Confessio Amantis; Or, Tales of the Seven Deadly Sins

John Gower and G. C. Macaulay



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CONFESSIO AMANTIS

or

TALES OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

By John Gower

1330–1408 A.D.

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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 betwen 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 bisinesse,
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 knyhthode 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 knyhthode 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.
Althogh 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 unliered.
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 betwen the kynges
After the lawe of charite,

Which is the propre duete
Belongende unto the presthode.
Bot as it thenkth to the manhode,
The hevene 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 descharge
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 chaiere 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 thexperience
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 desguise
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 resistence:
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 wynne,
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 electioun
Hath cleped to perfectioun
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 ernest 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 pleinly 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 befalle 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 evere untrewe, and as the blynde
Improprelich 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 deceipte in his balance,
And al is that the variance
Of ous, that scholde ous betre avise;
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 befalle,
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 lefte,
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 lefte 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 divise
How Daniel the swevene expondeth
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 knyhthode and of Citezeins,
To peise now with that beforn,
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 hevenly 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 clowdy 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 fielinge,
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 gospell 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 awey 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 awey 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 oultrage
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.

Explicit Prologus

Incipit Liber Primus

Naturatus amor nature legibus orbem
Subdit, et vnanimes 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 aweye his fees,

As he that pleieth ate Dees,
And therupon what schal befalle
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 pleinly 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 pleinly 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 uplifte
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 schriven 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 certein 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 pleinly,
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 aspie
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

Himselve 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 awey 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 vengance 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 Phorceus
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 excedeth
Mesure, 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 ought 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 Lomb beforn
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 richesse, as men sein,
Under the simplesce of poverte,
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 deceipte 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 avise
And telle it me, if it be so.

Min holy fader, certes no.
As forto feigne such sieknesse
It nedeth noght, for this witnesse
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 thousendel
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 avise
What hath befalle 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 thow 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 Croniqe
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 fortuned
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.

There was a Duck, and he was hote
Mundus, which hadde in his baillie
To lede the chivalerie
Of Rome, and was a worthi knyht;
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,
Fulfild 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 eschuied.
Bot I his grace have so poursuied,
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 desteigneth
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 hirself beweileth
Welmore 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 juise,
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 acquited,
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 vengance.

And ek to take remembrance
Of that Ypocrisie hath wroght
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 betraied:
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 beheste 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 sacrifie.

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 processioun
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 thousend wynter ther tofore,
Thei have anon tobroke and tore;
The stronge walles doun 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 aspie
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 sufficant,
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 untrewe
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 enbrace
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 awey, althogh 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 pleinly 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 wynne,
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 poverte
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 pleinly 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 befalle 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 aventures 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 vengance
Upon Florent, bot remembrance
That thei toke of his worthinesse
Of knyhthod 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 vengement,
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 knowlechinge
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 befalle.
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 answere.
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 aventurous,

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 avantage,
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 answere.
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 soverein 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 answere 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 answere 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 answere 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 answere 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 descrive 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 untrewe 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 gentilesse,
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 avise,
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 soverein,
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 sovereinete
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 pleinly 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 wenynge 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 wenynge 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 wenynge 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 Capaneus
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 Croniqes 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 hemself 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 resistence
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 mervaile
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 wenynge
And Sothfastnesse into lesynge
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 himselve 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 Nimphes 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 wenynge 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 knowlechinge;
Bot he fordoth it alto sore.
And riht of such a maner lore
Ther ben lovers: forthi if thow
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 bettre,
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 furthere 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 awey 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 kepth 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 officiers
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 awey,

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 awey 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 renomed 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 avise.

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 desguised.
Mor jolif than the brid in Maii
He makth him evere freissh and gay,
And doth al his array desguise,
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 avantage,

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 rathere 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,
Althogh 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 vengance 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 vengance 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 waisshen 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 wroght
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 althermest?"

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 answere 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 hevenely 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 sorwfulli 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:
Therfore 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 pleinly 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 Midelerthe and ek also
Pride is the cause of alle wo,
That al the world ne may suffise
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 hirself 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 pleinly 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.

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 vicium 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 thousend 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 aspie;
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 Bacheler 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 beheste,
That sche ne was al at his heste.
This yonge knyht 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,
Fulfild 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 hirself 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 vengance,
Which to non other man is lief,
And is unto himselve 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 termined,
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 aspie
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 Netle 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 wynge 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 mencioun:
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 hirself 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 enquere 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 thousend 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 aspie
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 avise,
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 assissed
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 hirself: “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,
Vitailed 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 Hermyngeld, 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 avise,
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 befalle
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 blody hiere!
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,
Baptesme 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 betwen 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 Messager, 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 untrewe,
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 Messager, 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 Messager 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 Messager 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 cleymen 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 Messager, 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 Stieward hadde,
Oon Thelous, 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 certeinly 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 abord 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 pleinly as it stod,
Of Rome how that the gentil blod
In Barbarie was betraied,
And therupon he hath assaied
Be werre, and taken such vengance,
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 plihte,
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 tuelve 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 Messager 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 befalle,
Bot it is al in other wise.”
And tho began he to devise
How he the childes 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 childes 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 hiere:
For he was nouther 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 softe pas;
Bot whan this ladi come was
To themperour, in his presence
Sche seide alowd in audience,
"Mi lord, mi fader, wel you be!
And of this time that I se
Youre honour and your goode hele,
Which is the helpe of my querele,
I thonke unto the goddes 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 nomor 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 Engelond 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 tunges 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 reherse
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 Perseus 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 jugge 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 gulteles 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 queint in every creature.

And whan this king was passed thus,
This false tunged 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 overthrowe.

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 Perseüs, 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 befrose 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 aspie 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 sustienance.
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 untrewe 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 wawes dryve
In gret tempeste and gret debat,
Wherof that love and his astat
Empeireth. And therfore 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 avise,
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 aspie
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 aspie,
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 wroght,
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,
Althogh 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 hiere.

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 grucchinge 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 desteigned 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 untrewe:
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 avaleth,
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 gulteles; 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 apropriacioun
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 knyhthode:
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 knyhthode 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 befalle
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 awey 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 cleym 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 Stieward 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 juise.

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 soune 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 clerc, 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 astat: 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 relesse
His hihe astat, 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 befalle
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 wroght,
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 oultrage,
And seide he scholde don hommage
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 hoved and abod
Embuisshed 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,
Misledere 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 hiere,
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 descrive,
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 hevenericheˌ 3150
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 avantage
Therof sette a recoverir,
It were tome a gret desir, 3160
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 3170
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, 3180

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 understond 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 divised;
To some worschipe and richesse,
To some poverte and distresse,
On lordeth and an other serveth;
Bot yit as every man deserveth
The world yifth noght 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 noght 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 wroght
Upon the blod which gulteth noght.
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
Departe 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 contrevaileth
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 hiere
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 pleinly 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 worchinge 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 sovereine.

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 avise.

Explicit Liber Secundus

Incipit Liber Tercius

Ira suis paribus est par furiis Acherontis,
Quo furor ad tempus nil pietatis habet.
Ira malencolicos animos perturbat, vt equo
Iure sui pondus nulla statera tenet.
Omnibus in causis grauat Ira, set inter amantes,
Illa magis facili sorte grauamen agit:
Est vbi 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 ferst 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 untrewe 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 miself oppressed
Of thoght, the which I have impressed,
That al wakende I dreme 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 miself 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 furthere 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 unmerciable
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 abye.

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 crualte
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 asterte,
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 doun 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 blody crieth;
Bot al that mihte him noght suffise,
That he ne bad to do juise
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 vengance,
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 Cheste,
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 Cheste wot of his felawes:
For as a Sive kepeth Ale,
Riht so can Cheste 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 resistence,
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
Descrive hem be a thousendel:
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 eny 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 gentilesse
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 Cheste also reproeved.
Bot rathere, 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 Cheste 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 Cheste 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 Cheste.
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 hiere a mannes speche
And be noght wroth of that he seith;
So yifth 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 ernest 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 destance:
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,
Althogh 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 hirself 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 awey 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 hiere
In privete what thei have wroght,
Hold conseil and descoevere it noght,
For Cheste 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 befalle
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 tunges 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 reles
Of no debat which is befalle.

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 avise
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 towardes 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 rathere 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 lyest, 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 ferst 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 Bacheler,
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 betwen 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 desguised 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 compleignynge
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 hilte:
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 betwen 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 pourchaseth
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 forfeture
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 merciable,
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.
Therfore 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 qwyt
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 gentilesse,
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 fihteth 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 Piramus,
Whan he in haste his swerd outdrowh

And on the point himselve slowh
For love of Tisbee pitously,
For he hire wympel fond blody
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.
Therfore attempre thi corage;
Folhaste doth non avantage,
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 asseureth other
To helpe as to his oghne brother,
To vengen hem of thilke oultrage
And winne ayein here heritage.
And thus thei ryde aboute faste
To gete hem help, and ate laste
Thei hadden pouer sufficant,
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 vengance.
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 vengance 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 vengance.
Forthi tak into remembrance
To love in such a maner wise
That thou deserve no juise:
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 befalle:
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 untrewe 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 assailleth,
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 understondinge 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 juise.
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 certein 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 awey 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 aspie,
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 juise.
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 solempnete
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 poverte 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 wroght
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 winnynge;
And if he do it to pourchace
The hevene 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 poverte
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 richesse 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 poverte 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 somwhat sein,

Althogh 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 werreiour 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 fortuned 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 contienance
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 Croniqes 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 gospell 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 tuelve

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 Croniqes 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 Peleüs
His oghne brother Phocus slowh;
Bot for he hadde gold ynowh
To yive, his Senne was despensed
With gold, wherof it was compensed:
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,
Egeüs 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 eschuie,
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 Cheste 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 pleinly 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.

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 ernest 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 pleinly 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 hirself 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 certeinly 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 befalle
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 befalle
That Troie was destruid and brent,
He made non delaiement,
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 houre,
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 Maidenes 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 houre 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 hiere.

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 stere his fot;
So that be resoun lese he mot,
That wol noght auntre 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 doumb 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
Coupable as touchende of this Slowthe,
Schrif thee therof and tell me trowthe.

Mi fader, I am al beknowe
That I have ben on of tho 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 pourpos that I have nome,
Whan I toward mi ladi come,
Bot let it passe and overgo.

Mi Sone, do nomore so:
For after that a man poursuieth
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 contienance,
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 betwen 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 sory 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 lovere 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 doun,
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 hiere,
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 knowlechinge:
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, somtime yee,
Somtime he cam, somtime 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 Demephon,
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 hirselven there.
Wherof the goddes were amoeved,
And Demephon 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.

Fulfild 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 sikernesse,
That me myhte outher 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,
Althogh 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 avise
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 hiere.

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 befalle,
Which yifth unto the vices reste
And is of slowe the sloweste.

Among these othre of Slowthes kinde,
Which alle labour set behinde,
And hateth alle besinesse,
Ther is yit 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,
Bot if he pleie oght ate Dees.
For who as evere take fees
And thenkth worschipe to deserve,
Ther is no lord whom he wol serve,
As forto duelle in his servise,
Bot 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 ladi sake,
Bot liveth al upon his wisshes;
And as a cat wolde ete fisshes
Withoute wetinge of his cles,
So wolde he do, bot natheles
He faileth ofte of that he wolde.

Mi Sone, if thou of such a molde
Art mad, now tell me plein thi schrifte.

Nay, fader, god I yive a yifte.
That toward love, as be mi wit,
Al ydel was I nevere yit,
Ne nevere schal, whil I mai go.

Now, Sone, tell me thanne so,
What hast thou don of besischipe
To love and to the ladischipe
Of hire which thi ladi 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, somtime 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 contienance 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 abaissht 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 preciouse 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 hiere
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, allas, 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 hirself, "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 occupacion,
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 aspie
Of janglinge 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 mervaile 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 esposaile
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 sacrifise
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 aflihte
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 ferst 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, somtime in Rodes,
And somtime 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 theffect 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 schriven 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 knyhthode 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 knyhthode 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 knyhthode,
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 wommannysshe 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 Saül 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 Saül 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
Pourchace 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 knyhthode the prouesce,
Which is to love sufficant
Aboven al the remenant
That unto loves court poursuie.
Bot who that wol no Slowthe eschuie,
Upon knihthode 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 Oënes
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 ferst 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 fulfille
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 hirself 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 gentilesse,
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 gentilesse
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 richesse 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 richesse into poverte,
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 yifth 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,
Althogh 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 nouther part favoureth.
So wot I nothing after kinde
Where I mai gentilesse finde.

For lacke of vertu lacketh grace,
Wherof richesse 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 gentilesse,
Which yifth 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 gentilesse
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 avantage.
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 Croniqes 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 descrive 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 ferst the forge and wroghte it wel:

And Jadahel, as seith the bok,
Ferst made Net and fisshes 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 ferst and dede it make.

Verconius of cokerie
Ferst made the delicacie.

The craft Minerve of wolle fond
And made cloth hire oghne hond;

And Delbora made it of lyn:
Tho wommen were of great engyn.

Bot thing which yifth ous mete and drinke
And doth the labourer to swinke
To tile lond and sette vines,
Wherof the cornes and the wynes
Ben sustenance to mankinde,
In olde bokes as I finde,
Saturnus of his oghne wit
Hath founde ferst, and more yit
Of Chapmanhode he fond the weie,
And ek to coigne the moneie
Of sondri metall, as it is,
He was the ferste man of this.

Bot hou that metall cam a place
Thurgh mannes wit and goddes grace
The route of Philosophres wise
Controeveden be sondri wise,
Ferst 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 hou 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 extremites,
To whiche alle othre be degres
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 wroght 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 hiere 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 clennesse,
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 mulptiplicacioun
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 poverte 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,
Carmente 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 poursuie
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 dreme 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 rathere 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 weerdes 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:
Therfore, 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 somwhat elles, for I wolde
Kisse hire eftsones, if I scholde,
Bot selden 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 goddesse
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:
Ceïx 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 pourchace,
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 hirself 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 sacrifise

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 Slepes hous 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 hevene 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 thousendfold.
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.
Fulofte 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 thousend 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 Morpheus, 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 dreynte 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,
Beclipte 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 hirself 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 contenaunce!”
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 prolificacion,
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 awey, 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 dreme 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 desguised,
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 Pype 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 thousend 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 drecchinge 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 besinesse
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 vengance,
For sche was cause of thilke chaunce,
Why that this kinges Sone is split.
Sche takth upon hirself 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 hirself 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 thousend 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 pleigntes herde
And syhe hou wofully sche ferde,
Hire lif thei toke awey 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 vengance.
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 pinacle,
That alle men it mihte knowe,
And under tht thei maden lowe
A tumbe riche 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 avise
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 pleinly 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 hiere
The forme bothe and the matiere.

Explicit Liber Quartus.

Incipit Liber Quintus

Obstat auaricia nature legibus, et que
Largus amor poscit, striccius illa vetat.
Omne quod est nimium viciosum dicitur aurum,
Vellera sicut oues, seruat auarus opes.
Non decet vt soli seruabitur es, set amori
Debet homo solam solus habere suam.

Ferst whan the hyhe god began
This world, and that the kinde of man
Was falle into no gret encress,
For worldes good tho was no press,
Bot al was set to the comune.
Thei spieken thanne of no fortune
Or forto lese or forto winne,
Til Avarice broghte it inne;
And that was whan the world was woxe
Of man, of hors, of Schep, of Oxe,
And that men knewen the moneie.
Tho wente pes out of the weie
And werre cam on every side,
Which alle love leide aside
And of comun his propre made,
So that in stede of schovele and spade
The scharpe swerd was take on honde;
And in this wise it cam to londe,
Wherof men maden dyches depe
And hyhe walles forto kepe
The gold which Avarice encloseth.

Bot al to lytel him supposeth,
Thogh he mihte al the world pourchace;
For what thing that he may embrace
Of gold, of catel or of lond,
He let it nevere out of his hond,
Bot get him more and halt it faste,
As thogh the world scholde evere laste.
So is he lych unto the helle;
For as these olde bokes telle,
What comth therinne, lasse or more,
It schal departe neveremore:
Thus whanne he hath his cofre loken,
It schal noght after ben unstoken,
Bot whanne him list to have a syhte
Of gold, hou that it schyneth brihte,
That he ther on mai loke and muse;
For otherwise he dar noght use
To take his part, or lasse or more.
So is he povere, and everemore
Him lacketh that he hath ynowh:
An Oxe draweth in the plowh,
Of that himself hath no profit;
A Schep riht in the same plit
His wolle berth, bot on a day
An other takth the flees away:
Thus hath he, that he noght ne hath,
For he therof his part ne tath.
To seie hou such a man hath good,
Who so that reson understod,
It is impropreliche seid,
For good hath him and halt him teid,
That he ne gladeth noght withal,
Bot is unto his good a thral,

And as soubgit thus serveth he,
Wher that he scholde maister be:
Such is the kinde of thaverous.

Mi Sone, as thou art amerous,
Tell if thou farst of love so.

Mi fader, as it semeth, no;
That averous yit nevere I was,
So as ye setten me the cas:
For as ye tolden here above,
In full possession of love
Yit was I nevere hier tofore,
So that me thenketh wel therfore,
I mai excuse wel my dede.
Bot of mi will withoute drede,
If I that tresor mihte gete,
It scholde nevere be foryete,
That I ne wolde it faste holde,
Til god of love himselve wolde
That deth ous scholde part atuo.
For lieveth wel, I love hire so,
That evene with min oghne lif,
If I that swete lusti wif
Mihte ones welden at my wille,
For evere I wolde hire holde stille:
And in this wise, taketh kepe,
If I hire hadde, I wolde hire kepe,
And yit no friday wolde I faste,
Thogh I hire kepte and hielde faste.
Fy on the bagges in the kiste!
I hadde ynogh, if I hire kiste.
For certes, if sche were myn,
I hadde hir levere than a Myn
Of Gold; for al this worldesriche

Ne mihte make me so riche
As sche, that is so inly good.
I sette noght of other good;
For mihte I gete such a thing,
I hadde a tresor for a king;
And thogh I wolde it faste holde,
I were thanne wel beholde.
Bot I mot pipe nou with lasse,
And suffre that it overpasse,
Noght with mi will, for thus I wolde
Ben averous, if that I scholde.
Bot, fader, I you herde seie
Hou thaverous hath yit som weie,
Wherof he mai be glad; for he
Mai whanne him list his tresor se,
And grope and fiele it al aboute,
Bot I fulofte am schet theroute,
Ther as my worthi tresor is.
So is mi lif lich unto this,
That ye me tolden hier tofore,
Hou that an Oxe his yock hath bore
For thing that scholde him noght availe:
And in this wise I me travaile;
For who that evere hath the welfare,
I wot wel that I have the care,
For I am hadd and noght ne have,
And am, as who seith, loves knave.
Nou demeth in youre oghne thoght,
If this be Avarice or noght.

Mi Sone, I have of thee no wonder,
Thogh thou to serve be put under
With love, which to kinde acordeth:
Bot, so as every bok recordeth,
It is to kinde no plesance

That man above his sustienance
Unto the gold schal serve and bowe,
For that mai no reson avowe.
Bot Avarice natheles,
If he mai geten his encress
Of gold, that wole he serve and kepe,
For he takth of noght elles kepe,
Bot forto fille hise bagges large;
And al is to him bot a charge,
For he ne parteth noght withal,
Bot kepth it, as a servant schal:
And thus, thogh that he multeplie
His gold, withoute tresorie
He is, for man is noght amended
With gold, bot if it be despended
To mannes us; wherof I rede
A tale, and tak therof good hiede,
Of that befell be olde tyde,
As telleth ous the clerk Ovide.

Bachus, which is the god of wyn,
Acordant unto his divin
A Prest, the which Cillenus hihte,
He hadde, and fell so that be nyhte
This Prest was drunke and goth astraied,
Wherof the men were evele apaied
In Frigelond, where as he wente.
Bot ate laste a cherl him hente
With strengthe of other felaschipe,
So that upon his drunkeschipe
Thei bounden him with chenes faste,
And forth thei ladde him als so faste
Unto the king, which hihte Myde.
Bot he, that wolde his vice hyde,
This courteis king, tok of him hiede,

And bad that men him scholde lede
Into a chambre forto kepe,
Til he of leisir hadde slepe.
And tho this Prest was sone unbounde,
And up a couche fro the grounde
To slepe he was leid softe ynowh;
And whanne he wok, the king him drowh
To his presence and dede him chiere,
So that this Prest in such manere,
Whil that him liketh, there he duelleth:
And al this he to Bachus telleth,
Whan that he cam to him ayein.
And whan that Bachus herde sein
How Mide hath don his courtesie,
Him thenkth it were a vilenie,
Bot he rewarde him for his dede,
So as he mihte of his godhiede.
Unto this king this god appiereth
And clepeth, and that other hiereth:
This god to Mide thonketh faire
Of that he was so debonaire
Toward his Prest, and bad him seie:
What thing it were he wolde preie,
He scholde it have, of worldes good.
This king was glad, and stille stod,
And was of his axinge in doute,
And al the world he caste aboute,
What thing was best for his astat,
And with himself stod in debat
Upon thre pointz, the whiche I finde
Ben lievest unto mannes kinde.
The ferste of hem it is delit,
The tuo ben worschipe and profit.
And thanne he thoghte, “If that I crave

Delit, thogh I delit mai have,
Delit schal passen in myn age:
That is no siker avantage,
For every joie bodily
Schal ende in wo: delit forthi
Wol I noght chese. And if worschipe
I axe and of the world lordschipe,
That is an occupacion
Of proud ymaginacion,
Which makth an herte vein withinne;
Ther is no certain forto winne,
For lord and knave al is o weie,
Whan thei be bore and whan thei deie.
And if I profit axe wolde,
I not in what manere I scholde
Of worldes good have sikernesse;
For every thief upon richesse
Awaiteth forto robbe and stele:
Such good is cause of harmes fele.
And also, thogh a man at ones
Of al the world withinne his wones
The tresor myhte have everydel,
Yit hadde he bot o mannes del
Toward himself, so as I thinke,
Of clothinge and of mete and drinke,
For more, outake vanite,
Ther hath no lord in his degre."
And thus upon the pointz diverse
Diverseliche he gan reherce
What point him thoghte for the beste;
Bot pleinly forto gete him reste
He can so siker weie caste.
And natheles yit ate laste
He fell upon the coveitise

Of gold; and thanne in sondri wise
He thoghte, as I have seid tofore,
Hou tresor mai be sone lore,
And hadde an inly gret desir
Touchende of such recoverir,
Hou that he mihte his cause availe
To gete him gold withoute faile.
Withinne his herte and thus he preiseth
The gold, and seith hou that it peiseth
Above al other metall most:
"The gold," he seith, "may lede an host
To make werre ayein a King;
The gold put under alle thing,
And set it whan him list above;
The gold can make of hate love
And werre of pes and ryht of wrong,
And long to schort and schort to long;
Withoute gold mai be no feste,
Gold is the lord of man and beste,
And mai hem bothe beie and selle;
So that a man mai sothly telle
That al the world to gold obeieth."
Forthi this king to Bachus preieth
To grante him gold, bot he excedeth
Mesure more than him nedeth.
Men tellen that the maladie
Which cleped is ydropesie
Resembled is unto this vice
Be weie of kinde of Avarice:
The more ydropesie drinketh,
The more him thursteth, for him thinketh
That he mai nevere drinke his fille;
So that ther mai nothing fulfille
The lustes of his appetit:

And riht in such a maner plit
Stant Avarice and evere stod;
The more he hath of worldes good,
The more he wolde it kepe streyte,
And evere mor and mor coveite.
And riht in such condicioun
Withoute good discrecioun
This king with avarice is smite,
That al the world it myhte wite:
For he to Bachus thanne preide,
That wherupon his hond he leide,
It scholde thurgh his touche anon
Become gold, and therupon
This god him granteth as he bad.
Tho was this king of Frige glad,
And forto put it in assai
With al the haste that he mai,
He toucheth that, he toucheth this,
And in his hond al gold it is,
The Ston, the Tree, the Lef, the gras,
The flour, the fruit, al gold it was.
Thus toucheth he, whil he mai laste
To go, bot hunger ate laste
Him tok, so that he moste nede
Be weie of kinde his hunger fede.
The cloth was leid, the bord was set,
And al was forth tofore him fet,
His disch, his coppe, his drinke, his mete;
Bot whanne he wolde or drinke or ete,
Anon as it his mouth cam nyh,
It was al gold, and thanne he syh
Of Avarice the folie.
And he with that began to crie,
And preide Bachus to foryive

His gilt, and soffre him forto live
And be such as he was tofore,
So that he were not forlore.
This god, which herde of his grevance,
Tok rowthe upon his repentance,
And bad him go forth redily
Unto a flod was faste by,
Which Paceole thanne hyhte,
In which as clene as evere he myhte
He scholde him waisshen overal,
And seide him thanne that he schal
Recovere his ferste astat ayein.
This king, riht as he herde sein,
Into the flod goth fro the lond,
And wissh him bothe fot and hond,
And so forth al the remenant,
As him was set in covenant:
And thanne he syh merveilles strange,
The flod his colour gan to change,
The gravel with the smale Stones
To gold thei torne bothe at ones,
And he was quit of that he hadde,
And thus fortune his chance ladde.
And whan he sih his touche aweie,
He goth him hom the rihte weie
And liveth forth as he dede er,
And putte al Avarice afer,
And the richesse of gold despiseth,
And seith that mete and cloth sufficeth.
Thus hath this king experience
Hou foles don the reverence
To gold, which of his oghne kinde
Is lasse worth than is the rinde
To sustienance of mannes fode;

And thanne he made lawes goode
And al his thing sette upon skile:
He bad his poeple forto tile
Here lond, and live under the lawe,
And that thei scholde also forthdrawe
Bestaile, and seche non encress
Of gold, which is the breche of pes.
For this a man mai finde write,
Tofor the time, er gold was smite
In Coign, that men the florin knewe,
Ther was welnyh noman untrewe;
Tho was ther nouther schield ne spere
Ne dedly wepne forto bere;
Tho was the toun withoute wal,
Which nou is closed overal;
Tho was ther no brocage in londe,
Which nou takth every cause on honde:
So mai men knowe, hou the florin
Was moder ferst of malengin
And bringere inne of alle werre,
Wherof this world stant out of herre
Thurgh the conseil of Avarice,
Which of his oghne propre vice
Is as the helle wonderfull;
For it mai neveremor be full,
That what as evere comth therinne,
Awey ne may it nevere winne.
Bot Sone myn, do thou noght so,
Let al such Avarice go,
And tak thi part of that thou hast:
I bidde noght that thou do wast,
Bot hold largesce in his mesure;
And if thou se a creature,
Which thurgh poverte is falle in nede,

Yif him som good, for this I rede
To him that wol noght yiven here,
What peine he schal have elleswhere.

Ther is a peine amonges alle
Benethe in helle, which men calle
The wofull peine of Tantaly,
Of which I schal thee redely
Devise hou men therinne stonde.
In helle, thou schalt understonde,
Ther is a flod of thilke office,
Which serveth al for Avarice:
What man that stonde schal therinne,
He stant up evene unto the chinne;
Above his hed also ther hongeth
A fruyt, which to that peine longeth,
And that fruit toucheth evere in on
His overlippe: and therupon
Swich thurst and hunger him assaileth,
That nevere his appetit ne faileth.
Bot whanne he wolde his hunger fede,
The fruit withdrawth him ate nede,
And thogh he heve his hed on hyh,
The fruit is evere aliche nyh,
So is the hunger wel the more:
And also, thogh him thurste sore
And to the water bowe a doun,
The flod in such condicioun
Avaleth, that his drinke areche
He mai noght. Lo nou, which a wreche,
That mete and drinke is him so couth,
And yit ther comth non in his mouth!
Lich to the peines of this flod
Stant Avarice in worldes good:
He hath ynowh and yit him nedeth,

For his skarsnesse it him forbiedeth,
And evere his hunger after more
Travaileth him aliche sore,
So is he peined overal.
Forthi thi goodes forth withal,
Mi Sone, loke thou despende,
Wherof thou myht thiself amende
Bothe hier and ek in other place.
And also if thou wolt pourchace
To be beloved, thou most use
Largesce, for if thou refuse
To yive for thi loves sake,
It is no reson that thou take
Of love that thou woldest crave.
Forthi, if thou wolt grace have,
Be gracious and do largesse,
Of Avarice and the seknesse
Eschuie above alle other thing,
And tak ensample of Mide king
And of the flod of helle also,
Where is ynowh of alle wo.
And thogh ther were no matiere
Bot only that we finden hiere,
Men oghten Avarice eschuie;
For what man thilke vice suie,
He get himself bot litel reste.
For hou so that the body reste,
The herte upon the gold travaileth,
Whom many a nyhtes drede assaileth;
For thogh he ligge abedde naked,
His herte is everemore awaked,
And dremeth, as he lith to slepe,

How besi that he is to kepe
His tresor, that no thief it stele.
Thus hath he bot a woful wele.

And riht so in the same wise,
If thou thiself wolt wel avise,
Ther be lovers of suche ynowe,
That wole unto no reson bowe.
If so be that thei come above,
Whan thei ben maistres of here love,
And that thei scholden be most glad,
With love thei ben most bestad,
So fain thei wolde it holden al.
Here herte, here yhe is overal,
And wenen every man be thief,
To stele awey that hem is lief;
Thus thurgh here oghne fantasie
Thei fallen into Jelousie.
Thanne hath the Schip tobroke his cable,
With every wynd and is muable.

Mi fader, for that ye nou telle,
I have herd ofte time telle
Of Jelousie, bot what it is
Yit understod I nevere er this:
Wherfore I wolde you beseche,
That ye me wolde enforme and teche
What maner thing it mihte be.

Mi Sone, that is hard to me:
Bot natheles, as I have herd,
Now herkne and thou schalt ben ansuerd.

Among the men lacke of manhode
In Mariage upon wifhode
Makth that a man himself deceiveth,
Wherof it is that he conceiveth

That ilke unsely maladie,
The which is cleped Jelousie:
Of which if I the proprete
Schal telle after the nycete,
So as it worcheth on a man,
A Fievere it is cotidian,
Which every day wol come aboute,
Wher so a man be inne or oute.
At hom if that a man wol wone,
This Fievere is thanne of comun wone
Most grevous in a mannes yhe:
For thanne he makth him tote and pryhe,
Wher so as evere his love go;
Sche schal noght with hir litel too
Misteppe, bot he se it al.
His yhe is walkende overal;
Wher that sche singe or that sche dance,
He seth the leste contienance,
If sche loke on a man aside
Or with him roune at eny tyde,
Or that sche lawghe, or that sche loure,
His yhe is ther at every houre.
And whanne it draweth to the nyht,
If sche thanne is withoute lyht,
Anon is al the game schent;
For thanne he set his parlement
To speke it whan he comth to bedde,
And seith, “If I were now to wedde,
I wolde neveremore have wif.”
And so he torneth into strif
The lust of loves duete,
And al upon diversete.
If sche be freissh and wel araied,
He seith hir baner is displaied

To clepe in gestes fro the weie:
And if sche be noght wel beseie,
And that hir list noght to be gladd,
He berth an hond that sche is madd
And loveth noght hire housebonde;
He seith he mai wel understonde,
That if sche wolde his compaignie,
Sche scholde thanne afore his ije
Schewe al the plesir that sche mihte.
So that be daie ne be nyhte
Sche not what thing is for the beste,
Bot liveth out of alle reste;
For what as evere him liste sein,
Sche dar noght speke a word ayein,
Bot wepth and holt hire lippes clos.
Sche mai wel wryte, “Sanz repos,”
The wif which is to such on maried.
Of alle wommen be he waried,
For with this Fievere of Jalousie
His echedaies fantasie
Of sorghe is evere aliche grene,
So that ther is no love sene,
Whil that him list at hom abyde.
And whan so is he wol out ryde,
Thanne hath he redi his aspie
Abidinge in hir compaignie,
A janglere, an evel mouthed oon,
That sche ne mai nowhider gon,
Ne speke a word, ne ones loke,
That he ne wol it wende and croke
And torne after his oghne entente,
Thogh sche nothing bot honour mente.
Whan that the lord comth hom ayein,
The janglere moste somwhat sein;

So what withoute and what withinne,
This Fievere is evere to beginne,
For where he comth he can noght ende,
Til deth of him have mad an ende.
For thogh so be that he ne hiere
Ne se ne wite in no manere
Bot al honour and wommanhiede,
Therof the Jelous takth non hiede,
Bot as a man to love unkinde,
He cast his staf, as doth the blinde,
And fint defaulte where is non;
As who so dremeth on a Ston
Hou he is leid, and groneth ofte,
Whan he lith on his pilwes softe.
So is ther noght bot strif and cheste;
Whan love scholde make his feste,
It is gret thing if he hir kisse:
Thus hath sche lost the nyhtes blisse,
For at such time he gruccheth evere
And berth on hond ther is a levere,
And that sche wolde an other were
In stede of him abedde there;
And with tho wordes and with mo
Of Jelousie, he torneth fro
And lith upon his other side,
And sche with that drawth hire aside,
And ther sche wepeth al the nyht.
Ha, to what peine sche is dyht,
That in hire youthe hath so beset
The bond which mai noght ben unknet!
I wot the time is ofte cursed,
That evere was the gold unpursed,
The which was leid upon the bok,
Whan that alle othre sche forsok

For love of him; bot al to late
Sche pleigneth, for as thanne algate
Sche mot forbere and to him bowe,
Thogh he ne wole it noght allowe.
For man is lord of thilke feire,
So mai the womman bot empeire,
If sche speke oght ayein his wille;
And thus sche berth hir peine stille.

Bot if this Fievere a womman take,
Sche schal be wel mor harde schake;
For thogh sche bothe se and hiere,
And finde that ther is matiere,
Sche dar bot to hirselve pleine,
And thus sche suffreth double peine.

Lo thus, mi Sone, as I have write,
Thou miht of Jelousie wite
His fievere and his condicion,
Which is full of suspecion.
Bot wherof that this fievere groweth,
Who so these olde bokes troweth,
Ther mai he finden hou it is:
For thei ous teche and telle this,
Hou that this fievere of Jelousie
Somdel it groweth of sotie
Of love, and somdiel of untrust.
For as a sek man lest his lust,
And whan he may no savour gete,
He hateth thanne his oughne mete,
Riht so this fieverous maladie,
Which caused is of fantasie,
Makth the Jelous in fieble plit

To lese of love his appetit
Thurgh feigned enformacion
Of his ymaginacion.

Bot finali to taken hiede,
Men mai wel make a liklihiede
Betwen him which is averous
Of gold and him that is jelous
Of love, for in on degre
Thei stonde bothe, as semeth me.
That oon wolde have his bagges stille,
And noght departen with his wille,
And dar noght for the thieves slepe,
So fain he wolde his tresor kepe;
That other mai noght wel be glad,
For he is evere more adrad
Of these lovers that gon aboute,
In aunter if thei putte him oute.
So have thei bothe litel joye
As wel of love as of monoie.

Now hast thou, Sone, at my techinge
Of Jelousie a knowlechinge,
That thou myht understonde this,
Fro whenne he comth and what he is,
And ek to whom that he is lik.
Be war forthi thou be noght sik
Of thilke fievere as I have spoke,
For it wol in himself be wroke.
For love hateth nothing more,
As men mai finde be the lore
Of hem that whilom were wise,
Hou that thei spieke in many wise.

Mi fader, soth is that ye sein.
Bot forto loke therayein,
Befor this time hou it is falle,
Wherof ther mihte ensample falle
To suche men as be jelous
In what manere it is grevous,
Riht fain I wolde ensample hiere.

My goode Sone, at thi preiere
Of suche ensamples as I finde,
So as thei comen nou to mynde
Upon this point, of time gon
I thenke forto tellen on.

Ovide wrot of manye thinges,
Among the whiche in his wrytinges
He tolde a tale in Poesie,
Which toucheth unto Jelousie,
Upon a certein cas of love.
Among the goddes alle above
It fell at thilke time thus:
The god of fyr, which Vulcanus
Is hote, and hath a craft forthwith
Assigned, forto be the Smith
Of Jupiter, and his figure
Bothe of visage and of stature
Is lothly and malgracious,
Bot yit he hath withinne his hous
As for the likynge of his lif
The faire Venus to his wif.
Bot Mars, which of batailles is
The god, an yhe hadde unto this:
As he which was chivalerous,
It fell him to ben amerous,
And thoghte it was a gret pite

To se so lusti on as sche
Be coupled with so lourde a wiht:
So that his peine day and nyht
He dede, if he hire winne myhte;
And sche, which hadde a good insihte
Toward so noble a knyhtli lord,
In love fell of his acord.
Ther lacketh noght bot time and place,
That he nys siker of hire grace:
Bot whan tuo hertes falle in on,
So wys await was nevere non,
That at som time thei ne mete;
And thus this faire lusti swete
With Mars hath ofte compaignie.
Bot thilke unkynde Jelousie,
Which everemor the herte opposeth,
Makth Vulcanus that he supposeth
That it is noght wel overal,
And to himself he seide, he schal
Aspie betre, if that he may;
And so it fell upon a day,
That he this thing so slyhli ledde,
He fond hem bothe tuo abedde
Al warm, echon with other naked.
And he with craft al redy maked
Of stronge chenes hath hem bounde,
As he togedre hem hadde founde,
And lefte hem bothe ligge so,
And gan to clepe and crie tho
Unto the goddes al aboute;
And thei assembled in a route
Come alle at ones forto se.
Bot none amendes hadde he,
Bot was rebuked hiere and there

Of hem that loves frendes were;
And seiden that he was to blame,
For if ther fell him eny schame,
It was thurgh his misgovernance:
And thus he loste contienance,
This god, and let his cause falle;
And thei to skorne him lowhen alle,
And losen Mars out of hise bondes.
Wherof these erthli housebondes
For evere myhte ensample take,
If such a chaunce hem overtake:
For Vulcanus his wif bewreide,
The blame upon himself he leide,
Wherof his schame was the more;
Which oghte forto ben a lore
For every man that liveth hiere,
To reulen him in this matiere.
Thogh such an happ of love asterte,
Yit scholde he noght apointe his herte
With Jelousie of that is wroght,
Bot feigne, as thogh he wiste it noght:
For if he lete it overpasse,
The sclaundre schal be wel the lasse,
And he the more in ese stonde.
For this thou myht wel understonde,
That where a man schal nedes lese,
The leste harm is forto chese.
Bot Jelousie of his untrist
Makth that full many an harm arist,
Which elles scholde noght arise;
And if a man him wolde avise
Of that befell to Vulcanus,
Him oghte of reson thenke thus,

That sithe a god therof was schamed,
Wel scholde an erthli man be blamed
To take upon him such a vice.

Forthi, my Sone, in thin office
Be war that thou be noght jelous,
Which ofte time hath schent the hous.

Mi fader, this ensample is hard,
Hou such thing to the heveneward
Among the goddes myhte falle:
For ther is bot o god of alle,
Which is the lord of hevene and helle.
Bot if it like you to telle
Hou suche goddes come aplace,
Ye mihten mochel thonk pourchace,
For I schal be wel tawht withal.

Mi Sone, it is thus overal
With hem that stonden misbelieved,
That suche goddes ben believed:
In sondri place sondri wise
Amonges hem whiche are unwise
Ther is betaken of credence;
Wherof that I the difference
In the manere as it is write
Schal do the pleinly forto wite.

Er Crist was bore among ous hiere,
Of the believes that tho were
In foure formes thus it was.
Thei of Caldee as in this cas
Hadde a believe be hemselve,
Which stod upon the signes tuelve,
Forth ek with the Planetes sevene,
Whiche as thei sihe upon the hevene.
Of sondri constellacion

In here ymaginacion
With sondri kerf and pourtreture
Thei made of goddes the figure.

In thelementz and ek also
Thei hadden a believe tho;
And al was that unresonable:
For thelementz ben servicable
To man, and ofte of Accidence,
As men mai se thexperience,
Thei ben corrupt be sondri weie;
So mai no mannes reson seie
That thei ben god in eny wise.
And ek, if men hem wel avise,
The Sonne and Mone eclipse bothe,
That be hem lieve or be hem lothe,
Thei soffre; and what thing is passible
To ben a god is impossible.
These elementz ben creatures,
So ben these hevenly figures,
Wherof mai wel be justefied
That thei mai noght be deified:
And who that takth awey thonour
Which due is to the creatour,
And yifth it to the creature,
He doth to gret a forsfaiture.
Bot of Caldee natheles
Upon this feith, thogh it be les,
Thei holde affermed the creance;
So that of helle the penance,
As folk which stant out of believe,
They schull receive, as we believe.

Of the Caldeus lo in this wise
Stant the believe out of assisse:
Bot in Egipte worst of alle
The feith is fals, hou so it falle;
For thei diverse bestes there
Honoure, as thogh thei goddes were:
And natheles yit forth withal
Thre goddes most in special
Thei have, forth with a goddesse,
In whom is al here sikernesse.
Tho goddes be yit cleped thus,
Orus, Typhon and Isirus:
Thei were brethren alle thre,
And the goddesse in hir degre
Here Soster was and Ysis hyhte,
Whom Isirus forlai be nyhte
And hield hire after as his wif.
So it befell that upon strif
Typhon hath Isre his brother slain,
Which hadde a child to Sone Orayn,
And he his fader deth to herte
So tok, that it mai noght asterte
That he Typhon after ne slowh,
Whan he was ripe of age ynowh.
Bot yit thegipcienes trowe
For al this errour, which thei knowe,
That these brethren ben of myht
To sette and kepe Egipte upriht,
And overthrowe, if that hem like.
Bot Ysis, as seith the Cronique,
Fro Grece into Egipte cam,
And sche thanne upon honde nam
To teche hem forto sowe and eere,
Which noman knew tofore there.

And whan thegipcienes syhe
The fieldes fulle afore here yhe,
And that the lond began to greine,
Which whilom hadde be bareigne,—
For therthe bar after the kinde
His due charge,—this I finde,
That sche of berthe the goddesse
Is cleped, so that in destresse
The wommen there upon childinge
To hire clepe, and here offringe
Thei beren, whan that thei ben lyhte.
Lo, hou Egipte al out of syhte
Fro resoun stant in misbelieve
For lacke of lore, as I believe.

Among the Greks, out of the weie
As thei that reson putte aweie,
Ther was, as the Cronique seith,
Of misbelieve an other feith,
That thei here goddes and goddesses,
As who seith, token al to gesses
Of suche as weren full of vice,
To whom thei made here sacrifice.
The hihe god, so as thei seide,
To whom thei most worschipe leide,
Saturnus hihte, and king of Crete
He hadde be; bot of his sete
He was put doun, as he which stod
In frenesie, and was so wod,
That fro his wif, which Rea hihte,
Hise oghne children he to plihte,
And eet hem of his comun wone.
Bot Jupiter, which was his Sone
And of full age, his fader bond
And kutte of with his oghne hond

Hise genitals, whiche als so faste
Into the depe See he caste;
Wherof the Greks afferme and seie,
Thus whan thei were caste aweie,
Cam Venus forth be weie of kinde.
And of Saturne also I finde
How afterward into an yle
This Jupiter him dede exile,
Wher that he stod in gret meschief.
Lo, which a god thei maden chief!
And sithen that such on was he,
Which stod most hihe in his degre
Among the goddes, thou miht knowe,
These othre, that ben more lowe,
Ben litel worth, as it is founde.

For Jupiter was the secounde,
Which Juno hadde unto his wif;
And yit a lechour al his lif
He was, and in avouterie
He wroghte many a tricherie;
And for he was so full of vices,
Thei cleped him god of delices:
Of whom, if thou wolt more wite,
Ovide the Poete hath write.
Bot yit here Sterres bothe tuo,
Saturne and Jupiter also,
Thei have, althogh thei be to blame,
Attitled to here oghne name.

Mars was an other in that lawe,
The which in Dace was forthdrawe,
Of whom the clerk Vegecius
Wrot in his bok, and tolde thus,
Hou he into Ytaile cam,

And such fortune ther he nam
That he a Maiden hath oppressed,
Which in hire ordre was professed,
As sche which was the Prioresse
In Vestes temple the goddesse,
So was sche wel the mor to blame.
Dame Ylia this ladi name
Men clepe, and ek sche was also
The kinges dowhter that was tho,
Which Mynitor be name hihte.
So that ayein the lawes ryhte
Mars thilke time upon hire that
Remus and Romulus begat,
Whiche after, whan thei come in Age,
Of knihthode and of vassellage
Ytaile al hol thei overcome
And foundeden the grete Rome;
In Armes and of such emprise
Thei weren, that in thilke wise
Here fader Mars for the mervaile
The god was cleped of bataille.
Thei were his children bothe tuo,
Thurgh hem he tok his name so,
Ther was non other cause why:
And yit a Sterre upon the Sky
He hath unto his name applied,
In which that he is signified.

An other god thei hadden eke,
To whom for conseil thei beseke,
The which was brother to Venus,
Appollo men him clepe thus.
He was an Hunte upon the helles,
Ther was with him no vertu elles,
Wherof that enye bokes karpe,

Bot only that he couthe harpe;
Which whanne he walked over londe,
Fulofte time he tok on honde,
To gete him with his sustienance,
For lacke of other pourveance.
And otherwhile of his falshede
He feignede him to conne arede
Of thing which after scholde falle;
Wherof among hise sleyhtes alle
He hath the lewed folk deceived,
So that the betre he was received.
Lo now, thurgh what creacion
He hath deificacion,
And cleped is the god of wit
To suche as be the foles yit.

An other god, to whom thei soghte,
Mercurie hihte, and him ne roghte
What thing he stal, ne whom he slowh.
Of Sorcerie he couthe ynowh,
That whanne he wolde himself transforme,
Fulofte time he tok the forme
Of womman and his oghne lefte;
So dede he wel the more thefte.
A gret spekere in alle thinges
He was also, and of lesinges
An Auctour, that men wiste non
An other such as he was on.
And yit thei maden of this thief
A god, which was unto hem lief,
And clepede him in tho believes
The god of Marchantz and of thieves.
Bot yit a sterre upon the hevene
He hath of the planetes sevene.

But Vulcanus, of whom I spak,
He hadde a courbe upon the bak,
And therto he was hepehalt:
Of whom thou understonde schalt,
He was a schrewe in al his youthe,
And he non other vertu couthe
Of craft to helpe himselve with,
Bot only that he was a Smith
With Jupiter, which in his forge
Diverse thinges made him forge;
So wot I noght for what desir
Thei clepen him the god of fyr.
King of Cizile Ypolitus
A Sone hadde, and Eolus
He hihte, and of his fader grant
He hield be weie of covenant
The governance of every yle
Which was longende unto Cizile,
Of hem that fro the lond forein
Leie open to the wynd al plein.
And fro thilke iles to the londe
Fulofte cam the wynd to honde:
After the name of him forthi
The wyndes cleped Eoli
Tho were, and he the god of wynd.
Lo nou, hou this believe is blynd!
The king of Crete Jupiter,
The same which I spak of er,
Unto his brother, which Neptune
Was hote, it list him to comune
Part of his good, so that be Schipe
He mad him strong of the lordschipe
Of al the See in tho parties;

Wher that he wroghte his tyrannyes,
And the strange yles al aboute
He wan, that every man hath doute
Upon his marche forto saile;
For he anon hem wolde assaile
And robbe what thing that thei ladden,
His sauf conduit bot if thei hadden.
Wherof the comun vois aros
In every lond, that such a los
He cawhte, al nere it worth a stre,
That he was cleped of the See
The god be name, and yit he is
With hem that so believe amis.
This Neptune ek was thilke also,
Which was the ferste foundour tho
Of noble Troie, and he forthi
Was wel the more lete by.

The loresman of the Schepherdes,
And ek of hem that ben netherdes,
Was of Archade and hihte Pan:
Of whom hath spoke many a man;
For in the wode of Nonarcigne,
Enclosed with the tres of Pigne,
And on the Mont of Parasie
He hadde of bestes the baillie,
And ek benethe in the valleie,
Wher thilke rivere, as men seie,
Which Ladon hihte, made his cours,
He was the chief of governours
Of hem that kepten tame bestes,
Wherof thei maken yit the festes
In the Cite Stinfalides.
And forth withal yit natheles
He tawhte men the forthdrawinge

Of bestaile, and ek the makinge
Of Oxen, and of hors the same,
Hou men hem scholde ryde and tame:
Of foules ek, so as we finde,
Ful many a soubtiel craft of kinde
He fond, which noman knew tofore.
Men dede him worschipe ek therfore,
That he the ferste in thilke lond
Was which the melodie fond
Of Riedes, whan thei weren ripe,
With double pipes forto pipe;
Therof he yaf the ferste lore,
Til afterward men couthe more.
To every craft for mannes helpe
He hadde a redi wit to helpe
Thurgh naturel experience:
And thus the nyce reverence
Of foles, whan that he was ded,
The fot hath torned to the hed,
And clepen him god of nature,
For so thei maden his figure.

An other god, so as thei fiele,
Which Jupiter upon Samele
Begat in his avouterie,
Whom, forto hide his lecherie,
That non therof schal take kepe,
In a Montaigne forto kepe,
Which Dyon hihte and was in Ynde,
He sende, in bokes as I finde:
And he be name Bachus hihte,
Which afterward, whan that he mihte,
A wastour was, and al his rente
In wyn and bordel he despente.
Bot yit, al were he wonder badde,

Among the Greks a name he hadde;
Thei cleped him the god of wyn,
And thus a glotoun was dyvyn.

Ther was yit Esculapius
A godd in thilke time as thus.
His craft stod upon Surgerie,
Bot for the lust of lecherie,
That he to Daires dowhter drowh,
It felle that Jupiter him slowh:
And yit thei made him noght forthi
A god, and was no cause why.
In Rome he was long time also
A god among the Romeins tho;
For, as he seide, of his presence
Ther was destruid a pestilence,
Whan thei to thyle of Delphos wente,
And that Appollo with hem sente
This Esculapius his Sone,
Among the Romeins forto wone.
And there he duelte for a while,
Til afterward into that yle,
Fro whenne he cam, ayein he torneth,
Where al his lyf that he sojorneth
Among the Greks, til that he deide.
And thei upon him thanne leide
His name, and god of medicine
He hatte after that ilke line.

An other god of Hercules
Thei made, which was natheles
A man, bot that he was so strong,
In al this world that brod and long
So myhti was noman as he.
Merveiles tuelve in his degre,

As it was couth in sondri londes,
He dede with hise oghne hondes
Ayein geantz and Monstres bothe,
The whiche horrible were and lothe,
Bot he with strengthe hem overcam:
Wherof so gret a pris he nam,
That thei him clepe amonges alle
The god of strengthe, and to him calle.
And yit ther is no reson inne,
For he a man was full of sinne,
Which proved was upon his ende,
For in a rage himself he brende;
And such a cruel mannes dede
Acordeth nothing with godhede.

Thei hadde of goddes yit an other,
Which Pluto hihte, and was the brother
Of Jupiter, and he fro youthe
With every word which cam to mouthe,
Of eny thing whan he was wroth,
He wolde swere his commun oth,
Be Lethen and be Flegeton,
Be Cochitum and Acheron,
The whiche, after the bokes telle,
Ben the chief flodes of the helle:
Be Segne and Stige he swor also,
That ben the depe Pettes tuo
Of helle the most principal.
Pluto these othes overal
Swor of his commun custummance,
Til it befell upon a chance,
That he for Jupiteres sake
Unto the goddes let do make
A sacrifice, and for that dede
On of the pettes for his mede

In helle, of which I spak of er,
Was granted him; and thus he ther
Upon the fortune of this thing
The name tok of helle king.

Lo, these goddes and wel mo
Among the Greks thei hadden tho,
And of goddesses manyon,
Whos names thou schalt hiere anon,
And in what wise thei deceiven
The foles whiche here feith receiven.

So as Saturne is soverein
Of false goddes, as thei sein,
So is Sibeles of goddesses
The Moder, whom withoute gesses
The folk Payene honoure and serve,
As thei the whiche hire lawe observe.
Bot forto knowen upon this
Fro when sche cam and what sche is,
Bethincia the contre hihte,
Wher sche cam ferst to mannes sihte;
And after was Saturnes wif,
Be whom thre children in hire lif
Sche bar, and thei were cleped tho
Juno, Neptunus and Pluto,
The whiche of nyce fantasie
The poeple wolde deifie.
And for hire children were so,
Sibeles thanne was also
Mad a goddesse, and thei hire calle
The moder of the goddes alle.
So was that name bore forth,
And yit the cause is litel worth.

A vois unto Saturne tolde
Hou that his oghne Sone him scholde
Out of his regne putte aweie;
And he be cause of thilke weie,
That him was schape such a fate,
Sibele his wif began to hate
And ek hire progenie bothe.
And thus, whil that thei were wrothe,
Be Philerem upon a dai
In his avouterie he lai,
On whom he Jupiter begat;
And thilke child was after that
Which wroghte al that was prophecied,
As it tofore is specefied:
So that whan Jupiter of Crete
Was king, a wif unto him mete
The Dowhter of Sibele he tok,
And that was Juno, seith the bok.
Of his deificacion
After the false oppinion,
That have I told, so as thei meene;
And for this Juno was the queene
Of Jupiter and Soster eke,
The foles unto hire sieke,
And sein that sche is the goddesse
Of Regnes bothe and of richesse:
And ek sche, as thei understonde,
The water Nimphes hath in honde
To leden at hire oghne heste;
And whan hir list the Sky tempeste,
The reinbowe is hir Messager.
Lo, which a misbelieve is hier!
That sche goddesse is of the Sky
I wot non other cause why.

An other goddesse is Minerve,
To whom the Greks obeie and serve:
And sche was nyh the grete lay
Of Triton founde, wher sche lay
A child forcast, bot what sche was
Ther knew noman the sothe cas.
Bot in Aufrique sche was leid
In the manere as I have seid,
And caried fro that ilke place
Into an Yle fer in Trace,
The which Palene thanne hihte,
Wher a Norrice hir kepte and dihte.
And after, for sche was so wys
That sche fond ferst in hire avis
The cloth makinge of wolle and lyn,
Men seiden that sche was divin,
And the goddesse of Sapience
Thei clepen hire in that credence.

Of the goddesse which Pallas
Is cleped sondri speche was.
On seith hire fader was Pallant,
Which in his time was geant,
A cruel man, a bataillous:
An other seith hou in his hous
Sche was the cause why he deide.
And of this Pallas some ek seide
That sche was Martes wif; and so
Among the men that weren tho
Of misbelieve in the riote
The goddesse of batailles hote
She was, and yit sche berth the name.
Now loke, hou they be forto blame.

Saturnus after his exil
Fro Crete cam in gret peril
Into the londes of Ytaile,
And ther he dede gret mervaile,
Wherof his name duelleth yit.
For he fond of his oghne wit
The ferste craft of plowh tilinge,
Of Eringe and of corn sowinge,
And how men scholden sette vines
And of the grapes make wynes;
Al this he tawhte, and it fell so,
His wif, the which cam with him tho,
Was cleped Cereres be name,
And for sche tawhte also the same,
And was his wif that ilke throwe,
As it was to the poeple knowe,
Thei made of Ceres a goddesse,
In whom here tilthe yit thei blesse,
And sein that Tricolonius
Hire Sone goth amonges ous
And makth the corn good chep or dere,
Riht as hire list fro yer to yeere;
So that this wif be cause of this
Goddesse of Cornes cleped is.

King Jupiter, which his likinge
Whilom fulfelde in alle thinge,
So priveliche aboute he ladde
His lust, that he his wille hadde
Of Latona, and on hire that
Diane his dowhter he begat
Unknowen of his wif Juno.
And afterward sche knew it so,
That Latona for drede fledde
Into an Ile, wher sche hedde

Hire wombe, which of childe aros.
Thilke yle cleped was Delos;
In which Diana was forthbroght,
And kept so that hire lacketh noght.
And after, whan sche was of Age,
Sche tok non hiede of mariage,
Bot out of mannes compaignie
Sche tok hire al to venerie
In forest and in wildernesse
For ther was al hire besinesse
Be daie and ek be nyhtes tyde
With arwes brode under the side
And bowe in honde, of which sche slowh
And tok al that hir liste ynowh
Of bestes whiche ben chacable:
Wherof the Cronique of this fable
Seith that the gentils most of alle
Worschipen hire and to hire calle,
And the goddesse of hihe helles,
Of grene trees, of freisshe welles,
They clepen hire in that believe,
Which that no reson mai achieve.

Proserpina, which dowhter was
Of Cereres, befell this cas:
Whil sche was duellinge in Cizile,
Hire moder in that ilke while
Upon hire blessinge and hire heste
Bad that sche scholde ben honeste,
And lerne forto weve and spinne,
And duelle at hom and kepe hire inne.
Bot sche caste al that lore aweie,
And as sche wente hir out to pleie,
To gadre floures in a pleine,
And that was under the monteine

Of Ethna, fell the same tyde
That Pluto cam that weie ryde,
And sodeinly, er sche was war,
He tok hire up into his char.
And as thei riden in the field,
Hire grete beaute he behield,
Which was so plesant in his ije,
That forto holde in compainie
He weddeth hire and hield hire so
To ben his wif for everemo.
And as thou hast tofore herd telle
Hou he was cleped god of helle,
So is sche cleped the goddesse
Be cause of him, ne mor ne lesse.

Lo, thus, mi Sone, as I thee tolde,
The Greks whilom be daies olde
Here goddes hadde in sondri wise,
And thurgh the lore of here aprise
The Romeins hielden ek the same.
And in the worschipe of here name
To every godd in special
Thei made a temple forth withal,
And ech of hem his yeeres dai
Attitled hadde; and of arai
The temples weren thanne ordeigned,
And ek the poeple was constreigned
To come and don here sacrifice;
The Prestes ek in here office
Solempne maden thilke festes.
And thus the Greks lich to the bestes
The men in stede of god honoure,
Whiche mihten noght hemself socoure,
Whil that thei were alyve hiere.
And over this, as thou schalt hiere,

The Greks fulfild of fantasie
Sein ek that of the helles hihe
The goddes ben in special,
Bot of here name in general
Thei hoten alle Satiri.
Ther ben of Nimphes proprely
In the believe of hem also:
Oreades thei seiden tho
Attitled ben to the monteines;
And for the wodes in demeynes
To kepe, tho ben Driades;
Of freisshe welles Naiades;
And of the Nimphes of the See
I finde a tale in proprete,
Hou Dorus whilom king of Grece,
Which hadde of infortune a piece,—
His wif forth with hire dowhtres alle,
So as the happes scholden falle,
With many a gentil womman there
Dreint in the salte See thei were:
Wherof the Greks that time seiden,
And such a name upon hem leiden,
Nereïdes that thei ben hote,
The Nimphes whiche that thei note
To regne upon the stremes salte.
Lo now, if this believe halte!
Bot of the Nimphes as thei telle,
In every place wher thei duelle
Thei ben al redi obeissant
As damoiselles entendant
To the goddesses, whos servise
Thei mote obeie in alle wise;

Wherof the Greks to hem beseke
With tho that ben goddesses eke,
And have in hem a gret credence.

And yit withoute experience
Salve only of illusion,
Which was to hem dampnacion,
For men also that were dede
Thei hadden goddes, as I rede,
And tho be name Manes hihten,
To whom ful gret honour thei dihten,
So as the Grekes lawe seith,
Which was ayein the rihte feith.

Thus have I told a gret partie;
Bot al the hole progenie
Of goddes in that ilke time
To long it were forto rime.
Bot yit of that which thou hast herd,
Of misbelieve hou it hath ferd,
Ther is a gret diversite.

Mi fader, riht so thenketh me.
Bot yit o thing I you beseche,
Which stant in alle mennes speche,
The godd and the goddesse of love,
Of whom ye nothing hier above
Have told, ne spoken of her fare,
That ye me wolden now declare
Hou thei ferst comen to that name.

Mi Sone, I have it left for schame,
Be cause I am here oghne Prest;
Bot for thei stonden nyh thi brest
Upon the schrifte of thi matiere,
Thou schalt of hem the sothe hiere:
And understond nou wel the cas.

Venus Saturnes dowhter was,
Which alle danger putte aweie
Of love, and fond to lust a weie;
So that of hire in sondri place
Diverse men felle into grace,
And such a lusti lif sche ladde,
That sche diverse children hadde,
Nou on be this, nou on be that.
Of hire it was that Mars beyat
A child, which cleped was Armene;
Of hire also cam Andragene,
To whom Mercurie fader was:
Anchises begat Eneas
Of hire also, and Ericon
Biten begat, and therupon,
Whan that sche sih ther was non other,
Be Jupiter hire oghne brother
Sche lay, and he begat Cupide.
And thilke Sone upon a tyde,
Whan he was come unto his Age,
He hadde a wonder fair visage,
And fond his Moder amourous,
And he was also lecherous:
So whan thei weren bothe al one,
As he which yhen hadde none
To se reson, his Moder kiste;
And sche also, that nothing wiste
Bot that which unto lust belongeth,
To ben hire love him underfongeth.
Thus was he blind, and sche unwys:
Bot natheles this cause it is,
Why Cupide is the god of love,
For he his moder dorste love.
And sche, which thoghte hire lustes fonde,

Diverse loves tok in honde,
Wel mo thanne I the tolde hiere:
And for sche wolde hirselve skiere,
Sche made comun that desport,
And sette a lawe of such a port,
That every womman mihte take
What man hire liste, and noght forsake
To ben als comun as sche wolde.
Sche was the ferste also which tolde
That wommen scholde here bodi selle;
Semiramis, so as men telle,
Of Venus kepte thilke aprise,
And so dede in the same wise
Of Rome faire Neabole,
Which liste hire bodi to rigole;
Sche was to every man felawe,
And hild the lust of thilke lawe,
Which Venus of hirself began;
Wherof that sche the name wan,
Why men hire clepen the goddesse
Of love and ek of gentilesse,
Of worldes lust and of plesance.

Se nou the foule mescreance
Of Greks in thilke time tho,
Whan Venus tok hire name so.
Ther was no cause under the Mone
Of which thei hadden tho to done,
Of wel or wo wher so it was,
That thei ne token in that cas
A god to helpe or a goddesse.
Wherof, to take mi witnesse,

The king of Bragmans Dindimus
Wrot unto Alisandre thus:
In blaminge of the Grekes feith
And of the misbelieve, he seith
How thei for every membre hadden
A sondri god, to whom thei spradden
Here armes, and of help besoghten.

Minerve for the hed thei soghten,
For sche was wys, and of a man
The wit and reson which he can
Is in the celles of the brayn,
Wherof thei made hire soverain.

Mercurie, which was in his dawes
A gret spekere of false lawes,
On him the kepinge of the tunge
Thei leide, whan thei spieke or sunge.

For Bachus was a glotoun eke,
Him for the throte thei beseke,
That he it wolde waisshen ofte
With swote drinkes and with softe.

The god of schuldres and of armes
Was Hercules; for he in armes
The myhtieste was to fihte,
To him tho Limes they behihte.

The god whom that thei clepen Mart
The brest to kepe hath for his part,
Forth with the herte, in his ymage
That he adresce the corage.

And of the galle the goddesse,
For sche was full of hastifesse
Of wraththe and liht to grieve also,
Thei made and seide it was Juno.

Cupide, which the brond afyre
Bar in his hond, he was the Sire
Of the Stomak, which builleth evere,
Wherof the lustes ben the levere.

To the goddesse Cereres,
Which of the corn yaf hire encress
Upon the feith that tho was take,
The wombes cure was betake;

And Venus thurgh the Lecherie,
For which that thei hire deifie,
Sche kept al doun the remenant
To thilke office appourtenant.

Thus was dispers in sondri wise
The misbelieve, as I devise,
With many an ymage of entaile,
Of suche as myhte hem noght availe;
For thei withoute lyves chiere
Unmyhti ben to se or hiere
Or speke or do or elles fiele;
And yit the foles to hem knele,
Which is here oghne handes werk.
Ha lord, hou this believe is derk,
And fer fro resonable wit!
And natheles thei don it yit:
That was to day a ragged tre,
To morwe upon his majeste
Stant in the temple wel besein.
How myhte a mannes resoun sein
That such a Stock mai helpe or grieve?
Bot thei that ben of such believe
And unto suche goddes calle,
It schal to hem riht so befalle,
And failen ate moste nede.

Bot if thee list to taken hiede
And of the ferste ymage wite,
Petornius therof hath write
And ek Nigargorus also;
And thei afferme and write so,
That Promotheus was tofore
And fond the ferste craft therfore,
And Cirophanes, as thei telle,
Thurgh conseil which was take in helle,
In remembrance of his lignage
Let setten up the ferste ymage.

Of Cirophanes seith the bok,
That he for sorwe, which he tok
Of that he sih his Sone ded,
Of confort knew non other red,
Bot let do make in remembrance
A faire ymage of his semblance
And sette it in the market place,
Which openly tofore his face
Stod every dai to don him ese.
And thei that thanne wolden plese
The fader, scholden it obeie,
Whan that they comen thilke weie.

And of Ninus king of Assire
I rede hou that in his empire
He was next after the secounde
Of hem that ferst ymages founde.
For he riht in semblable cas
Of Belus, which his fader was
Fro Nembroth in the rihte line,
Let make of gold and Stones fine
A precious ymage riche
After his fader evene liche;

And therupon a lawe he sette,
That every man of pure dette
With sacrifice and with truage
Honoure scholde thilke ymage:
So that withinne time it fell,
Of Belus cam the name of Bel,
Of Bel cam Belzebub, and so
The misbelieve wente tho.

The thridde ymage next to this
Was, whan the king of Grece Apis
Was ded, thei maden a figure
In resemblance of his stature.
Of this king Apis seith the bok
That Serapis his name tok,
In whom thurgh long continuance
Of misbelieve a gret creance
Thei hadden, and the reverence
Of Sacrifice and of encence
To him thei made: and as thei telle,
Among the wondres that befelle,
Whan Alisandre fro Candace
Cam ridende, in a wilde place
Undur an hull a Cave he fond;
And Candalus, which in that lond
Was bore, and was Candaces Sone,
Him tolde hou that of commun wone
The goddes were in thilke cave.
And he, that wolde assaie and have
A knowlechinge if it be soth,
Liht of his hors and in he goth,
And fond therinne that he soghte:
For thurgh the fendes sleihte him thoghte,
Amonges othre goddes mo
That Serapis spak to him tho,

Whom he sih there in gret arrai.
And thus the fend fro dai to dai
The worschipe of ydolatrie
Drowh forth upon the fantasie
Of hem that weren thanne blinde
And couthen noght the trouthe finde.

Thus hast thou herd in what degre
Of Grece, Egipte and of Caldee
The misbelieves whilom stode;
And hou so that thei be noght goode
Ne trewe, yit thei sprungen oute,
Wherof the wyde world aboute
His part of misbelieve tok.
Til so befell, as seith the bok,
That god a poeple for himselve
Hath chose of the lignages tuelve,
Wherof the sothe redely,
As it is write in Genesi,
I thenke telle in such a wise
That it schal be to thin apprise.

After the flod, fro which Noë
Was sauf, the world in his degre
Was mad, as who seith, newe ayein,
Of flour, of fruit, of gras, of grein,
Of beste, of bridd and of mankinde,
Which evere hath be to god unkinde:
For noght withstondende al the fare,
Of that this world was mad so bare
And afterward it was restored,
Among the men was nothing mored
Towardes god of good lyvynge,
Bot al was torned to likinge
After the fleissh, so that foryete

Was he which yaf hem lif and mete,
Of hevene and Erthe creatour.
And thus cam forth the grete errour,
That thei the hihe god ne knewe,
Bot maden othre goddes newe,
As thou hast herd me seid tofore:
Ther was noman that time bore,
That he ne hadde after his chois
A god, to whom he yaf his vois.
Wherof the misbelieve cam
Into the time of Habraham:
Bot he fond out the rihte weie,
Hou only that men scholde obeie
The hihe god, which weldeth al,
And evere hath don and evere schal,
In hevene, in Erthe and ek in helle;
Ther is no tunge his miht mai telle.
This Patriarch to his lignage
Forbad, that thei to non ymage
Encline scholde in none wise,
Bot here offrende and sacrifise
With al the hole hertes love
Unto the mihti god above
Thei scholden yive and to no mo:
And thus in thilke time tho
Began the Secte upon this Erthe,
Which of believes was the ferthe.
Of rihtwisnesse it was conceived,
So moste it nedes be received
Of him that alle riht is inne,
The hihe god, which wolde winne
A poeple unto his oghne feith.
On Habraham the ground he leith,
And made him forto multeplie

Into so gret a progenie,
That thei Egipte al overspradde.
Bot Pharao with wrong hem ladde
In servitute ayein the pes,
Til god let sende Moises
To make the deliverance;
And for his poeple gret vengance
He tok, which is to hiere a wonder.
The king was slain, the lond put under,
God bad the rede See divide,
Which stod upriht on either side
And yaf unto his poeple a weie,
That thei on fote it passe dreie
And gon so forth into desert:
Wher forto kepe hem in covert,
The daies, whan the Sonne brente,
A large cloude hem overwente,
And forto wissen hem be nyhte,
A firy Piler hem alyhte.
And whan that thei for hunger pleigne,
The myhti god began to reyne
Manna fro hevene doun to grounde,
Wherof that ech of hem hath founde
His fode, such riht as him liste;
And for thei scholde upon him triste,
Riht as who sette a tonne abroche,
He percede the harde roche,
And sprong out water al at wille,
That man and beste hath drunke his fille:
And afterward he yaf the lawe
To Moises, that hem withdrawe
Thei scholden noght fro that he bad.
And in this wise thei be lad,
Til thei toke in possession

The londes of promission,
Wher that Caleph and Josuë
The Marches upon such degre
Departen, after the lignage
That ech of hem as Heritage
His porpartie hath underfonge.
And thus stod this believe longe,
Which of prophetes was governed;
And thei hadde ek the poeple lerned
Of gret honour that scholde hem falle;
Bot ate moste nede of alle
Thei faileden, whan Crist was bore.
Bot hou that thei here feith have bore,
It nedeth noght to tellen al,
The matiere is so general:
Whan Lucifer was best in hevene
And oghte moste have stonde in evene,
Towardes god he tok debat;
And for that he was obstinat,
And wolde noght to trouthe encline,
He fell for evere into ruine:
And Adam ek in Paradis,
Whan he stod most in al his pris
After thastat of Innocence,
Ayein the god brak his defence
And fell out of his place aweie:
And riht be such a maner weie
The Jwes in here beste plit,
Whan that thei scholden most parfit
Have stonde upon the prophecie,
Tho fellen thei to most folie,
And him which was fro hevene come,
And of a Maide his fleissh hath nome,
And was among hem bore and fedd,

As men that wolden noght be spedd
Of goddes Sone, with o vois
Thei hinge and slowhe upon the crois.
Wherof the parfit of here lawe
Fro thanne forth hem was withdrawe,
So that thei stonde of no merit,
Bot in truage as folk soubgit
Withoute proprete of place
Thei liven out of goddes grace,
Dispers in alle londes oute.

And thus the feith is come aboute,
That whilom in the Jewes stod,
Which is noght parfihtliche good.
To speke as it is nou befalle,
Ther is a feith aboven alle,
In which the trouthe is comprehended,
Wherof that we ben alle amended.

The hihe almyhti majeste,
Of rihtwisnesse and of pite,
The Sinne which that Adam wroghte,
Whan he sih time, ayein he boghte,
And sende his Sone fro the hevene
To sette mannes Soule in evene,
Which thanne was so sore falle
Upon the point which was befalle,
That he ne mihte himself arise.

Gregoire seith in his aprise,
It helpeth noght a man be bore,
If goddes Sone were unbore;
For thanne thurgh the ferste Sinne,
Which Adam whilom broghte ous inne,
Ther scholden alle men be lost;
Bot Crist restoreth thilke lost,

And boghte it with his fleissh and blod.
And if we thenken hou it stod
Of thilke rancoun which he payde,
As seint Gregoire it wrot and sayde,
Al was behovely to the man:
For that wherof his wo began
Was after cause of al his welthe,
Whan he which is the welle of helthe,
The hihe creatour of lif,
Upon the nede of such a strif
So wolde for his creature
Take on himself the forsfaiture
And soffre for the mannes sake.
Thus mai no reson wel forsake
That thilke Senne original
Ne was the cause in special
Of mannes worschipe ate laste,
Which schal withouten ende laste.
For be that cause the godhede
Assembled was to the manhede
In the virgine, where he nom
Oure fleissh and verai man becom
Of bodely fraternite;
Wherof the man in his degre
Stant more worth, as I have told,
Than he stod erst be manyfold,
Thurgh baptesme of the newe lawe,
Of which Crist lord is and felawe.

And thus the hihe goddes myht,
Which was in the virgine alyht,
The mannes Soule hath reconsiled,
Which hadde longe ben exiled.
So stant the feith upon believe,
Withoute which mai non achieve

To gete him Paradis ayein:
Bot this believe is so certein,
So full of grace and of vertu,
That what man clepeth to Jhesu
In clene lif forthwith good dede,
He mai noght faile of hevene mede,
Which taken hath the rihte feith;
For elles, as the gospel seith,
Salvacion ther mai be non.
And forto preche therupon
Crist bad to hise Apostles alle,
The whos pouer as nou is falle
On ous that ben of holi cherche,
If we the goode dedes werche;
For feith only sufficeth noght,
Bot if good dede also be wroght.
Now were it good that thou forthi,
Which thurgh baptesme proprely
Art unto Cristes feith professed,
Be war that thou be noght oppressed
With Anticristes lollardie.
For as the Jwes prophecie
Was set of god for avantage,
Riht so this newe tapinage
Of lollardie goth aboute
To sette Cristes feith in doute.
The seintz that weren ous tofore,
Be whom the feith was ferst upbore,
That holi cherche stod relieved,
Thei oghten betre be believed
Than these, whiche that men knowe
Noght holy, thogh thei feigne and blowe
Here lollardie in mennes Ere.
Bot if thou wolt live out of fere,

Such newe lore, I rede, eschuie,
And hold forth riht the weie and suie,
As thine Ancestres dede er this:
So schalt thou noght believe amis.

Crist wroghte ferst and after tawhte,
So that the dede his word arawhte;
He yaf ensample in his persone,
And we the wordes have al one,
Lich to the Tree with leves grene,
Upon the which no fruit is sene.

The Priest Thoas, which of Minerve
The temple hadde forto serve,
And the Palladion of Troie
Kepte under keie, for monoie,
Of Anthenor which he hath nome,
Hath soffred Anthenor to come
And the Palladion to stele,
Wherof the worschipe and the wele
Of the Troiens was overthrowe.
Bot Thoas at the same throwe,
Whan Anthenor this Juel tok,
Wynkende caste awei his lok
For a deceipte and for a wyle:
As he that scholde himself beguile,
He hidde his yhen fro the sihte,
And wende wel that he so mihte
Excuse his false conscience.
I wot noght if thilke evidence
Nou at this time in here estatz
Excuse mihte the Prelatz,
Knowende hou that the feith discresceth
And alle moral vertu cesseth,
Wherof that thei the keies bere,

Bot yit hem liketh noght to stere
Here gostliche yhe forto se
The world in his adversite;
Thei wol no labour undertake
To kepe that hem is betake.
Crist deide himselve for the feith,
Bot nou our feerfull prelat seith,
"The lif is suete," and that he kepeth,
So that the feith unholpe slepeth,
And thei unto here ese entenden
And in here lust her lif despenden,
And every man do what him list.
Thus stant this world fulfild of Mist,
That noman seth the rihte weie:
The wardes of the cherche keie
Thurgh mishandlinge ben myswreynt,
The worldes wawe hath welnyh dreynt
The Schip which Peter hath to stiere,
The forme is kept, bot the matiere
Transformed is in other wise.
Bot if thei weren gostli wise,
And that the Prelatz weren goode,
As thei be olde daies stode,
It were thanne litel nede
Among the men to taken hiede
Of that thei hieren Pseudo telle,
Which nou is come forto duelle,
To sowe cokkel with the corn,
So that the tilthe is nyh forlorn,
Which Crist sew ferst his oghne hond.
Nou stant the cockel in the lond,
Wher stod whilom the goode grein,
For the Prelatz nou, as men sein,
Forslowthen that thei scholden tile.

And that I trowe be the skile,
Whan ther is lacke in hem above,
The poeple is stranged to the love
Of trouthe, in cause of ignorance;
For wher ther is no pourveance
Of liht, men erren in the derke.
Bot if the Prelatz wolden werke
Upon the feith which thei ous teche,
Men scholden noght here weie seche
Withoute liht, as now is used:
Men se the charge aldai refused,
Which holi cherche hath undertake.

Bot who that wolde ensample take,
Gregoire upon his Omelie
Ayein the Slouthe of Prelacie
Compleigneth him, and thus he seith:
"Whan Peter, fader of the feith,
At domesdai schal with him bringe
Judeam, which thurgh his prechinge
He wan, and Andrew with Achaie
Schal come his dette forto paie,
And Thomas ek with his beyete
Of Ynde, and Poul the routes grete
Of sondri londes schal presente,
And we fulfild of lond and rente,
Which of this world we holden hiere,
With voide handes schul appiere,
Touchende oure cure spirital,
Which is our charge in special,
I not what thing it mai amonte
Upon thilke ende of oure accompte,
Wher Crist himself is Auditour,
Which takth non hiede of vein honour."
Thoffice of the Chancellerie

Or of the kinges Tresorie
Ne for the writ ne for the taille
To warant mai noght thanne availe;
The world, which nou so wel we trowe,
Schal make ous thanne bot a mowe:
So passe we withoute mede,
That we non otherwise spede,
Bot as we rede that he spedde,
The which his lordes besant hedde
And therupon gat non encress.
Bot at this time natheles,
What other man his thonk deserve,
The world so lusti is to serve,
That we with him ben all acorded,
And that is wist and wel recorded
Thurghout this Erthe in alle londes
Let knyhtes winne with here hondes,
For oure tunge schal be stille
And stonde upon the fleisshes wille.
It were a travail forto preche
The feith of Crist, as forto teche
The folk Paiene, it wol noght be;
Bot every Prelat holde his See
With al such ese as he mai gete
Of lusti drinke and lusti mete,
Wherof the bodi fat and full
Is unto gostli labour dull
And slowh to handle thilke plowh.
Bot elles we ben swifte ynowh
Toward the worldes Avarice;
And that is as a sacrifice,
Which, after that thapostel seith,
Is openly ayein the feith
Unto thidoles yove and granted:

Bot natheles it is nou haunted,
And vertu changed into vice,
So that largesce is Avarice,
In whos chapitre now we trete.

Mi fader, this matiere is bete
So fer, that evere whil I live
I schal the betre hede yive
Unto miself be many weie:
Bot over this nou wolde I preie
To wite what the branches are
Of Avarice, and hou thei fare
Als wel in love as otherwise.

Mi Sone, and I thee schal devise
In such a manere as thei stonde,
So that thou schalt hem understonde.

Dame Avarice is noght soleine,
Which is of gold the Capiteine;
Bot of hir Court in sondri wise
After the Scole of hire aprise
Sche hath of Servantz manyon,
Wherof that Covoitise is on;
Which goth the large world aboute,
To seche thavantages oute,
Wher that he mai the profit winne
To Avarice, and bringth it inne.
That on hald and that other draweth,
Ther is no day which hem bedaweth,
No mor the Sonne than the Mone,
Whan ther is eny thing to done,
And namely with Covoitise;
For he stant out of al assisse
Of resonable mannes fare.
Wher he pourposeth him to fare

Upon his lucre and his beyete,
The smale path, the large Strete,
The furlong and the longe Mile,
Al is bot on for thilke while:
And for that he is such on holde,
Dame Avarice him hath withholde,
As he which is the principal
Outward, for he is overal
A pourveour and an aspie.
For riht as of an hungri Pie
The storve bestes ben awaited,
Riht so is Covoitise afaited
To loke where he mai pourchace,
For be his wille he wolde embrace
Al that this wyde world beclippeth;
Bot evere he somwhat overhippeth,
That he ne mai noght al fulfille
The lustes of his gredi wille.
Bot where it falleth in a lond,
That Covoitise in myhti hond
Is set, it is ful hard to fiede;
For thanne he takth non other hiede,
Bot that he mai pourchace and gete,
His conscience hath al foryete,
And not what thing it mai amonte
That he schal afterward acompte.
Bote as the Luce in his degre
Of tho that lasse ben than he
The fisshes griedeli devoureth,
So that no water hem socoureth,
Riht so no lawe mai rescowe
Fro him that wol no riht allowe;
For wher that such on is of myht,
His will schal stonde in stede of riht.

Thus be the men destruid fulofte,
Til that the grete god alofte
Ayein so gret a covoitise
Redresce it in his oghne wise:
And in ensample of alle tho
I finde a tale write so,
The which, for it is good to liere,
Hierafterward thou schalt it hiere.

Whan Rome stod in noble plit,
Virgile, which was tho parfit,
A Mirour made of his clergie
And sette it in the tounes ije
Of marbre on a piler withoute;
That thei be thritty Mile aboute
Be daie and ek also be nyhte
In that Mirour beholde myhte
Here enemys, if eny were,
With al here ordinance there,
Which thei ayein the Cite caste:
So that, whil thilke Mirour laste,
Ther was no lond which mihte achieve
With werre Rome forto grieve;
Wherof was gret envie tho.
And fell that ilke time so,
That Rome hadde werres stronge
Ayein Cartage, and stoden longe
The tuo Cites upon debat.
Cartage sih the stronge astat
Of Rome in thilke Mirour stonde,
And thoghte al prively to fonde
To overthrowe it be som wyle.
And Hanybal was thilke while
The Prince and ledere of Cartage,
Which hadde set al his corage
Upon knihthod in such a wise,
That he be worthi and be wise
And be non othre was conseiled,
Wherof the world is yit merveiled
Of the maistries that he wroghte

Upon the marches whiche he soghte.
And fell in thilke time also,
The king of Puile, which was tho,
Thoghte ayein Rome to rebelle,
And thus was take the querele,
Hou to destruie this Mirour.

Of Rome tho was Emperour
Crassus, which was so coveitous,
That he was evere desirous
Of gold to gete the pilage;
Wherof that Puile and ek Cartage
With Philosophres wise and grete
Begunne of this matiere trete,
And ate laste in this degre
Ther weren Philosophres thre,
To do this thing whiche undertoke,
And therupon thei with hem toke
A gret tresor of gold in cophres,
To Rome and thus these philisophres
Togedre in compainie wente,
Bot noman wiste what thei mente.
Whan thei to Rome come were,
So prively thei duelte there,
As thei that thoghten to deceive:
Was non that mihte of hem perceive,
Til thei in sondri stedes have
Here gold under the ground begrave
In tuo tresors, that to beholde
Thei scholden seme as thei were olde.
And so forth thanne upon a day
Al openly in good arai
To themperour thei hem presente,
And tolden it was here entente
To duellen under his servise.

And he hem axeth in what wise;
And thei him tolde in such a plit,
That ech of hem hadde a spirit,
The which slepende a nyht appiereth
And hem be sondri dremes lereth
After the world that hath betid.
Under the ground if oght be hid
Of old tresor at eny throwe,
They schull it in here swevenes knowe;
And upon this condicioun,
Thei sein, what gold under the toun
Of Rome is hid, thei wole it finde,
Ther scholde noght be left behinde,
Be so that he the halvendel
Hem grante, and he assenteth wel;
And thus cam sleighte forto duelle
With Covoitise, as I thee telle.
This Emperour bad redily
That thei be logged faste by
Where he his oghne body lay;
And whan it was amorwe day,
That on of hem seith that he mette
Wher he a goldhord scholde fette:
Wherof this Emperour was glad,
And therupon anon he bad
His Mynours forto go and myne,
And he himself of that covine
Goth forth withal, and at his hond
The tresor redi there he fond,
Where as thei seide it scholde be;
And who was thanne glad bot he?

Upon that other dai secounde
Thei have an other goldhord founde,
Which the seconde maister tok

Upon his swevene and undertok.
And thus the sothe experience
To themperour yaf such credence,
That al his trist and al his feith
So sikerliche on hem he leith,
Of that he fond him so relieved,
That thei ben parfitli believed,
As thogh thei were goddes thre.
Nou herkne the soutilete.

The thridde maister scholde mete,
Which, as thei seiden, was unmete
Above hem alle, and couthe most;
And he withoute noise or bost
Al priveli, so as he wolde,
Upon the morwe his swevene tolde
To themperour riht in his Ere,
And seide him that he wiste where
A tresor was so plentivous
Of gold and ek so precious
Of jeueals and of riche stones,
That unto alle hise hors at ones
It were a charge sufficant.
This lord upon this covenant
Was glad, and axeth where it was.
The maister seide, under the glas,
And tolde him eke, as for the Myn
He wolde ordeigne such engin,
That thei the werk schull undersette
With Tymber, that withoute lette
Men mai the tresor saufli delve,
So that the Mirour be himselve
Withoute empeirement schal stonde:
And this the maister upon honde
Hath undertake in alle weie.

This lord, which hadde his wit aweie
And was with Covoitise blent,
Anon therto yaf his assent;
And thus they myne forth withal,
The timber set up overal,
Wherof the Piler stod upriht;
Til it befell upon a nyht
These clerkes, whan thei were war
Hou that the timber only bar
The Piler, wher the Mirour stod,—
Here sleihte noman understod,—
Thei go be nyhte unto the Myne
With pich, with soulphre and with rosine,
And whan the Cite was a slepe,
A wylde fyr into the depe
They caste among the timberwerk,
And so forth, whil the nyht was derk,
Desguised in a povere arai
Thei passeden the toun er dai.
And whan thei come upon an hell,
Thei sihen how the Mirour fell,
Wherof thei maden joie ynowh,
And ech of hem with other lowh,
And seiden, “Lo, what coveitise
Mai do with hem that be noght wise!”
And that was proved afterward,
For every lond, to Romeward
Which hadde be soubgit tofore,
Whan this Mirour was so forlore
And thei the wonder herde seie,
Anon begunne desobeie
With werres upon every side;
And thus hath Rome lost his pride
And was defouled overal.

For this I finde of Hanybal,
That he of Romeins in a dai,
Whan he hem fond out of arai,
So gret a multitude slowh,
That of goldringes, whiche he drowh
Of gentil handes that ben dede,
Buisshelles fulle thre, I rede,
He felde, and made a bregge also,
That he mihte over Tibre go
Upon the corps that dede were
Of the Romeins, whiche he slowh there.

Bot now to speke of the juise,
The which after the covoitise
Was take upon this Emperour,
For he destruide the Mirour;
It is a wonder forto hiere.
The Romeins maden a chaiere
And sette here Emperour therinne,
And seiden, for he wolde winne
Of gold the superfluite,
Of gold he scholde such plente
Receive, til he seide Ho:
And with gold, which thei hadden tho
Buillende hot withinne a panne,
Into his Mouth thei poure thanne.
And thus the thurst of gold was queynt,
With gold which hadde ben atteignt.

Wherof, mi Sone, thou miht hiere,
Whan Covoitise hath lost the stiere
Of resonable governance,
Ther falleth ofte gret vengance.
For ther mai be no worse thing
Than Covoitise aboute a king:

If it in his persone be,
It doth the more adversite;
And if it in his conseil stonde,
It bringth alday meschief to honde
Of commun harm; and if it growe
Withinne his court, it wol be knowe,
For thanne schal the king be piled.
The man which hath hise londes tiled,
Awaiteth noght more redily
The Hervest, than thei gredily
Ne maken thanne warde and wacche,
Wher thei the profit mihten cacche:
And yit fulofte it falleth so,
As men mai sen among hem tho,
That he which most coveiteth faste
Hath lest avantage ate laste.
For whan fortune is therayein,
Thogh he coveite, it is in vein;
The happes be noght alle liche,
On is mad povere, an other riche,
The court to some doth profit,
And some ben evere in o plit;
And yit thei bothe aliche sore
Coveite, bot fortune is more
Unto that o part favorable.
And thogh it be noght resonable,
This thing a man mai sen alday,
Wherof that I thee telle may
A fair ensample in remembrance,
Hou every man mot take his chance
Or of richesse or of poverte.
Hou so it stonde of the decerte,
Hier is noght every thing aquit,
For ofte a man mai se this yit,

That who best doth, lest thonk schal have;
It helpeth noght the world to crave,
Which out of reule and of mesure
Hath evere stonde in aventure
Als wel in Court as elles where:
And hou in olde daies there
It stod, so as the thinges felle,
I thenke a tale forto telle.

In a Cronique this I rede.
Aboute a king, as moste nede,
Ther was of knyhtes and squiers
Gret route, and ek of Officers:
Some of long time him hadden served,
And thoghten that thei have deserved
Avancement, and gon withoute;
And some also ben of the route
That comen bot a while agon,
And thei avanced were anon.
These olde men upon this thing,
So as thei dorste, ayein the king
Among hemself compleignen ofte:
Bot ther is nothing seid so softe,
That it ne comth out ate laste;
The king it wiste, and als so faste,
As he which was of hih Prudence,
He schop therfore an evidence
Of hem that pleignen in that cas,
To knowe in whos defalte it was.
And al withinne his oghne entente,
That noman wiste what it mente,
Anon he let tuo cofres make
Of o semblance and of o make,
So lich that no lif thilke throwe
That on mai fro that other knowe:

Thei were into his chambre broght,
Bot noman wot why thei be wroght,
And natheles the king hath bede
That thei be set in prive stede.
As he that was of wisdom slih,
Whan he therto his time sih,
Al prively, that non it wiste,
Hise oghne hondes that o kiste
Of fin gold and of fin perrie,
The which out of his tresorie
Was take, anon he felde full;
That other cofre of straw and mull
With Stones meind he felde also.
Thus be thei fulle bothe tuo,
So that erliche upon a day
He bad withinne, ther he lay,
Ther scholde be tofore his bed
A bord upset and faire spred;
And thanne he let the cofres fette,
Upon the bord and dede hem sette.
He knew the names wel of tho,
The whiche ayein him grucche so,
Bothe of his chambre and of his halle,
Anon and sende for hem alle,
And seide to hem in this wise:
“Ther schal noman his happ despise;
I wot wel ye have longe served,
And god wot what ye have deserved:
Bot if it is along on me
Of that ye unavanced be,
Or elles it be long on you,
The sothe schal be proved nou,
To stoppe with youre evele word.
Lo hier tuo cofres on the bord:

Ches which you list of bothe tuo;
And witeth wel that on of tho
Is with tresor so full begon,
That if ye happe therupon,
Ye schull be riche men for evere.
Now ches and tak which you is levere:
Bot be wel war, er that ye take;
For of that on I undertake
Ther is no maner good therinne,
Wherof ye mihten profit winne.
Now goth togedre of on assent
And taketh youre avisement,
For bot I you this dai avance,
It stant upon youre oghne chance
Al only in defalte of grace:
So schal be schewed in this place
Upon you alle wel afyn,
That no defalte schal be myn."
Thei knelen alle and with o vois
The king thei thonken of this chois:
And after that thei up arise,
And gon aside and hem avise,
And ate laste thei acorde;
Wherof her tale to recorde,
To what issue thei be falle,
A kniht schal speke for hem alle.
He kneleth doun unto the king,
And seith that thei upon this thing,
Or forto winne or forto lese,
Ben alle avised forto chese.
Tho tok this kniht a yerde on honde,
And goth there as the cofres stonde,
And with assent of everichon
He leith his yerde upon that on,

And seith the king hou thilke same
Thei chese in reguerdoun be name,
And preith him that thei mote it have.
The king, which wolde his honour save,
Whan he hath herd the commun vois,
Hath granted hem here oghne chois
And tok hem therupon the keie.
Bot for he wolde it were seie
What good thei have, as thei suppose,
He bad anon the cofre unclose,
Which was fulfild with straw and stones:
Thus be thei served al at ones.
This king thanne in the same stede
Anon that other cofre undede,
Where as thei sihen gret richesse,
Wel more than thei couthen gesse.
"Lo," seith the king, "nou mai ye se
That ther is no defalte in me;
Forthi miself I wole aquyte,
And bereth ye youre oghne wyte
Of that fortune hath you refused."
Thus was this wise king excused,
And thei lefte of here evele speche
And mercy of here king beseche.

Somdiel to this matiere lik
I finde a tale, hou Frederik,
Of Rome that time Emperour,
Herde, as he wente, a gret clamour
Of tuo beggers upon the weie.
That on of hem began to seie,
"Ha lord, wel mai the man be riche
Whom that a king list forto riche."
That other saide nothing so,
Bot, "He is riche and wel bego,

To whom that god wole sende wele."
And thus thei maden wordes fele,
Wherof this lord hath hiede nome,
And dede hem bothe forto come
To the Paleis, wher he schal ete,
And bad ordeine for here mete
Tuo Pastes, whiche he let do make.
A capoun in that on was bake,
And in that other forto winne
Of florins al that mai withinne
He let do pute a gret richesse;
And evene aliche, as man mai gesse,
Outward thei were bothe tuo.
This begger was comanded tho,
He that which hield him to the king,
That he ferst chese upon this thing:
He sih hem, bot he felte hem noght,
So that upon his oghne thoght
He ches the Capoun and forsok
That other, which his fela tok.
Bot whanne he wiste hou that it ferde,
He seide alowd, that men it herde,
"Nou have I certeinly conceived
That he mai lihtly be deceived,
That tristeth unto mannes helpe;
Bot wel is him whom god wol helpe,
For he stant on the siker side,
Which elles scholde go beside:
I se my fela wel recovere,
And I mot duelle stille povere."

Thus spak this begger his entente,
And povere he cam and povere he wente;
Of that he hath richesse soght,
His infortune it wolde noght.

So mai it schewe in sondri wise,
Betwen fortune and covoitise
The chance is cast upon a Dee;
Bot yit fulofte a man mai se
Ynowe of suche natheles,
Whiche evere pute hemself in press
To gete hem good, and yit thei faile.

And forto speke of this entaile
Touchende of love in thi matiere,
Mi goode Sone, as thou miht hiere,
That riht as it with tho men stod
Of infortune of worldes good,
As thou hast herd me telle above,
Riht so fulofte it stant be love:
Thogh thou coveite it everemore,
Thou schalt noght have o diel the more,
Bot only that which thee is schape,
The remenant is bot a jape.
And natheles ynowe of tho
Ther ben, that nou coveiten so,
That where as thei a womman se,
Ye ten or tuelve thogh ther be,
The love is nou so unavised,
That wher the beaute stant assised,
The mannes herte anon is there,
And rouneth tales in hire Ere,
And seith hou that he loveth streite,
And thus he set him to coveite,
An hundred thogh he sihe aday.
So wolde he more thanne he may;
Bot for the grete covoitise
Of sotie and of fol emprise
In ech of hem he fint somwhat
That pleseth him, or this or that;

Som on, for sche is whit of skin,
Som on, for sche is noble of kin,
Som on, for sche hath rodi chieke,
Som on, for that sche semeth mieke,
Som on, for sche hath yhen greie,
Som on, for sche can lawhe and pleie,
Som on, for sche is long and smal,
Som on, for sche is lyte and tall,
Som on, for sche is pale and bleche,
Som on, for sche is softe of speche,
Som on, for that sche is camused,
Som on, for sche hath noght ben used,
Som on, for sche can daunce and singe;
So that som thing to his likinge
He fint, and thogh nomore he fiele,
Bot that sche hath a litel hiele,
It is ynow that he therfore
Hire love, and thus an hundred score,
Whil thei be newe, he wolde he hadde;
Whom he forsakth, sche schal be badde.
The blinde man no colour demeth,
But al is on, riht as him semeth;
So hath his lust no juggement,
Whom covoitise of love blent.
Him thenkth that to his covoitise
Hou al the world ne mai suffise,
For be his wille he wolde have alle,
If that it mihte so befalle:
Thus is he commun as the Strete,
I sette noght of his beyete.

Mi Sone, hast thou such covoitise?

Nai, fader, such love I despise,
And whil I live schal don evere,
For in good feith yit hadde I levere,
Than to coveite in such a weie,
To ben for evere til I deie
As povere as Job, and loveles,
Outaken on, for haveles
His thonkes is noman alyve.
For that a man scholde al unthryve
Ther oghte no wisman coveite,
The lawe was noght set so streite:
Forthi miself withal to save,
Such on ther is I wolde have,
And non of al these othre mo.

Mi Sone, of that thou woldest so,
I am noght wroth, bot over this
I wol thee tellen hou it is.
For ther be men, whiche otherwise,
Riht only for the covoitise
Of that thei sen a womman riche,
Ther wol thei al here love affiche;
Noght for the beaute of hire face,
Ne yit for vertu ne for grace,
Which sche hath elles riht ynowh,
Bot for the Park and for the plowh,
And other thing which therto longeth:
For in non other wise hem longeth
To love, bot thei profit finde;
And if the profit be behinde,
Here love is evere lesse and lesse,
For after that sche hath richesse,
Her love is of proporcion.
If thou hast such condicion,
Mi Sone, tell riht as it is.

Min holi fader, nay ywiss,
Condicion such have I non.
For trewli, fader, I love oon
So wel with al myn hertes thoght,
That certes, thogh sche hadde noght,
And were as povere as Medea,
Which was exiled for Creusa,
I wolde hir noght the lasse love;
Ne thogh sche were at hire above,
As was the riche qwen Candace,
Which to deserve love and grace
To Alisandre, that was king,
Yaf many a worthi riche thing,
Or elles as Pantasilee,
Which was the quen of Feminee,
And gret richesse with hir nam,
Whan sche for love of Hector cam
To Troie in rescousse of the toun,—
I am of such condicion,
That thogh mi ladi of hirselve
Were also riche as suche tuelve,
I couthe noght, thogh it wer so,
No betre love hir than I do.
For I love in so plein a wise,
That forto speke of coveitise,
As for poverte or for richesse
Mi love is nouther mor ne lesse.
For in good feith I trowe this,
So coveitous noman ther is,
Forwhy and he mi ladi sihe,
That he thurgh lokinge of his yhe
Ne scholde have such a strok withinne,
That for no gold he mihte winne
He scholde noght hire love asterte,

Bot if he lefte there his herte;
Be so it were such a man,
That couthe Skile of a womman.
For ther be men so ruide some,
Whan thei among the wommen come,
Thei gon under protecciouN,
That love and his affecciouN
Ne schal noght take hem be the slieve;
For thei ben out of that believe,
Hem lusteth of no ladi chiere,
Bot evere thenken there and hiere
Wher that here gold is in the cofre,
And wol non other love profre:
Bot who so wot what love amounteth
And be resoun trewliche acompteth,
Than mai he knowe and taken hiede
That al the lust of wommanhiede,
Which mai ben in a ladi face,
Mi ladi hath, and ek of grace
If men schull yiven hire a pris,
Thei mai wel seie hou sche is wys
And sobre and simple of contenance,
And al that to good governance
Belongeth of a worthi wiht
Sche hath pleinli: for thilke nyht
That sche was bore, as for the nones
Nature sette in hire at ones
Beaute with bounte so besein,
That I mai wel afferme and sein,
I sawh yit nevere creature
Of comlihied and of feture
In eny kinges regioun
Be lich hire in comparisoun:
And therto, as I have you told,

Yit hath sche more a thousendfold
Of bounte, and schortli to telle,
Sche is the pure hed and welle
And Mirour and ensample of goode.
Who so hir vertus understode,
Me thenkth it oughte ynow suffise
Withouten other covoitise
To love such on and to serve,
Which with hire chiere can deserve
To be beloved betre ywiss
Than sche per cas that richest is
And hath of gold a Milion.
Such hath be myn opinion
And evere schal: bot natheles
I seie noght sche is haveles,
That sche nys riche and wel at ese,
And hath ynow wherwith to plese
Of worldes good whom that hire liste;
Bot o thing wolde I wel ye wiste,
That nevere for no worldes good
Min herte untoward hire stod,
Bot only riht for pure love;
That wot the hihe god above.
Nou, fader, what seie ye therto?

Mi Sone, I seie it is wel do.
For tak of this riht good believe,
What man that wole himself relieve
To love in eny other wise,
He schal wel finde his coveitise
Schal sore grieve him ate laste,
For such a love mai noght laste.
Bot nou, men sein, in oure daies
Men maken bot a fewe assaies,
Bot if the cause be richesse;

Forthi the love is wel the lesse.
And who that wolde ensamples telle,
Be olde daies as thei felle,
Than mihte a man wel understonde
Such love mai noght longe stonde.
Now herkne, Sone, and thou schalt hiere
A gret ensample of this matiere.

To trete upon the cas of love,
So as we tolden hiere above,
I finde write a wonder thing.
Of Puile whilom was a king,
A man of hih complexioun
And yong, bot his affeccioun
After the nature of his age
Was yit noght falle in his corage
The lust of wommen forto knowe.
So it betidde upon a throwe
This lord fell into gret seknesse:
Phisique hath don the besinesse
Of sondri cures manyon
To make him hol; and therupon
A worthi maister which ther was
Yaf him conseil upon this cas,
That if he wolde have parfit hele,
He scholde with a womman dele,
A freissh, a yong, a lusti wiht,
To don him compaignie a nyht:
For thanne he seide him redily,
That he schal be al hol therby,
And otherwise he kneu no cure.

This king, which stod in aventure
Of lif and deth, for medicine
Assented was, and of covine

His Steward, whom he tristeth wel,
He tok, and tolde him everydel,
Hou that this maister hadde seid:
And therupon he hath him preid
And charged upon his ligance,
That he do make porveance
Of such on as be covenable
For his plesance and delitable;
And bad him, hou that evere it stod,
That he schal spare for no good,
For his will is riht wel to paie.

The Steward seide he wolde assaie:
Bot nou hierafter thou schalt wite,
As I finde in the bokes write,
What coveitise in love doth.
This Steward, forto telle soth,
Amonges al the men alyve
A lusti ladi hath to wyve,
Which natheles for gold he tok
And noght for love, as seith the bok.
A riche Marchant of the lond
Hir fader was, and hire fond
So worthily, and such richesse
Of worldes good and such largesse
With hire he yaf in mariage,
That only for thilke avantage
Of good this Steward hath hire take,
For lucre and noght for loves sake,
And that was afterward wel seene;
Nou herkne what it wolde meene.

This Steward in his oghne herte
Sih that his lord mai noght asterte
His maladie, bot he have

A lusti womman him to save,
And thoghte he wolde yive ynowh
Of his tresor; wherof he drowh
Gret coveitise into his mynde,
And sette his honour fer behynde.
Thus he, whom gold hath overset,
Was trapped in his oghne net;
The gold hath mad hise wittes lame,
So that sechende his oghne schame
He rouneth in the kinges Ere,
And seide him that he wiste where
A gentile and a lusti on
Tho was, and thider wolde he gon:
Bot he mot yive yiftes grete;
For bot it be thurgh grete beyete
Of gold, he seith, he schal noght spede.
The king him bad upon the nede
That take an hundred pound he scholde,
And yive it where that he wolde,
Be so it were in worthi place:
And thus to stonde in loves grace
This king his gold hath abandouned.
And whan this tale was full rouned,
The Steward tok the gold and wente,
Withinne his herte and many a wente
Of coveitise thanne he caste,
Wherof a pourpos ate laste
Ayein love and ayein his riht
He tok, and seide hou thilke nyht
His wif schal ligge be the king;
And goth thenkende upon this thing
Toward his In, til he cam hom
Into the chambre, and thanne he nom
His wif, and tolde hire al the cas.

And sche, which red for schame was,
With bothe hire handes hath him preid
Knelende and in this wise seid,
That sche to reson and to skile
In what thing that he bidde wile
Is redy forto don his heste,
Bot this thing were noght honeste,
That he for gold hire scholde selle.
And he tho with hise wordes felle
Forth with his gastly contienance
Seith that sche schal don obeissance
And folwe his will in every place;
And thus thurgh strengthe of his manace
Hir innocence is overlad,
Wherof sche was so sore adrad
That sche his will mot nede obeie.
And therupon was schape a weie,
That he his oghne wif be nyhte
Hath out of alle mennes sihte
So prively that non it wiste
Broght to the king, which as him liste
Mai do with hire what he wolde.
For whan sche was ther as sche scholde,
With him abedde under the cloth,
The Steward tok his leve and goth
Into a chambre faste by;
Bot hou he slep, that wot noght I,
For he sih cause of jelousie.

Bot he, which hath the compainie
Of such a lusti on as sche,
Him thoghte that of his degre
Ther was noman so wel at ese:
Sche doth al that sche mai to plese,
So that his herte al hol sche hadde;

And thus this king his joie ladde,
Til it was nyh upon the day.
The Steward thanne wher sche lay
Cam to the bedd, and in his wise
Hath bede that sche scholde arise.
The king seith, “Nay, sche schal noght go.”
His Steward seide ayein, “Noght so;
For sche mot gon er it be knowe,
And so I swor at thilke throwe,
Whan I hire fette to you hiere.”
The king his tale wol noght hiere,
And seith hou that he hath hire boght,
Forthi sche schal departe noght,
Til he the brighte dai beholde.
And cawhte hire in hise armes folde,
As he which liste forto pleie,
And bad his Steward gon his weie,
And so he dede ayein his wille.
And thus his wif abedde stille
Lay with the king the longe nyht,
Til that it was hih Sonne lyht;
Bot who sche was he knew nothing.

Tho cam the Steward to the king
And preide him that withoute schame
In savinge of hire goode name
He myhte leden hom ayein
This lady, and hath told him plein
Hou that it was his oghne wif.
The king his Ere unto this strif
Hath leid, and whan that he it herde,
Welnyh out of his wit he ferde,
And seide, “Ha, caitif most of alle,
Wher was it evere er this befalle,
That eny cokard in this wise

Betok his wif for coveitise?
Thou hast bothe hire and me beguiled
And ek thin oghne astat reviled,
Wherof that buxom unto thee
Hierafter schal sche nevere be.
For this avou to god I make,
After this day if I thee take,
Thou schalt ben honged and todrawe.
Nou loke anon thou be withdrawe,
So that I se thee neveremore."
This Steward thanne dradde him sore,
With al the haste that he mai
And fledde awei that same dai,
And was exiled out of londe.

Lo, there a nyce housebonde,
Which thus hath lost his wif for evere!
Bot natheles sche hadde a levere;
The king hire weddeth and honoureth,
Wherof hire name sche socoureth,
Which erst was lost thurgh coveitise
Of him, that ladde hire other wise,
And hath himself also forlore.

Mi Sone, be thou war therfore,
Wher thou schalt love in eny place,
That thou no covoitise embrace,
The which is noght of loves kinde.
Bot for al that a man mai finde
Nou in this time of thilke rage
Ful gret desese in mariage,
Whan venym melleth with the Sucre
And mariage is mad for lucre,

Or for the lust or for the hele:
What man that schal with outher dele,
He mai noght faile to repente.

Mi fader, such is myn entente:
Bot natheles good is to have,
For good mai ofte time save
The love which scholde elles spille.
Bot god, which wot myn hertes wille,
I dar wel take to witnesse,
Yit was I nevere for richesse
Beset with mariage non;
For al myn herte is upon on
So frely, that in the persone
Stant al my worldes joie al one:
I axe nouther Park ne Plowh,
If I hire hadde, it were ynowh,
Hir love scholde me suffise
Withouten other coveitise.
Lo now, mi fader, as of this,
Touchende of me riht as it is,
Mi schrifte I am beknowe plein;
And if ye wole oght elles sein,
Of covoitise if ther be more
In love, agropeth out the sore.

Mi Sone, thou schalt understonde
Hou Coveitise hath yit on honde
In special tuo conseilours,
That ben also hise procurours.
The ferst of hem is Falswitnesse,
Which evere is redi to witnesse
What thing his maister wol him hote:
Perjurie is the secounde hote,
Which spareth noght to swere an oth,

Thogh it be fals and god be wroth.
That on schal falswitnesse bere,
That other schal the thing forswere,
Whan he is charged on the bok.
So what with hepe and what with crok
Thei make here maister ofte winne
And wol noght knowe what is sinne
For coveitise, and thus, men sain,
Thei maken many a fals bargain.
Ther mai no trewe querele arise
In thilke queste and thilke assise,
Where as thei tuo the poeple enforme;
For thei kepe evere o maner forme,
That upon gold here conscience
Thei founde, and take here evidence;
And thus with falswitnesse and othes
Thei winne hem mete and drinke and clothes.

Riht so ther be, who that hem knewe,
Of thes lovers ful many untrewe:
Nou mai a womman finde ynowe,
That ech of hem, whan he schal wowe,
Anon he wole his hand doun lein
Upon a bok, and swere and sein
That he wole feith and trouthe bere;
And thus he profreth him to swere
To serven evere til he die,
And al is verai tricherie.
For whan the sothe himselven trieth,
The more he swerth, the more he lieth;
Whan he his feith makth althermest,
Than mai a womman truste him lest;
For til he mai his will achieve,

He is no lengere forto lieve.
Thus is the trouthe of love exiled,
And many a good womman beguiled.

And ek to speke of Falswitnesse,
There be nou many suche, I gesse,
That lich unto the provisours
Thei make here prive procurours,
To telle hou ther is such a man,
Which is worthi to love and can
Al that a good man scholde kunne;
So that with lesinge is begunne
The cause in which thei wole procede,
And also siker as the crede
Thei make of that thei knowen fals.
And thus fulofte aboute the hals
Love is of false men embraced;
Bot love which is so pourchaced
Comth afterward to litel pris.
Forthi, mi Sone, if thou be wis,
Nou thou hast herd this evidence,
Thou miht thin oghne conscience
Oppose, if thou hast ben such on.

Nai, god wot, fader I am non,
Ne nevere was; for as men seith,
Whan that a man schal make his feith,
His herte and tunge moste acorde;
For if so be that thei discorde,
Thanne is he fals and elles noght:
And I dar seie, as of my thoght,
In love it is noght descordable
Unto mi word, bot acordable.
And in this wise, fader, I
Mai riht wel swere and salvely,

That I mi ladi love wel,
For that acordeth everydel.
It nedeth noght to mi sothsawe
That I witnesse scholde drawe,
Into this dai for nevere yit
Ne mihte it sinke into mi wit,
That I my conseil scholde seie
To eny wiht, or me bewreie
To sechen help in such manere,
Bot only of mi ladi diere.
And thogh a thousend men it wiste,
That I hire love, and thanne hem liste
With me to swere and to witnesse,
Yit were that no falswitnesse;
For I dar on this trouthe duelle,
I love hire mor than I can telle.
Thus am I, fader, gulteles,
As ye have herd, and natheles
In youre dom I put it al.

Mi Sone, wite in special,
It schal noght comunliche faile,
Al thogh it for a time availe
That Falswitnesse his cause spede,
Upon the point of his falshiede
It schal wel afterward be kid;
Wherof, so as it is betid,
Ensample of suche thinges blinde
In a Cronique write I finde.

The Goddesse of the See Thetis,
Sche hadde a Sone, and his name is
Achilles, whom to kepe and warde,
Whil he was yong, as into warde
Sche thoghte him salfly to betake,

As sche which dradde for his sake
Of that was seid in prophecie,
That he at Troie scholde die,
Whan that the Cite was belein.
Forthi, so as the bokes sein,
Sche caste hire wit in sondri wise,
Hou sche him mihte so desguise
That noman scholde his bodi knowe:
And so befell that ilke throwe,
Whil that sche thoghte upon this dede,
Ther was a king, which Lichomede
Was hote, and he was wel begon
With faire dowhtres manyon,
And duelte fer out in an yle.

Nou schalt thou hiere a wonder wyle:
This queene, which the moder was
Of Achilles, upon this cas
Hire Sone, as he a Maiden were,
Let clothen in the same gere
Which longeth unto wommanhiede:
And he was yong and tok non hiede,
Bot soffreth al that sche him dede.
Wherof sche hath hire wommen bede
And charged be here othes alle,
Hou so it afterward befalle,
That thei discovere noght this thing,
Bot feigne and make a knowleching,
Upon the conseil which was nome,
In every place wher thei come
To telle and to witnesse this,
Hou he here ladi dowhter is.
And riht in such a maner wise
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,
So that Achilles underfongeth

As to a yong ladi belongeth
Honour, servise and reverence.
For Thetis with gret diligence
Him hath so tawht and so afaited,
That, hou so that it were awaited,
With sobre and goodli contenance
He scholde his wommanhiede avance,
That non the sothe knowe myhte,
Bot that in every mannes syhte
He scholde seme a pure Maide.
And in such wise as sche him saide,
Achilles, which that ilke while
Was yong, upon himself to smyle
Began, whan he was so besein.

And thus, after the bokes sein,
With frette of Perle upon his hed,
Al freissh betwen the whyt and red,
As he which tho was tendre of Age,
Stod the colour in his visage,
That forto loke upon his cheke
And sen his childly manere eke,
He was a womman to beholde.
And thanne his moder to him tolde,
That sche him hadde so begon
Be cause that sche thoghte gon
To Lichomede at thilke tyde,
Wher that sche seide he scholde abyde
Among hise dowhtres forto duelle.

Achilles herde his moder telle,
And wiste noght the cause why;
And natheles ful buxomly
He was redy to that sche bad,
Wherof his moder was riht glad,

To Lichomede and forth thei wente.
And whan the king knew hire entente,
And sih this yonge dowhter there,
And that it cam unto his Ere
Of such record, of such witnesse,
He hadde riht a gret gladnesse
Of that he bothe syh and herde,
As he that wot noght hou it ferde
Upon the conseil of the nede.
Bot for al that king Lichomede
Hath toward him this dowhter take,
And for Thetis his moder sake
He put hire into compainie
To duelle with Deïdamie,
His oghne dowhter, the eldeste,
The faireste and the comelieste
Of alle hise doghtres whiche he hadde.

Lo, thus Thetis the cause ladde,
And lefte there Achilles feigned,
As he which hath himself restreigned
In al that evere he mai and can
Out of the manere of a man,
And tok his wommannysshe chiere,
Wherof unto his beddefere
Deïdamie he hath be nyhte.
Wher kinde wole himselve rihte,
After the Philosophres sein,
Ther mai no wiht be therayein:
And that was thilke time seene.
The longe nyhtes hem betuene
Nature, which mai noght forbere,
Hath mad hem bothe forto stere:
Thei kessen ferst, and overmore
The hihe weie of loves lore

Thei gon, and al was don in dede,
Wherof lost is the maydenhede;
And that was afterward wel knowe.

For it befell that ilke throwe
At Troie, wher the Siege lay
Upon the cause of Menelay
And of his queene dame Heleine,
The Gregois hadden mochel peine
Alday to fihte and to assaile.
Bot for thei mihten noght availe
So noble a Cite forto winne,
A prive conseil thei beginne,
In sondri wise wher thei trete;
And ate laste among the grete
Thei fellen unto this acord,
That Protheus, of his record
Which was an Astronomien
And ek a gret Magicien,
Scholde of his calculacion
Seche after constellacion,
Hou thei the Cite mihten gete:
And he, which hadde noght foryete
Of that belongeth to a clerk,
His studie sette upon this werk.
So longe his wit aboute he caste,
Til that he fond out ate laste,
Bot if they hadden Achilles
Here werre schal ben endeles.
And over that he tolde hem plein
In what manere he was besein,
And in what place he schal be founde;
So that withinne a litel stounde
Ulixes forth with Diomede
Upon this point to Lichomede

Agamenon togedre sente.
Bot Ulixes, er he forth wente,
Which was on of the moste wise,
Ordeigned hath in such a wise,
That he the moste riche aray,
Wherof a womman mai be gay,
With him hath take manyfold,
And overmore, as it is told,
An harneis for a lusti kniht,
Which burned was as Selver bryht,
Of swerd, of plate and ek of maile,
As thogh he scholde to bataille,
He tok also with him be Schipe.
And thus togedre in felaschipe
Forth gon this Diomede and he
In hope til thei mihten se
The place where Achilles is.

The wynd stod thanne noght amis,
Bot evene topseilcole it blew,
Til Ulixes the Marche knew,
Wher Lichomede his Regne hadde.
The Stieresman so wel hem ladde,
That thei ben comen sauf to londe,
Wher thei gon out upon the stronde
Into the Burgh, wher that thei founde
The king, and he which hath facounde,
Ulixes, dede the message.
Bot the conseil of his corage,
Why that he cam, he tolde noght,
Bot undernethe he was bethoght
In what manere he mihte aspie
Achilles fro Deïdamie
And fro these othre that ther were,
Full many a lusti ladi there.

Thei pleide hem there a day or tuo,
And as it was fortuned so,
It fell that time in such a wise,
To Bachus that a sacrifise
Thes yonge ladys scholden make;
And for the strange mennes sake,
That comen fro the Siege of Troie,
Thei maden wel the more joie.
Ther was Revel, ther was daunsinge,
And every lif which coude singe
Of lusti wommen in the route
A freissh carole hath sunge aboute;
Bot for al this yit natheles
The Greks unknowe of Achilles
So weren, that in no degre
Thei couden wite which was he,
Ne be his vois, ne be his pas.
Ulixes thanne upon this cas
A thing of hih Prudence hath wroght:
For thilke aray, which he hath broght
To yive among the wommen there,
He let do fetten al the gere
Forth with a knihtes harneis eke,—
In al a contre forto seke
Men scholden noght a fairer se,—
And every thing in his degre
Endlong upon a bord he leide.
To Lichomede and thanne he preide
That every ladi chese scholde
What thing of alle that sche wolde,
And take it as be weie of yifte;
For thei hemself it scholde schifte,
He seide, after here oghne wille.

Achilles thanne stod noght stille:
Whan he the bryhte helm behield,
The swerd, the hauberk and the Schield,
His herte fell therto anon;
Of all that othre wolde he non,
The knihtes gere he underfongeth,
And thilke aray which that belongeth
Unto the wommen he forsok.
And in this wise, as seith the bok,
Thei knowen thanne which he was:
For he goth forth the grete pas
Into the chambre where he lay;
Anon, and made no delay,
He armeth him in knyhtli wise,
That bettre can noman devise,
And as fortune scholde falle,
He cam so forth tofore hem alle,
As he which tho was glad ynowh.
But Lichomede nothing lowh,
Whan that he syh hou that it ferde,
For thanne he wiste wel and herde,
His dowhter hadde be forlein;
Bot that he was so oversein,
The wonder overgoth his wit.
For in Cronique is write yit
Thing which schal nevere be foryete,
Hou that Achilles hath begete
Pirrus upon Deïdamie,
Wherof cam out the tricherie
Of Falswitnesse, whan thei saide
Hou that Achilles was a Maide.
Bot that was nothing sene tho,
For he is to the Siege go
Forth with Ulixe and Diomede.

Lo, thus was proved in the dede
And fulli spoke at thilke while:
If o womman an other guile,
Wher is ther eny sikernesse?
Whan Thetis, which was the goddesse,
Deïdamie hath so bejaped,
I not hou it schal ben ascaped
With tho wommen whos innocence
Is nou alday thurgh such credence
Deceived ofte, as it is seene,
With men that such untrouthe meene.
For thei ben slyhe in such a wise,
That thei be sleihte and be queintise
Of Falswitnesse bringen inne
That doth hem ofte forto winne,
Wher thei ben noght worthi therto.
Forthi, my Sone, do noght so.

Mi fader, as of Falswitnesse
The trouthe and the matiere expresse,
Touchende of love hou it hath ferd,
As ye have told, I have wel herd.
Bot for ye seiden otherwise,
Hou thilke vice of Covoitise
Hath yit Perjurie of his acord,
If that you list of som record
To telle an other tale also
In loves cause of time ago,
What thing it is to be forswore,
I wolde preie you therfore,
Wherof I mihte ensample take.

Mi goode Sone, and for thi sake
Touchende of this I schall fulfille
Thin axinge at thin oghne wille,

And the matiere I schal declare,
Hou the wommen deceived are,
Whan thei so tendre herte bere,
Of that thei hieren men so swere;
Bot whan it comth unto thassay,
Thei finde it fals an other day:
As Jason dede to Medee,
Which stant yet of Auctorite
In tokne and in memorial;
Wherof the tale in special
Is in the bok of Troie write,
Which I schal do thee forto wite.

In Grece whilom was a king,
Of whom the fame and knowleching
Beleveth yit, and Peleüs
He hihte; bot it fell him thus,
That his fortune hir whiel so ladde
That he no child his oghne hadde
To regnen after his decess.
He hadde a brother natheles,
Whos rihte name was Eson,
And he the worthi kniht Jason
Begat, the which in every lond
Alle othre passede of his hond
In Armes, so that he the beste
Was named and the worthieste,
He soghte worschipe overal.
Nou herkne, and I thee telle schal
An aventure that he soghte,
Which afterward ful dere he boghte.

Ther was an yle, which Colchos
Was cleped, and therof aros
Gret speche in every lond aboute,

That such merveile was non oute
In al the wyde world nawhere,
As tho was in that yle there.
Ther was a Schiep, as it was told,
The which his flees bar al of gold,
And so the goddes hadde it set,
That it ne mihte awei be fet
Be pouer of no worldes wiht:
And yit ful many a worthi kniht
It hadde assaied, as thei dorste,
And evere it fell hem to the worste.
Bot he, that wolde it noght forsake,
Bot of his knyhthod undertake
To do what thing therto belongeth,
This worthi Jason, sore alongeth
To se the strange regiouns
And knowe the condiciouns
Of othre Marches, where he wente;
And for that cause his hole entente
He sette Colchos forto seche,
And therupon he made a speche
To Peleüs his Em the king.
And he wel paid was of that thing;
And schop anon for his passage,
And suche as were of his lignage,
With othre knihtes whiche he ches,
With him he tok, and Hercules,
Which full was of chivalerie,
With Jason wente in compaignie;
And that was in the Monthe of Maii,
Whan colde stormes were away.
The wynd was good, the Schip was yare,
Thei tok here leve, and forth thei fare
Toward Colchos: bot on the weie

What hem befell is long to seie;
Hou Lamedon the king of Troie,
Which oghte wel have mad hem joie.
Whan thei to reste a while him preide,
Out of his lond he hem congeide;
And so fell the dissencion,
Which after was destruccion
Of that Cite, as men mai hiere:
Bot that is noght to mi matiere.
Bot thus this worthi folk Gregeis
Fro that king, which was noght curteis,
And fro his lond with Sail updrawe
Thei wente hem forth, and many a sawe
Thei made and many a gret manace,
Til ate laste into that place
Which as thei soghte thei aryve,
And striken Sail, and forth as blyve
Thei sente unto the king and tolden
Who weren ther and what thei wolden.
Oëtes, which was thanne king,
Whan that he herde this tyding
Of Jason, which was comen there,
And of these othre, what thei were,
He thoghte don hem gret worschipe:
For thei anon come out of Schipe,
And strawht unto the king thei wente,
And be the hond Jason he hente,
And that was ate paleis gate,
So fer the king cam on his gate
Toward Jason to don him chiere;
And he, whom lacketh no manere,
Whan he the king sih in presence,
Yaf him ayein such reverence
As to a kinges stat belongeth.

And thus the king him underfongeth,
And Jason in his arm he cawhte,
And forth into the halle he strawhte,
And ther they siete and spieke of thinges,
And Jason tolde him tho tidinges,
Why he was come, and faire him preide
To haste his time, and the kyng seide,
"Jason, thou art a worthi kniht,
Bot it lith in no mannes myht
To don that thou art come fore:
Ther hath be many a kniht forlore
Of that thei wolden it assaie."
Bot Jason wolde him noght esmaie,
And seide, "Of every worldes cure
Fortune stant in aventure,
Per aunter wel, per aunter wo:
Bot hou as evere that it go,
It schal be with myn hond assaied."
The king tho hield him noght wel paied,
For he the Grekes sore dredde,
In aunter, if Jason ne spedde,
He mihte therof bere a blame;
For tho was al the worldes fame
In Grece, as forto speke of Armes.
Forthi he dredde him of his harmes,
And gan to preche him and to preie;
Bot Jason wolde noght obeie,
Bot seide he wolde his porpos holde
For ought that eny man him tolde.
The king, whan he thes wordes herde,
And sih hou that this kniht ansuerde,
Yit for he wolde make him glad,
After Medea gon he bad,
Which was his dowhter, and sche cam.

And Jason, which good hiede nam,
Whan he hire sih, ayein hire goth;
And sche, which was him nothing loth,
Welcomede him into that lond,
And softe tok him be the hond,
And doun thei seten bothe same.
Sche hadde herd spoke of his name
And of his grete worthinesse;
Forthi sche gan hir yhe impresse
Upon his face and his stature,
And thoghte hou nevere creature
Was so wel farende as was he.
And Jason riht in such degre
Ne mihte noght withholde his lok,
Bot so good hiede on hire he tok,
That him ne thoghte under the hevene
Of beaute sawh he nevere hir evene,
With al that fell to wommanhiede.
Thus ech of other token hiede,
Thogh ther no word was of record;
Here hertes bothe of on acord
Ben set to love, bot as tho
Ther mihten be no wordes mo.
The king made him gret joie and feste,
To alle his men he yaf an heste,
So as thei wolde his thonk deserve,
That thei scholde alle Jason serve,
Whil that he wolde there duelle.
And thus the dai, schortly to telle,
With manye merthes thei despente,
Til nyht was come, and tho thei wente,
Echon of other tok his leve,
Whan thei no lengere myhten leve.
I not hou Jason that nyht slep,

Bot wel I wot that of the Schep,
For which he cam into that yle,
He thoghte bot a litel whyle;
Al was Medea that he thoghte,
So that in many a wise he soghte
His witt wakende er it was day,
Som time yee, som time nay,
Som time thus, som time so,
As he was stered to and fro
Of love, and ek of his conqueste
As he was holde of his beheste.
And thus he ros up be the morwe
And tok himself seint John to borwe,
And seide he wolde ferst beginne
At love, and after forto winne
The flees of gold, for which he com,
And thus to him good herte he nom.

Medea riht the same wise,
Til dai cam that sche moste arise,
Lay and bethoughte hire al the nyht,
Hou sche that noble worthi kniht
Be eny weie mihte wedde:
And wel sche wiste, if he ne spedde
Of thing which he hadde undertake,
Sche mihte hirself no porpos take;
For if he deide of his bataile,
Sche moste thanne algate faile
To geten him, whan he were ded.
Thus sche began to sette red
And torne aboute hir wittes alle,
To loke hou that it mihte falle
That sche with him hadde a leisir
To speke and telle of hir desir.
And so it fell that same day

That Jason with that suete may
Togedre sete and hadden space
To speke, and he besoughte hir grace.
And sche his tale goodli herde,
And afterward sche him ansuerde
And seide, “Jason, as thou wilt,
Thou miht be sauf, thou miht be spilt;
For wite wel that nevere man,
Bot if he couthe that I can,
Ne mihte that fortune achieve
For which thou comst: bot as I lieve,
If thou wolt holde covenant
To love, of al the remenant
I schal thi lif and honour save,
That thou the flees of gold schalt have.”
He seide, “Al at youre oghne wille,
Ma dame, I schal treuly fulfille
Youre heste, whil mi lif mai laste.”
Thus longe he preide, and ate laste
Sche granteth, and behihte him this,
That whan nyht comth and it time is,
Sche wolde him sende certeinly
Such on that scholde him prively
Al one into hire chambre bringe.
He thonketh hire of that tidinge,
For of that grace him is begonne
Him thenkth alle othre thinges wonne.

The dai made ende and lost his lyht,
And comen was the derke nyht,
Which al the daies yhe blente.
Jason tok leve and forth he wente,
And whan he cam out of the pres,
He tok to conseil Hercules,
And tolde him hou it was betid,

And preide it scholde wel ben hid,
And that he wolde loke aboute,
Therwhiles that he schal ben oute.
Thus as he stod and hiede nam,
A Mayden fro Medea cam
And to hir chambre Jason ledde,
Wher that he fond redi to bedde
The faireste and the wiseste eke;
And sche with simple chiere and meke,
Whan sche him sih, wax al aschamed.
Tho was here tale newe entamed;
For sikernesse of Mariage
Sche fette forth a riche ymage,
Which was figure of Jupiter,
And Jason swor and seide ther,
That also wiss god scholde him helpe,
That if Medea dede him helpe,
That he his pourpos myhte winne,
Thei scholde nevere parte atwinne,
Bot evere whil him lasteth lif,
He wolde hire holde for his wif.
And with that word thei kisten bothe;
And for thei scholden hem unclothe,
Ther cam a Maide, and in hir wise
Sche dede hem bothe full servise,
Til that thei were in bedde naked:
I wot that nyht was wel bewaked,
Thei hadden bothe what thei wolde.
And thanne of leisir sche him tolde,
And gan fro point to point enforme
Of his bataile and al the forme,
Which as he scholde finde there,
Whan he to thyle come were.

Sche seide, at entre of the pas
Hou Mars, which god of Armes was,
Hath set tuo Oxen sterne and stoute,
That caste fyr and flamme aboute
Bothe at the mouth and ate nase,
So that thei setten al on blase
What thing that passeth hem betwene:
And forthermore upon the grene
Ther goth the flees of gold to kepe
A Serpent, which mai nevere slepe.
Thus who that evere scholde it winne,
The fyr to stoppe he mot beginne,
Which that the fierce bestes caste,
And daunte he mot hem ate laste,
So that he mai hem yoke and dryve;
And therupon he mot as blyve
The Serpent with such strengthe assaile,
That he mai slen him be bataile;
Of which he mot the teth outdrawe,
As it belongeth to that lawe,
And thanne he mot tho Oxen yoke,
Til thei have with a plowh tobroke
A furgh of lond, in which arowe
The teth of thaddre he moste sowe,
And therof schule arise knihtes
Wel armed up at alle rihtes.
Of hem is noght to taken hiede,
For ech of hem in hastihiede
Schal other slen with dethes wounde:
And thus whan thei ben leid to grounde,
Than mot he to the goddes preie,
And go so forth and take his preie.
Bot if he faile in eny wise
Of that ye hiere me devise,

Ther mai be set non other weie,
That he ne moste algates deie.
"Nou have I told the peril al:
I woll you tellen forth withal,"
Quod Medea to Jason tho,
"That ye schul knowen er ye go,
Ayein the venym and the fyr
What schal ben the recoverir.
Bot, Sire, for it is nyh day,
Ariseth up, so that I may
Delivere you what thing I have,
That mai youre lif and honour save."
Thei weren bothe loth to rise,
Bot for thei weren bothe wise,
Up thei arisen ate laste:
Jason his clothes on him caste
And made him redi riht anon,
And sche hir scherte dede upon
And caste on hire a mantel clos,
Withoute more and thanne aros.
Tho tok sche forth a riche Tye
Mad al of gold and of Perrie,
Out of the which sche nam a Ring,
The Ston was worth al other thing.
Sche seide, whil he wolde it were,
Ther myhte no peril him dere,
In water mai it noght be dreynt,
Wher as it comth the fyr is queynt,
It daunteth ek the cruel beste,
Ther may no qued that man areste,
Wher so he be on See or lond,
Which hath that ring upon his hond:
And over that sche gan to sein,
That if a man wol ben unsein,

Withinne his hond hold clos the Ston,
And he mai invisible gon.
The Ring to Jason sche betauhte,
And so forth after sche him tauhte
What sacrifise he scholde make;
And gan out of hire cofre take
Him thoughte an hevenely figure,
Which al be charme and be conjure
Was wroght, and ek it was thurgh write
With names, which he scholde wite,
As sche him tauhte tho to rede;
And bad him, as he wolde spede,
Withoute reste of eny while,
Whan he were londed in that yle,
He scholde make his sacrifise
And rede his carecte in the wise
As sche him tauhte, on knes doun bent,
Thre sithes toward orient;
For so scholde he the goddes plese
And winne himselven mochel ese.
And whanne he hadde it thries rad,
To opne a buiste sche him bad,
Which sche ther tok him in present,
And was full of such oignement,
That ther was fyr ne venym non
That scholde fastnen him upon,
Whan that he were enoynt withal.
Forthi sche tauhte him hou he schal
Enoignte his armes al aboute,
And for he scholde nothing doute,
Sche tok him thanne a maner glu,
The which was of so gret vertu,
That where a man it wolde caste,
It scholde binde anon so faste

That noman mihte it don aweie.
And that sche bad be alle weie
He scholde into the mouthes throwen
Of tho tweie Oxen that fyr blowen,
Therof to stoppen the malice;
The glu schal serve of that office.
And over that hir oignement,
Hir Ring and hir enchantement
Ayein the Serpent scholde him were,
Til he him sle with swerd or spere:
And thanne he may saufliche ynowh
His Oxen yoke into the plowh
And the teth sowe in such a wise,
Til he the knyhtes se arise,
And ech of other doun be leid
In such manere as I have seid.

Lo, thus Medea for Jason
Ordeigneth, and preith therupon
That he nothing foryete scholde,
And ek sche preith him that he wolde,
Whan he hath alle his Armes don,
To grounde knele and thonke anon
The goddes, and so forth be ese
The flees of gold he scholde sese.
And whanne he hadde it sesed so,
That thanne he were sone ago
Withouten eny tariynge.

Whan this was seid, into wepinge
Sche fell, as sche that was thurgh nome
With love, and so fer overcome,
That al hir world on him sche sette.
Bot whan sche sih ther was no lette,
That he mot nedes parte hire fro,

Sche tok him in hire armes tuo,
An hundred time and gan him kisse,
And seide, “O, al mi worldes blisse,
Mi trust, mi lust, mi lif, min hele,
To be thin helpe in this querele
I preie unto the goddes alle.”
And with that word sche gan doun falle
On swoune, and he hire uppe nam,
And forth with that the Maiden cam,
And thei to bedde anon hir broghte,
And thanne Jason hire besoghte,
And to hire seide in this manere:
“Mi worthi lusti ladi dere,
Conforteth you, for be my trouthe
It schal noght fallen in mi slouthe
That I ne wol thurghout fulfille
Youre hestes at youre oghne wille.
And yit I hope to you bringe
Withinne a while such tidinge,
The which schal make ous bothe game.”

Bot for he wolde kepe hir name,
Whan that he wiste it was nyh dai,
He seide, “A dieu, mi swete mai.”
And forth with him he nam his gere,
Which as sche hadde take him there,
And strauht unto his chambre he wente,
And goth to bedde and slep him hente,
And lay, that noman him awok,
For Hercules hiede of him tok,
Til it was undren hih and more.
And thanne he gan to sighe sore
And sodeinliche abreide of slep;
And thei that token of him kep,
His chamberleins, be sone there,

And maden redi al his gere,
And he aros and to the king
He wente, and seide hou to that thing
For which he cam he wolde go.
The king therof was wonder wo,
And for he wolde him fain withdrawe,
He tolde him many a dredful sawe,
Bot Jason wolde it noght recorde,
And ate laste thei acorde.
Whan that he wolde noght abide,
A Bot was redy ate tyde,
In which this worthi kniht of Grece
Ful armed up at every piece,
To his bataile which belongeth,
Tok ore on honde and sore him longeth,
Til he the water passed were.
Whan he cam to that yle there,
He set him on his knes doun strauht,
And his carecte, as he was tawht,
He radde, and made his sacrifise,
And siththe enoignte him in that wise,
As Medea him hadde bede;
And thanne aros up fro that stede,
And with the glu the fyr he queynte,
And anon after he atteinte
The grete Serpent and him slowh.
Bot erst he hadde sorwe ynowh,
For that Serpent made him travaile
So harde and sore of his bataile,
That nou he stod and nou he fell:
For longe time it so befell,
That with his swerd ne with his spere
He mihte noght that Serpent dere.
He was so scherded al aboute,

It hield all eggetol withoute,
He was so ruide and hard of skin,
Ther mihte nothing go therin;
Venym and fyr togedre he caste,
That he Jason so sore ablaste,
That if ne were his oignement,
His Ring and his enchantement,
Which Medea tok him tofore,
He hadde with that worm be lore;
Bot of vertu which therof cam
Jason the Dragon overcam.
And he anon the teth outdrouh,
And sette his Oxen in a plouh,
With which he brak a piece of lond
And sieu hem with his oghne hond.
Tho mihte he gret merveile se:
Of every toth in his degre
Sprong up a kniht with spere and schield,
Of whiche anon riht in the field
Echon slow other; and with that
Jason Medea noght foryat,
On bothe his knes he gan doun falle,
And yaf thonk to the goddes alle.
The Flees he tok and goth to Bote,
The Sonne schyneth bryhte and hote,
The Flees of gold schon forth withal,
The water glistreth overal.

Medea wepte and sigheth ofte,
And stod upon a Tour alofte:
Al prively withinne hirselve,
Ther herde it nouther ten ne tuelve,
Sche preide, and seide, “O, god him spede,
The kniht which hath mi maidenhiede!”
And ay sche loketh toward thyle.

Bot whan sche sih withinne a while
The Flees glistrende ayein the Sonne,
Sche saide, “Ha, lord, now al is wonne,
Mi kniht the field hath overcome:
Nou wolde god he were come;
Ha lord, that he ne were alonde!”
Bot I dar take this on honde,
If that sche hadde wynges tuo,
Sche wolde have flowe unto him tho
Strawht ther he was into the Bot.

The dai was clier, the Sonne hot,
The Gregeis weren in gret doute,
The whyle that here lord was oute:
Thei wisten noght what scholde tyde,
Bot waiten evere upon the tyde,
To se what ende scholde falle.
Ther stoden ek the nobles alle
Forth with the comun of the toun;
And as thei loken up and doun,
Thei weren war withinne a throwe,
Wher cam the bot, which thei wel knowe,
And sihe hou Jason broghte his preie.
And tho thei gonnen alle seie,
And criden alle with o stevene,
“Ha, wher was evere under the hevene
So noble a knyht as Jason is?”
And welnyh alle seiden this,
That Jason was a faie kniht,
For it was nevere of mannes miht
The Flees of gold so forto winne;
And thus to talen thei beginne.
With that the king com forth anon,
And sih the Flees, hou that it schon;
And whan Jason cam to the lond,

The king himselve tok his hond
And kist him, and gret joie him made.
The Gregeis weren wonder glade,
And of that thing riht merie hem thoghte,
And forth with hem the Flees thei broghte,
And ech on other gan to leyhe;
Bot wel was him that mihte neyhe,
To se therof the proprete.
And thus thei passen the cite
And gon unto the Paleis straght.

Medea, which foryat him naght,
Was redy there, and seide anon,
"Welcome, O worthi kniht Jason."
Sche wolde have kist him wonder fayn,
Bot schame tornede hire agayn;
It was noght the manere as tho,
Forthi sche dorste noght do so.
Sche tok hire leve, and Jason wente
Into his chambre, and sche him sente
Hire Maide to sen hou he ferde;
The which whan that sche sih and herde,
Hou that he hadde faren oute
And that it stod wel al aboute,
Sche tolde hire ladi what sche wiste,
And sche for joie hire Maide kiste.
The bathes weren thanne araied,
With herbes tempred and assaied,
And Jason was unarmed sone
And dede as it befell to done:
Into his bath he wente anon
And wyssh him clene as eny bon;
He tok a sopp, and oute he cam,
And on his beste aray he nam,
And kempde his hed, whan he was clad,

And goth him forth al merie and glad
Riht strawht into the kinges halle.
The king cam with his knihtes alle
And maden him glad welcominge;
And he hem tolde the tidinge
Of this and that, hou it befell,
Whan that he wan the schepes fell.

Medea, whan sche was asent,
Com sone to that parlement,
And whan sche mihte Jason se,
Was non so glad of alle as sche.
Ther was no joie forto seche,
Of him mad every man a speche,
Som man seide on, som man seide other;
Bot thogh he were goddes brother
And mihte make fyr and thonder,
Ther mihte be nomore wonder
Than was of him in that cite.
Echon tauhte other, "This is he,
Which hath in his pouer withinne
That al the world ne mihte winne:
Lo, hier the beste of alle goode."
Thus saiden thei that there stode,
And ek that walkede up and doun,
Bothe of the Court and of the toun.

The time of Souper cam anon,
Thei wisshen and therto thei gon,
Medea was with Jason set:
Tho was ther many a deynte fet
And set tofore hem on the bord,
Bot non so likinge as the word
Which was ther spoke among hem tuo,
So as thei dorste speke tho.

Bot thogh thei hadden litel space,
Yit thei acorden in that place
Hou Jason scholde come at nyht,
Whan every torche and every liht
Were oute, and thanne of other thinges
Thei spieke aloud for supposinges
Of hem that stoden there aboute:
For love is everemore in doute,
If that it be wisly governed
Of hem that ben of love lerned.

Whan al was don, that dissh and cuppe
And cloth and bord and al was uppe,
Thei waken whil hem lest to wake,
And after that thei leve take
And gon to bedde forto reste.
And whan him thoghte for the beste,
That every man was faste aslepe,
Jason, that wolde his time kepe,
Goth forth stalkende al prively
Unto the chambre, and redely
Ther was a Maide, which him kepte.
Medea wok and nothing slepte,
Bot natheles sche was abedde,
And he with alle haste him spedde
And made him naked and al warm.
Anon he tok hire in his arm:
What nede is forto speke of ese?
Hem list ech other forto plese,
So that thei hadden joie ynow:
And tho thei setten whanne and how
That sche with him awey schal stele.
With wordes suche and othre fele
Whan al was treted to an ende,

Jason tok leve and gan forth wende
Unto his oughne chambre in pes;
Ther wiste it non bot Hercules.

He slepte and ros whan it was time,
And whanne it fell towardes prime,
He tok to him suche as he triste
In secre, that non other wiste,
And told hem of his conseil there,
And seide that his wille were
That thei to Schipe hadde alle thinge
So priveliche in thevenynge,
That noman mihte here dede aspie
Bot tho that were of compaignie:
For he woll go withoute leve,
And lengere woll he noght beleve;
Bot he ne wolde at thilke throwe
The king or queene scholde it knowe.
Thei saide, “Al this schal wel be do:”
And Jason truste wel therto.

Medea in the mene while,
Which thoghte hir fader to beguile,
The Tresor which hir fader hadde
With hire al priveli sche ladde,
And with Jason at time set
Awey sche stal and fond no let,
And straght sche goth hire unto schipe
Of Grece with that felaschipe,
And thei anon drowe up the Seil.
And al that nyht this was conseil,
Bot erly, whan the Sonne schon,
Men syhe hou that thei were agon,
And come unto the king and tolde:
And he the sothe knowe wolde,

And axeth where his dowhter was.
Ther was no word bot Out, Allas!
Sche was ago. The moder wepte,
The fader as a wod man lepte,
And gan the time forto warie,
And swor his oth he wol noght tarie,
That with Caliphe and with galeie
The same cours, the same weie,
Which Jason tok, he wolde take,
If that he mihte him overtake.
To this thei seiden alle yee:
Anon thei weren ate See,
And alle, as who seith, at a word
Thei gon withinne schipes bord,
The Sail goth up, and forth thei strauhte.
Bot non espleit therof thei cauhte,
And so thei tornen hom ayein,
For al that labour was in vein.

Jason to Grece with his preie
Goth thurgh the See the rihte weie:
Whan he ther com and men it tolde,
Thei maden joie yonge and olde.
Eson, whan that he wiste of this,
Hou that his Sone comen is,
And hath achieved that he soughte
And hom with him Medea broughte,
In al the wyde world was non
So glad a man as he was on.
Togedre ben these lovers tho,
Til that thei hadden sones tuo,
Wherof thei weren bothe glade,
And olde Eson gret joie made
To sen thencress of his lignage;
For he was of so gret an Age,

That men awaiten every day,
Whan that he scholde gon away.
Jason, which sih his fader old,
Upon Medea made him bold,
Of art magique, which sche couthe,
And preith hire that his fader youthe
Sche wolde make ayeinward newe:
And sche, that was toward him trewe,
Behihte him that sche wolde it do,
Whan that sche time sawh therto.
Bot what sche dede in that matiere
It is a wonder thing to hiere,
Bot yit for the novellerie
I thenke tellen a partie.

Thus it befell upon a nyht,
Whan ther was noght bot sterreliht,
Sche was vanyssht riht as hir liste,
That no wyht bot hirself it wiste,
And that was ate mydnyht tyde.
The world was stille on every side;
With open hed and fot al bare,
Hir her tosprad sche gan to fare,
Upon hir clothes gert sche was,
Al specheles and on the gras
Sche glod forth as an Addre doth:
Non otherwise sche ne goth,
Til sche cam to the freisshe flod,
And there a while sche withstod.
Thries sche torned hire aboute,
And thries ek sche gan doun loute
And in the flod sche wette hir her,
And thries on the water ther
Sche gaspeth with a drecchinge onde,
And tho sche tok hir speche on honde.

Ferst sche began to clepe and calle
Upward unto the sterres alle,
To Wynd, to Air, to See, to lond
Sche preide, and ek hield up hir hond
To Echates, and gan to crie,
Which is goddesse of Sorcerie.
Sche seide, “Helpeth at this nede,
And as ye maden me to spede,
Whan Jason cam the Flees to seche,
So help me nou, I you beseche.”
With that sche loketh and was war,
Doun fro the Sky ther cam a char,
The which Dragouns aboute drowe:
And tho sche gan hir hed doun bowe,
And up sche styh, and faire and wel
Sche drof forth bothe char and whel
Above in thair among the Skyes.
The lond of Crete and tho parties
Sche soughte, and faste gan hire hye,
And there upon the hulles hyhe
Of Othrin and Olimpe also,
And ek of othre hulles mo,
Sche fond and gadreth herbes suote,
Sche pulleth up som be the rote,
And manye with a knyf sche scherth,
And alle into hir char sche berth.
Thus whan sche hath the hulles sought,
The flodes ther foryat sche nought,
Eridian and Amphrisos,
Peneie and ek Spercheïdos,
To hem sche wente and ther sche nom
Bothe of the water and the fom,
The sond and ek the smale stones,
Whiche as sche ches out for the nones,

And of the rede See a part,
That was behovelich to hire art,
Sche tok, and after that aboute
Sche soughte sondri sedes oute
In feldes and in many greves,
And ek a part sche tok of leves:
Bot thing which mihte hire most availe
Sche fond in Crete and in Thessaile.

In daies and in nyhtes Nyne,
With gret travaile and with gret pyne,
Sche was pourveid of every piece,
And torneth homward into Grece.
Before the gates of Eson
Hir char sche let awai to gon,
And tok out ferst that was therinne;
For tho sche thoghte to beginne
Such thing as semeth impossible,
And made hirselven invisible,
As sche that was with Air enclosed
And mihte of noman be desclosed.
Sche tok up turves of the lond
Withoute helpe of mannes hond,
Al heled with the grene gras,
Of which an Alter mad ther was
Unto Echates the goddesse
Of art magique and the maistresse,
And eft an other to Juvente,
As sche which dede hir hole entente.
Tho tok sche fieldwode and verveyne,
Of herbes ben noght betre tueine,
Of which anon withoute let
These alters ben aboute set:
Tuo sondri puttes faste by
Sche made, and with that hastely

A wether which was blak sche slouh,
And out therof the blod sche drouh
And dede into the pettes tuo;
Warm melk sche putte also therto
With hony meynd: and in such wise
Sche gan to make hir sacrifice,
And cride and preide forth withal
To Pluto the god infernal,
And to the queene Proserpine.
And so sche soghte out al the line
Of hem that longen to that craft,
Behinde was no name laft,
And preide hem alle, as sche wel couthe,
To grante Eson his ferste youthe.

This olde Eson broght forth was tho,
Awei sche bad alle othre go
Upon peril that mihte falle;
And with that word thei wenten alle,
And leften there hem tuo al one.
And tho sche gan to gaspe and gone,
And made signes manyon,
And seide hir wordes therupon;
So that with spellinge of hir charmes
Sche tok Eson in bothe hire armes,
And made him forto slepe faste,
And him upon hire herbes caste.
The blake wether tho sche tok,
And hiewh the fleissh, as doth a cok;
On either alter part sche leide,
And with the charmes that sche seide
A fyr doun fro the Sky alyhte
And made it forto brenne lyhte.
Bot whan Medea sawh it brenne,
Anon sche gan to sterte and renne
The fyri aulters al aboute:
Ther was no beste which goth oute
More wylde than sche semeth ther:
Aboute hir schuldres hyng hir her,
As thogh sche were oute of hir mynde
And torned in an other kynde.
Tho lay ther certein wode cleft,
Of which the pieces nou and eft
Sche made hem in the pettes wete,
And put hem in the fyri hete,
And tok the brond with al the blase,

And thries sche began to rase
Aboute Eson, ther as he slepte;
And eft with water, which sche kepte,
Sche made a cercle aboute him thries,
And eft with fyr of sulphre twyes:
Ful many an other thing sche dede,
Which is noght writen in this stede.
Bot tho sche ran so up and doun,
Sche made many a wonder soun,
Somtime lich unto the cock,
Somtime unto the Laverock,
Somtime kacleth as a Hen,
Somtime spekth as don the men:
And riht so as hir jargoun strangeth,
In sondri wise hir forme changeth,
Sche semeth faie and no womman;
For with the craftes that sche can
Sche was, as who seith, a goddesse,
And what hir liste, more or lesse,
Sche dede, in bokes as we finde,
That passeth over manneskinde.
Bot who that wole of wondres hiere,
What thing sche wroghte in this matiere,
To make an ende of that sche gan,
Such merveile herde nevere man.

Apointed in the newe Mone,
Whan it was time forto done,
Sche sette a caldron on the fyr,
In which was al the hole atir,
Wheron the medicine stod,
Of jus, of water and of blod,
And let it buile in such a plit,
Til that sche sawh the spume whyt;
And tho sche caste in rynde and rote,

And sed and flour that was for bote,
With many an herbe and many a ston,
Wherof sche hath ther many on:
And ek Cimpheius the Serpent
To hire hath alle his scales lent,
Chelidre hire yaf his addres skin,
And sche to builen caste hem in;
A part ek of the horned Oule,
The which men hiere on nyhtes houle;
And of a Raven, which was told
Of nyne hundred wynter old,
Sche tok the hed with al the bile;
And as the medicine it wile,
Sche tok therafter the bouele
Of the Seewolf, and for the hele
Of Eson, with a thousand mo
Of thinges that sche hadde tho,
In that Caldroun togedre as blyve
Sche putte, and tok thanne of Olyve
A drie branche hem with to stere,
The which anon gan floure and bere
And waxe al freissh and grene ayein.
Whan sche this vertu hadde sein,
Sche let the leste drope of alle
Upon the bare flor doun falle;
Anon ther sprong up flour and gras,
Where as the drope falle was,
And wox anon al medwe grene,
So that it mihte wel be sene.
Medea thanne knew and wiste
Hir medicine is forto triste,
And goth to Eson ther he lay,
And tok a swerd was of assay,
With which a wounde upon his side

Sche made, that therout mai slyde
The blod withinne, which was old
And sek and trouble and fieble and cold.
And tho sche tok unto his us
Of herbes al the beste jus,
And poured it into his wounde;
That made his veynes fulle and sounde:
And tho sche made his wounde clos,
And tok his hond, and up he ros;
And tho sche yaf him drinke a drauhte,
Of which his youthe ayein he cauhte,
His hed, his herte and his visage
Lich unto twenty wynter Age;
Hise hore heres were away,
And lich unto the freisshe Maii,
Whan passed ben the colde shoures,
Riht so recovereth he his floures.

Lo, what mihte eny man devise,
A womman schewe in eny wise
Mor hertly love in every stede,
Than Medea to Jason dede?
Ferst sche made him the flees to winne,
And after that fro kiththe and kinne
With gret tresor with him sche stal,
And to his fader forth withal
His Elde hath torned into youthe,
Which thing non other womman couthe:
Bot hou it was to hire aquit,
The remembrance duelleth yit.

King Peleüs his Em was ded,
Jason bar corone on his hed,
Medea hath fulfild his wille:
Bot whanne he scholde of riht fulfille

The trouthe, which to hire afore
He hadde in thyle of Colchos swore,
Tho was Medea most deceived.
For he an other hath received,
Which dowhter was to king Creon,
Creusa sche hihte, and thus Jason,
As he that was to love untrewe,
Medea lefte and tok a newe.
Bot that was after sone aboght:
Medea with hire art hath wroght
Of cloth of gold a mantel riche,
Which semeth worth a kingesriche,
And that was unto Creusa sent
In name of yifte and of present,
For Sosterhode hem was betuene;
And whan that yonge freisshe queene
That mantel lappeth hire aboute,
Anon therof the fyr sprong oute
And brente hir bothe fleissh and bon.
Tho cam Medea to Jason
With bothe his Sones on hire hond,
And seide, “O thou of every lond
The moste untrewe creature,
Lo, this schal be thi forfeture.”
With that sche bothe his Sones slouh
Before his yhe, and he outdrouh
His swerd and wold have slayn hir tho,
Bot farewel, sche was ago
Unto Pallas the Court above,
Wher as sche pleigneth upon love,
As sche that was with that goddesse,
And he was left in gret destresse.

Thus miht thou se what sorwe it doth
To swere an oth which is noght soth,
In loves cause namely.
Mi Sone, be wel war forthi,
And kep that thou be noght forswore:
For this, which I have told tofore,
Ovide telleth everydel.

Mi fader, I may lieve it wel,
For I have herde it ofte seie
Hou Jason tok the flees aweie
Fro Colchos, bot yit herde I noght
Be whom it was ferst thider broght.
And for it were good to hiere,
If that you liste at mi preiere
To telle, I wolde you beseche.

Mi Sone, who that wole it seche,
In bokes he mai finde it write;
And natheles, if thou wolt wite,
In the manere as thou hast preid
I schal the telle hou it is seid.

The fame of thilke schepes fell,
Which in Colchos, as it befell,
Was al of gold, schal nevere deie;
Wherof I thenke for to seie
Hou it cam ferst into that yle.
Ther was a king in thilke whyle
Towardes Grece, and Athemas
The Cronique of his name was;
And hadde a wif, which Philen hihte,
Be whom, so as fortune it dihte,
He hadde of children yonge tuo.
Frixus the ferste was of tho,
A knave child, riht fair withalle;

A dowhter ek, the which men calle
Hellen, he hadde be this wif.
Bot for ther mai no mannes lif
Endure upon this Erthe hiere,
This worthi queene, as thou miht hiere,
Er that the children were of age,
Tok of hire ende the passage,
With gret worschipe and was begrave.

What thing it liketh god to have
It is gret reson to ben his;
Forthi this king, so as it is,
With gret suffrance it underfongeth:
And afterward, as him belongeth,
Whan it was time forto wedde,
A newe wif he tok to bedde,
Which Yno hihte and was a Mayde,
And ek the dowhter, as men saide,
Of Cadme, which a king also
Was holde in thilke daies tho.
Whan Yno was the kinges make,
Sche caste hou that sche mihte make
These children to here fader lothe,
And schope a wyle ayein hem bothe,
Which to the king was al unknowe.
A yeer or tuo sche let do sowe
The lond with sode whete aboute,
Wherof no corn mai springen oute;
And thus be sleyhte and be covine
Aros the derthe and the famine
Thurghout the lond in such a wise,
So that the king a sacrifise
Upon the point of this destresse
To Ceres, which is the goddesse
Of corn, hath schape him forto yive,

To loke if it mai be foryive,
The meschief which was in his lond.
Bot sche, which knew tofor the hond
The circumstance of al this thing,
Ayein the cominge of the king
Into the temple, hath schape so,
Of hire acord that alle tho
Whiche of the temple prestes were
Have seid and full declared there
Unto the king, bot if so be
That he delivere the contre
Of Frixus and of Hellen bothe,
With whom the goddes ben so wrothe,
That whil tho children ben therinne,
Such tilthe schal noman beginne,
Wherof to gete him eny corn.
Thus was it seid, thus was it sworn
Of all the Prestes that ther are;
And sche which causeth al this fare
Seid ek therto what that sche wolde,
And every man thanne after tolde
So as the queene hem hadde preid.

The king, which hath his Ere leid,
And lieveth al that evere he herde,
Unto here tale thus ansuerde,
And seith that levere him is to chese
Hise children bothe forto lese,
Than him and al the remenant
Of hem whiche are aportenant
Unto the lond which he schal kepe:
And bad his wif to take kepe
In what manere is best to done,
That thei delivered weren sone
Out of this world. And sche anon

Tuo men ordeigneth forto gon;
Bot ferst sche made hem forto swere
That thei the children scholden bere
Unto the See, that non it knowe,
And hem therinne bothe throwe.

The children to the See ben lad,
Wher in the wise as Yno bad
These men be redy forto do.
Bot the goddesse which Juno
Is hote, appiereth in the stede,
And hath unto the men forbede
That thei the children noght ne sle;
Bot bad hem loke into the See
And taken hiede of that thei sihen.
Ther swam a Schep tofore here yhen,
Whos flees of burned gold was al;
And this goddesse forth withal
Comandeth that withoute lette
Thei scholde anon these children sette
Above upon this Schepes bak;
And al was do, riht as sche spak,
Wherof the men gon hom ayein.
And fell so, as the bokes sein,
Hellen the yonge Mayden tho,
Which of the See was wo bego,
For pure drede hire herte hath lore,
That fro the Schep, which hath hire bore,
As sche that was swounende feint,
Sche fell, and hath hirselve dreint;
With Frixus and this Schep forth swam,
Til he to thyle of Colchos cam,
Where Juno the goddesse he fond,
Which tok the Schep unto the lond,
And sette it there in such a wise

As thou tofore hast herd devise,
Wherof cam after al the wo,
Why Jason was forswore so
Unto Medee, as it is spoke.

Mi fader, who that hath tobroke
His trouthe, as ye have told above,
He is noght worthi forto love
Ne be beloved, as me semeth:
Bot every newe love quemeth
To him which newefongel is.
And natheles nou after this,
If that you list to taken hiede
Upon mi Schrifte to procede,
In loves cause ayein the vice
Of covoitise and Avarice
What ther is more I wolde wite.

Mi Sone, this I finde write,
Ther is yit on of thilke brood,
Which only for the worldes good,
To make a Tresor of Moneie,
Put alle conscience aweie:
Wherof in thi confession
The name and the condicion
I schal hierafterward declare,
Which makth on riche, an other bare.

Upon the bench sittende on hih
With Avarice Usure I sih,
Full clothed of his oghne suite,
Which after gold makth chace and suite
With his brocours, that renne aboute
Lich unto racches in a route.
Such lucre is non above grounde,
Which is noght of tho racches founde;

For wher thei se beyete sterte,
That schal hem in no wise asterte,
Bot thei it dryve into the net
Of lucre, which Usure hath set.
Usure with the riche duelleth,
To al that evere he beith and selleth
He hath ordeined of his sleyhte
Mesure double and double weyhte:
Outward he selleth be the lasse,
And with the more he makth his tasse,
Wherof his hous is full withinne.
He reccheth noght, be so he winne,
Though that ther lese ten or tuelve:
His love is al toward himselve
And to non other, bot he se
That he mai winne suche thre;
For wher he schal oght yive or lene,
He wol ayeinward take a bene,
Ther he hath lent the smale pese.
And riht so ther ben manye of these
Lovers, that thogh thei love a lyte,
That scarsly wolde it weie a myte,
Yit wolde thei have a pound again,
As doth Usure in his bargain.
Bot certes such usure unliche,
It falleth more unto the riche,
Als wel of love as of beyete,
Than unto hem that be noght grete,
And, as who seith, ben simple and povere;
For sielden is whan thei recovere,
Bot if it be thurgh gret decerte.
And natheles men se poverte
With porsuite and continuance
Fulofte make a gret chevance

And take of love his avantage,
Forth with the help of his brocage,
That maken seme wher is noght.
And thus fulofte is love boght
For litel what, and mochel take,
With false weyhtes that thei make.

Nou, Sone, of that I seide above
Thou wost what Usure is of love:
Tell me forthi what so thou wilt,
If thou therof hast eny gilt.

Mi fader, nay, for ought I hiere.
For of tho pointz ye tolden hiere
I wol you be mi trouthe assure,
Mi weyhte of love and mi mesure
Hath be mor large and mor certein
Than evere I tok of love ayein:
For so yit couthe I nevere of sleyhte,
To take ayein be double weyhte
Of love mor than I have yive.
For als so wiss mot I be schrive
And have remission of Sinne,
As so yit couthe I nevere winne,
Ne yit so mochel, soth to sein,
That evere I mihte have half ayein
Of so full love as I have lent:
And if myn happ were so wel went,
That for the hole I mihte have half,
Me thenkth I were a goddeshalf.
For where Usure wole have double,
Mi conscience is noght so trouble,
I biede nevere as to my del
Bot of the hole an halvendel;
That is non excess, as me thenketh.

Bot natheles it me forthenketh;
For wel I wot that wol noght be,
For every day the betre I se
That hou so evere I yive or lene
Mi love in place ther I mene,
For oght that evere I axe or crave,
I can nothing ayeinward have.
Bot yit for that I wol noght lete,
What so befalle of mi beyete,
That I ne schal hire yive and lene
Mi love and al mi thoght so clene,
That toward me schal noght beleve.
And if sche of hire goode leve
Rewarde wol me noght again,
I wot the laste of my bargain
Schal stonde upon so gret a lost,
That I mai neveremor the cost
Recovere in this world til I die.
So that touchende of this partie
I mai me wel excuse and schal;
And forto speke forth withal,
If eny brocour for me wente,
That point cam nevere in myn entente:
So that the more me merveilleth,
What thing it is mi ladi eilleth,
That al myn herte and al my time
Sche hath, and doth no betre bime.

I have herd seid that thoght is fre,
And natheles in privete
To you, mi fader, that ben hiere
Min hole schrifte forto hiere,
I dar min herte wel desclose.
Touchende usure, as I suppose,
Which as ye telle in love is used,

Mi ladi mai noght ben excused;
That for o lokinge of hire yë
Min hole herte til I dye
With al that evere I may and can
Sche hath me wonne to hire man:
Wherof, me thenkth, good reson wolde
That sche somdel rewarde scholde,
And yive a part, ther sche hath al.
I not what falle hierafter schal,
Bot into nou yit dar I sein,
Hire liste nevere yive ayein
A goodli word in such a wise,
Wherof min hope mihte arise,
Mi grete love to compense.
I not hou sche hire conscience
Excuse wole of this usure;
Be large weyhte and gret mesure
Sche hath mi love, and I have noght
Of that which I have diere boght,
And with myn herte I have it paid;
Bot al that is asyde laid,
And I go loveles aboute.
Hire oghte stonde if ful gret doute,
Til sche redresce such a sinne,
That sche wole al mi love winne
And yifth me noght to live by:
Noght als so moche as “grant mercy”
Hir list to seie, of which I mihte
Som of mi grete peine allyhte.
Bot of this point, lo, thus I fare
As he that paith for his chaffare,
And beith it diere, and yit hath non,
So mot he nedes povere gon:
Thus beie I diere and have no love,

That I ne mai noght come above
To winne of love non encress.
Bot I me wole natheles
Touchende usure of love aquite;
And if mi ladi be to wyte,
I preie to god such grace hir sende
That sche be time it mot amende.

Mi Sone, of that thou hast ansuerd
Touchende Usure I have al herd,
Hou thou of love hast wonne smale:
Bot that thou tellest in thi tale
And thi ladi therof accusest,
Me thenkth tho wordes thou misusest.
For be thin oghne knowlechinge
Thou seist hou sche for o lokinge
Thin hole herte fro the tok:
Sche mai be such, that hire o lok
Is worth thin herte manyfold;
So hast thou wel thin herte sold,
Whan thou hast that is more worth.
And ek of that thou tellest forth,
Hou that hire weyhte of love unevene
Is unto thin, under the hevene
Stod nevere in evene that balance
Which stant in loves governance.
Such is the statut of his lawe,
That thogh thi love more drawe
And peise in the balance more,
Thou miht noght axe ayein therfore
Of duete, bot al of grace.
For love is lord in every place,
Ther mai no lawe him justefie

Be reddour ne be compaignie,
That he ne wole after his wille
Whom that him liketh spede or spille.

To love a man mai wel beginne,
Bot whether he schal lese or winne,
That wot noman til ate laste:
Forthi coveite noght to faste,
Mi Sone, bot abyd thin ende,
Per cas al mai to goode wende.
Bot that thou hast me told and said,
Of o thing I am riht wel paid,
That thou be sleyhte ne be guile
Of no brocour hast otherwhile
Engined love, for such dede
Is sore venged, as I rede.

Brocours of love that deceiven,
No wonder is thogh thei receiven
After the wrong that thei decerven;
For whom as evere that thei serven
And do plesance for a whyle,
Yit ate laste here oghne guile
Upon here oghne hed descendeth,
Which god of his vengance sendeth,
As be ensample of time go
A man mai finde it hath be so.
It fell somtime, as it was sene,
The hihe goddesse and the queene
Juno tho hadde in compainie
A Maiden full of tricherie;
For sche was evere in on acord
With Jupiter, that was hire lord,
To gete him othre loves newe,
Thurgh such brocage and was untrewe

Al otherwise than him nedeth.
Bot sche, which of no schame dredeth,
With queinte wordes and with slyhe
Blente in such wise hir lady yhe,
As sche to whom that Juno triste,
So that therof sche nothing wiste.
Bot so prive mai be nothing,
That it ne comth to knowleching;
Thing don upon the derke nyht
Is after knowe on daies liht:
So it befell, that ate laste
Al that this slyhe maiden caste
Was overcast and overthrowe.
For as the sothe mot be knowe,
To Juno was don understonde
In what manere hir housebonde
With fals brocage hath take usure
Of love mor than his mesure,
Whan he tok othre than his wif,
Wherof this mayden was gultif,
Which hadde ben of his assent.
And thus was al the game schent;
She soffreth him, as sche mot nede,
Bot the brocour of his misdede,
Sche which hir conseil yaf therto,
On hire is the vengance do:
For Juno with hire wordes hote,
This Maiden, which Eccho was hote,
Reproveth and seith in this wise:
“O traiteresse, of which servise
Hast thou thin oghne ladi served!
Thou hast gret peine wel deserved,
That thou canst maken it so queinte,
Thi slyhe wordes forto peinte

Towardes me, that am thi queene,
Wherof thou madest me to wene
That myn housbonde trewe were,
Whan that he loveth elleswhere,
Al be it so him nedeth noght.
Bot upon thee it schal be boght,
Which art prive to tho doinges,
And me fulofte of thi lesinges
Deceived hast: nou is the day
That I thi while aquite may;
And for thou hast to me conceled
That my lord hath with othre deled,
I schal thee sette in such a kende,
That evere unto the worldes ende
Al that thou hierest thou schalt telle,
And clappe it out as doth a belle."
And with that word sche was forschape,
Ther may no vois hire mouth ascape,
What man that in the wodes crieth,
Withoute faile Eccho replieth,
And what word that him list to sein,
The same word sche seith ayein.
Thus sche, which whilom hadde leve
To duelle in chambre, mot beleve
In wodes and on helles bothe,
For such brocage as wyves lothe,
Which doth here lordes hertes change
And love in other place strange.

Forthi, if evere it so befalle,
That thou, mi Sone, amonges alle
Be wedded man, hold that thou hast,
For thanne al other love is wast.
O wif schal wel to thee suffise,
And thanne, if thou for covoitise

Of love woldest axe more,
Thou scholdest don ayein the lore
Of alle hem that trewe be.

Mi fader, as in this degre
My conscience is noght accused;
For I no such brocage have used,
Wherof that lust of love is wonne.
Forthi spek forth, as ye begonne,
Of Avarice upon mi schrifte.

Mi Sone, I schal the branches schifte
Be ordre so as thei ben set,
On whom no good is wel beset.

Blinde Avarice of his lignage
For conseil and for cousinage,
To be withholde ayein largesse,
Hath on, whos name is seid Skarsnesse,
The which is kepere of his hous,
And is so thurghout averous,
That he no good let out of honde;
Thogh god himself it wolde fonde,
Of yifte scholde he nothing have;
And if a man it wolde crave,
He moste thanne faile nede,
Wher god himselve mai noght spede.
And thus Skarsnesse in every place
Be reson mai no thonk porchace,
And natheles in his degree
Above all othre most prive
With Avarice stant he this.
For he governeth that ther is
In ech astat of his office
After the reule of thilke vice;
He takth, he kepth, he halt, he bint,

That lihtere is to fle the flint
Than gete of him in hard or neisshe
Only the value of a reysshe
Of good in helpinge of an other,
Noght thogh it were his oghne brother.
For in the cas of yifte and lone
Stant every man for him al one,
Him thenkth of his unkindeschipe
That him nedeth no felaschipe:
Be so the bagge and he acorden,
Him reccheth noght what men recorden
Of him, or it be evel or good.
For al his trust is on his good,
So that al one he falleth ofte,
Whan he best weneth stonde alofte,
Als wel in love as other wise;
For love is evere of som reprise
To him that wole his love holde.
Forthi, mi Sone, as thou art holde,
Touchende of this tell me thi schrifte:
Hast thou be scars or large of yifte
Unto thi love, whom thou servest?
For after that thou wel deservest
Of yifte, thou miht be the bet;
For that good holde I wel beset,
For why thou miht the betre fare;
Thanne is no wisdom forto spare.
For thus men sein, in every nede
He was wys that ferst made mede;
For where as mede mai noght spede,
I not what helpeth other dede:
Fulofte he faileth of his game
That wol with ydel hand reclame
His hauk, as many a nyce doth.

Forthi, mi Sone, tell me soth
And sei the trouthe, if thou hast be
Unto thy love or skars or fre.

Mi fader, it hath stonde thus,
That if the tresor of Cresus
And al the gold Octovien,
Forth with the richesse Yndien
Of Perles and of riche stones,
Were al togedre myn at ones,
I sette it at nomore acompte
Than wolde a bare straw amonte,
To yive it hire al in a day,
Be so that to that suete may
I myhte like or more or lesse.
And thus be cause of my scarsnesse
Ye mai wel understonde and lieve
That I schal noght the worse achieve
The pourpos which is in my thoght.
Bot yit I yaf hir nevere noght,
Ne therto dorste a profre make;
For wel I wot sche wol noght take,
And yive wol sche noght also,
Sche is eschu of bothe tuo.
And this I trowe be the skile
Towardes me, for sche ne wile
That I have eny cause of hope,
Noght also mochel as a drope.
Bot toward othre, as I mai se,
Sche takth and yifth in such degre,
That as be weie of frendlihiede
Sche can so kepe hir wommanhiede,
That every man spekth of hir wel.
Bot sche wole take of me no del,
And yit sche wot wel that I wolde

Yive and do bothe what I scholde
To plesen hire in al my myht:
Be reson this wot every wyht,
For that mai be no weie asterte,
Ther sche is maister of the herte,
Sche mot be maister of the good.
For god wot wel that al my mod
And al min herte and al mi thoght
And al mi good, whil I have oght,
Als freliche as god hath it yive,
It schal ben hires, while I live,
Riht as hir list hirself commande.
So that it nedeth no demande,
To axe of me if I be scars
To love, for as to tho pars
I wole ansuere and seie no.

Mi Sone, that is riht wel do.
For often times of scarsnesse
It hath be sen, that for the lesse
Is lost the more, as thou schalt hiere
A tale lich to this matiere.

Skarsnesse and love acorden nevere,
For every thing is wel the levere,
Whan that a man hath boght it diere:
And forto speke in this matiere,
For sparinge of a litel cost
Fulofte time a man hath lost
The large cote for the hod.
What man that scars is of his good
And wol noght yive, he schal noght take:
With yifte a man mai undertake
The hihe god to plese and queme,
With yifte a man the world mai deme;

For every creature bore,
If thou him yive, is glad therfore,
And every gladschipe, as I finde,
Is confort unto loves kinde
And causeth ofte a man to spede.
So was he wys that ferst yaf mede,
For mede kepeth love in house;
Bot wher the men ben coveitouse
And sparen forto yive a part,
Thei knowe noght Cupides art:
For his fortune and his aprise
Desdeigneth alle coveitise
And hateth alle nygardie.
And forto loke of this partie,
A soth ensample, hou it is so,
I finde write of Babio;
Which hadde a love at his menage,
Ther was non fairere of hire age,
And hihte Viola be name;
Which full of youthe and ful of game
Was of hirself, and large and fre,
Bot such an other chinche as he
Men wisten noght in al the lond,
And hadde affaited to his hond
His servant, the which Spodius
Was hote. And in this wise thus
The worldes good of sufficance
Was had, bot likinge and plesance,
Of that belongeth to richesse
Of love, stod in gret destresse;
So that this yonge lusty wyht
Of thing which fell to loves riht
Was evele served overal,
That sche was wo bego withal,

Til that Cupide and Venus eke
A medicine for the seke
Ordeigne wolden in this cas.
So as fortune thanne was,
Of love upon the destine
It fell, riht as it scholde be,
A freissh, a fre, a frendly man
That noght of Avarice can,
Which Croceus be name hihte,
Toward this swete caste his sihte,
And ther sche was cam in presence.
Sche sih him large of his despence,
And amorous and glad of chiere,
So that hir liketh wel to hiere
The goodly wordes whiche he seide;
And therupon of love he preide,
Of love was al that he mente,
To love and for sche scholde assente,
He yaf hire yiftes evere among.
Bot for men sein that mede is strong,
It was wel seene at thilke tyde;
For as it scholde of ryht betyde,
This Viola largesce hath take
And the nygard sche hath forsake:
Of Babio sche wol no more,
For he was grucchende everemore,
Ther was with him non other fare
Bot forto prinche and forto spare,
Of worldes muk to gete encress.
So goth the wrecche loveles,
Bejaped for his Skarcete,
And he that large was and fre
And sette his herte to despende,

This Croceus, the bowe bende,
Which Venus tok him forto holde,
And schotte als ofte as evere he wolde.

Lo, thus departeth love his lawe,
That what man wol noght be felawe
To yive and spende, as I thee telle,
He is noght worthi forto duelle
In loves court to be relieved.
Forthi, my Sone, if I be lieved,
Thou schalt be large of thi despence.

Mi fader, in mi conscience
If ther be eny thing amis,
I wol amende it after this,
Toward mi love namely.

Mi Sone, wel and redely
Thou seist, so that wel paid withal
I am, and forthere if I schal
Unto thi schrifte specefie
Of Avarices progenie
What vice suieth after this,
Thou schalt have wonder hou it is,
Among the folk in eny regne
That such a vice myhte regne,
Which is comun at alle assaies,
As men mai finde nou adaies.

The vice lik unto the fend,
Which nevere yit was mannes frend,
And cleped is Unkindeschipe,
Of covine and of felaschipe
With Avarice he is withholde.
Him thenkth he scholde noght ben holde
Unto the moder which him bar;
Of him mai nevere man be war,

He wol noght knowe the merite,
For that he wolde it noght aquite;
Which in this world is mochel used,
And fewe ben therof excused.
To telle of him is endeles,
Bot this I seie natheles,
Wher as this vice comth to londe,
Ther takth noman his thonk on honde;
Thogh he with alle his myhtes serve,
He schal of him no thonk deserve.
He takth what eny man wol yive,
Bot whil he hath o day to live,
He wol nothing rewarde ayein;
He gruccheth forto yive o grein,
Wher he hath take a berne full.
That makth a kinde herte dull,
To sette his trust in such frendschipe,
Ther as he fint no kindeschipe;
And forto speke wordes pleine,
Thus hiere I many a man compleigne,
That nou on daies thou schalt finde
At nede fewe frendes kinde;
What thou hast don for hem tofore,
It is foryete, as it were lore.
The bokes speken of this vice,
And telle hou god of his justice,
Be weie of kinde and ek nature
And every lifissh creature,
The lawe also, who that it kan,
Thei dampnen an unkinde man.

It is al on to seie unkinde
As thing which don is ayein kinde,
For it with kinde nevere stod
A man to yelden evel for good.

For who that wolde taken hede,
A beste is glad of a good dede,
And loveth thilke creature
After the lawe of his nature
Which doth him ese. And forto se
Of this matiere Auctorite,
Fulofte time it hath befalle;
Wherof a tale amonges alle,
Which is of olde ensamplerie,
I thenke forto specefie.

To speke of an unkinde man,
I finde hou whilom Adrian,
Of Rome which a gret lord was,
Upon a day as he per cas
To wode in his huntinge wente,
It hapneth at a soudein wente,
After his chace as he poursuieth,
Thurgh happ, the which noman eschuieth,
He fell unwar into a pet,
Wher that it mihte noght be let.
The pet was dep and he fell lowe,
That of his men non myhte knowe
Wher he becam, for non was nyh,
Which of his fall the meschief syh.
And thus al one ther he lay
Clepende and criende al the day
For socour and deliverance,
Til ayein Eve it fell per chance,
A while er it began to nyhte,
A povere man, which Bardus hihte,
Cam forth walkende with his asse,
And hadde gadred him a tasse
Of grene stickes and of dreie
To selle, who that wolde hem beie,

As he which hadde no liflode,
Bot whanne he myhte such a lode
To toune with his Asse carie.
And as it fell him forto tarie
That ilke time nyh the pet,
And hath the trusse faste knet,
He herde a vois, which cride dimme,
And he his Ere to the brimme
Hath leid, and herde it was a man,
Which seide, "Ha, help hier Adrian,
And I wol yiven half mi good."

The povere man this understod,
As he that wolde gladly winne,
And to this lord which was withinne
He spak and seide, "If I thee save,
What sikernesse schal I have
Of covenant, that afterward
Thou wolt me yive such reward
As thou behihtest nou tofore?"

That other hath his othes swore
Be hevene and be the goddes alle,
If that it myhte so befalle
That he out of the pet him broghte,
Of all the goodes whiche he oghte
He schal have evene halvendel.

This Bardus seide he wolde wel;
And with this word his Asse anon
He let untrusse, and therupon
Doun goth the corde into the pet,
To which he hath at ende knet
A staf, wherby, he seide, he wolde
That Adrian him scholde holde.
Bot it was tho per chance falle,

Into that pet was also falle
An Ape, which at thilke throwe,
Whan that the corde cam doun lowe,
Al sodeinli therto he skipte
And it in bothe hise armes clipte.
And Bardus with his Asse anon
Him hath updrawe, and he is gon.
But whan he sih it was an Ape,
He wende al hadde ben a jape
Of faierie, and sore him dradde:
And Adrian eftsone gradde
For help, and cride and preide faste,
And he eftsone his corde caste;
Bot whan it cam unto the grounde,
A gret Serpent it hath bewounde,
The which Bardus anon up drouh.
And thanne him thoghte wel ynouh,
It was fantosme, bot yit he herde
The vois, and he therto ansuerde,
"What wiht art thou in goddes name?"

"I am," quod Adrian, "the same,
Whos good thou schalt have evene half."
Quod Bardus, "Thanne a goddes half
The thridde time assaie I schal":
And caste his corde forth withal
Into the pet, and whan it cam
To him, this lord of Rome it nam,
And therupon him hath adresced,
And with his hand fulofte blessed,
And thanne he bad to Bardus hale.
And he, which understod his tale,
Betwen him and his Asse al softe
Hath drawe and set him up alofte
Withouten harm al esely.

He seith noght ones “grant merci,”
Bot strauhte him forth to the cite,
And let this povere Bardus be.
And natheles this simple man
His covenant, so as he can,
Hath axed; and that other seide,
If so be that he him umbreide
Of oght that hath be speke or do,
It schal ben venged on him so,
That him were betre to be ded.
And he can tho non other red,
But on his asse ayein he caste
His trusse, and hieth homward faste:
And whan that he cam hom to bedde,
He tolde his wif hou that he spedde.
Bot finaly to speke oght more
Unto this lord he dradde him sore,
So that a word ne dorste he sein:
And thus upon the morwe ayein,
In the manere as I recorde,
Forth with his Asse and with his corde
To gadre wode, as he dede er,
He goth; and whan that he cam ner
Unto the place where he wolde,
He hath his Ape anon beholde,
Which hadde gadred al aboute
Of stickes hiere and there a route,
And leide hem redy to his hond,
Wherof he made his trosse and bond;
Fro dai to dai and in this wise
This Ape profreth his servise,
So that he hadde of wode ynouh.
Upon a time and as he drouh
Toward the wode, he sih besyde

The grete gastli Serpent glyde,
Til that sche cam in his presence,
And in hir kinde a reverence
Sche hath him do, and forth withal
A Ston mor briht than a cristall
Out of hir mouth tofore his weie
Sche let doun falle, and wente aweie,
For that he schal noght ben adrad.
Tho was this povere Bardus glad,
Thonkende god, and to the Ston
He goth an takth it up anon,
And hath gret wonder in his wit
Hou that the beste him hath aquit,
Wher that the mannes Sone hath failed,
For whom he hadde most travailed.
Bot al he putte in goddes hond,
And torneth hom, and what he fond
Unto his wif he hath it schewed;
And thei, that weren bothe lewed,
Acorden that he scholde it selle.
And he no lengere wolde duelle,
Bot forth anon upon the tale
The Ston he profreth to the sale;
And riht as he himself it sette,
The jueler anon forth fette
The gold and made his paiement,
Therof was no delaiement.

Thus whan this Ston was boght and sold,
Homward with joie manyfold
This Bardus goth; and whan he cam
Hom to his hous and that he nam
His gold out of his Purs, withinne
He fond his Ston also therinne,
Wherof for joie his herte pleide,

Unto his wif and thus he seide,
"Lo, hier my gold, lo, hier mi Ston!"
His wif hath wonder therupon,
And axeth him hou that mai be.
"Nou be mi trouthe I not," quod he,
"Bot I dar swere upon a bok,
That to my Marchant I it tok,
And he it hadde whan I wente:
So knowe I noght to what entente
It is nou hier, bot it be grace.
Forthi tomorwe in other place
I wole it fonde forto selle,
And if it wol noght with him duelle,
Bot crepe into mi purs ayein,
Than dar I saufly swere and sein,
It is the vertu of the Ston."

The morwe cam, and he is gon
To seche aboute in other stede
His Ston to selle, and he so dede,
And lefte it with his chapman there.
Bot whan that he cam elleswhere,
In presence of his wif at hom,
Out of his Purs and that he nom
His gold, he fond his Ston withal:
And thus it fell him overal,
Where he it solde in sondri place,
Such was the fortune and the grace.
Bot so wel may nothing ben hidd,
That it nys ate laste kidd:
This fame goth aboute Rome
So ferforth, that the wordes come
To themperour Justinian;
And he let sende for the man,
And axede him hou that it was.

And Bardus tolde him al the cas,
Hou that the worm and ek the beste,
Althogh thei maden no beheste,
His travail hadden wel aquit;
Bot he which hadde a mannes wit,
And made his covenant be mouthe
And swor therto al that he couthe
To parte and yiven half his good,
Hath nou foryete hou that it stod,
As he which wol no trouthe holde.

This Emperour al that he tolde
Hath herd, and thilke unkindenesse
He seide he wolde himself redresse.
And thus in court of juggement
This Adrian was thanne assent,
And the querele in audience
Declared was in the presence
Of themperour and many mo;
Wherof was mochel speche tho
And gret wondringe among the press.
Bot ate laste natheles
For the partie which hath pleigned
The lawe hath diemed and ordeigned
Be hem that were avised wel,
That he schal have the halvendel
Thurghout of Adrianes good.
And thus of thilke unkinde blod
Stant the memoire into this day,
Wherof that every wysman may
Ensamplen him, and take in mynde
What schame it is to ben unkinde;
Ayein the which reson debateth,
And every creature it hateth.

Forthi, mi Sone, in thin office
I rede fle that ilke vice.
For riht as the Cronique seith
Of Adrian, hou he his feith
Foryat for worldes covoitise,
Fulofte in such a maner wise
Of lovers nou a man mai se
Full manye that unkinde be:
For wel behote and evele laste
That is here lif; for ate laste,
Whan that thei have here wille do,
Here love is after sone ago.
What seist thou, Sone, to this cas?

Mi fader, I wol seie Helas,
That evere such a man was bore,
Which whan he hath his trouthe suore
And hath of love what he wolde,
That he at eny time scholde
Evere after in his herte finde
To falsen and to ben unkinde.
Bot, fader, as touchende of me,
I mai noght stonde in that degre;
For I tok nevere of love why,
That I ne mai wel go therby
And do my profit elles where,
For eny sped I finde there.
I dar wel thenken al aboute,
Bot I ne dar noght speke it oute;
And if I dorste, I wolde pleigne,
That sche for whom I soffre peine
And love hir evere aliche hote,
That nouther yive ne behote
In rewardinge of mi servise
It list hire in no maner wise.

I wol noght say that sche is kinde,
And forto sai sche is unkinde,
That dar I noght; bot god above,
Which demeth every herte of love,
He wot that on myn oghne side
Schal non unkindeschipe abide:
If it schal with mi ladi duelle,
Therof dar I nomore telle.
Nou, goode fader, as it is,
Tell me what thenketh you of this.

Mi Sone, of that unkindeschipe,
The which toward thi ladischipe
Thou pleignest, for sche wol thee noght,
Thou art to blamen of that thoght.
For it mai be that thi desir,
Thogh it brenne evere as doth the fyr,
Per cas to hire honour missit,
Or elles time com noght yit,
Which standt upon thi destine:
Forthi, mi Sone, I rede thee,
Thenk wel, what evere the befalle;
For noman hath his lustes alle.
Bot as thou toldest me before
That thou to love art noght forswore,
And hast don non unkindenesse,
Thou miht therof thi grace blesse:
And lef noght that continuance;
For ther mai be no such grevance
To love, as is unkindeschipe.
Wherof to kepe thi worschipe,
So as these olde bokes tale,
I schal thee telle a redi tale:
Nou herkne and be wel war therby,
For I wol telle it openly.

Mynos, as telleth the Poete,
The which whilom was king of Crete,
A Sone hadde and Androchee
He hihte: and so befell that he
Unto Athenes forto lere
Was send, and so he bar him there,
For that he was of hih lignage,
Such pride he tok in his corage,
That he foryeten hath the Scoles,
And in riote among the foles
He dede manye thinges wronge;
And useth thilke lif so longe,
Til ate laste of that he wroghte
He fond the meschief which he soghte,
Wherof it fell that he was slain.
His fader, which it herde sain,
Was wroth, and al that evere he mihte,
Of men of Armes he him dighte
A strong pouer, and forth he wente
Unto Athenys, where he brente
The pleine contre al aboute:
The Cites stode of him in doute,
As thei that no defence hadde
Ayein the pouer which he ladde.

Egeüs, which was there king,
His conseil tok upon this thing,
For he was thanne in the Cite:
So that of pes into tretee
Betwen Mynos and Egeüs
Thei felle, and ben acorded thus;
That king Mynos fro yer to yeere
Receive schal, as thou schalt here,
Out of Athenys for truage
Of men that were of myhti Age

Persones nyne, of whiche he schal
His wille don in special
For vengance of his Sones deth.
Non other grace ther ne geth,
Bot forto take the juise;
And that was don in such a wise,
Which stod upon a wonder cas.
For thilke time so it was,
Wherof that men yit rede and singe,
King Mynos hadde in his kepinge
A cruel Monstre, as seith the geste:
For he was half man and half beste,
And Minotaurus he was hote,
Which was begete in a riote
Upon Pasiphe, his oghne wif,
Whil he was oute upon the strif
Of thilke grete Siege at Troie.
Bot sche, which lost hath alle joie,
Whan that sche syh this Monstre bore,
Bad men ordeigne anon therfore:
And fell that ilke time thus,
Ther was a Clerk, on Dedalus,
Which hadde ben of hire assent
Of that hir world was so miswent;
And he made of his oghne wit,
Wherof the remembrance is yit,
For Minotaure such an hous,
Which was so strange and merveilous,
That what man that withinne wente,
Ther was so many a sondri wente,
That he ne scholde noght come oute,
But gon amased al aboute.
And in this hous to loke and warde
Was Minotaurus put in warde,

That what lif that therinne cam,
Or man or beste, he overcam
And slow, and fedde him therupon;
And in this wise many on
Out of Athenys for truage
Devoured weren in that rage.
For every yeer thei schope hem so,
Thei of Athenys, er thei go
Toward that ilke wofull chance,
As it was set in ordinance,
Upon fortune here lot thei caste;
Til that Theseüs ate laste,
Which was the kinges Sone there,
Amonges othre that ther were
In thilke yeer, as it befell,
The lot upon his chance fell.
He was a worthi kniht withalle;
And whan he sih this chance falle,
He ferde as thogh he tok non hiede,
Bot al that evere he mihte spiede,
With him and with his felaschipe
Forth into Crete he goth be Schipe;
Wher that the king Mynos he soghte,
And profreth all that he him oghte
Upon the point of here acord.

This sterne king, this cruel lord
Tok every day on of the Nyne,
And put him to the discipline
Of Minotaure, to be devoured;
Bot Theseüs was so favoured,
That he was kept til ate laste.
And in the meene while he caste
What thing him were best to do:
And fell that Adriagne tho,

Which was the dowhter of Mynos,
And hadde herd the worthi los
Of Theseüs and of his myht,
And syh he was a lusti kniht,
Hire hole herte on him sche leide,
And he also of love hir preide,
So ferforth that thei were al on.
And sche ordeigneth thanne anon
In what manere he scholde him save,
And schop so that sche dede him have
A clue of thred, of which withinne
Ferst ate dore he schal beginne
With him to take that on ende,
That whan he wolde ayeinward wende,
He mihte go the same weie.
And over this, so as I seie,
Of pich sche tok him a pelote,
The which he scholde into the throte
Of Minotaure caste rihte:
Such wepne also for him sche dighte,
That he be reson mai noght faile
To make an ende of his bataile;
For sche him tawhte in sondri wise,
Til he was knowe of thilke emprise,
Hou he this beste schulde quelle.
And thus, schort tale forto telle,
So as this Maide him hadde tawht,
Theseüs with this Monstre fawht,
Smot of his hed, the which he nam,
And be the thred, so as he cam,
He goth ayein, til he were oute.
Tho was gret wonder al aboute:

Mynos the tribut hath relessed,
And so was al the werre cessed
Betwen Athene and hem of Crete.

Bot now to speke of thilke suete,
Whos beaute was withoute wane,
This faire Maiden Adriane,
Whan that sche sih Theseüs sound,
Was nevere yit upon the ground
A gladder wyht that sche was tho.
Theseüs duelte a dai or tuo
Wher that Mynos gret chiere him dede:
Theseüs in a prive stede
Hath with this Maiden spoke and rouned,
That sche to him was abandouned
In al that evere that sche couthe,
So that of thilke lusty youthe
Al prively betwen hem tweie
The ferste flour he tok aweie.
For he so faire tho behihte
That evere, whil he live mihte,
He scholde hire take for his wif,
And as his oghne hertes lif
He scholde hire love and trouthe bere;
And sche, which mihte noght forbere,
So sore loveth him ayein,
That what as evere he wolde sein
With al hire herte sche believeth.
And thus his pourpos he achieveth,
So that assured of his trouthe
With him sche wente, and that was routhe.

Fedra hire yonger Soster eke,
A lusti Maide, a sobre, a meke,
Fulfild of alle curtesie,

For Sosterhode and compainie
Of love, which was hem betuene,
To sen hire Soster mad a queene,
Hire fader lefte and forth sche wente
With him, which al his ferste entente
Foryat withinne a litel throwe,
So that it was al overthrowe,
Whan sche best wende it scholde stonde.
The Schip was blowe fro the londe,
Wherin that thei seilende were;
This Adriagne hath mochel fere
Of that the wynd so loude bleu,
As sche which of the See ne kneu,
And preide forto reste a whyle.
And so fell that upon an yle,
Which Chyo hihte, thei ben drive,
Where he to hire his leve hath yive
That sche schal londe and take hire reste.
Bot that was nothing for the beste:
For whan sche was to londe broght,
Sche, which that time thoghte noght
Bot alle trouthe, and tok no kepe,
Hath leid hire softe forto slepe,
As sche which longe hath ben forwacched;
Bot certes sche was evele macched
And fer from alle loves kinde;
For more than the beste unkinde
Theseüs, which no trouthe kepte,
Whil that this yonge ladi slepte,
Fulfild of his unkindeschipe
Hath al foryete the goodschipe
Which Adriane him hadde do,
And bad unto the Schipmen tho
Hale up the seil and noght abyde,

And forth he goth the same tyde
Toward Athene, and hire alonde
He lefte, which lay nyh the stronde
Slepende, til that sche awok.
Bot whan that sche cast up hire lok
Toward the stronde and sih no wyht,
Hire herte was so sore aflyht,
That sche ne wiste what to thinke,
Bot drouh hire to the water brinke,
Wher sche behield the See at large.
Sche sih no Schip, sche sih no barge
Als ferforth as sche mihte kenne:
"Ha lord," sche seide, "which a Senne,
As al the world schal after hiere,
Upon this woful womman hiere
This worthi kniht hath don and wroght!
I wende I hadde his love boght,
And so deserved ate nede,
Whan that he stod upon his drede,
And ek the love he me behihte.
It is gret wonder hou he mihte
Towardes me nou ben unkinde,
And so to lete out of his mynde
Thing which he seide his oghne mouth.
Bot after this whan it is couth
And drawe into the worldes fame,
It schal ben hindringe of his name:
For wel he wot and so wot I,
He yaf his trouthe bodily,
That he myn honour scholde kepe."
And with that word sche gan to wepe,
And sorweth more than ynouh:
Hire faire tresces sche todrouh,
And with hirself tok such a strif,

That sche betwen the deth and lif
Swounende lay fulofte among.
And al was this on him along,
Which was to love unkinde so,
Wherof the wrong schal everemo
Stonde in Cronique of remembrance.
And ek it asketh a vengance
To ben unkinde in loves cas,
So as Theseüs thanne was,
Al thogh he were a noble kniht;
For he the lawe of loves riht
Forfeted hath in alle weie,
That Adriagne he putte aweie,
Which was a gret unkinde dede:
And after this, so as I rede,
Fedra, the which hir Soster is,
He tok in stede of hire, and this
Fel afterward to mochel teene.
For thilke vice of which I meene,
Unkindeschipe, where it falleth,
The trouthe of mannes herte it palleth,
That he can no good dede aquite:
So mai he stonde of no merite
Towardes god, and ek also
Men clepen him the worldes fo;
For he nomore than the fend
Unto non other man is frend,
Bot al toward himself al one.
Forthi, mi Sone, in thi persone
This vice above all othre fle.

Mi fader, as ye techen me,
I thenke don in this matiere.
Bot over this nou wolde I hiere,
Wherof I schal me schryve more.

Mi goode Sone, and for thi lore,
After the reule of coveitise
I schal the proprete devise
Of every vice by and by.
Nou herkne and be wel war therby.

In the lignage of Avarice,
Mi Sone, yit ther is a vice,
His rihte name it is Ravine,
Which hath a route of his covine.
Ravine among the maistres duelleth,
And with his servantz, as men telleth,
Extorcion is nou withholde:
Ravine of othre mennes folde
Makth his larder and paieth noght;
For wher as evere it mai be soght,
In his hous ther schal nothing lacke,
And that fulofte abyth the packe
Of povere men that duelle aboute.
Thus stant the comun poeple in doute,
Which can do non amendement;
For whanne him faileth paiement,
Ravine makth non other skile,
Bot takth be strengthe what he wile.

So ben ther in the same wise
Lovers, as I thee schal devise,
That whan noght elles mai availe,
Anon with strengthe thei assaile
And gete of love the sesine,
Whan thei se time, be Ravine.

Forthi, mi Sone, schrif thee hier,
If thou hast ben a Raviner
Of love.

Certes, fader, no:
For I mi ladi love so,
That thogh I were as was Pompeie,
That al the world me wolde obeie,
Or elles such as Alisandre,
I wolde noght do such a sklaundre;
It is no good man, which so doth.

In good feith, Sone, thou seist soth:
For he that wole of pourveance
Be such a weie his lust avance,
He schal it after sore abie,
Bot if these olde ensamples lie.

Nou, goode fader, tell me on,
So as ye cunne manyon,
Touchende of love in this matiere.

Nou list, mi Sone, and thou schalt hiere,
So as it hath befalle er this,
In loves cause hou that it is
A man to take be Ravine
The preie which is femeline.

Ther was a real noble king,
And riche of alle worldes thing,
Which of his propre enheritance
Athenes hadde in governance,
And who so thenke therupon,
His name was king Pandion.
Tuo douhtres hadde he be his wif,
The whiche he lovede as his lif;
The ferste douhter Progne hihte,
And the secounde, as sche wel mihte,
Was cleped faire Philomene,
To whom fell after mochel tene.
The fader of his pourveance

His doughter Progne wolde avance,
And yaf hire unto mariage
A worthi king of hih lignage,
A noble kniht eke of his hond,
So was he kid in every lond,
Of Trace he hihte Tereüs;
The clerk Ovide telleth thus.
This Tereüs his wif hom ladde,
A lusti lif with hire he hadde;
Til it befell upon a tyde,
This Progne, as sche lay him besyde,
Bethoughte hir hou it mihte be
That sche hir Soster myhte se,
And to hir lord hir will sche seide,
With goodly wordes and him preide
That sche to hire mihte go:
And if it liked him noght so,
That thanne he wolde himselve wende,
Or elles be som other sende,
Which mihte hire diere Soster griete,
And schape hou that thei mihten miete.
Hir lord anon to that he herde
Yaf his acord, and thus ansuerde:
"I wole," he seide, "for thi sake
The weie after thi Soster take
Miself, and bringe hire, if I may."
And sche with that, there as he lay,
Began him in hire armes clippe,
And kist him with hir softe lippe,
And seide, "Sire, grant mercy."
And he sone after was redy,
And tok his leve forto go;
In sori time dede he so.

This Tereüs goth forth to Schipe
With him and with his felaschipe;
Be See the rihte cours he nam,
Into the contre til he cam,
Wher Philomene was duellinge,
And of hir Soster the tidinge
He tolde, and tho thei weren glade,
And mochel joie of him thei made.
The fader and the moder bothe
To leve here douhter weren lothe,
Bot if thei weren in presence;
And natheles at reverence
Of him, that wolde himself travaile,
Thei wolden noght he scholde faile
Of that he preide, and yive hire leve:
And sche, that wolde noght beleve,
In alle haste made hire yare
Toward hir Soster forto fare,
With Tereüs and forth sche wente.
And he with al his hole entente,
Whan sche was fro hir frendes go,
Assoteth of hire love so,
His yhe myhte he noght withholde,
That he ne moste on hir beholde;
And with the sihte he gan desire,
And sette his oghne herte on fyre;
And fyr, whan it to tow aprocheth,
To him anon the strengthe acrocheth,
Til with his hete it be devoured,
The tow ne mai noght be socoured.
And so that tirant raviner,
Whan that sche was in his pouer,
And he therto sawh time and place,
As he that lost hath alle grace,

Foryat he was a wedded man,
And in a rage on hire he ran,
Riht as a wolf which takth his preie.
And sche began to crie and preie,
“O fader, o mi moder diere,
Nou help!” Bot thei ne mihte it hiere,
And sche was of to litel myht
Defense ayein so ruide a knyht
To make, whanne he was so wod
That he no reson understod,
Bot hield hire under in such wise,
That sche ne myhte noght arise,
Bot lay oppressed and desesed,
As if a goshauk hadde sesed
A brid, which dorste noght for fere
Remue: and thus this tirant there
Beraft hire such thing as men sein
Mai neveremor be yolde ayein,
And that was the virginite:
Of such Ravine it was pite.

Bot whan sche to hirselven com,
And of hir meschief hiede nom,
And knew hou that sche was no maide,
With wofull herte thus sche saide,
“O thou of alle men the worste,
Wher was ther evere man that dorste
Do such a dede as thou hast do?
That dai schal falle, I hope so,
That I schal telle out al mi fille,
And with mi speche I schal fulfille
The wyde world in brede and lengthe.
That thou hast do to me be strengthe,
If I among the poeple duelle,
Unto the poeple I schal it telle;

And if I be withinne wall
Of Stones closed, thanne I schal
Unto the Stones clepe and crie,
And tellen hem thi felonie;
And if I to the wodes wende,
Ther schal I tellen tale and ende,
And crie it to the briddes oute,
That thei schul hiere it al aboute.
For I so loude it schal reherce,
That my vois schal the hevene perce,
That it schal soune in goddes Ere.
Ha, false man, where is thi fere?
O mor cruel than eny beste,
Hou hast thou holden thi beheste
Which thou unto my Soster madest?
O thou, which alle love ungladest,
And art ensample of alle untrewe,
Nou wolde god mi Soster knewe,
Of thin untrouthe, hou that it stod!"
And he than as a Lyon wod
With hise unhappi handes stronge
Hire cauhte be the tresses longe,
With whiche he bond ther bothe hire armes,
That was a fieble dede of armes,
And to the grounde anon hire caste,
And out he clippeth also faste
Hire tunge with a peire scheres.
So what with blod and what with teres
Out of hire yhe and of hir mouth,
He made hire faire face uncouth:
Sche lay swounende unto the deth,
Ther was unethes eny breth;
Bot yit whan he hire tunge refte,
A litel part therof belefte,

Bot sche with al no word mai soune,
Bot chitre and as a brid jargoune.
And natheles that wode hound
Hir bodi hent up fro the ground,
And sente hir there as be his wille
Sche scholde abyde in prison stille
For everemo: bot nou tak hiede
What after fell of this misdede.

Whanne al this meschief was befalle,
This Tereüs, that foule him falle,
Unto his contre hom he tyh;
And whan he com his paleis nyh,
His wif al redi there him kepte.
Whan he hir sih, anon he wepte,
And that he dede for deceite,
For sche began to axe him streite,
"Wher is mi Soster?" And he seide
That sche was ded; and Progne abreide,
As sche that was a wofull wif,
And stod betuen hire deth and lif,
Of that sche herde such tidinge:
Bot for sche sih hire lord wepinge,
She wende noght bot alle trouthe,
And hadde wel the more routhe.
The Perles weren tho forsake
To hire, and blake clothes take;
As sche that was gentil and kinde,
In worschipe of hir Sostres mynde
Sche made a riche enterement,
For sche fond non amendement
To syghen or to sobbe more:
So was ther guile under the gore.

Nou leve we this king and queene,
And torne ayein to Philomene,
As I began to tellen erst.
Whan sche cam into prison ferst,
It thoghte a kinges douhter strange
To maken so soudein a change
Fro welthe unto so grete a wo;
And sche began to thenke tho,
Thogh sche be mouthe nothing preide,
Withinne hir herte thus sche seide:
"O thou, almyhty Jupiter,
That hihe sist and lokest fer,
Thou soffrest many a wrong doinge,
And yit it is noght thi willinge.
To thee ther mai nothing ben hid,
Thou wost hou it is me betid:
I wolde I hadde noght be bore,
For thanne I hadde noght forlore
Mi speche and mi virginite.
Bot, goode lord, al is in thee,
Whan thou therof wolt do vengance
And schape mi deliverance."
And evere among this ladi wepte,
And thoghte that sche nevere kepte
To ben a worldes womman more,
And that sche wissheth everemore.
Bot ofte unto hir Soster diere
Hire herte spekth in this manere,
And seide, "Ha, Soster, if ye knewe
Of myn astat, ye wolde rewe,
I trowe, and my deliverance
Ye wolde schape, and do vengance
On him that is so fals a man:
And natheles, so as I can,

I wol you sende som tokninge,
Wherof ye schul have knowlechinge
Of thing I wot, that schal you lothe,
The which you toucheth and me bothe."
And tho withinne a whyle als tyt
Sche waf a cloth of Selk al whyt
With lettres and ymagerie,
In which was al the felonie,
Which Tereüs to hire hath do;
And lappede it togedre tho
And sette hir signet therupon
And sende it unto Progne anon.
The messager which forth it bar,
What it amonteth is noght war;
And natheles to Progne he goth
And prively takth hire the cloth,
And wente ayein riht as he cam,
The court of him non hiede nam.

Whan Progne of Philomene herde,
Sche wolde knowe hou that it ferde,
And opneth that the man hath broght,
And wot therby what hath be wroght
And what meschief ther is befalle.
In swoune tho sche gan doun falle,
And efte aros and gan to stonde,
And eft sche takth the cloth on honde,
Behield the lettres and thymages;
Bot ate laste, "Of suche oultrages,"
Sche seith, "wepinge is noght the bote:"
And swerth, if that sche live mote,
It schal be venged otherwise.
And with that sche gan hire avise
Hou ferst sche mihte unto hire winne
Hir Soster, that noman withinne,

Bot only thei that were suore,
It scholde knowe, and schop therfore
That Tereüs nothing it wiste;
And yit riht as hirselven liste,
Hir Soster was delivered sone
Out of prison, and be the mone
To Progne sche was broght be nyhte.

Whan ech of other hadde a sihte,
In chambre, ther thei were al one,
Thei maden many a pitous mone;
Bot Progne most of sorwe made,
Which sihe hir Soster pale and fade
And specheles and deshonoured,
Of that sche hadde be defloured;
And ek upon hir lord sche thoghte,
Of that he so untreuly wroghte
And hadde his espousaile broke.
Sche makth a vou it schal be wroke,
And with that word sche kneleth doun
Wepinge in gret devocioun:
Unto Cupide and to Venus
Sche preide, and seide thanne thus:
"O ye, to whom nothing asterte
Of love mai, for every herte
Ye knowe, as ye that ben above
The god and the goddesse of love;
Ye witen wel that evere yit
With al mi will and al my wit,
Sith ferst ye schopen me to wedde,
That I lay with mi lord abedde,
I have be trewe in mi degre,
And evere thoghte forto be,
And nevere love in other place,
Bot al only the king of Trace,

Which is mi lord and I his wif.
Bot nou allas this wofull strif!
That I him thus ayeinward finde
The most untrewe and most unkinde
That evere in ladi armes lay.
And wel I wot that he ne may
Amende his wrong, it is so gret;
For he to lytel of me let,
Whan he myn oughne Soster tok,
And me that am his wif forsok."

Lo, thus to Venus and Cupide
Sche preide, and furthermor sche cride
Unto Appollo the hiheste,
And seide, "O myghti god of reste,
Thou do vengance of this debat.
Mi Soster and al hire astat
Thou wost, and hou sche hath forlore
Hir maidenhod, and I therfore
In al the world schal bere a blame
Of that mi Soster hath a schame,
That Tereüs to hire I sente:
And wel thou wost that myn entente
Was al for worschipe and for goode.
O lord, that yifst the lives fode
To every wyht, I prei thee hiere
Thes wofull Sostres that ben hiere,
And let ous noght to the ben lothe;
We ben thin oghne wommen bothe."

Thus pleigneth Progne and axeth wreche,
And thogh hire Soster lacke speche,
To him that alle thinges wot
Hire sorwe is noght the lasse hot:
Bot he that thanne had herd hem tuo,

Him oughte have sorwed everemo
For sorwe which was hem betuene.
With signes pleigneth Philomene,
And Progne seith, “It schal be wreke,
That al the world therof schal speke.”
And Progne tho seknesse feigneth,
Wherof unto hir lord sche pleigneth,
And preith sche moste hire chambres kepe,
And as hir liketh wake and slepe.
And he hire granteth to be so;
And thus togedre ben thei tuo,
That wolde him bot a litel good.
Nou herk hierafter hou it stod
Of wofull auntres that befelle:
Thes Sostres, that ben bothe felle,—
And that was noght on hem along,
Bot onliche on the grete wrong
Which Tereüs hem hadde do,—
Thei schopen forto venge hem tho.

This Tereüs be Progne his wif
A Sone hath, which as his lif
He loveth, and Ithis he hihte:
His moder wiste wel sche mihte
Do Tereüs no more grief
Than sle this child, which was so lief.
Thus sche, that was, as who seith, mad
Of wo, which hath hir overlad,
Withoute insihte of moderhede
Foryat pite and loste drede,
And in hir chambre prively
This child withouten noise or cry
Sche slou, and hieu him al to pieces:
And after with diverse spieces
The fleissh, whan it was so toheewe,

Sche takth, and makth therof a sewe,
With which the fader at his mete
Was served, til he hadde him ete;
That he ne wiste hou that it stod,
Bot thus his oughne fleissh and blod
Himself devoureth ayein kinde,
As he that was tofore unkinde.
And thanne, er that he were arise,
For that he scholde ben agrise,
To schewen him the child was ded,
This Philomene tok the hed
Betwen tuo disshes, and al wrothe
Tho comen forth the Sostres bothe,
And setten it upon the bord.
And Progne tho began the word,
And seide, “O werste of alle wicke,
Of conscience whom no pricke
Mai stere, lo, what thou hast do!
Lo, hier ben nou we Sostres tuo;
O Raviner, lo hier thi preie,
With whom so falsliche on the weie
Thou hast thi tirannye wroght.
Lo, nou it is somdel aboght,
And bet it schal, for of thi dede
The world schal evere singe and rede
In remembrance of thi defame:
For thou to love hast do such schame,
That it schal nevere be foryete.”
With that he sterte up fro the mete,
And schof the bord unto the flor,
And cauhte a swerd anon and suor
That thei scholde of his handes dye.
And thei unto the goddes crie
Begunne with so loude a stevene,

That thei were herd unto the hevene;
And in a twinclinge of an yhe
The goddes, that the meschief syhe,
Here formes changen alle thre.
Echon of hem in his degre
Was torned into briddes kinde;
Diverseliche, as men mai finde,
After thastat that thei were inne,
Here formes were set atwinne.
And as it telleth in the tale,
The ferst into a nyhtingale
Was schape, and that was Philomene,
Which in the wynter is noght sene,
For thanne ben the leves falle
And naked ben the buisshes alle.
For after that sche was a brid,
Hir will was evere to ben hid,
And forto duelle in prive place,
That noman scholde sen hir face
For schame, which mai noght be lassed,
Of thing that was tofore passed,
Whan that sche loste hir maidenhiede:
For evere upon hir wommanhiede,
Thogh that the goddes wolde hire change,
Sche thenkth, and is the more strange,
And halt hir clos the wyntres day.
Bot whan the wynter goth away,
And that Nature the goddesse
Wole of hir oughne fre largesse
With herbes and with floures bothe
The feldes and the medwes clothe,
And ek the wodes and the greves
Ben heled al with grene leves,
So that a brid hire hyde mai,

Betwen Averil and March and Maii,
Sche that the wynter hield hir clos,
For pure schame and noght aros,
Whan that sche seth the bowes thikke,
And that ther is no bare sticke,
Bot al is hid with leves grene,
To wode comth this Philomene
And makth hir ferste yeres flyht;
Wher as sche singeth day and nyht,
And in hir song al openly
Sche makth hir pleignte and seith, “O why,
O why ne were I yit a maide?”
For so these olde wise saide,
Which understoden what sche mente,
Hire notes ben of such entente.
And ek thei seide hou in hir song
Sche makth gret joie and merthe among,
And seith, “Ha, nou I am a brid,
Ha, nou mi face mai ben hid:
Thogh I have lost mi Maidenhede,
Schal noman se my chekes rede.”
Thus medleth sche with joie wo
And with hir sorwe merthe also,
So that of loves maladie
Sche makth diverse melodie,
And seith love is a wofull blisse,
A wisdom which can noman wisse,
A lusti fievere, a wounde softe:
This note sche reherceth ofte
To hem whiche understonde hir tale.
Nou have I of this nyhtingale,
Which erst was cleped Philomene,

Told al that evere I wolde mene,
Bothe of hir forme and of hir note,
Wherof men mai the storie note.

And of hir Soster Progne I finde,
Hou sche was torned out of kinde
Into a Swalwe swift of winge,
Which ek in wynter lith swounynge,
Ther as sche mai nothing be sene:
Bot whan the world is woxe grene
And comen is the Somertide,
Than fleth sche forth and ginth to chide,
And chitreth out in hir langage
What falshod is in mariage,
And telleth in a maner speche
Of Tereüs the Spousebreche.
Sche wol noght in the wodes duelle,
For sche wolde openliche telle;
And ek for that sche was a spouse,
Among the folk sche comth to house,
To do thes wyves understonde
The falshod of hire housebonde,
That thei of hem be war also,
For ther ben manye untrewe of tho.
Thus ben the Sostres briddes bothe,
And ben toward the men so lothe,
That thei ne wole of pure schame
Unto no mannes hand be tame;
For evere it duelleth in here mynde
Of that thei founde a man unkinde,
And that was false Tereüs.
If such on be amonges ous
I not, bot his condicion
Men sein in every region
Withinne toune and ek withoute

Nou regneth comunliche aboute.
And natheles in remembrance
I wol declare what vengance
The goddes hadden him ordeined,
Of that the Sostres hadden pleigned:
For anon after he was changed
And from his oghne kinde stranged,
A lappewincke mad he was,
And thus he hoppeth on the gras,
And on his hed ther stant upriht
A creste in tokne he was a kniht;
And yit unto this dai men seith,
A lappewincke hath lore his feith
And is the brid falseste of alle.

Bewar, mi Sone, er thee so falle;
For if thou be of such covine,
To gete of love be Ravine
Thi lust, it mai thee falle thus,
As it befell of Tereüs.

Mi fader, goddes forebode!
Me were levere be fortrode
With wilde hors and be todrawe,
Er I ayein love and his lawe
Dede eny thing or loude or stille,
Which were noght mi ladi wille.
Men sein that every love hath drede;
So folweth it that I hire drede,
For I hire love, and who so dredeth,
To plese his love and serve him nedeth.
Thus mai ye knowen be this skile
That no Ravine don I wile
Ayein hir will be such a weie;
Bot while I live, I wol obeie
Abidinge on hire courtesie,
If eny merci wolde hir plie.
Forthi, mi fader, as of this
I wot noght I have don amis:
Bot furthermore I you beseche,
Som other point that ye me teche,
And axeth forth, if ther be auht,
That I mai be the betre tauht.

Whan Covoitise in povere astat
Stant with himself upon debat
Thurgh lacke of his misgovernance,
That he unto his sustienance

Ne can non other weie finde
To gete him good, thanne as the blinde,
Which seth noght what schal after falle,
That ilke vice which men calle
Of Robberie, he takth on honde;
Wherof be water and be londe
Of thing which othre men beswinke
He get him cloth and mete and drinke.
Him reccheth noght what he beginne,
Thurgh thefte so that he mai winne:
Forthi to maken his pourchas
He lith awaitende on the pas,
And what thing that he seth ther passe,
He takth his part, or more or lasse,
If it be worthi to be take.
He can the packes wel ransake,
So prively berth non aboute
His gold, that he ne fint it oute,
Or other juel, what it be;
He takth it as his proprete.
In wodes and in feldes eke
Thus Robberie goth to seke,
Wher as he mai his pourpos finde.

And riht so in the same kinde,
My goode Sone, as thou miht hiere,
To speke of love in the matiere
And make a verrai resemblance,
Riht as a thief makth his chevance
And robbeth mennes good aboute
In wode and field, wher he goth oute,
So be ther of these lovers some,
In wylde stedes wher thei come
And finden there a womman able,
And therto place covenable,

Withoute leve, er that thei fare,
Thei take a part of that chaffare:
Yee, though sche were a Scheperdesse,
Yit wol the lord of wantounesse
Assaie, althogh sche be unmete,
For other mennes good is swete.
Bot therof wot nothing the wif
At hom, which loveth as hir lif
Hir lord, and sitt alday wisshinge
After hir lordes hom comynge:
Bot whan that he comth hom at eve,
Anon he makth his wif beleve,
For sche noght elles scholde knowe:
He telth hire hou his hunte hath blowe,
And hou his houndes have wel runne,
And hou ther schon a merye Sunne,
And hou his haukes flowen wel;
Bot he wol telle her nevere a diel
Hou he to love untrewe was,
Of that he robbede in the pas,
And tok his lust under the schawe
Ayein love and ayein his lawe.

Which thing, mi Sone, I thee forbede,
For it is an ungoodly dede.
For who that takth be Robberie
His love, he mai noght justefie
His cause, and so fulofte sithe
For ones that he hath be blithe
He schal ben after sory thries.
Ensample of suche Robberies
I finde write, as thou schalt hiere,
Acordende unto this matiere.

I rede hou whilom was a Maide,
The faireste, as Ovide saide,
Which was in hire time tho;
And sche was of the chambre also
Of Pallas, which is the goddesse
And wif to Marte, of whom prouesse
Is yove to these worthi knihtes.
For he is of so grete mihtes,
That he governeth the bataille;
Withouten him may noght availe
The stronge hond, bot he it helpe;
Ther mai no knyht of armes yelpe,
Bot he feihte under his banere.
Bot nou to speke of mi matiere,
This faire, freisshe, lusti mai,
Al one as sche wente on a dai
Upon the stronde forto pleie,
Ther cam Neptunus in the weie,
Which hath the See in governance;
And in his herte such plesance
He tok, whan he this Maide sih,
That al his herte aros on hih,
For he so sodeinliche unwar
Behield the beaute that sche bar.
And caste anon withinne his herte
That sche him schal no weie asterte,
Bot if he take in avantage
Fro thilke maide som pilage,
Noght of the broches ne the Ringes,
Bot of some othre smale thinges
He thoghte parte, er that sche wente;
And hire in bothe hise armes hente,
And putte his hond toward the cofre,
Wher forto robbe he made a profre,

That lusti tresor forto stele,
Which passeth othre goodes fele
And cleped is the maidenhede,
Which is the flour of wommanhede.
This Maiden, which Cornix be name
Was hote, dredende alle schame,
Sih that sche mihte noght debate,
And wel sche wiste he wolde algate
Fulfille his lust of Robberie,
Anon began to wepe and crie,
And seide, "O Pallas, noble queene,
Scheu nou thi myht and let be sene,
To kepe and save myn honour:
Help, that I lese noght mi flour,
Which nou under thi keie is loke."
That word was noght so sone spoke,
Whan Pallas schop recoverir
After the will and the desir
Of hire, which a Maiden was,
And sodeinliche upon this cas
Out of hire wommanisshe kinde
Into a briddes like I finde
Sche was transformed forth withal,
So that Neptunus nothing stal
Of such thing as he wolde have stole.
With fetheres blake as eny cole
Out of hise armes in a throwe
Sche flih before his yhe a Crowe;
Which was to hire a more delit,
To kepe hire maidenhede whit
Under the wede of fethers blake,
In Perles whyte than forsake
That no lif mai restore ayein.
Bot thus Neptune his herte in vein

Hath upon Robberie sett;
The bridd is flowe and he was let,
The faire Maide him hath ascaped,
Wherof for evere he was bejaped
And scorned of that he hath lore.

Mi Sone, be thou war therfore
That thou no maidenhode stele,
Wherof men sen deseses fele
Aldai befalle in sondri wise;
So as I schal thee yit devise
An other tale therupon,
Which fell be olde daies gon.

King Lichaon upon his wif
A dowhter hadde, a goodly lif,
A clene Maide of worthi fame,
Calistona whos rihte name
Was cleped, and of many a lord
Sche was besoght, bot hire acord
To love myhte noman winne,
As sche which hath no lust therinne;
Bot swor withinne hir herte and saide
That sche wolde evere ben a Maide.
Wherof to kepe hireself in pes,
With suche as Amadriades
Were cleped, wodemaydes, tho,
And with the Nimphes ek also
Upon the spring of freisshe welles
Sche schop to duelle and nagher elles.
And thus cam this Calistona
Into the wode of Tegea,
Wher sche virginite behihte
Unto Diane, and therto plihte
Her trouthe upon the bowes grene,

To kepe hir maidenhode clene.
Which afterward upon a day
Was priveliche stole away;
For Jupiter thurgh his queintise
From hire it tok in such a wise,
That sodeinliche forth withal
Hire wombe aros and sche toswal,
So that it mihte noght ben hidd.
And therupon it is betidd,
Diane, which it herde telle,
In prive place unto a welle
With Nimphes al a compainie
Was come, and in a ragerie
Sche seide that sche bathe wolde,
And bad that every maide scholde
With hire al naked bathe also.
And tho began the prive wo,
Calistona wax red for schame;
Bot thei that knewe noght the game,
To whom no such thing was befalle,
Anon thei made hem naked alle,
As thei that nothing wolden hyde:
Bot sche withdrouh hire evere asyde,
And natheles into the flod,
Wher that Diane hirselve stod,
Sche thoghte come unaperceived.
Bot therof sche was al deceived;
For whan sche cam a litel nyh,
And that Diane hire wombe syh,
Sche seide, “Awey, thou foule beste,
For thin astat is noght honeste
This chaste water forto touche;
For thou hast take such a touche,
Which nevere mai ben hol ayein.”

And thus goth sche which was forlein
With schame, and fro the Nimphes fledde,
Til whanne that nature hire spedde,
That of a Sone, which Archas
Was named, sche delivered was.
And tho Juno, which was the wif
Of Jupiter, wroth and hastif,
In pourpos forto do vengance
Cam forth upon this ilke chance,
And to Calistona sche spak,
And sette upon hir many a lak,
And seide, “Ha, nou thou art atake,
That thou thi werk myht noght forsake.
Ha, thou ungoodlich ypocrite,
Hou thou art gretly forto wyte!
Bot nou thou schalt ful sore abie
That ilke stelthe and micherie,
Which thou hast bothe take and do;
Wherof thi fader Lichao
Schal noght be glad, whan he it wot,
Of that his dowhter was so hot,
That sche hath broke hire chaste avou.
Bot I thee schal chastise nou;
Thi grete beaute schal be torned,
Thurgh which that thou hast be mistorned,
Thi large frount, thin yhen greie,
I schal hem change in other weie,
And al the feture of thi face
In such a wise I schal deface,
That every man thee schal forbere.”
With that the liknesse of a bere
Sche tok and was forschape anon.

Withinne a time and therupon
Befell that with a bowe on honde,
To hunte and gamen forto fonde,
Into that wode goth to pleie
Hir Sone Archas, and in his weie
It hapneth that this bere cam.
And whan that sche good hiede nam,
Wher that he stod under the bowh,
Sche kneu him wel and to him drouh;
For thogh sche hadde hire forme lore,
The love was noght lost therfore
Which kinde hath set under his lawe.
Whan sche under the wodesschawe
Hire child behield, sche was so glad,
That sche with bothe hire armes sprad,
As thogh sche were in wommanhiede,
Toward him cam, and tok non hiede
Of that he bar a bowe bent.
And he with that an Arwe hath hent
And gan to teise it in his bowe,
As he that can non other knowe,
Bot that it was a beste wylde.
Bot Jupiter, which wolde schylde
The Moder and the Sone also,
Ordeineth for hem bothe so,
That thei for evere were save.

Bot thus, mi Sone, thou myht have
Ensample, hou that it is to fle
To robbe the virginite
Of a yong innocent aweie:
And overthis be other weie,
In olde bokes as I rede,
Such Robberie is forto drede,
And nameliche of thilke good

Which every womman that is good
Desireth forto kepe and holde,
As whilom was be daies olde.
For if thou se mi tale wel
Of that was tho, thou miht somdiel
Of old ensample taken hiede,
Hou that the flour of maidenhiede
Was thilke time holde in pris.
And so it was, and so it is,
And so it schal for evere stonde:
And for thou schalt it understonde,
Nou herkne a tale next suiende,
Hou maidenhod is to commende.

Of Rome among the gestes olde
I finde hou that Valerie tolde
That what man tho was Emperour
Of Rome, he scholde don honour
To the virgine, and in the weie,
Wher he hire mette, he scholde obeie
In worschipe of virginite,
Which tho was of gret dignite.
Noght onliche of the wommen tho,
Bot of the chaste men also
It was commended overal:
And forto speke in special
Touchende of men, ensample I finde,

Phyryns, which was of mannes kinde
Above alle othre the faireste
Of Rome and ek the comelieste,
That wel was hire which him mihte
Beholde and have of him a sihte.
Thus was he tempted ofte sore;
Bot for he wolde be nomore

Among the wommen so coveited,
The beaute of his face streited
He hath, and threste out bothe hise yhen,
That alle wommen whiche him syhen
Thanne afterward, of him ne roghte:
And thus his maidehiede he boghte.
So mai I prove wel forthi,
Above alle othre under the Sky,
Who that the vertus wolde peise,
Virginite is forto preise,
Which, as thapocalips recordeth,
To Crist in hevene best acordeth.
So mai it schewe wel therfore,
As I have told it hier tofore,
In hevene and ek in Erthe also
It is accept to bothe tuo.

And if I schal more over this
Declare what this vertu is,
I finde write upon this thing
Of Valentinian the king
And Emperour be thilke daies,
A worthi knyht at alle assaies,
Hou he withoute Mariage
Was of an hundred wynter Age,
And hadde ben a worthi kniht
Bothe of his lawe and of his myht.
Bot whan men wolde his dedes peise
And his knyhthode of Armes preise,
Of that he dede with his hondes,
Whan he the kinges and the londes
To his subjeccion put under,
Of al that pris hath he no wonder,
For he it sette of non acompte,
And seide al that may noght amonte

Ayeins o point which he hath nome,
That he his fleissh hath overcome:
He was a virgine, as he seide;
On that bataille his pris he leide.
Lo nou, my Sone, avise thee.

Yee, fader, al this wel mai be,
Bot if alle othre dede so,
The world of men were sone go:
And in the lawe a man mai finde,
Hou god to man be weie of kinde
Hath set the world to multeplie;
And who that wol him justefie,
It is ynouh to do the lawe.
And natheles youre goode sawe
Is good to kepe, who so may,
I wol noght therayein seie nay.

Mi Sone, take it as I seie;
If maidenhod be take aweie
Withoute lawes ordinance,
It mai noght failen of vengance.
And if thou wolt the sothe wite,
Behold a tale which is write,
Hou that the King Agamenon,
Whan he the Cite of Lesbon
Hath wonne, a Maiden ther he fond,
Which was the faireste of the Lond
In thilke time that men wiste.
He tok of hire what him liste
Of thing which was most precious,
Wherof that sche was dangerous.
This faire Maiden cleped is
Criseide, douhter of Crisis,
Which was that time in special

Of thilke temple principal,
Wher Phebus hadde his sacrifice,
So was it wel the more vice.
Agamenon was thanne in weie
To Troieward, and tok aweie
This Maiden, which he with him ladde,
So grete a lust in hire he hadde.
Bot Phebus, which hath gret desdeign
Of that his Maiden was forlein,
Anon as he to Troie cam,
Vengance upon this dede he nam
And sende a comun pestilence.
Thei soghten thanne here evidence
And maden calculacion,
To knowe in what condicion
This deth cam in so sodeinly;
And ate laste redyly
The cause and ek the man thei founde:
And forth withal the same stounde
Agamenon opposed was,
Which hath beknowen al the cas
Of the folie which he wroghte.
And therupon mercy thei soghte
Toward the god in sondri wise
With preiere and with sacrifise,
The Maide and hom ayein thei sende,
And yive hire good ynouh to spende
For evere whil sche scholde live:
And thus the Senne was foryive
And al the pestilence cessed.

Lo, what it is to ben encressed
Of love which is evele wonne.
It were betre noght begonne
Than take a thing withoute leve,

Which thou most after nedes leve,
And yit have malgre forth withal.
Forthi to robben overal
In loves cause if thou beginne,
I not what ese thou schalt winne.
Mi Sone, be wel war of this,
For thus of Robberie it is.

Mi fader, youre ensamplerie
In loves cause of Robberie
I have it riht wel understonde.
Bot overthis, hou so it stonde,
Yit wolde I wite of youre aprise
What thing is more of Covoitise.

With Covoitise yit I finde
A Servant of the same kinde,
Which Stelthe is hote, and Mecherie
With him is evere in compainie.
Of whom if I schal telle soth,
He stalketh as a Pocok doth,
And takth his preie so covert,
That noman wot it in apert.
For whan he wot the lord from home,
Than wol he stalke aboute and rome;
And what thing he fint in his weie,
Whan that he seth the men aweie,
He stelth it and goth forth withal,
That therof noman knowe schal.
And ek fulofte he goth a nyht
Withoute Mone or sterreliht,
And with his craft the dore unpiketh,
And takth therinne what him liketh:
And if the dore be so schet,
That he be of his entre let,

He wole in ate wyndou crepe,
And whil the lord is faste aslepe,
He stelth what thing as him best list,
And goth his weie er it be wist.
Fulofte also be lyhte of day
Yit wole he stele and make assay;
Under the cote his hond he put,
Til he the mannes Purs have cut,
And rifleth that he fint therinne.
And thus he auntreth him to winne,
And berth an horn and noght ne bloweth,
For noman of his conseil knoweth;
What he mai gete of his Michinge,
It is al bile under the winge.
And as an hound that goth to folde
And hath ther taken what he wolde,
His mouth upon the gras he wypeth,
And so with feigned chiere him slypeth,
That what as evere of schep he strangle,
Ther is noman therof schal jangle,
As forto knowen who it dede;
Riht so doth Stelthe in every stede,
Where as him list his preie take.
He can so wel his cause make
And so wel feigne and so wel glose,
That ther ne schal noman suppose,
Bot that he were an innocent,
And thus a mannes yhe he blent:
So that this craft I mai remene
Withouten help of eny mene.

Ther be lovers of that degre,
Which al here lust in privete,
As who seith, geten al be Stelthe,
And ofte atteignen to gret welthe

As for the time that it lasteth.
For love awaiteth evere and casteth
Hou he mai stele and cacche his preie,
Whan he therto mai finde a weie:
For be it nyht or be it day,
He takth his part, whan that he may,
And if he mai nomore do,
Yit wol he stele a cuss or tuo.

Mi Sone, what seist thou therto?
Tell if thou dedest evere so.

Mi fader, hou?

Mi Sone, thus,—
If thou hast stolen eny cuss
Or other thing which therto longeth,
For noman suche thieves hongeth:
Tell on forthi and sei the trouthe.

Mi fader, nay, and that is routhe,
For be mi will I am a thief;
Bot sche that is to me most lief,
Yit dorste I nevere in privete
Noght ones take hire be the kne,
To stele of hire or this or that,
And if I dorste, I wot wel what:
And natheles, bot if I lie,
Be Stelthe ne be Robberie
Of love, which fell in mi thoght,
To hire dede I nevere noght.
Bot as men sein, wher herte is failed,
Ther schal no castell ben assailed;
Bot thogh I hadde hertes ten,
And were als strong as alle men,
If I be noght myn oghne man
And dar noght usen that I can,

I mai miselve noght recovere.
Thogh I be nevere man so povere,
I bere an herte and hire it is,
So that me faileth wit in this,
Hou that I scholde of myn acord
The servant lede ayein the lord:
For if mi fot wolde awher go,
Or that min hand wolde elles do,
Whan that myn herte is therayein,
The remenant is al in vein.
And thus me lacketh alle wele,
And yit ne dar I nothing stele
Of thing which longeth unto love:
And ek it is so hyh above,
I mai noght wel therto areche,
Bot if so be at time of speche,
Ful selde if thanne I stele may
A word or tuo and go my way.
Betwen hire hih astat and me
Comparison ther mai non be,
So that I fiele and wel I wot,
Al is to hevy and to hot
To sette on hond withoute leve:
And thus I mot algate leve
To stele that I mai noght take,
And in this wise I mot forsake
To ben a thief ayein mi wille
Of thing which I mai noght fulfille.
For that Serpent which nevere slepte
The flees of gold so wel ne kepte
In Colchos, as the tale is told,
That mi ladi a thousendfold
Nys betre yemed and bewaked,
Wher sche be clothed or be naked.

To kepe hir bodi nyht and day,
Sche hath a wardein redi ay,
Which is so wonderful a wyht,
That him ne mai no mannes myht
With swerd ne with no wepne daunte,
Ne with no sleihte of charme enchaunte,
Wherof he mihte be mad tame,
And Danger is his rihte name;
Which under lock and under keie,
That noman mai it stele aweie,
Hath al the Tresor underfonge
That unto love mai belonge.
The leste lokinge of hire yhe
Mai noght be stole, if he it syhe;
And who so gruccheth for so lyte,
He wolde sone sette a wyte
On him that wolde stele more.
And that me grieveth wonder sore,
For this proverbe is evere newe,
That stronge lokes maken trewe
Of hem that wolden stele and pyke:
For so wel can ther noman slyke
Be him ne be non other mene,
To whom Danger wol yive or lene
Of that tresor he hath to kepe.
So thogh I wolde stalke and crepe,
And wayte on eve and ek on morwe,
Of Danger schal I nothing borwe,
And stele I wot wel may I noght:
And thus I am riht wel bethoght,
Whil Danger stant in his office,
Of Stelthe, which ye clepe a vice,
I schal be gultif neveremo.
Therfore I wolde he were ago

So fer that I nevere of him herde,
Hou so that afterward it ferde:
For thanne I mihte yit per cas
Of love make som pourchas
Be Stelthe or be som other weie,
That nou fro me stant fer aweie.

Bot, fader, as ye tolde above,
Hou Stelthe goth a nyht for love,
I mai noght wel that point forsake,
That ofte times I ne wake
On nyhtes, whan that othre slepe;
Bot hou, I prei you taketh kepe.
Whan I am loged in such wise
That I be nyhte mai arise,
At som wyndowe and loken oute
And se the housinge al aboute,
So that I mai the chambre knowe
In which mi ladi, as I trowe,
Lyth in hir bed and slepeth softe,
Thanne is myn herte a thief fulofte:
For there I stonde to beholde
The longe nyhtes that ben colde,
And thenke on hire that lyth there.
And thanne I wisshe that I were
Als wys as was Nectanabus
Or elles as was Protheus,
That couthen bothe of nigromaunce
In what liknesse, in what semblaunce,
Riht as hem liste, hemself transforme:
For if I were of such a forme,
I seie thanne I wolde fle
Into the chambre forto se
If eny grace wolde falle,
So that I mihte under the palle

Som thing of love pyke and stele.
And thus I thenke thoghtes fele,
And thogh therof nothing be soth,
Yit ese as for a time it doth:
Bot ate laste whanne I finde
That I am falle into my mynde,
And se that I have stonde longe
And have no profit underfonge,
Than stalke I to mi bedd withinne.
And this is al that evere I winne
Of love, whanne I walke on nyht:
Mi will is good, bot of mi myht
Me lacketh bothe and of mi grace;
For what so that mi thoght embrace,
Yit have I noght the betre ferd.
Mi fader, lo, nou have ye herd
What I be Stelthe of love have do,
And hou mi will hath be therto:
If I be worthi to penance
I put it on your ordinance.

Mi Sone, of Stelthe I the behiete,
Thogh it be for a time swete,
At ende it doth bot litel good,
As be ensample hou that it stod
Whilom, I mai thee telle nou.

I preie you, fader, sei me hou.

Mi Sone, of him which goth be daie
Be weie of Stelthe to assaie,
In loves cause and takth his preie,
Ovide seide as I schal seie,
And in his Methamor he tolde
A tale, which is good to holde.

The Poete upon this matiere
Of Stelthe wrot in this manere.
Venus, which hath this lawe in honde
Of thing which mai noght be withstonde,
As sche which the tresor to warde
Of love hath withinne hir warde,
Phebum to love hath so constreigned,
That he withoute reste is peined
With al his herte to coveite
A Maiden, which was warded streyte
Withinne chambre and kept so clos,
That selden was whan sche desclos
Goth with hir moder forto pleie.
Leuchotoe, so as men seie,
This Maiden hihte, and Orchamus
Hir fader was; and befell thus.
This doughter, that was kept so deere,
And hadde be fro yer to yeere
Under hir moder discipline
A clene Maide and a Virgine,
Upon the whos nativite
Of comelihiede and of beaute
Nature hath set al that sche may,
That lich unto the fresshe Maii,
Which othre monthes of the yeer
Surmonteth, so withoute pier
Was of this Maiden the feture.
Wherof Phebus out of mesure
Hire loveth, and on every syde
Awaiteth, if so mai betyde,
That he thurgh eny sleihte myhte
Hire lusti maidenhod unrihte,
The which were al his worldes welthe.
And thus lurkende upon his stelthe

In his await so longe he lai,
Til it befell upon a dai,
That he thurghout hir chambre wall
Cam in al sodeinliche, and stall
That thing which was to him so lief.
Bot wo the while, he was a thief!
For Venus, which was enemie
Of thilke loves micherie,
Discovereth al the pleine cas
To Clymene, which thanne was
Toward Phebus his concubine.
And sche to lette the covine
Of thilke love, dedli wroth
To pleigne upon this Maide goth,
And tolde hire fader hou it stod;
Wherof for sorwe welnyh wod
Unto hire moder thus he saide:
"Lo, what it is to kepe a Maide!
To Phebus dar I nothing speke,
Bot upon hire I schal be wreke,
So that these Maidens after this
Mow take ensample, what it is
To soffre her maidenhed be stole,
Wherof that sche the deth schal thole."
And bad with that do make a pet,
Wherinne he hath his douhter set,
As he that wol no pite have,
So that sche was al quik begrave
And deide anon in his presence.
Bot Phebus, for the reverence
Of that sche hadde be his love,
Hath wroght thurgh his pouer above,
That sche sprong up out of the molde
Into a flour was named golde,

Which stant governed of the Sonne.
And thus whan love is evele wonne,
Fulofte it comth to repentaile.

Mi fader, that is no mervaile,
Whan that the conseil is bewreid.
Bot ofte time love hath pleid
And stole many a prive game,
Which nevere yit cam into blame,
Whan that the thinges weren hidde.
Bot in youre tale, as it betidde,
Venus discoverede al the cas,
And ek also brod dai it was,
Whan Phebus such a Stelthe wroghte,
Wherof the Maide in blame he broghte,
That afterward sche was so lore.
Bot for ye seiden nou tofore
Hou stelthe of love goth be nyhte,
And doth hise thinges out of syhte,
Therof me liste also to hiere
A tale lich to the matiere,
Wherof I myhte ensample take.

Mi goode Sone, and for thi sake,
So as it fell be daies olde,
And so as the Poete it tolde,
Upon the nyhtes micherie
Nou herkne a tale of Poesie.

The myhtieste of alle men
Whan Hercules with Eolen,
Which was the love of his corage,
Togedre upon a Pelrinage
Towardes Rome scholden go,
It fell hem be the weie so,
That thei upon a dai a Cave

Withinne a roche founden have,
Which was real and glorious
And of Entaile curious,
Be name and Thophis it was hote.
The Sonne schon tho wonder hote,
As it was in the Somer tyde;
This Hercules, which be his syde
Hath Eolen his love there,
Whan thei at thilke cave were,
He seide it thoghte him for the beste
That sche hire for the hete reste
Al thilke day and thilke nyht;
And sche, that was a lusti wyht,
It liketh hire al that he seide:
And thus thei duelle there and pleide
The longe dai. And so befell,
This Cave was under the hell
Of Tymolus, which was begrowe
With vines, and at thilke throwe
Faunus with Saba the goddesse,
Be whom the large wildernesse
In thilke time stod governed,
Weere in a place, as I am lerned,
Nyh by, which Bachus wode hihte.
This Faunus tok a gret insihte
Of Eolen, that was so nyh;
For whan that he hire beaute syh,
Out of his wit he was assoted,
And in his herte it hath so noted,
That he forsok the Nimphes alle,
And seide he wolde, hou so it falle,
Assaie an other forto winne;
So that his hertes thoght withinne
He sette and caste hou that he myhte

Of love pyke awey be nyhte
That he be daie in other wise
To stele mihte noght suffise:
And therupon his time he waiteth.

Nou tak good hiede hou love afaiteth
Him which withal is overcome.
Faire Eolen, whan sche was come
With Hercules into the Cave,
Sche seide him that sche wolde have
Hise clothes of and hires bothe,
That ech of hem scholde other clothe.
And al was do riht as sche bad,
He hath hire in hise clothes clad
And caste on hire his gulion,
Which of the Skyn of a Leoun
Was mad, as he upon the weie
It slouh, and overthis to pleie
Sche tok his grete Mace also
And knet it at hir gerdil tho.
So was sche lich the man arraied,
And Hercules thanne hath assaied
To clothen him in hire array:
And thus thei jape forth the dai,
Til that her Souper redy were.
And whan thei hadden souped there,
Thei schopen hem to gon to reste;
And as it thoghte hem for the beste,
Thei bede, as for that ilke nyht,
Tuo sondri beddes to be dyht,
For thei togedre ligge nolde,
Be cause that thei offre wolde
Upon the morwe here sacrifice.
The servantz deden here office
And sondri beddes made anon,

Wherin that thei to reste gon
Ech be himself in sondri place.
Faire Eole hath set the Mace
Beside hire beddes hed above,
And with the clothes of hire love
Sche helede al hire bed aboute;
And he, which hadde of nothing doute,
Hire wympel wond aboute his cheke,
Hire kertell and hire mantel eke
Abrod upon his bed he spredde.
And thus thei slepen bothe abedde;
And what of travail, what of wyn,
The servantz lich to drunke Swyn
Begunne forto route faste.

This Faunus, which his Stelthe caste,
Was thanne come to the Cave,
And fond thei weren alle save
Withoute noise, and in he wente.
The derke nyht his sihte blente,
And yit it happeth him to go
Where Eolen abedde tho
Was leid al one for to slepe;
Bot for he wolde take kepe
Whos bed it was, he made assai,
And of the Leoun, where it lay,
The Cote he fond, and ek he fieleth
The Mace, and thanne his herte kieleth,
That there dorste he noght abyde,
Bot stalketh upon every side
And soghte aboute with his hond,
That other bedd til that he fond,
Wher lai bewympled a visage.
Tho was he glad in his corage,
For he hir kertell fond also

And ek hir mantell bothe tuo
Bespred upon the bed alofte.
He made him naked thanne, and softe
Into the bedd unwar he crepte,
Wher Hercules that time slepte,
And wende wel it were sche;
And thus in stede of Eole
Anon he profreth him to love.
But he, which felte a man above,
This Hercules, him threw to grounde
So sore, that thei have him founde
Liggende there upon the morwe;
And tho was noght a litel sorwe,
That Faunus of himselve made,
Bot elles thei were alle glade
And lowhen him to scorne aboute:
Saba with Nimphis al a route
Cam doun to loke hou that he ferde,
And whan that thei the sothe herde,
He was bejaped overal.

Mi Sone, be thou war withal
To seche suche mecheries,
Bot if thou have the betre aspies,
In aunter if the so betyde
As Faunus dede thilke tyde,
Wherof thou miht be schamed so.

Min holi fader, certes no.
Bot if I hadde riht good leve,
Such mecherie I thenke leve:
Mi feinte herte wol noght serve;
For malgre wolde I noght deserve
In thilke place wher I love.
Bot for ye tolden hier above

Of Covoitise and his pilage,
If ther be more of that lignage,
Which toucheth to mi schrifte, I preie
That ye therof me wolde seie,
So that I mai the vice eschuie.

Mi Sone, if I be order suie
The vices, as thei stonde arowe,
Of Covoitise thou schalt knowe
Ther is yit on, which is the laste;
In whom ther mai no vertu laste,
For he with god himself debateth,
Wherof that al the hevene him hateth.

The hihe god, which alle goode
Pourveied hath for mannes fode
Of clothes and of mete and drinke,
Bad Adam that he scholde swinke
To geten him his sustienance:
And ek he sette an ordinance
Upon the lawe of Moises,
That though a man be haveles,
Yit schal he noght be thefte stele.
Bot nou adaies ther ben fele,
That wol no labour undertake,
Bot what thei mai be Stelthe take
Thei holde it sikerliche wonne.
And thus the lawe is overronne,
Which god hath set, and namely
With hem that so untrewely
The goodes robbe of holi cherche.
The thefte which thei thanne werche
Be name is cleped Sacrilegge,
Ayein the whom I thenke alegge.
Of his condicion to telle,

Which rifleth bothe bok and belle,
So forth with al the remenant
To goddes hous appourtenant,
Wher that he scholde bidde his bede,
He doth his thefte in holi stede,
And takth what thing he fint therinne:
For whan he seth that he mai winne,
He wondeth for no cursednesse,
That he ne brekth the holinesse
And doth to god no reverence;
For he hath lost his conscience,
That though the Prest therfore curse,
He seith he fareth noght the wurse.

And forto speke it otherwise,
What man that lasseth the franchise
And takth of holi cherche his preie,
I not what bedes he schal preie.
Whan he fro god, which hath yive al,
The Pourpartie in special,
Which unto Crist himself is due,
Benymth, he mai noght wel eschue
The peine comende afterward;
For he hath mad his foreward
With Sacrilegge forto duelle,
Which hath his heritage in helle.
And if we rede of tholde lawe,
I finde write, in thilke dawe
Of Princes hou ther weren thre
Coupable sore in this degre.
That on of hem was cleped thus,
The proude king Antiochus;
That other Nabuzardan hihte,
Which of his crualte behyhte
The temple to destruie and waste,

And so he dede in alle haste;
The thridde, which was after schamed,
Was Nabugodonosor named,
And he Jerusalem putte under,
Of Sacrilegge and many a wonder
There in the holi temple he wroghte,
Which Baltazar his heir aboghte,
Whan Mane, Techel, Phares write
Was on the wal, as thou miht wite,
So as the bible it hath declared.
Bot for al that it is noght spared
Yit nou aday, that men ne pile,
And maken argument and skile
To Sacrilegge as it belongeth,
For what man that ther after longeth,
He takth non hiede what he doth.

And riht so, forto telle soth,
In loves cause if I schal trete,
Ther ben of suche smale and grete:
If thei no leisir fynden elles,
Thei wol noght wonden for the belles,
Ne thogh thei sen the Prest at masse;
That wol thei leten overpasse.
If that thei finde here love there,
Thei stonde and tellen in hire Ere,
And axe of god non other grace,
Whyl thei ben in that holi place;
Bot er thei gon som avantage
Ther wol thei have, and som pilage
Of goodli word or of beheste,
Or elles thei take ate leste
Out of hir hand or ring or glove,
So nyh the weder thei wol love,
As who seith sche schal noght foryete,

Nou I this tokne of hire have gete:
Thus halwe thei the hihe feste.
Such thefte mai no cherche areste,
For al is leveful that hem liketh,
To whom that elles it misliketh.
And ek riht in the selve kinde
In grete Cites men mai finde
This lusti folk, that make it gay,
And waite upon the haliday:
In cherches and in Menstres eke
Thei gon the wommen forto seke,
And wher that such on goth aboute,
Tofore the faireste of the route,
Wher as thei sitten alle arewe,
Ther wol he most his bodi schewe,
His croket kembd and theron set
A Nouche with a chapelet,
Or elles on of grene leves,
Which late com out of the greves,
Al for he scholde seme freissh.
And thus he loketh on the fleissh,
Riht as an hauk which hath a sihte
Upon the foul, ther he schal lihte;
And as he were of faierie,
He scheweth him tofore here yhe
In holi place wher thei sitte,
Al forto make here hertes flitte.
His yhe nawher wole abyde,
Bot loke and prie on every syde
On hire and hire, as him best lyketh:
And otherwhile among he syketh;
Thenkth on of hem, “That was for me,”
And so ther thenken tuo or thre,
And yit he loveth non of alle,

Bot wher as evere his chance falle.
And natheles to seie a soth,
The cause why that he so doth
Is forto stele an herte or tuo,
Out of the cherche er that he go:
And as I seide it hier above,
Al is that Sacrilege of love;
For wel mai be he stelth away
That he nevere after yelde may.
Tell me forthi, my Sone, anon,
Hast thou do Sacrilege, or non,
As I have said in this manere?

Mi fader, as of this matiere
I wole you tellen redely
What I have do; bot trewely
I mai excuse min entente,
That nevere I yit to cherche wente
In such manere as ye me schryve,
For no womman that is on lyve.
The cause why I have it laft
Mai be for I unto that craft
Am nothing able so to stele,
Thogh ther be wommen noght so fele.
Bot yit wol I noght seie this,
Whan I am ther mi ladi is,
In whom lith holly mi querele,
And sche to cherche or to chapele
Wol go to matins or to messe,—
That time I waite wel and gesse,
To cherche I come and there I stonde,
And thogh I take a bok on honde,
Mi contienance is on the bok,
Bot toward hire is al my lok;
And if so falle that I preie

Unto mi god, and somwhat seie
Of Paternoster or of Crede,
Al is for that I wolde spede,
So that mi bede in holi cherche
Ther mihte som miracle werche
Mi ladi herte forto chaunge,
Which evere hath be to me so strange.
So that al mi devocion
And al mi contemplacion
With al min herte and mi corage
Is only set on hire ymage;
And evere I waite upon the tyde.
If sche loke eny thing asyde,
That I me mai of hire avise,
Anon I am with covoitise
So smite, that me were lief
To ben in holi cherche a thief;
Bot noght to stele a vestement,
For that is nothing mi talent,
Bot I wold stele, if that I mihte,
A glad word or a goodly syhte;
And evere mi service I profre,
And namly whan sche wol gon offre,
For thanne I lede hire, if I may,
For somwhat wolde I stele away.
Whan I beclippe hire on the wast,
Yit ate leste I stele a tast,
And otherwhile “grant mercy”
Sche seith, and so winne I therby
A lusti touch, a good word eke,
Bot al the remenant to seke
Is fro mi pourpos wonder ferr.
So mai I seie, as I seide er,
In holy cherche if that I wowe,

My conscience it wolde allowe,
Be so that up amendement
I mihte gete assignement
Wher forto spede in other place:
Such Sacrilege I holde a grace.
And thus, mi fader, soth to seie,
In cherche riht as in the weie,
If I mihte oght of love take,
Such hansell have I noght forsake.
Bot finali I me confesse,
Ther is in me non holinesse,
Whil I hire se in eny stede;
And yit, for oght that evere I dede,
No Sacrilege of hire I tok,
Bot if it were of word or lok,
Or elles if that I hir fredde,
Whan I toward offringe hir ledde,
Take therof what I take may,
For elles bere I noght away:
For thogh I wolde oght elles have,
Alle othre thinges ben so save
And kept with such a privilege,
That I mai do no Sacrilege.
God wot mi wille natheles,
Thogh I mot nedes kepe pes
And malgre myn so let it passe,
Mi will therto is noght the lasse,
If I mihte other wise aweie.
Forthi, mi fader, I you preie,
Tell what you thenketh therupon,
If I therof have gult or non.

Thi will, mi Sone, is forto blame,
The remenant is bot a game,
That I have herd the telle as yit.

Bot tak this lore into thi wit,
That alle thing hath time and stede,
The cherche serveth for the bede,
The chambre is of an other speche.
Bot if thou wistest of the wreche,
Hou Sacrilege it hath aboght,
Thou woldest betre ben bethoght;
And for thou schalt the more amende,
A tale I wole on the despende.

To alle men, as who seith, knowe
It is, and in the world thurgh blowe,
Hou that of Troie Lamedon
To Hercules and to Jasoun,
Whan toward Colchos out of Grece
Be See sailende upon a piece
Of lond of Troie reste preide,—
Bot he hem wrathfulli congeide:
And for thei founde him so vilein,
Whan thei come into Grece ayein,
With pouer that thei gete myhte
Towardes Troie thei hem dyhte,
And ther thei token such vengance,
Wherof stant yit the remembrance;
For thei destruide king and al,
And leften bot the brente wal.
The Grecs of Troiens many slowe
And prisoners thei toke ynowe,
Among the whiche ther was on,
The kinges doughter Lamedon,
Esiona, that faire thing,
Which unto Thelamon the king
Be Hercules and be thassent
Of al the hole parlement
Was at his wille yove and granted.

And thus hath Grece Troie danted,
And hom thei torne in such manere:
Bot after this nou schalt thou hiere
The cause why this tale I telle,
Upon the chances that befelle.

King Lamedon, which deide thus,
He hadde a Sone, on Priamus,
Which was noght thilke time at hom:
Bot whan he herde of this, he com,
And fond hou the Cite was falle,
Which he began anon to walle
And made ther a cite newe,
That thei whiche othre londes knewe
Tho seiden, that of lym and Ston
In al the world so fair was non.
And on that o side of the toun
The king let maken Ylioun,
That hihe Tour, that stronge place,
Which was adrad of no manace
Of quarel nor of non engin;
And thogh men wolde make a Myn,
No mannes craft it mihte aproche,
For it was sett upon a roche.
The walles of the toun aboute,
Hem stod of al the world no doute,
And after the proporcion
Sex gates weren of the toun
Of such a forme, of such entaile,
That hem to se was gret mervaile:
The diches weren brode and depe,
A fewe men it mihte kepe
From al the world, as semeth tho,
Bot if the goddes weren fo.
Gret presse unto that cite drouh,

So that ther was of poeple ynouh,
Of Burgeis that therinne duellen;
Ther mai no mannes tunge tellen
Hou that cite was riche of good.

Whan al was mad and al wel stod,
King Priamus tho him bethoghte
What thei of Grece whilom wroghte,
And what was of her swerd devoured,
And hou his Soster deshonoured
With Thelamon awey was lad:
And so thenkende he wax unglad,
And sette anon a parlement,
To which the lordes were assent.
In many a wise ther was spoke,
Hou that thei mihten ben awroke,
Bot ate laste natheles
Thei seiden alle, "Acord and pes."
To setten either part in reste
It thoghte hem thanne for the beste
With resonable amendement;
And thus was Anthenor forth sent
To axe Esionam ayein
And witen what thei wolden sein.
So passeth he the See be barge
To Grece forto seie his charge,
The which he seide redely
Unto the lordes by and by:
Bot where he spak in Grece aboute,
He herde noght bot wordes stoute,
And nameliche of Thelamon;
The maiden wolde he noght forgon,
He seide, for no maner thing,

And bad him gon hom to his king,
For there gat he non amende
For oght he couthe do or sende.

This Anthenor ayein goth hom
Unto his king, and whan he com,
He tolde in Grece of that he herde,
And hou that Thelamon ansuerde,
And hou thei were at here above,
That thei wol nouther pes ne love,
Bot every man schal don his beste.
Bot for men sein that nyht hath reste,
The king bethoghte him al that nyht,
And erli, whan the dai was lyht,
He tok conseil of this matiere;
And thei acorde in this manere,
That he withouten eny lette
A certein time scholde sette
Of Parlement to ben avised:
And in the wise it was devised,
Of parlement he sette a day,
And that was in the Monthe of Maii.
This Priamus hadde in his yhte
A wif, and Hecuba sche hyhte,
Be whom that time ek hadde he
Of Sones fyve, and douhtres thre
Besiden hem, and thritty mo,
And weren knyhtes alle tho,
Bot noght upon his wif begete,
Bot elles where he myhte hem gete
Of wommen whiche he hadde knowe;
Such was the world at thilke throwe:
So that he was of children riche,
As therof was noman his liche.

Of Parlement the dai was come,
Ther ben the lordes alle and some;
Tho was pronounced and pourposed,
And al the cause hem was desclosed,
Hou Anthenor in Grece ferde.
Thei seten alle stille and herde,
And tho spak every man aboute:
Ther was alegged many a doute,
And many a proud word spoke also;
Bot for the moste part as tho
Thei wisten noght what was the beste,
Or forto werre or forto reste.
Bot he that was withoute fere,
Hector, among the lordes there
His tale tolde in such a wise,
And seide, “Lordes, ye ben wise,
Ye knowen this als wel as I,
Above all othre most worthi
Stant nou in Grece the manhode
Of worthinesse and of knihthode;
For who so wole it wel agrope,
To hem belongeth al Europe,
Which is the thridde parti evene
Of al the world under the hevene;
And we be bot of folk a fewe.
So were it reson forto schewe
The peril, er we falle thrinne:
Betre is to leve, than beginne
Thing which as mai noght ben achieved;
He is noght wys that fint him grieved,
And doth so that his grief be more;
For who that loketh al tofore
And wol noght se what is behinde,
He mai fulofte hise harmes finde:

Wicke is to stryve and have the worse.
We have encheson forto corse,
This wot I wel, and forto hate
The Greks; bot er that we debate
With hem that ben of such a myht,
It is ful good that every wiht
Be of himself riht wel bethoght.
Bot as for me this seie I noght;
For while that mi lif wol stonde,
If that ye taken werre on honde,
Falle it to beste or to the werste,
I schal miselven be the ferste
To grieven hem, what evere I may.
I wol noght ones seie nay
To thing which that youre conseil demeth,
For unto me wel more it quemeth
The werre certes than the pes;
Bot this I seie natheles,
As me belongeth forto seie.
Nou schape ye the beste weie."

Whan Hector hath seid his avis,
Next after him tho spak Paris,
Which was his brother, and alleide
What him best thoghte, and thus he seide:
"Strong thing it is to soffre wrong,
And suffre schame is more strong,
Bot we have suffred bothe tuo;
And for al that yit have we do
What so we mihte to reforme
The pes, whan we in such a forme
Sente Anthenor, as ye wel knowe.
And thei here grete wordes blowe
Upon her wrongful dedes eke;
And who that wole himself noght meke

To pes, and list no reson take,
Men sein reson him wol forsake:
For in the multitude of men
Is noght the strengthe, for with ten
It hath be sen in trew querele
Ayein an hundred false dele,
And had the betre of goddes grace.
This hath befalle in many place;
And if it like unto you alle,
I wolde assaie, hou so it falle,
Oure enemis if I mai grieve;
For I have cawht a gret believe
Upon a point I wol declare.

This ender day, as I gan fare
To hunte unto the grete hert,
Which was tofore myn houndes stert,
And every man went on his syde
Him to poursuie, and I to ryde
Began the chace, and soth to seie,
Withinne a while out of mi weie
I rod, and nyste where I was.
And slep me cauhte, and on the gras
Beside a welle I lay me doun
To slepe, and in a visioun
To me the god Mercurie cam;
Goddesses thre with him he nam,
Minerve, Venus and Juno,
And in his hond an Appel tho
He hield of gold with lettres write:
And this he dede me to wite,
Hou that thei putt hem upon me,
That to the faireste of hem thre
Of gold that Appel scholde I yive.
With ech of hem tho was I schrive,

And echon faire me behihte;
Bot Venus seide, if that sche mihte
That Appel of mi yifte gete,
Sche wolde it neveremor foryete,
And seide hou that in Grece lond
Sche wolde bringe unto myn hond
Of al this Erthe the faireste;
So that me thoghte it for the beste,
To hire and yaf that Appel tho.
Thus hope I wel, if that I go,
That sche for me wol so ordeine,
That thei matiere forto pleigne
Schul have, er that I come ayein.
Nou have ye herd that I wol sein:
Sey ye what stant in youre avis."
And every man tho seide his,
And sundri causes thei recorde,
Bot ate laste thei acorde
That Paris schal to Grece wende,
And thus the parlement tok ende.

Cassandra, whan sche herde of this,
The which to Paris Soster is,
Anon sche gan to wepe and weile,
And seide, "Allas, what mai ous eile?
Fortune with hire blinde whiel
Ne wol noght lete ous stonde wel:
For this I dar wel undertake,
That if Paris his weie take,
As it is seid that he schal do,
We ben for evere thanne undo."
This, which Cassandre thanne hihte,
In al the world as it berth sihte,
In bokes as men finde write,
Is that Sibille of whom ye wite,

That alle men yit clepen sage.
Whan that sche wiste of this viage,
Hou Paris schal to Grece fare,
No womman mihte worse fare
Ne sorwe more than sche dede;
And riht so in the same stede
Ferde Helenus, which was hir brother,
Of prophecie and such an other:
And al was holde bot a jape,
So that the pourpos which was schape,
Or were hem lief or were hem loth,
Was holde, and into Grece goth
This Paris with his retenance.
And as it fell upon his chance,
Of Grece he londeth in an yle,
And him was told the same whyle
Of folk which he began to freyne,
Tho was in thyle queene Heleyne,
And ek of contres there aboute
Of ladis many a lusti route,
With mochel worthi poeple also.
And why thei comen theder tho,
The cause stod in such a wise,—
For worschipe and for sacrifise
That thei to Venus wolden make,
As thei tofore hadde undertake,
Some of good will, some of beheste,
For thanne was hire hihe feste
Withinne a temple which was there.

Whan Paris wiste what thei were,
Anon he schop his ordinance
To gon and don his obeissance
To Venus on hire holi day,
And dede upon his beste aray.

With gret richesse he him behongeth,
As it to such a lord belongeth,
He was noght armed natheles,
Bot as it were in lond of pes,
And thus he goth forth out of Schipe
And takth with him his felaschipe:
In such manere as I you seie
Unto the temple he hield his weie.

Tydinge, which goth overal
To grete and smale, forth withal
Com to the queenes Ere and tolde
Hou Paris com, and that he wolde
Do sacrifise to Venus:
And whan sche herde telle thus,
Sche thoghte, hou that it evere be,
That sche wole him abyde and se.

Forth comth Paris with glad visage
Into the temple on pelrinage,
Wher unto Venus the goddesse
He yifth and offreth gret richesse,
And preith hir that he preie wolde.
And thanne aside he gan beholde,
And sih wher that this ladi stod;
And he forth in his freisshe mod
Goth ther sche was and made her chiere,
As he wel couthe in his manere,
That of his wordes such plesance
Sche tok, that al hire aqueintance,
Als ferforth as the herte lay,
He stal er that he wente away.
So goth he forth and tok his leve,

And thoghte, anon as it was eve,
He wolde don his Sacrilegge,
That many a man it scholde abegge.

Whan he to Schipe ayein was come,
To him he hath his conseil nome,
And al devised the matiere
In such a wise as thou schalt hiere.
Withinne nyht al prively
His men he warneth by and by,
That thei be redy armed sone
For certein thing which was to done:
And thei anon ben redi alle,
And ech on other gan to calle,
And went hem out upon the stronde
And tok a pourpos ther alonde
Of what thing that thei wolden do,
Toward the temple and forth thei go.
So fell it, of devocion
Heleine in contemplacion
With many an other worthi wiht
Was in the temple and wok al nyht,
To bidde and preie unto thymage
Of Venus, as was thanne usage;
So that Paris riht as him liste
Into the temple, er thei it wiste,
Com with his men al sodeinly,
And alle at ones sette ascry
In hem whiche in the temple were,
For tho was mochel poeple there;
Bot of defense was no bote,
So soffren thei that soffre mote.

Paris unto the queene wente,
And hire in bothe hise armes hente
With him and with his felaschipe,
And forth thei bere hire unto Schipe.
Up goth the Seil and forth thei wente,
And such a wynd fortune hem sente,
Til thei the havene of Troie cauhte;
Where out of Schipe anon thei strauhte
And gon hem forth toward the toun,
The which cam with processioun
Ayein Paris to sen his preie.
And every man began to seie
To Paris and his felaschipe
Al that thei couthen of worschipe;
Was non so litel man in Troie,
That he ne made merthe and joie
Of that Paris hath wonne Heleine.
Bot al that merthe is sorwe and peine
To Helenus and to Cassaundre;
For thei it token schame and sklaundre
And lost of al the comun grace,
That Paris out of holi place
Be Stelthe hath take a mannes wif,
Wherof that he schal lese his lif
And many a worthi man therto,
And al the Cite be fordo,
Which nevere schal be mad ayein.
And so it fell, riht as thei sein,
The Sacrilege which he wroghte
Was cause why the Gregois soughte
Unto the toun and it beleie,
And wolden nevere parte aweie,
Til what be sleihte and what be strengthe
Thei hadde it wonne in brede and lengthe,

And brent and slayn that was withinne.
Now se, mi Sone, which a sinne
Is Sacrilege in holy stede:
Be war therfore and bidd thi bede,
And do nothing in holy cherche,
Bot that thou miht be reson werche.

And ek tak hiede of Achilles,
Whan he unto his love ches
Polixena, that was also
In holi temple of Appollo,
Which was the cause why he dyde
And al his lust was leyd asyde.

And Troilus upon Criseide
Also his ferste love leide
In holi place, and hou it ferde,
As who seith, al the world it herde;
Forsake he was for Diomede,
Such was of love his laste mede.

Forthi, mi Sone, I wolde rede,
Be this ensample as thou myht rede,
Sech elles, wher thou wolt, thi grace,
And war the wel in holi place
What thou to love do or speke,
In aunter if it so be wreke
As thou hast herd me told before.
And tak good hiede also therfore
Upon what forme, of Avarice
Mor than of eny other vice,
I have divided in parties
The branches, whiche of compainies
Thurghout the world in general
Ben nou the leders overal,
Of Covoitise and of Perjure,

Of fals brocage and of Usure,
Of Skarsnesse and Unkindeschipe,
Which nevere drouh to felaschipe,
Of Robberie and privi Stelthe,
Which don is for the worldes welthe,
Of Ravine and of Sacrilegge,
Which makth the conscience agregge;
Althogh it mai richesse atteigne,
It floureth, bot it schal noght greine
Unto the fruit of rihtwisnesse.
Bot who that wolde do largesse
Upon the reule as it is yive,
So myhte a man in trouthe live
Toward his god, and ek also
Toward the world, for bothe tuo
Largesse awaiteth as belongeth,
To neither part that he ne wrongeth;
He kepth himself, he kepth his frendes,
So stant he sauf to bothe hise endes,
That he excedeth no mesure,
So wel he can himself mesure:
Wherof, mi Sone, thou schalt wite,
So as the Philosophre hath write.

Betwen the tuo extremites
Of vice stant the propretes
Of vertu, and to prove it so
Tak Avarice and tak also
The vice of Prodegalite;
Betwen hem Liberalite,
Which is the vertu of Largesse,
Stant and governeth his noblesse.
For tho tuo vices in discord
Stonde evere, as I finde of record;
So that betwen here tuo debat

Largesse reuleth his astat.
For in such wise as Avarice,
As I tofore have told the vice,
Thurgh streit holdinge and thurgh skarsnesse
Stant in contraire to Largesse,
Riht so stant Prodegalite
Revers, bot noght in such degre.
For so as Avarice spareth,
And forto kepe his tresor careth,
That other al his oghne and more
Ayein the wise mannes lore
Yifth and despendeth hiere and there,
So that him reccheth nevere where.
While he mai borwe, he wol despende,
Til ate laste he seith, "I wende";
Bot that is spoken al to late,
For thanne is poverte ate gate
And takth him evene be the slieve,
For erst wol he no wisdom lieve.
And riht as Avarice is Sinne,
That wolde his tresor kepe and winne,
Riht so is Prodegalite:
Bot of Largesse in his degre,
Which evene stant betwen the tuo,
The hihe god and man also
The vertu ech of hem commendeth.
For he himselven ferst amendeth,
That overal his name spredeth,
And to alle othre, where it nedeth,
He yifth his good in such a wise,
That he makth many a man arise,
Which elles scholde falle lowe.
Largesce mai noght ben unknowe;
For what lond that he regneth inne,

It mai noght faile forto winne
Thurgh his decerte love and grace,
Wher it schal faile in other place.

And thus betwen tomoche and lyte
Largesce, which is noght to wyte,
Halt evere forth the middel weie:
Bot who that torne wole aweie
Fro that to Prodegalite,
Anon he lest the proprete
Of vertu and goth to the vice;
For in such wise as Avarice
Lest for scarsnesse his goode name,
Riht so that other is to blame,
Which thurgh his wast mesure excedeth,
For noman wot what harm that bredeth.

Bot mochel joie ther betydeth,
Wher that largesse an herte guydeth:
For his mesure is so governed,
That he to bothe partz is lerned,
To god and to the world also,
He doth reson to bothe tuo.
The povere folk of his almesse
Relieved ben in the destresse
Of thurst, of hunger and of cold;
The yifte of him was nevere sold,
Bot frely yive, and natheles
The myhti god of his encress
Rewardeth him of double grace;
The hevene he doth him to pourchace
And yifth him ek the worldes good:
And thus the Cote for the hod
Largesse takth, and yit no Sinne
He doth, hou so that evere he winne.

What man hath hors men yive him hors,
And who non hath of him no fors,
For he mai thanne on fote go;
The world hath evere stonde so.
Bot forto loken of the tweie,
A man to go the siker weie,
Betre is to yive than to take:
With yifte a man mai frendes make,
Bot who that takth or gret or smal,
He takth a charge forth withal,
And stant noght fre til it be quit.
So forto deme in mannes wit,
It helpeth more a man to have
His oghne good, than forto crave
Of othre men and make him bounde,
Wher elles he mai stonde unbounde.

Senec conseileth in this wise,
And seith, "Bot, if thi good suffise
Unto the liking of thi wille,
Withdrawh thi lust and hold the stille,
And be to thi good sufficant."
For that thing is appourtenant
To trouthe and causeth to be fre
After the reule of charite,
Which ferst beginneth of himselve.
For if thou richest othre tuelve,
Wherof thou schalt thiself be povere,
I not what thonk thou miht recovere.

Whil that a man hath good to yive,
With grete routes he mai live
And hath his frendes overal,
And everich of him telle schal.
Therwhile he hath his fulle packe,

Thei seie, “A good felawe is Jacke”;
Bot whanne it faileth ate laste,
Anon his pris thei overcaste,
For thanne is ther non other lawe
Bot, “Jacke was a good felawe.”
Whan thei him povere and nedy se,
Thei lete him passe and farwel he;
Al that he wende of compainie
Is thanne torned to folie.

Bot nou to speke in other kinde
Of love, a man mai suche finde,
That wher thei come in every route
Thei caste and waste her love aboute,
Til al here time is overgon,
And thanne have thei love non:
For who that loveth overal,
It is no reson that he schal
Of love have eny proprete.
Forthi, mi Sone, avise thee
If thou of love hast be to large,
For such a man is noght to charge:
And if it so be that thou hast
Despended al thi time in wast
And set thi love in sondri place,
Though thou the substance of thi grace
Lese ate laste, it is no wonder;
For he that put himselven under,
As who seith, comun overal,
He lest the love special
Of eny on, if sche be wys;
For love schal noght bere his pris
Be reson, whanne it passeth on.
So have I sen ful many on,
That were of love wel at ese,

Whiche after felle in gret desese
Thurgh wast of love, that thei spente
In sondri places wher thei wente.

Riht so, mi Sone, I axe of thee
If thou with Prodegalite
Hast hier and ther thi love wasted.

Mi fader, nay; bot I have tasted
In many a place as I have go,
And yit love I nevere on of tho,
Bot forto drive forth the dai.
For lieveth wel, myn herte is ay
Withoute mo for everemore
Al upon on, for I nomore
Desire bot hire love al one:
So make I many a prive mone,
For wel I fiele I have despended
Mi longe love and noght amended
Mi sped, for oght I finde yit.
If this be wast to youre wit
Of love, and Prodegalite,
Nou, goode fader, demeth ye:
Bot of o thing I wol me schryve,
That I schal for no love thryve,
Bot if hirself me wol relieve.

Mi Sone, that I mai wel lieve:
And natheles me semeth so,
For oght that thou hast yit misdo
Of time which thou hast despended,
It mai with grace ben amended.
For thing which mai be worth the cost
Per chaunce is nouther wast ne lost;
For what thing stant on aventure,
That can no worldes creature

Telle in certein hou it schal wende,
Til he therof mai sen an ende.
So that I not as yit therfore
If thou, mi Sone, hast wonne or lore:
For ofte time, as it is sene,
Whan Somer hath lost al his grene
And is with Wynter wast and bare,
That him is left nothing to spare,
Al is recovered in a throwe;
The colde wyndes overblowe,
And still be the scharpe schoures,
And soudeinliche ayein his floures
The Somer hapneth and is riche:
And so per cas thi graces liche,
Mi Sone, thogh thou be nou povere
Of love, yit thou miht recovere.

Mi fader, certes grant merci:
Ye have me tawht so redeli,
That evere whil I live schal
The betre I mai be war withal
Of thing which ye have seid er this.
Bot overmore hou that it is,
Toward mi schrifte as it belongeth,
To wite of othre pointz me longeth;
Wherof that ye me wolden teche
With al myn herte I you beseche.

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 astat,
And wext anon so fieble and mat,
That he mai nouther 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 nouther 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 ça* the 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 whyle 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 contienance.
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 merveilleth
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 gentilesse,
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 Pyment 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 sotye 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 sotie 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 thurst 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 reles:
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 thurst 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 soverein,
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 drunkeschipe is a sieknesse
Thurgh fielinge 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 hemselve 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 drunkeschipe 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 drunkeschipe, 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 merveilleth,
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 thurst 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 selden 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 drunkeschipe 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 drunkeschipe 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 hiere.

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 Pirotous so 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 drunkeschipe.
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 nouther 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 drunkeschipe 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 witnesse;
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 befalle
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 avise
Hou he it toke and in what wise.
For who that useth that he knoweth,
Ful selden 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;
Avise 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 stomac 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 sustienance
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 goshauk 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 thoght
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 spreedeth,
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 fielinge and of tast,
Yit mihte I nevere have o repast.
And thus, as I have seid aforn,
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 hiere and se
I take of love my fiedinge
Withoute tastinge or fielinge:
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 eschuied
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 understondinge 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 knoulechinge
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 avise
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 avise,
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 towardes 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,
Althogh thei hadde it noght deserved,
Thei token service of the same.
Bot afterward al thilke game
Was into wofull ernest torned;
For whan thei weren thus sojorned,
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 thurst of love him cawhte,
Wher that him list he tok a drauhte,
He spareth nouther 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 hevene 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 fissch, 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
Aëremance 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 rathere er 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 avantage
He takth, and somwhat 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 poursuieth: 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 somwhat of his aventures,
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 londed 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 hemself 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 pleinly 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 furthere 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 resistence,
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 astat 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 desguised 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 cilence
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 hevenely 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 pleinly 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 Lubye 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,
Althogh 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 deceipte 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 amonges 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 himselve 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 brennynge 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 levene
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 thexperience
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.
Saul, 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 cunnynge

Upon the forme of this wrytynge,
Som part therof yit have I herd,
In this matiere hou it hath ferd.

Explicit Liber Sextus

Incipit Liber Septimus.

Omnibus in causis sapiens doctrina salutem
Consequitur, nec habet quis nisi doctus opem.
Naturam superat doctrina, viro quod et ortus
Ingenii docilis non dedit, ipsa dabit.
Non ita discretus hominum per climata regnat,
Quin magis ut sapiat, indiget ipse schole.

I Genius the prest of love,
Mi Sone, as thou hast preid above
That I the Scole schal declare
Of Aristotle and ek the fare
Of Alisandre, hou he was tauht,
I am somdel therof destrauht;
For it is noght to the matiere
Of love, why we sitten hiere
To schryve, so as Venus bad.
Bot natheles, for it is glad,
So as thou seist, for thin aprise
To hiere of suche thinges wise,
Wherof thou myht the time lisse,
So as I can, I schal the wisse:
For wisdom is at every throwe
Above alle other thing to knowe
In loves cause and elleswhere.
Forthi, my Sone, unto thin Ere,
Though it be noght in the registre

Of Venus, yit of that Calistre
And Aristotle whylom write
To Alisandre, thou schalt wite.

Bot for the lores ben diverse,
I thenke ferst to the reherce
The nature of Philosophie,
Which Aristotle of his clergie,
Wys and expert in the sciences,
Declareth thilke intelligences,
As of thre pointz in principal.

Wherof the ferste in special
Is Theorique, which is grounded
On him which al the world hath founded,
Which comprehendeth al the lore.

And forto loken overmore,
Next of sciences the seconde
Is Rethorique, whos faconde
Above alle othre is eloquent:
To telle a tale in juggement
So wel can noman speke as he.

The laste science of the thre
It is Practique, whos office
The vertu tryeth fro the vice,
And techeth upon goode thewes
To fle the compaignie of schrewes,
Which stant in disposicion
Of mannes free eleccion.
Practique enformeth ek the reule,
Hou that a worthi king schal reule
His Realme bothe in werre and pes.

Lo, thus danz Aristotiles
These thre sciences hath divided
And the nature also decided,

Wherof that ech of hem schal serve.

The ferste, which is the conserve
And kepere of the remnant,
As that which is most sufficant
And chief of the Philosophie,
If I therof schal specefie
So as the Philosophre tolde,
Nou herkne, and kep that thou it holde.

Of Theorique principal
The Philosophre in special
The propretees hath determined,
As thilke which is enlumined
Of wisdom and of hih prudence
Above alle othre in his science:
And stant departed upon thre,
The ferste of which in his degre
Is cleped in Philosophie
The science of Theologie,
That other named is Phisique,
The thridde is seid Mathematique.

Theologie is that science
Which unto man yifth evidence
Of thing which is noght bodely,
Wherof men knowe redely
The hihe almyhti Trinite,
Which is o god in unite
Withouten ende and beginnynge
And creatour of alle thinge,
Of hevene, of erthe and ek of helle.
Wherof, as olde bokes telle,
The Philosophre in his resoun
Wrot upon this conclusioun,
And of his wrytinge in a clause

He clepeth god the ferste cause,
Which of himself is thilke good,
Withoute whom nothing is good,
Of which that every creature
Hath his beinge and his nature.
After the beinge of the thinges
Ther ben thre formes of beinges:
Thing which began and ende schal,
That thing is cleped temporal;
Ther is also be other weie
Thing which began and schal noght deie.
As Soules, that ben spiritiel,
Here beinge is perpetuel:
Bot ther is on above the Sonne,
Whos time nevere was begonne,
And endeles schal evere be;
That is the god, whos mageste
Alle othre thinges schal governe,
And his beinge is sempiterne.
The god, to whom that al honour
Belongeth, he is creatour,
And othre ben hise creatures:
The god commandeth the natures
That thei to him obeien alle;
Withouten him, what so befalle,
Her myht is non, and he mai al:
The god was evere and evere schal,
And thei begonne of his assent;
The times alle be present
To god, to hem and alle unknowe,
Bot what him liketh that thei knowe:
Thus bothe an angel and a man,
The whiche of al that god began
Be chief, obeien goddes myht,

And he stant endeles upriht.
To this science ben prive
The clerkes of divinite,
The whiche unto the poeple prechen
The feith of holi cherche and techen,
Which in som cas upon believe
Stant more than thei conne prieve
Be weie of Argument sensible:
Bot natheles it is credible,
And doth a man gret meede have,
To him that thenkth himself to save.
Theologie in such a wise
Of hih science and hih aprise
Above alle othre stant unlike,
And is the ferste of Theorique.

Phisique is after the secounde,
Thurgh which the Philosophre hath founde
To techen sondri knowlechinges
Upon the bodiliche thinges.
Of man, of beste, of herbe, of ston,
Of fissch, of foughl, of everychon
That ben of bodely substance,
The nature and the circumstance
Thurgh this science it is ful soght,
Which vaileth and which vaileth noght.

The thridde point of Theorique,
Which cleped is Mathematique,
Devided is in sondri wise
And stant upon diverse aprise.
The ferste of whiche is Arsmetique,
And the secounde is seid Musique,
The thridde is ek Geometrie,
Also the ferthe Astronomie.

Of Arsmetique the matiere
Is that of which a man mai liere
What Algorisme in nombre amonteth,
Whan that the wise man acompteth
After the formel proprete
Of Algorismes Abece:
Be which multiplicacioun
Is mad and diminucioun
Of sommes be thexperience
Of this Art and of this science.

The seconde of Mathematique,
Which is the science of Musique,
That techeth upon Armonie
A man to make melodie
Be vois and soun of instrument
Thurgh notes of acordement,
The whiche men pronounce alofte,
Nou scharpe notes and nou softe,
Nou hihe notes and nou lowe,
As be the gamme a man mai knowe,
Which techeth the prolacion
Of note and the condicion.

Mathematique of his science
Hath yit the thridde intelligence
Full of wisdom and of clergie
And cleped is Geometrie,
Thurgh which a man hath thilke sleyhte,
Of lengthe, of brede, of depthe, of heyhte
To knowe the proporcion
Be verrai calculacion
Of this science: and in this wise
These olde Philosophres wise,
Of al this worldes erthe round,

Hou large, hou thikke was the ground,
Controeveden thexperience;
The cercle and the circumference
Of every thing unto the hevene
Thei setten point and mesure evene.
Mathematique above therthe
Of hyh science hath yit the ferthe,
Which spekth upon Astronomie
And techeth of the sterres hihe,
Beginnynge upward fro the mone.
Bot ferst, as it was forto done,
This Aristotle in other thing
Unto this worthi yonge king
The kinde of every element
Which stant under the firmament,
Hou it is mad and in what wise,
Fro point to point he gan devise.
Tofore the creacion
Of eny worldes stacion,
Of hevene, of erthe, or eke of helle,
So as these olde bokes telle,
As soun tofore the song is set
And yit thei ben togedre knet,
Riht so the hihe pourveance
Tho hadde under his ordinance
A gret substance, a gret matiere,
Of which he wolde in his manere
These othre thinges make and forme.
For yit withouten eny forme
Was that matiere universal,
Which hihte Ylem in special.
Of Ylem, as I am enformed,
These elementz ben mad and formed,

Of Ylem elementz they hote
After the Scole of Aristote,
Of whiche if more I schal reherce,
Foure elementz ther ben diverse.

The ferste of hem men erthe calle,
Which is the lowest of hem alle,
And in his forme is schape round,
Substancial, strong, sadd and sound,
As that which mad is sufficant
To bere up al the remenant.
For as the point in a compas
Stant evene amiddes, riht so was
This erthe set and schal abyde,
That it may swerve to no side,
And hath his centre after the lawe
Of kinde, and to that centre drawe
Desireth every worldes thing,
If ther ne were no lettyng.

Above therthe kepth his bounde
The water, which is the secounde
Of elementz, and al withoute
It environeth therthe aboute.
Bot as it scheweth, noght forthi
This soubtil water myhtely,
Thogh it be of himselve softe,
The strengthe of therthe perceth ofte;
For riht as veines ben of blod
In man, riht so the water flod
Therthe of his cours makth ful of veines,
Als wel the helles as the pleines.
And that a man may sen at ije,
For wher the hulles ben most hyhe,

Ther mai men welle stremes finde:
So proveth it be weie of kinde
The water heyher than the lond.

And over this nou understond,
Air is the thridde of elementz,
Of whos kinde his aspirementz
Takth every lifissh creature,
The which schal upon erthe endure:
For as the fissh, if it be dreie,
Mot in defaute of water deie,
Riht so withouten Air on lyve
No man ne beste myhte thryve,
The which is mad of fleissh and bon;
There is outake of alle non.

This Air in Periferies thre
Divided is of such degre,
Benethe is on and on amidde,
To whiche above is set the thridde:
And upon the divisions
There ben diverse impressions
Of moist and ek of drye also,
Whiche of the Sonne bothe tuo
Ben drawe and haled upon hy,
And maken cloudes in the Sky,
As schewed is at mannes sihte;
Wherof be day and ek be nyhte
After the times of the yer
Among ous upon Erthe her
In sondri wise thinges falle.

The ferste Periferie of alle
Engendreth Myst and overmore
The dewes and the Frostes hore,

After thilke intersticion
In which thei take impression.

Fro the seconde, as bokes sein,
The moiste dropes of the reyn
Descenden into Middilerthe,
And tempreth it to sed and Erthe,
And doth to springe grass and flour.
And ofte also the grete schour
Out of such place it mai be take,
That it the forme schal forsake
Of reyn, and into snow be torned;
And ek it mai be so sojorned
In sondri places up alofte,
That into hail it torneth ofte.

The thridde of thair after the lawe
Thurgh such matiere as up is drawe
Of dreie thing, as it is ofte,
Among the cloudes upon lofte,
And is so clos, it may noght oute,—
Thanne is it chased sore aboute,
Til it to fyr and leyt be falle,
And thanne it brekth the cloudes alle,
The whiche of so gret noyse craken,
That thei the feerful thonder maken.
The thonderstrok smit er it leyte,
And yit men sen the fyr and leyte,
The thonderstrok er that men hiere:
So mai it wel be proeved hiere
In thing which schewed is fro feer,
A mannes yhe is there nerr
Thanne is the soun to mannes Ere.
And natheles it is gret feere
Bothe of the strok and of the fyr,

Of which is no recoverir
In place wher that thei descende,
Bot if god wolde his grace sende.

And forto speken over this,
In this partie of thair it is
That men fulofte sen be nyhte
The fyr in sondri forme alyhte.
Somtime the fyrdrake it semeth,
And so the lewed poeple it demeth;
Somtime it semeth as it were
A Sterre, which that glydeth there:
Bot it is nouther of the tuo,
The Philosophre telleth so,
And seith that of impressions
Thurgh diverse exalacions
Upon the cause and the matiere
Men sen diverse forme appiere
Of fyr, the which hath sondri name.

Assub, he seith, is thilke same,
The which in sondry place is founde,
Whanne it is falle doun to grounde,
So as the fyr it hath aneled,
Lich unto slym which is congeled.

Of exalacion I finde
Fyr kinled of the fame kinde,
Bot it is of an other forme;
Wherof, if that I schal conforme
The figure unto that it is,
These olde clerkes tellen this,
That it is lik a Got skippende,
And for that it is such semende,
It hatte Capra saliens.

And ek these Astronomiens
An other fyr also, be nyhte
Which scheweth him to mannes syhte,
Thei clepen Eges, the which brenneth
Lik to the corrant fyr that renneth
Upon a corde, as thou hast sein,
Whan it with poudre is so besein
Of Sulphre and othre thinges mo.

Ther is an other fyr also,
Which semeth to a mannes yhe
Be nyhtes time as thogh ther flyhe
A dragon brennende in the Sky,
And that is cleped proprely
Daaly, wherof men sein fulofte,
"Lo, wher the fyri drake alofte
Fleth up in thair!" and so thei demen.
Bot why the fyres suche semen
Of sondri formes to beholde,
The wise Philosophre tolde,
So as tofore it hath ben herd.

Lo thus, my Sone, hou it hath ferd:
Of Air the due proprete
In sondri wise thou myht se,
And hou under the firmament
It is ek the thridde element,
Which environeth bothe tuo,
The water and the lond also.

And forto tellen overthis
Of elementz which the ferthe is,
That is the fyr in his degre,
Which environeth thother thre
And is withoute moist al drye.
Bot lest nou what seith the clergie;

For upon hem that I have seid
The creatour hath set and leid
The kinde and the complexion
Of alle mennes nacion.
Foure elementz sondri ther be,
Lich unto whiche of that degre
Among the men ther ben also
Complexions foure and nomo,
Wherof the Philosophre treteth,
That he nothing behinde leteth,
And seith hou that thei ben diverse,
So as I schal to thee reherse.

He which natureth every kinde,
The myhti god, so as I finde,
Of man, which is his creature,
Hath so devided the nature,
That non til other wel acordeth:
And be the cause it so discordeth,
The lif which fieleth the seknesse
Mai stonde upon no sekernesse.

Of therthe, which is cold and drye,
The kinde of man Malencolie
Is cleped, and that is the ferste,
The most ungoodlich and the werste;
For unto loves werk on nyht
Him lacketh bothe will and myht:
No wonder is, in lusty place
Of love though he lese grace.
What man hath that complexion,
Full of ymaginacion
Of dredes and of wrathful thoghtes,
He fret himselven al to noghtes.

The water, which is moyste and cold,
Makth fleume, which is manyfold
Foryetel, slou and wery sone
Of every thing which is to done:
He is of kinde sufficant
To holde love his covenant,
Bot that him lacketh appetit,
Which longeth unto such delit.

What man that takth his kinde of thair,
He schal be lyht, he schal be fair,
For his complexion is blood.
Of alle ther is non so good,
For he hath bothe will and myht
To plese and paie love his riht:
Wher as he hath love undertake,
Wrong is if that he be forsake.

The fyr of his condicion
Appropreth the complexion
Which in a man is Colre hote,
Whos propretes ben dreie and hote:
It makth a man ben enginous
And swift of fote and ek irous;
Of contek and folhastifnesse
He hath a riht gret besinesse,
To thenke of love and litel may:
Though he behote wel a day,
On nyht whan that he wole assaie,
He may ful evele his dette paie.

After the kinde of thelement,
Thus stant a mannes kinde went,
As touchende his complexion,
Upon sondri division
Of dreie, of moiste, of chele, of hete,

And ech of hem his oghne sete
Appropred hath withinne a man.
And ferst to telle as I began,

The Splen is to Malencolie
Assigned for herbergerie:

The moiste fleume with his cold
Hath in the lunges for his hold
Ordeined him a propre stede,
To duelle ther as he is bede:

To the Sanguin complexion
Nature of hire inspeccion
A propre hous hath in the livere
For his duellinge mad delivere:

The dreie Colre with his hete
Be weie of kinde his propre sete
Hath in the galle, wher he duelleth,
So as the Philosophre telleth.

Nou over this is forto wite,
As it is in Phisique write
Of livere, of lunge, of galle, of splen,
Thei alle unto the herte ben
Servantz, and ech in his office
Entendeth to don him service,
As he which is chief lord above.
The livere makth him forto love,
The lunge yifth him weie of speche,
The galle serveth to do wreche,
The Splen doth him to lawhe and pleie,
Whan al unclennesse is aweie:
Lo, thus hath ech of hem his dede.
And to sustienen hem and fede
In time of recreacion,
Nature hath in creacion

The Stomach for a comun Coc
Ordeined, so as seith the boc.
The Stomach coc is for the halle,
And builleth mete for hem alle,
To make hem myghty forto serve
The herte, that he schal noght sterve:
For as a king in his Empire
Above alle othre is lord and Sire,
So is the herte principal,
To whom reson in special
Is yove as for the governance.

And thus nature his pourveance
Hath mad for man to liven hiere;
Bot god, which hath the Soule diere,
Hath formed it in other wise.
That can noman pleinli devise;
Bot as the clerkes ous enforme,
That lich to god it hath a forme,
Thurgh which figure and which liknesse
The Soule hath many an hyh noblesse
Appropred to his oghne kinde.
Bot ofte hir wittes be mad blinde
Al onliche of this ilke point,
That hir abydinge is conjoint
Forth with the bodi forto duelle:
That on desireth toward helle,
That other upward to the hevene;
So schul thei nevere stonde in evene,
Bot if the fleissh be overcome
And that the Soule have holi nome
The governance, and that is selde,
Whil that the fleissh him mai bewelde.
Al erthli thing which god began
Was only mad to serve man;

Bot he the Soule al only made
Himselven forto serve and glade.
Alle othre bestes that men finde
Thei serve unto here oghne kinde,
Bot to reson the Soule serveth;
Wherof the man his thonk deserveth
And get him with hise werkes goode
The perdurable lyves foode.

Of what matiere it schal be told,
A tale lyketh manyfold
The betre, if it be spoke plein:
Thus thinke I forto torne ayein
And telle plenerly therfore
Of therthe, wherof nou tofore
I spak, and of the water eke,
So as these olde clerkes spieke,
And sette proprely the bounde
After the forme of Mappemounde,
Thurgh which the ground be pourparties
Departed is in thre parties,
That is Asie, Aufrique, Europe,
The whiche under the hevene cope,
Als ferr as streccheth eny ground,
Begripeth al this Erthe round.
Bot after that the hihe wrieche
The water weies let out seche
And overgo the helles hye,
Which every kinde made dye
That upon Middelerthe stod,
Outake Noë and his blod,
His Sones and his doughtres thre,
Thei were sauf and so was he;—
Here names who that rede rihte,
Sem, Cam, Japhet the brethren hihte;—

And whanne thilke almyhty hond
Withdrouh the water fro the lond,
And al the rage was aweie,
And Erthe was the mannes weie,
The Sones thre, of whiche I tolde,
Riht after that hemselve wolde,
This world departe thei begonne.

Asie, which lay to the Sonne
Upon the Marche of orient,
Was graunted be comun assent
To Sem, which was the Sone eldeste;
For that partie was the beste
And double as moche as othre tuo.
And was that time bounded so;
Wher as the flod which men Nil calleth
Departeth fro his cours and falleth
Into the See Alexandrine,
Ther takth Asie ferst seisine
Toward the West, and over this
Of Canahim wher the flod is
Into the grete See rennende,
Fro that into the worldes ende
Estward, Asie it is algates,
Til that men come unto the gates
Of Paradis, and there ho.
And schortly for to speke it so,
Of Orient in general
Withinne his bounde Asie hath al.

And thanne upon that other syde
Westward, as it fell thilke tyde,
The brother which was hote Cham
Upon his part Aufrique nam.
Japhet Europe tho tok he,

Thus parten thei the world on thre.
Bot yit ther ben of londes fele
In occident as for the chele,
In orient as for the hete,
Which of the poeple be forlete
As lond desert that is unable,
For it mai noght ben habitable.

The water eke hath sondri bounde,
After the lond wher it is founde,
And takth his name of thilke londes
Wher that it renneth on the strondes:
Bot thilke See which hath no wane
Is cleped the gret Occeane,
Out of the which arise and come
The hyhe flodes alle and some;
Is non so litel welle spring,
Which ther ne takth his beginnyng,
And lich a man that haleth breth
Be weie of kinde, so it geth
Out of the See and in ayein,
The water, as the bokes sein.

Of Elementz the propretes
Hou that they stonden be degres,
As I have told, nou myht thou hiere,
Mi goode Sone, al the matiere
Of Erthe, of water, Air and fyr.
And for thou saist that thi desir
Is forto witen overmore
The forme of Aristotles lore,
He seith in his entendement,
That yit ther is an Element
Above the foure, and is the fifte,
Set of the hihe goddes yifte,

The which that Orbis cleped is.
And therupon he telleth this,
That as the schelle hol and sound
Encloseth al aboute round
What thing withinne an Ey belongeth,
Riht so this Orbis underfongeth
These elementz alle everychon,
Which I have spoke of on and on.

Bot overthis nou tak good hiede,
Mi Sone, for I wol procede
To speke upon Mathematique,
Which grounded is on Theorique.
The science of Astronomie
I thinke forto specefie,
Withoute which, to telle plein,
Alle othre science is in vein
Toward the scole of erthli thinges:
For as an Egle with his winges
Fleth above alle that men finde,
So doth this science in his kinde.

Benethe upon this Erthe hiere
Of alle thinges the matiere,
As tellen ous thei that ben lerned,
Of thing above it stant governed,
That is to sein of the Planetes.
The cheles bothe and ek the hetes,
The chances of the world also,
That we fortune clepen so,
Among the mennes nacion
Al is thurgh constellacion,
Wherof that som man hath the wele,
And som man hath deseses fele
In love als wel as othre thinges;

The stat of realmes and of kinges
In time of pes, in time of werre
It is conceived of the Sterre:
And thus seith the naturien
Which is an Astronomien.
Bot the divin seith otherwise,
That if men weren goode and wise
And plesant unto the godhede,
Thei scholden noght the sterres drede;
For o man, if him wel befalle,
Is more worth than ben thei alle
Towardes him that weldeth al.
Bot yit the lawe original,
Which he hath set in the natures,
Mot worchen in the creatures,
That therof mai be non obstacle,
Bot if it stonde upon miracle
Thurgh preiere of som holy man.
And forthi, so as I began
To speke upon Astronomie,
As it is write in the clergie,
To telle hou the planetes fare,
Som part I thenke to declare,
Mi Sone, unto thin Audience.

Astronomie is the science
Of wisdom and of hih connynge,
Which makth a man have knowlechinge
Of Sterres in the firmament,
Figure, cercle and moevement
Of ech of hem in sondri place,
And what betwen hem is of space,
Hou so thei moeve or stonde faste,
Al this it telleth to the laste.

Assembled with Astronomie
Is ek that ilke Astrologie
The which in juggementz acompteth
Theffect, what every sterre amonteth,
And hou thei causen many a wonder
To tho climatz that stonde hem under.

And forto telle it more plein,
These olde philosphres sein
That Orbis, which I spak of err,
Is that which we fro therthe a ferr
Beholde, and firmament it calle,
In which the sterres stonden alle,
Among the whiche in special
Planetes sefne principal
Ther ben, that mannes sihte demeth,
Bot thorizonte, as to ous semeth.
And also ther ben signes tuelve,
Whiche have her cercles be hemselve
Compassed in the zodiaque,
In which thei have here places take.
And as thei stonden in degre,
Here cercles more or lasse be,
Mad after the proporcion
Of therthe, whos condicion
Is set to be the foundement
To sustiene up the firmament.
And be this skile a man mai knowe,
The more that thei stonden lowe,
The more ben the cercles lasse;
That causeth why that some passe
Here due cours tofore an other.
Bot nou, mi lieve dere brother,
As thou desirest forto wite
What I finde in the bokes write,

To telle of the planetes sevene,
Hou that thei stonde upon the hevene
And in what point that thei ben inne,
Tak hiede, for I wol beginne,
So as the Philosophre tauhte
To Alisandre and it betauhte,
Wherof that he was fulli tawht
Of wisdom, which was him betawht.

Benethe alle othre stant the Mone,
The which hath with the See to done:
Of flodes hihe and ebbes lowe
Upon his change it schal be knowe;
And every fissh which hath a schelle
Mot in his governance duelle,
To wexe and wane in his degre,
As be the Mone a man mai se;
And al that stant upon the grounde
Of his moisture it mot be founde.
Alle othre sterres, as men finde,
Be schynende of here oghne kinde
Outake only the monelyht,
Which is noght of himselve bright,
Bot as he takth it of the Sonne.
And yit he hath noght al fulwonne
His lyht, that he nys somdiel derk;
Bot what the lette is of that werk
In Almageste it telleth this:
The Mones cercle so lowe is,
Wherof the Sonne out of his stage
Ne seth him noght with full visage,
For he is with the ground beschaded,
So that the Mone is somdiel faded
And may noght fully schyne cler.
Bot what man under his pouer

Is bore, he schal his places change
And seche manye londes strange:
And as of this condicion
The Mones disposicion
Upon the lond of Alemaigne
Is set, and ek upon Bretaigne,
Which nou is cleped Engelond;
For thei travaile in every lond.

Of the Planetes the secounde
Above the Mone hath take his bounde,
Mercurie, and his nature is this,
That under him who that bore is,
In boke he schal be studious
And in wrytinge curious,
And slouh and lustles to travaile
In thing which elles myhte availe:
He loveth ese, he loveth reste,
So is he noght the worthieste;
Bot yit with somdiel besinesse
His herte is set upon richesse.
And as in this condicion,
Theffect and disposicion
Of this Planete and of his chance
Is most in Burgoigne and in France.

Next to Mercurie, as wol befalle,
Stant that Planete which men calle
Venus, whos constellacion
Governeth al the nacion
Of lovers, wher thei spiede or non,
Of whiche I trowe thou be on:
Bot whiderward thin happes wende,
Schal this planete schewe at ende,
As it hath do to many mo,

To some wel, to some wo.
And natheles of this Planete
The moste part is softe and swete;
For who that therof takth his berthe,
He schal desire joie and merthe,
Gentil, courteis and debonaire,
To speke his wordes softe and faire,
Such schal he be be weie of kinde,
And overal wher he may finde
Plesance of love, his herte boweth
With al his myht and there he woweth.
He is so ferforth Amourous,
He not what thing is vicious
Touchende love, for that lawe
Ther mai no maner man withdrawe,
The which venerien is bore
Be weie of kinde, and therefore
Venus of love the goddesse
Is cleped: bot of wantounesse
The climat of hir lecherie
Is most commun in Lombardie.

Next unto this Planete of love
The brighte Sonne stant above,
Which is the hindrere of the nyht
And forthrere of the daies lyht,
As he which is the worldes ije,
Thurgh whom the lusti compaignie
Of foules be the morwe singe,
The freisshe floures sprede and springe,
The hihe tre the ground beschadeth,
And every mannes herte gladeth.
And for it is the hed Planete,

Hou that he sitteth in his sete,
Of what richesse, of what nobleie,
These bokes telle, and thus thei seie.

Of gold glistrende Spoke and whiel
The Sonne his carte hath faire and wiel,
In which he sitt, and is coroned
With brighte stones environed;
Of whiche if that I speke schal,
Ther be tofore in special
Set in the front of his corone
Thre Stones, whiche no persone
Hath upon Erthe, and the ferste is
Be name cleped Licuchis;
That othre tuo be cleped thus,
Astrices and Ceramius.
In his corone also behinde,
Be olde bokes as I finde,
Ther ben of worthi Stones thre
Set ech of hem in his degre:
Wherof a Cristall is that on,
Which that corone is set upon;
The seconde is an Adamant;
The thridde is noble and avenant,
Which cleped is Ydriades.
And over this yit natheles
Upon the sydes of the werk,
After the wrytinge of the clerk,
Ther sitten fyve Stones mo:
The smaragdine is on of tho,
Jaspis and Elitropius
And Dendides and Jacinctus.
Lo, thus the corone is beset,
Wherof it schyneth wel the bet;
And in such wise his liht to sprede

Sit with his Diademe on hede
The Sonne schynende in his carte.
And forto lede him swithe and smarte
After the bryhte daies lawe,
Ther ben ordeined forto drawe
Foure hors his Char and him withal,
Wherof the names telle I schal:
Eritheüs the ferste is hote,
The which is red and schyneth hote,
The seconde Acteos the bryhte,
Lampes the thridde coursier hihte,
And Philogeus is the ferthe,
That bringen lyht unto this erthe,
And gon so swift upon the hevene,
In foure and twenty houres evene
The carte with the bryhte Sonne
Thei drawe, so that overronne
Thei have under the cercles hihe
Al Middelerthe in such an hye.
And thus the Sonne is overal
The chief Planete imperial,
Above him and benethe him thre:
And thus betwen hem regneth he,
As he that hath the middel place
Among the Sevene, and of his face
Be glade alle erthly creatures,
And taken after the natures
Here ese and recreacion.
And in his constellacion
Who that is bore in special,
Of good will and of liberal
He schal be founde in alle place,
And also stonde in mochel grace
Toward the lordes forto serve

And gret profit and thonk deserve.
And over that it causeth yit
A man to be soubtil of wit
To worche in gold, and to be wys
In every thing which is of pris.
Bot forto speken in what cost
Of al this erthe he regneth most
As for wisdom, it is in Grece,
Wher is apropred thilke spiece.

Mars the Planete bataillous
Next to the Sonne glorious
Above stant, and doth mervailes
Upon the fortune of batailes.
The conquerours be daies olde
Were unto this planete holde:
Bot who that his nativite
Hath take upon the proprete
Of Martes disposicioun
Be weie of constellacioun,
He schal be fiers and folhastif
And desirous of werre and strif.
Bot forto telle redely
In what climat most comunly
That this planete hath his effect,
Seid is that he hath his aspect
Upon the holi lond so cast,
That there is no pes stedefast.

Above Mars upon the hevene,
The sexte Planete of the sevene,
Stant Jupiter the delicat,
Which causeth pes and no debat.
For he is cleped that Planete
Which of his kinde softe and swete

Attempreth al that to him longeth;
And whom this planete underfongeth
To stonde upon his regiment,
He schal be meke and pacient
And fortunat to Marchandie
And lusti to delicacie
In every thing which he schal do.
This Jupiter is cause also
Of the science of lyhte werkes,
And in this wise tellen clerkes
He is the Planete of delices.
Bot in Egipte of his offices
He regneth most in special:
For ther be lustes overal
Of al that to this lif befalleth;
For ther no stormy weder falleth,
Which myhte grieve man or beste,
And ek the lond is so honeste
That it is plentevous and plein,
Ther is non ydel ground in vein;
And upon such felicite
Stant Jupiter in his degre.

The heyeste and aboven alle
Stant that planete which men calle
Saturnus, whos complexion
Is cold, and his condicion
Causeth malice and crualte
To him the whos nativite
Is set under his governance.
For alle hise werkes ben grevance
And enemy to mannes hele,
In what degre that he schal dele.
His climat is in Orient,
Wher that he is most violent.

Of the Planetes by and by,
Hou that thei stonde upon the Sky,
Fro point to point as thou myht hiere,
Was Alisandre mad to liere.
Bot overthis touchende his lore,
Of thing that thei him tawhte more
Upon the scoles of clergie
Now herkne the Philosophie.

He which departeth dai fro nyht,
That on derk and that other lyht,
Of sevene daies made a weke,
A Monthe of foure wekes eke
He hath ordeigned in his lawe,
Of Monthes tuelve and ek forthdrawe
He hath also the longe yeer.
And as he sette of his pouer
Acordant to the daies sevene
Planetes Sevene upon the hevene,
As thou tofore hast herd devise,
To speke riht in such a wise,
To every Monthe be himselve
Upon the hevene of Signes tuelve
He hath after his Ordinal
Assigned on in special,
Wherof, so as I schal rehersen,
The tydes of the yer diversen.
Bot pleinly forto make it knowe
Hou that the Signes sitte arowe,
Ech after other be degre
In substance and in proprete
The zodiaque comprehendeth
Withinne his cercle, as it appendeth.

The ferste of whiche natheles
Be name is cleped Aries,
Which lich a wether of stature
Resembled is in his figure.
And as it seith in Almageste,
Of Sterres tuelve upon this beste
Ben set, wherof in his degre
The wombe hath tuo, the heved hath thre,
The Tail hath sevene, and in this wise,
As thou myht hiere me divise,
Stant Aries, which hot and drye
Is of himself, and in partie
He is the receipte and the hous
Of myhty Mars the bataillous.
And overmore ek, as I finde,
The creatour of alle kinde
Upon this Signe ferst began
The world, whan that he made man.
And of this constellacioun
The verray operacioun
Availeth, if a man therinne
The pourpos of his werk beginne;
For thanne he hath of proprete
Good sped and gret felicite.

The tuelve Monthes of the yeer
Attitled under the pouer
Of these tuelve Signes stonde;
Wherof that thou schalt understonde
This Aries on of the tuelve
Hath March attitled for himselve,
Whan every bridd schal chese his make,
And every neddre and every Snake
And every Reptil which mai moeve,

His myht assaieth forto proeve,
To crepen out ayein the Sonne,
Whan Ver his Seson hath begonne.

Taurus the seconde after this
Of Signes, which figured is
Unto a Bole, is dreie and cold;
And as it is in bokes told,
He is the hous appourtienant
To Venus, somdiel descordant.
This Bole is ek with sterres set,
Thurgh whiche he hath hise hornes knet
Unto the tail of Aries,
So is he noght ther sterreles.
Upon his brest ek eyhtetiene
He hath, and ek, as it is sene,
Upon his tail stonde othre tuo.
His Monthe assigned ek also
Is Averil, which of his schoures
Ministreth weie unto the floures.

The thridde signe is Gemini,
Which is figured redely
Lich to tuo twinnes of mankinde,
That naked stonde; and as I finde,
Thei be with Sterres wel bego:
The heved hath part of thilke tuo
That schyne upon the boles tail,
So be thei bothe of o parail;
But on the wombe of Gemini
Ben fyve sterres noght forthi,
And ek upon the feet be tweie,
So as these olde bokes seie,
That wise Tholomeus wrot.
His propre Monthe wel I wot

Assigned is the lusti Maii,
Whanne every brid upon his lay
Among the griene leves singeth,
And love of his pointure stingeth
After the lawes of nature
The youthe of every creature.

Cancer after the reule and space
Of Signes halt the ferthe place.
Like to the crabbe he hath semblance,
And hath unto his retienance
Sextiene sterres, wherof ten,
So as these olde wise men
Descrive, he berth on him tofore,
And in the middel tuo be bore,
And foure he hath upon his ende.
Thus goth he sterred in his kende,
And of himself is moiste and cold,
And is the propre hous and hold
Which appartieneth to the Mone,
And doth what longeth him to done.
The Monthe of Juin unto this Signe
Thou schalt after the reule assigne.

The fifte Signe is Leo hote,
Whos kinde is schape dreie and hote,
In whom the Sonne hath herbergage.
And the semblance of his ymage
Is a leoun, which in baillie
Of sterres hath his pourpartie:
The foure, which as Cancer hath
Upon his ende, Leo tath
Upon his heved, and thanne nest
He hath ek foure upon his brest,
And on upon his tail behinde,

In olde bokes as we finde.
His propre Monthe is Juyl be name,
In which men pleien many a game.

After Leo Virgo the nexte
Of Signes cleped is the sexte,
Wherof the figure is a Maide;
And as the Philosophre saide,
Sche is the welthe and the risinge,
The lust, the joie and the likinge
Unto Mercurie: and soth to seie
Sche is with sterres wel beseie,
Wherof Leo hath lent hire on,
Which sit on hih hir heved upon,
Hire wombe hath fyve, hir feet also
Have other fyve: and overmo
Touchende as of complexion,
Be kindly disposicion
Of dreie and cold this Maiden is.
And forto tellen over this
Hir Monthe, thou schalt understonde,
Whan every feld hath corn in honde
And many a man his bak hath plied,
Unto this Signe is Augst applied.

After Virgo to reknen evene
Libra sit in the nombre of sevene,
Which hath figure and resemblance
Unto a man which a balance
Berth in his hond as forto weie:
In boke and as it mai be seie,
Diverse sterres to him longeth,
Wherof on hevede he underfongeth
Ferst thre, and ek his wombe hath tuo,
And doun benethe eighte othre mo.

This Signe is hot and moiste bothe,
The whiche thinges be noght lothe
Unto Venus, so that alofte
Sche resteth in his hous fulofte,
And ek Saturnus often hyed
Is in this Signe and magnefied.
His propre Monthe is seid Septembre,
Which yifth men cause to remembre,
If eny Sor be left behinde
Of thing which grieve mai to kinde.

Among the Signes upon heighte
The Signe which is nombred eighte
Is Scorpio, which as feloun
Figured is a Scorpioun.
Bot for al that yit natheles
Is Scorpio noght sterreles;
For Libra granteth him his ende
Of eighte sterres, wher he wende,
The whiche upon his heved assised
He berth, and ek ther ben divised
Upon his wombe sterres thre,
And eighte upon his tail hath he.
Which of his kinde is moiste and cold
And unbehovely manyfold;
He harmeth Venus and empeireth,
Bot Mars unto his hous repeireth,
Bot war whan thei togedre duellen.
His propre Monthe is, as men tellen,
Octobre, which bringth the kalende
Of wynter, that comth next suiende.

The nynthe Signe in nombre also,
Which folweth after Scorpio,
Is cleped Sagittarius,

The whos figure is marked thus,
A Monstre with a bowe on honde:
On whom that sondri sterres stonde,
Thilke eighte of whiche I spak tofore,
The whiche upon the tail ben bore
Of Scorpio, the heved al faire
Bespreden of the Sagittaire;
And eighte of othre stonden evene
Upon his wombe, and othre sevene
Ther stonde upon his tail behinde.
And he is hot and dreie of kinde:
To Jupiter his hous is fre,
Bot to Mercurie in his degre,
For thei ben noght of on assent,
He worcheth gret empeirement.
This Signe hath of his proprete
A Monthe, which of duete
After the sesoun that befalleth
The Plowed Oxe in wynter stalleth;
And fyr into the halle he bringeth,
And thilke drinke of which men singeth,
He torneth must into the wyn;
Thanne is the larder of the swyn;
That is Novembre which I meene,
Whan that the lef hath lost his greene.

The tenthe Signe dreie and cold,
The which is Capricornus told,
Unto a Got hath resemblance:
For whos love and whos aqueintance
Withinne hise houses to sojorne
It liketh wel unto Satorne,
Bot to the Mone it liketh noght,
For no profit is there wroght.
This Signe as of his proprete

Upon his heved hath sterres thre,
And ek upon his wombe tuo,
And tweie upon his tail also.
Decembre after the yeeres forme,
So as the bokes ous enforme,
With daies schorte and nyhtes longe
This ilke Signe hath underfonge.

Of tho that sitte upon the hevene
Of Signes in the nombre ellevene
Aquarius hath take his place,
And stant wel in Satornes grace,
Which duelleth in his herbergage,
Bot to the Sonne he doth oultrage.
This Signe is verraily resembled
Lich to a man which halt assembled
In eyther hand a water spoute,
Wherof the stremes rennen oute.
He is of kinde moiste and hot,
And he that of the sterres wot
Seith that he hath of sterres tuo
Upon his heved, and ben of tho
That Capricorn hath on his ende;
And as the bokes maken mende,
That Tholomeus made himselve,
He hath ek on his wombe tuelve,
And tweie upon his ende stonde.
Thou schalt also this understonde,
The frosti colde Janever,
Whan comen is the newe yeer,
That Janus with his double face
In his chaiere hath take his place
And loketh upon bothe sides,
Somdiel toward the wynter tydes,
Somdiel toward the yeer suiende,

That is the Monthe belongende
Unto this Signe, and of his dole
He yifth the ferste Primerole.

The tuelfthe, which is last of alle
Of Signes, Piscis men it calle,
The which, as telleth the scripture,
Berth of tuo fisshes the figure.
So is he cold and moiste of kinde,
And ek with sterres, as I finde,
Beset in sondri wise, as thus:
Tuo of his ende Aquarius
Hath lent unto his heved, and tuo
This Signe hath of his oghne also
Upon his wombe, and over this
Upon his ende also ther is
A nombre of twenty sterres bryghte,
Which is to sen a wonder sighte.
Toward this Signe into his hous
Comth Jupiter the glorious,
And Venus ek with him acordeth
To duellen, as the bok recordeth.
The Monthe unto this Signe ordeined
Is Februer, which is bereined,
And with londflodes in his rage
At Fordes letteth the passage.

Nou hast thou herd the proprete
Of Signes, bot in his degre
Albumazar yit over this
Seith, so as therthe parted is
In foure, riht so ben divised
The Signes tuelve and stonde assised,
That ech of hem for his partie
Hath his climat to justefie.

Wherof the ferste regiment
Toward the part of Orient
From Antioche and that contre
Governed is of Signes thre,
That is Cancer, Virgo, Leo:
And toward Occident also
From Armenie, as I am lerned,
Of Capricorn it stant governed,
Of Pisces and Aquarius:
And after hem I finde thus,
Southward from Alisandre forth
Tho Signes whiche most ben worth
In governance of that doaire,
Libra thei ben and Sagittaire
With Scorpio, which is conjoint
With hem to stonde upon that point:
Constantinople the Cite,
So as the bokes tellen me,
The laste of this division
Stant untoward Septemtrion,
Wher as be weie of pourveance
Hath Aries the governance
Forth with Taurus and Gemini.
Thus ben the Signes propreli
Divided, as it is reherced,
Wherof the londes ben diversed.

Lo thus, mi Sone, as thou myht hiere,
Was Alisandre mad to liere
Of hem that weren for his lore.
But nou to loken overmore,
Of othre sterres hou thei fare
I thenke hierafter to declare,
So as king Alisandre in youthe

Of him that suche thinges couthe
Enformed was tofore his yhe
Be nyhte upon the sterres hihe.

Upon sondri creacion
Stant sondri operacion,
Som worcheth this, som worcheth that;
The fyr is hot in his astat
And brenneth what he mai atteigne,
The water mai the fyr restreigne,
The which is cold and moist also.
Of other thing it farth riht so
Upon this erthe among ous here;
And forto speke in this manere,
Upon the hevene, as men mai finde,
The sterres ben of sondri kinde
And worchen manye sondri thinges
To ous, that ben here underlinges.
Among the whiche forth withal
Nectanabus in special,
Which was an Astronomien
And ek a gret Magicien,
And undertake hath thilke emprise
To Alisandre in his aprise
As of Magique naturel
To knowe, enformeth him somdel
Of certein sterres what thei mene;
Of whiche, he seith, ther ben fiftene,
And sondrily to everich on
A gras belongeth and a Ston,
Wherof men worchen many a wonder
To sette thing bothe up and under.

To telle riht as he began,
The ferste sterre Aldeboran,
The cliereste and the moste of alle,
Be rihte name men it calle;
Which lich is of condicion
To Mars, and of complexion
To Venus, and hath therupon
Carbunculum his propre Ston:
His herbe is Anabulla named,
Which is of gret vertu proclamed.

The seconde is noght vertules;
Clota or elles Pliades
It hatte, and of the mones kinde
He is, and also this I finde,
He takth of Mars complexion:
And lich to such condicion
His Ston appropred is Cristall,
And ek his herbe in special
The vertuous Fenele it is.

The thridde, which comth after this,
Is hote Algol the clere rede,
Which of Satorne, as I may rede,
His kinde takth, and ek of Jove
Complexion to his behove.
His propre Ston is Dyamant,
Which is to him most acordant;
His herbe, which is him betake,
Is hote Eleborum the blake.

So as it falleth upon lot,
The ferthe sterre is Alhaiot,
Which in the wise as I seide er
Of Satorne and of Jupiter
Hath take his kinde; and therupon

The Saphir is his propre Ston,
Marrubium his herbe also,
The whiche acorden bothe tuo.

And Canis maior in his like
The fifte sterre is of Magique,
The whos kinde is venerien,
As seith this Astronomien.
His propre Ston is seid Berille,
Bot forto worche and to fulfille
Thing which to this science falleth,
Ther is an herbe which men calleth
Saveine, and that behoveth nede
To him that wole his pourpos spede.

The sexte suiende after this
Be name Canis minor is;
The which sterre is Mercurial
Be weie of kinde, and forth withal,
As it is writen in the carte,
Complexion he takth of Marte.
His Ston and herbe, as seith the Scole,
Ben Achates and Primerole.

The sefnthe sterre in special
Of this science is Arial,
Which sondri nature underfongeth.
The Ston which propre unto him longeth,
Gorgonza proprely it hihte:
His herbe also, which he schal rihte
Upon the worchinge as I mene,
Is Celidoine freissh and grene.

Sterre Ala Corvi upon heihte
Hath take his place in nombre of eighte,
Which of his kinde mot parforne
The will of Marte and of Satorne:

To whom Lapacia the grete
Is herbe, bot of no beyete;
His Ston is Honochinus hote,
Thurgh which men worchen gret riote.

The nynthe sterre faire and wel
Be name is hote Alaezel,
Which takth his propre kinde thus
Bothe of Mercurie and of Venus.
His Ston is the grene Amyraude,
To whom is yoven many a laude:
Salge is his herbe appourtenant
Aboven al the rememant.

The tenthe sterre is Almareth,
Which upon lif and upon deth
Thurgh kinde of Jupiter and Mart
He doth what longeth to his part.
His Ston is Jaspe, and of Planteine
He hath his herbe sovereine.

The sterre ellefthe is Venenas,
The whos nature is as it was
Take of Venus and of the Mone,
In thing which he hath forto done.
Of Adamant is that perrie
In which he worcheth his maistrie;
Thilke herbe also which him befalleth,
Cicorea the bok it calleth.

Alpheta in the nombre sit,
And is the twelfthe sterre yit;
Of Scorpio which is governed,
And takth his kinde, as I am lerned;
And hath his vertu in the Ston

Which cleped is Topazion:
His herbe propre is Rosmarine,
Which schapen is for his covine.

Of these sterres, whiche I mene,
Cor Scorpionis is thritiene;
The whos nature Mart and Jove
Have yoven unto his behove.
His herbe is Aristologie,
Which folweth his Astronomie:
The Ston which that this sterre alloweth,
Is Sardis, which unto him boweth.

The sterre which stant next the laste,
Nature on him this name caste
And clepeth him Botercadent;
Which of his kinde obedient
Is to Mercurie and to Venus.
His Ston is seid Crisolitus,
His herbe is cleped Satureie,
So as these olde bokes seie.

Bot nou the laste sterre of alle
The tail of Scorpio men calle,
Which to Mercurie and to Satorne
Be weie of kinde mot retorne
After the preparacion
Of due constellacion.
The Calcedoine unto him longeth,
Which for his Ston he underfongeth;
Of Majorane his herbe is grounded.
Thus have I seid hou thei be founded,
Of every sterre in special,
Which hath his herbe and Ston withal,
As Hermes in his bokes olde
Witnesse berth of that I tolde.

The science of Astronomie,
Which principal is of clergie
To dieme betwen wo and wel
In thinges that be naturel,
Thei hadde a gret travail on honde
That made it ferst ben understonde;
And thei also which overmore
Here studie sette upon this lore,
Thei weren gracious and wys
And worthi forto bere a pris.
And whom it liketh forto wite
Of hem that this science write,
On of the ferste which it wrot
After Noë, it was Nembrot,
To his disciple Ychonithon
And made a bok forth therupon
The which Megaster cleped was.
An other Auctor in this cas
Is Arachel, the which men note;
His bok is Abbategnyh hote.
Danz Tholome is noght the leste,
Which makth the bok of Almageste;
And Alfraganus doth the same,
Whos bok is Chatemuz be name.
Gebuz and Alpetragus eke
Of Planisperie, which men seke,
The bokes made: and over this
Ful many a worthi clerc ther is,
That writen upon this clergie
The bokes of Altemetrie,
Planemetrie and ek also,
Whiche as belongen bothe tuo,
So as thei ben naturiens,
Unto these Astronomiens.

Men sein that Habraham was on;
Bot whether that he wrot or non,
That finde I noght; and Moises
Ek was an other: bot Hermes
Above alle othre in this science
He hadde a gret experience;
Thurgh him was many a sterre assised,
Whos bokes yit ben auctorized.
I mai noght knowen alle tho
That writen in the time tho
Of this science; bot I finde,
Of jugement be weie of kinde
That in o point thei alle acorden:
Of sterres whiche thei recorden
That men mai sen upon the hevene,
Ther ben a thousend sterres evene
And tuo and twenty, to the syhte
Whiche aren of hemself so bryhte,
That men mai dieme what thei be,
The nature and the proprete.

Nou hast thou herd, in which a wise
These noble Philosophres wise
Enformeden this yonge king,
And made him have a knowleching
Of thing which ferst to the partie
Belongeth of Philosophie,
Which Theorique cleped is,
As thou tofore hast herd er this.
Bot nou to speke of the secounde,
Which Aristotle hath also founde,
And techeth hou to speke faire,
Which is a thing full necessaire
To contrepeise the balance,
Wher lacketh other sufficance.

Above alle erthli creatures
The hihe makere of natures
The word to man hath yove alone,
So that the speche of his persone,
Or forto lese or forto winne,
The hertes thoght which is withinne
Mai schewe, what it wolde mene;
And that is noghwhere elles sene
Of kinde with non other beste.
So scholde he be the more honeste,
To whom god yaf so gret a yifte,
And loke wel that he ne schifte
Hise wordes to no wicked us;
For word the techer of vertus
Is cleped in Philosophie.
Wherof touchende this partie,
Is Rethorique the science
Appropred to the reverence
Of wordes that ben resonable:
And for this art schal be vailable
With goodli wordes forto like,
It hath Gramaire, it hath Logiqe,
That serven bothe unto the speche.
Gramaire ferste hath forto teche
To speke upon congruite:
Logique hath eke in his degre
Betwen the trouthe and the falshode
The pleine wordes forto schode,
So that nothing schal go beside,
That he the riht ne schal decide.
Wherof full many a gret debat
Reformed is to good astat,
And pes sustiened up alofte
With esy wordes and with softe,

Wher strengthe scholde lete it falle.
The Philosophre amonges alle
Forthi commendeth this science,
Which hath the reule of eloquence.

In Ston and gras vertu ther is,
Bot yit the bokes tellen this,
That word above alle erthli thinges
Is vertuous in his doinges,
Wher so it be to evele or goode.
For if the wordes semen goode
And ben wel spoke at mannes Ere,
Whan that ther is no trouthe there,
Thei don fulofte gret deceipte;
For whan the word to the conceipte
Descordeth in so double a wise,
Such Rethorique is to despise
In every place, and forto drede.
For of Uluxes thus I rede,
As in the bok of Troie is founde,
His eloquence and his facounde
Of goodly wordes whiche he tolde,
Hath mad that Anthenor him solde
The toun, which he with tresoun wan.
Word hath beguiled many a man;
With word the wilde beste is daunted,
With word the Serpent is enchaunted,
Of word among the men of Armes
Ben woundes heeled with the charmes,
Wher lacketh other medicine;
Word hath under his discipline
Of Sorcerie the karectes.
The wordes ben of sondri sectes,
Of evele and eke of goode also;
The wordes maken frend of fo,

And so of frend, and pes of werre,
And werre of pes, and out of herre
The word this worldes cause entriketh,
And reconsileth whan him liketh.
The word under the coupe of hevene
Set every thing or odde or evene;
With word the hihe god is plesed,
With word the wordes ben appesed,
The softe word the loude stilleth;
Wher lacketh good, the word fulfilleth,
To make amendes for the wrong;
Whan wordes medlen with the song,
It doth plesance wel the more.

Bot forto loke upon the lore
Hou Tullius his Rethorique
Componeth, ther a man mai pike
Hou that he schal hise wordes sette,
Hou he schal lose, hou he schal knette,
And in what wise he schal pronounce
His tale plein withoute frounce.
Wherof ensample if thou wolt seche,
Tak hiede and red whilom the speche
Of Julius and Cithero,
Which consul was of Rome tho,
Of Catoun eke and of Cillene,
Behold the wordes hem betwene,
Whan the tresoun of Cateline
Descoevered was, and the covine
Of hem that were of his assent
Was knowe and spoke in parlement,
And axed hou and in what wise
Men scholde don hem to juise.
Cillenus ferst his tale tolde,
To trouthe and as he was beholde,

The comun profit forto save,
He seide hou tresoun scholde have
A cruel deth; and thus thei spieke,
The Consul bothe and Catoun eke,
And seiden that for such a wrong
Ther mai no peine be to strong.
Bot Julius with wordes wise
His tale tolde al otherwise,
As he which wolde her deth respite,
And fondeth hou he mihte excite
The jugges thurgh his eloquence
Fro deth to torne the sentence
And sette here hertes to pite.
Nou tolden thei, nou tolde he;
Thei spieken plein after the lawe,
Bot he the wordes of his sawe
Coloureth in an other weie
Spekende, and thus betwen the tweie,
To trete upon this juggement,
Made ech of hem his Argument.
Wherof the tales forto hiere,
Ther mai a man the Scole liere
Of Rethoriqes eloquences,
Which is the secounde of sciences
Touchende to Philosophie;
Wherof a man schal justifie
Hise wordes in disputeisoun,
And knette upon conclusioun
His Argument in such a forme,
Which mai the pleine trouthe enforme
And the soubtil cautele abate,
Which every trewman schal debate.

The ferste, which is Theorique,
And the secounde Rethorique,
Sciences of Philosophie,
I have hem told as in partie,
So as the Philosophre it tolde
To Alisandre: and nou I wolde
Telle of the thridde what it is,
The which Practique cleped is.

Practique stant upon thre thinges
Toward the governance of kinges;
Wherof the ferst Etique is named,
The whos science stant proclamed
To teche of vertu thilke reule,
Hou that a king himself schal reule
Of his moral condicion
With worthi disposicion
Of good livinge in his persone,
Which is the chief of his corone.
It makth a king also to lerne
Hou he his bodi schal governe,
Hou he schal wake, hou he schal slepe,
Hou that he schal his hele kepe
In mete, in drinke, in clothinge eke:
Ther is no wisdom forto seke
As for the reule of his persone,
The which that this science al one
Ne techeth as be weie of kinde,
That ther is nothing left behinde.

That other point which to Practique
Belongeth is Iconomique,
Which techeth thilke honestete
Thurgh which a king in his degre
His wif and child schal reule and guie,

So forth with al the companie
Which in his houshold schal abyde,
And his astat on every syde
In such manere forto lede,
That he his houshold ne mislede.

Practique hath yit the thridde aprise,
Which techeth hou and in what wise
Thurgh hih pourveied ordinance
A king schal sette in governance
His Realme, and that is Policie,
Which longeth unto Regalie
In time of werre, in time of pes,
To worschipe and to good encress
Of clerk, of kniht and of Marchant,
And so forth of the remenant
Of al the comun poeple aboute,
Withinne Burgh and ek withoute,
Of hem that ben Artificiers,
Whiche usen craftes and mestiers,
Whos Art is cleped Mechanique.
And though thei ben noght alle like,
Yit natheles, hou so it falle,
O lawe mot governe hem alle,
Or that thei lese or that thei winne,
After thastat that thei ben inne.

Lo, thus this worthi yonge king
Was fulli tauht of every thing,
Which mihte yive entendement
Of good reule and good regiment
To such a worthi Prince as he.
Bot of verray necessite
The Philosophre him hath betake
Fyf pointz, whiche he hath undertake

To kepe and holde in observance,
As for the worthi governance
Which longeth to his Regalie,
After the reule of Policie.

To every man behoveth lore,
Bot to noman belongeth more
Than to a king, which hath to lede
The poeple; for of his kinghede
He mai hem bothe save and spille.
And for it stant upon his wille,
It sit him wel to ben avised,
And the vertus whiche are assissed
Unto a kinges Regiment,
To take in his entendement:
Wherof to tellen, as thei stonde,
Hierafterward nou woll I fonde.

Among the vertus on is chief,
And that is trouthe, which is lief
To god and ek to man also.
And for it hath ben evere so,
Tawhte Aristotle, as he wel couthe,
To Alisandre, hou in his youthe
He scholde of trouthe thilke grace
With al his hole herte embrace,
So that his word be trewe and plein,
Toward the world and so certein
That in him be no double speche:
For if men scholde trouthe seche
And founde it noght withinne a king,
It were an unsittende thing.
The word is tokne of that withinne,
Ther schal a worthi king beginne
To kepe his tunge and to be trewe,

So schal his pris ben evere newe.
Avise him every man tofore,
And be wel war, er he be swore,
For afterward it is to late,
If that he wole his word debate.
For as a king in special
Above alle othre is principal
Of his pouer, so scholde he be
Most vertuous in his degre;
And that mai wel be signefied
Be his corone and specified.

The gold betokneth excellence,
That men schull don him reverence
As to here liege soverein.
The Stones, as the bokes sein,
Commended ben in treble wise:
Ferst thei ben harde, and thilke assisse
Betokneth in a king Constance,
So that ther schal no variance
Be founde in his condicion;
And also be descripcion
The vertu which is in the stones
A verrai Signe is for the nones
Of that a king schal ben honeste
And holde trewly his beheste
Of thing which longeth to kinghede:
The bryhte colour, as I rede,
Which in the stones is schynende,
Is in figure betoknende
The Cronique of this worldes fame,
Which stant upon his goode name.
The cercle which is round aboute

Is tokne of al the lond withoute,
Which stant under his Gerarchie,
That he it schal wel kepe and guye.

And for that trouthe, hou so it falle,
Is the vertu soverein of alle,
That longeth unto regiment,
A tale, which is evident
Of trouthe in comendacioun,
Toward thin enformacion,
Mi Sone, hierafter thou schalt hiere
Of a Cronique in this matiere.

As the Cronique it doth reherce,
A Soldan whilom was of Perce,
Which Daires hihte, and Ytaspis
His fader was; and soth it is
That thurgh wisdom and hih prudence
Mor than for eny reverence
Of his lignage as be descente
The regne of thilke empire he hente:
And as he was himselve wys,
The wisemen he hield in pris
And soghte hem oute on every side,
That toward him thei scholde abide.
Among the whiche thre ther were
That most service unto him bere,
As thei which in his chambre lyhen
And al his conseil herde and syhen.
Here names ben of strange note,
Arpaghes was the ferste hote,
And Manachaz was the secounde,
Zorobabel, as it is founde
In the Cronique, was the thridde.
This Soldan, what so him betidde,

To hem he triste most of alle,
Wherof the cas is so befalle:
This lord, which hath conceiptes depe,
Upon a nyht whan he hath slepe,
As he which hath his wit desposed,
Touchende a point hem hath opposed.

The kinges question was this;
Of thinges thre which strengest is,
The wyn, the womman or the king:
And that thei scholde upon this thing
Of here ansuere avised be,
He yaf hem fulli daies thre,
And hath behote hem be his feith
That who the beste reson seith,
He schal receive a worthi mede.

Upon this thing thei token hiede
And stoden in desputeison,
That be diverse opinion
Of Argumentz that thei have holde
Arpaghes ferst his tale tolde,
And seide hou that the strengthe of kinges
Is myhtiest of alle thinges.
For king hath pouer over man,
And man is he which reson can,
As he which is of his nature
The moste noble creature
Of alle tho that god hath wroght:
And be that skile it semeth noght,
He seith, that eny erthly thing
Mai be so myhty as a king.
A king mai spille, a king mai save,
A king mai make of lord a knave
And of a knave a lord also:

The pouer of a king stant so,
That he the lawes overpasseth;
What he wol make lasse, he lasseth,
What he wol make more, he moreth;
And as the gentil faucon soreth,
He fleth, that noman him reclameth;
Bot he al one alle othre tameth,
And stant himself of lawe fre.
Lo, thus a kinges myht, seith he,
So as his reson can argue,
Is strengest and of most value.

Bot Manachaz seide otherwise,
That wyn is of the more emprise;
And that he scheweth be this weie.
The wyn fulofte takth aweie
The reson fro the mannes herte;
The wyn can make a krepel sterte,
And a delivere man unwelde;
It makth a blind man to behelde,
And a bryht yhed seme derk;
It makth a lewed man a clerk,
And fro the clerkes the clergie
It takth aweie, and couardie
It torneth into hardiesse;
Of Avarice it makth largesse.
The wyn makth ek the goode blod,
In which the Soule which is good
Hath chosen hire a resting place,
Whil that the lif hir wole embrace.
And be this skile Manachas
Ansuered hath upon this cas,
And seith that wyn be weie of kinde
Is thing which mai the hertes binde
Wel more than the regalie.

Zorobabel for his partie
Seide, as him thoghte for the beste,
That wommen ben the myhtieste.
The king and the vinour also
Of wommen comen bothe tuo;
And ek he seide hou that manhede
Thurgh strengthe unto the wommanhede
Of love, wher he wole or non,
Obeie schal; and therupon,
To schewe of wommen the maistrie,
A tale which he syh with yhe
As for ensample he tolde this,—

Hou Apemen, of Besazis
Which dowhter was, in the paleis
Sittende upon his hihe deis,
Whan he was hotest in his ire
Toward the grete of his empire,
Cirus the king tirant sche tok,
And only with hire goodly lok
Sche made him debonaire and meke,
And be the chyn and be the cheke
Sche luggeth him riht as hir liste,
That nou sche japeth, nou sche kiste,
And doth with him what evere hir liketh;
Whan that sche loureth, thanne he siketh,
And whan sche gladeth, he is glad:
And thus this king was overlad
With hire which his lemman was.
Among the men is no solas,
If that ther be no womman there;
For bot if that the wommen were,
This worldes joie were aweie:
Thurgh hem men finden out the weie
To knihthode and to worldes fame;

Thei make a man to drede schame,
And honour forto be desired:
Thurgh the beaute of hem is fyred
The Dart of which Cupide throweth,
Wherof the jolif peine groweth,
Which al the world hath under fote.
A womman is the mannes bote,
His lif, his deth, his wo, his wel;
And this thing mai be schewed wel,
Hou that wommen ben goode and kinde,
For in ensample this I finde.

Whan that the duk Ametus lay
Sek in his bedd, that every day
Men waiten whan he scholde deie,
Alceste his wif goth forto preie,
As sche which wolde thonk deserve,
With Sacrifice unto Minerve,
To wite ansuere of the goddesse
Hou that hir lord of his seknesse,
Wherof he was so wo besein,
Recovere myhte his hele ayein.
Lo, thus sche cride and thus sche preide,
Til ate laste a vois hir seide,
That if sche wolde for his sake
The maladie soffre and take,
And deie hirself, he scholde live.
Of this ansuere Alceste hath yive
Unto Minerve gret thonkinge,
So that hir deth and his livinge
Sche ches with al hire hole entente,
And thus acorded hom sche wente.
Into the chambre and whan sche cam,
Hire housebonde anon sche nam
In bothe hire Armes and him kiste,

And spak unto him what hire liste;
And therupon withinne a throwe
This goode wif was overthrowe
And deide, and he was hool in haste.
So mai a man be reson taste,
Hou next after the god above
The trouthe of wommen and the love,
In whom that alle grace is founde,
Is myhtiest upon this grounde
And most behovely manyfold.

Lo, thus Zorobabel hath told
The tale of his opinion:
Bot for final conclusion
What strengest is of erthli thinges,
The wyn, the wommen or the kinges,
He seith that trouthe above hem alle
Is myhtiest, hou evere it falle.
The trouthe, hou so it evere come,
Mai for nothing ben overcome;
It mai wel soffre for a throwe,
Bot ate laste it schal be knowe.
The proverbe is, who that is trewe,
Him schal his while nevere rewe:
For hou so that the cause wende,
The trouthe is schameles ate ende,
Bot what thing that is troutheles,
It mai noght wel be schameles,
And schame hindreth every wyht:
So proveth it, ther is no myht
Withoute trouthe in no degre.
And thus for trouthe of his decre
Zorobabel was most commended,
Wherof the question was ended,
And he resceived hath his mede
For trouthe, which to mannes nede
Is most behoveliche overal.
Forthi was trouthe in special
The ferste point in observance
Betake unto the governance
Of Alisandre, as it is seid:
For therupon the ground is leid

Of every kinges regiment,
As thing which most convenient
Is forto sette a king in evene
Bothe in this world and ek in hevene.

Next after trouthe the secounde,
In Policie as it is founde,
Which serveth to the worldes fame
In worschipe of a kinges name,
Largesse it is, whos privilegge
Ther mai non Avarice abregge.
The worldes good was ferst comune,
Bot afterward upon fortune
Was thilke comun profit cessed:
For whan the poeple stod encresced
And the lignages woxen grete,
Anon for singulier beyete
Drouh every man to his partie;
Wherof cam in the ferste envie
With gret debat and werres stronge,
And laste among the men so longe,
Til noman wiste who was who,
Ne which was frend ne which was fo.
Til ate laste in every lond
Withinne hemself the poeple fond
That it was good to make a king,
Which mihte appesen al this thing
And yive riht to the lignages
In partinge of here heritages
And ek of al here other good;
And thus above hem alle stod
The king upon his Regalie,
As he which hath to justifie
The worldes good fro covoitise.
So sit it wel in alle wise

A king betwen the more and lesse
To sette his herte upon largesse
Toward himself and ek also
Toward his poeple; and if noght so,
That is to sein, if that he be
Toward himselven large and fre
And of his poeple take and pile,
Largesse be no weie of skile
It mai be seid, bot Avarice,
Which in a king is a gret vice.

A king behoveth ek to fle
The vice of Prodegalite,
That he mesure in his expence
So kepe, that of indigence
He mai be sauf: for who that nedeth,
In al his werk the worse he spedeth.
As Aristotle upon Chaldee
Ensample of gret Auctorite
Unto king Alisandre tauhte
Of thilke folk that were unsauhte
Toward here king for his pilage:
Wherof he bad, in his corage
That he unto thre pointz entende,
Wher that he wolde his good despende.
Ferst scholde he loke, hou that it stod,
That al were of his oghne good
The yiftes whiche he wolde yive;
So myhte he wel the betre live:
And ek he moste taken hiede
If ther be cause of eny nede,
Which oghte forto be defended,
Er that his goodes be despended:
He mot ek, as it is befalle,
Amonges othre thinges alle

Se the decertes of his men;
And after that thei ben of ken
And of astat and of merite,
He schal hem largeliche aquite,
Or for the werre, or for the pes,
That non honour falle in descres,
Which mihte torne into defame,
Bot that he kepe his goode name,
So that he be noght holde unkinde.
For in Cronique a tale I finde,
Which spekth somdiel of this matiere,
Hierafterward as thou schalt hiere.

In Rome, to poursuie his riht,
Ther was a worthi povere kniht,
Which cam al one forto sein
His cause, when the court was plein,
Wher Julius was in presence.
And for him lacketh of despence,
Ther was with him non advocat
To make ple for his astat.
Bot thogh him lacke forto plede,
Him lacketh nothing of manhede;
He wiste wel his pours was povere,
Bot yit he thoghte his riht recovere,
And openly poverte alleide,
To themperour and thus he seide:
"O Julius, lord of the lawe,
Behold, mi conseil is withdrawe
For lacke of gold: do thin office
After the lawes of justice:
Help that I hadde conseil hiere
Upon the trouthe of mi matiere."
And Julius with that anon
Assigned him a worthi on,

Bot he himself no word ne spak.
This kniht was wroth and fond a lak
In themperour, and seide thus:
“O thou unkinde Julius,
Whan thou in thi bataille were
Up in Aufrique, and I was there,
Mi myht for thi rescousse I dede
And putte noman in my stede,
Thou wost what woundes ther I hadde:
Bot hier I finde thee so badde,
That thee ne liste speke o word
Thin oghne mouth, nor of thin hord
To yive a florin me to helpe.
Hou scholde I thanne me beyelpe
Fro this dai forth of thi largesse,
Whan such a gret unkindenesse
Is founde in such a lord as thou?”

This Julius knew wel ynou
That al was soth which he him tolde;
And for he wolde noght ben holde
Unkinde, he tok his cause on honde,
And as it were of goddes sonde,
He yaf him good ynouh to spende
For evere into his lives ende.
And thus scholde every worthi king
Take of his knihtes knowleching,
Whan that he syh thei hadden nede,
For every service axeth mede:
Bot othre, which have noght deserved
Thurgh vertu, bot of japes served,
A king schal noght deserve grace,
Thogh he be large in such a place.

It sit wel every king to have
Discrecion, whan men him crave,
So that he mai his yifte wite:
Wherof I finde a tale write,
Hou Cinichus a povere kniht
A Somme which was over myht
Preide of his king Antigonus.
The king ansuerde to him thus,
And seide hou such a yifte passeth
His povere astat: and thanne he lasseth,
And axeth bot a litel peny,
If that the king wol yive him eny.
The king ansuerde, it was to smal
For him, which was a lord real;
To yive a man so litel thing
It were unworschipe in a king.

Be this ensample a king mai lere
That forto yive is in manere:
For if a king his tresor lasseth
Withoute honour and thonkles passeth,
Whan he himself wol so beguile,
I not who schal compleigne his while,
Ne who be rihte him schal relieve.
Bot natheles this I believe,
To helpe with his oghne lond
Behoveth every man his hond
To sette upon necessite;
And ek his kinges realte
Mot every liege man conforte,
With good and bodi to supporte,
Whan thei se cause resonable:
For who that is noght entendable
To holde upriht his kinges name,
Him oghte forto be to blame.

Of Policie and overmore
To speke in this matiere more,
So as the Philosophre tolde,
A king after the reule is holde
To modifie and to adresce
Hise yiftes upon such largesce
That he mesure noght excede:
For if a king falle into nede,
It causeth ofte sondri thinges
Whiche are ungoodly to the kinges.
What man wol noght himself mesure,
Men sen fulofte that mesure
Him hath forsake: and so doth he
That useth Prodegalite,
Which is the moder of poverte,
Wherof the londes ben deserte;
And namely whan thilke vice
Aboute a king stant in office
And hath withholde of his partie
The covoitouse flaterie,
Which many a worthi king deceiveth,
Er he the fallas aperceiveth
Of hem that serven to the glose.
For thei that cunnen plese and glose,
Ben, as men tellen, the norrices
Unto the fostringe of the vices,
Wherof fulofte natheles
A king is blamed gulteles.

A Philosophre, as thou schalt hiere,
Spak to a king of this matiere,
And seide him wel hou that flatours
Coupable were of thre errours.
On was toward the goddes hihe,
That weren wrothe of that thei sihe

The meschief which befalle scholde
Of that the false flatour tolde.
Toward the king an other was,
Whan thei be sleihte and be fallas
Of feigned wordes make him wene
That blak is whyt and blew is grene
Touchende of his condicion:
For whanne he doth extorcion
With manye an other vice mo,
Men schal noght finden on of tho
To groucche or speke therayein,
Bot holden up his oil and sein
That al is wel, what evere he doth;
And thus of fals thei maken soth,
So that here kinges yhe is blent
And wot not hou the world is went.
The thridde errour is harm comune,
With which the poeple mot commune
Of wronges that thei bringen inne:
And thus thei worchen treble sinne,
That ben flatours aboute a king.
Ther myhte be no worse thing
Aboute a kinges regalie,
Thanne is the vice of flaterie.

And natheles it hath ben used,
That it was nevere yit refused
As forto speke in court real;
For there it is most special,
And mai noght longe be forbore.
Bot whan this vice of hem is bore,
That scholden the vertus forthbringe,
And trouthe is torned to lesinge,
It is, as who seith, ayein kinde,
Wherof an old ensample I finde.

Among these othre tales wise
Of Philosophres, in this wise
I rede, how whilom tuo ther were,
And to the Scole forto lere
Unto Athenes fro Cartage
Here frendes, whan thei were of Age,
Hem sende; and ther thei stoden longe,
Til thei such lore have underfonge,
That in here time thei surmonte
Alle othre men, that to acompte
Of hem was tho the grete fame.
The ferste of hem his rihte name
Was Diogenes thanne hote,
In whom was founde no riote:
His felaw Arisippus hyhte,
Which mochel couthe and mochel myhte.
Bot ate laste, soth to sein,
Thei bothe tornen hom ayein
Unto Cartage and scole lete.
This Diogenes no beyete
Of worldes good or lasse or more
Ne soghte for his longe lore,
Bot tok him only forto duelle
At hom; and as the bokes telle,
His hous was nyh to the rivere
Besyde a bregge, as thou schalt hiere.
Ther duelleth he to take his reste,
So as it thoghte him for the beste,
To studie in his Philosophie,
As he which wolde so defie
The worldes pompe on every syde.

Bot Arisippe his bok aside
Hath leid, and to the court he wente,
Wher many a wyle and many a wente

With flaterie and wordes softe
He caste, and hath compassed ofte
Hou he his Prince myhte plese;
And in this wise he gat him ese
Of vein honour and worldes good.
The londes reule upon him stod,
The king of him was wonder glad,
And all was do, what thing he bad,
Bothe in the court and ek withoute.
With flaterie he broghte aboute
His pourpos of the worldes werk,
Which was ayein the stat of clerk,
So that Philosophie he lefte
And to richesse himself uplefte:
Lo, thus hadde Arisippe his wille.

Bot Diogenes duelte stille
A home and loked on his bok:
He soghte noght the worldes crok
For vein honour ne for richesse,
Bot all his hertes besinesse
He sette to be vertuous;
And thus withinne his oghne hous
He liveth to the sufficance
Of his havinge. And fell per chance,
This Diogene upon a day,
And that was in the Monthe of May,
Whan that these herbes ben holsome,
He walketh forto gadre some
In his gardin, of whiche his joutes
He thoghte have, and thus aboutes
Whanne he hath gadred what him liketh,
He satte him thanne doun and pyketh,
And wyssh his herbes in the flod
Upon the which his gardin stod,

Nyh to the bregge, as I tolde er.
And hapneth, whil he sitteth ther,
Cam Arisippes be the strete
With manye hors and routes grete,
And straght unto the bregge he rod.
Wher that he hoved and abod;
For as he caste his yhe nyh,
His felaw Diogene he syh,
And what he dede he syh also,
Wherof he seide to him so:

"O Diogene, god thee spede.
It were certes litel nede
To sitte there and wortes pyke,
If thou thi Prince couthest lyke,
So as I can in my degre."

"O Arisippe," ayein quod he,
"If that thou couthist, so as I,
Thi wortes pyke, trewely
It were als litel nede or lasse,
That thou so worldly wolt compasse
With flaterie forto serve,
Wherof thou thenkest to deserve
Thi princes thonk, and to pourchace
Hou thou myht stonden in his grace,
For getinge of a litel good.
If thou wolt take into thi mod
Reson, thou myht be reson deeme
That so thi prince forto queeme
Is noght to reson acordant,
Bot it is gretly descordant
Unto the Scoles of Athene."
Lo, thus ansuerde Diogene
Ayein the clerkes flaterie.

Bot yit men sen thessamplerie
Of Arisippe is wel received,
And thilke of Diogene is weyved.
Office in court and gold in cofre
Is nou, men sein, the philosophre
Which hath the worschipe in the halle;
Bot flaterie passeth alle
In chambre, whom the court avanceth;
For upon thilke lot it chanceth
To be beloved nou aday.
I not if it be ye or nay,
Bot as the comun vois it telleth;
Bot wher that flaterie duelleth
In eny lond under the Sonne,
Ther is ful many a thing begonne
Which were betre to be left;
That hath be schewed nou and eft.

Bot if a Prince wolde him reule
Of the Romeins after the reule,
In thilke time as it was used,
This vice scholde be refused,
Wherof the Princes ben assoted.
Bot wher the pleine trouthe is noted,
Ther may a Prince wel conceive,
That he schal noght himself deceive,
Of that he hiereth wordes pleine;
For him thar noght be reson pleigne,
That warned is er him be wo.
And that was fully proeved tho,
Whan Rome was the worldes chief,
The Sothseiere tho was lief,
Which wolde noght the trouthe spare,
Bot with hise wordes pleine and bare
To Themperour hise sothes tolde,

As in Cronique is yit withholde,
Hierafterward as thou schalt hiere
Acordende unto this matiere.

To se this olde ensamplerie,
That whilom was no flaterie
Toward the Princes wel I finde;
Wherof so as it comth to mynde,
Mi Sone, a tale unto thin Ere,
Whil that the worthi princes were
At Rome, I thenke forto tellen.
For whan the chances so befellen
That eny Emperour as tho
Victoire hadde upon his fo,
And so forth cam to Rome ayein,
Of treble honour he was certein,
Wherof that he was magnefied.
The ferste, as it is specefied,
Was, whan he cam at thilke tyde,
The Charr in which he scholde ryde
Foure whyte Stiedes scholden drawe;
Of Jupiter be thilke lawe
The Cote he scholde were also;
Hise prisoners ek scholden go
Endlong the Charr on eyther hond,
And alle the nobles of the lond
Tofore and after with him come
Ridende and broghten him to Rome,
In thonk of his chivalerie
And for non other flaterie.
And that was schewed forth withal;
Wher he sat in his Charr real,
Beside him was a Ribald set,
Which hadde hise wordes so beset,
To themperour in al his gloire

He seide, “Tak into memoire,
For al this pompe and al this pride
Let no justice gon aside,
Bot know thiself, what so befalle.
For men sen ofte time falle
Thing which men wende siker stonde:
Thogh thou victoire have nou on honde,
Fortune mai noght stonde alway;
The whiel per chance an other day
Mai torne, and thou myht overthrowe;
Ther lasteth nothing bot a throwe.”

With these wordes and with mo
This Ribald, which sat with him tho,
To Themperour his tale tolde:
And overmor what evere he wolde,
Or were it evel or were it good,
So pleinly as the trouthe stod,
He spareth noght, bot spekth it oute;
And so myhte every man aboute
The day of that solempnete
His tale telle als wel as he
To Themperour al openly.
And al was this the cause why;
That whil he stod in that noblesse,
He scholde his vanite represse
With suche wordes as he herde.

Lo nou, hou thilke time it ferde
Toward so hih a worthi lord:
For this I finde ek of record,
Which the Cronique hath auctorized.
What Emperour was entronized,
The ferste day of his corone,
Wher he was in his real Throne

And hield his feste in the paleis
Sittende upon his hihe deis
With al the lust that mai be gete,
Whan he was gladdest at his mete,
And every menstral hadde pleid,
And every Disour hadde seid
What most was plesant to his Ere,
Than ate laste comen there
Hise Macons, for thei scholden crave
Wher that he wolde be begrave,
And of what Ston his sepulture
Thei scholden make, and what sculpture
He wolde ordeine therupon.

Tho was ther flaterie non
The worthi princes to bejape;
The thing was other wise schape
With good conseil; and otherwise
Thei were hemselven thanne wise,
And understoden wel and knewen.
Whan suche softe wyndes blewen
Of flaterie into here Ere,
Thei setten noght here hertes there;
Bot whan thei herden wordes feigned,
The pleine trouthe it hath desdeigned
Of hem that weren so discrete.
So tok the flatour no beyete
Of him that was his prince tho:
And forto proven it is so,
A tale which befell in dede
In a Cronique of Rome I rede.

Cesar upon his real throne
Wher that he sat in his persone
And was hyest in al his pris,

A man, which wolde make him wys,
Fell doun knelende in his presence,
And dede him such a reverence,
As thogh the hihe god it were:
Men hadden gret mervaille there
Of the worschipe which he dede.
This man aros fro thilke stede,
And forth with al the same tyde
He goth him up and be his side
He set him doun as pier and pier,
And seide, “If thou that sittest hier
Art god, which alle thinges myht,
Thanne have I do worshipe ariht
As to the god; and other wise,
If thou be noght of thilke assisse,
Bot art a man such as am I,
Than mai I sitte faste by,
For we be bothen of o kinde.”
Cesar ansuerde and seide, “O blinde,
Thou art a fol, it is wel sene
Upon thiself: for if thou wene
I be a god, thou dost amys
To sitte wher thou sest god is;
And if I be a man, also
Thou hast a gret folie do,
Whan thou to such on as schal deie
The worschipe of thi god aweie
Hast yoven so unworthely.
Thus mai I prove redely,
Thou art noght wys.” And thei that herde
Hou wysly that the king ansuerde,
It was to hem a newe lore;
Wherof thei dradden him the more,
And broghten nothing to his Ere,

Bot if it trouthe and reson were.
So be ther manye, in such a wise
That feignen wordes to be wise,
And al is verray flaterie
To him which can it wel aspie.
The kinde flatour can noght love
Bot forto bringe himself above;
For hou that evere his maister fare,
So that himself stonde out of care,
Him reccheth noght: and thus fulofte
Deceived ben with wordes softe
The kinges that ben innocent.
Wherof as for chastiement
The wise Philosophre seide,
What king that so his tresor leide
Upon such folk, he hath the lesse,
And yit ne doth he no largesse,
Bot harmeth with his oghne hond
Himself and ek his oghne lond,
And that be many a sondri weie.
Wherof if that a man schal seie,
As forto speke in general,
Wher such thing falleth overal
That eny king himself misreule,
The Philosophre upon his reule
In special a cause sette,
Which is and evere hath be the lette
In governance aboute a king
Upon the meschief of the thing,
And that, he seith, is Flaterie.
Wherof tofore as in partie
What vice it is I have declared;
For who that hath his wit bewared
Upon a flatour to believe,

Whan that he weneth best achieve
His goode world, it is most fro.
And forto proeven it is so
Ensamples ther ben manyon,
Of whiche if thou wolt knowen on,
It is behovely forto hiere
What whilom fell in this matiere.

Among the kinges in the bible
I finde a tale, and is credible,
Of him that whilom Achab hihte,
Which hadde al Irahel to rihte;
Bot who that couthe glose softe
And flatre, suche he sette alofte
In gret astat and made hem riche;
Bot thei that spieken wordes liche
To trouthe and wolde it noght forbere,
For hem was non astat to bere,
The court of suche tok non hiede.
Til ate laste upon a nede,
That Benedab king of Surie
Of Irahel a gret partie,
Which Ramoth Galaath was hote,
Hath sesed; and of that riote
He tok conseil in sondri wise,
Bot noght of hem that weren wise.
And natheles upon this cas
To strengthen him, for Josaphas,
Which thanne was king of Judee,
He sende forto come, as he
Which thurgh frendschipe and alliance
Was next to him of aqueintance;
For Joram Sone of Josaphath
Achabbes dowhter wedded hath,
Which hihte faire Godelie.

And thus cam into Samarie
King Josaphat, and he fond there
The king Achab: and whan thei were
Togedre spekende of this thing,
This Josaphat seith to the king,
Hou that he wolde gladly hiere
Som trew prophete in this matiere,
That he his conseil myhte yive
To what point that it schal be drive.

And in that time so befell,
Ther was such on in Irahel,
Which sette him al to flaterie,
And he was cleped Sedechie;
And after him Achab hath sent:
And he at his comandement
Tofore him cam, and be a sleyhte
He hath upon his heved on heyhte
Tuo large hornes set of bras,
As he which al a flatour was,
And goth rampende as a leoun
And caste hise hornes up and doun,
And bad men ben of good espeir,
For as the hornes percen their,
He seith, withoute resistence,
So wiste he wel of his science
That Benedab is desconfit.
Whan Sedechie upon this plit
Hath told this tale to his lord,
Anon ther were of his acord
Prophetes false manye mo
To bere up oil, and alle tho
Affermen that which he hath told,
Wherof the king Achab was bold
And yaf hem yiftes al aboute.

But Josaphat was in gret doute,
And hield fantosme al that he herde,
Preiende Achab, hou so it ferde,
If ther were eny other man,
The which of prophecie can,
To hiere him speke er that thei gon.
Quod Achab thanne, “Ther is on,
A brothell, which Micheas hihte;
Bot he ne comth noght in my sihte,
For he hath longe in prison lein.
Him liketh nevere yit to sein
A goodly word to mi plesance;
And natheles at thin instance
He schal come oute, and thanne he may
Seie as he seide many day;
For yit he seide nevere wel.”
Tho Josaphat began somdel
To gladen him in hope of trouthe,
And bad withouten eny slouthe
That men him scholden fette anon.
And thei that weren for him gon,
Whan that thei comen wher he was,
Thei tolden unto Micheas
The manere hou that Sedechie
Declared hath his prophecie;
And therupon thei preie him faire
That he wol seie no contraire,
Wherof the king mai be desplesed,
For so schal every man ben esed,
And he mai helpe himselve also.

Micheas upon trouthe tho
His herte sette, and to hem seith,
Al that belongeth to his feith
And of non other feigned thing,

That wol he telle unto his king,
Als fer as god hath yove him grace.
Thus cam this prophete into place
Wher he the kinges wille herde;
And he therto anon ansuerde,
And seide unto him in this wise:
“Mi liege lord, for mi servise,
Which trewe hath stonden evere yit,
Thou hast me with prisone aquit;
Bot for al that I schal noght glose
Of trouthe als fer as I suppose;
And as touchende of this bataille,
Thou schalt noght of the sothe faile.
For if it like thee to hiere,
As I am tauht in that matiere,
Thou miht it understonde sone;
Bot what is afterward to done
Avise thee, for this I sih.
I was tofor the throne on hih,
Wher al the world me thoghte stod,
And there I herde and understod
The vois of god with wordes cliere
Axende, and seide in this manere:
“In what thing mai I best beguile
The king Achab?” And for a while
Upon this point thei spieken faste.
Tho seide a spirit ate laste,
“I undertake this emprise.”
And god him axeth in what wise.
“I schal,” quod he, “deceive and lye
With flaterende prophecie
In suche mouthes as he lieveth.”
And he which alle thing achieveth
Bad him go forth and don riht so.

And over this I sih also
The noble peple of Irahel
Dispers as Schep upon an hell,
Withoute a kepere unarraied:
And as thei wente aboute astraied,
I herde a vois unto hem sein,
"Goth hom into your hous ayein,
Til I for you have betre ordeigned."

Quod Sedechie, "Thou hast feigned
This tale in angringe of the king."
And in a wraththe upon this thing
He smot Michee upon the cheke;
The king him hath rebuked eke,
And every man upon him cride:
Thus was he schent on every side,
Ayein and into prison lad,
For so the king himselve bad.
The trouthe myhte noght ben herd;
Bot afterward as it hath ferd,
The dede proveth his entente:
Achab to the bataille wente,
Wher Benedab for al his Scheld
Him slouh, so that upon the feld
His poeple goth aboute astray.
Bot god, which alle thinges may,
So doth that thei no meschief have;
Here king was ded and thei ben save,
And hom ayein in goddes pes
Thei wente, and al was founde les
That Sedechie hath seid tofore.

So sit it wel a king therfore
To loven hem that trouthe mene;
For ate laste it wol be sene

That flaterie is nothing worth.
Bot nou to mi matiere forth,
As forto speken overmore
After the Philosophres lore,
The thridde point of Policie
I thenke forto specifie.

What is a lond wher men ben none?
What ben the men whiche are al one
Withoute a kinges governance?
What is a king in his ligance,
Wher that ther is no lawe in londe?
What is to take lawe on honde,
Bot if the jugges weren trewe?
These olde worldes with the newe
Who that wol take in evidence,
Ther mai he se thexperience,
What thing it is to kepe lawe,
Thurgh which the wronges ben withdrawe
And rihtwisnesse stant commended,
Wherof the regnes ben amended.
For wher the lawe mai comune
The lordes forth with the commune,
Ech hath his propre duete;
And ek the kinges realte
Of bothe his worschipe underfongeth,
To his astat as it belongeth,
Which of his hihe worthinesse
Hath to governe rihtwisnesse,
As he which schal the lawe guide.
And natheles upon som side
His pouer stant above the lawe,
To yive bothe and to withdrawe
The forfet of a mannes lif;

But thinges whiche are excessif
Ayein the lawe, he schal noght do
For love ne for hate also.

The myhtes of a king ben grete,
Bot yit a worthi king schal lete
Of wrong to don, al that he myhte;
For he which schal the poeple ryhte,
It sit wel to his regalie
That he himself ferst justefie
Towardes god in his degre:
For his astat is elles fre
Toward alle othre in his persone,
Save only to the god al one,
Which wol himself a king chastise,
Wher that non other mai suffise.
So were it good to taken hiede
That ferst a king his oghne dede
Betwen the vertu and the vice
Redresce, and thanne of his justice
So sette in evene the balance
Towardes othre in governance,
That to the povere and to the riche
Hise lawes myhten stonde liche,
He schal excepte no persone.
Bot for he mai noght al him one
In sondri places do justice,
He schal of his real office
With wys consideracion
Ordeigne his deputacion
Of suche jugges as ben lerned,
So that his poeple be governed
Be hem that trewe ben and wise.
For if the lawe of covoitise
Be set upon a jugges hond,

Wo is the poeple of thilke lond,
For wrong mai noght himselven hyde:
Bot elles on that other side,
If lawe stonde with the riht,
The poeple is glad and stant upriht.
Wher as the lawe is resonable,
The comun poeple stant menable,
And if the lawe torne amis,
The poeple also mistorned is.

And in ensample of this matiere
Of Maximin a man mai hiere,
Of Rome which was Emperour,
That whanne he made a governour
Be weie of substitucion
Of Province or of region,
He wolde ferst enquere his name,
And let it openly proclame
What man he were, or evel or good.
And upon that his name stod
Enclin to vertu or to vice,
So wolde he sette him in office,
Or elles putte him al aweie.
Thus hield the lawe his rihte weie,
Which fond no let of covoitise:
The world stod than upon the wise,
As be ensample thou myht rede;
And hold it in thi mynde, I rede.

In a Cronique I finde thus,
Hou that Gayus Fabricius,
Which whilom was Consul of Rome,
Be whom the lawes yede and come,
Whan the Sampnites to him broghte
A somme of gold, and him besoghte

To don hem favour in the lawe,
Toward the gold he gan him drawe,
Wherof in alle mennes lok
A part up in his hond he tok,
Which to his mouth in alle haste
He putte, it forto smelle and taste,
And to his yhe and to his Ere,
Bot he ne fond no confort there:
And thanne he gan it to despise,
And tolde unto hem in this wise:
"I not what is with gold to thryve,
Whan non of all my wittes fyve
Fynt savour ne delit therinne.
So is it bot a nyce Sinne
Of gold to ben to covoitous;
Bot he is riche and glorious,
Which hath in his subjeccion
Tho men whiche in possession
Ben riche of gold, and be this skile;
For he mai aldai whan he wile,
Or be hem lieve or be hem lothe,
Justice don upon hem bothe."
Lo, thus he seide, and with that word
He threw tofore hem on the bord
The gold out of his hond anon,
And seide hem that he wolde non:
So that he kepte his liberte
To do justice and equite,
Withoute lucre of such richesse.

Ther be nou fewe of suche, I gesse;
For it was thilke times used,
That every jugge was refused
Which was noght frend to comun riht;
Bot thei that wolden stonde upriht

For trouthe only to do justice
Preferred were in thilke office
To deme and jugge commun lawe:
Which nou, men sein, is al withdrawe.
To sette a lawe and kepe it noght
Ther is no comun profit soght;
Bot above alle natheles
The lawe, which is mad for pes,
Is good to kepe for the beste,
For that set alle men in reste.

The rihtful Emperour Conrade
To kepe pes such lawe made,
That non withinne the cite
In destorbance of unite
Dorste ones moeven a matiere.
For in his time, as thou myht hiere,
What point that was for lawe set
It scholde for no gold be let,
To what persone that it were.
And this broghte in the comun fere,
Why every man the lawe dradde,
For ther was non which favour hadde.

So as these olde bokes sein,
I finde write hou a Romein,
Which Consul was of the Pretoire,
Whos name was Carmidotoire,
He sette a lawe for the pes,
That non, bot he be wepneles,
Schal come into the conseil hous,
And elles as malicious
He schal ben of the lawe ded.
To that statut and to that red
Acorden alle it schal be so,

For certein cause which was tho:
Nou lest what fell therafter sone.
This Consul hadde forto done,
And was into the feldes ride;
And thei him hadden longe abide,
That lordes of the conseil were,
And for him sende, and he cam there
With swerd begert, and hath foryete,
Til he was in the conseil sete.
Was non of hem that made speche,
Til he himself it wolde seche,
And fond out the defalte himselve;
And thanne he seide unto the tuelve,
Whiche of the Senat weren wise,
"I have deserved the juise,
In haste that it were do."
And thei him seiden alle no;
For wel thei wiste it was no vice,
Whan he ne thoghte no malice,
Bot onliche of a litel slouthe:
And thus thei leften as for routhe
To do justice upon his gilt,
For that he scholde noght be spilt.
And whanne he sih the maner hou
Thei wolde him save, he made avou
With manfull herte, and thus he seide,
That Rome scholde nevere abreide
His heires, whan he were of dawe,
That here Ancestre brak the lawe.
Forthi, er that thei weren war,
Forth with the same swerd he bar
The statut of his lawe he kepte,
So that al Rome his deth bewepte.

In other place also I rede,
Wher that a jugge his oghne dede
Ne wol noght venge of lawe broke,
The king it hath himselven wroke.
The grete king which Cambises
Was hote, a jugge laweles
He fond, and into remembrance
He dede upon him such vengance:
Out of his skyn he was beflain
Al quyk, and in that wise slain,
So that his skyn was schape al meete,
And nayled on the same seete
Wher that his Sone scholde sitte.
Avise him, if he wolde flitte
The lawe for the coveitise,
Ther sih he redi his juise.

Thus in defalte of other jugge
The king mot otherwhile jugge,
To holden up the rihte lawe.
And forto speke of tholde dawe,
To take ensample of that was tho,
I finde a tale write also,
Hou that a worthi prince is holde
The lawes of his lond to holde,
Ferst for the hihe goddes sake,
And ek for that him is betake
The poeple forto guide and lede,
Which is the charge of his kinghede.

In a Cronique I rede thus
Of the rihtful Ligurgius,
Which of Athenis Prince was,
Hou he the lawe in every cas,
Wherof he scholde his poeple reule,

Hath set upon so good a reule,
In al this world that cite non
Of lawe was so wel begon
Forth with the trouthe of governance.
Ther was among hem no distance,
Bot every man hath his encress;
Ther was withoute werre pes,
Withoute envie love stod;
Richesse upon the comun good
And noght upon the singuler
Ordeigned was, and the pouer
Of hem that weren in astat
Was sauf: wherof upon debat
Ther stod nothing, so that in reste
Mihte every man his herte reste.

And whan this noble rihtful king
Sih hou it ferde of al this thing,
Wherof the poeple stod in ese,
He, which for evere wolde plese
The hihe god, whos thonk he soghte,
A wonder thing thanne him bethoghte,
And schop if that it myhte be,
Hou that his lawe in the cite
Mihte afterward for evere laste.
And therupon his wit he caste
What thing him were best to feigne,
That he his pourpos myhte atteigne.

A Parlement and thus he sette,
His wisdom wher that he besette
In audience of grete and smale,
And in this wise he tolde his tale:
"God wot, and so ye witen alle,
Hierafterward hou so it falle,

Yit into now my will hath be
To do justice and equite
In forthringe of comun profit;
Such hath ben evere my delit.
Bot of o thing I am beknowe,
The which mi will is that ye knowe:
The lawe which I tok on honde,
Was altogedre of goddes sonde
And nothing of myn oghne wit;
So mot it nede endure yit,
And schal do lengere, if ye wile.
For I wol telle you the skile;
The god Mercurius and no man
He hath me tawht al that I can
Of suche lawes as I made,
Wherof that ye ben alle glade;
It was the god and nothing I,
Which dede al this, and nou forthi
He hath comanded of his grace
That I schal come into a place
Which is forein out in an yle,
Wher I mot tarie for a while,
With him to speke, as he hath bede.
For as he seith, in thilke stede
He schal me suche thinges telle,
That evere, whyl the world schal duelle,
Athenis schal the betre fare.
Bot ferst, er that I thider fare,
For that I wolde that mi lawe
Amonges you ne be withdrawe
Ther whyles that I schal ben oute,
Forthi to setten out of doute
Bothe you and me, this wol I preie,
That ye me wolde assure and seie

With such an oth as I wol take,
That ech of you schal undertake
Mi lawes forto kepe and holde."
Thei seiden alle that thei wolde,
And therupon thei swore here oth,
That fro the time that he goth,
Til he to hem be come ayein,
Thei scholde hise lawes wel and plein
In every point kepe and fulfille.

Thus hath Ligurgius his wille,
And tok his leve and forth he wente.
Bot lest nou wel to what entente
Of rihtwisnesse he dede so:
For after that he was ago,
He schop him nevere to be founde;
So that Athenis, which was bounde,
Nevere after scholde be relessed,
Ne thilke goode lawe cessed,
Which was for comun profit set.
And in this wise he hath it knet;
He, which the comun profit soghte,
The king, his oghne astat ne roghte;
To do profit to the comune,
He tok of exil the fortune,
And lefte of Prince thilke office
Only for love and for justice,
Thurgh which he thoghte, if that he myhte,
For evere after his deth to rihte
The cite which was him betake.
Wherof men oghte ensample take
The goode lawes to avance
With hem which under governance
The lawes have forto kepe;
For who that wolde take kepe

Of hem that ferst the lawes founde,
Als fer as lasteth eny bounde
Of lond, here names yit ben knowe:
And if it like thee to knowe
Some of here names hou thei stonde,
Nou herkne and thou schalt understonde.

Of every bienfet the merite
The god himself it wol aquite;
And ek fulofte it falleth so,
The world it wole aquite also,
Bot that mai noght ben evene liche:
The god he yifth the heveneriche,
The world yifth only bot a name,
Which stant upon the goode fame
Of hem that don the goode dede.
And in this wise double mede
Resceiven thei that don wel hiere;
Wherof if that thee list to hiere
After the fame as it is blowe,
Ther myht thou wel the sothe knowe,
Hou thilke honeste besinesse
Of hem that ferst for rihtwisnesse
Among the men the lawes made,
Mai nevere upon this erthe fade.
For evere, whil ther is a tunge,
Here name schal be rad and sunge
And holde in the Cronique write;
So that the men it scholden wite,
To speke good, as thei wel oghten,
Of hem that ferst the lawes soghten
In forthringe of the worldes pes.
Unto thebreus was Moises
The ferste, and to thegipciens
Mercurius, and to Troiens

Ferst was Neuma Pompilius,
To Athenes Ligurgius
Yaf ferst the lawe, and to Gregois
Foroneus hath thilke vois,
And Romulus to the Romeins.
For suche men that ben vileins
The lawe in such a wise ordeigneth,
That what man to the lawe pleigneth,
Be so the jugge stonde upriht,
He schal be served of his riht.
And so ferforth it is befalle
That lawe is come among ous alle:
God lieve it mote wel ben holde,
As every king therto is holde;
For thing which is of kinges set,
With kinges oghte it noght be let.
What king of lawe takth no kepe,
Be lawe he mai no regne kepe.
Do lawe awey, what is a king?
Wher is the riht of eny thing,
If that ther be no lawe in londe?
This oghte a king wel understonde,
As he which is to lawe swore,
That if the lawe be forbore
Withouten execucioun,
If makth a lond torne up so doun,
Which is unto the king a sclandre.
Forthi unto king Alisandre
The wise Philosophre bad,
That he himselve ferst be lad
Of lawe, and forth thanne overal
So do justice in general,
That al the wyde lond aboute
The justice of his lawe doute,

And thanne schal he stonde in reste.
For therto lawe is on the beste
Above alle other erthly thing,
To make a liege drede his king.
Bot hou a king schal gete him love
Toward the hihe god above,
And ek among the men in erthe,
This nexte point, which is the ferthe
Of Aristotles lore, it techeth:
Wherof who that the Scole secheth,
What Policie that it is
The bok reherceth after this.

It nedeth noght that I delate
The pris which preised is algate,
And hath ben evere and evere schal,
Wherof to speke in special,
It is the vertu of Pite,
Thurgh which the hihe mageste
Was stered, whan his Sone alyhte,
And in pite the world to rihte
Tok of the Maide fleissh and blod.
Pite was cause of thilke good,
Wherof that we ben alle save:
Wel oghte a man Pite to have
And the vertu to sette in pris,
Whan he himself which is al wys
Hath schewed why it schal be preised.
Pite may noght be conterpeised
Of tirannie with no peis;
For Pite makth a king courteis
Bothe in his word and in his dede.

It sit wel every liege drede
His king and to his heste obeie,
And riht so be the same weie
It sit a king to be pitous
Toward his poeple and gracious
Upon the reule of governance,
So that he worche no vengance,
Which mai be cleped crualte.
Justice which doth equite
Is dredfull, for he noman spareth;
Bot in the lond wher Pite fareth
The king mai nevere faile of love,
For Pite thurgh the grace above,
So as the Philosphre affermeth,
His regne in good astat confermeth.

Thus seide whilom Constantin:
"What Emperour that is enclin
To Pite forto be servant,
Of al the worldes remenant
He is worthi to ben a lord."

In olde bokes of record
This finde I write of essamplaire:
Troian the worthi debonaire,
Be whom that Rome stod governed,
Upon a time as he was lerned
Of that he was to familier,
He seide unto that conseiller,
That forto ben an Emperour
His will was noght for vein honour,
Ne yit for reddour of justice;
Bot if he myhte in his office
Hise lordes and his poeple plese,
Him thoghte it were a grettere ese

With love here hertes to him drawe,
Than with the drede of eny lawe.
For whan a thing is do for doute,
Fulofte it comth the worse aboute;
Bot wher a king is Pietous,
He is the more gracious,
That mochel thrift him schal betyde,
Which elles scholde torne aside.

Of Pite forto speke plein,
Which is with mercy wel besein,
Fulofte he wole himselve peine
To kepe an other fro the peine:
For Charite the moder is
Of Pite, which nothing amis
Can soffre, if he it mai amende.
It sit to every man livende
To be Pitous, bot non so wel
As to a king, which on the whiel
Fortune hath set aboven alle:
For in a king, if so befalle
That his Pite be ferme and stable,
To al the lond it is vailable
Only thurgh grace of his persone;
For the Pite of him al one
Mai al the large realme save.
So sit it wel a king to have
Pite; for this Valeire tolde,
And seide hou that be daies olde
Codrus, which was in his degre
King of Athenis the cite,
A werre he hadde ayein Dorrence:
And forto take his evidence
What schal befalle of the bataille,
He thoghte he wolde him ferst consaille

With Appollo, in whom he triste;
Thurgh whos ansuere this he wiste,
Of tuo pointz that he myhte chese,
Or that he wolde his body lese
And in bataille himselve deie,
Or elles the seconde weie,
To sen his poeple desconfit.
Bot he, which Pite hath parfit
Upon the point of his believe,
The poeple thoghte to relieve,
And ches himselve to be ded.
Wher is nou such an other hed,
Which wolde for the lemes dye?
And natheles in som partie
It oghte a kinges herte stere,
That he hise liege men forbere.
And ek toward hise enemis
Fulofte he may deserve pris,
To take of Pite remembrance,
Wher that he myhte do vengance:
For whanne a king hath the victoire,
And thanne he drawe into memoire
To do Pite in stede of wreche,
He mai noght faile of thilke speche
Wherof arist the worldes fame,
To yive a Prince a worthi name.

I rede hou whilom that Pompeie,
To whom that Rome moste obeie,
A werre hadde in jeupartie
Ayein the king of Ermenie,
Which of long time him hadde grieved.
Bot ate laste it was achieved
That he this king desconfit hadde,
And forth with him to Rome ladde

As Prisoner, wher many a day
In sori plit and povere he lay,
The corone of his heved deposed,
Withinne walles faste enclosed;
And with ful gret humilite
He soffreth his adversite.
Pompeie sih his pacience
And tok pite with conscience,
So that upon his hihe deis
Tofore al Rome in his Paleis,
As he that wolde upon him rewe,
Let yive him his corone newe
And his astat al full and plein
Restoreth of his regne ayein,
And seide it was more goodly thing
To make than undon a king,
To him which pouer hadde of bothe.
Thus thei, that weren longe wrothe,
Acorden hem to final pes;
And yit justice natheles
Was kept and in nothing offended;
Wherof Pompeie was comended.
Ther mai no king himself excuse,
Bot if justice he kepe and use,
Which for teschuie crualte
He mot attempre with Pite.

Of crualte the felonie
Engendred is of tirannie,
Ayein the whos condicion
God is himself the champion,
Whos strengthe mai noman withstonde.
For evere yit it hath so stonde,
That god a tirant overladde;
Bot wher Pite the regne ladde,

Ther mihte no fortune laste
Which was grevous, bot ate laste
The god himself it hath redresced.
Pite is thilke vertu blessed
Which nevere let his Maister falle;
Bot crualte, thogh it so falle
That it mai regne for a throwe,
God wole it schal ben overthrowe:
Wherof ensamples ben ynowhe
Of hem that thilke merel drowhe.

Of crualte I rede thus:
Whan the tirant Leoncius
Was to thempire of Rome arrived,
Fro which he hath with strengthe prived
The pietous Justinian,
As he which was a cruel man,
His nase of and his lippes bothe
He kutte, for he wolde him lothe
Unto the poeple and make unable.
Bot he which is al merciable,
The hihe god, ordeigneth so,
That he withinne a time also,
Whan he was strengest in his ire,
Was schoven out of his empire.
Tiberius the pouer hadde,
And Rome after his will he ladde,
And for Leonce in such a wise
Ordeigneth, that he tok juise
Of nase and lippes bothe tuo,
For that he dede an other so,
Which more worthi was than he.

Lo, which a fall hath crualte,
And Pite was set up ayein:
For after that the bokes sein,
Therbellis king of Bulgarie
With helpe of his chivalerie
Justinian hath unprisoned
And to thempire ayein coroned.

In a Cronique I finde also
Of Siculus, which was ek so
A cruel king lich the tempeste,
The whom no Pite myhte areste,—
He was the ferste, as bokes seie,
Upon the See which fond Galeie
And let hem make for the werre,—
As he which al was out of herre
Fro Pite and misericorde;
For therto couthe he noght acorde,
Bot whom he myhte slen, he slouh,
And therof was he glad ynouh.
He hadde of conseil manyon,
Among the whiche ther was on,
Be name which Berillus hihte;
And he bethoghte him hou he myhte
Unto the tirant do likinge,
And of his oghne ymaginynge
Let forge and make a Bole of bras,
And on the side cast ther was
A Dore, wher a man mai inne,
Whan he his peine schal beginne
Thurgh fyr, which that men putten under.
And al this dede he for a wonder,
That whanne a man for peine cride,
The Bole of bras, which gapeth wyde,
It scholde seme as thogh it were

A belwinge in a mannes Ere,
And noght the criinge of a man.
Bot he which alle sleihtes can,
The devel, that lith in helle fast,
Him that this caste hath overcast,
That for a trespas which he dede
He was putt in the same stede,
And was himself the ferste of alle
Which was into that peine falle
That he for othre men ordeigneth;
Ther was noman which him compleigneth.

Of tirannie and crualte
Be this ensample a king mai se,
Himself and ek his conseil bothe,
Hou thei ben to mankinde lothe
And to the god abhominable.
Ensamples that ben concordable
I finde of othre Princes mo,
As thou schalt hiere, of time go.
The grete tirant Dionys,
Which mannes lif sette of no pris,
Unto his hors fulofte he yaf
The men in stede of corn and chaf,
So that the hors of thilke stod
Devoureden the mennes blod;
Til fortune ate laste cam,
That Hercules him overcam,
And he riht in the same wise
Of this tirant tok the juise:
As he til othre men hath do,
The same deth he deide also,
That no Pite him hath socoured,
Til he was of hise hors devoured.

Of Lichaon also I finde
Hou he ayein the lawe of kinde
Hise hostes slouh, and into mete
He made her bodies to ben ete
With othre men withinne his hous.
Bot Jupiter the glorious,
Which was commoeved of this thing,
Vengance upon this cruel king
So tok, that he fro mannes forme
Into a wolf him let transforme:
And thus the crualte was kidd,
Which of long time he hadde hidd;
A wolf he was thanne openly,
The whos nature prively
He hadde in his condicion.
And unto this conclusioun,
That tirannie is to despise,
I finde ensample in sondri wise,
And nameliche of hem fulofte,
The whom fortune hath set alofte
Upon the werres forto winne.
Bot hou so that the wrong beginne
Of tirannie, it mai noght laste,
Bot such as thei don ate laste
To othre men, such on hem falleth;
For ayein suche Pite calleth
Vengance to the god above.
For who that hath no tender love
In savinge of a mannes lif,
He schal be founde so gultif,
That whanne he wolde mercy crave
In time of nede, he schal non have.

Of the natures this I finde,
The fierce Leon in his kinde,
Which goth rampende after his preie,
If he a man finde in his weie,
He wole him slen, if he withstonde.
Bot if the man coude understonde
To falle anon before his face
In signe of mercy and of grace,
The Leon schal of his nature
Restreigne his ire in such mesure,
As thogh it were a beste tamed,
And torne awey halfvinge aschamed,
That he the man schal nothing grieve.
Hou scholde than a Prince achieve
The worldes grace, if that he wolde
Destruie a man whanne he is yolde
And stant upon his mercy al?
Bot forto speke in special,
Ther have be suche and yit ther be
Tirantz, whos hertes no pite
Mai to no point of mercy plie,
That thei upon her tirannie
Ne gladen hem the men to sle;
And as the rages of the See
Ben unpitous in the tempeste,
Riht so mai no Pite areste
Of crualte the gret oultrage,
Which the tirant in his corage
Engendred hath: wherof I finde
A tale, which comth nou to mynde.

I rede in olde bokes thus:
Ther was a Duk, which Spertachus
Men clepe, and was a werreiour,
A cruel man, a conquerour

With strong pouer the which he ladde.
For this condicion he hadde,
That where him hapneth the victoire,
His lust and al his moste gloire
Was forto sle and noght to save:
Of rancoun wolde he no good have
For savinge of a mannes lif,
Bot al goth to the swerd and knyf,
So lief him was the mannes blod.
And natheles yit thus it stod,
So as fortune aboute wente,
He fell riht heir as be descente
To Perse, and was coroned king.
And whan the worschipe of this thing
Was falle, and he was king of Perse,
If that thei weren ferst diverse,
The tirannies whiche he wroghte,
A thousendfold welmore he soghte
Thanne afterward to do malice.
The god vengance ayein the vice
Hath schape: for upon a tyde,
Whan he was heihest in his Pride,
In his rancour and in his hete
Ayein the queene of Marsagete,
Which Thameris that time hihte,
He made werre al that he myhte:
And sche, which wolde hir lond defende,
Hir oghne Sone ayein him sende,
Which the defence hath undertake.
Bot he desconfit was and take;
And whan this king him hadde in honde,
He wol no mercy understonde,
Bot dede him slen in his presence.

The tidinge of this violence
Whan it cam to the moder Ere,
Sche sende anon ay wydewhere
To suche frendes as sche hadde,
A gret pouer til that sche ladde.
In sondri wise and tho sche caste
Hou sche this king mai overcaste;
And ate laste acorded was,
That in the danger of a pass,
Thurgh which this tirant scholde passe,
Sche schop his pouer to compasse
With strengthe of men be such a weie
That he schal noght eschape aweie.
And whan sche hadde thus ordeigned,
Sche hath hir oghne bodi feigned,
For feere as thogh sche wolde flee
Out of hir lond: and whan that he
Hath herd hou that this ladi fledde,
So faste after the chace he spedde,
That he was founde out of array.
For it betidde upon a day,
Into the pas whanne he was falle,
Thembuisschementz tobrieken alle
And him beclipte on every side,
That fle ne myhte he noght aside:
So that ther weren dede and take
Tuo hundred thousend for his sake,
That weren with him of his host.
And thus was leid the grete bost
Of him and of his tirannie:
It halp no mercy forto crie
To him which whilom dede non;
For he unto the queene anon
Was broght, and whan that sche him sih,

This word sche spak and seide on hih:
"O man, which out of mannes kinde
Reson of man hast left behinde
And lived worse than a beste,
Whom Pite myhte noght areste,
The mannes blod to schede and spille
Thou haddest nevere yit thi fille.
Bot nou the laste time is come,
That thi malice is overcome:
As thou til othre men hast do,
Nou schal be do to thee riht so."
Tho bad this ladi that men scholde
A vessel bringe, in which sche wolde
Se the vengance of his juise,
Which sche began anon devise;
And tok the Princes whiche he ladde,
Be whom his chief conseil he hadde,
And whil hem lasteth eny breth,
Sche made hem blede to the deth
Into the vessel wher it stod:
And whan it was fulfild of blod,
Sche caste this tirant therinne,
And seide him, "Lo, thus myht thou wynne
The lustes of thin appetit.
In blod was whilom thi delit,
Nou schalt thou drinken al thi fille."

And thus onliche of goddes wille,
He which that wolde himselve strange
To Pite, fond mercy so strange,
That he withoute grace is lore.
So may it schewe wel therfore
That crualte hath no good ende;
Bot Pite, hou so that it wende,
Makth that the god is merciable,

If ther be cause resonable
Why that a king schal be pitous.
Bot elles, if he be doubtous
To slen in cause of rihtwisnesse,
It mai be said no Pitousnesse,
Bot it is Pusillamite,
Which every Prince scholde flee.
For if Pite mesure excede,
Kinghode may noght wel procede
To do justice upon the riht:
For it belongeth to a knyht
Als gladly forto fihte as reste,
To sette his liege poeple in reste,
Whan that the werre upon hem falleth;
For thanne he mote, as it befalleth,
Of his knyhthode as a Leon
Be to the poeple a champioun
Withouten eny Pite feigned.
For if manhode be restreigned,
Or be it pes or be it werre,
Justice goth al out of herre,
So that knyhthode is set behinde.
Of Aristotles lore I finde,
A king schal make good visage,
That noman knowe of his corage
Bot al honour and worthinesse:
For if a king schal upon gesse
Withoute verrai cause drede,
He mai be lich to that I rede;
And thogh that it be lich a fable,
Thensample is good and resonable.

As it be olde daies fell,
I rede whilom that an hell
Up in the londes of Archade

A wonder dredful noise made;
For so it fell that ilke day,
This hell on his childinge lay,
And whan the throwes on him come,
His noise lich the day of dome
Was ferfull in a mannes thoght
Of thing which that thei sihe noght,
Bot wel thei herden al aboute
The noise, of which thei were in doute,
As thei that wenden to be lore
Of thing which thanne was unbore.
The nerr this hell was upon chance
To taken his deliverance,
The more unbuxomliche he cride;
And every man was fledd aside,
For drede and lefte his oghne hous:
And ate laste it was a Mous,
The which was bore and to norrice
Betake; and tho thei hield hem nyce,
For thei withoute cause dradde.

Thus if a king his herte ladde
With every thing that he schal hiere,
Fulofte he scholde change his chiere
And upon fantasie drede,
Whan that ther is no cause of drede.

Orace to his Prince tolde,
That him were levere that he wolde
Upon knihthode Achillem suie
In time of werre, thanne eschuie,
So as Tersites dede at Troie.
Achilles al his hole joie
Sette upon Armes forto fihte;
Tersites soghte al that he myhte

Unarmed forto stonde in reste:
Bot of the tuo it was the beste
That Achilles upon the nede
Hath do, wherof his knyhtlihiede
Is yit comended overal.

King Salomon in special
Seith, as ther is a time of pes,
So is a time natheles
Of werre, in which a Prince algate
Schal for the comun riht debate
And for his oghne worschipe eke.
Bot it behoveth noght to seke
Only the werre for worschipe,
Bot to the riht of his lordschipe,
Which he is holde to defende,
Mote every worthi Prince entende.
Betwen the simplesce of Pite
And the folhaste of crualte,
Wher stant the verray hardiesce,
Ther mote a king his herte adresce,
Whanne it is time to forsake,
And whan time is also to take
The dedly werres upon honde,
That he schal for no drede wonde,
If rihtwisnesse be withal.
For god is myhty overal
To forthren every mannes trowthe,
Bot it be thurgh his oghne slowthe;
And namely the kinges nede
It mai noght faile forto spede,
For he stant one for hem alle;
So mote it wel the betre falle
And wel the more god favoureth,
Whan he the comun riht socoureth.

And forto se the sothe in dede,
Behold the bible and thou myht rede
Of grete ensamples manyon,
Wherof that I wol tellen on.

Upon a time as it befell,
Ayein Judee and Irahel
Whan sondri kinges come were
In pourpos to destruie there
The poeple which god kepte tho,—
And stod in thilke daies so,
That Gedeon, which scholde lede
The goddes folk, tok him to rede,
And sende in al the lond aboute,
Til he assembled hath a route
With thritti thousend of defence,
To fihte and make resistence
Ayein the whiche hem wolde assaille:
And natheles that o bataille
Of thre that weren enemys
Was double mor than was al his;
Wherof that Gedeon him dradde,
That he so litel poeple hadde.
Bot he which alle thing mai helpe,
Wher that ther lacketh mannes helpe,
To Gedeon his Angel sente,
And bad, er that he forther wente,
Al openly that he do crie
That every man in his partie
Which wolde after his oghne wille
In his delice abide stille
At hom in eny maner wise,
For pourchas or for covoitise,
For lust of love or lacke of herte,
He scholde noght aboute sterte,

Bot holde him stille at hom in pes:
Wherof upon the morwe he les
Wel twenty thousend men and mo,
The whiche after the cri ben go.
Thus was with him bot only left
The thridde part, and yit god eft
His Angel sende and seide this
To Gedeon: “If it so is
That I thin help schal undertake,
Thou schalt yit lasse poeple take,
Be whom mi will is that thou spede.
Forthi tomorwe tak good hiede,
Unto the flod whan ye be come,
What man that hath the water nome
Up in his hond and lapeth so,
To thi part ches out alle tho;
And him which wery is to swinke,
Upon his wombe and lith to drinke,
Forsak and put hem alle aweie.
For I am myhti alle weie,
Wher as me list myn help to schewe
In goode men, thogh thei ben fewe.”

This Gedeon awaiteth wel,
Upon the morwe and everydel,
As god him bad, riht so he dede.
And thus ther leften in that stede
With him thre hundred and nomo,
The remenant was al ago:
Wherof that Gedeon merveileth,
And therupon with god conseileth,
Pleignende as ferforth as he dar.
And god, which wolde he were war
That he schal spede upon his riht,
Hath bede him go the same nyht

And take a man with him, to hiere
What schal be spoke in his matere
Among the hethen enemis;
So mai he be the more wys,
What afterward him schal befalle.

This Gedeon amonges alle
Phara, to whom he triste most,
Be nyhte tok toward thilke host,
Which logged was in a valleie,
To hiere what thei wolden seie;
Upon his fot and as he ferde,
Tuo Sarazins spekende he herde.
Quod on, "Ared mi swevene ariht,
Which I mette in mi slep to nyht.

Me thoghte I sih a barli cake,
Which fro the Hull his weie hath take,
And cam rollende doun at ones;
And as it were for the nones,
Forth in his cours so as it ran,
The kinges tente of Madian,
Of Amalech, of Amoreie,
Of Amon and of Jebuseie,
And many an other tente mo
With gret noise, as me thoghte tho,
It threw to grounde and overcaste,
And al this host so sore agaste
That I awok for pure drede."

"This swevene can I wel arede,"
Quod thother Sarazin anon:
"The barli cake is Gedeon,
Which fro the hell doun sodeinly
Schal come and sette such ascry
Upon the kinges and ous bothe,

That it schal to ous alle lothe:
For in such drede he schal ous bringe,
That if we hadden flyht of wynge,
The weie on fote in desespeir
We scholden leve and flen in their,
For ther schal nothing him withstonde."
Whan Gedeon hath understonde
This tale, he thonketh god of al,
And priveliche ayein he stal,
So that no lif him hath perceived.
And thanne he hath fulli conceived
That he schal spede; and therupon
The nyht suiende he schop to gon
This multitude to assaile.
Nou schalt thou hiere a gret mervaile,
With what voisdie that he wroghte.
The litel poeple which he broghte,
Was non of hem that he ne hath
A pot of erthe, in which he tath
A lyht brennende in a kressette,
And ech of hem ek a trompette
Bar in his other hond beside;
And thus upon the nyhtes tyde
Duk Gedeon, whan it was derk,
Ordeineth him unto his werk,
And parteth thanne his folk in thre,
And chargeth hem that thei ne fle,
And tawhte hem hou they scholde ascrie
Alle in o vois per compaignie,
And what word ek thei scholden speke,
And hou thei scholde here pottes breke
Echon with other, whan thei herde

That he himselve ferst so ferde;
For whan thei come into the stede,
He bad hem do riht as he dede.

And thus stalkende forth a pas
This noble Duk, whan time was,
His pot tobrak and loude ascride,
And tho thei breke on every side.
The trompe was noght forto seke;
He blew, and so thei blewen eke
With such a noise among hem alle,
As thogh the hevene scholde falle.
The hull unto here vois ansuerde,
This host in the valleie it herde,
And sih hou that the hell alyhte;
So what of hieringe and of sihte,
Thei cawhten such a sodein feere,
That non of hem belefte there:
The tentes hole thei forsoke,
That thei non other good ne toke,
Bot only with here bodi bare
Thei fledde, as doth the wylde Hare.
And evere upon the hull thei blewe,
Til that thei sihe time, and knewe
That thei be fled upon the rage;
And whan thei wiste here avantage,
Thei felle anon unto the chace.

Thus myht thou sen hou goddes grace
Unto the goode men availeth;
But elles ofte time it faileth
To suche as be noght wel disposed.
This tale nedeth noght be glosed,
For it is openliche schewed
That god to hem that ben wel thewed

Hath yove and granted the victoire:
So that thensample of this histoire
Is good for every king to holde;
Ferst in himself that he beholde
If he be good of his livinge,
And that the folk which he schal bringe
Be good also, for thanne he may
Be glad of many a merie day,
In what as evere he hath to done.
For he which sit above the Mone
And alle thing mai spille and spede,
In every cause, in every nede
His goode king so wel adresceth,
That alle his fomen he represseth,
So that ther mai noman him dere;
And als so wel he can forbere,
And soffre a wickid king to falle
In hondes of his fomen alle.

Nou forthermore if I schal sein
Of my matiere, and torne ayein
To speke of justice and Pite
After the reule of realte,
This mai a king wel understonde,
Knihthode mot ben take on honde,
Whan that it stant upon the nede:
He schal no rihtful cause drede,
Nomore of werre thanne of pes,
If he wol stonde blameles;
For such a cause a king mai have
That betre him is to sle than save,
Wherof thou myht ensample finde.
The hihe makere of mankinde
Be Samuel to Saul bad,
That he schal nothing ben adrad

Ayein king Agag forto fihte;
For this the godhede him behihte,
That Agag schal ben overcome:
And whan it is so ferforth come,
That Saul hath him desconfit,
The god bad make no respit,
That he ne scholde him slen anon.
Bot Saul let it overgon
And dede noght the goddes heste:
For Agag made gret beheste
Of rancoun which he wolde yive,
King Saul soffreth him to live
And feigneth pite forth withal.
Bot he which seth and knoweth al,
The hihe god, of that he feigneth
To Samuel upon him pleigneth,
And sende him word, for that he lefte
Of Agag that he ne berefte
The lif, he schal noght only dye
Himself, bot fro his regalie
He schal be put for everemo,
Noght he, bot ek his heir also,
That it schal nevere come ayein.

Thus myht thou se the sothe plein,
That of tomoche and of tolyte
Upon the Princes stant the wyte.
Bot evere it was a kinges riht
To do the dedes of a knyht;
For in the handes of a king
The deth and lif is al o thing
After the lawes of justice.
To slen it is a dedly vice,
Bot if a man the deth deserve;
And if a king the lif preserve

Of him which oghte forto dye,
He suieth noght thensamplerie
Which in the bible is evident:
Hou David in his testament,
Whan he no lengere myhte live,
Unto his Sone in charge hath yive
That he Joab schal slen algate;
And whan David was gon his gate,
The yonge wise Salomon
His fader heste dede anon,
And slouh Joab in such a wise,
That thei that herden the juise
Evere after dradden him the more,
And god was ek wel paid therfore,
That he so wolde his herte plye
The lawes forto justefie.
And yit he kepte forth withal
Pite, so as a Prince schal,
That he no tirannie wroghte;
He fond the wisdom which he soghte,
And was so rihtful natheles,
That al his lif he stod in pes,
That he no dedly werres hadde,
For every man his wisdom dradde.
And as he was himselve wys,
Riht so the worthi men of pris
He hath of his conseil withholde;
For that is every Prince holde,
To make of suche his retenue
Whiche wise ben, and to remue
The foles: for ther is nothing
Which mai be betre aboute a king,
Than conseil, which is the substance
Of all a kinges governance.

In Salomon a man mai see
What thing of most necessite
Unto a worthi king belongeth.
Whan he his kingdom underfongeth,
God bad him chese what he wolde,
And seide him that he have scholde
What he wolde axe, as of o thing.
And he, which was a newe king,
Forth therupon his bone preide
To god, and in this wise he seide:
"O king, be whom that I schal regne,
Yif me wisdom, that I my regne,
Forth with thi poeple which I have,
To thin honour mai kepe and save."
Whan Salomon his bone hath taxed,
The god of that which he hath axed
Was riht wel paid, and granteth sone
Noght al only that he his bone
Schal have of that, bot of richesse,
Of hele, of pes, of hih noblesse,
Forth with wisdom at his axinges,
Which stant above alle othre thinges.

Bot what king wole his regne save,
Ferst him behoveth forto have
After the god and his believe
Such conseil which is to believe,
Fulfild of trouthe and rihtwisnesse:
Bot above alle in his noblesse
Betwen the reddour and pite
A king schal do such equite
And sette the balance in evene,
So that the hihe god in hevene
And al the poeple of his nobleie
Loange unto his name seie.

For most above all erthli good,
Wher that a king himself is good
It helpeth, for in other weie
If so be that a king forsueie,
Fulofte er this it hath be sein,
The comun poeple is overlein
And hath the kinges Senne aboght,
Al thogh the poeple agulte noght.
Of that the king his god misserveth,
The poeple takth that he descerveth
Hier in this world, bot elleswhere
I not hou it schal stonde there.
Forthi good is a king to triste
Ferst to himself, as he ne wiste
Non other help bot god alone;
So schal the reule of his persone
Withinne himself thurgh providence
Ben of the betre conscience.
And forto finde ensample of this,
A tale I rede, and soth it is.

In a Cronique it telleth thus:
The king of Rome Lucius
Withinne his chambre upon a nyht
The Steward of his hous, a knyht,
Forth with his Chamberlein also,
To conseil hadde bothe tuo,
And stoden be the Chiminee
Togedre spekende alle thre.
And happeth that the kinges fol
Sat be the fyr upon a stol,
As he that with his babil pleide,
Bot yit he herde al that thei seide,
And therof token thei non hiede.
The king hem axeth what to rede

Of such matiere as cam to mouthe,
And thei him tolden as thei couthe.
Whan al was spoke of that thei mente,
The king with al his hole entente
Thanne ate laste hem axeth this,
What king men tellen that he is:
Among the folk touchende his name,
Or be it pris, or be it blame,
Riht after that thei herden sein,
He bad hem forto telle it plein,
That thei no point of soth forbere,
Be thilke feith that thei him bere.

The Steward ferst upon this thing
Yaf his ansuere unto the king
And thoghte glose in this matiere,
And seide, als fer as he can hiere,
His name is good and honourable:
Thus was the Stieward favorable,
That he the trouthe plein ne tolde.
The king thanne axeth, as he scholde,
The Chamberlein of his avis.

And he, that was soubtil and wys,
And somdiel thoghte upon his feith,
Him tolde hou al the poeple seith
That if his conseil were trewe,
Thei wiste thanne wel and knewe
That of himself he scholde be
A worthi king in his degre:
And thus the conseil he accuseth
In partie, and the king excuseth.

The fol, which herde of al the cas
That time, as goddes wille was,
Sih that thei seiden noght ynowh,
And hem to skorne bothe lowh,
And to the king he seide tho:
“Sire king, if that it were so,
Of wisdom in thin oghne mod
That thou thiselven were good,
Thi conseil scholde noght be badde.”
The king therof merveille hadde,
Whan that a fol so wisly spak,
And of himself fond out the lack
Withinne his oghne conscience:

And thus the foles evidence,
Which was of goddes grace enspired,
Makth that good conseil was desired.
He putte awey the vicious
And tok to him the vertuous;
The wrongful lawes ben amended,
The londes good is wel despended,
The poeple was nomore oppressed,
And thus stod every thing redressed.
For where a king is propre wys,
And hath suche as himselven is
Of his conseil, it mai noght faile
That every thing ne schal availe:
The vices thanne gon aweie,
And every vertu holt his weie;
Wherof the hihe god is plesed,
And al the londes folk is esed.
For if the comun poeple crie,
And thanne a king list noght to plie
To hiere what the clamour wolde,
And otherwise thanne he scholde
Desdeigneth forto don hem grace,
It hath be sen in many place,
Ther hath befalle gret contraire;
And that I finde of ensamplaire.

After the deth of Salomon,
Whan thilke wise king was gon,
And Roboas in his persone
Receive scholde the corone,
The poeple upon a Parlement
Avised were of on assent,
And alle unto the king thei preiden,
With comun vois and thus thei seiden:

"Oure liege lord, we thee beseche
That thou receive oure humble speche
And grante ous that which reson wile,
Or of thi grace or of thi skile.
Thi fader, whil he was alyve
And myhte bothe grante and pryve,
Upon the werkes whiche he hadde
The comun poeple streite ladde:
Whan he the temple made newe,
Thing which men nevere afore knewe
He broghte up thanne of his taillage,
And al was under the visage
Of werkes whiche he made tho.
Bot nou it is befalle so,
That al is mad, riht as he seide,
And he was riche whan he deide;
So that it is no maner nede,
If thou therof wolt taken hiede,
To pilen of the poeple more,
Which long time hath be grieved sore.
And in this wise as we thee seie,
With tendre herte we thee preie
That thou relesse thilke dette,
Which upon ous thi fader sette.
And if thee like to don so,
We ben thi men for everemo,
To gon and comen at thin heste."

The king, which herde this requeste,
Seith that he wole ben avised,
And hath therof a time assised;
And in the while as he him thoghte
Upon this thing, conseil he soghte.
And ferst the wise knyhtes olde,
To whom that he his tale tolde,

Conseilen him in this manere;
That he with love and with glad chiere
Foryive and grante al that is axed
Of that his fader hadde taxed;
For so he mai his regne achieve
With thing which schal him litel grieve.

The king hem herde and overpasseth,
And with these othre his wit compasseth,
That yonge were and nothing wise.
And thei these olde men despise,
And seiden: “Sire, it schal be schame
For evere unto thi worthi name,
If thou ne kepe noght the riht,
Whil thou art in thi yonge myht,
Which that thin olde fader gat.
Bot seie unto the poeple plat,
That whil thou livest in thi lond,
The leste finger of thin hond
It schal be strengere overal
Than was thi fadres bodi al.
And this also schal be thi tale,
If he hem smot with roddes smale,
With Scorpions thou schalt hem smyte;
And wher thi fader tok a lyte,
Thou thenkst to take mochel more.
Thus schalt thou make hem drede sore
The grete herte of thi corage,
So forto holde hem in servage.

This yonge king him hath conformed
To don as he was last enformed,
Which was to him his undoinge:
For whan it cam to the spekinge,
He hath the yonge conseil holde,

That he the same wordes tolde
Of al the poeple in audience;
And whan thei herden the sentence
Of his malice and the manace,
Anon tofore his oghne face
Thei have him oultreli refused
And with ful gret reproef accused.
So thei begunne forto rave,
That he was fain himself to save;
For as the wilde wode rage
Of wyndes makth the See salvage,
And that was calm bringth into wawe,
So for defalte of grace and lawe
This poeple is stered al at ones
And forth thei gon out of hise wones;
So that of the lignages tuelve
Tuo tribes only be hemselve
With him abiden and nomo:
So were thei for everemo
Of no retorn withoute espeir
Departed fro the rihtfull heir.
Al Irahel with comun vois
A king upon here oghne chois
Among hemself anon thei make,
And have here yonge lord forsake;
A povere knyht Jeroboas
Thei toke, and lefte Roboas,
Which rihtfull heir was be descente.

Lo, thus the yonge cause wente:
For that the conseil was noght good,
The regne fro the rihtfull blod
Evere afterward divided was.
So mai it proven be this cas
That yong conseil, which is to warm,

Er men be war doth ofte harm.
Old age for the conseil serveth,
And lusti youthe his thonk deserveth
Upon the travail which he doth;
And bothe, forto seie a soth,
Be sondri cause forto have,
If that he wole his regne save,
A king behoveth every day.
That on can and that other mai,
Be so the king hem bothe reule,
For elles al goth out of reule.

And upon this matiere also
A question betwen the tuo
Thus writen in a bok I fond;
Wher it be betre for the lond
A king himselve to be wys,
And so to bere his oghne pris,
And that his consail be noght good,
Or other wise if it so stod,
A king if he be vicious
And his conseil be vertuous.
It is ansuerd in such a wise,
That betre it is that thei be wise
Be whom that the conseil schal gon,
For thei be manye, and he is on;
And rathere schal an one man
With fals conseil, for oght he can,
From his wisdom be mad to falle,
Thanne he al one scholde hem alle
Fro vices into vertu change,
For that is wel the more strange.

Forthi the lond mai wel be glad,
Whos king with good conseil is lad,
Which set him unto rihtwisnesse,
So that his hihe worthinesse
Betwen the reddour and Pite
Doth mercy forth with equite.
A king is holden overal
To Pite, bot in special
To hem wher he is most beholde;
Thei scholde his Pite most beholde
That ben the Lieges of his lond,
For thei ben evere under his hond
After the goddes ordinaunce
To stonde upon his governance.

Of themperour Anthonius
I finde hou that he seide thus,
That levere him were forto save
Oon of his lieges than to have
Of enemis a thousend dede.
And this he lernede, as I rede,
Of Cipio, which hadde be
Consul of Rome. And thus to se
Diverse ensamples hou thei stonde,
A king which hath the charge on honde
The comun poeple to governe,
If that he wole, he mai wel lerne.
Is non so good to the plesance
Of god, as is good governance;
And every governance is due
To Pite: thus I mai argue
That Pite is the foundement
Of every kinges regiment,
If it be medled with justice.

Thei tuo remuen alle vice,
And ben of vertu most vailable
To make a kinges regne stable.

Lo, thus the foure pointz tofore,
In governance as thei ben bore,
Of trouthe ferst and of largesse,
Of Pite forth with rihtwisnesse,
I have hem told; and over this
The fifte point, so as it is
Set of the reule of Policie,
Wherof a king schal modefie
The fleisschly lustes of nature,
Nou thenk I telle of such mesure,
That bothe kinde schal be served
And ek the lawe of god observed.

The Madle is mad for the the femele,
Bot where as on desireth fele,
That nedeth noght be weie of kinde:
For whan a man mai redy finde
His oghne wif, what scholde he seche
In strange places to beseche
To borwe an other mannes plouh,
Whan he hath geere good ynouh
Affaited at his oghne heste,
And is to him wel more honeste
Than other thing which is unknowe?
Forthi scholde every good man knowe
And thenke, hou that in mariage
His trouthe pliht lith in morgage,
Which if he breke, it is falshode,
And that descordeth to manhode,
And namely toward the grete,
Wherof the bokes alle trete;

So as the Philosophre techeth
To Alisandre, and him betecheth
The lore hou that he schal mesure
His bodi, so that no mesure
Of fleisshly lust he scholde excede.
And thus forth if I schal procede,
The fifte point, as I seide er,
Is chastete, which sielde wher
Comth nou adaies into place;
And natheles, bot it be grace
Above alle othre in special,
Is non that chaste mai ben all.
Bot yit a kinges hihe astat,
Which of his ordre as a prelat
Schal ben enoignt and seintefied,
He mot be more magnefied
For dignete of his corone,
Than scholde an other low persone,
Which is noght of so hih emprise.
Therfore a Prince him scholde avise,
Er that he felle in such riote,
And namely that he nassote
To change for the wommanhede
The worthinesse of his manhede.

Of Aristotle I have wel rad,
Hou he to Alisandre bad,
That forto gladen his corage
He schal beholde the visage
Of wommen, whan that thei ben faire.
Bot yit he set an essamplaire,
His bodi so to guide and reule,
That he ne passe noght the reule,
Wherof that he himself beguile.
For in the womman is no guile

Of that a man himself bewhapeth;
Whan he his oghne wit bejapeth,
I can the wommen wel excuse:
Bot what man wole upon hem muse
After the fool impression
Of his ymaginacioun,
Withinne himself the fyr he bloweth,
Wherof the womman nothing knoweth,
So mai sche nothing be to wyte.
For if a man himself excite
To drenche, and wol it noght forbere,
The water schal no blame bere.
What mai the gold, thogh men coveite?
If that a man wol love streite,
The womman hath him nothing bounde;
If he his oghne herte wounde,
Sche mai noght lette the folie;
And thogh so felle of compainie
That he myht eny thing pourchace,
Yit makth a man the ferste chace,
The womman fleth and he poursuieth:
So that be weie of skile it suieth,
The man is cause, hou so befalle,
That he fulofte sithe is falle
Wher that he mai noght wel aryse.
And natheles ful manye wise
Befoled have hemself er this,
As nou adaies yit it is
Among the men and evere was,
The stronge is fieblest in this cas.
It sit a man be weie of kinde
To love, bot it is noght kinde
A man for love his wit to lese:
For if the Monthe of Juil schal frese

And that Decembre schal ben hot,
The yeer mistorneth, wel I wot.
To sen a man fro his astat
Thurgh his sotie effeminat,
And leve that a man schal do,
It is as Hose above the Scho,
To man which oghte noght ben used.
Bot yit the world hath ofte accused
Ful grete Princes of this dede,
Hou thei for love hemself mislede,
Wherof manhode stod behinde,
Of olde ensamples as I finde.

These olde gestes tellen thus,
That whilom Sardana Pallus,
Which hield al hol in his empire
The grete kingdom of Assire,
Was thurgh the slouthe of his corage
Falle into thilke fyri rage
Of love, which the men assoteth,
Wherof himself he so rioteth,
And wax so ferforth wommannyssh,
That ayein kinde, as if a fissh
Abide wolde upon the lond,
In wommen such a lust he fond,
That he duelte evere in chambre stille,
And only wroghte after the wille
Of wommen, so as he was bede,
That selden whanne in other stede
If that he wolde wenden oute,
To sen hou that it stod aboute.
Bot ther he keste and there he pleide,
Thei tawhten him a Las to breide,
And weve a Pours, and to enfile
A Perle: and fell that ilke while,

On Barbarus the Prince of Mede
Sih hou this king in wommanhede
Was falle fro chivalerie,
And gat him help and compaignie,
And wroghte so, that ate laste
This king out of his regne he caste,
Which was undon for everemo:
And yit men speken of him so,
That it is schame forto hiere.

Forthi to love is in manere.
King David hadde many a love,
Bot natheles alwey above
Knyhthode he kepte in such a wise,
That for no fleisshli covoitise
Of lust to ligge in ladi armes
He lefte noght the lust of armes.
For where a Prince hise lustes suieth,
That he the werre noght poursuieth,
Whan it is time to ben armed,
His contre stant fulofte harmed,
Whan thenemis ben woxe bolde,
That thei defence non beholde.
Ful many a lond hath so be lore,
As men mai rede of time afore
Of hem that so here eses soghten,
Which after thei full diere aboghten.

To mochel ese is nothing worth,
For that set every vice forth
And every vertu put abak,
Wherof priss torneth into lak,
As in Cronique I mai reherse:
Which telleth hou the king of Perse,
That Cirus hihte, a werre hadde

Ayein a poeple which he dradde,
Of a contre which Liddos hihte;
Bot yit for oght that he do mihte
As in bataille upon the werre,
He hadde of hem alwey the werre.
And whan he sih and wiste it wel,
That he be strengthe wan no del,
Thanne ate laste he caste a wyle
This worthi poeple to beguile,
And tok with hem a feigned pes,
Which scholde lasten endeles,
So as he seide in wordes wise,
Bot he thoghte al in other wise.
For it betidd upon the cas,
Whan that this poeple in reste was,
Thei token eses manyfold;
And worldes ese, as it is told,
Be weie of kinde is the norrice
Of every lust which toucheth vice.
Thus whan thei were in lustes falle,
The werres ben foryeten alle;
Was non which wolde the worschipe
Of Armes, bot in idelschipe
Thei putten besinesse aweie
And token hem to daunce and pleie;
Bot most above alle othre thinges
Thei token hem to the likinges
Of fleysshly lust, that chastete
Received was in no degre,
Bot every man doth what him liste.
And whan the king of Perse it wiste,
That thei unto folie entenden,
With his pouer, whan thei lest wenden,
Mor sodeinly than doth the thunder

He cam, for evere and put hem under.
And thus hath lecherie lore
The lond, which hadde be tofore
The beste of hem that were tho.

And in the bible I finde also
A tale lich unto this thing,
Hou Amalech the paien king,
Whan that he myhte be no weie
Defende his lond and putte aweie
The worthi poeple of Irael,
This Sarazin, as it befell,
Thurgh the conseil of Balaam
A route of faire wommen nam,
That lusti were and yonge of Age,
And bad hem gon to the lignage
Of these Hebreus: and forth thei wente
With yhen greye and browes bente
And wel arraied everych on;
And whan thei come were anon
Among thebreus, was non insihte,
Bot cacche who that cacche myhte,
And ech of hem hise lustes soghte,
Whiche after thei full diere boghte.
For grace anon began to faile,
That whan thei comen to bataille
Thanne afterward, in sori plit
Thei were take and disconfit,
So that withinne a litel throwe
The myht of hem was overthrowe,
That whilom were wont to stonde.
Til Phinees the cause on honde
Hath take, this vengance laste,
Bot thanne it cessede ate laste,
For god was paid of that he dede:

For wher he fond upon a stede
A couple which misferde so,
Thurghout he smot hem bothe tuo,
And let hem ligge in mennes yhe;
Wherof alle othre whiche hem sihe
Ensamplede hem upon the dede,
And preiden unto the godhiede
Here olde Sennes to amende:
And he, which wolde his mercy sende,
Restorede hem to newe grace.

Thus mai it schewe in sondri place,
Of chastete hou the clennesse
Acordeth to the worthinesse
Of men of Armes overal;
Bot most of alle in special
This vertu to a king belongeth,
For upon his fortune it hongeth
Of that his lond schal spede or spille.
Forthi bot if a king his wille
Fro lustes of his fleissh restreigne,
Ayein himself he makth a treigne,
Into the which if that he slyde,
Him were betre go besyde.
For every man mai understonde,
Hou for a time that it stonde,
It is a sori lust to lyke,
Whos ende makth a man to syke
And torneth joies into sorwe.
The brihte Sonne be the morwe
Beschyneth noght the derke nyht,
The lusti youthe of mannes myht,
In Age bot it stonde wel,
Mistorneth al the laste whiel.

That every worthi Prince is holde
Withinne himself himself beholde,
To se the stat of his persone,
And thenke hou ther be joies none
Upon this Erthe mad to laste,
And hou the fleissh schal ate laste
The lustes of this lif forsake,
Him oghte a gret ensample take
Of Salomon, whos appetit
Was holy set upon delit,
To take of wommen the plesance:
So that upon his ignorance
The wyde world merveileth yit,
That he, which alle mennes wit
In thilke time hath overpassed,
With fleisshly lustes was so tassed,
That he which ladde under the lawe
The poeple of god, himself withdrawe
He hath fro god in such a wise,
That he worschipe and sacrifise
For sondri love in sondri stede
Unto the false goddes dede.
This was the wise ecclesiaste,
The fame of whom schal evere laste,
That he the myhti god forsok,
Ayein the lawe whanne he tok
His wyves and his concubines
Of hem that weren Sarazines,
For whiche he dede ydolatrie.
For this I rede of his sotie:

Sche of Sidoyne so him ladde,
That he knelende his armes spradde
To Astrathen with gret humblesse,
Which of hire lond was the goddesse:

And sche that was a Moabite
So ferforth made him to delite
Thurgh lust, which al his wit devoureth,
That he Chamos hire god honoureth.

An other Amonyte also
With love him hath assoted so,
Hire god Moloch that with encense
He sacreth, and doth reverence
In such a wise as sche him bad.
Thus was the wiseste overlad
With blinde lustes whiche he soghte;
Bot he it afterward aboghte.

For Achias Selonites,
Which was prophete, er his decess,
Whil he was in hise lustes alle,
Betokneth what schal after falle.
For on a day, whan that he mette
Jeroboam the knyht, he grette
And bad him that he scholde abyde,
To hiere what him schal betyde.
And forth withal Achias caste
His mantell of, and also faste
He kut it into pieces twelve,
Wherof tuo partz toward himselve
He kepte, and al the remenant,
As god hath set his covenant,
He tok unto Jeroboas,
Of Nabal which the Sone was,
And of the kinges court a knyht:
And seide him, “Such is goddes myht,
As thou hast sen departed hiere
Mi mantell, riht in such manere
After the deth of Salomon

God hath ordeigned therupon,
This regne thanne he schal divide:
Which time thou schalt ek abide,
And upon that division
The regne as in proporcion
As thou hast of mi mantell take,
Thou schalt receive, I undertake.
And thus the Sone schal abie
The lustes and the lecherie
Of him which nou his fader is."

So forto taken hiede of this,
It sit a king wel to be chaste,
For elles he mai lihtly waste
Himself and ek his regne bothe,
And that oghte every king to lothe.
O, which a Senne violent,
Wherof so wys a king was schent,
That the vengance in his persone
Was noght ynouh to take al one,
Bot afterward, whan he was passed,
It hath his heritage lassed,
As I more openli tofore
The tale tolde. And thus therfore
The Philosophre upon this thing
Writ and conseileth to a king,
That he the surfet of luxure
Schal tempre and reule of such mesure,
Which be to kinde sufficant
And ek to reson acordant,
So that the lustes ignorance
Be cause of no misgovernance,
Thurgh which that he be overthrowe,
As he that wol no reson knowe.
For bot a mannes wit be swerved,

Whan kinde is dueliche served,
It oghte of reson to suffise;
For if it falle him otherwise,
He mai tho lustes sore drede.

For of Anthonie thus I rede,
Which of Severus was the Sone,
That he his lif of comun wone
Yaf holy unto thilke vice,
And ofte time he was so nyce,
Wherof nature hire hath compleigned
Unto the god, which hath desdeigned
The werkes whiche Antonie wroghte
Of lust, whiche he ful sore aboghte:
For god his forfet hath so wroke
That in Cronique it is yit spoke.
Bot forto take remembrance
Of special misgovernance
Thurgh covoitise and injustice
Forth with the remenant of vice,
And nameliche of lecherie,
I finde write a gret partie
Withinne a tale, as thou schalt hiere,
Which is thensample of this matiere.

So as these olde gestes sein,
The proude tirannyssh Romein
Tarquinus, which was thanne king
And wroghte many a wrongful thing,
Of Sones hadde manyon,
Among the whiche Arrons was on,
Lich to his fader of maneres;
So that withinne a fewe yeres
With tresoun and with tirannie
Thei wonne of lond a gret partie,

And token hiede of no justice,
Which due was to here office
Upon the reule of governance;
Bot al that evere was plesance
Unto the fleisshes lust thei toke.
And fell so, that thei undertoke
A werre, which was noght achieved,
Bot ofte time it hadde hem grieved,
Ayein a folk which thanne hihte
The Gabiens: and al be nyhte
This Arrons, whan he was at hom
In Rome, a prive place he nom
Withinne a chambre, and bet himselve
And made him woundes ten or tuelve
Upon the bak, as it was sene;
And so forth with hise hurtes grene
In al the haste that he may
He rod, and cam that other day
Unto Gabie the Cite,
And in he wente: and whan that he
Was knowe, anon the gates schette,
The lordes alle upon him sette
With drawe swerdes upon honde.
This Arrons wolde hem noght withstonde,
Bot seide, “I am hier at your wille,
Als lief it is that ye me spille,
As if myn oghne fader dede.”
And forthwith in the same stede
He preide hem that thei wolde se,
And schewede hem in what degre
His fader and hise brethren bothe,
Whiche, as he seide, weren wrothe,
Him hadde beten and reviled,
For evere and out of Rome exiled.

And thus he made hem to believe,
And seide, if that he myhte achieve
His pourpos, it schal wel be yolde,
Be so that thei him helpe wolde.
Whan that the lordes hadde sein
Hou wofully he was besein,
Thei token Pite of his grief;
Bot yit it was hem wonder lief
That Rome him hadde exiled so.
These Gabiens be conseil tho
Upon the goddes made him swere,
That he to hem schal trouthe bere
And strengthen hem with al his myht;
And thei also him have behiht
To helpen him in his querele.
Thei schopen thanne for his hele
That he was bathed and enoignt,
Til that he was in lusti point;
And what he wolde thanne he hadde,
That he al hol the cite ladde
Riht as he wolde himself divise.
And thanne he thoghte him in what wise
He myhte his tirannie schewe;
And to his conseil tok a schrewe,
Whom to his fader forth he sente
In his message, and he tho wente,
And preide his fader forto seie
Be his avis, and finde a weie,
Hou they the cite myhten winne,
Whil that he stod so wel therinne.
And whan the messager was come
To Rome, and hath in conseil nome
The king, it fell per chance so
That thei were in a gardin tho,

This messager forth with the king.
And whanne he hadde told the thing
In what manere that it stod,
And that Tarquinus understod
Be the message hou that it ferde,
Anon he tok in honde a yerde,
And in the gardin as thei gon,
The lilie croppes on and on,
Wher that thei weren sprongen oute,
He smot of, as thei stode aboute,
And seide unto the messager:
"Lo, this thing, which I do nou hier,
Schal ben in stede of thin ansuere;
And in this wise as I me bere,
Thou schalt unto mi Sone telle."
And he no lengere wolde duelle,
Bot tok his leve and goth withal
Unto his lord, and told him al,
Hou that his fader hadde do.
Whan Arrons herde him telle so,
Anon he wiste what it mente,
And therto sette al his entente,
Til he thurgh fraude and tricherie
The Princes hefdes of Gabie
Hath smiten of, and al was wonne:
His fader cam tofore the Sonne
Into the toun with the Romeins,
And tok and slowh the citezeins
Withoute reson or pite,
That he ne spareth no degre.
And for the sped of this conqueste
He let do make a riche feste
With a sollempne Sacrifise
In Phebus temple; and in this wise

Whan the Romeins assembled were,
In presence of hem alle there,
Upon thalter whan al was diht
And that the fyres were alyht,
From under thalter sodeinly
An hidous Serpent openly
Cam out and hath devoured al
The Sacrifice, and ek withal
The fyres queynt, and forth anon,
So as he cam, so is he gon
Into the depe ground ayein.
And every man began to sein,
"Ha lord, what mai this signefie?"
And therupon thei preie and crie
To Phebus, that thei mihten knowe
The cause: and he the same throwe
With gastly vois, that alle it herde,
The Romeins in this wise ansuerde,
And seide hou for the wikkidnesse
Of Pride and of unrihtwisnesse,
That Tarquin and his Sone hath do,
The Sacrifice is wasted so,
Which myhte noght ben acceptable
Upon such Senne abhominable.
And over that yit he hem wisseth,
And seith that which of hem ferst kisseth
His moder, he schal take wrieche
Upon the wrong: and of that speche
Thei ben withinne here hertes glade,
Thogh thei outward no semblant made.
Ther was a knyht which Brutus hihte,
And he with al the haste he myhte
To grounde fell and therthe kiste,
Bot non of hem the cause wiste,

Bot wenden that he hadde sporned
Per chance, and so was overtorned.
Bot Brutus al an other mente;
For he knew wel in his entente
Hou therthe of every mannes kinde
Is Moder: bot thei weren blinde,
And sihen noght so fer as he.
Bot whan thei leften the Cite
And comen hom to Rome ayein,
Thanne every man which was Romein
And moder hath, to hire he bende
And keste, and ech of hem thus wende
To be the ferste upon the chance,
Of Tarquin forto do vengance,
So as thei herden Phebus sein.

Bot every time hath his certein,
So moste it nedes thanne abide,
Til afterward upon a tyde
Tarquinus made unskilfully
A werre, which was fasteby
Ayein a toun with walles stronge
Which Ardea was cleped longe,
And caste a Siege theraboute,
That ther mai noman passen oute.
So it befell upon a nyht,
Arrons, which hadde his souper diht,
A part of the chivalerie
With him to soupe in compaignie
Hath bede: and whan thei comen were
And seten at the souper there,
Among here othre wordes glade
Arrons a gret spekinge made,
Who hadde tho the beste wif
Of Rome: and ther began a strif,

For Arrons seith he hath the beste.
So jangle thei withoute reste,
Til ate laste on Collatin,
A worthi knyht, and was cousin
To Arrons, seide him in this wise:
“It is,” quod he, “of non emprise
To speke a word, bot of the dede,
Therof it is to taken hiede.
Anon forthi this same tyde
Lep on thin hors and let ous ryde:
So mai we knowe bothe tuo
Unwarli what oure wyves do,
And that schal be a trewe assay.”
This Arrons seith noght ones nay:
On horse bak anon thei lepte
In such manere, and nothing slepte,
Ridende forth til that thei come
Al prively withinne Rome;
In strange place and doun thei lihte,
And take a chambre, and out of sihte
Thei be desguised for a throwe,
So that no lif hem scholde knowe.
And to the paleis ferst thei soghte,
To se what thing this ladi wroghte
Of which Arrons made his avant:
And thei hire sihe of glad semblant,
Al full of merthes and of bordes;
Bot among alle hire othre wordes
Sche spak noght of hire housebonde.
And whan thei hadde al understonde
Of thilke place what hem liste,
Thei gon hem forth, that non it wiste,
Beside thilke gate of bras,
Collacea which cleped was,

Wher Collatin hath his duellinge.
Ther founden thei at hom sittinge
Lucrece his wif, al environed
With wommen, whiche are abandoned
To werche, and sche wroghte ek withal,
And bad hem haste, and seith, “It schal
Be for mi housebondes were,
Which with his swerd and with his spere
Lith at the Siege in gret desese.
And if it scholde him noght displese,
Nou wolde god I hadde him hiere;
For certes til that I mai hiere
Som good tidinge of his astat,
Min herte is evere upon debat.
For so as alle men witnesse,
He is of such an hardiesse,
That he can noght himselve spare,
And that is al my moste care,
Whan thei the walles schulle assaile.
Bot if mi wisshes myhte availe,
I wolde it were a groundles pet,
Be so the Siege were unknet,
And I myn housebonde sihe.”
With that the water in hire yhe
Aros, that sche ne myhte it stoppe,
And as men sen the dew bedroppe
The leves and the floures eke,
Riht so upon hire whyte cheke
The wofull salte teres felle.
Whan Collatin hath herd hire telle
The menynge of hire trewe herte,
Anon with that to hire he sterte,
And seide, “Lo, mi goode diere,
Nou is he come to you hiere,

That ye most loven, as ye sein."
And sche with goodly chiere ayein
Beclipte him in hire armes smale,
And the colour, which erst was pale,
To Beaute thanne was restored,
So that it myhte noght be mored.

The kinges Sone, which was nyh,
And of this lady herde and syh
The thinges as thei ben befalle,
The resoun of hise wittes alle
Hath lost; for love upon his part
Cam thanne, and of his fyri dart
With such a wounde him hath thurghsmite,
That he mot nedes fiele and wite
Of thilke blinde maladie,
To which no cure of Surgerie
Can helpe. Bot yit natheles
At thilke time he hield his pes,
That he no contienance made,
Bot openly with wordes glade,
So as he couthe in his manere,
He spak and made frendly chiere,
Til it was time forto go.
And Collatin with him also
His leve tok, so that be nyhte
With al the haste that thei myhte
Thei riden to the Siege ayein.
Bot Arrons was so wo besein
With thoghtes whiche upon him runne,
That he al be the brode Sunne
To bedde goth, noght forto reste,
Bot forto thenke upon the beste
And the faireste forth withal,
That evere he syh or evere schal,

So as him thoghte in his corage,
Where he pourtreieth hire ymage:
Ferst the fetures of hir face,
In which nature hadde alle grace
Of wommanly beaute beset,
So that it myhte noght be bet;
And hou hir yelwe her was tresced
And hire atir so wel adresced,
And hou sche spak, and hou sche wroghte,
And hou sche wepte, al this he thoghte,
That he foryeten hath no del,
Bot al it liketh him so wel,
That in the word nor in the dede
Hire lacketh noght of wommanhiede.
And thus this tirannysshe knyht
Was soupled, bot noght half ariht,
For he non other hiede tok,
Bot that he myhte be som crok,
Althogh it were ayein hire wille,
The lustes of his fleissh fulfille;
Which love was noght resonable,
For where honour is remuable,
It oghte wel to ben avised.
Bot he, which hath his lust assised
With melled love and tirannie,
Hath founde upon his tricherie
A weie which he thenkth to holde,
And seith, “Fortune unto the bolde
Is favorable forto helpe.”
And thus withinne himself to yelpe,
As he which was a wylde man,
Upon his treson he began:
And up he sterte, and forth he wente
On horsebak, bot his entente

Ther knew no wiht, and thus he nam
The nexte weie, til he cam
Unto Collacea the gate
Of Rome, and it was somdiel late,
Riht evene upon the Sonne set,
As he which hadde schape his net
Hire innocence to betrappe.
And as it scholde tho mishappe,
Als priveliche as evere he myhte
He rod, and of his hors alyhte
Tofore Collatines In,
And al frendliche he goth him in,
As he that was cousin of house.
And sche, which is the goode spouse,
Lucrece, whan that sche him sih,
With goodli chiere drowh him nyh,
As sche which al honour supposeth,
And him, so as sche dar, opposeth
Hou it stod of hire housebonde.
And he tho dede hire understonde
With tales feigned in his wise,
Riht as he wolde himself devise,
Wherof he myhte hire herte glade,
That sche the betre chiere made,
Whan sche the glade wordes herde,
Hou that hire housebonde ferde.
And thus the trouthe was deceived
With slih tresoun, which was received
To hire which mente alle goode;
For as the festes thanne stode,
His Souper was ryht wel arraied.
Bot yit he hath no word assaied
To speke of love in no degre;
Bot with covert subtilite

His frendly speches he affaiteth,
And as the Tigre his time awaiteth
In hope forto cacche his preie.
Whan that the bordes were aweie
And thei have souped in the halle,
He seith that slep is on him falle,
And preith he moste go to bedde;
And sche with alle haste spedde,
So as hire thoghte it was to done,
That every thing was redi sone.
Sche broghte him to his chambre tho
And tok hire leve, and forth is go
Into hire oghne chambre by,
As sche that wende certeinly
Have had a frend, and hadde a fo,
Wherof fell after mochel wo.

This tirant, thogh he lyhe softe,
Out of his bed aros fulofte,
And goth aboute, and leide his Ere
To herkne, til that alle were
To bedde gon and slepten faste.
And thanne upon himself he caste
A mantell, and his swerd al naked
He tok in honde; and sche unwaked
Abedde lay, but what sche mette,
God wot; for he the Dore unschette
So prively that non it herde,
The softe pas and forth he ferde
Unto the bed wher that sche slepte,
Al sodeinliche and in he crepte,
And hire in bothe his Armes tok.
With that this worthi wif awok,
Which thurgh tendresce of wommanhiede
Hire vois hath lost for pure drede,

That o word speke sche ne dar:
And ek he bad hir to be war,
For if sche made noise or cry,
He seide, his swerd lay faste by
To slen hire and hire folk aboute.
And thus he broghte hire herte in doute,
That lich a Lomb whanne it is sesed
In wolves mouth, so was desesed
Lucrece, which he naked fond:
Wherof sche swounede in his hond,
And, as who seith, lay ded oppressed.
And he, which al him hadde adresced
To lust, tok thanne what him liste,
And goth his wey, that non it wiste,
Into his oghne chambre ayein,
And clepede up his chamberlein,
And made him redi forto ryde.
And thus this lecherouse pride
To horse lepte and forth he rod;
And sche, which in hire bed abod,
Whan that sche wiste he was agon,
Sche clepede after liht anon
And up aros long er the day,
And caste awey hire freissh aray,
As sche which hath the world forsake,
And tok upon the clothes blake:
And evere upon continuinge,
Riht as men sen a welle springe,
With yhen fulle of wofull teres,
Hire her hangende aboute hire Eres,
Sche wepte, and noman wiste why.
Bot yit among full pitously

Sche preide that thei nolden drecche
Hire housebonde forto fecche
Forth with hire fader ek also.

Thus be thei comen bothe tuo,
And Brutus cam with Collatin,
Which to Lucrece was cousin,
And in thei wenten alle thre
To chambre, wher thei myhten se
The wofulleste upon this Molde,
Which wepte as sche to water scholde.
The chambre Dore anon was stoke,
Er thei have oght unto hire spoke;
Thei sihe hire clothes al desguised,
And hou sche hath hirself despised,
Hire her hangende unkemd aboute,
Bot natheles sche gan to loute
And knele unto hire housebonde;
And he, which fain wolde understonde
The cause why sche ferde so,
With softe wordes axeth tho,
"What mai you be, mi goode swete?"
And sche, which thoghte hirself unmete
And the lest worth of wommen alle,
Hire wofull chiere let doun falle
For schame and couthe unnethes loke.
And thei therof good hiede toke,
And preiden hire in alle weie
That sche ne spare forto seie
Unto hir frendes what hire eileth,
Why sche so sore hirself beweileth,
And what the sothe wolde mene.
And sche, which hath hire sorwes grene,
Hire wo to telle thanne assaieth,
Bot tendre schame hire word delaieth,

That sondri times as sche minte
To speke, upon the point sche stinte.
And thei hire bidden evere in on
To telle forth, and therupon,
Whan that sche sih sche moste nede,
Hire tale betwen schame and drede
Sche tolde, noght withoute peine.
And he, which wolde hire wo restreigne,
Hire housebonde, a sory man,
Conforteth hire al that he can,
And swor, and ek hire fader bothe,
That thei with hire be noght wrothe
Of that is don ayein hire wille;
And preiden hire to be stille,
For thei to hire have al foryive.
Bot sche, which thoghte noght to live,
Of hem wol no foryivenesse,
And seide, of thilke wickednesse
Which was unto hire bodi wroght,
Al were it so sche myhte it noght,
Nevere afterward the world ne schal
Reproeven hire; and forth withal,
Er eny man therof be war,
A naked swerd, the which sche bar
Withinne hire Mantel priveli,
Betwen hire hondes sodeinly
Sche tok, and thurgh hire herte it throng,
And fell to grounde, and evere among,
Whan that sche fell, so as sche myhte,
Hire clothes with hire hand sche rihte,
That noman dounward fro the kne
Scholde eny thing of hire se:
Thus lay this wif honestely,
Althogh sche deide wofully.

Tho was no sorwe forto seke:
Hire housebonde, hire fader eke
Aswoune upon the bodi felle;
Ther mai no mannes tunge telle
In which anguisshe that thei were.
Bot Brutus, which was with hem there,
Toward himself his herte kepte,
And to Lucrece anon he lepte,
The blodi swerd and pulleth oute,
And swor the goddes al aboute
That he therof schal do vengance.
And sche tho made a contienance,
Hire dedlich yhe and ate laste
In thonkinge as it were up caste,
And so behield him in the wise,
Whil sche to loke mai suffise.
And Brutus with a manlich herte
Hire housebonde hath mad up sterte
Forth with hire fader ek also
In alle haste, and seide hem tho
That thei anon withoute lette
A Beere for the body fette;
Lucrece and therupon bledende
He leide, and so forth out criende
He goth into the Market place
Of Rome: and in a litel space
Thurgh cry the cite was assembled,
And every mannes herte is trembled,
Whan thei the sothe herde of the cas.
And therupon the conseil was
Take of the grete and of the smale,
And Brutus tolde hem al the tale;
And thus cam into remembrance
Of Senne the continuance,

Which Arrons hadde do tofore,
And ek, long time er he was bore,
Of that his fadre hadde do
The wrong cam into place tho;
So that the comun clamour tolde
The newe schame of Sennes olde.
And al the toun began to crie,
"Awey, awey the tirannie
Of lecherie and covoitise!"
And ate laste in such a wise
The fader in the same while
Forth with his Sone thei exile,
And taken betre governance.
Bot yit an other remembrance
That rihtwisnesse and lecherie
Acorden noght in compaignie
With him that hath the lawe on honde,
That mai a man wel understonde,
As be a tale thou shalt wite,
Of olde ensample as it is write.

At Rome whan that Apius,
Whos other name is Claudius,
Was governour of the cite,
Ther fell a wonder thing to se
Touchende a gentil Maide, as thus,
Whom Livius Virginius
Begeten hadde upon his wif:
Men seiden that so fair a lif
As sche was noght in al the toun.
This fame, which goth up and doun,
To Claudius cam in his Ere,
Wherof his thoght anon was there,
Which al his herte hath set afyre,
That he began the flour desire

Which longeth unto maydenhede,
And sende, if that he myhte spede
The blinde lustes of his wille.
Bot that thing mai he noght fulfille,
For sche stod upon Mariage;
A worthi kniht of gret lignage,
Ilicius which thanne hihte,
Acorded in hire fader sihte
Was, that he scholde his douhter wedde.
Bot er the cause fully spedde,
Hire fader, which in Romanie
The ledinge of chivalerie
In governance hath undertake,
Upon a werre which was take
Goth out with al the strengthe he hadde
Of men of Armes whiche he ladde:
So was the mariage left,
And stod upon acord til eft.

The king, which herde telle of this,
Hou that this Maide ordeigned is
To Mariage, thoghte an other.
And hadde thilke time a brother,
Which Marchus Claudius was hote,
And was a man of such riote
Riht as the king himselve was:
Thei tuo togedre upon this cas
In conseil founden out this weie,
That Marchus Claudius schal seie
Hou sche be weie of covenant
To his service appourtenant
Was hol, and to non other man;
And therupon he seith he can
In every point witnesse take,
So that sche schal it noght forsake.

Whan that thei hadden schape so,
After the lawe which was tho,
Whil that hir fader was absent,
Sche was somouned and assent
To come in presence of the king
And stonde in ansuere of this thing.
Hire frendes wisten alle wel
That it was falshed everydel,
And comen to the king and seiden,
Upon the comun lawe and preiden,
So as this noble worthi knyht
Hir fader for the comun riht
In thilke time, as was befalle,
Lai for the profit of hem alle
Upon the wylde feldes armed,
That he ne scholde noght ben harmed
Ne schamed, whil that he were oute;
And thus thei preiden al aboute.

For al the clamour that he herde,
The king upon his lust ansuerde,
And yaf hem only daies tuo
Of respit; for he wende tho,
That in so schorte a time appiere
Hire fader mihte in no manere.
Bot as therof he was deceived;
For Livius hadde al conceived
The pourpos of the king tofore,
So that to Rome ayein therfore
In alle haste he cam ridende,
And lefte upon the field liggende
His host, til that he come ayein.
And thus this worthi capitein
Appiereth redi at his day,
Wher al that evere reson may

Be lawe in audience he doth,
So that his dowhter upon soth
Of that Marchus hire hadde accused
He hath tofore the court excused.

The king, which sih his pourpos faile,
And that no sleihte mihte availe,
Encombred of his lustes blinde
The lawe torneth out of kinde,
And half in wraththe as thogh it were,
In presence of hem alle there
Deceived of concupiscence
Yaf for his brother the sentence,
And bad him that he scholde sese
This Maide and make him wel at ese;
Bot al withinne his oghne entente
He wiste hou that the cause wente,
Of that his brother hath the wyte
He was himselven forto wyte.
Bot thus this maiden hadde wrong,
Which was upon the king along,
Bot ayein him was non Appel,
And that the fader wiste wel:
Wherof upon the tirannie,
That for the lust of Lecherie
His douhter scholde be deceived,
And that Ilicius was weyved
Untrewly fro the Mariage,
Riht as a Leon in his rage,
Which of no drede set acompte
And not what pite scholde amounte,
A naked swerd he pulleth oute,
The which amonges al the route
He threste thurgh his dowhter side,
And al alowd this word he cride:

“Lo, take hire ther, thou wrongfull king,
For me is levere upon this thing
To be the fader of a Maide,
Thogh sche be ded, that if men saide
That in hir lif sche were schamed
And I therof were evele named.”

Tho bad the king men scholde areste
His bodi, bot of thilke heste,
Lich to the chaced wylde bor,
The houndes whan he fieleth sor,
Tothroweth and goth forth his weie,
In such a wise forto seie
This worthi kniht with swerd on honde
His weie made, and thei him wonde,
That non of hem his strokes kepte;
And thus upon his hors he lepte,
And with his swerd droppende of blod,
The which withinne his douhter stod,
He cam ther as the pouer was
Of Rome, and tolde hem al the cas,
And seide hem that thei myhten liere
Upon the wrong of his matiere,
That betre it were to redresce
At hom the grete unrihtwisnesse,
Than forto werre in strange place
And lese at hom here oghne grace.
For thus stant every mannes lif
In jeupartie for his wif
Or for his dowhter, if thei be
Passende an other of beaute.

Of this merveile which thei sihe
So apparant tofore here yhe,
Of that the king him hath misbore,

Here othes thei have alle swore
That thei wol stonde be the riht.
And thus of on acord upriht
To Rome at ones hom ayein
Thei torne, and schortly forto sein,
This tirannye cam to mouthe,
And every man seith what he couthe,
So that the prive tricherie,
Which set was upon lecherie,
Cam openly to mannes Ere;
And that broghte in the comun feere,
That every man the peril dradde
Of him that so hem overladde.
Forthi, er that it worse falle,
Thurgh comun conseil of hem alle
Thei have here wrongfull king deposed,
And hem in whom it was supposed
The conseil stod of his ledinge
Be lawe unto the dom thei bringe,
Wher thei receiven the penance
That longeth to such governance.
And thus thunchaste was chastised,
Wherof thei myhte ben avised
That scholden afterward governe,
And be this evidence lerne,
Hou it is good a king eschuie
The lust of vice and vertu suie.

To make an ende in this partie,
Which toucheth to the Policie
Of Chastite in special,
As for conclusion final
That every lust is to eschue
Be gret ensample I mai argue:
Hou in Rages a toun of Mede

Ther was a Mayde, and as I rede,
Sarra sche hihte, and Raguel
Hir fader was; and so befell,
Of bodi bothe and of visage
Was non so fair of the lignage,
To seche among hem alle, as sche;
Wherof the riche of the cite,
Of lusti folk that couden love,
Assoted were upon hire love,
And asken hire forto wedde.
On was which ate laste spedde,
Bot that was more for likinge,
To have his lust, than for weddinge,
As he withinne his herte caste,
Which him repenteth ate laste.
For so it fell the ferste nyht,
That whanne he was to bedde dyht,
As he which nothing god besecheth
Bot al only hise lustes secheth,
Abedde er he was fully warm
And wolde have take hire in his Arm,
Asmod, which was a fend of helle,
And serveth, as the bokes telle,
To tempte a man of such a wise,
Was redy there, and thilke emprise,
Which he hath set upon delit,
He vengeth thanne in such a plit,
That he his necke hathe writhe atuo.
This yonge wif was sory tho,
Which wiste nothing what it mente;
And natheles yit thus it wente
Noght only of this ferste man,
Bot after, riht as he began,
Sexe othre of hire housebondes

Asmod hath take into hise bondes,
So that thei alle abedde deiden,
Whan thei her hand toward hir leiden,
Noght for the lawe of Mariage,
Bot for that ilke fyri rage
In which that thei the lawe excede:
For who that wolde taken hiede
What after fell in this matiere,
Ther mihte he wel the sothe hiere.
Whan sche was wedded to Thobie,
And Raphael in compainie
Hath tawht him hou to ben honeste,
Asmod wan noght at thilke feste,
And yit Thobie his wille hadde;
For he his lust so goodly ladde,
That bothe lawe and kinde is served,
Wherof he hath himself preserved,
That he fell noght in the sentence.
O which an open evidence
Of this ensample a man mai se,
That whan likinge in the degre
Of Mariage mai forsueie,
Wel oghte him thanne in other weie
Of lust to be the betre avised.
For god the lawes hath assissed
Als wel to reson as to kinde,
Bot he the bestes wolde binde
Only to lawes of nature,
Bot to the mannes creature
God yaf him reson forth withal,
Wherof that he nature schal
Upon the causes modefie,
That he schal do no lecherie,
And yit he schal hise lustes have.

So ben the lawes bothe save
And every thing put out of sclandre;
As whilom to king Alisandre
The wise Philosophre tawhte,
Whan he his ferste lore cawhte,
Noght only upon chastete,
Bot upon alle honestete;
Wherof a king himself mai taste,
Hou trewe, hou large, hou joust, hou chaste
Him oghte of reson forto be,
Forth with the vertu of Pite,
Thurgh which he mai gret thonk deserve
Toward his godd, that he preserve
Him and his poeple in alle welthe
Of pes, richesse, honour and helthe
Hier in this world and elles eke.

Mi Sone, as we tofore spieke
In schrifte, so as thou me seidest,
And for thin ese, as thou me preidest,
Thi love throghes forto lisse,
That I thee wolde telle and wisse
The forme of Aristotles lore,
I have it seid, and somdiel more
Of othre ensamples, to assaie
If I thi peines myhte allaie
Thurgh eny thing that I can seie.

Do wey, mi fader, I you preie:
Of that ye have unto me told
I thonke you a thousendfold.
The tales sounen in myn Ere,
Bot yit min herte is elleswhere,
I mai miselve noght restreigne,
That I nam evere in loves peine:

Such lore couthe I nevere gete,
Which myhte make me foryete
O point, bot if so were I slepte,
That I my tydes ay ne kepte
To thenke of love and of his lawe;
That herte can I noght withdrawe.
Forthi, my goode fader diere,
Lef al and speke of my matiere
Touchende of love, as we begonne:
If that ther be oght overronne
Or oght foryete or left behinde
Which falleth unto loves kinde,
Wherof it nedeth to be schrive,
Nou axeth, so that whil I live
I myhte amende that is mys.

Mi goode diere Sone, yis.
Thi schrifte forto make plein,
Ther is yit more forto sein
Of love which is unavised.
Bot for thou schalt be wel avised
Unto thi schrifte as it belongeth,
A point which upon love hongeth
And is the laste of alle tho,
I wol thee telle, and thanne ho.

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 reclamed
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 Noë,
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 Sosterhiede
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 Sosterhode 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 Isaäc
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 Isaäc 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 tuelve, as I thee seie,
Thurgh providence of god himselve
Ben seid the Patriarkes tuelve;
Of whom, as afterward befell,
The tribes tuelve 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 sotie 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 Soster ayein kinde,
Which hihte Thamar, he forlay;
Bot he that lust an other day
Aboghte, whan that Absolon
His oghne brother therupon,
Of that he hadde his Soster 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 befalle
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 hirself 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 certein 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 ferst 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 quyt 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 unloke,
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 eschuie,
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 hiere.
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 crualte,
He stinte his wraththe and let him be.

Bot over this now forto telle
Of aventures 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 ancher 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 merciable,
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 yelpe,
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 befalle,
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 delivere 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 certein 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 othre 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 lefte 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 hiere.”
“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 gentilesse.
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, awey 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 ernest 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 divise
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 sacrifise
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 mervailes
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 lyhthnynge 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 betwen 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 betwen 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 swoune 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 thousend 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 enclowed,
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 somwhat 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 certein 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 thousend 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 vengance

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 avantage, let do crye,
That what man wolde his lecherie
Attempte upon hire maidenhede,
Lei doun 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 aspie,
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 hirself fro schame,
And kneleth doun 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 wepth, 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 tumbe 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 assisse
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 Thaïsis 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 Croniqes 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 avaled,
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 Messager 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 awey 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 awey 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 sacrifise;
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 Ancher and abod;
And whil that he on Ancher 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 befalle,
Ther was nothing foryete of alle.
His wif, as it was goddes grace,
Which was professed in the place,
As sche that was Abbesse 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 hirself 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 thousend 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 fielinge 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 betwen 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 pleinly 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 avise.
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 untrewe 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 witnesse,
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,
Halvynge 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 swoune 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 Pipinge 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 knyhthod 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.

Theseüs, thogh he were untrewe
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 sovereine;
And Troilus stod with Criseide,
Bot evere among, althogh he pleide,
Be semblant he was hevy chiered,
For Diomede, as him was liered,
Cleymeth to ben his parconner.
And thus full many a bacheler,
A thousend 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 fortuned 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 Theseüs 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 Diomede
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 hirself 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 Tereüs 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 hirselven 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 hirself 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 sufficant,
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 reclamed,
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 gentilesse 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 enoignt,
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 pourchace,
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 outen helpe.
So wiste I nought wher of to yelpe,
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, contekt, 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 wynne,
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 ernest 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 rethoriqe
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 purchace
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 pleinly 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 3170
Wher resteth love and alle pes,
Oure joie mai ben endeles.

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Vt sine liuore vigeat lectoris in ore.
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