

**The Canterbury
Tales and Other
Poems
VOL.IV**

**By
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Freeditorial 

THE CANTERBURY TALES AND OTHER POEMS

THE FRANKLIN'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

"IN faith, Squier, thou hast thee well acquit,
And gentilly; I praise well thy wit,"
Quoth the Franklin; "considering thy youthe
So feelingly thou speak'st, Sir, I aloue thee, allow, approve
As to my doom, there is none that is here so far as my judgment
Of eloquence that shall be thy peer, goes
If that thou live; God give thee goode chance,
And in virtue send thee continuance,
For of thy speaking I have great dainty. value, esteem
I have a son, and, by the Trinity;
It were me lever than twenty pound worth land, I would rather
Though it right now were fallen in my hand,
He were a man of such discretion
As that ye be: fy on possession,
But if a man be virtuous withal. unless
I have my sone snibbed and yet shall, rebuked; "snubbed."
For he to virtue listeth not t'intend, does not wish to
But for to play at dice, and to dispend, apply himself
And lose all that he hath, is his usage;
And he had lever talke with a page,
Than to commune with any gentle wight,
There he might learen gentilless aright."
Straw for your gentillesse!" quoth our Host.
"What? Frankelin, pardie, Sir, well thou wost knowest
That each of you must tellen at the least
A tale or two, or breake his behest." promise
"That know I well, Sir," quoth the Frankelin;
"I pray you have me not in disdain,
Though I to this man speak a word or two."
"Tell on thy tale, withoute wordes mo'."
"Gladly, Sir Host," quoth he, "I will obey
Unto your will; now hearken what I say;
I will you not contrary in no wise, disobey

As far as that my wittes may suffice.
I pray to God that it may please you,
Then wot I well that it is good enow.
"These olde gentle Bretons, in their days,
Of divers adventures made lays,
Rhymeden in their firste Breton tongue;
Which layes with their instruments they sung,
Or elles reade them for their pleasance;
And one of them have I in remembrance,
Which I shall say with good will as I can.
But, Sirs, because I am a borel man, rude, unlearned
At my beginning first I you beseech
Have me excused of my rude speech.
I learned never rhetoric, certain;
Thing that I speak, it must be bare and plain.
I slept never on the mount of Parnasso,
Nor learned Marcus Tullius Cicero.
Coloures know I none, withoute dread, doubt
But such coloures as growen in the mead,
Or elles such as men dye with or paint;
Coloures of rhetoric be to me quaint; strange
My spirit feeleth not of such mattere.
But, if you list, my tale shall ye hear."

THE TALE.

In Armoric', that called is Bretagne,
There was a knight, that lov'd and did his pain devoted himself,
To serve a lady in his beste wise; strove
And many a labour, many a great emprise, enterprise
He for his lady wrought, ere she were won:
For she was one the fairest under sun,
And eke thereto come of so high kindred,
That well unnethes durst this knight for dread, see note
Tell her his woe, his pain, and his distress
But, at the last, she for his worthiness,
And namely for his meek obeisance, especially
Hath such a pity caught of his penance, suffering, distress
That privily she fell of his accord
To take him for her husband and her lord
(Of such lordship as men have o'er their wives);
And, for to lead the more in bliss their lives,
Of his free will he swore her as a knight,
That never in all his life he day nor night
Should take upon himself no mastery
Against her will, nor kith her jealousy, show
But her obey, and follow her will in all,
As any lover to his lady shall;
Save that the name of sovereignty
That would he have, for shame of his degree.
She thanked him, and with full great humbless
She saide; "Sir, since of your gentleness
Ye proffer me to have so large a reign,
Ne woulde God never betwixt us twain,
As in my guilt, were either war or strife: see note
Sir, I will be your humble true wife,
Have here my troth, till that my hearte brest." burst
Thus be they both in quiet and in rest.
For one thing, Sires, safely dare I say,
That friends ever each other must obey,
If they will longe hold in company.
Love will not be constrain'd by mastery.
When mast'ry comes, the god of love anon
Beateth his wings, and, farewell, he is gone.

Love is a thing as any spirit free.
Women of kind desire liberty, by nature
And not to be constrained as a thrall, slave
And so do men, if soothly I say shall.
Look who that is most patient in love,
He is at his advantage all above. enjoys the highest
Patience is a high virtue certain, advantages of all
For it vanquisheth, as these clerkes sayn,
Things that rigour never should attain.
For every word men may not chide or plain.
Learne to suffer, or, so may I go, prosper
Ye shall it learn whether ye will or no.
For in this world certain no wight there is,
That he not doth or saith sometimes amiss.
Ire, or sickness, or constellation, the influence of
Wine, woe, or changing of complexion, the planets
Causeth full oft to do amiss or speaken:
On every wrong a man may not be wroken. revenged
After the time must be temperance according to
To every wight that can of governance. is capable of
And therefore hath this worthy wise knight
(To live in ease) sufferance her behight; promised
And she to him full wisly gan to swear surely
That never should there be default in her.
Here may men see a humble wife accord;
Thus hath she ta'en her servant and her lord,
Servant in love, and lord in marriage.
Then was he both in lordship and servage?
Servage? nay, but in lordship all above,
Since he had both his lady and his love:
His lady certes, and his wife also,
The which that law of love accordeth to.
And when he was in this prosperrity,
Home with his wife he went to his country,
Not far from Penmark, where his dwelling was,
And there he liv'd in bliss and in solace. delight
Who coulde tell, but he had wedded be, unless
The joy, the ease, and the prosperity,
That is betwixt a husband and his wife?
A year and more lasted this blissful life,
Till that this knight, of whom I spake thus,

That of Cairrud was call'd Arviragus,
Shope him to go and dwell a year or twain prepared, arranged
In Engleland, that call'd was eke Britain,
To seek in armes worship and honour
(For all his lust he set in such labour); pleasure
And dwelled there two years; the book saith thus.
Now will I stint of this Arviragus, cease speaking
And speak I will of Dorigen his wife,
That lov'd her husband as her hearte's life.
For his absence weepeth she and siketh, sigheth
As do these noble wives when them liketh;
She mourneth, waketh, waileth, fasteth, plaineth;
Desire of his presence her so distraineth,
That all this wide world she set at nought.
Her friendes, which that knew her heavy thought,
Comforte her in all that ever they may;
They preache her, they tell her night and day,
That causeless she slays herself, alas!
And every comfort possible in this case
They do to her, with all their business, assiduity
And all to make her leave her heaviness.
By process, as ye knowen every one,
Men may so longe graven in a stone,
Till some figure therein imprinted be:
So long have they comforted her, till she
Received hath, by hope and by reason,
Th' imprinting of their consolation,
Through which her greate sorrow gan assuage;
She may not always duren in such rage.
And eke Arviragus, in all this care,
Hath sent his letters home of his welfare,
And that he will come hastily again,
Or elles had this sorrow her hearty-slain.
Her friendes saw her sorrow gin to slake, slacken, diminish
And prayed her on knees for Godde's sake
To come and roamen in their company,
Away to drive her darke fantasy;
And finally she granted that request,
For well she saw that it was for the best.
Now stood her castle faste by the sea,
And often with her friendes walked she,

Her to disport upon the bank on high,
There as many a ship and barge sigh, saw
Sailing their courses, where them list to go.
But then was that a parcel of her woe, part
For to herself full oft, "Alas!" said she,
Is there no ship, of so many as I see,
Will bringe home my lord? then were my heart
All warish'd of this bitter paine's smart." cured
Another time would she sit and think,
And cast her eyen downward from the brink;
But when she saw the grisly rockes blake, black
For very fear so would her hearte quake,
That on her feet she might her not sustene sustain
Then would she sit adown upon the green,
And piteously into the sea behold, look out on the sea
And say right thus, with careful sikes cold: painful sighs
"Eternal God! that through thy purveyance
Leadest this world by certain governance,
In idle, as men say, ye nothing make; idly, in vain
But, Lord, these grisly fiendly rockes blake,
That seem rather a foul confusion
Of work, than any fair creation
Of such a perfect wise God and stable,
Why have ye wrought this work unreasonable?
For by this work, north, south, or west, or east,
There is not foster'd man, nor bird, nor beast:
It doth no good, to my wit, but annoyeth. works mischief
See ye not, Lord, how mankind it destroyeth?
A hundred thousand bodies of mankind
Have rockes slain, all be they not in mind; though they are
Which mankind is so fair part of thy work, forgotten
Thou madest it like to thine owen mark. image
Then seemed it ye had a great cherte love, affection
Toward mankind; but how then may it be
That ye such meanes make it to destroy?
Which meanes do no good, but ever annoy.
I wot well, clerkes will say as them lest, please
By arguments, that all is for the best,
Although I can the causes not y-know;
But thilke God that made the wind to blow, that
As keep my lord, this is my conclusion:

To clerks leave I all disputation:
But would to God that all these rockes blake
Were sunken into helle for his sake
These rockes slay mine hearte for the fear."
Thus would she say, with many a piteous tear.
Her friendes saw that it was no disport
To roame by the sea, but discomfort,
And shope them for to playe somewhere else. arranged
They leade her by rivers and by wells,
And eke in other places delectables;
They dancen, and they play at chess and tables. backgammon
So on a day, right in the morning-tide,
Unto a garden that was there beside,
In which that they had made their ordinance provision, arrangement
Of victual, and of other purveyance,
They go and play them all the longe day:
And this was on the sixth morrow of May,
Which May had painted with his soft showers
This garden full of leaves and of flowers:
And craft of manne's hand so curiously
Arrayed had this garden truely,
That never was there garden of such price, value, praise
But if it were the very Paradise. unless
Th'odour of flowers, and the freshe sight,
Would have maked any hearte light
That e'er was born, but if too great sickness unless
Or too great sorrow held it in distress;
So full it was of beauty and pleasance.
And after dinner they began to dance
And sing also, save Dorigen alone
Who made alway her complaint and her moan,
For she saw not him on the dance go
That was her husband, and her love also;
But natheless she must a time abide
And with good hope let her sorrow slide.
Upon this dance, amonge other men,
Danced a squier before Dorigen
That fresher was, and jollier of array
As to my doom, than is the month of May. in my judgment
He sang and danced, passing any man,
That is or was since that the world began;

Therewith he was, if men should him describe,
One of the beste faring men alive, most accomplished
Young, strong, and virtuous, and rich, and wise,
And well beloved, and holden in great price. esteem, value
And, shortly if the sooth I telle shall,
Unweeting of this Dorigen at all, unknown to
This lusty squier, servant to Venus,
Which that y-called was Aurelius,
Had lov'd her best of any creature
Two year and more, as was his aventure; fortune
But never durst he tell her his grievance;
Withoute cup he drank all his penance.
He was despaired, nothing durst he say,
Save in his songes somewhat would he wray betray
His woe, as in a general complaining;
He said, he lov'd, and was belov'd nothing.
Of suche matter made he many lays,
Songes, complaintes, roundels, virelays
How that he durste not his sorrow tell,
But languished, as doth a Fury in hell;
And die he must, he said, as did Echo
For Narcissus, that durst not tell her woe.
In other manner than ye hear me say,
He durste not to her his woe bewray,
Save that paraventure sometimes at dances,
Where younge folke keep their observances,
It may well be he looked on her face
In such a wise, as man that asketh grace,
But nothing wiste she of his intent.
Nath'less it happen'd, ere they thennes went, thence (from the
Because that he was her neighebour, garden)
And was a man of worship and honour,
And she had knowen him of time yore, for a long time
They fell in speech, and forth aye more and more
Unto his purpose drew Aurelius;
And when he saw his time, he saide thus:
Madam," quoth he, "by God that this world made,
So that I wist it might your hearte glade, gladden
I would, that day that your Arviragus
Went over sea, that I, Aurelius,
Had gone where I should never come again;

For well I wot my service is in vain.
My guerdon is but bursting of mine heart. reward
Madame, rue upon my paine's smart,
For with a word ye may me slay or save.
Here at your feet God would that I were grave.
I have now no leisure more to say:
Have mercy, sweet, or you will do me dey." cause me to die
She gan to look upon Aurelius;
"Is this your will," quoth she, "and say ye thus?
Ne'er erst," quoth she, "I wiste what ye meant: before
But now, Aurelius, I know your intent.
By thilke God that gave me soul and life, that
Never shall I be an untrue wife
In word nor work, as far as I have wit;
I will be his to whom that I am knit;
Take this for final answer as of me."
But after that in play thus saide she. playfully, in jest
"Aurelius," quoth she, "by high God above,
Yet will I grante you to be your love
(Since I you see so piteously complain);
Looke, what day that endelong Bretagne from end to end of
Ye remove all the rockes, stone by stone,
That they not lette ship nor boat to gon, prevent
I say, when ye have made this coast so clean
Of rockes, that there is no stone seen,
Then will I love you best of any man;
Have here my troth, in all that ever I can;
For well I wot that it shall ne'er betide.
Let such folly out of your hearte glide.
What dainty should a man have in his life value, pleasure
For to go love another manne's wife,
That hath her body when that ever him liketh?"
Aurelius full often sore siketh; sigheth
Is there none other grace in you?" quoth he,
"No, by that Lord," quoth she, "that maked me.
Woe was Aurelius when that he this heard,
And with a sorrowful heart he thus answer'd.
"Madame, quoth he, "this were an impossible.
Then must I die of sudden death horrible."
And with that word he turned him anon.
Then came her other friends many a one,

And in the alleys roamed up and down,
And nothing wist of this conclusion,
But suddenly began to revel new,
Till that the brighte sun had lost his hue,
For th' horizon had reft the sun his light
(This is as much to say as it was night);
And home they go in mirth and in solace;
Save only wretch'd Aurelius, alas
He to his house is gone with sorrowful heart.
He said, he may not from his death astart. escape
Him seemed, that he felt his hearte cold.
Up to the heav'n his handes gan he hold,
And on his knees bare he set him down.
And in his raving said his orisoun. prayer
For very woe out of his wit he braid; wandered
He wist not what he spake, but thus he said;
With piteous heart his plaint hath he begun
Unto the gods, and first unto the Sun.
He said; "Apollo God and governour
Of every plante, herbe, tree, and flower,
That giv'st, after thy declination,
To each of them his time and his season,
As thine herberow changeth low and high; dwelling, situation
Lord Phoebus: cast thy merciable eye
On wretched Aurelius, which that am but lorn. undone
Lo, lord, my lady hath my death y-sworn,
Withoute guilt, but thy benignity unless
Upon my deadly heart have some pity.
For well I wot, Lord Phoebus, if you lest, please
Ye may me helpe, save my lady, best.
Now vouchsafe, that I may you devise tell, explain
How that I may be holp, and in what wise. helped
Your blissful sister, Lucina the sheen,
That of the sea is chief goddess and queen, —
Though Neptunus have deity in the sea,
Yet emperess above him is she; —
Ye know well, lord, that, right as her desire
Is to be quick'd and lighted of your fire, quickened
For which she followeth you full busily,
Right so the sea desireth naturally
To follow her, as she that is goddess

Both in the sea and rivers more and less.
Wherefore, Lord Phoebus, this is my request,
Do this miracle, or do mine hearte brest; cause my heart
That flow, next at this opposition, to burst
Which in the sign shall be of the Lion,
As praye her so great a flood to bring,
That five fathom at least it overspring
The highest rock in Armoric Bretagne,
And let this flood endure yeares twain:
Then certes to my lady may I say,
"Holde your hest," the rockes be away.
Lord Phoebus, this miracle do for me,
Pray her she go no faster course than ye;
I say this, pray your sister that she go
No faster course than ye these yeares two:
Then shall she be even at full alway,
And spring-flood laste bothe night and day.
And but she vouchesafe in such mannere if she do not
To grante me my sov'reign lady dear,
Pray her to sink every rock adown
Into her owen darke regioun
Under the ground, where Pluto dwelleth in
Or nevermore shall I my lady win.
Thy temple in Delphos will I barefoot seek.
Lord Phoebus! see the teares on my cheek
And on my pain have some compassioun."
And with that word in sorrow he fell down,
And longe time he lay forth in a trance.
His brother, which that knew of his penance, distress
Up caught him, and to bed he hath him brought,
Despaired in this torment and this thought
Let I this woeful creature lie;
Choose he for me whe'er he will live or die. whether
Arviragus with health and great honour
(As he that was of chivalry the flow'r)
Is come home, and other worthy men.
Oh, blissful art thou now, thou Dorigen!
Thou hast thy lusty husband in thine arms,
The freshe knight, the worthy man of arms,
That loveth thee as his own hearte's life:
Nothing list him to be imaginatif he cared not to fancy

If any wight had spoke, while he was out,
To her of love; he had of that no doubt; fear, suspicion
He not intended to no such mattere, occupied himself with
But danced, jousted, and made merry cheer.
And thus in joy and bliss I let them dwell,
And of the sick Aurelius will I tell
In languor and in torment furious
Two year and more lay wretch'd Aurelius,
Ere any foot on earth he mighte gon;
Nor comfort in this time had he none,
Save of his brother, which that was a clerk. scholar
He knew of all this woe and all this work;
For to none other creature certain
Of this matter he durst no worde sayn;
Under his breast he bare it more secree
Than e'er did Pamphilus for Galatee.
His breast was whole withoute for to seen,
But in his heart aye was the arrow keen,
And well ye know that of a sursanure
In surgery is perilous the cure,
But men might touch the arrow or come thereby. except
His brother wept and wailed privily,
Till at the last him fell in remembrance,
That while he was at Orleans in France, —
As younge clerkes, that be likerous — eager
To readen artes that be curious,
Seeken in every halk and every hern nook and corner
Particular sciences for to learn,—
He him remember'd, that upon a day
At Orleans in study a book he say saw
Of magic natural, which his fellow,
That was that time a bachelor of law
All were he there to learn another craft, though
Had privily upon his desk y-laft;
Which book spake much of operations
Touching the eight and-twenty mansions
That longe to the Moon, and such folly
As in our dayes is not worth a fly;
For holy church's faith, in our believe, belief, creed
Us suff'reth none illusion to grieve.
And when this book was in his remembrance

Anon for joy his heart began to dance,
And to himself he saide privily;
"My brother shall be warish'd hastily cured
For I am sicker that there be sciences, certain
By which men make divers apparences,
Such as these subtle tregetoures play. tricksters
For oft at feaste's have I well heard say,
That tregetours, within a halle large,
Have made come in a water and a barge,
And in the halle rowen up and down.
Sometimes hath seemed come a grim lioun,
And sometimes flowers spring as in a mead;
Sometimes a vine, and grapes white and red;
Sometimes a castle all of lime and stone;
And, when them liked, voided it anon: vanished
Thus seemed it to every manne's sight.
Now then conclude I thus; if that I might
At Orleans some olde fellow find,
That hath these Moone's mansions in mind,
Or other magic natural above.
He should well make my brother have his love.
For with an appearance a clerk may make, learned man
To manne's sight, that all the rockes blake
Of Bretagne were voided every one, removed
And shippes by the brinke come and gon,
And in such form endure a day or two;
Then were my brother warish'd of his woe, cured
Then must she needes holde her behest, keep her promise
Or elles he shall shame her at the least."
Why should I make a longer tale of this?
Unto his brother's bed he comen is,
And such comfort he gave him, for to gon
To Orleans, that he upstart anon,
And on his way forth-ward then is he fare, gone
In hope for to be lissed of his care. eased of
When they were come almost to that city,
But if it were a two furlong or three, all but
A young clerk roaming by himself they met,
Which that in Latin thriftily them gret. greeted them
And after that he said a wondrous thing; civilly
I know," quoth he, "the cause of your coming;"

Aud ere they farther any foote went,
He told them all that was in their intent.
The Breton clerk him asked of fellows
The which he hadde known in olde daws, days
And he answer'd him that they deade were,
For which he wept full often many a tear.
Down off his horse Aurelius light anon,
And forth with this magician is be gone
Home to his house, and made him well at ease;
Them lacked no vitail that might them please. victuals, food
So well-array'd a house as there was one,
Aurelius in his life saw never none.
He shewed him, ere they went to suppere,
Forestes, parkes, full of wilde deer.
There saw he hartes with their hornes high,
The greatest that were ever seen with eye.
He saw of them an hundred slain with hounds,
And some with arrows bleed of bitter wounds.
He saw, when voided were the wilde deer, passed away
These falconers upon a fair rivere,
That with their hawkes have the heron slain.
Then saw he knightes jousting in a plain.
And after this he did him such pleasance,
That he him shew'd his lady on a dance,
In which himselfe danced, as him thought.
And when this master, that this magic wrought,
Saw it was time, he clapp'd his handes two,
And farewell, all the revel is y-go. gone, removed
And yet remov'd they never out of the house,
While they saw all the sightes marvellous;
But in his study, where his bookes be,
They satte still, and no wight but they three.
To him this master called his squier,
And said him thus, "May we go to supper?
Almost an hour it is, I undertake,
Since I you bade our supper for to make,
When that these worthy men wente with me
Into my study, where my bookes be."
"Sir," quoth this squier, "when it liketh you.
It is all ready, though ye will right now."
"Go we then sup," quoth he, "as for the best;

These amorous folk some time must have rest."
At after supper fell they in treaty
What summe should this master's guerdon be, reward
To remove all the rockes of Bretagne,
And eke from Gironde to the mouth of Seine.
He made it strange, and swore, so God him save, a matter of
Less than a thousand pound he would not have, difficulty
Nor gladly for that sum he would not gon. see note
Aurelius with blissful heart anon
Answered thus; "Fie on a thousand pound!
This wide world, which that men say is round,
I would it give, if I were lord of it.
This bargain is full-driv'n, for we be knit; agreed
Ye shall be payed truly by my troth.
But looke, for no negligence or sloth,
Ye tarry us here no longer than to-morrow."
"Nay," quoth the clerk, "have here my faith to borrow." I pledge my
To bed is gone Aurelius when him lest, faith on it
And well-nigh all that night he had his rest,
What for his labour, and his hope of bliss,
His woeful heart of penance had a liss. had a respite
from suffering
Upon the morrow, when that it was day,
Unto Bretagne they took the righte way,
Aurelius and this magician beside,
And be descended where they would abide:
And this was, as the bookes me remember,
The colde frosty season of December.
Phoebus wax'd old, and hued like latoun, brass
That in his hote declinatioun
Shone as the burned gold, with streames bright; beams
But now in Capricorn adown he light,
Where as he shone full pale, I dare well sayn.
The bitter frostes, with the sleet and rain,
Destroyed have the green in every yard. courtyard, garden
Janus sits by the fire with double beard,
And drinketh of his bugle horn the wine:
Before him stands the brawn of tusked swine
And "nowel" crieth every lusty man Noel
Aurelius, in all that ev'r he can,
Did to his master cheer and reverence,

And prayed him to do his diligence
To bringe him out of his paines smart,
Or with a sword that he would slit his heart.
This subtle clerk such ruth had on this man, pity
That night and day he sped him, that he can,
To wait a time of his conclusion;
This is to say, to make illusion,
By such an appearance of jugglery
(I know no termes of astrology),
That she and every wight should ween and say,
That of Bretagne the rockes were away,
Or else they were sunken under ground.
So at the last he hath a time found
To make his japes and his wretchedness tricks
Of such a superstitious cursedness. detestable villainy
His tables Toletanes forth he brought,
Full well corrected, that there lacked nought,
Neither his collect, nor his expanse years,
Neither his rootes, nor his other gears,
As be his centres, and his arguments,
And his proportional convenients
For his equations in everything.
And by his eighte spheres in his working,
He knew full well how far Alnath was shove
From the head of that fix'd Aries above,
That in the ninthe sphere consider'd is.
Full subtilly he calcul'd all this.
When he had found his firste mansion,
He knew the remnant by proportion;
And knew the rising of his moone well,
And in whose face, and term, and every deal;
And knew full well the moone's mansion
Accordant to his operation;
And knew also his other observances,
For such illusions and such meschances, wicked devices
As heathen folk used in thilke days.
For which no longer made he delays;
But through his magic, for a day or tway,
It seemed all the rockes were away.
Aurelius, which yet despaired is
Whe'er he shall have his love, or fare amiss, whether

Awaited night and day on this miracle:
And when he knew that there was none obstacle,
That voided were these rockes every one, removed
Down at his master's feet he fell anon,
And said; "I, woeful wretch'd Aurelius,
Thank you, my Lord, and lady mine Venus,
That me have holpen from my cares cold."
And to the temple his way forth hath he hold,
Where as he knew he should his lady see.
And when he saw his time, anon right he
With dreadful heart and with full humble cheer fearful mien
Saluteth hath his sovereign lady dear.
"My rightful Lady," quoth this woeful man,
"Whom I most dread, and love as I best can,
And lothest were of all this world displease,
Were't not that I for you have such disease, distress, affliction
That I must die here at your foot anon,
Nought would I tell how me is woebegone.
But certes either must I die or plain; bewail
Ye slay me guilteless for very pain.
But of my death though that ye have no ruth,
Advise you, ere that ye break your truth:
Repente you, for thilke God above,
Ere ye me slay because that I you love.
For, Madame, well ye wot what ye have hight; promised
Not that I challenge anything of right
Of you, my sovereign lady, but of grace:
But in a garden yond', in such a place,
Ye wot right well what ye behighte me, promised
And in mine hand your trothe plighted ye,
To love me best; God wot ye saide so,
Albeit that I unworthy am thereto;
Madame, I speak it for th' honour of you,
More than to save my hearte's life right now;
I have done so as ye commanded me,
And if ye vouchesafe, ye may go see.
Do as you list, have your behest in mind,
For, quick or dead, right there ye shall me find;
In you hes all to do me live or dey; cause me to
But well I wot the rockes be away." live or die
He took his leave, and she astonish'd stood;

In all her face was not one drop of blood:
She never ween'd t'have come in such a trap.
"Alas!" quoth she, "that ever this should hap!
For ween'd I ne'er, by possibility,
That such a monster or marvail might be;
It is against the process of nature."
And home she went a sorrowful creature;
For very fear unnethes may she go. scarcely
She weeped, wailed, all a day or two,
And swooned, that it ruthe was to see:
But why it was, to no wight tolde she,
For out of town was gone Arviragus.
But to herself she spake, and saide thus,
With face pale, and full sorrowful cheer,
In her complaint, as ye shall after hear.
"Alas!" quoth she, "on thee, Fortune, I plain, complain
That unaware hast me wrapped in thy chain,
From which to scape, wot I no succour,
Save only death, or elles dishonour;
One of these two behoveth me to choose.
But nathless, yet had I lever lose sooner, rather
My life, than of my body have shame,
Or know myselfe false, or lose my name;
And with my death I may be quit y-wis. I may certainly purchase
Hath there not many a noble wife, ere this, my exemption
And many a maiden, slain herself, alas!
Rather than with her body do trespass?
Yes, certes; lo, these stories bear witness.
When thirty tyrants full of cursedness wickedness
Had slain Phidon in Athens at the feast,
They commanded his daughters to arrest,
And bringe them before them, in despite,
All naked, to fulfil their foul delight;
And in their father's blood they made them dance
Upon the pavement, — God give them mischance.
For which these woeful maidens, full of dread,
Rather than they would lose their maidenhead,
They privily be start into a well, suddenly leaped
And drowned themselves, as the bookes tell.
They of Messene let inquire and seek
Of Lacedaemon fifty maidens eke,

On which they woulde do their lechery:
But there was none of all that company
That was not slain, and with a glad intent
Chose rather for to die, than to assent
To be oppressed of her maidenhead. forcibly bereft
Why should I then to dien be in dread?
Lo, eke the tyrant Aristoclides,
That lov'd a maiden hight Stimphalides,
When that her father slain was on a night,
Unto Diana's temple went she right,
And hent the image in her handes two, caught, clasped
From which image she woulde never go;
No wight her handes might off it arace, pluck away by force
Till she was slain right in the selfe place. same
Now since that maidens hadde such despite
To be defouled with man's foul delight,
Well ought a wife rather herself to sle, slay
Than be defouled, as it thinketh me.
What shall I say of Hasdrubale's wife,
That at Carthage bereft herself of life?
For, when she saw the Romans win the town,
She took her children all, and skipt adown
Into the fire, and rather chose to die,
Than any Roman did her villainy.
Hath not Lucretia slain herself, alas!
At Rome, when that she oppressed was ravished
Of Tarquin? for her thought it was a shame
To live, when she hadde lost her name.
The seven maidens of Milesie also
Have slain themselves for very dread and woe,
Rather than folk of Gaul them should oppress.
More than a thousand stories, as I guess,
Could I now tell as touching this matter.
When Abradate was slain, his wife so dear
Herselfe slew, and let her blood to glide
In Abradate's woundes, deep and wide,
And said, 'My body at the leaste way
There shall no wight defoul, if that I may.'
Why should I more examples hereof sayn?
Since that so many have themselves slain,
Well rather than they would defouled be,

I will conclude that it is bet for me better
 To slay myself, than be defouled thus.
 I will be true unto Arviragus,
 Or elles slay myself in some mannere,
 As did Demotione's daughter dear,
 Because she woulde not defouled be.
 O Sedasus, it is full great pity
 To reade how thy daughters died, alas!
 That slew themselves for suche manner cas. in circumstances of
 As great a pity was it, or well more, the same kind
 The Theban maiden, that for Nicanor
 Herselfe slew, right for such manner woe.
 Another Theban maiden did right so;
 For one of Macedon had her oppress'd,
 She with her death her maidenhead redress'd. vindicated
 What shall I say of Niceratus' wife,
 That for such case bereft herself her life?
 How true was eke to Alcibiades
 His love, that for to dien rather chese, chose
 Than for to suffer his body unburied be?
 Lo, what a wife was Alceste?" quoth she.
 "What saith Homer of good Penelope?
 All Greece knoweth of her chastity.
 Pardie, of Laedamia is written thus,
 That when at Troy was slain Protesilaus,
 No longer would she live after his day.
 The same of noble Porcia tell I may;
 Withoute Brutus coulde she not live,
 To whom she did all whole her hearte give.
 The perfect wifehood of Artemisie
 Honoured is throughout all Barbarie.
 O Teuta queen, thy wifely chastity
 To alle wives may a mirror be."
 Thus plained Dorigen a day or tway,
 Purposing ever that she woulde dey; die
 But natheless upon the thirde night
 Home came Arviragus, the worthy knight,
 And asked her why that she wept so sore.
 And she gan weepen ever longer more.
 "Alas," quoth she, "that ever I was born!
 Thus have I said," quoth she; "thus have I sworn. "

And told him all, as ye have heard before:
It needeth not rehearse it you no more.
This husband with glad cheer, in friendly wise, demeanour
Answer'd and said, as I shall you devise. relate
"Is there aught elles, Dorigen, but this?"
"Nay, nay," quoth she, "God help me so, as wis assuredly
This is too much, an it were Godde's will." if
"Yea, wife," quoth he, "let sleepe what is still,
It may be well par'venture yet to-day.
Ye shall your trothe holde, by my fay.
For, God so wisly have mercy on me, certainly
I had well lever sticked for to be, I had rather be slain
For very love which I to you have,
But if ye should your trothe keep and save.
Truth is the highest thing that man may keep."
But with that word he burst anon to weep,
And said; "I you forbid, on pain of death,
That never, while you lasteth life or breath,
To no wight tell ye this misaventure;
As I may best, I will my woe endure,
Nor make no countenance of heaviness,
That folk of you may deeme harm, or guess."
And forth he call'd a squier and a maid.
"Go forth anon with Dorigen," he said,
"And bringe her to such a place anon."
They take their leave, and on their way they gon:
But they not wiste why she thither went;
He would to no wight telle his intent.
This squier, which that hight Aurelius,
On Dorigen that was so amorous,
Of aventure happen'd her to meet
Amid the town, right in the quickest street, nearest
As she was bound to go the way forthright prepared, going
Toward the garden, there as she had hight. promised
And he was to the garden-ward also;
For well he spied when she woulde go
Out of her house, to any manner place;
But thus they met, of aventure or grace,
And he saluted her with glad intent,
And asked of her whitherward she went.
And she answered, half as she were mad,

"Unto the garden, as my husband bade,
My trothe for to hold, alas! alas!"
Aurelius gan to wonder on this case,
And in his heart had great compassion
Of her, and of her lamentation,
And of Arviragus, the worthy knight,
That bade her hold all that she hadde hight;
So loth him was his wife should break her truth troth, pledged word
And in his heart he caught of it great ruth, pity
Considering the best on every side,
That from his lust yet were him lever abide, see note
Than do so high a churlish wretchedness wickedness
Against franchise, and alle gentleness; generosity
For which in fewe words he saide thus;
"Madame, say to your lord Arviragus,
That since I see the greate gentleness
Of him, and eke I see well your distress,
That him were lever have shame (and that were ruth) rather pity
Than ye to me should breake thus your truth,
I had well lever aye to suffer woe, forever
Than to depart the love betwixt you two. sunder, split up
I you release, Madame, into your hond,
Quit ev'ry surement and ev'ry bond, surety
That ye have made to me as herebeforn,
Since thilke time that ye were born.
Have here my truth, I shall you ne'er reprove reproach
Of no behest; and here I take my leave, of no (breach of)
As of the truest and the beste wife promise
That ever yet I knew in all my life.
But every wife beware of her behest;
On Dorigen remember at the least.
Thus can a squier do a gentle deed,
As well as can a knight, withoute drede." doubt
She thanked him upon her knees bare,
And home unto her husband is she fare, gone
And told him all, as ye have hearde said;
And, truste me, he was so well apaid, satisfied
That it were impossible me to write.
Why should I longer of this case indite?
Arviragus and Dorigen his wife
In sov'reign blisse ledde forth their life;

Ne'er after was there anger them between;
He cherish'd her as though she were a queen,
And she was to him true for evermore;
Of these two folk ye get of me no more.
Aurelius, that his cost had all forlorn, utterly lost
Cursed the time that ever he was born.
"Alas!" quoth he, "alas that I behight promised
Of pure gold a thousand pound of weight refined
To this philosopher! how shall I do?
I see no more, but that I am fordo. ruined, undone
Mine heritage must I needs sell,
And be a beggar; here I will not dwell,
And shamen all my kindred in this place,
But I of him may gette better grace. unless
But nathless I will of him assay
At certain dayes year by year to pay,
And thank him of his greate courtesy.
My trothe will I keep, I will not he."
With hearte sore he went unto his coffer,
And broughte gold unto this philosopher,
The value of five hundred pound, I guess,
And him beseeched, of his gentleness,
To grant him dayes of the remenant; time to pay up
And said; "Master, I dare well make avaunt,
I failed never of my truth as yet.
For sickerly my debte shall be quit
Towardes you how so that e'er I fare
To go a-begging in my kirtle bare:
But would ye vouchesafe, upon surety,
Two year, or three, for to respite me,
Then were I well, for elles must I sell
Mine heritage; there is no more to tell."
This philosopher soberly answer'd, gravely
And saide thus, when he these wordes heard;
"Have I not holden covenant to thee?"
"Yes, certes, well and truely," quoth he.
"Hast thou not had thy lady as thee liked?"
"No, no," quoth he, and sorrowfully siked. sighed
"What was the cause? tell me if thou can."
Aurelius his tale anon began,
And told him all as ye have heard before,

It needeth not to you rehearse it more.
He said, "Arviragus of gentleness
Had lever die in sorrow and distress, rather
Than that his wife were of her trothe false."
The sorrow of Dorigen he told him als', also
How loth her was to be a wicked wife,
And that she lever had lost that day her life;
And that her troth she swore through innocence;
She ne'er erst had heard speak of apparence before see note
That made me have of her so great pity,
And right as freely as he sent her to me,
As freely sent I her to him again:
This is all and some, there is no more to sayn."
The philosopher answer'd; "Leve brother, dear
Evereach of you did gently to the other;
Thou art a squier, and he is a knight,
But God forbidde, for his blissful might,
But if a clerk could do a gentle deed
As well as any of you, it is no drede doubt
Sir, I release thee thy thousand pound,
As thou right now were crept out of the ground,
Nor ever ere now haddest knowen me.
For, Sir, I will not take a penny of thee
For all my craft, nor naught for my travail; labour, pains
Thou hast y-payed well for my vitaille;
It is enough; and farewell, have good day."
And took his horse, and forth he went his way.
Lordings, this question would I aske now,
Which was the moste free, as thinketh you? generous
Now telle me, ere that ye farther wend.
I can no more, my tale is at an end. know, can tell

THE DOCTOR'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

"YEA, let that passe," quoth our Host, "as now.
Sir Doctor of Physik, I praye you,
Tell us a tale of some honest mattere."
"It shall be done, if that ye will it hear,"
Said this Doctor; and his tale gan anon.
"Now, good men," quoth he, "hearken everyone."

THE TALE.

There was, as telleth Titus Livius,
A knight, that called was Virginius,
Full filled of honour and worthiness,
And strong of friendes, and of great richness.
This knight one daughter hadde by his wife;
No children had he more in all his life.
Fair was this maid in excellent beauty
Aboven ev'ry wight that man may see:
For nature had with sov'reign diligence
Y-formed her in so great excellence,
As though she woulde say, "Lo, I, Nature,
Thus can I form and paint a creature,
When that me list; who can me counterfeit?
Pygmalion? not though he aye forge and beat,
Or grave or painte: for I dare well sayn,
Apelles, Zeuxis, shoulde work in vain,
Either to grave, or paint, or forge, or beat,
If they presumed me to counterfeit.
For he that is the former principal,
Hath made me his vicar-general
To form and painten earthly creatures
Right as me list, and all thing in my cure is, care
Under the moone, that may wane and wax.
And for my work right nothing will I ax ask
My lord and I be full of one accord.
I made her to the worship of my lord;
So do I all mine other creatures,
What colour that they have, or what figures."
Thus seemeth me that Nature woulde say.
This maiden was of age twelve year and tway, two
In which that Nature hadde such delight.
For right as she can paint a lily white,
And red a rose, right with such painture
She painted had this noble creature,
Ere she was born, upon her limbes free,
Where as by right such colours shoulde be:
And Phoebus dyed had her tresses great,
Like to the streames of his burned heat. beams, rays
And if that excellent was her beauty,

A thousand-fold more virtuous was she.
In her there lacked no condition,
That is to praise, as by discretion.
As well in ghost as body chaste was she: mind, spirit
For which she flower'd in virginity,
With all humility and abstinence,
With alle temperance and patience,
With measure eke of bearing and array. moderation
Discreet she was in answering alway,
Though she were wise as Pallas, dare I sayn;
Her faconde eke full womanly and plain, speech
No counterfeited termes hadde she
To seeme wise; but after her degree
She spake, and all her worde's more and less
Sounding in virtue and in gentleness.
Shamefast she was in maiden's shamefastness,
Constant in heart, and ever in business diligent, eager
To drive her out of idle sluggardy:
Bacchus had of her mouth right no mast'ry.
For wine and slothe do Venus increase,
As men in fire will casten oil and grease.
And of her owen virtue, unconstrain'd,
She had herself full often sick y-feign'd,
For that she woulde flee the company,
Where likely was to treaten of folly,
As is at feasts, at revels, and at dances,
That be occasions of dalliances.
Such thinges make children for to be
Too soone ripe and bold, as men may see,
Which is full perilous, and hath been yore; of old
For all too soone may she learne lore
Of boldeness, when that she is a wife.
And ye mistresses, in your olde life governesses, duennas
That lordes' daughters have in governance,
Take not of my wordes displeasance
Thinke that ye be set in governings
Of lordes' daughters only for two things;
Either for ye have kept your honesty,
Or else for ye have fallen in frailty
And knowe well enough the olde dance,
And have forsaken fully such meschance wickedness

For evermore; therefore, for Christe's sake,
To teach them virtue look that ye not slake. be slack, fail
A thief of venison, that hath forlaft forsaken, left
His lik'rousness, and all his olde craft, gluttony
Can keep a forest best of any man;
Now keep them well, for if ye will ye can.
Look well, that ye unto no vice assent,
Lest ye be damned for your wick' intent, wicked, evil
For whoso doth, a traitor is certain;
And take keep of that I shall you sayn; heed
Of alle treason, sov'reign pestilence
Is when a wight betrayeth innocence.
Ye fathers, and ye mothers eke also,
Though ye have children, be it one or mo',
Yours is the charge of all their surveyance, supervision
While that they be under your governance.
Beware, that by example of your living,
Or by your negligence in chastising,
That they not perish for I dare well say,
If that they do, ye shall it dear abeye. pay for, suffer for
Under a shepherd soft and negligent
The wolf hath many a sheep and lamb to-rent.
Suffice this example now as here,
For I must turn again to my matter.
This maid, of which I tell my tale express,
She kept herself, her needed no mistress;
For in her living maidens mighte read,
As in a book, ev'ry good word and deed
That longeth to a maiden virtuous;
She was so prudent and so bounteous.
For which the fame out sprang on every side
Both of her beauty and her bounte wide: goodness
That through the land they praised her each one
That loved virtue, save envy alone,
That sorry is of other manne's weal,
And glad is of his sorrow and unheal — misfortune
The Doctor maketh this descriptioun. —
This maiden on a day went in the town
Toward a temple, with her mother dear,
As is of younge maidens the mannere.
Now was there then a justice in that town,

That governor was of that regioun:
And so befell, this judge his eyen cast
Upon this maid, avising her full fast, observing
As she came forth by where this judge stood;
Anon his hearte changed and his mood,
So was he caught with beauty of this maid
And to himself full privily he said,
"This maiden shall be mine for any man." despite what any
Anon the fiend into his hearte ran, man may do
And taught him suddenly, that he by sleight
This maiden to his purpose winne might.
For certes, by no force, nor by no meed, bribe, reward
Him thought he was not able for to speed;
For she was strong of friendes, and eke she
Confirmed was in such sov'reign bounte,
That well he wist he might her never win,
As for to make her with her body sin.
For which, with great deliberatioun,
He sent after a clerk was in the town,
The which he knew for subtle and for bold.
This judge unto this clerk his tale told
In secret wise, and made him to assure
He shoulde tell it to no creature,
And if he did, he shoulde lose his head.
And when assented was this cursed rede, counsel, plot
Glad was the judge, and made him greate cheer,
And gave him giftes precious and dear.
When shapen was all their conspiracy arranged
From point to point, how that his lechery
Performed shoulde be full subtilly,
As ye shall hear it after openly,
Home went this clerk, that highte Claudius.
This false judge, that highte Appius, —
(So was his name, for it is no fable,
But knowen for a storial thing notable; historical, authentic
The sentence of it sooth is out of doubt); — account true
This false judge went now fast about
To hasten his delight all that he may.
And so befell, soon after on a day,
This false judge, as telleth us the story,
As he was wont, sat in his consistory,

And gave his doomes upon sundry case'; judgments
This false clerk came forth a full great pace, in haste
 And saide; Lord, if that it be your will,
As do me right upon this piteous bill, petition
 In which I plain upon Virginius.
 And if that he will say it is not thus,
I will it prove, and finde good witness,
 That sooth is what my bille will express."
The judge answer'd, "Of this, in his absence,
 I may not give definitive sentence.
Let do him call, and I will gladly hear; cause
Thou shalt have alle right, and no wrong here."
Virginius came to weet the judge's will, know, learn
 And right anon was read this cursed bill;
 The sentence of it was as ye shall hear
 "To you, my lord, Sir Appius so clear,
 Sheweth your poore servant Claudius,
 How that a knight called Virginius,
 Against the law, against all equity,
 Holdeth, express against the will of me,
My servant, which that is my thrall by right, slave
 Which from my house was stolen on a night,
While that she was full young; I will it preve prove
By witness, lord, so that it you not grieve; be not displeasing
 She is his daughter not, what so he say.
Wherefore to you, my lord the judge, I pray,
 Yield me my thrall, if that it be your will."
 Lo, this was all the sentence of the bill.
 Virginius gan upon the clerk behold;
 But hastily, ere he his tale told,
And would have proved it, as should a knight,
 And eke by witnessing of many a wight,
 That all was false that said his adversary,
 This cursed judge would no longer tarry,
 Nor hear a word more of Virginius,
 But gave his judgement, and saide thus:
"I deem anon this clerk his servant have; pronounce, determine
 Thou shalt no longer in thy house her save.
Go, bring her forth, and put her in our ward
The clerk shall have his thrall: thus I award."
 And when this worthy knight, Virginius,

Through sentence of this justice Appius,
Muste by force his deare daughter give
Unto the judge, in lechery to live,
He went him home, and sat him in his hall,
And let anon his deare daughter call;
And with a face dead as ashes cold
Upon her humble face he gan behold,
With father's pity sticking through his heart, piercing
All would he from his purpose not convert. although turn aside
"Daughter," quoth he, "Virginia by name,
There be two wayes, either death or shame,
That thou must suffer, — alas that I was bore! born
For never thou deservedest wherefore
To dien with a sword or with a knife,
O deare daughter, ender of my life,
Whom I have foster'd up with such pleasance
That thou were ne'er out of my remembrance;
O daughter, which that art my laste woe,
And in this life my laste joy also,
O gem of chastity, in patience
Take thou thy death, for this is my sentence:
For love and not for hate thou must be dead;
My piteous hand must smiten off thine head.
Alas, that ever Appius thee say! saw
Thus hath he falsely judged thee to-day."
And told her all the case, as ye before
Have heard; it needeth not to tell it more.
"O mercy, deare father," quoth the maid.
And with that word she both her armes laid
About his neck, as she was wont to do,
(The teares burst out of her eyen two),
And said, "O goode father, shall I die?
Is there no grace? is there no remedy?"
"No, certes, deare daughter mine," quoth he.
"Then give me leisure, father mine, quoth she,
"My death for to complain a little space bewail
For, pardie, Jephthah gave his daughter grace
For to complain, ere he her slew, alas!
And, God it wot, nothing was her trespass, offence
But for she ran her father first to see,
To welcome him with great solemnity."

And with that word she fell a-swoon anon;
And after, when her swooning was y-gone,
She rose up, and unto her father said:
"Blessed be God, that I shall die a maid.
Give me my death, ere that I have shame;
Do with your child your will, in Godde's name."
And with that word she prayed him full oft
That with his sword he woulde smite her soft;
And with that word, a-swoon again she fell.
Her father, with full sorrowful heart and fell, stern, cruel
Her head off smote, and by the top it hent, took
And to the judge he went it to present,
As he sat yet in doom in consistory. judgment
And when the judge it saw, as saith the story,
He bade to take him, and to hang him fast.
But right anon a thousand people in thrast rushed in
To save the knight, for ruth and for pity
For knowen was the false iniquity.
The people anon had suspect in this thing, suspicion
By manner of the clerke's challenging,
That it was by th'assent of Appius;
They wiste well that he was lecherous.
For which unto this Appius they gon,
And cast him in a prison right anon,
Where as he slew himself: and Claudius,
That servant was unto this Appius,
Was doomed for to hang upon a tree;
But that Virginius, of his pity,
So prayed for him, that he was exil'd;
And elles certes had he been beguil'd; see note
The remenant were hanged, more and less,
That were consenting to this cursedness. villainy
Here men may see how sin hath his merite: deserts
Beware, for no man knows how God will smite
In no degree, nor in which manner wise
The worm of conscience may agrise frighten, horrify
Of wicked life, though it so privy be,
That no man knows thereof, save God and he;
For be he lewed man or elles lear'd, ignorant learned
He knows not how soon he shall be afear'd;
Therefore I rede you this counsel take, advise

Forsake sin, ere sinne you forsake.

THE PARDONER'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

OUR Hoste gan to swear as he were wood;
"Harow!" quoth he, "by nailes and by blood,
This was a cursed thief, a false justice.
As shameful death as hearte can devise
Come to these judges and their advoca's. advocates, counsellors
Algate this sely maid is slain, alas! nevertheless innocent
Alas! too deare bought she her beauty.
Wherefore I say, that all day man may see
That giftes of fortune and of nature
Be cause of death to many a creature.
Her beauty was her death, I dare well sayn;
Alas! so piteously as she was slain.
Of bothe giftes, that I speak of now
Men have full often more harm than prow, profit
But truely, mine owen master dear,
This was a piteous tale for to hear;
But natheless, pass over; 'tis no force. no matter
I pray to God to save thy gentle corse, body
And eke thine urinals, and thy jordans,
Thine Hippocras, and eke thy Galliens,
And every boist full of thy lectuary, box
God bless them, and our lady Sainte Mary.
So may I the', thou art a proper man, thrive
And like a prelate, by Saint Ronian;
Said I not well? Can I not speak in term? in set form
But well I wot thou dost mine heart to erme, makest grieve⁴
That I have almost caught a cardiacle: heartache
By corpus Domini, but I have triacle, unless a remedy
Or else a draught of moist and corny ale,
Or but I hear anon a merry tale, unless
Mine heart is brost for pity of this maid. burst, broken
Thou bel ami, thou Pardoner," he said, good friend
"Tell us some mirth of japes right anon." jokes
"It shall be done," quoth he, "by Saint Ronion.
But first," quoth he, "here at this ale-stake ale-house sign
I will both drink, and biten on a cake."
But right anon the gentles gan to cry,

"Nay, let him tell us of no ribaldry.
Tell us some moral thing, that we may lear learn
Some wit, and thenne will we gladly hear." wisdom, sense
"I grant y-wis," quoth he; "but I must think surely
Upon some honest thing while that I drink."

THE TALE

Lordings (quoth he), in churche when I preach,
I paine me to have an hautein speech, take pains loud
And ring it out, as round as doth a bell,
For I know all by rote that I tell.
My theme is always one, and ever was;
Radix malorum est cupiditas.
First I pronounce whence that I come,
And then my bulles shew I all and some;
Our liege lorde's seal on my patent,
That shew I first, my body to warrent, for the protection
That no man be so hardy, priest nor clerk, of my person
Me to disturb of Christe's holy werk.
And after that then tell I forth my tales.
Bulles of popes, and of cardinales,
Of patriarchs, and of bishops I shew,
And in Latin I speak a wordes few,
To savour with my predication,
And for to stir men to devotion
Then show I forth my longe crystal stones,
Y-crammed fall of cloutes and of bones; rags, fragments
Relics they be, as weene they each one. as my listeners think
Then have I in latoun a shoulder-bone brass
Which that was of a holy Jewe's sheep.
"Good men," say I, "take of my wordes keep; heed
If that this bone be wash'd in any well,
If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swell,
That any worm hath eat, or worm y-stung,
Take water of that well, and wash his tongue,
And it is whole anon; and farthermore
Of pockes, and of scab, and every sore
Shall every sheep be whole, that of this well
Drinketh a draught; take keep of that I tell. heed
"If that the goodman, that the beastes oweth, owneth
Will every week, ere that the cock him croweth,
Fasting, y-drinken of this well a draught,
As thilke holy Jew our elders taught,
His beastes and his store shall multiply.
And, Sirs, also it healeth jealousy;
For though a man be fall'n in jealous rage,

Let make with this water his pottage,
And never shall he more his wife mistrust, mistrust
Though he the sooth of her defaulte wist; though he truly
All had she taken priestes two or three. knew her sin
Here is a mittain eke, that ye may see; glove, mitten
He that his hand will put in this mittain,
He shall have multiplying of his grain,
When he hath sowen, be it wheat or oats,
So that he offer pence, or elles groats.
And, men and women, one thing warn I you;
If any wight be in this church now
That hath done sin horrible, so that he
Dare not for shame of it y-shriven be; confessed
Or any woman, be she young or old,
That hath y-made her husband cokewold, cuckold
Such folk shall have no power nor no grace
To offer to my relics in this place.
And whoso findeth him out of such blame,
He will come up and offer in God's name;
And I assoil him by the authority absolve
Which that by bull y-granted was to me."
By this gaud have I wonne year by year jest, trick
A hundred marks, since I was pardonere.
I stande like a clerk in my pulpit,
And when the lewed people down is set, ignorant
I preache so as ye have heard before,
And telle them a hundred japes more. jests, deceits
Then pain I me to stretche forth my neck,
And east and west upon the people I beck,
As doth a dove, sitting on a bern; barn
My handes and my tongue go so yern, briskly
That it is joy to see my business.
Of avarice and of such cursedness wickedness
Is all my preaching, for to make them free
To give their pence, and namely unto me. especially
For mine intent is not but for to win,
And nothing for correction of sin.
I recke never, when that they be buried,
Though that their soules go a blackburied.
For certes many a predication preaching is often inspired
Cometh oft-time of evil intention; by evil motives

Some for pleasance of folk, and flattery,
To be advanced by hypocrisy;
And some for vainglory, and some for hate.
For, when I dare not otherwise debate,
Then will I sting him with my tongue smart sharply
In preaching, so that he shall not astart escape
To be defamed falsely, if that he
Hath trespass'd to my brethren or to me. offended
For, though I telle not his proper name,
Men shall well knowe that it is the same
By signes, and by other circumstances.
Thus quite I folk that do us displeasances: I am revenged on
Thus spit I out my venom, under hue
Of holiness, to seem holy and true.
But, shortly mine intent I will devise,
I preach of nothing but of covetise.
Therefore my theme is yet, and ever was, —
Radix malorum est cupiditas.
Thus can I preach against the same vice
Which that I use, and that is avarice.
But though myself be guilty in that sin,
Yet can I maken other folk to twin depart
From avarice, and sore them repent.
But that is not my principal intent;
I preache nothing but for covetise.
Of this mattere it ought enough suffice.
Then tell I them examples many a one,
Of olde stories longe time gone;
For lewed people love tales old; unlearned
Such thinges can they well report and hold.
What? trowe ye, that whiles I may preach
And winne gold and silver for I teach, because
That I will live in povert' wilfully?
Nay, nay, I thought it never truely.
For I will preach and beg in sundry lands;
I will not do no labour with mine hands,
Nor make baskets for to live thereby,
Because I will not beggen idlyly.
I will none of the apostles counterfeit; imitate (in poverty)
I will have money, wool, and cheese, and wheat,
All were it given of the poorest page, even if

Or of the pooreste widow in a village:
All should her children sterve for famine. die
Nay, I will drink the liquor of the vine,
And have a jolly wench in every town.
But hearken, lordings, in conclusioun;
Your liking is, that I shall tell a tale
Now I have drunk a draught of corny ale,
By God, I hope I shall you tell a thing
That shall by reason be to your liking;
For though myself be a full vicious man,
A moral tale yet I you telle can,
Which I am wont to preache, for to win.
Now hold your peace, my tale I will begin.
In Flanders whilom was a company
Of younge folkes, that haunted folly,
As riot, hazard, stewes, and taverns; brothels
Where as with lutes, harpes, and giterns, guitars
They dance and play at dice both day and night,
And eat also, and drink over their might;
Through which they do the devil sacrifice
Within the devil's temple, in cursed wise,
By superfluity abominable.
Their oathes be so great and so damnable,
That it is grisly for to hear them swear. dreadful
Our blissful Lorde's body they to-tear; tore to pieces
Them thought the Jewes rent him not enough,
And each of them at other's sinne lough. laughed
And right anon in come tombesteres
Fetis and small, and younge fruitesteres. dainty fruit-girls
Singers with harpes, baudes, waferers, revellers cake-sellers
Which be the very devil's officers,
To kindle and blow the fire of lechery,
That is annexed unto gluttony.
The Holy Writ take I to my witness,
That luxury is in wine and drunkenness.
Lo, how that drunken Lot unkindely unnaturally
Lay by his daughters two unwittingly,
So drunk he was he knew not what he wrought.
Herodes, who so well the stories sought,
When he of wine replete was at his feast,
Right at his owen table gave his hest command

To slay the Baptist John full guileless.
Seneca saith a good word, doubtless:
He saith he can no difference find
Betwixt a man that is out of his mind,
And a man whiche that is drunkelew: a drunkard
But that woodness, y-fallen in a shrew, madness one evil-tempered
Persevereth longer than drunkenness.
O gluttony, full of all cursedness;
O cause first of our confusion,
Original of our damnation,
Till Christ had bought us with his blood again!
Looke, how deare, shortly for to sayn,
Abought was first this cursed villainy: atoned for
Corrupt was all this world for gluttony.
Adam our father, and his wife also,
From Paradise, to labour and to woe,
Were driven for that vice, it is no dread. doubt
For while that Adam fasted, as I read,
He was in Paradise; and when that he
Ate of the fruit defened of the tree, forbidden
Anon he was cast out to woe and pain.
O gluttony! well ought us on thee plain.
Oh! wist a man how many maladies
Follow of excess and of gluttonies,
He woulde be the more measurable moderate
Of his diete, sitting at his table.
Alas! the shorte throat, the tender mouth,
Maketh that east and west, and north and south,
In earth, in air, in water, men do swink labour
To get a glutton dainty meat and drink.
Of this mattere, O Paul! well canst thou treat
Meat unto womb, and womb eke unto meat, belly
Shall God destroye both, as Paulus saith.
Alas! a foul thing is it, by my faith,
To say this word, and fouler is the deed,
When man so drinketh of the white and red, i.e. wine
That of his throat he maketh his privy
Through thilke cursed superfluity
The apostle saith, weeping full piteously,
There walk many, of which you told have I, —
I say it now weeping with piteous voice, —

That they be enemies of Christe's crois; cross
Of which the end is death; womb is their God. belly
O womb, O belly, stinking is thy cod, bag
Full fill'd of dung and of corruptioun;
At either end of thee foul is the soun.
How great labour and cost is thee to find! supply
These cookes how they stamp, and strain, and grind,
And turne substance into accident,
To fulfill all thy likerous talent!
Out of the harde bones knocke they
The marrow, for they caste naught away
That may go through the gullet soft and swoot sweet
Of spicery and leaves, of bark and root,
Shall be his sauce y-maked by delight,
To make him have a newer appetite.
But, certes, he that haunteth such delices
Is dead while that he liveth in those vices.
A lecherous thing is wine, and drunkenness
Is full of striving and of wretchedness.
O drunken man! disfigur'd is thy face,
Sour is thy breath, foul art thou to embrace:
And through thy drunken nose sowneth the soun',
As though thous saidest aye, Samsoun! Samsoun!
And yet, God wot, Samson drank never wine.
Thou fallest as it were a sticked swine;
Thy tongue is lost, and all thine honest cure; care
For drunkenness is very sepulture tomb
Of manne's wit and his discretion.
In whom that drink hath domination,
He can no counsel keep, it is no dread. doubt
Now keep you from the white and from the red,
And namely from the white wine of Lepe, especially
That is to sell in Fish Street and in Cheap.
This wine of Spaine creepeth subtilly —
In other wines growing faste by,
Of which there riseth such fumosity,
That when a man hath drunken draughtes three,
And weeneth that he be at home in Cheap,
He is in Spain, right at the town of Lepe,
Not at the Rochelle, nor at Bourdeaux town;
And thenne will he say, Samsoun! Samsoun!

But hearken, lordings, one word, I you pray,
That all the sovrein actes, dare I say,
Of victories in the Old Testament,
Through very God that is omnipotent,
Were done in abstinence and in prayere:
Look in the Bible, and there ye may it lear. learn
Look, Attila, the greate conqueror,
Died in his sleep, with shame and dishonour,
Bleeding aye at his nose in drunkenness:
A captain should aye live in soberness
And o'er all this, advise you right well consider, bethink
What was commanded unto Lemuel;
Not Samuel, but Lemuel, say I.
Reade the Bible, and find it expressly
Of wine giving to them that have justice.
No more of this, for it may well suffice.
And, now that I have spoke of gluttony,
Now will I you defende hazardry. forbid gambling
Hazard is very mother of leasings, lies
And of deceit, and cursed forswearings:
Blasphem' of Christ, manslaughter, and waste also
Of chattel and of time; and furthermo' property
It is reprove, and contrar' of honour, reproach
For to be held a common hazardour.
And ever the higher he is of estate,
The more he is holden desolate. undone, worthless
If that a prince use hazardry,
In alle governance and policy
He is, as by common opinion,
Y-hold the less in reputation.
Chilon, that was a wise ambassador,
Was sent to Corinth with full great honor
From Lacedemon, to make alliance;
And when he came, it happen'd him, by chance,
That all the greatest that were of that land,
Y-playing atte hazard he them fand. found
For which, as soon as that it mighte be,
He stole him home again to his country
And saide there, "I will not lose my name,
Nor will I take on me so great diffame, reproach
You to ally unto no hazardors. gamblers

Sende some other wise ambassadors,
For, by my troth, me were lever die, rather
Than I should you to hazardors ally.
For ye, that be so glorious in honours,
Shall not ally you to no hazardours,
As by my will, nor as by my treaty."
This wise philosopher thus said he.
Look eke how to the King Demetrius
The King of Parthes, as the book saith us,
Sent him a pair of dice of gold in scorn,
For he had used hazard therebeforn:
For which he held his glory and renown
At no value or reputatioun.
Lordes may finden other manner play
Honest enough to drive the day away.
Now will I speak of oathes false and great
A word or two, as olde bookes treat.
Great swearing is a thing abominable,
And false swearing is more reprovable.
The highe God forbade swearing at all;
Witness on Matthew: but in special
Of swearing saith the holy Jeremie,
Thou thalt swear sooth thine oathes, and not lie:
And swear in doom and eke in righteousness; judgement
But idle swearing is a cursedness. wickedness
Behold and see, there in the firste table
Of highe Godde's hestes honourable, commandments
How that the second best of him is this,
Take not my name in idle or amiss. in vain
Lo, rather he forbiddeth such swearing, sooner
Than homicide, or many a cursed thing;
I say that as by order thus it standeth;
This knoweth he that his hests understandeth, commandments
How that the second hest of God is that.
And farthermore, I will thee tell all plat, flatly, plainly
That vengeance shall not parte from his house,
That of his oathes is outrageous.
"By Godde's precious heart, and by his nails,
And by the blood of Christ, that is in Hailes,
Seven is my chance, and thine is cinque and trey:
By Godde's armes, if thou falsely play,

This dagger shall throughout thine hearte go."
This fruit comes of the bicched bones two, two cursed bones (dice)
Forswearing, ire, falseness, and homicide.
Now, for the love of Christ that for us died,
Leave your oathes, bothe great and smale.
But, Sirs, now will I ell you forth my tale.
These riotoures three, of which I tell,
Long erst than prime rang of any bell, before
Were set them in a tavern for to drink;
And as they sat, they heard a belle clink
Before a corpse, was carried to the grave.
That one of them gan calle to his knave, servant
"Go bet," quoth he, "and aske readily
What corpse is this, that passeth here forth by;
And look that thou report his name well."
"Sir," quoth the boy, "it needeth never a deal; whit
It was me told ere ye came here two hours;
He was, pardie, an old fellow of yours,
And suddenly he was y-slain to-night;
Fordrunk as he sat on his bench upright, completely drunk
There came a privy thief, men clepe Death,
That in this country all the people slay'th,
And with his spear he smote his heart in two,
And went his way withoute wordes mo'.
He hath a thousand slain this pestilence;
And, master, ere you come in his presence,
Me thinketh that it were full necessary
For to beware of such an adversary;
Be ready for to meet him evermore.
Thus taughte me my dame; I say no more."
"By Sainte Mary," said the tavernere,
"The child saith sooth, for he hath slain this year,
Hence ov'r a mile, within a great village,
Both man and woman, child, and hind, and page;
I trow his habitation be there;
To be advised great wisdom it were, watchful, on one's guard
Ere that he did a man a dishonour." lest
"Yea, Godde's armes," quoth this riotour,
"Is it such peril with him for to meet?
I shall him seek, by stile and eke by street.
I make a vow, by Godde's digne bones." worthy

Hearken, fellows, we three be alle ones: at one
 Let each of us hold up his hand to other,
 And each of us become the other's brother,
 And we will slay this false traitor Death;
 He shall be slain, he that so many slay'th,
 By Godde's dignity, ere it be night."
 Together have these three their trothe plight
 To live and die each one of them for other
 As though he were his owen sworn brother.
 And up they start, all drunken, in this rage,
 And forth they go towardses that village
 Of which the taverner had spoke beforne,
 And many a grisly oathe have they sworn, dreadful
 And Christe's blessed body they to-rent; tore to pieces
 "Death shall be dead, if that we may him hent." catch
 When they had gone not fully half a mile,
 Right as they would have trodden o'er a stile,
 An old man and a poore with them met.
 This olde man full meekely them gret, greeted
 And saide thus; "Now, lordes, God you see!" look on graciously
 The proudest of these riotoures three
 Answer'd again; "What? churl, with sorry grace,
 Why art thou all forwrapped save thy face? closely wrapt up
 Why livest thou so long in so great age?"
 This olde man gan look on his visage,
 And saide thus; "For that I cannot find
 A man, though that I walked unto Ind,
 Neither in city, nor in no village go,
 That woulde change his youthe for mine age;
 And therefore must I have mine age still
 As longe time as it is Godde's will.
 And Death, alas! he will not have my life.
 Thus walk I like a resteless caitife, miserable wretch
 And on the ground, which is my mother's gate,
 I knocke with my staff, early and late,
 And say to her, 'Leve mother, let me in. dear
 Lo, how I wane, flesh, and blood, and skin;
 Alas! when shall my bones be at rest?
 Mother, with you I woulde change my chest,
 That in my chamber longe time hath be,
 Yea, for an hairy clout to wrap in me.' wrap myself in

But yet to me she will not do that grace,
For which fall pale and welked is my face. withered
But, Sirs, to you it is no courtesy
To speak unto an old man villainy,
But he trespass in word or else in deed. except
In Holy Writ ye may yourselves read;
'Against an old man, hoar upon his head, to meet
Ye should arise:' therefore I you rede, advise
Ne do unto an old man no harm now,
No more than ye would a man did you
In age, if that ye may so long abide.
And God be with you, whether ye go or ride
I must go thither as I have to go."
"Nay, olde churl, by God thou shalt not so,"
Saide this other hazardor anon;
"Thou partest not so lightly, by Saint John.
Thou spakest right now of that traitor Death,
That in this country all our friendes slay'th;
Have here my troth, as thou art his espy; spy
Tell where he is, or thou shalt it abie, suffer for
By God and by the holy sacrament;
For soothly thou art one of his assent
To slay us younge folk, thou false thief."
"Now, Sirs," quoth he, "if it be you so lief desire
To finde Death, turn up this crooked way,
For in that grove I left him, by my fay,
Under a tree, and there he will abide;
Nor for your boast he will him nothing hide.
See ye that oak? right there ye shall him find.
God save you, that bought again mankind,
And you amend!" Thus said this olde man;
And evereach of these riotoures ran,
Till they came to the tree, and there they found
Of florins fine, of gold y-coined round,
Well nigh a seven bushels, as them thought.
No longer as then after Death they sought;
But each of them so glad was of the sight,
For that the florins were so fair and bright,
That down they sat them by the precious hoard.
The youngest of them spake the firste word:
"Brethren," quoth he, "take keep what I shall say; heed

My wit is great, though that I bourde and play joke, frolic
This treasure hath Fortune unto us given
In mirth and jollity our life to liven;
And lightly as it comes, so will we spend.
Hey! Godde's precious dignity! who wend weened, thought
Today that we should have so fair a grace?
But might this gold he carried from this place
Home to my house, or elles unto yours
(For well I wot that all this gold is ours),
Then were we in high felicity.
But truely by day it may not be;
Men woulde say that we were thieves strong,
And for our owen treasure do us hong. have us hanged
This treasure muste carried be by night,
As wisely and as slily as it might.
Wherefore I rede, that cut among us all advise lots
We draw, and let see where the cut will fall:
And he that hath the cut, with hearte blithe
Shall run unto the town, and that full swithe, quickly
And bring us bread and wine full privily:
And two of us shall keepe subtilly
This treasure well: and if he will not tarry,
When it is night, we will this treasure carry,
By one assent, where as us thinketh best."
Then one of them the cut brought in his fist,
And bade them draw, and look where it would fall;
And it fell on the youngest of them all;
And forth toward the town he went anon.
And all so soon as that he was y-gone,
The one of them spake thus unto the other;
"Thou knowest well that thou art my sworn brother,
Thy profit will I tell thee right anon. what is for thine
Thou knowest well that our fellow is gone, advantage
And here is gold, and that full great plenty,
That shall departed he among us three. divided
But natheless, if I could shape it so contrive
That it departed were among us two,
Had I not done a friende's turn to thee?"
Th' other answer'd, "I n'ot how that may be; know not
He knows well that the gold is with us tway.
What shall we do? what shall we to him say?"

"Shall it be counsel?" said the firste shrew; secret wretch
 "And I shall tell to thee in wordes few
 What we shall do, and bring it well about."
 "I grante," quoth the other, "out of doubt,
 That by my truth I will thee not bewray." betray
"Now," quoth the first, "thou know'st well we be tway,
 And two of us shall stronger be than one.
Look; when that he is set, thou right anon sat down
 Arise, as though thou wouldest with him play;
 And I shall rive him through the sides tway, stab
 While that thou strugglest with him as in game;
 And with thy dagger look thou do the same.
 And then shall all this gold departed be, divided
 My deare friend, betwixte thee and me:
 Then may we both our lustes all fulfil, pleasures
 And play at dice right at our owen will."
And thus accorded be these shrewes tway agreed wretches
 To slay the third, as ye have heard me say.
 The youngest, which that wente to the town,
 Full oft in heart he rolled up and down
 The beauty of these florins new and bright.
 "O Lord!" quoth he, "if so were that I might
 Have all this treasure to myself alone,
 There is no man that lives under the throne
 Of God, that shoulde have so merry as I."
 And at the last the fiend our enemy
 Put in his thought, that he should poison buy,
 With which he mighte slay his fellows twy. two
For why, the fiend found him in such living, leading such a
 That he had leave to sorrow him to bring. (bad) life
 For this was utterly his full intent
 To slay them both, and never to repent.
 And forth he went, no longer would he tarry,
 Into the town to an apothecary,
 And prayed him that he him woulde sell
 Some poison, that he might his rattes quell, kill his rats
And eke there was a polecat in his haw, farm-yard, hedge
 That, as he said, his eapons had y-slaw: slain
 And fain he would him wreak, if that he might, revenge
 Of vermin that destroyed him by night.
 Th'apothecary answer'd, "Thou shalt have

A thing, as wisly God my soule save, surely
In all this world there is no creature
That eat or drank hath of this confecture,
Not but the mountance of a corn of wheat, amount
That he shall not his life anon forlete; immediately lay down
Yea, sterve he shall, and that in lesse while die
Than thou wilt go apace nought but a mile: quickly
This poison is so strong and violent."
This cursed man hath in his hand y-hent taken
This poison in a box, and swift he ran
Into the nexte street, unto a man,
And borrow'd of him large bottles three;
And in the two the poison poured he;
The third he kepte clean for his own drink,
For all the night he shope him for to swink purposed labour
In carrying off the gold out of that place.
And when this riotour, with sorry grace,
Had fill'd with wine his greate bottles three,
To his fellows again repaired he.
What needeth it thereof to sermon more? talk, discourse
For, right as they had cast his death before, plotted
Right so they have him slain, and that anon.
And when that this was done, thus spake the one;
"Now let us sit and drink, and make us merry,
And afterward we will his body bury."
And with that word it happen'd him par cas by chance
To take the bottle where the poison was,
And drank, and gave his fellow drink also,
For which anon they sterved both the two. died
But certes I suppose that Avicen
Wrote never in no canon, nor no fen,
More wondrous signes of empoisoning,
Than had these wretches two ere their ending.
Thus ended be these homicides two,
And eke the false empoisoner also.
O cursed sin, full of all cursedness!
O trait'rous homicide! O wickedness!
O glutt'ny, luxury, and hazardry!
Thou blasphemer of Christ with villany, outrage, impiety
And oathes great, of usage and of pride!
Alas! mankinde, how may it betide,

That to thy Creator, which that thee wrought,
And with his precious heart-blood thee bought,
Thou art so false and so unkind, alas! unnatural
Now, good men, God forgive you your trespass,
And ware you from the sin of avarice. keep
Mine holy pardon may you all warice, heal
So that ye offer nobles or sterlings, gold or silver coins
Or elles silver brooches, spoons, or rings.
Bowe your head under this holy bull.
Come up, ye wives, and offer of your will;
Your names I enter in my roll anon;
Into the bliss of heaven shall ye gon;
I you assoil by mine high powere, absolve
You that will offer, as clean and eke as clear
As ye were born. Lo, Sires, thus I preach;
And Jesus Christ, that is our soules' leech, healer
So grante you his pardon to receive;
For that is best, I will not deceive.
But, Sirs, one word forgot I in my tale;
I have relics and pardon in my mail,
As fair as any man in Engleland,
Which were me given by the Pope's hand.
If any of you will of devotion
Offer, and have mine absolution,
Come forth anon, and kneele here adown
And meekely receive my pardoun.
Or elles take pardon, as ye wend, go
All new and fresh at every towne's end,
So that ye offer, always new and new,
Nobles or pence which that be good and true.
'Tis an honour to evereach that is here, each one
That ye have a suffisant pardonere suitable
T'assoile you in country as ye ride, absolve
For adventures which that may betide.
Paraventure there may fall one or two
Down of his horse, and break his neck in two.
Look, what a surety is it to you all,
That I am in your fellowship y-fall,
That may assoil you bothe more and lass, absolve
When that the soul shall from the body pass. great and small
I rede that our Hoste shall begin, advise

For he is most enveloped in sin.
Come forth, Sir Host, and offer first anon,
And thou shalt kiss; the relics every one,
Yea, for a groat; unbuckle anon thy purse.
"Nay, nay," quoth he, "then have I Christe's curse!
Let be," quoth he, "it shall not be, so the'ch. so may I thrive
Thou wouldest make me kiss thine olde breech,
And swear it were a relic of a saint,
Though it were with thy fundament depaint'. stained by your bottom
But, by the cross which that Saint Helen fand, found
I would I had thy coilons in mine hand, testicles
Instead of relics, or of sanctuary.
Let cut them off, I will thee help them carry;
They shall be shrined in a hogge's turd."
The Pardoner answered not one word;
So wroth he was, no worde would he say.
"Now," quoth our Host, "I will no longer play
With thee, nor with none other angry man."
But right anon the worthy Knight began
(When that he saw that all the people lough), laughed
"No more of this, for it is right enough.
Sir Pardoner, be merry and glad of cheer;
And ye, Sir Host, that be to me so dear,
I pray you that ye kiss the Pardoner;
And, Pardoner, I pray thee draw thee ner, nearer
And as we didde, let us laugh and play."
Anon they kiss'd, and rode forth their way.

THE SHIPMAN'S TALE
THE PROLOGUE

Our Host upon his stirrups stood anon,
And saide; "Good men, hearken every one,
This was a thrifty tale for the nones. discreet, profitable
Sir Parish Priest," quoth he, "for Godde's bones,
Tell us a tale, as was thy forward yore: promise formerly
I see well that ye learned men in lore
Can muche good, by Godde's dignity." know
The Parson him answer'd, "Ben'dicite!
What ails the man, so sinfully to swear?"
Our Host answer'd, "O Jankin, be ye there?
Now, good men," quoth our Host, "hearken to me.
I smell a Lollard in the wind," quoth he.
"Abide, for Godde's digne passion, worthy
For we shall have a predication:
This Lollard here will preachen us somewhat."
"Nay, by my father's soul, that shall he not,
Saide the Shipman; "Here shall he not preach,
He shall no gospel glose here nor teach. comment upon
We all believe in the great God," quoth he.
"He woulde sowe some difficulty,
Or springe cockle in our cleane corn.
And therefore, Host, I warne thee befor,
My jolly body shall a tale tell,
And I shall clinke you so merry a bell,
That I shall waken all this company;
But it shall not be of philosophy,
Nor of physic, nor termes quaint of law;
There is but little Latin in my maw." belly

THE TALE.

A Merchant whilom dwell'd at Saint Denise,
That riche was, for which men held him wise.
A wife he had of excellent beauty,
And companiable and revellous was she, fond of society and
Which is a thing that causeth more dispence merry making
Than worth is all the cheer and reverence
That men them do at feastes and at dances.
Such salutations and countenances
Passen, as doth the shadow on the wall;
Put woe is him that paye must for all.
The sely husband algate he must pay, innocent always
He must us clothe and he must us array
All for his owen worship richely:
In which array we dance jollily.
And if that he may not, paraventure,
Or elles list not such dispence endure,
But thinketh it is wasted and y-lost,
Then must another paye for our cost,
Or lend us gold, and that is perilous.
This noble merchant held a noble house;
For which he had all day so great repair, resort of visitors
For his largesse, and for his wife was fair,
That wonder is; but hearken to my tale.
Amonges all these gwestes great and smale,
There was a monk, a fair man and a bold,
I trow a thirty winter he was old,
That ever-in-one was drawing to that place. constantly
This younge monk, that was so fair of face,
Acquainted was so with this goode man,
Since that their firste knowledge began,
That in his house as familiar was he
As it is possible any friend to be.
And, for as muchel as this goode man,
And eke this monk of which that I began,
Were both the two y-born in one village,
The monk him claimed, as for cousinage, claimed kindred
And he again him said not once nay, with him
But was as glad thereof as fowl of day;
"For to his heart it was a great pleasance.

Thus be they knit with etern' alliance,
And each of them gan other to assure
Of brotherhood while that their life may dure.
Free was Dan John, and namely of dispence, especially spending
As in that house, and full of diligence
To do pleasance, and also great costage; liberal outlay
He not forgot to give the leaste page
In all that house; but, after their degree,
He gave the lord, and sithen his meinie, afterwards servants
When that he came, some manner honest thing;
For which they were as glad of his coming
As fowl is fain when that the sun upriseth.
No more of this as now, for it sufficeth.
But so befell, this merchant on a day
Shope him to make ready his array resolved, arranged
Toward the town of Bruges for to fare,
To buye there a portion of ware; merchandise
For which he hath to Paris sent anon
A messenger, and prayed hath Dan John
That he should come to Saint Denis, and play enjoy himself
With him, and with his wife, a day or tway,
Ere he to Bruges went, in alle wise.
This noble monk, of which I you devise, tell
Had of his abbot, as him list, licence,
(Because he was a man of high prudence,
And eke an officer out for to ride,
To see their granges and their barnes wide);
And unto Saint Denis he came anon.
Who was so welcome as my lord Dan John,
Our deare cousin, full of courtesy?
With him he brought a jub of malvesie, jug
And eke another full of fine vernage,
And volatile, as aye was his usage: wild-fowl
And thus I let them eat, and drink, and play,
This merchant and this monk, a day or tway.
The thirde day the merchant up ariseth,
And on his needeis sadly him adviseth;
And up into his countour-house went he, counting-house
To reckon with himself as well may be,
Of thilke year, how that it with him stood, that
And how that he dispended bad his good,

And if that he increased were or non.
His bookes and his bagges many a one
He laid before him on his counting-board.
Full riche was his treasure and his hoard;
For which full fast his countour door he shet;
And eke he would that no man should him let hinder
Of his accountes, for the meane time:
And thus he sat, till it was passed prime.
Dan John was risen in the morn also,
And in the garden walked to and fro,
And had his thinges said full courteously.
The good wife came walking full privily
Into the garden, where he walked soft,
And him saluted, as she had done oft;
A maiden child came in her company,
Which as her list she might govern and gie, guide
For yet under the yarde was the maid. rod
"O deare cousin mine, Dan John," she said,
"What aileth you so rath for to arise?" early
"Niece," quoth he, "it ought enough suffice
Five houres for to sleep upon a night;
But it were for an old appalled wight, unless pallid, wasted
As be these wedded men, that lie and dare, stare
As in a forme sits a weary hare,
Alle forstraught with houndes great and smale; distracted, confounded
But, deare niece, why be ye so pale?
I trowe certes that our goode man
Hath you so laboured, since this night began,
That you were need to reste hastily."
And with that word he laugh'd full merrily,
And of his owen thought he wax'd all red.
This faire wife gan for to shake her head,
And saide thus; "Yea, God wot all" quoth she.
"Nay, cousin mine, it stands not so with me;
For by that God, that gave me soul and life,
In all the realm of France is there no wife
That lesse lust hath to that sorry play;
For I may sing alas and well-away!
That I was born; but to no wight," quoth she,
"Dare I not tell how that it stands with me.
Wherefore I think out of this land to wend,

Or elles of myself to make an end,
So full am I of dread and eke of care."
This monk began upon this wife to stare,
And said, "Alas! my niece, God forbid
That ye for any sorrow, or any dread,
Fordo yourself: but telle me your grief, destroy
Paraventure I may, in your mischief, distress
Counsel or help; and therefore telle me
All your annoy, for it shall be secre.
For on my portos here I make an oath, breviary
That never in my life, for lief nor loth, willing or unwilling
Ne shall I of no counsel you bewray."
"The same again to you," quoth she, "I say.
By God and by this portos I you swear,
Though men me woulden all in pieces tear,
Ne shall I never, for to go to hell, though I should
Bewray one word of thing that ye me tell, betray
For no cousinage, nor alliance,
But verily for love and affiance." confidence, promise
Thus be they sworn, and thereupon they kiss'd,
And each of them told other what them list.
"Cousin," quoth she, "if that I hadde space,
As I have none, and namely in this place, specially
Then would I tell a legend of my life,
What I have suffer'd since I was a wife
With mine husband, all be he your cousin. although
"Nay," quoth this monk, "by God and Saint Martin,
He is no more cousin unto me,
Than is the leaf that hangeth on the tree;
I call him so, by Saint Denis of France,
To have the more cause of acquaintance
Of you, which I have loved specially
Aboven alle women sickerly, surely
This swear I you on my professioun; by my vows of religion
Tell me your grief, lest that he come adown,
And hasten you, and go away anon."
"My deare love," quoth she, "O my Dan John,
Full lief were me this counsel for to hide, pleasant
But out it must, I may no more abide.
My husband is to me the worste man
That ever was since that the world began;

But since I am a wife, it sits not me becomes
To telle no wight of our privity,
Neither in bed, nor in none other place;
God shield I shoulde tell it for his grace; forbid
A wife shall not say of her husband
But all honour, as I can understand;
Save unto you thus much I telle shall;
As help me God, he is nought worth at all
In no degree, the value of a fly.
But yet me grieveth most his niggardy. stinginess
And well ye wot, that women naturally
Desire thinges six, as well as I.
They woulde that their husbands shoulde be
Hardy, and wise, and rich, and thereto free, brave
And buxom to his wife, and fresh in bed. yielding, obedient
But, by that ilke Lord that for us bled, same
For his honour myself for to array,
On Sunday next I muste needes pay
A hundred francs, or elles am I lorn. ruined, undone
Yet were me lever that I were unborn, I would rather
Than me were done slander or villainy.
And if mine husband eke might it espy,
I were but lost; and therefore I you pray,
Lend me this sum, or elles must I dey. die
Dan John, I say, lend me these hundred francs;
Pardie, I will not faile you, my thanks, if I can help it
If that you list to do that I you pray;
For at a certain day I will you pay,
And do to you what pleasance and service
That I may do, right as you list devise.
And but I do, God take on me vengeance, unless
As foul as e'er had Ganilion of France."
This gentle monk answer'd in this mannere;
"Now truely, mine owen lady dear,
I have," quoth he, "on you so greate ruth, pity
That I you swear, and plighte you my truth,
That when your husband is to Flanders fare, gone
I will deliver you out of this care,
For I will bringe you a hundred francs."
And with that word he caught her by the flanks,
And her embraced hard, and kissed her oft.

"Go now your way," quoth he, "all still and soft,
And let us dine as soon as that ye may,
For by my cylinder 'tis prime of day; portable sundial
Go now, and be as true as I shall be ."
"Now elles God forbidde, Sir," quoth she;
And forth she went, as jolly as a pie,
And bade the cookes that they should them hie, make haste
So that men mighte dine, and that anon.
Up to her husband is this wife gone,
And knocked at his contour boldly.
"Qui est la?" quoth he. "Peter! it am I," who is there?
Quoth she; "What, Sir, how longe all will ye fast?
How longe time will ye reckon and cast
Your summes, and your bookes, and your things?
The devil have part of all such reckonings!
Ye have enough, pardie, of Godde's sond. sending, gifts
Come down to-day, and let your bagges stond. stand
Ne be ye not ashamed, that Dan John
Shall fasting all this day elenge gon? see note
What? let us hear a mass, and go we dine."
"Wife," quoth this man, "little canst thou divine
The curious businesse that we have;
For of us chapmen, all so God me save, merchants
And by that lord that cleped is Saint Ive,
Scarcely amonges twenty, ten shall thrive
Continually, lasting unto our age.
We may well make cheer and good visage,
And drive forth the world as it may be,
And keepen our estate in privity,
Till we be dead, or elles that we play
A pilgrimage, or go out of the way.
And therefore have I great necessity
Upon this quaint world to advise me. strange consider
For evermore must we stand in dread
Of hap and fortune in our chapmanhead. trading
To Flanders will I go to-morrow at day,
And come again as soon as e'er I may:
For which, my deare wife, I thee beseek beseech
As be to every wight buxom and meek, civil, courteous
And for to keep our good be curious,
And honestly governe well our house.

Thou hast enough, in every manner wise,
That to a thrifty household may suffice.
Thee lacketh none array, nor no vitail;
Of silver in thy purse thou shalt not fail."
And with that word his contour door he shet, shut
And down he went; no longer would he let; delay, hinder
And hastily a mass was there said,
And speedily the tables were laid,
And to the dinner faste they them sped,
And richely this monk the chapman fed.
And after dinner Dan John soberly
This chapman took apart, and privily
He said him thus: "Cousin, it standeth so,
That, well I see, to Bruges ye will go;
God and Saint Austin speede you and guide.
I pray you, cousin, wisely that ye ride:
Governe you also of your diet
Attemperly, and namely in this heat. moderately
Betwixt us two needeth no strange fare; ado, ceremony
Farewell, cousin, God shielde you from care.
If any thing there be, by day or night,
If it lie in my power and my might,
That ye me will command in any wise,
It shall be done, right as ye will devise.
But one thing ere ye go, if it may be;
I woulde pray you for to lend to me
A hundred frankes, for a week or twy,
For certain beastes that I muste buy,
To store with a place that is ours
(God help me so, I would that it were yours);
I shall not faile surely of my day,
Not for a thousand francs, a mile way.
But let this thing be secret, I you pray;
For yet to-night these beastes must I buy.
And fare now well, mine owen cousin dear;
Grand mercy of your cost and of your cheer." great thanks
This noble merchant gentilly anon like a gentleman
Answer'd and said, "O cousin mine, Dan John,
Now sickerly this is a small request:
My gold is youres, when that it you lest,
And not only my gold, but my chaffare; merchandise

Take what you list, God shielde that ye spare. God forbid that you
But one thing is, ye know it well enow should take too little
Of chapmen, that their money is their plough.
We may creance while we have a name, obtain credit
But goldless for to be it is no game.
Pay it again when it lies in your ease;
After my might full fain would I you please."
These hundred frankes set he forth anon,
And privily he took them to Dan John;
No wight in all this world wist of this loan,
Saving the merchant and Dan John alone.
They drink, and speak, and roam a while, and play,
Till that Dan John rode unto his abbay.
The morrow came, and forth this merchant rideth
To Flanders-ward, his prentice well him guideth,
Till he came unto Bruges merrily.
Now went this merchant fast and busily
About his need, and buyed and creanced; got credit
He neither played at the dice, nor danced;
But as a merchant, shortly for to tell,
He led his life; and there I let him dwell.
The Sunday next the merchant was y-gone, after
To Saint Denis y-comen is Dan John,
With crown and beard all fresh and newly shave,
In all the house was not so little a knave, servant-boy
Nor no wight elles that was not full fain
For that my lord Dan John was come again.
And shortly to the point right for to gon,
The faire wife accorded with Dan John,
That for these hundred francs he should all night
Have her in his armes bolt upright;
And this accord performed was in deed.
In mirth all night a busy life they lead,
Till it was day, that Dan John went his way,
And bade the meinie "Farewell; have good day." servants
For none of them, nor no wight in the town,
Had of Dan John right no suspicioun;
And forth he rode home to his abbay,
Or where him list; no more of him I say.
The merchant, when that ended was the fair,
To Saint Denis he gan for to repair,

And with his wife he made feast and cheer,
And tolde her that chaffare was so dear, merchandise
That needes must he make a chevisance; loan
For he was bound in a recognisance
To paye twenty thousand shields anon. crowns, ecus
For which this merchant is to Paris gone,
To borrow of certain friendes that he had
A certain francs, and some with him he lad. took
And when that he was come into the town,
For great cherte and great affectioun love
Unto Dan John he wente first to play;
Not for to borrow of him no money,
Bat for to weet and see of his welfare, know
And for to telle him of his chaffare,
As friendes do, when they be met in fere. company
Dan John him made feast and merry cheer;
And he him told again full specially,
How he had well y-bought and graciously
(Thanked be God) all whole his merchandise;
Save that he must, in alle manner wise,
Maken a chevisance, as for his best;
And then he shoulde be in joy and rest.
Dan John answered, "Certes, I am fain glad
That ye in health be come borne again:
And if that I were rich, as have I bliss,
Of twenty thousand shields should ye not miss,
For ye so kindly the other day
Lente me gold, and as I can and may
I thanke you, by God and by Saint Jame.
But natheless I took unto our Dame,
Your wife at home, the same gold again,
Upon your bench; she wot it well, certain,
By certain tokens that I can her tell
Now, by your leave, I may no longer dwell;
Our abbot will out of this town anon,
And in his company I muste gon.
Greet well our Dame, mine owen niece sweet,
And farewell, deare cousin, till we meet.
This merchant, which that was full ware and wise,
Creanced hath, and paid eke in Paris had obtained credit
To certain Lombards ready in their hond

The sum of gold, and got of them his bond,
 And home he went, merry as a popinjay. parrot
 For well he knew he stood in such array
 That needes must he win in that voyage
 A thousand francs, above all his costage. expenses
 His wife full ready met him at the gate,
 As she was wont of old usage algate always
 And all that night in mirthe they beset; spent
 For he was rich, and clearly out of debt.
 When it was day, the merchant gan embrace
 His wife all new, and kiss'd her in her face,
 And up he went, and maked it full tough.
 "No more," quoth she, "by God ye have enough;"
 And wantonly again with him she play'd,
 Till at the last this merchant to her said.
 "By God," quoth he, "I am a little wroth
 With you, my wife, although it be me loth;
 And wot ye why? by God, as that I guess,
 That ye have made a manner strangeness a kind of estrangement
 Betwixte me and my cousin, Dan John.
 Ye should have warned me, ere I had gone,
 That he you had a hundred frankes paid
 By ready token; he had him evil apaid was displeas'd
 For that I to him spake of chevisance, borrowing
 (He seemed so as by his countenance);
 But natheless, by God of heaven king,
 I thoughte not to ask of him no thing.
 I pray thee, wife, do thou no more so.
 Tell me alway, ere that I from thee go,
 If any debtor hath in mine absence
 Y-pay'd thee, lest through thy negligence
 I might him ask a thing that he hath paid."
 This wife was not afeared nor afraid,
 But boldely she said, and that anon;
 "Mary! I defy that false monk Dan John,
 I keep not of his tokens never a deal: care whit
 He took me certain gold, I wot it well. —
 What? evil thedom on his monke's snout! — thriving
 For, God it wot, I ween'd withoute doubt
 That he had given it me, because of you,
 To do therewith mine honour and my prow, profit

For cousinage, and eke for belle cheer
That he hath had full often here.
But since I see I stand in such disjoint, awkward position
I will answer you shortly to the point.
Ye have more slacke debtors than am I;
For I will pay you well and readily,
From day to day, and if so be I fail,
I am your wife, score it upon my tail,
And I shall pay as soon as ever I may.
For, by my troth, I have on mine array,
And not in waste, bestow'd it every deal.
And, for I have bestowed it so well,
For your honour, for Godde's sake I say,
As be not wroth, but let us laugh and play.
Ye shall my jolly body have to wed; in pledge
By God, I will not pay you but in bed;
Forgive it me, mine owen spouse dear;
Turn hitherward, and make better cheer."
The merchant saw none other remedy;
And for to chide, it were but a folly,
Since that the thing might not amended be.
"Now, wife," he said, "and I forgive it thee;
But by thy life be no more so large; liberal, lavish
Keep better my good, this give I thee in charge."
Thus endeth now my tale; and God us send
Taling enough, until our lives' end!

THE PRIORESS'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

"WELL said, by corpus Domini," quoth our Host; the Lord's body
"Now longe may'st thou saile by the coast,
Thou gentle Master, gentle Marinere.
God give the monk a thousand last quad year! ever so much evil
Aha! fellows, beware of such a jape. trick
The monk put in the manne's hood an ape, fooled him
And in his wife's eke, by Saint Austin.
Drawe no monkes more into your inn.
But now pass over, and let us seek about,
Who shall now telle first of all this rout
Another tale;" and with that word he said,
As courteously as it had been a maid;
"My Lady Prioress, by your leave,
So that I wist I shoulde you not grieve, offend
I woulde deeme that ye telle should judge, decide
A tale next, if so were that ye would.
Now will ye vouchesafe, my lady dear?"
"Gladly," quoth she; and said as ye shall hear.

THE TALE

O Lord our Lord! thy name how marvellous
Is in this large world y-spread! (quoth she)
For not only thy laude precious praise
Performed is by men of high degree,
But by the mouth of children thy bounte goodness
Performed is, for on the breast sucking
Sometimes showe they thy herying. glory
Wherefore in laud, as I best can or may
Of thee, and of the white lily flow'r
Which that thee bare, and is a maid alway,
To tell a story I will do my labour;
Not that I may increase her honour,
For she herselven is honour and root
Of bounte, next her son, and soules' boot. help
O mother maid, O maid and mother free! bounteous
O bush unburnt, burning in Moses' sight,
That ravished'st down from the deity,
Through thy humbles, the ghost that in thee light;
Of whose virtue, when he thine hearte light, lightened, gladdened
Conceived was the Father's sapience;
Help me to tell it to thy reverence.
Lady! thy bounty, thy magnificence,
Thy virtue, and thy great humility,
There may no tongue express in no science:
For sometimes, Lady! ere men pray to thee,
Thou go'st before, of thy benignity,
And gettest us the light, through thy prayere,
To guiden us unto thy son so dear.
My conning is so weak, O blissful queen, skill, ability
For to declare thy great worthiness,
That I not may the weight of it sustene;
But as a child of twelvemonth old, or less,
That can unnethes any word express, scarcely
Right so fare I; and therefore, I you pray,
Guide my song that I shall of you say.
There was in Asia, in a great city,
Amonges Christian folk, a Jewery,
Sustained by a lord of that country,
For foul usure, and lucre of villainy,

Hateful to Christ, and to his company;
And through the street men mighte ride and wend, go, walk
For it was free, and open at each end.
A little school of Christian folk there stood
Down at the farther end, in which there were
Children an heap y-come of Christian blood,
That learned in that schoole year by year
Such manner doctrine as men used there;
This is to say, to singen and to read,
As smalle children do in their childhead.
Among these children was a widow's son,
A little clergion, seven year of age, young clerk or scholar
That day by day to scholay was his won, study wont
And eke also, whereso he saw th' image
Of Christe's mother, had he in usage,
As him was taught, to kneel adown, and say
Ave Maria as he went by the way.
Thus had this widow her little son y-taught
Our blissful Lady, Christe's mother dear,
To worship aye, and he forgot it not;
For sely child will always soone lear. innocent learn
But aye when I remember on this mattere,
Saint Nicholas stands ever in my presence;
For he so young to Christ did reverence.
This little child his little book learning,
As he sat in the school at his primere,
He Alma redemptoris hearde sing,
As children learned their antiphonere;
And as he durst, he drew him nere and nere, nearer
And hearken'd aye the wordes and the note,
Till he the firste verse knew all by rote.
Nought wist he what this Latin was tosay, meant
For he so young and tender was of age;
But on a day his fellow gan he pray
To expound him this song in his language,
Or tell him why this song was in usage:
This pray'd he him to construe and declare,
Full oftentime upon his knees bare.
His fellow, which that elder was than he,
Answer'd him thus: "This song, I have heard say,
Was maked of our blissful Lady free,

Her to salute, and eke her to pray
To be our help and succour when we dey. die
I can no more expound in this matter:
I learne song, I know but small grammere."
"And is this song y-made in reverence
Of Christe's mother?" said this innocent;
Now certes I will do my diligence
To conne it all, ere Christemas be went; learn; con
Though that I for my primer shall be shent, disgraced
And shall be beaten thries in an hour,
I will it conne, our Lady to honour."
His fellow taught him homeward privily on the way home
From day to day, till he coud it by rote, knew
And then he sang it well and boldely
From word to word according with the note;
Twice in a day it passed through his throat;
To schoole-ward, and homeward when he went;
On Christ's mother was set all his intent.
As I have said, throughout the Jewery,
This little child, as he came to and fro,
Full merrily then would he sing and cry,
O Alma redemptoris, evermo';
The sweetness hath his hearte pierced so
Of Christe's mother, that to her to pray
He cannot stint of singing by the way. cease
Our firste foe, the serpent Satanas,
That hath in Jewes' heart his waspe's nest,
Upwell'd and said, "O Hebrew people, alas!
Is this to you a thing that is honest, creditable, becoming
That such a boy shall walken as him lest
In your despite, and sing of such sentence,
Which is against your lawe's reverence?"
From thenceforth the Jewes have conspired
This innocent out of the world to chase;
A homicide thereto have they hired,
That in an alley had a privy place,
And, as the child gan forth by for to pace,
This cursed Jew him hent, and held him fast seized
And cut his throat, and in a pit him cast.
I say that in a wardrobe he him threw, privy
Where as the Jewes purged their entrail.

O cursed folk! O Herodes all new!
What may your evil intente you avail?
Murder will out, certain it will not fail,
And namely where th' honour of God shall spread; especially
The blood out crieth on your cursed deed.
O martyr souted to virginity, confirmed
Now may'st thou sing, and follow ever-in-one continually
The white Lamb celestial (quoth she),
Of which the great Evangelist Saint John
In Patmos wrote, which saith that they that gon
Before this Lamb, and sing a song all new,
That never fleshly woman they ne knew.
This poore widow waited all that night
After her little child, but he came not;
For which, as soon as it was daye's light,
With face pale, in dread and busy thought,
She hath at school and elleswhere him sought,
Till finally she gan so far espy,
That he was last seen in the Jewery.
With mother's pity in her breast enclosed,
She went, as she were half out of her mind,
To every place, where she hath supposed
By likelihood her little child to find:
And ever on Christ's mother meek and kind
She cried, and at the laste thus she wrought,
Among the cursed Jewes she him sought.
She freined, and she prayed piteously asked
To every Jew that dwelled in that place,
To tell her, if her childe went thereby;
They saide, "Nay;" but Jesus of his grace
Gave in her thought, within a little space,
That in that place after her son she cried,
Where he was cast into a pit beside.
O greate God, that preformest thy laud
By mouth of innocents, lo here thy might!
This gem of chastity, this emeraud, emerald
And eke of martyrdom the ruby bright,
Where he with throat y-carven lay upright, cut
He Alma Redemptoris gan to sing
So loud, that all the place began to ring.
The Christian folk, that through the streete went,

In came, for to wonder on this thing:
 And hastily they for the provost sent.
 He came anon withoute tarrying,
 And heried Christ, that is of heaven king, praised
 And eke his mother, honour of mankind;
 And after that the Jewes let he bind. caused
 With torment, and with shameful death each one
 The provost did these Jewes for to sterve caused die
 That of this murder wist, and that anon;
 He woulde no such cursedness observe overlook
 Evil shall have that evil will deserve;
 Therefore with horses wild he did them draw,
 And after that he hung them by the law.
 The child, with piteous lamentation,
 Was taken up, singing his song alway:
 And with honour and great procession,
 They crry him unto the next abbay.
 His mother swooning by the biere lay;
 Unnetes might the people that were there scarcely
 This newe Rachel bringe from his bier.
 Upon his biere lay this innocent
 Before the altar while the masses last'; lasted
 And, after that, th' abbot with his convent
 Have sped them for to bury him full fast;
 And when they holy water on him cast,
 Yet spake this child, when sprinkled was the water,
 And sang, O Alma redemptoris mater!
 This abbot, which that was a holy man,
 As monkes be, or elles ought to be,
 This younger child to conjure he began,
 And said; "O deare child! I halse thee, implore
 In virtue of the holy Trinity;
 Tell me what is thy cause for to sing,
 Since that thy throat is cut, to my seeming."
 "My throat is cut unto my necke-bone,"
 Saide this child, "and, as by way of kind, in course of nature
 I should have died, yea long time agone;
 But Jesus Christ, as ye in bookes find,
 Will that his glory last and be in mind;
 And, for the worship of his mother dear, glory
 Yet may I sing O Alma loud and clear.

"This well of mercy, Christe's mother sweet, fountain
I loved alway, after my conning: knowledge
And when that I my life should forlete, leave
To me she came, and bade me for to sing
This anthem verily in my dying,
As ye have heard; and, when that I had sung,
Me thought she laid a grain upon my tongue.
"Wherefore I sing, and sing I must certain,
In honour of that blissful maiden free,
Till from my tongue off taken is the grain.
And after that thus saide she to me;
'My little child, then will I fetch thee,
When that the grain is from thy tongue take:
Be not aghast, I will thee not forsake.'" afraid
This holy monk, this abbot him mean I,
His tongue out caught, and took away the grain;
And he gave up the ghost full softly.
And when this abbot had this wonder seen,
His salte teares trickled down as rain:
And groff he fell all flat upon the ground, prostrate, grovelling
And still he lay, as he had been y-bound.
The convent lay eke on the pavement all the monks
Weeping, and heryng Christ's mother dear. praising
And after that they rose, and forth they went,
And took away this martyr from his bier,
And in a tomb of marble stones clear
Enclosed they his little body sweet;
Where he is now, God lene us for to meet. grant
O younge Hugh of Lincoln! slain also
With cursed Jewes, — as it is notable,
For it is but a little while ago, —
Pray eke for us, we sinful folk unstable,
That, of his mercy, God so merciabile merciful
On us his greate mercy multiply,
For reverence of his mother Mary.

CHAUCER'S TALE OF SIR THOPAS.

THE PROLOGUE

WHEN said was this miracle, every man
As sober was, that wonder was to see, serious
Till that our Host to jopen he began, talk lightly
And then at erst he looked upon me, for the first time
And saide thus; "What man art thou?" quoth he;
"Thou lookest as thou wouldest find an hare,
For ever on the ground I see thee stare.
"Approache near, and look up merrily.
Now ware you, Sirs, and let this man have place.
He in the waist is shapen as well as I;
This were a puppet in an arm t'embrace
For any woman small and fair of face.
He seemeth elvish by his countenance, surly, morose
For unto no wight doth he dalliance.
"Say now somewhat, since other folk have said;
Tell us a tale of mirth, and that anon."
"Hoste," quoth I, "be not evil apaid, dissatisfied
For other tale certes can I none, know
Eut of a rhyme I learned yore agone." long
"Yea, that is good," quoth he; "now shall we hear
Some dainty thing, me thinketh by thy cheer." expression, mien

THE TALE
The First Fit part

Listen, lordings, in good intent,
And I will tell you verrament truly
Of mirth and of solas, delight, solace
All of a knight was fair and gent, gentle
In battle and in tournament,
His name was Sir Thopas.
Y-born he was in far country,
In Flanders, all beyond the sea,
At Popering in the place;
His father was a man full free,
And lord he was of that country,
As it was Godde's grace.
Sir Thopas was a doughty swain,
White was his face as paindemain,
His lippes red as rose.
His rode is like scarlet in grain, complexion
And I you tell in good certain
He had a seemly nose.
His hair, his beard, was like saffroun,
That to his girdle reach'd adown,
His shoes of cordewane:
Of Bruges were his hosen brown;
His robe was of ciclatoun,
That coste many a jane.
He coulde hunt at the wild deer,
And ride on hawking for rivere by the river
With gray goshawk on hand:
Thereto he was a good archere,
Of wrestling was there none his peer,
Where any ram should stand.
Full many a maiden bright in bow'r
They mourned for him par amour,
When them were better sleep;
But he was chaste, and no lechour,
And sweet as is the bramble flow'r
That beareth the red heep. hip
And so it fell upon a day,
For sooth as I you telle may,

Sir Thopas would out ride;
He worth upon his steede gray, mounted
And in his hand a launcegay, spear
A long sword by his side.
He pricked through a fair forest,
Wherein is many a wilde beast,
Yea, bothe buck and hare;
And as he pricked north and east,
I tell it you, him had almost almost
Betid a sorry care. befallen
There sprange herbes great and small,
The liquorice and the setewall, valerian
And many a clove-gilofre,
And nutemeg to put in ale,
Whether it be moist or stale, new
Or for to lay in coffer.
The birdes sang, it is no nay,
The sperhawk and the popinjay, sparrowhawk parrot
That joy it was to hear;
The throstle-cock made eke his lay,
The woode-dove upon the spray
She sang full loud and clear.
Sir Thopas fell in love-longing
All when he heard the throstle sing,
And prick'd as he were wood; rode as if he
His faire steed in his pricking were mad
So sweated, that men might him wring,
His sides were all blood.
Sir Thopas eke so weary was
For pricking on the softe grass,
So fierce was his corage, inclination, spirit
That down he laid him in that place,
To make his steed some solace,
And gave him good forage.
"Ah, Saint Mary, ben'dicite,
What aileth thilke love at me this
To binde me so sore?
Me dreamed all this night, pardie,
An elf-queen shall my leman be, mistress
And sleep under my gore. shirt
An elf-queen will I love, y-wis, assuredly

For in this world no woman is
Worthy to be my make mate
In town;
All other women I forsake,
And to an elf-queen I me take
By dale and eke by down."
Into his saddle he clomb anon,
And pricked over stile and stone
An elf-queen for to spy,
Till he so long had ridden and gone,
That he found in a privy wonne haunt
The country of Faery,
So wild;
For in that country was there none
That to him durste ride or gon,
Neither wife nor child.
Till that there came a great giaunt,
His name was Sir Oliphaunt,
A perilous man of deed;
He saide, "Child, by Termagaunt, young man
But if thou prick out of mine haunt, unless
Anon I slay thy steed
With mace.
Here is the Queen of Faery,
With harp, and pipe, and symphony,
Dwelling in this place."
The Child said, "All so may I the, thrive
To-morrow will I meete thee,
When I have mine armor;
And yet I hope, par ma fay, by my faith
That thou shalt with this launcegay
Abyen it full sore; suffer for
Thy maw belly
Shall I pierce, if I may,
Ere it be fully prime of day,
For here thou shalt be slaw." slain
Sir Thopas drew aback full fast;
This giant at him stones cast
Out of a fell staff sling:
But fair escaped Child Thopas,
And all it was through Godde's grace,

And through his fair bearing.
Yet listen, lordings, to my tale,
Merrier than the nightingale,
For now I will you rown, whisper
How Sir Thopas, with sides smale, small
Pricking over hill and dale,
Is come again to town.
His merry men commanded he
To make him both game and glee;
For needes must he fight
With a giant with heades three,
For paramour and jollity
Of one that shone full bright.
"Do come," he saide, "my minstrales summon
And gestours for to telle tales. story-tellers
Anon in mine arming,
Of romances that be royales,
Of popes and of cardinales,
And eke of love-longing."
They fetch'd him first the sweete wine,
And mead eke in a maseline, drinking-bowl
And royal spicery; of maple wood
Of ginger-bread that was full fine,
And liquorice and eke cumin,
With sugar that is trie. refined
He didde, next his white lere, put on skin
Of cloth of lake fine and clear, fine linen
A breech and eke a shirt;
And next his shirt an haketon, cassock
And over that an habergeon, coat of mail
For piercing of his heart;
And over that a fine hauberk, plate-armour
Was all y-wrought of Jewes' werk, magicians'
Full strong it was of plate;
And over that his coat-armour, knight's surcoat
As white as is the lily flow'r,
In which he would debate. fight
His shield was all of gold so red
And therein was a boare's head,
A charboucle beside; carbuncle
And there he swore on ale and bread,

How that the giant should be dead,
Betide whatso betide.
His jambeaux were of cuirbouly, boots
His sworde's sheath of ivory,
His helm of latoun bright, brass
His saddle was of rewel bone,
His bridle as the sunne shone,
Or as the moonelight.
His speare was of fine cypress,
That bodeth war, and nothing peace;
The head full sharp y-ground.
His steede was all dapple gray,
It went an amble in the way
Full softely and round
In land.
Lo, Lordes mine, here is a fytt;
If ye will any more of it,
To tell it will I fand. try
The Second Fit

Now hold your mouth for charity,
Bothe knight and lady free,
And hearken to my spell; tale
Of battle and of chivalry,
Of ladies' love and druerie, gallantry
Anon I will you tell.
Men speak of romances of price worth, esteem
Of Horn Child, and of Ipotis,
Of Bevis, and Sir Guy,
Of Sir Libeux, and Pleindamour,
But Sir Thopas, he bears the flow'r
Of royal chivalry.
His goode steed he all bestrode,
And forth upon his way he glode, shone
As sparkle out of brand; torch
Upon his crest he bare a tow'r,
And therein stick'd a lily flow'r;
God shield his corse from shand! body harm
And, for he was a knight auntrous, adventurous
He woulde sleepen in none house,
But liggen in his hood, lie

His brighte helm was his wanger, pillow
And by him baited his destrer fed horse
Of herbes fine and good.
Himself drank water of the well,
As did the knight Sir Percivel,
So worthy under weed;
Till on a day - . . .

CHAUCER'S TALE OF MELIBOEUS.

THE PROLOGUE.

"No more of this, for Godde's dignity!"
Quoth oure Hoste; "for thou makest me
So weary of thy very lewedness, stupidity, ignorance
That, all so wisly God my soule bless, surely
Mine eares ache for thy drafty speech. worthless
Now such a rhyme the devil I beteche: commend to
This may well be rhyme doggerel," quoth he.
"Why so?" quoth I; "why wilt thou lette me prevent
More of my tale than any other man,
Since that it is the best rhyme that I can?" know
"By God!" quoth he, "for, plainly at one word,
Thy drafty rhyming is not worth a tord:
Thou dost naught elles but dispendest time. wastest
Sir, at one word, thou shalt no longer rhyme.
Let see whether thou canst tellen aught in gest, by way of
Or tell in prose somewhat, at the least, narrative
In which there be some mirth or some doctrine."
"Gladly," quoth I, "by Godde's sweete pine, suffering
I will you tell a little thing in prose,
That oughte like you, as I suppose, please
Or else certes ye be too dangerous. fastidious
It is a moral tale virtuous,
All be it told sometimes in sundry wise although it be
By sundry folk, as I shall you devise.
As thus, ye wot that ev'ry Evangelist,
That telleth us the pain of Jesus Christ, passion
He saith not all thing as his fellow doth;
But natheless their sentence is all soth, true
And all accorden as in their sentence, meaning
All be there in their telling difference;
For some of them say more, and some say less,
When they his piteous passion express;
I mean of Mark and Matthew, Luke and John;
But doubteless their sentence is all one.
Therefore, lordinges all, I you beseech,
If that ye think I vary in my speech,
As thus, though that I telle somedeal more

Of proverbes, than ye have heard before
Comprehended in this little treatise here,
T'enforce with the effect of my mattere, with which to
And though I not the same wordes say enforce
As ye have heard, yet to you all I pray
Blame me not; for as in my sentence
Shall ye nowhere finde no difference
From the sentence of thilke treatise lite, this little
After the which this merry tale I write.
And therefore hearken to what I shall say,
And let me tellen all my tale, I pray."

THE TALE.

A young man called Meliboeus, mighty and rich, begat upon his wife, that called was Prudence, a daughter which that called was Sophia. Upon a day befell, that he for his disport went into the fields him to play. His wife and eke his daughter hath he left within his house, of which the doors were fast shut. Three of his old foes have it espied, and set ladders to the walls of his house, and by the windows be entered, and beaten his wife, and wounded his daughter with five mortal wounds, in five sundry places; that is to say, in her feet, in her hands, in her ears, in her nose, and in her mouth; and left her for dead, and went away. When Meliboeus returned was into his house, and saw all this mischief, he, like a man mad, rending his clothes, gan weep and cry. Prudence his wife, as farforth as she durst, besought him of his weeping for to stint: but not forthy notwithstanding he gan to weep and cry ever longer the more.

This noble wife Prudence remembered her upon the sentence of Ovid, in his book that called is the "Remedy of Love," where he saith: He is a fool that disturbeth the mother to weep in the death of her child, till she have wept her fill, as for a certain time; and then shall a man do his diligence with amiable words her to recomfort and pray her of her weeping for to stint cease. For which reason this noble wife Prudence suffered her husband for to weep and cry, as for a certain space; and when she saw her time, she said to him in this wise: "Alas! my lord," quoth she, "why make ye yourself for to be like a fool? For sooth it appertaineth not to a wise man to make such a sorrow. Your daughter, with the grace of God, shall warish be cured and escape. And all although were it so that she right now were dead, ye ought not for her death yourself to destroy. Seneca saith, 'The wise man shall not take too great discomfort for the death of his children, but certes he should suffer it in patience, as well as he abideth the death of his own proper person.'"

Meliboeus answered anon and said: "What man," quoth he, "should of his weeping stint, that hath so great a cause to weep? Jesus Christ, our Lord, himself wept for the death of Lazarus his friend." Prudence answered, "Certes, well I wot, attempered moderate weeping is nothing defended forbidden to him that sorrowful is, among folk in sorrow but it is rather granted him to weep. The Apostle Paul unto the Romans writeth, 'Man shall rejoice with them that make joy, and weep with such folk as weep.' But though temperate weeping be granted, outrageous weeping certes is defended. Measure of weeping should be conserved, after the lore doctrine that teacheth us Seneca. 'When that thy friend is dead,' quoth he, 'let not thine eyes too moist be of tears, nor too much dry: although the tears come to thine eyes, let them not fall. And when thou hast forgone lost thy friend, do diligence to get again another friend: and this is more wisdom than to weep for thy friend which that thou hast lorn lost for therein is no boot advantage. And therefore if ye govern you by sapience, put away sorrow out of your heart. Remember

you that Jesus Sirach saith, 'A man that is joyous and glad in heart, it him conserveth flourishing in his age: but soothly a sorrowful heart maketh his bones dry.' He said eke thus, 'that sorrow in heart slayth full many a man.' Solomon saith 'that right as moths in the sheep's fleece annoy do injury to the clothes, and the small worms to the tree, right so annoyeth sorrow to the heart of man.' Wherefore us ought as well in the death of our children, as in the loss of our goods temporal, have patience. Remember you upon the patient Job, when he had lost his children and his temporal substance, and in his body endured and received full many a grievous tribulation, yet said he thus: 'Our Lord hath given it to me, our Lord hath bereft it me; right as our Lord would, right so be it done; blessed be the name of our Lord.'"

To these foresaid things answered Meliboeus unto his wife Prudence: "All thy words," quoth he, "be true, and thereto also profitable, but truly mine heart is troubled with this sorrow so grievously, that I know not what to do." "Let call," quoth Prudence, "thy true friends all, and thy lineage, which be wise, and tell to them your case, and hearken what they say in counselling, and govern you after their sentence opinion. Solomon saith, 'Work all things by counsel, and thou shall never repent.'" Then, by counsel of his wife Prudence, this Meliboeus let call sent for a great congregation of folk, as surgeons, physicians, old folk and young, and some of his old enemies reconciled (as by their semblance) to his love and to his grace; and therewithal there come some of his neighbours, that did him reverence more for dread than for love, as happeneth oft. There come also full many subtle flatterers, and wise advocates learned in the law. And when these folk together assembled were, this Meliboeus in sorrowful wise showed them his case, and by the manner of his speech it seemed that in heart he bare a cruel ire, ready to do vengeance upon his foes, and suddenly desired that the war should begin, but nevertheless yet asked he their counsel in this matter. A surgeon, by licence and assent of such as were wise, up rose, and to Meliboeus said as ye may hear. "Sir," quoth he, "as to us surgeons appertaineth, that we do to every wight the best that we can, where as we be withholden, employed and to our patient that we do no damage; wherefore it happeneth many a time and oft, that when two men have wounded each other, one same surgeon healeth them both; wherefore unto our art it is not pertinent to nurse war, nor parties to support take sides. But certes, as to the warishing healing of your daughter, albeit so that perilously she be wounded, we shall do so attentive business from day to night, that, with the grace of God, she shall be whole and sound, as soon as is possible." Almost right in the same wise the physicians answered, save that they said a few words more: that right as maladies be cured by their contraries, right so shall man warish war (by peace). His neighbours full of envy, his feigned friends that seemed reconciled, and his flatterers, made semblance of weeping, and impaired and aggregated aggravated much of this matter, in praising greatly Meliboeus of might, of power, of riches, and of friends, despising the power of his adversaries: and said utterly, that he anon should wreak him on his foes, and begin war.

Up rose then an advocate that was wise, by leave and by counsel of other that were wise, and said, "Lordings, the need business for which we be assembled in this place, is a full heavy thing, and an high matter, because of the wrong and of the wickedness that hath been done, and eke by reason of the great damages that in time coming be possible to fall for the same cause, and eke by reason of the great riches and power of the parties both; for which reasons, it were a full great peril to err in this matter. Wherefore, Meliboeus, this is our sentence opinion; we counsel you, above all things, that right anon thou do thy diligence in keeping of thy body, in such a wise that thou want no espy nor watch thy body to save. And after that, we counsel that in thine house thou set sufficient garrison, so that they may as well thy body as thy house defend. But, certes, to move war or suddenly to do vengeance, we may not deem judge in so little time that it were profitable. Wherefore we ask leisure and space to have deliberation in this case to deem; for the common proverb saith thus; 'He that soon deemeth soon shall repent.' And eke men say, that that judge is wise, that soon understandeth a matter, and judgeth by leisure. For albeit so that all tarrying be annoying, algates nevertheless it is no reproof subject for reproach in giving of judgement, nor in vengeance taking, when it is sufficient and, reasonable. And that shewed our Lord Jesus Christ by example; for when that the woman that was taken in adultery was brought in his presence to know what should be done with her person, albeit that he wist well himself what he would answer, yet would he not answer suddenly, but he would have deliberation, and in the ground he wrote twice. And by these causes we ask deliberation and we shall then by the grace of God counsel the thing that shall be profitable."

Up started then the young folk anon at once, and the most part of that company have scorned these old wise men and begun to make noise and said, "Right as while that iron is hot men should smite, right so men should wreak their wrongs while that they be fresh and new:" and with loud voice they cried. "War! War!" Up rose then one of these old wise, and with his hand made countenance a sign, gesture that men should hold them still, and give him audience. "Lordings," quoth he, "there is full many a man that crieth, 'War! war!' that wot full little what war amounteth. War at his beginning hath so great an entering and so large, that every wight may enter when him liketh, and lightly easily find war: but certes what end shall fall thereof it is not light to know. For soothly when war is once begun, there is full many a child unborn of his mother, that shall sterve die young by cause of that war, or else live in sorrow and die in wretchedness; and therefore, ere that any war be begun, men must have great counsel and great deliberation." And when this old man weened thought, intended to enforce his tale by reasons, well-nigh all at once began they to rise for to break his tale, and bid him full oft his words abridge. For soothly he that preacheth to them that list not hear his words, his sermon them annoyeth. For Jesus Sirach saith, that music in weeping is a noyous troublesome thing. This is to say, as much availeth to speak before folk to whom his

speech annoyeth, as to sing before him that weepeth. And when this wise man saw that him wanted audience, all shamefast he sat him down again. For Solomon saith, 'Where as thou mayest have no audience, enforce thee not to speak.' "I see well," quoth this wise man, "that the common proverb is sooth, that good counsel wanteth, when it is most need." Yet besides, further had this Meliboeus in his council many folk, that privily in his ear counselled him certain thing, and counselled him the contrary in general audience. When Meliboeus had heard that the greatest part of his council were accorded in agreement that he should make war, anon he consented to their counselling, and fully affirmed their sentence opinion, judgement.

(Dame Prudence, seeing her husband's resolution thus taken, in full humble wise, when she saw her time, begins to counsel him against war, by a warning against haste in requital of either good or evil. Meliboeus tells her that he will not work by her counsel, because he should be held a fool if he rejected for her advice the opinion of so many wise men; because all women are bad; because it would seem that he had given her the mastery over him; and because she could not keep his secret, if he resolved to follow her advice. To these reasons Prudence answers that it is no folly to change counsel when things, or men's judgements of them, change — especially to alter a resolution taken on the impulse of a great multitude of folk, where every man crieth and clattereth what him liketh; that if all women had been wicked, Jesus Christ would never have descended to be born of a woman, nor have showed himself first to a woman after his resurrection and that when Solomon said he had found no good woman, he meant that God alone was supremely good; that her husband would not seem to give her the mastery by following her counsel, for he had his own free choice in following or rejecting it; and that he knew well and had often tested her great silence, patience, and secrecy. And whereas he had quoted a saying, that in wicked counsel women vanquish men, she reminds him that she would counsel him against doing a wickedness on which he had set his mind, and cites instances to show that many women have been and yet are full good, and their counsel wholesome and profitable. Lastly, she quotes the words of God himself, when he was about to make woman as an help meet for man; and promises that, if her husband will trust her counsel, she will restore to him his daughter whole and sound, and make him have honour in this case. Meliboeus answers that because of his wife's sweet words, and also because he has proved and assayed her great wisdom and her great truth, he will govern him by her counsel in all things. Thus encouraged, Prudence enters on a long discourse, full of learned citations, regarding the manner in which counsellors should be chosen and consulted, and the times and reasons for changing a counsel. First, God must be besought for guidance. Then a man must well examine his own thoughts, of such things as he holds to be best for his own profit; driving out of his heart anger, covetousness, and hastiness, which perturb and pervert the judgement. Then he must keep his counsel secret, unless confiding it to another shall be more profitable; but, in so confiding it, he shall say nothing to bias the mind of the counsellor toward flattery or

subserviency. After that he should consider his friends and his enemies, choosing of the former such as be most faithful and wise, and eldest and most approved in counselling; and even of these only a few. Then he must eschew the counselling of fools, of flatterers, of his old enemies that be reconciled, of servants who bear him great reverence and fear, of folk that be drunken and can hide no counsel, of such as counsel one thing privily and the contrary openly; and of young folk, for their counselling is not ripe. Then, in examining his counsel, he must truly tell his tale; he must consider whether the thing he proposes to do be reasonable, within his power, and acceptable to the more part and the better part of his counsellors; he must look at the things that may follow from that counselling, choosing the best and waiving all besides; he must consider the root whence the matter of his counsel is engendered, what fruits it may bear, and from what causes they be sprung. And having thus examined his counsel and approved it by many wise folk and old, he shall consider if he may perform it and make of it a good end; if he be in doubt, he shall choose rather to suffer than to begin; but otherwise he shall prosecute his resolution steadfastly till the enterprise be at an end. As to changing his counsel, a man may do so without reproach, if the cause cease, or when a new case betides, or if he find that by error or otherwise harm or damage may result, or if his counsel be dishonest or come of dishonest cause, or if it be impossible or may not properly be kept; and he must take it for a general rule, that every counsel which is affirmed so strongly, that it may not be changed for any condition that may betide, that counsel is wicked. Meliboeus, admitting that his wife had spoken well and suitably as to counsellors and counsel in general, prays her to tell him in especial what she thinks of the counsellors whom they have chosen in their present need. Prudence replies that his counsel in this case could not properly be called a counselling, but a movement of folly; and points out that he has erred in sundry wise against the rules which he had just laid down. Granting that he has erred, Meliboeus says that he is all ready to change his counsel right as she will devise; for, as the proverb runs, to do sin is human, but to persevere long in sin is work of the Devil. Prudence then minutely recites, analyses, and criticises the counsel given to her husband in the assembly of his friends. She commends the advice of the physicians and surgeons, and urges that they should be well rewarded for their noble speech and their services in healing Sophia; and she asks Meliboeus how he understands their proposition that one contrary must be cured by another contrary. Meliboeus answers, that he should do vengeance on his enemies, who had done him wrong. Prudence, however, insists that vengeance is not the contrary of vengeance, nor wrong of wrong, but the like; and that wickedness should be healed by goodness, discord by accord, war by peace. She proceeds to deal with the counsel of the lawyers and wise folk that advised Meliboeus to take prudent measures for the security of his body and of his house. First, she would have her husband pray for the protection and aid of Christ; then commit the keeping of his person to his true friends; then suspect and avoid all strange folk, and liars, and such people as she had already warned him against; then beware of presuming on his strength, or the weakness of his adversary, and neglecting to

guard his person — for every wise man dreadeth his enemy; then he should evermore be on the watch against ambush and all espial, even in what seems a place of safety; though he should not be so cowardly, as to fear where is no cause for dread; yet he should dread to be poisoned, and therefore shun scorers, and fly their words as venom. As to the fortification of his house, she points out that towers and great edifices are costly and laborious, yet useless unless defended by true friends that be old and wise; and the greatest and strongest garrison that a rich man may have, as well to keep his person as his goods, is, that he be beloved by his subjects and by his neighbours. Warmly approving the counsel that in all this business Meliboeus should proceed with great diligence and deliberation, Prudence goes on to examine the advice given by his neighbours that do him reverence without love, his old enemies reconciled, his flatterers that counselled him certain things privily and openly counselled him the contrary, and the young folk that counselled him to avenge himself and make war at once. She reminds him that he stands alone against three powerful enemies, whose kindred are numerous and close, while his are fewer and remote in relationship; that only the judge who has jurisdiction in a case may take sudden vengeance on any man; that her husband's power does not accord with his desire; and that, if he did take vengeance, it would only breed fresh wrongs and contests. As to the causes of the wrong done to him, she holds that God, the causer of all things, has permitted him to suffer because he has drunk so much honey of sweet temporal riches, and delights, and honours of this world, that he is drunken, and has forgotten Jesus Christ his Saviour; the three enemies of mankind, the flesh, the fiend, and the world, have entered his heart by the windows of his body, and wounded his soul in five places — that is to say, the deadly sins that have entered into his heart by the five senses; and in the same manner Christ has suffered his three enemies to enter his house by the windows, and wound his daughter in the five places before specified. Meliboeus demurs, that if his wife's objections prevailed, vengeance would never be taken, and thence great mischiefs would arise; but Prudence replies that the taking of vengeance lies with the judges, to whom the private individual must have recourse. Meliboeus declares that such vengeance does not please him, and that, as Fortune has nourished and helped him from his childhood, he will now assay her, trusting, with God's help, that she will aid him to avenge his shame. Prudence warns him against trusting to Fortune, all the less because she has hitherto favoured him, for just on that account she is the more likely to fail him; and she calls on him to leave his vengeance with the Sovereign Judge, that avengeth all villainies and wrongs. Meliboeus argues that if he refrains from taking vengeance he will invite his enemies to do him further wrong, and he will be put and held over low; but Prudence contends that such a result can be brought about only by the neglect of the judges, not by the patience of the individual. Supposing that he had leave to avenge himself, she repeats that he is not strong enough, and quotes the common saw, that it is madness for a man to strive with a stronger than himself, peril to strive with one of equal strength, and folly to strive with a weaker. But, considering his own defaults and demerits, — remembering the

patience of Christ and the undeserved tribulations of the saints, the brevity of this life with all its trouble and sorrow, the discredit thrown on the wisdom and training of a man who cannot bear wrong with patience — he should refrain wholly from taking vengeance. Meliboeus submits that he is not at all a perfect man, and his heart will never be at peace until he is avenged; and that as his enemies disregarded the peril when they attacked him, so he might, without reproach, incur some peril in attacking them in return, even though he did a great excess in avenging one wrong by another. Prudence strongly deprecates all outrage or excess; but Meliboeus insists that he cannot see that it might greatly harm him though he took a vengeance, for he is richer and mightier than his enemies, and all things obey money. Prudence thereupon launches into a long dissertation on the advantages of riches, the evils of poverty, the means by which wealth should be gathered, and the manner in which it should be used; and concludes by counselling her husband not to move war and battle through trust in his riches, for they suffice not to maintain war, the battle is not always to the strong or the numerous, and the perils of conflict are many. Meliboeus then curtly asks her for her counsel how he shall do in this need; and she answers that certainly she counsels him to agree with his adversaries and have peace with them. Meliboeus on this cries out that plainly she loves not his honour or his worship, in counselling him to go and humble himself before his enemies, crying mercy to them that, having done him so grievous wrong, ask him not to be reconciled. Then Prudence, making semblance of wrath, retorts that she loves his honour and profit as she loves her own, and ever has done; she cites the Scriptures in support of her counsel to seek peace; and says she will leave him to his own courses, for she knows well he is so stubborn, that he will do nothing for her. Meliboeus then relents; admits that he is angry and cannot judge aright; and puts himself wholly in her hands, promising to do just as she desires, and admitting that he is the more held to love and praise her, if she reproveth him of his folly)

Then Dame Prudence discovered all her counsel and her will unto him, and said: "I counsel you," quoth she, "above all things, that ye make peace between God and you, and be reconciled unto Him and to his grace; for, as I have said to you herebefore, God hath suffered you to have this tribulation and disease distress, trouble for your sins; and if ye do as I say you, God will send your adversaries unto you, and make them fall at your feet, ready to do your will and your commandment. For Solomon saith, 'When the condition of man is pleasant and liking to God, he changeth the hearts of the man's adversaries, and constraineth them to beseech him of peace of grace.' And I pray you let me speak with your adversaries in privy place, for they shall not know it is by your will or your assent; and then, when I know their will and their intent, I may counsel you the more surely." "Dame," quoth Meliboeus, "'do your will and your liking, for I put me wholly in your disposition and ordinance."

Then Dame Prudence, when she saw the goodwill of her husband, deliberated and took advice in herself, thinking how she might bring this need affair, emergency unto a good end. And when she saw her time, she sent for these adversaries to come into her into a privy place, and showed wisely unto them the great goods that come of peace, and the great harms and perils that be in war; and said to them, in goodly manner, how that they ought have great repentance of the injuries and wrongs that they had done to Meliboeus her Lord, and unto her and her daughter. And when they heard the goodly words of Dame Prudence, then they were surprised and ravished, and had so great joy of her, that wonder was to tell. "Ah lady!" quoth they, "ye have showed unto us the blessing of sweetness, after the saying of David the prophet; for the reconciling which we be not worthy to have in no manner, but we ought require it with great contrition and humility, ye of your great goodness have presented unto us. Now see we well, that the science and conning knowledge of Solomon is full true; for he saith, that sweet words multiply and increase friends, and make shrews the ill-natured or angry to be debonair gentle, courteous and meek. Certes we put our deed, and all our matter and cause, all wholly in your goodwill, and be ready to obey unto the speech and commandment of my lord Meliboeus. And therefore, dear and benign lady, we pray you and beseech you as meekly as we can and may, that it like unto your great goodness to fulfil in deed your goodly words. For we consider and acknowledge that we have offended and grieved my lord Meliboeus out of measure, so far forth that we be not of power to make him amends; and therefore we oblige and bind us and our friends to do all his will and his commandment. But peradventure he hath such heaviness and such wrath to usward, towards us because of our offence, that he will enjoin us such a pain penalty as we may not bear nor sustain; and therefore, noble lady, we beseech to your womanly pity to take such advisement consideration in this need, that we, nor our friends, be not disinherited and destroyed through our folly."

"Certes," quoth Prudence, "it is an hard thing, and right perilous, that a man put him all utterly in the arbitration and judgement and in the might and power of his enemy. For Solomon saith, 'Believe me, and give credence to that that I shall say: to thy son, to thy wife, to thy friend, nor to thy brother, give thou never might nor mastery over thy body, while thou livest.' Now, since he defendeth forbiddeth that a man should not give to his brother, nor to his friend, the might of his body, by a stronger reason he defendeth and forbiddeth a man to give himself to his enemy. And nevertheless, I counsel you that ye mistrust not my lord: for I wot well and know verily, that he is debonair and meek, large, courteous and nothing desirous nor envious of good nor riches: for there is nothing in this world that he desireth save only worship and honour. Furthermore I know well, and am right sure, that he shall nothing do in this need without counsel of me; and I shall so work in this case, that by the grace of our Lord God ye shall be reconciled unto us."

Then said they with one voice, ""Worshipful lady, we put us and our goods all fully in your will and disposition, and be ready to come, what day that it like unto your nobleness to limit us or assign us, for to make our obligation and bond, as strong as it liketh unto your goodness, that we may fulfil the will of you and of my lord Meliboeus."

When Dame Prudence had heard the answer of these men, she bade them go again privily, and she returned to her lord Meliboeus, and told him how she found his adversaries full repentant, acknowledging full lowly their sins and trespasses, and how they were ready to suffer all pain, requiring and praying him of mercy and pity. Then said Meliboeus, "He is well worthy to have pardon and forgiveness of his sin, that excuseth not his sin, but acknowledgeth, and repenteth him, asking indulgence. For Seneca saith, 'There is the remission and forgiveness, where the confession is; for confession is neighbour to innocence.' And therefore I assent and confirm me to have peace, but it is good that we do naught without the assent and will of our friends." Then was Prudence right glad and joyful, and said, "Certes, Sir, ye be well and goodly advised; for right as by the counsel, assent, and help of your friends ye have been stirred to avenge you and make war, right so without their counsel shall ye not accord you, nor have peace with your adversaries. For the law saith, 'There is nothing so good by way of kind, nature as a thing to be unbound by him that it was bound.'"

And then Dame Prudence, without delay or tarrying, sent anon her messengers for their kin and for their old friends, which were true and wise; and told them by order, in the presence of Meliboeus, all this matter, as it is above expressed and declared; and prayed them that they would give their advice and counsel what were best to do in this need. And when Meliboeus' friends had taken their advice and deliberation of the foresaid matter, and had examined it by great business and great diligence, they gave full counsel for to have peace and rest, and that Meliboeus should with good heart receive his adversaries to forgiveness and mercy. And when Dame Prudence had heard the assent of her lord Meliboeus, and the counsel of his friends, accord with her will and her intention, she was wondrous glad in her heart, and said: "There is an old proverb that saith, 'The goodness that thou mayest do this day, do it, and abide not nor delay it not till to-morrow:' and therefore I counsel you that ye send your messengers, such as be discreet and wise, unto your adversaries, telling them on your behalf, that if they will treat of peace and of accord, that they shape prepare them, without delay or tarrying, to come unto us." Which thing performed was indeed. And when these trespassers and repenting folk of their follies, that is to say, the adversaries of Meliboeus, had heard what these messengers said unto them, they were right glad and joyful, and answered full meekly and benignly, yielding graces and thanks to their lord Meliboeus, and to all his company; and shaped them without delay to go with the messengers, and obey to the commandment of their lord Meliboeus. And right anon they took their way to the court

of Meliboeus, and took with them some of their true friends, to make faith for them, and for to be their borrows sureties.

And when they were come to the presence of Meliboeus, he said to them these words; "It stands thus," quoth Meliboeus, "and sooth it is, that ye causeless, and without skill and reason, have done great injuries and wrongs to me, and to my wife Prudence, and to my daughter also; for ye have entered into my house by violence, and have done such outrage, that all men know well that ye have deserved the death: and therefore will I know and weet of you, whether ye will put the punishing and chastising, and the vengeance of this outrage, in the will of me and of my wife, or ye will not?" Then the wisest of them three answered for them all, and said; "Sir," quoth he, "we know well, that we be I unworthy to come to the court of so great a lord and so worthy as ye be, for we have so greatly mistaken us, and have offended and aguilt incurred guilt in such wise against your high lordship, that truly we have deserved the death. But yet for the great goodness and debonaire courtesy, gentleness that all the world witnesseth of your person, we submit us to the excellence and benignity of your gracious lordship, and be ready to obey to all your commandments, beseeching you, that of your merciable merciful pity ye will consider our great repentance and low submission, and grant us forgiveness of our outrageous trespass and offence; for well we know, that your liberal grace and mercy stretch them farther into goodness, than do our outrageous guilt and trespass into wickedness; albeit that cursedly wickedly and damnably we have aguilt incurred guilt against your high lordship." Then Meliboeus took them up from the ground full benignly, and received their obligations and their bonds, by their oaths upon their pledges and borrows, sureties and assigned them a certain day to return unto his court for to receive and accept sentence and judgement, that Meliboeus would command to be done on them, by the causes aforesaid; which things ordained, every man returned home to his house.

And when that Dame Prudence saw her time she freined inquired and asked her lord Meliboeus, what vengeance he thought to take of his adversaries. To which Meliboeus answered, and said; "Certes," quoth he, "I think and purpose me fully to disinherit them of all that ever they have, and for to put them in exile for evermore." "Certes," quoth Dame Prudence, "this were a cruel sentence, and much against reason. For ye be rich enough, and have no need of other men's goods; and ye might lightly easily in this wise get you a covetous name, which is a vicious thing, and ought to be eschewed of every good man: for, after the saying of the Apostle, covetousness is root of all harms. And therefore it were better for you to lose much good of your own, than for to take of their good in this manner. For better it is to lose good with worship honour, than to win good with villainy and shame. And every man ought to do his diligence and his business to get him a good name. And yet further shall he not only busy him in keeping his good name, but he shall also enforce him alway to do some thing by which he may renew his good

name; for it is written, that the old good los reputation of a man is soon gone and passed, when it is not renewed. And as touching that ye say, that ye will exile your adversaries, that thinketh ye much against reason, and out of measure, moderation considered the power that they have given you upon themselves. And it is written, that he is worthy to lose his privilege, that misuseth the might and the power that is given him. And I set case if I assume ye might enjoin them that pain by right and by law (which I trow ye may not do), I say, ye might not put it to execution peradventure, and then it were like to return to the war, as it was before. And therefore if ye will that men do you obeisance, ye must deem decide more courteously, that is to say, ye must give more easy sentences and judgements. For it is written, 'He that most courteously commandeth, to him men most obey.' And therefore I pray you, that in this necessity and in this need ye cast you endeavour, devise a way to overcome your heart. For Seneca saith, that he that overcometh his heart, overcometh twice. And Tullius saith, 'There is nothing so commendable in a great lord, as when he is debonair and meek, and appeaseth him lightly easily.' And I pray you, that ye will now forbear to do vengeance, in such a manner, that your good name may be kept and conserved, and that men may have cause and matter to praise you of pity and of mercy; and that ye have no cause to repent you of thing that ye do. For Seneca saith, 'He overcometh in an evil manner, that repenteth him of his victory.' Wherefore I pray you let mercy be in your heart, to the effect and intent that God Almighty have mercy upon you in his last judgement; for Saint James saith in his Epistle, 'Judgement without mercy shall be done to him, that hath no mercy of another wight.'"

When Meliboeus had heard the great skills arguments, reasons and reasons of Dame Prudence, and her wise information and teaching, his heart gan incline to the will of his wife, considering her true intent, he conformed him anon and assented fully to work after her counsel, and thanked God, of whom proceedeth all goodness and all virtue, that him sent a wife of so great discretion. And when the day came that his adversaries should appear in his presence, he spake to them full goodly, and said in this wise; "Albeit so, that of your pride and high presumption and folly, an of your negligence and unconning, ignorance ye have misborne misbehaved you, and trespassed done injury unto me, yet forasmuch as I see and behold your great humility, and that ye be sorry and repentant of your guilts, it constraineth me to do you grace and mercy. Wherefore I receive you into my grace, and forgive you utterly all the offences, injuries, and wrongs, that ye have done against me and mine, to this effect and to this end, that God of his endless mercy will at the time of our dying forgive us our guilts, that we have trespassed to him in this wretched world; for doubtless, if we be sorry and repentant of the sins and guilts which we have trespassed in the sight of our Lord God, he is so free and so merciable merciful, that he will forgive us our guilts, and bring us to the bliss that never hath end." Amen.

THE MONK'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE

WHEN ended was my tale of Melibee,
And of Prudence and her benignity,
Our Hoste said, "As I am faithful man,
And by the precious corpus Madrian,
I had lever than a barrel of ale, rather
That goode lefe my wife had heard this tale; dear
For she is no thing of such patience
As was this Meliboeus' wife Prudence.
By Godde's bones! when I beat my knaves
She bringeth me the greate clubbed staves,
And crieth, 'Slay the dogges every one,
And break of them both back and ev'ry bone.'
And if that any neighebour of mine
Will not in church unto my wife incline,
Or be so hardy to her to trespace, offend
When she comes home she rampeth in my face, springs
And crieth, 'False coward, wreak thy wife avenge
By corpus Domini, I will have thy knife,
And thou shalt have my distaff, and go spin.'
From day till night right thus she will begin.
'Alas!' she saith, 'that ever I was shape destined
To wed a milksop, or a coward ape,
That will be overlad with every wight! imposed on
Thou darest not stand by thy wife's right.'
"This is my life, but if that I will fight; unless
And out at door anon I must me dight, betake myself
Or elles I am lost, but if that I
Be, like a wilde lion, fool-hardy.
I wot well she will do me slay some day make
Some neighebour and thenne go my way; take to flight
For I am perilous with knife in hand,
Albeit that I dare not her withstand;
For she is big in armes, by my faith!
That shall he find, that her misdoth or saith.
But let us pass away from this mattere.
My lord the Monk," quoth he, "be merry of cheer,
For ye shall tell a tale truely.

Lo, Rochester stands here faste by.
Ride forth, mine owen lord, break not our game.
But by my troth I cannot tell your name;
Whether shall I call you my lord Dan John,
Or Dan Thomas, or elles Dan Albon?
Of what house be ye, by your father's kin?
I vow to God, thou hast a full fair skin;
It is a gentle pasture where thou go'st;
Thou art not like a penant or a ghost. penitent
Upon my faith thou art some officer,
Some worthy sexton, or some cellarer.
For by my father's soul, as to my dome, in my judgement
Thou art a master when thou art at home;
No poore cloisterer, nor no novice,
But a governor, both wily and wise,
And therewithal, of brawnes and of bones, sinews
A right well-faring person for the nonce.
I pray to God give him confusion
That first thee brought into religion.
Thou would'st have been a treade-fowl aright; cock
Hadst thou as greate leave, as thou hast might,
To perform all thy lust in engendrure, generation, begettting
Thou hadst begotten many a creature.
Alas! why wearest thou so wide a cope?
God give me sorrow, but, an I were pope, if
Not only thou, but every mighty man,
Though he were shorn full high upon his pan, crown
Should have a wife; for all this world is lorn; undone, ruined
Religion hath ta'en up all the corn
Of treading, and we borel men be shrimps: lay
Of feeble trees there come wretched imps. shoots
This maketh that our heires be so slender
And feeble, that they may not well engender.
This maketh that our wives will assay
Religious folk, for they may better pay
Of Venus' payementes than may we:
God wot, no lusheburghes paye ye.
But be not wroth, my lord, though that I play;
Full oft in game a sooth have I heard say."
This worthy Monk took all in patience,
And said, "I will do all my diligence,

As far as souneth unto honesty, agrees with good manners
To telle you a tale, or two or three.
And if you list to hearken hitherward,
I will you say the life of Saint Edward;
Or elles first tragedies I will tell,
Of which I have an hundred in my cell.
Tragedy is to say a certain story, means
As olde bookes maken us memory,
Of him that stood in great prosperity,
And is y-fallen out of high degree
In misery, and endeth wretchedly.
And they be versified commonly
Of six feet, which men call hexametron;
In prose eke be indited many a one, also
And eke in metre, in many a sundry wise.
Lo, this declaring ought enough suffice.
Now hearken, if ye like for to hear.
But first I you beseech in this mattere,
Though I by order telle not these things,
Be it of popes, emperors, or kings,
After their ages, as men written find, in chronological order
But tell them some before and some behind,
As it now cometh to my remembrance,
Have me excused of mine ignorance."

THE TALE.

I will bewail, in manner of tragedy,
The harm of them that stood in high degree,
And felle so, that there was no remedy
To bring them out of their adversity.
For, certain, when that Fortune list to flee,
There may no man the course of her wheel hold:
Let no man trust in blind prosperity;
Beware by these examples true and old.
At LUCIFER, though he an angel were,
And not a man, at him I will begin.
For though Fortune may no angel dere, hurt
From high degree yet fell he for his sin
Down into hell, where as he yet is in.
O Lucifer! brightest of angels all,
Now art thou Satanas, that may'st not twin depart
Out of the misery in which thou art fall.
Lo ADAM, in the field of Damascene
With Godde's owen finger wrought was he,
And not begotten of man's sperm unclean;
And welt all Paradise saving one tree: commanded
Had never worldly man so high degree
As Adam, till he for misgovernance misbehaviour
Was driven out of his prosperity
To labour, and to hell, and to mischance.
Lo SAMPSON, which that was annunciate
By the angel, long ere his nativity;
And was to God Almighty consecrate,
And stood in nobless while that he might see;
Was never such another as was he,
To speak of strength, and thereto hardiness; courage
But to his wives told he his secre,
Through which he slew himself for wretchedness.
Sampson, this noble and mighty champion,
Withoute weapon, save his handes tway,
He slew and all to-rente the lion, tore to pieces
Toward his wedding walking by the way.
His false wife could him so please, and pray,
Till she his counsel knew; and she, untrue,
Unto his foes his counsel gan bewray,

And him forsook, and took another new.
Three hundred foxes Sampson took for ire,
And all their tailes he together band,
And set the foxes' tailes all on fire,
For he in every tail had knit a brand,
And they burnt all the combs of that lend,
And all their oliveres and vines eke. olive trees
A thousand men he slew eke with his hand,
And had no weapon but an ass's cheek.
When they were slain, so thirsted him, that he
Was well-nigh lorn, for which he gan to pray near to perishing
That God would on his pain have some pity,
And send him drink, or elles must he die;
And of this ass's check, that was so dry,
Out of a wang-tooth sprang anon a well, cheek-tooth
Of which, he drank enough, shortly to say.
Thus help'd him God, as Judicum can tell.
By very force, at Gaza, on a night,
Maugre the Philistines of that city, in spite of
The gates of the town he hath up plight, plucked, wrenched
And on his back y-carried them hath he
High on an hill, where as men might them see.
O noble mighty Sampson, lefe and dear, loved
Hadst thou not told to women thy secre,
In all this world there had not been thy peer.
This Sampson never cider drank nor wine,
Nor on his head came razor none nor shear,
By precept of the messenger divine;
For all his strengthes in his haire were;
And fully twenty winters, year by year,
He had of Israel the governance;
But soone shall he weepe many a tear,
For women shall him bringe to mischance.
Unto his leman Dalila he told, mistress
That in his haire all his strengthe lay;
And falsely to his foemen she him sold,
And sleeping in her barme upon a day lap
She made to clip or shear his hair away,
And made his foemen all his craft espie.
And when they founde him in this array,
They bound him fast, and put out both his eyen.

But, ere his hair was clipped or y-shave,
There was no bond with which men might him bind;
But now is he in prison in a cave,
Where as they made him at the querne grind. mill
O noble Sampson, strongest of mankind!
O whilom judge in glory and richness!
Now may'st thou weepe with thine eyen blind,
Since thou from weal art fall'n to wretchedness.
Th'end of this caitiff was as I shall say; wretched man
His foemen made a feast upon a day,
And made him as their fool before them play;
And this was in a temple of great array.
But at the last he made a foul affray,
For he two pillars shook, and made them fall,
And down fell temple and all, and there it lay,
And slew himself and eke his foemen all;
This is to say, the princes every one;
And eke three thousand bodies were there slain
With falling of the great temple of stone.
Of Sampson now will I no more sayn;
Beware by this example old and plain,
That no man tell his counsel to his wife
Of such thing as he would have secret fain, wish to be secret
If that it touch his limbes or his life.
Of HERCULES the sov'reign conquerour
Singe his workes' land and high renown;
For in his time of strength he bare the flow'r.
He slew and reft the skin of the lion
He of the Centaurs laid the boast adown;
He Harpies slew, the cruel birdes fell;
He golden apples reft from the dragon
He drew out Cerberus the hound of hell.
He slew the cruel tyrant Busirus.
And made his horse to fret him flesh and bone; devour
He slew the fiery serpent venomous;
Of Achelous' two hornes brake he one.
And he slew Cacus in a cave of stone;
He slew the giant Antaeus the strong;
He slew the grisly boar, and that anon;
And bare the heav'n upon his necke long.
Was never wight, since that the world began,

That slew so many monsters as did he;
Throughout the wide world his name ran,
What for his strength, and for his high bounte;
And every realme went he for to see;
He was so strong that no man might him let; withstand
At both the worlde's ends, as saith Trophee,
Instead of boundes he a pillar set.
A leman had this noble champion,
That highte Dejanira, fresh as May;
And, as these clerkes make mention,
She hath him sent a shirte fresh and gay;
Alas! this shirt, alas and well-away!
Envenomed was subtilly withal,
That ere that he had worn it half a day,
It made his flesh all from his bones fall.
But natheless some clerkes her excuse
By one, that highte Nessus, that it maked;
Be as he may, I will not her accuse;
But on his back this shirt he wore all naked,
Till that his flesh was for the venom blaked. blackened
And when he saw none other remedy,
In hote coals he hath himselfe raked,
For with no venom deigned he to die.
Thus sterf this worthy mighty Hercules. died
Lo, who may trust on Fortune any throw? for a moment
For him that followeth all this world of pres, near
Ere he be ware, is often laid full low;
Full wise is he that can himselfe know.
Beware, for when that Fortune list to glose
Then waiteth she her man to overthrow,
By such a way as he would least suppose.
The mighty throne, the precious treasure,
The glorious sceptre, and royal majesty,
That had the king NABUCHODONOSOR
With tongue unnethes may described be. scarcely
He twice won Jerusalem the city,
The vessels of the temple he with him lad; took away
At Babylone was his sov'reign see, seat
In which his glory and delight he had.
The fairest children of the blood royal
Of Israel he did do geld anon, caused to be castrated

And maked each of them to be his thrall. slave
Amonges others Daniel was one,
That was the wisest child of every one;
For he the dreames of the king expounded,
Where in Chaldaeia clerkes was there none
That wiste to what fine his dreames sounded. end
This proude king let make a statue of gold
Sixty cubites long, and seven in bread',
To which image hathe young and old
Commanded he to lout, and have in dread, bow down to
Or in a furnace, full of flames red,
He should be burnt that woulde not obey:
But never would assente to that deed
Daniel, nor his younge fellows tway.
This king of kinges proud was and elate; lofty
He ween'd that God, that sits in majesty, thought
Mighte him not bereave of his estate;
But suddenly he lost his dignity,
And like a beast he seemed for to be,
And ate hay as an ox, and lay thereout
In rain, with wilde beastes walked he,
Till certain time was y-come about.
And like an eagle's feathers wax'd his hairs,
His nailes like a birde's clawes were,
Till God released him at certain years,
And gave him wit; and then with many a tear
He thanked God, and ever his life in fear
Was he to do amiss, or more trespase:
And till that time he laid was on his bier,
He knew that God was full of might and grace.
His sone, which that highte BALTHASAR,
That held the regne after his father's day, possessed the kingdom
He by his father coulde not beware,
For proud he was of heart and of array;
And eke an idolaster was he aye.
His high estate assured him in pride; confirmed
But Fortune cast him down, and there he lay,
And suddenly his regne gan divide.
A feast he made unto his lordes all
Upon a time, and made them blithe be,
And then his officeres gan he call;

"Go, bringe forth the vessels," saide he,
"Which that my father in his prosperity
Out of the temple of Jerusalem reft,
And to our highe goddes thanks we
Of honour, that our elders with us left." forefathers
His wife, his lordes, and his concubines
Aye dranke, while their appetites did last,
Out of these noble vessels sundry wines.
And on a wall this king his eyen cast,
And saw an hand, armless, that wrote full fast;
For fear of which he quaked, and sighed sore.
This hand, that Balthasar so sore aghast, dismayed
Wrote Mane, tekem, phares, and no more.
In all that land magician was there none
That could expounde what this letter meant.
But Daniel expounded it anon,
And said, "O King, God to thy father lent
Glory and honour, regne, treasure, rent; revenue
And he was proud, and nothing God he drad; dreaded
And therefore God great wreche upon him sent, vengeance
And him bereft the regne that he had.
"He was cast out of manne's company;
With asses was his habitation
And ate hay, as a beast, in wet and dry,
Till that he knew by grace and by reason
That God of heaven hath domination
O'er every regne, and every creature;
And then had God of him compassion,
And him restor'd his regne and his figure.
"Eke thou, that art his son, art proud also,
And knowest all these thinges verily;
And art rebel to God, and art his foe.
Thou drankest of his vessels boldely;
Thy wife eke, and thy wenches, sinfully
Drank of the same vessels sundry wines,
And heried false goddes cursedly; praised
Therefore to thee y-shapen full great pine is. great punishment is
prepared for thee
"This hand was sent from God, that on the wall
Wrote Mane, tekem, phares, truste me;
Thy reign is done; thou weighest naught at all;

Divided is thy regne, and it shall be
To Medes and to Persians giv'n," quoth he.
And thilke same night this king was slaw slain
And Darius occupied his degree,
Though he thereto had neither right nor law.
Lordings, example hereby may ye take,
How that in lordship is no sickerness; security
For when that Fortune will a man forsake,
She bears away his regne and his richness,
And eke his friendes bothe more and less,
For what man that hath friendes through fortune,
Mishap will make them enemies, I guess;
This proverb is full sooth, and full commune.
ZENOBIA, of Palmyrie the queen,
As write Persians of her nobless,
So worthy was in armes, and so keen,
That no wight passed her in hardiness,
Nor in lineage, nor other gentleness. noble qualities
Of the king's blood of Perse is she descended; Persia
I say not that she hadde most fairness,
But of her shape she might not be amended.
From her childhood I finde that she fled
Office of woman, and to woods she went,
And many a wilde harte's blood she shed
With arrows broad that she against them sent;
She was so swift, that she anon them hent. caught
And when that she was older, she would kill
Lions, leopards, and beares all to-rent, torn to pieces
And in her armes wield them at her will.
She durst the wilde beastes' dennes seek,
And runnen in the mountains all the night,
And sleep under a bush; and she could eke
Wrestle by very force and very might
With any young man, were he ne'er so wight; active, nimble
There mighte nothing in her armes stonde.
She kept her maidenhood from every wight,
To no man deigned she for to be bond.
But at the last her friendes have her married
To Odenate, a prince of that country;
All were it so, that she them longe tarried.
And ye shall understande how that he

Hadde such fantasies as hadde she;
But natheless, when they were knit in fere, together
They liv'd in joy, and in felicity,
For each of them had other lefe and dear. loved
Save one thing, that she never would assent,
By no way, that he shoulde by her lie
But ones, for it was her plain intent
To have a child, the world to multiply;
And all so soon as that she might espy
That she was not with childe by that deed,
Then would she suffer him do his fantasy
Eftsoon, and not but ones, out of dread. again without doubt
And if she were with child at thilke cast, that
No more should he playe thilke game
Till fully forty dayes were past;
Then would she once suffer him do the same.
All were this Odenatus wild or tame, whether
He got no more of her; for thus she said,
It was to wives lechery and shame
In other case if that men with them play'd. on other terms
Two sones, by this Odenate had she,
The which she kept in virtue and lettrure. learning
But now unto our tale turne we;
I say, so worshipful a creature,
And wise therewith, and large with measure, bountiful moderation
So penible in the war, and courteous eke, laborious
Nor more labour might in war endure,
Was none, though all this worlde men should seek.
Her rich array it mighte not be told,
As well in vessel as in her clothing:
She was all clad in pierrie and in gold, jewellery
And eke she lefte not, for no hunting, did not neglect
To have of sundry tongues full knowing,
When that she leisure had, and for t'intend apply
To learne bookes was all her liking,
How she in virtue might her life dispend.
And, shortly of this story for to treat,
So doughty was her husband and eke she,
That they conquered many regnes great
In th'Orient, with many a fair city
Appertinent unto the majesty

Of Rome, and with strong hande held them fast,
Nor ever might their foemen do them flee, make
 Aye while that Odenatus' dayes last'.
Her battles, whoso list them for to read,
 Against Sapor the king, and other mo',
And how that all this process fell in deed,
 Why she conquer'd, and what title thereto,
And after of her mischief and her woe, misfortune
 How that she was besieged and y-take,
 Let him unto my master Petrarch go,
 That writes enough of this, I undertake.
 When Odenate was dead, she mightily
 The regne held, and with her proper hand
 Against her foes she fought so cruelly,
That there n'as king nor prince in all that land, was not
 That was not glad, if be that grace fand
That she would not upon his land warray; make war
 With her they maden alliance by bond,
 To be in peace, and let her ride and play.
 The emperor of Rome, Claudius,
 Nor, him before, the Roman Gallien,
 Durst never be so courageous,
 Nor no Armenian, nor Egyptien,
 Nor Syrian, nor no Arabien,
 Within the fielde durste with her fight,
Lest that she would them with her handes slen, slay
 Or with her meinie putte them to flight. troops
 In kinges' habit went her sones two,
 As heires of their father's regnes all;
 And Heremanno and Timolao
 Their names were, as Persians them call
 But aye Fortune hath in her honey gall;
This mighty queene may no while endure;
 Fortune out of her regne made her fall
 To wretchedness and to misadventure.
 Aurelian, when that the governance
 Of Rome came into his handes tway,
He shope upon this queen to do vengeance; prepared
 And with his legions he took his way
 Toward Zenobie, and, shortly for to say,
He made her flee, and at the last her hent, took

And fetter'd her, and eke her children tway,
And won the land, and home to Rome he went.
Amonges other thinges that he wan,
Her car, that was with gold wrought and pierrie, jewels
This greate Roman, this Aurelian
Hath with him led, for that men should it see.
Before in his triumphe walked she
With gilte chains upon her neck hanging;
Crowned she was, as after her degree, according to
And full of pierrie her clothing.
Alas, Fortune! she that whilom was
Dreadful to kinges and to emperours,
Now galeth all the people on her, alas! yelleth
And she that helmed was in starke stowres, wore a helmet in
And won by force townes strong and tow'rs, obstinate battles
Shall on her head now wear a vitremite;
And she that bare the sceptre full of flow'rs
Shall bear a distaff, her cost for to quite. to make her living
Although that NERO were so vicious
As any fiend that lies full low adown,
Yet he, as telleth us Suetonius,
This wide world had in subjection,
Both East and West, South and Septentrioun.
Of rubies, sapphires, and of pearles white
Were all his clothes embroider'd up and down,
For he in gemmes greatly gan delight.
More delicate, more pompous of array,
More proud, was never emperor than he;
That ilke cloth that he had worn one day, same robe
After that time he would it never see;
Nettes of gold thread had he great plenty,
To fish in Tiber, when him list to play;
His lustes were as law, in his degree, pleasures
For Fortune as his friend would him obey.
He Rome burnt for his delicacy; pleasure
The senators he slew upon a day,
To heare how that men would weep and cry;
And slew his brother, and by his sister lay.
His mother made he in piteous array;
For he her wombe slitte, to behold
Where he conceived was; so well-away!

That he so little of his mother told. valued
 No tear out of his eyen for that sight
 Came; but he said, a fair woman was she.
 Great wonder is, how that he could or might
 Be doomesman of her deade beauty: judge
 The wine to bringe him commanded he,
 And drank anon; none other woe he made,
 When might is joined unto cruelty,
 Alas! too deepe will the venom wade.
 In youth a master had this emperour,
 To teache him lettrure and courtesy; literature, learning
 For of morality he was the flow'r,
 As in his time, but if bookes lie. unless
 And while this master had of him mast'ry,
 He made him so conning and so souple, subtle
 That longe time it was ere tyranny,
 Or any vice, durst in him uncouple. be let loose
 This Seneca, of which that I devise, tell
 Because Nero had of him suche dread,
 For he from vices would him aye chastise
 Discreetly, as by word, and not by deed;
 "Sir," he would say, "an emperor must need
 Be virtuous, and hate tyranny."
 For which he made him in a bath to bleed
 On both his armes, till he muste die.
 This Nero had eke of a custumance habit
 In youth against his master for to rise; stand in his presence
 Which afterward he thought a great grievance;
 Therefore he made him dien in this wise.
 But natheless this Seneca the wise
 Chose in a bath to die in this mannere,
 Rather than have another tormentise; torture
 And thus hath Nero slain his master dear.
 Now fell it so, that Fortune list no longer
 The highe pride of Nero to cherice; cherish
 For though he were strong, yet was she stronger.
 She thoughte thus; "By God, I am too nice foolish
 To set a man, that is full fill'd of vice,
 In high degree, and emperor him call!
 By God, out of his seat I will him trice! thrust
 When he least weeneth, soonest shall he fall." expecteth

The people rose upon him on a night,
For his default; and when he it espied,
Out of his doors anon he hath him dight betaken himself
Alone, and where he ween'd t'have been allied, regarded with
He knocked fast, and aye the more he cried friendship
The faster shutte they their doores all;
Then wist he well he had himself misgied, misled
And went his way, no longer durst he call.
The people cried and rumbled up and down,
That with his eares heard he how they said;
"Where is this false tyrant, this Neroun?"
For fear almost out of his wit he braid, went
And to his goddes piteously he pray'd
For succour, but it mighte not betide
For dread of this he thoughte that died,
And ran into a garden him to hide.
And in this garden found he churles tway,
That satte by a fire great and red;
And to these churles two he gan to pray
To slay him, and to girdon off his head, strike
That to his body, when that he were dead,
Were no despite done for his defame. infamy
Himself he slew, he could no better rede; he knew no better
Of which Fortune laugh'd and hadde game. counsel
Was never capitain under a king,
That regnes more put in subjection,
Nor stronger was in field of alle thing
As in his time, nor greater of renown,
Nor more pompous in high presumption,
Than HOLOFERNES, whom Fortune aye kiss'd
So lik'rously, and led him up and down,
Till that his head was off ere that he wist. before he knew it
Not only that this world had of him awe,
For losing of riches and liberty;
But he made every man reny his law. renounce his religion
Nabuchodonosor was God, said he;
None other Godde should honoured be.
Against his hest there dare no wight trespase, command
Save in Bethulia, a strong city,
Where Eliachim priest was of that place.
But take keep of the death of Holofern; notice

Amid his host he drunken lay at night
Within his tente, large as is a bern; barn
And yet, for all his pomp and all his might,
Judith, a woman, as he lay upright
Sleeping, his head off smote, and from his tent
Full privily she stole from every wight,
And with his head unto her town she went.
What needeth it of king ANTIOCHUS
To tell his high and royal majesty,
His great pride, and his workes venomous?
For such another was there none as he;
Reade what that he was in Maccabee.
And read the proude wordes that he said,
And why he fell from his prosperity,
And in an hill how wretchedly he died.
Fortune him had enhanced so in pride,
That verily he ween'd he might attain
Unto the starres upon every side,
And in a balance weighen each mountain,
And all the floodes of the sea restrain.
And Godde's people had he most in hate
Them would he slay in torment and in pain,
Weening that God might not his pride abate.
And for that Nicanor and Timothee
With Jewes were vanquish'd mightily,
Unto the Jewes such an hate had he,
That he bade graith his car full hastily, prepare his chariot
And swore and saide full dispiteously,
Unto Jerusalem he would eftsoon, immediately
To wreak his ire on it full cruelly
But of his purpose was he let full soon. prevented
God for his menace him so sore smote,
With invisible wound incurable,
That in his guttes carf it so and bote, cut gnawed
Till that his paines were importable; unendurable
And certainly the wreche was reasonable, vengeance
For many a manne's guttes did he pain;
But from his purpose, curs'd and damnable, impious
For all his smart he would him not restrain;
But bade anon appaile his host. prepare
And suddenly, ere he was of it ware,

God daunted all his pride, and all his boast
For he so sore fell out of his chare, chariot
That it his limbes and his skin to-tare,
So that he neither mighte go nor ride
But in a chaire men about him bare,
Alle forbruised bothe back and side.
The wreche of God him smote so cruelly, vengeance
That through his body wicked wormes crept,
And therewithal he stank so horribly
That none of all his meinie that him kept, servants
Whether so that he woke or elles slept,
Ne mighte not of him the stink endure.
In this mischief he wailed and eke wept,
And knew God Lord of every creature.
To all his host, and to himself also,
Full wlatsem was the stink of his carrain; loathsome body
No manne might him beare to and fro.
And in this stink, and this horrible pain,
He starf full wretchedly in a mountain. dies
Thus hath this robber, and this homicide,
That many a manne made to weep and plain,
Such guerdon as belongeth unto pride. reward
The story of ALEXANDER is so commune,
That ev'ry wight that hath discretion
Hath heard somewhat or all of his fortune.
This wide world, as in conclusion,
He won by strength; or, for his high renown,
They were glad for peace to him to send.
The pride and boast of man he laid adown,
Whereso he came, unto the worlde's end.
Comparison yet never might be maked
Between him and another conqueror;
For all this world for dread of him had quaked
He was of knighthood and of freedom flow'r:
Fortune him made the heir of her honour.
Save wine and women, nothing might assuage
His high intent in arms and labour,
So was he full of leonine courage.
What praise were it to him, though I you told
Of Darius, and a hundred thousand mo',
Of kinges, princes, dukes, and earles bold,

Which he conquer'd, and brought them into woe?
I say, as far as man may ride or go,
The world was his, why should I more devise? tell
For, though I wrote or told you evermo',
Of his knighthood it mighte not suffice.
Twelve years he reigned, as saith Maccabee
Philippe's son of Macedon he was,
That first was king in Greece the country.
O worthy gentle Alexander, alas noble
That ever should thee falle such a case!
Empoison'd of thine owen folk thou were;
Thy six fortune hath turn'd into an ace,
And yet for thee she wepte never a tear.
Who shall me give teares to complain
The death of gentiless, and of franchise, generosity
That all this worlde had in his demaine, dominion
And yet he thought it mighte not suffice,
So full was his corage of high emprise? spirit
Alas! who shall me helpe to indite
False Fortune, and poison to despise?
The whiche two of all this woe I wite. blame
By wisdom, manhood, and by great labour,
From humbleness to royal majesty
Up rose he, JULIUS the Conquerour,
That won all th' Occident, by land and sea, West
By strength of hand or elles by treaty,
And unto Rome made them tributary;
And since of Rome the emperor was he, afterwards
Till that Fortune wax'd his adversary.
O mighty Caesar, that in Thessaly
Against POMPEIUS, father thine in law,
That of th' Orient had all the chivalry,
As far as that the day begins to daw,
That through thy knighthood hast them take and slaw, slain
Save fewe folk that with Pompeius fled;
Through which thou put all th' Orient in awe;
Thanke Fortune that so well thee sped.
But now a little while I will bewail
This Pompeius, this noble governor
Of Rome, which that fled at this battaile
I say, one of his men, a false traitor,

His head off smote, to winne him favor
Of Julius, and him the head he brought;
Alas! Pompey, of th' Orient conqueror,
That Fortune unto such a fine thee brought! end
To Rome again repaired Julius,
With his triumphe laureate full high;
But on a time Brutus and Cassius,
That ever had of his estate envy,
Full privily have made conspiracy
Against this Julius in subtle wise
And cast the place in which he shoulde die, arranged
With bodekins, as I shall you devise. daggers tell
This Julius to the Capitole went
Upon a day, as he was wont to gon;
And in the Capitol anon him hent seized
This false Brutus, and his other fone, foes
And sticked him with bodekins anon
With many a wound, and thus they let him lie.
But never groan'd he at no stroke but one,
Or else at two, but if the story lie. unless
So manly was this Julius of heart,
And so well loved estately honesty dignified propriety
That, though his deadly woundes sore smart, pained him
His mantle o'er his hippes caste he,
That ne man shoulde see his privity
And as he lay a-dying in a trance,
And wiste verily that dead was he,
Of honesty yet had he remembrance.
Lucan, to thee this story I recommend,
And to Sueton', and Valerie also,
That of this story write word and end the whole
How that to these great conquerores two
Fortune was first a friend, and since a foe. afterwards
No manne trust upon her favour long,
But have her in await for evermo'; ever be watchful against her
Witness on all these conquerores strong.
The riche CROESUS, whilom king of Lyde, —
Of which Croesus Cyrus him sore drad, — dreaded
Yet was he caught amidde all his pride,
And to be burnt men to the fire him lad;
But such a rain down from the welkin shad, poured from the sky

That slew the fire, and made him to escape:
But to beware no grace yet he had,
Till fortune on the gallows made him gape.
When he escaped was, he could not stint refrain
For to begin a newe war again;
He weened well, for that Fortune him sent
Such hap, that he escaped through the rain,
That of his foes he mighte not be slain.
And eke a sweven on a night he mette, dream dreamed
Of which he was so proud, and eke so fain, glad
That he in vengeance all his hearte set.
Upon a tree he was set, as he thought,
Where Jupiter him wash'd, both back and side,
And Phoebus eke a fair towel him brought
To dry him with; and therefore wax'd his pride.
And to his daughter that stood him beside,
Which he knew in high science to abound,
He bade her tell him what it signified;
And she his dream began right thus expound.
"The tree," quoth she, "the gallows is to mean,
And Jupiter betokens snow and rain,
And Phoebus, with his towel clear and clean,
These be the sunne's streames sooth to sayn; rays
Thou shalt y-hangeth be, father, certain;
Rain shall thee wash, and sunne shall thee dry."
Thus warned him full plat and eke full plain
His daughter, which that called was Phanie.
And hanged was Croesus the proude king;
His royal throne might him not avail.
Tragedy is none other manner thing,
Nor can in singing crien nor bewail,
But for that Fortune all day will assail
With unware stroke the regnes that be proud: kingdoms
For when men truste her, then will she fail,
And cover her bright face with a cloud.
O noble, O worthy PEDRO, glory OF SPAIN,
Whem Fortune held so high in majesty,
Well oughte men thy piteous death complain.
Out of thy land thy brother made thee flee,
And after, at a siege, by subtlety,
Thou wert betray'd, and led unto his tent,

Where as he with his owen hand slew thee,
Succeeding in thy regne and in thy rent. kingdom revenues
The field of snow, with th' eagle of black therein,
Caught with the lion, red-colour'd as the glede, burning coal
He brew'd this cursedness, and all this sin; wickedness, villainy
The wicked nest was worker of this deed;
Not Charles' Oliver, that took aye heed
Of truth and honour, but of Armorike
Ganilien Oliver, corrupt for meed, reward, bribe
Broughte this worthy king in such a brike. breach, ruin
O worthy PETRO, King of CYPRE also,
That Alexandre won by high mast'ry,
Full many a heathnen wroughtest thou full woe,
Of which thine owen lieges had envy;
And, for no thing but for thy chivalry,
They in thy bed have slain thee by the morrow;
Thus can Fortune her wheel govern and gie, guide
And out of joy bringe men into sorrow.
Of Milan greate BARNABO VISCOUNT,
God of delight, and scourge of Lombardy,
Why should I not thine clomben wert so high? climbed
Thy brother's son, that was thy double ally,
For he thy nephew was and son-in-law,
Within his prison made thee to die,
But why, nor how, n'ot I that thou were slaw. I know not slain
Of th' Earl HUGOLIN OF PISE the languour agony
There may no tongue telle for pity.
But little out of Pisa stands a tow'r,
In whiche tow'r in prison put was he,
Aud with him be his little children three;
The eldest scarcely five years was of age;
Alas! Fortune, it was great cruelty
Such birdes for to put in such a cage.
Damned was he to die in that prison;
For Roger, which that bishop was of Pise,
Had on him made a false suggestion,
Through which the people gan upon him rise,
And put him in prison, in such a wise
As ye have heard; and meat and drink he had
So small, that well unneth it might suffice, scarcely
And therewithal it was full poor and bad.

And on a day befell, that in that hour
When that his meate wont was to be brought,
The jailor shut the doores of the tow'r;
He heard it right well, but he spake nought.
And in his heart anon there fell a thought,
That they for hunger woulde do him dien; cause him to die
"Alas!" quoth he, "alas that I was wrought!" made, born
Therewith the teares fell from his eyen.
His youngest son, that three years was of age,
Unto him said, "Father, why do ye weep?
When will the jailor bringen our pottage?
Is there no morsel bread that ye do keep?
I am so hungry, that I may not sleep.
Now woulde God that I might sleepen ever!
Then should not hunger in my wombe creep; stomach
There is no thing, save bread, that one were lever." dearer
Thus day by day this child begun to cry,
Till in his father's barme adown he lay, lap
And saide, "Farewell, father, I must die;"
And kiss'd his father, and died the same day.
And when the woeful father did it sey, see
For woe his armes two he gan to bite,
And said, "Alas! Fortune, and well-away!
To thy false wheel my woe all may I wite." blame
His children ween'd that it for hunger was
That he his armes gnaw'd, and not for woe,
And saide, "Father, do not so, alas!
But rather eat the flesh upon us two.
Our flesh thou gave us, our flesh take us fro',
And eat enough;" right thus they to him said.
And after that, within a day or two,
They laid them in his lap adown, and died.
Himself, despaired, eke for hunger starf. died
Thus ended is this Earl of Pise;
From high estate Fortune away him carf. cut off
Of this tragedy it ought enough suffice
Whoso will hear it in a longer wise, at greater length
Reade the greate poet of Itale,
That Dante hight, for he can it devise
From point to point, not one word will he fail.

Freeditorial 