

Geoffrey Chaucer

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# Complete Works Volume 4

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

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THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

*EDITED, FROM NUMEROUS MANUSCRIPTS*

BY THE

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THE CANTERBURY TALES: TEXT

'Let every felawe telle his tale aboute,  
And lat see now who shal the soper winne.'

*The Knights Tale; A890*

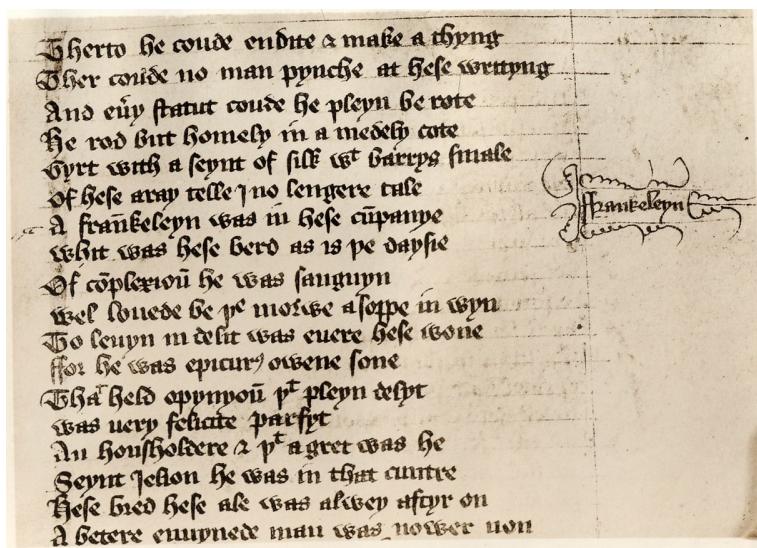
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Frontispiece. CAMBRIDGE MS. (Gg. 4. 27). Prol. 326-342

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## INTRODUCTION

### SS 1. THE PRESENT TEXT.

The text of the 'Canterbury Tales,' as printed in the present volume, is an entirely new one, owing nothing to the numerous printed editions which have preceded it. The only exceptions to this statement are to be found in the case of such portions as have been formerly edited, for the Clarendon Press, by Dr. Morris and myself. The reasons for the necessity of a formation of an absolutely new text will appear on a perusal of the text itself, as compared with any of its predecessors.

On the other hand, it owes everything to the labours of Dr. Furnivall for the Chaucer Society, but for which no satisfactory results could have been obtained, except at the cost of more time and toil than I could well devote to the subject. In other words, my work is entirely founded upon the splendid 'Six-text' Edition published by that Society, supplemented by the very valuable reprint of the celebrated 'Harleian' manuscript in the same series. These Seven Texts are all exact reproductions of seven important MSS., and are, in two respects, more important to the student than the MSS. themselves; that is to say, they can be studied simultaneously instead of separately, and they can be consulted and re-consulted at any moment, being always accessible. The importance of such opportunities is obvious.

### SS 2. THE MANUSCRIPTS.

The following list contains all the MSS. of the existence of which I am aware. As to their types, see SS 7.

#### I. MSS. IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

1. Harl. 7334; denoted here by **H1**. By Tyrwhitt called 'C.' A MS of the B-type (see below). Printed in full for the Chaucer Society, 1885. Collated throughout.

A MS. of great importance, but difficult to understand or describe. For the greater clearness, I shall roughly describe the MSS. as being of the A-type, the B-type, the C-type, and the D-type (really a second C-type). Of the A-type, the best example is the Ellesmere MS.; of the B-type, the best example is the Harleian MS. 7334; of the C-type, the Corpus and Lansdowne MSS.; the D-type is that exhibited by Caxton and Thynne in the early printed editions. They may be called the 'Ellesmere,' 'Harleian,' 'Corpus,' and 'Caxton' types respectively. These types differ as to the arrangement of the Tales, and even MSS. of a similar type differ slightly, in this respect, among themselves. They also frequently differ as to certain characteristic readings, although many of the variations of reading are peculiar to one or two MSS. only.

MS. **H1** contains the best copy of the Tale of Gamelyn, for which see p. 645; this Tale is not found in MSS. of the A-type. Moreover, Group G here precedes Group C and a large part of Group B, whereas in the Ellesmere MS. it follows them. In the Monk's Tale, the lines numbered B 3565-3652 (containing the Tales called the 'modern instances') immediately follow B 3564 (as in this edition), whereas in the Ellesmere MS. these lines come at the end of the Tale.

The 'various readings' of this MS. are often peculiar, and it is difficult to appraise them. I take them to be of two kinds: (1) readings which are better than those of the Six-text, and should certainly be preferred, such as *halfe* in A 8, *cloysterlees* in A 179, *a* (not *a ful*) in A 196, and the like; and (2) readings due to a terrible blundering on the part of the scribe, such as *fleyng* for *flickeringe* in A 1962, *greene* for *kene* in A 1966, and the like. It is, in fact, a most dangerous MS. to trust to, unless constantly corrected by others, and is not at all fitted to be taken as the *basis* of a text. For further remarks, see the description of Wright's printed edition at p. xvi.

As regards age, this MS. is one of the oldest; and it is beautifully written. Its chief defect is the loss of eight leaves, so that ll. 617-1223 in Group F are missing. It also misses several lines in various places; as A 2013-8, 2958, 3721-2, 4355, 4358, 4375-6, 4415-22; B 417, 1186-90, 1355, 1376-9, 1995, 3213-20, 4136-7, 4479-80; C 299, 300, 305-6, 478-9; D 575-584, 605-612, 619-626, 717-720; E 2356-7; F 1455-6, 1493-8; G 155, 210-216; besides some lines in Melibee and the Persones Tale. Moreover, it has nine spurious lines, D 2004 b, c, 2012 b, c, 2037 b, c 2048 b, c, F 592. These imperfections furnish an additional reason for not founding a text upon this MS.

**2.** Harl. 7335; by Tyrwhitt called 'A.' Of the B-type. Very imperfect, especially at the end. A few lines are printed in the Six-text edition to fill up gaps in various MSS., viz. E 1646-7, F 1-8, 1423-4, 1433-4, G 158, 213-4, 326-337, 432-3, 484. Collated so far.

**3.** Harl. 7333; by Tyrwhitt called 'E.' Of the D-type. One of Shirley's MSS. Some lines are printed in the Six-text edition, viz. B 4233-8, E 1213-44, F 1147-8, 1567-8, G 156-9, 213-4, 326-337, 432. It also contains some of the Minor Poems; see the description of MS. 'Harl.' in the Introduction to those poems in vol. i.<sup>[1]</sup>

**4.** Harl. 1758, denoted by **Harl.** at p. 645; by Tyrwhitt called 'F.' In Urry's list, i. Of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn. Many lines are printed in the Six-text, including the whole of 'Gamelyn.' It is freely used to fill up gaps, as B 1-9, 2096-2108, 3049-78, 4112, 4114, 4581-4636, &c.

**5.** Harl. 1239; in Tyrwhitt, 'I.' In Urry's list, ii. Imperfect both at beginning and end.

**6.** Royal 18 C II; denoted by **Rl.**; in Tyrwhitt, 'B.' In Urry, vii. Of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn. Used to fill up gaps in the Six-text; e.g. in B 1163-1190 (Shipman's Prologue, called in this MS. the Squire's Prologue), 2109-73, 3961-80, E 65, 73, 81, 143, G 1337-40, I 472-511. The whole of 'Gamelyn' is also printed from this MS. in the Six-text.

**7.** Royal 17 D xv; in Tyrwhitt, 'D.' In Urry, viii. Of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn. Used to fill up gaps in the Six-text; e.g. in B 2328-61, 3961-80, 4112, 4114, 4233-8, 4637-51, D 609-612, 619-626, 717-720, E 1213-44, F 1423-4, 1433-4, H 47-52; and in the Tale of Gamelyn.

**8.** Sloane 1685; denoted by **Sl.** In Tyrwhitt, 'G.' In Urry, iii. Of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn. In two handwritings, one later than the other. Imperfect; has no Sir Thopas, Melibee, Manciple, or Parson. Very frequently quoted in the Six-text, to fill up rather large gaps in the Cambridge MS.; e.g. A 754-964, 3829-90, 4365-4422, &c. Gamelyn is printed from this MS. in the Six-text, the gaps in it being filled up from MS. 7 (above).

**9.** Sloane 1686; in Tyrwhitt, 'H.' In Urry, iv. Of the C-type; containing Gamelyn. A late MS., on paper. Imperfect; no Canon's Yeoman or Parson.

**10.** Lansdowne 851; denoted by **Ln.** In Tyrwhitt, 'W,' because at that time in the possession of P. C. Webb, Esq. Used by Mr. Wright to fill up the large gap in Hl., viz. F 617-1223, and frequently consulted by him and others. Printed in full as the sixth MS. of the Six-text. Of the C-type; containing Gamelyn. Not a good MS., being certainly the worst of the six; but worth printing owing to the frequent use that has been made of it by editors.

**11.** Additional 5140; in Tyrwhitt, 'Ask. 2,' as being one of two MSS. lent to him by Dr. Askew. It has in it the arms of H. Deane, Archbp. of Canterbury, 1501-3. Of the A-type. Quoted in the Six-text to fill up gaps; e.g. B 3961-80, 4233-8, 4637-52, D 2158-2294, E 1213-44, 1646-7, 2419-40, F 1-8, 673-708, G 103, I 887-944, 1044-92.

**12.** Additional 25718. A mere fragment. A short passage from it, C 409-427, is quoted in the Six-text, to fill up a gap in Ln.

**13.** Egerton 2726; called the 'Haistwell MS.'; in Tyrwhitt denoted by 'HA,' and formerly belonging to E. Haistwell, Esq. Of the A-type, but imperfect. The Six-text quotes F 679, 680: also F 673-708 in the Preface.

## II. MSS. IN OXFORD.

**14.** Bodley 686; no. 2527 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B a.' A neat MS., with illuminations. Of the A-type; imperfect. The latter part of the Cook's Tale is on an inserted leaf (leaf 55), and concludes the Tale in a manner that is not Chaucer's. After the Canterbury Tales occur several poems by Lydgate.

**15.** Bodley 414; not noticed by Tyrwhitt. Given to the library by B. Heath in 1766. A late MS. of the D-type, and imperfect. No Cook, Gamelyn, Squire, or Merchant.

**16.** Laud 739: no. 1234 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B b.' A poor and late MS. of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn; imperfect at the end; ends with Sir Thopas, down to B 2056.

**17.** Laud 600; no. 1476 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B g.' Imperfect; several leaves 'restored.' Apparently, of the B-type; but Group D and the Clerk's Tale follow Gamelyn. Some extracts from it are given in the Six-text, viz. B 2328-61, D 717-20 (no other Oxford MS. has these scarce lines), F 673-708.

**18.** Arch. Selden B 14; no. 3360 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B d.' Perhaps the best and earliest of the Bodleian MSS., but not very good. Sometimes here quoted as **Seld.** Apparently of the A-type, having no copy of Gamelyn; but it practically represents a transition-state between the A and B types, and has one correction of prime importance, as it is the only MS. which links together all the Tales in Group B, making the Shipman follow the Man of Law. Frequent

extracts from it occur in the Six-text; e.g. A 1-72, B 1163-1190, &c. In particular, a large portion of the Parson's Tale, I 290-1086, is printed from this MS. in the same.

**19.** Barlow 20; no. 6420 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B z' A clearly written MS. of the D-type, including Gamelyn; imperfect after Sir Thopas, but contains a portion of the Manciple's Tale. It contains the somewhat rare lines F 679, 680, which are quoted from it in the Six-text.

**20.** Hatton, Donat. 1 (not the same MS. as Hatton 1); no. 4138 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B e.' The Tales are in great disorder, the Man of Law being thrust in between the Reeve and the Cook, as in no other MS. It contains Gamelyn. Lines F 679, 680 are quoted from it in the Six-text; and a few lines are again quoted from it at the end of the Parson's Tale.

**21.** Rawlinson Poet. 149. Apparently of the D-type, but it is very imperfect, having lost several leaves in various places. A late MS.

**22.** Rawlinson Poet. 141. Not a bad MS., but several Tales are omitted, and the Shipman follows the Clerk. Groups C and Gdo not appear at all. The Latin side-notes are numerous.

**23.** Rawlinson Poet. 223; the same as that called Rawl. Misc. 1133 in the Six-text 'Trial-table.' No copy of Gamelyn. The Tales are strangely misplaced. Slightly imperfect here and there.

**24.** Corpus Christi College (Oxford), no. 198; denoted by **Cp**. The best of the Oxford MSS., printed in full as the fourth MS. in the Six-text edition. Of the C-type; collated throughout. It contains a copy of Gamelyn, which is duly printed. It is rather imperfect from the loss of leaves in various places; the gaps being usually supplied from the Selden MS. (no. 18 above).

**25.** Christ Church (Oxford), no. 152. Contains Gamelyn. The Tales are extraordinarily arranged, but the MS. is nearly perfect, except at the end. A large part of the Parson's Tale, after I 550, being lost from the Hengwrt MS., the gap is supplied, in the Six-text, from this MS. and Addit. 5140. The Second Nun follows the Shipman. Of the A-type.

**26.** New College (Oxford), no. 314; called 'NC' in Tyrwhitt. Of the D-type; imperfect at the beginning. No copy of Gamelyn.

**27.** Trinity College (Oxford), no. 49; containing 302 leaves; formerly in the possession of John Leche, temp. Edw. IV. It contains Gamelyn. The Tales are misplaced; the Pardoner and Man of Law being thrust into the middle of Group B, after the Prioress.

### III. MSS. AT CAMBRIDGE.

**28.** University Library, Gg. 4. 27, not noticed by Tyrwhitt; here denoted by **Cm**. Also denoted, in vol. iii., by **C**; and in vol. i., by **Gg**. A highly valuable and important MS. of the A-type, printed as the third text in the Six-text edition. The best copy in any public library. See the description of 'Gg.' in vol. i.; and the full description in the Library Catalogue.

**29.** University Library, Dd. 4. 24; in Tyrwhitt, 'C 1.' Quoted as **Dd**. A good MS. of the A-type, much relied upon by Tyrwhitt, who made good use of it. Has lost several leaves. The whole of the Clerk's Tale was printed from this MS. by Mr. Aldis Wright. The passage in B 4637-52 occurs only in this MS. and a few others, viz. Royal 17 D xv, Addit. 5140, and the Chr. Ch. MS. It also contains the rare lines D 575-84, 609-12, 619-26, 717-20, all printed from this MS. in the Six-text. Lines E 1213-44 are also quoted, to fill a gap in **Cm**.

**30.** University Library, Ii. 3. 26; in Tyrwhitt, 'C 2.' Of the D-type, including Gamelyn; but the Franklin's Tale is inserted after the Merchant. Contains many corrupt readings.

**31.** University Library, Mm. 2. 5. The arrangement of the Tales is very unusual, but resembles that in the Petworth MS., than which it is a little more irregular. A complete MS. of the D-type, including Gamelyn.

**32.** Trinity College (Cambridge), R. 3. 15; in Tyrwhitt, 'Tt.' In quarto, on paper. Some leaves are missing, so that the Canon's Yeoman, Prioress, and Sir Thopas are lost. Of the D-type, without Gamelyn.

N.B. This MS. also contains the three poems printed as Chaucer's (though not his) in the edition of 1687, and numbered 66, 67, and 68, in my 'Account of Speght's edition' in vol. i. It also contains the best MS. of Pierce the Ploughman's Crede, edited by me from this MS. in 1867.

**33.** Trinity College (Cambridge), R. 3. 3; in Tyrwhitt, 'T.' A folio MS., on vellum; of the D-type, without Gamelyn; but several Tales are misplaced.

### IV. IN OTHER PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

- 34.** Sion College, London. A mere fragment, containing only the Clerk's Tale and Group D.
- 35.** Lichfield Cathedral Library; quoted as **Lich.** or **Li.** Of the D-type, omitting Gamelyn. The Tale of Melibee is missing. As the Hengwrt MS. has no Canon's Yeoman's Tale, lines G 554-1481 are printed from this MS. in the Six-text.
- 36.** Lincoln Cathedral Library; begins with A 381. Resembles no. 42.
- 37.** Glasgow; in the Hunterian Museum. Begins with A 353; dated 1476.
- 38.** MS. at Paris, mentioned by Dr. Furnivall. Of the B-type.
- 39.** MS. at Naples, mentioned by Dr. Furnivall.<sup>[2]</sup>

V. MSS. IN PRIVATE HANDS.

These include some of the very best.

- 40.** The 'Ellesmere' MS., in the possession of the Earl of Ellesmere; denoted by **E**. It formerly belonged to the Duke of Bridgewater, and afterwards to the Marquis of Stafford. The finest and best of all the MSS. now extant. Of the A-type; printed as the first of the MSS. in the Six-text, and taken as the basis of the present edition.

It contains the curious coloured drawings of 23 of the Canterbury Pilgrims which have been reproduced for the Chaucer Society. At the end of the MS. is a valuable copy of Chaucer's Balade of 'Truth'; see vol. i. At the beginning of the MS., in a later hand, are written two poems printed in Todd's Illustrations of Gower, &c., pp. 295-309, which Todd absurdly attributed to Chaucer! They are of slight value or interest. It may suffice to say that, at the beginning of the former poem, we find *revved* rimed with *meved*, and many of the lines in it are too long; e.g.—'I supposed yt to have been some noxiall fantasy.' In the latter poem, a compliment to the family of Vere, *by rimes with auncestrye*, and *quarter* with *hereafter*; and the lines are of similar over-length, e.g.—'Of whom prophesyes of antiquite makthy mencion.'

- 41.** The 'Hengwrt' MS., no. 154, belonging to Mr. Wm. W. E. Wynne, of Peniarth; denoted by **Hn**. A valuable MS.; it is really of the A-type, though the Tales are strangely misplaced, and the Canon's Yeoman's Tale is missing. The readings frequently agree so closely with those of E. (no. 40) that it is, to some extent, almost a duplicate of it. Printed as the second MS. in the Six-text. It also contains Chaucer's Boethius (imperfect).

- 42.** The 'Petworth' MS., belonging to Lord Leconfield; denoted by **Pt**. A folio MS., on vellum, of high value. Formerly in the possession of the Earl of Egremont (Todd's Illustrations, p. 118). Of the D-type, including Gamelyn; but the Shipman and Prioress wrongly precede the Man of Law. Printed as the fifth MS. in the Six-text.

- 43.** The 'Holkham' MS., noted by Todd (Illustrations, p. 127) as then belonging to Mr. Coke, of Norfolk, and now belonging to the Earl of Leicester. The Tales are out of order; perhaps the leaves are misarranged. Imperfect in various places; has no Parson's Tale.

- 44.** The 'Helmingham' MS., at Helmingham Hall, Suffolk, belonging to Lord Tollemache. On paper and vellum; about 1460 A.D. For a specimen, see the Shipman's Prologue, printed in the Six-text, in the Preface, p. ix\*. Either of the C-type or the D-type.

- 45-48.** Four MSS. in the collection of the late Sir Thos. Phillipps, at Cheltenham, viz. nos. 6570, 8136, 8137, 8299.

Two of these are mentioned in Todd's Illustrations, p. 127, as being 'now [in 1810] in the collection of John P. Kemble, Esq., and in that belonging to the late Duke of Roxburghe; the latter is remarkably beautiful, and is believed to have been once the property of Sir Henry Spelman.' No. 8299 contains the Clerk's Tale only.

- 49-52.** Four MSS. belonging to the Earl of Ashburnham; numbered 124-127 in the Appendix. Of these, no. 124 wants the end of the Man of Law's Tale and the beginning of the Squire's, and therefore belongs to either the C-type or D-type. Nos. 125 and 126 are imperfect. No. 127 seems to be complete.

- 53.** A MS. belonging to the Duke of Devonshire, at Chatsworth; and formerly to Sir N. L'Estrange. (Of the A-type.)

- 54.** A MS. belonging to Sir Henry Ingilby, of Ripley Castle, Yorkshire. (Of the A-type.)

- 55.** A MS. belonging to the Duke of Northumberland, at Alnwick; and formerly to Mrs. Thynne. (Of the A-type.)

- 56.** A MS. now (in 1891) in the possession of Lady Cardigan.

- 57-59.** Tyrwhitt uses the symbol 'Ask. 1' to denote a MS. lent to him by the late Dr. Askew. He also uses the symbols 'Ch.' and 'N.' to denote 'two MSS. described in the Preface to Urry's edition, the one as belonging to Chas. Cholmondeley, Esq. of Vale Royal, in Cheshire, and the other to Mr. Norton, of Southwick, in Hampshire.' Of these, 'Ch.' is now Lord Delamere's MS., described by Dr. Furnivall in Notes and Queries, 4 Ser. ix. 353. The others I cannot trace.

In the first five editions, the Canterbury Tales were published separately.

1. Caxton; about 1477-8, from a poor MS. Copies are in the British Museum, Merton College, and in the Pepysian Library (no. 2053).
2. Caxton; about 1483, from a better MS. A perfect copy exists in St. John's College Library, Oxford. Caxton bravely issued this new edition because he had found that his former one was faulty.
3. Pynson; about 1493. Copied from Caxton's 2nd edition.
4. Wynkyn de Worde; in 1498. In the British Museum.
5. Pynson; in 1526. Copied from Caxton's 2nd edition.

After this the Canterbury Tales were invariably issued with the rest of Chaucer's Works, until after 1721. Some account of these editions is given in the Preface to the Minor Poems, in vol. i.; which see. They are: Thynne's three editions, in 1532, 1542, and 1550 (the last is undated); Stowe's edition, 1561; Speght's editions, in 1598, 1602, and 1687; Urry's edition, in 1721.

Two modernised editions of the Canterbury Tales were published in London in 1737 or 1740, and in 1741.

Next came: 'Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, to which is added, an Essay on his Language and Versification; an introductory discourse; notes, and a glossary. By Thomas Tyrwhitt, London, 1775-8, 8vo, 5 vols.' A work of high literary value, to which I am greatly indebted for many necessary notes. Reprinted in 1798 in 4to, 2 vols., by the University of Oxford; and again, at London, in 1822, in post 8vo, 5 vols.; (by Pickering) in 1830, 8vo, 5 vols.; and (by Moxon) in 1845, in 1 vol. imp. 8vo. The last of these adds poor texts of the rest of Chaucer's Works, from old black-letter editions, with which Tyrwhitt had nothing to do. In Tyrwhitt's text, the number of grammatical errors is very large, and he frequently introduces words into the text without authority. For some account of the later editions of Chaucer's Works, see the Introduction to the Legend of Good Women, in vol. iii. I may note, by the way, that the editions by Wright, Bell, and Morris are all founded on MS. Harl. 7334, a very unsafe MS. in some respects; see p. viii (above).

It is necessary to add here a few words of warning. Wright's edition, though it has many merits, turns out, in practice, to be dangerously untrustworthy. He frequently inserts words, borrowed from Tyrwhitt's edition (which he heartily condemns as being full of errors in grammar), without the least indication that they are *not in the MS.* This becomes the more serious when we find, upon examination, that Tyrwhitt had likewise no authority for some of such insertions, but simply introduced them, by guess, to fill up a line in a way that pleased him. For example, A 628 runs thus, in all the seven MSS.:--

'Of his visage children were afred.' It is quite correct; for 'visag-e' is trisyllabic. Tyrwhitt did not know this, and counted the syllables as *two* only, neglecting the final *e*. The line seemed then too short; so he inserted *sore* before *afred*, thus ruining the scansion. Wright follows suit, and inserts *sore*, though it is not in his MS.; giving no notice at all of what he has done. Bell follows suit, and the word is even preserved in Morris; but the latter prints the word in italics, to shew that it is not in the MS. Nor is it in the Six-text.

I shall not adduce more instances, but shall content myself with saying that, until the publications of the Chaucer Society appeared, no reader had the means of knowing what the best MS. texts were really like. All who have been accustomed to former (complete) editions have necessarily imbibed hundreds of false impressions, and have necessarily accepted numberless theories as to the scansion of lines which they will, in course of due time, be prepared to abandon. In the course of my work, it has been made clear to me that Chaucer's text has been manipulated and sophisticated, frequently in most cunning and plausible ways, to a far greater extent than I could have believed to be possible. This is not a pleasant subject, and I only mention it for the use of scholars. Such variations fortunately seldom affect the sense; but they vitiate the scansion, the grammar, and the etymology in many cases. Of course it will be understood that I am saying no more than I can fully substantiate.

It is absolutely appalling to read such a statement as the following in Bell's edition, vol. i. p. 60. 'All deviations, either from Mr. Wright's edition, or from the original MS., are pointed out in the footnotes for the ultimate satisfaction of the reader.' For the instances in which this is really done are very rare indeed, in spite of the large number of such deviations.

Of Tyrwhitt's text, it is sufficient to remark that it was hardly possible, at that date, for a better text to have been produced. The rules of Middle English grammar had not been formulated, so that we are not surprised to find that he constantly makes the past tense of a weak verb monosyllabic, when it should be dissyllabic, and treats the past participle as dissyllabic, when it should be monosyllabic: which makes wild work with the scansion. It is also to be regretted that he based his text upon the faulty black-letter editions, though he took a great deal of pains in collating them with various MSS.

On the other hand, his literary notes are full of learning and research; and the number of admirable illustrations by which he has efficiently elucidated the text is very great. His reputation as one of the foremost of our literary critics is thoroughly established, and needs no comment.

Mr. Wright's notes are likewise excellent, and resulted from a wide reading. I have also found some most useful hints in the notes to Bell's edition. Of all such sources of information I have been only too glad to avail myself, as is more fully shewn in the succeeding volume.

#### SS 4. PLAN OF THE PRESENT EDITION.

The text of the present edition of the Canterbury Tales is founded upon that of the Ellesmere MS. (E.) It has been collated throughout with that of the other six MSS. published by the Chaucer Society. Of these seven MSS., the Harleian MS. 7334 (H1.) was printed separately. The other six were printed in the valuable 'Six-text' edition, to which I constantly have occasion to refer, in parallel columns. The six MSS. are: E. (Ellesmere), Hn. (Hengwrt), Cm. (Cambridge, Gg. 4. 27), Cp. (Corpus Coll., Oxford), Pt. (Petworth), and Ln. (Lansdowne). MSS. E. Hn. Cm. represent the earliest type

(A) of the text; Hl., a transitional type (B); Cp. and Ln., a still later type (C); and Pt., the latest of all (D), but hardly differing from C.

In using these terms, 'earliest,' &c., I do not refer to the age of the MSS., but to the type of text which they exhibit.

In the list of MSS. given above, Hl. is no. 1; E., Hn., Cm., are nos. 40, 41, and 28; and Cp., Pt., Ln., are nos. 24, 42, and 10 respectively.

Of all the MSS., E. is the best in nearly every respect. It not only gives good lines and good sense, but is also (usually) grammatically accurate and thoroughly well spelt. The publication of it has been a very great boon to all Chaucer students, for which Dr. Furnivall will be ever gratefully remembered. We must not omit, at the same time, to recognise the liberality and generosity of the owner of the MS., who so freely permitted such full use of it to be made; the same remark applies, equally, to the owners of the Hengwrt and the Petworth MSS. The names of the Earl of Ellesmere, Mr. Wm. W. E. Wynne of Peniarth, and Lord Leconfield have deservedly become as 'familiar as household words' to many a student of Chaucer.

This splendid MS. has also the great merit of being complete, requiring no supplement from any other source, except in the few cases where a line or two has been missed. For example, it does not contain A 252 *b-c* (found in Hn. only); nor A 2681-2 (also not in Hn. or Cm.); nor B 1163-1190 (also not in Hn. or Cm.); nor B 1995 (very rare indeed).

It is slightly imperfect in B 2510, 2514, 2525, 2526, 2623-4, 2746, 2967. It drops B 3147-8, C 103-4, C 297-8 (not in Hn. Cm. Pt.), E 1358-61, G 564-5; and has a few defects in the Parson's Tale in I 190, 273, &c. In the Tale of Melibeus, the French original shews that *all* the MSS. have lost B 2252-3, 2623-4, which have to be supplied by translation.

None of the seven MSS. have B 4637-4652; these lines are genuine, but were probably meant to be cancelled. They only occur, to my knowledge, in four MSS., nos. 7, 11, 25, and 29; though found also in the old black-letter editions.

On the other hand, E. preserves lines rarely found elsewhere. Such are A 3155-6, 3721-2, F 1455-6, 1493-9; twelve genuine lines, none of which are in Tyrwhitt, and only the first two are in Wright. Observe also the stanza in the footnote to p. 424; with which compare B 3083, on p. 241.

The text of the Ellesmere MS. has only been corrected in cases where careful collation suggests a desirable improvement. Every instance of this character is invariably recorded in the footnotes. Thus, in A 8, the grammar and scansion require *half-e*, not *half*; though, curiously enough, this correct form appears in Hl. only, among all the seven MSS. In very difficult cases, other MSS. (besides the seven) have been collated, but I have seldom gained much by it. The chief additional MSS. thus used are Dd.=Cambridge, Dd. 4. 24 (no. 29 above); Slo. or Sl.=Sloane 1685 (no. 8); Roy. or Rl.=Royal 18 C 2 (no. 6); Harl.=Harleian 1758 (see p. 645); Li. or Lich.=Lichfield MS. (no. 35), for the Canon's Yeoman's Tale; and others that are sufficiently indicated.

I have paid especial attention to the suffixes required by Middle-English grammar, to the scansion, and to the pronunciation; and I suppose that this is the first complete edition in which the spelling has been tested by phonetic considerations. With a view to making the spelling a little clearer and more consistent, I have ventured to adopt certain methods which I here explain.

In certain words of variable spelling in E., such as *whan* or *whanne*, *than* or *thanne*, I have adopted that form which the scansion requires; but the MS. is usually right.

E. usually has *hise* for *his* with a plural sb., as in l. 1; I use *his* always, except in prose. E. has *hir*, *here*, for her, their; I use *hir* only, except at the end of a line.

E. uses the endings *-ight* or *-yght*, *-inde* or *-ynde*; I use *-ight* *-inde* only; and, in general, I use *i* to represent short *i*, and *y* to represent long *i*, as in *king*, *wyf*. Such is the usual habit of the scribe, but he often changes *i* into *y* before *m* and *n*, to make his writing clearer; such a precaution is needless in modern printing. Thus, in l. 42, I replace the scribe's *bigynne* by *biginne*; and in l. 78, I replace his *pilgrymage* by *pilgrimage*. This makes the text easier to read.

For a like reason, where equivalent spellings occur, I select the simpler; writing *couthé* (as in Pt.) for *kowthe*, *sote* for *soote*, *sege* for *seege*, and so on. In words such as *our* or *oure*, *your* or *youre*, *hir* or *hire*, *neuer* or *neuere*, I usually give the simpler forms, without the final *-e*, when the *-e* is obviously silent.

For consonantal *u*, as in *neuer*, I write *v*, as in *never*. This is usual in all editions. But I could not bring myself to use *j* for *i* consonant; the anachronism is too great. *Never* for *neuer* is common in the fifteenth century, but *j* does not occur even in the first folio of Shakespeare. I therefore usually keep the capital *i* of the MSS. and of the Elizabethan printers, as in *Joye* (=joye) where initial, and the small *i*, as in *enioinen=enjoinen*) elsewhere. Those who dislike such conservatism may be comforted by the reflection that the sound rarely occurs.

The word *eye* has to be altered to *ye* at the end of a line, to preserve the rimes. The scribes usually write *eye* in the middle of a line, but when they come to it at the end of one, they are fairly puzzled. In l. 10, the scribe of Hn. writes *yhe*, and that of Ln. writes *yhe*; and the variations on this theme are most curious. The spelling *ye* (=ye) is, however, common; as in A 1096 (Cm., Pt.). I print it 'ye' to distinguish it from *ye*, the pl. pronoun.

These minute variations are, I trust, legitimate, and I have not recorded them. They cause trouble to the editor, but afford ease to the reader, which seems a sufficient justification for adopting them. But the scrupulous critic need not fear that the MS. has been departed from in any case, where it could make any phonetic difference, without due notice. Thus, in l. 9, where I have changed *foweles* into *fowles* as being a more usual form, the fact that *foweles* is the Ellesmere spelling is duly recorded in the footnotes. And so in other cases.

The footnotes do not record various readings where E. is correct as it stands; they have purposely been made as concise as possible. It would have been easy to multiply them fourfold without giving much information of value; this is not unfrequently done, but the gain is slight. With so good a MS. as the basis of the text, it did not seem desirable.

The following methods for shortening the footnotes have been adopted.

1. Sometimes only the readings of *some* of the MSS. are given. Thus at l. 9 (p. 1), I omit the readings of Cp. and of Cm. As a fact, neither of these MSS. contain the line; but it was not worth while to take up space by saying so. At l. 10 (p. 1), I again omit the readings of Cp. and of Cm., for the same reason; also of Ln., which is a poor MS., though here it agrees with Hl. (having *yhe*); also of Pt., which has *eyghe*, a spelling not here to be thought of. At l. 12, I just note that E. has *pilgrimage* (by mistake); of course this means that it should have had *pilgrimages* in the plural, as in other MSS., and as required by the rime.
2. At l. 23 (p. 2), the remark '*rest* was' implies that all the rest of the seven MSS. specially collated have 'was.' The word '*rest*' is a convenient abbreviation.
3. When, as at l. 53, I give *nacions* as a rejected reading of E. in the footnote, it will be understood that *naciouns* is a better spelling, justified by other MSS., and by other lines in E. itself. E.g., *naciouns* occurs in Hl. and Pt., and Cm. has *naciounys*.
4. I often use '*om.*' for '*omit*,' or '*omits*' as in the footnote to l. 188 (p. 6).
5. At l. 335 (p. 11), I give the footnote:--'*ever*] Hl. al.' This means that MS. Hl. has *al* instead of the word *ever* of the other MSS. It seemed worth noting; but *ever* is probably right.
6. At l. 520 (p. 16), the note is:--'*All but* Hl. *this was.*' That is, Hl. has *was*, as in the text; the rest have *this was*, where the addition of *this* sadly clogs the line.

With these hints, the footnotes present no difficulty.

As a rule, I have refrained from all emendation; but, in B 1189, I have ventured to suggest *physices*<sup>[3]</sup>, for reasons explained in the Notes. Those who prefer the reading *Phislyas* can adopt it.

For further details regarding particular passages, I beg leave to refer the reader to the Notes in vol. v.

#### SS 5. TABLE OF SYMBOLS DENOTING MSS.

Cm.--Cambridge Univ. Lib. Gg. 4. 27 (Ellesmere type). No. 28 in list.

Cp.--Carpus Chr. Coll., Oxford, no. 198. No. 24.

Dd.--Cambridge Univ. Lib. Dd. 4. 24 (Ellesmere type). No. 29.

E.--Ellesmere MS. (basis of the text). No. 40.

Harl.--Harl. 1758; Brit. Mus.; see p. 645. No. 4.

Hl.--Harl. 7334; British Museum. No. 1.

Hn.--Hengwrt MS. no. 154. No. 41.

Li. or Lich.--Lichfield MS.; see pp. 533-553. No. 35.

Ln.--Lansdowne 851; Brit. Mus. (Corpus type). No. 10.

Pt.--Petworth MS. No. 42.

Rl. or Roy.--Royal 18 C. II; Brit. Mus.; see p. 645. No. 6.

Seld.--Arch. Selden, B. 14; Bodleian Library. No. 18.

Sl. or Slo.--Sloane 1685; Brit. Mus.; see p. 645. No. 8.

#### SS 6. TABLE SHEWING THE VARIOUS WAYS OF NUMBERING THE LINES.

SIX-TEXT (as here)	TYRWHITT.	WRIGHT.
A--1-4422	1-4420 <sup>[4]</sup>	1-4420 <sup>[4]</sup>
B--1-1162	4421-5582	4421-5582
B--1163-2156	12903-13894 <sup>[5]</sup>	14384-15374 <sup>[6]</sup>
B--2157-3078 <sup>[7]</sup>	Prose; not counted <sup>[8]</sup> .	Prose; not counted.
B--3079-3564	13895-14380	15375-15860
B--3565-3652	14685-14772	15861-15948
B--3653-3956	14381-14684	15949-16262
B--3957-4652	14773-15468	16253-16932 <sup>[9]</sup>
<i>Spurious</i> ; see p. 289, note.	11929-11934	13410-13415
C--1-968	11935-12902	13416-14383
D (2294 lines); E (2440); F(1624)	5583-11928 <sup>[10]</sup>	5583-11928
G--1-1481	15469-16949	11929-13409
H--(362); I 1-74	16950-17385	16933-17368

Hence, to obtain the order of the lines in Tyrwhitt, see A-B 1162; D, E, F; p. 289, footnote; C; B 1163-2156, 3079-3564, 3653-3956, 3565-3652, 3957-4652; G, H, I.

Or (by pages), see pp. 1-164, 320-508, 289 (footnote), 290-319, 165-256 (which includes Melibeus), 259-268, 256-258, 269-289, 509-end.

To facilitate reference, the numbering of the lines in Tyrwhitt's text is marked at the top of every page, preceded by the letter 'T.'; lines which Tyrwhitt omits are marked '[T. om.', as on p. 90; and his paragraphs (all numbered in this edition) are carefully preserved in Melibeus and the Parson's Tale, which are in prose. In the Prologue, after l. 250, his numbering is given within marks of parenthesis.

The lines in every piece are also numbered *separately*, within marks of parenthesis, as (10), (20), on p. 26. This numbering (borrowed from Dr. Murray) agrees with the references given in the New English Dictionary. It also gives, in most cases, either exactly or approximately, the references to Dr. Morris's edition, who adopts a similar method, with a few variations of detail. The lines in Bell's edition are not numbered at all.

To obtain the order in Wright's edition, see pp. 1-164, 320-554, 289 (footnote), 290-319, 165-289, 555-end. The variations are fewer.

Some may find it more convenient to observe the names of the Tales.

Tyrwhitt's order of the Tales is as follows<sup>[11]</sup>--Prologue, Knight, Miller, Reeve, Cook--Man of Lawe--Wife, Friar, Sommour--Clerk, Merchant--Squire, Franklin--Doctor (Physician), Pardoner--Shipman, Prioress, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk<sup>[12]</sup>, Nun's Priest--Second Nun, Canon's Yeoman--Manciple--Parson.

#### SS7. THE FOUR LEADING TYPES OF THE MSS.

The four leading types of MSS. usually exhibit a variation in the order of the Tales, as well as many minor differences. I only note here the former (omitting Gamelyn, which is absent from MSS. of the A-type, and from some of the D-type).

- A.--1. Prologue, Knight, Miller, Reeve, Cook.
- 2. Man of Lawe.
- 3. Wife of Bath, Friar, Sompnour.
- 4. Clerk, Merchant.
- 5. Squire, Franklin.
- 6. Doctor, Pardoner.
- 7. Shipman, Prioress, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk, Nun's Priest.
- 8. Second Nun, Canon's Yeoman.
- 9. Manciple, (*slightly linked to*) Parson.

B.--Places 8 before 6. Order: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 6, 7, 9.

C.--Not only places 8 before 6 (as B), but splits 5 into 5 a

(Squire) and 5 *b* (Franklin), and places 5 *a* before 3. Order: 1, 2, 5 *a*, 3, 4, 5 *b*, 8, 6, 7, 9.

D.--As C, but further splits 4 into 4 *a* (Clerk), and 4 *b* (Merchant), and places 4 *b* after 5 *a*. Order: 1, 2, 5 *a*, 4 *b*, 3, 4 *a*, 5 *b*, 8, 6, 7, 9. (D. is really a mere variety of C., with an external difference.)

Observe the position of the Franklin. Thus: A. Squire, Franklin, Doctor. B. Squire, Franklin, Second Nun. C. Merchant, Franklin, Second Nun. D. Clerk, Franklin, Second Nun.

For further remarks on this subject, see vol. v.

## ERRATA

N.B. The following are all the Errata that I have observed. Those marked with an asterisk should be noticed. The rest are unimportant.

- P. 14. A 467. Perhaps the full stop at the end of the line should be a colon.
- P. 15. Footnote to A 503. For 'Hl. alone' read 'Tyrwhitt.'
- P. 85. A 3016. For eye read ye
- \*P. 110. A 3822. For celle read selle
- \*P. 131. B 59, 60. For eek and seek read eke and seke
- P. 133. B 115. Insert marks of quotation at the beginning and end of the line.
- P. 133. B 120, 121. Insert marks of quotation at the beginning of l. 120 and at the end of l. 121.
- P. 134. In the headline; for T. 4454 read T. 4554.
- P. 146. B 540, 541, 547. For cristen read Cristen
- P. 146. B 544 For cristianitee read Cristianitee. So also at p. 525; G 535.
- P. 194. B 2043. *Dele; after spicerie*
- P. 202. B 2222. For yevynge read yevinge
- P. 205. B 2253. For owe read ow
- P. 207. B 2303. For se read see
- P. 219, footnotes. For 2251 and 2252 read 2551 and 2552
- \*P. 222. B 2624. For Iurisdiccion read Iurisdiccioun
- P. 232, ll. 9, 10. *Dele the quotation-mark after certeyne, and insert it after another.*
- \*P. 245. B 3230. For my read ny
- \*P. 253. B 3490. For warre read werre
- P. 271. B 4011. For stope a better reading is stape
- P. 285. B 4510. For charitee perhaps read Charitee
- P. 285. B 4541. For chide read chyde
- P. 299. C 291. Either read advocas, or note that the t in advocats is silent.
- \*P. 309. C 601. For opinoun read opiniou
- P. 318. C 955. For Thay read They
- P. 338. In the headline; for 6225 read 6235.
- P. 339. In the headline; for 6226 read 6236.
- P. 344. D 846. For But if read But-if
- P. 345. D 859. For All read Al
- P. 354. Footnotes; last line. For 1205 read 1204
- P. 355. D 1219, 1227. For Chese and chese read Chees and chees.
- P. 363. D 1436. For But if read But-if
- P. 387. D 2242. *Perhaps insert a comma after himself*
- P. 419. E 994. For gouernance read governance
- P. 428. E 1304, 1306. Insert quotation-mark at the end of l. 1304, instead of the end of l. 1306.
- P. 438. E 1635. For Saue read Save

- P. 444. E 1866. *Insert Auctor opposite this line.*
- P. 449. E 2058. *For scorpion read scorpions; as the last syllable is accented.*
- P. 459. E 2418. *For bless read blesse*
- P. 461. F 20. After all, the right reading probably is that given by E. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl., but with the form *pietous* for *pitous* as in Troilus, iii. 1444, and v. 451. Read--And pietous and lust, alwey y-liche.
- P. 468. F 266. *For Cambynskan read Cambinskian.* So also at p. 480, first line.
- P. 474. F 462. *For sle read slee*
- P. 505, footnotes. *For 1527 read 1526*
- P. 527. G 558, footnote. *The real reading of E is--*
- And vndermeth he wered a surlys
- P. 543. G 1107. *For shall read shal*
- \*P. 545. G 1171. *For torned read terved.* [The reading in E is really terued=terved, i.e. stripped, flayed. The reading torned is a poor substitution.]
- \*P. 548. G 1274. *For torn, read terve,*
- \*P. 560. H 144. *For hept read kept*
- P. 626. Footnotes; last line. *For E. Seld. Ln. beauteis; read E. Seld. Ln. beautees;*
- P. 634. I 955. *For Daniel, read David.* [N.B. MSS. E. Cm. Danyel; *the rest*, Dauid. Probably Chaucer wrote 'Daniel' at first, and afterwards corrected it (by the original) to 'David.' Nevertheless, 'Daniel' is a good reading.]
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## ADDITIONS

TO

### 'THE MINOR POEMS' IN VOL. I.

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[Further researches have brought to light some more of Chaucer's Minor Poems. I first met with the excellent Balade on 'Womanly Noblesse' in MS. Phillipps 9030 (now MS. Addit. 34360) on June 1, 1894; and on the following day I noticed in MS. Harl. 7578 (partly described in vol. i. p. 58) two Complaints that may perhaps be attributed to our author. As, from the nature of the case, they could not be included in Vol. i, they are inserted here.]

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### XXIV. WOMANLY NOBLESSE.

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#### **Balade that Chaucier made.**

So hath my herte caught in remembraunce  
Your beaute hool, and stedfast governaunce,  
    Your vertues alle, and your hy noblesse,  
That you to serve is set al my plesaunce;  
So wel me lykth your womanly contenaunce,  
    Your fresshe fetures and your comlynesse,  
That, whyl I live, my herte to his maistresse,  
You hath ful chose, in trew perseveraunce,  
    Never to chaunge, for no maner distresse.

From MS. Addit. 34360, fol. 21, back (with ascription by Shirley); hitherto unprinted. Rejected readings of the MS. are here given.  
1. hert. 2. Yowre (*throughout*); hoole; stidefast. 3. al; hie. 4. yow; sette. 5. likith; *for womanly* perhaps read *wyfly*. 6: comlynesse. 7: whiles; myn hert; maystresse. 8: triev.

And sith I [you] shal do this observaunce  
Al my lyf, withouten displesaunce,  
    You for to serve with al my besynesse,  
[Taketh me, lady, in your obeisaunce,]  
And have me somewhat in your souvenaunce.  
    My woful herte suffreth greet duresse;

And [loke] how humbl[e]ly, with al simplesse,  
My wil I conforme to your ordenaunce,  
As you best list, my peynes to redresse.

10: *I insert* you. 11: (*Accent on Al*); live. 12: besynesse. 13. *Dr. Furnivall supplies this lost line; cf. Complaint to Pity, l. 84.* 15. hert suffith  
grete. 16: *I supply* loke; humbly. 17: ordynaunce. 18: for to (*I omit* for).

Considring eek how I hange in balaunce  
In your servyse; swich, lo! is my chaunce,  
Abyding grace, whan that your gentilnesse  
Of my gret wo list doon allegeaunce,  
And with your pite me som wyse avaunce,  
In ful rebating of my hevinesse;  
And thinkth, by reson, wommanly noblesse  
Shuld nat desyre for to doon outrance  
Ther-as she findeth noon unbuxumnesse.

19: eke. 20: service suche loo. 21: (*Perhaps omit* that). 22: grete woo; do. 23: wise. 24: rebatyng; myn hevynesse. 25: And thynkith be raison that  
(*too long*). 26: desire; for til do the (*I omit* the). 27: fyndith non vn-.

*Lenvoye.*

Auctour of norture, lady of plesaunce,  
Soveraine of beaute, flour of wommanhede,  
Take ye non hede unto myn ignoraunce,  
But this receyveth of your goodlihede,  
Thinking that I have caught in remembraunce  
Your beaute hool, your stedfast governaunce.

29. Soueraigne; floure. 31. receyvith; goodelyhede. 32. Thynkyng. 33. hole; stidefast.

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## XXV. COMPLAINT TO MY MORTAL FOE.

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Al hoolly youres, withouten otheres part!  
Wherfore? y-wis, that I ne can ne may  
My service chaungen; thus of al suche art  
The lerninge I desyre for ever and ay.  
And evermore, whyl that I live may,  
In trouthe I wol your servant stille abyde,  
Although my wo encrese day by day,  
Til that to me be come the dethes tyde.

From MS. Harl. 7578, fol. 15. At the bottom of fol. 14, back, is the last line of Chaucer's Complaint to Pity, beneath which is written 'Balade.' But the present poem is really a Complaint, like the preceding one. Rejected readings of the MS. are here given. There is no title in the MS. except 'Balade.'

1. holly; others parte. 2. I wisse. 3. By (*surely an error for My*); arte. 4. lernynge; desire; euer (*and u for v often*). 5. while; leue. 6.rought (*sic*);  
youre; abide. 7. be (*for by*).

Seint Valentyne! to you I renouele  
My woful lyf, as I can, compleyninge;  
But, as me thinketh, to you a quarele  
Right greet I have, whan I, rememberinge  
Bitwene, how kinde, ayeins the yeres springe,  
Upon your day, doth ech foul chese his make;  
And you list not in swich comfort me bringe,  
That to her grace my lady shulde me take.

9. valentine; Renouele. 10. compleyninge. 12. grete; whanne; remembringe. 13. Bytwene howe kende. 14. Vppon youre; doith eche foule. 15.  
lyste; suche comforde.

Wherfor unto you, Cupide, I beseche,

Furh with Vēnus, noble lusty goddesse,  
Sith ye may best my sorowe lesse and eche;  
And I, your man, oppressed with distresse,  
Can not crye 'help!' but to your gentilnesse:  
So voucheth sauf, sith I, your man, wol dye,  
My ladies herte in pite folde and presse,  
That of my peyne I finde remedye.

21. cry helpe; vnto (*for* to); gentelnesse. 22. safē. 24. peine; fynde I may (*for* I finde); remydie.

To your conning, my hertes right princesse,  
My mortal fo, whiche I best love and serve,  
I recommaunde my boistous lewednesse.  
And, for I can not altherbest deserve  
Your grace, I preye, as he that wol nat swerve,  
That I may fare the better for my trouthe;  
Sith I am youres, til deth my herte kerve,  
On me, your man, now mercy have and routhe.

25. konnyngge; princes. 26. foo. 27. leudenesse. 29. prey; swerue. 30. trouth. 31. herte wol kerue (*I omit* wol). 32. haue; routh.

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## XXVI. COMPLAINT TO MY LODE-STERRE.

---

Of gretter cause may no wight him compleyne  
Than I; for love hath set me in swich caas  
That lasse loye and more encrees of peyne  
Ne hath no man; wherfore I crye 'allas!'  
A thousand tyme, whan I have tyme and space.  
For she, that is my verray sorowes grounde,  
Wol with her grace no wyse my sorowes sounde.

From MS. Harl. 7578, fol. 15, back. No title but 'Balade'; but it is really a Complaint. Rejected readings of the MS. are here given.

2. y (*for* I); hath me sette in swiche. 3. encrese. 5. whenne; haue. 6. sheo; werry (*for* verray). 7. Wolle; wise; (sounde means heal).

And that, shulde be my sorowes hertes leche,  
Is me ageins, and maketh me swich werre,  
That shortly, [in] al maner thought and speche,  
Whether it be that I be nigh or ferre,  
I misse the grace of you, my lode-sterre,  
Which causeth me on you thus for to crye;  
And al is it for lakke of remedye.

9. Ys; swide (*miswritten* for swiche). 10. *I supply* in; alle manere. 11. Whethre. 12. mys; loode-. 13. Whiche. 14. alle; remydie.

My soverain loye thus is my mortal fo;  
She that shulde causen al my lustiness  
List in no wyse of my sorowes saye 'ho!'  
But let me thus darraine, in heviness,  
With woful thoughtes and my grete distresse,  
The which she might right wele, [at] every tyde,  
If that her liste, out of my herte gyde.

15. souueraine; foo. 16. alle; lustynesse. 17. Liste; wise; say hoo. 18. lete; heuinesse. 19. wooful; grette. 20. sheo; *I supply* at; euery. 21. oute; guyde.

But it is so, that her list, in no wyse,  
Have pite on my woful besinesse;  
And I ne can do no maner servyse  
That may me torne out of my hevinesse;  
So wolde god, that she now wolde impresse

Right in her herte my trouthe and eek good wille;  
And let me not, for lakke of mercy, spille.

22. liste; wise. 23. Haue pitee. 24. kanne; manere seruice. 25. be (*for* me); oute; heuynesse. 26. sheo nowe. 27. herre (*for* her); trough (*sic*); eke.  
28. lette; lake.

Now wele I woot why thus I smerte sore;  
For couthe I wele, as othere folkes, feyne,  
Than neded me to live in peyne no more,  
But, whan I were from you, unteye my reyne,  
And, for the tyme, drawe in another cheyne.  
But wolde god that alle swich were y-knowe,  
And duely punisshed of hye and lowe.

29. woote; why that I thus smerte so sore (*two syllables too much*). 30. couth; sayne (*for feyne*). 31. Thanne nedes; lyue. 32. whenne; vntey. 33. into (*for in*); a-nothre. 35. punisshede both of high (*I omit both*).

Swich lyf defye I, bothe in thoughte and worde,  
For yet me were wel lever for to sterue  
Than in my herte for to make an horde  
Of any falsehood; for, til deth to-kerve  
My herte and body, shal I never swerve  
From you, that best may be my fynal cure,  
But, at your liste, abyde myn aventure;

36. Swiche; defie. 37. yette; sterue. 38. Thanne; hoorde. 39. falshode; til deth the kerue (*but see note on p. xxxii*). 40. neuere swerue. 41. youre (*for my*). 42. atte youre; abide.

And preye to you, noble seint Valentyne,  
My ladies herte that ye wolde embrase,  
And make her pite to me more enclyne  
That I may stonden in her noble grace  
In hasty tyme, whyl I have lyves space:  
For yit wiste I never noon, of my lyve,  
So litel honyn in so fayre hyve.

43. prey; sainte valentine. 45. pitee. 46. here. 47. whiles; haue lyues. 48. yitte; neuere none; lyfe. 49. hiue.

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## NOTES TO THE PRECEDING POEMS.

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XXIV.—I take the title from l. 25; cf. Troil. i. 287.

The metre exhibits the nine-line stanza, as in Anelida, 211-9; but the same rimes recur in all three stanzas. The six-line Envoy, with the rhyme-formula *a b a b a a*, is unique in Chaucer. There are nineteen lines ending in *-aunce*, twelve in *-esse*, and two in *-ede*.

1. Note how ll. 1 and 2 are re-echoed in ll. 32, 33. For a similar effect, see Anelida, 211, 350.

8. *ful chose*, fully chosen; parallel to *ful drive* in C. T., F 1230.

14. *souvenance*, remembrance; not found elsewhere in Chaucer.

16. *humblely* is trisyllabic; see Leg. 156, Troil. ii. 1719, v. 1354.

20. *lo* emphasises *swich*; cf. *lo, this*, T. v. 54; *lo, which*, T. iv. 1231.

22. *allegeaunce, alleviation*; the verb *allege* is in the Glossary.

26. *outrance*, extreme violence, great hurt; see Godefroy.

27. *unbuxumnesse*, unsubmissiveness; cf. *buxumnesse*, Truth, 15.

XXV.—I take the title from l. 26; cf. Compl. to his Lady, 41, 64.

1. Cf Amorous Complaint, 87; Troil. v. 1318, i. 960.

3. 'Love hath me taught no more of his art,' &c.; Compl. to his Lady, 42-3.

9. Cf Compl. of Mars, 13, 14; p. xxx above, l. 43; Parl. Foules, 386-9; Amorous Complaint, 85-6.

19. *eche*, augment; 'hir sorwes *eche*', T. i. 705.

27. 'And to your trouthe ay I me recomaunde;' T. v. 1414. 'I am a *boistous* man;' C. T., H 211.

XXVI.--I take the title from l. 12; see T. v. 232, 638, 1392.

7. *sounde*, heal, cure; as in Anelida, 242.

8. Perhaps read *hertes sorwes leche*; see T. ii. 1066.

10. Cf 'as in his speche,' T. ii. 1069.

26. *impresse*; cf T. ii. 1371.

28. *spille*; cf Compl. to his Lady, 121.

32. *reyne*, bridle. For this image, cf Anelida, 184.

39. MS. *deth the kerue*. As *e* and *o* are constantly confused, the prefix *to* (written apart) may have looked like *te*, and would easily be altered to *the*. Cf *forkerveth* in the Manc. Tale, H 340.

47. Here *spac-e* rimes with *embrac-e*, but in l. 5 it rimes with *allas*. This variation is no worse than the riming of *embrace* with *compas* in Proverbs, 8 (vol. i. p. 407). Cf *plac-e* in C.T., B 1910, with its variant *plas*, B 1971.

N.B. The Complaints numbered XXV and XXVI are obviously by the same author; compare XXV. 26 with XXVI. 15; XXV. 9 with XXVI. 43; and XXV. 29-31 with XXVI. 39, 40. They were probably written nearly at the same time.

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## THE CANTERBURY TALES.

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### GROUP A. THE PROLOGUE.

#### Here biginneth the Book of the Tales of Caunterbury.

Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote  
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,  
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,  
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;  
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth  
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth  
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne  
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne,  
And smale fowles maken melodye,  
That slepen al the night with open ye,  
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages):  
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages  
(And palmers for to seken straunge strandes)  
To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;  
And specially, from every shires ende  
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,  
The holy blisful martir for to seke,  
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.

HEADING. From E. 1. E. hise; rest his. 8. Hl. halfē; rest half 9. Hl. fowles; Pt. Ln. foules; E. Hn. foweles. 10. Hl. yhe; Hn. Iye; E. eye. 12. Pt. Ln. Than; E. Thanne. E. pilgrimage (by mistake). 13. Pt. Hl. palmers; E. Palmeres. 16. Hn. Caunter-; E. Cauntur-. 18. E. seeke.

Bifel that, in that seson on a day,  
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay  
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage  
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,  
At night was come in-to that hostelrye  
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,  
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle  
In felawshipe, and pilgirms were they alle,  
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;  
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,  
And wel we weren esed atte beste.  
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,  
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,  
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,  
And made forward erly for to ryse,

To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.

19. Hn. Bifēl; E. Bifil. 23. E. were; *rest* was. 24. E. Hn. compaignye. 26, 32. E. fēlaweshepe. Hl. pilgryms; E. pilgrimes. 34. E. oure.

But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space,  
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,  
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,  
To telle yow al the condicoun  
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,  
And whiche they weren, and of what degree;  
And eek in what array that they were inne:  
And at a knight than wol I first biginne.

35. E. Hn. nathelees. 40. Hl. weren; *rest* were, weere.

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,  
That fro the tyme that he first bigan  
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye,  
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.  
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,  
And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre)  
As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,  
And ever honoured for his worthinessse.

49. Hn. Hl. as; *rest* as in.

At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne;  
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne  
Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.  
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,  
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.  
In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be  
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.  
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,  
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See  
At many a noble aryve hadde he be.  
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,  
And foughten for our feith at Tramissene  
In listes thryes, and ay slain his foo.  
This ilke worthy knight had been also  
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye,  
Ageyn another hethen in Turkye:  
And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.  
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,  
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.  
He never yet no vileinye ne sayde  
In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.  
He was a verray parfit gentil knight.  
But for to tellen yow of his array,  
His hors were gode, but he was nat gay.  
Of fustian he wered a gipoun  
Al bismotered with his habergeoun;  
For he was late y-come from his viage,  
And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

53. E. nacions. 56. E. seege. 60. Hl. ariue; Cm. aryue; E. Hn. armee; Cp. Ln. arme. 62. E. oure. 64. Pt. had; *rest* hadde. 67. E. -moore. 68. E. Hn. Cm. were; *rest* was. 74. E. Pt. weren; Hl. Ln. was; *rest* were. Hl. Hn. he ne was.

With him ther was his sone, a yong SQUYER,  
A lovyere, and a lusty bacheler,  
With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.  
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.

Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,  
And wonderly deliver, and greet of strengthe.  
And he had been somtyme in chivachye,  
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,  
And born him wel, as of so litel space,  
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.  
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede  
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.  
Singinge he was, or floytinge, al the day;  
He was as fresh as is the month of May.  
Short was his goune, with sleves longe and wyde.  
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.  
He coude songes make and wel endyte,  
Iuste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryte,  
So hote he lovede, that by nightertale  
He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale.  
Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,  
And carf biforn his fader at the table.

83. Ln. euen; *rest* euene. 84. Hl. Ln. delyuer; *rest* delyuere. E. Hn. of greet; Cm. of gret; *rest* gret of 85. Ln. had. 87. E. weel. 89, 90. E. meede, rede. 92. E. fresh. E. in; *rest* is. E. Hn. Monthe; Cp. month; Hl. Pt. Ln. moneth; Cm. monyth. 96. E. weel. 98. Hl. Cp. sleep; *rest* slepte. E. - moore. 99. Hl. Cp. Ln. lowly; E. Hn. Pt. lowly.

A YEMAN hadde he, and servaunts namo  
At that tyme, for him liste ryde so;  
And he was clad in cote and hood of grene;  
A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene  
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily;  
(Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:  
His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),  
And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.  
A not-heed hadde he, with a broun visage.  
Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage.  
Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,  
And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,  
And on that other syde a gay daggere,  
Harnised wel, and sharp as point of spere;  
A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene.  
An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene;  
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

101. E. seruantz. 102. E. soo. 104. Hl. Cp. Pt. Ln. pocok. Cm. bryghte; *rest* bright. 107. E. Hise. 108, 111. E. baar. 113. E. oother. 115. Hn. Cristofe; E. Cristophere. E. sheene.

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,  
That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy;  
Hir gretteste ooth was but by seyt Loy;  
And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.  
Ful wel she song the service divyne,  
Entuned in hir nose ful semely;  
And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,  
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,  
For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.  
At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;  
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,  
Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.  
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,  
That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.  
In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.  
Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,  
That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene

Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.  
Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,  
And sikerly she was of greet disport,  
And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port,  
And peyned hir to countrefete chere  
Of court, and been estatlich of manere,  
And to ben holden digne of reverence.  
But, for to speken of hir conscience,  
She was so charitable and so pitous,  
She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous  
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.  
Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde  
With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-breed.  
But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,  
Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte:  
And al was conscience and tendre herte.  
Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was;  
Hir nose tretys; hir eyen greye as glas;  
Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed;  
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;  
It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe;  
For, hardily, she was nat undergroe.  
Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war.  
Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar  
A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene;  
And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene,  
On which ther was first write a crowned A,  
And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.

122. E. soong. 123. E. semeely. 131. Cm. brest; E. Hn. brist. 132. Cp. moche; Cm. meche; E. Hn. muchel. Hl. lest; E. Hn. Cm. list. 134. Hl. was; *rest* ther was. 137. E. Hn. disport; *rest* disport. 140. E. to been; Hl. Hn. *omit* to. 144. Hl. Hn. Cp. Ln. sawe; E. saugh; Cm. seye. 146. Pt. Ln. had; *rest* hadde. 148. Ln. wepped; *rest* wepte; *read* weep; cf. l. 2878. E. any; *rest* oon, on, one. 151. E. semly. E. wympul; Hn. wympel. 160. E. Hn. brooch; *rest* broche.

Another NONNE with hir hadde she,  
That was hir chapeleyne, and PREESTES three.

A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistreye,  
An out-rydere, that lovede venerye;  
A manly man, to been an abbot able.  
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable:  
And, whan he rood, men mighte his brydel here  
Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere,  
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-belle,  
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.  
The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,  
By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,  
This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace,  
And held after the newe world the space.  
He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,  
That seith, that hunters been nat holy men;  
Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,  
Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees;  
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre.  
But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre;  
And I seyde, his opinoun was good.  
What sholde he studie, and make him-selven wood,  
Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,  
Or swinken with his handes, and laboure,  
As Austin bit? How shal the world be served?

Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.  
Therfore he was a pricasour aright;  
Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in flight;  
Of priking and of hunting for the hare  
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.  
I seigh his sleves purfiled at the hond  
With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;  
And, for to festne his hood under his chin,  
He hadde of gold y-wroght a curious pin:  
A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.  
His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,  
And eek his face, as he had been anoint.  
He was a lord ful fat and in good point;  
His eyen stepe, and rollinge in his heed,  
That stemmed as a forneys of a leed;  
His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.  
Now certeinly he was a fair prelat;  
He was nat pale as a for-pyned goost.  
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.  
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

170. Hl. Cp. whistlyng; E. whistlynge. E. Cm. als; Ln. al-so; Hl. so; rest as. 176. E. Hn. heeld; Cm. held. 178. Hn. Hl. been; E. beth. 179. Hl. cloysterles; E. Hn. recchelees; Cp. Pt. Ln. recheles; Cm. rekeles (Ten Brink proposes recetlees). 182. E. Hn. heeld; Cm. held. 188. E. his owene; rest om. owene. 190. Hl. swiffe; rest swift. 193. Hl. Hn. purfiled; Cm. purfilid; E. ypurfiled. 196. Hl. a; rest a ful. 196, 218. Ln. had; rest hadde. 199. E. it; rest he. 203, 4. E. estaat, prelaat.

A FRERE ther was, a wantown and a merye,  
A limitor, a ful solempne man.  
In alle the ordres foure is noon that can  
So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.  
He hadde maad ful many a mariage  
Of yonge wommen, at his owne cost.  
Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.  
Ful wel biloved and familier was he  
With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,  
And eek with worthy wommen of the toun:  
For he had power of confessioun,  
As seyde him-self, more than a curat,  
For of his ordre he was licentiat.  
Ful sweetly herde he confessioun,  
And plesaunt was his absolucioun;  
He was an esy man to yeve penaunce  
Ther as he wiste to han a good pitaunce;  
For unto a povre ordre for to yive  
Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive.  
For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,  
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.  
For many a man so hard is of his herte,  
He may nat wepe al-thogh him sore smerte.  
Therfore, in stede of weping and preyeres,  
Men moot yeve silver to the povre freres.  
His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves  
And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.  
And certeinly he hadde a mery note;  
Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a rote.  
Of yeddinges he bar utterly the prys.  
His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;  
Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.  
He knew the tavernes wel in every toun,  
And everich hostiler and tappestere

Bet than a lazар or a beggestere;  
For un-to swich a worthy man as he  
Acorded nat, as by his facultee,  
To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce.  
It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce  
For to delen with no swich poraille,  
But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.  
And over-al, ther as profit sholde aryse,  
Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse.  
Ther nas no man no-wher so vertuous.  
He was the beste beggere in his hous;  
[And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt;  
Noon of his bretheren camther in his haunt;]  
For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,  
So plesaunt was his "*In principio*,"  
Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente.  
His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.  
And rage he coude, as it were right a whelpe.  
In love-dayes ther coude he muchel helpe.  
For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,  
With a thredbar cope, as is a povre scoler,  
But he was lyk a maister or a pope.  
Of double worsted was his semi-cope,  
That rounded as a belle out of the presse.  
Somwhat he lipsed, for his wantownesse,  
To make his English swete up-on his tonge;  
And in his harping, whan that he had songe,  
His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,  
As doon the sterres in the frosty night.  
This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

208. E. wantowne. 211. Hn. muche; E. muchel. 213. Hl. owne; E. owene. 215. E. And; *rest* Ful. 217. Hl. Hn. eek; *rest omit.* 224. Hl. Cm. han; E. haue. 229. E. harde. 231. E. wepynge. 232. E. Hn. moote; *see note.* 234. E. yonge; *rest* faire. 235. Hl. mery; E. murye. 237. E. baar. Pt. vttirly; Hl. vtturly; E. Hn. outrely. 240. E. al the; *rest* every. 245. E. Hn. Cm. sike; Pt. Ln. seke; *see l.* 18. 246. Cm. honest; E. honeste. 248. E. selleres. 250. E. lowely. *After l.* 252, Hn. *alone inserts* ll. 252 b and 252 c. 259. Hl. Cm. cloysterer; E. Hn. Cloystrer. 260. *So all the MSS. (but with -bare); cf. l.* 290. 262. *All*worstede (*badly*). 266. Pt. Ln. had; *rest* hadde.

A MARCHANT was ther with a forked berd,  
In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat,  
Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat;  
His botes clasped faire and fetisly.  
His resonis he spak ful solemnly,  
Souninge alway thencrees of his winning.  
He wolde the see were kept for any thing  
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.  
Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.  
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;  
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,  
So estately was he of his governaunce,  
With his bargaynes, and with his chevisaunce.  
For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,  
But sooth to seyn, I noot how men him calle.

271. Ln. motteley; Hl. motteleye; E. Hn. mottee. 272. E. beuere. 273. Cp. Pt. clasped; Hl. clapsud. 274. E. Hise. 281. Cp. statly.

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,  
That un-to logik hadde longe y-go.  
As lene was his hors as is a rake,  
And he nas nat right fat, I undertake;  
But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.  
Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy;

For he had geten him yet no benefyce,  
Ne was so worldly for to have offyce.  
For him was lever have at his beddes heed  
Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,  
Of Aristotle and his philosophye,  
Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrye.  
But al be that he was a philosophre,  
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;  
But al that he mighte of his freendes hente,  
On bokes and on leminge he it spente,  
And bisly gan for the soules preye  
Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleyse.  
Of studie took he most cure and most hede.  
Noght o word spak he more than was nede,  
And that was seyd in forme and reverence,  
And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.  
Souninge in moral vertu was his speche,  
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

287. E. And; Hl. Al so; *rest* As. 289. E. Hn. sobrelly; *rest* soburly. 290. *All* -bare. Hl. ouerest; E. Hn. Cm. ouereste. 291. Cp. Ln. had; *rest* hadde. 293. Cp. Ln. Hl. leuer; *rest* leuere. 300. E. Hl. his; *rest* on.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and wys,  
That often hadde been at the parvys,  
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.  
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:  
He semed swich, his wordes weren so wyse.  
Iustycy he was ful often in assyse,  
By patente, and by pleyn commissioune;  
For his science, and for his heigh renoun  
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.  
So greet a purchasour was no-wher noon.  
Al was fee simple to him in effect,  
His purchasing mighte nat been infect.  
No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,  
And yet he semed bisier than he was.  
In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,  
That from the tyme of king William were falle.  
Therto he coude endyte, and make a thing,  
Ther coude no wight pinche at his wryting;  
And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.  
He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote  
Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;  
Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

324. E. yfalle; *rest* fille. 326. E. Hn. pynchen; *rest* pynche, pinche.

A FRANKELEYN was in his company;  
Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesye.  
Of his complexioune was sangwyn.  
Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn.  
To liven in delyt was ever his wone,  
For he was Epicurus owne sone,  
That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt  
Was verrailly felicitee parfyte.  
An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;  
Seint Julian he was in his contree.  
His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon;  
A bettre envyned man was no-wher noon.  
With-oute bake mete was never his hous,

Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteuous,  
It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke,  
Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.  
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,  
So chaunged he his mete and his soper.  
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,  
And many a bream and many a luce in stewe.  
Wo was his cook, but-if his sauce were  
Poynant and sharp, and redy al his gere.  
His table dormant in his halle alway  
Stood redy covered al the longe day.  
At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;  
Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.  
An anlas and a gipser al of silk  
Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk.  
A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour;  
Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour.

332. E. heed; *rest* berd, berde. E. a; *rest* the. 335. ever] Hl. al. 336. E. Hn. Cm. owene; *rest* owne. 338. Hl. verrailly; *rest* verray, verrey, uery. 340. E. was he; *rest* he was. 341. Cm. Ln. alwey; Hl. alway; E. Hn. Cp. always. 342. Hl. Pt. nowher; Cm. nower: *rest* neuere; cf. I. 360. 349, 350. E. Hn. muwe, stuwe. 357. E. Hn. anlaas; Hl. Cm. anlas. 358. E. Hn. heeng. 359. E. Hn. Cm. *om.* a.

An HABERDASSHER and a CARPENTER,  
A WEBBE, a DYERE, and a TAPICER,  
Were with us eek, clothed in o liveree,  
Of a solempne and greet fraternitee.  
Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked was;  
Hir knyves were y-chaped noght with bras,  
But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel,  
Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel.  
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,  
To sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys.  
Everich, for the wisdom that he can,  
Was shaply for to been an alderman.  
For catel hadde they y-nogh and rente,  
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;  
And elles certein were they to blame.  
It is ful fair to been y-clept "*ma dame*,"  
And goon to vigilyes al bifore,  
And have a mantel royalliche y-bore.

363. So Hl.; *rest* And they were clothed alle. 364. All but Hl. and a. 366. Hl. I-chapud; Cm. chapid; *rest* chaped. 370. E. yeldehalle. 376. E. Hn. ycleped; Hl. clept; *rest* cleped, clepid. 380. Hl. *om.* Ist the.

A COOK they hadde with hem for the nones,  
To boille the chiknes with the mary-bones,  
And poudre-marchant tart, and galengale.  
Wel coude he knowe a draughte of London ale.  
He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,  
Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.  
But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,  
That on his shine a mormal hadde he;  
For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.

383. E. Hl. boille; Cm. boyle; *rest* broille, broile. 388. E. wonyng; Hn. wonyng.

A SHIPMAN was ther, woning fer by weste:  
For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.  
He rood up-on a rounchy, as he couthe,  
In a gowne of falding to the knee.  
A daggere hanging on a laas hadde he

Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.  
The hote somer had maad his hewe al broun;  
And, certeinly, he was a good felawe.  
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawe  
From Burdeaux-ward, whyl that the chapman sleep.  
Of nyce conscience took he no keep.  
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,  
By water he sente hem hoom to every lond.  
But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,  
His stremes and his daungers him bisydes,  
His herberwe and his mone, his lodemenage,  
Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.  
Hardy he was, and wys to undertake;  
With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.  
He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,  
From Gootlond to the cape of Finistere,  
And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne;  
His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne.

396. Cm. I-drawe; *rest* drawe. 407. Hl. *ins.* wel; *rest om.*

With us ther was a DOCTOR OF PHISYK,  
In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk  
To speke of phisik and of surgerye;  
For he was grounded in astronomye.  
He kepte his pacient a ful greet del  
In houres, by his magik naturel.  
Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent  
Of his images for his pacient.  
He knew the cause of everich maladye,  
Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or drye,  
And where engendred, and of what humour;  
He was a verrey parfit practisour.  
The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the rote,  
Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.  
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries,  
To sende him drogges and his letuaries,  
For ech of hem made other for to winne;  
Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.  
Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,  
And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus,  
Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;  
Serapion, Razis, and Avicen;  
Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn;  
Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.  
Of his diete mesurable was he,  
For it was of no superfluitee,  
But of greet norissing and digestible.  
His studie was but litel on the Bible.  
In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,  
Lyned with taffata and with sendal;  
And yet he was but esy of dispence;  
He kepte that he wan in pestilence.  
For gold in phisik is a cordial,  
Therfore he lovede gold in special.

415. Hl. wonderly wel; *rest* a ful greet deal (del). 416. E. Hn. natureel. 418. E. Hn. hise; Cm. hese. 421. E. Cm. Hl. where they; Hn. where it.  
424. Cm. Ln. seke; *rest* sike. 425. E. hise. 426. E. Hn. Cm. drogges; Cp. Pt. Ln. drugges; Hl. dragges. 430. Pt. Rufis; Cm. Rufis; Hn. Cp. Ln.  
Hl. Rusan; E. Risus. 431. Hl. Pt. Old; *rest* Olde.

A good WYF was ther of bisyde BATHE,

But she was som-del deef, and that was scathe.  
Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,  
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.  
In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon  
That to the offring bifore hir sholde goon;  
And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she,  
That she was out of alle charitee.  
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground;  
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound  
That on a Sonday were upon hir heed.  
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,  
Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and newe.  
Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.  
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,  
Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve,  
Withouten other compayne in youthe;  
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.  
And thryes hadde she been at Ierusalem;  
She hadde passed many a straunge stream;  
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,  
In Galice at saint Iame, and at Coloigne.  
She coude muche of wandring by the weye.  
Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.  
Up-on an amblere esily she sat,  
Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat  
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;  
A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,  
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.  
In felawship wel coude she laughe and carpe.  
Of remedyes of love she knew per-chaunce,  
For she coude of that art the olde daunce.

452. Hl. was thanne out. 453, 455. E. weren. 457. Cp. Hl. schoos; E. Pt. Ln. shoes. 458. E. Hn. Boold. 463. Ln. had. 467. Ln. muche; Hl. Pt. Cp. moche; E. Hn. muchel. 474. E. Hn. flaweschip. 476. Hl. For of that art sche knew.

A good man was ther of religioun,  
And was a povre PERSOUN of a toun;  
But riche he was of holy thoght and werk.  
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,  
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;  
His parisshens devoutly wolde he teche.  
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,  
And in adversitee ful pacient;  
And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.  
Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes,  
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,  
Un-to his povre parisshens aboute  
Of his offring, and eek of his substaunce.  
He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce.  
Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder,  
But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,  
In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte  
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte,  
Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf.  
This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,  
That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte;  
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte;  
And this figure he added eek ther-to,  
That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?  
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,

No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;  
And shame it is, if a preest take keep,  
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.  
Wel oughte a preest ensample for to yive,  
By his clennesse, how that his sheep shold live.  
He sette nat his benefice to hyre,  
And leet his sheep encombred in the myre,  
And ran to London, un-to seynt Poules,  
To seken him a chaunterie for soules,  
Or with a bretherherd to been withholde;  
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,  
So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie;  
He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.  
And though he holy were, and vertuous,  
He was to sinful man nat despitous,  
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,  
But in his teching discreet and benigne.  
To drawen folk to heven by fairesse  
By good ensample, was his bisenesse:  
But it were any persone obstinat,  
What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,  
Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.  
A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher noon is.  
He wayted after no pompe and reverence,  
Ne maked him a spyced conscience,  
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,  
He taughte, and first he folwed it him-selve.

485. Hl. I-proued; E. Cp. Pt. preued. 486. E. hise. 490. Hl. Cm. Pt. han; E. Hn. Cp. Ln. haue. 493. E. siknesse. 497. E. firste. E. *ins.* that (*by mistake*) before he. 503. Hl. *alone ins.* that after if. 505. Hl. yiue; E. yeue. 509. Hl. Cp. seynte. 510. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. chaunterie; E. Hn. chauntrie. 512. E. dwelleth; *rest* dwelte. E. keepeth; *rest* kepte. 514. Hl. no; *rest* not a. 516. Hl. to senful man nought; *rest* nat to sinful man. 520. All but Hl. this was. 522. Hn. lowe; E. lough. 523. E. nonys. 525. E. waiteth; *rest* waited. 527. E. hise. 528. Hl. and; *rest* but.

With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,  
That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,  
A trewe swinker and a good was he,  
Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.  
God loved he best with al his hole herte  
At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,  
And thanne his neighebour right as him-selve.  
He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and delve,  
For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,  
Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might.  
His tythes payed he ful faire and wel,  
Bothe of his propre swink and his catel.  
In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

534. E. Pt. Ln. he; *rest* him. 537. for] Hn. Hl. with. 539. Cp. Pt. payed; Cm. Hl. payede; E. Hn. payde. 540. propre] Hl. owne.

Ther was also a Reve and a Millere,  
A Somnour and a Pardoner also,  
A Maunciple, and my-self; ther were namo.

The MILLER was a stout carl, for the nones,  
Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones;  
That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,  
At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram.  
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,  
Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,  
Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.  
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,

And ther-to brood, as though it were a spade.  
Up-on the cop right of his nose he hade  
A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres,  
Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres;  
His nose-thirles blake were and wyde.  
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde;  
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.  
He was a Ianglere and a goliardeys,  
And that was most of sinne and harlotryes;  
Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen thryes;  
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.  
A whyt cote and a blew hood wered he.  
A baggeypye wel coude he blowe and sowne,  
And ther-with-al he broghte us out of towne.

550. Cp. Hl. nolde; Hn. noolde; E. ne wolde. 555. E. toff; Ln. toffe: *rest* tuff. E. herys. 556. Hn. bristles; E. brustles; Pt. brysteles; Hl. Cp. berstles. E. erys. 558. *All but* Cp. and a. 559. Hl. wyde; *rest* greet, gret. 565. Hl. *om.* wel.

A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple,  
Of which achatours mighte take exemple  
For to be wyse in bying of vitaille.  
For whether that he payde, or took by taille,  
Algat he wayted so in his achat,  
That he was ay biforn and in good stat.  
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,  
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace  
The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?  
Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten,  
That were of lawe expert and curious;  
Of which ther were a doseyn in that hous,  
Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and lond  
Of any lord that is in Engelond,  
To make him live by his propre good,  
In honour dettelees, but he were wood,  
Or live as scarsly as him list desire;  
And able for to helpen al a shire  
In any cas that mighte falle or happe;  
And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe.

570. E. Hn. wheither. 571. E. Achaat. 572. E. staat. 577. E. weren. 578. E. whence. Cm. doseyn; E. duszeyne. 581. E. maken. 582. Cm. but; Cp. Pt. but if that; *rest* but if 585. E. Hn. caas.

The REVE was a sclendre colerik man,  
His berd was shave as ny as ever he can.  
His heer was by his eres round y-shorn.  
His top was dokked lyk a preest bifrom.  
Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,  
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.  
Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne;  
Ther was noon auditour coude on him winne.  
Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the reyn,  
The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.  
His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,  
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye,  
Was hoolly in this reves governing,  
And by his covenaunt yaf the reckening,  
Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age;  
Ther coude no man bringe him in arrage.  
Ther nas baillif, ne herde, ne other hyne,  
That he ne knew his sleighe and his covyne;  
They were adrad of him, as of the deeth.

His woning was ful fair up-on an heeth,  
With grene trees shadwed was his place.  
He coude bettre than his lord purchace.  
Ful riche he was astored privly,  
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly,  
To yeve and lene him of his owne good,  
And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.  
In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister;  
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.  
This reve sat up-on a ful good stot,  
That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.  
A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,  
And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.  
Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,  
Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.  
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,  
And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.

589. All but Hl. Ln. ins. ful after eres. 590. E. doked. 594. E. of rest on. 603. ne (2) E. Hn. Cp. Pt. nor. 604. Hl. they (*for he*). E. Cm. om. ne. 606. Hl. fair; E. faire. 607. E. Hn. shadwed; Hl. I-schadewed; Cm. I-schadewid; Cp. Pt. shadewed; Ln. schadowed. 611. Hl. owne; E. owene. 612. E. om. and. E. gowne; rest cote. 613. So Hn. Hl.; E. and rest hadde lerned. Cp. Hl. mester. 618. E. baar.

A SOMNOUR was ther with us in that place,  
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubinnes face,  
For sawcefleem he was, with eyen narwe.  
As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe;  
With scalled browes blake, and piled berd;  
Of his visage children were aferd.  
Ther nas quik-silver, litarge, ne brimstoon,  
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,  
Ne oynement that wolde dense and byte,  
That him mighte helpen of his whelkes whyte,  
Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekis.  
Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,  
And for to dricken strong wyn, reed as blood.  
Thanne wolde he speke, and crye as he were wood.  
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,  
Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.  
A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,  
That he had lerned out of som decree;  
No wonder is, he herde it al the day;  
And eek ye knownen wel, how that a lay  
Can clepen 'Watte,' as well as can the pope.  
But who-so coude in other thing him grope,  
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye;  
Ay '*Questio quid iuris*' wolde he crye.  
He was a gentil harlot and a kinde;  
A bettre felawe sholde men noght finde.  
He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,  
A good felawe to have his concubyn  
A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle:  
Ful privly a finch eek coude he pulle.  
And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,  
He wolde techen him to have non awe,  
In swich cas, of the erchedeknes curs,  
But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;  
For in his purs he sholde y-punisshed be.  
'Purs is the erchedeknes helle,' seyde he.  
But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;  
Of cursing oghte ech guilty man him drede--

For curs wol slee, right as assoilling saveth--  
And also war him of a *significavit*.  
In daunger hadde he at his owne gyse  
The yonge girles of the diocese,  
And knew hir counseil, and was al hir reed.  
A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,  
As greet as it were for an ale-stake;  
A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.

623. Cm. Pt. Somnour; Hl. sompnour; E. Hn. Somonour. 627. E. Hn. Cm. scaled. 629. Cp. Pt. Hl. bremston. 632. E. the; *rest his*. 652. E. Ln. Hl. And; *rest* Ful. 655. Cm. Cp. erche-; E. erce-; Hl. arche-. 660. Cp. Ln. him; Hl. Pt. to; *rest om*. 661. Hl. Pt. saueth; E. sauth. 663. Hl. owne; E. owene. 668. E. bokeleer.

With him ther rood a gentil PARDONER  
Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer,  
That straignt was comen fro the court of Rome.  
Ful loude he song, 'Com hider, love, to me.'  
This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,  
Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.  
This pardoner hadde heer as yellow as wex,  
But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike of flex;  
By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,  
And ther-with he his shuldres overspradde;  
But thinne it lay, by colpons oon and oon;  
But hood, for lolitee, ne wered he noon,  
For it was trussed up in his walet.  
Him thoughte, he rood al of the newe let;  
Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.  
Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.  
A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe.  
His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,  
Bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.  
A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.  
No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,  
As smothe it was as it were late y-shave;  
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.  
But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,  
Ne was ther swich another pardoner.  
For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,  
Which that, he seyde, was our lady veyl:  
He seyde, he hadde a gobet of the seyl  
That seynt Peter hadde, whan that he wente  
Up-on the see, til Iesu Crist him hente.  
He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,  
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.  
But with thise reliques, whan that he fond  
A povre person dwelling up-on lond,  
Up-on a day he gat him more moneye  
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.  
And thus, with feyned flaterye and lapes,  
He made the person and the peple his apes.  
But trewely to tellen, atte laste,  
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.  
Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,  
But alderbest he song an offertorie;  
For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,  
He moste preche, and wel affyle his tongue,  
To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;  
Therefore he song so meriely and loude.

669. E. was; *rest* rood, rode. 670. E. Cm. Pt. Rouncuale. 672. E. soong. 676. E. heeng. 677, 678. E. hise. 680. But] Cm. Hl. And. Hl. ne; *rest omit.* 683. E. Discheuelee. 685. Hl. Cp. on; *rest vp on.* 686. Hl. lay; *which the rest omit.* 687. Hl. Cm. come; *rest comen.* 688. Hl. eny (*for hath a.*) 690. Hn. yshae; E. shae. 695. *All oure.* 713. Hl. right (*for ful.*) 714. Cp. Pt. Ln. so meriely; E. Hn. Cm. the murierly.

Now have I told you shortly, in a clause,  
Thestat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the cause  
Why that assembled was this compayne  
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelye,  
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.  
But now is tyme to yow for to telle  
How that we baren us that ilke night,  
Whan we were in that hostelye alight.  
And after wol I telle of our viage,  
And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.  
But first I pray yow, of your curteisye,  
That ye narette it nat my vileyne,  
Thogh that I pleyntly speke in this matere,  
To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere;  
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes properly.  
For this ye knownen al-so wel as I,  
Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,  
He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,  
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,  
Al speke he never so rueliche and large;  
Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe,  
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe.  
He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his brother;  
He moot as wel seye o word as another.  
Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,  
And wel ye woot, no vileyne is it.  
Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him rede,  
The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.  
Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,  
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree  
Here in this tale, as that they sholde stonde;  
My wit is short, ye may wel understande.

715. E. Hl. shortly; *rest* soothly. 716. Hl. Thestat; Hn. Thestaat; E. The staat; Cm. Cp. The estat. 718. E. as; *rest* at. 724. E. oure (*but our in l.* 723). 725. E. youre; Hl. your. 726. E. Hn. Cm. narette; Cp. Pt. Hl. ne rette. 734. E. or; Hl. ne; *rest* and. 741. *All but Hl. om.* that.

Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,  
And to the soper sette he us anon;  
And served us with vitaille at the beste.  
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us leste.  
A semely man our hoste was with-alle  
For to han been a marshal in an halle;  
A large man he was with eyen stepe,  
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:  
Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught,  
And of manhood him lakkede right naught.  
Eek thereto he was right a mery man,  
And after soper pleyen he bigan,  
And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,  
Whan that we hadde maad our rekeninges;  
And seyde thus: 'Now, lordinges, trewely,  
Ye been to me right welcome hertely:  
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,  
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a compayne  
At ones in this herberwe as is now.  
Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.  
And of a mirthe I am right now bithought,

To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.

747. E. chiere. E. hoost (*see* l. 751). 752. Hl. han; *rest om.* 754. E. Hn. was. 755. E. Hn. Boold. 756. Cm. Cp. lakkede; E. lakked. 761. now] Hl. lo. 764. Hl. ne saugh; *rest* saugh nat (seigh not, &c.). Hl. Cm. mery; E. myrie.

Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow spedē,  
The blisful martir quyte yow your mede.  
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,  
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;  
For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon  
To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon;  
And therfore wol I maken yow disport,  
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.  
And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,  
Now for to stonden at my lugement,  
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,  
To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye,  
Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,  
But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed.  
Hold up your hond, withouten more speche!'

774. a] E. the; Hn. *om.* 778. *All but* Hl. *om.* Now. 782. E. But if, *rest* But. E. myrie. Hl. merye smyteth of

Our counsel was nat longe for to seche;  
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys,  
And graunted him withouten more avys,  
And bad him seye his verdit, as him leste.

785. Hl. nas. 787. Cp. verdit; Pt. veredit; Hl. Ln. verdite; Cm. verdoit; E. Hn. voirdit.

'Lordinges,' quod he, 'now herkneth for the beste;  
But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn;  
This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,  
That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye,  
In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,  
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,  
And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,  
Of aventures that whylom han bifalle.  
And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,  
That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas  
Tales of best sentence and most solas,  
Shal have a soper at our aller cost  
Here in this place, sitting by this post,  
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.  
And for to make yow the more mery,  
I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,  
Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde.  
And who-so wol my lugement withseye  
Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.  
And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,  
Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo,  
And I wol erly shape me therfore.'

789. E. taak; Ln. tak; Cp. Pt. take; Hl. Hn. taketh. 791. Cp. Hl. your; *rest* our; *qf.* l. 803. 795. Hl. ther (*for* whylom). 797, 798. E. caas, solaas.  
802. E. Hn. Cp. mury. 803. Hl. my seluen gladly; E. my selfgoodly. 805. E. wole (*but* wol in l. 809).

This thing was graunted, and our othes swore  
With ful glad herte, and preyden him also  
That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,  
And that he wolde been our governour,  
And of our tales luge and reportour,  
And sette a soper at a certeyn prys;

And we wold reuled been at his devys,  
In heigh and lowe; and thus, by oon assent,  
We been acorded to his Iugement.  
And ther-up-on the wyn was fet anon;  
We dronken, and to reste wente echon,  
With-outen any lenger taryinge.

812. E. would. 816. Hl. wolde; Pt. wold; *rest* wol, wolen, wiln, wil. 817. Hl. lowe; E. lough.

A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,  
Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,  
And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,  
And forth we ridein, a litel more than pas,  
Un-to the watering of seint Thomas.  
And there our host bigan his hors areste,  
And seyde; 'Lordinges, herkneth, if yow leste.  
Ye woot your forward, and I it yow recorde.  
If even-song and morwe-song acorde,  
Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.  
As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,  
Who-so be rebel to my Iugement  
Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent.  
Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twinne;  
He which that hath the shortest shal biginne.  
Sire knight,' quod he, 'my maister and my lord,  
Now draweth cut, for that is myn accord.  
Cometh neer,' quod he, 'my lady prioress;  
And ye, sir clerk, lat be your shamfastnesse,  
Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man.'

822. E. Hn. that; Hl. that the; *rest* the. E. gan for; Hn. Cp. Hl. bigan. 823. E. Hn. aller; Hl. althur; Cp. alther; Pt. Ln. alder. 825. E. paas. 829. E. foreward (*badly*). E. Hn. *om.* I. 831. Hl. *ferst* a tale. 835. Cp. Pt. Ln. *ferther*; Hl. *forther*. 836. E. Hn. *shorteste*. 840. E. *shamefastnesse*.

Anon to drawnen every wight bigan,  
And shortly for to tellen, as it was,  
Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,  
The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knight,  
Of which ful blythe and glad was every wight;  
And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,  
By forward and by composiciooun,  
As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?  
And whan this gode man saugh it was so,  
As he that wys was and obedient  
To kepe his forward by his free assent,  
He seyde: 'Sin I shal biginne the game,  
What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!  
Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye.'

848, 852. E. foreward (*badly*). 850. *All insert that after saugh (needlessly)*. 854. Hl. thou (*for the*).

And with that word we ridein forth our weye;  
And he bigan with right a mery chere  
His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

### Here endeth the prolog of this book; and here biginneth the first tale, which is the Knights Tale.

857. Cm. mery; E. myrie. 858. So E. Hl.; *rest* as ye may here. COLOPHON: from MS. Sloane 1685, which has Heere endith, heere, knyghe (*sic*).

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### THE KNIGHTES TALE.

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*Iamque domos patrias, Scithice post aspera gentis  
Prelia, laurigero, &c.*

[Statius, *Theb.* xii. 519.]

Whylom, as olde stories tellen us,  
Ther was a duk that highte Theseus;  
Of Athenes he was lord and governour,  
And in his tyme swich a conquerour,  
That gretter was ther noon under the sonne.  
Ful many a riche contree hadde he wonne;  
What with his wisdom and his chivalrye,  
He conquered al the regne of Femenye,  
That whylom was y-cleped Scithia;  
And weddede the quene Ipolita,  
And broghte hir hoom with him in his contree  
With muchel glorie and greet solempnitez,  
And eek hir yonge suster Emelye.  
And thus with victorie and with melodye  
Lete I this noble duk to Athenes ryde,  
And al his hoost, in armes, him bisyde.

QUOTATION; *so in* E. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. 865. E. Hl. That; *rest* What. 868. Cp. Hl. weddede; Slo. weddide; *rest* wedded. 871. E. faire; Pt. yenge; *rest* yonge.

And certes, if it nere to long to here,  
I wolde han told yow fully the manere,  
How wonnen was the regne of Femenye  
By Theseus, and by his chivalrye;  
And of the grete bataille for the nones  
Bitwixen Athenes and Amazones;  
And how assaged was Ipolita,  
The faire hardy quene of Scithia;  
And of the feste that was at hir weddinge,  
And of the tempest at hir hoom-cominge;  
But al that thing I moot as now forbere.  
I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere,  
And wayke been the oxen in my plough.  
The remenant of the tale is long y-nough.  
I wol nat letten eek noon of this route;  
Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute,  
And lat see now who shal the soper winne;  
And ther I lefte, I wol ageyn biginne.

876. Hl. han told yow; E. yow haue toold; *rest* haue toold (told). 880. Tyrwhitt inserts the *after* and; *but see* 968, 973, 1023, &c. 889. Hl. lette eek non of al; *rest* letten, *and omit* al. 892. Hl. agayn; E. Hn. Cp. Pt. ayeyn.

This duk, of whom I make mencioune,  
When he was come almost unto the toun,  
In al his wele and in his moste pryd,  
He was war, as he caste his eye asyde,  
Wher that ther kneled in the hye weye  
A compayne of ladies, tweye and tweye,  
Ech after other, clad in clothes blake;  
But swich a cry and swich a wo they make,  
That in this world nis creature livinge,  
That herde swich another weymentinge;  
And of this cry they nolde never stenten,  
Til they the reynes of his brydel henten.

897. E. *om.* hye; *rest* hye, heighe, hihe, highe, high.

'What folk ben ye, that at myn hoom-cominge  
Perturben so my feste with cryinge?  
Quod Theseus, 'have ye so greet envye  
Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and crye?  
Or who hath yow misboden, or offended?  
And telleth me if it may been amended;  
And why that ye ben clothed thus in blak?'

The eldest lady of hem alle spak,  
When she hadde swooned with a deedly chere,  
That it was routhe for to seen and here,  
And seyde: 'Lord, to whom Fortune hath yiven  
Victorie, and as a conquerour to liven,  
Noght greveth us your glorie and your honour;  
But we biseken mercy and socour.  
Have mercy on our wo and our distresse.  
Som drope of pitee, thurgh thy gentillesse,  
Up-on us wrecched wommen lat thou falle.  
For certes, lord, ther nis noon of us alle,  
That she nath been a duchesse or a quene;  
Now be we caitifs, as it is wel sene:  
Thanked be Fortune, and hir false wheel,  
That noon estat assureth to be weel.  
And certes, lord, to abyden your presence,  
Here in the temple of the goddesse Clemence  
We han ben waytinge al this fourtenight;  
Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy might.

912. Cm. eldest; E. eldeste. 914. E. routhe; Ln. rewthe; Slo. reuthe. Hl. or; *rest* and. 915. Hn. yiuen; E. yeuen. 916. Hn. conquerour; E. conqueror. 917. Hn. Hl. Noght; E. Pt. Ln. Nat. Hl. *om. 2nd* your. 922. Hl. nys; *rest* is. 923. E. Hn. Pt. Ln. ne hath. 924. Cp. Hl. caytis; E. Hn. Pt. caytyues.

I wrecche, which that wepe and waille thus,  
Was whylom wyf to king Capaneus,  
That starf at Thebes, cursed be that day!  
And alle we, that been in this array,  
And maken al this lamentacioun,  
We losten alle our housbondes at that toun,  
Whyl that the sege ther-aboute lay.  
And yet now the olde Creon, weylaway!  
That lord is now of Thebes the citee,  
Fulfilde of ire and of iniquitee,  
He, for despyt, and for his tiranny,  
To do the dede bodyes vileyne,  
Of alle our lordes, whiche that ben slawe,  
Hath alle the bodyes on an heep y-drawe,  
And wol nat suffren hem, by noon assent,  
Neither to been y-buried nor y-brent,  
But maketh houndes ete hem in despyt.'  
And with that word, with-outen more respyt,  
They llen gruf, and cryden pitously,  
'Have on us wrecched wommen som mercy,  
And lat our sorwe sinken in thyn herte.'

931. E. crie; Hn. Hl. waille; Cp. Pt. weile. 938. Only Hl. *om. now.* 943. Hl. i-slave. 944. E. He hath; *rest* Hath.

This gentil duk doun from his courser sterte  
With herte pitous, whan he herde hem speke.  
Him thoughte that his herte wolde breke,  
Whan he saugh hem so pitous and so mat,  
That whylom weren of so greet estat.

And in his armes he hem alle up hente,  
And hem conforteth in ful good entente;  
And swoor his ooth, as he was trewe knight,  
He wolde doon so ferforthly his might  
Up-on the tyraunt Creon hem to wreke,  
That al the peple of Grece sholde speke  
How Creon was of Theseus y-served,  
As he that hadde his deeth ful wel deserved.  
And right anoon, with-outen more abood,  
His baner he desplayeth, and forth rood  
To Thebes-ward, and al his host bisyde;  
No neer Athenes wolde he go ne ryde,  
Ne take his ese fully half a day,  
But onward on his wey that night he lay;  
And sente anoon Ipolita the quene,  
And Emelye hir yonge suster shene,  
Un-to the toun of Athenes to dwelle;  
And forth he rit; ther nis namore to telle.

955. E. maat. 956. E. estaat. 974. Hn. Cp. nys; rest is.

The rede statue of Mars, with spere and targe,  
So shyneth in his whyte baner large,  
That alle the feeldes gliteren up and doun;  
And by his baner born is his penoun  
Of gold ful riche, in which ther was y-bete  
The Minotaur, which that he slough in Crete.  
Thus rit this duk, thus rit this conquerour,  
And in his host of chivalrye the flour,  
Til that he cam to Thebes, and alighte  
Faire in a feeld, ther as he thoghte fighte.  
But shortly for to speken of this thing,  
With Creon, which that was of Thebes king,  
He faught, and slough him manly as a knight  
In pleyn bataille, and putte the folk to flight;  
And by assaut he wan the citee after,  
And rente adoun bothe wal, and sparre, and rafter;  
And to the ladyes he restored agayn  
The bones of hir housbondes that were slain,  
To doon obsequies, as was tho the gyse.  
But it were al to long for to devyse  
The grete clamour and the waymentinge  
That the ladyes made at the brenninge  
Of the bodyes, and the grete honour  
That Theseus, the noble conquerour,  
Doth to the ladyes, whan they from him wente;  
But shortly for to telle is myn entente.  
Whan that this worthy duk, this Theseus,  
Hath Creon slayn, and wonne Thebes thus,  
Stille in that feeld he took al night his reste,  
And dide with al the contree as him leste.

984. Hn. thoghte; E. thoughte. 992. E. weren. 996. Hl. Which that.

To ransake in the tas of bodyes dede,  
Hem for to strepe of harneys and of wede,  
The pilours diden bisinesse and cure,  
After the bataille and disconfiture.  
And so bifel, that in the tas they founde,  
Thurgh-girt with many a grevous blody wounde,

Two yonge knightes ligging by and by,  
Bothe in oon armes, wroght ful richely,  
Of whiche two, Arcita hight that oon,  
And that other knight hight Palamon.  
Nat fully quike, ne fully dede they were,  
But by hir cote-armures, and by hir gere,  
The heraudes knewe hem best in special,  
As they that weren of the blood royal  
Of Thebes, and of sustren two y-born.  
Out of the tas the pilours han hem torn,  
And han hem caried softe un-to the tente  
Of Theseus, and he ful sone hem sente  
To Athenes, to dwellen in prisoun  
Perpetually, he nolde no raunsoun.  
And whan this worthy duk hath thus y-don,  
He took his host, and hoom he rood anon  
With laurer crowned as a conquerour;  
And there he liveth, in Ioye and in honour,  
Terme of his lyf; what nedeth wordes mo?  
And in a tour, in angwish and in wo,  
Dwelen this Palamoun and eek Arcite,  
For evermore, ther may no gold hem quyte.

1005, 1009, 1020. E. Hn. Cm. taas; Hl. cas; Cp. Pt. Ln. caas; *read* tas. 1005. Hn. Cm. Hl. of *rest* of the. 1013, 1014. Hl. hight; E. highte. 1022. E. Hl. ful soone he. 1023. Hl. Tathenes for to. 1029. E. Cm. om. his. E. lyue; *rest* lyf lif 1031. E. Cm. Hl. This Palamon and his felawe Arcite.

This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by day,  
Til it fil ones, in a morwe of May,  
That Emelye, that fairer was to sene  
Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene,  
And fressher than the May with floures newe--  
For with the rose colour stroof hir hewe,  
I noot which was the fairer of hem two--  
Er it were day, as was hir wone to do,  
She was arisen, and al redy dight;  
For May wol have no slogardye a-night.  
The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,  
And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,  
And seith, 'Arys, and do thyn observaunce.'  
This maked Emelye have remembraunce  
To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.  
Y-clothed was she fresh, for to devyse;  
Hir yelow heer was broyded in a tresse,  
Bihinde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse.  
And in the gardin, at the sonne up-riste,  
She walketh up and doun, and as hir liste  
She gadereth floures, party whyte and rede,  
To make a solil gerland for hir hede,  
And as an aungel hevenly she song.  
The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,  
Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun,  
(Ther-as the knightes weren in prisoun,  
Of whiche I tolde yow, and tellen shal)  
Was evene loynant to the gardin-wal,  
Ther as this Emelye hadde hir pleyinge.  
Bright was the sonne, and clear that morweninge,  
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,  
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,  
Was risen, and romed in a chambre on heigh,  
In which he al the noble citee seigh,

And eek the gardin, ful of braunches grene,  
Ther-as this fresshe Emelye the shene  
Was in hir walk, and romed up and doun.  
This sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun,  
Goth in the chambre, roming to and fro,  
And to him-self compleyning of his wo;  
That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, 'alas!'  
And so bifel, by aventure or cas,  
That thurgh a window, thikke of many a barre  
Of yren greet, and square as any sparre,  
He caste his eye upon Emelya,  
And ther-with-al he bleynte, and cryde 'a!'  
As though he stongen were un-to the herte.  
And with that cry Arcite anon up-sterte,  
And seyde, 'Cosin myn, what eyleth thee,  
That art so pale and deedly on to see?  
Why crydestow? who hath thee doon offence?  
For Goddes love, tak al in pacience  
Our prisoun, for it may non other be;  
Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.  
Som wilke aspect or disposicioun  
Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun,  
Hath yeven us this, al-though we hadde it sworn;  
So stood the heven whan that we were born;  
We moste endure it: this is the short and pleyn.'

1036. Hl. on hire. 1039. E. Hl. fyner; Cm. fynere; Hn. Cp. Pt. fairer. 1042. E. slogardrie; *rest* slogardye (slogardye, sluggardie). 1049. E. Hn. Cm. Cp. broyded; Pt. breided; Ln. Hl. browded. 1054. Ln. sotil; Cp. sotyl; E. Hn. Cm. subtil; Pt. subtile; Hl. certeyn. 1055. Hl. Pt. heuenly; Cm. heuenelic; E. Hn. Cp. Ln. heuenysshly. 1063. E. And this Palamon. 1065. Hl. Cp. Pt. on; *rest* an. 1091. Only E. om. it.

This Palamon answerde, and seyde ageyn,  
'Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinioun  
Thou hast a veyn imaginacioun.  
This prison caused me nat for to crye.  
But I was hurt right now thurgh-out myn ye  
In-to myn herte, that wol my bane be.  
The faimesse of that lady that I see  
Yond in the gardin romen to and fro,  
Is cause of al my crying and my wo.  
I noot wher she be womman or goddesse;  
But Vénus is it, soothly, as I gesse.'  
And ther-with-al on knees doun he fil,  
And seyde: 'Vénus, if it be thy wil  
Yow in this gardin thus to transfigure  
Bifore me, sorweful wrecche creature,  
Out of this prisoun help that we may scapen.  
And if so be my destinee be shapen  
By eterne word to dyen in prisoun,  
Of our linage have som compassioun,  
That is so lowe y-brought by tirannyne.'  
And with that word Arcite gan espye  
Wher-as this lady romed to and fro.  
And with that sighte hir beautee hurte him so,  
That, if that Palamon was wounded sore,  
Arcite is hurt as muche as he, or more.  
And with a sigh he seyde pitously:  
'The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly  
Of hir that rometh in the yonder place;  
And, but I have hir mercy and hir grace,  
That I may seen hir atte leeste weye,

I nam but deed; ther nis namore to seye.'

1096. Cm. Pt. ye; Hn. Iye; Cp. Hl. yhe; E. eye. 1101. Cm. whether; Hl. whethur. 1103. Hl. Cp. a doun. 1115. E. *wrongly om.* was. 1116. Hn. muche; E. moche. 1122. E. is; *rest* nys.

This Palamon, whan he tho wordes herde,  
Dispitously he loked, and answerde:  
'Whether seistow this in ernest or in pley?'

1125 E. Wheither.

'Nay,' quod Arcite, 'in ernest, by my fey!  
God help me so, me list ful yvele pleye.'

This Palamon gan knitte his browes tweye:  
'It nere,' quod he, 'to thee no greet honour  
For to be fals, ne for to be traytour  
To me, that am thy cosin and thy brother  
Y-sworn ful depe, and ech of us til other,  
That never, for to dyen in the peyne,  
Til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne,  
Neither of us in love to hindren other,  
Ne in non other cas, my leve brother;  
But that thou sholdest trewely forthren me  
In every cas, and I shal forthren thee.  
This was thyn ooth, and myn also, certeyn;  
I wot right wel, thou darst it nat withseyn.  
Thus artow of my conseil, out of doute.  
And now thou woldest falsly been aboute  
To love my lady, whom I love and serve,  
And ever shal, til that myn herte sterue.  
Now certes, fals Arcite, thou shalt nat so.  
I loved hir first, and tolde thee my wo  
As to my conseil, and my brother swom  
To forthre me, as I have told biform.  
For which thou art y-bounden as a knight  
To helpen me, if it lay in thy might,  
Or elles artow fals, I dar wel seyn.'

1132. til] Cm. Pt. Ln. Hl. to. 1134. E. Ln. Hl. *om.* the. 1135. E. hyndre; Cm. hynderyn. 1138. E. as; *rest* and. 1141, 1151. E. Hn. artow; *rest* art thou. 1145. E. Nay; *rest* Now. 1147. E. Cm. and to my.

This Arcite ful proudly spak ageyn,  
'Thou shalt,' quod he, 'be rather fals than I;  
But thou art fals, I telle thee utterly;  
For *par amour* I loved hir first er thow.  
What wiltow seyn? thou wistest nat yet now  
Whether she be a womman or goddesse!  
Thyn is affeccioun of holinesse,  
And myn is love, as to a creature;  
For which I tolde thee myn aventure  
As to my cosin, and my brother swom.  
I pose, that thou lovedest hir biform;  
Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,  
That 'who shal yeve a lover any lawe?'  
Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan,  
Than may be yeve to any erthly man.  
And therefore positif lawe and swich decree  
Is broke al-day for love, in ech degree.  
A man moot nedes love, maugree his heed.  
He may nat fleen it, thogh he sholde be deed,

Al be she mayde, or widwe, or elles wyf.  
And eek it is nat lykly, al thy lyf,  
To stonden in hir grace; namore shal I;  
For wel thou woost thy-selven, verrailly,  
That thou and I be dampned to prisoun  
Perpetually; us gayneth no raunsoun.  
We stryve as dide the houndes for the boon,  
They foughte al day, and yet hir part was noon;  
Ther cam a kyte, whyl that they were wrothe,  
And bar awey the boon bitwixe hem bothe.  
And therfore, at the kinges court, my brother,  
Ech man for him-self, ther is non other.  
Love if thee list; for I love and ay shal;  
And soothly, leve brother, this is al.  
Here in this prisoun mote we endure,  
And everich of us take his aventur.'

1154. E. Hn. And; *rest* But. Hl. Cm. uttirly; Cp. Pt. Ln. witterly; E. Hn. outrely. 1156. Cp. Pt. *wilt thou*; Hl. *wolt thou*. 1157. E. Wheither. 1163. Cm. *Wist thou*; Hl. Ln. *Wost thou*; Pt. *Woost thow*. 1166. E. of *rest* to. 1167. Hl. *om.* And. 1168. L. Cm. broken. 1170. Hn. Cp. Pt. *fleen*; E. Hl. *flee*. 1177. Hn. Cm. Hl. *stryue*; *rest* *stryuen*. 1179. E. *om.* that. *All but* Cm. Hl. *ins.* so *after* were.

Greet was the stryf and long bitwixe hem tweye,  
If that I hadde leyser for to seye;  
But to theeffect. It happed on a day,  
(To telle it yow as shortly as I may)  
A worthy duk that highte Perotheus,  
That felawe was un-to duk Theseus  
Sin thilke day that they were children lyte,  
Was come to Athenes, his felawe to visyte,  
And for to pleye, as he was wont to do,  
For in this world he loved no man so:  
And he loved him as tendrely ageyn.  
So wel they loved, as olde bokes seyn,  
That whan that oon was deed, soothly to telle,  
His felawe wente and soghte him doun in helle;  
But of that story list me nat to wryte.  
Duk Perotheus loved wel Arcite,  
And hadde him knowe at Thebes yeer by yere;  
And fynally, at requeste and preyere  
Of Perotheus, with-oute any raunsoun,  
Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoun,  
Freely to goon, wher that him liste over-al,  
In swich a gyse, as I you tellen shal.  
This was the forward, pleynly for tendyte,  
Bitwixen Theseus and him Arcite:  
That if so were, that Arcite were y-founde  
Ever in his lyf, by day or night or stounde  
In any contree of this Theseus,  
And he were caught, it was acorded thus,  
That with a swerd he sholde lese his heed;  
Ther has non other remedye ne reed,  
But taketh his leve, and homward he him spedde;  
Let him be war, his nekke lyth to wedde!

1192. E. to; Hl. to the; *rest* un-to. 1195. E. won; Cm. wone; *rest* wont. 1197. E. Cp. als; Hn. Cm. Hl. as. 1198. E. louede. 1200. Hn. soghte; E. soughte. 1205. Hl. Cp. Pt. with-oute; *rest* with-outen. 1217. Hl. (*alone*) took.

How greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite!  
The deeth he feleth thurgh his herte smyte;  
He wepeth, wayleth, cryeth pitously;  
To sleen him-self he wayteth prively.

He seyde, 'Allas that day that I was born!  
Now is my prison worse than biforn;  
Now is me shape eternally to dwelle  
Noght in purgatorie, but in helle.  
Allas! that ever knew I Perotheus!  
For elles hadde I dwelled with Theseus  
Y-fetered in his prisoun ever-mo.  
Than hadde I been in blisse, and nat in wo.  
Only the sighte of hir, whom that I serve,  
Though that I never hir grace may deserve,  
Wolde han suffised right y-nough for me.  
O dere cosin Palamon,' quod he,  
'Thyn is the victorie of this aventur,  
Ful blisfully in prison maistow dure;  
In prison? certes nay, but in paradys!  
Wel hath fortune y-turned thee the dys,  
That hast the sighte of hir, and I thabsence.  
For possible is, sin thou hast hir presence,  
And art a knight, a worthy and an able,  
That by som cas, sin fortune is chaungeable,  
Thou mayst to thy desyr som-tyme atteyne.  
But I, that am exyled, and bareyne  
Of alle grace, and in so greet despeir,  
That ther nis erthe, water, fyr, ne eir,  
Ne creature, that of hem maked is,  
That may me helpe or doon confort in this.  
Wel oughte I sterue in wanhope and distresse;  
Farwel my lyf, my lust, and my gladnesse!

1223. that (i)] Hn. Hl. the. E. he; rest I. 1226. Hn. Noght; E. Nat; Cm. Not; rest Nought. E. ins. my after in. 1228. Hl. dweld. 1237. Cp. Pt. Ln. om. in. 1242. E. (alone) om. by. 1248. E. heele; rest helpe.

Allas, why pleynen folk so in commune  
Of purveyaunce of God, or of fortune,  
That yeveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse  
Wel bettre than they can hem-self devyse?  
Som man desyreth for to han richesse,  
That cause is of his mordre or greet siknesse.  
And som man wolde out of his prison fayn,  
That in his hous is of his meynee slain.  
Infinite harmes been in this matere;  
We witen nat what thing we preyen here.  
We faren as he that dronke is as a mous;  
A dronke man wot wel he hath an hous,  
But he noot which the righte wey is thider;  
And to a dronke man the wey is slider.  
And certes, in this world so faren we;  
We seken faste after felicitee,  
But we goon wrong ful often, trewely.  
Thus may we seyen alle, and namely I,  
That wende and hadde a greet opinoun,  
That, if I mighte escapen from prisoun,  
Than hadde I been in loye and perfit hele,  
Ther now I am exyled fro my wele.  
Sin that I may nat seen yow, Emelye,  
I nam but deed; ther nis no remedye.'

1256. Cp. Ln. mordre; E. Hn. moerdre; Cm. Pt: mordere; Hl. morthre. 1260. E. (alone) om. thing. 1262. E. Cm. wel that he. 1268. Hl. seyen; E. Hn. Cm. Cp. seyn. 1272. Ther] E. That.

Up-on that other syde Palamon,

Whan that he wiste Arcite was agon,  
Swich sorwe he maketh, that the grete tour  
Resouneth of his youling and clamour.  
The pure fettres on his shines grete  
Weren of his bittre salte teres wete.  
'Allas!' quod he, 'Arcita, cosin myn,  
Of al our stryf, God woot, the fruyt is thyn.  
Thow walkest now in Thebes at thy large,  
And of my wo thou yevest litel charge.  
Thou mayst, sin thou hast wisdom and manhede,  
Assemblen alle the folk of our kinrede,  
And make a werre so sharp on this citee,  
That by som aventure, or som tretee,  
Thou mayst have hir to lady and to wyf,  
For whom that I mot nedes lese my lyf.  
For, as by wey of possibilitee,  
Sith thou art at thy large, of prison free,  
And art a lord, greet is thyn avaantage,  
More than is myn, that sterve here in a cage.  
For I mot wepe and wayle, whyl I live,  
With al the wo that prison may me yive,  
And eek with peyne that love me yiveth also,  
That doubleth al my torment and my wo.'  
Ther-with the fyr of Ielousye up-sterte  
With-inne his brest, and hente him by the herte  
So woodly, that he lyk was to biholde  
The box-tree, or the asshen dede and colde.  
Tho seyde he; 'O cruel goddes, that governe  
This world with binding of your word eterne,  
And wryten in the table of athamaunt  
Your parlement, and your eterne graunt,  
What is mankinde more un-to yow holde  
Than is the sheep, that roulketh in the folde?  
For slayn is man right as another beste,  
And dwelleth eek in prison and areste,  
And hath siknesse, and greet adversitee,  
And ofte tymes giltelees, pardee!

1278. E. Resounded; rest Resouneth. Cp. Hl. yolling; Pt. Ln. yellinge. 1290. *All* moste, most, muste; *but read* mot: see l. 1295. 1296. Hl. yyue;  
E. yeue. 1297. E. yeueth. 1299. Hl. Ielousye; E. Ialousie. 1303. Hl. Tho; E. Thanne. E. cruel gooddes(!). 1305. Hl. Cm. athamaunte; E.  
Athamaunt. 1309. Cm. Hl. beste; E. beest. 1310. Cm. areste; Hl. areste; E. arrest. 1312, 1314. Cm. Cp. Hl. gilteles; E. giltees.

What governaunce is in this prescience,  
That giltelees tormenteth innocence?  
And yet encreseth this al my penaunce,  
That man is bounden to his observaunce,  
For Goddes sake, to letten of his wille,  
Ther as a beest may al his lust fulfille.  
And whan a beest is deed, he hath no peyne;  
But man after his deeth moot wepe and pleyne,  
Though in this world he have care and wo:  
With-outen doute it may stonden so.  
The awnswere of this I lete to divynis,  
But wel I woot, that in this world gret pyne is.  
Allas! I see a serpent or a theef,  
That many a trewe man hath doon mescheef,  
Goon at his large, and wher him list may turne.  
But I mot been in prison thurgh Saturne,  
And eek thurgh Iuno, Ialous and eek wood,  
That hath destroyed wel ny al the blood

Of Thebes, with his waste walles wyde.  
And Vénus sleeth me on that other syde  
For Ielousye, and fere of him Arcite.'

1315. Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. encreseth; E. encresseth. 1320. So Hn. Cm. Hl.; *rest* after his deeth man. 1323. So Hl.; *rest* lete I. 1331. E. hise. 1333. E. Ialousie.

Now wol I stinte of Palamon a lyte,  
And lete him in his prison stille dwelle,  
And of Arcita forth I wol yow telle.

The somer passeth, and the nightes longe  
Encresen double wyse the peynes stronge  
Bothe of the lovere and the prisoner.  
I noot which hath the wofullere mester.  
For shortly for to seyn, this Palamoun  
Perpetually is dampned to prisoun,  
In cheynes and in fettres to ben deed;  
And Arcite is exyled upon his heed  
For ever-mo as out of that contree,  
Ne never-mo he shal his lady see.

1337. E. (*alone*) sonne. 1338. E. Encressen. 1344. Cm. Cp. Pt. vp (*perhaps rightly*).

Yow loveres axe I now this questioun,  
Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamoun?  
That oon may seen his lady day by day,  
But in prison he moot dwelle alway.  
That other wher him list may ryde or go,  
But seen his lady shal he never-mo.  
Now demeth as yow liste, ye that can,  
For I wol telle forth as I bigan.

1347. E. Now (*wrongly*); rest Yow. 1350. Hn. Cp. Pt. moot he. 1353. Ln. liste; Cm. lyste; Hl. luste; *rest* list.

#### **Explicit prima Pars. Sequitur pars secunda.**

Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen was,  
Ful ofte a day he swelte and seyde 'allas,'  
For seen his lady shal he never-mo.  
And shortly to concluden al his wo,  
So muche sorwe had never creature  
That is, or shal, whyl that the world may dure.  
His sleep, his mete, his drink is him biraft,  
That lene he wex, and drye as is a shaft.  
His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde;  
His hewe falwe, and pale as asshen colde,  
And solitarie he was, and ever allone,  
And wailing al the night, making his mone.  
And if he herde song or instrument,  
Then wolde he wepe, he mighte nat be stent;  
So feble eek were his spirits, and so lowe,  
And chaunged so, that no man coude knowe  
His speche nor his vois, though men it herde.  
And in his gere, for al the world he ferde  
Nat oonly lyk the loveres maladye  
Of Hereos, but rather lyk manye  
Engendred of humour malencolyk,  
Biforen, in his celle fantastyk.  
And shortly, turned was al up-so-doun  
Bothe habit and eek disposicioun

Of him, this woful lovere daun Arcite.

1359. Hl. Pt. Ln. had; *rest* hadde. 1362. E. Pt. wexeth. 1364. Hi. Cm. Cp. falwe; E. Hn. falow. 1369. E. spiritz. 1376. E. Bifōrn his owene; Cm. Be-fōrn hese owene; Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. Bifōrn his; Hl. Beforne in his.

What sholde I al-day of his wo endyte?  
Whan he endured hadde a yeer or two  
This cruel torment, and this peyne and wo,  
At Thebes, in his contree, as I seyde,  
Up-on a night, in sleep as he him leyde,  
Him thoughte how that the winged god Mercurie  
Bifōrn him stood, and bad him to be murye.  
His sleepy yerde in hond he bar uprighte;  
An hat he werede up-on his heres brighte.  
Arrayed was this god (as he took keep)  
As he was whan that Argus took his sleep;  
And seyde him thus: 'To Athenes shal tou wende;  
Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende.'  
And with that word Arcite wook and sterte.  
'Now trewely, how sore that me smerte,'  
Quod he, 'to Athenes right now wol I fare;  
Ne for the drede of deeth shal I nat spare  
To see my lady, that I love and serve;  
In hir presence I recche nat to sterfe.'

1382. E. crueel. 1388. E. vp (*perhaps rightly*); *rest* vp-on. 1389. E. I; *rest* he.

And with that word he caughte a greet mirour,  
And saugh that chaunged was al his colour,  
And saugh his visage al in another kinde.  
And right anoon it ran him in his minde,  
That, sith his face was so disfigured  
Of maladye, the which he hadde endured,  
He mighte wel, if that he bar him lowe,  
Live in Athenes ever-more unknowe,  
And seen his lady wel ny day by day.  
And right anon he chaunged his array,  
And cladde him as a povre laborer,  
And al allone, save oonly a squyer,  
That knew his privetee and al his cas,  
Which was disgysed povrely, as he was,  
To Athenes is he goon the nexte way.  
And to the court he wente up-on a day,  
And at the gate he profreth his servyse,  
To drugge and drawe, what so men wol devyse.  
And shortly of this matere for to seyn,  
He fil in office with a chamberleyn,  
The which that dwelling was with Emelye.  
For he was wys, and coude soon aspye  
Of every seruaunt, which that serveth here.  
Wel coude he hewen wode, and water bere,  
For he was yong and mighty for the nones,  
And ther-to be was strong and big of bones  
To doon that any wight can him devyse.  
A yeer or two he was in this servyse,  
Page of the chambre of Emelye the brighte;  
And 'Philostrate' he seide that he highte.  
But half so wel biloved a man as he  
Ne was ther never in court, of his degree;  
He was so gentil of condicioun,

That thurghout al the court was his renoun.  
They seyden, that it were a charitee  
That Theseus wolde enhauncen his degree,  
And putten him in worshipful servyse,  
Ther as he mighte his vertu excercyse.  
And thus, with-inne a whyle, his name is spronge  
Bothe of his dedes, and his goode tonge,  
That Theseus hath taken him so neer  
That of his chambre he made him a squyer,  
And yaf him gold to mayntene his degree;  
And eek men broghte him out of his contree  
From yeer to yeer, ful prively, his rente;  
But honestly and slyly he it spente,  
That no man wondred how that he it hadde.  
And three yeer in this wyse his lyf he ladde,  
And bar him so in pees and eek in werre,  
Ther nas no man that Theseus hath derre.  
And in this blisse lete I now Arcite,  
And speke I wol of Palamon a lyte.

1424. E. Cm. long; rest strong. 1431. E. Hl. ins. his *after* of 1441. E. Hn. Cp. gaf

In derknesse and horrible and strong prisoun  
This seven yeer hath seten Palamoun,  
Forpyned, what for wo and for distresse;  
Who feleth double soor and hevinesse  
But Palamon? that love destreyneheth so,  
That wood out of his wit he gooth for wo;  
And eek thereto he is a prisoner  
Perpetually, noght oonly for a yeer.  
Who coude ryme in English proprely  
His martirdom? for sothe, it am nat I;  
Therefore I passe as lightly as I may.

1454. E. Hn. Pt. soor; Cp. Ln. sore; Cm. Hl. sorwe. E. *om.* and.

It fel that in the seventhe yeer, in May,  
The thridde night, (as olde bokes seyn,  
That al this storie tellen more pleyn,)  
Were it by aventure or destinee,  
(As, whan a thing is shapen, it shal be,)  
That, sone after the midnight, Palamoun,  
By helping of a freend, brak his prisoun,  
And fleeth the citee, faste as he may go;  
For he had yive his gayler drinke so  
Of a clarree, maad of a certeyn wyn,  
With nercotikes and opie of Thebes fyn,  
That al that night, thogh that men wolde him shake,  
The gayler sleep, he mighte nat awake;  
And thus he fleeth as faste as ever he may.  
The night was short, and faste by the day,  
That nedes-cost he moste him-selven hyde,  
And til a grove, faste ther besyde,  
With dredful foot than stalketh Palamoun.  
For shortly, this was his opinoun,  
That in that grove he wolde him hyde al day,  
And in the night than wolde he take his way  
To Thebes-ward, his freendes for to preye  
On Theseus to helpe him to werreye;  
And shortly, outhere he wolde lese his lyf,

Or winnen Emelye un-to his wyf;  
This is the effect and his entente pleyn.

1470. Hl. yiue; E. yeue. 1472. E. Of *rest* With. 1477. E. moot; *rest* moste, most, muste. 1479. E. Hn. Cm. thanne; *rest* than.

Now wol I torne un-to Arcite ageyn,  
That litel wiste how ny that was his care,  
Til that fortune had broght him in the snare.

1488. E. Hn. Ln. to; *rest* vn-to.

The bisy larke, messenger of day,  
Salueth in hir song the morwe gray;  
And fyry Phebus ryseth up so brighte,  
That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,  
And with his stremes dryeth in the greves  
The silver dropes, hanging on the leves.  
And Arcite, that is in the court royal  
With Theseus, his squyer principal,  
Is risen, and loketh on the myrie day.  
And, for to doon his observaunce to May,  
Remembryng on the poynt of his desyr,  
He on a courser, sterting as the fyr,  
Is riden in-to the feeldes, him to pleye,  
Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye;  
And to the grove, of which that I yow tolde,  
By aventure, his wey he gan to holde,  
To maken him a gerland of the greves,  
Were it of wodebinde or hawethorn-leves,  
And loude he song ageyn the sonne shene:  
'May, with alle thy floures and thy grene,  
Wel-come be thou, faire fresshe May,  
I hope that I som grene gete may.'  
And from his courser, with a lusty herte,  
In-to the grove ful hastily he sterte,  
And in a path he rometh up and doun,  
Ther-as, by aventure, this Palamoun  
Was in a bush, that no man myghte him see,  
For sore afered of his deeth was he.  
No-thing ne knew he that it was Arcite:  
God wot he wolde have trowed it ful lyte.  
But sooth is seyd, gon sithen many yeres,  
That 'feeld hath eyen, and the wode hath eres.'  
It is ful fair a man to bere him evene,  
For al-day meteth men at unset stevene.  
Ful litel woot Arcite of his felawe,  
That was so ny to herknen al his sawe,  
For in the bush he sitteth now ful stille.

1491. day] Hl. May. 1495. E. hise. 1497. Hl. Arcite; *rest* Arcita. 1502. E. Hn. Cm. a; *rest* his. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. stertyng; E. Hn. startlynge; Cm. stertyng. 1511. Hl. wel faire; *rest* om. wel. 1512. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. In; *rest* I. 1514. E. a; *rest* the. 1518. Hn. Hl. afered; Cm. ofered; *rest* aferd. E. (alone) ins. thanne bef. was. 1521. Hl. Pt. goon; Cm. Ln. gon; E. Hn. Cp. go. 1526. E. Hn. al; *rest* of

Whan that Arcite had romed al his fille,  
And songen al the roundel lustily,  
In-to a studie he fil sodeynly,  
As doon thise loveres in hir queynte geres,  
Now in the croppe, now doun in the breres,  
Now up, now doun, as boket in a welle.  
Right as the Friday, soothly for to telle,  
Now it shyneth, now it reyneth faste,

Right so can gery Venus overcaste  
The hertes of hir folk; right as hir day  
Is gerful, right so chaungeth she array.  
Selde is the Friday al the wyke y-lyke.

1530. E. fil al: *rest om.* al. 1532. E. Hn. Cm. crop; Cp. Hl. Pt. croppe. 1536. E. Hn. Cm. kan; *rest gan.* 1538. E. *gereful*; Cp. *geerful*; Hl. *grisful*; *rest gerful.* 1539. Hl. wyke; Hn. Cp. wike; Pt. Ln. weke; Cm. wouke; E. wowke.

Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan to syke,  
And sette him doun with-outen any more:  
'Alas!' quod he, 'that day that I was bore!  
How longe, Iuno, thurgh thy crueltee,  
Woltow werreyen Thebes the citee?  
Allas! y-brought is to confusiou  
The blood royal of Cadme and Amphioun;  
Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man  
That Thebes bulte, or first the toun bigan,  
And of the citee first was crouned king,  
Of his linage am I, and his of-spring  
By verray ligne, as of the stok royal:  
And now I am so caitif and so thral,  
That he, that is my mortal enemy,  
I serve him as his squyer povrely.  
And yet doth Iuno me wel more shame,  
For I dar noght biknowe myn owne name;  
But ther-as I was wont to highte Arcite,  
Now highte I Philostrate, noght worth a myte.  
Allas! thou felle Mars, allas! Iuno,  
Thus hath your ire our kinrede al fordo,  
Save only me, and wrecched Palamoun,  
That Theseus martyreth in prisoun.  
And over al this, to sleen me utterly,  
Love hath his fyry dart so brenningly  
Y-stiked thurgh my trewe careful herte,  
That shapen was my deeth erst than my sherte.  
Ye sleen me with your eyen, Emelye;  
Ye been the cause wherfor that I dye.  
Of al the remenant of myn other care  
Ne sette I nat the mountaunce of a tare,  
So that I coude don aught to your plesaunce!"  
And with that word he fil doun in a traunce  
A longe tyme; and after he up-sterte.

1551. Cm. Pt. Hl. lyne. 1556. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. owne; E. owene. 1557. highte] Hl. hote. 1560. E. kynrede; *rest lynage* (lignage). 1563. Hl. vtterly;  
E. outrely. 1573. So E.; *rest afterward* (*for after*). Hl. *om* he.

This Palamoun, that thoughte that thurgh his herte  
He felte a cold swerd sodeynliche glyde,  
For ire he quook, no lenger wolde he byde.  
And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,  
As he were wood, with face deed and pale,  
He sterte him up out of the buskes thikke,  
And seyde: 'Arcite, false traitour wikkie,  
Now artow hent, that louest my lady so,  
For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,  
And art my blood, and to my conseil sworn,  
As I ful ofte have told thee heer-biform,  
And hast by-iaped here duk Theseus,  
And falsly chaunged hast thy name thus;  
I wol be deed, or elles thou shalt dye.  
Thou shalt nat love my lady Emelye,

But I wol love hir only, and namo;  
For I am Palamoun, thy mortal fo.  
And though that I no wepne have in this place,  
But out of prison am astert by grace,  
I drede noght that outhier thou shalt dye,  
Or thou ne shalt nat loven Emelye.  
Chees which thou wilt, for thou shalt nat asterte.'

1579. Hl. bussches; Cm. boschis; Ln. boskes. 1581. E. Hn. artow; *rest* art thou. 1584. told] E. Cm. seyd. 1589. E. Hn. namo; Hl. Cm. no mo. 1595. E. Hn. wolt. Hl. for; *rest* or.

This Arcite, with ful despitous herte,  
Whan he him knew, and hadde his tale herd,  
As fiers as leoun, pulled out a swerd,  
And seyde thus: 'by God that sit above,  
Nere it that thou art sik, and wood for love,  
And eek that thou no wepne hast in this place,  
Thou sholdest never out of this grove pace,  
That thou ne sholdest dyen of myn hond.  
For I defye the seurtee and the bond  
Which that thou seyst that I have maad to thee.  
What, verray fool, think wel that love is free,  
And I wol love hir, maugre al thy might!  
But, for as muche thou art a worthy knight,  
And wilhest to darreyne hir by batayle,  
Have heer my trouthe, to-morwe I wol nat fayle,  
With-outen witing of any other wight,  
That here I wol be founden as a knight,  
And bringen harneys right y-nough for thee;  
And chees the beste, and leve the worste for me.  
And mete and drinke this night wol I bringe  
Y-nough for thee, and clothes for thy beddinge.  
And, if so be that thou my lady winne,  
And slee me in this wode ther I am inne,  
Thou mayst wel have thy lady, as for me.'  
This Palamon answerde: 'I graunte it thee.'  
And thus they been departed til a-morwe,  
When ech of hem had leyd his feith to borwe.

1598. E. Hn. his; *rest* a. 1599. E. sit; Cm. set; *rest* sitteth. 1604. Hl. seurte; Cp. sewrte; E. seurete; Hn. seuretee. 1609. Cp. derreyne; Hl. dereyne. 1614. Hn. chees; Cm. Hl. ches; *rest* chese.

O Cupide, out of alle charitee!  
O regne, that wolt no felawe have with thee!  
Ful sooth is seyd, that love ne lordshipe  
Wol noght, his thankes, have no felaweshipe;  
Wel finden that Arcite and Palamoun.  
Arcite is riden anon un-to the toun,  
And on the morwe, er it were dayes light,  
Ful prively two harneys hath he dight,  
Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne  
The bataille in the feeld bitwix hem tweyne.  
And on his hors, allone as he was born,  
He carieth al this harneys him biforn;  
And in the grove, at tyme and place y-set,  
This Arcite and this Palamon ben met.  
Tho chaungen gan the colour in hir face;  
Right as the hunter in the regne of Trace,  
That stondeth at the gappe with a spere,  
Whan hunted is the leoun or the bere,  
And hereth him come russhing in the greves,

And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,  
And thinketh, 'heer cometh my mortel enemy,  
With-oute faile, he moot be deed, or I;  
For outher I mot sleen him at the gappe,  
Or he mot sleen me, if that me mishappe:  
So ferdyn they, in chaunging of hir hewe,  
As fer as everich of hem other knewe.  
Ther nas no good day, ne no saluing;  
But streight, with-outen word or rehersing,  
Everich of hem halp for to armen other,  
As freendly as he were his owne brother;  
And after that, with sharpe speres stronge  
They foynen ech at other wonder longe.  
Thou mightest wene that this Palamoun  
In his fighting were a wood leoun,  
And as a cruel tygre was Arcite:  
As wilde bores gonue they to smyte,  
That frothen whyte as foom for ire wood.  
Up to the ancle foghte they in hir blood.  
And in this wyse I lete hem fighting dwelle;  
And forth I wol of Theseus yow telle.

1626. E. hir; *rest* his. 1634. E. the; Hn. Cm. Hl. this. 1637. Hl. Tho; *rest* To. 1638. Hl. honterus; *rest* hunters, hunterys; ed. 1542, hunter. 1640. E. and; *rest* or. 1651. Cm. halp; Cp. hilp; E. Hn. heelp; Hl. Pt. helpeth; Ln. helpe. Hl. Ln. om. for. 1652. E. owene. 1656. Tyrwhitt ins. as bef. a. 1659. E. Hn. whit. 1660. E. ancle. 1662. E. wole.

The destinee, minstre general,  
That executeth in the world over-al  
The purveyaunce, that God hath seyn biforn,  
So strong it is, that, though the world had sworn  
The contrarie of a thing, by ye or nay,  
Yet somtyme it shal fallen on a day  
That falleth nat eft with-inne a thousand yere.  
For certeinly, our appetytes here,  
Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,  
Al is this reuled by the sighte above.  
This mene I now by mighty Theseus,  
That for to honten is so desirous,  
And namely at the grete hert in May,  
That in his bed ther daweth him no day,  
That he nis clad, and redy for to ryde  
With hunte and horn, and houndes him bisyde.  
For in his hunting hath he swich delyt,  
That it is al his Ioye and appetyt  
To been him-self the grete hertes bane;  
For after Mars he serveth now Diane.

1672. this] Hl. it.

Cleer was the day, as I have told er this,  
And Theseus, with alle Ioye and blis,  
With his Ipolita, the fayre quene,  
And Emelye, clothed al in grene,  
On hunting be they riden roially.  
And to the grove, that stood ful faste by,  
In which ther was an hert, as men him tolde,  
Duk Theseus the streigthe wey hath holde.  
And to the launde he rydeth him ful right,  
For thider was the hert wont have his flight,  
And over a brook, and so forth on his weye.  
This duk wol han a cours at him, or tweye,

With houndes, swiche as that him list comaunde.

1693. E. Hl. in; *rest* on. 1695. Hn. Cp. Pt. that; *rest om.*

And whan this duk was come un-to the launde,  
Under the sonne he loketh, and anon  
He was war of Arcite and Palamon,  
That foughтен breme, as it were bores two;  
The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro  
So hidously, that with the leeste strook  
It seemed as it wolde felle an ook;  
But what they were, no-thing he ne woot.  
This duk his courser with his spores smoot,  
And at a stert he was bitwix hem two,  
And pulled out a swerd and cryed, 'ho!  
Namore, up peyne of lesing of your heed.  
By mighty Mars, he shal anon be deed,  
That smyeth any strook, that I may seen!  
But telleth me what mister men ye been,  
That been so hardy for to fighten here  
With-outen Iuge or other officere,  
As it were in a listes royally?'

1699. E. Cm. Hl. bores; *rest* boles. 1702. E. fille. 1706. E. cride; Hn. Cp. Pt. cryed. 1707. E. Hn. Ln. vp-on; *rest* vp. 1710. Hn. Cm. Cp. Pt. myster; E. mystiers; Ln. mester; Hl. mestir.

This Palamon answerde hastily,  
And seyde: 'sire, what nedeth wordes mo?  
We have the deeth deserved bothe two.  
Two woful wrecches been we, two caytyves,  
That been encombred of our owne lyves;  
And as thou art a rightful lord and Iuge,  
Ne yeve us neither mercy ne refuge,  
But slee me first, for seynte charitee;  
But slee my felawe eek as wel as me.  
Or slee him first; for, though thou knowe it lyte,  
This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,  
That fro thy lond is banished on his heed,  
For which he hath deserved to be deed.  
For this is he that cam un-to thy gate,  
And seyde, that he highte Philostrate.  
Thus hath he laped thee ful many a yeer,  
And thou has maked him thy chief squyer;  
And this is he that loveth Emelye.  
For sith the day is come that I shal dye,  
I make pleynly my confessiouin,  
That I am thilke woful Palamoun,  
That hath thy prison broken wikkedly.  
I am thy mortal fo, and it am I  
That loveth so hote Emelye the brighte,  
That I wol dye present in hir sighte.  
Therfore I axe deeth and my Iuwysse;  
But slee my felawe in the same wyse,  
For bothe han we deserved to be slayn.'

1716. E. Hn. disserued. 1718. E. Hn. Cm. owene. 1723. Hl. Hn. knowe; *rest* knowest. 1741. Ln. Hl. we haue.

This worthy duk answerde anon agayn,  
And seyde, 'This is a short conclusioun:  
Youre owne mouth, by your confessiouin,  
Hath dampned you, and I wol it recorde,

It nedeth noght to pyne yow with the corde.  
Ye shul be deed, by mighty Mars the rede!  
The quene anon, for verray wommanhede,  
Can for to wepe, and so dide Emelye,  
And alle the ladies in the compayne.  
Gret pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,  
That ever swich a chaunce sholde falle;  
For gentil men they were, of greet estat,  
And no-thing but for love was this debat;  
And sawe hir blody woundes wyde and sore;  
And alle cryden, bothe lasse and more,  
'Have mercy, lord, up-on us wommen alle!'  
And on hir bare knees adoun they falle,  
And wolde have kist his feet ther-as he stood,  
Til at the laste aslaked was his mood;  
For pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.  
And though he first for ire quook and sterte,  
He hath considered shortly, in a clause,  
The trespass of hem bothe, and eek the cause:  
And al-though that his ire hir gilt accused,  
Yet in his reson he hem bothe excused;  
As thus: he thoughte wel, that every man  
Wol helpe him-self in love, if that he can,  
And eek delivere him-self out of prisoun;  
And eek his herte had compassioun  
Of wommen, for they wepen ever in oon;  
And in his gentil herte he thoughte anoon,  
And softe un-to himself he seyde: 'fy  
Up-on a lord that wol have no mercy,  
But been a leoun, bothe in word and dede,  
To hem that been in repentaunce and drede  
As wel as to a proud despitous man  
That wol maynteyne that he first bigan!  
That lord hath litel of discrecioun,  
That in swich cas can no divisioun,  
But weyeth pryd and humblesse after oon.'  
And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,  
He gan to loken up with eyen lighte,  
And spak thise same wordes al on highte:--  
The god of love, a! *benedicite*,  
How mighty and how greet a lord is he!  
Ayeins his might ther gayneth none obstacles,  
He may be cleped a god for his miracles;  
For he can maken at his owne gyse  
Of everich herte, as that him list devyse.  
Lo heer, this Arcite and this Palamoun,  
That quilty weren out of my prisoun,  
And mighte han lived in Thebes roially,  
And witen I am hir mortal enemy,  
And that hir deeth lyth in my might also,  
And yet hath love, maugree hir eyen two,  
Y-brought hem hider bothe for to dye!  
Now loketh, is nat that an heigh folye?  
Who may been a fool, but-if he love?  
Bihold, for Goddes sake that sit above,  
Se how they blede! be they noght wel arrayed?  
Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, y-payed  
Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse!  
And yet they wenken for to been ful wyse

That serven love, for aught that may bifalle!  
But this is yet the beste game of alle,  
That she, for whom they han this Iolitee,  
Can hem ther-for as muche thank as me;  
She woot namore of al this hote fare,  
By God, than woot a cokkow or an hare!  
But al mot been assayed, hoot and cold;  
A man mot been a fool, or yong or old;  
I woot it by my-self ful yore agoon:  
For in my tyme a servant was I oon.  
And therfore, sin I knowe of loves peyne,  
And woot how sore it can a man distreyne,  
As he that hath ben caught ofte in his las,  
I yow foryeve al hooly this trespass,  
At requeste of the quene that kneleth here,  
And eek of Emelye, my suster dere.  
And ye shul bothe anon un-to me swere,  
That never-mo ye shul my contree dere,  
Ne make werre up-on me night ne day,  
But been my freendes in al that ye may;  
I yow foryeve this trespass every del.'  
And they him swore his axing fayre and wel,  
And him of lordshipe and of mercy preyde,  
And he hem graunteth grace, and thus he seyde:

1744. E. Hn. Cm. owene; Hl. Cp. Pt. owne. 1747. Hn. Pt. shul; Cm. Hl. schul; E. shal. 1753. E. estaat. 1754. E. debaat. 1767. Hn. Cm. Cp. As; *rest* And. 1770. Hl. Pt. Ln. had; *rest* hadde. 1771. Hn. wepten; *rest* wepen. 1788. E. hise. 1789. E. Hn. Cm. owene; Cp. Pt. owne. 1790. E. diuyse. 1797. Hl. I-brought; *rest* Broght, Brought. 1799. See note. Hl. if that; *rest* but if 1810. E. Hn. Cp. of *rest* or 1811. and] Cm. Hl. or 1817. E. Hn. Cp. Pt. laas; Cm. las; Hl. Ln. lace. 1818. E. Pt. trespaas. 1822. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. shal. contree] Cp. Ln. Hl. coroune. 1825, 1826. E. del, weel; Hn. Cm. Cp. del, wel. Hl. Pt. swore; *rest* sworen, sworne, sworyn. 1828. Hl. Cm. graunted.

'To speke of royal linage and richesse,  
Though that she were a quene or a princesse,  
Ech of yow bothe is worthy, doutelees,  
To wedden whan tyme is, but nathelees  
I speke as for my suster Emelye,  
For whom ye have this stryf and Ielousye;  
Ye woot your-self, she may not wedden two  
At ones, though ye fighten ever-mo:  
That oon of yow, al be him looth or leef,  
He moot go pypen in an ivy-leef;  
This is to seyn, she may nat now han bothe,  
Al be ye never so Ielous, ne so wrothe.  
And for-thy I yow putte in this degree,  
That ech of yow shal have his destinee  
As him is shape; and herkneth in what wyse;  
Lo, heer your ende of that I shal devyse.

1832. E. wrongly repeats doutelees. 1834. E. Hn. Cp. Ialousye. 1837. E. Hn. Pt. lief. 1838. E. om. go. 1840. E. Hn. Cp. Ialouse.

My wil is this, for plat conclusioun,  
With-outen any replicacioun,  
If that yow lyketh, tak it for the beste,  
That everich of yow shal gon wher him leste  
Frely, with-outen raunson or daunger;  
And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner,  
Everich of yow shal bringe an hundred knightes,  
Armed for listes up at alle rightes,  
Al redy to darreynе hir by bataille.  
And this bihote I yow, with-outen faille,  
Up-on my trouthe, and as I am a knight,

That whether of yow bothe that hath might,  
This is to seyn, that whether he or thou  
May with his hundred, as I spak of now,  
Sleen his contrarie, or out of listes dryve,  
Him shal I yeve Emelya to wyve,  
To whom that fortune yeveth so fair a grace.  
The listes shal I maken in this place,  
And God so wisly on my soule rewe,  
As I shal even luge been and trewe.  
Ye shul non other ende with me maken,  
That oon of yow ne shal be deed or taken.  
And if yow thinketh this is wel y-sayd,  
Seyeth your avys, and holdeth yow apayd.  
This is your ende and your conclusioun.'

1856. 7. E. whether. 1860. Hl. Him; Cp. Ln. That; E. Hn. Thanne; Cm. Pt. Than. E. Cp. Ln. Emelya; Hl. Hn. Emelye.

Who loketh lightly now but Palamoun?  
Who springeth up for Ioye but Arcite?  
Who couthe telle, or who couthe it endyte,  
The Ioye that is maked in the place  
Whan Theseus hath doon so fair a grace?  
But doun on knees wente every maner wight,  
And thanked him with al her herte and might,  
And namely the Thebans ofte sythe.  
And thus with good hope and with herte blythe  
They take hir leve, and hom-ward gonnew they ryde  
To Thebes, with his olde walles wyde.

1872. E. Cm. Hl. *om. it.* 1876. Hl. thanked; Cm. thankede; Cp. Pt. Ln. thonked; E. Hn. thonken. 1877. E. often; Ln. off; Pt. mony; *rest offe*.

**Explicit secunda pars. Sequitur pars tercia.**

I trowe men wolde deme it negligence,  
If I foryete to tellen the dispence  
Of Theseus, that goth so bisily  
To maken up the listes royally;  
That swich a noble theatre as it was,  
I dar wel seyn that in this world ther nas.  
The circuit a myle was aboue,  
Walled of stoon, and ditched al with-oute.  
Round was the shap, in maner of compas,  
Ful of degrees, the heigthe of sixty pas,  
That, whan a man was set on o degree,  
He letted nat his felawe for to see.

1886. Hl. that; *rest om.* 1889. E. compaas. 1892. E. lette; Cm. lettyth; *rest letted.*

Est-ward ther stood a gate of marbel whyt,  
West-ward, right swich another in the opposit.  
And shortly to concluden, swich a place  
Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space;  
For in the lond ther nas no crafty man,  
That geometrie or ars-metrik can,  
Ne purtreyour, ne kerver of images,  
That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages  
The theatre for to maken and devyse.  
And for to doon his ryte and sacrificysse,  
He est-ward hath, up-on the gate above,  
In worship of Venus, goddesse of love,  
Don make an auter and an oratorie;

And west-ward, in the minde and in memorie  
Of Mars, he maked hath right swich another,  
That coste largely of gold a fother.  
And north-ward, in a touret on the wal,  
Of alabastre whyt and reed coral  
An oratorie riche for to see,  
In worship of Dyane of chastitee,  
Hath Theseus don wrought in noble wyse.

1893. E. Hn. Hl. marbul. 1899. Hl. Hn. Cp. purtreyour; E. portreitour. 1900. Cp. Pt. Cm. him; Hl. hem; *rest om.* 1906. So Hl.; E. Hn. Cm. (wrongly) And on the west-ward in memorie.

But yet hadde I foryeten to devyse  
The noble kerving, and the portreitures,  
The shap, the countenaunce, and the figures,  
That weren in thise oratories three.

First in the temple of Vénus maystow see  
Wrought on the wal, ful pitous to biholde,  
The broken slepes, and the sykes colde;  
The sacred teres, and the waymenting;  
The fyry strokes of the desiring,  
That loves servaunts in this lyf enduren;  
The othes, that hir covenants assuren;  
Plesaunce and hope, desyr, fool-hardinesse,  
Beautee and youthe, bauderie, richesse,  
Charmes and force, lesinges, flaterye,  
Dispense, bisynesse, and Ielousye,  
That wered of yelwe goldes a gerland,  
And a cokkow sitting on hir hand;  
Festes, instruments, caroles, daunces,  
Lust and array, and alle the circumstaunces  
Of love, whiche that I rekne and rekne shal,  
By ordre weren peynted on the wal,  
And mo than I can make of mencioune.  
For soothly, al the mount of Citheroun,  
Ther Vénus hath hir principal dwelling,  
Was shewed on the wal in portreyng,  
With al the gardin, and the lustinessse.  
Nat was foryeten the porter Ydelnesse,  
Ne Narcisus the faire of yore agon,  
Ne yet the folye of king Salamon,  
Ne yet the grete strengthe of Hercules--  
Thenchauntements of Medea and Circes--  
Ne of Turnus, with the hardy fiers corage,  
The riche Cresus, caytif in servage.  
Thus may ye seen that wisdom ne richesse,  
Beautee ne sleighe, strengthe, ne hardinesse,  
Ne may with Vénus holde champartye;  
For as hir list the world than may she gye.  
Lo, alle thise folk so caught were in hir las,  
Til they for wo ful ofte seyd 'allas!'  
Suffyceth heer ensamples oon or two,  
And though I coude rekne a thousand mo.

1922. E. Hl. and; *rest of* 1928. E. Hn. Cp. Ialousye. 1929. Hl. guldes. 1930. Cp. Ln. Cm. his. 1933. Cm. I reken and rekne schal; Hn. Hl. I rekned and rekne shal; E. I rekned haue and rekne shal (*too long*). 1942. E. Cm. And; *rest Ne.* 1943. E. Cm. And eek; Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. Ne yet; Hl. Ne eek. E. Hn. Cm. Ercules. 1948. E. Hn. Pt. *om. ne.*

The statue of Vénus, glorious for to see,  
Was naked fleting in the large see,

And fro the navele doun all covered was  
With wawes grene, and brighte as any glas.  
A citole in hir right hand hadde she,  
And on hir heed, ful semely for to see,  
A rose gerland, fresh and wel smellinge;  
Above hir heed hir dowves flikeringe.  
Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido,  
Up-on his shuldres winges hadde he two;  
And blind he was, as it is ofte sene;  
A bowe he bar and arwes brighte and kene.

1965. E. it was; *rest* it is.

Why sholde I noght as wel eek telle yow al  
The portreiture, that was up-on the wal  
With-inne the temple of mighty Mars the rede?  
Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and brede,  
Lyk to the estres of the grisly place,  
That highte the grete temple of Mars in Trace,  
In thilke colde frosty regiouin,  
Ther-as Mars hath his sovereyn mansioun.

First on the wal was peynted a foreste,  
In which ther dwelleth neither man ne beste,  
With knotty knarry bareyn trees olde  
Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to biholde;  
In which ther ran a rumbel and a swough,  
As though a storm sholde bresten every bough:  
And downward from an hille, under a bente,  
Ther stood the temple of Mars armipotente,  
Wroght al of burned steel, of which thentree  
Was long and streit, and gastly for to see.  
And ther-out cam a rage and such a vese,  
That it made al the gates for to rese.  
The northren light in at the dores shoon,  
For windowe on the wal ne was ther noon,  
Thurgh which men mighten any light discerne.  
The dores were alle of adamant eterne,  
Y-clenched overthwart and endelong  
With iren tough; and, for to make it strong,  
Every piler, the temple to sustene,  
Was tonne-greet, of iren bright and shene.

1975. Hl. foreste; E. forest. 1976. Hl. beste; E. best. 1977. E. Hn. Cm. Cp. bareyne. 1979. E. rumbel; Cm. rumbil; Hn. rombul; Cp. Ln. rombel;  
Hl. swymbul. E. Pt. and; *rest* in. 1980. Ln. berste; Hl. berst. 1981. Hn. Hl. on (*for* from). 1983. E. Hn. the entre. 1985. Cp. vese; Cm. wese; E.  
Hn. Ln. veze; Hl. prise. 1986. E. Hn. Cm. gate. Hl. rise. 1990. E. Hn. Pt. dore was.

Ther saugh I first the derke imagining  
Of felonye, and al the compassing;  
The cruel ire, reed as any glede;  
The pykepurs, and eek the pale drede;  
The smyler with the knyf under the cloke;  
The shepne brenning with the blake smoke;  
The treson of the mordring in the bedde;  
The open werre, with woundes al bi-bledde;  
Contek, with blody knyf and sharp manace;  
Al ful of chirking was that sory place.  
The sleere of him-self yet saugh I ther,  
His herte-blood hath bathed al his heer;  
The nayl y-driven in the shode a-night;  
The colde deeth, with mouth gaping up-right.

Amiddes of the temple sat meschaunce,  
With disconfort and sory contenaunce.  
Yet saugh I woodnesse laughing in his rage;  
Armed compleint, out-hees, and fiers outrage.  
The careyne in the bush, with throte y-corve:  
A thousand slayn, and nat of qualmy-storve;  
The tiraunt, with the prey by force y-raft;  
The toun destroyed, ther was no-thing laft.  
Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres;  
The hunte strangled with the wilde beres:  
The sowe freten the child right in the cradel;  
The cook y-scalded, for al his longe ladel.  
Noght was foryeten by the infortune of Marte;  
The carter over-riden with his carte,  
Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun.  
Ther were also, of Martes divisoun,  
The barbour, and the bocher, and the smith  
That forgeth sharpe swerde on his stith.  
And al above, depeynted in a tour,  
Saw I conquest sittinge in greet honour,  
With the sharpe swerde over his heed  
Hanginge by a sotil twynes threed.  
Depeynted was the slaughtre of Iulius,  
Of grete Nero, and of Antonius;  
Albe that thilke tyme they were unborn,  
Yet was hir deeth depeynted ther-biform,  
By manasinge of Mars, right by figure;  
So was it shewed in that portreiture  
As is depeynted in the sterres above,  
Who shal be slain or elles deed for love.  
Suffyceth oon ensample in stories olde,  
I may not rekne hem alle, thogh I wolde.

1995. E. Hn. dirke. 1996. E. Cm. on. al. 1998. E. Cm. *om. eek*. 2012. Cm. outes. 2013. E. Cp. Ln. busk; Cm. bosch; Hn. Pt. bussh. 2014. E. ins. oon *after* nat. 2021. Hl. *om. by*. 2025. E. Cm. laborer; *rest* barbour. 2029. Pt. Ln. swerde; *rest* swerd. 2030. E. soutil; Hn. Cp. Ln. subtil. 2037. Hl. sterres; E. Pt. certres; *rest* sterres.

The statue of Mars up-on a carte stood,  
Armed, and lokd grim as he were wood;  
And over his he'ed ther shynen two figures  
Of sterres, that been cleped in scriptures,  
That oon Puella, that other Rubeus.  
This god of armes was arrayed thus:--  
A wolf ther stood bifrom him at his feet  
With eyen rede, and of a man he eet;  
With sotil pencil was depeynt this storie,  
In redoutinge of Mars and of his glorie.

2049. Cm. sotyl; E. soutil. *All depeynted (badly); see C. 950.*

Now to the temple of Diane the chaste  
As shortly as I can I wol me haste,  
To telle yow al the descripcioune.  
Depeynted been the walles up and doun  
Of hunting and of shamfast chastitee.  
Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee,  
Whan that Diane agreved was with here,  
Was turned from a womman til a bere,  
And after was she maad the lode-sterre;  
Thus was it peynt, I can say yow no ferre;  
Hir sone is eek a sterre, as men may see.

Ther saugh I Dane, y-turned til a tree,  
I mene nat the goddesse Diane,  
But Penneus daughter, which that highte Dane.  
Ther saugh I Attheon an hert y-maked,  
For vengeance that he saugh Diane al naked;  
I saugh how that his houndes have him caught,  
And freten him, for that they knewe him naught.  
Yet peynted was a litel forther-moor,  
How Atthalante hunted the wilde boor,  
And Meleagre, and many another mo,  
For which Diane wroghte him care and wo.  
Ther saugh I many another wonder storie,  
The whiche me list nat drawnen to memorie.  
This goddesse on an hert ful hye seet,  
With smale houndes al aboute hir feet;  
And undermethe hir feet she hadde a mone,  
Wexing it was, and sholde wanis sone.  
In gaude grene hir statue clothed was,  
With bowe in honde, and arwes in a cas.  
Hir eyen caste she ful lowe adoun,  
Ther Pluto hath his derke regioun.  
A womman travailinge was hir biforn,  
But, for hir child so longe was unborn,  
Ful pitously Lucyna gan she calle,  
And seyde, 'help, for thou mayst best of alle.'  
Wel couthe he peynten lyfly that it wroghte,  
With many a florin he the hewes boghte.

2058. E. Pt. Ln. Hl. to; *rest til*; see l. 2062. 2060. *All peynted*; see l. 2049. Hl. *om. yow*. 2062. Hl. Cp. Pt. Ln. turned. 2067. E. Hn. *hise*; Cm. *hese*. 2069. E. *om. was*. 2071. E. Hn. *Meleagree*. 2075. E. Cp. Pt. *ins. wel after ful*.

Now been these listes maad, and Theseus,  
That at his grete cost arrayed thus  
The temples and the theatre every del,  
Whan it was doon, him lyked wonder wel.  
But stinte I wol of Theseus a lyte,  
And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

2089. *thise*] E. *the*.

The day approacheth of hir retourninge,  
That everich sholde an hundred knighthes bringe,  
The bataille to darreyne, as I yow tolde;  
And til Athenes, hir covenant for to holde,  
Hath everich of hem broght an hundred knighthes  
Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes.  
And sikerly, ther trowed many a man  
That never, sithen that the world bigan,  
As for to speke of knighthod of hir hond,  
As fer as God hath maked see or lond,  
Nas, of so fewe, so noble a companye.  
For every wight that lovede chivalrye,  
And wolde, his thankes, han a passant name,  
Hath preyed that he myghte ben of that game;  
And wel was him, that ther-to chosen was.  
For if ther fille to-morwe swich a cas,  
Ye knownen wel, that every lusty knight,  
That loveth paramours, and hath his might,  
Were it in Engelond, or elles-where,  
They wolde, hir thankes, wilnen to be there.

To fighte for a lady, *benedicite!*  
It were a lusty sighte for to see.

2098. E. couenantz. Hl. *om.* for. 2108. E. preyd; Hn. prayd; Hl. Cm. preyed. 2110. E. Cp. Pt. Hl. caas.

And right so ferdan they with Palamon.  
With him ther wenten knighting many oon;  
Som wol ben armed in an habergeoun,  
In a brest-plat and in a light gipoun;  
And somme wohn have a peyre plates large;  
And somme wohn have a Pruce sheld, or a targe;  
Somme wohn ben armed on hir legges weel,  
And have an ax, and somme a mace of steel.  
Ther nis no newe gyse, that it nas old.  
Armed were they, as I have you told,  
Everich after his opinioun.

2120. Hl. In a; E. And in; Hn. Cm. Cp. Ln. And in a; Pt. And a.

Ther maistow seen coming with Palamoun  
Ligurge him-self, the grete king of Trace;  
Blak was his berd, and manly was his face.  
The cercles of his eyen in his heed,  
They gloweden bitwixe yelow and reed;  
And lyk a griffon loked he aboue,  
With kempe heres on his browes stoute;  
His limes grete, his braunes harde and stronge,  
His shuldres brode, his armes rounde and longe.  
And as the gyse was in his contree,  
Ful hye up-on a char of gold stood he,  
With foure whyte boles in the trays.  
In-stede of cote-armure over his harnays,  
With nayles yelwe and brighte as any gold,  
He hadde a beres skin, col-blak, for-old.  
His longe heer was kembd bihinde his bak,  
As any ravenes fether it shoon for-blak:  
A wrethe of gold arm-greet, of huge wighte,  
Upon his heed, set ful of stones brighte,  
Of fyne rubies and of dyamaunts.  
Aboute his char ther wenten whyte alaunts,  
Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,  
To hunten at the leoun or the deer,  
And folwed him, with mosel faste y-bounde,  
Colers of gold, and torets fyled rounde.  
An hundred lordes hadde he in his route  
Armed ful wel, with hertes sterne and stoute.

2132. E. Hn. bitwyxen. 2134, 5, 6. E. hise. 2141. Hn. Cm. yelwe; E. yelewe; Hl. yolwe. 2148. E. chaar. 2152. Pt. Ln. Colers; Cp. Coleres; Hl. Colerd; E. Hn. Colered; Cm. Colerid. E. tourettes; Cp. Pt. torettes; Hl. torettz (*better* torets); Ln. turettes. 2154. E. Hn. stierne.

With Arcita, in stories as men finde,  
The grete Emetreus, the king of Inde,  
Up-on a stede bay, trapped in steel,  
Covered in cloth of gold diapred weel,  
Cam ryding lyk the god of armes, Mars.  
His cote-armure was of cloth of Tars,  
Couched with perles whyte and rounde and grete.  
His sadel was of brend gold newe y-bete;  
A mantelet upon his shuldrre hanginge  
Bret-ful of rubies rede, as fyr sparklinge.  
His crispe heer lyk ringes was y-ronne,

And that was yellow, and glitered as the sonne.  
His nose was heigh, his eyen bright citryn,  
His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwyn,  
A fewe fraknes in his face y-spreynd,  
Betwixen yelow and somdel blak y-meynd,  
And as a leoun he his loking caste.  
Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.  
His berd was wel bigonne for to springe;  
His voys was as a trompe thunderinge.  
Up-on his heed he wered of laurer grene  
A gerland fresh and lusty for to sene.  
Up-on his hand he bar, for his deduyt,  
An egle tame, as eny lilie whyt.  
An hundred lordes hadde he with him there,  
Al armed, sauf hir heddes, in al hir gere,  
Ful richely in alle maner thinges.  
For trusteth wel, that dukes, erles, kinges,  
Were gadered in this noble compayne,  
For love and for encrees of chivalrye.  
Aboute this king ther ran on every part  
Ful many a tame leoun and lepart.  
And in this wyse thise lordes, alle and some,  
Ben on the Sonday to the citee come  
Aboute pryme, and in the toun alight.

2155. E. Pt. Arcite; *rest* Arcita. 2163. E. Cm. Pt. mantel. 2164. E. Brat-ful. 2180. Hl. *om. al.* 2186. Hl. Cp. Ln. lepart; E. leopard.

This Theseus, this duk, this worthy knight,  
Whan he had broght hem in-to his citee,  
And inned hem, everich in his degree,  
He festeth hem, and dooth so greet labour  
To esen hem, and doon hem al honour,  
That yet men weneth that no mannes wit  
Of noon estat ne coude amendoun it.  
The minstralcye, the service at the feste,  
The grete yiftes to the moste and leste,  
The riche array of Theseus paleys,  
Ne who sat first ne last up-on the deys,  
What ladies fairest been or best daunsinge,  
Or which of hem can dauncen best and singe,  
Ne who most felingly speketh of love:  
What haukes sitten on the perche above,  
What houndes liggen on the floor adoun:  
Of al this make I now no mencioun;  
But al theeffect, that thinketh me the beste;  
Now comth the poynt, and herkneth if yow leste.

2192. E. in; Pt. after; *rest* at. 2195. E. maner. 2198. E. Hn. meeste; Cm. Cp. meste; *rest* most. 2205. E. Cm. Hl. in; *rest* on. 2207. al] Hl. of 2208. Hn. Hl. comth; *rest* cometh.

The Sonday night, er day bigan to springe,  
When Palamon the larke herde singe,  
Although it nere nat day by houres two,  
Yet song the larke, and Palamon also.  
With holy herte, and with an heigh corage  
He roos, to wenden on his pilgrimage  
Un-to the blisful Citherea benigne,  
I mene Vénus, honourable and digne.  
And in hir houre he walketh forth a pas  
Un-to the listes, ther hir temple was,

And doun he kneleth, and with humble chere  
And herte soor, he seyde as ye shul here.

2212. also] Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. right tho. 2217. E. paas. 2219. E. with ful; rest and with. 2220. E. and seyde in this manere.

'Faireste of faire, o lady myn, Vénus,  
Doughter to Iove and spouse of Vulcanus,  
Thou glader of the mount of Citheroun,  
For thilke love thou haddest to Adoun,  
Have pitee of my bittre teres smerte,  
And tak myn humble preyer at thyn herte.  
Allas! I ne have no langage to telle  
Theffectes ne the torments of myn helle;  
Myn herte may myne harmes nat biwreye;  
I am so confus, that I can noght seye.  
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest weel  
My thought, and seest what harmes that I feel,  
Considere al this, and rewe up-on my sore,  
As wisly as I shal for evermore,  
Emforth my might, thy trewe servant be,  
And holden werre alwey with chastitee;  
That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe.  
I kepe noght of armes for to yelpe,  
Ne I ne axe nat to-morwe to have victorie,  
Ne renoun in this cas, ne veyne glorie  
Of pris of armes blowen up and doun,  
But I wolde have fully possessioun  
Of Emelye, and dye in thy servyse;  
Find thou the maner how, and in what wyse.  
I recche nat, but it may bettre be,  
To have victorie of hem, or they of me,  
So that I have my lady in myne armes.  
For though so be that Mars is god of armes,  
Your vertu is so greet in hevene above,  
That, if yow list, I shal wel have my love,  
Thy temple wol I worshipe evermo,  
And on thyn auter, wher I ryde or go,  
I wol don sacrifice, and fyres bete.  
And if ye wol nat so, my lady swete,  
Than preyte I thee, to-morwe with a spere  
That Arcita me thurgh the herte bere.  
Thanne rekke I noght, whan I have lost my lyf,  
Though that Arcita winne hir to his wyf.  
This is theffect and ende of my preyere,  
Yif me my love, thou blisful lady dere.'

2222. to] Hn. Hl. of of all but E. Cm. to. 2226. E. Cm. preyere; Hn. prayere. at] Hl. to. 2227. to] Hl. for to. 2231, 2. Cm. Hl. wel, ful; rest wele, ffele. 2239. Hl. aske. Hl. Ln. to mom.

Whan thorisoun was doon of Palamon,  
His sacrifice he dide, and that anon  
Ful pitously, with alle circumstaunces,  
Al telle I noght as now his observaunces.  
But atte laste the statue of Vénus shook,  
And made a signe, wher-by that he took  
That his preyere accepted was that day.  
For thogh the signe shewed a delay,  
Yet wiste he wel that graunted was his bone;  
And with glad herte he wente him hoom ful sone.

2261. Hl. thorisoun; rest the orison (orisoun). 2263. E. Cm. circumstaunce. 2264. E. Cm. obseruaunce.

The thridde houre inequal that Palamon  
Bigan to Vēnus temple for to goon,  
Up roos the sonne, and up roos Emelye,  
And to the temple of Diane gan hye.  
Hir maydens, that she thider with hir ladde,  
Ful redily with hem the fyr they hadde,  
Thencens, the clothes, and the remenant al  
That to the sacrificye longen shal;  
The hornes fulle of meth, as was the gyse;  
Ther lakked nocht to doon hir sacrificye.  
Smoking the temple, ful of clothes faire,  
This Emelye, with herte debonaire,  
Hir body wessh with water of a welle;  
But how she dide hir ryte I dar nat telle,  
But it be any thing in general;  
And yet it were a game to heren al;  
To him that meneth wel, it were no charge:  
But it is good a man ben at his large.  
Hir brighte heer was kempt, untressed al;  
A coroune of a grene ook cereal  
Up-on hir heed was set ful fair and mete.  
Two fyres on the auter gan she bete,  
And dide hir thinges, as men may biholde  
In Stace of Thebes, and thise bokes olde.  
Whan kindled was the fyr, with pitous chere  
Un-to Diane she spak, as ye may here.

2274. Pt. Hl. ins. she after gan. 2276. E. ladde; rest hadde. 2279. Cp. Pt. Ln. methe; Hl. meth; E. meeth; Hn. mede. 2287. were] Hn. Cp. Ln. nere. 2289. E. kempd.

'O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,  
To whom bothe hevene and erthe and see is sene,  
Quene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe,  
Goddesse of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe  
Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire,  
As keep me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire,  
That Attheon aboughte cruelly.  
Chaste goddesse, wel wostow that I  
Desire to been a mayden al my lyf,  
Ne never wol I be no love ne wyf.  
I am, thou woost, yet of thy companye,  
A mayde, and love hunting and venerye,  
And for to walken in the wodes wilde,  
And noght to been a wyf, and be with childe.  
Noght wol I knowe companye of man.  
Now help me, lady, sith ye may and can,  
For tho thre formes that thou hast in thee.  
And Palamon, that hath swich love to me,  
And eek Arcite, that loveth me so sore,  
This grace I preye thee with-oute more,  
As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two;  
And fro me turne awey hir hertes so,  
That al hir hote love, and hir desyr,  
And al hir bisy torment, and hir fyr  
Be queynt, or turned in another place;  
And if so be thou wolt not do me grace,  
Or if my destinee be shapen so,  
That I shal nedes have oon of hem two,  
As sende me him that most desireth me.  
Bihold, goddesse of clene chastitee,

The bittre teres that on my chekes falle.  
Sin thou are mayde, and keper of us alle,  
My maydenhede thou kepe and wel conserve,  
And whyl I live a mayde, I wol thee serve.'

2303. Hl. Atheon. cruelly] Hl. trewely. 2311. E. Hl. *ins.* the *after* knowe. 2317. Hn. As; *rest* And; *see* l. 2325. 2322. not do me] E. Hl. Pt. do me no. 2323. E. And; *rest* Or. 2328. E. Cm. Cp. kepere.

The fyres brenne up-on the auter clere,  
Whyl Emelye was thus in hir preyere;  
But sodeinly she saugh a sighte queynte,  
For right anon oon of the fyres queynte,  
And quiked agayn, and after that anon  
That other fyr was queynt, and al agon;  
And as it queynte, it made a whistelinge,  
As doon thise wete brondes in hir brenninge,  
And at the brondes ende out-ran anoon  
As it were blody dropes many oon;  
For which so sore agast was Emelye,  
That she was wel ny mad, and gan to crye,  
For she ne wiste what it signifyed;  
But only for the fere thus hath she cryed,  
And weep, that it was pitee for to here.  
And ther-with-al Diane gan appere,  
With bowe in hond, right as an hunteresse,  
And seyde: 'Doghter, stint thyn hevinesse.  
Among the goddes hye it is affermed,  
And by eterne word write and confermed,  
Thou shalt ben wedded un-to oon of tho  
That han for thee so muchel care and wo;  
But un-to which of hem I may nat telle.  
Farwel, for I ne may no lenger dwelle.  
The fyres which that on myn auter brenne  
Shul thee declaren, er that thou go henne,  
Thyn aventure of love, as in this cas.'  
And with that word, the arwes in the cas  
Of the goddesse clateren faste and ringe,  
And forth she wente, and made a vanisshinge;  
For which this Emelye astoned was,  
And seyde, 'What amounteth this, allas!  
I putte me in thy proteccioun,  
Diane, and in thy disposiciooun.'  
And hoom she gooth anon the nexte weye.  
This is theeffect, ther is namore to seye.

2337. E. Hn. Cp. whistlynge. 2338. Hl. (*only*) As doth a wete brond in his. 2344. Pt Hl. *om.* hath. 2350. Hl. write; Pt. writh; *rest* writen. 2356. E. Cp. Hl. declare. 2358. E. caas.

The nexte oure of Mars folwinge this,  
Arcite un-to the temple walked is  
Of fierse Mars, to doon his sacrifysse,  
With alle the rytes of his payen wyse.  
With pitous herte and heigh devocioun,  
Right thus to Mars he seyde his orisoun:

2369. E. Hn. fierse; Cm. fierse; Hl. fyry.

'O stronge god, that in the regnes colde  
Of Trace honoured art, and lord y-holde,  
And hast in every regne and every lond  
Of armes al the brydel in thyn hond,

And hem fortunest as thee list devyse,  
Accept of me my pitous sacrifyse.  
If so be that my youthe may deserve,  
And that my might be worthy for to serve  
Thy godhede, that I may been oon of thyne,  
Than preye I thee to rewe up-on my pyne.  
For thilke peyne, and thilke hote fyr,  
In which thou whylom brendest for desyr,  
Whan that thou usedest the grete beautee  
Of fayre yonge fresshe Venus free,  
And haddest hir in armes at thy wille,  
Al-though thee ones on a tyme mis fille  
Whan Vulcanus had caught thee in his las,  
And fond thee ligging by his wyf, alas!  
For thilke sorwe that was in thyn herte,  
Have routhe as wel up-on my peynes smerte.  
I am yong and unkonning, as thou wost,  
And, as I trowe, with love offended most,  
That ever was any lyves creature;  
For she, that dooth me al this wo endure,  
Ne reccheth never wher I sinke or flete.  
And wel I woot, er she me mercy hete,  
I moot with strengthe winne hir in the place;  
And wel I woot, withouten help or grace  
Of thee, ne may my strengthe noght availle.  
Than help me, lord, to-morwe in my bataille,  
For thilke fyr that whylom brente thee,  
As wel as thilke fyr now brenneth me;  
And do that I to-morwe have victorie.  
Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the glorie!  
Thy sovereign temple wol I most honouren  
Of any place, and alwey most labouren  
In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes stronge,  
And in thy temple I wol my baner honge,  
And alle the armes of my companye;  
And evere-mo, un-to that day I dye,  
Eterne fyr I wol biforn thee finde.  
And eek to this avow I wol me binde:  
My berd, myn heer that hongeth long adoun,  
That never yet ne felte offensioun  
Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yive,  
And ben thy trewe servant whyl I live.  
Now lord, have routhe up-on my sorwes sore,  
Yif me victorie, I aske thee namore.'

2385. Hl. the gret; rest om. gret. 2402. E. Hn. Thanne. 2420. All ins. the (Hl. thy) after me; (read victorie).

The preyere stinte of Arcita the stronge,  
The ringes on the temple-dore that honge,  
And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste,  
Of which Arcita som-what him agaste.  
The fyres brende up-on the auter brighte,  
That it gan al the temple for to lighte;  
And swete smel the ground anon up-yaf,  
And Arcita anon his hand up-haf,  
And more encens in-to the fyr he caste,  
With othere rytes mo; and atte laste  
The statue of Mars bigan his hauberk ringe.  
And with that soun he herde a murmuringe

Ful lowe and dim, that sayde thus, 'Victorie.'  
For which he yaf to Mars honour and glorie.  
And thus with loye, and hope wel to fare,  
Arcite anon un-to his inne is fare,  
As fayn as fowel is of the brighte sonne.

2425. Hn. Cm. brende; E. Cp. Hl. brenden. 2433. E. Hn. Hl. and; *rest* that. 2436. E. Hn. Cm. in.

And right anon swich stryf ther is bigonne  
For thilke graunting, in the hevene above,  
Bitwixe Vénus, the goddesse of love,  
And Mars, the sterne god armipotente,  
That Jupiter was bisy it to stente;  
Til that the pale Saturnus the colde,  
That knew so manye of aventures olde,  
Fond in his olde experience an art,  
That he ful sone hath plesed every part.  
As sooth is sayd, elde hath greet avantage;  
In elde is bothe wisdom and usage;  
Men may the olde at-renne, and noght at-rede.  
Saturne anon, to stinten stryf and drede,  
Al be it that it is agayn his kynde,  
Of al this stryf he gan remedie fynde.

2441. E. stieme. 2445. an] E. Pt. and. 2449. Hl. Pt. but; *rest* and.

'My dere doghther Vénus,' quod Satyne,  
'My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,  
Hath more power than wot any man.  
Myn is the drenching in the see so wan;  
Myn is the prison in the derke cote;  
Myn is the strangling and hanging by the throte;  
The murmure, and the cherles rebelling,  
The groyning, and the pryvee empoysoning:  
I do vengeance and pleyn correccioun  
Whyl I dwelle in the signe of the leoun.  
Myn is the ruine of the hye halles,  
The falling of the toures and of the walles  
Up-on the mynour or the carpenter.  
I slow Sampsoun in shaking the piler;  
And myne be the maladyes colde,  
The derke tresons, and the castes olde;  
My loking is the fader of pestilence.  
Now weep namore, I shal doon diligence  
That Palamon, that is thyn owne knight,  
Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight.  
Though Mars shal helpe his knight, yet nathelees  
Bitwixe yow ther moot be som tyme pees,  
Al be ye noght of o complexiouin,  
That causest al day swich divisiooun.  
I am thin ayel, redy at thy wille;  
Weep thou namore, I wol thy lust fulfille.'

2462. E. om. *Ist* the. 2466. Hl. in; *rest om.* 2468. Hl. tresoun.

Now wol I stinten of the goddes above,  
Of Mars, and of Vénus, goddesse of love,  
And telle yow, as pleynly as I can,  
The grete effect, for which that I bigan.

**Explicit tercia pars. Sequitur pars quarta.**

Greet was the feste in Athenes that day,  
And eek the lusty seson of that May  
Made every wight to been in swich plesaunce,  
That al that Monday Justen they and daunce,  
And spenden it in Venus heigh servyse.  
But by the cause that they sholde ryse  
Erly, for to seen the grete fight,  
Unto hir reste wente they at night.  
And on the morwe, whan that day gan springe,  
Of hors and harneys, noyse and clateringe  
Ther was in hostelyes al aboute;  
And to the paleys rood ther many a route  
Of lordes, up-on stedes and palfreys.  
Ther maystow seen devysing of herneys  
So uncouth and so riche, and wrought so weel  
Of goldsmithrie, of browding, and of steel;  
The sheeldes brighte, testers, and trappures;  
Gold-hewen helmes, hauberk, cote-armures;  
Lordes in paraments on hir courseres,  
Knights of retenue, and eek squyeres  
Nailinge the speres, and helmes bokelinge,  
Gigginge of sheeldes, with layneres lacinge;  
Ther as need is, they weren no-thing ydel;  
The fomy stedes on the golden brydel  
Gnawinge, and faste the armurers also  
With fyle and hamer prikinge to and fro;  
Yemen on fote, and communes many oon  
With shorte staves, thikke as they may goon;  
Pypes, trompes, nakers, clariones,  
That in the bataille blowen blody sounes;  
The paleys ful of peples up and doun,  
Heer three, ther ten, holding hir questioun,  
Divyninge of thise Thebane knightes two.  
Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal be so;  
Somme helden with him with the blake berd,  
Somme with the balled, somme with the thikke-herd;  
Somme sayde, he loked grim and he wolde fighte;  
He hath a sparsh of twenty pound of wighte.  
Thus was the halle ful of divyninge,  
Longe after that the sonne gan to springe.

2489. Hl. Erly a-morwe for to see that fight. 2493. E. ins. the *after* in. 2500. Hl. Gold-beten. 2503. Nailinge] Hl. Rayhyng. 2504. Hl. Girdyng.  
2511. E. nakerers (*wrongly*). 2513. Hl. pepul; Pt. puple; Ln. peple.

The grete Theseus, that of his sleep awaked  
With minstralcye and noyse that was maked,  
Held yet the chambre of his paleys riche,  
Til that the Thebane knightes, bothe y-liche  
Honoured, were into the paleys fet.  
Duk Theseus was at a window set,  
Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.  
The peple preesseth thider-ward ful sone  
Him for to seen, and doon heigh reverence,  
And eek to herkne his hest and his sentence.

An herald on a scaffold made an ho,  
Til al the noyse of the peple was y-do;  
And whan he saugh the peple of noyse al stille,  
Tho showed he the mighty dukes wille.

'The lord hath of his heigh discreciooun  
Considered, that it were destruccioun  
To gentil blood, to fighten in the gyse  
Of mortal bataille now in this emprise;  
Wherfore, to shapen that they shul not dye,  
He wol his firste purpos modifie.  
No man therfor, up peyne of los of lyf,  
No maner shot, ne pollax, ne short knyf  
Into the listes sende, or thider bringe;  
Ne short swerd for to stoke, with poynt bytinge,  
No man ne drawe, ne bere it by his syde.  
Ne no man shal un-to his felawe ryde  
But o cours, with a sharp y-grounde spere;  
Foyne, if him list, on fote, him-self to were.  
And he that is at meschief, shal be take,  
And noght slayn, but be broght un-to the stake  
That shal ben ordeyned on either syde;  
But thider he shal by force, and ther abyde.  
And if so falle, the chieftayn be take  
On either syde, or elles slee his make,  
No lenger shal the turneyinge laste.  
God sped yow; goth forth, and ley on faste.  
With long swerd and with maces fight your fille.  
Goth now your wey; this is the lordes wille.'

2544. E. Cm. om. 1st ne. 2545. or] E. Cm. Ln. ne. 2547. E. Hl. om. it. 2555. fille] E. be. Cm. cheuynteyn; Cp. cheuentein; Hl. cheuenten. 2556. Hl. sle; rest sleen (sclayn). 2559. Hl. fight; Ln. fithen; rest fighteth.

The voys of peple touchede the hevene,  
So loude cryden they with mery stevene:  
'God save swich a lord, that is so good,  
He wilheth no destruccioun of blood!'  
Up goon the trompes and the melodye.  
And to the listes rit the compayne  
By ordinaunce, thurgh-out the citee large,  
Hanged with cloth of gold, and nat with sarge.  
Ful lyk a lord this noble duk gan ryde,  
These two Thebanes up-on either syde;  
And after rood the quene, and Emelye,  
And after that another compayne  
Of oon and other, after hir degree.  
And thus they passen thurgh-out the citee,  
And to the listes come they by tyme.  
It nas not of the day yet fully pryme,  
Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hye,  
Ipolita the quene and Emelye,  
And other ladies in degrees aboute.  
Un-to the seetes preesseth al the route.  
And west-ward, thurgh the gates under Marte,  
Arcite, and eek the hundred of his parte,  
With baner reed is entred right anon;  
And in that selve moment Palamon  
Is under Venus, est-ward in the place,  
With baner whyt, and hardy chere and face.  
In al the world, to seken up and doun,  
So even with-outen variacioun,  
Ther nere swiche companyes tweye.  
For ther nas noon so wys that coude seye,

That any hadde of other avauntage  
Of worthinesse, ne of estaat, ne age,  
So even were they chosen, for to gesse.  
And in two renges faire they hem dresse.  
Whan that hir names rad were everichoon,  
That in hir nombre gyle were ther noon,  
Tho were the gates shet, and cryed was loude:  
'Do now your devoir, yonge knightes proude!'

2561. Cm. Cp. touchede; Hl. touchith; *rest* touched. 2562. Cm. cryedyn; E. cride. E. murie. 2570. E. Hn. Hl. Thebans; *see* l. 2623. 2593. E. *om.* they. 2598. Hl. Dooth.

The heraudes lefte hir priking up and doun;  
Now ringen trompes loude and clarioun;  
Ther is namore to seyn, but west and est  
In goon the speres ful sadly in arest;  
In goth the sharpe spore in-to the syde.  
Ther seen men who can luste, and who can ryde;  
Ther shiveren shaftes up-on sheeldes thikke;  
He feleth thurgh the herte-spoon the prikke.  
Up springen speres twenty foot on highte;  
Out goon the swerdes as the silver brighte.  
The helmes they to-hewen and to-shrede;  
Out brest the blood, with sterne stremes rede.  
With mighty maces the bones they to-breste.  
He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan threste.  
Ther stomblen stedes stronge, and doun goth al.  
He rolleth under foot as dooth a bal.  
He foyneth on his feet with his tronchoun,  
And he him hurtleth with his hors adoun.  
He thurgh the body is hurt, and sithen y-take,  
Maugree his heed, and broght un-to the stake,  
As forward was, right ther he moste abyde;  
Another lad is on that other syde.  
And som tyme dooth hem Theseus to reste,  
Hem to refresshe, and dricken if hem leste.  
Ful ofte a-day han thise Thebanes two  
Togidre y-met, and wroght his felawe wo;  
Unhorsed hath ech other of hem tweye.  
Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgopheye,  
Whan that hir whelp is stole, whan it is lyte,  
So cruel on the hunte, as is Arcite  
For Ielous herte upon this Palamoun:  
Ne in Belmarye ther nis so fel leoun,  
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,  
Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,  
As Palamon to sleen his fo Arcite.  
The Ielous strokes on hir helmes byte;  
Out renneth blood on bothe hir sydes rede.

2608. E. gooth; *rest* goon. 2613. stomblen] E. Cm. semblen. 2622. E. fesshen.

Som tyme an ende ther is of every dede;  
For er the sonne un-to the reste wente,  
The stronge king Emetreus gan hente  
This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,  
And made his swerd depe in his flesh to byte;  
And by the force of twenty is he take  
Unyolden, and y-drawe unto the stake.  
And in the rescous of this Palamoun

The stronge king Ligurge is born adoun;  
And king Emetreus, for al his strengthe,  
Is born out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe,  
So hitte him Palamon er he were take;  
But al for noght, he was broght to the stake.  
His hardy herte mighte him helpe naught;  
He moste abyde, whan that he was caught  
By force, and eek by composicioun.

2643. E. rescus; Pt. rescowe; *rest* rescous.

Who sorweth now but woful Palamoun,  
That moot namore goon agayn to fighte?  
And whan that Theseus had seyn this sighte,  
Un-to the folk that foghten thus echoon  
He cryde, 'Ho! namore, for it is doon!  
I wol be trewe Iuge, and no partye.  
Arcite of Thebes shal have Emelye,  
That by his fortune hath hir faire y-wonne.'  
Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne  
For loye of this, so loude and heigh with-alle,  
It semed that the listes sholde falle.

What can now faire Vēnus doon above?  
What seith she now? what dooth this quene of love?  
But wepeth so, for wanting of hir wille,  
Til that hir teres in the listes fille;  
She seyde: 'I am ashamed, doutelees.'  
Saturnus seyde: 'Doghter, hold thy pees.  
Mars hath his wille, his knight hath al his bone,  
And, by myn heed, thou shalt ben esed sone.'

The trompes, with the loude minstralcye,  
The heraudes, that ful loude yolle and crye,  
Been in hir wele for loye of daun Arcite.  
But herkneth me, and stinteth now a lyte,  
Which a miracle ther bifel anon.

2671. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. tromptours.

This fierse Arcite hath of his helm y-don,  
And on a courser, for to shewe his face,  
He priketh endelong the large place,  
Loking upward up-on this Emelye;  
And she agayn him caste a freendlich ye,  
(For wommen, as to speken in comune,  
They folwen al the favour of fortune),  
And she was al his chere, as in his herte.  
Out of the ground a furie infernal sterte,  
From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturme,  
For which his hors for fere gan to turne,  
And leep asyde, and foundred as he leep;  
And, er that Arcite may taken keep,  
He pighte him on the pomel of his heed,  
That in the place he lay as he were deed,  
His brest to-brosten with his sadel-bowe.  
As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,  
So was the blood y-ronnen in his face.  
Anon he was y-born out of the place  
With herte soor, to Theseus paleys.

Tho was he corven out of his harneys,  
And in a bed y-brought ful faire and blyve,  
For he was yet in memorie and alyve,  
And alway crying after Emelye.

2676. Cm. ferse; E. Hn. fierse. 2679. E. Pt. *om.* this. 2681. E. Hn. Cm. *omit* ll. 2681, 2682. 2683. Hn. she; *rest om.* 2684. E. furie; Hn. Cm. furye; *rest* fyr, fir, fire, fyre; *see note.* 2698. Hl. Pt. on lyue.

Duk Theseus, with al his companye,  
Is comen hoom to Athenes his citee,  
With alle blisse and greet solempnitee.  
Al be it that this aventure was falle,  
He nolde noght disconforcen hem alle.  
Men seyde eek, that Arcite shal nat dye;  
He shal ben heled of his maladye.  
And of another thing they were as fayn,  
That of hem alle was ther noon y-slayn,  
Al were they sore y-hurt, and namely oon,  
That with a spere was thirled his brest-boon.  
To othere woundes, and to broken armes,  
Some hadden salves, and some hadden charmes;  
Fermacies of herbes, and eek save  
They dronken, for they wolde hir limes have.  
For which this noble duk, as he wel can,  
Conforteth and honoureth every man,  
And made revel al the longe night,  
Un-to the straunge lordes, as was right.  
Ne ther was holden no disconfitinge,  
But as a lustes or a tourneyinge;  
For soothly ther was no disconfiture,  
For falling nis nat but an aventure;  
Ne to be lad with fors un-to the stake  
Unyolden, and with twenty knightes take,  
O persone allone, with-outen mo,  
And haried forth by arme, foot, and to,  
And eek his stede driven forth with staves,  
With footmen, bothe yemen and eek knaves,  
It nas arretted him no vileinye,  
Ther may no man clepen it cowardye.

2714. limes] Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. lyues. 2726. E. Hn. Cm. arm.

For which anon duk Theseus leet crye,  
To stinten alle rancour and envyne,  
The gree as wel of o syde as of other,  
And either syde y-lyk, as otheres brother;  
And yaf hem yiftes after hir degree,  
And fully heeld a feste dayes three;  
And conveyed the kinges worthily  
Out of his toun a Iournee largely.  
And hoom wente every man the righte way.  
Ther was namore, but 'far wel, have good day!'  
Of this bataille I wol namore endyte,  
But speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

2737. E. conuoyed. 2740. E. fare; Cm. Hl. far.

Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the sore  
Encreeseth at his herte more and more.  
The clothered blood, for any lechecraft,  
Corrupteth, and is in his bouk y-laft,

That neither veyne-blood, ne ventusinge,  
Ne drinke of herbes may ben his helpinge.  
The vertu expulsif, or animal,  
Fro thilke vertu cleped natural  
Ne may the venim voyden, ne expelle.  
The pypes of his longes gonne to swelle,  
And every lacerte in his brest adoun  
Is shent with venim and corrupcioun.  
Him gayneth neither, for to gete his lyf,  
Vomyt upward, ne downward laxatif;  
Al is to-brosten thilke regiou,  
Nature hath now no dominacioun.  
And certeinly, ther nature wol nat wirche,  
Far-wel, phisyk! go ber the man to chirche!  
This al and som, that Arcita mot dye,  
For which he sendeth after Emelye,  
And Palamon, that was his cosin dere;  
Than seyde he thus, as ye shul after here.

2746. Hl. Pt. Corrumpith. 2760. E. *fare*; Cm. Hl. *far*.

'Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte  
Declare o poynt of alle my sorwes smerte  
To yow, my lady, that I love most;  
But I biquethe the service of my gost  
To yow aboven every creature,  
Sin that my lyf may no lenger dure.  
Allas, the wo! allas, the peynes stronge,  
That I for yow have suffred, and so longe!  
Allas, the deeth! allas, myn Emelye!  
Allas, departing of our compayne!  
Allas, myn hertes quene! allas, my wyf!  
Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!  
What is this world? what asketh men to have?  
Now with his love, now in his colde grave  
Allone, with-outen any compayne.  
Far-wel, my swete fo! myn Emelye!  
And softe tak me in your armes tweye,  
For love of God, and herkneth what I seye.

2770. Tyrwhitt *has* ne may; *ne is not* in the MSS. 2781. E. *taak*.

I have heer with my cosin Palamon  
Had stryf and rancour, many a day a-gon,  
For love of yow, and for my Ielousye.  
And Iupiter so wis my soule gye,  
To speken of a servant proprely,  
With alle circumstaunces trewely,  
That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and knighthede,  
Wisdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh kinrede,  
Fredom, and al that longeth to that art,  
So Iupiter have of my soule part,  
As in this world right now ne knowe I non  
So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,  
That serveth yow, and wol don al his lyf.  
And if that ever ye shul been a wyf,  
Foryet nat Palamon, the gentil man.  
And with that word his speche faille gan,  
For from his feet up to his brest was come  
The cold of deeth, that hadde him overcome.

And yet more-over, in his armes two  
The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago.  
Only the intellect, with-outen more,  
That dwelled in his herte syk and sore,  
Gan faillen, when the herte felte deeth,  
Dusked his eyen two, and failled breeth.  
But on his lady yet caste he his ye;  
His laste word was, 'mercy, Emelye!'  
His spirit chaunged hous, and wente ther,  
As I cam never, I can nat tellen wher.  
Therfor I stinte, I nam no divinistre;  
Of soules finde I nat in this registre,  
Ne me ne list thilke opiniouns to telle  
Of hem, though that they wryten wher they dwelle.  
Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gye;  
Now wol I speken forth of Emelye.

2785. E. Hn. Cp. Ialousye. 2789. Cp. Pt. Hl. and; rest *om.* 2799. For] E. And. *feet*] E. Hl. Cm. herte. 2801. *All but Hl. ins. for before in.*

Shrighte Emelye, and howleth Palamon,  
And Theseus his suster took anon  
Swowninge, and bar hir fro the corps away.  
What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,  
To tellen how she weep, bothe eve and morwe?  
For in swich cas wommen have swich sorwe,  
Whan that hir housbonds been from hem ago,  
That for the more part they sorwen so,  
Or elles fallen in swich maladye,  
That at the laste certeinly they dye.

2819. E. Hn. baar. 2822. Hl. can haue; *rest om.* can. 2823. E. housbond is.

Infinite been the sorwes and the teres  
Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeres,  
In al the toun, for deeth of this Theban;  
For him ther wepeth bothe child and man;  
So greet a weeping was ther noon, certayn,  
Whan Ector was y-brought, al fresh y-slayn,  
To Troye; allas! the pitee that was ther,  
Cracching of chekes, rending eek of heer.  
'Why woldestow be deed,' thise wommen crye,  
'And haddest gold y-nough, and Emelye?'No man mighte gladen Theseus,  
Savinge his olde fader Egeus,  
That knew this worldes transmutacioun,  
As he had seyn it chaungen up and doun,  
Ioye after wo, and wo after gladnesse:  
And shewed hem ensamples and lyknesse.

2828. E. eek; *for 2nd folk.* 2834. E. Hn. Cm. Pt. rentyng. 2840. Hn. chaungen; Hl. torne; *rest om.*

'Right as ther deyed never man,' quod he,  
'That he ne livede in erthe in som degree,  
Right so ther livede never man,' he seyde,  
'In al this world, that som tyme he ne deyde.  
This world nis but a thurghfare ful of wo,  
And we ben pilgrimes, passinge to and fro;  
Deeth is an ende of every worldly sore.'  
And over al this yet seyde he muchel more  
To this effect, ful wysly to enhorte  
The peple, that they sholde hem reconforte.

Duk Theseus, with al his bisy cure,  
Caste now wher that the sepulture  
Of good Arcite may best y-maked be,  
And eek most honourable in his degree.  
And at the laste he took conclusioun,  
That ther as first Arcite and Palamoun  
Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,  
That in that selve grove, swote and grene,  
Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,  
His compleynt, and for love his hote fires,  
He wolde make a fyr, in which thoffice  
Funeral he mighte al accomplice;  
And leet comaunde anon to hakke and hewe  
The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe  
In colpons wel arrayed for to brenne;  
His officers with swifte feet they renne  
And ryde anon at his comaunderement.  
And after this, Theseus hath y-sent  
After a bere, and it al over-spradde  
With cloth of gold, the richest that he hadde.  
And of the same suyte he cladde Arcite;  
Upon his hondes hadde he gloves whyte;  
Eek on his heed a croune of laurer grene,  
And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.  
He leyde him bare the visage on the bere,  
Therwith he weep that pitee was to here.  
And for the peple sholde seen him alle,  
Whan it was day, he broghte him to the halle,  
That roreth of the crying and the soun.

2854. Hn. Caste; E. Hl. Cast. now] Hl. busylly. 2861. E. amorouse. 2863. E. the office; Hl. thoffice. 2869. E. ryden. 2875. Cp. Pt. Hl. croune; *rest* coroune.

Tho cam this woful Theban Palamoun,  
With flotery berd, and ruggy asshy heres,  
In clothes blake, y-dropped al with teres;  
And, passing othere of weping, Emelye,  
The rewfullest of al the compayne.  
In as muche as the service sholde be  
The more noble and riche in his degree,  
Duk Theseus leet forth three stedes bringe,  
That trapped were in steel al gliteringe,  
And covered with the armes of daun Arcite.  
Up-on thise stedes, that weren grete and whyte,  
Ther seten folk, of which oon bar his sheeld,  
Another his spere up in his hondes heeld;  
The thridd bar with him his bowe Turkeys,  
Of brend gold was the cas, and eek the harneys;  
And ridein forth a pas with sorweful chere  
Toward the grove, as ye shul after here.  
The nobleste of the Grekes that ther were  
Upon hir shuldres carieden the bere,  
With slakke pas, and eyen rede and wete,  
Thurgh-out the citee, by the maister-strete,  
That sprad was al with blak, and wonder hye  
Right of the same is al the strete y-wrye.  
Up-on the right hond wente old Egeus,  
And on that other syde duk Theseus,

With vessels in hir hand of gold ful fyn,  
Al ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wyn;  
Eek Palamon, with ful greet companye;  
And after that cam woful Emelye,  
With fyr in honde, as was that tyme the gyse,  
To do thoffice of funeral servyse.

2883. E. rugged. 2892. Hl. that weren; *rest om.* 2893. E. Ln. sitten. 2894. E. *om.* up. 2901. Ln. slake (*for slakke*); *rest slak.* 2904. Hl. al; *rest om.* 2912. So Hl. Cp.; *rest* the office.

Heigh labour, and ful greet apparaillinge  
Was at the service and the fyr-makinge,  
That with his grene top the heven raughte,  
And twenty fadme of brede the armes straughte;  
This is to seyn, the bowes were so brode.  
Of stree first ther was leyd ful many a lode.  
But how the fyr was maked up on highte,  
And eek the names how the trees highte,  
As ook, firre, birch, asp, alder, holm, popler,  
Willow, elm, plane, ash, box, chasteyn, lind, laurer,  
Mapul, thorn, beech, hasel, ew, whippeltree,  
How they weren feld, shal nat be told for me;  
Ne how the goddes ronnen up and doun,  
Disherited of hir habitacioun,  
In which they woneden in reste and pees,  
Nymphes, Faunes, and Amadrides;  
Ne how the bestes and the briddes alle  
Fledden for fere, whan the wode was falle;  
Ne how the ground agast was of the light,  
That was nat wont to seen the sonne bright;  
Ne how the fyr was couched first with stree,  
And than with drye stokkes cloven a three,  
And than with grene wode and spycerye,  
And than with cloth of gold and with perrye,  
And gerlandes hanging with ful many a flour,  
The mirre, thencens, with al so greet odour;  
Ne how Arcite lay among al this,  
Ne what richessee aboute his body is;  
Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,  
Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse;  
Ne how she swowned whan men made the fyr,  
Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desyr;  
Ne what leweles men in the fyr tho caste,  
Whan that the fyr was greet and brente faste;  
Ne how som caste hir sheeld, and som hir spere,  
And of hir vestiments, whiche that they were,  
And cuppes ful of wyn, and milk, and blood,  
Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood;  
Ne how the Grekes with an huge route  
Thryes ride al the fyr aboute  
Up-on the left hand, with a loud shoutinge,  
And thryes with hir speres clateringe;  
And thryes how the ladies gonне crye;  
Ne how that lad was hom-ward Emelye;  
Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde;  
Ne how that liche-wake was y-holde  
Al thilke night, ne how the Grekes pleye  
The wake-pleyes, ne kepe I nat to seye;  
Who wrastleth best naked, with oille enoynt,  
Ne who that bar him best, in no disioynt.

I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon  
Hoom til Athenes, whan the pley is doon;  
But shortly to the poynt than wol I wende,  
And maken of my longe tale an ende.

2916. Hl. tharme. 2920. how] E. that. 2921. Hn. Hl. popler; *rest* popelere. 2924. E. fid. 2926. Hl. Disheryt. 2928. E. Cm. Nymphus. 2934, 5, 6. Pt. Ln. than; *rest* thanne. 2934. E. Cp. stokkes; *rest* stikkes. 2943. E. om. the. 2945. Hl. tho; *rest* om. 2952. So all but Hl., which has Thre tymes; see l. 2954. E. place (*for* fyr). 2956. E. Hn. And (*for* Ne). 2958. E. Hn. lych; *rest* liche.

By processe and by lengthe of certeyn yeres  
Al stinted is the moorning and the teres  
Of Grekes, by oon general assent.  
Than semed me ther was a parlement  
At Athenes, up-on certeyn poynts and cas;  
Among the whiche poynts y-spoken was  
To have with certeyn contrees alliaunce,  
And have fully of Thebans obeisaunce.  
For which this noble Theseus anon  
Leet senden after gentil Palamon,  
Unwist of him what was the cause and why;  
But in his blake clothes sorwefully  
He cam at his comaundement in hye.  
Tho sente Theseus for Emelye.  
Whan they were set, and hust was al the place,  
And Theseus abiden hadde a space  
Er any word cam from his wyse brest,  
His eyen sette he ther as was his lest,  
And with a sad visage he syked stille,  
And after that right thus he seyde his wille.

'The firste moevere of the cause above,  
Whan he first made the faire cheyne of love,  
Greet was theeffect, and heigh was his entente;  
Wel wiste he why, and what ther-of he mente;  
For with that faire cheyne of love he bond  
The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond  
In certeyn boundes, that they may nat flee;  
That same prince and that moevere,' quod he,  
'Hath stablissed, in this wrecched world adoun,  
Certeyne dayes and duracioun  
To al that is engendred in this place,  
Over the whiche day they may nat pace,  
Al mowe they yet tho dayes wel abregge;  
Ther needeth non auctoritee allegge,  
For it is preved by experience,  
But that me list declarlen my sentence.  
Than may men by this ordre wel discerne,  
That thilke moevere stable is and eterne.  
Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool,  
That every part deryveth from his hool.  
For nature hath nat take his beginning  
Of no partye ne cantel of a thing,  
But of a thing that parfit is and stable,  
Descending so, til it be corrumpable.  
And therfore, of his wyse purveyaunce,  
He hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,  
That species of thinges and progressiouns  
Shullen enduren by successiouns,  
And nat eterne be, with-oute lye:  
This maistow understande and seen at eye.

2994. Hn. Ln. that; *rest* (*except* Hl.) that same. Hl. and moeure eek. 2995. Hl. Ln. stabled. 2997. Hl. alle that er; Cp. alle that beth. 3000. E. Cp. ins. nocht *bef.* noon. Hl. tallegge; Hn. to allegge; Cm. Cp. Pt. to legge. 3006. E. dirryueth. 3007. Hl. Ln. take; *rest* taken; E. Cm. *om.* nat. 3008. Hl. ne; E. Hn. Pt. or of Cm. or of a. 3015. So Hl.; *rest* eterne with-outen any lye. 3016. at] E. it.

'Lo the ook, that hath so long a norisshinge  
From tyme that it first biginneth springe,  
And hath so long a lyf, as we may see,  
Yet at the laste wasted is the tree.

'Considereth eek, how that the harde stoon  
Under our feet, on which we trede and goon,  
Yit wasteth it, as it lyth by the weye.  
The brode river somtyme wexeth dreye.  
The grete tounes see we wane and wende.  
Than may ye see that al this thing hath ende.

3025. E. toures.

'Of man and womman seen we wel also,  
That nedeth, in oon of thise termes two,  
This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age,  
He moot ben deed, the king as shal a page;  
Som in his bed, som in the depe see,  
Som in the large feeld, as men may se;  
Ther helpeth nocht, al goth that ilke weye.  
Thanne may I seyn that al this thing moot deye.  
What maketh this but Jupiter the king?  
The which is prince and cause of alle thing,  
Converting al un-to his propre welle,  
From which it is deryved, sooth to telle.  
And here-agayns no creature on lyve  
Of no degree availleth for to stryve.

3034. E. Cm. *om.* that. 3036. So Hl.; *rest* That is.

'Thanne is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,  
To maken vertu of necessitee,  
And take it wel, that we may nat eschue,  
And namely that to us alle is due.  
And who-so gruccheth ought, he dooth folye,  
And rebel is to him that al may gye.  
And certainly a man hath most honour  
To dyen in his excellencie and flour,  
Whan he is siker of his gode name;  
Than hath he doon his freend, ne him, no shame.  
And gladder oghte his freend ben of his deeth,  
Whan with honour up-yolden is his breeth,  
Than whan his name apalled is for age;  
For al forgeten is his vasselage.  
Than is it best, as for a worthy fame,  
To dyen whan that he is best of name.  
The contrarie of al this is wilfulness.  
Why grucchen we? why have we heviness,  
That good Arcite, of chivalrye flour  
Departed is, with duetee and honour,  
Out of this foule prison of this lyf?  
Why grucchen heer his cosin and his wyf  
Of his wel-fare that loved hem so weel?  
Can he hem thank? nay, God wot, never a deel,  
That bothe his soule and eek hem-self offendie,  
And yet they mowe hir lustes nat amende.

3056. Hl. whan a man. 3059. Hl. Cp. Pt. Ln. *ins.* the *bef* flour.

'What may I conclude of this longe serie,  
But, after wo, I rede us to be merie,  
And thanken Iupiter of al his grace?  
And, er that we departen from this place,  
I rede that we make, of sorwes two,  
O parfyte Ioye, lasting ever-mo;  
And loketh now, wher most sorwe is her-inne,  
Ther wol we first amenden and beginne.

3071. Hl. that; *rest om.*

'Suster,' quod he, 'this is my fulle assent,  
With al thavys heer of my parlement,  
That gentil Palamon, your owne knight,  
That serveth yow with wille, herte, and might,  
And ever hath doon, sin that ye first him knewe,  
That ye shul, of your grace, up-on him rewe,  
And taken him for housbonde and for lord:  
Leen me your hond, for this is our acord.  
Lat see now of your wommanly pitee.  
He is a kinges brother sone, pardee;  
And, though he were a povre bacheler,  
Sin he hath served yow so many a yeer,  
And had for yow so greet adversitee,  
It moste been considered, leveth me;  
For gentil mercy oghe to passen right.'

3077. your] E. thyn. 3082. Hn. Leen; *rest Lene.*

Than seyde he thus to Palamon ful right;  
'I trowe ther nedeth litel sermoning  
To make yow assente to this thing.  
Com neer, and tak your lady by the hond.  
Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond,  
That highte matrimoine or mariage,  
By al the conseil and the baronage.  
And thus with alle blisse and melodye  
Hath Palamon y-wedded Emelye.  
And God, that al this wyde world hath wroght,  
Sende him his love, that hath it dere a-boght.  
For now is Palamon in alle wele,  
Living in blisse, in richesse, and in hele;  
And Emelye him loveth so tendrelly,  
And he hir serveth al-so gentilly,  
That never was ther no word hem bitwene  
Of Ielousye, or any other tene.  
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye;  
And God save al this faire compayne!--Amen.

### Here is ended the Knights Tale.

3095. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. matrimoine; Pt. matrimoine; Hl. matrimoyn. 3100. E. *om.* hath. 3104. Hl. also; *rest so.* 3106. E. Hn. Cp. Ialousye. Hl. ne of non oþir teene. COLOPHON; *so* E. Hn.; Pt. Hl. endeth.

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### THE MILLER'S PROLOGUE.

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Here folwen the wordes bitwene the Host and the Millere.

Whan that the Knight had thus his tale y-told,  
In al the route nas ther yong ne old  
That he ne seyde it was a noble storie,  
And worthy for to drawen to memorie;  
And namely the gentils everichoon.  
Our Hoste lough and swoor, 'so moot I goon,  
This gooth aright; unbokeled is the male;  
Lat see now who shal telle another tale:  
For trewely, the game is wel bigonne.  
Now telleth ye, sir Monk, if that ye conne,  
Sumwhat, to quyte with the Knightes tale.'  
The Miller, that for-dronken was al pale,  
So that unnethe up-on his hors he sat,  
He nolde avalen neither hood ne hat,  
Ne abyde no man for his curteisye,  
But in Pilates vois he gan to crye,  
And swoor by armes and by blood and bones,  
'I can a noble tale for the nones,  
With which I wol now quyte the Knights tale.'

HEADING. *From E. Heere; hoost. 3118. E. on; rest ye.*

Our Hoste saugh that he was dronke of ale,  
And seyde: 'abyd, Robin, my leve brother,  
Som bettre man shal telle us first another:  
Abyd, and lat us werken thriftily.'

3128. Ln. oste; E. hoost; Hl. *has*--Oure hoost saugh wel how.

'By goddes soul,' quod he, 'that wol nat I;  
For I wol speke, or elles go my wey.'  
Our Hoste answerde: 'tel on, a devel wey!  
Thou art a fool, thy wit is overcome.'

3134. Pt. hooste; Ln. oste; E. hoost.

'Now herkneth,' quod the Miller, 'alle and some!  
But first I make a protestacioun  
That I am dronke, I knowe it by my soun;  
And therfore, if that I misspeke or seye,  
Wyte it the ale of Southwerk, I yow preye;  
For I wol telle a legende and a lyf  
Bothe of a Carpenter, and of his wyf,  
How that a clerk hath set the wrightes cappe.'

3140. E. Hn. Cm. *om.* yow.

The Reve answerde and seyde, 'stint thy clappe,  
Lat be thy lewed drunken harlotrye.  
It is a sinne and eek a greet folye  
To apeiren any man, or him diffame,  
And eek to bringen wyves in swich fame.  
Thou mayst y-nogh of othere thinges seyn.'

3147. E. Ln. Hl. *defame*; *rest diffame*.

This drunken Miller spak ful sone ageyn,  
And seyde, 'leve brother Osewold,  
Who hath no wyf, he is no cokewold.  
But I sey nat therfore that thou art oon;  
Ther been ful gode wyves many oon,  
And ever a thousand gode ayeyns oon badde,

That knowestow wel thy-self, but-if thou madde.  
Why artow angry with my tale now?  
I have a wyf, pardee, as well as thou,  
Yet nolde I, for the oxen in my plogh,  
Taken up-on me more than y-nogh,  
As demen of my-self that I were oon;  
I wol beleve wel that I am noon.  
An housbond shal nat been inquisitif  
Of goddes privathee, nor of his wyf.  
So he may finde goddes foyson there,  
Of the remenant nedeth nat enquere.'

3150. E. dronke; Cm. dronkyn; *rest* drunken. 3155, 6. *These two lines are in E. Cm. Hl. only.* 3160. Cm. Takyn; *rest* Take, Tak. 3166. enquere] Cp. Pt. Ln. to enquere.

What sholde I more seyn, but this Millere  
He nolde his wordes for no man forbere,  
But tolde his cherles tale in his manere;  
Me thinketh that I shal reherce it here.  
And ther-fore every gentil wight I preye,  
For goddes love, demeth nat that I seye  
Of evel entente, but that I moot reherce  
Hir tales alle, be they bettre or wersse,  
Or elles falsen som of my matere.  
And therfore, who-so list it nat y-here,  
Turne over the leef, and chese another tale;  
For he shal finde y-nowe, grete and smale,  
Of storial thing that toucheth gentillesse,  
And eek moralitee and holinesse;  
Blameth nat me if that ye chese amis.  
The Miller is a cherl, ye knowe wel this;  
So was the Reve, and othere many mo,  
And harlotrye they tolden bothe two.  
Avyseth yow and putte me out of blame;  
And eek men shal nat make ernest of game.

#### Here endeth the prologue.

3170. E. Mathynketh; Hn. Cp. Ln. Hl. Me athynketh; Cm. Me thynkyth. 3172. demeth] Hl. as deme. 3173. E. yuel; Cm. euyl. 3177. Cp. chees; Cm. ches; *rest* chese. 3185. E. Cm. *om.* and. E. Cp. putteth; *rest* putte, put. 3186. E. Hn. Cm. maken; *rest* make. COLOPHON. *From* Cm.; Pt. Thus endeth the prologue; Ln. Explicit prologus; Hl. Here endeth the prologue of the Miller

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## THE MILLERES TALE.

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#### Here biginneth the Millere his tale.

Whylom ther was dwellinge at Oxenford  
A riche gnof, that gestes heeld to bord,  
And of his craft he was a Carpenter.  
With him ther was dwellinge a povre scoler,  
Had lerned art, but al his fantasye  
Was turned for to lerne astrologye,  
And coude a certeyn of conclusiouns  
To demen by interrogaciouns,  
If that men axed him in certein houres,  
Whan that men sholde have droghte or elles shoures,  
Or if men axed him what sholde bifalle  
Of every thing, I may nat rekene hem alle.

3187. Cm. Pt. in (*for* at). 3190. Cm. Pt. Hl. pore; E. Hn. poure (= povre); Cp. Ln. pouer (= pover). 3195, 7. E. asked; *rest* axed.

This clerk was cleped hende Nicholas;  
Of derne love he coude and of solas;  
And ther-to be was sleigh and ful privee,  
And lyk a mayden meke for to see.  
A chambre hadde he in that hostelye  
Allone, with-outen any compayne,  
Ful fetisly y-dight with herbes swote;  
And he him-self as swete as is the rote  
Of licorys, or any cetewale.  
His Alimageste and bokes grete and smale,  
His astrelabie, longinge for his art,  
His augrim-stones layen faire a-part  
On shelves couched at his beddes heed:  
His presse y-covered with a falding reed.  
And al above ther lay a gay sautrye,  
On which he made a nightes melodye  
So swetely, that al the chambre rong;  
And *Angelus ad virginem* he song;  
And after that he song the kinges note;  
Ful often blessed was his mery throte.  
And thus this swete clerk his tyme spente  
After his freendes finding and his rente.

3218. Cm. Pt. Ln. Hl. mery; E. myrie.

This Carpenter had wedded newe a wyf  
Which that he lovede more than his lyf;  
Of eightetene yeer she was of age.  
Ialous he was, and heeld hir narwe in cage,  
For she was wilde and yong, and he was old  
And demed him-self ben lyk a cokewold.  
He knew nat Catoun, for his wit was rude,  
That bad man sholde wedde his similitude.  
Men sholde wedden after hir estaat,  
For youthe and elde is often at debaat.  
But sith that he was fallen in the snare,  
He moste endure, as other folk, his care.

3223. Hl. eyghteteene; rest xvij. 3225. E. yong and wylde. 3230. Cm. Hl. ben; rest is.

Fair was this yonge wyf, and ther-with-al  
As any wesele hir body gent and smal.  
A ceynt she werede barred al of silk,  
A barmclooth eek as whyt as morne milk  
Up-on hir lendes, ful of many a gore.  
Whyt was hir smok, and brouded al bifore  
And eek bihinde, on hir coler aboute,  
Of col-blak silk, with-inne and eek with-oute.  
The tapes of hir whyte voluper  
Were of the same suyte of hir coler;  
Hir filet brood of silk, and set ful hye:  
And sikerly she hadde a likerous ye.  
Ful smale y-pulled were hir browes two,  
And tho were bent, and blake as any sloo.  
She was ful more blisful on to see  
Than is the newe pere-ionette tree;  
And softer than the wolle is of a wether.  
And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether  
Tasseld with silk, and perled with latoun.

In al this world, to seken up and doun,  
There nis no man so wys, that coude thenche  
So gay a popelote, or swich a wenche.  
Ful brighter was the shyning of hir hewe  
Than in the tour the noble y-forged newe.  
But of hir song, it was as loude and yerne  
As any swalwe sittinge on a berne.  
Ther-to she coude skippe and make game,  
As any kide or calf folwinge his dame.  
Hir mouth was swete as bragot or the meeth,  
Or hord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.  
Winsinge she was, as is a Ioly colt,  
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.  
A brooch she baar up-on hir lowe coler,  
As brood as is the bos of a bocler.  
Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hye;  
She was a prymereole, a pigges-nye  
For any lord to leggen in his bedde,  
Or yet for any good yeman to wedde.

3235. E. y-barred; *rest* barred. 3236. Hl. eek; *rest om.* 3238. Cp. brouded; Hl. browdid; Cm. I-brouded; E. Hn. broyden. 3251. E. Hn. Tasseled; Ln. Tassilde; Hl. Cp. Tassid. E. grene; *rest* silk. 3253. E. nas; Hn. Pt. Hl. nys; Cm. Cp. Ln. is. 3261. Cm. Pt. Cp. Ln. braket. 3265. Cm. lowe; *rest* loue. 3266. Cp. bocler; Hl. bocleer; *rest* bokeeler.

Now sire, and eft sire, so bifel the cas,  
That on a day this hende Nicholas  
Fil with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye,  
Whyl that hir housbond was at Oseneye,  
As clerkes ben ful subtile and ful queynte;  
And prively he caughte hir by the queynte,  
And seyde, 'y-wis, but if ich have my wille,  
For derne love of thee, lemmman, I spille.'  
And heeld hir harde by the haunche-bones,  
And seyde, 'lemmman, love me al at-ones,  
Or I wol dyen, also god me save!'  
And she spong as a colt doth in the trave,  
And with hir heed she wryed faste awey,  
And seyde, 'I wol nat kisse thee, by my fey,  
Why, lat be,' quod she, 'lat be, Nicholas,  
Or I wol crye out "harrow" and "allas."  
Do wey your handes for your curteisye!'

3283. Cm. wrythed. 3285. Pt. she; Cm. Hl. sche; Ln. iche; *rest* ich.

This Nicholas gan mercy for to crye,  
And spak so faire, and profred hir so faste,  
That she hir love him graunted atte laste,  
And swoor hir ooth, by seint Thomas of Kent,  
That she wol been at his comandement,  
Whan that she may hir leyser wel espye.  
Myn housbond is so ful of Ialousye,  
That but ye wayte wel and been privee,  
I woot right wel I nam but deed,' quod she.  
'Ye moste been ful derne, as in this cas.'

'Nay ther-of care thee noght,' quod Nicholas,  
'A clerk had litherly biset his whyle,  
But-if he coude a Carpenter bigyle.'  
And thus they been acorded and y-sworn  
To wayte a tyme, as I have told biforn.  
Whan Nicholas had doon thus everydeel,

And thakked hir abouthe the lenes weel,  
He kist hir swete, and taketh his sautrye,  
And pleyeth faste, and maketh melodye.

3289. E. hir; *rest* him.

Than fil it thus, that to the parish-chirche,  
Cristes owne werkes for to wirche,  
This gode wyf wente on an haliday;  
Hir forheed shoon as bright as any day,  
So was it wasshen whan she leet hir werk.

Now was ther of that chirche a parish-clerk,  
The which that was y-cleped Absolon.  
Crul was his heer, and as the gold it shoon,  
And strouted as a fanne large and brode;  
Ful streight and even lay his Ioly shode.  
His rode was reed, his eyen greye as goos;  
With Powles window corven on his shoos,  
In hoses rede he wente fetisly.  
Y-clad he was ful smal and proprely,  
Al in a kirtel of a light wachet;  
Ful faire and thikke been the poyntes set.  
And ther-up-on he hadde a gay surplys  
As whyt as is the blosme up-on the rys.  
A mery child he was, so god me save,  
Wel coude he laten blood and clippe and shave,  
And make a chartre of lond or acquitaunce.  
In twenty manere coude he trippe and daunce  
After the scole of Oxenforde tho,  
And with his legges casten to and fro,  
And pleyen songes on a small rubible;  
Ther-to he song som-tyme a loud quinible;  
And as wel coude he pleye on his giterne.  
In al the toun nas brewhous ne taverne  
That he ne visited with his solas,  
Ther any gaylard tappestere was.  
But sooth to seyn, he was somdel squaymous  
Of farting, and of speche daungerous.

3319. Cm. hosyn; Pt. hosen; *rest* hoses. 3321. Hl. fyn (*for* light). Hl. Ln. wachet; Cm. vachet; *rest* waget. 3325. E. myrie; Hn. murye. 3327. E. Hn. maken. 3329. E. Hn. Oxenford; Cm. Oxenforthe; *rest* Oxenforde. 3333. E. his; *rest* a.

This Absolon, that Iolif was and gay,  
Gooth with a sencer on the haliday,  
Sensinge the wyves of the parish faste;  
And many a lovely look on hem he caste,  
And namely on this carpenteres wyf.  
To loke on hir him thoughte a mery lyf,  
She was so propre and swete and likerous.  
I dar wel seyn, if she had been a mous,  
And he a cat, he wolde hir hente anon.

3344. E. myrie; Hn. murye. 3347. E. Hl. wold; *rest* wolde.

This parish-clerk, this Ioly Absolon,  
Hath in his herte swich a love-longinge,  
That of no wyf ne took he noon offringe;  
For curteisye, he seyde, he wolde noon.  
The mone, whan it was night, ful brighte shoon,  
And Absolon his giterne hath y-take,

For paramours, he thoghte for to wake.  
And forth he gooth, Iolif and amorous,  
Til he cam to the carpenteres hous  
A litel after cokkes hadde y-crowe;  
And dressed him up by a shot-windowe  
That was up-on the carpenteres wal.  
He singeth in his vois gentil and smal,  
Now, dere lady, if thy wille be,  
I preye yow that ye wol rewe on me,'  
Ful wel accordaunt to his giterninge.  
This carpenter awook, and herde him singe,  
And spak un-to his wyf, and seyde anon,  
'What! Alison! herestow nat Absolon  
That chaunteth thus under our boures wal?'  
And she answerde hir housbond ther-with-al,  
'Yis, god wot, Iohn, I here it every-del.'

3350. Hn. Hl. ne; *rest om.* 3362. Cm. preye; Hl. praye; Ln. preie; E. Hn. Cp. Pt. pray. E. wole; Cm. wele; Hn. Hl. wol; *rest wil.* E. thynke; *rest rewe.* 3364. E. *om.* him.

This passeth forth; what wol ye bet than wel?  
Fro day to day this Ioly Absolon  
So woweth hir, that him is wo bigon.  
He waketh al the night and al the day;  
He kempte hise lokkes brode, and made him gay;  
He woweth hir by menes and brocage,  
And swoor he wolde been hir owne page;  
He singeth, brokkinge as a nightingale;  
He sente hir piment, meeth, and spyced ale,  
And wafres, piping hote out of the glede;  
And for she was of toune, he profred mede.  
For som folk wol ben wonnen for richesse,  
And som for strokes, and som for gentillesse.

3371. E. *repeats* to day. 3374. Cm. kempte; Hn. Ln. kembed; Cp. kembede; E. Pt. kembeth. 3379. Cm. Pt. Ln. hote; E. Hn. Cp. hoot. 3380. E. profeth.

Somtyme, to shewe his lightnesse and maistrye,  
He pleyeth Herodes on a scaffold hye.  
But what availleth him as in this cas?  
She loveth so this hende Nicholas,  
That Absolon may blowe the bukses horn;  
He ne hadde for his labour but a scorn;  
And thus she maketh Absolon hir ape,  
And al his ernest turneth til a Iape.  
Ful sooth is this proverbe, it is no lye,  
Men seyn right thus, 'alwey the nye slye  
Maketh the ferre leve to be looth.'  
For though that Absolon be wood or wrooth,  
By-cause that he fer was fromhir sighte,  
This nye Nicholas stood in his lighte.

3384. Hl. Herodz; Ln. Heraude; *rest* Herodes, Heraudes. Hl. on; *rest vp on.* 3390. Hl. Pt. to; *rest til.*

Now bere thee wel, thou hende Nicholas!  
For Absolon may waille and singe 'allas.'  
And so bifel it on a Saterday,  
This carpenter was goon til Osenay;  
And hende Nicholas and Alisoun  
Acorded been to this conclusioun,  
That Nicholas shal shapen him a wyle

This sely Ialous housbond to bigyle;  
And if so be the game wente aright,  
She sholde slepen in his arm al night,  
For this was his desyr and hir also.  
And right anon, with-outen wordes mo,  
This Nicholas no lenger wolde tarie,  
But doth ful softe un-to his chambre carie  
Bothe mete and drinke for a day or tweye,  
And to hir housbonde bad hir for to seye,  
If that he axed after Nicholas,  
She sholde seye she niste where he was,  
Of al that day she saugh him nat with ye;  
She trowed that he was in maladye,  
For, for no cry, hir mayde coude him calle;  
He nolde answer, for no-thing that mighte falle.

3415. Cm. Pt. ye; Hl. Iye; *rest* eye. 3418. Hn. Cm. Cp. Ln. no thyng; Pt. Hl. nought; E. thyng. Pt. Hl. may bifalle. (*Read* mighte as might').

This passeth forth al thilke Saterday,  
That Nicholas stille in his chambre lay,  
And eet and sleep, or dide what him leste,  
Til Sonday, that the sonne gooth to reste.

This sely carpenter hath greet merveyle  
Of Nicholas, or what thing mighte him eyle,  
And seyde, 'I am adrad, by seint Thomas,  
It stondeth nat aright with Nicholas.  
God shilde that he deyde sodeynly!  
This world is now ful tikel, sikerly;  
I saugh to-day a cors y-born to chirche  
That now, on Monday last, I saugh him wirche.

Go up,' quod he un-to his knave anoon,  
'Clepe at his dore, or knokke with a stoon,  
Loke how it is, and tel me boldely.'

This knave gooth him up ful sturdily,  
And at the chambre-dore, whyl that he stood,  
He cryde and knokked as that he were wood:--  
'What! how! what do ye, maister Nicholay?  
How may ye slepen al the longe day?'

But al for noght, he herde nat a word;  
An hole he fond, ful lowe up-on a bord,  
Ther as the cat was wont in for to crepe;  
And at that hole he looked in ful depe,  
And at the laste he hadde of him a sighte.  
This Nicholas sat gaping ever up-righte,  
As he had kyked on the newe mone.  
Adoun he gooth, and tolde his maister sone  
In what array he saugh this ilke man.

3440. E. Hn. foond; Pt. foonde. 3444. E. Hn. Cp. capyng. 3445. Cp. Ln. keked; Hl. loked. 3447. E. Pt. that; *rest* this.

This carpenter to blessem him bigan,  
And seyde, 'help us, seinte Frideswyde!  
A man woot litel what him shal bityde.  
This man is falle, with his astromye,  
In som woodnesse or in som agonye;  
I thoghte ay wel how that it sholde be!  
Men sholde nat knowe of goddes privathee.

Ye, blessed be alwey a lewed man,  
That noght but oonly his bileve can!  
So ferde another clerk with astromye;  
He walked in the feeldes for to prye  
Up-on the sterres, what ther sholde bifalle,  
Til he was in a marle-pit y-falle;  
He saugh nat that. But yet, by seint Thomas,  
Me reweth sore of hende Nicholas.  
He shal be rated of his studying,  
If that I may, by Iesus, hevene king!

3451. E. Hn. Astromye; Ln. Arstromye; *rest astronomye*; *but Astromye is meant; see l. 3457.* 3457. So E. Hn.; *rest astronomye.* 3460. E. -put.

Get me a staf, that I may underspore,  
Whyl that thou, Robin, hevest up the dore.  
He shal out of his studying, as I gesse'--  
And to the chambre-dore he gan him dresse.  
His knave was a strong carl for the nones,  
And by the haspe he haf it up atones;  
In-to the floor the dore fil anon.  
This Nicholas sat ay as stille as stoon,  
And ever gaped upward in-to the eir.  
This carpenter wende he were in despeir,  
And hente him by the sholdres mightily,  
And shook him harde, and cryde spitously,  
'What! Nicholay! what, how! what! loke adoun!  
Awake, and thenk on Cristes passioun;  
I crouche thee from elves and fro wightes!'  
Ther-with the night-spel seyde he anon-rightes  
On foure halves of the hous aboute,  
And on the threshfold of the dore with-oute:--  
'Tesu Crist, and seynt Benedight,  
Blesse this hous from every wilked wight,  
For nightes verye, the white *pater-noster!*  
Where wentestow, seynt Petres soster?'

3466. E. of *rest vp, vpe.* 3470. Cm. Hl. haf. E. Hn. haaf. Cp. heef. Hn. Pt. Ln. Hl. vp; *rest of* 3473. E. Hn. caped; Hl. capyd; Cp. capede; *rest gaped, gapede.* 3477. Hl. man (*for 3rd what*); *rest om.* 3485. All but E. Hl. For the nyghtes. E. Hn. uerye; Cm. verie; Cp. Pt. verye; Ln. very; Hl. verray. 3486. Cm. wonyst thou; Hl. wonestow; *after which* Cm. Hl. ins. now.

And atte laste this hende Nicholas  
Gan for to syke sore, and seyde, 'allas!  
Shal al the world be lost eftsones now?'

3487. Hl. *om. this.* 3489. E. *this; rest the.*

This carpenter answerde, 'what seystow?  
What! thenk on god, as we don, men that swinke.'

3491. Hn. Pt. Hl. thenk; *rest thynk; see* 3478. Cm. as men don whan they swinke.

This Nicholas answerde, 'fecche me drinke;  
And after wol I speke in privathee  
Of certeyn thing that toucheth me and thee;  
I wol telle it non other man, certeyn.'

This carpenter goth doun, and comth ageyn,  
And broghte of mighty ale a large quart;  
And whan that ech of hem had dronke his part,  
This Nicholas his dore faste shette,  
And doun the carpenter by him he sette.

He seyde, Tohn, myn hoste lief and dere,  
Thou shall up-on thy trouthe swere me here,  
That to no wight thou shalt this conseil wreye;  
For it is Cristes conseil that I seye,  
And if thou telle it man, thou are forlore;  
For this vengaunce thou shalt han therfore,  
That if thou wreye me, thou shalt be wood!  
Nay, Crist forbede it, for his holy blood!"  
Quod tho this sely man, 'I nam no labbe,  
Ne, though I seye, I nam nat lief to gabbe.  
Sey what thou wolt, I shal it never telle  
To child ne wyf, by him that harwed helle!"

3501. Cp. Pt. hooste; Ln. ostee; Hl. host ful; E. Hn. hoost; Cm. ost. 3505. E. *om.* it. 3510. E. Hl. am; *rest* nam, ne am.

'Now John,' quod Nicholas, 'I wol nat lye;  
I have y-founde in myn astrologye,  
As I have loked in the mone bright,  
That now, a Monday next, at quarter-night,  
Shal falle a reyn and that so wilde and wood,  
That half so greet was never Noes flood.  
This world,' he seyde, 'in lasse than in an hour  
Shal al be dreynt, so hidous is the shour;  
Thus shal mankynde drenche and lese hir lyf.'

3516. a] Hl. on. 3519. Cm. Hl. *om.* 2nd in.

This carpenter answerde, 'allas, my wyf!  
And shal she drenche? allas! myn Alisoun!'  
For sorwe of this he fil almost adoun,  
And seyde, 'is ther no remedie in this cas?'

3525. Pt. Ln. *om.* ther.

'Why, yis, for gode,' quod hende Nicholas,  
'If thou wolt werken after lore and reed;  
Thou mayst nat werken after thyn owene heed.  
For thus seith Salomon, that was ful trewe,  
"Werk al by conseil, and thou shalt nat rewe."  
And if thou werken wolt by good conseil,  
I undertake, with-outen mast and seyl,  
Yet shal I saven hir and thee and me  
Hastow nat herd how saved was Noe,  
Whan that our lord had warned him biforn  
That al the world with water sholde be lorn?"

3527. E. affir. 3534. E. hou. 3535. Hl. had; E. Hn. Cm. hadde.

'Yis,' quod this carpenter, 'ful yore ago.'

'Hastow nat herd,' quod Nicholas, 'also  
The sorwe of Noe with his felawshipe,  
Er that he mighte gete his wyf to shipe?  
Him had be lever, I dar wel undertake,  
At thilke tyme, than alle hise wetheres blake,  
That she hadde had a ship hir-self allone.  
And ther-fore, wostou what is best to done?  
This asketh haste, and of an hastif thing  
Men may nat preche or maken taryng.

3539. E. felawshipe. 3540. E. brynge; *rest* gete. 3541. E. hadde; leuere. 3544. E. woostou; doone.

Anon go gete us faste in-to this in  
A kneding-trogh, or elles a kimelin,  
For ech of us, but loke that they be large,  
In whiche we mowe swimme as in a barge,  
And han ther-inne vitaille suffisant  
But for a day; fy on the remenant!  
The water shal aslake and goon away  
Aboute pryme up-on the nexte day.  
But Robin may nat wite of this, thy knave,  
Ne eek thy mayde Gille I may nat save;  
Axe nat why, for though thou aske me,  
I wol nat tellen goddes privetee.  
Suffiseth thee, but if thy wittes madde,  
To han as greet a grace as Noe hadde.  
Thy wyf shal I wel saven, out of doute,  
Go now thy wey, and speed thee heer-aboute.

3548. E. ellis. E. kymelyn; HI. kemelyn.

But whan thou hast, for hir and thee and me,  
Y-geten us thise kneding-tubbes three,  
Than shaltow hange hem in the roof ful hye,  
That no man of our purveyaunce spye.  
And whan thou thus hast doon as I have seyd,  
And hast our vitaille faire in hem y-leyd,  
And eek an ax, to smyte the corde atwo  
When that the water comth, that we may go,  
And broke an hole an heigh, up-on the gable,  
Unto the gardin-ward, over the stable,  
That we may frely passen forth our way  
Whan that the grete shour is goon away--  
Than shaltow swimme as myrie, I undertake,  
As doth the whyte doke after hir drake.  
Than wol I clepe, "how! Alison! how! John!  
Be myrie, for the flood wol passe anon."  
And thou wolt seyn, "hayl, maister Nicholay!  
Good morwe, I se thee wel, for it is day."  
And than shul we be lordes al our lyf  
Of al the world, as Noe and his wyf.

3565: E. Thanne. 3571. E. Pt. Ln. broke; *rest* breke. 3575. E. Thanne. E. shal I; *rest* shaltow, shalt thou. 3577. E. Thanne.

But of o thyng I warne thee ful right,  
Be wel avysed, on that ilke night  
That we ben entred in-to shippes bord,  
That noon of us ne speke nat a word,  
Ne clepe, ne crye, but been in his preyere;  
For it is goddes owne heste dere.

3588. E. heeste.

Thy wyf and thou mote hange fer a-twinne,  
For that bitwixe yow shal be no sinne  
No more in looking than ther shal in dede;  
This ordinance is seyd, go, god thee sped!  
Tomorwe at night, whan men ben alle aslepe,  
In-to our kneding-tubbes wol we crepe,  
And sitten ther, abyding goddes grace.  
Go now thy wey, I have no lenger space  
To make of this no lenger sermoning.  
Men seyn thus, "send the wyse, and sey no-thing;"

Thou art so wys, it nedeth thee nat teche;  
Go, save our lyf, and that I thee biseche.'

3591. E. Hn. Na. 3592. E. Pt. Hl. so; *rest* go. 3593. E. folk; Cm. we; *rest* men. 3598. E. sende. 3599. E. to preche; Cp. to teche; *rest* teche.

This sely carpenter goth forth his wey.  
Ful ofte he seith 'allas' and 'weylawey,'  
And to his wyf he tolde his privetee;  
And she was war, and knew it bet than he,  
What al this queynte cast was for to seye.  
But nathelees she ferde as she wolde deye,  
And seyde, 'allas! go forth thy wey anon,  
Help us to scape, or we ben lost echon;  
I am thy trewe verray wedded wyf,  
Go, dere spouse, and help to save our lyf.'

3608. Cm. er (*for* or). E. lost; *rest* dede, deede, ded. 3609. Cm. Hl. verray trewe.

Lo! which a greet thyng is affecioun!  
Men may dye of imaginacioun,  
So depe may impressioune be take.  
This sely carpenter biginneth quake;  
Him thinketh verrailly that he may see  
Noes flood come walwing as the see  
To drenchen Alisoun, his hony dere.  
He wepeth, weyleth, maketh sory chere,  
He syketh with ful many a sory swogh.  
He gooth and geteth him a kneding-trogh,  
And after that a tubbe and a kimelin,  
And prively he sente hem to his in,  
And heng hem in the roof in privetee.  
His owne hand he made laddres three,  
To climben by the ronges and the stalkes  
Un-to the tubbes hanginge in the balkes,  
And hem vitailled, bothe trogh and tubbe,  
With breed and chese, and good ale in a Iubbe,  
Suffysinge right y-nogh as for a day.  
But er that he had maad al this array,  
He sente his knave, and eek his wenche also,  
Up-on his nede to London for to go.  
And on the Monday, whan it drow to night,  
He shette his dore with-oute candel-light,  
And dressed al thing as it sholde be.  
And shortly, up they clomben alle three;  
They sitten stille wel a furlong-way.

3611. E. Auctor (*in margin*). 3612. Hl. A man. E. Hn. dyen. Pt. Hl. for; Cm. thour; *rest* of 3624. E. *om.* he; Hl. *has* than. 3626. E. In-to; Cm. Onto; *rest* Vnto. 3627. E. vitaileth. 3630. E. hadde. 3635. E. dresseth; *rest* dressed. E. Hn. Cm. alle. Hn. Cp. scholde; E. shal.

'Now, *Pater-noster*, clom!' seyde Nicholay,  
And 'clom' quod John, and 'clom' seyde Alisoun.  
This carpenter seyde his devocioun,  
And stille he sit, and biddeth his preyere,  
Awaytinge on the reyn, if he it here.

The dede sleep, for wery bisinesse,  
Fil on this carpenter right, as I gesse,  
Aboute corfew-tyme, or litel more;  
For travail of his goost he groneth sore,  
And eft he routeth, for his heed mislay.  
Doun of the laddre stalketh Nicholay,

And Alisoun, ful softe adoun she spedde;  
With-outen wordes mo, they goon to bedde  
Ther-as the carpenter is wont to lye.  
Ther was the revel and the melodye;  
And thus lyth Alison and Nicholas,  
In bisenesse of mirthe and of solas,  
Til that the belle of laudes gan to ringe,  
And freres in the chauncel gonne singe.

3643. Cm. Hl. verray; *rest* wery.

This parish-clerk, this amorous Absolon,  
That is for love alwey so wo bigon,  
Up-on the Monday was at Oseneye  
With compayne, him to disporte and pleye,  
And axed up-on cas a cloisterer  
Ful prively after Iohn the carpenter;  
And he drough him a-part out of the chirche,  
And seyde, 'I noot, I saugh him here nat wirche  
Sin Saterday; I trow that he be went  
For timber, ther our abbot hath him sent;  
For he is wont for timber for to go,  
And dwellen at the grange a day or two;  
Or elles he is at his hous, certeyn;  
Wher that he be, I can nat sothly seyn.'

3660. E. With a compaignye. 3661. E. Cloistrer; Pt. Ln. Cloystrere.

This Absolon ful Ioly was and light,  
And thoghte, 'now is tyme wake al night;  
For sikirly I saugh him nat stiringe  
Aboute his dore sin day bigan to springe.  
So moot I thryve, I shal, at cokkes crowe,  
Ful prively knokken at his windowe  
That stant ful lowe up-on his boures wal.  
To Alison now wol I tellen al  
My love-longing, for yet I shal nat misse  
That at the leste wey I shal hir kisse.  
Som maner confort shal I have, parfay,  
My mouth hath icched al this longe day;  
That is a signe of kissing atte leste.  
Al night me mette eek, I was at a feste.  
Therfor I wol gon slepe an houre or tweye,  
And al the night than wol I wake and pleye.'

3672. E. Hl. wake; Cm. to wakyn; *rest* to wake. 3676. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. knokken; E. Cm. knokke; Hl. go knokke.

Whan that the firste cok hath crowe, anon  
Up rist this Ioly lover Absolon,  
And him arrayeth gay, at point-devys.  
But first he cheweth greyn and lycorys,  
To smellen swete, er he had kembd his heer.  
Under his tonge a trewe love he beer,  
For ther-by wende he to ben gracious.  
He rometh to the carpenteres hous,  
And stille he stant under the shot-windowe;  
Un-to his brest it raughte, it was so lowe;  
And softe he cogheth with a semi-soun--  
'What do ye, hony-comb, swete Alisoun?  
My faire brid, my swete cinamome,  
Awaketh, lemann myn, and speketh to me!

Wel litel thenken ye up-on my wo,  
That for your love I swete ther I go.  
No wonder is thogh that I swelte and swete;  
I moorne as doth a lamb after the tete.  
Y-wis, leman, I have swich love-longinge,  
That lyk a turtel trewe is my moorninge;  
I may nat ete na more than a mayde.'

3690. E. of *rest* and. 3696. E. brist. 3697. Hn. cogheth; Cp. coughed; Hl. cowith; Pt. kougheth; Cm. coude; E. knokketh. 3701. Cp. Pt. thenken; *rest* thynken, thynke.

'Go fro the window, lakke fool,' she sayde,  
'As help me god, it wol nat be "com ba me,"  
I love another, and elles I were to blame,  
Wel bet than thee, by Iesu, Absolon!  
Go forth thy wey, or I wol caste a ston,  
And lat me slepe, a twenty devel wey!'

3709. E. Hn. com pa me; Cp. com pame; Cm. cumpame; Pt. compame; Hl. Ln. compaine; *several* MSS. come bame, combame; *see note*.

'Allas,' quod Absolon, 'and weylawey!  
That trewe love was ever so yvel biset!  
Than kisse me, sin it may be no bet,  
For Iesus love and for the love of me.'

3716. Cp. Pt. Ln. kisse; Hl. kisseth; *rest* kys.

'Wiltow than go thy wey ther-with?' quod she.

3718. E. *om.* ther-with.

'Ye, certes, leman,' quod this Absolon.

'Thanne make thee redy,' quod she, 'I come anon;'  
And un-to Nicholas she seyde stille,  
'Now hust, and thou shall laughen al thy fille.'

3721, 2. *These 2 lines in E. only*

This Absolon doun sette him on his knees,  
And seyde, 'I am a lord at alle degrees;  
For after this I hope ther cometh more!  
Leman, thy grace, and swete brid, thyn ore!'

3724. E. *om.* a.

The window she undoth, and that in haste,  
'Have do,' quod she, 'com of, and speed thee faste,  
Lest that our neighebores thee espye.'

3728. Cm. don; Hl. doon; Pt. doo; *rest* do. Hn. thee; *rest* the.

This Absolon gan wype his mouth ful drye;  
Derk was the night as pich, or as the cole,  
And at the window out she putte hir hole,  
And Absolon, him fil no bet ne wers,  
But with his mouth he kiste hir naked ers  
Ful savourly, er he was war of this.

3731. E. Dirk. 3732. E. pitte.

Abak he sterte, and thoghte it was amis,  
For wel he wiste a womman hath no berd;  
He felte a thing al rough and long y-herd,

And seyde, 'fy! allas! what have I do?'

3736. E. Cm. stirte.

'Tehee!' quod she, and clapte the window to;  
And Absolon goth forth a sory pas.

'A berd, a berd!' quod hende Nicholas,  
'By goddes *corpus*, this goth faire and weel!'

This sely Absolon herde every deel,  
And on his lippe he gan for anger byte;  
And to him-self he seyde, 'I shal thee quyte!'

3743, 4. E. weel, deel; Ln. wele, dele; rest wel, del.

Who rubbeth now, who froteth now his lippes  
With dust, with sond, with straw, with clooth, with chippes,  
But Absolon, that seith ful ofte, 'allas!  
My soule bitake I un-to Sathanas,  
But me wer lever than al this toun,' quod he,  
'Of this despyt awroken for to be!  
Allas!' quod he, 'allas! I ne hadde y-bleynt!'  
His hote love was cold and al y-queynt;  
For fro that tyme that he had kiste hir ers,  
Of paramours he sette nat a kers,  
For he was heled of his maladye;  
Ful ofte paramours he gan deffye,  
And weep as dooth a child that is y-bete.  
A softe paas he wente over the strete  
Un-til a smith men cleped daun Gerveys,  
That in his forge smithed plough-harneys;  
He sharpeth shaar and culter bisily.  
This Absolon knokketh al esily,  
And seyde, 'undo, Gerveys, and that anon.'

3753. Hl. nadde bleynt. 3759. Cm. wepte; Hl. wept. 3763. E. Hn. kultour; Cp. Pt. Ln. culter.

'What, who artow?' 'It am I, Absolon.'  
'What, Absolon! for Cristes swete tree,  
Why ryse ye so rathe, ey, *benedicite!*  
What eyleth yow? som gay gerl, god it woot,  
Hath broght yow thus up-on the viritoot;  
By seynt Note, ye woot wel what I mene.'

3766. E. I am heere; rest it am I. 3770. E. Hn. Cp. viritoot; Pt. Vyritote; Ln. veritote; Cm. merytot; Hl. verytrot. 3771. Pt. Ln. seynt; rest seinte. Pt. Hl. Noet.

This Absolon ne roghte nat a bene  
Of al his pley, no word agayn he yaf;  
He hadde more tow on his distaf  
Than Gerveys knew, and seyde, 'freend so dere,  
That hote culter in the chimenee here,  
As lene it me, I have ther-with to done,  
And I wol bringe it thee agayn ful sone.'

3776. E. kultour

Gerveys answerde, 'certes, were it gold,  
Or in a poke nobles alle untold,  
Thou sholdest have, as I am trewe smith;  
Ey, Cristes foo! what wol ye do ther-with?'

3781. Hl. Ye schul him haue. 3782. Hl. fo; *rest* fo; ed. 1561, fōte.

'Ther-of,' quod Absolon, 'be as be may;  
I shal wel telle it thee to-morwe day'--  
And caughte the culter by the colde stèle.  
Ful softe out at the dore he gan to stèle,  
And wente un-to the carpenteres wal.  
He cogheth first, and knokketh ther-with-al  
Upon the windowe, right as he dide er.

3785. E. kultour

This Alison answerde, 'Who is ther  
That knokketh so? I warante it a theef!'

'Why, nay,' quod he, 'god woot, my swete leef,  
I am thyn Absolon, my dereling!  
Of gold,' quod he, 'I have thee broght a ring;  
My moder yaf it me, so god me save,  
Ful fyn it is, and ther-to wel y-grave;  
This wol I yeve thee, if thou me kisse!'

3793. E. Hn. my; Cm. myn; Hl. O my; Cp. thi; Pt. thine; Ln. thin. E. deerelyng; Hn. Cm. Cp. derelyng.

This Nicholas was risen for to pisse,  
And thoghte he wolde amenden al the Iape,  
He sholde kisse his ers er that he scape.  
And up the windowe dide he hastily,  
And out his ers he putteth privly  
Over the buttok, to the haunce-bon;  
And ther-with spak this clerk, this Absolon,  
'Spek, swete brid, I noot nat wher thou art.'

3800. E. *om.* ers.

This Nicholas anon leet flee a fart,  
As greet as it had been a thonder-dent,  
That with the strook he was almost y-blent;  
And he was redy with his iren hoot,  
And Nicholas amidde the ers he smoot.

3810. E. *om.* the.

Of gooth the skin an hande-brede aboute,  
The hole culter brende so his toute,  
And for the smert he wende for to dye.  
As he were wood, for wo he gan to crye--  
Help! water! water! help, for goddes herte!'

3812. E. kultour. 3813. And] Hn. That.

This carpenter out of his slomber sterte,  
And herde oon cryen 'water' as he were wood,  
And thoghte, 'Allas! now comth Nowelis flood!'  
He sit him up with-outen wordes mo,  
And with his ax he smoot the corde a-two,  
And doun goth al; he fond neither to selle,  
Ne breed ne ale, til he cam to the celle  
Up-on the floor; and ther aswowne he lay.

3818. E. Hn. Nowelis; Cp. Noweles (*intentionally*); Cm. Newelis; Pt. Ln. Hl. noes. 3821. Hl. he goth (*for* goth al). E. Hn. foond.

Up sterte hir Alison, and Nicholay,

And cryden 'out' and 'harrow' in the strete.  
The neighebores, bothe smale and grete,  
In ronnen, for to gauren on this man,  
That yet aswowne he lay, bothe pale and wan;  
For with the fal he brosten hadde his arm;  
But stonde he moste un-to his owne harm.  
For whan he spak, he was anon bore doun  
With hende Nicholas and Alisoun.  
They tolden every man that he was wood,  
He was agast so of Nowelis flood'  
Thurgh fantasye, that of his vanitee  
He hadde y-boght him kneding-tubbes three,  
And hadde hem hanged in the roof above;  
And that he preyed hem, for goddes love,  
To sitten in the roof, *par compayne*.

3828. E. Hn. he; *rest om.* 3831. Pt. Ln. Hl. born. 3834. E. Hn. Nowelis; Cp. Ln. the Nowels; Pt. the Noes; Hl. Noes. 3837. E. roue; *see l.* 3839.  
3838. E. Hn. Ln. preyde.

The folk gan laughen at his fantasye;  
In-to the roof they kyken and they gape,  
And turned al his harm un-to a Iape.  
For what so that this carpenter answerde,  
It was for noght, no man his reson herde;  
With othes grete he was so sworn adoun,  
That he was holden wood in al the toun;  
For every clerk anon-right heeld with other.  
They seyde, 'the man is wood, my leve brother,'  
And every wight gan laughen of this stryf.

3841. E. Hn. Cp. cape. 3846. E. holde. 3848. E. Hn. Hl. was; *rest is.* 3849. E. of this; Hn. at this; *rest at his.*

Thus swyved was the carpenteres wyf,  
For al his keping and his Ialousye;  
And Absolon hath kist hir nether ye;  
And Nicholas is scalded in the toute.  
This tale is doon, and god save al the route!

#### **Here endeth the Millere his tale.**

3850. E. this; *rest the.* 3852. Pt. Hl. ye; Hn. Iye; E. Ln. eye. 3853. E. Hn. the; *rest his.* COLOPHON. So E. (*with Heere*); Hl. Pn. Here endeth the  
Millers tale; Hn. Here is ended the Millerys tale; Cp. Ln. Explicit *fabula Molendinarii.*

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## THE REEVE'S PROLOGUE

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#### **The prologue of the Reves tale.**

Whan folk had laughen at this nyce cas  
Of Absolon and hende Nicholas,  
Diverse folk diversely they seyde;  
But, for the more part, they loughe and pleyde,  
Ne at this tale I saugh no man him greve,  
But it were only Osewold the Reve,  
By-cause he was of carpenteres craft.  
A litel ire is in his herte y-laft,  
He gan to grucche and blamed it a lyte.

3862. E. Pt. *om.* is.

'So theek,' quod he, 'ful wel coude I yow quyte

With blering of a proud milleres ye,  
If that me liste speke of ribaudye.  
But ik am old, me list not pley for age;  
Gras-tyme is doon, my fodder is now forage,  
This whyte top wryteth myne olde yeres,  
Myn herte is al-so mowled as myne heres,  
But-if I fare as dooth an open-ers;  
That ilke fruit is ever leng the wers,  
Til it be roten in mullok or in stree.  
We olde men, I drede, so fare we;  
Til we be roten, can we nat be rype;  
We hoppen ay, whyl that the world wol pype.  
For in oure wil ther stiketh ever a nayl,  
To have an hoor heed and a grene tayl,  
As hath a leek; for thogh our might be goon,  
Our wil desireth folie ever in oon.  
For whan we may nat doon, than wol we speke;  
Yet in our asshen olde is fyr y-reke.

3865. E. Ln. eye. 3867. E. Hn. no (*for not*). 3869. Hl. My (*for This*). 3870. E. mowled also. 3872. E. leng; Ln. longe: *rest* lenger. 3876. E. ay  
whil that; Hn. alwey whil that; *rest* alwey while.

Foure gledes han we, whiche I shal devyse,  
Avaunting, lying, anger, coveityse;  
Thise foure sparkles longen un-to elde.  
Our olde lemes mowe wel been unwelde,  
But wil ne shal nat faillen, that is sooth.  
And yet ik have alwey a coltes tooth,  
As many a yeer as it is passed henne  
Sin that my tappe of lyf bigan to renne.  
For sikerly, whan I was bore, anon  
Deeth drogh the tappe of lyf and leet it gon;  
And ever sith hath so the tappe y-ronne,  
Til that almost al empty is the tonne.  
The streem of lyf now droppeth on the chimbe;  
The sely tongue may wel ringe and chimbe  
Of wrecchednesse that passed is ful yore;  
With olde folk, save dotage, is namore.'

3885. E. eelde. 3886. E. vnweelde. 3893. Hn. sith; E. sithe.

Whan that our host hadde herd this sermoning,  
He gan to speke as lordly as a king;  
He seide, 'what amounteth al this wit?  
What shul we speke alday of holy writ?  
The devel made a reve for to preche,  
And of a souter a shipman or a leche.  
Sey forth thy tale, and tarie nat the tyme,  
Lo, Depeford! and it is half-way pryme.  
Lo, Grenewich, ther many a shrewe is inne;  
It were al tyme thy tale to beginne.'

3904. E. Cm. And; *rest* Or. *All but* Hn. om. 2nd a. 3907. Cp. Pt. Ln. that (*for ther*). 3908. Pt. hie (*for al*).

'Now, sires,' quod this Osewold the Reve,  
I pray yow alle that ye nat yow greve,  
Thogh I answerē and somdel sette his howve;  
For leveful is with force force of-showve.

3912. *In margin of* E.--vim vi repellere.

This dronke millere hath y-told us heer,

How that bigyled was a carpenter,  
Peraventure in scorn, for I am oon.  
And, by your leve, I shal him quyte anoon;  
Right in his cherles termes wol I speke.  
I pray to god his nekke mote breke;  
He can wel in myn ye seen a stalke,  
But in his owne he can nat seen a balke.

3918. Hl. tobreke; Pt. alto-breke. 3919. Pt. ye; Cp. ye; rest eye.

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## THE REVES TALE.

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**Here biginneth the Reves tale.**

At Trumpington, nat fer fro Cantebrigge,  
Ther goth a brook and over that a brigge,  
Up-on the whiche brook ther stant a melle;  
And this is verray soth that I yow telle.  
A Miller was ther dwelling many a day;  
As eny pecok he was proud and gay.  
Pypen he coude and fisshe, and nettes bete,  
And turne coppes, and wel wrastle and shete;  
And by his belt he baar a long panade,  
And of a swerd ful trenchant was the blade.  
A Ioly popper baar he in his pouche;  
Ther was no man for peril dorste him touche.  
A Sheffeld thwitel baar he in his hose;  
Round was his face, and camuse was his nose.  
As piled as an ape was his skulle.  
He was a market-beter atte fulle.  
Ther dorste no wight hand up-on him legge,  
That he ne swoor he sholde anon abegge.  
A theef he was for sothe of corn and mele,  
And that a sly, and usaunt for to stele.  
His name was hoten deynous Simkin.  
A wyf he hadde, y-comen of noble kin;  
The person of the toun hir fader was.  
With hir he yaf ful many a panne of bras,  
For that Simkin sholde in his blood allye.  
She was y-fostred in a nonnerye;  
For Simkin wolde no wyf, as he sayde,  
But she were wel y-norised and a mayde,  
To saven his estaat of yomanrye.  
And she was proud, and pert as is a pye.  
A ful fair sighte was it on hem two;  
On haly-dayes bifore hir wolde he go  
With his tipet bounden about his heed,  
And she cam after in a gyte of reed;  
And Simkin hadde hosen of the same.  
Ther dorste no wight clepen hir but 'dame.'  
Was noon so hardy that wente by the weye  
That with hir dorste rage or ones pleye,  
But-if he wolde be slain of Simkin  
With panade, or with knyf, or boydekin.  
For Ialous folk ben perilous evermo,  
Algate they wolde hir wyves wenden so.  
And eek, for she was somdel smoterlich,  
She was as digne as water in a dich;

And ful of hoker and of bisemare.  
Hir thoughte that a lady sholde hir spare,  
What for hir kinrede and hir nortelrye  
That she had lerned in the nonnerye.

3923. E. Hn. Cm. which; *rest* whence. 3928. Hl. wrastle wel (*om.* and). 3934. Hl. camois; Pt. camoyse. 3939. E. was of corn and eek of Mele. 3941. E. Cp. Hl. hoote; Cm. hotyn; *rest* hoten. Pt. deyneyouse. 3944. panne] Cm. peny. 3948. E. But if *rest* But. 3949. Hn. Cm. Pt. yemanrye. 3950. E. Hn. Pt. peert. 3951. Cm. Hl. on; *rest* vp-on. 3953. Cm. boundyn; Pt. bounden; Hn. Cp. Ln. wounded; Hl. ybounde. 3956. Hl. ma dame. 3958. Hl. elles (*for* ones). 3959. Hl. Symekyn. 3965. Hn. Cm. And; *rest* As. Hl. bissemare; Cp. bisemare; E. Hn. Pt. Ln. bismare.

A doghter hadde they bitwixe hem two  
Of twenty yeer, with-outen any mo,  
Savinge a child that was of half-yeer age;  
In cradel it lay and was a propre page.  
This wenche thikke and wel y-grownen was,  
With camuse nose and yen greye as glas;  
With buttokes brode and brestes rounde and hye,  
But right fair was hir heer, I wol nat lye.

3974. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. camoys. MSS. eyen, eyyen. 3975. E. Cm. *om.* With.

The person of the toun, for she was feir,  
In purpos was to maken hir his heir  
Bothe of his catel and his messuage,  
And straunge he made it of hir mariage.  
His purpos was for to bistowe hir hye  
In-to som worthy blood of auncetrye;  
For holy chirches good moot been despended  
On holy chirches blood, that is descended.  
Therfore he wolde his holy blood honoure,  
Though that he holy chirche sholde devoure.

3977. E. Cm. This; *rest* The.

Gret soken hath this miller, out of doute,  
With whete and malt of al the land aboute;  
And nameliche ther was a greet collegge,  
Men clepen the Soler-halle at Cantebregge,  
Ther was hir whete and eek hir malt y-grounde.  
And on a day it happed, in a stounde,  
Sik lay the maunciple on a maladye;  
Men wenden wisly that he sholde dye.  
For which this miller stal bothe mele and corn  
An hundred tyme more than biforn;  
For ther-biforn he stal but curteisly,  
But now he was a theef outrageously,  
For which the wardeyn chidde and made fare.  
But ther-of sette the miller nat a tare;  
He craketh boost, and swoor it was nat so.

3987. E. Cm. sokene.

Than were ther yonge povre clerkes two,  
That dwelten in this halle, of which I seye.  
Testif they were, and lusty for to pleye,  
And, only for hir mirthe and revelrye,  
Up-on the wardeyn bisily they crye,  
To yeve hem leve but a litel stounde  
To goon to mille and seen hir corn y-grounde;  
And hardily, they dorste leye hir nekke,  
The miller shold nat stele hem half a pekke  
Of corn by sleighe, ne by force hem reve;

And at the laste the wardeyn yaf hem leve.  
Iohn hight that oon, and Aleyn hight that other;  
Of o toun were they born, that highte Strother,  
Fer in the north, I can nat telle where.

4002. Pt. Ln. Than; *rest* Thanne. 4004. Pt. Teestif 4005. Ln. revelrie; *rest* reuerye; ed. 1561, reuelry. 4013. E. highte (*1st*); heet (*2nd*). Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. hight.

This Aleyn maketh redy al his gere,  
And on an hors the sak he caste anon.  
Forth goth Aleyn the clerk, and also Iohn,  
With good swerd and with bokele by hir syde.  
Iohn knew the wey, hem nedede no gyde,  
And at the mille the sak adoun he layth.  
Aleyn spak first, 'al hayl, Symond, y-fayth;  
How fares thy faire doghter and thy wyf?'

4019. E. Cm. Pt. *om.* with. 4020. Cp. needede (*see* l. 4161); E. Hn. Pt. neded; Cm. Hl. nedyth; Ln. nedeth. 4022. Hn. Symkyn; *rest* Symond, Symon; *see* l. 4026.

'Aleyn! welcome,' quod Simkin, 'by my lyf  
And Iohn also, how now, what do ye heer?'

'Symond,' quod Iohn, 'by god, nede has na peer;  
Him boes serve him-selve that has na swayn,  
Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes sayn.  
Our manciple, I hope he wil be deed,  
Swa werkes ay the wanges in his heed.  
And forthy is I come, and eek Alayn,  
To grinde our corn and carie it ham agayn;  
I pray yow sped us hethen that ye may.'

4027. E. boes (= North. E. *bus*); Hn. Cp. bihoues; Pt. Ln. byhoueth; Cm. muste; Hl. falles. 4033. E. Hn. Cp. heythen; Ln. hethen (*the right form*); Cm. hene; Pt. hepen (*for hethen*).

'It shal be doon,' quod Simkin, 'by my fay;  
What wol ye doon whyl that it is in hande?'

'By god, right by the hoper wil I stande,'  
Quod Iohn, 'and se how that the corn gas in;  
Yet saugh I never, by my fader kin,  
How that the hoper wagges til and fra.'

4036. E. hopur.

Aleyn answerde, 'Iohn, and wiltow swa,  
Than wil I be bynethe, by my croun,  
And se how that the mele falles doun  
In-to the trough; that sal be my disport.  
For Iohn, in faith, I may been of your sort;  
I is as ille a miller as are ye.'

4040. Cp. Hl. and; *rest om.* 4044. E. Cm. yfayth. 4045. Cm. Pt. is (*for are*); Ln. es.

This miller smyled of hir nycetee,  
And thoghte, 'al this nis doon but for a wyle;  
They wene that no man may hem bigyle;  
But, by my thrift, yet shal I blere hir ye  
For al the sleighe in hir philosophye.  
The more queynete crekes that they make,  
The more wol I stele whan I take.  
In stede of flour, yet wol I yeve hem bren.  
"The gretteste clerkes been noght the wysest men,"

As whylom to the wolf thus spak the mare;  
Of al hir art I counte nocht a tare.'

4049. E. Ln. eye. 4051. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. crekes; Hl. knakkes. 4053. E. stide. 4054. E. Cm. Hl. *om.* the. 4056. Cm. I counte; Hl. ne counte I; *rest* counte I.

Out at the dore he gooth ful prively,  
Whan that he saugh his tyme, softly;  
He loketh up and doun til he hath founde  
The clerkes hors, ther as it stood y-bounde  
Bihinde the mille, under a levesel;  
And to the hors he gooth him faire and wel;  
He strepeth of the brydel right anon.  
And whan the hors was loos, he ginneth gon  
Toward the fen, ther wilde mares renne,  
Forth with wehee, thurgh thikke and thurgh thenne.

4061. Cm. Cp. Ln. Hl. leuesel; E. leſſel; Hn. leeſel. 4064. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. laus; Hl. loos; Cm. los; Pt. louse; *see* l. 4138.

This miller gooth agayn, no word he seyde,  
But dooth his note, and with the clerkes pleyde,  
Til that hir corn was faire and wel y-grounde.  
And whan the mele is sakked and y-bounde,  
This Iohn goth out and fyt his hors away,  
And gan to crye 'harrow' and 'weylaway!  
Our hors is lorn! Alayn, for goddes banes,  
Step on thy feet, com out, man, al at anes!  
Allas, our wardeyn has his palfrey lorn.'  
This Aleyn al forgat, bothe mele and corn,  
Al was out of his mynde his housbondrye.  
'What? whilk way is he geen?' he gan to crye.

4069. E. weel. 4074. E. out; Hn. Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. of Hl. on. 4078. E. geen; Hn. Ln. gane; Hl. gan; Cm. Cp. Pt. gon.

The wyf cam leping inward with a ren,  
She seyde, 'allas! your hors goth to the fen  
With wilde mares, as faste as he may go.  
Unthank come on his hand that bond him so,  
And he that bettre sholde han knit the reyne.'

4082. E. Hn. boond.

'Allas,' quod Iohn, 'Aleyn, for Cristes peyne,  
Lay doun thy swerd, and I wil myn alswa;  
I is ful wight, god waat, as is a raa;  
By goddes herte he sal nat scape us bathe.  
Why nadstow pit the capul in the lathe?  
Il-hayl, by god, Aleyn, thou is a fonne!'

4084. E. Cm. *om.* Iohn. 4087. E. Hn. god; *rest* goddes, goddis. 4088. E. Hn. Cm. pit; *rest* put (putte).

This sely clerkes han ful faste y-ronne  
To-ward the fen, bothe Aleyn and eek John.

And whan the miller saugh that they were gon,  
He half a busshel of hir flour hath take,  
And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake.  
He seyde, 'I trowe the clerkes were aferd;  
Yet can a miller make a clerkes berd  
For al his art; now lat hem goon hir weye.  
Lo wher they goon, ye, lat the children pleye;  
They gete him nat so lightly, by my croun!'

Thise sely clerkes rennen up and doun  
 With 'keep, keep, stand, stand, Iossa, warderere,  
 Ga whistle thou, and I shal kepe him here!'  
 But shortly, til that it was verray night,  
 They coude nat, though they do al hir might,  
 Hir capul cacche, he ran alwey so faste,  
 Til in a dich they caughte him atte laste.

4101. Cm. ware the rere; Hl. ware derere; *rest* warderere; ed. 1561, wartherere. 4104. E. do; Cm. don; *rest* dide (did).

Wery and weet, as beste is in the reyn,  
 Comth sely Iohn, and with him comth Aleyn.  
 'Allas,' quod Iohn, 'the day that I was born!  
 Now are we drive til hething and til scorn.  
 Our corn is stole, men wil us foles calle,  
 Bathe the wardeyn and our felawes alle,  
 And namely the miller; weylaway!

4107. Cm. beste; E. Hn. beest. 4110. E. Hl. dryue; *rest* dryuen (dreven). 4111. E. stoln me.

Thus pleyneth Iohn as he goth by the way  
 Toward the mille, and Bayard in his hond.  
 The miller sitting by the fyr he fond,  
 For it was night, and forther mighte they noght;  
 But, for the love of god, they him bisought  
 Of herberwe and of ese, as for hir peny.

The miller seyde agayn, 'if ther be eny,  
 Swich as it is, yet shal ye have your part.  
 Myn hous is streit, but ye han lerned art;  
 Ye conne by argumentes make a place  
 A myle brood of twenty foot of space.  
 Lat see now if this place may suffyse,  
 Or make it roum with speche, as is youre gyse.'

4123. E. Hn. Argumentz; Cm. argumentis; Cp. Hl. argumentes. 4126. E. in (*for* is).

'Now, Symond,' seyde Iohn, 'by saint Cutberd,  
 Ay is thou mery, and this is faire answerd.  
 I have herd seyd, man sal taa of twa thinges  
 Slyk as he fyndes, or taa slyk as he brings.  
 But specially, I pray thee, hoste dere,  
 Get us som mete and drinke, and make us chere,  
 And we wil payen trewely atte fulle.  
 With empty hand men may na haukes tulle;  
 Lo here our silver, redy for to spende.'

4128. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. mery; E. Hn. myrie. 4129. E. taa; Cm. tan; Pt. taken; Hn. tak; Cp. take. 4131. E. Hn. hoost; Hl. host ful; Pt. hooste; Cp. Ln. ooste. 4134. Hl. na; Cp. naan; E. Hn. Cm. none; Pt. not.

This miller in-to toun his doghter sende  
 For ale and breed, and rosted hem a goos,  
 And bond hir hors, it sholde nat gon loos;  
 And in his owne chambre hem made a bed  
 With shetes and with chalons faire y-spred,  
 Noght from his owne bed ten foot or twelve.  
 His doghter hadde a bed, al by hir-selve,  
 Right in the same chambre, by and by;  
 It mighte be no bet, and cause why,  
 Ther was no roumer herberwe in the place.

They soupen and they speke, hem to solace,  
And drinnen ever strong ale atte beste.  
Aboute midnight wente they to reste.

4138. E. Hn. Cp. boond. E. nat; Cm. not; Hn. namoore; Cp. namore; Pt. Ln. Hl. no more. 4147. E. drynke; Hn. Cp. Pt. drynken; Hl. Cm. dronken.

Wel hath this miller vernisshid his heed;  
Ful pale he was for-dronken, and nat reed.  
He yexeth, and he speketh thurgh the nose  
As he were on the quakke, or on the pose.  
To bedde he gooth, and with him goth his wyf.  
As any lay she light was and Iolyf,  
So was hir Ioly whistle wel y-wet.  
The cradel at hir beddes feet is set,  
To rokken, and to yeve the child to souke.  
And whan that dronken al was in the crouke,  
To bedde went the doghter right anon;  
To bedde gooth Aleyn and also Iohn;  
Ther nas na more, hem nedede no dwale.  
This miller hath so wisly bibbed ale,  
That as an hors he snorteth in his sleep,  
Ne of his tayl bishinde he took no keep.  
His wyf bar him a burdon, a ful strong,  
Men mighte hir routing here two furlong;  
The wenche routeth eek *par companye*.

4151. Hl. yoxeth. 4160. E. wente; *rest* gooth (goth). 4161. Cp. needede (*see* l. 4020); *rest* nedeed. 4162. Hl. wysly; Cm. wysely; E. wisely; *rest* wisly. 4166. Hl. Cp. a (*for* two).

Aleyne the clerk, that herd this melodye,  
He poked Iohn, and seyde, 'slepestow?  
Herdestow ever slyk a sang er now?  
Lo, whilk a compline is y-mel hem alle!  
A wilde fyr up-on thair bodyes falle!  
Wha herkned ever slyk a ferly thing?  
Ye, they sal have the flour of il ending.  
This lange night ther tydes me na reste;  
But yet, na fors; al sal be for the beste.  
For Iohn, 'seyde he, 'als ever moot I thryve,  
If that I may, yon wenche wil I swyve.  
Som esement has lawe y-shapen us;  
For Iohn, ther is a lawe that says thus,  
That gif a man in a point be y-greved,  
That in another he sal be releved.  
Our corn is stoln, shortly, it is na nay,  
And we han had an il fit al this day.  
And sin I sal have neen amendment,  
Agayn my los I wil have esement.  
By goddes saule, it sal neen other be!"

4170. Cp. Herdestow; Cm. Ln. Herdist thou; Hl. Herdistow; E. Herdtow; Hn. Herd thow. 4171. E. whilk; Hn. Cp. Ln. swilke; Cm. swich; Pt. schlike; Hl. slik. 4171. Ln. compline; Hn. compling; Pt. conplinge; Hl. couplyng (*wrongly*); E. cowplyng; Cm. copil. 4181. Hl. (*margin*) Qui in vno grauator in alio debet reueari. 4183. E. Cm. shortly; *rest* sothly. E. is; *rest* it is. Hn. Hl. na; E. ne; *rest* no (non). 4185. E. neen; Hn. naan; Hl. nan; *rest* non (noon); *so in* 4187.

This Iohn answerde, 'Alayn, avyse thee,  
The miller is a perilous man,' he seyde,  
'And gif that he out of his sleep abreyde,  
He mighte doon us bathe a vileinye.'

Aleyne answerde, 'I count him nat a flye;'

And up he rist, and by the wenche he crepte.  
This wenche lay upright, and faste slepte,  
Til he so ny was, er she mighte espye,  
That it had been to late for to crye,  
And shortly for to seyn, they were at on;  
Now pley, Aleyn! for I wol speke of Iohn.

This Iohn lyth stille a furlong-wey or two,  
And to him-self he maketh routhe and wo:  
'Allas' quod he, 'this is a wikked Iape;  
Now may I seyn that I is but an ape.  
Yet has my felawe som-what for his harm;  
He has the milleris doghter in his arm.  
He autred him, and has his nedes sped,  
And I lye as a draf-sek in my bed;  
And when this Iape is tald another day,  
I sal been halde a daf, a cokenay!  
I wil aryse, and autre it, by my fayth!  
"Unhardy is unsele," thus men sayth.'  
And up he roos and softely he wente  
Un-to the cradel, and in his hand it hente,  
And baar it softe un-to his beddes feet.

4206. E. Cm. sek; *rest* sak. 4213. E. the; *rest* his.

Sone after this the wyf hir routing leet,  
And gan awake, and wente hir out to pissee,  
And cam agayn, and gan hir cradel misse,  
And groped heer and ther, but she fond noon.  
'Allas' quod she, 'I hadde almost misgoon;  
I hadde almost gon to the clerkes bed.  
By, *benedicite!* thanne hadde I foule y-sped.'  
And forth she gooth til she the cradel fond.  
She gropeth alwey farther with hir hond,  
And fond the bed, and thoghte noght but good,  
By-cause that the cradel by it stood,  
And niste wher she was, for it was derk;  
But faire and wel she creep in to the clerk,  
And lyth ful stille, and wolde han caught a sleep.  
With-inne a whyl this Iohn the clerk up leep,  
And on this gode wyf he leyth on sore.  
So mery a fit ne hadde she nat ful yore;  
He priketh harde and depe as he were mad.  
This Ioly lyf han thise two clerkes lad  
Til that the thridde cok bigan to singe.

4217. E. Hn. Pt. foond. 4223. E. Hn. foond. 4226. to] Cm. bi. 4230. E. myrie; *om.* ne. 4231. E. soore; Cm. sore; *rest* depe (deepe).

Aleyn wex wery in the daweninge,  
For he had swonken al the longe night;  
And seyde, 'far wel, Malin, swete wight!  
The day is come, I may no lenger byde;  
But evermo, wher so I go or ryde,  
I is thyng awen clerk, swa have I seel!'

4234. Cm. Ln. Pt. wex; *rest* wax. 4236. Cm. Cp. Hl. far; *rest* fare; *see note.*

'Now dere leman,' quod she, 'go, far weel!  
But er thou go, o thing I wol thee telle,  
Whan that thou wendest homward by the melle,  
Right at the entree of the dore bikhinde,

Thou shalt a cake of half a busshel finde  
That was y-maked of thyne owne mele,  
Which that I heelp my fader for to stèle.  
And, gode leman, god thee save and kepe!"  
And with that word almost she gan to wepe.

4246. Cm. halp; E. Hn. heelp.

Aleyn up-rist, and thoughte, 'er that it dawe,  
I wol go crepen in by my felawe;  
And fond the cradel with his hand anon,  
'By god,' thoghte he, 'al wrang I have misgon;  
Myn heed is toty of my swink to-night,  
That maketh me that I go nat aright.  
I woot wel by the cradel, I have misgo,  
Heer lyth the miller and his wyf also.'  
And forth he goth, a twenty devel way,  
Un-to the bed ther-as the miller lay.  
He wende have cropen by his felawe Iohn;  
And by the miller in he creep anon,  
And caughte hym by the nekke, and softe he spak:  
He seyde, 'thou, Iohn, thou swynes-heed, awak  
For Cristes saule, and heer a noble game.  
For by that lord that called is seint lame,  
As I have thryes, in this shorte night,  
Swyved the milleres doghter bolt-upright,  
Whyl thou hast as a coward been agast.'

'Ye, false harlot,' quod the miller, 'hast?  
A! false traitour! false clerk!' quod he,  
'Thou shalt be deed, by goddes dignitee!  
Who dorste be so bold to disparage  
My doghter, that is come of swich linage?'  
And by the throte-bolle he caughte Alayn.  
And he hente hym despitously agayn,  
And on the nose he smoot him with his fest.  
Doun ran the blody streem up-on his brest;  
And in the floor, with nose and mouth to-broke,  
They walwe as doon two pigges in a poke.  
And up they goon, and doun agayn anon,  
Til that the miller sporned at a stoon,  
And doun he fil bakward up-on his wyf,  
That wiste no-thing of this nyce stryf,  
For she was falle aslepe a lyte wight  
With Iohn the clerk, that waked hadde al night.  
And with the fal, out of hir sleep she breyde--  
'Help, holy croys of Bromeholm' she seyde,  
*In manus tuas!* lord, to thee I calle!  
Awak, Symond! the feend is on us falle,  
Myn herte is broken, help, I nam but deed;  
There lyth oon up my wombe and up myn heed;  
Help, Simkin, for the false clerkes fighte.'

4277. in] Hn. on. 4278. Hl. walweden as pigges. 4280. Hn. on; Cm. ayen; rest at. 4283. E. lite; Cm. lyte; rest litel. 4286. Cm. Pt. Ln. Bromeholm; rest Bromholm. 4290. Cp. Ln. vp (*twice*). E. Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. vp on (*for 1st* up). E. Cm. Pt. Hl. on (Hn. vp); *for 2nd* vp.

This Iohn sterte up as faste as ever he myghte,  
And grasperth by the walles to and fro,  
To finde a staf; and she sterte up also,  
And knew the estres bet than dide this Iohn,

And by the wal a staf she fond, anon,  
And saugh a litel shimering of a light,  
For at an hole in shoon the mone bright;  
And by that light she saugh hem bothe two,  
But sikerly she niste who was who,  
But as she saugh a whyt thing in hir ye.  
And whan she gan the whyte thing espye,  
She wende the clerk hadde wered a volupeer.  
And with the staf she drough ay neer and neer,  
And wende han hit this Aleyn at the fulle,  
And smoot the miller on the pylled skulle,  
That doun he gooth and cryde, 'harrow! I dye!'  
Thise clerkes bete him weel and lete him lye;  
And greythen hem, and toke hir hors anon,  
And eek hir mele, and on hir wey they gon.  
And at the mille yet they toke hir cake  
Of half a busshel flour, ful wel y-bake.

4292. E. Cm. stirte. E. soone (*for faste*). 4296. E. Hn. foond; Hl. took. 4301. Hl. ye; Hn. Iye; *rest eye*. 4307. E. Cm. Hl. And; *rest That*. 4309. Hl. greyth; Cm. hastede.

Thus is the proude miller wel y-bete,  
And hath y-lost the grinding of the whete,  
And payed for the soper every-deel  
Of Aleyn and of Iohn, that bette him weel.  
His wyf is swyved, and his doghter als;  
Lo, swich it is a miller to be fals!  
And therfore this proverbe is seyd ful sooth,  
'Him nat wene wel that yvel dooth;  
A gylour shal him-self bigyled be.'  
And God, that sitteth heighe in magestee,  
Save al this companye grete and smale!  
Thus have I quit the miller in my tale.

#### Here is ended the Reves tale.

4320. E. Hn. yuele; Cm. euele. 4322. E. Trinitie; *rest magestee* (*mageste*). COLOPHON. Hn. Hl. Here endeth the Reves tale.

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## THE COOK'S PROLOGUE.

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#### The prologue of the Cokes Tale.

The Cook of London, whyl the Reve spak,  
For loye, him thoughte, he clawed him on the bak,  
'Ha! ha!' quod he, 'for Cristes passioune,  
This miller hadde a sharp conclusioun  
Upon his argument of herbergage!  
Wel seyde Salomon in his langage,  
"Ne bringe nat every man in-to thyn hous;"  
For herberwing by nighte is perilous.  
Wel oghte a man avysed for to be  
Whom that he broghte in-to his privetee.  
I pray to god, so yeve me sorwe and care,  
If ever, sith I highte Hogge of Ware,  
Herde I a miller bettre y-set a-werk.  
He hadde a lape of malice in the derk.  
But god forbede that we stinten here;  
And therfore, if ye vouche-sauf to here  
A tale of me, that am a povre man,

I wol yow telle as wel as ever I can  
A litel Iape that fil in our citee.'

4325. E. whil that the. 4332. Hl. herburgage. 4336. Hn. sith; E. sitthe; Hl. siththe; Cp. Pt. Ln. sithen. 4339. Hn. Hl. stynten; E. stynte. 4339, 4340. *Last two words glossed hic and audire in E. Hn.*

Our host answerde, and seide, 'I graunte it thee;  
Now telle on, Roger, loke that it be good;  
For many a pastee hastow laten blood,  
And many a Iakke of Dover hastow sold  
That hath been twyes hoot and twyes cold.  
Of many a pilgrim hastow Cristes curs,  
For of thy persly yet they fare the wors,  
That they han eten with thy stubbel-goos;  
For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos.  
Now telle on, gentil Roger, by thy name.  
But yet I pray thee, be nat wrooth for game,  
A man may seye ful sooth in game and pley.'

4347. E. Hn. Cm. Ln. Douere. E. Hn. soold. 4348. E. Hn. coold. 4350. Hl. persly; Hn. persle; E. percely. 4355. Hl. omits.

'Thou seist ful sooth,' quod Roger, 'by my fey,  
But "sooth pley, quaad pley," as the Fleming seith;  
And ther-fore, Herry Bailly, by thy feith,  
Be thou nat wrooth, er we departen heer,  
Though that my tale be of an hostileer.  
But nathelees I wol nat telle it yit,  
But er we parte, y-wis, thou shalt be quit.'  
And ther-with-al he lough and made chere,  
And seyde his tale, as ye shul after here.

### Thus endeth the Prologue of the Cokes tale.

4357. E. Cm. quaad; Cp. Hl. quad; *rest quade*. 4359. E. na (*for nat*). COLOPHON. *In Pt.*; Ln. Explicit prologus.

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## THE COKES TALE.

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### Heer bigynneth the Cokes tale.

A prentis whylom dwelled in our citee,  
And of a craft of vitaillers was he;  
Gaillard he was as goldfinch in the shawe,  
Broun as a berie, a propre short felawe,  
With lokkes blake, y-kempt ful fetisly.  
Dauncen he coude so wel and Iolily,  
That he was cleped Perkin Revelour.  
He was as ful of love and paramour  
As is the hyve ful of hony swete;  
Wel was the wenche with him mighte mete.  
At every brydale wolde he singe and hoppe,  
He loved bet the taverne than the shoppe.

4366. E. vitaillers. 4369. E. ykempd; Hn. ykembd; *rest ykempt*.

For whan ther any ryding was in Chepe,  
Out of the shoppe thider wolde he lepe.  
Til that he hadde al the sighte y-seyn,  
And daunced wel, he wolde nat come ageyn.  
And gadered him a meinee of his sort  
To hoppe and singe, and maken swich dispot.

And ther they setten Steven for to mete  
To pleyen at the dys in swich a strete.  
For in the toune nas ther no prentys,  
That fairer coude caste a paire of dys  
Than Perkin coude, and ther-to he was free  
Of his dispense, in place of privetee.  
That fond his maister wel in his chaffare;  
For often tyme he fond his box ful bare.  
For sikerly a prentis revelour,  
That haunteth dys, riot, or paramour,  
His maister shal it in his shoppe abyne,  
Al have he no part of the minstralcye;  
For thefte and riot, they ben convertible,  
Al conne he pleye on giterne or ribble.  
Revel and trouthe, as in a low degree,  
They been ful wrothe al day, as men may see.

4380. E. ayeyn. 4383. Pt. Ln. steuen; *rest* steuene. 4385. Pt. Ln. toune; *rest* toun. 4396. E. Ln. ribble; *rest* rubible. 4397. E. lowe.

This Ioly prentis with his maister bood,  
Til he were ny out of his prentishood,  
Al were he snibbed bothe erly and late,  
And somtyme lad with revel to Newgate;  
But atte laste his maister him bithoghte,  
Up-on a day, whan he his paper soghte,  
Of a proverbe that seith this same word,  
'Wel bet is rotent appel out of hord  
Than that it rotie al the remenaunt.'  
So fareth it by a riotous seruaunt;  
It is wel lasse harm to lete him pace,  
Than he shende alle the servants in the place.  
Therfore his maister yaf him acquittance,  
And bad him go with sorwe and with meschance;  
And thus this Ioly prentis hadde his leve.  
Now lat him riote al the night or leve.

4402. E. Newegate. 4404. E. Hn. Hl. papir. 4406. E. Hn. Cp. Hl. Appul. 4410. E. seruantz.

And for ther is no theef with-oute a louke,  
That helpeth him to wasten and to souke  
Of that he brybe can or borwe may,  
Anon he sente his bed and his array  
Un-to a compeer of his owne sort,  
That lovede dys and revel and disport,  
And hadde a wyf that heeld for countenance  
A shoppe, and swyved for hir sustenance.

#### Of this Cokes tale maked Chaucer na more.

[*For The Tale of Gamelin, see the Appendix.*]

4415-22. Hl.