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Confessio Amantis

or

Tales of the Seven Deadly Sins

By John Gower, 1330–1408 A.D.

May, 1995 [Etext #266]

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CONFESSIO AMANTIS

or

TALES OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

By John Gower, 1330–1408 A.D.

The following electronic text is based on that edition published in THE WORKS OF JOHN GOWER, ed. Prof. G.C. Macauley.

This electronic text was edited and proofed by Douglas B. Killings (DeTroyes@AOL.COM), September 1994.

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TALES OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

By John Gower, 1330–1408 A.D.

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 10
 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 20
 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, 30
 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 vertuouus;
 For hier in erthe amanges ous, 40
 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 cruualte,
 Right as thei stoden in degre, 50
 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. 60
 Thogh I seknesse have upon honde

And longe have had, yit woll I fonde
 To wryte and do my businesse,
 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, 70
 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. 80
 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 hye god him hath proclamed
 Ful of knythode and alle grace.
 So woll I now this werk embrace 90
 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 knythode in pris be name,
 Wherof the wyde worldes fame 100
 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: 110
 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 120
 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 purchase,
 And lawe hath take hire double face, 130
 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: 140
 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. 150
 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 hier.
 Although a man be wys himselve,
 Yit is the wisdom more of tuelve;
 And if thei stoden bothe in on,
 To hope it were thanne anon 160
 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 170
 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, 180
 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 between the londes
 And take her cause into hise hondes, 190
 So that the world may stonde appesed
 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
 Ensamble and reule of alle tho
 Whiche of wisdom the vertu soughten.
 Unto the god ferst thei besoughten
 As to the substauce of her Scole,
 That thei ne scholden nocht befole 200
 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, 210
 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 nocht honeste;
 Bot of simplesce and pacience

Thei maden thanne no defence:
 The Court of worldly regalie
 To hem was thanne no baillie; 220
 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, 230
 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, 240
 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 250
 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 thinkth to the manhode, 260
 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 nocht availe 270
 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 280
 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 nocht of compaignie:
 For every werk as it is founded
 Schal stonde or elles be confounded; 290
 Who that only for Cristes sake
 Desireth cure forto take,
 And nocht 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, 300
 Noght for the merite of the charge,
 Bot for thei wolde hemself discharge
 Of poverte and become grete;
 And thus for Pompe and for beyete
 The Scribe and ek the Pharisee
 Of Moises upon the See
 In the chaire on hyh ben set;
 Wherof the feith is ofte let,
 Which is betaken hem to kepe.
 In Cristes cause alday thei slepe, 310
 Bot of the world is nocht 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: 320
 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 330
 At Avynoun the experience
 Therof hath yove an evidence,
 Of that men sen hem so divided.
 And yit the cause is noght decided;
 Bot it is seid and evere schal,
 Betwen tuo Stoles lyth the fal,
 Whan that men wenen best to sitte:
 In holy cherche of such a slitte
 Is for to rewe un to ous alle;
 God grante it mote wel befall 340
 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 350
 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 360
 That Crist in Erthe taghte here,
 Thei scholden noght in such manere,
 Among hem that ben holden wise,
 The Papacie so disguise
 Upon diverse eleccioun,
 Which stant after thaffeccioun
 Of sondry londes al aboute:
 Bot whan god wole, it schal were oute,
 For trowthe mot stonde ate laste.
 Bot yet thei argumenten faste 370
 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 380
 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, 390
 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, 400
 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 410
 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 thogh 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, 420
 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, 430
 I wol noght seie in general,
 For ther ben somme in special
 In whom that alle vertu duelleth,
 And tho ben, as thapostel telleth,
 That god of his eleccioun
 Hath cleped to perfeccioun
 In the manere as Aaron was:
 Thei ben nothing in thilke cas
 Of Simon, which the foldes gate
 Hath lete, and goth in othergate, 440
 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 450
 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, 460
 It thinkth thei wolden do the same;
 Bot yet betwen earnest and game
 Ful ofte it torneth other wise.
 With holy tales thei devise
 How meritoire is thilke dede
 Of charite, to clothe and fede
 The povere folk and forto parte
 The worldes good, bot thei departe
 Ne thenken noght fro that thei have.
 Also thei sein, good is to save 470
 With penance and with abstinence
 Of chastite the continence;
 Bot pleinely 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. 480
 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: 490
 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 500
 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. 510
 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
 Yifh every man in sondry wise.
 Bot what man wolde himself avise, 520
 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, 530
 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 untrewē, 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, 540
 Ther is deceipte in his balance,
 And al is that the variance
 Of ous, that scholde ous betre advise;
 For after that we falle and rise,
 The world arist and falth withal,
 So that the man is overal
 His oghne cause of wel and wo.
 That we fortune clepe so
 Out of the man himself it groweth;
 And who that other wise troweth, 550
 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, 560
 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, 570
 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, 580
 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, 590
 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 600
 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 down to the kne,
 Of bras thei were upon to se; 610
 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 nocht 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, 620
 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. 630
 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: 640
 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 nocht laste wiel,
 Bot if that on that other waste;
 So mot it nedes faile in haste. 650
 The Ston, which fro the hully Stage
 He syh down 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; 660
 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 670
 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 680
 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 690
 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; 700
 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 710
 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 720
 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, 730
 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 740
 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 750
 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 760
 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, 770
 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; 780
 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 790
 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 800
 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: 810
 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 820
 To thalemans. And in this wise,
 As ye tofore have herd devise
 How Daniel the swevene expoundeth
 Of that ymage, on whom he foundeth
 The world which after scholde falle,
 Come is the laste tokne of alle;
 Upon the feet of Erthe and Stiel
 So stant this world now everydiel
 Departed; which began riht tho,
 Whan Rome was divided so: 830
 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 840
 Which whilom was of the Romeins,

Of knythode and of Citezeins,
 To peise now with that befor,
 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, 850
 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 860
 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, 870
 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. 880
 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, 890
 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 900
 And sein, good dede may non be
 Which stant nocht 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 witesse
 That ilke ymage bar liknesse
 Of man and of non other beste.
 For ferst unto the mannes heste 910
 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; 920
 The purest Eir for Senne alofte
 Hath ben and is corrupt fulofte,
 Right now the hyhe wyndes blowe,
 And anon after thei ben lowe,
 Now cloudy and now clier it is:
 So may it proeven wel be this,
 A mannes Senne is forto hate,
 Which makth the welkne to debate.
 And forto se the proprete
 Of every thyng in his degree, 930
 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, 940
 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, 950
 And lich to beste he hath fielingē,
 And lich to Trees he hath growingē;
 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 960
 Ayein the man and make him werre:
 Therwhile himself stant out of herre,
 The remenant wol nocht acorde:
 And in this wise, as I recorde,
 The man is cause of alle wo,
 Why this world is divided so.
 Division, the gossell seith,
 On hous upon another leith,
 Til that the Regne al overthowe:
 And thus may every man wel knowe, 970
 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 estat
 Stant evermore in such debat, 980
 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 nocht laste,
 That he ne deieth ate laste. 990
 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 1000
 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 1010
 Among the men in erthe hier, e,
 And was the cause and the matiere
 Why god the grete flodes sende,
 Of al the world and made an ende
 Bot Noe⁵ 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 1020
 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 nocht procede.
 And thus it stant of every dede,
 Wher Senne takth the cause on honde,
 It may upriht nocht longe stonde;
 For Senne of his condicioun
 Is moder of divisioun 1030
 And tokne whan the world schal faile.
 For so seith Crist withoute faile,
 That nyh upon the worldes ende
 Pes and acord away schol wende
 And alle charite schal cesse,
 Among the men and hate encesce;
 And whan these toknes ben befalle,
 Al sodeinly the Ston schal falle,
 As Daniel it hath beknowe,
 Which al this world schal overthrowe, 1040
 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; 1050
 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, 1060
 The Hare in pees stod with the Hound;
 And every man upon this ground
 Which Arion that time herde,
 Als wel the lord as the schepherde,
 He broghte hem alle in good acord;
 So that the comun with the lord,
 And lord with the comun also,
 He sette in love bothe tuo
 And putte away malencolie.
 That was a lusti melodie, 1070
 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 1080
 Hath set his world, it is to drede;
 For that bringth in the comun drede,
 Which stant at every mannes Dore:
 Bot whan the scharpnese 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 vnanimis concitat esse feras:
 Huius enim mundi Princeps amor esse videtur,

Cuius eget diues, pauper et omnis ope.
 Sunt in agone pares amor et fortuna, que cecas

Plebis ad insidias vertit vterque rotas.
 Est amor egra salus, vexata quies, pius error,

Bellica pax, vulnus dulce, suaue malum.

I may nocht strecche up to the hevене
 Min hand, ne setten al in evēne
 This world, which evere is in balance:
 It stant nocht in my sufficance
 So grete thinges to compasse,
 Bot I mot lete it overpasse
 And tretē upon othre thinges.
 Forthi the Stile of my writinges
 Fro this day forth I thenke change
 And speke of thing is nocht so strange, 10
 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, 20
 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 nocht helpe,
 And he which elles wolde him yelpē
 Is rathest throwen under fote,
 Ther can no wiht therof do bote.
 For yet was nevere such covine,
 That couthe ordeine a medicine 30
 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, 40
 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 nocht se,

Forthi may no certeinete
 Be set upon his jugement,
 Bot as the whiel aboute went 50
 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 befall
 He not, til that the chance falle,
 Wher he schal lese or he schal winne.
 And thus fulofte men beginne,
 That if thei wisten what it mente,
 Thei wolde change al here entente. 60
 And forto proven it is so,
 I am miselven on of tho,
 Which to this Scole am underfonge.
 For it is siththe go nocht longe,
 As forto speke of this matiere,
 I may you telle, if ye woll hier,
 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 comene 70
 And plainly forto telle it oute.
 To hem that ben lovers aboute
 Fro point to point I wol declare
 And wryten of my wofull 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, 80
 And that he wot of good aprise
 To teche it forth, for such emprise
 Is forto preise; and therefore 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, 90
 And yet it may nocht be withstonde
 For oght that men may understonde.
 Upon the point that is befall
 Of love, in which that I am falle,
 I thenke telle my matiere:
 Now herkne, who that wol it hier,
 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, 100
 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, 110
 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, 120
 Whanne I out of my peine awok,
 And caste up many a pitous lok
 Unto the hevene, and seide thus:
 "O thou Cupide, O thou Venus,
 Thou god of love and thou goddesse,
 Wher is pite? wher is meknesse?
 Now doth me plainly live or dye,
 For certes such a maladie
 As I now have and longe have hadd,
 It myhte make a wisman madd, 130
 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 140
 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 150
 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: 160
 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, 170
 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 180
 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; 190
 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 thought 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 200
 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, 210
 Tell pleinliche as it is befaller."
 And with that word I gan doun falle
 On knees, and with devocioun
 And with full gret contricioun
 I seide thanne: "Dominus,
 Min holi fader Genius,
 So as thou hast experience
 Of love, for whos reverence
 Thou schalt me schreven at this time,
 I prai the let me nocht mistime 220
 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, 230
 And with his wordes debonaire
 He seide tome softe and faire:
 "Thi schrifte to oppose and hierer,
 My Sone, I am assigned hierer
 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, 240
 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 250
 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 260
 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 nocht tawht in such a wise;
 For it is nocht my comun us
 To speke of vices and vertus,
 Bot al of love and of his lore,
 For Venus bokes of nomore 270
 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 hier
 The vices, and to thi matiere
 Of love I schal hem so remene,
 That thou schalt knowe what thei mene. 280
 For what a man schal axe or sein
 Touchende of schrifte, it mot be plein,
 It nedeth nocht to make it queinte,
 For trowthe hise wordes wol nocht peinte:
 That I wole axe of the forthi,
 My Sone, it schal be so plainly,
 That thou schalt knowe and understonde
 The pointz of schrifte how that thei stonde."
 Between the lif and deth I herde
 This Prestes tale er I answerde, 290
 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 300
 Comth alle thing unto the feire,
 Which may the mannes Soule empeire.
 And now this matiere is brought 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 befall.
 And forto speke in loves kinde,
 Ful manye suche a man mai finde, 310
 Whiche evere caste aboute here yhe,
 To loke if that thei myhte asprie
 Fulofte thing which hem ne toucheth,
 Bot only that here herte soucheth
 In hindringe of an other wiht;
 And thus ful many a worthi knyht
 And many a lusti lady bothe
 Have be fulofte sythe wrothe.
 So that an yhe is as a thief
 To love, and doth ful gret meschief; 320
 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 330
 Thin yhe forto kepe and warde,
 So that it passe nocht 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, 340
 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, 350
 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. 360
 Amidd the plein he syh a welle,
 So fair ther myhte noman telle,
 In which Diana naked stod
 To bathe and pleie hire in the flod
 With many a Nimphe, which hire serveth.
 Bot he his yhe away ne swerveth
 Fro hire, which was naked al,
 And sche was wonder wroth withal,
 And him, as sche which was godesse,
 Forschop anon, and the liknesse 370
 Sche made him taken of an Hert,
 Which was tofore hise houndes stert,
 That ronne besiliche aboute
 With many an horn and many a route,
 That maden mochel noise and cry:
 And ate laste unhappely
 This Hert his oghne houndes slowhe
 And him for vengeance al todrowhe.
 Lo now, my Sone, what it is
 A man to caste his yhe amis, 380
 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 hier.
 In Metamor it telleth thus,
 How that a lord which Phorce s 390
 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, 400
 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. 410
 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 Perse s that worthi knyht,
 Whom Pallas of hir grete myht 420
 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, 430
 The Schield of Pallas gan embrace,
 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, 440
 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 450
 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, 460
 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, 470
 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. 480
 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, 490
 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 500
 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 hierie;
 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, 510
 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 520
 His Ere for no lust to caste;
 For he hem stoppede alle faste,
 That non of hem mai hier 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 530
 Thou myht ensample taken hier,
 As I have told, and what thou hier
 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, 540
 Wherof that now thi love excedeth
 Measure, and many a peine bredeth.
 Bot if thou cowthest sette in reule
 Tho tuo, the thre were eth to reule:
 Forthi as of thi wittes five
 I wole as now nomore schryve,
 Bot only of these ilke tuo.
 Tell me therefore if it be so,
 Hast thou thin yhen oght mistorowe?
 Mi fader, ye, I am beknowe, 550
 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 hier,
 Mi wit with that hath lost his Stiere: 560
 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 thought,
 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. 570
 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 580
 Is Pride, which is principal,
 And hath with him in special
 Ministres five ful diverse,
 Of whiche, as I the schal rehearse,
 The ferste is seid Ypocrisie.
 If thou art of his compaignie,
 Tell forth, my Sone, and schrif the clene.
 I wot nocht, fader, what ye mene:
 Bot this I wolde you beseche,
 That ye me be som weie teche 590
 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 nocht so withinne;
 And doth so for he wolde winne
 Of his desir the vein astat.
 And whanne he comth anon therat, 600
 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 befor
 Is thanne a Wolf, and thus malice
 Under the colour of justice
 Is hid; and as the poeple telleth,
 These ordres witen where he duelleth,
 As he that of here conseil is,
 And thilke world which thei er this 610
 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, 620
 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, 630
 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. 640
 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, 650
 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: 660
 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, 670
 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, 680
 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, 690
 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, 700
 Wherof he berth the pale hewe;
 And for he wolde seme trewe,
 He makth him siek, whan he is heil.
 Bot whanne he berth lowest the Seil,
 Thanne is he swiftest to beguile
 The womman, which that ilke while
 Set upon him feith or credence.
 Mi Sone, if thou thi conscience
 Entamed hast in such a wise,
 In schrifte thou thee myht advise 710
 And telle it me, if it be so.
 Min holy fader, certes no.
 As forto feigne such sieknesse
 It nedeth nocht, for this witsesse
 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 720
 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 thought;
 For in good feith, this lieveth wel,
 Mi will was betre a thousandel
 Than eny chiere that I cowthe.
 Bot, Sire, if I have in my yowthe 730
 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,
 Although I may no thonk deserve,
 To whom yet nevere into this day
 I seide onlyche or ye or nay, 740
 Bot if it so were in my thought.
 As touchende othre seie I noght
 That I nam somdel forto wyte
 Of that ye clepe an ypocrite.
 Mi Sone, it sit wel every wiht
 To kepe his word in trowthe upryht
 Towardes love in alle wise.
 For who that wolde him wel advise
 What hath befalle in this matiere,
 He scholde noght with feigned chiere 750
 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 Cronique
 Of hem that love so beswike. 760
 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, 770
 Which thurgh beaute ne mai be drawe
 To love, and stonde under the lawe
 Of thilke bore frele kinde,
 Which makth the hertes yhen blinde,
 Wher no reson mai be comuned:

And in this wise stod fortunéd
 This tale, of which I wolde mene;
 This wif, which in hire lustes grene
 Was fair and freissh and tendre of age,
 Sche may nocht lette the corage 780
 Of him that wole on hire assote.
 Ther was a Duck, and he was hote
 Mundus, which hadde in his baillie
 To lede the chivalerie
 Of Rome, and was a worthi knyht;
 Bot yet he was nocht 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, 790
 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, 800
 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. 810
 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 820
 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 830
 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 here,
 And seith he woll to thee appiere
 Be nyhtes time himself alone,
 For love he hath to thi persone: 840
 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 850
 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. 860
 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, 870
 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, 880
 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, 890
 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 nocht perceive;
 And he, that thoghte to deceive, 900
 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, 910
 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, 920
 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 930
 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 940
 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 eschuiet.
 Bot I his grace have so poursuiet,
 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, 950
 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 960
 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 970
 With sorwe, and axeth what hire eileth.
 And sche with that hirsself 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 980
 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 nocht:
 Bot natheles withinne his thoght
 His herte stod in sori plit,
 And seide he wolde of that despit 990
 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. 1000
 Tho was this wofull wif confortid
 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: 1010
 And ferst he let the Prestes take,
 And for thei scholde it nocht forsake,
 He put hem into questioun;
 Bot thei of the suggestioun
 Ne couthen nocht a word refuse,
 Bot for thei wolde hemself excuse,
 The blame upon the Duck thei leide.
 Bot therayein the conseil seide
 That thei be nocht excused so,
 For he is on and thei ben tuo, 1020
 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 nocht excusable.
 And thus be lawe resonable 1030
 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, 1040
 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; 1050
 For Love put reson aweie
 And can noght se the rihte weie.
 And be this cause he was respited,
 So that the deth him was acquitted,
 Bot for al that he was exiled,
 For he his love hath so beguiled,
 That he schal nevere come ayein:
 For who that is to trowthe unplein,
 He may noght failen of vengance.
 And ek to take remembrance 1060
 Of that Ypocrisie hath wrought
 On othel 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; 1070
 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, 1080
 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 never man
 That such an other werk began. 1090
 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 1100
 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, 1110
 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, 1120
 The pes to kepe in good entente,
 Thei mosten offre er that thei wente.
 The kyng conseiled in this cas
 Be Anthenor and Eneas
 Therto hath yoven his assent:
 So was the pleine trowthe blent
 Thurgh contrefet Ipocrisie
 Of that thei scholden sacrificie.
 The Greks under the holinesse
 Anon with alle besinesse 1130
 Here Hors of Bras let faire dihte,
 Which was to sen a wonder sihte;
 For it was trapped of himselfe,
 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 1140
 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, 1150
 For pes, wherof that thei ben glade,
 The gates that Neptunus made
 A thousand wynter ther tofore,
 Thei have anon tobroke and tore;
 The stronge walles 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 1160
 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 1170
 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, 1180
 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 releas
 Of thilke swerd which al devoureth.
 Fulofte and thus the swete soureth, 1190
 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, 1200
 Thei speden that ben most untrewre
 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, 1210
 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, 1220
 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, 1230
 To schryve and speken overthis
 Touchende of Pride, yit ther is
 The point seconde, I thee behote,
 Which Inobediencie is hote.
 This vice of Inobediencie
 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, 1240
 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 1250
 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, 1260
 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, 1270
 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 1280
 For al this world obeie ywiss;
 For whanne I am ther as sche is,
 Though sche my tales noght alowe,
 Ayein hir will yit mot I bowe,
 To seche if that I myhte have grace:
 Bot that thing may I noght embrace
 For ought that I can speke or do;
 And yit fulofte I speke so,
 That sche is wroth and seith, "Be stille."
 If I that heste schal fulfillle 1290
 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 nocht bothe save 1300
 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 nocht sinke into my wit;
 For ofte time sche me bit 1310
 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, 1320
 That I ne stonde more faste
 Upon hire love, and mai nocht caste
 Min herte away, although I wolde.
 For god wot, thogh I nevere scholde
 Sen hir with yhe after this day,
 Yit stant it so that I ne may
 Hir love out of my brest remue.
 This is a wonder retenue,
 That malgre wher sche wole or non
 Min herte is everemore in on, 1330
 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 pleynly me wolde enforme, 1340
 So that I may myn herte reule
 In loves cause after the reule.
 Toward this vice of which we trete
 Ther ben yit tweie of thilke estrete,
 Here name is Murmur and Compleignte:
 Ther can noman here chiere peinte,
 To sette a glad semblant therinne,

For thogh fortune make hem wyne,
 Yit grucchen thei, and if thei lese,
 Ther is no weie forto chese, 1350
 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 1360
 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 1370
 To soffre til it betre falle.
 Forthi if thou amonges alle
 Hast used this condicioun,
 Mi Sone, in thi Confessioun
 Now tell me plainly what thou art.
 Mi fader, I beknowe a part,
 So as ye tolden hier above
 Of Murmur and Compleignte of love,
 That for I se no sped comende,
 Ayein fortune compleignende 1380
 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, 1390
 And thogh I make no semblant,
 Min herte is al desobeissant;
 And in this wise I me confesse
 Of that ye clepe unbuxomnesse.
 Now telleth what youre conseil is.
 Mi Sone, and I thee rede this,
 What so befall of other weie,
 That thou to loves heste obeie
 Als ferr as thou it myht suffise:

For ofte sithe in such a wise 1400
 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: 1410
 Wifles he was, Florent he hihte,
 He was a man that mochel myhte,
 Of armes he was desirous,
 Chivalerous and amorous,
 And for the fame of worldes speche,
 Strange adventures forto seche,
 He rod the Marches al aboute.
 And fell a time, as he was oute,
 Fortune, which may every thred
 Tobreke and knette of mannes sped, 1420
 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. 1430
 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 knythod and of gentillesse,
 And how he stod of cousinage
 To themperour, made hem assuage,
 And dorsten nocht slen him for fere:
 In gret desputeisoun thei were 1440
 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 1450
 Withoute blame of eny wiht.

Anon sche sende for this kniht,
 And of hire Sone sche alleide
 The deth, and thus to him sche seide:
 "Florent, how so thou be to wyte
 Of Branchus deth, men schal respite
 As now to take vengeance,
 Be so thou stonde in juggement
 Upon certein condicioun,
 That thou unto a questioun 1460
 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 1470
 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: 1480
 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 1490
 He tolde, of that him is befaller.
 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; 1500
 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 answer. 1510
 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 1520
 That he par aventure deie.
 And thus he wente forth his weie
 Alone as knyht adventurous,
 And in his thoght was curious
 To wite what was best to do:
 And as he rod al one so,
 And cam nyh ther he wolde be,
 In a forest under a tre
 He syh wher sat a creature,
 A lothly wommannysch figure, 1530
 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, 1540
 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: 1550
 "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." 1560
 "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, 1570
 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. 1580
 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," 1590
 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 comyng abyde,
 Thei wole anon the same tide 1600
 Oppose thee of thin answer.
 I wot thou wolt nothing forbere
 Of that thou wenest be thi beste,
 And if thou myht so finde reste,
 Wel is, for thanne is ther nomore.
 And elles this schal be my lore,
 That thou schalt seie, upon this Molde

That alle wommen lievest wolde
 Be sovereign of mannes love:
 For what womman is so above, 1610
 Sche hath, as who seith, al hire wille;
 And elles may sche noght fulfille
 What thing hir were lievest have.
 With this answeere 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 hevvy chiere,
 As he that not in what manere 1620
 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 answeere forto yive,
 Or forto deie or forto live. 1630
 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. 1640
 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 answeere in special
 Of that sche hadde him ferst opposed:
 And thanne he hath trewly supposed 1650
 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 knyght ansuerde,
 Sche seide: "Ha treson, wo thee be,

That hast thus told the privite, 1660
 Which alle wommen most desire!
 I wolde that thou were afire."
 Bot natheles in such a plit
 Florent of his answeere is quit:
 And tho began his sorwe newe,
 For he mot gon, or ben untrewē,
 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, 1670
 As he that was with trowthe affaited.
 This olde wyht him hath awaited
 In place wher as he hire leftē:
 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, 1680
 And riven as an emty skyn
 Hangende doun unto the chin,
 Hire Lippes schrunken ben for age,
 Ther was no grace in the visage,
 Hir front was nargh, hir lockes hore,
 Sche loketh forth as doth a More,
 Hire Necke is schort, hir schuldres courbe,
 That myhte a mannes lust destourbe,
 Hire body gret and nothing smal,
 And schortly to describe hire al, 1690
 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 1700
 For sorwe that he may noght fle,
 Bot if he wolde untrewē 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 likyngē,
 And liveth, as who seith, deyingē; 1710
 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; 1720
 So that for pure gentillesse,
 As he hire couthe best adresce,
 In ragges, as sche was totore,
 He set hire on his hors tofore
 And forth he takth his weie softe;
 No wonder thogh he siketh ofte.
 Bot as an oule fleth be nyhte
 Out of alle othre briddes syhte,
 Riht so this knyht on daies brode
 In clos him hield, and schop his rode 1730
 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 1740
 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, 1750
 And sche ne wolde nocht 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 fullliche arraied
 And hire atyr was al assaied,
 Tho was sche foulere on to se:
 Bot yit it may non other be, 1760
 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, 1770
 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 thought 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: 1780
 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, 1790
 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 1800
 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, 1810
 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 thought,

Bot for al that yit cowthe he nocht
 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 1820
 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 nocht 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, 1830
 Riht as ye wole so wol I."
 "Mi lord," sche seide, " grant merci,
 For of this word that ye now sein,
 That ye have mad me sovereign,
 Mi destine is overpassed,
 That nevere hierafter schal be lassed
 Mi beaute, which that I now have,
 Til I be take into my grave;
 Bot nyht and day as I am now
 I schal alwey be such to yow. 1840
 The kinges dowhter of Cizile
 I am, and fell bot siththe awhile,
 As I was with my fader late,
 That my Stepmoder for an hate,
 Which toward me sche hath begonne,
 Forschop me, til I hadde wonne
 The love and sovereignete
 Of what knyht that in his degre
 Alle othre passeth of good name:
 And, as men sein, ye ben the same, 1850
 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, 1860
 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 1870
 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 hier anon,
 To knowe if thou have gult or non 1880
 Upon the forme as thou schalt hier:
 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. 1890
 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 1900
 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 1910
 This vice upon the cause of love
 So proudly set the herte above,
 And doth him pleinely 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 nocht beloved is, 1920
 To be beloved alther best.
 Now, Sone, tell what so thee lest
 Of this that I have told thee hier.
 Ha, fader, be nocht in a wer:
 I trowe ther be noman lesse,
 Of eny maner worthinesse,
 That halt him lasse worth thanne I
 To be beloved; and nocht forthi
 I seie in excusinge of me,
 To alle men that love is fre. 1930
 And certes that mai noman werne;
 For love is of himself so derne,
 It luteth in a mannes herte:
 Bot that ne schal me nocht 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. 1940
 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 nocht certain,
 Mi wenyng hath be set in vein
 To triste in thing that halp me nocht,
 Bot onliche of myn oughne thocht.
 For as it semeth that a belle
 Lik to the wordes that men telle 1950
 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 1960
 Which is withoute botme rowe,
 He moste nedes overthrowe.
 Riht so wenyng hath ferd be me:
 For whanne I wende next have be,
 As I be my wenyng caste,
 Thanne was I furthest ate laste,
 And as a foll my bowe unbende,
 Whan al was failed that I wende.
 Forthi, my fader, as of this,
 That my wenyng hath gon amis 1970
 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 Capane s 1980
 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, 1990
 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 2000
 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 2010
 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. 2020
 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 2030
 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 2040
 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 2050
 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 2060
 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. 2070
 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. 2080
 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. 2090
 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: 2100
 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, 2110
 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, 2120
 And therupon yaf such conseil
 Toward his king that was noght heil;
 Wherof to be the betre lered,
 He thinkth 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 2130
 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, 2140
 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 befaller.
 And thei him axe cause why;
 Bot he the sothe noght forthi 2150
 Ne wiste, and ther was sorwe tho:
 For it stod thilke tyme so,
 This trompe was of such sentence,
 That therayein no resistance
 Thei couthe ordeine be no weie,
 That he ne mot algate deie,
 Bot if so that he may pourchace
 To gete his liege lordes grace.
 Here wittes therupon thei caste,
 And ben apointed ate laste. 2160
 This lord a worthe ladi hadde
 Unto his wif, which also dradde
 Hire lordes deth, and children five
 Between 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, 2170
 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, 2180
 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. 2190
 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, 2200
 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 2210
 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, 2220
 In sihte of alle men aboute,
 For that thou seist thou art in doute
 Of deth, which stant under the lawe
 Of man, and man it mai withdrawe,
 So that it mai par chance faile.
 Now schalt thou noght forthi mervaille
 That I doun fro my Charr alihte,
 Whanne I behield tofore my sihte
 In hem that were of so grete age
 Min oghne deth thurgh here ymage, 2230
 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, 2240
 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 2250
 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 nocht surquidous.
 Mi fader, I am amorous,
 Wherof I wolde you beseche
 That ye me som ensample teche, 2260
 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 nocht wel betide
 Which useth thilke vice of Pride,
 Which torneth wisdom to wenyng
 And Sothfastnesse into lesyng
 Thurgh fol ymaginacion.
 And for thin enformacion, 2270
 That thou this vice as I the rede
 Eschuie schalt, a tale I rede,
 Which fell whilom be daies olde,
 So as the clerk Ovide tolde.
 Ther was whilom a lordes Sone,
 Which of his Pride a nyce wone
 Hath cawht, that worthi to his liche,
 To sechen al the worldes riche,
 Ther was no womman forto love.
 So hihe he sette himselfe above 2280
 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, 2290
 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, 2300
 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 down he lihte and be the brinke 2310
 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 2320
 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, 2330
 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, 2340
 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 2350
 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, 2360
 And as he sette his pris most hyhe,
 He was lest worth in loves yhe
 And most bejaped in his wit:
 Wherof the remembrance is yit,
 So that thou myht ensample take,
 And ek alle othre for his sake.
 Mi fader, as touchende of me,
 This vice I thenke forto fle,
 Which of his wenyng overtroweth;
 And nameliche of thing which groweth 2370
 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 2380
 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, 2390
 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 nocht sitte stille,
 Which elles scholde have al his wille.
 The vice cleped Avantance
 With Pride hath take his aqueintance, 2400
 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, 2410
 Which thurgh the blastes that he bloweth
 The mannes fame he overthroweth
 Of vertu, which scholde elles springe
 Into the worldes knowleching;
 Bot he fordoth it alto sore.
 And riht of such a maner lore
 Ther ben lovers: forthi if thou
 Art on of hem, tell and sei how.
 Whan thou hast taken eny thing
 Of loves yifte, or Nouche or ring, 2420
 Or tok upon thee for the cold
 Som goodly word that thee was told,
 Or frendly chiere or tokne or lettre,
 Wherof thin herte was the better,
 Or that sche sende the grietinge,
 Hast thou for Pride of thi likinge
 Mad thin avant wher as the liste?
 I wolde, fader, that ye wiste,
 Mi conscience lith nocht hiere:
 Yit hadde I nevere such matiere, 2430
 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, 2440
 As ye have seid hier manyon;
 Bot I fond cause nevere non:
 Bot daunger, which welnyh me slowh,
 Therof I cowthe telle ynowh,
 And of non other Avantance:
 Thus nedeth me no repentance.
 Now axeth further of my lif,
 For hierof am I nocht gultif.
 Mi Sone, I am wel paid withal;
 For wite it wel in special 2450
 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 2460
 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, 2470
 That he ne smot his hed of thanne,
 Wherof he tok away the Panne,
 Of which he seide he wolde make
 A Cuppe for Gurmoundes sake,
 To kepe and drawe into memoire
 Of his bataille the victoire.
 And thus whan he the feld hath wonne,
 The lond anon was overronne
 And sesed in his oghne hond,
 Wher he Gurmondes dowhter fond, 2480
 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, 2490
 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, 2500
 That sche the lordes ate feste,
 That were obeissant to his heste,
 Mai knowe: and so forth therupon
 He let ordeine, and sende anon
 Be lettres and be messagiers,
 And warnede alle hise officers
 That every thing be wel arraied:
 The grete Stiedes were assaied
 For joustinge and for tornement,
 And many a perled garnement 2510
 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: 2520
 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, 2530
 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 2540
 Of werkmanschipe it was begrave
 Of such werk as it scholde have,
 And was policed ek so clene

That no signe of the Skulle is sene,
 Bot as it were a Gripes Ey.
 The king bad bere his Cuppe away,
 Which stod tofore him on the bord,
 And fette thilke. Upon his word
 This Skulle is fet and wyn therinne,
 Wherof he bad his wif beginne: 2550
 "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 witnessse,
 And made avant thurgh what prouesse 2560
 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, 2570
 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 2580
 Of hire and of hire fader bothe;
 Wherof hire thoghtes ben so wrothe,
 Sche seith, that sche schal nocht 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: 2590
 And with this sleihte thei beginne,
 How thei Helmege myhten winne,
 Which was the kinges Boteler,
 A proud a lusti Bachelor,
 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 2600
 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, 2610
 And seide: "Helmege, I am thi qwene,
 Now schal thi love wel be sene
 Of that thou hast thi wille wrought:
 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, 2620
 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, 2630
 So that it thoghte hem for the beste
 To fle, for there was no reste:
 And thus the tresor of the king
 Thei trusse and mochel other thing,
 And with a certein felaschipe
 Thei fledde and wente away be schipe,
 And hielde here rihte cours fro thenne,
 Til that thei come to Ravenne,
 Wher thei the Dukes helpe soghte.
 And he, so as thei him besoghte, 2640
 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 therefore a man to hide
 His oghne pris, for if he speke,
 He mai lihtliche his thonk tobreke. 2650
 In armes lith non avantance
 To him which thenkth his name avance
 And be renommed of his dede:
 And also who that thenkth to spede
 Of love, he mai him noght avaunte;
 For what man thilke vice haunte,
 His pourpos schal fulofte faile.
 In armes he that wol travaile
 Or elles loves grace atteigne,
 His lose tunge he mot restreigne, 2660
 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 eschuiе,
 Now axeth forth, and I wol suie
 What thing that ye me wole enforme.
 Mi Sone, yit in other forme 2670
 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. 2680
 The proude vice of veine gloire
 Remembreth noght of purgatoire,
 Hise worldes joyes ben so grete,
 Him thenkth of hevене 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. 2690
 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 2700
 His colour, and thus unavised
 Fulofte time he stant disguised.
 Mor jolif than the brid in Maii
 He makth him evere freissh and gay,
 And doth al his array disguise,
 So that of him the newe guise
 Of lusti folk alle othre take;
 And ek he can carolles make,
 Rondeal, balade and virelai.
 And with al this, if that he may 2710
 Of love gete him avantage,
 Anon he wext of his corage
 So overglad, that of his ende
 Him thinkth ther is no deth comende:
 For he hath thanne at alle tide
 Of love such a maner pride,
 Him thinkth 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. 2720
 Mi fader, as touchinge of al
 I may nocht wel ne nocht 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, 2730
 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 nocht 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 nocht for hir sake, 2740
 And liste nocht 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 nocht say, 2750
 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 2760
 Tidinges of my ladi hele,
 Although I may nocht 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 2770
 That I therof am forto wyte.
 Of that ther is I thee acquite,
 Mi sone, he seide, and for thi goode
 I wolde that thou understode:
 For I thenke upon this matiere
 To telle a tale, as thou schalt hiere,
 How that ayein this proude vice
 The hihe god of his justice
 Is wroth and gret vengeance doth.
 Now herkne a tale that is soth: 2780
 Thogh it be nocht 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: 2790
 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 2800
 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 2810
 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; 2820
 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. 2830
 As he this wonder stod and syh,
 Him thoghte he herde a vois on hih
 Criende, and seide aboven alle:
 "Hew down 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, 2840
 And schal no mannes herte bere,
 Bot every lust he schal forbere
 Of man, and lich an Oxe his mete
 Of gras he schal pourchace and ete,
 Til that the water of the hevene
 Have waisschen him be times sevene,
 So that he be thurghknowe ariht
 What is the heveneliche myht,
 And be mad humble to the wille
 Of him which al mai save and spille." 2850
 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 2860
 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, 2870
 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 nocht 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, 2880
 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, 2890
 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. 2900
 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. 2910
 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 betekneth thin astat,
 Which now with god is in debat: 2920
 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. 2930
 So upon this condicioun
 Thi swevene hath expositioun.
 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, 2940
 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, 2950
 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. 2960
 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 2970
 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 grasses 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 2980
 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, 2990
 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 3000
 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, 3010
 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 3020
 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. 3030
 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 3040
 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; 3050
 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, 3060
 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, 3070
 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 answer,
 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; 3080
 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 3090
 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 hier.
 The ferste point of alle thre
 Was this: "What thing in his degre 3100
 Of al this world hath nede lest,
 And yet men helpe it althermost?"
 The secoude 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 3110
 To every point, what it amonteth.
 And if so be that he misconteth,
 To make in his answer a faile,
 Ther schal non other thing availe,
 The king seith, bot he schal be ded

And lese hise goodes and his hed.
 The knyht was sori of this thing
 And wolde excuse him to the king,
 Bot he ne wolde him noght forbere,
 And thus the knyht of his ansuere 3120
 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 astate,
 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, 3130
 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, 3140
 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 down 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, 3150
 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, 3160
 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. 3170
 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 nocht 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, 3180
 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 plainly that he cowthe
 Ansuere unto no point of this.
 And sche, that hiereth how it is, 3190
 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 3200
 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 nocht areche."
 The fader herde his dowhter speche,
 And thoghte ther was resoun inne,
 And sih his oghne lif to winne 3210
 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 certain 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, 3220
 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 3230
 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, 3240
 And to this Maide he caste his chiere,
 And seide he wolde hire tale hierre,
 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: 3250
 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, 3260
 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. 3270
 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, 3280
 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. 3290
 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. 3300
 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; 3310
 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 answer, and to you preie,
 Mi liege lord, of youre office
 That ye such grace and such justice
 Ordeigne for mi fader hier, e,
 That after this, whan men it hier, 3320
 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: 3330
 "Mi faire Maide, wel thee be!
 Of thin ansuere and ek of thee
 Me liketh wel, and as thou wilt,
 Forgive 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. 3340
 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 3350
 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 knees
 Tofore the king, hise charitees 3360
 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 3370
 So gret a charite fulfille,
 God wot it were wel my wille:
 For he which was a Bachelor,
 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. 3380
 He myhte nocht the maide aserter,
 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 3390
 The kingdom hadde in governance,
 And as the bok makth remembrance,
 Alphonse was his propre name:
 The knyht also, if I schal name,
 Danz Petro hihte, and as men telle,
 His dowhter wyse Peronelle
 Was cleped, which was full of grace:
 And that was sene in thilke place,
 Wher sche hir fader out of teene
 Hath broght and mad himself a qweene, 3400
 Of that sche hath so wel desclosed
 The pointz wherof sche was opposed.
 Lo now, my Sone, as thou myht hier,
 Of al this thing to my matiere
 Bot on I take, and that is Pride,
 To whom no grace mai betide:
 In hevne 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, 3410
 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, 3420
 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 nocht foryete
 Of this that ye have told me hier,

And if that eny such manere
 Of humble port mai love appaie,
 Hierafterward I thenke assaie: 3430
 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 pleinely herd above,
 So that ther is nomor to seie
 Touchende of that; bot other weie 3440
 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. 10
 Forthi, my Sone, if it be so
 Thou art or hast ben on of tho,

As forto speke in loves cas,
 If evere yit thin herte was
 Sek of an other mannes hele?
 So god avance my querele,
 Mi fader, ye, a thousand sithe:
 Whanne I have sen an other blithe
 Of love, and hadde a goodly chiere,
 Ethna, which brenneth yer be yere, 20
 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, 30
 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 40
 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. 50
 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 advise hire what sche doth,
 Ne betre, forto seie a soth,
 Kepe hire honour ate alle tide,
 And yit get hire a thank beside. 60
 Bot natheles I am beknowe,
 That whanne I se at eny throwe,
 Or elles if I mai it hierie,
 That sche make eny man good chiere,

Thogh I therof have nocht 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 70
 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 80
 Telle an ensample of this matiere
 Touchende Envie, as thou schalt hier.
 Write in Civile this I finde:
 Thogh it be nocht 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 90
 And mai himselven nocht 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 nocht able as of hemselve
 To gete love, and for Envie
 Upon alle othre thei asprie; 100
 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 nocht lacche.
 That made him forto waite and wacche 110
 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. 120
 This Galathee, seith the Poete,
 Above alle othre was unmete
 Of beaute, that men thanne knewe,
 And hadde a lusti love and trewe,
 A Bachelor in his degree,
 Riht such an other as was sche,
 On whom sche hath hire herte set,
 So that it myhte noght be let
 For yifte ne for no beheste,
 That sche ne was al at his heste. 130
 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, 140
 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 150
 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; 160
 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 170
 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 180
 And kept hire in so sauf a place
 Fro Polipheme and his manace,
 That he with al his false Envie
 Ne mihte atteigne hir compaignie.
 This Galathee of whom I speke,
 That of hirsself mai noght be wreke,
 Withouten eny semblant feigned
 Sche hath hire loves deth compleigned,
 And with hire sorwe and with hire wo
 Sche hath the goddes moeved so, 190
 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, 200
 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 chauce:
 For it is an unwys vengeance,
 Which to non other man is lief,
 And is unto himselve grief. 210
 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. 220

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 230
 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 hier 240
 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 hier
 Is only for my lady diere; 250
 That for non other that I knowe
 Me reccheth nocht 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 260
 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 nocht availe
 To sen an other man travaile,
 I am riht glad if he be let;
 And thogh I fare nocht the bet,
 His sorwe is to myn herte a game:
 Whan that I knowe it is the same 270
 Which to mi ladi stant enclined,
 And hath his love nocht terminated,

I am riht joifull in my thoght.
 If such Envie grieveth oght,
 As I beknowe me coupable,
 Ye that be wys and resonable,
 Mi fader, telleth youre avis.
 Mi Sone, Envie into no pris
 Of such a forme, I understonde,
 Ne mihte be no resoun stonde 280
 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 hierre,
 To schewe proprely the vice
 Of this Envie and the malice. 290
 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 300
 This Angel, which him scholde enforme,
 Was clothed in a mannes forme,
 And overtok, I understonde,
 Tuo men that wenten over londe,
 Thurgh whiche he thoghte to asprie
 His cause, and goth in compaignie.
 This Angel with hise wordes wise
 Opposeth hem in sondri wise,
 Now lowde wordes and now softe,
 That mad hem to desputen ofte, 310
 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, 320
 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; 330
 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, 340
 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. 350
 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. 360
 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 370
 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. 380
 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 390
 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. 400
 For as the Nettle which up renneth
 The freisshe rede Roses brenneth
 And makth hem fade and pale of hewe,
 Riht so this fals Envious hewe,
 In every place wher he duelleth,
 With false wordes whiche he telleth
 He torneth preisinge into blame
 And worschipe into worldes schame.
 Of such lesinge as he compasseth,
 Is non so good that he ne passeth 410
 Betwen his teeth and is bacbited,
 And thurgh his false tunge endited:
 Lich to the Scharnebudes kinde,
 Of whos nature this I finde,
 That in the hoteste of the dai,
 Whan comen is the merie Maii,
 He sprat his wynges and up he fleth:
 And under al aboute he seth
 The faire lusti floures springe,
 Bot therof hath he no likinge; 420
 Bot where he seth of eny beste
 The felthe, ther he makth his feste,
 And therupon he wole alyhte,
 Ther liketh him non other sihte.
 Riht so this janglere Envious,
 Thogh he a man se vertuous
 And full of good condicioun,
 Therof makth he no mencion:

Bot elles, be it nocht so lyte,
 Wherof that he mai sette a wyte, 430
 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. 440
 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 nocht ben ansuered;
 Bot yit fulofte it is believed,
 And many a worthi love is grieved 450
 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? nocht openly,
 Bot otherwhile prively,
 Whan I my diere ladi mete,
 And thenke how that I am nocht mete
 Unto hire hihe worthinesse,
 And ek I se the besinesse 460
 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 nocht 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; 470
 Sche lieveth nocht al that sche hiereth,
 And thus fulofte hirsself 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 nocht 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 480

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. 490
 So fayn I wolde that sche wiste
 How litel thei ben forto triste,
 And what thei wolde and what thei mente,
 So as thei be of double entente:
 Thus toward hem that wicke mene
 My wicked word was evere grene.
 And natheles, the soth to telle,
 In certain if it so befelle
 That althertrewest man ybore,
 To chese among a thousand score, 500
 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 510
 To soffre an othre fully winne,
 Ther as I am yit to beginne.
 For be thei goode, or be thei badde,
 I wolde non my ladi hadde;
 And that me makth fulofte asprie
 And usen wordes of Envie,
 Al forto make hem bere a blame.
 And that is bot of thilke same,
 The whiche unto my ladi drawe,
 For evere on hem I rounge and gknawe 520
 And hindre hem al that evere I mai;
 And that is, sothly forto say,
 Bot only to my lady selve:
 I telle it noght to ten ne tuelve,
 Therof I wol me wel advise,
 To speke or jangle in eny wise
 That toucheth to my ladi name,
 The which in ernest and in game
 I wolde save into my deth;
 For me were levere lacke breth 530
 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. 540
 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; 550
 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, 560
 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 570
 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, 580
 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, 590
 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, 600
 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. 610
 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 620
 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, 630
 And therupon to make an ende
 The Souldan hise hostages sende
 To Rome, of Princes Sones tuelve:
 Wherof the fader in himselve
 Was glad, and with the Pope avised
 Tuo Cardinals he hath assised

With othre lordes many mo,
 That with his doghter scholden go,
 To se the Souldan be converted.
 Bot that which nevere was wel herted, 640
 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 himself: "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 650
 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, 660
 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 670
 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, 680
 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; 690
 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; 700
 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, 710
 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 720
 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 730
 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 740

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 750
 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, 760
 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, 770
 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 780
 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, 790
 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, 800
 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; 810
 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; 820
 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 fulfillle;
 And to the bed he stalketh stille,
 Wher that he wiste was the wif,
 And in his hond a rasour knif 830
 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, 840
 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, 850
 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 falsched 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, 860
 "Lo, seth the knif al bloody hier!
 What nedeth more in this matiere
 To axe?" And thus hire innocence
 He sclandreth 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, 870
 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, 880
 Lo, thus hath god the sclandre 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 890
 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 900
 He wol hire wedde, and upon this
 Assured 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 fulfilled the mariage.
 Bot for no lust ne for no rage 910
 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 920
 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. 930
 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, 940
 That kepers weren of the qweene:
 And he that scholde go betwene,
 The Messenger, to Knaresburgh,
 Which toun he scholde passe thurgh,
 Ridende cam the ferste day.
 The kinges Moder there lay,
 Whos rihte name was Domilde,
 Which after al the cause spilde:

For he, which thonk deserve wolde,
 Unto this ladi goth and tolde 950
 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 960
 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 faerie,
 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 970
 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." 980
 This lettre, as thou hast herd devise,
 Was contrefet in such a wise
 That noman scholde it aperceive:
 And sche, which thoghte to deceive,
 It leith wher sche that other tok.
 This Messenger, whan he awok,
 And wiste nothing how it was,
 Aros and rod the grete pas
 And tok this lettre to the king.
 And whan he sih this wonder thing, 990
 He makth the Messenger no chiere,
 Bot natheles in wys manere
 He wrote ayein, and yaf hem charge
 That thei ne soffre noght at large
 His wif to go, bot kepe hire stille,
 Til thei have herd mor of his wille.
 This Messenger was yifteles,
 Bot with this lettre natheles,
 Or be him lief or be him loth,
 In alle haste ayein he goth 1000

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, 1010
 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 1020
 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, 1030
 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 1040
 The Messenger, which was unwar,
 Upon the kingeshalve bar,
 And where he scholde it hath betake.
 Bot whan that thei have hiede take,
 And rad that writen is withinne,
 So gret a sorwe thei beginne,
 As thei here oghne Moder sihen
 Brent in a fyr before here yhen:
 Ther was wepinge and ther was wo,
 Bot finaly the thing is do. 1050
 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 1060
 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, 1070
 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 1080
 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 1090
 Was lord, and he a Steward hadde,
 Oon Thelo s, 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 1100
 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, 1110
 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, 1120
 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, 1130
 Hire Schip goth in among hem alle,
 And stinte noght, er it be falle
 And hath the vessell undergete,
 Which Maister was of al the Flete,
 Bot there it resteth and abod.
 This grete Schip on Anker rod;
 The Lord cam forth, and whan he sih
 That other ligge aboard so nyh,
 He wondreth what it myhte be,
 And bad men to gon in and se. 1140
 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, 1150
 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, 1160
 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 1170
 With him abide in compaignie,
 And seide he cam fro Barbarie
 To Romeward, and hom he wente.
 Tho sche supposeth what it mente,
 And seith sche wolde with him wende
 And duelle unto hire lyves ende,
 Be so it be to his plesance.
 And thus upon here aqueintance
 He tolde hire plainly as it stod,
 Of Rome how that the gentil blod 1180
 In Barbarie was betraied,
 And therupon he hath assaied
 Be werre, and taken such vengeance,
 That non of al thilke alliance,
 Be whom the tresoun was compassed,
 Is from the swerd alyve passed;
 Bot of Constance hou it was,
 That cowthe he knowe be no cas,
 Wher sche becam, so as he seide.
 Hire Ere unto his word sche leide, 1190
 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, 1200
 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 1210
 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 1220
 Was kept, bot noman redily
 Knew what sche was, and nocht 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: 1230
 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, 1240
 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. 1250
 He seide, "Nay." Thei seiden, "Yis."
 The lettre schewed rad it is,
 Which thei forsoken everidel.
 Tho was it understonde wel
 That ther is tresoun in the thing:
 The Messenger tofore the king
 Was broght and sodeinliche opposed;
 And he, which nothing hath supposed
 Bot alle wel, began to seie
 That he nagher upon the weie 1260

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 1270
 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 juisse
 Hast thou deserved forto deie,
 That hast so falsly put aweie 1280
 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, 1290
 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, 1300
 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, 1310
 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, 1320
 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, 1330
 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. 1340
 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 1350
 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 1360
 Unto the Senatour to come
 Upon the morwe and othre some,
 To sitte with him at the mete.
 This tale hath Couste nocht 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 1370
 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 nocht; 1380
 This child he loveth kindely,
 And yit he wot no cause why.
 Bot wel he sih and understod
 That he toward Arcenne stod,
 And axeth him anon riht there,
 If that this child his Sone were.
 He seide, "Yee, so I him calle,
 And wolde it were so befall,
 Bot it is al in other wise."
 And tho began he to devise 1390
 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, 1400
 "His Moder hatte Couste, and this
 I not what maner name it is."
 But Allee wiste wel ynogh,
 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, 1410
 It were a wonder forto hiere:
 For he was nouthther 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 1420
 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, 1430
 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 1440
 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 1450
 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 1460
 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 nocht forsake; 1470
 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 1480
 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. 1490
 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 1500
 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 1510
 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, 1520

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, 1530
 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 1540
 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, 1550
 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; 1560
 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 1570
 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 nocht defende his lif;
 And thus he parteth from his wif,
 Which thanne made sorwe ynowh.
 And therupon hire herte drowh 1580
 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 nocht there bot a throwe,
 Whan deth of kinde hath overthrowe
 Hir worthi fader, which men seide
 That he betwen hire armes deide. 1590
 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; 1600
 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 1610
 Now miht thou hier 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 Perse s that other. 1620
 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, 1630
 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, 1640
 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 1650
 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 1660
 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 encess
 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." 1670
 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, 1680
 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 Perse s was bold. 1690
 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 privelech of his acord
 Thei stonde as witnessse of record:
 The jugge was mad favorable:
 Thus was the lawe deceivable
 So ferforth that the trowthe fond
 Rescousse non, and thus the lond 1700
 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 nocht it were unknowe;
 And that was afterward wel proved
 In him which hath the deth controved.
 Of that his brother was so slain
 This Perse s was wonder fain, 1710
 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 nocht as heir bot as a king
 He tok upon him alle thing 1720
 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, 1730
 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, 1740
 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 Perse s 1750
 The regiment hath underfonge.
 Bot ther mai nothing stonde longe
 Which is nocht 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, 1760
 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 nocht be nombred,
 The folk which after was encombred 1770
 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 1780

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 1790
 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, 1800
 The hihe god, it schal redresse;
 For so my dowhter prophettesse
 Forth with hir litel houndes deth
 Betokneth." And thus forth he geth
 Conforted of this evidence,
 With the Romeins in his defence
 Ayein the Greks that ben comende.
 This Perse s, as nocht seende
 This meschief which that him abod,
 With al his multitude rod, 1810
 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 1820
 So harde, that he wende wel
 To passe: bot the blinde whiel,
 Which torneth ofte er men be war,
 Thilke ys which that the horsmen bar
 Tobrak, so that a gret partie
 Was dreint; of the chivalerie
 The rerewarde it tok aweie,
 Cam non of hem to londe dreie.
 Paulus the worthi kniht Romein
 Be his asprie it herde sein, 1830
 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, 1840
 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, 1850
 He lerneth for his sustenance.
 Such was the Sones pourveance,
 And of his fader it is seid,
 In strong prisoun that he was leid
 In Albe, wher that he was ded
 For hunger and defalte of bred.
 The hound was tokne and prophecie
 That lich an hound he scholde die,
 Which lich was of condicioun,
 Whan he with his detraccioun 1860
 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 1870
 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 1880
 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 nocht so.
 For Falssemblant hath everemo 1890
 Of his conseil in compaignie
 The derke untrewre Ypocrisie,
 Whos word descordeth to his thocht:
 Forthi thei ben togedre broght
 Of o covine, of on houshold,
 As it schal after this be told.
 Of Falssemblant it nedeth nocht
 To telle of olde ensamples oght;
 For al dai in experience
 A man mai se thilke evidence 1900
 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 nocht 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 1910
 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 thocht,
 Thogh men him se, thei knowe him nocht; 1920
 Bot as it scheweth in the glas
 Thing which therinne nevere was,
 So scheweth it in his visage
 That nevere was in his corage:
 Thus doth he al his thing with sleyhte.
 Now ley thi conscience in weyhte,
 Mi goode Sone, and schrif the hier,
 If thou were evere Custummer
 To Falssemblant in eny wise.
 For ought I can me yit advise, 1930
 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 thought
 With Falssemblant and coverture
 To wite of eny creature 1940
 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; 1950
 And thoghtest that his destourbanche
 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 1960
 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 1970
 Of love that he wol me telle,
 Anon I renne unto the welle
 And caste water in the fyr,
 So that his carte amidde the Myr,
 Be that I have his conseil knowe,
 Fulofte sithe I overthowe,
 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, 1980
 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 nocht,
 That toucheth nothing to my thought, 1990
 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 nocht 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. 2000
 Thus have I feigned compaignie
 Fulofte, for I wolde asprie
 What thing it is that eny man
 Telle of mi worthi lady can:
 And for tuo causes I do this,
 The ferste cause wherof is,—
 If that I myhte offerkne and seke
 That eny man of hire mispeke,
 I wolde excuse hire so fully,
 That whan sche wist in inderly, 2010
 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 2020
 Mi ladi: for sothliche I lieve
 And durste setten it in prieve,
 Is non so wys that scholde asterte,
 Bot he were lustles in his herte,
 Forwhy and he my ladi sihe,
 Hir visage and hir goodlych yhe,
 Bot he hire lovede, er he wente.
 And for that such is myn entente,
 That is the cause of myn asprie,
 Why that I feigne compaignie 2030
 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 here how thei have wrought,
 I fare as thogh I herde it nocht 2040

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, 2050
 I finde unto miself no bote,
 Although myn herte nedes mote
 Thurgh strengthe of love al that I hiere
 Discovere unto my ladi diere:
 For in good feith I have no miht
 To hele fro that swete wiht,
 If that it touche hire eny thing.
 Bot this wot wel the hevene king,
 That sithen ferst this world began,
 Unto non other strange man 2060
 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, 2070
 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, 2080
 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: 2090
 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, 2100
 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 2110
 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, 2120
 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 2130
 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 2140
 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, 2150
 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, 2160
 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, 2170
 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 frendschipec and of alle goode,
 And comth where as thei bothe stode, 2180
 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 2190
 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 2200
 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 nocht 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 2210
 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, 2220
 And in the flod began to wade,
 As he which no grucching made,
 And bar hire over sauf and sound.
 Bot whanne he stod on dreie ground
 And Hercules was fer behinde,
 He sette his trowthe al out of mynde,
 Who so therof be lief or loth,
 With Deianyre and forth he goth,
 As he that thoghte to dissevere
 The compaignie of hem for evere. 2230
 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. 2240
 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, 2250
 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 2260
 Of hem that ben to love untrew:
 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, 2270
 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, 2280
 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 begon. 2290
 For thilke scherte unto the bon
 His body sette afyre anon,
 And clevech 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, 2300

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, 2310
 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 fite 2320
 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 2330
 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 2340
 And stonden with his slyh compass
 In stede there an other was;
 And so to sette himselfen 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 2350
 And forto change upon the whel
 His wo with othre mennes wel:

Of that an other man avaeth,
 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: 2360
 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 2370
 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, 2380
 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. 2390
 For were it wrong or were it riht,
 Me lakketh nothing bote myht,
 That I ne wolde longe er this
 Of other mannes love ywiss
 Be weie of Supplantacioun
 Have mad apropiacioun
 And holde that I nevere boghte,
 Thogh it an other man forthoghte.
 And al this speke I bot of on,
 For whom I lete alle othre gon; 2400
 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 befallē,
 That I al one scholde hem alle 2410
 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. 2420
 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, 2430
 As for nothing that I have herd,
 Bot only that thou hast misferd
 Thinkende, 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, 2440
 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. 2450
 Ensamplē I finde therupon,
 At Troie how that Agamenon
 Supplantede the worthi knyht
 Achilles of that swete wiht,
 Which named was Brexei5da;
 And also of Crisei5da,

Whom Troilus to love ches,
 Supplanted hath Diomedes.
 Of Geta and Amphitriion,
 That whilom weren bothe as on 2460
 Of frendschiipe 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, 2470
 That whil he was out of the weie,
 Amphitriion 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 2480
 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; 2490
 Amphitriion him hath supplanted
 With sleyhte of love and hire enchanted:
 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. 2500
 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, 2510
 To some it thoghte nothing so,
 And that was only unto tho
 Whos herte stod upon knythode:
 Bot most of alle of his manhode
 The worthi Sone of themperour,
 Which wolde ben a werreieur,
 As he that was chivalerous
 Of worldes fame and desirous,
 Began his fadre to beseche
 That he the werres mihte seche, 2520
 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 2530
 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, 2540
 Tresor ynnowh 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, 2550
 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 2560

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, 2570
 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 2580
 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 knyhtode 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, 2590
 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, 2600
 Which was in such a wise set
 That lengere scholde it nocht 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 2610
 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: 2620
 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;
 Egippte fledde in his presence,
 And thei of Perse upon the chace
 Pursuien: bot I not what grace 2630
 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, 2640
 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 2650
 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, 2660
 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, 2670
 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, 2680
 Whan that his lord be nihte slepte,
 This Ring, the which his maister kepte,
 Out of his Pours away he dede,
 And putte an other in the stede.
 Amorwe, whan the Court is set,
 The yonge ladi was forth fet,
 To whom the lordes don homage,
 And after that of Mariage
 Thei trete and axen of hir wille.
 Bot sche, which thoghte to fulfille 2690
 Hire fader heste in this matiere,
 Seide openly, that men mai hierie,
 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 2700
 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, 2710
 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 2720
 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. 2730
 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, 2740
 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 befallle,
 Thurghout the lond thei seiden alle,
 If it be soth that men suppose,
 His oghne untrowthe him schal depose. 2750
 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 2760
 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 nocht be ded in Perse;
 And thus the skiles ben diverse. 2770
 Be cause that he was coroned,
 And that the lond was abandoned
 To him, although 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, 2780
 Wher that Supplant hath his juise.
 Wherof that thou thee miht avise
 Upon this enformacioun
 Touchende of Supplantacioun,
 That thou, my Sone, do nocht 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, 2790
 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 nocht 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, 2800
 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, 2810
 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. 2820

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 2830
 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 2840
 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, 2850
 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. 2860
 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 2870
 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 2880
 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. 2890
 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. 2900
 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 nocht.
 And thus withinne himself bethoght,
 He bar it stille in his memoire,
 Til he cam to the Consistoire;
 And there in presence of hem alle
 He axeth, if it so befall 2910
 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 2920
 That ther be such a lawe wroght,
 Than mihte he cesse, and elles nocht.
 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, 2930
 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. 2940
 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 nocht hyde 2950
 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 nocht soffre himself be wel. 2960
 Envie, which is loveles,
 And Pride, which is laweles,
 With such tempeste made him erre,
 That charite goth out of herre:
 So that upon misgovernance
 Ayein Lowyz the king of France
 He tok querelle of his outrage,
 And seide he scholde don homage
 Unto the cherche bodily.
 Bot he, that wiste nothing why 2970
 He scholde do so gret servise
 After the world in such a wise,
 Withstod the wrong of that demande;
 For nocht the Pope mai comande
 The king wol nocht 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, 2980
 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 spiritual;
 Bot thilke Pride temporal
 Of Boniface in his persone,
 Ayein that ilke wrong al one 2990
 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 3000
 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
 Embuissshed upon horse bak,
 Al sodeinliche upon him brak
 And hath him be the bridel sesed,
 And seide: "O thou, which hast desesed 3010
 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, 3020
 Misedere of the Papacie,
 Thi false bodi schal abyde
 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 3030
 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. 3040
 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 3050
 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 3060
 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, 3070
 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, 3080

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, 3090
 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, 3100
 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. 3110
 Envie if that I schal describe,
 He is noght schaply forto wyve
 In Erthe among the wommen hiere;
 For ther is in him no matiere
 Wherof he mihte do plesance.
 Ferst for his hevvy 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, 3120
 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, 3130
 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 3140
 And of malice hath his steringe,
 Wherof he makth his bakbitinge,
 And is himself therof desesed.
 So mai ther be no kinde plesed;
 For ay the mor that he envieth,
 The more ayein himself he plieth.
 Thus stant Envie in good espeir
 To ben himself the develes heir,
 As he which is his nexte liche
 And forthest fro the heveneriche, 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 understand, 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 nocht 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 nocht 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, 3190
 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 nocht 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 3200
 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 3210
 And nocht 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 3220
 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 3230
 Into the Paleis forth be broght
 With many a sory hertes thocht
 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 3240
 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 3250
 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 3260
 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 yifh noght his yiftes hier.
 Bot certes he hath gret matiere 3270
 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 3280
 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, 3290
 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." 3300
 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 sauflī tornen hom ayein
 Withoute lost of eny grein. 3310
 Thurgh charite thus he despendeth
 His good, wherof that he amendeth
 The povere poeple, and contrevailleth
 The harm, that he hem so travaileth:
 And thus the woful nyhtes sorwe
 To joie is torned on the morwe;
 Al was thonkinge, al was blessinge,
 Which erst was wepinge and cursinge;
 Thes wommen gon hom glade ynowh,
 Echon for joie on other lowh, 3320
 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 hierē
 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: 3330
 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: 3340

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, 3350
 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. 3360
 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?" 3370
 And thei him tolden what thei hihte,
 And forth withal out of his sihte
 Thei passen up into the hevене.
 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 3380
 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 therefore
 His Sone sende from above,
 Which bore was for mannes love, 3390
 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, 3400
 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 3410
 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 3420
 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. 3430
 And thus Silvestre with his sawe
 The ground of al the newe lawe
 With gret devocion he precheth,
 Fro point to point and plainly techeth
 Unto this hethen Emperour;
 And seith, the hihe creatour
 Hath underfonge his charite,
 Of that he wroghte such pite,
 Whan he the children hadde on honde.
 Thus whan this lord hath understonde 3440
 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. 3450
 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, 3460
 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: 3470
 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 3480
 Of lordschipe and of worldes good.
 Bot how so that his will was good
 Toward the Pope and his Franchise,
 Yit hath it proved other wise,
 To se the worching of the dede:
 For in Cronique this I rede;
 Anon as he hath mad the yifte,
 A vois was herd on hih the lifte,
 Of which al Rome was adrad,
 And seith: "To day is venym schad 3490
 In holi cherche of temporal,
 Which medleth with the spiritual."
 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, 3500
 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, 3510
 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 hier
 In private between ous tweie,
 Now axeth what ther is, I preie.
 Mi goode Sone, and for thi lore
 I woll thee telle what is more, 3520
 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 hier
 Which vice stant next after this:
 And whan thou wost how that it is,
 As thou schalt hier me devise,
 Thow miht thiself the betre advise. 3530

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 grauatur 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, 10
 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 20
 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, 30
 And noman wot the cause why.
 Mi Sone, schrif thee now forthi:
 Hast thou be Malencolien?
 Ye, fader, be seint Julien,
 Bot I untrewed wordes use,
 I mai me noght therof excuse:
 And al makth love, wel I wot,
 Of which myn herte is evere hot,
 So that I brenne as doth a glede
 For Wrathe that I mai noght spede. 40
 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, 50
 That al wakende I dreame and meete
 That I with hire al one meete

And preie hire of som good ansuere:
 Bot for sche wol noght gladly swere,
 Sche seith me nay withouten oth;
 And thus wexe I withinne wroth,
 That outward I am al affraied,
 And so distempred and esmaied.
 A thousand times on a day
 Ther souneth in myn Eres nay, 60
 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 70
 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, 80
 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, 90
 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 100
 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 thought.
 And natheles, the soth to telle,
 Ayeinward if it so befelle
 That I at thilke time sihe
 On me that sche miscaste hire yhe, 110
 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. 120
 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 130
 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 140
 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, 150
 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. 160
 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 170
 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, 180
 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, 190
 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. 200
 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, 210
 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 unmerciabile
 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 220
 That sche it schal ful sore aby.
 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, 230
 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 astarte, 240
 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 250
 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 260

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." 270
 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, 280
 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 nocht asterte,
 And yit with al myn hole herte,
 Whil that me lasteth eny breth,
 I wol the love into my deth. 290
 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, 300
 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 think 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 310
 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 bloody crieth; 320
 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 330
 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 340
 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. 350
 For it is seid thus overal,
 That nedes mot that nede schal
 Of that a lif doth after kinde,
 Wherof he mai no bote finde.
 What nature hath set in hir lawe
 Ther mai no mannes miht withdrawe,
 And who that worcheth therayein,
 Fulofte time it hath be sein,
 Ther hath befalle gret vengeance,
 Wherof I finde a remembrance. 360
 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 370
 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 angrelliche he boghte. 380
 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 390
 To love, wher he wole or non.
 Think 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 nocht my ladi,
 For I schal nocht be wroth therby. 400
 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, 410
 That I miself schal nocht 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 420
 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. 430
 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 resistance,
 So with his croked eloquence 440
 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, 450
 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, 460
 And echon seide in his degre,
 "Ha wicke tunge, wo thee be!"
 For men sein that the harde bon,
 Although himselven have non,
 A tunge brekth it al to pieces.
 He hath so manye sondri spieces
 Of vice, that I mai nocht wel
 Describe hem be a thousandel:

Bot whan that he to Cheste falleth,
 Ful many a wonder thing befalleth, 470
 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 480
 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 wittenesse;
 For I wot, of hir gentillesse
 That sche me wolde wel excuse,
 That I no suche thinges use. 490
 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 500
 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. 510
 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 520

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 nocht ne leve:
 And thogh it be beside hire leve, 530
 I hope and trowe natheles
 That I do nocht ayein the pes;
 For thogh I telle hire al my thoght,
 Sche wot wel that I chyde nocht.
 Men mai the hihe god beseche,
 And he wol hiere a mannes speche
 And be nocht wroth of that he seith;
 So yifh it me the more feith
 And makth me hardi, soth to seie,
 That I dar wel the betre preie 540
 Mi ladi, which a womman is.
 For thogh I telle hire that or this
 Of love, which me grieveth sore,
 Hire oghte nocht be wroth the more,
 For I withoute noise or cri
 Mi pleignte make al buxomly
 To puten alle wraththe away.
 Thus dar I seie unto this day
 Of Cheste in earnest or in game
 Mi ladi schal me nothing blame. 550
 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; 560
 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 nocht: 570
 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 therefore
 So overwroth in al my thought,
 That I myself chide al to noght: 580
 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, 590
 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 600
 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, 610
 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, 620
 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. 630
 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 hierie,
 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 640
 Ensamble lefte, which is write:
 And for thou schalt the sothe wite,
 Of this ensample what I mene,
 Although it be now litel sene
 Among the men thilke evidence,
 Yit he was upon pacience
 So sett, that he himself assaie
 In thing which mihte him most mispaie
 Desireth, and a wickid wif
 He weddeth, which in sorwe and strif 650
 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 660
 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 hirsself noght hyde, 670
 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 680
 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, 690
 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, 700
 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 710
 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, 720
 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 befaller he it wite,
 As I finde in the bokes write. 730
 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 mencion
 How thei felle at dissencion 740
 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 nocht acorde in on,
 And toke a jugge therupon,
 Which cleped is Tiresias,
 And bede him demen in the cas; 750
 And he withoute avisement
 Ayein Juno yaf juggement.
 This goddess upon his ansuere
 Was wroth and wolde nocht forbere,
 Bot tok away for everemo
 The liht fro bothe hise yhen tuo.
 Whan Jupiter this harm hath sein,
 An other bienfait therayein
 He yaf, and such a grace him doth,
 That for he wiste he seide soth, 760
 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 770
 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 purchace.
 And over this, my Sone diere,
 Of othre men, if thou miht hiere
 In privete what thei have wrought,
 Hold conseil and descoevere it nocht,
 For Cheste can no conseil hele,
 Or be it wo or be it wele: 780

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 790
 And hadde of hire al that he wolde:
 Bot a fals bridd, which sche hath holde
 And kept in chambre of pure yowthe,
 Discovereth 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, 800
 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, 810
 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, 820
 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 hier
 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. 830
 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. 840
 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 befallle.
 Now spek, if thou art on of alle, 850
 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; 860
 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; 870
 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. 880
 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 890
 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 900
 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 910
 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, 920
 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. 930
 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 940
 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 nocht do be hate;
 So miht thou gete love algate
 And sette thee, my Sone, in reste,
 For thou schalt finde it for the beste. 950
 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 fisses faste,
 So, whan he seth time ate laste,
 That he mai worche an other wo,
 Schal noman tornen him therfro, 960
 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: 970
 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: 980
 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 hevne out of the watergates
 The reyni Storm fell doun algates

And al here takel made unwelde,
 That noman mihte himself bewelde. 990
 Ther mai men hiere Schipmen crie,
 That stode in aunter forto die:
 He that behinde sat to stiere
 Mai nocht 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. 1000
 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. 1010
 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 nocht of such emprise
 To vengen him in open wise.
 The fame, which goth wyde where,
 Makth knowe how that the Gregois were 1020
 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 1030
 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, 1040

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, 1050
 For ther thei wenden deth ascaped,
 Withouten help here deth was schaped.
 Thus thei that comen first 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. 1060
 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 1070
 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, 1080
 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 1090
 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, 1100
 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; 1110
 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. 1120
 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 hier;e;
 For we ben sett to schryve of love,
 As we begunne ferst above:
 And natheles I am beknowe
 That as touchende of loves throwe, 1130
 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 1140
 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 1150
 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 1160
 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. 1170
 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 nocht 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 1180
 To spede, and will seith therayein
 That such an herte is to vilein,
 Which dar nocht 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 nocht will forsake, 1190
 That he nys Maister of my thought,
 Or that I spede, or spede nocht.
 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. 1200
 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, 1210
 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 hevne
 And deme of the planetes sevne,
 As he which cowthe mochel what.
 And thus fulofte there he sat
 To muse in his philosophie
 Solein withoute compaignie: 1220
 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 1230
 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 1240
 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 nocht,"
 Quod he, "bot this I am bethoght, 1250
 Mi mannes man hou that he is."
 "Thou lyeest, 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: 1260
 "Alheil," he seith, "what man art thou?"
 Quod he, "Such on as thou sest now."
 The king, which hadde wordes wise,
 His age wolde nocht 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: 1270
 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 nocht don amis:
 And thus be weie of covenant
 Will is my man and my servant, 1280
 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 nocht laste,
 Thou hiest evere aliche faste,
 Wher thou no reson hast to winne:
 And thus thi will is cause of Sinne, 1290
 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, 1300

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 tilke yifte,
 Which lith nocht in thi miht to schifte: 1310
 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 nocht be lieved,
 Where it is nocht 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, 1320
 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 befall
 That will schal the corage lede,
 In loves cause it is to drede:
 Wherof I finde ensample write,
 Which is behovely forto wite. 1330
 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, 1340
 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, 1350
 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 betrayed,
 That thei be alle weies seche
 How that thei mihten winne a speche, 1360
 Here wofull peine forto lisse.
 Who loveth wel, it mai nocht 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 1370
 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, 1380
 Wher was a welle under a Tree;
 And who cam ferst, or sche or he,
 He scholde stille there abide.
 So it befell the nyhtes tide
 This maiden, which disguised was,
 Al prively the softe pas
 Goth thurgh the large toun unknowe,
 Til that sche cam withinne a throwe
 Wher that sche liketh forto duelle,
 At thilke unhappi freisshe welle, 1390
 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, 1400
 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 to drawe,
 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. 1410
 And Tisbee dorste nocht remue,
 Bot as a bridd which were in Mue
 Withinne a buissh sche kepte hire clos
 So stille that sche nocht aros;
 Unto himself 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 1420
 Tidinge, ne to mannes sihte
 Merveile, which so sore aflithe
 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: 1430
 "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 nocht his love as tho
 Have in this world, that of her grace
 He miht hire have in other place, 1440
 For hiere wolde he nocht 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 1450
 As Tisbee was, whan sche him sih:
 Sche mihte nocht 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 1460
 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 hier I se
 Bledende, what hath he deserved?
 For he youre heste hath kept and served, 1470
 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 1480
 Than live after this sorghful day."
 And with this word, where as he lay,
 Hire love in armes sche embraseth,
 Hire oghne deth and so purchaseth
 That now sche wepte and nou sche kiste,
 Til ate laste, er sche it wiste,
 So gret a sorwe is to hire falle,
 Which overgoth hire wittes alle.
 As sche which mihte it noght asterte,
 The swerdes point ayein hire herte 1490
 Sche sette, and fell down therupon,
 Wherof that sche was ded anon:
 And thus bothe on o swerd bledende
 Thei weren founde ded liggende.
 Now thou, mi Sone, hast herd this tale,
 Bewar that of thin oghne bale
 Thou be noght cause in thi folhaste,
 And kep that thou thi witt ne waste
 Upon thi thoght in aventure,
 Wherof thi lyves forfeiture 1500
 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, 1510
 Though love fully me ne slowh,
 Mi will to deie was ynowh,
 So am I of my will coupable:
 And yit is sche noght merciabile,
 Which mai me yive lif and hele.
 Bot that hir list noght with me dele,
 I wot be whos conseil it is,
 And him wolde I long time er this,
 And yit I wolde and evere schal,
 Slen and destruie in special. 1520
 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. 1530
 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 1540
 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; 1550
 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, 1560

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; 1570
 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 1580
 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 hirsself 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, 1590
 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 1600
 And of reson to ben appeled,
 Whan with o word sche mihte have heled
 A man, and soffreth him so deie.
 Ha, who sawh evere such a weie?
 Ha, who sawh evere such destresse?
 Withoute pite gentillesse,
 Withoute mercy wommanhede,
 That wol so quyte a man his mede,
 Which evere hath be to love trewe.
 Mi goode fader, if ye rewe 1610
 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 1620
 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, 1630
 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 seldom 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: 1640
 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 fihtheth most withal
 Schal lest conquere of his emprise:
 For this thei tellen that ben wise, 1650
 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, 1660
 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, 1670
 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 advantage, 1680
 Bot ofte it set a man behinde
 In cause of love, and that I finde
 Be olde ensample, as thou schalt hierre,
 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, 1690
 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, 1700
 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, 1710
 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. 1720
 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 1730
 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 1740
 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 1750
 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 1760
 In manye places, as men seide,
 That hem forsoke and desobeide.
 Among the whiche fell this cas
 To Demophon 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. 1770
 Wherof they token hem to rede,
 And soghten frendes ate nede,
 And ech of hem assureth other
 To helpe as to his oghne brother,
 To vengen hem of thilke outrage
 And winne ayein here heritage.
 And thus thei ryde aboute faste
 To gete hem help, and ate laste
 Thei hadden pouer sufficient,
 And maden thanne a covenant, 1780
 That thei ne scholden no lif save,
 Ne prest, ne clerc, ne lord, ne knave,
 Ne wif, ne child, of that thei finde,
 Which berth visage of mannes kinde,
 So that no lif schal be socoured,
 Bot with the dedly swerd devoured:
 In such Folhaste here ordinance
 Thei schapen forto do vengeance.
 Whan this pourpos was wist and knowe
 Among here host, tho was ther blowe 1790
 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 nocht be to gret
 To vengen hem of such forfet:
 Thus seith the wilde unwise tonge
 Of hem that there weren yonge. 1800
 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. 1810
 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, 1820

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: 1830
 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 1840
 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; 1850
 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. 1860
 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 1870
 To love in such a maner wise
 That thou deserve no juise:

For wel I wot, thou miht nocht lette,
 That thou ne schalt thin herte sette
 To love, wher thou wolt or non;
 Bot if thi wit be overgon,
 So that it torne into malice,
 Ther wot noman of thilke vice,
 What peril that ther mai befall:
 Wherof a tale amonges alle, 1880
 Which is gret pite forto hier, e,
 I thenke forto tellen hier,
 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; 1890
 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 nocht be weived,
 Of love untrew was deceived.
 An old sawe is, "Who that is slyh
 In place where he mai be nyh, 1900
 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, 1910
 To love there it mai nocht 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 nocht ben hedd, 1920
 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, 1930
 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, 1940
 And preide him for his fader sake
 That he this child wolde undertake
 And kepe him til he be of Age,
 So as he was of his lignage;
 And tolde him over al the cas,
 How that his fadre moerdred was,
 And hou Egistus, as men seide,
 Was king, to whom the lond obeide.
 And whanne Ydomeneux the king
 Hath understandinge of this thing, 1950
 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 1960
 In vengeance 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, 1970
 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 outrage
 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 1980
 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 nocht 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 1990
 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 vengeance
 So cruel, that the remembrance 2000
 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 2010
 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, 2020
 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 2030
 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, 2040
 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. 2050
 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, 2060
 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 wrought,
 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 2070
 Upon his Moder brest anon,
 And rente out fro the bare bon
 Hire Pappes bothe and caste aweie
 Amiddes in the carte weie,
 And after tok the dede cors
 And let it drawe away with hors
 Unto the hound and to the raven;
 Sche was non other wise graven.
 Egistus, which was elles where,
 Tidinges comen to his Ere 2080

How that Micenes was belein,
 Bot what was more herd he noght sein;
 With gret manace and mochel bost
 He drowh pouer and made an host
 And cam in rescousse of the toun.
 Bot al the sleyhte of his tresoun
 Horestes wiste it be asprie,
 And of his men a gret partie
 He made in buisschement abide,
 To waite on him in such a tide 2090
 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 2100
 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 2110
 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 2120
 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, 2130
 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 hierē,
 Ansuerde and tolde his tale alarge,
 And hou the goddes in his charge 2140
 Comanded him in such a wise
 His oghne hond to do juisse.
 And with this tale a Duc aros,
 Which was a worthi kniht of los,
 His name was Menestes,
 And seide unto the lordes thus:
 "The wreeche which Horestedede,
 It was thing of the goddes bede,
 And nothing of his cruhalte;
 And if ther were of mi degree 2150
 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, 2160
 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 2170
 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 2180
 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; 2190
 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 vengeance.
 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. 2200
 Mi fader, of this aventure
 Which ye have told, I you assure
 Min herte is sory forto hierre,
 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. 2210
 What man that is of traierie,
 Of moerdre or elles robberie
 Atteint, the jugge schal nocht 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 nocht his office,
 That he his mercy so bewareth,
 Whan for o schrewe which he spareth 2220
 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 2230
 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. 2240
 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. 2250
 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 down therfore,
 Whom the Schepherdes herden singe,
 Pes to the men of welwillinge
 In erthe be among ous here.
 So forto speke in this matiere 2260
 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, 2270
 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 nocht:
 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, 2280
 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 nocht speke, and natheles
 Crist hath comanded love and pes,

And who that worcheth the revers,
 I trowe his mede is ful divers. 2290
 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: 2300
 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, 2310
 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; 2320
 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 2330
 Expressly stonden therayein.
 Bot he mot nedes somewhat sein,
 Although ther be no reson inne,
 Which secheth cause forto winne:
 For wit that is with will oppressed,
 Whan coveitise him hath adressed,
 And alle resoun put aweie,
 He can wel finde such a weie
 To werre, where as evere him liketh,
 Wherof that he the world entriketh, 2340

That many a man of him compleigneth:
 Bot yit alwei som cause he feigneth,
 And of his wrongful herte he demeth
 That al is wel, what evere him semeth,
 Be so that he mai winne ynowh.
 For as the trew man to the plowh
 Only to the gaignage entendeth,
 Riht so the werreour despendeth
 His time and hath no conscience.
 And in this point for evidence 2350
 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: 2360
 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 fortunad 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 2370
 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 nocht excused,
 Bot preith the king to don him riht,
 And seith, "Sire, if I were of miht, 2380
 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, 2390
 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 poverté
 Tho ben nocht taken evene liche.
 And natheles he that is riche
 This dai, tomorwe he mai be povere;
 And in contraire also recovere 2400
 A povere man to gret richesse
 Men sen: forthi let rihtwisnesse
 Be peised evene in the balance.
 The king his hardi contenance
 Behield, and herde hise wordes wise,
 And seide unto him in this wise:
 "Thin ansuere I have understonde,
 Wherof my will is, that thou stonde
 In mi service and stille abide."
 And forth withal the same tide 2410
 He hath him terme of lif withholde,
 The mor and for he schal ben holde,
 He made him kniht and yaf him lond,
 Which afterward was of his hond
 And orped kniht in many a stede,
 And gret prouesce of armes dede,
 As the Croniques it recorden.
 And in this wise thei acorden,
 The whiche of o condicioun
 Be set upon destruccioun: 2420
 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 2430
 And soeffreth nothing in the weie,
 Wherof that he mai take his preie,
 Is nocht 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 nocht resonable.
 Wherof ensample concordable
 Lich to this point of which I meene,
 Was upon Alisandre sene, 2440
 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, 2450
 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. 2460
 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 wrought
 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 2470
 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. 2480
 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, 2490
 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 himselfe,
 Whan he was ded, these othre tuelve
 Of hise Apostles wente aboute
 The holi feith to prechen oute, 2500
 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, 2510
 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 2520
 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, 2530
 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: 2540
 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 Pele s 2550
 His oghne brother Phocus slowh;
 Bot for he hadde gold ynowh
 To yive, his Senne was despensed
 With gold, wherof it was compensated:
 Achastus, which with Venus was
 Hire Priest, assoilede in that cas,
 Al were ther no repentance.
 And as the bok makth remembrance,
 It telleth of Medee also;
 Of that sche slowh her Sones tuo, 2560
 Ege s in the same plit
 Hath mad hire of hire Senne quit.
 The Sone ek of Amphioras,
 Whos rihte name Alme s 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 2570
 Of worldes good it falleth ofte
 That homicide is set alofte
 Hierie 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, 2580
 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 nocht finde upon his liche
 A beste forto take his preie:
 And sithen kinde hath such a weie, 2590
 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 nocht resonable
 Ne kinde, and that is nocht honeste,
 Whan he is worse than a beste.
 Among the bokes whiche I finde
 Solyns spekth of a wonder kinde, 2600

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, 2610
 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 2620
 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. 2630
 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, 2640
 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; 2650
 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, 2660
 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 between 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, 2670
 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. 2680
 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 encess;
 Ferst for thi fader Achilles 2690
 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. 2700
 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." 2710
 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 therefore,
 That thou miht take remembrance,
 Mi Sone; and whan thou sest a chaunce, 2720
 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, 2730
 Wherof thin herte schal debate
 With homicide ne with hate
 For Chestre or for Malencolie:
 Thou schalt be soft in compaignie
 Withoute Contek or Folhaste:
 For elles miht thou longe waste
 Thi time, er that thou have thi wille
 Of love; for the weder stille
 Men preise, and blame the tempestes.
 Mi fader, I wol do youre hestes, 2740
 And of this point ye have me tawht,
 Toward miself the betre sawht
 I tenke 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, 2750
 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 2760
 To wite pleinely 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 nocht vertue
 To leve of vice the folie:
 For word is wynd, bot the maistrie
 Is that a man himself defende
 Of thing which is nocht to comende, 2770
 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, 10
 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 nocht 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. 20
 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, 30
 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." 40
 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 thought,
 Or it was drede, or it was schame;
 Bot evere in earnest and in game 50
 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, 60
 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 70
 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 80
 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 90
 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 nocht longe abide
 The hote peine of loves throwe,
 Anon withinne a litel throwe
 A lettre unto hir kniht hath write,
 And dede him pleynly forto wite, 100
 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 110
 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: 120
 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 hirsself 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 130
 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; 140
 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, 150
 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 160
 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, 170
 Which love can, my love secheth,
 With gret preiere and me besecheth:
 And some maken gret manace,
 That if thei mihten come in place,
 Wher that thei mihte here wille have,

Ther is nothing me scholde save,
 That thei ne wolde werche thinges;
 And some tellen me tidynges
 That ye ben ded, and some sein
 That certainly ye ben besein 180
 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 190
 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. 200
 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 210
 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 220
 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 230
 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 240
 Of half a Minut of an houre,
 Fro ferst that he began labour
 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, 250
 Bot he mai singe in his karole
 How Latewar cam to the Dole,
 Wher he no good receive mihte.
 And that was proved wel be nyhte
 Whilom of the Maiden's fyve,
 Whan thilke lord cam forto wyve:
 For that here oyle was aweie
 To lihte here lampes in his weie,
 Here Slowthe broghte it so aboute,
 Fro him that thei ben schet withoute. 260
 Wherof, my Sone, be thou war,
 Als ferforth as I telle dar.
 For love moste ben awaited:
 And if thou be nocht wel affaited
 In love to eschuie Slowthe,
 Mi Sone, forto telle trowthe,
 Thou miht nocht of thiself ben able
 To winne love or make it stable,
 All thogh thou mihtest love achieve.
 Mi fader, that I mai wel lieve. 270
 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; 280
 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, 290
 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 businesse so,
 That no Lachesce in the be founde:
 For Slowthe is mihti to confounde 300
 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, 310
 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. 320
 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 thinkth the wolf is in the weie,
 And of ymaginacioun
 He makth his excusacioun 330
 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 340
 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; 350
 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 360
 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 yifh hire happi chance
 To him which makth continuance
 To preie love and to beseche;
 As be ensample I schal thee teche. 370
 I finde hou whilom ther was on,
 Whos name was Pymaleon,
 Which was a lusti man of yowthe:
 The werkes of entaile he cowthe
 Above alle othre men as tho;
 And thurgh fortune it fell him so,
 As he whom love schal travaile,
 He made an ymage of entaile
 Lich to a womman in semblance
 Of feture and of contenance, 380
 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 390
 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, 400
 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, 410
 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, 420
 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. 430
 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, 440
 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. 450
 The king Ligdus upon a strif
 Spak unto Thelacuse his wif,
 Which thanne was with childe grete;
 He swor it scholde nocht 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, 460
 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 470
 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. 480
 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, 490
 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, 500
 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. 510
 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, 520
 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 530
 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, 540
 Which cleped is Foryetelnesse;
 That nocht 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 nocht forthi 550
 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 560
 And al the world torne up so down,
 And so recorde I mi lecoun
 And wryte in my memorial
 What I to hire telle schal,
 Riht al the matiere of mi tale:
 Bot al nys worth a note schale;
 For whanne I come ther sche is,
 I have it al foryete ywiss;
 Of that I thoghte forto telle
 I can nocht thanne unethes spelle 570
 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 nocht 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 580
 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 590
 And wot nocht 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? 600
 For of hire hand ther is no drede:
 So wel I knowe hir wommanhede,
 That in hire is nomore outrage
 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] 610
 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, 620
 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." 630
 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, 640
 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,
 Although I hadde on such a Ring,
 As Moises thurgh his enchanting
 Som time in Ethiope made,
 Whan that he Tharbis weddid hade. 650
 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; 660
 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 nocht 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, 670
 Min herte folwith hire aboute.
 Thus mai I seie withoute doute,
 For bet, for wers, for oght, for nocht,
 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 680
 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, 690
 A tunge I have and wordes none.
 And thus I stonde and thenke al one
 Of thing that helpeth ofte nocht;
 Bot what I hadde afore thoght
 To speke, whanne I come there,

It is foryete, as nocht ne were,
 And stonde amased and assoted,
 That of nothing which I have noted
 I can nocht thanne a note singe,
 Bot al is out of knowlechinge: 700
 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 710
 Hast seid, and that thou most amende:
 For love his grace wol nocht 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 nocht tuelve, 720
 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. 730
 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 740
 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; 750
 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, 760
 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. 770
 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. 780
 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 nocht 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 nocht longe mai suffise 790
 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 800
 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 eftsome and oversat.
 Bot sche, which mihte noght do so,
 The tyde awayteth everemo,
 And caste hire yhe upon the See:
 Somtime nay, sometime yee, 810
 Somtime he cam, sometime noght,
 Thus sche desputeth in hire thoght
 And wot noght what sche thenke mai;
 Bot fastende al the longe day
 Sche was into the derke nyht,
 And tho sche hath do set up lyht
 In a lanterne on hih alofte
 Upon a Tour, wher sche goth ofte,
 In hope that in his cominge
 He scholde se the liht brenninge, 820
 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 830
 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; 840
 So as sche mihte and evere in on
 Sche clepede upon Demophon,
 And seide, "Helas, thou slowe wiht,
 Wher was ther evere such a knyht,
 That so thurgh his ungentilesce
 Of Slowthe and of foryetelnesse
 Ayein his trowthe brak his stevene?"
 And tho hire yhe up to the hevene
 Sche caste, and seide, "O thou unkinde,
 Hier schalt thou thurgh thi Slowthe finde, 850
 If that thee list to come and se,

A ladi ded for love of thee,
 So as I schal myselve spille;
 Whom, if it hadde be thi wille,
 Thou mihtest save wel ynowh."
 With that upon a grene bowh
 A Ceinte of Selk, which sche ther hadde,
 Sche knette, and so hireself sche ladde,
 That sche aboute hire whyte swere
 It dede, and hyng hirselves there. 860
 Wherof the goddes were amoeved,
 And Demophon was so reproeved,
 That of the goddes providence
 Was schape such an evidence
 Evere afterward ayein the slowe,
 That Phillis in the same throwe
 Was schape into a Notetre,
 That alle men it mihte se,
 And after Phillis Philliberd
 This tre was cleped in the yerd, 870
 And yit for Demophon to schame
 Into this dai it berth the name.
 This wofull chance how that it ferde
 Anon as Demophon 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; 880
 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, 890
 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 900
 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, 910
 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, 920
 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. 930
 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,
 Controevve cowthe I nevere yit
 To finden eny sikernesse,
 That me myhte outhere more or lesse
 Of love make forto spede:
 For lieveth wel withoute drede, 940
 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, 950
 Although mi wit ne be noght strong,
 It is noght on mi will along,
 For that is besi nyht and day
 To lerne al that he lerne may,
 How that I mihte love winne:

Bot yit I am as to beginne
 Of that I wolde make an ende,
 And for I not how it schal wende,
 That is to me mi moste sorwe.
 Bot I dar take god to borwe, 960
 As after min entendement,
 Non other wise necgligent
 Thanne I yow seie have I nocht be:
 Forthi per seinte charite
 Tell me, mi fader, what you semeth.
 In good feith, Sone, wel me qwemeth,
 That thou thiself hast thus quit
 Toward this vice, in which no wit
 Abide mai, for in an houre
 He lest al that he mai laboure 970
 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 980
 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 990
 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, 1000
 That he mistake nocht 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 1010
 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, 1020
 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 1030
 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 1040
 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 1050
 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, 1060
 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, 1070
 Als wel in love as other weie.
 Now goode fader, I you preie,
 If ther be more in the matiere
 Of Slowthe, that I mihte it hier.
 Mi Sone, and for thi diligence,
 Which every mannes conscience
 Be resoun scholde reule and kepe,
 If that thee list to taken kepe,
 I wol thee telle, aboven alle
 In whom no vertu mai befalle, 1080
 Which yifh 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, 1090
 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, 1100
 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 fisses
 Withoute wetinge of his cles,
 So wolde he do, bot natheles 1110
 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 1120
 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 thocht
 Comth ferst of that I mai suffise,
 I bowe and profre my servise, 1130
 Somtime in chambre, sometime in halle,
 Riht as I se the times falle.
 And whan sche goth to hiere masse,
 That time schal noght overpasse,
 That I naproche hir ladihede,
 In aunter if I mai hire lede
 Unto the chapelle and ayein.
 Thanne is noght al mi weie in vein,
 Somdiel I mai the betre fare,
 Whan I, that mai noght fiele hir bare, 1140
 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, 1150
 Of that I se mi besi thocht
 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, 1160
 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, 1170
 What so sche wole so wol I,
 Whan sche wol sitte, I knele by,
 And whan sche stant, than wol I stonde:
 Bot whan sche takth hir werk on honde
 Of wevinge or enbrouderie,
 Than can I noght bot muse and prie
 Upon hir fingres longe and smale,
 And now I thenke, and now I tale,
 And now I singe, and now I sike,
 And thus mi contenance I pike. 1180
 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, 1190
 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, 1200
 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, 1210
 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 overall
 With herte and with mi body al, 1220
 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 hier,
 Thou schalt have no penance hier.
 And natheles a man mai se,
 How now adayes that ther be
 Ful manye of suche hertes slowe,
 That wol nocht besien hem to knowe 1230
 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 sometime was 1240
 A kinges dowhter unavised,
 Til that Cupide hire hath chastised:
 Wherof thou schalt a tale hier
 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, 1250
 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 nocht knowe.
 And thus sche was on of the slowe 1260
 As of such hertes besinesse,
 Til whanne Venus the goddessse,
 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 1270
 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, 1280
 Which ferst sche hadde of slow manere:
 For thus it fell, as thou schalt hier.
 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, 1290
 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, 1300
 The madle go with the femele;
 And so began ther a querele
 Betwen love and hir oghne herte,
 Fro which sche couthe nocht 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, 1310
 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, 1320
 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 abaisst drowh hire adryh 1330
 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 nocht 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, 1340
 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, 1350
 In which the wofull womman sat,
 And natheles ther was with that
 A riche bridel for the nones
 Of gold and preciouise Stones.
 Hire cote was somdiel totore;
 Aboute hir middel twenty score
 Of horse haltres and wel mo
 Ther hyngen ate time tho.
 Thus whan sche cam the ladi nyh,
 Than tok sche betre hiede and syh 1360
 This womman fair was of visage,
 Freysssh, 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 here,
 What ben thei, that now riden here, 1370
 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 nocht be let:
 Ma Dame, I go to mi servise,
 So moste I haste in alle wise; 1380
 Forthi, ma Dame, yif me leve,
 I mai nocht 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 nocht to love obeie,
 And that I now ful sore abeie. 1390
 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, 1400
 Hem thenkth I am worthi nomore,
 For I was slow in loves lore,
 Whan I was able forto lere,
 And wolde nocht 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 1410
 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. 1420
 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: 1430
 To godd, ma Dame, I you betake,
 And warneth alle for mi sake,
 Of love that thei ben noght ydel,
 And bidd hem thenke upon mi brydel."
 And with that word al sodeinly
 Sche passeth, as it were a Sky,
 Al clene out of this ladi sihte:
 And tho for fere hire herte afflihte,
 And seide to himself, "Helas]
 I am riht in the same cas. 1440
 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, 1450
 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 1460
 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 1470
 Cupides lawe; and natheles
 Men sen such love sielde in pes,
 That it nys evere upon asprie
 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, 1480
 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 therefore
 Ensample take, of that sche strangeth
 Hir love, and longe er that sche changeth 1490
 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 1500
 Be let, whan that hire lievest were.
 Wherof a tale unto hire Ere,
 Which is coupable upon this dede,
 I tenke 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, 1510
 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 sacrificie."
 And thus with his chivalerie 1520
 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, 1530
 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 hierre,
 Nou wot I that in no manere
 This worldes joie mai be plein.
 I hadde al that I coude sein 1540
 Ayein mi fomen be thi grace,
 So whan I cam toward this place
 Ther was non gladdere man than I:
 But now, mi lord, al sodeinli
 Mi joie is torned into sorwe,
 For I mi dowhter schal tomorwe
 Tohewe and brenne in thi servise
 To loenge of thi sacrificise
 Thurgh min avou, so as it is."
 The Maiden, whan sche wiste of this, 1550
 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 afflihte
 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 befallre 1560
 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, 1570
 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, 1580
 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 1590
 Was come, in which sche scholde take
 Hir deth, which sche may nocht 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 nocht spared 1600
 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 1610
 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, 1620
 Wher that these worthi wommen are,
 He mai nocht 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, 1630
 And somtime into Tartarie;

So that these heraldz on him crie,
 "Vailant, vailant, lo, wher he goth]"
 And thanne he yifh 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 1640
 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 1650
 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, 1660
 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 1670
 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, 1680
 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: 1690
 For how as evere a man laboure,
 Cupide appointed hath his heure.
 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 nocht ayein the toun 1700
 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. 1710
 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 1720
 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. 1730
 Bot this I se, on daies nou
 The blinde god, I wot nocht 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, 1740
 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, 1750
 With besinesse and mai noght winne.
 And in good feith that is gret Sinne;
 For I mai seie, of dede and thought
 That ydel man have I be noght;
 For hou as evere I be deslaied,
 Yit evermore I have assaied.
 Bot thogh my besinesse laste,
 Al is bot ydel ate laste,
 For whan theeffect is ydelnesse,
 I not what thing is besinesse. 1760
 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. 1770
 Mi Sone, I have herd thi matiere,
 Of that thou hast thee schriven hier:
 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 1780
 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, 1790
 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 1800
 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 knythode 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. 1810
 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 knythode 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, 1820
 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, 1830
 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. 1840
 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; 1850
 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 1860
 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 1870
 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 knythode,
 Which is the pris of thi manhode 1880
 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, 1890
 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, 1900
 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, 1910
 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, 1920
 That he with hire at home abide.
 Bot he hath cast hir lettre aside,
 As he which tho no maner hiede
 Tok of hire wommannysse drede;
 And forth he goth, as noght ne were,
 To Troie, and was the ferste there
 Which londeth, and tok arryvaile:
 For him was levere in the bataille,
 He seith, to deien as a knyht,
 Than forto lyve in al his myht 1930
 And be reproeved of his name.
 Lo, thus upon the worldes fame
 Knythode hath evere yit be set,
 Which with no couardie is let.
 Of king Sa l also I finde,
 Whan Samuel out of his kinde,
 Thurgh that the Phitonesse hath lered,
 In Samarie was arered
 Long time after that he was ded,
 The king Sa l him axeth red, 1940
 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 knythode lette
 For no peril he couthe sette; 1950
 Wherof that bothe his Sone and he
 Upon the Montz of Gelboe5
 Assemblen with here enemys:
 For thei knythode 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; 1960
 The whos knythode 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 1970
 With Chiro, which Centaurus hihte,
 Of many a wondre hier he mihte.
 For it stod thilke time thus,
 That this Chiro, this Centaurus,
 Withinne a large wilderness,
 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, 1980
 Wherof was thanne mochel speche.
 Ther hath Chiro this Chyld to teche,
 What time he was of twelve 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, 1990
 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

Pouchace and take his veneison,
 As to a kniht is acordant.
 And therupon a covenant
 This Chiro with Achilles sette,
 That every day withoute lette 2000
 He scholde such a cruel beste
 Or slen or wouden 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 2010
 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 knythode the prouesce,
 Which is to love sufficant
 Aboven al the remenant
 That unto loves court poursuie.
 Bot who that wol no Slowthe eschuie, 2020
 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 hierie I wolde.
 Mi Sone, it is wel resonable,
 In place which is honorable 2030
 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 witnessse 2040
 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 Oe5nes
 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; 2050
 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 2060
 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: 2070
 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 2080
 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. 2090
 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 2100
 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 nocht 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; 2110
 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 2120
 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. 2130
 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 nocht.
 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, 2140
 The love of Hector forto sieke
 And for thonour of armes eke,
 To Troie cam with Spere and Schield,
 And rod hirsself 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 2150
 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; 2160
 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; 2170
 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; 2180
 For otherwise he scholde have failed,
 If that he hadde nocht travailed.
 Eneas ek withinne Ytaile,
 Ne hadde he wonne the bataille
 And don his miht so besily
 Ayein king Turne his enemy,
 He hadde nocht Lavine wonne;
 Bot for he hath him overronne
 And gete his pris, he gat hire love.
 Be these ensamples here above, 2190
 Lo, now, mi Sone, as I have told,
 Thou miht wel se, who that is bold
 And dar travaile and undertake
 The cause of love, he schal be take
 The rathere unto loves grace;
 For comunliche in worthi place
 The wommen loven worthinesse
 Of manhode and of gentillesse,
 For the gentils ben most desired.
 Mi fader, bot I were enspired 2200
 Thurgh lore of you, I wot no weie
 What gentilesce is forto seie,
 Wherof to telle I you beseche.

The ground, Mi Sone, forto seche
 Upon this diffinicion,
 The worldes constitucion
 Hath set the name of gentillesse
 Upon the fortune of richesse
 Which of long time is falle in age.
 Thanne is a man of hih lignage 2210
 After the forme, as thou miht hier, e,
 Bot nothing after the matiere.
 For who that resoun understonde,
 Upon richesse it mai nocht 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, 2220
 Which gentillesce 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 gentillesce be.
 For to the reson if we se, 2230
 Of mannes berthe the mesure,
 It is so comun to nature,
 That it yifh every man aliche,
 Als wel to povere as to the riche;
 For naked thei ben bore bothe,
 The lord nomore hath forto clothe
 As of himself that ilke throwe,
 Than hath the povereste of the rowe.
 And whan thei schulle both passe,
 I not of hem which hath the lasse 2240
 Of worldes good, bot as of charge
 The lord is more forto charge,
 Whan god schal his accompte hier, e,
 For he hath had hise lustes hier, e.
 Bot of the bodi, which schal deie,
 Although ther be diverse weie
 To deth, yit is ther bot on ende,
 To which that every man schal wende,
 Als wel the beggere as the lord,
 Of o nature, of on acord: 2250
 Sche which oure Eldemoder is,
 The Erthe, bothe that and this
 Receiveth and alich devoureth,
 That sche to nouth part favoureth.
 So wot I nothing after kinde

Where I mai gentillesse finde.
 For lacke of vertu lacketh grace,
 Wherof richesse in many place,
 Whan men best wene forto stonde,
 Al sodeinly goth out of honde: 2260
 Bot vertu set in the corage,
 Ther mai no world be so salvage,
 Which mihte it take and don aweie,
 Til whanne that the bodi deie;
 And thanne he schal be riched so,
 That it mai faile neveremo;
 So mai that wel be gentillesse,
 Which yifh so gret a sikernesse.
 For after the condicion
 Of resonable entencion, 2270
 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 nocht spiede, 2280
 Wher that the riche vice woweth;
 For sielde it is that love alloweth
 The gentil man withoute good,
 Thogh his condicion be good.
 Bot if a man of bothe tuo
 Be riche and vertuous also,
 Thanne is he wel the more worth:
 Bot yit to putte himselve forth
 He moste don his besinesse,
 For nowther good ne gentillesse 2290
 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, 2300
 And to the couard hardiesce
 It yifh, 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, 2310
 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 2320
 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. 2330
 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, 2340
 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 2350
 Thing which that thei ferst founden oute,
 It scholde noght be broght aboute.
 Here lyves thanne were longe,
 Here wittes grete, here mihtes stronge,
 Here hertes ful of besinesse,
 Wherof the worldes redinesse
 In bodi bothe and in corage
 Stant evere upon his advantage.
 And forto drawe into memoire

Here names bothe and here histoire, 2360
 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 2370
 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, 2380
 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 befallle,
 Of labour which that thei begunne
 We be now tawht of that we kunne: 2390
 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. 2400
 Cadmus the lettres of Gregois
 Ferst made upon his oghne chois.
 Theges of thing which schal befallle,
 He was the ferste Augurre of alle:
 And Philemon be the visage
 Fond to describe the corage.
 Cladyns, Esdras and Sulpices,
 Termegis, Pandulf, Frigidilles,
 Menander, Ephiloquorus,
 Solins, Pandas and Josephus 2410
 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. 2420
 Zenzis fond ferst the pourtreture,
 And Promothe s 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: 2430
 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 2440
 To tile lond and sette vines,
 Wherof the cornes and the wyne
 Ben sustenance to mankinde,
 In olde bokes as I finde,
 Saturnus of his oghne wit
 Hath founde 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. 2450
 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 2460
 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 hier
 Of the Planetes ben begonne:
 The gold is tited to the Sonne,
 The mone of Selver hath his part,
 And Iren that stant upon Mart, 2470
 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 secoude
 In Sal Armoniak is founde: 2480
 The thridde spirit Sulphur is;
 The ferthe suiende after this
 Arcennicum be name is hote.
 With blowinge and with fyres hote
 In these thinges, whiche I seie,
 Thei worchen be diverse weie.
 For as the philosophre tolde
 Of gold and selver, thei ben holde
 Tuo principal extremities,
 To whiche alle othre be degres 2490
 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, 2500
 In sevene formes it is set;
 Of alle and if that on be let,
 The remenant mai nocht availe,
 Bot otherwise it mai nocht 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, 2510
 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 2520
 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. 2530
 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. 2540
 The Ston seconde I thee behote
 Is lapis animalis hote,
 The whos vertu is propre and cowth
 For Ere and yhe and nase and mouth,
 Wherof a man mai hierie and se
 And smelle and taste in his degre,
 And forto fiele and forto go
 It helpeth man of bothe tuo:
 The wittes fyve he underfongeth
 To kepe, as it to him belongeth. 2550
 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 2560
 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 propretres
 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; 2570
 For to the rede and to the whyte
 This Ston hath pouer to profite.
 It makth multiplicacioun
 Of gold, and the fixacioun
 It causeth, and of his habit
 He doth the werk to be parfit
 Of thilke Elixer which men calle
 Alconomie, as is befalle
 To hem that whilom weren wise.
 Bot now it stant al otherwise; 2580
 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, 2590
 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 nocht as thei weene.
 Bot nocht forthi, who that it knewe,
 The science of himself is trewe
 Upon the forme as it was founded,
 Wherof the names yit ben grounded 2600
 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, 2610
 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 nocht on to wite and weene;
 In forme of wordes thei it trete,

Bot yit they failen of beyete, 2620
 For of tomoche or of tolyte
 Ther is algate founde a wyte,
 So that thei folwe nocht 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; 2630
 Wherof the Cronique of her lore
 Schal stonde in pris for everemore.
 Bot toward oure Marches hierie,
 Of the Latins if thou wolt hierie,
 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 2640
 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 2650
 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 2660
 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, 2670
 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 nocht be.
 For lich unto the greene tree, 2680
 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 2690
 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. 2700
 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, 2710
 He hath al wowed what him list;
 That ofte he goth to bedde unkist,
 And seith that for no Druerie
 He wol nocht 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, 2720
 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, 2730
 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 thinkth 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 2740
 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 nocht 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. 2750
 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, 2760
 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
 Eschue of slep the truandise,
 So that I hope in such a wise
 To love forto ben excused,
 That I no Sompnolence have used. 2770
 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, 2780
 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, 2790
 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 2800
 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, 2810
 Whan that I schal my leve take,
 Hire oghte of mercy forto slake
 Hire daunger, which seith evere nay.
 Bot he seith often, "Have good day,"
 That loth is forto take his leve:
 Therefore, while I mai beleve,
 I tarie forth the nyht along,
 For it is noght on me along
 To slep that I so sone go,
 Til that I mot algate so; 2820
 And thanne I bidde godd hire se,
 And so doun knelende on mi kne
 I take leve, and if I schal,
 I kisse hire, and go forth withal.
 And otherwhile, if that I dore,
 Er I come fulli to the Dore,
 I torne ayein and feigne a thing,

As thogh I hadde lost a Ring
 Or somewhat elles, for I wolde
 Kisse hire eftsones, if I scholde, 2830
 Bot seldom is that I so spede.
 And whanne I se that I mot nede
 Departen, I departe, and thanne
 With al myn herte I curse and banne
 That evere slep was mad for yhe;
 For, as me thenkth, I mihte dryhe
 Withoute slep to waken evere,
 So that I scholde noght dissevere
 Fro hire, in whom is al my liht:
 And thanne I curse also the nyht 2840
 With al the will of mi corage,
 And seie, "Awey, thou blake ymage,
 Which of thi derke cloudy face
 Makst al the worldes lyht deface,
 And causest unto slep a weie,
 Be which I mot nou gon aweie
 Out of mi ladi compaignie.
 O slepi nyht, I thee defie,
 And wolde that thou leye in presse
 With Proserpine the goddessse 2850
 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 2860
 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, 2870
 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, 2880
 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: 2890
 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. 2900
 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, 2910
 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 2920
 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:
 Cei5x the king of Trocinie
 Hadde Alceone to his wif,
 Which as hire oghne hertes lif 2930
 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 2940
 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 2950
 His wif unto the See him broghte,
 With al hire herte and him besoghte,
 That he the time hire wolde sein,
 Whan that he thoghte come ayein:
 "Withinne," he seith, "tuo Monthe day."
 And thus in al the haste he may
 He tok his leve, and forth he seileth
 Wepende, and sche hirsself beweileth,
 And torneth hom, ther sche cam fro.
 Bot whan the Monthes were ago, 2960
 The whiche he sette of his comynge,
 And that sche herde no tydinge,
 Ther was no care forto seche:
 Wherof the goddes to beseche
 Tho sche began in many wise,
 And to Juno hire sacrificise
 Above alle othre most sche dede,
 And for hir lord sche hath so bede
 To wite and knowe hou that he ferde,
 That Juno the goddesse hire herde, 2970
 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 2980
 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. 2990
 Under an hell ther is a Cave,
 Which of the Sonne mai noight have,
 So that noman mai knowe ariht
 The point between 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 3000
 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, 3010
 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 3020
 He lith with many a pilwe of doun:
 The chambre is strowed up and doun
 With swevenes many thousandfold.
 Thus cam Yris into this hold,
 And to the bedd, which is al blak,
 Sche goth, and ther with Slep sche spak,
 And in the wise as sche was bede
 The Message of Juno sche dede.
 Fulofte hir wordes sche reherceth,
 Er sche his slepi Eres perceth; 3030
 With mochel wo bot ate laste
 His slombrende yhen he upcaste
 And seide hir that it schal be do.
 Wherof among a thousand tho,
 Withinne his hous that slepi were,

In special he ches out there
 Thre, whiche scholden do this dede:
 The ferste of hem, so as I rede,
 Was Morphe s, the whos nature
 Is forto take the figure 3040
 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, 3050
 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 Morphe s be nyht al one
 Appiereth until Alceone
 In liknesse of hir housebonde
 Al naked ded upon the stronde, 3060
 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, 3070
 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 3080
 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
 Behelde, and for the trowthe of love, 3090
 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, 3100
 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 hirsself conforme 3110
 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 3120
 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 3130
 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, 3140
 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, 3150
 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, 3160
 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 3170
 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: 3180
 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 3190
 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,— 3200
 Bot natheles ther is a thing,
 Which onli to the knouleching
 Belongeth as in private
 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, 3210
 Under the cloudes derke and stille
 Thanne hath this thing most of his wille.
 Forthi unto thi myhtes hye,
 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, 3220
 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 3230
 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 towardses 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 goddessse, 3240
 That thou to me be gracious:
 And in Cancro thin oghne hous
 Ayein Phebus in opposit

Stond al this time, and of delit
 Behold Venus with a glad yhe.
 For thanne upon Astronomie
 Of due constellacion
 Thou makst proliferacion,
 And dost that children ben begete:
 Which grace if that I mihte gete, 3250
 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 3260
 Hath put away, as thilke same,
 Which lustles ferr from alle game
 In chambre doth fulofte wo
 Abedde, whanne it falleth so
 That love scholde ben awaited.
 But Slowthe, which is evele affaited,
 With Slep hath mad his retenue,
 That what thing is to love due,
 Of all his dette he paieth non:
 He wot noght how the nyht is gon 3270
 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, 3280
 That fell me nevere yit er this.
 Bot otherwhile, whan so is
 That I mai cacche Slep on honde
 Liggende al one, thanne I fonde
 To dreame a merie swevene er day;
 And if so falle that I may
 Mi thought with such a swevene plese,
 Me thenkth I am somdiel in ese,
 For I non other confort have.
 So nedeth noght that I schal crave 3290
 The Sonnes Carte forto tarie,
 Ne yit the Mone, that sche carie
 Hire cours along upon the hevne,
 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 3300
 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, 3310
 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 3320
 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. 3330
 Now herkne hou that he was beguiled.
 Mercurie, which was al affiled
 This Cow to stele, he cam disguised,
 And hadde a Pipe wel devised
 Upon the notes of Musiqe,
 Wherof he mihte hise Eres like.
 And over that he hadde affaited
 Hise lusti tales, and awaited
 His time; and thus into the field
 He cam, where Argus he behield 3340
 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 3350
 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 3360
 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. 3370
 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 3380
 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, 3390
 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 therefore,
 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 3400
 A thousand time with o breth
 Wepende he wissheth after deth,
 Whan he fortune fint adverse.
 For thanne he wole his hap reherce,
 As thogh his world were al forlore,
 And seith, "Helas, that I was bore]
 Hou schal I live? hou schal I do?
 For nou fortune is thus mi fo,
 I wot wel god me wol nocht helpe.
 What scholde I thanne of joies yelpe, 3410
 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 nocht availe:
 Bot yit ne wol he nocht travaile
 To helpe himself at such a nede,
 Bot slowtheth under such a drede, 3420
 Which is affermed in his herte,
 Riht as he mihte nocht asterte
 The worldes wo which he is inne.
 Also whan he is falle in Sinne,
 Him thinkth he is so ferr coupable,
 That god wol nocht be merciabile
 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 nocht knowe 3430
 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 nocht avowe
 His oghne skile bot of hed:
 Thus dwyneth he, til he be ded, 3440
 In hindringe of his oghne astat.
 For where a man is obstinat,
 Wanhope folweth ate laste,
 Which mai nocht 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 3450
 And conne nocht 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 3460
 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, 3470
 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 purchace. 3480
 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 3490
 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, 3500
 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: 3510
 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 regard of his lignage, 3520
 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 exceedeth the mesure
 Of reson, that himself assure
 He can nocht; for the more he preide,
 The lass love on him sche leide.
 He was with love unwys constreigned,
 And sche with resoun was restreigned: 3530
 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, 3540
 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; 3550
 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, 3560
 Ye knowen al min hole herte,
 That I ne mai your hond asterte;
 On you is evere that I crie,
 And yit you deigneth nought 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 3570
 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; 3580
 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 nought 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, 3590
 Whan thei my wofull deth recorde."
 And with that word he tok a Corde,
 With which upon the gate tre
 He h yng 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. 3600
 This Maiden, whan that sche it herde,
 And sih this thing hou it misferde,
 Anon sche wiste what it mente,
 And al the cause hou it wente
 To al the world sche tolde it oute,
 And preith to hem that were aboute
 To take of hire the vengeance,

For sche was cause of thilke chaunce,
 Why that this kinges Sone is split.
 Sche takth upon himself the gilt, 3610
 And is al redi to the peine
 Which eny man hir wole ordeigne:
 And bot if eny other wolde,
 Sche seith that sche hirselve scholde
 Do wreche with hire oghne hond,
 Thurghout the world in every lond
 That every lif therof schal speke,
 Hou sche herself i scholde wreke.
 Sche wepth, sche crith, sche swouneth ofte,
 Sche caste hire yhen up alofte 3620
 And seide among ful pitously:
 "A godd, thou wost wel it am I,
 For whom Iphis is thus besein:
 Ordeine so, that men mai sein
 A thousand wynter after this,
 Hou such a Maiden dede amis,
 And as I dede, do to me:
 For I ne dede no pite
 To him, which for mi love is lore,
 Do no pite to me therefore." 3630
 And with this word sche fell to grounde
 Aswoune, and ther sche lay a stounde.
 The goddes, whiche hir pleigntes herde
 And syhe hou woefully sche ferde,
 Hire lif thei toke away anon,
 And schopen hire into a Ston
 After the forme of hire ymage
 Of bodi bothe and of visage.
 And for the merveile of this thing
 Unto the place cam the king 3640
 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 3650
 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,

Tokedre bothe tuo thei ladde. 3660
 This ilke ymage as for miracle
 Was set upon an hyh pinnacle,
 That alle men it mihte knowe,
 And under tht thei maden lowe
 A 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, 3670
 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: 3680
 He was to neysshe and sche to hard.
 Be war forthi hierafterward;
 Ye men and wommen bothe tuo,
 Ensamleth 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 3690
 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 pleinely 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 3700
 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: 3710
 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 encess,
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, 10
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 20
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, 30
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 nocht use
 To take his part, or lasse or more.
 So is he povere, and everemore 40
 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 nocht ne hath,
 For he therof his part ne tath.
 To seie hou such a man hath good,
 Who so that reson understod, 50
 It is impropreliche seid,
 For good hath him and halt him teid,
 That he ne gladeth nocht 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; 60
 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, 70
 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, 80
 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; 90
 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, 100
 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; 110
 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 thought,
 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, 120
 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 encess
 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, 130
 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. 140

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 150
 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 160
 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, 170
 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, 180
 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, 190
 Delit schal passen in myn age:
 That is no siker avantage,

For every joie bodily
 Schal ende in wo: delit forthi
 Wol I nocht 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, 200
 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 210
 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 pleinely forto gete him reste 220
 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. 230
 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; 240
 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 exceedeth
 Mesure more than him nedeth.
 Men tellen that the maladie
 Which cleped is ydropesie 250
 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, 260
 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 270
 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 280
 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, 290
 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 300
 He scholde him waisschen 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, 310
 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. 320
 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 330
 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 untrew;e;
 Tho was ther nouthur schield ne spere
 Ne dedly wepne forto bere;
 Tho was the toun withoute wal,
 Which nou is closed overal; 340
 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, 350
 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 360
 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: 370
 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, 380
 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
 Availeth, 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! 390
 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
 Travailleth him aliche sore,
 So is he peined overal.
 Forthi thi goodes forth withal,
 Mi Sone, loke thou despende,
 Wherof thou myht thiself amende 400

Bothe hier and ek in other place.
 And also if thou wolt purchace
 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 410
 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 here,
 Men oghten Avarice eschuie;
 For what man thilke vice suie,
 He get himself bot litel reste.
 For hou so that the body reste, 420
 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 advise, 430
 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 away that hem is lief; 440
 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:
 Wherefore I wolde you beseche,
 That ye me wolde enforme and teche 450
 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: 460
 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, 470
 Wher so as evere his love go;
 Sche schal noght with hir litel too
 Mistepe, bot he se it al.
 His yhe is walkende overal;
 Wher that sche singe or that sche dance,
 He seth the leste contenance,
 If sche loke on a man aside
 Or with him rounde at eny tyde,
 Or that sche lawghe, or that sche loure,
 His yhe is ther at every houre. 480
 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. 490
 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 500
 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 wepeth 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, 510
 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 asprie
 Abidinge in hir compaignie,
 A janglere, an evel mouthed oon,
 That sche ne mai nowhider gon, 520
 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 somewhat 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. 530
 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. 540
 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 Jalousie, he torneth fro 550
 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 560
 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 nocht 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; 570
 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, 580
 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, 590
 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. 600
 That oon wolde have his bagges stille,
 And nocht departen with his wille,
 And dar nocht for the thieves slepe,
 So fain he wolde his tresor kepe;
 That other mai nocht 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. 610
 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 nocht 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 620
 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 hier.
 My goode Sone, at thi preiere 630
 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 640
 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. 650
 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 660

Toward so noble a knyhtli lord,
 In love fell of his acord.
 Ther lacketh nocht 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, 670
 Which everemor the herte opposeth,
 Makth Vulcanus that he supposeth
 That it is nocht 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 680
 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; 690
 And seiden that he was to blame,
 For if ther fell him eny schame,
 It was thurgh his misgovernance:
 And thus he loste contenance,
 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: 700
 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 nocht apointe his herte
 With Jelousie of that is wrought,
 Bot feigne, as thogh he wiste it nocht: 710
 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 advise 720
 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 730
 Among the goddes myhte falle:
 For ther is bot o god of alle,
 Which is the lord of hevne 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: 740
 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 pleinely forto wite.
 Er Crist was bore among ous hier, e,
 Of the believes that tho were
 In foure formes thus it was.
 Thei of Caldee as in this cas 750
 Hadde a believe be hemselve,
 Which stod upon the signes tuelve,
 Forth ek with the Planetes sevne,
 Whiche as thei sihe upon the hevne.
 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; 760
 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 advise,
 The Sonne and Mone eclipse bothe,
 That be hem lieve or be hem lothe, 770
 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 away thonour
 Which due is to the creatour,
 And yifh it to the creature,
 He doth to gret a forsfaiture. 780
 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; 790
 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 goddessse,
 In whom is al here sikernesse.
 Tho goddes be yit cleped thus,
 Orus, Typhon and Isirus:
 Thei were brethren alle thre,
 And the goddessse in hir degre 800
 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. 810
 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. 820
 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 830
 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 840
 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 down, as he which stod
 In frenesie, and was so wod,
 That fro his wif, which Rea hihte,
 Hise oghne children he to plihte, 850
 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 860
 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, 870
 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, 880
 Thei have, although 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, 890
 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, 900
 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, 910
 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, 920

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 sustenance,
 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 930
 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, 940
 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, 950
 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 960
 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 970
 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! 980
 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 990
 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. 1000
 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, 1010
 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 1020
 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 1030
 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, 1040
 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: 1050
 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. 1060
 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, 1070
 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 1080
 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 1090
 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; 1100
 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, 1110
 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 1120
 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, 1130
 And in what wise thei deceiven
 The foles whiche here feith receiven.
 So as Saturne is sovereign
 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, 1140
 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 1150
 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,
 Sibeles his wif began to hate 1160
 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 1170
 The Dowhter of Sibeles 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: 1180

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 Messenger.
 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: 1190
 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. 1200
 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, 1210
 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. 1220
 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; 1230
 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 1240
 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 1250
 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 forthbrought,
 And kept so that hire lacketh nocht.
 And after, whan sche was of Age,
 Sche tok non hiede of mariage, 1260
 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 1270
 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 1280
 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, 1290
 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, 1300
 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, 1310
 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, 1320
 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 1330
 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, 1340
 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,
 Nerei5des that thei ben hote,
 The Nimphe whiche that thei note
 To regne upon the stremes salte.
 Lo now, if this believe halte!
 Bot of the Nimphe as thei telle,
 In every place wher thei duelle 1350
 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, 1360
 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. 1370
 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 1380
 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 here:
 And understond nou wel the cas.
 Venus Saturnes dowhter was,

Which alle danger putte aweie
 Of love, and fond to lust a weie; 1390
 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 1400
 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: 1410
 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. 1420
 And sche, which thoghte hire lustes fonde,
 Diverse loves tok in honde,
 Wel mo thanne I the tolde hier:
 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 nocht forsake
 To ben als comun as sche wolde.
 Sche was the ferste also which tolde 1430
 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 hirsself began;
 Wherof that sche the name wan, 1440

Why men hire clepen the goddesse
 Of love and ek of gentillesse,
 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 1450
 A god to helpe or a goddesse.
 Wherof, to take mi witnessse,
 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, 1460
 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, 1470
 That he it wolde waisschen 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. 1480
 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 encess 1490
 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 nocht availe; 1500
 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 1510
 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 1520
 And ek Nigargorus also;
 And thei afferme and write so,
 That Promothe s 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 1530
 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. 1540
 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; 1550
 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 1560
 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, 1570
 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, 1580
 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. 1590
 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, 1600
 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 Noe⁵
 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: 1610
 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 lyvyng,
 Bot al was torned to likinge
 After the fleissh, so that foryete
 Was he which yaf hem lif and mete,
 Of hevене and Erthe creatour.
 And thus cam forth the grete errour, 1620
 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 1630
 The hihe god, which weldeth al,
 And evere hath don and evere schal,
 In hevене, 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 sacrificise
 With al the hole hertes love
 Unto the mihti god above 1640
 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, 1650
 And made him forto multeplie
 Into so gret a progenie,
 That thei Egipte al overspradde.
 Bot Pharao with wrong hem ladde
 In servitude 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, 1660
 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. 1670
 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: 1680
 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 Josue
 The Marches upon such degre
 Departen, after the lignage
 That ech of hem as Heritage 1690
 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: 1700

Whan Lucifer was best in hevne
 And oghte moste have stonde in evene,
 Towardes god he tok debat;
 And for that he was obstinat,
 And wolde nocht 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 1710
 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 hevne come,
 And of a Maide his fleissh hath nome,
 And was among hem bore and fedd,
 As men that wolden nocht be spedd 1720
 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, 1730
 That whilom in the Jewes stod,
 Which is nocht 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, 1740
 And sende his Sone fro the hevne
 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 nocht a man be bore,
 If goddes Sone were unbore;
 For thanne thurgh the ferste Sinne,
 Which Adam whilom broghte ous inne, 1750
 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, 1760
 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. 1770
 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. 1780
 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 1790
 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; 1800
 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 1810
 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, 1820
 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. 1830
 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, 1840
 Whan Anthenor this Juel tok,
 Wynnende 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, 1850
 Knowende hou that the feith discreceth
 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, 1860
 "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 mysweynt,
 The worldes wawe hath welnyh dreynt 1870
 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, 1880
 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 1890
 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, 1900
 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 1910
 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." 1920
 Thoffice of the Chancellerie
 Or of the kinges Tresorie
 Ne for the writ ne for the taille
 To warant mai nocht 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 1930
 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 fleissches wille. 1940
 It were a travail forto preche
 The feith of Crist, as forto teche
 The folk Paiene, it wol nocht 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 1950
 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 1960

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. 1970
 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. 1980
 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, 1990
 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 asprie.
 For riht as of an hungri Pie
 The storve bestes ben awaited,
 Riht so is Covoitise afaited 2000
 To loke where he mai pourchace,
 For be his wille he wolde embrace
 Al that this wyde world beclippeth;
 Bot evere he somewhat 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, 2010
 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; 2020
 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. 2030
 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, 2040
 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 2050
 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 2060
 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 destruye this Mirour.
 Of Rome tho was Emperour
 Crassus, which was so covetous,
 That he was evere desirous 2070
 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 2080
 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. 2090
 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 slepente a nyht appiereth
 And hem be sondri dremes lereth 2100
 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 nocht be left behinde,
 Be so that he the halvendel
 Hem grante, and he assenteth wel; 2110
 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 2120
 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. 2130
 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 2140
 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 2150
 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 2160
 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 upright;
 Til it befell upon a nyht 2170
 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, 2180
 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 nocht wise!"
 And that was proved afterward,
 For every lond, to Romeward 2190
 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, 2200
 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 juisse,
 The which after the covoitise 2210
 Was take upon this Emperour,
 For he destruide the Mirour;
 It is a wonder forto hier.
 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 2220

Buillende hot withinne a panne,
 Into his Mouth thei poure thanne.
 And thus the thirst of gold was queynt,
 With gold which hadde ben atteight.
 Wherof, mi Sone, thou miht hiere,
 Whan Covoitise hath lost the stiere
 Of resonable governance,
 Ther falleth ofte gret vengeance.
 For ther mai be no worse thing
 Than Covoitise aboute a king: 2230
 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 2240
 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, 2250
 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 2260
 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 2270
 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 2280
 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 2290
 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 wrought, 2300
 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 2310
 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, 2320
 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 unadvanced be,
 Or elles it be long on you,
 The sothe schal be proved nou, 2330
 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 2340
 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." 2350
 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 advise,
 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, 2360
 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, 2370
 Whan he hath herd the comun 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 fulfilled with straw and stones:
 Thus be they served all at ones.
 This king thanne in the same stede
 Anon that other cofre undede, 2380
 Where as they sihen gret richesse,
 Wel more than they couthen gesse.
 "Lo," seith the king, "nou mai ye se
 That there is no default in me;
 Forthi myself I wole aquyte,
 And bereft ye youre oghne wyte
 Of that fortune hath you refused."
 Thus was this wise king excused,
 And they left of here evele speche
 And mercy of here king beseche. 2390
 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, 2400
 To whom that god wole sende wele."
 And thus they 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 all that mai withinne 2410
 He let do pute a gret richesse;
 And evne aliche, as man mai gesse,
 Outward they were bothe tuo.
 This begger was comanded tho,
 He that which held him to the king,
 That he first chese upon this thing:
 He sih hem, bot he felte hem nocht,
 So that upon his oghne thocht
 He ches the Capoun and forsok
 That other, which his fela tok. 2420
 Bot whanne he wiste hou that it ferde,
 He seide alowd, that men it herde,
 "Nou have I certainly conceived
 That he mai lightly 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." 2430
 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 2440
 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 hierre,
 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, 2450
 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, 2460
 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 somewhat
 That pleseth him, or this or that;
 Som on, for sche is whit of skin,
 Som on, for sche is noble of kin, 2470
 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, 2480

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; 2490
 So hath his lust no juggement,
 Whom covoitise of love blent.
 Him thinkth that to his covoitise
 Hou al the world ne mai suffise,
 For be his wille he wolde have alle,
 If that it mihte so befallē:
 Thus is he commun as the Strete,
 I sette nocht of his beyete.
 Mi Sone, hast thou such covoitise?
 Nai, fader, such love I despise, 2500
 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 nocht set so streite: 2510
 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 nocht 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; 2520
 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, 2530
 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, 2540
 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 2550
 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 poverté or for richesse
 Mi love is nouthé mor ne lesse. 2560
 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 lefté there his herte;
 Be so it were such a man,
 That couthe Skile of a womman. 2570
 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: 2580
 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 2590
 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: 2600
 And therto, as I have you told,
 Yit hath sche more a thousandfold
 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 2610
 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, 2620
 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 2630
 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. 2640
 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 2650
 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, 2660
 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, 2670
 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: 2680
 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 2690
 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 2700
 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 2710
 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, 2720
 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 rounded,
 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 2730
 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 2740

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 contenance
 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 2750
 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 2760
 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, 2770
 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 hier."
 The king his tale wol noght hier, 2780
 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; 2790
 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, 2800
 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, 2810
 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; 2820
 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 2830
 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 outhere 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 2840
 The love which scholde elles spille.
 Bot god, which wot myn hertes wille,
 I dar wel take to witnessse,
 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 nouthen Park ne Plowh,
 If I hire hadde, it were ynowh, 2850
 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 2860
 In special tuo conseilours,
 That ben also hise procurours.
 The ferst of hem is Falswitnessse,
 Which evere is redi to witnessse
 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 falswitnessse bere,
 That other schal the thing forswere, 2870
 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, 2880
 That upon gold here conscience
 Thei founde, and take here evidence;
 And thus with falswitnessse and othes
 Thei winne hem mete and drinke and clothes.
 Riht so ther be, who that hem knewe,
 Of thes lovers ful many untrewre:
 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 2890
 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 althermost,
 Than mai a womman truste him lest;
 For til he mai his will achieve,
 He is no lengere forto lieve. 2900
 Thus is the trouthe of love exiled,
 And many a good womman beguiled.
 And ek to speke of Falswitnessse,
 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 2910
 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 purchaced
 Comth afterward to litel pris.
 Forthi, mi Sone, if thou be wis,
 Nou thou hast herd this evidence,
 Thou miht thin oghne conscience 2920
 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 thought,
 In love it is noght descordable
 Unto mi word, bot acordable. 2930
 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 witnessse 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 2940
 To sechen help in such manere,
 Bot only of mi ladi diere.
 And thogh a thousand men it wiste,
 That I hire love, and thanne hem liste
 With me to swere and to witnessse,
 Yit were that no falswitnessse;
 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 2950
 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 Falswitness 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. 2960
 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, 2970
 Sche caste hire wit in sondri wise,
 Hou sche him mihte so disguise
 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: 2980
 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, 2990
 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 witness 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 3000

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, 3010
 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, 3020
 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 nocht the cause why;
 And natheles ful buxomly 3030
 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 witsnesse,
 He hadde riht a gret gladnesse
 Of that he bothe syh and herde,
 As he that wot nocht hou it ferde 3040
 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 Dei5damie,
 His oghne dowhter, the eldeste,
 The faireste and the comelieste
 Of alle hise doghtres whiche he hadde.
 Lo, thus Thetis the cause ladde, 3050
 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 wommannysse chiere,
 Wherof unto his beddefere
 Dei5damie he hath be nyhte.
 Wher kinde wole himselve rihte,
 After the Philosophres sein,
 Ther mai no wiht be therayein: 3060
 And that was thilke time seene.
 The longe nyhtes hem betuene
 Nature, which mai nocht 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 3070
 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 nocht availe
 So noble a Cite forto winne,
 A prive conseil thei beginne,
 In sondri wise wher thei trete;
 And ate laste among the grete 3080
 Thei fellen unto this acord,
 That Prothes, 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 nocht foryete
 Of that belongeth to a clerk,
 His studie sette upon this werk. 3090
 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 Diomedede
 Upon this point to Lichomedede 3100
 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, 3110
 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, 3120
 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 3130
 In what manere he mihte asprie
 Achilles fro Dei5damie
 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 fortunued so,
 It fell that time in such a wise,
 To Bachus that a sacrificise
 Thes yonge ladys scholden make;
 And for the strange mennes sake, 3140
 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, 3150
 Ne be his vois, ne be his pas.
 Ulixes thanne upon this cas
 A thing of hih Prudence hath wrought:
 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 nocht a fairer se,–
 And every thing in his degre 3160
 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 nocht stille:
 Whan he the bryhte helm behield,
 The swerd, the hauberk and the Schield, 3170
 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, 3180
 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, 3190
 The wonder overgoth his wit.
 For in Cronique is write yit
 Thing which schal nevere be foryete,
 Hou that Achilles hath begete
 Pirrus upon Dei5damie,
 Wherof cam out the tricherie
 Of Falswitnessse, whan thei saide
 Hou that Achilles was a Maide.
 Bot that was nothing sene tho,
 For he is to the Siege go 3200
 Forth with Ulixé 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 goddessse,
 Dei5damie hath so bejaped,
 I not hou it schal ben ascaped

With tho wommen whos innocence
 Is nou alday thurgh such credence 3210
 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 Falswitnessse bringen inne
 That doth hem ofte forto winne,
 Wher thei ben noght worthi therto.
 Forthi, my Sone, do noght so.
 Mi fader, as of Falswitnessse
 The trouthe and the matiere expresse, 3220
 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, 3230
 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: 3240
 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 Pele s
 He hihte; bot it fell him thus, 3250
 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, 3260

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. 3270
 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 knythod undertake 3280
 To do what thing therto belongeth,
 This worthi Jason, sore alongeth
 To se the strange regiouns
 And knowe the condicions
 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 Pele s his Em the king.
 And he wel paid was of that thing; 3290
 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 3300
 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 hier:
 Bot that is noght to mi matiere. 3310
 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. 3320
 Oe5tes, 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 3330
 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, 3340
 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, 3350
 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, 3360
 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, 3370
 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 down 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 3380
 Was so wel farende as was he.
 And Jason riht in such degre
 Ne mihte nocht 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 3390
 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, 3400
 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, 3410
 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. 3420
 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 hirsself no porpos take;
 For if he deide of his bataile,
 Sche moste thanne algate faile 3430
 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
 Tokedre sete and hadden space
 To speke, and he besoughte hir grace. 3440
 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 3450
 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 certainly
 Such on that scholde him prively 3460
 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, 3470
 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, 3480
 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, 3490
 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, 3500
 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 3510
 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 3520

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 furch of lond, in which arowe
 The teth of thaddre he moste sowe,
 And therof schule arise knihtes
 Wel armed up at alle rihtes. 3530
 Of hem is nocht 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. 3540
 "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
 Deliver you what thing I have,
 That mai youre lif and honour save." 3550
 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, 3560
 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 nocht 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: 3570
 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 sacrificise he scholde make;
 And gan out of hire cofre take
 Him thoughte an hevenely figure,
 Which al be charme and be conjure 3580
 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 loded in that yle,
 He scholde make his sacrificise
 And rede his carecte in the wise
 As sche him tauhte, on knes doun bent,
 Thre sithes toward orient; 3590
 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 3600
 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, 3610
 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 sauffliche ynowh
 His Oxen yoke into the plowh
 And the teth sowe in such a wise,
 Til he the knyhtes se arise, 3620
 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. 3630
 And whanne he hadde it sesed so,
 That thanne he were sone ago
 Withouten eny tariyng.
 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, 3640
 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, 3650
 And to hire seide in this manere:
 "Mi worthi lusti ladi dere,
 Conforteth you, for be my trouthe
 It schal nocht 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, 3660
 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 3670
 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, 3680
 Bot Jason wolde it nocht recorde,
 And ate laste thei acorde.
 Whan that he wolde nocht 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, 3690
 He set him on his knes doun strauht,
 And his carecte, as he was tawht,
 He radde, and made his sacrificise,
 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, 3700
 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 nocht that Serpent dere.
 He was so scheredd al aboute,
 It hield all eggetol withoute,
 He was so ruide and hard of skin,
 Ther mihte nothing go therin; 3710
 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, 3720
 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 nocht foryat,

On bothe his knes he gan doun falle,
 And yaf thonk to the goddes alle. 3730
 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 nouter ten ne tuelve,
 Sche preide, and seide, "O, god him spede,
 The kniht which hath mi maidenhiede!" 3740
 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 3750
 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 nocht 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 down, 3760
 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 3770
 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, 3780

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; 3790
 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. 3800
 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 3810
 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. 3820
 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: 3830
 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 3840
 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, 3850
 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, 3860
 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, 3870
 So that thei hadden joie ynow:
 And tho thei setten whanne and how
 That sche with him away 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 towards prime, 3880
 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 asprie
 Bot tho that were of compaignie:
 For he woll go withoute leve,
 And lengere woll he nocht beleve; 3890
 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 priveri sche ladde,
 And with Jason at time set
 Awey sche stal and fond no let, 3900
 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! 3910
 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 nocht 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, 3920
 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. 3930
 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 3940
 To sen thencess 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, 3950
 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 nocht bot sterreliht,
 Sche was vanysst riht as hir liste,
 That no wyht bot hirself it wiste, 3960
 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. 3970
 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 held up hir hond 3980
 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, 3990
 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, 4000
 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 Sperchei5dos,
 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, 4010
 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, 4020
 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 hirselves invisible,
 As sche that was with Air enclosed
 And mihte of noman be desclosed. 4030
 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, 4040

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, 4050
 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 4060
 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. 4070
 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 down 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 4080
 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 4090
 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, 4100
 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. 4110
 Bot who that wole of wondres hierre,
 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, 4120
 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 adres skin,
 And sche to builen caste hem in; 4130
 A part ek of the horned Oule,
 The which men hierre 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 thereafter the bouele
 Of the Seewolf, and for the hele
 Of Eson, with a thousand mo
 Of thinges that sche hadde tho, 4140
 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, 4150
 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. 4160
 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; 4170
 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 4180
 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 Pele s his Em was ded,
 Jason bar corone on his hed,
 Medea hath fulfild his wille:
 Bot whanne he scholde of riht fulfille 4190
 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 untrew,
 Medea lefte and tok a newe.
 Bot that was after sone aboght:
 Medea with hire art hath wroght 4200
 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 4210
 With bothe his Sones on hire hond,
 And seide, "O thou of every lond
 The moste untrew creature,
 Lo, this schal be thi forfeiture."
 With that sche bothe his Sones slouh
 Before his yhe, and he outdrouh
 His swerd and wold have slayn hir tho,
 Bot farewell, sche was ago
 Unto Pallas the Court above,
 Wher as sche pleigneth upon love, 4220
 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, 4230
 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 hier, e,
 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, 4240
 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; 4250
 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, 4260
 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, 4270
 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 4280
 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 sacrificise
 Upon the point of this destresse
 To Ceres, which is the goddessse
 Of corn, hath schape him forto yive,
 To loke if it mai be foryive, 4290
 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 deliverre the contre 4300

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 4310
 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 4320
 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 first 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 4330
 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 nocht 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 4340
 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, 4350
 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 4360
 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, 4370
 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 4380
 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; 4390
 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, 4400
 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 4410
 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, 4420
 Bot if it be thurgh gret decerte.
 And natheles men se poverté
 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. 4430
 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: 4440
 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, 4450
 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 4460
 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 thocht so clene,
 That toward me schal noght beleve.
 And if sche of hire goode leve 4470
 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: 4480
 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 thocht 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, 4490
 Which as ye telle in love is used,
 Mi ladi mai noght ben excused;
 That for o lokinge of hire ye5
 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, 4500
 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 compensate.
 I not hou sche hire conscience
 Excuse wole of this usure;
 Be large weyhte and gret mesure

Sche hath mi love, and I have nocht
 Of that which I have diere boght, 4510
 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 nocht to live by:
 Noght als so moche as "grant mercy"
 Hir list to seie, of which I mihte
 Som of mi grete peine allyhte. 4520
 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 nocht come above
 To winne of love non encess.
 Bot I me wole natheles
 Touchende usure of love aquite;
 And if mi ladi be to wyte, 4530
 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 4540
 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. 4550
 Such is the statut of his lawe,
 That thogh thi love more drawe
 And peise in the balance more,
 Thou miht nocht 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. 4560

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 4570
 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, 4580
 As be ensample of time go
 A man mai finde it hath be so.
 It fell sometime, 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 untrew 4590
 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: 4600
 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, 4610
 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 4620
 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 nocht.
 Bot upon thee it schal be boght, 4630
 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." 4640
 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, 4650
 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 4660
 Of alle hem that trewe be.
 Mi fader, as in this degre
 My conscience is nocht 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. 4670
 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, 4680
 He moste thanne faile nede,
 Wher god himselve mai nocht 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; 4690
 He takth, he kepeth, he halt, he bint,
 That lihtere is to fle the flint
 Than gete of him in hard or neisshe
 Only the value of a reysse
 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: 4700
 Be so the bagge and he acorden,
 Him reccheth nocht 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, 4710
 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; 4720
 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 4730
 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 4740
 Ye mai wel understonde and lieve
 That I schal noght the worse achieve
 The pourpos which is in my thocht.
 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 4750
 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 4760
 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 thocht
 And al mi good, whil I have oght,

Als freliche as god hath it yive,
 It schal ben hires, while I live, 4770
 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 hier
 A tale lich to this matiere. 4780
 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 4790
 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 4800
 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, 4810
 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, 4820

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, 4830
 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 hier 4840
 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: 4850
 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 encess.
 So goth the wrecche loveles,
 Bejaped for his Skarcete,
 And he that large was and fre
 And sette his herte to despence,
 This Croceus, the bowe bende, 4860
 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 4870
 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, 4880
 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 thankth he scholde nocht ben holde 4890
 Unto the moder which him bar;
 Of him mai nevere man be war,
 He wol nocht knowe the merite,
 For that he wolde it nocht 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; 4900
 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; 4910
 And forto speke wordes pleine,
 Thus hierie 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, 4920
 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 4930
 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 4940
 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 nocht 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. 4950
 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, 4960
 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, 4970
 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 4980
 Be hevене and be the goddes alle,
 If that it myhte so befallē
 That he out of the pet him broghte,
 Of all the goodes whiche he oghte
 He schal have evēne halvēdel.
 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 4990
 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. 5000
 But whan he sih it was an Ape,
 He wende al hadde ben a jape
 Of faierie, and sore him dradde:
 And Adrian eftsome gradde
 For help, and cride and preide faste,
 And he eftsome 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, 5010
 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 evēne 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, 5020
 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. 5030
 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: 5040
 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 5050
 Unto the place where he wolde,
 He hath his Ape anon beholde,
 Which hadde gadred al aboute
 Of stickes hier 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 5060
 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 down falle, and wente aweie,
 For that he schal nocht ben adrad.
 Tho was this povere Bardus glad, 5070
 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, 5080

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 5090
 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, 5100
 "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, 5110
 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, 5120
 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, 5130
 Hou that the worm and ek the beste,
 Although 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 5140
 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 5150
 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; 5160
 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: 5170
 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 5180
 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 nocht speke it oute; 5190
 And if I dorste, I wolde pleigne,
 That sche for whom I soffre peine
 And love hir evere aliche hote,
 That nouthur yive ne behote
 In rewardinge of mi servise
 It list hire in no maner wise.
 I wol nocht say that sche is kinde,
 And forto sai sche is unkinde,
 That dar I nocht; bot god above,
 Which demeth every herte of love, 5200
 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 nocht,
 Thou art to blamen of that thought. 5210
 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 nocht yit,
 Which standt upon thi destine:
 Forthi, mi Sone, I rede thee,
 Think wel, what evere the befalle;
 For noman hath his lustes alle.
 Bot as thou toldest me before
 That thou to love art nocht forswore, 5220
 And hast don non unkindenese,
 Thou miht therof thi grace blesse:
 And lef nocht 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. 5230
 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 5240
 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 5250
 The pleine contre al aboute:
 The Cites stode of him in doute,
 As thei that no defence hadde
 Ayein the pouer which he ladde.
 Ege s, which was there king,
 His conseil tok upon this thing,
 For he was thanne in the Cite:
 So that of pes into trettee
 Betwen Mynos and Ege s
 Thei felle, and ben acorded thus; 5260
 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 vengeance of his Sones deth.
 Non other grace ther ne geth,
 Bot forto take the juise;
 And that was don in such a wise, 5270
 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 5280
 Of thilke grete Siege at Troie.
 Bot sche, which lost hath alle joie,
 Whan that sche syh this Monstre bore,
 Bad men ordeigne anon therefore:
 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, 5290
 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 nocht 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 5300
 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 These s ate laste, 5310
 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; 5320
 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 These s was so favoured,
 That he was kept til ate laste.
 And in the meene while he caste 5330
 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 These s 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 5340

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 5350
 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,
 These s with this Monstre fawht, 5360
 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, 5370
 Whan that sche sih These s sound,
 Was nevere yit upon the ground
 A gladder wyht that sche was tho.
 These s duelte a dai or tuo
 Wher that Mynos gret chiere him dede:
 These s in a prive stede
 Hath with this Maiden spoke and rounded,
 That sche to him was abandouned
 In al that evere that sche couthe,
 So that of thilke lusty youthe 5380
 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 5390
 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, 5400
 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, 5410
 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, 5420
 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
 These s, 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 5430
 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, 5440
 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, 5450
 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, 5460
 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 hirsself tok such a strif,
 That sche between 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 5470
 Stonde in Cronique of remembrance.
 And ek it asketh a vengeance
 To ben unkinde in loves cas,
 So as These s 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, 5480
 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; 5490
 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, 5500
 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, 5510
 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, 5520
 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 5530
 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, 5540
 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. 5550
 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, 5560
 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 Tere s;
 The clerk Ovide telleth thus. 5570
 This Tere s 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 nocht so, 5580
 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, 5590
 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 Tere s goth forth to Schipe
 With him and with his felaschipe;
 Be See the rihte cours he nam,
 Into the contre til he cam, 5600

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 nocht he scholde faile 5610
 Of that he preide, and yive hire leve:
 And sche, that wolde nocht beleve,
 In alle haste made hire yare
 Toward hir Soster forto fare,
 With Tere s 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 nocht withholde,
 That he ne moste on hir beholde; 5620
 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 nocht 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, 5630
 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, 5640
 Bot hield hire under in such wise,
 That sche ne myhte nocht arise,
 Bot lay oppressed and desesed,
 As if a goshawk hadde sesed
 A brid, which dorste nocht 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. 5650
 Bot whan sche to hirselves 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 5660
 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, 5670
 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 sounne 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, 5680
 And art ensample of alle untrewes,
 Nou wolde god mi Soster kewe,
 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 5690
 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 sounne,
 Bot chitre and as a brid jargoune. 5700
 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 befallē,
 This Tere s, that foule him falle,
 Unto his contre hom he tyh;
 And whan he com his paleis nyh, 5710
 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, 5720
 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. 5730
 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: 5740
 "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, 5750
 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, 5760
 I trowe, and my deliverance
 Ye wolde schape, and do vengeance
 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 5770
 With lettres and ymagerie,
 In which was al the felonie,
 Which Tere s to hire hath do;
 And lappede it togedre tho
 And sette hir signet therupon
 And sende it unto Progne anon.
 The messenger which forth it bar,
 What it amonteth is noght war;
 And natheles to Progne he goth
 And prively takth hire the cloth, 5780
 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 wrought
 And what meschief ther is befalle.
 In swoune tho sche gan doun falle,
 And eft aros and gan to stonde,
 And eft sche takth the cloth on honde, 5790
 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 5800
 That Tere s nothing it wiste;
 And yit riht as hirselves 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 5810
 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
 Weping in gret devocioun:
 Unto Cupide and to Venus
 Sche preide, and seide thanne thus: 5820
 "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, 5830
 And nevere love in other place,
 Bot al only the king of Trace,
 Which is mi lord and I his wif.
 Bot nou alas 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, 5840
 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 vengeance of this debat.
 Mi Soster and al hire astat
 Thou wost, and hou sche hath forlore
 Hir maidenhod, and I therfore 5850
 In al the world schal bere a blame
 Of that mi Soster hath a schame,
 That Tere s 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 hier
 Thes wofull Sostres that ben hier,
 And let ous nocht to the ben lothe;
 We ben thin oghne wommen bothe." 5860

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." 5870
 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,— 5880
 And that was noght on hem along,
 Bot onliche on the grete wrong
 Which Tere s hem hadde do,—
 Thei schopen forto venge hem tho.
 This Tere s be Progne his wif
 A Sone hath, which as his lif
 He loveth, and Ithis he hihte:
 His moder wiste wel sche mihte
 Do Tere s no more grief
 Than sle this child, which was so lief. 5890
 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, 5900
 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 5910
 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 5920
 Thou hast thi tirannye wrought.
 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 5930
 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, 5940
 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 nocht 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, 5950
 And forto duelle in prive place,
 That noman scholde sen hir face
 For schame, which mai nocht 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, 5960
 And that Nature the goddessse
 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, 5970
 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, 5980
 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, 5990
 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, 6000
 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, 6010
 And chitreth out in hir langage
 What falshod is in mariage,
 And telleth in a maner speche
 Of Tere s 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, 6020
 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 Tere s.
 If such on be amonges ous 6030
 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 vengeance
 The goddes hadden him ordeined,
 Of that the Sostres hadden pleigned:
 For anon after he was changed
 And from his oghne kinde stranged, 6040
 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 6050
 Thi lust, it mai thee falle thus,
 As it befell of Tere s.
 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 nocht mi ladi wille.
 Men sein that every love hath drede;
 So folweth it that I hire drede, 6060
 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: 6070
 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 sustenance
 Ne can non other weie finde
 To gete him good, thanne as the blinde, 6080
 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, 6090
 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, 6100
 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 6110
 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, although sche be unmete,
 For other mennes good is swete.
 Bot therof wot nothing the wif
 At hom, which loveth as hir lif 6120

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 6130
 Hou he to love untrewes 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 6140
 He schal ben after sory thries.
 Ensampler of suche Robberies
 I finde write, as thou schalt hierre,
 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 goddessse
 And wif to Marte, of whom prouesse 6150
 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 6160
 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, 6170
 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 6180
 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, 6190
 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 6200
 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 6210
 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 6220
 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 6230
 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. 6240
 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, 6250
 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 6260
 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, 6270
 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 6280
 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 vengeance
 Cam forth upon this ilke chance,
 And to Calistona sche spak,
 And sette upon hir many a lak, 6290
 And seide, "Ha, nou thou art atake,
 That thou thi werk myht nocht 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 nocht be glad, whan he it wot,
 Of that his dowhter was so hot, 6300
 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 6310
 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; 6320
 For thogh sche hadde hire forme lore,
 The love was nocht 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 6330
 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 6340
 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 6350
 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 6360
 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 6370
 Touchende of men, ensample I finde,
 Phyrins, 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 6380

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. 6390
 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, 6400
 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 knyhtode 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, 6410
 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: 6420
 And in the lawe a man mai finde,
 Hou god to man be weie of kinde
 Hath set the world to multeplicie;
 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 6430
 Withoute lawes ordinance,
 It mai noght failen of vengeance.

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 6440
 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 6450
 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 6460
 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 sacrificise, 6470
 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, 6480
 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, 6490
 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. 6500
 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: 6510
 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, 6520
 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, 6530
 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: 6540
 So that this craft I mai remene
 Withouten help of eny mene.
 Ther be lovers of that degre,
 Which al here lust in private,
 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: 6550
 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: 6560
 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 private
 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 6570
 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, 6580
 I bere an herte and hire it is,
 So that me failleth 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 6590
 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 6600
 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 thousandfold 6610
 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; 6620
 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, 6630
 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, 6640

And stele I wot wel may I nocht:
 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.
 Therefore 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 6650
 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 nocht 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, 6660
 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 6670
 Als wys as was Nectanabus
 Or elles as was Prothe s,
 That couthen bothe of nigromaunce
 In what liknesse, in what semblaunce,
 Riht as hem liste, hemsself 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 6680
 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 6690
 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 thought 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. 6700
 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, 6710
 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 6720
 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 6730
 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 6740
 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 6750
 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, 6760
 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." 6770
 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, 6780
 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, 6790
 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, 6800
 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 6810
 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 6820
 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 6830
 Of Tymolus, which was begrowe
 With vines, and at thilke throwe
 Faunus with Saba the goddessse,
 Be whom the large wildernessse
 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, 6840
 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 away be nyhte

That he be daie in other wise
 To stele mihte noght suffise: 6850
 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 6860
 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, 6870
 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 6880
 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 6890
 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, 6900

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 6910
 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, 6920
 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 6930
 And lowhen him to scorne aboute:
 Saba with Nimphis al a route
 Cam down 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, 6940
 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, 6950
 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. 6960
 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, 6970
 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 Sacrilege,
 Ayein the whom I thenke alegge. 6980
 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 6990
 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, 7000
 Which unto Crist himself is due,
 Benymth, he mai noght wel eschue
 The peine comende afterward;
 For he hath mad his foreward

With Sacrilege 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. 7010
 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 Sacrilege and many a wonder 7020
 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 Sacrilege as it belongeth,
 For what man that ther after longeth, 7030
 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, 7040
 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: 7050
 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, 7060
 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, 7070
 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; 7080
 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; 7090
 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 7100
 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 nocht so fele.
 Bot yit wol I nocht seie this,
 Whan I am ther mi ladi is,

In whom lith holly mi querele,
 And sche to cherche or to chapele 7110
 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 contenance is on the bok,
 Bot toward hire is al my lok;
 And if so falle that I preie
 Unto mi god, and somewhat seie
 Of Paternoster or of Crede,
 Al is for that I wolde spede, 7120
 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, 7130
 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 nocht 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, 7140
 For thanne I lede hire, if I may,
 For somewhat 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, 7150
 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 nocht forsake. 7160

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: 7170
 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, 7180
 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 bedde,
 The chambre is of an other speche.
 Bot if thou wistest of the wreche, 7190
 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 7200
 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 vengeance,
 Wherof stant yit the remembrance;
 For thei destruide king and al,
 And leften bot the brente wal. 7210
 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, 7220
 And hom thei torne in such manere:
 Bot after this nou schalt thou hier
 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 7230
 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, 7240
 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 7250
 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, 7260
 And what was of her swerd devoured,
 And hou his Soster deshonoured
 With Thelamon away 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." 7270
 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: 7280
 Bot where he spak in Grece aboute,
 He herde nocht bot wordes stoute,
 And nameliche of Thelamon;
 The maiden wolde he nocht 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, 7290
 He tolde in Grece of that he herde,
 And hou that Thelamon ansuerde,
 And hou thei were at here above,
 That thei wol nouter 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, 7300
 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 7310
 Besiden hem, and thritty mo,
 And weren knyhtes alle tho,
 Bot nocht 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; 7320
 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 nocht what was the beste,
 Or forto werre or forto reste. 7330
 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, 7340
 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 nocht ben achieved;
 He is nocht wys that fint him grieved,
 And doth so that his grief be more;
 For who that loketh al tofore 7350
 And wol nocht 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 nocht; 7360
 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 nocht 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, 7370
 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 7380
 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 7390
 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 7400
 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 down
 To slepe, and in a visioun 7410
 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, 7420

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, 7430
 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 recordere,
 Bot ate laste thei acorde
 That Paris schal to Grece wende,
 And thus the parlement tok ende. 7440
 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." 7450
 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 7460
 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 7470
 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 sacrificise
 That thei to Venus wolden make,
 As thei tofore hadde undertake, 7480
 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, 7490
 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 7500
 Do sacrificise 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 goddessse
 He yifth and offreth gret richesse,
 And preith hir that he preie wolde.
 And thanne aside he gan beholde, 7510
 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, 7520
 He wolde don his Sacrilege,
 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: 7530
 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, 7540
 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. 7550
 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 processiou 7560
 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 7570
 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 7580
 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. 7590
 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; 7600
 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 7610
 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, 7620
 Of Robberie and privi Stelthe,
 Which don is for the worldes welthe,
 Of Ravine and of Sacrilege,
 Which makth the conscience agregge;
 Although it mai richesse atteigne,
 It floureth, bot it schal nocht 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 7630
 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 exceedeth no mesure,
 So wel he can himself mesure:
 Wherof, mi Sone, thou schalt wite,
 So as the Philosophre hath write. 7640
 Betwen the tuo extremities
 Of vice stant the propreties
 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; 7650
 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, 7660
 That other al his oghne and more
 Ayein the wise mannes lore
 Yifh 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. 7670
 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 spreadeth,
 And to alle othre, where it nedeth, 7680

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, 7690
 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 exceedeth,
 For noman wot what harm that bredeth. 7700
 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, 7710
 Bot frely yive, and natheles
 The myhti god of his encess
 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
 Largesce 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, 7720
 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, 7730
 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 7740
 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. 7750
 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. 7760
 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 7770
 If thou of love hast be to large,
 For such a man is nocht 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 7780
 Of eny on, if sche be wys;
 For love schal nocht 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 7790
 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, 7800
 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 hirsself me wol relieve.
 Mi Sone, that I mai wel lieve: 7810
 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 nouthur 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. 7820
 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 7830
 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, 7840
 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 envyned,
 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; 10
 Of which the branches ben so grete,
 That of hem alle I wol nocht 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, 20
 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: 30
 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 nouthen 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, 40
 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, 50
 Or elles lich the dede man,
 Which nouthen 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 a the cuppe." 60
 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 wepeth, in sorwe he singeth,
 For Dronkeschipe is so divers,
 It may no whyle stonde in vers. 70
 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, 80
 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 thocht
 So drunke, that thei knowe nocht
 What reson is, or more or lesse.
 Such is the kinde of that sieknesse,
 And that is nocht for lacke of brain,
 Bot love is of so gret a main, 90
 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 100
 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 110
 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 nocht what I mene; 120
 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 nocht,
 With musinge of min oghne thocht,
 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, 130

That I foryete al that I can
 And stonde lich a mased man;
 That ofte, whanne I scholde pleie,
 It makth me drawe out of the weie
 In soulein place be miselve,
 As doth a labourer to delve,
 Which can no gentil mannes chere;
 Or elles as a lewed Frere,
 Whan he is put to his penance,
 Riht so lese I mi contenance. 140
 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, 150
 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. 160
 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, 170
 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 gentillesse,
 Myn herte is full of such gladnesse, 180
 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 190
 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 200
 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, 210
 Al soudeinliche upon me renneth,
 That al mi thocht 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 thocht so swete in mi corage,
 That nevere Pymment ne vernage
 Was half so swete forto drinke.
 For as I wolde, thanne I thinke 220
 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 230
 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, 240
 And so it coldeth at myn herte,
 That wonder is hou I astate,
 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 250
 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. 260
 Bot al the worste of everychon
 Is evere that I thurste in on;
 The more that myn herte drinketh,
 The more I may; so that me thinketh,
 My thirst schal nevere ben aqueint.
 God schilde that I be noght dreint
 Of such a superfluite:
 For wel I fiele in mi degre
 That al mi wit is overcast,
 Wherof I am the more agast, 270
 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; 280
 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, 290
 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. 300
 Thus am I drunke of that I se,
 For tastinge is defended me,
 And I can noght miselven stanche:
 So that, mi fader, of this branche
 I am gultif, to telle trouthe.
 Mi Sone, that me thenketh routhe;
 For lovedrunke is the meschief
 Above alle othre the most chief,
 If he no lusti thoght assaie,
 Which mai his sori thirst allaie: 310
 As for the time yit it lisseth
 To him which other joie misseth.
 Forthi, mi Sone, aboven alle
 Think 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 320
 Of lovedrunke, why men pleigneth
 After the court which al ordeigneth,
 I wol the tellen the manere;
 Nou lest, mi Sone, and thou schalt hier.
 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, 330
 Which is of goddes sovereign,
 Hath in his celier, as men sein,
 Tuo tonnes fulle of love drinke,
 That maken many an herte sinke
 And many an herte also to flete,
 Or of the soure or of the swete.
 That on is full of such piment,
 Which passeth all entendement

Of mannes witt, if he it taste,
 And makth a jolif herte in haste: 340
 That other biter as the galle,
 Which makth a mannes herte palle,
 Whos drunkeschipe is a sieknesse
 Thurgh fieling of the biternesse.
 Cupide is boteler of bothe,
 Which to the lieve and to the lothe
 Yifth of the swete and of the soure,
 That some lawhe, and some loure.
 Bot for so moche as he blind is,
 Fulofte time he goth amis 350
 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 360
 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 nocht greven
 So to be drunken every even,
 For al is thanne bot a game.
 Bot whanne it is nocht of the same, 370
 And he the biter tonne draweth,
 Such drunkeschipe an herte gnaweth
 And fiebleth al a mannes thoght,
 That betre him were have drunke nocht
 And al his bred have eten dreie;
 For thanne he lest his lusti weie
 With drunkeschipe, and wot nocht whider
 To go, the weies ben so slider,
 In which he mai per cas so falle,
 That he schal breke his wittes alle. 380
 And in this wise men be drunke
 After the drink that thei have drunke:
 Bot alle drinken nocht alike,
 For som schal singe and som schal syke,
 So that it me nothing merveillesh,
 Mi Sone, of love that thee eilleth;
 For wel I knowe be thi tale,
 That thou hast drunken of the duale,
 Which biter is, til god the sende
 Such grace that thou miht amende. 390

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 400
 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, 410
 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 420
 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 preiyngge,
 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 overturned, 430
 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 440
 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, 450
 And axe and prei erli and late
 Thi thirst 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 460
 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 nocht arise.
 And forto loke in evidence
 Upon the sothe experience,
 So as it hath befalle er this,
 In every mannes mouth it is 470
 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, 480
 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 Pirote s so him spedde,
 That he to wyve hire scholde wedde, 490
 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, 500
 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: 510
 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, 520
 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 530
 Upon the nature of the vice,
 Of custume and of exercice
 The mannes grace hou it fordooth,
 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, 540
 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. 550
 Men sein ther is non evidence,
 Wherof to knowe a difference
 Betwen the drunken and the wode,
 For thei be nevere nouthur goode;
 For wher that wyn doth wit aweie,
 Wisdom hath lost the rihte weie,
 That he no maner vice dredeth;
 Nomore than a blind man thredeth
 His nedle be the Sonnes lyht,
 Nomore is reson thanne of myht, 560
 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 570
 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, 580
 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 witsesse;
 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, 590
 And dronken til so was befall
 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, 600
 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 nocht 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. 610
 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 620
 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 630
 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 640
 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 nocht 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, 650

To him that wole his hele gete
 Is non so good as comun mete:
 For who that loketh on the bokes,
 It seith, confeccion of cokes,
 A man him scholde wel advise
 Hou he it toke and in what wise.
 For who that useth that he knoweth,
 Ful selden seknesse on him groweth,
 And who that useth metes strange,
 Though his nature empeire and change 660
 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 670
 And thenke hem mor delicious
 Than he hath in his oghne hous:
 Men sein it is nou ofte so;
 Advise 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 thinkth that he is noght relieved,
 Thogh that his ladi make him chiere,
 So as sche mai in good manere 680
 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, 690
 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, 700
 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 refrechted. 710
 Bot certes, fader, sche ne doth;
 For in good feith, to telle soth,
 I trowe, thogh I scholde sterve,
 Sche wolde nocht 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 720
 Of plente more than ynowh;
 Bot that is of himself so towh,
 Mi stomac mai it nocht 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 nocht I am gylteles,
 That I somdel am delicat:
 For elles were I fulli mat, 730
 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 nocht 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 740
 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 nocht; 750
 For whom that failleth fode of herte,
 He mai nocht 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, 760
 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 freisshe is than eny flour,
 He seth hire front is large and plein
 Withoute fronce of eny grein, 770
 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 780
 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. 790
 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, 800
 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, 810
 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 nocht be full,
 Of that the stomac underfongeth,
 Bot evere in on myn yhe longeth:
 For loke hou that a goshawk tireth,
 Riht so doth he, whan that he pireth
 And toteth on hire wommanhiede;
 For he mai nevere fulli fiede 820
 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 thought
 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, 830
 Wher as myn yhe mai nocht 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 840
 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 850
 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, 860
 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 verrailly 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, 870
 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, 880
 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, 890
 Riht as it were a cherie feste;
 Bot forto compten ate leste,
 As for the while yit it eseth
 And somdel of myn herte appeseth:
 For what thing to myn Ere spreadeth,
 Which is plesant, somdel it feedeth
 With wordes suche as he mai gete
 Mi lust, in stede of other mete.
 Lo thus, mi fader, as I seie,
 Of lust the which myn yhe hath seie, 900
 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 910

Mi resouper 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 920
 Of lust, which I have herd or sein.
 Bot yit is noght mi feste al plein,
 Bot al of woldes and of wissches,
 Therof have I my fulle disshes,
 Bot as of fieling and of tast,
 Yit mihte I nevere have o repast.
 And thus, as I have seid afor,
 I licke hony on the thorn,
 And as who seith, upon the bridel
 I chiewe, so that al is ydel 930
 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 940
 I take of love my fiedinge
 Withoute tastinge or fieling:
 And as the Plover doth of Eir
 I live, and am in good espeir
 That for no such delicacie
 I trowe I do no glotonie.
 And natheles to youre avis,
 Min holi fader, that be wis,
 I recomande myn astat
 Of that I have be delicat. 950
 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, 960
 Wherof that thou reson excede:
 For in the bokes thou myht rede,

If mannes wisdom schal be suied,
 It oghte wel to ben eschuiud
 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, 970
 A tale acordant unto this,
 Which of gret understandinge is
 To mannes soule resonable,
 I thenke telle, and is no fable.
 Of Cristes word, who wole it rede,
 Hou that this vice is forto drede
 In thevangile it telleth plein,
 Which mot algate be certein,
 For Crist himself it berth witnessse.
 And thogh the clerk and the clergesse 980
 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, 990
 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 1000
 Of alle lustes ate bord,
 Ne deigneth nocht 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, 1010
 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, 1020
 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; 1030
 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: 1040
 "Send Lazar down 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, 1050
 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 1060
 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; 1070
 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
 Tokedre duellende in on hous;
 To whom, as thou art gracious, 1080
 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 1090
 His brethren mihten knowe and hier
 Of Moises on Erthe hier
 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; 1100
 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 1110
 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 1120
 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 1130
 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, 1140
 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. 1150
 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. 1160
 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 towards him to pleie, 1170

And ete and drinke als wel as he.
 Therof was no diversite;
 For every day whan that thei eete,
 Tofore his oghne bord thei seete,
 And of such mete as he was served,
 Although thei hadde it noght deserved,
 Thei token service of the same.
 Bot afterward al thilke game
 Was into wofull ernest torned;
 For whan thei weren thus sojorned, 1180
 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, 1190
 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 down 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, 1200
 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, 1210
 Wherof the bodi myhte glade,
 For he non abstinence made;
 Bot most above alle erthli thinges
 Of wommen unto the likinges
 Nero sette al his hole herte,
 For that lust scholde him noght asterte.
 Whan that the thirst of love him cawhte,
 Wher that him list he tok a drauhte,
 He spareth nouter wif ne maide,
 That such an other, as men saide, 1220
 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; 1230
 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, 1240
 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 hierre 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. 1250
 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 hevене and erthe and helle,
 Hierafterward as I schall telle. 1260
 Who dar do thing which love ne dar?
 To love is every lawe unwar,
 Bot to the lawes of his heste
 The fisch, the foul, the man, the beste
 Of al the worldes kinde louteth.
 For love is he which nothing douteth:
 In mannes herte where he sit,
 He compteth noght toward his wit
 The wo nomore than the wele,
 No mor the hete than the chele, 1270
 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, 1280
 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 1290
 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 1300
 Ae5remance 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. 1310
 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 1320
 The Seal, and therupon thymage
 Of Thebith, for his avantage
 He takth, and somewhat of Gibiere,
 Which helplich is to this matiere.
 Babilla with hire Sones sevene,
 Which hath renoned to the hevene,

With Cernes bothe square and rounde,
 He traceth ofte upon the grounde,
 Makende his invocacioun;
 And for full enformacioun 1330
 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, 1340
 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; 1350
 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 1360
 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 1370
 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, 1380
 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. 1390
 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; 1400
 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 1410
 Of Surgerie he knew the cures.
 Bot somewhat 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, 1420
 Of whiche I thenke tellen on,
 Hou that malgre the nedle and ston
 Wynddrive he was al soudeinly
 Upon the strondes of Cilly,
 Wher that he moste abyde a whyle.
 Tuo queenes weren in that yle
 Calipsa named and Circes;
 And whan they herde hou Uluxes
 Is loded ther upon the ryve,
 For him thei senden als so blive. 1430

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, 1440
 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, 1450
 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, 1460
 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, 1470
 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 1480
 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. 1490
 The fame, which mai nocht 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, 1500
 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, 1510
 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, 1520
 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: 1530
 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: 1540
 "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 1550
 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, 1560
 "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: 1570
 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 1580
 Al plainly forto knowe an ende;
 Bot natheles hou so it wende,
 He dradde him of his oghne Sone.
 That makth him wel the more astone,
 And schop therfore anon withal,
 So that withinne castel wall

Thelamachum his Sone he schette,
 And upon him strong warde he sette.
 The sothe further he ne knew,
 Til that fortune him overthreu; 1590
 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, 1600
 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, 1610
 Ther mai be non such resistance,
 Which mihte make a man defence;
 Al that schal be mot falle algate.
 This Circes, which I spak of late,
 On whom Uluxes hath begete
 A child, thogh he it have foryete,
 Whan time com, as it was wone,
 Sche was delivered of a Sone,
 Which cleped is Thelogonus.
 This child, whan he was bore thus, 1620
 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 1630
 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; 1640
 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: 1650
 And whan that he was thus arraied
 And hath his harneis al assaied,
 That he was redy everydel,
 His moder bad him farewell,
 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, 1660
 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, 1670
 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, 1680
 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 1690

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 1700
 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; 1710
 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 wepeth, he seith therefore,
 "Helas, that evere was I bore, 1720
 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 thocht he sette
 Upon the swevene which he mette, 1730
 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, 1740
 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 1750
 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 1760
 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, 1770
 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, 1780
 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, 1790
 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, 1800
 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. 1810
 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 1820
 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 1830
 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 1840
 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; 1850
 And so forth every other man,
 Which pleie couthe, his pley began,
 To plesse 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. 1860
 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. 1870
 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." 1880
 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, 1890
 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, 1900
 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 1910
 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, 1920
 Which so wol don hire compainie.
 And he seide, "Amos of Lubie."
 And sche seith, "That mai I nocht 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 1930
 The thing schal afterward befallle.
 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." 1940
 "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, 1950

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, 1960
 He loketh the conjunccions,
 He loketh the recepcions,
 His signe, his heure, 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, 1970
 That every wyht is falle aslepe,
 He thoghte he wolde his time kepe,
 As he which hath his heure 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, 1980
 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, 1990
 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, 2000
 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 2010
 In hope of such a glad metrede,
 Which after schal befalle in dede.
 Sche longeth sore after the dai,
 That sche hir swevene telle mai
 To this guilour in privete,
 Which kneu it als so wel as sche:
 And natheles on morwe sone
 Sche lefte alle other thing to done,
 And for him sende, and al the cas
 Sche tolde him plainly as it was, 2020
 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, 2030
 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, 2040
 That ye ne schull nocht 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 2050
 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, 2060
 Thurgh the deceipte of his magique
 He putte him out of mannes like,
 And of a dragoun tok the forme,
 As he which wolde him al conforme
 To that sche sih in swevene er this;
 And thus to chambre come he is.
 The queene lay abedde and sih,
 And hopeth evere, as he com nyh,
 That he god of Luby were,
 So hath sche wel the lasse fere. 2070
 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, 2080
 And cam to bedde, and sche lai stille,
 Wher as sche soffreth al his wille,
 As sche which wende noght misdo.
 Bot natheles it hapneth so,
 Although sche were in part deceived,
 Yit for al that sche hath conceived
 The worthieste of alle kiththe,
 Which evere was tofore or siththe
 Of conqueste and chivalerie;
 So that thurgh guile and Sorcerie 2090
 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. 2100
 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, 2110
 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 2120
 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, 2130
 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 dreame and se
 The dragoun and the privete 2140
 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 2150
 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 clerck, his name is Amphion: 2160
 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." 2170
 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, 2180
 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 deysse on hih;
 And whan he cam the queene nyh,
 He stinte his noise, and in his wise
 To hire he profreth his servise, 2190
 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, 2200
 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, 2210

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 2220
 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, 2230
 And in ayein it wolde have wonne,
 Bot for the brennyng of the Sonne
 It mihte noght, and so it deide.
 And therupon the clerkes seide,
 "As the Serpent, whan it was oute,
 Went enviroun the schelle aboute
 And mihte noght torne in ayein,
 So schal it fallen in certein:
 This child the world schal environe,
 And above alle the corone 2240
 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, 2250
 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 2260
 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 levne
 So cruel was upon the hevne,
 That every ertli creature
 Tho thoghte his lif in aventure. 2270
 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, 2280
 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, 2290
 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 2300
 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, 2310
 And seith him, "Ly down 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 nocht befallē."
 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 2320
 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. 2330
 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 2340
 The maistrie and the pouer hadde,
 His creatour to nocht 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; 2350
 And siththen to deceive a queene,
 That torneth him to mochel teene;
 Thurgh lust of love he gat him hate,
 That ende couthe he nocht 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; 2360
 Nectanabus his craft miswente,
 So it misfell him er he wente.
 I not what helpeth that clergie
 Which makth a man to do folie,
 And nameliche of nigromance,
 Which stant upon the mescreance.

And forto se more evidence,
 Zorastes, which the experience
 Of Art magique ferst forth drouh,
 Anon as he was bore, he louh, 2370
 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 nocht riht with the believe: 2380
 Bot lich to wolle is evele sponne,
 Who lest himself hath litel wonne,
 An ende proveth every thing.
 Sa l, 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. 2390
 To conne moche thing it helpeth,
 Bot of to mochel noman yelpeth:
 So forto loke on every side,
 Magique mai nocht 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. 2400
 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 nocht 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 2410
 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. 2420
 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; 2430
 And for it helpeth to comune,
 Al ben thei noght to me comune,
 The scoles of Philosophie,
 Yit thenke I forto specefie,
 In boke as it is comprehended,
 Wherof thou mihtest ben amended.
 For thogh I be noght al cunnyng
 Upon the forme of this wrytyng,
 Som part therof yit have I herd,
 In this matiere hou it hath ferd. 2440

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, 10
 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 20
 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 30
 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 40
 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 50
 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. 60
 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, 70
 That other named is Phisique,
 The thridde is seid Mathematique.
 Theologie is that science
 Which unto man yifith evidence
 Of thing which is nocht bodely,
 Wherof men knowe redely
 The hihe almyhti Trinite,
 Which is o god in unite
 Withouten ende and beginnyng
 And creatour of alle thinge, 80
 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. 90
 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 nocht deie.
 As Soules, that ben spiritiel,
 Here beinge is perpetuel:
 Bot ther is on above the Sonne,
 Whos time nevere was begonne, 100
 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, 110
 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. 120
 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. 130
 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 secoude,
 Thurgh which the Philosophre hath founde
 To techen sondri knowlechinges
 Upon the bodiliche thinges.
 Of man, of beste, of herbe, of ston,
 Of fisch, of foughl, of everychon 140
 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 secoude is seid Musique, 150
 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 160
 Of sommes be thexperience
 Of this Art and of this science.
 The secoude 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, 170
 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 180
 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 the experience;
 The cercle and the circumference
 Of every thing unto the hevene
 Thei setten point and mesure evene. 190
 Mathematique above therthe
 Of hyh science hath yit the ferthe,
 Which spekth upon Astronomie
 And techeth of the sterres hihe,
 Beginnyng 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, 200
 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 210
 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 Scol of Aristote, 220
 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,
 Substantial, 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 230
 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 secoude
 Of elementz, and al withoute
 It environeth therthe aboute. 240
 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 hye, 250
 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 aspiementz
 Takth every lifissh creature,
 The which schal upon erthe endure:
 For as the fissh, if it be dreie,
 Mot in defaute of water deie, 260
 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 270
 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 280
 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 290
 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 sojourned
 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, 300
 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 hier:
 So mai it wel be proeved hier 310
 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 320
 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 nouthur of the tuo,

The Philosophre telleth so,
 And seith that of impressions
 Thurgh diverse exalacions 330
 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, 340
 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, 350
 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 360
 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, 370
 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; 380
 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, 390
 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. 400
 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 410
 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. 420
 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
 Appreth the complexion 430
 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. 440
 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: 450
 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 460
 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, 470
 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. 480
 The Stomach coc is for the halle,
 And builleth mete for hem alle,
 To make hem myghty forto serve

The herte, that he schal nocht 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 490
 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 500
 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. 510
 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. 520
 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, 530
 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 540
 That upon Middelerthe stod,
 Outake Noe⁵ 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, 550
 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; 560
 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 570
 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. 580
 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: 590
 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. 600
 Of Elementz the propretres
 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 610
 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. 620
 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 630
 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, 640
 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. 650
 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, 660
 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 670
 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 680
 The which in juggementz acompteth
 Theeffect, 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, 690
 Among the whiche in special

Planetes sefne principal
 Ther ben, that mannes sihte demeth,
 Bot thozizonte, 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, 700
 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, 710
 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. 720
 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 waxe 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. 730
 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, 740
 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 nocht 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 750
 Upon the lond of Alemaigne
 Is set, and ek upon Bretaigne,
 Which nou is cleped Engeland;
 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, 760
 And slouh and lustles to travaile
 In thing which elles myhte availe:
 He loveth ese, he loveth reste,
 So is he nocht 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. 770
 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. 780
 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. 790
 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 comun in Lombardie. 800
 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. 810
 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 820
 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: 830
 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, 840
 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 850
 Foure hors his Char and him withal,
 Wherof the names telle I schal:
 Erithe s the ferste is hote,
 The which is red and schyneth hote,
 The seconde Acteos the bryhte,
 Lampes the thridde coursier hihte,
 And Philoge s is the ferthe,
 That bringen lyht unto this erthe,
 And gon so swift upon the hevене,
 In foure and twenty houres evene 860
 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 870
 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. 880
 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 890
 Above stant, and doth mervailles
 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. 900
 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. 910
 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 920
 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 930
 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 940
 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 hierre,
 Was Alisandre mad to liere. 950
 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 twelve and ek forthdrawe 960
 He hath also the longe yeer.
 And as he sette of his pouer
 Acordant to the daies sevene
 Planetes Sevene upon the hevене,
 As thou tofore hast herd devise,
 To speke riht in such a wise,
 To every Monthe be himselve
 Upon the hevене of Signes twelve
 He hath after his Ordinal
 Assigned on in special, 970
 Wherof, so as I schal rehersen,
 The tydes of the yer diversen.
 Bot plainly 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, 980
 Which lich a wether of stature
 Resembled is in his figure.
 And as it seith in Almageste,
 Of Sterres twelve 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 hier me devise,
 Stant Aries, which hot and drye
 Is of himself, and in partie 990
 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
 Availleth, if a man therinne
 The pourpos of his werk beginne; 1000
 For thanne he hath of proprete
 Good sped and gret felicite.
 The twelve 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 himselfe,
 Whan every bridd schal chese his make,
 And every neddre and every Snake 1010
 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 appourtient
 To Venus, somdiel discordant. 1020
 This Bole is ek with sterres set,
 Thurgh whiche he hath hise hornes knet
 Unto the tail of Aries,
 So is he nocht 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. 1030
 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 nocht forthi, 1040
 And ek upon the feet be tweie,
 So as these olde bokes seie,
 That wise Tholome s wrot.
 His propre Monthe wel I wot
 Assigned is the lusti Maii,
 Whanne every brid upon his lay
 Among the griene leues singeth,
 And love of his pointure stingeth
 After the lawes of nature
 The youthe of every creature. 1050
 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
 Describe, 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, 1060
 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 1070
 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. 1080
 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, 1090
 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. 1100
 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. 1110
 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. 1120
 Among the Signes upon heighte
 The Signe which is nombred eighte
 Is Scorpio, which as feloun
 Figured is a Scorpoun.
 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 1130
 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. 1140
 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; 1150
 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 1160
 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, 1170
 Unto a Got hath resemblance:
 For whos love and whos aqeintance
 Withinne hise houses to sojorne
 It liketh wel unto Satorne,
 Bot to the Mone it liketh nought,
 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. 1180
 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 outrage. 1190
 This Signe is verrailly 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, 1200
 That Tholome s 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, 1210
 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, 1220
 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, 1230
 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 1240
 In foure, riht so ben divided
 The Signes twelve 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 1250
 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: 1260
 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. 1270
 Lo thus, mi Sone, as thou myht hierre,
 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. 1280
 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, 1290
 Upon the hevne, 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 1300
 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, 1310
 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 1320
 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, 1330
 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 1340
 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 1350
 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. 1360
 His Ston and herbe, as seith the Scoler,
 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 worching as I mene,
 Is Celidoine freissh and grene. 1370
 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, 1380
 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. 1390
 His Ston is Jaspe, and of Planteine
 He hath his herbe soveraine.
 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. 1400
 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; 1410
 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 1420
 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. 1430
 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
 Witnessse berth of that I tolde.
 The science of Astronomie,
 Which principal is of clergie 1440
 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, 1450
 On of the ferste which it wrot
 After Noe⁵, 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 nocht the leste,
 Which makth the bok of Almageste; 1460
 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, 1470
 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 Moyses
 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. 1480
 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 thousand sterres evene
 And tuo and twenty, to the syhte
 Whiche aren of hemself so bryhte, 1490
 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. 1500
 Bot nou to speke of the secoude,
 Which Aristotle hath also founde,
 And techeth hou to speke faire,
 Which is a thing full necessaire
 To contrepise 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, 1510
 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 1520
 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 Logique,
 That serven bothe unto the speche.
 Gramaire ferste hath forto teche 1530
 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, 1540
 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 1550
 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 1560
 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 1570
 Of Sorcerie the karectes.
 The wordes ben of sondri sectes,
 Of evele and eke of goode also;
 The wordes maken frend of fo,
 And fo 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 hevене
 Set every thing or odde or evēne; 1580
 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 1590
 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, 1600
 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 1610
 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 1620
 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 hierie,
 Ther mai a man the Scole liere 1630
 Of Rethoriques eloquences,
 Which is the secoude 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. 1640
 The ferste, which is Theorique,
 And the secoude 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; 1650
 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, 1660
 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, 1670
 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 1680
 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 encess
 Of clerk, of kniht and of Marchant,
 And so forth of the remenant
 Of al the comun poeple aboute,
 Withinne Burgh and ek withoute, 1690
 Of hem that ben Artificiers,
 Whiche usen craftes and mestiers,
 Whos Art is cleped Mechanique.
 And though thei ben nocht 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, 1700
 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. 1710
 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 assised
 Unto a kinges Regiment,
 To take in his entendement: 1720
 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, 1730
 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. 1740
 Advise 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. 1750
 The gold betokneth excellence,
 That men schull don him reverence
 As to here liege sovereign.
 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 1760
 The vertu which is in the stoness
 A verrai Signe is for the noness
 Of that a king schal ben honeste
 And holde trewly his behest
 Of thing which longeth to kinghede:
 The bryhte colour, as I rede,
 Which in the stoness is schynende,
 Is in figure betoknende
 The Cronique of this worldes fame,
 Which stant upon his goode name. 1770
 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 sovereign of alle,
 That longeth unto regiment,
 A tale, which is evident
 Of trouthe in comendacioun,
 Toward thin enformacion, 1780
 Mi Sone, hierafter thou schalt hier
 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: 1790
 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, 1800
 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. 1810
 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 1820
 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 1830
 Of alle tho that god hath wrought:
 And be that skile it semeth noght,
 He seith, that eny ertly 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, 1840
 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; 1850
 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 1860
 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 1870
 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, 1880
 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 1890
 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, 1900
 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, 1910
 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, 1920
 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, 1930
 And deie hirsself, 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; 1940
 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 1950
 The tale of his opinion:
 Bot for final conclusion
 What strengest is of ertthli 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. 1960
 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 1970
 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 1980
 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. 1990
 The worldes good was ferst comene,

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, 2000
 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 2010
 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 nocht so,
 That is to sein, if that he be
 Toward himselven large and fre 2020
 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. 2030
 As Aristotle upon Chaldee
 Ensampl 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 2040
 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 befallē,
 Amonges othre thinges alle
 Se the decertes of his men;
 And after that thei ben of ken 2050
 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. 2060
 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; 2070
 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." 2080
 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, 2090
 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 2100
 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: 2110
 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 2120
 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. 2130
 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 2140
 To sette upon necessite;
 And ek his kinges realte
 Mot every liege man confortte,
 With good and bodi to supportte,
 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, 2150
 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 2160
 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 2170
 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 hierre,
 Spak to a king of this matiere,
 And seide him wel hou that flatours
 Coupable were of thre errours. 2180
 On was toward the goddes hihe,
 That weren wrothe of that thei sihe
 The meschief which befaller 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 2190
 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 error is harm comune,

With which the poeple mot commune 2200
 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, 2210
 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 2220
 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: 2230
 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, 2240
 His hous was nyh to the rivere
 Besyde a bregge, as thou schalt hier.
 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 2250
 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 2260
 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 nocht the worldes crok
 For vein honour ne for richesse,
 Bot all his hertes besinesse 2270
 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 2280
 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; 2290
 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, 2300
 "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 2310
 Reson, thou myht be reson deeme
 That so thi prince forto queeme
 Is nocht to reson acordant,
 Bot it is gretly discordant
 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. 2320
 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 2330
 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, 2340
 Ther may a Prince wel conceive,
 That he schal nocht himself deceive,
 Of that he hiereth wordes pleine;
 For him thar nocht 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 nocht the trouthe spare,
 Bot with hise wordes pleine and bare 2350
 To Themperour hise sothes tolde,
 As in Cronique is yit withholde,
 Hierafterward as thou schalt hier
 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 2360
 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 magnified.
 The ferste, as it is specefied,
 Was, whan he cam at thilke tyde,
 The Charr in which he scholde ryde 2370
 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. 2380
 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 befall.
 For men sen ofte time falle 2390
 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 ever he wolde, 2400
 Or were it evel or were it good,
 So plainly 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 repressse 2410
 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 2420
 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 2430
 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 hemselves thanne wise,
 And understoden wel and knewen.
 Whan suche softe wyndes blew
 Of flaterie into here Ere,
 Thei setten noght here hertes there; 2440
 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 2450
 And was hiest 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 2460
 He set him down 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, 2470
 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, 2480
 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 brogthen 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 asprie. 2490
 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 chastiment
 The wise Philosophre seide,
 What king that so his tresor leide 2500
 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 2510
 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 2520
 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 hierie
 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; 2530
 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, 2540
 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 frendschiipe and alliance
 Was next to him of aqueintance; 2550
 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 hierie
 Som trew prophete in this matiere, 2560
 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 2570
 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 2580
 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, 2590
 If ther were eny other man,
 The which of prophecie can,
 To hierie 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 2600
 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 2610
 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 2620
 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; 2630
 Bot for al that I schal nocht glose
 Of trouthe als fer as I suppose;
 And as touchende of this bataille,
 Thou schalt nocht of the sothe faile.
 For if it like thee to hierre,
 As I am tauht in that matiere,
 Thou miht it understonde sone;
 Bot what is afterward to done
 Advise thee, for this I sih.
 I was tofor the throne on hih, 2640
 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. 2650
 "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, 2660
 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, 2670
 Ayein and into prison lad,
 For so the king himselve bad.
 The trouthe myhte nocht 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, 2680
 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, 2690
 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, 2700
 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, 2710
 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 2720
 The forfeit 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 2730
 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 2740
 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 deputation 2750
 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. 2760
 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 here,
 Of Rome which was Emperour,
 That whanne he made a governour
 Be weie of substitution
 Of Province or of region, 2770
 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, 2780
 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, 2790
 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 2800
 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." 2810
 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 2820
 Which was nocht 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 comun 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, 2830
 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 hier,
 What point that was for lawe set
 It scholde for no gold be let, 2840
 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, 2850
 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, 2860
 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, 2870
 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 2880
 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 bewept.
 In other place also I rede,
 Wher that a jugge his oghne dede 2890
 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 vengeance:
 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 2900
 Wher that his Sone scholde sitte.
 Advise him, if he wolde flitte
 The lawe for the coveitise,
 Ther sih he redi his juisse.
 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, 2910
 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, 2920
 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 2930
 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 2940
 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 2950
 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: 2960
 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; 2970
 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, 2980
 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 2990
 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 3000
 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; 3010
 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 3020
 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; 3030
 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 3040
 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, 3050
 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 thegipcians
 Mercurius, and to Troiens
 Ferst was Neuma Pompilius,
 To Athenes Ligurgius
 Yaf ferst the lawe, and to Gregois
 Forone s hath thilke vois, 3060
 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; 3070
 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 away, 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 3080
 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, 3090
 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 Scolle secheth, 3100
 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 3110
 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 3120
 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 vengeance,
 Which mai be cleped crualte.
 Justice which doth equite 3130
 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 estat confermeth.
 Thus seide whilom Constantin:
 "What Emperour that is enclin
 To Pite forto be servant,
 Of al the worldes remenant 3140
 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, 3150
 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, 3160
 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 3170
 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 3180
 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, 3190
 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, 3200
 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 vengeance:
 For whanne a king hath the victoire,
 And thanne he drawe into memoire 3210
 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 3220
 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, 3230
 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, 3240
 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, 3250
 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 3260
 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 3270
 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 merciabile,
 The hihe god, ordeigneth so,
 That he withinne a time also,
 Whan he was strengest in his ire,
 Was schoven out of his empire. 3280
 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, 3290
 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 3300
 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 3310
 Unto the tirant do likinge,
 And of his oghne ymaginyng
 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, 3320
 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 3330
 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. 3340
 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: 3350
 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, 3360
 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, 3370
 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 3380
 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, 3390
 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 away halfvinge aschamed,
 That he the man schal nothing grieve.
 Hou scholde than a Prince achieve 3400
 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 3410
 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 werreieur,
 A cruel man, a conquerour 3420
 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 nocht 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, 3430
 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 thousandfold welmore he soghte
 Thanne afterward to do malice.
 The god vengance ayein the vice 3440
 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; 3450
 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; 3460
 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 nocht 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 3470
 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 nocht aside:
 So that ther weren dede and take
 Tuo hundred thousand for his sake, 3480
 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 3490
 And lived worse than a beste,
 Whom Pite myhte nocht 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 3500
 Se the vengeance 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 fulfilled of blod,
 Sche caste this tirant therinne,
 And seide him, "Lo, thus myht thou wyne 3510
 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, 3520
 Makth that the god is merciabe,
 If ther be cause resonable
 Why that a king schal be pitous.
 Bot elles, if he be doubtous
 To slen in cause of rihtwisenesse,
 It mai be said no Pitousnesse,
 Bot it is Pusillamite,
 Which every Prince scholde flee.
 For if Pite mesure excede,
 Kinghode may nocht wel procede 3530
 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 knythode as a Leon
 Be to the poeple a champioun
 Withouten eny Pite feigned.
 For if manhode be restreigned, 3540
 Or be it pes or be it werre,
 Justice goth al out of herre,
 So that knythode 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; 3550
 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 3560
 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, 3570
 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. 3580
 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 3590
 That Achilles upon the nede
 Hath do, wherof his knyhtlihiende
 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 3600
 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 3610
 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 3620
 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 3630
 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 thousand of defence,
 To fihte and make resistence
 Ayein the whiche hem wolde assaille:
 And natheles that o bataille 3640
 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 3650
 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 thousand men and mo,
 The whiche after the cri ben go. 3660
 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 3670
 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, 3680
 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 3690
 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 befall.
 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; 3700
 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, 3710
 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, 3720
 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 wynges,
 The weie on fote in desespeir
 We scholden leve and flen in their,
 For ther schal nothing him withstonde."
 Whan Gedeon hath understonde 3730
 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, 3740
 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, 3750
 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, 3760
 His pot tobrak and loude ascride,
 And tho thei breke on every side.
 The trompe was nocht 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, 3770
 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, 3780
 Thei felle anon unto the chace.
 Thus myht thou sen hou goddes grace
 Unto the goode men avaiileth;
 But elles ofte time it failleth
 To suche as be nocht wel disposed.
 This tale nedeth nocht 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 3790
 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 3800
 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, 3810
 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 3820
 Be Samuel to Sa l 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 Sa l hath him desconfit,
 The god bad make no respit,
 That he ne scholde him slen anon.
 Bot Sa l let it overgon 3830
 And dede nocht the goddes heste:
 For Agag made gret beheste
 Of rancoun which he wolde yive,
 King Sa l 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 3840
 The lif, he schal nocht 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; 3850
 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 nocht thensamplerie
 Which in the bible is evident:
 Hou David in his testament, 3860
 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 therefore, 3870
 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. 3880
 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. 3890
 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: 3900
 "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, 3910
 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,
 Fulfilld of trouthe and rihtwisenesse:
 Bot above alle in his noblesse
 Betwen the reddour and pite
 A king schal do such equite 3920
 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 3930
 And hath the kinges Senne aboght,
 Al thogh the poeple agulte nocht.
 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 3940
 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, 3950
 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. 3960
 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. 3970
 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 Steward 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, 3980
 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, 3990
 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 merueille hadde,
 Whan that a fol so wisly spak,
 And of himself fond out the lack 4000
 Withinne his oghne conscience:
 And thus the foles evidence,
 Which was of goddes grace enspired,
 Makth that good conseil was desired.
 He putte away 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. 4010
 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 4020
 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, 4030
 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, 4040
 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; 4050
 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, 4060
 To gon and comen at thin heste."
 The king, which herde this requeste,
 Seith that he wole ben avisid,
 And hath therof a time assided;
 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 4070
 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, 4080
 If thou ne kepe nocht 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, 4090
 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, 4100
 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 outreli refused
 And with ful gret reproef accused.
 So thei begunne forto rave,
 That he was fain himself to save; 4110
 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 twelve
 Tuo tribes only be hemselve
 With him abiden and nomo:
 So were thei for everemo 4120
 Of no retorn withoute esper
 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: 4130
 For that the conseil was nocht 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, 4140
 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 4150
 A king himselve to be wys,
 And so to bere his oghne pris,
 And that his consail be nocht 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; 4160
 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 4170
 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. 4180
 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 thousand 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 4190
 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, 4200
 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 modifie 4210
 The fleisschly lustes of nature,
 Nou think 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 nocht be weie of kinde:
 For whan a man mai reddy finde
 His oghne wif, what scholde he seche
 In strange places to beseche 4220
 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, 4230
 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 sielede wher 4240
 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 enoight and seintefied,
 He mot be more magnefied
 For dignete of his corone,
 Than scholde an other low persone, 4250
 Which is noght of so hih emprise.
 Therfore a Prince him scholde advise,
 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 4260
 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 4270
 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, 4280
 The womman hath him nothing bounde;
 If he his oghne herte wounde,
 Sche mai nocht 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 4290
 Wher that he mai nocht 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 nocht kinde
 A man for love his wit to lese:
 For if the Monthe of Juil schal frese 4300
 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 nocht ben used.
 Bot yit the world hath ofte accused
 Ful grete Princes of this dede,
 Hou thei for love hemself mislede, 4310
 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 fyrige rage
 Of love, which the men assoteth,
 Wherof himself he so rioteth, 4320
 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. 4330
 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, 4340
 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
 Knythode he kepte in such a wise,
 That for no fleisshli covoitise
 Of lust to ligge in ladi armes
 He lefte nocht the lust of armes. 4350
 For where a Prince hise lustes suieth,
 That he the werre nocht 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. 4360
 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 4370
 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. 4380
 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 4390
 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, 4400
 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 4410
 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 4420
 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, 4430
 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 4440
 Ensamplde 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 clenness
 Acordeth to the worthinesse
 Of men of Armes overal;
 Bot most of alle in special 4450
 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, 4460
 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 nocht 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, 4470
 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 4480
 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 sacrificise
 For sondri love in sondri stede
 Unto the false goddes dede. 4490
 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 4500
 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 4510
 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 4520
 And bad him that he scholde abyde,
 To hierre 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, 4530
 And of the kinges court a knyht:
 And seide him, "Such is goddes myht,
 As thou hast sen departed hierre
 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 4540
 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. 4550
 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, 4560
 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 deliche served, 4570
 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 4580
 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 4590
 Withinne a tale, as thou schalt hier,

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 4600
 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, 4610
 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 twelve
 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 4620
 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 4630
 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. 4640
 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 4650
 To helpen him in his querele.
 Thei schopen thanne for his hele
 That he was bathed and enoight,
 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 devise.
 And thanne he thoghte him in what wise
 He myhte his tirannie schewe;
 And to his conseil tok a schrewe, 4660
 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 messenger was come
 To Rome, and hath in conseil nome
 The king, it fell per chance so
 That thei were in a gardin tho, 4670
 This messenger forth with the king.
 And whanne he hadde told the thing
 In what manere that it stod,
 And that Tarquinius 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, 4680
 And seide unto the messenger:
 "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, 4690
 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. 4700
 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 4710
 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 4720
 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 4730
 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. 4740
 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 4750
 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
 Tarquinius made unskilfully
 A werre, which was fasteby
 Ayein a toun with walles stronge
 Which Ardea was cleped longe, 4760
 And caste a Siege therabout, e
 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, 4770
 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. 4780
 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 nocht ones nay:
 On horse bak anon thei lepte
 In such manere, and nothing slepte,
 Ridende forth til that thei come
 Al prively withinne Rome; 4790
 In strange place and doun thei lihte,
 And take a chambre, and out of sihte
 Thei be disguised 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 4800
 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 4810
 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. 4820
 For so as alle men witsesse,
 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 wissches 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 4830
 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 menyng of hire trewe herte,
 Anon with that to hire he sterte,
 And seide, "Lo, mi goode diere,
 Nou is he come to you hiere, 4840
 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 4850
 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 contenance made,
 Bot openly with wordes glade, 4860
 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 4870
 To bedde goth, nocht 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 nocht be bet; 4880
 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 nocht of wommanhiede.
 And thus this tyrannysse knyht
 Was soupled, bot nocht half ariht, 4890
 For he non other hiede tok,
 Bot that he myhte be som crok,
 Although it were ayein hire wille,
 The lustes of his fleissh fulfillle;
 Which love was nocht 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 4900
 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 4910
 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, 4920
 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, 4930
 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 4940
 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, 4950
 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 certainly
 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, 4960
 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 4970
 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 4980
 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, 4990
 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 away hire freissh aray, 5000
 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 5010
 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; 5020
 Thei sihe hire clothes al disguised,
 And hou sche hath herself 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 herself unmete 5030
 And the lest worth of wommen alle,
 Hire wofull chiere let down 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 herself beweileth,
 And what the sothe wolde mene.
 And sche, which hath hire sorwes grene, 5040
 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, 5050
 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 5060
 Which was unto hire bodi wrought,
 Al were it so sche myhte it noght,
 Nevere afterward the world ne schal
 Reproeuen hire; and forth withal,
 Er eny man therof be war,
 A naked swerd, the which sche bar
 Withinne hire Mantel prively,
 Betwen hire hondes sodeinly
 Sche tok, and thurgh hire herte it throng,
 And fell to grounde, and evere among, 5070
 Whan that sche fell, so as sche myhte,
 Hire clothes with hire hand sche rihte,
 That noman downward fro the kne
 Scholde eny thing of hire se:
 Thus lay this wif honestely,
 Although 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 5080
 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 vengeance.
 And sche tho made a contenance,
 Hire dedlich yhe and ate laste
 In thonkinge as it were up caste, 5090
 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 5100
 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, 5110
 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 5120
 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. 5130
 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, 5140
 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, 5150
 Illicius 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: 5160
 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 5170
 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 wisse take,
 So that sche schal it nocht forsake.
 Whan that thei hadden schape so,
 After the lawe which was tho, 5180
 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 5190
 In thilke time, as was befalle,
 Lai for the profit of hem alle
 Upon the wylde feldes armed,
 That he ne scholde nocht 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, 5200
 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 5210
 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, 5220
 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. 5230
 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, 5240
 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 5250
 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, 5260
 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, 5270
 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 5280
 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, 5290
 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. 5300
 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 5310
 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, 5320
 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, 5330
 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, 5340
 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, 5350
 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, 5360
 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 5370
 Of lust to be the betre avised.

For god the lawes hath assised
 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 modifie,
 That he schal do no lecherie, 5380
 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 5390
 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, 5400
 Thi love throgges 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 thousandfold. 5410
 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. 5420
 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. 5430
 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 hevne 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, 10
 With al the route apostazied
 Of hem that ben to him allied,
 Whiche out of hevne 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. 20
 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, 30
 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 hevne 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 40
 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, 50
 Hou that Adam and Eve also
 Virgines comen bothe tuo
 Into the world and were aschamed,
 Til that nature hem hath reclaimed
 To love, and tauht hem thilke lore,
 That ferst thei keste, and overmore
 Thei don that is to kinde due,
 Wherof thei hadden fair issue.
 A Sone was the ferste of alle,
 And Chain be name thei him calle; 60
 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: 70
 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, 80
 Hath dreint, outake lyves Eyhte.
 Tho was mankinde of litel weyhte;
 Sem, Cham, Japhet, of these thre,
 That ben the Sones of Noe⁵,
 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, 90
 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, 100
 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 Isaa^{5c} 110
 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 Isaa^{5c} was god betawht, 120
 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, 130
 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 140
 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 150
 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, 160
 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 hier.
 Mi fader, nay, god wot the sothe,
 Mi feire is nocht of such a bothe, 170
 So wylde a man yit was I nevere,
 That of mi ken or lief or lever
 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, 180
 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, 190
 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 nocht 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 200
 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: 210
 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 220
 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, 230
 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 ences
 Tuo nacions: and natheles,
 For that the stockes were ungoode,
 The branches mihten nocht be goode; 240
 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 thiselwe be beseie
 Of that thou hast of othre herd:
 For evere yit it hath so ferd, 250
 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, 260
 And leve that which is nocht so.
 Bot forto loke of time go,
 Hou lust of love exceedeth lawe,
 It oghte forto be withdrawe;
 For every man it scholde drede,
 And naveliche 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. 270
 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, 280
 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, 290
 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: 300
 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, 310
 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 hirsself 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, 320
 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 330
 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; 340
 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 350
 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, 360
 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, 370
 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 380
 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, 390
 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 nocht,
 Or with his heved it schal be boght: 400
 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 nocht forbore
 Mi modres fleissh, whos housebonde
 Mi fader forto seche I fonde,
 Which is the Sone ek of my wif.
 Hierof I am inquisitif; 410
 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 420
 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
 Between 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. 430
 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 nocht suffise:
 Bot loke wel thou nocht 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 440
 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 nocht abide, 450
 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 nocht 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, 460
 That there wolde he nocht abyde;
 For wel he knew that on som syde
 This tirant of his felonie
 Be som manere of tricherie
 To grieve his bodi wol nocht 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 470
 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 hier.
 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; 480
 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, 490
 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 befall
 Upon the ferste tale plein,
 And torne we therto ayein.
 Antiochus the grete Sire,
 Which full of rancour and of ire 500
 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 510
 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, 520
 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, 530
 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 adventures that befelle
 Unto this Prince of whom I tolde,
 He hath his rihte cours forth holde 540
 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, 550
 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 560
 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. 570
 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, 580
 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 590
 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, 600
 And scheweth, as I schal reherse,
 How sche was to this lord diverse,
 The which upon the See sche ferketh.
 The wynd aros, the weder derketh,
 It blew and made such tempeste,
 Non anchor mai the schip areste,
 Which hath tobroken al his gere;
 The Schipmen stode in such a feere,
 Was non that myhte himself bestere,
 Bot evere awaite upon the lere, 610
 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, 620
 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 merciabile,
 And broghte him sauf upon a table, 630
 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 640
 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 650
 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, 660
 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, 670
 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 680
 Of hem that ben deliverre 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, 690
 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, 700
 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 nocht,
 Withoute compaignie al one:
 Was non so semlich of persone,
 Of visage and of limes bothe,
 If that he hadde what to clothe. 710
 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, 720
 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 730
 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 softes pas
 And axeth whenne and what he was,
 And preith he scholde his thoghtes leve.
 He seith, "Ma Dame, be your leve 740
 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. 750
 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 760
 Upon a Chaier which thei fette
 Hirsself 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." 770
 "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 780
 Hem thoghte it souneth in here Ere,
 As thogh that he an Angel were.
 Thei gladen of his melodie,
 Bot most of alle the compainie
 The kinges doghter, which it herde,
 And thoghte ek hou that he ansuerde,
 Whan that he was of hire opposed,
 Withinne hir herte hath wel supposed
 That he is of gret gentillesse.
 Hise dedes ben therof witnesse 790
 Forth with the wisdom of his lore;
 It nedeth nocht to seche more,
 He myhte nocht 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, 800
 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 810
 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, 820
 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 830
 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 thought 840
 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; 850
 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 wommanysse 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; 860
 Bot forto thenken al hir fille
 Sche hield hire ofte times stille
 Withinne hir chambre, and goth nocht 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, 870
 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. 880
 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, 890
 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 nocht 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. 900
 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 910
 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 920
 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, 930
 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; 940
 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 devise 950
 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 sacrificise
 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 960
 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, 970
 And that was after somdel sene,
 For as thei pleiden hem betwene,
 Thei gete a child betwen hem tuo,
 To whom fell after mochel wo.
 Now have I told of the spousailes.
 Bot forto speke of the mervailles
 Whiche afterward to hem befelle,
 It is a wonder forto telle.
 It fell adai thei riden oute,
 The king and queene and al the route, 980
 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, 990
 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 vengeance, as god it wolde,
 Antiochus, as men mai wite,
 With thondre and lythnyng is forsmite; 1000
 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." 1010
 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: 1020
 Appolinus his leve tok,
 To god and al the lond betok
 With al the poeple long and brod,
 That he no lenger there abod.
 The king and queene sorwe made,
 Bot yit somdiel thei weren glade
 Of such thing as thei herden tho:
 And thus between the wel and wo
 To schip he goth, his wif with childe,
 The which was evere meke and mylde 1030
 And wolde noght departe him fro,
 Such love was between hem tuo.
 Lichorida for hire office
 Was take, which was a Norrice,
 To wende with this yonge wif,
 To whom was schape a woful lif.
 Withinne a time, as it betidde,
 Whan thei were in the See amidde,
 Out of the North they sihe a cloude;
 The storm aros, the wyndes loude 1040
 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, 1050
 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, 1060
 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." 1070
 In such wepinge and in such cry
 His dede wif, which lay him by,
 A thousand sithes he hire kiste;
 Was nevere man that sih ne wiste
 A sorwe unto his sorwe lich;
 For evere among upon the lich
 He fell swounende, as he that soghte
 His oghne deth, which he besoghte
 Unto the goddes alle above
 With many a pitous word of love; 1080
 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 1090
 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 1100
 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, 1110
 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 jeweals a strong beyete 1120
 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." 1130
 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. 1140
 The Schip forth on the wawes wente;
 The prince hath changed his entente,
 And seith he wol nocht 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. 1150
 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 nocht spille. 1160
 Riht as the corps was throwe alonde,
 Ther cam walkende upon the stronde
 A worthi clerc, a Surgien,
 And ek a gret Phisicien,
 Of al that lond the wisest on,
 Which hihte Maister Cerymon;
 Ther were of his disciples some.
 This Maister to the Cofre is come,
 He peiseth ther was somewhat in,

And bad hem bere it to his In, 1170
 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 1180
 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 1190
 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 joingt
 With certein oile and balsme enoingt,
 And putte a liquour in hire mouth,
 Which is to fewe clerkes couth, 1200
 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 1210
 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, 1220
 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 nocht,"
 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 1230
 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 nocht bot alle wo. 1240
 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, 1250
 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 1260
 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 1270
 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, 1280
 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, 1290
 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. 1300
 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 1310
 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; 1320
 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, 1330
 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 1340
 With Thayse set in eny place,
 The comun vois, the comun grace
 Was al upon that other Maide,
 And of hir doghter noman saide.
 Who wroth but Dionise thanne?
 Hire thoghte a thousand yer til whanne
 Sche myhte ben of Thaise wreke
 Of that sche herde folk so speke.
 And fell that ilke same tyde,
 That ded was trewe Lychoride, 1350
 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, 1360
 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, 1370
 Bot swor and seide he schal fulfillle
 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, 1380
 "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 hevne forto crave,
 Hire wofull Soule if sche mai save:
 And with this noise and with this cry,
 Out of a barge faste by, 1390
 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, 1400
 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, 1410
 Which Maister of the bordel was,
 And bad him gon a redy pas
 To fetten hire, and forth he wente,
 And Thaise out of his barge he hente,
 And to this bordeller hir solde.
 And he, that be hire body wolde
 Take advantage, let do crye,
 That what man wolde his lecherie
 Attempte upon hire maidenhede,
 Lei down the gold and he schal spede. 1420
 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 tuelle
 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 1430
 To don hire eny vileinie.
 This Leonin let evere asprie,
 And waiteth after gret beyete;
 Bot al for noght, sche was forlete,
 That mo men wolde ther noght come.
 Whan he therof hath hiede nome,
 And knew that sche was yit a maide,
 Unto his oghne man he saide,
 That he with strengthe ayein hire leve
 Tho scholde hir maidenhod bereve. 1440
 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 hirsself 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, 1450
 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, 1460
 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 1470
 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 1480
 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, 1490
 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, 1500
 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, 1510
 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, 1520
 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. 1530
 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 Thai5sis 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." 1540
 Thus was this false treson hidd,
 Which afterward was wyde kidd,
 As be the tale a man schal here.
 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 nocht foryete,
 For he som confort wolde gete, 1550
 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 nocht ben unkinde. 1560
 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, 1570
 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 1580
 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 1590
 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, 1600
 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, 1610
 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 aualed,
 The toun therof hath spoke and taled. 1620
 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, 1630
 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, 1640
 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, 1650
 Now this, now that, bot ate laste
 The wisdom of the toun this caste,
 That yonge Taise were asent.
 For if ther be amendement
 To glade with this woful king,
 Sche can so moche of every thing,
 That sche schal gladen him anon.
 A Messenger for hire is gon,
 And sche cam with hire Harpe on honde,
 And seide hem that sche wolde fonde 1660
 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 1670
 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. 1680
 For in proverbe and in probleme
 Sche spak, and bad he scholde deme
 In many soubtil question:
 Bot he for no suggestioun
 Which toward him sche couthe stere,
 He wolde noght o word ansuere,
 Bot as a madd man ate laste
 His heved wepende away he caste,
 And half in wraththe he bad hire go.

Bot yit sche wolde nocht do so, 1690
 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 nocht be so salvage."
 With that he sobreth his corage 1700
 And put away his hevy chiere.
 Bot of hem tuo a man mai liere
 What is to be so sibb of blod:
 Non wiste of other hou it stod,
 And yit the fader ate laste
 His herte upon this maide caste,
 That he hire loveth kindely,
 And yit he wiste nevere why.
 Bot al was knowe er that thei wente;
 For god, which wot here hol entente, 1710
 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, 1720
 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 nocht hele,
 Torne it to wo, torne it to wele, 1730
 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 1740
 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: 1750
 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 plesse with this worthi king,
 Ther lacketh him no maner thing:
 Bot yit for al his noble array
 Wifles he was into that day, 1760
 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 1770
 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 1780
 His doghter and himselven eke
 Schull go vengance forto seke.
 The Schipes were reddy 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, 1790
 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 sacrificise;
 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. 1800
 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, 1810
 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. 1820
 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 sacrificie.
 The citezeins tho herden seie
 Of such a king that cam to preie
 Unto Diane the godesse,
 And left al other besinesse, 1830
 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 1840
 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: 1850
 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 hirsself ayein,
 And thanne sche began to sein:
 "Ha, blessed be the hihe sonde,
 That I mai se myn housebonde, 1860
 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 1870
 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 1880
 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, 1890
 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 1900
 Of alle wommannysse 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, 1910
 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, 1920
 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, 1930
 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, 1940
 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: 1950
 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 1960
 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, 1970
 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 1980
 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 1990
 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 2000
 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 vengeance,
 And for his lust hath his penance.
 Lo thus, mi Sone, myht thou liere
 What is to love in good manere, 2010
 And what to love in other wise:
 The mede arist of the servise;
 Fortune, thogh sche be nocht 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 2020
 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 nocht ben honeste;
 For be no skile that I finde
 Such lust is nocht of loves kinde.
 Mi fader, hou so that it stonde,
 Youre tale is herd and understonde, 2030
 As thing which worthi is to hierie,
 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: 2040
 I not what ye fortune acompte,
 Bot what thing danger mai amonte
 I wot wel, for I have assaied;
 For whan myn herte is best arraied
 And I have al my wit thurghsoght
 Of love to beseche hire oght,
 For al that evere I skile may,
 I am concluded with a nay:
 That o sillable hath overthrowe
 A thousand wordes on a rowe 2050
 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 2060
 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 2070
 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, 2080
 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, 2090
 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, 2100
 The rathere into Aisshe it torneth;
 The fot which in the weie sporneth
 Fulofte his heved hath overthowe;
 Thus love is blind and can noght knowe
 Wher that he goth, til he be falle:

Forthi, bot if it so befall
 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; 2110
 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; 2120
 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, 2130
 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, 2140
 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, 2150
 I were mochel forto blame.
 Mi wo to you is bot a game,
 That fielen noght of that I fiele;
 The fieling of a mannes Hiele
 Mai noght be likned to the Herte:
 I mai noght, thogh I wolde, asterte,
 And ye be fre from al the peine

Of love, wherof I me pleigne.
 It is riht esi to comaunde;
 The hert which fre goth on the launde 2160
 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. 2170
 Bot, fader, if ye wolde thus
 Unto Cupide and to Venus
 Be frendlich toward mi querele,
 So that myn herte were in hele
 Of love which is in mi briest,
 I wot wel thanne a betre Prest
 Was nevere mad to my behove.
 Bot al the whiles that I hove
 In noncertein between the tuo,
 And not if I to wel or wo 2180
 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 goddessse,
 The which I preie you to bere
 And bringe ayein a good ansuere.
 Tho was betwen mi Prest and me
 Debat and gret perplexete: 2190
 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, 2200
 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 2210
 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, 2220
 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. 2230
 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 between 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: 2240
 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: 2250
 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; 2260
 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 clerck 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 2270
 He woundeth ofte, ther he wol noght hele;
 And that somdiel is cause of mi querele.
 Ovide ek seith that love to parforme
 Stant in the hond of Venus the goddessse,
 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, 2280
 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: 2290
 For Service in thi Court withouten hyre
 To me, which evere yit have kept thin heste,
 Mai nevere be to loves lawe honeste.
 O thou, gentile Venus, loves queene,
 Withoute gult thou dost on me thi wreche;
 Thou wost my peine is evere aliche grene
 For love, and yit I mai it noght areche:
 This wold I for my laste word beseche,
 That thou mi love aquite as I deserve,
 Or elles do me plainly forto sterve. 2300
 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, 2310
 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. 2320
 "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 2330
 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, 2340
 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, 2350
 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, 2360
 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, 2370
 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, 2380
 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: 2390
 It nedeth take no witesse,
 For sche which seid is the goddesse,
 To whether part of love it wende,
 Hath sett me for a final ende
 The point wherto that I schal holde.
 For whan sche hath me wel beholde,
 Halvyng of scorn, sche seide thus:
 "Thou wost wel that I am Venus,
 Which al only my lustes seche;
 And wel I wot, thogh thou beseche 2400
 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 2410
 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 retreat;
 For thogh thou myhtest love atteigne,

Yit were it bot an ydel peine,
 Whan that thou art noght sufficient
 To holde love his covenant. 2420
 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. 2430
 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, 2440
 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, 2450
 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, 2460
 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, 2470
 With sondri thinges wel devised,
 I sih, wherof thei ben queintised.
 It was al lust that thei with ferde,
 Ther was no song that I ne herde,
 Which unto love was touchende;
 Of Pan and al that was likende
 As in Piping of melodie
 Was herd in thilke compaignie
 So lowde, that on every side
 It thoghte as al the hevencrude 2480
 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 hier.
 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 ynogh of joie and feste, 2490
 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 knythod and of Armes,
 And what it is to ligge in armes
 With love, whanne it is achieved.
 Ther was Tristram, which was believed 2500
 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. 2510
 These s, thogh he were untrew
 To love, as alle wommen knewe,
 Yit was he there nathel
 With Phedra, whom to love he ches:
 Of Grece ek ther was Thelamon,
 Which fro the king Lamenedon
 At Troie his doghter refte aweie,
 Eeonen, as for his preie,
 Which take was whan Jason cam
 Fro Colchos, and the Cite nam 2520
 In vengeance 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 souveraine; 2530
 And Troilus stod with Criseide,
 Bot evere among, although 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 thousand mo than I can sein,
 With Yowthe I sih ther wel besein
 Forth with here loves glade and blithe.
 And some I sih whiche ofte sithe 2540
 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 fortunéd sore
 In loves cause. And overmore 2550
 Of wommen in the same cas,
 With hem I sih wher Dido was,
 Forsake which was with Enee;
 And Phillis ek I myhte see,
 Whom Demephon deceived hadde;
 And Adriagne hir sorwe ladde,
 For These s hir Soster tok
 And hire unkindely forsok.
 I sih ther ek among the press
 Compleignende upon Hercules 2560
 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 untrew!"
 I sih there ek Deijdamie,
 Which hadde lost the compaignie
 Of Achilles, whan Diomede
 To Troie him fette upon the nede. 2570
 Among these othre upon the grene
 I syh also the wofull queene
 Cleopatras, which in a Cave

With Serpentz hath hirsself 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; 2580
 And as myn Ere it myhte knowe,
 Sche seide, "Wo worthe alle slowe!"
 The pleignte of Progne and Philomene
 Ther herde I what it wolde mene,
 How Tere s 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, 2590
 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, 2600
 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, 2610
 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." 2620
 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, 2630
 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 nocht hirselves stille,
 Bot deide only for drede of schame
 In keping of hire goode name,
 As sche which was on of the beste.
 The thridde wif was hote Alceste, 2640
 Which whanne Ametus scholde dye
 Upon his grete maladye,
 Sche preide unto the goddes so,
 That sche receyveth al the wo
 And deide hirselves 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 2650
 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: 2660
 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 nocht so manye as Youthe hadde: 2670
 The moste part were of gret Age,
 And that was sene in the visage,
 And nocht 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, 2680
 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, 2690
 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. 2700
 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, 2710
 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, 2720
 Which hath so wise men reclaimed,
 And was miself the lasse aschamed,
 Or forto lese or forto winne
 In the meschief that I was inne:
 And thus I lay in hope of grace.
 And whan thei comen to the place
 Wher Venus stod and I was falle,
 These olde men with o vois alle
 To Venus preiden for my sake.

And sche, that myhte noght forsake 2730
 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 befallē.
 And thus for me thei preiden alle
 Of hem that weren olde aboute,
 And ek some of the yonge route, 2740
 Of gentillesse and pure trouthe
 I herde hem telle it was gret routhe,
 That I withouten help so ferde.
 And thus me thoghte I lay and herde.
 Cupido, which may hurte and hele
 In loves cause, as for myn hele
 Upon the point which him was preid
 Cam with Venus, wher I was leid
 Swounende upon the grene gras.
 And, as me thoghte, anon ther was 2750
 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 hierē gret partie 2760
 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. 2770
 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 2780
 Of hem that walken up and down

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 2790
 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 2800
 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. 2810
 And sche which mai the hertes bynde
 In loves cause and ek unbinde,
 Er I out of mi trance aros,
 Venus, which hield a boiste clos,
 And wolde noght I scholde deie,
 Tok out mor cold than eny keie
 An oignement, and in such point
 Sche hath my wounded herte enoight,
 My temples and my Reins also.
 And forth withal sche tok me tho 2820
 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, 2830
 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, 2840
 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 2850
 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 straid, 2860
 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, 2870
 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 nocht;
 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; 2880
 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, 2890
 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, 2900
 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, 2910
 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, 2920
 That seth nocht 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 nocht make suite and chace, 2930
 Wher that the game is nought pernabile;
 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 nocht 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." 2940
 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, 2950
 And y was left with ouden 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, 2960
 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. 2970
 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, 2980
 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 2990
 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 hevne above,
 And ek to sette reste and love 3000
 Among ous on this erthe hier.
 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, 3010
 That of here large retenue
 The lond is ful of maintenue,
 Which causith that the comune right
 In fewe contrees stant upright.
 Extorcioun, kontek, ravine
 Withholde ben of that covyne,
 Aldai men hierin gret compleignte
 Of the desease, of the constreignte,
 Wher of the poeple is sore oppressid:
 God graunte it mote be redressid. 3020
 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, 3030
 Toward the lawis of oure lond,
 Men sein that trouthe hath broke his bond
 And with brocage is goon aweie,
 So that no man can se the weie
 Wher forto fynde rightwisnesse.
 And if men sechin sikernesse
 Uppon the lucre of marchandie,
 Compassement and tricherie
 Of singuler profit to wyne,
 Men seyn, is cause of mochil synne, 3040
 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 3050
 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 hierie,
 Above alle othre on erthe hierie,
 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 3060
 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 3070
 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 3080
 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 3090
 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 3100
 Which longith to his duite;
 So that in his prosperite
 The poeple schal nought ben oppressid,
 Wherof his name schal be blessid,
 For evere and be memorial.
 And now to speke as in final,
 Touchende that y undirtok
 In englesch forto make a book
 Which stant betwene earnest and game,
 I have it maad as thilke same 3110
 Which axe forto ben excusid,
 And that my bok be nought refusid
 Of lered men, whan thei it se,
 For lak of curiosite:
 For thilke scole of eloquence
 Belongith nought to my science,
 Uppon the forme of rethorike
 My wordis forto peinte and pike,
 As Tullius som tyme wrot.
 Bot this y knowe and this y wot, 3120
 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, 3130
 That y mot stonden in here grace:
 For though me lacke to purchace
 Here worthi thonk as by decerte,
 Yit the symplesse of my povert
 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, 3140
 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 ovyrturnd 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 3150
 Withinne him self, and can nought leve.
 And thus forthy my final leve
 I take now for evere more,
 Withoute makyng any more,
 Of love and of his dedly hele,
 Which no phisicien can hele.
 For his nature is so divers,
 That it hath evere som travers
 Or of to moche or of to lite,
 That plainly mai noman delite, 3160
 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 hye 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.

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

[End of CONFESSIO AMANTIS]

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