and wys to undertake; 405
With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.
He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,
From Gootlond to the cape of Finistere, (410)
And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne;
His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne. 410

396. Cm. l-drawe; _rest_ drawe. 407. Hl. _ins._ wel; _rest_ om._

With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF PHISYK, =Doctour.=
In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk
To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
For he was grounded in astronomye.
He kepte his pacient a ful greet del 415
In houres, by his magik naturel.
Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his images for his pacient. (420)

He knew the cause of everich maladye,
 Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or drye, 420
 And where engendred, and of what humour;
 He was a verrey parfit practisour.
 The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the rote,
 Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.
 Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries, 425
 To sende him drogges and his letuaries,
 For ech of hem made other for to winne;
 Hir frendschiipe nas nat newe to biginne. (430)
 Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,
 And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus, 430
 Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;
 Serapion, Razis, and Avicen;
 Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn;
 Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
 Of his diete mesurable was he, 435
 For it was of no superfluitee,
 But of greet norissing and digestible.
 His studie was but litel on the Bible. (440)
 In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,
 [14: T. 442-478.]
 Lyned with taffata and with sendal; 440
 And yet he was but esy of dispence;
 He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
 For gold in phisik is a cordial,
 Therfore he lovede gold in special.

415. Hl. wondurly wel; _rest_ a ful greet deel (del). 416. E. Hn.
 natureel. 418. E. Hn. hise; Cm. hese. 421. E. Cm. Hl. where they;
 Hn. where it. 424. Cm. Ln. seke; _rest_ sike. 425. E. hise. 426.
 E. Hn. Cm. drogges; Cp. Pt. Ln. drugges; Hl. dragges. 430. Pt. Rufus;
 Cm. Rufijs; Hn. Cp. Ln. Hl. Rusus; E. Risus. 431. Hl. Pt. Old; _rest_
 Olde.

A good WYF was ther of bisyde BATHE, =Wyf of Bathe.=
 But she was som-del deaf, and that was scathe. 446
 Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,
 She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt. (450)
 In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
 That to the offring bifore hir sholde goon; 450
 And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she,
 That she was out of alle charitee.
 Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground;
 I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
 That on a Sondag were upon hir heed. 455
 Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
 Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and newe.
 Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe. (460)
 She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
 Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve, 460
 Withouten other companye in youthe;
 But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.
 And thryes hadde she been at Ierusalem;

She hadde passed many a straunge streem;
 At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne, 465
 In Galice at seint lame, and at Coloigne.
 She coude mucche of wandring by the weye.
 Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye. (470)
 Up-on an amblere esily she sat,
 Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat 470
 As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
 A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,
 And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
 In felawschip wel coude she laughe and carpe.
 Of remedies of love she knew per-chaunce, 475
 For she coude of that art the olde daunce.

452. Hl. was thanne out. 453, 455. E. weren. 457. Cp. Hl. schoos;
 E. Pt. Ln. shoes. 458. E. Hn. Boold. 463. Ln. had. 467. Ln.
 mucche; Hl. Pt. Cp. moche; E. Hn. muchel. 474. E. Hn. felaweschip.
 476. Hl. For of that art sche knew.

[15: T. 479-513.]

A good man was ther of religioun, =Persoun.=
 And was a povre PERSOUN of a toun; (480)
 But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
 He was also a lerned man, a clerk, 480
 That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
 His parisshe devoutly wolde he teche.
 Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
 And in adversitee ful pacient;
 And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes. 485
 Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes,
 But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
 Un-to his povre parisshe aboute (490)
 Of his offring, and eek of his substaunce.
 He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce. 490
 Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder,
 But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
 In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte
 The ferreste in his parisshe, mucche and lyte,
 Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf. 495
 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
 That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte;
 Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte; (500)
 And this figure he added eek ther-to,
 That if gold ruste, what shal iren do? 500
 For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
 No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
 And shame it is, if a preest take keep,
 A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
 Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive, 505
 By his clenness, how that his sheep shold live.
 He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
 And leet his sheep encombred in the myre, (510)
 And ran to London, un-to sēynt Poules,

To seken him a chaunterie for soules, 510
 Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;
 [16: T. 514-547.]
 But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,
 So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie;
 He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
 And though he holy were, and vertuous, 515
 He was to sinful man nat despitous,
 Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
 But in his teching discreet and benigne. (520)
 To drawen folk to heven by fairnesse
 By good ensample, was his businesse: 520
 But it were any persone obstinat,
 What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
 Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.
 A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher noon is.
 He wayted after no pompe and reverence, 525
 Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
 But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
 He taughte, and first he folwed it him-selve. (530)

485. Hl. I-proued; E. Cp. Pt. preued. 486. E. hise. 490. Hl. Cm.
 Pt. han; E. Hn. Cp. Ln. haue. 493. E. siknesse. 497. E. firste.
 E. _ins_ that (_by mistake_) _before_ he. 503. Hl. _alone ins_ that
 after if. 505. Hl. ?iue; E. yeue. 509. Hl. Cp. seynte. 510.
 Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. chaunterie; E. Hn. chaurtrie. 512. E. dwelleth;
 rest dwelte. E. keepeth; Ln. keped; _rest_ kepte. 514. Hl. no;
 rest not a. 516. Hl. to senful man nought; _rest_ nat to sinful
 man. 520. _All but_ Hl. this was. 522. Hn. lowe; E. lough. 523.
 E. nonys. 525. E. waiteth; _rest_ waited. 527. E. hise. 528. Hl.
 and; _rest_ but.

With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother, =Plowman.=
 That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother, 530
 A trewe swinker and a good was he,
 Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.
 God loved he best with al his hole herte
 At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,
 And thanne his neighebour right as him-selve. 535
 He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and delve,
 For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
 Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might. (540)
 His tythes payed he ful faire and wel,
 Bothe of his propre swink and his catel. 540
 In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

534. E. Pt. Ln. he; _rest_ him. 537. for] Hn. Hl. with. 539. Cp.
 Pt. payed; Cm. Hl. payede; E. Hn. payde. 540. propre] Hl. owne.

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

The MILLER was a stout carl, for the nones, =Miller.=

[17: T. 548-582.]

Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones; 546
That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,
At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram. (550)
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,
Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre, 550
Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
And ther-to brood, as though it were a spade.
Up-on the cop right of his nose he hade
A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres, 555
Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres;
His nose-thirles blake were and wyde.
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde; (560)
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
He was a langlere and a goliardeys, 560
And that was most of sinne and harlotryes.
Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen thryes;
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
A whyt cote and a blew hood wered he.
A baggepype wel coude he blowe and sowne, 565
And ther-with-al he broghte us out of towne.

550. Cp. Hl. nolde; Hn. noolde; E. ne wolde. 555. E. toft; Ln. tofte:
rest tuft. E. herys. 556. Hn. bristles; E. brustles; Pt. brysteles;
Hl. Cp. berstles. E. erys. 558. _All but_ Cp. and a. 559. Hl.
wyde; _rest_ greet, gret. 565. Hl. _om._ wel.

A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple, =Maunciple.=
Of which achatours mighte take exemple (570)
For to be wyse in bying of vitaille.
For whether that he payde, or took by taille, 570
Algate he wayted so in his achat,
That he was ay biforn and in good stat.
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
The wisdom of an heep of lerned men? 575
Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten,
That were of lawe expert and curious;
Of which ther were a doseyn in that hous, (580)
Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and lond
Of any lord that is in Engelond, 580

[18: T. 583-615.]

To make him live by his propre good,
In honour dettelees, but he were wood,
Or live as scarsly as him list desire;
And able for to helpen al a shire
In any cas that mighte falle or happe; 585
And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe.

570. E. Hn. wheither. 571. E. Achaat. 572. E. staat. 577. E.
weren. 578. E. whiche. Cm. doseyn; E. duszeyne. 581. E. maken.
582. Cm. but; Cp. Pt. but if that; _rest_ but if. 585. E. Hn. caas.

The REVE was a sclendre colerik man,	=Reve.=
His berd was shave as ny as ever he can.	(590)
His heer was by his eres round y-shorn.	
His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.	590
Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,	
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.	
Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne;	
Ther was noon auditour coude on him winne.	
Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the reyn,	595
The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.	
His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,	
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye,	(600)
Was hoolly in this reves governing,	
And by his covenaut yaf the rekening,	600
Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age;	
Ther coude no man bringe him in arrerage.	
Ther nas baillif, ne herde, ne other hyne,	
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;	
They were adrad of him, as of the deeth.	605
His woning was ful fair up-on an heeth,	
With grene treës shadwed was his place.	
He coude better than his lord purchase.	(610)
Ful riche he was astored prively,	
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly,	610
To yeve and lene him of his owne good,	
And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.	
In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister;	
[19: T. 616-652.]	
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.	
This reve sat up-on a ful good stot,	615
That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.	
A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,	
And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.	(620)
Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,	
Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.	620
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,	
And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.	

589. _All but_ Hl. Ln. _ins._ ful _after_ eres. 590. E. doked. 594. E. of; _rest_ on. 603. ne (2)] E. Hn. Cp. Pt. nor. 604. Hl. they (_for_ he). E. Cm. _om._ ne. 606. Hl. fair; E. faire. 607. E. Hn. shadwed; Hl. I-schadewed; Cm. I-schadewid; Cp. Pt. shadewed; Ln. schadowed. 611. Hl. owne; E. owene. 612. E. _om._ and. E. gowne; _rest_ cote. 613. _So_ Hn. Hl.; E. _and rest_ hadde lerned. Cp. Hl. mester. 618. E. baar.

A SOMNOUR was ther with us in that place,	=Somnour.=
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubinnes face,	
For sawcefleem he was, with eyen narwe.	625
As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe;	
With scalled browes blake, and piled berd;	
Of his visage children were aferd.	(630)
Ther nas quik-silver, litarge, ne brimstoon,	
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,	630

Ne oynement that wolde dense and byte,
 That him mighte helpen of his whelkes whyte,
 Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.
 Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
 And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as blood. 635
 Thanne wolde he speke, and crye as he were wood.
 And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
 Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn. (640)
 A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,
 That he had lerned out of som decree; 640
 No wonder is, he herde it al the day;
 And eek ye knowen wel, how that a lay
 Can clepen ?Watte,? as well as can the pope.
 But who-so coude in other thing him grope,
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye; 645
 Ay ?_Questio quid iuris_? wolde he crye.
 He was a gentil harlot and a kinde;
 A bettre felawe sholde men nocht finde. (650)
 He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,
 A good felawe to have his concubyn 650
 [20: T. 653-687.]
 A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle:
 Ful prively a finch eek coude he pulle.
 And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,
 He wolde techen him to have non awe,
 In swich cas, of the erchedeknes curs, 655
 But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;
 For in his purs he sholde y-punissshed be.
 ?Purs is the erchedeknes helle,? seyde he. (660)
 But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;
 Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede? 660
 For curs wol slee, right as assoilling saveth?
 And also war him of a _significavit_.
 In daunger hadde he at his owne gyse
 The yonge girles of the diocyse,
 And knew hir counseil, and was al hir reed. 665
 A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,
 As greet as it were for an ale-stake;
 A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake. (670)

623. Cm. Pt. Somnour; Hl. sompnour; E. Hn. Somonour. 627. E. Hn. Cm.
 scaled. 629. Cp. Pt. Hl. bremston. 632. E. the; _rest_ his. 652.
 E. Ln. Hl. And; _rest_ Ful. 655. Cm. Cp. erche-; E. erce-; Hl.
 arche-. 660. Cp. Ln. him; Hl. Pt. to; _rest_ om._ 661. Hl. Pt.
 saueth; E. sauith. 663. Hl. owne; E. owene. 668. E. bokeleer.

With him ther rood a gentil PARDONER =Pardoner.=
 Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer, 670
 That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
 Ful loude he song, ?Com hider, love, to me.?
 This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,
 Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.
 This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex, 675
 But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike of flex;

By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
And ther-with he his shuldres overspradde; (680)
But thinne it lay, by colpons oon and oon;
But hood, for lolitee, ne wered he noon, 680
For it was trussed up in his walet.

Him thoughte, he rood al of the newe let;
Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.
A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe. 685

[21: T. 688-722.]

His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,
Bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.
A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot. (690)

No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,
As smothe it was as it were late y-shave; 690
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.

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

He seyde, he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That sēynt Peter hadde, whan that he wente
Up-on the see, til lesu Crist him hente. (700)

He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones. 700

But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
A povre person dwelling up-on lond,
Up-on a day he gat him more moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.
And thus, with feyned flaterye and lapes, 705

He made the person and the peple his apes.
But trewely to tellen, atte laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste. (710)

Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest he song an offertorie; 710

For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
He moste preche, and wel affyle his tonge,
To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;
Therefore he song so meriely and loude.

669. E. was; _rest_ rood, rode. 670. E. Cm. Pt. Rounciuale. 672. E.
soong. 676. E. heeng. 677, 678. E. hise. 680. But] Cm. Hl. And.
Hl. ne; _rest_ omit_. 683. E. Discheuelee. 685. Hl. Cp. on; _rest_
vp on. 686. Hl. lay; _which the rest omit_. 687. Hl. Cm. come;
rest comen. 688. Hl. eny (_for_ hath a). 690. Hn. yshaue; E.
shaue. 695. _All_ oure. 713. Hl. right (_for_ ful). 714. Cp. Pt.
Ln. so meriely; E. Hn. Cm. the murierly.

Now have I told you shortly, in a clause, 715
Thestat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the cause
Why that assembled was this companye
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye, (720)
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
But now is tyme to yow for to telle 720

[22: T. 723-758.]

How that we baren us that ilke night,
Whan we were in that hostelrye alight.
And after wol I telle of our viage,
And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.
But first I pray yow, of your curteisye, 725
That ye narette it nat my vileinye,
Thogh that I pleyedly speke in this matere,
To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere; (730)
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes properly.
For this ye knowen al-so wel as I, 730
Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche and large;
Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe, 735
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe.
He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another. (740)
Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,
And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it. 740
Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him rede,
The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.
Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Here in this tale, as that they sholde stonde; 745
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.

715. E. Hl. shortly; _rest_ soothly. 716. Hl. Thestat; Hn. Thestaat;
E. The staat; Cm. Cp. The estat. 718. E. as; _rest_ at. 724. E.
oure (_but_ our _in_ l. 723). 725. E. youre; Hl. ?our. 726. E.
Hn. Cm. narette; Cp. Pt. Hl. ne rette. 734. E. or; Hl. ne; _rest_
and. 741. _All but_ Hl. _om._ that.

Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,
And to the soper sette he us anon; (750)
And served us with vitaille at the beste.
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us leste. 750
A semely man our hoste was with-alle
For to han been a marshal in an halle;
A large man he was with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:
Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught, 755
And of manhod him lakkede right naught.

[23: T. 759-793.]

Eek therto he was right a mery man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan, (760)
And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,
Whan that we hadde maad our rekeninges; 760
And seyde thus: ?Now, lordinges, trewely,
Ye been to me right welcome hertely:
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye
At ones in this herberwe as is now. 765

Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.
And of a mirthe I am right now bithoght,
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste nocht. (770)

747. E. chiere. E. hoost (_see_ l. 751). 752. Hl. han; _rest om._
754. E. Hn. was. 755. E. Hn. Boold. 756. Cm. Cp. lakkede; E.
lakked. 761. now] Hl. lo. 764. Hl. ne saugh; _rest_ saugh nat
(seigh not, &c.). Hl. Cm. mery; E. myrie.

Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow spede,
The blisful martir quyte yow your mede. 770
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;
For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon
To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon;
And therefore wol I maken yow disport, 775
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.
And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,
Now for to stonden at my lugement, (780)
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye, 780
Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,
But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed.
Hold up your hond, withouten more speche.?

774. a] E. the; Hn. _om._ 778. _All but_ Hl. _om._ Now. 782. E. But
if; _rest_ But. E. myrie. Hl. merye smyteth of.

Our conseil was nat longe for to seche;
Us thoughte it was nocht worth to make it wys, 785
And graunted him withouten more avys,
And bad him seye his verdit, as him leste.

785. Hl. nas. 787. Cp. verdit; Pt. veredit; Hl. Ln. verdite; Cm.
verdoit; E. Hn. voidit.

?Lordinges,? quod he, ?now herkneth for the beste; (790)
But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn, 790
That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye,
[24: T. 794-827.]
In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,
Of aventures that whylom han bifalle. 795
And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,
That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of best sentence and most solas, (800)
Shal have a soper at our aller cost
Here in this place, sitting by this post, 800
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
And for to make yow the more mery,
I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,
Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde.

And who-so wol my lugement withseye 805
Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo, (810)
And I wol erly shape me therfore.?

789. E. taak; Ln. tak; Cp. Pt. take; Hl. Hn. taketh. 791. Cp. Hl.
your; _rest_ our; _cf._ l. 803. 795. Hl. ther (_for_ whylom). 797,
798. E. caas, solaas. 802. E. Hn. Cp. mury. 803. Hl. my seluen
gladly; E. my self goodly. 805. E. wole (_but_ wol _in_ l. 809).

This thing was graunted, and our othes swore 810
With ful glad herte, and preyden him also
That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,
And that he wolde been our governour,
And of our tales luge and reportour,
And sette a soper at a certeyn prys; 815
And we wold reuled been at his devys,
In heigh and lowe; and thus, by oon assent,
We been acorded to his lugement. (820)
And ther-up-on the wyn was fet anon;
We dronken, and to reste wente echon, 820
With-outen any lenger tarynge.

812. E. would. 816. Hl. wolde; Pt. wold; _rest_ wol, wolen, wiln,
wil. 817. Hl. lowe; E. lough.

A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,
Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,
And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,
And forth we riden, a litel more than pas, 825
[25: T. 828-860.]
Un-to the watering of seint Thomas.
And there our host bigan his hors areste,
And seyde; ?Lordinges, herkneth, if yow leste. (830)
Ye woot your forward, and I it yow recorde.
If even-song and morwe-song acorde, 830
Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.
As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,
Who-so be rebel to my lugement
Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent.
Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twinne; 835
He which that hath the shortest shal biginne.
Sire knight,? quod he, ?my maister and my lord,
Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord. (840)
Cometh neer,? quod he, ?my lady prioresse;
And ye, sir clerk, lat be your shamfastnesse, 840
Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man.?

822. E. Hn. that; Hl. that the; _rest_ the. E. gan for; Hn. Cp. Hl.
bigan. 823. E. Hn. aller; Hl. althur; Cp. alther; Pt. Ln. alder.
825. E. paas. 829. E. foreward (_badly_). E. Hn. _om._ l. 831.
Hl. ferst a tale. 835. Cp. Pt. Ln. ferther; Hl. forther. 836. E.
Hn. shorteste. 840. E. shamefastnesse.

Anon to drawn every wight bigan,
 And shortly for to tellen, as it was,
 Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,
 The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knight, 845
 Of which ful blythe and glad was every wight;
 And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,
 By forward and by composicioun, (850)
 As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?
 And whan this gode man saugh it was so, 850
 As he that wys was and obedient
 To kepe his forward by his free assent,
 He seyde: ?Sin I shal biginne the game,
 What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!
 Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye.? 855

848, 852. E. foreward (_badly_). 850. _All insert_ that _after_ saugh
 (_needlessly_). 854. Hl. thou (_for_ the).

And with that word we riden forth our weye;
 And he bigan with right a mery chere
 His tale anon, and seyde in this manere. (860)

=Here endeth the prolog of this book; and here biginneth the first
 tale, which is the knightes tale.=

857. Cm. mery; E. myrie. 858. _So_ E. Hl.; _rest_ as ye may here.
 COLOPHON: _from_ MS. Sloane 1685, _which has_ Heere endith, heere,
 knyghte (_sic_).

[26: T. 861-885.]

* * * * *

THE KNIGHTES TALE.

* * * * *

Iamque domos patrias, Scithice post aspera gentis
 Prelia, laurigero, &c.
 [Statius, _Theb._ xii. 519.]

Whylom, as olde stories tellen us,
 Ther was a duk that highte Theseus; 860
 Of Athenes he was lord and governour,
 And in his tyme swich a conquerour,
 That gretter was ther noon under the sonne.
 Ful many a riche contree hadde he wonne;
 What with his wisdom and his chivalrye, 865
 He conquered al the regne of Femenye,
 That whylom was y-cleped Scithia;
 And weddede the quene Ipolita, (10)
 And broghte hir hoom with him in his contree
 With muchel glorie and greet solempnitee, 870

And eek hir yonge suster Emelye.
And thus with victorie and with melodye
Lete I this noble duk to Athenes ryde,
And al his hoost, in armes, him bisyde.

QUOTATION; _so in_ E. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. 865. E. Hl. That; _rest_
What. 868. Cp. Hl. weddede; Slo. weddide; _rest_ wedded. 871. E.
faire; Pt. yenge; _rest_ yonge.

And certes, if it nere to long to here, 875
I wolde han told yow fully the manere,
How wonnen was the regne of Femenye
By Theseus, and by his chivalrye; (20)
And of the grete bataille for the nones
Bitwixen Athenës and Amazones; 880
And how asseged was Ipolita,
The faire hardy quene of Scithia;
And of the feste that was at hir weddinge,
[27: T. 886-921.]
And of the tempest at hir hoom-cominge;
But al that thing I moot as now forbere. 885
I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere,
And wayke been the oxen in my plough.
The remenant of the tale is long y-nough. (30)
I wol nat letten eek noon of this route;
Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute, 890
And lat see now who shal the soper winne;
And ther I lefte, I wol ageyn biginne.

876. Hl. han told ?ow; E. yow haue toold; _rest_ haue toold
(told). 880. Tyrwhitt _inserts_ the _after_ and; _but see_ 968, 973,
1023, &c. 889. Hl. lette eek non of al; _rest_ letten, _and omit_
al. 892. Hl. agayn; E. Hn. Cp. Pt. ayeyn.

This duk, of whom I make mencion,
When he was come almost unto the toun,
In al his wele and in his moste pryde, 895
He was war, as he caste his eye asyde,
Wher that ther kneled in the hye weye
A companye of ladies, tweye and tweye, (40)
Ech after other, clad in clothes blake;
But swich a cry and swich a wo they make, 900
That in this world nis creature livinge,
That herde swich another weymentinge;
And of this cry they nolde never stenten,
Til they the reynes of his brydel henten.

897. E. _om._ hye; _rest_ hye, heighe, hihe, highe, high.

?What folk ben ye, that at myn hoom-cominge 905
Perturben so my feste with cryinge??
Quod Theseus, ?have ye so greet envye
Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and crye? (50)
Or who hath yow misboden, or offended?

And telleth me if it may been amended; 910
And why that ye ben clothed thus in blak??

The eldest lady of hem alle spak,
When she hadde swowned with a deedly chere,
That it was routhe for to seen and here,
And seyde: ?Lord, to whom Fortune hath given 915
Victorie, and as a conquerour to liven,
Noght greveth us your glorie and your honour;
But we biseken mercy and socour. (60)
Have mercy on our wo and our distresse.

[28: T. 922-957.]

Som drope of pitee, thurgh thy gentillesse, 920
Up-on us wrecched wommen lat thou falle.

For certes, lord, ther nis noon of us alle,
That she nath been a duchesse or a quene;
Now be we caitifs, as it is wel sene:
Thanked be Fortune, and hir false wheel, 925
That noon estat assureth to be weel.

And certes, lord, to abyden your presence,
Here in the temple of the goddessse Clemence (70)
We han ben waytinge al this fourteenight;
Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy might. 930

912. Cm. eldest; E. eldeste. 914. E. routhe; Ln. rewthe; Slo.
reuthe. Hl. or; _rest_ and. 915. Hn. yiuen; E. yeuen. 916. Hn.
conquerour; E. conqueror. 917. Hn. Hl. Noght; E. Pt. Ln. Nat. Hl.
om. 2nd your. 922. Hl. nys; _rest_ is. 923. E. Hn. Pt. Ln. ne
hath. 924. Cp. Hl. caytifs; E. Hn. Pt. caytyues.

I wrecche, which that wepe and waille thus,
Was whylom wyf to king Capaneus,
That starf at Thebes, cursed be that day!
And alle we, that been in this array,
And maken al this lamentacioun, 935
We losten alle our housbondes at that toun,
Whyl that the sege ther-aboute lay.
And yet now the olde Creon, weylaway! (80)
That lord is now of Thebes the citee,
Fulild of ire and of iniquitee, 940
He, for despyt, and for his tirannye,
To do the dede bodyes vileinye,
Of alle our lordes, whiche that ben slawe,
Hath alle the bodyes on an heep y-drawe,
And wol nat suffren hem, by noon assent, 945
Neither to been y-buried nor y-brent,
But maketh houndes ete hem in despyt.?
And with that word, with-outen more respyt, (90)
They fillen gruf, and cryden pitously,
?Have on us wrecched wommen som mercy, 950
And lat our sorwe sinken in thyn herte.?

931. E. crie; Hn. Hl. waille; Cp. Pt. weile. 938. _Only_ Hl. _om._
now. 943. Hl. i-slawe. 944. E. He hath; _rest_ Hath.

This gentil duk doun from his courser sterte
 With herte pitous, whan he herde hem speke.
 Him thoughte that his herte wolde breke,
 Whan he saugh hem so pitous and so mat, 955
 [29: T. 958-995.]
 That whylom weren of so greet estat.
 And in his armes he hem alle up hente,
 And hem conforteth in ful good entente; (100)
 And swoor his ooth, as he was trewe knight,
 He wolde doon so ferforthly his might 960
 Up-on the tyraunt Creon hem to wreke,
 That al the peple of Grece sholde speke
 How Creon was of Theseus y-served,
 As he that hadde his deeth ful wel deserved.
 And right anoon, with-uten more abood, 965
 His baner he desplayeth, and forth rood
 To Thebes-ward, and al his host bisyde;
 No neer Athenës wolde he go ne ryde, (110)
 Ne take his ese fully half a day,
 But onward on his wey that night he lay; 970
 And sente anoon Ipolita the quene,
 And Emelye hir yonge suster shene,
 Un-to the toun of Athenës to dwelle;
 And forth he rit; ther nis namore to telle.

955. E. maat. 956. E. estaat. 974. Hn. Cp. nys; _rest_ is.

The rede statue of Mars, with spere and targe, 975
 So shyneth in his whyte baner large,
 That alle the feeldes gliteren up and doun;
 And by his baner born is his penoun (120)
 Of gold ful riche, in which ther was y-bete
 The Minotaur, which that he slough in Crete. 980
 Thus rit this duk, thus rit this conquerour,
 And in his host of chivalrye the flour,
 Til that he cam to Thebes, and alighte
 Faire in a feeld, ther as he thoghte fighte.
 But shortly for to speken of this thing, 985
 With Creon, which that was of Thebes king,
 He faught, and slough him manly as a knight
 In pleyn bataille, and putte the folk to flight; (130)
 And by assaut he wan the citee after,
 And rente adoun bothe wal, and sparre, and rafter; 990
 And to the ladyes he restored agayn
 The bones of hir housbondes that were slayn,
 To doon obsequies, as was tho the gyse.
 [30: T. 996-1031.]
 But it were al to long for to devyse
 The grete clamour and the waymentinge 995
 That the ladyes made at the brenninge
 Of the bodyes, and the grete honour
 That Theseus, the noble conquerour, (140)
 Doth to the ladyes, whan they from him wente;

But shortly for to telle is myn entente. 1000
Whan that this worthy duk, this Theseus,
Hath Creon slayn, and wonne Thebes thus,
Stille in that feeld he took al night his reste,
And dide with al the contree as him leste.

984. Hn. thoghte; E. thoughte. 992. E. weren. 996. Hl. Which that.

To ransake in the tas of bodyes dede, 1005
Hem for to strepe of harneys and of wede,
The pilours diden businesse and cure,
After the bataille and disconfiture. (150)
And so bifel, that in the tas they founde,
Thurgh-girt with many a grevous bloody wounde, 1010
Two yonge knightes liggig by and by,
Bothe in oon armes, wroght ful richely,
Of whiche two, Arcita hight that oon,
And that other knight hight Palamon.
Nat fully quike, ne fully dede they were, 1015
But by hir cote-armures, and by hir gere,
The heraudes knewe hem best in special,
As they that weren of the blood royal (160)
Of Thebes, and of sustren two y-born. 1020
Out of the tas the pilours han hem torn,
And han hem caried softe un-to the tente
Of Theseus, and he ful sone hem sente
To Athenës, to dwellen in prisoun
Perpetuelly, he nolde no raunsoun.
And whan this worthy duk hath thus y-don, 1025
He took his host, and hoom he rood anon
With laurer crowned as a conquerour;
And there he liveth, in loye and in honour, (170)
Terme of his lyf; what nedeth wordes mo?
[31: T. 1032-1066.]
And in a tour, in angwish and in wo, 1030
Dwellen this Palamoun and eek Arcite,
For evermore, ther may no gold hem quyte.

1005, 1009, 1020. E. Hn. Cm. taas; Hl. cas; Cp. Pt. Ln. caas; _read_
tas. 1005. Hn. Cm. Hl. of; _rest_ of the. 1013, 1014. Hl. hight; E.
highte. 1022. E. Hl. ful soone he. 1023. Hl. Tathenes for to.
1029. E. Cm. _om._ his. E. lyue; _rest_ lyf, lif. 1031. E. Cm. Hl.
This Palamon and his felawe Arcite.

This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by day,
Til it fil ones, in a morwe of May,
That Emelye, that fairer was to sene 1035
Than is the lillie upon his stalke grene,
And fressher than the May with floures newe?
For with the rose colour stroof hir hewe, (180)
I noot which was the fairer of hem two?
Er it were day, as was hir wone to do, 1040
She was arisen, and al redy dight;
For May wol have no slogardye a-night.

The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,
 And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,
 And seith, ?Arys, and do thyn observaunce.? 1045
 This maked Emelye have remembraunce
 To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.
 Y-clothed was she fresh, for to devyse; (190)
 Hir yelow heer was broyded in a tresse,
 Bihinde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse. 1050
 And in the gardin, at the sonne up-riste,
 She walketh up and doun, and as hir liste
 She gadereth floures, party whyte and rede,
 To make a sotil gerland for hir hede,
 And as an aungel hevenly she song. 1055
 The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
 Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun,
 (Ther-as the knightes weren in prisoun, (200)
 Of whiche I tolde yow, and tellen shal)
 Was evene loynant to the gardin-wal, 1060
 Ther as this Emelye hadde hir pleyinge.
 Bright was the sonne, and cleer that morweninge,
 And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
 As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,
 [32: T. 1067-1103.]
 Was risen, and romed in a chambre on heigh, 1065
 In which he al the noble citee seigh,
 And eek the gardin, ful of braunches grene,
 Ther-as this fresshe Emelye the shene (210)
 Was in hir walk, and romed up and doun.
 This sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun, 1070
 Goth in the chambre, roming to and fro,
 And to him-self compleyning of his wo;
 That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, ?alas!
 And so bifel, by aventure or cas,
 That thurgh a window, thikke of many a barre 1075
 Of yren greet, and square as any sparre,
 He caste his eye upon Emelya,
 And ther-with-al he bleynte, and cryde ?a!?
 As though he stongen were un-to the herte. (220)
 And with that cry Arcite anon up-sterste, 1080
 And seyde, ?Cosin myn, what eyleth thee,
 That art so pale and deedly on to see?
 Why crydestow? who hath thee doon offence?
 For Goddes love, tak al in pacience
 Our prisoun, for it may non other be; 1085
 Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.
 Som wikke aspect or disposicioun
 Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun, (230)
 Hath yeven us this, al-though we hadde it sworn;
 So stood the heven whan that we were born; 1090
 We moste endure it: this is the short and pleyn.?

1036. Hl. on hire. 1039. E. Hl. fyner; Cm. fynere; Hn. Cp. Pt.
 fairer. 1042. E. slogardrie; _rest_ slogardye (sloggardye,
 sluggardie). 1049. E. Hn. Cm. Cp. broyded; Pt. breided; Ln. Hl.

browded. 1054. Ln. sotil; Cp. soty; E. Hn. Cm. subtil; Pt. subtile;
Hl. certeyn. 1055. Hl. Pt. heuently; Cm. heuaneliche; E. Hn. Cp. Ln.
heuenysshly. 1063. E. And this Palamon. 1065. Hl. Cp. Pt. on;
rest an. 1091. _Only_ E. _om._ it.

This Palamon answerde, and seyde ageyn,
?Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinioun
Thou hast a veyn imaginacioun.
This prison caused me nat for to crye. 1095
But I was hurt right now thurgh-out myn yë
In-to myn herte, that wol my bane be.
The fairnesse of that lady that I see (240)
Yond in the gardin romen to and fro,
Is cause of al my crying and my wo. 1100
I noot wher she be womman or goddesse;
[33: T. 1104-1139.]
But Venus is it, soothly, as I gesse?
And ther-with-al on kneës doun he fil,
And seyde: ?Venus, if it be thy wil
Yow in this gardin thus to transfigure 1105
Bifore me, sorweful wrecche creature,
Out of this prisoun help that we may scapen.
And if so be my destinee be shapen (250)
By eterne word to dyen in prisoun,
Of our linage have som compassioun, 1110
That is so lowe y-broght by tirannye?
And with that word Arcite gan espye
Wher-as this lady romed to and fro.
And with that sighte hir beautee hurte him so,
That, if that Palamon was wounded sore, 1115
Arcite is hurt as mucche as he, or more.
And with a sigh he seyde pitously:
?The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly (260)
Of hir that rometh in the yonder place;
And, but I have hir mercy and hir grace, 1120
That I may seen hir atte leeste weye,
I nam but deed; ther nis namore to seye.?

1096. Cm. Pt. ye; Hn. lye; Cp. Hl. yhe; E. eye. 1101. Cm. wheper; Hl.
whepur. 1103. Hl. Cp. a doun. 1115. E. _wrongly om._ was. 1116.
Hn. mucche; E. moche. 1122. E. is; _rest_ nys.

This Palamon, whan he tho wordes herde,
Dispitously he loked, and answerde:
?Whether seistow this in ernest or in pley?? 1125

1125 E. Wheither.

?Nay,? quod Arcite, ?in ernest, by my fey!
God help me so, me list ful yvele pleye.?

This Palamon gan knitte his browes tweye: (270)
?It nere,? quod he, ?to thee no greet honour
For to be fals, ne for to be traytour 1130

To me, that am thy cosin and thy brother
Y-sworn ful depe, and ech of us til other,
That never, for to dyen in the peyne,
Til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne,
Neither of us in love to hindren other, 1135
Ne in non other cas, my leve brother;
But that thou sholdest trewely forthren me
[34: T. 1140-1174.]

In every cas, and I shal forthren thee. (280)
This was thyn ooth, and myn also, certeyn;
I wot right wel, thou darst it nat withseyn. 1140

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

I loved hir first, and tolde thee my wo
As to my counseil, and my brother sworn
To forthre me, as I have told biforn. (290)

For which thou art y-bounden as a knight
To helpen me, if it lay in thy might, 1150
Or elles artow fals, I dar wel seyn.?

1132. til] Cm. Pt. Ln. Hl. to. 1134. E. Ln. Hl. _om._ the. 1135. E.
hyndre; Cm. hynderyn. 1138. E. as; _rest_ and. 1141, 1151. E. Hn.
artow; _rest_ art thou. 1145. E. Nay; _rest_ Now. 1147. E. Cm. and
to my.

This Arcitë ful proudly spak ageyn,
?Thou shalt,? quod he, ?be rather fals than I;
But thou art fals, I telle thee utterly;
For _par amour_ I loved hir first er thow. 1155

What wiltow seyn? thou wistest nat yet now
Whether she be a womman or goddesse!
Thyn is affeccoun of holinesse, (300)

And myn is love, as to a creature;
For which I tolde thee myn aventure 1160
As to my cosin, and my brother sworn.

I pose, that thou lovedest hir biforn;
Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,
That ?who shal yeve a lover any lawe??

Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan, 1165
Than may be yeve to any erthly man.
And therefore positif lawe and swich decree

Is broke al-day for love, in ech degree. (310)
A man moot nedes love, maugree his heed.
He may nat fleen it, thogh he sholde be deed, 1170

Al be she mayde, or widwe, or elles wyf.
And eek it is nat lykly, al thy lyf,
[35: T. 1175-1210.]

To stonden in hir grace; namore shal I;
For wel thou woost thy-selven, verraily,
That thou and I be dampned to prisoun 1175
Perpetuelly; us gayneth no raunsoun.

We stryve as dide the houndes for the boon,
 They foughte al day, and yet hir part was noon; (320)
 Ther cam a kyte, whyl that they were wrothe,
 And bar away the boon bitwixe hem bothe. 1180
 And therefore, at the kinges court, my brother,
 Ech man for him-self, ther is non other.
 Love if thee list; for I love and ay shal;
 And soothly, leve brother, this is al.
 Here in this prisoun mote we endure, 1185
 And everich of us take his aventure.?

1154. E. Hn. And; _rest_ But. Hl. Cm. uttirly; Cp. Pt. Ln. witterly; E.
 Hn. outrelly. 1156. Cp. Pt. wilt thou; Hl. wolt thou. 1157. E.
 Wheither. 1163. Cm. Wist thou; Hl. Ln. Wost thou; Pt. Woost thow.
 1166. E. of; _rest_ to. 1167. Hl. _om._ And. 1168. L. Cm. broken.
 1170. Hn. Cp. Pt. fleeen; E. Hl. flee. 1177. Hn. Cm. Hl. stryue;
 rest stryuen. 1179. E. _om._ that. _All but_ Cm. Hl. _ins._ so
 after were.

Greet was the stryf and long bitwixe hem tweye,
 If that I hadde leyser for to seye; (330)
 But to theeffect. It happed on a day,
 (To telle it yow as shortly as I may) 1190
 A worthy duk that highte Perotheus,
 That felawe was un-to duk Theseus
 Sin thilke day that they were children lyte,
 Was come to Athenes, his felawe to visyte,
 And for to pleye, as he was wont to do, 1195
 For in this world he loved no man so:
 And he loved him as tendrely ageyn.
 So wel they loved, as olde bokes seyn, (340)
 That whan that oon was deed, sothly to telle,
 His felawe wente and soghte him doun in helle; 1200
 But of that story list me nat to wryte.
 Duk Perotheus loved wel Arcite,
 And hadde him knowe at Thebes yeer by yere;
 And fynally, at requeste and preyere
 Of Perotheus, with-oute any raunsoun, 1205
 Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoun,
 Freely to goon, wher that him liste over-al,
 In swich a gyse, as I you tellen shal. (350)
 [36: T. 1211-1247.]
 This was the forward, pleyedly for tendyte,
 Bitwixen Theseus and him Arcite: 1210
 That if so were, that Arcite were y-founde
 Ever in his lyf, by day or night or stounde
 In any contree of this Theseus,
 And he were caught, it was acorded thus,
 That with a swerd he sholde lese his heed; 1215
 Ther nas non other remedye ne reed,
 But taketh his leve, and homward he him spedde;
 Let him be war, his nekke lyth to wedde! (360)

1192. E. to; Hl. to the; _rest_ un-to. 1195. E. won; Cm. wone; _rest_

wont. 1197. E. Cp. als; Hn. Cm. Hl. as. 1198. E. louede. 1200.
Hn. soghte; E. soughte. 1205. Hl. Cp. Pt. with-oute; _rest_
with-uten. 1217. Hl. (_alone_) took.

How greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite!
The deeth he feleth thurgh his herte smyte; 1220
He wepeth, wayleth, cryeth pitously;
To sleen him-self he wayteth prively.
He seyde, ?Allas that day that I was born!
Now is my prison worse than biforn;
Now is me shape eternally to dwelle 1225
Noght in purgatorie, but in helle.
Allas! that ever knew I Perotheus!
For elles hadde I dwelled with Theseus (370)
Y-fetered in his prisoun ever-mo.
Than hadde I been in blisse, and nat in wo. 1230
Only the sighte of hir, whom that I serve,
Though that I never hir grace may deserve,
Wolde han suffised right y-nough for me.
O dere cosin Palamon,? quod he,
?Thyn is the victorie of this aventure, 1235
Ful blisfully in prison maistow dure;
In prison? certes nay, but in paradys!
Wel hath fortune y-turned thee the dys, (380)
That hast the sighte of hir, and I thabsence.
For possible is, sin thou hast hir presence, 1240
And art a knight, a worthy and an able,
That by som cas, sin fortune is chaungeable,
Thou mayst to thy desyr som-tyme atteyne.
But I, that am exyled, and bareyne
Of alle grace, and in so greet despeir, 1245
[37: T. 1248-1283.]
That ther nis erthe, water, fyr, ne eir,
Ne creature, that of hem maked is,
That may me helpe or doon confort in this. (390)
Wel oughte I sterve in wanhope and distresse;
Farwel my lyf, my lust, and my gladnesse! 1250

1223. that (i)] Hn. Hl. the. E. he; _rest_ I. 1226. Hn. Noght; E.
Nat; Cm. Not; _rest_ Nought. E. _ins_ my _after_ in. 1228. Hl.
dweld. 1237. Cp. Pt. Ln. _om_ in. 1242. E. (_alone_) _om_ by.
1248. E. heele; _rest_ helpe.

Allas, why pleynen folk so in commune
Of purveyaunce of God, or of fortune,
That yeveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse
Wel bettre than they can hem-self devyse?
Som man desyreth for to han richesse, 1255
That cause is of his mordre or greet siknesse.
And som man wolde out of his prison fayn,
That in his hous is of his meynee slayn. (400)
Infinite harmes been in this matere;
We witen nat what thing we preyen here. 1260
We faren as he that dronke is as a mous;

A dronke man wot wel he hath an hous,
 But he noot which the righte wey is thider;
 And to a dronke man the wey is slider.
 And certes, in this world so faren we; 1265
 We seken faste after felicitee,
 But we goon wrong ful often, trewely.
 Thus may we seyen alle, and namely I, (410)
 That wende and hadde a greet opinioun,
 That, if I mighte escapen from prisoun, 1270
 Than hadde I been in loye and perfit hele,
 Ther now I am exyled fro my wele.
 Sin that I may nat seen yow, Emelye,
 I nam but deed; ther nis no remedye.?

1256. Cp. Ln. mordre; E. Hn. moerdre; Cm. Pt: mordre; Hl. morthre.

1260. E. (_alone_) _om._ thing. 1262. E. Cm. wel that he. 1268. Hl. seyen; E. Hn. Cm. Cp. seyn. 1272. Ther] E. That.

Up-on that other syde Palamon, 1275
 Whan that he wiste Arcite was agon,
 Swich sorwe he maketh, that the grete tour
 Resouneth of his youling and clamour. (420)
 The pure fettres on his shines grete
 Weren of his bittre salte teres wete. 1280
 ?Allas!? quod he, ?Arcita, cosin myn,
 [38: T. 1284-1317.]
 Of al our stryf, God woot, the fruyt is thyn.
 Thow walkest now in Thebes at thy large,
 And of my wo thou yevest litel charge.
 Thou mayst, sin thou hast wisdom and manhede, 1285
 Assemblen alle the folk of our kinrede,
 And make a werre so sharp on this citee,
 That by som aventure, or som trettee, (430)
 Thou mayst have hir to lady and to wyf,
 For whom that I mot nedes lese my lyf. 1290
 For, as by wey of possibilitee,
 Sith thou art at thy large, of prison free,
 And art a lord, greet is thyn avauntage,
 More than is myn, that sterve here in a cage.
 For I mot wepe and wayle, whyl I live, 1295
 With al the wo that prison may me yive,
 And eek with peyne that love me yiveth also,
 That doubleth al my torment and my wo.? (440)
 Ther-with the fyr of Ielousye up-sterete
 With-inne his brest, and hente him by the herte 1300
 So woodly, that he lyk was to biholde
 The box-tree, or the asshe dede and colde.
 Tho seyde he; ?O cruel goddes, that governe
 This world with binding of your word eterne,
 And wryten in the table of athamaunt 1305
 Your parlement, and your eterne graunt,
 What is mankinde more un-to yow holde
 Than is the sheep, that rouketh in the folde? (450)
 For slayn is man right as another beste,

And dwelleth eek in prison and areste, 1310
And hath siknesse, and greet adversitee,
And ofte tymes giltelees, pardee!

1278. E. Resouned; _rest_ Resouneth. Cp. Hl. yollyng; Pt. Ln.
yellinge. 1290. _All_ moste, most, muste; _but read_ mot: _see_ I.
1295. 1296. Hl. ?yue; E. yeue. 1297. E. yeueth. 1299. Hl.
lalousye; E. lalousie. 1303. Hl. Tho; E. Thanne. E. crueel
gooddes(!). 1305. Hl. Cm. athamaunte; E. Atthamaunt. 1309. Cm. Hl.
beste; E. beest. 1310. Cm. areste; Hl. arreste; E. arreest. 1312,
1314. Cm. Cp. Hl. gilteles; E. giltlees.

What governaunce is in this prescience,
That giltelees tormenteth innocence?
And yet encreseth this al my penaunce, 1315
[39: T. 1318-1353.]

That man is bounden to his observaunce,
For Goddes sake, to letten of his wille,
Ther as a beest may al his lust fulfille. (460)
And whan a beest is deed, he hath no peyne;
But man after his deeth moot wepe and pleyne, 1320
Though in this world he have care and wo:

With-outen doute it may stonden so.
The answeere of this I lete to divynis,
But wel I woot, that in this world gret pyne is.
Allas! I see a serpent or a theef, 1325
That many a trewe man hath doon mescheef,
Goon at his large, and wher him list may turne.

But I mot been in prison thurgh Saturne, (470)
And eek thurgh luno, lalous and eek wood,
That hath destroyed wel ny al the blood 1330
Of Thebes, with his waste walles wyde.
And Venus sleeth me on that other syde
For lelousye, and fere of him Arcite.?

1315. Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. encreseth; E. encresseth. 1320. _So_ Hn. Cm.
Hl.; _rest_ after his deeth man. 1323. _So_ Hl.; _rest_ lete I.
1331. E. hise. 1333. E. lalousie.

Now wol I stinte of Palamon a lyte,
And lete him in his prison stille dwelle, 1335
And of Arcita forth I wol yow telle.

The somer passeth, and the nightes longe
Encresen double wyse the peynes stronge (480)
Bothe of the love and the prisoner.
I noot which hath the wofullere mester. 1340

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

1337. E. (_alone_) sonne. 1338. E. Encressen. 1344. Cm. Cp. Pt. vp
(_perhaps rightly_).

Yow loveres axe I now this questioun,
Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamoun? (490)
That oon may seen his lady day by day,
But in prison he moot dwelle alway. 1350
That other wher him list may ryde or go,
[40: T. 1354-1386.]
But seen his lady shal he never-mo.
Now demeth as yow liste, ye that can,
For I wol telle forth as I bigan.

1347. E. Now (_wrongly_); rest Yow. 1350. Hn. Cp. Pt. moot he.
1353. Ln. liste; Cm. lyste; Hl. luste; _rest_ list.

=Explicit prima Pars. Sequitur pars secunda.=

Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen was, 1355
Ful ofte a day he swelte and seyde ?allas,
For seen his lady shal he never-mo.
And shortly to concluden al his wo, (500)
So muche sorwe had never creature
That is, or shal, whyl that the world may dure. 1360
His sleep, his mete, his drink is him biraft,
That lene he wex, and drye as is a shaft.
His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde;
His hewe falwe, and pale as asshen colde,
And solitarie he was, and ever allone, 1365
And wailling al the night, making his mone.
And if he herde song or instrument,
Then wolde he wepe, he mighte nat be stent; (510)
So feble eek were his spirits, and so lowe,
And chaunged so, that no man coude knowe 1370
His speche nor his vois, though men it herde.
And in his gere, for al the world he ferde
Nat oonly lyk the loveres maladye
Of Hereos, but rather lyk manye
Engendred of humour malencolyk, 1375
Biforen, in his celle fantastyk.
And shortly, turned was al up-so-doun
Bothe habit and eek disposicioun (520)
Of him, this woful love-re daun Arcite.

1359. Hl. Pt. Ln. had; _rest_ hadde. 1362. E. Pt. wexeth. 1364. Hi.
Cm. Cp. falwe; E. Hn. falow. 1369. E. spiritz. 1376. E. Biforn his
owene; Cm. Be-forn hese owene; Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. Biforn his; Hl. Beforne
in his.

What sholde I al-day of his wo endyte? 1380
Whan he endured hadde a yeer or two
This cruel torment, and this peyne and wo,
At Thebes, in his contree, as I seyde,
Up-on a night, in sleep as he him leyde,

[41: T. 1387-1424.]

Him thoughte how that the winged god Mercurie 1385
Biforn him stood, and bad him to be murye.
His slepy yerde in hond he bar uprighte;
An hat he werede up-on his heres brighte. (530)
Arrayed was this god (as he took keep)
As he was whan that Argus took his sleep; 1390
And seyde him thus: ?To Athenes shaltou wende;
Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende.?
And with that word Arcite wook and sterte.
?Now trewely, how sore that me smerte,?
Quod he, ?to Athenes right now wol I fare; 1395
Ne for the drede of deeth shal I nat spare
To see my lady, that I love and serve;
In hir presence I recche nat to sterve.? (540)

1382. E. crueel. 1388. E. vp (_perhaps rightly_); _rest_ vp-on.
1389. E. I; _rest_ he.

And with that word he caughte a greet mirour,
And saugh that chaunged was al his colour, 1400
And saugh his visage al in another kinde.
And right anoon it ran him in his minde,
That, sith his face was so disfigured
Of maladye, the which he hadde endured,
He mighte wel, if that he bar him lowe, 1405
Live in Athenes ever-more unknowe,
And seen his lady wel ny day by day.
And right anon he chaunged his array, (550)
And cladde him as a povre laborer,
And al allone, save oonly a squyer, 1410
That knew his privetee and al his cas,
Which was disgysed povrely, as he was,
To Athenes is he goon the nexte way.
And to the court he wente up-on a day,
And at the gate he profreth his servyse, 1415
To drugge and drawe, what so men wol devyse.
And shortly of this matere for to seyn,
He fil in office with a chamberleyn, (560)
The which that dwelling was with Emelye.
For he was wys, and coude soon aspye 1420
Of every servaunt, which that serveth here.
Wel coude he hewen wode, and water bere,
[42: T. 1425-1461.]
For he was yong and mighty for the nones,
And ther-to be was strong and big of bones
To doon that any wight can him devyse. 1425
A yeer or two he was in this servyse,
Page of the chambre of Emelye the brighte;
And ?Philostrate? he seide that he highte. (570)
But half so wel biloved a man as he
Ne was ther never in court, of his degree; 1430
He was so gentil of condicioun,
That thurghout al the court was his renoun.

They seyden, that it were a charitee
 That Theseus wolde enhauncen his degree,
 And putten him in worshipful servyse, 1435
 Ther as he mighte his vertu excercyse.
 And thus, with-inne a whyle, his name is spronge
 Bothe of his dedes, and his goode tonge, (580)
 That Theseus hath taken him so neer
 That of his chambre he made him a squyer, 1440
 And yaf him gold to mayntene his degree;
 And eek men broghte him out of his contree
 From yeer to yeer, ful prively, his rente;
 But honestly and slyly he it spente,
 That no man wondred how that he it hadde. 1445
 And three yeer in this wyse his lyf he ladde,
 And bar him so in pees and eek in werre,
 Ther nas no man that Theseus hath derre. (590)
 And in this blisse lete I now Arcite,
 And speke I wol of Palamon a lyte. 1450

1424. E. Cm. long; _rest_ strong. 1431. E. Hl. _ins._ his _after_
 of. 1441. E. Hn. Cp. gaf.

In derknesse and horrible and strong prisoun
 This seven yeer hath seten Palamoun,
 Forpyned, what for wo and for distresse;
 Who feleth double soor and hevinesse
 But Palamon? that love destreyneth so, 1455
 That wood out of his wit he gooth for wo;
 And eek therto he is a prisoner
 Perpetually, noght oonly for a yeer. (600)
 Who coude ryme in English proprely
 [43: T. 1462-1497.]
 His martirdom? for sothe, it am nat I; 1460
 Therefore I passe as lightly as I may.

1454. E. Hn. Pt. soor; Cp. Ln. sore; Cm. Hl. sorwe. E. _om._ and.

It fel that in the seventhe yeer, in May,
 The thridde night, (as olde bokes seyn,
 That al this storie tellen more pleyn,)
 Were it by aventure or destinee, 1465
 (As, whan a thing is shapen, it shal be,)
 That, sone after the midnight, Palamoun,
 By helping of a freend, brak his prisoun, (610)
 And fleeth the citee, faste as he may go;
 For he had yive his gayler drinke so 1470
 Of a clarree, maad of a certeyn wyn,
 With nercotikes and opie of Thebes fyn,
 That al that night, thogh that men wolde him shake,
 The gayler sleep, he mighte nat awake;
 And thus he fleeth as faste as ever he may. 1475
 The night was short, and faste by the day,
 That nedes-cost he moste him-selven hyde,
 And til a grove, faste ther besyde, (620)

With dredful foot than stalketh Palamoun.
 For shortly, this was his opinioun, 1480
 That in that grove he wolde him hyde al day,
 And in the night than wolde he take his way
 To Thebes-ward, his freendes for to preye
 On Theseus to helpe him to werreye;
 And shortly, outhere he wolde lese his lyf, 1485
 Or winnen Emelye un-to his wyf;
 This is theeffect and his entente pleyn.

1470. Hl. ?iue; E. yeue. 1472. E. Of; _rest_ With. 1477. E.
 moot; _rest_ moste, most, muste. 1479. E. Hn. Cm. thanne; _rest_
 than.

Now wol I torne un-to Arcite ageyn, (630)
 That litel wiste how ny that was his care,
 Til that fortune had broght him in the snare. 1490

1488. E. Hn. Ln. to; _rest_ vn-to.

The bisy larke, messenger of day,
 Saluëth in hir song the morwe gray;
 And fyry Phebus ryseth up so brighte,
 That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,
 And with his stremes dryeth in the greves 1495
 [44: T. 1498-1532.]

The silver dropes, hanging on the leues.
 And Arcite, that is in the court royal
 With Theseus, his squyer principal, (640)
 Is risen, and loketh on the myrie day.
 And, for to doon his observaunce to May, 1500
 Remembring on the poynt of his desyr,

He on a courser, sterting as the fyr,
 Is riden in-to the feeldes, him to pleye,
 Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye;
 And to the grove, of which that I yow tolde, 1505
 By aventure, his wey he gan to holde,

To maken him a gerland of the greves,
 Were it of wodebinde or hawethorn-leues, (650)
 And loude he song ageyn the sonne shene:
 ?May, with alle thy floures and thy grene, 1510
 Wel-come be thou, faire fresshe May,

I hope that I som grene gete may.?
 And from his courser, with a lusty herte,
 In-to the grove ful hastily he sterte,
 And in a path he rometh up and doun, 1515
 Ther-as, by aventure, this Palamoun

Was in a bush, that no man mighte him see,
 For sore afered of his deeth was he. (660)

No-thing ne knew he that it was Arcite:
 God wot he wolde have trowed it ful lyte. 1520
 But sooth is seyde, gon sithen many yeres,
 That ?feeld hath eyen, and the wode hath eres.?
 It is ful fair a man to bere him evene,

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

1491. day] Hl. May. 1495. E. hise. 1497. Hl. Arcite; _rest_
Arcita. 1502. E. Hn. Cm. a; _rest_ his. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. stertyng;
E. Hn. startlynge; Cm. stertelynge. 1511. Hl. wel faire; _rest om._
wel. 1512. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. In; _rest_ l. 1514. E. a; _rest_ the.
1518. Hn. Hl. afered; Cm. ofered; _rest_ aferd. E. (_alone_) _ins._
thanne _bef._ was. 1521. Hl. Pt. goon; Cm. Ln. gon; E. Hn. Cp. go.
1526. E. Hn. al; _rest_ of.

Whan that Arcite had romed al his fille, (670)
And songen al the roundel lustily,
In-to a studie he fil sodeynly, 1530
[45: T. 1533-1567.]

As doon thise loveres in hir queynte geres,
Now in the croppe, now down in the breres,
Now up, now down, as boket in a welle.
Right as the Friday, soothly for to telle,
Now it shyneth, now it reyneth faste, 1535
Right so can gery Venus overcaste
The hertes of hir folk; right as hir day
Is gerful, right so chaungeth she array. (680)
Selde is the Friday al the wyke y-lyke.

1530. E. fil al; _rest om._ al. 1532. E. Hn. Cm. crop; Cp. Hl. Pt.
crope. 1536. E. Hn. Cm. kan; _rest_ gan. 1538. E. gereful; Cp.
geerful; Hl. grisful; _rest_ gerful. 1539. Hl. wyke; Hn. Cp. wike;
Pt. Ln. weke; Cm. wouke; E. wowke.

Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan to syke, 1540
And sette him down with-outen any more:
?Alas!? quod he, ?that day that I was bore!
How longe, luno, thurgh thy crueltee,
Woltow werreyen Thebes the citee?
Allas! y-brought is to confusioun 1545
The blood royal of Cadme and Amphiou;
Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man
That Thebes bulte, or first the toun bigan, 690
And of the citee first was crouned king,
Of his linage am I, and his of-spring 1550
By verray ligne, as of the stok royal:
And now I am so caitif and so thral,
That he, that is my mortal enemy,
I serve him as his squyer povrely.
And yet doth luno me wel more shame, 1555
For I dar noght biknowe myn owne name;
But ther-as I was wont to highte Arcite,
Now highte I Philostrate, noght worth a myte. 700
Allas! thou felle Mars, allas! luno,
Thus hath your ire our kinrede al fordo, 1560
Save only me, and wrecched Palamoun,

That Theseus martyreth in prisoun.
And over al this, to sleen me utterly,
Love hath his fyry dart so brenningly
Y-stiked thurgh my trewe careful herte, 1565
[46: T. 1568-1602.]

That shapen was my deeth erst than my sherte.
Ye sleen me with your eyen, Emelye;
Ye been the cause wherfor that I dye. (710)
Of al the remenant of myn other care
Ne sette I nat the mountaunce of a tare, 1570
So that I coude don aught to your plesaunce!?
And with that word he fil down in a traunce
A longe tyme; and after he up-sterterte.

1551. Cm. Pt. Hl. lyne. 1556. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. owne; E. owene. 1557.
highte] Hl. hote. 1560. E. kynrede; _rest_ lynage (lignage). 1563.
Hl. vtterly; E. outrely. 1573. _So_ E.; _rest_ afterward (_for_
after). Hl. _om_ he.

This Palamoun, that thoughte that thurgh his herte
He felte a cold swerd sodeynliche glyde, 1575
For ire he quook, no lenger wolde he byde.
And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,
As he were wood, with face deed and pale, (720)
He sterterte him up out of the buskes thikke,
And seyde: ?Arcite, false traitour wikke, 1580
Now artow hent, that lovest my lady so,
For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,
And art my blood, and to my counseil sworn,
As I ful ofte have told thee heer-biforn,
And hast by-iaiped here duk Theseus, 1585
And falsly chaunged hast thy name thus;
I wol be deed, or elles thou shalt dye.
Thou shalt nat love my lady Emelye, (730)
But I wol love hir only, and namo;
For I am Palamoun, thy mortal fo. 1590
And though that I no wepne have in this place,
But out of prison am astart by grace,
I drede noght that outhere thou shalt dye,
Or thou ne shalt nat loven Emelye.
Chees which thou wilt, for thou shalt nat astarte.? 1595

1579. Hl. bussches; Cm. boschis; Ln. boskes. 1581. E. Hn. artow;
rest art thou. 1584. told] E. Cm. seyde. 1589. E. Hn. namo; Hl.
Cm. no mo. 1595. E. Hn. wolt. Hl. for; _rest_ or.

This Arcitë, with ful despitous herte,
Whan he him knew, and hadde his tale herd,
As fiers as leoun, pulled out a swerd, (740)
And seyde thus: ?by God that sit above,
Nere it that thou art sik, and wood for love, 1600
[47: T. 1603-1639.]
And eek that thou no wepne hast in this place,
Thou sholdest never out of this grove pace,

That thou ne sholdest dyen of myn hond.
 For I defye the seurtee and the bond
 Which that thou seyst that I have maad to thee. 1605
 What, verray fool, think wel that love is free,
 And I wol love hir, maugre al thy might!
 But, for as muche thou art a worthy knight, (750)
 And wilnest to darreyne hir by batayle,
 Have heer my trouthe, to-morwe I wol nat fayle, 1610
 With-ouen witing of any other wight,
 That here I wol be founden as a knight,
 And bringen harneys right y-nough for thee;
 And chees the beste, and leve the worste for me.
 And mete and drinke this night wol I bringe 1615
 Y-nough for thee, and clothes for thy beddinge.
 And, if so be that thou my lady winne,
 And slee me in this wode ther I am inne, (760)
 Thou mayst wel have thy lady, as for me.?
 This Palamon answerde: ?I graunte it thee.? 1620
 And thus they been departed til a-morwe,
 When ech of hem had leyd his feith to borwe.

1598. E. Hn. his; _rest_ a. 1599. E. sit; Cm. set; _rest_ sitteth.
 1604. Hl. seurte; Cp. sewrte; E. seurete; Hn. seuretee. 1609. Cp.
 derreyne; Hl. deryne. 1614. Hn. chees; Cm. Hl. ches; _rest_ chese.

O Cupide, out of alle charitee!
 O regne, that wolt no felawe have with thee!
 Ful sooth is seyde, that love ne lordshipe 1625
 Wol noght, his thankes, have no felaweshipe;
 Wel finden that Arcite and Palamoun.
 Arcite is riden anon un-to the toun, (770)
 And on the morwe, er it were dayes light,
 Ful prively two harneys hath he dight, 1630
 Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne
 The bataille in the feeld bitwix hem tweyne.
 And on his hors, allone as he was born,
 He carieth al this harneys him biforn;
 And in the grove, at tyme and place y-set, 1635
 This Arcite and this Palamon ben met.
 Tho chaungen gan the colour in hir face;
 [48: T. 1640-1675.]
 Right as the hunter in the regne of Trace, (780)
 That stondest at the gappe with a spere,
 Whan hunted is the leoun or the bere, 1640
 And hereth him come russhing in the greves,
 And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,
 And thinketh, ?heer cometh my mortel enemy,
 With-oute faile, he moot be deed, or I;
 For outhur I mot sleen him at the gappe, 1645
 Or he mot sleen me, if that me mishappe:?
 So ferden they, in chaunging of hir hewe,
 As fer as everich of hem other knewe. (790)
 Ther nas no good day, ne no saluing;
 But streight, with-ouen word or rehersing, 1650

Everich of hem halp for to armen other,
 As freendly as he were his owne brother;
 And after that, with sharpe speres stronge
 They foynen ech at other wonder longe.
 Thou mightest wene that this Palamoun 1655
 In his fighting were a wood leoun,
 And as a cruel tygre was Arcite:
 As wilde bores gonne they to smyte, (800)
 That frothen whyte as foom for ire wood.
 Up to the ancle foghte they in hir blood. 1660
 And in this wyse I lete hem fighting dwelle;
 And forth I wol of Theseus yow telle.

1626. E. hir; _rest_ his. 1634. E. the; Hn. Cm. Hl. this. 1637. Hl.
 Tho; _rest_ To. 1638. Hl. honter_us_; _rest_ hunters, hunterys; _ed._
 1542, hunter. 1640. E. and; _rest_ or. 1651. Cm. halp; Cp. hilp; E.
 Hn. heelp; Hl. Pt. helpeth; Ln. helpe. Hl. Ln. _om._ for. 1652. E.
 owene. 1656. Tyrwhitt _ins._ as _bef._ a. 1659. E. Hn. whit.
 1660. E. anlee. 1662. E. wole.

The destinee, ministre general,
 That executeth in the world over-al
 The purveyaunce, that God hath seyn biforn, 1665
 So strong it is, that, though the world had sworn
 The contrarie of a thing, by ye or nay,
 Yet somtyme it shal fallen on a day (810)
 That falleth nat eft with-inne a thousand yere.
 For certainly, our appetytes here, 1670
 Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,
 Al is this reuled by the sighte above.
 This mene I now by mighty Theseus,
 [49: T. 1676-1712.]
 That for to honten is so desirous,
 And namely at the grete hert in May, 1675
 That in his bed ther daweth him no day,
 That he nis clad, and redy for to ryde
 With hunte and horn, and houndes him bisyde. (820)
 For in his hunting hath he swich delyt,
 That it is al his loye and appetyt 1680
 To been him-self the grete hertes bane;
 For after Mars he serveth now Diane.

1672. this] Hl. it.

Cleer was the day, as I have told er this,
 And Theseus, with alle loye and blis,
 With his Ipolita, the fayre quene, 1685
 And Emelye, clothed al in grene,
 On hunting be they riden royally.
 And to the grove, that stood ful faste by, (830)
 In which ther was an hert, as men him tolde,
 Duk Theseus the streighte wey hath holde. 1690
 And to the launde he rydeth him ful right,
 For thider was the hert wont have his flight,

And over a brook, and so forth on his weye.
This duk wol han a cours at him, or tweye,
With houndes, swiche as that him list comaunde. 1695

1693. E. Hl. in; _rest_ on. 1695. Hn. Cp. Pt. that; _rest om._

And whan this duk was come un-to the launde,
Under the sonne he loketh, and anon
He was war of Arcite and Palamon, (840)
That foughten breme, as it were bores two;
The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro 1700
So hidously, that with the leeste strook
It seemed as it wolde felle an ook;
But what they were, no-thing he ne woot.
This duk his courser with his spores smoot,
And at a stert he was bitwix hem two, 1705
And pulled out a swerd and cryed, ?ho!
Namore, up peyne of lesing of your heed.
By mighty Mars, he shal anon be deed, (850)
That smyteth any strook, that I may seen!
But telleth me what mister men ye been, 1710
[50: T. 1713-1749.]
That been so hardy for to fighten here
With-uten luge or other officere,
As it were in a listes royally??

1699. E. Cm. Hl. bores; _rest_ boles. 1702. E. fille. 1706. E.
crude; Hn. Cp. Pt. cryed. 1707. E. Hn. Ln. vp-on; _rest_ vp. 1710.
Hn. Cm. Cp. Pt. myster; E. mystiers; Ln. mester; Hl. mestir.

This Palamon answerde hastily,
And seyde: ?sire, what nedeth wordes mo? 1715
We have the deeth deserved bothe two.
Two woful wrecches been we, two caytyves,
That been encombred of our owne lyves; (860)
And as thou art a rightful lord and luge,
Ne yeve us neither mercy ne refuge, 1720
But slee me first, for seynte charitee;
But slee my felawe eek as wel as me.
Or slee him first; for, though thou knowe it lyte,
This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,
That fro thy lond is banished on his heed, 1725
For which he hath deserved to be deed.
For this is he that cam un-to thy gate,
And seyde, that he highte Philostrate. (870)
Thus hath he laped thee ful many a yeer,
And thou has made him thy chief squyer; 1730
And this is he that loveth Emelye.
For sith the day is come that I shal dye,
I make pleyedly my confessioun,
That I am thilke woful Palamoun,
That hath thy prison broken wikkedly. 1735
I am thy mortal fo, and it am I
That loveth so hote Emelye the brighte,

That I wol dye present in hir sighte. (880)
Therefore I axe deeth and my luwyse;
But slee my felawe in the same wyse, 1740
For bothe han we deserved to be slayn.?

1716. E. Hn. disserued. 1718. E. Hn. Cm. owene. 1723. Hl. Hn.
knowe; _rest_ knowest. 1741. Ln. Hl. we haue.

This worthy duk answerde anon agayn,
And seyde, ?This is a short conclusioun:
Youre owne mouth, by your confessioun,
Hath dampned you, and I wol it recorde, 1745
It nedeth nocht to pyne yow with the corde.
Ye shul be deed, by mighty Mars the rede!?
[51: T. 1750-1787.]

The quene anon, for verray wommanhede, (890)
Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye,
And alle the ladies in the companye. 1750

Gret pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,
That ever swich a chaunce sholde falle;
For gentil men they were, of greet estat,
And no-thing but for love was this debat;
And sawe hir bloody woundes wyde and sore; 1755
And alle cryden, bothe lasse and more,
?Have mercy, lord, up-on us wommen alle!?

And on hir bare knees adoun they falle, (900)
And wolde have kist his feet ther-as he stood,
Til at the laste aslaked was his mood; 1760

For pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.
And though he first for ire quook and sterte,
He hath considered shortly, in a clause,
The trespass of hem bothe, and eek the cause:
And al-though that his ire hir gilt accused, 1765

Yet in his reson he hem bothe excused;
As thus: he thoghte wel, that every man
Wol helpe him-self in love, if that he can, (910)
And eek delivere him-self out of prisoun;
And eek his herte had compassioun 1770

Of wommen, for they wepen ever in oon;
And in his gentil herte he thoghte anoon,
And softe un-to himself he seyde: ?fy
Up-on a lord that wol have no mercy,
But been a leoun, bothe in word and dede, 1775
To hem that been in repentaunce and drede

As wel as to a proud despitous man
That wol maynteyne that he first bigan! (920)
That lord hath litel of discrecioun,

That in swich cas can no divisioun, 1780
But weyeth pryde and humblesse after oon.?
And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,

He gan to loken up with eyen lighte,
And spak these same wordes al on highte:?
The god of love, a! _benedicite_, 1785

[52: T. 1788-1823.]

How mighty and how greet a lord is he!
 Ayeins his might ther gayneth none obstacles,
 He may be cleped a god for his miracles; (930)
 For he can maken at his owne gyse
 Of everich herte, as that him list devyse. 1790
 Lo heer, this Arcite and this Palamoun,
 That quitly weren out of my prisoun,
 And mighte han lived in Thebes royally,
 And witen I am hir mortal enemy,
 And that hir deeth lyth in my might also, 1795
 And yet hath love, maugree hir eyen two,
 Y-broght hem hider bothe for to dye!
 Now loketh, is nat that an heigh folye? (940)
 Who may been a fool, but-if he love?
 Bihold, for Goddes sake that sit above, 1800
 Se how they blede! be they noght wel arrayed?
 Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, y-payed
 Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse!
 And yet they wenen for to been ful wyse
 That serven love, for aught that may bifalle! 1805
 But this is yet the beste game of alle,
 That she, for whom they han this lolitee,
 Can hem ther-for as mucche thank as me; (950)
 She woot namore of al this hote fare,
 By God, than woot a cokkow or an hare! 1810
 But al mot been assayed, hoot and cold;
 A man mot been a fool, or yong or old;
 I woot it by my-self ful yore agoon:
 For in my tyme a servant was I oon.
 And therefore, sin I knowe of loves peyne, 1815
 And woot how sore it can a man distreyne,
 As he that hath ben caught ofte in his las,
 I yow foryeve al hoolly this trespas, (960)
 At requeste of the quene that kneleth here,
 And eek of Emelye, my suster dere. 1820
 And ye shul bothe anon un-to me swere,
 [53: T. 1824-1859.]
 That never-mo ye shul my contree dere,
 Ne make werre up-on me night ne day,
 But been my freendes in al that ye may;
 I yow foryeve this trespas every del.? 1825
 And they him swore his axing fayre and wel,
 And him of lordshipe and of mercy preyde,
 And he hem graunteth grace, and thus he seyde: (970)

1744. E. Hn. Cm. owene; Hl. Cp. Pt. owne. 1747. Hn. Pt. shul; Cm. Hl.
 schul; E. shal. 1753. E. estaat. 1754. E. debaat. 1767. Hn. Cm.
 Cp. As; _rest_ And. 1770. Hl. Pt. Ln. had; _rest_ hadde. 1771. Hn.
 wepten; _rest_ wepen. 1788. E. hise. 1789. E. Hn. Cm. owene; Cp.
 Pt. owne. 1790. E. diuyse. 1797. Hl. I-brought; _rest_ Broght,
 Brought. 1799. _See note._ Hl. if that; _rest_ but if. 1810. E. Hn.
 Cp. of; _rest_ or. 1811. and] Cm. Hl. or. 1817. E. Hn. Cp. Pt.
 laas; Cm. las; Hl. Ln. lace. 1818. E. Pt. trespas. 1822. E. Hn.
 Cp. Ln. shal. contree] Cp. Ln. Hl. coroune. 1825, 1826. E. deel,

weel; Hn. Cm. Cp. del, wel. Hl. Pt. swore; _rest_ sworn, sworne, sworyn. 1828. Hl. Cm. graunted.

?To speke of royal linage and richesse,
Though that she were a quene or a princesse, 1830
Ech of yow bothe is worthy, doutelees,
To wedden whan tyme is, but nathelees
I speke as for my suster Emelye,
For whom ye have this stryf and lelousye;
Ye woot your-self, she may not wedden two 1835
At ones, though ye fighten ever-mo:
That oon of yow, al be him looth or leef,
He moot go pypen in an ivy-leef; (980)
This is to seyn, she may nat now han bothe,
Al be ye never so lelous, ne so wrothe. 1840
And for-thy I yow putte in this degree,
That ech of yow shal have his destinee
As him is shape; and herkneth in what wyse;
Lo, heer your ende of that I shal devyse.

1832. E. _wrongly repeats_ doutelees. 1834. E. Hn. Cp. lalousye.
1837. E. Hn. Pt. lief. 1838. E. _om._ go. 1840. E. Hn. Cp. lalouse.

My wil is this, for plat conclusioun, 1845
With-outen any replicacioun,
If that yow lyketh, tak it for the beste,
That everich of yow shal gon wher him leste (990)
Frely, with-outen raunson or daunger;
And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner, 1850
Everich of yow shal bringe an hundred knightes,
Armed for listes up at alle rightes,
Al redy to darreyne hir by bataille.
And this bihote I yow, with-outen faille,
Up-on my trouthe, and as I am a knight, 1855
That whether of yow bothe that hath might,
This is to seyn, that whether he or thou
[54: T. 1860-1892.]
May with his hundred, as I spak of now, (1000)
Sleen his contrarie, or out of listes dryve,
Him shal I yeve Emelya to wyve, 1860
To whom that fortune yeveth so fair a grace.
The listes shal I maken in this place,
And God so wisly on my soule rewe,
As I shal even luge been and trewe.
Ye shul non other ende with me maken, 1865
That oon of yow ne shal be deed or taken.
And if yow thinketh this is wel y-sayd,
Seyeth your avys, and holdeth yow apayd. (1010)
This is your ende and your conclusioun.?

1856, 7. E. wheither. 1860. Hl. Him; Cp. Ln. That; E. Hn. Thanne; Cm.
Pt. Than. E. Cp. Ln. Emelya; Hl. Hn. Emelye.

Who loketh lightly now but Palamoun? 1870

Who springeth up for loye but Arcite?
 Who couthe telle, or who couthe it endyte,
 The loye that is maked in the place
 Whan Theseus hath doon so fair a grace?
 But doun on knees wente every maner wight, 1875
 And thanked him with al her herte and might,
 And namely the Thebans ofte sythe.
 And thus with good hope and with herte blythe (1020)
 They take hir leve, and hom-ward gonne they ryde
 To Thebes, with his olde walles wyde. 1880

1872. E. Cm. Hl. _om._ it. 1876. Hl. thanked; Cm. thankede; Cp. Pt. Ln. thonked; E. Hn. thonken. 1877. E. often; Ln. oft; Pt. mony; _rest_ ofte.

=Explicit secunda pars. Sequitur pars tercia.=

I trowe men wolde deme it necligence,
 If I foryete to tellen the dispence
 Of Theseus, that goth so bisily
 To maken up the listes royally;
 That swich a noble theatre as it was, 1885
 I dar wel seyn that in this world ther nas.
 The circuit a myle was aboute,
 Walled of stoon, and diked al with-oute. (1030)
 Round was the shap, in maner of compas,
 Ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty pas, 1890
 [55: T. 1893-1928.]
 That, whan a man was set on o degree,
 He letted nat his felawe for to see.

1886. Hl. that; _rest om._ 1889. E. compaas. 1892. E. lette; Cm. lettyth; _rest_ letted.

Est-ward ther stood a gate of marbel whyt,
 West-ward, right swich another in the opposit.
 And shortly to concluden, swich a place 1895
 Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space;
 For in the lond ther nas no crafty man,
 That geometrie or ars-metrik can, (1040)
 Ne purtreyour, ne kerver of images,
 That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages 1900
 The theatre for to maken and devyse.
 And for to doon his ryte and sacrifyse,
 He est-ward hath, up-on the gate above,
 In worship of Venus, goddessse of love,
 Don make an auter and an oratorie; 1905
 And west-ward, in the minde and in memorie
 Of Mars, he maked hath right swich another,
 That coste largely of gold a fother. (1050)
 And north-ward, in a touret on the wal,
 Of alabastre whyt and reed coral 1910
 An oratorie riche for to see,
 In worship of Dyane of chastitee,

Hath Theseus don wrought in noble wyse.

1893. E. Hn. Hl. marbul. 1899. Hl. Hn. Cp. purtreyour; E. portreitour. 1900. Cp. Pt. Cm. him; Hl. hem; _rest om._ 1906. _So_ Hl.; E. Hn. Cm. (_wrongly_) And on the west-ward in memorie.

But yet hadde I foryeten to devyse
The noble kerving, and the portreitures, 1915
The shap, the countenance, and the figures,
That weren in these oratories three.

First in the temple of Venus maystow see (1060)
Wrought on the wal, ful pitous to biholde,
The broken slepes, and the sykes colde; 1920
The sacred teres, and the waymenting;
The fyry strokes of the desiring,
That loves servaunts in this lyf endure;
The othes, that hir covenants assure;
Plesaunce and hope, desyr, fool-hardinesse, 1925
Beautee and youthe, bauderie, richesse,
[56: T. 1929-1963.]

Charmes and force, lesinges, flaterye,
Dispense, bisynesse, and lelousye, (1070)
That wered of yelwe golde a gerland,
And a cokkow sitting on hir hand; 1930
Festes, instruments, caroles, daunces,
Lust and array, and alle the circumstaunces
Of love, whiche that I rekne and rekne shal,
By ordre weren peynted on the wal,
And mo than I can make of mencioun. 1935

For soothly, al the mount of Citheroun,
Ther Venus hath hir principal dwelling,
Was shewed on the wal in portreying, (1080)
With al the gardin, and the lustinesse.
Nat was foryeten the porter Ydelnesse, 1940

Ne Narcisus the faire of yore agon,
Ne yet the folye of king Salamon,
Ne yet the grete strengthe of Hercules?
Thenchauntements of Medea and Circes?
Ne of Turnus, with the hardy fiers corage, 1945
The riche Cresus, caytif in servage.

Thus may ye seen that wisdom ne richesse,
Beautee ne sleighte, strengthe, ne hardinesse, (1090)
Ne may with Venus holde champartye;
For as hir list the world than may she gye. 1950
Lo, alle these folk so caught were in hir las,
Til they for wo ful ofte seyde ?allas!?
Suffyceth heer ensamples oon or two,
And though I coude rekne a thousand mo.

1922. E. Hl. and; _rest_ of. 1928. E. Hn. Cp. lalousye. 1929. Hl. guldes. 1930. Cp. Ln. Cm. his. 1933. Cm. I reken and rekne schal; Hn. Hl. I rekned and rekne shal; E. I rekned haue and rekne shal (_too long_). 1942. E. Cm. And; _rest_ Ne. 1943. E. Cm. And eek; Hn. Cp.

Pt. Ln. Ne yet; Hl. Ne eek. E. Hn. Cm. Ercules. 1948. E. Hn. Pt.
om. ne.

The statue of Venus, glorious for to see, 1955
Was naked fleting in the large see,
And fro the navele doun all covered was
With wawes grene, and brighte as any glas. (1100)

A citole in hir right hand hadde she,
And on hir heed, ful semely for to see, 1960
A rose gerland, fresh and wel smellinge;
[57: T. 1964-1997.]

Above hir heed hir dowves flikeringe.
Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido,
Up-on his shuldres winges hadde he two;
And blind he was, as it is ofte sene; 1965
A bowe he bar and arwes brighte and kene.

1965. E. it was; _rest_ it is.

Why sholde I noght as wel eek telle yow al
The portreiture, that was up-on the wal (1110)
With-inne the temple of mighty Mars the rede?
Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and brede, 1970
Lyk to the estres of the grisly place,
That highte the grete temple of Mars in Trace,
In thilke colde frosty regioun,
Ther-as Mars hath his sovereyn mansioun.

First on the wal was peynted a foreste, 1975
In which ther dwelleth neither man ne beste,
With knotty knarry bareyn treës olde
Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to biholde; (1120)
In which ther ran a rumbel and a swough,
As though a storm sholde bresten every bough: 1980

And downward from an hille, under a bente,
Ther stood the temple of Mars armipotente,
Wroght al of burned steel, of which thentree
Was long and streit, and gastly for to see.
And ther-out cam a rage and such a vese, 1985
That it made al the gates for to rese.

The northren light in at the dores shoon,
For windowe on the wal ne was ther noon, (1130)
Thurgh which men mighten any light discerne.

The dores were alle of adamant eterne, 1990
Y-clenched overthwart and endelong
With iren tough; and, for to make it strong,
Every piler, the temple to sustene,
Was tonne-greet, of iren bright and shene.

1975. Hl. foreste; E. forest. 1976. Hl. beste; E. best. 1977. E.
Hn. Cm. Cp. bareyne. 1979. E. rumbel; Cm. ru_m_bil; Hn. rombul; Cp.
Ln. rombel; Hl. swymbul. E. Pt. and; _rest_ in. 1980. Ln. berste;
Hl. berst. 1981. Hn. Hl. on (_for_ from). 1983. E. Hn. the
entree. 1985. Cp. vese; Cm. wese; E. Hn. Ln. veze; Hl. prise. 1986.

E. Hn. Cm. gate. Hl. rise. 1990. E. Hn. Pt. dore was.

Ther saugh I first the derke imagining 1995
[58: T. 1998-2033.]
Of felonye, and al the compassing;
The cruel ire, reed as any glede;
The pykepurs, and eek the pale drede; (1140)
The smyler with the knyf under the cloke;
The shepne brenning with the blake smoke; 2000
The treson of the mordring in the bedde;
The open werre, with woundes al bi-bledde;
Contek, with blody knyf and sharp manace;
Al ful of chirking was that sory place.
The sleere of him-self yet saugh I ther, 2005
His herte-blood hath bathed al his heer;
The nayl y-driven in the shode a-night;
The colde deeth, with mouth gaping up-right. (1150)
Amiddes of the temple sat meschaunce,
With disconfort and sory contenaunce. 2010
Yet saugh I woodnesse laughing in his rage;
Armed compleint, out-hees, and fiers outrage.
The careyne in the bush, with throte y-corve:
A thousand slayn, and nat of qualm y-storve;
The tiraunt, with the prey by force y-raft; 2015
The toun destroyed, ther was no-thing laft.
Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres;
The hunte strangled with the wilde beres: (1160)
The sowe freten the child right in the cradel;
The cook y-scalded, for al his longe ladel. 2020
Noght was foryeten by the infortune of Marte;
The carter over-riden with his carte,
Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun.
Ther were also, of Martes divisioun,
The barbour, and the bocher, and the smith 2025
That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his stith.
And al above, depeynted in a tour,
Saw I conquest sittinge in greet honour, (1170)
With the sharpe swerde over his heed
Hanginge by a sotil twynes threed. 2030
Depeynted was the slaughtre of Iulius,
[59: T. 2034-2069.]
Of grete Nero, and of Antonius;
Al be that thilke tyme they were unborn,
Yet was hir deeth depeynted ther-biforn,
By manasinge of Mars, right by figure; 2035
So was it shewed in that portreiture
As is depeynted in the sterres above,
Who shal be slayn or elles deed for love. (1180)
Suffyceth oon ensample in stories olde,
I may not rekne hem alle, thogh I wolde. 2040

1995. E. Hn. dirke. 1996. E. Cm. on. al. 1998. E. Cm. _om._ eek.
2012. Cm. outes. 2013. E. Cp. Ln. busk; Cm. bosch; Hn. Pt. bussh.
2014. E. _ins._ oon _after_ nat. 2021. Hl. _om._ by. 2025. E. Cm.

laborer; _rest_ barbour. 2029. Pt. Ln. swerde; _rest_ swerd. 2030.
E. soutil; Hn. Cp. Ln. subtil. 2037. Hl. sterres; E. Pt. certres;
rest sertres.

The statue of Mars up-on a carte stood,
Armed, and loked grim as he were wood;
And over his he?ed ther shynen two figures
Of sterres, that been cleped in scriptures,
That oon Puella, that other Rubeus. 2045
This god of armes was arrayed thus:?
A wolf ther stood biforn him at his feet
With eyen rede, and of a man he eet; (1190)
With sotil pencil was depeynt this storie,
In redoutinge of Mars and of his glorie. 2050

2049. Cm. sotyl; E. soutil. _All_ depeynted (_badly_); _see_ C. 950.

Now to the temple of Diane the chaste
As shortly as I can I wol me haste,
To telle yow al the descripcioun.
Depeynted been the walles up and doun
Of hunting and of shamfast chastitee. 2055
Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee,
Whan that Diane agreved was with here,
Was turned from a womman til a bere, (1200)
And after was she maad the lode-sterre;
Thus was it peynt, I can say yow no ferre; 2060
Hir sone is eek a sterre, as men may see.
Ther saugh I Dane, y-turned til a tree,
I mene nat the goddesse Diane,
But Penneus doughter, which that highte Dane.
Ther saugh I Attheon an hert y-maked, 2065
For vengeance that he saugh Diane al naked;
I saugh how that his houndes have him caught,
[60: T. 2070-2106.]
And freten him, for that they knewe him naught. (1210)
Yet peynted was a litel forther-moor,
How Atthalante hunted the wilde boor, 2070
And Meleagre, and many another mo,
For which Diane wroghte him care and wo.
Ther saugh I many another wonder storie,
The whiche me list nat drawen to memorie.
This goddesse on an hert ful hye seet, 2075
With smale houndes al aboute hir feet;
And underne the hir feet she hadde a mone,
Wexing it was, and sholde wanie sone. (1220)
In gaude grene hir statue clothed was,
With bowe in honde, and arwes in a cas. 2080
Hir eyen caste she ful lowe adoun,
Ther Pluto hath his derke regioun.
A womman travailinge was hir biforn,
But, for hir child so longe was unborn,
Ful pitously Lucyna gan she calle, 2085
And seyde, ?help, for thou mayst best of alle.?

Wel couthe he peynten lyfly that it wroghte,
With many a florin he the hewes boghte. (1230)

2058. E. Pt. Ln. Hl. to; _rest_ til; _see_ l. 2062. 2060. _All_
peynted; _see_ l. 2049. Hl. _om._ yow. 2062. Hl. Cp. Pt. Ln.
turned. 2067. E. Hn. hise; Cm. hese. 2069. E. _om._ was. 2071. E.
Hn. Meleagree. 2075. E. Cp. Pt. _ins._ wel _after_ ful.

Now been thise listes maad, and Theseus,
That at his grete cost arrayed thus 2090
The temples and the theatre every del,
Whan it was doon, him lyked wonder wel.
But stinte I wol of Theseus a lyte,
And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

2089. thise] E. the.

The day approcheth of hir retourninge, 2095
That everich sholde an hundred knightes bringe,
The bataille to darreyne, as I yow tolde;
And til Athenes, hir covenant for to holde, (1240)
Hath everich of hem broght an hundred knightes
Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes. 2100

And sikerly, ther trowed many a man
That never, sithen that the world bigan,
As for to speke of knighthod of hir hond,
As fer as God hath maked see or lond,
[61: T. 2107-2143.]

Nas, of so fewe, so noble a companye. 2105
For every wight that lovede chivalrye,
And wolde, his thanks, han a passant name,
Hath preyed that he mighte ben of that game; (1250)
And wel was him, that ther-to chosen was.

For if ther fille to-morwe swich a cas, 2110
Ye knowen wel, that every lusty knight,
That loveth paramours, and hath his might,
Were it in Engelond, or elles-where,
They wolde, hir thanks, wilnen to be there.

To fighte for a lady, _benedicite!_ 2115
It were a lusty sighte for to see.

2098. E. couenantz. Hl. _om._ for. 2108. E. preyd; Hn. prayd; Hl. Cm.
preyed. 2110. E. Cp. Pt. Hl. caas.

And right so ferden they with Palamon.
With him ther wenten knightes many oon; (1260)

Som wol ben armed in an habergeoun,
In a brest-plat and in a light gipoun; 2120

And somme woln have a peyre plates large;
And somme woln have a Puce sheld, or a targe;
Somme woln ben armed on hir legges weel,
And have an ax, and somme a mace of steel.

Ther nis no newe gyse, that it nas old. 2125
Armed were they, as I have you told,

Everich after his opinioun.

2120. Hl. In a; E. And in; Hn. Cm. Cp. Ln. And in a; Pt. And a.

Ther maistow seen coming with Palamoun (1270)
Ligurge him-self, the grete king of Trace;
Blak was his berd, and manly was his face. 2130
The cercles of his eyen in his heed,
They gloweden bitwixe yelow and reed;
And lyk a griffon loked he aboute,
With kempe heres on his browes stoute;
His limes grete, his braunes harde and stronge, 2135
His shuldres brode, his armes rounde and longe.
And as the gyse was in his contree,
Ful hye up-on a char of gold stood he, (1280)
With foure whyte boles in the trays.
In-stede of cote-armure over his harnays, 2140
With nayles yelwe and brighte as any gold,
[62: T. 2144-2179.]
He hadde a beres skin, col-blak, for-old.
His longe heer was kembd bihinde his bak,
As any ravenes fether it shoon for-blak:
A wrethe of gold arm-greet, of huge wighte, 2145
Upon his heed, set ful of stones brighte,
Of fyne rubies and of dyamaunts.
Aboute his char ther wenten whyte alaunts, (1290)
Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,
To hunten at the leoun or the deer, 2150
And folwed him, with mosel faste y-bounde,
Colers of gold, and torets fyled rounde.
An hundred lordes hadde he in his route
Armed ful wel, with hertes sterne and stoute.

2132. E. Hn. bitwyxen. 2134, 5, 6. E. hise. 2141. Hn. Cm. yelwe; E. yelewe; Hl. yolwe. 2148. E. chaar. 2152. Pt. Ln. Colers; Cp. Coleres; Hl. Colerd; E. Hn. Colered; Cm. Colerid. E. to_u_rettes; Cp. Pt. torettes; Hl. torettz (_better_ torets); Ln. turettes. 2154. E. Hn. stierne.

With Arcita, in stories as men finde, 2155
The grete Emetreus, the king of Inde,
Up-on a stede bay, trapped in steel,
Covered in cloth of gold diapred weel, (1300)
Cam ryding lyk the god of armes, Mars.
His cote-armure was of cloth of Tars, 2160
Couched with perles whyte and rounde and grete.
His sadel was of brend gold newe y-bete;
A mantelet upon his shuldre hanginge
Bret-ful of rubies rede, as fyr sparklinge.
His crisper heer lyk ringes was y-ronne, 2165
And that was yelow, and glitered as the sonne.
His nose was heigh, his eyen bright citryn,
His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwyn, (1310)
A fewe fraknes in his face y-spreynd,

Betwixen yelow and somdel blak y-meynd, 2170
And as a leoun he his loking caste.
Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.
His berd was wel bigonne for to springe;
His voys was as a trompe thunderinge.
Up-on his heed he wered of laurer grene 2175
A gerland fresh and lusty for to sene.
Up-on his hand he bar, for his deduyt,
[63: T. 2180-2215.]

An egle tame, as eny lillie whyt. (1320)
An hundred lordes hadde he with him there,
Al armed, sauf hir heddes, in al hir gere, 2180
Ful richely in alle maner thinges.
For trusteth wel, that dukes, erles, kinges,
Were gadered in this noble companye,
For love and for encrees of chivalrye.
Aboute this king ther ran on every part 2185
Ful many a tame leoun and lepart.
And in this wyse thise lordes, alle and some,
Ben on the Sunday to the citee come (1330)
Aboute pryme, and in the toun alight.

2155. E. Pt. Arcite; _rest_ Arcita. 2163. E. Cm. Pt. mantel. 2164.
E. Brat-ful. 2180. Hl. _om._ al. 2186. Hl. Cp. Ln. lepart; E.
leopard.

This Theseus, this duk, this worthy knight, 2190
Whan he had broght hem in-to his citee,
And inned hem, everich in his degree,
He festeth hem, and dooth so greet labour
To esen hem, and doon hem al honour,
That yet men weneth that no mannes wit 2195
Of noon estat ne coude amenden it.
The minstralcye, the service at the feste,
The grete yiftes to the moste and leste, (1340)
The riche array of Theseus paleys,
Ne who sat first ne last up-on the deys, 2200
What ladies fairest been or best daunsinge,
Or which of hem can dauncen best and singe,
Ne who most felingly speketh of love:
What haukes sitten on the perche above,
What houndes liggan on the floor adoun: 2205
Of al this make I now no menciou;
But al theeffect, that thinketh me the beste;
Now comth the poynt, and herkneth if yow leste. (1350)

2192. E. in; Pt. after; _rest_ at. 2195. E. maner. 2198. E. Hn.
meeste; Cm. Cp. meste; _rest_ most. 2205. E. Cm. Hl. in; _rest_ on.
2207. al] Hl. of. 2208. Hn. Hl. comth; _rest_ cometh.

The Sunday night, er day bigan to springe,
When Palamon the larke herde singe, 2210
Although it nere nat day by houres two,
Yet song the larke, and Palamon also.

With holy herte, and with an heigh corage
[64: T. 2216-2251.]

He roos, to wenden on his pilgrimage
Un-to the blisful Citherea benigne, 2215
I mene Venus, honourable and digne.
And in hir houre he walketh forth a pas
Un-to the listes, ther hir temple was, (1360)
And doun he kneleth, and with humble chere
And herte soor, he seyde as ye shul here. 2220

2212. also] Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. right tho. 2217. E. paas. 2219. E. with
ful; _rest_ and with. 2220. E. and seyde in this manere.

?Faireste of faire, o lady myn, Venus,
Doughter to love and spouse of Vulcanus,
Thou glader of the mount of Citheroun,
For thilke love thou haddest to Adoun,
Have pitee of my bittre teres smerte, 2225
And tak myn humble preyer at thyn herte.
Allas! I ne have no langage to telle
Theeffectes ne the torments of myn helle; (1370)
Myn herte may myne harmes nat biwreye;
I am so confus, that I can noght seye. 2230
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest weel
My thought, and seest what harmes that I feel,
Considerere al this, and rewe up-on my sore,
As wisly as I shal for evermore,
Emforth my might, thy trewe servant be, 2235
And holden werre alwey with chastitee;
That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe.
I kepe noght of armes for to yelpe, (1380)
Ne I ne axe nat to-morwe to have victorie,
Ne renoun in this cas, ne veyne glorie 2240
Of pris of armes blowen up and doun,
But I wolde have fully possessioun
Of Emelye, and dye in thy servyse;
Find thou the maner how, and in what wyse.
I recche nat, but it may bettre be, 2245
To have victorie of hem, or they of me,
So that I have my lady in myne armes.
For though so be that Mars is god of armes, (1390)
Your vertu is so greet in hevене above,
[65: T. 2252-2287.]
That, if yow list, I shal wel have my love, 2250
Thy temple wol I worshipec evermo,
And on thyn auter, wher I ryde or go,
I wol don sacrifice, and fyres bete.
And if ye wol nat so, my lady swete,
Than preye I thee, to-morwe with a spere 2255
That Arcita me thurgh the herte bere.
Thanne rekke I noght, whan I have lost my lyf,
Though that Arcita winne hir to his wyf. (1400)
This is theeffect and ende of my preyere,
Yif me my love, thou blisful lady dere.? 2260

2222. to] Hn. Hl. of. of] _all but_ E. Cm. to. 2226. E. Cm.
preyere; Hn. prayere. at] Hl. to. 2227. to] Hl. for to. 2231, 2.
Cm. Hl. wel, fel; _rest_ wele, fele. 2239. Hl. aske. Hl. Ln. to
morn.

Whan thorisoun was doon of Palamon,
His sacrifice he dide, and that anon
Ful pitously, with alle circumstaunces,
Al telle I noght as now his observaunces.
But atte laste the statue of Venus shook, 2265
And made a signe, wher-by that he took
That his preyere accepted was that day.
For thogh the signe shewed a delay, (1410)
Yet wiste he wel that graunted was his bone;
And with glad herte he wente him hoom ful sone. 2270

2261. Hl. thorisoun; _rest_ the orison (orisoun). 2263. E. Cm.
circumstaunce. 2264. E. Cm. obseruaunce.

The thridde houre inequal that Palamon
Bigan to Venus temple for to goon,
Up roos the sonne, and up roos Emelye,
And to the temple of Diane gan hye.
Hir maydens, that she thider with hir ladde, 2275
Ful redily with hem the fyr they hadde,
Thencens, the clothes, and the remenant al
That to the sacrifyce longen shal; (1420)
The hornes fulle of meth, as was the gyse;
Ther lakked noght to doon hir sacrifyse. 2280
Smoking the temple, ful of clothes faire,
This Emelye, with herte debonaire,
Hir body wessh with water of a welle;
But how she dide hir ryte I dar nat telle,
But it be any thing in general; 2285
[66: T. 2288-2324.]
And yet it were a game to heren al;
To him that meneth wel, it were no charge:
But it is good a man ben at his large. (1430)
Hir brighte heer was kempt, untressed al;
A coroune of a grene ook cerial 2290
Up-on hir heed was set ful fair and mete.
Two fyres on the auter gan she bete,
And dide hir thinges, as men may biholde
In Stage of Thebes, and thise bokes olde.
Whan kindled was the fyr, with pitous chere 2295
Un-to Diane she spak, as ye may here.

2274. Pt. Hl. _ins_ she _after_ gan. 2276. E. ladde; _rest_ hadde.
2279. Cp. Pt. Ln. meth; Hl. meth; E. meeth; Hn. mede. 2287. were]
Hn. Cp. Ln. nere. 2289. E. kempd.

?O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,
To whom bothe hevене and erthe and see is sene, (1440)

Quene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe,
 Goddesse of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe 2300
 Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire,
 As keep me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire,
 That Attheon aboughte cruelly.
 Chaste goddesse, wel wostow that I
 Desire to been a mayden al my lyf, 2305
 Ne never wol I be no love ne wyf.
 I am, thou woost, yet of thy companye,
 A mayde, and love hunting and venerye, (1450)
 And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
 And noght to been a wyf, and be with childe. 2310
 Noght wol I knowe companye of man.
 Now help me, lady, sith ye may and can,
 For tho thre formes that thou hast in thee.
 And Palamon, that hath swich love to me,
 And eek Arcite, that loveth me so sore, 2315
 This grace I preye thee with-oute more,
 As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two;
 And fro me turne away hir hertes so, (1460)
 That al hir hote love, and hir desyr,
 And al hir bisy torment, and hir fyr 2320
 Be queynt, or turned in another place;
 And if so be thou wolt not do me grace,
 [67: T. 2325-2360.]
 Or if my destinee be shapen so,
 That I shal nedes have oon of hem two,
 As sende me him that most desireth me. 2325
 Bihold, goddesse of clene chastitee,
 The bittre teres that on my chekes falle.
 Sin thou are mayde, and keper of us alle, (1470)
 My maydenhede thou kepe and wel conserve,
 And whyl I live a mayde, I wol thee serve.? 2330

2303. Hl. Attheon. cruelly] Hl. trewely. 2311. E. Hl. _ins._ the
 after knowe. 2317. Hn. As; _rest_ And; _see_ l. 2325. 2322. not
 do me] E. Hl. Pt. do me no. 2323. E. And; _rest_ Or. 2328. E. Cm.
 Cp. kepere.

The fyres brenne up-on the auter clere,
 Whyl Emelye was thus in hir preyere;
 But sodeinly she saugh a sighte queynte,
 For right anon oon of the fyres queynte,
 And quiked agayn, and after that anon 2335
 That other fyr was queynt, and al agon;
 And as it queynte, it made a whistelinge,
 As doon these wete brondes in hir brenninge, (1480)
 And at the brondes ende out-ran anon
 As it were bloody dropes many oon; 2340
 For which so sore agast was Emelye,
 That she was wel ny mad, and gan to crye,
 For she ne wiste what it signified;
 But only for the fere thus hath she cryed,
 And weep, that it was pitee for to here. 2345

And ther-with-al Diane gan appere,
 With bowe in hond, right as an hunteresse,
 And seyde: ?Doghter, stint thyn hevinessse. (1490)
 Among the goddes hye it is affermed,
 And by eterne word write and confermed, 2350
 Thou shalt ben wedded un-to oon of tho
 That han for thee so muchel care and wo;
 But un-to which of hem I may nat telle.
 Farwel, for I ne may no lenger dwelle.
 The fyres which that on myn auter brenne 2355
 Shul thee declaren, er that thou go henne,
 Thyn aventure of love, as in this cas.?
 And with that word, the arwes in the cas (1500)
 [68: T. 2361-2398.]
 Of the goddesse clateren faste and ringe,
 And forth she wente, and made a vanisshinge; 2360
 For which this Emelye astoned was,
 And seyde, ?What amounteth this, allas!
 I putte me in thy proteccioun,
 Diane, and in thy disposicioun.?
 And hoom she gooth anon the nexte weye. 2365
 This is theeffect, ther is namore to seye.

2337. E. Hn. Cp. whistlynge. 2338. Hl. (_only_) As doth a wete brond
 in his. 2344. Pt Hl. _om._ hath. 2350. Hl. write; Pt. writt; _rest_
 writen. 2356. E. Cp. Hl. declare. 2358. E. caas.

The nexte houre of Mars folwinge this,
 Arcite un-to the temple walked is (1510)
 Of fierse Mars, to doon his sacrificyse,
 With alle the rytes of his payen wyse. 2370
 With pitous herte and heigh devocioun,
 Right thus to Mars he seyde his orisoun:

2369. E. Hn. fierse; Cm. ferse; Hl. fyry.

?O stronge god, that in the regnes colde
 Of Trace honoured art, and lord y-holde,
 And hast in every regne and every lond 2375
 Of armes al the brydel in thyn hond,
 And hem fortunest as thee list devyse,
 Accept of me my pitous sacrificyse. (1520)
 If so be that my youthe may deserve,
 And that my might be worthy for to serve 2380
 Thy godhede, that I may been oon of thyne,
 Than preye I thee to rewe up-on my pyne.
 For thilke peyne, and thilke hote fyr,
 In which thou whylom brendest for desyr,
 Whan that thou usedest the grete beautee 2385
 Of fayre yonge fresshe Venus free,
 And haddest hir in armes at thy wille,
 Al-though thee ones on a tyme misfille (1530)
 Whan Vulcanus had caught thee in his las,
 And fond thee ligging by his wyf, allas! 2390

For thilke sorwe that was in thyn herte,
 Have routhe as wel up-on my peynes smerte.
 I am yong and unkonning, as thou wost,
 And, as I trowe, with love offended most,
 That ever was any lyves creature; 2395
 For she, that dooth me al this wo endure,
 [69: T. 2399-2436.]
 Ne reccheth never wher I sinke or flete.
 And wel I woot, er she me mercy hete, (1540)
 I moot with strengthe winne hir in the place;
 And wel I woot, withouten help or grace 2400
 Of thee, ne may my strengthe nocht availle.
 Than help me, lord, to-morwe in my bataille,
 For thilke fyr that whylom brente thee,
 As wel as thilke fyr now brenneth me;
 And do that I to-morwe have victorie. 2405
 Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the glorie!
 Thy sovereign temple wol I most honouren
 Of any place, and alwey most labouren (1550)
 In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes stronge,
 And in thy temple I wol my baner honge, 2410
 And alle the armes of my companye;
 And evere-mo, un-to that day I dye,
 Eterne fyr I wol biforn thee finde.
 And eek to this avow I wol me binde:
 My berd, myn heer that hongeth long adoun, 2415
 That never yet ne felte offensioun
 Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yive,
 And ben thy trewe servant whyl I live. (1560)
 Now lord, have routhe up-on my sorwes sore,
 Yif me victorie, I aske thee namore.? 2420

2385. Hl. the gret; _rest om._ gret. 2402. E. Hn. Thanne. 2420.
 All ins. the (Hl. thy) _after_ me; (_read_ victorie).

The preyere stinte of Arcita the stronge,
 The ringes on the temple-dore that honge,
 And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste,
 Of which Arcita som-what him agaste.
 The fyres brende up-on the auter brighte, 2425
 That it gan al the temple for to lighte;
 And swete smel the ground anon up-yaf,
 And Arcita anon his hand up-haf, (1570)
 And more encens in-to the fyr he caste,
 With othere rytes mo; and atte laste 2430
 The statue of Mars bigan his hauberk ringe.
 And with that soun he herde a murmuringe
 Ful lowe and dim, that sayde thus, ?Victorie:?
 For which he yaf to Mars honour and glorie.
 [70: T. 2437-2473.]
 And thus with loye, and hope wel to fare, 2435
 Arcite anon un-to his inne is fare,
 As fayn as fowel is of the brighte sonne.

2425. Hn. Cm. brende; E. Cp. Hl. brenden. 2433. E. Hn. Hl. and;
rest that. 2436. E. Hn. Cm. in.

And right anon swich stryf ther is bigonne (1580)
For thilke graunting, in the hevene above,
Bitwixe Venus, the goddesse of love, 2440
And Mars, the sterne god armipotente,
That Iupiter was bisy it to stente;
Til that the pale Saturnus the colde,
That knew so manye of adventures olde,
Fond in his olde experience an art, 2445
That he ful sone hath plesed every part.
As sooth is sayd, elde hath greet advantage;
In elde is bothe wisdom and usage; (1590)
Men may the olde at-renne, and nocht at-rede.
Saturne anon, to stinten stryf and drede, 2450
Al be it that it is agayn his kynde,
Of al this stryf he gan remedie fynde.

2441. E. stierne. 2445. an] E. Pt. and. 2449. Hl. Pt. but; _rest_
and.

?My dere doghter Venus,? quod Saturne,
?My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,
Hath more power than wot any man. 2455
Myn is the drenching in the see so wan;
Myn is the prison in the derke cote;
Myn is the strangling and hanging by the throte; (1600)
The murmure, and the cherles rebelling,
The groyning, and the pryvee empoysoning: 2460
I do vengeance and pleyne correccioun
Why I dwelle in the signe of the leoun.
Myn is the ruine of the hie halles,
The falling of the toures and of the walles
Up-on the mynour or the carpenter. 2465
I slow Sampson in shaking the piler;
And myne be the maladyes colde,
The derke tresons, and the castes olde; (1610)
My loking is the fader of pestilence.
Now weep namore, I shal doon diligence 2470
That Palamon, that is thyn owne knight,
[71: T. 2474-2506.]
Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight.
Though Mars shal helpe his knight, yet nathelees
Bitwixe yow ther moot be som tyme pees,
Al be ye nocht of o complexioun, 2475
That causeth al day swich divisioun.
I am thin ayel, reddy at thy wille;
Weep thou namore, I wol thy lust fulfillle.? (1620)

2462. E. _om. 1st_ the. 2466. Hl. in; _rest om._ 2468. Hl. tresoun.

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

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

=Explicit tercia pars. Sequitur pars quarta.=

Greet was the feste in Athenes that day,
And eek the lusty seson of that May
Made every wight to been in swich plesaunce, 2485
That al that Monday lusten they and daunce,
And spenden it in Venus heigh servyse.
But by the cause that they sholde ryse (1630)
Erly, for to seen the grete fight,
Unto hir reste wente they at night. 2490
And on the morwe, whan that day gan springe,
Of hors and harneys, noyse and clateringe
Ther was in hostelryes al aboute;
And to the paleys rood ther many a route
Of lordes, up-on stedes and palfreys. 2495
Ther maystow seen devysing of herneys
So uncouth and so riche, and wroght so weel
Of goldsmithrie, of browding, and of steel; (1640)
The sheeldes brighte, testers, and trappures;
Gold-hewen helmes, hauberks, cote-armures; 2500
Lordes in paraments on hir courseres,
Knightes of retenue, and eek squyeres
Nailinge the speres, and helmes bokelinge,
Gigginge of sheeldes, with layneres lacinge;
[72: T. 2507-2543.]
Ther as need is, they weren no-thing ydel; 2505
The fomy stedes on the golden brydel
Gnawinge, and faste the armurers also
With fyle and hamer prikinge to and fro; (1650)
Yemen on fote, and communes many oon
With shorte staves, thikke as they may goon; 2510
Pypes, trompes, nakers, clariounes,
That in the bataille blowen bloody sounes;
The paleys ful of peples up and down,
Heer three, ther ten, holding hir questioun,
Divyninge of thise Thebane knightes two. 2515
Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal be so;
Somme helden with him with the blake berd,
Somme with the balled, somme with the thikke-herd; (1660)
Somme sayde, he loked grim and he wolde fighte;
He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte. 2520
Thus was the halle ful of divyninge,
Longe after that the sonne gan to springe.

2489. Hl. Erly a-morwe for to see that fight. 2493. E. _ins._ the
after in. 2500. Hl. Gold-beten. 2503. Nailinge] Hl. Rayhyng.
2504. Hl. Girdyng. 2511. E. nakerers (_wrongly_). 2513. Hl. pepul;
Pt. puple; Ln. peple.

The grete Theseus, that of his sleep awaked
With minstralcy and noyse that was maked,

Held yet the chambre of his paleys riche, 2525
 Til that the Thebane knightes, bothe y-liche
 Honoured, were into the paleys fet.
 Duk Theseus was at a window set, (1670)
 Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.
 The peple preeseth thider-ward ful sone 2530
 Him for to seen, and doon heigh reverence,
 And eek to herkne his hest and his sentence.

An heraud on a scaffold made an ho,
 Til al the noyse of the peple was y-do;
 And whan he saugh the peple of noyse al stille, 2535
 Tho showed he the mighty dukes wille.

2533. E. Hn. Pt. oo. 2534. E. _om. 2nd_ the. 2535. E. Cm. the noyse
 of peple.

?The lord hath of his heigh discrecioun
 Considered, that it were destruccioun (1680)
 To gentil blood, to figthen in the gyse
 Of mortal bataille now in this empryse; 2540
 Wherfore, to shapen that they shul not dye,
 [73: T. 2544-2579.]

He wol his firste purpos modifye.
 No man therfor, up peyne of los of lyf,
 No maner shot, ne pollax, ne short knyf
 Into the listes sende, or thider bringe; 2545
 Ne short swerd for to stoke, with poynt bytinge,
 No man ne drawe, ne bere it by his syde.

Ne no man shal un-to his felawe ryde (1690)
 But o cours, with a sharp y-grounde spere;
 Foyne, if him list, on fote, him-self to were. 2550
 And he that is at meschief, shal be take,
 And noght slayn, but be broght un-to the stake
 That shal ben ordeyned on either syde;
 But thider he shal by force, and ther abyde.

And if so falle, the chieftayn be take 2555
 On either syde, or elles slee his make,
 No lenger shal the turneyinge laste.
 God spede yow; goth forth, and ley on faste. (1700)
 With long swerd and with maces fight your fille.
 Goth now your wey; this is the lordes wille.? 2560

2544. E. Cm. _om. 1st_ ne. 2545. or] E. Cm. Ln. ne. 2547. E. Hl.
 om. it. 2555. falle] E. be. Cm. cheuynteyn; Cp. cheuntein; Hl.
 cheuenten. 2556. Hl. sle; _rest_ sleen (sclayn). 2559. Hl. fight;
 Ln. fihten; _rest_ fighteth.

The voys of peple touchede the hevене,
 So loude cryden they with mery stevene:
 ?God save swich a lord, that is so good,
 He wilneth no destruccioun of blood!?
 Up goon the trompes and the melodye. 2565
 And to the listes rit the companye

By ordinaunce, thurgh-out the citee large,
 Hanged with cloth of gold, and nat with sarge. (1710)
 Ful lyk a lord this noble duk gan ryde,
 Thise two Thebanes up-on either syde; 2570
 And after rood the quene, and Emelye,
 And after that another companye
 Of oon and other, after hir degree.
 And thus they passen thurgh-out the citee,
 And to the listes come they by tyme. 2575
 It nas not of the day yet fully pryme,
 Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hye,
 [74: T. 2580-2617.]
 Ipolita the quene and Emelye, (1720)
 And other ladies in degrees aboute.
 Un-to the seetes preesseth al the route. 2580
 And west-ward, thurgh the gates under Marte,
 Arcite, and eek the hundred of his parte,
 With baner reed is entred right anon;
 And in that selve moment Palamon
 Is under Venus, est-ward in the place, 2585
 With baner whyt, and hardy chere and face.
 In al the world, to seken up and down,
 So even with-outen variacioun, (1730)
 Ther nere swiche companyes tweye.
 For ther nas noon so wys that coude seye, 2590
 That any hadde of other avauntage
 Of worthinesse, ne of estaat, ne age,
 So even were they chosen, for to gesse.
 And in two ringes faire they hem dresse.
 Whan that hir names rad were everichoon, 2595
 That in hir nombre gyle were ther noon,
 Tho were the gates shet, and cryed was loude:
 ?Do now your devoir, yonge knightes proude!?! (1740)

2561. Cm. Cp. touchede; Hl. touchith; _rest_ touched. 2562. Cm.
 cryedyn; E. cride. E. murie. 2570. E. Hn. Hl. Thebans; _see_ l.
 2623. 2593. E. _om._ they. 2598. Hl. Dooth.

The heraudes lefte hir priking up and down;
 Now ringen trompes loude and clarioun; 2600
 Ther is namore to seyn, but west and est
 In goon the speres ful sadly in arest;
 In goth the sharpe spore in-to the syde.
 Ther seen men who can luste, and who can ryde;
 Ther shiveren shaftes up-on sheeldes thikke; 2605
 He feleth thurgh the herte-spoon the prikke.
 Up springen speres twenty foot on highte;
 Out goon the swerdes as the silver brighte. (1750)
 The helmes they to-hewen and to-shrede;
 Out brest the blood, with sterne stremes rede. 2610
 With mighty maces the bones they to-breste.
 He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan threste.
 Ther stomblen stedes stronge, and doun goth al.
 He rolleth under foot as dooth a bal.

He foyneth on his feet with his tronchoun, 2615
 [75: T. 2618-2655.]
 And he him hurtleth with his hors adoun.
 He thurgh the body is hurt, and sithen y-take,
 Maugree his heed, and broght un-to the stake, (1760)
 As forward was, right ther he moste abyde;
 Another lad is on that other syde. 2620
 And som tyme dooth hem Theseus to reste,
 Hem to refresshe, and drinken if hem leste.
 Ful ofte a-day han thise Thebanes two
 Togidre y-met, and wroght his felawe wo;
 Unhorsed hath ech other of hem tweye. 2625
 Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgopheye,
 Whan that hir whelp is stole, whan it is lyte,
 So cruel on the hunte, as is Arcite (1770)
 For lelous herte upon this Palamoun:
 Ne in Belmarye ther nis so fel leoun, 2630
 That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
 Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,
 As Palamon to sleen his fo Arcite.
 The lelous strokes on hir helmes byte;
 Out renneth blood on bothe hir sydes rede. 2635

2608. E. gooth; _rest_ goon. 2613. stomblen] E. Cm. semblen. 2622.
 E. fresshen.

Som tyme an ende ther is of every dede;
 For er the sonne un-to the reste wente,
 The stronge king Emetreus gan hente (1780)
 This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,
 And made his swerd depe in his flesh to byte; 2640
 And by the force of twenty is he take
 Unyolden, and y-drawe unto the stake.
 And in the rescous of this Palamoun
 The stronge king Ligurge is born adoun;
 And king Emetreus, for al his strengthe, 2645
 Is born out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe,
 So hitte him Palamon er he were take;
 But al for noght, he was broght to the stake. (1790)
 His hardy herte mighte him helpe naught;
 He moste abyde, whan that he was caught 2650
 By force, and eek by composicioun.

2643. E. rescus; Pt. rescowe; _rest_ rescous.

Who sorweth now but woful Palamoun,
 That moot namore goon agayn to fighte?
 [76: T. 2656-2691.]
 And whan that Theseus had seyn this sighte,
 Un-to the folk that foghten thus echoon 2655
 He cryde, ?Ho! namore, for it is doon!
 I wol be trewe luge, and no partye.
 Arcite of Thebes shal have Emelye, (1800)
 That by his fortune hath hir faire y-wonne.?

Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne 2660
For loye of this, so loude and heigh with-alle,
It semed that the listes sholde falle.

What can now faire Venus doon above?
What seith she now? what dooth this quene of love?
But wepeth so, for wanting of hir wille, 2665
Til that hir teres in the listes fille;
She seyde: ?I am ashamed, doutelees.?
Saturnus seyde: ?Doghter, hold thy pees. (1810)
Mars hath his wille, his knight hath al his bone,
And, by myn heed, thou shalt ben esed sone.? 2670

The trompes, with the loude minstralcye,
The heraudes, that ful loude yolle and crye,
Been in hir wele for loye of daun Arcite.
But herkneth me, and stinteth now a lyte,
Which a miracle ther bifel anon. 2675

2671. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. trompours.

This fierse Arcite hath of his helm y-don,
And on a courser, for to shewe his face,
He priketh endelong the large place, (1820)
Loking upward up-on this Emelye;
And she agayn him caste a freendlich yë, 2680
(For wommen, as to speken in comune,
They folwen al the favour of fortune),
And she was al his chere, as in his herte.
Out of the ground a furie infernal sterte,
From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne, 2685
For which his hors for fere gan to turne,
And leep asyde, and foundred as he leep;
And, er that Arcite may taken keep, (1830)
He pighte him on the pomel of his heed,
[77: T. 2692-2729.]
That in the place he lay as he were deed, 2690
His brest to-brosten with his sadel-bowe.
As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,
So was the blood y-ronnen in his face.
Anon he was y-born out of the place
With herte soor, to Theseus paleys. 2695
Tho was he corven out of his harneys,
And in a bed y-brought ful faire and blyve,
For he was yet in memorie and alyve, (1840)
And alway crying after Emelye.

2676. Cm. ferse; E. Hn. fierse. 2679. E. Pt. _om._ this. 2681. E.
Hn. Cm. _omit_ ll. 2681, 2682. 2683. Hn. she; _rest om._ 2684. E.
furie; Hn. Cm. furye; _rest_ fyr, fir, fire, fyre; _see note_. 2698.
Hl. Pt. on lyue.

Duk Theseus, with al his companye, 2700
Is comen hoom to Athenes his citee,

With alle blisse and greet solempnitee.
 Al be it that this aventure was falle,
 He nolde noght discomforten hem alle.
 Men seyde eek, that Arcite shal nat dye; 2705
 He shal ben heled of his maladye.
 And of another thing they were as fayn,
 That of hem alle was ther noon y-slayn, (1850)
 Al were they sore y-hurt, and namely oon,
 That with a spere was thirled his brest-boon. 2710
 To othere woundes, and to broken armes,
 Some hadden salves, and some hadden charmes;
 Fermacies of herbes, and eek save
 They dronken, for they wolde hir limes have.
 For which this noble duk, as he wel can, 2715
 Conforteth and honoureth every man,
 And made revel al the longe night,
 Un-to the straunge lordes, as was right. (1860)
 Ne ther was holden no disconfitinge,
 But as a lustes or a tourneyinge; 2720
 For soothly ther was no disconfiture,
 For falling nis nat but an aventure;
 Ne to be lad with fors un-to the stake
 Unyolden, and with twenty knightes take,
 O persone allone, with-ouen mo, 2725
 And haried forth by arme, foot, and to,
 And eek his stede driven forth with staves,
 [78: T. 2730-2767.]
 With footmen, bothe yemen and eek knaves, (1870)
 It nas aretted him no vileinye,
 Ther may no man clepen it cowardye. 2730

2714. limes] Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. lyues. 2726. E. Hn. Cm. arm.

For which anon duk Theseus leet crye,
 To stinten alle rancour and envye,
 The gree as wel of o syde as of other,
 And either syde y-lyk, as otheres brother;
 And yaf hem yiftes after hir degree, 2735
 And fully heeld a feste dayes three;
 And conveyed the kinges worthily
 Out of his toun a lounnee largely. (1880)
 And hoom wente every man the righte way.
 Ther was namore, but ?far wel, have good day!?! 2740
 Of this bataille I wol namore endyte,
 But speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

2737. E. conuoyed. 2740. E. fare; Cm. Hl. far.

Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the sore
 Encreesseth at his herte more and more.
 The clothered blood, for any lechecraft, 2745
 Corrupteth, and is in his bouk y-laft,
 That neither veyne-blood, ne ventusinge,
 Ne drinke of herbes may ben his helpinge. (1890)

The vertu expulsif, or animal,
 Fro thilke vertu cleped natural 2750
 Ne may the venim voyden, ne expelle.
 The pypes of his longes gonne to swelle,
 And every lacerte in his brest adoun
 Is shent with venim and corrupcioun.
 Him gayneth neither, for to gete his lyf, 2755
 Vomyt upward, ne downward laxatif;
 Al is to-brosten thilke regioun,
 Nature hath now no dominacioun. (1900)
 And certainly, ther nature wol nat wirche,
 Far-wel, phisyk! go ber the man to chirche! 2760
 This al and som, that Arcita mot dye,
 For which he sendeth after Emelye,
 And Palamon, that was his cosin dere;
 Than seyde he thus, as ye shul after here.

2746. Hl. Pt. Corrupith. 2760. E. fare; Cm. Hl. far.

?Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte 2765
 [79: T. 2768-2803.]
 Declare o poynt of alle my sorwes smerte
 To yow, my lady, that I love most;
 But I biquethe the service of my gost (1910)
 To yow aboven every creature,
 Sin that my lyf may no lenger dure. 2770
 Allas, the wo! allas, the peynes stronge,
 That I for yow have suffred, and so longe!
 Allas, the deeth! allas, myn Emelye!
 Allas, departing of our companye!
 Allas, myn hertes quene! allas, my wyf! 2775
 Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!
 What is this world? what asketh men to have?
 Now with his love, now in his colde grave (1920)
 Allone, with-outen any companye.
 Far-wel, my swete fo! myn Emelye! 2780
 And softe tak me in your armes tweye,
 For love of God, and herkneth what I seye.

2770. Tyrwhitt _has_ ne may; ne _is not in the_ MSS. 2781. E. taak.

I have heer with my cosin Palamon
 Had stryf and rancour, many a day a-gon,
 For love of yow, and for my lelousye. 2785
 And lupiter so wis my soule gye,
 To speken of a servant proprely,
 With alle circumstaunces trewely, (1930)
 That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and knighthede,
 Wisdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh kinrede, 2790
 Freedom, and al that longeth to that art,
 So lupiter have of my soule part,
 As in this world right now ne knowe I non
 So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,
 That serveth yow, and wol don al his lyf. 2795

And if that ever ye shul been a wyf,
Foryet nat Palamon, the gentil man.?
And with that word his speche faille gan, (1940)
For from his feet up to his brest was come
The cold of deeth, that hadde him overcome. 2800

And yet more-over, in his armes two
[80: T. 2804-2840.]
The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago.
Only the intellect, with-outen more,
That dwelled in his herte syk and sore,
Gan faillen, when the herte felte deeth, 2805
Dusked his eyen two, and failed breath.

But on his lady yet caste he his yë;
His laste word was, ?mercy, Emelye!?

(1950)
His spirit chaunged hous, and wente ther,
As I cam never, I can nat tellen wher. 2810

Therfor I stinte, I nam no divinistre;
Of soules finde I nat in this registre,
Ne me ne list thilke opiniouns to telle
Of hem, though that they wryten wher they dwelle.
Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gye; 2815
Now wol I speken forth of Emelye.

2785. E. Hn. Cp. Ialousye. 2789. Cp. Pt. Hl. and; rest _om._ 2799.
For] E. And. feet] E. Hl. Cm. herte. 2801. _All but_ Hl. _ins._ for
before in.

Shrighte Emelye, and howleth Palamon,
And Theseus his suster took anon (1960)
Swowninge, and bar hir fro the corps away.
What helpeth it to tarien forth the day, 2820
To tellen how she weep, bothe eve and morwe?
For in swich cas wommen have swich sorwe,
Whan that hir housbonds been from hem ago,
That for the more part they sorwen so,
Or elles fallen in swich maladye, 2825
That at the laste certainly they dye.

2819. E. Hn. baar. 2822. Hl. can haue; _rest om._ can. 2823. E.
housbond is.

Infinite been the sorwes and the teres
Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeres, (1970)
In al the toun, for deeth of this Theban;
For him ther wepeth bothe child and man; 2830
So greet a weping was ther noon, certayn,
Whan Ector was y-brought, al fresh y-slayn,
To Troye; allas! the pitee that was ther,
Cracching of chekes, rending eek of heer.

?Why woldestow be deed,? these wommen crye, 2835
?And haddest gold y-nough, and Emelye??

No man mighte gladen Theseus,
Savage his olde fader Egeus, (1980)
[81: T. 2841-2876.]

That knew this worldes transmutacioun,
As he had seyn it chaungen up and doun, 2840
loye after wo, and wo after gladnesse:
And shewed hem ensamples and lyknesse.

2828. E. eek; _for 2nd_ folk. 2834. E. Hn. Cm. Pt. rentynge. 2840.
Hn. chaungen; Hl. torne; _rest om._

?Right as ther deyed never man,? quod he,
?That he ne livede in erthe in som degree,
Right so ther livede never man,? he seyde, 2845
?In al this world, that som tyme he ne deyde.
This world nis but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we ben pilgrimes, passinge to and fro; (1990)
Deeth is an ende of every worldly sore.?
And over al this yet seyde he muchel more 2850
To this effect, ful wysly to enhort
The peple, that they sholde hem reconforte.

2843. Hn. deyed; E. dyed. 2849. E. worldes.

Duk Theseus, with al his bisy cure,
Caste now wher that the sepulture
Of good Arcite may best y-maked be, 2855
And eek most honorable in his degree.
And at the laste he took conclusioun,
That ther as first Arcite and Palamoun (2000)
Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,
That in that selve grove, swote and grene, 2860
Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,
His compleynt, and for love his hote fires,
He wolde make a fyr, in which thoffice
Funeral he mighte al accomplice;
And leet comaunde anon to hakke and hewe 2865
The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe
In colpons wel arrayed for to brenne;
His officers with swifte feet they renne (2010)
And ryde anon at his comaundement.
And after this, Theseus hath y-sent 2870
After a bere, and it al over-spradde
With cloth of gold, the richest that he hadde.
And of the same suyte he cladde Arcite;
Upon his hondes hadde he gloves whyte;
[82: T. 2877-2913.]
Eek on his heed a croune of laurer grene, 2875
And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.
He leyde him bare the visage on the bere,
Therwith he weep that pitee was to here. (2020)
And for the peple sholde seen him alle,
Whan it was day, he broghte him to the halle, 2880
That roreth of the crying and the soun.

2854. Hn. Caste; E. Hl. Cast. now] Hl. busyly. 2861. E. amoureuse.
2863. E. the office; Hl. thoffice. 2869. E. ryden. 2875. Cp. Pt.

Hl. croune; _rest_ coroune.

Tho cam this woful Theban Palamoun,
With flotery berd, and ruggy asshy heres,
In clothes blake, y-dropped al with teres;
And, passing othere of weping, Emelye, 2885
The rewfulleste of al the companye.
In as mucche as the service sholde be
The more noble and riche in his degree, (2030)
Duk Theseus leet forth three stedes bringe,
That trapped were in steel al glitteringe, 2890
And covered with the armes of daun Arcite.
Up-on these stedes, that weren grete and whyte,
Ther seten folk, of which oon bar his sheeld,
Another his spere up in his hondes heeld;
The thridde bar with him his bowe Turkeys, 2895
Of brend gold was the cas, and eek the harneys;
And riden forth a pas with sorweful chere
Toward the grove, as ye shul after here. (2040)
The nobleste of the Grekes that ther were
Upon hir shuldres carieden the bere, 2900
With slakke pas, and eyen rede and wete,
Thurgh-out the citee, by the maister-strete,
That sprad was al with blak, and wonder hye
Right of the same is al the strete y-wrye.
Up-on the right hond wente old Egeus, 2905
And on that other syde duk Theseus,
With vessels in hir hand of gold ful fyn,
Al ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wyn; (2050)
Eek Palamon, with ful greet companye;
And after that cam woful Emelye, 2910
With fyr in honde, as was that tyme the gyse,
[83: T. 2914-2949.]

To do thoffice of funeral servyse.

2883. E. rugged. 2892. Hl. that weren; _rest om._ 2893. E. Ln.
sitten. 2894. E. _om._ up. 2901. Ln. slake (_for_ slakke); _rest_
slak. 2904. Hl. al; _rest om._ 2912. _So_ Hl. Cp.; _rest_ the
office.

Heigh labour, and ful greet apparailinge
Was at the service and the fyr-makinge,
That with his grene top the heven raughte, 2915
And twenty fadme of brede the armes straughte;
This is to seyn, the bowes were so brode.
Of stree first ther was leyd ful many a lode. (2060)
But how the fyr was maked up on highte,
And eek the names how the treës highte, 2920
As ook, firre, birch, asp, alder, holm, popler,
Wilow, elm, plane, ash, box, chasteyn, lind, laurer,
Mapul, thorn, beech, hasel, ew, whippeltree,
How they weren feld, shal nat be told for me;
Ne how the goddes ronnen up and doun, 2925
Disherited of hir habitacioun,

In which they woneden in reste and pees,
 Nymphes, Faunes, and Amadrides; (2070)
 Ne how the bestes and the briddes alle
 Fledden for fere, whan the wode was falle; 2930
 Ne how the ground agast was of the light,
 That was nat wont to seen the sonne bright;
 Ne how the fyr was couched first with stree,
 And than with drye stokkes cloven a three,
 And than with grene wode and spycerye, 2935
 And than with cloth of gold and with perrye,
 And gerlandes hanging with ful many a flour,
 The mirre, thencens, with al so greet odour; (2080)
 Ne how Arcite lay among al this,
 Ne what richesse aboute his body is; 2940
 Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,
 Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse;
 Ne how she swowned whan men made the fyr,
 Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desyr;
 Ne what leweles men in the fyr tho caste, 2945
 Whan that the fyr was greet and brente faste;
 Ne how som caste hir sheeld, and som hir spere,
 [84: T. 2950-2986.]
 And of hir vestiments, whiche that they were, (2090)
 And cuppes ful of wyn, and milk, and blood,
 Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood; 2950
 Ne how the Grekes with an huge route
 Thryës riden al the fyr aboute
 Up-on the left hand, with a loud shoutinge,
 And thryës with hir speres clateringe;
 And thryës how the ladies gonne crye; 2955
 Ne how that lad was hom-ward Emelye;
 Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde;
 Ne how that liche-wake was y-holde (2100)
 Al thilke night, ne how the Grekes pleye
 The wake-pleyes, ne kepe I nat to seye; 2960
 Who wrastleth best naked, with oille enoynt,
 Ne who that bar him best, in no disioynt.
 I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon
 Hoom til Athenes, whan the pley is doon;
 But shortly to the poynt than wol I wende, 2965
 And maken of my longe tale an ende.

2916. Hl. tharme. 2920. how] E. that. 2921. Hn. Hl. popler; _rest_ popelere. 2924. E. fild. 2926. Hl. Disheryt. 2928. E. Cm. Nymphus. 2934, 5, 6. Pt. Ln. than; _rest_ thanne. 2934. E. Cp. stokkes; _rest_ stikkes. 2943. E. _om._ the. 2945. Hl. tho; _rest_ om. 2952. _So all but_ Hl., _which has_ Thre tymes; _see_ l. 2954. E. place (_for_ fyr). 2956. E. Hn. And (_for_ Ne). 2958. E. Hn. lych; _rest_ liche.

By processe and by lengthe of certeyn yeres
 Al stinted is the moorning and the teres (2110)
 Of Grekes, by oon general assent.
 Than semed me ther was a parlement 2970

At Athenes, up-on certeyn poynts and cas;
Among the whiche poynts y-spoken was
To have with certeyn contrees alliaunce,
And have fully of Thebans obeisaunce.
For which this noble Theseus anon 2975
Leet senden after gentil Palamon,
Unwist of him what was the cause and why;
But in his blake clothes sorwefully (2120)
He cam at his comaundement in hye.
Tho sente Theseus for Emelye. 2980
Whan they were set, and hust was al the place,
And Theseus abiden hadde a space
Er any word cam from his wyse brest,
His eyen sette he ther as was his lest,
[85: T. 2987-3020.]
And with a sad visage he syked stille, 2985
And after that right thus he seyde his wille.

?The firste moevere of the cause above,
Whan he first made the faire cheyne of love, (2130)
Greet was theeffect, and heigh was his entente;
Wel wiste he why, and what ther-of he mente; 2990
For with that faire cheyne of love he bond
The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond
In certeyn boundes, that they may nat flee;
That same prince and that moevere,? quod he,
?Hath stablissed, in this wrecched world adoun, 2995
Certeyne dayes and duracioun
To al that is engendred in this place,
Over the whiche day they may nat pace, (2140)
Al mowe they yet tho dayes wel abregge;
Ther needeth non auctoritee allegge, 3000
For it is preved by experience,
But that me list declaren my sentence.
Than may men by this ordre wel discerne,
That thilke moevere stable is and eterne.
Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool, 3005
That every part deryveth from his hool.
For nature hath nat take his beginning
Of no partye ne cantel of a thing, (2150)
But of a thing that parfit is and stable,
Descending so, til it be corrupable. 3010
And therefore, of his wyse purveyaunce,
He hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,
That speses of thinges and progressiouns
Shullen enduren by successiouns,
And nat eterne be, with-oute lye: 3015
This maistow understonde and seen at eye.

2994. Hn. Ln. that; _rest_ (_except_ Hl.) that same. Hl. and moeuere
eek. 2995. Hl. Ln. stabled. 2997. Hl. alle that er; Cp. alle that
beth. 3000. E. Cp. _ins._ noght _bef._ noon. Hl. tallegge; Hn. to
allegge; Cm. Cp. Pt. to legge. 3006. E. dirryueth. 3007. Hl. Ln.
take; _rest_ taken; E. Cm. _om._ nat. 3008. Hl. ne; E. Hn. Pt. or of;

Cm. or of a. 3015. _So_ Hl.; _rest_ eterne with-uten any lye.
3016. at] E. it.

?Lo the ook, that hath so long a norisshinge
From tyme that it first biginneth springe, (2160)
[86: T. 3021-3058.]
And hath so long a lyf, as we may see,
Yet at the laste wasted is the tree. 3020

?Considereth eek, how that the harde stoon
Under our feet, on which we trede and goon,
Yit wasteth it, as it lyth by the weye.
The brode river somtyme wexeth dreye.
The grete tounes see we wane and wende. 3025
Than may ye see that al this thing hath ende.

3025. E. toures.

?Of man and womman seen we wel also,
That nedeth, in oon of these termes two, (2170)
This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age,
He moot ben deed, the king as shal a page; 3030
Som in his bed, som in the depe see,
Som in the large feeld, as men may se;
Ther helpeth noght, al goth that ilke weye.
Thanne may I seyn that al this thing moot deye.
What maketh this but Iupiter the king? 3035
The which is prince and cause of alle thing,
Converting al un-to his propre welle,
From which it is deryved, sooth to telle. (2180)
And here-agayns no creature on lyve
Of no degree availleth for to stryve. 3040

3034. E. Cm. _om._ that. 3036. _So_ Hl.; _rest_ That is.

?Thanne is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,
To maken vertu of necessitee,
And take it wel, that we may nat eschue,
And namely that to us alle is due.
And who-so gruccheth ought, he dooth folye, 3045
And rebel is to him that al may gye.
And certainly a man hath most honour
To dyen in his excellence and flour, (2190)
Whan he is siker of his gode name;
Than hath he doon his freend, ne him, no shame. 3050
And gladder oghte his freend ben of his deeth,
Whan with honour up-yolden is his breeth,
Than whan his name apalled is for age;
For al forgeten is his vasselage.
Than is it best, as for a worthy fame, 3055
To dyen whan that he is best of name.
[87: T. 3059-3095.]
The contrarie of al this is wilfulnesse.
Why grucchen we? why have we hevinesse, (2200)

That good Arcite, of chivalrye flour
 Departed is, with duetee and honour, 3060
 Out of this foule prison of this lyf?
 Why grucchen heer his cosin and his wyf
 Of his wel-fare that loved hem so weel?
 Can he hem thank? nay, God wot, never a deel,
 That bothe his soule and eek hem-self offende, 3065
 And yet they mowe hir lustes nat amende.

3056. Hl. whan a man. 3059. Hl. Cp. Pt. Ln. _ins._ the _bef._ flour.

?What may I conclude of this longe serie,
 But, after wo, I rede us to be merie, (2210)
 And thanken Iupiter of al his grace?
 And, er that we departen from this place, 3070
 I rede that we make, of sorwes two,
 O parfyt loye, lasting ever-mo;
 And loketh now, wher most sorwe is her-inne,
 Ther wol we first amenden and biginne.

3071. Hl. that; _rest om._

?Suster,? quod he, ?this is my fulle assent, 3075
 With al thavys heer of my parlement,
 That gentil Palamon, your owne knight,
 That serveth yow with wille, herte, and might, (2220)
 And ever hath doon, sin that ye first him knewe,
 That ye shul, of your grace, up-on him rewe, 3080
 And taken him for housbonde and for lord:
 Leen me your hond, for this is our acord.
 Lat see now of your wommanly pitee.
 He is a kinges brother sone, pardee;
 And, though he were a povre bacheler, 3085
 Sin he hath served yow so many a yeer,
 And had for yow so greet adversitee,
 It moste been considered, leveth me; (2230)
 For gentil mercy oghte to passen right.?

3077. your] E. thyn. 3082. Hn. Leen; _rest_ Lene.

Than seyde he thus to Palamon ful right; 3090
 ?I trowe ther nedeth litel sermoning
 To make yow assente to this thing.
 Com neer, and tak your lady by the hond.?
 [88: T. 3096-3110.]
 Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond,
 That highte matrimoine or mariage, 3095
 By al the counseil and the baronage.
 And thus with alle blisse and melodye
 Hath Palamon y-wedded Emelye. (2240)
 And God, that al this wyde world hath wroght,
 Sende him his love, that hath it dere a-boght. 3100
 For now is Palamon in alle wele,
 Living in blisse, in richesse, and in hele;

And Emelye him loveth so tendrely,
And he hir serveth al-so gentilly,
That never was ther no word hem bitwene 3105
Of Ielousye, or any other tene.
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye;
And God save al this faire companye! Amen. (2250)

HERE IS ENDED THE KNIGHTES TALE.

3095. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. matrimoigne; Pt. matrimoyne; Hl. matrimoyn.
3100. E. _om._ hath. 3104. Hl. also; _rest_ so. 3106. E. Hn. Cp.
Ialousye. Hl. ne of non othir teene. COLOPHON; _so_ E. Hn.; Pt. Hl.
endeth.

[89: T. 3111-3133.]

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THE MILLER'S PROLOGUE.

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HERE FOLWEN THE WORDES BITWENE THE HOST AND THE MILLERE.

Whan that the Knight had thus his tale y-told,
In al the route nas ther yong ne old 3110
That he ne seyde it was a noble storie,
And worthy for to drawen to memorie;
And namely the gentils everichoon.
Our Hoste lough and swoor, ?so moot I goon,
This gooth aright; unboked is the male; 3115
Lat see now who shal telle another tale:
For trewely, the game is wel bigonne.
Now telleth ye, sir Monk, if that ye conne, (10)
Sumwhat, to quyte with the Knightes tale.?
The Miller, that for-dronken was al pale, 3120
So that unnethe up-on his hors he sat,
He nolde avalen neither hood ne hat,
Ne abyde no man for his curteisye,
But in Pilates vois he gan to crye,
And swoor by armes and by blood and bones, 3125
?I can a noble tale for the nones,
With which I wol now quyte the Knightes tale.?

HEADING. _From_ E. Heere; hoost. 3118. E. on; _rest_ ye.

Our Hoste saugh that he was dronke of ale, (20)
And seyde: ?abyd, Robin, my leve brother,
Som bettre man shal telle us first another: 3130
Abyd, and lat us werken thriftily.?

3128. Ln. oste; E. hoost; Hl. _has_?Oure hoost saugh wel how.

[90: T. 3134-3166.]

?By goddes soul,? quod he, ?that wol nat I;
For I wol speke, or elles go my wey.?
Our Hoste answerde: ?tel on, a devel wey!
Thou art a fool, thy wit is overcome.? 3135

3134. Pt. hooste; Ln. oste; E. hoost.

?Now herkneth,? quod the Miller, ?alle and some!
But first I make a protestacioun
That I am dronke, I knowe it by my soun; (30)
And therefore, if that I misspeke or seye,
Wyte it the ale of Southwerk, I yow preye; 3140
For I wol telle a legende and a lyf
Bothe of a Carpenter, and of his wyf,
How that a clerk hath set the wrightes cappe.?

3140. E. Hn. Cm. _om._ yow.

The Reve answerde and seyde, ?stint thy clappe,
Lat be thy lewed dronken harlotrye. 3145
It is a sinne and eek a greet folye
To apeiren any man, or him diffame,
And eek to bringen wyves in swich fame. (40)
Thou mayst y-nogh of othere thinges seyn.?

3147. E. Ln. Hl. defame; _rest_ diffame.

This dronken Miller spak ful sone ageyn, 3150
And seyde, ?leve brother Osewold,
Who hath no wyf, he is no cokewold.
But I sey nat therfore that thou art oon;
Ther been ful gode wyves many oon, 3154
And ever a thousand gode ayeyns oon badde, [T. _om._
That knowestow wel thy-self, but-if thou madde. [T. _om._
Why artow angry with my tale now?
I have a wyf, pardee, as well as thou, (50)
Yet nolde I, for the oxen in my plogh,
Taken up-on me more than y-nogh, 3160
As demen of my-self that I were oon;
I wol beleve wel that I am noon.
An housbond shal nat been inquisitif
Of goddes privetee, nor of his wyf.
So he may finde goddes foyson there, 3165
Of the remenant nedeth nat enquere.?

3150. E. dronke; Cm. dronkyn; _rest_ dronken. 3155, 6. _These two
lines are in_ E. Cm. Hl. only. 3160. Cm. Takyn; _rest_ Take, Tak.
3166. enquere] Cp. Pt. Ln. to enquere.

[91: T. 3167-3186.]

What sholde I more seyn, but this Millere
He nolde his wordes for no man forbere, (60)

But tolde his cherles tale in his manere;
 Me thinketh that I shal reherce it here. 3170
 And ther-fore every gentil wight I preye,
 For goddes love, demeth nat that I seye
 Of evel entente, but that I moot reherce
 Hir tales alle, be they bettre or werse,
 Or elles falsen som of my matere. 3175
 And therefore, who-so list it nat y-here,
 Turne over the leef, and chese another tale;
 For he shal finde y-nowe, grete and smale, (70)
 Of storial thing that toucheth gentillesse,
 And eek moralitee and holinesse; 3180
 Blameth nat me if that ye chese amis.
 The Miller is a cherl, ye knowe wel this;
 So was the Reve, and othere many mo,
 And harlotrye they tolden bothe two.
 Avyseth yow and putte me out of blame; 3185
 And eek men shal nat make ernest of game.

HERE ENDETH THE PROLOGE.

3170. E. Mathynketh; Hn. Cp. Ln. Hl. Me athynketh; Cm. Me thynkyth.
 3172. demeth] Hl. as deme. 3173. E. yuel; Cm. euyt. 3177. Cp.
 chees; Cm. ches; _rest_ chese. 3185. E. Cm. _om._ and. E. Cp.
 putteth; _rest_ putte, put. 3186. E. Hn. Cm. maken; _rest_ make.
 COLOPHON. _From_ Cm.; Pt. Thus endeth the prologe; Ln. Explicit
 prologus; Hl. Here endeth the prologe of the Miller.

[92: T. 3187-3214.]

* * * * *

THE MILLERES TALE.

* * * * *

HERE BIGINNETH THE MILLERE HIS TALE.

Whylom ther was dwellinge at Oxenford
 A riche gnof, that gestes heeld to bord,
 And of his craft he was a Carpenter.
 With him ther was dwellinge a povre scoler, 3190
 Had lerned art, but al his fantasye
 Was turned for to lerne astrologye,
 And coude a certeyn of conclusiouns
 To demen by interrogaciouns,
 If that men axed him in certein houres, 3195
 Whan that men sholde have droghte or elles shoures, (10)
 Or if men axed him what sholde bifalle
 Of every thing, I may nat rekene hem alle.

3187. Cm. Pt. in (_for_ at). 3190. Cm. Pt. Hl. pore; E. Hn. poure (= povre); Cp. Ln. pouer (= pover). 3195, 7. E. asked; _rest_ axed.

This clerk was cleped hende Nicholas;
 Of derne love he coude and of solas; 3200
 And ther-to be was sleigh and ful privee,
 And lyk a mayden meke for to see.
 A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye
 Allone, with-oueten any companye,
 Ful fetisly y-dight with herbes swote; 3205
 And he him-self as swete as is the rote (20)
 Of licorys, or any cetewale.
 His Almageste and bokes grete and smale,
 His astrelabie, longinge for his art,
 His augrim-stones layen faire a-part 3210
 On shelves couched at his beddes heed:
 His presse y-covered with a falding reed.
 And al above ther lay a gay sautrye,
 On which he made a nightes melodye
 [93: T. 3215-3250.]
 So swetely, that al the chambre rong; 3215
 And _Angelus ad virginem_ he song; (30)
 And after that he song the kinges note;
 Ful often blessed was his mery throte.
 And thus this swete clerk his tyme spente
 After his freendes finding and his rente. 3220

3218. Cm. Pt. Ln. Hl. mery; E. myrie.

This Carpenter had wedded newe a wyf
 Which that he lovede more than his lyf;
 Of eightetene yeer she was of age.
 Ialous he was, and heeld hir narwe in cage,
 For she was wilde and yong, and he was old 3225
 And demed him-self ben lyk a cokewold. (40)
 He knew nat Catoun, for his wit was rude,
 That bad man sholde wedde his similitude.
 Men sholde wedden after hir estaat,
 For youthe and elde is often at debaat. 3230
 But sith that he was fallen in the snare,
 He moste endure, as other folk, his care.

3223. Hl. eyghteteene; _rest_ xvij. 3225. E. yong and wylde. 3230.
 Cm. Hl. ben; _rest_ is.

Fair was this yonge wyf, and ther-with-al
 As any wesele hir body gent and smal.
 A ceynt she werede barred al of silk, 3235
 A barmclooth eek as whyt as morne milk (50)
 Up-on hir lendes, ful of many a gore.
 Whyt was hir smok, and brouded al bifore
 And eek bihinde, on hir coler aboute,
 Of col-blak silk, with-inne and eek with-oute. 3240
 The tapes of hir whyte voluper
 Were of the same suyte of hir coler;
 Hir filet brood of silk, and set ful hye:
 And sikerly she hadde a likerous yë.

Ful smale y-pulled were hir browes two, 3245
 And tho were bent, and blake as any sloo. (60)
 She was ful more blisful on to see
 Than is the newe pere-ionette tree;
 And softer than the wolfe is of a wether.
 And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether 3250
 [94: T. 3251-3285.]
 Tasseld with silk, and perled with latoun.
 In al this world, to seken up and doun,
 There nis no man so wys, that coude thenche
 So gay a popelote, or swich a wenche.
 Ful brighter was the shyning of hir hewe 3255
 Than in the tour the noble y-forged newe. (70)
 But of hir song, it was as loude and yerne
 As any swalwe sittinge on a berne.
 Ther-to she coude skippe and make game,
 As any kide or calf folwinge his dame. 3260
 Hir mouth was swete as bragot or the meeth,
 Or hord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.
 Winsinge she was, as is a loly colt,
 Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.
 A brooch she baar up-on hir lowe coler, 3265
 As brood as is the bos of a bocler. (80)
 Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hye;
 She was a prymerole, a pigges-nye
 For any lord to leggen in his bedde,
 Or yet for any good yeman to wedde. 3270

3235. E. y-barred; _rest_ barred. 3236. Hl. eek; _rest om._ 3238.
 Cp. brouded; Hl. browdid; Cm. l-brouded; E. Hn. broyden. 3251. E. Hn.
 Tasseled; Ln. Tassilde; Hl. Cp. Tassid. E. grene; _rest_ silk.
 3253. E. nas; Hn. Pt. Hl. nys; Cm. Cp. Ln. is. 3261. Cm. Pt. Cp. Ln.
 brakat. 3265. Cm. lowe; _rest_ loue. 3266. Cp. bocler; Hl. bocleer;
 rest bokeler.

Now sire, and eft sire, so bifel the cas,
 That on a day this hende Nicholas
 Fil with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye,
 Whyl that hir housbond was at Oseneye,
 As clerkes ben ful subtile and ful queynte; 3275
 And prively he caughte hir by the queynte, (90)
 And seyde, ?y-wis, but if ich have my wille,
 For derne love of thee, lemman, I spille?
 And heeld hir harde by the haunche-bones,
 And seyde, ?lemman, love me al at-ones, 3280
 Or I wol dyen, also god me save!?
 And she sprong as a colt doth in the trave,
 And with hir heed she wryed faste away,
 And seyde, ?I wol nat kisse thee, by my fey,
 Why, lat be,? quod she, ?lat be, Nicholas, 3285
 [95: T. 3286-3322.]
 Or I wol crye out ?harrow? and ?allas.? (100)
 Do wey your handes for your curteisy!?

3283. Cm. wrythed. 3285. Pt. she; Cm. Hl. sche; Ln. iche; _rest_ ich.

This Nicholas gan mercy for to crye,
And spak so faire, and profred hir so faste,
That she hir love him graunted atte laste, 3290
And swoor hir ooth, by seint Thomas of Kent,
That she wol been at his comandement,
Whan that she may hir leyser wel espye.
?Myn housbond is so ful of lalousye,
That but ye wayte wel and been privee, 3295
I woot right wel I nam but deed,? quod she. (110)
?Ye moste been ful derne, as in this cas.?

?Nay ther-of care thee noght,? quod Nicholas,
?A clerk had litherly biset his whyle,
But-if he coude a Carpenter bigyle.? 3300
And thus they been acorded and y-sworn
To wayte a tyme, as I have told biforn.
Whan Nicholas had doon thus everydeel,
And thakked hir aboute the lendes weel,
He kist hir swete, and taketh his sautrye, 3305
And pleyeth faste, and maketh melodye. (120)

3289. E. hir; _rest_ him.

Than fil it thus, that to the parish-chirche,
Cristes owne werkes for to wirche,
This gode wyf wente on an haliday;
Hir forheed shoon as bright as any day, 3310
So was it wasshen whan she leet hir werk.

Now was ther of that chirche a parish-clerk,
The which that was y-cleped Absolon.
Crul was his heer, and as the gold it shoon,
And strouted as a fanne large and brode; 3315
Ful streight and even lay his loly shode. (130)

His rode was reed, his eyen greye as goos;
With Powles window corven on his shoos,
In hoses rede he wente fetisly.
Y-clad he was ful smal and proprely, 3320

Al in a kirtel of a light wachet;
Ful faire and thikke been the poyntes set.
[96: T. 3323-3358.]
And ther-up-on he hadde a gay surplys
As whyt as is the blosme up-on the rys.
A mery child he was, so god me save, 3325
Wel coude he laten blood and clippe and shave, (140)
And make a chartre of lond or acquitaunce.

In twenty manere coude he trippe and daunce
After the scole of Oxenforde tho,
And with his legges casten to and fro, 3330
And pleyen songes on a small rubible;
Ther-to he song som-tyme a loud quinible;
And as wel coude he pleye on his giterne.

In al the toun nas brewhous ne taverne
 That he ne visited with his solas, 3335
 Ther any gaylard tappestere was. (150)
 But sooth to seyn, he was somdel squaymous
 Of farting, and of speche daungerous.

3319. Cm. hosyn; Pt. hosen; _rest_ hoses. 3321. Hl. fyn (_for_
 light). Hl. Ln. wachet; Cm. vachet; _rest_ waget. 3325. E. myrie;
 Hn. murye. 3327. E. Hn. maken. 3329. E. Hn. Oxenford; Cm.
 Oxenforthe; _rest_ Oxenforde. 3333. E. his; _rest_ a.

This Absolon, that lolif was and gay,
 Gooth with a sencer on the haliday, 3340
 Sensinge the wyves of the parish faste;
 And many a lovely look on hem he caste,
 And namely on this carpenteres wyf.
 To loke on hir him thoughte a mery lyf,
 She was so propre and swete and likerous. 3345
 I dar wel seyn, if she had been a mous, (160)
 And he a cat, he wolde hir hente anon.

3344. E. myrie; Hn. murye. 3347. E. Hl. wold; _rest_ wolde.

This parish-clerk, this loly Absolon,
 Hath in his herte swich a love-longinge,
 That of no wyf ne took he noon offringe; 3350
 For curteisye, he seyde, he wolde noon.
 The mone, whan it was night, ful brighte shoon,
 And Absolon his giterne hath y-take,
 For paramours, he thoghte for to wake.
 And forth he gooth, lolif and amorous, 3353
 Til he cam to the carpenteres hous (170)
 A litel after cokkes hadde y-crowe;
 And dressed him up by a shot-windowe
 [97: T. 3359-3392.]
 That was up-on the carpenteres wal.
 He singeth in his vois gentil and smal, 3360
 ?Now, dere lady, if thy wille be,
 I preye yow that ye wol rewe on me,?
 Ful wel acordaunt to his giterninge.
 This carpenter awook, and herde him singe,
 And spak un-to his wyf, and seyde anon, 3365
 ?What! Alison! herestow nat Absolon (180)
 That chaunteth thus under our boures wal??
 And she answerde hir housbond ther-with-al,
 ?Yis, god wot, lohn, I here it every-del.?

3350. Hn. Hl. ne; _rest om._ 3362. Cm. preye; Hl. praye; Ln. preie;
 E. Hn. Cp. Pt. pray. E. wole; Cm. wele; Hn. Hl. wol; _rest_ wil. E.
 thynke; _rest_ rewe. 3364. E. _om._ him.

This passeth forth; what wol ye bet than wel? 3370
 Fro day to day this loly Absolon
 So woweth hir, that him is wo bigon.

He waketh al the night and al the day;
 He kempte hise lokkes brode, and made him gay;
 He woweth hir by menes and brocage, 3375
 And swoor he wolde been hir owne page; (190)
 He singeth, brokkinge as a nightingale;
 He sente hir piment, meeth, and spyced ale,
 And wafres, pyping hote out of the glede;
 And for she was of toune, he profred mede. 3380
 For som folk wol ben wonnen for richesse,
 And som for strokes, and som for gentillesse.

3371. E. repeats to day. 3374. Cm. kempte; Hn. Ln. kembed; Cp. kembede; E. Pt. kembeth. 3379. Cm. Pt. Ln. hote; E. Hn. Cp. hoot.
 3380. E. profreth.

Somtyme, to shewe his lightnesse and maistrye,
 He pleyeth Herodes on a scaffold hye.
 But what availleth him as in this cas? 3385
 She loveth so this hende Nicholas, (200)
 That Absolon may blowe the bukkes horn;
 He ne hadde for his labour but a scorn;
 And thus she maketh Absolon hir ape,
 And al his earnest turneth til a lape. 3390

Ful sooth is this proverbe, it is no lye,
 Men seyn right thus, ?alwey the nye slye
 [98: T. 3393-3429.]
 Maketh the ferre leve to be looth.?
 For though that Absolon be wood or wrooth,
 By-cause that he fer was from hir sighte, 3395
 This nye Nicholas stood in his lighte. (210)

3384. Hl. Herodz; Ln. Heraude; rest Herodes, Heraudes. Hl. on;
rest vp on. 3390. Hl. Pt. to; rest til.

Now bere thee wel, thou hende Nicholas!
 For Absolon may waille and singe ?allas.?
 And so bifel it on a Saterdag,
 This carpenter was goon til Osenay; 3400
 And hende Nicholas and Alisoun
 Acorded been to this conclusioun,
 That Nicholas shal shapen him a wyle
 This sely lalous housbond to bigyle;
 And if so be the game wente aright, 3405
 She sholde slepen in his arm al night, (220)
 For this was his desyr and hir also.
 And right anon, with-uten wordes mo,
 This Nicholas no lenger wolde tarie,
 But doth ful softe un-to his chambre carie 3410
 Bothe mete and drinke for a day or tweye,
 And to hir housbonde bad hir for to seye,
 If that he axed after Nicholas,
 She sholde seye she niste where he was,
 Of al that day she saugh him nat with yë; 3415
 She trowed that he was in maladye, (230)

For, for no cry, hir mayde coude him calle;
He nolde answeere, for no-thing that mighte falle.

3415. Cm. Pt. ye; Hl. lye; _rest_ eye. 3418. Hn. Cm. Cp. Ln. no
thyng; Pt. Hl. nought; E. thyng. Pt. Hl. may bifalle. (_Read_ mighte
as might?).

This passeth forth al thilke Saterdag,
That Nicholas stille in his chambre lay, 3420
And eet and sleep, or dide what him leste,
Til Sunday, that the sonne gooth to reste.

This sely carpenter hath greet merveyde
Of Nicholas, or what thing mighte him eyde,
And seyde, ?I am adrad, by seint Thomas, 3425
It stondeh nat aright with Nicholas. (240)

God shilde that he deyde sodeynly!
This world is now ful tikel, sikerly;
I saugh to-day a cors y-born to chirche
[99: T. 3430-3465.]
That now, on Monday last, I saugh him wirche. 3430

Go up,? quod he un-to his knave anoon,
?Clepe at his dore, or knokke with a stoon,
Loke how it is, and tel me boldely.?

This knave gooth him up ful sturdily,
And at the chambre-dore, whyl that he stood, 3435
He cryde and knocked as that he were wood:?
?What! how! what do ye, maister Nicholay?
How may ye slepen al the longe day?? (250)

But al for noght, he herde nat a word;
An hole he fond, ful lowe up-on a bord, 3440
Ther as the cat was wont in for to crepe;
And at that hole he looked in ful depe,
And at the laste he hadde of him a sighte.
This Nicholas sat gaping ever up-righte,
As he had kyked on the newe mone. 3445
Adoun he gooth, and tolde his maister sone (260)
In what array he saugh this ilke man.

3440. E. Hn. foond; Pt. foonde. 3444. E. Hn. Cp. capyng. 3445. Cp.
Ln. keked; Hl. loked. 3447. E. Pt. that; _rest_ this.

This carpenter to blessen him bigan,
And seyde, ?help us, seinte Frideswyde!
A man woot litel what him shal bityde. 3450
This man is falle, with his astromye,
In som woodnesse or in som agonye;
I thoghte ay wel how that it sholde be!
Men sholde nat knowe of goddes privetee.
Ye, blessed be alwey a lewed man, 3455
That noght but oonly his bileve can! (270)

So ferde another clerk with astromye;
 He walked in the feeldes for to pry
 Up-on the sterres, what ther sholde bifalle,
 Til he was in a marle-pit y-falle; 3460
 He saugh nat that. But yet, by seint Thomas,
 Me reweth sore of hende Nicholas.
 He shal be rated of his studying,
 If that I may, by Iesus, hevne king!

3451. E. Hn. Astromye; Ln. Arstromye; _rest_ astronomye; _but_ Astromye
 is meant; see l. 3457. 3457. _So_ E. Hn.; _rest_ astronomye.
 3460. E. -put.

Get me a staf, that I may underspore, 3465
 [100: T. 3466-3498.]
 Why! that thou, Robin, hevest up the dore. (280)
 He shal out of his studying, as I gesse??
 And to the chambre-dore he gan him dresse.
 His knave was a strong carl for the nones,
 And by the haspe he haf it up atones; 3470
 In-to the floor the dore fil anon.
 This Nicholas sat ay as stille as stoon,
 And ever gaped upward in-to the eir.
 This carpenter wende he were in despeir,
 And hente him by the sholdres mightily, 3475
 And shook him harde, and cryde spitously, (290)
 ?What! Nicholay! what, how! what! loke adoun!
 Awake, and thenk on Cristes passioun;
 I crouche thee from elves and fro wightes!?
 Ther-with the night-spel seyde he anon-rightes 3480
 On foure halves of the hous aboute,
 And on the threshfold of the dore with-oute:?
 ?Iesu Crist, and seynt Benedight,
 Blesse this hous from every wikked wight,
 For nightes verye, the white _pater-noster_! 3485
 Where wentestow, seynt Petres soster?? (300)

3466. E. of; _rest_ vp, vpe. 3470. Cm. Hl. haf; E. Hn. haaf; Cp.
 heef. Hn. Pt. Ln. Hl. vp; _rest_ of. 3473. E. Hn. caped; Hl. capyd;
 Cp. capede; _rest_ gaped, gapede. 3477. Hl. man (_for 3rd_ what);
 rest om. 3485. _All but_ E. Hl. For the nyghtes. E. Hn. uerye;
 Cm. verie; Cp. Pt. verye; Ln. very; Hl. verray. 3486. Cm. wonyst
 p_o_u; Hl. wonestow; _after which_ Cm. Hl. _ins._ now.

And atte laste this hende Nicholas
 Gan for to syke sore, and seyde, ?allas!
 Shal al the world be lost eftsones now??

3487. Hl. _om._ this. 3489. E. this; _rest_ the.

This carpenter answerde, ?what seystow? 3490
 What! thenk on god, as we don, men that swinke.?

3491. Hn. Pt. Hl. thenk; _rest_ thynk; _see_ 3478. Cm. as men don whan

they swinke.

This Nicholas answerde, ?fecche me drinke;
And after wol I speke in privetee
Of certeyn thing that toucheth me and thee;
I wol telle it non other man, certeyn.? 3495

This carpenter goth doun, and comth ageyn, (310)
And broghte of mighty ale a large quart;
And whan that ech of hem had dronke his part,
[101: T. 3499-3534.]
This Nicholas his dore faste shette,
And doun the carpenter by him he sette. 3500

He seyde, ?lohn, myn hoste lief and dere,
Thou shall up-on thy trouthe swere me here,
That to no wight thou shalt this conseil wreye;
For it is Cristes conseil that I seye,
And if thou telle it man, thou are forlore; 3505
For this vengauce thou shalt han therfore, (320)
That if thou wreye me, thou shalt be wood!?
?Nay, Crist forbede it, for his holy blood!?
Quod tho this sely man, ?I nam no labbe,
Ne, though I seye, I nam nat lief to gabbe. 3510
Sey what thou wolt, I shal it never telle
To child ne wyf, by him that harwed helle!?

3501. Cp. Pt. hooste; Ln. ostee; Hl. host ful; E. Hn. hoost; Cm. ost.

3505. E. _om._ it. 3510. E. Hl. am; _rest_ nam, ne am.

?Now John,? quod Nicholas, ?I wol nat lye;
I have y-founde in myn astrologye,
As I have loked in the mone bright, 3515
That now, a Monday next, at quarter-night, (330)
Shal falle a reyn and that so wilde and wood,
That half so greet was never Noës flood.
This world,? he seyde, ?in lasse than in an hour
Shal al be dreynt, so hidous is the shour; 3520
Thus shal mankynde drenche and lese hir lyf.?

3516. a] Hl. on. 3519. Cm. Hl. _om. 2nd_ in.

This carpenter answerde, ?allas, my wyf!
And shal she drenche? allas! myn Alisoun!?
For sorwe of this he fil almost adoun,
And seyde, ?is ther no remedie in this cas?? 3525

3525. Pt. Ln. _om._ ther.

?Why, yis, for gode,? quod hende Nicholas, (340)
?If thou wolt werken after lore and reed;
Thou mayst nat werken after thyn owene heed.
For thus seith Salomon, that was ful trewe,
?Werk al by conseil, and thou shalt nat rewe.? 3530

And if thou werken wolt by good conseil,
I undertake, with-outen mast and seyl,
Yet shal I saven hir and thee and me
Hastow nat herd how saved was Noë,
[102: T. 3535-3570.]

Whan that our lord had warned him biforn 3535
That al the world with water sholde be lorn?? (350)

3527. E. aftir. 3534. E. hou. 3535. Hl. had; E. Hn. Cm. hadde.

?Yis,? quod this carpenter, ?ful yore ago.?

?Hastow nat herd,? quod Nicholas, ?also
The sorwe of Noë with his felawshipe,
Er that he mighte gete his wyf to shipe? 3540
Him had be lever, I dar wel undertake,
At thilke tyme, than alle hise wetheres blake,
That she hadde had a ship hir-self allone.
And ther-fore, wostou what is best to done?
This asketh haste, and of an hastif thing 3545
Men may nat preche or maken tarying. (360)

3539. E. felaweshipe. 3540. E. brynge; _rest_ gete. 3541. E. hadde;
leuere. 3544. E. woostou; doone.

Anon go gete us faste in-to this in
A kneding-trogh, or elles a kimelin,
For ech of us, but loke that they be large,
In whiche we mowe swimme as in a barge, 3550
And han ther-inne vitaille suffisant
But for a day; fy on the remenant!
The water shal aslake and goon away
Aboute pryve up-on the nexte day.
But Robin may nat wite of this, thy knave, 3555
Ne eek thy mayde Gille I may nat save; (370)
Axe nat why, for though thou aske me,
I wol nat tellen goddes privetee.
Suffiseth thee, but if thy wittes madde,
To han as greet a grace as Noë hadde. 3560
Thy wyf shal I wel saven, out of doute,
Go now thy wey, and speed thee heer-aboute.

3548. E. ellis. E. kymelyn; Hl. kemelyn.

But whan thou hast, for hir and thee and me,
Y-geten us thise kneding-tubbes three,
Than shaltow hange hem in the roof ful hye, 3565
That no man of our purveyaunce spye. (380)
And whan thou thus hast doon as I have seyde,
And hast our vitaille faire in hem y-leyde,
And eek an ax, to smyte the corde atwo
When that the water comth, that we may go, 3570
[103: T. 3571-3606.]
And broke an hole an heigh, up-on the gable,

Unto the gardin-ward, over the stable,
 That we may frely passen forth our way
 Whan that the grete shour is goon away?
 Than shaltow swimme as myrie, I undertake, 3575
 As doth the whyte doke after hir drake. (390)
 Than wol I clepe, ?how! Alison! how! John!
 Be myrie, for the flood wol passe anon.?
 And thou wolt seyn, ?hayl, maister Nicholay!
 Good morwe, I se thee wel, for it is day.? 3580
 And than shul we be lordes al our lyf
 Of al the world, as Noë and his wyf.

3565: E. Thanne. 3571. E. Pt. Ln. broke; _rest_ breke. 3575. E.
 Thanne. E. shal I; _rest_ shaltow, shalt thou. 3577. E. Thanne.

But of o thyng I warne thee ful right,
 Be wel avysed, on that ilke night
 That we ben entred in-to shippes bord, 3585
 That noon of us ne speke nat a word, (400)
 Ne clepe, ne crye, but been in his preyere;
 For it is goddes owne heste dere.

3588. E. heeste.

Thy wyf and thou mote hange fer a-twinne,
 For that bitwixe yow shal be no sinne 3590
 No more in looking than ther shal in dede;
 This ordinance is seyde, go, god thee spede!
 Tomorwe at night, whan men ben alle aslepe,
 In-to our kneding-tubbes wol we crepe,
 And sitten ther, abyding goddes grace. 3595
 Go now thy wey, I have no lenger space (410)
 To make of this no lenger sermoning.
 Men seyn thus, ?send the wyse, and sey no-thing;?
 Thou art so wys, it nedeth thee nat teche;
 Go, save our lyf, and that I thee biseche.? 3600

3591. E. Hn. Na. 3592. E. Pt. Hl. so; _rest_ go. 3593. E. folk; Cm.
 we; _rest_ men. 3598. E. sende. 3599. E. to preche; Cp. to teche;
 rest teche.

This sely carpenter goth forth his wey.
 Ful ofte he seith ?allas? and ?weylawey,?
 And to his wyf he tolde his privetee;
 And she was war, and knew it bet than he,
 What al this queynte cast was for to seye. 3605
 But nathelees she ferde as she wolde deye, (420)
 [104: T. 3607-3641.]
 And seyde, ?allas! go forth thy wey anon,
 Help us to scape, or we ben lost echon;
 I am thy trewe verray wedded wyf;
 Go, dere spouse, and help to save our lyf.? 3610

3608. Cm. er (_for_ or). E. lost; _rest_ dede, deede, ded. 3609.

Cm. Hl. verray trewe.

Lo! which a greet thyng is affeccoun!
Men may dye of imaginacioun,
So depe may impressioun be take.
This sely carpenter biginneth quake;
Him thinketh verrailly that he may see 3615
Noës flood come walwing as the see (430)
To drenchen Alisoun, his hony dere.
He wepeth, weyleth, maketh sory chere,
He syketh with ful many a sory swogh.
He gooth and geteth him a kneding-trogh, 3620
And after that a tubbe and a kimelin,
And prively he sente hem to his in,
And heng hem in the roof in privetee.
His owne hand he made laddres three,
To climben by the ronges and the stalkes 3625
Un-to the tubbes hanginge in the balkes, (440)
And hem vitailed, bothe trogh and tubbe,
With breed and chese, and good ale in a lubbe,
Suffysinge right y-nogh as for a day.
But er that he had maad al this array, 3630
He sente his knave, and eek his wenche also,
Up-on his nede to London for to go.
And on the Monday, whan it drow to night,
He shette his dore with-oute candel-light,
And dressed al thing as it sholde be. 3635
And shortly, up they clomben alle three; (450)
They sitten stille wel a furlong-way.

3611. E. Auctor (_in margin_). 3612. Hl. A man. E. Hn. dyen. Pt.
Hl. for; Cm. thour; _rest_ of. 3624. E. _om._ he; Hl. _has_ pan.
3626. E. In-to; Cm. Onto; _rest_ Vnto. 3627. E. vitailleth. 3630.
E. hadde. 3635. E. dresseth; _rest_ dressed. E. Hn. Cm. alle.
Hn. Cp. scholde; E. shal.

?Now, _Pater-noster_, clom!? seyde Nicholay,
And ?clom,? quod John, and ?clom,? seyde Alisoun.
This carpenter seyde his devocioun, 3640
And stille he sit, and biddeth his preyere,
[105: T. 3642-3677.]
Awaytinge on the reyn, if he it here.

The dede sleep, for wery businesse,
Fil on this carpenter right, as I gesse,
Aboute corfew-tyme, or litel more; 3645
For travail of his goost he groneth sore, (460)
And eft he routeth, for his heed mislay.
Doun of the laddre stalketh Nicholay,
And Alisoun, ful softe adoun she spedde;
With-uten wordes mo, they goon to bedde 3650
Ther-as the carpenter is wont to lye.
Ther was the revel and the melodye;
And thus lyth Alison and Nicholas,

In businesse of mirth and of solas,
Til that the belle of laudes gan to ringe, 3655
And freres in the chauncel gonne singe. (470)

3643. Cm. Hl. verray; _rest_ wery.

This parish-clerk, this amorous Absolon,
That is for love alwey so wo bigon,
Up-on the Monday was at Oseneye
With companye, him to disporte and pleye, 3660
And axed up-on cas a cloisterer
Ful prively after lohn the carpenter;
And he drough him a-part out of the chirche,
And seyde, ?I noot, I saugh him here nat wirche
Sin Saterdag; I trow that he be went 3665
For timber, ther our abbot hath him sent; (480)
For he is wont for timber for to go,
And dwellen at the grange a day or two;
Or elles he is at his hous, certeyn;
Wher that he be, I can nat sothly seyn.? 3670

3660. E. With a compaignye. 3661. E. Cloistrer; Pt. Ln. Cloystre.

This Absolon ful loly was and light,
And thoghte, ?now is tyme wake al night;
For sikirly I saugh him nat stiringe
Aboute his dore sin day bigan to springe.
So moot I thryve, I shal, at cokkes crowe, 3675
Ful prively knocken at his windowe (490)
That stant ful lowe up-on his boures wal.
[106: T. 3678-3712.]
To Alison now wol I tellen al
My love-longing, for yet I shal nat misse
That at the leste wey I shal hir kisse. 3680
Som maner confort shal I have, parfay,
My mouth hath icched al this longe day;
That is a signe of kissing atte leste.
Al night me mette eek, I was at a feste.
Therfor I wol gon slepe an heure or tweye, 3685
And al the night than wol I wake and pleye.? (500)

3672. E. Hl. wake; Cm. to waky_n_; _rest_ to wake. 3676. Hn. Cp. Pt.
Ln. knocken; E. Cm. knocke; Hl. go knocke.

Whan that the firste cok hath crowe, anon
Up rist this loly lover Absolon,
And him arrayeth gay, at point-devys.
But first he cheweth greyn and lycorys, 3690
To smellen swete, er he had kembd his heer.
Under his tonge a trewe love he beer,
For ther-by wende he to ben gracious.
He rometh to the carpenteres hous,
And stille he stant under the shot-windowe; 3695
Un-to his brest it raughte, it was so lowe; (510)

And softe he cogheth with a semi-soun?
 ?What do ye, hony-comb, swete Alisoun?
 My faire brid, my swete cinamome,
 Awaketh, lemman myn, and speketh to me! 3700
 Wel litel thenken ye up-on my wo,
 That for your love I swete ther I go.
 No wonder is thogh that I swelte and swete;
 I moorne as doth a lamb after the tete.
 Y-wis, lemman, I have swich love-longinge, 3705
 That lyk a turtel trewe is my moorninge; (520)
 I may nat ete na more than a mayde.?

3690. E. of; _rest_ and. 3696. E. brist. 3697. Hn. cogheth; Cp. coughed; Hl. cowhith; Pt. kougheþ; Cm. coude; E. knokketh. 3701. Cp. Pt. thenken; _rest_ thynken, thynke.

?Go fro the window, lakke fool,? she sayde,
 ?As help me god, it wol nat be ?com ba me,?
 I love another, and elles I were to blame, 3710
 Wel bet than thee, by lesu, Absolon!
 Go forth thy wey, or I wol caste a ston,
 [107: T. 3713-3745.]
 And lat me slepe, a twenty devel wey!?

3709. E. Hn. com pa me; Cp. com pame; Cm. cu_m_pame; Pt. compame; Hl. Ln. compaine; _several_ MSS. come bame, combame; _see note_.

?Allas,? quod Absolon, ?and weylawey!
 That trewe love was ever so yvel biset! 3715
 Than kisse me, sin it may be no bet, (530)
 For lesus love and for the love of me.?

3716. Cp. Pt. Ln. kisse; Hl. kisseth; _rest_ kys.

?Wiltow than go thy wey ther-with?? quod she.

3718. E. _om._ ther-with.

?Ye, certes, lemman,? quod this Absolon.

?Thanne make thee redy,? quod she, ?I come anon;? 3720
 And un-to Nicholas she seyde stille, [T. _om._]
 ?Now hust, and thou shall laughen al thy fille.? [T. _om._]

3721, 2. _These 2 lines in_ E. _only._

This Absolon doun sette him on his knees,
 And seyde, ?I am a lord at alle degrees;
 For after this I hope ther cometh more! 3725
 Lemman, thy grace, and swete brid, thyn ore!? (540)

3724. E. _om._ a.

The window she undoth, and that in haste,

?Have do,? quod she, ?com of, and speed thee faste,
Lest that our neighebores thee espye.?

3728. Cm. don; Hl. doon; Pt. doo; _rest_ do. Hn. thee; _rest_ the.

This Absolon gan wype his mouth ful drye; 3730
Derk was the night as pich, or as the cole,
And at the window out she putte hir hole,
And Absolon, him fil no bet ne wers,
But with his mouth he kiste hir naked ers
Ful savourly, er he was war of this. 3735

3731. E. Dirk. 3732. E. pitte.

Abak he sterte, and thoghte it was amis, (550)
For wel he wiste a womman hath no berd;
He felte a thing al rough and long y-herd,
And seyde, ?fy! allas! what have I do??

3736. E. Cm. stirte.

?Tehee!? quod she, and clapte the window to; 3740
And Absolon goth forth a sory pas.

?A berd, a berd!? quod hende Nicholas,
?By goddes _corpus_, this goth faire and weel!?

This sely Absolon herde every deel,
And on his lippe he gan for anger byte; 3745
And to him-self he seyde, ?I shal thee quyte!? (560)

3743, 4. E. weel, deel; Ln. wele, dele; _rest_ wel, del.

Who rubbeth now, who froteth now his lippes
[108: T. 3746-3780.]

With dust, with sond, with straw, with clooth, with chippes,
But Absolon, that seith ful ofte, ?allas!

My soule bitake I un-to Sathanas, 3750

But me wer lever than al this toun,? quod he,

?Of this despyt awroken for to be!

Allas!? quod he, ?allas! I ne hadde y-bleynt!?

His hote love was cold and al y-queynt;

For fro that tyme that he had kiste hir ers, 3755

Of paramours he sette nat a kers, (570)

For he was heled of his maladye;

Ful ofte paramours he gan deffye,

And weep as dooth a child that is y-bete.

A softe paas he wente over the strete 3760

Un-til a smith men cleped daun Gerveys,

That in his forge smithed plough-harneys;

He sharpeth shaar and culter bisily.

This Absolon knokketh al esily,

And seyde, ?undo, Gerveys, and that anon.? 3765

3753. Hl. nadde bleynt. 3759. Cm. wepte; Hl. wept. 3763. E. Hn. kultour; Cp. Pt. Ln. culter.

?What, who artow?? ?It am I, Absolon.? (580)
?What, Absolon! for Cristes swete tree,
Why ryse ye so rathe, ey, _benedicite!_
What eyleth yow? som gay gerl, god it woot,
Hath broght yow thus up-on the viritoot; 3770
By seynt Note, ye woot wel what I mene.?

3766. E. I am heere; _rest_ it am I. 3770. E. Hn. Cp. viritoot; Pt. Vyritote; Ln. veritote; Cm. merytot; Hl. verytrot. 3771. Pt. Ln. seynt; _rest_ seinte. Pt. Hl. Noet.

This Absolon ne roghte nat a bene
Of al his pley, no word agayn he yaf;
He hadde more tow on his distaf
Than Gerveys knew, and seyde, ?freend so dere, 3775
That hote culter in the chimenee here, (590)
As lene it me, I have ther-with to done,
And I wol bringe it thee agayn ful sone.?

3776. E. kultour.

Gerveys answerde, ?certes, were it gold,
Or in a poke nobles alle untold, 3780
Thou sholdest have, as I am trewe smith;
Ey, Cristes foo! what wol ye do ther-with??
[109: T. 3781-3815.]

3781. Hl. Ye schul him haue. 3782. Hl. fo; _rest_ foo; ed. 1561, fote.

?Ther-of,? quod Absolon, ?be as be may;
I shal wel telle it thee to-morwe day??
And caughte the culter by the colde stele. 3785
Ful softe out at the dore he gan to stele, (600)
And wente un-to the carpenteres wal.
He cogheth first, and knokketh ther-with-al
Upon the windowe, right as he dide er.

3785. E. kultour.

This Alison answerde, ?Who is ther 3790
That knokketh so? I warante it a theef.?

?Why, nay,? quod he, ?god woot, my swete leef,
I am thyn Absolon, my dereling!
Of gold,? quod he, ?I have thee broght a ring;
My moder yaf it me, so god me save, 3795
Ful fyn it is, and ther-to wel y-grave; (610)
This wol I yeve thee, if thou me kisse!?

3793. E. Hn. my; Cm. myn; Hl. O my; Cp. thi; Pt. thine; Ln. þin. E.

deerelyng; Hn. Cm. Cp. derelyng.

This Nicholas was risen for to pisse,
And thoghte he wolde amenden al the lape,
He sholde kisse his ers er that he scape. 3800

And up the windowe dide he hastily,
And out his ers he putteth prively
Over the buttoke, to the haunche-bon;
And ther-with spak this clerk, this Absolon,
?Spek, swete brid, I noot nat wher thou art.? 3805

3800. E. _om._ ers.

This Nicholas anon leet flee a fart, (620)
As greet as it had been a thonder-dent,
That with the strook he was almost y-blent;
And he was redy with his iren hoot,
And Nicholas amidde the ers he smoot. 3810

3810. E. _om._ the.

Of gooth the skin an hande-brede aboute,
The hole culter brende so his toute,
And for the smert he wende for to dye.
As he were wood, for wo he gan to crye?
Help! water! water! help, for goddes herte!? 3815

3812. E. kultour. 3813. And] Hn. That.

This carpenter out of his slomber sterte, (630)
And herde oon cryen ?water? as he were wood,
[110: T. 3816-3848.]
And thoghte, ?Allas! now comth Nowelis flood!?
He sit him up with-outhe wordes mo,
And with his ax he smoot the corde a-two, 3820
And doun goth al; he fond neither to selle,
Ne breed ne ale, til he cam to the celle
Up-on the floor; and ther aswowne he lay.

3818. E. Hn. Nowelis; Cp. Noweles (_intentionally_); Cm. Newel_is_; Pt.
Ln. Hl. noes. 3821. Hl. he goth (_for_ goth al). E. Hn. foond.

Up sterte hir Alison, and Nicholay,
And cryden ?out? and ?harrow? in the strete. 3835
The neighebores, bothe smale and grete, (640)
In ronnen, for to gauren on this man,
That yet aswowne he lay, bothe pale and wan;
For with the fal he brosten hadde his arm;
But stonde he moste un-to his owne harm. 3830
For whan he spak, he was anon bore doun
With hende Nicholas and Alisoun.
They tolden every man that he was wood,
He was agast so of ?Nowelis flood?
Thurgh fantasye, that of his vanitee 3835

He hadde y-boght him kneding-tubbes three, (650)
And hadde hem hanged in the roof above;
And that he preyed hem, for goddes love,
To sitten in the roof, _par companye_.

3828. E. Hn. he; _rest om._ 3831. Pt. Ln. Hl. born. 3834. E. Hn.
Nowelis; Cp. Ln. the Nowels; Pt. þe Noes; Hl. Noes. 3837. E. roue;
see l. 3839. 3838. E. Hn. Ln. preyde.

The folk gan laughen at his fantasye; 3840
In-to the roof they kyken and they gape,
And turned al his harm un-to a lape.
For what so that this carpenter answerde,
It was for noght, no man his reson herde;
With othes grete he was so sworn adoun, 3845
That he was holden wood in al the toun; (660)
For every clerk anon-right heeld with other.
They seyde, ?the man is wood, my leve brother;?
And every wight gan laughen of this stryf.

3841. E. Hn. Cp. cape. 3846. E. holde. 3848. E. Hn. Hl. was; _rest_
is. 3849. E. of this; Hn. at this; _rest_ at his.

Thus swyved was the carpenteres wyf, 3850
[111: T. 3849-3852.]
For al his keping and his lalousye;
And Absolon hath kist hir nether yë;
And Nicholas is scalded in the toute. (667)
This tale is doon, and god save al the route! 3854

HERE ENDETH THE MILLERE HIS TALE.

3850. E. this; _rest_ the. 3852. Pt. Hl. ye; Hn. lye; E. Ln. eye.
3853. E. Hn. the; _rest_ his. COLOPHON. _So_ E. (_with_ Heere); Hl.
Pn. Here endeth the Millers tale; Hn. Here is ended the Millerys tale;
Cp. Ln. Explicit fabula Molendinarii.

[112: T. 3853-3882.]

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THE REEVE'S PROLOGUE

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THE PROLOGE OF THE REVES TALE.

Whan folk had laughen at this nyce cas 3855
Of Absolon and hende Nicholas,
Diverse folk diversely they seyde;
But, for the more part, they loughe and pleyde,
Ne at this tale I saugh no man him greve,
But it were only Osewold the Reve, 3860
By-cause he was of carpenteres craft.

A litel ire is in his herte y-laft,
He gan to grucche and blamed it a lyte.

3862. E. Pt. _om._ is.

?So theek,? quod he, ?ful wel coude I yow quyte (10)
With blering of a proud milleres yë, 3865
If that me liste speke of ribaudye.
But ik am old, me list not pley for age;
Gras-tyme is doon, my fodder is now forage,
This whyte top wryteth myne olde yeres,
Myn herte is al-so mowled as myne heres, 3870
But-if I fare as dooth an open-ers;
That ilke fruit is ever leng the wers,
Til it be roten in mullok or in stree.
We olde men, I drede, so fare we; (20)
Til we be roten, can we nat be rype; 3875
We hoppen ay, whyl that the world wol pype.
For in oure wil ther stiketh ever a nayl,
To have an hoor heed and a grene tayl,
As hath a leek; for thogh our might be goon,
Our wil desireth folie ever in oon. 3880
For whan we may nat doon, than wol we speke;
Yet in our asshen olde is fyr y-reke.

3865. E. Ln. eye. 3867. E. Hn. no (_for_ not). 3869. Hl. My (_for_
This). 3870. E. mowled also. 3872. E. leng; Ln. longe: _rest_
lenger. 3876. E. ay whil that; Hn. alwey whil þat; _rest_ alwey
while.

Foure gledes han we, whiche I shal devyse,
Avaunting, lying, anger, coveityse; (30)
[113: T. 3883-3918.]
Thise foure sparkles longen un-to elde. 3885
Our olde lemes mowe wel been unwelde,
But wil ne shal nat failen, that is sooth.
And yet ik have alwey a coltes tooth,
As many a yeer as it is passed henne
Sin that my tappe of lyf bigan to renne. 3890
For sikerly, whan I was bore, anon
Deeth drogh the tappe of lyf and leet it gon;
And ever sith hath so the tappe y-ronne,
Til that almost al empty is the tonne. (40)
The stream of lyf now droppeth on the chimbe; 3895
The sely tonge may wel ringe and chimbe
Of wrecchednesse that passed is ful yore;
With olde folk, save dotage, is namore.?

3885. E. eelde. 3886. E. vnweelde. 3893. Hn. sith; E. sithe.

Whan that our host hadde herd this sermoning,
He gan to speke as lordly as a king; 3900
He seide, ?what amounteth al this wit?
What shul we speke alday of holy writ?

The devel made a reve for to preche,
And of a souter a shipman or a leche. (50)
Sey forth thy tale, and tarie nat the tyme, 3905
Lo, Depeford! and it is half-way pryme.
Lo, Grenewich, ther many a shrewe is inne;
It were al tyme thy tale to biginne.?

3904. E. Cm. And; _rest_ Or. _All but_ Hn. _om. 2nd_ a. 3907. Cp.
Pt. Ln. that (_for_ ther). 3908. Pt. hie (_for_ al).

?Now, sires,? quod this Osewold the Reve,
?I pray yow alle that ye nat yow greve, 3910
Thogh I answeere and somdel sette his howve;
For leveful is with force force of-showve.

3912. _In margin of_ E.?vim vi repellere.

This dronke millere hath y-told us heer,
How that bigyled was a carpenteer, (60)
Peraventure in scorn, for I am oon. 3915
And, by your leve, I shal him quyte anoon;
Right in his cherles termes wol I speke.
I pray to god his nekke mote breke;
He can wel in myn yë seen a stalke,
But in his owne he can nat seen a balke. 3920

3918. Hl. tobreke; Pt. alto-breke. 3919. Pt. ye; Cp. ?e; rest eye.

[114: T. 3919-3943.]

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THE REVES TALE.

* * * * *

HERE BIGINNETH THE REVES TALE.

At Trumpington, nat fer fro Cantebrigge,
Ther goth a brook and over that a brigge,
Up-on the whiche brook ther stant a melle;
And this is verray soth that I yow telle.
A Miller was ther dwelling many a day; 3925
As eny pecok he was proud and gay.
Pypen he coude and fissue, and nettes bete,
And turne coppes, and wel wrastle and shete;
And by his belt he baar a long panade,
And of a swerd ful trenchant was the blade. 3930
A loly popper baar he in his pouche; (11)
Ther was no man for peril dorste him touche.
A Sheffield thwitel baar he in his hose;
Round was his face, and camuse was his nose.
As piled as an ape was his skulle. 3935
He was a market-beter atte fulle.

Ther dorste no wight hand up-on him legge,
 That he ne swoor he sholde anon abegge.
 A thief he was for sothe of corn and mele,
 And that a sly, and usaunt for to stele. 3940
 His name was hoten dëynous Simkin. (21)
 A wyf he hadde, y-comen of noble kin;
 The person of the toun hir fader was.
 With hir he yaf ful many a panne of bras,
 For that Simkin sholde in his blood allye. 3945
 [115: T. 3944-3976.]
 She was y-fostred in a nonnerye;
 For Simkin wolde no wyf, as he sayde,
 But she were wel y-norissed and a mayde,
 To saven his estaat of yomanrye.
 And she was proud, and pert as is a pye. 3950
 A ful fair sighte was it on hem two; (31)
 On haly-dayes biforn hir wolde he go
 With his tipet bounden about his heed,
 And she cam after in a gyte of reed;
 And Simkin hadde hosen of the same. 3955
 Ther dorste no wight clepen hir but ?dame?
 Was noon so hardy that wente by the weye
 That with hir dorste rage or ones pleye,
 But-if he wolde be slayn of Simkin
 With panade, or with knyf, or boydekin. 3960
 For lalous folk ben perilous evermo, (41)
 Algate they wolde hir wyves wenden so.
 And eek, for she was somdel smoterlich,
 She was as digne as water in a dich;
 And ful of hoker and of bisemare. 3965
 Hir thoughte that a lady sholde hir spare,
 What for hir kinrede and hir nortelrye
 That she had lerned in the nonnerye.

3923. E. Hn. Cm. which; _rest_ whiche. 3928. Hl. wrastle wel (_om._
 and). 3934. Hl. camois; Pt. camoyse. 3939. E. was of corn and eek
 of Mele. 3941. E. Cp. Hl. hoote; Cm. hotyn; _rest_ hoten. Pt.
 deyne?ouse. 3944. panne] Cm. peny. 3948. E. But if; _rest_
 But. 3949. Hn. Cm. Pt. yemanrye. 3950. E. Hn. Pt. peert. 3951.
 Cm. Hl. on; _rest_ vp-on. 3953. Cm. boundyn; Pt. bounden; Hn. Cp. Ln.
 wunden; Hl. ybounde. 3956. Hl. ma dame. 3958. Hl. elles (_for_
 ones). 3959. Hl. Symekyn. 3965. Hn. Cm. And; _rest_ As. Hl.
 bissemare; Cp. bisemare; E. Hn. Pt. Ln. bismare.

A doghter hadde they bitwixe hem two
 Of twenty yeer, with-uten any mo, 3970
 Savinge a child that was of half-yeer age; (51)
 In cradel it lay and was a propre page.
 This wenche thikke and wel y-growen was,
 With camuse nose and yën greye as glas;
 With buttokes brode and brestes rounde and hye, 3975
 But right fair was hir heer, I wol nat lye.

3974. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. camoys. MSS. eyen, ey?en. 3975. E. Cm.

om. With.

The person of the toun, for she was feir,
In purpos was to maken hir his heir
[116: T. 3977-4012.]
Bothe of his catel and his messuage,
And straunge he made it of hir mariage. 3980
His purpos was for to bistowe hir hye (61)
In-to som worthy blood of auncetrye;
For holy chirches good moot been despended
On holy chirches blood, that is descended.
Therefore he wolde his holy blood honoure, 3985
Though that he holy chirche sholde devoure.

3977. E. Cm. This; _rest_ The.

Gret soken hath this miller, out of doute,
With whete and malt of al the land aboute;
And nameliche ther was a greet collegge,
Men clepen the Soler-halle at Cantebregge, 3990
Ther was hir whete and eek hir malt y-grounde. (71)
And on a day it happed, in a stounde,
Sik lay the maunciple on a maladye;
Men wenden wisly that he sholde dye.
For which this miller stal bothe mele and corn 3995
An hundred tyme more than biforn;
For ther-biforn he stal but curteisly,
But now he was a theef outrageously,
For which the wardeyn chidde and made fare.
But ther-of sette the miller nat a tare; 4000
He craketh boost, and swoor it was nat so. (81)

3987. E. Cm. sokene.

Than were ther yonge povre clerkes two,
That dwelten in this halle, of which I seye.
Testif they were, and lusty for to pleye,
And, only for hir mirthe and revelrye, 4005
Up-on the wardeyn bisily they crye,
To yeve hem leve but a litel stounde
To goon to mille and seen hir corn y-grounde;
And hardily, they dorste leye hir nekke,
The miller shold nat stele hem half a pekke 4010
Of corn by sleighte, ne by force hem reve; (91)
And at the laste the wardeyn yaf hem leve.
Iohn hight that oon, and Aleyn hight that other;
Of o toun were they born, that highte Strother,
[117: T. 4013-4045.]
Fer in the north, I can nat telle where. 4015

4002. Pt. Ln. Than; _rest_ Thanne. 4004. Pt. Teestif. 4005. Ln.
revelrie; _rest_ reuerye; ed. 1561, reuelry. 4013. E. highte (_1st_);
heet (_2nd_). Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. hight.

This Aleyn maketh redy al his gere,
And on an hors the sak he caste anon.
Forth goth Aleyn the clerk, and also lohn,
With good swerd and with bokeler by hir syde.
lohn knew the wey, hem nedede no gyde, 4020
And at the mille the sak adoun he layth. (101)
Aleyn spak first, ?al hayl, Symond, y-fayth;
How fares thy faire doghter and thy wyf??

4019. E. Cm. Pt. _om._ with. 4020. Cp. nedede (_see_ l. 4161); E.
Hn. Pt. neded; Cm. Hl. nedyth; Ln. nedep. 4022. Hn. Symkyn; _rest_
Symond, Symon; _see_ l. 4026.

?Aleyn! welcome,? quod Simkin, ?by my lyf,
And lohn also, how now, what do ye heer?? 4025

?Symond,? quod lohn, ?by god, nede has na peer;
Him boës serve him-selve that has na swayn,
Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes sayn.
Our manciple, I hope he wil be deed,
Swa werkes ay the wanges in his heed. 4030
And forthy is I come, and eek Alayn, (111)
To grinde our corn and carie it ham agayn;
I pray yow spede us hethen that ye may.?

4027. E. boes (= North. E. _bus_); Hn. Cp. bihoues; Pt. Ln. byhouep;
Cm. muste; Hl. falles. 4033. E. Hn. Cp. heythen; Ln. hethen (_the
right form_); Cm. hene; Pt. hepen (_for_ hepen).

?It shal be doon,? quod Simkin, ?by my fay;
What wol ye doon whyl that it is in hande?? 4035

?By god, right by the hoper wil I stande,?
Quod lohn, ?and se how that the corn gas in;
Yet saugh I never, by my fader kin,
How that the hoper waggis til and fra.?

4036. E. hopur.

Aleyn answerde, ?lohn, and wiltow swa, 4040
Than wil I be bynethe, by my croun, (121)
And se how that the mele falles down
In-to the trough; that sal be my disport.
For lohn, in faith, I may been of your sort;
I is as ille a miller as are ye.? 4045

4040. Cp. Hl. and; _rest om._ 4044. E. Cm. yfayth. 4045. Cm. Pt. is
(_for_ are); Ln. es.

This miller smyled of hir nycetee,
And thoghte, ?al this nis doon but for a wyle;
[118: T. 4046-4079.]
They wene that no man may hem bigyle;
But, by my thrift, yet shal I blere hir yë

For al the sleighte in hir philosophye. 4050
The more queynte crekes that they make, (131)
The more wol I stele whan I take.
In stede of flour, yet wol I yeve hem bren.
?The gretteste clerkes been noght the wysest men,?
As whylom to the wolf thus spak the mare; 4055
Of al hir art I counte noght a tare.?

4049. E. Ln. eye. 4051. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. crekes; Hl. knakkes. 4053.
E. stide. 4054. E. Cm. Hl. _om._ the. 4056. Cm. I counte; Hl. ne
counte I; _rest_ counte I.

Out at the dore he gooth ful prively,
Whan that he saugh his tyme, softly;
He loketh up and doun til he hath founde
The clerkes hors, ther as it stood y-bounde 4060
Bihinde the mille, under a levesel; (141)
And to the hors he gooth him faire and wel;
He strepeth of the brydel right anon.
And whan the hors was loos, he ginneth gon
Toward the fen, ther wilde mares renne, 4065
Forth with wehee, thurgh thikke and thurgh thenne.

4061. Cm. Cp. Ln. Hl. leuesel; E. lefsel; Hn. leefsel. 4064. E. Hn.
Cp. Ln. laus; Hl. loos; Cm. los; Pt. louse; _see_ l. 4138.

This miller gooth agayn, no word he seyde,
But dooth his note, and with the clerkes pleyde,
Til that hir corn was faire and wel y-grounde.
And whan the mele is sakked and y-bounde, 4070
This lohn goth out and fynt his hors away, (151)
And gan to crye ?harrow? and ?weylaway!
Our hors is lorn! Alayn, for goddes banes,
Step on thy feet, com out, man, al at anes!
Allas, our wardeyn has his palfrey lorn.? 4075
This Aleyn al forgat, bothe mele and corn,
Al was out of his mynde his housbondrye.
?What? whilk way is he geen?? he gan to crye.

4069. E. weel. 4074. E. out; Hn. Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. of; Hl. on. 4078.
E. geen; Hn. Ln. gane; Hl. gan; Cm. Cp. Pt. gon.

The wyf cam leping inward with a ren,
She seyde, ?allas! your hors goth to the fen 4080
With wilde mares, as faste as he may go. (161)
[119: T. 4080-4114.]
Unthank come on his hand that bond him so,
And he that bettre sholde han knit the reyne.?

4082. E. Hn. boond.

?Allas,? quod lohn, ?Aleyn, for Cristes peyne,
Lay doun thy swerd, and I wil myn als wa; 4085
I is ful wight, god waat, as is a raa;

By goddes herte he sal nat scape us bathe.
Why nadstow pit the capul in the lathe?
Il-hayl, by god, Aleyn, thou is a fonne!?

4084. E. Cm. _om._ lohn. 4087. E. Hn. god; _rest_ goddes, goddis.
4088. E. Hn. Cm. pit; _rest_ put (putte).

This sely clerkes han ful faste y-ronne 4090
To-ward the fen, bothe Aleyn and eek lohn. (171)

And whan the miller saugh that they were gon,
He half a busschel of hir flour hath take,
And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake.
He seyde, ?I trowe the clerkes were aferd; 4095
Yet can a miller make a clerkes berd
For al his art; now lat hem goon hir weye.
Lo wher they goon, ye, lat the children pleye;
They gete him nat so lightly, by my croun!?

4094. E. _om._ a.

Thise sely clerkes rennen up and doun 4100
With ?keep, keep, stand, stand, lossa, warderere, (181)
Ga whistle thou, and I shal kepe him here!?
But shortly, til that it was verray night,
They coude nat, though they do al hir might,
Hir capul cacche, he ran alwey so faste, 4105
Til in a dich they caughte him atte laste.

4101. Cm. ware þe rere; Hl. ware derere; _rest_ warderere; ed. 1561,
wartherere. 4104. E. do; Cm. don; _rest_ dide (did).

Wery and weet, as beste is in the reyn,
Comth sely lohn, and with him comth Aleyn.
?Allas,? quod lohn, ?the day that I was born!
Now are we drive til hething and til scorn. 4110
Our corn is stole, men wil us foles calle, (191)
Bathe the wardeyn and our felawes alle,
And namely the miller; weylaway!?

4107. Cm. beste; E. Hn. beest. 4110. E. Hl. dryue; _rest_ dryuen
(dreven). 4111. E. stoln me.

Thus pleyneth lohn as he goth by the way
Toward the mille, and Bayard in his hond. 4115
The miller sitting by the fyr he fond,
[120: T. 4115-4147.]
For it was night, and forther mighte they noght;
But, for the love of god, they him bisoght
Of herberwe and of ese, as for hir peny.

The miller seyde agayn, ?if ther be eny, 4120
Swich as it is, yet shal ye have your part. (201)
Myn hous is streit, but ye han lerned art;

Ye conne by argumentes make a place
A myle brood of twenty foot of space.
Lat see now if this place may suffyse, 4125
Or make it roum with speche, as is youre gyse.?

4123. E. Hn. Argumentz; Cm. argumentis; Cp. Hl. argumentes. 4126. E.
in (_for_ is).

?Now, Symond,? seyde lohn, ?by seint Cutberd,
Ay is thou mery, and this is faire answerd.
I have herd seyde, man sal taa of twa thinges
Slyk as he fyndes, or taa slyk as he bringes. 4130
But specially, I pray thee, hoste dere, (211)
Get us som mete and drinke, and make us chere,
And we wil payen trewely atte fulle.
With empty hand men may na haukes tulle;
Lo here our silver, redy for to spende.? 4135

4128. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. mery; E. Hn. myrie. 4129. E. taa; Cm. tan; Pt.
taken; Hn. tak; Cp. take. 4131. E. Hn. hoost; Hl. host ful; Pt.
hooste; Cp. Ln. ooste. 4134. Hl. na; Cp. naan; E. Hn. Cm. none; Pt.
not.

This miller in-to toun his doghter sende
For ale and breed, and rosted hem a goos,
And bond hir hors, it sholde nat gon loos;
And in his owne chambre hem made a bed
With shetes and with chalons faire y-sprede, 4140
Noght from his owne bed ten foot or twelve. (221)
His doghter hadde a bed, al by hir-selve,
Right in the same chambre, by and by;
It mighte be no bet, and cause why,
Ther was no roumer herberwe in the place. 4145
They soupen and they speke, hem to solace,
And drinken ever strong ale atte beste.
Aboute midnight wente they to reste.

4138. E. Hn. Cp. boond. E. nat; Cm. not; Hn. namoore; Cp. namore; Pt.
Ln. Hl. no more. 4147. E. drynke; Hn. Cp. Pt. drynken; Hl. Cm.
dronken.

Wel hath this miller vernisshed his heed;
[121: T. 4148-4180.]
Ful pale he was for-dronken, and nat reed. 4150
He yexeth, and he speketh thurgh the nose (231)
As he were on the quakke, or on the pose.
To bedde he gooth, and with him goth his wyf.
As any lay she light was and lolyf,
So was hir loly whistle wel y-wet. 4155
The cradel at hir beddes feet is set,
To rokken, and to yeve the child to souke.
And whan that dronken al was in the crouke,
To bedde went the doghter right anon;
To bedde gooth Aleyne and also lohn; 4160

Ther nas na more, hem nedede no dwale. (241)
This miller hath so wisly bibbed ale,
That as an hors he snorteth in his sleep,
Ne of his tayl bihinde he took no keep.
His wyf bar him a burdon, a ful strong, 4165
Men mighte hir routing here two furlong;
The wenche routeth eek _par companye_.

4151. Hl. yoxeth. 4160. E. wente; _rest_ gooth (goth). 4161. Cp. needede (_see_ l. 4020); _rest_ neded. 4162. Hl. wysly; Cm. wysely; E. wisely; _rest_ wisly. 4166. Hl. Cp. a (_for_ two).

Aleyn the clerk, that herd this melodye,
He poked lohn, and seyde, ?slepestow?
Herdestow ever slyk a sang er now? 4170
Lo, whilk a compline is y-mel hem alle! (251)
A wilde fyr up-on thair bodyes falle!
Wha herkned ever slyk a ferly thing?
Ye, they sal have the flour of il ending.
This lange night ther tydes me na reste; 4175
But yet, na fors; al sal be for the beste.
For lohn,? seyde he, ?als ever moot I thryve,
If that I may, yon wenche wil I swyve.
Som esement has lawe y-shapen us;
For lohn, ther is a lawe that says thus, 4180
That gif a man in a point be y-greved, (261)
That in another he sal be releved.

[122: T. 4181-4216.]

Our corn is stoln, shortly, it is na nay,
And we han had an il fit al this day.
And sin I sal have neen amendement, 4185
Agayn my los I wil have esement.
By goddes saule, it sal neen other be!?

4170. Cp. Herdestow; Cm. Ln. Herdist thou; Hl. Herdistow; E. Herdtow; Hn. Herd thow. 4171. E. whilk; Hn. Cp. Ln. swilke; Cm. swich; Pt. sclike; Hl. slik. 4171. Ln. compline; Hn. conplyng; Pt. conplinge; Hl. couplyng (_wrongly_); E. cowplyng; Cm. copil. 4181. Hl. (_margin_) Qui in vno grauat in alio debet releuari. 4183. E. Cm. shortly; _rest_ sothly. E. is; _rest_ it is. Hn. Hl. na; E. ne; _rest_ no (non). 4185. E. neen; Hn. naan; Hl. nan; _rest_ non (noon); _so in_ 4187.

This lohn answerde, ?Alayn, avyse thee,
The miller is a perilous man,? he seyde,
?And gif that he out of his sleep abreyde, 4190
He mighte doon us bathe a vileinye.? (271)

Aleyn answerde, ?I count him nat a flye;?
And up he rist, and by the wenche he crepte.
This wenche lay upright, and faste slepte,
Til he so ny was, er she mighte espye, 4195
That it had been to late for to crye,
And shortly for to seyn, they were at on;

Now pley, Aleyn! for I wol speke of lohn.

This lohn lyth stille a furlong-wey or two,
And to him-self he maketh routhe and wo: 4200
?Allas!? quod he, ?this is a wikked lape; (281)
Now may I seyn that I is but an ape.
Yet has my felawe som-what for his harm;
He has the milleris doghter in his arm.
He auntred him, and has his nedes sped, 4205
And I lye as a draf-sek in my bed;
And when this lape is tald another day,
I sal been halde a daf, a cokenay!
I wil aryse, and auntre it, by my fayth!
?Unhardy is unsely,? thus men sayth.? 4210
And up he roos and softly he wente (291)
Un-to the cradel, and in his hand it hente,
And baar it softe un-to his beddes feet.

4206. E. Cm. sek; _rest_ sak. 4213. E. the; _rest_ his.

Sone after this the wyf hir routing leet,
And gan awake, and wente hir out to pisse, 4215
And cam agayn, and gan hir cradel misse,
And groped heer and ther, but she fond noon.
?Allas!? quod she, ?I hadde almost misgoon;
[123: T. 4217-4252.]
I hadde almost gon to the clerkes bed.
By, _benedicite!_ thanne hadde I foule y-sped:? 4220
And forth she gooth til she the cradel fond. (301)
She gropeth alwey forther with hir hond,
And fond the bed, and thoghte noght but good,
By-cause that the cradel by it stood,
And niste wher she was, for it was derk; 4225,
But faire and wel she creep in to the clerk,
And lyth ful stille, and wolde han caught a sleep.
With-inne a whyl this lohn the clerk up leep,
And on this gode wyf he leyth on sore.
So mery a fit ne hadde she nat ful yore; 4230
He priketh harde and depe as he were mad. (311)
This loly lyf han thise two clerkes lad
Til that the thridde cok bigan to singe.

4217. E. Hn. Pt. foond. 4223. E. Hn. foond. 4226. to] Cm. bi.
4230. E. myrie; _om._ ne. 4231. E. soore; Cm. sore; _rest_ depe
(deepe).

Aleyn wex wery in the daweninge,
For he had swonken al the longe night; 4235
And seyde, ?far wel, Malin, swete wight!
The day is come, I may no lenger byde;
But evermo, wher so I go or ryde,
I is thyn awen clerk, swa have I seel!?

4234. Cm. Ln. Pt. wex; _rest_ wax. 4236. Cm. Cp. Hl. far; _rest_

fare; _see note._

?Now dere lemman,? quod she, ?go, far weel! 4240
But er thou go, o thing I wol thee telle, (321)
Whan that thou wendest homward by the melle,
Right at the entree of the dore bihinde,
Thou shalt a cake of half a busshel finde
That was y-maked of thyn owne mele, 4245
Which that I heelp my fader for to stele.
And, gode lemman, god thee save and kepe!?
And with that word almost she gan to wepe.

4246. Cm. halp; E. Hn. heelp.

Aleyn up-rist, and thoughte, ?er that it dawe,
I wol go crepen in by my felawe; 4250
And fond the cradel with his hand anon, (331)
?By god,? thoghte he, ?al wrang I have misgon;
Myn heed is toty of my swink to-night,
That maketh me that I go nat aright.
[124: T. 4253-4288.]
I woot wel by the cradel, I have misgo, 4255
Heer lyth the miller and his wyf also.?
And forth he goth, a twenty devel way,
Un-to the bed ther-as the miller lay.
He wende have copen by his felawe lohn;
And by the miller in he creep anon, 4260
And caughte hym by the nekke, and softe he spak: (341)
He seyde, ?thou, lohn, thou swynes-heed, awak
For Cristes saule, and heer a noble game.
For by that lord that called is seint lame,
As I have thryes, in this shorte night, 4265
Swyved the milleres doghter bolt-upright,
Why! thou hast as a coward been agast.?

?Ye, false harlot,? quod the miller, ?hast?
A! false traitour! false clerk!? quod he,
?Thou shalt be deed, by goddes dignitee! 4270
Who dorste be so bold to disparage (351)
My doghter, that is come of swich linage??
And by the throte-bolle he caughte Alayn.
And he hente hym despitously agayn,
And on the nose he smoot him with his fest. 4275
Doun ran the bloody stream up-on his brest;
And in the floor, with nose and mouth to-broke,
They walwe as doon two pigges in a poke.
And up they goon, and doun agayn anon,
Til that the miller sporned at a stoon, 4280
And doun he fil bakward up-on his wyf, (361)
That wiste no-thing of this nyce stryf;
For she was falle aslepe a lyte wight
With lohn the clerk, that waked hadde al night.
And with the fal, out of hir sleep she breyde? 4285
?Help, holy croys of Bromeholm,? she seyde,

In manus tuas! lord, to thee I calle!
Awak, Symond! the feend is on us falle,
Myn herte is broken, help, I nam but deed;
There lyth oon up my wombe and up myn heed; 4290
[125: T. 4289-4322.]
Help, Simkin, for the false clerkes fighte.? (371)

4277. in] Hn. on. 4278. Hl. walweden as pigges. 4280. Hn. on; Cm.
a?en; _rest_ at. 4283. E. lite; Cm. lyte; _rest_ litel. 4286.
Cm. Pt. Ln. Bromholm; _rest_ Bromholm. 4290. Cp. Ln. vp (_twice_).
E. Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. vp on (_for_ 1st_ up). E. Cm. Pt. Hl. on (Hn. vp);
for 2nd_ vp.

This lohn sterte up as faste as ever he mighte,
And graspeth by the walles to and fro,
To finde a staf; and she sterte up also,
And knew the estres bet than dide this lohn, 4295
And by the wal a staf she fond, anon,
And saugh a litel shimmering of a light,
For at an hole in shoon the mone bright;
And by that light she saugh hem bothe two,
But sikerly she niste who was who, 4300
But as she saugh a whyt thing in hir yë. (38l)
And whan she gan the whyte thing espye,
She wende the clerk hadde wered a volupeer.
And with the staf she drough ay neer and neer,
And wende han hit this Aleyn at the fulle, 4305
And smoot the miller on the pyled skulle,
That doun he gooth and cryde, ?harrow! I dye!?
Thise clerkes bete him weel and lete him lye;
And greythen hem, and toke hir hors anon,
And eek hir mele, and on hir wey they gon. 4310
And at the mille yet they toke hir cake (39l)
Of half a busshel flour, ful wel y-bake.

4292. E. Cm. stirte. E. soone (_for_ faste). 4296. E. Hn. foond;
Hl. took. 4301. Hl. ye; Hn. lye; _rest_ eye. 4307. E. Cm. Hl. And;
rest That. 4309. Hl. greyth; Cm. hastede.

Thus is the proude miller wel y-bete,
And hath y-lost the grinding of the whete,
And payed for the soper every-deel 4315
Of Aleyn and of lohn, that bette him weel.
His wyf is swyved, and his doghter als;
Lo, swich it is a miller to be fals!
And therefore this proverbe is seyde ful sooth,
?Him thar nat wene wel that yvel dooth; 4320
A gylour shal him-self bigyled be.? (40l)
And God, that sitteth heighe in magestee,
Save al this companye grete and smale!
Thus have I quit the miller in my tale.

HERE IS ENDED THE REVES TALE.

4320. E. Hn. yuele; Cm. euele. 4322. E. Trinitee; _rest_ magestee
(mageste). COLOPHON. Hn. Hl. Here endeth the Reves tale.

[126: T. 4323-4347.]

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THE COOK'S PROLOGUE.

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THE PROLOGUE OF THE COKES TALE.

The Cook of London, whyl the Reve spak, 4325
For loye, him thoughte, he clawed him on the bak,
?Ha! ha!? quod he, ?for Cristes passioun,
This miller hadde a sharp conclusioun
Upon his argument of herbergage!
Wel seyde Salomon in his langage, 4330
?Ne bringe nat every man in-to thyn hous;?
For herberwing by nighte is perilous.
Wel oghte a man avysed for to be
Whom that he broghte in-to his privetee. (10)
I pray to god, so yeve me sorwe and care, 4335
If ever, sith I highte Hogge of Ware,
Herde I a miller bettre y-set a-werk.
He hadde a lape of malice in the derk.
But god forbede that we stinten here;
And therefore, if ye vouche-sauf to here 4340
A tale of me, that am a povre man,
I wol yow telle as wel as ever I can
A litel lape that fil in our citee.?

4325. E. whil that the. 4332. Hl. herburgage. 4336. Hn. sith; E.
sitthe; Hl. sippe; Cp. Pt. Ln. sithen. 4339. Hn. Hl. stynten; E.
stynte. 4339, 4340. _Last two words glossed_ hic _and_ audire _in_ E.
Hn.

Our host answerde, and seide, ?I graunte it thee; (20)
Now telle on, Roger, loke that it be good; 4345
For many a pastee hastow laten blood,
And many a lakke of Dover hastow sold
That hath been twyes hoot and twyes cold.
Of many a pilgrim hastow Cristes curs,
[127: T. 4348-4362.]
For of thy persly yet they fare the wors, 4350
That they han eten with thy stubbel-goos;
For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos.
Now telle on, gentil Roger, by thy name.
But yet I pray thee, be nat wrooth for game, (30)
A man may seye ful sooth in game and pley.? 4355

4347. E. Hn. Cm. Ln. Douere. E. Hn. soold. 4348. E. Hn. coold.
4350. Hl. persly; Hn. p_er_sle; E. p_er_cely. 4355. Hl. _omits_.

?Thou seist ful sooth,? quod Roger, ?by my fey,
 But ?sooth pley, quaad pley,? as the Fleming seith;
 And ther-fore, Herry Bailly, by thy feith,
 Be thou nat wrooth, er we departen heer,
 Though that my tale be of an hostileer. 4360
 But nathelees I wol nat telle it yit,
 But er we parte, y-wis, thou shalt be quit.?
 And ther-with-al he lough and made chere,
 And seyde his tale, as ye shul after here. (40)

THUS ENDETH THE PROLOGE OF THE COKES TALE.

4357. E. Cm. quaad; Cp. Hl. quad; _rest_ quade. 4359. E. na (_for_
 nat). COLOPHON. _In_ Pt.; Ln. Explicit prologus.

[128: T. 4363-4390.]

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THE COKES TALE.

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HEER BIGYNNETH THE COKES TALE.

A prentis whylom dwelled in our citee, 4365
 And of a craft of vitailleurs was he;
 Gaillard he was as goldfinch in the shawe,
 Broun as a berie, a propre short felawe,
 With lokkes blake, y-kempt ful fetisly.
 Dauncen he coude so wel and lolily, 4370
 That he was cleped Perkin Revelour.
 He was as ful of love and paramour
 As is the hyve ful of hony swete;
 Wel was the wenche with him mighte mete. (10)
 At every brydale wolde he singe and hoppe, 4375
 He loved bet the taverne than the shoppe.

4366. E. vitailleurs. 4369. E. ykempd; Hn. ykembd; _rest_ ykempt.

For whan ther any ryding was in Chepe,
 Out of the shoppe thider wolde he lepe.
 Til that he hadde al the sighte y-seyn,
 And daunced wel, he wolde nat come ageyn. 4380
 And gadered him a meinee of his sort
 To hoppe and singe, and maken swich disport.
 And ther they setten Steven for to mete
 To pleyen at the dys in swich a strete. (20)
 For in the toune nas ther no prentys, 4385
 That fairer coude caste a paire of dys
 Than Perkin coude, and ther-to he was free
 Of his dispense, in place of privetee.
 That fond his maister wel in his chaffare;

For often tyme he fond his box ful bare. 4390
 For sikerly a prentis revelour,
 That haunteth dys, riot, or paramour,
 [129: T. 4391-4420.]
 His maister shal it in his shoppe abyde,
 Al have he no part of the minstralcy; (30)
 For thefte and riot, they ben convertible, 4395
 Al conne he pleye on giterne or ribible.
 Revel and trouthe, as in a low degree,
 They been ful wrothe al day, as men may see.

4380. E. ayeyn. 4383. Pt. Ln. steuen; _rest_ steuene. 4385. Pt. Ln.
 toune; _rest_ toun. 4396. E. Ln. ribible; _rest_ rubible. 4397. E.
 lowe.

This loly prentis with his maister bood,
 Til he were ny out of his prentishood, 4400
 Al were he snibbed bothe erly and late,
 And somtyme lad with revel to Newgate;
 But atte laste his maister him bithoghte,
 Up-on a day, whan he his paper soghte, (40)
 Of a proverbe that seith this same word, 4405
 ?Wel bet is roten appel out of hord
 Than that it rotie al the remenaunt.?
 So fareth it by a riotous servaunt;
 It is wel lasse harm to lete him pace,
 Than he shende alle the servants in the place. 4410
 Therefore his maister yaf him acquittance,
 And bad him go with sorwe and with meschance;
 And thus this loly prentis hadde his leve.
 Now lat him riote al the night or leve. (50)

4402. E. Newegate. 4404. E. Hn. Hl. papir. 4406. E. Hn. Cp. Hl.
 Appul. 4410. E. servantz.

And for ther is no theef with-oute a louke, 4415
 That helpeth him to wasten and to souke
 Of that he brybe can or borwe may,
 Anon he sente his bed and his array
 Un-to a compeer of his owne sort,
 That lovede dys and revel and disport, 4420
 And hadde a wyf that heeld for countenance
 A shoppe, and swyved for hir sustenance. 4422

OF THIS COKES TALE MAKED CHAUCER NA MORE.

[_For_ The Tale of Gamelin, _see the_ Appendix.]

4415-22. Hl. _omits._ 4415. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. lowke; Pt. louke; Cm.
 loke. 4416. Pt. souke; _rest_ sowke. 4419. E. compier; Hn. compeer;
 Cp. Pt. Ln. conpere. COLOPHON. _In_ Hn. _only. Blank space in_ E.

[130: T. 4421-4446.]

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GROUP B.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MAN OF LAW'S PROLOGUE.

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THE WORDES OF THE HOOST TO THE COMPANYE.

Our Hoste sey wel that the brighte sonne
The ark of his artificial day had ronne
The fourthe part, and half an houre, and more;
And though he were not depe expert in lore,
He wiste it was the eightetethe day 5
Of April, that is messenger to May;
And sey wel that the shadwe of every tree
Was as in lengthe the same quantitee
That was the body erect that caused it.
And therfor by the shadwe he took his wit 10
That Phebus, which that shoon so clere and brighte,
Degrees was fyve and fourty clombe on highte;
And for that day, as in that latitude,
It was ten of the klokke, he gan conclude,
And sodeynly he plighte his hors aboute. 15

1. Hl. Hoste; Ln. oste; _rest_ hoost (oost). _On_ sey, see note. 2. E. Hn. Hl. hath; _rest_ had. 4. Cm. _wanting_; Cp. Pt. Ln. expert; E. Hn. ystert; Hl. _om._ 5. Hn. xviiithe; Cp. xviije; Pt. Ln. xviiij; E. eighte and twentithe; Hl. threttenthe. 14. Cm. Pt. Hl. of the; E. Hn. at the; Cp. atte; Ln. att.

?Lordinges,? quod he, ?I warne yow, al this route,
The fourthe party of this day is goon;
Now, for the love of god and of seint lohn,
Leseth no tyme, as ferforth as ye may;
Lordinges, the tyme wasteth night and day, 20
And steleth from us, what prively slepinge,
And what thurgh necligence in our wakinge,
As dooth the streem, that turneth never agayn,
Descending fro the montaigne in-to playn.
Wel can Senek, and many a philosophre 25
Biwailen tyme, more than gold in cofre.
[131: T. 4447-4483.]
?For los of catel may recovered be,
But los of tyme shendeth us,? quod he.
It wol nat come agayn, with-uten drede,
Na more than wol Malkins maydenhede, 30
Whan she hath lost it in hir wantownesse;
Lat us nat moulen thus in ydelnesse.
Sir man of lawe,? quod he, ?so have ye blis,
Tel us a tale anon, as forward is;
Ye been submitted thurgh your free assent 35
To stonde in this cas at my lugement.

Acquiteth yow, and holdeth your biheste,
Than have ye doon your devoir atte leste.?

37. Hl. and holdeth; _rest_ now of (_badly_). 38. E. do.

?Hoste,? quod he, ?_depardieux_ ich assente,
To breke forward is not myn entente. 40
Biheste is dette, and I wol holde fayn
Al my biheste; I can no better seyn.
For swich lawe as man yeveth another wight,
He sholde him-selven usen it by right;
Thus wol our text; but natheles certeyn 45
I can right now no thrifty tale seyn,
But Chaucer, though he can but lewedly
On metres and on ryming craftily,
Hath seyde hem in swich English as he can
Of olde tyme, as knoweth many a man. 50
And if he have not seyde hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath seyde hem in another.
For he hath told of loveres up and down
Mo than Ovyde made of mencion
In his Epistelles, that been ful olde. 55
What sholde I tellen hem, sin they ben tolde?
In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcion,
And sithen hath he spoke of everichon,
Thise noble wyves and thise loveres eek.
Who-so that wol his large volume seek 60
Clepeth the Seintes Legende of Cupyde,
Ther may he seen the large woundes wyde
Of Lucesse, and of Babilan Tisbee;
[132: T. 4484-4518.]
The swerd of Dido for the false Enee;
The tree of Phillis for hir Demophon; 65
The pleinte of Dianire and Hermion,
Of Adriane and of Isiphilee;
The bareyne yle standing in the see;
The dreynte Leander for his Erro;
The teres of Eleyne, and eek the wo 70
Of Brixseyde, and of thee, Ladomäa;
The crueltee of thee, queen Medäa,
Thy litel children hanging by the hals
For thy lason, that was of love so fals!
O Ypermestra, Penelopee, Alceste, 75
Your wyfhod he comendeth with the beste!

43. Cm. man; _rest_ a man. 45. E. wole; Hn. wol. 47. MS. Camb. Dd.
4. 24 _has_ But; _rest_ That; _see note_. 55. Hl. Cm. Epistelles; E.
Hn. Cp. Epistles. 56. E. Hn. telle; _rest_ tellen. 64. Hl. sorwe;
rest swerd. 66. E. Cm. Hl. Diane; Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. Dianire, _or_
Dyanyre. 69. E. Hn. Ln. Leandre. 70. E. _omits_ eek. 71. E.
omits of. 72. Cp. Hl. queen; _rest_ quene. 74. E. Cm. in; _rest_
of. 75. E. Hn. Cm. Penelopee. 76. E. wifhede.

But certainly no word ne wryteth he

Of thilke wikke ensample of Canacee,
 That lovede hir owne brother sinfully;
 Of swiche cursed stories I sey ?fy?; 80
 Or elles of Tyro Apollonius,
 How that the cursed king Antiochus
 Birafted his doghter of hir maydenhede,
 That is so horrible a tale for to rede,
 Whan he hir threw up-on the pavement. 85
 And therfor he, of ful avysement,
 Nolde never wryte in none of his sermons
 Of swiche unkinde abhominaciouns,
 Ne I wol noon rehearse, if that I may.

But of my tale how shal I doon this day? 90
 Me were looth be lykned, doutelees,
 To Muses that men clepe Pierides?
 Metamorphoseos wot what I mene:?
 But nathelees, I recche noght a bene
 Though I come after him with hawe-bake; 95
 I speke in prose, and lat him rymes make.?
 And with that word he, with a sobre chere,
 Bigan his tale, as ye shal after here.

95. Hn. Cp. Pt. Hl. hawe bake; E. hawebake; Cm. aw bake; Ln. halve
 bake.

[133: T. 4519-4553.]

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THE PROLOGE OF THE MANNES TALE OF LAWE.

O hateful harm! condicion of poverté!
 With thirst, with cold, with hunger so confounded! 100
 To asken help thee shameth in thyn herte;
 If thou noon aske, with nede artow so wounded,
 That verray nede unwrappeth al thy wounde hid!
 Maugree thyn heed, thou most for indigence
 Or stele, or begge, or borwe thy despence! 105
 Thou blamest Crist, and seyst ful bitterly,
 He misdeparteth richesse temporal;
 Thy neighebour thou wytest sinfully, (10)
 And seyst thou hast to lyte, and he hath al.
 ?Parfay,? seistow, ?somytyme he rekne shal, 110
 Whan that his tayl shal brennen in the glede,
 For he noght helpeth needfulle in hir nede.?
 Herkne what is the sentence of the wyse:?
 ?Bet is to dyën than have indigence;?
 Thy selve neighebour wol thee despyse; 115
 If thou be povre, farwel thy reverence!
 Yet of the wyse man tak this sentence:?
 ?Alle the dayes of povre men ben wikke;? (20)
 Be war therfor, er thou come in that prikke!
 If thou be povre, thy brother hateth thee, 120

And alle thy freendes fleen fro thee, alas!
 O riche marchaunts, ful of wele ben ye,
 O noble, o prudent folk, as in this cas!
 Your bagges been nat filled with _ambes as_,
 But with _sis sink_, than renneth for your chaunce; 125
 At Cristemasse merie may ye daunce!
 Ye seken lond and see for your winninges,
 As wyse folk ye knowen al thestaat (30)
 Of regnes; ye ben fadres of tydinges
 And tales, bothe of pees and of debat. 130
 I were right now of tales desolat,
 Nere that a marchaunt, goon is many a yere,
 Me taughte a tale, which that ye shal here.

102. _So_ Hn.; Cp. Pt. art pou so; Ln. pou art so; Hl. so art thou;
 but E. so soore artow ywoundid. 109. E. Hn. lite; _rest_ litel.
 118. E. _om._ the. 119. E. Hn. Hl. to; Cp. Pt. Ln. in. 124. E.
 fild.

[134: T. 4554-4579.]

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THE TALE OF THE MAN OF LAWE.

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HERE BEGINNETH THE MAN OF LAWE HIS TALE.

In Surrie whylom dwelte a companye
 Of chapmen riche, and therto sadde and trewe, 135
 That wyde-wher senten her spycerye,
 Clothes of gold, and satins riche of hewe;
 Her chaffar was so thrifty and so newe, (40)
 That every wight hath deyntee to chaffare
 With hem, and eek to sellen hem hir ware. 140

Now fel it, that the maistres of that sort
 Han shapen hem to Rome for to wende;
 Were it for chapmanhode or for disport,
 Nan other message wolde they thider sende,
 But comen hem-self to Rome, this is the ende; 145
 And in swich place, as thoughte hem avantage
 For her entente, they take her herbergage.

Sojourned han thise marchants in that toun (50)
 A certain tyme, as fel to hir plesance.
 And so bifel, that the excellent renoun 150
 Of themproures doghter, dame Custance,
 Reported was, with every circumstance,
 Un-to thise Surrien marchants in swich wyse,
 Fro day to day, as I shal yow devyse.

150. E. And; _rest_ But. 153. E. swich a wyse; _the rest omit_ a.

This was the commune vois of every man? 155
?Our Emperour of Rome, god him see,
A doghter hath that, sin the world bigan,
To rekne as wel hir goodnesse as beautee, (60)
Nas never swich another as is she;
[135: T. 4580-4616.]
I prey to god in honour hir sustene, 160
And wolde she were of al Europe the quene.

In hir is heigh beautee, with-oute pryde,
Yowthe, with-oute grenehede or folye;
To alle hir werkes vertu is hir gyde,
Humblesse hath slayn in hir al tyrannye. 165
She is mirour of alle curteisye;
Hir herte is verray chambre of holinesse,
Hir hand, ministre of fredom for almesse.? (70)

And al this vois was soth, as god is trewe,
But now to purpos lat us turne agayn; 170
These marchants han doon fraught hir shippes newe,
And, whan they han this blisful mayden seyn,
Hoom to Surrye been they went ful fayn,
And doon her nedes as they han don yore,
And liven in wele; I can sey yow no more. 175

Now fel it, that these marchants stode in grace
Of him, that was the sowdan of Surrye;
For whan they came from any strange place, (80)
He wolde, of his benigne curteisye,
Make hem good chere, and bisily espye 180
Tydings of sondry regnes, for to lere
The wondres that they mighte seen or here.

Amonges othere thinges, specially
These marchants han him told of dame Custance,
So gret noblesse in ernest, ceriously, 185
That this sowdan hath caught so gret plesance
To han hir figure in his remembrance,
That al his lust and al his bisy cure (90)
Was for to love hir whyl his lyf may dure.

Paraventure in thilke large book 190
Which that men clepe the heven, y-writen was
With sterres, whan that he his birthe took,
That he for love shulde han his deeth, allas!
For in the sterres, clerer than is glas,
Is writen, god wot, who-so coude it rede, 195
The deeth of every man, withouten drede.

[136: T. 4617-4651.]
In sterres, many a winter ther-biforn,
Was writen the deeth of Ector, Achilles, (100)
Of Pompey, Iulius, er they were born;

The stryf of Thebes; and of Ercules, 200
Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates
The deeth; but mennes wittes been so dulle,
That no wight can wel rede it atte fulle.

This sowdan for his privee conseil sente,
And, shortly of this mater for to pace, 205
He hath to hem declared his entente,
And seyde hem certein, ?but he mighte have grace
To han Custance with-inne a litel space, (110)
He nas but deed;? and charged hem, in hye,
To shapen for his lyf som remedye. 210

Diverse men diverse thinges seyden;
They argumenten, casten up and doun;
Many a subtil resoun forth they leyden,
They speken of magik and abusioun;
But finally, as in conclusioun, 215
They can not seen in that non avantage,
Ne in non other wey, save mariage.

212. Hl. Cp. argumentes.

Than sawe they ther-in swich difficultee (120)
By wey of resoun, for to speke al playn,
By-cause that ther was swich diversitee 220
Bitwene hir bothe lawes, that they sayn,
They trowe ?that no cristen prince wolde fayn
Wedden his child under oure lawes swete
That us were taught by Mahoun our prophete.?

220. Cm. _om._ that.

And he answerde, ?rather than I lese 225
Custance, I wol be cristned doutelees;
I mot ben hires, I may non other chese.
I prey yow holde your arguments in pees; (130)
Saveth my lyf, and beeth noght recchelees
To geten hir that hath my lyf in cure; 230
For in this wo I may not longe endure.?

[137: T. 4652-4686.]

What nedeth gretter dilatacioun?
I seye, by tretis and embassadrye,
And by the popes mediacioun,
And al the chirche, and al the chivalrye, 235
That, in destruccioun of Maumetrye,
And in encrees of Cristes lawe dere,
They ben acorded, so as ye shal here; (140)

How that the sowdan and his baronage
And alle his liges shulde y-cristned be, 240
And he shal han Custance in mariage,
And certein gold, I noot what quantitee,

And her-to founden suffisant seurtee;
This same acord was sworn on eyther syde;
Now, faire Custance, almighty god thee gyde! 245

Now wolde som men waiten, as I gesse,
That I shulde tellen al the purveyance
That themperour, of his grete noblesse, (150)
Hath shapen for his doghter dame Custance.
Wel may men knowe that so gret ordinance 250
May no man tellen in a litel clause
As was arrayed for so heigh a cause.

255. E. ynough; Hn. Cp. Hl. ynowe; Cm. Ln. Inowe.

Bisshopes ben shapen with hir for to wende,
Lordes, ladyes, knightes of renoun,
And other folk y-nowe, this is the ende; 255
And notified is thurgh-out the toun
That every wight, with gret devocioun,
Shulde preyen Crist that he this mariage (160)
Receyve in gree, and spede this viage.

The day is comen of hir departinge, 260
I sey, the woful day fatal is come,
That ther may be no lenger taryinge,
But forthward they hem dresen, alle and some;
Custance, that was with sorwe al overcome,
Ful pale arist, and dresseth hir to wende; 265
For wel she seeth ther is non other ende.

[138: T. 4687-4721.]

Allas! what wonder is it though she wepte,
That shal be sent to strange nacioun (170)
Fro freendes, that so tendrely hir kepte,
And to be bounden under subieccioun 270
Of oon, she knoweth not his condicioun.
Housbondes been alle gode, and han ben yore,
That knowen wyves, I dar say yow no more.

?Fader,? she sayde, ?thy wrecched child Custance,
Thy yonge doghter, fostred up so softe, 275
And ye, my moder, my soverayn plesance
Over alle thing, out-taken Crist on-lofte,
Custance, your child, hir recomandeth ofte (180)
Un-to your grace, for I shal to Surryë,
Ne shal I never seen yow more with yë. 280

Allas! un-to the Barbre nacioun
I moste anon, sin that it is your wille;
But Crist, that starf for our redempcioun,
So yeve me grace, his hestes to fulfillle;
I, wrecche womman, no fors though I spille. 285
Wommen are born to thraldom and penance,
And to ben under mannes governance.?

282. E. goon; _rest_ anon. 283. E. sauacioun; _rest_ redempcioun.

I trowe, at Troye, whan Pirrus brak the wal (190)
Or Ylion brende, at Thebes the citee,
Nat Rome, for the harm thurgh Hanibal 290
That Romayns hath venquissed tymes thre,
Nas herd swich tendre weping for pitee
As in the chambre was for hir departinge;
Bot forth she moot, wher-so she wepe or singe.

289. Cm. at; _rest_ om. (Or _means_ ere, _and_ brende _is_ intransitive.) 290. E. Hn. Cm. Nat (_for_ Ne at); Hl. Ne at.

O firste moevyng cruel firmament, 295
With thy diurnal sweigh that crowdest ay
And hurlest al from Est til Occident,
That naturelly wolde holde another way, (200)
Thy crowding set the heven in swich array
At the beginning of this fiers viage, 300
That cruel Mars hath slayn this mariage.

[139: T. 4722-4756.]

Infortunat ascendent tortuous,
Of which the lord is helples falle, allas!
Out of his angle in-to the derkest hous.
O Mars, O Atazir, as in this cas! 305
O feble mone, unhappy been thy pas!
Thou knittest thee ther thou art nat receyved,
Ther thou were weel, fro thennes artow weyved. (210)

306. E. Hn. Cp. fieble.

Imprudent emperour of Rome, allas!
Was ther no philosophre in al thy toun? 310
Is no tyme bet than other in swich cas?
Of viage is ther noon eleccioun,
Namely to folk of heigh condicioun,
Nat whan a rote is of a birthe y-knowe?
Allas! we ben to lewed or to slowe. 315

To shippe is brought this woful faire mayde
Solempnely, with every circumstance.
?Now lesu Crist be with yow alle,? she sayde; (220)
Ther nis namore but ?farewel! faire Custance!?
She peyneth hir to make good countenance, 320
And forth I lete hir sayle in this manere,
And turne I wol agayn to my matere.

316. E. come; _rest_ brought.

The moder of the sowdan, welle of vyces,
Espyöd hath hir sones pleyn entente,
How he wol lete his olde sacrifices, 325

And right anon she for hir conseil sente;
And they ben come, to knowe what she mente.
And when assembled was this folk in-fere, (230)
She sette hir down, and sayde as ye shal here.

?Lordes,? quod she, ?ye knowen everichon, 330
How that my sone in point is for to lete
The holy lawes of our Alkaron,
Yeven by goddes message Makomete.
But oon avow to grete god I hete,
The lyf shal rather out of my body sterte 335
Than Makometes lawe out of myn herte!

330. E. she seyde; _rest_ quod she. 333. Cp. Pt. Ln. messenger; Hl.
messenger; _see note._

[140: T. 4757-4791.]

What shulde us tyden of this newe lawe
But thraldom to our bodies and penance? (240)
And afterward in helle to be drawe
For we reneyed Mahoun our creance? 340
But, lordes, wol ye maken assurance,
As I shal seyn, assenting to my lore,
And I shall make us sauf for evermore??

They sworn and assenten, every man,
To live with hir and dye, and by hir stonde; 345
And everich, in the beste wyse he can,
To strengthen hir shal alle his freendes fonde;
And she hath this empryse y-take on honde, (250)
Which ye shal heren that I shal devyse,
And to hem alle she spak right in this wyse. 350

?We shul first feyne us cristendom to take,
Cold water shal not greve us but a lyte;
And I shal swich a feste and revel make,
That, as I trowe, I shal the sowdan quyte.
For though his wyf be cristned never so whyte, 355
She shal have nede to wasshe away the rede,
Thogh she a font-ful water with hir lede.?

O sowdanesse, rote of iniquitee, (260)
Virago, thou Semyram the secounde,
O serpent under femininitee, 360
Lyk to the serpent depe in helle y-bounde,
O feyned womman, al that may confounde
Vertu and innocence, thurgh thy malyce,
Is bred in thee, as nest of every vyce!

O Satan, envious sin thilke day 365
That thou were chased from our heritage,
Wel knowestow to wommen the olde way!
Thou madest Eva bringe us in servage. (270)

Thou wolt fordoon this cristen mariage.
Thyn instrument so, weylaway the whyle! 370
Makestow of wommen, whan thou wolt begyle.

[141: T. 4792-4824.]

This sowdanesse, whom I thus blame and warie,
Leet prively hir conseil goon hir way.
What sholde I in this tale lenger tarie?
She rydeth to the sowdan on a day, 375
And seyde him, that she wolde reneye hir lay,
And cristendom of preestes handes fonge,
Repenting hir she hethen was so longe, (280)

Biseching him to doon hir that honour,
That she moste han the cristen men to feste; 380
?To plesen hem I wol do my labour.?
The sowdan seith, ?I wol don at your heste,?
And kneling thanketh hir of that requeste.
So glad he was, he niste what to seye;
She kiste hir sone, and hoom she gooth hir weye. 385

385. E. hoome; Hn. Cm. hom.

Explicit prima pars. Sequitur pars secunda.

Arryved ben this cristen folk to londe,
In Surrie, with a greet solempne route,
And hastily this sowdan sente his sonde, (290)
First to his moder, and al the regne aboute,
And seyde, his wyf was comen, out of doute, 390
And preyde hir for to ryde agayn the quene,
The honour of his regne to sustene.

Gret was the prees, and riche was tharray
Of Surriens and Romayns met y-ferre;
The moder of the sowdan, riche and gay, 395
Receyveth hir with al-so glad a chere
As any moder mighte hir doghter dere,
And to the nexte citee ther bisyde (300)
A softe pas solempnely they ryde.

Noght trowe I the triumpe of lulius, 400
Of which that Lucan maketh swich a bost,
Was royaller, ne more curious
Than was thassemblee of this blisful host.
But this scorpioun, this wikked gost,

[142: T. 4825-4859.]

The sowdanesse, for al hir flateringe, 405
Caste under this ful mortally to stinge.

402. E. or; _rest_ ne. E. curius.

The sowdan comth him-self sone after this
So royally, that wonder is to telle, (310)

And welcometh hir with alle loye and blis.
And thus in merthe and loye I lete hem dwelle. 410
The fruyt of this matere is that I telle.
Whan tyme cam, men thoughte it for the beste
That revel stinte, and men goon to hir reste.

411. E. Cm. Cp. matiere; Hn. Pt. matere. 413. E. The; _rest_ That.

The tyme cam, this olde sowdanesse
Ordeyned hath this feste of which I tolde, 415
And to the feste cristen folk hem dresse
In general, ye! bothe yonge and olde.
Here may men feste and royaltee biholde, (320)
And deyntees mo than I can yow devyse,
But al to dere they boughte it er they ryse. 420

418. E. bihold.

O sodeyn wo! that ever art successour
To worldly blisse, spreynnd with bitternesse;
Thende of the loye of our worldly labour;
Wo occupieth the fyn of our gladnesse.
Herke this conseil for thy sikernes, 425
Up-on thy glade day have in thy minde
The unwar wo or harm that comth bihinde.

423. _So_ Cm.; _rest_ The ende.

For shortly for to tellen at o word, (330)
The sowdan and the cristen everichone
Ben al to-hewe and stiked at the bord, 430
But it were only dame Custance allone.
This olde sowdanesse, cursed crone,
Hath with hir frendes doon this cursed dede,
For she hir-self wolde al the contree lede.

428. E. soothly; _rest_ shortly. 432. Pt. Hl. this cursed; _rest_ omit_ this.

Ne ther was Surrien noon that was converted 435
That of the conseil of the sowdan woot,
That he nas al to-hewe er he asterted.
And Custance han they take anon, foot-hoot, (340)
And in a shippe al sterelees, god woot,
[143: T. 4860-4889.]
They han hir set, and bidde hir lerne sayle 440
Out of Surrye agaynward to Itayle.

435. E. _omits_ ther. 440. Hn. Cm. bidde; Cp. Pt. bidden; Ln. beden;
E. biddeth; Hl. bad.

A certein tresor that she thider ladde,
And, sooth to sayn, vitaille gret plentee
They han hir yeven, and clothes eek she hadde,

And forth she sayleth in the salte see. 445
O my Custance, ful of benignitee,
O emperoures yonge doghter dere,
He that is lord of fortune be thy stere! (350)

442. E. with hir_e_; _rest_ thider.

She blesseth hir, and with ful pitous voys
Un-to the croys of Crist thus seyde she, 450
?O clere, o welful auter, holy croys,
Reed of the lambes blood full of pitee,
That wesh the world fro the olde iniquitee,
Me fro the feend, and fro his clawes kepe,
That day that I shal drenchen in the depe. 455

451. E. woful; _rest_ welful, wilful, weleful. 453. E. wesshe; Cm.
wesch; Pt. wessh.

Victorious tree, proteccioun of trewe,
That only worthy were for to bere
The king of heven with his woundes newe, (360)
The whyte lamb, that hurt was with the spere,
Flemer of feendes out of him and here 460
On which thy limes feithfully extenden,
Me keep, and yif me might my lyf tamenden.?

462. Cm. Ln. kep; Hn. Pt. Hl. kepe; Cp. keepe; E. helpe.

Yeres and dayes fleet this creature
Thurghout the see of Grece un-to the strayte
Of Marrok, as it was hir aventure; 465
On many a sory meel now may she bayte;
After her deeth ful often may she wayte,
Er that the wilde wawes wole hir dryve (370)
Un-to the place, ther she shal arryve.

463. E. fleteth; but Hn. Cp. Pt. fleet. 469. _Read_ placè; Hl. _alone
inserts_ as _after_ ther.

[144: T. 4890-4924.]

Men mighten asken why she was not slayn? 470
Eek at the feste who mighte hir body save?
And I answeere to that demaunde agayn,
Who saved Daniel in the horrible cave,
Ther every wight save he, maister and knave,
Was with the leoun frete er he asterte? 475
No wight but god, that he bar in his herte.

473. Hl. thorrible.

God liste to shewe his wonderful miracle
In hir, for we sholde seen his mighty werkes; (380)
Crist, which that is to every harm triacle,

By certein menes ofte, as knowen clerkes, 480
Doth thing for certein ende that ful derk is
To mannes wit, that for our ignorance
Ne conne not knowe his prudent purveyance.

Now, sith she was not at the feste y-slawe,
Who kepte hir fro the drenching in the see? 485
Who kepte lonas in the fisshes mawe
Til he was spouted up at Ninivee?
Wel may men knowe it was no wight but he (390)
That kepte peple Ebraik fro hir drenchinge,
With drye feet thurgh-out the see passinge. 490

489. Pt. Ln. _om._ hir.

Who bad the foure spirits of tempest,
That power han tanoyen land and see,
?Bothe north and south, and also west and est,
Anyeth neither see, ne land, ne tree??
Sothly, the comaundour of that was he, 495
That fro the tempest ay this womman kepte
As wel whan [that] she wook as whan she slepte.

497. _I insert_ that; Hl. awok.

Wher mighte this womman mete and drinke have? (400)
Three yeer and more how lasteth hir vitaille?
Who fedde the Egipcien Marie in the cave, 500
Or in desert? no wight but Crist, sans faille.
Fyve thousand folk it was as gret merveille
With loves fyve and fisshes two to fede.
God sente his foison at hir grete nede.

[145: T. 4925-4959.]

She dryveth forth in-to our occean 505
Thurgh-out our wilde see, til, atte laste,
Under an hold that nempnen I ne can,
Fer in Northumberlond the wawe hir caste, (410)
And in the sond hir ship stiked so faste,
That thennes wolde it noght of al a tyde, 510
The wille of Crist was that she shulde abyde.

The constable of the castel doun is fare
To seen this wrak, and al the ship he soghte,
And fond this wery womman ful of care;
He fond also the tresor that she broghte. 515
In hir langage mercy she bisoghte
The lyf out of hir body for to twinne,
Hir to deliver of wo that she was inne. (420)

A maner Latin corrupt was hir speche,
But algates ther-by was she understonde; 520
The constable, whan him list no lenger seche,
This woful womman broghte he to the londe;

She kneleth doun, and thanketh goddes sonde.
But what she was, she wolde no man seye,
For foul ne fair, thogh that she shulde deye. 525

She seyde, she was so mased in the see
That she forgat hir minde, by hir trouthe;
The constable hath of hir so greet pitee, (430)
And eek his wyf, that they wepen for routhe,
She was so diligent, with-uten slouthe, 530
To serve and plesen everich in that place,
That alle hir loven that loken on hir face.

531. MSS. plese. 532. E. Cm. in; _rest_ on.

This constable and dame Hermengild his wyf
Were payens, and that contree every-where;
But Hermengild lovede hir right as hir lyf, 535
And Custance hath so longe sojourned there,
In orisons, with many a bitter tere,
Til lesu hath converted thurgh his grace (440)
Dame Hermengild, constablesse of that place.

536. sojourned] Hl. herberwed.

[146: T. 4960-4994.]

In al that lond no cristen durste route, 540
Alle cristen folk ben fled fro that contree
Thurgh payens, that conquereden al aboute
The plages of the North, by land and see;
To Walis fled the cristianitee
Of olde Britons, dwellinge in this yle; 545
Ther was hir refut for the mene whyle.

But yet nere cristen Britons so exyled
That ther nere somme that in hir privetee (450)
Honoured Crist, and hethen folk bigyled;
And ny the castel swiche ther dwelten three. 550
That oon of hem was blind, and mighte nat see
But it were with thilke yën of his minde,
With whiche men seen, after that they ben blinde.

553. E. whan; _rest_ after.

Bright was the sonne as in that someres day,
For which the constable and his wyf also 555
And Custance han y-take the righte way
Toward the see, a furlong wey or two,
To pleyen and to romen to and fro; (460)
And in hir walk this blinde man they mette
Croked and old, with yën faste y-shette. 560

561. E. olde; Hl. old; _rest_ blynde, blynd.

?In name of Crist,? cryde this blinde Britoun,
?Dame Hermengild, yif me my sighte agayn.?
This lady wex affrayed of the soun,
Lest that hir housbond, shortly for to sayn,
Wolde hir for Iesu Cristes love han slayn, 565
Til Custance made hir bold, and bad hir werche
The wil of Crist, as doghter of his chirche.

The constable wex abasshed of that sight, (470)
And seyde, ?what amounteth al this fare??
Custance answerde, ?sire, it is Cristes might, 570
That helpeth folk out of the feendes snare.?
And so ferforth she gan our lay declare,
That she the constable, er that it were eve,
Converted, and on Crist made him bileve.

574. Hl. Cm. Conuerted; _rest_ Conuerteth. E. maketh; Ln. maad;
rest made.

[147: T. 4995-5029.]

This constable was no-thing lord of this place 575
Of which I speke, ther he Custance fond,
But kepte it strongly, many wintres space,
Under Alla, king of al Northumberlond, (480)
That was ful wys, and worthy of his hond
Agayn the Scottes, as men may wel here, 580
But turne I wol agayn to my matere.

Sathan, that ever us waiteth to bigyle,
Saugh of Custance al hir perfeccioun,
And caste anon how he mighte quyte hir whyle,
And made a yong knight, that dwelte in that toun 585
Love hir so hote, of foul affeccioun,
That verraily him thoughte he shulde spille
But he of hir mighte ones have his wille. (490)

He woweth hir, but it availleth noght,
She wolde do no sinne, by no weye; 590
And, for despyt, he compassed in his thoght
To maken hir on shamful deth to deye.
He wayteth whan the constable was aweye,
And prively, up-on a night, he crepte
In Hermengildes chambre whyl she slepte. 595

Wery, for-waked in her orisouns,
Slepeth Custance, and Hermengild also.
This knight, thurgh Sathanas temptaciouns, (500)
Al softly is to the bed y-go,
And kitte the throte of Hermengild a-two, 600
And leyde the bloody knyf by dame Custance,
And wente his wey, ther god yeve him meschance!

598. E. Hn. Sathans; Hl. Satanas; _but_ Sathanas _in_ Cp. Pt. Ln.

Sone after comth this constable hoom agayn,
And eek Alla, that king was of that lond,
And saugh his wyf despitously y-slayn, 605
For which ful ofte he weep and wrong his hond,
And in the bed the bloody knyf he fond
By dame Custance; allas! what mighte she seye? (510)
For verray wo hir wit was al aweye.

606. E. Hn. weep; Cm. Cp. Pt. wepte; Hl. wept. E. wroong.

[148: T. 5030-5064.]

To king Alla was told al this meschance, 610
And eek the tyme, and where, and in what wyse
That in a ship was founden dame Custance,
As heer-biforn that ye han herd devyse.
The kinges herte of pitee gan agryse,
Whan he saugh so benigne a creature 615
Falle in disese and in misaventure.

For as the lomb toward his deeth is broght,
So stant this innocent bfore the king; (520)
This false knight that hath this tresoun wroght
Berth hir on hond that she hath doon this thing. 620
But nathelees, ther was greet moorning
Among the peple, and seyn, ?they can not gesse
That she hath doon so greet a wikkednesse.

620. _So in_ E.; _rest_ Bereth. 621. _All_ moorning (mornyng);
Tyrwhitt _has_ murmuring; _see note_.

For they han seyn hir ever so vertuous,
And loving Hermengild right as her lyf.? 625
Of this bar witesse everich in that hous
Save he that Hermengild slow with his knyf.
This gentil king hath caught a gret motyf (530)
Of this witesse, and thoghte he wolde enquere
Depper in this, a trouthe for to lere. 630

626. E. baar.

Allas! Custance! thou hast no champioun,
Ne fighte canstow nought, so weylawey!
But he, that starf for our redempcioun
And bond Sathan (and yit lyth ther he lay)
So be thy stronge champioun this day! 635
For, but-if Crist open miracle kythe,
Withouten gilt thou shalt be slayn as swythe.

She sette her doun on knees, and thus she sayde, (540)
?Immortal god, that savedest Susanne
Fro false blame, and thou, merciful mayde, 640
Mary I mene, doghter to Seint Anne,

Bifore whos child aungeles singe Osanne,
If I be giltlees of this felonye,
My socour be, for elles I shal dye!?

638. E. sit; Hn. Cm. Pt. sette; Hl. set. 644. E. or; _rest_ for.

[149: T. 5065-5099.]

Have ye nat seyn som tyme a pale face, 645
Among a prees, of him that hath be lad
Toward his deeth, wher-as him gat no grace,
And swich a colour in his face hath had, (550)
Men mighte knowe his face, that was bistad,
Amonges alle the faces in that route: 650
So stant Custance, and loketh hir aboute.

647. gat] Cp. get; Pt. gete; Hl. geyneth.

O quenes, livinge in prosperitee,
Duchesses, and ye ladies everichone,
Haveth som routhe on hir adversitee;
An emperoures doghter stant allone; 655
She hath no wight to whom to make hir mone.
O blood royal, that stondest in this drede,
Fer ben thy freendes at thy grete nede! (560)

654. E. Ln. _om._ ye.

This Alla king hath swich compassioun,
As gentil herte is fulfild of pitee, 660
That from his yën ran the water doun.
?Now hastily do fecche a book,? quod he,
?And if this knight wol sweren how that she
This womman slow, yet wole we us avyse
Whom that we wole that shal ben our lustyse.? 665

A Briton book, writen with Evangyles,
Was fet, and on this book he swoor anoon
She gilty was, and in the mene whyles (570)
A hand him smoot upon the nekke-boon,
That doun he fil atones as a stoon, 670
And bothe his yën broste out of his face
In sight of every body in that place.

A vois was herd in general audience,
And seyde, ?thou hast desclaundred giltelees
The doghter of holy chirche in hey presence; 675
Thus hastou doon, and yet holde I my pees.?
Of this mervaille agast was al the prees;
As mased folk they stoden everichone, (580)
For drede of wreche, save Custance allone.

[150: T. 5100-5134.]

Greet was the drede and eek the repentance 680

Of hem that hadden wrong suspeccioun
Upon this sely innocent Custance;
And, for this miracle, in conclusioun,
And by Custances mediacioun,
The king, and many another in that place, 685
Converted was, thanked be Cristes grace!

This false knight was slayn for his untrouthe
By Iugement of Alla hastifly; (590)
And yet Custance hadde of his deeth gret routhe.
And after this Iesus, of his mercy, 690
Made Alla wedden ful solempnely
This holy mayden, that is so bright and shene,
And thus hath Crist y-maad Custance a quene.

But who was woful, if I shal nat lye,
Of this wedding but Donegild, and na mo, 695
The kinges moder, ful of tirannye?
Hir thoughte hir cursed herte brast a-two;
She wolde noght hir sone had do so; (600)
Hir thoughte a despit, that he sholde take
So strange a creature un-to his make. 700

Me list nat of the chaf nor of the stree
Maken so long a tale, as of the corn.
What sholde I tellen of the royaltee
At mariage, or which cours gooth biforn,
Who bloweth in a trompe or in an horn? 705
The fruit of every tale is for to seye;
They ete, and drinke, and daunce, and singe, and pleye.

701. Cm. nor; E. or; _rest_ ne. 704. E. Hn. mariages; Ln. þe mariage;
rest mariage; Hl. Of mariage. 705. a] E. the; Hn. Pt. _omit_.

They goon to bedde, as it was skile and right; (610)
For, thogh that wyves been ful holy thinges,
They moste take in pacience at night 710
Swich maner necessaries as been plesinges
To folk that han y-wedded hem with ringes,
And leye a lyte hir holinesse asyde
As for the tyme; it may no bet bityde.

[151: T. 5135-5169.]

On hir he gat a knave-child anoon, 715
And to a bishop and his constable eke
He took his wyf to kepe, whan he is goon
To Scotland-ward, his fo-men for to seke; (620)
Now faire Custance, that is so humble and meke,
So longe is goon with childe, til that stille 720
She halt hir chambre, abyding Cristes wille.

The tyme is come, a knave-child she ber;
Mauricius at the font-stoon they him calle;
This Constable dooth forth come a messenger,

And wroot un-to his king, that cleped was Alle, 725
How that this blisful tyding is bifalle,
And othere tydings speedful for to seye;
He takth the lettre, and forth he gooth his weye. (630)

728. Hn. tath; Cm. taath; _rest_ taketh.

This messenger, to doon his avantage,
Un-to the kinges moder rydeth swythe, 730
And salueth hir ful faire in his langage,
?Madame,? quod he, ?ye may be glad and blythe,
And thanke god an hundred thousand sythe;
My lady quene hath child, with-ouen doute,
To loye and blisse of al this regne aboute. 735

733. Cp. Hl. thanke; E. Hn. thanketh; Cm. thankede; Pt. Ln. thonketh.

735. E. Cm. to; _rest_ of.

Lo, heer the lettres seled of this thing,
That I mot bere with al the haste I may;
If ye wol aught un-to your sone the king, (640)
I am your servant, bothe night and day.?
Donegild answerde, ?as now at this tyme, nay; 740
But heer al night I wol thou take thy reste,
Tomorwe wol I seye thee what me leste.?

740. Hl. _om._ at.

This messenger drank sadly ale and wyn,
And stolen were his lettres prively
Out of his box, whyl he sleep as a swyn; 745
And countrefeted was ful subtilly
Another lettre, wroght ful sinfully,
Un-to the king direct of this matere (650)
Fro his constable, as ye shul after here.

[152: T. 5170-5204.]

The lettre spak, ?the queen delivered was 750
Of so horrible a feendly creature,
That in the castel noon so hardy was
That any whyle dorste ther endure.
The moder was an elf, by aventure
Y-come, by charmes or by sorcerye, 755
And every wight hateth hir companye.?

750. MSS. queene, queen. 755. E. Hn. Cm. Y-comen. 756. E. Hn. _om._
wight; Hl. man.

Wo was this king whan he this lettre had seyn,
But to no wighte he tolde his sorwes sore, (660)
But of his owene honde he wroot ageyn,
?Welcome the sonde of Crist for evermore 760
To me, that am now lerned in his lore;
Lord, welcome be thy lust and thy plesaunce,

My lust I putte al in thyn ordinaunce!

Kepeth this child, al be it foul or fair,
And eek my wyf, un-to myn hoom-cominge; 765
Crist, whan him list, may sende me an heir
More agreable than this to my lykinge.?
This lettre he seleth, prively wepinge, (670)
Which to the messenger was take sone,
And forth he gooth; ther is na more to done. 770

O messenger, fulfild of dronkenesse,
Strong is thy breeth, thy limes faltren ay,
And thou biwreyest alle secreenesse.
Thy mind is lorn, thou langlest as a lay,
Thy face is turned in a newe array! 775
Ther dronkenesse regneth in any route,
Ther is no conseil hid, with-outen doute.

O Donegild, I ne have noon English digne (680)
Un-to thy malice and thy tirannye!
And therfor to the feend I thee resigne, 780
Let him endyten of thy traitorye!
Fy, mannish, fy! o nay, by god, I lye,
Fy, feendly spirit, for I dar wel telle,
Though thou heer walke, thy spirit is in helle!

[153: T. 5205-5239.]

This messenger comth fro the king agayn, 785
And at the kinges modres court he lighte,
And she was of this messenger ful fayn,
And plesed him in al that ever she mighte. (690)
He drank, and wel his girdel underpighte.
He slepeth, and he snoreth in his gyse 790
Al night, un-til the sonne gan aryse.

791. Hl. vn-to; Pt. to; rest til; but vn-til (as in Tyrwhitt)
seems better.

Eft were his lettres stolen everichon
And countrefeted lettres in this wyse;
?The king comandeth his constable anon,
Up peyne of hanging, and on heigh luyse, 795
That he ne sholde suffren in no wyse
Custance in-with his regne for tabyde
Thre dayes and a quarter of a tyde; (700)

795. So E. Hn.; Cm. and heigh; Cp. on a heih; Pt. on an high; Hl. of
an heigh; Ln. or an hihe. 797. regne] E. Reawme.

But in the same ship as he hir fond,
Hir and hir yonge sone, and al hir gere, 800
He sholde putte, and croude hir fro the lond,
And charge hir that she never eft come there.?
O my Custance, wel may thy goost have fere

And sleping in thy dreem been in penance,
When Donegild caste al this ordinance! 805

This messenger on morwe, whan he wook,
Un-to the castel halt the nexte wey,
And to the constable he the lettre took; (710)
And whan that he this pitous lettre sey,
Ful ofte he seyde ?allas!? and ?weylawey!?
?Lord Crist,? quod he, ?how may this world endure?
So ful of sinne is many a creature! 810

O mighty god, if that it be thy wille,
Sith thou art rightful luge, how may it be
That thou wolt suffren innocents to spille, 815
And wikked folk regne in prosperitee?
O good Custance, allas! so wo is me
That I mot be thy tormentour, or deye (720)
On shames deeth; ther is noon other weye!?

819. shames] Hl. schamful.

[154: T. 5240-5274.]

Wepen bothe yonge and olde in al that place, 820
Whan that the king this cursed lettre sente,
And Custance, with a deedly pale face,
The ferthe day toward hir ship she wente.
But natheles she taketh in good entente
The wille of Crist, and, kneling on the stronde, 825
She seyde, ?lord! ay wel-com be thy sonde!

823. E. Ln. the; _rest_ hir.

He that me kepte fro the false blame
Why I was on the londe amonges yow, (730)
He can me kepe from harme and eek fro shame
In salte see, al-thogh I se nat how. 830
As strong as ever he was, he is yet now.
In him triste I, and in his moder dere,
That is to me my seyl and eek my stere.?

Hir litel child lay weping in hir arm,
And kneling, pitously to him she seyde, 835
?Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee non harm.?
With that hir kerchef of hir heed she breyde,
And over his litel yën she it leyde; (740)
And in hir arm she lulleth it ful faste,
And in-to heven hir yën up she caste. 840

837. Ln. Hl. kerchef; Pt. keercchef; E. Hn. couerchief; Cm. couerchif;
Cp. couerchef. E. Hn. Cm. ouer (_wrongly_); _rest_ of.

?Moder,? quod she, ?and mayde bright, Marye,
Sooth is that thurgh wommannes eggement

Mankind was lorn and damned ay to dye,
For which thy child was on a croys y-rent;
Thy blisful yën sawe al his torment; 845
Than is ther no comparisoun bitwene
Thy wo and any wo man may sustene.

Thou sawe thy child y-slayn bifor thyn yën, (750)
And yet now liveth my litel child, parfay!
Now, lady bright, to whom alle woful cryën, 850
Thou glorie of wommanhede, thou faire may,
Thou haven of refut, brighte sterre of day,
Rewe on my child, that of thy gentillesse
Rewest on every rewful in distresse!

849. E. Ln. _om._ litel; _rest have it_.

[155: T. 5275-5302.]

O litel child, allas! what is thy gilt, 855
That never wroughtest sinne as yet, pardee,
Why wil thyn harde fader han thee spilt?
O mercy, dere Constable!? quod she; (760)
?As lat my litel child dwelle heer with thee;
And if thou darst not saven him, for blame, 860
So kis him ones in his fadres name!?

861. E. Yet; _rest_ So.

Ther-with she loketh bakward to the londe,
And seyde, ?far-wel, housbond routhelees!?
And up she rist, and walketh doun the stronde
Toward the ship; hir folweth al the prees, 865
And ever she preyeth hir child to holde his pees;
And taketh hir leve, and with an holy entente
She blesseth hir; and in-to ship she wente. (770)

862. E. Ln. Hl. looked; rest looketh, loketh. 868. Hn. Pt. Hl.
blesseth; Cm. Cp. Ln. blisseth; E. blished.

Vitailed was the ship, it is no drede,
Habundantly for hir, ful longe space, 870
And other necessaries that sholde nede
She hadde y-nogh, heried be goddes grace!
For wind and weder almighty god purchace,
And bringe hir hoom! I can no better seye;
But in the see she dryveth forth hir weye. 875

=Explicit secunda pars. Sequitur pars tercia.=

Alla the king comth hoom, sone after this,
Unto his castel of the which I tolde,
And axeth wher his wyf and his child is. (780)
The constable gan aboute his herte colde,
And pleynty al the maner he him tolde 880

As ye han herd, I can telle it no better,
And sheweth the king his seel and [eek] his lettre,

882. _The word_ eek _seems wanted; but is not in the MSS_.

[156: T. 5303-5337.]

And seyde, ?lord, as ye comaunded me
Up peyne of deeth, so have I doon, certein.?
This messenger tormented was til he 885
Moste biknowe and tellen, plat and plein,
Fro night to night, in what place he had leyn.
And thus, by wit and subtil enqueringe, (790)
Ymaged was by whom this harm gan springe.

The hand was knowe that the lettre wroot, 890
And al the venim of this cursed dede,
But in what wyse, certainly I noot.
Theeffect is this, that Alla, out of drede,
His moder slow, that men may plainly rede,
For that she traitour was to hir ligeaunce. 895
Thus endeth olde Donegild with meschaunce.

The sorwe that this Alla, night and day,
Maketh for his wyf and for his child also, (800)
Ther is no tonge that it telle may.
But now wol I un-to Custance go, 900
That fleteth in the see, in peyne and wo,
Fyve yeer and more, as lyked Cristes sonde,
Er that hir ship approched un-to londe.

903. _So_ Hn. Cp. Pt. Hl.; E. Ln. vn-to the; Cm. to the.

Under an hethen castel, atte laste,
Of which the name in my text noght I finde, 905
Custance and eek hir child the see up-caste.
Almighty god, that saveth al mankinde,
Have on Custance and on hir child som minde, (810)
That fallen is in hethen land eft-sonde,
In point to spille, as I shal telle yow sone. 910

907. E. saued; _rest_ saueth.

Doun from the castel comth ther many a wight
To gauren on this ship and on Custance.
But shortly, from the castel, on a night,
The lordes styward?god yeve him meschaunce!?
A theef, that had reneyed our creauce, 915
Com in-to ship allone, and seyde he sholde
Hir lemman be, wher-so she wolde or nolde.

916. E. Cm. in-to the; _rest omit_ the.

[157: T. 5338-5370.]

Wo was this wrecched womman tho bigon, (820)
Hir child cryde, and she cryde pitously;
But blisful Marie heelp hir right anon; 920
For with hir strugling wel and mightily
The thief fil over bord al sodeinly,
And in the see he dreynte for vengeance;
And thus hath Crist unwemmed kept Custance.

920. E. Hn. heelp; Hl. hilp; Cm. Cp. halp; Pt. halpe; Ln. helped.

O foule lust of luxurie! lo, thyn ende! =Auctor.=
925
Nat only that thou feyntest mannes minde,
But verrailly thou wolt his body shende;
Thende of thy werk or of thy lustes blinde (830)
Is compleyning, how many-oon may men finde
That noight for werk som-tyme, but for thentente 930
To doon this sinne, ben outhere sleyn or shente!

How may this wayke womman han this strengthe
Hir to defende agayn this renegat?
O Goliath, unmesurable of lengthe,
How mighte David make thee so mat, 935
So yong and of armure so desolat?
How dorste he loke up-on thy dredful face?
Wel may men seen, it nas but goddes grace! (840)

938. E. Hl. nas; Ln. is; _the rest_ was.

Who yaf Iudith corage or hardinesse
To sleen him, Oloferus, in his tente, 940
And to deliveren out of wrecchednesse
The peple of god? I seye, for this entente,
That, right as god spirit of vigour sente
To hem, and saved hem out of meschance,
So sente he might and vigour to Custance. 945

940. E. Oloferne; Hl. Olefernes; _the rest_ Oloferus, Oleferus, _or_
Olesphernus; _see note_.

Forth goth hir ship thurgh-out the narwe mouth
Of Iubaltar and Septe, dryving ay,
Som-tyme West, som-tyme North and South, (850)
And som-tyme Est, ful many a wery day,
Til Cristes moder (blessed be she ay!) 950
[158: T. 5371-5400.]
Hath shapen, thurgh hir endelees goodnesse,
To make an ende of al hir hevinesse.

947. E. alway; _rest_ ay. (_The latter is better, but recurs in_ I.
950.) 948. _All but_ Hl. _ins._ and _after_ West.

Now lat us stinte of Custance but a throwe,

And speke we of the Romain Emperour,
That out of Surrie hath by lettres knowe 955
The slaughtre of cristen folk, and dishonour
Don to his doghter by a fals traitour,
I mene the cursed wikked sowdanesse, (860)
That at the feste leet sleen both more and lesse.

For which this emperour hath sent anoon 960
His senatour, with royal ordinance,
And othere lordes, got wot, many oon,
On Surriens to taken heigh vengeance.
They brennen, sleen, and bringe hem to meschance
Ful many a day; but shortly, this is thende, 965
Homward to Rome they shapen hem to wende.

This senatour repaireth with victorie
To Rome-ward, sayling ful royally, (870)
And mette the ship dryving, as seith the storie,
In which Custance sit ful pitously. 970
No-thing ne knew he what she was, ne why
She was in swich array; ne she nil seye
Of hir estaat, although she sholde deye.

971. E. Cm. _om._ ne _before_ knew; _the rest have it_. 973. Hl.
although; Pt. though that; _rest_ thogh, though, thow.

He bringeth hir to Rome, and to his wyf
He yaf hir, and hir yonge sone also; 975
And with the senatour she ladde her lyf.
Thus can our lady bringen out of wo
Woful Custance, and many another mo. (880)
And longe tyme dwelled she in that place,
In holy werkes ever, as was hir grace. 980

[159: T. 5401-5435.]

The senatoures wyf hir aunte was,
But for al that she knew hir never the more;
I wol no lenger tarien in this cas,
But to king Alla, which I spak of yore,
That for his wyf wepeth and syketh sore, 985
I wol retourne, and lete I wol Custance
Under the senatoures governance.

985. E. _puts_ wepeth _after_ That.

King Alla, which that hadde his moder slayn, (890)
Upon a day fil in swich repentance,
That, if I shortly tellen shal and plain, 990
To Rome he comth, to receyven his penance;
And putte him in the popes ordinance
In heigh and low, and lesu Crist bisoghte
Foryeve his wikked werkes that he wroghte.

The fame anon thurgh Rome toun is born, 995

How Alla king shal come in pilgrimage,
By herbergeours that wenten him biforn;
For which the senatour, as was usage, (900)
Rood him ageyn, and many of his linage,
As wel to shewen his heighe magnificence 1000
As to don any king a reverence.

995. E. thurgh out the toun; _rest_ thurgh Rome toun. 996. E. Hn. Cp.
Pt. comen. 999. E. Hn. agayns.

Greet chere dooth this noble senatour
To king Alla, and he to him also;
Everich of hem doth other greet honour;
And so bifel that, in a day or two, 1005
This senatour is to king Alla go
To feste, and shortly, if I shal nat lye,
Custances sone wente in his companye. (910)

Som men wolde seyn, at requeste of Custance,
This senatour hath lad this child to feste; 1010
I may nat tellen every circumstance,
Be as be may, ther was he at the leste.
But soth is this, that, at his modres heste,
Biforn Alla, during the metes space,
The child stood, loking in the kinges face. 1015

[160: T. 5436-5470.]

This Alla king hath of this child greet wonder,
And to the senatour he seyde anon,
?Whos is that faire child that stondest yonder?? (920)
?I noot,? quod he, ?by god, and by seint lohn!
A moder he hath, but fader hath he non 1020
That I of woot??but shortly, in a stounde,
He tolde Alla how that this child was founde.

?But god wot,? quod this senatour also,
?So vertuous a livere in my lyf,
Ne saugh I never as she, ne herde of mo 1025
Of worldly wommen, mayden, nor of wyf;
I dar wel seyn hir hadde lever a knyf
Thurgh-out her breste, than been a womman wikke; (930)
Ther is no man coude bringe hir to that prikke.?

1026. Hl. Cm. Ln. mayden; _rest_ mayde. Cm. nor; Hl. Ln. or; _rest_ ne.

Now was this child as lyk un-to Custance 1030
As possible is a creature to be.
This Alla hath the face in remembrance
Of dame Custance, and ther-on mused he
If that the chilles moder were aught she
That was his wyf, and prively he sighte, 1035
And spedde him fro the table that he mighte.

?Parfay,? thoghte he, ?fantome is in myn heed!

I oghte deme, of skilful Iugement, (940)

That in the salte see my wyf is deed.?

And afterward he made his argument? 1040

?What woot I, if that Crist have hider y-sent

My wyf by see, as wel as he hir sente

To my contree fro thennes that she wente??

1041. E. haue; _rest_ hath. E. ysent; Cm. I-sent; _rest_ sent.

And, after noon, hoom with the senatour

Goth Alla, for to seen this wonder chaunce. 1045

This senatour dooth Alla greet honour,

And hastifly he sente after Custaunce.

But trusteth weel, hir liste nat to daunce (950)

Whan that she wiste wherefor was that sonde.

Unnethe up-on hir feet she mighte stonde. 1050

1047. E. Pt. hastifly; _rest_ hastily, hastely.

[161: T. 5471-5505.]

When Alla saugh his wyf, faire he hir grette,

And weep, that it was routhe for to see.

For at the firste look he on hir sette

He knew wel verrailly that it was she.

And she for sorwe as domb stant as a tree; 1055

So was hir herte shet in hir distresse

Whan she remembred his unkindenesse.

Twyës she swowned in his owne sighte; (960)

He weep, and him excuseth pitously:?

?Now god,? quod he, ?and alle his halwes brighte 1060

So wisly on my soule as have mercy,

That of your harm as giltelees am I

As is Maurice my sone so lyk your face;

Elles the feend me fecche out of this place!?

1060. Hl. alle; _which the rest omit_.

Long was the sobbing and the bitter peyne 1065

Er that hir woful hertes mighte cesse;

Greet was the pitee for to here hem pleyne,

Thurgh whiche pleintes gan hir wo encesse. (970)

I prey yow al my labour to relesse;

I may nat telle hir wo un-til tomorwe, 1070

I am so wery for to speke of sorwe.

But fynally, when that the sooth is wist

That Alla giltelees was of hir wo,

I trowe an hundred tymes been they kist,

And swich a blisse is ther bitwix hem two 1075

That, save the loye that lasteth evermo,

Ther is non lyk, that any creature

Hath seyn or shal, whyl that the world may dure. (980)

1074. Hi. they ben.

Tho preyde she hir housbond mekely,
In relief of hir longe pitous pyne, 1080
That he wold preye hir fader specially
That, of his magestee, he wolde enclyne
To vouche-sauf som day with him to dyne;
She preyde him eek, he sholde by no weye
Un-to hir fader no word of hir seye. 1085

1084. E. wolde; _rest_ sholde.

[162: T. 5506-5540.]

Som men wold seyn, how that the child Maurice
Doth this message un-to this emperour;
But, as I gesse, Alla was nat so nyce (990)
To him, that was of so sovereyn honour
As he that is of cristen folk the flour, 1090
Sente any child, but it is bet to deme
He wente him-self, and so it may wel seme.

This emperour hath graunted gentilly
To come to diner, as he him bisoghte;
And wel rede I, he loked bisily 1095
Up-on this child, and on his doghter thoghte.
Alla goth to his in, and, as him oghte,
Arrayed for this feste in every wyse (1000)
As ferforth as his conning may suffyse.

The morwe cam, and Alla gan him dresse, 1100
And eek his wyf, this emperour to mete;
And forth they ryde in loye and in gladnesse.
And whan she saugh hir fader in the strete,
She lighte doun, and falleth him to fete.
?Fader,? quod she, ?your yonge child Custance 1105
Is now ful clene out of your remembrance.

I am your doghter Custance,? quod she,
?That whylom ye han sent un-to Surrye. (1010)
It am I, fader, that in the salte see
Was put allone and dampned for to dye. 1110
Now, gode fader, mercy I yow crye,
Send me namore un-to non hethenesse,
But thonketh my lord heer of his kindenesse.?

1107. _So in all the MSS.; to be read as_ Cústancë (_three syllables_).

Who can the pitous loye tellen al
Bitwix hem three, sin they ben thus y-mette? 1115
But of my tale make an ende I shal;
The day goth faste, I wol no lenger lette.
This glade folk to diner they hem sette; (1020)

In loye and blisse at mete I lete hem dwelle
A thousand fold wel more than I can telle. 1120

[163: T. 5541-5573.]

This child Maurice was sithen emperour
Maad by the pope, and lived cristenly.
To Cristes chirche he dide greet honour;
But I lete al his storie passen by,
Of Custance is my tale specially. 1125
In olde Romayn gestes may men finde
Maurices lyf; I bere it noght in minde.

1126. E. Hn. Cm. In the; _rest om._ the.

This king Alla, whan he his tyme sey, (1030)
With his Custance, his holy wyf so swete,
To Engelond been they come the righte wey, 1130
Wher-as they live in loye and in quiete.
But litel whyl it lasteth, I yow hete,
loye of this world, for tyme wol nat abyde;
Fro day to night it changeth as the tyde.

Who lived ever in swich delyt o day 1135
That him ne moeved outhur conscience,
Or ire, or talent, or som kin affray,
Envye, or pryde, or passion, or offence? (1040)
I ne seye but for this ende this sentence,
That litel whyl in loye or in plesance 1140
Lasteth the blisse of Alla with Custance.

1137. E. som kynnes; Cm. su_m_kenys; Hl. som maner; Hn. Cp. Pt. som
kyn; Ln. sumkin.

For deeth, that taketh of heigh and low his rente,
When passed was a yeer, even as I gesse,
Out of this world this king Alla he hente,
For whom Custance hath ful gret hevinesse. 1145
Now lat us preyen god his soule blesse!
And dame Custance; fynally to seye,
Towards the toun of Rome gooth hir weye. (1050)

1146. E. praye to; Hl. pray that; _rest_ preyen, prayen, preien, _or_
preyne.

To Rome is come this holy creature,
And fyndeth ther hir frendes hole and sounde: 1150
Now is she scaped al hir aventure;
And whan that she hir fader hath y-founde,
Doun on hir kneës falleth she to grounde;
[164: T. 5574-5582.]
Weping for tendrenesse in herte blythe,
She herieth god an hundred thousand sythe. 1155

1150. Hl. And fynt hir frendes ther bothe hool and sound. _The rest

omit_ ther.

In vertu and in holy almes-dede
They liven alle, and never a-sonder wende;
Til deeth departed hem, this lyf they lede. (1060)
And fareth now weel, my tale is at an ende.
Now lesu Crist, that of his might may sende 1160
loye after wo, governe us in his grace,
And kepe us alle that ben in this place! Amen.

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

*** For l. 5583 _in_ Tyrwhitt?s Text, _see_ Group D, l. 1.

COLOPHON. _The latter part is from_ MS. Arch. Selden B. 14. _Many MSS.
have_ The prolog of the squyers tale, _or_ the prolog of the Squier.
The Petworth MS. _and some others have here an ill-written and
spurious_ Prologue to the Shipman?s Tale, _which is here subjoined:_

?Now freendes,? seide our Hoost so dere,
?How lyketh you by lohn the Pardonere?
For he hath unboked wel the male;
He hath us told right a thrifty tale
As touching of misgovernaunce?
I preye to God, yeve him good chaunce!?
As ye han herd of thise riotoures three.
Now, gentil Mariner, hertely I preye thee,
Telle us a good tale, and that right anon.?
?It shall be doon, by god and by seint lohn,?
Seyde this Mariner, ?as wel as ever I can,?
And right anon his tale he bigan.

[165: T. 12903-12924.]

* * * * *

THE SHIPMAN?S PROLOGUE.

* * * * *

=Here biginneth the Shipmannes Prolog.=

Our hoste up-on his stiropes stood anon,
And seyde, ?good men, herkneth everich on;
This was a thrifty tale for the nones! 1165
Sir parish prest,? quod he, ?for goddes bones,
Tel us a tale, as was thy forward yore.
I see wel that ye lerned men in lore
Can moche good, by goddes dignitee!?

1163-1190. _From_ Cp., _collated with_ Hl. Pt. Ln. Seld. Royal, _and_
Sloane; E. Hn. Cm. _omit_. 1164. Cp. herkeneth; Hl. herkneth.

The Persone him answerde, ?_benedicite_! 1170
What eyleth the man, so sinfully to swere??

Our hoste answerde, ?O lankin, be ye there? (10)
I smelle a loller in the wind,? quod he.
?How! good men,? quod our hoste, ?herkneth me;
Abydeth, for goddes digne passioun, 1175
For we shal han a predicacioun;
This loller heer wil prechen us som-what.?

1174. Cp. herkeneth; Hl. herkneth. 1174. Hl. Now; _rest_ How
(Howe). 1175. Hl. _omits_.

?Nay, by my fader soule! that shal be nat,?
Seyde the Shipman; ?heer he shal nat preche,
He shal no gospel glosen heer ne teche. 1180
We leve alle in the grete god,? quod he,
?He wolde sowen som difficultee, (20)
Or springen cokkel in our clene corn;
And therfor, hoste, I warne thee biforn,
[166: T. 12925-12930.]
My loly body shal a tale telle, 1185
And I shal clinken yow so mery a belle,
That I shal waken al this companye;
But it shal nat ben of philosophye,
Ne _physices_, ne termes queinte of lawe; (27)
Ther is but litel Latin in my mawe.? 1190

Here endeth the Shipman his Prolog.

1179. Seld. _has_ Shipman; Roy. Slo. Cp. Pt. Ln. squier; Hl.
sompnour. 1181. Seld. Hl. We leuen; Roy. Cp. Pt. Ln. He leueth.
1182. Seld. Hl. quod, _which_ Cp. Pt. Ln. Roy. Slo. _omit_. 1186-90.
Hl. omits. 1189. Tyrwhitt _has_ of physike; _the_ MSS. _have_ the
unmeaning word_ phislyas (Sloane phillyas; Ln. fisleas); _read_
physices; see note. COLOPHON. _From_ Seld.

[167: T. 12931-12957.]

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THE SHIPMANNES TALE.

* * * * *

=Here biginneth the Shipmannes Tale.=

A marchant whylom dwelled at Seint Denys,
That riche was, for which men helde him wys;
A wyf he hadde of excellent beautee,
And compaignable and revelous was she,
Which is a thing that causeth more dispence 1195
Than worth is al the chere and reverence
That men hem doon at festes and at daunces;

Swiche salutaciouns and contenaunces
 Passen as dooth a shadwe up-on the wal.
 But wo is him that payen moot for al; 1200
 The sely housbond, algate he mot paye; (11)
 He moot us clothe, and he moot us arraye,
 Al for his owene worship richely,
 In which array we daunce lolily.
 And if that he noght may, par-aventure, 1205
 Or elles, list no swich dispence endure,
 But thinketh it is wasted and y-lost,
 Than moot another payen for our cost,
 Or lene us gold, and that is perilous.

1191. Hl. hild. 1196. E. chiere. 1201. E. honsbonde. Hn. moot;
 Pt. mot; rest moste. 1205. Pt. Hl. may not. 1206. E. ellis. 1208.
 E. Thanne.

This noble Marchant heeld a worthy hous, 1210
 For which he hadde alday so greet repair (21)
 For his largesse, and for his wyf was fair,
 That wonder is; but herkneth to my tale.
 Amonges alle his gestes, grete and smale,
 Ther was a monk, a fair man and a bold, 1215
 I trowe of thritty winter he was old,
 That ever in oon was drawing to that place.

[168: T. 12958-12994.]

This yonge monk, that was so fair of face,
 Aqueinted was so with the gode man,
 Sith that hir firste knoweliche bigan, 1220
 That in his hous as famulier was he (31)
 As it possible is any freend to be.

1214. E. Hn. hise; Hl. these; _rest_ his. 1216. E. of; Hn. Cp. Ln. a;
 rest om. 1217. E. comynge; rest drawyng. 1220-3. Pt. _omits._

And for as muchel as this gode man
 And eek this monk, of which that I bigan,
 Were bothe two y-born in o village, 1225
 The monk him claimeth as for cosinage;
 And he again, he seith nat ones nay,
 But was as glad ther-of as fowel of day;
 For to his herte it was a greet plesaunce.
 Thus been they knit with eterne alliaunce, 1230
 And ech of hem gan other for tassure (41)
 Of bretherhede, whyl that hir lyf may dure.

1222. E. _om._ is; Hl. possibil is; _rest_ is possible. 1231. E. Hn.
 Pt. ech; Hl. ilk; _rest_ ilke. Cp. for to assure; Hl. Ln. to assure
 (_om._ for).

Free was daun lohn, and namely of dispence,
 As in that hous; and ful of diligence
 To doon plesaunce, and also greet costage. 1235
 He noght forgat to yeve the leeste page

In al that hous; but, after hir degree,
He yaf the lord, and sitthe al his meynee,
When that he cam, som maner honest thing;
For which they were as glad of his coming 1240
As fowel is fayn, whan that the sonne up-ryseth. (51)
Na more of this as now, for it suffyseth.

1237. E. the; _rest_ that.

But so bifel, this marchant on a day
Shoop him to make redy his array
Toward the toun of Brugges for to fare, 1245
To byën ther a porcioun of ware;
For which he hath to Paris sent anon
A messenger, and preyed hath daun lohn
That he sholde come to Seint Denys to pleye
With him and with his wyf a day or tweye, 1250
Er he to Brugges wente, in alle wyse. (61)

This noble monk, of which I yow devyse,
Hath of his abbot, as him list, licence,
By-cause he was a man of heigh prudence,
[169: T. 12995-13031.]
And eek an officer, out for to ryde, 1255
To seen hir graunges and hir bernes wyde;
And un-to Seint Denys he comth anon.
Who was so welcome as my lord daun lohn,
Our dere cosin, ful of curteisye?
With him broghte he a lubbe of Malvesye, 1260
And eek another, ful of fyn Vernage, (71)
And volatyl, as ay was his usage.
And thus I lete hem ete and drinke and pleye,
This marchant and this monk, a day or tweye.

1261. Cp. Ln. good (_for_ fyn); Hl. wyn. 1262. Hl. volantyn (!)
1263. E. _om._ ete and.

The thridde day, this marchant up aryseth, 1265
And on his nedes sadly him avyseth,
And up in-to his countour-hous goth he
To rekene with him-self, as wel may be,
Of thilke yeer, how that it with him stood,
And how that he despended hadde his good; 1270
And if that he encessed were or noon. (81)
His bokes and his bagges many oon
He leith biforn him on his counting-bord;
Ful riche was his tresor and his hord,
For which ful faste his countour-dore he shette; 1275
And eek he nolde that no man sholde him lette
Of his accountes, for the mene tyme;
And thus he sit til it was passed pryme.

1266, 1272, 1277. E. hise. 1268. Pt. Hl. as; _rest om._

Daun lohn was risen in the morwe also,
And in the gardin walketh to and fro, 1280
And hath his thinges seyde ful curteisly. (91)

This gode wyf cam walking prively
In-to the gardin, ther he walketh softe,
And him saleweth, as she hath don ofte.
A mayde child cam in hir companye, 1285
Which as hir list she may governe and gye,
For yet under the yerde was the mayde.
?O dere cosin myn, daun lohn,? she sayde,
?What eyleth yow so rathe for to ryse??
?Nece,? quod he, ?it oghte y-nough suffyse 1290
Fyve houres for to slepe up-on a night, (101)
[170: T. 13032-13066.]
But it were for an old appalled wight,
As been these wedded men, that lye and dare
As in a forme sit a wery hare, 1295
Were al for-straught with houndes grete and smale.
But dere nece, why be ye so pale?
I trowe certes that our gode man
Hath yow laboured sith the night bigan,
That yow were nede to resten hastily??
And with that word he lough ful merily, 1300
And of his owene thought he wex al reed. (111)

1294. E. fourme; _rest_ forme. 1300. E. murily. 1301. E. Cp. wax.

This faire wyf gan for to shake hir heed,
And seyde thus, ?ye, god wot al,? quod she;
?Nay, cosin myn, it stant nat so with me.
For, by that god that yaf me soule and lyf, 1305
In al the reme of France is ther no wyf
That lasse lust hath to that sory pley.
For I may singe ?allas? and ?weylawey,
That I was born,? but to no wight,? quod she,
?Dar I nat telle how that it stant with me. 1310
Wherfore I thinke out of this land to wende, (121)
Or elles of my-self to make an ende,
So ful am I of drede and eek of care.?

1304. E. _repeats_ nay. 1306. Cp. Pt. rewme; Hl. Ln. reme; E. Hn.
Reawme; _see_ B. 4326.

This monk bigan up-on this wyf to stare,
And seyde, ?allas, my nece, god forbede 1315
That ye, for any sorwe or any drede,
Fordo your-self; but telleth me your grief;
Paraventure I may, in your meschief,
Conseille or helpe, and therfore telleth me
Al your anoy, for it shal been secree; 1320
For on my porthors here I make an ooth, (131)
That never in my lyf, for lief ne looth,
Ne shal I of no conseil yow biwreie.?

1317. Hn. Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. telleth; E. tel. E. me of; Cp. Ln.
forth; _rest_ me. 1318. E. I yow may; _rest om._ yow. 1321. Cm.
here; _rest_ om.

?The same agayn to yow,? quod she, ?I seye;
By god and by this porthors, I yow swere, 1325
Though men me wolde al in-to peces tere,
[171: T. 13067-13103.]
Ne shal I never, for to goon to helle,
Biwreye a word of thing that ye me telle,
Nat for no cosinage ne alliance,
But verrailly, for love and affiance.? 1330
Thus been they sworn, and heer-upon they kiste, (141)
And ech of hem tolde other what hem liste.

1326. E. pieces; _rest_ peces, peeces.

?Cosin,? quod she, ?if that I hadde a space,
As I have noon, and namely in this place,
Than wolde I telle a legende of my lyf, 1335
What I have suffred sith I was a wyf
With myn housbonde, al be he your cosyn.?

1335. E. Thanne. 1337. your cosyn] E. of youre kyn.

?Nay,? quod this monk, ?by god and seint Martyn,
He is na more cosin un-to me
Than is this leef that hangeth on the tree! 1340
I clepe him so, by Seint Denys of Fraunce, (151)
To have the more cause of aqueintaunce
Of yow, which I have loved specially
Aboven alle wommen sikerly;
This swere I yow on my professioun. 1345
Telleth your grief, lest that he come adoun,
And hasteth yow, and gooth your wey anon.?

1338. and] E. Cp. Pt. Ln. and by. 1340. E. lief.

?My dere love,? quod she, ?o my daun lohn,
Ful lief were me this conseil for to hyde,
But out it moot, I may namore abyde. 1350
Myn housbond is to me the worste man (161)
That ever was, sith that the world bigan.
But sith I am a wyf, it sit nat me
To tellen no wight of our privetee,
Neither a bedde, ne in non other place; 1355
God shilde I sholde it tellen, for his grace!
A wyf ne shal nat seyn of hir housbonde
But al honour, as I can understonde;
Save un-to yow thus mucche I tellen shal;
As help me god, he is noght worth at al 1360
In no degree the value of a flye. (171)
But yet me greveth most his nigardye;

And wel ye woot that wommen naturelly

[172: T. 13104-13140.]

Desyren thinges sixe, as wel as I.

They wolde that hir housbondes sholde be 1365

Hardy, and wyse, and riche, and ther-to free,

And buxom to his wyf, and fresh a-bedde.

But, by that ilke lord that for us bledde,

For his honour, my-self for to arraye,

A Soday next, I moste nedes paye 1370

An hundred frankes, or elles am I lorn. (181)

Yet were me lever that I were unborn

Than me were doon a sclaundre or vileinye;

And if myn housbond eek it mighte espye,

I nere but lost, and therefore I yow preye 1375

Lene me this somme, or elles moot I deye.

Daun lohn, I seye, lene me thise hundred frankes;

Pardee, I wol nat faille yow my thankes,

If that yow list to doon that I yow praye.

For at a certein day I wol yow paye, 1380

And doon to yow what plesance and servyce (191)

That I may doon, right as yow list devyse.

And but I do, god take on me vengeance

As foul as ever had Geniloun of France!?

1351. E. housbonde. 1355. Hl. _om._ 1367. to] E. Hn. Cm. unto.

1371, 1376. E. ellis. 1371. E. Ln. Hl. I am; _rest_ am I. 1374. E.

housbonde. 1376-9. Hl. _omits_. 1384. E. hadde.

This gentil monk answerde in this manere; 1385

?Now, trewely, myn owene lady dere,

I have,? quod he, ?on yow so greet a routhe,

That I yow swere and plighte yow my trouthe,

That whan your housbond is to Flaundres fare,

I wol delivere yow out of this care; 1390

For I wol bringe yow an hundred frankes.? (201)

And with that word he caughte hir by the flankes,

And hir embraceth harde, and kiste hir ofte.

?Goth now your wey,? quod he, ?al stille and softe,

And lat us dyne as sone as that ye may; 1395

For by my chilindre it is pryme of day.

Goth now, and beeth as trewe as I shal be.?

1389. E. housbonde.

?Now, elles god forbede, sire,? quod she,

And forth she gooth, as lolif as a pye,

And bad the cokes that they sholde hem hye, 1400

[173: T. 13141-13176.]

So that men mighte dyne, and that anon. (211)

Up to hir housbonde is this wyf y-gon,

And knocketh at his countour boldely.

?_Qui la_?? quod he. ?Peter! it am I,?

Quod she, ?what, sire, how longe wol ye faste? 1405

How longe tyme wol ye rekene and caste
Your sommes, and your bokes, and your thinges?
The devel have part of alle swiche rekeninges!
Ye have y-nough, pardee, of goddes sonde;
Come down to-day, and lat your bagges stonde. 1410
Ne be ye nat ashamed that daun lohn (221)
Shal fasting al this day elenge goon?
What! lat us here a messe, and go we dyne.?

1404. E. Hn. Who ther (_with_ Qi la _in margin_); Hl. Qy la; Cp. Pt.
Quy la; Ln. Que la. 1408. Hl. Cm. of; _rest_ on. 1412. E. Cm.
alenge; _rest_ elenge. 1413. E. _om._ What.

?Wyf,? quod this man, ?litel canstow devyne
The curious businesse that we have. 1415
For of us chapmen, al-so god me save,
And by that lord that cleped is Seint Yve,
Scarsly amonges twelve ten shul thryve,
Continuelly, lastinge un-to our age.
We may wel make chere and good visage, 1420
And dryve forth the world as it may be, (231)
And kepen our estaat in privetee,
Til we be deed, or elles that we pleye
A pilgrimage, or goon out of the weye.
And therfor have I greet necessitee 1425
Up-on this queinte world tavyse me;
For evermore we mote stonde in drede
Of hap and fortune in our chapmanhede.

1417. E. clepid. 1418. E. xij. 1420. E. chiere. 1426. E. Hn. Cm.
tauyse; _rest_ to auyse.

To Flaundres wol I go to-morwe at day,
And come agayn, as sone as ever I may. 1430
For which, my dere wyf, I thee biseke, (241)
As be to every wight buxom and meke,
And for to kepe our good be curious,
And honestly governe wel our hous.
Thou hast y-nough, in every maner wyse, 1435
That to a thrifty houshold may suffyse.
[174: T. 13177-13214.]
Thee lakketh noon array ne no vitaille,
Of silver in thy purs shaltow nat faille.?
And with that word his countour-dore he shette,
And doun he gooth, no lenger wolde he lette, 1440
But hastily a messe was ther seyde, (251)
And spedily the tables were y-leyde,
And to the diner faste they hem spedde;
And richely this monk the chapman fedde.

1441. E. Hn. But; _rest_ And.

At-after diner daun lohn sobrelly 1445
This chapman took a-part, and prively

He seyde him thus, ?cosyn, it standeth so,
 That wel I see to Brugges wol ye go.
 God and seint Austin spede yow and gyde!
 I prey yow, cosin, wysly that ye ryde; 1450
 Governeth yow also of your diete (261)
 Atemprely, and namely in this hete.
 Bitwix us two nedeth no strange fare;
 Fare-wel, cosyn; god shilde yow fro care.
 If any thing ther be by day or night, 1455
 If it lye in my power and my might,
 That ye me wol comande in any wyse,
 It shal be doon, right as ye wol devyse.

1445. E. Hn. Cm. At; _rest_ And. 1455. E. Hn. And if that any thyng by day or night.

O thing, er that ye goon, if it may be,
 I wolde prey yow; for to lene me 1460
 An hundred frankes, for a wyke or tweye, (271)
 For certein beestes that I moste beye,
 To store with a place that is oures.
 God help me so, I wolde it were youres!
 I shal nat faille surely of my day, 1465
 Nat for a thousand frankes, a myle-way.
 But lat this thing be secree, I yow preye,
 For yet to-night thise beestes moot I beye;
 And fare-now wel, myn owene cosin dere,
 Graunt mercy of your cost and of your chere.? 1470

1465. E. at; _rest_ of.

This noble marchant gentilly anon (281)
 Answerde, and seyde, ?o cosin myn, daun lohn,
 Now sikerly this is a smal requeste;
 My gold is youres, whan that it yow leste.
 [175: T. 13215-13250.]
 And nat only my gold, but my chaffare; 1475
 Take what yow list, god shilde that ye spare.

But o thing is, ye knowe it wel y-nogh,
 Of chapmen, that hir moneye is hir plough.
 We may creauce whyl we have a name,
 But goldlees for to be, it is no game. 1480
 Paye it agayn whan it lyth in your ese; (291)
 After my might ful fayn wolde I yow plese.?

1479. Cm. encrece (_for_ creauce).

Thise hundred frankes he fette forth anon,
 And prively he took hem to daun lohn.
 No wight in al this world wiste of this lone, 1485
 Savinge this marchant and daun lohn allone.
 They drinke, and speke, and rome a whyle and pleye,
 Til that daun lohn rydeth to his abbeye.

1483. E. fette hyrn forth; _rest om._ hym.

The morwe cam, and forth this marchant rydeth
To Flaundres-ward; his prentis wel him gydeth, 1490
Til he cam in-to Brugges merily. (301)
Now gooth this marchant faste and bisily
Aboute his nede, and byeth and creaunceth.
He neither pleyeth at the dees ne daunceth;
But as a marchant, shortly for to telle, 1495
He let his lyf, and there I lete him dwelle.

1491. E. Hn. murily. 1494. E. Cm. _om._ the. 1496. E. Hn. let; Cm.
lat; Hl. Pt. lad; Cp. leet; Ln. letep (let = ledeth).

The Sondag next this Marchant was agon,
To Seint Denys y-comen is daun lohn,
With crowne and berd all fresh and newe y-shave.
In al the hous ther nas so litel a knave, 1500
Ne no wight elles, that he nas ful fayn, (311)
For that my lord daun lohn was come agayn.
And shortly to the point right for to gon,
This faire wyf accorded with daun lohn,
That for thise hundred frankes he sholde al night 1505
Have hir in his armes bolt-upright;
And this acord parfourned was in dede.
In mirthe al night a bisy lyf they lede
Til it was day, that daun lohn wente his way,
And bad the meynee ?fare-wel, have good day!? 1510
[176: T. 13251-13287.]
For noon of hem, ne no wight in the toun, (321)
Hath of daun lohn right no suspecioun.
And forth he rydeth hoom to his abbeye,
Or where him list; namore of him I seye.

1502. E. Hn. Cm. _om._ For. 1503. E. right to the point. 1506. E.
hise.

This marchant, whan that ended was the faire, 1515
To Seint Denys he gan for to repaire,
And with his wyf he maketh feste and chere,
And telleth hir that chaffare is so dere,
That nedes moste he make a chevisaunce.
For he was bounde in a reconissaunce 1520
To paye twenty thousand sheeld anon. (331)
For which this marchant is to Paris gon,
To borwe of certein frendes that he hadde
A certein frankes; and somme with him he ladde.
And whan that he was come in-to the toun, 1525
For greet chertee and greet affeccioun,
Un-to daun lohn he gooth him first, to pleye;
Nat for to axe or borwe of him moneye,
But for to wite and seen of his welfare,
And for to tellen him of his chaffare, 1530

As freendes doon whan they ben met y-fere. (341)
Daun lohn him maketh feste and mery chere;
And he him tolde agayn ful specially,
How he hadde wel y-boght and graciously,
Thanked be god, al hool his marchandyse. 1535
Save that he moste, in alle maner wyse,
Maken a chevisaunce, as for his beste,
And thanne he sholde been in loye and reste.

1517, 1532. E. feeste. 1519, 1537. E. cheuyssau_n_ce. 1520. Hl.
bounde; _rest_ bounden. 1526. Pt. cheertee; Ln. chere; _rest_
chiertee. 1532. E. murye.

Daun lohn answerde, ?certes, I am fayn
That ye in hele ar comen hoom agayn. 1540
And if that I were riche, as have I blisse, (351)
Of twenty thousand sheeld shold ye nat misse,
For ye so kindly this other day
Lente me gold; and as I can and may,
I thanke yow, by god and by seint lame! 1545
But nathelees I took un-to our dame,
Your wyf at hoom, the same gold ageyn
[177: T. 13288-13323.]
Upon your bench; she woot it wel, certeyn,
By certein tokenes that I can hir telle.
Now, by your leve, I may no lenger dwelle, 1550
Our abbot wol out of this toun anon; (361)
And in his companye moot I gon.
Grete wel our dame, myn owene nece swete,
And fare-wel, dere cosin, til we mete!?

1540. ar] Cp. Pt. Ln. be. 1549. E. Hn. Cm. yow; _rest_ hir.

This Marchant, which that was ful war and wys, 1555
Creaunced hath, and payd eek in Parys,
To certeyn Lumbardes, redy in hir hond,
The somme of gold, and gat of hem his bond;
And hoom he gooth, mery as a papeiay.
For wel he knew he stood in swich array, 1560
That nedes moste he winne in that viage (371)
A thousand frankes above al his costage.

1558. E. hadde; Hl. took; _rest_ gat. _Over_ bond _is the
gloss_?obligacionem. 1559. E. murie. E. papeiay; _rest_ papyniay,
popiniay. 1562. E. Hn. Cm. Cp. abouen; _rest_ aboue.

His wyf ful redy mette him atte gate,
As she was wont of old usage algate,
And al that night in mirthe they bisette; 1565
For he was riche and cleerly out of dette.
Whan it was day, this marchant gan embrace
His wyf al newe, and kiste hir on hir face,
And up he gooth and maketh it ful tough.

?Namore,? quod she, ?by god, ye have y-nough!? 1570
 And wantounly agayn with him she pleyde; (381)
 Til, atte laste, that this Marchant seyde,
 ?By god,? quod he, ?I am a litel wrooth
 With yow, my wyf, al-thogh it be me looth.
 And woot ye why? by god, as that I gesse, 1575
 That ye han maad a maner straungenesse
 Bitwixen me and my cosyn daun lohn.
 Ye sholde han warned me, er I had gon,
 That he yow hadde an hundred frankes payed
 By redy tokene; and heeld him yvel apayed, 1580
 For that I to him spak of chevisaunce, (391)
 Me semed so, as by his contenance.
 But nathelees, by god our hevene king,
 [178: T. 13324-13359.]
 I thoghte nat to axe of him no-thing.
 I prey thee, wyf, ne do namore so; 1585
 Tel me alwey, er that I fro thee go,
 If any dettour hath in myn absence
 Y-payëd thee; lest, thurgh thy necligence,
 I mighte him axe a thing that he hath payed.?

1571. E. wantownely. 1572. Cp. Pt. pat; Hl. þus; _rest om._ 1574.
 E. were; _rest_ be. 1584. E. axen; _rest_ axe. E. Hl. _om._ of.
 1585. E. as; Hl. _om._; _rest_ ne. 1586. Hn. Hl. Tel; Ln. Til; _rest_
 Telle.

This wyf was nat afered nor affrayed, 1590
 But boldely she seyde, and that anon: (401)
 ?Marie, I defye the false monk, daun lohn!
 I kepe nat of hise tokenes never a deel;
 He took me certein gold, that woot I weel!
 What! yvel thedom on his monkes snoute! 1595
 For, god it woot, I wende, withouten doute,
 That he had yeve it me bycause of yow,
 To doon ther-with myn honour and my prow,
 For cosinage, and eek for bele chere
 That he hath had ful ofte tymes here. 1600
 But sith I see I stonde in this disioint, (411)
 I wol answeere yow shortly, to the point.
 Ye han mo slakker dettours than am I!
 For I wol paye yow wel and redily
 Fro day to day; and, if so be I faille, 1605
 I am your wyf; score it up-on my taille,
 And I shal paye, as sone as ever I may.
 For, by my trouthe, I have on myn array,
 And nat on wast, bistowed every deel.
 And for I have bistowed it so weel 1610
 For your honour, for goddes sake, I seye, (421)
 As be nat wrooth, but lat us laughe and pleye.
 Ye shal my loly body have to wedde;
 By god, I wol nat paye yow but a-bedde.
 Forgive it me, myn owene spouse dere; 1615
 Turne hiderward and maketh bettre chere.?

1592. Cm. defye; _rest_ deffie. 1595. E. Hn. Cp. thedam. 1597. E. hadde. 1599. E. beelee; Cm. beel; _rest_ bele. 1601. E. Hn. Hl. this; _rest_ suche, such. 1611. E. Hn. For; _rest_ To.

This marchant saugh ther was no remedye,
And, for to chye, it nere but greet folye,
Sith that the thing may nat amended be.

[179: T. 13360-13364.]

?Now, wyf,? he seyde, ?and I foryeve it thee; 1620
But, by thy lyf, ne be namore so large; (431)
Keep bet our good, this yeve I thee in charge.?
Thus endeth now my tale, and god us sende
Taling y-nough un-to our lyves ende. Amen.

=Here endeth the Shipmannes Tale.=

1622. E. that; _rest_ this. 1623. E. Hn. _om._ now. 1624. Cm. Talyng; Hl. Talyng; E. Hn. Pt. Taillyng; Cp. Ln. Toylyng(!).
COLOPHON. _So_ E. Hn. Cp. Pt.

[180: T. 13365-13382.]

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THE PRIORESSE'S PROLOGUE

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=Bihold the mery wordes of the Host to the Shipman
and to the lady Prioress.=

?Wel seyde, by _corpus dominus_,? quod our hoste, 1625
?Now longe moot thou sayle by the coste,
Sir gentil maister, gentil marineer!
God yeve this monk a thousand last quad yeer!
A ha! felawes! beth ware of swiche a lape!
The monk putte in the mannes hood an ape, 1630
And in his wyves eek, by seint Austin!
Draweth no monkes more un-to your in.

HEADING. _So_ E. (_with_ Bihoold, murie, Hoost); Hn. Herke the myrie
Wordes of the Worthy Hoost; Pt. And here bygynneth the prologe of the
pries; Ln. Incipit prologus Priesse. 1625. E. Hn. Hoost. 1626.
E. Hn. moote; Ln. Hl. mot; _rest_ mote. E. saille; cost. 1628. E.
this; _rest_ the. Hn. quaad; _rest_ quade.

But now passe over, and lat us seke aboute,
Who shal now telle first, of al this route, (10)
Another tale;? and with that word he sayde, 1635
As curteisly as it had been a mayde,
?My lady Prioress, by your leve,
So that I wiste I sholde yow nat greve,
I wolde demen that ye tellen sholde

A tale next, if so were that ye wolde. 1640
Now wol ye vouche-sauf, my lady dere??

?Gladly,? quod she, and seyde as ye shal here. (18)

Explicit.

1642. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. sayde in this manere.

[181: T. 13383-13403.]

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THE PRIORESSES TALE.

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=The Prologe of the Prioresses Tale.=

Domine, dominus noster.

O Lord our lord, thy name how merveillous
Is in this large worlde y-sprad?quod she:?
For noght only thy laude precious 1645
Parfourned is by men of dignitee,
But by the mouth of children thy bountee
Parfourned is, for on the brest soukinge
Som tyme shewen they thyn heryinge.

HEADING. _From_ E. Hn. (Hn. proheme, _for_ prologe). Cp. _has_?Here
begynneth the tale of Alma redemptoris, the prioresses Tale. Prolog.
Domine Dominus noster.

Wherfor in laude, as I best can or may, 1650
Of thee, and of the whyte lily flour
Which that thee bar, and is a mayde alway, (10)
To telle a storie I wol do my labour;
Not that I may encresen hir honour;
For she hir-self is honour, and the rote 1655
Of bountee, next hir sone, and soules bote.?

1651. E. _om._ whyte.

O moder mayde! o mayde moder free!
O bush unbrent, brenninge in Moyses sighte,
That ravisdest down fro the deitee,
Thurgh thyn humblesse, the goost that in thalighte, 1660
Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte,
Conceived was the fadres sapience, (20)
Help me to telle it in thy reverence!

1660. Hl. Cp. the alight.

[182: T. 13404-13431.]

Lady! thy bountee, thy magnificence,
 Thy vertu, and thy grete humilitee 1665
 Ther may no tonge expresse in no science;
 For som-tyme, lady, er men praye to thee,
 Thou goost biforn of thy benigneitee,
 And getest us the light, thurgh thy preyere,
 To gyden us un-to thy sone so dere. 1670

1669. Hn. Slo. Ln. Hl. the] E. thurgh; Cp. Pt. to. E. Hn. of; _but
 the rest_ thurgh.

My conning is so wayk, o blisful quene,
 For to declare thy grete worthinesse, (30)
 That I ne may the weighte nat sustene,
 But as a child of twelf monthe old, or lesse,
 That can unnethes any word expresse, 1675
 Right so fare I, and therfor I yow preye,
 Gydeh my song that I shal of yow seye.

Explicit.

1675. Cp. Pt. Hl. vnnethes. E. Hn. vnnethe.

=Here biginneth the Prioresses Tale.

Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,
 Amonges cristen folk, a lewerye,
 Sustened by a lord of that contree 1680
 For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,
 Hateful to Crist and to his companye; (40)
 And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde or wende,
 For it was free, and open at either ende.

HEADING. _From_ E. Hn. _has_?Here biggynneth the Prioresse tale of
 Alma redemptoris mater.

A litel scole of cristen folk ther stood 1685
 Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were
 Children an heep, y-comen of cristen blood,
 That lerned in that scole yeer by yere
 Swich maner doctrine as men used there,
 This is to seyn, to singen and to rede, 1690
 As smale children doon in hir childhede.

[183: T. 13432-13466.]

Among these children was a widwes sone, (50)
 A litel clergeon, seven yeer of age,
 That day by day to scole was his wone,
 And eek also, wher-as he saugh thimage 1695
 Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,
 As him was taught, to knele adoun and seye
 His _Ave Marie_, as he goth by the weye.

1695. Cp. Pt. Ln. the ymage. 1696. E. he hadde.

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone y-taught
Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere, 1700
To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught,
For sely child wol alday sone lere; (60)
But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,
Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
For he so yong to Crist did reverence. 1705

1701. E. Pt. forgate. 1702. Hn. Hl. alwey.

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,
As he sat in the scole at his prymer,
He *_Alma redemptoris_* herde singe,
As children lerned hir antiphoner;
And, as he dorste, he drough him ner and ner, 1710
And herkned ay the wordes and the note,
Til he the firste vers coude al by rote. (70)

Noght wiste he what this Latin was to seye,
For he so yong and tendre was of age;
But on a day his felaw gan he preye 1715
Texpounden him this song in his langage,
Or telle him why this song was in usage;
This preyde he him to construe and declare
Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes bare.

1719. E. Hl. often.

His felaw, which that elder was than he, 1720
Answerde him thus: ?this song, I have herd seye,
Was maked of our blisful lady free, (80)
Hir to salue, and eek hir for to preye
To been our help and socour whan we deye.
I can no more expounde in this matere; 1725
I lerne song, I can but smal grammere.?

1725. E. Hn. na.

[184: T. 13467-13501.]

?And is this song maked in reverence
Of Cristes moder?? seyde this innocent;
?Now certes, I wol do my diligence
To conne it al, er Cristemasse is went; 1730
Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,
And shal be beten thryës in an houre, (90)
I wol it conne, our lady for to honoure.?

1733. Cp. Pt. Hl. *_omit_* for.

His felaw taughte him homward prively,
Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote, 1735

And than he song it wel and boldely
Fro word to word, acording with the note;
Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte,
To scoleward and homward whan he wente;
On Cristes moder set was his entente. 1740

As I have seyde, thurgh-out the lewerye
This litel child, as he cam to and fro, (100)
Ful merily than wolde he singe, and crye
O Alma redemptoris ever-mo.
The swetnes hath his herte perced so 1745
Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,
He can nat stinte of singing by the weye.

1741. E. luerie. 1743. Slo. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. than; E. Hn. _omit_.

1745. Slo. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. hath; E. Hn. _omit_.

Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in lewes herte his waspes nest,
Up swal, and seide, ?o Hebraik peple, allas! 1750
Is this to yow a thing that is honest,
That swich a boy shal walken as him lest (110)
In your despyt, and singe of swich sentence,
Which is agayn your lawes reverence??

1754. Hl. your; Pt. Ln. ?oure; E. Hn. Cm. Cp. oure.

Fro thennes forth the lewes han conspyred 1755
This innocent out of this world to chace;
An homicyde ther-to han they hyred,
That in an aley hadde a privee place;
And as the child gan for-by for to pace,
This cursed lew him hente and heeld him faste, 1760
And kitte his throte, and in a pit him caste.

[185: T. 13502-13536.]

I seye that in a wardrobe they him threwe (120)
Wher-as these lewes purgen hir entraille.
O cursed folk of Herodes al newe,
What may your yvel entente yow availle? 1765
Mordre wol out, certein, it wol nat faille,
And namely ther thonour of god shal sprede,
The blood out cryeth on your cursed dede.

1767. thonour] Cp. Pt. Ln. honour.

?O martir, souted to virginitee,
Now maystou singen, folwing ever in oon 1770
The whyte lamb celestial,? quod she,
?Of which the grete evangelist, seint Iohn, (130)
In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they that goon
Biforn this lamb, and singe a song al newe,
That never, fleshly, wommen they ne knewe.? 1775

This povre widwe awaiteth al that night
After hir litel child, but he cam noght;
For which, as sone as it was dayes light,
With face pale of drede and bisy thoght,
She hath at scole and elles-wher him soght, 1780
Til finally she gan so fer espye
That he last seyn was in the lewerye. (140)

With modres pitee in hir brest enclosed,
She gooth, as she were half out of hir minde,
To every place wher she hath supposed 1785
By lyklihede hir litel child to finde;
And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde
She cryde, and atte laste thus she wroghte,
Among the cursed lewes she him soghte.

She frayneth and she preyeth pitously 1790
To every lew that dwelte in thilke place,
To telle hir, if hir child wente oght for-by. (150)
They seyde, ?nay?; but lesu, of his grace,
Yaf in hir thought, inwith a litel space,
That in that place after hir sone she cryde, 1795
Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.

1794. inwith] Cm. Cp. Hl. withinne.

[186: T. 13537-13569.]

O grete god, that parfournest thy laude
By mouth of innocents, lo heer thy might!
This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
And eek of martirdom the ruby bright, 1800
Ther he with throte y-corven lay upright,
He ?_Alma redemptoris_? gan to singe (160)
So loude, that al the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete wente,
In coomen, for to wondre up-on this thing, 1805
And hastily they for the provost sente;
He cam anon with-uten taryng,
And herieth Crist that is of heven king,
And eek his moder, honour of mankinde,
And after that, the lewes leet he binde, 1810

1805. Cp. Pt. wondren on; Ln. wonderne of; E. Hn. wondre vpon; Hl.
wonder vpon; Cm. wonderyn vp-on.

This child with pitous lamentacioun
Up-taken was, singing his song alway; (170)
And with honour of greet processsioun
They carien him un-to the nexte abbay.
His moder swowning by the bere lay; 1815
Unnethe might the peple that was there
This newe Rachel bringe fro his bere.

1815. E. Hn. his; _rest_ the; see l. 1817. 1817. Cm. Hl. the; _rest_ his.

With torment and with shamful deth echon
This provost dooth this lewes for to sterve
That of this mordre wiste, and that anon; 1820
He nolde no swich cursednesse observe.
Yvel shal have, that yvel wol deserve. (180)
Therfor with wilde hors he dide hem drawe,
And after that he heng hem by the lawe.

1819. E. the; _rest_ thise, these. 1822. E. Cm. shal he; Pt. he shal; _rest_ omit_ he.

Up-on his here ay lyth this innocent 1825
Biforn the chief auter, whyl masse laste,
And after that, the abbot with his covent
Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste;
And whan they holy water on him caste,
[187: T. 13570-13604.]
Yet spak this child, whan spreynd was holy water, 1830
And song??_O Alma redemptoris mater_!?

1825. Hn. Hl. his; _the rest_ this. 1826. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. the masse;
Cp. Pt. Ln. _omit_ the. 1827. Hl. thabbot.

This abbot, which that was an holy man (190)
As monkes been, or elles oghten be,
This yonge child to coniure he bigan,
And seyde, ?o dere child, I halse thee, 1835
In vertu of the holy Trinitee,
Tel me what is thy cause for to singe,
Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge??

?My throte is cut un-to my nekke-boon,?
Seyde this child, ?and, as by wey of kinde, 1840
I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon,
But lesu Crist, as ye in bokes finde, (200)
Wil that his glorie laste and be in minde,
And, for the worship of his moder dere,
Yet may I singe ?_O Alma_? loude and clere. 1845

This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
I lovede alwey, as after my conninge;
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,
To me she cam, and bad me for to singe
This antem verrailly in my deyinge, 1850
As ye han herd, and, whan that I had songe,
Me thoughte, she leyde a greyn up-on my tonge. (210)

1850. Cm. Cp. Pt. anteme; Ln. antime; Hl. antym; Hn. antheme; E. Anthephen.

Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot certeyn
In honour of that blisful mayden free,
Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn; 1855
And afterward thus seyde she to me,
?My litel child, now wol I fecche thee
Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge y-take;
Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake.??

This holy monk, this abbot, him mene I, 1860
His tonge out-caughte, and took a-vey the greyn,
And he yaf up the goost ful softly. (220)
And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn,
His salte teres trikkled doun as reyn,
[188: T. 13605-13620.]
And gruf he fil al plat up-on the grounde, 1865
And stille he lay as he had been y-bounde.

1864. E. Hn. Cm. trikkled; Cp. Pt. stryked; Ln. strikled; Hl. striken.
1866. Cp. Hl. ben; Pt. Ln. bene; E. Hn. Cm. leyn.

The covent eek lay on the pavement
Weping, and herien Cristes moder dere,
And after that they ryse, and forth ben went,
And toke away this martir fro his bere, 1870
And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere
Enclosen they his litel body swete; (230)
Ther he is now, god leve us for to mete.

1869. Hl. thay went; _rest_ been, ben, bene went. 1870. E. token;
Hl. took; _rest_ toke. 1871. E. temple; _rest_ tombe, tounge. 1873.
E. alle for; _rest omit_ alle.

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln, slayn also
With cursed lewes, as it is notable, 1875
For it nis but a litel whyle ago;
Preye eek for us, we sinful folk unstable,
That, of his mercy, god so merciable
On us his grete mercy multiplie, (237)
For reverence of his moder Marye. Amen. 1880

=Here is ended the Prioresses Tale.=

1876. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. nys; E. Hn. Cm. is. COLOPHON. _From_ E.

[189: T. 13621-13641.]

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PROLOGUE TO SIR THOPAS.

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=Bihold the murye wordes of the Host to Chaucer.=

Whan seyde was al this miracle, every man
As sobre was, that wonder was to se,
Til that our hoste lapen tho bigan,
And than at erst he loked up-on me,
And seyde thus, ?what man artow?? quod he; 1885
?Thou lokest as thou woldest finde an hare,
For ever up-on the ground I see thee stare.

HEADING. _From_ E. E. Bihoold; Hoost. 1883. _Only_ Hl. _inserts_ to
before lapen. Cm. Cp. tho; E. to; Hn. he; Pt. Ln. Hl. _omit_.

Approche neer, and loke up merily.
Now war yow, sirs, and lat this man have place;
He in the waast is shape as wel as I; 1890
This were a popet in an arm tenbrace (11)
For any womman, smal and fair of face.
He semeth elvish by his contenance,
For un-to no wight dooth he daliaunce.

1888. E. murily; Hl. merily.

Sey now somewhat, sin other folk han sayd; 1895
Tel us a tale of mirthe, and that anoon;??
?Hoste,? quod I, ?ne beth nat yvel apayd,
For other tale certes can I noon,
But of a ryme I lerned longe agoon.?
?Ye, that is good,? quod he; ?now shul we here 1900
Som deyntee thing, me thinketh by his chere.? (21)

Explicit.

1897. Cp. Ln. Oste; E. Hn. Cm. Hoost. 1900. E. ye; _rest_ we.

[190: T. 13642-13665.]

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SIR THOPAS.

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=Here biginneth Chaucers Tale of Thopas.=

Listeth, lordes, in good entent,
And I wol telle verrayment
Of mirthe and of solas;
Al of a knyght was fair and gent 1905
In bataille and in tourneyment,
His name was sir Thopas.

HEADING. _From_ E. (E. Heere).

Y-born he was in fer contree,
In Flaundres, al biyonde the see,

At Popering, in the place; 1910
His fader was a man ful free, (10)
And lord he was of that contree,
As it was goddes grace.

Sir Thopas wex a doghty swayn,
Whyt was his face as payndemayn, 1915
His lippes rede as rose;
His rode is lyk scarlet in grayn,
And I yow telle in good certayn,
He hadde a semely nose.

His heer, his berd was lyk saffroun, 1920
That to his girdel raughte adoun; (20)
His shoon of Cordewane.
Of Brugges were his hosen broun,
His robe was of ciclatoun,
That coste many a lane. 1925

1922. E. shoos; Hn. Pt. shoon; _rest_ schoon, schon, schone.

[191: T. 13666-13695.]

He coude hunte at wilde deer,
And ryde an hauking for riveer,
With grey goshawk on honde;
Ther-to be was a good archeer,
Of wrastling was ther noon his peer, 1930
Ther any ram shal stonde. (30)

1927. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. for; Cp. by þe; Pt. Ln. for þe. 1931. E. Hn. Cm.
Hl. shal; Cp. schulde; Pt. schulde; Ln. scholde.

Ful many a mayde, bright in bour,
They moorne for him, paramour,
Whan hem were bet to slepe;
But he was chast and no lechour, 1935
And sweet as is the bremble-flour
That bereth the rede hepe.

And so bifel up-on a day,
For sothe, as I yow telle may,
Sir Thopas wolde out ryde; 1940
He worth upon his stede gray, (40)
And in his honde a launcegay,
A long swerd by his syde.

1938. Hn. Hl. it fel; Cm. it fil.

He priketh thurgh a fair forest,
Ther-inne is many a wilde best, 1945
Ye, bothe bukke and hare;
And, as he priketh north and est,
I telle it yow, him hadde alмест

Bitid a sory care.

1949. Cm. Hl. Bytid; _rest_ Bitidde, Betydde (!).

Ther springen herbes grete and smale, 1950
The lycorys and cetewale, (50)
And many a clowe-gilofre;
And notemuge to putte in ale,
Whether it be moyste or stale,
Or for to leye in cofre. 1955

[192: T. 13696-13725.]

The briddes singe, it is no nay,
The sparhawk and the papeiay,
That loye it was to here;
The thrustelcok made eek his lay,
The wodedowve upon the spray 1960
She sang ful loude and clere. (60)

1959. E. hir; _rest_ his. 1960. E. a; _rest_ the.

Sir Thopas fil in love-longinge
Al whan he herde the thrustel singe,
And priked as he were wood:
His faire stede in his prikinge 1965
So swatte that men mighte him wringe,
His sydes were al blood.

Sir Thopas eek so wery was
For prikinge on the softe gras,
So fiers was his corage, 1970
That doun he leyde him in that plas (70)
To make his stede som solas,
And yaf him good forage.

?O seinte Marie, _benedicite!_
What eyleth this love at me 1975
To binde me so sore?
Me dremed al this night, pardee,
An elf-queen shal my lemman be,
And slepe under my gore.

An elf-queen wol I love, y-wis, 1980
For in this world no womman is (80)
Worthy to be my make [T. 13722
In toune; [T. 13722
Alle othere wommen I forsake, [T. 13723
And to an elf-queen I me take 1985
By dale and eek by dounel!?

1980. Hn. Cm. Hl. haue; _rest_ loue.

[193: T. 13726-13755.]

In-to his sadel he clamb anoon,
 And priketh over style and stoon
 An elf-queen for tespye,
 Til he so longe had riden and goon 1990
 That he fond, in a privee woon, (90)
 The contree of Fairye [T. 13731
 So wilde; [T. 13734
 For in that contree was ther noon
 That to him dorste ryde or goon, 1995
 Neither wyf ne childe.

1989. _So_ E. Hn. Cm.; Cp. Pt. Ln. to asprie; Hl. to spye. 1995. _Not
 in the best_ MSS.; _supplied from_ MS. Reg. 17 D. 15 (Tyrwhitt).

Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,
 His name was sir Olifaunt,
 A perilous man of dede;
 He seyde, ?child, by Termagaunt, 2000
 But-if thou prike out of myn haunt, (100)
 Anon I slee thy stede [T. 13743
 With mace. [T. 13743
 Heer is the queen of Fayërye,
 With harpe and pype and simphonye 2005
 Dwelling in this place.?

2000. Hl. swar; _rest_ seyde. 2004. Cp. Hl. fayerye; E. Hn. Cm.
 Fairye. 2005. Hl. lute; _rest_ pype _or_ pipe.

The child seyde, ?al-so mote I thee,
 Tomorwe wol I mete thee
 Whan I have myn armoure;
 And yet I hope, _par ma fay_, 2010
 That thou shalt with this launcegay (110)
 Abyen it ful soure; [T. 13752
 Thy mawe [T. 13752
 Shal I percen, if I may,
 Er it be fully pryde of day, 2015
 For heer thou shalt be slawe.?

2008. E. Hl. meete with; _rest omit_ with. 2012. E. Hn. sowre; Cm.
 soure; _rest_ sore. 2014. E. Cm. Thyn hauberk shal I percen, if I
 may; _but the rest rightly omit_ Thyn hauberk.

[194: T. 13756-13785.]

Sir Thopas drow abak ful faste;
 This geaunt at him stonnes caste
 Out of a fel staf-slinge;
 But faire escapeth child Thopas, 2020
 And al it was thurgh goddes gras, (120)
 And thurgh his fair beringe.

2020. E. Cm. sire; _rest_ child.

Yet listeth, lordes, to my tale
Merier than the nightingale,
For now I wol yow rounne 2025
How sir Thopas with sydes smale,
Priking over hil and dale,
Is come agayn to toune.

2025. Cp. Pt. Ln. _insert_ For now, _which the rest omit_. 2027. hil]
Hl. hul; Cp. Pt. Ln. downe. 2028. E. Cm. comen.

His merie men comanded he
To make him bothe game and glee, 2030
For nedes moste he fighte (130)
With a geaunt with hevedes three,
For paramour and lolitee
Of oon that shoon ful brighte.

2032. E. Hn. heuedes; Hl. heedes; Cm. hedis; Cp. Pt. Ln. hedes.

?Do come,? he seyde, ?my minstrales, 2035
And gestours, for to tellen tales
Anon in myn arminge;
Of romances that been royales,
Of popes and of cardinales,
And eek of love-lykinge.? 2040

2038. Hn. Pt. Hl. reales.

They fette him first the swete wyn, (140)
And mede eek in a maselyn,
And royal spicerye;
Of gingebreed that was ful fyn,
And lycorys, and eek comyn, 2045
With sugre that is so trye.

2041. E. sette; _rest_ fette _or_ fet. E. Hn. Cm. _omit_ the. 2044.
E. And; Hn. Cm. Hl. Of. Cp. Pt. Ln. _omit_ ll. 2042-4. 2046. E.
alone retains so.

[195: T. 13786-13818.]

He dide next his whyte lere
Of clooth of lake fyn and clere
A breech and eek a sherte;
And next his sherte an aketoun, 2050
And over that an habergeoun (150)
For percinge of his herte;

And over that a fyn hauberk,
Was al y-wroght of lewes werk,
Ful strong it was of plate; 2055
And over that his cote-armour
As whyt as is a lily-flour,
In which he wol debate.

2058. Cm. wolde; Hl. wold; _rest_ wol, wole, wil.

His sheeld was al of gold so reed,
And ther-in was a bores heed, 2060
A charbocle bisyde; (160)
And there he swoor, on ale and breed,
How that ?the geaunt shal be deed,
Bityde what bityde!?

2061. Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. by his syde; Cp. him besyde. 2063. Cm. Cp. Ln.
schulde.

His lambeux were of quirboilly, 2065
His swerdes shethe of yvory,
His helm of laton bright;
His sadel was of rewel-boon,
His brydel as the sonne shoon,
Or as the mone light. 2070

2068. Pt. Hl. rowel; Cp. Ln. ruel.

His spere was of fyn ciprees, (170)
That bodeth werre, and no-thing pees,
The heed ful sharpe y-grunde;
His stede was al dappel-gray,
It gooth an ambel in the way 2075
Ful softly and rounde [T. 13815
In londe. [T. 13815
Lo, lordes myne, heer is a fit!
If ye wol any more of it,
To telle it wol I fonde. 2080

2071. E. it was; _rest omit_ it.

[196: T. 13819-13846.]

[_The Second Fit_.]

Now hold your mouth, _par charitee_, (180)
Bothe knight and lady free,
And herkne to my spelle;
Of bataille and of chivalry,
And of ladyes love-drury 2085
Anon I wol yow telle.

2084. E. batailles; Hn. bataille; _rest_ bataile, batail, batell.

Men speke of romances of prys,
Of Horn child and of Ypotys,
Of Bevis and sir Gy,
Of sir Libeux and Pleyn-damour; 2090
But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour (190)
Of royal chivalry.

2089. E. Pt. and of; _rest omit_ of.

His gode stede al he bistrood,
And forth upon his wey he glood
As sparkle out of the bronde; 2095
Up-on his crest he bar a tour,
And ther-in stiked a lily-flour,
God shilde his cors fro shonde!

2094. E. rood; _rest_ glood, glod, glode. 2095. Hl. Pt. spark; Cp.
Ln. sparcles.

And for he was a knight auntrous,
He nolde slepen in non hous, 2100
But ligen in his hode; (200)
His brighte helm was his wonger,
And by him baiteth his dextrer
Of herbes fyne and gode.

Him-self drank water of the wel, 2105
As did the knight sir Percivel,
So worthy under wede,
Til on a day?? (207)

=Here the host stinteth Chaucer of his Tale of Thopas.=

2107. Hl. worthy; E. Hn. worly; Pt. worthely; Cm. Cp. Ln. _omit_ ll.
2105-8. COLOPHON. _From_ E. (E. Heere; Hoost).

[197: T. 13847-13875.]

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PROLOGUE TO MELIBEUS.

* * * * *

?No more of this, for goddes dignitee,
Quod oure hoste, ?for thou makest me 2110
So verry of thy verray lewednesse
That, also wisly god my soule blesse,
Myn eres aken of thy drasty speche;
Now swiche a rym the devel I biteche!
This may wel be rym dogerel,? quod he. 2115

?Why so?? quod I, ?why wiltow lette me
More of my tale than another man,
Sin that it is the beste rym I can?? (10)

2118. E. tale; _rest_ rym, ryme.

?By god,? quod he, ?for pleynly, at a word,
Thy drasty ryming is nat worth a tord; 2120

Thou doost nought elles but despendest tyme,
Sir, at o word, thou shall no lenger ryme.
Lat see wher thou canst tellen aught in geste,
Or telle in prose somewhat at the leste
In which ther be som mirthe or som doctryne.? 2125

?Gladly,? quod I, ?by goddes swete pyne,
I wol yow telle a litel thing in prose,
That oghte lyken yow, as I suppose, (20)
Or elles, certes, ye been to daungerous.

It is a moral tale vertuous, 2130
Al be it told som-tyme in sondry wyse
Of sondry folk, as I shal yow devyse.
As thus; ye woot that every evangelist,
That telleth us the peyne of Iesu Crist,
Ne saith nat al thing as his felaw dooth, 2135
But natheles, hir sentence is al sooth,
And alle acorden as in hir sentence,
[198: T. 13876-13894.]

Al be ther in hir telling difference. (30)
For somme of hem seyn more, and somme lesse,
Whan they his pitous passioun expresse; 2140
I mene of Marke, Mathew, Luk and Iohn;
But doutelees hir sentence is al oon.

Therfor, lordinges alle, I yow biseche,
If that ye thinke I varie as in my speche,
As thus, thogh that I telle som-what more 2145
Of proverbes, than ye han herd bifore,
Comprehended in this litel tretis here,
To enforce with the theffect of my matere, (40)

And thogh I nat the same wordes seye
As ye han herd, yet to yow alle I preye, 2150
Blameth me nat; for, as in my sentence,
Ye shul not fynden moche difference
Fro the sentence of this tretis lyte
After the which this mery tale I wryte.

And therfor herkneth what that I shal seye, 2155
And lat me tellen al my tale, I preye.? (48)

Explicit.

2131. E. take; _rest_ told, tolde, toold. 2139. E. Hn. Ln. somme
seyn; _but_ Cp. Pt. Hl. _omit 2nd_ seyn. 2141. Ed. 1561, Marke; E.
Cp. Pt. Hl. Marke (?); Hn. Ln. Mark. 2144. E. Hl. yow; _rest_ ye.
Cp. Ln. _om._ as. 2146. Cp. prouerbis. 2152. Cm. Cp. Ln. Ye schal
not fynden moche; E. Hn. Pt. Hl. Shul ye nowher fynden. 2154. E.
murye; Hn. myry; Hl. lital; _rest_ mery.

[199]

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THE TALE OF MELIBEUS.

=Here biginneth Chaucers Tale of Melibee.=

§ 1. A yong man called Melibeus, mighty and riche, bigat up-on his wyf that called was Prudence, a doghter which that called was Sophie. /

HEADING. _From_ E.

§ 2. Upon a day bifel, that he for his desport is went in-to the feeldes him to pleye. / His wyf and eek his doghter hath he left inwith his hous, of which the dores weren fast y-shette. / Thre of his olde foos han it espyed, and setten laddres to the walles of his hous, and by the windowes been entred, /2160 and betten his wyf, and wounded his doghter with fyve mortal woundes in fyve sondry places; / this is to seyn, in hir feet, in hir handes, in hir eres, in hir nose, and in hir mouth; and leften hir for deed, and wenten away. /

2159. inwith] Ln. Cp. within. 2160. Thre] Cp. Ln. Foure. E. hise. E. foes; Hn. Cp. Ln. Hl. foos. by the] E. Hn. _om._ the. 2162. E. erys.

§ 3. Whan Melibeus retourned was in-to his hous, and saugh al this meschief, he, lyk a mad man, rendinge his clothes, gan to wepe and crye. /

2163. E. Hn. Ln. rentynge; _rest_ rendyng.

§ 4. Prudence his wyf, as ferforth as she dorste, bisoghte him of his weping for to stinte; / but nat for-thy he gan to crye and wepen ever lenger the more. /2165

§ 5. This noble wyf Prudence remembered hir upon the sentence of Ovide, in his book that cleped is The Remedie of Love, wher-as he seith; / ?he is a fool that destourbeth the moder to wepen in the deeth of hir child, til she have wept hir fille, as for a certain tyme; / and thanne shal man doon his diligence with amiable wordes hir to reconforte, and preyen hir of hir weping for to stinte.? / For which resoun this noble wyf Prudence suffred hir housbond for to wepe and crye as for a certein space; / and whan she saugh hir tyme, she seyde him in this wyse. ?Allas, my lord,? quod she,? why make ye your-self for to be lyk a fool? /2170 For [200] sothe, it aperteneth nat to a wys man, to maken swiche a sorwe. / Your doghter, with the grace of god, shal warisshe and escape. / And al were it so that she right now were deed, ye ne oghte nat as for hir deeth your-self to destroye. / Senek seith: ?the wise man shal nat take to greet discomfort for the deeth of his children, / but certes he sholde suffren it in pacience, as wel as he abyde the deeth of his owene propre persone.?? /2175

2172. Cp. Ln. be warisshed; Hl. warischt be. 2173. _Only_ E. Cp. Ln. _insert_ to _before_ destroye.

§ 6. This Melibeus answerde anon and seyde, ?What man,? quod he, ?sholde of his weping stinte, that hath so greet a cause for to wepe? / Iesu Crist, our lord, him-self wepte for the deeth of Lazarus his freend.? / Prudence

answerde, ?Certes, wel I woot, attemptree weping is no-thing defended to him that sorweful is, amonges folk in sorwe, but it is rather graunted him to wepe. / The Apostle Paul un-to the Romayns wryteth, ?man shal reioyse with hem that maken loye, and wepen with swich folk as wepen.? / But thogh attemptree weping be y-graunted, outrageous weping certes is defended. /2180 Mesure of weping sholde be considered, after the lore that techeth us Senek. / ?Whan that thy freend is deed,? quod he, ?lat nat thyne eyen to moyste been of teres, ne to muche drye; although the teres come to thyne eyen, lat hem nat falle.? / And whan thou hast for-goon thy freend, do diligence to gete another freend; and this is more wysdom than for to wepe for thy freend which that thou hast lorn; for ther-inne is no bote. / And therefore, if ye governe yow by sapience, put away sorwe out of your herte. / Remembre yow that Iesus Syrak seith: ?a man that is loyous and glad in herte, it him conserveth florissing in his age; but soothly sorweful herte maketh his bones drye.? /2185 He seith eek thus: ?that sorwe in herte sleeth ful many a man.? / Salomon seith: ?that, right as motthes in the shepes flees anoyeth to the clothes, and the smale wormes to the tree, right so anoyeth sorwe to the herte.? / Wherfore us oghte, as wel in the deeth of our children as in the losse of our goodes temporels, have pacience. /

2176. E. Pt. stente. 2178, 2180. E. deffended. 2182. E. teeris.
2185. E. florissynge. 2187. E. Hl. Motthes; Pt. Cm. mothes; Hn. moththes; Cp. moughtes. 2188. E. othere (_for_ our _before_ goodes);
rest oure, our.

§ 7. Remembre yow up-on the pacient Iob, whan he hadde lost his children and his temporel substance, and in his body [201] endured and receyved ful many a grevous tribulacioun; yet seyde he thus: / ?our lord hath yeven it me, our lord hath biraft it me; right as our lord hath wold, right so it is doon; blessed be the name of our lord.?? /2190 To thise foreseide thinges answerde Melibeus un-to his wyf Prudence: ?Alle thy wordes,? quod he, ?been sothe, and ther-to profitable; but trewely myn herte is troubled with this sorwe so grevously, that I noot what to done.? / ?Lat calle,? quod Prudence, ?thy trewe freendes alle, and thy linage whiche that been wyse; telleth your cas, and herkneht what they seye in conseiling, and yow governe after hir sentence. / Salomon seith: ?werk alle thy thinges by conseil, and thou shalt never repente.?? /

2189. E. temporeel. 2190. Cp. hap ?oue [_read_ yeuen] it me; Ln. yaue it me; Hl. it sent vnto me; _rest omit_ ; _only_ Cp. Ln. Hl. _repeat_ our lord. 2191. E. therwith; _rest_ ther-to.

§ 8. Thanne, by the conseil of his wyf Prudence, this Melibeus leet callen a greet congregacioun of folk; / as surgiens, phisiciens, olde folk and yonge, and somme of hise olde enemys reconsiled as by hir semblaunt to his love and in-to his grace; /2195 and ther-with-al ther comen somme of hise neighebores that diden him reverence more for drede than for love, as it happeth ofte. / Ther comen also ful many subtile flatereres, and wyse advocats lerned in the lawe. /

2196, 7. E. coomen.

§ 9. And whan this folk togidre assembled weren, this Melibeus in sorweful

wyse shewed hem his cas; / and by the manere of his speche it semed that in herte he bar a cruel ire, redy to doon vengeance up-on hise foos, and sodeynly desired that the werre sholde biginne; / but nathelees yet axed he hir conseil upon this matere. /2200 A surgien, by licence and assent of swiche as weren wyse, up roos and un-to Melibeus seyde as ye may here. /

2199. E. only ins. wel after semed. E. baar a crueel; foes.

2200. E. Cm. matiere; Hl. matier. 2201. E. Hl. to (for un-to).

§ 10. ?Sir,? quod he, ?as to us surgiens aperteneth, that we do to every wight the beste that we can, wher-as we been with-holde, and to our patients that we do no damage; / wherfore it happeth, many tyme and ofte, that whan twey men han everich wounded other, oon same surgien heleth hem bothe; / wherfore un-to our art it is nat pertinent to norice werre, ne parties to supporte. / But certes, as to the warisshinge of your doghter, al-be-it so that she perilously be wounded, we shullen do so ententif businessse fro day to night, that with the grace of god she shal be hool and [202] sound as sone as is possible.? /2205 Almost right in the same wyse the phisiciens answerden, save that they seyden a fewe wordes more: / ?That, right as maladyes been cured by hir contraries, right so shul men warisshen werre by vengeance.? / His neighebores, ful of envye, his feyned freendes that semeden reconsiled, and his flatereres, / maden semblant of weping, and empeireden and agreggeden muchel of this matere, in preising greetly Melibee of might, of power, of richesse, and of freendes, despysinge the power of his adversaries, / and seiden outrely that he anon sholde wreken him on his foos and biginne werre. /2210

2209. E. matiere. 2210. E. foes.

§ 11. Up roos thanne an advocat that was wys, by leve and by conseil of othere that were wyse, and seyde: / ?Lordinges, the nede for which we been assembled in this place is a ful hevye thing and an heigh matere, / by-cause of the wrong and of the wikkednesse that hath be doon, and eek by resoun of the grete damages that in tyme cominge been possible to fallen for this same cause; / and eek by resoun of the grete richesse and power of the parties bothe; / for the whiche resouns it were a ful greet peril to erren in this matere. /2215 Wherfore, Melibeus, this is our sentence: we conseilte yow aboven alle thing, that right anon thou do thy diligence in kepinge of thy propre persone, in swich a wyse that thou ne wante noon espye ne wacche, thy body for to save. / And after that we conseilte, that in thyn hous thou sette suffisant garnisoun, so that they may as wel thy body as thyn hous defende. / But certes, for to moeve werre, or sodeynly for to doon vengeance, we may nat demen in so litel tyme that it were profitable. / Wherfore we axen leyser and espace to have deliberacioun in this cas to deme. / For the commune proverbe seith thus: ?he that sone demeth, sone shal repente.? /2220 And eek men seyn that thilke luge is wys, that sone understondeth a matere and luggeth by leyser. / For al-be-it so that alle taryng be anyful, algates it is nat to repreve in yevynge of lugement, ne in vengeance-taking, whan it is suffisant and resonable. / And that shewed our lord lesu Crist by ensample; for whan that the womman that was taken in avoutrie was broght in his presence, to knowen what sholde be doon with hir persone, al-be-it so that he wiste wel him-self what that he [203] wolde answer, yet ne wolde he nat answer sodeynly, but he wolde have deliberacioun, and in the ground he wroot twyes. / And by these causes

we axen deliberacioun, and we shal thanne, by the grace of god, conseille thee thing that shal be profitable.? /

2212, 2215. E. matiere. 2216. E. _om. 1st._ ne. E. p_er_sone (_for_ body). 2217. E. sufficeant; Cp. suffisaunt; Hn. Pt. suffisant. 2218. or] _so_ E. Pt; _rest_ ne. 2221. E. matiere. 2222. E. sufficeant; Cp. Pt. suffisaunt; Hn. Ln. suffisant. 2223. Cm. Pt. Hl. of (_for_ with).

§ 12. Up stirten thanne the yonge folk at-ones, and the moste partie of that companye han scorned the olde wyse men, and bigonnen to make noyse, and seyden: that, /2225 right so as whyl that iren is hoot, men sholden smyte, right so, men sholde wreken hir wronges whyle that they been fresshe and newe; and with loud voys they cryden, ?werre! werre!/? /

2225. E. _om._ han.

Up roos tho oon of these olde wyse, and with his hand made contenance that men sholde holden hem stille and yeven him audience. / ?Lordinges,? quod he, ?ther is ful many a man that cryeth ?werre! werre!/? that woot ful litel what werre amounteth. / Werre at his biginning hath so greet an entree and so large, that every wight may entre whan him lyketh, and lightly finde werre. / But, certes, what ende that shal ther-of bifalle, it is nat light to knowe. /2230 For sothly, whan that werre is ones bigonne, ther is ful many a child unborn of his moder, that shal sterve yong by-cause of that ilke werre, or elles live in sorwe and dye in wrecchednesse. / And ther-fore, er that any werre biginne, men moste have greet conseil and greet deliberacioun.? / And whan this olde man wende to enforcen his tale by resons, wel ny alle at-ones bigonne they to ryse for to breken his tale, and beden him ful ofte his wordes for to abregge. / For soothly, he that precheth to hem that listen nat heren his wordes, his sermon hem anoyeth. / For Iesus Syrak seith: that ?musik in wepinge is anoyous thing;? this is to seyn: as muche availleth to speken bifore folk to whiche his speche anoyeth, as dooth to singe biforn him that wepeth. /2235 And whan this wyse man saugh that him wanted audience, al shamefast he sette him doun agayn. / For Salomon seith: ?ther-as thou ne mayst have noon audience, enforce thee nat to speke.? / ?I see wel,? quod this wyse man, ?that the commune proverbe is sooth; that ?good conseil wanteth whan it is most nede.?? /

2229. Hn. entree; Cm. Pt. Hl. entre; E. Cp. Ln. entryng. 2235. Hn. Cm. Hl. a noyous; E. anoyous; Cp. annoyous; Pt. noyous. Cm. doth; _rest_ it is (_badly_). 2236. E. _om._ whan. E. and al (_for_ al). 2238. E. _om._ nede.

§ 13. Yet hadde this Melibeus in his conseil many folk, that [204] prively in his ere conseilled him certeyn thing, and conseilled him the contrarie in general audience. /

Whan Melibeus hadde herd that the gretteste partie of his conseil weren accorded that he sholde maken werre, anon he consented to hir conseilling, and fully affermed hir sentence. /2240 Thanne dame Prudence, whan that she saugh how that hir housbonde shoop him for to wreken him on his foos, and to biginne werre, she in ful humble wyse, when she saugh hir tyme, seide him these wordes: / ?My lord,? quod she, ?I yow biseche as hertely as I dar

and can, ne haste yow nat to faste, and for alle guerdons as yeveth me audience. / For Piers Alfonse seith: ?who-so that dooth to that other good or harm, haste thee nat to quyten it; for in this wyse thy freend wol abyde, and thyn enemy shal the lenger live in drede.? / The proverbe seith: ?he hasteth wel that wysely can abyde;? and in wikked haste is no profit.?
/

2241. E. foes; to him (_rest om._ to). 2242. Pt. guerdons; Cp. Ln. Hl. guerdouns; E. Hn. gerdons.

§ 14. This Melibee answerde un-to his wyf Prudence: ?I purpose nat,? quod he, ?to werke by thy conseil, for many causes and resouns. For certes every wight wolde holde me thanne a fool; /2245 this is to seyn, if I, for thy conseilling, wolde chaungen thinges that been ordeyned and affermed by so manye wyse. / Secoundly I seye, that alle wommen been wikke and noon good of hem alle. For ?of a thousand men,? seith Salomon, ?I fond a good man: but certes, of alle wommen, good womman fond I never.? / And also certes, if I governed me by thy conseil, it sholde seme that I hadde yeve to thee over me the maistrie; and god forbede that it so were. / For Iesus Syrak seith; ?that if the wyf have maistrie, she is contrarious to hir housbonde.? / And Salomon seith: ?never in thy lyf, to thy wyf, ne to thy child, ne to thy freend, ne yeve no power over thy-self. For bettre it were that thy children aske of thy persone thinges that hem nedeth, than thou see thy-self in the handes of thy children.? /2250 And also, if I wolde werke by thy conseilling, certes my conseilling moste som tyme be secree, til it were tyme that it moste be knowe; and this ne may nocht be. / [For it is writen, that ?the langlerie of wommen can hyden thinges that they witen nocht.? / [205] Furthermore, the philosophre seith, ?in wikked conseil wommen venquisshe men;? and for these resouns I ne owe nat usen thy conseil.?] /

2247. E. Hn. foond; Cm. fond. 2248. E. weere. 2250. see] E. be; Pt. sese. 2251. E. _om._ also. 2252, 3. _Not in the_ MSS., _but necessary; see_ ll. 2274, 2280, _and see_ Note.

§ 15. Whanne dame Prudence, ful debonairly and with greet pacience, hadde herd al that hir housbonde lyked for to seye, thanne axed she of him licence for to speke, and seyde in this wyse. / ?My lord,? quod she, ?as to your firste resoun, certes it may lightly been answered. For I seye, that it is no folie to chaunge conseil whan the thing is chaunged; or elles whan the thing semeth otherweyes than it was biforn. /2255 And more-over I seye, that though ye han sworn and bihight to perfourne your emprise, and natheles ye weyve to perfourne thilke same emprise by luste cause, men sholde nat seyn therefore that ye were a lyer ne forsworn. / For the book seith, that ?the wyse man maketh no lesing whan he turneth his corage to the bettre.? / And al-be-it so that your emprise be establissed and ordeyned by greet multitude of folk, yet thar ye nat accomplice thilke same ordinaunce but yow lyke. / For the trouthe of thinges and the profit been rather founden in fewe folk that been wyse and ful of resoun, than by greet multitude of folk, ther every man cryeth and clatereth what that him lyketh. Soothly swich multitude is nat honeste. / As to the seconde resoun, where-as ye seyn that ?alle wommen been wikke,? save your grace, certes ye despyesen alle wommen in this wyse; and ?he that alle despyseth alle displeseth,? as seith the book. /2260 And Senek seith that ?who-so wole

have sapience, shal no man dispreise; but he shal gladly techen the science that he can, with-outen presumpcioun or pryde. / And swiche thinges as he nought ne can, he shal nat been ashamed to lerne hem and enquire of lasse folk than him-self. / And sir, that ther hath been many a good womman, may lightly be preved. / For certes, sir, our lord Iesu Crist wolde never have descended to be born of a womman, if alle wommen hadden ben wikke. / And after that, for the grete bountee that is in wommen, our lord Iesu Crist, whan he was risen fro death to lyve, appeered rather to a womman than to his apostles. /2265 And though that Salomon seith, that ?he ne fond never womman good,? it folweth nat therfore that alle wommen ben wikke. / For though that he ne fond no good [206] womman, certes, ful many another man hath founden many a womman ful good and trewe. / Or elles per-aventure the entente of Salomon was this; that, as in sovereyn bountee, he fond no womman; / this is to seyn, that ther is no wight that hath sovereyn bountee save god allone; as he him-self recordeth in his Evaungelie. / For ther nis no creature so good that him ne wanteth somewhat of the perfeccioun of god, that is his maker. /2270 Your thridde resoun is this: ye seyn that ?if ye governe yow by my conseil, it sholde seme that ye hadde yeve me the maistrie and the lordshipe over your persone.? / Sir, save your grace, it is nat so. For if it were so, that no man sholde be conseilled but only of hem that hadden lordshipe and maistrie of his persone, men wolden nat be conseilled so ofte. / For soothly, thilke man that asketh conseil of a purpos, yet hath he free chois, wheither he wole werke by that conseil or noon. / And as to your fourthe resoun, ther ye seyn that ?the langlerie of wommen hath hid thinges that they woot noght,? as who seith, that ?a womman can nat hyde that she woot;? / sir, these wordes been understonde of wommen that been langleresses and wikked; /2275 of whiche wommen, men seyn that ?three thinges dryven a man out of his hous; that is to seyn, smoke, dropping of reyn, and wikked wyves;? / and of swiche wommen seith Salomon, that ?it were bettre dwelle in desert, than with a womman that is riotous.? / And sir, by your leve, that am nat I; / for ye han ful ofte assayed my grete silence and my gret pacience; and eek how wel that I can hyde and hele thinges that men oghte secreely to hyde. / And soothly, as to your fifthe resoun, wher-as ye seyn, that ?in wikked conseil wommen venquisshe men;? god woot, thilke resoun stant here in no stede. /2280 For understand now, ye asken conseil to do wikkednesse; / and if ye wole werken wikkednesse, and your wyf restreyneth thilke wikked purpos, and overcometh yow by resoun and by good conseil; / certes, your wyf oghte rather to be preised than y-blamed. / Thus sholde ye understonde the philosophre that seith, ?in wikked conseil wommen venquisshe hir housbondes.? / And ther-as ye blamen alle wommen and hir resouns, I shal shewe yow by manye ensamples that many a womman hath ben ful good, and yet been; and hir conseils ful hoolsome and profitable. /2285 Eek som men han seyde, that ?the [207] conseillinge of wommen is outhere to dere, or elles to litel of prys.? / But al-be-it so, that ful many a womman is badde, and hir conseil vile and noght worth, yet han men founde ful many a good womman, and ful discrete and wise in conseillinge. / Lo, Iacob, by good conseil of his moder Rebekka, wan the benisoun of Ysaak his fader, and the lordshipe over alle his bretheren. / Iudith, by hir good conseil, delivered the citee of Bethulie, in which she dwelled, out of the handes of Oloferus, that hadde it biseged and wolde have al destroyed it. / Abigail delivered Nabal hir housbonde fro David the king, that wolde have slayn him, and apayed the ire of the king by hir wit and by hir good conseilling. /2290 Hester by hir good conseil enhanced greetly the peple of god in the regne of Assuerus

the king. / And the same bountee in good conseilling of many a good womman
may men telle. / And moreover, whan our lord hadde creat Adam our
forme-fader, he seyde in this wyse: / ?it is nat good to been a man allone;
make we to him an help semblable to himself.? / Here may ye se that, if
that wommen were nat goode, and hir conseils goode and profitable, /2295
our lord god of hevne wolde never han wrought hem, ne called hem help of
man, but rather confusioun of man. / And ther seyde ones a clerk in two
vers: ?what is bettre than gold? laspre. What is bettre than laspre?
Wisdom. / And what is bettre than wisdom? Womman. And what is bettre than a
good womman? No-thing.? / And sir, by manye of othre resons may ye seen,
that manye wommen been goode, and hir conseils goode and profitable. / And
therefore sir, if ye wol triste to my conseil, I shal restore yow your
doghter hool and sound. /2300 And eek I wol do to yow so mucche, that ye
shul have honour in this cause.? /

2258. E. Cp. Ln. _om._ same. 2260. E. (_only_) _om._ and he that _to_
book. 2261. E. Ln. despise; _rest_ dispreise. 2266, 7. E. Hn.
foond; Cm. fond. 2271. E. _om._ that. 2274. E. wiste noght. 2277.
E. Cp. Pt. _om._ of. 2291. E. (_only_) _puts_ by ... conseil after
greetly. 2297, 8. E. wisdom.

§ 16. Whan Melibee hadde herd the wordes of his wyf Prudence, he seyde
thus: / ?I se wel that the word of Salomon is sooth; he seith, that ?wordes
that been spoken discreetly by ordinaunce, been honycombes; for they yeven
swetnesse to the soule, and hoolsomnesse to the body.? / And wyf, by-cause
of thy swete wordes, and eek for I have assayed and preved thy grete
sapience and thy grete trouthe, I wol governe me by thy conseil in alle
thing.? /

§ 17. ?Now sir,? quod dame Prudence, ?and sin ye vouche-sauf [208] to been
governed by my conseil, I wol enforme yow how ye shul governe your-self in
chesinge of your conseillours. /2305 Ye shul first, in alle your werkes,
mekely biseken to the heighe god that he wol be your conseilour; / and
shapeth yow to swich entente, that he yeve yow conseil and confort, as
taughte Thobie his sone. / ?At alle tymes thou shalt blesse god, and praye
him to dresse thy weyes?; and looke that alle thy conseils been in him for
evermore. / Seint lame eek seith: ?if any of yow have nede of sapience, axe
it of god.? / And afterward thanne shul ye taken conseil in your-self, and
examine wel your thoghtes, of swich thing as yow thinketh that is best for
your profit. /2310 And thanne shul ye dryve fro your herte three thinges
that been contrariouse to good conseil, / that is to seyn, ire, coveitise,
and hastifnesse. /

2310. in] E. of. E. _om._ self.

§ 18. First, he that axeth conseil of him-self, certes he moste been
with-uten ire, for manye causes. / The firste is this: he that hath greet
ire and wratthe in him-self, he weneth alwey that he may do thing that he
may nat do. / And secoundely, he that is irous and wroth, he ne may nat wel
deme; /2315 and he that may nat wel deme, may nat wel conseille. / The
thridde is this; that ?he that is irous and wrooth,? as seith Senek, ?ne
may nat speke but he blame thinges;? / and with his viciouse wordes he
stireth other folk to angre and to ire. / And eek sir, ye moste dryve
coveitise out of your herte. / For the apostle seith, that ?coveitise is

rote of alle harmes.? /2320 And trust wel that a coveitous man ne can nocht
deme ne thinke, but only to fulfille the ende of his coveitise; / and
certes, that ne may never been accompliced; for ever the more habundaunce
that he hath of richesse, the more he desyreth. / And sir, ye moste also
dryve out of your herte hastifnesse; for certes, / ye ne may nat deme for
the beste a sodeyn thought that falleth in youre herte, but ye moste avyse
yow on it ful ofte. / For as ye herde biforn, the commune proverbe is this,
that ?he that sone demeth, sone repenteth.? /2325

§ 19. Sir, ye ne be nat alwey in lyke disposicioun; / for certes, som thing
that somtyme semeth to yow that it is good for to do, another tyme it
semeth to yow the contrarie. /

§ 20. Whan ye han taken conseil in your-self, and han demed by good
deliberacion swich thing as you semeth best, / thanne rede I yow, that ye
kepe it secree. / Biwrey nat your conseil to no persone, [209] but-if so be
that ye wenen sikerly that, thurgh your biwreying, your condicioun shal be
to yow the more profitable. /2330 For Iesus Syrak seith: ?neither to thy
foo ne to thy freend discovere nat thy secree ne thy folie; / for they wol
yeve yow audience and loking and supportacioun in thy presence, and scorne
thee in thyn absence.? / Another clerk seith, that ?scarsly shaltou finden
any persone that may kepe conseil secreely.? / The book seith: ?why! that
thou kepest thy conseil in thyn herte, thou kepest it in thy prisoun: / and
whan thou biwreyest thy conseil to any wight, he holdeth thee in his
snare.? /2335 And therefore yow is bettre to hyde your conseil in your
herte, than praye him, to whom ye han biwreyed your conseil, that he wole
kepen it cloos and stille. / For Seneca seith: ?if so be that thou ne mayst
nat thyn owene conseil hyde, how darstou prayen any other wight thy conseil
secreely to kepe?? / But nathelees, if thou wene sikerly that the biwreying
of thy conseil to a persone wol make thy condicioun to stonden in the
bette plyt, thanne shaltou tellen him thy conseil in this wyse. / First,
thou shalt make no semblant whether thee were lever pees or werre, or this
or that, ne shewe him nat thy wille and thyn entente; / for trust wel, that
comunly these conseilours been flatereres, /2340 namely the conseilours
of grete lordes; / for they enforcen hem alwey rather to speken plesante
wordes, enclyninge to the lordes lust, than wordes that been trewe or
profitable. / And therefore men seyn, that ?the riche man hath seld good
conseil but-if he have it of him-self.? / And after that, thou shalt
considere thy freendes and thyne enemys. / And as touchinge thy freendes,
thou shalt considere whiche of hem been most feithful and most wyse, and
eldest and most approved in conseilling. /2345 And of hem shalt thou aske
thy conseil, as the caas requireth. /

2328. in] E. of; Ln. vnto. semeth] E. list. 2332. E. to (_after_
loking); _rest_ and. 2333, 7. E. sikerly; _rest_ secreely. 2336. E.
hem; _rest_ him. 2339. E. wheither. 2340. E. co_m_e_n_li. 2343.
E. seeld. 2345. E. wiche. been] E. Hn. that been.

§ 21. I seye that first ye shul clepe to your conseil your freendes that
been trewe. / For Salomon seith: that ?right as the herte of a man delyteth
in savour that is sote, right so the conseil of trewe freendes yeveth
swetenesse to the soule.? / He seith also: ?ther may no-thing be lykned to
the trewe freend.? / For certes, gold ne silver beth nat so muche worth as
the gode wil of a trewe freend. /2350 And eek he seith, that ?a trewe

freend is a strong deffense; who-so that it findeth, certes he findeth a greet tresour.? / Thanne [210] shul ye eek considere, if that your trewe freendes been discrete and wyse. For the book seith: ?axe alwey thy conseil of hem that been wyse.? / And by this same resoun shul ye clepen to your conseil, of your freendes that been of age, swiche as han seyn and been expert in manye thinges, and been approved in conseillinges. / For the book seith, that ?in olde men is the sapience and in longe tyme the prudence.? / And Tullius seith: that ?grete thinges ne been nat ay accompliced by strengthe, ne by delivrenesse of body, but by good conseil, by auctoritee of persones, and by science; the whiche three thinges ne been nat feble by age, but certes they enforcen and encreesen day by day.? /2355 And thanne shul ye kepe this for a general reule. First shul ye clepen to your conseil a fewe of your freendes that been especiale; / for Salomon seith: ?manye freendes have thou; but among a thousand chese thee oon to be thy conseillour.? / For al-be-it so that thou first ne telle thy conseil but to a fewe, thou mayst afterward telle it to mo folk, if it be nede. / But loke alwey that thy conseillours have thilke three condicions that I have seyde bifore; that is to seyn, that they be trewe, wyse, and of old experience. / And werke nat alwey in every nede by oon counseillour allone; for somtyme bihoveth it to been conseilled by manye. /2360 For Salomon seith: ?salvacoun of thinges is wher-as ther been manye conseillours.? /

2355. E. Hn. fieble; Cp. Pt. Hl. feble; Cm. feblid; Ln. fiebled. E. encreescen.

§ 22. Now sith that I have told yow of which folk ye sholde been counseilled, now wol I teche yow which conseil ye oghte to eschewe. / First ye shul eschewe the conseilling of foles; for Salomon seith: ?taak no conseil of a fool, for he ne can nocht conseille but after his owene lust and his affeccoun.? / The book seith: that ?the propretee of a fool is this; he troweth lightly harm of every wight, and lightly troweth alle bountee in him-self.? / Thou shalt eek eschewe the conseilling of alle flatereres, swiche as enforcen hem rather to preise your persone by flaterye than for to telle yow the sothfastnesse of thinges. /2365

2362. Hn. Cm. Hl. that; Pt. what; _rest om._ 2365. E. _om._ alle.

§ 23. ?Wherfore Tullius seith: ?amonges alle the pestilences that been in freendshipe, the gretteste is flaterye.? And therefore is it more nede that thou eschewe and drede flatereres than any other peple. / The book seith: ?thou shalt rather drede and flee fro the swete wordes of flateringe preiseres, than fro the egre [211] wordes of thy freend that seith thee thy sothes.? / Salomon seith, that ?the wordes of a flaterere is a snare to cacche with innocents.? / He seith also, that ?he that speketh to his freend wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce, setteth a net biforn his feet to cacche him.? / And therefore seith Tullius: ?enclyne nat thyne eres to flatereres, ne taketh no conseil of wordes of flaterye.? /2370 And Caton seith: ?avyse thee wel, and eschewe the wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce.? / And eek thou shalt eschewe the conseilling of thyne olde enemys that been reconsiled. / The book seith: that ?no wight retourneth sauflly in-to the grace of his olde enemy.? / And Isope seith: ?ne trust nat to hem to whiche thou hast had som-tyme werre or enmitee, ne telle hem nat thy conseil.? / And Seneca telleth the cause why. ?It may nat be,? seith he, ?that, where greet fyr hath longe tyme endured, that ther ne dwelleth

som vapour of warmnesse.? /2375 And therefore seith Salomon: ?in thyn olde
foo trust never.? / For sikerly, though thyn enemy be reconsiled and maketh
thee chere of humilitee, and louteth to thee with his heed, ne trust him
never. / For certes, he maketh thilke feyned humilitee more for his profit
than for any love of thy persone; by-cause that he demeth to have victorie
over thy persone by swich feyned contenance, the which victorie he mighte
nat have by stryf or werre. / And Peter Alfonce seith: ?make no felawshipe
with thyne olde enemys; for if thou do hem bountee, they wol perverten it
in-to wikkednesse.? / And eek thou most eschewe the conseilling of hem that
been thy servants, and beren thee greet reverence; for peraventure they
seyn it more for drede than for love. /2380 And therefore seith a
philosophre in this wyse: ?ther is no wight parfityly trewe to him that he
to sore dredeth.? / And Tullius seith: ?ther nis no might so greet of any
emperour, that longe may endure, but-if he have more love of the peple than
drede.? / Thou shalt also eschewe the conseilling of folk that been
dronkelewe; for they ne can no conseil hyde. / For Salomon seith: ?ther is
no privetee ther-as regneth dronkenesse.? / Ye shul also han in suspect the
conseilling of swich folk as conseille yow a thing prively, and conseille
yow the contrarie openly. /2385 For [212] Cassidorie seith: that ?it is a
maner sleighte to hindre, whan he sheweth to doon a thing openly and
werketh prively the contrarie.? / Thou shalt also have in suspect the
conseilling of wikked folk. For the book seith: ?the conseilling of wikked
folk is alwey ful of fraude:?. / And David seith: ?blisful is that man that
hath nat folwed the conseilling of shrewes.? / Thou shalt also eschewe the
conseilling of yong folk; for hir conseil is nat rype. /

2368. E. chacche (_for_ cacche). Pt. to cacchen innocentes withe;
rest (_except_ E.) _om._ with. 2370. E. Cp. Ln. the wordes; _rest
om._ the. 2374. E. Hn. enemytee. 2377. E. chiere. 2378. E. nat
winne; _rest_ nat haue. 2380. E. doon; _rest_ seyn. 2382. E. for
drede; _rest om._ for. 2383. E. _om._ ne. 2388. E. sherewes.

§ 24. Now sir, sith I have shewed yow of which folk ye shul take your
conseil, and of which folk ye shul folwe the conseil, /2390 now wol I teche
yow how ye shal examine your conseil, after the doctrine of Tullius. / In
the examininge thanne of your conseillour, ye shul considere manye thinges.
/ Alderfirst thou shalt considere, that in thilke thing that thou
purposest, and upon what thing thou wolt have conseil, that verray trouthe
be seyde and conserved; this is to seyn, telle trewely thy tale. / For he
that seith fals may nat wel be conseilled, in that cas of which he lyeth. /
And after this, thou shalt considere the thinges that acorden to that thou
purposest for to do by thy conseillours, if resoun accorde therto; /2395
and eek, if thy might may atteine ther-to; and if the more part and the
bette part of thy conseillours acorde ther-to, or no. / Thanne shaltou
considerere what thing shal folwe of that conseilling; as hate, pees, werre,
grace, profit, or damage; and manye othere thinges. / And in alle these
thinges thou shalt chese the beste, and weyve alle othere thinges. / Thanne
shaltou considere of what rote is engendred the matere of thy conseil, and
what fruit it may conceyve and engendre. / Thou shalt eek considere alle
these causes, fro whennes they been sprongen. /2400 And whan ye han
examined your conseil as I have seyde, and which partie is the bettre and
more profitable, and hast approved it by manye wyse folk and olde; / thanne
shaltou considere, if thou mayst parfourne it and maken of it a good ende.
/ For certes, resoun wol nat that any man sholde biginne a thing, but-if he

mighte parfourne it as him oghte. / Ne no wight sholde take up-on hym so hevy a charge that he mighte nat bere it. / For the proverbe seith: ?he that to muche embraceth, distreyneth litel.? /2405 And Catoun seith: ?assay to do swich thing as thou hast power to doon, lest that the charge [213] oppresse thee so sore, that thee bihoveth to weyve thing that thou hast bigonne.? / And if so be that thou be in doute, whether thou mayst parfourne a thing or noon, chese rather to suffre than biginne. / And Piers Alphonse seith: ?if thou hast might to doon a thing of which thou most repente thee, it is better ?nay? than ?ye?;? / this is to seyn, that thee is better holde thy tonge stille, than for to speke. / Thanne may ye understonde by strengre resons, that if thou hast power to parfourne a werk of which thou shalt repente, thanne is it better that thou suffre than biginne. /2410 Wel seyn they, that defenden every wight to assaye any thing of which he is in doute, whether he may parfourne it or no. / And after, whan ye han examined your conseil as I have seyde bifore, and knowen wel that ye may parfourne youre emprise, conferme it thanne sadly til it be at an ende. /

2396. or no] E. or noon; Pt. anoon. 2397. of that] E. after hir.
 2398. E. Thanne of; _rest_ And in. 2399. E. matiere. conceyve] E.
 Hl. conserue. 2407, 2411. E. whether. 2411. Hn. Cm. no; _rest_
 noon (non).

§ 25. Now is it reson and tyme that I shewe yow, whanne, and wherfore, that ye may change your conseil with-outen your repreve. / Soothly, a man may chaungen his purpos and his conseil if the cause cesseth, or whan a newe caas bitydeth. / For the lawe seith: that ?upon thinges that newly bityden bihoveth newe conseil.? /2415 And Senek seith: ?if thy conseil is comen to the eres of thyn enemy, change thy conseil.? / Thou mayst also change thy conseil if so be that thou finde that, by errour or by other cause, harm or damage may bityde. / Also, if thy conseil be dishonest, or elles cometh of dishoneste cause, change thy conseil. / For the lawes seyn: that ?alle bihestes that been dishoneste been of no value.? / And eek, if it so be that it be impossible, or may nat goodly be parfourned or kept. /2420

2413. Hl. conseil; _rest_ conseilors. 2416. E. eeris. 2417. finde]
 E. mayst finde. 2420. E. Cp. if; _rest_ if it.

§ 26. And take this for a general reule, that every conseil that is affermed so strongly that it may nat be changed, for no condicioun that may bityde, I seye that thilke conseil is wikked.? /

§ 27. This Melibeus, whanne he hadde herd the doctrine of his wyf dame Prudence, answerde in this wyse. / ?Dame,? quod he, ?as yet in-to this tyme ye han wel and covenably taught me as in general, how I shal governe me in the chesinge and in the withholdinge of my conseilours. / But now wolde I fayn that ye wolde condescende in especial, / and telle me how lyketh yow, [214] or what semeth yow, by our conseilours that we han chosen in our present nede.? /2425

2423. in-to] Cp. Ln. vnto. E. couenablely.

§ 28. ?My lord,? quod she, ?I biseke yow in al humblesse, that ye wol nat

wilfully replye agayn my resouns, ne distempere your herte thogh I speke thing that yow displese. / For god wot that, as in myn entente, I speke it for your beste, for your honour and for your profite eke. / And soothly, I hope that your benignitee wol taken it in pacience. / Trusteth me wel,? quod she, ?that your conseil as in this caas ne sholde nat, as to speke properly, be called a conseilling, but a mocion or a moevyng of folye; / in which conseil ye han erred in many a sondry wyse. /2430

2428. E. benyngnytee.

§ 29. First and forward, ye han erred in thassemlinge of your conseilours. / For ye sholde first have cleped a fewe folk to your conseil, and after ye mighte han shewed it to mo folk, if it hadde been nede. / But certes, ye han sodeynly cleped to your conseil a greet multitude of peple, ful chargeant and ful anoyous for to here. / Also ye han erred, for there-as ye sholden only have cleped to your conseil your trewe freendes olde and wyse, / ye han y-cleped straunge folk, and yong folk, false flatereres, and enemys reconsiled, and folk that doon yow reverence withouten love. /2435 And eek also ye have erred, for ye han broght with yow to your conseil ire, covetise, and hastifnesse; / the whiche three thinges been contrariouse to every conseil honeste and profitable; / the whiche three thinges ye han nat anientissed or destroyed hem, neither in your-self ne in your conseilours, as yow oghte. / Ye han erred also, for ye han shewed to your conseilours your talent, and your affeccoun to make werre anon and for to do vengeance; / they han espyed by your wordes to what thing ye been enclyned. /2440 And therfore han they rather conseilled yow to your talent than to your profit. / Ye han erred also, for it semeth that yow suffyseth to han been conseilled by thise conseilours only, and with litel avys; / wher-as, in so greet and so heigh a nede, it hadde been necessarie mo conseilours, and more deliberacioun to parfourne your emprise. / Ye han erred also, for ye han nat examined your conseil in the forseide manere, ne in due manere as the caas requireth. / Ye han erred also, for ye han maked no divisioun bitwixe your conseilours; this is to [215] seyn, bitwixen your trewe freendes and your feyned conseilours; /2445 ne ye han nat knowe the wil of your trewe freendes olde and wyse; / but ye han cast alle hir wordes in an hochepot, and enclyned your herte to the more part and to the gretter nombre; and ther been ye condescended. / And sith ye wot wel that men shal alwey finde a gretter nombre of foles than of wyse men, / and therfore the conseils that been at congregaciouns and multitudes of folk, ther-as men take more reward to the nombre than to the sapience of persones, / ye see wel that in swiche conseillinges foles han the maistrie.? /2450 Melibeus answerde agayn, and seyde: ?I graunte wel that I have erred; / but ther-as thou hast told me heer-bifore, that he nis nat to blame that chaungeth hise conseilours in certein caas, and for certeine luste causes, / I am al redy to change my conseilours, right as thow wolt devyse. / The proverbe seith: that ?for to do sinne is mannish, but certes for to persevere longe in sinne is werk of the devel.?? /

2438. E. _om._ thinges. Hl. _om._ hem. 2442. Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. yow; E. it. 2445. E. nat maked; _rest om._ nat. 2447. E. partie; _rest_ part.

§ 30. To this sentence answerde anon dame Prudence, and seyde: /2455

?Examineth,? quod she, ?your conseil, and lat us see the whiche of hem han spoken most resonably, and taught yow best conseil. / And for-as-muche as that the examinacioun is necessarie, lat us biginne at the surgiens and at the phisiciens, that first speken in this matere. / I sey yow, that the surgiens and phisiciens han seyde yow in your conseil discreetly, as hem oughte; / and in hir speche seyden ful wysly, that to the office of hem aperteneth to doon to every wight honour and profit, and no wight for to anoye; / and, after hir craft, to doon greet diligence un-to the cure of hem whiche that they han in hir governaunce. /2460 And sir, right as they han answered wysly and discreetly, / right so rede I that they been heighly and sovereynly guerdoned for hir noble speche; / and eek for they sholde do the more ententif businesse in the curacioun of your doghter dere. / For al-be-it so that they been your freendes, therfore shal ye nat suffren that they serve yow for noght; / but ye oughte the rather guerdone hem and shewe hem your largesse. /2465 And as touchinge the proposicioun [216] which that the phisiciens entreteden in this caas, this is to seyn, / that, in maladyes, that oon contrarie is warisshed by another contrarie, / I wolde fayn knowe how ye understonde thilke text, and what is your sentence.? / ?Certes,? quod Melibeus, ?I understonde it in this wyse: / that, right as they han doon me a contrarie, right so sholde I doon hem another. /2470 For right as they han venged hem on me and doon me wrong, right so shal I venge me upon hem and doon hem wrong; / and thanne have I cured oon contrarie by another.? /

2455. E. answereth; _rest_ answerde (answered). 2456. E. resonably. 2457. E. matiere. 2459. E. seyde; Hn. Cm. Hl. seyden. 2460. E. in; _rest_ after. 2462. E. Hn. gerdoned; _rest_ guerdoned. 2465. E. Hn. Pt. gerdone. 2466. E. encreesceden; Hn. Ln. encreesceden; Cp. Cm. encreesden; Pt. encreesden; Hl. han schewed; ed. 1561, entreteden. 2468. thilke] E. this.

§ 31. ?Lo, lo!? quod dame Prudence, ?how lightly is every man enclyned to his owene desyr and to his owene plesaunce! / Certes,? quod she, ?the wordes of the phisiciens ne sholde nat han been understonden in this wyse. / For certes, wikkednesse is nat contrarie to wikkednesse, ne vengeaunce to vengeaunce, ne wrong to wrong; but they been semblable. /2475 And therfore, o vengeaunce is nat warisshed by another vengeaunce, ne o wrong by another wrong; / but everich of hem encreescedeth and aggreggeth other. / But certes, the wordes of the phisiciens sholde been understonden in this wyse: / for good and wikkednesse been two contraries, and pees and werre, vengeaunce and suffraunce, discord and accord, and manye othere thinges. / But certes, wikkednesse shal be warisshed by goodnesse, discord by accord, werre by pees, and so forth of othere thinges. /2480 And heer-to accordeth Seint Paul the apostle in manye places. / He seith: ?ne yeldeth nat harm for harm, ne wikked speche for wikked speche; / but do wel to him that dooth thee harm, and blesse him that seith to thee harm.? / And in manye othere places he amonesteth pees and accord. / But now wol I speke to yow of the conseil which that was yeven to yow by the men of lawe and the wyse folk, /2485 that seyden alle by oon accord as ye han herd bifore; / that, over alle thynges, ye sholde doon your diligence to kepen your persone and to warnestore your hous. / And seyden also, that in this caas ye oughten for to werken ful avysely and with greet deliberacioun. / And sir, as to the firste point, that toucheth to the keping of your persone; / ye shul understonde that he that hath werre shal evermore mekely and devoutly

preyen biforn alle thinges, /2490 that Iesus Crist of his grete [217] mercy wol han him in his proteccioun, and been his sovereyn helping at his nede. / For certes, in this world ther is no wight that may be conseilled ne kept suffisantly withouten the keping of our lord Iesu Crist. / To this sentence accordeth the prophete David, that seith: / ?if god ne kepe the citee, in ydel waketh he that it kepeth.? / Now sir, thanne shul ye committe the keping of your persone to your trewe freendes that been approved and y-knowe; /2495 and of hem shul ye axen help your persone for to kepe. For Catoun seith: ?if thou hast nede of help, axe it of thy freendes; / for ther nis noon so good a phisicien as thy trewe freend.? / And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow fro alle straunge folk, and fro Iyeres, and have alwey in suspect hir companye. / For Piers Alfonse seith: ?ne tak no companye by the weye of a straunge man, but-if so be that thou have knowe him of a lenger tyme. / And if so be that he falle in-to thy companye paraventure withouten thyn assent, /2500 enquere thanne, as subtilly as thou mayst, of his conversacioun and of his lyf bifore, and feyne thy wey; seye that thou goost thider as thou wolt nat go; / and if he bereth a spere, hold thee on the right syde, and if he bere a swerd, hold thee on the lift syde.? / And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow wysely from alle swich manere peple as I have seyde bifore, and hem and hir conseil eschewe. / And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow in swich manere, / that for any presumpcioun of your strengthe, that ye ne dispuse nat ne acunte nat the might of your adversarie so litel, that ye lete the keping of your persone for your presumpcioun; /2505 for every wys man dredeth his enemy. / And Salomon seith: ?weleful is he that of alle hath drede; / for certes, he that thurgh the hardinesse of his herte and thurgh the hardinesse of him-self hath to greet presumpcioun, him shal yvel bityde.? / Thanne shul ye evermore countrewayte embusshements and alle espiaille. / For Senek seith: that ?the wyse man that dredeth harmes escheweth harmes; /2510 ne he ne falleth in-to perils, that perils escheweth.? / And al-be-it so that it seme that thou art in siker place, yet shaltow alwey do thy diligence in kepinge of thy persone; / this is to seyn, ne be nat necligent to kepe thy persone, nat only fro [218] thy gretteste enemys but fro thy leeste enemy. / Senek seith: ?a man that is wel avysed, he dredeth his leste enemy.? / Ovide seith: that ?the litel wesele wol slee the grete bole and the wilde hert.? /2515 And the book seith: ?a litel thorn may prikke a greet king ful sore; and an hound wol holde the wilde boor.? / But nathelees, I sey nat thou shall be so coward that thou doute ther wher-as is no drede. / The book seith: that ?somme folk han greet lust to deceyve, but yet they dreden hem to be deceyved.? / Yet shaltou drede to been empoisoned, and kepe yow from the companye of scorners. / For the book seith: ?with scorners make no companye, but flee hir wordes as venim.? /2520

2488. E. Ln. Hl. yow; _rest_ ye. 2491. E grete; _rest om._ 2492. E. sufficeantly; Hn. suffisantly. 2495. y-knowe] E. knowe. 2499. E. taak; campaignye. E. straunge men; Cp. straunge man; _rest_ a straunge man. 2500. he] E. he be. 2502. E. his lift; _rest_ the lift. 2510. E. he dredeth; _rest_ that dredeth. Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. escheweth harmes; _rest om._ 2513. fro] E. Hl. for. 2514. E. _omits_ Senek ... enemy; _the rest have it_. 2517. E. _om._ so.

§ 32. Now as to the seconde point, wher-as your wyse conseillours conseilled yow to warnestore your hous with gret diligence, / I wolde fayn knowe, how that ye understonde thilke wordes, and what is your sentence.? /

§ 33. Melibeus answerde and seyde, ?Certes I understande it in this wise; that I shal warnestore myn hous with toures, swiche as han castelles and othere manere edifices, and armure and artelleries, / by whiche thinges I may my persone and myn hous so kepen and defenden, that myne enemys shul been in drede myn hous for to approche.? /

2523. Cm. artelleryes; E. Hn. artelries; Hl. artilries; Cp. Ln. archers.

§ 34. To this sentence answerde anon Prudence; ?warnestoring,? quod she, ?of heighe toures and of grete edifices apperteneth som-tyme to pryde; /2525 and eek men make heighe toures and grete edifices with grete costages and with greet travaille; and whan that they been accompliced, yet be they nat worth a stree, but-if they be defended by trewe freendes that been olde and wyse. / And understand wel, that the gretteste and strongeste garnison that a riche man may have, as wel to kepen his persone as hise goodes, is / that he be biloved amonges his subgets and with hise neighebores. / For thus seith Tullius: that ?ther is a maner garnison that no man may venquisse ne disconfite, and that is, / a lord to be biloved of hise citezeins and of his peple.? /2530

2525, 6. E. Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. _omit_ apperteneth ... edifices; Cp. Ln. _have it_; _see note_.

§ 35. Now sir, as to the thridde point; wher-as your olde and wise conseillours seyden, that yow ne oghte nat sodeynly ne hastily proceden in this nede, / but that yow oghte purveyen and [219] apparailen yow in this caas with greet diligence and greet deliberacioun; / trewely, I trowe that they seyden right wysly and right sooth. / For Tullius seith, ?in every nede, er thou biginne it, apparaille thee with greet diligence.? / Thanne seye I, that in vengeance-taking, in werre, in bataille, and in warnestoring, /2535 er thou biginne, I rede that thou apparaille thee ther-to, and do it with greet deliberacioun. / For Tullius seith: that ?long apparailing biforn the bataille maketh short victorie.? / And Cassidorus seith: ?the garnison is stronger whan it is longe tyme avysed.? /

2537. E. Ln. The longe; _rest_ that long.

§ 36. But now lat us speken of the conseil that was accorded by your neighebores, swiche as doon yow reverence withouten love, / your olde enemys reconsiled, your flatereres, /2540 that conseilled yow certeyne thinges prively, and openly conseilleden yow the contrarie; / the yonge folk also, that conseilleden yow to venge yow and make werre anon. / And certes, sir, as I have seyde biforn, ye han greetly erred to han cleped swich maner folk to your conseil; / which conseillours been y-nogh reprieved by the resouns afore-seyd. / But nathelees, lat us now descende to the special. Ye shuln first procede after the doctrine of Tullius. /2545 Certes, the trouthe of this matere or of this conseil nedeth nat diligently enquire; / for it is wel wist whiche they been that han doon to yow this trespas and vileinye, / and how manye trespasours, and in what manere they han to yow doon al this wrong and al this vileinye. / And after this, thanne shul ye examine the seconde condicioun, which that the same Tullius

addeth in this matere. / For Tullius put a thing, which that he clepeth
 ?consenting,? this is to seyn; /2550 who been they and how manye, and
 whiche been they, that consenteden to thy conseil, in thy wilfulnesse to
 doon hastif vengeance. / And lat us considere also who been they, and how
 manye been they, and whiche been they, that consenteden to your
 adversaries. / And certes, as to the firste poynt, it is wel knowen whiche
 folk been they that consenteden to your hastif wilfulnesse; / for trewely,
 alle tho that conseilleden yow to maken sodeyn werre ne been nat your
 freendes. / Lat us now considere whiche been they, that ye holde so greetly
 your freendes as to your persone. /2555 For al-be-it so that ye be mighty
 [220] and riche, certes ye ne been nat but allone. / For certes, ye ne han
 no child but a doghter; / ne ye ne han bretheren ne cosins germayns, ne
 noon other neigh kinrede, / wherfore that your enemys, for drede, sholde
 stinte to plede with yow or to destroye your persone. / Ye knowen also,
 that your riches moten been dispended in diverse parties; /2560 and whan
 that every wight hath his part, they ne wollen taken but litel reward to
 venge thy deeth. / But thyne enemys been three, and they han manie
 children, bretheren, cosins, and other ny kinrede; / and, though so were
 that thou haddest slayn of hem two or three, yet dwellen ther y-nowe to
 wreken hir deeth and to slee thy persone. / And though so be that your
 kinrede be more siker and stedefast than the kin of your adversarie, / yet
 nathelees your kinrede nis but a fer kinrede; they been but litel sib to
 yow, /2565 and the kin of your enemys been ny sib to hem. And certes, as in
 that, hir condicioun is bet than youres. / Thanne lat us considere also if
 the conseilling of hem that conseilleden yow to taken sodeyn vengeance,
 whether it accorde to resoun? / And certes, ye knowe wel ?nay.? / For as by
 right and resoun, ther may no man taken vengeance on no wight, but the luge
 that hath the luridiccioun of it, / whan it is graunted him to take thilke
 vengeance, hastily or attemprely, as the lawe requireth. /2570 And yet
 more-over, of thilke word that Tullius clepeth ?consenting,? / thou shalt
 considere if thy might and thy power may consenten and suffyse to thy
 wilfulnesse and to thy conseilours. / And certes, thou mayst wel seyn that
 ?nay.? / For sikerly, as for to speke proprely, we may do no-thing but only
 swich thing as we may doon rightfully. / And certes, rightfully ne mowe ye
 take no vengeance as of your propre auctoritee. /2575 Thanne mowe ye seen,
 that your power ne consenteth nat ne accordeth nat with your wilfulnesse. /
 Lat us now examine the thridde point that Tullius clepeth ?consequent.? /
 Thou shalt understonde that the vengeance that thou purposest for to take
 is the consequent. / And ther-of folweth another vengeance, peril, and
 werre; and othere damages with-oute nombre, of whiche we be nat war as at
 this tyme. / And as touchinge the fourthe point, that Tullius clepeth
 ?engendringe,? /2580 thou shalt considere, that this wrong which that is
 doon to thee is engendred of the hate of thyne enemys; / and of the
 vengeance-takinge upon that wolde engendre another vengeance, and muchel
 sorwe and wastinge of riches, as I seyde. /

2551. E. _om._ and whiche been they; _see_ 2552. Hk. consentid;
 rest consenten (_for_ consenteden); _see_ 2552.

[221] § 37. Now sir, as to the point that Tullius clepeth ?causes,? which
 that is the laste point, / thou shall understonde that the wrong that thou
 hast receyved hath certeine causes, / whiche that clerkes clepen _Oriens_
 and _Efficiens_, and _Causa longinqua_ and _Causa propinqua_; this is to
 seyn, the fer cause and the ny cause. /2585 The fer cause is almighty god,

that is cause of alle thinges. / The neer cause is thy three enemys. / The cause accidental was hate. / The cause material been the fyve woundes of thy doghter. / The cause formal is the manere of hir werkinge, that broghten laddres and cloumben in at thy windowes. /2590 The cause final was for to slee thy doghter; it letted nat in as muche as in hem was. / But for to speken of the fer cause, as to what ende they shul come, or what shal finally bityde of hem in this caas, ne can I nat deme but by coniectinge and by supposinge. / For we shul suppose that they shul come to a wikked ende, / by-cause that the Book of Decrees seith: ?selden or with greet payne been causes y-broght to good ende whanne they been baddely bigonne.?
/

2594. E. seelden.

§ 38. Now sir, if men wolde axe me, why that god suffred men to do yow this vileinye, certes, I can nat wel answeere as for no sothfastnesse. /2595 For thapostle seith, that ?the sciences and the luggementz of our lord god almighty been ful depe; / ther may no man comprehende ne serchen hem suffisantly.? / Nathelees, by certeyne presumpcions and coniectinges, I holde and bileve / that god, which that is ful of lustice and of rightwisnesse, hath suffred this bityde by luste cause resonable. /

§ 39. Thy name is Melibee, this is to seyn, ?a man that drinketh hony.?
/2600 Thou hast y-dronke so muchel hony of swete temporel riches and delices and honours of this world, / that thou art dronken; and hast forgeten Iesu Crist thy creatour; / thou ne hast nat doon to him swich honour and reverence as thee oughte. / Ne thou ne hast nat wel y-taken kepe to the wordes of Ovide, that seith: / ?under the hony of the godes of the body is hid the venim that sleeth the soule.? /2605 And Salomon seith, ?if thou hast founden hony, ete of it that suffyseth; / for if thou ete of it out of mesure, thou shalt spewe,? and be nedey and povre. / And peraventure Crist hath thee in despit, and hath turned away fro thee his face and hise eres of misericorde; / and also he hath suffred that thou hast been punisshed in the manere that thow [222] hast y-trespased. / Thou hast doon sinne agayn our lord Crist; /2610 for certes, the three enemys of mankinde, that is to seyn, the flesh, the feend, and the world, / thou hast suffred hem entre in-to thyn herte wilfully by the windowes of thy body, / and hast nat defended thy-self suffisantly agayns hir assautes and hir temptaciouns, so that they han wounded thy soule in fyve places; / this is to seyn, the deedly sinnes that been entred in-to thyn herte by thy fyve wittes. / And in the same manere our lord Crist hath wold and suffred, that thy three enemys been entred in-to thyn hous by the windowes, /2615 and han y-wounded thy doghter in the fore-seyde manere.?
/

2601. E. sweete temporeel. 2608. E. eeris.

§ 40. ?Certes,? quod Melibee, ?I see wel that ye enforce yow muchel by wordes to overcome me in swich manere, that I shal nat venge me of myne enemys; / shewinge me the perils and the yveles that mighten falle of this vengeance. / But who-so wolde considere in alle vengeancees the perils and yveles that mighte sewe of vengeance-takinge, / a man wolde never take vengeance, and that were harm; /2620 for by the vengeance-takinge been the wikked men dissevered fro the gode men. / And they that han wil to do wikkednesse restreyne hir wikked purpos, whan they seen the punissinge and

chastysinge of the trespassours.? / [And to this answerde dame Prudence:
?Certes,? seyde she, ?I graunte wel that of vengeaunce cometh muchel yvel
and muchel good; / but vengeaunce-taking aperteneth nat unto everichoon,
but only unto luges and unto hem that han lurisdiccioun upon the
trespassours.] / And yet seye I more, that right as a singuler persone
sinneth in takinge vengeance of another man, /2625 right so sinneth the
luge if he do no vengeance of hem that it han deserved. / For Senek seith
thus: ?that maister,? he seith, ?is good that proveth shrewes.? / And as
Cassidore seith: ?A man dredeth to do outrages, whan he woot and knoweth
that it displeth to the luges and sovereyns.? / And another seith: ?the
luge that dredeth to do right, maketh men shrewes.? / And Seint Paule the
apostle seith in his epistle, whan he wryteth un-to the Romayns: that ?the
luges beren nat the spere with-outen cause;? /2630 but they beren it to
punisse the shrewes and misdoeres, and for to defende the gode men. / If ye
wol thanne take vengeance of [223] your enemys, ye shul retourne or have
your recours to the luge that hath the lurisdiccion up-on hem; / and he
shal punisse hem as the lawe axeth and requyreth.? /

2623, 2624. _Not in the_ MSS. _Supplied by translating the French
text_. 2626. E. Hn. disserued. 2629. E. _om._ And. 2631. E. Ln.
om. for.

§ 41. ?A!? quod Melibee, ?this vengeance lyketh me no-thing. / I bithenke
me now and take hede, how fortune hath norissed me fro my childhede, and
hath holpen me to passe many a strong pas. /2635 Now wol I assayen hir,
trowinge, with goddes help, that she shal helpe me my shame for to venge.?
/

§ 42. ?Certes,? quod Prudence, ?if ye wol werke by my conseil, ye shul nat
assaye fortune by no wey; / ne ye shul nat lene or bowe unto hir, after the
word of Senek: / for ?things that been folily doon, and that been in hope
of fortune, shullen never come to good ende.? / And as the same Senek
seith: ?the more cleer and the more shyning that fortune is, the more
brotil and the sonner broken she is.? /2640 Trusteth nat in hir, for she
nis nat stidefast ne stable; / for whan thou trowest to be most seur or
siker of hir help, she wol faille thee and deceyve thee. / And wher-as ye
seyen that fortune hath norissed yow fro your childhede, / I seye, that in
so muchel shul ye the lasse truste in hir and in hir wit. / For Senek
seith: ?what man that is norissed by fortune, she maketh him a greet fool.?
/2645 Now thanne, sin ye desyre and axe vengeance, and the vengeance that
is doon after the lawe and bifore the luge ne lyketh yow nat, / and the
vengeance that is doon in hope of fortune is perilous and uncertein, /
thanne have ye noon other remedie but for to have your recours unto the
sovereyn luge that vengeth alle vileinyes and wronges; / and he shal venge
yow after that him-self witnesseth, wher-as he seith: / ?leveth the
vengeance to me, and I shal do it.?? /2650

2642. E. and (_before_ siker); _rest_ or; Hl. _om._ or siker.

§ 43. Melibee answerde, ?if I ne venge me nat of the vileinye that men han
doon to me, / I sompne or warne hem that han doon to me that vileinye and
alle othere, to do me another vileinye. / For it is writen: ?if thou take
no vengeance of an old vileinye, thou sompnest thyne adversaries to do thee
a newe vileinye.? / And also, for my suffrance, men wolden do to me so

muchel vileinye, that I mighte neither here it ne sustene; / and so sholde I been put and holden over lowe. /2655 For men seyn: ?in muchel suffringe shul manye thinges falle un-to thee whiche thou shalt nat mowe suffre.?? /

[224] § 44. ?Certes,? quod Prudence, ?I graunte yow that over muchel suffraunce nis nat good; / but yet ne folweth it nat ther-of, that every persone to whom men doon vileinye take of it vengeance; / for that aperteneth and longeth al only to the luges, for they shul venge the vileinyes and iniuries. / And ther-fore tho two auctoritees that ye han seyde above, been only understonden in the luges; /2660 for when they suffren over muchel the wronges and the vileinyes to be doon withouten punisshinge, / they sompne nat a man al only for to do newe wronges, but they comanden it. / Also a wys man seith: that ?the luge that correcteth nat the sinnere comandeth and biddeth him do sinne.? / And the luges and sovereyns mighten in hir land so muchel suffre of the shrewes and misdoeres, / that they sholden by swich suffraunce, by proces of tyme, wexen of swich power and might, that they sholden putte out the luges and the sovereyns from hir places, /2665 and atte laste maken hem lesen hir lordshipes. /

§ 45. But lat us now putte, that ye have leve to venge yow. / I seye ye been nat of might and power as now to venge yow. / For if ye wole maken comparisoun un-to the might of your adversaries, ye shul finde in manye thinges, that I have shewed yow er this, that hir condicioun is bettre than youres. / And therefore seye I, that it is good as now that ye suffre and be pacient. /2670

§ 46. Forther-more, ye knowen wel that, after the comune sawe, ?it is a woodnesse a man to stryve with a strengere or a more mighty man than he is him-self; / and for to stryve with a man of evene strengthe, that is to seyn, with as strong a man as he, it is peril; / and for to stryve with a weyker man, it is folie.? / And therefore sholde a man flee stryvinge as muchel as he mighte. / For Salomon seith: ?it is a greet worship to a man to kepen him fro noyse and stryf.? /2675 And if it so bifalle or happe that a man of gretter might and strengthe than thou art do thee grevaunce, / studie and bisie thee rather to stille the same grevaunce, than for to venge thee. / For Senek seith: that ?he putteth him in greet peril that stryveth with a gretter man than he is him-self.? / And Catoun seith: ?if a man of hyer estaat or degree, or more mighty than thou, do thee any or grevaunce, suffre him; / for he that ones hath greved thee may another tyme releve thee and helpe.? /2680 Yet sette I caas, ye have bothe might and licence for to [225] venge yow. / I seye, that ther be ful manye thinges that shul restreyne yow of vengeance-takinge, / and make yow for to enclyne to suffre, and for to han pacience in the thinges that han been doon to yow. / First and foreward, if ye wole considere the defautes that been in your owene persone, / for whiche defautes god hath suffred yow have this tribulacioun, as I have seyde yow heer-bifore. /2685 For the poete seith, that ?we oghte paciently taken the tribulacions that comen to us, when we thinken and consideren that we han deserved to have hem.? / And Seint Gregorie seith: that ?when a man considereth wel the nombre of hise defautes and of his sinnes, / the peynes and the tribulaciouns that he suffreth semen the lesse un-to hym; / and in-as-muche as him thinketh hise sinnes more hevye and grevous, / in-so-muche semeth his peyne the lighter and the esier un-to him.? /2690 Also ye owen to enclyne and bowe your herte

to take the pacience of our lord Iesu Crist, as seith seint Peter in hise epistles: / ?Iesu Crist,? he seith, ?hath suffred for us, and yeven ensample to every man to folwe and sewe him; / for he dide never sinne, ne never cam ther a vileinous word out of his mouth: / whan men cursed him, he cursed hem noght; and whan men betten him, he manaced hem noght.? / Also the grete pacience, which the seintes that been in paradys han had in tribulaciouns that they han y-suffred, with-outen hir desert or gilt, /2695 oghte muchel stiren yow to pacience. / Forthermore, ye sholde enforce yow to have pacience, / consideringe that the tribulaciouns of this world but litel whyle endure, and sone passed been and goon. / And the loye that a man seketh to have by pacience in tribulaciouns is perdurable, after that the apostle seith in his epistle: / ?the loye of god,? he seith, ?is perdurable,? that is to seyn, everlastinge. /2700 Also troweth and bileveth stedefastly, that he nis nat wel y-norissed ne wel y-taught, that can nat have pacience or wol nat receyve pacience. / For Salomon seith: that ?the doctrine and the wit of a man is knowen by pacience.? / And in another place he seith: that ?he that is pacient governeth him by greet prudence.? / And the same Salomon seith: ?the angry and wrathful man maketh noyses, and the pacient man atempteth hem and stilleth.? / He seith also: ?it is more worth to be pacient than for to be right strong; /2705 and he that may have the lordshipe of his owene herte is more to preyse, than [226] he that by his force or strengthe taketh grete citees.? / And therfore seith seint lame in his epistle: that ?pacience is a greet vertu of perfeccioun.?? /

2680. E. (_only_) _puts_ may _after_ tyme. 2686. E. Hn. Cp. disserued. 2698. E. Cm. goone.

§ 47. ?Certes,? quod Melibee, ?I graunte yow, dame Prudence, that pacience is a greet vertu of perfeccioun; / but every man may nat have the perfeccioun that ye seken; / ne I nam nat of the nombre of right parfite men, /2710 for myn herte may never been in pees un-to the tyme it be venged. / And al-be-it so that it was greet peril to myne enemys, to do me a vileinye in takinge vengeance up-on me, / yet token they noon hede of the peril, but fulfilleden hir wikked wil and hir corage. / And therfore, me thinketh men oghten nat repreve me, though I putte me in a litel peril for to venge me, / and though I do a greet excesse, that is to seyn, that I venge oon outrage by another.? /2715

§ 48. ?A!? quod dame Prudence, ?ye seyn your wil and as yow lyketh; / but in no caas of the world a man sholde nat doon outrage ne excesse for to vengen him. / For Cassidore seith: that ?as yvel doth he that vengeth him by outrage, as he that doth the outrage.? / And therfore ye shul venge yow after the ordre of right, that is to seyn by the lawe, and noght by excesse ne by outrage. / And also, if ye wol venge yow of the outrage of your adversaries in other maner than right comandeth, ye sinnen; /2720 and therfore seith Senek: that ?a man shal never vengen shrewednesse by shrewednesse.? / And if ye seye, that right axeth a man to defenden violence by violence, and fighting by fighting, / certes ye seye sooth, whan the defense is doon anon with-outen intervalle or with-outen tarying or delay, / for to defenden him and nat for to vengen him. / And it bihoveth that a man putte swich attemperance in his defence, /2725 that men have no cause ne matere to repreven him that defendeth him of excesse and outrage; for elles were it agayn resoun. / Pardee, ye knowen wel, that ye maken no defence as now for to defende yow, but for to venge yow; / and so

seweth it that ye han no wil to do your dede attemprely. / And therefore, me thinketh that pacience is good. For Salomon seith: that ?he that is nat pacient shal have greet harm.?? /

2724-7. E. deffenden, deffense. 2728. E. sheweth; Hl. semeth; _rest_ seweth.

§ 49. ?Certes,? quod Melibee, ?I graunte yow, that whan [227] a man is inpacient and wroth, of that that toucheth him noght and that aperteneth nat un-to him, though it harme him, it is no wonder. /2730 For the lawe seith: that ?he is coupable that entremetteth or medleth with swich thyng as aperteneth nat un-to him.? / And Salomon seith: that ?he that entremetteth him of the noyse or stryf of another man, is lyk to him that taketh an hound by the eres.? / For right as he that taketh a straunge hound by the eres is outhewhyle biten with the hound, / right in the same wyse is it resoun that he have harm, that by his inpacience medleth him of the noyse of another man, wher-as it aperteneth nat un-to him. / But ye knowen wel that this dede, that is to seyn, my grief and my disese, toucheth me right ny. /2735 And therefore, though I be wroth and inpacient, it is no merueille. / And savinge your grace, I can nat seen that it mighte greetly harme me though I toke vengeance; / for I am richer and more mighty than myne enemys been. / And wel knowen ye, that by moneye and by havinge grete possessions been all the thinges of this world governed. / And Salomon seith: that ?alle thinges obeyen to moneye.?? /2740

§ 50. Whan Prudence hadde herd hir housbonde avanten him of his richesse and of his moneye, dispreisinge the power of hise adversaries, she spak, and seyde in this wyse: / ?certes, dere sir, I graunte yow that ye been rich and mighty, / and that the richesces been goode to hem that han wel y-geten hem and wel conne usen hem. / For right as the body of a man may nat liven with-oute the soule, namore may it live with-uten temporel goodes. / And by richesces may a man gete him grete freendes. /2745 And therefore seith Pamphilles: ?if a net-herdes doghter,? seith he, ?be riche, she may chesen of a thousand men which she wol take to hir housbonde; / for, of a thousand men, oon wol nat forsaken hir ne refusen hir.? / And this Pamphilles seith also: ?if thou be right happy, that is to seyn, if thou be right riche, thou shalt find a greet nombre of felawes and freendes. / And if thy fortune change that thou wexe povre, farewell freendshipe and felaweshipe; / for thou shalt be allone with-uten any companye, but-if it be the companye of povre folk.? /2750 And yet seith this Pamphilles moreover: that ?they that been thralle and bonde of [228] linage shullen been maad worthy and noble by the richesces.? / And right so as by richesces ther comen manye goodes, right so by poverté come ther manye harmes and yveles. / For greet poverté constreyneth a man to do manye yveles. / And therefore clepeth Cassidore poverté ?the moder of ruine,? / that is to seyn, the moder of overthrowinge or fallinge doun. /2755 And therefore seith Piers Alfonse: ?oon of the grettteste adversitees of this world is / whan a free man, by kinde or by burthe, is constreyned by poverté to eten the almesse of his enemy.? / And the same seith Innocent in oon of hise bokes; he seith: that ?sorweful and mishappy is the condicioun of a povre begger; / for if he axe nat his mete, he dyeth for hunger; / and if he axe, he dyeth for shame; and algates necessitee constreyneth him to axe.? /2760 And therefore seith Salomon: that ?bet it is to dye than for to have swich poverté.? / And as the same Salomon seith: ?bette it is to dye

of bitter deeth than for to liven in swich wyse.? / By thise resons that I
have seid un-to yow, and by manye othere resons that I coude seye, / I
graunte yow that richesesses been goode to hem that geten hem wel, and to hem
that wel usen tho richesesses. / And therfore wol I shewe yow how ye shul
have yow, and how ye shul here yow in gaderinge of richesesses, and in what
manere ye shul usen hem. /2765

2744. E. tempered. 2745. by] E. for. 2746. _All_ Pamphilles. Hn.
Hl. which she ... housbonde; _rest om._ 2750. E. Hn. al alloone;
rest omit al.

§ 51. First, ye shul geten hem with-ouen greet desyr, by good leyser
sokingly, and nat over hastily. / For a man that is to desyringe to gete
richesses abaundoneth him first to theft and to alle other yveles. / And
therfore seith Salomon: ?he that hasteth him to bisily to wexe riche shal
be noon innocent.? / He seith also: that ?the richesesse that hastily cometh
to a man, sone and lightly gooth and passeth fro a man; / but that richesesse
that cometh litel and litel wexeth alwey and multiplyeth.? /2770 And sir,
ye shul geten richesesses by your wit and by your travaille un-to your
profit; / and that with-ouen wrong or harm-doinge to any other persone. /
For the lawe seith: that ?ther maketh no man himselven riche, if he do harm
to another wight;? / this is to seyn, that nature defendeth and forbedeth
by right, that no man make him-self riche un-to the harm of another
persone. / And Tullius seith: that ?no sorwe ne no drede of deeth, ne
no-thing that may falle un-to a man /2775 is so muchel agayns nature, as a
man to [229] encressen his owene profit to the harm of another man. / And
though the grete men and the mighty men geten richesesses more lightly than
thou, / yet shaltou nat been ydel ne slow to do thy profit; for thou shalt
in alle wyse flee ydelnesse.? / For Salomon seith: that ?ydelnesse techeth
a man to do manye yveles.? / And the same Salomon seith: that ?he that
travailleth and bisieth him to tilien his land, shal eten breed; /2780 but
he that is ydel and casteth him to no businesse ne occupacioun, shal falle
in-to poverte, and dye for hunger.? / And he that is ydel and slow can
never finde covenable tyme for to doon his profit. / For ther is a
versifiour seith: that ?the ydel man excuseth hym in winter, by cause of
the grete cold; and in somer, by enchesoun of the hete.? / For thise causes
seith Caton: ?waketh and enclyneth nat yow over muchel for to slepe; for
over muchel reste norisseth and causeth manye vices.? / And therfore seith
seint Ierome: ?doth somme gode dedes, that the devel which is our enemy ne
finde yow nat unoccupied.? /2785 For the devel ne taketh nat lightly un-to
his werkinge swiche as he findeth occupied in gode werkes. /

2766. E. Hn. sekyngly; _rest_ sokyngly. 2785. E. goodes; _rest_ goode
dedes.

§ 52. Thanne thus, in getinge richesesses, ye mosten flee ydelnesse. / And
afterward, ye shul use the richesesses, whiche ye have geten by your wit and
by your travaille, / in swich a manere, that men holde nat yow to scars, ne
to sparinge, ne to fool-large, that is to seyn, over-large a spender. / For
right as men blamen an avaricious man by-cause of his scarsetee and
chincherye, /2790 in the same wyse is he to blame that spendeth over
largely. / And therfore seith Caton: ?use,? he seith, ?thy richesesses that
thou hast geten / in swich a manere, that men have no matere ne cause to
calle thee neither wrecche ne chinche; / for it is a greet shame to a man

to have a povere herte and a riche purs.? / He seith also: ?the goodes that thou hast y-geten, use hem by mesure,? that is to seyn, spende hem mesurably; /2795 for they that folily wasten and despenden the goodes that they han, / whan they han namore propre of hir owene, they shapen hem to take the goodes of another man. / I seye thanne, that ye shul fleen avarice; / usinge your riches in swich manere, that men seye nat that your riches been y-buried, / but that ye have hem in [230] your might and in your weeldinge. /2800 For a wys man repreveth the avaricious man, and seith thus, in two vers: / ?wherto and why burieth a man hise goodes by his grete avarice, and knoweth wel that nedes moste he dye; / for deeth is the ende of every man as in this present lyf.? / And for what cause or enchesoun loyneth he him or knitteth he him so faste un-to hise goodes, / that alle his wittes mowen nat disseveren him or departen him from hise goodes; /2805 and knoweth wel, or oghte knowe, that whan he is deed, he shal no-thing bere with him out of this world. / And ther-fore seith seint Augustin: that ?the avaricious man is likned un-to helle; / that the more it swelweth, the more desyr it hath to swelwe and devoure.? / And as wel as ye wolde eschewe to be called an avaricious man or chinche, / as wel sholde ye kepe yow and governe yow in swich a wyse that men calle yow nat fool-large. /2810 Therefore seith Tullius: ?the goodes,? he seith, ?of thyn hous ne sholde nat been hid, ne kept so cloos but that they mighte been opened by pitee and debonairetee;? / that is to seyn, to yeven part to hem that han greet nede; / ?ne thy goodes shullen nat been so opene, to been every mannes goodes.? / Afterward, in getinge of your riches and in usinge hem, ye shul alwey have three thinges in your herte; / that is to seyn, our lord god, conscience, and good name. /2815 First, ye shul have god in your herte; / and for no richesse ye shullen do nothing, which may in any manere displese god, that is your creatour and maker. / For after the word of Salomon: ?it is bettre to have a litel good with the love of god, / than to have muchel good and tresour, and lese the love of his lord god.? / And the prophete seith: that ?bettre it is to been a good man and have litel good and tresour, /2820 than to been holden a shrewe and have grete riches.? / And yet seye I ferthermore, that ye sholde alwey doon your businesse to gete yow riches, / so that ye gete hem with good conscience. / And thapostle seith: that ?ther nis thing in this world, of which we sholden have so greet loye as whan our conscience bereth us good witnesse.? / And the wyse man seith: ?the substance of a man is ful good, whan sinne is nat in mannes conscience.? /2825 Afterward, in getinge of your riches, and in usinge of hem, / yow moste have greet businesse and greet diligence, that your goode name be alwey kept and conserved. / For Salomon seith: that ?bettre it is and more it availleth a man to have a good name, than for to have grete riches.? / [231] And therefore he seith in another place: ?do greet diligence,? seith Salomon, ?in keping of thy freend and of thy gode name; / for it shal lenger abide with thee than any tresour, be it never so precious.? /2830 And certes he sholde nat be called a gentil man, that after god and good conscience, alle thinges left, ne dooth his diligence and businesse to kepen his good name. / And Cassidore seith: that ?it is signe of a gentil herte, whan a man loveth and desyreth to han a good name.? / And therefore seith seint Augustin: that ?ther been two thinges that arn necessarie and nedefulle, / and that is good conscience and good loos; / that is to seyn, good conscience to thyn owene persone inward, and good loos for thy neighebore outward.? /2835 And he that trusteth him so muchel in his gode conscience, / that he displeseth and setteth at noght his gode name or loos, and rekketh noght though he

kepe nat his gode name, nis but a cruel cherl. /

2790. E. chyngerie; Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. chyncherye. 2837. E. crueel.

§ 53. Sire, now have I shewed yow how ye shul do in getinge riches, and how ye shullen usen hem; / and I se wel, that for the trust that ye han in youre riches, ye wole moeve werre and bataille. / I conseille yow, that ye biginne no werre in trust of your riches; for they ne suffysen nocht werres to mayntene. /2840 And therefore seith a philosophre: ?that man that desyret and wole algates han werre, shal never have suffisaunce; / for the richer that he is, the gretter despenses moste he make, if he wole have worship and victorie.? / And Salomon seith: that ?the gretter riches that a man hath, the mo despendours he hath.? / And dere sire, al-be-it so that for your riches ye mowe have muchel folk, / yet bihoveth it nat, ne it is nat good, to biginne werre, where-as ye mowe in other manere have pees, un-to your worship and profit. /2845 For the victories of batailles that been in this world, lyen nat in greet nombre or multitude of the peple ne in the vertu of man; / but it lyth in the wil and in the hand of our lord god almighty. / And therefore Iudas Machabeus, which was goddes knight, / whan he sholde fighte agayn his adversarie that hadde a greet nombre, and a gretter multitude of folk and strenger than was this peple of Machabee, / yet he reconforted his litel companye, and seyde right in this wyse: /2850 ?als lightly,? quod he, ?may our lord god almighty yeve victorie to a fewe folk as to many folk; / for the victorie of bataille cometh nat by the grete [232] nombre of peple, / but it cometh from our lord god of hevne.? / And dere sir, for as muchel as there is no man certein, if he be worthy that god yeve him victorie, [namore than he is certein whether he be worthy of the love of god] or naught, after that Salomon seith, / therefore every man sholde greetly drede werres to biginne. /2855 And by-cause that in batailles fallen manye perils, / and happeth outhere-while, that as sone is the grete man sleyn as the litel man; / and, as it is written in the seconde book of Kinges, ?the dedes of batailles been aventureuse and nothing certeyne;? / for as lightly is oon hurt with a spere as another. / And for ther is gret peril in werre, therefore sholde a man flee and eschewe werre, in as muchel as a man may goodly. /2860 For Salomon seith: ?he that loveth peril shal falle in peril.?? /

2852. E. Hn. a bataille; _rest om._ a. E. comth. 2853. E. come; _rest_ cometh. 2854. E. he be; _rest_ it be. _I supply from_ namore _to_ god; _see_ Note.

§ 54. After that Dame Prudence hadde spoken in this manere, Melibee answerde and seyde, / ?I see wel, dame Prudence, that by your faire wordes and by your resons that ye han shewed me, that the werre lyketh yow no-thing; / but I have nat yet herd your conseil, how I shal do in this nede.? /

§ 55. ?Certes,? quod she, ?I conseille yow that ye accorde with youre adversaries, and that ye haue pees with hem. /2865 For seint lame seith in hise epistles: that ?by concord and pees the smale riches wexen grete, / and by debaat and discord the grete riches fallen down.? / And ye knowen wel that oon of the gretteste and most sovereyn thing, that is in this world, is unitee and pees. / And therefore seyde our lord lesu Crist to hise apostles in this wyse: / ?wel happy and blessed been they that loven

and purchacen pees; for they been called children of god.?? /2870 ?A!? quod Melibee, ?now se I wel that ye loven nat myn honour ne my worshiþe. / Ye knowen wel that myne adversaries han bigonnen this debaat and brige by hir outrage; / and ye see wel that they ne requeren ne preyen me nat of pees, ne they asken nat to be reconciled. / Wol ye thanne that I go and meke me and obeye me to hem, and crye hem mercy? / For sothe, that were nat my worship. /2875 For right as men seyn, that ?over-greet homlinesse engendreth dispreysinge,? so fareth it by to greet humylitee or mekenesse.? /

2866. seint Iame] F. text, Seneques. 2872. E. bryge; Hn. Cm. Hl. brige; Cp. Pt. brigge (F. text, _brigue_).

[233] § 56. Thanne bigan dame Prudence to maken semblant of wratthe, and seyde, / ?certes, sir, sauf your grace, I love your honour and your profit as I do myn owene, and ever have doon; / ne ye ne noon other syen never the contrarie. / And yit, if I hadde seyde that ye sholde han purchaced the pees and the reconsiliacioun, I ne hadde nat muchel mistaken me, ne seyde amis. /2880 For the wyse man seith: ?the dissensioun biginneth by another man, and the reconciling bi-ginneth by thy-self.? / And the prophete seith: ?flee shrewednesse and do goodnesse; / seke pees and folwe it, as muchel as in thee is.? / Yet seye I nat that ye shul rather pursue to your adversaries for pees than they shuln to yow; / for I knowe wel that ye been so hard-herted, that ye wol do no-thing for me. /2885 And Salomon seith: ?he that hath over-hard an herte, atte laste he shal mishappe and mistyde.?? /

§ 57. Whanne Melibee hadde herd dame Prudence maken semblant of wratthe, he seyde in this wyse, / ?dame, I prey yow that ye be nat displeasid of thinges that I seye; / for ye knowe wel that I am angry and wrooth, and that is no wonder; / and they that been wrothe witen nat wel what they doon, ne what they seyn. /2890 Therefore the prophete seith: that ?troubled eyen han no cleer sighte.? / But seyeth and conseileth me as yow lyketh; for I am redy to do right as ye wol desyre; / and if ye repreve me of my folye, I am the more holden to love yow and to preyse yow. / For Salomon seith: that ?he that repreveth him that doth folye, / he shal finde gretter grace than he that deceyveth him by swete wordes.?? /2895

2893. to preyse] E. _om._ to.

§ 58. Thanne seide dame Prudence, ?I make no semblant of wratthe ne anger but for your grete profit. / For Salomon seith: ?he is more worth, that repreveth or chydeth a fool for his folye, shewing him semblant of wratthe, / than he that supporteth him and preyseth him in his misdoinge, and laugheth at his folye.? / And this same Salomon seith afterward: that ?by the sorweful visage of a man,? that is to seyn, by the sory and hevvy countenance of a man, / ?the fool correcteth and amendeth him-self.?? /2900

2898. E. peyseth (_for_ preyseth).

§ 59. Thanne seyde Melibee, ?I shal nat conne answer to so manye faire resouns as ye putten to me and shewen. / Seyeth shortly your wil and your conseil, and I am al ready to fulfille and parfourne it.? /

[234] § 60. Thanne dame Prudence discovered al hir wil to him, and seyde, /
?I conseilte yow,? quod she, ?aboven alle thinges, that ye make pees
bitwene god and yow; / and beth reconsiled un-to him and to his grace.
/2905 For as I have seyde yow heer-biforn, god hath suffred yow to have this
tribulacioun and disese for your sinnes. / And if ye do as I sey yow, god
wol sende your adversaries un-to yow, / and maken hem fallen at your feet,
redy to do your wil and your comandements. / For Salomon seith: ?whan the
condicioun of man is plesaunt and likinge to god, / he chaungeth the hertes
of the mannes adversaries, and constreyneth hem to biseken him of pees and
of grace.? /2910 And I prey yow, lat me speke with your adversaries in
privee place; / for they shul nat knowe that it be of your wil or your
assent. / And thanne, whan I knowe hir wil and hir entente, I may conseilte
yow the more seurly.? /

2913. E. seurely; Hn. Cp. Hl. seurly.

§ 61. ?Dame,? quod Melibee, ?dooth your wil and your lykinge, / for I putte
me hoolly in your disposicioun and ordinaunce.? /2915

§ 62. Thanne Dame Prudence, whan she saugh the gode wil of her housbonde,
delibered and took avys in hir-self, / thinkinge how she mighte bringe this
nede un-to a good conclusioun and to a good ende. / And whan she saugh hir
tyme, she sente for these adversaries to come un-to hir in-to a privee
place, / and shewed wysly un-to hem the grete goodes that comen of pees, /
and the grete harmes and perils that been in werre; /2920 and seyde to hem
in a goodly manere, how that hem oughte have greet repentaunce / of the
iniurie and wrong that they hadden doon to Melibee hir lord, and to hir,
and to hir doghter. /

2921. Cm. oughte; Cp. Hl. aughte; _rest_ oughten.

§ 63. And whan they herden the goodliche wordes of dame Prudence, / they
weren so surprised and ravished, and hadden so greet loye of hir, that
wonder was to telle. / ?A! lady!? quod they, ?ye han shewed un-to us ?the
blessinge of swetnesse,? after the sawe of David the prophete; /2925 for
the reconsilinge which we been nat worthy to have in no manere, / but we
oghte requeren it with greet contricioun and humilitee, / ye of your grete
goodnesse have presented unto us. / Now see we wel that the science and the
conninge of Salomon is ful trewe; / for he seith: that ?swete wordes
multiplen and encreasen freendes, and maken shrewes to be debonaire and
meke.? /2930

2924. Hl. surprised; Cm. suppreysed; _rest_ surprised.

[235] § 64. ?Certes,? quod they, ?we putten our dede and al our matere and
cause al hoolly in your goode wil; / and been redy to obeye to the speche
and comandement of my lord Melibee. / And therefore, dere and benigne lady,
we preyen yow and biseke yow as mekely as we conne and mowen, / that it
lyke un-to your grete goodnesse to fulfillen in dede your goodliche wordes;
/ for we consideren and knowlichen that we han offended and greved my lord
Melibee out of mesure; /2935 so ferforth, that we be nat of power to maken
hise amendes. / And therefore we oblige and binden us and our freendes to
doon al his wil and hise comandements. / But peraventure he hath swich

hevinesse and swich wratthe to us-ward, by-cause of our offence, / that he wole enjoyne us swich a peyne as we mowe nat here ne sustene. / And therefore, noble lady, we biseke to your wommanly pitee, /2940 to taken swich avysement in this nede, that we, ne our freendes, be nat desherited ne destroyed thurgh our folye.? /

§ 65. ?Certes,? quod Prudence, ?it is an hard thing and right perilous, / that a man putte him al outrelly in the arbitracioun and luggement, and in the might and power of hise enemys. / For Salomon seith: ?leveth me, and yeveth credence to that I shal seyn; I seye,? quod he, ?ye peple, folk, and governours of holy chirche, / to thy sone, to thy wyf, to thy freend, ne to thy brother /2945 ne yeve thou never might ne maistrie of thy body, whyl thou livest.? / Now sithen he defendeth, that man shal nat yeven to his brother ne to his freend the might of his body, / by a strenger resoun he defendeth and forbedeth a man to yeven him-self to his enemy. / And natheless I conseilte you, that ye mistruste nat my lord. / For I wool wel and knowe verrailly, that he is debonaire and meke, large, curteys, /2950 and nothing desyrous ne covetous of good ne richesse. / For ther nis no-thing in this world that he desyreth, save only worship and honour. / Forther-more I knowe wel, and am right seur, that he shal no-thing doon in this nede with-uten my conseil. / And I shal so werken in this cause, that, by grace of our lord god, ye shul been reconsiled un-to us.? /

§ 66. Thanne seyden they with o vois, ?worshipful lady, we putten us and our goodes al fully in your wil and disposicioun; /2955 and been redy to comen, what day that it lyke un-to your noblesse to limite us or assigne us, / for to maken our obligacioun and bond as strong as it lyketh un-to your goodnesse; / that we mowe fulfillle the wille of yow and of my lord Melibee.? /

[236] § 67. Whan dame Prudence hadde herd the answeres of thise men, she bad hem goon agayn prively; / and she retourned to hir lord Melibee, and tolde him how she fond hise adversaries ful repentant, /2960 knowleching ful lowely hir sinnes and trespas, and how they were redy to suffren al peyne, / requiringe and preyinge him of mercy and pitee. /

§ 68. Thanne seyde Melibee, ?he is wel worthy to have pardoun and foryifnesse of his sinne, that excuseth nat his sinne, / but knowlecheth it and repenteth him, axinge indulgence. / For Senek seith: ?ther is the remissioun and foryifnesse, where-as confessioun is;? /2965 for confession is neighebore to innocence. / And he seith in another place: ?he that hath shame for his sinne and knowlecheth it, is worthy remissioun.? And therefore I assente and conferme me to have pees; / but it is good that we do it nat with-uten the assent and wil of our freendes.? /

2967. E. Cm. _omit from_ And he _to_ remissioun; Hn. Cp. Hl. _om. only_ is worthy remissioun, _which occurs in_ Pt., _where_ Ln. _has_ is worthi haue mercy. E. corforme (_sic_); _rest_ conferme.

§ 69. Thanne was Prudence right glad and loyeful, and seyde, / ?Certes, sir,? quod she, ?ye han wel and goodly answered. /2970 For right as by the conseil, assent, and help of your freendes, ye han been stired to venge yow and maken werre, / right so with-uten hir conseil shul ye nat accorden yow, ne have pees with your adversaries. / For the lawe seith: ?ther nis

no-thing so good by wey of kinde, as a thing to been unbounde by him that it was y-bounde.?? /

§ 70. And thanne dame Prudence, with-outen delay or taryinge, sente anon hir messages for hir kin, and for hir olde freendes whiche that were trewe and wyse, / and tolde hem by ordre, in the presence of Melibee, al this matere as it is aboven expressed and declared; /2975 and preyden hem that they wolde yeven hir avys and conseil, what best were to doon in this nede. / And whan Melibees freendes hadde taken hir avys and deliberacioun of the forseide matere, / and hadden examined it by greet businesse and greet diligence, / they yave ful conseil for to have pees and reste; / and that Melibee sholde receyve with good herte hise adversaries to foryifnesse and mercy. /2980

2976. E. _om._ hem.

§ 71. And whan dame Prudence hadde herd the assent of hir lord Melibee, and the conseil of hise freendes, / accorde with hir wille and hir entencioun, / she was wonderly glad in hir herte, and [237] seyde: / ?ther is an old proverbe,? quod she, ?seith: that ?the goodnesse that thou mayst do this day, do it; / and abyde nat ne delaye it nat til to-morwe.? /2985 And therefore I conseille that ye sende your messages, swiche as been discrete and wyse, / un-to your adversaries; tellinge hem, on your bihalve, / that if they wole trete of pees and of accord, / that they shape hem, with-outen delay or taryng, to comen un-to us.? / Which thing parfourned was in dede. /2990 And whanne thise trespassours and repentine folk of hir folies, that is to seyn, the adversaries of Melibee, / hadden herd what thise messagers seyden un-to hem, / they weren right glad and loyeful, and answereden ful mekely and benignely, / yeldinge graces and thankinges to hir lord Melibee and to al his companye; / and shopen hem, with-outen delay, to go with the messagers, and obeye to the comandement of hir lord Melibee. /2995

§ 72. And right anon they token hir wey to the court of Melibee, / and token with hem somme of hir trewe freendes, to maken feith for hem and for to been hir borwes. / And whan they were comen to the presence of Melibee, he seyde hem thise wordes: / ?it standeth thus,? quod Melibee, ?and sooth it is, that ye, / causeless, and with-outen skile and resoun, /3000 han doon grete iniuries and wronges to me and to my wyf Prudence, and to my doghter also. / For ye han entred in-to myn hous by violence, / and have doon swich outrage, that alle men knowen wel that ye have deserved the deeth; / and therefore wol I knowe and wite of yow, / whether ye wol putte the punissement and the chastysinge and the vengeance of this outrage in the wil of me and of my wyf Prudence; or ye wol nat?? /3005

3003. E. disserued.

§ 73. Thanne the wyseste of hem three answerde for hem alle, and seyde: / ?sire,? quod he, ?we knowen wel, that we been unworthy to comen un-to the court of so greet a lord and so worthy as ye been. / For we han so greetly mistaken us, and han offended and agilt in swich a wyse agayn your heigh lordshipe, / that trewely we han deserved the deeth. / But yet, for the grete goodnesse and debonairetee that all the world witnesseth of your persone, /3010 we submitten us to the excellence and benignitee of your gracious lordshipe, / and been redy to obeie to alle your comandements; /

bisekinge yow, that of your merciable pitee ye wol [238] considere our grete repentaunce and lowe submissioun, / and graunten us foryevenesse of our outrageous trespas and offence. / For wel we knowe, that your liberal grace and mercy strecchen hem ferther in-to goodnesse, than doon our outrageouse giltes and trespas in-to wikkednesse; /3015 al-be-it that cursedly and dampnably we han agilt agayn your heigh lordshipe.? /

3005. E. wheither. 3009. E. disserued. 3010. of] E. in. 3013. E. lough; _rest_ lowe. 3016. E. Hn. dampnably.

§ 74. Thanne Melibee took hem up fro the ground ful benignely, / and receyved hir obligaciouns and hir bondes by hir othes up-on hir plegges and borwes, / and assigned hem a certeyn day to retourne un-to his court, / for to accepte and receyve the sentence and lugement that Melibee wolde comande to be doon on hem by the causes afore-seyd; /3020 whiche thinges ordeyned, every man retourned to his hous. /

§ 75. And whan that dame Prudence saugh hir tyme, she freyned and axed hir lord Melibee, / what vengeance he thoughte to taken of hise adversaries? /

§ 76. To which Melibee answerde and seyde, ?certes,? quod he, ?I thinke and purpose me fully / to desherite hem of al that ever they han, and for to putte hem in exil for ever.? /3025

§ 77. ?Certes,? quod dame Prudence, ?this were a cruel sentence, and muchel agayn resoun. / For ye been riche y-nough, and han no nede of other mennes good; / and ye mighte lightly in this wyse gete yow a coveitous name, / which is a vicious thing, and oghte been eschewed of every good man. / For after the sawe of the word of the apostle: ?coveitise is rote of alle harmes.? /3030 And therefore, it were bettre for yow to lese so muchel good of your owene, than for to taken of hir good in this manere. / For bettre it is to lesen good with worshipe, than it is to winne good with vileinye and shame. / And every man oghte to doon his diligence and his businesse to geten him a good name. / And yet shal he nat only bisie him in kepinge of his good name, / but he shal also enforchen him alwey to do som-thing by which he may renovelle his good name; /3035 for it is writen, that ?the olde good loos or good name of a man is sone goon and passed, whan it is nat newed ne renovelled.? / And as touchinge that ye seyn, ye wole exile your adversaries, / that thinketh me muchel agayn resoun and out of mesure, / considered the power that they han yeve yow [239] up-on hem-self. / And it is writen, that ?he is worthy to lesen his privilege that misuseth the might and the power that is yeven him.? /3040 And I sette cas ye mighte enioyne hem that payne by right and by lawe, / which I trowe ye mowe nat do, / I seye, ye mighte nat putten it to execucioun per-aventure, / and thanne were it lykly to retourne to the werre as it was biforn. / And therefore, if ye wole that men do yow obeisance, ye moste demen more curteisly; /3045 this is to seyn, ye moste yeven more esy sentences and lugements. / For it is writen, that ?he that most curteisly comandeth, to him men most obeyen.? / And therefore, I prey yow that in this necessitee and in this nede, ye caste yow to overcome your herte. / For Senek seith: that ?he that overcometh his herte, overcometh twyes.? / And Tullius seith: ?ther is nothing so comendable in a greet lord /3050 as whan he is debonaire and meke, and appeseth him lightly.? / And I prey yow that ye wole forbere now to do vengeance, / in swich a manere, that your goode name

may be kept and conserved; / and that men mowe have cause and matere to
preyse yow of pitee and of mercy; / and that ye have no cause to repente
yow of thing that ye doon. /3055 For Senek seith: ?he overcometh in an yvel
manere, that repenteth him of his victorie.? / Wherefore I pray yow, lat
mercy been in your minde and in your herte, / to theeffect and entente that
god almighty have mercy on yow in his laste lugement. / For seint lame
seith in his epistle: ?lugement withouten mercy shal be doon to him, that
hath no mercy of another wight.?? /

3026. E. crueel. 3032. E. _om._ good (_twice_). 3036. or] E. and.
3051. E. _om._ him. 3057. E. in youre mynde and; _rest om._

§ 78. Whanne Melibee hadde herd the grete skiles and resouns of dame
Prudence, and hir wise informaciouns and techinges, /3060 his herte gan
encline to the wil of his wyf, consideringe hir trewe entente; / and
conformed him anon, and assented fully to werken after hir conseil; / and
thonked god, of whom procedeth al vertu and alle goodnesse, that him sente
a wyf of so greet discrecioun. / And whan the day cam that hise adversaries
sholde apperen in his presence, / he spak unto hem ful goodly, and seyde in
this wyse: /3065 ?al-be-it so that of your pryde and presumpcioun and
folie, and of your necligence and unconninge, / ye have misborn yow and
trespassed un-to me; / yet, for as much as I see and biholde your grete
humilitee, / and that ye [240] been sory and repentant of your giltes, / it
constreyneth me to doon yow grace and mercy. /3070 Therfore I receyve yow
to my grace, / and foryeve yow outrely alle the offences, iniuries, and
wronges, that ye have doon agayn me and myne; / to this effect and to this
ende, that god of his endelees mercy / wole at the tyme of our dyinge
foryeven us our giltes that we han trespassed to him in this wrecched
world. / For doutelees, if we be sory and repentant of the sinnes and
giltes whiche we han trespassed in the sighte of our lord god, /3075 he is
so free and so merciabe, / that he wole foryeven us our giltes, / and
bringen us to his blisse that never hath ende. Amen.? /3078

=Here is ended Chaucers Tale of Melibee and of Dame Prudence.=

3064 E. Hn., appieren. 3078. E. his; Hn. Pt. Hl. the; Cp. Ln.
thilke. _After_ ende, Cp. Ln. _have this spurious couplet_:?

To whiche blisse he us bringe
That blood on crosse for us gan springe,

followed by?_Qui cum patre_, &c.

COLOPHON. _From_ E.; Hn. _has_?Here is endid Chaucers tale of Melibe;
Hl. _has_?Here endith Chaucer his tale of Melibe.

[241: T. 13895-13924.]

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THE MONK'S PROLOGUE.

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=The mery wordes of the Host to the Monk.=

Whan ended was my tale of Melibee,
And of Prudence and hir benigntee, 3080
Our hoste seyde, ?as I am faithful man,
And by the precious _corpus Madrian_,
I hadde lever than a barel ale
That goode lief my wyf hadde herd this tale!
For she nis no-thing of swich pacience 3085
As was this Melibeus wyf Prudence.
By goddes bones! whan I bete my knaves,
She bringth me forth the grete clobbed staves, (10)
And cryeth, ?slee the dogges everichoon,
And brek hem, bothe bak and every boon.? 3090
And if that any neighebor of myne
Wol nat in chirche to my wyf enclyne,
Or be so hardy to hir to trespace,
Whan she comth hoom, she rampeth in my face,
And cryeth, ?false coward, wreek thy wyf, 3095
By _corpus_ bones! I wol have thy knyf,
And thou shalt have my distaf and go spinne!?
Fro day to night right thus she wol biginne;? (20)
?Allas!? she seith, ?that ever I was shape
To wedde a milksop or a coward ape, 3100
That wol be overlad with every wight!
Thou darst nat stonden by thy wyves right!?
This is my lyf, but-if that I wol fighte;
And out at dore anon I moot me dighte,
Or elles I am but lost, but-if that I 3105
Be lyk a wilde leoun fool-hardy.
I woot wel she wol do me slee som day
Som neighebor, and thanne go my wey. (30)
[242: T. 13925-13962.]
For I am perilous with knyf in honde,
Al be it that I dar nat hir withstonde, 3110
For she is big in armes, by my feith,
That shal he finde, that hir misdooth or seith.
But lat us passe away fro this matere.

HEADING. _From_ E.; Hn. Here bigynneth The Prologe of the Monkes
tale. E. murye. 3082. the] E. Hn. that. 3085. E. Hn. _omit_
For. 3094. Pt. hoom; Hl. hom; Cp. Ln. home; E. Hn. _omit._ 3099. E.
Hn. euere that I. 3110. E. Cp. Ln. hire nat; Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. nat
hire.

My lord the Monk,? quod he, ?be mery of chere;
For ye shul telle a tale trewely. 3115
Lo! Rouchestre stant heer faste by!
Ryd forth, myn owene lord, brek nat our game,
But, by my trouthe, I knowe nat your name, (40)
Wher shal I calle yow my lord dan lohn,
Or dan Thomas, or elles dan Albon? 3120
Of what hous be ye, by your fader kin?
I vow to god, thou, hast a ful fair skin,

It is a gentil pasture ther thou goost;
 Thou art nat lyk a penaunt or a goost.
 Upon my feith, thou art som officer, 3125
 Som worthy sexteyn, or som celerer,
 For by my fader soule, as to my doom,
 Thou art a maister whan thou art at hoom; (50)
 No povre cloisterer, ne no novys,
 But a governour, wyly and wys. 3130
 And therwithal of brawnes and of bones
 A wel-faring persone for the nones.
 I pray to god, yeve him confusioun
 That first thee broghte un-to religioun;
 Thou woldest han been a trede-foul aright. 3135
 Haddestow as greet a leve, as thou hast might
 To parfourne al thy lust in engendrure,
 Thou haddest bigeten many a creature. (60)
 Alas! why werestow so wyd a cope?
 God yeve me sorwel but, and I were a pope, 3140
 Not only thou, but every mighty man,
 Thogh he were shorn ful hye upon his pan,
 Sholde have a wyf; for al the world is lorn!
 Religioun hath take up al the corn
 Of treading, and we borel men ben shrimpes! 3145
 Of feble trees ther comen wrecched impes.
 [243: T. 13963-13996.]
 This maketh that our heires been so sclendre
 And feble, that they may nat wel engendre. (70)
 This maketh that our wyves wol assaye
 Religious folk, for ye may bettre paye 3150
 Of Venus payements than mowe we;
 God woot, no lussheburghes payen ye!
 But be nat wrooth, my lord, for that I pleye;
 Ful ofte in game a sooth I have herd seye.?

3114. E. Hn. myrie. 3119, 20. E. daun. 3129. E. Hn. Pt. Ln.
 cloistrer. 3138. E. Hn. ful many. 3147, 8. E. _om. these lines;
 from_ Hn.; Hn. Cm. sklendre; Cp. Pt. sclendre (sclender_e_). 3151. E.
 paiementz. 3152. E. Hn. lussheburgh; Cp. lussheburghes; Hl.
 lusscheburghes.

This worthy monk took al in pacience, 3155
 And seyde, ?I wol doon al my diligence,
 As fer as souneth in-to honestee,
 To telle yow a tale, or two, or three. (80)
 And if yow list to herkne hiderward,
 I wol yow seyn the lyf of seint Edward; 3160
 Or elles first Tragedies wol I telle
 Of whiche I have an hundred in my celle.
 Tragedie is to seyn a certeyn storie,
 As olde bokes maken us memorie,
 Of him that stood in greet prosperitee 3165
 And is y-fallen out of heigh degree
 Into miserie, and endeth wrecchedly.
 And they ben versified comunly (90)

Of six feet, which men clepe _exametron_.
In prose eek been endyted many oon, 3170
And eek in metre, in many a sondry wyse.
Lo! this declaring oughte y-nough suffise.

3160. E. _omits_ yow. 3163. Cp. Pt. Ln. for to; _rest omit_ for.
3168. E. comunely; Cm. comounly; Hn. Hl. comunly.

Now herkneth, if yow lyketh for to here;
But first I yow biseke in this matere,
Though I by ordre telle nat thise thinges, 3175
Be it of popes, emperours, or kinges,
After hir ages, as men writen finde,
But telle hem som bifore and som bihinde, (100)
As it now comth un-to my remembraunce;
Have me excused of myn ignoraunce.? 3180

Explicit.

[244: T. 13997-14016.]

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THE MONKES TALE.

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=Here biginneth the Monkes Tale, De Casibus Virorum Illustrium.=

I wol biwayle in maner of Tragedie
The harm of hem that stode in heigh degree,
And fillen so that ther nas no remedie
To bringe hem out of hir adversitee;
For certein, whan that fortune list to flee, 3185
Ther may no man the cours of hir withholde;
Lat no man truste on blind prosperitee;
Be war by thise ensamples trewe and olde.

HEADING. _From_ E. (E. Heere). 3188. E. Pt. of; _rest_ by.

LUCIFER.

At Lucifer, though he an angel were,
And nat a man, at him I wol biginne; 3190
For, thogh fortune may non angel dere, (11)
From heigh degree yet fel he for his sinne
Doun in-to helle, wher he yet is inne.
O Lucifer! brightest of angels alle,
Now artow Sathanas, that maist nat twinne 3195
Out of miserie, in which that thou art falle.

3191. E. though; Hn. thogh.

ADAM.

Lo Adam, in the feld of Damassene,
With goddes owene finger wroght was he,
And nat bigeten of mannes sperme unclene,
And welte al Paradys, saving o tree. 3200

[245: T. 14017-14048.]

Had never worldly man so heigh degree (21)
As Adam, til he for misgovernaunce
Was drive out of his hye prosperitee
To labour, and to helle, and to meschaunce.

3197. Cm. Hl. Damassene; E. Hn. Damyssene.

SAMPSON.

Lo Sampson, which that was annunciat 3205
By thangel, longe er his nativitee,
And was to god almighty consecrat,
And stood in noblesse, whyl he mighte see.
Was never swich another as was he,
To speke of strengthe, and therwith hardinesse; 3210
But to his wyves tolde he his secree, (31)
Through which he slow him-self, for wrecchednesse.

3206. Hl. Cp. thangel; Hn. Pt. Ln. the aungel; E. Cm. angel.

Sampson, this noble almighty champioun,
Withouten wepen save his hondes tweye,
He slow and al to-rente the leoun, 3215
Toward his wedding walking by the weye.
His false wyf coude him so plese and preye
Til she his conseil knew, and she untrew
Un-to his foos his conseil gan biwrewe,
And him forsook, and took another newe. 3220

Three hundred foxes took Sampson for ire, (41)
And alle hir tayles he togider bond,
And sette the foxes tayles alle on fire,
For he on every tayl had knit a brond;
And they brende alle the cornes in that lond, 3225
And alle hir oliveres and vynes eek.
A thousand men he slow eek with his hond,
And had no wepen but an asses cheek.

Whan they were slayn, so thursted him that he
Was wel my lorn, for which he gan to preye 3230
That god wolde on his peyne han som pitee, (51)
And sende him drinke, or elles moste he deye;
[246: T. 14049-14080.]

And of this asses cheke, that was dreye,
Out of a wang-tooth sprang anon a welle,
Of which he drank y-nogh, shortly to seye, 3235
Thus heelp him god, as _Iudicum_ can telle.

3235. E. anon; _rest_ ynogh, ynough, ynouhe, &c.

By verray force, at Gazan, on a night,
Maugree Philistiens of that citee,
The gates of the toun he hath up-plight,
And on his bak y-caried hem hath he 3240
Hye on an hille, that men mighte hem see. (61)
O noble almighty Sampson, leef and dere,
Had thou nat told to wommen thy secree,
In al this worlde ne hadde been thy pere!

This Sampson never sicer drank ne wyn, 3245
Ne on his heed cam rasour noon ne shere,
By precept of the messenger divyn,
For alle his strengthes in his heres were;
And fully twenty winter, yeer by yere,
He hadde of Israel the governaunce. 3250
But sone shal he wepen many a tere, (71)
For wommen shal him bringen to meschaunce!

3245. E. Hn. ciser (_for_ sicer); Hl. siser; Cm. Pt. Ln. sythir; Cp. cyder.

Un-to his lemman Dalida he tolde
That in his heres al his strengthe lay,
And falsly to his fo-men she him solde. 3255
And sleping in hir barme up-on a day
She made to clippe or shere his heer away,
And made his fo-men al his craft espyen;
And whan that they him fonde in this array,
They bounde him faste, and putten out his yën. 3260

3257. E. Hl. heres; _rest_ heer, here. 3258. E. Hn. this craft; _rest_ his craft.

But er his heer were clipped or y-shave, (81)
Ther was no bond with which men might him binde;
But now is he in prisoun in a cave,
Wher-as they made him at the querne grinde.
[247: T. 14081-14112.]
O noble Sampson, strongest of mankinde, 3265
O whylom luge in glorie and in richesse,
Now maystow wepen with thyn yën blinde,
Sith thou fro wele art falle in wrecchednesse.

3261. E. were; _rest_ was; _see l._ 3328.

Thende of this caytif was as I shal seye;
His fo-men made a feste upon a day, 3270
And made him as hir fool bfore hem pleye, (91)
And this was in a temple of greet array.
But atte laste he made a foul affray;
For he two pilers shook, and made hem falle,
And doun fil temple and al, and ther it lay, 3275

And slow him-self, and eek his fo-men alle.

3271. E. Cm. a; _rest_ hire, here. 3274. E. the; _rest_ two.

This is to seyn, the princes everichoon,
And eek three thousand bodies wer ther slayn
With falling of the grete temple of stoon.
Of Sampson now wol I na-more seyn. 3280
Beth war by this ensample old and playn (101)
That no men telle hir conseil til hir wyves
Of swich thing as they wolde han secree fayn,
If that it touche hir limmes or hir lyves.

HERCULES.

Of Hercules the sovereyn conquerour 3285
Singen his workes laude and heigh renoun;
For in his tyme of strengthe he was the flour.
He slow, and rafte the skin of the leoun;
He of Centauros leyde the boost adoun;
He Arpies slow, the cruel briddes felle; 3290
He golden apples rafte of the dragoun; (111)
He drow out Cerberus, the hound of helle:

He slow the cruel tyrant Busirus,
And made his hors to frete him, flesh and boon;
He slow the firy serpent venimous; 3295
Of Achelois two hornes, he brak oon;
[248: T. 14113-14148.]
And he slow Cacus in a cave of stoon;
He slow the geaunt Antheus the stronge;
He slow the grisly boor, and that anoon,
And bar the heven on his nekke longe. 3300

3294. E. flessh. 3296. E. Cm. hornes two; _rest_ two hornes.

Was never wight, sith that the world bigan, (121)
That slow so many monstres as dide he.
Thurgh-out this wyde world his name ran,
What for his strengthe, and for his heigh bountee,
And every reaume wente he for to see. 3305
He was so strong that no man mighte him lette;
At bothe the worldes endes, seith Trophee,
In stede of boundes, he a piler sette.

3308. E. stide; pileer.

A lemman hadde this noble champioun,
That highte Dianira, fresh as May; 3310
And, as thise clerkes maken menciou, (131)
She hath him sent a sherte fresh and gay.
Allas! this sherte, allas and weylaway!
Envenimed was so subtilly with-alle,
That, er that he had wered it half a day, 3315

It made his flesh al from his bones falle.

3310, 2. E. fressh. 3316. E. flessh.

But nathelees somme clerkes hir excusen
By oon that highte Nessus, that it maked;
Be as be may, I wol hir noght accusen;
But on his bak this sherte he wered al naked, 3320
Til that his flesh was for the venim blaked. (141)
And whan he sey noon other remedye,
In hote coles he hath him-selven raked,
For with no venim deynded him to dye.

Thus starf this worthy mighty Hercules; 3325
Lo, who may truste on fortune any throwe?
For him that folweth al this world of prees,
Er he be war, is ofte y-leyd ful lowe.
Ful wys is he that can him-selven knowe.
Beth war, for whan that fortune list to glose, 3330
Than wayteth she hir man to overthrowe (151)
By swich a wey as he wolde leest suppose.

[249: T. 14149-14180.]

NABUGODONOSOR (NEBUCHADNEZZAR).

The mighty trone, the precious tresor,
The glorious ceptre and royal magestee
That hadde the king Nabugodonosor, 3335
With tonge unnethe may discryved be.
He twyes wan Ierusalem the citee;
The vessel of the temple he with him ladde.
At Babiloyne was his sovereyn see,
In which his glorie and his delyt he hadde. 3340

3336. Hl. vnnethes.

The fairest children of the blood royal (161)
Of Israel he leet do gelde anoon,
And maked ech of hem to been his thral.
Amonges othere Daniel was oon,
That was the wysest child of everichoon; 3345
For he the dremes of the king expounded,
Wher-as in Chaldey clerk ne was ther noon
That wiste to what fyn his dremes souned.

This proude king leet make a statue of golde,
Sixty cubytes long, and seven in brede, 3350
To which image bothe yonge and olde (171)
Comaunded he to loute, and have in drede;
Or in a fourneys ful of flambes rede
He shal be brent, that wolde noght obeye.
But never wolde assente to that dede 3355
Daniel, ne his yonge felawes tweye.

3351. E. The; _rest_ To. E. Hn. Cm. he bothe; _rest omit_ he. 3352.
E. Hn. Cm. _omit_ he.

This king of kinges proud was and elaat,
He wende that god, that sit in magestee,
Ne mighte him nat bireve of his estaat:
But sodeynly he loste his dignitee, 3360
And lyk a beste him semed for to be, (181)
And eet hay as an oxe, and lay ther-oute;
In reyn with wilde bestes walked he,
Til certein tyme was y-come aboute.

[250: T. 14181-14212.]
And lyk an egles fetheres wexe his heres, 3365
His nayles lyk a briddes clawes were;
Til god relesed him a certein yeres,
And yaf him wit; and than with many a tere
He thanked god, and ever his lyf in fere
Was he to doon amis, or more trespace; 3370
And, til that tyme he leyd was on his bere, (191)
He knew that god was ful of might and grace.

3365. Wexe _is the right reading, whence_ Cm. wexsyn, _and_ Hl. Cp.
were (_for_ wexe); E. Hn. wax; Pt. Ln. was (_for_ wax).

BALTHASAR (BELSHAZZAR).

His sone, which that highte Balthasar,
That heeld the regne after his fader day,
He by his fader coude nought be war, 3375
For proud he was of herte and of array;
And eek an ydolastre was he ay.
His hye estaat assured him in pryde.
But fortune caste him doun, and ther he lay,
And sodeynly his regne gan divyde. 3380

3377. E. he was; _rest_ was he.

A feste he made un-to his lordes alle (201)
Up-on a tyme, and bad hem blythe be,
And than his officeres gan he calle?
?Goth, bringeth forth the vessels,? [tho] quod he,
?Which that my fader, in his prosperitee, 3385
Out of the temple of Ierusalem birafte,
And to our hye goddes thanke we
Of honour, that our eldres with us lafte.?

3384. _I supply_ tho. _For_ vessels, _see_ 3391, 3416, 3418.

His wyf, his lordes, and his concubynes
Ay dronken, whyl hir appetytes laste, 3390
Out of this noble vessels sundry wynes; (211)
And on a wal this king his yën caste,

And sey an hond armlees, that wroot ful faste,
For fere of which he quook and syked sore.
This hond, that Balthasar so sore agaste, 3395
Wroot _Mane, techel, phares_, and na-more.

[251: T. 14213-14244.]

In al that lond magicien was noon
That coude expoune what this lettre mente;
But Daniel expouned it anoon,
And seyde, ?king, god to thy fader lente 3400
Glorie and honour, regne, tresour, rente: (221)
And he was proud, and no-thing god ne dradde,
And therfor god gret wreche up-on him sente,
And him birafte the regne that he hadde.

3400. Hn. lente; _rest_ sente (_but see_ l. 3403).

He was out cast of mannes companye, 3405
With asses was his habitacioun,
And eet hey as a beste in weet and drye,
Til that he knew, by grace and by resoun,
That god of heven hath dominacioun
Over every regne and every creature; 3410
And thanne had god of him compassioun, (231)
And him restored his regne and his figure.

Eek thou, that art his sone, art proud also,
And knowest alle these thinges verraily,
And art rebel to god, and art his fo. 3415

Thou drank eek of his vessels boldely;
Thy wyf eek and thy wenches sinfully
Dronke of the same vessels sondry wynes,
And heriest false goddes cursedly;
Therfor to thee y-shapen ful gret pyne is. 3420

This hand was sent from god, that on the walle (241)
Wroot _mane, techel, phares_, truste me;
Thy regne is doon, thou weyest noght at alle;
Divyded is thy regne, and it shal be
To Medes and to Perses yeven,? quod he. 3425
And thilke same night this king was slawe,
And Darius occupyeth his degree,
Thogh he therto had neither right ne lawe.

3422. E. Hn. Cp. Hl. truste; Pt. trest; Ln. trust; Cm. trust to. See
B. 4214. 3425. E. _om._ yeven.

[252: T. 14245-14276.]

Lordinges, ensample heer-by may ye take
How that in lordshipe is no sikernesse; 3430
For whan fortune wol a man forsake, (251)
She bereth away his regne and his richesse,
And eek his freendes, bothe more and lesse;

For what man that hath freendes thurgh fortune,
Mishap wol make hem enemys, I gesse: 3435
This proverbe is ful sooth and ful commune.

3435. E. as I; _the rest omit_ as.

CENOBIA (ZENOBIA).

Cenobia, of Palimerie quene,
As writen Persiens of hir noblesse,
So worthy was in armes and so kene,
That no wight passed hir in hardinesse, 3440
Ne in linage, ne in other gentillesse. (261)
Of kinges blode of Perse is she descended;
I seye nat that she hadde most fairnesse,
But of hir shape she mighte nat been amended.

3437. _So_ E. Hn. Cm.; _and_ Cp. _has the heading_ ?De Cenobia
Palymerie regina. 3441. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. ne in; E. nor in; Hn. ne; Cm.
nor; (ne in = n?in).

From hir childhede I finde that she fledde 3445
Office of wommen, and to wode she wente;
And many a wilde hertes blood she shedde
With arwes brode that she to hem sente.
She was so swift that she anon hem hente,
And whan that she was elder, she wolde kille 3450
Leouns, lepardes, and beres al to-rente, (271)
And in hir armes welde hem at hir wille.

She dorste wilde beestes dennes seke,
And rennen in the montaignes al the night,
And slepen under a bush, and she coude eke 3455
Wrastlen by verray force and verray might
With any yong man, were he never so wight;
Ther mighte no-thing in hir armes stonde.
She kepte hir maydenhod from every wight,
To no man deigned hir for to be bonde. 3460

3455. E. Hn. Cm. the; _rest_ a. E. bussh.

[253: T. 14277-14308.]

But atte laste hir frendes han hir married (281)
To Odenake, a prince of that contree,
Al were it so that she hem longe taried;
And ye shul understonde how that he
Hadde swiche fantasyes as hadde she. 3465
But nathelees, whan they were knit in-fere,
They lived in loye and in felicitee;
For ech of hem hadde other leef and dere.

3462. E. Hn. Cm. Onedake; Cp. Ln. Hl. Odenake; Pt. Odonak. 3468. E.
oother lief.

Save o thing, that she never wolde assente
By no wey, that he sholde by hir lye 3470
But ones, for it was hir pleyn entente (291)
To have a child, the world to multiplie;
And al-so sone as that she mighte espye
That she was nat with childe with that dede,
Than wolde she suffre him doon his fantasye 3475
Eft-sone, and nat but ones, out of drede.

And if she were with childe at thilke cast,
Na-more sholde he pleyen thilke game
Til fully fourty dayes weren past;
Than wolde she ones suffre him do the same. 3480
Al were this Odenake wilde or tame, (301)
He gat na-more of hir, for thus she seyde,
?It was to wyves lecherye and shame
In other cas, if that men with hem pleyde.?

3481. E. Hn. Cm. Onedake; _rest_ Odenake.

Two sones by this Odenake hadde she, 3485
The whiche she kepte in vertu and lettrure;
But now un-to our tale turne we.
I seye, so worshipful a creature,
And wys therwith, and large with mesure,
So penible in the warre, and curteis eke, 3490
Ne more labour mighte in werre endure, (311)
Was noon, thogh al this world men sholde seke.

3485. E. _om._ this. E. Hn. Cm. Onedake; _rest_ Odenake. 3492. E.
thogh; Hn. thogh. E. wolde; _rest_ sholde (schulde).

[254: T. 14309-14340.]

Hir riche array ne mighte nat be told
As wel in vessel as in hir clothing;
She was al clad in perree and in gold, 3495
And eek she lafte noght, for noon hunting,
To have of sondry tonges ful knowing,
Whan that she leyser hadde, and for to entende
To lernen bokes was al hir lyking,
How she in vertu mighte hir lyf dispende. 3500

And, shortly of this storie for to trete, (321)
So doughty was hir housbonde and eek she,
That they conquered many regnes grete
In the orient, with many a fair citee,
Apertenaunt un-to the magestee 3505
Of Rome, and with strong hond helde hem ful faste;
Ne never mighte hir fo-men doon hem flee,
Ay whyl that Odenakes dayes laste.

3501. E. proces; _rest_ storie. 3508. Hl. Odenakes; _rest_ Onedakes,

Odenake.

Hir batailles, who-so list hem for to rede,
Agayn Sapor the king and othere mo, 3510
And how that al this proces fil in dede, (331)
Why she conquered and what title had therto,
And after of hir meschief and hir wo,
How that she was biseged and y-take,
Let him un-to my maister Petrark go, 3515
That writ y-nough of this, I undertake.

3511. E. omits that. 3512. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. had; which E. Hn. Cm.
omit.

When Odenake was deed, she mightily
The regnes heeld, and with hir propre honde
Agayn hir foos she faught so cruelly,
That ther nas king ne prince in al that londe 3520
That he nas glad, if that he grace fonde, (341)
That she ne wolde up-on his lond werreye;
With hir they made alliaunce by bonde
To been in pees, and lete hir ryde and pleye.

3517. So Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl.; E. Hn. Cm. Onedake. 3518. E. honde; Pt.
honde; Ln. hande; rest hond. 3523. MSS. made; read maden?

[255: T. 14341-14372.]

The emperour of Rome, Claudius, 3525
Ne him bifore, the Romain Galien,
Ne dorste never been so corageous,
Ne noon Ermyne, ne noon Egipcien,
Ne Surrien, ne noon Arabien,
Within the feld that dorste with hir fighte 3530
Lest that she wolde hem with hir hondes slen, (351)
Or with hir meynee putten hem to flighte.

3530. Cp. feeld; Hl. feld; Ln. felde; Pt. feelde; E. Hn. Cm. feeldes.

In kinges habit wente hir sones two,
As heires of hir fadres regnes alle,
And Hermanno, and Thymalaö 3535
Her names were, as Persiens hem calle.
But ay fortune hath in hir hony galle;
This mighty quene may no whyl endure.
Fortune out of hir regne made hir falle
To wrecchednesse and to misaventure. 3540

Aurelian, whan that the governaunce (361)
Of Rome cam in-to his hondes tweye,
He shoop up-on this queen to do vengeaunce,
And with his legiouns he took his weye
Toward Cenobie, and, shortly for to seye, 3545
He made hir flee, and atte laste hir hente,

And fettred hir, and eek hir children tweye,
And wan the lond, and hoom to Rome he wente.

Amonges othere thinges that he wan,
Hir char, that was with gold wrought and perree, 3550
This grete Romain, this Aurelian, (371)
Hath with him lad, for that men sholde it see.
Biforen his triumphe walketh she
With gilte cheynes on hir nekke hanging;
Corouned was she, as after hir degree, 3555
And ful of perree charged hir clothing.

3553. _MSS._ Biforn, Bifore (Hl. Bifore this). 3555. E. _omits_ as.

[256: T. 14373-14708.]

Allas, fortune! she that whylom was
Dredful to kinges and to emperoures,
Now gaureth al the peple on hir, allas!
And she that helmed was in starke stoures, 3560
And wan by force tounes stronge and toures, (381)
Shal on hir heed now were a vitremyte;
And she that bar the ceptre ful of floures
Shal bere a distaf, hir cost for to quyte. [T. 14380.]

3560. E. shoures. 3562. Hl. wyntermyte. 3564. Hn. Cm. Ln. cost; Pt.
coste; E. Cp. costes; Hl. self.

(NERO _follows in_ T.; _see_ p. 259.)

DE PETRO REGE ISPANNIE.

O noble, o worthy Petro, glorie of Spayne, [T. 14685.
Whom fortune heeld so hy in magestee, 3566
Wel oughten men thy pitous deeth complayne!
Out of thy lond thy brother made thee flee;
And after, at a sege, by subtiltee,
Thou were bitrayed, and lad un-to his tente, 3570
Wher-as he with his owene hond slow thee, (391)
Succeding in thy regne and in thy rente.

3570. E. Hn. Cm. bitraysed.

The feeld of snow, with thegle of blak ther-inne, [T. 14693.
Caught with the lymrod, coloured as the glede,
He brew this cursednes and al this sinne. 3575
The ?wikked nest? was werker of this nede;
Noght Charles Oliver, that ay took hede
Of trouthe and honour, but of Armorike
Genilon Oliver, corrupt for mede,
Broghte this worthy king in swich a brike. 3580

3577. E. Hn. Cm. took ay; _rest_ ay took.

DE PETRO REGE DE CIPRO.

O worthy Petro, king of Cypre, also, (401)
That Alisaundre wan by heigh maistrye,
Ful many a hethen wroghtestow ful wo,
Of which thyn owene liges hadde envye,
And, for no thing but for thy chivalrye, 3585
They in thy bedde han slayn thee by the morwe.
Thus can fortune hir wheel governe and gye,
And out of loye bringe men to sorwe. [T. 14708.]

[257: T. 14709-14740.]

DE BARNABO DE LUMBARDIA.

Of Melan grete Barnabo Viscounte,
God of delyt, and scourge of Lombardy, 3590
Why sholde I nat thyn infortune acounte, (411)
Sith in estaat thou clombe were so hye?
Thy brother sone, that was thy double allye,
For he thy newew was, and sone-in-lawe,
With-inne his prisoun made thee to dye; 3595
But why, ne how, noot I that thou were slawe.

DE HUGELINO, COMITE DE PIZE.

Of the erl Hugelyn of Pyse the langour
Ther may no tonge telle for pitee;
But litel out of Pyse stant a tour,
In whiche tour in prisoun put was he, 3600
And with him been his litel children three. (421)
The eldeste scarsly fyf yeer was of age.
Allas, fortune! it was greet crueltee
Swiche briddes for to putte in swiche a cage!

3597. E. Pyze; Hn. Pize; Cp. Pyse; Pt. Ln. Hl. Pise. 3599. E. Hn. Cm.
Pize; Cp. Pyse; Pt. Ln. Hl. Pise.

Dampned was he to deye in that prisoun, 3605
For Roger, which that bisshop was of Pyse,
Hadde on him maad a fals suggestioun,
Thurgh which the peple gan upon him ryse,
And putten him to prisoun in swich wyse
As ye han herd, and mete and drink he hadde 3610
So smal, that wel unnethe it may suffyse, (431)
And therwith-al it was ful povre and badde.

3606. E. Hn. Pize; Cm. Pyze; Cp. Pyse; Pt. Ln. Hl. Pise. 3611. E. Pt.
omit wel.

And on a day bifil that, in that hour,
Whan that his mete wont was to be broght,
The gayler shette the dores of the tour. 3615
He herde it wel,?but he spak right noght,

And in his herte anon ther fil a thoght,
That they for hunger wolde doon him dyen.
?Allas!? quod he, ?allas! that I was wroght!?
Therwith the teres fillen from his yën. 3620

3616. E. Hn. spak right; Cp. Hl. saugh it; Pt. seegh it; Ln. sawe it.

[258: T. 14741-14772.]

His yonge sone, that three yeer was of age, (441)
Un-to him seyde, ?fader, why do ye wepe?
Whan wol the gayler bringen our potage,
Is ther no morsel breed that ye do kepe?
I am so hungry that I may nat slepe, 3625
Now wolde god that I mighte slepen ever!
Than sholde nat hunger in my wombe crepe;
Ther is no thing, save breed, that me were lever.?

3622. E. Hn. _repeat_ fader. 3628. Ln. Hl. saue; Cp. Pt. sauf; E. Hn.
but.

Thus day by day this child bigan to crye,
Til in his fadres barme adoun it lay, 3630
And seyde, ?far-wel, fader, I moot dye,? (451)
And kiste his fader, and deyde the same day.
And whan the woful fader deed it sey,
For wo his armes two he gan to byte,
And seyde, ?allas, fortune! and weylaway! 3635
Thy false wheel my wo al may I wyte!?

3632. E. Hl. dyde; Hn. Cp. deyde; _see_ l. 3644.

His children wende that it for hunger was
That he his armes gnou, and nat for wo,
And seyde, ?fader, do nat so, allas!
But rather eet the flesh upon us two; 3640
Our flesh thou yaf us, tak our flesh us fro (461)
And eet y-nough: right thus they to him seyde,
And after that, with-in a day or two,
They leyde hem in his lappe adoun, and deyde.

3640. E. flessh. 3641. E. flessh. E. Hn. _omit_ vs _after_ yaf.

Him-self, despeired, eek for hunger starf; 3645
Thus ended is this mighty Erl of Pyse;
From heigh estaat fortune away him carf.
Of this Tragedie it oghte y-nough suffyse.
Who-so wol here it in a lenger wyse,
Redeth the grete poete of Itaille, 3650
That highte Dant, for he can al devyse (471)
Fro point to point, nat o word wol he faille. [T. 14772.

3646. _See note to_ l. 3597.

[259: T. 14381-14412.] (_For_ T. 14773, _see_ p. 269; _for_ T. 14380, _see_ p. 256.)

NERO.

Al-though that Nero were as vicious [T. 14381.
As any feend that lyth ful lowe adoun,
Yet he, as telleth us Swetonius, 3655
This wyde world hadde in subieccioun,
Both Est and West, South and Septemtrioun;
Of rubies, saphires, and of perles whyte
Were alle his clothes brouded up and doun;
For he in gemmes greetly gan delyte. 3660

3653. E. Hn. Cm. _omit_ as. 3654. E. in helle; _rest_ full lowe.
3657. E. Hn. Cm. North (_but read_ South); Cp. Pt. Ln. HI _omit_!

More delicat, more pompous of array, (481)
More proud was never emperour than he;
That ilke cloth, that he had wered o day,
After that tyme he nolde it never see.
Nettes of gold-thred hadde he gret plentee 3665
To fische in Tybre, whan him liste pleye.
His lustes were al lawe in his decree,
For fortune as his freend him wolde obeye.

He Rome brende for his delicacye;
The senatours he slow up-on a day. 3670
To here how men wolde wepe and crye; (491)
And slow his brother, and by his sister lay.
His moder made he in pitous array;
For he hir wombe slitte, to biholde
Wher he conceyved was; so weilawey! 3675
That he so litel of his moder tolde!

3673, 6. E. mooder.

No tere out of his yën for that sighte
Ne cam, but seyde, ?a fair womman was she?
Gret wonder is, how that he coude or mighte
Be domesman of hir dede beautee. 3680
The wyn to bringen him comaunded he, (501)
And drank anon; non other wo he made.
Whan might is loyned un-to crueltee,
Allas! to depe wol the venim wade!

3682. E. noon oother.

[260: T. 14413-14444.]

In youthe a maister hadde this emperour, 3685
To teche him letterure and curteisye,
For of moralitee he was the flour,
As in his tyme, but-if bokes lye;

And whyl this maister hadde of him maistrye,
He made him so conning and so souple 3690
That longe tyme it was er tyrannye (511)
Or any vyce dorste on him uncouple.

This Seneca, of which that I devyse,
By-cause Nero hadde of him swich drede,
For he fro vyces wolde him ay chastyse 3695
Discreetly as by worde and nat by dede;?
?Sir,? wolde he seyn, ?an emperour moot nede
Be vertuous, and hate tyrannye??
For which he in a bath made him to blede
On bothe his armes, til he moste dye. 3700

3694. Cm. Bycause that. 3695. Hn. Cm. ay; _rest omit._ [3699.
Misnumbered 520 _in the_ Aldine Edition; _but corrected further on._]

This Nero hadde eek of acustumaunce (521)
In youthe ageyn his maister for to ryse,
Which afterward him thoughte a greet grevaunce;
Therfor he made him deyen in this wyse.
But natheles this Seneca the wyse 3705
Chees in a bath to deye in this manere
Rather than han another tormentyse;
And thus hath Nero slayn his maister dere.

3703. E. (_only_) _omits_ a. 3707. E. any oother.

Now fil it so that fortune list no lenger
The hye pryde of Nero to cheryce; 3710
For though that he were strong, yet was she strengre; (531)
She thoughte thus, ?by god, I am to nyce
To sette a man that is fulfild of vyce
In heigh degree, and emperour him calle.
By god, out of his sete I wol him tryce; 3715
When he leest weneth, sonest shal he falle.?

3711. E. Hn. was; _the rest_ were.

[261: T. 14445-14476.]

The peple roos up-on him on a night
For his defaute, and whan he it espyed,
Out of his dores anon he hath him dight
Alone, and, ther he wende han ben allyed, 3720
He knocked faste, and ay, the more he cryed, (541)
The faster shette they the dores alle;
Tho wiste he wel he hadde him-self misgyed,
And wente his wey, no lenger dorste he calle.

3723. E. Hn. _wrongly repeat_ l. 3731 _here._

The peple cryde and rombled up and doun, 3725
That with his eres herde he how they seyde,

?Wher is this false tyraunt, this Neroun??
For fere almost out of his wit he breyde,
And to his goddes pitously he preyde
For socour, but it mighte nat bityde. 3730
For drede of this, him thoughte that he deyde, (551)
And ran in-to a gardin, him to hyde.

And in this gardin fond he cherles tweye
That seten by a fyr ful greet and reed,
And to thise cherles two he gan to preye 3735
To sleen him, and to girden of his heed,
That to his body, whan that he were deed,
Were no despyt y-doon, for his defame.
Him-self he slow, he coude no better reed,
Of which fortune lough, and hadde a game. 3740

3733. E. Hn. foond. 3734. E. Hn. Cm. _omit_ ful.

DE OLOFERNO (HOLOFERNES).

Was never capitayn under a king (561)
That regnes mo putte in subieccioun,
Ne strengere was in feeld of alle thing,
As in his tyme, ne gretter of renoun,
Ne more pompous in heigh presumpcioun 3745
Than Oloferne, which fortune ay kiste
So likerously, and ladde him up and doun
Til that his heed was of, er that he wiste.

[262: T. 14477-14508.]

Nat only that this world hadde him in awe
For lesinge of richesse or libertee, 3750
But he made every man reneye his lawe. (571)
?Nabugodonosor was god,? seyde he,
?Noon other god sholde adoured be.?
Ageyns his heste no wight dar trespace
Save in Bethulia, a strong citee, 3755
Wher Eliachim a prest was of that place.

3751. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. _omit_ he. 3753. E. Hn. Cm. adoured; Cp. Pt. Ln.
Hl. honoured. 3754. E. Hn. dorste; _rest_ dar.

But tak kepe of the deeth of Olofern;
Amidde his host he dronke lay a night,
With-inne his tente, large as is a bern,
And yit, for al his pompe and al his might, 3760
Iudith, a womman, as he lay upright, (581)
Sleping, his heed of smoot, and from his tente
Ful prively she stal from every wight,
And with his heed unto hir toun she wente.

DE REGE ANTHIOCHO ILLUSTRIO.

What nedeth it of King Anthiochus 3765

To telle his hye royal magestee,
His hye pryde, his werkes venimous?
For swich another was ther noon as he.
Rede which that he was in Machabee,
And rede the proude wordes that he seyde, 3770
And why he fil fro heigh prosperitee, (591)
And in an hil how wrechedly he deyde.

Fortune him hadde enhaunced so in pryde
That verrailly he wende he mighte attayne
Unto the sterres, upon every syde, 3775
And in balance weyen ech montayne,
And alle the flodes of the see restrayne.
And goddes peple hadde he most in hate,
Hem wolde he sleen in torment and in payne,
Wening that god ne mighte his pryde abate. 3780

3777. Cm. flody; _rest_ floodes. 3778. E. Hn. moost.

[263: T. 14509-14540.]

And for that Nichanor and Thimothee (601)
Of lewes weren venquissed mightily,
Unto the lewes swich an hate hadde he
That he bad greithe his char ful hastily,
And swoor, and seyde, ful despitously, 3785
Unto Ierusalem he wolde eft-sone,
To wreken his ire on it ful cruelly;
But of his purpos he was let ful sone.

3784. E. greithen; Hn. greithe; Cm. ordeyne. E. Hn. chaar; Cm. char.

God for his manace him so sore smoot
With invisible wounde, ay incurable, 3790
That in his guttes carf it so and boot (611)
That his peynes weren importable.
And certainly, the wreche was resonable,
For many a mannes guttes dide he peyne;
But from his purpos cursed and dampnable 3795
For al his smert he wolde him nat restreyne;

But bad anon apparailen his host,
And sodeynly, er he of it was war,
God daunted al his pryde and al his bost.
For he so sore fil out of his char, 3800
That it his limes and his skin to-tar, (621)
So that he neither mighte go ne ryde,
But in a chayer men aboute him bar,
Al for-brused, bothe bak and syde.

3797, 9. E. hoost, boost. 3801. E. lemes; Hn. Cp. Hl. lymes; Cm.
lymys; Ln. limes.

The wreche of god him smoot so cruelly 3805

That thurgh his body wikked wormes crepte;
And ther-with-al he stank so horribly,
That noon of al his meynee that him kepte,
Whether so he wook or elles slepte,
Ne mighte noght for stink of him endure. 3810
In this meschief he wayled and eek wepte, (631)
And knew god lord of every creature.

3807. E. _om._ so; E. horribly. 3809. E. Hn. Cm. so; Pt. Hl. that;
Cp. Ln. so that. 3810. E. Hn. for; _rest_ the.

[264: T. 14541-14572.]

To al his host and to him-self also
Ful wlatson was the stink of his careyne;
No man ne mighte him bere to ne fro. 3815
And in this stink and this horrible peyne
He starf ful wrecchedly in a monteyne.
Thus hath this robbour and this homicyde,
That many a man made to wepe and pleyne,
Swich guerdon as bilongeth unto pryde. 3820

DE ALEXANDRO.

The storie of Alisaundre is so comune, (641)
That every wight that hath discrecioun
Hath herd somewhat or al of his fortune.
This wyde world, as in conclusioun,
He wan by strengthe, or for his hye renoun 3825
They weren glad for pees un-to him sende.
The pryde of man and beste he leyde adoun,
Wher-so he cam, un-to the worldes ende.

3827. beste] Hl. bost.

Comparisoun might never yit be maked
Bitwixe him and another conquerour; 3830
For al this world for drede of him hath quaked, (651)
He was of knighthode and of fredom flour;
Fortune him made the heir of hir honour;
Save wyn and wommen, no-thing mighte aswage
His hye entente in armes and labour; 3835
So was he ful of leonyn corage.

3830. E. Hn. Bitwixen. 3832. E. Hn. Cm. _omit_ was. 3834. E. man:
rest thing.

What preys were it to him, though I yow tolde
Of Darius, and an hundred thousand mo,
Of kinges, princes, erles, dukes bolde,
Whiche he conquered, and broghte hem in-to wo? 3840
I seye, as fer as man may ryde or go, (661)
The world was his, what sholde I more devyse?
For though I write or tolde you evermo

Of his knighthode, it mighte nat suffyse.

3837. Cm. preys; E. Hn. pris: Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. pite. 3843. Hl.
omits.

[265: T. 14573-14604.]

Twelf yeer he regned, as seith Machabee; 3845
Philippe's sone of Macedoyne he was,
That first was king in Grece the contree.
O worthy gentil Alisaundre, allas!
That ever sholde fallen swich a cas!
Empoisoned of thyn owene folk thou were; 3850
Thy _sys_ fortune hath turned into _as;_ (671)
And yit for thee ne weep she never a tere!

3851. E. Hn. Cm. aas; Cp. Pt. Hl. an aas; Ln. an as. 3852. E. Hn. Cm.
omit yit; Hl. _has_ right.

Who shal me yeven teres to compleyne
The death of gentillesse and of fraunchyse,
That al the world welded in his demeyne, 3855
And yit him thoughte it mighte nat suffyse?
So ful was his corage of heigh empryse.
Allas! who shal me helpe to endyte
False fortune, and poison to despyse,
The whiche two of al this wo I wyte? 3860

DE IULIO CESARE.

By wisdom, manhede, and by greet labour (681)
Fro humble bed to royal magestee,
Up roos he, Iulius the conquerour,
That wan al thoccident by lond and see,
By strengthe of hond, or elles by treetee, 3865
And un-to Rome made hem tributarie;
And sitthe of Rome the emperour was he,
Til that fortune wex his adversarie.

3861. E. Cp. Pt. Ln. _omit_ greet. 3862. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. humble bed;
Pt. Cp. Ln. humbledede.

O mighty Cesar, that in Thessalye
Ageyn Pompeius, fader thyn in lawe, 3870
That of thorient hadde al the chivalrye (691)
As fer as that the day biginneth dawe,
Thou thurgh thy knighthode hast hem take and slawe,
Save fewe folk that with Pompeius fledde,
Thurgh which thou puttest al thorient in awe. 3875
Thanke fortune, that so wel thee spedde!

3870. _MSS._ Pompeus, Pompilus.

[266: T. 14605-14636.]

But now a litel whyl I wol biwaille
This Pompeius, this noble governour
Of Rome, which that fleigh at this bataille;
I seye, oon of his men, a fals traitour, 3880
His heed of smoot, to winnen him favour (701)
Of Iulius, and him the heed he broghte.
Allas, Pompey, of thorient conquerour,
That fortune unto swich a fyn thee broghte!

[3881. _Misnumbered_ 700 _in the_ Aldine edition.]

To Rome ageyn repaireth Iulius 3885
With his triumphe, laureat ful hye,
But on a tyme Brutus Cassius,
That ever hadde of his hye estaat envye,
Ful prively hath maad conspiracye
Ageins this Iulius, in subtil wyse, 3890
And cast the place, in whiche he sholde dye (711)
With boydekins, as I shal yow devyse.

3887. _So in the MSS.; observe_ hath _in l._ 3889.

This Iulius to the Capitolie wente
Upon a day, as he was wont to goon,
And in the Capitolie anon him hente 3895
This false Brutus, and his othere foon,
And stikede him with boydekins anoon
With many a wounde, and thus they lete him lye;
But never gronte he at no strook but oon,
Or elles at two, but-if his storie lye. 3900

So manly was this Iulius at herte (721)
And so wel lovede estaatly honestee,
That, though his deedly woundes sore smerte,
His mantel over his hippes casteth he,
For no man sholde seen his privitee. 3905
And, as he lay on deyng in a traunce,
And wiste verrailly that deed was he,
Of honestee yit hadde he remembraunce.

3904. Cm. castyth; _rest_ caste, cast. 3906. Cm. on deyng; Pt. on
dyinge; Ln. in deynge; E. Hn. of dyng.

[267: T. 14637-14668.]

Lucan, to thee this storie I recomende,
And to Sweton, and to Valerie also, 3910
That of this storie wryten word and ende, (731)
How that to thise grete conqueroures two
Fortune was first freend, and sithen fo.
No man ne truste up-on hir favour longe,
But have hir in awayt for ever-mo. 3915
Witnesse on alle thise conqueroures stronge.

3910. Hl. Valirien; _rest_ Valerius; ed. 1561, Valerie. 3911. _The
MSS. have_ word (_for_ ord); _see the note._ 3913. E. sitthe; Hl.
siththen; Hn. Cm. siththe a.

CRESUS.

This riche Cresus, whylom king of Lyde,
Of whiche Cresus Cyrus sore him dradde,
Yit was he caught amidde al his pryde,
And to be brent men to the fyr him ladde. 3920
But swich a reyn doun fro the welkne shadde (741)
That slow the fyr, and made him to escape;
But to be war no grace yet he hadde,
Til fortune on the galwes made him gape.

Whan he escaped was, he can nat stente 3925
For to biginne a newe werre agayn.
He wende wel, for that fortune him sente
Swich hap, that he escaped thurgh the rayn,
That of his foos he mighte nat be slayn;
And eek a sweven up-on a night he mette, 3930
Of which he was so proud and eek so fayn, (751)
That in vengeaunce he al his herte sette.

Up-on a tree he was, as that him thoughte,
Ther Iuppiter him wesh, bothe bak and syde,
And Phebus eek a fair towaille him broughte 3935
To drye him with, and ther-for wex his pryde;
And to his doghter, that stood him bisyde,
Which that he knew in heigh science habounde,
He bad hir telle him what it signifyde,
And she his dreem bigan right thus expounde. 3940

3936. Cm. Pt. Ln. wex; _rest_ wax.

[268: T. 14669-14684.]

?The tree,? quod she, ?the galwes is to mene, (761)
And Iuppiter bitokneth snow and reyn,
And Phebus, with his towaille so clene,
Tho ben the sonne stremes for to seyn;
Thou shalt anhangd be, fader, certeyn; 3945
Reyn shal thee wasshe, and sonne shal thee drye;?
Thus warned she him ful plat and ful pleyn,
His doghter, which that called was Phanye.

3944. E. bemes; _rest_ stremes. 3947. Pt. Ln. Hl. she; _rest omit_.

Anhangd was Cresus, the proude king,
His royal trone mighte him nat availle.? 3950
Tragedie is noon other maner thing, (771)
Ne can in singing crye ne biwaille,
But for that fortune alwey wol assaille

With unwar strook the regnes that ben proude;
For when men trusteth hir, than wol she faille, 3955
And covere hir brighte face with a cloude. [See p. 256.]

Explicit Tragedia.

=Here stinteth the Knight the Monk of his Tale.=

3951. Cm. Tragedy is; _so_ Cp. Pt.; Ln. Tregedrye in; E. Hn. Tragedies;
Hl. Tegredis(!). 3953. Cm. Hl. for; _rest omit_. [3956. _Reckoned
as 775 in the_ Aldine edition; _but really_ 776.] _After l._ 3956, E.
Hn. Cm. _have_ ll. 3565-3652. COLOPHON. _From_ E. Hn. Here is ended
the Monkes tale.

[269: T. 14773-14798.]

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THE PROLOGUE OF THE NONNE PRESTES TALE.

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=The prologue of the Nonne Preestes Tale.=

?Ho!? quod the knight, ?good sir, na-more of this,
That ye han seyde is right y-nough, y-wis,
And mochel more; for litel hevinesse
Is right y-nough to mochel folk, I gesse. 3960
I seye for me, it is a greet disese
Wher-as men han ben in greet welthe and ese,
To heren of hir sodeyn fal, allas!
And the contrarie is loie and greet solas,
As whan a man hath been in povre estaat, 3965
And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat, (10)
And ther abyde in prosperitee,
Swich thing is gladsom, as it thinketh me,
And of swich thing were goodly for to telle?
?Ye,? quod our hoste, ?by seint Poules belle, 3970
Ye seye right sooth; this monk, he clappeth loude,
He spak how ?fortune covered with a cloude?
I noot never what, and als of a ?Tragedie?
Right now ye herde, and parde! no remedie
It is for to biwaille, ne compleyne 3975
That that is doon, and als it is a peyne, (20)
As ye han seyde, to here of hevinesse.
Sir monk, na-more of this, so god yow blesse!
Your tale anoyeth al this companye;
Swich talking is nat worth a boterflye; 3980
For ther-in is ther no desport ne game.
Wherfor, sir Monk, or dan Piers by your name,
[270: T. 14799-14826.]
I preye yow hertely, telle us somewhat elles,
For sikerly, nere clinking of your belles,
That on your brydel hange on every syde, 3985

By heven king, that for us alle dyde, (30)
 I sholde er this han fallen doun for slepe,
 Although the slough had never been so depe;
 Than had your tale al be told in vayn.
 For certainly, as that these clerkes seyn, 3990
 ?Wher-as a man may have noon audience,
 Noght helpeth it to tellen his sentence.?
 And wel I woot the substance is in me,
 If any thing shal wel reported be.
 Sir, sey somewhat of hunting, I yow preye.? 3995
 ?Nay,? quod this monk, ?I have no lust to pleye;
 Now let another telle, as I have told.? (40)
 Than spak our host, with rude speche and bold,
 And seyde un-to the Nonnes Preest anon,
 ?Com neer, thou preest, com hider, thou sir lohn, 4000
 Tel us swich thing as may our hertes glade,
 Be blythe, though thou ryde up-on a lade.
 What though thyn hors be bothe foule and lene,
 If he wol serve thee, rekke nat a bene;
 Look that thyn herte be mery evermo.? 4005
 ?Yis, sir,? quod he, ?yis, host, so mote I go, (50)
 But I be mery, y-wis, I wol be blamed:??
 And right anon his tale he hath attamed,
 And thus he seyde un-to us everichon,
 This swete preest, this goodly man, sir lohn. 4010

Explicit.

3982. Pt. or; Hn. o; _rest omit._ 4002. though] Hl. al-though.
 4004. Pt. Hl. rek. 4005. E. Hn. murie; _rest_ mery. 4006. Cp. Ln.
 Yis, ost, quod he, so mote I ryde or go.

[271: T. 14827-14852.]

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THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

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

A povre widwe, somdel stope in age,
 Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cotage,
 Bisyde a grove, standing in a dale.
 This widwe, of which I telle yow my tale,
 Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf, 4015
 In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,
 For litel was hir catel and hir rente;
 By housbondrye, of such as God hir sente,
 She fond hir-self, and eek hir doghtren two.
 Three large sowes hadde she, and namo, 4020
 Three kyn, and eek a sheep that highte Malle. (11)

Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,
 In which she eet ful many a splendre meel.
 Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.
 No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte; 4025
 Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.
 Repleccioun ne made hir never syk;
 Attempree dyete was al hir phisyk,
 And exercyse, and hertes suffisaunce.
 The goute lette hir no-thing for to daunce, 4030
 Napoplexye shente nat hir heed; (21)
 No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed;
 Hir bord was served most with whyt and blak,
 Milk and broun breed, in which she fond no lak,
 Seynd bacoun, and somtyme an ey or tweye, 4035
 For she was as it were a maner deye.

4011. E. Hn. stape; Ln. stoupe; _rest_ stope. 4013. E. grene. 4021.
 E. keen; Hn. Hl. Cp. kyn. 4031. E. Hn. Napoplexie; _rest_ Ne
 poplexie.

[272: T. 14853-14887.]

A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
 With stikkes, and a drye dich with-oute,
 In which she hadde a cok, hight Chauntecleer,
 In al the land of crowing nas his peer. 4040
 His vois was merier than the mery orgon (31)
 On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon;
 Wel sikerer was his crowing in his logge,
 Than is a klokke, or an abbey orlogge.
 By nature knew he ech ascencioun 4045
 Of equinoxial in thilke toun;
 For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,
 Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben amended.
 His comb was redder than the fyn coral,
 And batailed, as it were a castel-wal. 4050
 His bile was blak, and as the leet it shoon; (41)
 Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon;
 His nayles whytter than the lilie flour,
 And lyk the burned gold was his colour.
 This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce 4055
 Sevene hennes, for to doon al his plesaunce,
 Whiche were his sustres and his paramours,
 And wonder lyk to him, as of colours.
 Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
 Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote. 4060
 Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire, (51)
 And compaignable, and bar hir-self so faire,
 Sin thilke day that she was seven night old,
 That trewely she hath the herte in hold
 Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith; 4065
 He loved hir so, that wel was him therwith.
 But such a loye was it to here hem singe,
 Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,

In swete accord, ?my lief is faren in londe.?
For thilke tyme, as I have understonde, 4070
Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe. (61)

4039. E. Hn. heet; Cp. that highte; _rest_ that hight. 4041. E. Hn.
Cm. murier. E. Cm. murie. 4045. Hl. knew he; E. Pt. he crew; _rest_
he knew. 4046. E. Ln. _ins._ the _after_ Of. 4051. Hl. geet; Pt.
Ln. gete. 4054. Hl. Cp. Pt. Ln. burnischt. 4062. Hl. ful (_for_
so). 4068. E. Cm. Ln. bigan.

[273: T. 14888-14924.]

And so bifel, that in a daweninge,
As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
And next him sat this faire Pertelote, 4075
This Chauntecleer gan Gronen in his throte,
As man that in his dreem is drecched sore.
And whan that Pertelote thus herde him rore,
She was agast, and seyde, ?O herte dere,
What eyleth yow, to grone in this manere? 4080
Ye been a verray sleper, fy for shame!?
(71)
And he answerde and seyde thus, ?madame,
I pray yow, that ye take it nat a-grief:
By god, me mette I was in swich meschief
Right now, that yet myn herte is sore afright. 4085
Now god,? quod he, ?my swevene recche aright,
And keep my body out of foul prisoun!
Me mette, how that I romed up and doun
Withinne our yerde, wher-as I saugh a beste,
Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areste 4090
Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed.
(81)
His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;
And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eres,
With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heres;
His snowte smal, with glowinge eyen tweye. 4095
Yet of his look for fere almost I deye;
This caused me my Groning, doutelees.?

4072. a] E. Pt. the. 4079. E. o; _rest om._ 4084. mette] E.
thoughte. 4086. E. Hn. recche; Cm. reche; _rest_ rede, reed. 4091.
E. Hn. Cm. _om._ wolde.

?Avoy!? quod she, ?fy on yow, hertelees!
Allas!? quod she, ?for, by that god above,
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love; 4100
I can nat love a coward, by my feith. (91)
For certes, what so any womman seith,
We alle desyren, if it mighte be,
To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,
And secree, and no nigard, ne no fool, 4105
Ne him that is agast of every tool,
Ne noon avauntour, by that god above!
How dorste ye seyn for shame unto your love,

[274: T. 14925-14960.]

That any thing mighte make yow aferd?
Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd? 4110
Allas! and conne ye been agast of swevenis? (101)
No-thing, god wot, but vanitee, in sweven is.
Swevenes engendren of replecciouns,
And ofte of fume, and of complecciouns,
Whan humours been to habundant in a wight. 4115
Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-night,
Cometh of the grete superfluitee
Of youre rede _colera_, pardee,
Which causeth folk to dreden in here dremes
Of arwes, and of fyr with rede lemes, 4120
Of grete bestes, that they wol hem byte, (111)
Of kontek, and of whelpes grete and lyte;
Right as the humour of malencolye
Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,
For fere of blake beres, or boles blake, 4125
Or elles, blake develes wole hem take.
Of othere humours coude I telle also,
That werken many a man in sleep ful wo;
But I wol passe as lightly as I can.

4117. E. _om._ the, _and has_ greet. 4119. E. Hn. Cm. dreden; _rest_
dremen; _see_ 4159. 4121. E. grete; _rest_ rede. 4125. _So_ E. Hn.
Cm.; Cp. of beres and of boles; Ln. Pt. of beres and boles; Hl. of
beres or of boles.

Lo Catoun, which that was so wys a man, 4130
Seyde he nat thus, ne do no fors of dremes? (121)
Now, sire,? quod she, ?whan we flee fro the bemes,
For Goddes love, as tak som laxatyf;
Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
I counseille yow the beste, I wol nat lye, 4135
That bothe of colere and of malencolye
Ye purge yow; and for ye shul nat tarie,
Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
I shal my-self to herbes techen yow,
That shul ben for your hele, and for your prow; 4140
And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde, (131)
The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,
To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.
Forget not this, for goddes owene love!

[275: T. 14961-14996.]

Ye been ful colerik of compleccioun. 4145
Ware the sonne in his ascencioun
Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hote;
And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,
That ye shul have a fevere terciane,
Or an agu, that may be youre bane. 4150
A day or two ye shul have digestyves (141)
Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,
Of lauriol, centaure, and fumetere,
Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,

Of catapuce, or of gaytres beryis, 4155
Of erbe yve, growing in our yerd, that mery is;
Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem in.
Be mery, housbond, for your fader kin!
Dredeth no dreem; I can say yow na-more.?

4132. E. ye; _rest_ we. 4136, 7. Hl. _om._ 4155. Cp. Ln. gaytres;
E. gaitrys; Hn. gaytrys; Hl. gaytre; Cm. gattris; Pt. gatys. 4156.
Ln. that; Hn. they; _rest_ ther.

?Madame,? quod he, ?_graunt mercy_ of your lore. 4160
But nathelees, as touching daun Catoun, (151)
That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,
Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
By god, men may in olde bokes rede
Of many a man, more of auctoritee 4165
Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,
Than al the revers seyn of his sentence,
And han wel founden by experience,
That dremes ben significaciouns,
As wel of loye as tribulaciouns 4170
That folk enduren in this lyf present. (161)
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;
The verray preve sheweth it in dede.

4166. Hn. Cm. Cp. mote; E. moot. 4167. his] E. Pt. this. 4170. E.
Cm. Cp. Ln. Hl. _ins._ of _after_ as.

Oon of the gretteste auctours that men rede
Seith thus, that whylom two felawes wente 4175
On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente;
And happed so, thay come into a toun,
Wher-as ther was swich congregacioun
Of peple, and eek so streit of herbergage,
That they ne founde as mucche as o cotage, 4180
[276: T. 14997-15033.]
In which they bothe mighte y-logged be. (171)
Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,
As for that night, departen compaignye;
And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
And took his logging as it wolde falle. 4185
That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;
That other man was logged wel y-nough,
As was his aventure, or his fortune,
That us governeth alle as in commune. 4190

4174. Cm. autourys; Hl. auctorite; _rest_ auctour (_sic_). 4177. E.
Hn. coomen in; Cm. comyn in. 4181. E. logged.

And so bifel, that, longe er it were day, (181)
This man mette in his bed, ther-as he lay,
How that his felawe gan up-on him calle,
And seyde, ?allas! for in an oxes stalle

This night I shal be mordred ther I lye. 4195
 Now help me, dere brother, er I dye;
 In alle haste com to me,? he sayde.
 This man out of his sleep for fere abrayde;
 But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,
 He turned him, and took of this no keep; 4200
 Him thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee. (191)
 Thus twyës in his sleping dremed he.
 And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
 Cam, as him thoughte, and seide, ?I am now slawe;
 Bihold my bloody woundes, depe and wyde! 4205
 Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,
 And at the west gate of the toun,? quod he,
 ?A carte ful of donge ther shaltow see,
 In which my body is hid ful prively;
 Do thilke carte aresten boldely. 4210
 My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn;? (201)
 And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn,
 With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
 And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe;
 For on the morwe, as sone as it was day, 4215
 To his felawes in he took the way;
 And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
 [277: T. 15034-15069.]
 After his felawe he bigan to calle.

4194. Hl. Cp. Ln. oxe. 4196. er] Ln. ar; E. Hn. Hl. or. 4200. E.
 it; _rest_ this. 4210. E. arresten. 4217. Hl. Cp. Ln. oxe.

The hostiler answered him anon,
 And seyde, ?sire, your felawe is agon, 4220
 As sone as day he wente out of the toun.? (211)
 This man gan fallen in suspecioun,
 Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
 And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he lette,
 Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond 4225
 A dong-carte, as it were to donge lond,
 That was arrayed in the same wyse
 As ye han herd the dede man devyse;
 And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
 Vengeaunce and lustice of this felonye:? 4230
 ?My felawe mordred is this same night, (221)
 And in this carte he lyth gapinge upright.
 I crye out on the ministres,? quod he,
 ?That sholden kepe and reulen this citee;
 Harrow! allas! her lyth my felawe slayn!? 4235
 What sholde I more un-to this tale sayn?
 The peple out-sterter, and caste the cart to grounde,
 And in the middel of the dong they founde
 The dede man, that mordred was al newe.

4219. Cp. Hl. answered; E. Hn. answerde. 4222. Hl. _ins._ a _after_
 in; Cp. Pt. Ln. _ins._ gret (grete). 4226. Hn. Cm. Hl. wente as it
 were; Cp. Pt. Ln. as he wente. 4232. E. Hn. Cm. _ins._ heere _after_

carte.

O blisful god, that art so lust and trewe! 4240
Lo, how that thou biwreyst mordre alway! (231)
Mordre wol out, that see we day by day.
Mordre is so wlatson and abhominable
To god, that is so lust and resonable,
That he ne wol nat suffre it heled be; 4245
Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.
And right anoon, ministres of that toun
Han hent the carter, and so sore him pyned,
And eek the hostiler so sore engyned, 4250
That thay biknewe hir wikkednesse anoon, (241)
And were an-hanged by the nekke-boon.

4247. E. Hn. Cm. this (this is being pronounced this); rest this is. 4248. Hl. ins. the after anoon.

Here may men seen that dremes been to drede.
[278: T. 15070-15105.]
And certes, in the same book I rede,
Right in the nexte chapitre after this, 4255
(I gabbe nat, so have I loye or blis,)
Two men that wolde han passed over see,
For certeyn cause, in-to a fer contree,
If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,
That made hem in a citee for to tarie, 4260
That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde. (251)
But on a day, agayn the even-tyde,
The wind gan change, and blew right as hem leste.
Iolif and glad they wente un-to hir reste,
And casten hem ful erly for to saille; 4265
But to that oo man fil a greet mervaille.
That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,
Him mette a wonder dreem, agayn the day;
Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes syde,
And him comaunded, that he sholde abyde, 4270
And seyde him thus, ?if thou to-morwe wende, (261)
Thou shalt be dreynt; my tale is at an ende.?
He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,
And preyde him his viage for to lette;
As for that day, he preyde him to abyde. 4275
His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,
Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful faste.
?No dreem,? quod he, ?may so myn herte agaste,
That I wol lette for to do my thinges.
I sette not a straw by thy dreminges, 4280
For swevenes been but vanitees and lapes. (271)
Men dreme al-day of owles or of apes,
And eke of many a mase therwithal;
Men dreme of thing that nevere was ne shal.
But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde, 4285
And thus for-sleuthen wilfully thy tyde,

God wot it reweth me; and have good day.?
And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.
But er that he hadde halfe his cours y-seyled,
[279: T. 15106-15141.]

Noot I nat why, ne what mischaunce it eyled, 4290
But casuelly the shippes botme rente, (281)

And ship and man under the water wente
In sighte of othere shippes it byside,
That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere, 4295
By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,
That no man sholde been to recchelees
Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,
That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede.

4256. Cp. Ln. and (_for_ or). 4266. _All ins._ herkneth (herken)
after But. 4274. E. Hn. Hl. _om._ for; _cf._ l. 4265. 4275. E.
Hn. byde. 4282. E. Hn. or; _rest_ and. 4283. Hl. eke; _rest om._
4293. it] Cp. Pt. him; Ln. hem; Hl. ther. 4296. E. _ins._ yet _after_
olde.

Lo, in the lyf of seint Kenelm, I rede, 4300
That was Kenulphus sone, the noble king (291)

Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a thing;
A lyte er he was mordred, on a day,
His mordre in his avisioun he say.
His norice him expounded every del 4305

His sweven, and bad him for to kepe him wel
For traisoun; but he nas but seven yeer old,
And therefore litel tale hath he told
Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.
By god, I hadde lever than my sherte 4310
That ye had rad his legende, as have I. (301)

Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
Macrobeus, that writ the avisioun
In Affrike of the worthy Cipiou,
Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been 4315
Warning of thinges that men after seen.

4309. E. is; _rest_ was. 4313. Cm. thauysioun.

And forther-more, I pray yow loketh wel
In the olde testament, of Daniel,
If he held dremes any vanitee.
Reed eek of Ioseph, and ther shul ye see 4320
Wher dremes ben somtyme (I sey nat alle) (311)

Warning of thinges that shul after falle.
Loke of Egipt the king, daun Pharao,
His bakere and his boteler also,
Wher they ne felte noon effect in dremes. 4325

[280: T. 15142-15177.]
Who-so wol seken actes of sondry remes,
May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.

4319. E. Hn. Cp. heeld. 4324. Cm. Ln. boteler: Pt. botelere; E. Hn. butiller.

Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde king,
Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,
Which signified he sholde anhangd be? 4330
Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores wyf, (321)
That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
She dremed on the same night biforn,
How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn,
If thilke day he wente in-to bataille; 4335
She warned him, but it mighte nat availle;
He wente for to fighte nathelees,
But he was slayn anoon of Achilles.
But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle. 4340
Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun, (331)
That I shal han of this avisioun
Adversitee; and I seye forther-more,
That I ne telle of laxatyves no store,
For they ben venimous, I woot it wel; 4345
I hem defye, I love hem never a del.

4331. E. Cp. Pt. Ln. Adromacha. 4338. Hn. And (_for_ But). 4345.
Hn. Cm. venymes. it] Cp. Pt. Ln. right. 4346. E. Cp. diffye.

Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte al this;
Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
Of o thing god hath sent me large grace;
For whan I see the beautee of your face, 4350
Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yën, (341)
It maketh al my drede for to dyen;
For, also siker as _In principio_,
Mulier est hominis confusio;
Madame, the sentence of this Latin is? 4355
Womman is mannes loye and al his blis.
For whan I fele a-night your softe syde,
Al-be-it that I may nat on you ryde,
For that our perche is maad so narwe, alas!
I am so ful of loye and of solas 4360
That I defye bothe sweven and dreem.? (351)
[281: T. 15178-15211.]
And with that word he fley doun fro the beem,
For it was day, and eek his hennes alle;
And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
For he had founde a corn, lay in the yerd. 4365
Royal he was, he was namore aferd;
He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,
And trad as ofte, er that it was pryme.
He loketh as it were a grim leoun;
And on his toos he rometh up and doun, 4370
Him deynd not to sette his foot to grounde. (361)
He chukketh, whan he hath a corn y-founde,
And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.

Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture; 4375
And after wol I telle his aventure.

4361. E. Cp. diffye. 4362. Hn. Cm. fley; E. fly; Hl. Cp. fleigh.
4365. E. Hn. Cm. hadde. 4366. Cm. Ln. Royal; _rest_ Real; _but see_
l. 4374. 4367. He] E. And. 4368. Hl. that; _rest om._ Cp. Pt. Ln.
were. Hl. er that it was prime. 4370. Hl. toon. 4371. Cm.
deynyth. 4374. his] E. Cm. an.

Whan that the month in which the world bigan,
That highte March, whan god first maked man,
Was complet, and [y]-passed were also,
Sin March bigan, thritty dayes and two, 4380
Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde, (371)
His seven wyves walking by his syde,
Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus hadde y-ronne
Twenty degrees and oon, and somewhat more; 4385
And knew by kynde, and by noon other lore,
That it was pryme, and crew with blisful stevene.
?The sonne,? he sayde, ?is clomben up on hevene
Fourty degrees and oon, and more, y-wis.
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis, 4390
Herkneth thise blisful briddes how they singe, (381)
And see the fresshe floures how they springe;
Ful is myn herte of revel and solas.?
But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas;
For ever the latter ende of loye is wo. 4395
[282: T. 15212-15248.]
God woot that worldly loye is sone ago;
And if a rethor coude faire endyte,
He in a cronique saufly mighte it wryte,
As for a sovereyn notabilitee.
Now every wys man, lat him herkne me; 4400
This storie is al-so trewe, I undertake, (391)
As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
That wommen holde in ful gret reverence.
Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.

4379. _All_ passed. 4380. Hl. tway monthes and dayes tuo. 4386.
And] Cp. Pt. Ln. He. 4398. Hl. Cp. cronique; _rest_ cronicle. 4404.
torne] E. come.

A col-fox, ful of sly iniquitee, 4405
That in the grove hadde woned yeres three,
By heigh imaginacioun forn-cast,
The same night thurgh-out the hegges brast
Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire; 4410
And in a bed of wortes stille he lay, (401)
Til it was passed undern of the day,
Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,
As gladly doon thise homicydes alle,

That in awayt ligger to mordre men. 4415
 O false mordrer, lurking in thy den!
 O newe Scariot, newe Genilon!
 False dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,
 That brogthest Troye al outrely to sorwe!
 O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe, 4420
 That thou into that yerd flough fro the bemes! (411)
 Thou were ful wel y-warned by thy dremes,
 That thilke day was perilous to thee.
 But what that god forwoot mot nedes be,
 After the opinioun of certeyn clerkis. 4425
 Witnesse on him, that any perfit clerk is,
 That in scole is gret altercacioun
 In this matere, and greet disputisoun,
 And hath ben of an hundred thousand men.
 But I ne can not bulte it to the bren, 4430
 As can the holy doctour Augustyn, (421)
 Or Boece, or the bishop Bradwardyn,
 [283: T. 15249-15284.]
 Whether that goddes worthy forwiting
 Streyneth me nedely for to doon a thing,
 (Nedely clepe I simple necessitee); 4435
 Or elles, if free choys be graunted me
 To do that same thing, or do it noght,
 Though god forwoot it, er that it was wroght;
 Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del
 But by necessitee condicionel. 4440
 I wol not han to do of swich matere; (431)
 My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,
 That took his counseil of his wyf, with sorwe,
 To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
 That he had met the dreem, that I yow tolde. 4445
 Wommennes counseils been ful ofte colde;
 Wommannes counseil broghte us first to wo,
 And made Adam fro paradys to go,
 Ther-as he was ful mery, and wel at ese.
 But for I noot, to whom it mighte displese, 4450
 If I counseil of wommen wolde blame, (441)
 Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.
 Rede auctours, wher they trete of swich matere,
 And what thay seyn of wommen ye may here.
 Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat myne; 4455
 I can noon harm of no womman divyne.

4412. E. Hn. Pt. vndren. 4421. E. Hn. flaugh; Cm. flaw; Cp. fley?e; Hl. flough. 4433. E. Wheither. 4434. E. nedefully to doon. 4442. may] Hl. Cp. Pt. schal (schuln). 4445. yow] E. of. 4448. E. out of (_for_ fro). 4452. seyde] E. seye.

Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,
 Lyth Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by,
 Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free
 Song merier than the mermayde in the see; 4460
 For Physiologus seith sikerly, (451)

How that they singen wel and merily.
And so bifel that, as he caste his yë,
Among the wortes, on a boterflye,
He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe. 4465

No-thing ne liste him thanne for to crowe,
But cryde anon, ?cok, cok,? and up he sterte,
As man that was affrayed in his herte.

[284: T. 15285-15322.]

For naturelly a beest desyreth flee
Fro his contrarie, if he may it see, 4470
Though he never erst had seyn it with his yë. (461)

4460. E murier. 4462. E. myrily.

This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him espye,
He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
Seyde, ?Gentil sire, allas! wher wol ye gon?
Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend? 4475
Now certes, I were worse than a feend,
If I to yow wolde harm or vileinye.

I am nat come your counseil for tespye;
But trewely, the cause of my cominge
Was only for to herkne how that ye singe. 4480
For trewely ye have as mery a stevene (471)

As eny aungel hath, that is in hevene;
Therwith ye han in musik more felinge
Than hadde Boece, or any that can singe.
My lord your fader (god his soule blesse!) 4485

And eek your moder, of hir gentillesse,
Han in myn hous y-been, to my gret ese;
And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
But for men speke of singing, I wol saye,
So mote I brouke wel myn eyen tweye, 4490
Save yow, I herde never man so singe, (48l)

As dide your fader in the morweninge;
Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.
And for to make his voys the more strong,
He wolde so peyne him, that with bothe his yën 4495

He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,
And stonden on his tiptoon ther-with-al,
And strecche forth his nekke long and smal.
And eek he was of swich discrecioun,
That ther nas no man in no regioun 4500
That him in song or wisdom mighte passe. (491)

I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Asse,
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
For that a preestes sone yaf him a knock
Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce, 4505
He made him for to lese his benefyce.

[285: T. 15323-15359.]

But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun
Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun
Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
Now singeth, sire, for seinte charitee, 4510

Let see, conne ye your fader countrefete?? (501)

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

4482. E. _om._ hath. 4484. Hl. Pt. had. 4489. E. _ins._ yow _after_
wol. 4491. E. herde I; yet (_for_ so). 4508. E. Cm. Cp. Bitwixe.

Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour 4515

Is in your courtes, and many a losengeour,
That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,
Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow seith.

Redeth Ecclesiaste of flaterye;
Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye. 4520

This Chauntecleer stood hye up-on his toos, (511)

Strecching his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos,
And gan to crowe loude for the nones;

And daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,
And by the gargat hente Chauntecleer, 4525

And on his bak toward the wode him beer,
For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed.

O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed!
Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!

Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes! 4530

And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce. (521)

O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
Sin that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,

And in thy service dide al his poweer,
More for delyt, than world to multiplie, 4535

Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to dye?

O Gaufred, dere mayster soverayn,

That, whan thy worthy king Richard was slayn

With shot, compleynedest his deth so sore,

Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy lore, 4540

The Friday for to chide, as diden ye? (531)

(For on a Friday soothly slayn was he.)

Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude pleyne

[286: T. 15360-15395.]

For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.

4524. E. Hn. Cm. stirte. 4525. E. Hn. gargat; Cm. Hl. garget; Ln.
gorge. 4531. E. Hn. Cm. fil; _rest_ fel.

Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun 4545

Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun

Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite swerd,

Whan he hadde hent king Priam by the berd,

And slayn him (as saith us _Eneydos_),

As maden alle the hennes in the clos, 4550

Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte. (541)

But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighthe,

Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf,

Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his lyf,

And that the Romayns hadde brend Cartage; 4555
 She was so ful of torment and of rage,
 That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
 And brende hir-selven with a stedfast herte.
 O woful hennes, right so cryden ye,
 As, whan that Nero brende the citee 4560
 Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves, (551)
 For that hir housbondes losten alle hir lyves;
 Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
 Now wol I torne to my tale agayn:?

4552. E. sodeynly (_for_ sovereynly). 4554. Hn. Cm. y-lost. 4564.
 E. Now turne I wole.

This sely widwe, and eek hir doghtres two, 4565
 Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo,
 And out at dores sterten they anoon,
 And syen the fox toward the grove goon,
 And bar upon his bak the cok away;
 And cryden, ?Out! harrow! and weylaway! 4570
 Ha, ha, the fox! and after him they ran, (561)
 And eek with staves many another man;
 Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland,
 And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand;
 Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges 4575
 So were they fered for berking of the dogges
 And shouting of the men and wimmen eke,
 They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte breke.
 They yelleden as feendes doon in helle;
 [287: T. 15396-15431.]
 The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle; 4580
 The gees for fere flowen over the trees; (571)
 Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;
 So hidous was the noyse, a! _benedicite_!
 Certes, he lakke Straw, and his meynee,
 Ne made never shoutes half so shrille, 4585
 Whan that they wolden any Fleming kille,
 As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
 Of bras thay broghten bemes, and of box,
 Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and pouped,
 And therwithal thay shryked and they houped; 4590
 It semed as that heven sholde falle. (581)
 Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle!

4567. E. Hn. Cm. stirten. 4570. Pt. They. 4575. E. Hl. _om._ eek.
 4576. Hl. were they; _rest om._ 4579. E. yolleden. 4585. E. Ln.
 shille. 4590. E. Hn. skriked.

Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly
 The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!
 This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak, 4595
 In al his drede, un-to the fox he spak,
 And seyde, ?sire, if that I were as ye,
 Yet sholde I seyn (as wis god helpe me),

Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!
 A verray pestilence up-on yow falle! 4600
 Now am I come un-to this wodes syde, (591)
 Maugree your heed, the cok shal heer abyde;
 I wol him ete in feith, and that anon.??
 The fox answerde, ?in feith, it shal be don,??
 And as he spak that word, al sodeinly 4605
 This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,
 And heighe up-on a tree he fleigh anon.
 And whan the fox saugh that he was y-gon,
 ?Allas!? quod he, ?O Chauntecleer, allas!
 I have to yow,? quod he, ?y-doon trespass, 4610
 In-as-muche as I maked yow aferd, (601)
 Whan I yow hente, and broghte out of the yerd;
 But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente;
 Com doun, and I shal telle yow what I mente.
 I shal seye sooth to yow, god help me so.? 4615
 [288: T. 15432-15452.]
 ?Nay than,? quod he, ?I shrewe us bothe two,
 And first I shrewe my-self, bothe blood and bones,
 If thou bigyle me offer than ones.
 Thou shalt na-more, thurgh thy flaterye,
 Do me to singe and winke with myn yë. 4620
 For he that winketh, whan he sholde see, (611)
 Al wilfully, god lat him never thee!?
 ?Nay,? quod the fox, ?but god yeve him meschaunce,
 That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
 That langleth whan he sholde holde his pees.? 4625

4594. E. _om._ eek. 4598. E. wolde (_for_ sholde). 4601. E. the
 (_for_ this). 4608. Hl. i-goon; _rest_ gon, goon. 4612. E. Hn. into
 this (_for_ out of the). 4613. E. of (_for_ in). 4618. E. Hn. Hl.
 ins. any _before_ offer.

Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees,
 And necligent, and truste on flaterye.
 But ye that holden this tale a folye,
 As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
 Taketh the moralitee, good men. 4630
 For seint Paul seith, that al that writen is, (621)
 To our doctryne it is y-write, y-wis.
 Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille.

4630. Pt. good; _rest_ goode.

Now, gode god, if that it be thy wille,
 As seith my lord, so make us alle good men; 4635
 And bringe us to his heighe blisse. Amen.

=Here is ended the Nonne Preestes Tale.=

4635. Hl. Pt. Ln. good; _rest_ goode. COLOPHON. Cp. Nonne; E. Hn.
 Nonnes. Hl. Here endeth the tale of Chaunteclere and p_er_telote.

[289: T. 15453-15468.]

* * * * *

EPILOGUE TO THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

* * * * *

?Sir Nonnes Preest,? our hoste seyde anoon,
?Y-blessed be thy breche, and every stoon!
This was a mery tale of Chauntecleer.
But, by my trouthe, if thou were seculer, 4640
Thou woldest been a trede-foul a-right.
For, if thou have corage as thou hast might,
Thee were nede of hennes, as I wene,
Ya, mo than seven tymes seventene.
See, whiche braunes hath this gentil Preest, 4645
So greet a nekke, and swich a large breest! (10)
He loketh as a sperhawk with his yën;
Him nedeth nat his colour for to dyen
With brasil, ne with greyn of Portingale.
Now sire, faire falle yow for youre tale!? 4650

And after that he, with ful mery chere,
Seide to another, as ye shullen here.

These genuine lines only occur in Dd., _in_ MS. Reg. 17 D. xv, _and
in_ MS. Addit. 5140 (B. M.). _The text is founded on_ Dd.

4637. Dd. oure hoost. 4639. Dd. murie; Reg. Add. mery. 4641. Dd.
ben. Dd. tredfoul; Reg. Add. trede foule. 4645. Dd. which; Reg.
whiche; Add. suche. 4646. Dd. gret. 4647. Dd. sp_er_hauke; eyen.
4648. Dd. dyghen; Reg. Add. dyen. 4650-2. _I suspect these three
lines to be spurious._ 4650. Reg. youre mery tale. 4652. to] _all_
un-to. another] Add. the Nonne.

NOTE. _Three varieties of a_ Doctour?s Prologue _are given,
respectively, by_ Tyrwhitt, Wright, _and_ Morris; _but are all
spurious. Perhaps the best is the very short one in_ Tyrwhitt, _as
follows:?

?Ye, let that passen,? quod our Hoste, ?as now.
Sire Doctour of Phisyk, I preye yow,
Telle us a tale of som honest matere.?
?It shal be doon, if that ye wol it here,?
Seyde this Doctour, and his tale bigan anon.
?Now, good men,? quod he, ?herkneth everichon.?

[290: T. 11935-11957.]

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GROUP C.

THE PHISICIENS TALE.

* * * * *

*** _For a spurious_ Prologue, _see p._ 289.

=Here folweth the Phisiciens Tale.=

Ther was, as telleth Titus Livius,
A knight that called was Virginius,
Fulfilde of honour and of worthinesse,
And strong of freendes and of greet richesse.

2. Hn. called was; E. was called; _rest_ cleped was.

This knight a doghter hadde by his wyf, 5
No children hadde he mo in al his lyf.
Fair was this mayde in excellent beautee
Aboven every wight that man may see;
For nature hath with sovereyn diligence
Y-formed hir in so greet excellence, 10
As though she wolde seyn, ?lo! I, Nature,
Thus can I forme and peynte a creature,
Whan that me list; who can me countrefete?
Pigmalion noght, though he ay forge and bete,
Or grave, or peynte; for I dar wel seyn, 15
Apelles, Zanzis, sholde werche in veyn,
Outher to grave or peynte or forge or bete,
If they presumed me to countrefete.
For he that is the former principal
Hath maked me his vicaire general, 20
To forme and peynten erthely creaturis
Right as me list, and ech thing in my cure is
Under the mone, that may wane and waxe,
[291: T. 11958-11993.]
And for my werk right no-thing wol I axe;
My lord and I ben ful of oon accord; 25
I made hir to the worship of my lord.
So do I alle myne othere creatures,
What colour that they han, or what figures.??
Thus semeth me that Nature wolde seye.

16. E. Hn. Apelles; Hl. Appollus; rest Apollus. E. Hn. Zanzis; rest zephirus (!). 25. E. Hn. ful of oon; _rest_ fully at.

This mayde of age twelf yeer was and tweye, 30
In which that Nature hadde swich delyt.
For right as she can peynte a lillie whyt
And reed a rose, right with swich peynture
She peynted hath this noble creature
Er she were born, up-on hir limes free, 35
Wher-as by right swiche colours sholde be;
And Phebus dyed hath hir tresses grete
Lyk to the stremes of his burned hete.

And if that excellent was hir beautee,
 A thousand-fold more vertuouus was she. 40
 In hir ne lacked no condicioun,
 That is to preyse, as by discrecioun.
 As wel in goost as body chast was she;
 For which she floured in virginitee
 With alle humilitee and abstinence, 45
 With alle attemperaunce and pacience,
 With mesure eek of bering and array.
 Discreet she was in answering alway;
 Though she were wys as Pallas, dar I seyn,
 Hir facound eek ful wommanly and pleyn, 50
 No countrefeted termes hadde she
 To seme wys; but after hir degree
 She spak, and alle hir wordes more and lesse
 Souninge in vertu and in gentillesse.
 Shamfast she was in maydens shamfastnesse, 55
 Constant in herte, and ever in businesse
 To dryve hir out of ydel slogardye.
 Bacus hadde of hir mouth right no maistrye;
 For wyn and youthe doon Venus encrece,
 [292: T. 11994-12028.]
 As men in fyr wol casten oile or grece. 60
 And of hir owene vertu, unconstreyned,
 She hath ful ofte tyme syk hir feyned,
 For that she wolde fleen the companye
 Wher lykly was to treten of folye,
 As is at festes, revels, and at daunces, 65
 That been occasions of daliaunces.
 Swich thinges maken children for to be
 To sone rype and bold, as men may see,
 Which is ful perilous, and hath ben yore.
 For al to sone may she lerne lore 70
 Of boldnesse, whan she woxen is a wyf.

49. Cp. Pt. Ln. as; _rest om._ 50. E. a (_for_ and). 55. E.
 Shamefast. E. _om._ in. 59. E. Hn. dooth; _rest_ doon. E. Hn.
 encrese. 60. E. man; _rest_ men. E. wasten; _rest_ casten. E.
 oille; greesse. 67. E. Hn. thyng; _rest_ thinges. 70. E. Hn. they;
 rest she.

And ye maistresses in your olde lyf,
 That lordes doghtres han in governaunce,
 Ne taketh of my wordes no displesaunce;
 Thenketh that ye ben set in governinges 75
 Of lordes doghtres, only for two thinges;
 Outher for ye han kept your honestee,
 Or elles ye han falle in freletee,
 And knowen wel y-nough the olde daunce,
 And han forsaken fully swich meschaunce 80
 For evermo; therefore, for Cristes sake,
 To teche hem vertu loke that ye ne slake.
 A thief of venisoun, that hath forlaft
 His likerousnesse, and al his olde craft,

Can kepe a forest best of any man. 85
Now kepeth hem wel, for if ye wol, ye can;
Loke wel that ye un-to no vice assente,
Lest ye be dampned for your wikke entente;
For who-so doth, a traitour is certeyn.
And taketh kepe of that that I shal seyn; 90
Of alle tresons sovereyn pestilence
Is whan a wight bitrayseth innocence.

80. E. Hn. han; _rest_ conne. 82. _So_ E. Hn.; _rest_ Kepeth wel tho
that ye undertake. 84. E. Hn. olde; _rest_ theves. 86. _Read_
kep?th; E. Hn. _om._ hem; Hl. hir(!). E. wolde; _rest_ wole (wil).
92. E. Hn. bitrayseth; _rest_ betrayeth.

Ye fadres and ye modres eek also,
Though ye han children, be it oon or two,
[293: T. 12029-12063.]
Your is the charge of al hir surveyaunce, 95
Whyl that they been under your governaunce.
Beth war that by ensample of your livinge,
Or by your necligence in chastisinge,
That they ne perisse; for I dar wel seye,
If that they doon, ye shul it dere abeye. 100
Under a shepherde softe and necligent
The wolf hath many a sheep and lamb to-rent.
Suffyseth oon ensample now as here,
For I mot turne agayn to my matere.

95. E. Hn. surveiaunce; _rest_ sufferauce (suffraunce). 97. E. Hn.
if; _rest_ that. 99. E. Hn. _om._ ne. 103, 4. E. _om. both lines; I
follow_ Hn. _and the rest_.

This mayde, of which I wol this tale expresse, 105
So kepte hir-self, hir neded no maistresse;
For in hir living maydens mighten rede,
As in a book, every good word or dede,
That longeth to a mayden vertuous;
She was so prudent and so bountevous. 110
For which the fame out-sprong on every syde
Bothe of hir beautee and hir bountee wyde;
That thurgh that land they preysed hir echone,
That loved vertu, save envye allone,
That sory is of other mennes wele, 115
And glad is of his sorwe and his unhele;
(The doctour maketh this descripcioun).
This mayde up-on a day wente in the toun
Toward a temple, with hir moder dere,
As is of yonge maydens the manere. 120

105. E. Hn. I wol this; _rest_ I telle my. 119. E. Hn. a; _rest_ the.

Now was ther thanne a lustice in that toun,
That governour was of that regioun.
And so bifel, this luge his eyen caste

Up-on this mayde, avysinge him ful faste,
As she cam forby ther this luge stood. 125
Anon his herte chaunged and his mood,
So was he caught with beautee of this mayde;
And to him-self ful prively he sayde,
?This mayde shal be myn, for any man.?

125. E. Hn. ther as; _rest om._ as.

[294: T. 12064-12100.]

Anon the feend in-to his herte ran, 130
And taughte him sodeynly, that he by slighte
The mayden to his purpos winne mighte.
For certes, by no force, ne by no mede,
Him thoughte, he was nat able for to spede;
For she was strong of freendes, and eek she 135
Confermed was in swich soverayn bountee,
That wel he wiste he mighte hir never winne
As for to make hir with hir body sinne.
For which, by greet deliberacioun,
He sente after a cherl, was in the toun, 140
Which that he knew for subtil and for bold.
This luge un-to this cherl his tale hath told
In secree wyse, and made him to ensure,
He sholde telle it to no creature,
And if he dide, he sholde lese his heed. 145
Whan that assented was this cursed reed,
Glad was this luge and maked him greet chere,
And yaf hym yiftes precieuse and dere.

138. E. maken; _rest_ make. 140, 142. E. Hn. cherl; _rest_ clerk.
147. E. Hn. this; _rest_ the.

Whan shapen was al hir conspiracye
Fro point to point, how that his lecherye 150
Parfourned sholde been ful subtilly,
As ye shul here it after openly,
Hoom gooth the cherl, that highte Claudius.
This false luge that highte Apius,
So was his name, (for this is no fable, 155
But knowen for historial thing notable,
The sentence of it sooth is, out of doute),
This false luge gooth now faste aboute
To hasten his delyt al that he may.
And so bifel sone after, on a day, 160
This false luge, as telleth us the storie,
As he was wont, sat in his consistorie,
And yaf his domes up-on sondry cas.
This false cherl cam forth a ful greet pas,
And seyde, ?lord, if that it be your wille, 165
As dooth me right up-on this pitous bille,

[295: T. 12101-12136.]

In which I pleyne up-on Virginius.

And if that he wol seyn it is nat thus,
I wol it preve, and finde good witnessse,
That sooth is that my bille wol expresse.? 170

149. E. Hn. hir; _rest_ this. 153, 164. E. Hn. cherl; _rest_ clerk.
155. E. Hn. this; _rest_ it.

The luge answerde, ?of this, in his absence,
I may nat yeve diffinitif sentence.
Lat do him calle, and I wol gladly here;
Thou shall have al right, and no wrong here.?

172. E. diffynyue; rest diffinitif. 173, 174. E. heere, glossed
audire; and heere, glossed hie.

Virginus cam, to wite the luges wille, 175
And right anon was rad this cursed bille;
The sentence of it was as ye shul here.

?To yow, my lord, sire Apius so dere,
Sheweth your povre servant Claudius,
How that a knight, called Virginus, 180
Agayns the lawe, agayn al equitee,
Holdeth, expres agayn the wil of me,
My servant, which that is my thral by right,
Which fro myn hous was stole up-on a night,
Whyl that she was ful yong; this wol I preve 185
By witnessse, lord, so that it nat yow greve.
She nis his doghter nat, what so he seye;
Wherfore to yow, my lord the luge, I preye,
Yeld me my thral, if that it be your wille.?
Lo! this was al the sentence of his bille. 190

Virginus gan up-on the cherl biholde,
But hastily, er he his tale tolde,
And wolde have preved it, as sholde a knight,
And eek by witnessing of many a wight,
That it was fals that seyde his adversarie, 195
This cursed luge wolde no-thing tarie,
Ne here a word more of Virginus,
But yaf his lugement, and seyde thus:?

191. E. Hn. Cm. cherl; rest clerk.

?I deme anon this cherl his servant have;
Thou shalt no lenger in thyn hous hir save. 200
Go bring hir forth, and put hir in our warde,
The cherl shal have his thral, this I awarde.?

199, 202. E. Hn. Cm. cherl; rest clerk.

[296: T. 12137-12173.]

And whan this worthy knight Virginus,

Thurgh sentence of this lustice Apius,
 Moste by force his dere doghter yiven 205
 Un-to the luge, in lecherye to liven,
 He gooth him hoom, and sette him in his halle,
 And leet anon his dere doghter calle,
 And, with a face deed as asshen colde,
 Upon hir humble face he gan biholde, 210
 With fadres pitee stiking thurgh his herte,
 Al wolde he from his purpos nat converte.

202. E. Hn. Cm. this; rest thus. 205. Hl. Cp. yiuen; rest yeuen.

?Doghter,? quod he, ?Virginia, by thy name,
 Ther been two weyes, outhere deeth or shame,
 That thou most suffre; allas! that I was bore! 215
 For never thou deservedest wherfore
 To dyen with a swerd or with a knyf.
 O dere doghter, ender of my lyf,
 Which I have fostred up with swich plesaunce,
 That thou were never out of my remembraunce! 220
 O doghter, which that art my laste wo,
 And in my lyf my laste loye also,
 O gemme of chastitee, in pacience
 Take thou thy deeth, for this is my sentence.
 For love and nat for hate, thou most be deed; 225
 My pitous hand mot smyten of thyn heed.
 Allas! that ever Apius thee say!
 Thus hath he falsly lugged thee to-day??
 And tolde hir al the cas, as ye bifore
 Han herd; nat nedeth for to telle it more. 230

223. E. o; rest of.

?O mercy, dere fader,? quod this mayde,
 And with that word she both hir armes layde
 About his nekke, as she was wont to do:
 The teres broste out of hir eyen two,
 And seyde, ?gode fader, shal I dye? 235
 Is ther no grace? is ther no remedye??

234. E. Hn. teeris. E. bruste; Cm. broste; Pt. brosten; Hn. borste;
 Cp. Ln. barsten; Hl. brast.

?No, certes, dere doghter myn,? quod he.

?Thanne yif me leyser, fader myn,? quod she,
 ?My deeth for to compleyne a litel space;
 [297: T. 12174-12208.]
 For pardee, lepte yaf his doghter grace 240
 For to compleyne, er he hir slow, allas!
 And god it woot, no-thing was hir trespas,
 But for she ran hir fader first to see,
 To welcome him with greet solempnitee?
 And with that word she fil aswowne anon, 245

And after, whan hir swowning is agon,
She ryseth up, and to hir fader sayde,
?Blessed be god, that I shal dye a mayde.
Yif me my deeth, er that I have a shame;
Doth with your child your wil, a goddes name!?

250

243. E. Hn. for; _rest_ first. 248. E. Ln. Blissed; _rest_ Blessed.

And with that word she preyed him ful ofte,
That with his swerd he wolde smyte softe,
And with that word aswowne doun she fil.
Hir fader, with ful sorweful herte and wil,
Hir heed of smoot, and by the top it hente,
And to the luge he gan it to presente,
As he sat yet in doom in consistorie.

255

And whan the luge it saugh, as seith the storie,
He bad to take him and anchange him faste.
But right anon a thousand peple in thraste,
To save the knight, for routhe and for pitee,
For knowen was the false iniquitee.

260

The peple anon hath suspect of this thing,
By manere of the cherles chalanging,
That it was by the assent of Apius;
They wisten wel that he was lecherous.

265

For which un-to this Apius they gon,
And caste him in a prison right anon,
Wher-as he slow him-self; and Claudius,
That servant was un-to this Apius,
Was demed for to hange upon a tree;

270

But that Virginius, of his pitee,
So preyde for him that he was exyled;
And elles, certes, he had been bigyled.

[298: T. 12209-12220.]

The remenant were anchanged, more and lesse,
That were consentant of this cursednesse.?

275

252. _All but_ E. Hn. _ins._ hir _before_ softe. 259. E. Hn. anchange;
rest honge. 260. E. Hn. a thousand; _rest_ al the. 263. E. of;
rest in. 264. E. Hn. the cherles; _rest_ this clerkes. 269. E.
Hn. Ther; _rest_ Wher. 271. E. And; _rest_ Was. 275. E. Hn. Hl.
anchanged; _rest_ honged.

Heer men may seen how sinne hath his meryte!
Beth war, for no man woot whom god wol smyte
In no degree, ne in which maner wyse
The worm of conscience may agryse
Of wikked lyf, though it so privee be,
That no man woot ther-of but god and he.
For be he lewed man, or elles lered,
He noot how sone that he shal been afered.
Therefore I rede yow this conseil take,
Forsaketh sinne, er sinne yow forsake.

280

285

=Here endeth the Phisiciens Tale.=

278. E. Hn. whom; _rest_ how. 280. E. Hn. may agryse; _rest_ wol
(wil) arise. 283. E. ellis. Cp. Ln. Whether he be lewed man or
lered; _so_ Pt. (_with_ Where _for_ Whether); so Hl. (_with_ Wher that
for Whether). COLOPHON. _So_ E. Hn.; Sloane _has_ Here endethe the
tale of the Mayster of phisyk; Hl. Here endeth the Doctor of phisique
his tale.

[299: T. 12221-12239.]

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WORDS OF THE HOST.

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=The wordes of the Host to the Phisicien and the Pardoner.=

Our Hoste gan to swere as he were wood,
?Harrow!? quod he, ?by nayles and by blood!
This was a fals cherl and a fals lustyse!
As shamful deeth as herte may devyse 290
Come to thise luges and hir advocats!
Algate this sely mayde is slayn, allas!
Allas! to dere boghte she beautee!
Wherfore I seye al day, as men may see,
That yiftes of fortune or of nature 295
Ben cause of deeth to many a creature. (10)
Hir beautee was hir deeth, I dar wel sayn;
Allas! so pitously as she was slayn!
Of bothe yiftes that I speke of now
Men han ful ofte more harm than prow. 300
But trewely, myn owene mayster dere,
This is a pitous tale for to here.
But natheles, passe over, is no fors;
I prey to god, so save thy gentil cors,
And eek thyne urinals and thy lordanes, 305
[300: T. 12240-12262.]
Thyn Ypocras, and eek thy Galianes, (20)
And every boist ful of thy letuarie;
God blesse hem, and our lady seinte Marie!
So mot I theen, thou art a propre man,
And lyk a prelat, by saint Ronyan! 310
Seyde I nat wel? I can nat speke in terme;
But wel I woot, thou doost my herte to erme,
That I almost have caught a cardiacle.
By corpus bones! but I have triacle,
Or elles a draught of moyste and corny ale, 315
Or but I here anon a mery tale, (30)
Myn herte is lost for pitee of this mayde.
Thou bel amy, thou Pardoner,? he seyde,
?Tel us som mirthe or lapes right anon.?
?It shall be doon,? quod he, ?by saint Ronyon! 320
But first,? quod he, ?heer at this ale-stake

I wol both drinke, and eten of a cake.?

HEADING. _So_ E. E. Hoost. 287. Ln. oste; _rest_ hoost, ost. 290. E. shameful. 291, 292. _So_ E. Hn. Pt.; _but_ Cp. _has_?So falle vpon his body and his bones The deuyll I bekenne him al at ones; _so also_ Ln. Hl. 291. E. (_alone_) _ins._ false _before_ luges. E. Hn. Aduocatz; Pt. aduocas. 295. E. Hn. and; _rest_ or. 296. E. Hn. to; _rest_ of. 297, 298. _So_ Cp. Ln. Hl.; _rest_ omit these lines. 300. E. Hn. for harm; _rest_ om._ for. 303. Hl. this is; _the rest omit_ this. 305. Ln. lordanes; Cp. Iurdanes; E. Hn. Iurdones. 306. Cp. Galianes; E. Hn. Galiones. 307. Hl. boist; E. Hn. boyste; Cp. Pt. Ln. box. 313. E. Hn. cardynacle(!). 322. eten of] Hl. byt on.

But right anon thise gentils gonne to crye,
?Nay! lat him telle us of no ribaudye;
Tel us som moral thing, that we may lere 325
Som wit, and thanne wol we gladly here.? (40)
?I graunte, y-wis,? quod he, ?but I mot thinke
Up-on som honest thing, whyl that I drinke.

323. E. Hn. And; _the rest_ But. 324. E. Hn. Cp. Hl. ribaudye; Ln. rebaudie; Pt. rybaudrye. 327. _For ll._ 326, 327, Hl. _has_?Gladly, quod he, and sayde as ye schal heere: But in the cuppe wil I me bethinke.

[301: T. 12263-12288.]

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THE PROLOGUE OF THE PARDONERS TALE.

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=Here folweth the Prologe of the Pardoners Tale.=

Radix malorum est Cupiditas: Ad Thimotheum, sexto.

?Lordings,? quod he, ?in chirches whan I preche,
I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche, 330
And ringe it out as round as gooth a belle,
For I can al by rote that I telle.
My theme is alwey oon, and ever was?
?_Radix malorum est Cupiditas_?.

First I pronounce whennes that I come, 335
And than my bulles shewe I, alle and somme.
Our lige lordes seel on my patente,
That shewe I first, my body to warente, (10)
That no man be so bold, ne preest ne clerk,
Me to destourbe of Cristes holy werk; 340
And after that than telle I forth my tales,
Bulles of popes and of cardinales,
Of patriarkes, and bishoppes I shewe;
And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,

To saffron with my predicacioun, 345
 And for to stire men to devocioun.
 Than shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,
 Y-crammed ful of cloutes and of bones; (20)
 Reliks been they, as wenen they echoon.
 Than have I in latoun a sholder-boon 350
 Which that was of an holy lewes shepe.
 ?Good men,? seye I, ?tak of my wordes kepe;
 If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,
 If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle
 [302: T. 12289-12324.]
 That any worm hath ete, or worm y-stonge, 355
 Tak water of that welle, and wash his tonge,
 And it is hool anon; and forthermore,
 Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every sore (30)
 Shal every sheep be hool, that of this welle
 Drinketh a draughte; tak kepe eek what I telle. 360
 If that the good-man, that the bestes oweth,
 Wol every wike, er that the cok him croweth,
 Fastinge, drinken of this welle a draughte,
 As thilke holy lewe our eldres taughte,
 His bestes and his stoor shal multiplie. 565
 And, sirs, also it heleth lalousye;
 For, though a man be falle in lalous rage,
 Let maken with this water his potage, (40)
 And never shal he more his wyf mistriste,
 Though he the sooth of hir defaute wiste; 370
 Al had she taken preestes two or three.

346. E. Hn. Hl. hem; _rest_ men. 350. E. _omits_ I _by accident_.
 352. E. Hl. Pt. Ln. Good; E. Hn. Cp. Goode. Hn. I seye; _rest_ say I,
 saie I. 366. E. Hn. sire; _rest_ sires, sirs.

Heer is a miteyn eek, that ye may see.
 He that his hond wol putte in this miteyn,
 He shal have multiplying of his greyn,
 Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes, 375
 So that he offre pens, or elles grotes.

Good men and wommen, o thing warne I yow,
 If any wight be in this chirche now, (50)
 That hath doon sinne horrible, that he
 Dar nat, for shame, of it y-shriven be, 380
 Or any womman, be she yong or old,
 That hath y-maad hir housbond cokewold,
 Swich folk shul have no power ne no grace
 To offren to my reliks in this place.
 And who-so findeth him out of swich blame, 385
 He wol com up and offre in goddes name,
 And I assoille him by the auctoritee
 Which that by bulle y-graunted was to me.? (60)

377. E. Hn. Goode; _rest_ And. 382. Cp. Ln. Hl. ymaad; Pt. made; E.
 Hn. ymaked. 385. E. fame; _rest_ blame. 386. Hn. He; _rest_ They.

E. on; Hn. a; _rest_ in. 387. E. Hl. hem; _rest_ him or hym.

By this gaude have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
An hundred mark sith I was Pardoner. 390
[303: T. 12325-12361.]
I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
And whan the lewed peple is doun y-set,
I preche, so as ye han herd bifore,
And telle an hundred false lapes more.
Than peyne I me to strecche forth the nekke, 395
And est and west upon the peple I bekke,
As doth a dowve sitting on a berne.
Myn hondes and my tonge goon so yerne, (70)
That it is loye to see my businesse.
Of avaryce and of swich cursednesse 400
Is al my preching, for to make hem free
To yeve her pens, and namely un-to me.
For my entente is nat but for to winne,
And no-thing for correccioun of sinne.
I rekke never, whan that they ben beried, 405
Though that her soules goon a-blakeberied!
For certes, many a predicacioun
Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun; (80)
Som for plesaunce of folk and flaterye,
To been avauced by ipocrisyse, 410
And som for veyne glorie, and som for hate.
For, whan I dar non other weyes debate,
Than wol I stinge him with my tonge smerte
In preching, so that he shal nat asterte
To been defamed falsly, if that he 415
Hath trespassed to my brethren or to me.
For, though I telle nocht his propre name,
Men shal wel knowe that it is the same (90)
By signes and by othere circumstances.
Thus quyte I folk that doon us displesances; 420
Thus spitte I out my venim under hewe
Of holynesse, to seme holy and trewe.

395. the] Cm. myn; Cp. Ln. Hl. my. 405. E. Hl. _omit_ that.

But shortly myn entente I wol devyse;
I preche of no-thing but for coveityse.
Therfor my theme is yet, and ever was? 425
?_Radix malorum est cupiditas_.?
Thus can I preche agayn that same vyce
[304: T. 12362-12396.]
Which that I use, and that is avaryce. (100)
But, though my-self be gilty in that sinne,
Yet can I maken other folk to twinne 430
From avaryce, and sore to repente.
But that is nat my principal entente.
I preche no-thing but for coveityse;
Of this matere it oughte y-nogh suffyse.

425. E. Hn. theme; _rest_ teme (teem).

Than telle I hem ensamples many oon 435
Of olde stories, longe tyme agoon:
For lewed peple loven tales olde;
Swich thinges can they wel reporte and holde. (110)
What? trowe ye, the whyles I may preche,
And winne gold and silver for I teche, 440
That I wol live in povert wilfully?
Nay, nay, I thoghte it never trewely!
For I wol preche and begge in sondry londes;
I wol not do no labour with myn hondes,
Ne make baskettes, and live therby, 445
Because I wol nat beggen ydelly.
I wol non of the apostles counterfete;
I wol have money, wolle, chese, and whete, (120)
Al were it yeven of the povrest page,
Or of the povrest widwe in a village, 450
Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.
Nay! I wol drinke licour of the vyne,
And have a loly wenche in every toun.
But herkneth, lordings, in conclusioun;
Your lyking is that I shal telle a tale. 455
Now, have I dronke a draughte of corny ale,
By god, I hope I shal yow telle a thing
That shal, by resoun, been at your lyking. (130)
For, though myself be a ful vicious man,
A moral tale yet I yow telle can, 460
Which I am wont to preche, for to winne.
Now holde your pees, my tale I wol beginne.

439. E. Pt. the whiles; Cm. that whilis that; Cp. Ln. whiles that; Hl. whiles; Hn. that whiles. 449. Hl. prestes (_for_ povrest).

[305: T. 12397-12422.]

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THE PARDONERS TALE.

(_Numbered in continuation of the preceding_.)

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=Here biginneth the Pardoners Tale.=

In Flaundes whylom was a companye
Of yonge folk, that haunteden folye,
As ryot, hasard, stewes, and tavernes, 465
Wher-as, with harpes, lutes, and giternes,
They daunce and pleye at dees bothe day and night,
And ete also and drinken over hir might, (140)
Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrificyse
With-in that deves temple, in cursed wyse, 470

By superfluitee abhominable;
 Hir othes been so grete and so dampnable,
 That it is grisly for to here hem swere;
 Our blisshed lordes body they to-tere;
 Hem thoughte lewes rente him noght y-nough; 475
 And ech of hem at otheres sinne lough.
 And right anon than comen tombesteres
 Fetys and smale, and yonge fruyteteres, (150)
 Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,
 Whiche been the verray develes officeres 480
 To kindle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
 That is annexed un-to glotonye;
 The holy writ take I to my witsnesse,
 That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.

HEADING; from E. Hn. 465. E. Hl. stywes. 475. So Cp. Ln. Hl.;
 E. Hn. Cm. that lewes; Pt. þe lwes. 478, 479. Hl. omits.

Lo, how that dronken Loth, unkindely, 485
 Lay by his doghtres two, unwitingly;
 So dronke he was, he niste what he wroghte.

Herodes, (who-so wel the stories soghte), (160)
 [306: T. 12423-12459.]
 Whan he of wyn was replet at his feste,
 Right at his owene table he yaf his heste 490
 To sleen the Baptist lohn ful giltelees.

488. E. Hn. Cm. P. Hl. agree here; Cp. Ln. have two additional
 (spurious) lines; see note.

Senek seith eek a good word dotelees;
 He seith, he can no difference finde
 Bitwix a man that is out of his minde
 And a man which that is dronkelewe, 495
 But that woodnesse, y-fallen in a shrewe,
 Persevereth lenger than doth dronkenesse.
 O glotonye, ful of cursednesse, (170)
 O cause first of our confusioun,
 O original of our dampnacioun, 500
 Til Crist had boght us with his blood agayn!
 Lo, how dere, shortly for to sayn,
 Aboght was thilke cursed vileinye;
 Corrupt was al this world for glotonye!

492. Hl. Seneca (for Senek). Cp. Ln. eek; rest omit. 495. which
 that] Hl. the which; Cp. Pt. Ln. om. which. 496. E. Hl. fallen; Hn.
 Cm. y-fallen.

Adam our fader, and his wyf also, 505
 Fro Paradys to labour and to wo
 Were driven for that vyce, it is no drede;
 For whyl that Adam fasted, as I rede, (180)
 He was in Paradys; and whan that he

Eet of the fruyt defended on the tree, 510
 Anon he was out-cast to wo and peyne.
 O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne!
 O, wiste a man how many maladyes
 Folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,
 He wolde been the more mesurable 515
 Of his diete, sittinge at his table.
 Allas! the shorte throte, the tendre mouth,
 Maketh that, Est and West, and North and South, (190)
 In erthe, in eir, in water men to-swinke
 To gete a glotoun deyntee mete and drinke! 520
 Of this matere, o Paul, wel canstow trete,
 ?Mete un-to wombe, and wombe eek un-to mete,
 Shal god destroyen bothe,? as Paulus seith.
 Allas! a foul thing is it, by my feith,
 To seye this word, and fouler is the dede, 525
 [307: T. 12460-12496.]
 Whan man so drinketh of the whyte and rede,
 That of his throte he maketh his privee,
 Thurgh thilke cursed superfluitee. (200)

519. E. HI. man; _rest_ men.

The apostel weping seith ful pitously,
 ?Ther walken many of whiche yow told have I, 530
 I seye it now weping with pitous voys,
 That they been enemys of Cristes croys,
 Of whiche the ende is deeth, wombe is her god.?
 O wombe! O bely! O stinking cod,
 Fulfild of donge and of corrupcioun! 535
 At either ende of thee foul is the soun.
 How greet labour and cost is thee to finde!
 These cokes, how they stampe, and streyne, and grinde, (210)
 And turnen substaunce in-to accident,
 To fulfille al thy likerous talent! 540
 Out of the harde bones knocke they
 The mary, for they caste noght a-vey
 That may go thurgh the golet softe and swote;
 Of spicerye, of leef, and bark, and rote
 Shal been his sauce y-maked by delyt, 545
 To make him yet a newer appetyt.
 But certes, he that haunteth swich delyces
 Is deed, whyl that he liveth in tho vyces. (220)

532. That they _is_ Tyrwhitt?s _reading_; HI. Thay; _but the rest have_
 Ther, _probably repeated by mistake from_ l. 530. 534. HI. o stynking
 is thi cod.

A lecherous thing is wyn, and dronkenesse
 Is ful of stryving and of wrecchednesse. 550
 O dronke man, disfigured is thy face,
 Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace,
 And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the soun
 As though thou seydest ay ?Sampsoun, Sampsoun?;

And yet, god wot, Sampson drank never no wyn. 555
 Thou fallest, as it were a stiked swyn;
 Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honest cure;
 For dronkenesse is verray sepulture (230)
 Of mannes wit and his discrecioun.
 In whom that drinke hath dominacioun, 560
 He can no conseil kepe, it is no drede.
 Now kepe yow fro the whyte and fro the rede,
 [308: T. 12497-12533.]
 And namely fro the whyte wyn of Lepe,
 That is to selle in Fish-strete or in Chepe.
 This wyn of Spayne crepeth subtilly 565
 In othere wyne, growing faste by,
 Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee,
 That whan a man hath dronken draughtes three, (240)
 And weneth that he be at hoom in Chepe,
 He is in Spayne, right at the toun of Lepe, 570
 Nat at the Rochel, ne at Burdeux toun;
 And thanne wol he seye, ?Sampson, Sampson.?

But herkneth, lordings, o word, I yow preye,
 That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,
 Of victories in the olde testament, 575
 Thurgh verray god, that is omnipotent,
 Were doon in abstinence and in preyere;
 Loketh the Bible, and ther ye may it lere. (250)

573. E. lordes; _rest_ lordinges, lordynges, lordyngs.

Loke, Attila, the grete conquerour,
 Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dishonour, 580
 Bleding ay at his nose in dronkenesse;
 A capitayn shoulde live in sobrenesse.
 And over al this, avyseth yow right wel
 What was comaunded un-to Lamuel?
 Nat Samuel, but Lamuel, seye I? 585
 Redeth the Bible, and finde it expresly
 Of wyn-yeving to hem that han lustyse.
 Na-more of this, for it may wel suffyse. (260)

And now that I have spoke of glotonye,
 Now wol I yow defenden hasardrye. 590
 Hasard is verray moder of lesinges,
 And of deceite, and cursed forsweringes,
 Blaspheme of Crist, manslaughtre, and wast also
 Of catel and of tyme; and forthermo,
 It is repreve and contrarie of honour 595
 For to ben holde a commune hasardour.
 And ever the hyër he is of estaat,
 The more is he holden desolaat. (270)
 If that a prince useth hasardrye,
 [309: T. 12534-12569.]
 In alle governaunce and policye 600
 He is, as by commune opinoun,

Y-holde the lasse in reputacioun.

589. E. Hl. _omit_ that. 593. E. Blasphemyng; _rest_ BlaspHEME.

Stilbon, that was a wys embassadour,
Was sent to Corinthe, in ful greet honour,
Fro Lacidomie, to make hir alliaunce. 605
And whan he cam, him happede, par chaunce,
That alle the grettest that were of that lond,
Pleyinge atte hasard he hem fond. (280)
For which, as sone as it mighte be,
He stal him hoom agayn to his contree, 610
And seyde, ?ther wol I nat lese my name;
Ne I wol nat take on me so greet defame,
Yow for to allye un-to none hasardours.
Sendeth othere wyse embassadours;
For, by my trouthe, me were lever dye, 615
Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye.
For ye that been so glorious in honours
Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours (290)
As by my wil, ne as by my tretee.?
This wyse philosophre thus seyde he. 620

606. Cm. Cp. Hl. happede; _rest_ happed. 612. Hn. Ny; Cm. Nay (_both
put for_ Ne I) _which shews the scansion._ Hl. I nyl not. 614. _So
all_.

Loke eek that, to the king Demetrius
The king of Parthes, as the book seith us,
Sente him a paire of dees of gold in scorn,
For he hadde used hasard ther-biforn;
For which he heeld his glorie or his renoun 625
At no value or reputacioun.
Lordes may finden other maner pley
Honeste y-nough to dryve the day away. (300)

621. E. Ln. Hl. _omit_ to.

Now wol I speke of othes false and grete
A word or two, as olde bokes trete. 630
Gret swering is a thing abhominable,
And false swering is yet more reprevable.
The heighe god forbad swering at al,
Witnesse on Mathew; but in special
Of swering seith the holy Ieremye, 635
[310: T. 12570-12605.]
?Thou shalt seye sooth thyn othes, and nat lye,
And swere in dome, and eek in rightwisnesse;?
But ydel swering is a cursednesse. (310)
Bihold and see, that in the firste table
Of heighe goddes hestes honorable, 640
How that the seconde heste of him is this?
?Tak nat my name in ydel or amis.?
Lo, rather he forbedeth swich swering

Than homicyde or many a cursed thing;
 I seye that, as by ordre, thus it stondesth; 645
 This knowen, that his hestes understondeth,
 How that the second heste of god is that.
 And forther over, I wol thee telle al plat, (320)
 That vengeance shal nat parten from his hous,
 That of his othes is to outrageous. 650
 ?By goddes precious herte, and by his nayles,
 And by the blode of Crist, that it is in Hayles,
 Seven is my chaunce, and thyn is cink and treye;
 By goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,
 This dagger shal thurgh-out thyn herte go?? 655
 This fruyt cometh of the bicched bones two,
 Forswering, ire, falsnesse, homicyde.
 Now, for the love of Crist that for us dyde, (330)
 Leveth your othes, bothe grete and smale;
 But, sirs, now wol I telle forth my tale. 660

632. Cp. Ln. Hl. _om._ yet. 644. Hn. Cm. Hl. many a.; E. any; Cp. Pt.
 Ln. eny other. 656. Hl. bicchid; Ln. becched; Hn. Cm. bicche; Pt.
 thilk. 659. E. Hn. Lete; _rest_ Leueth.

These ryotoures three, of whiche I telle,
 Longe erst er pryde rong of any belle,
 Were set hem in a tavernne for to drinke;
 And as they satte, they herde a belle clinke
 Biforn a cors, was caried to his grave; 665
 That oon of hem gan callen to his knave,
 ?Go bet,? quod he, ?and axe redily,
 What cors is this that passeth heer forby; (340)
 And look that thou reporte his name wel.?

661. E. Hn. Pt. Hl. riotours. 663. Cp. Pt. Hl. for; _rest om._

?Sir,? quod this boy, ?it nedeth never-a-del. 670
 It was me told, er ye cam heer, two houres;
 [311: T. 12606-12642.]
 He was, pardee, an old felawe of youres;
 And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-night,
 For-dronke, as he sat on his bench upright;
 Ther cam a privee theef, men clepeth Deeth, 675
 That in this contree al the peple sleeth,
 And with his spere he smoot his herte a-two,
 And wente his wey with-outen wordes mo. (350)
 He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence:
 And, maister, er ye come in his presence, 680
 Me thinketh that it were necessarie
 For to be war of swich an adversarie:
 Beth redy for to mete him evermore.
 Thus taughte me my dame, I sey na-more?
 ?By seinte Marie,? seyde this taverner, 685
 ?The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this year,
 Henne over a myle, with-in a greet village,
 Both man and womman, child and hyne, and page. (360)

I trowe his habitacioun be there;
 To been avysed greet wisdom it were, 690
 Er that he dide a man a dishonour.?
 ?Ye, goddes armes,? quod this ryotour,
 ?Is it swich peril with him for to mete?
 I shal him seke by wey and eek by strete,
 I make avow to goddes digne bones! 695
 Herkneht, felawes, we three been al ones;
 Lat ech of us holde up his hond til other, (370)
 And ech of us bicomen otheres brother,
 And we wol sleen this false traytour Deeth;
 He shal be slayn, which that so many sleeth, 700
 By goddes dignitee, er it be night.?

Togidres han thise three her trouthes plight,
 To live and dyen ech of hem for other,
 As though he were his owene y-boren brother.
 And up they sterte al dronken, in this rage, 705
 And forth they goon towardses that village,
 Of which the taverner had spoke biforn,
 And many a grisly ooth than han they sworn, (380)
 [312: T. 12643-12680.]
 And Cristes blessed body they to-rente?
 ?Deeth shal be deed, if that they may him hente.? 710

704. E. yborn; Hn. ybore; Cm. bore; Pt. born; Cp. Ln. Hl. sworne.
 705. E. Hn. stirte. Hn. Cp. Ln. Hl. al; E. Cm. Pt. and. 710. they]
 Cp. Pt. Ln. we.

Whan they han goon nat fully half a myle,
 Right as they wolde han troden over a style,
 An old man and a povre with hem mette.
 This olde man ful mekely hem grette,
 And seyde thus, ?now, lordes, god yow see!? 715

The proudest of thise ryotoures three
 Answerde agayn, ?what? carl, with sory grace,
 Why artow al forwrapped save thy face? (390)
 Why livestow so longe in so greet age??

This olde man gan loke in his visage, 720
 And seyde thus, ?for I ne can nat finde
 A man, though that I walked in-to Inde,
 Neither in citee nor in no village,
 That wolde chaunge his youthe for myn age;
 And therefore moot I han myn age stille, 725
 As longe time as it is goddes wille.

Ne deeth, allas! ne wol nat han my lyf;
 Thus walke I, lyk a resteleees caityf, (400)
 And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
 I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and late, 730
 And seye, ?leve moder, leet me in!
 Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin!

Allas! whan shul my bones been at reste?
Moder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste,
That in my chambre longe tyme hath be, 735
Ye! for an heyre clout to wrappe me!?
But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,
For which ful pale and welked is my face. (410)

But, sirs, to yow it is no curteisye
To speken to an old man vileinye, 740
But he trespasse in worde, or elles in dede.
In holy writ ye may your-self wel rede,
?Agayns an old man, hoor upon his heed,
Ye sholde aryse;? wherfor I yeve yow reed,
Ne dooth un-to an old man noon harm now, 745
Na-more than ye wolde men dide to yow
[313: T. 12681-12718.]
In age, if that ye so longe abyde;
And god be with yow, wher ye go or ryde. (420)
I moot go thider as I have to go.?

746. E. Hn. than that; _rest omit_ that.

?Nay, olde cherl, by god, thou shall nat so,? 750
Seyde this other hasardour anon;
?Thou partest nat so lightly, by seint lohn!
Thou spak right now of thilke traitour Deeth,
That in this contree alle our frendes sleeth.
Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his aspye, 755
Tel wher he is, or thou shalt it abyde,
By god, and by the holy sacrament!
For soothly thou art oon of his assent, (430)
To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theef!?

?Now, sirs,? quod he, ?if that yow be so leef 760
To finde Deeth, turne up this croked wey,
For in that grove I lafte him, by my fey,
Under a tree, and ther he wol abyde;
Nat for your boost he wol him no-thing hyde.
See ye that ook? right ther ye shul him finde. 765
God save yow, that boghte agayn mankinde,
And yow amende!??thus seyde this olde man.
And everich of these rytoures ran, (440)
Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde
Of florins fyne of golde y-coyned rounde 770
Wel ny an eighte busshels, as hem thoughte.
No lenger thanne after Deeth they soughte,
But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
For that the florins been so faire and brighte,
That doun they sette hem by this precious hord. 775
The worste of hem he spake the firste word.

760. E. Cm. ye; Hn. Hl. yow.

?Brethren,? quod he, ?tak kepe what I seye;

My wit is greet, though that I bourde and pleye. (450)
 This tresor hath fortune un-to us yiven,
 In mirthe and lolitee our lyf to liven, 780
 And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende.
 Ey! goddes precious dignitee! who wende
 To-day, that we sholde han so fair a grace?
 But mighte this gold be caried fro this place
 [314: T. 12719-12754.]
 Hoom to myn hous, or elles un-to youres? 785
 For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures?
 Than were we in heigh felicitee.
 But trewely, by daye it may nat be; (460)
 Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge,
 And for our owene tresor doon us honge. 790
 This tresor moste y-caried be by nighte
 As wysly and as slyly as it mighte.
 Wherfore I rede that cut among us alle
 Be drawe, and lat se wher the cut wol falle;
 And he that hath the cut with herte blythe 795
 Shal renne to the toune, and that ful swythe,
 And bringe us breed and wyn ful prively.
 And two of us shul kepen subtilly (470)
 This tresor wel; and, if he wol nat tarie,
 Whan it is night, we wol this tresor carie 800
 By oon assent, wher-as us thinketh best.?
 That oon of hem the cut broughte in his fest,
 And bad hem drawe, and loke wher it wol falle;
 And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle;
 And forth toward the toun he wente anon. 805
 And al-so sone as that he was gon,
 That oon of hem spak thus un-to that other,
 ?Thou knowest wel thou art my sworne brother, (480)
 Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
 Thou woost wel that our felawe is agon; 810
 And heer is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
 That shal departed been among us three.
 But natheles, if I can shape it so
 That it departed were among us two,
 Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to thee?? 815

779. E. Hn. Pt. Ln. yeuen. 780. E. loliftee. 796. Hl. Ln. the;
 rest omit. 803. E. hym; _rest_ hem. E. Hn. Cp. wol; Hl. wil; Cm.
 Pt. Ln. wolde. 807. E. _omits_ of hem. 808. E. Hn. Pt. sworn; Cm.
 swore: Cp. Ln. Hl. sworne.

That other answerde, ?I noot how that may be;
 He woot how that the gold is with us tweye,
 What shal we doon, what shal we to him seye?? (490)

?Shal it be conseil?? seyde the firste shrewe,
 ?And I shal tellen thee, in wordes fewe, 820
 [315: T. 12755-12790.]
 What we shal doon, and bringe it wel aboute.?

820. Hl. the (=thee); _rest omit._ E. Hn. Cm. in a; _rest omit_ a.

?I graunte,? quod that other, ?out of doute,
That, by my trouthe, I wol thee nat biwreye.?

823. E. shal; _rest_ wol (wil, wyl).

?Now,? quod the firste, ?thou woost wel we be tweye,
And two of us shul strenger be than oon. 825
Look whan that he is set, and right anoon
Arys, as though thou woldest with him pleye;
And I shal ryve him thurgh the sydes tweye (500)
Whyl that thou strogelest with him as in game,
And with thy dagger look thou do the same; 830
And than shal al this gold departed be,
My dere freend, bitwixen me and thee;
Than may we bothe our lustes al fulfillle,
And pleye at dees right at our owene wille.?
And thus acorded been these shrewes tweye 835
To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.

826. E. Hn. Cm. that right; Cp. and thanne; Pt. Ln. Hl. and that. _I
take_ and _from_ Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl., _and_ right _from_ E. Hn. Cm.

This yongest, which that wente un-to the toun,
Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and doun (510)
The beautee of these florins newe and brighte.
?O lord!? quod he, ?if so were that I mighte 840
Have al this tresor to my-self alone,
Ther is no man that liveth under the trone
Of god, that sholde live so mery as !!
And atte laste the feend, our enemy,
Putte in his thought that he shold poyson beye, 845
With which he mighte sleen his felawes tweye;
For-why the feend fond him in swich lyvinge,
That he had leve him to sorwe bringe, (520)
For this was outrelly his fulle entente
To sleen hem bothe, and never to repente. 850
And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,
Into the toun, un-to a pothecarie,
And preyed him, that he him wolde selle
Som poyson, that he mighte his rattes quelle;
And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe, 855
That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde y-slawe,
[316: T. 12791-12826.]
And fayn he wolde wreke him, if he mighte,
On vermin, that destroyed him by nighte. (530)

847. E. Hn. foond. 848. E. Cm. hem; _rest_ hym _or_ him. 853. Hn.
preyed; Cm. preyede; _rest_ preyde.

The pothecarie answerde, ?and thou shalt have
A thing that, al-so god my soule save, 860
In al this world ther nis no creature,

That ete or dronke hath of this confiture
Noght but the mountance of a corn of whete,
That he ne shal his lyf anon forlete;
Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lasse whyle 865
Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a myle;
This poyson is so strong and violent.?

861. E. Hn. Cm. is; _rest_ nys _or_ nis.

This cursed man hath in his hond y-hent (540)
This poyson in a box, and sith he ran
In-to the nexte strete, un-to a man, 870
And borwed [of] him large botels three;
And in the two his poyson poured he;
The thridde he kepte clene for his drinke.
For al the night he shoop him for to swinke
In caryinge of the gold out of that place. 875
And whan this ryotour, with sory grace,
Had filled with wyn his grete botels three,
To his felawes agayn repaireth he. (550)

871. _All_ omit of. 873. E. his owene; _rest omit_ owene.

What nedeth it to sermone of it more?
For right as they had cast his deeth bfore, 880
Right so they han him slayn, and that anon.
And whan that this was doon, thus spak that oon,
?Now lat us sitte and drinke, and make us merie,
And afterward we wol his body berie.?
And with that word it happed him, par cas, 885
To take the botel ther the poyson was,
And drank, and yaf his felawe drinke also,
For which anon they storven bothe two. (560)

880. E. so as; _rest omit_ so.

But, certes, I suppose that Avicen
Wroot never in no canon, ne in no fen, 890
Mo wonder signes of empoisoning
Than hadde these wrecches two, er hir ending.
[317: T. 12827-12861.]
Thus ended been these homicydes two,
And eek the false empoysoner also.

891. E. Hn. Cm. signes; Cp. Ln. Hl. sorwes; Pt. sorowes.

O cursed sinne, ful of cursednesse! 895
O traytours homicyde, o wikkednesse!
O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye!
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileinye (570)
And othes grete, of usage and of pryde!
Allas! mankinde, how may it bityde, 900
That to thy creatour which that thee wroghte,
And with his precious herte-blood thee boghte,

Thou art so fals and so unkinde, allas!

895. E. Hn. Cm. of alle; Cp. Ln. Hl. ful of; Pt. ful of al.

Now, goode men, god forgeve yow your trespas,
And ware yow fro the sinne of avaryce. 905
Myn holy pardoun may yow alle waryce,
So that ye offre nobles or sterlinges,
Or elles silver broches, spones, ringes. (580)
Boweth your heed under this holy bulle!
Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of your wolle! 910
Your name I entre heer in my rolle anon;
In-to the blisse of hevene shul ye gon;
I yow assoile, by myn heigh power,
Yow that wol offre, as clene and eek as cleer
As ye were born; and, lo, sirs, thus I preche. 915
And Iesu Crist, that is our soules leche,
So graunte yow his pardon to receyve;
For that is best; I wol yow nat deceyve. (590)

910. E. Com; _rest_ Cometh, Comyth. 911. E. Hl. names; _rest_ name.

But sirs, o word forgat I in my tale,
I have relikes and pardon in my male, 920
As faire as any man in Engelond,
Whiche were me yeven by the popes hond.
If any of yow wol, of devocioun,
Offren, and han myn absolucioun,
Cometh forth anon, and kneleth heer adoun, 925
And mekely receyveth my pardoun:
Or elles, taketh pardon as ye wende,
[318: T. 12862-12897.]
Al newe and fresh, at every tounes ende, (600)
So that ye offren alwey newe and newe
Nobles and pens, which that be gode and trewe. 930
It is an honour to everich that is heer,
That ye mowe have a suffisant pardoneer
Tassoille yow, in contree as ye ryde,
For adventures which that may bityde.
Peraventure ther may falle oon or two 935
Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke atwo.
Look which a seuretee is it to yow alle
That I am in your felawship y-falle, (610)
That may assoille yow, bothe more and lasse,
Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe, 940
I rede that our hoste heer shal biginne,
For he is most envoluped in sinne.
Com forth, sir hoste, and offre first anon,
And thou shalt kisse the reliks everichon,
Ye, for a grote! unbokel anon thy purs.? 945

925. E. Hn. Com; _rest_ Cometh, Comyth. 928. E. Hn. Cm. myles; _rest_
tounes. 930. E. Hn. or; _rest_ and. 935. E. fallen. 941. E. Cm.
heere; _rest om._ 944. E. my; Cm. myne; _rest_ the.

?Nay, nay,? quod he, ?than have I Cristes curs!
 Lat be,? quod he, ?it shal nat be, so theech!
 Thou woldest make me kisse thyn old breech, (620)
 And swere it were a relik of a seint,
 Thogh it were with thy fundement depeint! 950
 But by the croys which that seint Eleyne fond,
 I wolde I hadde thy coillons in myn hond
 In stede of relikes or of seintuarie;
 Lat cutte hem of, I wol thee helpe hem carie;
 Thay shul be shryned in an hogges tord.? 955

947. Hn. thee ich; _rest_ theech. 954. Cp. Ln. the helpe; Pt. Hl. helpe; E. with thee; Cm. from the; Hn. thee.

This pardoner answerde nat a word;
 So wrooth he was, no word ne wolde he seye.

?Now,? quod our host, ?I wol no lenger pleye (630)
 With thee, ne with noon other angry man.?
 But right anon the worthy knight bigan, 960
 Whan that he saugh that al the peple lough,
 ?Na-more of this, for it is right y-nough;
 Sir pardoner, be glad and mery of chere;
 [319: T. 12898-12902.]
 And ye, sir host, that been to me so dere,
 I prey yow that ye kisse the pardoner. 965
 And pardoner, I prey thee, drawe thee neer,
 And, as we diden, lat us laughe and pleye.? (639)
 Anon they kiste, and riden forth hir weye. [T. 12902.

=Here is ended the Pardoners Tale.=

(_For_ T. 12903, _see_ p. 165).

COLOPHON. _From_ E. Hn.; Hl. Here endeth the pardoneres tale.

[320: T. 5583-5602.]

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GROUP D.

THE WIFE OF BATH'S PROLOGUE.

T. 5583 sqq.; _for_ T. 5582, _see_ p. 164.)

* * * * *

=The prologe of the Wyves Tale of Bathe.=

?Experience, though noon auctoritee
 Were in this world, were right y-nough to me
 To speke of wo that is in mariage;

For, lordinges, sith I twelf yeer was of age,
 Thonked be god that is eterne on lyve, 5
 Housbondes at chirche-dore I have had fyve;
 For I so ofte have y-wedded be;
 And alle were worthy men in hir degree.
 But me was told certeyn, nat longe agon is,
 That sith that Crist ne wente never but onis 10
 To wedding in the Cane of Galilee,
 That by the same ensample taughte he me
 That I ne sholde wedded be but ones.
 Herke eek, lo! which a sharp word for the nones
 Besyde a welle Iesus, god and man, 15
 Spak in repreve of the Samaritan:
 ?Thou hast y-had fyve housbondes,? quod he,
 ?And thilke man, the which that hath now thee,
 Is noght thyn housbond;? thus seyde he certeyn;
 What that he mente ther-by, I can nat seyn; 20
 [321: T. 5603-5636.]
 But that I axe, why that the fifthe man
 Was noon housbond to the Samaritan?
 How manye mighte she have in mariage?
 Yet herde I never tellen in myn age
 Upon this nombre diffinicioun; 25
 Men may devyne and glosen up and doun.
 But wel I woot expres, with-oute lye,
 God bad us for to wexe and multiplie;
 That gentil text can I wel understonde.
 Eek wel I woot he seyde, myn housbonde 30
 Sholde lete fader and moder, and take me;
 But of no nombre mencion made he,
 Of bigamye or of octogamye;
 Why sholde men speke of it vileinye?

HEADING. _So_ E.; Hn. Here bigynneth the prologe of the tale of the Wyf
 of Bathe; Hl. Here bygynneth the prologe of the wyf of Bathe. 5. Hn.
 Pt. Ln. Thonked; E. Ythonked. 7. _So_ E.; _rest_ If (Hl. For) I so
 ofte myghte haue wedded be. 12. E. _om._ That. E. thoughte; _rest_
 taughte he. 14. E. Herkne; Hl. Herken; _rest_ Herke (Herk). E. Hl.
 om. lo. 18. E. And that; _rest_ And that ilke (_read_ thilke).
 29. E. _om._ wel. 31. E. take; Hl. folwe; _rest_ take to.

Lo, here the wyse king, dan Salomon; 35
 I trowe he hadde wyves mo than oon;
 As, wolde god, it leveful were to me
 To be refreshed half so ofte as he!
 Which yifte of god hadde he for alle his wyvis!
 No man hath swich, that in this world alyve is. 40
 God woot, this noble king, as to my wit,
 The firste night had many a mery fit
 With ech of hem, so wel was him on lyve!
 Blessed be god that I have wedded fyve!
 Welcome the sixte, whan that ever he shal. 45
 For sothe, I wol nat kepe me chast in al;
 Whan myn housbond is fro the world y-gon,

Som Cristen man shal wedde me anon;
 For thanne thapostle seith, that I am free
 To wedde, a goddes half, wher it lyketh me. 50
 He seith that to be wedded is no sinne;
 Bet is to be wedded than to brinne.
 What rekketh me, thogh folk seye vileinye
 Of shrewed Lameth and his bigamye?
 [322: T. 5637-5672.]
 I woot wel Abraham was an holy man, 55
 And Iacob eek, as ferforth as I can;
 And ech of hem hadde wyves mo than two;
 And many another holy man also.
 Whan saugh ye ever, in any maner age,
 That hye god defended mariage 60
 By expres word? I pray you, telleth me;
 Or wher comanded he virginitee?
 I woot as wel as ye, it is no drede,
 Thapostel, whan he speketh of maydenhede;
 He seyde, that precept ther-of hadde he noon. 65
 Men may conseille a womman to been oon,
 But conseilling is no comandement;
 He putte it in our owene lugement.
 For hadde god comanded maydenhede,
 Thanne hadde he dampned wedding with the dede; 70
 And certes, if ther were no seed y-sowe,
 Virginitee, wher-of than sholde it growe?
 Poul dorste nat comanden atte leste
 A thing of which his maister yaf noon heste.
 The dart is set up for virginitee; 75
 Cacche who so may, who renneth best lat see.

37. _So all but_ E., _which has_ it were leueful vn-to me. 42. E. myrie; Hn. murye. 44. E. Hl. Yblessed; _rest_ Blessed (Blissed). 46. E. chaast. 49. E. _om._ that. 50. Hl. wher so it be; _rest_ wher it liketh me (_correctly; for_ a goddes half = a god?s half). 51. E. _om._ that. 52. E. Hn. Hl. Bet; _rest_ Better. 54. E. Hl. of; _rest_ his. 58. E. _om._ holy. 59. Hl. Whan; E. Whanne; _rest_ Where (Wher). E. _om._ any. 64. E. Whan thapostel speketh. 67. E. nat; _rest_ no (non). 71. E. certein. 73. E. Hl. _ins._ ne _after_ Poul. 75. E. of; Cp. fro; Hl. on; _rest_ for.

But this word is nat take of every wight,
 But ther as god list give it of his might.
 I woot wel, that thapostel was a mayde;
 But natheless, thogh that he wroot and sayde, 80
 He wolde that every wight were swich as he,
 Al nis but conseil to virginitee;
 And for to been a wyf, he yaf me leve
 Of indulgence; so it is no repreve
 To wedde me, if that my make dye, 85
 With-oute excepcioun of bigamye.
 Al were it good no womman for to touche,
 He mente as in his bed or in his couche;
 For peril is bothe fyr and tow tasseble;

Ye knowe what this ensample may resemble. 90

[323: T. 5673-5706.]

This is al and som, he heeld virginitee
More parfit than wedding in freletee.
Freeltee clepe I, but-if that he and she
Wolde leden al hir lyf in chastitee.

77. E. Hl. taken. 78. E. Cm. lust; Hn. Hl. list. 79. E. _om._
that. 85. E. Cm. _om._ that. 89. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. to assemble. 91.
E. Cm that; Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. he heeld; Hl. he holdith. 92. E. Cm.
profiteth; _rest_ parfit. 94. Hn. Hl. leden; _rest_ lede.

I graunte it wel, I have noon envye, 95
Thogh maydenhede preferre bigamye;
Hem lyketh to be clene, body and goost,
Of myn estaat I nil nat make no boost.
For wel ye knowe, a lord in his houshold,
He hath nat every vessel al of gold; 100
Somme been of tree, and doon hir lord servyse.
God clepeth folk to him in sondry wyse,
And everich hath of god a propre yifte,
Som this, som that,?as him lyketh shifte.

104. _So all but_ Hl. Ln. _which have_ to schifte. _Perhaps read_ right
as him.

Virginitee is greet perfeccioun, 105
And continence eek with devocioun.
But Crist, that of perfeccioun is welle,
Bad nat every wight he shold go selle
All that he hadde, and give it to the pore,
And in swich wyse folwe hime and his fore. 110
He spak to hem that wolde live parfitly;
And lordinges, by your leve, that am nat I.
I wol bistowe the flour of al myn age
In the actes and in fruit of mariage.

108. E. Cm. Hl. _om._ he. 109, 110. E poore, foore; _and_ foore _is
glossed by_ steppes. 113. E Hl. _om._ al.

Telle me also, to what conclusioun 115
Were membres maad of generacioun,
And for what profit was a wight y-wrought?
Trusteth right wel, they wer nat maad for noght.
Glose who-so wole, and seye bothe up and doun,
That they were makid for purgacioun
Of urine, and our bothe thinges smale
Were eek to knowe a femele from a male,
And for noone other cause: sey ye no?
The experience woot wel it is noght so;
[324: T. 5707-5741.]

So that the clerkes be nat with me wrothe, 125
I sey this, that they makid been for bothe,
This is to seye, for office, and for ese

Of engendrure, ther we nat god displese.
 Why sholde men elles in hir bokes sette,
 That man shal yelde to his wyf hir dette? 130
 Now wher-with sholde he make his payement,
 If he ne used his sely instrument?
 Than were they maad up-on a creature,
 To purge uryne, and eek for engendrure.

116 E. ymaad. 120. Cm. makyd; _rest_ maad; _see_ l. 126. 121. _So_
 Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln.; E. vryne bothe and thynges. 122. E. Cm. And; Hn. Hl.
 Was; _rest_ Were. 126. this] E. yis. E. Cm. beth maked. 130. E.
 Cm. a man. 133. E. Thanne. 134. E. Cm. _om._ eek.

But I seye noght that every wight is holde, 135
 That hath swich harneys as I to yow tolde,
 To goon and usen hem in engendrure;
 Than sholde men take of chastitee no cure.
 Crist was a mayde, and shapen as a man,
 And many a seint, sith that the world bigan, 140
 Yet lived they ever in parfit chastitee.

I nil envye no virginitee;
 Lat hem be breed of pured whete-seed,
 And lat us wyves hoten barly-breed;
 And yet with barly-breed, Mark telle can, 145
 Our lord lesu refreshed many a man.

In swich estaat as god hath cleped us
 I wol persevere, I nam nat precious.
 In wyfhode I wol use myn instrument
 As frely as my maker hath it sent. 150

If I be daungerous, god yeve me sorwe!
 Myn housbond shal it have bothe eve and morwe,
 Whan that him list com forth and paye his dette.
 An housbonde I wol have, I nil nat lette,
 Which shal be bothe my dettour and my thral, 155
 And have his tribulacioun with-al

Up-on his flessh, whyl that I am his wyf.
 I have the power duringe al my lyf
 Up-on his propre body, and noght he.
 [325: T. 5742-5776.]
 Right thus the apostel tolde it un-to me; 160
 And bad our housbondes for to love us weel.
 Al this sentence me lyketh every-deel??

136. Hn. Hl. to yow; E. Cm. of. 138. E. Cm. They shul nat; _rest_
 Than sholde men. 140. E. Cm. _om._ that (_perhaps read_ sē-int).
 142. E. Cm. nil nat. 144. E. hoten; Hn. Cm. hote; Cp. Pt. Ln. ete(!);
 Hl. eten(!). 146. E. Cm. Hl. _om._ lesu. 148. E. Hn. precius.

Up sterte the Pardoner, and that anon,
 ?Now dame,? quod he, ?by god and by seint lohn,
 Ye been a noble prechour in this cas! 165
 I was aboute to wedde a wyf; allas!
 What sholde I bye it on my flesh so dere?
 Yet hadde I lever wedde no wyf to-yere!?

163. E. Hn. stirte.

?Abyde!? quod she, ?my tale is nat bigonne;
Nay, thou shalt drinken of another tonne 170
Er that I go, shal savoure wors than ale.
And whan that I have told thee forth my tale
Of tribulacioun in mariage,
Of which I am expert in al myn age,
This to seyn, my-self have been the whippe;? 175
Than maystow chese whether thou wolt sippe
Of thilke tonne that I shal abroche.
Be war of it, er thou to ny approche;
For I shal telle ensamples mo than ten.
Who-so that nil be war by othere men, 180
By him shul othere men corrected be.
The same wordes wryteth Ptholomee;
Rede in his Almageste, and take it there.?

172. Hn. Hl. thee; _rest om._ 173. E. Cm. that is in (_for_ in).

176. E. wheither. 177. E. Cm. that; _rest_ thilke. 180. Hn. nyle;
Hl. nyl; _rest_ wol nat. 182. Ln. tholome; Pt. ptholome; Hl.
p_ro_tholome; E. Hn. Cm. Cp. Protholome(!). 183. E. Cm. Rede it in.

?Dame, I wolde praye yow, if your wil it were,?
Seyde this Pardoner, ?as ye bigan, 185
Telle forth your tale, spareth for no man,
And teche us yonge men of your praktike.?

184. E. Cm. _om._ yow.

?Gladly,? quod she, ?sith it may yow lyke.
But yet I praye to al this companye,
If that I speke after my fantasye, 190
As taketh not a-grief of that I seye;
For myn entente nis but for to pleye.

188. E. sires; Cm. sire; _rest_ quod she. 191. E. Cm. _om._ of.
192. Hn. nis; E. Cm. is; _rest_ is not.

Now sires, now wol I telle forth my tale.?
As ever mote I drinken wyn or ale,
[326: T. 5777-5811.]
I shal seye sooth, tho housbondes that I hadde, 195
As three of hem were gode and two were badde.
The three men were gode, and riche, and olde;
Unnethe mighte they the statut holde
In which that they were bounden un-to me.
Ye woot wel what I mene of this, pardee! 200
As help me god, I laughe whan I thinke
How pitously a-night I made hem swinke;
And by my fey, I tolde of it no stoor.
They had me yeven hir gold and hir tresoor;
Me neded nat do lenger diligence 205

To winne hir love, or doon hem reverence.
They loved me so wel, by god above,
That I ne tolde no deyntee of hir love!
A wys womman wol sette hir ever in oon
To gete hir love, ther as she hath noon. 210

But sith I hadde hem hoolly in myn hond,
And sith they hadde me yeven all hir lond,
What sholde I taken hede hem for to plese,
But it were for my profit and myn ese?
I sette hem so a-werke, by my fey, 215

That many a night they songen ?weilawey!?
The bacoun was nat fet for hem, I trowe,
That som men han in Essex at Dunmowe.
I governed hem so wel, after my lawe,
That ech of hem ful blisful was and fawe 220

To bringe me gaye thinges fro the fayre.
They were ful glad whan I spak to hem fayre;
For god it woot, I chidde hem spitously.

193. E. Hn. Cm. sire. 195. E. of tho; Hl. Cm. of; Hn. Cp. Pt. tho;
Ln. the. 197. Cp. Pt. Ln. men; _rest om._ 210. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. ye
ther; _but read_ lov-ë. 215. E. Hn. a-werk; _rest_ a-werke. 220. E.
was ful blisful; Cm. was blysfyl and ful.

Now herkneth, how I bar me proprely,
Ye wyse wyves, that can understonde. 225

224. E. baar.

Thus shul ye speke and bere hem wrong on honde;
For half so boldely can ther no man
Swere and lyen as a womman can.
I sey nat this by wyves that ben wyse,
[327: T. 5812-5845.]
But-if it be whan they hem misavyse. 230
A wys wyf, if that she can hir good,
Shal beren him on hond the cow is wood,
And take witesse of hir owene mayde
Of hir assent; but herkneth how I sayde.

226. E. beren: _om._ wrong. 228. MSS. lye; _read_ lyen. Hn. Ln. a
womman kan; Pt. womman can; _rest_ kan a womman. 231. E. Hn. Cm. A
wys; Hl. I-wis a; _rest_ wise. _Read_ wys-e? 232. Hl. beren; _rest_
bere. Cm. cou; Pt. Ln. cowe.

?Sir olde kaynard, is this thyn array? 235
Why is my neighebores wyf so gay?
She is honoured over-al ther she goth;
I sitte at hoom, I have no thrifty cloth.

What dostow at my neighebores hous?
Is she so fair? artow so amorous? 240
What rowne ye with our mayde? _benedicite_!
Sir olde lechour, lat thy lapes be!
And if I have a gossib or a freend,

With-uten gilt, thou chydest as a feend,
 If that I walke or pleye un-to his hous! 245
 Thou comest hoom as dronken as a mous,
 And prechest on thy bench, with yvel preef!
 Thou seist to me, it is a greet meschief
 To wedde a povre womman, for costage;
 And if that she be riche, of heigh parage, 250
 Than seistow that it is a tormentrye
 To suffre hir pryde and hir malencolye.
 And if that she be fair, thou verray knave,
 Thou seyst that every holour wol hir have;
 She may no whyle in chastitee abyde, 255
 That is assailed up-on ech a syde.

242. E. Pt. Hl. lecchour. 250. E. Cm. _om._ that. E. Cm. Hl. and of; _rest_ of. 251. E. Cm. Hl. _om._ that. 252. E. soffren.

Thou seyst, som folk desyre us for richesse,
 Somme for our shap, and somme for our fairnesse;
 And som, for she can outhere singe or daunce,
 And som, for gentillesse and daliaunce; 260
 Som, for hir handes and hir armes smale;
 Thus goth al to the devel by thy tale.
 Thou seyst, men may nat kepe a castel-wal;
 [328: T. 5846-5880.]
 It may so longe assailed been over-al.

257. E. Cm. that som. E. Hn. Cm. desiren. 258. E. Cm. _om._ and. 259. E. Cm. Hl. _om._ outhere. E. Cm. Hl. and (_for_ or). 260. and] E. Cm. and som for; Hl. or.

And if that she be foul, thou seist that she 265
 Coveiteth every man that she may se;
 For as a spaynel she wol on him lepe,
 Til that she finde som man hir to chepe;
 Ne noon so grey goos goth ther in the lake,
 As, seistow, that wol been with-oute make. 270
 And seyst, it is an hard thing for to welde
 A thing that no man wol, his thankes, helde.
 Thus seistow, lorel, whan thow goost to bedde;
 And that no wys man nedeth for to wedde,
 Ne no man that entendeth un-to hevене. 275
 With wilde thonder-dint and firy levене
 Mote thy welked nekke be to-broke!

269. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. ther; _rest om._ 270. Cp. Pt. Ln. that; _rest om._ 271, 272. Hn. Hl. wolde, holde. 277. E. Hn. Pt. Ln. welked; Cm. wekede; Cp. Hl. wicked.

Thow seyst that dropping houses, and eek smoke,
 And chydng wyves, maken men to flee
 Out of hir owene hous; a! _benedicite_! 280
 What eyleth swich an old man for to chyde?

280. E. Hn. Cp. houses.

Thow seyst, we wyves wol our vyces hyde
Til we be fast, and than we wol hem shewe;
Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewe!

282. E. Cm. that we.

Thou seist, that oxen, asses, hors, and houndes, 285
They been assayed at diverse stoundes;
Bacins, lavours, er that men hem bye,
Spones and stoles, and al swich housbondrye,
And so been pottes, clothes, and array;
But folk of wyves maken noon assay 290
Til they be wedded; olde dotard shrewe!
And than, seistow, we wol oure vices shewe.

286. E. assayd; Pt. Ln. assaide; _rest_ assayed. 292. Hn. Hl.
supply And.

Thou seist also, that it displeseth me
But-if that thou wolt preyse my beautee,
And but thou poure alwey up-on my face, 295
And clepe me ?faire dame? in every place;
And but thou make a feste on thilke day
That I was born, and make me fresh and gay,
[329: T. 5881-5913.]
And but thou do to my norice honour,
And to my chamberere with-inne my bour, 300
And to my fadres folk and his allyes;?
Thus seistow, olde barel ful of lyes!

295. Hl. pore; _rest_ poure. 300. Cm. chaumberere; Hl. chamberer; E.
Hn. chambrere.

And yet of our apprentice lanekyn,
For his crisp heer, shyninge as gold so fyn,
And for he squiereth me bothe up and doun, 305
Yet hastow caught a fals suspecioun;
I wol hym noght, thogh thou were deed to-morwe.

303. E. lanekyn; _rest_ lankyn.

But tel me this, why hydestow, with sorwe,
The keyes of thy cheste away fro me?
It is my good as wel as thyn, pardee. 310
What wenestow make an idiot of our dame?
Now by that lord, that called is seint lame,
Thou shalt nat bothe, thogh that thou were wood,
Be maister of my body and of my good;
That oon thou shalt forgo, maugree thyne yën; 315
What nedeth thee of me to enquere or spyën?
I trowe, thou woldest loke me in thy chiste!
Thou sholdest seye, ?wyf, go wher thee liste,

Tak your disport, I wol nat leve no talis;
I knowe yow for a trewe wyf, dame Alis.? 320
We love no man that taketh kepe or charge
Wher that we goon, we wol ben at our large.

308. E. Cm. Hl. _om._ this. 309. thy] E. Cm. my. 311. E. Cm. to
make; _rest om._ to. 313. Hn. Ln. that; _rest om._ 315. Hl. yen; E.
eyen. 316. E. nedeth thee; _rest_ helpeth it. Hn. Cp. Ln. _om._
to. Hl. tenqueren; _read_ t?enquere. 319. _All but_ Cp. Ln. _om._
not (nat). 320. E. Pt. Alys; Ln. Ales.

Of alle men y-blessed moot he be,
The wyse astrologien Dan Ptholome,
That seith this proverbe in his Almageste, 325
?Of alle men his wisdom is the hyste,
That rekketh never who hath the world in honde.?
By this proverbe thou shalt understonde,
Have thou y-nogh, what thar thee recche or care
How merily that othere folkes fare? 330

For certeyn, olde dotard, by your leve,
[330: T. 5914-5949.]
Ye shul have queynte right y-nough at eve.
He is to greet a nigard that wol werne
A man to lighte his candle at his lanterne;
He shal have never the lasse light, pardee; 335
Have thou y-nough, thee thar nat pleyne thee.

323. Hn. Hl. yblessed; _rest_ blessed. 324. MSS. Daun. E.
Protholome; Hn. Cm. Hl. P_ro_tholome. 326. E. Cm. _ins._ the _before_
hyste; (_read_ th? hy-est-e). 328. Cp. Pt. Ln. shal wel. 330. E.
myrily. 333. E. Cm. wolde.

Thou seyst also, that if we make us gay
With clothing and with precious array,
That it is peril of our chastitee;
And yet, with sorwe, thou most enforce thee, 340
And seye this wordes in the apostles name,
?In habit, maad with chastitee and shame,
Ye wommen shul apparaille yow,? quod he,
?And noght in tressed heer and gay perree,
As perles, ne with gold, ne clothes riche;? 345
After thy text, ne after thy rubriche
I wol nat wirche as muchel as a gnat.
Thou seydest this, that I was lyk a cat;
For who-so wolde senge a cattes skin,
Thanne wolde the cat wel dwellen in his in; 350
And if the cattes skin be slyk and gay,
She wol nat dwelle in house half a day,
But forth she wole, er any day be dawed,
To shewe hir skin, and goon a-caterwawed;
This is to seye, if I be gay, sir shrewe, 355
I wol renne out, my borel for to shewe.

348. Hl. thus; Cp. Pt. Ln. als; _rest_ this. 350. _All_ his.

Sire olde fool, what eyleth thee to spyën?
Thogh thou preye Argus, with his hundred yën,
To be my warde-cors, as he can best,
In feith, he shal nat kepe me but me lest; 360
Yet coude I make his berd, so moot I thee.

358. Hl. yen; E. eyen. 359. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. -corps. 360. E.
om. 2nd me.

Thou seydest eek, that ther ben thinges three,
The whiche thinges troublen al this erthe,
And that no wight ne may endure the ferthe;
O leve sir shrewe, lesu shorte thy lyf! 365
Yet prechestow, and seyst, an hateful wyf
Y-rekened is for oon of these meschances.

[331: T. 5950-5982.]

Been ther none othere maner resemblances
That ye may lykne your parables to,
But-if a sely wyf be oon of tho? 370

364. _All but_ Pt. Ln. _om._ ne. 366. E. and (_for_ an). 368. Cp.
Pt. Ln. maner; Cm. of these; Hl. of thy; E. _om._

Thou lykenest wommanes love to helle,
To bareyne lond, ther water may not dwelle.
Thou lyknest it also to wilde fyr;
The more it brenneth, the more it hath desyr
To consume every thing that brent wol be. 375
Thou seyst, that right as wormes shende a tree,
Right so a wyf destroyeth hir housbonde;
This knowe they that been to wyves bonde.?

371. Cp. Ln. Hl. likenest; Cm. likkenyst; E. Hn. Pt. liknest. E.
wommennes. 375. E. Hn. consumen. 376. Cp. Pt. that; _rest om._
Hn. Cp. Pt. shende; E. Pt. shendeth.

Lordinges, right thus, as ye have understonde,
Bar I stifly myne olde housbondes on honde, 380
That thus they seyden in hir dronkenesse;
And al was fals, but that I took witnessse
On lanekin and on my nece also.

O lord, the peyne I dide hem and the wo,
Ful giltelees, by goddes swete pyne! 385

For as an hors I coude byte and whyne.
I coude pleyne, thogh I were in the gilt,
Or elles often tyme hadde I ben spilt.
Who-so that first to mille comth, first grint;
I pleynd first, so was our werre y-stint. 390

They were ful glad to excusen hem ful blyve
Of thing of which they never agilte hir lyve.

383. Hl. vpon. 385. E. Hn. gillees. 389. _So_ Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln.; E.
Who so comth first to mille; Hl. Who-so first cometh to the mylle.

391. E. Cm. _om. 2nd_ ful.

Of wenches wolde I beren him on honde,
Whan that for syk unnethes mighte he stonde.
Yet tikled it his herte, for that he 395
Wende that I hadde of him so greet chiertee.
I swoor that al my walkinge out by nighte
Was for tespye wenches that he dighte;
Under that colour hadde I many a mirthe.
For al swich wit is yeven us in our birthe; 400
[332: T. 5983-6019.]
Deceite, weping, spinning god hath yive
To wommen kindely, whyl they may live.
And thus of o thing I avaunte me,
Atte ende I hadde the bettre in ech degree,
By sleighte, or force, or by som maner thing, 405
As by continuel murmur or grucching;
Namely a bedde hadden they meschaunce,
Ther wolde I chyde and do hem no plesaunce;
I wolde no lenger in the bed abyde,
If that I felte his arm over my syde, 410
Til he had maad his raunson un-to me;
Than wolde I suffre him do his nycetee.
And ther-fore every man this tale I telle,
Winne who-so may, for al is for to selle.
With empty hand men may none haukes lure; 415
For winning wolde I al his lust endure,
And make me a feyned appetyt;
And yet in bacon hadde I never delyt;
That made me that ever I wolde hem chyde.
For thogh the pope had seten hem biside, 420
I wolde nat spare hem at hir owene bord.
For by my trouthe, I quitte hem word for word.
As help me verray god omnipotent,
Thogh I right now sholde make my testament,
I ne owe hem nat a word that it nis quit. 425
I broghte it so aboute by my wit,
That they moste yeve it up, as for the beste;
Or elles hadde we never been in reste.
For thogh he loked as a wood leoun,
Yet sholde he faille of his conclusioun. 430

393. E. hym; _rest_ hem; _but see_ 394. 395. E. it; _rest_ I. 400.
E. thyng was; _rest_ wit is. 401. E. yeue. 402. _All but_ Hn. Hl.
ins. that _before_ they. 406. E. continueel. 428. E. rest.

Thanne wolde I seye, ?gode lief, tak keep
How mekely loketh Wilkinoure sheep;
Com neer, my spouse, lat me ba thy cheke!
Ye sholde been al pacient and meke,
And han a swete spyced conscience, 435
Sith ye so preche of lobes pacience.
Suffreth alwey, sin ye so wel can preche;
[333: T. 6020-6056.]

And but ye do, certain we shal yow teche
 That it is fair to have a wyf in pees.
 Oon of us two moste bowen, doutelees; 440
 And sith a man is more resonable
 Than womman is, ye moste been suffrable.
 What eyleth yow to grucche thus and grone?
 Is it for ye wolde have my queynte allone?
 Why taak it al, lo, have it every-deel; 445
 Peter! I shrewe yow but ye love it weel!
 For if I wolde selle my _bele chose,_
 I coude walke as fresh as is a rose;
 But I wol kepe it for your owene tooth.
 Ye be to blame, by god, I sey yow sooth.? 450

431. Cp. Pt. Hl. _ins._ now _before_ goode. 445. E. Hn. Pt. Wy.

Swiche maner wordes hadde we on honde.
 Now wol I speken of my fourthe housbonde.

My fourthe housbonde was a revelour,
 This is to seyn, he hadde a paramour;
 And I was yong and ful of ragerye, 455
 Stiborn and strong, and loly as a pye.
 Wel coude I daunce to an harpe smale,
 And singe, y-wis, as any nightingale,
 Whan I had dronke a draughte of swete wyn.
 Metellius, the foule cherl, the swyn, 460
 That with a staf birafte his wyf hir lyf,
 For she drank wyn, thogh I hadde been his wyf,
 He sholde nat han daunted me fro drinke;
 And, after wyn, on Venus moste I thinke:
 For al so siker as cold engendreth hayl, 465
 A likerous mouth moste han a likerous tayl.
 In womman vinolent is no defence,
 This knowen lechours by experience.

456. Cm. Cp. Ln. Styborne; Pt. Hl. Stiborn; E. Hn. Stibourne. 464.
 Cm. muste; Ln. must. 467. E. Hl. wommen.

But, lord Crist! whan that it remembreth me
 Up-on my yowthe, and on my lolitee, 470
 It tikleth me aboute myn herte rote.
 Unto this day it dooth myn herte bote
 That I have had my world as in my tyme.
 But age, allas! that al wol envenyme,
 [334: T. 6057-6093.]
 Hath me biraft my beautee and my pith; 475
 Lat go, fare-wel, the devel go therwith!
 The flour is goon, ther is na-more to telle,
 The bren, as I best can, now moste I selle;
 But yet to be right mery wol I fonde.
 Now wol I tellen of my fourthe housbonde. 480

479. E. myrie; Hn. murye.

I seye, I hadde in herte greet despyt
 That he of any other had delyt.
 But he was quit, by god and by seint loce!
 I made him of the same wode a croce;
 Nat of my body in no foul manere, 485
 But certainly, I made folk swich chere,
 That in his owene grece I made him frye
 For angre, and for verray lalousye.
 By god, in erthe I was his purgatorie,
 For which I hope his soule be in glorie. 490
 For god it woot, he sat ful ofte and song
 Whan that his shoo ful bitterly him wrong.
 Ther was no wight, save god and he, that wiste,
 In many wyse, how sore I him twiste.
 He deyde whan I cam fro Ierusalem, 495
 And lyth y-grave under the rode-beem,
 Al is his tombe noght so curious
 As was the sepulcre of him, Darius,
 Which that Appelles wroghte subtilly;
 It nis but wast to burie him preciously. 500
 Lat him fare-wel, god yeve his soule reste,
 He is now in the grave and in his cheste.

486. E. c_er_tein. 497. E. Hn. curyus.

Now of my fifthe housbond wol I telle.
 God lete his soule never come in helle!
 And yet was he to me the moste shrewe; 505
 That fele I on my ribbes al by rewe,
 And ever shal, un-to myn ending-day.
 But in our bed he was so fresh and gay,
 And ther-with-al so wel coude he me glose,
 Whan that he wolde han my _bele chose, 510
 That thogh he hadde me bet on every boon,
 [335: T. 6094-6129.]
 He coude winne agayn my love anoon.
 I trowe I loved him beste, for that he
 Was of his love daungerous to me.
 We wommen han, if that I shal nat lye, 515
 In this matere a queynte fantasye;
 Wayte what thing we may nat lightly have,
 Ther-after wol we crye al-day and crave.
 Forbede us thing, and that desyren we;
 Prees on us faste, and thanne wol we flee. 520
 With daunger oute we al our chaffare;
 Greet prees at market maketh dere ware,
 And to greet cheep is holde at litel prys;
 This knoweth every womman that is wys.

508. E. ful; _rest_ so. 511. Cp. Hl. boon; _rest_ bon. 513. Cm. Hl.
 beste; E. Hn. best; Cp. Pt. the bet; Ln. bette. 520. E. Hn. Preesse;
 Cm Presse. 521. E. Hn. Cm. oute; Cp. Ln. Hl. outen; Pt. outer.

My fifthe housbonde, god his soule blesse! 525
 Which that I took for love and no richesse,
 He som-tyme was a clerk of Oxenford,
 And had left scole, and wente at hoom to bord
 With my gossib, dwellinge in oure toun,
 God have hir soule! hir name was Alisoun. 530
 She knew myn herte and eek my privetee
 Bet than our parisshe-preest, so moot I thee!
 To hir biwreyed I my conseil al.
 For had myn housbonde pissed on a wal,
 Or doon a thing that sholde han cost his lyf, 535
 To hir, and to another worthy wyf,
 And to my nece, which that I loved weel,
 I wolde han told his conseil every-deel.
 And so I dide ful often, god it woot,
 That made his face ful often reed and hoot 540
 For verray shame, and blamed him-self for he
 Had told to me so greet a privetee.

528. E. hadde; hom. 532. E. Hn. as; _rest_ so. 534. E. Hn. Cm. Cp. hadde.

And so bifel that ones, in a Lente,
 (So often tymes I to my gossib wente,
 For ever yet I lovede to be gay, 545
 And for to walke, in March, Averille, and May,
 Fro hous to hous, to here sondry talis),
 [336: T. 6130-6164.]
 That lankin clerk, and my gossib dame Alis,
 And I my-self, in-to the felde wente.
 Myn housbond was at London al that Lente; 550
 I hadde the bettre leyser for to pleye,
 And for to see, and eek for to be seye
 Of lusty folk; what wiste I wher my grace
 Was shapen for to be, or in what place?
 Therefore I made my visitaciouns, 555
 To vigilies and to processions,
 To preching eek and to thise pilgrimages,
 To pleyes of miracles and mariages,
 And wered upon my gaye scarlet gytes.
 Thise wormes, ne thise motthes, ne thise mytes, 560
 Upon my peril, frete hem never a deel;
 And wostow why? for they were used weel.

545. Hn. Cm. louede; E. Hl. loued. 550. E. the; _rest_ that. 558. E. Hn. and to; Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. and of; Hl. _om._ to (_or_ of). 561. E. Hn. Cm. Cp. peril (_correctly_); Pt. perile; Ln. Hl. perel.

Now wol I tellen forth what happed me.
 I seye, that in the feeldes walked we,
 Til trewely we hadde swich daliance, 565
 This clerk and I, that of my purveyance
 I spak to him, and seyde him, how that he,
 If I were widwe, sholde wedde me.

For certainly, I sey for no bobance,
Yet was I never with-outen purveyance 570
Of mariage, nof othere thinges eek.
I holde a mouses herte nat worth a leek,
That hath but oon hole for to sterte to,
And if that faille, thanne is al y-do.

571. E. Hn. nof; Cm. and more; _rest_ ne of. 572. herte] Cp. Pt. Ln.
witte.

I bar him on honde, he hadde enchanted me; 575
My dame taughte me that soutiltee.
And eek I seyde, I mette of him al night;
He wolde han slayn me as I lay up-right,
And al my bed was ful of verray blood,
But yet I hope that he shal do me good; 580
For blood bitokeneth gold, as me was taught.
And al was fals, I dremed of it right naught,
[337: T. 6165-6199.]
But as I folwed ay my dames lore,
As wel of this as of other thinges more.

575-584. _All but_ E. Cm. _omit these lines;_ (Dd. _has them_). 583.
E. Cm. _om._ as; _but it occurs in_ MSS. Camb. Dd. 4. 24, li. l. 36,
&c.

But now sir, lat me see, what I shal seyn? 585
A! ha! by god, I have my tale ageyn.

Whan that my fourthe housbond was on bere,
I weep algate, and made sory chere,
As wyves moten, for it is usage,
And with my coverchief covered my visage; 590
But for that I was purveyed of a make,
I weep but smal, and that I undertake.

592. E. wepte; _but see_ 588.

To chirche was myn housbond born a-morwe
With neighebores, that for him maden sorwe;
And lankin oure clerk was oon of tho. 595
As help me god, whan that I saugh him go
After the bere, me thoughte he hadde a paire
Of legges and of feet so clene and faire,
That al myn herte I yaf un-to his hold.
He was, I trowe, a twenty winter old, 600
And I was fourty, if I shal seye sooth;
But yet I hadde alwey a coltes tooth.
Gat-tothed I was, and that bicam me weel;
I hadde the prente of sēynt Venus seel.
As help me god, I was a lusty oon, 605
And faire and riche, and yong, and wel bigoon;
And trewely, as myne housbondes tolde me,
I had the beste _quoniam_ mighte be.

For certes, I am al Venerien
In felinge, and myn herte is Marcien. 610

Venus me yaf my lust, my likerousnesse,
And Mars yaf me my sturdy hardinesse.
Myn ascendent was Taur, and Mars ther-inne.
Allas! allas! that ever love was sinne!

I folwed ay myn inclinacioun 615

By vertu of my constellacioun;
That made me I coude nocht withdrawe
[338: T. 6200-6225.]

My chambre of Venus from a good felawe.
Yet have I Martes mark up-on my face,
And also in another privee place. 620

For, god so wis be my savacioun,
I ne loved never by no discrecioun,
But ever folwede myn appetyt,
Al were he short or long, or blak or whyt;
I took no kepe, so that he lyked me, 625
How pore he was, ne eek of what degree.

595. _Or_ lanekin, _see_ 383; MSS. lankyn. 603. Ln. Gate-topede.
605-612. Hl. _omits._ 608. E. hadde. E. Hn. quonyam; Cm. Pt. Ln.
quoniam; Cp. queynte. 609-612. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. _omit._ 619-626. Hn.
Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. _omit._ 623. Cm. folwede; E. folwed. 626. Cm. pore;
E. poore.

What sholde I seye, but, at the monthes ende,
This loly clerk lankin, that was so hende,
Hath wedded me with greet solempnitee,
And to him yaf I al the lond and fee 630
That ever was me yeven ther-bifore;
But afterward repented me ful sore.
He nolde suffre nothing of my list.

By god, he smoot me ones on the list,
For that I rente out of his book a leef, 635
That of the strook myn ere wex al deef.

Stiborn I was as is a leonesse,
And of my tonge a verray langleresse,
And walke I wolde, as I had doon biforn,
From hous to hous, al-though he had it sworn. 640

For which he often tymes wolde preche,
And me of olde Romain gestes teche,
How he, Simplicius Gallus, lefte his wyf,
And hir forsook for terme of al his lyf,
Noght but for open-headed he hir say 645
Lokinge out at his dore upon a day.

634. E. Hn. on the lyst; (Ln. luste; Cp. Pt. lest); Hl. Cm. with his
fist. 636. E. Hl. wax. 637. E. Hn. Stibourne. 645. E. Hn.
-headed; Hl. heedid.

Another Romain tolde he me by name,
That, for his wyf was at a someres game
With-oute his witing, he forsook hir eke.

And than wolde he up-on his Bible seke 650
That ilke proverbe of Ecclesiaste,
Wher he comandeth and forbedeth faste,
Man shal nat suffre his wyf go roule aboute;
[339: T. 6226-6271.]

Than wolde he seye right thus, with-outen doute,
?Who-so that buildeth his hous al of salwes, 655
And priketh his blinde hors over the falwes,
And suffreth his wyf to go seken halwes,
Is worthy to been hanged on the galwes!?

But al for noght, I sette noght an hawe
Of his proverbes nof his olde sawe, 660
Ne I wolde nat of him corrected be.

I hate him that my vices telleth me,
And so do mo, god woot! of us than I.
This made him with me wood al outrely;
I nolde noght forbere him in no cas. 665

649. E. Hn. Cm. With-outen. 650. E. thanne. 654. E. Thanne. 660.
E. Hn. nof; _rest_ ne of. E. awe; Hn. Cm. Hl. sawe; Cp. Pt. Ln. lawe.

Now wol I seye yow sooth, by seint Thomas,
Why that I rente out of his book a leef,
For which he smoot me so that I was deaf.

He hadde a book that gladly, night and day,
For his desport he wolde rede alway. 670
He cleped it Valerie and Theofraste,
At whiche book he lough alwey ful faste.

And eek ther was som-tyme a clerk at Rome,
A cardinal, that highte Seint Ierome,
That made a book agayn Iovinian; 675

In whiche book eek ther was Tertulan,
Crisippus, Trotula, and Helowys,
That was abbesse nat fer fro Parys;
And eek the Parables of Salomon,
Ovydes Art, and bokes many on, 680
And alle these wer bounden in o volume.

And every night and day was his custume,
Whan he had leyser and vacacioun
From other worldly occupacioun,
To reden on this book of wikked wyves. 685

He knew of hem mo legendes and lyves
Than been of gode wyves in the Bible.
For trusteth wel, it is an impossible
That any clerk wol speke good of wyves,
[340: T. 6272-6305.]

But-if it be of holy seintes lyves, 690
Ne of noon other womman never the mo.

Who peyntede the leoun, tel me who?
By god, if women hadde writen stories,
As clerkes han with-inne hir oratories,
They wolde han writen of men more wikkednesse 695
Than all the mark of Adam may redresse.

The children of Mercurie and of Venus
Been in hir wirking ful contrarious;
Mercurie loveth wisdom and science,
And Venus loveth ryot and dispence. 700

And, for hir diverse disposicioun,
Ech falleth in otheres exaltacioun;
And thus, god woot! Mercurie is desolat
In Pisces, wher Venus is exaltat;
And Venus falleth ther Mercurie is reysed; 705

Therfore no womman of no clerk is preysed.
The clerk, whan he is old, and may noight do
Of Venus werkes worth his olde sho,
Than sit he doun, and writ in his dotage
That wommen can nat kepe hir mariage! 710

676. Cm. Ln. whiche; _rest_ which. Cp. Pt. Hl. Terculan. 680. Hl.
bourdes; _rest_ bookes (bokes). 683. E. hadde. 691. E. Ne; Hn. Nof;
rest Ne of. 692. Cm. peyntede; _rest_ peynted. 697. Cm. Hl. and
of; _rest_ om._ of. 698. E. Hn. Ln. Hl. contrarius. 699. E.
wysdam. 705. _Over_ is reysed E. _has_ i. in Virgine. 709. E.
Thanne.

But now to purpos, why I tolde thee
That I was beten for a book, pardee.
Up-on a night lankin, that was our syre,
Redde on his book, as he sat by the fyre,
Of Eva first, that, for hir wikkednesse, 715

Was al mankinde broght to wrecchednesse,
For which that lesu Crist him-self was slayn,
That boghte us with his herte-blood agayn.
Lo, here expres of womman may ye finde,
That womman was the los of al mankinde. 720

717-720. Hn. Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. _omit._ 717. E. _om._ that lesu;
which occurs in MS. Bibl. Reg. 17. D. xv. _and in_ Dd.

Tho redde he me how Sampson loste his heres,
Slepinge, his lemman kitte hem with hir sheres;
Thurgh whiche tresoun loste he bothe his yën.

721, 723. E. hise. 722. Cm. hem; _rest_ it (_badly_). 723. Pt. Ln.
whiche; _rest_ which (_badly_). E. eyen.

[341: T. 6306-6340.]

Tho redde he me, if that I shal nat lyen,
Of Hercules and of his Dianyre, 725
That caused him to sette himself a-fyre.

No-thing forgat he the penaunce and wo
That Socrates had with hise wyves two;
How Xantippa caste pisse up-on his heed;
This sely man sat stille, as he were deed; 730
He wyped his heed, namore dorste he seyn

But ?er that thonder stinte, comth a reyn.?

727. Cp. Pt. Ln. penance; E. Hn. sorwe; Cm. Hl. care. 728. E. hadde.

Of Phasipha, that was the quene of Crete,
For shrewednesse, him thoughte the tale swete;
Fy! spek na-more?it is a grisly thing? 735
Of hir horrible lust and hir lyking.

733. E. Hn. Phasifpha; Cm. Phasippa; _rest_ Phasipha. 735. E. speke;
Hn. Cm. Cp. Hl. spek.

Of Clitemistra, for hir lecherye,
That falsly made hir housbond for to dye,
He redde it with ful good devocioun.

737. E. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. Clitermystra; Cm. Clitemysta; Hl. Clydemystra.

He tolde me eek for what occasioun 740
Amphiorax at Thebes loste his lyf;
Myn housbond hadde a legende of his wyf,
Eriphilem, that for an ouche of gold
Hath prively un-to the Grekes told
Wher that hir housbonde hidde him in a place, 745
For which he hadde at Thebes sory grace.

Of Lyma tolde he me, and of Lucye,
They bothe made hir housbondes for to dye;
That oon for love, that other was for hate;
Lyma hir housbond, on an even late, 750
Empoysoned hath, for that she was his fo.
Lucya, likerous, loved hir housbond so,
That, for he sholde alwey up-on hir thinke,
She yaf him swich a maner love-drinke,
That he was deed, er it were by the morwe; 755
And thus algates housbondes han sorwe.

750. E. vpon; _rest_ on.

Than tolde he me, how oon Latumius
Compleyned to his felawe Arrius,
[342: T. 6341-6376.]
That in his gardin growed swich a tree,
On which, he seyde, how that his wyves three 760
Hanged hem-self for herte despitous.
?O leve brother,? quod this Arrius,
?Yif me a plante of thilke blissed tree,
And in my gardin planted shal it be!?

757. E. Thanne. E. Hn. how that oon. Cm. Latymyus; _rest_ Latumyus.

758. E. Hn. Hl. vnto; _rest_ to. 764. E. Ln. it shal; Pt. shal he;
rest shal it.

Of latter date, of wyves hath he red, 765

That somme han slayn hir housbondes in hir bed,
And lete hir lechour dighte hir al the night
Whyl that the corps lay in the floor up-right.
And somme han drive nayles in hir brayn
Whyl that they slepte, and thus they han hem slayn. 770

Somme han hem yeve poysoun in hir drinke.
He spak more harm than herte may bithinke.
And ther-with-al, he knew of mo proverbes
Than in this world ther growen gras or herbes.
?Bet is,? quod he, ?thyn habitacioun 775

Be with a leoun or a foul dragoun,
Than with a womman usinge for to chyde.
Bet is,? quod he, ?hye in the roof abyde
Than with an angry wyf down in the hous;
They been so wikked and contrarious; 780

They haten that hir housbondes loveth ay.?
He seyde, ?a womman cast hir shame away,
Whan she cast of hir smok;? and forther-mo,
?A fair womman, but she be chaast also,
Is lyk a gold ring in a sowes nose.? 785

Who wolde wenen, or who wolde suppose
The wo that in myn herte was, and pyne?

767. E. lecchour. 768. Cm. Whils; Hl. Whil; _rest_ Whan; _see_ 770.

786. E. leeue; _rest_ wene; _but read_ wenen.

And whan I saugh he wolde never fyne
To reden on this cursed book al night,
Al sodeynly three leves have I plight 790
Out of his book, right as he radde, and eke,
I with my fist so took him on the cheke,
That in our fyr he fil bakward adoun.

And he up-stirte as dooth a wood leoun,
[343: T. 6377-6410.]
And with his fist he smoot me on the heed, 795
That in the floor I lay as I were deed.

And when he saugh how stille that I lay,
He was agast, and wolde han fled his way,
Til atte laste out of my swogh I breyde:
?O! hastow slayn me, false theef?? I seyde, 800
?And for my land thus hastow mordred me?
Er I be deed, yet wol I kisse thee.?

792. E. Cp. fest; _rest_ fist. 795. E. Hn. Cp. fest; _rest_ fist.

And neer he cam, and kneled faire adoun,
And seyde, ?dere suster Alisoun,
As help me god, I shal thee never smyte; 805
That I have doon, it is thy-self to wyte.

Foryeve it me, and that I thee biseke??
And yet eft-sones I hitte him on the cheke,
And seyde, ?theef, thus muchel am I wreke;
Now wol I dye, I may no lenger speke.? 810
But atte laste, with muchel care and wo,

We fille acorded, by us selven two.
 He yaf me al the brydel in myn hond
 To han the governance of hous and lond,
 And of his tonge and of his hond also, 815
 And made him brenne his book anon right tho.
 And whan that I hadde geten un-to me,
 By maistrie, al the soveraynetee,
 And that he seyde, ?myn owene trewe wyf,
 Do as thee lust the terme of al thy lyf, 820
 Keep thyn honour, and keep eek myn estaat??
 After that day we hadden never debaat.
 God help me so, I was to him as kinde
 As any wyf from Denmark un-to Inde,
 And also trewe, and so was he to me. 825
 I prey to god that sit in magestee,
 So blesse his soule, for his mercy dere!
 Now wol I seye my tale, if ye wol here.?

812. E. Hn. Cp. Pt. vs; Cm. Ln. Hl. oure. 815. E. Hn. Pt. _om. 2nd_
 of. 820. E. to; Cm. for; Hl. in; _rest_ the (_before_ terme). 822.
 Hl. neuer had.

[344: T. 6411-6438.]

=Biholde the wordes bitween the Somonour and the Frere.=

The Frere lough, whan he hadde herd al this,
 ?Now, dame,? quod he, ?so have I loye or blis, 830
 This is a long preamble of a tale!?
 And whan the Somnour herde the Frere gale,
 ?Lo!? quod the Somnour, ?goddess armes two!
 A frere wol entremette him ever-mo.
 Lo, gode men, a flye and eek a frere 835
 Wol falle in every dish and eek matere.
 What spekestow of preambulacioun?
 What! amble, or trotte, or pees, or go sit down;
 Thou lettest our disport in this manere.?

832. E. Somonour; Hn. Cm. Cp. Pt. somnour. 836. Cp. Pt. Ln. eek;
 rest om.

?Ye, woltow so, sir Somnour?? quod the Frere, 840
 ?Now, by my feith, I shal, er that I go,
 Telle of a Somnour swich a tale or two,
 That alle the folk shal laughen in this place.?

?Now elles, Frere, I bishrewe thy face,?
 Quod this Somnour, ?and I bishrewe me, 845
 But if I telle tales two or thre
 Of freres er I come to Sidingborne,
 That I shal make thyn herte for to morne;
 For wel I wool thy patience is goon.?

Our hoste cryde ?pees! and that anoon!? 850

And seyde, ?lat the womman telle hir tale.
Ye fare as folk that dronken been of ale.
Do, dame, tel forth your tale, and that is best.?

850. Cp. Hl. hoste; Ln. oste; E. Hn. hoost. 852. E. Cm. were; _rest_
ben. 853. E. telle (_but_ tel _in_ 856).

?Al redy, sir,? quod she, ?right as yow lest,
If I have licence of this worthy Frere.? 855

?Yis, dame,? quod he, ?tel forth, and I wol here.?

=Here endeth the Wyf of Bathe hir Prologe.=

COLOPHON. Hn. Here endeth the prologe of the Wyf of Bathe. E. _adds_
and bigynneth hir tale.

[345: T. 6439-6463.]

* * * * *

THE TALE OF THE WYF OF BATHE.

* * * * *

=Here biginneth the Tale of the Wyf of Bathe.=

In tholde dayes of the king Arthour,
Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
All was this land fulfilled of fayerye.
The elf-queen, with hir loly companye, 860
Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede;
This was the olde opinion, as I rede,
I speke of manye hundred yeres ago;
But now can no man see none elves mo.
For now the grete charitee and prayeres 865
Of limitours and othere holy freres, (10)
That serchen every lond and every stream,
As thikke as motes in the sonne-beem,
Blessinge halles, chambres, kichenes, boures,
Citees, burghes, castels, hye toures, 870
Thropes, bernes, shipnes, dayeryes,
This maketh that ther been no fayeryes.
For ther as wont to walken was an elf,
Ther walketh now the limitour him-self
In undermeles and in morweninges, 875
And seyth his matins and his holy thinges (20)
As he goth in his limitacioun.
Wommen may go saufly up and doun,
In every bush, or under every tree;
Ther is noon other incubus but he, 880
And he ne wol doon hem but dishonour.

HEADING. _From_ Hn. 857. E. Cm. _om._ the. 859. Cp. fayerie; _rest_

fairye. 872. Cp. fayeries; E. Hn. fairyas. 880. Hl. incumbent (!). 881. Cm. non; _rest_ but. Hl. ne wol but doon hem.

[346: T. 6464-6498.]

And so bifel it, that this king Arthour
Hadde in his hous a lusty bachelor,
That on a day cam rydinge fro river;
And happed that, allone as she was born, 885
He saugh a mayde walkinge him biforn, (30)
Of whiche mayde anon, maugree hir heed,
By verray force he rafte hir maydenheed;
For which oppressioun was swich clamour
And swich pursute un-to the king Arthour, 890
That dampned was this knight for to be deed
By cours of lawe, and sholde han lost his heed
Paraventure, swich was the statut tho;
But that the quene and othere ladies mo
So longe preyeden the king of grace, 895
Til he his lyf him graunted in the place, (40)
And yaf him to the quene al at hir wille,
To chese, whether she wolde him save or spille.

882. E. Hn. Cm. _om._ it. 883. E. _om._ his. 885. E. Hn. he(!).
887. Cm. Ln. whiche; _rest_ which. 888. E. Cm. Hl. birafte; _rest_ he
rafte (refte). 895. Hl. Cm. preyeden; E. Hn. preyden. 898. E.
wheither.

The quene thanketh the king with al hir might,
And after this thus spak she to the knight, 900
Whan that she saugh hir tyme, up-on a day:
?Thou standest yet,? quod she, ?in swich array,
That of thy lyf yet hastow no suretee.
I grante thee lyf, if thou canst tellen me
What thing is it that wommen most desyren? 905
Be war, and keep thy nekke-boon from yren. (50)
And if thou canst nat tellen it anon,
Yet wol I yeve thee leve for to gon
A twelf-month and a day, to seche and lere
An answeere suffisant in this matere. 910
And suretee wol I han, er that thou pace,
Thy body for to yelden in this place.?

907. E. Hl. tellen it; Hn. tellen me; Cm. telle me; _rest_ telle it
me. 908. E. shal (_for_ wol).

Wo was this knight and sorwefully he syketh;
But what! he may nat do al as him lyketh.
And at the laste, he chees him for to wende, 915
And come agayn, right at the yeres ende, (60)

[347: T. 6499-6536.]

With swich answeere as god wolde him purveye;
And taketh his leve, and wendeth forth his weye.

914. Cm. ?it (_for_ what); E. _om._

He seketh every hous and every place,
Wher-as he hopeth for to finde grace, 920
To lerne, what thing wommen loven most;
But he ne coude arryven in no cost,
Wher-as he mighte finde in this matere
Two creatures accordinge in-fere.

Somme seyde, wommen loven best richesse, 925
Somme seyde, honour, somme seyde, lolynesse; (70)
Somme, riche array, somme seyden, lust abedde,
And ofte tyme to be widwe and wedde.

Somme seyde, that our hertes been most esed,
Whan that we been y-flatered and y-pled. 930
He gooth ful ny the sothe, I wol nat lye;
A man shal winne us best with flaterye;
And with attendance, and with businesse,
Been we y-lymed, bothe more and lesse.

And somme seyn, how that we loven best 935
For to be free, and do right as us lest, (80)
And that no man repreve us of our vyce,
But seye that we be wyse, and no-thing nyce.
For trewely, ther is noon of us alle,
If any wight wol clawe us on the galle, 940
That we nil kike, for he seith us sooth;
Assay, and he shal finde it that so dooth.
For be we never so vicious with-inne,
We wol been holden wyse, and clene of sinne.

935. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. _om._ how. 941. nil] E. nel; Cm. nolde.

And somme seyn, that greet delyt han we 945
For to ben holden stable and eek secree, (90)
And in o purpos stedefastly to dwelle,
And nat biwreye thing that men us telle.
But that tale is nat worth a rake-stele;
Pardee, we wommen conne no-thing hele; 950
Witnessse on Myda; wol ye here the tale?

Ovyde, amonges othere thinges smale,
Seyde, Myda hadde, under his longe heres,
Growinge up-on his heed two asses eres,
[348: T. 6537-6572.]
The which vyce he hidde, as he best mighte, 955
Ful subtilly from every mannes sighte, (100)
That, save his wyf, ther wiste of it na-mo.
He loved hir most, and trusted hir also;
He preyede hir, that to no creature
She sholde tellen of his disfigure. 960

958. Hn. Cp. Hl. trusted; Cm. trostid; E. triste. 959. Cm. preyede;

Hl. prayed; Hn. preyed; E. preyde.

She swoor him ?nay, for al this world to winne,
She nolde do that vileinye or sinne,
To make hir housbond han so foul a name;
She nolde nat telle it for hir owene shame.?
But nathelees, hir thoughte that she dyde, 965
That she so longe sholde a conseil hyde; (110)
Hir thoughte it swal so sore aboute hir herte,
That nedely som word hir moste asterte;
And sith she dorste telle it to no man,
Doun to a mareys faste by she ran; 970
Til she came there, hir herte was a-fyre,
And, as a bitore bombleth in the myre,
She leyde hir mouth un-to the water doun:
?Biwreye me nat, thou water, with thy soun,?
Quod she, ?to thee I telle it, and namo; 975
Myn housbond hath longe asses eres two! (120)
Now is myn herte all hool, now is it oute;
I mighte no lenger kepe it, out of doute,?
Heer may ye se, thogh we a tyme abyde,
Yet out it moot, we can no conseil hyde; 980
The remenant of the tale if ye wol here,
Redeth Ovyde, and ther ye may it lere.

972. Cm. bumbith; Cp. Pt. bumlith; Hl. bumblith.

This knight, of which my tale is specially,
Whan that he saugh he mighte nat come therby,
This is to seye, what wommen loven moost, 985
With-inne his brest ful sorweful was the goost; (130)
But hoom he gooth, he mighte nat soioune.
The day was come, that hoomward moste he tourne,
And in his wey it happed him to ryde,
In al this care, under a forest-syde, 990
[349: T. 6573-6609.]
Wher-as he saugh up-on a daunce go
Of ladies foure and twenty, and yet mo;
Toward the whiche daunce he drow ful yerne,
In hope that som wisdom sholde he lerne.
But certainly, er he came fully there, 995
Vanished was this daunce, he niste where. (140)
No creature saugh he that bar lyf,
Save on the grene he saugh sittinge a wyf;
A fouler wight ther may no man devyse.
Agayn the knight this olde wyf gan ryse, 1000
And seyde, ?sir knight, heer-forth ne lyth no wey.
Tel me, what that ye seken, by your fey?
Paraventure it may the bettre be;
Thise olde folk can muchel thing,? quod she.

985. E. loue. 990. E. Hn. this; _rest_ his. 993. Hn. whiche; E. which; _rest vary_.

?My leve mooder,? quod this knight certeyn, 1005
?I nam but deed, but-if that I can seyn (150)
What thing it is that wommen most desyre;
Coude ye me wisse, I wolde wel quyte your hyre.?

?Plighte me thy trouthe, heer in myn hand,? quod she,
?The nexte thing that I requere thee, 1010
Thou shalt it do, if it lye in thy might;
And I wol telle it yow er it be night.?
?Have heer my trouthe,? quod the knight, ?I grante.?

?Thanne,? quod she, ?I dar me wel avante,
Thy lyf is sauf, for I wol stonde therby, 1015
Up-on my lyf, the queen wol seye as I. (160)
Lat see which is the proudeste of hem alle,
That wereth on a coverchief or a calle,
That dar seye nay, of that I shal thee teche;
Lat us go forth with-outen lenger speche.? 1020
Tho rouned she a pistel in his ere,
And bad him to be glad, and have no fere.

1016. E. queene.

Whan they be comen to the court, this knight
Seyde, ?he had holde his day, as he hadde hight,
And redy was his answer,? as he sayde. 1025
Ful many a noble wyf, and many a mayde, (170)
And many a widwe, for that they ben wyse,
[350: T. 6610-6645.]
The quene hir-self sittinge as a lustyse,
Assembled been, his answer for to here;
And afterward this knight was bode appere. 1030

1028. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. _om._ a.

To every wight comanded was silence,
And that the knight sholde telle in audience,
What thing that worldly wommen loven best.
This knight ne stood nat stille as doth a best,
But to his questioun anon answerde 1035
With manly voys, that al the court it herde: (180)

?My lige lady, generally,? quod he,
?Wommen desyren to have sovereyntee
As wel over hir housbond as hir love,
And for to been in maistrie him above; 1040
This is your moste desyr, thogh ye me kille,
Doth as yow list, I am heer at your wille.?

1038. E. _om._ to. 1042. E. _om._ heer; Cm. al.

In al the court ne was ther wyf ne mayde,
Ne widwe, that contraried that he sayde,
But seyden, ?he was worthy han his lyf.? 1045

And with that word up stirte the olde wyf, (190)
Which that the knight saugh sittinge in the grene:
?Mercy,? quod she, ?my sovereyn lady quene!
Er that your court departe, do me right.
I taughte this answeere un-to the knight; 1050
For which he plighte me his trouthe there,
The firste thing I wolde of him requere,
He wolde it do, if it lay in his might.
Bifore the court than preye I thee, sir knight,?
Quod she, ?that thou me take un-to thy wyf; 1055
For wel thou wost that I have kept thy lyf. (200)
If I sey fals, sey nay, up-on thy fey!?

1052. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. _om._ of. 1054. E. thanne.

This knight answerde, ?allas! and weylawey!
I woot right wel that swich was my biheste.
For goddes love, as chees a newe requeste; 1060
Tak al my good, and lat my body go.?

1061. E. Hn. Taak.

?Nay than,? quod she, ?I shrewe us bothe two!
For thogh that I be foul, and old, and pore,
[351: T. 6646-6682.]
I nolde for al the metal, ne for ore,
That under erthe is grave, or lyth above, 1065
But-if thy wyf I were, and eek thy love.? (210)

1062. E. thanne. 1063. _All but_ Cp. Pt. _om. 1st_ and. E. oold,
poore. 1064. Hl. the oure; E. Hn. oore; Cm. Pt. ore; Cp. oure; Ln.
oer.

?My love?? quod he; ?nay, my dampnacioun!
Allas! that any of my nacioun
Sholde ever so foule disparaged be!?
But al for noght, the ende is this, that he 1070
Constreyned was, he nedes moste hir wedde;
And taketh his olde wyf, and gooth to bedde.

1070. E. Hn. thende.

Now wolden som men seye, paraventure,
That, for my necligence, I do no cure
To tellen yow the loye and al tharray 1075
That at the feste was that ilke day. (220)
To whiche thing shortly answerde I shal;
I seye, ther nas no loye ne feste at al,
Ther nas but hevinesse and mucche sorwe;
For prively he wedded hir on a morwe, 1080
And al day after hidde him as an oule;
So wo was him, his wyf looked so foule.

Greet was the wo the knight hadde in his thoght,
 Whan he was with his wyf a-bedde y-brought;
 He walweth, and he turneth to and fro. 1085
 His olde wyf lay smylinge evermo, (230)
 And seyde, ?o dere housbond, _benedicite_!
 Fareth every knight thus with his wyf as ye?
 Is this the lawe of king Arthures hous?
 Is every knight of his so dangerous? 1090
 I am your owene love and eek your wyf;
 I am she, which that saved hath your lyf;
 And certes, yet dide I yow never unright;
 Why fare ye thus with me this firste night?
 Ye faren lyk a man had lost his wit; 1095
 What is my gilt? for goddes love, tel me it, (240)
 And it shal been amended, if I may.?

1091. Cp. Pt. Ln. eek; _rest om._ 1093. E. Hn. yet ne dide. 1096.
 Cm. Hl. me; _rest om._ (_Read_ goddes _as_ god?s).

?Amended?? quod this knight, ?allas! nay, nay!
 It wol nat been amended never mo!
 Thou art so loothly, and so old also, 1100
 [352: T. 6683-6718.]
 And ther-to comen of so lowe a kinde,
 That litel wonder is, thogh I walwe and winde.
 So wolde god myn herte wolde breste!?

1101. E. lough. 1102. Pt. no (_for_ litel). _Read_ wonder?s.

?Is this,? quod she, ?the cause of your unreste??

?Ye, certainly,? quod he, ?no wonder is.? 1105

?Now, sire,? quod she, ?I coude amende al this, (250)
 If that me liste, er it were dayes three,
 So wel ye mighte here yow un-to me.

But for ye speken of swich gentillesse
 As is descended out of old richesse, 1110
 That therfore sholden ye be gentil men,
 Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.
 Loke who that is most vertuouse alway,
 Privee and apert, and most entendeth ay
 To do the gentil dedes that he can, 1115
 And tak him for the grettest gentil man. (260)
 Crist wol, we clayme of him our gentillesse,
 Nat of our eldres for hir old richesse.
 For thogh they yeve us al hir heritage,
 For which we clayme to been of heigh parage, 1120
 Yet may they nat biquethe, for no-thing,
 To noon of us hir vertuouse living,
 That made hem gentil men y-called be;
 And bad us folwen hem in swich degree.

1112. Cp. Pt. nys (_for_ is). 1116. Cp. Pt. Ln. And take; _rest om._
And.

Wel can the wyse poete of Florence, 1125
That highte Dant, speken in this sentence; (270)
Lo in swich maner rym is Dantes tale:
?Ful selde up ryseth by his branches smale
Prowesse of man, for god, of his goodnesse,
Wol that of him we clayme our gentillesse;? 1130
For of our eldres may we no-thing clayme
But temporel thing, that man may hurte and mayme.

1126. Hl. of (_for_ in). Cm. declare (_for_ speken in). 1129. E.
goodnesse; _rest_ prowesse.

Eek every wight wot this as wel as I,
If gentillesse were planted naturelly
Un-to a certeyn linage, doun the lyne, 1135
Privee ne apert, than wolde they never fyne (280)
[353: T. 6719-6753.]
To doon of gentillesse the faire offyce;
They mighte do no vileinye or vyce.

1134. E. naturelly. 1136. E. Cm. nor; Hl. ne; _rest_ and. E. thanne.

Tak fyr, and ber it in the derkeste hous
Bitwix this and the mount of Caucasus, 1140
And lat men shette the dores and go thenne;
Yet wol the fyr as faire lye and brenne,
As twenty thousand men mighte it biholde;
His office naturel ay wol it holde,
Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye. 1145

1139. E. Taak. 1140. E. Kaukasous. 1144. E. natureel.

Heer may ye see wel, how that genterye (290)
Is nat annexed to possessioun,
Sith folk ne doon hir operacioun
Alwey, as dooth the fyr, lo! in his kinde.
For, god it woot, men may wel often finde 1150
A lordes sone do shame and vileinye;
And he that wol han prys of his gentrye
For he was boren of a gentil hous,
And hadde hise eldres noble and vertuous,
And nil him-selven do no gentil dedis, 1155
Ne folwe his gentil auncestre that deed is, (300)
He nis nat gentil, be he duk or erl;
For vileyns sinful dedes make a cherl.
For gentillesse nis but renomee
Of thyne auncestres, for hir heigh bountee, 1160
Which is a strange thing to thy persone.
Thy gentillesse cometh fro god allone;
Than comth our verray gentillesse of grace,
It was no-thing biquethe us with our place.

1153. Cp. Hl. boren; Cm. bore; _rest_ born. 1155. E. nel; _rest_ nyl. 1156. E. Hn. folwen. 1162. _Read_ comth; _see_ 1163. 1163. E. Thanne.

Thenketh how noble, as seith Valerius, 1165
Was thilke Tullius Hostilius, (310)

That out of povert roos to heigh noblesse.
Redeth Senek, and redeth eek Boëce,
Ther shul ye seen expres that it no drede is,
That he is gentil that doth gentil dedis; 1170
And therefore, leve housbond, I thus conclude,
[354: T. 6754-6788.]

Al were it that myne auncestres were rude,
Yet may the hye god, and so hope I,
Grante me grace to liven vertuously.
Thanne am I gentil, whan that I biginne 1175
To liven vertuously and weyve sinne. (320)

1166. E. Hn. Hostillius. 1167. Cm. Cp. Ln. Hl. pouert; _rest_ pouerte. 1168. E. Reed; _rest_ Redeth. 1169. Cp. Pt. Ln. it; _rest_ om._ 1172. E. Hn. weren (_2nd_). 1176. Cm. leuyn; Pt. leuen; _rest_ weyue (weyuen).

And ther-as ye of povert me repreve,
The hye god, on whom that we bileve,
In wilful povert chees to live his lyf.
And certes every man, mayden, or wyf, 1180
May understonde that lesus, hevене king,
Ne wolde nat chese a vicious living.

Glad povert is an honest thing, certeyn;
This wol Senek and othere clerkes seyn.
Who-so that halt him payd of his povert, 1185
I holde him riche, al hadde he nat a sherte. (330)

He that coveyteth is a povre wight,
For he wolde han that is nat in his might.
But he that noght hath, ne coveyteth have,
Is riche, al-though ye holde him but a knave. 1190

1177. E. Hn. pouerte; _rest_ pouert. 1179. E. Hn. Pt. pouerte; _rest_ pouert; _so in_ 1183, 1191. 1182. E. chesen; E. _om._ a. 1183. E. Hn. honeste; Cm. oneste.

Verray povert, it singeth proprely;
Iuvenal seith of povert merily:
?The povre man, whan he goth by the weye,
Bifore the theves he may singe and pleye.?
Povert is hateful good, and, as I gesse, 1195
A ful greet bringer out of businesse; (340)

A greet amender eek of sapience
To him that taketh it in pacience.
Povert is this, al-though it seme elenge:
Possessioun, that no wight wol challenge. 1200
Povert ful ofte, whan a man is lowe,

Maketh his god and eek him-self to knowe.
Povert a spectacle is, as thinketh me,
Thurgh which he may his verray frendes see.
And therefore, sire, sin that I noght yow greve, 1205
Of my povert na-more ye me repreve. (350)

1191. E. Cm. it syngeth; _rest_ is sinne (!). 1192. E. Hn. Cp.
myrily. 1195. Cp. Pt. Ln. hatel. 1199. Hn. Hl. elenge; Ln. alinge;
rest alenge. 1205. E. hise.

[355: T. 6789-6826.]

Now, sire, of elde ye repreve me;
And certes, sire, thogh noon auctoritee
Were in no book, ye gentils of honour
Seyn that men sholde an old wight doon favour, 1210
And clepe him fader, for your gentillesse;
And auctours shal I finden, as I gesse.

Now ther ye seye, that I am foul and old,
Than drede you noght to been a cokewold;
For filthe and elde, al-so moot I thee, 1215
Been grete wardeyns up-on chastitee. (360)
But nathelees, sin I knowe your delyt,
I shal fulfillle your worldly appetyt.

Chese now,? quod she, ?oon of thise thinges tweye,
To han me foul and old til that I deye, 1220
And be to yow a trewe humble wyf,
And never yow displese in al my lyf,
Or elles ye wol han me yong and fair,
And take your aventure of the repair
That shal be to your hous, by-cause of me, 1225
Or in som other place, may wel be. (370)
Now chese your-selven, whether that yow lyketh.?

1227. E. wheither.

This knight avyseth him and sore syketh,
But atte laste he seyde in this manere,
?My lady and my love, and wyf so dere, 1230
I put me in your wyse governance;
Cheseth your-self, which may be most plesance,
And most honour to yow and me also.
I do no fors the whether of the two;
For as yow lyketh, it suffiseth me.? 1235

?Thanne have I gete of yow maistrye,? quod she, (380)
?Sin I may chese, and governe as me lest??

1234. E. wheither. 1236. of?maistrye] Cm. the maysterye.

?Ye, certes, wyf,? quod he, ?I holde it best.?

?Kis me,? quod she, ?we be no lenger wrothe;
For, by my trouthe, I wol be to yow bothe, 1240
This is to seyn, ye, bothe fair and good.
I prey to god that I mot sterven wood,
But I to yow be al-so good and trewe
As ever was wyf, sin that the world was newe.

[356: T. 6827-6846.]

And, but I be to-morn as fair to sene 1245
As any lady, emperyce, or quene, (390)
That is bitwixe the est and eke the west,
Doth with my lyf and deeth right as yow lest.
Cast up the curtin, loke how that it is.?

And whan the knight saugh verrailly al this, 1250
That she so fair was, and so yong ther-to,
For loye he hente hir in his armes two,
His herte bathed in a bath of blisse;
A thousand tyme a-rewe he gan hir kisse.
And she obeyed him in every thing 1255
That mighte doon him plesance or lyking. (400)

1254. E. Hn. Ln. a rewe; Hl. on rowe; _rest_ a rowe.

And thus they live, un-to hir lyves ende,
In parfit loye; and lesu Crist us sende
Housbondes meke, yonge, and fresshe a-bedde,
And grace toverbyde hem that we wedde. 1260
And eek I preye lesu shorte hir lyves
That wol nat be governed by hir wyves;
And olde and angry nigardes of dispence,
God sende hem sone verray pestilence.

=Here endeth the Wyves Tale of Bathe.=

1259. E. _om._ and Ln. fresshe; E. fressh. 1260. E. Hn. touerbyde;
Cm. Hl. to ouerbyde; Cp. Pt. Ln. to ouerlede (!). 1261. Cm. preye;
Hn. praye; E. pray. 1262. E. Hn. nat wol; _rest transpose_.
COLOPHON. _So_ E. Hn.

[357: T. 6847-6868.]

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THE FRIAR'S PROLOGUE.

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=The prologe of the Freres Tale.=

This worthy limitour, this noble Frere, 1265
He made alwey a maner louring chere
Upon the Somnour, but for honestee
No vileyns word as yet to him spak he.
But atte laste he seyde un-to the Wyf,

?Dame,? quod he, ?god yeve yow right good lyf! 1270
 Ye han heer touched, al-so moot I thee,
 In scole-matere greet difficultee;
 Ye han seyde muchel thing right wel, I seye;
 But dame, here as we ryden by the weye, (10)
 Us nedeth nat to speken but of game, 1275
 And lete auctoritees, on goddes name,
 To preching and to scole eek of clergye.
 But if it lyke to this companye,
 I wol yow of a somnour telle a game.
 Pardee, ye may wel knowe by the name, 1280
 That of a somnour may no good be sayd;
 I praye that noon of you be yvel apayd.
 A somnour is a renner up and doun
 With mandements for fornicacioun, (20)
 And is y-bet at every tounes ende.? 1285

HEADING. _So_ E. Hn. 1266. E. chiere. 1267. E. Somonour; Hn.
 Somnour. 1273. E. Hn. muche; Ln. muchel; _rest_ mochel. 1274. E.
 ryde; _rest_ ryden. 1277. Hl. scoles. E. Hn. Hl. _om._ eek. 1278.
 K. And; _rest_ But. 1284. E. Hn. mandementz.

Our host tho spak, ?a! sire, ye sholde be hende
 [358: T. 6869-6882.]
 And curteys, as a man of your estaat;
 In companye we wol have no debaat.
 Telleth your tale, and lat the Somnour be.?

1286. Hl. oste (_om._ tho).

?Nay,? quod the Somnour, ?lat him seye to me 1290
 What so him list; whan it comth to my lot,
 By god, I shal him quyten every grot.
 I shal him tellen which a greet honour (29)
 It is to be a flateringe limitour; [T. 6876
 And his offyce I shal him telle, y-wis.? [T. 6879

After I. 1294 _all but_ Hl. _wrongly insert_ II. 1307 _and_ 1308;
 which see. Tyrwhitt _also inserts them._

Our host answerde, ?pees, na-more of this.? 1296
 And after this he seyde un-to the Frere,
 ?Tel forth your tale, leve maister deere.?

=Here endeth the Prologe of the Frere.=

1298. E. Hn. leeue; Hl. my; Cp. Ln. my leue; Pt. my owen. COLOPHON.
 From Hn.; _so_ Pt.(_with_ Thus _for_ Here).

[359: T. 6883-6902.]

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THE FRERES TALE.

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=Here biginneth the Freres Tale.=

Whilom ther was dwellinge in my contree
An erchedeken, a man of heigh degree, 1300
That boldely dide execucioun
In punisshinge of fornicacioun,
Of wicchecraft, and eek of bauderye,
Of diffamacioun, and avoutrye,
Of chirche-reves, and of testaments, 1305
Of contractes, and of lakke of sacraments,
And eek of many another maner cryme [T. _om._
Which nedeth nat rehercen at this tyme; [T. _om._
Of usure, and of symonye also. (11)
But certes, lechours dide he grettest wo; 1310
They sholde singen, if that they were hent;
And smale tytheres weren foule y-shent.
If any persone wolde up-on hem pleyne,
Ther mighte asterte him no pecunial peyne.
For smale tythes and for smal offringe, 1315
He made the peple pitously to singe.
For er the bisshop caughte hem with his hook,
They weren in the erchedeknes book. (20)
Thanne hadde he, thurgh his lurisdiccoun,
Power to doon on hem correccioun. 1320
[360: T. 6903-6937.]
He hadde a Somnour redy to his hond,
A slyer boy was noon in Engelond;
For subtilly he hadde his espiaille,
That taughte him, wher that him mighte availle.
He coude spare of lechours oon or two, 1325
To techen him to foure and twenty mo.
For thogh this Somnour wood were as an hare,
To telle his harlotrye I wol nat spare; (30)
For we been out of his correccioun;
They han of us no lurisdiccoun, 1330
Ne never shullen, terme of alle hir lyves.

HEADING. _So_ E. Pt. 1306. E. Hn. and eek; _rest_ and. 1307, 1308.
Wrongly inserted after l. 1294 _in all but_ Hl. 1307. E. Hn. Ln.
om. eek. 1308. E. Hn. for; _rest_ at. 1310. Ln. lychoures; _rest_
lecchours. 1315. Hn. Hl. for; Cp. eek for; Pt. Ln. eek; E. _om._
1317. E. Hl. him. 1318. Cp. Pt. Hl. weren; _rest_ were. 1319. Hl.
And; _rest_ And thanne; _read_ Thanne. 1321. E. Somonour; Hl.
Sompnour; _rest_ Somnour. 1322. E. Pt. Ln. boye. 1324. _Read_
taughten(?), _or_ taught-e. Cp. Pt. that; _rest_ om. 1325. E.
lecchours. 1327. E. was; _rest_ were. 1331. E. Hn. _om._ alle.

?Peter! so been the women of the styves,
Quod the Somnour, ?y-put out of my cure!?

1332. E. Cm. _om. 1st_ the.

?Pees, with mischance and with misaventure,
Thus seyde our host, ?and lat him telle his tale. 1335
Now telleth forth, thogh that the Somnour gale,
Ne spareth nat, myn owene maister dere.?

This false thief, this Somnour, quod the Frere, (40)
Hadde alwey baudes redy to his hond,
As any hauk to lure in Engelond, 1340

That tolde him al the secree that they knewe;
For hir acquoyntance was nat come of-newe.
They weren hise approwours prively;
He took him-self a greet profit therby;
His maister knew nat alwey what he wan. 1345

With-outen mandement, a lewed man
He coude somne, on peyne of Cristes curs,
And they were gladde for to fille his purs, (50)
And make him grete festes atte nale.

And right as ludas hadde purses smale, 1350

And was a thief, right swich a thief was he;
His maister hadde but half his duëtee.
He was, if I shal yeven him his laude,
A thief, and eek a Somnour, and a baude.

He hadde eek wenches at his retenue, 1355
[361: T. 6938-6971.]

That, whether that sir Robert or sir Huwe,
Or lakke, or Rauf, or who-so that it were,
That lay by hem, they tolde it in his ere; (60)

Thus was the wenche and he of oon assent. 1360
And he wolde fecche a feyned mandement,

And somne hem to the chapitre bothe two,
And pile the man, and lete the wenche go.
Thanne wolde he seye, ?frend, I shal for thy sake
Do stryken hir out of our lettres blake;
Thee thar na-more as in this cas travaille; 1365
I am thy freend, ther I thee may availle.?

Certeyn he knew of bryberyes mo
Than possible is to telle in yeres two. (70)

For in this world nis dogge for the bowe,
That can an hurt deer from an hool y-knowe, 1370

Bet than this Somnour knew a sly lechour,
Or an avouter, or a paramour.

And, for that was the fruit of al his rente,
Therefore on it he sette al his entente.

1343. Ln. approwers; Cm. apprououris; Pt. aprouers; _rest_
approuours. 1348. Cp. gladde; E. Hn. glade. 1349. Cm. at the nale;
(atte nale = atten ale). 1352. Hl. not (_for_ but). Cp. dewete.
1356. E. wheither. 1364. E. Hn. hir; _rest_ pe. 1367. E.
bribryes. 1370. Hl. y-knowe; _rest_ knowe [_perhaps read_ hole
knowe). 1371. Cm. lechour; E. Hn. lecchour. 1372. Hn. Cp. Pt.
auouter; E. Hl. auowtier.

And so bifel, that ones on a day 1375

This Somnour, ever waiting on his pray,
Rood for to somne a widwe, an old ribybe,
Feynyng a cause, for he wolde brybe. (80)
And happed that he saugh bifore him ryde
A gay yeman, under a forest-syde. 1380
A bowe he bar, and arwes brighte and kene;
He hadde up-on a courtepy of grene;
An hat up-on his heed with frenges blake.

1377. Hl. Rod; Cp. Pt. Ln. Rode; Cm. Wente; E. Hn. _om._ Cm. a wedewe
an old; Hl. a widew and(!) old; E. Hn. an old wydwe a. 1379. E.
Hn._om._ And

?Sir,? quod this Somnour, ?hay! and wel a-take!?
?Wel-come,? quod he, ?and every good felawe! 1385
Wher rydestow under this grene shawe??
Seyde this yeman, ?wiltow fer to day??

1386. E. Cm. Pt. Ln. grene wode shawe (_too long_).

This Somnour him answerde, and seyde, ?nay;
[Truncated]