

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

**By
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Freeditorial 

THE CANTERBURY TALES AND OTHER POEMS

THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE

THE PROLOGUE.

"Ho!" quoth the Knight, "good sir, no more of this;
That ye have said is right enough, y-wis, of a surety
And mucche more; for little heaviness
Is right enough to mucche folk, I guess.
I say for me, it is a great disease, source of distress, annoyance
Where as men have been in great wealth and ease,
To hearken of their sudden fall, alas!
And the contrary is joy and great solas, delight, comfort
As when a man hath been in poor estate,
And climbeth up, and waxeth fortunate,
And there abideth in prosperity;
Such thing is gladsome, as it thinketh me,
And of such thing were goodly for to tell."
"Yea," quoth our Hoste, "by Saint Paule's bell.
Ye say right sooth; this monk hath clapped loud; talked
He spake how Fortune cover'd with a cloud
I wot not what, and als' of a tragedy
Right now ye heard: and pardie no remedy
It is for to bewaile, nor complain
That that is done, and also it is pain,
As ye have said, to hear of heaviness.
Sir Monk, no more of this, so God you bless;
Your tale annoyeth all this company;
Such talking is not worth a butterfly,
For therein is there no sport nor game;
Therefore, Sir Monke, Dan Piers by your name,
I pray you heart'ly, tell us somewhat else,
For sickerly, n'ere clinking of your bells, were it not for the
That on your bridle hang on every side,
By heaven's king, that for us alle died,
I should ere this have fallen down for sleep,
Although the slough had been never so deep;
Then had your tale been all told in vain.
For certainly, as these clerkes sayn,
Where as a man may have no audience,

Nought helpeth it to telle his sentence.
And well I wot the substance is in me,
If anything shall well reported be.
Sir, say somewhat of hunting, I you pray."
"Nay," quoth the Monk, "I have no lust to play; no fondness for
Now let another tell, as I have told." jesting
Then spake our Host with rude speech and bold,
And said unto the Nunne's Priest anon,
"Come near, thou Priest, come hither, thou Sir John,
Tell us such thing as may our heartes glade. gladden
Be blithe, although thou ride upon a jade.
What though thine horse be bothe foul and lean?
If he will serve thee, reck thou not a bean;
Look that thine heart be merry evermo'."
"Yes, Host," quoth he, "so may I ride or go,
But I be merry, y-wis I will be blamed." unless
And right anon his tale he hath attamed commenced
And thus he said unto us every one,
This sweete priest, this goodly man, Sir John.

THE TALE.

A poor widow, somedeal y-stept in age, somewhat advanced
Was whilom dwelling in a poor cottage,
Beside a grove, standing in a dale.
This widow, of which I telle you my tale,
Since thilke day that she was last a wife,
In patience led a full simple life,
For little was her chattel and her rent. her goods and her income
By husbandry of such as God her sent, thrifty management
She found herself, and eke her daughters two. maintained
Three large sowes had she, and no mo';
Three kine, and eke a sheep that highte Mall.
Full sooty was her bow'r, and eke her hall, chamber
In which she ate full many a slender meal.
Of poignant sauce knew she never a deal. whit
No dainty morsel passed through her throat;
Her diet was accordant to her cote. in keeping with her cottage
Repletion her made never sick;
Attemper diet was all her physic, moderate
And exercise, and hearte's suffisance. contentment of heart
The goute let her nothing for to dance, did not prevent her
Nor apoplexy shente not her head. from dancing hurt
No wine drank she, neither white nor red:
Her board was served most with white and black,
Milk and brown bread, in which she found no lack,
Seind bacon, and sometimes an egg or tway; singed
For she was as it were a manner dey. kind of day labourer
A yard she had, enclosed all about
With stickes, and a drye ditch without,
In which she had a cock, hight Chanticleer;
In all the land of crowing n'as his peer. was not his equal
His voice was merrier than the merry orgon, organ
On masse days that in the churches gon.
Well sickerer was his crowing in his lodge, more punctual
Than is a clock, or an abbay horloge. clock
By nature he knew each ascension
Of th' equinoctial in thilke town;
For when degrees fiftene were ascended,
Then crew he, that it might not be amended.
His comb was redder than the fine coral,

Embattell'd as it were a castle wall.
His bill was black, and as the jet it shone;
Like azure were his legges and his tone; toes
His nailes whiter than the lily flow'r,
And like the burnish'd gold was his colour,
This gentle cock had in his governance
Sev'n hennes, for to do all his pleasance,
Which were his sisters and his paramours,
And wondrous like to him as of colours.
Of which the fairest-hued in the throat
Was called Damoselle Partelote,
Courteous she was, discreet, and debonair,
And companiable, and bare herself so fair, sociable
Since the day that she sev'n night was old,
That truely she had the heart in hold
Of Chanticleer, locked in every lith; limb
He lov'd her so, that well was him therewith,
But such a joy it was to hear them sing,
When that the brighte sunne gan to spring,
In sweet accord, "My lefe is fare in land." my love is
For, at that time, as I have understand, gone abroad
Beastes and birdes coulde speak and sing.
And so befell, that in a dawening,
As Chanticleer among his wives all
Sat on his perche, that was in the hall,
And next him sat this faire Partelote,
This Chanticleer gan groanen in his throat,
As man that in his dream is dretched sore, oppressed
And when that Partelote thus heard him roar,
She was aghast, and saide, "Hearte dear, afraid
What aileth you to groan in this mannere?
Ye be a very sleeper, fy for shame!"
And he answer'd and saide thus; "Madame,
I pray you that ye take it not agrief; amiss, in umbrage
By God, me mette I was in such mischief, I dreamed trouble
Right now, that yet mine heart is sore affright'.
Now God," quoth he, "my sweven read aright dream, vision.
And keep my body out of foul prisoun.
Me mette, how that I roamed up and down I dreamed
Within our yard, where as I saw a beast
Was like an hound, and would have made arrest siezed

Upon my body, and would have had me dead.
 His colour was betwixt yellow and red;
 And tipped was his tail, and both his ears,
 With black, unlike the remnant of his hairs.
 His snout was small, with glowing eyen tway;
 Yet of his look almost for fear I dey; died
 This caused me my groaning, doubtless."
 "Away," quoth she, "fy on you, hearteless! coward
 Alas!" quoth she, "for, by that God above!
 Now have ye lost my heart and all my love;
 I cannot love a coward, by my faith.
 For certes, what so any woman saith,
 We all desiren, if it mighte be,
 To have husbandes hardy, wise, and free,
 And secret, and no niggard nor no fool, discreet
 Nor him that is aghast of every tool, afraid rag, trifle
 Nor no avantour, by that God above! braggart
 How durste ye for shame say to your love
 That anything might make you afear'd?
 Have ye no manne's heart, and have a beard?
 Alas! and can ye be aghast of swevenes? dreams
 Nothing but vanity, God wot, in sweven is,
 Swevens engender of repletions, are caused by over-eating
 And oft of fume, and of complexions, drunkenness
 When humours be too abundant in a wight.
 Certes this dream, which ye have mette tonight,
 Cometh of the great supefluity
 Of youre rede cholera, pardie, bile
 Which causeth folk to dreaden in their dreams
 Of arrows, and of fire with redde beams,
 Of redde beastes, that they will them bite,
 Of conteke, and of whelpes great and lite; contention little
 Right as the humour of melancholy
 Causeth full many a man in sleep to cry,
 For fear of bulles, or of beares blake,
 Or elles that black devils will them take,
 Of other humours could I tell also,
 That worke many a man in sleep much woe;
 That I will pass as lightly as I can.
 Lo, Cato, which that was so wise a man,
 Said he not thus, 'Ne do no force of dreams,'⁸ attach no weight to

Now, Sir," quoth she, "when we fly from these beams,
For Godde's love, as take some laxatife;
On peril of my soul, and of my life,
I counsel you the best, I will not lie,
That both of choler, and melancholy,
Ye purge you; and, for ye shall not tarry,
Though in this town is no apothecary,
I shall myself two herbes teache you,
That shall be for your health, and for your prow; profit
And in our yard the herbes shall I find,
The which have of their property by kind nature
To purge you beneath, and eke above.
Sire, forget not this for Godde's love;
Ye be full choleric of complexion;
Ware that the sun, in his ascension,
You finde not replete of humours hot;
And if it do, I dare well lay a groat,
That ye shall have a fever tertiane,
Or else an ague, that may be your bane,
A day or two ye shall have digestives
Of wormes, ere ye take your laxatives,
Of laurel, centaury, and fumeterere,
Or else of elder-berry, that groweth there,
Of catapuce, or of the gaitre-berries,
Or herb ivy growing in our yard, that merry is:
Pick them right as they grow, and eat them in,
Be merry, husband, for your father's kin;
Dreade no dream; I can say you no more."
"Madame," quoth he, "grand mercy of your lore,
But natheless, as touching Dan Catoun, Cato
That hath of wisdom such a great renown,
Though that he bade no dreames for to dread,
By God, men may in olde bookes read
Of many a man more of authority
Than ever Cato was, so may I the, thrive
That all the reverse say of his sentence, opinion
And have well founden by experience
That dreames be significations
As well of joy, as tribulations
That folk endure in this life present.
There needeth make of this no argument;

The very preve sheweth it indeed. trial, experience
One of the greatest authors that men read
Saith thus, that whilom two fellowes went
On pilgrimage in a full good intent;
And happen'd so, they came into a town
Where there was such a congregatioun
Of people, and eke so strait of herbergage, without lodging
That they found not as much as one cottage
In which they bothe might y-lodged be:
Wherefore they musten of necessity,
As for that night, departe company;
And each of them went to his hostelry, inn
And took his lodging as it woulde fall.
The one of them was lodged in a stall,
Far in a yard, with oxen of the plough;
That other man was lodged well enow,
As was his aventure, or his fortune,
That us governeth all, as in commune.
And so befell, that, long ere it were day,
This man mette in his bed, there: as he lay, dreamed
How that his fellow gan upon him call,
And said, 'Alas! for in an ox's stall
This night shall I be murder'd, where I lie
Now help me, deare brother, or I die;
In alle haste come to me,' he said.
This man out of his sleep for fear abraid; started
But when that he was wak'd out of his sleep,
He turned him, and took of this no keep; paid this no attention
He thought his dream was but a vanity.
Thus twies in his sleeping dreamed he, twice
And at the thirde time yet his fellow again
Came, as he thought, and said, 'I am now slaw; slain
Behold my bloody woundes, deep and wide.
Arise up early, in the morning, tide,
And at the west gate of the town,' quoth he,
'A carte full of dung there shalt: thou see,
In which my body is hid privily.
Do thilke cart arroste boldely. stop
My gold caused my murder, sooth to sayn.'
And told him every point how he was slain,
With a full piteous face, and pale of hue.

"And, truste well, his dream he found full true;
For on the morrow, as soon as it was day,
To his fellowes inn he took his way;
And when that he came to this ox's stall,
After his fellow he began to call.
The hostelere answered him anon,
And saide, 'Sir, your fellow is y-gone,
As soon as day he went out of the town.'
This man gan fallen in suspicioun,
Rememb'ring on his dreames that he mette, dreamed
And forth he went, no longer would he let, delay
Unto the west gate of the town, and fand found
A dung cart, as it went for to dung land,
That was arrayed in the same wise
As ye have heard the deade man devise; describe
And with an hardy heart he gan to cry,
'Vengeance and justice of this felony:
My fellow murder'd in this same night
And in this cart he lies, gaping upright.
I cry out on the ministers,' quoth he.
'That shoulde keep and rule this city;
Harow! alas! here lies my fellow slain.'
What should I more unto this tale sayn?
The people out start, and cast the cart to ground
And in the middle of the dung they found
The deade man, that murder'd was all new.
O blissful God! that art so good and true,
Lo, how that thou bewray'st murder alway.
Murder will out, that see we day by day.
Murder is so wlatson and abominable loathsome
To God, that is so just and reasonable,
That he will not suffer it heled be; concealed
Though it abide a year, or two, or three,
Murder will out, this is my conclusioun,
And right anon, the ministers of the town
Have hent the carter, and so sore him pined, seized tortured
And eke the hostelere so sore engined, racked
That they beknew their wickedness anon, confessed
And were hanged by the necke bone.
"Here may ye see that dreames be to dread.
And certes in the same book I read,

Right in the nexte chapter after this
(I gabbe not, so have I joy and bliss), talk idly
Two men that would, have passed over sea,
For certain cause, into a far country,
If that the wind not hadde been contrary,
That made them in a city for to tarry,
That stood full merry upon an haven side;
But on a day, against the even-tide,
The wind gan change, and blew right as them lest. as they wished
Jolly and glad they wente to their rest,
And caste them full early for to sail. resolved
But to the one man fell a great marvail
That one of them, in sleeping as he lay,
He mette a wondrous dream, against the day: dreamed
He thought a man stood by his bedde's side,
And him commanded that he should abide;
And said him thus; 'If thou to-morrow wend,
Thou shalt be drown'd; my tale is at an end.'
He woke, and told his follow what he mette,
And prayed him his voyage for to let; delay
As for that day, he pray'd him to abide.
His fellow, that lay by his bedde's side,
Gan for to laugh, and scorned him full fast.
'No dream,' quoth he, 'may so my heart aghast, frighten
That I will lette for to do my things. delay
I sette not a straw by thy dreamings,
For swevens be but vanities and japes. dreams jokes, deceits
Men dream all day of owles and of apes,
And eke of many a maze therewithal; wild imagining
Men dream of thing that never was, nor shall.
But since I see, that thou wilt here abide,
And thus forslothe wilfully thy tide, idle away time
God wot, it rueth me; and have good day.' I am sorry for it
And thus he took his leave, and went his way.
But, ere that he had half his course sail'd,
I know not why, nor what mischance it ail'd,
But casually the ship's bottom rent, by accident
And ship and man under the water went,
In sight of other shippes there beside
That with him sailed at the same tide.
"And therefore, faire Partelote so dear,

By such examples olde may'st thou lear, learn
That no man shoulde be too reckeless
Of dreames, for I say thee doubtless,
That many a dream full sore is for to dread.
Lo, in the life of Saint Kenelm I read,
That was Kenulphus' son, the noble king
Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a thing.
A little ere he was murder'd on a day,
His murder in his vision he say. saw
His norice him expounded every deal nurse part
His sweven, and bade him to keep him well guard
For treason; but he was but seven years old,
And therefore little tale hath he told he attached little
Of any dream, so holy was his heart. significance to
By God, I hadde lever than my shirt
That ye had read his legend, as have I.
Dame Partelote, I say you truely,
Macrobius, that wrote the vision
In Afric' of the worthy Scipion,
Affirmeth dreames, and saith that they be
'Warnings of thinges that men after see.
And furthermore, I pray you looke well
In the Old Testament, of Daniel,
If he held dreames any vanity.
Read eke of Joseph, and there shall ye see
Whether dreams be sometimes (I say not all)
Warnings of thinges that shall after fall.
Look of Egypt the king, Dan Pharaoh,
His baker and his buteler also,
Whether they felte none effect in dreams. significance
Whoso will seek the acts of sundry remes realms
May read of dreames many a wondrous thing.
Lo Croesus, which that was of Lydia king,
Mette he not that he sat upon a tree,
Which signified he shoulde hanged be?
Lo here, Andromache, Hectore's wife,
That day that Hector shoulde lose his life,
She dreamed on the same night beforne,
How that the life of Hector should be lorn, lost
If thilke day he went into battaile;
She warned him, but it might not avail;

He wente forth to fighte natheless,
And was y-slain anon of Achilles.
But thilke tale is all too long to tell;
And eke it is nigh day, I may not dwell.
Shortly I say, as for conclusion,
That I shall have of this avision
Adversity; and I say furthermore,
That I ne tell of laxatives no store, hold laxatives
For they be venomous, I wot it well; of no value
I them defy, I love them never a del. distrust whit
"But let us speak of mirth, and stint all this; cease
Madame Partelote, so have I bliss,
Of one thing God hath sent me large grace; liberal
For when I see the beauty of your face,
Ye be so scarlet-hued about your eyen,
I maketh all my dreade for to dien,
For, all so sicker as In principio, certain
Mulier est hominis confusio.
Madam, the sentence of of this Latin is, meaning
Woman is manne's joy and manne's bliss.
For when I feel at night your softe side, —
Albeit that I may not on you ride,
For that our perch is made so narrow, Alas!
I am so full of joy and of solas, delight
That I defy both sweven and eke dream."
And with that word he flew down from the beam,
For it was day, and eke his hennes all;
And with a chuck he gan them for to call,
For he had found a corn, lay in the yard.
Royal he was, he was no more afear'd;
He feather'd Partelote twenty time,
And as oft trode her, ere that it was prime.
He looked as it were a grim lion,
And on his toes he roamed up and down;
He deigned not to set his feet to ground;
He chucked, when he had a corn y-found,
And to him ranne then his wives all.
Thus royal, as a prince is in his hall,
Leave I this Chanticleer in his pasture;
And after will I tell his aventure.
When that the month in which the world began,

That highte March, when God first maked man,
Was complete, and y-passed were also,
Since March ended, thirty days and two,
Befell that Chanticleer in all his pride,
His seven wives walking him beside,
Cast up his eyen to the brighte sun,
That in the sign of Taurus had y-run
Twenty degrees and one, and somewhat more;
He knew by kind, and by none other lore, nature learning
That it was prime, and crew with blissful steven. voice
"The sun," he said, "is clomben up in heaven
Twenty degrees and one, and more y-wis. assuredly
Madame Partelote, my worlde's bliss,
Hearken these blissful birdes how they sing,
And see the freshe flowers how they spring;
Full is mine heart of revel and solace."
But suddenly him fell a sorrowful case; casualty
For ever the latter end of joy is woe:
God wot that worldly joy is soon y-go:
And, if a rhetor coulde fair indite, orator
He in a chronicle might it safely write,
As for a sov'reign notability a thing supremely notable
Now every wise man, let him hearken me;
This story is all as true, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot du Lake,
That women hold in full great reverence.
Now will I turn again to my sentence.
A col-fox, full of sly iniquity,
That in the grove had wonned yeares three, dwelt
By high imagination forecast,
The same night thorough the hedges brast burst
Into the yard, where Chanticleer the fair
Was wont, and eke his wives, to repair;
And in a bed of wortes still he lay, cabbages
Till it was passed undern of the day,
Waiting his time on Chanticleer to fall:
As gladly do these homicides all,
That in awaite lie to murder men.
O false murd'rer! Rouking in thy den! crouching, lurking
O new Iscariot, new Ganilion!
O false dissimuler, O Greek Sinon,

That broughtest Troy all utterly to sorrow!
O Chanticleer! accursed be the morrow
That thou into thy yard flew from the beams; rafters
Thou wert full well y-warned by thy dreams
That thilke day was perilous to thee.
But what that God forewot must needs be, foreknows
After th' opinion of certain clerkes.
Witness on him that any perfect clerk is,
That in school is great altercation
In this matter, and great disputation,
And hath been of an hundred thousand men.
But I ne cannot boult it to the bren, examine it thoroughly
As can the holy doctor Augustine,
Or Boece, or the bishop Bradwardine,
Whether that Godde's worthy foreweeting foreknowledge
Straineth me needly for to do a thing forces me
(Needly call I simple necessity),
Or elles if free choice be granted me
To do that same thing, or do it not,
Though God forewot it ere that it was wrought; knew in advance
Or if his weeting straineth never a deal, his knowing constrains
But by necessity conditionel. not at all
I will not have to do of such mattere;
My tale is of a cock, as ye may hear,
That took his counsel of his wife, with sorrow,
To walken in the yard upon the morrow
That he had mette the dream, as I you told.
Womane's counsels be full often cold; mischievous, unwise
Womane's counsel brought us first to woe,
And made Adam from Paradise to go,
There as he was full merry and well at case.
But, for I n'ot to whom I might displease know not
If I counsel of women woulde blame,
Pass over, for I said it in my game. jest
Read authors, where they treat of such mattere
And what they say of women ye may hear.
These be the cocke's wordes, and not mine;
I can no harm of no woman divine. conjecture, imagine
Fair in the sand, to bathe her merrily, bask
Lies Partelote, and all her sisters by,
Against the sun, and Chanticleer so free

Sang merrier than the mermaid in the sea;
For Physiologus saith sickerly, certainly
How that they singe well and merrily.
And so befell that, as he cast his eye
Among the wortes, on a butterfly, cabbages
He was ware of this fox that lay full low.
Nothing ne list him thenne for to crow, he had no inclination
But cried anon "Cock! cock!" and up he start,
As man that was affrayed in his heart.
For naturally a beast desireth flee
From his contrary, if be may it see, enemy
Though he ne'er erst had soon it with his eye never before
This Chanticleer, when he gan him espy,
He would have fled, but that the fox anon
Said, "Gentle Sir, alas! why will ye gon?
Be ye afraid of me that am your friend?
Now, certes, I were worse than any fiend,
If I to you would harm or villainy.
I am not come your counsel to espy.
But truely the cause of my coming
Was only for to hearken how ye sing;
For truely ye have as merry a steven, voice
As any angel hath that is in heaven;
Therewith ye have of music more feeling,
Than had Boece, or any that can sing.
My lord your father (God his soule bless)
And eke your mother of her gentleness,
Have in mnine house been, to my great ease: satisfaction
And certes, Sir, full fain would I you please.
But, for men speak of singing, I will say,
So may I brooke well mine eyen tway, enjoy, possess, or use
Save you, I hearde never man so sing
As did your father in the morrowning.
Certes it was of heart all that he sung.
And, for to make his voice the more strong,
He would so pain him, that with both his eyen make such an exertion
He muste wink, so loud he woulde cryen,
And standen on his tiptoes therewithal,
And stretche forth his necke long and small.
And eke he was of such discretion,
That there was no man, in no region,

That him in song or wisdom mighte pass.
I have well read in Dan Burnel the Ass,
Among his verse, how that there was a cock
That, for a prieste's son gave him a knock because
Upon his leg, while he was young and nice, foolish
He made him for to lose his benefice.
But certain there is no comparison
Betwixt the wisdom and discretion
Of youre father, and his subtilty.
Now singe, Sir, for sainte charity,
Let see, can ye your father counterfeit?"
This Chanticleer his wings began to beat,
As man that could not his treason espy,
So was he ravish'd with his flattery.
Alas! ye lordes, many a false flattour flatterer
Is in your court, and many a losengeour, deceiver
That please you well more, by my faith,
Than he that soothfastness unto you saith. truth
Read in Ecclesiast' of flattery;
Beware, ye lordes, of their treachery.
This Chanticleer stood high upon his toes,
Stretching his neck, and held his eyen close,
And gan to crowe loude for the nonce
And Dan Russel the fox start up at once,
And by the gorge hente Chanticleer, seized by the throat
And on his back toward the wood him bare.
For yet was there no man that him pursu'd.
O destiny, that may'st not be eschew'd! escaped
Alas, that Chanticleer flew from the beams!
Alas, his wife raughte nought of dreams! regarded
And on a Friday fell all this mischance.
O Venus, that art goddess of pleasance,
Since that thy servant was this Chanticleer
And in thy service did all his powere,
More for delight, than the world to multiply,
Why wilt thou suffer him on thy day to die?
O Gaufrid, deare master sovereign,
That, when thy worthy king Richard was slain
With shot, complainedest his death so sore,
Why n'had I now thy sentence and thy lore,
The Friday for to chiden, as did ye?

(For on a Friday, soothly, slain was he),
Then would I shew you how that I could plain lament
For Chanticleere's dread, and for his pain.
Certes such cry nor lamentation
Was ne'er of ladies made, when Iliion
Was won, and Pyrrhus with his straighte sword,
When he had hent king Priam by the beard, seized
And slain him (as saith us Eneidos), The Aeneid
As maden all the hennes in the close, yard
When they had seen of Chanticleer the sight.
But sov'reignly Dame Partelote shrigh, above all others
Full louder than did Hasdrubale's wife, shrieked
When that her husband hadde lost his life,
And that the Romans had y-burnt Carthage;
She was so full of torment and of rage,
That wilfully into the fire she start,
And burnt herselfe with a steadfast heart.
O woeful hennes! right so cried ye,
As, when that Nero burned the city
Of Rome, cried the senatores' wives,
For that their husbands losten all their lives;
Withoute guilt this Nero hath them slain.
Now will I turn unto my tale again;
The sely widow, and her daughters two, simple, honest
Hearde these hennes cry and make woe,
And at the doors out started they anon,
And saw the fox toward the wood is gone,
And bare upon his back the cock away:
They cried, "Out! harow! and well-away!
Aha! the fox!" and after him they ran,
And eke with staves many another man
Ran Coll our dog, and Talbot, and Garland;
And Malkin, with her distaff in her hand
Ran cow and calf, and eke the very hogges
So fear'd they were for barking of the dogges,
And shouting of the men and women eke.
They ranne so, them thought their hearts would break.
They yelled as the fiendes do in hell;
The duckes cried as men would them quell; kill, destroy
The geese for feare flewen o'er the trees,
Out of the hive came the swarm of bees,

So hideous was the noise, ben'dicite!
Certes he, Jacke Straw, and his meinie, followers
Ne made never shoutes half so shrill
When that they woulden any Fleming kill,
As thilke day was made upon the fox.
Of brass they broughte beames and of box, trumpets
Of horn and bone, in which they blew and pooped, tooted
And therewithal they shrieked and they hooped;
It seemed as the heaven shoulde fall
Now, goode men, I pray you hearken all;
Lo, how Fortune turneth suddenly
The hope and pride eke of her enemy.
This cock, that lay upon the fox's back,
In all his dread unto the fox he spake,
And saide, "Sir, if that I were as ye,
Yet would I say (as wisly God help me), surely
'Turn ye again, ye proude churles all;
A very pestilence upon you fall.
Now am I come unto the woode's side,
Maugre your head, the cock shall here abide;
I will him eat, in faith, and that anon."
The fox answer'd, "In faith it shall be done:"
And, as he spake the word, all suddenly
The cock brake from his mouth deliverly, nimbly
And high upon a tree he flew anon.
And when the fox saw that the cock was gone,
"Alas!" quoth he, "O Chanticleer, alas!
I have," quoth he, "y-done to you trespass, offence
Inasmuch as I maked you afear'd,
When I you hent, and brought out of your yard; took
But, Sir, I did it in no wick' intent;
Come down, and I shall tell you what I meant.
I shall say sooth to you, God help me so."
"Nay then," quoth he, "I shrew us both the two, curse
And first I shrew myself, both blood and bones,
If thou beguile me oftener than once.
Thou shalt no more through thy flattery
Do me to sing and winke with mine eye; cause
For he that winketh when he shoulde see,
All wilfully, God let him never the." thrive
"Nay," quoth the fox; "but God give him mischance

That is so indiscreet of governance,
That jangleth when that he should hold his peace." chatters
Lo, what it is for to be reckeless
And negligent, and trust on flattery.
But ye that holde this tale a folly,
As of a fox, or of a cock or hen,
Take the morality thereof, good men.
For Saint Paul saith, That all that written is,
To our doctrine it written is y-wis. is surely written for
Take the fruit, and let the chaff be still. our instruction
Now goode God, if that it be thy will,
As saith my Lord, so make us all good men;
And bring us all to thy high bliss. Amen.

THE EPILOGUE

"Sir Nunne's Priest," our hoste said anon,
"Y-blessed be thy breech, and every stone;
This was a merry tale of Chanticleer.
But by my truth, if thou wert seculere, a layman
Thou wouldest be a treadefowl aright; cock
For if thou have courage as thou hast might,
Thee were need of hennes, as I ween,
Yea more than seven times seventeen.
See, whate brawnes hath this gentle priest, muscles, sinews
So great a neck, and such a large breast
He looketh as a sperhawk with his eyen
Him needeth not his colour for to dyen
With Brazil, nor with grain of Portugale.
But, Sir, faire fall you for your tale'."
And, after that, he with full merry cheer
Said to another, as ye shall hear.

THE SECOND NUN'S TALE

The minister and norice unto vices, nurse
Which that men call in English idleness,
The porter at the gate is of delices; delights
T'eschew, and by her contrar' her oppress, —
That is to say, by lawful business, — occupation, activity
Well oughte we to do our all intent apply ourselves
Lest that the fiend through idleness us hent. seize
For he, that with his thousand cordes sly
Continually us waiteth to beclap, entangle, bind
When he may man in idleness espy,
He can so lightly catch him in his trap,
Till that a man be hent right by the lappe, seize hem
He is not ware the fiend hath him in hand;
Well ought we work, and idleness withstand.
And though men dreaded never for to die,
Yet see men well by reason, doubteless,
That idleness is root of sluggardy,
Of which there cometh never good increase;
And see that sloth them holdeth in a leas, leash
Only to sleep, and for to eat and drink,
And to devouren all that others swink. labour
And, for to put us from such idleness,
That cause is of so great confusion,
I have here done my faithful business,
After the Legend, in translation
Right of thy glorious life and passion, —
Thou with thy garland wrought of rose and lily,
Thee mean I, maid and martyr, Saint Cecilie.
And thou, thou art the flow'r of virgins all,
Of whom that Bernard list so well to write,
To thee at my beginning first I call;
Thou comfort of us wretches, do me indite
Thy maiden's death, that won through her merite
Th' eternal life, and o'er the fiend victory,
As man may after readen in her story.
Thou maid and mother, daughter of thy Son,
Thou well of mercy, sinful soules' cure,
In whom that God of bounte chose to won; dwell
Thou humble and high o'er every creature,

Thou nobilest, so far forth our nature, as far as our nature admits
That no disdain the Maker had of kind, nature
His Son in blood and flesh to clothe and wind. wrap
Within the cloister of thy blissful sides
Took manne's shape th' eternal love and peace,
That of the trine compass Lord and guide is the trinity
Whom earth, and sea, and heav'n, out of release, unceasingly
Aye hery; and thou, Virgin wemmeless, forever praise immaculate
Bare of thy body, and dweltest maiden pure,
The Creator of every creature.
Assembled is in thee magnificence
With mercy, goodness, and with such pity,
That thou, that art the sun of excellence,
Not only helpest them that pray to thee,
But oftentime, of thy benignity,
Full freely, ere that men thine help beseech,
Thou go'st before, and art their lives' leech. healer, saviour.
Now help, thou meek and blissful faire maid,
Me, flemed wretch, in this desert of gall; banished, outcast
Think on the woman Cananee that said
That whelpes eat some of the crumbes all
That from their Lorde's table be y-fall;
And though that I, unworthy son of Eve,
Be sinful, yet accepte my believe. faith
And, for that faith is dead withoute werkes,
For to worke give me wit and space,
That I be quit from thennes that most derk is; freed from the most
O thou, that art so fair and full of grace, dark place (Hell)
Be thou mine advocate in that high place,
Where as withouten end is sung Osanne,
Thou Christe's mother, daughter dear of Anne.
And of thy light my soul in prison light,
That troubled is by the contagion
Of my body, and also by the weight
Of earthly lust and false affection;
O hav'n of refuge, O salvation
Of them that be in sorrow and distress,
Now help, for to my work I will me dress.
Yet pray I you, that reade what I write,
Forgive me that I do no diligence
This ilke story subtilly t' indite. same

For both have I the wordes and sentence
Of him that at the sainte's reverence
The story wrote, and follow her legend;
And pray you that you will my work amend.
First will I you the name of Saint Cecilie
Expound, as men may in her story see.
It is to say in English, Heaven's lily,
For pure chasteness of virginity;
Or, for she whiteness had of honesty, purity
And green of conscience, and of good fame
The sweete savour, Lilie was her name.
Or Cecilie is to say, the way of blind;
For she example was by good teaching;
Or else Cecilie, as I written find,
Is joined by a manner conjoining
Of heaven and Lia, and herein figuring
The heaven is set for thought of holiness,
And Lia for her lasting business.
Cecilie may eke be said in this mannere,
Wanting of blindness, for her greate light
Of sapience, and for her thewes clear. qualities
Or elles, lo, this maiden's name bright
Of heaven and Leos comes, for which by right
Men might her well the heaven of people call,
Example of good and wise workes all;
For Leos people in English is to say;
And right as men may in the heaven see
The sun and moon, and starres every way,
Right so men ghostly, in this maiden free, spiritually
Sawen of faith the magnanimity,
And eke the clearness whole of sapience,
And sundry workes bright of excellence.
And right so as these philosophers write,
That heav'n is swift and round, and eke burning,
Right so was faire Cecilie the white
Full swift and busy in every good working,
And round and whole in good persevering,
And burning ever in charity full bright;
Now have I you declared what she hight. why she had her name
This maiden bright Cecile, as her life saith,
Was come of Romans, and of noble kind,

And from her cradle foster'd in the faith
Of Christ, and bare his Gospel in her mind:
She never ceased, as I written find,
Of her prayere, and God to love and dread,
Beseeching him to keep her maidenhead.
And when this maiden should unto a man
Y-wedded be, that was full young of age,
Which that y-called was Valerian,
And come was the day of marriage,
She, full devout and humble in her corage, heart
Under her robe of gold, that sat full fair,
Had next her flesh y-clad her in an hair. garment of hair-cloth
And while the organs made melody,
To God alone thus in her heart sang she;
"O Lord, my soul and eke my body gie guide
Unwemmed, lest that I confounded be." unblemished
And, for his love that died upon the tree,
Every second or third day she fast',
Aye bidding in her orisons full fast. praying
The night came, and to bedde must she gon
With her husband, as it is the mannere;
And privily she said to him anon;
"O sweet and well-beloved spouse dear,
There is a counsel, an' ye will it hear, secret if
Which that right fain I would unto you say,
So that ye swear ye will it not bewray." betray
Valerian gan fast unto her swear
That for no case nor thing that mighte be,
He never should to none bewrayen her;
And then at erst thus to him saide she; for the first time
"I have an angel which that loveth me,
That with great love, whether I wake or sleep,
Is ready aye my body for to keep;
"And if that he may feelen, out of dread, without doubt
That ye me touch or love in villainy,
He right anon will slay you with the deed,
And in your youthe thus ye shoulde die.
And if that ye in cleane love me gie," guide
He will you love as me, for your cleanness,
And shew to you his joy and his brightness."
Valerian, corrected as God wo'ld,

Answer'd again, "If I shall truste thee,
Let me that angel see, and him behold;
And if that it a very angel be,
Then will I do as thou hast prayed me;
And if thou love another man, forsooth
Right with this sword then will I slay you both."
Cecile answer'd anon right in this wise;
"If that you list, the angel shall ye see,
So that ye trow Of Christ, and you baptise; know
Go forth to Via Appia," quoth she,
That from this towne stands but miles three,
And to the poore folkes that there dwell
Say them right thus, as that I shall you tell,
"Tell them, that I, Cecile, you to them sent
To shewe you the good Urban the old,
For secret needs, and for good intent; business
And when that ye Saint Urban have behold,
Tell him the wordes which I to you told
And when that he hath purged you from sin,
Then shall ye see that angel ere ye twin depart
Valerian is to the place gone;
And, right as he was taught by her learning
He found this holy old Urban anon
Among the saintes' burials louting; lying concealed
And he anon, withoute tarrying,
Did his message, and when that he it told,
Urban for joy his handes gan uphold.
The teares from his eyen let he fall;
"Almighty Lord, O Jesus Christ,"
Quoth he, "Sower of chaste counsel, herd of us all; shepherd
The fruit of thilke seed of chastity that
That thou hast sown in Cecile, take to thee
Lo, like a busy bee, withoute guile,
Thee serveth aye thine owen thrall Cicile, servant
"For thilke spouse, that she took but now, lately
Full like a fierce lion, she sendeth here,
As meek as e'er was any lamb to owe."
And with that word anon there gan appear
An old man, clad in white clothes clear,
That had a book with letters of gold in hand,
And gan before Valerian to stand.

Valerian, as dead, fell down for dread,
When he him saw; and he up hent him tho, took there
And on his book right thus he gan to read;
"One Lord, one faith, one God withoute mo',
One Christendom, one Father of all also,
Aboven all, and over all everywhere."
These wordes all with gold y-written were.
When this was read, then said this olde man,
"Believ'st thou this or no? say yea or nay."
"I believe all this," quoth Valerian,
"For soother thing than this, I dare well say, truer
Under the Heaven no wight thinke may."
Then vanish'd the old man, he wist not where
And Pope Urban him christened right there.
Valerian went home, and found Cecilie
Within his chamber with an angel stand;
This angel had of roses and of lily
Corones two, the which he bare in hand, crowns
And first to Cecile, as I understand,
He gave the one, and after gan he take
The other to Valerian her make. mate, husband
"With body clean, and with unwemmed thought, unspotted, blameless
Keep aye well these corones two," quoth he;
"From Paradise to you I have them brought,
Nor ever more shall they rotten be,
Nor lose their sweet savour, truste me,
Nor ever wight shall see them with his eye,
But he be chaste, and hate villainy.
"And thou, Valerian, for thou so soon
Assented hast to good counsel, also
Say what thee list, and thou shalt have thy boon." wish desire
"I have a brother," quoth Valerian tho, then
"That in this world I love no man so;
I pray you that my brother may have grace
To know the truth, as I do in this place."
The angel said, "God liketh thy request,
And bothe, with the palm of martyrdom,
Ye shalle come unto this blissful rest."
And, with that word, Tiburce his brother came.
And when that he the savour undernome perceived
Which that the roses and the lilies cast,

Within his heart he gan to wonder fast;
And said; "I wonder, this time of the year,
Whence that sweete savour cometh so
Of rose and lilies, that I smelle here;
For though I had them in mine handes two,
The savour might in me no deeper go;
The sweete smell, that in my heart I find,
Hath changed me all in another kind."
Valerian said, "Two crownes here have we,
Snow-white and rose-red, that shine clear,
Which that thine eyen have no might to see;
And, as thou smellst them through my prayere,
So shalt thou see them, leve brother dear, beloved
If it so be thou wilt withoute sloth
Believe aright, and know the very troth. "
Tiburce answered, "Say'st thou this to me
In soothness, or in dreame hear I this?"
"In dreames," quoth Valorian, "have we be
Unto this time, brother mine, y-wis
But now at erst in truth our dwelling is." for the first time
How know'st thou this," quoth Tiburce; "in what wise?"
Quoth Valerian, "That shall I thee devise describe
"The angel of God hath me the truth y-taught,
Which thou shalt see, if that thou wilt reny renounce
The idols, and be clean, and elles nought."
And of the miracle of these crownes tway
Saint Ambrose in his preface list to say;
Solemnely this noble doctor dear
Commendeth it, and saith in this mannere
"The palm of martyrdom for to receive,
Saint Cecilie, full filled of God's gift,
The world and eke her chamber gan to weive; forsake
Witness Tiburce's and Cecilie's shrift, confession
To which God of his bounty woulde shift
Corones two, of flowers well smelling,
And made his angel them the crownes bring.
"The maid hath brought these men to bliss above;
The world hath wist what it is worth, certain,
Devotion of chastity to love."
Then showed him Cecilie all open and plain,
That idols all are but a thing in vain,

For they be dumb, and thereto they be deave; therefore deaf

And charged him his idols for to leave.

"Whoso that troweth not this, a beast he is," believeth

Quoth this Tiburce, "if that I shall not lie."

And she gan kiss his breast when she heard this,

And was full glad he could the truth espy:

"This day I take thee for mine ally." chosen friend

Saide this blissful faire maiden dear;

And after that she said as ye may hear.

"Lo, right so as the love of Christ," quoth she,

"Made me thy brother's wife, right in that wise

Anon for mine ally here take I thee,

Since that thou wilt thine idoles despise.

Go with thy brother now and thee baptise,

And make thee clean, so that thou may'st behold

The angel's face, of which thy brother told."

Tiburce answer'd, and saide, "Brother dear,

First tell me whither I shall, and to what man?"

"To whom?" quoth he, "come forth with goode cheer,

I will thee lead unto the Pope Urban."

"To Urban? brother mine Valerian,"

Quoth then Tiburce; "wilt thou me thither lead?

Me thinketh that it were a wondrous deed.

"Meanest thou not that Urban," quoth he tho, then

"That is so often damned to be dead,

And wons in halkes always to and fro, dwells corners

And dare not ones putte forth his head?

Men should him brennen in a fire so red, burn

If he were found, or if men might him spy:

And us also, to bear him company.

"And while we seeke that Divinity

That is y-hid in heaven privily,

Algate burnt in this world should we be." nevertheless

To whom Cecilie answer'd boldely;

"Men mighte dreade well and skilfully reasonably

This life to lose, mine owen deare brother,

If this were living only, and none other.

"But there is better life in other place,

That never shall be loste, dread thee nought;

Which Godde's Son us tolde through his grace

That Father's Son which alle thinges wrought;

And all that wrought is with a skilful thought, reasonable
The Ghost, that from the Father gan proceed, Holy Spirit
Hath souled them, withouten any drede. endowed them with a soul
doubt

By word and by miracle, high God's Son,
When he was in this world, declared here.
That there is other life where men may won." dwell
To whom answer'd Tiburce, "O sister dear,
Saidest thou not right now in this mannere,
There was but one God, Lord in soothfastness, truth
And now of three how may'st thou bear witness?"
"That shall I tell," quoth she, "ere that I go.
Right as a man hath sapiences three, mental faculties
Memory, engine, and intellect also, wit
So in one being of divinity
Three persones there maye right well be."
Then gan she him full busily to preach
Of Christe's coming, and his paines teach,
And many pointes of his passion;
How Godde's Son in this world was withhold employed
To do mankinde plein remission, full
That was y-bound in sin and cares cold. wretched
All this thing she unto Tiburce told,
And after that Tiburce, in good intent,
With Valerian to Pope Urban he went.
That thanked God, and with glad heart and light
He christen'd him, and made him in that place
Perfect in his learning, and Godde's knight.
And after this Tiburce got such grace,
That every day he saw in time and space
Th' angel of God, and every manner boon request, favour
That be God asked, it was sped full anon. granted, successful
It were full hard by order for to sayn
How many wonders Jesus for them wrought,
But at the last, to telle short and plain,
The sergeants of the town of Rome them sought,
And them before Almach the Prefect brought,
Which them apposed, and knew all their intent, questioned
And to th' image of Jupiter them sent.
And said, "Whoso will not do sacrifice,
Swap off his head, this is my sentence here." strike

Anon these martyrs, that I you devise, of whom I tell you
One Maximus, that was an officere
Of the prefect's, and his corniculere
Them hent, and when he forth the saintes lad, seized led
Himself he wept for pity that he had.
When Maximus had heard the saintes lore, doctrine, teaching
He got him of the tormentores leave, torturers
And led them to his house withoute more;
And with their preaching, ere that it were eve,
They gonnen from the tormentors to reave, began wrest, root out
And from Maxim', and from his folk each one,
The false faith, to trow in God alone. believe
Cecilia came, when it was waxen night,
With priestes, that them christen'd all in fere; in a company
And afterward, when day was waxen light,
Cecile them said with a full steadfast cheer, mien
"Now, Christe's owen knightes lefe and dear, beloved
Cast all away the workes of darkness,
And arme you in armour of brightness.
Ye have forsooth y-done a great battaile,
Your course is done, your faith have ye conserved;
O to the crown of life that may not fail;
The rightful Judge, which that ye have served
Shall give it you, as ye have it deserved."
And when this thing was said, as I devise, relate
Men led them forth to do the sacrifice.
But when they were unto the place brought
To telle shortly the conclusion,
They would incense nor sacrifice right nought
But on their knees they sette them adown,
With humble heart and sad devotion, steadfast
And loste both their heades in the place;
Their soules wente to the King of grace.
This Maximus, that saw this thing betide,
With piteous teares told it anon right,
That he their soules saw to heaven glide
With angels, full of clearness and of light
Andt with his word converted many a wight.
For which Almachius did him to-beat see note
With whip of lead, till he his life gan lete. quit
Cecile him took, and buried him anon

By Tiburce and Valerian softly,
 Within their burying-place, under the stone.
 And after this Almachius hastily
 Bade his ministers fetchen openly
 Cecile, so that she might in his presence
 Do sacrifice, and Jupiter incense. burn incense to
 But they, converted at her wise lore, teaching
 Wepte full sore, and gave full credence
 Unto her word, and cried more and more;
 "Christ, Godde's Son, withoute difference,
 Is very God, this is all our sentence, opinion
 That hath so good a servant him to serve
 Thus with one voice we trowe, though we sterve. believe die
 Almachius, that heard of this doing,
 Bade fetch Cecilie, that he might her see;
 And alderfirst, lo, this was his asking; first of all
 "What manner woman arte thou?" quoth he,
 "I am a gentle woman born," quoth she.
 "I aske thee," quoth he, "though it thee grieve,
 Of thy religion and of thy believe."
 "Ye have begun your question foolishly,"
 Quoth she, "that wouldest two answers conclude
 In one demand? ye aske lewedly." ignorantly
 Almach answer'd to that similitude,
 "Of whence comes thine answering so rude?"
 "Of whence?" quoth she, when that she was freined, asked
 "Of conscience, and of good faith unfeigned."
 Almachius saide; "Takest thou no heed
 Of my power?" and she him answer'd this;
 "Your might," quoth she, "full little is to dread;
 For every mortal manne's power is
 But like a bladder full of wind, y-wis; certainly
 For with a needle's point, when it is blow',
 May all the boast of it be laid full low."
 "Full wrongfully begunnest thou," quoth he,
 "And yet in wrong is thy perseverance.
 Know'st thou not how our mighty princes free
 Have thus commanded and made ordinance,
 That every Christian wight shall have penance, punishment
 But if that he his Christendom withsay, deny
 And go all quit, if he will it renay?" renounce

"Your princes erren, as your nobley doth," nobility
 Quoth then Cecile, "and with a wood sentence mad judgment
 Ye make us guilty, and it is not sooth: true
 For ye that knowe well our innocence,
 Forasmuch as we do aye reverence
 To Christ, and for we bear a Christian name,
 Ye put on us a crime and eke a blame.
 "But we that knowe thilke name so
 For virtuous, we may it not withsay."
 Almach answered, "Choose one of these two,
 Do sacrifice, or Christendom renay,
 That thou may'st now escape by that way."
 At which the holy blissful faire maid
 Gan for to laugh, and to the judge said;
 "O judge, confused in thy nicety, confounded in thy folly
 Wouldest thou that I reny innocence?
 To make me a wicked wight," quoth she,
 "Lo, he dissimuleth here in audience; dissembles
 He stareth and woodeth in his advertence." grows furious thought
 To whom Almachius said, "Unsely wretch, unhappy
 Knowest thou not how far my might may stretch?
 "Have not our mighty princes to me given
 Yea bothe power and eke authority
 To make folk to dien or to liven?
 Why speakest thou so proudly then to me?"
 "I speake not but steadfastly," quoth she,
 Not proudly, for I say, as for my side,
 We hate deadly thilke vice of pride. mortally
 "And, if thou dreade not a sooth to hear, truth
 Then will I shew all openly by right,
 That thou hast made a full great leasing here. falsehood
 Thou say'st thy princes have thee given might
 Both for to slay and for to quick a wight, — give life to
 Thou that may'st not but only life bereave;
 Thou hast none other power nor no leave.
 "But thou may'st say, thy princes have thee maked
 Minister of death; for if thou speak of mo',
 Thou liest; for thy power is full naked."
 "Do away thy boldness," said Almachius tho, then
 "And sacrifice to our gods, ere thou go.
 I recke not what wrong that thou me proffer,

For I can suffer it as a philosopher.
 "But those wronges may I not endure,
 That thou speak'st of our goddes here," quoth he.
 Cecile answer'd, "O nice creature, foolish
 Thou saidest no word, since thou spake to me,
 That I knew not therewith thy nicety, folly
 And that thou wert in every manner wise every sort of way
 A lewed officer, a vain justice. ignorant
 "There lacketh nothing to thine outward eye
 That thou art blind; for thing that we see all
 That it is stone, that men may well espyen,
 That ilke stone a god thou wilt it call. very, selfsame
 I rede thee let thine hand upon it fall, advise
 And taste it well, and stone thou shalt it find; examine, test
 Since that thou see'st not with thine eye blind.
 "It is a shame that the people shall
 So scorne thee, and laugh at thy folly;
 For commonly men wot it well over all, know it everywhere
 That mighty God is in his heaven high;
 And these images, well may'st thou espy,
 To thee nor to themselves may not profite,
 For in effect they be not worth a mite."
 These wordes and such others saide she,
 And he wax'd wroth, and bade men should her lead
 Home to her house; "And in her house," quoth he,
 "Burn her right in a bath, with flames red."
 And as he bade, right so was done the deed;
 For in a bath they gan her faste shetten, shut, confine
 And night and day great fire they under betten. kindled, applied
 The longe night, and eke a day also,
 For all the fire, and eke the bathe's heat,
 She sat all cold, and felt of it no woe,
 It made her not one droppe for to sweat;
 But in that bath her life she must lete. leave
 For he, Almachius, with full wick' intent,
 To slay her in the bath his sonde sent. message, order
 Three strokes in the neck he smote her tho, there
 The tormentor, but for no manner chance executioner
 He might not smite her faire neck in two:
 And, for there was that time an ordinance
 That no man should do man such penance, severity, torture

The fourthe stroke to smite, soft or sore,
This tormentor he durste do no more;
But half dead, with her necke carven there gashed
He let her lie, and on his way is went.
The Christian folk, which that about her were,
With sheetes have the blood full fair y-hent; taken up
Three dayes lived she in this torment,
And never ceased them the faith to teach,
That she had foster'd them, she gan to preach.
And them she gave her mebles and her thing, goods
And to the Pope Urban betook them tho; commended then
And said, "I aske this of heaven's king,
To have respite three dayes and no mo',
To recommend to you, ere that I go,
These soules, lo; and that I might do wirc cause to be made
Here of mine house perpetually a church."
Saint Urban, with his deacons, privily
The body fetch'd, and buried it by night
Among his other saintes honestly;
Her house the church of Saint Cecilie hight; is called
Saint Urban hallow'd it, as he well might;
In which unto this day, in noble wise,
Men do to Christ and to his saint service.

THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

WHEN ended was the life of Saint Cecile,
Ere we had ridden fully five mile,
At Boughton-under-Blee us gan o'ertake
A man, that clothed was in clothes black,
And underneath he wore a white surplice.
His hackenay, which was all pomely-gris, nag dapple-gray
So sweated, that it wonder was to see;
It seem'd as he had pricked miles three. spurred
The horse eke that his yeoman rode upon
So sweated, that unnethes might he gon. hardly go
About the peytrel stood the foam full high;
He was of foam, as flecked as a pie. spotted like a magpie
A maile twyfold on his crupper lay;
It seemed that he carried little array;
All light for summer rode this worthy man.
And in my heart to wonder I began
What that he was, till that I understood
How that his cloak was sewed to his hood;
For which, when I had long advised me, considered
I deemed him some Canon for to be.
His hat hung at his back down by a lace, cord
For he had ridden more than trot or pace;
He hadde pricked like as he were wood. mad
A clote-leaf he had laid under his hood, burdock-leaf
For sweat, and for to keep his head from heat.
But it was joye for to see him sweat;
His forehead dropped as a stillatory still
Were full of plantain or of paritory. wallflower
And when that he was come, he gan to cry,
"God save," quoth he, "this jolly company.
Fast have I pricked," quoth he, "for your sake,
Because that I would you overtake,
To riden in this merry company."
His Yeoman was eke full of courtesy,
And saide, "Sirs, now in the morning tide
Out of your hostelry I saw you ride,
And warned here my lord and sovereign,

Which that to ride with you is full fain,
 For his disport; he loveth dalliance."
 "Friend, for thy warning God give thee good chance," fortune
 Said oure Host; "certain it woulde seem
 Thy lord were wise, and so I may well deem;
 He is full jocund also, dare I lay;
 Can he aught tell a merry tale or tway,
 With which he gladden may this company?"
 "Who, Sir? my lord? Yea, Sir, withoute lie,
 He can of mirth and eke of jollity knows
 Not but enough; also, Sir, truste me, not less than
 An ye him knew all so well as do I, if
 Ye would wonder how well and craftily
 He coulde work, and that in sundry wise.
 He hath take on him many a great emprise, task, undertaking
 Which were full hard for any that is here
 To bring about, but they of him it lear. unless learn
 As homely as he rides amonges you,
 If ye him knew, it would be for your prow: advantage
 Ye woulde not forego his acquaintance
 For mucche good, I dare lay in balance
 All that I have in my possession.
 He is a man of high discretion.
 I warn you well, he is a passing man." surpassing, extraordinary
 Well," quoth our Host, "I pray thee tell me than,
 Is he a clerk, or no? Tell what he is." scholar, priest
 "Nay, he is greater than a clerk, y-wis," certainly
 Saide this Yeoman; "and, in wordes few,
 Host, of his craft somewhat I will you shew,
 I say, my lord can such a subtlety knows
 (But all his craft ye may not weet of me, learn
 And somewhat help I yet to his working),
 That all the ground on which we be riding
 Till that we come to Canterbury town,
 He could all cleane turnen up so down,
 And pave it all of silver and of gold."
 And when this Yeoman had this tale told
 Unto our Host, he said; "Ben'dicite!
 This thing is wonder marvellous to me,
 Since that thy lord is of so high prudence,
 Because of which men should him reverence,

That of his worship recketh he so lite; honour little
 His overest slop it is not worth a mite upper garment
 As in effect to him, so may I go;
 It is all bawdy and to-tore also. slovenly
 Why is thy lord so sluttish, I thee pray,
 And is of power better clothes to buy, buy
 If that his deed accordeth with thy speech?
 Telle me that, and that I thee beseech."
 "Why?" quoth this Yeoman, "whereto ask ye me?
 God help me so, for he shall never the thrive
 (But I will not avowe that I say, admit
 And therefore keep it secret, I you pray);
 He is too wise, in faith, as I believe.
 Thing that is overdone, it will not preve stand the test
 Aright, as clerkes say; it is a vice;
 Wherefore in that I hold him lewd and nice." ignorant and foolish
 For when a man hath over great a wit,
 Full oft him happens to misusen it;
 So doth my lord, and that me grieveth sore.
 God it amend; I can say now no more."
 "Thereof no force, good Yeoman, "quoth our Host; no matter
 "Since of the conning of thy lord, thou know'st, knowledge
 Tell how he doth, I pray thee heartily,
 Since that he is so crafty and so sly. wise
 Where dwelle ye, if it to telle be?"
 "In the suburbes of a town," quoth he,
 "Lurking in hernes and in lanes blind, corners
 Where as these robbers and these thieves by kind nature
 Holde their privy fearful residence,
 As they that dare not show their presence,
 So fare we, if I shall say the soothe." truth
 "Yet," quoth our Hoste, "let me talke to thee;
 Why art thou so discolour'd of thy face?"
 "Peter!" quoth he, "God give it harde grace,
 I am so us'd the hote fire to blow,
 That it hath changed my colour, I trow;
 I am not wont in no mirror to pry,
 But swinke sore, and learn to multiply. labour
 We blunder ever, and poren in the fire, toil peer
 And, for all that, we fail of our desire
 For ever we lack our conclusion

To muche folk we do illusion,
And borrow gold, be it a pound or two,
Or ten or twelve, or many summes mo',
And make them weenen, at the leaste way, fancy
That of a pounde we can make tway.
Yet is it false; and aye we have good hope
It for to do, and after it we grope: search, strive
But that science is so far us beforne,
That we may not, although we had it sworn,
It overtake, it slides away so fast;
It will us make beggars at the last."
While this Yeoman was thus in his talking,
This Canon drew him near, and heard all thing
Which this Yeoman spake, for suspicion
Of menne's speech ever had this Canon:
For Cato saith, that he that guilty is,
Deemeth all things be spoken of him y-wis; surely
Because of that he gan so nigh to draw
To his Yeoman, that he heard all his saw;
And thus he said unto his Yeoman tho then
"Hold thou thy peace, and speak no wordes mo':
For if thou do, thou shalt it dear abie. pay dearly for it
Thou slanderest me here in this company
And eke discoverest that thou shouldest hide."
"Yea," quoth our Host, "tell on, whatso betide;
Of all his threatening reck not a mite."
"In faith," quoth he, "no more do I but lite." little
And when this Canon saw it would not be
But his Yeoman would tell his privity, secrets
He fled away for very sorrow and shame.
"Ah!" quoth the Yeoman, "here shall rise a game; some diversion
All that I can anon I will you tell,
Since he is gone; the foule fiend him quell! destroy
For ne'er hereafter will I with him meet,
For penny nor for pound, I you behete. promise
He that me broughte first unto that game,
Ere that he die, sorrow have he and shame.
For it is earnest to me, by my faith; a serious matter
That feel I well, what so any man saith;
And yet for all my smart, and all my grief,
For all my sorrow, labour, and mischief, trouble

I coulde never leave it in no wise.
Now would to God my witte might suffice
To tellen all that longeth to that art!
But natheless yet will I telle part;
Since that my lord is gone, I will not spare;

THE TALE.

With this Canon I dwelt have seven year,
And of his science am I ne'er the near nearer
All that I had I have lost thereby,
And, God wot, so have many more than I.
Where I was wont to be right fresh and gay
Of clothing, and of other good array
Now may I wear an hose upon mine head;
And where my colour was both fresh and red,
Now is it wan, and of a leaden hue
(Whoso it useth, sore shall he it rue);
And of my swink yet bleared is mine eye; labour
Lo what advantage is to multiply!
That sliding science hath me made so bare, slippery, deceptive
That I have no good, where that ever I fare; property
And yet I am indebted so thereby
Of gold, that I have borrow'd truely,
That, while I live, I shall it quite never; repay
Let every man beware by me for ever.
What manner man that casteth him thereto, betaketh
If he continue, I hold his thrift y-do; prosperity at an end
So help me God, thereby shall he not win,
But empty his purse, and make his wittes thin.
And when he, through his madness and folly,
Hath lost his owen good through jupartie, hazard
Then he exciteth other men thereto,
To lose their good as he himself hath do'.
For unto shrewes joy it is and ease wicked folk
To have their fellows in pain and disease. trouble
Thus was I ones learned of a clerk;
Of that no charge; I will speak of our work. matter
When we be there as we shall exercise
Our elvish craft, we seeme wonder wise, fantastic, wicked
Our termes be so clerghial and quaint. learned and strange
I blow the fire till that mine hearte faint.
Why should I tellen each proportion
Of thinges, whiche that we work upon,
As on five or six ounces, may well be,
Of silver, or some other quantity?
And busy me to telle you the names,

As orpiment, burnt bones, iron squames, scales
That into powder grounden be full small?
And in an earthen pot how put is all,
And, salt y-put in, and also peppere,
Before these powders that I speak of here,
And well y-cover'd with a lamp of glass?
And of much other thing which that there was?
And of the pots and glasses engluting, sealing up
That of the air might passen out no thing?
And of the easy fire, and smart also, slow quick
Which that was made? and of the care and woe
That we had in our matters subliming,
And in amalgaming, and calcining
Of quicksilver, called mercury crude?
For all our sleightes we can not conclude.
Our orpiment, and sublim'd mercury,
Our ground litharge eke on the porphyry, white lead
Of each of these of ounces a certain, certain proportion
Not helpeth us, our labour is in vain.
Nor neither our spirits' ascensioun,
Nor our matters that lie all fix'd adown,
May in our working nothing us avail;
For lost is all our labour and travail,
And all the cost, a twenty devil way,
Is lost also, which we upon it lay.
There is also full many another thing
That is unto our craft appertaining,
Though I by order them not rehearse can,
Because that I am a lewed man; unlearned
Yet will I tell them as they come to mind,
Although I cannot set them in their kind,
As sal-armoniac, verdigris, borace;
And sundry vessels made of earth and glass;
Our urinales, and our descensories,
Phials, and croslets, and sublimatories,
Cucurbites, and alembikes eke,
And other suche, dear enough a leek, worth less than a leek
It needeth not for to rehearse them all.
Waters rubifying, and bulles' gall,
Arsenic, sal-armoniac, and brimstone,
And herbes could I tell eke many a one,

As egreinoe, valerian, and lunary, agrimony moon-wort
And other such, if that me list to tarry;
Our lampes burning bothe night and day,
To bring about our craft if that we may;
Our furnace eke of calcination,
And of waters albification,
Unslaked lime, chalk, and glair of an ey, egg-white
Powders diverse, ashes, dung, piss, and clay,
Seared pokettes, saltpetre, and vitriol;
And divers fires made of wood and coal;
Sal-tartar, alkali, salt preparate,
And combust matters, and coagulate;
Clay made with horse and manne's hair, and oil
Of tartar, alum, glass, barm, wort, argoil, potter's clay⁶
Rosalgar, and other matters imbibing; flowers of antimony
And eke of our matters encorporing, incorporating
And of our silver citrination,
Our cementing, and fermentation,
Our ingots, tests, and many thinges mo'. moulds
I will you tell, as was me taught also,
The foure spirits, and the bodies seven,
By order, as oft I heard my lord them neven. name
The first spirit Quicksilver called is;
The second Orpiment; the third, y-wis,
Sal-Armoniac, and the fourth Brimstone.
The bodies sev'n eke, lo them here anon.
Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe name
Mars iron, Mercury quicksilver we clepe; call
Saturnus lead, and Jupiter is tin,
And Venus copper, by my father's kin.
This cursed craft whoso will exercise,
He shall no good have that him may suffice;
For all the good he spendeth thereabout,
He lose shall, thereof have I no doubt.
Whoso that list to utter his folly, display
Let him come forth and learn to multiply:
And every man that hath aught in his coffer,
Let him appear, and wax a philosopher;
Ascaunce that craft is so light to lear. as if learn
Nay, nay, God wot, all be he monk or frere,
Priest or canon, or any other wight;

Though he sit at his book both day and night;
In learning of this elvish nice lore, fantastic, foolish
All is in vain; and pardie muche more,
Is to learn a lew'd man this subtlety; ignorant
Fie! speak not thereof, for it will not be.
And conne he letterure, or conne he none, if he knows learning
As in effect, he shall it find all one;
For bothe two, by my salvation,
Concluden in multiplication transmutation by alchemy
Alike well, when they have all y-do;
This is to say, they faile bothe two.
Yet forgot I to make rehearsale
Of waters corrosive, and of limaile, metal filings
And of bodies' mollification,
And also of their induration,
Oiles, ablutions, metal fusible,
To tellen all, would passen any Bible
That owhere is; wherefore, as for the best, anywhere
Of all these names now will I me rest;
For, as I trow, I have you told enough
To raise a fiend, all look he ne'er so rough.
Ah! nay, let be; the philosopher's stone,
Elixir call'd, we seeke fast each one;
For had we him, then were we sicker enow; secure
But unto God of heaven I make avow, confession
For all our craft, when we have all y-do,
And all our sleight, he will not come us to.
He hath y-made us spende muche good,
For sorrow of which almost we waxed wood, mad
But that good hope creeped in our heart,
Supposing ever, though we sore smart,
To be relieved by him afterward.
Such supposing and hope is sharp and hard.
I warn you well it is to seeken ever.
That future temps hath made men dissever, time part from
In trust thereof, from all that ever they had,
Yet of that art they cannot waxe sad, repentant
For unto them it is a bitter sweet;
So seemeth it; for had they but a sheet
Which that they mighte wrap them in at night,
And a bratt to walk in by dayelight, cloak10

They would them sell, and spend it on this craft;
They cannot stint, until no thing be laft. cease
And evermore, wherever that they gon,
Men may them knowe by smell of brimstone;
For all the world they stinken as a goat;
Their savour is so rammish and so hot,
That though a man a mile from them be,
The savour will infect him, truste me.
Lo, thus by smelling and threadbare array,
If that men list, this folk they knowe may.
And if a man will ask them privily,
Why they be clothed so unthriftilly, shabbily
They right anon will rownen in his ear, whisper
And sayen, if that they espied were,
Men would them slay, because of their science:
Lo, thus these folk betrayen innocence!
Pass over this; I go my tale unto.
Ere that the pot be on the fire y-do placed
Of metals, with a certain quantity
My lord them tempers, and no man but he adjusts the proportions
(Now he is gone, I dare say boldely);
For as men say, he can do craftily,
Algate I wot well he hath such a name, although
And yet full oft he runneth into blame;
And know ye how? full oft it happ'neth so,
The pot to-breaks, and farewell! all is go'. gone
These metals be of so great violence,
Our walles may not make them resistance,
But if they were wrought of lime and stone; unless
They pierce so, that through the wall they gon;
And some of them sink down into the ground
(Thus have we lost by times many a pound),
And some are scatter'd all the floor about;
Some leap into the roof withoute doubt.
Though that the fiend not in our sight him show,
I trowe that he be with us, that shrew; impious wretch
In helle, where that he is lord and sire,
Is there no more woe, rancour, nor ire.
When that our pot is broke, as I have said,
Every man chides, and holds him evil apaid. dissatisfied
Some said it was long on the fire-making; because of

Some saide nay, it was on the blowing
(Then was I fear'd, for that was mine office);
"Straw!" quoth the third, "ye be lewed and nice, ignorant foolish
It was not temper'd as it ought to be." mixed in due proportions
"Nay," quoth the fourthe, "stint and hearken me; stop
Because our fire was not y-made of beech,
That is the cause, and other none, so the'ch. so may I thrive
I cannot tell whereon it was along,
But well I wot great strife is us among."
"What?" quoth my lord, "there is no more to do'n,
Of these perils I will beware eftsoon. another time
I am right sicker that the pot was crazed. sure cracked
Be as be may, be ye no thing amazed. confounded
As usage is, let sweep the floor as swithe; quickly
Pluck up your heartes and be glad and blithe."
The mullok on a heap y-sweaped was, rubbish
And on the floor y-cast a canevas,
And all this mullok in a sieve y-throw,
And sifted, and y-picked many a throw. time
"Pardie," quoth one, "somewhat of our metal
Yet is there here, though that we have not all.
And though this thing mishapped hath as now, has gone amiss
Another time it may be well enow. at present
We muste put our good in adventure; risk our property
A merchant, pardie, may not aye endure,
Truste me well, in his prosperity:
Sometimes his good is drenched in the sea, drowned, sunk
And sometimes comes it safe unto the land."
"Peace," quoth my lord; "the next time I will fand endeavour
To bring our craft all in another plight, to a different conclusion
And but I do, Sirs, let me have the wite; blame
There was default in somewhat, well I wot."
Another said, the fire was over hot.
But be it hot or cold, I dare say this,
That we concluden evermore amiss;
We fail alway of that which we would have;
And in our madness evermore we rave.
And when we be together every one,
Every man seemeth a Solomon.
But all thing, which that shineth as the gold,
It is not gold, as I have heard it told;

Nor every apple that is fair at eye,
It is not good, what so men clap or cry. assert
Right so, lo, fareth it amonges us.
He that the wisest seemeth, by Jesus,
Is most fool, when it cometh to the prefe; proof, test
And he that seemeth truest, is a thief.
That shall ye know, ere that I from you wend;
By that I of my tale have made an end.
There was a canon of religioun
Amonges us, would infect all a town, deceive
Though it as great were as was Nineveh,
Rome, Alisandre, Troy, or other three. Alexandria
His sleightes and his infinite falseness cunning tricks
There coulde no man writen, as I guess,
Though that he mighte live a thousand year;
In all this world of falseness n'is his peer. there is not
For in his termes he will him so wind,
And speak his wordes in so sly a kind,
When he commune shall with any wight,
That he will make him doat anon aright, become foolishly
But it a fiende be, as himself is. fond of him
Full many a man hath he beguil'd ere this,
And will, if that he may live any while;
And yet men go and ride many a mile
Him for to seek, and have his acquaintance,
Not knowing of his false governance. deceitful conduct
And if you list to give me audience,
I will it telle here in your presence.
But, worshipful canons religious,
Ne deeme not that I slander your house,
Although that my tale of a canon be.
Of every order some shrew is, pardie;
And God forbid that all a company
Should rue a singular manne's folly. individual
To slander you is no thing mine intent;
But to correct that is amiss I meant.
This tale was not only told for you,
But eke for other more; ye wot well how
That amonges Christe's apostles twelve
There was no traitor but Judas himselve;
Then why should all the remenant have blame,

That guiltless were? By you I say the same.
Save only this, if ye will hearken me,
If any Judas in your convent be,
Remove him betimes, I you rede, counsel
If shame or loss may causen any dread.
And be no thing displeased, I you pray;
But in this case hearken what I say.
In London was a priest, an annualere,
That therein dwelled hadde many a year,
Which was so pleasant and so serviceable
Unto the wife, where as he was at table,
That she would suffer him no thing to pay
For board nor clothing, went he ne'er so gay;
And spending silver had he right enow;
Thereof no force; will proceed as now, no matter
And telle forth my tale of the canon,
That brought this prieste to confusion.
This false canon came upon a day
Unto the prieste's chamber, where he lay,
Beseeching him to lend him a certain
Of gold, and he would quit it him again.
"Lend me a mark," quoth he, "but dayes three,
And at my day I will it quite thee.
And if it so be that thou find me false,
Another day hang me up by the halse." neck
This priest him took a mark, and that as swithe, quickly
And this canon him thanked often sithe, times
And took his leave, and wente forth his way;
And at the thirde day brought his money;
And to the priest he took his gold again,
Whereof this priest was wondrous glad and fain. pleased
"Certes," quoth he, "nothing annoyeth me I am not unwiling
To lend a man a noble, or two, or three,
Or what thing were in my possession,
When he so true is of condition,
That in no wise he breake will his day;
To such a man I never can say nay."
"What," quoth this canon, "should I be untrue?
Nay, that were thing y-fallen all of new! a new thing to happen
Truth is a thing that I will ever keep,
Unto the day in which that I shall creep

Into my grave; and elles God forbid;
Believe this as sicker as your creed. sure
God thank I, and in good time be it said,
That there was never man yet evil apaid displeased, dissatisfied
For gold nor silver that he to me lent,
Nor ever falsehood in mine heart I meant.
And Sir," quoth he, "now of my privity,
Since ye so goodly have been unto me,
And kithed to me so great gentleness, shown
Somewhat, to quite with your kindness,
I will you shew, and if you list to lear, learn
I will you teache plainly the mannere
How I can worken in philosophy.
Take good heed, ye shall well see at eye with your own eye
That I will do a mas'try ere I go."
"Yea," quoth the priest; "yea, Sir, and will ye so?
Mary! thereof I pray you heartily."
"At your commandement, Sir, truely,"
Quoth the canon, "and elles God forbid."
Lo, how this thiefe could his service bedede! offer
Full sooth it is that such proffer'd service
Stinketh, as wisse these olde wise; those wise folk of old
And that full soon I will it verify
In this canon, root of all treachery,
That evermore delight had and gladness
(Such fiendly thoughtes in his heart impress) press into his heart
How Christe's people he may to mischief bring.
God keep us from his false dissimuling!
What wiste this priest with whom that he dealt?
Nor of his harm coming he nothing felt.
O sely priest, O sely innocent! simple
With covetise anon thou shalt be blent; blinded; beguiled
O graceless, full blind is thy conceit!
For nothing art thou ware of the deceit
Which that this fox y-shapen hath to thee; contrived
His wily wrenches thou not mayest flee. snares
Wherefore, to go to the conclusioun
That referreth to thy confusion,
Unhappy man, anon I will me hie hasten
To telle thine unwit and thy folly, stupidity
And eke the falseness of that other wretch,

As farforth as that my conning will stretch. knowledge
This canon was my lord, ye woulde ween; imagine
Sir Host, in faith, and by the heaven's queen,
It was another canon, and not he,
That can an hundred fold more subtlety. knows
He hath betrayed folkes many a time;
Of his falseness it doleth me to rhyme. paineth
And ever, when I speak of his falsehead,
For shame of him my cheekes waxe red;
Algates they beginne for to glow, at least
For redness have I none, right well I know,
In my visage; for fumes diverse
Of metals, which ye have me heard rehearse,
Consumed have and wasted my redness.
Now take heed of this canon's cursedness. villainy
"Sir," quoth he to the priest, "let your man gon
For quicksilver, that we it had anon;
And let him bringen ounces two or three;
And when he comes, as faste shall ye see
A wondrous thing, which ye saw ne'er ere this."
"Sir," quoth the priest, "it shall be done, y-wis." certainly
He bade his servant fetche him this thing,
And he all ready was at his bidding,
And went him forth, and came anon again
With this quicksilver, shortly for to sayn;
And took these ounces three to the canoun;
And he them laide well and fair adown,
And bade the servant coales for to bring,
That he anon might go to his working.
The coales right anon weren y-fet, fetched
And this canon y-took a crosselet crucible
Out of his bosom, and shew'd to the priest.
"This instrument," quoth he, "which that thou seest,
Take in thine hand, and put thyself therein
Of this quicksilver an ounce, and here begin,
In the name of Christ, to wax a philosopher.
There be full few, which that I woulde proffer
To shewe them thus much of my science;
For here shall ye see by experience
That this quicksilver I will mortify,
Right in your sight anon withoute lie,

And make it as good silver, and as fine,
As there is any in your purse, or mine,
Or elleswhere; and make it malleable,
And elles holde me false and unable
Amonge folk for ever to appear.
I have a powder here that cost me dear,
Shall make all good, for it is cause of all
My conning, which that I you shewe shall. knowledge
Voide your man, and let him be thereout; send away
And shut the doore, while we be about
Our privity, that no man us espy,
While that we work in this phiosophy."
All, as he bade, fulfilled was in deed.
This ilke servant right anon out yede, went
And his master y-shut the door anon,
And to their labour speedily they gon.
This priest, at this cursed canon's biddIng,
Upon the fire anon he set this thing,
And blew the fire, and busied him full fast.
And this canon into the croslet cast
A powder, I know not whereof it was
Y-made, either of chalk, either of glass,
Or somewhat elles, was not worth a fly,
To blinden with this priest; and bade him hie deceive make haste
The coales for to couchen all above lay in order
The croslet; "for, in token I thee love,"
Quoth this canon, "thine owen handes two
Shall work all thing that here shall be do'."
"Grand mercy," quoth the priest, and was full glad, great thanks
And couch'd the coales as the canon bade.
And while he busy was, this fiendly wretch,
This false canon (the foule fiend him fetch),
Out of his bosom took a beechen coal,
In which full subtifly was made a hole,
And therein put was of silver limaile filings
An ounce, and stopped was withoute fail
The hole with wax, to keep the limaile in.
And understande, that this false gin contrivance
Was not made there, but it was made before;
And other thinges I shall tell you more,
Hereafterward, which that he with him brought;

Ere he came there, him to beguile he thought,
And so he did, ere that they went atwin; separated
Till he had turned him, could he not blin. cease
It doleth me, when that I of him speak; paineth
On his falsehood fain would I me awreak, revenge myself
If I wist how, but he is here and there;
He is so variant, he abides nowhere. changeable
But take heed, Sirs, now for Godde's love.
He took his coal, of which I spake above,
And in his hand he bare it privily,
And while the prieste couched busily
The coales, as I tolde you ere this,
This canon saide, "Friend, ye do amiss;
This is not couched as it ought to be,
But soon I shall amenden it," quoth he.
"Now let me meddle therewith but a while,
For of you have I pity, by Saint Gile.
Ye be right hot, I see well how ye sweat;
Have here a cloth, and wipe away the wet."
And while that the prieste wip'd his face,
This canon took his coal, — with sorry grace, — evil fortune
And layed it above on the midward attend him!
Of the croslet, and blew well afterward,
Till that the coals beganne fast to brenn. burn
"Now give us drinke," quoth this canon then,
"And swithe all shall be well, I undertake. quickly
Sitte we down, and let us merry make."
And whenne that this canon's beechen coal
Was burnt, all the limaile out of the hole
Into the crosselet anon fell down;
And so it muste needes, by reasoun,
Since it above so even couched was; exactly laid
But thereof wist the priest no thing, alas!
He deemed all the coals alike good,
For of the sleight he nothing understood.
And when this alchemister saw his time,
"Rise up, Sir Priest," quoth he, "and stand by me;
And, for I wot well ingot have ye none; mould
Go, walke forth, and bring me a chalk stone;
For I will make it of the same shape
That is an ingot, if I may have hap.

Bring eke with you a bowl, or else a pan,
Full of water, and ye shall well see than then
How that our business shall hap and preve succeed
And yet, for ye shall have no misbelieve mistrust
Nor wrong conceit of me, in your absence,
I wille not be out of your presence,
But go with you, and come with you again."
The chamber-doore, shortly for to sayn,
They opened and shut, and went their way,
And forth with them they carried the key;
And came again without any delay.
Why should I tarry all the longe day?
He took the chalk, and shap'd it in the wise
Of an ingot, as I shall you devise; describe
I say, he took out of his owen sleeve
A teine of silver (evil may he cheve!) little piece prosper
Which that ne was but a just ounce of weight.
And take heed now of his cursed sleight;
He shap'd his ingot, in length and in brede breadth
Of this teine, withouten any drede, doubt
So slily, that the priest it not espied;
And in his sleeve again he gan it hide;
And from the fire he took up his mattere,
And in th' ingot put it with merry cheer;
And in the water-vessel he it cast,
When that him list, and bade the priest as fast
Look what there is; "Put in thine hand and grope;
There shalt thou finde silver, as I hope."
What, devil of helle! should it elles be?
Shaving of silver, silver is, pardie.
He put his hand in, and took up a teine
Of silver fine; and glad in every vein
Was this priest, when he saw that it was so.
"Godde's blessing, and his mother's also,
And alle hallows, have ye, Sir Canon!" saints
Saide this priest, "and I their malison curse
But, an' ye vouchesafe to teache me if
This noble craft and this subtilty,
I will be yours in all that ever I may."
Quoth the canon, "Yet will I make assay
The second time, that ye may take heed,

And be expert of this, and, in your need,
Another day assay in mine absence
This discipline, and this crafty science.
Let take another ounce," quoth he tho, then
"Of quicksilver, withoute wordes mo',
And do therewith as ye have done ere this
With that other, which that now silver is. "
The priest him busied, all that e'er he can,
To do as this canon, this cursed man,
Commanded him, and fast he blew the fire
For to come to th' effect of his desire.
And this canon right in the meanwhile
All ready was this priest eft to beguile, again
and, for a countenance, in his hande bare stratagem
An hollow sticke (take keep and beware); heed
Of silver limaile put was, as before
Was in his coal, and stopped with wax well
For to keep in his limaile every deal. particle
And while this priest was in his business,
This canon with his sticke gan him dress apply
To him anon, and his powder cast in,
As he did erst (the devil out of his skin
Him turn, I pray to God, for his falsehead,
For he was ever false in thought and deed),
And with his stick, above the crosselet,
That was ordained with that false get, provided contrivance
He stirr'd the coales, till relente gan
The wax against the fire, as every man,
But he a fool be, knows well it must need.
And all that in the sticke was out yede, went
And in the croslet hastily it fell. quickly
Now, goode Sirs, what will ye bet than well? better
When that this priest was thus beguil'd again,
Supposing naught but truthe, sooth to sayn,
He was so glad, that I can not express
In no mannere his mirth and his gladness;
And to the canon he proffer'd eftsoon forthwith; again
Body and good. "Yea," quoth the canon soon,
"Though poor I be, crafty thou shalt me find; skilful
I warn thee well, yet is there more behind.
Is any copper here within?" said he.

"Yea, Sir," the prieste said, "I trow there be."
"Elles go buy us some, and that as swithe. swiftly
Now, goode Sir, go forth thy way and hie thee." hasten
He went his way, and with the copper came,
And this canon it in his handes name, took
And of that copper weighed out an ounce.
Too simple is my tongue to pronounce,
As minister of my wit, the doubleness
Of this canon, root of all cursedness.
He friendly seem'd to them that knew him not;
But he was fiendly, both in work and thought.
It wearieth me to tell of his falseness;
And natheless yet will I it express,
To that intent men may beware thereby,
And for none other cause truely.
He put this copper in the crosselet,
And on the fire as swithe he hath it set, swiftly
And cast in powder, and made the priest to blow,
And in his working for to stoope low,
As he did erst, and all was but a jape; before trick
Right as him list the priest he made his ape. befooled him
And afterward in the ingot he it cast,
And in the pan he put it at the last
Of water, and in he put his own hand;
And in his sleeve, as ye beforehand
Hearde me tell, he had a silver teine; small piece
He silly took it out, this cursed heine wretch
(Unweeting this priest of his false craft), unsuspecting
And in the panne's bottom he it laft left
And in the water rumbleth to and fro,
And wondrous privily took up also
The copper teine (not knowing thilke priest),
And hid it, and him hente by the breast, took
And to him spake, and thus said in his game;
"Stoop now adown; by God, ye be to blame;
Helpe me now, as I did you whilere; before
Put in your hand, and looke what is there."
This priest took up this silver teine anon;
And thenne said the canon, "Let us gon,
With these three teines which that we have wrought,
To some goldsmith, and weet if they be aught: find out if they are

For, by my faith, I would not for my hood worth anything
But if they were silver fine and good, unless
And that as swithe well proved shall it be." quickly
Unto the goldsmith with these teines three
They went anon, and put them in assay proof
To fire and hammer; might no man say nay,
But that they weren as they ought to be.
This sotted priest, who gladder was than he? stupid, besotted
Was never bird gladder against the day;
Nor nightingale in the season of May
Was never none, that better list to sing;
Nor lady lustier in carolling,
Or for to speak of love and womanhead;
Nor knight in arms to do a hardy deed,
To standen in grace of his lady dear,
Than had this priest this crafte for to lear;
And to the canon thus he spake and said;
"For love of God, that for us alle died,
And as I may deserve it unto you,
What shall this receipt coste? tell me now."
"By our Lady," quoth this canon, "it is dear.
I warn you well, that, save I and a frere,
In Engleland there can no man it make."
"No force," quoth he; "now, Sir, for Godde's sake, no matter
What shall I pay? telle me, I you pray."
"Y-wis," quoth he, "it is full dear, I say. certainly
Sir, at one word, if that you list it have,
Ye shall pay forty pound, so God me save;
And n'ere the friendship that ye did ere this were it not for
To me, ye shoulde paye more, y-wis."
This priest the sum of forty pound anon
Of nobles fet, and took them every one fetched
To this canon, for this ilke receipt.
All his working was but fraud and deceit.
"Sir Priest," he said, "I keep to have no los care praise
Of my craft, for I would it were kept close;
And as ye love me, keep it secre:
For if men knewen all my subtlety,
By God, they woulde have so great envy
To me, because of my philosophy,
I should be dead, there were no other way."

"God it forbid," quoth the priest, "what ye say.
Yet had I lever spenden all the good rather
Which that I have (and elles were I wood), mad
Than that ye shoulde fall in such mischief."
"For your good will, Sir, have ye right good prefe," results of your
Quoth the canon; "and farewell, grand mercy." experiments
He went his way, and never the priest him sey saw
After that day; and when that this priest should
Maken assay, at such time as he would,
Of this receipt, farewell! it would not be.
Lo, thus bejaped and beguil'd was he; tricked
Thus made he his introduction
To bringe folk to their destruction.
Consider, Sirs, how that in each estate
Betwixte men and gold there is debate,
So farforth that unnethes is there none. scarcely is there any
This multiplying blint so many a one, blinds, deceive
That in good faith I trowe that it be
The cause greatest of such scarcity.
These philosophers speak so mistily
In this craft, that men cannot come thereby,
For any wit that men have how-a-days.
They may well chatter, as do these jays,
And in their termes set their lust and pain, pleasure and exertion
But to their purpose shall they ne'er attain.
A man may lightly learn, if he have aught, easily
To multiply, and bring his good to naught.
Lo, such a lucre is in this lusty game; profit pleasant
A manne's mirth it will turn all to grame, sorrow
And empty also great and heavy purses,
And make folke for to purchase curses
Of them that have thereto their good y-lent.
Oh, fy for shame! they that have been brent, burnt
Alas! can they not flee the fire's heat?
Ye that it use, I rede that ye it lete, advise leave
Lest ye lose all; for better than never is late;
Never to thrive, were too long a date.
Though ye prowle aye, ye shall it never find;
Ye be as bold as is Bayard the blind,
That blunders forth, and peril casteth none; perceives no danger
He is as bold to run against a stone,

As for to go beside it in the way:
So fare ye that multiply, I say.
If that your eyen cannot see aright,
Look that your minde lacke not his sight.
For though you look never so broad, and stare,
Ye shall not win a mite on that chaffare, traffic, commerce
But wasten all that ye may rape and renn. get by hook or crook
Withdraw the fire, lest it too faste brenn; burn
Meddle no more with that art, I mean;
For if ye do, your thrift is gone full clean. prosperity
And right as swithe I will you telle here quickly
What philosophers say in this mattere.
Lo, thus saith Arnold of the newe town,
As his Rosary maketh mentioun,
He saith right thus, withouten any lie;
"There may no man mercury mortify,
But it be with his brother's knowledging." except
Lo, how that he, which firste said this thing,
Of philosophers father was, Hermes;
He saith, how that the dragon doubtless
He dieth not, but if that he be slain
With his brother. And this is for to sayn,
By the dragon, Mercury, and none other,
He understood, and Brimstone by his brother,
That out of Sol and Luna were y-draw. drawn, derived
"And therefore," said he, "take heed to my saw. saying
Let no man busy him this art to seech, study, explore
But if that he th'intention and speech unless
Of philosophers understande can;
And if he do, he is a lewed man. ignorant, foolish
For this science and this conning," quoth he, knowledge
"Is of the secret of secrets pardie."
Also there was a disciple of Plato,
That on a time said his master to,
As his book, Senior, will bear witness,
And this was his demand in soothfastness:
"Tell me the name of thilke privy stone." that secret
And Plato answer'd unto him anon;
"Take the stone that Titanos men name."
"Which is that?" quoth he. "Magnesia is the same,"
Saide Plato. "Yea, Sir, and is it thus?"

This is ignotum per ignotius.
What is Magnesia, good Sir, I pray?"
"It is a water that is made, I say,
Of th' elementes foure," quoth Plato.
"Tell me the roote, good Sir," quoth he tho, then
"Of that water, if that it be your will."
"Nay, nay," quoth Plato, "certain that I n'ill. will not
The philosophers sworn were every one,
That they should not discover it to none,
Nor in no book it write in no mannere;
For unto God it is so lefe and dear, precious
That he will not that it discover'd be,
But where it liketh to his deity
Man for to inspire, and eke for to defend' protect
Whom that he liketh; lo, this is the end."
Then thus conclude I, since that God of heaven
Will not that these philosophers neven name
How that a man shall come unto this stone,
I rede as for the best to let it gon. counsel
For whoso maketh God his adversary,
As for to work any thing in contrary
Of his will, certes never shall he thrive,
Though that he multiply term of his live.
And there a point; for ended is my tale. end
God send ev'ry good man boot of his bale. remedy for his sorrow

THE MANCIPLE'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

WEET ye not where there stands a little town, know
Which that y-called is Bob-up-and-down,
Under the Blee, in Canterbury way?
There gan our Hoste for to jape and play,
And saide, "Sirs, what? Dun is in the mire.
Is there no man, for prayer nor for hire,
That will awaken our fellow behind?
A thief him might full rob and bind easily
See how he nappeth, see, for cocke's bones,
As he would falle from his horse at ones.
Is that a Cook of London, with mischance?
Do him come forth, he knoweth his penance; make
For he shall tell a tale, by my fay, faith
Although it be not worth a bottle hay.
Awake, thou Cook," quoth he; "God give thee sorrow
What aileth thee to sleepe by the morrow? in the day time
Hast thou had fleas all night, or art drunk?
Or had thou with some quean all night y-swunk, whore laboured
So that thou mayest not hold up thine head?"
The Cook, that was full pale and nothing red,
Said to Host, "So God my soule bless,
As there is fall'n on me such heaviness,
I know not why, that me were lever sleep, rather
Than the best gallon wine that is in Cheap."
"Well," quoth the Manciple, "if it may do ease
To thee, Sir Cook, and to no wight displease
Which that here rideth in this company,
And that our Host will of his courtesy,
I will as now excuse thee of thy tale;
For in good faith thy visage is full pale:
Thine eyen daze, soothly as me thinketh, are dim
And well I wot, thy breath full soure stinketh,
That sheweth well thou art not well disposed;
Of me certain thou shalt not be y-glosed. flattered
See how he yawneth, lo, this drunken wight,
As though he would us swallow anon right.
Hold close thy mouth, man, by thy father's kin;

The devil of helle set his foot therein!
Thy cursed breath infecte will us all:
Fy! stinking swine, fy! foul may thee befall.
Ah! take heed, Sirs, of this lusty man.
Now, sweete Sir, will ye joust at the fan?
Thereto, me thinketh, ye be well y-shape.
I trow that ye have drunken wine of ape,
And that is when men playe with a straw."
And with this speech the Cook waxed all wraw, wrathful
And on the Manciple he gan nod fast
For lack of speech; and down his horse him cast,
Where as he lay, till that men him up took.
This was a fair chevachie of a cook: cavalry expedition
Alas! that he had held him by his ladle!
And ere that he again were in the saddle
There was great shoving bothe to and fro
To lift him up, and mucche care and woe,
So unwieldy was this silly paled ghost.
And to the Manciple then spake our Host:
"Because that drink hath domination
Upon this man, by my salvation
I trow he lewedly will tell his tale. stupidly
For were it wine, or old or moisty ale, new
That he hath drunk, he speaketh in his nose,
And sneezeth fast, and eke he hath the pose
He also hath to do more than enough
To keep him on his capel out of the slough; horse
And if he fall from off his capel eftsoon, again
Then shall we alle have enough to do'n
In lifting up his heavy drunken corse.
Tell on thy tale, of him make I no force. I take no account
But yet, Manciple, in faith thou art too nice foolish
Thus openly to reprove him of his vice;
Another day he will paraventure
Reclaime thee, and bring thee to the lure;
I mean, he speake will of smalle things,
As for to pinchen at thy reckonings, pick flaws in
That were not honest, if it came to prefe." test, proof
Quoth the Manciple, "That were a great mischief;
So might he lightly bring me in the snare.
Yet had I lever paye for the mare rather

Which he rides on, than he should with me strive.

I will not wrathe him, so may I thrive)

That that I spake, I said it in my bourde. jest

And weet ye what? I have here in my gourd

A draught of wine, yea, of a ripe grape,

And right anon ye shall see a good jape. trick

This Cook shall drink thereof, if that I may;

On pain of my life he will not say nay."

And certainly, to tellen as it was,

Of this vessel the cook drank fast (alas!

What needed it? he drank enough befor),

And when he hadde pouped in his horn, belched

To the Manciple he took the gourd again.

And of that drink the Cook was wondrous fain,

And thanked him in such wise as he could.

Then gan our Host to laughe wondrous loud,

And said, "I see well it is necessary

Where that we go good drink with us to carry;

For that will turne rancour and disease trouble, annoyance

T'accord and love, and many a wrong appease.

O Bacchus, Bacchus, blessed be thy name,

That so canst turnen earnest into game!

Worship and thank be to thy deity.

Of that mattere ye get no more of me.

Tell on thy tale, Manciple, I thee pray."

"Well, Sir," quoth he, "now hearken what I say."

THE TALE.

When Phoebus dwelled here in earth adown,
As olde bookes make mentioun,
He was the moste lusty bacheler pleasant
Of all this world, and eke the best archer. also
He slew Python the serpent, as he lay
Sleeping against the sun upon a day;
And many another noble worthy deed
He with his bow wrought, as men maye read.
Playen he could on every minstrelsy,
And singe, that it was a melody
To hearen of his cleare voice the soun'.
Certes the king of Thebes, Amphioun,
That with his singing walled the city,
Could never singe half so well as he.
Thereto he was the seemlieste man
That is, or was since that the world began;
What needeth it his features to describe?
For in this world is none so fair alive.
He was therewith full fill'd of gentleness,
Of honour, and of perfect worthiness.
This Phoebus, that was flower of bach'lery,
As well in freedom as in chivalry, generosity
For his disport, in sign eke of victory
Of Python, so as telleth us the story,
Was wont to bearen in his hand a bow.
Now had this Phoebus in his house a crow,
Which in a cage he foster'd many a day,
And taught it speaken, as men teach a jay.
White was this crow, as is a snow-white swan,
And counterfeit the speech of every man
He coulde, when he shoulde tell a tale.
Therewith in all this world no nightingale
Ne coulde by an hundred thousand deal part
Singe so wondrous merrily and well.
Now had this Phoebus in his house a wife;
Which that he loved more than his life.
And night and day did ever his diligence
Her for to please, and do her reverence:
Save only, if that I the sooth shall sayn,

Jealous he was, and would have kept her fain.
For him were loth y-japed for to be; tricked, deceived
And so is every wight in such degree;
But all for nought, for it availeth nought.
A good wife, that is clean of work and thought,
Should not be kept in none await certain: observation
And truely the labour is in vain
To keep a shrewe, for it will not be. ill-disposed woman
This hold I for a very nicety, sheer folly
To spille labour for to keepe wives; lose
Thus writen olde clerkes in their lives.
But now to purpose, as I first began.
This worthy Phoebus did all that he can
To please her, weening, through such pleasance,
And for his manhood and his governance,
That no man should have put him from her grace;
But, God it wot, there may no man embrace
As to distrain a thing, which that nature succeed in constraining
Hath naturally set in a creature.
Take any bird, and put it in a cage,
And do all thine intent, and thy corage, what thy heart prompts
To foster it tenderly with meat and drink
Of alle dainties that thou canst bethink,
And keep it all so cleanly as thou may;
Although the cage of gold be never so gay,
Yet had this bird, by twenty thousand fold,
Lever in a forest, both wild and cold, rather
Go eate wormes, and such wretchedness.
For ever this bird will do his business
T'escape out of his cage when that he may:
His liberty the bird desireth aye.
Let take a cat, and foster her with milk
And tender flesh, and make her couch of silk,
And let her see a mouse go by the wall,
Anon she weiveth milk, and flesh, and all, forsaketh
And every dainty that is in that house,
Such appetite hath she to eat the mouse.
Lo, here hath kind her domination, nature
And appetite flemeth discretion. drives out
A she-wolf hath also a villain's kind
The lewedeste wolf that she may find,

Or least of reputation, will she take
 In time when her lust to have a mate. she desires mate
 All these examples speak I by these men with reference to
 That be untrue, and nothing by women.
 For men have ever a lik'rous appetite
 On lower things to perform their delight
 Than on their wives, be they never so fair,
 Never so true, nor so debonair. gentle, mild
 Flesh is so newefangled, with mischance, ill luck to it
 That we can in no thinge have pleasance
 That souneth unto virtue any while. accords with
 This Phoebus, which that thought upon no guile,
 Deceived was for all his jollity;
 For under him another hadde she,
 A man of little reputation,
 Nought worth to Phoebus in comparison.
 The more harm is; it happens often so,
 Of which there cometh muche harm and woe.
 And so befell, when Phoebus was absent,
 His wife anon hath for her leman sent. unlawful lover
 Her leman! certes that is a knavish speech.
 Forgive it me, and that I you beseech.
 The wise Plato saith, as ye may read,
 The word must needs accorde with the deed;
 If men shall telle properly a thing,
 The word must cousin be to the working.
 I am a boistous man, right thus I say. rough-spoken, downright
 There is no difference truly
 Betwixt a wife that is of high degree
 (If of her body dishonest she be),
 And any poore wench, other than this
 (If it so be they worke both amiss),
 But, for the gentle is in estate above, because
 She shall be call'd his lady and his love;
 And, for that other is a poor woman,
 She shall be call'd his wench and his leman:
 And God it wot, mine owen deare brother,
 Men lay the one as low as lies the other.
 Right so betwixt a titleless tyrant usurper
 And an outlaw, or else a thief errant, wandering
 The same I say, there is no difference

(To Alexander told was this sentence),
 But, for the tyrant is of greater might
 By force of meinie for to slay downright, followers
 And burn both house and home, and make all plain, level
 Lo, therefore is he call'd a capitain;
 And, for the outlaw hath but small meinie,
 And may not do so great an harm as he,
 Nor bring a country to so great mischief,
 Men calle him an outlaw or a thief.
 But, for I am a man not textuel, learned in texts
 I will not tell of texts never a deal; whit
 I will go to my tale, as I began.
 When Phoebus' wife had sent for her leman,
 Anon they wroughten all their lust volage. light or rash pleasure
 This white crow, that hung aye in the cage,
 Beheld their work, and said never a word;
 And when that home was come Phoebus the lord,
 This crowe sung, "Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo!"
 "What? bird," quoth Phoebus, "what song sing'st thou now?
 Wert thou not wont so merrily to sing,
 That to my heart it was a rejoicing
 To hear thy voice? alas! what song is this?"
 "By God," quoth he, "I singe not amiss.
 Phoebus," quoth he, "for all thy worthiness,
 For all thy beauty, and all thy gentleness,
 For all thy song, and all thy minstrelsy,
 For all thy waiting, bleared is thine eye despite all thy watching,
 With one of little reputation, thou art befooled
 Not worth to thee, as in comparison,
 The mountance of a gnat, so may I thrive; value
 For on thy bed thy wife I saw him swive."
 What will ye more? the crow anon him told,
 By sade tokens, and by wordes bold, grave, trustworthy
 How that his wife had done her lechery,
 To his great shame and his great villainy;
 And told him oft, he saw it with his eyen.
 This Phoebus gan awayward for to wrien; turn aside
 Him thought his woeful hearte burst in two.
 His bow he bent, and set therein a flo, arrow
 And in his ire he hath his wife slain;
 This is th' effect, there is no more to sayn.

For sorrow of which he brake his minstrelsy,
Both harp and lute, giterne and psaltery; guitar
And eke he brake his arrows and his bow;
And after that thus spake he to the crow.
"Traitor," quoth he, "with tongue of scorpion,
Thou hast me brought to my confusion;
Alas that I was wrought! why n'ere I dead? made was not
O deare wife, O gem of lustihead, pleasantness
That wert to me so sad, and eke so true, steadfast
Now liest thou dead, with face pale of hue,
Full guileless, that durst I swear y-wis! certainly
O rakel hand, to do so foul amiss rash, hasty
O troubled wit, O ire reckelless,
That unadvised smit'st the guileless!
O wantrust, full of false suspicion! distrust
Where was thy wit and thy discretion?
O! every man beware of rakelness, rashness
Nor trow no thing withoute strong witness. believe
Smite not too soon, ere that ye weete why, know
And be advised well and sickerly consider surely
Ere ye do any execution take any action
Upon your ire for suspicion. upon your anger
Alas! a thousand folk hath rakel ire
Foulyly fordone, and brought them in the mire.
Alas! for sorrow I will myself slee slay
And to the crow, "O false thief," said he,
"I will thee quite anon thy false tale.
Thou sungst whilom like any nightingale, once on a time
Now shalt thou, false thief, thy song foregone, lose
And eke thy white feathers every one,
Nor ever in all thy life shalt thou speak;
Thus shall men on a traitor be awak. revenged
Thou and thine offspring ever shall be black, black
Nor ever sweete noise shall ye make,
But ever cry against tempest and rain, before, in warning of
In token that through thee my wife is slain."
And to the crow he start, and that anon, sprang
And pull'd his white feathers every one,
And made him black, and reft him all his song,
And eke his speech, and out at door him flung
Unto the devil, which I him betake; to whom I commend him

And for this cause be all crowes blake.
 Lordings, by this ensample, I you pray,
 Beware, and take keep what that ye say; heed
 Nor telle never man in all your life
 How that another man hath dight his wife;
 He will you hate mortally certain.
 Dan Solomon, as wise clerkes sayn,
 Teacheth a man to keep his tongue well;
 But, as I said, I am not textuel.
 But natheless thus taughte me my dame;
 "My son, think on the crow, in Godde's name.
 My son, keep well thy tongue, and keep thy friend;
 A wicked tongue is worse than is a fiend:
 My sone, from a fiend men may them bless. defend by crossing
 My son, God of his endeless goodness themselves
 Walled a tongue with teeth, and lippes eke,
 For man should him advise, what he speak. because consider
 My son, full often for too mucche speech
 Hath many a man been spilt, as clerkes teach; destroyed
 But for a little speech advisedly
 Is no man shent, to speak generally. ruined
 My son, thy tongue shouldest thou restrain
 At alle time, but when thou dost thy pain except when you do
 To speak of God in honour and prayere. your best effort
 The firste virtue, son, if thou wilt lear, learn
 Is to restrain and keepe well thy tongue;
 Thus learne children, when that they be young.
 My son, of mucche speaking evil advis'd,
 Where lesse speaking had enough suffic'd,
 Cometh much harm; thus was me told and taught;
 In mucche speeche sinne wanteth not.
 Wost thou whereof a rakel tongue serveth? knowest hasty
 Right as a sword forcutteth and forcarveth
 An arm in two, my deare son, right so
 A tongue cutteth friendship all in two.
 A jangler is to God abominable. prating man
 Read Solomon, so wise and honourable;
 Read David in his Psalms, and read Senec'.
 My son, speak not, but with thine head thou beck, beckon, nod
 Dissimule as thou wert deaf, if that thou hear
 A jangler speak of perilous mattere.

The Fleming saith, and learn if that thee lest, if it please thee
That little jangling causeth much rest.
My son, if thou no wicked word hast said,
Thee thou shalt not dread for to be bewray'd; thou hast no need to
But he that hath missaid, I dare well sayn, fear to be betrayed
He may by no way call his word again.
Thing that is said is said, and forth it go'th,
Though him repent, or be he ne'er so loth;
He is his thrall, to whom that he hath said slave
A tale, of which he is now evil paid. which he now regrets
My son, beware, and be no author new
Of tidings, whether they be false or true;
Whereso thou come, amonges high or low,
Keep well thy tongue, and think upon the crow."

THE PARSON'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

By that the Manciple his tale had ended,
The sunne from the south line was descended
So lowe, that it was not to my sight
Degrees nine-and-twenty as in height.
Four of the clock it was then, as I guess,
For eleven foot, a little more or less,
My shadow was at thilke time, as there,
Of such feet as my lengthe parted were
In six feet equal of proportion.
Therewith the moone's exaltation, rising
In meane Libra, gan alway ascend, in the middle of
As we were ent'ring at a thorp's end. village's
For which our Host, as he was wont to gie, govern
As in this case, our jolly company,
Said in this wise; "Lordings every one,
Now lacketh us no more tales than one.
Fulfill'd is my sentence and my decree;
I trow that we have heard of each degree. from each class or rank
Almost fulfilled is mine ordinance; in the company
I pray to God so give him right good chance
That telleth us this tale lustily.
Sir Priest," quoth he, "art thou a vicary? vicar
Or art thou a Parson? say sooth by thy fay. faith
Be what thou be, breake thou not our play;
For every man, save thou, hath told his tale.
Unbuckle, and shew us what is in thy mail. wallet
For truely me thinketh by thy cheer
Thou shouldest knit up well a great mattere.
Tell us a fable anon, for cocke's bones."
This Parson him answered all at ones;
"Thou gettest fable none y-told for me,
For Paul, that writeth unto Timothy,
Reproveth them that weive soothfastness, forsake truth
And telle fables, and such wretchedness.
Why should I sowe draff out of my fist, chaff, refuse
When I may sowe wheat, if that me list?
For which I say, if that you list to hear

Morality and virtuous mattere,
And then that ye will give me audience,
I would full fain at Christe's reverence
Do you pleasance lawful, as I can.
But, truste well, I am a southern man,
I cannot gest, rom, ram, ruf, by my letter; relate stories
And, God wot, rhyme hold I but little better.
And therefore if you list, I will not glose, mince matters
I will you tell a little tale in prose,
To knit up all this feast, and make an end.
And Jesus for his grace wit me send
To shewe you the way, in this voyage,
Of thilke perfect glorious pilgrimage,
That hight Jerusalem celestial.
And if ye vouchesafe, anon I shall
Begin upon my tale, for which I pray
Tell your advice, I can no better say. opinion
But natheless this meditation
I put it aye under correction
Of clerkes, for I am not textuel; scholars
I take but the sentence, trust me well. meaning, sense
Therefore I make a protestation,
That I will stande to correction."
Upon this word we have assented soon;
For, as us seemed, it was for to do'n, a thing worth doing
To enden in some virtuous sentence, discourse
And for to give him space and audience;
And bade our Host he shoulde to him say
That alle we to tell his tale him pray.
Our Hoste had. the wordes for us all:
"Sir Priest," quoth he, "now faire you befall;
Say what you list, and we shall gladly hear."
And with that word he said in this mannere;
"Telle," quoth he, "your meditatioun,
But hasten you, the sunne will adown.
Be fructuous, and that in little space; fruitful; profitable
And to do well God sende you his grace."

THE TALE.

The Parson begins his "little treatise" -(which, if given at length, would extend to about thirty of these pages, and which cannot by any stretch of courtesy or fancy be said to merit the title of a "Tale") in these words: —

Our sweet Lord God of Heaven, that no man will perish, but will that we come all to the knowledge of him, and to the blissful life that is perdurable everlasting, admonishes us by the prophet Jeremiah, that saith in this wise: "Stand upon the ways, and see and ask of old paths, that is to say, of old sentences, which is the good way, and walk in that way, and ye shall find refreshing for your souls," &c. Many be the spiritual ways that lead folk to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the reign of glory; of which ways there is a full noble way, and full convenable, which may not fail to man nor to woman, that through sin hath misgone from the right way of Jerusalem celestial; and this way is called penitence. Of which men should gladly hearken and inquire with all their hearts, to wit what is penitence, and whence it is called penitence, and in what manner, and in how many manners, be the actions or workings of penitence, and how many species there be of penitences, and what things appertain and behove to penitence, and what things disturb penitence.

Penitence is described, on the authority of Saints Ambrose, Isidore, and Gregory, as the bewailing of sin that has been wrought, with the purpose never again to do that thing, or any other thing which a man should bewail; for weeping and not ceasing to do the sin will not avail — though it is to be hoped that after every time that a man falls, be it ever so often, he may find grace to arise through penitence. And repentant folk that leave their sin ere sin leave them, are accounted by Holy Church sure of their salvation, even though the repentance be at the last hour. There are three actions of penitence; that a man be baptized after he has sinned; that he do no deadly sin after receiving baptism; and that he fall into no venial sins from day to day. "Thereof saith St Augustine, that penitence of good and humble folk is the penitence of every day." The species of penitence are three: solemn, when a man is openly expelled from Holy Church in Lent, or is compelled by Holy Church to do open penance for an open sin openly talked of in the country; common penance, enjoined by priests in certain cases, as to go on pilgrimage naked or barefoot; and privy penance, which men do daily for private sins, of which they confess privately and receive private penance. To very perfect penitence are behoveful and necessary three things: contrition of heart, confession of mouth, and satisfaction; which are fruitful penitence against delight in thinking, reckless speech, and wicked sinful works.

Penitence may be likened to a tree, having its root in contrition, biding itself in the heart as a tree-root does in the earth; out of this root springs a stalk, that bears branches and

leaves of confession, and fruit of satisfaction. Of this root also springs a seed of grace, which is mother of all security, and this seed is eager and hot; and the grace of this seed springs of God, through remembrance on the day of judgment and on the pains of hell. The heat of this seed is the love of God, and the desire of everlasting joy; and this heat draws the heart of man to God, and makes him hate his sin. Penance is the tree of life to them that receive it. In penance or contrition man shall understand four things: what is contrition; what are the causes that move a man to contrition; how he should be contrite; and what contrition availeth to the soul. Contrition is the heavy and grievous sorrow that a man receiveth in his heart for his sins, with earnest purpose to confess and do penance, and never more to sin. Six causes ought to move a man to contrition: . He should remember him of his sins; . He should reflect that sin putteth a man in great thralldom, and all the greater the higher is the estate from which he falls; . He should dread the day of doom and the horrible pains of hell; . The sorrowful remembrance of the good deeds that man hath omitted to do here on earth, and also the good that he hath lost, ought to make him have contrition; . So also ought the remembrance of the passion that our Lord Jesus Christ suffered for our sins; . And so ought the hope of three things, that is to say, forgiveness of sin, the gift of grace to do well, and the glory of heaven with which God shall reward man for his good deeds. — All these points the Parson illustrates and enforces at length; waxing especially eloquent under the third head, and plainly setting forth the sternly realistic notions regarding future punishments that were entertained in the time of Chaucer:-

Certes, all the sorrow that a man might make from the beginning of the world, is but a little thing, at retard of in comparison with the sorrow of hell. The cause why that Job calleth hell the land of darkness; understand, that he calleth it land or earth, for it is stable and never shall fail, and dark, for he that is in hell hath default is devoid of light natural; for certes the dark light, that shall come out of the fire that ever shall burn, shall turn them all to pain that be in hell, for it sheweth them the horrible devils that them torment. Covered with the darkness of death; that is to say, that he that is in hell shall have default of the sight of God; for certes the sight of God is the life perdurable everlasting. The darkness of death, be the sins that the wretched man hath done, which that disturb prevent him to see the face of God, right as a dark cloud doth between us and the sun. Land of misere, because there be three manner of defaults against three things that folk of this world have in this present life; that is to say, honours, delights, and riches. Against honour have they in hell shame and confusion: for well ye wot, that men call honour the reverence that man doth to man; but in hell is no honour nor reverence; for certes no more reverence shall be done there to a king than to a knave servant. For which God saith by the prophet Jeremiah; "The folk that me despise shall be in despite." Honour is also called great lordship. There shall no wight serve other, but of harm and torment. Honour is also called great dignity and highness; but in hell shall they be all fortrodden trampled under foot of devils. As God saith, "The horrible devils

shall go and come upon the heads of damned folk;" and this is, forasmuch as the higher that they were in this present life, the more shall they be abated abased and defouled in hell. Against the riches of this world shall they have misease trouble, torment of poverty, and this poverty shall be in four things: in default want of treasure; of which David saith, "The rich folk that embraced and oned united all their heart to treasure of this world, shall sleep in the sleeping of death, and nothing shall they find in their hands of all their treasure." And moreover, the misease of hell shall be in default of meat and drink. For God saith thus by Moses, "They shall be wasted with hunger, and the birds of hell shall devour them with bitter death, and the gall of the dragon shall be their drink, and the venom of the dragon their morsels." And furthermore, their misease shall be in default of clothing, for they shall be naked in body, as of clothing, save the fire in which they burn, and other filths; and naked shall they be in soul, of all manner virtues, which that is the clothing of the soul. Where be then the gay robes, and the soft sheets, and the fine shirts? Lo, what saith of them the prophet Isaiah, that under them shall be strewed moths, and their covertures shall be of worms of hell. And furthermore, their misease shall be in default of friends, for he is not poor that hath good friends: but there is no friend; for neither God nor any good creature shall be friend to them, and evereach of them shall hate other with deadly hate. The Sons and the daughters shall rebel against father and mother, and kindred against kindred, and chide and despise each other, both day and night, as God saith by the prophet Micah. And the loving children, that whom loved so fleshly each other, would each of them eat the other if they might. For how should they love together in the pains of hell, when they hated each other in the prosperity of this life? For trust well, their fleshly love was deadly hate; as saith the prophet David; "Whoso loveth wickedness, he hateth his own soul:" and whoso hateth his own soul, certes he may love none other wight in no manner: and therefore in hell is no solace nor no friendship, but ever the more kindreds that be in hell, the more cursing, the more chiding, and the more deadly hate there is among them. And furthermore, they shall have default of all manner delights; for certes delights be after the appetites of the five wits senses; as sight, hearing, smelling, savouring tasting, and touching. But in hell their sight shall be full of darkness and of smoke, and their eyes full of tears; and their hearing full of waimenting lamenting and grinting gnashing of teeth, as saith Jesus Christ; their nostrils shall be full of stinking; and, as saith Isaiah the prophet, their savouring tasting shall be full of bitter gall; and touching of all their body shall be covered with fire that never shall quench, and with worms that never shall die, as God saith by the mouth of Isaiah. And forasmuch as they shall not ween that they may die for pain, and by death flee from pain, that may they understand in the word of Job, that saith, "There is the shadow of death." Certes a shadow hath the likeness of the thing of which it is shadowed, but the shadow is not the same thing of which it is shadowed: right so fareth the pain of hell; it is like death, for the horrible anguish; and why? for it paineth them ever as though they should die anon; but certes they shall not die. For, as saith Saint Gregory, "To wretched caitiffs shall be given death without death,

and end without end, and default without failing; for their death shall always live, and their end shall evermore begin, and their default shall never fail." And therefore saith Saint John the Evangelist, "They shall follow death, and they shall not find him, and they shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." And eke Job saith, that in hell is no order of rule. And albeit that God hath created all things in right order, and nothing without order, but all things be ordered and numbered, yet nevertheless they that be damned be not in order, nor hold no order. For the earth shall bear them no fruit (for, as the prophet David saith, "God shall destroy the fruit of the earth, as for them"); nor water shall give them no moisture, nor the air no refreshing, nor the fire no light. For as saith Saint Basil, "The burning of the fire of this world shall God give in hell to them that be damned, but the light and the clearness shall be given in heaven to his children; right as the good man giveth flesh to his children, and bones to his hounds." And for they shall have no hope to escape, saith Job at last, that there shall horror and grisly dread dwell without end. Horror is always dread of harm that is to come, and this dread shall ever dwell in the hearts of them that be damned. And therefore have they lost all their hope for seven causes. First, for God that is their judge shall be without mercy to them; nor they may not please him; nor none of his hallows saints; nor they may give nothing for their ransom; nor they have no voice to speak to him; nor they may not flee from pain; nor they have no goodness in them that they may shew to deliver them from pain.

Under the fourth head, of good works, the Parson says: —

The courteous Lord Jesus Christ will that no good work be lost, for in somewhat it shall avail. But forasmuch as the good works that men do while they be in good life be all amortised killed, deadened by sin following, and also since all the good works that men do while they be in deadly sin be utterly dead, as for to have the life perdurable everlasting, well may that man that no good works doth, sing that new French song, *J'ai tout perdu — mon temps et mon labour*. For certes, sin bereaveth a man both the goodness of nature, and eke the goodness of grace. For soothly the grace of the Holy Ghost fareth like fire, that may not be idle; for fire faileth anon as it forleteth leaveth its working, and right so grace faileth anon as it forleteth its working. Then loseth the sinful man the goodness of glory, that only is to good men that labour and work. Well may he be sorry then, that oweth all his life to God, as long as he hath lived, and also as long as he shall live, that no goodness hath to pay with his debt to God, to whom he oweth all his life: for trust well he shall give account, as saith Saint Bernard, of all the goods that have been given him in his present life, and how he hath them dispended, insomuch that there shall not perish an hair of his head, nor a moment of an hour shall not perish of his time, that he shall not give thereof a reckoning.

Having treated of the causes, the Parson comes to the manner, of contrition — which should be universal and total, not merely of outward deeds of sin, but also of wicked

delights and thoughts and words; "for certes Almighty God is all good, and therefore either he forgiveth all, or else right naught." Further, contrition should be "wonder sorrowful and anguishous," and also continual, with steadfast purpose of confession and amendment. Lastly, of what contrition availeth, the Parson says, that sometimes it delivereth man from sin; that without it neither confession nor satisfaction is of any worth; that it "destroyeth the prison of hell, and maketh weak and feeble all the strengths of the devils, and restoreth the gifts of the Holy Ghost and of all good virtues, and cleanseth the soul of sin, and delivereth it from the pain of hell, and from the company of the devil, and from the servage slavery of sin, and restoreth it to all goods spiritual, and to the company and communion of Holy Church." He who should set his intent to these things, would no longer be inclined to sin, but would give his heart and body to the service of Jesus Christ, and thereof do him homage. "For, certes, our Lord Jesus Christ hath spared us so benignly in our follies, that if he had not pity on man's soul, a sorry song might we all sing."

The Second Part of the Parson's Tale or Treatise opens with an explanation of what is confession — which is termed "the second part of penitence, that is, sign of contrition;" whether it ought needs be done or not; and what things be convenable to true confession. Confession is true shewing of sins to the priest, without excusing, hiding, or forwrapping disguising of anything, and without vaunting of good works. "Also, it is necessary to understand whence that sins spring, and how they increase, and which they be." From Adam we took original sin; "from him fleshly descended be we all, and engendered of vile and corrupt matter;" and the penalty of Adam's transgression dwelleth with us as to temptation, which penalty is called concupiscence. "This concupiscence, when it is wrongfully disposed or ordained in a man, it maketh him covet, by covetise of flesh, fleshly sin by sight of his eyes, as to earthly things, and also covetise of highness by pride of heart." The Parson proceeds to shew how man is tempted in his flesh to sin; how, after his natural concupiscence, comes suggestion of the devil, that is to say the devil's bellows, with which he bloweth in man the fire of concupiscence; and how man then bethinketh him whether he will do or no the thing to which he is tempted. If he flame up into pleasure at the thought, and give way, then is he all dead in soul; "and thus is sin accomplished, by temptation, by delight, and by consenting; and then is the sin actual." Sin is either venial, or deadly; deadly, when a man loves any creature more than Jesus Christ our Creator, venial, if he love Jesus Christ less than he ought. Venial sins diminish man's love to God more and more, and may in this wise skip into deadly sin; for many small make a great. "And hearken this example: A great wave of the sea cometh sometimes with so great a violence, that it drencheth causes to sink the ship: and the same harm do sometimes the small drops, of water that enter through a little crevice in the thurrok hold, bilge, and in the bottom of the ship, if men be so negligent that they discharge them not betimes. And therefore, although there be difference betwixt these two causes of drenching, algates in any case

the ship is dreint sunk. Right so fareth it sometimes of deadly sin," and of venial sins when they multiply in a man so greatly as to make him love worldly things more than God. The Parson then enumerates specially a number of sins which many a man peradventure deems no sins, and confesses them not, and yet nevertheless they are truly sins: —

This is to say, at every time that a man eateth and drinketh more than sufficeth to the sustenance of his body, in certain he doth sin; eke when he speaketh more than it needeth, he doth sin; eke when he heareth not benignly the complaint of the poor; eke when he is in health of body, and will not fast when other folk fast, without cause reasonable; eke when he sleepeth more than needeth, or when he cometh by that occasion too late to church, or to other works of charity; eke when he useth his wife without sovereign desire of engendrure, to the honour of God, or for the intent to yield his wife his debt of his body; eke when he will not visit the sick, or the prisoner, if he may; eke if he love wife, or child, or other worldly thing, more than reason requireth; eke if he flatter or blandish more than he ought for any necessity; eke if he minish or withdraw the alms of the poor; eke if he apparail prepare his meat more deliciously than need is, or eat it too hastily by likerousness gluttony; eke if he talk vanities in the church, or at God's service, or that he be a talker of idle words of folly or villainy, for he shall yield account of them at the day of doom; eke when he behighteth promiseth or assureth to do things that he may not perform; eke when that by lightness of folly he missayeth or scorneth his neighbour; eke when he hath any wicked suspicion of thing, that he wot of it no soothfastness: these things, and more without number, be sins, as saith Saint Augustine.

No earthly man may eschew all venial sins; yet may he refrain him, by the burning love that he hath to our Lord Jesus Christ, and by prayer and confession, and other good works, so that it shall but little grieve. "Furthermore, men may also refrain and put away venial sin, by receiving worthily the precious body of Jesus Christ; by receiving eke of holy water; by alms-deed; by general confession of Confiteor at mass, and at prime, and at compline evening service; and by blessing of bishops and priests, and by other good works." The Parson then proceeds to weightier matters:—

Now it is behovely profitable, necessary to tell which be deadly sins, that is to say, chieftains of sins; forasmuch as all they run in one leash, but in diverse manners. Now be they called chieftains, forasmuch as they be chief, and of them spring all other sins. The root of these sins, then, is pride, the general root of all harms. For of this root spring certain branches: as ire, envy, accidie or sloth, avarice or covetousness (to common understanding), gluttony, and lechery: and each of these sins hath his branches and his twigs, as shall be declared in their chapters following. And though so be, that no man can tell utterly the number of the twigs, and of the harms that come of pride, yet will I

shew a part of them, as ye shall understand. There is inobedience, vaunting, hypocrisy, despite, arrogance, impudence, swelling of hearte, insolence, elation, impatience, strife, contumacy, presumption, irreverence, pertinacity, vain- glory and many another twig that I cannot tell nor declare. . . .

And yet moreover there is a privy species of pride that waiteth first to be saluted ere he will salute, all although be he less worthy than that other is; and eke he waiteth expecteth or desireth to sit or to go above him in the way, or kiss the pax, or be incensed, or go to offering before his neighbour, and such semblable like things, against his duty peradventure, but that he hath his heart and his intent in such a proud desire to be magnified and honoured before the people. Now be there two manner of prides; the one of them is within the heart of a man, and the other is without. Of which soothly these foresaid things, and more than I have said, appertain to pride that is within the heart of a man and there be other species of pride that be without: but nevertheless, the one of these species of pride is sign of the other, right as the gay levesell bush at the tavern is sign of the wine that is in the cellar. And this is in many things: as in speech and countenance, and outrageous array of clothing; for certes, if there had been no sin in clothing, Christ would not so soon have noted and spoken of the clothing of that rich man in the gospel. And Saint Gregory saith, that precious clothing is culpable for the dearth dearness of it, and for its softness, and for its strangeness and disguising, and for the superfluity or for the inordinate scantness of it; alas! may not a man see in our days the sinful costly array of clothing, and namely specially in too much superfluity, or else in too disordinate scantness? As to the first sin, in superfluity of clothing, which that maketh it so dear, to the harm of the people, not only the cost of the embroidering, the disguising, indenting or barring, ounding, paling, winding, or banding, and semblable similar waste of cloth in vanity; but there is also the costly furring lining or edging with fur in their gowns, so much punching of chisels to make holes, so much dagging cutting of shears, with the superfluity in length of the foresaid gowns, trailing in the dung and in the mire, on horse and eke on foot, as well of man as of woman, that all that trailing is verily (as in effect) wasted, consumed, threadbare, and rotten with dung, rather than it is given to the poor, to great damage of the foresaid poor folk, and that in sundry wise: this is to say, the more that cloth is wasted, the more must it cost to the poor people for the scarceness; and furthermore, if so be that they would give such punched and dagged clothing to the poor people, it is not convenient to wear for their estate, nor sufficient to boot help, remedy their necessity, to keep them from the distemperance inclemency of the firmament. Upon the other side, to speak of the horrible disordinate scantness of clothing, as be these cutted slops or hanselines breeches, that through their shortness cover not the shameful member of man, to wicked intent alas! some of them shew the boss and the shape of the horrible swollen members, that seem like to the malady of hernia, in the wrapping of their hosen, and eke the buttocks of them, that fare as it were the hinder part of a she-ape in the full of the moon. And more over the wretched swollen

members that they shew through disguising, in departing dividing of their hosen in white and red, seemeth that half their shameful privy members were flain flayed. And if so be that they depart their hosen in other colours, as is white and blue, or white and black, or black and red, and so forth; then seemeth it, by variance of colour, that the half part of their privy members be corrupt by the fire of Saint Anthony, or by canker, or other such mischance. And of the hinder part of their buttocks it is full horrible to see, for certes, in that part of their body where they purge their stinking ordure, that foul part shew they to the people proudly in despite of honesty decency, which honesty Jesus Christ and his friends observed to shew in his life. Now as of the outrageous array of women, God wot, that though the visages of some of them seem full chaste and debonair gentle, yet notify they, in their array of attire, likerousness and pride. I say not that honesty reasonable and appropriate style in clothing of man or woman unconvenable but, certes, the superfluity or disordinate scarcity of clothing is reprobable. Also the sin of their ornament, or of apparel, as in things that appertain to riding, as in too many delicate horses, that be holden for delight, that be so fair, fat, and costly; and also in many a vicious knave, servant that is sustained because of them; in curious harness, as in saddles, cruppers, peytrels, breast-plates and bridles, covered with precious cloth and rich bars and plates of gold and silver. For which God saith by Zechariah the prophet, "I will confound the riders of such horses." These folk take little regard of the riding of God's Son of heaven, and of his harness, when he rode upon an ass, and had no other harness but the poor clothes of his disciples; nor we read not that ever he rode on any other beast. I speak this for the sin of superfluity, and not for reasonable honesty seemliness, when reason it requireth. And moreover, certes, pride is greatly notified in holding of great meinie retinue of servants, when they be of little profit or of right no profit, and namely especially when that meinie is felonous violent and damageous harmful to the people by hardiness arrogance of high lordship, or by way of office; for certes, such lords sell then their lordship to the devil of hell, when they sustain the wickedness of their meinie. Or else, when these folk of low degree, as they that hold hostelries, sustain theft of their hostellers, and that is in many manner of deceits: that manner of folk be the flies that follow the honey, or else the hounds that follow the carrion. Such foresaid folk strangle spiritually their lordships; for which thus saith David the prophet, "Wicked death may come unto these lordships, and God give that they may descend into hell adown; for in their houses is iniquity and shrewedness, impiety and not God of heaven." And certes, but if unless they do amendment, right as God gave his benison blessing to Laban by the service of Jacob, and to Pharaoh by the service of Joseph; right so God will give his malison condemnation to such lordships as sustain the wickedness of their servants, but unless they come to amendment. Pride of the table apaireth worketh harm eke full oft; for, certes, rich men be called to feasts, and poor folk be put away and rebuked; also in excess of divers meats and drinks, and namely specially such manner bake-meats and dish-meats burning of wild fire, and painted and castled with paper, and semblable similar waste, so that it is abuse to think.

And eke in too great preciousness of vessel, plate and curiosity of minstrelsy, by which a man is stirred more to the delights of luxury, if so be that he set his heart the less upon our Lord Jesus Christ, certain it is a sin; and certainly the delights might be so great in this case, that a man might lightly easily fall by them into deadly sin.

The sins that arise of pride advisedly and habitually are deadly; those that arise by frailty unadvised suddenly, and suddenly withdraw again, though grievous, are not deadly. Pride itself springs sometimes of the goods of nature, sometimes of the goods of fortune, sometimes of the goods of grace; but the Parson, enumerating and examining all these in turn, points out how little security they possess and how little ground for pride they furnish, and goes on to enforce the remedy against pride — which is humility or meekness, a virtue through which a man hath true knowledge of himself, and holdeth no high esteem of himself in regard of his deserts, considering ever his frailty.

Now be there three manners kinds of humility; as humility in heart, and another in the mouth, and the third in works. The humility in the heart is in four manners: the one is, when a man holdeth himself as nought worth before God of heaven; the second is, when he despiseth no other man; the third is, when he recketh not though men hold him nought worth; the fourth is, when he is not sorry of his humiliation. Also the humility of mouth is in four things: in temperate speech; in humility of speech; and when he confesseth with his own mouth that he is such as he thinketh that he is in his heart; another is, when he praiseth the bounte goodness of another man and nothing thereof diminisheth. Humility eke in works is in four manners: the first is, when he putteth other men before him; the second is, to choose the lowest place of all; the third is, gladly to assent to good counsel; the fourth is, to stand gladly by the award judgment of his sovereign, or of him that is higher in degree: certain this is a great work of humility.

The Parson proceeds to treat of the other cardinal sins, and their remedies: (.) Envy, with its remedy, the love of God principally and of our neighbours as ourselves: (.) Anger, with all its fruits in revenge, rancour, hate, discord, manslaughter, blasphemy, swearing, falsehood, flattery, chiding and reproving, scorning, treachery, sowing of strife, doubleness of tongue, betraying of counsel to a man's disgrace, menacing, idle words, jangling, japery or buffoonery, &c. — and its remedy in the virtues called mansuetude, debonaire, or gentleness, and patience or sufferance: (.) Sloth, or "Accidie," which comes after the sin of Anger, because Envy blinds the eyes of a man, and Anger troubleth a man, and Sloth maketh him heavy, thoughtful, and peevish. It is opposed to every estate of man — as unfallen, and held to work in praising and adoring God; as sinful, and held to labour in praying for deliverance from sin; and as in the state of grace, and held to works of penitence. It resembles the heavy and sluggish condition of those in hell; it will suffer no hardness and no penance; it prevents any beginning of good works; it causes despair of God's mercy, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost; it

induces somnolency and neglect of communion in prayer with God; and it breeds negligence or recklessness, that cares for nothing, and is the nurse of all mischiefs, if ignorance is their mother. Against Sloth, and these and other branches and fruits of it, the remedy lies in the virtue of fortitude or strength, in its various species of magnanimity or great courage; faith and hope in God and his saints; surety or sickness, when a man fears nothing that can oppose the good works he has under taken; magnificence, when he carries out great works of goodness begun; constancy or stableness of heart; and other incentives to energy and laborious service: (.) Avarice, or Covetousness, which is the root of all harms, since its votaries are idolaters, oppressors and enslavers of men, deceivers of their equals in business, simoniacs, gamblers, liars, thieves, false swearers, blasphemers, murderers, and sacrilegious. Its remedy lies in compassion and pity largely exercised, and in reasonable liberality — for those who spend on "fool-largesse," or ostentation of worldly estate and luxury, shall receive the malison condemnation that Christ shall give at the day of doom to them that shall be damned: (.) Gluttony; — of which the Parson treats so briefly that the chapter may be given in full: —

After Avarice cometh Gluttony, which is express against the commandment of God. Gluttony is unmeasurable appetite to eat or to drink; or else to do in aught to the unmeasurable appetite and disordered covetousness craving to eat or drink. This sin corrupted all this world, as is well shewed in the sin of Adam and of Eve. Look also what saith Saint Paul of gluttony: "Many," saith he, "go, of which I have oft said to you, and now I say it weeping, that they be enemies of the cross of Christ, of which the end is death, and of which their womb stomach is their God and their glory;" in confusion of them that so savour take delight in earthly things. He that is usant accustomed, addicted to this sin of gluttony, he may no sin withstand, he must be in servage bondage of all vices, for it is the devil's hoard, lair, lurking-place where he hideth him in and resteth. This sin hath many species. The first is drunkenness, that is the horrible sepulture of man's reason: and therefore when a man is drunken, he hath lost his reason; and this is deadly sin. But soothly, when that a man is not wont to strong drink, and peradventure knoweth not the strength of the drink, or hath feebleness in his head, or hath travailed laboured, through which he drinketh the more, all although be he suddenly caught with drink, it is no deadly sin, but venial. The second species of gluttony is, that the spirit of a man waxeth all troubled for drunkenness, and bereaveth a man the discretion of his wit. The third species of gluttony is, when a man devoureth his meat, and hath no rightful manner of eating. The fourth is, when, through the great abundance of his meat, the humours of his body be distempered. The fifth is, forgetfulness by too much drinking, for which a man sometimes forgetteth by the morrow what he did at eve. In other manner be distinct the species of gluttony, after Saint Gregory. The first is, for to eat or drink before time. The second is, when a man getteth him too delicate meat or drink. The third is, when men take too much over measure immoderately. The fourth is

curiosity nicety with great intent application, pains to make and apparel prepare his meat. The fifth is, for to eat too greedily. These be the five fingers of the devil's hand, by which he draweth folk to the sin.

Against gluttony the remedy is abstinence, as saith Galen; but that I hold not meritorious, if he do it only for the health of his body. Saint Augustine will that abstinence be done for virtue, and with patience. Abstinence, saith he, is little worth, but if unless a man have good will thereto, and but it be enforced by patience and by charity, and that men do it for God's sake, and in hope to have the bliss in heaven. The fellows of abstinence be temperance, that holdeth the mean in all things; also shame, that escheweth all dishonesty indecency, impropriety, sufficiency, that seeketh no rich meats nor drinks, nor doth no force of sets no value on no outrageous apparelling of meat; measure moderation also, that restraineth by reason the unmeasurable appetite of eating; soberness also, that restraineth the outrage of drink; sparing also, that restraineth the delicate ease to sit long at meat, wherefore some folk stand of their own will to eat, because they will eat at less leisure.

At great length the Parson then points out the many varieties of the sin of (.) Lechery, and its remedy in chastity and continence, alike in marriage and in widowhood; also in the abstaining from all such indulgences of eating, drinking, and sleeping as inflame the passions, and from the company of all who may tempt to the sin. Minute guidance is given as to the duty of confessing fully and faithfully the circumstances that attend and may aggravate this sin; and the Treatise then passes to the consideration of the conditions that are essential to a true and profitable confession of sin in general. First, it must be in sorrowful bitterness of spirit; a condition that has five signs — shamefastness, humility in heart and outward sign, weeping with the bodily eyes or in the heart, disregard of the shame that might curtail or garble confession, and obedience to the penance enjoined. Secondly, true confession must be promptly made, for dread of death, of increase of sinfulness, of forgetfulness of what should be confessed, of Christ's refusal to hear if it be put off to the last day of life; and this condition has four terms; that confession be well pondered beforehand, that the man confessing have comprehended in his mind the number and greatness of his sins and how long he has lain in sin, that he be contrite for and eschew his sins, and that he fear and flee the occasions for that sin to which he is inclined. — What follows under this head is of some interest for the light which it throws on the rigorous government wielded by the Romish Church in those days —

Also thou shalt shrive thee of all thy sins to one man, and not a parcel portion to one man, and a parcel to another; that is to understand, in intent to depart divide thy confession for shame or dread; for it is but strangling of thy soul. For certes Jesus Christ is entirely all good, in him is none imperfection, and therefore either he forgiveth all

perfectly, or else never a deal not at all. I say not that if thou be assigned to thy penitencer for a certain sin, that thou art bound to shew him all the remnant of thy sins, of which thou hast been shriven of thy curate, but if it like thee unless thou be pleased of thy humility; this is no departing division of shrift. And I say not, where I speak of division of confession, that if thou have license to shrive thee to a discreet and an honest priest, and where thee liketh, and by the license of thy curate, that thou mayest not well shrive thee to him of all thy sins: but let no blot be behind, let no sin be untold as far as thou hast remembrance. And when thou shalt be shriven of thy curate, tell him eke all the sins that thou hast done since thou wert last shriven. This is no wicked intent of division of shrift. Also, very shrift true confession asketh certain conditions. First, that thou shrive thee by thy free will, not constrained, nor for shame of folk, nor for malady sickness, or such things: for it is reason, that he that trespasseth by his free will, that by his free will he confess his trespass; and that no other man tell his sin but himself; nor he shall not nay nor deny his sin, nor wrath him against the priest for admonishing him to leave his sin. The second condition is, that thy shrift be lawful, that is to say, that thou that shrivest thee, and eke the priest that heareth thy confession, be verily in the faith of Holy Church, and that a man be not despaired of the mercy of Jesus Christ, as Cain and Judas were. And eke a man must accuse himself of his own trespass, and not another: but he shall blame and wite accuse himself of his own malice and of his sin, and none other: but nevertheless, if that another man be occasion or else enticer of his sin, or the estate of the person be such by which his sin is aggravated, or else that he may not plainly shrive him but unless he tell the person with which he hath sinned, then may he tell, so that his intent be not to backbite the person, but only to declare his confession. Thou shalt not eke make no leasings falsehoods in thy confession for humility, peradventure, to say that thou hast committed and done such sins of which that thou wert never guilty. For Saint Augustine saith, "If that thou, because of humility, makest a leasing on thyself, though thou were not in sin before, yet art thou then in sin through thy leasing." Thou must also shew thy sin by thine own proper mouth, but unless thou be dumb, and not by letter; for thou that hast done the sin, thou shalt have the shame of the confession. Thou shalt not paint thy confession with fair and subtle words, to cover the more thy sin; for then beguilest thou thyself, and not the priest; thou must tell it plainly, be it never so foul nor so horrible. Thou shalt eke shrive thee to a priest that is discreet to counsel thee; and eke thou shalt not shrive thee for vain-glory, nor for hypocrisy, nor for no cause but only for the doubt fear of Jesus' Christ and the health of thy soul. Thou shalt not run to the priest all suddenly, to tell him lightly thy sin, as who telleth a jape jest or a tale, but advisedly and with good devotion; and generally shrive thee oft; if thou oft fall, oft arise by confession. And though thou shrive thee oftener than once of sin of which thou hast been shriven, it is more merit; and, as saith Saint Augustine, thou shalt have the more lightly easily release and grace of God, both of sin and of pain. And certes, once a year at the least way, it is lawful to be houseled, for soothly once a year all things in the earth renovel en renew themselves.

Here ends the Second Part of the Treatise; the Third Part, which contains the practical application of the whole, follows entire, along with the remarkable "Prayer of Chaucer," as it stands in the Harleian Manuscript:—

De Tertia Parte Poenitentiae. Of the third part of penitence

Now have I told you of very true confession, that is the second part of penitence: The third part of penitence is satisfaction, and that standeth generally in almsdeed and bodily pain. Now be there three manner of almsdeed: contrition of heart, where a man offereth himself to God; the second is, to have pity of the default of his neighbour; the third is, in giving of good counsel and comfort, ghostly and bodily, where men have need, and namely specially sustenance of man's food. And take keep heed that a man hath need of these things generally; he hath need of food, of clothing, and of herberow lodging, he hath need of charitable counsel and visiting in prison and malady, and sepulture of his dead body. And if thou mayest not visit the needful with thy person, visit them by thy message and by thy gifts. These be generally alms or works of charity of them that have temporal riches or discretion in counselling. Of these works shalt thou hear at the day of doom. This alms shouldest thou do of thine own proper things, and hastily promptly, and privily secretly if thou mayest; but nevertheless, if thou mayest not do it privily, thou shalt not forbear to do alms, though men see it, so that it be not done for thank of the world, but only for thank of Jesus Christ. For, as witnesseth Saint Matthew, chap. v., "A city may not be hid that is set on a mountain, nor men light not a lantern and put it under a bushel, but men set it on a candlestick, to light the men in the house; right so shall your light lighten before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father that is in heaven."

Now as to speak of bodily pain, it is in prayer, in wakings, watchings in fastings, and in virtuous teachings. Of orisons ye shall understand, that orisons or prayers is to say a piteous will of heart, that redresseth it in God, and expresseth it by word outward, to remove harms, and to have things spiritual and durable, and sometimes temporal things. Of which orisons, certes in the orison of the Pater noster hath our Lord Jesus Christ enclosed most things. Certes, it is privileged of three things in its dignity, for which it is more digne worthy than any other prayer: for Jesus Christ himself made it: and it is short, for in order it should be coude the more lightly, be more easily conned or learned and to withhold retain it the more easy in heart, and help himself the oftener with this orison; and for a man should be the less weary to say it; and for a man may not excuse him to learn it, it is so short and so easy: and for it comprehendeth in itself all good prayers. The exposition of this holy prayer, that is so excellent and so digne, I betake commit to these masters of theology; save thus much will I say, when thou prayest that God should forgive thee thy guilts, as thou forgivest them that they guilt to

thee, be full well ware that thou be not out of charity. This holy orison aminisheth lesseneth eke venial sin, and therefore it appertaineth specially to penitence. This prayer must be truly said, and in very faith, and that men pray to God ordinally, discreetly, and devoutly; and always a man shall put his will to be subject to the will of God. This orison must eke be said with great humbleness and full pure, and honestly, and not to the annoyance of any man or woman. It must eke be continued with the works of charity. It availeth against the vices of the soul; for, assaith Saint Jerome, by fasting he saved the vices of the flesh, and by prayer the vices of the soul

After this thou shalt understand, that bodily pain stands in waking watching. For Jesus Christ saith "Wake and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Ye shall understand also, that fasting stands in three things: in forbearing of bodily meat and drink, and in forbearing of worldly jollity, and in forbearing of deadly sin; this is to say, that a man shall keep him from deadly sin in all that he may. And thou shalt understand eke, that God ordained fasting; and to fasting appertain four things: largeness generosity to poor folk; gladness of heart spiritual; not to be angry nor annoyed nor grudge murmur for he fasteth; and also reasonable hour for to eat by measure; that is to say, a man should not eat in untime out of time, nor sit the longer at his meal for because he fasteth. Then shalt thou understand, that bodily pain standeth in discipline, or teaching, by word, or by writing, or by ensample. Also in wearing of hairs haircloth or of stamin coarse hempen cloth, or of habergeons mail-shirts on their naked flesh for Christ's sake; but ware thee well that such manner penance of thy flesh make not thine heart bitter or angry, nor annoyed of thyself; for better is to cast away thine hair than to cast away the sweetness of our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore saith Saint Paul, "Clothe you, as they that be chosen of God in heart, of misericorde with compassion, debonaire gentleness, sufferance patience, and such manner of clothing," of which Jesus Christ is more apaid better pleased than of hairs or of hauberks. Then is discipline eke in knocking of thy breast, in scourging with yards rods, in kneelings, in tribulations, in suffering patiently wrongs that be done to him, and eke in patient sufferance of maladies, or losing of worldly catel chattels, or of wife, or of child, or of other friends.

Then shalt thou understand which things disturb penance, and this is in four things; that is dread, shame, hope, and wanhope, that is, desperation. And for to speak first of dread, for which he weeneth that he may suffer no penance, thereagainst is remedy for to think that bodily penance is but short and little at the regard of in comparison with the pain of hell, that is so cruel and so long, that it lasteth without end. Now against the shame that a man hath to shrive him, and namely specially these hypocrites, that would be holden so perfect, that they have no need to shrive them; against that shame should a man think, that by way of reason he that hath not been ashamed to do foul things, certes he ought not to be ashamed to do fair things, and that is confession. A man should eke think, that God seeth and knoweth all thy thoughts, and all thy works; to him may

nothing be hid nor covered. Men should eke remember them of the shame that is to come at the day of doom, to them that be not penitent and shriven in this present life; for all the creatures in heaven, and in earth, and in hell, shall see apertly openly all that he hideth in this world.

Now for to speak of them that be so negligent and slow to shrive them; that stands in two manners. The one is, that he hopeth to live long, and to purchase acquire much riches for his delight, and then he will shrive him: and, as he sayeth, he may, as him seemeth, timely enough come to shrift: another is, the surquedrie presumption that he hath in Christ's mercy. Against the first vice, he shall think that our life is in no sickness, security and eke that all the riches in this world be in adventure, and pass as a shadow on the wall; and, as saith St Gregory, that it appertaineth to the great righteousness of God, that never shall the pain stint cease of them, that never would withdraw them from sin, their thanks with their goodwill, but aye continue in sin; for that perpetual will to do sin shall they have perpetual pain. Wanhope despair is in two manners of two kinds. The first wanhope is, in the mercy of God: the other is, that they think they might not long persevere in goodness. The first wanhope cometh of that he deemeth that he sinned so highly and so oft, and so long hath lain in sin, that he shall not be saved. Certes against that cursed wanhope should he think, that the passion of Jesus Christ is more strong for to unbind, than sin is strong for to bind. Against the second wanhope he shall think, that as oft as he falleth, he may arise again by penitence; and though he never so long hath lain in sin, the mercy of Christ is always ready to receive him to mercy. Against the wanhope that he thinketh he should not long persevere in goodness, he shall think that the feebleness of the devil may nothing do, but unless men will suffer him; and eke he shall have strength of the help of God, and of all Holy Church, and of the protection of angels, if him list.

Then shall men understand, what is the fruit of penance; and after the word of Jesus Christ, it is the endless bliss of heaven, where joy hath no contrariety of woe nor of penance nor grievance; there all harms be passed of this present life; there as is the sickness security from the pain of hell; there as is the blissful company, that rejoice them evermore each of the other's joy; there as the body of man, that whilom was foul and dark, is more clear than the sun; there as the body of man that whilom was sick and frail, feeble and mortal, is immortal, and so strong and so whole, that there may nothing apair impair, injure it; there is neither hunger, nor thirst, nor cold, but every soul replenished with the sight of the perfect knowing of God. This blissful regne kingdom may men purchase by poverty spiritual, and the glory by lowliness, the plenty of joy by hunger and thirst, the rest by travail, and the life by death and mortification of sin; to which life He us bring, that bought us with his precious blood! Amen.

PRECES DE CHAUCERES Prayer of Chaucer

Now pray I to you all that hear this little treatise or read it, that if there be anything in it that likes them, that thereof they thank our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom proceedeth all wit and all goodness; and if there be anything that displeaseth them, I pray them also that they arette impute it to the default of mine unconning unskilfulness, and not to my will, that would fain have said better if I had had conning; for the book saith, all that is written for our doctrine is written. Wherefore I beseech you meekly for the mercy of God that ye pray for me, that God have mercy on me and forgive me my guilts, and namely specially my translations and of inditing in worldly vanities, which I revoke in my Retractions, as is the Book of Troilus, the Book also of Fame, the Book of Twenty-five Ladies, the Book of the Duchess, the Book of Saint Valentine's Day and of the Parliament of Birds, the Tales of Canter bury, all those that sounen unto sin, are sinful, tend towards sin the Book of the Lion, and many other books, if they were in my mind or remembrance, and many a song and many a lecherous lay, of the which Christ for his great mercy forgive me the sins. But of the translation of Boece de Consolacione, and other books of consolation and of legend of lives of saints, and homilies, and moralities, and devotion, that thank I our Lord Jesus Christ, and his mother, and all the saints in heaven, beseeching them that they from henceforth unto my life's end send me grace to bewail my guilts, and to study to the salvation of my soul, and grant me grace and space of very repentance, penitence, confession, and satisfaction, to do in this present life, through the benign grace of Him that is King of kings and Priest of all priests, that bought us with his precious blood of his heart, so that I may be one of them at the day of doom that shall be saved: Qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula. Amen.

THE END OF THE CANTERBURY TALES

THE COURT OF LOVE.

"The Court Of Love" was probably Chaucer's first poem of any consequence. It is believed to have been written at the age, and under the circumstances, of which it contains express mention; that is, when the poet was eighteen years old, and resided as a student at Cambridge, — about the year . The composition is marked by an elegance, care, and finish very different from the bold freedom which in so great measure distinguishes the Canterbury Tales; and the fact is easily explained when we remember that, in the earlier poem, Chaucer followed a beaten path, in which he had many predecessors and competitors, all seeking to sound the praises of love with the grace, the ingenuity, and studious devotion, appropriate to the theme. The story of the poem is exceedingly simple. Under the name of Philogenet, a clerk or scholar of Cambridge, the poet relates that, summoned by Mercury to the Court of Love, he journeys to the splendid castle where the King and Queen of Love, Admetus and Alcestis, keep their state. Discovering among the courtiers a friend named Philobone, a chamberwoman to the Queen, Philogenet is led by her into a circular temple, where, in a tabernacle, sits Venus, with Cupid by her side. While he is surveying the motley crowd of suitors to the goddess, Philogenet is summoned back into the King's presence, chidden for his tardiness in coming to Court, and commanded to swear observance to the twenty Statutes of Love — which are recited at length. Philogenet then makes his prayers and vows to Venus, desiring that he may have for his love a lady whom he has seen in a dream; and Philobone introduces him to the lady herself, named Rosial, to whom he does suit and service of love. At first the lady is obdurate to his entreaties; but, Philogenet having proved the sincerity of his passion by a fainting fit, Rosial relents, promises her favour, and orders Philobone to conduct him round the Court. The courtiers are then minutely described; but the description is broken off abruptly, and we are introduced to Rosial in the midst of a confession of her love. Finally she commands Philogenet to abide with her until the First of May, when the King of Love will hold high festival; he obeys; and the poem closes with the May Day festival service, celebrated by a choir of birds, who sing an ingenious, but what must have seemed in those days a more than slightly profane, paraphrase or parody of the matins for Trinity Sunday, to the praise of Cupid. From this outline, it will be seen at once that Chaucer's "Court of Love" is in important particulars different from the institutions which, in the two centuries preceding his own, had so much occupied the attention of poets and gallants, and so powerfully controlled the social life of the noble and refined classes. It is a regal, not a legal, Court which the poet pictures to us; we are not introduced to a regularly constituted and authoritative tribunal in which nice questions of conduct in the relations of lovers are discussed and decided — but to the central and sovereign seat of Love's authority, where the statutes are moulded, and the decrees are issued, upon which the

inferior and special tribunals we have mentioned frame their proceedings. The "Courts of Love," in Chaucer's time, had lost none of the prestige and influence which had been conferred upon them by the patronage and participation of Kings, Queens, Emperors, and Popes. But the institution, in its legal or judicial character, was peculiar to France; and although the whole spirit of Chaucer's poem, especially as regards the esteem and reverence in which women were held, is that which animated the French Courts, his treatment of the subject is broader and more general, consequently more fitted to enlist the interest of English readers. (Transcriber's note: Modern scholars believe that Chaucer was not the author of this poem)

The poem consists of stanzas of seven lines each; of which, in this edition, eighty-three are represented by a prose abridgement.

With timorous heart, and trembling hand of dread,
Of cunning naked, bare of eloquence, skill
Unto the flow'r of port in womanhead one who is the perfection
I write, as he that none intelligence of womanly behaviour
Of metres hath, nor flowers of sentence,
Save that me list my writing to convey,
In that I can, to please her high nobley. nobleness
The blossoms fresh of Tullius' garden swoot Cicero sweet
Present they not, my matter for to born: burnish, polish
Poems of Virgil take here no root,
Nor craft of Galfrid may not here sojourn;
Why n'am I cunning? O well may I mourn, am I not
For lack of science, that I cannot write
Unto the princess of my life aright!
No terms are dign unto her excellence, worthy
So is she sprung of noble stirp and high; stock
A world of honour and of reverence
There is in her, this will I testify.
Calliope, thou sister wise and sly, skilful
And thou, Minerva, guide me with thy grace,
That language rude my matter not deface!
Thy sugar droppes sweet of Helicon
Distil in me, thou gentle Muse, I pray;
And thee, Melpomene, I call anon
Of ignorance the mist to chase away;
And give me grace so for to write and say,
That she, my lady, of her worthiness,
Accept in gree this little short treatess, with favour treatise

That is entitled thus, The Court of Love.
 And ye that be metricians, me excuse, skilled versifiers
 I you beseech, for Venus' sake above;
 For what I mean in this ye need not muse:
 And if so be my lady it refuse
 For lack of ornate speech, I would be woe
 That I presume to her to write so.
 But my intent, and all my busy cure, care
 Is for to write this treatise, as I can,
 Unto my lady, stable, true, and sure,
 Faithful and kind, since first that she began
 Me to accept in service as her man;
 To her be all the pleasure of this book,
 That, when her like, she may it read and look. it pleases her
 When he was young, at eighteen year of age,
 Lusty and light, desirous of pleasance,
 Approaching full sad and ripe corage, gradually attaining
 Then — says the poet — did Love urge him to do him obeisance, and to go "the Court of
 Love to see, a lite little beside the Mount of Citharee." Mercury bade him, on pain of
 death, to appear; and he went by strange and far countries in search of the Court. Seeing
 at last a crowd of people, "as bees," making their way thither, the poet asked whither
 they went; and "one that answer'd like a maid" said that they were bound to the Court of
 Love, at Citheron, where "the King of Love, and all his noble rout company,

 "Dwelleth within a castle royally."
 So them apace I journey'd forth among,
 And as he said, so found I there truly;
 For I beheld the town — so high and strong,
 And high pinnacles, large of height and long,
 With plate of gold bespread on ev'ry side,
 And precious stones, the stone work for to hide.
 No sapphire of Ind, no ruby rich of price,
 There lacked then, nor emerald so green,
 Balais, Turkeis, nor thing, to my devise, in my judgement
 That may the castle make for to sheen; be beautiful
 All was as bright as stars in winter be'n;
 And Phoebus shone, to make his peace again,
 For trespass done to high estates twain, — offence
 When he had found Venus in the arms of Mars, and hastened to tell Vulcan of his wife's
 infidelity . Now he was shining brightly on the castle, "in sign he looked after Love's
 grace;" for there is no god in Heaven or in Hell "but he hath been right subject unto

Love." Continuing his description of the castle, Philogenet says that he saw never any so large and high; within and without, it was painted "with many a thousand daisies, red as rose," and white also, in signification of whom, he knew not; unless it was the flower of Alcestis, who, under Venus, was queen of the place, as Admetus was king;

To whom obey'd the ladies good nineteen,
With many a thousand other, bright of face.
And young men fele came forth with lusty pace, many
And aged eke, their homage to dispose;
But what they were, I could not well disclose.
Yet nere and nere forth in I gan me dress, nearer
Into a hall of noble apparail, furnishings
With arras spread, and cloth of gold, I guess,
And other silk of easier avail; less difficult, costly, to attain
Under the cloth of their estate, sans fail, state canopy
The King and Queen there sat, as I beheld;
It passed joy of Elysee the feld. The Elysian Fields
There saintes have their coming and resort, martyrs for love
To see the King so royally beseen, adorned
In purple clad, and eke the Queen in sort; suitably
And on their heades saw I crownes twain,
With stones frett, so that it was no pain, adorned
Withoute meat or drink, to stand and see
The Kinge's honour and the royalty.

To treat of state affairs, Danger stood by the King, and Disdain by the Queen; who cast her eyes haughtily about, sending forth beams that seemed "shapen like a dart, sharp and piercing, and small and straight of line;" while her hair shone as gold so fine, "dishevel, crisp, down hanging at her back a yard in length." Amazed and dazzled by her beauty, Philogenet stood perplexed, till he spied a Maid, Philobone — a chamberwoman of the Queen's — who asked how and on what errand he came thither. Learning that he had been summoned by Mercury, she told him that he ought to have come of his free will, and that he "will be shent rebuked, disgraced" because he did not.

"For ye that reign in youth and lustiness,
Pamper'd with ease, and jealous in your age,
Your duty is, as far as I can guess,
To Love's Court to dresse your voyage, direct, address
As soon as Nature maketh you so sage
That ye may know a woman from a swan,
Or when your foot is growen half a span.
"But since that ye, by wilful negligence,

This eighteen year have kept yourself at large,
The greater is your trespass and offence,
And in your neck you must bear all the charge:
For better were ye be withoute barge boat
Amid the sea in tempest and in rain,
Than bide here, receiving woe and pain
"That ordained is for such as them absent
From Love's Court by yeares long and fele. many
I lay my life ye shall full soon repent; wayer
For Love will rive your colour, lust, and heal: health
Eke ye must bait on many a heavy meal: feed
No force, y-wis; I stirr'd you long agoe no matter
To draw to Court," quoth little Philobone.
"Ye shall well see how rough and angry face
The King of Love will show, when ye him see;
By mine advice kneel down and ask him grace,
Eschewing peril and adversity; avoiding
For well I wot it will none other be;
Comfort is none, nor counsel to your ease;
Why will ye then the King of Love displease?"

Thereupon Philogenet professed humble repentance, and willingness to bear all
hardship and chastisement for his past offence.

These wordes said, she caught me by the lap, edge of the garment
And led me forth into a temple round,
Both large and wide; and, as my blessed hap
And good. adventure was, right soon I found
A tabernacle raised from the ground,
Where Venus sat, and Cupid by her side;
Yet half for dread I gan my visage hide.
And eft again I looked and beheld, afterwards
Seeing full sundry people in the place, people of many sorts
And mister folk, and some that might not weld craftsmen
Their limbes well, — me thought a wonder case. use
The temple shone with windows all of glass,
Bright as the day, with many a fair image;
And there I saw the fresh queen of Carthage,
Dido, that brent her beauty for the love burnt
Of false Aeneas; and the waimenting lamenting
Of her, Annelide, true as turtle dove
To Arcite false; and there was in painting

Of many a Prince, and many a doughty King,
Whose martyrdom was show'd about the walls;
And how that fele for love had suffer'd falls. many calamities
Philogenet was astonished at the crowd of people that he saw, doing sacrifice to the god
and goddess. Philobone informed him that they came from other courts; those who
knelt in blue wore the colour in sign of their changeless truth ; those in black, who
uttered cries of grief, were the sick and dying of love. The priests, nuns, hermits, and
friars, and all that sat in white, in russet and in green, "wailed of their woe;" and for all
people, of every degree, the Court was open and free. While he walked about with
Philobone, a messenger from the King entered, and summoned all the new-come folk to
the royal presence. Trembling and pale, Philogenet approached the throne of Admetus,
and was sternly asked why he came so late to Court. He pleaded that a hundred times he
had been at the gate, but had been prevented from entering by failure to see any of his
acquaintances, and by shamefacedness. The King pardoned him, on condition that
thenceforth he should serve Love; and the poet took oath to do so, "though Death
therefor me thirle pierce with his spear." When the King had seen all the new-comers, he
commanded an officer to take their oaths of allegiance, and show them the Statutes of
the Court, which must be observed till death.

And, for that I was letter'd, there I read
The statutes whole of Love's Court and hail:
The first statute that on the book was spread,
Was, To be true in thought and deedes all
Unto the King of Love, the lord royal;
And, to the Queen, as faithful and as kind
As I could think with hearte, will, and mind.
The second statute, Secretly to keep
Counsel of love, not blowing ev'rywhere secrets talking
All that I know, and let it sink and fleet; float
It may not sound in ev'ry wighte's ear:
Exiling slander ay for dread and fear,
And to my lady, which I love and serve,
Be true and kind, her grace for to deserve.
The third statute was clearly writ also,
Withoute change to live and die the same,
None other love to take, for weal nor woe,
For blind delight, for earnest nor for game:
Without repent, for laughing or for grame, vexation, sorrow
To bide still in full perseverance:
All this was whole the Kinge's ordinance.
The fourth statute, To purchase ever to her, promote her cause

And stirre folk to love, and bete fire kindle
On Venus' altar, here about and there,
And preach to them of love and hot desire,
And tell how love will quite well their hire: reward
This must be kept; and loth me to displeas:
If love be wroth, pass; for thereby is ease.
The fifth statute, Not to be dangerous, fastidious, angry
If that a thought would reave me of my sleep: deprive
Nor of a sight to be over squaimous; desirous
And so verily this statute was to keep,
To turn and wallow in my bed and weep,
When that my lady, of her cruelty,
Would from her heart exilen all pity.
The sixth statute, It was for me to use
Alone to wander, void of company,
And on my lady's beauty for to muse,
And thinken it no force to live or die; matter of indifference
And eft again to think the remedy, think upon
How to her grace I might anon attain,
And tell my woe unto my sovereign.
The sev'nth statute was, To be patient,
Whether my lady joyful were or wroth;
For wordes glad or heavy, diligent,
Whether that she me helde lefe or loth: in love or loathing
And hereupon I put was to mine oath,
Her for to serve, and lowly to obey,
And show my cheer, yea, twenty times a day. countenance
The eighth statute, to my remembrance,
Was, For to speak and pray my lady dear,
With hourly labour and great entendance, attention
Me for to love with all her heart entere, entire
And me desire and make me joyful cheer,
Right as she is, surmounting every fair;
Of beauty well, and gentle debonair. the fountain
The ninth statute, with letters writ of gold,
This was the sentence, How that I and all
Should ever dread to be too overbold
Her to displeas; and truly so I shall;
But be content for all thing that may fall,
And meekly take her chastisement and yerd, rod, rule
And to offend her ever be afear'd.

The tenth statute was, Equally to discern justly
 Between the lady and thine ability,
 And think thyself art never like to earn,
 By right, her mercy nor her equity,
 But of her grace and womanly pity:
 For, though thyself be noble in thy strenge, strain, descent
 A thousand fold more noble is thy Queen.
 Thy life's lady and thy sovereign,
 That hath thine heart all whole in governance,
 Thou may'st no wise it take to disdain,
 To put thee humbly at her ordinance,
 And give her free the rein of her pleasance;
 For liberty is thing that women look, look for, desire
 And truly else the matter is a crook. things go wrong
 Th' eleventh statute, Thy signes for to know
 With eye and finger, and with smiles soft,
 And low to couch, and alway for to show,
 For dread of spies, for to winken oft:
 And secretly to bring a sigh aloft,
 But still beware of over much resort;
 For that peradventure spoileth all thy sport.
 The twelfth statute remember to observe:
 For all the pain thou hast for love and woe,
 All is too lite her mercy to deserve, little
 Thou muste think, where'er thou ride or go;
 And mortal woundes suffer thou also,
 All for her sake, and think it well beset spent
 Upon thy love, for it may not be bet. better (spent)
 The thirteenth statute, Whilom is to think
 What thing may best thy lady like and please,
 And in thine hearte's bottom let it sink:
 Some thing devise, and take for it thine ease,
 And send it her, that may her heart appease:
 Some heart, or ring, or letter, or device,
 Or precious stone; but spare not for no price.
 The fourteenth statute eke thou shalt assay
 Firmly to keep, the most part of thy life:
 Wish that thy lady in thine armes lay,
 And nightly dream, thou hast thy nighte's wife
 Sweetly in armes, straining her as blife: eagerly
 And, when thou seest it is but fantasy,

See that thou sing not over merrily;
For too much joy hath oft a woeful end.
It longeth eke this statute for to hold, it belongs to the proper
To deem thy lady evermore thy friend, observance of this statute
And think thyself in no wise a cuckold.
In ev'ry thing she doth but as she sho'ld:
Construe the best, believe no tales new,
For many a lie is told, that seems full true.
But think that she, so bounteous and fair,
Could not be false: imagine this algate; at all events
And think that wicked tongues would her apair, defame
Sland'ring her name and worshipful estate, honourable fame
And lovers true to setten at debate:
And though thou seest a fault right at thine eye,
Excuse it blife, and glose it prettily. gloss it over
The fifteenth statute, Use to swear and stare,
And counterfeit a leasing hardily, falsehood boldly
To save thy lady's honour ev'rywhere,
And put thyself for her to fight boldly;
Say she is good, virtuous, and ghostly, spiritual, pure
Clear of intent, and heart, and thought, and will;
And argue not for reason nor for skill
Against thy lady's pleasure nor intent,
For love will not be counterpled indeed: met with counterpleas
Say as she saith, then shalt thou not be shent; disgraced
"The crow is white;" "Yea truly, so I rede:" judge
And aye what thing that she will thee forbid,
Eschew all that, and give her sov'reignty,
Her appetite to follow in all degree.
The sixteenth statute, keep it if thou may:
Sev'n times at night thy lady for to please,
And sev'n at midnight, sev'n at morrow day,
And drink a caudle early for thine ease.
Do this, and keep thine head from all disease,
And win the garland here of lovers all,
That ever came in Court, or ever shall.
Full few, think I, this statute hold and keep;
But truly this my reason gives me feel, enables me to perceive
That some lovers should rather fall asleep,
Than take on hand to please so oft and weel. well
There lay none oath to this statute adele, annexed

But keep who might as gave him his corage: as his heart
Now get this garland, folk of lusty age! inspired him
Now win who may, ye lusty folk of youth,
This garland fresh, of flowers red and white,
Purple and blue, and colours full uncouth, strange
And I shall crown him king of all delight!
In all the Court there was not, to my sight,
A lover true, that he was not adread,
When he express had heard the statute read. plainly
The sev'nteenth statute, When age approacheth on,
And lust is laid, and all the fire is queint, quenched
As freshly then thou shalt begin to fon, behave fondly
And doat in love, and all her image paint
In thy remembrance, till thou gin to faint,
As in the first season thine heart began:
And her desire, though thou nor may nor can
Perform thy living actual and lust;
Register this in thine remembrance:
Eke when thou may'st not keep thy thing from rust,
Yet speak and talk of pleasant dalliance;
For that shall make thine heart rejoice and dance;
And when thou may'st no more the game assay,
The statute bids thee pray for them that may.
The eighteenth statute, wholly to commend,
To please thy lady, is, That thou eschew
With sluttishness thyself for to offend;
Be jolly, fresh, and feat, with thinges new, dainty
Courtly with manner, this is all thy due,
Gentle of port, and loving cleanliness;
This is the thing that liketh thy mistress.
And not to wander like a dulled ass,
Ragged and torn, disguised in array,
Ribald in speech, or out of measure pass,
Thy bound exceeding; think on this alway:
For women be of tender heartes ay,
And lightly set their pleasure in a place;
When they misthink, they lightly let it pace. think wrongly
The nineteenth statute, Meat and drink forget:
Each other day see that thou fast for love,
For in the Court they live withoute meat,
Save such as comes from Venus all above;

They take no heed, in pain of great reprove, on pain of great
 Of meat and drink, for that is all in vain, reproach
 Only they live by sight of their sov'reign.
 The twentieth statute, last of ev'ry one,
 Enrol it in thy hearte's privy;
 To wring and wail, to turn, and sigh, and groan,
 When that thy lady absent is from thee;
 And eke renew the wordes all that she
 Between you twain hath said, and all the cheer
 That thee hath made thy life's lady dear.
 And see thy heart in quiet nor in rest
 Sojourn, till time thou see thy lady eft, again
 But whe'er she won by south, or east, or west, whether dwell
 With all thy force now see it be not left
 Be diligent, till time thy life be reft, until the time that
 In that thou may'st, thy lady for to see;
 This statute was of old antiquity.

The officer, called Rigour — who is incorruptible by partiality, favour, prayer, or gold — made them swear to keep the statutes; and, after taking the oath, Philogenet turned over other leaves of the book, containing the statutes of women. But Rigour sternly bade him forbear; for no man might know the statutes that belong to women.

"In secret wise they kepte be full close;
 They sound each one to liberty, my friend; tend, accord
 Pleasant they be, and to their own purpose;
 There wot no wight of them, but God and fiend, knows
 Nor aught shall wit, unto the worlde's end.
 The queen hath giv'n me charge, in pain to die,
 Never to read nor see them with mine eye.
 "For men shall not so near of counsel be'n
 With womanhead, nor knowen of their guise,
 Nor what they think, nor of their wit th'engine; craft
 I me report to Solomon the wise, I refer for proof to
 And mighty Samson, which beguiled thrice
 With Delilah was; he wot that, in a throw,
 There may no man statute of women know.
 "For it peradventure may right so befall,
 That they be bound by nature to deceive,
 And spin, and weep, and sugar strew on gall,
 The heart of man to ravish and to reave,
 And whet their tongue as sharp as sword or gleve: glaive, sword

It may betide this is their ordinance,
So must they lowly do their observance,
"And keep the statute given them of kind, by nature
Of such as Love hath giv'n them in their life.
Men may not wit why turneth every wind,
Nor waxe wise, nor be inquisitive
To know secret of maid, widow, or wife;
For they their statutes have to them reserved,
And never man to know them hath deserved."

Rigour then sent them forth to pay court to Venus, and pray her to teach them how they might serve and please their dames, or to provide with ladies those whose hearts were yet vacant. Before Venus knelt a thousand sad petitioners, entreating her to punish "the false untrue," that had broken their vows, "barren of ruth, untrue of what they said, now that their lust and pleasure is allay'd." But the mourners were in a minority;

Yet eft again, a thousand million,
Rejoicing, love, leading their life in bliss:
They said: "Venus, redress of all division, healer
Goddess eternal, thy name heried is! glorified
By love's bond is knit all thing, y-wis, assuredly
Beast unto beast, the earth to water wan, pale
Bird unto bird, and woman unto man;
"This is the life of joy that we be in,
Resembling life of heav'nly paradise;
Love is exiler ay of vice and sin;
Love maketh heartes lusty to devise;
Honour and grace have they in ev'ry wise,
That be to love's law obedient;
Love maketh folk benign and diligent;
"Aye stirring them to drede vice and shame:
In their degree it makes them honourable;
And sweet it is of love to bear the name,
So that his love be faithful, true, and stable:
Love pruneth him to seemen amiable;
Love hath no fault where it is exercis'd,
But sole with them that have all love despis'd:" only

And they conclude with grateful honours to the goddess — rejoicing hat they are hers in heart, and all inflamed with her grace and heavenly fear. Philogenet now entreats the goddess to remove his grief; for he also loves, and hotly, only he does not know where —

"Save only this, by God and by my troth;

Troubled I was with slumber, sleep, and sloth
This other night, and in a vision
I saw a woman roamen up and down,
"Of mean stature, and seemly to behold, middling height
Lusty and fresh, demure of countenance,
Young and well shap'd, with haire sheen as gold, shining
With eyne as crystal, farced with pleasance; crammed
And she gan stir mine heart a lite to dance; little
But suddenly she vanish gan right there:
Thus I may say, I love, and wot not where." know

If he could only know this lady, he would serve and obey her with all benignity; but if his destiny were otherwise, he would gladly love and serve his lady, whosoever she might be. He called on Venus for help to possess his queen and heart's life, and vowed daily war with Diana: "that goddess chaste I keepen care in no wise to serve; a fig for all her chastity!" Then he rose and went his way, passing by a rich and beautiful shrine, which, Philobone informed him, was the sepulchre of Pity. "A tender creature," she said,

"Is shrined there, and Pity is her name.
She saw an eagle wreak him on a fly, avenge
And pluck his wing, and eke him, in his game; for sport
And tender heart of that hath made her die:
Eke she would weep, and mourn right piteously,
To see a lover suffer great distress.
In all the Court was none, as I do guess,
"That could a lover half so well avail, help
Nor of his woe the torment or the rage
Aslake; for he was sure, withoute fail, assuage
That of his grief she could the heat assuage.
Instead of Pity, speedeth hot Courage
The matters all of Court, now she is dead;
I me report in this to womanhead. for evidence I refer to the
behaviour of women themselves.
"For wail, and weep, and cry, and speak, and pray, —
Women would not have pity on thy plaint;
Nor by that means to ease thine heart convey,
But thee receive for their own talent: inclination
And say that Pity caus'd thee, in consent
Of ruth, to take thy service and thy pain, compassion
In that thou may'st, to please thy sovereign."

Philobone now promised to lead Philogenet to "the fairest lady under sun that is," the "mirror of joy and bliss," whose name is Rosial, and "whose heart as yet is given to no

wight;" suggesting that, as he also was "with love but light advanc'd," he might set this lady in the place of her of whom he had dreamed. Entering a chamber gay, "there was Rosial, womanly to see;" and the subtle-piercing beams of her eyes wounded Philogenet to the heart. When he could speak, he threw himself on his knees, beseeching her to cool his fervent woe:

For there I took full purpose in my mind,
Unto her grace my painful heart to bind.
For, if I shall all fully her describe, describe
Her head was round, by compass of nature;
Her hair as gold, she passed all alive,
And lily forehead had this creature,
With lively browes flaw, of colour pure, yellow eyebrows
Between the which was mean disseverance
From ev'ry brow, to show a due distance.
Her nose directed straight, even as line,
With form and shape thereto convenient,
In which the goddes' milk-white path doth shine; the galaxy
And eke her eyne be bright and orient
As is the smaragd, unto my judgment, emerald
Or yet these starres heav'nly, small, and bright;
Her visage is of lovely red and white.
Her mouth is short, and shut in little space,
Flaming somedeal, not over red I mean, somewhat
With pregnant lips, and thick to kiss, percase as it chanced
(For lippes thin, not fat, but ever lean,
They serve of naught, they be not worth a bean;
For if the bass be full, there is delight; kiss
Maximian truly thus doth he write).
But to my purpose: I say, white as snow
Be all her teeth, and in order they stand
Of one stature; and eke her breath, I trow,
Surmounteth all odours that e'er I fand found
In sweetness; and her body, face, and hand
Be sharply slender, so that, from the head
Unto the foot, all is but womanhead. womanly perfection
I hold my peace of other thinges hid:
Here shall my soul, and not my tongue, bewray;
But how she was array'd, if ye me bid,
That shall I well discover you and say:
A bend of gold and silk, full fresh and gay, band

With hair in tress, y-broidered full well, plaited in tresses
Right smoothly kempt, and shining every deal. combed
About her neck a flow'r of fresh device
With rubies set, that lusty were to see'n;
And she in gown was, light and summer-wise,
Shapen full well, the colour was of green,
With aureate seint about her sides clean, golden cincture
With divers stones, precious and rich:
Thus was she ray'd, yet saw I ne'er her lich, arrayed like
If Jove had but seen this lady, Calisto and Alcmena had never lain in his arms, nor had
he loved the fair Europa, nor Danae, nor Antiope; "for all their beauty stood in Rosial;
she seemed like a thing celestial." By and by, Philogenet presented to her his petition for
love, which she heard with some haughtiness; she was not, she said, well acquainted
with him, she did not know where he dwelt, nor his name and condition. He informed
her that "in art of love he writes," and makes songs that may be sung in honour of the
King and Queen of Love. As for his name —

"My name? alas, my heart, why mak'st thou strange? why so cold
Philogenet I call'd am far and near, or distant?
Of Cambridge clerk, that never think to change
From you, that with your heav'nly streames clear beams, glances
Ravish my heart; and ghost, and all in fere: all together
Since at the first I writ my bill for grace, petition
Me thinks I see some mercy in your face;"
And again he humbly pressed his suit. But the lady disdained the idea that, "for a word
of sugar'd eloquence," she should have compassion in so little space; "there come but
few who speede here so soon." If, as he says, the beams of her eyes pierce and fret him,
then let him withdraw from her presence:

"Hurt not yourself, through folly, with a look;
I would be sorry so to make you sick!
A woman should beware eke whom she took:
Ye be a clerk: go searche well my book,
If any women be so light to win: easy
Nay, bide a while, though ye were all my kin." my only kindred
He might sue and serve, and wax pale, and green, and dead, without murmuring in any
wise; but whereas he desired her hastily to lean to love, he was unwise, and must cease
that language. For some had been at Court for twenty years, and might not obtain their
mistresses' favour; therefore she marvelled that he was so bold as to treat of love with
her. Philogenet, on this, broke into pitiful lamentation; bewailing the hour in which he

was born, and assuring the unyielding lady that the frosty grave and cold must be his bed, unless she relented.

With that I fell in swoon, and dead as stone,
With colour slain, and wan as ashes pale; deathlike
And by the hand she caught me up anon:
"Arise," quoth she; "what? have ye drunken dwale? sleeping potion
Why sleepe ye? It is no nightertale." night-time
"Now mercy! sweet," quoth I, y-wis afraid;
"What thing," quoth she, "hath made you so dismay'd?"

She said that by his hue she knew well that he was a lover; and if he were secret, courteous, and kind, he might know how all this could be allayed. She would amend all that she had missaid, and set his heart at ease; but he must faithfully keep the statutes, "and break them not for sloth nor ignorance." The lover requests, however, that the sixteenth may be released or modified, for it "doth him great grievance;" and she complies.

And softly then her colour gan appear,
As rose so red, throughout her visage all;
Wherefore methinks it is according her appropriate to
That she of right be called Rosial.
Thus have I won, with wordes great and small,
Some goodly word of her that I love best,
And trust she shall yet set mine heart in rest.

Rosial now told Philobone to conduct Philogenet all over the Court, and show him what lovers and what officers dwelt there; for he was yet a stranger.

And, stalking soft with easy pace, I saw
About the king standen all environ, around
Attendance, Diligence, and their fellow
Furtherer, Esperance, and many one; Hope
Dread-to-offend there stood, and not alone;
For there was eke the cruel adversair,
The lover's foe, that called is Despair;
Which unto me spake angrily and fell, cruelly
And said, my lady me deceive shall:
"Trow'st thou," quoth she, "that all that she did tell
Is true? Nay, nay, but under honey gall.
Thy birth and hers they be no thing egal: equal
Cast off thine heart, for all her wordes white,
For in good faith she loves thee but a lite. little

"And eke remember, thine ability
May not compare with her, this well thou wot."
Yea, then came Hope and said, "My friend, let be!
Believe him not: Despair he gins to doat."
"Alas," quoth I, "here is both cold and hot:
The one me biddeth love, the other nay;
Thus wot I not what me is best to say.
"But well wot I, my lady granted me
Truly to be my wounde's remedy;
Her gentleness may not infected be noble nature
With doubleness, this trust I till I die." duplicity
So cast I t' avoid Despair's company,
And take Hope to counsel and to friend.
"Yea, keep that well," quoth Philobone, "in mind."
And there beside, within a bay window,
Stood one in green, full large of breadth and length,
His beard as black as feathers of the crow;
His name was Lust, of wondrous might and strength;
And with Delight to argue there he think'th,
For this was always his opinion,
That love was sin: and so he hath begun
To reason fast, and ledge authority: allege authorities
"Nay," quoth Delight, "love is a virtue clear,
And from the soul his progress holdeth he:
Blind appetite of lust doth often steer, stir (the heart)
And that is sin; for reason lacketh there:
For thou dost think thy neighbour's wife to win;
Yet think it well that love may not be sin;
"For God, and saint, they love right verily,
Void of all sin and vice: this know I weel, well
Affection of flesh is sin truly;
But very love is virtue, as I feel; true
For very love may frail desire akele: cool
For very love is love withoute sin."
"Now stint," quoth Lust, "thou speak'st not worth a pin." cease
And there I left them in their arguing,
Roaming farther into the castle wide,
And in a corner Liar stood talking
Of leasings fast, with Flattery there beside; falsehoods
He said that women ware attire of pride, wore
And men were found of nature variant,

And could be false and showe beau semblant. put on plausible
appearances to deceive

Then Flattery bespake and said, y-wis:

"See, so she goes on pattens fair and feat; pretty, neat

It doth right well: what pretty man is this

That roameth here? now truly drink nor meat

Need I not have, my heart for joy doth beat

Him to behold, so is he goodly fresh:

It seems for love his heart is tender and nesh." soft

This is the Court of lusty folk and glad,

And well becomes their habit and array:

O why be some so sorry and so sad,

Complaining thus in black and white and gray?

Friars they be, and monkes, in good fay:

Alas, for ruth! great dole it is to see, sorrow

To see them thus bewail and sorry be.

See how they cry and ring their handes white,

For they so soon went to religion!, young

And eke the nuns with veil and wimple plight, plaited

Their thought is, they be in confusion:

"Alas," they say, "we feign perfection,

In clothes wide, and lack our liberty;

But all the sin must on our friendes be.

"For, Venus wot, we would as fain as ye, gladly

That be attired here and well beseen, gaily clothed

Desire man, and love in our degree,'

Firm and faithful, right as would the Queen:

Our friendes wick', in tender youth and green,

Against our will made us religious;

That is the cause we mourn and waile thus."

Then said the monks and friars in the tide, at the same time

"Well may we curse our abbeyes and our place,

Our statutes sharp to sing in copes wide,

Chastely to keep us out of love's grace,

And never to feel comfort nor solace; delight

Yet suffer we the heat of love's fire,

And after some other haply we desire.

"O Fortune cursed, why now and wherefore

Hast thou," they said, "bereft us liberty,

Since Nature gave us instrument in store,

And appetite to love and lovers be?

Why must we suffer such adversity,
Dian' to serve, and Venus to refuse?
Full often sithe these matters do us muse. many a time
"We serve and honour, sore against our will,
Of chastity the goddess and the queen;
Us liefer were with Venus bide still, we would rather
And have regard for love, and subject be'n
Unto these women courtly, fresh, and sheen. bright, beautiful
Fortune, we curse thy wheel of variance!
Where we were well, thou reavest our pleasance." takest away
Thus leave I them, with voice of plaint and care,
In raging woe crying full piteously;
And as I went, full naked and full bare
Some I beheld, looking dispiteously,
On Poverty that deadly cast their eye;
And "Well-away!" they cried, and were not fain,
For they might not their glad desire attain.
For lack of riches worldly and of good,
They ban and curse, and weep, and say, "Alas!
That povert' hath us hent, that whilom stood seized
At hearte's ease, and free and in good case!
But now we dare not show ourselves in place,
Nor us embold to dwell in company, make bold, venture
Where as our heart would love right faithfully."
And yet againward shrieked ev'ry nun,
The pang of love so strained them to cry:
"Now woe the time," quoth they, "that we be boun'! bound
This hateful order nice will do us die! into which we foolishly
We sigh and sob, and bleeden inwardly, entered
Fretting ourselves with thought and hard complaint,
That nigh for love we waxe wood and faint." mad
And as I stood beholding here and there,
I was ware of a sort full languishing, a class of people
Savage and wild of looking and of cheer,
Their mantles and their clothes aye tearing;
And oft they were of Nature complaining,
For they their members lacked, foot and hand,
With visage wry, and blind, I understand.
They lacked shape and beauty to prefer
Themselves in love: and said that God and Kind Nature
Had forged them to worshippe the sterre, fashioned star

Venus the bright, and leften all behind
His other workes clean and out of mind:
"For other have their full shape and beauty,
And we," quoth they, "be in deformity."
And nigh to them there was a company,
That have the Sisters warray'd and missaid,
I mean the three of fatal destiny,
That be our workers: suddenly abraid, aroused
Out gan they cry as they had been afraid;
"We curse," quoth they, "that ever hath Nature
Y-formed us this woeful life t'endure."
And there eke was Contrite, and gan repent,
Confessing whole the wound that Cythere
Had with the dart of hot desire him sent,
And how that he to love must subject be:
Then held he all his scornes vanity,
And said that lovers held a blissful life,
Young men and old, and widow, maid, and wife.
"Bereave me, Goddess!" quoth he, "of thy might,
My scornes all and scoffes, that I have
No power for to mocken any wight
That in thy service dwell: for I did rave;
This know I well right now, so God me save,
And I shall be the chief post of thy faith, prop, pillar
And love uphold, the reverse whoso saith."
Dissemble stood not far from him in truth,
With party mantle, party hood and hose; parti-coloured
And said he had upon his lady ruth, pity
And thus he wound him in, and gan to glose,
Of his intent full double, I suppose:
In all the world he said he lov'd her weel;
But ay me thought he lov'd her ne'er a deal. never a jot
Eke Shamefastness was there, as I took heed,
That blushed red, and durst not be y-know
She lover was, for thereof had she dread;
She stood and hung her visage down alow;
But such a sight it was to see, I trow,
As of these roses ruddy on their stalk:
There could no wight her spy to speak or talk
In love's art, so gan she to abash,
Nor durst not utter all her privy:

Many a stripe and many a grievous lash
 She gave to them that woulde lovers be,
 And hinder'd sore the simple commonalty,
 That in no wise durst grace and mercy crave,
 For were not she, they need but ask and have; but for her
 Where if they now approache for to speak,
 Then Shamefastness returneth them again: turns them back
 They think, "If we our secret counsel break,
 Our ladies will have scorn us certain,
 And peradventure thinke great disdain:"
 Thus Shamefastness may bringen in Despair;
 When she is dead the other will be heir.
 "Come forth Avaunter! now I ring thy bell!"
 I spied him soon; to God I make avow, confession
 He looked black as fiendes do in Hell:
 "The first," quoth he, "that ever I did wow, woo
 Within a word she came, I wot not how, she was won with
 So that in armes was my lady free, a single word
 And so have been a thousand more than she.
 "In England, Britain, Spain, and Picardy, Brittany
 Artois, and France, and up in high Holland,
 In Burgoyne, Naples, and in Italy, Burgundy
 Navarre, and Greece, and up in heathen land,
 Was never woman yet that would withstand
 To be at my commandment when I wo'ld:
 I lacked neither silver coin nor gold.
 "And there I met with this estate and that;
 And her I broach'd, and her, and her, I trow:
 Lo! there goes one of mine; and, wot ye what?
 Yon fresh attired have I laid full low;
 And such one yonder eke right well I know;
 I kept the statute when we lay y-fere: together
 And yet yon same hath made me right good cheer." also
 Thus hath Avaunter blowen ev'rywhere
 All that he knows, and more a thousand fold;
 His ancestry of kin was to Lier, Liar
 For first he maketh promise for to hold
 His lady's counsel, and it not unfold; —
 Wherefore, the secret when he doth unshit, disclose
 Then lieth he, that all the world may wit. know
 For falsing so his promise and behest, trust

I wonder sore he hath such fantasy;
He lacketh wit, I trow, or is a beast,
That can no bet himself with reason guy better guide
By mine advice, Love shall be contrary
To his avail, and him eke dishonour, advantage
So that in Court he shall no more sojour. sojourn, remain
"Take heed," quoth she, this little Philobone,
"Where Envy rocketh in the corner yond, yonder
And sitteth dark; and ye shall see anon
His lean body, fading both face and hand;
Himself he fretteth, as I understand devoureth
(Witness of Ovid Metamorphoseos);
The lover's foe he is, I will not glose. gloss over
"For where a lover thinketh him promote, to promote himself
Envy will grudge, repining at his weal;
It swelleth sore about his hearte's root,
That in no wise he cannot live in heal; health
And if the faithful to his lady steal,
Envy will noise and ring it round about,
And say much worse than done is, out of doubt."
And Privy Thought, rejoicing of himself, —
Stood not far thence in habit marvellous;
"Yon is," thought I, "some spirit or some elf,
His subtile image is so curious:
How is," quoth I, "that he is shaded thus
With yonder cloth, I n'ot of what color?" know not
And near I went and gan to lear and pore, to ascertain and
gaze curiously
And frained him a question full hard. asked
"What is," quoth I, "the thing thou lovest best?
Or what is boot unto thy paines hard? remedy
Me thinks thou livest here in great unrest,
Thou wand'rest aye from south to east and west,
And east to north; as far as I can see,
There is no place in Court may holde thee.
"Whom followest thou? where is thy heart y-set?
But my demand assoil, I thee require." answer my question
"Me thought," quoth he, "no creature may let hinder
Me to be here, and where as I desire;
For where as absence hath out the fire,
My merry thought it kindleth yet again,

That bodily, me thinks, with my sov'reign my lady
 "I stand, and speak, and laugh, and kiss, and halse; embrace
 So that my thought comforteth me full oft:
 I think, God wot, though all the world be false,
 I will be true; I think also how soft
 My lady is in speech, and this on loft
 Bringeth my heart with joy and great gladness;
 This privy thought allays my heaviness.
 "And what I think, or where, to be, no man
 In all this Earth can tell, y-wis, but I:
 And eke there is no swallow swift, nor swan
 So wight of wing, nor half so yern can fly; nimble eagerly
 For I can be, and that right suddenly,
 In Heav'n, in Hell, in Paradise, and here,
 And with my lady, when I will desire.
 "I am of counsel far and wide, I wot,
 With lord and lady, and their privity
 I wot it all; but, be it cold or hot,
 They shall not speak without licence of me.
 I mean, in such as seasonable be, prudent
 Tho first the thing is thought within the heart, when
 Ere any word out from the mouth astart." escape
 And with the word Thought bade farewell and yede: went away
 Eke forth went I to see the Courte's guise,
 And at the door came in, so God me speed,
 Two courtiers of age and of assise size
 Like high, and broad, and, as I me advise,
 The Golden Love and Leaden Love they hight: were called
 The one was sad, the other glad and light.

At this point there is a hiatus in the poem, which abruptly ceases to narrate the tour of
 Philogenet and Philobone round the Court, and introduces us again to Rosial, who is
 speaking thus to her lover, apparently in continuation of a confession of love:

"Yes! draw your heart, with all your force and might,
 To lustiness, and be as ye have said."

She admits that she would have given him no drop of favour, but that she saw him "wax
 so dead of countenance;" then Pity "out of her shrine arose from death to life,"
 whisperingly entreating that she would do him some pleasance. Philogenet protests his
 gratitude to Pity, his faithfulness to Rosial; and the lady, thanking him heartily, bids him
 abide with her till the season of May, when the King of Love and all his company will
 hold his feast fully royally and well. "And there I bode till that the season fell."

On May Day, when the lark began to rise,
To matins went the lusty nightingale,
Within a temple shapen hawthorn-wise;
He might not sleep in all the nightertale, night-time
But "Domine" gan he cry and gale, call out
"My lippes open, Lord of Love, I cry,
And let my mouth thy praising now bewry." show forth
The eagle sang "Venite," bodies all,
And let us joy to love that is our health."
And to the desk anon they gan to fall,
And who came late he pressed in by stealth
Then said the falcon, "Our own heartes' wealth,
'Domine Dominus noster,' I wot,
Ye be the God that do us burn thus hot." make
"Coeli enarrant," said the popinjay, parrot
"Your might is told in Heav'n and firmament."
And then came in the goldfinch fresh and gay,
And said this psalm with heartly glad intent,
"Domini est terra;" this Latin intent, means
The God of Love hath earth in governance:
And then the wren began to skip and dance.
"Jube Domine; O Lord of Love, I pray
Command me well this lesson for to read;
This legend is of all that woulde dey die
Martyrs for love; God yet their soules speed!
And to thee, Venus, sing we, out of dread, without doubt
By influence of all thy virtue great,
Beseeching thee to keep us in our heat."
The second lesson robin redbreast sang,
"Hail to the God and Goddess of our lay!" law, religion
And to the lectern amorously he sprang:
"Hail now," quoth be, "O fresh season of May,
Our moneth glad that singen on the spray! glad month for us that
Hail to the flowers, red, and white, and blue, sing upon the bough
Which by their virtue maken our lust new!"
The third lesson the turtle-dove took up,
And thereat laugh'd the mavis in a scorn: blackbird
He said, "O God, as might I dine or sup,
This foolish dove will give us all a horn!
There be right here a thousand better born,

To read this lesson, which as well as he,
And eke as hot, can love in all degree."
The turtle-dove said, "Welcome, welcome May,
Gladsome and light to lovers that be true!
I thank thee, Lord of Love, that doth purvey
For me to read this lesson all of due; in due form
For, in good sooth, of corage I pursue with all my heart
To serve my make till death us must depart:" mate
And then "Tu autem" sang he all apart.
"Te Deum amoris" sang the throstel cock: thrush
Tubal himself, the first musician,
With key of harmony could not unlock
So sweet a tune as that the throstel can:
"The Lord of Love we praise," quoth he than, then
And so do all the fowles great and lite; little
"Honour we May, in false lovers' despite."
"Dominus regnavit," said the peacock there,
"The Lord of Love, that mighty prince, y-wis,
He is received here and ev'rywhere:
Now Jubilate sing:" "What meaneth this?"
Said then the linnet; "welcome, Lord of bliss!"
Out start the owl with "Benedicite,"
"What meaneth all this merry fare?" quoth he. doing, fuss
"Laudate," sang the lark with voice full shrill;
And eke the kite "O admirabile;"
This quire will through mine eares pierce and thrill; choir
But what? welcome this May season," quoth he;
"And honour to the Lord of Love must be,
That hath this feast so solemn and so high:"
"Amen," said all; and so said eke the pie. magpie
And forth the cuckoo gan proceed anon,
With "Benedictus" thanking God in haste,
That in this May would visit them each one,
And gladden them all while the feast shall last:
And therewithal a-laughter out he brast;" in laughter burst
"I thanke God that I should end the song,
And all the service which hath been so long."
Thus sang they all the service of the feast,
And that was done right early, to my doom; judgment
And forth went all the Court, both most and least, great and small
To fetch the flowers fresh, and branch and bloom;

And namely hawthorn brought both page and groom, especially
With freshe garlands party blue and white, parti-coloured
And then rejoiced in their great delight.
Eke each at other threw the flowers bright,
The primerose, the violet, and the gold;
So then, as I beheld the royal sight,
My lady gan me suddenly behold,
And with a true love, plighted many a fold,
She smote me through the very heart as blive; straightway
And Venus yet I thank I am alive.

Freeditorial 