

Classic Poetry Series

John Gower

- poems -

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John Gower(1330 - October 1408)

John Gower was an English poet, a contemporary of William Langland and a personal friend of Geoffrey Chaucer. He is remembered primarily for three major works, the *Mirroir de l'Omme*, *Vox Clamantis*, and *Confessio Amantis*, three long poems written in French, Latin, and English respectively, which are united by common moral and political themes.

Life

Few details are known of Gower's early life. He was probably born into a prominent Yorkshire family which held properties in Kent, Yorkshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. It is thought that he practiced law in or around London.

While in London, he became closely associated with the nobility of his day. He was apparently personally acquainted with Richard II: in the prologue of the first edition of the *Confessio Amantis*, he tells how the king, chancing to meet him on the Thames (probably circa 1385), invited him aboard the royal barge, and that their conversation then resulted in a commission for the work that would become the *Confessio Amantis*. Later in life his allegiance switched to the future Henry IV, to whom later editions of the *Confessio Amantis* were dedicated. Much of this is based on circumstantial rather than documentary evidence, and the history of revisions of the *Confessio Amantis*, including the different dedications, is yet to be fully understood.

Gower's friendship with Chaucer is also well documented. When Chaucer was sent as a diplomat to Italy in 1378, Gower was one of the men to whom he gave power of attorney over his affairs in England. The two poets also paid one another compliments in their verse: Chaucer dedicated his *Troilus and Criseyde* in part to "moral Gower", and Gower reciprocated by placing a speech in praise of Chaucer in the mouth of Venus at the end of the *Confessio Amantis*.

At some point during the early 1370s, he took up residence in rooms provided by the Priory of St Mary Overie (now Southwark Cathedral). In 1398, while living here, he married, probably for the second time: his wife, Agnes Groundolf, was to survive him. In his last years, and possibly as early as 1400, he became blind.

After his death in 1408, Gower was interred in an ostentatious tomb in the Priory church (now Southwark Cathedral), which remains today.

Works

Gower's verse is by turns religious, political, historical, and moral—though he has been narrowly defined as "moral Gower" ever since Chaucer graced him with the epithet. His primary mode is allegory, although he shies away from sustained abstractions in favour of the plain style of the raconteur.

His earliest works were probably ballades in Anglo-Norman French, some of which may have later been included in his work the Cinkante Ballades. The first work which has survived is in the same language, however: it is the Speculum Meditantis, also known by the French title Mirour de l'Omme, a poem of just under 30,000 lines, containing a dense exposition of religion and morality.

Gower's second major work, the Vox Clamantis, was written in Latin: it takes as its subject the state of England, and incorporates commentary on the Peasants' Revolt that occurred during the composition of the poem. Gower takes the side of the aristocracy, and appears to have admired the techniques Richard II used to suppress the revolt.

His third work is the Confessio Amantis, a 30,000-line poem in octosyllabic English couplets, which makes use of the structure of a Christian confession (presented allegorically as a confession of sins against Love) as a narrative frame within which a multitude of individual tales are told. Like his previous works, the theme is very much morality, even where the stories themselves have a tendency to describe rather immoral behaviour. One scholar asserts that Confessio Amantis "almost exclusively" made Gower's "poetic reputation." In later years Gower wrote a number of minor works in all three languages: the Cinkante Ballades, a series of French ballades on romantic subjects, and several poems addressed to the new Henry IV—in return for which he was granted a pension, in the form of an annual allowance of wine.

Gower's poetry has had a mixed critical reception. In the 15th century, he was generally regarded alongside Chaucer as the father of English poetry. Over the years, however, his reputation declined, largely on account of a perceived didacticism and dullness. During the 20th century he has received more recognition, notably by C. S. Lewis in The Allegory of Love (1936). However, he has not obtained the same following or critical acceptance as other major poets of the period.

Concerning The Philosophers Stone. (Alchemical Verse .)

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And also with great diligence,
Thei fonde thilke Experience:
Which cleped is Alconomie,
Whereof the Silver multiplie;
Thei made, and eke the Gold also.
And for to telle howe itt is so:
Of bodies seven in Speciall,
With fowre Spirites joynt withall;
Stant the substance of this matere,
The bodies which I speke of here,
Of the Plannets ben begonne,
The Gold is titled to the Sonne:
The Moone of Silver hath hi part,
And Iron that stonde uppon Mart:
The Leed after Saturne groweth,
And Jupiter the Brasse bestoweth;
The Copper sette is to Venus:
And to his part Mercurius
Hath the Quicksilver, as it falleth,
The which after the Boke it calleth,
Is first of thilke foure named
Of Spirits, which be proclymed,
And the Spirite which is seconde,
In Sal Armoniake is founde:
The third Spirite Sulphur is,
The fourth Sewende after this,
Arcennium by name is hotte
With blowyng, and with fires hote:
In these things which I say,
Thei worchen by divers waye.
For as the Philosopher tolde,
Of Gold and Sylver thei ben holde,
Two Principall extremittees,

To which all other by degrees,
Of the mettals ben accordant,
And so through kinde resemblant:
That what man couth awaie take,
The rust, of which they waxen blake,
And And the favour of the hardnes;
Thei shulden take the likeness;
Of Gold or Silver perfectly,
Bot for to worche it sykerly;
Between the Corps and the Spirite,
Er that the Metall be parfite,
In seven forms itt is sette
Of all, and if one be lette,
The remnant may not avayle,
But otherwise it maie nought fayle;
For thei by whome this Arte was founde,
To every poynt a certayne bounde,
Ordeinen that a man may finde,
This Craft is wrought by wey of kinde;
So that there is no fallace in;
But what man that this werke begyn;
He mote awaite at every tyde,
So that nothyng be left asyde.

Fyrst of Distillacion,
Forth with the Cogelacion,
Solucion, Disscencion,
And kepe in his entencion,
The poynt of Sublimacion,
And forthwith Calcinacion,
Of very Approbacion,
So that there be Fixacion,
With temperate hetes of fyer,
Tyll he the perfite Elixer,
Of thilke Philosophers Stone,
Maie gette, of which that many one
Of Philosophers, whilome write,
Of thilke Stone with other two,
Which as the Clerkes maden tho;
So as the Bokes itt recorden,
The kinde of hem I shall recorden.

These old Philosophers wise,
By wey of kynde in sondry wise;

Thre Stones made through Clergie,
The fyrst I shall specifie,
Was cleped Vegetabilis;
Of which the proper vertue is,
To mans heale to serve,
As for to keepe, and to preserve,
The body fro sickness all,
Till death of kinde upon hym fall.
The second Stone I the behote,
Is Lapis Animalis hote:
The whose vertue, is proper and couth,
For Eare and Eye, Nose and Mouth;
Whereof a man may here, and see,
And smell and tast, in his degree,
And for to feele and for to goe,
Itt helpeth a man of both two:
The witts five he undersongeth
To keepe, as it to hym belongeth.
The third Stone in speciall
by name is cleped Minerall,
Which the Mettalls of every myne,
Attempreth, till that thei ben fyne;
And pureth hem by such a wey,
That all the vice goth away,
Of Rust, of Stynke, and of Hardnes:
And when they ben of such clennes,
This minerall so as I fynde,
Transformeth all the fyrst kynde,
And maketh hem able to conceive,
Through his vertue and receive
Both in substance and in figure,
Of Gold and Silver the nature.
For thei two ben the extremittees,
To which after the propertees,
Hath every mettall his desire,
With helpe and comforte of the fyre.
Forth with this Stone as it is said,
Which to the Sonne and Moone is laide:
For to the Red, and to the White,
This Stone hath power to profite;
It maketh Multiplicacion
Of Gold and the fixacion,

It causeth and of this babite,
He doth the werke to be parfite:
Of thilke Elixer which me call
Alconomy, as is befalle
To hem, that whilome were wise;
But now it stant all otherwise:
Thei speken fast of thilke Stone,
But how to make it now wote none.
After the sooth Experience,
And nathles greate diligence,
Thei setten up thilke dede,
And spillen more then thei spede;
For alwey thei fynde a lette,
Which bringeth in povertie and Dette;
To hem that rich were to fore,
The Losse is had the Lucre is lore:
To gette a pound thei spendeth five,
I not how such a Craft shall thrive:
In the manner as it is used,
It were better be refused,
Then for to worchen upon wene,
In thinge which stant not ast thei wene:
But not for thy who that it knew,
The Science of himselfe is trew:
Uppon the forme as it was founded,
Whereof the names yett be grounded;
Of hem, that first it founden out:
And thus the fame goth all about,
To such as soughten besines,
Of vertue and worthines,
Of whom if I the names call,
Hermes was one the first of all,
To whom this Art is most applied,
Geber thereof was magnified,
And Ortolane and Morien,
Among the which is Avicen.
Which founde and wrote and greate partie,
The practicke of Alconomie,
Whose bokes plainlie as thei stonde,
Uppon this Craft few understonde.
But yet to put hem in assay,
There be full manie now a day,

That knowen litle that thei mene,
It is not one to wite and wene,
In forme of words thei it trete;
But yet thei failen of beyet.
For of to much, or of to lite,
There is algate found a wite:
So that thei follow not the line,
Of the perfect Medicine,
Which grounded is upon nature;
But thei that written the Scripture;
Of Greke, Arabe, and Caldee,
Thei were of such Auctoritee,
That thei firste founden out the wey,
Of all that thou hast herd me sey,
Whereof the Cronicke of her Lore,
Shall stonde in price for evermore.

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John Gower

Confessio Amantis, Book Iii

Appolinus his lev{.e} tok,
To God and al the lond betok
With al the poeple long and brod,
That he no lenger there abod.
The king and queen{.e} sorw{.e} mad{.e},
Bot yit somdiel thei weren glad{.e}
Of such thing as thei herden tho:
And thus between the wel and wo
To schip he goth, his wif with child{.e},
The which was ever{.e} meke and myld{.e}
And wold{.e} noght departe him fro,
Such lov{.e} was between hem tuo.
Lichorida for hire offic{.e}
Was tak{.e}, which was a norric{.e},
To wend{.e} with this yong{.e} wif,
To whom was schape a woful lif.
Withinne a time, as it betidd{.e},
Whan thei were in the see amidd{.e},
Out of the north they sihe a cloud{.e};
The storm aros, the wynd{.e}s loud{.e}
Thei blewen many a dredful blast,
The welkn{.e} was al overcast,
The derk{.e} nyht the sonne hath under,
Ther was a gret tempeste of thunder:
The mone and ek the sterr{.e}s both{.e}
In blak{.e} cloud{.e}s thei hem cloth{.e},
Wherof here briht{.e} lok thei hyd{.e}.
This yong{.e} ladi wepte and crid{.e},
To whom no confort myhte avail{.e};
Of child{.e} sche began travail{.e},
Wher sche lay in a caban clos:
Hire woful lord fro hire aros,
And that was longe er eny morw{.e},
So that in anguisse and in sorw{.e}
Sche was deliver{.e}d al be nyht{.e}
And ded in every mannes syht{.e};
Bot nath{.e}les for al this wo
A maid{.e} child was bor{.e} tho.

Appolinus whan he this knew,
 For sorwe a swoune he overthrew,
 That noman wiste in him no lif.
 And whanne he wok, he seide, "Ha, wif,
 Mi lust, mi joi{.e}, my desir,
 Mi welthe and my recoverir,
 Why schal I live, and thou schalt dy{.e}?
 Ha, thou fortune, I thee deffi{.e},
 Nou hast thou do to me thi werst{.e}.
 Ha, hert{.e}, why ne wolt thou berst{.e},
 That forth with hire I myht{.e} pass{.e}?
 Mi pein{.e}s weren wel the lass{.e}."
 In such wepinge and in such cry
 His ded{.e} wif, which lay him by,
 A thousand sith{.e}s he hire kist{.e};
 Was nevere man that sih ne wist{.e}
 A sorwe unto his sorw{.e} lich;
 For evere among, upon the lich
 He fell swounende, as he that soght{.e}
 His oghn{.e} deth, which he besoght{.e}
 Unto the godd{.e}s alle abov{.e}
 With many a pitous word of lov{.e};
 Bot such{.e} word{.e}s as tho wer{.e}
 Yit herd{.e} nevere mannes er{.e},
 Bot only thilk{.e} whiche he seid{.e}.
 The maister schipman cam and preid{.e}
 With othr{.e} suche as be therinn{.e},
 And sein that he mai nothing winn{.e}
 Ayein the deth, bot thei him red{.e},
 He be wel war and tak hied{.e},
 The see be weie of his natur{.e}
 Receiv{.e} mai no creatur{.e}
 Withinne himself as forto hold{.e},
 The which is ded: forthi thei wold{.e},
 As thei conseilen al about{.e},
 The ded{.e} body casten out{.e}.
 For betre it is, thei seiden all{.e},
 That it of hir{.e} so befall{.e},
 Than if thei scholden all{.e} spill{.e}.

The king, which understod here will{.e}
 And knew here conseil that was trew{.e},

Began ayein his sorw{.e} new{.e}
With pitous herte, and thus to sei{.e}:
"It is al reson that ye prei{.e}.
I am," quod he, "bot on al on{.e},
So wolde I noght for mi person{.e}
There fell{.e} such adversité.
Bot whan it mai no betr{.e} be,
Doth thann{.e} thus upon my word,
Let make a cofr{.e} strong of bord,
That it be ferm with led and pich."
Anon was mad a cofr{.e} sich,
Al redy broght unto his hond;
And whanne he sih and redy fond
This cofr{.e} mad and wel enclow{.e}d,
The ded{.e} bodi was besow{.e}d
In cloth of gold and leid therinn{.e}.
And for he wolde unto hir winn{.e}
Upon som cooste a sepultur{.e},
Under hire heved in aventur{.e}
Of gold he leid{.e} somm{.e}s gret{.e}
And of jeueals a strong beyet{.e}
Forth with a lettre, and seid{.e} thus:

"I, king of Tyr Appollinus,
Do all{.e} maner men to wit{.e},
That hiere and se this lettr{.e} writ{.e},
That help{.e}les without{.e} red
Hier lith a king{.e}s doghter ded:
And who that happeth hir to find{.e},
For charité tak in his mynd{.e},
And do so that sche be begrav{.e}
With this tr{.e}sor, which he schal hav{.e}."
Thus whan the lettr{.e} was full spok{.e},
Thei have anon the cofr{.e} stok{.e},
And bounden it with yren fast{.e},
That it may with the waw{.e}s last{.e},
And stoppen it be such a wei{.e},
That it schal be withinn{.e} drei{.e},
So that no water myhte it griev{.e}.
And thus in hope and good believ{.e}
Of that the corps schal wel aryv{.e},
Thei caste it over bord als blyv{.e}.

The schip forth on the waw{.e}s went{.e};
The prince hath chang{.e}d his entent{.e},
And seith he wol noght come at Tyr
As thann{.e}, bot al his desir
Is ferst to seilen unto Thars{.e}.
The wyndy storm began to skars{.e},
The sonne arist, the weder cliereth,
The schipman which behind{.e} stiereth
Whan that he sih the wynd{.e}s saght{.e},
Toward{.e}s Tharse his cours he straght{.e}.

Bot now to mi matiere ayein,
To telle as old{.e} bok{.e}s sein,
This dede corps of which ye know{.e}
With wynd and water was forthrow{.e}
Now hier, now ther, til at{.e} last{.e}
At Ephesim the see upcast{.e}
The cofre and al that was therinn{.e}.
Of gret merveil{.e} now beginn{.e}
Mai hier{.e} who that sitteth still{.e};
That God wol sav{.e} mai noght spill{.e}.
Riht as the corps was throwe alond{.e},
Ther cam walkende upon the strond{.e}
A worthi clerc, a surgi{.e}n,
And ek a gret phisici{.e}n,
Of al that lond the wisest on,
Which hiht{.e} Maister Cerymon;
Ther were of his discipl{.e}s som{.e}.
This maister to the cofre is com{.e},
He peiseth ther was somewhat in,
And bad hem bere it to his in,
And goth himselv{.e} forth withal.
Al that schal fall{.e}, fall{.e} schal;
They comen hom and tari{.e} noght;
This cofre is into chambr{.e} broght,
Which that thei find{.e} fast{.e} stok{.e},
Bot thei with craft it have unlok{.e}.
Thei loken in, where as thei found{.e}
A bodi ded, which was bewound{.e}
In cloth of gold, as I seide er,
The tresor ek thei founden ther

Forth with the lettr{.e} which thei red{.e}.
 And tho thei token betr{.e} hied{.e};
 Unsowed was the bodi son{.e},
 And he, which knew what is to don{.e},
 This nobl{.e} clerk, with all{.e} hast{.e}
 Began the vein{.e}s forto tast{.e},
 And sih hire ag{.e} was of youth{.e},
 And with the craft{.e}s whiche he couth{.e}
 He soghte and fond a signe of lif.
 With that this worthi king{.e}s wif
 Honest{.e}ly thei token out{.e},
 And maden fyr{.e}s al about{.e};
 Thei leide hire on a couch{.e} soft{.e},
 And with a scheet{.e} warm{.e}d oft{.e}
 Hire cold{.e} brest began to het{.e},
 Hire herte also to flacke and bet{.e}.
 This maister hath hire every joignt
 With certein oile and balsme enoignt,
 And putte a liquour in hire mouth,
 Which is to few{.e} clerk{.e}s couth,
 So that sche coevereth at{.e} last{.e}:
 And ferst hire yhen up sche cast{.e},
 And whan sche more of strengthe cawht{.e},
 Hire arm{.e}s both{.e} forth sche strawht{.e},
 Hield up hire hond and pitously
 Sche spak and seide, "Ha, wher am I?
 Where is my lord, what world is this?"
 As sche that wot noght hou it is.
 Bot Cerymon the worthi lech{.e}
 Ansuerde anon upon hire spech{.e}
 And seith, "Ma dam{.e}, yee ben hier{.e},
 Where yee be sauf, as yee schal hier{.e}
 Hierafterward; forthi as nou
 Mi conseil is, conforteth you:
 For trusteth wel without{.e} fail{.e},
 Ther is nothing which schal you fail{.e},
 That oghte of reson to be do."

John Gower

Confessio Amantis. Explicit Prologus

Incipit Liber Primus

Naturatus amor nature legibus orbem
Subdit, et vnanimis concitat esse feras:
Huius enim mundi Princeps amor esse videtur,
Cuius eget diues, pauper et omnis ope.
Sunt in agone pares amor et fortuna, que cecas
Plebis ad insidias vertit vterque rotas.
Est amor egra salus, vexata quies, pius error,
Bellica pax, vulnus dulce, suaue malum.

I may noght strecche up to the hevene
Min hand, ne setten al in evene
This world, which evere is in balance:
It stant noght in my sufficance
So grete thinges to compasse,
Bot I mot lete it overpasse
And treten upon othre thinges.
Forthi the Stile of my writinges
Fro this day forth I thenke change
And speke of thing is noght so strange,
Which every kinde hath upon honde,
And wherupon the world mot stonde,
And hath don sithen it began,
And schal whil ther is any man;
And that is love, of which I mene
To trete, as after schal be sene.
In which ther can noman him reule,
For loves lawe is out of reule,
That of tomoche or of tolite
Welnyh is every man to wyte,
And natheles ther is noman
In al this world so wys, that can
Of love tempre the mesure,
Bot as it falth in aventure:
For wit ne strengthe may noght helpe,
And he which elles wolde him yelpe
Is rathest throwen under fote,
Ther can no wiht therof do bote.

For yet was nevere such covine,
That couthe ordeine a medicine
To thing which god in lawe of kinde
Hath set, for ther may noman finde
The rihte salve of such a Sor.
It hath and schal ben everemor
That love is maister wher he wile,
Ther can no lif make other skile;
For wher as evere him lest to sette,
Ther is no myht which him may lette.
Bot what schal fallen ate laste,
The sothe can no wisdom caste,
Bot as it falleth upon chance;
For if ther evere was balance
Which of fortune stant governed,
I may wel lieve as I am lerned
That love hath that balance on honde,
Which wol no reson understonde.
For love is blind and may noght se,
Forthi may no certeinete
Be set upon his jugement,
Bot as the whiel aboute went
He yifth his graces undeserved,
And fro that man which hath him served
Fulofte he takth awaye his fees,
As he that pleieth ate Dees,
And therupon what schal befall
He not, til that the chance falle,
Wher he schal lese or he schal winne.
And thus fulofte men beginne,
That if thei wisten what it mente,
Thei wolde change al here entente.
And forto proven it is so,
I am miselven on of tho,
Which to this Scole am underfonge.
For it is siththe go noght longe,
As forto speke of this matiere,
I may you telle, if ye woll hiere,
A wonder hap which me befell,
That was to me bothe hard and fell,
Touchende of love and his fortune,
The which me liketh to comune

And plainly forto telle it oute.
To hem that ben lovers aboute
Fro point to point I wol declare
And wryten of my woful care,
Mi wofull day, my wofull chance,
That men mowe take remembrance
Of that thei schall hierafter rede:
For in good feith this wolde I rede,
That every man ensample take
Of wisdom which him is betake,
And that he wot of good aprise
To teche it forth, for such emprise
Is forto preise; and therfore I
Woll wryte and schewe al openly
How love and I togedre mette,
Wherof the world ensample fette
Mai after this, whan I am go,
Of thilke unsely jolif wo,
Whos reule stant out of the weie,
Nou glad and nou gladnesse aweie,
And yet it may noght be withstonde
For oght that men may understonde.
Upon the point that is befalle
Of love, in which that I am falle,
I thenke telle my matiere:
Now herkne, who that wol it hiere,
Of my fortune how that it ferde.
This enderday, as I forthferde
To walke, as I yow telle may,-
And that was in the Monthe of Maii,
Whan every brid hath chose his make
And thenkth his merthes forto make
Of love that he hath achieved;
Bot so was I nothing relieved,
For I was further fro my love
Than Erthe is fro the hevene above,
As forto speke of eny sped:
So wiste I me non other red,
Bot as it were a man forfare
Unto the wode I gan to fare,
Noght forto singe with the briddes,
For whanne I was the wode amiddes,

I fond a swote grene pleine,
And ther I gan my wo compleigne
Wisshinge and wepinge al myn one,
For other merthes made I none.
So hard me was that ilke throwe,
That ofte sithes overthrowe
To grounde I was withoute breth;
And evere I wisshide after deth,
Whanne I out of my peine awok,
And caste up many a pitous lok
Unto the hevene, and seide thus:
'O thou Cupide, O thou Venus,
Thou god of love and thou goddesse,
Wher is pite? wher is meknesse?
Now doth me plainly live or dye,
For certes such a maladie
As I now have and longe have hadd,
It myhte make a wisman madd,
If that it scholde longe endure.
O Venus, queene of loves cure,
Thou lif, thou lust, thou mannes hele,
Behold my cause and my querele,
And yif me som part of thi grace,
So that I may finde in this place
If thou be gracious or non.'
And with that word I sawh anon
The kyng of love and qweene bothe;
Bot he that kyng with yhen wrothe
His chiere aweiward fro me caste,
And forth he passede ate laste.
Bot natheles er he forth wente
A firy Dart me thoghte he hente
And threw it thurgh myn herte rote:
In him fond I non other bote,
For lenger list him noght to duelle.
Bot sche that is the Source and Welle
Of wel or wo, that schal betide
To hem that loven, at that tide
Abod, bot forto tellen hiere
Sche cast on me no goodly chiere:
Thus natheles to me sche seide,
'What art thou, Sone?' and I abreide

Riht as a man doth out of slep,
 And therof tok sche riht good kep
 And bad me nothing ben adrad:
 Bot for al that I was noght glad,
 For I ne sawh no cause why.
 And eft scheo asketh, what was I:
 I seide, 'A Caitif that lith hiere:
 What wolde ye, my Ladi diere?
 Schal I ben hol or elles dye?'
 Sche seide, 'Tell thi maladie:
 What is thi Sor of which thou pleignest?
 Ne hyd it noght, for if thou feignest,
 I can do the no medicine.'
 'Ma dame, I am a man of thyne,
 That in thi Court have longe served,
 And aske that I have deserved,
 Some wele after my longe wo.'
 And sche began to loure tho,
 And seide, 'Ther is manye of yow
 Faitours, and so may be that thow
 Art riht such on, and be feintise
 Seist that thou hast me do servise.'
 And natheles sche wiste wel,
 Mi world stod on an other whiel
 Withouten eny faiterie:
 Bot algate of my maladie
 Sche bad me telle and seie hir trowthe.
 'Ma dame, if ye wolde have rowthe,'
 Quod I, 'than wolde I telle yow.'
 'Sey forth,' quod sche, 'and tell me how;
 Schew me thi seknesse everydiel.'
 'Ma dame, that can I do wel,
 Be so my lif therto wol laste.'
 With that hir lok on me sche caste,
 And seide: 'In aunter if thou live,
 Mi will is ferst that thou be schrive;
 And natheles how that it is
 I wot miself, bot for al this
 Unto my prest, which comth anon,
 I woll thou telle it on and on,
 Bothe all thi thoght and al thi werk.
 O Genius myn oghne Clerk,

Com forth and hier this mannes schrifte,'
Quod Venus tho; and I uplifted
Min hefd with that, and gan beholde
The selve Prest, which as sche wolde
Was redy there and sette him doun
To hiere my confessioun.
This worthi Prest, this holy man
To me spekende thus began,
And seide: 'Benedicite,
Mi Sone, of the felicite
Of love and ek of all the wo
Thou schalt thee schrive of bothe tuo.
What thou er this for loves sake
Hast felt, let nothing be forsake,
Tell pleinliche as it is befalle.'
And with that word I gan doun falle
On knees, and with devocioun
And with full gret contricioun
I seide thanne: 'Dominus,
Min holi fader Genius,
So as thou hast experience
Of love, for whos reverence
Thou schalt me schreven at this time,
I prai the let me noght mistime
Mi schrifte, for I am destourbed
In al myn herte, and so contourbed,
That I ne may my wittes gete,
So schal I moche thing foryete:
Bot if thou wolt my schrifte oppose
Fro point to point, thanne I suppose,
Ther schal nothing be left behinde.
Bot now my wittes ben so blinde,
That I ne can miselven teche.'
Tho he began anon to preche,
And with his wordes debonaire
He seide tome softe and faire:
'Thi schrifte to oppose and hiere,
My Sone, I am assigned hiere
Be Venus the godesse above,
Whos Prest I am touchende of love.
Bot natheles for certain skile
I mot algate and nedes wile

Noght only make my spekynges
Of love, bot of othre thinges,
That touchen to the cause of vice.
For that belongeth to thoffice
Of Prest, whos ordre that I bere,
So that I wol nothing forbere,
That I the vices on and on
Ne schal thee schewen everychon;
Wherof thou myht take evidence
To reule with thi conscience.
Bot of conclusion final
Conclude I wol in special
For love, whos servant I am,
And why the cause is that I cam.
So thenke I to don bothe tuo,
Ferst that myn ordre longeth to,
The vices forto telle arewe,
Bot next above alle othre schewe
Of love I wol the propretes,
How that thei stonde be degrees
After the disposicioun
Of Venus, whos condicioun
I moste folwe, as I am holde.
For I with love am al withholde,
So that the lasse I am to wyte,
Thogh I ne conne bot a lyte
Of othre thinges that ben wise:
I am noght tawht in such a wise;
For it is noght my comun us
To speke of vices and vertus,
Bot al of love and of his lore,
For Venus bokes of nomore
Me techen nowther text ne glose.
Bot for als moche as I suppose
It sit a prest to be wel thewed,
And schame it is if he be lewed,
Of my Presthode after the forme
I wol thi schrifte so enforme,
That ate leste thou schalt hiere
The vices, and to thi matiere
Of love I schal hem so remene,
That thou schalt knowe what thei mene.

For what a man schal axe or sein
Touchende of schrifte, it mot be plein,
It nedeth noght to make it queinte,
For trowthe hise wordes wol noght peinte:
That I wole axe of the forthi,
My Sone, it schal be so plainly,
That thou schalt knowe and understonde
The pointz of schrifte how that thei stonde.'
Betwen the lif and deth I herde
This Prestes tale er I answerde,
And thanne I preide him forto seie
His will, and I it wolde obeie
After the forme of his apprise.
Tho spak he tome in such a wise,
And bad me that I scholde schrive
As touchende of my wittes fyve,
And schape that thei were amended
Of that I hadde hem misdispended.
For tho be proprely the gates,
Thurgh whiche as to the herte algates
Comth alle thing unto the feire,
Which may the mannes Soule empeire.
And now this matiere is broght inne,
Mi Sone, I thenke ferst beginne
To wite how that thin yhe hath stonde,
The which is, as I understonde,
The moste principal of alle,
Thurgh whom that peril mai befalle.
And forto speke in loves kinde,
Ful manye suche a man mai finde,
Whiche evere caste aboute here yhe,
To loke if that thei myhte asprie
Fulofte thing which hem ne toucheth,
Bot only that here herte soucheth
In hindringe of an other wiht;
And thus ful many a worthi knyht
And many a lusti lady bothe
Have be fulofte sythe wrothe.
So that an yhe is as a thief
To love, and doth ful gret meschief;
And also for his oghne part
Fulofte thilke firy Dart

Of love, which that evere brenneth,
Thurgh him into the herte renneth:
And thus a mannes yhe ferst
Himselfe grieveth alther werst,
And many a time that he knoweth
Unto his oghne harm it groweth.
Mi Sone, herkne now forthi
A tale, to be war therby
Thin yhe forto kepe and warde,
So that it passe noght his warde.
Ovide telleth in his bok
Ensample touchende of mislok,
And seith hou whilom ther was on,
A worthi lord, which Acteon
Was hote, and he was cousin nyh
To him that Thebes ferst on hyh
Up sette, which king Cadme hyhte.
This Acteon, as he wel myhte,
Above alle othre caste his chiere,
And used it fro yer to yere,
With Houndes and with grete Hornes
Among the wodes and the thornes
To make his hunting and his chace:
Where him best thoghte in every place
To finde gamen in his weie,
Ther rod he forto hunte and pleie.
So him befell upon a tide
On his hunting as he cam ride,
In a Forest al one he was:
He syh upon the grene gras
The faire freisshe floures springe,
He herde among the leves singe
The Throstle with the nyhtingale:
Thus er he wiste into a Dale
He cam, wher was a litel plein,
All round aboute wel besein
With buisshes grene and Cedres hyhe;
And ther withinne he caste his yhe.
Amidd the plein he syh a welle,
So fair ther myhte noman telle,
In which Diana naked stod
To bathe and pleie hire in the flod

With many a Nimphe, which hire serveth.
Bot he his yhe away ne swerveth
Fro hire, which was naked al,
And sche was wonder wroth withal,
And him, as sche which was godesse,
Forschop anon, and the liknesse
Sche made him taken of an Hert,
Which was tofore hise houndes stert,
That ronne besiliche aboute
With many an horn and many a route,
That maden mochel noise and cry:
And ate laste unhappely
This Hert his oghne houndes slowhe
And him for vengeance al todrowhe.
Lo now, my Sone, what it is
A man to caste his yhe amis,
Which Acteon hath dere aboght;
Be war forthi and do it noght.
For ofte, who that hiede toke,
Betre is to winke than to loke.
And forto proven it is so,
Ovide the Poete also
A tale which to this matiere
Acordeth seith, as thou schalt hiere.
In Metamor it telleth thus,
How that a lord which Phorce⁵
Was hote, hadde dowhtres thre.
Bot upon here nativite
Such was the constellacion,
That out of mannes nacion
Fro kynde thei be so miswent,
That to the liknesse of Serpent
Thei were bore, and so that on
Of hem was cleped Stellibon,
That other soster Suriale,
The thridde, as telleth in the tale,
Medusa hihte, and natheles
Of comun name Gorgones
In every contre ther aboute,
As Monstres whiche that men doute,
Men clepen hem; and bot on yhe
Among hem thre in pourpartie

Thei hadde, of which thei myhte se,
Now hath it this, now hath it sche;
After that cause and nede it ladde,
Be throwes ech of hem it hadde.
A wonder thing yet more amis
Ther was, wherof I telle al this:
What man on hem his chiere caste
And hem behield, he was als faste
Out of a man into a Ston
Forschape, and thus ful manyon
Deceived were, of that thei wolde
Misloke, wher that thei ne scholde.
Bot Perseus that worthi knyht,
Whom Pallas of hir grete myht
Halp, and tok him a Schield therto,
And ek the god Mercurie also
Lente him a swerd, he, as it fell,
Beyende Athlans the hihe hell
These Monstres soghte, and there he fond
Diverse men of thilke lond
Thurgh sihte of hem mistorned were,
Stondende as Stones hiere and there.
Bot he, which wisdom and prouesse
Hadde of the god and the godesse,
The Schield of Pallas gan enbrace,
With which he covereth sauf his face,
Mercuries Swerd and out he drowh,
And so he bar him that he slowh
These dredful Monstres alle thre.
Lo now, my Sone, avise the,
That thou thi sihte noght misuse:
Cast noght thin yhe upon Meduse,
That thou be torned into Ston:
For so wys man was nevere non,
Bot if he wel his yhe kepe
And take of fol delit no kepe,
That he with lust nys ofte nome,
Thurgh strengthe of love and overcome.
Of mislokynge how it hath ferd,
As I have told, now hast thou herd,
My goode Sone, and tak good hiede.
And overthis yet I thee rede

That thou be war of thin heringe,
Which to the Herte the tidinge
Of many a vanite hath broght,
To tarie with a mannes thoght.
And natheles good is to hiere
Such thing wherof a man may lere
That to vertu is acordant,
And toward al the remenant
Good is to torne his Ere fro;
For elles, bot a man do so,
Him may fulofte mysbefalle.
I rede ensample amonges alle,
Wherof to kepe wel an Ere
It oghte pute a man in fere.
A Serpent, which that Aspidis
Is cleped, of his kynde hath this,
That he the Ston noblest of alle,
The which that men Carbuncle calle,
Berth in his hed above on heihte.
For which whan that a man be sleyhte,
The Ston to winne and him to daunte,
With his carecte him wolde enchaunte,
Anon as he perceiveth that,
He leith doun his on Ere al plat
Unto the ground, and halt it faste,
And ek that other Ere als faste
He stoppeth with his tail so sore,
That he the wordes lasse or more
Of his enchantement ne hiereth;
And in this wise himself he skiereth,
So that he hath the wordes weyved
And thurgh his Ere is noght deceived.
An othre thing, who that recordeth,
Lich unto this ensample acordeth,
Which in the tale of Troie I finde.
Sirenes of a wonder kynde
Ben Monstres, as the bokes tellen,
And in the grete Se thei duellen:
Of body bothe and of visage
Lik unto wommen of yong age
Up fro the Navele on hih thei be,
And doun benethe, as men mai se,

Thei bere of fisshes the figure.
And overthis of such nature
Thei ben, that with so swete a stevene
Lik to the melodie of hevene
In wommanysshe vois thei singe,
With notes of so gret likinge,
Of such mesure, of such musike,
Wherof the Schipes thei beswike
That passen be the costes there.
For whan the Schipmen leie an Ere
Unto the vois, in here avys
Thei wene it be a Paradys,
Which after is to hem an helle.
For reson may noght with hem duelle,
Whan thei tho grete lustes hiere;
Thei conne noght here Schipes stiere,
So besiliche upon the note
Thei herkne, and in such wise assote,
That thei here rihte cours and weie
Foryete, and to here Ere obeie,
And seilen til it so befalle
That thei into the peril falle,
Where as the Schipes be todrawe,
And thei ben with the Monstres slawe.
Bot fro this peril natheles
With his wisdom king Uluxes
Ascapeth and it overpasseth;
For he tofor the hond compasseth
That noman of his compaignie
Hath pouer unto that folie
His Ere for no lust to caste;
For he hem stoppede alle faste,
That non of hem mai hiere hem singe.
So whan they comen forth seilinge,
Ther was such governance on honde,
That thei the Monstres have withstonde
And slain of hem a gret partie.
Thus was he sauf with his navie,
This wise king, thurgh governance.
Wherof, my Sone, in remembrance
Thou myht ensample taken hiere,
As I have told, and what thou hiere

Be wel war, and yif no credence,
Bot if thou se more evidence.
For if thou woldest take kepe
And wisly cowthest warde and kepe
Thin yhe and Ere, as I have spoke,
Than haddest thou the gates stoke
Fro such Sotie as comth to winne
Thin hertes wit, which is withinne,
Wherof that now thi love exceedeth
Measure, and many a peine bredeth.
Bot if thou cowthest sette in reule
Tho tuo, the thre were eth to reule:
Forthi as of thi wittes five
I wole as now nomore schryve,
Bot only of these ilke tuo.
Tell me therfore if it be so,
Hast thou thin yhen oght misthrowe?
Mi fader, ye, I am beknowe,
I have hem cast upon Meduse,
Therof I may me noght excuse:
Min herte is growen into Ston,
So that my lady therupon
Hath such a priente of love grave,
That I can noght miselve save.
What seist thou, Sone, as of thin Ere?
Mi fader, I am gultyf there;
For whanne I may my lady hiere,
Mi wit with that hath lost his Stiere:
I do noght as Uluxes dede,
Bot falle anon upon the stede,
Wher as I se my lady stonde;
And there, I do yow understonde,
I am topulled in my thoght,
So that of reson leveth noght,
Wherof that I me mai defende.
My goode Sone, god thamende:
For as me thenketh be thi speche
Thi wittes ben riht feer to seche.
As of thin Ere and of thin yhe
I woll nomore specefie,
Bot I woll axen overthis
Of othre thing how that it is.

Mi Sone, as I thee schal enforme,
Ther ben yet of an other forme
Of dedly vices sevene applied,
Wherof the herte is ofte plied
To thing which after schal him grieve.
The ferste of hem thou schalt believe
Is Pride, which is principal,
And hath with him in special
Ministres five ful diverse,
Of whiche, as I the schal reherse,
The ferste is seid Ypocrisie.
If thou art of his compaignie,
Tell forth, my Sone, and schrif the clene.
I wot noght, fader, what ye mene:
Bot this I wolde you beseche,
That ye me be som weie teche
What is to ben an ypocrite;
And thanne if I be forto wyte,
I wol beknowen, as it is.
Mi Sone, an ypocrite is this,-
A man which feigneth conscience,
As thogh it were al innocence,
Withoute, and is noght so withinne;
And doth so for he wolde winne
Of his desir the vein astat.
And whanne he comth anon therat,
He scheweth thanne what he was,
The corn is torned into gras,
That was a Rose is thanne a thorn,
And he that was a Lamb befor
Is thanne a Wolf, and thus malice
Under the colour of justice
Is hid; and as the poeple telleth,
These ordres witen where he duelleth,
As he that of here conseil is,
And thilke world which thei er this
Forsoken, he drawth in ayein:
He clotheth riches, as men sein,
Under the simplesce of poverté,
And doth to seme of gret decerte
Thing which is litel worth withinne:
He seith in open, fy! to Sinne,

And in secre ther is no vice
Of which that he nis a Norrice:
And evere his chiere is sobre and softe,
And where he goth he blesseth ofte,
Wherof the blinde world he dreccheth.
Bot yet al only he ne streccheth
His reule upon religioun,
Bot next to that condicioun
In suche as clepe hem holy cherche
It scheweth ek how he can werche
Among tho wyde furred hodes,
To geten hem the worldes goodes.
And thei hemself ben thilke same
That setten most the world in blame,
Bot yet in contraire of her lore
Ther is nothing thei loven more;
So that semende of liht thei werke
The dedes whiche are inward derke.
And thus this double Ypocrisie
With his devolte apparantie
A viser set upon his face,
Wherof toward this worldes grace
He semeth to be riht wel thewed,
And yit his herte is al beschrewed.
Bot natheles he stant believed,
And hath his pourpos ofte achieved
Of worschipe and of worldes welthe,
And takth it, as who seith, be stelthe
Thurgh coverture of his fallas.
And riht so in semblable cas
This vice hath ek his officers
Among these othre seculers
Of grete men, for of the smale
As for tacompte he set no tale,
Bot thei that passen the comune
With suche him liketh to comune,
And where he seith he wol socoure
The poeple, there he woll devoure;
For now aday is manyon
Which spekth of Peter and of John
And thenketh Judas in his herte.
Ther schal no worldes good asterte

His hond, and yit he yifth almesse
And fasteth ofte and hiereth Messe:
With mea culpa, which he seith,
Upon his brest fullofte he leith
His hond, and cast upward his yhe,
As thogh he Cristes face syhe;
So that it seemeth ate syhte,
As he al one alle othre myhte
Rescoue with his holy bede.
Bot yet his herte in other stede
Among hise bedes most devoute
Goth in the worldes cause aboute,
How that he myhte his warisoun
Encresce. And in comparisoun
Ther ben lovers of such a sort,
That feignen hem an humble port,
And al is bot Ypocrisie,
Which with decepte and flaterie
Hath many a worthi wif beguiled.
For whanne he hath his tunge affiled,
With softe speche and with lesinge,
Forth with his fals pitous lokynge,
He wolde make a womman wene
To gon upon the faire grene,
Whan that sche falleth in the Mir.
For if he may have his desir,
How so falle of the remenant,
He halt no word of covenant;
Bot er the time that he spede,
Ther is no sleihte at thilke nede,
Which eny loves faitour mai,
That he ne put it in assai,
As him belongeth forto done.
The colour of the reyni Mone
With medicine upon his face
He set, and thanne he axeth grace,
As he which hath sieknesse feigned.
Whan his visage is so desteigned,
With yhe upcast on hire he siketh,
And many a contenance he piketh,
To bringen hire in to believe
Of thing which that he wolde achieve,

Wherof he berth the pale hewe;
And for he wolde seme trewe,
He makth him siek, whan he is heil.
Bot whanne he berth lowest the Seil,
Thanne is he swiftest to beguile
The womman, which that ilke while
Set upon him feith or credence.
Mi Sone, if thou thi conscience
Entamed hast in such a wise,
In schrifte thou thee myht advise
And telle it me, if it be so.
Min holy fader, certes no.
As forto feigne such sieknesse
It nedeth noght, for this witesse
I take of god, that my corage
Hath ben mor siek than my visage.
And ek this mai I wel avowe,
So lowe cowthe I nevere bowe
To feigne humilite withoute,
That me ne leste betre loute
With alle the thoghtes of myn herte;
For that thing schal me nevere asterte,
I speke as to my lady diere,
To make hire eny feigned chiere.
God wot wel there I lye noght,
Mi chiere hath be such as my thoght;
For in good feith, this lieveth wel,
Mi will was betre a thousandel
Than eny chiere that I cowthe.
Bot, Sire, if I have in my yowthe
Don other wise in other place,
I put me therof in your grace:
For this excusen I ne schal,
That I have elles overal
To love and to his compaignie
Be plein withoute Ypocrisie;
Bot ther is on the which I serve,
Althogh I may no thonk deserve,
To whom yet nevere into this day
I seide onlyche or ye or nay,
Bot if it so were in my thoght.
As touchende othre seie I noght

That I nam somdel forto wyte
Of that ye clepe an ypocrite.
Mi Sone, it sit wel every wiht
To kepe his word in trowthe upryht
Towardes love in alle wise.
For who that wolde him wel advise
What hath befall in this matiere,
He scholde noght with feigned chiere
Deceive Love in no degre.
To love is every herte fre,
Bot in deceipte if that thou feignest
And therupon thi lust atteignest,
That thou hast wonne with thi wyle,
Thogh it thee like for a whyle,
Thou schalt it afterward repente.
And forto prove myn entente,
I finde ensample in a Cronique
Of hem that love so beswike.
It fell be olde daies thus,
Whil themperour Tiberius
The Monarchie of Rome ladde,
Ther was a worthi Romein hadde
A wif, and sche Pauline hihte,
Which was to every mannes sihte
Of al the Cite the faireste,
And as men seiden, ek the beste.
It is and hath ben evere yit,
That so strong is no mannes wit,
Which thurgh Beaute ne mai be drawe
To love, and stonde under the lawe
Of thilke bore frele kinde,
Which makth the hertes yhen blinde,
Wher no reson mai be comuned:
And in this wise stod fortunéd
This tale, of which I wolde mene;
This wif, which in hire lustes grene
Was fair and freissh and tendre of age,
Sche may noght lette the corage
Of him that wole on hire assote.
Ther was a Duck, and he was hote
Mundus, which hadde in his baillie
To lede the chivalerie

Of Rome, and was a worthi knyght;
Bot yet he was noght of such myht
The strengthe of love to withstonde,
That he ne was so broght to honde,
That malgre wher he wole or no,
This yonge wif he loveth so,
That he hath put al his assay
To wynne thing which he ne may
Gete of hire graunt in no manere,
Be yifte of gold ne be preiere.
And whanne he syh that be no mede
Toward hir love he myhte spede,
Be sleyhte feigned thanne he wroghte;
And therupon he him bethoghte
How that ther was in the Cite
A temple of such auctorite,
To which with gret Devocioun
The noble wommen of the toun
Most comunliche a pelrinage
Gon forto preie thilke ymage
Which the godesse of childinge is,
And cleped was be name Ysis:
And in hire temple thanne were,
To reule and to ministre there
After the lawe which was tho,
Above alle othre Prestes tuo.
This Duck, which thoghte his love gete,
Upon a day hem tuo to mete
Hath bede, and thei come at his heste;
Wher that thei hadde a riche feste,
And after mete in prive place
This lord, which wolde his thonk pourchace,
To ech of hem yaf thanne a yifte,
And spak so that be weie of schrifte
He drowh hem unto his covine,
To helpe and schape how he Pauline
After his lust deceive myhte.
And thei here trowthes bothe plyhte,
That thei be nyhte hire scholden wynne
Into the temple, and he therinne
Schal have of hire al his entente:
And thus acorded forth thei wente.

Now lest thurgh which ypocrisie
Ordeigned was the tricherie,
Wherof this ladi was deceived.
These Prestes hadden wel conceived
That sche was of gret holinesse;
And with a contrefet simplesse,
Which hid was in a fals corage,
Feignende an hevenely message
Thei come and seide unto hir thus:
'Pauline, the god Anubus
Hath sent ous bothe Prestes hiere,
And seith he woll to thee appiere
Be nyhtes time himself alone,
For love he hath to thi persone:
And therupon he hath ous bede,
That we in Ysis temple a stede
Honestely for thee pourveie,
Wher thou be nyhte, as we thee seie,
Of him schalt take avisioun.
For upon thi condicioun,
The which is chaste and ful of feith,
Such pris, as he ous tolde, he leith,
That he wol stonde of thin acord;
And forto bere hierof record
He sende ous hider bothe tuo.'
Glad was hire innocence tho
Of suche wordes as sche herde,
With humble chiere and thus answerde,
And seide that the goddes wille
Sche was al redy to fulfille,
That be hire housebondes leve
Sche wolde in Ysis temple at eve
Upon hire goddes grace abide,
To serven him the nyhtes tide.
The Prestes tho gon hom ayein,
And sche goth to hire sovereign,
Of goddes wille and as it was
Sche tolde him al the pleine cas,
Wherof he was deceived eke,
And bad that sche hire scholde meke
Al hol unto the goddes heste.
And thus sche, which was al honeste

To godward after hire entente,
At nyht unto the temple wente,
Wher that the false Prestes were;
And thei receiven hire there
With such a tokne of holinesse,
As thogh thei syhen a godesse,
And al withinne in prive place
A softe bedd of large space
Thei hadde mad and encourtined,
Wher sche was afterward engined.
Bot sche, which al honour supposeth,
The false Prestes thanne opposeth,
And axeth be what observance
Sche myhte most to the plesance
Of godd that nyhtes reule kepe:
And thei hire bidden forto slepe
Liggende upon the bedd alofte,
For so, thei seide, al stille and softe
God Anubus hire wolde awake.
The conseil in this wise take,
The Prestes fro this lady gon;
And sche, that wiste of guile non,
In the manere as it was seid
To slepe upon the bedd is leid,
In hope that sche scholde achieve
Thing which stod thanne upon bilieve,
Fulfilde of alle holinesse.
Bot sche hath failed, as I gesse,
For in a closet faste by
The Duck was hid so prively
That sche him myhte noght perceive;
And he, that thoghte to deceive,
Hath such arrai upon him nome,
That whanne he wolde unto hir come,
It scholde semen at hire yhe
As thogh sche verrailiche syhe
God Anubus, and in such wise
This ypocrite of his queintise
Awaiteth evere til sche slepte.
And thanne out of his place he crepte
So stille that sche nothing herde,
And to the bedd stalkende he ferde,

And sodeinly, er sche it wiste,
Beclipt in armes he hire kiste:
Wherof in wommanysshe drede
Sche wok and nyste what to rede;
Bot he with softe wordes milde
Conforteth hire and seith, with childe
He wolde hire make in such a kynde
That al the world schal have in mynde
The worschipe of that ilke Sone;
For he schal with the goddes wone,
And ben himself a godd also.
With suche wordes and with mo,
The whiche he feigneth in his speche,
This lady wit was al to seche,
As sche which alle trowthe weneth:
Bot he, that alle untrowthe meneth,
With blinde tales so hire ladde,
That all his wille of hire he hadde.
And whan him thoghte it was ynowh,
Ayein the day he him withdrowh
So prively that sche ne wiste
Wher he becom, bot as him liste
Out of the temple he goth his weie.
And sche began to bidde and preie
Upon the bare ground knelende,
And after that made hire offrende,
And to the Prestes yiftes grete
Sche yaf, and homward be the Strete.
The Duck hire mette and seide thus:
'The myhti godd which Anubus
Is hote, he save the, Pauline,
For thou art of his discipline
So holy, that no mannes myht
Mai do that he hath do to nyht
Of thing which thou hast evere eschued.
Bot I his grace have so poursued,
That I was mad his lieutenant:
Forthi be weie of covenant
Fro this day forth I am al thin,
And if thee like to be myn,
That stant upon thin oghne wille.'
Sche herde his tale and bar it stille,

And hom sche wente, as it befell,
Into hir chambre, and ther sche fell
Upon hire bedd to wepe and crie,
And seide: 'O derke ypocrisie,
Thurgh whos dissimilacion
Of fals ymaginacion
I am thus wickedly deceived!
Bot that I have it aperceived
I thonke unto the goddes alle;
For thogh it ones be befalle,
It schal nevere eft whil that I live,
And thilke avou to godd I yive.'
And thus wepende sche compleigneth,
Hire faire face and al destaigneth
With wofull teres of hire ije,
So that upon this agonie
Hire housebonde is inne come,
And syh how sche was overcome
With sorwe, and axeth what hire eileth.
And sche with that hirsself beweileth
Welmores than sche dede afore,
And seide, 'Helas, wifhode is lore
In me, which whilom was honeste,
I am non other than a beste,
Now I defouled am of tuo.'
And as sche myhte speke tho,
Aschamed with a pitous onde
Sche tolde unto hir housebonde
The sothe of al the hole tale,
And in hire speche ded and pale
Sche swouneth welnyh to the laste.
And he hire in hise armes faste
Uphield, and ofte swor his oth
That he with hire is nothing wroth,
For wel he wot sche may ther noght:
Bot natheles withinne his thoght
His herte stod in sori plit,
And seide he wolde of that despit
Be venged, how so evere it falle,
And sende unto hise frendes alle.
And whan thei weren come in fere,
He tolde hem upon this matiere,

And axeth hem what was to done:
And thei avised were sone,
And seide it thoghte hem for the beste
To sette ferst his wif in reste,
And after pleigne to the king
Upon the matiere of this thing.
Tho was this wofull wif conforted
Be alle weies and desported,
Til that sche was somdiel amended;
And thus a day or tuo despended,
The thridde day sche goth to pleigne
With many a worthi Citezeine,
And he with many a Citezein.
Whan themperour it herde sein,
And knew the falshed of the vice,
He seide he wolde do justice:
And ferst he let the Prestes take,
And for thei scholde it noght forsake,
He put hem into questioun;
Bot thei of the suggestioun
Ne couthen noght a word refuse,
Bot for thei wolde hemself excuse,
The blame upon the Duck thei leide.
Bot therayein the conseil seide
That thei be noght excused so,
For he is on and thei ben tuo,
And tuo han more wit then on,
So thilke excusement was non.
And over that was seid hem eke,
That whan men wolden vertu seke,
Men scholde it in the Prestes finde;
Here ordre is of so hyh a kinde,
That thei be Duistres of the weie:
Forthi, if eny man forsueie
Thurgh hem, thei be noght excusable.
And thus be lawe resonable
Among the wise jugges there
The Prestes bothe dampned were,
So that the prive tricherie
Hid under fals Ipocrisie
Was thanne al openliche schewed,
That many a man hem hath beschrewed.

And whan the Prestes weren dede,
The temple of thilke horrible dede
Thei thoghten purge, and thilke ymage,
Whos cause was the pelrinage,
Thei drowen out and als so faste
Fer into Tibre thei it caste,
Wher the Rivere it hath defied:
And thus the temple purified
Thei have of thilke horrible Sinne,
Which was that time do therinne.
Of this point such was the juisse,
Bot of the Duck was other wise:
For he with love was bestad,
His dom was noght so harde lad;
For Love put reson aweie
And can noght se the rihte weie.
And be this cause he was respited,
So that the deth him was acquitted,
Bot for al that he was exiled,
For he his love hath so beguiled,
That he schal nevere come ayein:
For who that is to trowthe unplein,
He may noght failen of vengeance.
And ek to take remembrance
Of that Ypocrisie hath wrought
On other half, men scholde noght
To lihtly lieve al that thei hiere,
Bot thanne scholde a wisman stiere
The Schip, whan suche wyndes blowe:
For ferst thogh thei beginne lowe,
At ende thei be noght menable,
Bot al tobreken Mast and Cable,
So that the Schip with sodein blast,
Whan men lest wene, is overcast;
As now fulofte a man mai se:
And of old time how it hath be
I finde a gret experience,
Wherof to take an evidence
Good is, and to be war also
Of the peril, er him be wo.
Of hem that ben so derk withinne,
At Troie also if we beginne,

Ipocrisie it hath betrayed:
For whan the Greks hadde al assaied,
And founde that be no bataille
Ne be no Siege it myhte availe
The toun to winne thurgh prouesse,
This vice feigned of simplesce
Thurgh sleyhte of Calcas and of Crise
It wan be such a maner wise.
An Hors of Bras thei let do forge
Of such entaile, of such a forge,
That in this world was nevere man
That such an other werk began.
The crafti werkman Epius
It made, and forto telle thus,
The Greks, that thoghten to beguile
The kyng of Troie, in thilke while
With Anthenor and with Enee,
That were bothe of the Cite
And of the conseil the wiseste,
The richeste and the myhtieste,
In prive place so thei trete
With fair behestes and yiftes grete
Of gold, that thei hem have engined;
Togedre and whan thei be covined,
Thei feignen forto make a pes,
And under that yit natheles
Thei schopen the destruccioun
Bothe of the kyng and of the toun.
And thus the false pees was take
Of hem of Grece and undertake,
And therupon thei founde a weie,
Wher strengthe myhte noght aweie,
That sleihte scholde helpe thanne;
And of an ynche a large spanne
Be colour of the pees thei made,
And tolden how thei weren glade
Of that thei stoden in acord;
And for it schal ben of record,
Unto the kyng the Gregois seiden,
Be weie of love and this thei preiden,
As thei that wolde his thonk deserve,
A Sacrifice unto Minerve,

The pes to kepe in good entente,
Thei mosten offre er that thei wente.
The kyng conseiled in this cas
Be Anthenor and Eneas
Therto hath yoven his assent:
So was the pleine trowthe blent
Thurgh contrefet Ipocrisie
Of that thei scholden sacrificie.
The Greks under the holinesse
Anon with alle besinesse
Here Hors of Bras let faire dihte,
Which was to sen a wonder sihte;
For it was trapped of himselve,
And hadde of smale whieles twelve,
Upon the whiche men ynowe
With craft toward the toun it drowe,
And goth glistrende ayein the Sunne.
Tho was ther joie ynowh begunne,
For Troie in gret devocioun
Cam also with processoun
Ayein this noble Sacrifise
With gret honour, and in this wise
Unto the gates thei it broghte.
Bot of here entre whan thei soghte,
The gates weren al to smale;
And therupon was many a tale,
Bot for the worschipe of Minerve,
To whom thei comen forto serve,
Thei of the toun, whiche understode
That al this thing was do for goode,
For pes, wherof that thei ben glade,
The gates that Neptunus made
A thousand wynter ther tofore,
Thei have anon tobroke and tore;
The stronge walles down thei bete,
So that in to the large strete
This Hors with gret solempnite
Was broght withinne the Cite,
And offred with gret reverence,
Which was to Troie an evidence
Of love and pes for everemo.
The Gregois token leve tho

With al the hole felaschipe,
And forth thei wenten into Schipe
And crossen seil and made hem yare,
Anon as thogh thei wolden fare:
Bot whan the blake wynter nyht
Withoute Mone or Sterre lyht
Bederked hath the water Stronde,
Al prively thei gon to londe
Ful armed out of the navie.
Synon, which mad was here asprie
Withinne Troie, as was conspired,
Whan time was a tokne hath fired;
And thei with that here weie holden,
And comen in riht as thei wolden,
Ther as the gate was tobroke.
The pourpos was full take and spoke:
Er eny man may take kepe,
Whil that the Cite was aslepe,
Thei slowen al that was withinne,
And token what thei myhten wynne
Of such good as was sufficient,
And brenden up the remenant.
And thus cam out the tricherie,
Which under fals Ypocrisie
Was hid, and thei that wende pees
Tho myhten finde no reles
Of thilke swerd which al devoureth.
Fulofte and thus the swete soureth,
Whan it is knowe to the tast:
He spilleth many a word in wast
That schal with such a poeple trete;
For whan he weneth most beyete,
Thanne is he schape most to lese.
And riht so if a womman chese
Upon the wordes that sche hiereth
Som man, whan he most trewe appiereth,
Thanne is he forthest fro the trowthe:
Bot yit fulofte, and that is rowthe,
Thei speden that ben most untrewes
And loven every day a newe,
Wherof the lief is after loth
And love hath cause to be wroth.

Bot what man that his lust desireth
Of love, and therupon conspireth
With wordes feigned to deceive,
He schal noght faile to receive
His peine, as it is ofte sene.
Forthi, my Sone, as I thee mene,
It sit the wel to taken hiede
That thou eschuie of thi manhiede
Ipocrisie and his semblant,
That thou ne be noght deceivant,
To make a womman to believe
Thing which is noght in thi bilieve:
For in such feint Ipocrisie
Of love is al the tricherie,
Thurgh which love is deceived ofte;
For feigned semblant is so softe,
Unethes love may be war.
Forthi, my Sone, as I wel dar,
I charge thee to fle that vice,
That many a womman hath mad nice;
Bot lok thou dele noght withal.
Iwiss, fader, nomor I schal.
Now, Sone, kep that thou hast swore:
For this that thou hast herd before
Is seid the ferste point of Pride:
And next upon that other side,
To schryve and speken overthis
Touchende of Pride, yit ther is
The point seconde, I thee behote,
Which Inobedience is hote.
This vice of Inobedience
Ayein the reule of conscience
Al that is humble he desalloweth,
That he toward his god ne boweth
After the lawes of his heste.
Noght as a man bot as a beste,
Which goth upon his lustes wilde,
So goth this proude vice unmylde,
That he desdeigneth alle lawe:
He not what is to be felawe,
And serve may he noght for pride;
So is he badde on every side,

And is that selve of whom men speke,
Which wol noght bowe er that he breke.
I not if love him myhte plie,
For elles forto justefie
His herte, I not what mihte availe.
Forthi, my Sone, of such entaile
If that thin herte be disposed,
Tell out and let it noght be glosed:
For if that thou unbuxom be
To love, I not in what degree
Thou schalt thi goode world achieve.
Mi fader, ye schul wel believe,
The yonge whelp which is affaited
Hath noght his Maister betre awaited,
To couche, whan he seith 'Go lowe,'
That I, anon as I may knowe
Mi ladi will, ne bowe more.
Bot other while I grucche sore
Of some thinges that sche doth,
Wherof that I woll telle soth:
For of tuo pointz I am bethoght,
That, thogh I wolde, I myhte noght
Obeie unto my ladi heste;
Bot I dar make this beheste,
Save only of that ilke tuo
I am unbuxom of no mo.
Whan ben tho tuo? tell on, quod he.
Mi fader, this is on, that sche
Comandeth me my mowth to close,
And that I scholde hir noght oppose
In love, of which I ofte preche,
Bot plenerliche of such a speche
Forbere, and soffren hire in pes.
Bot that ne myhte I natheles
For al this world obeie ywiss;
For whanne I am ther as sche is,
Though sche my tales noght alowe,
Ayein hir will yit mot I bowe,
To seche if that I myhte have grace:
Bot that thing may I noght embrace
For ought that I can speke or do;
And yit fulofte I speke so,

That sche is wroth and seith, 'Be stille.'
If I that heste schal fulfille
And therto ben obedient,
Thanne is my cause fully schent,
For specheles may noman spede.
So wot I noght what is to rede;
Bot certes I may noght obeie,
That I ne mot algate seie
Somwhat of that I wolde mene;
For evere it is aliche grene,
The grete love which I have,
Wherof I can noght bothe save
My speche and this obedience:
And thus fulofte my silence
I breke, and is the ferste point
Wherof that I am out of point
In this, and yit it is no pride.
Now thanne upon that other side
To telle my desobeissance,
Ful sore it stant to my grevance
And may noght sinke into my wit;
For ofte time sche me bit
To leven hire and chese a newe,
And seith, if I the sothe knewe
How ferr I stonde from hir grace,
I scholde love in other place.
Bot therof woll I desobeie;
For also wel sche myhte seie,
'Go tak the Mone ther it sit,'
As bringe that into my wit:
For ther was nevere rooted tre,
That stod so faste in his degre,
That I ne stonde more faste
Upon hire love, and mai noght caste
Min herte away, although I wolde.
For god wot, thogh I nevere scholde
Sen hir with yhe after this day,
Yit stant it so that I ne may
Hir love out of my brest remue.
This is a wonder retenue,
That malgre wher sche wole or non
Min herte is everemore in on,

So that I can non other chese,
Bot whether that I winne or lese,
I moste hire loven til I deie;
And thus I breke as be that weie
Hire hestes and hir comandinges,
Bot trewliche in non othre thinges.
Forthi, my fader, what is more
Touchende to this ilke lore
I you beseche, after the forme
That ye plainly me wolde enforme,
So that I may myn herte reule
In loves cause after the reule.
Toward this vice of which we trete
Ther ben yit tweie of thilke estrete,
Here name is Murmur and Compleignte:
Ther can noman here chiere peinte,
To sette a glad semblant therinne,
For thogh fortune make hem wyne,
Yit grucchen thei, and if thei lese,
Ther is no weie forto chese,
Wherof thei myhten stonde appesed.
So ben thei comunly desesed;
Ther may no welthe ne poverté
Attempren hem to the decerte
Of buxomnesse be no wise:
For ofte time thei despise
The goode fortune as the badde,
As thei no mannes reson hadde,
Thurgh pride, wherof thei be blinde.
And ryht of such a maner kinde
Ther be lovers, that thogh thei have
Of love al that thei wolde crave,
Yit wol thei grucche be som weie,
That thei wol noght to love obeie
Upon the trowthe, as thei do scholde;
And if hem lacketh that thei wolde,
Anon thei falle in such a peine,
That evere unbuxomly thei pleigne
Upon fortune, and curse and crie,
That thei wol noght here hertes plie
To soffre til it betre falle.
Forthi if thou amonges alle

Hast used this condicioun,
Mi Sone, in thi Confessioun
Now tell me plainly what thou art.
Mi fader, I beknowe a part,
So as ye tolden hier above
Of Murmur and Compleignte of love,
That for I se no sped comende,
Ayein fortune compleignende
I am, as who seith, everemo:
And ek fulofte tyme also,
Whan so is that I se and hiere
Or hevy word or hevy chiere
Of my lady, I grucche anon;
Bot wordes dar I speke non,
Wherof sche myhte be desplesed,
Bot in myn herte I am desesed:
With many a Murmur, god it wot,
Thus drinke I in myn oghne swot,
And thogh I make no semblant,
Min herte is al desobeissant;
And in this wise I me confesse
Of that ye clepe unbuxomnesse.
Now telleth what youre conseil is.
Mi Sone, and I thee rede this,
What so befall of other weie,
That thou to loves heste obeie
Als ferr as thou it myht suffise:
For ofte sithe in such a wise
Obedience in love availeth,
Wher al a mannes strengthe faileth;
Wherof, if that the list to wite
In a Cronique as it is write,
A gret ensample thou myht fynde,
Which now is come to my mynde.
Ther was whilom be daies olde
A worthi knyht, and as men tolde
He was Nevoeu to themperour
And of his Court a Courteour:
Wifles he was, Florent he hihte,
He was a man that mochel myhte,
Of armes he was desirous,
Chivalerous and amorous,

And for the fame of worldes speche,
Strange adventures forto seche,
He rod the Marches al aboute.
And fell a time, as he was oute,
Fortune, which may every thred
Tobreke and knette of mannes sped,
Schop, as this knyht rod in a pas,
That he be strengthe take was,
And to a Castell thei him ladde,
Wher that he fewe frendes hadde:
For so it fell that ilke stounde
That he hath with a dedly wounde
Feihtende his oghne hondes slain
Branchus, which to the Capitain
Was Sone and Heir, wherof ben wrothe
The fader and the moder bothe.
That knyht Branchus was of his hond
The worthieste of al his lond,
And fain thei wolden do vengeance
Upon Florent, bot remembrance
That thei toke of his worthinesse
Of knythod and of gentilesse,
And how he stod of cousinage
To themperour, made hem assuage,
And dorsten noght slen him for fere:
In gret desputeisoun thei were
Among hemself, what was the beste.
Ther was a lady, the slyheste
Of alle that men knewe tho,
So old sche myhte unethes go,
And was grantdame unto the dede:
And sche with that began to rede,
And seide how sche wol bringe him inne,
That sche schal him to dethe winne
Al only of his oghne grant,
Thurgh strengthe of verray covenant
Withoute blame of eny wiht.
Anon sche sende for this kniht,
And of hire Sone sche alleide
The deth, and thus to him sche seide:
'Florent, how so thou be to wyte
Of Branchus deth, men schal respite

As now to take vengeance,
Be so thou stonde in juggement
Upon certein condicioun,
That thou unto a questioun
Which I schal axe schalt ansuere;
And over this thou schalt ek swere,
That if thou of the sothe faile,
Ther schal non other thing availe,
That thou ne schalt thi deth receive.
And for men schal thee noght deceive,
That thou therof myht ben avised,
Thou schalt have day and tyme assised
And leve saufly forto wende,
Be so that at thi daies ende
Thou come ayein with thin avys.
This knyht, which worthi was and wys,
This lady preith that he may wite,
And have it under Seales write,
What questioun it scholde be
For which he schal in that degree
Stonde of his lif in jeupartie.
With that sche feigneth compaignie,
And seith: 'Florent, on love it hongeth
Al that to myn axinge longeth:
What alle wommen most desire
This wole I axe, and in thempire
Wher as thou hast most knowleching
Tak conseil upon this axinge.'
Florent this thing hath undertake,
The day was set, the time take,
Under his seal he wrot his oth,
In such a wise and forth he goth
Hom to his Emes court ayein;
To whom his aventure plein
He tolde, of that him is befall.
And upon that thei weren alle
The wiseste of the lond asent,
Bot natheles of on assent
Thei myhte noght acorde plat,
On seide this, an othre that.
After the disposicioun
Of naturel complexioun

To som womman it is plesance,
That to an other is grevance;
Bot such a thing in special,
Which to hem alle in general
Is most plesant, and most desired
Above alle othre and most conspired,
Such o thing conne thei noght finde
Be Constellacion ne kinde:
And thus Florent withoute cure
Mot stonde upon his aventure,
And is al schape unto the lere,
As in defalte of his answeere.
This knyht hath levere forto dye
Than breke his trowthe and forto lye
In place ther as he was swore,
And schapth him gon ayein therfore.
Whan time cam he tok his leve,
That lengere wolde he noght beleve,
And preith his Em he be noght wroth,
For that is a point of his oth,
He seith, that noman schal him wreke,
Thogh afterward men hiere speke
That he par aventure deie.
And thus he wente forth his weie
Alone as knyht adventurous,
And in his thoght was curious
To wite what was best to do:
And as he rod al one so,
And cam nyh ther he wolde be,
In a forest under a tre
He syh wher sat a creature,
A lothly wommannysch figure,
That forto speke of fleisch and bon
So foul yit syh he nevere non.
This knyht behield hir redely,
And as he wolde have passed by,
Sche cleped him and bad abide;
And he his horse heved aside
Tho torneth, and to hire he rod,
And there he hoveth and abod,
To wite what sche wolde mene.
And sche began him to bemene,

And seide: 'Florent be thi name,
Thou hast on honde such a game,
That bot thou be the betre avised,
Thi deth is schapen and devised,
That al the world ne mai the save,
Bot if that thou my conseil have.'
Florent, whan he this tale herde,
Unto this olde wyht answerde
And of hir conseil he hir preide.
And sche ayein to him thus seide:
'Florent, if I for the so schape,
That thou thurgh me thi deth ascape
And take worschipe of thi dede,
What schal I have to my mede?'
'What thing,' quod he, 'that thou wolt axe.'
'I bidde nevere a betre taxe,'
Quod sche, 'bot ferst, er thou be sped,
Thou schalt me leve such a wedd,
That I wol have thi trowthe in honde
That thou schalt be myn housebonde.'
'Nay,' seith Florent, 'that may noght be.'
'Ryd thanne forth thi wey,' quod sche,
'And if thou go withoute red,
Thou schalt be sekerliche ded.'
Florent behihte hire good ynowh
Of lond, of rente, of park, of plowh,
Bot al that compteth sche at noght.
Tho fell this knyht in mochel thoght,
Now goth he forth, now comth ayein,
He wot noght what is best to sein,
And thoghte, as he rod to and fro,
That chese he mot on of the tuo,
Or forto take hire to his wif
Or elles forto lese his lif.
And thanne he caste his advantage,
That sche was of so gret an age,
That sche mai live bot a while,
And thoghte put hire in an Ile,
Wher that noman hire scholde knowe,
Til sche with deth were overthrowe.
And thus this yonge lusti knyht
Unto this olde lothly wiht

Tho seide: 'If that non other chance
Mai make my deliverance,
Bot only thilke same speche
Which, as thou seist, thou schalt me teche,
Have hier myn hond, I schal thee wedde.'
And thus his trowthe he leith to wedde.
With that sche frounceth up the browe:
'This covenant I wol allowe,'
Sche seith: 'if eny other thing
Bot that thou hast of my techyng
Fro deth thi body mai respite,
I woll thee of thi trowthe acquite,
And elles be non other weie.
Now herkne me what I schal seie.
Whan thou art come into the place,
Wher now thei maken gret manace
And upon thi comynge abyde,
Thei wole anon the same tide
Oppose thee of thin answer.
I wot thou wolt nothing forbere
Of that thou wenest be thi beste,
And if thou myht so finde reste,
Wel is, for thanne is ther nomore.
And elles this schal be my lore,
That thou schalt seie, upon this Molde
That alle wommen lievest wolde
Be sovereign of mannes love:
For what womman is so above,
Sche hath, as who seith, al hire wille;
And elles may sche noght fulfille
What thing hir were lievest have.
With this answer thou schalt save
Thiself, and other wise noght.
And whan thou hast thin ende wroght,
Com hier ayein, thou schalt me finde,
And let nothing out of thi minde.'
He goth him forth with hevy chiere,
As he that not in what manere
He mai this worldes joie atteigne:
For if he deie, he hath a peine,
And if he live, he mot him binde
To such on which of alle kinde

Of wommen is thunsemlieste:
Thus wot he noght what is the beste:
Bot be him lief or be him loth,
Unto the Castell forth he goth
His full answer forto yive,
Or forto deie or forto live.
Forth with his conseil cam the lord,
The thinges stoden of record,
He sende up for the lady sone,
And forth sche cam, that olde Mone.
In presence of the remenant
The strengthe of al the covenant
Tho was reherced openly,
And to Florent sche bad forthi
That he schal tellen his avis,
As he that woot what is the pris.
Florent seith al that evere he couthe,
Bot such word cam ther non to mowthe,
That he for yifte or for beheste
Mihte eny wise his deth areste.
And thus he tarieth longe and late,
Til that this lady bad algate
That he schal for the dom final
Yive his answer in special
Of that sche hadde him ferst opposed:
And thanne he hath trewly supposed
That he him may of nothing yelpe,
Bot if so be tho wordes helpe,
Whiche as the womman hath him tawht;
Wherof he hath an hope cawht
That he schal ben excused so,
And tolde out plein his wille tho.
And whan that this Matrone herde
The manere how this knyht ansuerde,
Sche seide: 'Ha treson, wo thee be,
That hast thus told the privite,
Which alle wommen most desire!
I wolde that thou were afire.'
Bot natheles in such a plit
Florent of his answer is quit:
And tho began his sorwe newe,
For he mot gon, or ben untrewe,

To hire which his trowthe hadde.
Bot he, which alle schame dradde,
Goth forth in stede of his penance,
And takth the fortune of his chance,
As he that was with trowthe affaited.
This olde wyht him hath awaited
In place wher as he hire lefte:
Florent his wofull heved uplefte
And syh this vecke wher sche sat,
Which was the lothlieste what
That evere man caste on his yhe:
Hire Nase bass, hire browes hyhe,
Hire yhen smale and depe set,
Hire chekes ben with teres wet,
And rivelen as an emty skyn
Hangende doun unto the chin,
Hire Lippes schrunken ben for age,
Ther was no grace in the visage,
Hir front was nargh, hir lockes hore,
Sche loketh forth as doth a More,
Hire Necke is schort, hir schuldres courbe,
That myhte a mannes lust destourbe,
Hire body gret and nothing smal,
And schortly to describe hire al,
Sche hath no lith withoute a lak;
Bot lich unto the wollesak
Sche proferth hire unto this knyht,
And bad him, as he hath behyht,
So as sche hath ben his warant,
That he hire holde covenant,
And be the bridel sche him seseth.
Bot godd wot how that sche him pleseth
Of suche wordes as sche spekth:
Him thenkth welnyh his herte brekth
For sorwe that he may noght fle,
Bot if he wolde untrew be.
Loke, how a sek man for his hele
Takth baldemoine with Canele,
And with the Mirre takth the Sucre,
Ryht upon such a maner lucre
Stant Florent, as in this diete:
He drinkth the bitre with the swete,

He medleth sorwe with likynge,
And liveth, as who seith, deyinge;
His youthe schal be cast aweie
Upon such on which as the weie
Is old and lothly overal.
Bot nede he mot that nede schal:
He wolde algate his trowthe holde,
As every knyht therto is holde,
What happ so evere him is befalle:
Thogh sche be the fouleste of alle,
Yet to thonour of wommanhiede
Him thoghte he scholde taken hiede;
So that for pure gentillesse,
As he hire couthe best adresce,
In ragges, as sche was totore,
He set hire on his hors tofore
And forth he takth his weie softe;
No wonder thogh he siketh ofte.
Bot as an oule fleth be nyhte
Out of alle othre briddes syhte,
Riht so this knyht on daies brode
In clos him hield, and schop his rode
On nyhtes time, til the tyde
That he cam there he wolde abide;
And prively withoute noise
He bringth this foule grete Coise
To his Castell in such a wise
That noman myhte hire schappe advise,
Til sche into the chambre cam:
Wher he his prive conseil nam
Of suche men as he most troste,
And tolde hem that he nedes moste
This beste wedde to his wif,
For elles hadde he lost his lif.
The prive wommen were asent,
That scholden ben of his assent:
Hire ragges thei anon of drawe,
And, as it was that time lawe,
She hadde bath, sche hadde reste,
And was arraied to the beste.
Bot with no craft of combes brode
Thei myhte hire hore lockes schode,

And sche ne wolde noght be schore
For no conseil, and thei therfore,
With such atyr as tho was used,
Ordeinen that it was excused,
And hid so crafteliche aboute,
That noman myhte sen hem oute.
Bot when sche was fulliche arraied
And hire atyr was al assaied,
Tho was sche foulere on to se:
Bot yit it may non other be,
Thei were wedded in the nyht;
So wo begon was nevere knyht
As he was thanne of mariage.
And sche began to pleie and rage,
As who seith, I am wel ynowh;
Bot he therof nothing ne lowh,
For sche tok thanne chiere on honde
And clepeth him hire housebonde,
And seith, 'My lord, go we to bedde,
For I to that entente wedde,
That thou schalt be my worldes blisse:'
And profreth him with that to kisse,
As sche a lusti Lady were.
His body myhte wel be there,
Bot as of thoght and of memoire
His herte was in purgatoire.
Bot yit for strengthe of matrimoine
He myhte make non essoine,
That he ne mot algates plie
To gon to bedde of compaignie:
And whan thei were abedde naked,
Withoute slep he was awaked;
He torneth on that other side,
For that he wolde hise yhen hyde
Fro lokynge on that foule wyht.
The chambre was al full of lyht,
The courtins were of cendal thinne,
This newe bryd which lay withinne,
Thogh it be noght with his acord,
In armes sche beclipte hire lord,
And preide, as he was torned fro,
He wolde him torne ayeinward tho;

'For now,' sche seith, 'we ben bothe on.'
And he lay stille as eny ston,
Bot evere in on sche spak and preide,
And bad him thenke on that he seide,
Whan that he tok hire be the hond.
He herde and understod the bond,
How he was set to his penance,
And as it were a man in trance
He torneth him al sodeinly,
And syh a lady lay him by
Of eyhtetiene wynter age,
Which was the faireste of visage
That evere in al this world he syh:
And as he wolde have take hire nyh,
Sche put hire hand and be his leve
Besoghte him that he wolde leve,
And seith that forto wynne or lese
He mot on of tuo thinges chese,
Wher he wol have hire such on nyht,
Or elles upon daies lyht,
For he schal noght have bothe tuo.
And he began to sorwe tho,
In many a wise and caste his thoght,
Bot for al that yit cowthe he noght
Devise himself which was the beste.
And sche, that wolde his hertes reste,
Preith that he scholde chese algate,
Til ate laste longe and late
He seide: 'O ye, my lyves hele,
Sey what you list in my querele,
I not what ansuere I schal yive:
Bot evere whil that I may live,
I wol that ye be my maistresse,
For I can noght miselve gesse
Which is the beste unto my chois.
Thus grante I yow myn hole vois,
Ches for ous bothen, I you preie;
And what as evere that ye seie,
Riht as ye wole so wol I.'
'Mi lord,' sche seide, 'grant merci,
For of this word that ye now sein,
That ye have mad me sovereign,

Mi destine is overpassed,
That nevere hierafter schal be lassed
Mi beaute, which that I now have,
Til I be take into my grave;
Bot nyht and day as I am now
I schal alwey be such to yow.
The kinges dowhter of Cizile
I am, and fell bot siththe awhile,
As I was with my fader late,
That my Stepmoder for an hate,
Which toward me sche hath begonne,
Forschop me, til I hadde wonne
The love and sovereignete
Of what knyht that in his degre
Alle othre passeth of good name:
And, as men sein, ye ben the same,
The dede proeveth it is so;
Thus am I youres evermo.'
Tho was plesance and joye ynowh,
Echon with other pleide and lowh;
Thei live longe and wel thei ferde,
And clerkes that this chance herde
Thei writen it in evidence,
To teche how that obedience
Mai wel fortune a man to love
And sette him in his lust above,
As it befell unto this knyht.
Forthi, my Sone, if thou do ryht,
Thou schalt unto thi love obeie,
And folwe hir will be alle weie.
Min holy fader, so I wile:
For ye have told me such a skile
Of this ensample now tofore,
That I schal evermo therfore
Hierafterward myn observance
To love and to his obeissance
The betre kepe: and over this
Of pride if ther oght elles is,
Wherof that I me schryve schal,
What thing it is in special,
Mi fader, axeth, I you preie.
Now lest, my Sone, and I schal seie:

For yit ther is Surquiderie,
Which stant with Pride of compaignie;
Wherof that thou schalt hiere anon,
To knowe if thou have gult or non
Upon the forme as thou schalt hiere:
Now understond wel the matiere.
Surquiderie is thilke vice
Of Pride, which the thridde office
Hath in his Court, and wol noght knowe
The trowthe til it overthrowe.
Upon his fortune and his grace
Comth 'Hadde I wist' fulofte aplace;
For he doth al his thing be gesse,
And voideth alle sikernesse.
Non other conseil good him siemeth
Bot such as he himselve diemeth;
For in such wise as he compasseth,
His wit al one alle othre passeth;
And is with pride so thurghsoght,
That he alle othre set at noght,
And weneth of himselven so,
That such as he ther be nomo,
So fair, so semly, ne so wis;
And thus he wolde bere a pris
Above alle othre, and noght forthi
He seith noght ones 'grant mercy'
To godd, which alle grace sendeth,
So that his wittes he despendeth
Upon himself, as thogh ther were
No godd which myhte availe there:
Bot al upon his oghne witt
He stant, til he falle in the pitt
So ferr that he mai noght arise.
And riht thus in the same wise
This vice upon the cause of love
So proudly set the herte above,
And doth him plainly forto wene
That he to loven eny qwene
Hath worthinesse and sufficance;
And so withoute pourveance
Fulofte he heweth up so hihe,
That chippes fallen in his yhe;

And ek ful ofte he weneth this,
Ther as he noght beloved is,
To be beloved alther best.
Now, Sone, tell what so thee lest
Of this that I have told thee hier.
Ha, fader, be noght in a wer:
I trowe ther be noman lesse,
Of eny maner worthinesse,
That halt him lasse worth thanne I
To be beloved; and noght forthi
I seie in excusinge of me,
To alle men that love is fre.
And certes that mai noman werne;
For love is of himself so derne,
It luteth in a mannes herte:
Bot that ne schal me noght asterte,
To wene forto be worthi
To loven, bot in hir mercy.
Bot, Sire, of that ye wolden mene,
That I scholde otherwise wene
To be beloved thanne I was,
I am beknowe as in that cas.
Mi goode Sone, tell me how.
Now lest, and I wol telle yow,
Mi goode fader, how it is.
Fulofte it hath befalle or this
Thurgh hope that was noght certein,
Mi wenyng hath be set in vein
To triste in thing that halp me noght,
Bot onliche of myn oughne thoght.
For as it semeth that a belle
Lik to the wordes that men telle
Answerth, riht so ne mor ne lesse,
To yow, my fader, I confesse,
Such will my wit hath overset,
That what so hope me behet,
Ful many a time I wene it soth,
Bot finali no spied it doth.
Thus may I tellen, as I can,
Wenyng beguileth many a man;
So hath it me, riht wel I wot:
For if a man wole in a Bot

Which is withoute botme rowe,
He moste nedes overthrowe.
Riht so wenyng hath ferd be me:
For whanne I wende next have be,
As I be my wenyng caste,
Thanne was I furthest ate laste,
And as a foll my bowe unbende,
Whan al was failed that I wende.
Forthi, my fader, as of this,
That my wenyng hath gon amis
Touchende to Surquiderie,
Yif me my penance er I die.
Bot if ye wolde in eny forme
Of this matiere a tale enforme,
Which were ayein this vice set,
I scholde fare wel the bet.
Mi Sone, in alle maner wise
Surquiderie is to despise,
Wherof I finde write thus.
The proude knyht Capane⁵
He was of such Surquiderie,
That he thurgh his chivalerie
Upon himself so mochel triste,
That to the goddes him ne liste
In no querele to beseche,
Bot seide it was an ydel speche,
Which caused was of pure drede,
For lack of herte and for no nede.
And upon such presumpcioun
He hield this proude opinioun,
Til ate laste upon a dai,
Aboute Thebes wher he lay,
Whan it of Siege was belein,
This knyht, as the Croniques sein,
In alle mennes sihte there,
Whan he was proudest in his gere,
And thoghte how nothing myhte him dere,
Ful armed with his schield and spere
As he the Cite wolde assaile,
Godd tok himselve the bataille
Ayein his Pride, and fro the sky
A firy thonder sodeinly

He sende, and him to pouldre smot.
And thus the Pride which was hot,
Whan he most in his strengthe wende,
Was brent and lost withouten ende:
So that it proeveth wel therfore,
The strengthe of man is sone lore,
Bot if that he it wel governe.
And over this a man mai lerne
That ek fulofte time it grieveth,
Whan that a man himself believeth,
As thogh it scholde him wel beseme
That he alle othre men can deme,
And hath foryete his oghne vice.
A tale of hem that ben so nyce,
And feigne himself to be so wise,
I schal thee telle in such a wise,
Wherof thou schalt ensample take
That thou no such thing undertake.
I finde upon Surquiderie,
How that whilom of Hungarie
Be olde daies was a King
Wys and honeste in alle thing:
And so befell upon a dai,
And that was in the Monthe of Maii,
As thilke time it was usance,
This kyng with noble pourveance
Hath for himself his Charr araied,
Wher inne he wolde ride amaied
Out of the Cite forto pleie,
With lordes and with gret nobleie
Of lusti folk that were yonge:
Wher some pleide and some songe,
And some gon and some ryde,
And some prike here hors aside
And bridlen hem now in now oute.
The kyng his yhe caste aboute,
Til he was ate laste war
And syh comende ayein his char
Two pilegrins of so gret age,
That lich unto a dreie ymage
Thei weren pale and fade hewed,
And as a bussh which is besnewed,

Here berdes weren hore and whyte;
Ther was of kinde bot a lite,
That thei ne semen fulli dede.
Thei comen to the kyng and bede
Som of his good par charite;
And he with gret humilite
Out of his Char to grounde lepte,
And hem in bothe hise armes kepte
And keste hem bothe fot and hond
Before the lordes of his lond,
And yaf hem of his good therto:
And whanne he hath this dede do,
He goth into his char ayein.
Tho was Murmur, tho was desdeign,
Tho was compleignte on every side,
Thei seiden of here oghne Pride
Eche until othre: 'What is this?
Oure king hath do this thing amis,
So to abesse his realte
That every man it myhte se,
And humbled him in such a wise
To hem that were of non emprise.'
Thus was it spoken to and fro
Of hem that were with him tho
Al prively behinde his bak;
Bot to himselven noman spak.
The kinges brother in presence
Was thilke time, and gret offence
He tok therof, and was the same
Above alle othre which most blame
Upon his liege lord hath leid,
And hath unto the lordes seid,
Anon as he mai time finde,
Ther schal nothing be left behinde,
That he wol speke unto the king.
Now lest what fell upon this thing.
The day was merie and fair ynowh,
Echon with othre pleide and lowh,
And fellen into tales newe,
How that the freisshe floures grewe,
And how the grene leves spronge,
And how that love among the yonge

Began the hertes thanne awake,
And every bridd hath chose hire make:
And thus the Maies day to thende
Thei lede, and hom ayein thei wende.
The king was noght so sone come,
That whanne he hadde his chambre nome,
His brother ne was redi there,
And broghte a tale unto his Ere
Of that he dede such a schame
In hindringe of his oghne name,
Whan he himself so wolde drecche,
That to so vil a povere wrecche
Him deigneth schewe such simplesce
Ayein thastat of his noblesce:
And seith he schal it nomor use,
And that he mot himself excuse
Toward hise lordes everychon.
The king stod stille as eny ston,
And to his tale an Ere he leide,
And thoghte more than he seide:
Bot natheles to that he herde
Wel cortaisly the king answerde,
And tolde it scholde be amended.
And thus whan that her tale is ended,
Al redy was the bord and cloth,
The king unto his Souper goth
Among the lordes to the halle;
And whan thei hadden souped alle,
Thei token leve and forth thei go.
The king bethoghte himselve tho
How he his brother mai chastie,
That he thurgh his Surquiderie
Tok upon honde to despreise
Humilite, which is to preise,
And therupon yaf such conseil
Toward his king that was noght heil;
Wherof to be the betre lered,
He thenkth to maken him afered.
It fell so that in thilke dawe
Ther was ordeined be the lawe
A trompe with a sterne breth,
Which cleped was the Trompe of deth:

And in the Court wher the king was
A certein man this Trompe of bras
Hath in kepinge, and therof serveth,
That whan a lord his deth deserveth,
He schal this dredful trompe blowe
Tofore his gate, and make it knowe
How that the jugement is yove
Of deth, which schal noght be foryove.
The king, whan it was nyht, anon
This man asente and bad him gon
To trompen at his brother gate;
And he, which mot so don algate,
Goth forth and doth the kynges heste.
This lord, which herde of this tempeste
That he tofore his gate blew,
Tho wiste he be the lawe and knew
That he was sikerliche ded:
And as of help he wot no red,
Bot sende for hise frendes alle
And tolde hem how it is befalle.
And thei him axe cause why;
Bot he the sothe noght forthi
Ne wiste, and ther was sorwe tho:
For it stod thilke tyme so,
This trompe was of such sentence,
That therayein no resistance
Thei couthe ordeine be no weie,
That he ne mot algate deie,
Bot if so that he may pourchace
To gete his liege lordes grace.
Here wittes therupon thei caste,
And ben apointed ate laste.
This lord a worthi ladi hadde
Unto his wif, which also dradde
Hire lordes deth, and children five
Betwen hem two thei hadde alyve,
That weren yonge and tendre of age,
And of stature and of visage
Riht faire and lusty on to se.
Tho casten thei that he and sche
Forth with here children on the morwe,
As thei that were full of sorwe,

Al naked bot of smok and scherte,
To tendre with the kynges herte,
His grace scholden go to seche
And pardoun of the deth beseche.
Thus passen thei that wofull nyht,
And erly, whan thei sihe it lyht,
Thei gon hem forth in such a wise
As thou tofore hast herd devise,
Al naked bot here schortes one.
Thei wepte and made mochel mone,
Here Her hangende aboute here Eres;
With sobbinge and with sory teres
This lord goth thanne an humble pas,
That whilom proud and noble was;
Wherof the Cite sore afflyhte,
Of hem that sihen thilke syhte:
And natheless al openly
With such wepinge and with such cri
Forth with hise children and his wif
He goth to preie for his lif.
Unto the court whan thei be come,
And men therinne have hiede nome,
Ther was no wiht, if he hem syhe,
Fro water mihte kepe his yhe
For sorwe which thei maden tho.
The king supposeth of this wo,
And feigneth as he noght ne wiste;
Bot natheles at his upriste
Men tolden him how that it ferde:
And whan that he this wonder herde,
In haste he goth into the halle,
And alle at ones doun thei falle,
If eny pite may be founde.
The king, which seth hem go to grounde,
Hath axed hem what is the fere,
Why thei be so despuiled there.
His brother seide: 'Ha lord, mercy!
I wot non other cause why,
Bot only that this nyht ful late
The trompe of deth was at my gate
In tokne that I scholde deie;
Thus be we come forto preie

That ye mi worldes deth respite.'
'Ha fol, how thou art forto wyte,'
The king unto his brother seith,
'That thou art of so litel feith,
That only for a trompes soun
Hast gon despuiled thurgh the toun,
Thou and thi wif in such manere
Forth with thi children that ben here,
In sihte of alle men aboute,
For that thou seist thou art in doute
Of deth, which stant under the lawe
Of man, and man it mai withdrawe,
So that it mai par chance faile.
Now schalt thou noght forthi mervaille
That I doun fro my Charr alihte,
Whanne I behield tofore my sihte
In hem that were of so grete age
Min oghne deth thurgh here ymage,
Which god hath set be lawe of kynde,
Wherof I mai no bote finde:
For wel I wot, such as thei be,
Riht such am I in my degree,
Of fleissh and blod, and so schal deie.
And thus, thogh I that lawe obeie
Of which the kinges ben put under,
It oghte ben wel lasse wonder
Than thou, which art withoute nede
For lawe of londe in such a drede,
Which for tacompte is bot a jape,
As thing which thou miht overscape.
Forthi, mi brother, after this
I rede, sithen that so is
That thou canst drede a man so sore,
Dred god with al thin herte more:
For al schal deie and al schal passe,
Als wel a Leoun as an asse,
Als wel a beggere as a lord,
Towardes deth in on acord
Thei schullen stonde.' And in this wise
The king hath with hise wordes wise
His brother tawht and al foryive.
Forthi, mi Sone, if thou wolt live

In vertu, thou most vice eschuie,
And with low herte humblesce suie,
So that thou be noght surquidous.
Mi fader, I am amorous,
Wherof I wolde you beseche
That ye me som ensample teche,
Which mihte in loves cause stonde.
Mi Sone, thou schalt understonde,
In love and othre thinges alle
If that Surquiderie falle,
It may to him noght wel betide
Which useth thilke vice of Pride,
Which torneth wisdom to wenyng
And Sothfastnesse into lesyng
Thurgh fol ymaginacion.
And for thin enformacion,
That thou this vice as I the rede
Eschuie schalt, a tale I rede,
Which fell whilom be daies olde,
So as the clerk Ovide tolde.
Ther was whilom a lordes Sone,
Which of his Pride a nyce wone
Hath cawht, that worthi to his liche,
To sechen al the worldes riche,
Ther was no womman forto love.
So hihe he sette himselfe above
Of stature and of beaute bothe,
That him thoghte alle wommen lothe:
So was ther no comparisoun
As toward his condicioun.
This yonge lord Narcizus hihte:
No strengthe of love bowe mihte
His herte, which is unaffiled;
Bot ate laste he was beguiled:
For of the goddes pourveance
It fell him on a dai par chance,
That he in all his proude fare
Unto the forest gan to fare,
Amonges othre that ther were
To hunte and to desporte him there.
And whanne he cam into the place
Wher that he wolde make his chace,

The houndes weren in a throwe
Uncoupled and the hornes blowe:
The grete hert anon was founde,
Which swifte feet sette upon grounde,
And he with spore in horse side
Him hasteth faste forto ride,
Til alle men be left behinde.
And as he rod, under a linde
Beside a roche, as I thee telle,
He syh wher sprong a lusty welle:
The day was wonder hot withalle,
And such a thurst was on him falle,
That he moste owther deie or drinke;
And doun he lihte and be the brinke
He teide his Hors unto a braunche,
And leide him lowe forto staunche
His thurst: and as he caste his lok
Into the welle and hiede tok,
He sih the like of his visage,
And wende ther were an ymage
Of such a Nimphe as tho was faie,
Wherof that love his herte assaie
Began, as it was after sene,
Of his sotie and made him wene
It were a womman that he syh.
The more he cam the welle nyh,
The nerr cam sche to him ayein;
So wiste he nevere what to sein;
For whanne he wepte, he sih hire wepe,
And whanne he cride, he tok good kepe,
The same word sche cride also:
And thus began the newe wo,
That whilom was to him so strange;
Tho made him love an hard eschange,
To sette his herte and to beginne
Thing which he mihte nevere winne.
And evere among he gan to loute,
And preith that sche to him come oute;
And otherwhile he goth a ferr,
And otherwhile he draweth nerr,
And evere he fond hire in o place.
He wepth, he crith, he axeth grace,

There as he mihte gete non;
So that ayein a Roche of Ston,
As he that knew non other red,
He smot himself til he was ded.
Wherof the Nymphes of the welles,
And othre that ther weren elles
Unto the wodes belongende,
The body, which was ded ligende,
For pure pite that thei have
Under the grene thei begrave.
And thanne out of his sepulture
Ther sprong anon par aventure
Of floures such a wonder syhte,
That men ensample take myhte
Upon the dedes whiche he dede,
As tho was sene in thilke stede;
For in the wynter freysshe and faire
The floures ben, which is contraire
To kynde, and so was the folie
Which fell of his Surquiderie.
Thus he, which love hadde in desdeign,
Worste of all othre was besein,
And as he sette his pris most hyhe,
He was lest worth in loves yhe
And most bejaped in his wit:
Wherof the remembrance is yit,
So that thou myht ensample take,
And ek alle othre for his sake.
Mi fader, as touchende of me,
This vice I thenke forto fle,
Which of his wenyng overtroweth;
And nameliche of thing which groweth
In loves cause or wel or wo
Yit pryded I me nevere so.
Bot wolde god that grace sende,
That toward me my lady wende
As I towardes hire wene!
Mi love scholde so be sene,
Ther scholde go no pride a place.
Bot I am ferr fro thilke grace,
As forto speke of tyme now;
So mot I soffre, and preie yow

That ye wole axe on other side
If ther be eny point of Pride,
Wherof it nedeth to be schrive.
Mi Sone, godd it thee foryive,
If thou have eny thing misdo
Touchende of this, bot overmo
Ther is an other yit of Pride,
Which nevere cowthe hise wordes hide,
That he ne wole himself avaunte;
Ther mai nothing his tunge daunte,
That he ne clappeth as a Belle:
Wherof if thou wolt that I telle,
It is behovely forto hiere,
So that thou myht thi tunge stiere,
Toward the world and stonde in grace,
Which lacketh ofte in many place
To him that can noght sitte stille,
Which elles scholde have al his wille.
The vice cleped Avantance
With Pride hath take his aqueintance,
So that his oghne pris he lasseth,
When he such mesure overpasseth
That he his oghne Herald is.
That ferst was wel is thanne mis,
That was thankworth is thanne blame,
And thus the worschipe of his name
Thurgh pride of his avantarie
He torneth into vilenie.
I rede how that this proude vice
Hath thilke wynd in his office,
Which thurgh the blastes that he bloweth
The mannes fame he overthroweth
Of vertu, which scholde elles springe
Into the worldes knowleching;
Bot he fordooth it alto sore.
And riht of such a maner lore
Ther ben lovers: forthi if thou
Art on of hem, tell and sei how.
Whan thou hast taken eny thing
Of loves yifte, or Nouche or ring,
Or tok upon thee for the cold
Som goodly word that thee was told,

Or frendly chiere or tokne or lettre,
Wherof thin herte was the better,
Or that sche sende the grietinge,
Hast thou for Pride of thi likinge
Mad thin avant wher as the liste?
I wolde, fader, that ye wiste,
Mi conscience lith noght hiere:
Yit hadde I nevere such matiere,
Wherof min herte myhte amende,
Noght of so mochel that sche sende
Be mowthe and seide, 'Griet him wel:'
And thus for that ther is no diel
Wherof to make myn avant,
It is to reson acordant
That I mai nevere, bot I lye,
Of love make avanterie.
I wot noght what I scholde have do,
If that I hadde encheson so,
As ye have seid hier manyon;
Bot I fond cause nevere non:
Bot daunger, which welnyh me slowh,
Therof I cowthe telle ynowh,
And of non other Avantance:
Thus nedeth me no repentance.
Now axeth further of my lif,
For hierof am I noght gultif.
Mi Sone, I am wel paid withal;
For wite it wel in special
That love of his verrai justice
Above alle othre ayein this vice
At alle times most debateth,
With al his herte and most it hateth.
And ek in alle maner wise
Avantarie is to despise,
As be ensample thou myht wite,
Which I finde in the bokes write.
Of hem that we Lombars now calle
Albinus was the ferste of alle
Which bar corone of Lombardie,
And was of gret chivalerie
In werre ayein diverse kinges.
So fell amonges othre thinges,

That he that time a werre hadde
With Gurmond, which the Geptes ladde,
And was a myhti kyng also:
Bot natheles it fell him so,
Albinus slowh him in the feld,
Ther halp him nowther swerd ne scheld,
That he ne smot his hed of thanne,
Wherof he tok away the Panne,
Of which he seide he wolde make
A Cuppe for Gurmoundes sake,
To kepe and drawe into memoire
Of his bataille the victoire.
And thus whan he the feld hath wonne,
The lond anon was overronne
And sesed in his oghne hond,
Wher he Gurmondes dowhter fond,
Which Maide Rosemounde hihte,
And was in every mannes sihte
A fair, a freissh, a lusti on.
His herte fell to hire anon,
And such a love on hire he caste,
That he hire weddeth ate laste;
And after that long time in reste
With hire he duelte, and to the beste
Thei love ech other wonder wel.
Bot sche which kepeth the blinde whel,
Venus, whan thei be most above,
In al the hoteste of here love,
Hire whiel sche torneth, and thei felle
In the manere as I schal telle.
This king, which stod in al his welthe
Of pes, of worschipe and of helthe,
And felte him on no side grieved,
As he that hath his world achieved,
Tho thoghte he wolde a feste make;
And that was for his wyves sake,
That sche the lordes ate feste,
That were obeissant to his heste,
Mai knowe: and so forth therupon
He let ordeine, and sende anon
Be lettres and be messagiers,
And warnede alle hise officers

That every thing be wel arraied:
The grete Stiedes were assaied
For joustinge and for tornement,
And many a perled garnement
Embroudred was ayein the dai.
The lordes in here beste arrai
Be comen ate time set,
On jousteth wel, an other bet,
And otherwhile thei torneie,
And thus thei casten care aweie
And token lustes upon honde.
And after, thou schalt understonde,
To mete into the kinges halle
Thei come, as thei be beden alle:
And whan thei were set and served,
Thanne after, as it was deserved,
To hem that worthi knyhtes were,
So as thei seten hiere and there,
The pris was yove and spoken oute
Among the heraldz al aboute.
And thus benethe and ek above
Al was of armes and of love,
Wherof abouten ate bordes
Men hadde manye sondri wordes,
That of the merthe which thei made
The king himself began to glade
Withinne his herte and tok a pride,
And sih the Cuppe stonde aside,
Which mad was of Gurmoundes hed,
As ye have herd, whan he was ded,
And was with gold and riche Stones
Beset and bounde for the nones,
And stod upon a fot on heihte
Of burned gold, and with gret sleihte
Of werkmanschipe it was begrave
Of such werk as it scholde have,
And was policed ek so clene
That no signe of the Skulle is sene,
Bot as it were a Gripes Ey.
The king bad bere his Cuppe away,
Which stod tofore him on the bord,
And fette thilke. Upon his word

This Skulle is fet and wyn therinne,
Wherof he bad his wif beginne:
'Drink with thi fader, Dame,' he seide.
And sche to his biddinge obeide,
And tok the Skulle, and what hire liste
Sche drank, as sche which nothing wiste
What Cuppe it was: and thanne al oute
The kyng in audience aboute
Hath told it was hire fader Skulle,
So that the lordes knowe schulle
Of his bataille a soth witnesse,
And made avant thurgh what prouesse
He hath his wyves love wonne,
Which of the Skulle hath so begonne.
Tho was ther mochel Pride alofte,
Thei speken alle, and sche was softe,
Thenkende on thilke unkynde Pride,
Of that hire lord so nyh hire side
Avanteth him that he hath slain
And piked out hire fader brain,
And of the Skulle had mad a Cuppe.
Sche soffreth al til thei were uppe,
And tho sche hath seknesse feigned,
And goth to chambre and hath compleigned
Unto a Maide which sche triste,
So that non other wyht it wiste.
This Mayde Glodeside is hote,
To whom this lady hath behote
Of ladischipe al that sche can,
To vengen hire upon this man,
Which dede hire drinke in such a plit
Among hem alle for despit
Of hire and of hire fader bothe;
Wherof hire thoghtes ben so wrothe,
Sche seith, that sche schal noght be glad,
Til that sche se him so bestad
That he nomore make avant.
And thus thei felle in covenant,
That thei acorden ate laste,
With suche wiles as thei caste
That thei wol gete of here acord
Som orped knyht to sle this lord:

And with this sleihte thei beginne,
How thei Helmege myhten winne,
Which was the kinges Boteler,
A proud a lusti Bacheler,
And Glodeside he loveth hote.
And sche, to make him more assote,
Hire love granteth, and be nyhte
Thei schape how thei togedre myhte
Abedde meete: and don it was
This same nyht; and in this cas
The qwene hirself the nyht secounde
Wente in hire stede, and there hath founde
A chambre derk withoute liht,
And goth to bedde to this knyht.
And he, to kepe his observance,
To love doth his obeissance,
And weneth it be Glodeside;
And sche thanne after lay aside,
And axeth him what he hath do,
And who sche was sche tolde him tho,
And seide: 'Helmege, I am thi qwene,
Now schal thi love wel be sene
Of that thou hast thi wille wroght:
Or it schal sore ben aboght,
Or thou schalt worche as I thee seie.
And if thou wolt be such a weie
Do my plesance and holde it stille,
For evere I schal ben at thi wille,
Bothe I and al myn heritage.'
Anon the wylde loves rage,
In which noman him can governe,
Hath mad him that he can noght werne,
Bot fell al hol to hire assent:
And thus the whiel is al miswent,
The which fortune hath upon honde;
For how that evere it after stonde,
Thei schope among hem such a wyle,
The king was ded withinne a whyle.
So slihly cam it noght aboute
That thei ne ben descoevered oute,
So that it thoghte hem for the beste
To fle, for there was no reste:

And thus the tresor of the king
Thei trusse and mochel other thing,
And with a certein felaschipe
Thei fledde and wente away be schipe,
And hielde here rihte cours fro thenne,
Til that thei come to Ravenne,
Wher thei the Dukes helpe soghte.
And he, so as thei him besoghte,
A place granteth forto duelle;
Bot after, whan he herde telle
Of the manere how thei have do,
This Duk let schape for hem so,
That of a puison which thei drunke
Thei hadden that thei have beswunke.
And al this made avant of Pride:
Good is therfore a man to hide
His oghne pris, for if he speke,
He mai lihtliche his thonk tobreke.
In armes lith non avantance
To him which thenkth his name avance
And be renommed of his dede:
And also who that thenkth to spede
Of love, he mai him noght avaunte;
For what man thilke vice haunte,
His pourpos schal fulofte faile.
In armes he that wol travaile
Or elles loves grace atteigne,
His lose tunge he mot restreigne,
Which berth of his honour the keie.
Forthi, my Sone, in alle weie
Tak riht good hiede of this matiere.
I thonke you, my fader diere,
This scole is of a gentil lore;
And if ther be oght elles more
Of Pride, which I schal eschuie,
Now axeth forth, and I wol suie
What thing that ye me wole enforme.
Mi Sone, yit in other forme
Ther is a vice of Prides lore,
Which lich an hauk whan he wol sore,
Fleith upon heihte in his delices
After the likynge of his vices,

And wol no mannes resoun knowe,
Till he doun falle and overthrowe.
This vice veine gloire is hote,
Wherof, my Sone, I thee behote
To trete and speke in such a wise,
That thou thee myht the betre advise.
The proude vice of veine gloire
Remembreth noght of purgatoire,
Hise worldes joyes ben so grete,
Him thenkth of hevene no beyete;
This lives Pompe is al his pes:
Yit schal he deie natheles,
And therof thenkth he bot a lite,
For al his lust is to delite
In newe thinges, proude and veine,
Als ferforth as he mai atteigne.
I trowe, if that he myhte make
His body newe, he wolde take
A newe forme and leve his olde:
For what thing that he mai beholde,
The which to comun us is strange,
Anon his olde guise change
He wole and falle therupon,
Lich unto the Camelion,
Which upon every sondri hewe
That he beholt he moste newe
His colour, and thus unavised
Fulofte time he stant disguised.
Mor jolif than the brid in Maii
He makth him evere freissh and gay,
And doth al his array disguise,
So that of him the newe guise
Of lusti folk alle othre take;
And ek he can carolles make,
Rondeal, balade and virelai.
And with al this, if that he may
Of love gete him advantage,
Anon he wext of his corage
So overglad, that of his ende
Him thenkth ther is no deth comende:
For he hath thanne at alle tide
Of love such a maner pride,

Him thenkth his joie is endeles.
Now schrif thee, Sone, in godes pes,
And of thi love tell me plein
If that thi gloire hath be so vein.
Mi fader, as touchinge of al
I may noght wel ne noght ne schal
Of veine gloire excuse me,
That I ne have for love be
The betre adresced and arraied;
And also I have ofte assaied
Rondeal, balade and virelai
For hire on whom myn herte lai
To make, and also forto peinte
Caroles with my wordes qweinte,
To sette my pourpos alofte;
And thus I sang hem forth fulofte
In halle and ek in chambre aboute,
And made merie among the route,
Bot yit ne ferde I noght the bet.
Thus was my gloire in vein beset
Of al the joie that I made;
For whanne I wolde with hire glade,
And of hire love songes make,
Sche saide it was noght for hir sake,
And liste noght my songes hiere
Ne witen what the wordes were.
So forto speke of myn arrai,
Yit couthe I nevere be so gay
Ne so wel make a songe of love,
Wherof I myhte ben above
And have encheson to be glad;
Bot rather I am ofte adrad
For sorwe that sche seith me nay.
And natheles I wol noght say,
That I nam glad on other side;
For fame, that can nothing hide,
Alday wol bringe unto myn Ere
Of that men speken hier and there,
How that my ladi berth the pris,
How sche is fair, how sche is wis,
How sche is wommanlich of chiere;
Of al this thing whanne I mai hiere,

What wonder is thogh I be fain?
And ek whanne I may hiere sain
Tidinges of my ladi hele,
Although I may noght with hir dele,
Yit am I wonder glad of that;
For whanne I wot hire good astat,
As for that time I dar wel swere,
Non other sorwe mai me dere,
Thus am I gladed in this wise.
Bot, fader, of youre lores wise,
Of whiche ye be fully tawht,
Now tell me if yow thenketh awht
That I therof am forto wyte.
Of that ther is I thee acquite,
Mi sone, he seide, and for thi goode
I wolde that thou understode:
For I thenke upon this matiere
To telle a tale, as thou schalt hiere,
How that ayein this proude vice
The hihe god of his justice
Is wroth and gret vengeance doth.
Now herkne a tale that is soth:
Thogh it be noght of loves kinde,
A gret ensample thou schalt finde
This veine gloire forto fle,
Which is so full of vanite.
Ther was a king that mochel myhte,
Which Nabugodonosor hihte,
Of whom that I spak hier tofore.
Yit in the bible his name is bore,
For al the world in Orient
Was hol at his comandement:
As thanne of kinges to his liche
Was non so myhty ne so riche;
To his Empire and to his lawes,
As who seith, alle in thilke dawes
Were obeissant and tribut bere,
As thogh he godd of Erthe were.
With strengthe he putte kinges under,
And wroghte of Pride many a wonder;
He was so full of veine gloire,
That he ne hadde no memoire

That ther was eny good bot he,
For pride of his prosperite;
Til that the hihe king of kinges,
Which seth and knoweth alle thinges,
Whos yhe mai nothing asterte,-
The privetes of mannes herte
Thei speke and sounen in his Ere
As thogh thei lowde wyndes were,-
He tok vengeance upon this pride.
Bot for he wolde awhile abide
To loke if he him wolde amende,
To him a foretokne he sende,
And that was in his slep be nyhte.
This proude kyng a wonder syhte
Hadde in his swevene, ther he lay:
Him thoghte, upon a merie day
As he behield the world aboute,
A tree fulgrowe he syh theroute,
Which stod the world amiddes evene,
Whos heihte straghte up to the hevene;
The leves weren faire and large,
Of fruit it bar so ripe a charge,
That alle men it myhte fede:
He sih also the bowes spriede
Above al Erthe, in whiche were
The kinde of alle briddes there;
And eke him thoghte he syh also
The kinde of alle bestes go
Under this tre aboute round
And fedden hem upon the ground.
As he this wonder stod and syh,
Him thoghte he herde a vois on hih
Criende, and seide aboven alle:
'Hew doun this tree and lett it falle,
The leves let defoule in haste
And do the fruit destruie and waste,
And let of schreden every braunche,
Bot ate Rote let it staunche.
Whan al his Pride is cast to grounde,
The rote schal be faste bounde,
And schal no mannes herte bere,
Bot every lust he schal forbere

Of man, and lich an Oxe his mete
Of gras he schal pourchace and ete,
Til that the water of the hevene
Have waisschen him be times sevene,
So that he be thurghknowe ariht
What is the heveneliche myht,
And be mad humble to the wille
Of him which al mai save and spille.'
This king out of his swefne abreide,
And he upon the morwe it seide
Unto the clerkes whiche he hadde:
Bot non of hem the sothe aradde,
Was non his swevene cowthe undo.
And it stod thilke time so,
This king hadde in subjeccioun
Judee, and of affeccioun
Above alle othre on Daniel
He loveth, for he cowthe wel
Divine that non other cowthe:
To him were alle thinges cowthe,
As he it hadde of goddes grace.
He was before the kinges face
Asent, and bode that he scholde
Upon the point the king of tolde
The fortune of his swevene expounde,
As it scholde afterward be founde.
Whan Daniel this swevene herde,
He stod long time er he ansuerde,
And made a wonder hevy chiere.
The king tok hiede of his manere,
And bad him telle that he wiste,
As he to whom he mochel triste,
And seide he wolde noght be wroth.
Bot Daniel was wonder loth,
And seide: 'Upon thi fomen alle,
Sire king, thi swevene mote falle;
And natheles touchende of this
I wol the tellen how it is,
And what desese is to thee schape:
God wot if thou it schalt ascape.
The hihe tree, which thou hast sein
With lef and fruit so wel besein,

The which stod in the world amiddes,
So that the bestes and the briddes
Governed were of him al one,
Sire king, betokneth thi persone,
Which stant above all erthli thinges.
Thus regnen under the the kinges,
And al the poeple unto thee louteth,
And al the world thi pouer doubteth,
So that with vein honour deceived
Thou hast the reverence weyved
Fro him which is thi king above,
That thou for drede ne for love
Wolt nothing knowen of thi godd;
Which now for thee hath mad a rodd,
Thi veine gloire and thi folie
With grete peines to chastie.
And of the vois thou herdest speke,
Which bad the bowes forto breke
And hewe and felle doun the tree,
That word belongeth unto thee;
Thi regne schal ben overthrowe,
And thou despuiled for a throwe:
Bot that the Rote scholde stonde,
Be that thou schalt wel understonde,
Ther schal abyden of thi regne
A time ayein whan thou schalt regne.
And ek of that thou herdest seie,
To take a mannes herte aweie
And sette there a bestial,
So that he lich an Oxe schal
Pasture, and that he be bereined
Be times sefne and sore peined,
Til that he knowe his goddes mihtes,
Than scholde he stonde ayein uprihtes,-
Al this betokneth thin astat,
Which now with god is in debat:
Thi mannes forme schal be lassed,
Til sevene yer ben overpassed,
And in the liknesse of a beste
Of gras schal be thi real feste,
The weder schal upon thee reine.
And understond that al this peine,

Which thou schalt soffre thilke tide,
Is schape al only for thi pride
Of veine gloire, and of the sinne
Which thou hast longe stonden inne.
So upon this condicioun
Thi swevene hath exposicioun.
Bot er this thing befalle in dede,
Amende thee, this wolde I rede:
Yif and departe thin almesse,
Do mercy forth with rihtwisnesse,
Besech and prei the hihe grace,
For so thou myht thi pes pourchace
With godd, and stonde in good acord.'
Bot Pride is loth to leve his lord,
And wol noght soffre humilite
With him to stonde in no degree;
And whan a schip hath lost his stiere,
Is non so wys that mai him stiere
Ayein the wawes in a rage.
This proude king in his corage
Humilite hath so forlore,
That for no swevene he sih tofore,
Ne yit for al that Daniel
Him hath conseiled everydel,
He let it passe out of his mynde,
Thurgh veine gloire, and as the blinde,
He seth no weie, er him be wo.
And fell withinne a time so,
As he in Babiloine wente,
The vanite of Pride him hente;
His herte aros of veine gloire,
So that he drowh into memoire
His lordschipe and his regalie
With wordes of Surquiderie.
And whan that he him most avaunteth,
That lord which veine gloire daunteth,
Al sodeinliche, as who seith treis,
Wher that he stod in his Paleis,
He tok him fro the mennes sihte:
Was non of hem so war that mihte
Sette yhe wher that he becom.
And thus was he from his kingdom

Into the wilde Forest drawe,
Wher that the myhti goddes lawe
Thurgh his pouer dede him transforme
Fro man into a bestes forme;
And lich an Oxe under the fot
He graseth, as he nedes mot,
To geten him his lives fode.
Tho thoghte him colde grases goode,
That whilom eet the hote spices,
Thus was he torned fro delices:
The wyn which he was wont to drinke
He tok thanne of the welles brinke
Or of the pet or of the slowh,
It thoghte him thanne good ynowh:
In stede of chambres wel arraied
He was thanne of a buissh wel paied,
The harde ground he lay upon,
For othre pilwes hath he non;
The stormes and the Reines falle,
The wyndes blowe upon him alle,
He was tormented day and nyht,
Such was the hihe goddes myht,
Til sevene yer an ende toke.
Upon himself tho gan he loke;
In stede of mete gras and stres,
In stede of handes longe cles,
In stede of man a bestes lyke
He syh; and thanne he gan to syke
For cloth of gold and for perrie,
Which him was wont to magnefie.
Whan he behield his Cote of heres,
He wepte and with fulwoful teres
Up to the hevene he caste his chiere
Wepende, and thoghte in this manere;
Thogh he no wordes myhte winne,
Thus seide his herte and spak withinne:
'O mihti godd, that al hast wrought
And al myht bringe ayein to noght,
Now knowe I wel, bot al of thee,
This world hath no prosperite:
In thin aspect ben alle liche,
The povere man and ek the riche,

Withoute thee ther mai no wight,
And thou above alle othre miht.
O mihti lord, toward my vice
Thi merci medle with justice;
And I woll make a covenant,
That of my lif the remenant
I schal it be thi grace amende,
And in thi lawe so despende
That veine gloire I schal eschuie,
And bowe unto thin heste and suie
Humilite, and that I vowe.'
And so thenkende he gan doun bowe,
And thogh him lacke vois and speche,
He gan up with his feet areche,
And wailende in his bestly stevene
He made his pleignte unto the hevene.
He kneleth in his wise and braieth,
To seche merci and assaieth
His god, which made him nothing strange,
Whan that he sih his pride change.
Anon as he was humble and tame,
He fond toward his god the same,
And in a twinklinge of a lok
His mannes forme ayein he tok,
And was reformed to the regne
In which that he was wont to regne;
So that the Pride of veine gloire
Evere afterward out of memoire
He let it passe. And thus is schewed
What is to ben of Pride unthewed
Ayein the hihe goddes lawe,
To whom noman mai be felawe.
Forthi, my Sone, tak good hiede
So forto lede thi manhiede,
That thou ne be noght lich a beste.
Bot if thi lif schal ben honeste,
Thou most humblesce take on honde,
For thanne myht thou siker stonde:
And forto speke it otherwise,
A proud man can no love assise;
For thogh a womman wolde him plese,
His Pride can noght ben at ese.

Ther mai noman to mochel blame
A vice which is forto blame;
Forthi men scholde nothing hide
That mihte falle in blame of Pride,
Which is the werste vice of alle:
Wherof, so as it was befalle,
The tale I thenke of a Cronique
To telle, if that it mai thee like,
So that thou myht humblesce suie
And ek the vice of Pride eschuie,
Wherof the gloire is fals and vein;
Which god himself hath in desdeign,
That thogh it mounte for a throwe,
It schal doun falle and overthrowe.
A king whilom was yong and wys,
The which sette of his wit gret pris.
Of depe ymaginaciouns
And strange interpretaciouns,
Problemes and demandes eke,
His wisdom was to finde and seke;
Wherof he wolde in sondri wise
Opposen hem that weren wise.
Bot non of hem it myhte bere
Upon his word to yeve answere,
Outaken on, which was a knyht;
To him was every thing so liht,
That also sone as he hem herde,
The kinges wordes he answerde;
What thing the king him axe wolde,
Therof anon the trowthe he tolde.
The king somdiel hadde an Envie,
And thoghte he wolde his wittes plie
To sette som conclusioun,
Which scholde be confusioun
Unto this knyht, so that the name
And of wisdom the hihe fame
Toward himself he wolde winne.
And thus of al his wit withinne
This king began to studie and muse,
What strange matiere he myhte use
The knyhtes wittes to confounde;
And ate laste he hath it founde,

And for the knyht anon he sente,
That he schal telle what he mente.
Upon thre pointz stod the matiere
Of questions, as thou schalt hiere.
The ferste point of alle thre
Was this: 'What thing in his degre
Of al this world hath nede lest,
And yet men helpe it althermost?'
The secounde is: 'What most is worth,
And of costage is lest put forth?'
The thridde is: 'Which is of most cost,
And lest is worth and goth to lost?'
The king thes thre demandes axeth,
And to the knyht this lawe he taxeth,
That he schal gon and come ayein
The thridde weke, and telle him plein
To every point, what it amonteth.
And if so be that he misconteth,
To make in his answer a faile,
Ther schal non other thing availe,
The king seith, bot he schal be ded
And lese hise goodes and his hed.
The knyht was sori of this thing
And wolde excuse him to the king,
Bot he ne wolde him noght forbere,
And thus the knyht of his ansuere
Goth hom to take avisement:
Bot after his entendement
The more he caste his wit aboute,
The more he stant therof in doute.
Tho wiste he wel the kinges herte,
That he the deth ne scholde asterte,
And such a sorwe hath to him take,
That gladschipe he hath al forsake.
He thoghte ferst upon his lif,
And after that upon his wif,
Upon his children ek also,
Of whiche he hadde dowhtres tuo;
The yongest of hem hadde of age
Fourtiene yer, and of visage
Sche was riht fair, and of stature
Lich to an havenely figure,

And of manere and goodli speche,
Thogh men wolde alle Londes seche,
Thei scholden noght have founde hir like.
Sche sih hire fader sorwe and sike,
And wiste noght the cause why;
So cam sche to him prively,
And that was where he made his mone
Withinne a Gardin al him one;
Upon hire knes sche gan doun falle
With humble herte and to him calle,
And seide: 'O goode fader diere,
Why make ye thus hevy chiere,
And I wot nothing how it is?
And wel ye knowen, fader, this,
What aventure that you felle
Ye myhte it saufly to me telle,
For I have ofte herd you seid,
That ye such trust have on me leid,
That to my soster ne my brother,
In al this world ne to non other,
Ye dorste telle a privite
So wel, my fader, as to me.
Forthi, my fader, I you preie,
Ne casteth noght that herte aweie,
For I am sche that wolde kepe
Youre honour.' And with that to wepe
Hire yhe mai noght be forbore,
Sche wissheth forto ben unbore,
Er that hire fader so mistriste
To tellen hire of that he wiste:
And evere among merci sche cride,
That he ne scholde his conseil hide
From hire that so wolde him good
And was so nyh his fleissh and blod.
So that with wepinge ate laste
His chiere upon his child he caste,
And sorwulli to that sche preide
He tolde his tale and thus he seide:
'The sorwe, dowhter, which I make
Is noght al only for my sake,
Bot for thee bothe and for you alle:
For such a chance is me befalle,

That I schal er this thridde day
 Lese al that evere I lese may,
 Mi lif and al my good therto:
 Therefore it is I sorwe so.'
 'What is the cause, helas!' quod sche,
 'Mi fader, that ye scholden be
 Ded and destruid in such a wise?'
 And he began the pointz devise,
 Whiche as the king told him be mowthe,
 And seid hir plainly that he cowthe
 Ansuere unto no point of this.
 And sche, that hiereth how it is,
 Hire conseil yaf and seide tho:
 'Mi fader, sithen it is so,
 That ye can se non other weie,
 Bot that ye moste nedes deie,
 I wolde preie of you a thing:
 Let me go with you to the king,
 And ye schull make him understonde
 How ye, my wittes forto fonde,
 Have leid your ansuere upon me;
 And telleth him, in such degre
 Upon my word ye wole abide
 To lif or deth, what so betide.
 For yit par chaunce I may pourchace
 With som good word the kinges grace,
 Your lif and ek your good to save;
 For ofte schal a womman have
 Thing which a man mai noght areche.'
 The fader herde his dowhter speche,
 And thoghte ther was resoun inne,
 And sih his oghne lif to winne
 He cowthe don himself no cure;
 So betre him thoghte in aventure
 To put his lif and al his good,
 Than in the maner as it stod
 His lif in certein forto lese.
 And thus thenkende he gan to chese
 To do the conseil of this Maide,
 And tok the pourpos which sche saide.
 The dai was come and forth thei gon,
 Unto the Court thei come anon,

Wher as the king in juggement
Was set and hath this knyht assent.
Arraied in hire beste wise
This Maiden with hire wordes wise
Hire fader ladde be the hond
Into the place, wher he fond
The king with othre whiche he wolde,
And to the king knelende he tolde
As he enformed was tofore,
And preith the king that he therfore
His dowhtres wordes wolde take,
And seith that he wol undertake
Upon hire wordes forto stonde.
Tho was ther gret merveile on honde,
That he, which was so wys a knyht,
His lif upon so yong a wyht
Besette wolde in jeupartie,
And manye it hielden for folie:
Bot ate laste natheles
The king comandeth ben in pes,
And to this Maide he caste his chiere,
And seide he wolde hire tale hiere,
He bad hire speke, and sche began:
'Mi liege lord, so as I can,'
Quod sche, 'the pointz of whiche I herde,
Thei schul of reson ben ansuerde.
The ferste I understonde is this,
What thing of al the world it is,
Which men most helpe and hath lest nede.
Mi liege lord, this wolde I rede:
The Erthe it is, which everemo
With mannes labour is bego;
Als wel in wynter as in Maii
The mannes hond doth what he mai
To helpe it forth and make it riche,
And forthi men it delve and dyche
And eren it with strengthe of plowh,
Wher it hath of himself ynowh,
So that his nede is ate leste.
For every man and bridd and beste,
And flour and gras and rote and rinde,
And every thing be weie of kynde

Schal sterve, and Erthe it schal become;
As it was out of Erthe nome,
It schal to therthe torne ayein:
And thus I mai be resoun sein
That Erthe is the most nedeles,
And most men helpe it natheles.
So that, my lord, touchende of this
I have ansuerd hou that it is.
That other point I understod,
Which most is worth and most is good,
And costeth lest a man to kepe:
Mi lord, if ye woll take kepe,
I seie it is Humilite,
Thurgh which the hihe trinite
As for decerte of pure love
Unto Marie from above,
Of that he knew hire humble entente,
His oghne Sone adoun he sente,
Above alle othre and hire he ches
For that vertu which bodeth pes:
So that I may be resoun calle
Humilite most worth of alle.
And lest it costeth to maintiene,
In al the world as it is sene;
For who that hath humblesce on honde,
He bringth no werres into londe,
For he desireth for the beste
To setten every man in reste.
Thus with your hihe reverence
Me thenketh that this evidence
As to this point is sufficant.
And touchende of the remenant,
Which is the thridde of youre axinges,
What leste is worth of alle thinges,
And costeth most, I telle it, Pride;
Which mai noght in the hevene abide,
For Lucifer with hem that felle
Bar Pride with him into helle.
Ther was Pride of to gret a cost,
Whan he for Pride hath hevene lost;
And after that in Paradis
Adam for Pride loste his pris:

In Miderlert the and ek also
Pride is the cause of alle wo,
That al the world ne may suffice
To stanche of Pride the reprise:
Pride is the heved of alle Sinne,
Which wasteth al and mai noght winne;
Pride is of every mis the pricke,
Pride is the werste of alle wicke,
And costneth most and lest is worth
In place where he hath his forth.
Thus have I seid that I wol seie
Of myn answere, and to you preie,
Mi liege lord, of youre office
That ye such grace and such justice
Ordeigne for mi fader hiere,
That after this, whan men it hiere,
The world therof mai speke good.'
The king, which reson understod
And hath al herd how sche hath said,
Was inly glad and so wel paid
That al his wraththe is overgo:
And he began to loke tho
Upon this Maiden in the face,
In which he fond so mochel grace,
That al his pris on hire he leide,
In audience and thus he seide:
'Mi faire Maide, wel thee be!
Of thin ansuere and ek of thee
Me liketh wel, and as thou wilt,
Foryive be thi fader gilt.
And if thou were of such lignage,
That thou to me were of parage,
And that thi fader were a Pier,
As he is now a Bachilier,
So seker as I have a lif,
Thou scholdest thanne be my wif.
Bot this I seie natheles,
That I wol schape thin encress;
What worldes good that thou wolt crave,
Axe of my yifte and thou schalt have.'
And sche the king with wordes wise
Knelende thonketh in this wise:

'Mi liege lord, god mot you quite!
Mi fader hier hath bot a lite
Of warison, and that he wende
Hadde al be lost; bot now amende
He mai wel thurgh your noble grace.'
With that the king riht in his place
Anon forth in that freisshe hete
An Erldom, which thanne of eschete
Was late falle into his hond,
Unto this knyht with rente and lond
Hath yove and with his chartre sesed;
And thus was all the noise appesed.
This Maiden, which sat on hire knes
Tofore the king, hise charitees
Comendeth, and seide overmore:
'Mi liege lord, riht now tofore
Ye seide, as it is of record,
That if my fader were a lord
And Pier unto these othre grete,
Ye wolden for noght elles lete,
That I ne scholde be your wif;
And this wot every worthi lif,
A kinges word it mot ben holde.
Forthi, my lord, if that ye wolde
So gret a charite fulfille,
God wot it were wel my wille:
For he which was a Bacheler,
Mi fader, is now mad a Pier;
So whenne as evere that I cam,
An Erles dowhter now I am.'
This yonge king, which peised al,
Hire Beaute and hir wit withal,
As he that was with love hent,
Anon therto yaf his assent.
He myhte noght the maide asterte,
That sche nis ladi of his herte;
So that he tok hire to his wif,
To holde whyl that he hath lif:
And thus the king toward his knyht
Acordeth him, as it is riht.
And over this good is to wite,
In the Cronique as it is write,

This noble king of whom I tolde
Of Spaine be tho daies olde
The kingdom hadde in governance,
And as the bok makth remembrance,
Alphonse was his propre name:
The knyht also, if I schal name,
Danz Petro hihte, and as men telle,
His dowhter wyse Peronelle
Was cleped, which was full of grace:
And that was sene in thilke place,
Wher sche hir fader out of teene
Hath broght and mad himself a qweene,
Of that sche hath so wel desclosed
The pointz wherof sche was opposed.
Lo now, my Sone, as thou myht hiere,
Of al this thing to my matiere
Bot on I take, and that is Pride,
To whom no grace mai betide:
In hevene he fell out of his stede,
And Paradis him was forbede,
The goode men in Erthe him hate,
So that to helle he mot algate,
Where every vertu schal be weyved
And every vice be received.
Bot Humblesce is al otherwise,
Which most is worth, and no reprise
It takth ayein, bot softe and faire,
If eny thing stond in contraire,
With humble speche it is redresced:
Thus was this yonge Maiden blessed,
The which I spak of now tofore,
Hire fader lif sche gat therfore,
And wan with al the kinges love.
Forthi, my Sone, if thou wolt love,
It sit thee wel to leve Pride
And take Humblesce upon thi side;
The more of grace thou schalt gete.
Mi fader, I woll noght foryete
Of this that ye have told me hiere,
And if that eny such manere
Of humble port mai love appaie,
Hierafterward I thenke assaie:

Bot now forth over I beseche
That ye more of my schrifte seche.
Mi goode Sone, it schal be do:
Now herkne and ley an Ere to;
For as touchende of Prides fare,
Als ferforth as I can declare
In cause of vice, in cause of love,
That hast thou plainly herd above,
So that ther is nomor to seie
Touchende of that; bot other weie
Touchende Envie I thenke telle,
Which hath the propre kinde of helle,
Withoute cause to misdo
Toward himself and othre also,
Hierafterward as understonde
Thou schalt the spieces, as thei stonde.

John Gower

Confessio Amantis. Prologus

Torpor, ebes sensus, scola parua labor minimusque
Causant quo minimus ipse minora canam:
Qua tamen Engisti lingua canit Insula Bruti
Anglica Carmente metra iuuante loquar.
Ossibus ergo carens que conterit ossa loquelis
Absit, et interpres stet procul oro malus.

Of hem that writen ous tofore
The bokes duelle, and we therfore
Ben tawht of that was write tho:
Forthi good is that we also
In oure tyme among ous hiere
Do wryte of newe som matiere,
Essampled of these olde wyse
So that it myhte in such a wyse,
Whan we ben dede and elleswhere,
Beleve to the worldes eere
In tyme comende after this.
Bot for men sein, and soth it is,
That who that al of wisdom writ
It dulleth ofte a mannes wit
To him that schal it aldai rede,
For thilke cause, if that ye rede,
I wolde go the middel weie
And wryte a bok between the tweie,
Somwhat of lust, somewhat of lore,
That of the lasse or of the more
Som man mai lyke of that I wryte:
And for that fewe men endite
In oure englissh, I thenke make
A bok for Engelondes sake,
The yer sextenthe of kyng Richard.
What schal befalle hierafterward
God wot, for now upon this tyde
Men se the world on every syde
In sondry wyse so diversed,
That it welnyh stant al reversed,
As forto speke of tyme ago.

The cause whi it changeth so
It needeth nought to specifie,
The thing so open is at ije
That every man it mai beholde:
And natheles be daies olde,
Whan that the bokes weren levere,
Wrytinge was beloved evere
Of hem that weren vertuous;
For hier in erthe amonges ous,
If noman write hou that it stode,
The pris of hem that weren goode
Scholde, as who seith, a gret partie
Be lost: so for to magnifie
The worthi princes that tho were,
The bokes schewen hiere and there,
Wherof the world ensampled is;
And tho that deden thanne amis
Thurgh tirannie and crualte,
Right as thei stoden in degre,
So was the wrytinge of here werk.
Thus I, which am a burel clerk,
Purpose forto wryte a bok
After the world that whilom tok
Long tyme in olde daies passed:
Bot for men sein it is now lassed,
In worse plit than it was tho,
I thenke forto touche also
The world which neweth every dai,
So as I can, so as I mai.
Thogh I seknesse have upon honde
And longe have had, yit woll I fonde
To wryte and do my bisnesse,
That in som part, so as I gesse,
The wyse man mai ben avised.
For this prologe is so assised
That it to wisdom al belongeth:
What wysman that it underfongeth,
He schal drawe into remembrance
The fortune of this worldes chance,
The which noman in his persone
Mai knowe, bot the god al one.
Whan the prologe is so despended,

This bok schal afterward ben ended
Of love, which doth many a wonder
And many a wys man hath put under.
And in this wyse I thenke trete
Towardes hem that now be grete,
Betwen the vertu and the vice
Which longeth unto this office.
Bot for my wittes ben to smale
To tellen every man his tale,
This bok, upon amendment
To stonde at his commandement,
With whom myn herte is of accord,
I sende unto myn oghne lord,
Which of Lancastre is Henri named:
The hyhe god him hath proclamed
Ful of knyghthode and alle grace.
So woll I now this werk embrace
With hol trust and with hol believe;
God grante I mot it wel achieve.
If I schal drawe in to my mynde
The tyme passed, thanne I fynde
The world stod thanne in al his welthe:
Tho was the lif of man in helthe,
Tho was plente, tho was richesse,
Tho was the fortune of prouesse,
Tho was knyghthode in pris be name,
Wherof the wyde worldes fame
Write in Cronique is yit withholde;
Justice of lawe tho was holde,
The privilege of regalie
Was sauf, and al the baronie
Worschiped was in his astat;
The citees knewen no debat,
The poeple stod in obeissance
Under the reule of governance,
And pes, which ryhtwisnesse keste,
With charite tho stod in reste:
Of mannes herte the corage
Was schewed thanne in the visage;
The word was lich to the conceite
Withoute semblant of deceite:
Tho was ther unenvied love,

Tho was the vertu sett above
And vice was put under fote.
Now stant the crop under the rote,
The world is changed overal,
And therof most in special
That love is falle into discord.
And that I take to record
Of every lond for his partie
The comun vois, which mai noght lie;
Noght upon on, bot upon alle
It is that men now clepe and calle,
And sein the regnes ben divided,
In stede of love is hate guided,
The werre wol no pes purchace,
And lawe hath take hire double face,
So that justice out of the weie
With ryhtwisnesse is gon aweie:
And thus to loke on every halve,
Men sen the sor withoute salve,
Which al the world hath overtake.
Ther is no regne of alle outtake,
For every climat hath his diel
After the tornynge of the whiel,
Which blinde fortune overthroweth;
Wherof the certain noman knoweth:
The hevene wot what is to done,
Bot we that duelle under the mone
Stonde in this world upon a weer,
And namely bot the pouer
Of hem that ben the worldes guides
With good consail on alle sides
Be kept upriht in such a wyse,
That hate breke noght thassise
Of love, which is al the chief
To kepe a regne out of meschief.
For alle resoun wolde this,
That unto him which the heved is
The membres buxom scholden bowe,
And he scholde ek her trowthe allowe,
With al his herte and make hem chiere,
For good consail is good to hiere.
Although a man be wys himselve,

Yit is the wisdom more of tuelve;
And if thei stoden bothe in on,
To hope it were thanne anon
That god his grace wolde sende
To make of thilke werre an ende,
Which every day now groweth newe:
And that is gretly forto rewe
In special for Cristes sake,
Which wolde his oghne lif forsake
Among the men to yeve pes.
But now men tellen natheles
That love is fro the world departed,
So stant the pes unevene parted
With hem that liven now adaies.
Bot forto loke at alle assaies,
To him that wolde resoun seche
After the comun worldes speche
It is to wondre of thilke werre,
In which non wot who hath the werre;
For every lond himself deceyveth
And of desese his part receyveth,
And yet ne take men no kepe.
Bot thilke lord which al may kepe,
To whom no consail may ben hid,
Upon the world which is betid,
Amende that wherof men pleigne
With trewe hertes and with pleine,
And reconcile love ayeyn,
As he which is king sovereign
Of al the worldes governaunce,
And of his hyhe porveaunce
Afferme pes betwen the londes
And take her cause into hise hondes,
So that the world may stonde apppesed
And his godhede also be plesed.
To thenke upon the daies olde,
The lif of clerkes to beholde,
Men sein how that thei weren tho
Ensample and reule of alle tho
Whiche of wisdom the vertu soughten.
Unto the god ferst thei besoughten
As to the substaunce of her Scole,

That thei ne scholden noght befole
Her wit upon none erthly werkes,
Which were ayein thestat of clerkes,
And that thei myhten fle the vice
Which Simon hath in his office,
Wherof he takth the gold in honde.
For thilke tyme I understonde
The Lumbard made non eschange
The bisschopriches forto change,
Ne yet a lettre for to sende
For dignite ne for Provende,
Or cured or withoute cure.
The cherche keye in aventure
Of armes and of brygantaille
Stod nothing thanne upon bataille;
To fyhte or for to make cheste
It thoghte hem thanne noght honeste;
Bot of simplesce and pacience
Thei maden thanne no defence:
The Court of worldly regalie
To hem was thanne no baillie;
The vein honour was noght desired,
Which hath the proude herte fyred;
Humilite was tho withholde,
And Pride was a vice holde.
Of holy cherche the largesse
Yaf thanne and dede gret almesse
To povere men that hadden nede:
Thei were ek chaste in word and dede,
Wherof the poeple ensample tok;
Her lust was al upon the bok,
Or forto preche or forto preie,
To wisse men the ryhte weie
Of suche as stode of trowthe unlied.
Lo, thus was Petres barge stiered
Of hem that thilke tyme were,
And thus cam ferst to mannes Ere
The feith of Crist and alle goode
Thurgh hem that thanne weren goode
And sobre and chaste and large and wyse.
Bot now men sein is otherwise,
Simon the cause hath undertake,

The worldes swerd on honde is take;
And that is wonder natheles,
Whan Crist him self hath bode pes
And set it in his testament,
How now that holy cherche is went,
Of that here lawe positif
Hath set to make werre and strif
For worldes good, which may noght laste.
God wot the cause to the laste
Of every right and wrong also;
But whil the lawe is reuled so
That clerkes to the werre entende,
I not how that thei scholde amende
The woful world in othre thinges,
To make pes between the kynges
After the lawe of charite,
Which is the propre duete
Belongende unto the presthode.
Bot as it thenkth to the manhode,
The hevne is ferr, the world is nyh,
And veine gloire is ek so slyh,
Which coveitise hath now withholde,
That thei non other thing beholde,
Bot only that thei myhten winne.
And thus the werres thei beginne,
Wherof the holi cherche is taxed,
That in the point as it is axed
The disme goth to the bataille,
As thogh Crist myhte noght availe
To don hem riht be other weie.
In to the swerd the cherche keie
Is torned, and the holy bede
Into cursinge, and every stede
Which scholde stonde upon the feith
And to this cause an Ere leyth,
Astoned is of the querele.
That scholde be the worldes hele
Is now, men sein, the pestilence
Which hath exiled pacience
Fro the clergie in special:
And that is schewed overal,
In eny thing whan thei ben grieved.

Bot if Gregoire be believed,
As it is in the bokes write,
He doth ous somdel forto wite
The cause of thilke prelacie,
Wher god is noght of compaignie:
For every werk as it is founded
Schal stonde or elles be confounded;
Who that only for Cristes sake
Desireth cure forto take,
And noght for pride of thilke astat,
To bere a name of a prelat,
He schal be resoun do profit
In holy cherche upon the plit
That he hath set his conscience;
Bot in the worldes reverence
Ther ben of suche manie glade,
Whan thei to thilke astat ben made,
Noght for the merite of the charge,
Bot for thei wolde hemself discharge
Of poverte and become grete;
And thus for Pompe and for beyete
The Scribe and ek the Pharisee
Of Moises upon the See
In the chaire on hyh ben set;
Wherof the feith is ofte let,
Which is betaken hem to kepe.
In Cristes cause alday thei slepe,
Bot of the world is noght foryete;
For wel is him that now may gete
Office in Court to ben honoured.
The stronge coffre hath al devoured
Under the keye of avarice
The tresor of the benefice,
Wherof the povere schulden clothe
And ete and drinke and house bothe;
The charite goth al unknowe,
For thei no grein of Pite sowe:
And slouthe kepeth the libraire
Which longeth to the Saintuaire;
To studie upon the worldes lore
Sufficeth now withoute more;
Delicacie his swete toth

Hath fostred so that it fordoth
Of abstinence al that ther is.
And forto loken over this,
If Ethna brenne in the clergie,
Al openly to mannes ije
At Avynoun the experience
Therof hath yove an evidence,
Of that men sen hem so divided.
And yit the cause is noght decided;
Bot it is seid and evere schal,
Betwen tuo Stoles lyth the fal,
Whan that men wenen best to sitte:
In holy cherche of such a slitte
Is for to rewe un to ous alle;
God grante it mote wel befalle
Towardes him which hath the trowthe.
Bot ofte is sen that mochel slowthe,
Whan men ben drunken of the cuppe,
Doth mochel harm, whan fyr is uppe,
Bot if somwho the flamme stanche;
And so to speke upon this branche,
Which proud Envie hath mad to springe,
Of Scisme, causeth forto bringe
This newe Secte of Lollardie,
And also many an heresie
Among the clerkes in hemselve.
It were betre dike and delve
And stonde upon the ryhte feith,
Than knowe al that the bible seith
And erre as somme clerkes do.
Upon the hond to were a Schoo
And sette upon the fot a Glove
Acordeth noght to the behove
Of resonable mannes us:
If men behielden the vertus
That Crist in Erthe taghte here,
Thei scholden noght in such manere,
Among hem that ben holden wise,
The Papacie so disguise
Upon diverse eleccioun,
Which stant after thaffeccioun
Of sondry londes al aboute:

Bot whan god wole, it schal were oute,
For trowthe mot stonde ate laste.
Bot yet thei argumenten faste
Upon the Pope and his astat,
Wherof thei falle in gret debat;
This clerk seith yee, that other nay,
And thus thei dryve forth the day,
And ech of hem himself amendeth
Of worldes good, bot non entendeth
To that which comun profit were.
Thei sein that god is myhti there,
And schal ordeine what he wile,
Ther make thei non other skile
Where is the peril of the feith,
Bot every clerk his herte leith
To kepe his world in special,
And of the cause general,
Which unto holy cherche longeth,
Is non of hem that underfongeth
To schapen eny resistance:
And thus the riht hath no defence,
Bot ther I love, ther I holde.
Lo, thus tobroke is Cristes folde,
Wherof the flock withoute guide
Devoured is on every side,
In lacke of hem that ben unware
Schepherdes, whiche her wit beware
Upon the world in other halve.
The scharpe pricke in stede of salve
Thei usen now, wherof the hele
Thei hurte of that thei scholden hele;
And what Schep that is full of wulle
Upon his back, thei toose and pulle,
Whil ther is eny thing to pile:
And thogh ther be non other skile
Bot only for thei wolden wyne,
Thei leve noght, whan thei begynne,
Upon her acte to procede,
Which is no good schepherdes dede.
And upon this also men sein,
That fro the leese which is plein
Into the breres thei forcacche

Her Orf, for that thei wolden lacche
With such duresce, and so bereve
That schal upon the thornes leve
Of wulle, which the brere hath tore;
Wherof the Schep ben al totore
Of that the hierdes make hem lese.
Lo, how thei feignen chalk for chese,
For though thei speke and teche wel,
Thei don hemself therof no del:
For if the wolf come in the weie,
Her gostly Staf is thanne aweie,
Wherof thei scholde her flock defende;
Bot if the povere Schep offende
In eny thing, thogh it be lyte,
They ben al redy forto smyte;
And thus, how evere that thei tale,
The strokes falle upon the smale,
And upon othre that ben grete
Hem lacketh herte forto bete.
So that under the clerkes lawe
Men sen the Merel al mysdrawe,
I wol noght seie in general,
For ther ben somme in special
In whom that alle vertu duelleth,
And tho ben, as thapostel telleth,
That god of his eleccioun
Hath cleped to perfeccioun
In the manere as Aaron was:
Thei ben nothing in thilke cas
Of Simon, which the foldes gate
Hath lete, and goth in othergate,
Bot thei gon in the rihte weie.
Ther ben also somme, as men seie,
That folwen Simon ate hieles,
Whos carte goth upon the whieles
Of coveitise and worldes Pride,
And holy cherche goth beside,
Which scheweth outward a visage
Of that is noght in the corage.
For if men loke in holy cherche,
Betwen the word and that thei werche
Ther is a full gret difference:

Thei prechen ous in audience
That noman schal his soule empeire,
For al is bot a chirie feire
This worldes good, so as thei telle;
Also thei sein ther is an helle,
Which unto mannes sinne is due,
And bidden ous therfore eschue
That wikkid is, and do the goode.
Who that here wordes understode,
It thenkth thei wolden do the same;
Bot yet betwen earnest and game
Ful ofte it torneth other wise.
With holy tales thei devise
How meritoire is thilke dede
Of charite, to clothe and fede
The povere folk and forto parte
The worldes good, bot thei departe
Ne thenken noght fro that thei have.
Also thei sein, good is to save
With penance and with abstinence
Of chastite the continence;
Bot plainly forto speke of that,
I not how thilke body fat,
Which thei with deynte metes kepe
And leyn it softe forto slepe,
Whan it hath elles al his wille,
With chastite schal stonde stille:
And natheles I can noght seie,
In aunter if that I misseye.
Touchende of this, how evere it stonde,
I here and wol noght understonde,
For therof have I noght to done:
Bot he that made ferst the Mone,
The hyhe god, of his goodnesse,
If ther be cause, he it redresce.
Bot what as eny man accuse,
This mai reson of trowthe excuse;
The vice of hem that ben ungoode
Is no reproef unto the goode:
For every man hise oghne werkes
Schal bere, and thus as of the clerkes
The goode men ben to comende,

And alle these othre god amende:
For thei ben to the worldes ije
The Mirour of ensamplerie,
To reulen and to taken hiede
Betwen the men and the godhiede.
Now forto speke of the comune,
It is to drede of that fortune
Which hath befall in sondri londes:
Bot often for defalte of bondes
Al sodeinliche, er it be wist,
A Tonne, whanne his lye arist,
Tobrekth and renneth al aboute,
Which elles scholde noght gon oute;
And ek fulofte a litel Skar
Upon a Banke, er men be war,
Let in the Strem, which with gret peine,
If evere man it schal restreigne.
Wher lawe lacketh, errour groweth,
He is noght wys who that ne troweth,
For it hath proeved ofte er this;
And thus the comun clamour is
In every lond wher poeple dwelleth,
And eche in his compleignte telleth
How that the world is al miswent,
And ther upon his jugement
Yifth every man in sondry wise.
Bot what man wolde himself avise,
His conscience and noght misuse,
He may wel ate ferste excuse
His god, which evere stant in on:
In him ther is defalte non,
So moste it stonde upon ousselve
Nought only upon ten ne twelve,
Bot plenerliche upon ous alle,
For man is cause of that schal falle.
And natheles yet som men wryte
And sein that fortune is to wyte,
And som men holde oppinion
That it is constellacion,
Which causeth al that a man doth:
God wot of bothe which is soth.
The world as of his propre kynde

Was ever untrew, and as the blynde
Impropelych he demeth fame,
He blameth that is noght to blame
And preiseth that is noght to preise:
Thus whan he schal the thinges peise,
Ther is decepte in his balance,
And al is that the variance
Of ous, that scholde ous betre advise;
For after that we falle and rise,
The world arist and falth withal,
So that the man is overal
His oghne cause of wel and wo.
That we fortune clepe so
Out of the man himself it groweth;
And who that other wise troweth,
Behold the poeple of Irael:
For evere whil thei deden wel,
Fortune was hem debonaire,
And whan thei deden the contraire,
Fortune was contrariende.
So that it proeveth wel at ende
Why that the world is wonderfull
And may no while stonde full,
Though that it seme wel besein;
For every worldes thing is vein,
And evere goth the whiel aboute,
And evere stant a man in doute,
Fortune stant no while stille,
So hath ther noman al his wille.
Als fer as evere a man may knowe,
Ther lasteth nothing bot a throwe;
The world stant evere upon debat,
So may be seker non astat,
Now hier now ther, now to now fro,
Now up now down, this world goth so,
And evere hath don and evere schal:
Wherof I finde in special
A tale writen in the Bible,
Which moste nedes be credible;
And that as in conclusioun
Seith that upon divisioun
Stant, why no worldes thing mai laste,

Til it be drive to the laste.
And fro the ferste regne of alle
Into this day, hou so befallē,
Of that the regnes be muable
The man himself hath be coupable,
Which of his propre governance
Fortuneth al the worldes chance.
The hyhe almyhti pourveance,
In whos eterne remembrance
Fro ferst was every thing present,
He hath his prophecie sent,
In such a wise as thou schalt hiere,
To Daniel of this matiere,
Hou that this world schal torne and wende,
Till it be falle to his ende;
Wherof the tale telle I schal,
In which it is betokned al.
As Nabugodonosor slepte,
A swevene him tok, the which he kepte
Til on the morwe he was arise,
For he therof was sore agrise.
To Daniel his drem he tolde,
And preide him faire that he wolde
Arede what it tokne may;
And seide: 'Abedde wher I lay,
Me thoghte I syh upon a Stage
Wher stod a wonder strange ymage.
His hed with al the necke also
Thei were of fin gold bothe tuo;
His brest, his schuldres and his armes
Were al of selver, bot the tharmes,
The wombe and al doun to the kne,
Of bras thei were upon to se;
The legges were al mad of Stiel,
So were his feet also somdiel,
And somdiel part to hem was take
Of Erthe which men Pottes make;
The fieble meynd was with the stronge,
So myhte it wel noght stonde longe.
And tho me thoghte that I sih
A gret ston from an hull on hyh
Fel doun of sodein aventure

Upon the feet of this figure,
With which Ston al tobroke was
Gold, Selver, Erthe, Stiel and Bras,
That al was in to pouldre broght,
And so forth torned into noght.'
This was the swevene which he hadde,
That Daniel anon aradde,
And seide him that figure strange
Betokneth how the world schal change
And waxe lasse worth and lasse,
Til it to noght al overpasse.
The necke and hed, that weren golde,
He seide how that betokne scholde
A worthi world, a noble, a riche,
To which non after schal be liche.
Of Selver that was overforth
Schal ben a world of lasse worth;
And after that the wombe of Bras
Tokne of a werse world it was.
The Stiel which he syh afterward
A world betokneth more hard:
Bot yet the werste of everydel
Is last, whan that of Erthe and Stiel
He syh the feet departed so,
For that betokneth mochel wo.
Whan that the world divided is,
It moste algate fare amis,
For Erthe which is meynd with Stiel
Togedre may noght laste wiel,
Bot if that on that other waste;
So mot it nedes faile in haste.
The Ston, which fro the hully Stage
He syh doun falle on that ymage,
And hath it into pouldre broke,
That swevene hath Daniel unloke,
And seide how that is goddes myht,
Which whan men wene most upryht
To stonde, schal hem overcaste.
And that is of this world the laste,
And thanne a newe schal beginne,
Fro which a man schal nevere twinne;
Or al to peine or al to pes

That world schal lasten endeles.
Lo thus expondeth Daniel
The kynges swevene faire and wel
In Babiloyne the Cite,
Wher that the wiseste of Caldee
Ne cowthen wite what it mente;
Bot he tolde al the hol entente,
As in partie it is befalle.
Of gold the ferste regne of alle
Was in that kinges time tho,
And laste manye daies so,
Therwhiles that the Monarchie
Of al the world in that partie
To Babiloyne was soubgit;
And hield him stille in such a plit,
Til that the world began diverse:
And that was whan the king of Perse,
Which Cirus hyhte, ayein the pes
Forth with his Sone Cambises
Of Babiloine al that Empire,
Ryht as thei wolde hemself desire,
Put under in subjeccioun
And tok it in possessioun,
And slayn was Baltazar the king,
Which loste his regne and al his thing.
And thus whan thei it hadde wonne,
The world of Selver was begonne
And that of gold was passed oute:
And in this wise it goth aboute
In to the Regne of Darius;
And thanne it fell to Perse thus,
That Alisaundre put hem under,
Which wroghte of armes many a wonder,
So that the Monarchie lefte
With Grecs, and here astat uplefte,
And Persiens gon under fote,
So soffre thei that nedes mote.
And tho the world began of Bras,
And that of selver ended was;
Bot for the time thus it laste,
Til it befell that ate laste
This king, whan that his day was come,

With strengthe of deth was overcome.
And natheles yet er he dyde,
He schop his Regnes to divide
To knyhtes whiche him hadde served,
And after that thei have deserved
Yaf the conquestes that he wan;
Wherof gret werre tho began
Among hem that the Regnes hadde,
Thurgh proud Envie which hem ladde,
Til it befell ayein hem thus:
The noble Cesar Julius,
Which tho was king of Rome lond,
With gret bataille and with strong hond
Al Grece, Perse and ek Caldee
Wan and put under, so that he
Noght al only of thorient
Bot al the Marche of thoccident
Governeth under his empire,
As he that was hol lord and Sire,
And hield thurgh his chivalerie
Of al this world the Monarchie,
And was the ferste of that honour
Which tok the name of Emperour.
Wher Rome thanne wolde assaille,
Ther myhte nothing contrevaille,
Bot every contre moste obeie:
Tho goth the Regne of Bras aweie,
And comen is the world of Stiel,
And stod above upon the whiel.
As Stiel is hardest in his kynde
Above alle othre that men finde
Of Metals, such was Rome tho
The myhtieste, and laste so
Long time amonges the Romeins
Til thei become so vileins,
That the fals Emperour Leo
With Constantin his Sone also
The patrimoine and the richesse,
Which to Silvestre in pure almesse
The ferste Constantinus left,
Fro holy cherche thei berefte.
Bot Adrian, which Pope was,

And syh the meschief of this cas,
Goth in to France forto pleigne,
And preith the grete Charlemeine,
For Cristes sake and Soule hele
That he wol take the querele
Of holy cherche in his defence.
And Charles for the reverence
Of god the cause hath undertake,
And with his host the weie take
Over the Montz of Lombardie;
Of Rome and al the tirandie
With blodi swerd he overcom,
And the Cite with strengthe nom;
In such a wise and there he wroghte,
That holy cherche ayein he broghte
Into franchise, and doth restore
The Popes lost, and yaf him more:
And thus whan he his god hath served,
He tok, as he wel hath deserved,
The Diademe and was coroned.
Of Rome and thus was abandoned
Thempire, which cam nevere ayein
Into the hond of no Romein;
Bot a long time it stod so stille
Under the Frensche kynges wille,
Til that fortune hir whiel so ladde,
That afterward Lombardz it hadde,
Noght be the swerd, bot be soffrance
Of him that tho was kyng of France,
Which Karle Calvus cleped was;
And he resigneth in this cas
Thempire of Rome unto Lowis
His Cousin, which a Lombard is.
And so hit laste into the yeer
Of Albert and of Berenger;
Bot thanne upon dissencioun
Thei felle, and in divisioun
Among hemself that were grete,
So that thei loste the beyete
Of worschipe and of worldes pes.
Bot in proverbe natheles
Men sein, ful selden is that welthe

Can soffre his oghne astat in helthe;
And that was on the Lombardz sene,
Such comun strif was hem betwene
Thurgh coveitise and thurgh Envie,
That every man drowh his partie,
Which myhte leden eny route,
Withinne Burgh and ek withoute:
The comun ryht hath no felawe,
So that the governance of lawe
Was lost, and for necessite,
Of that thei stode in such degre
Al only thurgh divisioun,
Hem nedeth in conclusioun
Of strange londes help beside.
And thus for thei hemself divide
And stonden out of reule unevene,
Of Alemaine Princes sevene
Thei chose in this condicioun,
That upon here eleccioun
Thempire of Rome scholde stonde.
And thus thei left it out of honde
For lacke of grace, and it forsoke,
That Alemans upon hem toke:
And to confermen here astat,
Of that thei founden in debat
Thei token the possessioun
After the composicioun
Among hemself, and therupon
Thei made an Emperour anon,
Whos name as the Cronique telleth
Was Othes; and so forth it duelleth,
Fro thilke day yit unto this
Thempire of Rome hath ben and is
To thalemans. And in this wise,
As ye tofore have herd devise
How Daniel the swevene expoundeth
Of that ymage, on whom he foundeth
The world which after scholde falle,
Come is the laste tokne of alle;
Upon the feet of Erthe and Stiel
So stant this world now everydiel
Departed; which began riht tho,

Whan Rome was divided so:
And that is forto rewe sore,
For alway siththe more and more
The world empeireth every day.
Wherof the sothe schewe may,
At Rome ferst if we beginne:
The wall and al the Cit withinne
Stant in ruine and in decas,
The feld is wher the Paleis was,
The toun is wast; and overthat,
If we beholde thilke astat
Which whilom was of the Romeins,
Of knythode and of Citezeins,
To peise now with that beforne,
The chaf is take for the corn,
As forto speke of Romes myht:
Unethes stant ther oght upryht
Of worschipe or of worldes good,
As it before tyme stod.
And why the worschipe is aweie,
If that a man the sothe seie,
The cause hath ben divisioun,
Which moder of confusioun
Is wher sche cometh overal,
Noght only of the temporal
Bot of the spirital also.
The dede proeveth it is so,
And hath do many day er this,
Thurgh venym which that medled is
In holy cherche of erthly thing:
For Crist himself makth knowleching
That noman may togedre serve
God and the world, bot if he swerve
Froward that on and stonde unstable;
And Cristes word may noght be fable.
The thing so open is at ije,
It nedeth noght to specefie
Or speke oght more in this matiere;
Bot in this wise a man mai lere
Hou that the world is gon aboute,
The which welnyh is wered oute,
After the forme of that figure

Which Daniel in his scripture
Expondeth, as tofore is told.
Of Bras, of Selver and of Gold
The world is passed and agon,
And now upon his olde ton
It stant of brutel Erthe and Stiel,
The whiche acorden nevere a diel;
So mot it nedes swerve aside
As thing the which men sen divide.
Thapostel writ unto ous alle
And seith that upon ous is falle
Thende of the world; so may we knowe,
This ymage is nyh overthrowe,
Be which this world was signified,
That whilom was so magnefied,
And now is old and fieble and vil,
Full of meschief and of peril,
And stant divided ek also
Lich to the feet that were so,
As I tolde of the Statue above.
And this men sen, thurgh lacke of love
Where as the lond divided is,
It mot algate fare amis:
And now to loke on every side,
A man may se the world divide,
The werres ben so general
Among the cristene overal,
That every man now secheth wreche,
And yet these clerkes alday preche
And sein, good dede may non be
Which stant noght upon charite:
I not hou charite may stonde,
Wher dedly werre is take on honde.
Bot al this wo is cause of man,
The which that wit and reson can,
And that in tokne and in witnesse
That ilke ymage bar liknesse
Of man and of non other beste.
For ferst unto the mannes heste
Was every creature ordeined,
Bot afterward it was restreigned:
Whan that he fell, thei fellen eke,

Whan he wax sek, thei woxen seke;
For as the man hath passioun
Of seknesse, in comparisoun
So soffren othre creatures.
Lo, ferst the heavenly figures,
The Sonne and Mone eclipsen bothe,
And ben with mannes senne wrothe;
The purest Eir for Senne alofte
Hath ben and is corrupt fulofte,
Right now the hyhe wyndes blowe,
And anon after thei ben lowe,
Now cloudy and now clier it is:
So may it proeven wel be this,
A mannes Senne is forto hate,
Which makth the welkne to debate.
And forto se the proprete
Of every thyng in his degree,
Benethe forth among ous hiere
Al stant aliche in this matiere:
The See now ebbeth, now it floweth,
The lond now welketh, now it groweth,
Now be the Trees with leves grene,
Now thei be bare and nothing sene,
Now be the lusti somer floures,
Now be the stormy wynter shoures,
Now be the daies, now the nyhtes,
So stant ther nothing al upryhtes,
Now it is lyht, now it is derk;
And thus stant al the worldes werk
After the disposicioun
Of man and his condicioun.
Forthi Gregoire in his Moral
Seith that a man in special
The lasse world is properly:
And that he proeveth redely;
For man of Soule resonable
Is to an Angel resemblable,
And lich to beste he hath fieling,
And lich to Trees he hath growinge;
The Stones ben and so is he:
Thus of his propre qualite
The man, as telleth the clergie,

Is as a world in his partie,
And whan this litel world mistorneth,
The grete world al overtorneth.
The Lond, the See, the firmament,
Thei axen alle jugement
Ayein the man and make him werre:
Therwhile himself stant out of herre,
The remenant wol noght acorde:
And in this wise, as I recorde,
The man is cause of alle wo,
Why this world is divided so.
Division, the gspell seith,
On hous upon another leith,
Til that the Regne al overthrowe:
And thus may every man wel knowe,
Division aboven alle
Is thing which makth the world to falle,
And evere hath do sith it began.
It may ferst proeve upon a man;
The which, for his complexioun
Is mad upon divisioun
Of cold, of hot, of moist, of drye,
He mot be verray kynde dye:
For the contraire of his astat
Stant evermore in such debat,
Til that o part be overcome,
Ther may no final pes be nome.
Bot other wise, if a man were
Mad al togedre of o matiere
Withouten interrupcioun,
Ther scholde no corrupcioun
Engendre upon that unite:
Bot for ther is diversite
Withinne himself, he may noght laste,
That he ne deieth ate laste.
Bot in a man yit over this
Full gret divisioun ther is,
Thurgh which that he is evere in strif,
Whil that him lasteth eny lif:
The bodi and the Soule also
Among hem ben divided so,
That what thing that the body hateth

The soule loveth and debateth;
Bot natheles fulofte is sene
Of werre which is hem betwene
The fieble hath wonne the victoire.
And who so drawth into memoire
What hath befalle of old and newe,
He may that werre sore rewe,
Which ferst began in Paradis:
For ther was proeved what it is,
And what desese there it wroghte;
For thilke werre tho forth broghte
The vice of alle dedly Sinne,
Thurgh which division cam inne
Among the men in erthe hiere,
And was the cause and the matiere
Why god the grete flodes sende,
Of al the world and made an ende
Bot Noe with his felaschipe,
Which only weren saulf be Schipe.
And over that thurgh Senne it com
That Nembrot such emprise nom,
Whan he the Tour Babel on heihte
Let make, as he that wolde feihte
Ayein the hihe goddes myht,
Wherof divided anon ryht
Was the langage in such entente,
Ther wiste non what other mente,
So that thei myhten noght procede.
And thus it stant of every dede,
Wher Senne takth the cause on honde,
It may upriht noght longe stonde;
For Senne of his condicioun
Is moder of divisioun
And tokne whan the world schal faile.
For so seith Crist withoute faile,
That nyh upon the worldes ende
Pes and acord away schol wende
And alle charite schal cesse,
Among the men and hate encresce;
And whan these toknes ben befalle,
Al sodeinly the Ston schal falle,
As Daniel it hath beknowe,

Which al this world schal overthrowe,
And every man schal thanne arise
To Joie or elles to Juise,
Wher that he schal for evere dwelle,
Or straght to hevene or straght to helle.
In hevene is pes and al acord,
Bot helle is full of such descord
That ther may be no loveday:
Forthi good is, whil a man may,
Echon to sette pes with other
And loven as his oghne brother;
So may he winne worldes welthe
And afterward his soule helthe.
Bot wolde god that now were on
An other such as Arion,
Which hadde an harpe of such temprure,
And therto of so good mesure
He song, that he the bestes wilde
Made of his note tame and milde,
The Hinde in pes with the Leoun,
The Wolf in pes with the Moltoun,
The Hare in pees stod with the Hound;
And every man upon this ground
Which Arion that time herde,
Als wel the lord as the schepherde,
He broghte hem alle in good acord;
So that the comun with the lord,
And lord with the comun also,
He sette in love bothe tuo
And putte away malencolie.
That was a lusti melodie,
Whan every man with other low;
And if ther were such on now,
Which cowthe harpe as he tho dede,
He myhte availe in many a stede
To make pes wher now is hate;
For whan men thenken to debate,
I not what other thing is good.
Bot wher that wisdom waxeth wod,
And reson torneth into rage,
So that mesure upon outrage
Hath set his world, it is to drede;

For that bringth in the comun drede,
Which stant at every mannes Dore:
Bot whan the scharpnesse of the spore
The horse side smit to sore,
It grieveth ofte. And now nomore,
As forto speke of this matiere,
Which non bot only god may stiere.

John Gower

Confessio Amantis. Explicit Liber Primus

Incipit Liber Secundus

Inuidie culpa magis est attrita dolore,
Nam sua mens nullo tempore leta manet:
Quo gaudent alii, dolet ille, nec vnus amicus
Est, cui de puro comoda velle facit.
Proximitatis honor sua corda veretur, et omnis
Est sibi leticia sic aliena dolor.
Hoc etenim viciū quam sepe repugnat amanti,
Non sibi, set reliquis, dum fauet ipsa Venus.
Est amor ex proprio motu fantasticus, et que
Gaudia fert alius, credit obesse sibi.

Now after Pride the secounde
Ther is, which many a woful stounde
Towardes othre berth aboute
Withinne himself and noght withoute;
For in his thoght he brenneth evere,
Whan that he wot an other levere
Or more vertuous than he,
Which passeth him in his degre;
Therof he takth his maladie:
That vice is cleped hot Envie.
Forthi, my Sone, if it be so
Thou art or hast ben on of tho,
As forto speke in loves cas,
If evere yit thin herte was
Sek of an other mannes hele?
So god avance my querele,
Mi fader, ye, a thousand sithe:
Whanne I have sen an other blithe
Of love, and hadde a goodly chiere,
Ethna, which brenneth yer be yere,
Was thanne noght so hot as I
Of thilke Sor which prively
Min hertes thoght withinne brenneth.
The Schip which on the wawes renneth,
And is forstormed and forblowe,

Is noght more peined for a throwe
Than I am thanne, whanne I se
An other which that passeth me
In that fortune of loves yifte.
Bot, fader, this I telle in schrifte,
That is nowher bot in o place;
For who that lese or finde grace
In other stede, it mai noght grieve:
Bot this ye mai riht wel believe,
Toward mi ladi that I serve,
Thogh that I wiste forto sterve,
Min herte is full of such sotie,
That I myself mai noght chastie.
Whan I the Court se of Cupide
Aproche unto my ladi side
Of hem that lusti ben and freisshe,-
Thogh it availe hem noght a reisshe,
Bot only that thei ben in speche,-
My sorwe is thanne noght to seche:
Bot whan thei rounen in hire Ere,
Than groweth al my moste fere,
And namly whan thei talen longe;
My sorwes thanne be so stronge
Of that I se hem wel at ese,
I can noght telle my desese.
Bot, Sire, as of my ladi selve,
Thogh sche have wowers ten or twelve,
For no mistrust I have of hire
Me grieveth noght, for certes, Sire,
I trowe, in al this world to seche,
Nis womman that in dede and speche
Woll betre avise hire what sche doth,
Ne betre, forto seie a soth,
Kepe hire honour ate alle tide,
And yit get hire a thank beside.
Bot natheles I am beknowe,
That whanne I se at eny throwe,
Or elles if I mai it hiere,
That sche make eny man good chiere,
Thogh I therof have noght to done,
Mi thought wol entermette him sone.
For thogh I be miselve strange,

Envie makth myn herte change,
That I am sorghfully bestad
Of that I se an other glad
With hire; bot of other alle,
Of love what so mai befalle,
Or that he faile or that he spede,
Therof take I bot litel heede.
Now have I seid, my fader, al
As of this point in special,
Als ferforthli as I have wist.
Now axeth further what you list.
Mi Sone, er I axe eny more,
I thenke somdiel for thi lore
Telle an ensample of this matiere
Touchende Envie, as thou schalt hiere.
Write in Civile this I finde:
Thogh it be noght the houndes kinde
To ete chaf, yit wol he werne
An Oxe which comth to the berne,
Therof to taken eny fode.
And thus, who that it understode,
It stant of love in many place:
Who that is out of loves grace
And mai himselven noght availe,
He wolde an other scholde faile;
And if he may put eny lette,
He doth al that he mai to lette.
Wherof I finde, as thou schalt wite,
To this pourpos a tale write.
Ther ben of suche mo than twelve,
That ben noght able as of hemselve
To gete love, and for Envie
Upon alle othre thei asprie;
And for hem lacketh that thei wolde,
Thei kepte that non other scholde
Touchende of love his cause spede:
Wherof a gret ensample I rede,
Which unto this matiere acordeth,
As Ovide in his bok recordeth,
How Poliphemus whilom wroghte,
Whan that he Galathee besoghte
Of love, which he mai noght lacche.

That made him forto waite and wacche
Be alle weies how it ferde,
Til ate laste he knew and herde
How that an other hadde leve
To love there as he mot leve,
As forto speke of eny sped:
So that he knew non other red,
Bot forto wayten upon alle,
Til he may se the chance falle
That he hire love myhte grieve,
Which he himself mai noght achieve.
This Galathee, seith the Poete,
Above alle othre was unmete
Of Beaute, that men thanne knewe,
And hadde a lusti love and trewe,
A Bachelor in his degree,
Riht such an other as was sche,
On whom sche hath hire herte set,
So that it myhte noght be let
For yifte ne for no behest,
That sche ne was al at his heste.
This yonge knyght Acis was hote,
Which hire ayeinward als so hote
Al only loveth and nomo.
Hierof was Poliphemus wo
Thurgh pure Envie, and evere aspide,
And waiteth upon every side,
Whan he togedre myhte se
This yonge Acis with Galathe.
So longe he waiteth to and fro,
Til ate laste he fond hem tuo,
In prive place wher thei stode
To speke and have here wordes goode.
The place wher as he hem syh,
It was under a banke nyh
The grete See, and he above
Stod and behield the lusti love
Which ech of hem to other made
With goodly chiere and wordes glade,
That al his herte hath set afyre
Of pure Envie: and as a fyre
Which fleth out of a myhti bowe,

Aweie he fledde for a throwe,
As he that was for love wod,
Whan that he sih how that it stod.
This Polipheme a Geant was;
And whan he sih the sothe cas,
How Galathee him hath forsake
And Acis to hire love take,
His herte mai it noght forbere
That he ne roreth lich a Bere;
And as it were a wilde beste,
The whom no reson mihte areste,
He ran Ethna the hell aboute,
Wher nevere yit the fyr was oute,
Fulild of sorghe and gret desese,
That he syh Acis wel at ese.
Til ate laste he him bethoghte,
As he which al Envie soghte,
And torneth to the banke ayein,
Wher he with Galathee hath seyn
Acis, whom that he thoghte grieve,
Thogh he himself mai noght relieve.
This Geant with his ruide myht
Part of the banke he schof doun riht,
The which evene upon Acis fell,
So that with fallinge of this hell
This Poliphemus Acis slowh,
Wherof sche made sorwe ynowh.
And as sche fledde fro the londe,
Neptunus tok hire into honde
And kept hire in so sauf a place
Fro Polipheme and his manace,
That he with al his false Envie
Ne mihte atteigne hir compaignie.
This Galathee of whom I speke,
That of hirsself mai noght be wreke,
Withouten eny semblant feigned
Sche hath hire loves deth compleigned,
And with hire sorwe and with hire wo
Sche hath the goddes moeved so,
That thei of pite and of grace
Have Acis in the same place,
Ther he lai ded, into a welle

Transformed, as the bokes telle,
With freisshe stremes and with cliere,
As he whilom with lusti chiere
Was freissh his love forto qweme.
And with this ruide Polipheme
For his Envie and for his hate
Thei were wrothe. And thus algate,
Mi Sone, thou myht understonde,
That if thou wolt in grace stonde
With love, thou most leve Envie:
And as thou wolt for thi partie
Toward thi love stonde fre,
So most thou soffre an other be,
What so befalle upon the chaunce:
For it is an unwys vengeance,
Which to non other man is lief,
And is unto himselfe grief.
Mi fader, this ensample is good;
Bot how so evere that it stod
With Poliphemes love as tho,
It schal noght stonde with me so,
To worchen eny felonie
In love for no such Envie.
Forthi if ther oght elles be,
Now axeth forth, in what degre
It is, and I me schal confesse
With schrifte unto youre holinesse.
Mi goode Sone, yit ther is
A vice revers unto this,
Which envious takth his gladnesse
Of that he seth the hevinesse
Of othre men: for his welfare
Is whanne he wot an other care:
Of that an other hath a fall,
He thenkth himself arist withal.
Such is the gladschipe of Envie
In worldes thing, and in partie
Fulofte times ek also
In loves cause it stant riht so.
If thou, my Sone, hast joie had,
Whan thou an other sihe unglad,
Schrif the therof. Mi fader, yis:

I am beknowe unto you this.
Of these lovers that loven streyte,
And for that point which thei coveite
Ben poursuiantz fro yeer to yere
In loves Court, whan I may hiere
How that thei clymbe upon the whel,
And whan thei wene al schal be wel,
Thei ben doun throwen ate laste,
Thanne am I fedd of that thei faste,
And lawhe of that I se hem loure;
And thus of that thei brewe soure
I drinke swete, and am wel esed
Of that I wot thei ben desesed.
Bot this which I you telle hiere
Is only for my lady diere;
That for non other that I knowe
Me reccheth noght who overthrowe,
Ne who that stonde in love upriht:
Bot be he squier, be he knyht,
Which to my ladiward poursuieth,
The more he lest of that he suieth,
The mor me thenketh that I winne,
And am the more glad withinne
Of that I wot him sorwe endure.
For evere upon such aventure
It is a confort, as men sein,
To him the which is wo besein
To sen an other in his peine,
So that thei bothe mai compleigne.
Wher I miself mai noght availe
To sen an other man travaile,
I am riht glad if he be let;
And thogh I fare noght the bet,
His sorwe is to myn herte a game:
Whan that I knowe it is the same
Which to mi ladi stant enclined,
And hath his love noght terminated,
I am riht joifull in my thoght.
If such Envie grieveth oght,
As I beknowe me coupable,
Ye that be wys and resonable,
Mi fader, telleth youre avis.

Mi Sone, Envie into no pris
Of such a forme, I understonde,
Ne mihte be no resoun stonde
For this Envie hath such a kinde,
That he wole sette himself behinde
To hindre with an othre wyht,
And gladly lese his oghne riht
To make an other lesen his.
And forto knowe how it so is,
A tale lich to this matiere
I thenke telle, if thou wolt hiere,
To schewe proprely the vice
Of this Envie and the malice.
Of Jupiter this finde I write,
How whilom that he wolde wite
Upon the pleigntes whiche he herde,
Among the men how that it ferde,
As of here wrong condicion
To do justificacion:
And for that cause doun he sente
An Angel, which about wente,
That he the sothe knowe mai.
So it befell upon a dai
This Angel, which him scholde enforme,
Was clothed in a mannes forme,
And overtok, I understonde,
Tuo men that wenten over londe,
Thurgh whiche he thoghte to asprie
His cause, and goth in compaignie.
This Angel with hise wordes wise
Opposeth hem in sondri wise,
Now lowde wordes and now softe,
That mad hem to desputen ofte,
And ech of hem his reson hadde.
And thus with tales he hem ladde
With good examinacioun,
Til he knew the condicioun,
What men thei were bothe tuo;
And sih wel ate laste tho,
That on of hem was coveitous,
And his fela was envious.
And thus, whan he hath knowlechinge,

Anon he feigneth departinge,
And seide he mot algate wende.
Bot herkne now what fell at ende:
For thanne he made hem understonde
That he was there of goddes sonde,
And seide hem, for the kindeschipe
That thei have don him felaschipe,
He wole hem do som grace ayein,
And bad that on of hem schal sein
What thing him is lievest to crave,
And he it schal of yifte have;
And over that ek forth withal
He seith that other have schal
The double of that his felaw axeth;
And thus to hem his grace he taxeth.
The coveitous was wonder glad,
And to that other man he bad
And seith that he ferst axe scholde:
For he supposeth that he wolde
Make his axinge of worldes good;
For thanne he knew wel how it stod,
That he himself be double weyhte
Schal after take, and thus be sleyhte,
Be cause that he wolde winne,
He bad his fela ferst beginne.
This Envious, thogh it be late,
Whan that he syh he mot algate
Make his axinge ferst, he thoghte,
If he worschipe or profit soghte,
It schal be doubled to his fiere:
That wolde he chese in no manere.
Bot thanne he scheweth what he was
Toward Envie, and in this cas
Unto this Angel thus he seide
And for his yifte this he preide,
To make him blind of his on yhe,
So that his fela nothing syhe.
This word was noght so sone spoke,
That his on yhe anon was loke,
And his felawh forthwith also
Was blind of bothe his yhen tuo.
Tho was that other glad ynowh,

That on wepte, and that other lowh,
He sette his on yhe at no cost,
Wherof that other two hath lost.
Of thilke ensample which fell tho,
Men tellen now fulofte so,
The world empeireth comunly:
And yit wot non the cause why;
For it acordeth noght to kinde
Min oghne harm to seche and finde
Of that I schal my brother grieve;
It myhte nevere wel achieve.
What seist thou, Sone, of this folie?
Mi fader, bot I scholde lie,
Upon the point which ye have seid
Yit was myn herte nevere leid,
Bot in the wise as I you tolde.
Bot overmore, if that ye wolde
Oght elles to my schrifte seie
Touchende Envie, I wolde preie.
Mi Sone, that schal wel be do:
Now herkne and ley thin Ere to.
Touchende as of Envious brod
I wot noght on of alle good;
Bot natheles, suche as thei be,
Yit is ther on, and that is he
Which cleped in Detraccioun.
And to conferme his accioun,
He hath withholde Malebouche,
Whos tunge neither pyl ne crouche
Mai hyre, so that he pronounce
A plein good word withoute frounce
Awher behinde a mannes bak.
For thogh he preise, he fint som lak,
Which of his tale is ay the laste,
That al the pris schal overcaste:
And thogh ther be no cause why,
Yit wole he jangle noght forthi,
As he which hath the heraldie
Of hem that usen forto lye.
For as the Nettle which up renneth
The freisshe rede Roses brenneth
And makth hem fade and pale of hewe,

Riht so this fals Envious hewe,
In every place wher he duelleth,
With false wordes whiche he telleth
He torneth preisinge into blame
And worschipe into worldes schame.
Of such lesinge as he compasseth,
Is non so good that he ne passeth
Betwen his teeth and is bacbited,
And thurgh his false tunge endited:
Lich to the Scharnebudes kinde,
Of whos nature this I finde,
That in the hoteste of the dai,
Whan comen is the merie Maii,
He sprat his wynges and up he fleth:
And under al aboute he seth
The faire lusti floures springe,
Bot therof hath he no likinge;
Bot where he seth of eny beste
The felthe, ther he makth his feste,
And therupon he wole alyhte,
Ther liketh him non other sihte.
Riht so this janglere Envious,
Thogh he a man se vertuous
And full of good condicioun,
Therof makth he no mencion:
Bot elles, be it noght so lyte,
Wherof that he mai sette a wyte,
Ther renneth he with open mouth,
Behinde a man and makth it couth.
Bot al the vertu which he can,
That wole he hide of every man,
And openly the vice telle,
As he which of the Scole of helle
Is tawht, and fostred with Envie
Of houshold and of compaignie,
Wher that he hath his propre office
To sette on every man a vice.
How so his mouth be comely,
His word sit evermore awry
And seith the worste that he may.
And in this wise now a day
In loves Court a man mai hiere

Fulofte pleigne of this matiere,
That many envious tale is stered,
Wher that it mai noght ben ansuered;
Bot yit fulofte it is believed,
And many a worthi love is grieved
Thurgh bacbitinge of fals Envie.
If thou have mad such janglerie
In loves Court, mi Sone, er this,
Schrif thee therof. Mi fader, yis:
Bot wite ye how? noght openly,
Bot otherwhile prively,
Whan I my diere ladi mete,
And thenke how that I am noght mete
Unto hire hihe worthinesse,
And ek I se the besinesse
Of al this yonge lusty route,
Whiche alday pressen hire aboute,
And ech of hem his time awaiteth,
And ech of hem his tale affaiteth,
Al to deceive an innocent,
Which woll noght ben of here assent;
And for men sein unknowe unkest,
Hire thombe sche holt in hire fest
So clos withinne hire oghne hond,
That there winneth noman lond;
Sche lieveth noght al that sche hiereth,
And thus fulofte herself sche skiereth
And is al war of 'hadde I wist':-
Bot for al that myn herte arist,
Whanne I thes comun lovers se,
That woll noght holden hem to thre,
Bot welnyh loven overal,
Min herte is Envious withal,
And evere I am adrad of guile,
In aunter if with eny wyle
Thei mihte hire innocence enchaunte.
Forthi my wordes ofte I haunte
Behynden hem, so as I dar,
Wherof my ladi may be war:
I sai what evere comth to mowthe,
And worse I wolde, if that I cowthe;
For whanne I come unto hir speche,

Al that I may enquire and seche
Of such deceipte, I telle it al,
And ay the werste in special.
So fayn I wolde that sche wiste
How litel thei ben forto triste,
And what thei wolde and what thei mente,
So as thei be of double entente:
Thus toward hem that wicke mene
My wicked word was evere grene.
And natheles, the soth to telle,
In certain if it so befelle
That althertrewest man ybore,
To chese among a thousand score,
Which were alfulli forto triste,
Mi ladi lovede, and I it wiste,
Yit rathere thanne he scholde spede,
I wolde swiche tales sprede
To my ladi, if that I myhte,
That I scholde al his love unrihte,
And therto wolde I do mi peine.
For certes thogh I scholde feigne,
And telle that was nevere thoght,
For al this world I myhte noght
To soffre an othre fully winne,
Ther as I am yit to beginne.
For be thei goode, or be thei badde,
I wolde non my ladi hadde;
And that me makth fulofte asprie
And usen wordes of Envie,
Al forto make hem bere a blame.
And that is bot of thilke same,
The whiche unto my ladi drawe,
For evere on hem I rounge and gknawe
And hindre hem al that evere I mai;
And that is, sothly forto say,
Bot only to my lady selve:
I telle it noght to ten ne tuelve,
Therof I wol me wel advise,
To speke or jangle in eny wise
That toucheth to my ladi name,
The which in ernest and in game
I wolde save into my deth;

For me were levere lacke breth
Than speken of hire name amis.
Now have ye herd touchende of this,
Mi fader, in confessioun:
And therfor of Detraccioun
In love, of that I have mispoke,
Tel how ye wole it schal be wroke.
I am al redy forto bere
Mi peine, and also to forbere
What thing that ye wol noght allowe;
For who is bounden, he mot bowe.
So wol I bowe unto youre heste,
For I dar make this beheste,
That I to yow have nothing hid,
Bot told riht as it is betid;
And otherwise of no mispeche,
Mi conscience forto seche,
I can noght of Envie finde,
That I mispoke have oght behinde
Wherof love owhte be mispaid.
Now have ye herd and I have said;
What wol ye, fader, that I do?
Mi Sone, do nomore so,
Bot evere kep thi tunge stille,
Thou miht the more have of thi wille.
For as thou saist thiselven here,
Thi ladi is of such manere,
So wys, so war in alle thinge,
It nedeth of no bakbitinge
That thou thi ladi mis enforme:
For whan sche knoweth al the forme,
How that thiself art envious,
Thou schalt noght be so gracious
As thou peraunter scholdest elles.
Ther wol noman drinke of tho welles
Whiche as he wot is puyson inne;
And ofte swich as men beginne
Towardes othre, swich thei finde,
That set hem ofte fer behinde,
Whan that thei wene be before.
Mi goode Sone, and thou therfore
Bewar and lef thi wicke speche,

Wherof hath fallen ofte wreche
To many a man befor this time.
For who so wole his handes lime,
Thei mosten be the more unclene;
For many a mote schal be sene,
That wolde noght cleve elles there;
And that schold every wys man fere:
For who so wol an other blame,
He secheth ofte his oghne schame,
Which elles myhte be riht stille.
Forthi if that it be thi wille
To stonde upon amendement,
A tale of gret entendement
I thenke telle for thi sake,
Wherof thou miht ensample take.
A worthi kniht in Cristes lawe
Of grete Rome, as is the sawe,
The Sceptre hadde forto rihte;
Tiberie Constantin he hihte,
Whos wif was cleped Ytalie:
Bot thei togedre of progenie
No children hadde bot a Maide;
And sche the god so wel apaide,
That al the wide worldes fame
Spak worschipe of hire goode name.
Constance, as the Cronique seith,
Sche hihte, and was so ful of feith,
That the greteste of Barbarie,
Of hem whiche usen marchandie,
Sche hath converted, as thei come
To hire upon a time in Rome,
To schewen such thing as thei broghte;
Whiche worthili of hem sche boghte,
And over that in such a wise
Sche hath hem with hire wordes wise
Of Cristes feith so full enformed,
That thei therto ben all conformed,
So that baptesme thei receiven
And alle here false goddes weyven.
Whan thei ben of the feith certein,
Thei gon to Barbarie ayein,
And ther the Souldan for hem sente

And axeth hem to what entente
Thei have here ferste feith forsake.
And thei, whiche hadden undertake
The rihte feith to kepe and holde,
The matiere of here tale tolde
With al the hole circumstance.
And whan the Souldan of Constance
Upon the point that thei ansuerde
The beaute and the grace herde,
As he which thanne was to wedde,
In alle haste his cause spedde
To sende for the mariage.
And furthermor with good corage
He seith, be so he mai hire have,
That Crist, which cam this world to save,
He woll believe: and this recorded,
Thei ben on either side acorded,
And therupon to make an ende
The Souldan hise hostages sende
To Rome, of Princes Sones tuelve:
Wherof the fader in himselve
Was glad, and with the Pope avised
Tuo Cardinals he hath assised
With othre lordes many mo,
That with his doghter scholden go,
To se the Souldan be converted.
Bot that which nevere was wel herted,
Envie, tho began travaile
In destourbance of this spousaile
So prively that non was war.
The Moder which this Souldan bar
Was thanne alyve, and thoghte this
Unto herself: 'If it so is
Mi Sone him wedde in this manere,
Than have I lost my joies hiere,
For myn astat schal so be lassed.'
Thenkende thus sche hath compassed
Be sleihte how that sche may beguile
Hire Sone; and fell withinne a while,
Betwen hem two whan that thei were,
Sche feigneth wordes in his Ere,
And in this wise gan to seie:

'Mi Sone, I am be double weie
With al myn herte glad and blithe,
For that miself have ofte sithe
Desired thou wolt, as men seith,
Receive and take a newe feith,
Which schal be forthringe of thi lif:
And ek so worschipful a wif,
The doughter of an Emperour,
To wedde it schal be gret honour.
Forthi, mi Sone, I you beseche
That I such grace mihte areche,
Whan that my doughter come schal,
That I mai thanne in special,
So as me thenkth it is honeste,
Be thilke which the ferste feste
Schal make unto hire welcominge.'
The Souldan granteth hire axinge,
And sche therof was glad ynowh:
For under that anon sche drowh
With false wordes that sche spak
Covine of deth behinde his bak.
And therupon hire ordinance
She made so, that whan Constance
Was come forth with the Romeins,
Of clerkes and of Citezeins,
A riche feste sche hem made:
And most whan that thei weren glade,
With fals covine which sche hadde
Hire clos Envie tho sche spradde,
And alle tho that hadden be
Or in apert or in prive
Of conseil to the mariage,
Sche slowh hem in a sodein rage
Endlong the bord as thei be set,
So that it myhte noght be let;
Hire oghne Sone was noght quit,
Bot deide upon the same plit.
Bot what the hihe god wol spare
It mai for no peril misfare:
This worthi Maiden which was there
Stod thanne, as who seith, ded for feere,
To se the feste how that it stod,

Which al was torned into blod:
The Dissh forthwith the Coppe and al
Bebled thei weren overal;
Sche sih hem deie on every side;
No wonder thogh sche wepte and cride
Makende many a wofull mone.
Whan al was slain bot sche al one,
This olde fend, this Sarazine,
Let take anon this Constantine
With al the good sche thider broghte,
And hath ordeined, as sche thoghte,
A nakid Schip withoute stiere,
In which the good and hire in fiere,
Vitaile full for yeres fyve,
Wher that the wynd it wolde dryve,
Sche putte upon the wawes wilde.
Bot he which alle thing mai schilde,
Thre yer, til that sche cam to londe,
Hire Schip to stiere hath take in honde,
And in Northumberlond aryveth;
And happeth thanne that sche dryveth
Under a Castel with the flod,
Which upon Humber banke stod
And was the kynges oghne also,
The which Allee was cleped tho,
A Saxon and a worthi knyht,
Bot he believed noght ariht.
Of this Castell was Chastellein
Elda the kinges Chamberlein,
A knyhtly man after his lawe;
And whan he sih upon the wawe
The Schip drivende al one so,
He bad anon men scholden go
To se what it betokne mai.
This was upon a Somer dai,
The Schip was loked and sche founde;
Elda withinne a litel stounde
It wiste, and with his wif anon
Toward this yonge ladi gon,
Wher that thei founden gret richesse;
Bot sche hire wolde noght confesse,
Whan thei hire axen what sche was.

And natheles upon the cas
Out of the Schip with gret worschipe
Thei toke hire into felaschipe,
As thei that weren of hir glade:
Bot sche no maner joie made,
Bot sorweth sore of that sche fond
No cristendom in thilke lond;
Bot elles sche hath al hire wille,
And thus with hem sche duelleth stille.
Dame Hermyngheld, which was the wif
Of Elda, lich hire oghne lif
Constance loveth; and fell so,
Spekende alday betwen hem two,
Thurgh grace of goddes pourveance
This maiden tawhte the creance
Unto this wif so parfitly,
Upon a dai that faste by
In presence of hire housebonde,
Wher thei go walkende on the Stronde,
A blind man, which cam there lad,
Unto this wif criende he bad,
With bothe hise hondes up and preide
To hire, and in this wise he seide:
'O Hermyngheld, which Cristes feith,
Enformed as Constance seith,
Received hast, yif me my sihte.'
Upon his word hire herte afflihte
Thenkende what was best to done,
Bot natheles sche herde his bone
And seide, 'In trust of Cristes lawe,
Which don was on the crois and slawe,
Thou bysne man, behold and se.'
With that to god upon his kne
Thonkende he tok his sihte anon,
Wherof thei merveile everychon,
Bot Elda wondreth most of alle:
This open thing which is befalle
Concludeth him be such a weie,
That he the feith mot nede obeie.
Now lest what fell upon this thing.
This Elda forth unto the king
A morwe tok his weie and rod,

And Hermyngeld at home abod
Forth with Constance wel at ese.
Elda, which thoghte his king to plese,
As he that thanne unwedded was,
Of Constance al the pleine cas
Als goodliche as he cowthe tolde.
The king was glad and seide he wolde
Come thider upon such a wise
That he him mihte of hire advise,
The time apointed forth withal.
This Elda triste in special
Upon a knyht, whom fro childhode
He hadde updrawe into manhode:
To him he tolde al that he thoghte,
Wherof that after him forthoghte;
And natheles at thilke tide
Unto his wif he bad him ride
To make redi alle thing
Ayein the cominge of the king,
And seith that he himself tofore
Thenkth forto come, and bad therfore
That he him kepe, and told him whanne.
This knyht rod forth his weie thanne;
And soth was that of time passed
He hadde in al his wit compassed
How he Constance myhte winne;
Bot he sih tho no sped therinne,
Wherof his lust began tabate,
And that was love is thanne hate;
Of hire honour he hadde Envie,
So that upon his tricherie
A lesinge in his herte he caste.
Til he cam home he hieth faste,
And doth his ladi tunderstonde
The Message of hire housebonde:
And therupon the longe dai
Thei setten thinges in arrai,
That al was as it scholde be
Of every thing in his degree;
And whan it cam into the nyht,
This wif hire hath to bedde dyht,
Wher that this Maiden with hire lay.

This false knyht upon delay
Hath taried til thei were aslepe,
As he that wolde his time kepe
His dedly werkes to fulfille;
And to the bed he stalketh stille,
Wher that he wiste was the wif,
And in his hond a rasour knif
He bar, with which hire throte he cutte,
And prively the knif he putte
Under that other beddes side,
Wher that Constance lai beside.
Elda cam hom the same nyht,
And stille with a prive lyht,
As he that wolde noght awake
His wif, he hath his weie take
Into the chambre, and ther liggende
He fond his dede wif bledende,
Wher that Constance faste by
Was falle aslepe; and sodeinly
He cride alowd, and sche awok,
And forth withal sche caste a lok
And sih this ladi blede there,
Wherof swoundende ded for fere
Sche was, and stille as eny Ston
She lay, and Elda therupon
Into the Castell clepeth oute,
And up sterte every man aboute,
Into the chambre and forth thei wente.
Bot he, which alle untrouthe mente,
This false knyht, among hem alle
Upon this thing which is befall
Seith that Constance hath don this dede;
And to the bed with that he yede
After the falshed of his speche,
And made him there forto seche,
And fond the knif, wher he it leide,
And thanne he cride and thanne he seide,
'Lo, seth the knif al bloody hier!
What nedeth more in this matiere
To axe?' And thus hire innocence
He sclaundreth there in audience
With false wordes whiche he feigneth.

Bot yit for al that evere he pleigneth,
Elda no full credence tok:
And happeth that ther lay a bok,
Upon the which, whan he it sih,
This knyht hath swore and seid on hih,
That alle men it mihte wite,
'Now be this bok, which hier is write,
Constance is gultif, wel I wot.'
With that the hond of hevene him smot
In tokne of that he was forswore,
That he hath bothe hise yhen lore,
Out of his hed the same stounde
Thei sterte, and so thei weren founde.
A vois was herd, whan that they felle,
Which seide, 'O dampned man to helle,
Lo, thus hath god the sclaundre wroke
That thou ayein Constance hast spoke:
Beknow the sothe er that thou dye.'
And he told out his felonie,
And starf forth with his tale anon.
Into the ground, wher alle gon,
This dede lady was begrave:
Elda, which thoghte his honour save,
Al that he mai restreigneth sorwe.
For the seconde day a morwe
The king cam, as thei were acorded;
And whan it was to him recorded
What god hath wroght upon this chaunce,
He tok it into remembrance
And thoghte more than he seide.
For al his hole herte he leide
Upon Constance, and seide he scholde
For love of hire, if that sche wolde,
Baptisme take and Cristes feith
Believe, and over that he seith
He wol hire wedde, and upon this
Asseured ech til other is.
And forto make schorte tales,
Ther cam a Bisschop out of Wales
Fro Bangor, and Lucie he hihte,
Which thurgh the grace of god almihte
The king with many an other mo

Hath cristned, and between hem tuo
He hath fulfild the mariage.
Bot for no lust ne for no rage
Sche tolde hem nevere what sche was;
And natheles upon the cas
The king was glad, how so it stod,
For wel he wiste and understod
Sche was a noble creature.
The hihe makere of nature
Hire hath visited in a throwe,
That it was openliche knowe
Sche was with childe be the king,
Wherof above al other thing
He thonketh god and was riht glad.
And fell that time he was bestad
Upon a werre and moste ride;
And whil he scholde there abide,
He lefte at hom to kepe his wif
Suche as he knew of holi lif,
Elda forth with the Bisschop eke;
And he with pouer goth to seke
Ayein the Scottes forto fonde
The werre which he tok on honde.
The time set of kinde is come,
This lady hath hire chambre nome,
And of a Sone bore full,
Wherof that sche was joiefull,
Sche was delivered sauf and sone.
The bisshop, as it was to done,
Yaf him baptesme and Moris calleth;
And therupon, as it befalleth,
With lettres writen of record
Thei sende unto here liege lord,
That kepers weren of the qweene:
And he that scholde go betwene,
The Messenger, to Knaresburgh,
Which toun he scholde passe thurgh,
Ridende cam the ferste day.
The kinges Moder there lay,
Whos rihte name was Domilde,
Which after al the cause spilde:
For he, which thonk deserve wolde,

Unto this ladi goth and tolde
Of his Message al how it ferde.
And sche with feigned joie it herde
And yaf him yiftes largely,
Bot in the nyht al prively
Sche tok the lettres whiche he hadde,
Fro point to point and overradde,
As sche that was thurghout untrewed,
And let do wryten othre newe
In stede of hem, and thus thei spieke:
'Oure liege lord, we thee beseke
That thou with ous ne be noght wroth,
Though we such thing as is thee loth
Upon oure trowthe certefie.
Thi wif, which is of faierie,
Of such a child delivered is
Fro kinde which stant al amis:
Bot for it scholde noght be seie,
We have it kept out of the weie
For drede of pure worldes schame,
A povere child and in the name
Of thilke which is so misbore
We toke, and therto we be swore,
That non bot only thou and we
Schal knowen of this privete:
Moris it hatte, and thus men wene
That it was boren of the qweene
And of thin oghne bodi gete.
Bot this thing mai noght be foryete,
That thou ne sende ous word anon
What is thi wille therupon.'
This lettre, as thou hast herd devise,
Was contrefet in such a wise
That noman scholde it aperceive:
And sche, which thoghte to deceive,
It leith wher sche that other tok.
This Messenger, whan he awok,
And wiste nothing how it was,
Aros and rod the grete pas
And tok this lettre to the king.
And whan he sih this wonder thing,
He makth the Messenger no chiere,

Bot natheles in wys manere
He wrote ayein, and yaf hem charge
That thei ne soffre noght at large
His wif to go, bot kepe hire stille,
Til thei have herd mor of his wille.
This Messenger was yifteles,
Bot with this lettre natheles,
Or be him lief or be him loth,
In alle haste ayein he goth
Be Knaresburgh, and as he wente,
Unto the Moder his entente
Of that he fond toward the king
He tolde; and sche upon this thing
Seith that he scholde abide al nyht
And made him feste and chiere ariht,
Feignende as thogh sche cowthe him thonk.
Bot he with strong wyn which he dronk
Forth with the travail of the day
Was drunke, aslepe and while he lay,
Sche hath hise lettres overseie
And formed in an other weie.
Ther was a newe lettre write,
Which seith: 'I do you forto wite,
That thurgh the conseil of you tuo
I stonde in point to ben undo,
As he which is a king deposed.
For every man it hath supposed,
How that my wif Constance is faie;
And if that I, thei sein, delaie
To put hire out of compaignie,
The worschipe of my Regalie
Is lore; and over this thei telle,
Hire child schal noght among hem duelle,
To cleyment eny heritage.
So can I se non avantage,
Bot al is lost, if sche abide:
Forthi to loke on every side
Toward the meschief as it is,
I charge you and bidde this,
That ye the same Schip vitaile,
In which that sche tok arivaile,
Therinne and putteth bothe tuo,

Hireself forthwith hire child also,
And so forth broght unto the depe
Betaketh hire the See to kepe.
Of foure daies time I sette,
That ye this thing no longer lette,
So that your lif be noght forsfet.'
And thus this lettre contrefet
The Messenger, which was unwar,
Upon the kingeshalve bar,
And where he scholde it hath betake.
Bot whan that thei have hiede take,
And rad that writen is withinne,
So gret a sorwe thei beginne,
As thei here oghne Moder sihen
Brent in a fyr before here yhen:
Ther was wepinge and ther was wo,
Bot finaly the thing is do.
Upon the See thei have hire broght,
Bot sche the cause wiste noght,
And thus upon the flod thei wone,
This ladi with hire yonge Sone:
And thanne hire handes to the hevene
Sche strawhte, and with a milde stevene
Knelende upon hire bare kne
Sche seide, 'O hihe mageste,
Which sest the point of every trowthe,
Tak of thi wofull womman rowthe
And of this child that I schal kepe.'
And with that word sche gan to wepe,
Swounende as ded, and ther sche lay;
Bot he which alle thinges may
Conforteth hire, and ate laste
Sche loketh and hire yhen caste
Upon hire child and seide this:
'Of me no maner charge it is
What sorwe I soffre, bot of thee
Me thenkth it is a gret pite,
For if I sterve thou schalt deie:
So mot I nedes be that weie
For Moderhed and for tendresse
With al myn hole besinesse
Ordeigne me for thilke office,

As sche which schal be thi Norrice.'
Thus was sche strengthed forto stonde;
And tho sche tok hire child in honde
And yaf it sowke, and evere among
Sche wepte, and otherwhile song
To rocke with hire child aslepe:
And thus hire oghne child to kepe
Sche hath under the goddes cure.
And so fell upon aventure,
Whan thilke yer hath mad his ende,
Hire Schip, so as it moste wende
Thurgh strengthe of wynd which god hath yive,
Estward was into Spaigne drive
Riht faste under a Castell wall,
Wher that an hethen Amirall
Was lord, and he a Steward hadde,
Oon Thelo^u which al was badde,
A fals knyht and a renegat.
He goth to loke in what astat
The Schip was come, and there he fond
Forth with a child upon hire hond
This lady, wher sche was al one.
He tok good hiede of the persone,
And sih sche was a worthi wiht,
And thoghte he wolde upon the nyht
Demene hire at his oghne wille,
And let hire be therinne stille,
That mo men sih sche noght that dai.
At goddes wille and thus sche lai,
Unknowe what hire schal betide;
And fell so that be nyhtes tide
This knyht withoute felaschipe
Hath take a bot and cam to Schipe,
And thoghte of hire his lust to take,
And swor, if sche him daunger make,
That certainly sche scholde deie.
Sche sih ther was non other weie,
And seide he scholde hire wel conforte,
That he ferst loke out ate porte,
That noman were nyh the stede,
Which myhte knowe what thei dede,
And thanne he mai do what he wolde.

He was riht glad that sche so tolde,
And to the porte anon he ferde:
Sche preide god, and he hire herde,
And sodeinliche he was out throwe
And dreynt, and tho began to blowe
A wynd menable fro the lond,
And thus the myhti goddes hond
Hire hath conveied and defended.
And whan thre yer be full despended,
Hire Schip was drive upon a dai,
Wher that a gret Navye lay
Of Schipes, al the world at ones:
And as god wolde for the nones,
Hire Schip goth in among hem alle,
And stinte noght, er it be falle
And hath the vessell undergete,
Which Maister was of al the Flete,
Bot there it resteth and abod.
This grete Schip on Anker rod;
The Lord cam forth, and whan he sih
That other ligge aboard so nyh,
He wondreth what it myhte be,
And bad men to gon in and se.
This ladi tho was crope aside,
As sche that wolde hireselven hide,
For sche ne wiste what thei were:
Thei soghte aboute and founde hir there
And broghten up hire child and hire;
And therupon this lord to spire
Began, fro whenne that sche cam,
And what sche was. Quod sche, 'I am
A womman wofully bestad.
I hadde a lord, and thus he bad,
That I forth with my litel Sone
Upon the wawes scholden wone,
Bot why the cause was, I not:
Bot he which alle thinges wot
Yit hath, I thonke him, of his miht
Mi child and me so kept upriht,
That we be save bothe tuo.'
This lord hire axeth overmo
How sche believeth, and sche seith,

'I lieve and triste in Cristes feith,
Which deide upon the Rode tree.'
'What is thi name?' tho quod he.
'Mi name is Couste,' sche him seide:
Bot forthermor for noght he preide
Of hire astat to knowe plein,
Sche wolde him nothing elles sein
Bot of hir name, which sche feigneth;
Alle othre thinges sche restreigneth,
That a word more sche ne tolde.
This lord thanne axeth if sche wolde
With him abide in compaignie,
And seide he cam fro Barbarie
To Romeward, and hom he wente.
Tho sche supposeth what it mente,
And seith sche wolde with him wende
And duelle unto hire lyves ende,
Be so it be to his plesance.
And thus upon here aqueintance
He tolde hire plainly as it stod,
Of Rome how that the gentil blod
In Barbarie was betrayed,
And therupon he hath assaied
Be werre, and taken such vengeance,
That non of al thilke alliance,
Be whom the tresoun was compassed,
Is from the swerd alyve passed;
Bot of Constance hou it was,
That cowthe he knowe be no cas,
Wher sche becam, so as he seide.
Hire Ere unto his word sche leide,
Bot forther made sche no chiere.
And natheles in this matiere
It happeth thilke time so:
This Lord, with whom sche scholde go,
Of Rome was the Senatour,
And of hir fader themperour
His brother doughter hath to wyve,
Which hath hir fader ek alyve,
And was Salustes cleped tho;
This wif Heleine hihte also,
To whom Constance was Cousine.

Thus to the sike a medicine
Hath god ordeined of his grace,
That forthwith in the same place
This Senatour his trowthe plihthe,
For evere, whil he live mihte,
To kepe in worschipe and in welthe,
Be so that god wol yive hire helthe,
This ladi, which fortune him sende.
And thus be Schipe forth sailende
Hire and hir child to Rome he broghte,
And to his wif tho he besoghte
To take hire into compaignie:
And sche, which cowthe of courtesie
Al that a good wif scholde konne,
Was inly glad that sche hath wonne
The felaschip of so good on.
Til twelve yeres were agon,
This Emperoures dowhter Custe
Forth with the dowhter of Saluste
Was kept, bot noman redily
Knew what sche was, and noght forthi
Thei thoghten wel sche hadde be
In hire astat of hih degre,
And every lif hire loveth wel.
Now herke how thilke unstable whel,
Which evere torneth, wente aboute.
The king Allee, whil he was oute,
As thou tofore hast herd this cas,
Deceived thurgh his Moder was:
Bot whan that he cam hom ayein,
He axeth of his Chamberlein
And of the Bisschop ek also,
Wher thei the qweene hadden do.
And thei answerde, there he bad,
And have him thilke lettre rad,
Which he hem sende for warant,
And tolde him pleinli as it stant,
And sein, it thoghte hem gret pite
To se so worthi on as sche,
With such a child as ther was bore,
So sodeinly to be forlore.
He axeth hem what child that were;

And thei him seiden, that naghere,
In al the world thogh men it soghte,
Was nevere womman that forth broghte
A fairer child than it was on.
And thanne he axede hem anon,
Whi thei ne hadden write so:
Thei tolden, so thei hadden do.
He seide, 'Nay.' Thei seiden, 'Yis.'
The lettre schewed rad it is,
Which thei forsoken everidel.
Tho was it understonde wel
That ther is tresoun in the thing:
The Messenger tofore the king
Was broght and sodeinliche opposed;
And he, which nothing hath supposed
Bot alle wel, began to seie
That he nagher upon the weie
Abod, bot only in a stede;
And cause why that he so dede
Was, as he wente to and fro,
At Knaresburgh be nyhtes tuo
The kinges Moder made him duelle.
And whan the king it herde telle,
Withinne his herte he wiste als faste
The treson which his Moder caste;
And thoghte he wolde noght abide,
Bot forth riht in the same tide
He tok his hors and rod anon.
With him ther riden manion,
To Knaresburgh and forth thei wente,
And lich the fyr which tunder hente,
In such a rage, as seith the bok,
His Moder sodeinliche he tok
And seide unto hir in this wise:
'O beste of helle, in what juise
Hast thou deserved forto deie,
That hast so falsly put aweie
With tresoun of thi bacbitinge
The treweste at my knowlechinge
Of wyves and the most honeste?
Bot I wol make this beheste,
I schal be venged er I go.'

And let a fyr do make tho,
And bad men forto caste hire inne:
Bot ferst sche tolde out al the sinne,
And dede hem alle forto wite
How sche the lettres hadde write,
Fro point to point as it was wroght.
And tho sche was to dethe broght
And brent tofore hire Sones yhe:
Wherof these othre, whiche it sihe
And herden how the cause stod,
Sein that the juggement is good,
Of that hir Sone hire hath so served;
For sche it hadde wel deserved
Thurgh tresoun of hire false tunge,
Which thurgh the lond was after sunge,
Constance and every wiht compleigneth.
Bot he, whom alle wo distreigneth,
This sorghfull king, was so bestad,
That he schal nevermor be glad,
He seith, eftsone forto wedde,
Til that he wiste how that sche spedde,
Which hadde ben his ferste wif:
And thus his yonge unlusti lif
He dryveth forth so as he mai.
Til it befell upon a dai,
Whan he hise werres hadde achieved,
And thoghte he wolde be relieved
Of Soule hele upon the feith
Which he hath take, thanne he seith
That he to Rome in pelrinage
Wol go, wher Pope was Pelage,
To take his absolucioun.
And upon this condicioun
He made Edwyn his lieutenant,
Which heir to him was apparant,
That he the lond in his absence
Schal reule: and thus be providence
Of alle thinges wel begon
He tok his leve and forth is gon.
Elda, which tho was with him there,
Er thei fulliche at Rome were,
Was sent tofore to pourveie;

And he his guide upon the weie,
In help to ben his herbergour,
Hath axed who was Senatour,
That he his name myhte kenne.
Of Capadoce, he seide, Arcenne
He hihte, and was a worthi kniht.
To him goth Elda tho forth riht
And tolde him of his lord tidinge,
And preide that for his comynge
He wolde assigne him herbergage;
And he so dede of good corage.
Whan al is do that was to done,
The king himself cam after sone.
This Senatour, whan that he com,
To Couste and to his wif at hom
Hath told how such a king Allee
Of gret array to the Citee
Was come, and Couste upon his tale
With herte clos and colour pale
Aswoune fell, and he merveileth
So sodeinly what thing hire eyleth,
And cawhte hire up, and whan sche wok,
Sche syketh with a pitous lok
And feigneth seknesse of the See;
Bot it was for the king Allee,
For joie which fell in hire thoght
That god him hath to toune broght.
This king hath spoke with the Pope
And told al that he cowthe agrope,
What grieveth in his conscience;
And thanne he thoghte in reverence
Of his astat, er that he wente,
To make a feste, and thus he sente
Unto the Senatour to come
Upon the morwe and othre some,
To sitte with him at the mete.
This tale hath Couste noght foryete,
Bot to Moris hire Sone tolde
That he upon the morwe scholde
In al that evere he cowthe and mihte
Be present in the kinges sihte,
So that the king him ofte sihe.

Moris tofore the kinges yhe
Upon the morwe, wher he sat,
Fulofte stod, and upon that
The king his chiere upon him caste,
And in his face him thoghte als faste
He sih his oghne wif Constance;
For nature as in resemblance
Of face hem liketh so to clothe,
That thei were of a suite bothe.
The king was moeved in his thoght
Of that he seth, and knoweth it noght;
This child he loveth kindely,
And yit he wot no cause why.
Bot wel he sih and understod
That he toward Arcenne stod,
And axeth him anon riht there,
If that this child his Sone were.
He seide, 'Yee, so I him calle,
And wolde it were so befall,
Bot it is al in other wise.'
And tho began he to devise
How he the chilles Moder fond
Upon the See from every lond
Withinne a Schip was stiereles,
And how this ladi helpeles
Forth with hir child he hath forthdrawe.
The king hath understonde his sawe,
The chilles name and axeth tho,
And what the Moder hihte also
That he him wolde telle he preide.
'Moris this child is hote,' he seide,
'His Moder hatte Couste, and this
I not what maner name it is.'
But Allee wiste wel ynowh,
Wherof somdiel smylende he lowh;
For Couste in Saxoun is to sein
Constance upon the word Romein.
Bot who that cowthe specefie
What tho fell in his fantasie,
And how his wit aboute renneth
Upon the love in which he brenneth,
It were a wonder forto hier:

For he was nouthur ther ne hiere,
Bot clene out of himself aweie,
That he not what to thenke or seie,
So fain he wolde it were sche.
Wherof his hertes privete
Began the werre of yee and nay,
The which in such balance lay,
That contenance for a throwe
He loste, til he mihte knowe
The sothe: bot in his memoire
The man which lith in purgatoire
Desireth noght the hevene more,
That he ne longeth al so sore
To wite what him schal betide.
And whan the bordes were aside
And every man was rise aboute,
The king hath weyved al the route,
And with the Senatour al one
He spak and preide him of a bone,
To se this Couste, wher sche duelleth
At hom with him, so as he telleth.
The Senatour was wel appaied,
This thing no lengere is delaied,
To se this Couste goth the king;
And sche was warned of the thing,
And with Heleine forth sche cam
Ayein the king, and he tho nam
Good hiede, and whan he sih his wif,
Anon with al his hertes lif
He cawhte hire in his arm and kiste.
Was nevere wiht that sih ne wiste
A man that more joie made,
Wherof thei weren alle glade
Whiche herde tellen of this chance.
This king tho with his wif Constance,
Which hadde a gret part of his wille,
In Rome for a time stille
Abod and made him wel at ese:
Bot so yit cowthe he nevere plese
His wif, that sche him wolde sein
Of hire astat the trowthe plein,
Of what contre that sche was bore,

Ne what sche was, and yit therfore
With al his wit he hath don sieke.
Thus as they lihe abedde and spieke,
Sche preide him and conseileth bothe,
That for the worschipe of hem bothe,
So as hire thoghte it were honeste,
He wolde an honourable feste
Make, er he wente, in the Cite,
Wher themperour himself schal be:
He graunteth al that sche him preide.
Bot as men in that time seide,
This Emperour fro thilke day
That ferst his dowhter wente away
He was thanne after nevere glad;
Bot what that eny man him bad
Of grace for his dowhter sake,
That grace wolde he noght forsake;
And thus ful gret almesse he dede,
Wherof sche hadde many a bede.
This Emperour out of the toun
Withinne a ten mile enviroun,
Where as it thoghte him for the beste,
Hath sondry places forto reste;
And as fortune wolde tho,
He was duellende at on of tho.
The king Allee forth with thassent
Of Couste his wif hath thider sent
Moris his Sone, as he was taght,
To themperour and he goth straght,
And in his fader half besoghte,
As he which his lordschipe soghte,
That of his hihe worthinesse
He wolde do so gret meknesse,
His oghne toun to come and se,
And yive a time in the cite,
So that his fader mihte him gete
That he wolde ones with him ete.
This lord hath granted his requeste;
And whan the dai was of the feste,
In worschipe of here Emperour
The king and ek the Senatour
Forth with here wyves bothe tuo,

With many a lord and lady mo,
On horse riden him ayein;
Til it befell, upon a plein
Thei sihen wher he was comende.
With that Constance anon preiende
Spak to hir lord that he abyde,
So that sche mai tofore ryde,
To ben upon his bienvenue
The ferste which schal him salue;
And thus after hire lordes graunt
Upon a Mule whyt amblaunt
Forth with a fewe rod this qweene.
Thei wondren what sche wolde mene,
And riden after softes pas;
Bot whan this lady come was
To themperour, in his presence
Sche seide aloud in audience,
'Mi lord, mi fader, wel you be!
And of this time that I se
Your honour and your goode hele,
Which is the helpe of my querele,
I thonke unto the goddess myht.'
For joie his herte was affliht
Of that sche tolde in remembrance;
And whanne he wiste it was Constance,
Was nevere fader half so blithe.
Wepende he keste hire ofte sithe,
So was his herte al overcome;
For thogh his Moder were come
Fro deth to lyve out of the grave,
He mihte nomore wonder have
Than he hath whan that he hire sih.
With that hire oghne lord cam nyh
And is to themperour obeied;
Bot whan the fortune is bewreied,
How that Constance is come aboute,
So hard an herte was non oute,
That he for pite tho ne wepte.
Arcennus, which hire fond and kepte,
Was thanne glad of that is falle,
So that with joie among hem alle
Thei riden in at Rome gate.

This Emperour thoghte al to late,
Til that the Pope were come,
And of the lordes sende some
To preie him that he wolde haste:
And he cam forth in alle haste,
And whan that he the tale herde,
How wonderly this chance ferde,
He thonketh god of his miracle,
To whos miht mai be non obstacle:
The king a noble feste hem made,
And thus thei weren alle glade.
A parlement, er that thei wente,
Thei setten unto this entente,
To puten Rome in full espeir
That Moris was apparant heir
And scholde abide with hem stille,
For such was al the londes wille.
Whan every thing was fulli spoke,
Of sorwe and queint was al the smoke,
Tho tok his leve Allee the king,
And with full many a riche thing,
Which themperour him hadde yive,
He goth a glad lif forto live;
For he Constance hath in his hond,
Which was the confort of his lond.
For whan that he cam hom ayein,
Ther is no tunge it mihte sein
What joie was that ilke stounde
Of that he hath his qweene founde,
Which ferst was sent of goddes sonde,
Whan sche was drive upon the Stronde,
Be whom the misbelieve of Sinne
Was left, and Cristes feith cam inne
To hem that whilom were blinde.
Bot he which hindreth every kinde
And for no gold mai be forboght,
The deth comende er he be soght,
Tok with this king such aqueintance,
That he with al his retenance
Ne mihte noght defende his lif;
And thus he parteth from his wif,
Which thanne made sorwe ynowh.

And therupon hire herte drowh
To leven Engeland for evere
And go wher that sche hadde levere,
To Rome, whenne that sche cam:
And thus of al the lond sche nam
Hir leve, and goth to Rome ayein.
And after that the bokes sein,
She was noght there bot a throwe,
Whan deth of kinde hath overthrowe
Hir worthi fader, which men seide
That he betwen hire armes deide.
And afterward the yer suiende
The god hath mad of hire an ende,
And fro this worldes faierie
Hath take hire into compaignie.
Moris hir Sone was corouned,
Which so ferforth was abandouned
To Cristes feith, that men him calle
Moris the cristeneste of alle.
And thus the wel meninge of love
Was ate laste set above;
And so as thou hast herd tofore,
The false tungen weren lore,
Whiche upon love wolden lie.
Forthi touchende of this Envie
Which longeth unto bacbitinge,
Be war thou make no lesinge
In hindringe of an other wiht:
And if thou wolt be tawht ariht
What meschief bakbitinge doth
Be other weie, a tale soth
Now miht thou hiere next suiende,
Which to this vice is acordende.
In a Cronique, as thou schalt wite,
A gret ensample I finde write,
Which I schal telle upon this thing.
Philippe of Macedoyne kyng
Two Sones hadde be his wif,
Whos fame is yit in Grece rif:
Demetrius the ferste brother
Was hote, and Perseus that other.
Demetrius men seiden tho

The betre knyht was of the tuo,
To whom the lond was entendant,
As he which heir was apparant
To regne after his fader dai:
Bot that thing which no water mai
Quenche in this world, bot evere brenneth,
Into his brother herte it renneth,
The proude Envie of that he sih
His brother scholde clymbe on hih,
And he to him mot thanne obeie:
That may he soffre be no weie.
With strengthe dorst he nothing fonde,
So tok he lesinge upon honde,
Whan he sih time and spak therto.
For it befell that time so,
His fader grete werres hadde
With Rome, whiche he streite ladde
Thurgh mihty hond of his manhode,
As he which hath ynowh knihthode,
And ofte hem hadde sore grieved.
Bot er the werre were achieved,
As he was upon ordinance
At hom in Grece, it fell per chance,
Demetrius, which ofte aboute
Ridende was, stod that time oute,
So that this Perse in his absence,
Which bar the tunge of pestilence,
With false wordes whiche he feigneth
Upon his oghne brother pleigneth
In privete behinde his bak,
And to his fader thus he spak:
'Mi diere fader, I am holde
Be weie of kinde, as resoun wolde,
That I fro yow schal nothing hide,
Which mihte torne in eny side
Of youre astat into grevance:
Forthi myn hertes obeissance
Towardes you I thenke kepe;
For it is good ye take kepe
Upon a thing which is me told.
Mi brother hath ous alle sold
To hem of Rome, and you also;

For thanne they behote him so,
That he with hem schal regne in pes.
Thus hath he cast for his encress
That youre astat schal go to noght;
And this to proeve schal be broght
So ferforth, that I undertake
It schal noght wel mow be forsake.'
The king upon this tale ansuerde
And seide, if this thing which he herde
Be soth and mai be broght to prove,
'It schal noght be to his behove,
Which so hath schapen ous the werste,
For he himself schal be the ferste
That schal be ded, if that I mai.'
Thus afterward upon a dai,
Whan that Demetrius was come,
Anon his fader hath him nome,
And bad unto his brother Perse
That he his tale schal rehearse
Of thilke tresoun which he tolde.
And he, which al untrowthe wolde,
Conseileth that so hih a nede
Be treted wher as it mai spede,
In comun place of juggement.
The king therto yaf his assent,
Demetrius was put in hold,
Wherof that Perse was bold.
Thus stod the trowthe under the charge,
And the falshede goth at large,
Which thurgh beheste hath overcome
The greteste of the lordes some,
That privelich of his acord
Thei stonde as witnesse of record:
The juggle was mad favorable:
Thus was the lawe deceivable
So ferforth that the trowthe fond
Rescousse non, and thus the lond
Forth with the king deceived were.
The gultes was dampned there
And deide upon accusement:
Bot such a fals conspirement,
Thogh it be prive for a throwe,

Godd wolde noght it were unknowe;
And that was afterward wel proved
In him which hath the deth controved.
Of that his brother was so slain
This Perseus was wonder fain,
As he that tho was apparant,
Upon the Regne and expectant;
Wherof he wax so proud and vein,
That he his fader in desdeign
Hath take and set of non acompte,
As he which thoghte him to surmonte;
That wher he was ferst debonaire,
He was tho rebell and contraire,
And noght as heir bot as a king
He tok upon him alle thing
Of malice and of tirannie
In contempt of the Regalie,
Livende his fader, and so wroghte,
That whan the fader him bethoghte
And sih to whether side it drowh,
Anon he wiste well ynowh
How Perse after his false tunge
Hath so thenvious belle runge,
That he hath slain his oghne brother.
Wherof as thanne he knew non other,
Bot sodeinly the jugge he nom,
Which corrupt sat upon the dom,
In such a wise and hath him pressed,
That he the sothe him hath confessed
Of al that hath be spoke and do.
Mor sori than the king was tho
Was nevere man upon this Molde,
And thoghte in certain that he wolde
Vengance take upon this wrong.
Bot thother parti was so strong,
That for the lawe of no statut
Ther mai no riht ben execut;
And upon this division
The lond was torned up so doun:
Wherof his herte is so distraght,
That he for pure sorwe hath caght
The maladie of which nature

Is quaint in every creature.
And whan this king was passed thus,
This false tonged Perseus
The regiment hath underfonge.
Bot ther mai nothing stonde longe
Which is noght upon trowthe grounded;
For god, which alle thing hath bounded
And sih the falshod of his guile,
Hath set him bot a litel while,
That he schal regne upon depos;
For sodeinliche as he aros
So sodeinliche doun he fell.
In thilke time it so befell,
This newe king of newe Pride
With strengthe schop him forto ride,
And seide he wolde Rome waste,
Wherof he made a besi haste,
And hath assembled him an host
In al that evere he mihte most:
What man that mihte wepne bere
Of alle he wolde non forbere;
So that it mihte noght be nombred,
The folk which after was encombred
Thurgh him, that god wolde overthowe.
Anon it was at Rome knowe,
The pompe which that Perse ladde;
And the Romeins that time hadde
A Consul, which was cleped thus
Be name, Paul Emilius,
A noble, a worthi kniht withalle;
And he, which chief was of hem alle,
This werre on honde hath undertake.
And whanne he scholde his leve take
Of a yong dowhter which was his,
Sche wepte, and he what cause it is
Hire axeth, and sche him ansuerde
That Perse is ded; and he it herde,
And wondreth what sche meene wolde:
And sche upon childhode him tolde
That Perse hir litel hound is ded.
With that he pulleth up his hed
And made riht a glad visage,

And seide how that was a presage
 Touchende unto that other Perse,
 Of that fortune him scholde adverse,
 He seith, for such a prenostik
 Most of an hound was to him lik:
 For as it is an houndes kinde
 To berke upon a man behinde,
 Riht so behinde his brother bak
 With false wordes whiche he spak
 He hath do slain, and that is rowthe.
 'Bot he which hateth alle untrowthe,
 The hihe god, it schal redresse;
 For so my dowhter prophetesse
 Forth with hir litel houndes deth
 Betokneth.' And thus forth he geth
 Conforted of this evidence,
 With the Romeins in his defence
 Ayein the Greks that ben comende.
 This Perse, as noght seende
 This meschief which that him abod,
 With al his multitude rod,
 And prided him upon the thing,
 Of that he was become a king,
 And how he hadde his regne gete;
 Bot he hath al the riht foryete
 Which longeth unto governance.
 Wherof thurgh goddes ordinance
 It fell, upon the wynter tide
 That with his host he scholde ride
 Over Danubie thilke flod,
 Which al befroze thanne stod
 So harde, that he wende wel
 To passe: bot the blinde whiel,
 Which torneth ofte er men be war,
 Thilke ys which that the horsmen bar
 Tobrak, so that a gret partie
 Was dreint; of the chivalerie
 The rerewarde it tok aweie,
 Cam non of hem to londe dreie.
 Paulus the worthi kniht Romein
 Be his asprie it herde sein,
 And hasteth him al that he may,

So that upon that other day
He cam wher he this host beheld,
And that was in a large feld,
Wher the Baneres ben desplaied.
He hath anon hise men arraied,
And whan that he was embatailled,
He goth and hath the feld assailed,
And slowh and tok al that he fond;
Wherof the Macedoyne lond,
Which thurgh king Alisandre honoured
Long time stod, was tho devoured.
To Perse and al that infortune
Thei wyte, so that the comune
Of al the lond his heir exile;
And he despeired for the while
Desguised in a povere wede
To Rome goth, and ther for nede
The craft which thilke time was,
To worche in latoun and in bras,
He lerneth for his sustenance.
Such was the Sones pourveance,
And of his fader it is seid,
In strong prisoun that he was leid
In Albe, wher that he was ded
For hunger and defalte of bred.
The hound was tokne and prophecie
That lich an hound he scholde die,
Which lich was of condicioun,
Whan he with his detraccioun
Bark on his brother so behinde.
Lo, what profit a man mai finde,
Which hindre wole an other wiht.
Forthi with al thin hole miht,
Mi Sone, eschuie thilke vice.
Mi fader, elles were I nyce:
For ye therof so wel have spoke,
That it is in myn herte loke
And evere schal: bot of Envie,
If ther be more in his baillie
Towardes love, sai me what.
Mi Sone, as guile under the hat
With sleyhtes of a tregetour

Is hidd, Envie of such colour
Hath yit the ferthe deceivant,
The which is cleped Falssemblant,
Wherof the matiere and the forme
Now herkne and I thee schal enforme.
Of Falssemblant if I schal telle,
Above alle othre it is the welle
Out of the which deceipte floweth.
Ther is noman so wys that knoweth
Of thilke flod which is the tyde,
Ne how he scholde himselven guide
To take sauf passage there.
And yit the wynd to mannes Ere
Is softe, and as it semeth oute
It makth clier weder al aboute;
Bot thogh it seme, it is noght so.
For Falssemblant hath everemo
Of his conseil in compaignie
The derke untrewes Ypocrisie,
Whos word descordeth to his thoght:
Forthi thei ben togedre broght
Of o covine, of on houshold,
As it schal after this be told.
Of Falssemblant it nedeth noght
To telle of olde ensamples oght;
For al dai in experience
A man mai se thilke evidence
Of faire wordes whiche he hiereth;
Bot yit the barge Envie stiereth
And halt it evere fro the londe,
Wher Falssemblant with Ore on honde
It roweth, and wol noght arive,
Bot let it on the waves dryve
In gret tempeste and gret debat,
Wherof that love and his astat
Empeireth. And therefore I rede,
Mi Sone, that thou fle and drede
This vice, and what that othre sein,
Let thi Semblant be trewe and plein.
For Falssemblant is thilke vice,
Which nevere was withoute office:
Wher that Envie thenkth to guile,

He schal be for that ilke while
Of prive conseil Messagier.
For whan his semblant is most clier,
Thanne is he most derk in his thoght,
Thogh men him se, thei knowe him noght;
Bot as it scheweth in the glas
Thing which therinne nevere was,
So scheweth it in his visage
That nevere was in his corage:
Thus doth he al his thing with sleyhte.
Now ley thi conscience in weyhte,
Mi goode Sone, and schrif the hier,
If thou were evere Custummer
To Falssemblant in eny wise.
For ought I can me yit advise,
Mi goode fader, certes no.
If I for love have oght do so,
Now asketh, I wol praie yow:
For elles I wot nevere how
Of Falssemblant that I have gilt.
Mi Sone, and sithen that thou wilt
That I schal axe, gabbe noght,
Bot tell if evere was thi thoght
With Falssemblant and coverture
To wite of eny creature
How that he was with love lad;
So were he sori, were he glad,
Whan that thou wistest how it were,
Al that he rounede in thin Ere
Thou toldest forth in other place,
To setten him fro loves grace
Of what womman that thee beste liste,
Ther as noman his conseil wiste
Bot thou, be whom he was deceived
Of love, and from his pourpos weyved;
And thoghtest that his destourbance
Thin oghne cause scholde avance,
As who saith, 'I am so celee,
Ther mai no mannes privete
Be heled half so wel as myn.'
Art thou, mi Sone, of such engin?
Tell on. Mi goode fader, nay

As for the more part I say;
Bot of somdiel I am beknowe,
That I mai stonde in thilke rowe
Amonges hem that Saundres use.
I wol me noght therof excuse,
That I with such colour ne steyne,
Whan I my beste Semblant feigne
To my felawh, til that I wot
Al his conseil bothe cold and hot:
For be that cause I make him chiere,
Til I his love knowe and hiere;
And if so be myn herte soucheth
That oght unto my ladi toucheth
Of love that he wol me telle,
Anon I renne unto the welle
And caste water in the fyr,
So that his carte amidd the Myr,
Be that I have his conseil knowe,
Fulofte sithe I overthrowe,
Whan that he weneth best to stonde.
Bot this I do you understonde,
If that a man love elles where,
So that my ladi be noght there,
And he me telle, I wole it hide,
Ther schal no word ascape aside,
For with deceipte of no semblant
To him breke I no covenant;
Me liketh noght in other place
To lette noman of his grace,
Ne forto ben inquisitif
To knowe an other mannes lif:
Wher that he love or love noght,
That toucheth nothing to my thoght,
Bot al it passeth thurgh myn Ere
Riht as a thing that nevere were,
And is foryete and leid beside.
Bot if it touche on eny side
Mi ladi, as I have er spoken,
Myn Eres ben noght thanne loken;
For certes, whanne that betitt,
My will, myn herte and al my witt
Ben fully set to herkne and spire

What eny man wol speke of hire.
Thus have I feigned compaignie
Fulofte, for I wolde asprie
What thing it is that eny man
Telle of mi worthi lady can:
And for tuo causes I do this,
The ferste cause wherof is,-
If that I myhte ofherkne and seke
That eny man of hire mispeke,
I wolde excuse hire so fully,
That whan sche wist in inderly,
Min hope scholde be the more
To have hir thank for everemore.
That other cause, I you assure,
Is, why that I be coverture
Have feigned semblant ofte time
To hem that passen alday byme
And ben lovers als wel as I,
For this I weene trewely,
That ther is of hem alle non,
That thei ne loven everich on
Mi ladi: for sothliche I lieve
And durste setten it in prieve,
Is non so wys that scholde asterte,
Bot he were lustles in his herte,
Forwhy and he my ladi sihe,
Hir visage and hir goodlych yhe,
Bot he hire lovede, er he wente.
And for that such is myn entente,
That is the cause of myn asprie,
Why that I feigne compaignie
And make felawe overal;
For gladly wolde I knowen al
And holde me covert alway,
That I fulofte ye or nay
Ne liste ansuere in eny wise,
Bot feigne semblant as the wise
And herkne tales, til I knowe
Mi ladi lovers al arowe.
And whanne I hiere how thei have wrought,
I fare as thogh I herde it noght
And as I no word understode;

Bot that is nothing for here goode:
For lieveth wel, the sothe is this,
That whanne I knowe al how it is,
I wol bot forthren hem a lite,
Bot al the worste I can endite
I telle it to my ladi plat
In forthringe of myn oghne astat,
And hindre hem al that evere I may.
Bot for al that yit dar I say,
I finde unto miself no bote,
Although myn herte nedes mote
Thurgh strengthe of love al that I hiere
Discovere unto my ladi diere:
For in good feith I have no miht
To hele fro that swete wiht,
If that it touche hire eny thing.
Bot this wot wel the hevene king,
That sithen ferst this world began,
Unto non other strange man
Ne feigned I semblant ne chiere,
To wite or axe of his matiere,
Thogh that he lovede ten or tuelve,
Whanne it was noght my ladi selve:
Bot if he wolde axe eny red
Al onlich of his oghne hed,
How he with other love ferde,
His tales with myn Ere I herde,
Bot to myn herte cam it noght
Ne sank no deppere in my thoght,
Bot hield conseil, as I was bede,
And tolde it nevere in other stede,
Bot let it passen as it com.
Now, fader, say what is thi dom,
And hou thou wolt that I be peined
For such Semblant as I have feigned.
Mi Sone, if reson be wel peised,
Ther mai no vertu ben unpreised
Ne vice non be set in pris.
Forthi, my Sone, if thou be wys,
Do no viser upon thi face,
Which as wol noght thin herte embrace:
For if thou do, withinne a throwe

To othre men it schal be knowe,
So miht thou lihtli falle in blame
And lese a gret part of thi name.
And natheles in this degree
Fulofte time thou myht se
Of suche men that now aday
This vice setten in a say:
I speke it for no mannes blame,
Bot forto warne thee the same.
Mi Sone, as I mai hiere talke
In every place where I walke,
I not if it be so or non,
Bot it is manye daies gon
That I ferst herde telle this,
How Falssemblant hath ben and is
Most comunly fro yer to yere
With hem that duelle among ous here,
Of suche as we Lombardes calle.
For thei ben the slyeste of alle,
So as men sein in toune aboute,
To feigne and schewe thing withoute
Which is revers to that withinne:
Wherof that thei fulofte winne,
Whan thei be reson scholden lese;
Thei ben the laste and yit thei chese,
And we the ferste, and yit behinde
We gon, there as we scholden finde
The profit of oure oghne lond:
Thus gon thei fre withoute bond
To don her profit al at large,
And othre men bere al the charge.
Of Lombardz unto this covine,
Whiche alle londes conne engine,
Mai Falssemblant in special
Be likned, for thei overal,
Wher as they thenken forto duelle,
Among hemself, so as thei telle,
Ferst ben enformed forto lere
A craft which cleped is Fa crere:
For if Fa crere come aboute,
Thanne afterward hem stant no doute
To voide with a soubtil hond

The beste goodes of the lond
And bringe chaf and take corn.
Where as Fa crere goth toforn,
In all his weie he fynt no lette;
That Dore can non huissher schette
In which him list to take entre:
And thus the conseil most secre
Of every thing Fa crere knoweth,
Which into strange place he bloweth,
Where as he wot it mai most grieve.
And thus Fa crere makth believe,
So that fulofte he hath deceived,
Er that he mai ben aperceived.
Thus is this vice forto drede;
For who these olde bokes rede
Of suche ensamples as were ar,
Him oghte be the more war
Of alle tho that feigne chiere,
Wherof thou schalt a tale hier.
Of Falssemblant which is believed
Ful many a worthi wiht is grieved,
And was long time er we wer bore.
To thee, my Sone, I wol therfore
A tale telle of Falssemblant,
Which falseth many a covenant,
And many a fraude of fals conseil
Ther ben hangende upon his Seil:
And that aboghten gulteles
Bothe Deianire and Hercules,
The whiche in gret desese felle
Thurgh Falssemblant, as I schal telle.
Whan Hercules withinne a throwe
Al only hath his herte throwe
Upon this faire Deianire,
It fell him on a dai desire,
Upon a Rivere as he stod,
That passe he wolde over the flod
Withoute bot, and with him lede
His love, bot he was in drede
For tendresce of that swete wiht,
For he knew noght the forde ariht.
Ther was a Geant thanne nyh,

Which Nessus hihte, and whanne he sih
This Hercules and Deianyre,
Withinne his herte he gan conspire,
As he which thurgh his tricherie
Hath Hercules in gret envie,
Which he bar in his herte loke,
And thanne he thoghte it schal be wroke.
Bot he ne dorste natheles
Ayein this worthi Hercules
Falle in debat as forto feihte;
Bot feigneth Semblant al be sleihte
Of frendschipe and of alle goode,
And comth where as thei bothe stode,
And makth hem al the chiere he can,
And seith that as here oghne man
He is al redy forto do
What thing he mai; and it fell so
That thei upon his Semblant triste,
And axen him if that he wiste
What thing hem were best to done,
So that thei mihten sauf and sone
The water passe, he and sche.
And whan Nessus the privete
Knew of here herte what it mente,
As he that was of double entente,
He made hem riht a glad visage;
And whanne he herde of the passage
Of him and hire, he thoghte guile,
And feigneth Semblant for a while
To don hem plesance and servise,
Bot he thoghte al an other wise.
This Nessus with hise wordes slyhe
Yaf such conseil tofore here yhe
Which semeth outward profitable
And was withinne deceivable.
He bad hem of the Stremes depe
That thei be war and take kepe,
So as thei knowe noght the pas;
Bot forto helpe in such a cas,
He seith himself that for here ese
He wolde, if that it mihte hem plese,
The passage of the water take,

And for this ladi undertake
To bere unto that other stronde
And sauf to sette hire up alonde,
And Hercules may thanne also
The weie knowe how he schal go:
And herto thei acorden alle.
Bot what as after schal befalle,
Wel payd was Hercules of this,
And this Geant also glad is,
And tok this ladi up alofte
And set hire on his schuldre softe,
And in the flod began to wade,
As he which no grucching made,
And bar hire over sauf and sound.
Bot whanne he stod on dreie ground
And Hercules was fer behinde,
He sette his trowthe al out of mynde,
Who so therof be lief or loth,
With Deianyre and forth he goth,
As he that thoghte to dissevere
The compaignie of hem for evere.
Whan Hercules therof tok hiede,
Als faste as evere he mihte him spiede
He hyeth after in a throwe;
And hapneth that he hadde a bowe,
The which in alle haste he bende,
As he that wolde an Arwe sende,
Which he tofore hadde envenimed.
He hath so wel his schote timed,
That he him thurgh the bodi smette,
And thus the false wiht he lette.
Bot lest now such a felonie:
Whan Nessus wiste he scholde die,
He tok to Deianyre his scherte,
Which with the blod was of his herte
Thurghout destaigned overal,
And tolde how sche it kepe schal
Al prively to this entente,
That if hire lord his herte wente
To love in eny other place,
The scherte, he seith, hath such a grace,
That if sche mai so mochel make

That he the scherte upon him take,
He schal alle othre lete in vein
And torne unto hire love ayein.
Who was tho glad bot Deianyre?
Hire thoghte hire herte was afyre
Til it was in hire cofre loke,
So that no word therof was spoke.
The daies gon, the yeres passe,
The hertes waxen lasse and lasse
Of hem that ben to love untrewē:
This Hercules with herte newe
His love hath set on Eolen,
And therof spieken alle men.
This Eolen, this faire maide,
Was, as men thilke time saide,
The kinges dowhter of Eurice;
And sche made Hercules so nyce
Upon hir Love and so assote,
That he him clotheth in hire cote,
And sche in his was clothed ofte;
And thus fieblesce is set alofte,
And strengthe was put under fote,
Ther can noman therof do bote.
Whan Deianyre hath herd this speche,
Ther was no sorwe forto seche:
Of other helpe wot sche non,
Bot goth unto hire cofre anon;
With wepende yhe and woful herte
Sche tok out thilke unhappi scherte,
As sche that wende wel to do,
And broghte hire werk aboute so
That Hercules this scherte on dede,
To such entente as she was bede
Of Nessus, so as I seide er.
Bot therof was sche noght the ner,
As no fortune may be weyved;
With Falssemblant sche was deceived,
That whan sche wende best have wonne,
Sche lost al that sche hath begonne.
For thilke scherte unto the bon
His body sette afyre anon,
And cleveth so, it mai noght twinne,

For the venym that was therinne.
And he thanne as a wilde man
Unto the hihe wode he ran,
And as the Clerk Ovide telleth,
The grete tres to grounde he felleth
With strengthe al of his oghne myght,
And made an huge fyr upriht,
And lepte himself therinne at ones
And brende him bothe fleissh and bones.
Which thing cam al thurgh Falssemblant,
That false Nessus the Geant
Made unto him and to his wif;
Wherof that he hath lost his lif,
And sche sori for everemo.
Forthi, my Sone, er thee be wo,
I rede, be wel war therfore;
For whan so gret a man was lore,
It oghte yive a gret conceipte
To warne alle othre of such deceipte.
Grant mercy, fader, I am war
So fer that I nomore dar
Of Falssemblant take aqueintance;
Bot rathere I wol do penance
That I have feigned chiere er this.
Now axeth forth, what so ther is
Of that belongeth to my schrifte.
Mi Sone, yit ther is the fifte
Which is conceived of Envie,
And cleped is Supplantarie,
Thurgh whos compassement and guile
Ful many a man hath lost his while
In love als wel as otherwise,
Hierafter as I schal devise.
The vice of Supplantacioun
With many a fals collacioun,
Which he conspireth al unknowe,
Full ofte time hath overthrowe
The worschipe of an other man.
So wel no lif awayte can
Ayein his sleyhte forto caste,
That he his pourpos ate laste
Ne hath, er that it be withset.

Bot most of alle his herte is set
In court upon these grete Offices
Of dignitees and benefices:
Thus goth he with his sleyhte aboute
To hindre and schowve an other oute
And stonden with his slyh compas
In stede there an other was;
And so to sette himselven inne,
He reccheth noght, be so he winne,
Of that an other man schal lese,
And thus fulofte chalk for chese
He changeth with ful litel cost,
Wherof an other hath the lost
And he the profit schal receive.
For his fortune is to deceive
And forto change upon the whel
His wo with othre mennes wel:
Of that an other man avalet, h,
His oghne astat thus up he haleth,
And takth the bridd to his beyete,
Wher othre men the buisshes bete.
Mi Sone, and in the same wise
Ther ben lovers of such emprise,
That schapen hem to be relieved
Where it is wrong to ben achieved:
For it is other mannes riht,
Which he hath taken dai and niht
To kepe for his oghne Stor
Toward himself for everemor,
And is his propre be the lawe,
Which thing that axeth no felawe,
If love holde his covenant.
Bot thei that worchen be supplaunt,
Yit wolden thei a man supplaunte,
And take a part of thilke plaunte
Which he hath for himselve set:
And so fulofte is al unknet,
That som man weneth be riht fast.
For Supplant with his slyhe cast
Fulofte happneth forto mowe
Thing which an other man hath sowe,
And makth comun of proprete

With sleihte and with soubtilite,
As men mai se fro yer to yere.
Thus cleymeth he the bot to stiere,
Of which an other maister is.
Forthi, my Sone, if thou er this
Hast ben of such professioun,
Discovere thi confessioun:
Hast thou supplanted eny man?
For oght that I you telle can,
Min holi fader, as of the dede
I am withouten eny drede
Al gultes; bot of my thoght
Mi conscience excuse I noght.
For were it wrong or were it riht,
Me lakketh nothing bote myht,
That I ne wolde longe er this
Of other mannes love ywiss
Be weie of Supplantacioun
Have mad apropiacioun
And holde that I nevere boghte,
Thogh it an other man forthoghte.
And al this speke I bot of on,
For whom I lete alle othre gon;
Bot hire I mai noght overpasse,
That I ne mot alwey compasse,
Me roghte noght be what queintise,
So that I mihte in eny wise
Fro suche that mi ladi serve
Hire herte make forto swerve
Withouten eny part of love.
For be the goddes alle above
I wolde it mihte so befalle,
That I al one scholde hem alle
Supplante, and welde hire at mi wille.
And that thing mai I noght fulfille,
Bot if I scholde strengthe make;
And that I dar noght undertake,
Thogh I were as was Alisaundre,
For therof mihte arise sklaundre;
And certes that schal I do nevere,
For in good feith yit hadde I levere
In my simplesce forto die,

Than worche such Supplantarie.
Of otherwise I wol noght seie
That if I founde a seker weie,
I wolde as for conclusioun
Worche after Supplantacioun,
So hihe a love forto winne.
Now, fader, if that this be Sinne,
I am al redy to redresce
The gilt of which I me confesse.
Mi goode Sone, as of Supplant
Thee thar noght drede tant ne quant,
As for nothing that I have herd,
Bot only that thou hast misferd
Thenkende, and that me liketh noght,
For godd beholt a mannes thoght.
And if thou understode in soth
In loves cause what it doth,
A man to ben a Supplantour,
Thou woldest for thin oghne honour
Be double weie take kepe:
Ferst for thin oghne astat to kepe,
To be thiself so wel bethoght
That thou supplanted were noght,
And ek for worschipe of thi name
Towardes othre do the same,
And soffren every man have his.
Bot natheles it was and is,
That in a wayt at alle assaies
Supplant of love in oure daies
The lief fulofte for the levere
Forsakth, and so it hath don evere.
Ensample I finde therupon,
At Troie how that Agamenon
Supplantede the worthi knyht
Achilles of that swete wiht,
Which named was Brexeida;
And also of Criseida,
Whom Troilus to love ches,
Supplanted hath Diomedes.
Of Geta and Amphitrion,
That whilom weren bothe as on
Of frendschipe and of compaignie,

I rede how that Supplantarie
In love, as it betidde tho,
Beguiled hath on of hem tuo.
For this Geta that I of meene,
To whom the lusti faire Almeene
Assured was be weie of love,
Whan he best wende have ben above
And sikerest of that he hadde,
Cupido so the cause ladde,
That whil he was out of the weie,
Amphitrion hire love aweie
Hath take, and in this forme he wroghte.
Be nyhte unto the chambre he soghte,
Wher that sche lay, and with a wyle
He contrefeteth for the whyle
The vois of Gete in such a wise,
That made hire of hire bedd arise,
Wenende that it were he,
And let him in, and whan thei be
Togedre abedde in armes faste,
This Geta cam thanne ate laste
Unto the Dore and seide, 'Undo.'
And sche ansuerde and bad him go,
And seide how that abedde al warm
Hir lief lay naked in hir arm;
Sche wende that it were soth.
Lo, what Supplant of love doth:
This Geta forth bejaped wente,
And yit ne wiste he what it mente;
Amphitrion him hath supplanted
With sleyhte of love and hire enchaunted:
And thus put every man out other,
The Schip of love hath lost his Rother,
So that he can no reson stiere.
And forto speke of this matiere
Touchende love and his Supplant,
A tale which is acordant
Unto thin Ere I thenke enforme.
Now herkne, for this is the forme.
Of thilke Cite chief of alle
Which men the noble Rome calle,
Er it was set to Cristes feith,

Ther was, as the Cronique seith,
An Emperour, the which it ladde
In pes, that he no werres hadde:
Ther was nothing desobeissant
Which was to Rome appourtenant,
Bot al was torned into reste.
To some it thoghte for the beste,
To some it thoghte nothing so,
And that was only unto tho
Whos herte stod upon knyghthode:
Bot most of alle of his manhode
The worthi Sone of themperour,
Which wolde ben a werreiour,
As he that was chivalerous
Of worldes fame and desirous,
Began his fadre to beseche
That he the werres mihte seche,
In strange Marches forto ride.
His fader seide he scholde abide,
And wolde granten him no leve:
Bot he, which wolde noght beleve,
A kniht of his to whom he triste,
So that his fader nothing wiste,
He tok and tolde him his corage,
That he pourposeth a viage.
If that fortune with him stonde,
He seide how that he wolde fonde
The grete See to passe unknowe,
And there abyde for a throwe
Upon the werres to travaile.
And to this point withoute faile
This kniht, whan he hath herd his lord,
Is swore, and stant of his acord,
As thei that bothe yonge were;
So that in prive conseil there
Thei ben assented forto wende.
And therupon to make an ende,
Tresor ynowh with hem thei token,
And whan the time is best thei loken,
That sodeinliche in a Galeie
Fro Romelond thei wente here weie
And londe upon that other side.

The world fell so that ilke tide,
Which evere hise happes hath diverse,
The grete Soldan thanne of Perse
Ayein the Caliphe of Egipte
A werre, which that him beclipte,
Hath in a Marche costeiant.
And he, which was a poursuiant
Worschipe of armes to atteigne,
This Romein, let anon ordeigne,
That he was redi everydel:
And whan he was arraied wel
Of every thing which him belongeth,
Straght unto Kaire his weie he fongeth,
Wher he the Soldan thanne fond,
And axeth that withinne his lond
He mihte him for the werre serve,
As he which wolde his thonk deserve.
The Soldan was riht glad with al,
And wel the more in special
Whan that he wiste he was Romein;
Bot what was elles in certein,
That mihte he wite be no weie.
And thus the kniht of whom I seie
Toward the Soldan is beleft,
And in the Marches now and eft,
Wher that the dedli werres were,
He wroghte such knihthode there,
That every man spak of him good.
And thilke time so it stod,
This mihti Soldan be his wif
A Dowhter hath, that in this lif
Men seiden ther was non so fair.
Sche scholde ben hir fader hair,
And was of yeres ripe ynowh:
Hire beaute many an herte drowh
To bowe unto that ilke lawe
Fro which no lif mai be withdrawe,
And that is love, whos nature
Set lif and deth in aventure
Of hem that knyghthode undertake.
This lusti peine hath overtake
The herte of this Romein so sore,

That to knihthode more and more
Prouesce avanceth his corage.
Lich to the Leoun in his rage,
Fro whom that alle bestes fle,
Such was the knyht in his degre:
Wher he was armed in the feld,
Ther dorste non abide his scheld;
Gret pris upon the werre he hadde.
Bot sche which al the chance ladde,
Fortune, schop the Marches so,
That be thassent of bothe tuo,
The Soldan and the Caliphe eke,
Bataille upon a dai thei seke,
Which was in such a wise set
That lengere scholde it noght be let.
Thei made hem stronge on every side,
And whan it drowh toward the tide
That the bataille scholde be,
The Soldan in gret privete
A goldring of his dowhter tok,
And made hire swere upon a bok
And ek upon the goddes alle,
That if fortune so befall
In the bataille that he deie,
That sche schal thilke man obeie
And take him to hire housebonde,
Which thilke same Ring to honde
Hire scholde bringe after his deth.
This hath sche swore, and forth he geth
With al the pouer of his lond
Unto the Marche, where he fond
His enemy full embatailled.
The Soldan hath the feld assailed:
Thei that ben hardy sone assemblen,
Wherof the dredfull hertes tremblen:
That on sleth, and that other sterveth,
Bot above all his pris deserveth
This knihtly Romein; where he rod,
His dedly swerd noman abod,
Ayein the which was no defence;
Egipte fledde in his presence,
And thei of Perse upon the chace

Poursuien: bot I not what grace
Befell, an Arwe out of a bowe
Al sodeinly that ilke throwe
The Soldan smot, and ther he lay:
The chace is left for thilke day,
And he was bore into a tente.
The Soldan sih how that it wente,
And that he scholde algate die;
And to this knyht of Romanie,
As unto him whom he most triste,
His Dowhter Ring, that non it wiste,
He tok, and tolde him al the cas,
Upon hire oth what tokne it was
Of that sche scholde ben his wif.
Whan this was seid, the hertes lif
Of this Soldan departeth sone;
And therupon, as was to done,
The dede body wel and faire
Thei carie til thei come at Kaire,
Wher he was worthily begrave.
The lordes, whiche as wolden save
The Regne which was desolat,
To bringe it into good astat
A parlement thei sette anon.
Now herkne what fell therupon:
This yonge lord, this worthi kniht
Of Rome, upon the same niht
That thei amorwe trete scholde,
Unto his Bacheler he tolde
His conseil, and the Ring with al
He scheweth, thurgh which that he schal,
He seith, the kinges Dowhter wedde,
For so the Ring was leid to wedde,
He tolde, into hir fader hond,
That with what man that sche it fond
Sche scholde him take to hire lord.
And this, he seith, stant of record,
Bot noman wot who hath this Ring.
This Bacheler upon this thing
His Ere and his entente leide,
And thoghte more thanne he seide,
And feigneth with a fals visage

That he was glad, bot his corage
Was al set in an other wise.
These olde Philosophres wise
Thei writen upon thilke while,
That he mai best a man beguile
In whom the man hath most credence;
And this befell in evidence
Toward this yonge lord of Rome.
His Bacheler, which hadde tome,
Whan that his lord be nihte slepte,
This Ring, the which his maister kepte,
Out of his Pours away he dede,
And putte an other in the stede.
Amorwe, whan the Court is set,
The yonge ladi was forth fet,
To whom the lordes don homage,
And after that of Mariage
Thei trete and axen of hir wille.
Bot sche, which thoghte to fulfille
Hire fader heste in this matiere,
Seide openly, that men mai hiere,
The charge which hire fader bad.
Tho was this Lord of Rome glad
And drowh toward his Pours anon,
Bot al for noght, it was agon:
His Bacheler it hath forthdrawe,
And axeth ther upon the lawe
That sche him holde covenant.
The tokne was so sufficant
That it ne mihte be forsake,
And natheles his lord hath take
Querelle ayein his oghne man;
Bot for nothing that evere he can
He mihte as thanne noght ben herd,
So that his cleyrn is unansuerd,
And he hath of his pourpos failed.
This Bacheler was tho consailed
And wedded, and of thilke Empire
He was coroned Lord and Sire,
And al the lond him hath received;
Wherof his lord, which was deceived,
A seknesse er the thridde morwe

Conceived hath of dedly sorwe:
And as he lay upon his deth,
Therwhile him lasteth speche and breth,
He sende for the worthieste
Of al the lond and ek the beste,
And tolde hem al the sothe tho,
That he was Sone and Heir also
Of themperour of grete Rome,
And how that thei togedre come,
This kniht and he; riht as it was,
He tolde hem al the pleine cas,
And for that he his conseil tolde,
That other hath al that he wolde,
And he hath failed of his mede:
As for the good he takth non hiede,
He seith, bot only of the love,
Of which he wende have ben above.
And therupon be lettre write
He doth his fader forto wite
Of al this matiere as it stod;
And thanne with an hertly mod
Unto the lordes he besoghte
To telle his ladi how he boghte
Hire love, of which an other gladeth;
And with that word his hewe fadeth,
And seide, 'A dieu, my ladi swete.'
The lif hath lost his kindly hete,
And he lay ded as eny ston;
Wherof was sory manyon,
Bot non of alle so as sche.
This false knyht in his degree
Arested was and put in hold:
For openly whan it was told
Of the tresoun which is befalle,
Thurghout the lond thei seiden alle,
If it be soth that men suppose,
His oghne untrowthe him schal depose.
And forto seche an evidence,
With honour and gret reverence,
Wherof they mihten knowe an ende,
To themperour anon thei sende
The lettre which his Sone wrot.

And whan that he the sothe wot,
To telle his sorwe is endeles,
Bot yit in haste natheles
Upon the tale which he herde
His Steward into Perse ferde
With many a worthi Romein eke,
His liege tretour forto seke;
And whan thei thider come were,
This kniht him hath confessed there
How falsly that he hath him bore,
Wherof his worthi lord was lore.
Tho seiden some he scholde deie,
Bot yit thei founden such a weie
That he schal noght be ded in Perse;
And thus the skiles ben diverse.
Be cause that he was coroned,
And that the lond was abandoned
To him, althogh it were unriht,
Ther is no peine for him diht;
Bot to this point and to this ende
Thei granten wel that he schal wende
With the Romeins to Rome ayein.
And thus acorded ful and plein,
The qwike body with the dede
With leve take forth thei lede,
Wher that Supplant hath his juisse.
Wherof that thou thee miht avise
Upon this enformacioun
Touchende of Supplantacioun,
That thou, my Sone, do noght so:
And forto take hiede also
What Supplant doth in other halve,
Ther is noman can finde a salve
Pleinly to helen such a Sor;
It hath and schal ben everemor,
Whan Pride is with Envie joint,
He soffreth noman in good point,
Wher that he mai his honour lette.
And therupon if I schal sette
Ensample, in holy cherche I finde
How that Supplant is noght behinde;
God wot if that it now be so:

For in Cronique of time ago
I finde a tale concordable
Of Supplant, which that is no fable,
In the manere as I schal telle,
So as whilom the thinges felle.
At Rome, as it hath ofte falle,
The vicair general of alle
Of hem that lieven Cristes feith
His laste day, which non withseith,
Hath schet as to the worldes ije,
Whos name if I schal specefie,
He hihte Pope Nicolas.
And thus whan that he passed was,
The Cardinals, that wolden save
The forme of lawe, in the conclave
Gon forto chese a newe Pope,
And after that thei cowthe agrope
Hath ech of hem seid his entente:
Til ate laste thei assente
Upon an holy clerk reclus,
Which full was of gostli vertus;
His pacience and his simplesse
Hath set him into hih noblesse.
Thus was he Pope canonized,
With gret honour and intronized,
And upon chance as it is falle,
His name Celestin men calle;
Which notefied was be bulle
To holi cherche and to the fulle
In alle londes magnified.
Bot every worschipe is envied,
And that was thilke time sene:
For whan this Pope of whom I meene
Was chose, and othre set beside,
A Cardinal was thilke tide
Which the papat longe hath desired
And therupon gretli conspired;
Bot whan he sih fortune is failed,
For which long time he hath travailed,
That ilke fyr which Ethna brenneth
Thurghout his wofull herte renneth,
Which is resembled to Envie,

Wherof Supplant and tricherie
Engendred is; and natheles
He feigneth love, he feigneth pes,
Outward he doth the reverence,
Bot al withinne his conscience
Thurgh fals ymaginacioun
He thoghte Supplantacioun.
And therupon a wonder wyle
He wroghte: for at thilke whyle
It fell so that of his lignage
He hadde a clergoun of yong age,
Whom he hath in his chambre affaited.
This Cardinal his time hath waited,
And with his wordes slyhe and queinte,
The whiche he cowthe wysly peinte,
He schop this clerk of which I telle
Toward the Pope forto duelle,
So that withinne his chambre anyht
He lai, and was a prive wyht
Toward the Pope on nyhtes tide.
Mai noman fle that schal betide.
This Cardinal, which thoghte guile,
Upon a day whan he hath while
This yonge clerc unto him tok,
And made him swere upon a bok,
And told him what his wille was.
And forth withal a Trompe of bras
He hath him take, and bad him this:
'Thou schalt,' he seide, 'whan time is
Awaite, and take riht good kepe,
Whan that the Pope is fast aslepe
And that non other man by nyh;
And thanne that thou be so slyh
Thurghout the Trompe into his Ere,
Fro hevene as thogh a vois it were,
To soun of such prolacioun
That he his meditacioun
Therof mai take and understonde,
As thogh it were of goddes sonde.
And in this wise thou schalt seie,
That he do thilke astat aweie
Of Pope, in which he stant honoured,

So schal his Soule be socoured
Of thilke worschipe ate laste
In hevene which schal evere laste.'
This clerke, whan he hath herd the forme
How he the Pope scholde enforme,
Tok of the Cardinal his leve,
And goth him hom, til it was Eve,
And prively the trompe he hedde,
Til that the Pope was abedde.
And at the Midnyht, whan he knewh
The Pope slepte, thanne he blewh
Withinne his trompe thurgh the wal,
And tolde in what manere he schal
His Papacie leve, and take
His ferste estat: and thus awake
This holi Pope he made thries,
Wherof diverse fantasies
Upon his grete holinesse
Withinne his herte he gan impresse.
The Pope ful of innocence
Conceiveth in his conscience
That it is goddes wille he cesse;
Bot in what wise he may relese
His hihe estat, that wot he noght.
And thus withinne himself bethoght,
He bar it stille in his memoire,
Til he cam to the Consistoire;
And there in presence of hem alle
He axeth, if it so befall
That eny Pope cesse wolde,
How that the lawe it soffre scholde.
Thei seten alle stille and herde,
Was non which to the point ansuerde,
For to what pourpos that it mente
Ther was noman knew his entente,
Bot only he which schop the guile.
This Cardinal the same while
Al openly with wordes pleine
Seith, if the Pope wolde ordeigne
That ther be such a lawe wrought,
Than mihte he cesse, and elles noght.
And as he seide, don it was;

The Pope anon upon the cas
Of his Papal Autorite
Hath mad and yove the decre:
And whan that lawe was confermed
In due forme and al affermed,
This innocent, which was deceived,
His Papacie anon hath weyved,
Renounced and resigned eke.
That other was nothing to seke,
Bot undernethe such a jape
He hath so for himselve schape,
That how as evere it him beseme,
The Mitre with the Diademe
He hath thurgh Supplantacion:
And in his confirmacion
Upon the fortune of his grace
His name is cleped Boneface.
Under the viser of Envie,
Lo, thus was hid the tricherie,
Which hath beguiled manyon.
Bot such conseil ther mai be non,
With treson whan it is conspired,
That it nys lich the Sparke fyred
Up in the Rof, which for a throwe
Lith hidd, til whan the wyndes blowe
It blaseth out on every side.
This Bonefas, which can noght hyde
The tricherie of his Supplant,
Hath openly mad his avant
How he the Papacie hath wonne.
Bot thing which is with wrong begonne
Mai nevere stonde wel at ende;
Wher Pride schal the bowe bende,
He schet fulofte out of the weie:
And thus the Pope of whom I seie,
Whan that he stod on hih the whiel,
He can noght soffre himself be wel.
Envie, which is loveles,
And Pride, which is laweles,
With such tempeste made him erre,
That charite goth out of herre:
So that upon misgovernance

Ayein Lowyz the king of France
He tok querelle of his outrage,
And seide he scholde don homage
Unto the cherche bodily.
Bot he, that wiste nothing why
He scholde do so gret servise
After the world in such a wise,
Withstod the wrong of that demande;
For noght the Pope mai comande
The king wol noght the Pope obeie.
This Pope tho be alle weie
That he mai worche of violence
Hath sent the bulle of his sentence
With cursinge and with enterdit.
The king upon this wrongful plyt,
To kepe his regne fro servage,
Conseiled was of his Barnage
That miht with miht schal be withstonde.
Thus was the cause take on honde,
And seiden that the Papacie
Thei wolde honoure and magnefie
In al that evere is spirital;
Bot thilke Pride temporal
Of Boneface in his persone,
Ayein that ilke wrong al one
Thei wolde stonden in debat:
And thus the man and noght the stat
The Frensche schopen be her miht
To grieve. And fell ther was a kniht,
Sire Guilliam de Langharet,
Which was upon this cause set;
And therupon he tok a route
Of men of Armes and rod oute,
So longe and in a wayt he lay,
That he aspide upon a day
The Pope was at Avinoun,
And scholde ryde out of the toun
Unto Pontsorge, the which is
A Castell in Provence of his.
Upon the weie and as he rod,
This kniht, which hove and abod
Embuissched upon horse bak,

Al sodeinliche upon him brak
And hath him be the bridel sesed,
And seide: 'O thou, which hast desesed
The Court of France be thi wrong,
Now schalt thou singe an other song:
Thin enterdit and thi sentence
Ayein thin oghne conscience
Hierafter thou schalt fiele and grope.
We pleigne noght ayein the Pope,
For thilke name is honourable,
Bot thou, which hast be deceivable
And tricherous in al thi werk,
Thou Bonefas, thou proude clerk,
Misedere of the Papacie,
Thi false bodi schal abye
And soffre that it hath deserved.'
Lo, thus the Supplantour was served;
For thei him ladden into France
And setten him to his penance
Withinne a tour in harde bondes,
Wher he for hunger bothe hise hondes
Eet of and deide, god wot how:
Of whom the wrytinge is yit now
Registred, as a man mai hier,
Which spekth and seith in this manere:
Thin entre lich the fox was slyh,
Thi regne also with pride on hih
Was lich the Leon in his rage;
Bot ate laste of thi passage
Thi deth was to the houndes like.
Such is the lettre of his Cronique
Proclamed in the Court of Rome,
Wherof the wise ensample nome.
And yit, als ferforth as I dar,
I rede alle othre men be war,
And that thei loke wel algate
That non his oghne astat translate
Of holi cherche in no degree
Be fraude ne soubtilite:
For thilke honour which Aaron tok
Schal non receive, as seith the bok,
Bot he be cleped as he was.

What I schal thenken in this cas
Of that I hiere now aday,
I not: bot he which can and may,
Be reson bothe and be nature
The help of every mannes cure,
He kepe Simon fro the folde.
For Joachim thilke Abbot tolde
How suche daies scholden falle,
That comunliche in places alle
The Chapmen of such mercerie
With fraude and with Supplantarie
So manye scholden beie and selle,
That he ne may for schame telle
So foul a Senne in mannes Ere.
Bot god forbiede that it were
In oure daies that he seith:
For if the Clerc beware his feith
In chapmanhod at such a feire,
The remenant mot nede empeire
Of al that to the world belongeth;
For whan that holi cherche wrongeth,
I not what other thing schal rihte.
And natheles at mannes sihte
Envie forto be preferred
Hath conscience so differred,
That noman loketh to the vice
Which is the Moder of malice,
And that is thilke false Envie,
Which causeth many a tricherie;
For wher he may an other se
That is mor gracious than he,
It schal noght stonden in his miht
Bot if he hindre such a wiht:
And that is welnyh overal,
This vice is now so general.
Envie thilke unhapp indrowh,
Whan Joab be deceipte slowh
Abner, for drede he scholde be
With king David such as was he.
And thurgh Envie also it fell
Of thilke false Achitofell,
For his conseil was noght achieved,

Bot that he sih Cusy believed
With Absolon and him forsake,
He heng himself upon a stake.
Senec witnesseth openly
How that Envie proprely
Is of the Court the comun wenche,
And halt taverne forto schenche
That drink which makth the herte brenne,
And doth the wit aboute renne,
Be every weie to compasse
How that he mihte alle othre passe,
As he which thurgh unkindeschipe
Envieth every felaschipe;
So that thou miht wel knowe and se,
Ther is no vice such as he,
Ferst toward godd abhominable,
And to mankinde unprofitable:
And that be wordes bot a fewe
I schal be reson prove and schewe.
Envie if that I schal describe,
He is noght schaply forto wyve
In Erthe among the wommen hiere;
For ther is in him no matiere
Wherof he mihte do plesance.
Ferst for his hevy continance
Of that he semeth evere unglad,
He is noght able to ben had;
And ek he brenneth so withinne,
That kinde mai no profit winne,
Wherof he scholde his love plese:
For thilke blod which scholde have ese
To regne among the moiste veines,
Is drye of thilke unkendeli peines
Thurgh whiche Envie is fyred ay.
And thus be reson prove I may
That toward love Envie is noght;
And otherwise if it be soght,
Upon what side as evere it falle,
It is the werste vice of alle,
Which of himself hath most malice.
For understond that every vice
Som cause hath, wherof it groweth,

Bot of Envie noman knoweth
Fro whenne he cam bot out of helle.
For thus the wise clerkes telle,
That no spirit bot of malice
Be weie of kinde upon a vice
Is tempted, and be such a weie
Envie hath kinde put aweie
And of malice hath his steringe,
Wherof he makth his bakbitinge,
And is himself therof desesed.
So mai ther be no kinde plesed;
For ay the mor that he envieth,
The more ayein himself he plieth.
Thus stant Envie in good espeir
To ben himself the develes heir,
As he which is his nexte liche
And forthest fro the heveneriche,
For there mai he nevere wone.
Forthi, my goode diere Sone,
If thou wolt finde a siker weie
To love, put Envie aweie.
Min holy fader, reson wolde
That I this vice eschuie scholde:
Bot yit to strengthe mi corage,
If that ye wolde in advantage
Therof sette a recoverir,
It were tome a gret desir,
That I this vice mihte flee.
Nou understond, my Sone, and se,
Ther is phisique for the seke,
And vertus for the vices eke.
Who that the vices wolde eschuie,
He mot be resoun thanne suie
The vertus; for be thilke weie
He mai the vices don aweie,
For thei togedre mai noght duelle:
For as the water of a welle
Of fyr abateth the malice,
Riht so vertu fordoth the vice.
Ayein Envie is Charite,
Which is the Moder of Pite,
That makth a mannes herte tendre,

That it mai no malice engendre
In him that is enclin therto.
For his corage is tempred so,
That thogh he mihte himself relieve,
Yit wolde he noght an other grieve,
Bot rather forto do plesance
He berth himselven the grevance,
So fain he wolde an other ese.
Wherof, mi Sone, for thin ese
Now herkne a tale which I rede,
And understand it wel, I rede.
Among the bokes of latin
I finde write of Constantin
The worthi Emperour of Rome,
Suche infortunes to him come,
Whan he was in his lusti age,
The lepre cawhte in his visage
And so forth overal aboute,
That he ne mihte ryden oute:
So lefte he bothe Schield and spere,
As he that mihte him noght bestere,
And hield him in his chambre clos.
Thurgh al the world the fame aros,
The grete clerkes ben asent
And come at his comandement
To trete upon this lordes hele.
So longe thei togedre dele,
That thei upon this medicine
Apointen hem, and determine
That in the maner as it stod
Thei wolde him bathe in childes blod
Withinne sevene wynter age:
For, as thei sein, that scholde assuage
The lepre and al the violence,
Which that thei knewe of Accidence
And noght be weie of kinde is falle.
And therto thei acorden alle
As for final conclusioun,
And tolden here opinioun
To themperour: and he anon
His conseil tok, and therupon
With lettres and with seales oute

Thei sende in every lond aboute
The yonge children forto seche,
Whos blod, thei seiden, schal be leche
For themperoures maladie.
Ther was ynowh to wepe and crie
Among the Modres, whan thei herde
Hou wofully this cause ferde,
Bot natheles thei moten bowe;
And thus wommen ther come ynowhe
With children soukende on the Tete.
Tho was ther manye teres lete,
Bot were hem lieve or were hem lothe,
The wommen and the children bothe
Into the Paleis forth be broght
With many a sory hertes thoght
Of hem whiche of here bodi bore
The children hadde, and so forlore
Withinne a while scholden se.
The Modres wepe in here degre,
And manye of hem aswoune falle,
The yonge babes criden alle:
This noyse aros, the lord it herde,
And loked out, and how it ferde
He sih, and as who seith abreide
Out of his slep, and thus he seide:
'O thou divine pourveance,
Which every man in the balance
Of kinde hast formed to be liche,
The povere is bore as is the riche
And deieth in the same wise,
Upon the fol, upon the wise
Siknesse and hele entrecomune;
Mai non eschuie that fortune
Which kinde hath in hire lawe set;
Hire strengthe and beaute ben beset
To every man aliche fre,
That sche preferreth no degre
As in the disposicioun
Of bodili complexioun:
And ek of Soule resonable
The povere child is bore als able
To vertu as the kinges Sone;

For every man his oghne wone
After the lust of his assay
The vice or vertu chese may.
Thus stonden alle men franchised,
Bot in astat thei ben divided;
To some worschipe and richesse,
To some poverté and distresse,
On lordeth and an other serveth;
Bot yit as every man deserveth
The world yifþ nought his yiftes hiere.
Bot certes he hath gret matiere
To ben of good condicioun,
Which hath in his subjeccioun
The men that ben of his semblance.'
And ek he tok a remembrance
How he that made lawe of kinde
Wolde every man to lawe binde,
And bad a man, such as he wolde
Toward himself, riht such he scholde
Toward an other don also.
And thus this worthi lord as tho
Sette in balance his oghne astat
And with himself stod in debat,
And thoghte hou that it was nought good
To se so mochel mannes blod
Be spilt for cause of him alone.
He sih also the grete mone,
Of that the Modres were unglade,
And of the wo the children made,
Wherof that al his herte tendreth,
And such pite withinne engendreth,
That him was levere forto chese
His oghne bodi forto lese,
Than se so gret a moerdre wrought
Upon the blod which gulteth nought.
Thus for the pite which he tok
Alle othre leches he forsok,
And put him out of aventure
Al only into goddes cure;
And seith, 'Who that woll maister be,
He mot be servant to pite.'
So ferforth he was overcome

With charite, that he hath nome
His conseil and hise officers,
And bad unto hise tresorers
That thei his tresour al aboute
Depart among the povere route
Of wommen and of children bothe,
Wherof thei mihte hem fede and clothe
And saufli tornen hom ayein
Withoute lost of eny grein.
Thurgh charite thus he despendeth
His good, wherof that he amendeth
The povere poeple, and contrevailleth
The harm, that he hem so travaileth:
And thus the woful nyhtes sorwe
To joie is torned on the morwe;
Al was thonkinge, al was blessinge,
Which erst was wepinge and cursinge;
Thes wommen gon hom glade ynowh,
Echon for joie on other lowh,
And preiden for this lordes hele,
Which hath relessed the querele,
And hath his oghne will forsake
In charite for goddes sake.
Bot now hierafter thou schalt hier
What god hath wroght in this matiere,
As he which doth al equite.
To him that wroghte charite
He was ayeinward charitous,
And to pite he was pitous:
For it was nevere knowe yit
That charite goth unaquit.
The nyht, whan he was leid to slepe,
The hihe god, which wolde him kepe,
Seint Peter and seint Poul him sende,
Be whom he wolde his lepre amende.
Thei tuo to him slepende appiere
Fro god, and seide in this manere:
'O Constantin, for thou hast served
Pite, thou hast pite deserved:
Forthi thou schalt such pite have
That god thurgh pite woll thee save.
So schalt thou double hele finde,

Ferst for thi bodiliche kinde,
And for thi wofull Soule also,
Thou schalt ben hol of bothe tuo.
And for thou schalt thee noght despeire,
Thi lepre schal nomore empeire
Til thou wolt sende therupon
Unto the Mont of Celion,
Wher that Silvestre and his clergie
Togedre duelle in compaignie
For drede of thee, which many day
Hast ben a fo to Cristes lay,
And hast destruid to mochel schame
The prechours of his holy name.
Bot now thou hast somdiel appesed
Thi god, and with good dede plesed,
That thou thi pite hast bewared
Upon the blod which thou hast spared.
Forthi to thi salvacion
Thou schalt have enformacioun,
Such as Silvestre schal the teche:
The nedeth of non other leche.'
This Emperour, which al this herde,
'Grant merci lordes,' he ansuerde,
'I wol do so as ye me seie.
Bot of o thing I wolde preie:
What schal I telle unto Silvestre
Or of youre name or of youre estre?'
And thei him tolden what thei hihte,
And forth withal out of his sihte
Thei passen up into the hevene.
And he awok out of his swevene,
And clepeth, and men come anon:
He tolde his drem, and therupon
In such a wise as he hem telleth
The Mont wher that Silvestre duelleth
Thei have in alle haste soght,
And founde he was and with hem broght
To themperour, which to him tolde
His swevene and elles what he wolde.
And whan Silvestre hath herd the king,
He was riht joiful of this thing,
And him began with al his wit

To techen upon holi writ
Ferst how mankinde was forlore,
And how the hihe god therfore
His Sone sende from above,
Which bore was for mannes love,
And after of his oghne chois
He tok his deth upon the crois;
And how in grave he was beloke,
And how that he hath helle broke,
And tok hem out that were him lieve;
And forto make ous full believe
That he was verrai goddes Sone,
Ayein the kinde of mannes wone
Fro dethe he ros the thridde day,
And whanne he wolde, as he wel may,
He styh up to his fader evene
With fleissh and blod into the hevene;
And riht so in the same forme
In fleissh and blod he schal reforme,
Whan time comth, the qwike and dede
At thilke woful dai of drede,
Where every man schal take his dom,
Als wel the Maister as the grom.
The mihti kinges retenue
That dai may stonde of no value
With worldes strengthe to defende;
For every man mot thanne entende
To stonde upon his oghne dedes
And leve alle othre mennes nedes.
That dai mai no consail availe,
The pledour and the plee schal faile,
The sentence of that ilke day
Mai non appell sette in delay;
Ther mai no gold the Jugge plie,
That he ne schal the sothe trie
And setten every man upriht,
Als wel the plowman as the kniht:
The lewed man, the grete clerk
Schal stonde upon his oghne werk,
And such as he is founde tho,
Such schal he be for everemo.
Ther mai no peine be relessed,

Ther mai no joie ben encressed,
Bot endeles, as thei have do,
He schal receive on of the tuo.
And thus Silvestre with his sawe
The ground of al the newe lawe
With gret devocion he precheth,
Fro point to point and plainly techeth
Unto this hethen Emperour;
And seith, the hihe creatour
Hath underfonge his charite,
Of that he wroghte such pite,
Whan he the children hadde on honde.
Thus whan this lord hath understonde
Of al this thing how that it ferde,
Unto Silvestre he thanne ansuerde,
With al his hole herte and seith
That he is redi to the feith.
And so the vessel which for blod
Was mad, Silvestre, ther it stod,
With clene water of the welle
In alle haste he let do felle,
And sette Constantin therinne
Al naked up unto the chinne.
And in the while it was begunne,
A liht, as thogh it were a Sunne,
Fro hevene into the place com
Wher that he tok his cristendom;
And evere among the holi tales
Lich as thei weren fisshes skales
Ther fellen from him now and eft,
Til that ther was nothing beleft
Of al his grete maladie.
For he that wolde him purefie,
The hihe god hath mad him clene,
So that ther lefte nothing sene;
He hath him clensed bothe tuo,
The bodi and the Soule also.
Tho knew this Emperour in dede
That Cristes feith was forto drede,
And sende anon hise lettres oute
And let do crien al aboute,
Up peine of deth that noman weyve

That he baptesme ne receive:
After his Moder qweene Heleine
He sende, and so betwen hem tweine
Thei treten, that the Cite all
Was cristned, and sche forth withall.
This Emperour, which hele hath founde,
Withinne Rome anon let founde
Tuo cherches, which he dede make
For Peter and for Poules sake,
Of whom he hadde avisioun;
And yaf therto possessioun
Of lordschipe and of worldes good.
Bot how so that his will was good
Toward the Pope and his Franchise,
Yit hath it proved other wise,
To se the worching of the dede:
For in Cronique this I rede;
Anon as he hath mad the yifte,
A vois was herd on hih the lifte,
Of which al Rome was adrad,
And seith: 'To day is venym schad
In holi cherche of temporal,
Which medleth with the spirital.'
And hou it stant of that degree
Yit mai a man the sothe se:
God mai amende it, whan he wile,
I can ther to non other skile.
Bot forto go ther I began,
How charite mai helpe a man
To bothe worldes, I have seid:
And if thou have an Ere leid,
Mi Sone, thou miht understonde,
If charite be take on honde,
Ther folweth after mochel grace.
Forthi, if that thou wolt pourchace
How that thou miht Envie flee,
Aqueinte thee with charite,
Which is the vertu soveraine.
Mi fader, I schal do my peine:
For this ensample which ye tolde
With al myn herte I have withholde,
So that I schal for everemore

Eschuie Envie wel the more:
And that I have er this misdo,
Yif me my penance er I go.
And over that to mi matiere
Of schrifte, why we sitten hiere
In privete betwen ous tweie,
Now axeth what ther is, I preie.
Mi goode Sone, and for thi lore
I woll thee telle what is more,
So that thou schalt the vices knowe:
For whan thei be to thee full knowe,
Thou miht hem wel the betre eschuie.
And for this cause I thenke suie
The forme bothe and the matiere,
As now suiende thou schalt hiere
Which vice stant next after this:
And whan thou wost how that it is,
As thou schalt hiere me devise,
Thow miht thiself the betre advise.

John Gower

Confessio Amantis. Explicit Liber Quintus

Incipit Liber Sextus

Est gula, que nostrum maculavit prima parentem
Ex vetito pomo, quo dolet omnis homo
Hec agit, ut corpus anime contraria spirat,
Quo caro fit crassa, spiritus atque macer.
Intus et exterius si que virtutis habentur,
Potibus ebrietas conviciata ruit.
Mersa sopore labis, que Bachus inebriat hospes,
Indignata Venus oscula raro premit.

The grete Senne original,
Which every man in general
Upon his berthe hath envenymed,
In Paradis it was mystymed:
Whan Adam of thilke Appel bot,
His swete morscel was to hot,
Which dedly made the mankinde.
And in the bokes as I finde,
This vice, which so out of rule
Hath sette ous alle, is cleped Gule;
Of which the branches ben so grete,
That of hem alle I wol noght trete,
Bot only as touchende of tuo
I thenke speke and of no mo;
Wherof the ferste is Dronkeschipe,
Which berth the cuppe felaschipe.
Ful many a wonder doth this vice,
He can make of a wisman nyce,
And of a fool, that him schal seme
That he can al the lawe deme,
And yiven every juggement
Which longeth to the firmament
Bothe of the sterre and of the mone;
And thus he makth a gret clerk sone
Of him that is a lewed man.
Ther is nothing which he ne can,

Whil he hath Dronkeschipe on honde,
He knowth the See, he knowth the stronde,
He is a noble man of armes,
And yit no strengthe is in his armes:
Ther he was strong ynouh tofore,
With Dronkeschipe it is forlore,
And al is changed his estat,
And wext anon so fieble and mat,
That he mai nouthur go ne come,
Bot al togedre him is benome
The pouer bothe of hond and fot,
So that algate abide he mot.
And alle hise wittes he foryet,
The which is to him such a let,
That he wot nevere what he doth,
Ne which is fals, ne which is soth,
Ne which is dai, ne which is nyht,
And for the time he knowth no wyht,
That he ne wot so moche as this,
What maner thing himselven is,
Or he be man, or he be beste.
That holde I riht a sori feste,
Whan he that reson understod
So soudeinliche is woxe wod,
Or elles lich the dede man,
Which nouthur go ne speke can.
Thus ofte he is to bedde broght,
Bot where he lith yit wot he noght,
Til he arise upon the morwe;
And thanne he seith, 'O, which a sorwe
It is a man be drinkeles!'
So that halfdrunke in such a res
With dreie mouth he sterte him uppe,
And seith, 'Nou baillez ðe cuppe.'
That made him lese his wit at eve
Is thanne a morwe al his beleve;
The cuppe is al that evere him pleseth,
And also that him most deseseth;
It is the cuppe whom he serveth,
Which alle cares fro him kerveth
And alle bales to him bringeth:
In joie he wepth, in sorwe he singeth,

For Dronkeschipe is so divers,
It may no whye stonde in vers.
He drinkth the wyn, bot ate laste
The wyn drynkth him and bint him faste,
And leith him drunke be the wal,
As him which is his bonde thral
And al in his subjeccion.
And lich to such condicion,
As forto speke it other wise,
It falleth that the moste wise
Ben otherwhile of love adoted,
And so bewhaped and assoted,
Of drunke men that nevere yit
Was non, which half so loste his wit
Of drinke, as thei of such thing do
Which cleped is the jolif wo;
And waxen of here oghne thoght
So drunke, that thei knowe noght
What reson is, or more or lesse.
Such is the kinde of that sieknesse,
And that is noght for lacke of brain,
Bot love is of so gret a main,
That where he takth an herte on honde,
Ther mai nothing his miht withstonde:
The wise Salomon was nome,
And stronge Sampson overcome,
The knihtli David him ne mihte
Rescoue, that he with the sihte
Of Bersabee ne was bestad,
Virgile also was overlad,
And Aristotle was put under.
Forthi, mi Sone, it is no wonder
If thou be drunke of love among,
Which is above alle othre strong:
And if so is that thou so be,
Tell me thi Schrifte in privite;
It is no schame of such a thew
A yong man to be dronkelew.
Of such Phisique I can a part,
And as me semeth be that art,
Thou scholdest be Phisonomie
Be schapen to that maladie

Of lovedrunke, and that is routhe.
Ha, holi fader, al is trouthe
That ye me telle: I am beknowe
That I with love am so bethrowe,
And al myn herte is so thurgh sunke,
That I am verrailiche drunke,
And yit I mai bothe speke and go.
Bot I am overcome so,
And torned fro miself so clene,
That ofte I wot noght what I mene;
So that excusen I ne mai
Min herte, fro the ferste day
That I cam to mi ladi kiththe,
I was yit sobre nevere siththe.
Wher I hire se or se hire noght,
With musinge of min oghne thoght,
Of love, which min herte assaileth,
So drunke I am, that mi wit faileth
And al mi brain is overtorned,
And mi manere so mistorned,
That I foryete al that I can
And stonde lich a mased man;
That ofte, whanne I scholde pleie,
It makth me drawe out of the weie
In soulein place be miselve,
As doth a labourer to delve,
Which can no gentil mannes chere;
Or elles as a lewed Frere,
Whan he is put to his penance,
Riht so lese I mi contenance.
And if it nedes to betyde,
That I in compainie abyde,
Wher as I moste daunce and singe
The hovedance and carolinge,
Or forto go the newefot,
I mai noght wel heve up mi fot,
If that sche be noght in the weie;
For thanne is al mi merthe aweie,
And waxe anon of thoght so full,
Wherof mi limes ben so dull,
I mai unethes gon the pas.
For thus it is and evere was,

Whanne I on suche thoghtes muse,
The lust and merthe that men use,
Whan I se noght mi ladi byme,
Al is foryete for the time
So ferforth that mi wittes changen
And alle lustes fro me strangen,
That thei seie alle trewely,
And swere, that it am noght I.
For as the man which ofte drinketh,
With win that in his stomac sinketh
Wext drunke and witles for a throwe,
Riht so mi lust is overthrowe,
And of myn oghne thoght so mat
I wexe, that to myn astat
Ther is no lime wol me serve,
Bot as a drunke man I swerve,
And suffre such a Passion,
That men have gret compassion,
And everich be himself mervelleth
What thing it is that me so eilleth.
Such is the manere of mi wo
Which time that I am hire fro,
Til eft ayein that I hire se.
Bot thanne it were a nycete
To telle you hou that I fare:
For whanne I mai upon hire stare,
Hire wommanhede, hire gentillesse,
Myn herte is full of such gladnesse,
That overpasseth so mi wit,
That I wot nevere where it sit,
Bot am so drunken of that sihte,
Me thenkth that for the time I mihte
Riht sterte thurgh the hole wall;
And thanne I mai wel, if I schal,
Bothe singe and daunce and lepe aboute,
And holde forth the lusti route.
Bot natheles it falleth so
Fulofte, that I fro hire go
Ne mai, bot as it were a stake,
I stonde avisement to take
And loke upon hire faire face;
That for the while out of the place

For al the world ne myhte I wende.
Such lust comth thanne unto mi mende,
So that withoute mete or drinke,
Of lusti thoughtes whiche I thinke
Me thenkth I mihte stonden evere;
And so it were to me levere
Than such a sihte forto leve,
If that sche wolde yif me leve
To have so mochel of mi wille.
And thus thenkende I stonde stille
Withoute blenchinge of myn yhe,
Riht as me thoghte that I syhe
Of Paradis the moste joie:
And so therwhile I me rejoie,
Into myn herte a gret desir,
The which is hotere than the fyr,
Al soudeinliche upon me renneth,
That al mi thoght withinne brenneth,
And am so ferforth overcome,
That I not where I am become;
So that among the hetes stronge
In stede of drinke I underfonge
A thoght so swete in mi corage,
That nevere Pymment ne vernage
Was half so swete forto drinke.
For as I wolde, thanne I thinke
As thogh I were at myn above,
For so thurgh drunke I am of love,
That al that mi sotype demeth
Is soth, as thanne it to me semeth.
And whyle I mai tho thoghtes kepe,
Me thenkth as thogh I were aslepe
And that I were in goddes barm;
Bot whanne I se myn oghne harm,
And that I soudeinliche awake
Out of my thought, and hiede take
Hou that the sothe stant in dede,
Thanne is mi sekernesse in drede
And joie torned into wo,
So that the hete is al ago
Of such sote as I was inne.
And thanne ayeinward I beginne

To take of love a newe thorst,
The which me grieveth altherworst,
For thanne comth the blanche fievere,
With chele and makth me so to chievere,
And so it coldeth at myn herte,
That wonder is hou I asterte,
In such a point that I ne deie:
For certes ther was nevere keie
Ne frosen ys upon the wal
More inly cold that I am al.
And thus soffre I the hote chele,
Which passeth othre peines fele;
In cold I brenne and frese in hete:
And thanne I drinke a biter swete
With dreie lippe and yhen wete.
Lo, thus I tempre mi diete,
And take a drauhte of such reles,
That al mi wit is herteles,
And al myn herte, ther it sit,
Is, as who seith, withoute wit;
So that to prove it be reson
In makinge of comparison
Ther mai no difference be
Betwen a drunke man and me.
Bot al the worste of everychon
Is evere that I thurste in on;
The more that myn herte drinketh,
The more I may; so that me thinketh,
My thirst schal nevere ben aqueint.
God schilde that I be noght dreint
Of such a superfluite:
For wel I fiele in mi degre
That al mi wit is overcast,
Wherof I am the more agast,
That in defaulte of ladischipe
Per chance in such a drunkeschipe
I mai be ded er I be war.
For certes, fader, this I dar
Beknowe and in mi schrifte telle:
Bot I a drauhte have of that welle,
In which mi deth is and mi lif,
Mi joie is torned into strif,

That sobre schal I nevere worthe,
Bot as a drunke man forworthe;
So that in londe where I fare
The lust is lore of mi welfare,
As he that mai no bote finde.
Bot this me thenkth a wonder kinde,
As I am drunke of that I drinke,
So am I ek for falte of drinke;
Of which I finde no rele:
Bot if I myhte natheles
Of such a drinke as I coveite,
So as me liste, have o receite,
I scholde assobre and fare wel.
Bot so fortune upon hire whiel
On hih me deigneth noght to sette,
For everemore I finde a lette:
The boteler is noght mi frend,
Which hath the keie be the bend;
I mai wel wisshe and that is wast,
For wel I wot, so freissh a tast,
Bot if mi grace be the more,
I schal assaie neveremore.
Thus am I drunke of that I se,
For tastinge is defended me,
And I can noght miselven stanche:
So that, mi fader, of this branche
I am gultif, to telle trouthe.
Mi Sone, that me thenketh routhe;
For lovedrunke is the meschief
Above alle othre the most chief,
If he no lusti thoght assaie,
Which mai his sori thirst allaie:
As for the time yit it lisseth
To him which other joie misseth.
Forthi, mi Sone, aboven alle
Thenk wel, hou so it the befalle,
And kep thi wittes that thou hast,
And let hem noght be drunke in wast:
Bot natheles ther is no wyht
That mai withstonde loves miht.
Bot why the cause is, as I finde,
Of that ther is diverse kinde

Of lovedrunke, why men pleigneth
After the court which al ordeigneth,
I wol the tellen the manere;
Nou lest, mi Sone, and thou schalt hiere.
For the fortune of every chance
After the goddes pourveance
To man it groweth from above,
So that the sped of every love
Is schape there, er it befalle.
For Jupiter aboven alle,
Which is of goddes sovereign,
Hath in his celier, as men sein,
Tuo tonnes fulle of love drinke,
That maken many an herte sinke
And many an herte also to flete,
Or of the soure or of the swete.
That on is full of such piment,
Which passeth all entendement
Of mannes witt, if he it taste,
And makth a jolif herte in haste:
That other biter as the galle,
Which makth a mannes herte palle,
Whos drunkschipe is a sieknesse
Thurgh fieling of the biternesse.
Cupide is boteler of bothe,
Which to the lieve and to the lothe
Yifth of the swete and of the soure,
That some lawhe, and some loure.
Bot for so moche as he blind is,
Fulofte time he goth amis
And takth the badde for the goode,
Which hindreth many a mannes fode
Withoute cause, and forthreth eke.
So be ther some of love seke,
Whiche oghte of reson to ben hole,
And some comen to the dole
In happ and as hemselfe leste
Drinke undeserved of the beste.
And thus this blinde Boteler
Yifth of the trouble in stede of cler
And ek the cler in stede of trouble:
Lo, hou he can the hertes trouble,

And makth men drunke al upon chaunce
Withoute lawe of governance.
If he drawe of the swete tonne,
Thanne is the sorwe al overronne
Of lovedrunke, and schalt noght greven
So to be drunken every even,
For al is thanne bot a game.
Bot whanne it is noght of the same,
And he the biter tonne draweth,
Such drunkschipe an herte gnaweth
And fiebleth al a mannes thoght,
That betre him were have drunke noght
And al his bred have eten dreie;
For thanne he lest his lusti weie
With drunkschipe, and wot noght whider
To go, the weies ben so slider,
In which he mai per cas so falle,
That he schal breke his wittes alle.
And in this wise men be drunke
After the drink that thei have drunke:
Bot alle drinken noght alike,
For som schal singe and som schal syke,
So that it me nothing merveillesh,
Mi Sone, of love that thee eilleth;
For wel I knowe be thi tale,
That thou hast drunken of the duale,
Which biter is, til god the sende
Such grace that thou miht amende.
Bot, Sone, thou schalt bidde and preie
In such a wise as I schal seie,
That thou the lusti welle atteigne
Thi wofull thurstes to restreigne
Of love, and taste the swetnesse;
As Bachus dede in his distresse,
Whan bodiliche thirst him hente
In strange londes where he wente.
This Bachus Sone of Jupiter
Was hote, and as he wente fer
Be his fadres assignement
To make a werre in Orient,
And gret pouer with him he ladde,
So that the heiere hond he hadde

And victoire of his enemys,
And torneth homward with his pris,
In such a contre which was dreie
A meschief fell upon the weie.
As he rod with his compainie
Nyh to the strondes of Lubie,
Ther myhte thei no drinke finde
Of water nor of other kinde,
So that himself and al his host
Were of defalte of drinke almost
Destruid, and thanne Bachus preide
To Jupiter, and thus he seide:
'O hihe fader, that sest al,
To whom is reson that I schal
Beseche and preie in every nede,
Behold, mi fader, and tak hiede
This wofull thurst that we ben inne
To staunche, and grante ous forto winne,
And sauf unto the contre fare,
Wher that oure lusti loves are
Waitende upon oure hom cominge.'
And with the vois of his preiynge,
Which herd was to the goddes hihe,
He syh anon tofore his yhe
A wether, which the ground hath sporned;
And wher he hath it overtorned,
Ther sprang a welle freissh and cler,
Wherof his oghne boteler
After the lustes of his wille
Was every man to drinke his fille.
And for this ilke grete grace
Bachus upon the same place
A riche temple let arere,
Which evere scholde stonde there
To thursti men in remembrance.
Forthi, mi Sone, after this chance
It sit thee wel to taken hiede
So forto preie upon thi nede,
As Bachus preide for the welle;
And thenk, as thou hast herd me telle,
Hou grace he gradde and grace he hadde.
He was no fol that ferst so radde,

For seldom get a domb man lond:
Tak that proverbe, and understond
That wordes ben of vertu grete.
Forthi to speke thou ne lete,
And axe and prei erli and late
Thi thurst to quenche, and thenk algate,
The boteler which berth the keie
Is blind, as thou hast herd me seie;
And if it mihte so betyde,
That he upon the blinde side
Per cas the swete tonne arauhte,
Than schalt thou have a lusti drauhte
And waxe of lovedrunke sobre.
And thus I rede thou assobre
Thin herte in hope of such a grace;
For drunkschipe in every place,
To whether side that it torne,
Doth harm and makth a man to sporne
And ofte falle in such a wise,
Wher he per cas mai noght arise.
And forto loke in evidence
Upon the sothe experience,
So as it hath befalle er this,
In every mannes mouth it is
Hou Tristram was of love drunke
With Bele Ysolde, whan thei drunke
The drink which Brangwein hem betok,
Er that king Marc his Eem hire tok
To wyve, as it was after knowe.
And ek, mi Sone, if thou wolt knowe,
As it hath fallen overmore
In loves cause, and what is more
Of drunkschipe forto drede,
As it whilom befell in dede,
Wherof thou miht the betre eschuie
Of drunke men that thou ne suie
The compaignie in no manere,
A gret ensample thou schalt hier.
This finde I write in Poesie
Of thilke faire Ipotacie,
Of whos beaute ther as sche was
Spak every man, - and fell per cas,

That Piroto⁵so him spedde,
That he to wyve hire scholde wedde,
Wherof that he gret joie made.
And for he wolde his love glade,
Ayein the day of mariage
Be mouthe bothe and be message
Hise frendes to the feste he preide,
With gret worschipe and, as men seide,
He hath this yonge ladi spoused.
And whan that thei were alle housed,
And set and served ate mete,
Ther was no wyn which mai be gete,
That ther ne was plente ynouh:
Bot Bachus thilke tonne drouh,
Wherof be weie of drunkeschipe
The greteste of the felaschipe
Were oute of reson overtake;
And Venus, which hath also take
The cause most in special,
Hath yove hem drinke forth withal
Of thilke cuppe which exciteth
The lust wherinne a man deliteth:
And thus be double weie drunke,
Of lust that ilke fyri funke
Hath mad hem, as who seith, halfwode,
That thei no reson understode,
Ne to non other thing thei syhen,
Bot hire, which tofore here yhen
Was wedded thilke same day,
That freisshe wif, that lusti May,
On hire it was al that thei thoghten.
And so ferforth here lustes soghten,
That thei the whiche named were
Centauri, ate feste there
Of on assent, of an acord
This yonge wif malgre hire lord
In such a rage awei forth ladden,
As thei whiche non insihte hadden
Bot only to her drunke fare,
Which many a man hath mad misfare
In love als wel as other weie.
Wherof, if I schal more seie

Upon the nature of the vice,
Of custume and of exercice
The mannes grace hou it fordoth,
A tale, which was whilom soth,
Of fooles that so drunken were,
I schal reherce unto thine Ere.
I rede in a Cronique thus
Of Galba and of Vitellus,
The whiche of Spaigne bothe were
The greteste of alle othre there,
And bothe of o condicion
After the disposicion
Of glotonie and drunkschipe.
That was a sori felaschipe:
For this thou miht wel understonde,
That man mai wel noght longe stonde
Which is wyndrunke of comun us;
For he hath lore the vertus,
Wherof reson him scholde clothe;
And that was seene upon hem bothe.
Men sein ther is non evidence,
Wherof to knowe a difference
Betwen the drunken and the wode,
For thei be nevere nouthur goode;
For wher that wyn doth wit aweie,
Wisdom hath lost the rihte weie,
That he no maner vice dredeth;
Nomore than a blind man thredeth
His nedle be the Sonnes lyht,
Nomore is reson thanne of myht,
Whan he with drunkschipe is blent.
And in this point thei weren schent,
This Galba bothe and ek Vitelle,
Upon the cause as I schal telle,
Wherof good is to taken hiede.
For thei tuo thurgh her drunkenhiede
Of witles excitacioun
Oppressede al the nacion
Of Spaigne; for of fool usance,
Which don was of continuance
Of hem, whiche alday drunken were,
Ther was no wif ne maiden there,

What so thei were, or faire or foule,
Whom thei ne token to defoule,
Wherof the lond was often wo:
And ek in othre thinges mo
Thei wroghten many a sondri wrong.
Bot hou so that the dai be long,
The derke nyht comth ate laste:
God wolde noght thei scholden laste,
And schop the lawe in such a wise,
That thei thurgh dom to the juise
Be dampned forto be forlore.
Bot thei, that hadden ben tofore
Enclin to alle drunkenesse,-
Here ende thanne bar witnessse;
For thei in hope to assuage
The peine of deth, upon the rage
That thei the lasse scholden fiele,
Of wyn let fille full a Miele,
And dronken til so was befallle
That thei her strengthes losten alle
Withouten wit of eny brain;
And thus thei ben halfdede slain,
That hem ne grieveth bot a lyte.
Mi Sone, if thou be forto wyte
In eny point which I have seid,
Wherof thi wittes ben unteid,
I rede clepe hem hom ayein.
I schal do, fader, as ye sein,
Als ferforth as I mai suffise:
Bot wel I wot that in no wise
The drunkeschipe of love aweie
I mai remue be no weie,
It stant noght upon my fortune.
Bot if you liste to comune
Of the seconde Glotonie,
Which cleped is Delicacie,
Wherof ye spieken hier tofore,
Beseche I wolde you therfore.
Mi Sone, as of that ilke vice,
Which of alle othre is the Norrice,
And stant upon the retenue
Of Venus, so as it is due,

The proprete hou that it fareth
The bok hierafter nou declareth.
Of this chapitre in which we trete
There is yit on of such diete,
To which no povere mai atteigne;
For al is Past of paindemeine
And sondri wyn and sondri drinke,
Wherof that he wole ete and drinke:
Hise cokes ben for him affaited,
So that his body is awaited,
That him schal lacke no delit,
Als ferforth as his appetit
Sufficeth to the metes hote.
Wherof this lusti vice is hote
Of Gule the Delicacie,
Which al the hole progenie
Of lusti folk hath undertake
To feede, whil that he mai take
Richesses wherof to be founde:
Of Abstinence he wot no bounde,
To what profit it scholde serve.
And yit phisique of his conserve
Makth many a restauracioun
Unto his recreacioun,
Which wolde be to Venus lief.
Thus for the point of his relief
The coc which schal his mete arraie,
Bot he the betre his mouth assaie,
His lordes thonk schal ofte lese,
Er he be served to the chese:
For ther mai lacke noght so lyte,
That he ne fint anon a wyte;
For bot his lust be fully served,
Ther hath no wiht his thonk deserved.
And yit for mannes sustenance,
To kepe and holde in governance,
To him that wole his hele gete
Is non so good as comun mete:
For who that loketh on the bokes,
It seith, confeccion of cokes,
A man him scholde wel advise
Hou he it toke and in what wise.

For who that useth that he knoweth,
Ful seldom seknesse on him groweth,
And who that useth metes strange,
Though his nature empeire and change
It is no wonder, lieve Sone,
Whan that he doth ayein his wone;
For in Phisique this I finde,
Usage is the seconde kinde.
And riht so changeth his astat
He that of love is delicat:
For though he hadde to his hond
The beste wif of al the lond,
Or the faireste love of alle,
Yit wolde his herte on othre falle
And thenke hem mor delicious
Than he hath in his oghne hous:
Men sein it is nou ofte so;
Avisе hem wel, thei that so do.
And forto speke in other weie,
Fulofte time I have herd seie,
That he which hath no love achieved,
Him thenkth that he is noght relieved,
Thogh that his ladi make him chiere,
So as sche mai in good manere
Hir honour and hir name save,
Bot he the surplus mihte have.
Nothing withstondende hire astat,
Of love more delicat
He set hire chiere at no delit,
Bot he have al his appetit.
Mi Sone, if it be with thee so,
Tell me. Myn holi fader, no:
For delicat in such a wise
Of love, as ye to me devise,
Ne was I nevere yit gultif;
For if I hadde such a wif
As ye speke of, what scholde I more?
For thanne I wolde neveremore
For lust of eny wommanhiede
Myn herte upon non other fiede:
And if I dede, it were a wast.
Bot al withoute such repast

Of lust, as ye me tolde above,
Of wif, or yit of other love,
I faste, and mai no fode gete;
So that for lacke of deinte mete,
Of which an herte mai be fedd,
I go fastende to my bedd.
Bot myhte I geten, as ye tolde,
So mochel that mi ladi wolde
Me fede with hir glad semblant,
Though me lacke al the remenant,
Yit scholde I somdel ben abeched
And for the time wel refreched.
Bot certes, fader, sche ne doth;
For in good feith, to telle soth,
I trowe, thogh I scholde sterve,
Sche wolde noght hire yhe swerve,
Min herte with o goodly lok
To fede, and thus for such a cok
I mai go fastinge everemo:
Bot if so is that eny wo
Mai fede a mannes herte wel,
Therof I have at every meel
Of plente more than ynowh;
Bot that is of himself so towh,
Mi stomach mai it noght defie.
Lo, such is the delicacie
Of love, which myn herte fedeth;
Thus have I lacke of that me nedeth.
Bot for al this yit natheles
I seie noght I am gylteles,
That I somdel am delicat:
For elles were I fulli mat,
Bot if that I som lusti stounde
Of confort and of ese founde,
To take of love som repast;
For thogh I with the fulle tast
The lust of love mai noght fiele,
Min hunger otherwise I kiele
Of smale lustes whiche I pike,
And for a time yit thei like;
If that ye wisten what I mene.
Nou, goode Sone, schrif thee clene

Of suche deyntes as ben goode,
Wherof thou takst thin hertes fode.
Mi fader, I you schal reherce,
Hou that mi fodes ben diverse,
So as thei fallen in degre.
O fiedinge is of that I se,
An other is of that I here,
The thridde, as I schal tellen here,
It groweth of min oghne thoght:
And elles scholde I live noght;
For whom that failleth fode of herte,
He mai noght wel the deth asterte.
Of sihte is al mi ferste fode,
Thurgh which myn yhe of alle goode
Hath that to him is acordant,
A lusti fode sufficant.
Whan that I go toward the place
Wher I schal se my ladi face,
Min yhe, which is loth to faste,
Beginth to hungre anon so faste,
That him thenkth of on houre thre,
Til I ther come and he hire se:
And thanne after his appetit
He takth a fode of such delit,
That him non other deynte nedeth.
Of sondri sihtes he him fedeth:
He seth hire face of such colour,
That freisshere is than eny flour,
He seth hire front is large and plein
Withoute fronce of eny grein,
He seth hire yhen lich an hevene,
He seth hire nase strauht and evene,
He seth hire rode upon the cheke,
He seth hire rede lippes eke,
Hire chyn acordeth to the face,
Al that he seth is full of grace,
He seth hire necke round and clene,
Therinne mai no bon be sene,
He seth hire handes faire and whyte;
For al this thing withoute wyte
He mai se naked ate leste,
So is it wel the more feste

And wel the mor Delicacie
Unto the fiedinge of myn yhe.
He seth hire schapthe forth withal,
Hire bodi round, hire middel smal,
So wel begon with good array,
Which passeth al the lust of Maii,
Whan he is most with softe schoures
Ful clothed in his lusti floures.
With suche sihtes by and by
Min yhe is fed; bot finaly,
Whan he the port and the manere
Seth of hire wommanysshe chere,
Than hath he such delice on honde,
Him thenkth he mihte stille stonde,
And that he hath ful sufficance
Of liflode and of sustenance
As to his part for everemo.
And if it thoghte alle othre so,
Fro thenne wolde he nevere wende,
Bot there unto the worldes ende
He wolde abyde, if that he mihte,
And fieden him upon the syhte.
For thogh I mihte stonden ay
Into the time of domesday
And loke upon hire evere in on,
Yit whanne I scholde fro hire gon,
Min yhe wolde, as thogh he faste,
Ben hungerstorven al so faste,
Til efte ayein that he hire syhe.
Such is the nature of myn yhe:
Ther is no lust so deintefull,
Of which a man schal noght be full,
Of that the stomac underfongeth,
Bot evere in on myn yhe longeth:
For loke hou that a goshawk tireth,
Riht so doth he, whan that he pireth
And toteth on hire wommanhiede;
For he mai nevere fulli fiede
His lust, bot evere aliche sore
Him hungreth, so that he the more
Desireth to be fed algate:
And thus myn yhe is mad the gate,

Thurgh which the deyntes of my thocht
Of lust ben to myn herte broght.
Riht as myn yhe with his lok
Is to myn herte a lusti coc
Of loves fode delicat,
Riht so myn Ere in his astat,
Wher as myn yhe mai noght serve,
Can wel myn hertes thonk deserve
And fieden him fro day to day
With suche deyntes as he may.
For thus it is, that overal,
Wher as I come in special,
I mai hiere of mi ladi pris;
I hiere on seith that sche is wys,
An other seith that sche is good,
And som men sein, of worthi blod
That sche is come, and is also
So fair, that nawher is non so;
And som men preise hire goodli chiere:
Thus every thing that I mai hiere,
Which souneth to mi ladi goode,
Is to myn Ere a lusti foode.
And ek min Ere hath over this
A deynte feste, whan so is
That I mai hiere hirselve speke;
For thanne anon mi faste I breke
On suche wordes as sche seith,
That full of trouthe and full of feith
Thei ben, and of so good desport,
That to myn Ere gret confort
Thei don, as thei that ben delices.
For al the metes and the spices,
That eny Lombard couthe make,
Ne be so lusti forto take
Ne so ferforth restauratif,
I seie as for myn oghne lif,
As ben the wordes of hire mouth:
For as the wyndes of the South
Ben most of alle debonaire,
So whan hir list to speke faire,
The vertu of hire goodly speche
Is verraily myn hertes leche.

And if it so befalle among,
That sche carole upon a song,
Whan I it hiere I am so fedd,
That I am fro miself so ledd,
As thogh I were in paradis;
For certes, as to myn avis,
Whan I here of hir vois the stevene,
Me thenkth it is a blisse of hevene.
And ek in other wise also
Fulofte time it falleth so,
Min Ere with a good pitance
Is fedd of redinge of romance
Of Ydoine and of Amadas,
That whilom weren in mi cas,
And eke of othre many a score,
That loveden longe er I was bore.
For whan I of here loves rede,
Min Ere with the tale I fede;
And with the lust of here histoire
Somtime I drawe into memoire
Hou sorwe mai noght evere laste;
And so comth hope in ate laste,
Whan I non other fode knowe.
And that endureth bot a throwe,
Riht as it were a cherie feste;
Bot forto compten ate leste,
As for the while yit it eseth
And somdel of myn herte appeseth:
For what thing to myn Ere spreadeth,
Which is plesant, somdel it feedeth
With wordes suche as he mai gete
Mi lust, in stede of other mete.
Lo thus, mi fader, as I seie,
Of lust the which myn yhe hath seie,
And ek of that myn Ere hath herd,
Fulofte I have the betre ferd.
And tho tuo bringen in the thridde,
The which hath in myn herte amidde
His place take, to arraie
The lusti fode, which assaie
I mot; and nameliche on nyhtes,
Whan that me lacketh alle sihtes,

And that myn heringe is aweie,
Thanne is he redy in the weie
Mi reresouper forto make,
Of which myn hertes fode I take.
This lusti cokes name is hote
Thoght, which hath evere hise pottes hote
Of love buillende on the fyr
With fantasie and with desir,
Of whiche er this fulofte he fedde
Min herte, whanne I was abedde;
And thanne he set upon my bord
Bothe every syhte and every word
Of lust, which I have herd or sein.
Bot yit is noght mi feste al plein,
Bot al of woldes and of wisshes,
Therof have I my fulle disshes,
Bot as of fieling and of tast,
Yit mihte I nevere have o repast.
And thus, as I have seid afor,
I licke hony on the thorn,
And as who seith, upon the bridel
I chiewe, so that al is ydel
As in effect the fode I have.
Bot as a man that wolde him save,
Whan he is seck, be medicine,
Riht so of love the famine
I fonde in al that evere I mai
To fiede and dryve forth the day,
Til I mai have the grete feste,
Which al myn hunger myhte areste.
Lo suche ben mi lustes thre;
Of that I thenke and hier and se
I take of love my fiedinge
Withoute tastinge or fieling:
And as the Plover doth of Eir
I live, and am in good espeir
That for no such delicacie
I trowe I do no glotonie.
And natheles to youre avis,
Min holi fader, that be wis,
I recomande myn astat
Of that I have be delicat.

Mi Sone, I understonde wel
That thou hast told hier everydel,
And as me thenketh be thi tale,
It ben delices wonder smale,
Wherof thou takst thi loves fode.
Bot, Sone, if that thou understode
What is to ben delicious,
Thou woldest noght be curious
Upon the lust of thin astat
To ben to sore delicat,
Wherof that thou reson excede:
For in the bokes thou myht rede,
If mannes wisdom schal be suied,
It oghte wel to ben eschuiet
In love als wel as other weie;
For, as these holi bokes seie,
The bodely delices alle
In every point, hou so thei falle,
Unto the Soule don grievance.
And forto take in remembrance,
A tale acordant unto this,
Which of gret understandinge is
To mannes soule resonable,
I thenke telle, and is no fable.
Of Cristes word, who wole it rede,
Hou that this vice is forto drede
In thevangile it telleth plein,
Which mot algate be certein,
For Crist himself it berth witnesse.
And thogh the clerk and the clergesse
In latin tunge it rede and singe,
Yit for the more knouelechinge
Of trouthe, which is good to wite,
I schal declare as it is write
In Engleissh, for thus it began.
Crist seith: 'Ther was a riche man,
A mihti lord of gret astat,
And he was ek so delicat
Of his clothing, that everyday
Of pourpre and bisse he made him gay,
And eet and drank therto his fille
After the lustes of his wille,

As he which al stod in delice
And tok non hiede of thilke vice.
And as it scholde so betyde,
A povere lazre upon a tyde
Cam to the gate and axed mete:
Bot there mihte he nothing gete
His dedly hunger forto stanche;
For he, which hadde his fulle panche
Of alle lustes ate bord,
Ne deigneth noght to speke a word,
Onliche a Crumme forto yive,
Wherof the povere myhte live
Upon the yifte of his almesse.
Thus lai this povere in gret destresse
Acold and hungred ate gate,
Fro which he mihte go no gate,
So was he wofulli besein.
And as these holi bokes sein,
The houndes comen fro the halle,
Wher that this sike man was falle,
And as he lay ther forto die,
The woundes of his maladie
Thei licken forto don him ese.
Bot he was full of such desese,
That he mai noght the deth eschape;
Bot as it was that time schape,
The Soule fro the bodi passeth,
And he whom nothing overpasseth,
The hihe god, up to the hevene
Him tok, wher he hath set him evene
In Habrahammes barm on hyh,
Wher he the hevene joie syh
And hadde al that he have wolde.
And fell, as it befalle scholde,
This riche man the same throwe
With soudein deth was overthrowe,
And forth withouten eny wente
Into the helle straght he wente;
The fend into the fyr him drouh,
Wher that he hadde peine ynouh
Of flamme which that evere brenneth.
And as his yhe aboute renneth,

Toward the hevene he cast his lok,
Wher that he syh and hiede tok
Hou Lazar set was in his Se
Als ferr as evere he mihte se
With Habraham; and thanne he preide
Unto the Patriarch and seide:
'Send Lazar doun fro thilke Sete,
And do that he his finger wete
In water, so that he mai droppe
Upon my tunge, forto stoppe
The grete hete in which I brenne.'
Bot Habraham answerde thenne
And seide to him in this wise:
'Mi Sone, thou thee miht advise
And take into thi remembrance,
Hou Lazar hadde gret penance,
Whyl he was in that other lif,
Bot thou in al thi lust jolif
The bodily delices soghtest:
Forthi, so as thou thanne wroghtest,
Nou schalt thou take thi reward
Of dedly peine hierafterward
In helle, which schal evere laste;
And this Lazar nou ate laste
The worldes peine is overronne,
In hevene and hath his lif begonne
Of joie, which is endeles.
Bot that thou preidest natheles,
That I schal Lazar to the sende
With water on his finger ende,
Thin hote tunge forto kiele,
Thou schalt no such graces fiele;
For to that foule place of Sinne,
For evere in which thou schalt ben inne,
Comth non out of this place thider,
Ne non of you mai comen hider;
Thus be yee parted nou atuo.'
The riche ayeinward cride tho:
'O Habraham, sithe it so is,
That Lazar mai noght do me this
Which I have axed in this place,
I wolde preie an other grace.

For I have yit of brethren fyve,
That with mi fader ben alyve
Togedre duellende in on hous;
To whom, as thou art gracious,
I preie that thou woldest sende
Lazar, so that he mihte wende
To warne hem hou the world is went,
That afterward thei be noght schent
Of suche peines as I drye.
Lo, this I preie and this I crie,
Now I may noght miself amende.'
The Patriarch anon suiende
To his preiere ansuerde nay;
And seide him hou that everyday
His brethren mihten knowe and hiere
Of Moises on Erthe hiere
And of prophetes othre mo,
What hem was best. And he seith no;
Bot if ther mihte a man aryse
Fro deth to lyve in such a wise,
To tellen hem hou that it were,
He seide hou thanne of pure fere
Thei scholden wel be war therby.
Quod Habraham: 'Nay sikerly;
For if thei nou wol noght obeie
To suche as techen hem the weie,
And alday preche and alday telle
Hou that it stant of hevene and helle,
Thei wol noght thanne taken hiede,
Thogh it befelle so in dede
That eny ded man were arered,
To ben of him no betre lered
Than of an other man alyve.'
If thou, mi Sone, canst descryve
This tale, as Crist himself it tolde,
Thou schalt have cause to beholde,
To se so gret an evidence,
Wherof the sothe experience
Hath schewed openliche at ije,
That bodili delicacie
Of him which yeveth non almesse
Schal after falle in gret destresse.

And that was sene upon the riche:
For he ne wolde unto his liche
A Crumme yiven of his bred,
Thanne afterward, whan he was ded,
A drope of water him was werned.
Thus mai a mannes wit be lerned
Of hem that so delices taken;
Whan thei with deth ben overtaken,
That erst was swete is thanne sour.
Bot he that is a governour
Of worldes good, if he be wys,
Withinne his herte he set no pris
Of al the world, and yit he useth
The good, that he nothing refuseth,
As he which lord is of the thinges.
The Nouches and the riche ringes,
The cloth of gold and the Perrie
He takth, and yit delicacie
He leveth, thogh he were al this.
The beste mete that ther is
He ett, and drinkth the beste drinke;
Bot hou that evere he ete or drinke,
Delicacie he put aweie,
As he which goth the rihte weie
Noght only forto fiede and clothe
His bodi, bot his soule bothe.
Bot thei that taken otherwise
Here lustes, ben none of the wise;
And that whilom was schewed eke,
If thou these olde bokes seke,
Als wel be reson as be kinde,
Of olde ensample as men mai finde.
What man that wolde him wel advise,
Delicacie is to despise,
Whan kinde acordeth noght withal;
Wherof ensample in special
Of Nero whilom mai be told,
Which ayein kinde manyfold
Hise lustes tok, til ate laste
That god him wolde al overcaste;
Of whom the Cronique is so plein,
Me list nomore of him to sein.

And natheles for glotonie
Of bodili Delicacie,
To knowe his stomak hou it ferde,
Of that noman tofore herde,
Which he withinne himself bethoghte,
A wonder soubtil thing he wroghte.
Thre men upon eleccioun
Of age and of complexioun
Lich to himself be alle weie
He tok towardses him to pleie,
And ete and drinke als wel as he.
Therof was no diversite;
For every day whan that thei eete,
Tofore his oghne bord thei seete,
And of such mete as he was served,
Although thei hadde it noght deserved,
Thei token service of the same.
Bot afterward al thilke game
Was into wofull earnest torned;
For whan thei weren thus sojourned,
Withinne a time at after mete
Nero, which hadde noght foryete
The lustes of his frele astat,
As he which al was delicat,
To knowe thilke experience,
The men let come in his presence:
And to that on the same tyde,
A courser that he scholde ryde
Into the feld, anon he bad;
Wherof this man was wonder glad,
And goth to prike and prance aboute.
That other, whil that he was oute,
He leide upon his bedd to slepe:
The thridde, which he wolde kepe
Withinne his chambre, faire and softe
He goth now doun nou up fulofte,
Walkende a pass, that he ne slepte,
Til he which on the courser lepte
Was come fro the field ayein.
Nero thanne, as the bokes sein,
These men doth taken alle thre
And slouh hem, for he wolde se

The whos stomak was best defied:
And whanne he hath the sothe tryed,
He fond that he which goth the pass
Defyed best of alle was,
Which afterward he usede ay.
And thus what thing unto his pay
Was most plesant, he lefte non:
With every lust he was begon,
Wherof the bodi myhte glade,
For he non abstinence made;
Bot most above alle erthli thinges
Of wommen unto the likinges
Nero sette al his hole herte,
For that lust scholde him noght asterte.
Whan that the thirst of love him cawhte,
Wher that him list he tok a drauhte,
He spareth nouthur wif ne maide,
That such an other, as men saide,
In al this world was nevere yit.
He was so drunke in al his wit
Thurgh sondri lustes whiche he tok,
That evere, whil ther is a bok,
Of Nero men schul rede and singe
Unto the worldes knowlechinge,
Mi goode Sone, as thou hast herd.
For evere yit it hath so ferd,
Delicacie in loves cas
Withoute reson is and was;
For wher that love his herte set,
Him thenkth it myhte be no bet;
And thogh it be noght fulli mete,
The lust of love is evere swete.
Lo, thus togedre of felaschipe
Delicacie and drunkeschipe,
Wherof reson stant out of herre,
Have mad full many a wisman erre
In loves cause most of alle:
For thanne hou so that evere it falle,
Wit can no reson understonde,
Bot let the governance stonde
To Will, which thanne wext so wylde,
That he can noght himselve schylde

Fro no peril, bot out of feere
The weie he secheth hiere and there,
Him recheth noght upon what syde:
For oftetime he goth beside,
And doth such thing withoute drede,
Wherof him oghte wel to drede.
Bot whan that love assoteth sore,
It passeth alle mennes lore;
What lust it is that he ordeigneth,
Ther is no mannes miht restreigneth,
And of the godd takth he non hiede:
Bot laweles withoute drede,
His pourpos for he wolde achieve
Ayeins the pointz of the believe,
He tempteth hevne and erthe and helle,
Hierafterward as I schall telle.
Who dar do thing which love ne dar?
To love is every lawe unwar,
Bot to the lawes of his heste
The fisch, the foul, the man, the beste
Of al the worldes kinde louteth.
For love is he which nothing douteth:
In mannes herte where he sit,
He compteth noght toward his wit
The wo nomore than the wele,
No mor the hete than the chele,
No mor the wete than the dreie,
No mor to live than to deie,
So that tofore ne behinde
He seth nothing, bot as the blinde
Withoute insyhte of his corage
He doth merveilles in his rage.
To what thing that he wole him drawe,
Ther is no god, ther is no lawe,
Of whom that he takth eny hiede;
Bot as Baiard the blinde stede,
Til he falle in the dich amidde,
He goth ther noman wole him bidde;
He stant so ferforth out of reule,
Ther is no wit that mai him reule.
And thus to telle of him in soth,
Ful many a wonder thing he doth,

That were betre to be laft,
Among the whiche is wicchecraft,
That som men clepen Sorcerie,
Which forto winne his druerie
With many a circumstance he useth,
Ther is no point which he refuseth.
The craft which that Saturnus fond,
To make prickes in the Sond,
That Geomance cleped is,
Fulofte he useth it amis;
And of the flod his Ydromance,
And of the fyr the Piromance,
With questions echon of tho
He tempteth ofte, and ek also
Aeremance in juggement
To love he bringth of his assent:
For these craftes, as I finde,
A man mai do be weie of kinde,
Be so it be to good entente.
Bot he goth al an other wente;
For ratherer he scholde faile,
With Nigromance he wole assaile
To make his incantacioun
With hot subfumigacioun.
Thilke art which Spatula is hote,
And used is of comun rote
Among Paiens, with that craft ek
Of which is Auctor Thosz the Grek,
He worcheth on and on be rowe:
Razel is noght to him unknowe,
Ne Salomones Candarie,
His Ydeac, his Eutonye;
The figure and the bok withal
Of Balamuz, and of Ghenbal
The Seal, and therupon thymage
Of Thebith, for his advantage
He takth, and somewhat of Gibiere,
Which helplich is to this matiere.
Babilla with hire Sones sevene,
Which hath renonced to the hevene,
With Cernes bothe square and rounde,
He traceth ofte upon the grounde,

Makende his invocacioun;
And for full enformacioun
The Scole which Honorius
Wrot, he pursuieth: and lo, thus
Magique he useth forto winne
His love, and spareth for no Sinne.
And over that of his Sotie,
Riht as he secheth Sorcerie
Of hem that ben Magiciens,
Riht so of the Naturiens
Upon the Sterres from above
His weie he secheth unto love,
Als fer as he hem understondeth.
In many a sondry wise he fondeth:
He makth ymage, he makth sculpture,
He makth writinge, he makth figure,
He makth his calculacions,
He makth his demonstracions;
His houres of Astronomie
He kepeth as for that partie
Which longeth to thinspeccion
Of love and his affeccion;
He wolde into the helle seche
The devel himselve to beseche,
If that he wiste forto spede,
To gete of love his lusti mede:
Wher that he hath his herte set,
He bede nevere fare bet
Ne wite of other hevene more.
Mi Sone, if thou of such a lore
Hast ben er this, I red thee leve.
Min holi fader, be youre leve
Of al that ye have spoken hiere
Which toucheth unto this matiere,
To telle soth riht as I wene,
I wot noght o word what ye mene.
I wol noght seie, if that I couthe,
That I nolde in mi lusti youthe
Benethe in helle and ek above
To winne with mi ladi love
Don al that evere that I mihte;
For therof have I non insihte

Wher afterward that I become,
To that I wonne and overcome
Hire love, which I most coveite.
Mi Sone, that goth wonder streite:
For this I mai wel telle soth,
Ther is noman the which so doth,
For al the craft that he can caste,
That he nabeith it ate laste.
For often he that wol beguile
Is guiled with the same guile,
And thus the guilour is beguiled;
As I finde in a bok compiled
To this matiere an old histoire,
The which comth nou to mi memoire,
And is of gret essamplerie
Ayein the vice of Sorcerie,
Wherof non ende mai be good.
Bot hou whilom therof it stod,
A tale which is good to knowe
To thee, mi Sone, I schal beknowe.
Among hem whiche at Troie were,
Uluxes ate Siege there
Was on be name in special;
Of whom yit the memorial
Abit, for whyl ther is a mouth,
For evere his name schal be couth.
He was a worthi knyht and king
And clerk knowende of every thing;
He was a gret rethorien,
He was a gret magicien;
Of Tullius the rethorique,
Of king Zorastes the magique,
Of Tholome thastronomie,
Of Plato the Philosophie,
Of Daniel the slepi dremes,
Of Neptune ek the water stremes,
Of Salomon and the proverbes,
Of Macer al the strengthe of herbes,
And the Phisique of Ypocras,
And lich unto Pictagoras
Of Surgerie he knew the cures.
Bot somewhat of his adventures,

Which schal to mi matiere acorde,
To thee, mi Sone, I wol recorde.
This king, of which thou hast herd sein,
Fro Troie as he goth hom ayein
Be Schipe, he fond the See divers,
With many a wyndi storm revers.
Bot he thurgh wisdom that he schapeth
Ful many a gret peril ascapeth,
Of whiche I thenke tellen on,
Hou that malgre the nedle and ston
Wynddrive he was al soudeinly
Upon the strondes of Cilly,
Wher that he moste abyde a whyle.
Tuo queenes weren in that yle
Calipsa named and Circes;
And whan they herde hou Uluxes
Is loded ther upon the ryve,
For him thei senden als so blive.
With him suche as he wolde he nam
And to the court to hem he cam.
Thes queenes were as tuo goddesses
Of Art magique Sorceresses,
That what lord comth to that rivage,
Thei make him love in such a rage
And upon hem assote so,
That thei wol have, er that he go,
Al that he hath of worldes good.
Uluxes wel this understod,
Thei couthe moche, he couthe more;
Thei schape and caste ayein him sore
And wroghte many a soutil wyle,
Bot yit thei mihte him noght beguile.
Bot of the men of his navie
Thei tuo forschope a gret partie,
Mai non of hem withstonde here hestes;
Som part thei schopen into bestes,
Som part thei schopen into foules,
To beres, tigres, Apes, oules,
Or elles be som other weie;
Ther myhte hem nothing desobeie,
Such craft thei hadde above kinde.
Bot that Art couthe thei noght finde,

Of which Uluxes was deceived,
That he ne hath hem alle weyved,
And broght hem into such a rote,
That upon him thei bothe assote;
And thurgh the science of his art
He tok of hem so wel his part,
That he begat Circes with childe.
He kepte him sobre and made hem wilde,
He sette himselve so above,
That with here good and with here love,
Who that therof be lief or loth,
Al quit into his Schip he goth.
Circes toswolle bothe sides
He lefte, and waiteth on the tydes,
And straght thurghout the salte fom
He takth his cours and comth him hom,
Where as he fond Penolope;
A betre wif ther mai non be,
And yit ther ben ynowhe of goode.
Bot who hir goodschipe understode
Fro ferst that sche wifhode tok,
Hou many loves sche forsok
And hou sche bar hire al aboute,
Ther whiles that hire lord was oute,
He mihte make a gret avant
Amonges al the remenant
That sche was on of al the beste.
Wel myhte he sette his herte in reste,
This king, whan he hir fond in hele;
For as he couthe in wisdom dele,
So couthe sche in wommanhiede:
And whan sche syh withoute drede
Hire lord upon his oghne ground,
That he was come sauf and sound,
In al this world ne mihte be
A gladdere womman than was sche.
The fame, which mai noght ben hidd,
Thurghout the lond is sone kidd,
Here king is come hom ayein:
Ther mai noman the fulle sein,
Hou that thei weren alle glade,
So mochel joie of him thei made.

The presens every day be newed,
He was with yiftes al besnewed;
The poeple was of him so glad,
That thogh non other man hem bad,
Taillage upon himself thei sette,
And as it were of pure dette
Thei yeve here goodes to the king:
This was a glad hom welcomyng.
Thus hath Uluxes what he wolde,
His wif was such as sche be scholde,
His poeple was to him sougit,
Him lacketh nothing of delit.
Bot fortune is of such a sleyhte,
That whan a man is most on heyhte,
Sche makth him rathest forto falle:
Ther wot noman what schal befalle,
The happes over mannes hed
Ben honged with a tendre thred.
That proved was on Uluxes;
For whan he was most in his pes,
Fortune gan to make him werre
And sette his welthe al out of herre.
Upon a dai as he was merie,
As thogh ther mihte him nothing derie,
Whan nyht was come, he goth to bedde,
With slep and bothe his yhen fedde.
And while he slepte, he mette a swevene:
Him thoghte he syh a stature evene,
Which brihtere than the sonne schon;
A man it semeth was it non,
Bot yit it was as in figure
Most lich to mannyssh creature,
Bot as of beaute hevenelich
It was most to an Angel lich:
And thus betwen angel and man
Beholden it this king began,
And such a lust tok of the sihte,
That fain he wolde, if that he mihte,
The forme of that figure embrace;
And goth him forth toward the place,
Wher he sih that ymage tho,
And takth it in his Armes tuo,

And it embraceth him ayein
 And to the king thus gan it sein:
 'Uluxes, understond wel this,
 The tokne of oure aqueintance is
 Hierafterward to mochel tene:
 The love that is ous betuene,
 Of that we nou such joie make,
 That on of ous the deth schal take,
 Whan time comth of destine;
 It may non other wise be.'
 Uluxes tho began to preie
 That this figure wolde him seie
 What wyht he is that seith him so.
 This wyht upon a spere tho
 A pensel which was wel begon,
 Embrouded, scheweth him anon:
 Thre fisshes alle of o colour
 In manere as it were a tour
 Upon the pensel were wroght.
 Uluxes kneu this tokne noght,
 And preith to wite in som partie
 What thing it myhte signefie,
 'A signe it is,' the wyht ansuerde,
 'Of an Empire:' and forth he ferde
 Al sodeinly, whan he that seide.
 Uluxes out of slep abreide,
 And that was riht ayein the day,
 That lengere slepen he ne may.
 Men sein, a man hath knowleching
 Save of himself of alle thing;
 His oghne chance noman knoweth,
 Bot as fortune it on him throweth:
 Was nevere yit so wys a clerk,
 Which mihte knowe al goddes werk,
 Ne the secret which god hath set
 Ayein a man mai noght be let.
 Uluxes, thogh that he be wys,
 With al his wit in his avis,
 The mor that he his swevene acompteth,
 The lasse he wot what it amonteth:
 For al his calculacion,
 He seth no demonstracion

Al plainly forto knowe an ende;
Bot natheles hou so it wende,
He dradde him of his oghne Sone.
That makth him wel the more astone,
And schop therfore anon withal,
So that withinne castel wall
Thelamachum his Sone he schette,
And upon him strong warde he sette.
The sothe further he ne knew,
Til that fortune him overthreu;
Bot natheles for sikernesse,
Wher that he mihte wite and gesse
A place strengest in his lond,
Ther let he make of lym and sond
A strengthe where he wolde duelle;
Was nevere man yit herde telle
Of such an other as it was.
And forto strengthe him in that cas,
Of al his lond the sekereste
Of servantz and the worthieste,
To kepen him withinne warde,
He sette his bodi forto warde;
And made such an ordinance,
For love ne for aqueintance,
That were it erly, were it late,
Thei scholde lete in ate gate
No maner man, what so betydde,
Bot if so were himself it bidde.
Bot al that myhte him noght availe,
For whom fortune wole assaile,
Ther mai be non such resistance,
Which mihte make a man defence;
Al that schal be mot falle algate.
This Circes, which I spak of late,
On whom Uluxes hath begete
A child, thogh he it have foryete,
Whan time com, as it was wone,
Sche was delivered of a Sone,
Which cleped is Thelogonus.
This child, whan he was bore thus,
Aboute his moder to ful age,
That he can reson and langage,

In good estat was drawe forth:
And whan he was so mochel worth
To stonden in a mannes stede,
Circes his moder hath him bede
That he schal to his fader go,
And tolde him al togedre tho
What man he was that him begat.
And whan Thelogonus of that
Was war and hath ful knowleching
Hou that his fader was a king,
He preith his moder faire this,
To go wher that his fader is;
And sche him granteth that he schal,
And made him redi forth withal.
It was that time such usance,
That every man the conoiscance
Of his contre bar in his hond,
Whan he wente into strange lond;
And thus was every man therfore
Wel knowe, wher that he was bore:
For espiaile and mistrowinges
They dede thanne suche thinges,
That every man mai other knowe.
So it befell that ilke throwe
Thelogonus as in this cas;
Of his contre the signe was
Thre fisshes, whiche he scholde bere
Upon the penon of a spere:
And whan that he was thus arraied
And hath his harneis al assaied,
That he was redy everydel,
His moder bad him farewel,
And seide him that he scholde swithe
His fader griete a thousand sithe.
Thelogonus his moder kiste
And tok his leve, and wher he wiste
His fader was, the weie nam,
Til he unto Nachaie cam,
Which of that lond the chief Cite
Was cleped, and ther axeth he
Wher was the king and hou he ferde.
And whan that he the sothe herde,

Wher that the king Uluxes was,
Al one upon his hors gret pas
He rod him forth, and in his hond
He bar the signal of his lond
With fisshes thre, as I have told;
And thus he wente unto that hold,
Wher that his oghne fader duelleth.
The cause why he comth he telleth
Unto the kepers of the gate,
And wolde have comen in therate,
Bot schortli thei him seide nay:
And he als faire as evere he may
Besoghte and tolde hem ofte this,
Hou that the king his fader is;
Bot they with proude wordes grete
Begunne to manace and threte,
Bot he go fro the gate faste,
Thei wolde him take and sette faste.
Fro wordes unto strokes thus
Thei felle, and so Thelogonus
Was sore hurt and welnyh ded;
Bot with his scharpe speres hed
He makth defence, hou so it falle,
And wan the gate upon hem alle,
And hath slain of the beste fyve;
And thei ascriden als so blyve
Thurghout the castell al aboute.
On every syde men come oute,
Wherof the kinges herte afflihte,
And he with al the haste he mihte
A spere cauhte and out he goth,
As he that was nyh wod for wroth.
He sih the gates ful of blod,
Thelogonus and wher he stod
He sih also, bot he ne knew
What man it was, and to him threw
His Spere, and he sterte out asyde.
Bot destine, which schal betide,
Befell that ilke time so,
Thelogonus knew nothing tho
What man it was that to him caste,
And while his oghne spere laste,

With al the signe therupon
He caste unto the king anon,
And smot him with a dedly wounde.
Uluxes fell anon to grounde;
Tho every man, 'The king! the king!'
Began to crie, and of this thing
Thelogonus, which sih the cas,
On knes he fell and seide, 'Helas!
I have min oghne fader slain:
Nou wolde I deie wonder fain,
Nou sle me who that evere wile,
For certes it is right good skile.'
He crith, he wepth, he seith therfore,
'Helas, that evere was I bore,
That this unhappi destine
So wofulli comth in be me!'
This king, which yit hath lif ynouh,
His herte ayein to him he drouh,
And to that vois an Ere he leide
And understod al that he seide,
And gan to speke, and seide on hih,
'Bring me this man.' And whan he sih
Thelogonus, his thoght he sette
Upon the swevene which he mette,
And axeth that he myhte se
His spere, on which the fisshes thre
He sih upon a pensel wroght.
Tho wiste he wel it faileth noght,
And badd him that he telle scholde
Fro whenne he cam and what he wolde.
Thelogonus in sorghe and wo
So as he mihte tolde tho
Unto Uluxes al the cas,
Hou that Circes his moder was,
And so forth seide him everydel,
Hou that his moder gret him wel,
And in what wise sche him sente.
Tho wiste Uluxes what it mente,
And tok him in hise Armes softe,
And al bledende he kest him ofte,
And seide, 'Sone, whil I live,
This infortune I thee foryive.'

After his other Sone in haste
He sende, and he began him haste
And cam unto his fader tyt.
Bot whan he sih him in such plit,
He wolde have ronne upon that other
Anon, and slain his oghne brother,
Ne hadde be that Uluxes
Betwen hem made acord and pes,
And to his heir Thelamachus
He bad that he Thelogonus
With al his pouer scholde kepe,
Til he were of his woundes depe
Al hol, and thanne he scholde him yive
Lond wher upon he mihte live.
Thelamachus, whan he this herde,
Unto his fader he ansuerde
And seide he wolde don his wille.
So duelle thei togedre stille,
These brethren, and the fader sterveth.
Lo, wherof Sorcerie serveth.
Thurgh Sorcerie his lust he wan,
Thurgh Sorcerie his wo began,
Thurgh Sorcerie his love he ches,
Thurgh Sorcerie his lif he les;
The child was gete in Sorcerie,
The which dede al this felonie:
Thing which was ayein kynde wroght
Unkindeliche it was aboght;
The child his oghne fader slowh,
That was unkindeschipe ynowh.
Forthi tak hiede hou that it is,
So forto winne love amis,
Which endeth al his joie in wo:
For of this Art I finde also,
That hath be do for loves sake,
Wherof thou miht ensample take,
A gret Cronique imperial,
Which evere into memorial
Among the men, hou so it wende,
Schal duelle to the worldes ende.
The hihe creatour of thinges,
Which is the king of alle kinges,

Ful many a wonder worldes chance
Let slyden under his suffrance;
Ther wot noman the cause why,
Bot he the which is almyhty.
And that was proved whilom thus,
Whan that the king Nectanabus,
Which hadde Egipte forto lede,-
Bot for he sih tofor the dede
Thurgh magique of his Sorcerie,
Wherof he couthe a gret partie,
Hise enemys to him comende,
Fro whom he mihte him noght defende,
Out of his oghne lond he fledde;
And in the wise as he him dredde
It fell, for al his wicchecraft,
So that Egipte him was beraft,
And he disguised fledde aweie
Be schipe, and hield the rihte weie
To Macedoine, wher that he
Aryveth ate chief Cite.
Thre yomen of his chambre there
Al only forto serve him were,
The whiche he trusteth wonder wel,
For thei were trewe as eny stiel;
And hapneth that thei with him ladde
Part of the beste good he hadde.
Thei take logginge in the toun
After the disposicion
Wher as him thoghte best to duelle:
He axeth thanne and herde telle
Hou that the king was oute go.
Upon a werre he hadde tho;
But in that Cite thanne was
The queene, which Olimpias
Was hote, and with sollempnete
The feste of hir nativite,
As it befell, was thanne holde;
And for hire list to be beholde
And preised of the poeple aboute,
Sche schop hir forto riden oute
At after mete al openly.
Anon were alle men redy,

And that was in the monthe of Maii,
This lusti queene in good arrai
Was set upon a Mule whyt:
To sen it was a gret delit
The joie that the cite made;
With freisshe thinges and with glade
The noble toun was al behonged,
And every wiht was sore alonged
To se this lusti ladi ryde.
Ther was gret merthe on alle syde;
Wher as sche passeth be the strete,
Ther was ful many a tymber bete
And many a maide carolende:
And thus thurghout the toun pleiende
This queene unto a pleine rod,
Wher that sche hoved and abod
To se diverse game pleie,
The lusti folk jouste and tourneie;
And so forth every other man,
Which pleie couthe, his pley began,
To plese with this noble queene.
Nectanabus cam to the grene
Amonges othre and drouh him nyh.
Bot whan that he this ladi sih
And of hir beaute hiede tok,
He couthe noght withdrawe his lok
To se noght elles in the field,
Bot stod and only hire behield.
Of his clothinge and of his gere
He was unlich alle othre there,
So that it hapneth ate laste,
The queene on him hire yhe caste,
And knew that he was strange anon:
Bot he behield hire evere in on
Withoute blenchinge of his chere.
Sche tok good hiede of his manere,
And wondreth why he dede so,
And bad men scholde for him go.
He cam and dede hire reverence,
And sche him axeth in cilenche
For whenne he cam and what he wolde.
And he with sobre wordes tolde,

And seith, 'Ma dame, a clerk I am,
To you and in message I cam,
The which I mai noght tellen hiere;
Bot if it liketh you to hiere,
It mot be seid al prively,
Wher non schal be bot ye and I.'
Thus for the time he tok his leve.
The dai goth forth til it was eve,
That every man mot lete his werk;
And sche thoghte evere upon this clerk,
What thing it is he wolde mene:
And in this wise abod the queene,
And passeth over thilke nyht,
Til it was on the morwe liht.
Sche sende for him, and he com,
With him his Astellabre he nom,
Which was of fin gold precious
With pointz and cercles merveilous;
And ek the havenely figures
Wroght in a bok ful of peintures
He tok this ladi forto schewe,
And tolde of ech of hem be rewe
The cours and the condicion.
And sche with gret affeccion
Sat stille and herde what he wolde:
And thus whan he sih time, he tolde,
And feigneth with hise wordes wise
A tale, and seith in such a wise:
'Ma dame, bot a while ago,
Wher I was in Egipte tho,
And radde in scole of this science,
It fell into mi conscience
That I unto the temple wente,
And ther with al myn hole entente
As I mi sacrifice dede,
On of the goddes hath me bede
That I you warne prively,
So that ye make you redy,
And that ye be nothing agast;
For he such love hath to you cast,
That ye schul ben his oghne diere,
And he schal be your beddefiere,

Til ye conceive and be with childe.'
And with that word sche wax al mylde,
And somdel red becam for schame,
And axeth him that goddes name,
Which so wol don hire compainie.
And he seide, 'Amos of Lubie.'
And sche seith, 'That mai I noght lieve,
Bot if I sihe a betre prieve.'
'Ma dame,' quod Nectanabus,
'In tokne that it schal be thus,
This nyht for enformacion
Ye schul have an avision:
That Amos schal to you appiere,
To schewe and teche in what manere
The thing schal afterward befalle.
Ye oghten wel above alle
To make joie of such a lord;
For whan ye ben of on acord,
He schal a Sone of you begete,
Which with his swerd schal winne and gete
The wyde world in lengthe and brede;
Alle erthli kinges schull him drede,
And in such wise, I you behote,
The god of erthe he schal be hote.'
'If this be soth,' tho quod the queene,
'This nyht, thou seist, it schal be sene.
And if it falle into mi grace,
Of god Amos, that I pourchace
To take of him so gret worschipe,
I wol do thee such ladischipe,
Wherof thou schalt for everemo
Be riche.' And he hir thonketh tho,
And tok his leve and forth he wente.
Sche wiste litel what he mente,
For it was guile and Sorcerie,
Al that sche tok for Prophecie.
Nectanabus thurghout the day,
Whan he cam hom wher as he lay,
His chambre be himselve tok,
And overtorneth many a bok,
And thurgh the craft of Artemage
Of wex he forgeth an ymage.

He loketh his equacions
And ek the constellacions,
He loketh the conjunccions,
He loketh the recepcions,
His signe, his houre, his ascendent,
And drawth fortune of his assent:
The name of queene Olimpias
In thilke ymage write was
Amiddes in the front above.
And thus to winne his lust of love
Nectanabus this werk hath diht;
And whan it cam withinne nyht,
That every wyht is falle aslepe,
He thoghte he wolde his time kepe,
As he which hath his houre apointed.
And thanne ferst he hath enoignted
With sondri herbes that figure,
And therupon he gan conjure,
So that thurgh his enchantement
This ladi, which was innocent
And wiste nothing of this guile,
Mette, as sche slepte thilke while,
Hou fro the hevene cam a lyht,
Which al hir chambre made lyht;
And as sche loketh to and fro,
Sche sih, hir thoghte, a dragoun tho,
Whos scherdes schynen as the Sonne,
And hath his softe pas begonne
With al the chiere that he may
Toward the bedd ther as sche lay,
Til he cam to the beddes side.
And sche lai stille and nothing cride,
For he dede alle his thinges faire
And was courteis and debonaire:
And as he stod hire fasteby,
His forme he changeth sodeinly,
And the figure of man he nom,
To hire and into bedde he com,
And such thing there of love he wroghte,
Wherof, so as hire thanne thoghte,
Thurgh likinge of this god Amos
With childe anon hire wombe aros,

And sche was wonder glad withal.
Nectanabus, which causeth al
Of this metrede the substance,
Whan he sih time, his nigromance
He stinte and nothing more seide
Of his carecte, and sche abreide
Out of hir slep, and lieveth wel
That it is soth thanne everydel
Of that this clerk hire hadde told,
And was the gladdere manyfold
In hope of such a glad metrede,
Which after schal befalle in dede.
Sche longeth sore after the dai,
That sche hir swevene telle mai
To this guilour in privete,
Which kneu it als so wel as sche:
And natheles on morwe sone
Sche lefte alle other thing to done,
And for him sende, and al the cas
Sche tolde him plainly as it was,
And seide hou thanne wel sche wiste
That sche his wordes mihte triste,
For sche fond hire Avisioun
Riht after the condicion
Which he hire hadde told tofore;
And preide him hertely therfore
That he hire holde covenant
So forth of al the remenant,
That sche may thurgh his ordinance
Toward the god do such plesance,
That sche wakende myhte him kepe
In such wise as sche mette aslepe.
And he, that couthe of guile ynouh,
Whan he this herde, of joie he louh,
And seith, 'Ma dame, it schal be do.
Bot this I warne you therto:
This nyht, whan that he comth to pleie,
That ther be no lif in the weie
Bot I, that schal at his likinge
Ordeine so for his cominge,
That ye ne schull noght of him faile.
For this, ma dame, I you consaile,

That ye it kepe so prive,
That no wiht elles bot we thre
Have knowlechinge hou that it is;
For elles mihte it fare amis,
If ye dede oght that scholde him grieve.'
And thus he makth hire to believe,
And feigneth under guile feith:
Bot natheles al that he seith
Sche troweth; and ayein the nyht
Sche hath withinne hire chambre dyht,
Wher as this guilour faste by
Upon this god schal prively
Awaite, as he makth hire to wene:
And thus this noble gentil queene,
Whan sche most trusteth, was deceived.
The nyht com, and the chambre is weyved,
Nectanabus hath take his place,
And whan he sih the time and space,
Thurgh the deceipte of his magique
He putte him out of mannes like,
And of a dragoun tok the forme,
As he which wolde him al conforme
To that sche sih in swevene er this;
And thus to chambre come he is.
The queene lay abedde and sih,
And hopeth evere, as he com nyh,
That he god of Luby were,
So hath sche wel the lasse fere.
Bot for he wolde hire more assure,
Yit eft he changeth his figure,
And of a wether the liknesse
He tok, in signe of his noblesse
With large hornes for the nones:
Of fin gold and of riche stones
A corone on his hed he bar,
And soudeinly, er sche was war,
As he which alle guile can,
His forme he torneth into man,
And cam to bedde, and sche lai stille,
Wher as sche soffreth al his wille,
As sche which wende noght misdo.
Bot natheles it hapneth so,

Although sche were in part deceived,
 Yit for al that sche hath conceived
 The worthieste of alle kiththe,
 Which evere was tofore or siththe
 Of conqueste and chivalerie;
 So that thurgh guile and Sorcerie
 Ther was that noble knyht begunne,
 Which al the world hath after wunne.
 Thus fell the thing which falle scholde,
 Nectanabus hath that he wolde;
 With guile he hath his love sped,
 With guile he cam into the bed,
 With guile he goth him out ayein:
 He was a schrewed chamberlein,
 So to beguile a worthi queene,
 And that on him was after seene.
 Bot natheles the thing is do;
 This false god was sone go,
 With his decepte and hield him clos,
 Til morwe cam, that he aros.
 And tho, whan time and leisir was,
 The queene tolde him al the cas,
 As sche that guile non supposeth;
 And of tuo pointz sche him opposeth.
 On was, if that this god nomore
 Wol come ayein, and overmore,
 Hou sche schal stonden in acord
 With king Philippe hire oghne lord,
 Whan he comth hom and seth hire grone.
 'Ma dame,' he seith, 'let me alone:
 As for the god I undertake
 That whan it liketh you to take
 His compaignie at eny throwe,
 If I a day tofore it knowe,
 He schal be with you on the nyht;
 And he is wel of such a myht
 To kepe you from alle blame.
 Forthi conforte you, ma dame,
 Ther schal non other cause be.'
 Thus tok he leve and forth goth he,
 And tho began he forto muse
 Hou he the queene mihte excuse

Toward the king of that is falle;
And fond a craft amanges alle,
Thurgh which he hath a See foul daunted,
With his magique and so enchaunted,
That he flyh forth, whan it was nyht,
Unto the kinges tente riht,
Wher that he lay amidde his host:
And whanne he was aslepe most,
With that the See foul to him broghte
And othre charmes, whiche he wroghte
At hom withinne his chambre stille,
The king he torneth at his wille,
And makth him forto dreme and se
The dragoun and the privete
Which was betuen him and the queene.
And over that he made him wene
In swevene, hou that the god Amos,
Whan he up fro the queene aros,
Tok forth a ring, wherinne a ston
Was set, and grave therupon
A Sonne, in which, whan he cam nyh,
A leoun with a swerd he sih;
And with that priente, as he tho mette,
Upon the queenes wombe he sette
A Seal, and goth him forth his weie.
With that the swevene wente aweie,
And tho began the king awake
And sigheth for his wyves sake,
Wher as he lay withinne his tente,
And hath gret wonder what it mente.
With that he hasteth him to ryse
Anon, and sende after the wise,
Among the whiche ther was on,
A clerc, his name is Amphion:
Whan he the kinges swevene herde,
What it betokneth he ansuerde,
And seith, 'So siker as the lif,
A god hath leie be thi wif,
And gete a Sone, which schal winne
The world and al that is withinne.
As leon is the king of bestes,
So schal the world obeie his hestes,

Which with his swerd schal al be wonne,
Als ferr as schyneth eny Sonne.'
The king was doubtif of this dom;
Bot natheles, whan that he com
Ayein into his oghne lond,
His wif with childe gret he fond.
He mihte noght himselfe stiere,
That he ne made hire hevy chiere;
Bot he which couthe of alle sorwe,
Nectanabus, upon the morwe
Thurgh the deceipte and nigromance
Tok of a dragoun the semblance,
And wher the king sat in his halle,
Com in rampende among hem alle
With such a noise and such a rore,
That thei agast were also sore
As thogh thei scholde deie anon.
And natheles he grieveth non,
Bot goth toward the deyss on hih;
And whan he cam the queene nyh,
He stinte his noise, and in his wise
To hire he profreth his servise,
And leith his hed upon hire barm;
And sche with goodly chiere hire arm
Aboute his necke ayeinward leide,
And thus the queene with him pleide
In sihte of alle men aboute.
And ate laste he gan to loute
And obeissance unto hire make,
As he that wolde his leve take;
And sodeinly his lothly forme
Into an Egle he gan transforme,
And flyh and sette him on a raile;
Wherof the king hath gret mervaile,
For there he pruneth him and piketh,
As doth an hauk whan him wel liketh,
And after that himself he schok,
Wherof that al the halle quok,
As it a terremote were;
Thei seiden alle, god was there:
In such a res and forth he flyh.
The king, which al this wonder syh,

Whan he cam to his chambre alone,
Unto the queene he made his mone
And of foryivenesse hir preide;
For thanne he knew wel, as he seide,
Sche was with childe with a godd.
Thus was the king withoute rodd
Chastised, and the queene excused
Of that sche hadde ben accused.
And for the gretere evidence,
Yit after that in the presence
Of king Philipp and othre mo,
Whan thei ride in the fieldes tho,
A Phesant cam before here yhe,
The which anon as thei hire syhe,
Fleende let an ey doun falle,
And it tobrak tofore hem alle:
And as thei token therof kepe,
Thei syhe out of the schelle crepe
A litel Serpent on the ground,
Which rampeth al aboute round,
And in ayein it wolde have wonne,
Bot for the brennyng of the Sonne
It mihte noght, and so it deide.
And therupon the clerkes seide,
'As the Serpent, whan it was oute,
Went enviroun the schelle aboute
And mihte noght torne in ayein,
So schal it fallen in certein:
This child the world schal environe,
And above alle the corone
Him schal befalle, and in yong Age
He schal desire in his corage,
Whan al the world is in his hond,
To torn ayein into the lond
Wher he was bore, and in his weie
Homward he schal with puison deie.'
The king, which al this sih and herde,
Fro that dai forth, hou so it ferde,
His jalousie hath al foryete.
Bot he which hath the child begete,
Nectanabus, in privete
The time of his nativite

Upon the constellacioun
Awaiteth, and relacion
Makth to the queene hou sche schal do,
And every houre apointeth so,
That no mynut therof was lore.
So that in due time is bore
This child, and forth with therupon
Ther felle wondres many on
Of terremote universiel:
The Sonne tok colour of stiel
And loste his lyht, the wyndes blewe,
And manye strengthes overthrewe;
The See his propre kinde changeth,
And al the world his forme strangeth;
The thonder with his fyri leve
So cruel was upon the hevene,
That every erthli creature
Tho thoghte his lif in aventure.
The tempeste ate laste cesseth,
The child is kept, his age encresseth,
And Alisandre his name is hote,
To whom Calistre and Aristote
To techen him Philosophie
Entenden, and Astronomie,
With othre thinges whiche he couthe
Also, to teche him in his youthe
Nectanabus tok upon honde.
Bot every man mai understonde,
Of Sorcerie hou that it wende,
It wole himselve prove at ende,
And namely forto beguile
A lady, which withoute guile
Supposeth trouthe al that sche hiereth:
Bot often he that evele stiereth
His Schip is dreynt therinne amidde;
And in this cas riht so betidde.
Nectanabus upon a nyht,
Whan it was fair and sterre lyht,
This yonge lord ladde up on hih
Above a tour, wher as he sih
Thee sterres such as he acompteth,
And seith what ech of hem amonteth,

As thogh he knewe of alle thing;
Bot yit hath he no knowleching
What schal unto himself befalle.
Whan he hath told his wordes alle,
This yonge lord thanne him opposeth,
And axeth if that he supposeth
What deth he schal himselve deie.
He seith, 'Or fortune is aweie
And every sterre hath lost his wone,
Or elles of myn oghne Sone
I schal be slain, I mai noght fle.'
Thoghte Alisandre in privete,
'Hierof this olde dotard lieth':
And er that other oght aspieth,
Al sodeinliche his olde bones
He schof over the wal at ones,
And seith him, 'Ly doun there apart:
Wherof nou serveth al thin art?
Thou knewe alle othre mennes chance
And of thiself hast ignorance:
That thou hast seid amonges alle
Of thi persone, is noght befalle.'
Nectanabus, which hath his deth,
Yit while him lasteth lif and breth,
To Alisandre he spak and seide
That he with wrong blame on him leide
Fro point to point and al the cas
He tolde, hou he his Sone was.
Tho he, which sory was ynowh,
Out of the dich his fader drouh,
And tolde his moder hou it ferde
In conseil; and whan sche it herde
And kneu the toknes whiche he tolde,
Sche nyste what sche seie scholde,
Bot stod abayssht as for the while
Of his magique and al the guile.
Sche thoghte hou that sche was deceived,
That sche hath of a man conceived,
And wende a god it hadde be.
Bot natheles in such degre,
So as sche mihte hire honour save,
Sche schop the body was begrave.

And thus Nectanabus aboghte
The Sorcerie which he wroghte:
Thogh he upon the creatures
Thurgh his carectes and figures
The maistrie and the pouer hadde,
His creatour to noght him ladde,
Ayein whos lawe his craft he useth,
Whan he for lust his god refuseth,
And tok him to the dieules craft.
Lo, what profit him is belaft:
That thing thurgh which he wende have stonde,
Ferst him exilede out of londe
Which was his oghne, and from a king
Made him to ben an underling;
And siththen to deceive a queene,
That torneth him to mochel teene;
Thurgh lust of love he gat him hate,
That ende couthe he noght abate.
His olde sleyhtes whiche he caste,
Yonge Alisaundre hem overcaste,
His fader, which him misbegat,
He slouh, a gret mishap was that;
Bot for o mis an other mys
Was yolde, and so fulofte it is;
Nectanabus his craft miswente,
So it misfell him er he wente.
I not what helpeth that clergie
Which makth a man to do folie,
And nameliche of nigromance,
Which stant upon the mescreance.
And forto se more evidence,
Zorastes, which the experience
Of Art magique ferst forth drouh,
Anon as he was bore, he louh,
Which tokne was of wo suinge:
For of his oghne controvinge
He fond magique and tauhte it forth;
Bot al that was him litel worth,
For of Surrie a worthi king
Him slou, and that was his endyng.
Bot yit thurgh him this craft is used,
And he thurgh al the world accused,

For it schal nevere wel achieve
That stant noght riht with the believe:
Bot lich to wolle is evele sponne,
Who lest himself hath litel wonne,
An ende proveth every thing.
Sa□ which was of Juys king,
Up peine of deth forbad this art,
And yit he tok therof his part.
The Phitonesse in Samarie
Yaf him conseil be Sorcerie,
Which after fell to mochel sorwe,
For he was slain upon the morwe.
To conne moche thing it helpeth,
Bot of to mochel noman yelpeth:
So forto loke on every side,
Magique mai noght wel betyde.
Forthi, my Sone, I wolde rede
That thou of these ensamples drede,
That for no lust of erthli love
Thou seche so to come above,
Wherof as in the worldes wonder
Thou schalt for evere be put under.
Mi goode fader, grant mercy,
For evere I schal be war therby:
Of love what me so befalle,
Such Sorcerie aboven alle
Fro this dai forth I schal eschuie,
That so ne wol I noght poursuie
Mi lust of love forto seche.
Bot this I wolde you beseche,
Beside that me stant of love,
As I you herde speke above
Hou Alisandre was betawht
To Aristotle, and so wel tawht
Of al that to a king belongeth,
Wherof min herte sore longeth
To wite what it wolde mene.
For be reson I wolde wene
That if I herde of thinges strange,
Yit for a time it scholde change
Mi peine, and lisse me somdiel.
Mi goode Sone, thou seist wel.

For wisdom, hou that evere it stonde,
To him that can it understonde
Doth gret profit in sondri wise;
Bot touchende of so hih aprise,
Which is noght unto Venus knowe,
I mai it noght miselve knowe,
Which of hir court am al forthdrawe
And can nothing bot of hir lawe.
Bot natheles to knowe more
Als wel as thou me longeth sore;
And for it helpeth to comune,
Al ben thei noght to me comune,
The scoles of Philosophie,
Yit thenke I forto specefie,
In boke as it is comprehended,
Wherof thou mihtest ben amended.
For thogh I be noght al cunnyng
Upon the forme of this wrytyng,
Som part therof yit have I herd,
In this matiere hou it hath ferd.

John Gower

Confessio Amantis. Explicit Liber Secundus

Incipit Liber Tercius

Ira suis paribus est par furiis Acherontis,
Quo furor ad tempus nil pietatis habet.
Ira malencolicos animos perturbat, ut equo
Iure sui pondus nulla statera tenet.
Omnibus in causis grauat Ira, set inter amantes,
Illa magis facili sorte grauamen agit:
Est ubi vir discors leuiterque repugnat amori,
Sepe loco ludi fletus ad ora venit.

If thou the vices lest to knowe,
Mi Sone, it hath noght ben unknowe,
Fro ferst that men the swerdes grounde,
That ther nis on upon this grounde,
A vice forein fro the lawe,
Wherof that many a good felawe
Hath be distraght be sodein chance;
And yit to kinde no plesance
It doth, bot wher he most achieveth
His pourpos, most to kinde he grieveth,
As he which out of conscience
Is enemy to pacience:
And is be name on of the Sevene,
Which ofte hath set this world unevene,
And cleped is the cruel Ire,
Whos herte is everemore on fyre
To speke amis and to do bothe,
For his servantz ben evere wrothe.
Mi goode fader, tell me this:
What thing is Ire? Sone, it is
That in oure englissh Wrathe is hote,
Which hath hise wordes ay so hote,
That all a mannes pacience
Is fyred of the violence.
For he with him hath evere fyve
Servantz that helpen him to stryve:

The first of hem Malencolie
Is cleped, which in compaignie
An hundred times in an houre
Wol as an angri beste loure,
And noman wot the cause why.
Mi Sone, schrif thee now forthi:
Hast thou be Malencolien?
Ye, fader, be seint Julien,
Bot I untrewed wordes use,
I mai me noght therof excuse:
And al makth love, wel I wot,
Of which myn herte is evere hot,
So that I brenne as doth a glede
For Wrathe that I mai noght spede.
And thus fulofte a day for noght
Save onlich of myn oghne thoght
I am so with miselven wroth,
That how so that the game goth
With othre men, I am noght glad;
Bot I am wel the more unglad,
For that is othre mennes game
It torneth me to pure grame.
Thus am I with myself oppressed
Of thoght, the which I have impressed,
That al wakende I dreame and meete
That I with hire al one meete
And preie hire of som good ansuere:
Bot for sche wol noght gladly swere,
Sche seith me nay withouten oth;
And thus wexe I withinne wroth,
That outward I am al affraied,
And so distempred and esmaied.
A thousand times on a day
Ther souneth in myn Eres nay,
The which sche seide me tofore:
Thus be my wittes as forlore;
And namely whan I beginne
To rekne with myself withinne
How many yeres ben agon,
Siththe I have trewly loved on
And nevere tok of other hede,
And evere aliche fer to spede

I am, the more I with hir dele,
So that myn happ and al myn hele
Me thenkth is ay the leng the ferre,
That bringth my gladschip out of herre,
Wherof my wittes ben empeired,
And I, as who seith, al despeired.
For finaly, whan that I muse
And thenke how sche me wol refuse,
I am with anger so bestad,
For al this world mihte I be glad:
And for the while that it lasteth
Al up so doun my joie it casteth,
And ay the further that I be,
Whan I ne may my ladi se,
The more I am redy to wraththe,
That for the touchinge of a laththe
Or for the torninge of a stree
I wode as doth the wylde Se,
And am so malencolious,
That ther nys servant in myn hous
Ne non of tho that ben aboute,
That ech of hem ne stant in doute,
And wenen that I scholde rave
For Anger that thei se me have;
And so thei wondre more and lasse,
Til that thei sen it overpasse.
Bot, fader, if it so betide,
That I aproche at eny tide
The place wher my ladi is,
And thanne that hire like ywiss
To speke a goodli word untome,
For al the gold that is in Rome
Ne cowthe I after that be wroth,
Bot al myn Anger overgoth;
So glad I am of the presence
Of hire, that I all offence
Foryete, as thogh it were noght,
So overgladed is my thoght.
And natheles, the soth to telle,
Ayeinward if it so befelle
That I at thilke time sihe
On me that sche miscaste hire yhe,

Or that sche liste noght to loke,
And I therof good hiede toke,
Anon into my ferste astat
I torne, and am with al so mat,
That evere it is aliche wicke.
And thus myn hand ayein the pricke
I hurte and have do many day,
And go so forth as I go may,
Fulofte bitinge on my lippe,
And make unto miself a whippe.
With which in many a chele and hete
Mi wofull herte is so tobete,
That all my wittes ben unsofte
And I am wroth, I not how ofte;
And al it is Malencolie,
Which groweth of the fantasie
Of love, that me wol noght loute:
So bere I forth an angri snoute
Ful manye times in a yer.
Bot, fader, now ye sitten hier
In loves stede, I yow beseche,
That som ensample ye me teche,
Wherof I mai miself appese.
Mi Sone, for thin hertes ese
I schal fulfille thi preiere,
So that thou miht the betre lere
What mischief that this vice stereth,
Which in his Anger noght forbereth,
Wherof that after him forthenketh,
Whan he is sobre and that he thenketh
Upon the folie of his dede;
And of this point a tale I rede.
Ther was a king which Eolus
Was hote, and it befell him thus,
That he tuo children hadde faire,
The Sone cleped was Machaire,
The dowhter ek Canace hihte.
Be daie bothe and ek be nyhte,
Whil thei be yonge, of comun wone
In chambre thei togedre wone,
And as thei scholden pleide hem ofte,
Til thei be growen up alofte

Into the youthe of lusti age,
Whan kinde assaileth the corage
With love and doth him forto bowe,
That he no reson can allowe,
Bot halt the lawes of nature:
For whom that love hath under cure,
As he is blind himself, riht so
He makth his client blind also.
In such manere as I you telle
As thei al day togedre duelle,
This brother mihte it noght asterte
That he with al his hole herte
His love upon his Soster caste:
And so it fell hem ate laste,
That this Machaire with Canace
Whan thei were in a prive place,
Cupide bad hem ferst to kesse,
And after sche which is Maistresse
In kinde and techeth every lif
Withoute lawe positif,
Of which sche takth nomaner charge,
Bot kepth hire lawes al at large,
Nature, tok hem into lore
And tawht hem so, that overmore
Sche hath hem in such wise daunted,
That thei were, as who seith, enchaunted.
And as the blinde an other ledeth
And til thei falle nothing dredeth,
Riht so thei hadde non insihte;
Bot as the bridd which wole alihte
And seth the mete and noght the net,
Which in deceipte of him is set,
This yonge folk no peril sihe,
Bot that was likinge in here yhe,
So that thei felle upon the chance
Where witt hath lore his remembrance.
So longe thei togedre assemble,
The wombe aros, and sche gan tremble,
And hield hire in hire chambre clos
For drede it scholde be disclos
And come to hire fader Ere:
Wherof the Sone hadde also fere,

And feigneth cause forto ryde;
For longe dorste he noght abyde,
In aunter if men wolde sein
That he his Soster hath forlein:
For yit sche hadde it noght beknowe
Whos was the child at thilke throwe.
Machaire goth, Canace abit,
The which was noght delivered yit,
Bot riht sone after that sche was.
Now lest and herkne a woful cas.
The sothe, which mai noght ben hid,
Was ate laste knowe and kid
Unto the king, how that it stod.
And whan that he it understod,
Anon into Malencolie,
As thogh it were a frenesie,
He fell, as he which nothing cowthe
How maistrefull love is in yowthe:
And for he was to love strange,
He wolde noght his herte change
To be benigne and favorable
To love, bot unmerciabie
Betwen the wawe of wod and wroth
Into his dowhtres chambre he goth,
And sih the child was late bore,
Wherof he hath hise othes swore
That sche it schal ful sore abyde.
And sche began merci to crie,
Upon hire bare knes and preide,
And to hire fader thus sche seide:
'Ha mercy! fader, thenk I am
Thi child, and of thi blod I cam.
That I misdede yowthe it made,
And in the flodes bad me wade,
Wher that I sih no peril tho:
Bot now it is befalle so,
Merci, my fader, do no wreche!'
And with that word sche loste speche
And fell doun swounende at his fot,
As sche for sorwe nedes mot.
Bot his horrible cruelte
Ther mihte attempre no pite:

Out of hire chambre forth he wente
Al full of wraththe in his entente,
And tok the conseil in his herte
That sche schal noght the deth avertere,
As he which Malencolien
Of pacience hath no lien,
Wherof the wraththe he mai restreigne.
And in this wilde wode peine,
Whanne al his resoun was untame,
A kniht he clepeth be his name,
And tok him as be weie of sonde
A naked swerd to bere on honde,
And seide him that he scholde go
And telle unto his dowhter so
In the manere as he him bad,
How sche that scharpe swerdes blad
Receive scholde and do withal
So as sche wot wherto it schal.
Forth in message goth this kniht
Unto this wofull yonge wiht,
This scharpe swerd to hire he tok:
Wherof that al hire bodi qwok,
For wel sche wiste what it mente,
And that it was to thilke entente
That sche hireselven scholde slee.
And to the kniht sche seide: 'Yee,
Now that I wot my fadres wille,
That I schal in this wise spille,
I wole obeie me therto,
And as he wole it schal be do.
Bot now this thing mai be non other,
I wole a lettre unto mi brother,
So as my fieble hand may wryte,
With al my wofull herte endite.'
Sche tok a Penne on honde tho,
Fro point to point and al the wo,
Als ferforth as hireself it wot,
Unto hire dedly frend sche wrot,
And tolde how that hire fader grace
Sche mihte for nothing pourchace;
And overthat, as thou schalt hiere,
Sche wrot and seide in this manere:

'O thou my sorwe and my gladnesse,
O thou myn hele and my siknesse,
O my wanhope and al my trust,
O my desese and al my lust,
O thou my wele, o thou my wo,
O thou my frend, o thou my fo,
O thou my love, o thou myn hate,
For thee mot I be ded algate.
Thilke ende may I noght asterte,
And yit with al myn hole herte,
Whil that me lasteth eny breth,
I wol the love into my deth.
Bot of o thing I schal thee preie,
If that my litel Sone deie,
Let him be beried in my grave
Beside me, so schalt thou have
Upon ous bothe remembrance.
For thus it stant of my grevance;
Now at this time, as thou schalt wite,
With teres and with enke write
This lettre I have in cares colde:
In my riht hond my Penne I holde,
And in my left the swerd I kepe,
And in my barm ther lith to wepe
Thi child and myn, which sobbeth faste.
Now am I come unto my laste:
Fare wel, for I schal sone deie,
And thenk how I thi love abeie.'
The pomel of the swerd to grounde
Sche sette, and with the point a wounde
Thurghout hire herte anon sche made,
And forth with that al pale and fade
Sche fell down ded fro ther sche stod.
The child lay bathende in hire blod
Out rolled fro the moder barm,
And for the blod was hot and warm,
He basketh him aboute thrinne.
Ther was no bote forto winne,
For he, which can no pite knowe,
The king cam in the same throwe,
And sih how that his dowhter dieth
And how this Babe al bloody crieth;

Bot al that mihte him noght suffise,
That he ne bad to do juisse
Upon the child, and bere him oute,
And seche in the Forest aboute
Som wilde place, what it were,
To caste him out of honde there,
So that som best him mai devoure,
Where as noman him schal socoure.
Al that he bad was don in dede:
Ha, who herde evere singe or rede
Of such a thing as that was do?
Bot he which ladde his wraththe so
Hath knowe of love bot a lite;
Bot for al that he was to wyte,
Thurgh his sodein Malencolie
To do so gret a felonie.
Forthi, my Sone, how so it stonde,
Be this cas thou miht understonde
That if thou evere in cause of love
Schalt deme, and thou be so above
That thou miht lede it at thi wille,
Let nevere thurgh thi Wraththe spille
Which every kinde scholde save.
For it sit every man to have
Reward to love and to his miht,
Ayein whos strengthe mai no wiht:
And siththe an herte is so constreigned,
The reddour oghte be restreigned
To him that mai no bet aweie,
Whan he mot to nature obeie.
For it is seid thus overal,
That nedes mot that nede schal
Of that a lif doth after kinde,
Wherof he mai no bote finde.
What nature hath set in hir lawe
Ther mai no mannes miht withdrawe,
And who that worcheth therayein,
Fulofte time it hath be sein,
Ther hath befalle gret vengeance,
Wherof I finde a remembrance.
Ovide after the time tho
Tolde an ensample and seide so,

How that whilom Tiresias,
As he walkende goth per cas,
Upon an hih Montaine he sih
Tuo Serpentz in his weie nyh,
And thei, so as nature hem tawhte,
Assembled were, and he tho cawhte
A yerde which he bar on honde,
And thoghte that he wolde fonde
To letten hem, and smot hem bothe:
Wherof the goddes weren wrothe;
And for he hath destourbed kinde
And was so to nature unkinde,
Unkindeliche he was transformed,
That he which erst a man was formed
Into a womman was forschape.
That was to him an angri jape;
Bot for that he with Angre wroghte,
Hise Angres angreliche he boghte.
Lo thus, my Sone, Ovide hath write,
Wherof thou miht be reson wite,
More is a man than such a beste:
So mihte it nevere ben honeste
A man to wraththen him to sore
Of that an other doth the lore
Of kinde, in which is no malice,
Bot only that it is a vice:
And thogh a man be resonable,
Yit after kinde he is menable
To love, wher he wole or non.
Thenk thou, my Sone, therupon
And do Malencolie aweie;
For love hath evere his lust to pleie,
As he which wolde no lif grieve.
Mi fader, that I mai wel lieve;
Al that ye tellen it is skile:
Let every man love as he wile,
Be so it be noght my ladi,
For I schal noght be wroth therby.
Bot that I wraththe and fare amis,
Al one upon miself it is,
That I with bothe love and kinde
Am so bestad, that I can finde

No weie how I it mai asterte:
Which stant upon myn oghne herte
And toucheth to non other lif,
Save only to that swete wif
For whom, bot if it be amended,
Mi glade daies ben despended,
That I miself schal noght forbere
The Wraththe which that I now bere,
For therof is non other leche.
Now axeth forth, I yow beseche,
Of Wraththe if ther oght elles is,
Wherof to schryve. Sone, yis.
Of Wraththe the secounde is Chestre,
Which hath the wyndes of tempeste
To kepe, and many a sodein blast
He bloweth, wherof ben agast
Thei that desiren pes and reste.
He is that ilke ungoodlieste
Which many a lusti love hath twinned;
For he berth evere his mowth unpinned,
So that his lippes ben unloke
And his corage is al tobroke,
That every thing which he can telle,
It springeth up as doth a welle,
Which mai non of his stremes hyde,
Bot renneth out on every syde.
So buillen up the foule sawes
That Chestre wot of his felawes:
For as a Sive kepeth Ale,
Riht so can Chestre kepe a tale;
Al that he wot he wol desclose,
And speke er eny man oppose.
As a Cite withoute wal,
Wher men mai gon out overal
Withouten eny resistance,
So with his croked eloquence
He spekth al that he wot withinne:
Wherof men lese mor than winne,
For ofte time of his chidinge
He bringth to house such tidinge,
That makth werre ate beddeshed.
He is the levein of the bred,

Which soureth al the past aboute:
Men oghte wel such on to doute,
For evere his bowe is redi bent,
And whom he hit I telle him schent,
If he mai perce him with his tunge.
And ek so lowde his belle is runge,
That of the noise and of the soun
Men feeren hem in al the toun
Welmore than thei don of thonder.
For that is cause of more wonder;
For with the wyndes whiche he bloweth
Fulofte sythe he overthroweth
The Cites and the policie,
That I have herd the poeple crie,
And echon seide in his degre,
'Ha wicke tunge, wo thee be!'
For men sein that the harde bon,
Althogh himselven have non,
A tunge brekth it al to pieces.
He hath so manye sondri spieces
Of vice, that I mai noght wel
Describe hem be a thousandel:
Bot whan that he to Cheste falleth,
Ful many a wonder thing befalleth,
For he ne can nothing forbere.
Now tell me, Sone, thin ansuere,
If it hath evere so betidd,
That thou at any time hast chidd
Toward thi love. Fader, nay:
Such Cheste yit unto this day
Ne made I nevere, god forbede:
For er I sunge such a crede,
I hadde levere to be lewed;
For thanne were I al beschrewed
And worthi to be put abak
With al the sorwe upon my bak
That eny man ordeigne cowthe.
Bot I spak nevere yit be mowthe
That unto Cheste mihte touche,
And that I durste riht wel vouche
Upon hirself as for witnesse;
For I wot, of hir gentillesse

That sche me wolde wel excuse,
That I no suche thinges use.
And if it scholde so betide
That I algates moste chide,
It myhte noght be to my love:
For so yit was I nevere above,
For al this wyde world to winne
That I dorste eny word beginne,
Be which sche mihte have ben amoeved
And I of Chestre also reproeved.
Bot rather, if it mihte hir like,
The beste wordes wolde I pike
Whiche I cowthe in myn herte chese,
And serve hem forth in stede of chese,
For that is helplich to defie;
And so wolde I my wordes plie,
That mihten Wraththe and Chestre avale
With tellinge of my softe tale.
Thus dar I make a foreward,
That nevere unto my ladiward
Yit spak I word in such a wise,
Wherof that Chestre scholde arise.
This seie I noght, that I fulofte
Ne have, whanne I spak most softe,
Per cas seid more thanne ynowh;
Bot so wel halt noman the plowh
That he ne balketh otherwhile,
Ne so wel can noman affile
His tunge, that som time in rape
Him mai som liht word overscape,
And yit ne meneth he no Chestre.
Bot that I have ayein hir heste
Fulofte spoke, I am beknowe;
And how my will is, that ye knowe:
For whan my time comth aboute,
That I dar speke and seie al oute
Mi longe love, of which sche wot
That evere in on aliche hot
Me grieveth, thanne al my desese
I telle, and though it hir desplese,
I speke it forth and noght ne leve:
And thogh it be beside hire leve,

I hope and trowe natheles
That I do noght ayein the pes;
For thogh I telle hire al my thoght,
Sche wot wel that I chyde noght.
Men mai the hihe god beseche,
And he wol hier a mannes speche
And be noght wroth of that he seith;
So yif it me the more feith
And makth me hardi, soth to seie,
That I dar wel the betre preie
Mi ladi, which a womman is.
For thogh I telle hire that or this
Of love, which me grieveth sore,
Hire oghte noght be wroth the more,
For I withoute noise or cri
Mi pleignte make al buxomly
To puten alle wraththe away.
Thus dar I seie unto this day
Of Cheste in earnest or in game
Mi ladi schal me nothing blame.
Bot ofte time it hath betidd
That with miselven I have chidd,
That noman couthe betre chide:
And that hath ben at every tide,
Whanne I cam to miself al one;
For thanne I made a prive mone,
And every tale by and by,
Which as I spak to my ladi,
I thenke and peise in my balance
And drawe into my remembrance;
And thanne, if that I finde a lak
Of eny word that I mispak,
Which was to moche in eny wise,
Anon my wittes I despise
And make a chidinge in myn herte,
That eny word me scholde asterte
Which as I scholde have holden inne.
And so forth after I beginne
And loke if ther was elles oght
To speke, and I ne spak it noght:
And thanne, if I mai seche and finde
That eny word be left behinde,

Which as I scholde more have spoke,
I wolde upon miself be wroke,
And chyde with miselven so
That al my wit is overgo.
For noman mai his time lore
Recovere, and thus I am therfore
So overwroth in al my thoght,
That I myself chide al to noght:
Thus for to moche or for to lite
Fulofte I am miself to wyte.
Bot al that mai me noght availe,
With cheste thogh I me travaile:
Bot Oule on Stock and Stock on Oule;
The more that a man defoule,
Men witen wel which hath the werse;
And so to me nys worth a kerse,
Bot torneth on myn oghne hed,
Thogh I, til that I were ded,
Wolde evere chyde in such a wise
Of love as I to you devise.
Bot, fader, now ye have al herd
In this manere how I have ferd
Of Cheste and of dissencioun,
Yif me youre absolucioun.
Mi Sone, if that thou wistest al,
What Cheste doth in special
To love and to his welwillinge,
Thou woldest flen his knowlechinge
And lerne to be debonaire.
For who that most can speke faire
Is most acordende unto love:
Fair speche hath ofte brought above
Ful many a man, as it is knowe,
Which elles scholde have be riht lowe
And failed mochel of his wille.
Forthi hold thou thi tunge stille
And let thi witt thi wille areste,
So that thou falle noght in Cheste,
Which is the source of gret distance:
And tak into thi remembrance
If thou miht gete pacience,
Which is the leche of alle offence,

As tellen ous these olde wise:
For whan noght elles mai suffise
Be strengthe ne be mannes wit,
Than pacience it oversit
And overcomth it ate laste;
Bot he mai nevere longe laste,
Which wol noght bowe er that he breke.
Tak hiede, Sone, of that I speke.
Mi fader, of your goodli speche
And of the witt which ye me teche
I thonke you with al myn herte:
For that world schal me nevere asterte,
That I ne schal your wordes holde,
Of Pacience as ye me tolde,
Als ferforth as myn herte thenketh;
And of my wraththe it me forthenketh.
Bot, fader, if ye forth withal
Som good ensample in special
Me wolden telle of som Cronique,
It scholde wel myn herte like
Of pacience forto hiere,
So that I mihte in mi matiere
The more unto my love obeie
And puten mi desese aweie.
Mi Sone, a man to beie him pes
Behoveth soffre as Socrates
Ensample lefte, which is write:
And for thou schalt the sothe wite,
Of this ensample what I mene,
Although it be now litel sene
Among the men thilke evidence,
Yit he was upon pacience
So sett, that he himself assaie
In thing which mihte him most mispaie
Desireth, and a wickid wif
He weddeth, which in sorwe and strif
Ayein his ese was contraire.
Bot he spak evere softe and faire,
Til it befell, as it is told,
In wynter, whan the dai is cold,
This wif was fro the welle come,
Wher that a pot with water nome

Sche hath, and broghte it into house,
And sih how that hire seli spouse
Was sett and loked on a bok
Nyh to the fyr, as he which tok
His ese for a man of age.
And sche began the wode rage,
And axeth him what devel he thoghte,
And bar on hond that him ne roghte
What labour that sche toke on honde,
And seith that such an Housebonde
Was to a wif noght worth a Stre.
He seide nowther nay ne ye,
Bot hield him stille and let hire chyde;
And sche, which mai herself noght hyde,
Began withinne forto swelle,
And that sche broghte in fro the welle,
The waterpot sche hente alofte
And bad him speke, and he al softe
Sat stille and noght a word ansuerde;
And sche was wroth that he so ferde,
And axeth him if he be ded;
And al the water on his hed
Sche pourede oute and bad awake.
Bot he, which wolde noght forsake
His Pacience, thanne spak,
And seide how that he fond no lak
In nothing which sche hadde do:
For it was wynter time tho,
And wynter, as be weie of kinde
Which stormy is, as men it finde,
Ferst makth the wyndes forto blowe,
And after that withinne a throwe
He reyneth and the watergates
Undoth; 'and thus my wif algates,
Which is with reson wel besein,
Hath mad me bothe wynd and rein
After the Sesoun of the yer.'
And thanne he sette him nerr the fer,
And as he mihte hise clothes dreide,
That he nomore o word ne seide;
Wherof he gat him somdel reste,
For that him thoghte was the beste.

I not if thilke ensample yit
Acordeth with a mannes wit,
To soffre as Socrates tho dede:
And if it falle in eny stede
A man to lese so his galle,
Him oghte among the wommen alle
In loves Court be juggement
The name bere of Pacient,
To yive ensample to the goode
Of pacience how that it stode,
That othre men it mihte knowe.
And, Sone, if thou at eny throwe
Be tempted ayein Pacience,
Tak hiede upon this evidence;
It schal per cas the lasse grieve.
Mi fader, so as I believe,
Of that schal be no maner nede,
For I wol take so good hiede,
That er I falle in such assai,
I thenke eschuie it, if I mai.
Bot if ther be oght elles more
Wherof I mihte take lore,
I preie you, so as I dar,
Now telleth, that I mai be war,
Som other tale in this matiere.
Sone, it is evere good to lere,
Wherof thou miht thi word restreigne,
Er that thou falle in eny peine.
For who that can no conseil hyde,
He mai noght faile of wo beside,
Which schal befalle er he it wite,
As I finde in the bokes write.
Yit cam ther nevere good of strif,
To seche in all a mannes lif:
Thogh it beginne on pure game,
Fulofte it torneth into grame
And doth grevance upon som side.
Wherof the grete Clerk Ovide
After the lawe which was tho
Of Jupiter and of Juno
Makth in his bokes mencioun
How thei felle at dissencioun

In manere as it were a borde,
As thei begunne forto worde
Among hemself in privete:
And that was upon this degree,
Which of the tuo more amorous is,
Or man or wif. And upon this
Thei mihten noght acorde in on,
And toke a jugge therupon,
Which cleped is Tiresias,
And bede him demen in the cas;
And he withoute avisement
Ayein Juno yaf juggement.
This goddesse upon his ansuere
Was wroth and wolde noght forbere,
Bot tok away for everemo
The liht fro bothe hise yhen tuo.
Whan Jupiter this harm hath sein,
An other bienfait therayein
He yaf, and such a grace him doth,
That for he wiste he seide soth,
A Sothseiere he was for evere:
Bot yit that other were levere,
Have had the lokinge of his yhe,
Than of his word the prophecie;
Bot how so that the sothe wente,
Strif was the cause of that he hente
So gret a peine bodily.
Mi Sone, be thou war ther by,
And hold thi tunge stille clos:
For who that hath his word desclos
Er that he wite what he mene,
He is fulofte nyh his tene
And lest ful many time grace,
Wher that he wolde his thonk pourchace.
And over this, my Sone diere,
Of othre men, if thou miht hier
In privete what thei have wroght,
Hold conseil and descoevere it noght,
For Chestre can no conseil hele,
Or be it wo or be it wele:
And tak a tale into thi mynde,
The which of olde ensample I finde.

Phebus, which makth the daies lihte,
A love he hadde, which tho hihte
Cornide, whom aboven alle
He pleseth: bot what schal befall
Of love ther is noman knoweth,
Bot as fortune hire happes throweth.
So it befell upon a chaunce,
A yong kniht tok hire aqueintance
And hadde of hire al that he wolde:
Bot a fals bridd, which sche hath holde
And kept in chambre of pure yowthe,
Discoevereth all that evere he cowthe.
This briddes name was as tho
Corvus, the which was thanne also
Welmore whyt than eny Swan,
And he that schrewe al that he can
Of his ladi to Phebus seide;
And he for wraththe his swerd outbreide,
With which Cornide anon he slowh.
Bot after him was wo ynowh,
And tok a full gret repentance,
Wherof in tokne and remembrance
Of hem whiche usen wicke speche,
Upon this bridd he tok this wreche,
That ther he was snow whyt tofore,
Evere afterward colblak therfore
He was transformed, as it scheweth,
And many a man yit him beschreweth,
And clepen him into this day
A Raven, be whom yit men mai
Take evidence, whan he crieth,
That som mishapp it signefieth.
Be war therfore and sei the beste,
If thou wolt be thiself in reste,
Mi goode Sone, as I the rede.
For in an other place I rede
Of thilke Nimphe which Laar hihte:
For sche the privete be nyhte,
How Jupiter lay be Jutorne,
Hath told, god made hire overtorne:
Hire tunge he kutte, and into helle
For evere he sende hir forto duelle,

As sche that was noght worthi hiere
To ben of love a Chamberere,
For sche no conseil cowthe hele.
And suche adaies be now fele
In loves Court, as it is seid,
That lete here tungen gon unteid.
Mi Sone, be thou non of tho,
To jangle and telle tales so,
And namely that thou ne chyde,
For Cheste can no conseil hide,
For Wraththe seide nevere wel.
Mi fader, soth is everydel
That ye me teche, and I wol holde
The reule to which I am holde,
To fle the Cheste, as ye me bidde,
For wel is him that nevere chidde.
Now tell me forth if ther be more
As touchende unto Wraththes lore.
Of Wraththe yit ther is an other,
Which is to Cheste his oghne brother,
And is be name cleped Hate,
That soffreth noght withinne his gate
That ther come owther love or pes,
For he wol make no rele
Of no debat which is befallle.
Now spek, if thou art on of alle,
That with this vice hast ben withholde.
As yit for oght that ye me tolde,
Mi fader, I not what it is.
In good feith, Sone, I trowe yis.
Mi fader, nay, bot ye me lere.
Now lest, my Sone, and thou schalt here.
Hate is a wraththe noght schewende,
Bot of long time gaderende,
And duelleth in the herte loken,
Til he se time to be wroken;
And thanne he scheweth his tempeste
Mor sodein than the wilde beste,
Which wot nothing what merci is.
Mi Sone, art thou knowende of this?
My goode fader, as I wene,
Now wot I somdel what ye mene;

Bot I dar saufly make an oth,
Mi ladi was me nevere loth.
I wol noght swere natheles
That I of hate am gulteles;
For whanne I to my ladi plie
Fro dai to dai and merci crie,
And sche no merci on me leith
Bot schorte wordes to me seith,
Thogh I my ladi love algate,
Tho wordes moste I nedes hate;
And wolde thei were al despent,
Or so ferr oute of londe went
That I nevere after scholde hem hiere;
And yit love I my ladi diere.
Thus is ther Hate, as ye mai se,
Betwen mi ladi word and me;
The word I hate and hire I love,
What so me schal betide of love.
Bot forthere mor I wol me schryve,
That I have hated al my lyve
These janglers, whiche of here Envie
Ben evere redi forto lie;
For with here fals compassement
Fuloften thei have mad me schent
And hindred me fulofte time,
Whan thei no cause wisten bime,
Bot onliche of here oghne thoght:
And thus fuloften have I boght
The lie, and drank noght of the wyn.
I wolde here happ were such as myn:
For how so that I be now schrive,
To hem ne mai I noght foryive,
Til that I se hem at debat
With love, and thanne myn astat
Thei mihten be here oghne deme,
And loke how wel it scholde hem qweme
To hindre a man that loveth sore.
And thus I hate hem everemore,
Til love on hem wol don his wreche:
For that schal I alway beseche
Unto the mihti Cupido,
That he so mochel wolde do,

So as he is of love a godd,
To smyte hem with the same rodd
With which I am of love smite;
So that thei mihten knowe and wite
How hindringe is a wofull peine
To him that love wolde atteigne.
Thus evere on hem I wayte and hope,
Til I mai sen hem lepe a lope,
And halten on the same Sor
Which I do now: for overmor
I wolde thanne do my myht
So forto stonden in here lyht,
That thei ne scholden finde a weie
To that thei wolde, bot aweie
I wolde hem putte out of the stede
Fro love, riht as thei me dede
With that thei speke of me be mowthe.
So wolde I do, if that I cowthe,
Of hem, and this, so god me save,
Is al the hate that I have,
Toward these janglers everydiel;
I wolde alle othre ferde wel.
Thus have I, fader, said mi wille;
Say ye now forth, for I am stille.
Mi Sone, of that thou hast me said
I holde me noght fulli paid:
That thou wolt haten eny man,
To that acorden I ne can,
Thogh he have hindred thee tofore.
Bot this I telle thee therfore,
Thou miht upon my beneicoun
Wel haten the condicioun
Of tho janglers, as thou me toldest,
Bot furthermor, of that thou woldest
Hem hindre in eny other wise,
Such Hate is evere to despise.
Forthi, mi Sone, I wol thee rede,
That thou drawe in be frendlihede
That thou ne miht noght do be hate;
So miht thou gete love algate
And sette thee, my Sone, in reste,
For thou schalt finde it for the beste.

And over this, so as I dar,
I rede that thou be riht war
Of othre mennes hate aboute,
Which every wysman scholde doute:
For Hate is evere upon await,
And as the fisshere on his bait
Sleth, whan he seth the fisshes faste,
So, whan he seth time ate laste,
That he mai worche an other wo,
Schal noman tornen him therfro,
That Hate nyle his felonie
Fulfille and feigne compaignie
Yit natheles, for fals Semblant
Is toward him of covenant
Withholde, so that under bothe
The prive wraththe can him clothe,
That he schal seme of gret believe.
Bot war thee wel that thou ne lieve
Al that thou sest tofore thin yhe,
So as the Gregois whilom syhe:
The bok of Troie who so rede,
Ther mai he finde ensample in dede.
Sone after the destruccioun,
Whan Troie was al bete doun
And slain was Priamus the king,
The Gregois, whiche of al this thing
Ben cause, tornen hom ayein.
Ther mai noman his happ withsein;
It hath be sen and felt fulofte,
The harde time after the softe:
Be See as thei forth homward wente,
A rage of gret tempeste hem hente;
Juno let bende hire parti bowe,
The Sky wax derk, the wynd gan blowe,
The firy welkne gan to thondre,
As thogh the world scholde al to sondre;
Fro hevene out of the watergates
The reyni Storm fell doun algates
And al here takel made unwelde,
That noman mihte himself bewelde.
Ther mai men hiere Schipmen crie,
That stode in aunter forto die:

He that behinde sat to stiere
Mai noght the forestempne hiere;
The Schip aros ayein the wawes,
The lodesman hath lost his lawes,
The See bet in on every side:
Thei nysten what fortune abide,
Bot sette hem al in goddes wille,
Wher he hem wolde save or spille.
And it fell thilke time thus:
Ther was a king, the which Namplus
Was hote, and he a Sone hadde,
At Troie which the Gregois ladde,
As he that was mad Prince of alle,
Til that fortune let him falle:
His name was Palamades.
Bot thurgh an hate natheles
Of some of hem his deth was cast
And he be tresoun overcast.
His fader, whan he herde it telle,
He swor, if evere his time felle,
He wolde him venge, if that he mihte,
And therto his avou behihte:
And thus this king thurgh prive hate
Abod upon await algate,
For he was noght of such emprise
To vengen him in open wise.
The fame, which goth wyde where,
Makth knowe how that the Gregois were
Homward with al the felaschipe
Fro Troie upon the See be Schipe.
Namplus, whan he this understod,
And knew the tydes of the flod,
And sih the wynd blew to the lond,
A gret deceipte anon he fond
Of prive hate, as thou schalt hiere,
Wherof I telle al this matiere.
This king the weder gan beholde,
And wiste wel thei moten holde
Here cours endlong his marche riht,
And made upon the derke nyht
Of grete Schydes and of blockes
Gret fyr ayein the grete rockes,

To schewe upon the helles hihe,
So that the Flete of Grece it sihe.
And so it fell riht as he thoghte:
This Flete, which an havene soghte,
The bryghte fyres sih a ferr,
And thei hem drowen nerr and nerr,
And wende wel and understode
How al that fyr was made for goode,
To schewe wher men scholde aryve,
And thiderward thei hasten blyve.
In Semblant, as men sein, is guile,
And that was proved thilke while;
The Schip, which wende his helpe acroche,
Drof al to pieces on the roche,
And so ther deden ten or twelve;
Ther mihte noman helpe himselve,
For ther thei wenden deth ascape,
Withouten help here deth was schape.
Thus thei that comen ferst tofore
Upon the Rockes be forlore,
Bot thurgh the noise and thurgh the cri
These othre were al war therby;
And whan the dai began to rowe,
Tho mihten thei the sothe knowe,
That wher they wenden frendes finde,
Thei founden frenschipe al behinde.
The lond was thanne sone weyved,
Wher that thei hadden be deceived,
And toke hem to the hihe See;
Therto thei seiden alle yee,
Fro that dai forth and war thei were
Of that thei hadde assaied there.
Mi Sone, hierof thou miht advise
How fraude stant in many wise
Amonges hem that guile thenke;
Ther is no Scrivein with his enke
Which half the fraude wryte can
That stant in such a maner man:
Forthi the wise men ne demen
The thinges after that thei semen,
Bot after that thei knowe and finde.
The Mirour scheweth in his kinde

As he hadde al the world withinne,
And is in soth nothing therinne;
And so farth Hate for a throwe:
Til he a man hath overthrowe,
Schal noman knowe be his chere
Which is avant, ne which arere.
Forthi, mi Sone, thenke on this.
Mi fader, so I wole ywiss;
And if ther more of Wraththe be,
Now axeth forth per charite,
As ye be youre bokes knowe,
And I the sothe schal beknowe.
Mi Sone, thou schalt understonde
That yit towards Wraththe stonde
Of dedly vices othre tuo:
And forto telle here names so,
It is Contek and Homicide,
That ben to drede on every side.
Contek, so as the bokes sein,
Folhast hath to his Chamberlein,
Be whos conseil al unavised
Is Pacience most despised,
Til Homicide with hem meete.
Fro merci thei ben al unmeete,
And thus ben thei the worste of alle
Of hem whiche unto wraththe falle,
In dede bothe and ek in thoght:
For thei acompte here wraththe at noght,
Bot if ther be schedinge of blod;
And thus lich to a beste wod
Thei knowe noght the god of lif.
Be so thei have or swerd or knif
Here dedly wraththe forto wreke,
Of Pite list hem noght to speke;
Non other reson thei ne fonge,
Bot that thei ben of mihtes stronge.
Bot war hem wel in other place,
Where every man behoveth grace,
Bot ther I trowe it schal hem faile,
To whom no merci mihte availe,
Bot wroghten upon tiraundie,
That no pite ne mihte hem plie.

Now tell, my Sone. Fader, what?
If thou hast be coupable of that.
Mi fader, nay, Crist me forbiede:
I speke onliche as of the dede,
Of which I nevere was coupable
Withoute cause resonable.
Bot this is noght to mi matiere
Of schrifte, why we sitten hiere;
For we ben sett to schryve of love,
As we begunne ferst above:
And natheles I am beknowe
That as touchende of loves throwe,
Whan I my wittes overwende,
Min hertes contek hath non ende,
Bot evere it stant upon debat
To gret desese of myn astat
As for the time that it lasteth.
For whan mi fortune overcasteth
Hire whiel and is to me so strange,
And that I se sche wol noght change,
Than caste I al the world aboute,
And thenke hou I at home and oute
Have al my time in vein despended,
And se noght how to ben amended,
Bot rather forto be empeired,
As he that is welnyh despeired:
For I ne mai no thonk deserve,
And evere I love and evere I serve,
And evere I am aliche nerr.
Thus, for I stonde in such a wer,
I am, as who seith, out of herre;
And thus upon miself the werre
I bringe, and putte out alle pes,
That I fulofte in such a res
Am wery of myn oghne lif.
So that of Contek and of strif
I am beknowe and have ansuerd,
As ye, my fader, now have herd.
Min herte is wonderly begon
With conseil, wherof witt is on,
Which hath resoun in compaignie;
Ayein the whiche stant partie

Will, which hath hope of his acord,
And thus thei bringen up descord.
Witt and resoun conseilen ofte
That I myn herte scholde softe,
And that I scholde will remue
And put him out of retenue,
Or elles holde him under fote:
For as thei sein, if that he mote
His oghne rewle have upon honde,
Ther schal no witt ben understonde.
Of hope also thei tellen this,
That overal, wher that he is,
He set the herte in jeupartie
With wihssinge and with fantasie,
And is noght trewe of that he seith,
So that in him ther is no feith:
Thus with reson and wit avised
Is will and hope aldai despised.
Reson seith that I scholde leve
To love, wher ther is no leve
To spede, and will seith therayein
That such an herte is to vilein,
Which dar noght love and til he spede,
Let hope serve at such a nede:
He seith ek, where an herte sit
Al hol governed upon wit,
He hath this lyves lust forlore.
And thus myn herte is al totore
Of such a Contek as thei make:
Bot yit I mai noght will forsake,
That he nys Maister of my thoght,
Or that I spede, or spede noght.
Thou dost, my Sone, ayein the riht;
Bot love is of so gret a miht,
His lawe mai noman refuse,
So miht thou thee the betre excuse.
And natheles thou schalt be lerned
That will scholde evere be governed
Of reson more than of kinde,
Wherof a tale write I finde.
A Philosophre of which men tolde
Ther was whilom be daies olde,

And Diogenes thanne he hihte.
So old he was that he ne mihte
The world travaile, and for the beste
He schop him forto take his reste,
And duelte at hom in such a wise,
That nyh his hous he let devise
Endlong upon an Axeltre
To sette a tonne in such degre,
That he it mihte torne aboute;
Wherof on hed was taken oute,
For he therinne sitte scholde
And torne himself so as he wolde,
To take their and se the hevene
And deme of the planetes sevene,
As he which cowthe mochel what.
And thus fulofte there he sat
To muse in his philosophie
Solein withoute compaignie:
So that upon a morwetyde,
As thing which scholde so betyde,
Whan he was set ther as him liste
To loke upon the Sonne ariste,
Wherof the propretes he sih,
It fell ther cam ridende nyh
King Alisandre with a route;
And as he caste his yhe aboute,
He sih this Tonne, and what it mente
He wolde wite, and thider sente
A knyht, be whom he mihte it knowe,
And he himself that ilke throwe
Abod, and hoveth there stille.
This kniht after the kinges wille
With spore made his hors to gon
And to the tonne he cam anon,
Wher that he fond a man of Age,
And he him tolde the message,
Such as the king him hadde bede,
And axeth why in thilke stede
The Tonne stod, and what it was.
And he, which understod the cas,
Sat stille and spak no word ayein.
The kniht bad speke and seith, 'Vilein,

Thou schalt me telle, er that I go;
It is thi king which axeth so.'
'Mi king,' quod he, 'that were unriht.'
'What is he thanne?' seith the kniht,
'Is he thi man?' 'That seie I noght,'
Quod he, 'bot this I am bethoght,
Mi mannes man hou that he is.'
'Thou lvest, false cherl, ywiss,'
The kniht him seith, and was riht wroth,
And to the king ayein he goth
And tolde him how this man ansuerde.
The king, whan he this tale herde,
Bad that thei scholden alle abyde,
For he himself wol thider ryde.
And whan he cam tofore the tonne,
He hath his tale thus begonne:
'Alheil,' he seith, 'what man art thou?'
Quod he, 'Such on as thou sest now.'
The king, which hadde wordes wise,
His age wolde noght despise,
Bot seith, 'Mi fader, I thee preie
That thou me wolt the cause seie,
How that I am thi mannes man.'
'Sire king,' quod he, 'and that I can,
If that thou wolt.' 'Yis,' seith the king.
Quod he, 'This is the sothe thing:
Sith I first resoun understod,
And knew what thing was evel and good,
The will which of my bodi moeveth,
Whos werkes that the god reproeveth,
I have restreigned everemore,
As him which stant under the lore
Of reson, whos soubgit he is,
So that he mai noght don amis:
And thus be weie of covenant
Will is my man and my servant,
And evere hath ben and evere schal.
And thi will is thi principal,
And hath the lordschipe of thi witt,
So that thou cowthest nevere yit
Take o dai reste of thi labour;
Bot forto ben a conquerour

Of worldes good, which mai noght laste,
Thou hiest evere aliche faste,
Wher thou no reson hast to winne:
And thus thi will is cause of Sinne,
And is thi lord, to whom thou servest,
Wherof thou litel thonk deservest.'
The king of that he thus answerde
Was nothing wroth, bot whanne he herde
The hihe wisdom which he seide,
With goodly wordes this he preide,
That he him wolde telle his name.
'I am,' quod he, 'that ilke same,
The which men Diogenes calle.'
Tho was the king riht glad withalle,
For he hadde often herd tofore
What man he was, so that therfore
He seide, 'O wise Diogene,
Now schal thi grete witt be sene;
For thou schalt of my yifte have
What worldes thing that thou wolt crave.'
Quod he, 'Thanne hove out of mi Sonne,
And let it schyne into mi Tonne;
For thou benymst me thilke yifte,
Which lith noght in thi miht to schifte:
Non other good of thee me nedeth.'
This king, whom every contre dredeth,
Lo, thus he was enformed there:
Wherof, my Sone, thou miht lere
How that thi will schal noght be lieved,
Where it is noght of wit relieved.
And thou hast seid thiself er this
How that thi will thi maister is;
Thurgh which thin hertes thoght withinne
Is evere of Contek to beginne,
So that it is gretli to drede
That it non homicide brede.
For love is of a wonder kinde,
And hath hise wittes ofte blinde,
That thei fro mannes reson falle;
Bot whan that it is so befalle
That will schal the corage lede,
In loves cause it is to drede:

Wherof I finde ensample write,
Which is behovely forto wite.
I rede a tale, and telleth this:
The Cite which Semiramis
Enclosed hath with wall aboute,
Of worthi folk with many a route
Was enhabited here and there;
Among the whiche tuo ther were
Above alle othre noble and grete,
Dwellende tho withinne a Strete
So nyh togedre, as it was sene,
That ther was nothing hem betwene,
Bot wow to wow and wall to wall.
This o lord hadde in special
A Sone, a lusti Bachelier,
In al the toun was non his pier:
That other hadde a dowhter eke,
In al the lond that forto seke
Men wisten non so faire as sche.
And fell so, as it scholde be,
This faire dowhter nyh this Sone
As thei togedre thanne wone,
Cupide hath so the thinges schape,
That thei ne mihte his hand ascape,
That he his fyr on hem ne caste:
Wherof her herte he overcaste
To folwe thilke lore and suie
Which nevere man yit miht eschuie;
And that was love, as it is happed,
Which hath here hertes so betrapped,
That thei be alle weies seche
How that thei mihten winne a speche,
Here wofull peine forto lisse.
Who loveth wel, it mai noght misse,
And namely whan ther be tuo
Of on acord, how so it go,
Bot if that thei som weie finde;
For love is evere of such a kinde
And hath his folk so wel affaited,
That howso that it be awaited,
Ther mai noman the pourpos lette:
And thus between hem tuo thei sette

And hole upon a wall to make,
Thurgh which thei have her conseil take
At alle times, whan thei myhte.
This faire Maiden Tisbee hihte,
And he whom that sche loveth hote
Was Piramus be name hote.
So longe here lecoun thei recorden,
Til ate laste thei acorden
Be nihtes time forto wende
Al one out fro the tounes ende,
Wher was a welle under a Tree;
And who cam ferst, or sche or he,
He scholde stille there abide.
So it befell the nyhtes tide
This maiden, which disguised was,
Al prively the softe pas
Goth thurgh the large toun unknowe,
Til that sche cam withinne a throwe
Wher that sche liketh forto duelle,
At thilke unhappi freisshe welle,
Which was also the Forest nyh.
Wher sche comende a Leoun syh
Into the feld to take his preie,
In haste and sche tho fledde aweie,
So as fortune scholde falle,
For feere and let hire wympel falle
Nyh to the welle upon therbage.
This Leoun in his wilde rage
A beste, which that he fond oute,
Hath slain, and with his blodi snoute,
Whan he hath eten what he wolde,
To drynke of thilke stremes colde
Cam to the welle, where he fond
The wympel, which out of hire hond
Was falle, and he it hath todrawe,
Bebled aboute and al forgnawe;
And thanne he strawhte him forto drinke
Upon the freisshe welles brinke,
And after that out of the plein
He torneth to the wode ayein.
And Tisbee dorste noght remue,
Bot as a bridd which were in Mue

Withinne a buissh sche kepte hire clos
So stille that sche noght aros;
Unto hirself and pleigneth ay.
And fell, whil that sche there lay,
This Piramus cam after sone
Unto the welle, and be the Mone
He fond hire wimpel blodi there.
Cam nevere yit to mannes Ere
Tidinge, ne to mannes sihte
Merveile, which so sore aflihte
A mannes herte, as it tho dede
To him, which in the same stede
With many a wofull compleignyng
Began his handes forto wringe,
As he which demeth sikerly
That sche be ded: and sodeinly
His swerd al nakid out he breide
In his folhaste, and thus he seide:
'I am cause of this felonie,
So it is resoun that I die,
As sche is ded be cause of me.'
And with that word upon his kne
He fell, and to the goddes alle
Up to the hevene he gan to calle,
And preide, sithen it was so
That he may noght his love as tho
Have in this world, that of her grace
He miht hire have in other place,
For hiere wolde he noght abide,
He seith: bot as it schal betide,
The Pomel of his swerd to grounde
He sette, and thurgh his herte a wounde
He made up to the bare hilde:
And in this wise himself he spilte
With his folhaste and deth he nam;
For sche withinne a while cam,
Wher he lai ded upon his knif.
So wofull yit was nevere lif
As Tisbee was, whan sche him sih:
Sche mihte noght o word on hih
Speke oute, for hire herte schette,
That of hir lif no pris sche sette,

Bot ded swounende doun sche fell.
Til after, whanne it so befell
That sche out of hire traunce awok,
With many a wofull pitous lok
Hire yhe alwei among sche caste
Upon hir love, and ate laste
Sche cawhte breth and seide thus:
'O thou which cleped art Venus,
Goddesse of love, and thou, Cupide,
Which loves cause hast forto guide,
I wot now wel that ye be blinde,
Of thilke unhapp which I now finde
Only between my love and me.
This Piramus, which hiere I se
Bledende, what hath he deserved?
For he youre heste hath kept and served,
And was yong and I bothe also:
Helas, why do ye with ous so?
Ye sette oure herte bothe afyre,
And maden ous such thing desire
Wherof that we no skile cowthe;
Bot thus oure freisshe lusti yowthe
Withoute joie is al despended,
Which thing mai nevere ben amended:
For as of me this wol I seie,
That me is levere forto deie
Than live after this sorghful day.'
And with this word, where as he lay,
Hire love in armes sche embraseth,
Hire oghne deth and so purchaseth
That now sche wepte and nou sche kiste,
Til ate laste, er sche it wiste,
So gret a sorwe is to hire falle,
Which overgoth hire wittes alle.
As sche which mihte it noght asterte,
The swerdes point ayein hire herte
Sche sette, and fell doun therupon,
Wherof that sche was ded anon:
And thus bothe on o swerd bledende
Thei weren founde ded liggende.
Now thou, mi Sone, hast herd this tale,
Bewar that of thin oghne bale

Thou be noght cause in thi folhaste,
And kep that thou thi witt ne waste
Upon thi thoght in aventure,
Wherof thi lyves forfeiture
Mai falle: and if thou have so thoght
Er this, tell on and hyde it noght.
Mi fader, upon loves side
Mi conscience I woll noght hyde,
How that for love of pure wo
I have ben ofte moeved so,
That with my wisshes if I myhte,
A thousand times, I yow plyhte,
I hadde storven in a day;
And therof I me schryve may,
Though love fully me ne slowh,
Mi will to deie was ynowh,
So am I of my will coupable:
And yit is sche noght merciabile,
Which mai me yive lif and hele.
Bot that hir list noght with me dele,
I wot be whos conseil it is,
And him wolde I long time er this,
And yit I wolde and evere schal,
Slen and destruie in special.
The gold of nyne kinges londes
Ne scholde him save fro myn hondes,
In my pouer if that he were;
Bot yit him stant of me no fere
For noght that evere I can manace.
He is the hindrere of mi grace,
Til he be ded I mai noght spede;
So mot I nedes taken hiede
And schape how that he were aweie,
If I therto mai finde a weie.
Mi Sone, tell me now forthi,
Which is that mortiel enemy
That thou manacest to be ded.
Mi fader, it is such a qwed,
That wher I come, he is tofore,
And doth so, that mi cause is lore.
What is his name? It is Daunger,
Which is mi ladi consailer:

For I was nevere yit so slyh,
To come in eny place nyh
Wher as sche was be nyht or day,
That Danger ne was redy ay,
With whom for speche ne for mede
Yit mihte I nevere of love spede;
For evere this I finde soth,
Al that my ladi seith or doth
To me, Daunger schal make an ende,
And that makth al mi world miswende:
And evere I axe his help, bot he
Mai wel be cleped sanz pite;
For ay the more I to him bowe,
The lasse he wol my tale alowe.
He hath mi ladi so englued,
Sche wol noght that he be remued;
For evere he hangeth on hire Seil,
And is so prive of conseil,
That evere whanne I have oght bede,
I finde Danger in hire stede
And myn ansuere of him I have;
Bot for no merci that I crave,
Of merci nevere a point I hadde.
I finde his ansuere ay so badde,
That werse mihte it nevere be:
And thus betwen Danger and me
Is evere werre til he dye.
Bot mihte I ben of such maistrie,
That I Danger hadde overcome,
With that were al my joie come.
Thus wolde I wonde for no Sinne,
Ne yit for al this world to winne;
If that I mihte finde a sleyhte,
To leie al myn astat in weyhte,
I wolde him fro the Court dissevere,
So that he come ayeinward nevere.
Therefore I wisshe and wolde fain
That he were in som wise slain;
For while he stant in thilke place,
Ne gete I noght my ladi grace.
Thus hate I dedly thilke vice,
And wolde he stode in non office

In place wher mi ladi is;
For if he do, I wot wel this,
That owther schal he deie or I
Withinne a while; and noght forthi
On my ladi fulofte I muse,
How that sche mai hirself excuse,
If that I deie in such a plit.
Me thenkth sche mihte noght be qwyte
That sche ne were an homicide:
And if it scholde so betide,
As god forbiede it scholde be,
Be double weie it is pite.
For I, which al my will and witt
Have yove and served evere yit,
And thanne I scholde in such a wise
In rewardinge of my servise
Be ded, me thenkth it were a rowthe:
And furthermor, to telle trowthe,
Sche, that hath evere be wel named,
Were worthi thanne to be blamed
And of reson to ben appeled,
Whan with o word sche mihte have heled
A man, and soffreth him so deie.
Ha, who sawh evere such a weie?
Ha, who sawh evere such destresse?
Withoute pite gentillesse,
Withoute mercy wommanhede,
That wol so quyte a man his mede,
Which evere hath be to love trewe.
Mi goode fader, if ye rewe
Upon mi tale, tell me now,
And I wol stinte and herkne yow.
Mi Sone, attempre thi corage
Fro Wraththe, and let thin herte assuage:
For who so wole him underfonge,
He mai his grace abide longe,
Er he of love be received;
And ek also, bot it be weyved,
Ther mihte mochel thing befalle,
That scholde make a man to falle
Fro love, that nevere afterward
Ne durste he loke thiderward.

In harde weies men gon softe,
And er thei clymbe avise hem ofte:
Men sen alday that rape reweth;
And who so wicked Ale breweth,
Fulofte he mot the werse drinke:
Betre is to flete than to sincke;
Betre is upon the bridel chiewe
Thanne if he felle and overthrewe,
The hors and stikede in the Myr:
To caste water in the fyr
Betre is than brenne up al the hous:
The man which is malicious
And folhastif, fulofte he falleth,
And selden is whan love him calleth.
Forthi betre is to soffre a throwe
Than be to wilde and overthrowe;
Suffrance hath evere be the beste
To wissen him that secheth reste:
And thus, if thou wolt love and spede,
Mi Sone, soffre, as I the rede.
What mai the Mous ayein the Cat?
And for this cause I axe that,
Who mai to love make a werre,
That he ne hath himself the werre?
Love axeth pes and evere schal,
And who that fiheth most withal
Schal lest conquere of his emprise:
For this thei tellen that ben wise,
Wicke is to stryve and have the werse;
To hasten is noght worth a kerse;
Thing that a man mai noght achieve,
That mai noght wel be don at Eve,
It mot abide til the morwe.
Ne haste noght thin oghne sorwe,
Mi Sone, and tak this in thi witt,
He hath noght lost that wel abitt.
Ensample that it falleth thus,
Thou miht wel take of Pirus,
Whan he in haste his swerd outdrowh
And on the point himselve slowh
For love of Tisbee pitously,
For he hire wympel fond bloody

And wende a beste hire hadde slain;
Wher as him oghte have be riht fain,
For sche was there al sauf beside:
Bot for he wolde noght abide,
This meschief fell. Forthi be war,
Mi Sone, as I the warne dar,
Do thou nothing in such a res,
For suffrance is the welle of Pes.
Thogh thou to loves Court poursuie,
Yit sit it wel that thou eschuie
That thou the Court noght overhaste,
For so miht thou thi time waste;
Bot if thin happ therto be schape,
It mai noght helpe forto rape.
Therefore attempre thi corage;
Folhaste doth non advantage,
Bot ofte it set a man behinde
In cause of love, and that I finde
Be olde ensample, as thou schalt hiere,
Touchende of love in this matiere.
A Maiden whilom ther was on,
Which Daphne hihte, and such was non
Of beaute thanne, as it was seid.
Phebus his love hath on hire leid,
And therupon to hire he soghte
In his folhaste, and so besoghte,
That sche with him no reste hadde;
For evere upon hire love he gradde,
And sche seide evere unto him nay.
So it befell upon a dai,
Cupide, which hath every chance
Of love under his governance,
Syh Phebus hasten him so sore:
And for he scholde him haste more,
And yit noght speden ate laste,
A dart thurghout his herte he caste,
Which was of gold and al afyre,
That made him manyfold desire
Of love more thanne he dede.
To Daphne ek in the same stede
A dart of Led he caste and smot,
Which was al cold and nothing hot.

And thus Phebus in love brenneth,
And in his haste aboute renneth,
To loke if that he mihte winne;
Bot he was evere to beginne,
For evere awei fro him sche fledde,
So that he nevere his love spedde.
And forto make him full believe
That no Folhaste mihte achieve
To gete love in such degree,
This Daphne into a lorer tre
Was torned, which is evere grene,
In tokne, as yit it mai be sene,
That sche schal duelle a maiden stille,
And Phebus failen of his wille.
Be suche ensamples, as thei stonde,
Mi Sone, thou miht understonde,
To hasten love is thing in vein,
Whan that fortune is therayein.
To take where a man hath leve
Good is, and elles he mot leve;
For whan a mannes happes failen,
Ther is non haste mai availen.
Mi fader, grant merci of this:
Bot while I se mi ladi is
No tre, but halt hire oghne forme,
Ther mai me noman so enforme,
To whether part fortune wende,
That I unto mi lyves ende
Ne wol hire serven everemo.
Mi Sone, sithen it is so,
I seie nomor; bot in this cas
Bewar how it with Phebus was.
Noght only upon loves chance,
Bot upon every governance
Which falleth unto mannes dede,
Folhaste is evere forto drede,
And that a man good consail take,
Er he his pourpos undertake,
For consail put Folhaste aweie.
Now goode fader, I you preie,
That forto wisse me the more,
Som good ensample upon this lore

Ye wolden telle of that is write,
That I the betre mihte wite
How I Folhaste scholde eschuie,
And the wisdom of conseil suie.
Mi Sone, that thou miht enforme
Thi pacience upon the forme
Of old essamples, as thei felle,
Now understond what I schal telle.
Whan noble Troie was belein
And overcome, and hom ayein
The Gregois torned fro the siege,
The kinges founde here oghne liege
In manye places, as men seide,
That hem forsoke and desobeide.
Among the whiche fell this cas
To Demephon and Athemas,
That weren kinges bothe tuo,
And bothe weren served so:
Here lieges wolde hem noght receive,
So that thei mote algates weyve
To seche lond in other place,
For there founde thei no grace.
Wherof they token hem to rede,
And soghten frendes ate nede,
And ech of hem assureth other
To helpe as to his oghne brother,
To vengen hem of thilke outrage
And winne ayein here heritage.
And thus thei ryde aboute faste
To gete hem help, and ate laste
Thei hadden pouer sufficient,
And maden thanne a covenant,
That thei ne scholden no lif save,
Ne prest, ne clerc, ne lord, ne knave,
Ne wif, ne child, of that thei finde,
Which berth visage of mannes kinde,
So that no lif schal be socoured,
Bot with the dedly swerd devoured:
In such Folhaste here ordinance
Thei schapen forto do vengeance.
Whan this pourpos was wist and knowe
Among here host, tho was ther blowe

Of wordes many a speche aboute:
Of yonge men the lusti route
Were of this tale glad ynowh,
Ther was no care for the plowh;
As thei that weren Folhastif,
Thei ben acorded to the strif,
And sein it mai noght be to gret
To vengen hem of such forfet:
Thus seith the wilde unwise tonge
Of hem that there weren yonge.
Bot Nestor, which was old and hor,
The salve sih tofore the sor,
As he that was of conseil wys:
So that anon be his avis
Ther was a prive conseil nome.
The lordes ben togedre come;
This Demephon and Athemas
Here pourpos tolden, as it was;
Thei sieten alle stille and herde,
Was non bot Nestor hem ansuerde.
He bad hem, if thei wolde winne,
They scholden se, er thei beginne,
Here ende, and sette here ferste entente,
That thei hem after ne repente:
And axeth hem this questioun,
To what final conclusioun
Thei wolde regne Kinges there,
If that no poeple in londe were;
And seith, it were a wonder wierde
To sen a king become an hierde,
Wher no lif is bot only beste
Under the liegance of his heste;
For who that is of man no king,
The remenant is as no thing.
He seith ek, if the pourpos holde
To sle the poeple, as thei tuo wolde,
Whan thei it mihte noght restore,
Al Grece it scholde abegge sore,
To se the wilde beste wone
Wher whilom duelte a mannes Sone:
And for that cause he bad hem trete,
And stinte of the manaces grete.

Betre is to winne be fair speche,
He seith, than such vengeance seche;
For whanne a man is most above,
Him nedeth most to gete him love.
Whan Nestor hath his tale seid,
Ayein him was no word withseid;
It thoghte hem alle he seide wel:
And thus fortune hire dedly whiel
Fro werre torneth into pes.
Bot forth thei wenten natheles;
And whan the Contres herde sein
How that here kinges be besein
Of such a pouer as thei ladde,
Was non so bold that hem ne dradde,
And forto seche pes and grith
Thei sende and preide anon forthwith,
So that the kinges ben appesed,
And every mannes herte is esed;
Al was foryete and noght recorded.
And thus thei ben togedre acorded;
The kinges were ayein received,
And pes was take and wraththe weived,
And al thurgh conseil which was good
Of him that reson understod.
Be this ensample, Sone, attempre
Thin herte and let no will distempre
Thi wit, and do nothing be myht
Which mai be do be love and riht.
Folhaste is cause of mochel wo;
Forthi, mi Sone, do noght so.
And as touchende of Homicide
Which toucheth unto loves side,
Fulofte it falleth unavised
Thurgh will, which is noght wel assised,
Whan wit and reson ben aweie
And that Folhaste is in the weie,
Wherof hath falle gret vengeance.
Forthi tak into remembrance
To love in such a maner wise
That thou deserve no juisse:
For wel I wot, thou miht noght lette,
That thou ne schalt thin herte sette

To love, wher thou wolt or non;
 Bot if thi wit be overgon,
 So that it torne into malice,
 Ther wot noman of thilke vice,
 What peril that ther mai befall:
 Wherof a tale amonges alle,
 Which is gret pite forto hiere,
 I thenke forto tellen hiere,
 That thou such moerdre miht withstonde,
 Whan thou the tale hast understonde.
 Of Troie at thilke noble toun,
 Whos fame stant yit of renoun
 And evere schal to mannes Ere,
 The Siege laste longe there,
 Er that the Greks it mihten winne,
 Whil Priamus was king therinne;
 Bot of the Greks that lyhe aboute
 Agamenon ladde al the route.
 This thing is knowen overal,
 Bot yit I thenke in special
 To my matiere therupon
 Telle in what wise Agamenon,
 Thurgh chance which mai noght be weived,
 Of love untrewed was deceived.
 An old sawe is, 'Who that is slyh
 In place where he mai be nyh,
 He makth the ferre Lieve loth':
 Of love and thus fulofte it goth.
 Ther while Agamenon batailleth
 To winne Troie, and it assaileth,
 Fro home and was long time ferr,
 Egistus drowh his qweene nerr,
 And with the leiser which he hadde
 This ladi at his wille he ladde:
 Climestre was hire rihte name,
 Sche was therof gretli to blame,
 To love there it mai noght laste.
 Bot fell to meschief ate laste;
 For whan this noble worthi kniht
 Fro Troie cam, the ferste nyht
 That he at home abedde lay,
 Egistus, longe er it was day,

As this Climestre him hadde asent,
And weren bothe of on assent,
Be treson slowh him in his bedd.
Bot moerdre, which mai noght ben hedd,
Sprong out to every mannes Ere,
Wherof the lond was full of fere.
Agamenon hath be this qweene
A Sone, and that was after sene;
Bot yit as thanne he was of yowthe,
A babe, which no reson cowthe,
And as godd wolde, it fell him thus.
A worthi kniht Taltabius
This yonge child hath in kepinge,
And whan he herde of this tidinge,
Of this treson, of this misdede,
He gan withinne himself to drede,
In aunter if this false Egiste
Upon him come, er he it wiste,
To take and moerdre of his malice
This child, which he hath to norrice:
And for that cause in alle haste
Out of the lond he gan him haste
And to the king of Crete he strawhte
And him this yonge lord betawhte,
And preide him for his fader sake
That he this child wolde undertake
And kepe him til he be of Age,
So as he was of his lignage;
And tolde him over al the cas,
How that his fadre moerdred was,
And hou Egistus, as men seide,
Was king, to whom the lond obeide.
And whanne Ydomeneux the king
Hath understandinge of this thing,
Which that this kniht him hadde told,
He made sorwe manyfold,
And tok this child into his warde,
And seide he wolde him kepe and warde,
Til that he were of such a myht
To handle a swerd and ben a knyht,
To venge him at his oghne wille.
And thus Horestes duelleth stille,

Such was the childes rihte name,
Which after wroghte mochel schame
In vengance of his fader deth.
The time of yeres overgeth,
That he was man of brede and lengthe,
Of wit, of manhod and of strengthe,
A fair persone amonges alle.
And he began to clepe and calle,
As he which come was to manne,
Unto the King of Crete thanne,
Preiende that he wolde him make
A kniht and pouer with him take,
For lengere wolde he noght beleve,
He seith, bot preith the king of leve
To gon and cleyme his heritage
And vengen him of thilke oultrage
Which was unto his fader do.
The king assenteth wel therto,
With gret honour and knyht him makth,
And gret pouer to him betakth,
And gan his journe forto caste:
So that Horestes ate laste
His leve tok and forth he goth.
As he that was in herte wroth,
His ferste pleinte to bemene,
Unto the Cite of Athene
He goth him forth and was received,
So there was he noght deceived.
The Duc and tho that weren wise
Thei profren hem to his servise;
And he hem thonketh of here profre
And seith himself he wol gon offre
Unto the goddes for his sped,
As alle men him yeven red.
So goth he to the temple forth:
Of yiftes that be mochel worth
His sacrifice and his offringe
He made; and after his axinge
He was ansuerd, if that he wolde
His stat recovere, thanne he scholde
Upon his Moder do vengance
So cruel, that the remembrance

Therof mihte everemore abide,
As sche that was an homicide
And of hire oghne lord Moerdrice.
Horestes, which of thilke office
Was nothing glad, as thanne he preide
Unto the goddes there and seide
That thei the juggement devise,
How sche schal take the juisse.
And therupon he hadde ansuere,
That he hire Pappes scholde of tere
Out of hire brest his oghne hondes,
And for ensample of alle londes
With hors sche scholde be todrawe,
Til houndes hadde hire bones gnawe
Withouten eny sepulture:
This was a wofull aventure.
And whan Horestes hath al herd,
How that the goddes have ansuerd,
Forth with the strengthe which he ladde
The Duc and his pouer he hadde,
And to a Cite forth thei gon,
The which was cleped Cropheon,
Where as Phoieus was lord and Sire,
Which profreth him withouten hyre
His help and al that he mai do,
As he that was riht glad therto,
To grieve his mortiel enemy:
And tolde hem certain cause why,
How that Egiste in Mariage
His dowhter whilom of full Age
Forlai, and afterward forsok,
Whan he Horestes Moder tok.
Men sein, 'Old Senne newe schame':
Thus more and more aros the blame
Ayein Egiste on every side.
Horestes with his host to ride
Began, and Phoieus with hem wente;
I trowe Egiste him schal repente.
Thei riden forth unto Micene,
Wher lay Climestre thilke qweene,
The which Horestes moder is:
And whan sche herde telle of this,

The gates weren faste schet,
And thei were of here entre let.
Anon this Cite was withoute
Belein and sieged al aboute,
And evere among thei it assaile,
Fro day to nyht and so travaile,
Til ate laste thei it wonne;
Tho was ther sorwe ynowh begonne.
Horestes dede his moder calle
Anon tofore the lordes alle
And ek tofor the poeple also,
To hire and tolde his tale tho,
And seide, 'O cruel beste unkinde,
How mihtest thou thin herte finde,
For eny lust of loves drawhte,
That thou acordest to the slawhte
Of him which was thin oghne lord?
Thi treson stant of such record,
Thou miht thi werkes noght forsake;
So mot I for mi fader sake
Vengance upon thi bodi do,
As I comanded am therto.
Unkindely for thou hast wroght,
Unkindeliche it schal be boght,
The Sone schal the Moder sle,
For that whilom thou seidest yee
To that thou scholdest nay have seid.'
And he with that his hond hath leid
Upon his Moder brest anon,
And rente out fro the bare bon
Hire Pappes bothe and caste aweie
Amiddes in the carte weie,
And after tok the dede cors
And let it drawe away with hors
Unto the hound and to the raven;
Sche was non other wise graven.
Egistus, which was elles where,
Tidinges comen to his Ere
How that Micenes was belein,
Bot what was more herd he noght sein;
With gret manace and mochel bost
He drowh pouer and made an host

And cam in rescousse of the toun.
Bot al the sleyhte of his tresoun
Horestes wiste it be asprie,
And of his men a gret partie
He made in buisshement abide,
To waite on him in such a tide
That he ne mihte here hond ascape:
And in this wise as he hath schape
The thing befell, so that Egiste
Was take, er he himself it wiste,
And was forth broght hise hondes bounde,
As whan men han a tretour founde.
And tho that weren with him take,
Whiche of tresoun were overtake,
Togedre in o sentence falle;
Bot false Egiste above hem alle
Was demed to diverse peine,
The worste that men cowthe ordeigne,
And so forth after be the lawe
He was unto the gibet drawe,
Where he above alle othre hongeth,
As to a tretour it belongeth.
Tho fame with hire swifte wynges
Aboute flyh and bar tidinges,
And made it cowth in alle londes
How that Horestes with hise hondes
Climestre his oghne Moder slowh.
Some sein he dede wel ynowh,
And som men sein he dede amis,
Diverse opinion ther is:
That sche is ded thei speken alle,
Bot pleinli hou it is befalle,
The matiere in so litel throwe
In soth ther mihte noman knowe
Bot thei that weren ate dede:
And comunliche in every nede
The worste speche is rathest herd
And lieved, til it be ansuerd.
The kinges and the lordes grete
Begonne Horestes forto threte
To puten him out of his regne:
'He is noght worthi forto regne,

The child which slowh his moder so,'
 Thei saide; and therupon also
 The lordes of comun assent
 A time sette of parlement,
 And to Athenes king and lord
 Togedre come of on accord,
 To knowe hou that the sothe was:
 So that Horestes in this cas
 Thei senden after, and he com.
 King Menelay the wordes nom
 And axeth him of this matiere:
 And he, that alle it mihten hiere,
 Ansuerde and tolde his tale alarge,
 And hou the goddes in his charge
 Comanded him in such a wise
 His oghne hond to do juisse.
 And with this tale a Duc aros,
 Which was a worthi kniht of los,
 His name was Menesteus
 And seide unto the lordes thus:
 'The wreeche which Horeste dede,
 It was thing of the goddes bede,
 And nothing of his crualte;
 And if ther were of mi degree
 In al this place such a kniht
 That wolde sein it was no riht,
 I wole it with my bodi prove.'
 And therupon he caste his glove,
 And ek this noble Duc alleide
 Ful many an other skile, and seide
 Sche hadde wel deserved wreche,
 Ferst for the cause of Spousebreche,
 And after wroghte in such a wise
 That al the world it oghte agrise,
 Whan that sche for so foul a vice
 Was of hire oghne lord moerdrice.
 Thei seten alle stille and herde,
 Bot therto was noman ansuerde,
 It thoghte hem alle he seide skile,
 Ther is noman withseie it wile;
 Whan thei upon the reson musen,
 Horestes alle thei excusen:

So that with gret solemprnete
He was unto his dignete
Received, and coroned king.
And tho befell a wonder thing:
Egiona, whan sche this wiste,
Which was the dowhter of Egiste
And Soster on the moder side
To this Horeste, at thilke tide,
Whan sche herde how hir brother spedde,
For pure sorwe, which hire ledde,
That he ne hadde ben exiled,
Sche hath hire oghne lif beguiled
Anon and hyng hireselve tho.
It hath and schal ben everemo,
To moerdre who that wole assente,
He mai noght faille to repente:
This false Egiona was on,
Which forto moerdre Agamenon
Yaf hire acord and hire assent,
So that be goddes juggement,
Thogh that non other man it wolde,
Sche tok hire juise as sche scholde;
And as sche to an other wroghte,
Vengance upon hireself sche soghte,
And hath of hire unhappi wit
A moerdre with a moerdre quit.
Such is of moerdre the vengance.
Forthi, mi Sone, in remembrance
Of this ensample tak good hiede:
For who that thenkth his love spiede
With moerdre, he schal with worldes schame
Himself and ek his love schame.
Mi fader, of this aventure
Which ye have told, I you assure
Min herte is sory forto hiere,
Bot only for I wolde lere
What is to done, and what to leve.
And over this now be your leve,
That ye me wolden telle I preie,
If ther be lieffull eny weie
Withoute Senne a man to sle.
Mi Sone, in sondri wise ye.

What man that is of traiterie,
Of moerdre or elles robberie
Atteint, the jugge schal noght lette,
Bot he schal slen of pure dette,
And doth gret Senne, if that he wonde.
For who that lawe hath upon honde,
And spareth forto do justice
For merci, doth noght his office,
That he his mercy so bewareth,
Whan for o schrewe which he spareth
A thousand goode men he grieveth:
With such merci who that believeth
To plese god, he is deceived,
Or elles resoun mot be weyved.
The lawe stod er we were bore,
How that a kinges swerd is bore
In signe that he schal defende
His trewe poeple and make an ende
Of suche as wolden hem devoure.
Lo thus, my Sone, to socoure
The lawe and comun riht to winne,
A man mai sle withoute Sinne,
And do therof a gret almesse,
So forto kepe rihtwisnesse.
And over this for his contre
In time of werre a man is fre
Himself, his hous and ek his lond
Defende with his oghne hond,
And slen, if that he mai no bet,
After the lawe which is set.
Now, fader, thanne I you beseche
Of hem that dedly werres seche
In worldes cause and scheden blod,
If such an homicide is good.
Mi Sone, upon thi question
The trowthe of myn opinion,
Als ferforth as my wit arecheth
And as the pleine lawe techeth,
I woll thee telle in evidence,
To rewle with thi conscience.
The hihe god of his justice
That ilke foule horrible vice

Of homicide he hath forbede,
Be Moises as it was bede.
Whan goddes Sone also was bore,
He sende hise anglis doun therfore,
Whom the Schepherdes herden singe,
Pes to the men of welwillinge
In erthe be among ous here.
So forto speke in this matiere
After the lawe of charite,
Ther schal no dedly werre be:
And ek nature it hath defended
And in hir lawe pes comended,
Which is the chief of mannes welthe,
Of mannes lif, of mannes helthe.
Bot dedly werre hath his covine
Of pestilence and of famine,
Of poverté and of alle wo,
Wherof this world we blamen so,
Which now the werre hath under fote,
Til god himself therof do bote.
For alle thing which god hath wrought
In Erthe, werre it bringth to noght:
The cherche is brent, the priest is slain,
The wif, the maide is ek forlain,
The lawe is lore and god unserved:
I not what mede he hath deserved
That suche werres ledeth inne.
If that he do it forto winne,
Ferst to acompte his grete cost
Forth with the folk that he hath lost,
As to the wordes rekeninge
Ther schal he finde no winnyng;
And if he do it to purchace
The hevne mede, of such a grace
I can noght speke, and natheles
Crist hath comanded love and pes,
And who that worcheth the revers,
I trowe his mede is ful divers.
And sithen thanne that we finde
That werres in here oghne kinde
Ben toward god of no decerte,
And ek thei bringen in poverté

Of worldes good, it is merveile
Among the men what it mai eyle,
That thei a pes ne conne sette.
I trowe Senne be the lette,
And every mede of Senne is deth;
So wot I nevere hou that it geth:
Bot we that ben of o believe
Among ousself, this wolde I lieve,
That betre it were pes to chese,
Than so be double weie lese.
I not if that it now so stonde,
Bot this a man mai understonde,
Who that these olde bokes redeth,
That coveitise is on which ledeth,
And broghte ferst the werres inne.
At Grece if that I schal beginne,
Ther was it proved hou it stod:
To Perce, which was ful of good,
Thei maden werre in special,
And so thei deden overal,
Wher gret riches was in londe,
So that thei leften nothing stonde
Unwerred, bot onliche Archade.
For there thei no werres made,
Be cause it was bareigne and povere,
Wherof thei mihten noght recovere;
And thus povert was forbore,
He that noght hadde noght hath lore.
Bot yit it is a wonder thing,
Whan that a riche worthi king,
Or other lord, what so he be,
Wol axe and cleyme proprete
In thing to which he hath no riht,
Bot onliche of his grete miht:
For this mai every man wel wite,
That bothe kinde and lawe write
Expressly stonden therayein.
Bot he mot nedes somewhat sein,
Although ther be no reson inne,
Which secheth cause forto winne:
For wit that is with will oppressed,
Whan coveitise him hath adressed,

And alle resoun put aweie,
He can wel finde such a weie
To werre, where as evere him liketh,
Wherof that he the world entriketh,
That many a man of him compleigneth:
Bot yit alwei som cause he feigneth,
And of his wrongful herte he demeth
That al is wel, what evere him semeth,
Be so that he mai winne ynowh.
For as the trew man to the plowh
Only to the gaignage entendeth,
Riht so the werreour despendeth
His time and hath no conscience.
And in this point for evidence
Of hem that suche werres make,
Thou miht a gret ensample take,
How thei her tirannie excusen
Of that thei wrongfull werres usen,
And how thei stonde of on acord,
The Souldeour forth with the lord,
The povere man forth with the riche,
As of corage thei ben liche,
To make werres and to pile
For lucre and for non other skyle:
Wherof a propre tale I rede,
As it whilom befell in dede.
Of him whom al this Erthe dradde,
Whan he the world so overladde
Thurgh werre, as it fortunèd is,
King Alisandre, I rede this;
How in a Marche, where he lay,
It fell per chance upon a day
A Rovere of the See was nome,
Which many a man hadde overcome
And slain and take here good aweie:
This Pilour, as the bokes seie,
A famous man in sondri stede
Was of the werkes whiche he dede.
This Prisoner tofor the king
Was broght, and there upon this thing
In audience he was accused:
And he his dede hath noght excused,

Bot preith the king to don him riht,
And seith, 'Sire, if I were of miht,
I have an herte lich to thin;
For if the pouer were myn,
Mi will is most in special
To rifle and geten overal
The large worldes good aboute.
Bot for I lede a povere route
And am, as who seith, at meschief,
The name of Pilour and of thief
I bere; and thou, which routes grete
Miht lede and take thi beyete,
And dost riht as I wolde do,
Thi name is nothing cleped so,
Bot thou art named Emperour.
Oure dedes ben of o colour
And in effect of o decerte,
Bot thi richesse and my poverte
Tho ben noght taken evene liche.
And natheles he that is riche
This dai, tomorwe he mai be povere;
And in contraire also recovere
A povere man to gret richesse
Men sen: forthi let rihtwisnesse
Be peised evene in the balance.
The king his hardi contenance
Behield, and herde hise wordes wise,
And seide unto him in this wise:
'Thin ansuere I have understonde,
Wherof my will is, that thou stonde
In mi service and stille abide.'
And forth withal the same tide
He hath him terme of lif withholde,
The mor and for he schal ben holde,
He made him kniht and yaf him lond,
Which afterward was of his hond
And orped kniht in many a stede,
And gret prouesce of armes dede,
As the Croniques it recorden.
And in this wise thei acorden,
The whiche of o condicioun
Be set upon destruccioun:

Such Capitein such retenue.
Bot forto se to what issue
The thing befalleth ate laste,
It is gret wonder that men caste
Here herte upon such wrong to winne,
Wher no beyete mai ben inne,
And doth desese on every side:
Bot whan reson is put aside
And will governeth the corage,
The faucon which that fleth ramage
And soeffreth nothing in the weie,
Wherof that he mai take his preie,
Is noght mor set upon ravine,
Than thilke man which his covine
Hath set in such a maner wise:
For al the world ne mai suffise
To will which is noght resonable.
Wherof ensample concordable
Lich to this point of which I meene,
Was upon Alisandre sene,
Which hadde set al his entente,
So as fortune with him wente,
That reson mihte him non governe,
Bot of his will he was so sterne,
That al the world he overran
And what him list he tok and wan.
In Ynde the superiour
Whan that he was ful conquerour,
And hadde his wilful pourpos wonne
Of al this Erthe under the Sonne,
This king homward to Macedoine,
Whan that he cam to Babiloine,
And wende most in his Empire,
As he which was hol lord and Sire,
In honour forto be received,
Most sodeinliche he was deceived,
And with strong puison envenimed.
And as he hath the world mistimed
Noght as he scholde with his wit,
Noght as he wolde it was aquit.
Thus was he slain that whilom slowh,
And he which riche was ynowh

This dai, tomorwe he hadde noght:
And in such wise as he hath wroght
In destorbance of worldes pes,
His werre he fond thanne endeles,
In which for evere desconfit
He was. Lo now, for what profit
Of werre it helpeth forto ryde,
For coveitise and worldes pride
To sle the worldes men aboute,
As bestes whiche gon theroute.
For every lif which reson can
Oghth wel to knowe that a man
Ne scholde thurgh no tirannie
Lich to these othre bestes die,
Til kinde wolde for him sende.
I not hou he it mihte amende,
Which takth awei for everemore
The lif that he mai noght restore.
Forthi, mi Sone, in alle weie
Be wel avised, I thee preie,
Of slawhte er that thou be coupable
Withoute cause resonable.
Mi fader, understonde it is,
That ye have seid; bot over this
I prei you tell me nay or yee,
To passe over the grete See
To werre and sle the Sarazin,
Is that the lawe? Sone myn,
To preche and soffre for the feith,
That have I herd the gospels seith;
Bot forto slee, that hiere I noght.
Crist with his oghne deth hath boght
Alle othre men, and made hem fre,
In tokne of parfit charite;
And after that he tawhte himselve,
Whan he was ded, these othre twelve
Of hise Apostles wente aboute
The holi feith to prechen oute,
Wherof the deth in sondri place
Thei soffre, and so god of his grace
The feith of Crist hath mad aryse:
Bot if thei wolde in other wise

Be werre have broght in the creance,
It hadde yit stonde in balance.
And that mai proven in the dede;
For what man the Croniques rede,
Fro ferst that holi cherche hath weyved
To preche, and hath the swerd received,
Wherof the werres ben begonne,
A gret partie of that was wonne
To Cristes feith stant now miswent:
Godd do therof amendement,
So as he wot what is the beste.
Bot, Sone, if thou wolt live in reste
Of conscience wel assised,
Er that thou sle, be wel avised:
For man, as tellen ous the clerkes,
Hath god above alle ertheli werkes
Ordeined to be principal,
And ek of Soule in special
He is mad lich to the godhiede.
So sit it wel to taken hiede
And forto loke on every side,
Er that thou falle in homicide,
Which Senne is now so general,
That it welnyh stant overal,
In holi cherche and elles where.
Bot al the while it stant so there,
The world mot nede fare amis:
For whan the welle of pite is
Thurgh coveitise of worldes good
Defouled with schedinge of blod,
The remenant of folk aboute
Unethe stonden eny doute
To werre ech other and to slee.
So is it all noght worth a Stree,
The charite wherof we prechen,
For we do nothing as we techen:
And thus the blinde conscience
Of pes hath lost thilke evidence
Which Crist upon this Erthe tawhte.
Now mai men se moerdre and manslawhte
Lich as it was be daies olde,
Whan men the Sennes boghte and solde.

In Grece afore Cristes feith,
 I rede, as the Cronique seith,
 Touchende of this matiere thus,
 In thilke time hou Peleus
 His oghne brother Phocus slowh;
 Bot for he hadde gold ynowh
 To yive, his Senne was despensed
 With gold, wherof it was compensated:
 Achastus, which with Venus was
 Hire Priest, assoilede in that cas,
 Al were ther no repentance.
 And as the bok makth remembrance,
 It telleth of Medee also;
 Of that sche slowh her Sones tuo,
 Egeus in the same plit
 Hath mad hire of hire Senne quit.
 The Sone ek of Amphioras,
 Whos rihte name Almeus was,
 His Moder slowh, Eriphile;
 Bot Achilo the Priest and he,
 So as the bokes it recorden,
 For certein Somme of gold acorden
 That thilke horrible sinfull dede
 Assoiled was. And thus for mede
 Of worldes good it falleth ofte
 That homicide is set alofte
 Hiere in this lif; bot after this
 Ther schal be knowe how that it is
 Of hem that suche thinges werche,
 And hou also that holi cherche
 Let suche Sennes passe quyte,
 And how thei wole hemself aquite
 Of dedly werres that thei make.
 For who that wolde ensample take,
 The lawe which is naturel
 Be weie of kinde scheweth wel
 That homicide in no degree,
 Which werreth ayein charite,
 Among the men ne scholde duelle.
 For after that the bokes telle,
 To seche in al this worldesriche,
 Men schal noght finde upon his liche

A beste forto take his preie:
And sithen kinde hath such a weie,
Thanne is it wonder of a man,
Which kynde hath and resoun can,
That he wol owther more or lasse
His kinde and resoun overpasse,
And sle that is to him semblable.
So is the man noght resonable
Ne kinde, and that is noght honeste,
Whan he is worse than a beste.
Among the bokes whiche I finde
Solyns spekth of a wonder kinde,
And seith of fowhles ther is on,
Which hath a face of blod and bon
Lich to a man in resemblance.
And if it falle him so per chance,
As he which is a fowhl of preie,
That he a man finde in his weie,
He wol him slen, if that he mai:
Bot afterward the same dai,
Whan he hath eten al his felle,
And that schal be beside a welle,
In which whan he wol drinke take,
Of his visage and seth the make
That he hath slain, anon he thenketh
Of his misdede, and it forthenketh
So gretly, that for pure sorwe
He liveth noght til on the morwe.
Be this ensample it mai well suie
That man schal homicide eschue,
For evere is merci good to take,
Bot if the lawe it hath forsake
And that justice is therayein.
For ofte time I have herd sein
Amonges hem that werres hadden,
That thei som while here cause ladden
Be merci, whan thei mihte have slain,
Wherof that thei were after fain:
And, Sone, if that thou wolt recorde
The vertu of Misericorde,
Thou sihe nevere thilke place,
Where it was used, lacke grace.

For every lawe and every kinde
The mannes wit to merci binde;
And namely the worthi knihtes,
Whan that thei stonden most uprihtes
And ben most mihti forto grieve,
Thei scholden thanne most relieve
Him whom thei mihten overthrowe,
As be ensample a man mai knowe.
He mai noght failen of his mede
That hath merci: for this I rede,
In a Cronique and finde thus.
Whan Achilles with Telaphus
His Sone toward Troie were,
It fell hem, er thei comen there,
Ayein Theucer the king of Mese
To make werre and forto sese
His lond, as thei that wolden regne
And Theucer pute out of his regne.
And thus the Marches thei assaile,
Bot Theucer yaf to hem bataille;
Thei foghte on bothe sides faste,
Bot so it hapneth ate laste,
This worthi Grek, this Achilles,
The king among alle othre ches:
As he that was cruel and fell,
With swerd in honde on him he fell,
And smot him with a dethes wounde,
That he unhorsed fell to grounde.
Achilles upon him alyhte,
And wolde anon, as he wel mihte,
Have slain him fullich in the place;
Bot Thelaphus his fader grace
For him besoghte, and for pite
Preith that he wolde lete him be,
And caste his Schield betwen hem tuo.
Achilles axeth him why so,
And Thelaphus his cause tolde,
And seith that he is mochel holde,
For whilom Theucer in a stede
Gret grace and socour to him dede,
And seith that he him wolde aquite,
And preith his fader to respite.

Achilles tho withdrowh his hond;
 Bot al the pouer of the lond,
 Whan that thei sihe here king thus take,
 Thei fledde and han the feld forsake:
 The Grecs unto the chace falle,
 And for the moste part of alle
 Of that contre the lordes grete
 Thei toke, and wonne a gret beyete.
 And anon after this victoire
 The king, which hadde good memoire,
 Upon the grete merci thoghte,
 Which Telaphus toward him wroghte,
 And in presence of al the lond
 He tok him faire be the hond,
 And in this wise he gan to seie:
 'Mi Sone, I mot be double weie
 Love and desire thin encress;
 Ferst for thi fader Achilles
 Whilom ful many dai er this,
 Whan that I scholde have fare amis,
 Rescousse dede in mi querele
 And kepte al myn astat in hele:
 How so ther falle now distance
 Amonges ous, yit remembrance
 I have of merci which he dede
 As thanne: and thou now in this stede
 Of gentilesce and of franchise
 Hast do mercy the same wise.
 So wol I noght that eny time
 Be lost of that thou hast do byme;
 For hou so this fortune falle,
 Yit stant mi trust aboven alle,
 For the mercy which I now finde,
 That thou wolt after this be kinde:
 And for that such is myn espeir,
 As for my Sone and for myn Eir
 I thee receive, and al my lond
 I yive and sese into thin hond.'
 And in this wise thei acorde,
 The cause was Misericorde:
 The lordes dede here obeissance
 To Thelaphus, and pourveance

Was mad so that he was coroned:
And thus was merci reguerdoned,
Which he to Theucer dede afore.
Lo, this ensample is mad therfore,
That thou miht take remembrance,
Mi Sone; and whan thou sest a chaunce,
Of other mennes passioun
Tak pite and compassioun,
And let nothing to thee be lief,
Which to an other man is grief.
And after this if thou desire
To stonde ayein the vice of Ire,
Consaile thee with Pacience,
And tak into thi conscience
Merci to be thi governour.
So schalt thou fiele no rancour,
Wherof thin herte schal debate
With homicide ne with hate
For Chestre or for Malencolie:
Thou schalt be soft in compaignie
Withoute Contek or Folhaste:
For elles miht thou longe waste
Thi time, er that thou have thi wille
Of love; for the weder stille
Men preise, and blame the tempestes.
Mi fader, I wol do youre hestes,
And of this point ye have me tawht,
Toward miself the betre sawht
I thenke be, whil that I live.
Bot for als moche as I am schrive
Of Wraththe and al his circumstance,
Yif what you list to my penance,
And asketh forthere of my lif,
If otherwise I be gultif
Of eny thing that toucheth Sinne.
Mi Sone, er we departe atwinne,
I schal behinde nothing leve.
Mi goode fader, be your leve
Thanne axeth forth what so you list,
For I have in you such a trist,
As ye that be my Soule hele,
That ye fro me wol nothing hele,

For I schal telle you the trowthe.
Mi Sone, art thou coupable of Slowthe
In eny point which to him longeth?
My fader, of tho pointz me longeth
To wite plainly what thei meene,
So that I mai me schrive cleene.
Now herkne, I schal the pointz devise;
And understond wel myn aprise:
For schrifte stant of no value
To him that wol him noght vertue
To leve of vice the folie:
For word is wynd, bot the maistrie
Is that a man himself defende
Of thing which is noght to comende,
Wherof ben fewe now aday.
And natheles, so as I may
Make unto thi memoire knowe,
The pointz of Slowthe thou schalt knowe.

John Gower

Confessio Amantis. Explicit Liber Septimus

Incipit Liber Octavus

Que favet ad vicium vetus hec modo regula confert,
Nec novus e contra qui docet ordo placet.
Cecus amor dudum nondum sua lumina cepit,
Quo Venus impositum devia fallit iter.

The myhti god, which unbegunne
Stant of himself and hath begunne
Alle othre thinges at his wille,
The hevene him liste to fulfille
Of alle joie, where as he
Sit inthronized in his See,
And hath hise Angles him to serve,
Suche as him liketh to preserve,
So that thei mowe noght forsueie:
Bot Lucifer he putte aweie,
With al the route apostazied
Of hem that ben to him allied,
Whiche out of hevene into the helle
From Angles into fendes felle;
Wher that ther is no joie of lyht,
Bot more derk than eny nyht
The peine schal ben endeles;
And yit of fyres natheles
Ther is plente, bot thei ben blake,
Wherof no syhte mai be take.
Thus whan the thinges ben befalle,
That Luciferes court was falle
Wher dedly Pride hem hath conveied,
Anon forthwith it was pourveied
Thurgh him which alle thinges may;
He made Adam the sexte day
In Paradis, and to his make
Him liketh Eve also to make,
And bad hem cresce and multiplie.
For of the mannes Progenie,

Which of the womman schal be bore,
The nombre of Angles which was lore,
Whan thei out fro the blisse felle,
He thoghte to restore, and felle
In hevene thilke holy place
Which stod tho voide upon his grace.
Bot as it is wel wiste and knowe,
Adam and Eve bot a throwe,
So as it scholde of hem betyde,
In Paradis at thilke tyde
Ne duelten, and the cause why,
Write in the bok of Genesi,
As who seith, alle men have herd,
Hou Raphael the fyri swerd
In honde tok and drof hem oute,
To gete here lyves fode aboute
Upon this wofull Erthe hiere.
Metodre seith to this matiere,
As he be revelacion
It hadde upon avision,
Hou that Adam and Eve also
Virgines comen bothe tuo
Into the world and were aschamed,
Til that nature hem hath reclaimed
To love, and tauht hem thilke lore,
That ferst thei keste, and overmore
Thei don that is to kinde due,
Wherof thei hadden fair issue.
A Sone was the ferste of alle,
And Chain be name thei him calle;
Abel was after the secounde,
And in the geste as it is founde,
Nature so the cause ladde,
Tuo douhtres ek Dame Eve hadde,
The ferste cleped Calmana
Was, and that other Delbora.
Thus was mankinde to beginne;
Forthi that time it was no Sinne
The Soster forto take hire brother,
Whan that ther was of chois non other:
To Chain was Calmana betake,
And Delboram hath Abel take,

In whom was gete natheles
Of worldes folk the ferste encres.
Men sein that nede hath no lawe,
And so it was be thilke dawe
And laste into the Secounde Age,
Til that the grete water rage,
Of Noeh which was seid the flod,
The world, which thanne in Senne stod,
Hath dreint, outake lyves Eyhte.
Tho was mankinde of litel weyhte;
Sem, Cham, Japhet, of these thre,
That ben the Sones of Noe,
The world of mannes nacion
Into multiplicacion
Was tho restored newe ayein
So ferforth, as the bokes sein,
That of hem thre and here issue
Ther was so large a retenue,
Of naciouns seventy and tuo;
In sondri place ech on of tho
The wyde world have enhabited.
Bot as nature hem hath excited,
Thei token thanne litel hiede,
The brother of the Sisterhiede
To wedde wyves, til it cam
Into the time of Habraham.
Whan the thridde Age was begunne,
The nede tho was overrunne,
For ther was poeple ynouh in londe:
Thanne ate ferste it cam to honde,
That Sisterhode of mariage
Was torned into cousinage,
So that after the rihte lyne
The Cousin weddeth the cousine.
For Habraham, er that he deide,
This charge upon his servant leide,
To him and in this wise spak,
That he his Sone Isaac
Do wedde for no worldes good,
Bot only to his oghne blod:
Wherof this Servant, as he bad,
Whan he was ded, his Sone hath lad

To Bathuel, wher he Rebecke
Hath wedded with the whyte necke;
For sche, he wiste wel and syh,
Was to the child cousine nyh.
And thus as Habraham hath tawht,
Whan Isaac was god betawht,
His Sone Jacob dede also,
And of Laban the dowhtres tuo,
Which was his Em, he tok to wyve,
And gat upon hem in his lyve,
Of hire ferst which hihte Lie,
Sex Sones of his Progenie,
And of Rachel tuo Sones eke:
The remenant was forto seke,
That is to sein of foure mo,
Wherof he gat on Bala tuo,
And of Zelpha he hadde ek tweie.
And these twelve, as I thee seie,
Thurgh providence of god himselve
Ben seid the Patriarkes twelve;
Of whom, as afterward befell,
The tribes twelve of Irahel
Engendred were, and ben the same
That of Hebreus tho hadden name,
Which of Sibrede in alliance
For evere kepten thilke usance
Most comunly, til Crist was bore.
Bot afterward it was forbore
Amonges ous that ben baptized;
For of the lawe canonized
The Pope hath bede to the men,
That non schal wedden of his ken
Ne the seconde ne the thridde.
Bot thogh that holy cherche it bidde,
So to restreigne Mariage,
Ther ben yit upon loves Rage
Full manye of suche nou aday
That taken wher thei take may.
For love, which is unbesein
Of alle reson, as men sein,
Thurgh sottie and thurgh nycete,
Of his voluptuosite

He spareth no condicion
Of ken ne yit religion,
Bot as a cock among the Hennes,
Or as a Stalon in the Fennes,
Which goth amonges al the Stod,
Riht so can he nomore good,
Bot takth what thing comth next to honde.
Mi Sone, thou schalt understonde,
That such delit is forto blame.
Forthi if thou hast be the same
To love in eny such manere,
Tell forth therof and schrif thee hiere.
Mi fader, nay, god wot the sothe,
Mi feire is noght of such a bothe,
So wylde a man yit was I nevere,
That of mi ken or lief or levere
Me liste love in such a wise:
And ek I not for what emprise
I scholde assote upon a Nonne,
For thogh I hadde hir love wonne,
It myhte into no pris amonte,
So therof sette I non acompte.
Ye mai wel axe of this and that,
Bot sothli forto telle plat,
In al this world ther is bot on
The which myn herte hath overgon;
I am toward alle othre fre.
Full wel, mi Sone, nou I see
Thi word stant evere upon o place,
Bot yit therof thou hast a grace,
That thou thee myht so wel excuse
Of love such as som men use,
So as I spak of now tofore.
For al such time of love is lore,
And lich unto the bitterswete;
For thogh it thenke a man ferst swete,
He schal wel fielen ate laste
That it is sour and may noght laste.
For as a morsell envenimed,
So hath such love his lust mistimed,
And grete ensamples manyon
A man mai finde therupon.

At Rome ferst if we beginne,
Ther schal I finde hou of this sinne
An Emperour was forto blame,
Gayus Caligula be name,
Which of his oghne Sostres thre
Berefte the virginite:
And whanne he hadde hem so forlein,
As he the which was al vilein,
He dede hem out of londe exile.
Bot afterward withinne a while
God hath beraft him in his ire
His lif and ek his large empire:
And thus for likinge of a throwe
For evere his lust was overthrowe.
Of this sotie also I finde,
Amon his Sister ayein kinde,
Which hihte Tamar, he forlay;
Bot he that lust an other day
Aboghte, whan that Absolon
His oghne brother therupon,
Of that he hadde his Sister schent,
Tok of that Senne vengement
And slowh him with his oghne hond:
And thus thunkinde unkinde fond.
And forto se more of this thing,
The bible makth a knowleching,
Wherof thou miht take evidence
Upon the sothe experience.
Whan Lothes wif was overgon
And schape into the salte Ston,
As it is spoke into this day,
Be bothe hise dowhtres thanne he lay,
With childe and made hem bothe grete,
Til that nature hem wolde lete,
And so the cause aboute ladde
That ech of hem a Sone hadde,
Moab the ferste, and the seconde
Amon, of whiche, as it is founde,
Cam afterward to gret encres
Tuo nacions: and natheles,
For that the stockes were ungoode,
The branches mihten noght be goode;

For of the false Moabites
Forth with the strengthe of Amonites,
Of that thei weren ferst misgete,
The poeple of god was ofte upsete
In Irahel and in Judee,
As in the bible a man mai se.
Lo thus, my Sone, as I thee seie,
Thou miht thiselve be beseie
Of that thou hast of othre herd:
For evere yit it hath so ferd,
Of loves lust if so befall
That it in other place falle
Than it is of the lawe set,
He which his love hath so beset
Mote afterward repente him sore.
And every man is othres lore;
Of that befell in time er this
The present time which now is
May ben enformed hou it stod,
And take that him thenketh good,
And leve that which is noght so.
Bot forto loke of time go,
Hou lust of love excedeth lawe,
It oghte forto be withdrawe;
For every man it scholde drede,
And nameliche in his Sibrede,
Which torneth ofte to vengance:
Wherof a tale in remembrance,
Which is a long process to hiere,
I thenke forto tellen hiere.
Of a Cronique in daies gon,
The which is cleped Pantheon,
In loves cause I rede thus,
Hou that the grete Antiochus,
Of whom that Antioche tok
His ferste name, as seith the bok,
Was coupled to a noble queene,
And hadde a dowhter hem betwene:
Bot such fortune cam to honde,
That deth, which no king mai withstonde,
Bot every lif it mote obeie,
This worthi queene tok aweie.

The king, which made mochel mone,
Tho stod, as who seith, al him one
Withoute wif, bot natheles
His doghter, which was piereles
Of Beaute, duelte aboute him stille.
Bot whanne a man hath welthe at wille,
The fleissh is frele and falleth ofte,
And that this maide tendre and softe,
Which in hire fadres chambres duelte,
Withinne a time wiste and felte:
For likinge and concupiscence
Withoute insihte of conscience
The fader so with lustes blente,
That he caste al his hole entente
His oghne doghter forto spille.
This king hath leisir at his wille
With strengthe, and whanne he time sih,
This yonge maiden he forlih:
And sche was tendre and full of drede,
Sche couthe noght hir Maidenhede
Defende, and thus sche hath forlore
The flour which she hath longe bore.
It helpeth noght althogh sche wepe,
For thei that scholde hir bodi kepe
Of wommen were absent as thanne;
And thus this maiden goth to manne,
The wylde fader thus devoureth
His oghne fleissh, which non socoureth,
And that was cause of mochel care.
Bot after this unkinde fare
Out of the chambre goth the king,
And sche lay stille, and of this thing,
Withinne herself such sorghe made,
Ther was no wiht that mihte hir glade,
For feere of thilke horrible vice.
With that cam inne the Norrice
Which fro childhode hire hadde kept,
And axeth if sche hadde slept,
And why hire chiere was unglad.
Bot sche, which hath ben overlad
Of that sche myhte noght be wreke,
For schame couthe unethes speke;

And natheles mercy sche preide
With wepende yhe and thus sche seide:
'Helas, mi Soster, waileway,
That evere I sih this ilke day!
Thing which mi bodi ferst begat
Into this world, onliche that
Mi worldes worschipe hath bereft.'
With that sche swouneth now and eft,
And evere wissheth after deth,
So that welnyh hire lacketh breth.
That other, which hire wordes herde,
In confortinge of hire ansuerde,
To lette hire fadres fol desir
Sche wiste no recoverir:
Whan thing is do, ther is no bote,
So suffren thei that suffre mote;
Ther was non other which it wiste.
Thus hath this king al that him liste
Of his likinge and his plesance,
And laste in such continuance,
And such delit he tok therinne,
Him thoghte that it was no Sinne;
And sche dorste him nothing withseie.
Bot fame, which goth every weie,
To sondry regnes al aboute
The grete Beaute telleth oute
Of such a maide of hih parage:
So that for love of mariage
The worthi Princes come and sende,
As thei the whiche al honour wende,
And knewe nothing hou it stod.
The fader, whanne he understod,
That thei his dowhter thus besoghte,
With al his wit he caste and thoghte
Hou that he myhte finde a lette;
And such a Statut thanne he sette,
And in this wise his lawe he taxeth,
That what man that his doghter axeth,
Bot if he couthe his question
Assoile upon suggestion
Of certain thinges that befelle,
The whiche he wolde unto him telle,

He scholde in certein lese his hed.
And thus ther weren manye ded,
Here hevedes stondende on the gate,
Till ate laste longe and late,
For lacke of ansuere in the wise,
The remenant that weren wise
Eschuieden to make assay.
Til it befell upon a day
Appolinus the Prince of Tyr,
Which hath to love a gret desir,
As he which in his hihe mod
Was likende of his hote blod,
A yong, a freissh, a lusti knyht,
As he lai musende on a nyht
Of the tidinges whiche he herde,
He thoghte assaie hou that it ferde.
He was with worthi compainie
Arraied, and with good navie
To schipe he goth, the wynd him dryveth,
And seileth, til that he arryveth:
Sauf in the port of Antioche
He londeth, and goth to aproche
The kinges Court and his presence.
Of every naturel science,
Which eny clerk him couthe teche,
He couthe ynowh, and in his speche
Of wordes he was eloquent;
And whanne he sih the king present,
He preith he moste his dowhter have.
The king ayein began to crave,
And tolde him the condicion,
Hou first unto his question
He mote ansuere and faile noght,
Or with his heved it schal be boght:
And he him axeth what it was.
The king declareth him the cas
With sturne lok and sturdi chiere,
To him and seide in this manere:
'With felonie I am upbore,
I ete and have it noght forbore
Mi modres fleissh, whos housebonde
Mi fader forto seche I fonde,

Which is the Sone ek of my wif.
Hierof I am inquisitif;
And who that can mi tale save,
Al quyrt he schal my doghter have;
Of his ansuere and if he faile,
He schal be ded withoute faile.
Forthi my Sone,' quod the king,
'Be wel avised of this thing,
Which hath thi lif in jeupartie.'
Appolinus for his partie,
Whan he this question hath herd,
Unto the king he hath ansuerd
And hath rehersed on and on
The pointz, and seide therupon:
'The question which thou hast spoke,
If thou wolt that it be unloue,
It toucheth al the privete
Betwen thin oghne child and thee,
And stant al hol upon you tuo.'
The king was wonder sory tho,
And thoghte, if that he seide it oute,
Than were he schamed al aboute.
With slihe wordes and with felle
He seith, 'Mi Sone, I schal thee telle,
Though that thou be of litel wit,
It is no gret merveile as yit,
Thin age mai it noght suffise:
Bot loke wel thou noght despise
Thin oghne lif, for of my grace
Of thretty daies fulle a space
I grante thee, to ben avised.'
And thus with leve and time assised
This yonge Prince forth he wente,
And understod wel what it mente,
Withinne his herte as he was lered,
That forto maken him afered
The king his time hath so deslaied.
Wherof he dradde and was esmaied,
Of treson that he deie scholde,
For he the king his sothe tolde;
And sodeinly the nyhtes tyde,
That more wolde he noght abide,

Al prively his barge he hente
And hom ayein to Tyr he wente:
And in his oghne wit he seide
For drede, if he the king bewreide,
He knew so wel the kinges herte,
That deth ne scholde he noght asterte,
The king him wolde so poursuie.
Bot he, that wolde his deth eschue,
And knew al this tofor the hond,
Forsake he thoghte his oghne lond,
That there wolde he noght abyde;
For wel he knew that on som syde
This tirant of his felonie
Be som manere of tricherie
To grieve his bodi wol noght leve.
Forthi withoute take leve,
Als priveliche as evere he myhte,
He goth him to the See be nyhte
In Schipes that be whete laden:
Here takel redy tho thei maden
And hale up Seil and forth thei fare.
Bot forto tellen of the care
That thei of Tyr begonne tho,
Whan that thei wiste he was ago,
It is a Pite forto hierie.
They losten lust, they losten chiere,
Thei toke upon hem such penaunce,
Ther was no song, ther was no daunce,
Bot every merthe and melodie
To hem was thanne a maladie;
For unlust of that aventure
Ther was noman which tok tonsure,
In doelful clothes thei hem clothe,
The bathes and the Stwes bothe
Thei schetten in be every weie;
There was no lif which leste pleie
Ne take of eny joie kepe,
Bot for here liege lord to wepe;
And every wyht seide as he couthe,
'Helas, the lusti flour of youthe,
Our Prince, oure heved, our governour,
Thurgh whom we stoden in honour,

Withoute the comun assent
Thus sodeinliche is fro ous went!
Such was the clamour of hem alle.
Bot se we now what is befalle
Upon the ferste tale plein,
And torne we therto ayein.
Antiochus the grete Sire,
Which full of rancour and of ire
His herte berth, so as ye herde,
Of that this Prince of Tyr ansuerde,
He hadde a feloun bacheler,
Which was his prive consailer,
And Taliart be name he hihte:
The king a strong puison him dihte
Withinne a buiste and gold therto,
In alle haste and bad him go
Strawht unto Tyr, and for no cost
Ne spare he, til he hadde lost
The Prince which he wolde spille.
And whan the king hath seid his wille,
This Taliart in a Galeie
With alle haste he tok his weie:
The wynd was good, he saileth blyve,
Til he tok lond upon the ryve
Of Tyr, and forth with al anon
Into the Burgh he gan to gon,
And tok his In and bod a throwe.
Bot for he wolde noght be knowe,
Desguised thanne he goth him oute;
He sih the wepinge al aboute,
And axeth what the cause was,
And thei him tolden al the cas,
How sodeinli the Prince is go.
And whan he sih that it was so,
And that his labour was in vein,
Anon he torneth hom ayein,
And to the king, whan he cam nyh,
He tolde of that he herde and syh,
Hou that the Prince of Tyr is fled,
So was he come ayein unsped.
The king was sori for a while,
Bot whan he sih that with no wyle

He myhte achieve his cruhalte,
He stinte his wraththe and let him be.
Bot over this now forto telle
Of adventures that befelle
Unto this Prince of whom I tolde,
He hath his rihte cours forth holde
Be Ston and nedle, til he cam
To Tharse, and there his lond he nam.
A Burgeis riche of gold and fee
Was thilke time in that cite,
Which cleped was Strangulio,
His wif was Dionise also:
This yonge Prince, as seith the bok,
With hem his herbergage tok;
And it befell that Cite so
Before time and thanne also,
Thurgh strong famyne which hem ladde
Was non that eny whete hadde.
Appolinus, whan that he herde
The meschief, hou the cite ferde,
Al freliche of his oghne yifte
His whete, among hem forto schifte,
The which be Schipe he hadde broght,
He yaf, and tok of hem riht noght.
Bot sithen ferst this world began,
Was nevere yit to such a man
Mor joie mad than thei him made:
For thei were alle of him so glade,
That thei for evere in remembrance
Made a figure in resemblance
Of him, and in the comun place
Thei sette him up, so that his face
Mihte every maner man beholde,
So as the cite was beholde;
It was of latoun overgilt:
Thus hath he noght his yifte spilt.
Upon a time with his route
This lord to pleie goth him oute,
And in his weie of Tyr he mette
A man, the which on knees him grette,
And Hellican be name he hihte,
Which preide his lord to have insihte

Upon himself, and seide him thus,
Hou that the grete Antiochus
Awaiteth if he mihte him spille.
That other thoghte and hield him stille,
And thonked him of his warnynge,
And bad him telle no tidinge,
Whan he to Tyr cam hom ayein,
That he in Tharse him hadde sein.
Fortune hath evere be muable
And mai no while stonde stable:
For now it hiheth, now it loweth,
Now stant upriht, now overthroweth,
Now full of blisse and now of bale,
As in the tellinge of mi tale
Hierafterward a man mai liere,
Which is gret routhe forto hiere.
This lord, which wolde don his beste,
Withinne himself hath litel reste,
And thoghte he wolde his place change
And seche a contre more strange.
Of Tharsiens his leve anon
He tok, and is to Schipe gon:
His cours he nam with Seil updrawe,
Where as fortune doth the lawe,
And scheweth, as I schal reherse,
How sche was to this lord diverse,
The which upon the See sche ferketh.
The wynd aros, the weder derketh,
It blew and made such tempeste,
Non anchor mai the schip areste,
Which hath tobroken al his gere;
The Schipmen stode in such a feere,
Was non that myhte himself bestere,
Bot evere awaite upon the lere,
Whan that thei scholde drenche at ones.
Ther was ynowh withinne wones
Of wepinge and of sorghe tho;
This yonge king makth mochel wo
So forto se the Schip travaile:
Bot al that myhte him noght availe;
The mast tobrak, the Seil torof,
The Schip upon the wawes drof,

Til that thei sihe a londes cooste.
Tho made avou the leste and moste,
Be so thei myhten come alonde;
Bot he which hath the See on honde,
Neptunus, wolde noght acorde,
Bot altobroke cable and corde,
Er thei to londe myhte aproche,
The Schip toclef upon a roche,
And al goth doun into the depe.
Bot he that alle thing mai kepe
Unto this lord was merciablen,
And broghte him sauf upon a table,
Which to the lond him hath upbore;
The remenant was al forlore,
Wherof he made mochel mone.
Thus was this yonge lord him one,
Al naked in a povere plit:
His colour, which whilom was whyt,
Was thanne of water fade and pale,
And ek he was so sore acale
That he wiste of himself no bote,
It halp him nothing forto mote
To gete ayein that he hath lore.
Bot sche which hath his deth forbore,
Fortune, thogh sche wol noght yelpen,
Al sodeinly hath sent him helpe,
Whanne him thoghte alle grace aweie;
Ther cam a Fisshere in the weie,
And sih a man ther naked stonde,
And whan that he hath understonde
The cause, he hath of him gret routhe,
And onliche of his povere trouthe
Of suche clothes as he hadde
With gret Pite this lord he cladde.
And he him thonketh as he scholde,
And seith him that it schal be yolde,
If evere he gete his stat ayein,
And preide that he wolde him sein
If nyh were eny toun for him.
He seide, 'Yee, Pentapolim,
Wher bothe king and queene duellen.'
Whanne he this tale herde tellen,

He gladeth him and gan beseche
That he the weie him wolde teche:
And he him taghte; and forth he wente
And preide god with good entente
To sende him joie after his sorwe.
It was noght passed yit Midmorwe,
Whan thiderward his weie he nam,
Wher sone upon the Non he cam.
He eet such as he myhte gete,
And forth anon, whan he hadde ete,
He goth to se the toun aboute,
And cam ther as he fond a route
Of yonge lusti men withalle;
And as it scholde tho befallē,
That day was set of such assisse,
That thei scholde in the londes guise,
As he herde of the poeple seie,
Here comun game thanne pleie;
And crid was that thei scholden come
Unto the gamen alle and some
Of hem that ben deliverē and wyhte,
To do such maistrie as thei myhte.
Thei made hem naked as thei scholde,
For so that ilke game wolde,
As it was tho custume and us,
Amonges hem was no refus:
The flour of al the toun was there
And of the court also ther were,
And that was in a large place
Riht evene afore the kinges face,
Which Artestrathes thanne hihte.
The pley was pleid riht in his sihte,
And who most worthi was of dede
Receive he scholde a certē mede
And in the cite bere a pris.
Appolinus, which war and wys
Of every game couthe an ende,
He thoghte assaie, hou so it wende,
And fell among hem into game:
And there he wan him such a name,
So as the king himself acompteth
That he alle othere men surmonteth,

And bar the pris above hem alle.
The king bad that into his halle
At Souper time he schal be broght;
And he cam thanne and lefte it noght,
Withoute compaignie al one:
Was non so semlich of persone,
Of visage and of limes bothe,
If that he hadde what to clothe.
At Soupertime natheles
The king amiddes al the pres
Let clepe him up among hem alle,
And bad his Mareschall of halle
To setten him in such degre
That he upon him myhte se.
The king was sone set and served,
And he, which hath his pris deserved
After the kinges oghne word,
Was mad beginne a Middel bord,
That bothe king and queene him sihe.
He sat and caste aboute his yhe
And sih the lordes in astat,
And with himself wax in debat
Thenkende what he hadde lore,
And such a sorwe he tok therfore,
That he sat evere stille and thoghte,
As he which of no mete roghte.
The king behield his hevynesse,
And of his grete gentillesse
His doghter, which was fair and good
And ate bord before him stod,
As it was thilke time usage,
He bad to gon on his message
And fonde forto make him glad.
And sche dede as hire fader bad,
And goth to him the softe pas
And axeth whenne and what he was,
And preith he scholde his thoghtes leve.
He seith, 'Ma Dame, be your leve
Mi name is hote Appolinus,
And of mi richesse it is thus,
Upon the See I have it lore.
The contre wher as I was bore,

Wher that my lond is and mi rente,
I left at Tyr, whan that I wente:
The worschipe of this worldes aghte,
Unto the god ther I betaghte.'
And thus togedre as thei tuo speeke,
The teres runne be his cheeke.
The king, which therof tok good kepe,
Hath gret Pite to sen him wepe,
And for his doghter sende ayein,
And preide hir faire and gan to sein
That sche no lengere wolde drecche,
Bot that sche wolde anon forth fecche
Hire harpe and don al that sche can
To glade with that sory man.
And sche to don hir fader heste
Hir harpe fette, and in the feste
Upon a Chaier which thei fette
Hirself next to this man sche sette:
With harpe bothe and ek with mouthe
To him sche dede al that sche couthe
To make him chiere, and evere he siketh,
And sche him axeth hou him liketh.
'Ma dame, certes wel,' he seide,
'Bot if ye the mesure pleide
Which, if you list, I schal you liere,
It were a glad thing forto hier.'
'Ha, lieve sire,' tho quod sche,
'Now tak the harpe and let me se
Of what mesure that ye mene.'
Tho preith the king, tho preith the queene,
Forth with the lordes alle arewe,
That he som merthe wolde schewe;
He takth the Harpe and in his wise
He tempreth, and of such assise
Singende he harpeth forth withal,
That as a vois celestial
Hem thoghte it souneth in here Ere,
As thogh that he an Angel were.
Thei gladen of his melodie,
Bot most of alle the compainie
The kinges doghter, which it herde,
And thoghte ek hou that he ansuerde,

Whan that he was of hire opposed,
Withinne hir herte hath wel supposed
That he is of gret gentillesse.
Hise dedes ben therof witnesse
Forth with the wisdom of his lore;
It nedeth noght to seche more,
He myhte noght have such manere,
Of gentil blod bot if he were.
Whanne he hath harped al his fille,
The kinges heste to fulfille,
Awey goth dissh, away goth cuppe,
Doun goth the bord, the cloth was uppe,
Thei risen and gon out of halle.
The king his chamberlein let calle,
And bad that he be alle weie
A chambre for this man pourveie,
Which nyh his oghne chambre be.
'It schal be do, mi lord,' quod he.
Appolinus of whom I mene
Tho tok his leve of king and queene
And of the worthi Maide also,
Which preide unto hir fader tho,
That sche myhte of that yonge man
Of tho sciences whiche he can
His lore have; and in this wise
The king hir granteth his aprise,
So that himself therto assente.
Thus was acorded er thei wente,
That he with al that evere he may
This yonge faire freisshe May
Of that he couthe scholde enforme;
And full assented in this forme
Thei token leve as for that nyht.
And whanne it was amorwe lyht,
Unto this yonge man of Tyr
Of clothes and of good atir
With gold and Selver to despende
This worthi yonge lady sende:
And thus sche made him wel at ese,
And he with al that he can plese
Hire serveth wel and faire ayein.
He tawhte hir til sche was certein

Of Harpe, of Citole and of Rote,
With many a tun and many a note
Upon Musique, upon mesure,
And of hire Harpe the temprure
He tawhte hire ek, as he wel couthe.
Bot as men sein that frele is youthe,
With leisir and continuance
This Mayde fell upon a chance,
That love hath mad him a querele
Ayein hire youthe freissh and frele,
That malgre wher sche wole or noght,
Sche mot with al hire hertes thoght
To love and to his lawe obeie;
And that sche schal ful sore abeie.
For sche wot nevere what it is,
Bot evere among sche fieleth this:
Thenkende upon this man of Tyr,
Hire herte is hot as eny fyr,
And otherwhile it is acale;
Now is sche red, nou is sche pale
Riht after the condicion
Of hire ymaginacion;
Bot evere among hire thoghtes alle,
Sche thoghte, what so mai befalle,
Or that sche lawhe, or that sche wepe,
Sche wolde hire goode name kepe
For feere of wommanysshe schame.
Bot what in earnest and in game,
Sche stant for love in such a plit,
That sche hath lost al appetit
Of mete, of drinke, of nyhtes reste,
As sche that not what is the beste;
Bot forto thenken al hir fille
Sche hield hire ofte times stille
Withinne hir chambre, and goth noght oute:
The king was of hire lif in doute,
Which wiste nothing what it mente.
Bot fell a time, as he out wente
To walke, of Princes Sones thre
Ther come and felle to his kne;
And ech of hem in sondri wise
Besoghte and profreth his servise,

So that he myhte his doghter have.
The king, which wolde his honour save,
Seith sche is siek, and of that speche
Tho was no time to beseche;
Bot ech of hem do make a bille
He bad, and wryte his oghne wille,
His name, his fader and his good;
And whan sche wiste hou that it stod,
And hadde here billes oversein,
Thei scholden have ansuere ayein.
Of this conseil thei weren glad,
And writen as the king hem bad,
And every man his oghne bok
Into the kinges hond betok,
And he it to his dowhter sende,
And preide hir forto make an ende
And wryte ayein hire oghne hond,
Riht as sche in hire herte fond.
The billes weren wel received,
Bot sche hath alle here loves weyved,
And thoghte tho was time and space
To put hire in hir fader grace,
And wrot ayein and thus sche saide:
'The schame which is in a Maide
With speche dar noght ben unloke,
Bot in writinge it mai be spoke;
So wryte I to you, fader, thus:
Bot if I have Appolinus,
Of al this world, what so betyde,
I wol non other man abide.
And certes if I of him faile,
I wot riht wel withoute faile
Ye schull for me be dowhterles.'
This lettre cam, and ther was press
Tofore the king, ther as he stod;
And whan that he it understod,
He yaf hem ansuer by and by,
Bot that was do so prively,
That non of othres conseil wiste.
Thei toke her leve, and wher hem liste
Thei wente forth upon here weie.
The king ne wolde noght bewreie

The conseil for no maner hihe,
Bot soffreth til he time sihe:
And whan that he to chambre is come,
He hath unto his conseil nome
This man of Tyr, and let him se
The lettre and al the privete,
The which his dowhter to him sente:
And he his kne to grounde bente
And thonketh him and hire also,
And er thei wenten thanne atuo,
With good herte and with good corage
Of full Love and full mariage
The king and he ben hol acorded.
And after, whanne it was recorded
Unto the dowhter hou it stod,
The yifte of al this worldes good
Ne scholde have mad hir half so blythe:
And forth withal the king als swithe,
For he wol have hire good assent,
Hath for the queene hir moder sent.
The queene is come, and whan sche herde
Of this matiere hou that it ferde,
Sche syh debat, sche syh desese,
Bot if sche wolde hir dowhter plese,
And is therto assented full.
Which is a dede wonderfull,
For noman knew the sothe cas
Bot he himself, what man he was;
And natheles, so as hem thoghte,
Hise dedes to the sothe wroghte
That he was come of gentil blod:
Him lacketh noght bot worldes good,
And as therof is no despeir,
For sche schal ben hire fader heir,
And he was able to governe.
Thus wol thei noght the love werne
Of him and hire in none wise,
Bot ther acorded thei divide
The day and time of Mariage.
Wher love is lord of the corage,
Him thenketh longe er that he spede;
Bot ate laste unto the dede

The time is come, and in her wise
With gret offrende and sacrifice
Thei wedde and make a riche feste,
And every thing which was honeste
Withinnen house and ek withoute
It was so don, that al aboute
Of gret worschipe, of gret noblesse
Ther cride many a man largesse
Unto the lordes hihe and loude;
The knyhtes that ben yonge and proude,
Thei jouste ferst and after daunce.
The day is go, the nyhtes chaunce
Hath derked al the bryhte Sonne;
This lord, which hath his love wonne,
Is go to bedde with his wif,
Wher as thei ladde a lusti lif,
And that was after somdel sene,
For as thei pleiden hem betwene,
Thei gete a child betwen hem tuo,
To whom fell after mochel wo.
Now have I told of the spousailes.
Bot forto speke of the mervailles
Whiche afterward to hem befelle,
It is a wonder forto telle.
It fell adai thei riden oute,
The king and queene and al the route,
To pleien hem upon the stronde,
Wher as thei sen toward the londe
A Schip sailende of gret array.
To knowe what it mene may,
Til it be come thei abide;
Than sen thei stonde on every side,
Endlong the schipes bord to schewe,
Of Penonceals a riche rewe.
Thei axen when the ship is come:
Fro Tyr, anon ansuerde some,
And over this thei seiden more
The cause why thei comen fore
Was forto seche and forto finde
Appolinus, which was of kinde
Her liege lord: and he appiereth,
And of the tale which he hiereth

He was riht glad; for thei him tolde,
 That for vengance, as god it wolde,
 Antiochus, as men mai wite,
 With thondre and lythnynge is forsmite;
 His doghter hath the same chaunce,
 So be thei bothe in o balance.
 'Forthi, oure liege lord, we seie
 In name of al the lond, and preie,
 That left al other thing to done,
 It like you to come sone
 And se youre oghne liege men
 With othre that ben of youre ken,
 That live in longinge and desir
 Til ye be come ayein to Tyr.'
 This tale after the king it hadde
 Pentapolim al overspradde,
 Ther was no joie forto seche;
 For every man it hadde in speche
 And seiden alle of on acord,
 'A worthi king schal ben oure lord:
 That thoghte ous ferst an hevinesse
 Is schape ous now to gret gladnesse.'
 Thus goth the tidinge overal.
 Bot nede he mot, that nede schal:
 Appolinus his leve tok,
 To god and al the lond betok
 With al the poeple long and brod,
 That he no lenger there abod.
 The king and queene sorwe made,
 Bot yit somdiel thei weren glade
 Of such thing as thei herden tho:
 And thus between the wel and wo
 To schip he goth, his wif with childe,
 The which was evere meke and mylde
 And wolde noght departe him fro,
 Such love was between hem tuo.
 Lichorida for hire office
 Was take, which was a Norrice,
 To wende with this yonge wif,
 To whom was schape a woful lif.
 Withinne a time, as it betidde,
 Whan thei were in the See amidde,

Out of the North they sihe a cloude;
The storm aros, the wyndes loude
Thei blewen many a dredful blast,
The welkne was al overcast,
The derke nyht the Sonne hath under,
Ther was a gret tempeste of thunder:
The Mone and ek the Sterres bothe
In blake cloudes thei hem clothe,
Wherof here brihte lok thei hyde.
This yonge ladi wepte and cride,
To whom no confort myhte availe;
Of childe sche began travaile,
Wher sche lay in a Caban clos:
Hire woful lord fro hire aros,
And that was longe er eny morwe,
So that in anguisse and in sorwe
Sche was delivered al be nyhte
And ded in every mannes syhte;
Bot natheles for al this wo
A maide child was bore tho.
Appolinus whan he this knew,
For sorwe a swoone he overthrew,
That noman wiste in him no lif.
And whanne he wok, he seide, 'Ha, wif,
Mi lust, mi joie, my desir,
Mi welthe and my recoverir,
Why schal I live, and thou schalt dye?
Ha, thou fortune, I thee deffie,
Nou hast thou do to me thi werste.
Ha, herte, why ne wolt thou berste,
That forth with hire I myhte passe?
Mi peines weren wel the lasse.'
In such wepinge and in such cry
His dede wif, which lay him by,
A thousand sithes he hire kiste;
Was nevere man that sih ne wiste
A sorwe unto his sorwe lich;
For evere among upon the lich
He fell swounende, as he that soghte
His oghne deth, which he besoghte
Unto the goddes alle above
With many a pitous word of love;

Bot suche wordes as tho were
Yit herde nevere mannes Ere,
Bot only thilke whiche he seide.
The Maister Schipman cam and preide
With othre suche as be therinne,
And sein that he mai nothing winne
Ayein the deth, bot thei him rede,
He be wel war and tak hiede,
The See be weie of his nature
Receive mai no creature
Withinne himself as forto holde,
The which is ded: forthi thei wolde,
As thei conseilen al aboute,
The dede body casten oute.
For betre it is, thei seiden alle,
That it of hire so befalle,
Than if thei scholden alle spille.
The king, which understod here wille
And knew here conseil that was trewe,
Began ayein his sorwe newe
With pitous herte, and thus to seie:
'It is al reson that ye preie.
I am,' quod he, 'bot on al one,
So wolde I noght for mi persone
Ther felle such adversite.
Bot whan it mai no betre be,
Doth thanne thus upon my word,
Let make a cofre strong of bord,
That it be ferm with led and pich.'
Anon was mad a cofre sich,
Al redy broght unto his hond;
And whanne he sih and redy fond
This cofre mad and wel enclosed,
The dede bodi was besowed
In cloth of gold and leid therinne.
And for he wolde unto hire winne
Upon som cooste a Sepulture,
Under hire heved in aventure
Of gold he leide Sommes grete
And of jeueals a strong beyete
Forth with a lettre, and seide thus:
'I, king of Tyr Appollinus,

Do alle maner men to wite,
That hiere and se this lettre write,
That helpeles withoute red
Hier lith a kinges doghter ded:
And who that happeth hir to finde,
For charite tak in his mynde,
And do so that sche be begrave
With this tresor, which he schal have.'
Thus whan the lettre was full spoke,
Thei haue anon the cofre stoke,
And bounden it with yren faste,
That it may with the wawes laste,
And stoppen it be such a weie,
That it schal be withinne dreie,
So that no water myhte it grieve.
And thus in hope and good believe
Of that the corps schal wel aryve,
Thei caste it over bord als blyve.
The Schip forth on the wawes wente;
The prince hath changed his entente,
And seith he wol noght come at Tyr
As thanne, bot al his desir
Is ferst to seilen unto Tharse.
The wyndy Storm began to skarse,
The Sonne arist, the weder cliereth,
The Schipman which behinde stiereth,
Whan that he sih the wyndes saghte,
Towardes Tharse his cours he straghte.
Bot now to mi matiere ayein,
To telle as olde bokes sein,
This dede corps of which ye knowe
With wynd and water was forthrowe
Now hier, now ther, til ate laste
At Ephesim the See upcaste
The cofre and al that was therinne.
Of gret merveile now beginne
Mai hiere who that sitteth stille;
That god wol save mai noght spille.
Riht as the corps was throwe alonde,
Ther cam walkende upon the stronde
A worthi clerc, a Surgien,
And ek a gret Phisicien,

Of al that lond the wisest on,
Which hihte Maister Cerymon;
Ther were of his disciples some.
This Maister to the Cofre is come,
He peiseth ther was somewhat in,
And bad hem bere it to his In,
And goth himselve forth withal.
Al that schal falle, falle schal;
Thei comen hom and tarie noght;
This Cofre is into chambre broght,
Which that thei finde faste stoke,
Bot thei with craft it have unloke.
Thei loken in, where as thei founde
A bodi ded, which was bewounde
In cloth of gold, as I seide er,
The tresor ek thei founden ther
Forth with the lettre, which thei rede.
And tho thei token betre hiede;
Unsowed was the bodi sone,
And he, which knew what is to done,
This noble clerk, with alle haste
Began the veines forto taste,
And sih hire Age was of youthe,
And with the craftes whiche he couthe
He soghte and fond a signe of lif.
With that this worthi kinges wif
Honestely thei token oute,
And maden fyres al aboute;
Thei leide hire on a couche softe,
And with a scheete warmed ofte
Hire colde brest began to hete,
Hire herte also to flacke and bete.
This Maister hath hire every joignt
With certain oile and balsme enoignt,
And putte a liquour in hire mouth,
Which is to fewe clerkes couth,
So that sche coevereth ate laste;
And ferst hire yhen up sche caste,
And whan sche more of strengthe cawhte,
Hire Armes bothe forth sche strawhte,
Hield up hire hond and pitously
Sche spak and seide, 'Ha, wher am I?

Where is my lord, what world is this?'
As sche that wot noght hou it is.
Bot Cerymon the worthi leche
Ansuerde anon upon hire speche
And seith, 'Ma dame, yee ben hiere,
Where yee be sauf, as yee schal hiere
Hierafterward; forthi as nou
Mi conseil is, conforteth you:
For trusteth wel withoute faile,
Ther is nothing which schal you faile,
That oghte of reson to be do.'
Thus passen thei a day or tuo;
Thei speke of noght as for an ende,
Til sche began somdiel amende,
And wiste hireselven what sche mente.
Tho forto knowe hire hol entente,
This Maister axeth al the cas,
Hou sche cam there and what sche was.
'Hou I cam hiere wot I noght,'
Quod sche, 'bot wel I am bethoght
Of othre thinges al aboute':
Fro point to point and tolde him oute
Als ferforthli as sche it wiste.
And he hire tolde hou in a kiste
The See hire threw upon the lond,
And what tresor with hire he fond,
Which was al redy at hire wille,
As he that schop him to fulfille
With al his myht what thing he scholde.
Sche thonketh him that he so wolde,
And al hire herte sche discloseth,
And seith him wel that sche supposeth
Hire lord be dreint, hir child also;
So sih sche noght bot alle wo.
Wherof as to the world nomore
Ne wol sche torne, and preith therfore
That in som temple of the Cite,
To kepe and holde hir chastete,
Sche mihte among the wommen duelle.
Whan he this tale hir herde telle,
He was riht glad, and made hire knowen
That he a dowhter of his owen

Hath, which he wol unto hir yive
To serve, whil thei bothe live,
In stede of that which sche hath lost;
Al only at his oghne cost
Sche schal be rendred forth with hire.
She seith, 'Grant mercy, lieve sire,
God quite it you, ther I ne may.'
And thus thei drive forth the day,
Til time com that sche was hol;
And tho thei take her conseil hol,
To schape upon good ordinance
And make a worthi pourveance
Ayein the day whan thei be veiled.
And thus, whan that thei be conseiled,
In blake clothes thei hem clothe,
This lady and the dowhter bothe,
And yolde hem to religion.
The feste and the profession
After the reule of that degre
Was mad with gret solempnete,
Where as Diane is seintefied;
Thus stant this lady justefied
In ordre wher sche thenkth to duelle.
Bot now ayeinward forto telle
In what plit that hire lord stod inne:
He seileth, til that he may winne
The havene of Tharse, as I seide er;
And whanne he was aryved ther,
And it was thurgh the Cite knowe,
Men myhte se withinne a throwe,
As who seith, al the toun at ones,
That come ayein him for the nones,
To yiven him the reverence,
So glad thei were of his presence:
And thogh he were in his corage
Desesed, yit with glad visage
He made hem chiere, and to his In,
Wher he whilom sojourned in,
He goth him straght and was resceived.
And whan the presse of poeple is weived,
He takth his hoste unto him tho,
And seith, 'Mi frend Strangulio,

Lo, thus and thus it is befalle,
And thou thiself art on of alle,
Forth with thi wif, whiche I most triste.
Forthi, if it you bothe liste,
My doghter Thaise be youre leve
I thenke schal with you beleve
As for a time; and thus I preie,
That sche be kept be alle weie,
And whan sche hath of age more,
That sche be set to bokes lore.
And this avou to god I make,
That I schal nevere for hir sake
Mi berd for no likinge schave,
Til it befalle that I have
In covenable time of age
Beset hire unto mariage.'
Thus thei acorde, and al is wel,
And forto resten him somdel,
As for a while he ther sojorneth,
And thanne he takth his leve and torneth
To Schipe, and goth him hom to Tyr,
Wher every man with gret desir
Awaiteth upon his comynge.
Bot whan the Schip com in seilinge,
And thei perceiven it is he,
Was nevere yit in no cite
Such joie mad as thei tho made;
His herte also began to glade
Of that he sih the poeple glad.
Lo, thus fortune his hap hath lad;
In sondri wise he was travailed,
Bot hou so evere he be assailed,
His latere ende schal be good.
And forto speke hou that it stod
Of Thaise his doghter, wher sche duelleth,
In Tharse, as the Cronique telleth,
Sche was wel kept, sche was wel loked,
Sche was wel tawht, sche was wel boked,
So wel sche spedde hir in hire youthe
That sche of every wisdom couthe,
That forto seche in every lond
So wys an other noman fond,

Ne so wel tawht at mannes yhe.
Bot wo worthe evere fals envie!
For it befell that time so,
A dowhter hath Strangulio,
The which was cleped Philotenne:
Bot fame, which wole evere renne,
Cam al day to hir moder Ere,
And seith, wher evere hir doghter were
With Thayse set in eny place,
The comun vois, the comun grace
Was al upon that other Maide,
And of hir doghter noman saide.
Who wroth but Dionise thanne?
Hire thoghte a thousand yer til whanne
Sche myhte ben of Thaise wreke
Of that sche herde folk so speke.
And fell that ilke same tyde,
That ded was trewe Lychoride,
Which hadde be servant to Thaise,
So that sche was the worse at aise,
For sche hath thanne no servise
Bot only thurgh this Dionise,
Which was hire dedlich Anemie
Thurgh pure treson and envie.
Sche, that of alle sorwe can,
Tho spak unto hire bondeman,
Which cleped was Theophilus,
And made him swere in conseil thus,
That he such time as sche him sette
Schal come Thaise forto fette,
And lede hire oute of alle sihte,
Wher as noman hire helpe myhte,
Upon the Stronde nyh the See,
And there he schal this maiden sle.
This cherles herte is in a traunce,
As he which drad him of vengeance
Whan time comth an other day;
Bot yit dorste he noght seie nay,
Bot swor and seide he schal fulfille
Hire hestes at hire oghne wille.
The treson and the time is schape,
So fell it that this cherles knape

Hath lad this maiden ther he wolde
Upon the Stronde, and what sche scholde
Sche was adrad; and he out breide
A rusti swerd and to hir seide,
'Thou schalt be ded.' 'Helas!' quod sche,
'Why schal I so?' 'Lo thus,' quod he,
'Mi ladi Dionise hath bede,
Thou schalt be moerdred in this stede.'
This Maiden tho for feere schryhte,
And for the love of god almyhte
Sche preith that for a litel stounde
Sche myhte knele upon the grounde,
Toward the hevene forto crave,
Hire wofull Soule if sche mai save:
And with this noise and with this cry,
Out of a barge faste by,
Which hidd was ther on Scomerfare,
Men sterten out and weren ware
Of this feloun, and he to go,
And sche began to crie tho,
'Ha, mercy, help for goddes sake!
Into the barge thei hire take,
As thieves scholde, and forth thei wente.
Upon the See the wynd hem hente,
And malgre wher thei wolde or non,
Tofor the weder forth thei gon,
Ther halp no Seil, ther halp non Ore,
Forstormed and forblowen sore
In gret peril so forth thei dryve,
Til ate laste thei aryve
At Mitelene the Cite.
In havene sauf and whan thei be,
The Maister Schipman made him boun,
And goth him out into the toun,
And profreth Thaise forto selle.
On Leonin it herde telle,
Which Maister of the bordel was,
And bad him gon a redy pas
To fetten hire, and forth he wente,
And Thaise out of his barge he hente,
And to this bordeller hir solde.
And he, that be hire body wolde

Take advantage, let do crye,
That what man wolde his lecherie
Attempte upon hire maidenhede,
Lei down the gold and he schal spede.
And thus whan he hath crid it oute
In syhte of al the poeple aboute,
He ladde hire to the bordel tho.
No wonder is thogh sche be wo:
Clos in a chambre be hireselve,
Ech after other ten or tuelve
Of yonge men to hire in wente;
Bot such a grace god hire sente,
That for the sorwe which sche made
Was non of hem which pouer hade
To don hire eny vileinie.
This Leonin let evere asprie,
And waiteth after gret beyete;
Bot al for noght, sche was forlete,
That mo men wolde ther noght come.
Whan he therof hath hiede nome,
And knew that sche was yit a maide,
Unto his oghne man he saide,
That he with strengthe ayein hire leve
Tho scholde hir maidenhod bereve.
This man goth in, bot so it ferde,
Whan he hire wofull pleintes herde
And he therof hath take kepe,
Him liste betre forto wepe
Than don oght elles to the game.
And thus sche kepte herself fro schame,
And kneleth down to therthe and preide
Unto this man, and thus sche seide:
'If so be that thi maister wolde
That I his gold encresce scholde,
It mai noght falle be this weie:
Bot soffre me to go mi weie
Out of this hous wher I am inne,
And I schal make him forto winne
In som place elles of the toun,
Be so it be religioun,
Wher that honeste wommen duelle.
And thus thou myht thi maister telle,

That whanne I have a chambre there,
Let him do crie ay wyde where,
What lord that hath his doghter diere,
And is in will that sche schal liere
Of such a Scole that is trewe,
I schal hire teche of thinges newe,
Which as non other womman can
In al this lond.' And tho this man
Hire tale hath herd, he goth ayein,
And tolde unto his maister plein
That sche hath seid; and therupon,
Whan than he sih beyete non
At the bordel be cause of hire,
He bad his man to gon and spire
A place wher sche myhte abyde,
That he mai winne upon som side
Be that sche can: bot ate leste
Thus was sche sauf fro this tempeste.
He hath hire fro the bordel take,
Bot that was noght for goddes sake,
Bot for the lucre, as sche him tolde.
Now comen tho that comen wolde
Of wommen in her lusty youthe,
To hiere and se what thing sche couthe:
Sche can the wisdom of a clerk,
Sche can of every lusti werk
Which to a gentil womman longeth,
And some of hem sche underfongeth
To the Citole and to the Harpe,
And whom it liketh forto carpe
Proverbes and demandes slyhe,
An other such thei nevere syhe,
Which that science so wel tawhte:
Wherof sche grete yiftes cawhte,
That sche to Leonin hath wonne;
And thus hire name is so begonne
Of sondri thinges that sche techeth,
That al the lond unto hir secheth
Of yonge wommen forto liere.
Nou lete we this maiden hiere,
And speke of Dionise ayein
And of Theophile the vilein,

Of whiche I spak of nou tofore.
Whan Thaise scholde have be forlore,
This false cherl to his lady
Whan he cam hom, al prively
He seith, 'Ma Dame, slain I have
This maide Thaise, and is begrave
In prive place, as ye me biede.
Forthi, ma dame, taketh hiede
And kep conseil, hou so it stonde.'
This fend, which this hath understonde,
Was glad, and weneth it be soth:
Now herkne, hierafter hou sche doth.
Sche wepeth, sche sorweth, sche compleigneth,
And of sieknesse which sche feigneth
Sche seith that Taise sodeinly
Be nyhte is ded, 'as sche and I
Togedre lyhen nyh my lord.'
Sche was a womman of record,
And al is lieved that sche seith;
And forto yive a more feith,
Hire housebonde and ek sche bothe
In blake clothes thei hem clothe,
And made a gret enterrement;
And for the poeple schal be blent,
Of Thaise as for the remembrance,
After the real olde usance
A tumbere of latoun noble and riche
With an ymage unto hir liche
Liggende above therupon
Thei made and sette it up anon.
Hire Epitaffe of good assise
Was write aboute, and in this wise
It spak: 'O yee that this beholde,
Lo, hier lith sche, the which was holde
The faireste and the flour of alle,
Whos name Thais men calle.
The king of Tyr Appolinus
Hire fader was: now lith sche thus.
Fourtiene yer sche was of Age,
Whan deth hir tok to his viage.'
Thus was this false treson hidd,
Which afterward was wyde kidd,

As be the tale a man schal hiere.
Bot forto clare mi matiere,
To Tyr I thenke torne ayein,
And telle as the Croniques sein.
Whan that the king was comen hom,
And hath left in the salte fom
His wif, which he mai noght foryete,
For he som confort wolde gete,
He let somoune a parlement,
To which the lordes were asent;
And of the time he hath ben oute,
He seth the thinges al aboute,
And told hem ek hou he hath fare,
Whil he was out of londe fare;
And preide hem alle to abyde,
For he wolde at the same tyde
Do schape for his wyves mynde,
As he that wol noght ben unkinde.
Solempne was that ilke office,
And riche was the sacrifice,
The feste reali was holde:
And therto was he wel beholde;
For such a wif as he hadde on
In thilke daies was ther non.
Whan this was do, thanne he him thoghte
Upon his doghter, and besoghte
Suche of his lordes as he wolde,
That thei with him to Tharse scholde,
To fette his doghter Taise there:
And thei anon al redy were,
To schip they gon and forth thei wente,
Til thei the havene of Tharse hente.
They londe and faile of that thei seche
Be coverture and sleyhte of speche:
This false man Strangulio,
And Dionise his wif also,
That he the betre trowe myhte,
Thei ladden him to have a sihte
Wher that hir tombe was arraied.
The lasse yit he was mispaied,
And natheles, so as he dorste,
He curseth and seith al the worste

Unto fortune, as to the blinde,
Which can no seker weie finde;
For sche him neweth evere among,
And medleth sorwe with his song.
Bot sithe it mai no betre be,
He thonketh god and forth goth he
Seilende toward Tyr ayein.
Bot sodeinly the wynd and reyn
Begonne upon the See debate,
So that he soffre mot algate
The lawe which Neptune ordeigneth;
Wherof fulofte time he pleigneth,
And hield him wel the more esmaied
Of that he hath tofore assaied.
So that for pure sorwe and care,
Of that he seth his world so fare,
The reste he lefte of his Caban,
That for the conseil of noman
Ayein therinne he nolde come,
Bot hath benethe his place nome,
Wher he wepende al one lay,
Ther as he sih no lyht of day.
And thus tofor the wynd thei dryve,
Til longe and late thei aryve
With gret distresce, as it was sene,
Upon this toun of Mitelene,
Which was a noble cite tho.
And hapneth thilke time so,
The lordes bothe and the comune
The hihe festes of Neptune
Upon the stronde at the rivage,
As it was custumme and usage,
Sollempneliche thei besihe.
Whan thei this strange vessel syhe
Come in, and hath his Seil ahaled,
The toun therof hath spoke and taled.
The lord which of the cite was,
Whos name is Athenagoras,
Was there, and seide he wolde se
What Schip it is, and who thei be
That ben therinne: and after sone,
Whan that he sih it was to done,

His barge was for him arraied,
And he goth forth and hath assaied.
He fond the Schip of gret Array,
Bot what thing it amonte may,
He seth thei maden hevy chiere,
Bot wel him thenkth be the manere
That thei be worthi men of blod,
And axeth of hem hou it stod;
And thei him tellen al the cas,
Hou that here lord fordrive was,
And what a sorwe that he made,
Of which ther mai noman him glade.
He preith that he here lord mai se,
Bot thei him tolde it mai noght be,
For he lith in so derk a place,
That ther may no wiht sen his face:
Bot for al that, thogh hem be loth,
He fond the ladre and doun he goth,
And to him spak, bot non ansuere
Ayein of him ne mihte he bere
For oght that he can don or sein;
And thus he goth him up ayein.
Tho was ther spoke in many wise
Amonges hem that weren wise,
Now this, now that, bot ate laste
The wisdom of the toun this caste,
That yonge Taise were asent.
For if ther be amendement
To glade with this woful king,
Sche can so moche of every thing,
That sche schal gladen him anon.
A Messenger for hire is gon,
And sche cam with hire Harpe on honde,
And seide hem that sche wolde fonde
Be alle weies that sche can,
To glade with this sory man.
Bot what he was sche wiste noght,
Bot al the Schip hire hath besoght
That sche hire wit on him despende,
In aunter if he myhte amende,
And sein it schal be wel aquit.
Whan sche hath understonden it,

Sche goth hir doun, ther as he lay,
Wher that sche harpeth many a lay
And lich an Angel sang withal;
Bot he nomore than the wal
Tok hiede of eny thing he herde.
And whan sche sih that he so ferde,
Sche falleth with him into wordes,
And telleth him of sondri bordes,
And axeth him demandes strange,
Wherof sche made his herte change,
And to hire speche his Ere he leide
And hath merveile of that sche seide.
For in proverbe and in probleme
Sche spak, and bad he scholde deme
In many soubtil question:
Bot he for no suggestioun
Which toward him sche couthe stere,
He wolde noght o word ansuere,
Bot as a madd man ate laste
His heved wepende away he caste,
And half in wraththe he bad hire go.
Bot yit sche wolde noght do so,
And in the derke forth sche goth,
Til sche him toucheth, and he wroth,
And after hire with his hond
He smot: and thus whan sche him fond
Desesed, courtaisly sche saide,
'Avoi, mi lord, I am a Maide;
And if ye wiste what I am,
And out of what lignage I cam,
Ye wolde noght be so salvage.'
With that he sobreth his corage
And put away his hevy chiere.
Bot of hem tuo a man mai liere
What is to be so sibb of blod:
Non wiste of other hou it stod,
And yit the fader ate laste
His herte upon this maide caste,
That he hire loveth kindely,
And yit he wiste nevere why.
Bot al was knowe er that thei wente;
For god, which wot here hol entente,

Here hertes bothe anon descloseth.
This king unto this maide opposeth,
And axeth ferst what was hire name,
And wher sche lerned al this game,
And of what ken that sche was come.
And sche, that hath hise wordes nome,
Ansuerth and seith, 'My name is Thaise,
That was som time wel at aise:
In Tharse I was forthdrawe and fed,
Ther lerned I, til I was sped,
Of that I can. Mi fader eke
I not wher that I scholde him seke;
He was a king, men tolde me:
Mi Moder dreint was in the See.'
Fro point to point al sche him tolde,
That sche hath longe in herte holde,
And nevere dorste make hir mone
Bot only to this lord al one,
To whom hire herte can noght hele,
Torne it to wo, torne it to wele,
Torne it to good, torne it to harm.
And he tho toke hire in his arm,
Bot such a joie as he tho made
Was nevere sen; thus be thei glade,
That sory hadden be toforn.
Fro this day forth fortune hath sworn
To sette him upward on the whiel;
So goth the world, now wo, now wel:
This king hath founde newe grace,
So that out of his derke place
He goth him up into the liht,
And with him cam that swete wiht,
His doghter Thaise, and forth anon
Thei bothe into the Caban gon
Which was ordeigned for the king,
And ther he dede of al his thing,
And was arraied realy.
And out he cam al openly,
Wher Athenagoras he fond,
The which was lord of al the lond:
He preith the king to come and se
His castell bothe and his cite,

And thus thei gon forth alle in fiere,
This king, this lord, this maiden diere.
This lord tho made hem riche feste
With every thing which was honeste,
To plese with this worthi king,
Ther lacketh him no maner thing:
Bot yit for al his noble array
Wifles he was into that day,
As he that yit was of yong Age;
So fell ther into his corage
The lusti wo, the glade peine
Of love, which noman restreigne
Yit nevere myhte as nou tofore.
This lord thenkth al his world forlore,
Bot if the king wol don him grace;
He waiteth time, he waiteth place,
Him thoghte his herte wol tobreke,
Til he mai to this maide speke
And to hir fader ek also
For mariage: and it fell so,
That al was do riht as he thoghte,
His pourpos to an ende he broghte,
Sche weddeth him as for hire lord;
Thus be thei alle of on acord.
Whan al was do riht as thei wolde,
The king unto his Sone tolde
Of Tharse thilke traiterie,
And seide hou in his compaignie
His doghter and himselven eke
Schull go vengance forto seke.
The Schipes were redy sone,
And whan thei sihe it was to done,
Withoute lette of eny wente
With Seil updrawe forth thei wente
Towardes Tharse upon the tyde.
Bot he that wot what schal betide,
The hihe god, which wolde him kepe,
Whan that this king was faste aslepe,
Be nyhtes time he hath him bede
To seile into an other stede:
To Ephesim he bad him drawe,
And as it was that time lawe,

He schal do there his sacrifice;
And ek he bad in alle wise
That in the temple amonges alle
His fortune, as it is befalle,
Touchende his doghter and his wif
He schal beknowe upon his lif.
The king of this Avisioun
Hath gret ymaginacioun,
What thing it signefie may;
And natheles, whan it was day,
He bad caste Anchor and abod;
And whil that he on Anchor rod,
The wynd, which was tofore strange,
Upon the point began to change,
And torneth thider as it scholde.
Tho knew he wel that god it wolde,
And bad the Maister make him yare,
Tofor the wynd for he wol fare
To Ephesim, and so he dede.
And whanne he cam unto the stede
Where as he scholde londe, he londeth
With al the haste he may, and fondeth
To schapen him be such a wise,
That he may be the morwe arise
And don after the mandement
Of him which hath him thider sent.
And in the wise that he thoghte,
Upon the morwe so he wroghte;
His doghter and his Sone he nom,
And forth unto the temple he com
With a gret route in compaignie,
Hise yiftes forto sacrifie.
The citezeins tho herden seie
Of such a king that cam to preie
Unto Diane the godesse,
And left al other besinesse,
Thei comen thider forto se
The king and the solempnete.
With worthi knyhtes environed
The king himself hath abandoned
Into the temple in good entente.
The dore is up, and he in wente,

Wher as with gret devocioun
Of holi contemplacioun
Withinne his herte he made his schrifte;
And after that a riche yifte
He offreth with gret reverence,
And there in open Audience
Of hem that stoden thanne aboute,
He tolde hem and declareth oute
His hap, such as him is befaller,
Ther was nothing foryete of alle.
His wif, as it was goddes grace,
Which was professed in the place,
As sche that was Abbess there,
Unto his tale hath leid hire Ere:
Sche knew the vois and the visage,
For pure joie as in a rage
Sche strawhte unto him al at ones,
And fell aswoune upon the stones,
Wherof the temple flor was paved.
Sche was anon with water laved,
Til sche cam to herself ayein,
And thanne sche began to sein:
'Ha, blessed be the hihe sonde,
That I mai se myn housebonde,
That whilom he and I were on!'
The king with that knew hire anon,
And tok hire in his Arm and kiste;
And al the toun thus sone it wiste.
Tho was ther joie manyfold,
For every man this tale hath told
As for miracle, and were glade,
Bot nevere man such joie made
As doth the king, which hath his wif.
And whan men herde hou that hir lif
Was saved, and be whom it was,
Thei wondren alle of such a cas:
Thurgh al the Lond aros the speche
Of Maister Cerymon the leche
And of the cure which he dede.
The king himself tho hath him bede,
And ek this queene forth with him,
That he the toun of Ephesim

Wol leve and go wher as thei be,
For nevere man of his degre
Hath do to hem so mochel good;
And he his profit understod,
And granteth with hem forto wende.
And thus thei maden there an ende,
And token leve and gon to Schipe
With al the hole felaschipe.
This king, which nou hath his desir,
Seith he wol holde his cours to Tyr.
Thei hadden wynd at wille tho,
With topseilcole and forth they go,
And striken nevere, til thei come
To Tyr, where as thei havene nome,
And londen hem with mochel blisse.
Tho was ther many a mowth to kisse,
Echon welcometh other hom,
Bot whan the queen to londe com,
And Thaise hir doghter be hir side,
The joie which was thilke tyde
Ther mai no mannes tunge telle:
Thei seiden alle, 'Hier comth the welle
Of alle wommannysshe grace.'
The king hath take his real place,
The queene is into chambre go:
Ther was gret feste arraied tho;
Whan time was, thei gon to mete,
Alle olde sorwes ben foryete,
And gladen hem with joies newe:
The descoloured pale hewe
Is now become a rody cheke,
Ther was no merthe forto seke,
Bot every man hath that he wolde.
The king, as he wel couthe and scholde,
Makth to his poeple riht good chiere;
And after sone, as thou schalt hiere,
A parlement he hath sommoned,
Wher he his doghter hath coroned
Forth with the lord of Mitelene,
That on is king, that other queene:
And thus the fadres ordinance
This lond hath set in governance,

And seide thanne he wolde wende
To Tharse, forto make an ende
Of that his doghter was betraied.
Therof were alle men wel paied,
And seide hou it was forto done:
The Schipes weren redi sone,
And strong pouer with him he tok;
Up to the Sky he caste his lok,
And syh the wynd was covenable.
Thei hale up Ancher with the cable,
The Seil on hih, the Stiere in honde,
And seilen, til thei come alonde
At Tharse nyh to the cite;
And whan thei wisten it was he,
The toun hath don him reverence.
He telleth hem the violence,
Which the tretour Strangulio
And Dionise him hadde do
Touchende his dowhter, as yee herde;
And whan thei wiste hou that it ferde,
As he which pes and love soghte,
Unto the toun this he besoghte,
To don him riht in juggement.
Anon thei were bothe asent
With strengthe of men, and comen sone,
And as hem thoghte it was to done,
Atteint thei were be the lawe
And diemed forto honge and drawe,
And brent and with the wynd toblowe,
That al the world it myhte knowe:
And upon this condicion
The dom in execucion
Was put anon withoute faile.
And every man hath gret mervaile,
Which herde tellen of this chance,
And thonketh goddes pourveance,
Which doth mercy forth with justice.
Slain is the moerdrer and moerdrice
Thurgh verray trowthe of rihtwisnesse,
And thurgh mercy sauf is simplesse
Of hire whom mercy preserveth;
Thus hath he wel that wel deserveth.

Whan al this thing is don and ended,
This king, which loved was and frended,
A lettre hath, which cam to him
Be Schipe fro Pentapolim,
Be which the lond hath to him write,
That he wolde understonde and wite
Hou in good mynde and in good pes
Ded is the king Artestrates,
Wherof thei alle of on acord
Him preiden, as here liege lord,
That he the lettre wel conceive
And come his regne to receive,
Which god hath yove him and fortune;
And thus besoghte the commune
Forth with the grete lordes alle.
This king sih how it was befalle,
Fro Tharse and in prosperite
He tok his leve of that Cite
And goth him into Schipe ayein:
The wynd was good, the See was plein,
Hem nedeth noght a Riff to slake,
Til thei Pentapolim have take.
The lond, which herde of that tidinge,
Was wonder glad of his cominge;
He resteth him a day or tuo
And tok his conseil to him tho,
And sette a time of Parlement,
Wher al the lond of on assent
Forth with his wif hath him corouned,
Wher alle goode him was fuisouned.
Lo, what it is to be wel grounded:
For he hath ferst his love founded
Honesteliche as forto wedde,
Honesteliche his love he spedde
And hadde children with his wif,
And as him liste he ladde his lif;
And in ensample his lif was write,
That alle lovers myhten wite
How ate laste it schal be sene
Of love what thei wolden mene.
For se now on that other side,
Antiochus with al his Pride,

Which sette his love unkindely,
His ende he hadde al sodeinly,
Set ayein kinde upon vengance,
And for his lust hath his penance.
Lo thus, mi Sone, myht thou liere
What is to love in good manere,
And what to love in other wise:
The mede arist of the servise;
Fortune, thogh sche be noght stable,
Yit at som time is favorable
To hem that ben of love trewe.
Bot certes it is forto rewe
To se love ayein kinde falle,
For that makth sore a man to falle,
As thou myht of tofore rede.
Forthi, my Sone, I wolde rede
To lete al other love aweie,
Bot if it be thurgh such a weie
As love and reson wolde acorde.
For elles, if that thou descorde,
And take lust as doth a beste,
Thi love mai noght ben honeste;
For be no skile that I finde
Such lust is noght of loves kinde.
Mi fader, hou so that it stonde,
Youre tale is herd and understonde,
As thing which worthi is to hiere,
Of gret ensample and gret matiere,
Wherof, my fader, god you quyte.
Bot in this point miself aquite
I mai riht wel, that nevere yit
I was assoted in my wit,
Bot only in that worthi place
Wher alle lust and alle grace
Is set, if that danger ne were.
Bot that is al my moste fere:
I not what ye fortune acompte,
Bot what thing danger mai amonte
I wot wel, for I have assaied;
For whan myn herte is best arraied
And I have al my wit thurghsoght
Of love to beseche hire oght,

For al that evere I skile may,
I am concluded with a nay:
That o sillable hath overthrowe
A thousand wordes on a rowe
Of suche as I best speke can;
Thus am I bot a lewed man.
Bot, fader, for ye ben a clerk
Of love, and this matiere is derk,
And I can evere leng the lasse,
Bot yit I mai noght let it passe,
Youre hole conseil I beseche,
That ye me be som weie teche
What is my beste, as for an ende.
Mi Sone, unto the trouthe wende
Now wol I for the love of thee,
And lete alle othre truffles be.
The more that the nede is hyh,
The more it nedeth to be slyh
To him which hath the nede on honde.
I have wel herd and understonde,
Mi Sone, al that thou hast me seid,
And ek of that thou hast me preid,
Nou at this time that I schal
As for conclusioun final
Conseile upon thi nede sette:
So thenke I finaly to knette
This cause, where it is tobroke,
And make an ende of that is spoke.
For I behihte thee that yifte
Ferst whan thou come under my schrifte,
That thogh I toward Venus were,
Yit spak I suche wordes there,
That for the Presthod which I have,
Min ordre and min astat to save,
I seide I wolde of myn office
To vertu more than to vice
Encline, and teche thee mi lore.
Forthi to speken overmore
Of love, which thee mai availe,
Tak love where it mai noght faile:
For as of this which thou art inne,
Be that thou seist it is a Sinne,

And Sinne mai no pris deserve,
Withoute pris and who schal serve,
I not what profit myhte availe.
Thus folweth it, if thou travaile,
Wher thou no profit hast ne pris,
Thou art toward thiself unwis:
And sett thou myhtest lust atteigne,
Of every lust thende is a peine,
And every peine is good to fle;
So it is wonder thing to se,
Why such a thing schal be desired.
The more that a Stock is fyred,
The rathere into Aisshe it torneth;
The fot which in the weie sporneth
Fulofte his heved hath overthrowe;
Thus love is blind and can noght knowe
Wher that he goth, til he be falle:
Forthi, bot if it so befalle
With good conseil that he be lad,
Him oghte forto ben adrad.
For conseil passeth alle thing
To him which thenkth to ben a king;
And every man for his partie
A kingdom hath to justefie,
That is to sein his oghne dom.
If he misreule that kingdom,
He lest himself, and that is more
Than if he loste Schip and Ore
And al the worldes good withal:
For what man that in special
Hath noght himself, he hath noght elles,
Nomor the perles than the schelles;
Al is to him of o value:
Thogh he hadde at his retenue
The wyde world ryht as he wolde,
Whan he his herte hath noght withholde
Toward himself, al is in vein.
And thus, my Sone, I wolde sein,
As I seide er, that thou aryse,
Er that thou falle in such a wise
That thou ne myht thiself rekevere;
For love, which that blind was evere,

Makth alle his servantz blinde also.
My Sone, and if thou have be so,
Yit is it time to withdrawe,
And set thin herte under that lawe,
The which of reson is governed
And noght of will. And to be lerned,
Ensamples thou hast many on
Of now and ek of time gon,
That every lust is bot a while;
And who that wole himself beguile,
He may the rathere be deceived.
Mi Sone, now thou hast conceived
Somwhat of that I wolde mene;
Hierafterward it schal be sene
If that thou lieve upon mi lore;
For I can do to thee nomore
Bot teche thee the rihte weie:
Now ches if thou wolt live or deie.
Mi fader, so as I have herd
Your tale, bot it were ansuerd,
I were mochel forto blame.
Mi wo to you is bot a game,
That fielen noght of that I fiele;
The fieling of a mannes Hiele
Mai noght be likned to the Herte:
I mai noght, thogh I wolde, asterte,
And ye be fre from al the peine
Of love, wherof I me pleigne.
It is riht esi to comaunde;
The hert which fre goth on the launde
Not of an Oxe what him eileth;
It falleth ofte a man merveileth
Of that he seth an other fare,
Bot if he knewe himself the fare,
And felt it as it is in soth,
He scholde don riht as he doth,
Or elles werse in his degre:
For wel I wot, and so do ye,
That love hath evere yit ben used,
So mot I nedes ben excused.
Bot, fader, if ye wolde thus
Unto Cupide and to Venus

Be frendlich toward mi querele,
So that myn herte were in hele
Of love which is in mi briest,
I wot wel thanne a betre Prest
Was nevere mad to my behove.
Bot al the whiles that I hove
In noncertein between the tuo,
And not if I to wel or wo
Schal torne, that is al my drede,
So that I not what is to rede.
Bot for final conclusion
I thenke a Supplicacion
With pleine wordes and expresse
Wryte unto Venus the goddesse,
The which I preie you to bere
And bringe ayein a good ansuere.
Tho was betwen mi Prest and me
Debat and gret perplexete:
Mi resoun understod him wel,
And knew it was sothe everydel
That he hath seid, bot noght forthi
Mi will hath nothing set therby.
For techinge of so wis a port
Is unto love of no desport;
Yit myhte nevere man beholde
Reson, wher love was withholde,
Thei be noght of o governance.
And thus we fellen in distance,
Mi Prest and I, bot I spak faire,
And thurgh mi wordes debonaire
Thanne ate laste we acorden,
So that he seith he wol recorden
To speke and stonde upon mi syde
To Venus bothe and to Cupide;
And bad me wryte what I wolde,
And seith me trewly that he scholde
Mi lettre bere unto the queene.
And I sat doun upon the grene
Fulfilt of loves fantasie,
And with the teres of myn ije
In stede of enke I gan to wryte
The wordes whiche I wolde endite

Unto Cupide and to Venus,
And in mi lettre I seide thus.
The wofull peine of loves maladie,
Ayein the which mai no phisique availe,
Min herte hath so bewhaped with sotie,
That wher so that I reste or I travaile,
I finde it evere redy to assaile
Mi resoun, which that can him noght defende:
Thus seche I help, wherof I mihte amende.
Ferst to Nature if that I me compleigne,
Ther finde I hou that every creature
Som time ayer hath love in his demeine,
So that the litel wrenne in his mesure
Hath yit of kinde a love under his cure;
And I bot on desire, of which I misse:
And thus, bot I, hath every kinde his blisse.
The resoun of my wit it overpasseth,
Of that Nature techeth me the weie
To love, and yit no certein sche compasseth
Hou I schal spede, and thus betwen the tweie
I stonde, and not if I schal live or deie.
For thogh reson ayein my will debate,
I mai noght fle, that I ne love algate.
Upon miself is thilke tale come,
Hou whilom Pan, which is the god of kinde,
With love wrastlede and was overcome:
For evere I wrastle and evere I am behinde,
That I no strengthe in al min herte finde,
Wherof that I mai stonden eny throwe;
So fer mi wit with love is overthrowe.
Whom nedeth help, he mot his helpe crave,
Or helpeles he schal his nede spille:
Pleinly thurghsoght my wittes alle I have,
Bot non of hem can helpe after mi wille;
And als so wel I mihte sitte stille,
As preie unto mi lady eny helpe:
Thus wot I noght wherof miself to helpe.
Unto the grete Jove and if I bidde,
To do me grace of thilke swete tunne,
Which under keie in his celier amidde
Lith couched, that fortune is overrunne,
Bot of the bitter cuppe I have begunne,

I not hou ofte, and thus finde I no game;
For evere I axe and evere it is the same.
I se the world stonde evere upon eschange,
Nou wyndes loude, and nou the weder softe;
I mai sen ek the grete mone change,
And thing which nou is lowe is eft alofte;
The dredfull werres into pes fulofte
Thei torne; and evere is Danger in o place,
Which wol noght change his will to do me grace.
Bot upon this the grete clerc Ovide,
Of love whan he makth his remembrance,
He seith ther is the blinde god Cupide,
The which hath love under his governance,
And in his hond with many a fyri lance
He woundeth ofte, ther he wol noght hele;
And that somdiel is cause of mi querele.
Ovide ek seith that love to parforne
Stant in the hond of Venus the goddesse,
Bot whan sche takth hir conseil with Satorne,
Ther is no grace, and in that time, I gesse,
Began mi love, of which myn hevynesse
Is now and evere schal, bot if I spede:
So wot I noght miself what is to rede.
Forthi to you, Cupide and Venus bothe,
With al myn hertes obeissance I preie,
If ye were ate ferste time wrothe,
Whan I began to love, as I you seie,
Nou stynt, and do thilke infortune aweie,
So that Danger, which stant of retenue
With my ladi, his place mai remue.
O thou Cupide, god of loves lawe,
That with thi Dart brennende hast set afyre
Min herte, do that wounde be withdrawe,
Or yif me Salve such as I desire:
For Service in thi Court withouten hyre
To me, which evere yit have kept thin heste,
Mai nevere be to loves lawe honeste.
O thou, gentile Venus, loves queene,
Withoute gult thou dost on me thi wreche;
Thou wost my peine is evere aliche grene
For love, and yit I mai it noght areche:
This wold I for my laste word beseche,

That thou mi love aquite as I deserve,
Or elles do me plainly forto sterve.
Whanne I this Supplicacioun
With good deliberacioun,
In such a wise as ye nou wite,
Hadde after min entente write
Unto Cupide and to Venus,
This Prest which hihte Genius
It tok on honde to presente,
On my message and forth he wente
To Venus, forto wite hire wille.
And I bod in the place stille,
And was there bot a litel while,
Noght full the montance of a Mile,
Whan I behield and sodeinly
I sih wher Venus stod me by.
So as I myhte, under a tre
To grounde I fell upon mi kne,
And preide hire forto do me grace:
Sche caste hire chiere upon mi face,
And as it were halvinge a game
Sche axeth me what is mi name.
'Ma dame,' I seide, 'John Gower.'
'Now John,' quod sche, 'in my pouer
Thou most as of thi love stonde;
For I thi bille have understonde,
In which to Cupide and to me
Somdiel thou hast compleigned thee,
And somdiel to Nature also.
Bot that schal stonde among you tuo,
For therof have I noght to done;
For Nature is under the Mone
Maistresse of every lives kinde,
Bot if so be that sche mai finde
Som holy man that wol withdrawe
His kindly lust ayein hir lawe;
Bot sielde whanne it falleth so,
For fewe men ther ben of tho,
Bot of these othre ynowe be,
Whiche of here oghne nycete
Ayein Nature and hire office
Deliten hem in sondri vice,

Wherof that sche fulofte hath pleigned,
And ek my Court it hath desdeigned
And evere schal; for it receiveth
Non such that kinde so deceiveth.
For al onliche of gentil love
Mi court stant alle courtz above
And takth noght into retenue
Bot thing which is to kinde due,
For elles it schal be refused.
Wherof I holde thee excused,
For it is manye daies gon,
That thou amonges hem were on
Which of my court hast ben withholde;
So that the more I am beholde
Of thi desese to commune,
And to remue that fortune,
Which manye daies hath the grieved.
Bot if my conseil mai be lieved,
Thou schalt ben esed er thou go
Of thilke unsely jolif wo,
Wherof thou seist thin herte is fyred:
Bot as of that thou hast desired
After the sentence of thi bille,
Thou most therof don at my wille,
And I therof me wole advise.
For be thou hol, it schal suffise:
Mi medicine is noght to sieke
For thee and for suche olde sieke,
Noght al per chance as ye it wolden,
Bot so as ye be reson scholden,
Acordant unto loves kinde.
For in the plit which I thee finde,
So as mi court it hath awarded,
Thou schalt be duely rewarded;
And if thou woldest more crave,
It is no riht that thou it have.'
Venus, which stant withoute lawe
In noncertein, bot as men drawe
Of Rageman upon the chance,
Sche leith no peis in the balance,
Bot as hir lyketh forto weie;
The trewe man fulofte aweie

Sche put, which hath hir grace bede,
And set an untrew in his stede.
Lo, thus blindly the world sche diemeth
In loves cause, as tome siemeth:
I not what othre men wol sein,
Bot I algate am so besein,
And stonde as on amonges alle
Which am out of hir grace falle:
It nedeth take no witesse,
For sche which seid is the goddesse,
To whether part of love it wende,
Hath sett me for a final ende
The point wherto that I schal holde.
For whan sche hath me wel beholde,
Halvyng of scorn, sche seide thus:
'Thou wost wel that I am Venus,
Which al only my lustes seche;
And wel I wot, thogh thou beseche
Mi love, lustes ben ther none,
Whiche I mai take in thi persone;
For loves lust and lockes hore
In chambre acorden neveremore,
And thogh thou feigne a yong corage,
It scheweth wel be the visage
That olde grisel is no fole:
There ben fulmanye yeres stole
With thee and with suche othre mo,
That outward feignen youthe so
And ben withinne of pore assay.
Min herte wolde and I ne may
Is noght beloved nou adayes;
Er thou make eny suche assaies
To love, and faile upon the fet,
Betre is to make a beau retret;
For thogh thou myhtest love atteigne,
Yit were it bot an ydel peine,
Whan that thou art noght sufficant
To holde love his covenant.
Forthi tak hom thin herte ayein,
That thou travaile noght in vein,
Wherof my Court may be deceived.
I wot and have it wel conceived,

Hou that thi will is good ynowh;
Bot mor behoveth to the plowh,
Wherof the lacketh, as I trowe:
So sitte it wel that thou beknowe
Thi fieble astat, er thou beginne
Thing wher thou miht non ende winne.
What bargain scholde a man assaie,
Whan that him lacketh forto paie?
Mi Sone, if thou be wel bethoght,
This toucheth thee; foryet it noght:
The thing is torned into was;
That which was whilom grene gras,
Is welked hey at time now.
Forthi mi conseil is that thou
Remembre wel hou thou art old.'
Whan Venus hath hir tale told,
And I bethoght was al aboute,
Tho wiste I wel withoute doute,
That ther was no recoverir;
And as a man the blase of fyr
With water quencheth, so ferd I;
A cold me cawhte sodeinly,
For sorwe that myn herte made
Mi dedly face pale and fade
Becam, and swoone I fell to grounde.
And as I lay the same stounde,
Ne fully quik ne fully ded,
Me thoghte I sih tofor myn hed
Cupide with his bowe bent,
And lich unto a Parlement,
Which were ordeigned for the nones,
With him cam al the world at ones
Of gentil folk that whilom were
Lovers, I sih hem alle there
Forth with Cupide in sondri routes.
Min yhe and as I caste aboutes,
To knowe among hem who was who,
I sih wher lusty Youthe tho,
As he which was a Capitein,
Tofore alle othre upon the plein
Stod with his route wel begon,
Here hevedes kempt, and therupon

Garlandes noght of o colour,
Some of the lef, some of the flour,
And some of grete Perles were;
The newe guise of Beawme there,
With sondri thinges wel devised,
I sih, wherof thei ben queintised.
It was al lust that thei with ferde,
Ther was no song that I ne herde,
Which unto love was touchende;
Of Pan and al that was likende
As in Piping of melodie
Was herd in thilke compaignie
So lowde, that on every side
It thoghte as al the hevene cride
In such acord and such a soun
Of bombard and of clarion
With Cornemuse and Schallemele,
That it was half a mannes hele
So glad a noise forto hiere.
And as me thoghte, in this manere
Al freissh I syh hem springe and dance,
And do to love her entendance
After the lust of youthes heste.
Ther was ynowh of joie and feste,
For evere among thei laghe and pleie,
And putten care out of the weie,
That he with hem ne sat ne stod.
And overthis I understod,
So as myn Ere it myhte areche,
The moste matiere of her speche
Was al of knyghthod and of Armes,
And what it is to ligge in armes
With love, whanne it is achieved.
Ther was Tristram, which was believed
With bele Ysolde, and Lancelot
Stod with Gunnore, and Galahot
With his ladi, and as me thoghte,
I syh wher Jason with him broghte
His love, which that Creusa hihte,
And Hercules, which mochel myhte,
Was ther berende his grete Mace,
And most of alle in thilke place

He peyneth him to make chiere
With Eolen, which was him diere.
These⁵, though he were untrewē
To love, as alle wommen knewe,
Yit was he there natheles
With Phedra, whom to love he ches:
Of Grece ek ther was Thelamon,
Which fro the king Lamenedon
At Troie his doghter refte aweie,
Eseonen, as for his preie,
Which take was whan Jason cam
Fro Colchos, and the Cite nam
In vengance of the ferste hate;
That made hem after to debate,
Whan Priamus the newe toun
Hath mad. And in avisioun
Me thoghte that I sih also
Ector forth with his brethren tuo;
Himself stod with Pantaselee,
And next to him I myhte se,
Wher Paris stod with faire Eleine,
Which was his joie sovereigne;
And Troilus stod with Criseide,
Bot evere among, although he pleide,
Be semblant he was hevy chiered,
For Diomedē, as him was liered,
Cleymeth to ben his parconner.
And thus full many a bacheler,
A thousand mo than I can sein,
With Yowthe I sih ther wel besein
Forth with here loves glade and blithe.
And some I sih whiche ofte sithe
Compleignen hem in other wise;
Among the whiche I syh Narcise
And Piramus, that sory were.
The worthy Grek also was there,
Achilles, which for love deide:
Agamenon ek, as men seide,
And Menelay the king also
I syh, with many an other mo,
Which hadden be fortunēd sore
In loves cause. And overmore

Of wommen in the same cas,
 With hem I sih wher Dido was,
 Forsake which was with Enee;
 And Phillis ek I myhte see,
 Whom Demephon deceived hadde;
 And Adriagne hir sorwe ladde,
 For These^{us} hir Soster tok
 And hire unkindely forsok.
 I sih ther ek among the press
 Compleignende upon Hercules
 His ferste love Deyanire,
 Which sette him afterward afyre:
 Medea was there ek and pleigneth
 Upon Jason, for that he feigneth,
 Withoute cause and tok a newe;
 Sche seide, 'Fy on alle untrewe!'

I sih there ek Deijdamie,
 Which hadde lost the compaignie
 Of Achilles, whan Diomedes
 To Troie him fette upon the nede.
 Among these othre upon the grene
 I syh also the wofull queene
 Cleopatras, which in a Cave
 With Serpentz hath herself begrave
 Alquik, and so sche was totore,
 For sorwe of that sche hadde lore
 Antonye, which hir love hath be:
 And forth with hire I sih Tisbee,
 Which on the scharpe swerdes point
 For love deide in sory point;
 And as myn Ere it myhte knowe,
 Sche seide, 'Wo worthe alle slowe!'

The pleignte of Progne and Philomene
 Ther herde I what it wolde mene,
 How Tere^{us} of his untrouthe
 Undede hem bothe, and that was routhe;
 And next to hem I sih Canace,
 Which for Machaire hir fader grace
 Hath lost, and deide in wofull plit.
 And as I sih in my spirit,
 Me thoghte amonges othre thus
 The doghter of king Priamus,

Polixena, whom Pirrus slowh,
Was there and made sorwe ynowh,
As sche which deide gulteles
For love, and yit was loveles.
And forto take the desport,
I sih there some of other port,
And that was Circes and Calipse,
That cowthen do the Mone eclipse,
Of men and change the liknesses,
Of Artmagique Sorceresses;
Thei hielde in honde manyon,
To love wher thei wolde or non.
Bot above alle that ther were
Of wommen I sih foure there,
Whos name I herde most comended:
Be hem the Court stod al amended;
For wher thei comen in presence,
Men deden hem the reverence,
As thogh they hadden be goddesses,
Of al this world or Emperesses.
And as me thoghte, an Ere I leide,
And herde hou that these othre seide,
'Lo, these ben the foure wyves,
Whos feith was proeved in her lyves:
For in essample of alle goode
With Mariage so thei stode,
That fame, which no gret thing hydeth,
Yit in Cronique of hem abydeth.'
Penolope that on was hote,
Whom many a knyht hath loved hote,
Whil that hire lord Ulixes lay
Full many a yer and many a day
Upon the grete Siege of Troie:
Bot sche, which hath no worldes joie
Bot only of hire housebonde,
Whil that hir lord was out of londe,
So wel hath kept hir wommanhiede,
That al the world therof tok hiede,
And nameliche of hem in Grece.
That other womman was Lucrece,
Wif to the Romain Collatin;
And sche constreigned of Tarquin

To thing which was ayein hir wille,
Sche wolde noght hirselves stille,
Bot deide only for drede of schame
In keping of hire goode name,
As sche which was on of the beste.
The thridde wif was hote Alceste,
Which whanne Ametus scholde dye
Upon his grete maladye,
Sche preide unto the goddes so,
That sche receyveth al the wo
And deide himself to yive him lif:
Lo, if this were a noble wif.
The ferthe wif which I ther sih,
I herde of hem that were nyh
Hou sche was cleped Alcione,
Which to Seyix hir lord al one
And to nomo hire body kepte;
And whan sche sih him dreynt, sche lepte
Into the wawes where he swam,
And there a Sefoul sche becam,
And with hire wenges him bespradde
For love which to him sche hadde.
Lo, these foure were tho
Whiche I sih, as me thoghte tho,
Among the grete compaignie
Which Love hadde forto guye:
Bot Youthe, which in special
Of Loves Court was Mareschal,
So besy was upon his lay,
That he non hiede where I lay
Hath take. And thanne, as I behield,
Me thoghte I sih upon the field,
Where Elde cam a softe pas
Toward Venus, ther as sche was.
With him gret compaignie he ladde,
Bot noght so manye as Youthe hadde:
The moste part were of gret Age,
And that was sene in the visage,
And noght forthi, so as thei myhte,
Thei made hem yongly to the sihte:
Bot yit herde I no pipe there
To make noise in mannes Ere,

Bot the Musette I myhte knowe,
For olde men which souneth lowe,
With Harpe and Lute and with Citole.
The hovedance and the Carole,
In such a wise as love hath bede,
A softe pas thei dance and trede;
And with the wommen otherwhile
With sobre chier among thei smyle,
For laghtre was ther non on hyh.
And natheles full wel I syh
That thei the more queinte it made
For love, in whom thei weren glade.
And there me thoghte I myhte se
The king David with Bersabee,
And Salomon was noght withoute;
Passende an hundred on a route
Of wyves and of Concubines,
Juesses bothe and Sarazines,
To him I sih alle entendant:
I not if he was sufficient,
Bot natheles for al his wit
He was attached with that writ
Which love with his hond enseleth,
Fro whom non erthly man appeleth.
And overthis, as for a wonder,
With his leon which he put under,
With Dalida Sampson I knew,
Whos love his strengthe al overthrew.
I syh there Aristotle also,
Whom that the queene of Grece so
Hath bridled, that in thilke time
Sche made him such a Silogime,
That he foryat al his logique;
Ther was non art of his Practique,
Thurgh which it mihte ben excluded
That he ne was fully concluded
To love, and dede his obeissance.
And ek Virgile of aqueintance
I sih, wher he the Maiden preide,
Which was the doghter, as men seide,
Of themperour whilom of Rome;
Sortes and Plato with him come,

So dede Ovide the Poete.
I thoghte thanne how love is swete,
Which hath so wise men reclaimed,
And was miself the lasse aschamed,
Or forto lese or forto winne
In the meschief that I was inne:
And thus I lay in hope of grace.
And whan thei comen to the place
Wher Venus stod and I was falle,
These olde men with o vois alle
To Venus preiden for my sake.
And sche, that myhte noght forsake
So gret a clamour as was there,
Let Pite come into hire Ere;
And forth withal unto Cupide
Sche preith that he upon his side
Me wolde thurgh his grace sende
Som confort, that I myhte amende,
Upon the cas which is befalle.
And thus for me thei preiden alle
Of hem that weren olde aboute,
And ek some of the yonge route,
Of gentillesse and pure trouthe
I herde hem telle it was gret routhe,
That I withouten help so ferde.
And thus me thoghte I lay and herde.
Cupido, which may hurte and hele
In loves cause, as for myn hele
Upon the point which him was preid
Cam with Venus, wher I was leid
Swounende upon the grene gras.
And, as me thoghte , anon ther was
On every side so gret presse,
That every lif began to presse,
I wot noght wel hou many score,
Suche as I spak of now tofore,
Lovers, that comen to beholde,
Bot most of hem that weren olde:
Thei stoden there at thilke tyde,
To se what ende schal betyde
Upon the cure of my sotie.
Tho myhte I hiere gret partie

Spekende, and ech his oghne avis
Hath told, on that, an other this:
Bot among alle this I herde,
Thei weren wo that I so ferde,
And seiden that for no riote
An old man scholde noght assote;
For as thei tolden redely,
Ther is in him no cause why,
Bot if he wolde himself benyce;
So were he wel the more nyce.
And thus desputen some of tho,
And some seiden nothing so,
Bot that the wylde loves rage
In mannes lif forberth non Age;
Whil ther is oyle forto fyre,
The lampe is lyhtly set afyre,
And is fulhard er it be queynt,
Bot only if it be som seint,
Which god preserveth of his grace.
And thus me thoghte, in sondri place
Of hem that walken up and doun
Ther was diverse opinioun:
And for a while so it laste,
Til that Cupide to the laste,
Forth with his moder full avised,
Hath determined and devised
Unto what point he wol descende.
And al this time I was liggende
Upon the ground tofore his yhen,
And thei that my desese syhen
Supposen noght I scholde live;
Bot he, which wolde thanne yive
His grace, so as it mai be,
This blinde god which mai noght se,
Hath groped til that he me fond;
And as he pitte forth his hond
Upon my body, wher I lay,
Me thoghte a fyri Lancegay,
Which whilom thurgh myn herte he caste,
He pulleth oute, and also faste
As this was do, Cupide nam
His weie, I not where he becam,

And so dede al the remenant
Which unto him was entendant,
Of hem that in Avision
I hadde a revelacion,
So as I tolde now tofore.
Bot Venus wente noght therfore,
Ne Genius, whiche thilke time
Abiden bothe faste byme.
And sche which mai the hertes bynde
In loves cause and ek unbinde,
Er I out of mi trance aros,
Venus, which hield a boiste clos,
And wolde noght I scholde deie,
Tok out mor cold than eny keie
An oignement, and in such point
Sche hath my wounded herte enoight,
My temples and my Reins also.
And forth withal sche tok me tho
A wonder Mirour forto holde,
In which sche bad me to beholde
And taken hiede of that I syhe;
Wherinne anon myn hertes yhe
I caste, and sih my colour fade,
Myn yhen dymme and al unglade,
Mi chiekes thinne, and al my face
With Elde I myhte se deface,
So riveled and so wo besein,
That ther was nothing full ne plein,
I syh also myn heres hore.
Mi will was tho to se nomore
Outwith, for ther was no plesance;
And thanne into my remembrance
I drowh myn olde daies passed,
And as reson it hath compassed,
I made a liknesse of miselve
Unto the sondri Monthes twelve,
Wherof the yeer in his astat
Is mad, and stant upon debat,
That lich til other non acordeth.
For who the times wel recordeth,
And thanne at Marche if he beginne,
Whan that the lusti yeer comth inne,

Til Augst be passed and Septembre,
The myhty youthe he may remembre
In which the yeer hath his deduit
Of gras, of lef, of flour, of fruit,
Of corn and of the wyny grape.
And afterward the time is schape
To frost, to Snow, to Wind, to Rein,
Til eft that Mars be come ayein:
The Wynter wol no Somer knowe,
The grene lef is overthrowe,
The clothed erthe is thanne bare,
Despuiled is the Somerfare,
That erst was hete is thanne chele.
And thus thenkende thoghtes fele,
I was out of mi swoune affraied,
Wherof I sih my wittes straied,
And gan to clepe hem hom ayein.
And whan Resoun it herde sein
That loves rage was aweie,
He cam to me the rihte weie,
And hath remued the sotie
Of thilke unwise fantasie,
Wherof that I was wont to pleigne,
So that of thilke fyri peine
I was mad sobre and hol ynowh.
Venus behield me than and lowh,
And axeth, as it were in game,
What love was. And I for schame
Ne wiste what I scholde ansuere;
And natheles I gan to swere
That be my trouthe I knew him noght;
So ferr it was out of mi thoght,
Riht as it hadde nevere be.
'Mi goode Sone,' tho quod sche,
'Now at this time I lieve it wel,
So goth the fortune of my whiel;
Forthi mi conseil is thou leve.'
'Ma dame,' I seide, 'be your leve,
Ye witen wel, and so wot I,
That I am unbehovely
Your Court fro this day forth to serve:
And for I may no thonk deserve,

And also for I am refused,
I preie you to ben excused.
And natheles as for the laste,
Whil that my wittes with me laste,
Touchende mi confession
I axe an absolucion
Of Genius, er that I go.'
The Prest anon was redy tho,
And seide, 'Sone, as of thi schrifte
Thou hast ful pardoun and foryifte;
Foryet it thou, and so wol I.'
'Min holi fader, grant mercy,'
Quod I to him, and to the queene
I fell on knes upon the grene,
And tok my leve forto wende.
Bot sche, that wolde make an ende,
As therto which I was most able,
A Peire of Bedes blak as Sable
Sche tok and heng my necke aboute;
Upon the gaudes al withoute
Was write of gold, Por reposer.
'Lo,' thus sche seide, 'John Gower,
Now thou art ate laste cast,
This have I for thin ese cast,
That thou nomore of love sieche.
Bot my will is that thou besieche
And preie hierafter for the pes,
And that thou make a plein reles
To love, which takth litel hiede
Of olde men upon the nede,
Whan that the lustes ben aweie:
Forthi to thee nys bot o weie,
In which let reson be thi guide;
For he may sone himself misguide,
That seth noght the peril tofore.
Mi Sone, be wel war therfore,
And kep the sentence of my lore
And tarie thou mi Court nomore,
Bot go ther vertu moral duelleth,
Wher ben thi bokes, as men telleth,
Whiche of long time thou hast write.
For this I do thee wel to wite,

If thou thin hele wolt purchace,
Thou miht noght make suite and chace,
Wher that the game is nought pernable;
It were a thing unresonable,
A man to be so overseie.
Forthi tak hiede of that I seie;
For in the lawe of my comune
We be noght schape to comune,
Thiself and I, nevere after this.
Now have y seid al that ther is
Of love as for thi final ende:
Adieu, for y mot fro the wende.'
And with that word al sodeinly,
Enclosid in a sterred sky,
Venus, which is the qweene of love,
Was take in to hire place above,
More wiste y nought wher sche becam.
And thus my leve of hire y nam,
And forth with al the same tide
Hire prest, which wolde nought abide,
Or be me lief or be me loth,
Out of my sighte forth he goth,
And y was left with ouden helpe.
So wiste I nought wher of to yelp,
Bot only that y hadde lore
My time, and was sori ther fore.
And thus bewhapid in my thought,
Whan al was turnyd in to nought,
I stod amasid for a while,
And in my self y gan to smyle
Thenkende uppon the bedis blake,
And how they weren me betake,
For that y schulde bidde and preie.
And whanne y sigh non othre weie
Bot only that y was refusid,
Unto the lif which y hadde usid
I thoughte nevere torne ayein:
And in this wise, soth to seyn,
Homward a softe pas y wente,
Wher that with al myn hol entente
Uppon the point that y am schryve
I thenke bidde whil y live.

He which withinne daies sevene
This large world forth with the hevene
Of his eternal providence
Hath mad, and thilke intelligence
In mannys soule resonable
Hath schape to be perdurable,
Wherof the man of his feture
Above alle erthli creature
Aftir the soule is immortal,
To thilke lord in special,
As he which is of alle thinges
The creatour, and of the kynges
Hath the fortunes uppon honde,
His grace and mercy forto fonde
Uppon my bare knes y preie,
That he this lond in siker weie
Wol sette uppon good governance.
For if men takyn remembrance
What is to live in unite,
Ther ys no staat in his degree
That noughte to desire pes,
With outen which, it is no les,
To seche and loke in to the laste,
Ther may no worldes joye laste.
Ferst forto loke the Clergie,
Hem oughte wel to justefie
Thing which belongith to here cure,
As forto praie and to procure
Oure pes toward the hevene above,
And ek to sette reste and love
Among ous on this erthe hiere.
For if they wroughte in this manere
Aftir the reule of charite,
I hope that men schuldyn se
This lond amende. And ovyr this,
To seche and loke how that it is
Touchende of the chevalerie,
Which forto loke, in som partie
Is worthi forto be comendid,
And in som part to ben amendid,
That of here large retenue
The lond is ful of maintenue,

Which causith that the comune right
In fewe contrees stant upright.
Extorcioun, kontek, ravine
Withholde ben of that covyne,
Aldai men hierin gret compleignte
Of the desease, of the constreignte,
Wher of the poeple is sore oppressid:
God graunte it mote be redressid.
For of knyghthode thordre wolde
That thei defende and kepe scholde
The comun right and the fraunchise
Of holy cherche in alle wise,
So that no wikke man it dere,
And ther fore servith scheld and spere:
Bot for it goth now other weie,
Oure grace goth the more aweie.
And forto lokyn ovyrmore,
Wher of the poeple pleigneth sore,
Toward the lawis of oure lond,
Men sein that trouthe hath broke his bond
And with brocage is goon aweie,
So that no man can se the weie
Wher forto fynde rightwisnesse.
And if men sechin sikernesse
Uppon the lucre of marchandie,
Compassement and tricherie
Of singuler profit to wyne,
Men seyn, is cause of mochil synne,
And namely of divisioun,
Which many a noble worthi toun
Fro welthe and fro prosperite
Hath brought to gret adversite.
So were it good to ben al on,
For mechil grace ther uppon
Unto the Citees schulde falle,
Which myghte availle to ous alle,
If these astatz amendid were,
So that the vertus stodyn there
And that the vices were aweie:
Me thenkth y dorste thanne seie,
This londis grace schulde arise.
Bot yit to loke in othre wise,

Ther is a stat, as ye schul hiere,
Above alle othre on erthe hiere,
Which hath the lond in his balance:
To him belongith the leiance
Of Clerk, of knyght, of man of lawe;
Undir his hond al is forth drawe
The marchant and the laborer;
So stant it al in his power
Or forto spille or forto save.
Bot though that he such power have,
And that his myghtes ben so large,
He hath hem nought withouten charge,
To which that every kyng ys swore:
So were it good that he ther fore
First un to rightwisnesse entende,
Wherof that he hym self amende
Toward his god and leve vice,
Which is the chief of his office;
And aftir al the remenant
He schal uppon his covenant
Governe and lede in such a wise,
So that ther be no tirandise,
Wherof that he his poeple grieve,
Or ellis may he nought achieve
That longith to his regalie.
For if a kyng wol justifie
His lond and hem that beth withynne,
First at hym self he mot begynne,
To kepe and reule his owne astat,
That in hym self be no debat
Toward his god: for othre wise
Ther may non erthly kyng suffise
Of his kyngdom the folk to lede,
Bot he the kyng of hevene drede.
For what kyng sett hym uppon pride
And takth his lust on every side
And wil nought go the righte weie,
Though god his grace caste aweie
No wondir is, for ate laste
He schal wel wite it mai nought laste,
The pompe which he secheth here.
Bot what kyng that with humble chere

Aftir the lawe of god eschuieth
The vices, and the vertus suieth,
His grace schal be suffisant
To governe al the remenant
Which longith to his duite;
So that in his prosperite
The poeple schal nought ben oppressid,
Wherof his name schal be blessid,
For evere and be memorial.
And now to speke as in final,
Touchende that y undirtok
In englesch forto make a book
Which stant betwene earnest and game,
I have it maad as thilke same
Which axe forto ben excusid,
And that my bok be nought refusid
Of lered men, whan thei it se,
For lak of curiosite:
For thilke scole of eloquence
Belongith nought to my science,
Uppon the forme of rethorike
My wordis forto peinte and pike,
As Tullius som tyme wrot.
Bot this y knowe and this y wot,
That y have do my trewe peyne
With rude wordis and with pleyne,
In al that evere y couthe and myghte,
This bok to write as y behighte,
So as siknesse it soffre wolde;
And also for my daies olde,
That y am feble and impotent,
I wot nought how the world ys went.
So preye y to my lordis alle
Now in myn age, how so befalle,
That y mot stonden in here grace:
For though me lacke to purchase
Here worthi thonk as by decerte,
Yit the symplesse of my poverte
Desireth forto do plesance
To hem undir whos governance
I hope siker to abide.
But now uppon my laste tide

That y this book have maad and write,
My muse doth me forto wite,
And seith it schal be for my beste
Fro this day forth to take reste,
That y nomore of love make,
Which many an herte hath overtake,
And ovyrturnyd as the blynde
Fro reson in to lawe of kynde;
Wher as the wisdom goth aweie
And can nought se the ryhte weie
How to governe his oghne estat,
Bot everydai stant in debat
Withinne him self, and can nought leve.
And thus forthy my final leve
I take now for evere more,
Withoute makynge any more,
Of love and of his dedly hele,
Which no phisicien can hele.
For his nature is so divers,
That it hath evere som travers
Or of to moche or of to lite,
That plainly mai noman delite,
Bot if him faile or that or this.
Bot thilke love which that is
Withinne a mannes herte affermed,
And stant of charite confermed,
Such love is goodly forto have,
Such love mai the bodi save,
Such love mai the soule amende,
The hyhe god such love ous sende
Forthwith the remenant of grace;
So that above in thilke place
Wher resteth love and alle pes,
Oure joie mai ben endeles.

Explicit iste liber, qui transeat, obsecro liber,
Vt sine liuore vigeat lectoris in ore.
Qui sedet in scannis celi det vt ista lohannis
Perpetuis annis stet pagina grata Britannis,
Derbeie Comiti, recolunt quem laude periti,
Vade liber purus, sub eo requiesce futurus.

John Gower

Confessio Amantis. Explicit Liber Tercius

Incipit Liber Quartus

Dicunt accidiam fore nutricem viciorum,
Torpet et in cunctis tarda que lenta bonis:
Que fieri possent hodie transfert piger in cras,
Furatoque prius ostia claudit equo.
Poscenti tardo negat emolumenta Cupido,
Set Venus in celeri ludit amore viri.

Upon the vices to procede
After the cause of mannes dede,
The ferste point of Slowthe I calle
Lachesce, and is the chief of alle,
And hath this propreliche of kinde,
To leven alle thing behinde.
Of that he mihte do now hier
He tarieth al the longe yer,
And everemore he seith, 'Tomorwe';
And so he wol his time borwe,
And wissheth after 'God me sende,'
That whan he weneth have an ende,
Thanne is he ferthest to beginne.
Thus bringth he many a meschief inne
Unwar, til that he be meschieved,
And may noght thanne be relieved.
And riht so nowther mor ne lesse
It stant of love and of lachesce:
Som time he slowtheth in a day
That he nevere after gete mai.
Now, Sone, as of this ilke thing,
If thou have eny knowleching,
That thou to love hast don er this,
Tell on. Mi goode fader, yis.
As of lachesce I am beknowe
That I mai stonde upon his rowe,
As I that am clad of his suite:
For whanne I thoghte mi poursuite
To make, and therto sette a day

To speke unto the swete May,
Lachesce bad abide yit,
And bar on hond it was no wit
Ne time forto speke as tho.
Thus with his tales to and fro
Mi time in tariinge he drowh:
Whan ther was time good ynowh,
He seide, 'An other time is bettre;
Thou schalt mowe senden hire a lettre,
And per cas wryte more plein
Than thou be Mowthe durstest sein.'
Thus have I lete time slyde
For Slowthe, and kepte noght my tide,
So that lachesce with his vice
Fulofte hath mad my wit so nyce,
That what I thoghte speke or do
With tariinge he hield me so,
Til whanne I wolde and mihte noght.
I not what thing was in my thoght,
Or it was drede, or it was schame;
Bot evere in earnest and in game
I wot ther is long time passed.
Bot yit is noght the love lassed,
Which I unto mi ladi have;
For thogh my tunge is slowh to crave
At alle time, as I have bede,
Min herte stant evere in o stede
And axeth besiliche grace,
The which I mai noght yit embrace.
And god wot that is malgre myn;
For this I wot riht wel a fin,
Mi grace comth so selde aboute,
That is the Slowthe of which I doute
Mor than of al the remenant
Which is to love appourtenant.
And thus as touchende of lachesce,
As I have told, I me confesse
To you, mi fader, and beseche
That furthermor ye wol me teche;
And if ther be to this matiere
Som goodly tale forto liere
How I mai do lachesce aweie,

That ye it wolden telle I preie.
To wisse thee, my Sone, and rede,
Among the tales whiche I rede,
An old ensample therupon
Now herkne, and I wol tellen on.
Ayein Lachesce in loves cas
I finde how whilom Eneas,
Whom Anchises to Sone hadde,
With gret navie, which he ladde
Fro Troie, aryveth at Cartage,
Wher for a while his herbergage
He tok; and it betidde so,
With hire which was qweene tho
Of the Cite his aqueintance
He wan, whos name in remembrance
Is yit, and Dido sche was hote;
Which loveth Eneas so hote
Upon the wordes whiche he seide,
That al hire herte on him sche leide
And dede al holi what he wolde.
Bot after that, as it be scholde,
Fro thenne he goth toward Ytaile
Be Schipe, and there his arivaile
Hath take, and schop him forto ryde.
Bot sche, which mai noght longe abide
The hote peine of loves throwe,
Anon withinne a litel throwe
A lettre unto hir kniht hath write,
And dede him plainly forto wite,
If he made eny tariinge,
To drecche of his ayeincomynge,
That sche ne mihte him fiele and se,
Sche scholde stonde in such degre
As whilom stod a Swan tofore,
Of that sche hadde hire make lore;
For sorwe a fethere into hire brain
Sche schof and hath hireselve slain;
As king Menander in a lay
The sothe hath founde, wher sche lay
Sprantlende with hire wynges tweie,
As sche which scholde thanne deie
For love of him which was hire make.

'And so schal I do for thi sake,'
This qweene seide, 'wel I wot.'
Lo, to Enee thus sche wrot
With many an other word of pleinte:
Bot he, which hadde hise thoghtes feinte
Towardes love and full of Slowthe,
His time lette, and that was rowthe:
For sche, which loveth him tofore,
Desireth evere more and more,
And whan sche sih him tarie so,
Hire herte was so full of wo,
That compleignende manyfold
Sche hath hire oghne tale told,
Unto herself and thus sche spak:
'Ha, who fond evere such a lak
Of Slowthe in eny worthi kniht?
Now wot I wel my deth is diht
Thurgh him which scholde have be mi lif.'
Bot forto stinten al this strif,
Thus whan sche sih non other bote,
Riht evene unto hire herte rote
A naked swerd anon sche threste,
And thus sche gat hireselve reste
In remembrance of alle slowe.
Wherof, my Sone, thou miht knowe
How tariinge upon the nede
In loves cause is forto drede;
And that hath Dido sore aboght,
Whos deth schal evere be bethoght.
And overmore if I schal seche
In this matiere an other spieche,
In a Cronique I finde write
A tale which is good to wite.
At Troie whan king Ulixes
Upon the Siege among the pres
Of hem that worthi knihtes were
Abod long time stille there,
In thilke time a man mai se
How goodli that Penolope,
Which was to him his trewe wif,
Of his lachesce was pleintif;
Wherof to Troie sche him sende

Hire will be lettre, thus spekende:
'Mi worthi love and lord also,
It is and hath ben evere so,
That wher a womman is al one,
It makth a man in his persone
The more hardi forto wowe,
In hope that sche wolde bowe
To such thing as his wille were,
Whil that hire lord were elleswhere.
And of miself I telle this;
For it so longe passed is,
Sithe ferst than ye fro home wente,
That welnyh every man his wente
To there I am, whil ye ben oute,
Hath mad, and ech of hem aboute,
Which love can, my love secheth,
With gret preiere and me besecheth:
And some maken gret manace,
That if thei mihten come in place,
Wher that thei mihte here wille have,
Ther is nothing me scholde save,
That thei ne wolde werche thinges;
And some tellen me tidynges
That ye ben ded, and some sein
That certainly ye ben besein
To love a newe and leve me.
Bot hou as evere that it be,
I thonke unto the goddes alle,
As yit for oght that is befallle
Mai noman do my chekes rede:
Bot natheles it is to drede,
That Lachesse in continuance
Fortune mihte such a chance,
Which noman after scholde amende.'
Lo, thus this ladi compleignende
A lettre unto hire lord hath write,
And preyde him that he wolde wite
And thenke hou that sche was al his,
And that he tarie noght in this,
Bot that he wolde his love aquite,
To hire ayeinward and noght wryte,
Bot come himself in alle haste,

That he non other paper waste;
So that he kepe and holde his trowthe
Withoute lette of eny Slowthe.
Unto hire lord and love liege
To Troie, wher the grete Siege
Was leid, this lettre was conveied.
And he, which wisdom hath pourveied
Of al that to reson belongeth,
With gentil herte it underfongeth:
And whan he hath it overrad,
In part he was riht inly glad,
And ek in part he was desesed:
Bot love his herte hath so thorghsesed
With pure ymaginacioun,
That for non occupacioun
Which he can take on other side,
He mai noght flitt his herte aside
Fro that his wif him hadde enformed;
Wherof he hath himself conformed
With al the wille of his corage
To schape and take the viage
Homward, what time that he mai:
So that him thenketh of a day
A thousand yer, til he mai se
The visage of Penolope,
Which he desireth most of alle.
And whan the time is so befall
That Troie was destruid and brent,
He made non delaieement,
Bot goth him home in alle hihe,
Wher that he fond tofore his yhe
His worthi wif in good astat:
And thus was cessed the debat
Of love, and Slowthe was excused,
Which doth gret harm, where it is used,
And hindreth many a cause honeste.
For of the grete Clerc Grossteste
I rede how besy that he was
Upon clergie an Hed of bras
To forge, and make it forto telle
Of suche thinges as befelle.
And sevene yeres besinesse

He leyde, bot for the lachesse
Of half a Minut of an heure,
Fro ferst that he began laboure
He loste all that he hadde do.
And otherwhile it fareth so,
In loves cause who is slow,
That he withoute under the wow
Be nyhte stant fulofte acold,
Which mihte, if that he hadde wold
His time kept, have be withinne.
Bot Slowthe mai no profit winne,
Bot he mai singe in his karole
How Latewar cam to the Dole,
Wher he no good receive mihte.
And that was proved wel be nyhte
Whilom of the Maiden's fyve,
Whan thilke lord cam forto wyve:
For that here oyle was aweie
To lihte here lampes in his weie,
Here Slowthe broghte it so aboute,
Fro him that thei ben schet withoute.
Wherof, my Sone, be thou war,
Als ferforth as I telle dar.
For love moste ben awaited:
And if thou be noght wel affaited
In love to eschuie Slowthe,
Mi Sone, forto telle trowthe,
Thou miht noght of thiself ben able
To winne love or make it stable,
All thogh thou mihtest love achieve.
Mi fader, that I mai wel lieve.
Bot me was nevere assigned place,
Wher yit to geten eny grace,
Ne me was non such time apointed;
For thanne I wolde I were unjoynted
Of every lime that I have,
If I ne scholde kepe and save
Min heure bothe and ek my stede,
If my ladi it hadde bede.
Bot sche is otherwise avised
Than grante such a time assised;
And natheles of mi lachesse

Ther hath be no defalte I gesse
Of time lost, if that I mihte:
Bot yit hire liketh noght alyhte
Upon no lure which I caste;
For ay the more I crie faste,
The lasse hire liketh forto hieren.
So forto speke of this matiere,
I seche that I mai noght finde,
I haste and evere I am behinde,
And wot noght what it mai amounte.
Bot, fader, upon myn acompte,
Which ye be sett to examine
Of Schrifte after the discipline,
Sey what your beste conseil is.
Mi Sone, my conseil is this:
Hou so it stonde of time go,
Do forth thi besinesse so,
That no Lachesce in the be founde:
For Slowthe is mihti to confounde
The spied of every mannes werk.
For many a vice, as seith the clerk,
Ther hongen upon Slowthes lappe
Of suche as make a man mishappe,
To pleigne and telle of hadde I wist.
And therupon if that thee list
To knowe of Slowthes cause more,
In special yit overmore
Ther is a vice full grevable
To him which is therof coupable,
And stant of alle vertu bare,
Hierafter as I schal declare.
Touchende of Slowthe in his degre,
Ther is yit Pusillamite,
Which is to seie in this langage,
He that hath litel of corage
And dar no mannes werk beginne:
So mai he noght be resoun winne;
For who that noght dar undertake,
Be riht he schal no profit take.
Bot of this vice the nature
Dar nothing sette in aventure,
Him lacketh bothe word and dede,

Wherof he scholde his cause spede:
He woll no manhed understonde,
For evere he hath drede upon honde:
Al is peril that he schal seie,
Him thenkth the wolf is in the weie,
And of ymaginacioun
He makth his excusacioun
And feigneth cause of pure drede,
And evere he faileth ate nede,
Til al be spilt that he with deleth.
He hath the sor which noman heleth,
The which is cleped lack of herte;
Thogh every grace aboute him sterte,
He wol noght ones sterve his fot;
So that be resoun lese he mot,
That wol noght aunter forto winne.
And so forth, Sone, if we beginne
To speke of love and his servise,
Ther ben truantz in such a wise,
That lacken herte, whan best were
To speke of love, and riht for fere
Thei wexen doun and dar noght telle,
Withoute soun as doth the belle,
Which hath no claper forto chyme;
And riht so thei as for the tyme
Ben herteles withoute speche
Of love, and dar nothing beseche;
And thus thei lese and winne noght.
Forthi, my Sone, if thou art oght
Couperable as touchende of this Slowthe,
Scrib the therof and tell me trowthe.
Mi fader, I am al beknowe
That I have ben on of the slowe,
As forto telle in loves cas.
Min herte is yit and evere was,
As thogh the world scholde al tobreke,
So ferful, that I dar noght speke
Of what purpos that I have nome,
Whan I toward mi lady come,
Bot let it passe and overgo.
Mi Sone, do nomore so:
For after that a man pursuieth

To love, so fortune suieth,
Fulofte and yifth hire happi chance
To him which makth continuance
To preie love and to beseche;
As be ensample I schal thee teche.
I finde hou whilom ther was on,
Whos name was Pymaleon,
Which was a lusti man of yowthe:
The werkes of entaile he cowthe
Above alle othre men as tho;
And thurgh fortune it fell him so,
As he whom love schal travaile,
He made an ymage of entaile
Lich to a womman in semblance
Of feture and of contenance,
So fair yit nevere was figure.
Riht as a lyves creature
Sche semeth, for of yvor whyt
He hath hire wroght of such delit,
That sche was rody on the cheke
And red on bothe hire lippes eke;
Wherof that he himself beguileth.
For with a goodly lok sche smyleth,
So that thurgh pure impression
Of his ymaginacion
With al the herte of his corage
His love upon this faire ymage
He sette, and hire of love preide;
Bot sche no word ayeinward seide.
The longe day, what thing he dede,
This ymage in the same stede
Was evere bi, that ate mete
He wolde hire serve and preide hire ete,
And putte unto hire mowth the cuppe;
And whan the bord was taken uppe,
He hath hire into chambre nome,
And after, whan the nyht was come,
He leide hire in his bed al nakid.
He was forwept, he was forwakid,
He keste hire colde lippes ofte,
And wissheth that thei weren softe,
And ofte he rouneth in hire Ere,

And ofte his arm now hier now there
He leide, as he hir wolde embrace,
And evere among he axeth grace,
As thogh sche wiste what he mente:
And thus himself he gan tormente
With such desese of loves peine,
That noman mihte him more peine.
Bot how it were, of his penance
He made such continuance
Fro dai to nyht, and preith so longe,
That his preiere is underfonge,
Which Venus of hire grace herde;
Be nyhte and whan that he worst ferde,
And it lay in his nakede arm,
The colde ymage he fieleth warm
Of fleissh and bon and full of lif.
Lo, thus he wan a lusti wif,
Which obeissant was at his wille;
And if he wolde have holde him stille
And nothing spoke, he scholde have failed:
Bot for he hath his word travailed
And dorste speke, his love he spedde,
And hadde al that he wolde abedde.
For er thei wente thanne atwo,
A knave child between hem two
Thei gete, which was after hote
Paphus, of whom yit hath the note
A certein yle, which Paphos
Men clepe, and of his name it ros.
Be this ensample thou miht finde
That word mai worche above kinde.
Forthi, my Sone, if that thou spare
To speke, lost is al thi fare,
For Slowthe bringth in alle wo.
And over this to loke also,
The god of love is favorable
To hem that ben of love stable,
And many a wonder hath befalle:
Wherof to speke amonges alle,
If that thee list to taken hede,
Therof a solein tale I rede,
Which I schal telle in remembraunce

Upon the sort of loves chaunce.
The king Ligdus upon a strif
Spak unto Thelacuse his wif,
Which thanne was with childe grete;
He swor it scholde noght be lete,
That if sche have a dowhter bore,
That it ne scholde be forlore
And slain, wherof sche sorry was.
So it befell upon this cas,
Whan sche delivered scholde be,
Isis be nyhte in privete,
Which of childinge is the goddesse,
Cam forto helpe in that destresse,
Til that this lady was al smal,
And hadde a dowhter forth withal;
Which the goddesse in alle weie
Bad kepe, and that thei scholden seie
It were a Sone: and thus Iphis
Thei namede him, and upon this
The fader was mad so to wene.
And thus in chambre with the qweene
This Iphis was forthdrawe tho,
And clothed and arraied so
Riht as a kinges Sone scholde.
Til after, as fortune it wolde,
Whan it was of a ten yer age,
Him was betake in mariage
A Duckes dowhter forto wedde,
Which Iante hihte, and ofte abedde
These children leien, sche and sche,
Whiche of on age bothe be.
So that withinne time of yeeres,
Togedre as thei ben pleiefieres,
Liggende abedde upon a nyht,
Nature, which doth every wiht
Upon hire lawe forto muse,
Constreigneth hem, so that thei use
Thing which to hem was al unknowe;
Wherof Cupide thilke throwe
Tok pite for the grete love,
And let do sette kinde above,
So that hir lawe mai ben used,

And thei upon here lust excused.
For love hateth nothing more
Than thing which stant ayein the lore
Of that nature in kinde hath sett:
Forthi Cupide hath so besett
His grace upon this aventure,
That he acordant to nature,
Whan that he syh the time best,
That ech of hem hath other kest,
Transformeth Iphe into a man,
Wherof the kinde love he wan
Of lusti yonge Iante his wif;
And tho thei ladde a merie lif,
Which was to kinde non offence.
And thus to take an evidence,
It semeth love is welwillende
To hem that ben continuende
With besy herte to poursuie
Thing which that is to love due.
Wherof, my Sone, in this matiere
Thou miht ensample taken hiere,
That with thi grete besinesse
Thou miht atteigne the richesse
Of love, if that ther be no Slowthe.
I dar wel seie be mi trowthe,
Als fer as I my witt can seche,
Mi fader, as for lacke of speche,
Bot so as I me schrof tofore,
Ther is non other time lore,
Wherof ther mihte ben obstacle
To lette love of his miracle,
Which I beseche day and nyht.
Bot, fader, so as it is riht
In forme of schrifte to beknowe
What thing belongeth to the slowe,
Your faderhode I wolde preie,
If ther be forthere eny weie
Touchende unto this ilke vice.
Mi Sone, ye, of this office
Ther serveth on in special,
Which lost hath his memorial,
So that he can no wit withholde

In thing which he to kepe is holde,
Wherof fulofte himself he grieveth:
And who that most upon him lieveth,
Whan that hise wittes ben so weyved,
He mai full lihtly be deceived.
To serve Accidie in his office,
Ther is of Slowthe an other vice,
Which cleped is Foryetelnesse;
That noght mai in his herte impresse
Of vertu which reson hath sett,
So clene his wittes he foryet.
For in the tellinge of his tale
Nomore his herte thanne his male
Hath remembrance of thilke forme,
Wherof he scholde his wit enforme
As thanne, and yit ne wot he why.
Thus is his pourpos noght forthi
Forlore of that he wolde bidde,
And skarsly if he seith the thridde
To love of that he hadde ment:
Thus many a loveere hath be schent.
Tell on therfore, hast thou be oon
Of hem that Slowthe hath so begon?
Ye, fader, ofte it hath be so,
That whanne I am mi ladi fro
And thenke untoward hire drawe,
Than cast I many a newe lawe
And al the world torne up so down,
And so recorde I mi lecoun
And wryte in my memorial
What I to hire telle schal,
Riht al the matiere of mi tale:
Bot al nys worth a note schale;
For whanne I come ther sche is,
I have it al foryete ywiss;
Of that I thoghte forto telle
I can noght thanne unethes spelle
That I wende altherbest have rad,
So sore I am of hire adrad.
For as a man that sodeinli
A gost behelde, so fare I;
So that for feere I can noght gete

Mi witt, bot I miself foryete,
That I wot nevere what I am,
Ne whider I schal, ne whenne I cam,
Bot muse as he that were amased.
Lich to the bok in which is rased
The lettre, and mai nothing be rad,
So ben my wittes overlad,
That what as evere I thoghte have spoken,
It is out fro myn herte stoken,
And stonde, as who seith, doumb and def,
That all nys worth an yvy lef,
Of that I wende wel have seid.
And ate laste I make abreid,
Caste up myn hed and loke aboute,
Riht as a man that were in doute
And wot noght wher he schal become.
Thus am I ofte al overcome,
Ther as I wende best to stonde:
Bot after, whanne I understonde,
And am in other place al one,
I make many a wofull mone
Unto miself, and speke so:
'Ha fol, wher was thin herte tho,
Whan thou thi worthi ladi syhe?
Were thou afered of hire yhe?
For of hire hand ther is no drede:
So wel I knowe hir wommanhede,
That in hire is nomore oultrage
Than in a child of thre yeer age.
Whi hast thou drede of so good on,
Whom alle vertu hath begon,
That in hire is no violence
Bot goodlihiede and innocence
Withouten spot of eny blame?
Ha, nyce herte, fy for schame]
Ha, couard herte of love unlered,
Wherof art thou so sore afered,
That thou thi tunge soffrest frese,
And wolt thi goode wordes lese,
Whan thou hast founde time and space?
How scholdest thou deserve grace,
Whan thou thiself darst axe non,

Bot al thou hast foryete anon?
And thus despute I loves lore,
Bot help ne finde I noght the more,
Bot stomble upon myn oghne treine
And make an ekinge of my peine.
For evere whan I thenke among
How al is on miself along,
I seie, 'O fol of alle foles,
Thou farst as he betwen tuo stoles
That wolde sitte and goth to grounde.
It was ne nevere schal be founde,
Betwen foryetelnesse and drede
That man scholde any cause spede.'
And thus, myn holi fader diere,
Toward miself, as ye mai hierre,
I pleigne of my foryetelnesse;
Bot elles al the besinesse,
That mai be take of mannes thoght,
Min herte takth, and is thorghsoght
To thenken evere upon that swete
Withoute Slowthe, I you behete.
For what so falle, or wel or wo,
That thoght foryete I neveremo,
Wher so I lawhe or so I loure:
Noght half the Minut of an houre
Ne mihte I lete out of my mende,
Bot if I thoghte upon that hende.
Therof me schal no Slowthe lette,
Til deth out of this world me fette,
Althogh I hadde on such a Ring,
As Moises thurgh his enchanting
Som time in Ethiope made,
Whan that he Tharbis weddid hade.
Which Ring bar of Oblivion
The name, and that was be resoun
That where it on a finger sat,
Anon his love he so foryat,
As thogh he hadde it nevere knowe:
And so it fell that ilke throwe,
Whan Tharbis hadde it on hire hond,
No knowlechinge of him sche fond,
Bot al was clene out of memoire,

As men mai rede in his histoire;
And thus he wente quit away,
That nevere after that ilke day
Sche thoghte that ther was such on;
Al was foryete and overgon.
Bot in good feith so mai noght I:
For sche is evere faste by,
So nyh that sche myn herte toucheth,
That for nothing that Slowthe voucheth
I mai foryete hire, lief ne loth;
For overal, where as sche goth,
Min herte folwith hire aboute.
Thus mai I seie withoute doute,
For bet, for wers, for oght, for noght,
Sche passeth nevere fro my thoght;
Bot whanne I am ther as sche is,
Min herte, as I you saide er this,
Som time of hire is sore adrad,
And som time it is overglad,
Al out of reule and out of space.
For whan I se hir goodli face
And thenke upon hire hihe pris,
As thogh I were in Paradis,
I am so ravisht of the syhte,
That speke unto hire I ne myhte
As for the time, thogh I wolde:
For I ne mai my wit unfolde
To finde o word of that I mene,
Bot al it is foryete clene;
And thogh I stonde there a myle,
Al is foryete for the while,
A tunge I have and wordes none.
And thus I stonde and thenke al one
Of thing that helpeth ofte noght;
Bot what I hadde afore thoght
To speke, whanne I come there,
It is foryete, as noght ne were,
And stonde amased and assoted,
That of nothing which I have noted
I can noght thanne a note singe,
Bot al is out of knowleching:
Thus, what for joie and what for drede,

Al is foryeten ate nede.
So that, mi fader, of this Slowthe
I have you said the pleine trowthe;
Ye mai it as you list redresce:
For thus stant my foryetelnesse
And ek my pusillamite.
Sey now forth what you list to me,
For I wol only do be you.
Mi Sone, I have wel herd how thou
Hast seid, and that thou most amende:
For love his grace wol noght sende
To that man which dar axe non.
For this we knowen everichon,
A mannes thoght withoute speche
God wot, and yit that men beseche
His will is; for withoute bedes
He doth his grace in fewe stedes:
And what man that foryet himselve,
Among a thousand be noght tuelve,
That wol him take in remembraunce,
Bot lete him falle and take his chaunce.
Forthi pull up a besi herte,
Mi Sone, and let nothing asterte
Of love fro thi besinesse:
For touchinge of foryetelnesse,
Which many a love hath set behinde,
A tale of gret ensample I finde,
Wherof it is pite to wite
In the manere as it is write.
King Demephon, whan he be Schipe
To Troieward with felaschipe
Sailende goth, upon his weie
It hapneth him at Rodopeie,
As Eolus him hadde blowe,
To londe, and rested for a throwe.
And fell that ilke time thus,
The dowhter of Ligurgius,
Which qweene was of the contre,
Was sojournende in that Cite
Withinne a Castell nyh the stronde,
Wher Demephon cam up to londe.
Phillis sche hihte, and of yong age

And of stature and of visage
Sche hadde al that hire best besemeth.
Of Demephon riht wel hire qwemeth,
Whan he was come, and made him chiere;
And he, that was of his manere
A lusti knyht, ne myhte asterte
That he ne sette on hire his herte;
So that withinne a day or tuo
He thoghte, how evere that it go,
He wolde assaie the fortune,
And gan his herte to commune
With goodly wordes in hire Ere;
And forto put hire out of fere,
He swor and hath his trowthe pliht
To be for evere hire oghne knyht.
And thus with hire he stille abod,
Ther while his Schip on Anker rod,
And hadde ynowh of time and space
To speke of love and seche grace.
This ladi herde al that he seide,
And hou he swor and hou he preide,
Which was as an enchantement
To hire, that was innocent:
As thogh it were trowthe and feith,
Sche lieveth al that evere he seith,
And as hire infortune scholde,
Sche granteth him al that he wolde.
Thus was he for the time in joie,
Til that he scholde go to Troie;
Bot tho sche made mochel sorwe,
And he his trowthe leith to borwe
To come, if that he live may,
Ayein withinne a Monthe day,
And therupon thei kisten bothe:
Bot were hem lieve or were hem lothe,
To Schipe he goth and forth he wente
To Troie, as was his ferste entente.
The daies gon, the Monthe passeth,
Hire love encresceth and his lasseth,
For him sche lefte slep and mete,
And he his time hath al foryete;
So that this wofull yonge qweene,

Which wot noght what it mihte meene,
A lettre sende and preide him come,
And seith how sche is overcome
With strengthe of love in such a wise,
That sche noght longe mai suffise
To liven out of his presence;
And putte upon his conscience
The trowthe which he hath behote,
Wherof sche loveth him so hote,
Sche seith, that if he lengere lette
Of such a day as sche him sette,
Sche scholde sterven in his Slowthe,
Which were a schame unto his trowthe.
This lettre is forth upon hire sonde,
Wherof somdiel confort on honde
Sche tok, as she that wolde abide
And waite upon that ilke tyde
Which sche hath in hire lettre write.
Bot now is pite forto wite,
As he dede erst, so he foryat
His time eftsone and oversat.
Bot sche, which mihte noght do so,
The tyde awayteth everemo,
And caste hire yhe upon the See:
Somtime nay, sometime yee,
Somtime he cam, sometime noght,
Thus sche desputeth in hire thoght
And wot noght what sche thenke mai;
Bot fastende al the longe day
Sche was into the derke nyht,
And tho sche hath do set up lyht
In a lanterne on hih alofte
Upon a Tour, wher sche goth ofte,
In hope that in his cominge
He scholde se the liht brenninge,
Wherof he mihte his weies rihte
To come wher sche was be nyhte.
Bot al for noght, sche was deceived,
For Venus hath hire hope weyved,
And schewede hire upon the Sky
How that the day was faste by,
So that withinne a litel throwe

The daies lyht sche mihte knowe.
Tho sche behield the See at large;
And whan sche sih ther was no barge
Ne Schip, als ferr as sche may kenne,
Doun fro the Tour sche gan to renne
Into an Herber all hire one,
Wher many a wonder woful mone
Sche made, that no lif it wiste,
As sche which all hire joie miste,
That now sche swouneth, now sche pleigneth,
And al hire face sche desteigneth
With teres, whiche, as of a welle
The stremes, from hire yhen felle;
So as sche mihte and evere in on
Sche clepede upon Demophon,
And seide, 'Helas, thou slowe wiht,
Wher was ther evere such a knyht,
That so thurgh his ungentilesce
Of Slowthe and of foryetelnesse
Ayein his trowthe brak his stevene?'
And tho hire yhe up to the hevene
Sche caste, and seide, 'O thou unkinde,
Hier schalt thou thurgh thi Slowthe finde,
If that thee list to come and se,
A ladi ded for love of thee,
So as I schal myselve spille;
Whom, if it hadde be thi wille,
Thou mihtest save wel ynowh.'
With that upon a grene bowh
A Ceinte of Selk, which sche ther hadde,
Sche knette, and so hireself sche ladde,
That sche aboute hire whyte swere
It dede, and hyng hirselves there.
Wherof the goddes were amoeved,
And Demophon was so reproeved,
That of the goddes providence
Was schape such an evidence
Evere afterward ayein the slowe,
That Phillis in the same throwe
Was schape into a Notetre,
That alle men it mihte se,
And after Phillis Philliberd

This tre was cleped in the yerd,
And yit for Demephon to schame
Into this dai it berth the name.
This wofull chance how that it ferde
Anon as Demephon it herde,
And every man it hadde in speche,
His sorwe was noght tho to seche;
He gan his Slowthe forto banne,
Bot it was al to late thanne.
Lo thus, my Sone, miht thou wite
Ayein this vice how it is write;
For noman mai the harmes gesse,
That fallen thurgh foryetelnesse,
Wherof that I thi schrifte have herd.
Bot yit of Slowthe hou it hath ferd
In other wise I thenke oppose,
If thou have gult, as I suppose.
Fulfilde of Slowthes essamplaire
Ther is yit on, his Secretaire,
And he is cleped Negligence:
Which wol noght loke his evidence,
Wherof he mai be war tofore;
Bot whanne he hath his cause lore,
Thanne is he wys after the hond:
Whanne helpe may no maner bond,
Thanne ate ferste wolde he binde:
Thus everemore he stant behinde.
Whanne he the thing mai noght amende,
Thanne is he war, and seith at ende,
'Ha, wolde god I hadde knowe']
Wherof bejaped with a mowe
He goth, for whan the grete Stiede
Is stole, thanne he taketh hiede,
And makth the stable dore fast:
Thus evere he pleith an aftercast
Of al that he schal seie or do.
He hath a manere eke also,
Him list noght lerne to be wys,
For he set of no vertu pris
Bot as him liketh for the while;
So fieleth he fulofte guile,
Whan that he weneth siker stonde.

And thus thou miht wel understonde,
Mi Sone, if thou art such in love,
Thou miht noght come at thin above
Of that thou woldest wel achieve.
Mi holi fader, as I lieve,
I mai wel with sauf conscience
Excuse me of necgligence
Towardes love in alle wise:
For thogh I be non of the wise,
I am so trewly amerous,
That I am evere curious
Of hem that conne best enforme
To knowe and witen al the forme,
What falleth unto loves craft.
Bot yit ne fond I noght the haft,
Which mihte unto that bladd acorde;
For nevere herde I man recorde
What thing it is that myhte availe
To winne love withoute faile.
Yit so fer cowthe I nevere finde
Man that be resoun ne be kinde
Me cowthe teche such an art,
That he ne failede of a part;
And as toward myn oghne wit,
Controeve cowthe I nevere yit
To finden eny sikernessee,
That me myhte outhere more or lesse
Of love make forto spede:
For lieveth wel withoute drede,
If that ther were such a weie,
As certeinliche as I schal deie
I hadde it lerned longe ago.
Bot I wot wel ther is non so:
And natheles it may wel be,
I am so rude in my degree
And ek mi wittes ben so dulle,
That I ne mai noght to the fulle
Atteigne to so hih a lore.
Bot this I dar seie overmore,
Although mi wit ne be noght strong,
It is noght on mi will along,
For that is besi nyht and day

To lerne al that he lerne may,
How that I mihte love winne:
Bot yit I am as to beginne
Of that I wolde make an ende,
And for I not how it schal wende,
That is to me mi moste sorwe.
Bot I dar take god to borwe,
As after min entendement,
Non other wise necgligent
Thanne I yow seie have I noght be:
Forthi per seinte charite
Tell me, mi fader, what you semeth.
In good feith, Sone, wel me qwemeth,
That thou thiself hast thus aquit
Toward this vice, in which no wit
Abide mai, for in an houre
He lest al that he mai laboure
The longe yer, so that men sein,
What evere he doth it is in vein.
For thurgh the Slowthe of Negligence
Ther was yit nevere such science
Ne vertu, which was bodely,
That nys destruid and lost therby.
Ensample that it hath be so
In boke I finde write also.
Phebus, which is the Sonne hote,
That schyneth upon Erthe hote
And causeth every lyves helthe,
He hadde a Sone in al his welthe,
Which Pheton hihte, and he desireth
And with his Moder he conspireth,
The which was cleped Clemenee,
For help and conseil, so that he
His fader carte lede myhte
Upon the faire daies brihte.
And for this thing thei bothe preide
Unto the fader, and he seide
He wolde wel, bot forth withal
Thre pointz he bad in special
Unto his Sone in alle wise,
That he him scholde wel advise
And take it as be weie of lore.

Ferst was, that he his hors to sore
Ne prike, and over that he tolde
That he the renes faste holde;
And also that he be riht war
In what manere he lede his charr,
That he mistake noght his gate,
Bot up avisement algate
He scholde bere a siker yhe,
That he to lowe ne to hyhe
His carte dryve at eny throwe,
Wherof that he mihte overthrowe.
And thus be Phebus ordinance
Tok Pheton into governance
The Sonnes carte, which he ladde:
Bot he such veine gloire hadde
Of that he was set upon hyh,
That he his oghne astat ne syh
Thurgh negligence and tok non hiede;
So mihte he wel noght longe spede.
For he the hors withoute lawe
The carte let aboute drawe
Wher as hem liketh wantounly,
That ate laste sodeinly,
For he no reson wolde knowe,
This fyri carte he drof to lowe,
And fyreth al the world aboute;
Wherof thei weren alle in doubte,
And to the god for helpe criden
Of suche unhappes as betyden.
Phebus, which syh the necgligence,
How Pheton ayein his defence
His charr hath drive out of the weie,
Ordeigneth that he fell aweie
Out of the carte into a flod
And dreynte. Lo now, hou it stod
With him that was so necgligent,
That fro the hyhe firmament,
For that he wolde go to lowe,
He was anon doun overthrowe.
In hih astat it is a vice
To go to lowe, and in service
It grieveth forto go to hye,

Wherof a tale in poesie
I finde, how whilom Dedalus,
Which hadde a Sone, and Icharus
He hihte, and thogh hem thoghte lothe,
In such prison thei weren bothe
With Minotaurus, that aboute
Thei mihten nawher wenden oute;
So thei begonne forto schape
How thei the prison mihte ascape.
This Dedalus, which fro his yowthe
Was tawht and manye craftes cowthe,
Of fetheres and of othre thinges
Hath mad to fle diverse wynges
For him and for his Sone also;
To whom he yaf in charge tho
And bad him thenke therupon,
How that his wynges ben set on
With wex, and if he toke his flyhte
To hyhe, al sodeinliche he mihte
Make it to melte with the Sonne.
And thus thei have her flyht begonne
Out of the prison faire and softe;
And whan thei weren bothe alofte,
This Icharus began to monte,
And of the conseil non accompte
He sette, which his fader tawhte,
Til that the Sonne his wynges cawhte,
Wherof it malt, and fro the heihte
Withouten help of eny sleihte
He fell to his destruccion.
And lich to that condicion
Ther fallen ofte times fele
For lacke of governance in wele,
Als wel in love as other weie.
Now goode fader, I you preie,
If ther be more in the matiere
Of Slowthe, that I mihte it hier.
Mi Sone, and for thi diligence,
Which every mannes conscience
Be resoun scholde reule and kepe,
If that thee list to taken kepe,
I wol thee telle, aboven alle

In whom no vertu mai befall,
Which yifthe unto the vices reste
And is of slowe the sloweste.
Among these othere of Slowthes kinde,
Which alle labour set behinde,
And hateth alle besinesse,
There is yet on, which Ydelnesse
Is cleped, and is the Norrice
In mannes kinde of every vice,
Which secheth eases manyfold.
In Wynter doth he noght for cold,
In Somer mai he noght for hete;
So whether that he frese or swete,
Or he be inne, or he be oute,
He wol ben ydel al aboute,
But if he pleie oght ate Dees.
For who as evere take fees
And thenkth worschipe to deserve,
There is no lord whom he wol serve,
As forto duelle in his servise,
But if it were in such a wise,
Of that he seth per aventure
That be lordschipe and coverture
He mai the more stonde stille,
And use his ydelnesse at wille.
For he ne wol no travail take
To ryde for his lady sake,
But liveth al upon his wissches;
And as a cat wolde ete fisshes
Withoute wetinge of his cles,
So wolde he do, but natheles
He faileth ofte of that he wolde.
Mi Sone, if thou of such a molde
Art mad, now tell me plain thi schrifte.
Nay, fader, god I yive a yifte.
That toward love, as be mi wit,
Al ydel was I nevere yet,
Ne nevere schal, whil I mai go.
Now, Sone, tell me thanne so,
What hast thou don of besischipe
To love and to the ladyschipe
Of hire which thi lady is?

Mi fader, evere yit er this
In every place, in every stede,
What so mi lady hath me bede,
With al myn herte obedient
I have therto be diligent.
And if so is sche bidde noght,
What thing that thanne into my thoght
Comth ferst of that I mai suffise,
I bowe and profre my servise,
Somtime in chambre, sometime in halle,
Riht as I se the times falle.
And whan sche goth to hiere masse,
That time schal noght overpasse,
That I naproche hir ladihede,
In aunter if I mai hire lede
Unto the chapelle and ayein.
Thanne is noght al mi weie in vein,
Somdiel I mai the betre fare,
Whan I, that mai noght fiele hir bare,
Mai lede hire clothed in myn arm:
Bot afterward it doth me harm
Of pure ymaginacioun;
For thanne this collacioun
I make unto miselven ofte,
And seie, 'Ha lord, hou sche is softe,
How sche is round, hou sche is smal]
Now wolde god I hadde hire al
Withoute danger at mi wille]'
And thanne I sike and sitte stille,
Of that I se mi besi thoght
Is torned ydel into noght.
Bot for al that lete I ne mai,
Whanne I se time an other dai,
That I ne do my besinesse
Unto mi ladi worthinesse.
For I therto mi wit afaite
To se the times and awaite
What is to done and what to leve:
And so, whan time is, be hir leve,
What thing sche bit me don, I do,
And wher sche bidt me gon, I go,
And whanne hir list to clepe, I come.

Thus hath sche fulliche overcome
Min ydelnesse til I sterve,
So that I mot hire nedes serve,
For as men sein, nede hath no lawe.
Thus mot I nedly to hire drawe,
I serve, I bowe, I loke, I loute,
Min yhe folweth hire aboute,
What so sche wole so wol I,
Whan sche wol sitte, I knele by,
And whan sche stant, than wol I stonde:
Bot whan sche takth hir werk on honde
Of wevinge or enbrouderie,
Than can I noght bot muse and prie
Upon hir fingres longe and smale,
And now I thenke, and now I tale,
And now I singe, and now I sike,
And thus mi contenance I pike.
And if it falle, as for a time
Hir liketh noght abide bime,
Bot besien hire on other thinges,
Than make I othre tariinges
To dreche forth the longe dai,
For me is loth departe away.
And thanne I am so simple of port,
That forto feigne som desport
I pleie with hire litel hound
Now on the bedd, now on the ground,
Now with hir briddes in the cage;
For ther is non so litel page,
Ne yit so simple a chamberere,
That I ne make hem alle chere,
Al for thei scholde speke wel:
Thus mow ye sen mi besi whiel,
That goth noght ydeliche aboute.
And if hir list to riden oute
On pelrinage or other stede,
I come, thogh I be noght bede,
And take hire in min arm alofte
And sette hire in hire sadel softe,
And so forth lede hire be the bridel,
For that I wolde noght ben ydel.
And if hire list to ride in Char,

And thanne I mai therof be war,
Anon I schape me to ryde
Riht evene be the Chares side;
And as I mai, I speke among,
And otherwhile I singe a song,
Which Ovide in his bokes made,
And seide, 'O whiche sorwes glade,
O which wofull prosperite
Belongeth to the proprete
Of love, who so wole him serve]
And yit therfro mai noman swerve,
That he ne mot his lawe obeie.'
And thus I ryde forth mi weie,
And am riht besi overal
With herte and with mi body al,
As I have said you hier tofore.
My goode fader, tell therfore,
Of Ydelnesse if I have gilt.
Mi Sone, bot thou telle wilt
Oght elles than I mai now hiere,
Thou schalt have no penance hiere.
And natheles a man mai se,
How now adayes that ther be
Ful manye of suche hertes slowe,
That wol noght besien hem to knowe
What thing love is, til ate laste,
That he with strengthe hem overcaste,
That malgre hem thei mote obeie
And don al ydelschipe aweie,
To serve wel and besiliche.
Bot, Sone, thou art non of swiche,
For love schal the wel excuse:
Bot otherwise, if thou refuse
To love, thou miht so per cas
Ben ydel, as somtime was
A kinges dowhter unavised,
Til that Cupide hire hath chastised:
Wherof thou schalt a tale hiere
Acordant unto this matiere.
Of Armenye, I rede thus,
Ther was a king, which Herupus
Was hote, and he a lusti Maide

To dowhter hadde, and as men saide
Hire name was Rosiphelee;
Which tho was of gret renomee,
For sche was bothe wys and fair
And scholde ben hire fader hair.
Bot sche hadde o defalte of Slowthe
Towardes love, and that was rowthe;
For so wel cowde noman seie,
Which mihte sette hire in the weie
Of loves occupacion
Thurgh non ymaginacion;
That scole wolde sche noght knowe.
And thus sche was on of the slowe
As of such hertes besinesse,
Til whanne Venus the goddesse,
Which loves court hath forto reule,
Hath broght hire into betre reule,
Forth with Cupide and with his miht:
For thei merveille how such a wiht,
Which tho was in hir lusti age,
Desireth nother Mariage
Ne yit the love of paramours,
Which evere hath be the comun cours
Amonges hem that lusti were.
So was it schewed after there:
For he that hihe hertes loweth
With fyri Dartes whiche he throweth,
Cupide, which of love is godd,
In chastisinge hath mad a rodd
To dryve awei hir wantounesse;
So that withinne a while, I gesse,
Sche hadde on such a chance sporned,
That al hire mod was overtorned,
Which ferst sche hadde of slow manere:
For thus it fell, as thou schalt hiere.
Whan come was the Monthe of Maii,
Sche wolde walke upon a dai,
And that was er the Sonne Ariste;
Of wommen bot a fewe it wiste,
And forth sche wente prively
Unto the Park was faste by,
Al softe walkende on the gras,

Til sche cam ther the Launde was,
Thurgh which ther ran a gret rivere.
It thoghte hir fair, and seide, 'Here
I wole abide under the schawe':
And bad hire wommen to withdrawe,
And ther sche stod al one stille,
To thenke what was in hir wille.
Sche sih the swote floures springe,
Sche herde glade foules singe,
Sche sih the bestes in her kinde,
The buck, the do, the hert, the hinde,
The madle go with the femele;
And so began ther a querele
Betwen love and hir oghne herte,
Fro which sche couthe noght asterte.
And as sche caste hire yhe aboute,
Sche syh clad in o suite a route
Of ladis, wher thei comen ryde
Along under the wodes syde:
On faire amblende hors thei sete,
That were al whyte, fatte and grete,
And everichon thei ride on side.
The Sadles were of such a Pride,
With Perle and gold so wel begon,
So riche syh sche nevere non;
In kertles and in Copes riche
Thei weren clothed, alle liche,
Departed evene of whyt and blew;
With alle lustes that sche knew
Thei were enbrouded overal.
Here bodies weren long and smal,
The beaute faye upon her face
Non erthly thing it may desface;
Corones on here hed thei beere,
As ech of hem a qweene weere,
That al the gold of Cresus halle
The leste coronal of alle
Ne mihte have boght after the worth:
Thus come thei ridende forth.
The kinges dowhter, which this syh,
For pure abaisht drowh hire adryh
And hield hire clos under the bowh,

And let hem passen stille ynowh;
For as hire thoghte in hire avis,
To hem that were of such a pris
Sche was noght worthi axen there,
Fro when they come or what thei were:
Bot levere than this worldes good
Sche wolde have wist hou that it stod,
And putte hire hed alitel oute;
And as sche lokede hire aboute,
Sche syh comende under the linde
A womman up an hors behinde.
The hors on which sche rod was blak,
Al lene and galled on the back,
And haltede, as he were encluyed,
Wherof the womman was annuied;
Thus was the hors in sori plit,
Bot for al that a sterre whit
Amiddes in the front he hadde.
Hir Sadel ek was wonder badde,
In which the wofull womman sat,
And natheles ther was with that
A riche bridel for the nones
Of gold and preciouise Stones.
Hire cote was somdiel totore;
Aboute hir middel twenty score
Of horse haltres and wel mo
Ther hyngen ate time tho.
Thus whan sche cam the ladi nyh,
Than tok sche betre hiede and syh
This womman fair was of visage,
Freyssh, lusti, yong and of tendre age;
And so this ladi, ther sche stod,
Bethoghte hire wel and understod
That this, which com ridende tho,
Tidinges couthe telle of tho,
Which as sche sih tofore ryde,
And putte hir forth and preide abide,
And seide, 'Ha, Suster, let me hiere,
What ben thei, that now riden hiere,
And ben so richeliche arraied?'
This womman, which com so esmaied,
Ansuerde with ful softe speche,

And seith, 'Ma Dame, I schal you teche.
These ar of tho that whilom were
Servantz to love, and trowthe beere,
Ther as thei hadde here herte set.
Fare wel, for I mai noght be let:
Ma Dame, I go to mi servise,
So moste I haste in alle wise;
Forthi, ma Dame, yif me leve,
I mai noght longe with you leve.'
'Ha, goode Soster, yit I preie,
Tell me whi ye ben so beseie
And with these haltres thus begon.'
'Ma Dame, whilom I was on
That to mi fader hadde a king;
Bot I was slow, and for no thing
Me liste noght to love obeie,
And that I now ful sore abeie.
For I whilom no love hadde,
Min hors is now so fieble and badde,
And al totore is myn arai,
And every yeer this freisshe Maii
These lusti ladis ryde aboute,
And I mot nedes suie here route
In this manere as ye now se,
And trusse here haltres forth with me,
And am bot as here horse knave.
Non other office I ne have,
Hem thenkth I am worthi nomore,
For I was slow in loves lore,
Whan I was able forto lere,
And wolde noght the tales hier
Of hem that couthen love teche.'
'Now tell me thanne, I you beseche,
Wherof that riche bridel serveth.'
With that hire chere awei sche swerveth,
And gan to wepe, and thus sche tolde:
'This bridel, which ye nou beholde
So riche upon myn horse hed,-
Ma Dame, afore, er I was ded,
Whan I was in mi lusti lif,
Ther fel into myn herte a strif
Of love, which me overcom,

So that therafter hiede I nom
And thoghte I wolde love a kniht:
That laste wel a fourtenyht,
For it no lengere mihte laste,
So nyh my lif was ate laste.
Bot now, alas, to late war
That I ne hadde him loved ar:
For deth cam so in haste bime,
Er I therto hadde eny time,
That it ne mihte ben achieved.
Bot for al that I am relieved,
Of that mi will was good therto,
That love soffreth it be so
That I schal swiche a bridel were.
Now have ye herd al myn ansuere:
To godd, ma Dame, I you betake,
And warneth alle for mi sake,
Of love that thei ben noght ydel,
And bidd hem thenke upon mi brydel.'
And with that word al sodeinly
Sche passeth, as it were a Sky,
Al clene out of this ladi sihte:
And tho for fere hire herte afflihte,
And seide to himself, 'Helas]
I am riht in the same cas.
Bot if I live after this day,
I schal amende it, if I may.'
And thus homward this lady wente,
And changede al hire ferste entente,
Withinne hire herte and gan to swere
That sche none haltres wolde bere.
Lo, Sone, hier miht thou taken hiede,
How ydelnesse is forto drede,
Namliche of love, as I have write.
For thou miht understonde and wite,
Among the gentil nacion
Love is an ocupacion,
Which forto kepe hise lustes save
Scholde every gentil herte have:
For as the ladi was chastised,
Riht so the knyht mai ben avised,
Which ydel is and wol noght serve

To love, he mai per cas deserve
A grettere peine than sche hadde,
Whan sche aboute with hire ladde
The horse haltres; and forthi
Good is to be wel war therbi.
Bot forto loke aboven alle,
These Maidens, hou so that it falle,
Thei scholden take ensample of this
Which I have told, for soth it is.
Mi ladi Venus, whom I serve,
What womman wole hire thonk deserve,
Sche mai noght thilke love eschuie
Of paramours, bot sche mot suie
Cupides lawe; and natheles
Men sen such love sielde in pes,
That it nys evere upon asprie
Of jangling and of fals Envie,
Fulofte medlid with disese:
Bot thilke love is wel at ese,
Which set is upon mariage;
For that dar schewen the visage
In alle places openly.
A gret mervaille it is forthi,
How that a Maiden wolde lette,
That sche hir time ne besette
To haste unto that ilke feste,
Wherof the love is al honeste.
Men mai recovere lost of good,
Bot so wys man yit nevere stod,
Which mai recovere time lore:
So mai a Maiden wel therfore
Ensample take, of that sche strangeth
Hir love, and longe er that sche changeth
Hir herte upon hir lustes greene
To mariage, as it is seene.
For thus a yer or tuo or thre
Sche lest, er that sche wedded be,
Whyl sche the charge myhte bere
Of children, whiche the world forbere
Ne mai, bot if it scholde faile.
Bot what Maiden hire esposaille
Wol tarie, whan sche take mai,

Sche schal per chance an other dai
Be let, whan that hire lievest were.
Wherof a tale unto hire Ere,
Which is coupable upon this dede,
I thenke telle of that I rede.
Among the Jewes, as men tolde,
Ther was whilom be daies olde
A noble Duck, which Jepte hihte.
And fell, he scholde go to fyhte
Ayein Amon the cruel king:
And forto speke upon this thing,
Withinne his herte he made avou
To god and seide, 'Ha lord, if thou
Wolt grante unto thi man victoire,
I schal in tokne of thi memoire
The ferste lif that I mai se,
Of man or womman wher it be,
Anon as I come hom ayein,
To thee, which art god sovereign,
Slen in thi name and sacrifie.'
And thus with his chivalerie
He goth him forth, wher that he scholde,
And wan al that he winne wolde
And overcam his fomen alle.
Mai noman lette that schal falle.
This Duc a lusti dowhter hadde,
And fame, which the wordes spradde,
Hath broght unto this ladi Ere
How that hire fader hath do there.
Sche waiteth upon his cominge
With dansinge and with carolinge,
As sche that wolde be tofore
Al othre, and so sche was therfore
In Masphat at hir fader gate
The ferste; and whan he com therate,
And sih his douhter, he tobreide
Hise clothes and wepende he seide:
'O mihti god among ous hiere,
Nou wot I that in no manere
This worldes joie mai be plein.
I hadde al that I coude sein
Ayein mi fomen be thi grace,

So whan I cam toward this place
Ther was non gladdere man than I:
But now, mi lord, al sodeinli
Mi joie is torned into sorwe,
For I mi dowhter schal tomorwe
Tohewe and brenne in thi servise
To loenge of thi sacrificise
Thurgh min avou, so as it is.'
The Maiden, whan sche wiste of this,
And sih the sorwe hir fader made,
So as sche mai with wordes glade
Conforteth him, and bad him holde
The covenant which he is holde
Towardes god, as he behihte.
Bot natheles hire herte aflichte
Of that sche sih hire deth comende;
And thanne unto the ground knelende
Tofore hir fader sche is falle,
And seith, so as it is befalle
Upon this point that sche schal deie,
Of o thing ferst sche wolde him preie,
That fourty daies of respit
He wolde hir grante upon this plit,
That sche the whyle mai bewepe
Hir maidenhod, which sche to kepe
So longe hath had and noght beset;
Wherof her lusti youthe is let,
That sche no children hath forthdrawe
In Mariage after the lawe,
So that the poeple is noght encressed.
Bot that it mihte be relessed,
That sche hir time hath lore so,
Sche wolde be his leve go
With othre Maidens to compleigne,
And afterward unto the peine
Of deth sche wolde come ayein.
The fader herde his douhter sein,
And therupon of on assent
The Maidens were anon asent,
That scholden with this Maiden wende.
So forto speke unto this ende,
Thei gon the dounes and the dales

With wepinge and with wofull tales,
And every wyht hire maidenhiede
Compleigneth upon thilke nede,
That sche no children hadde bore,
Wherof sche hath hir youthe lore,
Which nevere sche recovere mai:
For so fell that hir laste dai
Was come, in which sche scholde take
Hir deth, which sche may noght forsake.
Lo, thus sche deiede a wofull Maide
For thilke cause which I saide,
As thou hast understonde above.
Mi fader, as toward the Love
Of Maidens forto telle trowthe,
Ye have thilke vice of Slowthe,
Me thenkth, riht wonder wel declared,
That ye the wommen have noght spared
Of hem that tarien so behinde.
Bot yit it falleth in my minde,
Toward the men hou that ye spieke
Of hem that wole no travail sieke
In cause of love upon decerte:
To speke in wordes so coverte,
I not what travaill that ye mente.
Mi Sone, and after min entente
I woll thee telle what I thoghte,
Hou whilom men here loves boghte
Thurgh gret travaill in strange londes,
Wher that thei wroghten with here hondes
Of armes many a worthi dede,
In sondri place as men mai rede.
That every love of pure kinde
Is first forthdrawe, wel I finde:
Bot natheles yit overthis
Decerte doth so that it is
The rather had in mani place.
Forthi who secheth loves grace,
Wher that these worthi wommen are,
He mai noght thanne himselve spare
Upon his travail forto serve,
Wherof that he mai thonk deserve,
There as these men of Armes be,

Somtime over the grete Se:
 So that be londe and ek be Schipe
 He mot travaile for worschipe
 And make manye hastyf rodes,
 Somtime in Prus, sometime in Rodes,
 And sometime into Tartarie;
 So that these heraldz on him crie,
 'Vailant, vailant, lo, wher he goth']
 And thanne he yifth hem gold and cloth,
 So that his fame mihte springe,
 And to his ladi Ere bringe
 Som tidinge of his worthinesse;
 So that sche mihte of his prouesce
 Of that sche herde men recorde,
 The betre unto his love acorde
 And danger pute out of hire mod,
 Whanne alle men recorden good,
 And that sche wot wel, for hir sake
 That he no travail wol forsake.
 Mi Sone, of this travail I meene:
 Nou schrif thee, for it schal be sene
 If thou art ydel in this cas.
 My fader ye, and evere was:
 For as me thenketh trewely
 That every man doth mor than I
 As of this point, and if so is
 That I have oght so don er this,
 It is so litel of acompte,
 As who seith, it mai noght amonte
 To winne of love his lusti yifte.
 For this I telle you in schrifte,
 That me were levere hir love winne
 Than Kaire and al that is ther inne:
 And forto slen the hethen alle,
 I not what good ther mihte falle,
 So mochel blod thogh ther be schad.
 This finde I writen, hou Crist bad
 That noman other scholde sle.
 What scholde I winne over the Se,
 If I mi ladi loste at hom?
 Bot passe thei the salte fom,
 To whom Crist bad thei scholden preche

To al the world and his feith teche:
Bot now thei rucken in here nest
And resten as hem liketh best
In all the swetnesse of delices.
Thus thei defenden ous the vices,
And sitte hemselven al amidde;
To slen and feihten thei ous bidde
Hem whom thei scholde, as the bok seith,
Converten unto Cristes feith.
Bot hierof have I gret mervaile,
Hou thei wol bidde me travaile:
A Sarazin if I sle schal,
I sle the Soule forth withal,
And that was nevere Cristes lore.
Bot nou ho ther, I seie nomore.
Bot I wol speke upon mi schrifte;
And to Cupide I make a yifte,
That who as evere pris deserve
Of armes, I wol love serve;
And thogh I scholde hem bothe kepe,
Als wel yit wolde I take kepe
Whan it were time to abide,
As forto travaile and to ryde:
For how as evere a man laboure,
Cupide appointed hath his houre.
For I have herd it telle also,
Achilles lefte hise armes so
Bothe of himself and of his men
At Troie for Polixenen,
Upon hire love whanne he fell,
That for no chance that befell
Among the Grecs or up or doun,
He wolde noght ayein the toun
Ben armed, for the love of hire.
And so me thenketh, lieve Sire,
A man of armes mai him reste
Somtime in hope for the beste,
If he mai finde a weie nerr.
What scholde I thanne go so ferr
In strange londes many a mile
To ryde, and lese at hom therwhile
Mi love? It were a schort beyete

To winne chaf and lese whete.
Bot if mi ladi bidde wolde,
That I for hire love scholde
Travaile, me thenkth trewely
I mihte fle thurghout the Sky,
And go thurghout the depe Se,
For al ne sette I at a stre
What thonk that I mihte elles gete.
What helpeth it a man have mete,
Wher drinke lacketh on the bord?
What helpeth eny mannes word
To seie hou I travaile faste,
Wher as me faileth ate laste
That thing which I travaile fore?
O in good time were he bore,
That mihte atteigne such a mede.
Bot certes if I mihte spede
With eny maner besinesse
Of worldes travail, thanne I gesse,
Ther scholde me non ydelschipe
Departen fro hir ladischipe.
Bot this I se, on daies nou
The blinde god, I wot noght hou,
Cupido, which of love is lord,
He set the thinges in discord,
That thei that lest to love entende
Fulofte he wole hem yive and sende
Most of his grace; and thus I finde
That he that scholde go behinde,
Goth many a time ferr tofore:
So wot I noght riht wel therfore,
On whether bord that I schal seile.
Thus can I noght miself conseile,
Bot al I sette on aventure,
And am, as who seith, out of cure
For ought that I can seie or do:
For everemore I finde it so,
The more besinesse I leie,
The more that I knele and preie
With goode wordes and with softe,
The more I am refused ofte,
With besinesse and mai noght winne.

And in good feith that is gret Sinne;
For I mai seie, of dede and thoght
That ydel man have I be noght;
For hou as evere I be deslaied,
Yit evermore I have assaied.
Bot thogh my besinesse laste,
Al is bot ydel ate laste,
For whan theeffect is ydelnesse,
I not what thing is besinesse.
Sei, what availeth al the dede,
Which nothing helpeth ate nede?
For the fortune of every fame
Schal of his ende bere a name.
And thus for oght is yit befalle,
An ydel man I wol me calle
As after myn entendement:
Bot upon youre amendement,
Min holi fader, as you semeth,
Mi reson and my cause demeth.
Mi Sone, I have herd thi matiere,
Of that thou hast thee schreven hiere:
And forto speke of ydel fare,
Me semeth that thou tharst noght care,
Bot only that thou miht noght spede.
And therof, Sone, I wol thee rede,
Abyd, and haste noght to faste;
Thi dees ben every dai to caste,
Thou nost what chance schal betyde.
Betre is to wayte upon the tyde
Than rowe ayein the stremes stronge:
For thogh so be thee thenketh longe,
Per cas the revolucion
Of hevene and thi condicion
Ne be noght yit of on acord.
Bot I dar make this record
To Venus, whos Prest that I am,
That sithen that I hidir cam
To hiere, as sche me bad, thi lif,
Wherof thou elles be gultif,
Thou miht hierof thi conscience
Excuse, and of gret diligence,
Which thou to love hast so despended,

Thou oghtest wel to be comended.
Bot if so be that ther oght faile,
Of that thou slowthest to travaile
In armes forto ben absent,
And for thou makst an argument
Of that thou seidest hiere above,
Hou Achilles thurgh strengthe of love
Hise armes lefte for a throwe,
Thou schalt an other tale knowe,
Which is contraire, as thou schalt wite.
For this a man mai finde write,
Whan that knyghthode schal be werred,
Lust mai noght thanne be preferred;
The bedd mot thanne be forsake
And Schield and spere on honde take,
Which thing schal make hem after glade,
Whan thei ben worthi knihtes made.
Wherof, so as it comth to honde,
A tale thou schalt understonde,
Hou that a kniht schal armes suie,
And for the while his ese eschuie.
Upon knyghthode I rede thus,
How whilom whan the king Nauplus,
The fader of Palamades,
Cam forto preien Ulixes
With othre Gregois ek also,
That he with hem to Troie go,
Wher that the Siege scholde be,
Anon upon Penolope
His wif, whom that he loveth hote,
Thenkende, wolde hem noght behote.
Bot he schop thanne a wonder wyle,
How that he scholde hem best beguile,
So that he mihte duelle stille
At home and welde his love at wille:
Wherof erli the morwe day
Out of his bedd, wher that he lay,
Whan he was uppe, he gan to fare
Into the field and loke and stare,
As he which feigneth to be wod:
He tok a plowh, wher that it stod,
Wherinne anon in stede of Oxes

He let do yoken grete foxes,
And with gret salt the lond he siew.
But Nauplus, which the cause kniew,
Ayein the sleihte which he feigneth
An other sleihte anon ordeigneth.
And fell that time Ulixes hadde
A chyld to Sone, and Nauplus radde
How men that Sone taken scholde,
And setten him upon the Molde,
Wher that his fader hield the plowh,
In thilke furgh which he tho drowh.
For in such wise he thoghte assaie,
Hou it Ulixes scholde paie,
If that he were wod or non.
The knihtes for this child forthgon;
Thelamacus anon was fett,
Tofore the plowh and evene sett,
Wher that his fader scholde dryve.
Bot whan he sih his child, als blyve
He drof the plowh out of the weie,
And Nauplus tho began to seie,
And hath half in a jape cryd:
'O Ulixes, thou art aspyd:
What is al this thou woldest meene?
For openliche it is now seene
That thou hast feigned al this thing,
Which is gret schame to a king,
Whan that for lust of eny slowthe
Thou wolt in a querele of trowthe
Of armes thilke honour forsake,
And duelle at hom for loves sake:
For betre it were honour to winne
Than love, which likinge is inne.
Forthi tak worschipe upon honde,
And elles thou schalt understonde
These othre worthi kinges alle
Of Grece, which unto thee calle,
Towardes thee wol be riht wrothe,
And grieve thee per chance bothe:
Which schal be tothe double schame
Most for the hindrynge of thi name,
That thou for Slouthe of eny love

Schalt so thi lustes sette above
And leve of armes the knyhtode,
Which is the pris of thi manhode
And oghte ferst to be desired.'
Bot he, which hadde his herte fyred
Upon his wif, whan he this herde,
Noght o word therayein ansuerde,
Bot torneth hom halvinge aschamed,
And hath withinne himself so tamed
His herte, that al the sotie
Of love for chivalerie
He lefte, and be him lief or loth,
To Troie forth with hem he goth,
That he him mihte noght excuse.
Thus stant it, if a knyht refuse
The lust of armes to travaile,
Ther mai no worldes ese availe,
Bot if worschipe be with al.
And that hath schewed overal;
For it sit wel in alle wise
A kniht to ben of hih emprise
And puten alle drede aweie;
For in this wise, I have herd seie,
The worthi king Protheselai
On his passage wher he lai
Towardes Troie thilke Siege,
Sche which was al his oghne liege,
Laodomie his lusti wif,
Which for his love was pensif,
As he which al hire herte hadde,
Upon a thing wherof sche dradde
A lettre, forto make him duelle
Fro Troie, sende him, thus to telle,
Hou sche hath axed of the wyse
Touchende of him in such a wise,
That thei have don hire understonde,
Towardes othre hou so it stonde,
The destine it hath so schape
That he schal noght the deth ascape
In cas that he arryve at Troie.
Forthi as to hir worldes joie
With al hire herte sche him preide,

And many an other cause alleide,
 That he with hire at home abide.
 Bot he hath cast hir lettre aside,
 As he which tho no maner hiede
 Tok of hire wommannysse drede;
 And forth he goth, as noght ne were,
 To Troie, and was the ferste there
 Which londeth, and tok arryvaile:
 For him was levere in the bataille,
 He seith, to deien as a knyht,
 Than forto lyve in al his myht
 And be reproeved of his name.
 Lo, thus upon the worldes fame
 Knyhthode hath evere yit be set,
 Which with no couardie is let.
 Of king Sa^l also I finde,
 Whan Samuel out of his kinde,
 Thurgh that the Phitonesse hath lered,
 In Samarie was arered
 Long time after that he was ded,
 The king Sa^l him axeth red,
 If that he schal go fyhte or non.
 And Samuel him seide anon,
 'The ferste day of the bataille
 Thou schalt be slain withoute faile
 And Jonathas thi Sone also.'
 Bot hou as evere it felle so,
 This worthi kniht of his corage
 Hath undertake the viage,
 And wol noght his knyhthode lette
 For no peril he couthe sette;
 Wherof that bothe his Sone and he
 Upon the Montz of Gelboe
 Assemblen with here enemys:
 For thei knyhthode of such a pris
 Be olde daies thanne hielden,
 That thei non other thing behielden.
 And thus the fader for worschipe
 Forth with his Sone of felaschipe
 Thurgh lust of armes weren dede,
 As men mai in the bible rede;
 The whos knyhthode is yit in mende,

And schal be to the worldes ende.
And forto loken overmore,
It hath and schal ben evermore
That of knihthode the prouesse
Is grounded upon hardinesse
Of him that dar wel undertake.
And who that wolde ensample take
Upon the forme of knyhtes lawe,
How that Achilles was forthdrawe
With Chiro, which Centaurus hihte,
Of many a wondre hiere he mihte.
For it stod thilke time thus,
That this Chiro, this Centaurus,
Withinne a large wildernesse,
Wher was Leon and Leonesse,
The Lepard and the Tigre also,
With Hert and Hynde, and buck and doo,
Hadde his duellinge, as tho befell,
Of Pileon upon the hel,
Wherof was thanne mochel speche.
Ther hath Chiro this Chyld to teche,
What time he was of tuelve yer age;
Wher forto maken his corage
The more hardi be other weie,
In the forest to hunte and pleie
Whan that Achilles walke wolde,
Centaurus bad that he ne scholde
After no beste make his chace,
Which wolde flen out of his place,
As buck and doo and hert and hynde,
With whiche he mai no werre finde;
Bot tho that wolden him withstonde,
Ther scholde he with his Dart on honde
Upon the Tigre and the Leon
Purchace and take his veneison,
As to a kniht is acordant.
And therupon a covenant
This Chiro with Achilles sette,
That every day withoute lette
He scholde such a cruel beste
Or slen or wounden ate leste,
So that he mihte a tokne bringe

Of blod upon his hom cominge.
And thus of that Chiro him tawhte
Achilles such an herte cawhte,
That he nomore a Leon dradde,
Whan he his Dart on honde hadde,
Thanne if a Leon were an asse:
And that hath mad him forto passe
Alle othre knihtes of his dede,
Whan it cam to the grete nede,
As it was afterward wel knowe.
Lo, thus, my Sone, thou miht knowe
That the corage of hardiesce
Is of knyghthode the prouesce,
Which is to love sufficant
Aboven al the remenant
That unto loves court poursuie.
Bot who that wol no Slowthe eschuie,
Upon knighthode and noght travaile,
I not what love him scholde availe;
Bot every labour axeth why
Of som reward, wherof that I
Ensamples couthe telle ynowe
Of hem that toward love drowe
Be olde daies, as thei scholde.
Mi fader, therof hiere I wolde.
Mi Sone, it is wel resonable,
In place which is honorable
If that a man his herte sette,
That thanne he for no Slowthe lette
To do what longeth to manhede.
For if thou wolt the bokes rede
Of Lancelot and othre mo,
Ther miht thou sen hou it was tho
Of armes, for thei wolde atteigne
To love, which withoute peine
Mai noght be gete of ydelnesse.
And that I take to witnesse
An old Cronique in special,
The which into memorial
Is write, for his loves sake
Hou that a kniht schal undertake.
Ther was a king, which Oenes

Was hote, and he under his pes
Hield Calidoyne in his Empire,
And hadde a dowhter Deianire.
Men wiste in thilke time non
So fair a wiht as sche was on;
And as sche was a lusti wiht,
Riht so was thanne a noble kniht,
To whom Mercurie fader was.
This kniht the tuo pilers of bras,
The whiche yit a man mai finde,
Sette up in the desert of Ynde;
That was the worthi Hercules,
Whos name schal ben endeles
For the merveilles whiche he wroghte.
This Hercules the love soghte
Of Deianire, and of this thing
Unto hir fader, which was king,
He spak touchende of Mariage.
The king knowende his hih lignage,
And dradde also hise mihtes sterne,
To him ne dorste his dowhter werne;
And natheles this he him seide,
How Achelons er he first preide
To wedden hire, and in accord
Thei stode, as it was of record:
Bot for al that this he him granteth,
That which of hem that other daunteth
In armes, him sche scholde take,
And that the king hath undertake.
This Achelons was a Geant,
A soubtil man, a deceivant,
Which thurgh magique and sorcerie
Couthe al the world of tricherie:
And whan that he this tale herde,
Hou upon that the king ansuerde
With Hercules he moste feighte,
He tristeth noght upon his sleighte
Al only, whan it comth to nede,
Bot that which voydeth alle drede
And every noble herte stereth,
The love, that no lif forbereth,
For his ladi, whom he desireth,

With hardiesse his herte fyreth,
And sende him word withoute faile
That he wol take the bataille.
Thei setten day, they chosen field,
The knihtes coevered under Schield
Togedre come at time set,
And echon is with other met.
It fell thei foghten bothe afote,
Ther was no ston, ther was no rote,
Which mihte letten hem the weie,
But al was voide and take aweie.
Thei smyten strokes bot a fewe,
For Hercules, which wolde schewe
His grete strengthe as for the nones,
He sterte upon him al at ones
And cawhte him in hise armes stronge.
This Geant wot he mai noght longe
Endure under so harde bondes,
And thoghte he wolde out of hise hondes
Be sleyhte in som manere ascape.
And as he couthe himself forschape,
In liknesse of an Eddre he slipte
Out of his hond, and forth he skipte;
And efte, as he that feighte wole,
He torneth him into a Bole,
And gan to belwe of such a soun,
As thogh the world scholde al go doun:
The ground he sporneth and he tranceth,
Hise large hornes he avanceth
And caste hem here and there aboute.
Bot he, which stant of him no doute,
Awaiteth wel whan that he cam,
And him be bothe hornes nam
And al at ones he him caste
Unto the ground, and hield him faste,
That he ne mihte with no sleighte
Out of his hond gete upon heighte,
Til he was overcome and yolde,
And Hercules hath what he wolde.
The king him granteth to fulfillle
His axinge at his oghne wille,
And sche for whom he hadde served,

Hire thoghte he hath hire wel deserved.
And thus with gret decerte of Armes
He wan him forto ligge in armes,
As he which hath it dere aboght,
For otherwise scholde he noght.
And overthis if thou wolt hiere
Upon knihthode of this matiere,
Hou love and armes ben aqueinted,
A man mai se bothe write and peinted
So ferforth that Pantasilee,
Which was the queene of Feminee,
The love of Hector forto sieke
And for thonour of armes eke,
To Troie cam with Spere and Schield,
And rod himself into the field
With Maidens armed al a route
In rescouss of the toun aboute,
Which with the Gregois was belein.
Fro Pafagoine and as men sein,
Which stant upon the worldes ende,
That time it likede ek to wende
To Philemenis, which was king,
To Troie, and come upon this thing
In helpe of thilke noble toun;
And al was that for the renoun
Of worschipe and of worldes fame,
Of which he wolde bere a name:
And so he dede, and forth withal
He wan of love in special
A fair tribut for everemo.
For it fell thilke time so;
Pirrus the Sone of Achilles
This worthi queene among the press
With dedli swerd soghte out and fond,
And slowh hire with his oghne hond;
Wherof this king of Pafagoine
Pantasilee of Amazoine,
Wher sche was queene, with him ladde,
With suche Maidens as sche hadde
Of hem that were left alyve,
Forth in his Schip, til thei aryve;
Wher that the body was begrave

With worschipe, and the wommen save.
And for the goodschipe of this dede
Thei granten him a lusti mede,
That every yeer as for truage
To him and to his heritage
Of Maidens faire he schal have thre.
And in this wise spedde he,
Which the fortune of armes soghte,
With his travail his ese he boghte;
For otherwise he scholde have failed,
If that he hadde noght travailed.
Eneas ek withinne Ytaile,
Ne hadde he wonne the bataille
And don his miht so besily
Ayein king Turne his enemy,
He hadde noght Lavine wonne;
Bot for he hath him overronne
And gete his pris, he gat hire love.
Be these ensamples here above,
Lo, now, mi Sone, as I have told,
Thou miht wel se, who that is bold
And dar travaile and undertake
The cause of love, he schal be take
The rathere unto loves grace;
For comunliche in worthi place
The wommen loven worthinesse
Of manhode and of gentillesse,
For the gentils ben most desired.
Mi fader, bot I were enspired
Thurgh lore of you, I wot no weie
What gentilesce is forto seie,
Wherof to telle I you beseche.
The ground, Mi Sone, forto seche
Upon this diffinicion,
The worldes constitucion
Hath set the name of gentillesse
Upon the fortune of richesse
Which of long time is falle in age.
Thanne is a man of hih lignage
After the forme, as thou miht hiere,
Bot nothing after the matiere.
For who that resoun understonde,

Upon riches it mai noght stonde,
For that is thing which faileth ofte:
For he that stant to day alofte
And al the world hath in hise wones,
Tomorwe he falleth al at ones
Out of riches into poverté,
So that therof is no decerte,
Which gentilesce makth abide.
And forto loke on other side
Hou that a gentil man is bore,
Adam, which alle was tofore
With Eve his wif, as of hem tuo,
Al was aliche gentil tho;
So that of generacion
To make declaracion,
Ther mai no gentilesce be.
For to the reson if we se,
Of mannes berthe the mesure,
It is so comun to nature,
That it yifh every man aliche,
Als wel to povere as to the riche;
For naked thei ben bore bothe,
The lord nomore hath forto clothe
As of himself that ilke throwe,
Than hath the povereste of the rowe.
And whan thei schulle both passe,
I not of hem which hath the lasse
Of worldes good, bot as of charge
The lord is more forto charge,
Whan god schal his accompte hiere,
For he hath had hise lustes hiere.
Bot of the bodi, which schal deie,
Although ther be diverse weie
To deth, yit is ther bot on ende,
To which that every man schal wende,
Als wel the beggere as the lord,
Of o nature, of on acord:
Sche which oure Eldemoder is,
The Erthe, bothe that and this
Receiveth and alich devoureth,
That sche to nouthur part favoureth.
So wot I nothing after kinde

Where I mai gentillesse finde.
For lacke of vertu lacketh grace,
Wherof riches in many place,
Whan men best wene forto stonde,
Al sodeinly goth out of honde:
Bot vertu set in the corage,
Ther mai no world be so salvage,
Which mihte it take and don aweie,
Til whanne that the bodi deie;
And thanne he schal be riched so,
That it mai faile neveremo;
So mai that wel be gentillesse,
Which yifh so gret a sikernesse.
For after the condicion
Of resonable entencion,
The which out of the Soule groweth
And the vertu fro vice knoweth,
Wherof a man the vice eschuieth,
Withoute Slowthe and vertu suieth,
That is a verrai gentil man,
And nothing elles which he can,
Ne which he hath, ne which he mai.
Bot for al that yit nou aday,
In loves court to taken hiede,
The povere vertu schal noght spiede,
Wher that the riche vice woweth;
For sielde it is that love alloweth
The gentil man withoute good,
Thogh his condicion be good.
Bot if a man of bothe tuo
Be riche and vertuous also,
Thanne is he wel the more worth:
Bot yit to putte himselve forth
He moste don his besinesse,
For nowther good ne gentillesse
Mai helpen him whiche ydel be.
Bot who that wole in his degre
Travaile so as it belongeth,
It happeth ofte that he fongeth
Worschipe and ese bothe tuo.
For evere yit it hath be so,
That love honeste in sondri weie

Profiteth, for it doth aweie
The vice, and as the bokes sein,
It makth curteis of the vilein,
And to the couard hardiesce
It yifth, so that verrai prouesse
Is caused upon loves reule
To him that can manhode reule;
And ek toward the wommanhiede,
Who that therof wol taken hiede,
For thei the betre affaited be
In every thing, as men may se.
For love hath evere hise lustes grene
In gentil folk, as it is sene,
Which thing ther mai no kinde areste:
I trowe that ther is no beste,
If he with love scholde aqueinte,
That he ne wolde make it queinte
As for the while that it laste.
And thus I conclude ate laste,
That thei ben ydel, as me semeth,
Whiche unto thing that love demeth
Forslowthen that thei scholden do.
And overthis, mi Sone, also
After the vertu moral eke
To speke of love if I schal seke,
Among the holi bokes wise
I finde write in such a wise,
'Who loveth noght is hier as ded';
For love above alle othre is hed,
Which hath the vertus forto lede,
Of al that unto mannes dede
Belongeth: for of ydelschipe
He hateth all the felaschipe.
For Slowthe is evere to despise,
Which in desdeign hath al apprise,
And that acordeth noght to man:
For he that wit and reson kan,
It sit him wel that he travaile
Upon som thing which mihte availe,
For ydelschipe is noght comended,
Bot every lawe it hath defended.
And in ensample therupon

The noble wise Salomon,
Which hadde of every thing insihte,
Seith, 'As the briddes to the flihte
Ben made, so the man is bore
To labour,' which is noght forbore
To hem that thenken forto thryve.
For we, whiche are now alyve,
Of hem that besi whylom were,
Als wel in Scole as elleswhere,
Mowe every day ensample take,
That if it were now to make
Thing which that thei ferst founden oute,
It scholde noght be broght aboute.
Here lyves thanne were longe,
Here wittes grete, here mihtes stronge,
Here hertes ful of besinesse,
Wherof the worldes redinesse
In bodi bothe and in corage
Stant evere upon his advantage.
And forto drawe into memoire
Here names bothe and here histoire,
Upon the vertu of her dede
In sondri bokes thou miht rede.
Of every wisdom the parfit
The hyhe god of his spirit
Yaf to the men in Erthe hiere
Upon the forme and the matiere
Of that he wolde make hem wise:
And thus cam in the ferste apprise
Of bokes and of alle goode
Thurgh hem that whilom understode
The lore which to hem was yive,
Wherof these othre, that now live,
Ben every day to lerne newe.
Bot er the time that men siewe,
And that the labour forth it broghte,
Ther was no corn, thogh men it soghte,
In non of al the fieldes oute;
And er the wisdom cam aboute
Of hem that ferst the bokes write,
This mai wel every wys man wite,
Ther was gret labour ek also.

Thus was non ydel of the tuo,
 That on the plogh hath undertake
 With labour which the hond hath take,
 That other tok to studie and muse,
 As he which wolde noght refuse
 The labour of hise wittes alle.
 And in this wise it is befalle,
 Of labour which that thei begunne
 We be now tawht of that we kunne:
 Here besinesse is yit so seene,
 That it stant evere alyche greene;
 Al be it so the bodi deie,
 The name of hem schal nevere aweie.
 In the Croniques as I finde,
 Cham, whos labour is yit in minde,
 Was he which ferst the lettres fond
 And wrot in Hebreu with his hond:
 Of naturel Philosophie
 He fond ferst also the clergie.
 Cadmus the lettres of Gregois
 Ferst made upon his oghne chois.
 Theges of thing which schal befalle,
 He was the ferste Augurre of alle:
 And Philemon be the visage
 Fond to describe the corage.
 Cladyns, Esdras and Sulpices,
 Termegis, Pandulf, Frigidilles,
 Menander, Ephiloquorus,
 Solins, Pandas and Josephus
 The ferste were of Enditours,
 Of old Cronique and ek auctours:
 And Heredot in his science
 Of metre, of rime and of cadence
 The ferste was of which men note.
 And of Musique also the note
 In mannes vois or softe or scharpe,
 That fond Jubal; and of the harpe
 The merie soun, which is to like,
 That fond Poulins forth with phisique.
 Zenzis fond ferst the pourtreture,
 And Promotheus the Sculpture;
 After what forme that hem thoghte,

The resemblance anon thei wroghte.
Tubal in Iren and in Stel
Fond first the forge and wroghte it wel:
And Jadahel, as seith the bok,
First made Net and fishes tok:
Of huntynge ek he fond the chace,
Which now is knowe in many place:
A tente of cloth with corde and stake
He sette up first and dede it make.
Verconius of cokerie
First made the delicacie.
The craft Minerve of wolfe fond
And made cloth hire oghne hond;
And Delbora made it of lyn:
Tho women were of great engyn.
Bot thing which yifthe ous mete and drinke
And doth the labourer to swinke
To tile lond and sette vines,
Wherof the cornes and the wyne
Ben sustenance to mankinde,
In olde bokes as I finde,
Saturnus of his oghne wit
Hath founde first, and more yit
Of Chapmanhode he fond the weie,
And ek to coigne the moneie
Of sondri metall, as it is,
He was the firste man of this.
Bot how that metall cam a place
Thurgh mannes wit and goddes grace
The route of Philosophres wise
Controveeden be sondri wise,
First forto gete it out of Myne,
And after forto trie and fyne.
And also with gret diligence
Thei founden thilke experience,
Which cleped is Alconomie,
Wherof the Selver multeplie
Thei made and ek the gold also.
And forto telle how it is so,
Of bodies sevene in special
With foure spiritz joynt withal
Stant the substance of this matiere.

The bodies whiche I speke of hiere
Of the Planetes ben begonne:
The gold is titled to the Sonne,
The mone of Selver hath his part,
And Iren that stant upon Mart,
The Led after Satorne groweth,
And Jupiter the Bras bestoweth,
The Coper set is to Venus,
And to his part Mercurius
Hath the quikselver, as it falleth,
The which, after the bok it calleth,
Is ferst of thilke fowre named
Of Spiritz, whiche ben proclamed;
And the spirit which is secounde
In Sal Armoniak is founde:
The thridde spirit Sulphur is;
The ferthe suiende after this
Arcennicum be name is hote.
With blowinge and with fyres hote
In these thinges, whiche I seie,
Thei worchen be diverse weie.
For as the philosophre tolde
Of gold and selver, thei ben holde
Tuo principal extremities,
To whiche alle othre be degrees
Of the metalls ben acordant,
And so thurgh kinde resemblant,
That what man couthe aweie take
The rust, of which thei waxen blake,
And the savour and the hardnesse,
Thei scholden take the liknesse
Of gold or Selver parfitly.
Bot forto worche it sikirly,
Betwen the corps and the spirit,
Er that the metall be parfit,
In sevene formes it is set;
Of alle and if that on be let,
The remenant mai noght availe,
Bot otherwise it mai noght faile.
For thei be whom this art was founde
To every point a certain bounde
Ordeignen, that a man mai finde

This craft is wrought be weie of kinde,
So that ther is no fallas inne.
Bot what man that this werk beginne,
He mot awaite at every tyde,
So that nothing be left aside,
Ferst of the distillacion,
Forth with the congelacion,
Solucion, descencion,
And kepe in his entencion
The point of sublimacion,
And forth with calcinacion
Of veray approbacion
Do that ther be fixacion
With tempred hetes of the fyr,
Til he the parfit Elixir
Of thilke philosophres Ston
Mai gete, of which that many on
Of Philosophres whilom write.
And if thou wolt the names wite
Of thilke Ston with othre tuo,
Whiche as the clerkes maden tho,
So as the bokes it recorden,
The kinde of hem I schal recorden.
These olde Philosophres wyse
Be weie of kinde in sondri wise
Thre Stones maden thurgh clergie.
The ferste, if I schal specefie,
Was lapis vegetabilis,
Of which the propre vertu is
To mannes hele forto serve,
As forto kepe and to preserve
The bodi fro siknesses alle,
Til deth of kinde upon him falle.
The Ston seconde I thee behote
Is lapis animalis hote,
The whos vertu is propre and cowth
For Ere and yhe and nase and mouth,
Wherof a man mai hierie and se
And smelle and taste in his degre,
And forto fiele and forto go
It helpeth man of bothe tuo:
The wittes fyve he underfongeth

To kepe, as it to him belongeth.
The thridde Ston in special
Be name is cleped Minerall,
Which the metalls of every Mine
Attempreth, til that thei ben fyne,
And pureth hem be such a weie,
That al the vice goth aweie
Of rust, of stink and of hardnesse:
And whan thei ben of such clenness,
This Mineral, so as I finde,
Transformeth al the ferste kynde
And makth hem able to conceive
Thurgh his vertu, and to receive
Bothe in substance and in figure
Of gold and selver the nature.
For thei tuo ben thextremetes,
To whiche after the propretes
Hath every metal his desir,
With help and confort of the fyr
Forth with this Ston, as it is seid,
Which to the Sonne and Mone is leid;
For to the rede and to the whyte
This Ston hath pouer to profite.
It makth multiplicacioun
Of gold, and the fixacioun
It causeth, and of his habit
He doth the werk to be parfit
Of thilke Elixer which men calle
Alconomie, as is befalle
To hem that whilom weren wise.
Bot now it stant al otherwise;
Thei speken faste of thilke Ston,
Bot hou to make it, nou wot non
After the sothe experience.
And natheles gret diligence
Thei setten upon thilke dede,
And spille more than thei spede;
For allewey thei finde a lette,
Which bringeth in poverté and dette
To hem that riche were afore:
The lost is had, the lucre is lore,
To gete a pound thei spenden fyve;

I not hou such a craft schal thryve
In the manere as it is used:
It were betre be refused
Than forto worchen upon weene
In thing which stant noght as thei weene.
Bot noght forthi, who that it knewe,
The science of himself is trewe
Upon the forme as it was founded,
Wherof the names yit ben grounded
Of hem that ferste it founden oute;
And thus the fame goth aboute
To suche as soghten besinesse
Of vertu and of worthinesse.
Of whom if I the names calle,
Hermes was on the ferste of alle,
To whom this art is most applied;
Geber therof was magnefied,
And Ortolan and Morien,
Among the whiche is Avicen,
Which fond and wrot a gret partie
The practique of Alconomie;
Whos bokes, pleinli as thei stonde
Upon this craft, fewe understonde;
Bot yit to put hem in assai
Ther ben full manye now aday,
That knowen litel what thei meene.
It is noght on to wite and weene;
In forme of wordes thei it trete,
Bot yit they failen of beyete,
For of tomoche or of tolyte
Ther is algate founde a wyte,
So that thei folwe noght the lyne
Of the parfite medicine,
Which grounded is upon nature.
Bot thei that writen the scripture
Of Grek, Arabe and of Caldee,
Thei were of such Auctorite
That thei ferst founden out the weie
Of al that thou hast herd me seie;
Wherof the Cronique of her lore
Schal stonde in pris for everemore.
Bot toward oure Marches hiere,

Of the Latins if thou wolt hiere,
Of hem that whilom vertuous
Were and therto laborious,
Carmen made of hire engin
The ferste lettres of Latin,
Of which the tunge Romein cam,
Wherof that Aristarchus nam
Forth with Donat and Dindimus
The ferste reule of Scole, as thus,
How that Latin schal be componed
And in what wise it schal be soned,
That every word in his degre
Schal stonde upon congruite.
And thilke time at Rome also
Was Tullius with Cithero,
That writen upon Rethorike,
Hou that men schal the wordes pike
After the forme of eloquence,
Which is, men sein, a gret prudence:
And after that out of Hebreu
Jerom, which the langage kneu,
The Bible, in which the lawe is closed,
Into Latin he hath transposed;
And many an other writere ek
Out of Caldee, Arabe and Grek
With gret labour the bokes wise
Translateden. And otherwise
The Latins of hemself also
Here studie at thilke time so
With gret travaile of Scole toke
In sondri forme forto boke,
That we mai take here evidences
Upon the lore of the Sciences,
Of craftes bothe and of clergie;
Among the whiche in Poesie
To the lovers Ovide wrot
And tawhte, if love be to hot,
In what manere it scholde akiele.
Forthi, mi Sone, if that thou fiele
That love wringe thee to sore,
Behold Ovide and take his lore.
My fader, if thei mihte spede

Mi love, I wolde his bokes rede;
And if thei techen to restreigne
Mi love, it were an ydel peine
To lerne a thing which mai noght be.
For lich unto the greene tree,
If that men toke his rote aweie,
Riht so myn herte scholde deie,
If that mi love be withdrawe.
Wherof touchende unto this sawe
There is bot only to pursuie
Mi love, and ydelschipe eschuie.
Mi goode Sone, soth to seie,
If ther be siker eny weie
To love, thou hast seid the beste:
For who that wolde have al his reste
And do no travail at the nede,
It is no resoun that he spede
In loves cause forto winne;
For he which dar nothing beginne,
I not what thing he scholde achieve.
Bot overthis thou schalt believe,
So as it sit thee wel to knowe,
That ther ben othre vices slowe,
Whiche unto love don gret lette,
If thou thin herte upon hem sette.
Toward the Slowe progenie
Ther is yit on of compaignie,
And he is cleped Sompnolence,
Which doth to Slouthe his reverence,
As he which is his Chamberlein,
That many an hundrid time hath lein
To slepe, whan he scholde wake.
He hath with love trewes take,
That wake who so wake wile,
If he mai couche a doun his bile,
He hath al wowed what him list;
That ofte he goth to bedde unkist,
And seith that for no Druerie
He wol noght leve his sluggardie.
For thogh noman it wole allowe,
To slepe levere than to wowe
Is his manere, and thus on nyhtes,

Whan that he seth the lusti knyhtes
Revelen, wher these wommen are,
Awey he skulketh as an hare,
And goth to bedde and leith him softe,
And of his Slouthe he dremeth ofte
Hou that he stiketh in the Myr,
And hou he sitteth be the fyr
And claweth on his bare schanckes,
And hou he clymbeth up the banckes
And falleth into Slades depe.
Bot thanne who so toke kepe,
Whanne he is falle in such a drem,
Riht as a Schip ayein the Strem,
He routeth with a slepi noise,
And brustleth as a monkes froise,
Whanne it is throwe into the Panne.
And otherwhile sielde whanne
That he mai dreame a lusti swevene,
Him thenkth as thogh he were in hevene
And as the world were holi his:
And thanne he spekth of that and this,
And makth his exposicion
After the disposicion
Of that he wolde, and in such wise
He doth to love all his service;
I not what thonk he schal deserve.
Bot, Sone, if thou wolt love serve,
I rede that thou do noght so.
Ha, goode fader, certes no.
I hadde levere be mi trowthe,
Er I were set on such a slouthe
And beere such a slepi snoute,
Bothe yhen of myn hed were oute.
For me were betre fulli die,
Thanne I of such a slugardie
Hadde eny name, god me schilde;
For whan mi moder was with childe,
And I lay in hire wombe clos,
I wolde rather Atropos,
Which is goddesse of alle deth,
Anon as I hadde eny breth,
Me hadde fro mi Moder cast.

Bot now I am nothing agast,
I thonke godd; for Lachesis,
Ne Cloto, which hire felawe is,
Me schopen no such destine,
Whan thei at mi nativite
My weerdess setten as thei wolde;
Bot thei me schopen that I scholde
Eschuie of slep the truandise,
So that I hope in such a wise
To love forto ben excused,
That I no Sompnolence have used.
For certes, fader Genius,
Yit into nou it hath be thus,
At alle time if it befelle
So that I mihte come and duelle
In place ther my ladi were,
I was noght slow ne slepi there:
For thanne I dar wel undertake,
That whanne hir list on nyhtes wake
In chambre as to carole and daunce,
Me thenkth I mai me more avaunce,
If I mai gon upon hir hond,
Thanne if I wonne a kinges lond.
For whanne I mai hire hand beclippe,
With such gladnesse I daunce and skippe,
Me thenkth I touche noght the flor;
The Ro, which renneth on the Mor,
Is thanne noght so lyht as I:
So mow ye witen wel forthi,
That for the time slep I hate.
And whanne it falleth othergate,
So that hire like noght to daunce,
Bot on the Dees to caste chaunce
Or axe of love som demande,
Or elles that hir list comaunde
To rede and here of Troilus,
Riht as sche wole or so or thus,
I am al redi to consente.
And if so is that I mai hente
Somtime among a good leisir,
So as I dar of mi desir
I telle a part; bot whanne I preie,

Anon sche bidt me go mi weie
And seith it is ferr in the nyht;
And I swere it is even liht.
Bot as it falleth ate laste,
Ther mai no worldes joie laste,
So mot I nedes fro hire wende
And of my wachche make an ende:
And if sche thanne hiede toke,
Hou pitousliche on hire I loke,
Whan that I schal my leve take,
Hire oghte of mercy forto slake
Hire daunger, which seith evere nay.
Bot he seith often, 'Have good day,'
That loth is forto take his leve:
Therefore, while I mai beleve,
I tarie forth the nyht along,
For it is noght on me along
To slep that I so sone go,
Til that I mot algate so;
And thanne I bidde godd hire se,
And so doun knelende on mi kne
I take leve, and if I schal,
I kisse hire, and go forth withal.
And otherwhile, if that I dore,
Er I come fulli to the Dore,
I torne ayein and feigne a thing,
As thogh I hadde lost a Ring
Or somewhat elles, for I wolde
Kisse hire eftsones, if I scholde,
Bot seldom is that I so spede.
And whanne I se that I mot nede
Departen, I departe, and thanne
With al myn herte I curse and banne
That evere slep was mad for yhe;
For, as me thenkth, I mihte dryhe
Withoute slep to waken evere,
So that I scholde noght dissevere
Fro hire, in whom is al my liht:
And thanne I curse also the nyht
With al the will of mi corage,
And seie, 'Awey, thou blake ymage,
Which of thi derke cloudy face

Makst al the worldes lyht deface,
And causest unto slep a weie,
Be which I mot nou gon aweie
Out of mi ladi compaignie.
O slepi nyht, I thee defie,
And wolde that thou leye in presse
With Proserpine the goddessse
And with Pluto the helle king:
For til I se the daies spring,
I sette slep noght at a risshe.'
And with that word I sike and wisshe,
And seie, 'Ha, whi ne were it day?
For yit mi ladi thanne I may
Beholde, thogh I do nomore.'
And efte I thenke forthermore,
To som man hou the niht doth ese,
Whan he hath thing that mai him plese
The longe nyhtes be his side,
Where as I faile and go beside.
Bot slep, I not wherof it serveth,
Of which noman his thonk deserveth
To gete him love in eny place,
Bot is an hindrere of his grace
And makth him ded as for a throwe,
Riht as a Stok were overthrowe.
And so, mi fader, in this wise
The slepi nyhtes I despise,
And evere amiddes of mi tale
I thenke upon the nyhtingale,
Which slepeth noght be weie of kinde
For love, in bokes as I finde.
Thus ate laste I go to bedde,
And yit min herte lith to wedde
With hire, wher as I cam fro;
Thogh I departe, he wol noght so,
Ther is no lock mai schette him oute,
Him nedeth noght to gon aboute,
That perce mai the harde wall;
Thus is he with hire overall,
That be hire lief, or be hire loth,
Into hire bedd myn herte goth,
And softly takth hire in his arm

And fieleth hou that sche is warm,
And wissheth that his body were
To fiele that he fieleth there.
And thus miselven I tormente,
Til that the dede slep me hente:
Bot thanne be a thousand score
Welmore than I was tofore
I am tormented in mi slep,
Bot that I dreme is noght of schep;
For I ne thenke noght on wulle,
Bot I am drecched to the fulle
Of love, that I have to kepe,
That nou I lawhe and nou I wepe,
And nou I lese and nou I winne,
And nou I ende and nou beginne.
And otherwhile I dreme and mete
That I al one with hire mete
And that Danger is left behinde;
And thanne in slep such joie I finde,
That I ne bede nevere awake.
Bot after, whanne I hiede take,
And schal arise upon the morwe,
Thanne is al torned into sorwe,
Noght for the cause I schal arise,
Bot for I mette in such a wise,
And ate laste I am bethoght
That al is vein and helpeth noght:
Bot yit me thenketh be my wille
I wolde have leie and slepe stille,
To meten evere of such a swevene,
For thanne I hadde a slepi hevene.
Mi Sone, and for thou tellest so,
A man mai finde of time ago
That many a swevene hath be certein,
Al be it so, that som men sein
That swevenes ben of no credence.
Bot forto schewe in evidence
That thei fulofte sothe thinges
Betokne, I thenke in my wrytinges
To telle a tale therupon,
Which fell be olde daies gon.
This finde I write in Poesie:

Ceix the king of Trocinie
Hadde Alceone to his wif,
Which as hire oghne hertes lif
Him loveth; and he hadde also
A brother, which was cleped tho
Dedalion, and he per cas
Fro kinde of man forschape was
Into a Goshauk of liknesse;
Wherof the king gret hevynesse
Hath take, and thoghte in his corage
To gon upon a pelrinage
Into a strange regioun,
Wher he hath his devocioun
To don his sacrifice and preie,
If that he mihte in eny weie
Toward the goddes finde grace
His brother hele to purchace,
So that he mihte be reformed
Of that he hadde be transformed.
To this pourpos and to this ende
This king is redy forto wende,
As he which wolde go be Schipe;
And forto don him felaschipe
His wif unto the See him broghte,
With al hire herte and him besoghte,
That he the time hire wolde sein,
Whan that he thoghte come ayein:
'Withinne,' he seith, 'tuo Monthe day.'
And thus in al the haste he may
He tok his leve, and forth he seileth
Wepende, and sche hirsself beweileth,
And torneth hom, ther sche cam fro.
Bot whan the Monthes were ago,
The whiche he sette of his comynge,
And that sche herde no tydinge,
Ther was no care forto seche:
Wherof the goddes to beseche
Tho sche began in many wise,
And to Juno hire sacrificise
Above alle othre most sche dede,
And for hir lord sche hath so bede
To wite and knowe hou that he ferde,

That Juno the goddesse hire herde,
Anon and upon this matiere
Sche bad Yris hir Messagere
To Slepeshous that sche schal wende,
And bidde him that he make an ende
Be swevene and schewen al the cas
Unto this ladi, hou it was.
This Yris, fro the hihe stage
Which undertake hath the Message,
Hire reyny Cope dede upon,
The which was wonderli begon
With colours of diverse hewe,
An hundred mo than men it knewe;
The hevne lich into a bowe
Sche bende, and so she cam doun lowe,
The god of Slep wher that sche fond.
And that was in a strange lond,
Which marcheth upon Chymerie:
For ther, as seith the Poesie,
The god of Slep hath mad his hous,
Which of entaille is merveilous.
Under an hell ther is a Cave,
Which of the Sonne mai noght have,
So that noman mai knowe ariht
The point betwen the dai and nyht:
Ther is no fyr, ther is no sparke,
Ther is no dore, which mai charke,
Wherof an yhe scholde unschette,
So that inward ther is no lette.
And forto speke of that withoute,
Ther stant no gret Tree nyh aboute
Wher on ther myhte crowe or pie
Alihte, forto clepe or crie:
Ther is no cok to crowe day,
Ne beste non which noise may
The hell, bot al aboute round
Ther is growende upon the ground
Popi, which berth the sed of slep,
With othre herbes suche an hep.
A stille water for the nones
Rennende upon the smale stones,
Which hihte of Lethes the rivere,

Under that hell in such manere
Ther is, which yifth gret appetit
To slepe. And thus full of delit
Slep hath his hous; and of his couche
Withinne his chambre if I schal touche,
Of hebenus that slepi Tree
The bordes al aboute be,
And for he scholde slepe softe,
Upon a fethrebed alofte
He lith with many a pilwe of doun:
The chambre is strowed up and doun
With swevenes many thousandfold.
Thus cam Yris into this hold,
And to the bedd, which is al blak,
Sche goth, and ther with Slep sche spak,
And in the wise as sche was bede
The Message of Juno sche dede.
Fuloft hir wordes sche reherceth,
Er sche his slepi Eres perceth;
With mochel wo bot ate laste
His slombrende yhen he upcaste
And seide hir that it schal be do.
Wherof among a thousand tho,
Withinne his hous that slepi were,
In special he ches out there
Thre, whiche scholden do this dede:
The ferste of hem, so as I rede,
Was Morphe⁵, the whos nature
Is forto take the figure
Of what persone that him liketh,
Wherof that he fulofte entriketh
The lif which slepe schal be nyhte;
And Ithecus that other hihte,
Which hath the vois of every soun,
The chiere and the condicioun
Of every lif, what so it is:
The thridde suiende after this
Is Panthasas, which may transforme
Of every thing the rihte forme,
And change it in an other kinde.
Upon hem thre, so as I finde,
Of swevenes stant al thapparence,

Which otherwhile is evidence
And otherwhile bot a jape.
Bot natheles it is so schape,
That Morpheus be nyht al one
Appiereth until Alceone
In liknesse of hir housebonde
Al naked ded upon the stronde,
And hou he dreynthe in special
These othre tuo it schewen al.
The tempeste of the blake cloude,
The wode See, the wyndes loude,
Al this sche mette, and sih him dyen;
Wherof that sche began to crien,
Slepende abedde ther sche lay,
And with that noise of hire affray
Hir wommen sterten up aboute,
Whiche of here ladi were in doute,
And axen hire hou that sche ferde;
And sche, riht as sche syh and herde,
Hir swevene hath told hem everydel.
And thei it halsen alle wel
And sein it is a tokne of goode;
Bot til sche wiste hou that it stode,
Sche hath no confort in hire herte,
Upon the morwe and up sche sterte,
And to the See, wher that sche mette
The bodi lay, withoute lette
Sche drowh, and whan that sche cam nyh,
Stark ded, hise harmes sprad, sche syh
Hire lord flietende upon the wawe.
Wherof hire wittes ben withdrawe,
And sche, which tok of deth no kepe,
Anon forth lepte into the depe
And wolde have cawht him in hire arm.
This infortune of double harm
The goddes fro the hevene above
Behielde, and for the trowthe of love,
Which in this worthi ladi stod,
Thei have upon the salte flod
Hire dreinte lord and hire also
Fro deth to lyve torned so,
That thei ben schapen into briddes

Swimmende upon the wawe amiddes.
And whan sche sih hire lord livende
In liknesse of a bridd swimmende,
And sche was of the same sort,
So as sche mihte do desport,
Upon the joie which sche hadde
Hire wynges bothe abrod sche spradde,
And him, so as sche mai suffise,
Beclippte and keste in such a wise,
As sche was whilom wont to do:
Hire wynges for hire armes tuo
Sche tok, and for hire lippes softe
Hire harde bile, and so fulofte
Sche fondeth in hire briddes forme,
If that sche mihte herself conforme
To do the plesance of a wif,
As sche dede in that other lif:
For thogh sche hadde hir pouer lore,
Hir will stod as it was tofore,
And serveth him so as sche mai.
Wherof into this ilke day
Togedre upon the See thei wone,
Wher many a dowhter and a Sone
Thei bringen forth of briddes kinde;
And for men scholden take in mynde
This Alceoun the trewe queene,
Hire briddes yit, as it is seene,
Of Alceoun the name bere.
Lo thus, mi Sone, it mai thee stere
Of swevenes forto take kepe,
For ofte time a man aslepe
Mai se what after schal betide.
Forthi it helpeth at som tyde
A man to slepe, as it belongeth,
Bot slowthe no lif underfongeth
Which is to love appourtenant.
Mi fader, upon covenant
I dar wel make this avou,
Of all mi lif that into nou,
Als fer as I can understonde,
Yit tok I nevere Slep on honde,
Whan it was time forto wake;

For thogh myn yhe it wolde take,
Min herte is evere therayein.
Bot natheles to speke it plein,
Al this that I have seid you hiere
Of my wakinge, as ye mai hiere,
It toucheth to mi lady swete;
For otherwise, I you behiete,
In strange place whanne I go,
Me list nothing to wake so.
For whan the wommen listen pleie,
And I hir se noght in the weie,
Of whom I scholde merthe take,
Me list noght longe forto wake,
Bot if it be for pure schame,
Of that I wolde eschuie a name,
That thei ne scholde have cause non
To seie, 'Ha, lo, wher goth such on,
That hath forlore his contenance']'
And thus among I singe and daunce,
And feigne lust ther as non is.
For ofte sithe I fiele this;
Of thoght, which in mi herte falleth
Whanne it is nyht, myn hed appalleth,
And that is for I se hire noght,
Which is the wakere of mi thoght:
And thus as tymliche as I may,
Fulofte whanne it is brod day,
I take of all these othre leve
And go my weie, and thei beleve,
That sen per cas here loves there;
And I go forth as noght ne were
Unto mi bedd, so that al one
I mai ther ligge and sighe and grone
And wisshen al the longe nyht,
Til that I se the daies lyht.
I not if that be Sompnolence,
Bot upon youre conscience,
Min holi fader, demeth ye.
My Sone, I am wel paid with thee,
Of Slep that thou the Sluggardie
Be nyhte in loves compaignie
Eschuied hast, and do thi peine

So that thi love thar noght pleine:
For love upon his lust wakende
Is evere, and wolde that non ende
Were of the longe nyhtes set.
Wherof that thou be war the bet,
To telle a tale I am bethoght,
Hou love and Slep acorden noght.
For love who that list to wake
Be nyhte, he mai ensample take
Of Cephalus, whan that he lay
With Aurora that swete may
In armes all the longe nyht.
Bot whanne it drogh toward the liht,
That he withinne his herte sih
The dai which was amorwe nyh,
Anon unto the Sonne he preide
For lust of love, and thus he seide:
'O Phebus, which the daies liht
Governest, til that it be nyht,
And gladest every creature
After the lawe of thi nature,-
Bot natheles ther is a thing,
Which onli to the knouleching
Belongeth as in privete
To love and to his duete,
Which asketh noght to ben apert,
Bot in cilence and in covert
Desireth forto be beschaded:
And thus whan that thi liht is faded
And Vesper scheweth him alofte,
And that the nyht is long and softe,
Under the cloudes derke and stille
Thanne hath this thing most of his wille.
Forthi unto thi myhtes hyhe,
As thou which art the daies yhe,
Of love and myht no conseil hyde,
Upon this derke nyhtes tyde
With al myn herte I thee beseche
That I plesance myhte seche
With hire which lith in min armes.
Withdrawgh the Banere of thin Armes,
And let thi lyhtes ben unborn,

And in the Signe of Capricorn,
 The hous appropred to Satorne,
 I preie that thou wolt sojorne,
 Wher ben the nihtes derke and longe:
 For I mi love have underfonge,
 Which lith hier be mi syde naked,
 As sche which wolde ben awaked,
 And me lest nothing forto slepe.
 So were it good to take kepe
 Nou at this nede of mi preiere,
 And that the like forto stiere
 Thi fyri Carte, and so ordeigne,
 That thou thi swifte hors restreigne
 Lowe under Erthe in Occident,
 That thei towardes Orient
 Be Cercle go the longe weie.
 And ek to thee, Diane, I preie,
 Which cleped art of thi noblesse
 The nyhtes Mone and the goddesse,
 That thou to me be gracious:
 And in Cancro thin oghne hous
 Ayein Phebus in opposit
 Stond al this time, and of delit
 Behold Venus with a glad yhe.
 For thanne upon Astronomie
 Of due constellacion
 Thou makst proliferacion,
 And dost that children ben begete:
 Which grace if that I mihte gete,
 With al myn herte I wolde serve
 Be nyhte, and thi vigile observe.'
 Lo, thus this lusti Cephalus
 Preide unto Phebe and to Phebus
 The nyht in lengthe forto drawe,
 So that he mihte do the lawe
 In thilke point of loves heste,
 Which cleped is the nyhtes feste,
 Withoute Slep of sluggardie;
 Which Venus out of compaignie
 Hath put away, as thilke same,
 Which lustles ferr from alle game
 In chambre doth fulofte wo

Abedde, whanne it falleth so
That love scholde ben awaited.
But Slowthe, which is evele affaited,
With Slep hath mad his retenue,
That what thing is to love due,
Of all his dette he paieth non:
He wot noght how the nyht is gon
Ne hou the day is come aboute,
Bot onli forto slepe and route
Til hyh midday, that he arise.
Bot Cephalus dede otherwise,
As thou, my Sone, hast herd above.
Mi fader, who that hath his love
Abedde naked be his syde,
And wolde thanne hise yhen hyde
With Slep, I not what man is he:
Bot certes as touchende of me,
That fell me nevere yit er this.
Bot otherwhile, whan so is
That I mai cacche Slep on honde
Liggende al one, thanne I fonde
To dreame a merie swevene er day;
And if so falle that I may
Mi thought with such a swevene plese,
Me thenkth I am somdiel in ese,
For I non other confort have.
So nedeth noght that I schal crave
The Sonnes Carte forto tarie,
Ne yit the Mone, that sche carie
Hire cours along upon the hevene,
For I am noght the more in evene
Towardes love in no degree:
Bot in mi slep yit thanne I se
Somwhat in swevene of that me liketh,
Which afterward min herte entriketh,
Whan that I finde it otherwise.
So wot I noght of what servise
That Slep to mannes ese doth.
Mi Sone, certes thou seist soth,
Bot only that it helpeth kinde
Somtyme, in Phisique as I finde,
Whan it is take be mesure:

Bot he which can no Slep mesure
Upon the reule as it belongeth,
Fulofte of sodein chance he fongeth
Such infortune that him grieveth.
Bot who these olde bokes lieveth,
Of Sompnolence hou it is write,
Ther may a man the sothe wite,
If that he wolde ensample take,
That otherwhile is good to wake:
Wherof a tale in Poesie
I thenke forto specefie.
Ovide telleth in his sawes,
How Jupiter be olde dawes
Lay be a Mayde, which Yo
Was cleped, wherof that Juno
His wif was wroth, and the goddesse
Of Yo torneth the liknesse
Into a cow, to gon theroute
The large fieldes al aboute
And gete hire mete upon the griene.
And therupon this hyhe queene
Betok hire Argus forto kepe,
For he was selden wont to slepe,
And yit he hadde an hundred yhen,
And alle alyche wel thei syhen.
Now herkne hou that he was beguiled.
Mercurie, which was al affiled
This Cow to stele, he cam disguised,
And hadde a Pipe wel devised
Upon the notes of Musiqe,
Wherof he mihte hise Eres like.
And over that he hadde affaited
Hise lusti tales, and awaited
His time; and thus into the field
He cam, where Argus he behield
With Yo, which beside him wente.
With that his Pye on honde he hente,
And gan to pipe in his manere
Thing which was slepi forto hiere;
And in his pipinge evere among
He tolde him such a lusti song,
That he the fol hath broght aslepe.

Ther was non yhe mihte kepe
His hed, the which Mercurie of smot,
And forth withal anon fot hot
He stal the Cow which Argus kepte,
And al this fell for that he slepte.
Ensample it was to manye mo,
That mochel Slep doth ofte wo,
Whan it is time forto wake:
For if a man this vice take,
In Sompnolence and him delite,
Men scholde upon his Dore wryte
His epitaphe, as on his grave;
For he to spille and noght to save
Is schape, as thogh he were ded.
Forthi, mi Sone, hold up thin hed,
And let no Slep thin yhe englue,
Bot whanne it is to resoun due.
Mi fader, as touchende of this,
Riht so as I you tolde it is,
That ofte abedde, whanne I scholde,
I mai noght slepe, thogh I wolde;
For love is evere faste byme,
Which takth no hiede of due time.
For whanne I schal myn yhen close,
Anon min herte he wole oppose
And holde his Scole in such a wise,
Til it be day that I arise,
That selde it is whan that I slepe.
And thus fro Sompnolence I kepe
Min yhe: and forthi if ther be
Oght elles more in this degre,
Now axeth forth. Mi Sone, yis:
For Slowthe, which as Moder is
The forthdrawere and the Norrice
To man of many a dredful vice,
Hath yit an other laste of alle,
Which many a man hath mad to falle,
Wher that he mihte nevere arise;
Wherof for thou thee schalt avise,
Er thou so with thiself misfare,
What vice it is I wol declare.
Whan Slowthe hath don al that he may

To dryve forth the longe day,
Til it be come to the nede,
Thanne ate laste upon the dede
He loketh hou his time is lore,
And is so wo begon therfore,
That he withinne his thoght conceiveth
Tristesce, and so himself deceiveth,
That he wanhope bringeth inne,
Wher is no confort to beginne,
Bot every joie him is deslaied:
So that withinne his herte affraied
A thousand time with o breth
Wepende he wissheth after deth,
Whan he fortune fint adverse.
For thanne he wole his hap reherce,
As thogh his world were al forlore,
And seith, 'Helas, that I was bore]
Hou schal I live? hou schal I do?
For nou fortune is thus mi fo,
I wot wel god me wol noght helpe.
What scholde I thanne of joies yelpe,
Whan ther no bote is of mi care?
So overcast is my welfare,
That I am schapen al to strif.
Helas, that I nere of this lif,
Er I be fulliche overtake]'
And thus he wol his sorwe make,
As god him mihte noght availe:
Bot yit ne wol he noght travaile
To helpe himself at such a nede,
Bot slowtheth under such a drede,
Which is affermed in his herte,
Riht as he mihte noght asterte
The worldes wo which he is inne.
Also whan he is falle in Sinne,
Him thenkth he is so ferr coupable,
That god wol noght be merciable
So gret a Sinne to foryive;
And thus he leeveth to be schrive.
And if a man in thilke throwe
Wolde him consaile, he wol noght knowe
The sothe, thogh a man it finde:

For Tristesce is of such a kinde,
That forto meintiene his folie,
He hath with him Obstinacie,
Which is withinne of such a Slouthe,
That he forsaketh alle trouthe,
And wole unto no reson bowe;
And yit ne can he noght avowe
His oghne skile bot of hed:
Thus dwyneth he, til he be ded,
In hindringe of his oghne astat.
For where a man is obstinat,
Wanhope folweth ate laste,
Which mai noght after longe laste,
Till Slouthe make of him an ende.
Bot god wot whider he schal wende.
Mi Sone, and riht in such manere
Ther be lovers of hevy chiere,
That sorwen mor than it is ned,
Whan thei be taried of here sped
And conne noght hemselven rede,
Bot lesen hope forto spede
And stinten love to poursewe;
And thus thei faden hyde and hewe,
And lustles in here hertes waxe.
Hierof it is that I wolde axe,
If thou, mi Sone, art on of tho.
Ha, goode fader, it is so,
Outake a point, I am beknowe;
For elles I am overthrowe
In al that evere ye have seid.
Mi sorwe is everemore unteid,
And secheth overal my veines;
Bot forto conseile of mi peines,
I can no bote do therto;
And thus withouten hope I go,
So that mi wittes ben empeired,
And I, as who seith, am despeired
To winne love of thilke swete,
Withoute whom, I you behiete,
Min herte, that is so bestad,
Riht inly nevere mai be glad.
For be my trouthe I schal noght lie,

Of pure sorwe, which I drye
For that sche seith sche wol me noght,
With drecching of myn oghne thoght
In such a wanhope I am falle,
That I ne can unethes calle,
As forto speke of eny grace,
Mi ladi merci to pourchace.
Bot yit I seie noght for this
That al in mi defalte it is;
For I cam nevere yit in stede,
Whan time was, that I my bede
Ne seide, and as I dorste tolde:
Bot nevere fond I that sche wolde,
For oght sche knew of min entente,
To speke a goodly word assente.
And natheles this dar I seie,
That if a sinful wolde preie
To god of his foryivenesse
With half so gret a businesse
As I have do to my ladi,
In lacke of askinge of merci
He scholde nevere come in Helle.
And thus I mai you sothli telle,
Save only that I crie and bidde,
I am in Tristesce al amidde
And fulfild of Desesperance:
And therof yif me mi penance,
Min holi fader, as you liketh.
Mi Sone, of that thin herte siketh
With sorwe, miht thou noght amende,
Til love his grace wol thee sende,
For thou thin oghne cause empeirest
What time as thou thiself despeirest.
I not what other thing availeth,
Of hope whan the herte faileth,
For such a Sor is incurable,
And ek the goddes ben vengable:
And that a man mai riht wel frede,
These olde bokes who so rede,
Of thing which hath befalle er this:
Now hier of what ensample it is.
Whilom be olde daies fer

Of Mese was the king Theucer,
Which hadde a kniht to Sone, Iphis:
Of love and he so maistred is,
That he hath set al his corage,
As to reguard of his lignage,
Upon a Maide of lou astat.
Bot thogh he were a potestat
Of worldes good, he was soubgit
To love, and put in such a plit,
That he excedeth the mesure
Of reson, that himself assure
He can noght; for the more he preide,
The lass love on him sche leide.
He was with love unwys constreigned,
And sche with resoun was restreigned:
The lustes of his herte he suieth,
And sche for dred schame eschuieth,
And as sche scholde, tok good hiede
To save and kepe hir wommanhiede.
And thus the thing stod in debat
Betwen his lust and hire astat:
He yaf, he sende, he spak be mouthe,
Bot yit for oght that evere he couthe
Unto his sped he fond no weie,
So that he caste his hope aweie,
Withinne his herte and gan despeire
Fro dai to dai, and so empeire,
That he hath lost al his delit
Of lust, of Slep, of Appetit,
That he thurgh strengthe of love lasseth
His wit, and resoun overpasseth.
As he which of his lif ne rowhte,
His deth upon himself he sowhte,
So that be nyhte his weie he nam,
Ther wiste non wher he becam;
The nyht was derk, ther schon no Mone,
Tofore the gates he cam sone,
Wher that this yonge Maiden was
And with this wofull word, 'Helas!'
Hise dedli pleintes he began
So stille that ther was noman
It herde, and thanne he seide thus:

'O thou Cupide, o thou Venus,
Fortuned be whos ordinaunce
Of love is every mannes chaunce,
Ye knowen al min hole herte,
That I ne mai your hond asterte;
On you is evere that I crie,
And yit you deigneth noght to plie,
Ne toward me youre Ere encline.
Thus for I se no medicine
To make an ende of mi querele,
My deth schal be in stede of hele.
Ha, thou mi wofull ladi diere,
Which duellest with thi fader hiere
And slepest in thi bedd at ese,
Thou wost nothing of my desese.
Hou thou and I be now unmete.
Ha lord, what swevene schalt thou mete,
What dremes hast thou nou on honde?
Thou slepest there, and I hier stonde.
Thogh I no deth to the deserve,
Hier schal I for thi love sterve,
Hier schal a kinges Sone dye
For love and for no felonie;
Wher thou therof have joie or sorwe,
Hier schalt thou se me ded tomorwe.
O herte hard aboven alle,
This deth, which schal to me befalle
For that thou wolt noght do me grace,
Yit schal be told in many a place,
Hou I am ded for love and trouthe
In thi defalte and in thi slouthe:
Thi Daunger schal to manye mo
Ensample be for everemo,
Whan thei my wofull deth recorde.'
And with that word he tok a Corde,
With which upon the gate tre
He hyng himself, that was pite.
The morwe cam, the nyht is gon,
Men comen out and syhe anon
Wher that this yonge lord was ded:
Ther was an hous withoute red,
For noman knew the cause why;

Ther was wepinge and ther was cry.
This Maiden, whan that sche it herde,
And sih this thing hou it misferde,
Anon sche wiste what it mente,
And al the cause hou it wente
To al the world sche tolde it oute,
And preith to hem that were aboute
To take of hire the vengeance,
For sche was cause of thilke chaunce,
Why that this kinges Sone is split.
Sche takth upon herself the gilt,
And is al redi to the peine
Which eny man hir wole ordeigne:
And bot if eny other wolde,
Sche seith that sche hirselve scholde
Do wreche with hire oghne hond,
Thurghout the world in every lond
That every lif therof schal speke,
Hou sche herself i scholde wreke.
Sche wepth, sche crith, sche swouneth ofte,
Sche caste hire yhen up alofte
And seide among ful pitously:
'A godd, thou wost wel it am I,
For whom Iphis is thus besein:
Ordeine so, that men mai sein
A thousand wynter after this,
Hou such a Maiden dede amis,
And as I dede, do to me:
For I ne dede no pite
To him, which for mi love is lore,
Do no pite to me therfore.'
And with this word sche fell to grounde
Aswoune, and ther sche lay a stounde.
The goddes, whiche hir pleignes herde
And syhe hou woefully sche ferde,
Hire lif thei toke away anon,
And schopen hire into a Ston
After the forme of hire ymage
Of bodi bothe and of visage.
And for the merveile of this thing
Unto the place cam the king
And ek the queene and manye mo;

And whan thei wisten it was so,
As I have told it heir above,
Hou that Iphis was ded for love,
Of that he hadde be refused,
Thei hielden alle men excused
And wondren upon the vengeance.
And forto kepe in remembrance,
This faire ymage mayden liche
With compaignie noble and riche
With torche and gret sollempnite.
To Salamyne the Cite
Thei lede, and carie forth withal
The dede corps, and sein it schal
Beside thilke ymage have
His sepulture and be begrave:
This corps and this ymage thus
Into the Cite to Venus,
Wher that goddesse hire temple hadde,
Togedre bothe tuo thei ladde.
This ilke ymage as for miracle
Was set upon an hyh pinnacle,
That alle men it mihte knowe,
And under tht thei maden lowe
A tumberiche for the nones
Of marbre and ek of jaspre stones,
Wherin this Iphis was beloken,
That evermor it schal be spoken.
And for men schal the sothe wite,
Thei have here epitaphe write,
As thing which scholde abide stable:
The lettres graven in a table
Of marbre were and seiden this:
'Hier lith, which slowh himself, Iphis,
For love of Araxarathen:
And in ensample of tho wommen,
That soffren men to deie so,
Hire forme a man mai sen also,
Hou it is torned fleissh and bon
Into the figure of a Ston:
He was to neysshe and sche to hard.
Be war forthi hierafterward;
Ye men and wommen bothe tuo,

Ensampleth you of that was tho:
Lo thus, mi Sone, as I thee seie,
It grieveth be diverse weie
In desepeir a man to falle,
Which is the laste branche of alle
Of Slouthe, as thou hast herd devise.
Wherof that thou thiself advise
Good is, er that thou be deceived,
Wher that the grace of hope is weyved.
Mi fader, hou so that it stonde,
Now have I plainly understonde
Of Slouthes court the proprete,
Wherof touchende in my degre
For evere I thenke to be war.
Bot overthis, so as I dar,
With al min herte I you beseche,
That ye me wolde enforme and teche
What ther is more of youre aprise
In love als wel as otherwise,
So that I mai me clene schryve.
Mi Sone, whyl thou art alyve
And hast also thi fulle mynde,
Among the vices whiche I finde
Ther is yit on such of the sevene,
Which al this world hath set unevene
And causeth manye thinges wronge,
Where he the cause hath underfonge:
Wherof hierafter thou schalt hier
The forme bothe and the matiere.

John Gower