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A LITERARY MIDDLE ENGLISH READER

EDITED BY

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TO MY WIFE
ELIZABETH MERRILL COOK
WHOSE INSPIRATION AND HELP
HAVE MADE THIS BOOK POSSIBLE

PREFACE

Only two questions need to be satisfactorily answered in order to insure for Middle English literature a much larger place in college courses than it has hitherto occupied. These two questions are Is the literature of this period worth reading? and, Can it be read without a learned apparatus so formidable as to constitute a serious deterrent? The first question I have endeavored to answer in the Introduction, and to the second my affirmative reply is indicated in the whole method I have followed

This book, then, has been framed, not in the interest of grammar, or of dialectical study, or of lexicography, but of literary enjoyment and profit. It has been made somewhat copious, that those who desire only easier selections may be able to avoid the harder, that it may be possible to examine certain species and ignore others, and yet that the more comprehensive student shall have before him a fairly full conspectus of the literature as a whole. If I have not failed in my attempt, the texts included ought not to be much harder to read than if they were Elizabethan, and those who read them will be acquainting themselves with an earlier and no less important age.

Authorities vary with respect to the limits of the Middle English period, the variation as to the beginning being between 1100 and 1200, and as to the end between 1400 and 1500. Some scholars such as Sweet, call the language between 1100 and 1200 *Transition Old English*, and that between 1400 and 1500 *Transition Middle English*. In this book Middle English is assumed to cover 1100-1500. In two instances, works only to be found in manuscripts of later date than 1500 are assigned, on what seem to the editor sufficient grounds, to the fifteenth century.

The classification here observed is according to literary species, and not according to dialect or chronology. The species of literature are, however, not so clearly delimited in Middle English as in

some other tongues, notably in Greek, so that the classification of certain pieces must be regarded as only approximative.

No separate vocabulary has been provided, and no separate body of notes. On each page the reader will find, it is hoped, what is essential for a sufficient understanding of that page; if this has entailed a certain amount of repetition, or what to some minds may seem excess, in the defining of words, it must be borne in mind that he who is able to read while running is not obliged to pause. The general introduction has been made brief. The prefatory notes to the various selections are longer or shorter, according to circumstances. The list of helpful books will enable the student to extend his inquiries in a variety of directions.

The editor has used his own judgment with respect to punctuation and capitalization, has normalized *ı* and *ʝ*, *u* and *v*, capitalized the first personal pronoun, and substituted 'Jesu' for the ordinary 'Jhesu' — which is due to a misapprehension. In the constitution of certain texts he has emended somewhat freely, but has always endeavored to supply the means of restoring the manuscript readings or the text of an earlier editor; where there is reason to suppose that the latter faithfully represents the manuscript, it has been referred to in the footnotes as 'MS.'

An effort has been made to give due credit in each specific case of indebtedness, if there has been any failure in this respect, it is involuntary.

If this book succeeds in making the Middle Ages seem more attractive, more clearly related to modern times, or more profoundly suggestive, the editor will be satisfied. To him Middle English literature helps to make England, not less real, but more visionary, in the sense of Kipling's lines:

She is not any common Earth,
Water or wood or air,
But Merlin's Isle of Gramarye,
Where you and I will fare.

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INTRODUCTION

I. THE LITERATURE

Mediaeval European literature — at least if we except technical works and prose chronicles or histories — is characterized, in contrast with the ancient classics, by a certain expansiveness, resulting at times in an approach to garrulity. The author is not bent upon treating the matter in hand with the utmost economy, in order with the fewest possible strokes to achieve the finest proportions, the utmost simplicity, the most telling effect. The mediæval writer is more apt to be loose and desultory. At times he does not hesitate to be long-winded in description, discursive in the development of episodic reflection, tedious in the analysis of sentiment, or didactic in the enforcement of a moral. In all too few instances has he a sure sense of art — avoiding superfluity and digressions, and making straight for his goal. He employs repetition — for instance, in the refrain, or in the recurrent lines of the roundel, and, for the sake of rhyme, or to fill out a line, he will introduce conventional, almost meaningless, tags.

Vernacular writing in the Middle Ages was primarily addressed to the laity — to people who had not received the training of the schools, and who therefore were unaccustomed to strict sequences of thought, or to the measure and sobriety of perfect art. This may be clearly seen by the way in which translations are expanded — always excepting prose versions of the Bible and of some theological treatises. Chaucer,¹ in translating Boethius, uses three times as many words as the Latin verse, and more than twice as many as the Latin prose. The 38 words of Psalm 51. 1-3² in the Vulgate are converted by a late Middle English paraphrast into 194. Such translations, being less compact than the originals, made fewer demands

¹ See pp. 394-5.

² See pp. 402 ff.

upon the reader; he found them easier to follow, though his wit may have gone wandering before he reached the end.

Such absence of restraint may, according to circumstances, affect readers of to-day variously. Some things mediæval we may all find tedious, some things puerile; some things, on the other hand, simple, direct, and sweet—childlike, rather than childish. But take the pseudo-Mandeville,¹ for instance; is it easy to dismiss him with an epithet to which we should all assent? Is his book incredibly stupid—as much of it is certainly incredible—or is it always amusing? As easy to answer this, perhaps, as another question—is the compiler naively credulous, or is he an astute romancer? Perhaps neither the one nor the other, or rather both. Searching criticism reveals that some of his information rests on good authorities, and is true; other things are truth magnified and embellished by a purple mist; and still others are ancient poetry or fiction regarded as contemporary fact. His book is rambling, incoherent, uninformative, if you will; but to some minds it is charming. *Piers Plowman* leads us nowhither; but on the road we drop in at a tavern, and the low life of England under the senile Edward or the adolescent Richard is as plain before us as that of Holland in a picture by Teniers or Jan Steen, so that we look and listen in spite of ourselves.

All this is Gothic, both in the sense that we recognize, and in that which appealed to our ancestors of the eighteenth century. It lacks restraint; it is flamboyant, it sins by excess, it seems to emphasize the detail, and neglect the *ensemble*; its gargoyles grin, no less than its saints aspire; it comprehends legend, poetry, and record of fact—but who shall say where legend ends and fact begins? On the other hand, it is rich, and varied, and alive; not all the forms are noble or beautiful, but most are interesting; and there is often a science of structure when least suspected, though sometimes instinctive, sometimes empirical, and sometimes insufficient, like that which left the tower of Beauvais a heap of ruined stones.

And as Gothic borrowed something from Byzantine art, so there are Oriental elements in mediæval literature—not only such as are derived from the Bible and the primitive liturgies, but those that

¹ See pp. 248 ff.

came in with pilgrim, merchant, and Crusader, visible more especially in tale and romance.

The Gothic cathedrals of the consummated Middle Ages succeeded, and in some sense grew out of, the earlier Romanesque, with its obvious, if somewhat oppressive, structure and solidity. The Romanesque church embodies the classic principles illustrated by the Roman arch and the Roman basilica, just as Augustine and Bede continue the Roman literary tradition. The latter have more moderation, more severity, than a Bonaventura or a Richard Rolle. The cathedral is more florid, more airy, more gorgeous with flaming color than the Romanesque church; but it is more crumbling, and tends more swiftly to decadence and overthrow. The simpler Gothic runs apace into the Flamboyant, and lo, before one can realize it, it has slid into the earlier Renaissance. So it is with literature; so it is with society. Beauty flowers for a moment out of strength; but pass by a few days later, and the blossom is faded, the glory departed.

Thus far, however, we have been disregarding certain works which appear even in the high mediæval period, but which differ notably from those that we have been attempting to characterize. They are works of measure and sobriety, like those of classic antiquity, rigorously planned; in them every line is structural, and you must read every line in order to be impressed by the magnitude, the logic, or the splendor of the whole. Of these the supreme type is the *Divine Comedy*. True, the *Divine Comedy* has been compared to a cathedral, not without reason, but the Gothic cathedral was never finished; many accretions to its original design might have fallen out otherwise; it did not represent a basic style, out of which others might in due course proceed; it was not, in the same sense as the Romanesque, grounded, massive, eternal. In all these respects Dante's poem might be compared to the earlier form. No one has been able to suggest an essential improvement in it; in itself, and through its outgrowths, it dominates all later European poetry of the chivalrous or 'romantic' temper. The lineaments of Beatrice swim before every ardent Christian lover, and Stephen Phillips can still write of Paolo and Francesca.

Why has Dante this power and this permanence? Partly because he was Dante—that is, a genius; but also because, by his own avowal, he placed himself under the tutelage of Virgil, and hence of Homer.

In a measure, the same thing is true of Boccaccio. His long winded romances have not endured, but the *Decameron*, written with classic restraint and finish, has not only survived, but is still a model of prose. If we meet with comparatively little of this sort in Middle English, it is because the Renaissance began to exert its power much earlier in Italy than in England, or even in France.

But if we may expect few well-rounded wholes in Middle English literature, we must recognize that the poetic faculty, released from the strenuous and incessant task of watching over the complete organism at every step, is the more free to abandon itself at any moment to the full tide of occasional sentiment—comic, pathetic, tender, or wistful. A piece otherwise marred by imperfections may thus have lovely or poignant bits, so irresistible as to suffuse a glow over the composition as a whole, and blind our eyes to the faults which readily disclose themselves to reflection. And since, speaking broadly, the demands that we may make upon Middle English literature are restricted by considerations of form, it is with peculiar satisfaction that we now and then come upon a complete piece, as in Chaucer at his best, that endures the most searching trials, and yields unalloyed pleasure at every reperusal. But such encounters in Chaucer cause a deeper regret that so large a part of his writing is fragmentary, that his assignment of the several Canterbury tales to the personages of the pilgrimage is not always convincing, and that his greatest work, when viewed in the light of his own avowed plan, remains a torso.

To begin, and never to end, or to end only by stopping when fatigue or caprice dictates; to project what can never be compassed, or what is amorphous in its very conception; to reveal beauty only in glimpses, anon to be swallowed in convention or dulness—this it is to belong to the typical Middle Age, oppressed and glorified by its sense of the infinite, and seeing visions of starry brightness projected against a background of violence and fraud, of triumphant injustice

and unbearable oppression. The Crusades, the Hundred Years' War, typify in the world of action some of the literary and architectural phenomena that we have been attempting to describe — doomed to be abortive from their very nature, uninspired in many, perhaps most, of their particulars, but illumined by flashes of heroism and of generous sentiment, too fine to be steadily realized in the even course of a workaday world. In this respect the classic ideal, both of life and art, is more compassable, because more modest. Horace accomplishes what he undertakes more evenly, more uniformly, than Chaucer — yet shall I hesitate to say that some of us prefer Chaucer?

Whatever we may deny to our Middle English authors, in certain respects they are unrivaled. The wistfulness of regret for vanished glories, the sympathy with an outcast and bereaved wife, the mirthful interest in the mimic manhood of the barnyard, the joyous participation in the young life of the Maytime, the swift change by which the clowns and thieves of a Yorkshire moorside are transported to the Judean plains and the presence of the Divine Child in his sweet and touching innocence — these things have a perennial savor, a persistent appeal, even as the sorrows of Lear, the maiden grace of Miranda, the humors of Falstaff, or the piteous pleadings of Desdemona.

II. THE LANGUAGE

LETTERS

The letters are the same as in modern English (but see below), with the addition of **ȝ** (**ȝ**), **þ** (**þ**), and **ȥ** (**ȥ**). **ȝ** (from an old manuscript-form of *g*) is used for modern English *gh* (often before *t*) and for *y* (at the beginning or end of a syllable). **þ** (*thorn*) and **ȥ** (*eth*, as in *weather*) represent *th*, and are used interchangeably with **th** and each other.

J is represented in the manuscripts by **i**, and *v* by **u**; so that, strictly speaking, **j** and **v** should be subtracted from the total number of letters. **Y** is very frequently used for **i**, and the two are virtually interchangeable as vowels.

PRONUNCIATION

There are two possible ways of pronouncing Middle English — one for quick understanding, the other for beauty. According to the first, one reads the text like so much modern English, at the same time converting the words, wherever possible, into their modern English forms. This answers sufficiently well in the case of prose, or of poetry written without much regard to metrical principles, but it should always be regarded as a makeshift, and, in the strict sense, as unscholarly. Perhaps the aptest apology for it would be found in our reading Shakespeare as modern English, in spite of the fact that to Shakespeare himself our modern pronunciation would, to a large degree, have seemed unintelligible or barbarous.

The second mode of pronunciation, essential to the just rendering of artistic verse, takes account of two things — strict metre, and the quite different values of certain letters, especially the vowels, from those of modern English. By attending to these, much Middle English poetry may be made beautiful to the ear which otherwise

would sound commonplace or uncouth; and this result is quite worth the trouble involved.

The recognition of metrical technique in Middle English depends chiefly upon the pronunciation of final *-e* (besides *-es*, etc., in unstressed positions). As a rule, final *-e* is always to be regarded as forming a separate syllable; but before vowels, the commonest words beginning with *h*, and occasionally elsewhere, it is silent. The simplest rule is this: In verse, always pronounce final *-e* (*-es*, etc.) where it will conduce to the melody of the line, but suppress it in the comparatively rare instances where it does not. Such *-e*'s are always to be pronounced like the *-a* in *era* or *vista*. The *-e* of *-ed*, *-el*, *-en*, *-er* is also to be suppressed when metre so requires.

Besides the final unstressed *-e*, there is also a *stressed -e*—often represented by *-y* in modern English, thus, *cite* (i.e. *cité*), *city*.

VOWELS

Short vowels are pronounced about as in modern English, but *a* nearly as *ah* (*never* like *a* in *hat*); *o* always rounded (produced with rounded lips; about like *aw*, but shorter), and *never* pronounced like *a* in modern *ah*; *u* as in *pull*, not as in *dull*. From the normal *o* is to be distinguished an *o* which is equivalent to *u*, and originally was *u*; it can be known by its always corresponding to the modern English *o* or *u* pronounced as *u* in *sun*: e.g. Middle English *sonne*, *sonne*, *love*, etc. (OE. *sunne*, *sunu*, *lufu*, etc.), modern English *sun*, *son*, *love*, etc.

Long vowels are never pronounced as in modern English, but as in the European pronunciation of Latin, or approximately as in Italian, French, or German, thus:

<i>a</i> as in <i>father</i>	<i>o</i> close as in <i>blow</i>
<i>e</i> (<i>ee</i>) close as in <i>they</i>	<i>o</i> open as in <i>broad</i>
<i>e</i> (<i>ee</i>) open as in <i>there</i>	<i>u</i> as in <i>rule</i>
<i>i</i> as in <i>pike</i>	

Close and open *e* can only be discriminated by the student of Old English, close *o* is *oo* in modern English, open *o* being *o*, *oa*, etc. The double vowels, *ee* and *oo*, merely indicate long *e* and *o*, and are *never* to be pronounced as in modern English.

DIPHTHONGS

The diphthongs **ei** and **ui** are to be pronounced like the first element followed by the second, and with the first element stressed. The remaining diphthongs are thus pronounced :

ai as in *aisle*

au (aw) as in *house* (Ger. *Haus*)

eu (ew) as in *few*

iu (iw) as in *few*

oi as in *boil*

ou (ow) as in *boor*, when *now* pronounced as in *out*, *cow*

ou (ow) as $\delta + u$ (nearly as δ), in all cases but the preceding

CONSONANTS

c pronounced as *k* or *s*, under the same circumstances as in modern English; **ci** not = *sh*, but = *si* (modern Eng. *see*)

ch as in modern English, except before *t*, when it was pronounced like the *ch* in Ger. *ich* after *e*, *i*, or *y*, and like *ch* in Ger. *auch* after the other vowels

g as in *gold*, except occasionally as in *gem*; **ght** like **cht** (see above)

g initial = *y*; **gt** like **cht**

h final sometimes like the **ch** of **cht**: **sih**, **purh**

ht like **cht**

kn never like *n*, but = *k* + *n*

s like *s* between vowels, as in modern English

sch like *sh*

si not = *sh*, but = modern Eng. *see*

p, **θ** like *th* (both sounds) in modern English

tu not = *chu*: **na-tu-re**

Double consonants before a vowel are always pronounced twice: **renne** =

ren + **ne**; **thridde** = **thrid** + **de**

INFLECTION

NOUNS

The genitive singular and the plural regularly end in **-(e)s** (occasionally **-is, -us** ; **-(e)z**) ; the dative in **-e**, or without ending. To such irregular plurals (identical with the singular) as occur in the Modern English *sheep, swine*, etc., add **hore**. Certain original feminines like **lady, halle, sonne**, sometimes retain the nominative form in the genitive singular ; to these add the nouns of relationship, **fader, brother, moder**, etc., which, however, sometimes have **-s**. A few nouns of the Old English weak declension end in **-n** in the plural, like **been, bees** ; **yen, eyes** (modern poetic *eyne*) ; **schoon, shoes** (modern poetic *shoon*), and are occasionally followed by others which more normally would end in **-s** (see, for example, *Layamon*).

ADJECTIVES

The plural and the dative singular of adjectives ending in a consonant are often formed by the addition of **-e**. When the adjective is preceded by the definite article, a demonstrative, or a possessive, **-e** is sometimes appended. **the grete honour ; his white baner**.

PRONOUNS

The only forms which are not fairly self-explanatory are those of the feminine personal pronoun. The typical paradigm follows :

SING.	N.	h(e)o ; s(c)ho, s(c)he
	G.	} hir(e), hur(e), her(e)
	D.	
	A.	hi(e), hir(e), hur(e), her(e)
PLUR.	N.	h(i)e ; thei, thai
	G.	her(e), h(e)or(e) ; their(e)
	D.	} he(o)m, hi(o)m ; the(i)m, tha(i)m
	A.	

The plurals of the personal pronouns of all genders are identical with those of the feminine. The genitive and dative singular of **hit, it**, are the same as those of the masculine : **his, him**.

Of the second person, **ye** is nominative, **you**, **yow**, dative and accusative.

Tho and **thos(e)** are independent demonstratives, each meaning *those*.

VERBS

The normal endings of the verb (disregarding the subjunctive) are :

IND. PRES. SING.	1. -e
	2. -est
	3. -eth
PLUR.	-e(n)

WEAK VERBS		STRONG VERBS
IND. PRET. SING.	1. 3. -(e)de, -te	—
	2. -(e)dest, -test	-e, —
PLUR.	-(e)de(n), -te(n)	-e(n)
IMPER. SING.	-e, —	
PLUR.	-e, -eth, —	
INFIN.	-e(n), —; occasionally, -in, -yn	
PRES. PART	-ing(e); -inde (-ende, -and)	
PAST PART.	-(e)d, -t (of weak verbs); -e(n), -n (of strong verbs)	

The ind. pres 3 sing of a stem ending in **-t** or **-d** is often condensed to **-t**: thus, **sit** = **sitth** (for modern *sitteth*)

The following are the more important irregular verbs

Conjugation of **be(n)**, **beo(n)**, *be*.

INDICATIVE		SUBJUNCTIVE
PRES SING	1. be(o); am, æm; neg nam	1. 2. 3. b(e)o, be, b
	2. be(e)st; Northern es, is, bese; art, ert; with pers pron. artu, artow; neg nart	
	3. beth, beo(th); is, ys; Northern bes(e), es; neg nis, nys	
PLUR.	beo(th), be(e)th, be(o)n, be(ne); Northern es, is; synd(en); ar(e)n, ern, are, ere	be(n)

PRET. SING. 1. 3.	was, watz; neg. nas		wer(e), war(e)
	2. were		were
PLUR.	were(n), ware(n)		were(n)
IMPER. SING.	be(o)	INFIN.	be(n), bene, beon
PLUR.	be(o)th		
PRES. PART	beende, being(e)	PAST PART.	(i)be(o)n, (i)be(o), bene

Conjugation of **habben, have(n), have.**

	INDICATIVE	SUBJUNCTIVE
PRES. SING.	1. (h)abbe, have 2. hafest, ha(ve)st; Northern havis, has(e), hatz; with pers. pron. hastow 3. habbeth, haveth, hath; Northern havis, has	1. 2. 3. (h)abbe, have
PLUR.	habbeth, haveth, have, han; Northern havis, has(e)	have(n)
PRET. SING. 1. 3.	hafede, haved(e), hædde, had(d)e	1. 2. 3. [Like Ind. 1 and 3]
	2. hevedest, haddist; Northern hade	
PLUR	hæfden, hadde(n), haveden	[Like Ind.]
IMPER. SING	ha(f)e, have	INFIN. habben, haven, han
PLUR	habbeth, haveth	
PRES. PART.	hæbbende, hafand, having(e)	PAST PART. (i)haved, (i)hafd, (i)had

Conjugation of **go(n), ga(n), go.**

IND. PRES. SING. 1. go, ga; 2. gost, gast, gest; 3. goth, gath; Northern gæth, gæs; PLUR. goth, gath, go(n), ga(n). PRET. eode, geode, yede, yode, wente. PAST PART. (i)gan, (i)go(n), went.

Conjugation of **cunne(n), conne(n), know, be able.**

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. can(n), con(n); 2. canst, const; PLUR. cunne(n), conne(n), cunneth. PRET. c(o)uthe, cowthe, coude. PAST PART. c(o)uth.

Conjugation of —, *may, must*.

PRES. SING. 1. 3. **mot**; 2. **most(e)**; PLUR. **mote(n)**. PRET. SING.
1. 3 **most(e)**; 2. **mostes(t)**; PLUR. **moste(n)**.

(By the early fifteenth century, at latest, the preterit forms were also used as present.)

Conjugation of **mugen, mowe(n)**, *be able, be permitted*.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. **mai(x)**, **mey**, **may(e)**; 2. **miht**, **maist**;
PLUR. **mage(n)**, **mawen**, **muge**, **muwe(n)**, **mow**, **mowe(n)**. PRET.
SING. 1. 3. **mihte**, **mo(u)ht(e)**, **mygt**; 2. **mihtes(t)**; PLUR.
mihte(n).

Conjugation of —, *shall*.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. **s(h)al(l)**, **schal(l)**; 2. **s(c)halt**; Northern
sall; with personal pronoun **shaltow**; PLUR. **s(c)hul(l)(en)**,
sholen. PRET. **s(c)holde**, **s(c)hulde**; PLUR. **s(c)holden**, **s(c)hulden**.

Conjugation of **willen, will**.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. **wol(e)**, **wulle**, **wil(l)(e)**; 2. **wolt**, **wilt**,
wil(l); with personal pronoun **woltow**, **wiltu**; PLUR. **wol(le)n**,
wol(e), **wile(n)**. PRET. **wolde**; PLUR. **wolde(n)**. PAST PART.
wold.

Conjugation of **wite(n)**, *know*.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3 **wo(o)t**; neg. **not**; 2. **wo(o)st**; with per-
sonal pronoun **wostow**; PLUR. **witen**. PRET. **wiste**; PLUR.
wisten. PAST PART **wist**.

PREPOSITIONS

Of is sometimes contracted to **o**, as in modern Eng. *o'clock*, and **on**
to **a**, as in *aboard* = *on board*.

The Northern **til** is equivalent to *to*.

Th is assimilated to **t** in **atte** = *at the*.

DIALECTS

The dialects are Northern, Midland, and Southern, the first of these including also the language of the Scottish Lowlands. The most important dialect with reference to modern English is the East Midland, in whose district lay the two universities, and eventually London. Examples of the various dialects in this book are: Northern: Barbour, *The Bruce* (pp. 238 ff.); Southern: Layamon, *Brut* (pp. 219 ff.); Midland: *The Bestiary* (pp. 316 ff.).

Initial **v** for *f*, and **z** for *s*, are marks of the Southern dialect.

One of the commoner marks of the Northern dialect is **a** for *o* in words like **bald**, *bold*; **gast**, *ghost*; **wa**, *woe*. Others are: initial **s** for *sh*; **k** for *ch* (**kirk**, *church*). The Northern dialect has also a greater tendency to rid itself of inflectional endings and of final unstressed **-e**, has the present participle in **-and(e)** (Midland and Southern **-inde**, **-ende**, **-inge**), and to some extent has a peculiar vocabulary.

For fuller information about the dialects, see Emerson, *Middle English Reader*, 2d ed., New York, 1915, and Skeat, *English Dialects*, Cambridge (Eng.), 1911.

III. SOME USEFUL BOOKS FOR THE STUDY OF MIDDLE ENGLISH

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- KER, *English Literature Medieval*. London and New York, 1912.
- MORLLA, *English Writers*, Vols 3-5 2d ed. London and New York, 1889-1890
- SCHOFIELD, *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*. New York, 1906
- TEN BRINK, *Early English Literature (to Wyclif)*. New York, 1889.
- , *History of English Literature (Wyclif, Chaucer, Earliest Drama, Renaissance)*. New York, 1893.
- , *History of English Literature (from the Fourteenth Century to the Death of Surrey)*. New York, 1896
- See also Wells, under Bibliographies

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- RICKERT, *Early English Romances in Verse* 2 vols. London, 1908.
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- WLSTON, *Romance, Vision, and Satire*. Boston, 1912.
- , *The Chief Middle English Poets Selected Poems*. Boston, 1914

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- HAMMOND, *Chaucer a Bibliographical Manual*. New York, 1908.
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BOOKS FOR THE STUDY OF MIDDLE ENGLISH xxvii

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MORSBACH, *Mittelenglische Grammatik*, Vol 1. Halle, 1896.

See also Ten Brink, under Chaucer.

PROSODY

KALUZA, *Short History of English Versification*. London and New York, 1911

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See also Ten Brink, under Chaucer

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MURRAY, *New English Dictionary: A—Unforeseeable, V—Wash, X—end*. Oxford, 1888-1921.

KINDRED LITERATURES

EDWARDES, *Summary of the Literatures of Modern Europe*. London, 1907.

GASPARY-OELSNER, *History of Early Italian Literature to the Death of Dante*. London, 1901.

GRÖBER, *Grundriss der Romanischen Philologie*. Strassburg, 1888-1902.
 JEANROY, *Les Origines de la Poésie Lyrique en France au Moyen Age*.
 2d ed. Paris, 1904.

PARIS, *Littérature Française au Moyen Age*. 4th ed. Paris, 1909.

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GENERAL

ADAMS, *Mont St. Michel and Chartres*. Boston, 1913.

MÂLE, *L'Art Religieux du XIII^e Siècle en France*. 2d ed. Paris, 1902.

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 Haven, 1916 First Supplement. New Haven, 1919.

This virtually supersedes all the following. In addition to the bibliography, this work gives for each item its date, dialect, manuscripts, sources, etc., with abstracts of all the longer pieces.

BILLINGS, *Guide to the Middle English Metrical Romances dealing with English and Germanic Legends, and with the Cycles of Charlemagne and Arthur*. New York, 1901. (*Yale Studies in English*, No. 9.)

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KORTING, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Englischen Literatur*. 5th ed. Munster i W., 1910.

PAUL, *Grundriss der Germanischen Philologie*, 2¹. 609-718 (index, 2². 345-484) Strassburg, 1893.

WARD, *Catalogue of Romances* 3 vols. London, 1883-1910.

See also Edwardes, under Kindred Literatures; Hammond, under Chaucer; and Stoddard, under Miracle Plays.

MIDDLE ENGLISH READER

ROMANCES

MALORY, MORTE DARTHUR

Sir Thomas Malory, knight, completed his romance, according to his own statement, between March 4, 1469 and March 3, 1470 (the ninth year of Edward IV). His home was at Newbold Revel, near Coventry, and five and a half miles northwest of Rugby, where he succeeded his father in 1433 or 1434. He was member of Parliament for Warwickshire in 1445, and died March 14, 1470 (according to Kittredge, *Harvard Studies* 5 88 ff.). His book is mostly derived from a variety of French sources, though he occasionally adapts English poems. Whether the ultimate French originals had been digested into a single work which served as Malory's source has not been determined. The *Morte Darthur* was published by Caxton in 1485, and it is from Sommer's literal reprint that our text is derived.

For the characterization of this romance we may borrow a few sentences from Andrew Lang (*Le Morte Darthur*, ed Sommer, pp xiv-xxi). 'There is no more strange fortune in literature than that which blended wild Celtic myths, and a monastic theory of the saintly life, with all of chivalrous adventure, with all of courtesy and gentleness that the Middle Ages could conceive, and handed it on to be the delight of the changing ages. . . Malory has penned the great and chief romance of his own age and of ours, the story that must endure and must move the *lacryma rerum* till man's nature is altered again. The Celtic legends, passed through the French mind, and rendered in Malory's English, have, what Homer lacks, the charm of mystery and distance, the background of the unknown. . . Malory's book is a very complete and composite picture of a strangely inherited ideal, it is, indeed, "a jumble," but, of all jumbles, the most poetic and the most pathetic. . . Malory is skilled "to teach men unto strange adventures," to instruct in all courage, chastity, endurance, and true love, nor can we estimate what his influence must have been in training the fathers of Elizabeth's Englishmen. The style of Malory is, of course, based on the fresh and simple manner of his French originals. For an English style of his age, it is particularly fluent. . . Perhaps it is just because he does follow a French copy, and so is familiar with words derived from the Latin, that Malory possesses his fluency and facility. . . The manner and matter of Malory make him the most generally known of all old authors, except, of course, the translators of the Bible.'

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Book 18, chaps 18–20 Based upon the French prose romance of *Lancelot* (first half of the thirteenth century), and the fourteenth-century *Morte Arthur* contained in Harleian MS 2252 of the British Museum (edited by Bruce for the E. E. T. S., see also Hemingway's edition, Boston, 1912); but chapter 20 is almost wholly due to Malory. For details concerning the relation of our passage to the French *Lancelot*, see Sommer 3 10, 222–8, 230, for the text of the Old original, see *Mort Artu*, ed Bruce, pp 74 ff. For the general subject of Lancelot, see Jessie L. Weston's *The Legend of Lancelot du Lac* (London, 1901).

Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott* and *Lancelot and Elaine* are founded on Malory.

And so upon a morne they took their horses, and Elayne le Blank with them, and whan they came to Astolat, there were they wel lodged, and had grete chere of Syre Bernard the old baron, and of Sir Tyrre his sone. And so upon the morne, whan Syr Launcelot
 5 shold¹ departe, fayre Elayne brougt her fader with her, and Sir Lavayne and Sir Tyrre, and thus she said 'My lord Syr Launcelot, now I see ye wylle departe, now, fayre knyghte and curteis knyghte, have mercy upon me, and suffer me not to dye for thy love.' 'What wold ye that I dyd?' said Syr Launcelot. 'I wold have you to my
 10 husbond,' said Elayne. 'Fair damoyssel, I thanke yow,' said Syr Launcelot, 'but truly,' said he, 'I cast² me never to be wedded man.' 'Thenne, fair knyght,' said she, 'wylle ye be my peramour?'³ 'Jesu defende me,' said Syr Launcelot, 'for thenne I rewarded⁴ your fader and your broder ful evylle for their grete goodenes.'
 15 'Allas,' said she, 'thenne must I dye for your love.' 'Ye shal not so,' said Syre Launcelot, 'for wete⁵ ye wel, fayr mayden, I myght have ben marved and⁶ I had wolde,⁷ but I never applyed me to be mayed yet. But by cause,⁸ fair damoyssel, that ye love me as ye saye ye doo, I wille, for your good wylle and kyndenes, shewe yow
 20 somme goodenes, and that is this that w[h]eresomever ye wille beset⁹ youre herte upon somme goode knyghte that wylle wedde yow, I shalle gyve yow togyders¹⁰ a thousand pound yerely, to yow

¹ was to, was about to

² intend (NFD 44 b)

³ paramour, illicit lover

⁴ should reward (subj)

⁵ wit, know

⁶ if

⁷ willed, wished

⁸ because

⁹ set, place

¹⁰ together

and to your heyres. Thus moche will I gyve yow, faire madame, for your kyndenes, and alweyes whyle I lyve to be your owne knyghte.' 'Of alle this,' saide the mayden, 'I wille none, for, but-yf¹ ye wille wedde me, or ellys be my peramour at the leest, wete yow wel, Sir Launcelot, my good dayes are done.' 'Fair damoyssel,' sayd Sir Launcelot, 'of these two thynges ye must pardonne me.' Thenne she shryked² shrilly,³ and felle doun in a swoone, and thenne wymmen bare her into her chamber, and there she made overmoche sorowe. And thenne Sir Launcelot wold departe; and there he asked Sir Lavayn what he wold doo. 'What shold I doo,' said Syre Lavayne, 'but folowe yow, but-yf ye dryve me from yow, or commaunde me to goo from yow?' . . .

Thenne Sir Launcelot took his leve, and soo they departed, and came unto Wynchestre. And whan Arthur wyste⁴ that Syr Launcelot was come, hole⁵ and sound, the kyng made grete joye of hym, and soo dyd Sir Gawyn, and all the knyghtes of the Round Table excepte Sir Agravayn and Sire Mordred. Also Quene Guenever was woode⁶ wrothe with Sir Launcelot, and wold by no meanes speke with hym, but enstraunged⁷ herself from hym, and Sir Launcelot made alle the meanes that he myght for to speke with the quene, but hit wolde not be.

Now speke we of the fayre mayden of Astolat, that made suche sorowe daye and nyght that she never slepte, etc, nor drank, and ever she made her complaynt unto Sir Launcelot. So when she had thus endured a ten dayes, that she febled so⁸ that she must nedes passe out of this world, thenne she shryved⁹ her clene, and receyved her Creatoure.¹⁰ And ever she complayned styll upon Sire Launcelot. Thenne her ghostly¹¹ fader bad her leve suche thoughtes. 'Thenne she sayd: 'Why shold I leve suche thoughtes? Am I not an erthely woman? And alle the whyle the brethe is in my body I may complayne me, for my byleve is I doo none offence though I love an erthely man, and I take God to my record I loved none but Sir Launcelot du Lake, nor never shall; and a clene mayden I am for

¹ unless² shrieked³ shrilly⁴ knew⁵ This is direct from OE *hāl*⁶ mad(ly)⁷ estranged⁸ grew so weak⁹ confessed and received absolution¹⁰ the sacrament¹¹ spiritual

hym and for alle other. And sythen¹ hit is the sufferaunce² of God that I shalle dye for the love of soo noble a knyghte, I byseche the hyghe Fader of heven to have mercy upon my sowle, and [that] myn innumerable paynes that I suffred may be allygeaunce³ of parte of
 5 my synnes. For swete Lord Jesu,' sayd the fayre mayden, 'I take the to record, on the⁴ I was never grete offenser ageynst thy lawes, but that I loved this noble knyght Sire Launcelot out of mesure, and of myself, good Lord, I myght not withstande the fervent love wherfor⁵ I have my dethe.' And thenne she called her fader Sire Bernard,
 10 and her broder Sir Tyrre, and hertely she praid her fader that her broder myght wryte a letter lyke as she did endyte hit; and so her fader graunted her. And whan the letter was wryten word by word lyke as she devysed, thenne she prayd her fader that she myght be watched untyl she were dede. 'And whyle my body is hote,⁶ lete this
 15 letter be putt in my ryght hand, and my hande bounde fast with the letter untyl that I be cold, and lete me be putte in a fayre bedde. with alle the rychest clothes that I have aboute me, and so lete my bedde and alle my rychest clothes be laide with me in a charyot unto the next place where 'Temse'⁷ is, and there lete me be putte within a
 20 barget,⁸ and but one man with me, suche as ye trust to stere me thyder, and that my barget be covered with blak samyte,⁹ over and over. 'Thus, fader, I byseche yow, lete hit be done.' Soo her fader graunted hit her feythfully, alle thyng shold be done lyke as she had devysed. Thenne her fader and her broder made grete dole,¹⁰ for,
 25 when this was done, anone¹¹ she dyed. And soo whan she was dede, the corps, and the bedde, alle was ledde the next way unto Temse, and there a man, and the corps, and alle, were put into Temse, and soo the man styred¹² the barget unto Westmynster, and there he rowed a grete whyle to and fro or¹³ ony aspyed hit.
 30 Soo by fortune Kynge Arthur and the Quene Guenever were spekynge togyders at a wyndowe; and soo as they loked into Temse, they aspyed this blak barget, and hadde merveylle what it mente. Thenne

¹ since (< sithens, sithence)

² permission

³ alleviation

⁴ toward thee

⁵ because of which

⁶ hot, warm

⁷ Thames

⁸ barge

⁹ samite, rich silk

¹⁰ lamentation

¹¹ immediately (in one, i e minute)

¹² steered

¹³ ere, before

the kynge called Sire Kay, and shewed hit hym. 'Sir,' said Sir Kay, 'wete you wel there is some newe tydynges.' 'Goo thyder,' sayd the kynge to Sir Kay, 'and take with yow Sire Brandyles and Agravayne, and brynge me redy word what is there.' Thenne these four knyghtes departed, and came to the barget, and wente in; and there they fond 5 the fayrest corps lyenge in a ryche bedde, and a poure man sitting in the bargets ende, and no word wold he speke. Soo these foure knyghtes retorned unto the kyng ageyne, and told hym what they fond 'That fayr corps wyll I see,' sayd the kynge. And soo thenne the kyng took the quene by the hand, and went thydder. Thenne the 10 kynge made the barget to be holden fast; and thenne the kyng and pe quene entred, with certayn knyghtes wyth them. And there he sawe the fayrest woman lye in a ryche bedde, coverd unto her myddel with many ryche clothes, and alle was of clothe of gold, and she lay as though she had smyled. Thenne the quene aspyed a letter in her 15 ryght hand, and told it to the kynge. Thenne the kynge took it, and sayd: 'Now am I sure this letter wille telle what she was, and why she is come hydder.' Soo thenne the kynge and the quene wente oute of the barget, and soo commaunded a certayne¹ wayte upon the barget. And soo whan the kynge was come within his chamber, he 20 called many knyghtes aboute hym, and saide that he wold wete openly what was wryten within that letter. Thenne the kynge brake it, and made a clerke² to rede hit, and this was the entente³ of the letter. 'Moost noble knyghte, Sir Launcelot, now hath dethe made us two at debate for your love; I was your lover, that men called the fayre 25 mayden of Astolat, therfor unto alle ladyes I make my mone, yet praye for my soule, and bery me atte leest, and offre ye my masse-peny.⁴ This is my last request. And a clene mayden I dyed, I take God to wytnes. Pray for my soule, Sir Launcelot, as thou art pierles.⁵' This was alle the substance in the letter. And whan it was redde, the 30 kyng, the quene, and alle the knyghtes wepte for pyte of the doleful complayntes. Thenne was Sire Launcelot sente for. And whan he was come, Kynge Arthur made the letter to be redde to hym, and whanne Sire Launcelot herd hit word by word, he sayd. 'My lord

¹ certain person (or persons)² learned man scholar (Lat *clericus*)³ meaning, substance⁴ funeral dues⁵ peerless

Arthur, wete ye wel I am ryghte hevy¹ of the dethe of this fair damoyssel. God knoweth I was never causer of her dethe by my wyllynge, and that wille I reporte me² to her own broder; here he is, Sir Lavayne. I wille not saye nay,' sayd Syre Launcelot, 'but that
 5 she was bothe fayre and good, and moche I was beholden unto her, but she loved me out of mesure.' 'Ye myght have shewed her,' sayd the quene, 'somme bounte and gentilnes, that myghte have preserved her lyf' 'Madame,' sayd Sir Launcelot, 'she wold none other wayes be ansuerd, but that she wold be my wyf, outh³ els my peramour,
 10 and of these two I wold not graunte her; but I proferd her, for her good love that she shewed me, a thousand pound yerly to her and to her heyres, and to⁴ wedde ony manere knyghte⁵ that she coude fynde best to love in her herte. For, madame,' said Sir Launcelot, 'I love not to be constrayned to love, for love muste aryse of the herte, and
 15 not by no constraynte.' 'That is trouth,' sayd the kynge, and many knyghtes, 'love is free in hymselfe, and never wille be bounden, for where he is bounden he looseth hymself.' Thenne sayd the kynge unto Sire Launcelot: 'Hit wyl be your worshyp⁶ that ye oversee' that she be entered⁷ worshypfully.' 'Sire,' sayd Sire Launcelot, 'that
 20 shalle be done as I can best devyse.' And soo many knyghtes yede⁸ thyder to behold that fayr mayden And soo upon the morne she was entered rychely, and Sir Launcelot offryd her masse-peny, and all the knyghtes of the Table Round that were there at that tyme offryd with Syr Launcelot And thenne the povre man wente ageyne with
 25 the barget. Thenne the quene sente for Syr Launcelot, and prayd hym of mercy,¹⁰ for why¹¹ that she had ben wrothe with hym causeles. 'This is not the fyrste tyme,' said Sir Launcelot, 'that ye have ben displeasyd with me causeles, but, madame, ever I must suffre yow, but what sorowe I endure I take no force.'¹²

¹ sorrowful² refer (by way of appeal)³ or⁴ that she might⁵ of knight (for an explanation see *NED.* s.v. *knt*, 6 b)⁶ to your credit⁷ provide⁸ interred⁹ went¹⁰ besought his pardon¹¹ because¹² I do not mind

TRISTRAM AND ISOLDE: THE LOVE-DRINK

Book 8, chaps. 23, 24. Based upon the O.F. thirteenth-century romance of *Tristan*, 'which has been printed oftener than any other romance'; see Sommer 3. 9, 286.

Thenne Kyng Anguysshe and Syre Tristram toke theire leve, and sailed into Irland with grete noblesse¹ and joye. Soo whanne they were in Irland, the kyng lete² make it knowen³ thoroute alle the land, how and in what manere Syre Trystram had done for hym. Thenne the quene and alle that there were made the moost of hym 5 that they myghte. But the joye that La Beale Isoud made of Syr Tristram there myghte no tonge telle, for of alle men erthely she loved hym moost.

Thenne, upon a daye, Kyng Anguysshe asked Syr Tristram why he asked not his bone,⁴ for whatsomever he had promysed hym he 10. shold have hit withoute fayle. 'Syre,' sayd Sire Trystram, 'now is hit tyme; this is alle that I wylle desyre, that ye wylle gyve me La Beale Isoud youre doughter, not for myself, but for myn unkel Kyng Marke, that shalle have her to wyf, for soo have I promysed hym.' 'Allas,' said the kyng, 'I had lever⁵ than alle the land that I have 15 ye wold wedde her youreself.' 'Syre, and I dyd, than I were shamed for ever in this world, and fals of my promyse. Therefore,' said Sire Trystram, 'I praye you hold your promyse that ye promysed me, for this is my desyre, that ye wylle gyve me La Beale Isoud to goo with me into Cornewaile, for to be wedded to Kyng Marke, myn unkel.' 20 'As for that,' sayd Kyng Anguysshe, 'ye shalle have her with you, to doo with her what it please you, that is for to saye yf that ye lyst⁶ to wedde her yourself, that is me levest⁷; and yf ye wille gyve her unto Kyng Marke, youre unkel, that is in youre choyse.'

Soo to make short conclusion, La Beale Isoud was made redy to 25 goo with Syre Trystram, and Dame Bragwayne wente with her for her chyef gentylwoman, with many other. Thenne the quene, Isouds moder, gaf to her and Dame Bragwayne, her doughters gentylwoman,

¹ pomp² let³ caused it to be made known⁴ boon⁵ rather⁶ wish⁷ most pleasing

and unto Governaie, a drynke, and charged them that what day Kynge Marke shold wedde, that same daye they shold gyve hym that drynke, soo that Kynge Marke shold drynke to La Beale Isoud; 'and thenne,' said the quene, 'I undertake eyther shalle love other the dayes of
 5 their lyf.' Soo this drynke was yeven unto Dame Bragwayne and unto Governaile. And thenne anone Syre Trystram tooke the see and La Beale Isoud; and whan they were in their caban, hit happed soo that they were thursty, and they sawe a lytyl flacke[t]¹ of gold stande by them, and hit semed by the coloure and the taste that it
 10 was noble wyn. Thenne Sire Trystram toke the flacke[t] in his hand, and sayd · 'Madame Isoud, here is the best drynke that ever ye drank, that Dame Bragwayne youre mayden, and Governayle my servaunt, have kepte for themself.' Thenne they lough and made good chere, and eyther dranke to other frely, and they thoughte never drynke
 15 that ever they dranke to other was soo swete nor soo good. But by that² theyr drynke was in their bodyes, they loved eyther other so wel that never theyr love departed, for wele neyther³ for wo. And thus it happed the love fyrste betwixe Sire Tristram and La Beale Isoud, the whiche love never departed the dayes of their lyf.

THE QUEST OF THE HOLY GRAIL: THE VOW

Book 13, chaps 6-7 This comes from *La Queste del Saint Graal* (edited by Furnivall for the Roxburghe Club, London, 1864), see Sommer 3 206, 209, 210

With the second and third paragraphs of this extract may be compared Tennyson, *Holy Grail* 182 ff., 314 ff

20 'Now,' sayd the kyng, 'I am sure at this quest of the Sancgreal shalle alle ye of the Table Rounde departe, and never shalle I see yow ageyne hole togyders; therfor I wille see yow alle hole togyders in the medowe of Camelot, to juste and to torneye, that after your dethe men maye speke of hit, that suche good knyghtes were holy⁴ togyders
 25 suche a day.' As unto that counceyll, and at the kynges request, they accorded alle, and toke on their harneis⁵ that longed⁶ unto justynge.

¹ flask

² by the time

³ nor

⁴ wholly

⁵ armor

⁶ belonged

But alle this mevyng¹ of the kyng was for this entent, for to see Galahalt preved,² for the kyng demed³ he shold not lyghtly⁴ come ageyne unto the courte after his departyng. So were they assembled in the medowe, bothe more and lasse.⁵ Thenne Syr Galahalt, by the prayer of the kyng and the quene, dyd upon hym a noble jesseraunce, 5 and also he dyd on⁶ hys helme, but shelde wold he take none for no prayer of the kyng. And thenne Sir Gawayne and other knyghtes praid hym to take a spere. Ryghte soo he dyd; and the quene was in a toure with alle her ladyes for to behold that turnement. Thenne Sir Galahalt dressid hym⁷ in myddes⁸ of the medowe, and began to 10 breke speres merveyllously, that all men had wonder of hym, for he there surmounted⁹ alle other knyghtes, for within a whyle he had defouled¹⁰ many good knyghtes of the Table Round sauf¹¹ tweyne, that was Syr Launcelot and Sire Percyvale.

Thenne the kyng, at the quenes request, made hym to alyghte and 15 to unlace his helme, that the quene mygt see hym in the vysage. Whanne she beheld hym, she sayd 'Sothely,¹² I dar wel say that Sir Launcelot begat hym, for never two men resembled more in lykenes, therfor it nys no merveyle though he be of grete prowess.' So a lady that stode by the quene said. 'Madame, for Goddes sake, 20 oughte he of ryghte to be so good a knyghte?' 'Ye,¹³ forsothe,' said the quene, 'for he is of alle partyes¹⁴ come of the best knyghtes of the world, and of the hybest lygnage¹⁵, for Sir Launcelot is come but of the eighth degre from oure Lord Jesu Cryst, and Syre Galahalt is of the nynthe degree from oure Lord Jesu Cryst; therfor I dar saye 25 they be the grettest gentilmen of the world.' And thenne the kyng

¹ suggestion (moving)

² proved, tried

³ supposed

⁴ readily

⁵ less

⁶ put on, cf. *undo*

⁷ made ready

⁸ the midst

⁹ surpassed

¹⁰ trodden down, overthrown

¹¹ save, except

¹² in truth

¹³ yea

¹⁴ in all respects

¹⁵ lineage

5. *jesseraunce*: more correctly, *jaserant*, a word of Saracenic origin (found in the name *Algiers*), occurring in OF in the *Chanson de Roland*; it signifies (*NED*). 'A light coat of armor, composed of splints or small plates of metal riveted to each other, or to a lining of some stout material.' Scott (*Quentin Durward*) calls it a 'flexible shirt of linked mail'

24. *Cryst*: 'the first true gentleman that ever breathed' (Dekker). The sentence, from 'for Sir Launcelot' to 'world,' is original with Malory.

and al estates¹ wente home unto Camelot, and soo wente to evensonge to the grete mynster. And soo after upon that to souper, and every knygt sette in his owne place as they were toforehand. Thenne anone they herd crakynge and cryenge of thonder, that hem thought the
 5 place shold alle todryve.² In the myddes of this blast entred a sonne-beaume more clerer by seven tymes than ever they sawe daye, and al they were alyghted of the grace of the Holy Ghoost. Thenne beganne every knyghte to behold other, and eyther sawe other by theire semynge fayrer than ever they sawe afore. Not for thenne³ there was no knyght
 10 myghte speke one word a grete whyle, and soo they loked every man [o]n other, as they had ben dome.⁴ Thenne ther entred into the halle the Holy Graile, coverd with whyte samyte, but ther was none myghte see hit, nor who bare hit. And there was al the halle fulfylled⁵ with good odoures, and every knygt had suche metes and drynkes as he
 15 best loved in this world And whan the Holy Grayle had be⁶ borne thurgh the halle, thenne the holy vessel departed sodenly, that they wyste not where hit becam.⁷ Thenne had they alle brethe to speke. And thenne the kyng yelded⁸ thankynge to God of his good grace that he had sente them 'Certes,' said the kyng, 'we oughte to
 20 thanke oure Lord Jesu gretely, for that he hath shewed us this daye, atte reverence of this hye feest of Pentecost.' 'Now,' said Sir Gawayn, 'we have ben served this daye of what metes and drynkes we thoughte on, but one thyng begyled us — we myght not see the Holy Grayle, it was soo precyously coverd; wherfor I wil make here avowe⁹ that
 25 to-morne,¹⁰ withoute lenger¹¹ abydyng,¹² I shall laboure in the quest of the Sancgreal, that I shalle hold me oute a twelvemoneth and a day, or more yf nede be, and never shalle I retorne ageyne unto the courte tyl I have sene hit more openly than hit hath ben sene here; and yf I may not spede,¹³ I shall retorne ageyne, as he that maye not
 30 be ageynst the wil of our Lord Jesu Cryste.' Whan they of the Table Round herde Syr Gawayne saye so, they arose up the most party,¹⁴ and maade suche avowes as Sire Gawayne had made.

¹ ranks, degrees² burst asunder³ nevertheless⁴ dumb⁵ filled⁶ been⁷ went⁸ gave⁹ vow¹⁰ to-morrow¹¹ longer¹² delay¹³ succeed¹⁴ most part, greater number

Anone as Kyng Arthur¹ herd this, he was gretely dyspleasyd, for he wyste wel they myghte not ageynesaye² theyre avowes. 'Allas!' said Kyng Arthur unto Sir Gawayn, 'ye have nyghe slayne me with the avowe and promesse that ye have made. For thurgh yow ye have berafte³ me the fayrest felauship and the truest of knyghthode that ever⁴ were sene togyders in ony realme of the world. For whanne they departe from hens, I am sure they alle shalle never mete more in thys world, for they shalle dye many in the quest. And soo it forthynketh⁵ me a lytel, for I have loved them as wel as my lyf.'

KING HORN

The romance probably antedates 1250; the Cambridge manuscript (1530 lines), here followed, may be dated about 1310. The best edition is by Joseph Hall (Oxford, 1901).

The story is of a prince, who, set adrift by conquering Saracens, lands in Westernesse, is loved by the king's daughter of that country, is banished when his love is discovered, returns in time to save her from another marriage, wins her for himself, and finally becomes king of his native land.

According to Hall (pp liii-lvi) '*King Horn* is essentially English, a plain impersonal tale, picturing a simple state of society, and full of primitive touches centuries older than its language, written in a metre which is a natural development of Old English prosody. [The] poem, as we have it, is a story of the Danish raids on the south coast of England. It is, in the main, Teutonic in spirit and details: the names of the persons and places are mostly Teutonic, or assimilated to Teutonic forms. . . Rimenhild and Aylmar, and his court on the banks of the Dorsetshire Stour, are English additions to the original story, and the real Westernesse is Ireland. Then all the localities and surroundings are Celtic. Murry . . . is king of Suddene, the country of the Southern Damnonu, that is, of Cornwall. The banished Horn finds shelter at the court of an Irish king, with Irish troops, and accompanied by an Irish page, he recovers his father's kingdom. His rival is a Breton prince, Modi, king of Renns. These indications point to the conclusion that the story is originally a British tradition, arising out of some temporary success in which the Cornish, aided by the Irish, checked the westward progress of the English invader. It was annexed by some English poet, and recast to suit the similar position of his countrymen resisting the attacks of the Danes. Finally, it emerged at a much later date in the shape of the extant versions, under the impulse of the rising spirit of the English people recovering from the Norman Conquest, which found its peculiar literary expression in a whole cycle of outlaw and exile stories in verse and prose.

¹ retract, break² bereft, deprived (with two accusatives)³ grieves

'The literary interest of *King Horn* may be characterized in few words. It is probably the earliest of the English romances, but as a specimen of the purely narrative sort it has great merit. In swift succession of brief and incisive speeches it tells a simple story effectively, without distraction of elaborate description or reflective comment. But the characters are very simply conceived, the female element is slight, and lovemaking is quite subordinate to fighting. Although picturesque and even poetic situations, such as Horn's farewell to his boat, are not wanting, the language is bald and unimaginative. A certain epic simplicity and energetic directness of expression, to which the short verse lends itself, are the main merits of its style.'

Our extract runs from line 445 to line 586. The earlier course of the story is as follows. Saracens kill King Murry of Suddene, and set adrift the young prince, Horn, and his companions. The latter are carried over the water to Westernesse, where King Aylmar receives them kindly, and bids the steward Athelbrus teach Horn the arts of harping and song, and train him to serve the wine and carve at table. Horn is soon loved by all the court, but especially by the king's daughter, Rymenhild. She bids the steward bring him to her chamber, but Athelbrus, in dread of the king's anger, brings instead Horn's companion, Athulf. To Athulf she gives her love, supposing him to be Horn, but Athulf finally explains the mistake, and she upbraids the steward. Athelbrus again promises to bring Horn, and this time really does so. Rymenhild declares her love to Horn, and offers to marry him. He gently declines, on the ground that he is unworthy by birth for the honor, whereupon she swoons. Horn is moved by her grief, and suggests that marriage might be possible if he were a knight.

Rymenhild, þat swete þing,
Wakede of hire swoƷning¹
'Horn,' quap² heo,³ 'wel⁴ sone⁵
þat schal beon⁶ idone⁷:
5 þu schalt beo⁸ dubbed knigt
Are⁹ come seve¹⁰ niȝt.
Have her¹¹ þis cuppe,
And þis ryng þeruppe¹²
To Aylbrus þe¹³ stuard,
10 And se¹⁴ he holde foreward.¹⁵

¹ swoon² quoth, said³ she⁴ very; MS. vel⁵ soon⁶ be⁷ done (OE. *gedōn*)⁸ be⁹ before¹⁰ seven¹¹ here¹² thereupon, in addition¹³ MS. &¹⁴ see (that)¹⁵ keep his promise

7. Have: the Harleian and Laud MSS. have here a word for 'take.'

Seie ¹ Ihc him biseche
 Wiþ loveliche ² speche
 Þat he adun ³ falle
 Bifore þe king in halle,
 And bidde þe king arihte ⁴ 5
 Dubbe þe to knihte.
 Wiþ selver and wiþ golde
 Hit wurþ ⁶ him wel iholde. ⁶
 Crist him lene ⁷ spede ⁸
 Þin erende ⁹ to bede. ¹⁰ 10
 Horn tok his leve,
 For hit was neȝ ¹¹ eve.
 Aþelbrus he soȝte,
 And ȝaf ¹² him þat ¹³ he broȝte,
 And tolde him ful ȝare ¹⁴ 15
 Hu ¹⁵ he hadde ifare, ¹⁶
 And sede ¹⁷ him his nede,
 And bihet ¹⁸ him his mede. ¹⁹
 Aþelbrus also swiþe ²⁰
 Went to halle blive. ²¹ 20
 'Kyng,' he sede, 'þu leste ²²
 A tale mid þe beste,
 Þu schalt bere crune ²³
 To-moreȝe ²⁴ in þis tune ²⁵;
 To-moreȝe is þi feste ²⁶;
 Þer ²⁷ bihoveþ ²⁸ geste. ²⁹ 25
 Hit nere ³⁰ noȝt forloren ³¹
 For to knihte ³² Child ³³ Horn,

¹ say² loving, affectionate³ down⁴ as is right⁶ shall be⁶ requited⁷ grant⁸ success⁹ mission¹⁰ make known (OE *ðædan*)¹¹ nearly¹² gave¹³ that which, what¹⁴ readily, quickly¹⁵ how¹⁶ fared (OE *gefaren*)¹⁷ said, told¹⁸ promised¹⁹ reward²⁰ as fast as possible²¹ in haste²² listen²³ crown²⁴ OE *tō morgen*²⁵ town²⁶ feast²⁷ for this²⁸ is fitting²⁹ entertainment, conspicuous act³⁰ would not be³¹ lost, thrown away, without value³² knight³³ aspirant to knighthood

- þine armes for to welde¹;
 God² kniȝt he schal gelde.³
 Þe king sede sone :
 ' þat is wel idone —
 5 Horn me wel iquemþ⁴ ,
 God kniȝt him biſemeþ.⁵
 He ſchal have mi dubbing,
 And afterward [be] mi derling ;
 And alle his feren⁶ twelf
 10 He ſchal kniȝten himſelf :
 Alle he ſchal hem⁷ kniȝte
 Bifore me þis niȝte '
 Til þe liȝt of day ſprang
 Ailmar him þuȝte⁸ lang.
 15 Þe day biȝan to ſpringe ;
 Horn com⁹ biſore þe kinge
 Mid his twelf yfere¹⁰ —
 Sume hi¹¹ were luþere¹²
 Horn he dubbede to kniȝte,
 20 Wiþ ſwerd and ſpures briȝte.
 He ſette him on a ſtede¹³ whit ;
 Þer nas no kniȝt hym ilk¹⁴
 He ſmot him a litel wiȝt,¹⁵
 And bed¹⁶ him beon a god kniȝt.
 25 Apulſ fel a¹⁷ knes þar¹⁸
 Biſore þe king Aylmar.
 ' King,' he ſede, ' ſo kenc,¹⁹
 Grante me a bene²⁰ .
 Nu²¹ is kniȝt Sire Hoin
 30 þat in Suddenne²² was iboren²³ ,

¹ wield² good, valorous³ turn out, become⁴ pleases⁵ he seems⁶ companions (OE *gefēran*)⁷ them⁸ it seemed to Ailmar⁹ came¹⁰ See l 9¹¹ some of them (some they)¹² wicked¹³ steed¹⁴ like (OE *geſi*)¹⁵ a little bit, gently¹⁶ bade¹⁷ on¹⁸ there¹⁹ brave²⁰ boon, request²¹ now²² See Intr, p 11²³ born (OE *geboren*)

Lord he is of londe
 Over us þat bi him stonde¹;
 Þin armes he haþ and scheld,²
 'To fihte wiþ upon þe feld;
 Let him us alle knihte,
 For þat is ure³ rihte.'
 Aylmar sede sone ywis⁴:
 'Do nu þat þi wille is.'
 Horn adun lihte,⁵
 And makede⁶ hem alle knihtes.
 Murie⁷ was þe feste,
 Al of faire gestes;
 Ac Rymenhild nas noht þer,
 And þat hire þuhte⁸ seve⁹ ȝer.¹⁰
 After Horn heo¹¹ sente,
 And he to bure¹² wente.
 Nolde he noht go one¹³ —
 Apulf was his mone.¹⁴
 Rymenhild on flore stod
 (Hornes come¹⁵ hire þuhte god),
 And sede 'Welcome, Sire Horn,
 And Apulf kniht þe biforn.
 Kniht, nu is þi time
 For to sitte bi me;
 Do nu þat þu er¹⁶ of spake:
 To þi wif þu me take;
 Ef¹⁷ þu art trewe of dedes,
 Do nu ase þu sedes¹⁸,
 Nu þu hast wille þine,
 Unbind¹⁹ me of my pine.'²⁰

¹ stand² shield³ our⁴ certainly, indeed⁵ alighted, descended from
horseback⁶ made⁷ merry, joyous⁸ seemed to her⁹ seven¹⁰ years¹¹ she¹² bower, lady's chamber¹³ alone¹⁴ companion (OE *gemāna*)¹⁵ coming¹⁶ before¹⁷ if¹⁸ saigest¹⁹ set free²⁰ torment

- 'Rymenhild,' quap he, ' beo stille
 Ihc wulle ¹ don al þi wille.
 Also ² hit mot ³ bitide,⁴
 Mid spere I schal ⁵ furst ride,
 5 And mi knighthod prove,
 Ar ⁶ Ihc þe ginne ⁷ to woge.⁸
 We beþ ⁹ knigtes zonge,
 Of o ¹⁰ dai al isprunge,¹¹
 And of ure mestere ¹²
 10 So ¹³ is þe manere ¹⁴ :
 Wip sume opere knigte
 Wel for his lemman ¹⁵ figte,
 Or ¹⁶ he eni ¹⁷ wif take ,
 Forþi ¹⁸ me stondeþ ¹⁹ þe more rape.²⁰
 15 To-day, so Crist me blesse,
 Ihc wulle do pruesse ²¹
 For þi lufe in þe felde,
 Mid spere and mid schelde ;
 If Ihc come to lyve,²²
 20 Ihc schal þe take to wyve ' ²³
 ' Knigt,' quap heo, ' trewe,
 Ihc wene ²⁴ Ihc mai þe leve ²⁵ ;
 Tak nu her þis gold ring,
 God him is þe dubbing ²⁶ ,
 25 Þer is upon þe ringe
 Igrave ²⁷ " Rymenhild þe zonge ²⁸ "
 Þer nis non betere anonder ²⁹ sunne,
 Þat eni man of telle cunne ³⁰ ,

1 will
 2 even so
 3 must
 4 befall
 5 am bound to
 6 before
 7 begin
 8 woo
 9 are
 10 one, the same

11 having taken origin (OE *gesprungen*)
 12 profession
 13 thus
 14 custom
 15 lady-love
 16 before
 17 any
 18 wherefore
 19 there exists for me
 20 haste

21 deeds of valor
 22 return alive
 23 wife
 24 think
 25 believe, trust
 26 ornamentation
 27 engraved
 28 Read zunge (?)
 29 under
 30 may be able

For my luve þu hit were,
 And on þi finger þu hit ¹ bere.
 Þe stones beoþ ² of suche grace ³
 Þat þu ne schalt in none place
 Of none dundes ⁴ beon ofdrad, ⁵ 5
 Ne ⁶ on bataille beon amad, ⁷
 Ef þu loke þeran, ⁸
 And þenke upon þi lemman.
 And Sire Apulf, þi broþer,
 He schal have anoþer. 10
 Horn, Ihc þe biseche
 Wiþ loveliche speche,
 Crist ȝeve ⁹ god endinge, ¹⁰
 Þe aȝen ¹¹ to bringe.
 Þe kniȝt hire gan ¹² kesse, 15
 And heo him to blesse.
 Leve at ¹³ hire he nam, ¹⁴
 And into halle cam.

HAVELOK THE DANE

Composed before 1300; the unique manuscript (3001 lines) is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and may be dated about 1310. The English poem is probably a translation of a lost French one. The best recent editions are those by Holthausen (London, 1901) and Skeat (Oxford, 1915).

The story is of an exiled prince of Denmark, who becomes a servant at the English court, marries the princess of that country, and finally succeeds to the thrones of both Denmark and England.

¹ The historical source of the name and fame, and perhaps of the story of Havelok, has been traced to the life of Olaf Sitricson [see *Dict. Nat. Biog.*], a Danish prince, who, about the middle of the tenth century, reigned for a few years in Northumbria. One of the strongest motives underlying the development of the Havelok legend may well have been political or national, namely, the desire of the Danes to prove their right to sovereignty in England' (Billings, pp. 18, 20)

¹ MS him

² are

³ power, virtue

⁴ blows

⁵ afraid

⁶ nor

⁷ crazed, bewildered (OE. *gemædd*)

⁸ upon it

⁹ grant

¹⁰ MS. erndinge

¹¹ back again

¹² began

¹³ of

¹⁴ took

The ancient town-seal of Great Grimsby, in Lincolnshire, embodies a manifest allusion to our story. The seal is described at length by J Hopkin, as quoted in Skeat's edition (pp lv-lvi), from which the following extract is taken: 'On the right hand of Gryme stands his *protégé* Haveloc ("Habeloc"), whom, during one of his mercantile excursions soon after his arrival in Lincolnshire, Gryme had the good fortune to save from imminent danger of shipwreck, and who proved to be the son of Gunter, King of Denmark, and who was therefore conveyed to the British court, where he subsequently received in marriage Goldburgh, the daughter of the British sovereign. Above Gryme is represented a hand, being emblematical of the hand of Providence by which Haveloc was preserved, and near the hand is the star which marks the point where the inscription begins and ends. Haveloc made such a favorable representation of his preserver at the British and Danish courts that he procured for him many honors and privileges. From the British monarch Gryme, who had already realized an abundance of wealth, received a charter, and was made the chief governor of Grimsby; and the Danish sovereign granted to the town an immunity (which is still possessed by the burgesses of Grimsby) from all tolls at the port of Elsinour. Gryme afterwards lived in Grimsby like a petty prince in his hereditary dominions. Above Haveloc is represented a crown, and in his right hand is a battle-axe, the favorite weapon of the Northmen, and in his [left] hand is a ring which he is presenting to the British princess Goldburgh ("Goldebvrgh"), who stands on the left side of Gryme, and whose right hand is held towards the ring. Over her head is a regal diadem, and in her left hand is a sceptre. Sir F. Madden states that it is certain that this seal is at least as old as the time of Edward I (and therefore contemporaneous with the MS), as the legend is written in a character which after the year 1300 fell into disuse, and was succeeded by the black letter, or Gothic.'

The mention of Elsinore (Elsineur) suggests the name of Hamlet, for the connection between his story and that of Havelok, see the introduction to Israel Gollancz's *Hamlet in Iceland* (London, 1898).

Our extract embraces lines 862-1281

The earlier part of the story runs as follows. A good king of England, Athelwold, under whom the realm had been serenely peaceful and happy, lay at the point of death, with only an infant daughter, Goldborough, to succeed him. He called to him his lords and thanes, and bade them tell him to whom he might most safely entrust the kingdom until such time as his daughter could bear rule. They all declared that Earl Godrich was the man, and to him the child and the regency of the country were accordingly committed. But love of power made this man false; when Goldborough was twenty years old, he imprisoned her in a strong castle, and himself continued to rule.

Meanwhile, a similar story had been enacted in Denmark. Its king, Birka-beyn, had before his death entrusted his young son and two small daughters to a supposedly faithful vassal, Godard. The latter with his own hands killed two of the children, and ordered a fisherman, Grim, to drown the boy Havelok by the light of the moon. Grim carried Havelok home in a sack, but when he

rose at midnight to drown the child, a bright and shining light streamed forth from the sack, and both Grim and his wife recognized this as a sign of royal blood in the boy. They fell on their knees before him, and promised faithful allegiance

Soon after, Grim decided to flee from the country, and embarked in a boat with his wife, five children, and Havelok. Winds drove him to the coast of England, where he landed at the mouth of the Humber, and dwelt in a spot called, after him, Grimsby. Twelve years later, Havelok, now a well-grown youth, left the family of Grim to seek his fortune; and at this point our selection begins

In the manuscript, *th* is frequently found for *ht* and for *t*, in such cases the change has been made without notice

To Lincolne barfot he yede.¹

Hwan² he kam þe[r], he was ful wil,³

Ne havede⁴ he no frend to gangen⁵ til⁶;

Two dayes þer fastunde⁷ he yede,

þat non⁸ for his werk wolde⁹ him fede;

5

þe þridde¹⁰ day he herde calle:

'Bermen,¹¹ bermen, hider¹² forth alle!'

[Povie¹³ þat on fote yede]¹⁴

Sprongen¹⁵ forth so¹⁶ sparke of¹⁷ glede.¹⁸

Havelok shof¹⁹ dun²⁰ [wel]²¹ nyne or ten

10

Riht²² amideward²³ þe fen,²⁴

And stirte²⁵ forth to þe kok,²⁶

[þei²⁷ the erles mete he tok]¹⁴

þat he bouhte²⁸ at þe brigge;

þe bermen let he alle ligge,²⁹

15

And bar³⁰ þe mete to þe castel,

And gat³¹ him þere a ferþing³² wastel.³³

¹ went (OE *ƿæd*)

² when

³ uncertain what to do

⁴ had

⁵ go

⁶ to

⁷ fasting

⁸ no one

⁹ was willing

¹⁰ third

¹¹ porters

¹² hither

¹³ poor people

¹⁴ supplied by Skeat

¹⁵ sprang

¹⁶ as

¹⁷ from, MS on

¹⁸ burning coal

¹⁹ shoved, pushed

²⁰ down

²¹ full

²² right

²³ in the midst of

²⁴ mud

²⁵ started, leaped

²⁶ cook

²⁷ where

²⁸ bought

²⁹ lie

³⁰ bore

³¹ got

³² farthing

³³ cake

- þet oþer ¹ day he kepte ² ok ³
 Swiþe yerne ⁴ þe erles kok,
 'Til þat he saw ⁵ him on þe b[r]igge,
 And bi him mani fishes ligge.⁶
 5 þe erles ⁷ mete havede he bouht
 Of Cornwaile,⁸ and kalde ⁹ oft
 ' Bermen, bermen, hider swiþe ¹⁰ !'
 Havelok it herde, and was ful bliþe
 þat he herde ' bermen ' calle ,
 10 Alle made he hem ¹¹ dun falle
 þat in his gate ¹² yeden ¹³ and stode,¹⁴
 Wel sixtene laddes gode
 Als ¹⁵ he lep ¹⁶ þe kok [un-]til,¹⁷
 He shof hem alle upon an hyl ¹⁸ ,
 15 Astirte ¹⁹ til him with his rippe,²⁰
 And bigan þe fish to kippe ²¹
 He bar up wel a cartelode
 Of segges,²² laxes,²³ of playces ²⁴ brode,²⁵
 Of grete laumprees,²⁶ and of eles ²⁷ ,
 20 Sparede he neyþer tos ne heles
 'Til þat he to þe castel cam,
 þat men fro him his birþene ²⁸ nam ²⁹
 þan men haveden ³⁰ holpen ³¹ him doun
 With þe birþene of his croun,³²
 25 þe kok [bi] stod, and on him low,³³
 And þou[h]te him stalworþe man ynow,³⁴
 And seyde ' Wiltu ³⁵ ben wit[h] me ?

¹ second² kept watch for, MS kepte he³ also⁴ very eagerly⁵ MS say⁶ lying (to lie)⁷ MS herles⁸ MS cornwalie⁹ called¹⁰ quickly¹¹ them¹² way¹³ went¹⁴ stood¹⁵ as¹⁶ leaped¹⁷ unto¹⁸ heap¹⁹ leaped²⁰ fish-basket²¹ take up quickly²² cuttlefish²³ salmon²⁴ place²⁵ broad²⁶ lampreys²⁷ eels²⁸ burden²⁹ took³⁰ had³¹ helped³² crown, head³³ laughed³⁴ enough³⁵ wilt thou

Gladlike¹ wile Ich feden þe;
 Wel is set² þe mete þu etes,³
 And þe hire þat þu getes.
 'Goddot⁴!' quoth he, 'leve⁵ sire,
 Bidde⁶ Ich you non oþer hire; 5
 But yeveþ⁷ me inow to ete,
 Fir⁸ and water Y wile you fete,⁹
 Þe fir blowe, an[d] ful wele maken;
 Stickes kan Ich breken and kraken,¹⁰
 And kindlen [ek]¹¹ ful wci a fyr, 10
 And maken it to brennen¹² shir¹³;
 Ful wel kan Ich cleven¹⁴ shides,¹⁵
 Eles toturven¹⁶ of here¹⁷ hides,
 Ful wel kan Ich dishes swilen,¹⁸
 And don al þat ye evere wilen¹⁹, 15
 Quoth þe kok · 'Wile I no more;
 Go þu²⁰ yunder, and sit þore,²¹
 And Y shal yeve þe ful fair bred,
 And make þe broys²² in þe led.²³
 Sit now down and et²⁴ ful yerne; 20
 Dapeit hwo²⁵ þe mete werne²⁶!'
 Havelok sette him dun anon²⁷
 Also²⁸ stille als²⁹ a ston,
 Til he haveþe ful wel eten,
 Þo³⁰ haveþe Havelok fayre geten.³¹ 25
 Hwan he haveþe eten inow,
 He kam to þe welle, water updrow,
 And filde þe[r] a michel³² so³³;

1 gladly
 2 bestowed
 3 eatest
 4 God wot! MS. soddot
 5 dear
 6 ask, pray
 7 give
 8 fire
 9 fetch
 10 crack
 11 also

12 burn
 13 brightly
 14 cleave
 15 thin pieces of wood
 16 strip (*NED.* s. v. *trve*)
 17 their
 18 wash
 19 wish
 20 thou
 21 there
 22 brewis, broth

23 caldron, kettle
 24 eat
 25 a curse upon him who
 26 denies
 27 straightway
 28 as
 29 then
 30 done well
 31 large
 32 tub

- Bad he non ageyn ¹ him go ;
 Bitwen ² his hondes he bar it in,
 A[l] him one, ³ to þe kichin.
 Bad he non him water to fete,
 Ne ⁴ fro b[r]igge to bere þe mete.
 He bar þe turves, ⁵ he bar þe star, ⁶
 Þe wode fro the brigge he bar ;
 Al that evere shulde ⁷ he nytte, ⁸
 Al he drow, ⁹ and al he kitte ¹⁰ ;
 Wolde he nevere haven rest,
 More þan he weie ¹¹ a best. ¹²
 Of alle men was he mest ¹³ meke,
 Lauhwinde ¹⁴ ay, and bliþe of speke ¹⁵ ;
 Everc he was glad and bliþe,
 His sorwe ¹⁶ he coupe ¹⁷ ful wel mipe. ¹⁸
 It ne was ¹⁹ non so litel knave, ²⁰
 For to leyken, ²¹ ne for to plawe, ²²
 Þat he ne wo[l]de with him pleye ²³ ;
 Þe children that y[e]den in þe weie
 Of him he ²⁴ deden ²⁵ al he[r] wille,
 And with him leykeden here ²⁶ fille.
 Him loveden alle, stille and bolde,
 Knictes, children, yunge and olde ²⁷ ;
 Alle him loveden þat him sowen, ²⁸
 Bopen heye ²⁹ men and lowe.
 Of him ful wide þe word sprong,
 Hu ³⁰ he was mike[l], ³¹ hu ³⁰ he was strong,
 Hu fayr man God him haveðe maked, ³²

¹ opposite² MS but bitwen³ alone⁴ nor⁵ turf, peat⁶ a kind of sedge or reed⁷ MS shulden⁸ require for use⁹ drew¹⁰ cut, MS citte¹¹ if he were (subj)¹² beast¹³ most¹⁴ laughing¹⁵ speech¹⁶ sorrow¹⁷ could¹⁸ conceal¹⁹ there was²⁰ lad, boy²¹ frolic²² sport²³ play²⁴ they²⁵ did²⁶ their²⁷ MS. holde²⁸ saw²⁹ high³⁰ how, MS. hw³¹ tall³² made

But-on þat ¹ he was almeſt naked :
 For he ne havede nouht to ſhride ²
 But a kouel ³ ful unride,⁴
 Þat [was] ful ⁵ and ſwiþe wicke,⁶
 Was it nouht worth a fir-ſticke. 5
 Þe cok bigan of him to rewe,⁷
 And bouhte ⁸ him cloþes, al ſpan-newe ⁹ ;
 He bouhte ⁸ him boþe hosen and ſhon,
 And ſone dide him don es on.¹⁰
 Hwan he was cloþed, [h]oſed, and ſhod 10
 Was non ſo fayr under God,
 Þat evere yete in erþe were,¹¹
 Non þat evere moder ¹² bere ¹³ ,
 It ¹⁴ was nevere man þat yemed ¹⁵
 In kineriche,¹⁶ þat ſo wel ſemed ¹⁷ 15
 King or cayſer for to be ,
 Þan ¹⁸ he was ſhrid,¹⁹ ſo ſcmed ²⁰ he ;
 For þanne ¹⁸ he ²¹ weren alle ſamen ²²
 At Lincolne, at þe gamen,²³
 And þe erles men worn ²⁴ al[le] þore,²⁵ 20
 Þan was Havelok bi þe ſhuldren ²⁶ more ²⁷
 Þan þe meſte ²⁸ þat þer kam ;
 In armes him no man [ne] nam
 Þat he doune ſone ne caſte ,
 Havelok ſtod over hem als a maſt. 25
 Als he was heie, ſo ²⁹ he was ſtrong,³⁰
 He was boþe ſtark ³¹ and long ³² ,
 In Engelond [was] non hiſe per ³³

¹ except in one reſpect, that

² to clothe himſelf

³ garment

⁴ rough

⁵ foul

⁶ mean

⁷ have pity

⁸ bought

⁹ quite new

¹⁰ made him put them on

¹¹ waa

¹² mother

¹³ bore

¹⁴ there

¹⁵ governed

¹⁶ kingdom, MS. kinneriche

¹⁷ was fit

¹⁸ when

¹⁹ clothed

²⁰ ſeemed

²¹ they

²² together

²³ games

²⁴ were

²⁵ there

²⁶ ſhoulders

²⁷ taller

²⁸ talleft

²⁹ MS al

³⁰ MS long

³¹ ſturdy

³² MS ſtrong

³³ peer, equal

- Of strengþe þat evere kam him ner.¹
 Als he was strong, so was he softe²;
 Þey³ a man him misdede⁴ ofte,
 Nevere more he him misseyde,⁵
 5 Ne hond on him with yvele leyde.
 Of bodi was he mayden clene;
 Nevere yete in garth,⁶ ne in grene,
 Wit[h] hire⁷ ne wolde [he] leyke ne lye,
 No more þan it were a strie⁸
 10 In þat time al Engeland⁹
 Þerl¹⁰ Godrich haveðe in his hond,
 And he gart¹¹ komen into þe tun¹²
 Mani erl and mani barun,
 And alle [men] þat lives¹³ were
 15 In Eng[e]lond, þanne wer þere,
 Þat þey haveden after sent
 To ben þer at þe parlement.
 With hem com mani champion,¹⁴
 Mani wiht¹⁵ ladde,¹⁶ blac, and brown;
 20 An[d] fel¹⁷ it so þat yunge men,
 Wel abouten nine or ten,
 Bigunnen þere¹⁸ for to layke:
 Þider komen boþe stronge and wayke¹⁹;
 Þider komen lesse and more,
 25 Þat in þe borw²⁰ þanne weren þore²¹;
 Chauinpiouns,²² and starke laddes,
 Bondemen,²³ with here²⁴ gaddes,²⁵
 Als he²⁶ comen fro þe plow;
 Þere was sembling²⁷ inow!

¹ near² mild, gentle³ though⁴ injured⁵ reproached, spoke ill of, MS. misdede⁶ garden, enclosure, MS. game⁷ her (a woman)⁸ old hag⁹ MS. Hengeland¹⁰ the earl¹¹ made, had¹² town¹³ alive¹⁴ MS. chamboun¹⁵ stout¹⁶ lad¹⁷ happened¹⁸ MS. þe¹⁹ weak²⁰ borough²¹ there²² MS. chaunpiouns²³ husbandmen²⁴ their²⁵ goads²⁶ they²⁷ assembling

For it¹ ne was non horse-knave,²
 þou³ þei sholden in honde have,⁴
 þat he ne kam þider, þe leyk⁵ to se :
 Biforn here fet þanne lay a tre,
 And putten⁶ with a mikel ston
 þe starke laddes, ful god won.⁷
 þe ston was mikel, and ek⁸ gret,
 And al so hevi so a net⁹,
 Grundstalw[u]rþe¹⁰ man he sholde¹¹ be
 þat mouhte¹² liften it to his kne ;
 Was þer neyþer clerc ne prest¹³
 þat mihte¹⁴ liften it to his brest
 þerwit[h]¹⁵ putten the chaumpiouns¹⁶
 þat þider comen with þe barouns.
 Hwoso mihte putten þore
 Biforn anoþer an inch or more,
 Wore¹⁷ he yung, wore he old,¹⁸
 He was for a kempe¹⁹ told.²⁰
 Also²¹ þe[1] stoden, an[d] ofte streden,²²
 þe chaumpiouns,²³ and ek the ladden²⁴,
 And he²⁵ maden mikel strout²⁶
 Abouten þe alþerbeste²⁷ b[o]ut,²⁸
 Havelok stod, and lokede þertil²⁹ ;
 And of puttingge he was ful wil,³⁰
 For nevere yete ne saw he or³¹
 Putten the stone, or³² þanne þor.
 Hise mayster bad him gon þerto,

¹ there

² groom

³ MS þo

⁴ I'ough they (for he) should have [work]
in hand

⁵ game

⁶ put, MS pulten

⁷ in considerable numbers (won = plenty)

⁸ also

⁹ young ox

¹⁰ extremely stalwart

¹¹ had need to

¹² could

¹³ priest

¹⁴ with this

¹⁵ MS chaumpiouns

¹⁶ were

¹⁷ MS hold

¹⁸ knight, champion

¹⁹ counted

²⁰ as

²¹ stared

²² lads

²³ they

²⁴ contention

²⁵ best of all

²⁶ bout, throw

²⁷ thereto

²⁸ inexperienced

²⁹ before

- Als he coupe¹ þerwith do.
 Þo hise mayster it him bad,
 He was of him sore adrad;
 Þerto he stirte² sone anon,
 5 And kipte³ up þat hevi ston,
 Þat he sholde put[t]en wiþe;
 He putte, at þe firste siþe,⁴
 Over⁵ alle þat þer wore,
 Twel[ve] fote,⁶ and sumdel⁷ more.
 10 Þe chaumpiouns⁸ þat [þat] put sowen,⁹
 Shuldreden he ilc oþer,¹⁰ and lowen¹¹;
 Wolden he no more to putting gange,
 But seyde. 'We dwellen her to¹² longe!
 Þis selkouth¹³ mihte nouht ben hyd:
 15 Ful sone it was ful loude kid¹⁴
 Of Havelok, hu¹⁵ he warp¹⁶ þe ston
 Over þe laddes everilkon¹⁷,
 Hu¹⁵ he was fayr, hu¹⁵ he was long,
 Hu¹⁵ he was wiht,¹⁸ hu¹⁶ he was strong;
 20 Þorhut¹⁹ England yede þe speke,²⁰
 Hu¹⁶ he was strong, and ek [ful] meke;
 In the castel, up in þe halle,
 Þe knihtes speken þerof alle,
 So that Godrich it herde wel.
 25 Þe[1] speken of Havelok, everi del,²¹
 Hu¹⁵ he was strong man and hey,
 Hu¹⁶ he was strong, and ek [ful] sley²²;
 And þouhte²³ Godrich 'þoru²⁴ þis knave
 Shal Ich Engeland al have,
 30 And mi sone after me,

¹ could² leaped³ snatched⁴ time⁵ beyond⁶ feet⁷ somewhat⁸ MS chaumpiouns⁹ saw¹⁰ one another¹¹ laughed¹² too¹³ wonder¹⁴ made known¹⁵ MS hw¹⁶ threw¹⁷ every one¹⁸ courageous¹⁹ throughout, MS þoruth²⁰ speech, MS, speche²¹ on every side (?)²² skilful, MS fn²³ MS þouhte²⁴ through

For so I wile þat it be.
 King¹ Apelwald me dide² swere
 Upon al þe messe-gere³
 þat Y shu[l]de his douhter yive⁴
 þe hexte⁵ [man] þat mihte live, 5
 þe beste, þe fairest, þe strangest⁶ ok ;
 þat gart⁷ he me sweren on þe bok.
 Hwere mihte I finden ani so hey
 So Havelok is, or so sley ?
 þou[h] Y souhte heþen⁸ into Ynde,⁹ 10
 So fayr, so strong, ne mihte Y finde.
 Havelok is þat ilke¹⁰ knave
 þat shal Goldeborw have '
 þis pouhte [he] with trechery,
 Wit[h] traysoun, and with felony ; 15
 For he wende¹¹ þat Havelok wore¹²
 Sum cherles sone, and no more ,
 Ne shulde he haven of Engellond
 Onlepi¹³ forw¹⁴ in his hond
 With hire þat was þerof [þe] eyr,¹⁵ 20
 þat bope was god and swiþe fair.
 He wende þat Havelok wer a þral,¹⁶
 þerþoru¹⁷ he wende haven al
 In Engellond, þat hire riht was ,
 He werse was¹⁸ þan Sathanas 25
 þat Jesu Crist in erþe shop¹⁹ ,
 Hanged worþe²⁰ he on an hok !
 After Goldebo[r]w sone he sende,
 þat was bope fayr and hende,²¹
 And dide hire to Lincolne bringe²² , 30

¹ MS the king² caused³ utensils of the mass⁴ MS yeve⁵ highest, tallest⁶ strongest⁷ made⁸ hence⁹ India¹⁰ very¹¹ supposed¹² was¹³ a single¹⁴ furrow¹⁵ heir¹⁶ slave¹⁷ for this reason, by this means¹⁸ MS was werse¹⁹ shaped, created²⁰ may he be²¹ gentle, courteous²² and had her brought to Lincoln

- Belles dede he ageyn hire ¹ ringen,
 And jo²e he made hire swiþe mikel,
 But neþeles ³ he was ful swikel.⁴
 He seyde þat he sholde hire yive ⁴
 5 þe fayrest man that mihte live.
 She answerede and seyde anon,
 Bi [Jesu] Crist and bi Seint John,⁵
 þat hire sholde no man wedde,
 Ne no man bringen hire to ⁶ bedde,
 10 But ⁷ he were king or kinges eyr,
 Were he nevere man so fayr.
 Godrich þe erl was swiþe wroth
 þat she swor swilk ⁸ an oth,
 And seyde. ' Hweþer ⁹ þou wilt be
 15 Quen and leved¹⁰ over me ?
 þou shalt haven a gadeling,¹¹
 Ne shalt þou haven non oþer king ;
 þe shal spusen ¹² mi cokes knave ;
 Shalt ¹³ þou non oþer loverd ¹⁴ have.
 20 Dapeit þat ¹⁵ þe oþer ¹⁶ yive ⁴
 Everemore hwil I live !
 To-mo[r]we sholen ¹⁷ ye ¹⁸ ben weddet,
 And, maugre þin,¹⁹ togidere beddet.'
 Goldeborw gret,²⁰ and was hire ille ²¹ ;
 25 She wolde ben ded, bi hire wille.
 On þe morwen, hwan day was sprungen,
 And daybelle ²² at [þe] kirke ²³ rungen,
 After Havelok sente þat Judas,
 þat werse was þanne Sathanas,

¹ at her approach² nevertheless³ deceitful⁴ MS yeve⁵ MS Iohan⁶ MS to hire⁷ unless⁸ such⁹ MS hwor¹⁰ lady¹¹ vagabond, low fellow¹² marry¹³ MS ne shalt¹⁴ lord¹⁵ a curse upon him who¹⁶ another¹⁷ shall¹⁸ MS ye sholen¹⁹ in spite of thee²⁰ wept²¹ it was ill for her²² matin-bell²³ church

And seyde: 'Mayster, wiltu¹ wif²?'

'Nay,' quoth Havelok, 'bi my lif!

Hwat sholde Ich with wive³ do?

I ne may hire fede, ne cloþe, ne sho.

[H]wider sholde Ich wimman⁴ bringe?

5

I ne have none kin[n]es⁵ þinge.

I ne have hus,⁶ Y ne have cote,

I ne⁷ have stikke, Y ne have sprote,⁸

I ne have neyþer bred ne sowel,⁹

Ne cloth, but of an old whit¹⁰ couel.¹¹

10

Þis¹² cloþes, þat Ich onne have,

Aren þe kokes, and Ich his knave.'

Godrich sturt¹³ up, and on him dong¹⁴

[With dintes¹⁵ swiþe hard and strong],¹⁶

And seyde. 'But¹⁷ þou hire take

15

þat Y wole yeven þe to make,¹⁸

I shal hangen þe ful heye,

Or Y shal þristen¹⁹ ut þin eie²⁰,

Havelok was one,²¹ and was adrad,²²

And grauntede him al þat he bad

20

þo²³ sende he after hire sone,²⁴

þe fayrest wymman under mone²⁵,

And seyde til hire, [fals]²⁶ and slike,²⁶

þat wicke þral, þat foule swike²⁷.

'But þu þis man understonde,²⁸

25

I shal flemen²⁹ þe of³⁰ londe,

Or þou shal[t] to þe galwes³¹ renne,³²

¹ wilt thou, MS wite

² take a wife

³ MS wif

⁴ a woman

⁵ of no kind

⁶ MS hws

⁷ MS ne i

⁸ sprout, twig

⁹ relish eaten with bread

¹⁰ MS hold with

¹¹ garment

¹² these

¹³ started

¹⁴ struck

¹⁵ blows

¹⁶ Supplied by Skeat

¹⁷ unless

¹⁸ mate, wife

¹⁹ thrust

²⁰ MS heie

²¹ alone

²² MS. odrat

²³ then

²⁴ soon

²⁵ the moon

²⁶ smooth

²⁷ traitor

²⁸ receive

²⁹ banish

³⁰ from

³¹ gallows

³² run

- And þer þou shalt in a fir brenne,¹
 Sho² was adrad, for he so þrette,³
 And durste⁴ nouht þe spusing⁵ lette⁶;
 But þey⁷ hire likede⁸ swiþe ille,
 5 [Sho] þouhte it was Godes wille:
 God, þat makes to growen þe korn,
 Formede hire wimman to be born.
 Hwan he havede him don,⁹ for drede,
 þat he sholde hire spusen and fede,
 10 And þat she sholde til him holde,
 þer weren penies¹⁰ þicke tolde,¹¹
 Mikel plente upon þe bok:
 He¹² ys¹³ hire yaf, and she [e]s¹⁴ tok.
 He¹⁵ weren spused fayre and wel:
 15 þe messe he dede,¹⁶ [and] everidel¹⁷
 þat fel¹⁸ to spusing, a¹⁹ god cle[r]k,²⁰
 þe Erchebishop ut of²¹ Yerk,
 þat kam to þe parlement,
 Als God him havede þider sent.
 20 Hwan he²² togydere in Godes lawe
 Weren,²³ þat²⁴ folc²⁵ ful wel it sawe,
 He ne wisten²⁶ hwat he mouhten,²⁷
 Ne he ne wisten [h]wat hem douhte²⁸ —
 þer to dwellen, or þenne²⁹ to gonge.
 25 þer ne wolden he dwellen longe,
 For he wisten, and ful wel sawe,
 Godrich³⁰ hem hatede, þe devel him awe³¹!
 And yf he dwelleden þer ouht³² —

¹ burn² she³ threatened⁴ dared⁵ marriage⁶ hinder⁷ though⁸ it pleased her⁹ caused; MS don him¹⁰ pennies¹¹ counted in great number¹² Godrich¹³ them¹⁴ them, MS, as¹⁵ they¹⁶ performed; MS. deden¹⁷ everything¹⁸ pertained¹⁹ MS and²⁰ clergyman²¹ out of, from²² they²³ Transposed from preceding line (weren togydere)²⁴ MS þat þe²⁵ people²⁶ knew²⁷ could do²⁸ availed them²⁹ thence³⁰ MS þat Godrich³¹ own, possess, MS hawe³² any space of time

þat fel Havelok ful wel on þouht —

Men sholde don his leman shame,

Or elles bringen in wicke¹ blame;

þat were him levere² to ben ded.

Forþi³ he⁴ token anoper red,⁵

5

þat þei sholden þenne fle⁶

Til⁷ Grim, and til⁷ hise sonen þre;

þer wenden⁸ he⁴ alperbeste⁹ to spede,¹⁰

Hem¹¹ for to cloþe, and for to fede.

þe lond he⁴ token under fote,¹²

10

Ne wisten he⁴ non oþer bote,¹³

And helden ay the rihte sti¹⁴

Til he⁴ komen to Grimesby.

þanne¹⁵ he⁴ komen þere, þanne was Grim ded,

Of him ne haveden he⁴ no red;

15

But hise children alle fyve

Alle weren yet on live¹⁶,

þat¹⁷ ful fayre ayen¹⁸ hem neme,¹⁹

Hwan he⁴ wisten þat he⁴ keme,²⁰

And maden joie swiþe mikel,

20

Ne weren he⁴ nevere ayen hem fikel²¹

On knes ful fayre he⁴ hem setten,

And Havelok swiþe fayre gretten,²²

And scyden · ‘ Welcome, loverd²³ dere,

And welcome be þi fayre fere²⁴ !

25

Blessed be þat ilke þrawe²⁵

þat þou hire toke in Godes lawe !

Wel is us²⁶ we sen þe on lyve,

þou mihte²⁷ us boþe selle and yive²⁸ ;

¹ wicked

² liefer, rather

³ therefore

⁴ they

⁵ counsel, help

⁶ flee

⁷ to

⁸ thought

⁹ best of all

¹⁰ prosper

¹¹ themselves

¹² they walked

¹³ remedy

¹⁴ road

¹⁵ when

¹⁶ in life = alive

¹⁷ who

¹⁸ towards

¹⁹ went

²⁰ were coming

²¹ fickle

²² greeted

²³ lord

²⁴ companion, wife

²⁵ time, moment

²⁶ to us, MS hus

²⁷ might

²⁸ MS yeve

- þou mayt us boþe yive¹ and selle,
 With-þat² þou wilt here dwelle.
 We haven, loverd, alle gode,³
 Hors,⁴ and net,⁵ and ship on flode,⁶
 5 Gold, and silver, and michel auhte,⁷
 þat Grim ure fader us bitauhte⁸;
 Gold, and silver, and oper fe⁹
 Bad he us bitaken¹⁰ þe
 We haven shep, we haven swin,
 10 Bileve¹¹ her, loverd, and al be þin !
 Þo[u] shalt ben loverd, þou shalt ben syre,¹²
 And we sholen serven þe and hire ,
 And ure¹³ sistres sholen do
 Al that evere biddes sho¹⁴ ,
 15 He¹⁵ sholen hire cloþes¹⁶ washen and wringen,
 And to¹⁷ hondes water bringen ;
 He¹⁸ sholen bedden¹⁹ hire and þe,
 For levedi wile we þat she be '
 Hwan he²⁰ þis joie haveden maked,
 20 Siþen²¹ stikes broken and kraked,
 And þe fir brouht on brenne,²²
 Ne was þer spared gos²³ ne henne,
 Ne þe ende,²⁴ ne þe drake,
 Mete he²⁵ deden plente make ;²⁶
 25 Ne wantede þere no god mete ;
 Wyn and ale deden he²⁷ fete,²⁸
 And maden²⁹ hem glade and bliþe,
 Wessey l ledde³⁰ he fele siþe.³¹

¹ MS yeve² provided that³ property, goods⁴ horses⁵ cattle⁶ sea⁷ possessions, MS auhte⁸ delivered, committed, MS bitawchte⁹ property¹⁰ deliver, commit¹¹ remain¹² seignior, master¹³ our, MS hure¹⁴ she¹⁵ they¹⁶ MS cloþen¹⁷ for¹⁸ put to bed¹⁹ afterwards²⁰ to burning²¹ goose²² duck, MS hende²³ they had plenty of meats
prepared²⁴ they caused to be brought²⁵ MS, made²⁶ they led wassails (drank
healths)²⁷ many times

On þe niht, as Goldeborw lay,
 Sory and sorwful was she ay,
 For she wende she were biswike,¹
 þat she were ²yeven ³unkyndelike.⁴
 O niht ⁵saw she þerinne a liht,⁶ 5
 A swiþe fayr, a swiþe bryht,
 Al so briht, al so shir ⁷
 So⁸ it were a blase ⁹of fir.
 She lokede no[r]þ, and ek south,
 And saw it comen ut of his mouth, 10
 þat lay bi hire in þe bed —
 No ferlike ¹⁰pou[h] she were adred !
 þouhte she '[H]wat may this bimene ¹¹?
 He beth ¹²heyman ¹³yct, als Y wene ¹⁴;
 He beth heyman er he be ¹⁵ded.' 15
 On hise shuldre, of gold red
 She saw a swiþe noble croiz,¹⁶
 Of an angel she herde a voyz ¹⁶:
 'Goldeborw, lat þi sorwe be,¹⁷
 For Havelok, þat haveþ spuset þe, 20
 Is ¹⁸kinges sone and kinges eyr ¹⁹;
 þat bikenneth ²⁰þat croiz so fayr.
 It bikenneth more — þat he shal
 Denemark haven, and Englond al;
 He shal ben king, strong and stark, 25
 Of Engelond and Denemark;
 þat shal[t] þu wit[h] þin eyne sen,
 And þo[u] shalt quen and leved ben.'
 þanne ²¹she haveð herd the stevene ²²
 Of þe angel ut of hevene, 30

¹ cheated, deceived

² MS shere (*for she were*)

³ given

⁴ beneath her rank

⁵ in the night

⁶ light

⁷ shining

⁸ as if

⁹ blaze

¹⁰ wonder

¹¹ mean

¹² is

¹³ nobleman

¹⁴ think

¹⁵ cross

¹⁶ voice

¹⁷ put aside thy sorrow

¹⁸ MS he

¹⁹ heir

²⁰ betokens

²¹ when

²² voice

She was so fele sipes¹ blithe
 þat she ne mihte hire ioie mythe² —
 But Havelok sone anon she kiste ;
 And he slep, and nouht ne wiste³
 5 Hwat þat aungel havede seyð.

GOWER, CONFESSIO AMANTIS

John Gower — 'moral Gower,' as Chaucer called him — was born about 1330, and died between August 15 and October 24, 1408. He was of a Kentish family, a layman, and a man of some wealth. For the most part, he probably resided in London, and was personally known to Richard II. While living in Southwark, he married one Agnes Groundolf on January 25, 1397/8, and perhaps had been married before. He lies buried in St. Saviour's, Southwark, formerly called St. Mary Overey. The effigy of the poet, beneath a three-arched canopy, exhibits his head resting upon three volumes, bearing the names of his three principal works — *Speculum Meditantis*, *Vox Clamantis*, and *Confessio Amantis*.

Of these the first, now known as the *Mirour de l'Omme* (*Speculum Hominis*) has only recently been discovered. This is in French, the *Vox Clamantis* in Latin, and the *Confessio Amantis* in English. The French work was the earliest, the Latin work was produced about 1382, while the English work assumed its final form in 1393. The *Confessio Amantis* contains more than 33,000 lines, surpassing the *Mirour de l'Omme* by above 4000 lines. Besides these three, Gower wrote several minor works. The whole has been critically edited in four volumes by G. C. Macaulay (Oxford, 1899-1902). In the French and the Latin poems, Gower's tendency is markedly didactic. In the English poem his general theme is love, which he illustrates by a series of 112 stories.

Lowell said, in his essay on Chaucer: 'Gower has positively raised tediousness to the precision of a science.' A fairer judgment is that by Ker (*English Literature, Medieval*, pp. 225-226): 'Gower should always be remembered along with Chaucer, he is what Chaucer might have been without genius and without his Italian reading, but with his critical tact, and much of his skill in verse and diction. The *Confessio Amantis* is monotonous, but it is not dull. Much of it at a time is wearisome, but as it is composed of a number of separate stories, it can be read in bits, and ought to be so read. Taken one at a time, the clear bright little passages come out with a meaning and a charm that may be lost when the book is read too perseveringly.'

The *Apollonius of Tyre*, the first of our extracts, was first written in Greek (probably third century), and afterwards translated into Latin. Gower paraphrased the Latin, and the Shakespearean (?) *Pericles* is, in turn, based upon

¹ so many times, so very² conceal³ knew

Gower. For further particulars concerning Apollonius, see my *First Book in Old English*, pp. 164-165.

The Æson story is derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (7 162-293), 132 lines of the original being expanded to 230. A portion of this Ovidian passage (*Met* 7. 197 ff.), extremely condensed by Gower, reappears in Shakespeare's *Tempest* 5. 1. 33-50.

APOLLONIUS OF TYRE

8. 597-911

Of Tharsiens¹ his leve anon
 He² tok, and is to schipe gon.
 His cours he nam³ with seil updrawe,⁴
 Where as⁵ Fortune doth⁶ the lawe,
 And scheweth, as I schal reherse, 5
 How sche⁷ was to this lord diverse,⁸
 The which⁹ upon the see sche ferketh.¹⁰
 The wynd aros, the weder derketh,¹¹
 It blew and made such tempeste
 Non anchor mai the schip areste, 10
 Which hath tobroken al his gere¹²;
 The schipmen stode in such a feere,
 Was non that myhte himself bestere,¹³
 Bot evere awaite upon the lere,¹⁴
 Whan that thei scholde drenche¹⁵ at ones. 15
 Ther was ynowh withinne wones¹⁶
 Of wepinge and of sorghe¹⁷ tho¹⁸;
 This yonge king makth mochel wo
 So for to se the schip travaile¹⁹;
 Bot al that myhte him noght availe; 20
 The mast tobrak,²⁰ the seil torof²¹;
 The schip upon the waves drof,

¹ the people of Tarsus² Apollonius³ took⁴ drawn up⁵ wherever⁶ makes, lays down⁷ Fortune⁸ contrary⁹ Apollonius¹⁰ conducts¹¹ grows dark¹² tackle¹³ bestir¹⁴ destruction, shipwreck (OE *lyre*)¹⁵ drown¹⁶ reach¹⁷ sorrow¹⁸ then¹⁹ labor²⁰ snapped²¹ was rent

- Til that thei sihe ¹ a londes cooste.
 Tho made avou ² the leste and moste
 Be so ³ thei myhten come alonde ⁴ ,
 Bot he which hath the see on honde,
 5 Neptunus, wolde noght acorde,
 Bot altobroke ⁵ cable and corde ,
 Er thei to londe myhte aproche,
 The schip toclef ⁶ upon a roche,
 And al goth down into the depe.
 10 Bot He that alle thing mai kepe
 Unto this lord was merciable,
 And broghte him sauf upon a table,⁷
 Which to the lond him hath upbore ;
 The remenant was al forlore,⁸
 15 Whereof he made mochel mone ⁹
 Thus was this yonge lord him one,¹⁰
 Al naked in a povere plit ¹¹ ,
 His colour, which whilom ¹² was whyt,
 Was thanne of ¹³ water fade ¹⁴ and pale,
 20 And ek he was so sore ¹⁵ acale ¹⁶
 That he wiste ¹⁷ of himself no bote ¹⁸ :
 It halp ¹⁹ him nothing for to mote ²⁰
 To gete ayem that he hath lore.²¹
 Bot sche which hath his deth forbore,²²
 25 Fortune, thogh sche wol noght yelp,²³
 Al sodeinly hath sent him helpe,
 Whanne him thoghte alle grace aweie :
 Ther cam a fisshere in the weie,
 And sih ²⁴ a man ther naked stonde ,
 30 And whan that he hath understonde

¹ saw
² promise
³ on condition that
⁴ to land
⁵ broke asunder
⁶ clove asunder, split
⁷ plank
⁸ lost

⁹ moan
¹⁰ alone
¹¹ plight
¹² aforetime
¹³ by reason of
¹⁴ pale
¹⁵ very
¹⁶ acold, cold

¹⁷ knew
¹⁸ remedy
¹⁹ helped
²⁰ wish (unique in this sense)
²¹ lost
²² withheld
²³ boast
²⁴ saw

The cause, he hath of him gret routhe,¹
 And, onliche ² of his povere trouthe,³
 Of suche clothes as he hadde
 With gret pite this lord he cladde.
 And he him thonketh as he scholde, 5
 And seith him that it schal be yolde,⁴
 If evere he gete his stat ⁵ ayein,
 And preide that he wolde him sein ⁶
 If nyh were eny toun for him.
 He seide ' Yee,⁷ Pentapolim, 10
 Wher bothe king and queene duellen.'
 Whanne he this tale herde tellen,
 He gladeth him,⁸ and gan beseche
 That he the weie him wolde teche ⁹ ;
 And he him taghte, and forth he wente, 15
 And preide God with good entente ¹⁰
 To sende him joie after his sorwe
 It was noght passed yit mid-morwe,¹¹
 Whan thiderward his weie he nam,¹²
 Wher sone ¹³ upon the non ¹⁴ he cam 20
 He eet such as he myhte gete,
 And forth anon, whan he hadde ete,
 He goth to se the toun aboute,
 And cam ther as ¹⁵ he fond a route
 Of yonge lusti men withalle ; 25
 And as it scholde tho befalle,
 That day was set of such assise ¹⁶
 That thei scholde, in the londes guise,¹⁷
 As he herde of the poeple seie,
 Here ¹⁸ comun game thanne pleie : 30
 And crid ¹⁹ was that thei scholden come

¹ ruth, pity² only³ loyalty⁴ repaid⁵ state, dignity⁶ say⁷ yea⁸ himself⁹ point out, show¹⁰ intent¹¹ mid-morning¹² took¹³ soon¹⁴ noon¹⁵ where¹⁶ manner; MS. *assise*¹⁷ fashion¹⁸ their¹⁹ cried

Unto the gamen ¹ alle and some ²
 Of hem that ben delivere ³ and wyhte,⁴
 To do such maistrie ⁵ as thei myhte.
 Thei made hem naked as thei scholde,
 5 For so that ilke ⁶ game wolde,⁷
 As it was tho custume and us ⁸,
 Amonges hem was no refus ⁹
 The flour of al the toun was there,
 And of the court also ther were ;
 10 And that was in a large place
 Riht evene ¹⁰ afore the kinges face,
 Which Artestrathes ¹¹ thanne hihte.¹²
 The pley was pleid riht in his sihte,
 And who most worthi was of dede
 15 Receive he scholde a certein mede,¹³
 And in the cite here a pris ¹⁴
 Appolunus, which, war ¹⁵ and wys,
 Of every game couthe ¹⁶ an ende,¹⁷
 He thoghte assaie,¹⁸ hou so it wende,¹⁹
 20 And fell among hem into game ,
 And there he wan him such a name,
 So as the king himself acompteth,²⁰
 That he alle othre men surmonteth,
 And bar the pris above hem alle.
 25 The king bad that into his halle
 At souper-time he schal be broght ,
 And he cam thanne, and lefte ²¹ it noght
 Withoute compaignie, alone
 Was non so semlich ²² of persone,
 30 Of visage and of limes ²³ bothe,

¹ games
² one and all
³ active
⁴ nimble
⁵ feat
⁶ same
⁷ required
⁸ use

⁹ refusal
¹⁰ directly
¹¹ Arcestrates
¹² was called
¹³ reward
¹⁴ prize
¹⁵ wary
¹⁶ knew

¹⁷ an ende = pretty thoroughly
¹⁸ to try
¹⁹ might turn out
²⁰ deems
²¹ neglected
²² seemly
²³ limbs

If that he hadde what to clothe¹;
 At souper-time, natheles,
 The king amiddes al the pres²
 Let³ clepe⁴ him up among hem alle,
 And bad his mareschall⁵ of halle 5
 To setten him in such degre⁶
 That he upon him myhte se.
 The king was sone set and served,
 And he, which hath his pris deserved
 After the kinges oghne⁷ word, 10
 Was mad beginne⁸ a middel bord,⁹
 That bothe king and queene him sihe.¹⁰
 He sat and caste aboute his yhe,
 And sih the lordes in astat,¹¹
 And with himself wax¹² in debat, 15
 Thenkende¹³ what he hadde lore¹⁴;
 And such a sorwe he tok therfore,
 That he sat evere stille and thoghte,
 As he which of no mete¹⁵ roghte¹⁶
 The king behield his hevynesse,¹⁷ 20
 And, of his grete gentillesse,
 His doghter, which was fair and good,
 And ate¹⁸ bord before him stod,
 As it was thilke¹⁹ time usage,²⁰
 He bad to gon on his message, 25
 And fonde²¹ for to make him glad.
 And sche dede as hire fader bad,
 And goth to him the softe pas,²²
 And axeth whenne²³ and what he was,
 And preith he scholde his thoghtes leve.²⁴ 30

¹ wear² press, crowd³ bade⁴ to call⁵ marshal⁶ station⁷ own⁸ to begin, sit at the head of⁹ table¹⁰ might see¹¹ state¹² grew¹³ thinking¹⁴ lost¹⁵ food¹⁶ took account, recked¹⁷ sadness¹⁸ at the¹⁹ that²⁰ custom²¹ attempt²² pace²³ whence²⁴ abandon

He seith: 'Madame, be ¹ your leve,
 Mi name is hote ² Appolinus,
 And of mi richesse it is thus —
 Upon the see I have it lore
 5 The contre wher as I was bore,
 Wher that my lond is and mi rente,³
 I lefte at Tyr, whan that I wente,
 The worschipe ⁴ of this worldes aghte,⁵
 Unto the god ther I betaghte ⁶ '
 10 And thus togedre as thei tuo speeke,
 The teres runne be ⁷ his cheeke
 The king, which therof tok good kepe,⁸
 Hath gret pite to sen him wepe,
 And for his doghter sende ayein,
 15 And preide hir faire, and gan to sein ⁹
 That sche no lengere wolde drecche,¹⁰
 Bot that sche wolde anon forth fecche
 Hire harpe, and don al that sche can
 To glade with ¹¹ that sory man.
 20 And sche, to don hir fader ¹² heste,¹³
 Hir harpe fette,¹⁴ and, in the feste,¹⁵
 Upon a chaier which thei fette
 Hirsself next to this man sche sette,
 With harpe bothe, and ek with mouthe,
 25 To him sche dede al that sche couthe
 To make him chiere ¹⁶ — and evere he siketh ¹⁷,
 And sche him axeth hou him liketh.¹⁸
 'Madame, certes ¹⁹ wel,' he seide,
 'Bot, if ye the mesure pleide
 30 Which, if you list, I schal you here,²⁰
 It were a glad thing for to hieie.'

¹ by
² called
³ income
⁴ honor
⁵ goods
⁶ committed
⁷ along, down

⁸ heed
⁹ say
¹⁰ delay
¹¹ with which to gladden
¹² father's
¹³ command
¹⁴ fetched

¹⁵ feast
¹⁶ entertainment
¹⁷ sighs
¹⁸ it pleases him
¹⁹ certainly
²⁰ teach

' Ha, lieve sire,¹ ' tho² quod sche,
 ' Now tak the harpe, and let me se
 Of what mesure that ye mene.'
 Tho preith the king, tho preith the queene,
 Forth with³ the lordes alle arewe,⁴ 5
 That he som merthe wolde schewe;
 He takth the harpe, and in his wise
 He tempreth,⁵ and of such assise⁶
 Singende he harpeth forth withal,
 That as a vois celestial 10
 Hem thoghte⁷ it souneth in here ere,
 As thogh that he an angel were.
 Thei gladen of his melodie;
 Bot, most of all the compainie,
 The kinges doghter, which it herde, 15
 And thoghte ek⁸ hou that he ansuerde,
 Whan that he was of⁹ hire opposed,¹⁰
 Withinne hir herte hath wel supposed
 That he is of gret gentillesse.
 Hise dedes ben therof witnesse, 20
 Forth with the wisdom of his lore,
 It nedeth noght to seche¹¹ more —
 He myhte noght have such manere,
 Of gentil blod bot-if¹² he were.
 Whanne he hath harped al his fille, 25
 The kinges heste to fulfille,
 Away goth dissh, away goth cuppe,
 Doun goth the bord, the cloth was uppe,
 Thei risen and gon out of halle.
 The king his chamberleyn let calle, 30
 And bad that he be alle weie¹³
 A chambre for this man pourveie,¹⁴

¹ dear sir² then³ together with⁴ successively (in a row)⁵ tunes⁶ in such manner⁷ it seemed to them⁸ eke, also⁹ by¹⁰ questioned¹¹ seek¹² unless¹³ without fail¹⁴ purvey, provide

Which nyh his oghne chambre be.¹
 ' It schal be do,² mi lord,' quod he.
 Appolinus, of whom I mene,³
 Tho tok his leve of king and queene,
 5 And of the worthi maide also,
 Which preide unto hir fader tho
 That sche myhte of that yonge man
 Of tho⁴ sciences whiche he can⁵
 His lore⁶ have, and in this wisc
 10 The king hir granteth his aprise,⁷
 So that himself therto assente
 Thus was acorded, er thei wente,
 That he, with al that evere he may,
 This yonge faire freisshe may⁸
 15 Of that he couthe scholde enforme,
 And, full assented in this forme,
 Thei token leve as for that nyht.
 And, whanne it was amorwe⁹ lyht,
 Unto this yonge man of Tyr
 20 Of clothes and of good atir,
 With gold and selver to despende,¹⁰
 This worthi yonge lady sende;
 And thus sche made him wel at ese;
 And he, with al that he can plese,
 25 Hire serveth wel and faire¹¹ ayein.
 He tawhte hir til sche was certein
 Of harpe, of citole,¹² and of rote,¹³
 With many a tun¹⁴ and many a note
 Upon musique, upon mesure,
 30 And of hire harpe the temprure¹⁵
 He tawhte hire ek, as he wel couthe.

¹ should be² done³ make mention⁴ those⁵ knows⁶ teaching⁷ instruction⁸ damsel⁹ in the morning¹⁰ spend¹¹ fairly¹² dulcimer¹³ violin¹⁴ tune¹⁵ tuning

Bot, as men sein that frele¹ is youthe,
 With leisir² and continuance
 This mayde fell upon a chance,
 That Love hath mad him³ a querele⁴
 Ayein hire youthe freissh and frele, 5
 That malgre⁵ wher⁶ sche wole⁷ or noght,
 Sche mot⁸ with al hire hertes thoght
 To Love and to his lawe obeie;
 And that sche schal ful sore abeie,⁹
 For sche wot¹⁰ nevere what it is, 10
 Bot evere among¹¹ sche fieleth¹² this.
 Thenkende upon this man of Tyr,
 Hire herte is hot as eny fyr,
 And otherwhile it is acale;
 Now is sche red, nou is sche pale, 15
 Riht after the condicion
 Of hire ymaginacion,
 Bot evere among hire thoghtes alle,
 Sche thoghte, what so mai befallē,
 Or¹³ that sche lawhe,¹⁴ or that sche wepe, 20
 Sche wolde hire goode name kepe,
 For feere of wommanysshe¹⁵ schame.
 Bot, what in earnest and in game,
 Sche stant¹⁶ for love in such a plit¹⁷
 That sche hath lost al appetit 25
 Of mete, of drinke, of nyhtes reste,
 As sche that not¹⁸ what is the beste.
 Bot, for to thenken al hir fille,
 Sche held¹⁹ hire ofte times stille
 Withinne hir chambre, and goth noght oute, 30

¹ frail
² leisure
³ for himself
⁴ attack
⁵ in spite of
⁶ whether
⁷ will

⁸ must
⁹ atone for
¹⁰ knows
¹¹ in the course (of things)
¹² feels
¹³ whether
¹⁴ laugh

¹⁵ womanly
¹⁶ stands
¹⁷ plight
¹⁸ knows not
¹⁹ held

The king was of hire lif in doute,
 Which wiste nothing what it mente.
 Bot fell a time, as he out wente
 To walke, of princes sones thre
 5 Ther come and felle to his kne ,
 And ech of hem in sondri wise
 Besoghte and profreth his servise,
 So that he myhte his doghter have.
 The king, which wolde his honour save,
 10 Seith sche is siek,¹ and of that speche
 Tho² was no time to beseche ,
 Bot ech of hem do make³ a bille⁴
 He bad, and wryte his oghne wille,
 His name, his fader, and his good⁵ ,
 15 And whan sche wiste hou that it stod,
 And hadde here⁶ billes oversein,⁷
 Thei scholden have ansuere ayem.
 Of this conseil thei weren glad,
 And writen as the king hem bad ;
 20 And every man his oghne bok
 Into the kinges hond betok,⁸
 And he it to his dowhter sende,
 And preide hir tor to make an ende
 And wryte ayem hire oghne hond,
 25 Riht⁹ as sche in hire herte fond.
 The billes weren wel received ;
 Bot sche hath alle here loves weyved,¹⁰
 And thoghte tho was time and space
 To put hire in hir fader¹¹ grace,
 30 And wrot ayem, and thus sche saide :
 ' The schame which is in a maide
 With speche dar noght ben unloke,¹²

¹ sick² then³ cause to make, have made⁴ memorandum⁵ property⁶ their⁷ looked over⁸ delivered⁹ just¹⁰ put aside, rejected¹¹ father's¹² unlocked

Bot in writinge it mai be spoke;
 So wryte I to you, fader, thus:
 Bot-if I have Appolinus,
 Of al this world, what so betyde,
 I wol non other man abide, 5
 And certes if I of him faile,
 I wot riht wel, withoute faile,
 Ye schull for me be dowhterles.
 This lettre cam, and ther was press
 Tofore¹ the king, ther as² he stod, 10
 And whan that he it understod,
 He yaf³ hem ansuer by and by⁴;
 Bot that was do⁵ so prively
 That non of othres conseil wiste.
 Thei toke her leve, and wher hem liste⁶ 15
 Thei wente forth upon here weie.

ÆSON'S RESTORATION TO YOUTH

5 3945-4174

Jason, which sih his fader old,
 Upon Medca made him⁷ bold
 Of art magique, which sche couthe,⁸
 And preith hire that his fader⁹ youthe 2
 Sche wolde make ayeinward¹⁰ newe,
 And sche, that was toward him trewe,
 Behihte¹¹ him that sche wolde it do,
 Whan that sche time sawh therto.
 Bot what sche dede in that matiere¹² 23
 It is a wonder thing to hiere;
 Bot yit, for the novellerie,¹³
 I thanke tellen a partie¹⁴

¹ before
² where
³ gave
⁴ directly
⁵ done

⁶ it was pleasing to them
⁷ himself
⁸ knew
⁹ father's
¹⁰ again

¹¹ promised
¹² matter
¹³ novelty
¹⁴ part

Thus it befell upon a nyht,
 Whan ther was noght bot sterreliht,
 Sche was vanyssht riht as hir liste,¹
 That no wyht bot hirself it wiste,
 5 And that was ate ² mydnyht-tyde.
 The world was stille on every side;
 With open hed and fot al bare,
 Hir her ³ tosprad,⁴ sche gan to fare;
 Upon hir clothes gert ⁵ sche was.
 10 Al specheles,⁶ and on the gras,
 Sche glod ⁷ forth as an addre doth —
 Non otherwise sche ne goth —
 Til sche cam to the freisshe flod;
 And there a while sche with ⁸ stod.
 15 Thries sche torned hire aboute,
 And thries ek sche gan doun loute,
 And in the flod sche wette hir her,
 And thries on the water ther
 Sche gaspeth with a drecchunge ⁹ onde,¹⁰
 20 And tho sche tok hir speche on honde.
 Ferst sche began to clepe ¹¹ and calle
 Upward unto the sterres alle,
 To wynd, to air, to see, to lond,
 Sche preide, and ek hield up hir hond
 25 To Echates ¹² — and gan to crie —
 Whiche is goddessse of sorcerie.
 Sche seide ' Helpeth ¹³ at this nede,
 And, as ye maden me to spede ¹⁴
 Whan Jason cam the flees to seche,
 30 So help me nou, I you beseche.'
 With that sche loketh, and was war
 Doun fro the sky ther cam a char,¹⁵

¹ pleased² at the³ hair⁴ spread abroad (Lat. *nudos humeris infusa capillos*)⁵ girt (Lat. *vestes induta recinctas*)⁶ Lat. *per muta silentia noctis*⁷ glided⁸ by, near⁹ troubled, agonizing¹⁰ breath¹¹ cry¹² Hecate¹³ help¹⁴ succeed¹⁵ chariot

The which dragouns aboute drowe¹;
 And tho sche gan hir hed doun bowe,
 And up sche styh,² and faire and wel
 Sche drof³ forth bothe char and whel⁴
 Above in th' air among the skyes. 5
 The lond of Crete and tho⁵ parties⁶
 Sche soughte, and faste gan hire hye,⁷
 And there, upon the hulles⁸ hyhe
 Of Othrin and Olmpe also,
 And ek of othre hulles mo,⁹ 10
 Sche fond¹⁰ and gadreth herbes suote¹¹;
 Sche pulleth up som be the rote,
 And manye with a knyf sche scherth,¹²
 And alle into hir char sche berth.
 Thus whan sche hath the hulles sought, 15
 The flodes ther foryat sche nought¹³ —
 Eridian and Amphrisos,
 Peneie and ek Spercheidos,
 To hem sche wente, and ther sche nom¹⁴
 Bothe of the water and the fom, 20
 The sond, and ek the smale stones —
 Whiche as sche ches¹⁵ out for the nones¹⁶,
 And of the Rede See a part
 That was behovelich¹⁷ to hire art

1 drew
 2 ascended
 3 drove
 4 wheel
 5 those
 6 parts

7 hie, hasten
 8 hills
 9 more
 10 found
 11 sweet
 12 shears

13 not
 14 took
 15 chose
 16 nonce
 17 needful

6. *Crete*: this reposes upon a corrupt reading of the Latin; read perhaps 'Thrace'

9. *Othrin*: *Othrys*; *Medea* flies in a circuit about *Thessaly*

17. *Eridian*: not the *Eridanus* (Po), but the *Apidanus*, one of the tributaries of the *Peneus*, which flows through the vale of *Tempe*. — *Amphrisos*: a small river flowing northeast into the modern Gulf of *Volos*

18. *Spercheidos*: the *Spercheius* is south of the preceding

23. *Rede See*: *Macaulay* suggests that Gower read 'rubrum' for the 'refluum' of Ovid's line 267.

- Sche tok ; and, after that, aboute
 Sche soughte sondri sedes oute
 In felde, and in many greves¹,
 And ek a part sche tok of leves,
 5 Bot thing which mihte hire most availe
 Sche fond in Crete² and in Thessaile.
 In daies and in nyhtes nyne,
 With gret travaile and with gret pyne³
 Sche was pourveid⁴ of every piece,
 10 And torneth homward into Grece.
 Before the gates of Eson
 Hir char sche let awai to gon,
 And tok out ferst that was therinne ;
 For tho sche thoghte to beginne
 15 Such thing as semeth impossible,
 And made hirselven invisible,
 As sche that was with air enclosed,
 And mihte of no man be desclosed.
 Sche tok up turves of the lond,
 20 Withoute helpe of mannes hond,
 Al heled⁵ with the grene gras,
 Of which an alter mad ther was
 Unto Echates the goddesse
 Of art magique and the maistresse,
 25 And eft another to Juvente,⁶
 As sche which dede hir hole⁷ entente.
 Tho tok sche fieldwode⁸ and verveyne —
 Of herbes ben noght betre tueine —
 Of which anon, withoute let,⁹
 30 These alters ben aboute set
 Tuo sondri puttes¹⁰ faste¹¹ by
 Sche made, and with that hastily

¹ groves² See note on l 6, p. 47³ MS *peyne*⁴ provided⁵ covered⁶ Youth (Hebe)⁷ whole⁸ woodland-growth, Lat
silva agresti, literally
translated⁹ hindrance, we still say with
out let or hindrance¹⁰ pits¹¹ near

A wether which was blak sche slouh,¹
 And out therof the blod sche drouh,
 And dede into the pettes² tuo ;
 Warm melk sche putte also therto,
 With hony meynd³, and in such wise 5
 Sche gan to make hir sacrifice,
 And cride and preide forth withal
 To Pluto the god infernal,
 And to the queene Proserpine.
 And so sche soghte out al the line 10
 Of hem that longen⁴ to that craft —
 Behinde was no name laft —
 And preide hem⁵ alle, as sche wel couthe,
 To grantc Eson his ferste youthe.
 This olde Eson broght forth was tho ; 15
 Awei sche bad alle othre⁶ go
 Upon peril that mihte falle ,
 And with that word thei wenten alle,
 And leften there hem tuo alone
 And tho sche gan to gaspe and gone,⁷ 20
 And made signes many on,
 And seide hir wordes therupon ,
 So that, with spellinge of hir charmes,
 Sche tok Eson in bothe hire armes,
 And made him for to slepe faste, 25
 And him upon hire herbes caste.
 The blake wether tho sche tok,
 And hiewh⁸ the fleissh, as doth a cok ;
 On either alter part sche leide,
 And, with the charmes that sche seide, 30
 A fvr down fro the sky alyhte,
 And made it for to brenne lyhte.

¹ slew
² pits

³ mingled
⁴ belong

⁵ them
⁶ others

⁷ gape
⁸ hewed

Bot whan Medea sawh it brenne,
 Anon sche gan to sterte and renne¹
 The fyrn aulters al aboute.
 Ther was no beste² which goth oute
 5 More wylde than sche semeth ther :
 Aboute hir schuldres hyng³ hir her,
 As thogh sche were oute of hir mynde,
 And torned in another kynde.⁴
 Tho lay ther certein wode cleft,
 10 Of which the pieces nou and eft⁵
 Sche made hem in the pettes wete,⁶
 And put hem in the fyrn hete,
 And tok the brond with al the blase,
 And thries sche began to rase⁷
 15 Aboute Eson, ther as he slepte ,
 And eft with water, which sche kepte,
 Sche made a cercle aboute him thries,
 And eft with fyr of sulphre twyes ;
 Ful many another thing sche dede,
 20 Which is noght writen in this stede.⁸
 Bot tho sche ran so up and down,
 Sche made many a wonder⁹ soun,¹⁰
 Somtime lich¹¹ unto the cock,
 Somtime unto the lavcrok,¹²
 25 Somtime kacleth as a hen,
 Somtime spekth as don the men ,
 And riht so as hir jargoun strangeth,¹³
 In sondri wise hir forme changeth.
 Sche semeth faie,¹⁴ and no womman ;
 30 For, with the craftes that sche can,
 Sche was, as who seith,¹⁵ a goddesse ;
 And what hir liste, more or lesse,

1 run
 2 beast
 3 hung
 4 turned to another nature
 5 again

6 wet
 7 race
 8 place
 9 wonderful
 10 sound

11 like
 12 lark
 13 grows strange
 14 fay, fairy
 15 as one might say

Sche dede,¹ in bokes as we finde,
 That passeth over mannes kinde²
 Bot who that wole³ of wondres hiere —
 What thing sche wroghte in this matiere,
 To make an ende of that sche gan —
 Such merveile herde nevere man.

5

Apointed in the newe mone,
 Whan it was time for to done,
 Sche sette a caldron on the fyr,
 In which was al the hole atir⁴
 Wheron the medicine stod —
 Of jus,⁵ of water, and of blod —
 And let it buile⁶ in such a plit,⁷
 Til that sche sawh the spume⁸ whyt;
 And tho sche caste in rynde and rote,⁹
 And sed and flour¹⁰ that was for bote,¹¹
 With many an herbe and many a ston,
 Wherof sche hath ther many on.
 And ek Cimpheius the serpent
 To hire hath alle his scales lent;
 Chelidre hire yaf his addres skin,
 And sche to builen caste hem in;
 A part ek of the horned oule,
 The which men hiere on nyhtes houle;
 And of a raven, which was told¹²
 Of nyne hundred wynter old,
 Sche tok the hed with al the bile¹³;
 And as the medicine it wile,

10

15

20

25

¹ did² surpasses human nature³ will⁴ preparatoun⁵ juice⁶ boil⁷ manner⁸ foam⁹ rind and root¹⁰ flower¹¹ remedy¹² reckoned¹³ bill

20. Here the Latin has *nec defuit illic Squamea Cinyphi tenuis membrana chelydri* (*Met.* 7 271–2), which King translates 'skin membranous Of Afric's tortoise caught by Cinyphs' banks'; Gower quite misunderstands — Cf Shakespeare's 'fillet of a fenny snake' (*Macb* 4 1. 12)

Sche tok thereafter the bouele
 Of the seewolf,¹ and for the hele²
 Of Eson, with a thousand mo
 Of thinges that sche hadde tho,
 5 In that caldroun togedre, as blyve,³
 Sche putte, and tok thanne of olyve
 A drie branche hem with to stere,⁴
 The which anon gan floure⁵ and bere,
 And waxe al freissh and grene ayein.
 10 Whan sche this vertu hadde sein,⁶
 Sche let the leste drope of alle
 Upon the bare flor down falle,
 Anon ther sprong up flour and gras
 Where as the drope falle was,
 15 And wox anon al medwe-grene,⁷
 So that it mihte wel be sene
 Medea thanne knew and wiste
 Hir medicine is for to triste,⁸
 And goth to Eson ther he lay,
 20 And tok a swerd was of assay,⁹
 With which a wounde upon his side
 Sche made, that therout mai slyde
 The blod withinne, which was old
 And sek¹⁰ and trouble¹¹ and fieble and cold.
 25 And tho sche tok unto his us¹²
 Of herbes al the beste jus,
 And poured it into his wounde;
 That made his veynes fulle and sounde.
 And tho sche made his wounde clos,
 30 And tok his hand, and up he ros;

¹ shark; Ovid means the werwolf² recovery³ as quickly (as possible)⁴ to stir them with⁵ flower⁶ seen⁷ meadow-green⁸ trust⁹ proof, tried qualities¹⁰ sick¹¹ turbid¹² use

8. 'And lo! the sere wood in the caldron's heat Grew sudden green, and clad itself with leaves Afresh, and heavy drooped with berried fruit' (Ovid, tr. King).

And tho sche yaf him drink a drauhte,
 Of which his youthe¹ ayein he cauhte,²
 His hed, his herte, and his visage
 Lich unto twenty wynter age.
 Hise hore³ heres⁴ were away;
 And lich unto the freisshe Maii,
 Whan passed ben the colde schoures,⁵
 Riht so recovereth he his floures.

5

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (about 1380) has been called by Gaston Paris the jewel of English mediæval literature (*Hist Litt de la France* 30 73), and by Schofield (*Eng Lit. from the Conquest to Chaucer*, p 215) 'incomparably the best of the English romances, and one of the finest in any language' Of the unknown author Schofield adds 'Next to Chaucer his contemporary, he is perhaps the greatest of our mediæval poets'

The romance has been edited by Madden (*Syr Gawayne*, 1839, and by Morris (E.E.T S No 4), 1864 (revised by Gollancz, 1897) For general accounts of the author and his work, see *Camb Hist. Eng Lit* 1 357-373 (Gollancz), and Osgood's edition of *The Pearl*, pp. xi, xlvii-lx. A good prose translation is that by K G T Webster (Boston, 1916), and there is a humorous adaptation of the poem in modern verse by Charlton M Lewis (*Gawayne and the Green Knight: a Fairy Tale*), Boston, 1903

The story is probably from a French or Anglo-Norman source; for analogues, see Madden's edition, pp 305-7, M C Thomas, *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* (Zurich, 1883), pp 34-68, Gaston Paris, as above, 30 75-7; Weston, pp 88-102, Kittredge, *A Study of Gawain and the Green Knight* (Cambridge, 1916).

The incident of the beheading is found in the *Fled Bricrend* (translated in *Irish Texts Soc*, Vol 2), an Irish tale at least as early as 1100, in which the hero Cuchulinn undergoes the test (Gaston Paris, p 77, Weston, pp 92 ff)

It is an interesting fact that Richard-de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick (1382-1439), a reputed descendant of the legendary Guy of Warwick, and 'a brave and chivalrous warrior in an age of chivalry,' entered the lists at Guines, near Calais, in the character of 'the grene knyght' on Jan 6 (Twelfth Day) of either 1416 or 1417, and unhorsed a French knight, an exploit which he equaled on the two following days (Kittredge, *Harvard Notes* 5 94-95) A recent article, dealing with the connection between this poem and the Order of the Garter, by Isaac Jackson, will be found in *Anglia* 37. 393-423; this author

¹ youth
² caught

³ hoar
⁴ hairs, hair

⁵ showers

believes the date to be 1362. Chambers sees in the Green Knight a form of the fertilization-spirit (*The Mediæval Stage* 1. 117, 185-186)

The language of our author presents peculiar difficulties, as does that of the whole school of alliterative poets which flourished during the second half of the fourteenth and the early years of the fifteenth centuries. Of this school Gollancz (p. 373) considers that he may well have been the master.

The poem is long, and full of incident and description. Its story runs thus: While Arthur's court is feasting at Camelot on New Year's Day, a knight, all in green, and riding a green charger, rides into the hall. He challenges any knight present to give him a stroke with his battle-axe, on the understanding that it is to be rendered back to him a year later. All shrink back but Arthur's nephew, Gawain, who smites off the knight's head, whereupon the latter rides away with the head in his hand. Toward the end of the year, Gawain sets out to find the knight, whom he eventually encounters. After various temptations, he endures the return-blow—which, however, inflicts but a slight wound—and later goes back to Arthur's court. (For more extended analyses, see J. L. Weston, *Legend of Sir Gawain*, pp. 86-88; Schofield, pp. 215-217, *Camb Hist Eng. Lit.* 1. 364-365. Morris' ed., pp. viii-xxi.)

Morris has thus summarized the part of the poem which precedes our first extract: 'Arthur, the greatest of Britain's kings, holds the Christmas festival at Camelot, surrounded by the celebrated knights of the Round Table, . . . and ladies the loveliest that ever had life. This noble company celebrate the New Year by a religious service, by the bestowal of gifts, and the most joyous mirth. Lords and ladies take their seats at the table—(Queen Guenever, the grey-eyed, gaily dressed, sits at the dais. Arthur, in mood as joyful as a child, . . . declares that he will not eat nor sit long at the table until some adventurous thing has occurred to mark the return of the New Year.

'The first course [is] announced with cracking of trumpets, with the noise of nakers and noble pipes.'

Our extracts are lines 130-249, 2712-2778. The final *z* (for *i*) at the end of words is frequently represented in the MS. by *ȝ*, here it is uniformly printed as *z*.

Now wyl I of hor¹ servise say yow no more,
 For uch² wyȝe³ may wel wite⁴ no wont⁵ þat þer were;
 Anoper noyse ful newe nexed⁶ bilive,⁷
 Þat þe lude⁸ myȝt haf leve liflode⁹ to cach.¹⁰
 For uneþe¹¹ watz¹² þe noyce¹³ not a whyle¹⁴ sesed,¹⁵
 And þe fyrst cource in þe court kyndely¹⁶ served,

¹ their

² each

³ man

⁴ know

⁵ want

⁶ drew nigh

⁷ on a sudden

⁸ people

⁹ food

¹⁰ take

¹¹ scarcely

¹² was

¹³ noise (with which the first course
 was announced)

¹⁴ but just

¹⁵ ceased

¹⁶ duly

þer hales¹ in at þe halle-dor an aghlich² mayster,³
 On⁴ þe most⁵ on þe molde⁶ on mesure hyghe;
 Fro þe swyre⁷ to þe swange⁸ so sware⁹ and so pik,
 And his lyndes¹⁰ and his lymes so longe and so grete,
 Half etayn¹¹ in erde¹² I hope¹³ þat he were. 5
 Bot mon most I algate¹⁴ mynn¹⁵ hym to bene,
 And pat þe myriest¹⁶ in his muckel¹⁷ þat myxt ride;
 For of bak and of brest al¹⁸ were his bodi sturne,¹⁹
 Bot²⁰ his wombe²¹ and his wast were worthily smale,
 And alle his fetures²² folgande,²³ in forme þat he hade, 10
 Ful clene²⁴;
 For wonder of his hue²⁵ men hade,
 Set in his semblaunt²⁶ sene²⁷,
 He ferde²⁸ as²⁹ freke³⁰ were fade,³¹
 And overal³² enker-grene.³³ 15

Ande al grayped³⁴ in grene pis gome³⁵ and his wedes,³⁶
 A strayt³⁷ cote³⁸ ful strext,³⁹ þat stek on⁴⁰ his sides,
 A mere⁴¹ mantile abof, mensked⁴² withinne,
 With pelure⁴³ pured⁴⁴ apert⁴⁵ þe pane⁴⁶ ful clene,⁴⁷
 With blype⁴⁸ blaunner⁴⁹ ful bryxt, and his hod⁵⁰ bope, 20
 Pat watz lazt⁵¹ fro his lokkez, and layde on his schulderes,
 Heme⁵² wel haled,⁵³ hose of þat same grene,

1 rushes
 2 terrible
 3 lord
 4 one
 5 largest
 6 mold, earth
 7 neck
 8 loins
 9 square
 10 loins
 11 giant (OE. *eoten*)
 12 earth
 13 believe
 14 nevertheless
 15 think
 16 most agreeable (?)
 17 bigness
 18 though

19 stalwart
 20 yet
 21 belly
 22 parts of his body
 23 accordingly
 24 fine
 25 MS hwe
 26 appearance
 27 plain, manifest
 28 acted
 29 like
 30 man
 31 vigorous
 32 all over
 33 dark (inky) green
 34 arrayed
 35 man
 36 apparel

37 tight-fitting
 38 tunic
 39 (?)
 40 clung to
 41 beautiful (OE. *mære*)
 42 adorned
 43 fur
 44 shorn close, so as to show
 only one color
 45 evidently
 46 cloth
 47 fair
 48 gay
 49 (white?) fur
 50 hood
 51 caught
 52 border
 53 trimmed (?)

- þat spenet¹ on his sparlyr,² and clene spures under,
 Of bryxt golde upon silk bordes³ barred ful ryche,⁴
 And scholes⁵ under schankes,⁶ þere þe schalk⁷ rides;
 And alle his vesture verayly watz clene verdure,⁸
 5 Roþe þe barres of his belt and oþer blyþe stones,
 þat were richely rayled⁹ in his aray clene,
 Aboutte hymself and his sadel, upon silk werkez¹⁰
 þat were to tor¹¹ for to telle of tryfles þe halue,¹²
 þat were enbrauded¹³ abof wyth bryddes and flyȝes,¹⁴
 10 With gay gaudi¹⁵ grene,¹⁶ þe golde ay in myddes
 þe pendauntes of his payttrure,¹⁷ þe proude cropure,¹⁸
 His molaynes,¹⁹ and alle þe metal anamayld²⁰ was þenne;
 þe steropes þat he stod on stayned of þe same,
 And his arsounz²¹ al after, and his aþel²² sturtes,²³
 15 þat ever glemered²⁴ and glent²⁵ al of grene stones.
 þe fole²⁶ þat he ferkkes²⁷ on, fyn²⁸ of þat ilke,²⁹

Sertayn³⁰;

- A grene hors gret and þikke,
 A stede ful stif to strayne,³¹
 20 In brawdren³² brydel quik,³³
 To þe gome he watz ful gayn.³⁴

- Wel gay watz þis gome gered³⁵ in grene,
 And þe here of his hed of his hors swete³⁶,
 Fayre fannand³⁷ fax³⁸ umbefoldes³⁹ his schulderes;
 25 A much⁴⁰ berd as a busk⁴¹ over his brest henges,

¹ fastened

² calf

³ edges

⁴ richly

⁵ (?)

⁶ legs

⁷ man

⁸ pure green

⁹ disposed

¹⁰ works

¹¹ too tedious

¹² half

¹³ embroidered

¹⁴ flies

¹⁵ yellowish

¹⁶ MS of grene

¹⁷ poutrel, horse's breastplate

¹⁸ crupper

¹⁹ bits

²⁰ enameled

²¹ saddle-bows

²² noble

²³ stirrups (?)

²⁴ gleamed

²⁵ sparkled

²⁶ foal, steed

²⁷ pushes forward

²⁸ fine, choice

²⁹ same (color)

³⁰ certainly

³¹ curb

³² embroidered

³³ lively

³⁴ obedient

³⁵ arrayed

³⁶ fine

³⁷ waving

³⁸ hair

³⁹ falls about

⁴⁰ great

⁴¹ bush

þat wyth his higlich ¹ here, þat of his hed reches,
 Watz evesed ² al umbetorne, ³ abof his elbowes,
 þat half his armes þerunder were halched ⁴ in þe wyse
 Of a kynges capados, ⁵ þat closes ⁶ his swyre.
 Þe mane of þat mayn ⁷ hors much to hit lyke, 5
 Wel cresped ⁸ and cemmed ⁹ wyth knottes ful mony,
 Folden in wyth fildore ¹⁰ aboute þe fayre grene,
 Ay a ¹¹ herle ¹² of þe here, anoper of golde,
 Þe tayl and his toppyng ¹³ twynnen ¹⁴ of a sute, ¹⁵
 And bounden bope wyth a bande of a bryxt grene, 10
 Dubbed ¹⁶ wyth ful dere stonez, as þe dok lasted, ¹⁷
 Sypen ¹⁸ þrawn ¹⁹ wyth a þwong ²⁰ a þwarle ²¹ knot alofte,
 Þer mony bellez ful bryxt of brende ²² golde rungen.
 Such a fole upon folde, ²³ ne freke þat hym rydes,
 Watz never sene in þat sale ²⁴ wyth syxt er þat tyme, 15
 With yge ²⁵;

He loked as layt ²⁶ so lygt, ²⁷
 So sayd al þat hym syge, ²⁸
 Hit semed as no mon myxt
 Under his dynttez ²⁹ dryge ³⁰ 20

Wheþer ³¹ hade he no helme ne hawb[e]rgh nauþer, ³²
 Ne no pysan, ³³ ne no plate þat pented ³⁴ to armes,
 Ne no schafte, ³⁵ ne no schelde, to schune ³⁶ ne to smyte,
 Bot in his on ³⁷ honde he hade a holyn bobbe, ³⁸
 þat is grattest ³⁹ in grene when grevez ⁴⁰ ar bare, 25

¹ splendid² clipped³ around⁴ enlaced (with the hair)⁵ hood⁶ encloses⁷ great⁸ crisped⁹ combed¹⁰ gold thread¹¹ one¹² filament, hair¹³ crest (mane)¹⁴ matched¹⁵ kind¹⁶ adorned¹⁷ as far as the dock (fleshy
part) extended¹⁸ beyond that point¹⁹ twisted²⁰ thong²¹ tight (?)²² burnished²³ earth²⁴ hall²⁵ eye²⁶ lightning²⁷ bright²⁸ saw²⁹ strokes³⁰ endure³¹ yet³² neither³³ gorget³⁴ pertained³⁵ spear³⁶ protect, MS *schwne*³⁷ one³⁸ holly-branch³⁹ most pronounced⁴⁰ groves

And an ax in his oþer, a hoge¹ and unmete,²
 A spetos³ sparþe⁴ to expoun in spelle quoso myxt⁵;
 Þe hede of an elnþerde,⁶ þe large lenkþe⁷ hade,
 Þe grayn⁸ al of grene stele and of golde hewen,
 5 Þe bit⁹ burnyst bryxt, with a brod egge,¹⁰
 As wel schapen to schere¹¹ as scharp rasores;
 Þe stele¹² of a stuf staf þe sturne¹³ hit¹⁴ bigrypte,¹⁵
 Þat watz wounden¹⁶ wyth ym to þe wandez¹⁷ ende,
 And al bigraven¹⁸ with grene, in gracious¹⁹ werkes²⁰;
 10 A lace²¹ lapped aboute, þat louked²² at þe hede,
 And so after²³ þe halme²⁴ halched²⁵ ful ofte,
 Wyth tryed²⁶ tasselez þerto²⁷ tacched²⁸ innoghe²⁹
 On³⁰ botounz³¹ of þe bryxt grene brayden³² ful rychen.
 Þis hapel³³ heldez hym in,³⁴ and þe halle entres,
 15 Drivande to þe heze dece,³⁵ dut³⁶ he no woþe,³⁷
 Haylsed³⁸ he never one, bot heze he overloked³⁹
 Þe fyrst word þat he warp⁴⁰: 'Wher is,' he sayd,
 'Þe governour of þis gyng⁴¹? Gladly I wolde
 Se þat segg⁴² in syxt, and with hymself speke
 20

Raysoun.'

To knyxtes he kest⁴³ his yge,
 And reled⁴⁴ hym up and doun,
 He stemmed,⁴⁵ and con⁴⁶ studie
 Quo⁴⁷ walt⁴⁸ þer most renoun.

¹ huge

² immense

³ cruel

⁴ sparþ, battle-axe

⁵ whoever might try to make it
clear in speech

⁶ ell (long)

⁷ length

⁸ blade

⁹ cutting end

¹⁰ edge

¹¹ shear

¹² handle

¹³ firmly

¹⁴ it (the axe-head)

¹⁵ gripped, clasped

¹⁶ MS waunden

¹⁷ wand's, handle's

¹⁸ engraved

¹⁹ charming

²⁰ devices

²¹ cord

²² had a fastening

²³ along

²⁴ haulm, stalk (i.e. handle)

²⁵ caught

²⁶ choice

²⁷ to the cord

²⁸ attached

²⁹ sufficiently, MS. innoghee

³⁰ by means of

³¹ buttons

³² braided (i.e. the buttons)

³³ noble

³⁴ takes his way

³⁵ dais

³⁶ feared

³⁷ injury

³⁸ saluted

³⁹ looked (loftly,

⁴⁰ flung

⁴¹ company

⁴² man

⁴³ cast

⁴⁴ strode

⁴⁵ halted

⁴⁶ began

⁴⁷ who

⁴⁸ bore

Ther watz loking on lenþe,¹ þe lude² to beholde,
 For uch mon had mervayle quat hit mene mygt,
 Þat a hapel and a horse mygt such a hue lach,³
 As growe grene⁴ as þe gres — and grener hit semed,
 Þen⁵ g^{re}ne aumayl⁶ on golde lowande⁷ brygter. 5
 Al studied þat þer stod, and stalked hym nerre,⁸
 Wyth al þe wonder of⁹ þe worlde, what he worch¹⁰ schulde.
 For fele¹¹ sellyez¹² had þay sen, bot such never are,¹³
 Forþi¹⁴ for fantoum and fayryze¹⁵ þe folk þer hit demed;
 Þerfore to answere watz arge¹⁶ mony apel¹⁷ freke,¹⁸ 10
 And al stouned¹⁹ at his steven,²⁰ and ston-stil seten²¹
 In a swoghe²² sylence þurg þe sale²³ riche,
 As al were slypped upon²⁴ slepe — so slaked²⁵ hor²⁶ lotez²⁷ —
 In hyge²⁸;
 I deme hit not²⁹ al for doute,³⁰ 15
 Bot sum³¹ for cortaysye —
 Bot let³² hym³³ þat al schulde loute³⁴
 Cast³⁵ unto þat wyge.³⁶

When the time of the return visit approaches (see introductory note), Gawain sets out, and on Christmas Eve reaches a castle, where he is hospitably received by its lord and lady. Here he learns that the Green Chapel, his destination, is only two miles distant, and accordingly accepts an invitation to stay till New Year's morning. During the host's hunting-expeditions, his wife makes love to Gawain, but is unsuccessful in her endeavors; the kisses she bestows upon him are by him passed on to the host at nightfall. However, Gawain does accept from the lady a green girdle, which is to render him secure from every danger. On his resort to the Green Chapel, he hears the sound as of a blade sharpened on a grindstone.

¹ for a long time² man³ obtain⁴ as to grow as green⁵ than⁶ enamel⁷ shining⁸ nearer⁹ in¹⁰ do¹¹ many¹² wonders¹³ before¹⁴ wherefore¹⁵ enchantment¹⁶ timid¹⁷ noble¹⁸ knight¹⁹ were astonished²⁰ voice²¹ sat²² impotent, dead²³ hall²⁴ as if all had slipped (slid)

into sleep

²⁵ relaxed (or subdued)²⁶ their²⁷ features (or looks, possibly voices)²⁸ haste²⁹ was not³⁰ fear³¹ but that some were silent³² but that they let³³ Arthur³⁴ reverence³⁵ make advances (?)³⁶ champion

- Thenne þe knyxt con calle ful hyȝe¹
 'Who stigtlez² in þis sted,³ me steven⁴ to holde?'
 For now is gode Gawayn goande⁵ ryȝt here,
 if any wyȝe⁶ oȝt⁷ wyl, wynne⁸ hider fast,
 5 Oþer⁹ now oþer¹⁰ never, his nedeȝ¹¹ to spede.¹²
 'Abyde,' quoth on on þe bonke, aboveri over his hede,
 'And þou schal haf al in hast þat I þe hyȝt¹³ ones¹⁴.'
 Ȝet he¹⁵ rusched on¹⁶ þat rurde¹⁷ rapely¹⁸ a þrowe,¹⁹
 And wyth²⁰ quettyng²¹ awharf,²² er²³ he wolde lyȝt²⁴,
 10 And syþen²⁵ he keverez²⁶ bi a cragge, and comeȝ of²⁷ a hole,
 Whyrlande out of a wro,²⁸ wyth a felle²⁹ weppen,
 A Denez³⁰ ax nwe³¹ dyȝt,³² þe dynt with [t]o ȝelde³³
 With a borelych³⁴ bytte,³⁵ bende³⁶ by þe halme,
 Fyled in a fylor,³⁷ fowre fote large³⁸ —
 15 Hit watz no lasse — bi þat lace þat lemed³⁹ ful bryȝt.
 And þe gome in þe grene, gered as fyrst —
 Boþe þe lyre⁴⁰ and þe leggeȝ, lokkez and berde —
 Save þat fayre on his fote⁴¹ he foundez⁴² on þe crpe,
 Sette þe stele⁴³ to the stone,⁴⁴ and stalked bysyde
 20 When he wan to⁴⁵ þe watter, þer he wade nolde,
 He hypped⁴⁶ over on hys ax, and orpedly⁴⁷ strydeȝ,
 Bremlȝ⁴⁸ broþe,⁴⁹ on a bent,⁵⁰ þat brode watz aboute,
 On snawe.⁵¹

1 loudly
 2 dwell,
 3 place
 4 word, promise
 5 walking
 6 man
 7 anything
 8 let him win (speed)
 9 either
 10 or
 11 needs
 12 obtain
 13 promised
 14 once
 15 the Green Knight
 16 rushed back to
 17 din (made by the grinding)

18 forthwith
 19 (for) a time
 20 to
 21 whetting
 22 turned aside
 23 before
 24 approach
 25 afterwards
 26 makes his way
 27 out of
 28 nook
 29 cruel
 30 Danish
 31 newly
 32 made ready
 33 bestow
 34 stout

35 edge
 36 bent
 37 filing instrument
 38 broad
 39 gleamed
 40 face
 41 (instead of on horseback)
 42 walks
 43 pole
 44 (on which he walked)
 45 reached
 46 leaped
 47 boldly
 48 vehemently
 49 impetuous
 50 open field
 51 snow

Syr Gawayn þe knygt con mete,
 He ne lutte ¹ hym noþyng lowe,
 þat oþer sayde: 'Now, syr swete,
 Of steven ² mon ³ may þe trowe.⁴'

'Gawayn,' quoth þat grene gome, 'God þe mot loke ⁵ 5
 Iwysse ⁶ þou art welcom, wyge, to my place,
 And þou hatz tymed þi travayl ⁷ as true mon schulde;
 And þou knowez þe cove나untez kest ⁸ uus bytwene:
 At þis tyme twelmonyth þou toke þat ⁹ þe falled,¹⁰
 And I schulde at þis nwe gere ȝeþly ¹¹ þe quyte ¹² 10
 And we ar in þis valay, verayly oure one,¹³
 Here ar no renkes ¹⁴ us to rydde,¹⁵ rele ¹⁶ as uus likez;
 Haf þy ¹⁷ þy helme of ¹⁸ þy hede, and haf here þy pay;
 Busk ¹⁹ no more debate þen I þe bede ²⁰ þenne,
 When þou wypped ²¹ of my hede at a wap one ²² 15
 'Nay, bi God,' quoth Gawayn, 'þat ²³ me gost ²⁴ lante,²⁵
 I schal gruch ²⁶ þe no grwe,²⁷ for grem ²⁸ þat fallez,
 Bot styxtel ²⁹ þe upon on strok, and I schal stonde styлле,
 And warp ³⁰ þe no wernying,³¹ to worch as þe lykez,
 No whare.' 20

He lened with þe nek, and lutte,
 And schewed þat schyre al bare,
 And lette ³² as ³³ he noȝt dutte,³⁴
 For drede he wolde not dare.³⁵

1 bowed
 2 promise
 3 one
 4 believe
 5 keep, preserve
 6 surely
 7 journey
 8 cast, made
 9 what
 10 fell
 11 straightway
 12 requite
 13 by ourselves

14 men, knights
 15 part, separate
 16 rush about
 17 therefore (possibly, but
 perhaps delete)
 18 from off
 19 make ready
 20 offered
 21 didst strike
 22 one blow only
 23 who
 24 spirit, soul
 25 gave, has given

26 grudge
 27 partice, bit (*NFD* grue) ✓
 28 harm
 29 resolve, settle
 30 utter
 31 protest
 32 acted, behaved
 33 as though
 34 doubted
 35 that he would not shrink

- Then þe gome in þe grene grayped hym swyþe,
 Gederez up hys grymme tole,¹ Gawayn to smyte;
 With alle þe bur² in his body he ber hit on lofte,³
 Munt⁴ as magtyly as⁵ marre hym he wolde,
 5 Hade hit dryven adoun as dreȝ⁶ as he atled,⁷
 þer hade⁸ ben ded of his dynt þat⁹ doȝty watz ever.
 Bot Gawayn on þat giserne¹⁰ glyfte¹¹ hym bysyde,
 As hit com glydande adoun, on glode¹² hym to schende,¹³
 And schranke a lytel with þe schulderes, for þe scharp yrne.
 10 þat oþer schalk¹⁴ wyth a schunt¹⁵ þe schene¹⁶ wyththaldez,
 And þenne repreved he þe prynce with mony prowde wordez:
 'þou art not Gawayn,' quoth þe gome, 'þat is so goud¹⁷ halden,
 þat never arȝed¹⁸ for no here,¹⁹ by hylle ne be vale,
 And now þou fles for ferde,²⁰ er þou fele harmez²¹;
 15 Such cowardise of þat knyȝt cowþe²² I never here.
 Nawþer fyked²³ I ne flaȝe,²⁴ freke, quen þou myntest,²⁵
 Ne kest²⁶ no kavelacoun²⁷ in kynges hous Arthor,²⁸
 My hede flaȝ²⁹ to my fote, and ȝet flaȝ I never;
 And þou, er any harme hent,³⁰ arȝcz in hert,
 20 Wherefore þe better burne me burde³¹ be called
 þerfore.'

- Quoth Gawayn 'I schunt³² onez,
 And so wyl I no more;
 Bot þaȝ³³ my hede falle on þe stonez,
 25 I con not hit restore.'³⁴

¹ tool, weapon² force³ aloft⁴ threatened⁵ as if⁶ straight⁷ aimed⁸ would have⁹ he who¹⁰ axe¹¹ looked¹² its passage (?)¹³ destroy¹⁴ man¹⁵ slant¹⁶ bright (blade)¹⁷ brave¹⁸ trembled¹⁹ host²⁰ fear²¹ before thou art much hurt²² could²³ flinched²⁴ fled²⁵ didst aim²⁶ raised²⁷ objection²⁸ genitive case²⁹ flew³⁰ seized³¹ I ought to³² dodged³³ though³⁴ (as the Green Knight did)

Bot busk,¹ burne,² bi þi fayth, and bryng me to þe poynt,
 Dele to me my destine, and do hit out of honde,
 For I schal stonde þe a strok, and start³ no more,
 Til þyn ax have me hitte — haf here my trawþe.
 'Haf at þe þenne,' quoth þat oper, and heves hit alofte, 5
 And waytez⁴ as wropely as he wode were,
 He myntez⁵ at hym maȝtyly,⁶ bot not þe mon ryvez,⁷
 Withhelde heterly⁸ h[is] honde, er hit hurt myȝt.
 Gawayn grayþely⁹ hit bydez, and glent¹⁰ with no membre,
 Bot stode styлле as þe ston, oper¹¹ a stubbe auþer,¹² 10
 þat rapeled¹³ is in roche¹⁴ grounde, with rotez a hundreth.
 Þen muryly efte con¹⁵ he mele,¹⁶ þe mon in þe grene:
 'So now þou hatz þi hert holle,¹⁷ hitte me bihov[e]s,
 Halde þe now þe hyȝe¹⁸ hode¹⁹ þat Arþur þe raȝt,²⁰
 And kepe²¹ þy kanel²² at þis keſt,²³ ȝif hit²⁴ kever²⁵ may.' 15
 Gawayn ful gryndelly²⁶ with greme²⁷ þenne sayde,
 'Wy presch on, þou pro²⁸ mon, þou pretez to longe,
 I hope²⁹ þat þi hert arȝe³⁰ wyth þyn awen selven'
 'Forsoþe,' quoth þat oper freke,³¹ 'so felly³² þou spekez,
 I wyl no lenger on lyte³³ lette³⁴ þin ernde³⁵ 20

Riȝte nowe.'

Þenne tas³⁶ he hym stryþe³⁷ to stryke,
 And frounses³⁸ boþe lyppe and browe.
 No mervayle þaȝ hym³⁹ myslyke,
 þat hoped of no rescowe.⁴⁰ 25

1 make ready
 2 man
 3 flinch
 4 attends
 5 aims
 6 lustily
 7 gashes
 8 with a jerk
 9 duly
 10 shrank
 11 or
 12 either
 13 twisted
 14 rocky

15 did
 16 speak
 17 whole
 18 high
 19 hood
 20 gave (reached)
 21 guard
 22 neck
 23 blow
 24 the hood
 25 cover (the neck)
 26 roughly
 27 anger
 28 fierce

29 suspect
 30 grows cowardly
 31 man
 32 rudely
 33 tarrying
 34 delay
 35 business
 36 takes
 37 stride (firm position on his feet)
 38 wrinkles
 39 Gawain
 40 rescue

- He lyftes lygtly his lome,¹ and let hit down fayre,²
 With þe barbe of þe bitte³ bi þe bare nek;
 Þaȝ he homered⁴ heterly,⁵ hurt hym no more,
 Bot snyrt⁶ hym on þat on syde, þat severed þe hyde;
 5 þe scharp⁷ schrank⁸ to þe flesche þurȝ þe schyre⁹ grece,¹⁰
 þat þe schene¹¹ blod over his schulderes schot to þe erþe;
 And quen þe burne sez þe blode blenk¹² on þe snawe,
 He sprit¹³ forth spenne-fote,¹⁴ more þen a spere lenþe,
 Hent¹⁵ heterly⁵ his helme, and on his hed cast,
 10 Schot¹⁶ with his schulderes his fayre schelde under,
 Braydez¹⁷ out a bryxt sworde, and bremely¹⁸ he spekez;
 Never syn þat he watz burne borne of his moder,
 Watz he never in þis worlde wyȝe¹⁹ half so blyþe²⁰:
 ' Blynne,²¹ burne, of þy bur,²² bede²³ me no mo,
 15 I haf a stroke in þis sted withoute stryf hent,²⁴
 And if þow rechez²⁵ me any mo, I redyly schal quyte,²⁶
 And ȝelde ȝederly²⁷ aȝayn, and þerto ȝe tryst,²⁸
 And foo²⁹;
 Bot on stroke here me fallez,³⁰
 20 þe covenaut schap³¹ ryȝt soo,
 [Sikered]³² in Arþurez hallez,
 And þerfore hende now hoo³³ !'

- The hapel³⁴ heldet³⁵ hym fro, and on his ax rested,
 Sette þe schaft upon schore,³⁶ and to þe scharp lened,
 25 And loked to þe leude³⁷ þat on þe launde³⁸ ȝede,
 How þat dogty dredles dervely³⁹ þer stondez,

¹ weapon² full³ blade⁴ smote⁵ swiftly⁶ wounded (?)⁷ axe⁸ pierced⁹ bright¹⁰ grease (fleshy part of the neck)¹¹ bright¹² shine¹³ started¹⁴ swift-foot (?)¹⁵ grasped¹⁶ slipped¹⁷ draws¹⁸ boldly¹⁹ man²⁰ glad²¹ stop²² onalught²³ attempt²⁴ accepted²⁵ dealest (handest me out)²⁶ requite, retaliate²⁷ promptly²⁸ make up your mind²⁹ (?)³⁰ is due³¹ directed³² ratified³³ stop³⁴ knight³⁵ turned away³⁶ earth³⁷ man³⁸ plain³⁹ bravely

Armed ful aglez¹; in hert hit hym lykez.
 Þenn he melez muryly, wyth a much steven,²
 And wyth a r[a]ykande³ rurde⁴ he to þe renk⁵ sayde:
 ' Bolde burne,⁶ on þis bent⁷ be not so gryndel⁸,
 No mon here unmanerly þe mysboden⁹ habbe, 5
 Ne kyd,¹⁰ bot as covaunde,¹¹ at kynges kort¹² schaped¹³;
 I hyzt¹⁴ þe a strok, and þou hit hatz, halde þe wel payed.
 I relece þe of þe remnaunt, of ryktes alle oþer;
 Ȝif I deliver¹⁵ had bene, a boffet, paraunter,
 I couþe wroþeloker¹⁶ haf waret,¹⁷ [and] to þe haf wrozt anger. 10
 Fyrst I mansed¹⁸ þe muryly, with a mynt¹⁹ one,²⁰
 And rove²¹ þe wyth no rof,²² sore²³ with ryzt I þe profered,
 For þe forwarde þat we fest²⁴ in þe fyrst nyzt,
 And þou trystyly þe trawþe and trwly me haldez,
 Al þe gayne þow me gef, as god mon schulde; 15
 Þat oþer munt²⁵ for þe morne, mon,²⁶ I þe profered,
 Þou kyssedes my clere²⁷ wyf, þe cossez²⁸ me rahtez,²⁹
 For boþe two here³⁰ I þe bede bot two bare myntes,
 Route scape³¹;
 Trwe mon³² trwe restore, 20
 Þenne þar mon³³ drede no wape³⁴;
 At þe prid þou fayled þore,³⁴
 And perfor þat tappe³⁵ ta þe.³⁶

For hit is my wede³⁷ þat þou werez, þat ilke woven girdel,
 Myn owen wyf hit þe weved, I wot wel forsoþe, 25
 Now know I wel þy cosses, and þy costes³⁸ als,³⁹

1 fearless
 2 great voice
 3 rushing, loud
 4 sound
 5 knight
 6 man
 7 field
 8 fierce, angry
 9 offered wrong
 10 treated
 11 agreed upon
 12 court
 13 arranged

14 promised
 15 nimble
 16 more fiercely
 17 dealt
 18 menaced
 19 aimed blow
 20 only
 21 cleaved
 22 cut, blow
 23 wound
 24 pledged
 25 aimed blow
 26 man

27 fair
 28 kisses
 29 gavest
 30 both of these (two)
 31 without injury
 32 must
 33 danger, injury
 34 there
 35 stroke
 36 take to thyself
 37 garment
 38 qualities
 39 also

- And þe wowyng of my wyf, I wrogt it myselven;
 I sende¹ hir to asay² þe, and, sothly me þynkkez,
 On³ þe fautlest⁴ freke þat ever on fote zede⁵;
 As perle bi⁶ þe quite⁷ pese⁸ is of prys more,
 5 So is Gawayn, in god fayth, bi oper gay knyghtez.
 Bot here yow lakked a lyttel, syr, and lewte⁹ yow wanted,¹⁰
 Bot þat watz for no wylyde¹¹ werke, ne wowyng nauþer,
 Bot for ȝe lufud your lyf, — þe lasse I yow blame.
 Þat oper stif¹² mon in study stod a gret whyle;
 10 So agreved for greme¹³ he gryed¹⁴ withinne,
 Alle þe blode of his brest blende¹⁵ in his face,
 Þat al he schrank for schome, þat¹⁶ þe schalk talked.
 Þe forme¹⁷ worde upon folde¹⁸ þat þe freke meled:
 'Corsed worth¹⁹ cowarddyse and covetyse boþe!
 15 In yow is vylany and vyse, þat v:rtue disstryez.'
 Þenne he kaxt to²⁰ þe knot, and þe kest²¹ lawsez,²²
 Brayde²³ broþely²⁴ þe belt to þe burne selven:
 'Lo! þer þe falssyng,²⁵ foule mot hit falle!²⁶
 For care²⁷ of þy knokke, cowardyse me taxt
 20 To acorde me with covetyse, my kynde²⁸ to forsake,
 Þat is larges²⁹ and lewte, þat longez to³⁰ knyghtez.
 Now am I fawty,³¹ and falce, and ferde³² haf been ever;
 Of trecherye and untrawþe boþe bityde³³ sorȝe³⁴
 And care!
 25 I biknowe yow,³⁵ knyȝt, here styлле,
 Al fawty is my fare³⁶;

¹ sent² try, tempt³ one⁴ the most faultless⁵ went (OE *zode*)⁶ compared with⁷ white⁸ peas⁹ loyalty¹⁰ lacked¹¹ wily, intriguing¹² brave¹³ vexation, anger¹⁴ was agitated¹⁵ blent, mingled¹⁶ while¹⁷ first¹⁸ earth¹⁹ be²⁰ seized hold of²¹ twist²² looses²³ threw²⁴ angrily²⁵ falsity²⁶ may foul befall it²⁷ fear²⁸ nature²⁹ generosity³⁰ befits³¹ faulty³² afcared³³ come³⁴ sorrow³⁵ confess to you³⁶ conduct

Letez me overtake¹ your wylle,
And efte² I schal beware.'

Then loze³ þat oper leude, and luflyly⁴ sayde,
'I halde hit hardily⁵ hole,⁶ þe harme þat I hade;
þou art confessed so clene, beknownen of þy mysses,⁷ 5
And hatz þe penaunce apert,⁸ of⁹ þe poynt of myn egge,¹⁰
I halde þe polysed¹¹ of þat plyȝt,¹² and pured¹³ as clene,
As¹⁴ þou hadez never forfeȝet¹⁵ syþen þou watz fyrst borne.
And I gif þe, syr, þe gurdel þat is golde hemmed;
For hit is grene as my goune, syr Gawayn, ȝe maye 10
þenk upon þis ilke þrepe,¹⁶ þer¹⁷ þou forth þryngez¹⁸
Among prynces of prys, and¹⁹ þis a pure token
Of þe chaunce²⁰ of þe grene chapel, at²¹ chevalrous knyȝtez;
And ȝe schal in þis nwe ȝer aȝayn²² to my wonez,²³
And we schyn²⁴ revel þe remnaunt of þis ryche fest, 15
Ful bene.'²⁵

þer laped²⁶ hym fast²⁷ þe lorde,
And sayde · 'With my wyf, I wene,
We schal yow wel acorde,²⁸
þat watz your enmy kene.' 20

'Nay, forsoþe,' quoth þe segge,²⁹ and sesed³⁰ hys helme,
And hatz hit of³¹ hendely,³² and þe hapel³³ þonkkez
'I haf sojourned sadly, sele³⁴ yow bytyde,
And He ȝelde³⁵ hit ȝow ȝare,³⁶ þat ȝarkkez³⁷ al menskes³⁸!

¹ understand² afterwards³ laughed⁴ courteously⁵ assuredly⁶ cured⁷ with avowal made of thy sins⁸ openly, manifestly⁹ from¹⁰ (edge of) axe¹¹ absolved¹² offense¹³ purged¹⁴ as if¹⁵ sinned¹⁶ reproof, rebuke¹⁷ when¹⁸ dost crowd, press¹⁹ and keep²⁰ adventure²¹ on the part of²² come again²³ dwelling²⁴ shall²⁵ genially²⁶ invited²⁷ urgently²⁸ bring into friendly relations²⁹ knight³⁰ seized³¹ off³² courteously³³ warrior³⁴ blessing, prosperity³⁵ may he reward you for it³⁶ soon³⁷ bestows³⁸ honors

- And comaundez ¹ me to þat cortays, your comlych ² fere,³
 Boþe þat on and þat oþer, myn honoured ladyez,
 Þat þus hor knyxt wyth hor kest ⁴ han koynly ⁵ bigyled.
 Bot hit is no ferly, ⁶ þax a fole madde,⁷
- 5 And þurȝ wyles of wymmen be wonen to sorge;
 For so watz Adam in erde ⁸ with one bygyled,
 And Salamon with fele sere,⁹ and Samson eftsonez,¹⁰
 Dalyda ¹¹ dalt ¹² hym hys wyrde,¹³ and Davyth þerafter
 Watz blended ¹⁴ with Barsabe,¹⁵ þat much bale ¹⁶ poled.¹⁷
- 10 Now þese were wrathed ¹⁸ wyth her wyles, hit were a wynne ¹⁹ huge
 'To huf hom wel, and levc ²⁰ hem not — a leude þat coupe ²¹ —
 For þes wer forne ²² þe freest ²³ þat folȝed alle þe sele,
 Excellently of alle pyse oþer ²⁴ under hevenryche
 þat mused ²⁵;
- 15 And alle þay were biwyled,²⁶
 With wymmen þat þay used ²⁷,
 þax I be now bigyled,
 Me þink me burde ²⁸ be excused.'
- 20 'Bot your gordel,' quoth Gawayn — 'God yow forȝelde ²⁹! —
 Þat wyl I welde ³⁰ wyth good wylle, not for þe wynne ³¹ golde,
 Ne þe saynt,³² ne þe sylk, ne þe syde ³³ pendaundes,³⁴
 For wele,³⁵ ne for worchyp, ne for þe wlonk ³⁶ werkkez,
 Bot in syngne of my surfet ³⁷ I schal se hit ofte,
 When I ride in renoun, remorse ³⁸ to myselven
- 25 þe faut and þe fayntyse ³⁹ of þe flesche crabbed,⁴⁰

¹ commend² comely³ mate⁴ stratagem⁵ cunningly⁶ wonder⁷ grew mad⁸ on earth⁹ many different ones¹⁰ moreover, likewise¹¹ Delilah¹² dealt¹³ fate, doom¹⁴ mingled, wedded¹⁵ Bathsheba¹⁶ grief¹⁷ suffered¹⁸ vexed¹⁹ joy²⁰ believe²¹ were a man but able²² of old²³ noblest²⁴ beyond (excelling) all others²⁵ indulged their fancies (?)²⁶ beguiled²⁷ dealt with²⁸ it is fitting for me²⁹ requite³⁰ keep in possession³¹ goodly (?)³² samite³³ long³⁴ pendants³⁵ good fortune³⁶ beautiful³⁷ fault, sin³⁸ I shall blame³⁹ faintness, weakness⁴⁰ perverse (?)

How tender ¹ hit is to entyse ² teches ³ of fylpe ⁴ ;
 And þus, quen ⁵ pryde schal me pryk, for prowes of armes,
 þe loke to ⁶ þis luf ⁷ lace schal lepe ⁸ my hert.
 Bot on ⁹ I wolde yow pray, displeases ¹⁰ yow never,
 Syn ¹¹ ȝe be lorde of the ȝonder londe, þer I haf lent ¹² inne 5
 Wyth yow wyth worschyp — þe Wyȝe ¹³ hit yow ȝelde
 þat uphaldez þe heven, and on hyȝ ¹⁴ sittez ! —
 How norne ¹⁵ ȝe yowre ryȝt nome, and þenne no more ? '
 ' þat schal I telle þe trwly, ' quoth þat oþer þenne,
 ' Bernlak de Hautdesert I hat ¹⁶ in þis londe, 10
 þurȝ myȝt of Morgne la Faye (þat in my hous lenges) ¹⁷
 And koyntyse ¹⁸ of clergie ¹⁹ bi craftes wel lerned,
 þe maystres of Merlyn mony hatz ²⁰ taken ;
 For ho hatz dalt drwry ²¹ ful dere sum tyme
 With þat conable ²² klerk þat knowes alle your knyȝtez 15
 At hame,

Morgne þe goddes,
 þerfore hit is hir name,
 Weldez ²³ non so hyȝe hawtesse, ²⁴
 þat ho ne con make ful tame ²⁵ 20

Ho wayned ²⁶ me upon þis wyse to your wynne ²⁷ halle,
 For to assay þe surquidre, ²⁸ ȝif hit soth were,
 þat rennes ²⁹ of þe grete renoun of þe Rounde Table ;
 Ho wayned me, þis wonder, your wyttez to reve, ³⁰
 For to haf greved Gaynour, ³¹ and gart hir to dyȝe, ³² 25
 With gopnyng ³³ of þat ilke gomen, ³⁴ þat gostlych speked,
 With his hede in his honde, bfore þe hyȝe table.

¹ frail, weak² acquire, catch³ spots, stains, blemishes⁴ foulness, sin⁵ when⁶ at⁷ dear, precious⁸ soften⁹ one thing¹⁰ if it displease¹¹ since¹² dwelt¹³ Being¹⁴ high¹⁵ say¹⁶ am called¹⁷ dwells¹⁸ (her) cunning¹⁹ learning²⁰ MS ho²¹ carried on amours²² competent²³ possesses²⁴ dignity, power²⁵ submissive²⁶ sent²⁷ goodly (?)²⁸ pride²⁹ runs, is told³⁰ take away³¹ Guinevere³² die³³ fear³⁴ laughing-stock

- þat is ho þat is at home, þe auncian¹ lady;
 Ho is even þyn aunt, Arþurez half suster,
 þe duches doxter of Tyntagelle,² þat dere³ Uter⁴ after
 Hade Arþur upon,⁵ þat apē⁶ is nowþe.⁷
 5 þerfore I eþe⁸ þe, haþel, to com to þyn aunt,
 Make myry in my hous, my meny þe iovies,
 And I wol⁹ þe as wel, wyge, bi my faythe,
 As any gome under God, for þy grete trauþe.
 And he nikked hym naye,¹⁰ he nolde bi no wayes.
 10 þay acolen¹¹ and kyssen, [bikennen] ayþer oþer¹²
 To þe Prynce of Paradise, and parten rygt þere,
 On coolde¹³,
 Gawayn on blonk¹⁴ ful bene,
 To þe kynggez burȝ¹⁵ buskez¹⁶ bolde,
 15 And þe knygt in þe enker¹⁷ grene,
 Whiderwarde so ever he wolde.

THOMAS OF ERCELDOUNE

There was a Thomas Rimor (Rymour) of Erceldoune (modern Earlstoun) in the thirteenth century, a Scotchman who obtained in the following century the reputation of a prophet. He cannot, however, have been the author of our romance, which must have been composed after 1401, and is assigned by the *New English Dictionary* to about 1425. The romance consists of three cantos, of which the first is devoted to the fairy tale here following, and the second and third to prophecies, or what purport to be such. Child thought that the prophecies were by an inferior hand, but Murray believes the whole romance to have been the work of a single poet. Curiously enough, the story is told partly in the first person, and partly in the third.

A ballad, founded on the romance (see Murray's edition, pp lii, liii), is No. 37 of Child's collection, of which the first stanza runs in one version.

True Thomas lay oer yond grassy bank,
 And he beheld a ladie gay,
 A ladie that was brisk and bold,
 Come ridng oer the fernie brae

¹ ancient² the daughter of the Duchess of Tintagel³ noble⁴ Uther⁵ by⁶ noble⁷ now⁸ ask, bid⁹ wish¹⁰ refused him¹¹ embrace¹² commend each the other¹³ in the open (?)¹⁴ steed (*lit.* white steed)¹⁵ fortress¹⁶ hastens¹⁷ dark (inky) green

Thomas still retains his power over the imaginations of men. Professor Dixon, of the University of Glasgow, has written a little play, called *Thomas the Rhymer* (Glasgow, 1911), and Kipling's *Last Rhyme of True Thomas* (1893) is one of his most spirited poems.

The scene of the poem is best described by Sir James Murray (pp. l, h of his edition) 'Eildon Tree, referred to in the Romance, and connected traditionally with Thomas's prophecies, stood on the declivity of the eastern of the three Eildon Hills . . . Its site is believed to be indicated by the *Eildon Stone*, "a rugged boulder of whinstone" standing on the edge of the road from Melrose to St Boswell's, about a mile south-east from the former town, and on the ridge of a spur of the hill "The view from this point," says a correspondent, "is unsurpassed, on the north you have the vale of Leader almost up to Earliston, and Cowdenknowes with its 'Black Hill' rising abruptly from the bed of the stream, while downward to Tweed the undulating expanse of woody bank is so beautiful, that in the time of the 'bonny broom,' I am often tempted to bend my steps to the spot, and 'lie and watch the sight,' from a spot once 'un'erneath the Eildon Tree.' In the close vicinity is the 'Bogle Burn,' a stream which rises on the slope of the Eastern Eildon, and flows down a deep glen into the Tweed a little to the north of Newtown St Boswell's" . . . About half a mile to the west of the Eildon Stone, and on the slope of the same hill, we find the "Huntlee banks" of the old romance The spot lies a little above the North British Railway, at the point where it is crossed by the road to St Boswell's already referred to, about a quarter of a mile after leaving Melrose Station. The field next the road and railway at this point (No 2405 on the Ordnance Map) is called *Monks' Meadow*, and higher up the hill above this are two fields (Nos. 2548 and 2408) which have preserved the name of Huntlee Brae'

The Ordnance map in question is that of the Parish of Melrose (May, 1861), Sheet VIII 5 The road leaves the market-place, and leads to Oakendean House, it touches a corner of 2405 just after it crosses the railway and strikes a little southeast. No. 2408 is directly south of 2405, about 120 yards from the road, by way of a row of trees. No. 2548 is directly south of 2408, and about 150 yards further Directly east of 2548 is Corse Rig (2410), with a plantation of trees.

Sir Walter Scott's enthusiasm for the story is best shown by a passage or two from Basil Hall's journal for Dec. 30, 1824, as quoted in Lockhart's *Life of Scott* 'This morning Major Stisted, my brother, and I, accompanied Sir Walter Scott on a walk over his grounds, a distance of five or six miles. Occasionally he repeated snatches of songs, sometimes a whole ballad, and at other times he planted his staff in the ground and related some tale to us, which, though not in verse, came like a stream of poetry from his lips Thus, about the middle of our walk, we had first to cross, and then to wind down the banks of the Huntly Burn, the scene of old Thomas the Rhymer's interview with the Queen of the Fairies Before entering this little glen, he detained us on the heath above till he had related the whole of that romantic story, so that

by the time we descended the path, our imaginations were so worked upon by the wild nature of the fiction, and still more by the animation of the narrator, that we felt ourselves treading upon classical ground, and though the day was cold, the path muddy and scarcely passable, owing to the late floods, and the trees all bare, yet I do not remember ever to have seen any place so interesting as the skill of this mighty magician had rendered this narrow ravine, which in any other company would have seemed quite insignificant. In the evening, Sir Walter also read us, with the utmost delight, the famous poem on Thomas the Rhymer's adventure with the Queen of the Fairies; but I am at a loss to say which was the most interesting, or even I will say poetical — his conversational account of it to us to-day on the very spot, Huntly Burn, or the highly characteristic ballad which he read to us in the evening. On Scott's transfer of his supposititious 'Rhymer's Glen' to the Abbotsford estate, see Murray's edition, p. lii.

The complete romance exists in four manuscripts, of which the oldest and best, the Thornton MS of Lincoln Cathedral, dates from 1430-1440. All were admirably edited by Dr Murray in 1875 for the Early English Text Society (No. 61). Another edition, with a reconstructed text, is that by Professor Brandl (Berlin, 1880), with copious variants. The present text reposes upon the Thornton manuscript, as printed by Murray, but the spelling has been somewhat normalized, and an attempt has been made to eliminate certain manifest errors, this, therefore, is a restored text, and can not be depended upon for the exact manuscript readings. The editions of Murray and Brandl can be relied upon for detailed information upon all matters of interest.

Als I me¹ went þis endres² day,
Full fast in mynd makand my mone,
In a mery mornynge of May,
By Huntlee bankes myself allone,

5 I herd þe jay and þe prostell³;
The mavys⁴ menyde hir⁵ in hir song;
þe wodewale⁶ beryde⁷ als⁸ a bell,
That all þe wode abowt me rong.

10 Allone in longyng als I lay,
Undyrnethe a semely tree,
Saw I whare a lady gay
Came rindand over a lufly lee.⁹

¹ by myself
² other
³ throistle
⁴ song-thrush

⁵ bemoaned herself
⁶ wood-lark (Murray), according to others, the yaffle, or green wood-pecker

⁷ rang out
⁸ as, like
⁹ lea, meadow

If I solde sytt to Domesday,
 With my tonge to wrobbe and wrye,¹
 Certanely þat lady gay
 Never bese scho discryved² for mee.

Hir palfray was a dappill-gray — 5
 Swylk one ne sagh³ I never none.
 Als dose þe sonne on someres day,
 þat faire lady hirself scho schone.

Hir selle⁴ it was of roell bone⁵ — 10
 Semely was þat syght to see¹ —
 Stefly sett with precyous stone,
 And compast all with crapotee,⁶

With stones of Oryent, grete plente.
 Hir hare about hir hede it hang.
 Scho rade over þat lufly lee; 15
 A⁷ whyl scho blew, anoper scho sang.

Hir garthes⁸ of nobyll sylk þay were,
 The bukylls were of berel⁹ stone;
 Hir steraps were of crystal clere,
 And all with perel¹⁰ over bygone.¹¹ 20

Hir payetrel¹² was of irale¹³ fyne;
 Hir cropour was of orphare¹⁴;
 Hir brydill was of golde fyne —
 One aythir syde hang¹⁵ bellys three.

¹ The meaning of these two verbs is very doubtful

² shall she be described

³ saw

⁴ saddle

⁵ ivory (see *NED.* s.v. *ruel-bone*)

⁶ toadstone (cf. Shakespeare, *A.Y.L.* 2.1.13)

⁷ one

⁸ girths

⁹ beryl

¹⁰ pearl

¹¹ covered

¹² horse's breastplate

¹³ (?)

¹⁴ orphrey, rich embroidery (esp. of gold)

¹⁵ hung

- Scho led thre grewehundis ¹ in a lesse,²
 And seven raches ³ by hir ron ,
 Scho bare an horn abowt hir halse,⁴
 And undir hir belt full many a flon.⁵
- 5 Thomas lay and saw þat syght,
 Undirnethe ane semely tree.
 He sayd · ‘ Ȝon ⁶ es Mary, most of myght,
 þat bare þat Child þat dyede for mee.
- ‘ Bot-if ⁷ I speke with ȝon lady bryght,
 10 I hope ⁸ myn herte will bryst ⁹ in three ;
 Now sall I go with all my myght,
 Hir for to mete at Eldoun tree.’
- Thomas rathely ¹⁰ up he rase,
 And ran over þat mountayn hye ;
 15 Gyff ¹¹ it be als þe story says,
 He hir mette at Eldon tree.
- He knelyde down appon his knee,
 Undirnethe þat grenwode spray
 ‘ Lufly lady, rewe ¹² on me,
 20 Qwene of heven, als ¹³ þou wel may !’
- Than spake þat lady milde of thought :
 ‘ Thomas, late swylke wordes be I
 Qwene of heven ne am I noght,
 For I tuke ¹⁴ never so hegh degre ;
- 25 Bote I am of anoper countree,
 If ¹⁵ I be payreld ¹⁶ most of pryse.¹⁷
 I ryde aftyr this wylde fee ¹⁸ ,
 My raches rynnys at my devyse.¹⁹’

¹ greyhounds² leash³ hunting-dogs (hounds that follow by the scent, as the greyhound does by sight so Murray)⁴ neck⁵ arrow⁶ yon⁷ unless⁸ believe⁹ burst¹⁰ quickly¹¹ if¹² have pity¹³ as¹⁴ took¹⁵ even though¹⁶ appareled¹⁷ price¹⁸ game, animals¹⁹ command, will

' If þou be pareld most of pryse,
 And rydis here in thy foly,
 Of lufe, lady, als þou erte wyse,¹
 Þou gyffe me leve to lye the by l'

Scho sayde: ' Þou man, þat ware foly. 5
 I praye þe, Thomas, late me bee,
 For I saye þe full sekirly,²
 Þat synn wolde fordoo³ all my beaute.'

' Lufly lady, rewe on mee,
 And I will evermore with the duelle; 10
 Here my trowth I plyght to the,
 Whethir þou will in heven or helle.'

' Man of molde, þou will me merre,⁴
 Bot ȝit þou sall hafe all thy will,
 Bot trowe þou wele, þou chevys⁵ þe werre,⁶ 15
 For alle my beaute þou will spyll.'

Down þan lyghte þat lady bryght,
 Undirnethe þat grenewode spray;
 And, als þe story tellis full ryght,
 Seven sythis⁷ by hir he lay 20

Scho sayd: ' Man, the lykes thy play,
 What byrd⁸ in bourc⁹ may dele¹⁰ with the?
 Thou merrys me all þis longe day;
 I pray the, 'Thomas, late me bee l'

Thomas stod up in þat stede,¹¹ 25
 And he byheld þat lady gay
 Hir hare it hang all over hir hede,
 Hir eghne semede out, þat were so gray,

¹ wise (Murray says that *wise* and *pryse*
 are pronounced as if *wice* and *price*)

² surely

³ destroy

⁴ mar

⁵ succeedest, thrives

⁶ worse

⁷ times

⁸ woman

⁹ bower

¹⁰ deal

¹¹ stead, place

And all the rich clopyng was away,
 þat he byfore saw in þat stede,
 Hir a ¹ schanke ² blake, hir oþer gray,
 And all hir body lyke þe lede.³

5 þan said Thomas. 'Allas, alas!
 In fayth, þis es a dullfull ⁴ syght!
 How art þou fadyd in þe face,
 þat schan byfore als þe sonne so bryght!'

Sche sayd. 'Thomas, take leve at sonne and mone,
 10 And als ⁵ at lefe þat grewes on tree,
 This twelmonth sall þou with me gone,⁶
 And medill-erthe⁷ sall þou not see'

'Allas,' he sayd, 'and wa es mee!
 I trowe my dedis wyll wirk me care.
 15 My saule, Jesu, byteche ⁸ I the,
 Whedirsomever my banes sall fare.'

Scho ledde hym in at Eldone Hill,
 Undirnethe a derne ⁹ lee,
 20 Whare it was dirk als mydnyght myrk,¹⁰
 And ever þe water till his knee.

The montenans ¹¹ of dayes three,
 He herd bot swoghyng ¹² of þe flode,
 At þe laste he sayd 'Full wa ¹³ es mee!
 Almast I dye for fawte ¹⁴ of fode.'

¹ one² leg³ lead⁴ doleful⁵ also⁶ go⁷ middle earth⁸ commit⁹ secret¹⁰ murk, murky¹¹ amount, period¹² roaring¹³ woe¹⁴ lack

9. Sche sayd. These two words are perhaps extra-metrical, and not to be read.

Scho lede hym intill a faire herbere,¹
 Whare frute was growand gret plentee;
 Pere and appill both rype þay were,
 The date, and als the damasee²,

þe fygge, and also þe wyneberye³, 5
 The nyghtgales byggande⁴ on þair nest,
 þe papejoyes⁵ fast abowt gan⁶ flye,
 And throstylls sang — wolde hafe no rest.

He pressede to pull frute with his hand,
 Als man⁷ for fude⁸ þat was nere faynt. 10
 Scho sayd 'Thomas, þou late þam stand,
 Or ells þe fende the will atteynt.

If þou it plokk, sothely to say,
 Thi saule gose to þe fyr of helle;
 It commes never owte or⁹ Domesday, 15
 Bot þer in payne ay for to duelle.

Thomas, sothely I the hyght¹⁰
 Come lygg thyn hede down on my knee,
 And þou sall se þe fayrest syght
 þat ever saw man of thi contree.' 20

He did in hye¹¹ als scho hym badde.
 Appon hir knee his hede he layd,
 For hir to paye¹² he was full glade,
 And þan þat lady to him sayd

'Seese þou now ȝon faire way, 25
 þat lygges over ȝon hegh mountayn?
 Ȝone es þe waye to heven for ay,
 When synfull sawles are passede þer payn.

¹ garden, orchard² damson³ grape⁴ dwelling⁵ parrots⁶ did⁷ a man⁸ food⁹ ere¹⁰ bid¹¹ haste¹² please

Seese þou now ȝon oþer way,
 þat lygges lawe¹ byneth ȝon ryse²?
 Ȝon es þe way, þe sothe to say,
 Unto þe joye of Paradyse.

5 Seese þou ȝitt ȝon thirde way,
 þat higgis undir ȝon grene playn?
 Ȝone es þe way, with tene³ and tray⁴
 Whare synfull saulis suffiris þair payn.

10 Bot seese þou now ȝone ferthe way,
 þat lygges over ȝon depe delle?
 Ȝone es þe way — so waylaway! —
 Unto þe birnand fyr of helle.

Seese þou ȝitt ȝone faire castell,
 þat standis over ȝon heghe hill?
 15 Of towne and towre it beris þe bell⁵.
 In erthe es none lyke þertill.

Forsothe, Thomas, ȝone es myn awen
 And þe kynges⁶ of this countree,
 Bot me ware lever⁷ be hanged and drawen,
 20 Or⁸ þat he wyste þou laye by me

When þou commes to ȝone castell gay,
 I pray þe curtase man to bee,
 And whatso any man to þe say,
 Luke þou answeere none bot mee.

25 My lorde es servede at ȝlk⁹ a messe¹⁰
 With thritty knyghtis faire and free,
 I sall say, syttand at the desse,¹¹
 I tuke thi speche byȝonde the see.'

¹ low
² spray
³ grief

⁴ affliction
⁵ excels
⁶ king's

⁷ I had rather
⁸ ere
⁹ each

¹⁰ course
¹¹ dais

Thomas still als stane he stude,
 And byheld þat lady gay,
 Scho was agayn als¹ faire and gude,
 And also¹ ryche on hir palfray;

Hir grewehundis fillde² with dere blode, 5
 Hir raches couplede, by my fay³;
 Scho blew hir horn with mayn⁴ and mode,⁵
 And to þe castell scho tuke þe way.

Into þe hall sothely scho went;
 Thomas foloued at hir hand. 10
 Than ladyes come, both faire and gent,⁶
 With curtasye to hir kneland.

Harpe and fethill⁷ both þay fand,
 Þe getern,⁸ and also þe sawtrye,⁹
 Lute and rybybe¹⁰ bothe gangand, 15
 And all manere of mynstralsye.

Þe moste mervelle þat Thomas thoghte
 When þat he stode appon þe flore —
 Fefty hertis in were broghte,
 Þat were bothe grete and store.¹¹ 20

Raches lay lapand in þe blode;
 Cokes come with dryssyng-knyfe¹²,
 Thay bryttened¹³ þe dere als¹⁴ þey were wode¹⁵,
 Revell amanges þam was full ryfe.

Knyghtis dawnsede by three and three; 25
 There was revell, gamen, and playe;
 Lufly ladyes faire and free
 Satt and sang in riche araye.

"
 (were) filled
 ' faith
 † might
 ° spirit

⁶ well bred
⁷ fiddle
⁸ guttern (a kind of guitar)
⁹ psaltery (a kind of zither)
¹⁰ rebeck (a three-stringed fiddle)

¹¹ mighty
¹² dressing-knife
¹³ cut up
¹⁴ as if
¹⁵ mad

Thomas duellide in that solace
 More ¹ þan I gow saye, parde,²
 Till on a day — so hafe I grace! —
 My lufly lady sayd to mee

5 ' Buske ³ the, Thomas, þe buse ⁴ agayn,
 For here þou may no lengar be ,
 Hye ⁵ the faste with myght and mayn ;
 I sall the bryng till Eldone tree.'

 Thomas sayd þan with hevy chere :
 10 ' Lufly lady, now late me bee,
 For certaynly I hafe bene here
 Noght bot þe space of dayes three.'

 ' Forso⁶he, Thomas, als I þe tell,
 þou hase bene here thre gere and more,
 15 And langer here þou may noght duell ,
 The skyll ⁶ I sall þe tell wharefore .

 To-morne of helle þe foule fende
 Amang this folk will feche his fee ,
 And þou art mekill ⁷ man and hende ⁸ —
 20 I trow full wele he wil chese ⁹ the

 For all þe gold þat ever may bee
 Fro hethyn ¹⁰ unto þe worldis ende,
 þou bese ¹¹ never betrayed for mee ,
 þerefore with me I rede ¹² thou wende.'

25 Scho broght hym agayn to Eldone tree,
 Undirnethe þat grenewode spray —
 In Huntlee bankes es mery to bee,
 Whare fowles synges both nyght and day.

¹ longer² in truth (Fr *par Dieu*)³ prepare⁴ behooves (to return)⁵ haste⁶ reason⁷ large, robust⁸ courtly⁹ choose¹⁰ hence¹¹ shalt be¹² advise

AMIS AND AMILOUN

Amis and Amiloun (late thirteenth century) is ultimately derived from a Greek or Oriental source. The story represents the mediæval notion of an ideal friendship, capable of attaining supreme heights of devotion. Amiloun risks his life to save the honor of Amis by maintaining his friend's perjured word in a trial by combat, and afterwards suffers for his generosity by becoming a leper. As an outcast and beggar with only one young page as companion, he is at length recognized by Amis, and lovingly cared for and comforted. When an angel declares to Amis in a dream that only by means of the blood of his two children can Amiloun be cured, he meets even this demand upon his friendship and gratitude. Then a miracle takes place. Each friend has done what the other's need called for, and their sins are now fully atoned for by self-sacrifice. The two slaughtered children are found alive, happily playing together, and the story ends in cheer.

There are versions in Old French, Latin, Old Norse, and Celtic. The English romance is closely related to an Anglo-Norman poem printed by Kolbing, who has elaborately edited the English text (*Altenglische Bibliothek*, Vol. 2, Heilbronn, 1884), closely following the Auchinleck manuscript. The language is Northeast Midland. For a good outline, see Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp. 250-2.

Our extract covers lines 2245-2424

þan þouȝt þe douk,¹ wiþouten lesing,²
 For to slen³ his childer so ȝing⁴
 It were a dedli sinne,
 And þan þouȝt he, bi heven⁵ King,
 His broþer out of sorwe bring,⁶ 5
 For þat nold he nouȝt bliſſe.⁷
 So it bifel on Cristes niȝt,
 Swiche time as Jesu, ful of miȝt,
 Was born to save mankinne,⁸ 4
 To chirche to wende, al þat þer wes,⁹ 10
 Þai diȝten¹⁰ hem, wiþouten les,¹¹
 Wiþ joie and worldes winne.¹²

¹ duke

² deception

³ slay

⁴ young

⁵ heaven's

⁶ to bring

⁷ to that end would he not cease
(his endeavors)

⁸ MS. -kunne

⁹ who were there

¹⁰ prepared

¹¹ to tell the truth

¹² delight

- þan¹ þai were redi for to fare,²
 þe douke bad al þat þer ware,
 To chirche þai schuld wende,
 Litel and michel, lasse and mare,³
 5 þat non bileft⁴ in chaumber are,⁶
 As þai wald⁶ ben his frende⁷,
 And seyð he wald himselve þat nixt
 Kepe⁸ his broþer, þat gentil knixt,
 þat was so god and kende⁹
 10 þan was þer non þat durst say nay :
 To chirche þai went in her¹⁰ way,
 At hom bileft þe¹¹ hende¹²

 þe douke wel¹³ fast gan asprie¹⁴
 þe kays of þe noricerie,¹⁵
 15 Erþan¹⁶ þai schuld gon ,
 And priveliche¹⁷ he cast his eixe,¹⁸
 And aparceived ful witterlye¹⁹
 Where þat þai hadde hem don²⁰
 And when þai were to chirche went,²¹
 20 þan Sir Amis, verrament,²²
 Was bileft al on²³
 He tok a candel fair and brixt,
 And to þe kays he went ful rigt,
 And tok hem oway ichon.²⁴

 25 Alon himself, wiþouten mo,²⁵
 Into þe chaumber he gan to go,
 þer þat his childer were,

¹ when² go³ greater⁴ left⁵ should be ; MS. þare⁶ would⁷ friends⁸ watch over⁹ kind¹⁰ their¹¹ MS þo¹² they left the noble one¹³ very¹⁴ began to look for¹⁵ nursery¹⁶ before¹⁷ secretly¹⁸ eye¹⁹ clearly²⁰ put them²¹ gone²² truly²³ alone²⁴ each one²⁵ more, others

And biheld hem boþe to,¹
 Hou fair þai lay togider þo,
 And slepe boþe yfere²;
 þan seyð himselve. ' Bi Seyn Jon,
 It were gret reweþe³ ȝou to slon, 5
 þat God haþ bouȝt so dere¹ '
 His kniþ he had drawen þat tide⁴;
 For sorwe he sleynþ⁵ oway biside,
 And weþe wiþ reweful⁶ chere.⁷

þan he hadde wopen⁸ þer he stode, 10
 Anon he turned oȝain his mode,⁹
 And sayð wiþouten delay
 ' Mi broþer was so kinde and gode,
 Wiþ grimly¹⁰ wounde he schad¹¹ his blod
 For mi love opon a day, 15
 Whi schuld I þan mi childer spare,
 To bring mi broþer out of care?
 O, certes,¹² ' he sayð, ' nay!
 To help mi broþer now at þis nede,
 God graunt me þer to wele¹³ to spede,¹⁴ 20
 And Mari, þat best may¹⁵ ! '

No lenger stint¹⁶ he no stode,¹⁷
 Bot hent¹⁸ his kniþ wiþ dreri mode,
 And tok his children þo,
 For he nold nouȝt spille her¹⁹ blode, 25
 Over a bacine²⁰ fair and gode
 Her²¹ protes he schar²² atuo.²³

both two, both
² together
³ pity
⁴ time
⁵ slunk
⁶ pitiful
⁷ countenance
⁸ wept

⁹ changed his mind again
¹⁰ fearful
¹¹ shed
¹² truly
¹³ well-being
¹⁴ advance
¹⁵ can (help)
¹⁶ forbore

¹⁷ nor stood still
¹⁸ seized
¹⁹ their
²⁰ basin (OF *bacin*)
²¹ shore, cut
²² in two, asunder

And when he hadde hem boþe slain,
He laid hem in her bed oþain,

— No wonder þei¹ him wer² wo! —

And hilde³ hem, þat no wixt⁴ schuld se;
5 As no man hadde at⁵ hem be,⁶
Out of chaumber he gan go

And when he was out of chaumber gon,
þe dore he steked⁷ stille anon

As fast as it was biforn,
10 þe kays he hidde under a ston,
And þougt þai schuld wene⁸ ichon
þat þai hadde ben forlorn.⁹

To his broþer he went him þan,
And seyð to þat careful¹⁰ man,
15 Swiche time as God was born ·
' Ich have þe brougt mi childer¹¹ blod;
Ich hope it schal do þe gode,
As þe angel seyð biforn '

' Broþer,' Sir Amloun gan to say,
20 ' Hastow¹² slayn þine children tuay¹³ ?

Allas, whi de[de]stow¹⁴ so ? '

He wepe and seyð ' Waileway !

Ich had lever¹⁵ til Domesday¹⁶

Have lived in care and wo ! '

25 þan seyð Sir Amis · ' Be now stille;
Jesu, when it is his wille,

May sende me childer mo¹⁷

For me¹⁸ of blis þou art al bare¹⁹;

Ywis, mi hif wil Y nougt spare

30 To help þe now þerfro.²⁰ '

¹ though, if

² were

³ concealed

⁴ nobody

⁵ with

⁶ been

⁷ fastened

⁸ suppose

⁹ lost

¹⁰ full of care, sad

¹¹ children's

¹² hast thou

¹³ two

¹⁴ didst thou

¹⁵ rather

¹⁶ Doomsday

¹⁷ more

¹⁸ on my account

¹⁹ deprived of

²⁰ out of thy condition

He tok þat blode, þat was so brigȝt,
 And alied ¹ þat gentil kniȝt,
 þat er ² was hende ³ in hale ⁴;
 And seppen ⁵ in a bed him diȝt,⁶
 And wreixe ⁷ him wel warm, apliȝt,⁸ 5
 Wiþ cloþes riche and fale ⁹
 ' Broþer,' he scyd, ' ly now stille,
 And falle on slepe þurch Godes wille,
 As þe angel told in tale ¹⁰ ,
 And Ich hope wele, wiþouten lesing, 10
 Jesu, þat is heven King,
 Schal bote ¹¹ þe of þi bale ¹² '

Sir Amis lete ¹³ him ly ¹⁴ alon,
 And into his chapel he went anon,
 In gest ¹⁵ as ȝe may here , 15
 And for his childer þat he hadde slon
 To God of heven he made his mon,¹⁶
 And preyd wiþ rewely ¹⁷ chere
 [He] schuld save him fram schame þat day,
 And Mari, his moder, þat best may, 20
 þat was him leve ¹⁸ and dere
 And Jesu Crist, in þat stede,¹⁹
 Ful wele he herd þat kniȝtes bede,²⁰
 And graunt ²¹ him his praier.

A morwe,²² as tite ²³ as it was day, 25
 þe levedı com hom, al wiþ play,²⁴
 Wiþ kniȝtes ten and five.

1 anointed
 2 formerly
 3 courteous
 4 hall
 5 afterwards
 6 arranged
 7 covered
 8 in truth

9 many
 10 his message
 11 cure
 12 suffering
 13 left
 14 to lie, lying
 15 the story
 16 moan

17 piteous
 18 dear, precious
 19 in that situation
 20 prayer
 21 granted
 22 on the morrow
 23 soon
 24 in merry mood

- þai sougt þe kays þer¹ þai lay ;
 þai founde hem nougt — þai were oway ;
 Wel wo was hem o live.²
 þe douk bad al þat þer wes
 5 þai schuld hold hem stille in pes,³
 And stint⁴ of her strive⁵ ;
 And seyð he hadde þe keys nome⁶ ,
 Schuld no man in þe chaumber come
 Bot himself and his wive⁷
- 10 Anon he tok his levedi þan,
 And seyð to hir ' Leve leman,
 Be bliþe and glad of mode ,
 For, bi him þat þis world wan,⁸
 Boþe mi childer Ich have slan,⁹
 15 þat were so hende¹⁰ and gode ;
 For me þougt in mi sweven¹¹
 þat an angel com fram heven,
 And seyð me, þurch her blode¹²
 Mi broþer schuld passe out of his wo ;
 20 þerfore Y sloug hem boþe to,
 To hele þat frely fode.¹³
- þan was þe levedi ferly wo,¹⁴
 And seige¹⁵ hir lord was al so ;
 Sche comfort¹⁶ him ful gare.¹⁷
 25 ' O lef¹⁸ luf, ' sche seyð þo,
 ' God may sende ous¹⁹ childer mo,
 Of hem have þou no care ;
 3if it ware at min hert rote,²⁰
 For to bring þi broþer bote²¹
 30 My lyf Y wold not spare
- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 where | 8 won | 15 saw |
| 2 woeful, indeed, were they in life | 9 slain | 16 comforted |
| 3 peace | 10 gentle | 17 readily, soon |
| 4 cease | 11 dream | 18 dear |
| 5 effort | 12 by means of their blood | 19 us |
| 6 taken | 13 noble man | 20 my heart's root |
| 7 wife | 14 exceedingly sorrowful | 21 remedy |

For no man shal oure children see,
 To-morow shal þey beryed be
 Ryȝt as þey faire¹ ded ware.'

Al þus þe lady faire and bryȝt
 Comfort hur lord with al hur myȝt, 5
 As ȝe mow² understonde,
 And seth³ þey went boþ ful ryȝt
 To Sir Amylion, þat gentyl knyȝt,
 Þat ere⁴ was free⁵ to fonde.⁶
 And whan Sir Amylion wakyd þoo, 10
 Al his fowlehed⁷ was agoo,⁸
 Þurch grace of Goddes sonde⁹;
 And þan was he as feire a man
 As ever he was ȝet or þan,¹⁰
 Sep he was born in londe. 15

þan were þey al bliþ
 Her¹¹ joy couþ no man kyth,¹²
 And þonked God þat day.
 And þan, as ȝe mow listen and lyth,¹³
 To a chamber þey went swyþ,¹⁴ 20
 Þere þe children lay,
 And, without wemme¹⁵ and wound,
 Al hool¹⁶ and sound þe children found,
 And layen togeder and play.
 For joye þey wept þere þey stood, 25
 And þonked God with myld mood;
 Her care was al away.

¹ naturally² must³ afterwards⁴ formerly, before⁵ noble⁶ to make trial of; in trial⁷ disease⁸ gone⁹ messenger¹⁰ formerly or then¹¹ their¹² declare¹³ hearken¹⁴ quickly¹⁵ blemish¹⁶ whole

SIR ORFEO

Sir Orfeo (about 1320) is a classical fable metamorphosed into a fairy tale, told in the manner of a Breton lay. Orpheus, like the banished Duke in *As You Like It*, resorts to the fields and woods for a season, after Eurydice is borne away, but she is restored to him, he regains his kingdom, and they live long afterwards. Ker says of the lay (*English Literature Medieval*, p. 127, see also *Camb Hist Eng Lit* 1. 328) 'One may refer to it as a standard, to show what can be done in the mediæval art of narrative, with the simplest elements and smallest amount of decoration. It is minstrel poetry, popular poetry — the point is clear when King Orfeo excuses himself to the King of Faerie by the rules of his profession as a minstrel, that was intended to produce a smile, and applause perhaps, among the audience. But though a minstrel's poem, it is far from rude, and it is quite free from the ordinary faults of rambling and prosing, such as Chaucer ridiculed in his *Geste of Sir Thopas*. It is all in good compass, and coherent, nothing in it is meaningless or ill-placed.'

A ballad on the theme is No. 19 of Child's collection.

Our text follows Zielke's print (Breslau, 1880) of the Auchinleck manuscript (with lines 1-24, 33-46 supplied from Harl. MS. 3810), but the punctuation has been freely altered. Occasional variations from Zielke's readings are noted.

We redyn¹ ofte and fynde ywryte,²
 As clerkes don us to wyte,³
 Þe layes þat ben of harpyng
 Ben yfounde⁴ of frely [ferly?] þing.⁵
 5 Sum ben of wele, and sum of wo,
 And sum of joy and merþe also,
 Sum of trechery, and sum of gyle,
 And sum of happes⁶ þat fallen by whyle⁷;
 Sum of bourdys,⁸ and sum of rybaudry,
 10 And sum þer ben of þe feyrye.⁹
 Off alle þing þat men may se,
 Moost o love¹⁰ forsoþe þey be.
 In Brytain þis¹¹ layes arne¹² ywryte,
 Furst yfounde and forþe ygete,¹³

¹ read

² written

³ make us to know

⁴ composed

⁵ of noble matters

⁶ events

⁷ happen at times

⁸ mirth, jests

⁹ magic, enchantment

¹⁰ MS. lowe

¹¹ these

¹² are

¹³ conceived

Of adventures þat fillen¹ by dayes,²
 Wherof Brytouns made her layes.
 When þey myght owher³ heryn
 Of adventures þat þer weryn,
 Þey toke her harpys wiþ game,⁴ 5
 Maden layes, and gaf it⁶ name.

Of adventures þat han befallē
 Y can sum telle, but nought alle.⁶
 Herken, lordyngs þat ben trewe,
 And Y wol ȝou telle of sir Orphewe. 10

Orfeo was a king,
 In his time an heȝe lording,
 A stalworþ man and hardi bo,⁷
 Large,⁸ curteys he was also.
 His fader was comen of King Pluto, 15
 And his moder of King Juno,
 Þat sum time were as godes yhold,
 For aventours þat þai dede and told.

Orpheo most of ony þing
 Lovede þe gle of harpyng, 20
 Syker⁹ was every gode harpoure¹⁰
 Of hym to have moche honour.
 Hymself loved for to harpe,
 And layde pereon his wittes scharpe.¹¹
 He lernyd so, þer noþing was 25
 A better harper in no plas
 In þe world was never man born
 Þat ever Orpheo sat biforn,
 And¹² he myȝt of his harpyng her, 30
 He schulde þinke þat he wer
 In one of þe joys of Paradys,
 Suche joy and melody in his harpyng is.

¹ fell² once on a time³ anywhere⁴ joy, delight⁵ them⁶ MS all⁷ both⁸ generous⁹ sure¹⁰ MS harpoure¹¹ and gave his keen mind to the matter¹² if

Þis king sojurnd in Traciens,¹
 Þat was a cite of noble defens,
 He hadde wip him a quen of priis,²
 Þat was ycleped Dame Heurodis —
 5 þe fairest levedi, for þe nones,³
 Þat miȝt gon on bodi and bones,
 Ful of love and of godenisse,
 Ac⁴ no man may telle hir fairmise.
 Bifel so in þe comessing⁵ of May,
 10 When miri and hot is þe day,
 Oway beþ winter-schours,
 And everi feld is ful of flours,
 And blosme breme⁶ on everi bouȝ
 Overal⁷ wexep⁸ miri anouȝ,⁹
 15 Þis ich¹⁰ quen, Dame Heurodis,
 Tok to¹¹ maidens of priis,
 And went in an undrentide¹²
 To play bi an orchard-side,
 To se þe floures sprede and spring,
 20 And to here þe foules¹³ sing
 Þai sett hem doun al þre
 Under a fair ympe-tre,¹⁴
 And wel sone þis fair quene
 Fel on slepe¹⁵ opon þe grene
 25 þe maidens durst hir nouȝt awake,
 Bot lete hir ligge¹⁶ and rest take,
 So sche slepe til afternone,
 Þat under[n]tide was al ydone.
 Ac so sone as sche gan awake,
 30 Sche crid and loþli bere¹⁷ gan make.
 Sche froted¹⁸ hir honden and hir fet,

¹ Thrace (*lit* Thracians)² renown³ at that time⁴ but⁵ beginning⁶ bright⁷ everywhere⁸ grow⁹ enough¹⁰ same¹¹ two¹² morning¹³ birds¹⁴ grafted tree¹⁵ asleep¹⁶ lie¹⁷ unpleasing behavior¹⁸ rubbed, wrung

And crached ¹ hir visage, it bled wete;
 Hir riche robe sche ² al torett,³
 And was ravysed ⁴ out of hir witt.
 þe two ⁵ maidens hir biside
 No durst wiþ hir no leng ⁶ abide, 5
 Bot ourn ⁷ to þe palays ful ȝyt,
 And told boþe squier and knigt
 þat her quen awerde ⁸ wold,
 And bad hem go and hir athold ⁹
 Knigtes urn,⁷ and levedis also, 10
 Damisels sexti and mo;
 In þe orchard to þe quen hye ¹⁰ come,
 And her up in her ¹¹ armes nome,¹²
 And brouxt hir to bed atte ¹³ last,
 And held hir þere fine ¹⁴ fast. 15
 Ac ever sche held ¹⁵ in o ¹⁶ cri,
 And wold up and owy.¹⁷
 When Orfeo herd þat tiding,
 Never him nas ¹⁸ wers for ¹⁹ noþing;
 He come up wiþ knigtes tene ²⁰ 20
 To chaumber ȝyt bifor þe quene,
 And biheld, and seyð wiþ grete pite:
 'O lef hif, what is te,²¹
 þat ever ȝete hast ben so stille,
 And now gredest ²² wonder schille ²³? 25
 þi bodi, þat was so white ycore,²⁴
 Wiþ þine naules is al toto:e ²⁵
 Alas! þi rode,²⁶ þat was so red,
 Is as wan as þou were ded,

¹ scratched² MS hye³ rent apart⁴ ravished, MS. reneyd⁵ MS too⁶ longer⁷ ran⁸ go mad⁹ restrain¹⁰ they¹¹ their¹² took¹³ at the¹⁴ very¹⁵ continued¹⁶ one¹⁷ away¹⁸ it was not¹⁹ because of²⁰ ten²¹ what is ill with thee²² dost cry²³ wondrous shrill(y)²⁴ choicely²⁵ rent²⁶ complexion

- And also þine fingres smale
 Beþ al blodī and al pale !
 Allas, þi lovesum eygen to ¹
 Lokeþ so ² man dop on his fo !
 5 A, dame, Ich biseche merci !
 Lete ben ³ al þis reweful cri,
 And tel me what þe is ⁴ and hou,
 And what þing may þe help now.'
 Þo lay sche stille atte last,
 10 And gan to wepe swiþe fast,
 And seyð þus þe king to .
 ' Allas, mi lord, sir Orfeo !
 Seppen we first togider were,
 Ones ⁵ wroþ ⁶ never we nere ⁷ ;
 15 Bot ever Ich have yloved þe
 As mi luf, and so þou me.
 Ac now we mot delen ato ⁸ ,
 Do þi best, for y mot ⁹ go.'
 ' Allas,' quap he, ' forlorn Ich am !
 20 Whider wiltow go, and to wham ?
 Whider þou gost, Ichil ¹⁰ wiþ þe,
 And whider Y go, þou schalt wiþ me.'
 ' Nay, nay, sir, þat nouxt nis ¹¹ ,
 Ichil þe telle al hou it is .
 25 As Ich lay þis undertide,
 And slepe under our orchard-side,
 Þer come to me to ¹ fair knyghtes,
 Wele y-armed ¹² al to rixtes,
 And bad me comen on ¹³ heixing, ¹⁴
 30 And speke wiþ her ¹⁵ lord þe king.
 And Ich answerd at ¹⁶ wordes bold,

¹ two
² as
³ put aside, cease
⁴ what ails thee
⁵ once
⁶ angry

⁷ were not
⁸ separate (part in two)
⁹ must
¹⁰ I will
¹¹ that is in no way possible
¹² armed

¹³ MS an
¹⁴ in haste
¹⁵ their
¹⁶ with

Y durst nougt, no Y nold.¹
 þai priked ² oðain, as þai miȝt drive ³;
 þo kom her king also blive,⁴
 Wiþ an hundred kniȝtes and mo,
 And damisels an hundred also, 5
 Al on snowe-white stedes;
 As white as milke were her wedes.⁵
 Y no seige never ȝete bifore
 So fair creatours ycore.⁶
 þe king hadde a croun on hed; 10
 It nas of silver, no of gold red,
 Ac ⁷ it was of a precious ston,
 As briȝt as þe sonne it schon.
 And as son as he to me cam,
 Wold Ich, nold Ich,⁸ he me nam,⁹ 15
 And made me wiþ him ride
 Opon a palfray bi his side,
 And brouȝt me to his palays,
 Wele atird ¹⁰ in ich ways,¹¹
 And schewed me castels and tours, 20
 Rivers, forestes, friȝ ¹² wiþ flours,
 And his riche stedes ¹³ ichon,
 And seȝpen me brouȝt oðain hom
 Into our owen ¹⁴ orchard,
 And said to me þus afterward 25
 " Loke, dame, to-morwe þatow ¹⁵ be
 Riȝt here under þis ympe-tre,
 And þan þou schalt wiþ ous ¹⁶ go,
 And live wiþ ous evermo,
 And ȝif þou makest ous ylet,¹⁷ 30
 Whar ¹⁸ þou be, þou worst yfet,¹⁹

¹ nor would I
² rode hard
³ hasten
⁴ very quickly
⁵ their garments
⁶ chosen out
⁷ but

⁸ whether I was willing or not
 (would I, would I not)
⁹ took
¹⁰ adorned
¹¹ in all ways
¹² glade
¹³ places

¹⁴ own
¹⁵ that thou
¹⁶ us
¹⁷ delay
¹⁸ wherever
¹⁹ shalt be fetched

- And totore pine limes al,
 þat noþing help þe no schal ;
 And þei ¹ þou best ² so totorn,
 Ȝete þou worst ³ wiþ ous yborn. ⁴ ” ’
 5 When king Orfeo herd þis cas, ⁵
 ‘ Owe ⁶ ! ’ quap he, ‘ allas, allas !
 Lever me were to lete ⁷ mī liif,
 þan þus to lese ⁸ þe quen mī wiif ! ’
 He asked conseyl at ⁹ ich man,
 10 Ac no man him help no can.
 Amorwe ¹⁰ þe undertide is come,
 And Orfeo hap his armes ynome, ¹¹
 And wele ten hundred kniȝtes wiþ him,
 Ich y-armed stout and grim ,
 15 And wiþ þe quen wenten he ¹²
 Riȝt unto þat ympe-tre.
 þai made scheltrom ¹³ in ica side, ¹⁴
 And sayd þai wold þere abide,
 And dye þer everichon,
 20 Er þe quen schuld from hem gon.
 Ac ȝete amiddes hem ful riȝt ¹⁵
 þe quen was oway ytwiȝt, ¹⁶
 Wiþ fairi ¹⁷ forþ ynome ,
 Men wist never wher sche was bicomē. ¹⁸
 25 þo was þer cring, wepe, and wo ;
 þe king into his chaumber is go, ¹⁹
 And oft swoned opon þe ston,
 And made swiche diol ²⁰ and swiche mon
 þat nerȝe his liif was yspent —
 30 þer was no amendement.
 He cleped togider his barouns,

¹ though
² be
³ shalt be
⁴ carried away
⁵ situation
⁶ O woe
⁷ give up

⁸ lose
⁹ from
¹⁰ on the morrow
¹¹ taken
¹² they
¹³ band, troop
¹⁴ each side

¹⁵ from amidst them
¹⁶ snatched, MS ytwiȝt
¹⁷ by witchcraft, magic
¹⁸ what was become of her
¹⁹ gone
²⁰ dole

Erls, lordes of renouns ¹;
 And when þai al ycomen were,
 'Lordinges,' he said, 'bifore ȝou here
 Ich ordainy mun heige-steward
 To wite ² mī kingdom afterward; 5
 In mī stede ben he schal,
 To kepe mī londes over al.
 For, now Ichave mī quen ylore,³
 Þe fairest levedi þat ever was bore,
 Never eft Y nil ⁴ no woman se; 10
 Into wildernes Ichil te,⁵
 And live þer evermore
 Wiþ wilde bestes in holtes ⁶ hore.⁷
 And when ȝe understond þat Y be spent,⁸
 Make ȝou þan a parlement, 15
 And chese ȝou a newe king,
 Now doþ ȝour best wiþ al mī þing.⁹'
 Þo was þer wepeing in þe halle,
 And grete cri among hem alle;
 Unneþe ¹⁰ miȝt old or ȝong 20
 For wepeing speke a word wiþ tong.
 Þai kneled adoun al yfere,
 And praid him, ȝif his wille were,
 Þat he no schuld fram hem go;
 'Do way,' quap he, 'it schal be so.' 25
 Al his kingdom he forsoke,
 Bot a sclavin ¹¹ on him he ¹² toke —
 He ne hadde kirtel no hode,
 Schert, [ne] non oþer gode.
 Bot his harp he tok, algate,¹³ 30
 And dede him barfot out atte gate;
 No man most ¹⁴ wiþ him go

¹ renown
² rule
³ lost
⁴ will not
⁵ journey

⁶ forests
⁷ gray (from lichens or bareness)
⁸ dead
⁹ property
¹⁰ scarcely, with difficulty

¹¹ pilgrim's mantle
¹² MS te
¹³ notwithstanding
¹⁴ was allowed

Oway ! what þer was wepe and wo,
 When he þat hadde ben king wip croun,
 Went so poverlich out of toun !
 Þurch wode and over heþ
 5 Into þe wildernes he geþ,
 Noþing he fint þat him is ays,¹
 Bot ever he liveþ in gret malais.²
 He þat hadde ywed ³ þe fowe ⁴ and gruis,⁵
 And on bed þe purper bus,⁶
 10 Now on hard heþe he liþ,
 Wip leves and gresse he him wriþ.⁷
 He þat hadde had castels and tours,
 River, forest, friþ wip flours,
 Now, þei ⁸ it comenci to snewe ⁹ and frese,
 15 Þis king mote make his bed in mese ¹⁰,
 He þat had yhad kniþtes of priis
 Bifor him kneland, and levedis,
 Now seþ he noþing þat him likeþ,¹¹
 Bot wilde wormes bi him strikeþ ¹²;
 20 He þat had yhad plente
 Of mete and drink, of ich deynte,
 Now may he al day digge and wrote,¹³
 Er he finde his fille of rote.¹⁴
 In somer he liveþ bi ¹⁵ wild frut
 25 And berren ¹⁶ bot gode lut ¹⁷;
 In winter may he noþing finde
 Bot rote, grases, and þe rinde.¹⁸
 Al his bodi was oway dwine ¹⁹
 For missays,²⁰ and al tochine.²¹
 30 Lord ! who may telle þe sore ²²

¹ ease² distress, discomfort³ worn⁴ variegated fur⁵ gray fur⁶ fine linen (Lat *byssus*)⁷ covers⁸ though⁹ snow¹⁰ moss¹¹ pleaseth¹² slip, crawl¹³ grub¹⁴ roots¹⁵ on¹⁶ berries¹⁷ very few (good little), MS lite¹⁸ bark¹⁹ shrunk, MS dwine²⁰ discomfort²¹ chapped²² pain

þis king sufferd ten gere and more ?
 His here of his berd, blac and rowe,¹
 To his girdelstede was growe ,
 His harp, whereon was al his gle,
 He hidde in an holwe tre , 5
 And, when þe weder was clere and brigt,
 He toke his harp to him wel rígt,
 And harped at his owen wille ,
 Into alle þe wode þe soun gan schille,²
 þat alle þe wilde bestes þat þer bep 10
 For joie abouten him þai tep,³
 And alle þe foules þat þer were
 Come and sete on ȝh a brere,⁴
 To here his harping afin,⁵
 So miche melody was þerin , 15
 And when he his harping lete ⁶ wold,
 No best bi him abide nold
 He mȝt se him bisides
 Oft in hot undertides
 þe king o fairi,⁷ wȝ his rout, 20
 Com to hunt him al about,
 Wȝ dun,⁸ [with] cri and bloweing,⁹
 And houndes also wȝ him berking ;
 Ac no best þai no nome,¹⁰
 No never he nist ¹¹ whider þai bȝcome. 25
 And oþer while he mȝt him se
 As a gret ost bi him te ¹² —
 Wele atourned ¹³ ten hundred knȝtes,
 Ich y-armed to his rȝtes,¹⁴ *
 Of contenaunce stout and fers, 30
 Wȝ manȝ desplaid baners,

¹ rough² did shrill³ draw⁴ briar⁵ perfectly, MS. afine⁶ stop⁷ fairyland⁸ din⁹ blowing of horns¹⁰ did they take¹¹ knew not¹² come¹³ appointed, fitted out¹⁴ properly

And, ich his swerd ydrawe hold,¹
Ac never he nist whider þai wold.

And oper while he seige oper þing :
Knights and levedis com daunceing,
5 In queynt atire, gisely,²
[With] queynt[e]³ pas and soft[e]ly ;
Tabours and trumpes⁴ xede hem bi,
And al maner menstraci.

And on a day he seige him biside
10 Sexti levedis on hors ride,
Gentil and jolif⁵ as brid on ris⁶ —
Nougt o man amonges hem þer nis ;
And ich a faucoun on hond bere,⁷
And riden on haukin[g] bi o riverse.
15 Of game þai founde wel gode haunt⁸ —
Maulardes,⁹ hayroun,¹⁰ and corneraunt.

þe foules of þe water ariseþ,
þe faucouns hem wele deviseþ¹¹ :
Ich faucoun his pray slouȝ
20 þat seige Orfeo, and louȝ.¹²
' Parfay,¹³ ' quap he, ' þer is fair game,
þider Ichil, bi Godes name !
Ich was ywon¹⁴ swiche werk to se ' ;
He aros, and þider gan te.

25 To a levedi he was ycome,
Biheld, and hap wele undernome,¹⁵
And seþ bi al þing þat it is
His owen quen, Dam Heurodis.
Ȝern¹⁶ he biheld hir, and sche him eke,
30 Ac noþer to oper a word no speke.
For messais þat sche on him seige,

¹ held² handsomely³ dainty⁴ drums and trumpets, MS.
trimpes⁵ merry⁶ spray, twig⁷ inf. after *serge*, line 9⁸ resort⁹ mallards (wild ducks)¹⁰ heron¹¹ make their plans well¹² laughed¹³ by (my) faith¹⁴ wont, accustomed¹⁵ perceived¹⁶ eagerly, gladly

þat had ben so riche and so heige,¹
 þe teres fel out of her eige.
 þe oþer levedis þis yseige,
 And maked hir oway to ride —
 Sche most wip him no lenger abide. 5
 'Allas,' quap he, 'now me is wo !
 Whi nil² deþ now me slo ?
 Allas, wreche,³ þat Y no migt
 Dye now after þis sigt !
 Allas ! to⁴ long last mi liif, 10
 When Y no dar nougt wip mi wiif,
 No hye⁵ to me, o word speke.
 Allas ! whi nil min hert breke ?
 Parfay,' quap he, 'tide wat bitide,⁶
 Whider so þis⁷ levedis ride, 15
 þe selve⁸ way Ichil streche⁹ ;
 Of liif no deþ me no reche.¹⁰
 His sclavain he dede¹¹ on, als he¹² spac,¹³
 And henge his harp opon his bac,
 And had wel gode wil to gon — 20
 He no spard noiþer stub no ston.
 In at a roche þe leuedis rideþ,
 And he after, and nougt abideþ.
 When he was in þe roche ygo
 Wele þre mile oþer¹⁴ mo, 25
 He com into a fair cuntray,
 As brigt so¹⁵ sonne on somers day,
 Smoþe and plain and al grene —
 Hille no dale was þer non ysene.
 Amidde þe lond a castel he s[e]iþe,
 Riche and real¹⁶ and wonder heige. 30

¹ high, lofty² will not³ miserable that I am⁴ too⁵ nor she⁶ happen what may happen⁷ these⁸ same⁹ go¹⁰ I care not¹¹ put¹² MS also¹³ spoke¹⁴ or¹⁵ as¹⁶ royal

Al þe utmast wal
 Was clere and schine ¹ as cristal,
 An hundred tours þer were about,
 Degiselich ² and bataild stout,
 5 þe butras com out of þe dicke, ³
 Of rede gold y-arched ⁴ riche,
 þe bonsour ⁵ was anourned ⁶ al
 Of ich maner divers animal;
 Wiþin þer wer wide wones, ⁷
 10 Al of precious stones,
 þe werst piler on to biholde ⁸
 Was al of burnist gold
 Al þat lond was ever lȝt
 For when it schuld be þerk ⁹ and niȝt,
 15 þe riche stones lȝt gone, ¹⁰
 As briȝt as doȝ at none þe sonne
 No man may telle, no þenche in þouȝt,
 þe riche werk þat þer was wrouȝt,
 Bi al þing him þink ¹¹ þat it is
 20 þe proude court of Paradis
 In þis castel þe levedis aliȝt,
 He wold in after, ȝif he miȝt:
 Orfeo knokkeþ atte gate,
 þe porter was redi þerate,
 25 And asked what he wold have ydo.
 'Parfay,' quap he, 'Ich am a minstrel, lo!
 To solas þi lord wiþ mi gle,
 Ȝif his suete wille be'
 þe porter undede þe ȝate anon,
 30 And lete him into þe castel gon.
 þan he gan bihold about al,
 And seiȝe ful ¹² hȝgeand ¹³ wiþin þe wal

¹ bright, beautiful² elaborately ornamented³ moat⁴ arched⁵ arch⁶ adorned, MS. avowed⁷ apartments⁸ to look on, in appearance⁹ dark¹⁰ began to shine¹¹ it would seem to him¹² full many¹³ lying

Of folk þat were þider ybrougt,
And þougt dede, and ðere nougt.
Sum stode wiþouten hade,¹
And sum non armes nade,²
And sum purch þe bodi hadde wounde, 5
And sum lay wode,³ ybounde,
And sum, armed, on hors sete,
And sum astrangled as þai ete,
And sum were in water adreynt,⁴
And sum wiþ fire al forschreynt⁵; 10
Wives þer lay on childbedde,
Sum ded, and sum awedde⁶,
And wonder fele þer lay bisides,
Riȝt as þai slepe her⁷ undertides;
Eche was þus in þis warld ynome, 15
Wiþ fair⁸ þider ycome.
þer he seiȝe his owen wiif,
Dame Heurodis, his lef⁹ liif,
Slepe under an ympe-tre.
Bi her cloþes he knewe þat it was he¹⁰ 20
And when he hadde bihold þis¹¹ mervails alle,
He went into þe kinges halle;
þan seiȝe he þer a semly¹² siȝt —
A tabernacle blisseful and briȝt,
þerin her⁷ maister king sete, 25
And her quen fair and swete
Her⁷ crounes, her⁷ cloþes schine so briȝt,
þat unneþe¹³ bihold he hem miȝt.
When he hadde biholden al þat þing,
He kneled adoun biȝor þe king. 30

1 head

2 had not

8 mad

4 drowned

6 parched

6 out of their minds

7 their

8 enchantment

⁹ dear, MS luf (see 91 28)

10 she

11 these

12 comely

18 with difficulty

2 ff. Cf the enumeration in Chaucer, *Knight's Tale* 1137 ff.

- ' O lord,' he seyð, ' ȝif it þi wille were,
 Mi menstraci þou schust ¹ yhere.'
 Þe king answerd ' What man artow,
 þat art hider ycomen now ?
 5 Ich, no non þat is wiþ me,
 No sent never after þe ;
 Seppen þat Ich here regni gan,
 Y no fond so folehardi man
 þat hider to ous durst wende,
 10 Bot þat Ichim wold ofsende ² '
 ' Lord,' quap he, ' trowe ³ ful wel,
 Y nam bot ⁴ a pover menstrel,
 And, sir, it is þe maner of ous
 To seche ⁵ mani a lordes hous,
 15 þei we nouȝt welcom no be,
 Ȝete we mot ⁶ proferi forþ our gle.⁷ '
 Bifore þe king he sat adoun,
 And tok his harp so miri of soun,
 And temprep ⁸ his harp, as he welc can
 20 And blisseful notes he þer gan,
 þat al þat in þe palays were
 Com to him for to here,
 And liggeþ ⁹ adoun to ¹⁰ his fete —
 Hem þenkeþ ¹¹ his melody so swete.
 25 þe king herkneþ and sitt ful stille,
 To here his gle he haþ gode wille,
 Gode bourde ¹² he hadde of his gle,
 þe riche quen also hadde he ¹³
 When he hadde stint ¹⁴ his harping,
 30 þan seyð to him þe king .
 ' Menstrel, me likeþ wele þi gle ;
 Now aske of me what it be,

¹ shalt
² send for
³ believe
⁴ am only
⁵ seek

⁶ must needs
⁷ song, music
⁸ tunes
⁹ lie
¹⁰ at

¹¹ to them seems
¹² amusement, enjoyment
¹³ she
¹⁴ ceased

Largelich ¹ Ichil ² þe pay.
 Now speke, and tow miȝt asay.³
 'Sir,' he seyð, 'Ich biseche þe
 þatow woldest ȝive me
 þat ich ⁴ levedī, briȝt on ble,⁵ 5
 þat slepeþ under þe ympe-tre.'
 'Nay,' quap þe king, 'þat nouȝt nere ⁶!
 A sori couple of ȝou it were,
 For þou art lene, rowe,⁷ and blac,
 And sche is lovesum, witþouten lac ⁸; 10
 A loþlich ⁹ þing it were, forþi,¹⁰
 To sen hir in þi compayni.'
 'O sir,' he seyð, 'gentil king,
 Ȝete were it a wele fouler þing
 To here a lesing ¹¹ of ¹² þi mouþe; 15
 So, sir, as ȝe seyð nouþe,¹³
 What I wold aski, have Y schold;
 And nedes þou most þi word hold.¹⁴
 þe king seyð 'Seþþen it is so,
 Take hir bi þe hond, and go; 20
 Of hir Ichil þatow ¹⁵ be bliþe.'
 He knelyd adoun, and þonked him swiþe;
 His wuf he tok bi þe hond,
 And dede ¹⁶ him swiþe out of þat lond,
 And went him out of þat þede ¹⁷; 25
 Riȝt as he come, þe way he ȝede.
 So long he hap þe way ynome,
 To Traciens he is ycome,
 þat was his owen cite, 30
 Ac no man knewe þat it was he.
 No forþer þan þe tounes ende

¹ generously² I will³ if thou canst make trial⁴ same⁵ of hue⁶ were not possible⁷ rough⁸ lack, fault⁹ loathsome, dreadful¹⁰ therefore¹¹ lie¹² from¹³ now¹⁴ keep¹⁵ that thou¹⁶ went¹⁷ people

- For knoweleche ¹ [he] ne durst wende ;
 Bot wip a begger ybilt ² ful narwe.
 Þer he tok his herbarwe ³
 To ⁴ him and to his owen wiif
 5 As a minstrel of pover lif,
 And asked tidings of þat lond,
 And who þe kingdom held in hond
 Þe pover begger in his cote ⁵
 Told him everich a grot ⁶ —
 10 How her quen was stole owy,
 'Ten ȝer gon, ⁷ wip ⁸ fairy ,
 And hou hei ⁹ king in evile ȝede,
 Bot no ¹⁰ man nist in wiche þede ,
 And hou þe steward þe lond gan hold ;
 15 And oþer mani þinges him told.
 Amorwe oȝain none tide, ¹¹
 He makend his wiif þer abide ,
 Þe beggers cloþes he borwed ¹² anon,
 And heng his harp his rigge ¹³ opon,
 20 And went him into þat cite,
 Þat men miȝt him bihold and se.
 Erls and barouns bold,
 Buriays ¹⁴ and levedis him gan bihold.
 ' Lo,' þai seyð, ' swiche a man !
 25 How long þe here hongep him opan !
 Lo, hou his berd hongep to his kne !
 He is yclongen ¹⁵ also a tre !'
 And as he ȝede in þe strete,
 Wip his steward he gan mete,
 30 And loude he sett on him a criē
 ' Sir steward,' he seyð, ' merci !
 Ich am an harpouŕ of hepenisse ¹⁶ ;

¹ for fear of being recognized² lodged³ shelter⁴ for⁵ cot⁶ every little bit, every detail⁷ ago⁸ by⁹ their¹⁰ MS so¹¹ towards noon¹² borrowed, MS borwed¹³ back¹⁴ burgesses, citizens¹⁵ shrunk, withered¹⁶ from heathendom

Help me now in þis destresse!¹
 Þe steward seyð 'Com wiþ me home¹;
 Of þat Ichave, þou schalt have some.
 Everich gode harpou is welcom me to,
 For mi lordes love, Sir Orfeo.'

5

In þe castel þe steward sat atte mete,
 And many lording was bi him sete,
 Þer were trompou[r][s] and tabourers,
 Harpours fele, and crouders.²
 Miche melody þei maked alle,
 And Orfeo sat stille in þe halle,
 And herknep When þei ben al stille,
 He toke his harp and tempred schille³;
 Þe blissefulest notes he harped þere
 Þat ever ani man yherd wiþ ere,
 Ich man liked wele his gle

10

15

Þe steward biheld and gan yse,
 And knewe þe harp also⁴ blive.⁵
 'Menstrel,' he seyð, 'so mot þou þrive,⁶
 Where hadestow þis harp, and hou?
 Y pray þat þou me telle now.'
 'Lord,' quæþ he, 'in uncouþe⁷ þede,
 Þurch a wildernes as Y gede,
 Þer Y founde, in a dale,
 Wiþ⁸ lyouns a man totorn smale,
 And wolves him frete⁹ wiþ teþ so scharp.
 , Bi him Y fond þis ich[a]¹⁰ harp,
 Wele ten gere it is ygo.'

20

25

'O,' quæþ þe steward, 'now me is wo!
 Þat was mi lord, Sir Orfeo.
 Allas, wreche, what schal Y do,
 Þat have swiche a lord ylore?
 Away,¹¹ þat Ich was ybore!

30

¹ MS come² players on the crowd, an early
Celtic form of the violin³ shrilly⁴ MS als⁵ instantly⁶ mayst thou prosper⁷ strange⁸ by⁹ devoured¹⁰ same¹¹ woe

þat him was so hard grace¹ yʒarked,²
 And so vile deþ ymarked³ !'
 Adoun he fel aswon to grounde.
 His barouns him toke up in þat stounde,⁴
 5 And telleþ him hou it geþ —
 It is no bot⁵ of manes deþ.

King Orfeo knewe wele biþan
 His steward was a trewe man,
 And loved him, as he auct to do,
 10 And stont up and seyð⁶ þus ' Lo,
 Steward, herkne now þis þing.
 ʒif Ich were Orfeo þe king,
 And hadde ysuffred ful ʒore⁷
 In wildernisse miche sore,
 15 And hadde ywon mi quen owy
 Out of þe lond of fairy,
 And hadde ybrouxt þe levedi hende⁸
 Riht here to þe tounes ende,
 And wiþ a begger her in ynome;
 20 And were miself hider ycome
 Poverlich to þe, þus stille,
 For to asay þi gode wille,
 And ich founde þe þus trewe,
 þou no schust it never rewe⁹:
 25 Sikerlich,¹⁰ for love or ay,¹¹
 þou schust be king after mi day.
 ʒif¹² þou of mi deþ hadest ben bliþe,
 þou schust ben voided¹³ also swiþe.¹⁴
 þo al þo¹⁵ þat þerein sete
 30 þat it was King Orfeo underʒete,¹⁶
 And þe steward him wele knewe.

¹ such misfortune² appointed³ decreed⁴ time⁵ help⁶ MS, seyt⁷ for a long time past⁸ gentle, gracious⁹ repent¹⁰ truly¹¹ or fear¹² MS and ʒif¹³ shouldst have been put out¹⁴ in all haste¹⁵ then all those¹⁶ understood, perceived

Over and over þe bord¹ he þrewe,
 And fel adoun to his fet;
 So dede everich lord þat þer sete;
 And al þai seyð at o cring:
 'Ȝe beþ our lord, sir, and our king!'

5

Glad þai were of his lve.²
 To chaumber þai ladde him also³ blive,⁴
 And baped him, and schaved his berd,
 And tired⁵ him as a king apert⁶,
 And seþþen⁷ wiþ gret processiou
 Þai brouxt þe quen into þat toun,
 Wiþ al maner menstraci
 Lord, þer was grete melody
 For joie þai wepe wiþ her eize,
 Þat hem so sounde⁸ ycomen seiȝe.
 Now king Orfeo newe coround is,
 And his quen Dame Heurodis,
 And lived long afterward,
 And seþþen was king þe steward.

10

15

Harpours in Bretaine afterþan
 Herd hou þis mervaile bigan,
 And made⁹ a lay of gode likeing,
 And nempned it after þe king,
 Þat lay 'Orfeo' is yhote¹⁰ —
 Gode is þe lay, swete is þe note.

25

Þus com Sir Orfeo out of his care;
 God graunt ous alle wele to fare.

¹ table² life³ MS als⁴ as quickly as possible⁵ attired⁶ evident in his looks⁷ afterwards⁸ well in body⁹ MS made hereof¹⁰ called

CHAUCER, SIR THOPAS

Sir Thopas is well characterized by Ker (*English Literature: Medieval*, pp 129-31) 'Chaucer's burlesque is easily misunderstood. It is criticism, and it is ridicule, it shows up the true character of the common minstrelsy — the rambling narrative, the conventional stopgaps, the complacent childish vanity of the popular artist who has his audience in front of him, and knows all the easy tricks by which he can hold their attention. Chaucer has made a good thing out of the rhyme doggerel, and expresses the pleasant old fashioned quality of the minstrels' romances, as well as their absurdities. His parody touches on the want of plan and method and meaning in the popular rhymes of chivalry, it is also intended as criticism of their verse. That verse . . . is technically called *rime coule* or "tail-rhyme." It very readily becomes monotonous and flat. . . . But it is a form of stanza which may be so used as to escape the besetting faults; the fact that it has survived through all the changes of literary fashion, and has been used by poets in all the different centuries, is something to the credit of the minstrels, as against the rude common-sense criticism of the Host of the Tabard when he stopped the Rime of *Sir Thopas*.' Skeat also is tempted to break a lance in behalf of the poem (Chaucer, *Works* 3 424) 'I cannot quite resist the suspicion that Chaucer may himself, in his youth, have tried his hand at such romance-writing in all seriousness, but lived to have a good-humored laugh even in some degree at his own expense; and he seems as if endeavoring to make his readers feel that they could wish there was somewhat more of it.'

For the parodies in detail, see Bennewitz' dissertation (Halle, 1879), Kolbing's article in *Englische Studien*, Vol 11, and Skeat's notes. Our text in general follows Skeat.

For Chaucer in general, see Root, *The Poetry of Chaucer* (Boston, 1922), Legouis, *Geoffrey Chaucer* (London, 1913), or Jusserand, *Lit Hist Eng People* 1 267-343. To the investigator, Miss Hammond's *Chaucer: a Bibliographical Manual* (New York, 1908) is indispensable.

I

Listeth, lordes, in good entent,¹
 And I wol telle verrayment²
 Of mirthe and of solas³,
 Al of a knyght was fair and gent⁴
 In bataille and in tourneyment —
 His name was Sir Thopas

¹ with good will² verily³ diversion⁴ refined, noble

Yborn he was in fer contree,
 In Flaundres, al biyonde the see,
 At Popering,¹ in the place²;
 His fader was a man ful free,³
 And lord he was of that contree, 5
 As it was Goddes grace.

Sir Thopas wex⁴ a doghty⁵ swayn;
 Whyt was his face as payndemayn,⁶
 His lippes rede as rose;
 His rode⁷ was⁸ lyk scarlet in grayn,⁹ 10
 And I yow telle in good certayn,
 He hadde a semely nose.

His heer, his berd was lyk saffroun,¹⁰
 That to his girdel raughte¹¹ adoun,
 His shoon¹² of Cordewane¹³, 15
 Of Brugges¹⁴ were his hosen¹⁵ broun,
 His robe was of ciclatoun¹⁶
 That coste many a jane.¹⁷

He coude hunte at wilde deer,
 And ryde an hauking for riveer,¹⁸ 20
 With grey goshawk on honde,
 Therto he was a good archeer;
 Of wrastling was ther noon his peer,
 Ther¹⁹ any ram²⁰ shal stonde.

Ful many a mayde, bright in bour,²¹ 25
 They moorne fo. him, paramour,²²
 Whan hem were bet²³ to slepe,

¹ a small town in the district of Calais, southwest of Ostend

² manor-house, chief house of a town or village

³ noble

⁴ grew to be

⁵ valiant

⁶ very fine white bread

⁷ complexion (OE *rudu*)

⁸ MS *is*

⁹ dyed with cochineal, of a fast color

¹⁰ yellow

¹¹ reached

¹² shoes

¹³ Cordovan leather

¹⁴ Bruges, in Belgium

¹⁵ tight-fitting trousers, covering the feet

¹⁶ costly material, often embroidered with gold

¹⁷ small coin of Genoa, referred to in England as halfpence

¹⁸ towards the river

¹⁹ where

²⁰ A ram was the usual prize at a wrestling-match

²¹ bower

²² longingly

²³ it were better for them

But he was chast and no lechour,¹
 And sweet as is the bremble-flour²
 That bereth the rede hepe.³

5 And so bifel upon a day,
 Forsothe, as I yow telle may,
 Sir Thopas wolde out ryde ;
 He worth upon⁴ his stede gray,
 And in his honde a launcegay,⁵
 A long swerd by his syde.

10 He priketh⁶ thurgh a fair forest,
 Therinne is many a wilde best,
 Ye, bothe bukke and hare ,
 And, as he priketh north and est,
 I telle it yow, him⁷ hadde almost
 15 Bitid⁸ a sory care⁹

Thei springen herbes grete and smale,
 The lycorys¹⁰ and cetewale,¹¹
 And many a clowe-gilofre¹² ,
 And notemuge¹³ to put in ale,
 20 Whether it be moyste or stale,
 (Or for to leye in cofre.¹⁴

The briddes¹⁵ singe, it is no nay,¹⁶
 The sparhawk¹⁷ and the papejay,¹⁸
 That joye it was to here ,
 25 The thrustlecok¹⁹ made eek his lay,
 The wodedowve²⁰ upon the spray
 She sang ful loude and clere.

¹ unchaste man, debauchee

² flower of the bramble (dog-rose)

³ hip (fruit of the dog-rose)

⁴ got upon

⁵ a kind of lance, probably rather short

⁶ rides hard

⁷ to him

⁸ happened

⁹ a grievous misfortune

¹⁰ licorice

¹¹ zedoary (used in medicine
 as a stimulant)

¹² clove

¹³ nutmeg

¹⁴ a box

¹⁵ birds

¹⁶ it cannot be denied

¹⁷ sparrow-hawk

¹⁸ parrot

¹⁹ male thrush

²⁰ wood-dove

Sir Thopas fil in ¹ love-longinge
 Al whan he herde the thrustel singe,
 And priked as he were wood ²,
 His faire stede in his prikinge
 So swatte ³ that men mighte him wringe; 5
 His sydes were al blood

Sir Thopas eek so wery was,
 For prikinge on the softe gras —
 So fiers ⁴ was his corage —
 That doun he leyde him in that plas, 10
 To make his stede som solas,
 And yaf him good forage.

'O Sente Marie, *ben'cite* ⁵!
 What cyleth this love at me, ⁶
 To binde ⁷ me so sore? 15
 Me dremed ⁸ al this night, pardee, ⁹
 An elf-queen shal my lemman be,
 And slepe under my gore ¹⁰

An elf-queen wol I love, ywis, ¹¹
 For in this world no womman is 20
 Worthy to be my make, ¹²
 In toun ¹³,
 Alle othere wommen I forsake,
 And to an elf-queen I me take,
 By dale and eek by doune ¹⁴! 25

Into his sadel he clamb anoon,
 And prikeþ over style ¹⁵ and stoon,
 An elf queen for t' espye,

¹ fell into² as if he were mad³ sweat⁴ fierce⁵ *benedicite*, bless ye (the Lord)⁶ with respect to me⁷ enthrall⁸ I dreamed⁹ *En par Dieu*¹⁰ garment¹¹ certainly, truly¹² mate¹³ in the town, in the district
(a mere verse-tag)¹⁴ down, hill¹⁵ stile

- Til he so longe had riden and goon
 That he fond, in a privee woon,¹
 The contree of Fairyc
 So wilde ;
 5 For in that contree was ther noon
 That to him dorste ryde or goon,²
 Neither wyf ne childe,

 Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,³
 (His name was Sir Olifaunt⁴),
 10 A perilous man of dede
 He seyde ' ('hild,⁵ by 'Termagaunt,⁶
 But-if⁷ thou prike out of myn haunt,
 Anon I slee⁸ thy stede
 With mace
 15 Heer is the queen of Fayerye,
 With harpe and pype and simphonye,⁹
 Dwelling in this place.'

 The childe seyde ' Also mote I thee.¹⁰
 To-morwe wol I mete thee,
 20 Whan I have myn armoure ,
 And yet I hope, *par ma fuy*,¹¹
 'That thou shalt with this launcegay
 Abyen it ful soure¹² ,
 Thy mawe¹³
 25 Shal I percen, if I may,
 Er it be fully pryme of day,¹⁴
 For heer thou shalt be slawe.¹⁵ '

 Sir Thopas drow abak¹⁶ ful faste ,
 This geaunt at him stones caste
 30 Out of a fel¹⁷ staf-slinge¹⁸ ,

¹ secret retreat² This line is supplied from
an inferior MS³ giant⁴ Elephant⁵ title of a young squire or
knight⁶ a Saracen idol⁷ unless⁸ will slay⁹ a kind of tabor¹⁰ as I may thrive¹¹ by my faith¹² pay for it bitterly¹³ maw, stomach¹⁴ prime = 6-9 A M , fully
prime = 9 A M¹⁵ slain¹⁶ drew back¹⁷ deadly¹⁸ sling fastened to a stick

But faire escapeth Child Thopas,
And al it was thurgh Goddes gras,¹
And thurgh his fair beringe.

Yet listeth, lordes, to my tale
Merier than the nightingale, 5
For now I wol yow rounne²
How Sir Thopas, with sydes smale,
Priking over hil and dale,
Is come agayn to tounne

His merie men comanded he 10
To make him bothe game³ and glee,
For nedes moste he fighte
With a geaunt with hevedes⁴ three,
For paramour⁵ and joltee⁶
Of oon⁷ that shoon⁸ ful bryghte. 15

'Do⁹ come,' he seyde, 'my min[1]strales
And gestours,¹⁰ for to tellen tales
Anon, in¹¹ myn arminge,
Of romances that been royales,
Of popes and of cardinales, 20
And eek of love-lykinge.'

They fette him first the swete wyn,
And mede¹² eek in a masclyn,¹³
And royal spicerye¹⁴
Of gingebreed¹⁵ that was ful fyn, 25
And lycorys, and eek comyn,¹⁶
With sugre that is so trye.¹⁷

¹ grace, favor
² relate (*prop* whisper)

³ sport

⁴ heads

⁵ love

⁶ amusement

⁷ one

⁸ shone

⁹ cause to

¹⁰ story-tellers

¹¹ during

¹² mead

¹³ maple bowl

¹⁴ mixture of spices

¹⁵ preserved ginger

¹⁶ cumin

¹⁷ choice

- He dide¹ next his whyte lere²
 Of clooth of lake³ fyn and clere
 A breech⁴ and eek a sherte ;
 And next his sherte an aketoun,⁵
 5 And over that an habergeoun,⁶
 For⁷ percinge of his herte ;

 And over that a fyn hauberk⁸
 Was al ywroght of Jewes werk,
 Ful strong it was of plate⁹ ,
 10 And over that his cote-armour,¹⁰
 As whyt as is a lily-flour,
 In which he wol debate.¹¹

 His sheeld was al of gold so reed,
 And therin was a bores heed,
 15 A charboche¹² bisyde ,
 And there he swoor, on ale and breed,
 How that ' The geaunt shal be deed,
 Bityde what bityde¹³ ! '
- His jambeux¹⁴ were of quirboilly,¹⁵
 20 His swerdes shethe of yvory,
 His helm of laton¹⁶ bright ,
 His sadel was of rewel-boon¹⁷ ,
 His brydel as the sonne shoon,
 Or as the mone light.
- His spere was of fyn ciprees,¹⁸
 25 That bodeth werre, and nothing¹⁹ pees,
 The heed ful sharpe ygrounde ,

¹ put on² flesh³ linen⁴ pair of breeches⁵ short, sleeveless tunic⁶ coat of mail⁷ as protection against⁸ hauberk, coat of mail⁹ breastplate on the front of
the hauberk (?)¹⁰ a surcoat, not of metal¹¹ combat¹² carbuncle¹³ happen what may happen¹⁴ leg-pieces¹⁵ boiled leather, dried very
hard (F *cuir bouilli*)¹⁶ latten (metal compounded
chiefly of copper and zinc)¹⁷ walrus-ivory¹⁸ cypress-wood (as associated
with death)¹⁹ by no means

His stede was al dappel-gray,
 It gooth an ambel¹ in the way,
 Ful softly and rounde²
 In londe.

Lo, lordes myne, heer is a fit³! 5
 If ye wol any more of it,
 'To telle it wol I fonde.⁴

II

Now hold your mouth, *par charitee*,⁵
 Bothe knight and lady free,
 And herkneth to my spelle⁶, 10
 Of bataille and of chivalry,
 And of ladyes love-drury,⁷
 Anon I wol yow telle.

Men speke of romances of prys,⁸ —
 Of Horn Child and of Ypotys, 15
 Of Bevis and Sir Gy,
 Of Sir Libeux and Pleyndamour;
 But Sir Thopas, he bereth the flour
 Of royal chivalry.

¹ at an ambling pace² with an easy motion³ a division of a song or poem⁴ endeavor⁵ for charity⁶ story⁷ courtship⁸ renown

15. The romance of Horn appears in two forms, *King Horn* (see p 11) and *Horn Childe*. Chaucer probably refers to *Horn Childe*.

The romance of *Sir Ypotys* has not much in common with the others mentioned here, in it the Emperor Adrian interrogates the child Ypotys as to matters of God's law.

16. *Sir Bevis of Hampton* and *Sir Guy of Warwick* are two of the longest and dullest of mediæval romances.

17. *Sir Libeux*: a romance entitled *Lybeaus Disconus* (*The Fair Unknown*). — *Pleyndamour*: no romance of this name is known; the original must have been in French.

His gode stede al he bistrood,
 And forth upon his wey he glood¹
 As sparkle out of the bronde²;
 Upon his crest he bar a tour,³
 5 And therin stiked⁴ a lily-flour;
 God shilde his cors⁵ fro shonde⁶!

And for he was a knight auntrous,⁷
 He nolde⁸ slepen in non hous,
 But liggen⁹ in his hode¹⁰,
 10 His brighte helm was his wonger,¹¹
 And by him baiteth¹² his dextrer¹³
 Of¹⁴ herbes fyne and gode.

Himself drank water of the wel,
 As did the knight Sir Percivel,
 15 So worthy under wede,¹⁵
 Til on a day —

¹ glided
² burning wood, brand
³ tower
⁴ fixed
⁵ body

⁶ shame, disgrace
⁷ adventurous
⁸ would not
⁹ lie
¹⁰ hood

¹¹ pillow (cf. *wang*, cheek)
¹² feeds
¹³ courser
¹⁴ on
¹⁵ well-looking in his armor

13. A reference to the romance, *Sir Perceval of Galles*

TALES

CHAUCER, prioress' tale THE LITTLE CHOIR-BOY

See the general references on Chaucer at the close of the introductory note to *Sir Thopas*, p 108

PROLOGUE

O Lord our lord, thy name how mervellous
Is in this large worlde ysprad ¹ (quod she);
For noght only thy laude precious
Parfourned is by men of dignitee,
But by the mouth of children thy bountee 5
Parfourned ² is, for on the brest soukinge ³
Som tyme shewen they thyn herynge.⁴

Wherfor in laude, as I best can or may,
Of thee, and of the whyte lily-flour
Which that thee bar,⁵ and is a mayde alway, 10
To telle a storie I wol do my labour,
Not that I may encresen hir honour,
For she herself is honour, and the rote
Of bountee, next hir Sone, and soules bote.⁶

O moder mayde! O mayde moder free! 15
O bush unbrent,⁷ brenninge in Moyses sighte,
That ravisedest ⁸ down fro the detee,
Thurgh thyn humblesse, the Goost ⁹ that in th' alghte,
Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte,

¹ spread abroad

² perfected (cf. Ps 8. 2, Vulg, Matt 21 16)

³ sucking

⁴ praise

⁵ bore

⁶ healing, salvation

⁷ unburnt (Exod. 3 2)

⁸ didst draw

⁹ Spirit (Matt 1 18)

4. men of dignitee: such as monks or clergy in choirs

Conceived was the Fadres Sapience,¹
 Help me to telle it in thy reverence !

Lady ! thy bountee, thy magnificence,
 Thy vertu, and thy grete humilitee
 5 Ther may no tonge expresse in no science ;
 For somtyme, lady, er men praye to thee,
 Thou goost biforn,² of thy benignitee,
 And getest us the light, thurgh thy preyere,
 To gyden us unto thy Sone so dere.

10 My conning is so wayk, o blisful quene,
 For to declare thy grete worthinesse,
 That I ne may the weighte nat sustene,
 But as a child of twelf monthe old, or lesse,
 That can unnethes³ any word expresse,
 15 Right so fare I, and therfor I yow preye,
 Gydeth my song that I shal of yow seye.

THE TALE

Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,
 Amonges Cristen folk, a Jewerye,⁴
 Sustened by a lord of that contree
 20 For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,
 Hateful to Crist and to his companye ;
 And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde or wende,
 For it was free, and open at either ende.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood
 25 Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were
 Children an heep,⁵ ycomen of Cristen blood,
 That lerned in that scole yeer by yeer
 Swich maner doctrine⁶ as men used there,
 This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,
 30 As smale children doon in hir childhede.

¹ Cf. 1 Cor 1 24
² dost anticipate

³ with difficulty
⁴ ghetto, Jews' quarter

⁵ number
⁶ kind of learning

Among thise children was a widwes sone,
 A litel clergeon,¹ seven yeer of age,
 That day by day to scole was his wone,²
 And eek also, wheras ³ he saugh th' image
 Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,
 As him was taught, to knele adoun and seye
 His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.

5

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone ytaught
 Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere,
 To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught,
 For sely ⁴ child wol alday ⁵ sone lere ⁶;
 But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,
 Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
 For he so yong to Crist did reverence.

10

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,
 As he sat in the scole at his prymer,⁷
 He *Alma Redemptoris* herde singe,
 As children lerned hir antiphoner ⁸,
 And, as he dorste, he drough him ner ⁹ and ner,
 And herkned ay the wordes and the note,¹⁰
 Til he the firste vers coude ¹¹ al by rote.

15

20

Noght wiste he what this Latin was to seye,
 For he so yong and tendre was of age;
 But on a day his felaw gan he preye
 T' expounden him this song in his langage,
 Or telle him why this song was in usage;

25

¹ choir-boy² custom³ where⁴ good⁵ always⁶ learn, the line is a proverb⁷ small prayer-book, from which

children were taught to read

⁸ anthem-book⁹ nearer¹⁰ tune¹¹ knew

17. The eleventh-century hymn 'Alma Redemptoris mater, quæ pervia cœli,' one of four antiphons addressed to the Virgin. It is used from the first Sunday in Advent to the Feast of the Purification (February 2). It has been translated by Cardinal Newman and others.

This preyde he him to construe and declare
 Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes¹ bare.

His felaw, which that elder was than he,
 Answerde him thus: 'This song, I have herd seye,
 5 Was maked of our blisful lady free,
 Hir to saluc,² and eek hir for to preye
 To been our help and socour whan we deye.
 I can no more expounde in this matere,
 I lerne song, I can³ but smal grammere.'

10 'And is this song maked in reverence
 Of Cristes moder?' seyde this innocent,
 'Now certes, I wol do my diligence
 To conne⁴ it al, er Cristemasse is went,
 Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,⁵
 15 And shal be beten thryes in an houre,
 I wol it conne, our lady to honoure.'

His felaw taughte him homward prively,
 Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote,
 And than he song it wel and boldely
 20 Fro word to word, acordyng with the note,
 Twyes a day it passed thurgh his throte —
 To scoleward⁶ and homward whan he wente,
 On Cristes moder set was his entente.⁷

As I have seyde, thurghout the Jewerye
 25 This litel child, as he cam to and fro,
 Ful menly than wolde he singe, and crye
O alma Redemptoris evermo.⁸
 The swetnes hath his herte perced so
 Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,
 30 He can nat stinte⁹ of singing by the weye.

¹ knees
² greet
³ know

⁴ learn
⁵ disgraced
⁶ towards school

⁷ thought, mind
⁸ evermore
⁹ cease

Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,
 That hath in Jewes herte his waspes nest,
 Up swal,¹ and seide: 'O Hebraik peple, alas!
 Is this to yow a thing that is honest,²
 'That swich a boy shal walken as him lest' ⁵
 In your despyt, and singe of swich sentence,⁴
 Which is agayn your lawes ⁵ reverence?'

Fro thennes forth the Jewes han ⁶ conspyred
 This innocent out of this world to chace,
 An homicyde therto han they hyred, ¹⁰
 That in an aley ⁷ hadde a privee place;
 And as the child gan forby for to pace,
 This cursed Jew him hente ⁸ and heeld him faste,
 And kitte ⁹ his throte, and in a pit him caste.

I seye that in a wardrobe ¹⁰ they him threwe ¹⁵
 Wheras these Jewes purgen hir entraille
 O cursed folk of Herodes al newe,¹¹
 What may your yvel entente yow availle?
 Mordre wol out, certein, it wol nat faille;
 And namely ther ¹² th' onour of God shal sprede, ²⁰
 The blood out cryeth on your cursed dede

'O martir, souted to ¹³ virgimtee!
 Now maystou singen, folwing ever in oon ¹⁴
 'The whyte Lamb celestial,' quod she,
 'Of which the grete evangelist, Seint John, ²⁵
 In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they that goon
 Biforn this Lamb, and singe a song al newe,
 That never, fleshly,¹⁵ wommen they ne knewe.'

¹ swelled² honorable³ it pleases⁴ to such purport⁵ due to your law⁶ have⁷ alley⁸ seized⁹ cut¹⁰ outhouse¹¹ made up of new Herods¹² especially where¹³ confirmed in¹⁴ without ceasing, cf Rev 14 4¹⁵ carnally

This povre widwe awaiteth al that night
 After hir litel child, but he cam noght,
 For which, as sone as it was dayes light,
 With face pale of ¹ drede and bisy thoght,
 5 She hath at scole and elleswher him soght,
 Til finally she gan so fer espye ²
 That he last seyn was in the Jewerye.

With modres ³ pitee in hir brest enclosed,
 She gooth, as she were half out of hir minde,
 10 To every place wher she hath supposed
 By lyklihedde hir litel child to finde;
 And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde
 She cryde, and atte laste thus she wroghte —
 Among the cursed Jewes she him soghte.

15 She frayneth ⁴ and she preyeth pitously
 To every Jew that dwelte in thilke ⁵ place,
 To telle hir if hir child wente oght forby ⁶
 They seyde, 'Nay', but Jesu, of his grace,
 Yaf ⁷ in hir thought, inwith ⁸ a litel space,
 20 That in that place after hir sone she cryde
 Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.

O grete God, that parfournest thy laude
 By mouth of innocents, lo heer ⁹ thy might!
 'This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
 25 And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,
 Ther ¹⁰ he with throte ycorven ¹¹ lay upright,
 He *Alma Redemptoris* gan to singe
 So loude that al the place gan to ringe

'The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete wente,
 30 In coomen, for to wondre upon this thing,

¹ from
² find out
³ mother's
⁴ asks questions

⁵ that
⁶ had chanced to go by
⁷ gave
⁸ within

⁹ here
¹⁰ where
¹¹ cut, slashed

And hastily they for the provost¹ sente;
 He cam anon, withouten taryng,
 And herieth² Crist that is of heven King,
 And eek his moder, honour of mankinde;
 And, after that, the Jewes leet he binde.³ 5

This child with pitous lamentacioun
 Uptaken was, singing his song alway;
 And with honour of greet processioun
 They carien him unto the nexte⁴ abbay.
 His moder swowning by the bere lay; 10
 Unnethe might the peple that was there
 This newe Rachel⁵ bringe fro his bere.

With torment and with shamful deth echon⁶
 This provost dooth⁷ thise Jewes for to sterve⁸
 That of this mordre wiste, and that anon; 15
 He nolde no swich cursednesse⁹ observe.¹⁰
 Yvel shal have, that yvel wol deserve,
 Therfor with wilde hors¹¹ he dide hem drawe,¹²
 And after that he heng hem¹³ by the lawe.

Upon his bere ay lyth¹⁴ this innocent 20
 Biforn the chief auter,¹⁵ whyl masse laste,
 And after that, the abbot with his covent¹⁶
 Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste;
 And whan they holy water on him caste,
 Yet spak this child, whan spreynd¹⁷ was holy water, 25
 And song. *O alma Redemptoris mater!*

This abbot, which that was an holy man —
 As monkes been, or elles oghten be —

¹ chief magistrate² praises³ he caused to be bound⁴ nearest⁵ Cf Matt 2 18⁶ each one⁷ causes⁸ die⁹ wickedness¹⁰ favor¹¹ horses¹² had them drawn¹³ them¹⁴ lies¹⁵ altar¹⁶ monks of the convent¹⁷ sprinkled

This yonge chuld to conjure he bigan,
 And seyde 'O dere child, I halse¹ thee,
 In vertu of the holy Trinitee,
 Tel me what is thy cause for to singe,
 5 Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge²?''

'My throte is cut unto my nekke-boon,'
 Seyde this child, 'and, as by wey of kinde,³
 I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon,
 But Jesu Crist, as ye in bokes finde,
 10 Wil that his glorie laste and be in minde,
 And, for the worship of his moder dere,
 Yet may I singe *O alma* loude and clere.

This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
 I lovede alwey, as after my conninge⁴,
 15 And whan that I my lyf sholde⁵ forlete,
 To me she cam, and bad me for to singe
 This antem⁶ verrailly in my deyinge,
 As ye han herd, and, whan that I had songe,
 Me thoughte she leyde a greyn upon my tonge.

Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot⁷ certeyn
 In honour of that blisful mayden free,
 Til fro my tonge oftaken is the greyn,
 And afterward thus seyde she to me.
 "My litel child, now wol I fecche thee
 25 Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge ytake;
 Be nat agast,⁸ I wol thee nat forsake "'

This holy monk — this abbot, him mene I —
 His tonge outcaughte, and took awcy the greyn,
 And he yaf up the goost ful softly.

¹ implore² as it appears to me³ nature⁴ within the limits of my knowledge⁵ ought to have⁶ anthem⁷ must⁸ afraid

And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn,
 His salte teres trikked doun as reyn,
 And gruf¹ he fil al plat² upon the grounde,
 And stille he lay as he had been ybounde.

The covent eek lay on the pavement 5
 Weping, and herien Cristes moder dere;
 And after that they ryse, and forth ben went,
 And toke away this martir fro his bere,
 And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere
 Enclosen they his litel body swete, 10
 Ther³ he is now, God leve⁴ us for to mete.

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln,⁵ slayn also
 With⁶ cursed Jewes, as it is notable —
 For it nis but a litel whyle ago —
 Preye eek for us, we sinful folk unstable, 15
 That, of his mercy, God so merciable
 On us his grete mercy multiplye,
 For reverence of his moder Marye.

THE IMPRISONED WIFE

The Seven Sages of Rome, from which this story is taken, is the European counterpart of the Oriental *Book of Sindibād*, ultimately, according to general scholarly belief, of Indian origin. *The Book of Sindibād* exists in a number of versions (Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, Persian, etc.), and the European *Seven Sages* in many more, the latter being found in one or more forms in almost every language of Europe. As late as 1892 a Lithuanian version was printed at Plymouth, Pennsylvania.

How the Oriental outline of the story was carried westward is a matter of conjecture. Since only four of the fifteen tales in the European collection are similar to those in any Eastern versions, it has been supposed that the transmission was probably oral, and a crusader returning from the Holy Land has been suggested as the possible transmitter. In any case, the most important element borrowed from the East is the frame or general plan of a series of tales told by seven wise men in defending a young prince against the accusations

¹ face downward, groveling
² flat

³ where
⁴ grant

⁵ Cf. Skeat's note
⁶ by

of the queen, his stepmother, and the tales told by the queen in reply. Like the frames of *The Arabian Nights*, of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and of more modern groups, down to Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, this serves not only as a device by which to unite a number of tales, but also to account in some measure for the general character of the tales themselves.

The following selection is from the Cottonian manuscript of the Middle English version (British Museum Cotton Galba E 9). This manuscript (apparently copied from a lost earlier one) has been dated as of the first third of the fifteenth century. For a full discussion of dates and other details, and *The Seven Sages of Rome* in general, see the edition by Killis Campbell (Ginn, 1907), from which our text (including lines 3236-3726 of the poem), with certain emendations and changes of punctuation, is taken.

Among the most interesting analogues and variants of our *Inclusa*-story (which is not one of those found in the Oriental versions) are Plautus, *Miles Gloriosus* (cf Act 2); Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato* 1 22, *The Thousand and One Nights*, ed Habicht, 11 140, Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* 1 281.

In þe kingdom of Hungery
Wond¹ a nobil knyght whylom,
A rightwis man and whise of dome.²
He dremyd þus opon a nyght,
5 þat he lufed a lady bryght,
Bot he ne wist in what contre
þat þe lady myght funden be.
Him thocht he knew hir wele bi kinde,
And wele he hopid he sold hir finde.
10 þat same time dremyd þat ladi bryght,
And thocht þat sho sold luf a knight,
Bot sho wist noght of what land,
Ne in whate stede³ he was dweland,⁴
Ne his name knew sho nathing,
15 þarfore made sho grete murnyng.
Opon þe morn, þe stori sayse,
þe knight toke horses and hernays,⁵
And went to seke þat lady bryght
þat him dremyd of þat nyght.
20 þat jorney unto him was hard,

¹ dwelt
² judgment

³ place
⁴ dwelling

⁵ armor

For he wist noght whederward
 þat he sold tak þe redy way ;
 þarfore he drowped¹ night and day.
 So he travelde monethes thre,
 And no signe of hyr kowth he se ; 5
 Bot wele in hert he hoped ay
 þat he sold hir se sum day.
 So fer þe knyght his way had nomen
 þat into Hungeri es he cumen.
 þare he findes a faire castele 10
 Bi þe se-syde, wroght ful wele ;
 þarin stode a towre ful hee ;
 Fairer saw he never with ee.
 An erl wond in þat castele
 þat aght² þe lordship ilka dele. 15
 With him he had a worthy wife,
 þe fairest lady þat had lyfe
 þe erl was jeluse of þat lady ,
 He sperid³ hir in þe toure forþ⁴ ,
 Sho might noght out by day ne night, 20
 To speke with swier⁵ ne with knight.
 In þat land was were⁶ ful strang,
 Of kinges and lordes, þat lasted lang.
 þare come ridand þat nobil knight,
 þat so had soght þe lady bright ; 25
 He loked up unto þe toure,
 And saw þe lady, white so⁷ flowre,
 Lig⁸ in a window barred with stele.
 þan in his hert he wist ful wele
 þat þis lady was þe same 30
 þat he had so dremyd of at hame.
 He loked up unto þe toure,
 And merly sang he of amowre.⁹

¹ drooped² owned, possessed³ bolted, locked⁴ for that reason, therefore⁵ squire⁶ war⁷ as⁸ lie⁹ love

And when sho herd him so bigyn,
 Unnethes might þat ladi blyn ¹
 þat sho ne had cald him hir unto ,
 Bot for hir lord sho durst noght do.
 5 He sat biside under a tre,
 At þe ches, ² a knyght and he
 þis knyght perçayved þe erl þare.
 Unto þe lady he mened ³ na mare ;
 Bot til ⁴ þe erl he rides ful right,
 10 And of his palfray down he lyght.
 On his kne sone he him set,
 And þe erl ful faire he gret ,
 ' Sir Erl,' he said, ' I am a knight,
 Out of my cuntre cumen for fight ,
 15 þeder ogayn dar I noght gane,
 For a knight þare have I slane,
 þarfore, sir, if þi willes be,
 þus am I cumen to dwel with þe.
 My famen er ful steren ⁵ and stout ;
 20 þai have destroyed my landes about.'
 þe erl said ' So mot I þe,
 Right so fares my famen with me ,
 So þat I have no socoure
 Bot þis castel and þis toure.
 25 þarfore, sir, þou ert welkum here ;
 Of swilk a man have I mystere ⁶ ;
 And if þou wil me help trewly,
 I sal þe gif grete mede forthy.'
 ' Ȝis, sir,' he sayd, ' at my power,
 30 Ay whils I my armes bere.'
 With þe erl þus dwels þe knight,
 Al for luf of þe lady bryght
 þar was na knight þat bare shelde
 þat might so wele his wapen welde ;

¹ restrain herself
² chess

³ made moan
⁴ to

⁵ stern
⁶ need

Thorgh strenkith of hand and Godes grace

He overcome al þe erles fase.¹

þe erl him lufed and honord þan

Mare þan any oþer man ;

He made hym steward of al his land,

5

And bad þe men bow til hys hand.

Sone efter þat, opon a day,

þe knyght allane went him to play,

Under þe toure whare þe lady was ;

þare he made him grete solace.

10

þe lady in a wyndow lay,

And saw þe knyght allane him play ;

A letter sone sho kest hym tyll,

Wharby he might wit ² al hir will.

þe knight toke up þe parchemyne,

15

And red þe l'ranche ful fayre and fyne ;

And alsone als he red it had,

Was he never in hert so glad ;

By þat letter þe knight wele kend

þat his travayl was cumen till end.

20

Ful sare him langed to hyr at ³ ga,

Prevely, withowten ma ,

And wele he saw þat, by na gyn,⁴

Allane to hir myght he noght wyn ⁵ ;

þar was bot a dur and a way,

25

And þarof bare þe erl þe kay.

So on a day, with mylde worde,

þe knyght spekes unto hys lord,

And said · ' Sir, of þi gude grace,

"

I pray þe to gif me a place

30

Bifore þis towre, þat I may big ⁶

A litel place in for to lig,

And þat I mai my wonyng have

At myne ese if ge vowchesave.'

¹ foes

² know

³ to

⁴ device

⁵ succeed in going

⁶ build

- þe erl answerd him ful sone:
 'Sir, þi wil sal al be done,
 Big þe a hows at þi lykyng.'
 þe knight him thanked of þat thing.
 5 þe knight gat masons many ane,
 And gert¹ þam hew ful faire frestane;
 A nobil hows þare gert he make
 Ful sone for þe lady sake.
 When it was wrought als it sold be,
 10 Bath of stane and als² of tre,
 þan thocht he ever by whatkyn³ gin
 þat he moght to þe lady win.
 Biside þare, in anoþer town,
 Was þare cumen a new masown
 15 þat soght had fra fer cuntre;
 Sotiler man might none be
 þe knyght unto þat mason sent;
 His messangers wigh[t]ly⁴ war⁵ went.
 þai broght him to þe knyght in hy;
 20 He hailed⁶ him ful curtaysly.
 þe knyght said 'Mai I traist on þe,
 For to tel my prevete
 þat I have aghteld⁷ for to do?'
 þe mason sware grete athes him to
 25 þat he sold [do] whatsom he wolde,
 And never tel man on þis molde.⁸
 He said · 'In þis toure, I tel þe,
 Wons a lady þat lufes me,
 And I luf hir wele at my might;
 30 Bot I may, nowþer day ne night,
 Til hir win ne with hir speke;
 þarfore a hole behoves þe breke
 In þis towre ful prevely,
 þat no man wit bot þou and I;

¹ caused² also³ what sort of⁴ speedily⁵ were⁶ saluted⁷ purposed⁸ earth

þat I may cum in prevete
 Unto þe lady and sho to me.'
 'Sertes, sir,' said þe mason sone,
 'Als þou has said, it sal be done.'
 Hastly he takes hys tole,¹ 5
 And in þe toure he made a hole,
 þat þe knight might cum þe ladi untill,
 Night and day, at þaire owyn will.
 When þe lady wist of þis,
 Hir thocht hir hert was ful of blis. 10
 Þe knight quit² wele þe servise
 Of þe mason for his quayntyse³.
 He slogh him sone, þat ilk[e] day,
 For fered⁴ þat he sold oght say.
 And efterward, ful sone onane,⁵ 15
 Into þe toure þe knight gan gane,
 Thurgh þe hole gan he pas,
 Til he come whare þe lady was
 Bitwene þam was grete joy and blis,
 In armes ful curtaysly þai kys. 20
 Wele sho wist it was þat knyght
 þat sho had dremyd of anyght.
 Sho said 'Sir, þou art welkum here.'
 He said. 'Gramercy,⁶ lady dere'
 To hir he talde of his dreameing, 25
 And sho him talde of þe same thing,
 And when þai wist it was sertayn,
 Ayther of oper was ful fayn
 Sho lete him wirk þare al his will,
 And seþen he said þe lady untill: 30
 'Dame, I dar no lenger byde,
 For herein may þou me noght hide.
 And þarfore, dame, have now goday;
 I sal cum ogayn when I may.'

¹ tool² repaid³ cunning, skill⁴ fear⁵ at once⁶ many thanks

þe lady, at þaire departyng,¹
 Gaf þe knight a gude gold ring,
 And said ' Sir, I pray to þe,
 When þou sese þis, thinke on me.'
 5 At² þe lady þe ryng he tase,
 And graythly³ til þe hole he gase,
 þe ring he put his fynger on,
 And doun ogayn he hied him sone
 Thurgh þe hole was made of stane:
 10 A meri man þe knight was ane.
 þe knyght went unto þe hall,
 Unto þe erl and his menxe⁴ all;
 þe erl gert him sit ful nere,
 And to hym made he meri chere.
 15 Als þai spak of divers thing,
 þe erl saw his whives ring
 Opon þe knyghtes fynger bare;
 He had wonder how it was þare.
 He wist wele þar was none slike,⁵
 20 Ne þat none might be made so like,
 And ever he thinkes in hert styll
 How an man might come her till
 Styl he held al in his thoght,
 Unto þe knyght he sayd right noght,
 25 Bot up he rase bilyve onane,
 Unto his whife he thoght to gane,
 For to wit whare hir ring was.
 þe knight perzayved al þe case,
 He hies als fast als he may
 30 Tite⁶ until hys preve way
 þe erl hies to þe lady fre,
 Bot þe knyght come lang or⁷ he;
 Unto þe lady þe ring he cast,

¹ parting, separation² from³ quickly⁴ retinue⁵ such⁶ quickly⁷ before

And doun ogayn he hies him fast.
 Þe lady has þe ring up hent,
 Sho wist ful wele þan how it went;
 Sho did it in hir purs in horde,¹
 And sone þarefter come hir lorde, 5
 And with gude chere he gan hir glade,
 And asked hyr what chere sho made.
 Sho said sho myght have no solace,
 So was sho presond in þat place
 Fra þe sight of alkins² men. 10
 'How may I any kumforth ken?'
 'Dame,' said þe erl ful sone,
 'For grete derenes es yt done,
 And for I wil nane change þi thocht.'
 Þe lady said · 'Sir, thinkes it noght; 15
 Þar es no knight in no cuntre
 Þat might change my luf fra þe;
 And sen ȝe wil þat it be þus,
 At ȝowre lyking habide me bus,³
 For oþer cumforth kepe⁴ I nane 20
 Bot of God and of ȝow allane'
 Þe erl thocht ȝit on oþer thing
 'Dame,' he said, 'whare es þi ring
 Þat I þe gaf of gold ful fyne'
 Lat me se it, leman myne' 25
 Þe lady answerd hym unto.
 'Sir, what sal ȝe þarwith do?
 Wene ȝe þat it be oway
 For⁵ I were it noght ilk day?
 Nai, sir, dredes ȝow never a dele, 30
 For I sal ȝeme⁶ it wonder wele.'
 'Dame,' he sayd, 'for luf of me,
 A sight þarof þat I might se;
 And, sertes, I ask it for none ill.'

¹ hoard
² of every kind

³ it behooves me to abide
⁴ care for

⁵ because
⁶ care for

Sho said · ' Sir, gladly at gowre will.'
 Out of hir purs þe ring sho toke ;
 Þe lord gan graythly on hir loke.
 ' Lo ! sir,' sho said, ' here is my ring.'

5 Þe erl had mervail of þis thing,
 þat it was [so] like, by syght,
 þe ring þat he saw of his knyght ;
 Bot wele he hopid¹ and weterly²
 þat nane might win to þe lady,
 10 Ne þat hir ring was noght hir fra,
 Bot þat þai had bene like, þai twa.

 He was wele solast of þat sight,
 And þare he dwelled al þat night ,
 þe lady bi herself oft smyled,
 15 And thought þat he was wele bigild.
 Opon þe morn þe knyght up rase,
 And to þe kirk graythly he gase,
 Goddess werkes þare for to wirk.
 Seþen com þe erl unto þe kyrk ,
 20 A mes³ ful sone þan gert he sing,
 In honowre of oure Hevyn-kyng.

 Þe erl sent þan hastily
 Efter þe knyght of Hungery ,
 þe knyght come sone þe erl untill.
 25 Þe erl said ' Sir, if [þat] þou will,
 þou sal wend to wod with me,
 At⁴ hunt, and solace for to se.'

 Þe knyght answerd wordes hende⁵.
 ' Sir, to wod may I noght wende,
 30 For me es cumen new tidand⁶
 þat makes me ful wele lykand,⁷
 Fra my cuntre withowten lese⁸ —
 þat my frendes haves made mi pese

¹ thought
² surely
³ mass

⁴ to
⁵ courteous
⁶ tidings

⁷ pleased
⁸ deception

For þat knight þat I have slayn ;
 And of þir¹ tīpandes am I fayn.
 And, sir, þir² tīpandes es me broght
 Bi my leman, þat has me soght
 Heder out of myne awin cuntre. 5
 Þarfore, sir, if ȝowre wil be,
 Þis day I pray ȝow with me ete,
 And se my ieman at þe mete,
 And for to make cumforth hir till.
 Þe erl said ' Gladly I will 10
 Do al þe comforth þat I can
 Bath to þe and þi leman ,
 Whenso þou will, send efter me,
 And smertly³ sal I cum to þe.'
 Þan went þe erl to his solace, 15
 Unto þe wod to mak his chace,
 And þe knight went sone onane,
 And ordand⁴ mete and drink gud wane.⁵
 His hows he dight⁶ on gude aray ,
 And smertly þan he toke þe way 20
 Unto þe lady faire and bright,
 And gert þat sho war gayly dyght
 In gold garmentes, richely wroght,
 And talde hir al how he has thought
 Þat ilk day sho and hir lord 25
 Sold bath togeder et⁷ of a bord,
 And how hir lord sold understand
 Þat sho war cumen out of fer land.
 Down he broght hir til his hows
 Hamely,⁸ als sho war his spows ; 30
 Bot hir garmentes war al new,
 Þat no man in þat cuntre knew.
 Opon hir fingers gert he done

¹ these² MS þis³ quickly, MS. smeretly⁴ ordered⁵ quantity⁶ fitted out⁷ eat⁸ familiarly

- Gold ringes ful many one ;
 Hir hed was gayly dubed ¹ and dyght
 With gerlands al of gold ful bright ;
 So out of kenying ² he hir broght
 5 þat hir lord þan knew hir noght.
 Fra hunting come þe erl in hi ³,
 þe knyght him keped ⁴ ful curtaisly,
 And til his hows he led him þan
 For to ett with his leman.
 10 Redy was ordaynd and dyght
 Mete and drink for mani a knight.
 Unto þe bord þe erl es set,
 And his whif, with him to et.
 þe knight said ' þis es my leman ;
 15 Makes hir comforth if ȝe can.'
 þe erl bad sho sold be blith,
 And he biheld hir mony a syth ⁵ ;
 And wonder in his hert had he
 How þat it so myght be
 20 þat any lady in þis life
 Might be so like his owin wyfe.
 þe lady praied him blith to be,
 And ett gladly, par charite
 þe erl bad hir also be glad,
 25 And loked on hir als he war mad ;
 Bot he thocht þe towre was so strang
 þat þare myght no man do him wrang,
 Ne þat his whif might noght cum down ;
 þarfore trowed he no tresowne
 30 He thocht ' Oft sythes bifalles shike,⁶
 þat mani wemen er oper like,
 Als was þe ring of gold fyne
 þat I wend wele had bene myne '

¹ decorated
² recognition

³ haste
⁴ received

⁵ time
⁶ happen such things

þus þe erl left all his care ;
Of þis mater he thinkes no mare.

þan said þe knight on þis manere
Unto þe erl ' Sir, mase¹ gude chere.'

þe erl said · ' Sir, I þe pray, 5

þe sertan soth þat þou me say

Wheþin² es þis faire lady

þat þou has set at met me by ?'

þe knight said . ' Sir, bi my lewte,³

Sho es cumen fra myne awyn cuntre ; 10

Sho es my leman þat has me soght,

And new tithandes sho haves me broght :

Mi pese es made for evermare

For þe knight þat I slogh þare,

So þat I may wend hardily 15

Hame ogayn my pese to cri ;

And þarfore wil I with hir wende,

For to speke with ilka frende.'

' Sir, sekerly,' said þe erl þan,

' Me think þou has a fayre leman.' 20

Whan þai had etyn and dronken inoghe,

þai toke up mete, and clathes drogh.⁴

When þe erl liked to gane,

He toke leve at⁵ þe knyghtes leman ;

And hastily when he was went, 25

þe knight and þe lady gent

Sone did of⁶ þe riche aray

þat þai had done on⁷ þat day ;

Hir awyn robe sone did þai on,

And dighted hir als sho was won.⁸ 30

And þan sho toke þe preve sty⁹

Into þe toure ful hastily ,

¹ make

² whence

³ loyalty

⁴ cleared the table

⁵ of

⁶ took off

⁷ put on

⁸ accustomed

⁹ ascent

- þe knight gan playnly with hir pas
 Until sho in hir chamber was.
 And unnethes was þe knyght went out
 When þe erl was gane obowt¹;
 5 Unto þe toure he takes þe way
 Als hastily als ever he may;
 þare he findes his lady,
 Keped him ful curtaysely.
 þan was þe erl in hert ful glad
 10 When he wist þat he hir had.
 Him thoght ȝit² sho was like fully
 To þe lady þat sat him by
 þare þe erl dwelled al nyght,
 And laiked³ him with his lady bright.
 15 þat night þai wroght what þare wils ware;
 And on þat wise⁴ þai met na mare.
 Herkens now, how it bifell
 On þis maner stode þat castell,
 þat þe se ran fast byside,
 20 Many gode shippes gan þare bide.
 Whils þe erl of grete honowre
 Lay with þe lady in þe towre,
 þe knight ordand a ship of sail,
 And gert bere þeder gude vetaille⁵;
 25 Al his gode⁶ þeder gert he bere,
 Gold and silver and oper gere.
 On þe morn þe eil forth gase,
 And left his lady in þat place
 Until þe kirk þan went he sone
 30 And herd his mes als he was wone;
 And when he to þe kirk was gane,
 þe knyght went to þe towre onane,
 And down he broght þe fayre lady

¹ had started to go
² yet, nevertheless

³ sported
⁴ in that manner

⁵ provisions
⁶ property

Into his hows ful prevely.
 And of ¹ þai toke þe clathes sone
 þat þe lady had hir on ;
 þai dight hir in þe gairmentes gay
 þat sho had on þat oþer day ;
 With gerlandes and with gleterand ² thing
 Was sho made out of knawying.

3

When al was done als it sold be,
 Unto þe erl, his lord, went he.
 ' Sir,' he sayd, ' I wald þe pray
 Of a ded þis ilk day

10

þat þou wil gif me with þi hand
 My leman, or ³ I pas þi lond,
 þat I mai wed hir to my whife ;
 For with hir wil I lede my lyfe.'

15

He sayd he thoght to wed hir þan
 þat had byfore ben his leman,
 For luf of God and als for drede,
 And for he sold þe better spede.
 þe erl said ' þat es gude scill,⁴
 And als þou sais, syr, do I will '

20

Sone þe erl cals knightes twa,
 And bad þam sone þat þai sold ga
 And feche þe lady unto þe kirk.
 þai war redy his wil to wirk ,
 To kirk þai led þat faire lady.

25

A preste was revist ⁵ hastily.
 þe erl come with meri chere,
 Omang al þat folk in fere ⁶

His owin lady he toke bylive
 And gaf þe knyght until his wive ;
 þe prest þam weddes swith sone.
 And als tite als þe mes was done,

30

¹ off² glittering³ ere⁴ reason⁵ hurried thither⁶ in company, together

- þan was þare made grete menestrelsy ;
 And þe knight and his lady
 Went þam forth with grete solas
 To þe ship whare his godes in was.
 5 þe erl went with þam þartill ,
 þe knight went yn with ful gude will.
 þe lady stode still on þe sand ,
 þe erl toke hir by þe hand,
 And bad þe knyght sold hir take,
 10 Evermare to be his make
 þare þe knyght toke þe lady,
 And said to þe erl ' Sir, gramercy
 Of¹ þis and of¹ al oþer grace '
 þus of þe erl hys leve he tase ;
 15 þe wind blew, þai went þaire way.
 þus lost þe erl his whife for ay ,
 He gaf hir þus þe knyght to wed ;
 þarfore ful sari life he led
 When þe knight was went with þe lady,
 20 þe erl wendes hame hastily ,
 Until þe toure þe way he tase,
 To tel his lady how it was,
 And how he had his knyght conwayd² ;
 He trowed noght how he was bitraid
 25 Until his toure þus wendes he right,
 For to speke with his lady bright
 Into þe chamber³ gan he ga,
 And loked about, bath to and fra ;
 He saw no syght of his lady ,
 30 þarfore sone he wex sary.
 Of hir cowth he nothing here ,
 þan he wepid with sari chere
 Unto himself he gan him mene⁴
 þat al was soth als he had sene.

¹ for² accompanied³ MS chameber⁴ lament

þan wist he it was his lady
 þat at þe mete was set him by.
 To wax wise þan he bigan;
 þarfore blamed him moni a man.

DAME SIRITH

Dame Sirith is preserved in Digby MS 86, which has been assigned to a date between 1272 and 1283, but by some as late as 1300.

With respect to the introduction of such fabliaux into England, Jusserand says (*Lit Hist Eng People* 1. 225): "Merry England" became acquainted with every form of French mirth, she imitated French chansons, and gave a place in her literature to French fabliaux. Nothing could be less congenial to the Anglo-Saxon race than the spirit of the fabliaux. This spirit, however, was acclimatized in England, and, like several other products of the French mind, was grafted on the original stock. The tree thus bore fruit which would never have ripened as it did, without the Conquest. Such are the works of Chaucer, of Swift perhaps, and of Sterne. The most comic and *risqué* stories, those same stories meant to raise a laugh which we have seen old women tell at parlor windows, in order to cheer recluse anchoresses, were put into English verse, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. Thus we find under an English form such stories as the tale of "La Chienne qui pleure" [*Dame Sirith*], etc.

With respect to *Dame Sirith*, Ker says (*English Literature Medieval*, p. 172) "This is far above the ordinary level of such things, it is a shameful practical joke, but there is more in it than this, the character of Dame Sirith, in her machinations to help the distressed lover of his neighbour's wife, is such as belongs to comedy and to satire, not to the ordinary vulgar "merry tale"."

The germ of the story has been traced back to India, where a belief in metempsychosis is prevalent, and thence passes on to the Persian (*Book of Sindbad*), the Arabic (see Clouston's *Book of Sindbad*, pp. 162 ff.) and the Hebrew (*Mischle Sindbad*, tr. Cassel, pp. 268 ff.). About 1100 it is found in the *Disciplina Clericalis* of Petrus Alphonsus, a converted Spanish Jew, with which compare *Gesta Romanorum*, chap. 28 (of the Latin). The English version here printed bears a rather close resemblance to that in the Greek *Syntipas* (ed. Eberhard, *Fabulae Romanenses Graece Conscripae*, Leipzig, 1879). For other versions, and the transmission of the story in general, see Matzner, *Altenglische Sprachproben* 1. 103-5, Elsner, *Untersuchungen zu dem Mittelenglischen Fabliau 'Dame Siriz'*, Berlin, 1877, McKnight, *Middle English Humorous Tales in Verse* (Boston, 1913), pp. xxi-xxxvii, 83-5.

This tale has many points of resemblance with a fragmentary interlude printed below (pp. 477-80). It has been conjectured that both have a common

source in an interlude now lost (see Heuser, in *Anglia*, Vol. 30, and McKnight, pp xxxviii-ix)

The name of the old woman is sometimes found in the manuscript as *Sris* (147 2s, 148 4, 157 6, 8) and sometimes as *Srip* (150 7, 151 28, 153 1), but the rhymes show that the latter is undoubtedly correct (151 28, cf 148 4), *verb* is similarly written *verb* (148 5)

Ci comence le fablel et la comtise de Dame Sris

As I com bi an waie,
 Hof¹ on ich herde saie,
 Ful modi² mon and proud ;
 Wis he wes of lore,
 5 And gouplich³ under gore,⁴
 And cloped in fair sroud.⁵

To lovien he bigon
 On⁶ wedded wimmon —
 þerof he hevede wrong ,
 10 His herte hire⁷ wes alon,
 þat reste nevede⁸ he non,
 þe love wes so strong

Wel ȝerne⁹ he him biþoute¹⁰
 Hou he hire gete moute,¹¹
 15 In ani cunnes¹² wise.¹³
 þat befel on an day
 þe loverd wend away
 Hon his marchaundise¹⁴

He wente him to þen inne
 20 þer¹⁵ hoe¹⁶ wonede inne,
 þat wes riche won¹⁷ ,

¹ of
² haughty
³ goodly
⁴ raiment
⁵ apparel
⁶ a

⁷ to her
⁸ had not
⁹ intently
¹⁰ considered
¹¹ might
¹² kind

¹³ way
¹⁴ trafficking
¹⁵ where
¹⁶ she
¹⁷ dwelling

And com into þen halle,
 þer hoe wes srud¹ wip palle,²
 And þus he bigon .

[*Wilekin*] ' God almighty be herinne ! '
 [*Margerz*] ' Welcome, so ich ever bide winne³ ! ' 5
 Quod þis wif.
 ' His hit⁴ þi wille, com and site,
 And wat is þi wille let me wite,
 Mi leve lif

Bi houre Loverd, hevene King, 10
 If I mai don ani þing
 þat þe is lef,
 þou myght finden me ful fre ;
 Fol blepeli will I don for þe,
 Wiphouten gref.' 15

[*Wilekin*] ' Dame, God þe forgelde⁵ !
 Bote on þat⁶ þou me nout bimelede,⁷
 Ne make þe wroþ,
 Min hernde⁸ will I to þe bede⁹ ;
 Bote wrappen¹⁰ þe for ani dede¹¹ 20
 Were me loþ '

[*Margerz*] ' Nai, iwis, Wilekin !
 For noþing þat ever is min,
 þau¹² þou hit ȝirne,¹³
 Houncurteis¹⁴ ne will I be ; 25
 Ne con¹⁵ I nout on¹⁶ vilte,¹⁷
 Ne nout I nelle lerne.

¹ clothed² rich cloth³ expect (eternal) happiness ;

MS wenne

⁴ if it is⁵ repay⁶ on condition that⁷ betray⁸ errand⁹ make known¹⁰ anger¹¹ in any way¹² though¹³ desire¹⁴ discourteous¹⁵ know¹⁶ of¹⁷ churlishness

þou mai[ð]t saien al þine wille,
 And I shal herkennen and sitten stille,
 þat ¹ þou have told.
 And if þat þou me tellest skil,²
 5 I shal don after þi wil —
 þat be þou bold.³

And þau þou saie me ani same,⁴
 Ne shal I þe nouȝt blame
 For þi sawe ⁵ ,
 10 [*Wilekin*] ' Nou Ich have wonne leve,⁶
 Ȝif þat I þe ⁷ shulde greue,
 Hit were hounlawe.⁸

Certes, dame, þou seist as hende,⁹
 And I shal setten spel ¹⁰ on ende,
 15 And tellen þe al —
 Wat Ich wolde, and wi Ich com ,
 Ne con Ich saien non falsdom,
 Ne non I ne shal.

Ich habbe loved þe moni ȝer,
 20 þau Ich nabbe nout ben her
 Mi love to schowe
 Wile þi loverd is in toune,
 Ne mai no mon wiþ þe holden rounne ¹¹
 Wiþ no þewe ¹²

Ȝurstenda ¹³ Ich herde saie,
 25 As Ich wende bi þe waie,
 Of oure sire ¹⁴ ,

¹ till² what is reasonable³ confident, certain⁴ shame⁵ spech⁶ gained permission⁷ MS me⁸ wrong⁹ a courteous one¹⁰ discourse¹¹ secret talk¹² propriety¹³ yesterday¹⁴ lord, good man

Me¹ tolde me þat he was gon
 To þe ferre of Botolfston²
 In Lincolneschire.

And for Ich weste³ þat he wes⁴ houte,
 þarfore Ich am I ðgon aboute 5
 To speken wiþ þe.
 Him burþ⁵ to liken wel his lif,
 þat miȝtte welde⁶ secc⁷ a wif⁸
 In privityte

Dame, if hit is þi wille, 10
 Boþ dernelike⁹ and stille
 Ich wille þe love '
 [*Margery*] ' þat wold I don for non þin[g],
 Bi houre Loverd, hevene King,
 þat ous is bove¹⁰ ! 15

Ich habe mi loverd þat is mi spouse,
 þat maiden broute me to house
 Mid menske¹¹ inou¹²,
 He loveth me and Ich him wel,
 Oure love is also trewe as stel, 20
 Wiþhouten wou¹³

þau he be from hom on his hernde,
 Ich were ounseli,¹⁴ if Ich lernede
 To ben on¹⁵ hore.
 þat ne shal nevere be, 25
 þat I shal don selk falsete,
 On bedde ne on flure ,

¹ one, they² Boston (St. Botolph's town)³ knew⁴ MS. ves⁵ behooveth⁶ possess⁷ such⁸ MS. vif⁹ secretly¹⁰ above¹¹ honor¹² enow, enough¹³ wrong¹⁴ wicked¹⁵ a

Never more his lifwile,¹
 Thau he were on hondred mile
 Biȝende Rome,
 For no þing ne shuld I take
 5 Mon on erþe to ben mi make,²
 Ar³ his hom-come⁴

[*Wilkin*] ' Dame, dame, torn⁴ þi mod⁵;
 þi curteisī was ever god,
 And ȝet shal be,
 10 For þe Loverd þat ous haveþ wrouȝt,
 Amend þi mod, and torn þi þout,
 And rew⁶ on me.'

[*Margery*] ' We,⁷ we! [h]oldest þou me a fol?
 So Ich ever mote biden ȝol,⁸
 15 þou art ounwis.
 Mi þout ne shalt þou never⁹ wende;
 Mi loverd is curteis mon and hende,
 And mon of pris,

 And Ich am wif boþe god and trewe,
 20 Trewe woman mai¹⁰ no mon cnowe
 þen Ich am.
 þilke time shal¹¹ never bitide
 þat mon, for wouȝt ne þoru prude,¹²
 Shal do me scham.'

25 [*Wilkin*] ' Swete leymon,¹³ merci!
 Same ne vilani
 Ne bede I þe non;

¹ lifetime
² mate
³ ere
⁴ change
⁵ mind

⁶ have compassion
⁷ alas
⁸ Yule, Christmas
⁹ MS. newer
¹⁰ MS ne mai

¹¹ MS ne shal
¹² pride
¹³ MS leymon, or leumon (?)

Bote derne love I þe bede,
 As mon þat wolde of love spede,
 And fi[n]de won.¹

[*Margen*] 'So bide Ich evere mete oþer drinke,
 Her þou lesest al þi swinke.²
 Þou miȝt gon hom, leve broþer,
 For [ne] wille Ich þe love, ne non oþer
 Bote mi wedde houssebonde,
 To tellen hit þe ne wille Ich wonde.³'

5

[*Wilekin*] 'Certes, dame, þat me forþink :| ,
 An[d] wo is þe mon þa[t] muchel swinkeþ
 And at þe laste leseþ his sped⁴
 To maken menis⁵ his⁶ him ned,
 Bi⁷ me I saie [hit] ful iwis,
 Þat love þe — love þat I shal mis.
 An[d], dame, have nou godne dai⁸
 And þilke Loverd þat al welde⁹ mai
 Leve¹⁰ þat þi þout so tourne
 Þat Ich¹¹ for þe no leng¹² ne mourne.'

10

15

Drenimod¹³ he wente awai,
 And þoute boþe niȝt and dai
 Hire al for to wende.
 A frend him radde¹⁴ for to fare —
 And leven al his muchele kare —
 To Dame Sirith¹⁵ þe hende.

20

25

Þider he wente him anon,
 So suþe¹⁶ so he miȝtte gon,
 No mon he ni mette

¹ joy² toil³ hesitate, fear⁴ I am sorry for that⁵ moans⁶ is⁷ about⁸ wield⁹ grant¹⁰ MS. Ihe¹¹ longer¹² sad in heart¹³ counseled¹⁴ MS. Siriz¹⁵ quickly

Ful he wes of tene¹ and treie²;
 Mid wordes milde and eke sleie³
 Faire he hire grette.

[*Wilekin*] 'God þe iblessi, Dame Sirip⁴!
 5 Ich am icom to speken þe with,⁵
 For ful muchele nede,
 And⁶ Ich mai have help of þe,
 þou shalt have, þat þou shalt se,
 I ul riche mede'

10 [*Sirith*] 'Welcomen art þou, leve sone;
 And if Ich mai oþer cone⁷
 In eni wise for þe do,
 I shal strengþen me þerto;
 Forþi,⁸ leve sone, tel þou me
 15 Wat þou woldest I dude for þe'

[*Wilekin*] 'Bote, leve nelde,⁹ ful evele I fare,
 I lede mi lif wiþ tene and kare,
 Wiþ muchel hounsele¹⁰ ich lede mi lif,
 And þat is for on suete wif
 20 þat heighte Margeri
 Ich have iloved hire moni dai,
 And of hire love hoe seiz me nai,
 Hider Ich com forþi.
 Bote-if¹¹ hoe wende hire mod,
 25 For serewe¹² mon¹³ Ich wakese¹⁴ wod,
 Oþer miselve quelle¹⁵
 Ich hevede ipout miself to slo¹⁶,
 Forþen¹⁷ radde¹⁸ a frend me go
 To þe, mi sereue telle

¹ vexation
² grief
³ shrewd
⁴ MS Siriz
⁵ MS wiz
⁶ if

⁷ or know how to (can)
⁸ therefore
⁹ old lady
¹⁰ misfortune
¹¹ unless
¹² sorrow

¹³ must
¹⁴ grow, wax
¹⁵ destroy
¹⁶ slay
¹⁷ therefore
¹⁸ advised

He saide me, wiphouten faille
 þat þou me coupest helpe and vaile,¹
 And bringen me of wo,
 þoru þine crafftes and þine dedes,
 And Ich wile ȝeue þe riche mede[s],
 Wip þat² hit be so '

5

[*Sirith*] 'Benedicite be herinne³!

Her havest þou, sone, mikel sinne.⁴

Loverd, for his suete name,⁵

Lete þe þerfore haven no shame⁶!

10

þou servest affter Godes grame,⁷

Wen þou seist on me silk⁸ blame,

For Ich am old and sek and lame,

Seknesse haveþ maked me ful tame.

Blesse þe, blesse þe, leve knave,⁹

15

Leste þou mesaventer have

For þis lesing¹⁰ þat is founden¹¹

Oppon me, þat am harde ibo[u]nden!

Ich am on holi wimon,

On wicchecrafft nout I ne con,

20

Bote wip gode men[s] almesdede

Ilke dai mi lif I fede,

And bidde mi Pater Noster and mi Crede,

þat Goed hem helpe at hore¹² nede

þat helpen me mi lif to lede,

25

And leve þat hem mote wel spede.

His lif and his soule worþe ishend¹³

þat þe to me þis hernde haveþ send,

¹ avail, assist

² provided that

³ blessing be herein = God
 save us (an exclamation
 of surprise)

⁴ sin, MS senne

⁵ MS nome

⁶ MS shome

⁷ anger, MS grome

⁸ such

⁹ boy

¹⁰ lie

¹¹ invented

¹² their

¹³ disgraced

7. Flügel (*Matsuke Mem Vol*, p 95) prefers 'Benedicite' be herinne!' understanding 'God' as the subject of (opt or imp) 'h-

9. Note the six rhyming lines, like the six below (21-26)

And leve me to ben iwreken¹
On him þis shome me haveþ speken.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Leve nelde, bilef² al þis;
Me þinkeþ þa[t] þou art onwis.
5 þe mon þat me to þe taute,³
He weste þat þou hous⁴ couþest saute.⁵
Help, Dame Sirip, if þou maut,⁶
To make me wiþ þe sueting saut,
And Ich wille geve þe gift ful stark⁷:
10 Moni a pound and moni a marke,
Warne pilche⁸ and warne shon,
Wiþ þat min hernde be wel don
Of muchel godlec⁹ miȝt þou ȝelpe,¹⁰
If hit be so þat þou me helpe.'

15 [*Sirith*] 'Liȝ me nout, Wilekin, bi þi leute.¹¹
Is hit þin herness¹² þou tekest¹³ me?
Lovest þou wel Dame Margeri?''

[*Wilekin*] 'Ȝe, nelde, witerli,¹⁴
Ich hire love! Hit mot me spille¹⁵
20 Bote ich gete hire to mi wille.'

[*Sirith*] 'Wat, god Wilekin, me rewep þi scape¹⁶;
Houre Loverd sende þe help rape¹⁷!

Weste Hic hit miȝtte ben forholen,¹⁸
Me wolde þunche wel solen¹⁹
15 þi wille for to fellen²⁰
Make me siker wiþ word on honde

¹ avenged² leave³ directed⁴ us⁵ reconcile, bring to terms⁶ canst⁷ strong, large⁸ fur garments⁹ goodness, benefit¹⁰ boast¹¹ loyalty¹² earnest¹³ teachest¹⁴ truly, certainly¹⁵ destroy, ruin¹⁶ harm¹⁷ soon (early)¹⁸ concealed¹⁹ proper (solemn)²⁰ MS fullen

þat þou wolt helen,¹ and I wile ʒonde²
If Ich mai hire tellen.

For al þe world ne wold I nout
þat Ich were to chapitre³ ibrouȝt
For none selke⁴ werkes. 5
Mi jugement were sone ȝiven —
To ben wiþ shome somer-driven⁵
Wiþ⁶ prestes and with clarkes.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Iwis, nelde, ne wold I
þat þou hevedest vilani 10
Ne shame, for mi goed.
Her I þe mi trouȝe plixtte,
Ich shal helen bi⁷ mi miȝtte,
Bi þe holi roed !'

[*Sirith*] 'Welcome, Wilekin, hiderward ! 15
Her havest imaked a foreward⁸
þat þe mai ful wel like.
þou maȝt⁹ blesse þilke siþ,¹⁰
For þou maȝt make þe ful bliþ ;
Dar¹¹ þou namore sike.¹² 20

'To goderhele¹³ ever come pou hider,
For sone will I gange þider,
And maken hire hounderstonde.
I shal kenne¹⁴ hire sulke a lore
þat hoc shal lovien þe mikel more 25
þen ani mon in londe.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Al so hav I Godes griþ,¹⁵
Wel havest þou said, Dame Siriþ,
And goderhele shal ben þin.

¹ conceal (it)

² try

³ ecclesiastical court

⁴ such

⁵ sumpter-driven (slung
on a pack-animal) ?

⁶ by

⁷ according to

⁸ agreement

⁹ mayst

¹⁰ this opportunity

¹¹ needest (= þar, from OE *þearf*)

¹² sigh

¹³ for good fortune

¹⁴ make known, teach

¹⁵ peace

Have her twenti shiling :
 þis Ich ȝeve þe to meding,¹
 To buggen² þe sep³ and swin.'

5 [*Sirith*] ' So Ich evere brouke⁴ hous oper flet,⁵
 Neren never penes⁶ beter biset
 þen þes shulen ben.
 For I shal don a juperti,⁷
 And a ferh⁸ maistri⁹,
 þat þou shalt ful wel sen.—

10 [*To her dog*] Pepir¹⁰ nou shalt þou ete,¹¹
 þis mustart shal ben þi mete,
 And gar¹² þin eien to renne¹³;
 I shal make a lesing
 Of þin heie-renning,
 15 Ich wot wel wer and wenne.'

 [*Wilekin*] ' Wat ! nou const þou no god ?
 Me þinkeþ þat þou art wod
 ȝevest þo þe welpe¹⁴ mustard ? '

 [*Sirith*] ' Be stille, boinard¹⁵ !
 20 I shal mit¹⁶ þis ilke gin¹⁷
 Gar hire love to ben al þin.
 Ne shal ich never have reste ne ro¹⁸
 Til ich have told hou þou shalt do.
 Abid me her til min hom-come.'

25 [*Wilekin*] ' Ȝus,¹⁹ bi þe somer blome,²⁰
 Hepn²¹ null I ben binomen,²²
 Til þou be agein comen.'

¹ reward
² buy
³ sheep
⁴ enjoy
⁵ hall (*lit* floor)
⁶ pence
⁷ venture
⁸ wondrous

⁹ trick
¹⁰ MS pepis
¹¹ MS eten
¹² make
¹³ run, MS rene
¹⁴ whelp
¹⁵ fool
¹⁶ with

¹⁷ contrivance
¹⁸ quiet
¹⁹ yes
²⁰ bloom
²¹ hence
²² taken away

Dame Sirith bigon to go
 As a wrecche þat is wo,
 Þat¹ hoe come hire to þen inne²
 Þer þis gode wif wes inne.
 Þo hoe to þe dore com,
 Swiþe reuliche³ hoe bigon :

[*Sirith*] ' Loverd,' hoe seiþ, ' wo is holde⁴ wives,
 Þat in poverte ledeþ ay [hore]⁵ lives ,
 Not⁶ no mon so muchel of pine
 As poure wif þat falleþ in ansine⁷ ;
 Þat mai ilke mon bi me wite,
 For mai I nouþer gange ne site ;
 Ded wold I ben ful fain.
 Hounger and þurst me haveþ nei slain ,
 Ich ne mai mine limes onwold,⁸
 For mikel hounger and þurst and cold
 Wartō liveth selke a wrecche ?
 Wi nul⁹ Goed mī soule fecche ? '

[*Margeri*] ' Seiþ¹⁰ wif, God þe hounbinde¹¹ !
 To dai wille I þe mete finde,
 For love of Goed.
 Ich have reuþe of þi wo,
 For euele icloþed I se þe go,
 And euele ishoed ,
 Com herin, Ich wile þe fede.'¹²

[*Sirith*] ' Goed almiȝtten do þe mede,
 And þe Loverd þat wes on rode idon,¹³
 And faste fourti daus¹⁴ to non,¹⁵
 And hevene and erþe haveþ to welde,
 As þilke Loverd þe forȝelde¹⁶ '

¹ until
² dwelling
³ piteously
⁴ old
⁵ See 149 a

⁶ knows not
⁷ want
⁸ control
⁹ will not
¹⁰ good

¹¹ unbind, pardon
¹² destroyed
¹³ days
¹⁴ noon
¹⁵ requite

[*Margeri*] 'Have her fles¹ and eke bred,
 And make þe glad, hit is mi red²;
 And have her þe coppe wiþ þe drinke;
 Goed do þe mede for þi swinke.'

5 þenne spac þat holde wif —
 Crist aware³ hire lif! —
 [*Synth*] 'Alas! alas! þat ever I live!
 Al þe sunne Ich wolde forgive
 þe mon þat smite of⁴ min heved!
 10 Ich wolde mi lif me were bireved!'

[*Margeri*] 'Seli wif, what eilleþ þe?'

[*Synth*] 'Bote eþe⁶ mai I sori be:
 Ich hevede a douter fen and fre,⁶
 Feiror ne miȝtte no mon se
 15 Hoe hevede a curteis hossebonde,
 Freour⁷ mon miȝtte no mon fonde⁸
 Mi douter lovede him al to wel,
 Forþi⁹ mak I sori del¹⁰
 Oppon a dai he was out wend,
 20 And þarþoru¹¹ wes mi douter shend.
 He hede on ernde out of tounne,
 And com a modi¹² clate wiþ croune,¹³
 'To mi douter his love beed,
 And hoe nolde nout folewe his red
 25 He ne miȝtte his wille have,
 For no þing he miȝtte crave,
 þenne bigon þe clerc to wiche,¹⁴
 And shop¹⁵ mi douter til a biche.
 þis is mi douter þat Ich of speke,

¹ flesh, meat

² advice

³ curse

⁴ off

⁵ easily

⁶ noble

⁷ nobler

⁸ search out

⁹ on this account

¹⁰ lament

¹¹ by this means, thereby

¹² proud

¹³ tonsure

¹⁴ use witchcraft

¹⁵ transformed (shaped)

For del of hire min herte breke.
 Loke hou hire heien greten,¹
 On hire cheken þe teres meten²
 Forþi, dame, were hit no wonder,
 þau min herte burste assunder. 5
 A[nd] wose ever is ȝong houssewif,
 Ha³ loveþ ful lutele hire lif,
 And⁴ eni clerc of love hire bede,
 Bote⁵ hoe grante, and lete him spede⁶

[*Margeri*] 'A, Loverd Crist! wat mai [I] þenne do?' 1
 þis enderdai⁶ com a clarc me to,
 And bed⁷ me love on his manere,
 And Ich him nolde nout ihere.
 Ich trouue he wolde me forsape.⁸
 Hou troustu,⁹ nelde, Ich moue ascape?' 15

[*Sirith*] 'God almyȝtten be þin help
 þat þou ne be nouþer bicche ne welþ!
 Leve dame, if eni clerc
 Bedeþ þe þat love-werc,
 Ich rede þat þou grante his bone,¹⁰ 20
 And bicom his lefmon sone
 And if þat þou so ne dost,
 A worse red þou ounderfost¹¹'

[*Margeri*] 'Loverd Crist, þat me is wo,
 þat þe clarc me hede¹² fro 25
 Ar he me hevede biwonne!
 Me were levere þen ani fe¹³
 That he hevede enes¹⁴ leien bi me,
 And efttsones¹⁵ bigunne.

¹ shed tears² meet³ she⁴ if⁵ unless⁶ the other day⁷ offered⁸ transform⁹ thinkest thou, believest thou¹⁰ request (boon)¹¹ receivest, takest¹² went¹³ property¹⁴ once¹⁵ again

8. of. the verb takes the genitive of the thing besought in OE

Evermore, nelde, ich wille be þin,
 Wiþ þat ¹ þou feche me Willekin,
 þe clarc of wam I telle,
 Giftes will I geve þe
 5 þat þou maȝt ever þe betere be,
 Bi Godes hounne belle!'

[*Sirith*] 'Sopliche, mi swete dame,
 And if I mai wiþoute blame,
 Fain Ich wille ffonde,
 10 And if Ich mai wiþ him mete
 Bi eni wei oþer bi strete,
 Nout ne will I wonde.²

Have god dai, dame! forþ will I go.'
 [*Margeri*] 'Allegate ³ loke þat þou do so
 15 As Ich þe bad,
 Bote þat þou me Wilekin bringe,
 Ne mai [I] never lawe ⁴ ne singe,
 Ne be glad.'

[*Sirith*] 'Iwis, dame, if I mai,
 20 Ich wille bringen him ȝet to-dai,
 Bi mine miȝtte'
 Hoe wente hire to hire inne,
 Her hoe founde Wilekinne,
 Bi houre Driȝtte ⁵!

[*Sirith*] 'Swete Wilekin, be þou nout dred,
 25 For of þin her[n]de Ich have wel sped.
 Swiþe com for[þ] þider wiþ me,
 For hoe haveþ send affter þe;

¹ provided that
² hesitate

³ in every way, by all means
⁴ laugh

⁵ our Lord

⁶ belle sacring bell, used in the mass; see *Seven Sages* (Percy Soc. 16),
 l 2285 'By Goddis belle.'

Iwis nou maȝt þou ben above,
For þou havest grantise¹ of hire love.'

[*Wilekin*] 'God þe forȝelde, leve nelde,
þat hevene and erþe haveþ to welde!'

þis modi mon bigon to gon 5
Wiþ Sirþ² to his levemon
In þilke stounde³
Dame Sirþ² bigon to telle,
And swor bi Godes ouene belle,
Hoe hevede him founde 10

[*Sirith*] 'Dame, so have ich Wilekin sout,
For nou have Ich him ibrouȝt.'

[*Margeri*] 'Welcome, Wilekin, swete þing,
þou art welcomore þen þe king.

Wilekin þe swete, 15
Mi love I þe bihete,
To don al þine wille.
Turnd Ich have mi þout,
For I ne wolde nout
þat þou þe shuldest spille.' 20

[*Wilekin*] 'Dame, so Ich evere biȝde noen,⁴
And Ich am redi and iboen⁵
To don al þat þou saie.
Nelde, par ma fai!⁶
þou most gange awai, 25
Wile Ich and hoe shulen plaie.' . . .⁷

¹ grant² MS Siriz³ moment⁴ noon⁵ ready, prepared⁶ by my faith⁷ One stanza omitted

- [*Sirith*] ' And wose is onwis,
 And for non pris
 Ne con geten his levemon,
 I shal, for mi mede,
 5 Garen him to spede,
 For ful wel I con.'

ROBIN HOOD AND THE MONK

This poem, though unmistakably a ballad, tells a story, and is therefore here classed as a tale, though perhaps it has nearly equal claim to be called a romance. It is one of the few ballads of whose early date we are assured, the manuscript being of about 1450. It is No. 119 of Child's great collection (394-101), see also Sargent and Kittredge's edition in one volume, pp. 282-6. I omit stanzas 30-8, 53-66, both inclusive, and the end, stanzas 83-90. There is an unfortunate break after the first two lines of stanza 30, due to the loss of a sheet of the manuscript.

What Gummere says of ballads in general (*Camb Hist Eng Lit* 2 474, the whole chapter should be read) is true of this in particular. 'They give a hint of primitive and unspoiled poetic sensation. They can tell a good tale. They are fresh with the open air, wind and sunshine play through them.' For myself, I may add that the two opening stanzas of this ballad seem to me of peculiar loveliness.

- In somer, when þe shawes¹ be sheyne,²
 And leves be large and long,
 Hit is full mery in feyre foreste
 10 To here þe foulys song,

 To se þe dere draw to þe dale,
 And leve þe hilles hee,
 And shadow hem in þe leves grene,
 Under the grenewode tre.

 15 Hit befel on Whitsontide,
 Erly in a May mornying,
 The son up feyre can³ shyne,
 And the briddis mery can syng.

¹ thickets, groves² beautiful³ did

'This is a mery mornynge,' seid Litull John,
 'Be hym þat dyed on tre,
 A more mery man þen I am one
 Lyves not in Cristiante.¹

Pluk up þi hert, my dere mayster,' 5
 Litull John can sey,
 'And thynk hit is a full fayre tyme
 In a mornynge of May.'

'Ȝe,² on thyng greves me,' seid Robyn, 10
 'And does my hert mych woo;
 þat I may not no solem day
 To mas nor matyns goo.

Hit is a fourtnet and more,' seid he,
 'Syn I my Savyour³ sec,
 To-day wil I to Notyngham,' seid Robyn, 15
 'With þe myght of mylde Marye'

Than spake Moche,⁴ þe mylner⁵ sun —
 Ever more wel hym betyde!
 'Take twelve of þi wyght⁶ ȝemen,⁷
 Well weppynd, be þi side. 20
 Such on wolde þiselfe slon,
 þat twelve dar not abyde.⁸'

'Of all my mery men,' seid Robyn, ,
 'Be my feith I wil non have,
 But Litull John shall beyre my bow, 25
 Til þat me list to drawe.'

¹ Christendom² yea³ consecrated wafer or host⁴ Much⁵ miller's⁶ sturdy⁷ yeomen⁸ withstand

'þou shall beyre þin own,' seid Litull Jo[h]n,
 'Maister, and I wyl beyre myne,
 And we well shete a peny,¹ seid Litull Jo[h]n,
 'Under þe grenewode lync²'

5 'I wil not shete a peny,' scyd Robyn Hode,
 'In feith, Litull John, with the,
 But ever for on as³ þou shetis,' seide Robyn,
 'In feith I holde þe thre.'

Thus shet þei forth, þese gemen too,
 10 Bothe at buske⁴ and brome,⁵
 Til Litull John wan of his maister
 Five shillings to⁶ hose and shone.

A ferly⁷ strife fel þem betwene,
 As they went bi the wey,
 15 Litull John seid he had won five shillings,
 And Robyn Hode seid shortly, 'Nay.'

With þat Robyn Hode lyed⁸ Litul Jo[h]n,
 And smote hym with his hande,
 Litul Jo[h]n waxed wroth þerwith,
 20 And pulled out his bright bronde.

'Were þou not my maister,' seid Litull John,
 'þou shuldis by⁹ hit ful sore,
 Get þe a man wher þou w[ilt],
 For þou getis me no more'

25 þen Robyn goes to Notyngham,
 Hymselfe mornying¹⁰ allone,
 And Litull John to mery Scherwode —
 The pathes he knew ilkone

¹ shoot for a penny² lime, linden³ that⁴ bush⁵ broom⁶ for⁷ fierce⁸ gave the lie to⁹ pay for¹⁰ mourning

Whan Robyn came to Notyngham,
 Sertenly withouten layn,¹
 He prayed to God and myld Mary
 To bryng hym out save² agayn.

He gos into Seynt Mary churche, 5
 And kneled down before the rode³;
 Alle þat ever were þe church within
 Beheld wel Robyn Hode

Beside hym stod a gret-hedid munke,
 I pray to God woo he be! 10
 Fful sone he knew gode Robyn,
 As sone as he hym se

Out at þe durre he ran,
 Fful sone and anon;
 Alle þe ȝatis of Notyngham 15
 He made to be sparred everychon.

'Rise up,' he seid, 'þou prowde schereff,
 Buske⁴ þe and make þe bowne⁵,
 I have spyed þe kynggis felon,
 Fforsothe he is in þis town. 20

I have spyed þe false felon,
 As he stondis at his masse,
 Hit is long of⁶ þe,' seide þe munke,
 'And⁷ ever he fro us passe. 25

Þis traytur name is Robyn Hode, 30
 Under þe grenewode lynde⁸,
 He robbyt me onys of a hundred pound,
 Hit shalle never out of my mynde'

¹ lying
² safe
³ cross

⁴ prepare
⁵ ready
⁶ through, by means of

⁷ if
⁸ linden

Up þen rose þis prowde shereff,
 And radly¹ made hym ȝare²;
 Many was þe moder son
 To þe kyrk with hym can fare.

5 In at þe dures þei throly³ thrust,⁴
 With staves ful gode wone⁵,
 'Alas, alas!' seid Robyn Hode,
 'Now mysse I Litull John.'

But Robyn toke out a too-hond sworde,
 10 þat hangit down be his kne,
 þer as þe schereff and his men stode thyckust,
 Theþurwarde wolde he

Thryes thorowout þem he ran þen,
 Forsoþe, as I yow sey,
 15 And woundyt mony a moder son,
 And twelve he slew þat day

His sworde upon þe schireff hed
 Sertanly he brake in too,
 'þe smyth þat þe made,' seid Robyn,
 20 'I pray God⁶ wyrke hym woo'

Ffor now am I weppynlesse,' seid Robyn,
 'Alasse!' agayn my wyll,
 But-if I may fle þese traytors fro,
 I wot þei wil me kyll.'

There is a break in the manuscript two lines after this point, but it is evident from what follows that Robin Hood's men in some way learn of his capture. All of them are utterly distracted by this news save Little John, who feels sure that 'our Lady' will care for her servant. He himself will see to the monk

¹ quickly
² ready

³ stoutly
⁴ thrust

⁵ number
⁶ MS to God

Litul John stode at a wyndow in þe mornynge,
 And lokid forþ at a stage.
 He was war wher þe munke came ryding,
 And with hym a litul page.

'Be my feith,' seid Litul John to Moch. 5
 'I can þe tel tithyngus¹ gode;
 I se wher þe munke cumys rydyng,
 I know hym be his wyde hode.'

They went into the way, þese gemen boþe,
 As curtes men and hende; 10
 Þei spyrred² tithyngus at þe munke,
 As they hade bene his frende.

Ffro whens come ge?' seid Litull Jo[h]n,
 'Tel us tithyngus, I yow pray,
 Off a false owtlay, [callid Robyn Hode,] 15
 Was takyn xisterday.

He robbyt me and my felowes boþe
 Of twenti marke in sertayn³;
 If þat false owtlay be takyn,
 Fforsoþe we wolde be fayn.' 20

'So did he me,' seid þe munke,
 'Of a nundred pound and more;
 I layde furst hande hym apon,
 Ȝe may thonke me þefore.'

'I pray God thanke you,' seid Litull John, 25
 'And we wil when we may,
 We wil go with you, with your leve,
 And bryng yow on your way.

Ffor Robyn Hode hase many a wilde felow,
 I tell you in certayn¹,
 If þei wist ȝe rode þis way,
 In feith ȝe shulde be slayn.'

5 As þei went talking be þe way,
 'The munke and Litull John,
 John toke þe munkis horse be þe hede,
 Fful sone and anon

John² toke þe munkis horse be þe hed,
 10 Iforsoþe, as I yow say,
 So did Much, þe litull page,
 Ffor³ he shulde not scape away.

Be þe golett⁴ of þe hode
 John pulled þe munke down,
 15 John was nothyng of hym agast —
 He lete hym falle on his crown.

Litull John was so[re] agrevyd,
 And drew owt his swerde in hye⁵;
 This munke saw he shulde be ded,
 20 Lowd 'mercy!' can⁶ he crye.

'He was my maister,' seid Litull John,
 'þat þou hase browȝt in bale⁷,
 Shalle þou never cum at our kyng,
 Ffor to telle hym tale'

45 John smote of þe munkis hed,
 No longer wolde he dwell⁸,
 So did Moch þe litull page,
 Ffor ferd⁹ lest he wolde tell. . . .

¹ MS certen
² MS Johne
³ that

⁴ throat
⁵ haste
⁶ did

⁷ trouble
⁸ delay
⁹ fear

Little John and Much then carry to the king the letters taken from the monk's body, conveying the tidings of Robin's capture. The king rejoices at this news, gives the men twenty pounds as a reward, and makes them yeomen of the crown. He then bids Little John bear his privy seal to the sheriff of Nottingham, commanding that Robin Hood be brought to him, alive and uninjured.

The scheref made John gode chere,
 And gaf hym wyne of the best;
 At nyxt þei went to her bedde,
 And every man to his rest.

When þe scheref was on slepe,¹ 5
 Dronken of wyne and ale,
 Litul John and Moch, forsoþe,
 Toke þe way unto þe jale.

Litul John callid up þe jayler,
 And badc hym rise anon, 10
 He seyð Robyn Hode had brokyn prison,
 And out of hit was gon.

The porter rose anon, sertan,
 As sone as he herd John calle,
 Litul John was redy with a swerd, 15
 And bare hym to þe walle.

'Now wil I be porter,' seid Litul John,
 'And take þe keyes in honde',
 He toke þe way to Robyn Hode,
 And sone he hym unbonde 20

He gaf hym a gode swerd in his hond,
 His hed with for to kepe,²
 And ther as þe walle was lowyst
 Anon down can þei lepe

¹ asleep² to defend his head with

Be þat þe cok began to crow,
 The day began to spryng,
 The scheref fond þe jaylier ded,
 The comyn bell made he ryng.

5 He made a crye thoroout al þe tow[n],
 Wheder he be zoman or knave
 þat cowþe bryng hym Robyn Hode,
 His warison ¹ he shuld have.

' Ffor I dar never,' said þe scheref,
 10 ' Cum before oure kyng ,
 Ffor if I do, I wot serten
 Fforsoþe he wil me heng.'

The scheref made to seke Notyngham,
 Bothe he strete and stye,²
 15 And Robyn was in mery Scherwode,
 As lixt as lef on lynde

Then bespake gode Litull John,
 To Robyn Hode can he say
 ' I have done þe a gode turne for an evyll,
 20 Quyte þe ³ whan þou may

' I have done þe a gode turne,' seid Litull John
 ' Fforsothe, as I yow say ,
 I have brougt þe under grenewode lync ,
 Ffarewel, and have gode day '

25 ' Nay, be my trouth,' seid Robyn Hode,
 ' So shall hit neuer be ,
 I make þe maister,' seid Robyn Hode,
 ' Off alle my men and me.'

¹ reward² lane³ make return

'Nay, be my trouth,' seid Litull John,
 'So shalle hit never be;
 But lat me be a felow,¹' seid Litull John,
 'No noder kepe I be.'²

Thus John gate Robyn Hod[e] out of prison, 5
 Sertan withoutyn layn³;
 Whan his men saw hym hol and sounde,
 Fforsothe they were full fayne.

They filled in wyne, and made hem glad,
 Under þe levys smale, 10
 And gete⁴ pastes of venyson,
 Þat gode was with ale.

Eight stanzas remain. Word of the escape is carried to the king, who declares that, though Little John has beguiled both the sheriff and himself, he has been true to Robin Hood.

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

This is the poem from which Longfellow drew the Sicilian's tale, in the first series of his *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. Leigh Hunt related the story in prose in his *Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla* (1848); a play was founded on it in the reign of Henry VII, and acted at Chester in 1529 (Ward, *Hist. Eng. Dram. Lit.* 1 93-4, Collier, *Hist. Eng. Dram. Poetry*, London, 1831, 1 113-5, 2 128, 415, Hazlitt, *Rem. Early Pop. Poetry*, London, 1864, 1 264-88), and Rudolf Schmidt drew from it his drama, *Den Forvandlede Konge*, which appeared in 1876, and was several times played at Copenhagen. Closely allied to our Middle English poem is Jean de Condé's (fl. 1310-1340) *Li Dis dou Magnificat* (*Dits et Contes de Baudouin de Condé et de son fils, Jean de Condé*, ed. Scheler, Brussels, 1866, 2 355-70, 455 ff). The former, however, has been influenced by the romance of *Robert the Devil* (cf. Varnhagen, *Longfellow's Tales of a Wayside Inn*, Berlin, 1884, pp. 43-7), from which the king's name, Robert, may come, together with certain traits of his life as fool, Robert the Devil, like the king, reaches Rome on Maundy Thursday.

The tale appears in numerous versions, European and Asiatic. One set of the European versions derives from the story of Jovinian in the *Gesta Romanorum*. Much earlier is the Jewish legend, which occurs in four versions (Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds, Kabbala, etc.), one of which connects the story

¹ comrade² no other I care to be³ dissembling⁴ ate

with Jer. 9. 23, instead of with the Magnificat. On the Hebrew are founded an Arabic and a Turkish version, and the former, in turn, may have been influenced by the Hindoo belief in metempsychosis (see Varnhagen, *op cit*, and his *Ein Indisches Märchen auf seiner Wanderung*, Berlin, 1882).

Our text (lines 90-199, 383-416) is taken from Horstmann, *Sammlung Altenglischer Legenden* (Heilbronn, 1878). The poem must be earlier than 1370, the approximate date of the Vernon manuscript.

The first part of the poem may be summarized as follows. King Robert of Sicily was brother to Pope Urban and Emperor Valmond (not historical), and was proud to think that he had no equal. On Midsummer Night (June 24) he went to vespers, and heard a verse of the Magnificat — *Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles* — which he made a clerk translate to him, and then scoffed at it. In church he fell asleep, and when vespers were over was left there alone, his place with the court being taken by an angel who assumed his appearance. At length the king wakes, cries out for his men, and is roughly accosted by the sexton, who, finally, thinking him to be mad, opens the church-door.

þe kyng bigan to renne out faste,
 As a man þat was wod
 At his paleys-ȝate he stod,
 And het þe porter gadelyng,¹
 And bad him come in hȝtyng,²
 Anon þe ȝates up³ to do
 Þe porter seide 'Ho⁴ clepeþ⁵ so?'
 He answered riȝt anon
 'Þou schalt witen⁶ ar I gon
 Þi lord I am, þou schalt knowe,
 In prison þou schalt ligge⁷ lowe,
 And ben honged and todrawe⁸
 As a traytur, bi þe lawe,
 Þou schalt wel wite I am kyng
 Opene þe ȝates, gadelyng!¹
 Þe porter seide 'So mot⁹ I þe,¹⁰
 Þe kyng is mid his meyne¹¹,
 Wel I wot, wiþoute doute,
 Þe kyng nis nouȝt¹² now wiþoute.'

¹ knave² haste³ open⁴ who⁵ calleth⁶ know⁷ lie⁸ drawn⁹ may¹⁰ thrive, prosper¹¹ court¹² not

þe porter com into halle,
 Bifore þe newe kyng a ¹ knes gan falle,
 And seide ' þer is atte ² ȝate
 A nyce ³ fol, ycome late,
 He seiþ he is lord and kyng, 5
 And cleped me foule gadelyng.
 Lord, what wile ȝe þat I do —
 Lete him in, or lete him go?'
 þe angel seide in haste.
 ' Do him come in swiþe ⁴ faste; 10
 For mi fol I wile him make,
 Forte ⁵ he þe name of kyng forsake.'
 þe porter com to þe ȝate,
 And him called in — to late.
 He smot þe porter whan he com in, 15
 þat blod brast out of mouþ and chin.
 þe porter ȝeld ⁶ him his travayle —
 Him smot aȝen, wiþouten fayle,
 þat nese and mouþ brast a ⁷ blod.
 þanne he ⁸ semed almost wod. 20
 þe porter and his men in haste
 Kyng Roberd in a podel ⁹ caste,
 Unsemely made his bodi þan,
 þat he nas lik non oþer man,
 And brouȝt him bifore þe newe kyng, 25
 And seide · ' Lord, þis gadelyng
 Me haþ smite wiþoute desert;
 He seiþ he is oure kyng apert ¹⁰;
 þis harlot ¹¹ ouȝte for his sawe ¹² 30
 Ben yhonged and todrawe,
 For he seiþ non oþer word
 Bote þat he is boþe kyng and lord.'

¹ on
² at the
³ silly
⁴ full

⁵ until
⁶ requited
⁷ with
⁸ King Robert

⁹ puddle
¹⁰ clearly
¹¹ rascal
¹² saying

þe angel seide to Kyng Roberd .
 ' þou art a fol, þat art nouȝt ferd ¹
 Mi men to do such vileynye ,
 þi gult þou most nede abyge ²
 5 What art þou ? ' seide þe angel.
 Quap Roberd ' þou schalt wite wel .
 I am kyng, and kyng wil be ,
 Wiþ wronge ³ þou hast mi dignite.
 þe Pope of Rome is mi broþer,
 10 And þe Emperour min oþer ,
 þei wil me wreke, ⁴ forsop to telle,
 I wot þei nille nouȝt longe dwelle ⁵ ,
 ' þou art mi fol,' seide þe angel ,
 ' þou schalt be schore ⁶ everichdel ⁷
 15 Lich a fol, a fol to be —
 Wher is now þi dignite ?
 þi counseyler schal ben an ape,
 And o ⁸ clopyng ȝou ⁹ worþ ¹⁰ yschape ¹¹
 I schal him cloþen as þi broþer,
 20 Of o clopyng — hit nis non oþer ,
 He schal be þin owne fere ¹² —
 Sum wit of him þou miȝt lere
 Houndes, how so hit falle, ¹³
 Schulen ȝe wiþ þe in halle ,
 25 þou schalt eten on þe ground ,
 þin assayour ¹⁴ schal ben an hound,
 To assaye þi mete bifore þe —
 Wher is now þi dignite ? '
 He het a barbur him bifore,
 30 þat as a fol he schulde be schore
 Al around lich a frere, ¹⁵
 An hondebrede bove eiþer ere,

¹ afraid
² expiate
³ wrongfully
⁴ avenge
⁵ tarry

⁶ shorn
⁷ in every respect
⁸ one, the same
⁹ for you both
¹⁰ shall be

¹¹ made
¹² partner
¹³ befall
¹⁴ taster
¹⁵ friar

And on his croune make a crois.
 He gan crie and make nois :
 He swor þei schulde alle abyge
 þat him dude such vileynye,
 And ever he seide he was lord , 5
 And eche man scorned him for þat word,
 And eche man seide he was wod —
 þat proved wel he couþe no good.
 For he wende in none wise
 þat God almyȝt couþe devise 10
 Him to bringe to lower stat ,
 Wiþ o draugt ¹ he was chekmat.
 Wiþ houndes everich nȝt he lay,
 And ofte he cried welaway
 þat he ever was ybore, 15
 For he was a man forlore.
 Þer nas in court grom ne page
 þat of þe kyng ne made rage,²
 For no man ne myȝte him knowe :
 He was defigured in a þrowe.³ 20
 So lowe er þat was never kyng ;
 Allas, her was a delful ⁴ þing —
 þat him ⁵ scholde, for his pride,
 Such hap among his men bitide !
 Hunger and þurst he hadde grete,⁶ 25
 For he ne moste ⁷ no mete ete,
 Bote houndes eten of his disch.

The story continues thus. The new king gave Sicily an angelic government for more than three years — almost four, it would seem. At length — in April it was — he received a letter from Valmond, inviting him to Rome for Maundy Thursday. Thither the king went, and in his train the fool, the latter in a garment decorated with fox-tails, the angel in white samite set with pearls, and on a white steed. The deposed Robert appeals to his brothers in

¹ move
² sport
³ trice

⁴ doleful
⁵ MS he
⁶ great

⁷ might, was allowed

vain, and thereupon thinks of Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes, and how their pride was brought low With this he pours out his heart in prayer 'Lord, on thy fool have thou pity!' At the end of five weeks the king returns to Sicily

- þe angel com to Cisyle,
 He and his men, in a while,
 Whan he com into halle,
 þe fol he bad forþ calle.
 5 He seide 'fol, artow kyng?'
 'Nay, sire,' quap he, 'wipoute lesyng.'¹
 'What artow?' seide þe angel
 'Sire, a fol, þat wot I wel,
 And more þan fol, gif hit may be.
 10 Kep² I non oþer dignite'
 þe angel into chaumbre went,
 After þe fol anon he sent,
 He bad his men out of chaumbre gon;
 þer lefte³ no mo but he alon,
 15 And þe fol þat stod him bi.
 To him he seide, 'þou hast merci.
 þenk þou were lowe pult,⁴
 And al was for þin owne gult.
 A fol þou were to hevene Kyng,
 20 þerfore þou art an underlyng
 God hap forþive þi mysdede,
 Ever herafter þou him drede!
 I am an angel of renoun,
 Sent to kepe þi regioun.
 25 More joye me schal falle
 In hevene among mi feren⁵ alle
 In an oure of a day
 þan in erþe, I þe say,
 In an hundred þousend ȝer,
 30 þeig al þe world fer and ner

¹ falsehood
² hold

³ remained
⁴ placed

⁵ companions

Were min at mi likyng.
 I am an angel, þou art kyng.¹
 He went in twynklyng of an eye.
 No more of him þer nas seȝe.¹

CHAUCER, CLERK'S TALE. THE STORY OF GRISELDA

See the general references on Chaucer at the close of the introductory note to *Sir Thopas*, p. 108

Ther is at the west syde of Itaille, 5
 Doun at the rote of Vesulus² the colde,
 A lusty playne, habundant of vitaille,
 Wher many a tour and toun thou mayst biholde,
 That founded were in tyme of fadres olde,
 And many another delitable sighte, 10
 And Saluces³ this noble contree highte.

A markis whylom lord was of that londe,
 As were his worthy eldres him bifore,
 And obcisant and redy to his honde
 Were alle his liges,⁴ bothe lasse and more 15
 Thus in delyt he liveth, and hath don yore,⁵
 Biloved and drad, thurgh favour of fortune,
 Bothe of his lordes and of his commune⁶

Therwith he was, to speke as of linage,
 The gentilleste yborn of Lumbardye, 20
 A fair persone, and strong, and yong of age,
 And ful of honour and of curteisye,
 Discreet ynogh his contree for to gye⁷ —
 Save in somme thinges that he was to blame —
 And Walter was this yonge lordes name. 25

Lines 22–105 are here omitted. Walter's subjects urge him to marry, and he promises, conditionally, to do so. The next selection includes lines 106–19

¹ seen² Monte Viso³ Saluzzo, southwest of Turin⁴ vassals⁵ for a long time⁶ common people, commons⁷ guide, rule

' Lat me alone in chesinge of my wyf,
 That charge upon my bak I wol endure;
 But I yow preye, and charge upon your lyf,
 That what wyf that I take, ye me assure
 5 To worshiþe hir, whyl that hir lyf may dure,
 In word and werk, bothe here and everywhere,
 As she an emperoures doghter were.

And forthermore, this shal ye swere, that ye
 Agayn¹ my choys shul neither grucche² ne stryve;
 10 For sith I shal forgoon my libertee
 At your requeste, as ever moot I thryve,
 Ther as myn herte is set, ther wol I wyve,
 And but ye wole assente in swich manere,
 I prey yow, speketh namore of this matere '

Lines 120-40 are here omitted. Walter names the wedding-day, and orders the wedding-feast. The next selection includes lines 141-343.

15 Noght fer fro thilke paleys honourable,
 Ther as this markis shoop³ his mariage,
 Ther stood a throp,⁴ of site delitable;⁵
 In which that povre folk of that village
 Hadden hir bestes and hir herbergage,⁶
 20 And of hir labour took hir sustenance,
 After that th'erthe yaf hem habundance

Amonges thise povre folk ther dwelte a man
 Which that was holden povrest of hem alle
 (But hye God som tyme senden can
 25 His grace into a litel oxes stalle),
 Janicula men of that throp him calle
 A doghter hadde he, fair ynogh to sighte,
 And Grisildis this yonge mayden highte.

¹ against
² murmur, grumble

³ prepared for, planned
⁴ thorp, small village

⁵ delightful
⁶ lodging

But for to speke of vertuous beautee,
 Than was she oon the faireste under sonne ;
 For povrelliche yfostred up was she,
 No likerous ¹ lust was thurgh hir herte yronne ;
 Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne ² 5
 She drank, and, for she wolde vertu plese,
 She knew wel labour, but non ydel ese

 But thogh this mayde tendre were of age,
 Yet in the brest of hir virginitee
 Ther was enclosed rype and sad corage ³ ; 10
 And in greet reverence and chartee
 Hir olde povre fader fostred she ,
 A fewe sheep, spinning, on feeld she kepte,
 She wolde noght been ydel til she slepte

 And whan she hoomward cam, she wolde bringe 15
 Wortes ⁴ or othere herbes, tymes ofte,
 The whiche she shredde and seeth ⁵ for hir livinge,
 And made hir bed ful haide, and nothing softe ,
 And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf onlofte ⁶
 With everich obeisaunce and diligence 20
 That child may doon to fadres reverence.

 Upon Grisilde, this povre creature,
 Ful ofte sythe this markis sette his ye,
 As he on hunting rood paraventure ⁷ ,
 And whan it fil that he mighte hir espye, 25
 He noght with wantoun loking of folye
 His yen caste on hir, but in sad wyse
 U'pon hir chere ⁸ he wolde him ofte avyse,⁹

 Commending in his herte hir wommanhede,
 And eek hir vertu, passing any wight 30
 Of so yong age, as wel in chere as dede.

¹ wanton
² tun, cask
³ serious disposition

⁴ herbs
⁵ boiled
⁶ aloft (kept aloft = sustained)

⁷ by chance
⁸ face, countenance
⁹ take thought

For thogh the peple have no greet insight
 In vertu, he considered ful right
 Hir bountee, and disposed ¹ that he wolde
 Wedde hir only, if ever he wedde sholde

- 5 The day of wedding cam, but no wight can
 Telle what womman that it sholde be,
 For which mervelle wondred many a man,
 And seyden, whan they were in privetee.
 ' Wol nat our lord yet leve his vanitee ?
 10 Wol he nat wedde ? allas, allas the whyle !
 Why wol he thus himself and us bigyle ? '

- But natheles this markis hath don make ²
 Of gemmes, set in gold and in asure,
 Broches and ringes, for Grisildis sake,
 15 And of hir clothing took he the mesure
 By a mayde, lyk to hir [as of ³] stature,
 And eek of othere ornamentes alle
 That unto swich a wedding sholde falle

- The tyme of undern ⁴ of the same day
 20 Approcheth, that this wedding sholde be,
 And al the paleys put was in array,
 Bothe halle and chambres, ech in his degree,
 Houses of office ⁵ stuffed with plentee,
 Ther maystow seen, of deynteous ⁶ vitaille,⁷
 25 That may be founde as fer as last ⁸ itaille

- This royal markis, richely arrayed,
 Lordes and ladyes in his companye,
 The whiche unto the feste were yprayed,
 And of his retenue the bachelrye,⁹
 30 With many a soun of sondry melodye,

¹ planned
² had made
³ in respect to

⁴ about 9 A.M.
⁵ servants' offices
⁶ dainty

⁷ food
⁸ farthest (part of)
⁹ company of young men

Unto the village, of the which I tolde,
In this array the righte wey han holde.

Grisilde of this, God woot, ful innocent
That for hir shapen was al this array,
To fecchen water at a welle is went, 5
And cometh hoom as sone as ever she may,
For wel she hadde herd seyde that thilke day
The markis sholde wedde, and, if she mighte,
She wolde fayn han seyn som of that sighte.

She thoghte . ' I wol with othere maydens stonde 10
That been my felawes, in our dore, and see
The markisesse, and therfor wol I fonde ¹
To doon at hoom, as sone as it may be,
'The labour which that longeth unto me ;
And than I may at leyser hir biholde, 15
If she this wey unto the castel holde '

And as she wolde over hir threshfold goon,
The markis cam and gan hir for to calle ,
And she set down hir water-pot anon
Bysyde the threshfold, in an oxes stalle, 20
And down upon hir knees she gan to falle,
And with sad contenance kneleth stille,
Til she had herd what was the lordes wille.

This thoughtful markis spak unto this mayde
Ful sobrely, and seyde in this manere : 25
' Wher is your fader, Grisildis ? ' he sayde.
And she with reverence, in humble chere,
Answerde ' Lord, he is al redy here.'
And in she gooth withouten lenger lette,
And to the markis she hir fader fette. 30

¹ try, endeavor

He by the hond than took this olde man,
 And seyde thus, whan he him hadde asyde
 'Janicula, I neither may ne can
 Lenger the plesance of myn herte hyde,
 5 If that thou vouchesauf, whatso bityde,
 Thy doghter wol I take, er that I wende,¹
 As for my wyf, unto hir lyves ende.

Thou lovest me, I woot it wel, certeyn,
 And art my feithful hge man ybore,
 10 And al that lyketh² me, I dar wel seyn
 It lyketh thee, and specially therfore
 Tel me that poynt that I have seyde bifore —
 If that thou wolt unto that purpos drawe
 To take me as for thy sone-in-lawe?'³

'This sodeyn cas⁴ this man astoned so
 That reed he wex, abayst,⁵ and al quaking
 He stood, unnethes seyde he wordes mo,
 But only thus 'Lord,' quod he, 'my willing
 Is as ye wole, ne ayeines your lyking
 20 I wol nothing, ye be my lord so dere,
 Right as yow lust governeth⁶ this matere.'

'Yet wol I,' quod this markis softly,
 'That in thy chambre I and thou and she
 Have a collacion,⁷ and wostow why?
 25 For I wol ave if it hir wille be
 To be my wyf, and reule hir after me,
 And al this shal be doon in thy presence —
 I wol noght speke out of thyn audience.'

And in the chambre whyl they were aboute
 30 Hir tretis,⁷ which as ye shal after here,
 The peple cam unto the hous withoute,

¹ go
² pleaseth
³ happening

⁴ abashed, disconcerted
⁵ arrange (imp plur)
⁶ conference

⁷ treaties, agreements

And wondred hem in how honest¹ manere
 And tentify² she kepte hir fader dere.
 But outerly³ Grisildis wondre mighte,
 For never erst ne saugh she swich a sighte.

No wonder is thogh that she were astoned 5
 To seen so greet a gest come in that place;
 She never was to swiche gestes woned,⁴
 For which she loked with ful pale face.
 But shortly forth this tale for to chace,
 Thise am the wordes that the markis sayde 10
 'To this benigne verray feithful mayde.

'Grisilde,' he seyde, 'ye shul wel understonde
 It lyketh to your fader and to me
 That I yow wedde, and eek it may so stonde,
 As I suppose ye wol that it so be. 15
 But thise demandes axe I first,' quod he,
 'That, sith it shal be doon in hastif wyse,
 Wol ye assente, or elles yow avyse⁵?

I seye this, be ye redy with good herte
 'To al my lust, and that I frely may, 20
 As me best thinketh, do yow⁶ laughe or smerte,
 And never ye to grucche it, night ne day?
 And eek whan I sey "ye," ne⁷ sey nat "nay,"
 Neither by word ne frowning contenance,
 Swer this, and here I swere our alliance.' 25

Wondring upon this word, quaking for drede,
 She seyde 'Lord, undigne⁸ and unworthy
 Am I to thilke honour that ye me bede,⁹
 But as ye wol yourself, right so wol I;
 And heer I swere that never willingly 30

¹ creditable, decent² attentively, carefully³ utterly⁴ accustomed⁵ consider the matter (= refuse)⁶ cause you to⁷ So MS *read*, ye (?)⁸ undeserving⁹ offer

In werk ne thocht I nil yow disobeye
 For to be ¹ deed, though me were looth to deye.'

'This is ynogh, Grisilde myn ' ' quod he.
 And forth he gooth with a ful sobre chere
 5 Out at the dore, and after that cam she,
 And to the peple he seyde in this manere
 'This is my wyf,' quod he, 'that standeth here.
 Honoureth hir and loveth hir, I preye,
 Whoso me loveth, ther is namore to seye'

10 And for that nothing of hir olde gere ²
 She sholde bringe into his hous, he bad
 'That wommen sholde dispoilen hir right there;
 Of which thise ladyes were nat right glad
 To handle hir clothes wherin she was clad
 15 But natheles this mayde, bight of hewe,
 Fro foot to heed they clothed han al newe

Hir heres han they kembd, that lay untressed
 Ful rudely, and with hir ⁴ fingres smale
 A corone on hir heed they han ydressed,⁴
 20 And sette hir ful of nowches ⁵ grete and smale
 Of hir array what sholde I make a tale?
 Unnethe ⁶ the peple hir knew for hir fairnesse,
 Whan she translated was in swich richesse

This markis hath hir spoused with a ring
 25 Broght for the same cause, and than hir sette
 Upon an hors, snow-whyte and wel ambling,
 And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,⁷
 With joyful peple that hir ladde and mette,
 Conveyed hir, and thus the day they spende
 30 In revel, til the sonne gan descende.

¹ even if I were to be

² apparel

³ their

⁴ placed, arranged

⁵ jewels

⁶ scarcely, with difficulty

⁷ delayed

And shortly forth this tale for to chace,
 I seye that to this newe markisesse
 God hath swich favour sent hir, of his grace,
 That it ne semed nat by lyklinesse
 That she was born and fed in rudenesse, 5
 As in a cote or in an oxe-stalle,
 But norished in an emperoures halle

Lines 344-441 are here omitted A daughter is born to Griselda Soon after, in order to try her patience, Walter tells her that his subjects grumble about her low birth, and announces that the child must be taken from her The next selection embraces lines 442-518

Whan she had herd al this, she noght ameved,¹
 Neither in word, or chere, or countenaunce ,
 For, as it semed, she was nat agreved 10
 She seyde ' Lord, al lyth in your plesaunce ;
 My child and I with hertly obeisaunce ²
 Ben youres al, and ye mowe save or spille ³
 Your owene thing ⁴ , werketh after your wille.

Ther may nothing — God so my soule save ! — 15
 Lyken to yow that may displese me ,
 Ne I desyre nothing for to have,
 Ne drede for to lese, save only ye ;
 This wil is in myn herte, and ay shal be.
 No lengthe of tyme or deeth may this deface, 20
 Ne chaunge my corage ⁵ to another place.'

Glad was this markis of hir answering,
 But yet he feyned as he were nat so ,
 Al drery was his chere and his loking,
 Whan that he sholde out of the chambre go. 25
 Sone after this, a furlong wey or two,
 He prively hath told al his entente
 Unto a man, and to his wyf him sente.

¹ changed² hearty obedience³ destroy⁴ possession⁵ mind, disposition

- A maner¹ sergeant² was this privee man,
 The which that feithful ofte he founden hadde
 In thinges gretc, and eek swich folk wel can³
 Don execucioun on thinges badde.
- 5 The lord knew wel that he him loved and dradde ·
 And whan this sergeant wiste his lordes wille,
 Into the chambre he stalked him ful stille
- 'Madame,' he seyde, 'ye mote foryeve it me,
 Thogh I do thing to which I am constreyned ,
 10 Ye ben so wys that ful wel knowe ye
 That lordes hestes mowe nat been yfeyned⁴ ;
 They mowe wel ben biwailed or compleyned,
 But men mot nede unto her⁵ lust obeye,
 And so wol I , ther is namore to seye
- 15 This child I am comanded for to take ' ,
 And spak namore, but out the child he hente⁶
 Despitously, and gan a chere⁷ make
 As though he wolde han slayn it er he wente.
 Grisildis mot al suffien and consente ,
 20 And as a lamb she sitteth meke and stille,
 And leet this cruel seergeant doon his wille.
- Suspicious was the diffame⁸ of this man,
 Suspect his face, suspect his word also ,
 Suspect the tyme in which he this bigan.
- 25 Allas ! hir doghter that she lovede so,
 She wende he wolde han slawen it right tho.
 But natheless she neither weep ne syked,⁹
 Consenting hiu to that the markis lyked.
- But atte laste speken she bigan,
 30 And mekely she to the sergeant preyde,
 So as he was a worthy gentil man,

¹ sort of² officer³ know how to⁴ evaded⁵ their⁶ seized⁷ behavior⁸ ill report⁹ sighed

That she moste ¹ kisse hir child er that it deyde ;
 And in her barm ² this litel child she leyde
 With ful sad face, and gan the child to kisse,
 And lulled it, and after gan it blisse.³

And thus she seyde in hir benigne voys · 5
 ' Farweel, my child ; I shal thee never see ,
 But, sith I thee have marked with the croys,
 Of thilke Fader blessed mote thou be
 That for us deyde upon a croys of tree !
 Thy soule, litel child, I him bitake,⁴ 10
 For this night shaltow dyen for my sake.'

I trowe that to a norice ⁵ in this cas
 It had ben hard this rewthe for to se ,
 Wel mighte a mooder than han cryed ' Allas !'
 But nathelees so sad stedfast was she, 15
 That she endured all adversitec,
 And to the sergeant mekely she sayde ·
 ' Have heer agayn your litel yonge mayde.

Goth now,' quod she, ' and dooth my lordes heste,
 But o thing wol I preye yow of your grace, 20
 That, but ⁶ my lord forbad yow, atte leste
 Burieth this litel body in som place,
 That bestes ne no briddes it torace.'⁷
 But he no word wol to that purpos seye,
 But took the child, and wente upon his weye. 25

Lines 519-756 are here omitted The child is taken in safety to Boulogne to Walter's sister, the countess After four years a boy is born, and, to try Griselda's patience yet further, this child, too, is taken from her, and similarly disposed of As a last test, Walter tells her that she herself must leave him, and return to her father's cottage, for his people demand that he take a high-born wife The next selection embraces lines 757-805

¹ might
² lap
³ bless

⁴ commit
⁵ nurse
⁶ unless

⁷ tear to pieces

And she answerde agayn in pacience :
 ' My lord,' quod she, ' I woot, and wiste alway,
 How that bitwixen your magnificence
 And my poverte no wight [ne] can ne may
 5 Maken comparison , it is no nay.
 I heeld ¹ me never digne in no manere
 To be your wyf, no, ne your chamberere.²

And in this hous, ther ye me lady made —
 The heighe God take I for my witnesse,
 10 And also wisly he my soule glade ³ —
 I never heeld me lady ne maistresse,
 But humble servant to your worthinesse,
 And ever shal, whyl that my lyf may dure,
 Aboven every worldly creature

That ye so longe of your benignitee
 Han holden me in honour and nobleye,
 Whercas I was noght worthy for to be,
 That thonke I God and yow, to whom I preye
 15 Foryelde ⁴ it yow , there is namore to seye.
 20 Unto my fader gladly wol I wende,
 And with him dwelle unto my lyves ende.

Ther I was fostred of a child ful smal,
 Til I be deed, my lyf ther wol I lede,
 A widwe clene, in body, herte, and al
 25 For sith I yaf to yow my maydenhede,
 And am your trewe wyf, it is no drede,
 God shilde ⁵ swich a lordes wyf to take
 Another man to housbonde or to make

And of your newe wyf, God of his grace
 30 So graunte yow wele and prosperitee !
 For I wol gladly yelden hir my place,

¹ MS ne heeld
² chambermaid

³ comfort
⁴ to requite

⁵ forbid

In which that I was blisful wont to be ;
 For sith it lyketh yow, my lord,' quod she,
 ' That whylom weren al myn hertes reste,
 That I shal goon, I wol gon whan yow leste.

But ther as ye me profre swich dowaire 5
 As I first broghte, it is wel in my minde
 It were my wrecched clothes, nothing faire,
 'The which to me were hard now for to finde.
 O gode God ! how gentil and how kinde
 Ye semed by your speche and your visage 10
 The day that maked was our mariage !

But sooth is seyde, algate¹ I finde it trewe —
 For in effect it preved is on me —
 Love is noght old as whan that it is newe.
 But certes, lord, for noon adversitee, 15
 'To dyen in the cas,² it shal nat be
 That ever in word or werk I shal repente
 'That I yow yaf myn herte in hool entente.'

Lines 806-994 are here omitted. Griselda returns to her father's home, with but a single garment, and Walter's prospective marriage is announced. Soon he summons Griselda to prepare his house for the bride's coming, and she meekly obeys. When the bride and her brother appear, Griselda praises the maiden's beauty, and begs Walter to deal with her gently and kindly. The next selection embraces lines 995-1071.

' This is ynogh, Grisilde myn,' quod he,
 ' Be now namore agast ne yvel apayed³ ; 20
 I have thy feith and thy benignitee,
 As wel as ever womman was, assayed,
 In greet estaat, and povrelliche arrayed.
 Now knowe I, dere wyf, thy stedfastnesse¹ —
 And hir in armes took, and gan hir kesse. 25

¹ at any rate² though death were the result³ ill pleased

- And she for wonder took of it no keep¹ ;
 She herde nat what thing he to hir seyde ,
 She ferde² as she had stert out of a sleep,
 Til she out of hir masednesse abreyde³
 5 ' Grisilde,' quod he, ' by God that for us deyde,
 Thou art my wyf, ne noon other I have,
 Ne never hadde, as God my soule save !

 This is thy doghter which thou hast supposed
 To be my wyf , that other feithfully
 10 Shal be myn heir, as I have ay purposed ;
 'Thou bare him in thy body trewely
 At Boloigne have I kept hem⁴ prively ,
 Tak hem agayn, for now maystow nat seye
 That thou hast lorn non of thy children tweye.

 15 And folk that otherweyes⁵ han scyd of me,
 I warne hem wel that I have doon this dede
 For no malice ne for no crueltee,
 But for t' assaye in thee thy wommanhede,
 And nat to sleen my children — God forbede ! —
 20 But for to kepe hem prively and stille,
 'Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy wille.'

 Whan she this herde, aswowne down she falleth
 For pitous joye, and after hir swowninge
 She bothe hir yonge children unto hir calleth,
 25 And in hir armes, pitously wepinge,
 Embraceth hem, and tendriely kissinge
 Ful lyk a mooder, with hir salte teres
 She batheth bothe hir⁶ visage and hir heres.

 O, which a pitous thing it was to see
 30 Hir swowning, and hir humble voys to here !
 ' Graunt mercy,⁷ lord ! that thanke I yow,' quod she,

¹ notice
² behaved
³ awoke

⁴ them
⁵ otherwise
⁶ their

⁷ best thanks

' That ye han saved me my children dere !
 Now rekke I never to ben deed right here :
 Sith I stonde in your love and in your grace,
 No fors of ¹ deeth, ne whan my spirit pace !

O tendre, o dere, o yonge children myne, 5
 Your woful mooder wende ² stedfastly
 That cruel houndes or som foul vermyne
 Hadde eten yow , but God, of his mercy,
 And your benigne fader tendrely
 Hath doon yow kept ³ , and in that same stounde ⁴ 10
 Al sodeynly she swapte ⁵ adoun to grounde.

And in her swough ⁶ so sadly holdeth she
 Hir children two, whan she gan hem t' embrace,
 That with greet sleighte ⁷ and greet difficultee
 The children from hir arm they gonne arace. ⁸ 15
 O many a teer on many a pitous face
 Doun ran, of hem that stoden hir bisyde ;
 Unnethe ⁹ abouten hir mighte they abyde.

Walter hir gladeth, ¹⁰ and hir sorwe slaketh ¹¹ ;
 She ryseth up, abavsed, ¹² from hir traunce, 20
 And every wight hir joye and feste maketh,
 Til she hath caught agayn hir contenance.
 Walter hir dooth so feithfully plesaunce
 That it was deyntee ¹³ for to seen the chere
 Bitwixe hem two, now they ben met yfere ¹⁴ 25

Thise ladyes, whan that they hir tyme say, ¹⁵
 Han taken hir, and into chambre goon,
 And strepen hir out of hir rude array ;

¹ no matter for² believed³ caused you to be saved⁴ moment⁵ fell⁶ swoon⁷ dextenty⁸ tear away⁹ scarcely¹⁰ cheers¹¹ assuages¹² amazed¹³ delightful¹⁴ together¹⁵ saw

And in a cloth of gold that brighte shoon,
 With a coroune of many a riche stoon
 Upon hir heed, they into halle hir broghte,
 And ther she was honoured as hir oghte.

- 5 Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,
 For every man and womman dooth his might
 This day in murthe and revel to dispende,
 Til on the welkne¹ shoon the sterres light.
 For more solempne in every mannes sight
 10 This feste was, and gretter of costage,²
 Than was the revel of hir mariage.

THE FOX AND THE WOLF

The Fox and the Wolf is found in the same manuscript as *Dame Sirith*, and may therefore be assigned to the same date. It is a humorous beast-tale, a species of which this is the only English representative before the time of Chaucer. A version is to be found in Harris' *Uncle Remus Stories*, under the title, 'Old Mr Rabbit, he's a Good Fisherman'. For the bibliography of the subject, see McKnight, *Middle English Humorous Tales in Verse* (D. C. Heath & Co., 1913).

Of the *Roman de Renard*, to which our poem is related, Jusserand says (1852) 'Superb manuscripts were illustrated for the libraries of the nobles, the incidents of this epic were represented in tapestry, sculptured on church stalls, painted on the margins of English missals. At the Renaissance, Caxton, with his Westminster presses, printed a *Renard* in prose.'

The dialect is Southern — *wol* for *fox*, etc., and *v* is sometimes represented by *w*. The misplacement of *h*, now a mark of Cockney speech, is frequent.

- A vox gon out of þe wode go,
 Afingret³ so þat him wes wo,
 He nes nevere in none wise
 15 Afingret erour⁴ half so swipe⁵
 He ne hoeld⁶ nouþer wey ne strete,

¹ welkin, heaven
² expense

³ ahungred
⁴ before

⁵ much
⁶ held, kept to

For him wes loþ men to mete ;
 Him were levere meten one hen
 þen half an oundred ¹ wimmen.
 He strok ² swiþe ³ overal, ⁴
 So þat ⁵ he ofsei ⁶ ane wal ; 5
 Wiþinne þe walle wes on ⁷ hous.
 The wox wes þider ⁸ swiþe wous, ⁹
 For he þouhte ¹⁰ his hounger aquenche, ¹¹
 Oþer mid mete, oþer mid drenche. ¹²
 Abouten he biheld wel ȝerne ¹³ , 10
 Þo eroust ¹⁴ biȝon þe vox to erne ¹⁵
 Al fort ¹⁶ he come to one walle ,
 And som þerof wes afalle,
 And wes þe wal overal tobroke, ¹⁷
 And on ȝat ¹⁸ þer wes iroke ¹⁹ 15
 At þe furmeste ²⁰ bruche ²¹ þat he fond,
 He lep in, and over he wond ²²
 Þo he wes inne, smere ²³ he lou, ²⁴
 And þerof he hadde gome ²⁵ inou ,
 For he com in wiþouten leve 20
 Boþen of haiward ²⁶ and of reve ²⁷
 On hous þer wes — þe dore wes ope —
 Hennen weren þerinne icrope ²⁸ —
 Five, þat makeþ anne flok —
 And mid hem sat on kok 25
 Þe kok him wes flowen on hey,
 And two hennen him seten ney.
 'Wox,' quod þe kok, 'wat dest þou þare?

¹ a hundred² went, passed (OE *strīcan*)³ soon⁴ everywhere⁵ until⁶ observed⁷ a⁸ (to go) thither⁹ ready (OE *fæst*)¹⁰ thought, MS. *þohute*¹¹ to appease¹² MS *drunche*¹³ eagerly¹⁴ then first¹⁵ run¹⁶ until¹⁷ broken to pieces¹⁸ gate¹⁹ locked²⁰ first²¹ breach, opening²² went, wriggled (OE *wmdan*)²³ scornfully²⁴ laughed²⁵ sport²⁶ hedge-ward (one who protected the crops within enclosed fields)²⁷ reeve (farm-overseer)²⁸ crept (OE *crēaban*)

- Go hom, Crist þe geve kare !
 Houre ¹ hennen þou dest ofte shome.²
 ' Be stille, Ich hote,³ a Godes nome !'
 Quap þe wox : ' Sire Chauntecler,
 5 þou fle adoun, and com me ner.
 I nabbe ⁴ don her nout bote goed,
 I have leten þine hennen blod ,
 Hy weren seke ounder þe ribe,
 þat hy ne miȝtte non lengour libe ⁵
 10 Bote ⁶ here heddre ⁷ were itake ⁸ ,
 þat I do for almes sake.
 Ich have hem letten eddre ⁹ blod,
 And þe, Chauntecler, hit wolde don goed.
 þou havest þat ilke ounder þe splen,⁹
 15 þou nestes ¹⁰ nevere daies ten ,
 For þine lif-dayes bep al ago,
 Bote þou bi mine rede ¹¹ do ,
 I do þe lete blod ounder þe brest,
 Oþer sone axe after þe prest '
 20 ' Go wei,' quod þe kok, ' wo þe bigo ¹² !
 þou havest don oure kunne ¹³ wo
 Go mid ¹⁴ þan þat þou havest nouþe ¹⁵ ;
 Acoursed be þou of Godes mouþe !
 For were I adoun, bi Godes nome,
 25 Ich miȝte ben siker of opre shome
 Ac weste ¹⁶ hit houre cellarer ¹⁷
 þat þou were icomen her,
 He wolde sone after þe ȝonge,
 Mid pikes, and stones, and staves stronge :
 30 Alle þine bones he wolde tobreke ,
 þene we weren wel awreke.¹⁸ '

¹ our
² shame, dishonor
³ bid
⁴ have not
⁵ live
⁶ unless

⁷ vein (OE *ædre*)
⁸ opened (?)
⁹ spleen
¹⁰ dost build a nest
¹¹ counsel
¹² take possession of

¹³ kind, race
¹⁴ with
¹⁵ now
¹⁶ if (our cellarer) knew
¹⁷ cellarer
¹⁸ avenged

He¹ wes stille, ne spak namore,
 Ac he werp² aþurst wel sore;
 Þe þurst him dede more wo
 Þen hevede raþer³ his hounger do.
 Overal he ede⁴ and souhte,⁵ 5
 On aventure his witt⁶ him brouhte⁷
 To one putte⁸ — wes water inne —
 Þat wes imaked mid grete ginne.⁹
 Tuo boketes þer he founde:
 Þat oper¹⁰ wende to þe grounde, 10
 Þat wen¹¹ me shulde þat on opwinde,
 Þat oper wolde adoun winde
 He ne hounderstod nout of þe ginne;
 He nom¹² þat boket, and lep þerinne,
 For he hopede mou to drinke. 15
 Þis boket beginnep to sinke;
 To late þe vox wes biþout,¹³
 Þo he wes in þe ginne ibrouit.
 Inou he gon him biþenche,
 Ac hit ne halp mid none wrenche¹⁴; 20
 Adoun he moste, he wes þerinne,
 Ikaut he wes mid swikele¹⁵ ginne.
 Hit mihte han iben wel his wille
 To lete þat boket hongī stille
 Wat¹⁶ mid serewe¹⁷ and mid drede 25
 Al his þurst him overhede¹⁸
 Al þus he com to þe grounde,
 And water mou þer he founde
 Þo he fond water, ȝerne he dronk;
 Him þoute þat water þere stonk, 30
 For hit wes togeines his wille.

¹ the fox
² became
³ earlier, before
⁴ went (OE *ȝode*)
⁵ MS *sohute*
⁶ MS *wut*

⁷ MS *brohute*
⁸ pit, well
⁹ clever contrivance
¹⁰ second
¹¹ when
¹² took

¹³ had bethought himself
¹⁴ trick
¹⁵ deceiving
¹⁶ what
¹⁷ sorrow
¹⁸ passed away (OE. *oferȝode*)

- 'Wo worpe,' quap þe vox, 'lust and wille,
 þat ne can ¹ meþ ² to his mete!
 Ȝef ich nevede to muchel i-ete,
 þis ilke shome nedd ³ I noupe,
 5 Nedde lust iben of mine moupe.
 Him is wo in euche londe,
 þat is þef mid his honde.
 Ich am ikaut mid swikele ginne,
 Oper soum devel me broute herinne.
 10 I was woned ⁴ to ben wiis,
 Ac nou of me idon hit hūs. ⁵
 þe vox wep, and reuliche ⁶ bigan.
 þer com a wolf gon after þan
 Out of þe depe wode blive, ⁷
 15 For he wes afingret swiþe.
 Noþing he ne founde in al þe nixte,
 Wermide ⁸ his hunger aquenche mixtte.
 He com to þe putte, þene vox iherde,
 He him kneu wel bi his rerde, ⁹
 20 For hit wes his neizebore,
 And his gossip, of ¹⁰ children bore.
 Adoun bi þe putte he sat
 Quod þe wolf 'Wat may ben þat
 þat Ich in þe putte ihere?'
 25 Hertou ¹¹ Cristine, oper mi fere ¹²?
 Say me soþ, ne gabbe ¹³ þou me nout,
 Wo ¹⁴ haveþ þe in þe putte ibrou't?'
 þe vox hine ikneu wel for his kun,
 And þo eroust kom wiit to him;
 30 For he þoute mid soumme ginne
 Himself houpbringe, ¹⁵ þene wolf þerinne.

¹ knows² moderation³ should not have had⁴ accustomed, wont⁵ is (and now it is all up with me)⁶ sadly⁷ quickly⁸ wherewith⁹ speech¹⁰ from the time they were¹¹ art thou¹² companion¹³ jest, lie¹⁴ who¹⁵ to bring up

Quod þe vox : ' Wo is nou þere ?
 Ich wene hit is Sigrum þat Ich here.'
 ' Þat is soþ,' þe wolf sede ;
 ' Ac wat art þou, so God þe rede ?'
 ' A ! ' quod þe vox, ' Ich wille þe telle ; 5
 On alpi¹ word Ich he nelle.²
 Ich am Reneuard, þi frend,
 And gif Ich þine come³ hevede iwend,⁴
 Ich hedde so ibede⁵ for þe,
 Þat þou sholdest comen to me.' 10
 ' Mid þe ? ' quod þe wolf. ' War to ?
 Wat shulde Ich me þe putte do ? '
 Quod þe vox ' Þou art ounwiis,
 Her is þe blisse of paradus ,
 Her Ich mai evere wel fare, 15
 Wipouten pine,⁶ wipouten kare ,
 Her is mete, her is drinke,
 Her is blisse wipouten swinke⁷ ;
 Her nis hounger never mo,
 Ne non oþer kunnes⁸ wo , 20
 Of alle gode her is mou '
 Mid þilke wordes þe wolf⁹ lou.
 ' Art þou ded, so God þe rede,
 Oþer of þe worlde ? ' þe wolf sede
 Quod þe wolf ' Wenne storve¹⁰ þou, 25
 And wat dest þou þere nou ?
 Ne beþ nout ȝet þre daies ago,
 Þat þou and þi wif also,
 And þine children, smale and grette,
 Alle togedere mid me hete¹¹ ' 30
 ' Þat is soþ,' quod þe vox,
 ' Gode þonk, nou hit is þus,
 Þat Ihc am to Criste vend¹² ,

¹ single (OE *anlǽpe*)² will not³ coming⁴ thought of⁵ prayed⁶ pain, trouble⁷ labor⁸ of no other kind⁹ MS *volf*¹⁰ diedst¹¹ ate¹² = wend

- Not¹ hit non of mine frend.
 I nolde, for al þe worldes goed,
 Ben ine þe worlde, þer Ich hem fond;
 Wat² shuld Ich ine þe worlde go,
 5 þer³ nis bote kare and wo,
 And livie in fulþe⁴ and in sunne?
 Ac her beþ joies fele cunne⁵;
 Her beþ boþe shep and get.⁶
 þe wolf haveþ honger swiþe gret,
 10 For he nedde ȝare⁷ i-ete,
 And þo he herde speken of mete,
 He wolde bleþeliche⁸ ben þare.
 'A!' quod þe wolf, 'gode ifere,⁹
 Moni goed mel þou havest me binome¹⁰;
 15 Let me adoun to þe kome,
 And al Ich wole þe forþeve'
 'Ȝe,' quod þe vox, 'were þou isrive,¹¹
 And sunnen hevedest al forsake,
 And to klene lif itake,
 20 Ich wolde so bidde for þe
 þat þou sholdest comen to me.'
 'To wom shuld Ich,' þe wolfe seide,
 Ben iknowe of¹² mine misdede?
 Her nis noþing alive
 25 þat me kouþe her nou srive
 þou havest ben ofte min ifere,
 Woltou nou mi snit¹³ here,
 And al mi lif I shal þe telle?'
 'Nay,' quod þe vox, 'I nelle'
 30 'Neltou¹⁴?' quod þe wolf, 'þin ore¹⁵!
 Ich am afingret swiþe sore,
 Ich wot to-nigt ich worþe ded

¹ knows not² why (what)³ where⁴ filth, foulness⁵ many kinds⁶ goats⁷ for a long time⁸ gladly⁹ friend, companion (OE *gefēra*)¹⁰ taken away from¹¹ shriven¹² confess¹³ shrift, confession¹⁴ wilt thou not¹⁵ (grant) thy grace, favor (OE *dr*)

Bote þou do me somne reed.
 For Cristes love, be mi prest.
 Þe wolf bey¹ adoun his brest,
 And gon to siken² harde and stronge.
 'Woltou,' quod þe vox, 'srift ounderfonge,'
 Tel þine sunnen on and on,⁴
 Þat þer bileve⁵ never on.
 'Sone,' quod þe wolf, 'wel ifaie⁶;
 Ich habbe ben qued⁷ al mi lifdaie;
 Ich habbe widewene⁸ kors,⁹
 Þerfore ich fare þe wors.
 A þousent shep ich habbe abiten,
 And mo, ȝef hy weren iwrten,
 Ac hit me offpinkeþ¹⁰ sore
 Maister, shal I tellen more?'
 'Ȝe,' quod þe vox, 'al þou most sugge,¹¹
 Oper elleswer þou most abugge¹²'
 'Gossip,' quod þe wolf, 'forȝef hit me,
 Ich habbe ofte sehîd qued bi¹³ þe.
 Men seide þat þou on þine live
 Misferdest¹⁴ mid mine wive,
 Ich þe aperseivede one stounde,
 And in bedde togedere ou¹⁵ founde;
 Ich wes ofte ou ful ney,
 And in bedde togedere ou sey.¹⁶
 Ich wende, also oþre doþ,
 Þat¹⁷ Ich iseie were soþ,
 And þerfore þou were me loþ;
 Gode gossip, ne be þou nouht¹⁸ wroþ.'
 'Wolf,' quod þe vox him þo,
 'Al þat þou havest her bifore ido,

¹ bowed² groan³ receive⁴ one by one⁵ remain⁶ gladly, fain, MS I fare⁷ evil⁸ of widows⁹ curse¹⁰ repents (it repents me = I repent)¹¹ say¹² make atonement¹³ said evil of¹⁴ went astray, sinned¹⁵ you¹⁶ saw, MS ley¹⁷ what¹⁸ MS nobut

In þouht,¹ in speche, and in dede,
 In euche oþeres kunnes² quede,
 Ich þe forþeue at þisse nede.'

'Crist þe forþelde!' þe wolf seide.

'Nou Ich am in clene live,
 Ne recche Ich of childe ne of wive.
 Ac sei me wat I shal do,
 And ou³ Ich may comen þe to.'

'Do'' quod þe vox. 'Ich wille þe lere.⁴

Isust þou a boket hongri þere?
 Þere is a bruche of hevene blisse.⁵
 Lep þerinne, mid iwisse,
 And þou shalt comen to me sone.'

Quod the wolf, 'þat is lȝt to done.'

He lep in, and way⁶ sumdel⁷ —

þat weste⁸ þe vox ful wel.
 þe wolf gon sinke, þe vox arise,
 þo gon þe wolf sore agrise⁹
 þo he com amidde þe putte,
 þe wolfe þene vox opward¹⁰ mette

'Gossip,' quod þe wolf, 'wat nou?

Wat havest þou imunt¹¹ weder wolt þou?'

'Weder Ich wille?' þe vox sede.

'Ich wille oup, so God me rede!

And nou go down wiþ þi meel,¹²

þi biȝete¹³ worþ wel smal,
 Ac Ich am þerof glad and bliþe,
 þat þou art nomen¹⁴ in clene live.
 þi soule-cnul¹⁵ Ich wille do ringe,
 And masse for þine soule singe'

þe wrecche bineþe noþing ne vind

Bote cold water, and hounger him bind,

¹ MS þohut

² of every other kind

³ how

⁴ teach

⁵ opening into (chance at) heaven's joy

⁶ weighed

⁷ somewhat

⁸ knew

⁹ to be alarmed

¹⁰ on his way up

¹¹ meant, intended

¹² toward thy meal

¹³ getting, spoil

¹⁴ taken

¹⁵ soul-knell

To colde gistinge¹ he wes ibede²,
 Vroggen³ haveþ his dou iknede.⁴
 Þe wolf in þe putte stod,
 Afingret so þat he ves wod.⁵
 Inou he cursede þat pider him broute,
 Þe vox þerof luitel route.⁶
 Þe put him wes þe house ney,
 Þer freren woneden swiþe sley.⁷
 Þo þat hit com to þe time
 Þat hoe shulden arisen ine,
 For to suggen here houssong,⁸
 O frere þere wes among,
 Of here slep hem shulde awecche,
 Wen hoe⁹ shulden pidere recche.¹⁰
 He seide ' Ariseþ on and on,
 And komeþ to houssong heverouch on.'
 Þis ilke frere heyte¹¹ Ailmer,
 He wes hoere maister curtiler¹²
 He wes hofpurst swiþe stronge,
 Riht amidward here houssonge,
 Alhone¹³ to þe putte he hede,¹⁴
 For he wende bete¹⁵ his nede.
 He com to þe putte, and drou,
 And þe wolf wes hevi inou
 Þe frere mid al his maine¹⁶ tey¹⁷
 So longe þat¹⁸ he þene wolf isey!
 For he sei þene wolf þer sitte,
 He gradde¹⁹ ' Þe devel is in þe putte!
 To þe putte hy gounnen gon,
 Alle mid pikes, and staves, and ston,
 Euch mon mid þat he hedde,

1 feast

² invited

8 frogs; M\$ wroggen

⁴ dough kneaded

5 mad, crazed

6 reched

7 shrewd

⁸ matins (OE *ūhtsong*)

9 they

10 go

11 was named

12 gardener

18 alone

14 went

15 remedy, satisfy

¹⁶ strength (OE *mægen*, cf. modern 'might and main')

17 pulled, tugged

18 until

19 cried out

- Wo wes him þat wepne nedde.¹
 Hy comen to þe putte, þene wolf opdrowe²,
 þo hede þe wreche fomen inowe,
 þat weren egre him to slete³
 5 Mid grete houndes, and to bete.
 Wel and wroþe he wes iswonge⁴,
 Mid staves and speres he wes 1stounge.⁵
 þe wox bicharde⁶ him, mid iwisse,
 For he ne fond nones kunnes blisse,
 10 Ne hof⁷ dundes⁸ forþevenesse.

CHAUCER, NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE THE COCK
AND THE FOX

See the general references on Chaucer at the close of the introductory
note to *Sir Thopas*, p. 108

- A povre widwe, somdel stape⁹ in age,
 Was whylom¹⁰ dwelling in a narwe cotage,
 Bisyde a grove, standing in a dale.
 This widwe, of which I telle yow my tale,
 15 Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,
 In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,
 For litel was hir catel¹¹ and hir rente¹²,
 By housbondryc¹³ of such as God hir sente,
 She found¹⁴ herself, and eek hir doghtren two.
 20 Three large sowes hadde she, and na mo,¹⁵
 Three kyn,¹⁶ and eek a sheep that highte Malle.
 Ful sooty was hir bour,¹⁷ and eek hir halle,
 In which she eet ful many a sclendre meel.
 Of poynant sauce hir neded¹⁸ never a deel¹⁹,

¹ had not
² drew up
³ tear
⁴ beaten
⁵ pierced
⁶ deceived
⁷ of

⁸ blows
⁹ advanced
¹⁰ once on a time
¹¹ property
¹² income
¹³ economy
¹⁴ supported

¹⁵ no more
¹⁶ cows
¹⁷ inner room, bedchamber
¹⁸ was necessary for her
¹⁹ not a bit

No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte ;
 Hir dyete was accordant ¹ to hir cote ² —
 Repleccioun ne made hir never syk ;
 Attempre ³ dyete was al hir phisyk,
 And exerceyse, and hertes suffisaunce. ⁴ 5
 The goute lette ⁵ hir nothing ⁶ for to daunce,
 N' apoplexye shente ⁷ nat hir heed ,
 No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed ;
 Hir bord ⁸ was served most with whyt and blak,
 Milk and broun breed, in which she fond no lak, 10
 Seynd ⁹ bacoun, and somtyme an ey ¹⁰ or tweye,
 For she was as it were a maner ¹¹ deye. ¹²
 A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
 With stukkes, and a drye dich withoute,
 In which she hadde a cok, hight ¹³ Chauntecleer. 15
 In al the land of crowing nas ¹⁴ his peer ,
 His vois was merier than the mery orgon
 On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon ,
 Wel sikerer ¹⁵ was his crowing in his logge ¹⁶
 Than is a klokke, or an abbey -orlogge ¹⁷ 20
 By nature knew he ech ascencioun
 Of equinoxial ¹⁸ in thilke toun ,
 For whan degrees fiftene were ascended, ¹⁹
 Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben amended.
 His comb was redder than the fyn coral, 25
 And batailed, ²⁰ as it were a castel-wal ,
 His bile ²¹ was blak, and as the jeet ²² it shoon ,
 Lyk asur were his legges and his toon ²³ ,

¹ in consonance with² gown³ moderate, temperate⁴ a contented heart (heart's satisfaction)⁵ prevented⁶ not at all⁷ injured⁸ table⁹ singed, broiled¹⁰ egg¹¹ kind of¹² dairywoman¹³ called¹⁴ there was not¹⁵ more trustworthy¹⁶ lodge¹⁷ clock¹⁸ the equinoctial circle¹⁹ when one hour was past²⁰ indented like a battlement²¹ bill²² jet²³ toes

17. orgon: used here as customarily at that time, in the plural.

- His nayles whytter than the lillie-flour,
 And lyk the burned ¹ gold was his colour.
 This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce
 Sevene hennes, for to doon al his plesaunce,
 5 Whiche were his sustres and his paramours,
 And wonder lyk to him, as of ² colours;
 Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
 Was cleped faire Damoysele Pertelote.
 Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire, ³
 10 And compaignable, ⁴ and bar hirself so faire,
 Sin thilke day that she was seven night old,
 That trewely she hath the herte in hold ⁵
 Of Chauntecleer, loken in every lith ⁶,
 He loved hir so, that wel was him therwith.
 15 But such a joye was it to here hem singe,
 Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,
 In swete accord, ' My lief is faren in londe.'
 For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
 Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe.
 20 And so bifel that, in a dawninge, ⁷
 As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
 Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
 And next him sat this faire Pertelote,
 'This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte,
 25 As man that in his dreem is drecched ⁸ sore.
 And whan that Pertelote thus herde him rore
 She was agast, and seyde ' O herte dere,
 What eyleth yow, to grone in this manere?
 Ye been a verray sleper, fy! for shame!
 30 And he answerde and seyde thus · ' Madame,
 I pray yow that ye take it nat agrief ⁹,

¹ burnished² as regards³ well-mannered⁴ companionable⁵ in her possession⁶ locked in every limb⁷ dawn⁸ troubled⁹ amiss

By God, me mette ¹ I was in swich meschief
 Right now, that yet myn herte is sore afright.
 Now God,' quod he, ' my swevene ² recche ³ aright,
 And keep my body out of foul prisoun !
 Me mette how that I romed up and doun 5
 Withinne our yerde, wheras ⁴ I saugh a beste,
 Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areste ⁵
 Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed.
 His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed ,
 And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eres, 10
 With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heres ,
 His snowte smal, with glowinge eyen tweye.
 Yet of his look for fere almost I deye ,
 This caused me my groning, doutelees.'
 ' Avoy ⁶ ! ' quod she, ' fy on yow, hertelees ! 15
 Allas ! ' quod she, ' for, by that God above,
 Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love ;
 I can nat love a coward, by my feith !
 For certes, what so any womman seith,
 We alle desyren, if it mighte be, 20
 To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,⁷
 And secree,⁸ and no niggard, ne no fool,
 Ne him that is agast of every tool,⁹
 Ne noon avauntour,¹⁰ by that God above !
 How dorste ye seyn for shame — unto your love — 25
 That any thing mighte make yow aferd ?
 Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd ?
 Allas ! and conne ye been agast of swevenis ?
 Nothing, God wot, but vanitee in sweven is :
 Swevenes engendren of ¹¹ replecciouns,¹² 30
 And ofte of fume,¹³ and of complecciouns,¹⁴

¹ I dreamed² dream³ bring to a good issue (*lit.*
interpret)⁴ where⁵ arrest⁶ fie (OF. *avoi*)⁷ generous⁸ trustworthy⁹ instrument, weapon¹⁰ boaster¹¹ are produced by¹² surfeits¹³ noxious vapor rising from
stomach to brain¹⁴ the combination of the
four humors of the body
in certain proportions

- Whan humours been to habundant in a wight.
 Certes this dreem, which ye han met ¹ to-night,
 Cometh of the grete superfluitee
 Of youre rede *colera*,² pardee,
 5 Which causeth folk to dreden in here dremes
 Of arwes,³ and of fyr with rede lemes,⁴
 Of grete bestes, that they wol hem byte,
 Of kontek,⁵ and of whelpes ⁶ grete and lyte⁷;
 Right as the humour of malencolye
 10 Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,
 For fere of blake beres, or boles ⁸ blake,
 Or elles blake develes wole hem take.
 Of othere humours coude I telle also,
 That werken many a man in sleep ful wo,
 15 But I wol passe as lightly as I can
 Lo Catoun,⁹ which that was so wys a man,
 Seyde he nat thus, Ne do no fors of ¹⁰ dremes?
 Now, sire, quod she, 'whan we flee fro the bemes,
 For Goddes love, as tak ¹¹ som laxatyf,
 20 Up ¹² peril of my soule and of my lyf,
 I counseille yow the beste — I wol nat lye —
 That bothe of colere and of malencolye
 Ye purge yow, and, for ¹³ ye shul nat tarie,
 Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
 25 I shal myself to herbes techen ¹⁴ yow,
 That shul ben for your hele ¹⁵ and for your prow ¹⁶;
 And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,
 The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,¹⁷
 To purgen yow binethe, and cek above.
 30 Forget not this, for Goddes owene love!
 Ye been ful colerik of compleccioun,

¹ dreamed² one of the four so-called humors³ arrows⁴ flames⁵ strife, contest⁶ dogs⁷ small⁸ bulls⁹ *Dionysii Catonis Disticha de Moribus ad Fidem*¹⁰ pay no heed to¹¹ pray take¹² on¹³ in order that¹⁴ direct¹⁵ healing¹⁶ profit¹⁷ nature

Ware¹ the sonne in his ascencioun
 Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hote ;
 And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,²
 That ye shul have a fevere terciane³
 Or an agu, that may be youre bane. 5
 A day or two ye shul have digestyves
 Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,
 Of lauriol,⁴ centaure,⁵ and fumetere,⁶
 Or elles of ellebor⁷ that groweth there,
 Of catapuce⁸ or of gaytres beryis,⁹ 10
 Of erbe yve,¹⁰ growing in our yerd, ther mery is,
 Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem in.
 Be mery, housbond, for your fader¹¹ kin !
 Dredeth no dreem, I can say yow namore '
 'Madame,' quod he, 'graunt mercy¹² of your lore ! 15
 But nathelees, as touching daun¹³ Catoun,
 That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,
 'Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
 By God, men may in olde bokes rede
 Of many a man, more of auctoritee 20
 Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,¹⁴
 That al the revers¹⁵ seyn of his sentence,¹⁶
 And han wel founden by experience
 That dremes ben significaciouns
 As wel of joye as tribulaciouns 25
 That folk enduren in this lyf present.
 Ther nedeth make of this noon argument ;
 The verray preve¹⁷ sheweth it in dede.
 Oon of the gretteste auctours¹⁸ that men rede
 Seith thus, that whylom two felawes wente 30
 On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente ,

¹ beware lest² groat³ tertian⁴ spurge-laurel⁵ centaury⁶ fumitory⁷ hellebore⁸ lesser spurge (caper spurge)⁹ dogwood berries (some-
times those of other
similar shrubs)¹⁰ herb ivy (ground pine?)¹¹ father's¹² great thanks (gramercy)¹³ lord, sir (Lat *dominus*)¹⁴ so may I prosper¹⁵ opposite¹⁶ opinion¹⁷ proof¹⁸ Cicero, in his *De Divina-
tione*

- And happed so, thay come into a toun
 Wheras ther was swich congregacioun¹
 Of peple, and ² eek so streit³ of herbergage,⁴
 That they ne founde as muche as o⁵ cotage
 5 In which they bothe mighte ylogged⁶ be.
 Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,
 As for that night, departen⁷ compaignye;
 And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
 And took his logging as it wolde falle.⁸
 10 That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
 Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;
 That other man was logged wel ynough,
 As was his aventure,⁹ or his fortune,
 That us governeth alle as in commune¹⁰
 15 And so bifel that, longe er it were day,
 This man mette in his bed, ther as¹¹ he lay,
 How that his felawe gan upon him calle,
 And seyde "Allas! for in an oxes stalle
 This night I shal be mordred ther I lye.
 20 Now help me, dere brother, er I dye,
 In alle haste com to me," he sayde.
 This man out of his sleep for fere abrayde¹²,
 But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,
 He turned him, and took of this no keep¹³;
 25 Him thoughte¹⁴ his dreem nas but a vanitee¹⁵
 Thus twyes in his sleping dremed he,
 And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
 Cam, as him thoughte, and seide: "I am now slawe¹⁶,
 Bihold my bloody woundes, depe and wyde!
 30 Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,¹⁷
 And at the west gate of the toun," quod he,

¹ concourse, gathering² supply which was³ scanty⁴ lodgings⁵ one⁶ lodged⁷ part⁸ happen⁹ chance¹⁰ general¹¹ where¹² started up¹³ notice, heed¹⁴ it seemed to him that¹⁵ delusion¹⁶ slain¹⁷ morning

"A carte ful of dong¹ ther shaltow see,
 In which my body is hid ful prively;
 Do² thilke carte aresten³ boldely.
 My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn;"
 And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn, 5
 With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
 And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe;
 For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
 To his felawes in⁴ he took the way,
 And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle, 10
 After his felawe he bigan to calle.
 The hostiler⁵ answerde him anon,
 And seyde: "Sire, your felawe is agon;
 As sone as day he wente out of the toun."
 This man gan fallen in suspicioun, 15
 Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
 And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he lette,⁶
 Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
 A dong-carte, as it were to donge⁷ lond,
 That was arrayed in the same wyse 20
 As ye han herd the dede man devyse⁸;
 And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
 Vengeaunce and justice of⁹ this felonye:
 "My felawe mordred is this same night,
 And in this carte he lyth¹⁰ gapinge upright.¹¹ 25
 I crye out on the ministres," quod he,
 "That sholden kepe¹² and reulen¹³ this citee;
 Harrow¹⁴! allas! her lyth my felawe slayn!"
 What sholde I more unto this tale sayn?
 The peple outsterte,¹⁵ and caste the cart to grounde, 30
 And in the middel of the dong they founde

¹ dung² cause³ to be stopped⁴ inn⁵ innkeeper⁶ delay⁷ cover with manure⁸ relate⁹ for¹⁰ lieth¹¹ on his back¹² watch over¹³ rule¹⁴ a cry of distress¹⁵ started out

- The dede man, that mordred was al newe.¹
 O blisful God, that art so just and trewe!
 Lo, how that thou biwreyest² mordre alway;
 Mordre wol out — that see we day by day
 5 Mordre is so wlatom³ and abhominable
 To God, that is so just and resonable,
 That he ne wol nat suffre it heled⁴ be,
 Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
 Mordre wol out — this 's my conclusioun.
 10 And right anoon, ministres of that toun
 Han hent⁵ the carter, and so sore him pyned,⁶
 And eek the hostiler so sore engyned,⁷
 That thay biknewe⁸ hir wikkednesse anoon,
 And were anhangen by the nekke-boon,⁹
 15 Here may men seen that dremes been to drede
 And certes, in the same book I rede,
 Right in the nexte chapitre after this
 — I gabbe⁹ nat, so have I joye or blis —
 Two men that wolde han passed over see,
 20 For certeyn cause, into a fer contree,
 If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,
 That made hem in a citee for to tane,
 That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde
 But on a day, agayn¹⁰ the eventyde,
 25 The wind gan chaunge, and blew right as hem leste¹¹
 Iolif¹² and glad they wente unto hii reste,
 And casten¹³ hem ful erly for to saille,
 But to that oo¹⁴ man fil¹⁵ a greet mervaille.
 That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,
 30 Him mette a wonder drem, agayn¹⁰ the day
 Him thoughte¹⁶ a man stood by his beddes syde,

¹ recently² dost make manifest, bring to

light

³ heinous⁴ concealed⁵ seized⁶ tortured⁷ racked⁸ confessed⁹ lie¹⁰ towards¹¹ was agreeable to them¹² in good spirits¹³ proposed¹⁴ one¹⁵ befell¹⁶ it seemed to him

And him comaunded that he sholde abyde,
 And seyde him thus · " If thou to-morwe wende,
 Thou shalt be dreynt ¹, my tale is at an ende."
 He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,
 And preyde him his viage ² for to lette ³, 5
 As for that day, he preyde him to abyde.
 His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,
 Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful faste.
 " No dreem," quod he, " may so myn herte agaste,
 That I wol lette for to do my thinges.⁴ 10
 I sette not a straw by thy dreminges,
 For swevenes been but vanitees and japes ⁵:
 Men dreme alday ⁶ of owles or of apes,
 And eke of many a mase ⁷ therwithal,
 Men dreme of thing that never was ne shal.⁸ 15
 But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde,
 And thus forsleuthen ⁹ wilfully thy tyde,¹⁰
 God wot it reweth me ¹¹, and have good day."
 And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.
 But er that he hadde halfe his cours yseyled, 20
 Noot I ¹² nat why, ne what mischaunce it eyled,¹³
 But casuely ¹⁴ the shippes botme ¹⁵ rente,¹⁶
 And ship and man under the water wente,
 In sighte of othere shippes it byside,
 That with hem seyled at the same tyde 25
 And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere,
 By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,¹⁷
 That no man sholde been to recchelees ¹⁸
 Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,
 That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede. 30
 Lo, in the lyf of Seint Kenelm I rede —

¹ drowned² journey³ abandon, give up⁴ business affairs⁵ jests, tricks⁶ continually⁷ bewildering situation⁸ shall be⁹ waste in sloth¹⁰ time¹¹ I am sorry¹² I know not¹³ (there) ailed¹⁴ by accident¹⁵ bottom¹⁶ split¹⁷ mayst thou learn¹⁸ heedless

- That was Kenulphus¹ sone, the noble king
 Of Mercenrike² — how Kenelm mette a thing;
 A lyte³ er he was mordred, on a day,
 His mordre in his avisioun⁴ he say.⁵
 5 His norice⁶ him expounded⁷ every del⁸
 His sweven, and bad him for to kepe⁹ him wel
 For¹⁰ traisoun, but he nas but seven yeer old,
 And therfore litel tale hath he told¹¹
 Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.
 10 By God, I hadde lever than my sherte
 That ye had rad his legende, as have I.
 Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
 Macrobeus, that writ th' avisioun
 In Affrike of the worthy Cipiou,
 15 Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been
 Warning of thinges that men after¹² seen.
 And forthermore, I pray yow loketh wel
 In the Olde Testament, of¹³ Daniel,
 If he held dremes any vantee
 20 Recd eek of Joseph, and ther shul ye see
 Wher¹⁴ dremes ben somtyme — I sey nat alle —
 Warning of thinges that shul after falle
 Loke of Egipt the king, Daun Pharao,
 His bakere and his boteler also,
 25 Wher¹⁴ they ne felte noon effect¹⁵ in dremes.
 Whoso wol seken actes of sondry remes,¹⁶
 May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.
 Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde¹⁷ king,
 Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,

¹ Kenulf (died 819)² Mercia³ little⁴ vision⁵ saw⁶ nurse⁷ explained⁸ bit⁹ guard¹⁰ against¹¹ account hath he made¹² afterwards¹³ as to¹⁴ whether¹⁵ reality¹⁶ realms¹⁷ Lydia

¹³ avisioun the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero, with a commentary by Macrobius

²⁹ For this dream, cf the *Monk's Tale*.

Which signified he sholde anhangen be?
 Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores¹ wyf,
 That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
 She dremed on the same night biforn
 How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn,² 5
 If thilke day he wente into bataille.
 She warned him, but it mighte nat availle;
 He wente for to fighte nathelees,
 But he was slayn anon of Achilles
 But thilke tale is al to long to telle, 10
 And eek it is ny³ day, I may nat dwelle.⁴
 Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun,
 That I shal han of this avisioun
 Adversitee, and I seye, forthermore,
 That I ne telle⁵ of laxatyves no store, 15
 For they ben venimous,⁶ I woot it wel;
 I hem defye, I love hem never a del.⁷
 Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte⁸ al this;
 Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
 Of o thing God hath sent me large grace; 20
 For whan I see the beautee of your face,
 Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yen,⁹
 It maketh al my drede for to dyen,
 For, also siker¹⁰ as *In principio*,¹¹
Mulier est hominis confusio, 25
 Madame, the sentence¹² of this Latin is:
 "Womman is mannes joye and al his blis."
 For whan I fele aught¹³ your softe syde, . . .¹⁴
 I am so ful of joye and of solas
 That I defye bothe sweven and dreem.' 30
 And with that word he fleydoun fro the beem,

¹ Hector's² lost³ nearly⁴ continue⁵ set⁶ poisonous⁷ never a whit⁸ cease⁹ eyes¹⁰ sure¹¹ John 1:1¹² meaning¹³ by night¹⁴ Two lines omitted

- For it was day, and eek his hennes alle ;
 And with a chuk¹ he gan hem for to calle,
 For he had founde a corn, lay² in the yerd ;
 Royal he was, he was namore aferd . . .³
 5 He loketh as it were a grim leoun ,
 And on his toos he rometh up and doun,
 Him deynd⁴ not to sette his foot to grounde.
 He chukketh whan he hath a corn yfounded,
 And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.
 10 Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
 Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture ,
 And after wol I telle his aventure
 Whan that the month in which the world bigan,
 That highte March, whan God first makend man,
 15 Was complet, and [y]passed were also,
 Sin March was goon,⁵ [wel] thritty dayes and two,
 Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,
 His seven wyves walking by his syde,
 Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,
 20 That in the signe of Taurus hadde yronne⁶
 Twenty degrees and oon, and somewhat more ;
 And knew by kynde,⁷ and by noon other lore,⁸
 That it was pryde,⁹ and crew with blisful stevene.¹⁰
 ' The sonne,' he sayde, ' is clomben up on hevenc
 25 Fourty degrees and oon, and more, ywis
 Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
 Herkneþ this¹¹ blisful briddes how they singe,
 And see the fresshe floures how they springe ,
 Ful is myn herte of revel and solas '
 30 But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas,¹²

¹ cluck² that lay³ Two lines omitted⁴ he deigned⁵ MS bigan (*for* was goon)⁶ run, progressed⁷ nature⁸ teaching⁹ about 9 A M¹⁰ voice sound¹¹ these¹² misfortune14 *makend* : this was a mediæval idiom.

16. This would make the date May 3.

For ever the latter ende of joye is wo.
 God woot that worldly joye is sone ago¹;
 And if a rethor² coude faire endyte,³
 He in a cronique⁴ sauflly⁵ mighte it wryte,
 As for a sovereyn notabilitee⁶ 5
 Now every wys man, lat him herkne me
 This storie is also trewe, I undertake,
 As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
 That wommen holde in ful gret reverence.
 Now wol I toine agayn to my sentence⁷ 10
 A colfox,⁸ ful of sly inquitee,
 That in the grove hadde woned⁹ yeres three,
 By¹⁰ heigh imaginacioun forncast,¹¹
 The same night thurghout the hegges¹² brast¹³
 Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire 15
 Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire,
 And in a bed of wortes¹⁴ stille he lay,
 Til it was passed undern¹⁵ of the day,
 Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,
 As gladly¹⁶ doon thise¹⁷ homicydes alle, 20
 That in awayt¹⁸ liggen¹⁹ to mordre men.
 O false mordre, lurking in thy den!
 O newe Scariot,²⁰ newe Genilon²¹!
 False dissimilour,²² O Greek Sinon,
 That bioghtest Troye al outrely²³ to sorwe!²⁴ 25
 O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,
 That thou into that yerd flogh²⁴ fro the bemes!
 Thou were ful wel ywarned by thy dremes
 That thilke day was perilous to thee,

¹ past² skilled writer³ compose⁴ chronicle⁵ safely⁶ supremely notable fact⁷ subject⁸ brant fox (having a large intermixture of black in its fur)⁹ dwelt¹⁰ as a result of¹¹ premeditated¹² hedges¹³ burst¹⁴ herbs¹⁵ about 11 A.M.¹⁶ generally¹⁷ these¹⁸ waiting¹⁹ he²⁰ Iscaiot²¹ Gancelon, who betrayed Roland²² dissembler²³ utterly²⁴ flew

- But what that ¹ God forwoot ² mot nedes be,
 After ³ the opinioun of certeyn clerkis ;
 Witnesse on him that any perfit clerk is
 That in scole is gret altercacioun
 5 In this matere, and greet disputisoun,
 And hath ben of an hundred thousand men.
 But I ne can not bulte it to the bren,⁴
 As can the holy doctour Augustyn,
 Or Boece,⁵ or the bishop Bradwardyn,⁶
 10 Whether that Goddes worthy forwiting ⁷
 Streyneth ⁸ me nedely ⁹ for to doon a thing
 (Nedely clepe I simple necessitee),
 Or elles, if free choys be graunted me
 To do that same thing, or do it noght,
 15 Though God forwoot it er tha⁺ it was wrought ;
 Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del
 But by necessitee condicionel ⁺
 I wol not han to do of swich matere ;
 My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,
 20 That took his counseil of his wyf, with sorwe,
 To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
 That he had met ¹⁰ the dreem that I yow tolde.
 Wommennes counsels been ful ofte colde ¹¹ ;
 Wommannes counseil broghte us first to wo,
 25 And made Adam fro Paradys to go,
 Ther as ¹² he was ful mery, and wel at ese.
 But for ¹³ I noot ¹⁴ to whom it mighte displese,
 If I counseil of wommen wolde blame,
 Passe over, for I seyde it in my game ¹⁵
 30 Rede auctours wher they tiete of swich matere,

¹ that which² foreknows³ according to⁴ bolt it to the bran, sift

it thoroughly

⁵ Boethius⁶ Archbishop of Canterbury in the fourteenth century, and a divinity professor and chancellor of Oxford⁷ foreknowledge⁸ compels, constrains⁹ necessarily¹⁰ dreamed¹¹ disastrous¹² where¹³ since¹⁴ know not¹⁵ fun, sport

17. Conditional necessity, according to Boethius, implies knowledge of one knows that a man is walking, then he is, necessarily, walking

And what thay seyn of wommen ye may here.
 Thise¹ been² the cokkes wordes, and nat myne;
 I can³ noon harm of no womman divyne.

Faire in the sond⁴ to bathe hir merily,
 Lyth⁵ Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by, 5
 Agayn⁶ the sonne, and Chauntecleer so free
 Song merier than the mermayde in the see —
 For *Physiologus* seith sikerly
 How that they singen wel and merily
 And so bifel that, as he caste his ye, 10
 Among the wortes, on a boterflye,
 He was war⁷ of this fox that lay ful lowe.
 Nothing ne liste him⁸ thanne for to crowe,
 But cryde anon, 'Cok, cok,' and up he sterte,
 As man that was affrayed in his herte, 15
 For naturelly a beest desyreth flee
 Fro his contrarie,⁹ if he may it see,
 'Though he never erst¹⁰ had seyn it with his ye.

This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him espye,
 He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon 20
 Seyde · 'Gentil sire, allas ! wher wol ye gon ?
 Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend ?
 Now certes, I were worse than a feend,¹¹
 If I to yow wolde¹² harm or vileinye
 I am nat come your counsel for t' espyc, 25
 But trewely, the cause of my cominge
 Was only for to herkne how that ye singe,
 For trewely ye have as mery a stevene¹³
 As eny aungel hath that is in hevene,
 Therwith ye han in musik more felinge 30
 Than hadde Boece,¹⁴ or any that can singe.

¹ these
² are
³ know
⁴ and
⁵ heth

⁶ exposed to
⁷ aware
⁸ it pleased him not at all
⁹ opposite, foe
¹⁰ before

¹¹ fiend, devil
¹² wished
¹³ voice
¹⁴ Boethius wrote a treatise,
De Musica

My lord your fader — God his soule blesse ! —
 And eek your moder, of hir gentlesse,
 Han in myn hous ybeen, to my gret ese ¹;
 And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
 5 But for men speke of singing, I wol saye —
 So mote I brouke ² wel myn eyen tweye ! —
 Save yow, I herde never man so singe,
 As dide your fader in the morweninge,
 Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.
 10 And, for to make his voys the more strong,
 He wolde so payne him ³ that with bothe his yen
 He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,
 And stonden on his tiptoon therwithal,
 And strecche forth his nekke long and smal.
 15 And eek he was of swich discrecioun
 That ther nas no man in no regioun
 That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
 I have wel rad in *Daun Burnel the Asse*,
 Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
 20 For that a preestes sone yaf him a knock
 Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce,⁴
 He made him for to lese his benefyce.
 But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun
 Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun
 25 (Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
 Now singeth, sire, for seinte charitee,
 Let see, conne ye your fader countrefete ⁵ ?
 This Chauntecleer his winges gan to bete,
 As man that coude his tresoun nat espye,
 30 So was he ravished with his flaterye
 Allas ! ye lordes, many a fals flatour ⁶
 Is in your courtes, and many a losengeour,⁷

¹ delight² enjoy³ take such pains⁴ foolish⁵ imitate⁶ flatterer⁷ deceiver

¹⁸ Nigellus Wireker wrote the *Burnellus*, or *Speculum Stultorum*, in the twelfth century

That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,
 Than he that soothfastnesse ¹ unto yow seith.
 Redeth Ecclesiaste ² of ³ flaterye;
 Beth war, ⁴ ye lordes, of hir ⁵ trecherye.
 This Chauntecleer stood hye upon his toos, 5
 Strecching his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos, ⁶
 And gan to crowe loude for the nones ⁷,
 And Daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,
 And by the gargat ⁸ hente ⁹ Chauntecleer,
 And on his bak toward the wode him beer, 10
 For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed ¹¹
 O destunce, that mayst nat been eschewed ¹²!
 Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!
 Allas, his wyf ne roghte ¹³ nat of dremes!
 And on a Friday fil ¹⁴ al this meschaunce. 15
 O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
 Sin ¹⁵ that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
 And in thy service dide al his poweer,
 More for delyt, than world to multiplye,
 Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to dye? 20
 O Gaufred, ¹⁶ dere mayster soverayn,
 That, whan thy worthy King Richard was slayn
 With shot, compleynedest ¹⁷ his deth so sore,
 Why ne hadde I now thy sentence ¹⁸ and thy lore,
 The Friday for to chyde, ¹⁹ as diden ye 25
 (For on a Friday soothly slayn was he)?
 Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude pleyne ²⁰
 For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne ~~x b - 4 - 59~~
 Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun
 Was never of ladies maad whan Ihoun 30

¹ truth² Ecclesiasticus 12 1, 11, 16³ on⁴ beware⁵ their⁶ closed⁷ for the occasion⁸ throat⁹ seized¹⁰ bore¹¹ pursued¹² escaped¹³ recked¹⁴ happened¹⁵ since¹⁶ Geoffrey de Vinsauf¹⁷ didst lament¹⁸ judgment¹⁹ blame²⁰ lament

- Was wonne, and Pirrus¹ with his streite² swerd
 Whan he hadde hent King Priam by the berd,
 And slayn him — as saith us *Eneydos* —
 As maden alle the hennes in the clos,³
 5 Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte.
 But sovereynly⁴ Dame P'ertelote shrighite,⁵
 Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales⁶ wyf
 Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his lyf,
 And that the Romayns hadde brend⁷ Cartage;
 10 She was so ful of torment and of rage
 That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
 And brende hirsclven with a stedfast herte.
 () woful hennes, right so cryden ye
 As, whan that Nero brende the citee
 15 Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves,
 For that hir⁸ housbondes losten alle hir lyves;
 Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn
 Now wol I torne to my tale agayn.
 'This sely⁹ widwe, and eek hir doghtres two,
 20 Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo;
 And out at dores sterten they anon,
 And syen the fox toward the grove goon,
 And bar upon his bak the cok away,
 And cryden, 'Out¹⁰! harrow¹¹! and weylaway!
 25 Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him they ran,
 And eek with staves many another man;
 Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland,
 And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand;
 Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges —
 30 So were they fered¹² for berking of the dogges
 And shouting of the men and wimmen eke,
 They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte breke.

¹ Pirrus
² drawn
³ enclosure
⁴ most of all
⁵ shrieked

⁶ General of Carthage, when it was
 burned
⁷ burned
⁸ their
⁹ good

¹⁰ alas
¹¹ help
¹² frightened

They yelleden as feendes doon in helle,
 The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle¹,
 The gees for fere flowen over the trees,
 Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees,
 So hidous was the noyse, a! benedicite²! 5
 Certes he, Jakke Straw,³ and his meynce,⁴
 Ne made never shoutes half so shrille
 Whan that they wolden any Fleming⁵ kille,
 As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
 Of bras thay broghten bemes,⁶ and of box,⁷ 10
 Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and pouped,⁸
 And therewithal thay shryked and they houped,⁹
 It semed as that heven sholde falle
 Now, gode men, I pray yow heikneth alle!
 Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly 15
 The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!
 This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,
 In al his drede, unto the fox he spak,
 And seyde 'Sire, if that I were as ye,
 Yet sholde I seyn — as wis God helpe me! — 20
 "Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!
 A verray pestilence upon yow falle!
 Now am I come unto this wodes syde,
 Maugree your heed, the cok shal heer abyde,
 I wol him ete in feith, and that anon" ' 25
 The fox answerde 'In feith, it shal be don,'
 And as he spak that word, al sodeinly
 'This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,¹⁰
 And heighe upon a tree he fleigh anon
 And whan the fox saugh that he was ygon, 30
 'Allas!' quod he, 'O Chauntecleer, alas!
 I have to yow,' quod he, 'ydoon trespas,
 Inasmuche as I maked yow aferd,

¹ kill² bless us, *from* benedicte³ (in the rebellion of 1381)⁴ followers⁵ any Flemish merchant in
London⁶ trumpets⁷ boxwood⁸ tooted⁹ whooped¹⁰ nimbly, skilfully

Whan I yow hente, and broghte out of the yerd;
 But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente;
 Com doun, and I shal telle yow what I mente;
 I shal seye sooth to yow, God help me so.'

5 Nay than,' quod he, ' I shrewe ¹ us bothe two,
 And first I shrewe myself, bothe blood and bones,
 If thou bigyle me ofter than ones
 Thou shalt namore, thurgh thy flaterye,
 Do me to singe and winke with myn ye.
 10 For he that winketh whan he sholde see,
 Al wilfully, God lat him never thee ² !'

' Nay,' quod the fox, ' but God yeve him meschaunce
 That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
 That jangleth whan he sholde holde his pees !'

15 Lo, swich it is for to be reccheles ³
 And necligent, and truste on flaterye !
 But ye that holden this tale a folye,
 As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
 Taketh the moraliite, good men,
 20 For Seint Paul seith ⁴ that al that writen is,
 To our doctryne it is ywrite, ywis
 Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille

 Now, gode God, if that it be thy wille,
 As seith my lord, ⁵ so make us alle good men,
 25 And brunge us to his heighe blisse ! Amen

¹ curse² prosper³ heedless⁴ 2 Tim 3 16⁵ the Archbish op of Cantenbury, a
 thout script no c xplm

CHRONICLES

LAYAMON, BRUT

Our chief information concerning Layamon is derived from the first extract printed below. In the later manuscript, 'Laxamon' is 'Laweman', and indeed the word means 'lawman,' a kind of magistrate. 'Ernlexe' is Ar(e)ley Regis, or King's Ar(e)ley, just south of Stourport, where the Stour joins the Severn, and about ten miles north (slightly northwest) of Worcester. 'Radestone' is Redstone, a high cliff in the neighborhood.

Layamon goes on to say that it came into his mind to relate the history of England from the beginning, and that, in order to this, he journeyed up and down the country to procure the books he needed. Though he carries his story only down to 689, it consists of some 16,120 long lines, written about 1205. His chief source was Wace's *Roman de Brut* (1205), yet the earlier manuscript of Layamon contains, according to B. S. Monroe (*Modern Philology* 4: 567), only 87 French words. In common with Wace, or rather through Wace, he is ultimately dependent on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia of the Kings of Britain* (before 1148), the ultimate source of so much romance dealing with 'the matter of Britain'. Geoffrey's book has been excellently translated by Sebastian Evans (Temple Classics).

Of the two manuscripts, the second may be a half century or so later than the first. Our extracts are taken from the first, as given in the standard edition, Madden's (3 vols., London, 1847), with the latter's short lines printed as long ones (but Madden's numbering is retained). For further information, see the preface to Madden's edition, the *Dut Nat Brev*, *Cont Hist Eng Lit* 1: 260-4, Monroe, *Jour Eng and Germ Phil* 7: 139-41 (bibliography).

LAYAMON'S ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF

Lines 1-10 (Madden 1: 1)

An preost¹ wes on leoden,² Laxamon wes ȝhoten³,
He wes Leovenaðes sone — hƿe⁴ him beo Drihten⁵!
He wonede⁶ at Ernlexe, at æðelen⁷ are⁸ churcchen,⁹
Uppen Sevarne staƿe¹⁰ — sel¹¹ ƿar him ƿuhte¹² —
On fest¹³ Radestone, ƿer he bock radde¹⁴

5

¹ priest

² among the people

⁴ named

⁴ merciful

⁵ the Lord

⁶ lived

⁷ noble

⁸ a

⁹ church

¹⁰ bank

¹¹ good, pleasant

¹² seemed

¹³ hard by

¹⁴ read

THE PROPHECY OF DIANA

Lines 1097-1252 (Madden 1 47-53) Cf Geoffrey of Monmouth, Book I, chap 11, and Milton's translation of it in his *History of Britain*.

- Brutus nom ¹ Ignogen, and into scipe lædde.
 Heo ² rihten ³ heora rapes, heo rærden ⁴ heora mastes,
 Heo wunden up seiles, wind stod ⁵ an willen ⁶
 Sixtene siðe ⁷ tuenti scipen tuhten ⁸ from havene,
 5 And feower scipen greate þe weren grundladene ⁹
 Mid þat beste wepnen þa Brutus havede
 Heo fusden ¹⁰ from stronde ut of Griclonde ¹¹,
 Heo wenden ut i wide sæ, þa wilde ¹² wurðen itemede. ¹³
 Twege dawes and tua niht inne sæ weren,
 10 þen oðer ¹⁴ dai heo comen hiðen ¹⁵ on æven to londe.
 Logice ¹⁶ hatte ¹⁷ þat citlond ¹⁸, leode ¹⁹ nere þar nane —
 Ne wapmen ²⁰ ne wifmen — buten ²¹ westige ²² pæðes ²³
 Utlægen ²⁴ hefden iræved ²⁵ þat lond, and alle þa leoden ofslægen ²⁶;
 And swa lut wes al west, ²⁷ and wnnen ²⁸ bræved,
 15 Ah ²⁹ swa monie þar waren wilde deor ³⁰ þat wnder ³¹ heom þuhte ³²;
 And þa Troiniscle men tuhten to þon deoren,
 And cluden of þan wilden al heora willa ³³
 To þan scipen wælden ³⁴
 Heo funden i þon eitlonde ane burh ³⁵ swiðe stronge;
 20 Tohælde ³⁶ weoren þe walles, weste weren hallen
 Temple heo funden þar ane, imaked of marmestæne,
 Muchel and mære ³⁷, þe wrse ³⁸ hit hafde to welden. ³⁹

1 took

2 they

3 put in order

4 rused

5 MS. ston

6 was favorable

7 times

8 departed

9 deeply laden

10 hastened

11 Greece

12 wild (men)

13 tamed

14 next

15 voyaging

16 i. e. geocia, position unknown

17 hight

18 cyotland (island)

19 people

20 men

21 only

22 desert

23 MS. pædes

24 outlaws

25 devastated

26 alain

27 waste

28 (of) habitations

29 but

30 animals

31 wonder

32 seemed

33 will

34 carried

35 city

36 tottering

37 glorious

38 devil

39 rule

þerinne was an onlicnesse ¹ a ² wifmonnes liche ³ ;
 Feier hit wes and swide heih ⁴ , an ⁵ are ⁶ hætnesse ⁷ nome,
 Diana wes ihaten ⁸ , þe deovel heo luvete.
 Heo dude wndercraftes ⁹ , þe scucke ¹⁰ hire fulste ¹¹
 Heo wes quen of alle wodes þe weoven ¹² on eorðen , 5
 A ¹³ þon heðene lawen me ¹⁴ heold heo for hehne ¹⁵ godd.
 To hire weoren iwoned ¹⁶ þa wndercrestie men ;
 Of þa þinger ¹⁷ þa weren to kumen heo heom wolde cuðen ¹⁸
 Mid tacnen ¹⁹ and mid swefnen, ²⁰ þonne heo weren on slæpe.
 Þe wile þeo on þan eirlonde wes folc womende, ²¹ 10
 Heo wurðeden ²² þat anlicnes ; þe scucke hit ²³ onfeng ²⁴
 Brutus hit herde siggen ²⁵ purh his sæmonnen
 Þe ær ²⁶ weoren on þan londe, and þa lawen wusten
 Brutus nam twelf witiæn, ²⁷ þe weren his wiseste men,
 And enne preost of his lawen, þa weren on þan heden dæwen ²⁸ 15
 (Gerion hehte þe preost , he was an hirede ²⁹ hæh) ,
 He ferde ³⁰ to þere stowe ³¹ þar Diane inne stod
 Brutus ferde into þere temple, and þa twelfe mid him,
 And lette al his folc biðeven ³² þerute ³³
 Ana scale ³⁴ he bear an honde, al of reade golde , 20
 Mlc wes i þere scale, and win sume dale ³⁵ ,
 Þa mlc wæs of are wite hinde, þe Brutus sceat mid his honde
 He makede bi þon weofede ³⁶ a swide ³⁷ wunsum ³⁸ fur ,
 Nixen siðen ³⁹ he bieode ⁴⁰ þat weofed, for his neode ⁴¹
 He clepede ⁴² to þere levedi ⁴³ -- heo wes him on heorten leof ⁴⁴ , 25

¹ image
² in
³ form
⁴ majestic
⁵ by
⁶ a
⁷ heathen religion's (?)
⁸ called
⁹ sorceries
¹⁰ fiend
¹¹ aided
¹² grew
¹³ by
¹⁴ one, they
¹⁵ high

¹⁶ accustomed to resort
¹⁷ MS. kingen
¹⁸ tell
¹⁹ signs
²⁰ visions
²¹ dwelling
²² worshiped
²³ (the worship?)
²⁴ received
²⁵ say
²⁶ formerly
²⁷ prophets
²⁸ days
²⁹ among the people
³⁰ proceeded

³¹ place
³² remain
³³ outside
³⁴ dish
³⁵ part
³⁶ altar
³⁷ most
³⁸ winsome
³⁹ times
⁴⁰ circled about
⁴¹ need
⁴² cried
⁴³ lady
⁴⁴ dear

- Mid milden his worden he girnde ¹ hire mihten.
 Ofte he custe ² þat weofed mid wnsume lates ³;
 He halde ⁴ þa milc in þat fur mid milden his worden :
 ' Leafdi Diana, leove Diana, heƷe Diana, help me to neode.
 5 Wise ⁵ mi and witere, ⁶ þurh þine witful ⁷ craft,
 Whuder Ich mæi liðan, ⁸ and ledan mine leoden
 'To ane wnsume londe, þer ⁹ ich mihte wunien. ¹⁰
 And Ʒif Ich þat lond mai biƷeten, ¹¹ and mi folc hit þurhgengen, ¹²
 Makian Ich wille on þine nome mæren ¹³ ane stowe,
 10 And Ich þe wulle huren ¹⁴ mid wrhscepe hæƷan ¹⁵ '
 Þu: spec Brutus
 Seodðen ¹⁶ he nam þe hude ¹⁷ þa wæs of Ʒare hinde ,
 Biforen þan wefede he heo spradde, swlc ¹⁸ he leic on bedde ,
 He cnelede þar ufenan, ¹⁹ and seodðen he adun læi ,
 15 Swa he gon slomnen, ²⁰ and þeræfter to slepen.
 Þa þuhte him on his swefne, þar he on slepe læi,
 Þat his lavedi Diana hine leofliche ²¹ biheolde
 Mid wnsume leahtren ²² , wel heo him bihihte, ²³
 And hendiliche ²⁴ hire hond on his heved leide,
 20 And þus him to seide, þer he on slepe lai .
 ' BiƷende ²⁵ France, i þet west, þu scalt finden a wunsum lond ;
 Þat lond is biurnan ²⁶ mid þære sæ , þaron þu scalt wrþan ²⁷ sæl. ²⁸
 Þar is fugel, þar is fisc , þer wuniað feire deor ,
 Þar is wode, þar is water , þar is wilderne ²⁹ muchel
 15 Þet lond is swiƷe wunsum , weallen ³⁰ þer beoð feire ,
 Wuniað in þon londe eotanes ³¹ swiðe stronge.
 Albion hatte þat lond, ah leode ne beoð þar nane.
 Þerto þu scalt teman, ³² and ane neowe Troye þar makian ,

¹ besought² kissed³ looks⁴ poured⁵ guide⁶ instruct⁷ MS wihtful⁸ journey⁹ where¹⁰ dwell¹¹ obtain¹² overrun¹³ noble¹⁴ adore¹⁵ high¹⁶ afterward¹⁷ hide¹⁸ as if¹⁹ upon²⁰ drowse²¹ lovingly²² laughter²³ promised²⁴ courteously²⁵ beyond²⁶ surrounded²⁷ become²⁸ prosperous²⁹ wilderness³⁰ wells, springs³¹ giants, MS eotantes³² repair

þer scaþ of pine cunne¹ kinebearn² arisen,
 And scaþ þin mære³ kun wælden⁴ þas⁵ londas,
 Ȝeond⁶ þa weorlð beon ihæged⁷, and þu beo hæł and isund.⁸

THE BUILDING OF LONDON

Lines 1985-2060 (Madden 1 84-7) (cf Geoffrey 1 17 224 5-10 may be compared with the ultimate original in Geoffrey of Monmouth, with Robert of Gloucester's version of the latter, with Wace's expansion, and with Robert of Brunne's rendering of Wace

Geoffrey of Monmouth 1 16 'Amceno tamen situ locorum et piscosorum fluminum copia, nemoribusque præelecta'

Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle* (ca 1300) 484-7

þo Brut and is men þus come verst to londe,
 Hui wende aboute wide inou, þe contreies vor to fonde,
 Gret plente hui founde of fis, as hui wende bi þe weie,
 Of wodes and of rivers, as is in þe contreie

Wace, *Brut* 1245-1250

Brutus esgarda les montaignes,
 Vit les valées, vit les plaines,
 Les marines et les boscages,
 Et les éves et les rivages,
 Vit les cans et les praaries,
 Vit les tères bien gaagnies

Robert (Manning) of Brunne (1338) 1889-1894

Brutus byhel[d] þe mountaynes,
 And avised hym o þe playnes,
 Biheld þe wodes, watres, and ffen,
 Where esyest wony[n]g were for men,
 Als watres ronnen wel, he byheld,
 And mede wiþ þe erylde feld

Brutame hefde Brutus, and Cornwaile Corineus
 Brutus nom alle his freond, þe⁹ comen in his ferde¹⁰,
 Neh him he heom lænde,¹¹ for heo him leofe weoren.
 Corineus him cleopede to alle his icorene¹²,
 Alle he heom lænde þer heom wes alre¹³ leofest

5

¹ kin

² royal progeny

³ illustrious

⁴ rule (w gen)

⁵ MS þus

⁶ throughout

⁷ exalted

⁸ sound

⁹ that

¹⁰ army

¹¹ placed

¹² chosen ones

¹³ of all

- Weox¹ þet folk and wel ipaih,² for ælc hefde his iwillen³ ;
 Inne lut⁴ ƒeren firste⁵ wes þat folc swa muchel
 þat þer nas nan ende of folke swiƒe hende.
 Brutus hine biþohte,⁶ and þis folc biheold ,
 5 Biheold he þa muntas, feire and muchele ,
 Biheold he þa medewan þat weoren swiðe mære ,
 Biheold he þa wateres and þa wilde deor ,
 Biheold he þa fisches , biheold he þa fugeles ,
 Biheold he þa leswa⁷ and þene leofliche⁸ wode ,
 10 Biheold he þene wode hu he bleou⁹ , biheold he þat corn hu hit greu ,
 Al he iseh on leoden þat him leof was on heorten
 þa biþohte he on Troyƒen,¹⁰ þer his cun tcone¹¹ þoleden,¹²
 And he hidde¹³ ƒeond þis lond, and scæwede¹⁴ þa¹⁵ leoden.
 He funde wunsum ane stude¹⁶ uppen ane watere ,
 15 þær he gon aræren¹⁷ riche ane burhe,¹⁸
 Mid bouren and mid hallen, mid hæƒe stanwalle[n]
 þa þe burh wes unaked, þa wes he swiðe mære¹⁹
 þa burh wes swiðe wel idon, and he hire sette name on ,
 He ƒet hire²⁰ tifulne²¹ name -- Troye þe Newe,
 20 To munnen²² his ikunde²¹ whone²⁴ he icomen weore.
 Seodðen²⁵ þa leodene longe þerafter
 Leiden adun þene²⁶ noma, and Trinnoƒant heo²⁷ nemnedn.
 Binnen²⁸ feola²⁹ wintre hit iƒerð³⁰ seodðen³¹
 þat aras of Brutus kunne — þat wes an heh king —
 25 Lud wes ihaten³² þas burh he luvede swiðe ,
 þe king i þere burh wonede swiðe feola wintre.
 He lette heo Lude clepian ƒond his leodfolke,
 Hehte³³ heo nemnen Kacrlud, æfter þone kinge.

¹ grew² thrive³ will (what he desired)⁴ a few⁵ time⁶ bethought⁷ pastures⁸ lovely⁹ blew¹⁰ Troy¹¹ evil¹² suffered¹³ journeyed, MS hidðe¹⁴ viewed¹⁵ MS þea¹⁶ spot¹⁷ erect¹⁸ city¹⁹ glorious MS mare²⁰ MS hire to hire²¹ glorious²² commemorate²³ lineage²⁴ from which²⁵ subsequently, MS soððen²⁶ that²⁷ it²⁸ within²⁹ many³⁰ befell³¹ MS seodðen³² named³³ commanded

Seoððen¹ com oþer tīr² and neowe tidinde,
 þat men heo clepeden Lundin over al þas leode.
 Seoððen comen Engliſce men, and cleopeden heo Lundene,
 Seoððen³ comen þa Frenſca — þa mid fehte⁴ heo biwonnen⁵ —
 Mid heora leodðeawe,⁶ and Lundres heo hehten⁷ 5

THE DIVISION OF LEAR'S KINGDOM

Lines 2902–3110 (Madden 1 123–32) Cf Geoffrey 2 11

Bladud hafde enne sune — Leir wes ihaten,
 Efter his fader⁸ daie he heold þis drihliche⁹ lond
 Somed¹⁰ an¹¹ his live¹² ſixti winter
 He makede ane riċe burh þurh radfulle¹³ his crafte,¹⁴
 And he heo lette nemnen efter himſcolvan, 10
 Kaer Leir hehte þe burh — leof heo wes þan kinge —
 Þa we an ure leodquide¹⁵ Lencheſtre¹⁶ clepiað
 Ġeare,¹⁷ a þan olde¹⁸ dawen,¹⁹ heo wes ſwiðe ađel²⁰ burh,
 And seoððen þer ſeh²¹ toward ſwiðe muchel ſeorwe,
 Þat heo wes al forfaren²² þurh þere leodene væl²³ 15
 Sixti winter hefde Len þis lond al to welden
 Þe king hefde þreo dohtren bi his drihliche quen,
 Neſde he nenne sune — þerfore he warð ſari —
 His manſcipe²⁴ to halden, buten²⁵ þa þreo dohtren
 Þa ældeſte dohter haihte Gornouille, þa oðer Ragau, þa þridde 20
 Cordouille —
 Heo wes þa ġungeste ſuſter, a²⁶ whiten²⁷ alre vanest,
 Heo wes hire fader al ſwa leof ſwa his æġene lif
 Þa ældede²⁸ þe king, and wakede²⁹ an ađelan³⁰,

¹ MS seoððen

² glory

³ MS sedðen

⁴ battle

⁵ won

⁶ national customs

⁷ called (it)

⁸ father's

⁹ noble

¹⁰ together

¹¹ in

¹² lifetime

¹³ prudent

¹⁴ skill

¹⁵ language

¹⁶ Leicester

¹⁷ formerly

¹⁸ MS holde

¹⁹ days

²⁰ noble

²¹ came

²² destroyed

²³ slaughter

²⁴ dignity, lordship

²⁵ only

²⁶ in

²⁷ beauty

²⁸ grew old

²⁹ became weak

³⁰ power

- And he hine biþohte wet he don mahte
 Of ¹ his kineriche ² æfter his deie.
 He seide to himselven þat þat uel ³ wes :
 ' Ic wille mine nrehe todon ⁴ allen ⁵ minen dohtren,
 5 And 7even hem mine kineþeode, ⁶ and twemen ⁷ mine[n] bearnen, ⁸
 Ac ærst Ic wille fondien ⁹ whulche ¹⁰ beo mi beste freond,
 And heo scal habbe þat beste del of mine drihlichen lon[d].'
 þus þe king þohte, and þeræfter he worhte.
 He clepede Gornouille, his ¹¹ godfulle ¹² dohter,
 10 Ut of hire bure to hire fader deore ;
 And þus ¹³ spac þe alde king, þer he on æðelen ¹⁴ seat .
 ' Sei me, Gornouille, soðere ¹⁵ worden .
 Swiðe dure ¹⁶ þeo eart me , hu leof æm Ich þe ?
 Hu mochel worþ ¹⁷ levest ¹⁸ þu me to walden kineriche ?'
 15 Gornouille was swiðe wær ¹⁹ — swa beoð wifmen wel ihwær ²⁰ —
 And seide ane lesinge heore ²¹ fædere þon king
 ' Leofe fæder dure, swa bide ²² Ich Godes are ²³ —
 Swa helpe me Apollin, for min ilæfe ²⁴ is al on him —
 þat levere ²⁵ þeo ²⁶ ært me æne ²⁷ þane þis world al clanc ²⁸ ,
 20 And 7ei ²⁹ Ic þe wille speken wit ³⁰ . þeou ært leovere þene mi hf ,
 And þis Ich sugce ³¹ þe to soðe ³² , þu miht ³³ me wel ileve. ³⁴ '
 Leir þe king ilefde his dohter ³⁵ læisinge,
 And þas ænsware 7ef — þat wæs þe olde king .
 ' Ich þe, Gornouille, sugce, ³⁶ leove dohter dure,
 25 God ³⁷ scal beon þi meda ³⁸ for þira gretunge.
 Ic eam, for mire ældde, ³⁹ sw[1]þe unbalded, ⁴⁰

1 with
 2 kingdom
 3 evil
 4 divide
 5 MS & allen
 6 kingdom
 7 apporoun
 8 children
 9 test
 10 MS whulchere
 11 MS hes
 12 goodly, MS guð-
 13 MS þeus
 14 state

15 with true
 16 dear
 17 MS worþ
 18 (?), MS leste
 19 wary, cunning
 20 everywhere
 21 to her
 22 hope for
 23 mercy
 24 belief
 25 dearer
 26 thou
 27 alone
 28 entire

29 yet more
 30 with
 31 say
 32 MS seoðe
 33 mayst, MS mith
 34 believe
 35 daughter's, MS doster
 36 say, MS seuge
 37 good
 38 reward
 39 old age
 40 enfeebled

And þou me lovest¹ sw[i]þe mare þan is on live.
 Ich wille mi drihliche² lond a þreo³ al todalen⁴;
 þin is þat beste deal; þu ært mi dohter deore,
 And scalt habben to laved min alre beste þein⁵
 þeo Ich mai vinden in mine kinnelonde⁶;

5

Æfter spac þe olde kinge wit his [oþer]⁷ dohter ·
 'Leove dohter Regau, wæt seist tu⁸ me to ræde⁹?
 Seic þu bfore mire dugden¹⁰ heo¹¹ dure Ich am þe an herten.'
 þa answærde [Regau] mid rætfulle¹² worden ·
 'Al þat is on live nis nig¹³ swa dure

10

Swa me is þin an lime,¹⁴ forðe¹⁵ min ahæne¹⁶ lif.
 Ah heo ne seide naping soð,¹⁷ no more þenne hire suste[r];
 Alle hire lesinge hire vader ilefede.

þa answarede þe king — his¹⁸ dohter him icwemde¹⁹ ·

'þea pridde del of mine londe Ich bitake²⁰ þe an honde;

15

þu scalt nime²¹ loved²² þer þe is alre leowost.'

þa zet nolde²³ þe leodking²⁴ his sotscipe²⁵ bilæven²⁶,

He hehte²⁷ cumen him biforen his dohter Gordoille.

Heo was alre ængest, of soðe ærwitelest,²⁸

And þe king heo lovede more þanne ba tuec²⁹ þe oðre

20

Cordoille iherde þa lasinge þe hire sustren seiden þon kinge;

Nom³⁰ hire leaffulne³¹ hwe³² þat heo lizen³³ nolden —

Hire fader heo wolde suge soð,³⁴ were him lef,³⁵ were him lað.³⁶

þeo queð þe alde king — unræd³⁷ him fulede³⁸ ·

'Theren Ich wille of þe, Cordoille —

25

Swa þe helpe Appolin — hu deore þe beo lif min'

þa answarede Cordoille, lude³⁹ and no wiht stille,

¹ MS levoste

² MS drih-

³ in three, MS þreo

⁴ divide

⁵ thane

⁶ realm

⁷ second

⁸ thou

⁹ as opinion

¹⁰ men MS dugden

¹¹ how

¹² prudent

¹³ nigh

¹⁴ limb

¹⁵ before (?)

¹⁶ own

¹⁷ true; MS seð

¹⁸ MS hus

¹⁹ pleased

²⁰ deliver

²¹ take

²² husband

²³ would not

²⁴ king

²⁵ folly: MS soth-

²⁶ abandon

²⁷ commanded

²⁸ most gifted

²⁹ both (both two)

³⁰ made up

³¹ faithful

³² mind (OE *hyge*)

³³ lie

³⁴ MS seoð

³⁵ agreeable

³⁶ disagreeable

³⁷ un wisdom, MS unræð

³⁸ followed

³⁹ loudly

- Mid gomene¹ and mid lehtre to hire fader leve.
 ' þeo art me leof al so² mī fæder, and Ich þe al so þi dohter,
 Ich habbe to þe soƿfaste³ love, for⁴ we buoð swiþe isibbe⁵,
 And — swa Ich ibide⁶ are — Ich wille þe suge mare
 5 Al swa muchel þu bist worþ⁷ swa þu weldende⁸ ært,
 And al swa muchel swa þu havest men þe wileþ⁹ luvien,
 For sone he¹⁰ bið ilæged,¹¹ þe mon þe lutel ah¹²,
 þus seide þe mæiden C'ordoille, and seodðen set sw[ī]þe stille.
 þa iwarðe¹³ þe king wræð¹⁴ for he nes noht¹⁵ iquemed,¹⁶
 10 And wende on [h]is þonke¹⁷ þat¹⁸ hit weren for undeawe¹⁹
 þat he hire weore swa unwourð þat heo hine nolde iwurð²⁰
 Swa hire twa sustren, þe ba somed²¹ kesinge speken
 þe king Leir iwerðe²² swa blac swlch²³ hit a blac cloð weoren,
 Iwærð his hude²⁴ and his heowe,²⁵ for he was suþe²⁶ ihærmæd²⁷,
 15 Mid þære wræððe he wes isweved,²⁸ þat²⁹ he feol iswowen.³⁰
 Late³¹ þeo he up fusde³² — þat mæiden wes afeared,
 þa hit alles up brac — hit wes uvel³³ þat he spac
 ' Hær[c]ne,³⁴ (ordoille, Ich þe telle wille³⁵ mine wille
 Of mine dohtien þu were me durest, nu þu æert me alre³⁶ læðes[t]³⁷
 20 Ne scalt þu næver halden dale of mine lande,
 Ah mine[n] dohtien Ich wille delen mine riche,³⁸
 And þu scalt worðen wræchen,³⁹ and wonien in wanside,⁴⁰
 For navere Ich ne wende⁴¹ þat þu me woldes þus scanden⁴²,
 þarfore þu scalt beon dæd,⁴³ Ich wene. fliz⁴⁴ ut of min eæhsene⁴⁵
 25 þine sustren sculen habben mī knelond, and þis me is iqueme.⁴⁶

1 mirth (game)

2 as

3 true MS soh-

4 because

5 related

6 expect

7 worth

8 ruling, MS velden

9 MS wilest

10 MS heo

11 brought low MS ilaged

12 possesses

13 became

14 wroth MS wærð

15 MS þeo noht

16 gratified

17 thought

18 MS þaht

19 undutifulness

20 honor

21 both together

22 grew

23 as if

24 skin

25 hue

26 much

27 grieved

28 stupefied

29 so that

30 in a swoon

31 after a time

32 started

33 evil

34 hearken

35 will

36 of all, MS arle

37 most hateful

38 realm

39 exile, MS warchen

40 misery

41 supposed

42 shame

43 dead

44 fly

45 sight

46 agreeable

þe Duc of Cornwaile scal habbe Gornouille,
 And þe Scottene king Regau þat scone,¹
 And Ic hem ȝeve al þa winne² þe Ich æm waldinge³ over.⁷
 And al þe alde king dude⁴ swa he hafvede⁵ idemed.⁶
 Of[t] wes þen⁷ mædene wa,⁸ and nævre wors þenne þa⁹, 5
 Wa¹⁰ hire wes on mode¹¹ for hire fader wræþe.¹²
 Heo wende¹³ into hire boure, þar heo ofte sætte sare,¹⁴
 For heo nolde liȝen hire¹⁵ fader¹⁶ leove

CÆSAR'S BATTLE WITH THE BRITONS

Lanes 7472-7662 (Madden 1 319-27) Cf Geoffrey 4 3, 4

He¹⁷ cleopede on his cnihtes ' ðarewied¹⁸ eow to fihte,
 For nu is mid ferde¹⁹ icumen C'assibellaunus ' 10
 Heo hðede²⁰ togadere mid heore speren longe,
 Mid axen, mid sweorden, mid scærpe speres orde²¹,
 Hardliche²² heo heowen²³ hælmes þer gollen²⁴,
 Feon[d]liche²⁵ heo feohten, hafdes²⁶ þer feollen
 And C'esar þe keisere wes unimete²⁷ kene²⁸ 15
 His longe sweord he adroh,²⁹ and moni mon þermide³⁰ asloh³¹,
 He swonc³² i þon fehte þat al he lavede³³ a sweotc³⁴
 He sloh þa³⁵ him neh³⁶ weoren — alle buten³⁷ iferen³⁸,
 He dude þer muchelne³⁹ wundre, he sloh þer an hundred
 Of ahtere⁴⁰ monnen, þc feond⁴¹ mid his maxhe⁴² 20
 þat isch Androgeus, and cleopede his fader Nennius,

1 fair
2 possessions (?)

3 ruler

4 did

5 had

6 decided

7 to the

8 woe

9 then

10 MS þa

11 heart

12 wrath, MS wræþe

13 MS vende

14 sorrowful

15 to her

16 MS fadder

17 C'esar

18 prepare

19 army

20 came

21 point

22 stoutly

23 hewed

24 resounded

25 fiercely

26 heads

27 beyond measure

28 brave

29 drew

30 therewith

31 MS asloð

32 labored

33 dripped

34 sweat

35 those that

36 near

37 without

38 companions (help)

39 a great

40 valiant

41 enemy

42 sword

- And beiene¹ þa eorles bugen² heom togaderes,
 Mid swiðe muchele folke, togæderen stoden faste.
 Isexen³ heo Julus Cesar fæchten al swa a wilde bar,
 And heo him to fusden⁴ mid ladliche⁵ fehte,
 5 And monie of heore feonden heo fælden to þon grunde
 Þa iseh Nennius wær⁶ fæht Cesar Julius,
 And he him to rasde⁷ mid ræhæm⁸ his sweorde,
 Uppen þene helm he hine smat þat þet sweord in bat
 Selkuð⁹ hit puhte¹⁰ moni cnihte
 10 Þat he durste cumen him næh, for þan þa þe keisere¹¹ wes swa hæh¹²
 Julius Cesar ne queð nan word, ah he bræid¹³ ut his sweord,
 And Nennium he smat þa uppene þene helm swa
 Þat þe helm tohælde,¹⁴ and þat hæfde¹⁵ bledde,
 Ah he ne blakede¹⁶ no, for he wes cniht wel idon¹⁷
 15 And Julius noht ne na bræd,¹⁸ ah his brond¹⁹ he up ahæf,²⁰
 And Nennius hæf up his sceld, scilde²¹ hine sulte
 Julius adun smat,²² and þat sweord a²³ ðene scelde bat²⁴,
 Julius hit wraste,²⁵ and þat sweord stike[de]²⁶ feste,
 Julius þat sweord heold, and Nennius þene sceld,
 20 And þus heo hit longe bituxen,²⁷ ne mihte he þat sweord ut draæn²⁸
 Þat isæh Androgeus hu verden²⁹ Cesar and Nennius,
 And he³⁰ hem to fusde, Nennius³¹ to fulste³²
 Þa isæh Cesar tiðend³³ þat him wes sær,
 He forlette³⁴ þene brand — þa nefde he noht on his hond —
 25 And he þa feondliche³⁵ turnde to flæme³⁶
 Nennius wende i þane felde, and he turnde his scelde,
 Droh ut þene brande. Þa wes þe eorl swiþe bald

¹ both² turned³ saw⁴ hurried⁵ hostile⁶ where⁷ rushed⁸ fierce⁹ strange¹⁰ MS puhte¹¹ emperor¹² awe-inspiring¹³ drew¹⁴ gave way¹⁵ head¹⁶ paled¹⁷ trained¹⁸ paused for breath (?), but the text is
probably corrupt (The later MS
has mid þe seolve bræh)¹⁹ sword²⁰ lifted²¹ shielded²² smote²³ in²⁴ bit²⁵ wrenched²⁶ stuck²⁷ tugged it²⁸ draw²⁹ fared³⁰ MS he o³¹ MS monie³² assistance³³ occurrence³⁴ let go³⁵ as a foeman³⁶ flight

Monie Romanisce men mid þon sweorde he leide adun ;
 He wes moni¹ monnes bone,² and moni anne³ he dude scome.
 Al þat he mid þan sworde smat, þerriht⁴ hit⁵ iwat⁶ ,
 Al þat he þermid⁷ atran,⁸ weore hit flæs,⁹ weore hit ban,
 Purh þeos swordes wunde heo fullen to þon grunde. 5
 Alle dæi wes þat fiht,¹⁰ a¹¹ þet com þe þestere¹² niht.

Julus þe kaisere mid alle þan Romanisce here
 Dalden¹³ from þan fihte al bi þustere nihte ,
 To hærberge¹⁴ heo wenden uppen þare sæ stronde ,
 Heo blefden¹⁵ biæften¹⁶ twenti hundred cnihten 10
 Þeo leien under scelden, islægen æond þon felden
 C'esar iwende to his bedde , his men weoren ofdredde.¹⁷
 Hine¹⁸ biwakeden¹⁹ in þere nihte þritti hundred cnihten,
 Mid helmen and mid buinen,²⁰ and mid stelene sweorden.
 Julius C'esar he wes æp²¹ and swuðe iwær²² , 15
 He isæh his muchele lure,²³ and of mare²⁴ he hæfde kare ;
 He aras to þan midnihte, and bannede²⁵ his cnihtes,
 And seide heom þat heo wolden faren and fleon of þissen londe,
 Faren into Flandre, and beo[n] þer wuniende
 A²⁶ þat he isege²⁷ his time þat heo²⁸ mihten æft cumen hiðen²⁹ 20
 Heo feiden forþ³⁰ rihte to scipe al bi nihte ,
 Heo hæfden swiðe fair weder, and wenden into Flandre.
 A marcen, þa hit dæi wes, þe king mid his dugeðe³¹
 Æarekede³² his ferde, and wende to þan fihte
 Þo³³ was Romanisce folc ivaren³⁴ from here londe,³⁵ 25
 Þat³⁶ ne funden heo naver enne³⁷ of Cesares monnen.

1 MS moniennes

2 slayer

3 a one

4 straightway

5 it (— they)

6 died

7 therewith

8 reached, touched

9 flesh

10 MS fehti

11 till

12 dark

13 departed

14 shelter, harborage

15 left

16 behind

17 dismayed

18 him, MS inne

19 awakened

20 cuirasses

21 astute

22 wary

23 loss

24 more, further, MS. mare

25 summoned

26 until

27 should see, MS isægen

28 MS he

29 sailing

30 MS forh

31 knighthood

32 made ready

33 MS þeo

34 passed

35 MS sonde

36 so that

37 one

- þa weoren Bruttes bliðe¹ an heore mode,
 Muchel wes þa blisse þat heo makeden mid iwisse,²
 And³ sone þeræfter særi heo wurden⁴
 And Cassibellaune þe king iwarð særi þurh alle þing,⁵
 5 For Nennius his broðer ne mihte finden bote⁶
 Of his hæfved-wunde þe Julius smat mid honde,
 Ne þurh neinne læche-cræfte⁷ ne mihte he lif habben
 Nes þer nan oðer ræd⁸ buten Nennius iwarð dæd,⁹
 And Nennius was ilæd¹⁰ at þon norðgæte i Lundene.
 10 þe king næm enne marmestan, and lette hine mid golde bigon,¹¹
 Mid golde and mid zimme¹², his broðer he leide þerinne,
 Mid richedome¹³ þa Bruttes Nennium biburden¹⁴
 Nu þu miht¹⁵ iheoren selkuð¹⁶ word þe king nom þat ilke¹⁷ sweorde
 þat Nennius his broðer biwan of Julius Cæsare,
 15 And læide hit bi his broðer, þah¹⁸ hit his bone¹⁹ weore.
 Wæs þe stelene brond swiðe brad and swiðe long,
 Þeron weoren igraven feole cunne²⁰ bocstaven²¹,
 A²² ðere hilde wes igraven
 þat þa sweord wes icleoped²³ inne Rome *Crocut Mors*²⁴ —
 20 Swa þat sweord hæhte, for hit havede muchele mahte²⁵
 þermide þe keisere þrætede²⁶ ælches londes here²⁷,
 For nas næwere þe ilke bern²⁸ þe avere iboren weore,
 þat of þen ilke sweorde ennc²⁹ swipe³⁰ hefde,
 þat³¹ he of his likame³² lette ænne drope blod,
 25 þat he nes sone dæd, neorc he noht³³ swa dohti.
 Julius mid his ferde lei inne Flandre,
 þa word com to France hou³⁴ þe iwaren hæfde,

¹ joyful² with certainty, in truth³ but⁴ MS wurðen⁵ in every way⁶ cure⁷ medical skill⁸ remedy⁹ MS dæð¹⁰ laid¹¹ adorn¹² precious stone(s)¹³ splendor¹⁴ buried¹⁵ mayst¹⁶ strange¹⁷ very¹⁸ though MS þat¹⁹ slayer²⁰ kinds²¹ letters (cf Ger *Buchstaben*)²² on, MS æ²³ called²⁴ Saffron Death²⁵ might²⁶ menaced²⁷ army²⁸ mar²⁹ a³⁰ blow³¹ so that³² body³³ never³⁴ MS. heou

And hu he wæs mid his færde iſlæmde¹ of þiſſen earde.²
 þa³ weoren þa Frenſce men þefore ſwiþe væine,⁴
 For toward Julius heo hæfden grome,⁵ and forþi weoren fæin
 of his ſcome.⁶

CYMBELINE AND THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Lines 9064-9185 (Madden 1 386-91). Cf Geoffrey 4 11

On Kimbelines dæie, þe king wæs inne Bruttene,
 Com a þiſſen middelærde⁷ anes maidenes Sune, 5
 Iboren wes in Beðlecm of bezſte⁸ alre burden⁹
 He is ihaten Jesu Crist þurh þene Hahe Goſt,
 Alre worulde Wunne,¹⁰ Walden[d]¹¹ englenne¹²
 Fæder he is on hevenen, Frowe¹³ moncunnes¹⁴,
 Sune he is on eorðen of ſcle¹⁵ þon mædene, 10
 And þene Hahe Goſt haldeth¹⁶ mid himſcolven
 Þene Gaſt he wel daleð¹⁷ to þan þe him beoð leove,
 Al ſwa he dude Peture, þe wes a wræche¹⁸ fiſcære,
 Þe madeð hine an mancunne hehſt¹⁹ of alre manne
 Kimbelin, Bruttene king, wes god mon þurh alle þing, 15
 And he luvede²⁰ here twa and twenti ȝere
 An his dæie her luvede a mon inne þiſſe leoden —
 Feorliche²¹ þing fuleden²² him — he wes ihaten Teilesin²³,
 Heo heolden²⁴ hine for witie²⁵ þurh his witfulne²⁶ cræfte,
 And al heo hit ilæfden²⁷ þat Teilesin heom ſeide. 20
 He ſeide heom ſeolkuð²⁸ inoh, and al heo hit funden soð,
 He ſeide heom ælche ȝere wæt heom to cumen weore
 Þe king him ſende æfter wiſe twalf cnihtes,
 Bad²⁹ hine comen him³⁰ to — þat he nan oðer³¹ ſcolde³² don,

¹ put to flight

² country

³ MS þat

⁴ ſam, glad

⁵ grudge

⁶ ſhame

⁷ world

⁸ the beſt

⁹ women

¹⁰ joy

¹¹ lord

¹² of angels

¹³ comfort

¹⁴ of mankind

¹⁵ bliſſful

¹⁶ he holdeth

¹⁷ imparts

¹⁸ forlorn

¹⁹ hiĝheſt

²⁰ lived

²¹ wondrous

²² followed

²³ Talesin

²⁴ held, MS heolten

²⁵ prophet

²⁶ wiſe

²⁷ believed

²⁸ marvel

²⁹ bade, MS bað

³⁰ Cymbeline

³¹ other thing

³² ſhould, MS. ſeolden

- And heo hine¹ bro[h]ten sone bi foren þen folkekinge.
 Anan swa¹ þe king hine imette, fære he hine igrette.
 'Swa me helpen min hefde and mi chin, wulcume ært þu, Teilesin,
 And leovere me is þine isunden² þenne a þusend punden'
 5 þa andswerede Teilesin, and þus seide to Kimbelin.
 'Swa ich mote gode þeon,³ al⁴ þu hit⁵ sælt⁶ wel biteon.⁷
 þa wes glad Kimbelin, and þus seide to Teilesin
 'Her beoð to þisse londe icumen seolcude leodronen,⁸
 And fromward⁹ þeon¹⁰ londe of Jerusalem, iwurden¹¹ heo beoð in
 Beðleem
 10 þer is iboren an luttel child inne þere leoden.¹²
 Muchle is and stor¹³ þe eige¹⁴, tacnen¹⁵ þer beoð on sterren,
 An monen, and on seonnen¹⁶, eie¹⁷ is on moncunnen
 þis is widen¹⁸ icuð¹⁹ and þa writen²⁰ me beoð to icume,
 And Ic wolde iwiten æt²¹ þe — þu ært mi wine²² deore —
 15 To whan²³ þis toce wule ten,²⁴ to wulche þinge temen,²⁵
 For herfore²⁶ is alches londes folc lædliche²⁷ afered.'
 þa answerede Teilesin, and þus seide to Kimbelin.
 'Hit wes xare²⁸ iqueðen²⁹ — þa quides³⁰ beoð nu soðe —
 þat scolden beon a child iboren, of alle folke icoren,³¹
 20 And þat scolde beon ihaten Hælend,³² and helpen his freondes,
 Alesn³³ his leofwe wines of læde³⁴ heore bendes,³⁵
 Of³⁶ helle bringen Adam, Noc, and Abraham,
 Sadoc and Samiel, and Symeon þene alde,
 Josep an[d] Benjamin, and alle his broðeres mid him,
 25 Johel and Eliseon, Asor and Naason,
 Ysaac and his broðer, and moni enne³⁷ oðer,

¹ the moment that² health, welfare³ well thrive⁴ everything⁵ refers to *al*⁶ shalt⁷ accomplish⁸ secret tidings⁹ from, MS -ward¹⁰ the¹¹ come to pass, MS *iwurden*¹² country¹³ mighty, overwhelming¹⁴ alarm, misgiving¹⁵ signs¹⁶ sun¹⁷ fear¹⁸ widely¹⁹ known²⁰ writings²¹ know from²² friend²³ which²⁴ tend²⁵ lead²⁶ on account of this²⁷ sore²⁸ long ago²⁹ announced³⁰ assertions³¹ choicest³² Saviour, Jesu'³³ deliver³⁴ hateful³⁵ bonds³⁶ from³⁷ a one

Moni hundred þusend þe ipud¹ beoð to hellen ;
 And for swulchere² neode he is icumen to þere þeoden.³
 Þeos word seide Telesin, and alle heo weoren soðe.
 Þa þan⁴ kinge weoren⁵ icudde þas quides þa weoren soðe,
 þa weoren þa tiðinde cuðe Ʒeond his kineriche , 5
 Bruttes herof Ʒemden,⁶ and noht hit ne forȝeten
 Kinbelin wes god king, and grifful⁷ þurh alle þing,⁸
 And þa Romleoden⁹ swiðe hine luveden ,
 And Ʒif þe king wolde¹⁰ wið¹¹ heom wiðerhalden,¹²
 He mihte¹³ æthalden¹⁴ heore feoh¹⁵ þe Julius her¹⁶ fætte¹⁷ , 10
 Ah ævere mare¹⁸ bi¹⁹ his live he hit heom leofliche²⁰ Ʒeaf.
 Seoððe²¹ him comen þæ tiðinde of Crist, Godes childe,
 Ne leovede²² þe king mare buten ten Ʒere
 Seoððen þe king bilæfden²³ his lif , inne Eowverwike²⁴ he Ʒet hið.²⁵

THE OLD ENGLISH CHRONICLE THE REIGN OF STEPHEN (A.D. 1137)

The *Old English Chronicle* is of priceless value for the early history of England. Toward the end the language passes over into an early form of Middle English. Modern historians have often drawn upon this passage in characterizing the reign of Stephen.

Our text is from *Two Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, ed. Plummer and Earle, pp. 263-5, with contractions expanded.

Þa-þe²⁶ King Stephne to Englande com, þa macod he his gader- 15
 ing²⁷ æt Oxeneford, and þar he nam þe biscop Roger of Sereberi,²⁸
 and Alexander, Biscop of Lincol, and te Canceler Roger, hise neves,²⁹
 and dide ælle in prisun til hi Ʒafen³⁰ up here castles. Þa the suikes³¹

¹ consigned

² such

³ peoples

⁴ to the

⁵ MS. wes

⁶ took note

⁷ peaceable

⁸ in all ways

⁹ Romans

¹⁰ had wished

¹¹ against

¹² rebel, MS. -heolden

¹³ might have, MS. mihte

¹⁴ withhold

¹⁵ tribute

¹⁶ from here

¹⁷ fetched

¹⁸ MS. nære

¹⁹ during

²⁰ submissively, loyally

²¹ after

²² lived

²³ departed

²⁴ York

²⁵ lies

²⁶ when

²⁷ assembly

²⁸ Salisbury

²⁹ nephews

³⁰ gave

³¹ traitors

undergæton ¹ ðat he milde man was and softe and god, and na justise ne dide, þa diden hi alle wunder. Hi hadden him manred ² maked and athes suoren, ac ³ hi nan treuthe ne heolden, alle hi ⁴ wæron forsworen and here treotthes forloren, for ævric ⁵ rice man his castles
 5 makede and agænes him heolden, and fylden þe land ful of castles. Hi swuncten ⁶ suyðe þe wrecce men of þe land mid castelweorces.⁷ Þa þe castles wæren maked, þa fylden hi [hi] mid deovles and yvele men þa namen hi þa men þe hi wenden ðat an god ⁸ hefden, bathe be nihtes and be dæries, carlmen ⁹ and wimmen, and diden heom in prisun,
 10 efter ¹⁰ gold and sylver, and pined ¹¹ heom untellendlice ¹² pining For ne wæren nævre nan martyrs swa pined else hi wæron, me ¹³ hinged up bi the fet and smoked heom mid ful ¹⁴ smoke, me hinged bi the pumbes other bi the hefed,¹⁵ and hengen bryniges ¹⁶ on her fet, me dide cnotted strenges abuton here hæved, and wrythen ¹⁷ to ðat it
 15 gæde ¹⁸ to þe hæernes ¹⁹ Hi dyden heom in quarterne,²⁰ þar nadres ²¹ and snakes and pades ²² wæron inne, and drapen ²³ heom swa. Sume hi diden in crucethus,²⁴ ðat is in an cæste ²⁵ þat was scort and nareu and undep, and dide scærpe stanes þerinne, and þrengde ²⁶ þe man þærinne ðat him bræcon alle þe limes. In man of þe castles wæron
 20 lof ²⁷ and grin,²⁸ ðat wæron rachenteges ²⁹ ðat twa oþer thre men hadden onoh to bæron onne ³⁰, þat was sua maced, ðat is fæstned to an beom,³¹ and diden an scærp iren abuton þe ³² mannes throte and his hals,³³ ðat he ne myhte nowiderwaides,³⁴ ne sitten ne lien ne slepen, oc bæron al ðat iren Man þusen[d] hi drapen mid hungær.
 25 I ne can ne I ne mai tellen alle þe wunder, ne alle þe pines, ðat hi diden wrecce men on þis land, and ðat lastede þa xix wintre wile Stephne was king, and ævre it was werse and werse. Hi læiden

¹ understood, perceived² homage³ but⁴ MS he⁵ every⁶ oppressed⁷ the making of castles⁸ property⁹ men¹⁰ in pursuit of¹¹ tortured¹² unspeakable¹³ they¹⁴ foul¹⁵ head¹⁶ coats of mail¹⁷ twisted¹⁸ till it went¹⁹ brain²⁰ prison²¹ adders²² toads²³ killed²⁴ torture-box²⁵ chest²⁶ pressed, jammed²⁷ device (?)²⁸ contrivance²⁹ chains, fetters³⁰ one³¹ beam, rafter³² MS þa³³ neck³⁴ (go) in no direction

gældes¹ on the tunes ævre um wile,² and clepeden it tenserie.³ þa
 þe wrecce men ne hadden nan more to gyven, þa ræveden⁴ hi and
 brendon⁵ alle the tunes, ðat,⁶ wel⁷ þu myhtes faren all a dæis fare,⁸
 sculdest thu nevre finden man in tune sittende ne land tiled.⁹ þa
 was corn dære,¹⁰ and flesc¹¹ and cæse¹² and butere, for nan ne
 wæs o þe land. Wrecce men sturven¹³ of hungær; sume ieden¹⁴ on
 ælmes þe waren sum wile¹⁵ rice men; sume flugen¹⁶ ut of lande.
 Wes nævre gæt mare wreccehed¹⁷ on land, ne nævre hethen men
 werse ne diden þan hi diden, for ower¹⁸ sithon¹⁹ ne forbaren²⁰ hi
 nouthur circe²¹ ne cyrcærd,²² oc namen al þe god ðat þarinne was, 10
 and brenden sythen þe cyrce, and al tegædere. Ne hi ne forbaren
 biscopes land, ne abbotes, ne preostes, ac ræveden munekes and
 clerekes, and ævric man other²³ þe ower²⁴ myhte. Gif twa men oper
 in a coman ridend to an tun, al þe tunsceipe flugæn for heom, wenden
 ðat hi wæron ræveres²⁵. þe biscopes and lered men heom cursede²⁶ 15
 ævre, oc was heom naht þarof, for hi weron al forcursead and for-
 suoren and forloren. Warsæ²⁷ me tiledc, þe erthe ne bar nan corn,
 for þe land was al fordon mid sulce dædes, and hi sæden openlice
 ðat Crist slep and his halechen²⁸. Sulc and mare þanne we cunnen
 sæin, we þoleden²⁹ xix wintre for ure sinnes. 20

BARBOUR, THE BRUCE

The *Bruce* was composed in 1375 by a northern contemporary of Chaucer, John Barbour (1320 (?)–1395), who was for thirty-eight years archdeacon of Aberdeen. Of Barbour's life comparatively little is known, but we learn that he received permits from the king to study at Oxford and in France, and was granted various pensions. Besides the *Bruce*, he wrote a poem called *The Brut*, and a genealogy of the Stuart family, both of which are lost.

¹ tributes MS gældes

² from time to time

³ name given to a tax exacted
from vassals in return for
protection

⁴ plundered

⁵ burned

⁶ so that

⁷ though

⁸ journey

⁹ tiled

¹⁰ dear, expensive

¹¹ MS flec

¹² cheese

¹³ died, perished

¹⁴ went, lived

¹⁵ at one time

¹⁶ fled

¹⁷ wretchedness

¹⁸ everywhere, MS ouer

¹⁹ afterwards

²⁰ abstained from

²¹ church

²² churchyard

²³ each man his neighbor

²⁴ anywhere, MS ouer

²⁵ robbers

²⁶ excommunicated

²⁷ wheresoever

²⁸ saints

²⁹ endured, MS þoleden

The *Bruce* is called by its author a romance, though it has often been dealt with and criticized as history. 'We are hardly to regard it in the light of an exact history, but rather as a succession of episodes telling us various stories about the great perils and adventures of the heroes, the chief of whom are Robert Bruce, his brother Edward, Sir James Douglas, and Sir Thomas Randolph, afterwards Earl of Murray' (Skeat), the period covered being 1286-1332. The poem is divided into twenty books, and is written in the dialect of southern Scotland. While certain parts of it are undeniably tedious, it is of real interest for its national spirit, and has been influential upon so late a fellow-countryman of Barbour's as Sir Walter Scott. Barbour's unique position is that of being the father both of vernacular Scottish poetry and Scottish history' (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*)

Our text is taken from that of Skeat, as edited for the Scottish Text Society (Edinburgh, 1894), with the omission of square brackets, substitution of *r* for *ss* (representing a single sound), and writing of *n̄* as *n*, etc. Skeat's text is based on the Edinburgh manuscript, written in 1489, collated with the Cambridge MS G 23, and with several early editions. Our selections include lines 353-406 of Book 1, 352-452 of Book 10, and 18-49, 139-66, and 272-323 of Book 13. It is to be noted that *v* and *w* are frequently interchanged.

SIR JAMES DOUGLAS

To Sanct Androws he come in hy,¹
 Quhar² the byschop full curtasly
 Resavyt him, and gert³ him wer
 His knyvyys,⁴ forouch⁵ him to scher⁶,
 5 And cled him rycht honorabilly,
 And gert ordayn quhar he suld ly.
 A weile⁷ gret quhile thar duellyt he;
 All men lufyt him for his bounte,
 For he wes off full fayr effer,⁸
 10 Wys, curtais, and debonei,
 Larg⁹ and luffand als wes he,
 And our¹⁰ all thing luffyt lawte.¹¹
 Leaute to luff¹² is gretumly¹³
 Throuch leaute hiffis men rychtwisly,

¹ haste² where³ made⁴ knives, daggers⁵ before⁶ carve at table⁷ very (well)⁸ behavior⁹ generous¹⁰ over, above¹¹ loyalty¹² to be loved¹³ greatly

With a wertu ¹ of leaute
 A man may ȝeit sufficyand be ;
 And but ² leawte may nane haiff price, ³
 Quhethir he be wycht ⁴ or he be wys ,
 For quhar it failȝeys, na wertu 5
 May be off ⁵ price, na off valu,
 To mak a man sa gud that he
 May symply gud man callyt be.
 He wes in all his dedis lele ⁶ ;
 For him dedeynȝeit ⁷ nocht to dele 10
 With trechery, na with falset. ⁸
 His hart on hey honour wes set ,
 And hym contenyt ⁹ on sic ¹⁰ maner
 That all him luffyt that war him ner.
 Bot he wes nocht sa fayr that we 15
 Suld spek gretly off his beaute
 In wysage wes he sumdeill gray,
 And had blak har, as Ic hard say ,
 Bot off lymmys he wes weill maid,
 With banys ¹¹ gret and schuldrys braid. 20
 His body wes weyll maid and lenye, ¹²
 As thai that saw hym said to me
 Quhen he wes blyth, he wes luffy,
 And meyk and sweyt in cumpany ,
 Bot quha in battaill mycht him se, 25
 All othir contenance had he
 And in spek ¹³ whispyt ¹⁴ he sum deill,
 Bot that sat ¹⁵ him rycht wondre weill.
 Till ¹⁶ gud Ector of Troy mycht he
 In mony thingis liknyt be 30
 Ector had blak har as he had,

¹ virtue
² without
³ praise
⁴ vigorous
⁵ of
⁶ leal, loyal

⁷ deigned
⁸ falsehood
⁹ he demeaned himself
¹⁰ such
¹¹ bones
¹² lean, thin

¹³ speech
¹⁴ lisped
¹⁵ became
¹⁶ to

And stark¹ lymmys, and rycht weill maid;
 And wlispyt alsua as did he,
 And wes fullfillyt² of leawte,
 And wes curtais, and wys, and wycht.³
 5 Bot off manheid and mekill mycht,
 Till Ector dar I nane comper
 Off all that evir in warldys wer.
 The quhethyr⁴ in his tyme sa wrocht he,
 That he suld gretly lovyt be

THE WINNING OF ROXBURGH CASTLE

10 This tym that the gud erll Thomas
 Assegit,⁵ as the lettir⁶ sais,
 Edinburgh, James of Douglas
 Set all his vit for till purchas⁷
 How Roxburgh, throu subtilite
 15 Or ony craft, mycht wonnyn be;
 Till he gert Sym of the Ledows —
 A crafty man and a curious —
 Of hempyn rapis⁸ ledderis ma,⁹
 With treyn¹⁰ steppis bundin swa,
 20 That vald¹¹ brek apon na kyn wis.¹²
 A cruk¹³ thai maid, at thair deuis,¹⁴
 Of irn,¹⁵ that wes styth¹⁶ and square;
 That, fra¹⁷ it ane ky inaul¹⁸ ware,
 And the leddir tharfra stratly¹⁹
 25 Strekit,²⁰ it suld stand sekirly²¹
 This lord of Douglas than, alsoyn²²
 As this devisit wes and done,

¹ strong² filled full³ brave⁴ nevertheless⁵ besieged⁶ written account⁷ devise, contrive⁸ ropes⁹ make¹⁰ wooden¹¹ would¹² in no way¹³ large hook¹⁴ according to their plan¹⁵ iron¹⁶ strong¹⁷ from the time that, when¹⁸ against a battlement¹⁹ tightly²⁰ stretched²¹ securely²² as soon

Gaderit gud men in prevate¹;
 Thre score I trow at² thai mycht be.
 And on the fasteryn evyn³ rycht,
 In the begynnyng of the nycht,
 Till the castell thai tuk the vay. 5
 With blak froggis⁴ all helit⁵ thai
 The armouris at thai on thame had.
 Thai com ner by thar but abaid,⁶
 And send haly thair hors⁷ thame fra,
 And on range⁸ in ane rod⁹ can¹⁰ ga¹¹ 10
 On handis and feit, quhen thai war neir,
 Richt as thai ky¹² and oxin weir,
 That war unbondyn left therout.
 It wes richt merk,¹³ forouten¹⁴ dout;
 The quhethir¹⁵ ane, on the wall that lay, 15
 Besyde him till his feir¹⁶ can say
 'This man thinkis to mak gude chere' —
 And nemmyt¹⁷ ane husband¹⁸ tharby neir —
 'That has left all his oxyne out.'
 The tothir said, 'It is na dout; 20
 He sall mak merye this nycht, thouch thai¹⁹
 Be with²⁰ the Douglas led away.'
 Thai wende the Douglas and his men
 Had beyn oxyne, for thai xeid²¹ then
 On handis and feit, ay ane and ane 25
 The Dowglas rycht gud tent²² has tane²³
 Till all thar speke,²⁴ bot alssoyn²⁵ thai
 Held, carpand,²⁶ inward on thar way.
 The Douglas men tharof wes blith,

¹ secrecy² that³ eve of the fast, Shrove
Tuesday⁴ frocks⁵ covered, concealed⁶ without delay⁷ sent all their horses away⁸ in single file⁹ along a path (road)¹⁰ did (gan)¹¹ go¹² cows¹³ dark¹⁴ without¹⁵ nevertheless¹⁶ companion (OE. *gefēra*)¹⁷ named¹⁸ husbandman, farmer¹⁹ (the cattle)²⁰ by²¹ went (OE. *ȝode*)²² attention²³ paid (taken)²⁴ speech²⁵ very soon²⁶ talking

And till the wall thai sped thame swith¹;
 And soyn has up thair ledderis set,
 That maid a clap,² quhen the cleket³
 Wes festnyt fast in the kyrnell.
 5 That herd ane of the vachis⁴ wele,
 And buskit⁵ thiddirward but baid⁶,
 Bot Ledous, that the leddyr maid,
 Sped⁷ hym to clym first to the wall,
 Bot, or he wes up gottin all,
 10 He at⁸ that vard⁹ had in keping,
 Met him rycht at the upcummyng,
 And, for¹⁰ he thought to dyng¹¹ hym doune,
 He maid na noys, na cry, na sowne,
 Bot schot¹² till him deliverly¹³
 15 And he that wes in juperdy
 Till de,¹⁴ a lans¹⁵ till him he maid,
 And gat him be the nek but baid,
 And stekit¹⁶ him upward vith ane knyff,
 Quhill in his hand he left the liff.¹⁷
 20 And quhen he ded sa saw him ly,
 Upon the wall he went in hy,
 And doune the body kest thame till,
 And said · ' All gangis¹⁸ as we will;
 Speid¹⁹ xow upward deliverly.'
 25 And thai did swa in full gret hy
 Bot, or thai wan²⁰ up, thar com ane,
 And saw Ledows stand him allane,
 And knew he wes nocht of thar men.
 In hy he ruscht till hym then,
 30 And hym assalxert sturdely,
 Bot he hym slew deliverly,

¹ quickly² noise³ clicket, holdfast⁴ watches, guards⁵ hastened⁶ without delay⁷ hastened⁸ that⁹ watch¹⁰ because¹¹ throw¹² shot, dashed¹³ nimbly¹⁴ to die¹⁵ leap, dash¹⁶ stabbed¹⁷ life¹⁸ goes¹⁹ hasten²⁰ succeeded in getting

For he wes armyt and wes vycht.
 The tothir nakyt ¹ wes, I hicht, ²
 And had nocht for till stynt no strak. ³
 Sic melle ⁴ tharup ⁵ can he mak,
 Quhill Douglas and his menghe ⁶ all 5
 War wonnyn up apon the wall
 Than in the tour thai vent in hy.
 'The folk that tym wes halely ⁷
 Into ⁸ the hall at thair dansyng,
 Synging, and othir wayis playing, 10
 As apon fastryng evyn is
 The custom, to mak joy and blis,
 To folk that ar into savite ⁹ ;
 Swa trowit thai that tym to be
 Bot, or thai wist, rycht in the hall 15
 Douglas and his men cummyn var all,
 And cryit on hicht ¹⁰ . ' Douglas ! Douglas ! '
 And thai, that ma ¹¹ war than he was,
 Herd 'Dowglas ! ' cryit rycht hydwisly, ¹²
 Thai war abasit ¹³ for the cry, 20
 And schupe ¹⁴ richt na defens to ma. ¹⁵
 And thai but ¹⁶ pite can thame sla,
 Till thai had gottyn the ovir ¹⁷ hand.

¹ unarmed² assure you³ to oppose a blow (stop a stroke)⁴ such combat⁵ up there⁶ host⁷ all of them⁸ in⁹ in safety¹⁰ aloud¹¹ more¹² horribly¹³ dismayed¹⁴ attempted¹⁵ make¹⁶ without¹⁷ upper

THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN (A.D. 1314)

The closing incident of this selection may be compared with Scott's adaptation of it in *The Lord of the Isles* 6 31-2. The story of the campaign, with a survey of the related events and conditions, has been told by W. M. Mackenzie, *The Battle of Bannockburn: A Study in Medieval Warfare* (Glasgow, 1913).

The battale than so felloun¹ was,
 And sua richt gret spilling of blud,
 That on the erd the flus² it stod
 The Scottis men so weill thame bar,
 5 And sua gret slauchtir maid thai thar,
 And fra so feill³ the livis revit,⁴
 That all the feild wes bludy levit⁵
 That tym thir thre battalis⁶ wer
 All syde be syde fechtand⁷ weill neir,
 10 Thar mycht man her⁸ richt mony dynt,
 And vapnys⁹ apon armour stynt,¹⁰
 And se tummyll¹¹ knychtis and stedis,
 With mony rich and cyoll¹² wedis¹³
 Defoult roydly¹⁴ under feit
 15 Sum held on loft,¹⁵ sum tynt¹⁶ the suet¹⁷
 A long quhill thus fechtand thai wer,
 That men no noyis na cry mycht her,
 Men herd nocht ellis bot granys¹⁸ and dyntis,
 That slew¹⁹ hie, as men dois²⁰ on flyntis;
 20 Sa²¹ faucht thai ilkane egirly
 That thai maid nouthir noyis no cry,
 Bot dang²² on othir at thar mycht,
 With wapnys that war burnyst brycht
 The arrowis als so thik thai flaw

¹ cruel² pool³ many⁴ took away⁵ left⁶ these three battalions⁷ being fought⁸ hear⁹ weapons¹⁰ clash, smite¹¹ tumble, fall¹² royal¹³ garments¹⁴ rudely¹⁵ aloft¹⁶ lost¹⁷ life-blood (sweat)¹⁸ groans¹⁹ struck²⁰ do²¹ so²² struck

That thai mycht say weill, at ¹ thaim saw,
 That thai ane hydwis schour ² can ma ,
 For quhar thai fell, I wndirta, ³
 Thai left eftir thame taknyng, ⁴
 That sall neid, as I trow, lechyng, ⁵ 5
 The Ynglis archeris schot so fast
 That, mycht thar schot haf had last, ⁶
 It had beyne hard to Scottis men. . . .
 For quhen the Scottis ynkirly ⁷
 Saw thair fais sa sturdely 10
 Stand into ⁸ battale thame agane,
 With all thar mycht and all thar mayne
 Thai layd on, as men out of wit ,
 For quhar thai with full strak ⁹ mycht hit,
 Thair mycht no armyng ¹⁰ stynt thar strak , 15
 Thai tofruscht ¹¹ thame thai mycht ourtak, ¹²
 And with axis sic duschis ¹³ gaff
 That thai helmys and hedis claff.
 And thair fais richt hardely
 Met thame, and dang ¹⁴ on doughtely ¹⁵ 20
 With wapnys that war stith ¹⁶ of steill.
 Thar wes the battell strikyn ¹⁷ weill ,
 So gret dynnyng ther wes of dyntis,
 As wapnys apon armor styntis,
 And of speris so gret bristing, ¹⁸ 25
 With sic thrawing ¹⁹ and sic thristing, ²⁰
 Sic gyrnyng, ²¹ granyng, ²² and so gret
 A noyis, as thai can othir bet, ²³
 And cryit ensengeis ²⁴ on everilk syd,
 Gifand and takand woundis wyd, 30

¹ that² shower³ assert⁴ token⁵ healing⁶ lasted⁷ in particular, for their part⁸ in⁹ stroke¹⁰ armor¹¹ crushed¹² overtake¹³ severe blows¹⁴ struck¹⁵ valiantly¹⁶ strong¹⁷ engaged¹⁸ breaking, bursting¹⁹ throwing²⁰ thrusting²¹ grinning²² groaning²³ beat²⁴ war-cries

That it wes hydwiss for till her
 All four the battelis,¹ wicht that wer,
 Fechtand untill a front haly.²
 Almychty God! full douchtely
 5 Schir Edward the Brys and his men
 Among thair fais³ contenynt thame⁴ then. . .

For all the Scottis men that war thar,
 Quhen thair saw thame⁵ eschew the ficht,
 Dang on thame swa with all thar mycht
 10 That thair scaht⁶ in tropellis⁷ ser,⁸
 And till discumfitur war ner,
 And sum of thame fled all planly.⁹
 Bot thair that wicht war and hardy,
 That schame letit¹⁰ till ta¹¹ the flicht,
 15 At gret myschef mantenynt¹² the ficht,
 And stithly in the stour¹³ can stand.
 And quhen the king of England
 Saw his men fle in syndry¹⁴ place,
 And saw his fais rout,¹⁵ that was
 20 Worthyn¹⁶ so wicht and so hardy,
 That all his folk war halely¹⁷
 Swa stonayit¹⁸ that thair had no mycht
 To stynt¹⁹ thair fais in the ficht,
 He was abasit²⁰ so gretumly²¹
 25 That he and all his cumpany,
 Fif hundreth armyt weil at rycht,
 Intill a frusche²² all tuk the flycht,
 And till the castell held ther way.
 And zeit, as I herd sum men say,
 30 That of Wallanch Schir Amer,²³

¹ battalions² abreast, all in one rank (?)³ foes⁴ demeaned themselves⁵ the English⁶ dispersed⁷ small companies⁸ separate⁹ openly¹⁰ prevented¹¹ from taking¹² maintained¹³ combat, battle¹⁴ sundry¹⁵ host¹⁶ become¹⁷ entirely¹⁸ astonished, dismayed¹⁹ stop, check²⁰ cast down, discouraged²¹ greatly, extremely²² rush, sudden breaking of ranks²³ Sir Aymer de Valence

Quhen he the feld saw vencust¹ ner,
 By the renge² led away the king,
 Agane his will, fra the fichtung
 And quhen Schir Gelis de Argente³
 Saw the king thus, and his menze, 5
 Schape thame⁴ to fle so spedely,
 He com richt to the kyng in hy,
 And said 'Schir, sen that it is swa
 That ze thusgat⁵ your gat⁶ will ga,
 Haffis⁷ gud day¹ for agane⁸ will I,
 10 ~~Th~~eit fled I nevir sekirly,
 And I cheis heir to byde and de,
 'Than til lif heir and schamfully fle'
 His brydill than but mair abaid⁹
 He turnyt, and agane he raid, 15
 And on Schir Eduard the Brysis¹⁰ rout
 'That wes so sturdy and so stout,
 As dield of na kyn thing¹¹ had he,
 He prikit,¹² cryand 'Argente'¹
 And tha with speris swa him met, 20
 And swa feill speris on hym set,
 That he and hors war chargit¹³ swa
 'That bath doune to the erd can ga,
 And in that place than slayne wes he
 Of his ded wes rycht gret pite, 25
 He wes the thrid best knyght, perfay,
 'That men wist liffand in his day,
 He did mony a fair journe¹⁴

¹ vanquished² rein³ Gile de Argentine⁴ prepare themselves⁵ thus⁶ way⁷ have⁸ (turn) back again⁹ without more delay¹⁰ Bruce's¹¹ no sort of thing¹² rode hard¹³ pressed hard¹⁴ day's fighting

26. thrid the other two named by Lord Hailes (*Ann. Scot.* 2 48) are the Emperor Henry of Luxembourg and Robert Bruce

STORIES OF TRAVEL

SIR JOHN MANDEVILLE

The work which passes under the name of Sir John Mandeville was probably the production of a certain Jean de Bourgogne, called the Bearded, who died at Liège on November 17, 1372. According to the chronicle composed by Jean d'Outremeuse (1338-1399), this Jean de Bourgogne styled himself in his will Jean de Mandeville, and revealed on his deathbed to the chronicler that, having had the misfortune to kill an earl in his own country, England, he had bound himself to traverse three parts of the world. His tomb was to be seen at Liège till 1798, with an inscription which ran (*Dict Nat Biog* 36 26) 'Hic jacet vir nobilis Dom Joannes de Mandeville, alias dictus ad Barbam, Miles, Dominus de Campdi, natus de Anglia, medicinæ professor, devotissimus orator, et bonorum suorum largissimus pauperibus erogator, qui, toto quasi orbe lustrato, Leodii diem vitæ suæ clausit extremum, A D MCCCCLXXII, mensis Nov die XVII.'

Whatever traveling Mandeville (or Bourgogne) may have done, almost his whole work is a tissue of borrowings and adaptations from such writings as William of Boldensele's *Itinerary* (published 1336), Odoric of Pordenone's *Itinerary* (1330), Hetoun the Armenian's *History of the Orient* (1307), the so-called *Epistle of Prester John*, etc. The work was first written in French, and afterwards translated into English, Latin, and a variety of other languages.

Dr Warner says (*Dict Nat Biog* 36 28) 'Avowedly written for the unlearned, and combining interest of matter and a quaint simplicity of style, the book hit the popular taste. No mediæval work was more widely diffused in the vernacular.' Some three hundred manuscripts are said to be in existence. There are three English versions, of which two, both contained in manuscripts of 1410-1420, are superior to the other. One of these (in Cotton MS Titus 6 16) is the text generally found in print, the other, in Northern dialect (in Egerton MS 1982), was published by G. F. Warner in 1889, with an excellent introduction and notes, and is that from which our extracts are taken. For fuller accounts see *Encyc Brit* and *Dict Nat Biog* s.v., *Camb Hist Eng Lit* 2 90-100.

THE REBIRTH OF THE PHENIX

Text, p. 25. In order to show the relation of the English translation to the original, a passage of the French text printed by Dr Warner is here reproduced, but it must be understood that this undoubtedly differs from the precise text on which the present English version is based.

En Egipte est la cite de Eliopole, cest a dire la cite de solail. En celle y ad une temple fait reonde, a la guise de temple de Jerusalem. Luy prestres de ceo temple ad

par escript la date del oysel qad a noun Fenix, q' nest qe un soul en monde, et se vient la arder sur l'aulter de ceo temple au chief de vi^{ans}, qar tant vit il. I y preistres appareille et met sur cel aulter especes, et soufre vif, et autres choses q' legerement enflament, si qe ly oysel se vient ardoir tot en cendres. Et le primer iour apres lem troeve as cendres un verm, et le secund iour lem trove loisel tot parfait, et le tiercz iour il sen vole. Et ensi n'ad tot dys qe un oysel soul de celle nature, et vrayment ceo est grant miracle de Dieu. Et puet homme comparer cel oysel a Dieu, en ceo qe n'ad Dieu fors qe un soul, et en ceo qe nostre Seignur resuscita le tiercz iour. Cest oysel veit homme souent voler en celles parties. Et nest gairs plus grant dun aigle, et il ad un crest sur la teste plus grant qe un pauon, et ad col tout jaune de la colour dun oriel bien lusant, et le dos de ynde, et les aeles de purple colour, et la cove reget de travers de jaune et de rouge. Et est tres belle a veoir au solail, qar il treshuyt mult noblement.

In Egipte also es a citee pat es called Eliople,¹ pat es als mykill at say² as pe citee of pe sonne. In pis citee es a temple, round in pe maner of pe temple of Jerusalem. Pe preste of pe temple has writen in a buke pe date of a fewle³ pat men calles Fenix, and per es bot ane in all pe world. And pis fewle liffes fyve hundreth zere, and at pe fyve hundreth zere⁴ end he commes to pe forsaid temple, and apon pe awter he brynnes himself all to powder. And pe preste of pe temple, pat knawes by his buke pe tyme of his commyng, makes pe awter redy, and lays perapon diverse spiceris⁵ and sulphure vive,⁶ and stikkes of pe junipre tree, and oþer thinges pat will sone brynne. 10 And þan the fewle commes, and lightes apon pe awter, and fanner with his wenges ay till pe forsaid thinges be sett on fire, and þare he brynnes himself all till asches. On pe morue⁷ þai fynd in pe asches as it ware a worme, on pe secund day pat worme es turned till a fewle perfetely fourmed, and on pe thridd day it flies fra þat place to pe 15 place whare it was wont to dwell. And so per es nevermare bot ane. Pis ilke fewle betakens oure Lord Jesu Criste, in als mykill as per es bot a⁸ Godd, pat rase on pe thridd day fra deed to lyfe. Pis forsaid fewle es oft tymes sene ayrand⁹ aboute, when pe weder es fair and clere, and þai say þare þat when þai see þat fewle soie in pe aer, 20 þai sall afterward hafe gude zeres and myry, for þai say it es a fewle of heven. And pis fewle es na mare þan ane egle of body. He has on his heved a creste as a pacok, bot it es mykill mare þan pe creste

¹ Heliopolis, a short distance from Cairo

² as much as to say

³ bird

⁴ year's

⁵ spicy substances

⁶ sulphur vivum, horse brimstone

⁷ morrow

⁸ one

⁹ moving in the air

of a pacok. His nekke es galow, and his back es ynde¹ colour; his wenges er reed, and his taile es barred overthwert² with grene and galowe and reed. And in þe sonne he semes wonder faire, for þir³ er þe colours þat er fairest schewand⁴

THE PARADISE OF THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

Text, pp 137-8 Almost any encyclopædia, and the larger dictionaries under the word 'Assassin,' will give some information on the matter of this section The Assassins were so called because they were intoxicated with hashish (see the 'maner of drinke' below) Mandeville draws from Odoric (Yule, *Cathay* 1 153-5) or Marco Polo (Book 1, chap 22), see Yule's notes to both The 'old man,' or sheikh, derived his title from the mountainous region south of the Caspian which was under his sway In particular, he had a mountain castle at Alamūt in the Elburz range, some ninety miles northwest of Teheran, and just south of a line joining Teheran and Rasht The rise of this power may be assigned to 1090, or thereabouts, and the destruction of the castles where the sheikhs held sway to about 1256

- 5 Besyde þe ile of Pentoxore, þe whilk es Prestre Johnez, es anoþer ile bathe lang and brade, þe whilk es called Mulstorak⁵, and it es under þe lordschepe of Prestre John In þis ile es grete plentee of all maner of gudes and richess And in þat land was sum tyme a riche man þat was called Catolonabes, and he was a grete man and a won-
 10 der wylly And he had a faire castell and a strang, standand upon a hill, and he gert⁶ make aboute it strang wallez and hie And within þase wallez he gert make a faire gardyn, and plant þerin all maner of trecz berand diverse fruytz He gert plant þerin also all maner of erbez of gude smell, and þat bare faire floures Þare were also in þat
 15 gardyne many faire welles, and besyde þaim were many faire halles and chaumbres, paynted with gold and azure wele and curiously with diverse storys, and with diverse maners of bildes, þe whilk semed, as þai sang and turned by engyne,⁷ as þai had bene all quikke⁸ He putte also in þat gardyne all maner of fewles þat he myght get, and
 20 all maner of bestez þat he myght fynd, to make a man solace and disporte And he putte also into þat gardyne faire damysellz within þe

¹ blue (indigo)

² crosswise

³ these

⁴ showing (i.e. to look upon)

⁵ Melazgerd, in Armenia, north of Lake Van

⁶ caused to

⁷ mechanism

⁸ alive

elde¹ of xv gere, þe fairest þat he mygt fynd, and knafe² childre of þe same elde; and þai ware all cledd in clathes of gold. And þase, he said, ware aungelles. Also he gert make in þe forsaid gardyn three faire welles of precious stanes, closed aboute with jasper and cristall, wele bunden with gold and oþer precious stanes. And he gert make 5 cundytes³ under þe erthe, so þat, when he wald, ane of þir⁴ wellez ran of wyne, anoper of mylke, anoper of hony, thurgh þir forsaid cundytes. And þis place called he Paradys. And, when any zung bachelere of þe cuntree come to him, he ledd him into þis Paradys and schewed him all þise forsaid thingez. And he had diverse myn- 10 stralles prively in hye toure þat þai myght noȝt be sene, playand on diverse instrumentez of music. And he said þat þai ware Goddes aungelles, and þat þat was Paradys þat Godd graunted to þase þat he lufes, sayand on þis wyse. *Dabo vobis terram fluentem lac et mel*,⁵ þat es to say, 'I sall giffe to ȝow land flowande mylke and hony' 15 And þan þis ryche man gafe to þise men a maner of drinke, of whilke þai ware drunken allsone⁶, and þan þai ware mare blinded þan þai ware before, and wend þai had bene in full blisse. And he said þam þat, if þai wald putte þam in juperdy of deed⁷ for his sake, when þai ware deed þai schuld com into his Paradys, and þai schuld ever- 20 mare be of þe elde of þe forsaid damyselles, and þai schuld evermare dwll with þam, and have lyking⁸ and dalyaunce of þam, and evermare be maydens, and after a certayne tyme he schuld putte þam in a fairer Paradys, where þai schuld see Godd in his majestee, and in his blisse and joy. And þan þai graunted at⁹ do all þat he wald 25 bidd þam do. And þan he bad þam ga to swilk a place, and sla¹⁰ swilke a lorde or man of þe cuntree, whilk was his enmy, and þat þai schuld hafe na diede, for, if þai waic deed, þai schuld be putte into þat Paradys. And þus gert he sla many lordes of þe cuntree, and also many of þise men ware slaen, in hope to hafe þis Paradys þat he hight¹¹ þam. And þus he venged him on his enmys thurgh þis des- 30 sayte¹². And when lordes and riche men of þe cuntree persayved þis malice and wyle of him, þis Catolonabes, þai gadred þam togyder and

¹ age² boy³ conduits⁴ these⁵ Cf. I ev. 20. 24⁶ at once⁷ death⁸ pleasure⁹ to¹⁰ slay¹¹ promised¹² deceit

assaied þis castell, and slew Catolonabes, and destruyd all his ricchess and faire thinges þat ware in his Paradys, and kest doune his castell; and ȝit er þe welles þare, and sum other thinges, bot na ricchess. It es noȝt lang sen it was destruyd.

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

Text, p 84 Mandeville is here indebted to the so-called *Letter of Prester John*, extant before 1177. The Latin runs (Zarncke, *Der Priester Johannes*, in *Abh. Phil.-Hist. Classe der Königl.-Sächs. Ges. der Wiss.*, Vol 7, Leipzig, 1879, pp 912-3) 'Quod nemus situm est ad radicem montis Olympi, unde fons perspicuus oritur, omnium in se specierum saporem retinens. Variatur autem sapor per singulas horas diei et noctis, et progreditur itinere dierum trium non longe a Paradiso, unde Adam fuit expulsus. Si quis de fonte illo ter jejunos gustaverit, nullam ex illa die infirmitatem patietur, semperque erit quasi in ætate XXX duorum annorum, quamdiu vixerit.' The European notions of the Fountain of Youth all go back to this, according to E. W. Hopkins ('The Fountain of Youth,' in *Four Am. Or. Soc.* 26 (1905) 32 ff.)

- 5 At þe heved of þis ilk forest es þe citee of Polombe, and besyde þat citee es a mountayne wharoff þe citee takez þe name, for men callez þe mountayne Polombe. And at þe fote of þis mountayne es a well, noble and faire, and þe water þeroff has a swete savour and refluere,¹ as it ware of diverse maner of spicery. And ilke houre of þe
 10 day þe water chaungez diversely his savour and his smell. And wha so drinkes fastand thryes of þat well, he sall be hale of what maner of malady þat he hase. And forþi² þa³ þat wonnez⁴ nere þat well drynkez þeroff þe ofter, and þerfore þai hafe nevermare sekeness, bot evermare þai seme ȝung. I, John Maundevill, sawe þis well, and
 15 drank þeroff thrys and all my felawes, and evermare sen þat tyme I fele me þe better and þe haler, and suppose⁵ for to do till þe tyme þat Godd of his grace will make me to passe oute of þis dedly lyf. Sum men callez þat well *Fons Juventutis*, þat es for to say, þe well of ȝowthe-hede⁶, for þai þat drinkez þeroff semez allway ȝung. And þai say þis

¹ odor

² therefore

³ those

⁴ dwell

⁵ MS supposez

⁶ youth

5 Polombe. Quilon, or Quillon, not far from Cape Comorin, the southernmost point of India, on the west coast (1) *ule*, *Cathay* 12 71)

well commez fra Paradys terrestre,¹ for it es so vertuous. Thurgh-
oute all þis cuntree þer growes þe best gynger þat es ower whare²;
and marchaunds commez þider fra ferre cuntreez for to bye it.

ST. THOMAS AND INDIAN IDOLATRY

Text, pp 86-7 From Odoric, chaps 18, 19 (Yule, *Cathay* 1 80-83)

Fra þis land men gase by many diverse placez to a cuntree þat es
called Mabaron³, and it es fra þe forsaid land x day-journee. And 5
it es a grete rewme⁴ and a large, and many gude citeez and tounes
þerin. In þat land of Mabaron liez Sayne Thomas þe apostle, and his
body all hale, in a faire tounge in þe citee of Calamy⁵, for þare was
he martird and graven.⁶ Bot afterwarde þe Assirienese tuke his body,
and bare it to a citee in Mesopotamy þat es called Ediss⁷. Bot eft- 10
sones⁸ it was translated agayne to þe foresaid citee, and layd in þe
forsaid tounge, and his arme with his hand þat he putt in oure
Lordes syde after his resurreccioun, when he said, *Noli esse invidiosus,*
sed fidelis,⁹ lyez withouten in a vessell. And by that hand men of
þat cuntree giffez þaire jugementz, to wit wha has ríht. For if any 15
stryf be betwene twa parties, and ayther party affermez þat he has
ríht in his cause, þan þai ger write in a scrowe¹⁰ þe ríht of ayther party,
and puttez þase billes in þe hand of Sayne¹¹ Thomas; and als fast¹² þe
hand castez oute þe bille þat contenez þe fals cause, and þe toþer it
haldez still. And þefore men commez ofttymes oute of ferre cuntreez 20
þider, for to declare a ríhtwys cause betwene party and party, þe whilk
es in doute. Þe kirke whare Sayne Thomas lyes es mykill and faire,
and full of ymagery of þaire mawmets¹³, and þase ymagez er ilk ane
of þe stature of twa men at þe leste.

Bot þare es ane þat passez all oþer of stature, and þat es richely and 25
really¹⁴ enournd¹⁵ with gold and precious stanes all aboute, and sittes

¹ earthly

² anywhere where (redundant phrase)

³ the Coromandel coast of southern India (Yule, *Cathay* 1 80)

⁴ realm

⁵ St Thomas, a few miles south of Madras

⁶ buried

⁷ Edessa, or Urfa, in Syria

⁸ afterwards

⁹ John 20 27

¹⁰ scroll

¹¹ saint

¹² as fast as might be, very fast

¹³ false gods, idols (*lit* Mahomets)

¹⁴ royally

¹⁵ adorned

in a chaier nobelly arraied. And he has aboute his nekk as it ware
brade gyrdils¹ of silke, wele hernayst² with gold and preciouise stanes.
To þat ymage men commez fra ferre in pilgimage with grete devo-
cioun, als comounly als Cristen men commez to Sayne James.³ And
5 sum of þam, for þe grete devocioun þai hafe to þat mawmet, ay as þai
ga, er lukand douneward to þe erthe, and will noȝt luke aboute þam,
for þai schuld see nathing þat schuld lette þaire devocioun. Þare
commez sum also þider in pilgimage þat beres scharpe knyfes in þaire
handes, with whilk, ay as þai ga by þe way, þai wound þamself in þe
10 legges and þe armes, and in oþer placez of þaire body, þat þe blude
rynnez doune fra þer woundes in grete fuyssoun.⁴ And þis þai do for
lufe of þat ydole, and saue þat he es full blissed þat will dye for þe
lufe of his mawmet. And sum of þam bringez with þam þaire childer,
and slaez þam and makes sacrifice of þam to þaire mawmet; and þai
15 take þe blude of þaire childer, and sprenklez it apon þe ymage. Sum,
also, fra⁵ þai passe oute of þer housez til þai comme before þaire maw-
met, at ilke a thridd passe kneis doune apon þe erthe with grete de-
vocioun. And þai bring with þam incense and oþer thinges swete
smelland, for to tunify⁶ þat ymage, as we do here to Goddes body
20 And þare es before þat ymage, as it ware, a poonde⁷ or a vyver,⁸ full
of water, and into þat pilgrimes castez gold and silver and precious
stones withouten noumer, insteed of offerand. And forþi þe mynis-
ters þat kepez þat ilk mawmet, when þai hafe mister⁹ of any monee
for reparailynȝ of þaire kirk, or for any oþer thing þat fallez to þat
25 ilke mawmet, þai ga to þat ilke poonde, and takez oute þeroff als
mykill as þam nedeȝ. And ȝe schall understand þat, when grete festez
commez of þat mawmet, as þe dedicacioun of þe kirk or þe tronyng¹⁰
of þat mawmet, all þe cuntree assemblez þider, and þai sett þis maw-
met with grete wirschepe in a chariot, wele arraied with clathez of gold
30 and of silke, and ledez him with grete sollempnitee aboute þe citee.
And before þe chariot gase first in processioun all þe maydens of þe
cuntree, twa and twa toȝyder, and þan all þe pilgrymmes þat commez
þider fra ferre cuntreez, of whilke sum for þe grete devocioun þai

¹ a broad girdle² ornamented³ Saint James of Compostella⁴ abundance, profusion⁵ from the time when⁶ incense⁷ pond⁸ aquarium (*vivarium*)⁹ need¹⁰ throning

hafe to þat mawmet fallez doune before þe chariot, and latez it gang
 over þam. And so er sum of þam slayne, sum þaire armes and sum
 þaire schankes broken, and þai trowe þat, þe mare payne þai suffer
 here for lufe of þaire mawmet, þe mare joy in þe toper werld sall þai
 hafe, and þe nerre þaire godd sall þai be. And sikerly þai suffer so 5
 mykill payne and martirdom apon þaire bodys for þe lufe of þat ilke
 mawmet, þat unnethes¹ will any Cristen man suffer half so mykill,
 ne þe tende² parte, for þe lufe of oure Lorde Jesu Criste.

THE SULTAN OF EGYPT

Text, pp 20-1

þe sowdan³ has three wyfes, of þe whilke anc sall be a Cristen
 womman, and þe oper twa Sarezenes. And anc of þur wytes sall dwell 10
 in Jerusalem, anoper at Damasc, and þe thudd at Ascalon.⁴ And, ay
 when him list, he gase to visit þam, and umqwhyle⁵ ledes þam aboute
 with him. Noght forþ⁶ he has lemmanes, als many as him list have,
 for, when he comes till any citee or toun, he gers bing before him
 all þe nobilest and þe fairest maydens of þe cuntree nere aboute, and 15
 he gers þam be keped honestly and wirschipfully. And, when he will
 hafe any of þam, he gers þam all be broght before him, and wha so
 es maste lykand till him, he sendes till hir or takes þe ryng off his
 fynger, and castez till hir. And þan sall scho be tane,⁷ and waschen
 and bawmed⁸ and wirschipfully cledd, and after souper he broght till 20
 his chaumbre. And þus he duse ay when he will. Before þe sowdan
 sall na straunger com þat he ne sall be cledd in clathe of gold or tars⁹
 or in chamelet,¹⁰ a maner of clething whilk þe Sarzenes usez. And als
 sone as he has sight of þe sowdan, be it at wyndow or elleswhere,
 him behoves knele doune and kisse þe erthe, for swilk es þe maner 25
 þare to do reverence to þe sowdan, when any man will speke with
 him. And when any straungers commes till him in message¹¹ oute of
 ferre landes, his men sall stand aboute him with drawen swerdes in
 handes, and þer handes up on loft,¹² to stryke þam doun, if þai speke

¹ scarcely, with difficulty² tenth³ sultan⁴ West of Jerusalem, on the coast⁵ from time to time⁶ none the less⁷ taken⁸ anointed⁹ a rich Oriental stuff¹⁰ damasked silk¹¹ on an embassy¹² aloft

any thing þat displesez þe sowdan. þare sall na straunger com before him for to ask him any thing þat ne his asked sall be graunted him, if it be resounable and noxt agayne þaire lawe. And ríxt so duse all oþer princez and lordes in þat cuntree, for þai say þat na man suld
5 com before a prince þat he ne schuld passe gladder away þan he come þiderward.

THE EARTH IS ROUND

Text, pp 90-2

And ȝe schall understand þat in þis land, and in many oþer þare-
aboute, men may noxt see þe sterne¹ þat es called *Polus Articus*,
whilk suandes even north and stirrez never, by whilk schippemen er
10 ledd, for it es noxt sene in þe south. Bot þer es an oþer sterne, wilke
es called antartic, and þat es even agayne² þe toþer sterne, and by
þat sterne er schippemen ledd þare, as schippemen er ledd here by
Polus Articus. And, ríxt as þat sterne may noxt be sene here, on þe
same wyse þis sterne may noxt be sene þare. And þareby may men
15 see wele þat þe world es all rounde, for parties³ of þe firmament
whilk may be sene in sum cuntree may noxt be sene in an oþer. And
þat may men prove þus. For, if a man myght fynd redy schipping
and gude company, and þerto had his hele,⁴ and wald ga to see þe
world, he myght ga all aboute þe world, bathe aboven and benethe
20 And þat prufe I þus, after⁵ þat I hafe sene. For I hafe bene in
Braban,⁶ and sene by þe astrolaby⁷ þat þe pole artyc es þare lui de-
grees hegh, and in Almayne⁸ towards Boem⁹ it has lviij degrez, and
forþermare¹⁰ toward þe north it has lxii degrez of height and sum
mynutes. All þis I persayved by þe astrolaby. And ȝe schall under-
25 stand þat in þe south, even yñentes¹¹ þis sterne, es þe sterne þat es
called pole antartic. Þise twa sternes stirrez never mare, and aboute
þaim movez þe firmament, as a qwhele¹² duse aboute ane axeltree.
And so þe lyne þat es betwene þise twa sternes departez¹³ all þe firma-
ment in twa partes, ayther ylike mykill.¹⁴ Afterwardes I went toward

¹ star² exactly opposite to³ parts⁴ health⁵ according to⁶ Brabant⁷ astrolabe⁸ Germany⁹ Bohemia¹⁰ further¹¹ exactly opposite¹² wheel¹³ separates¹⁴ much alike

þe south, and I fand þat in Liby¹ seez men first þe sterne antartyke, and, as I went ferrer, I fand þat in hie Liby it hase in height xviii degreez and sum mynutes, of whilke mynutes lx makez a degre And so, passand by land and by see toward þe cuntree þat I spakk off are,² and oþer landes and iles þat er beþond, I fand þat þis sterne 5 antartik had in height xxxiii degreez And, if I had had cumpany and schipping þat wald hafe gane ferrer, I trow forsothe þat we schuld hafe sene all þe roundeness of þe firmament, þat es to say bathe þe emisperies,³ þe uppermare and þe nedermare.⁴ For, as I sayd ȝow before, halfe þe firmament es betwene þise twa sternes, þe whilk I 10 hafe sene. . . And þerfore I say sikerly þat a man myght go all þe werld aboute, bathe aboven and bynethe, and comme agayne to his awen cuntree, so þat he had his hele, gude schipping, and gude company, as I said before And all way he schuld fynd men, landes, and iles and citeez and townes, as er in þir cuntrees. For ȝe wate wele 15 þat þase men þat dwellez even under þe pole antartyk er fote agayne fote to þase þat dwellez even under þe pole artyke, als wele as we and þase men þat dwellez agaynes us er fote agayne fote, and riȝt so it es of oþer parties of þe werld For ilke a party of þe erthe and of þe see hase his contrary of thinges, whilk er even⁵ agaynes him 20 And ȝe schall understand þat, as I conjecture, þe land of Prestre John, Emperour of Inde, es even under us For, if a man schall ga fra Scotland or Ingland unto Jerusalem, he sall ga all way upward For oure land es þe lawest⁶ party of þe west, and þe land of Prestre John es in þe lawest party of þe este. And þai hafe day when we hafe nyght, 25 and nyght when we hafe day And, als mykill as a man ascendes upward oute of oure cuntrees to Jerusalem, als mykill schall he go downward to þe land of Prestre John, and þe cause es for þe erthe and þe see er rounde For it es þe comoun worde þat Jerusalem es in myddes of þe erthe, and þat may wele be proved þus. For, and a 30 man þare take a spere and sett it even in þe erthe at midday, when þe day and þe nyght er bathe ylyke lang, it makez na schadowe till na party⁷ And David also beres witnes þeroff, þare he saise *Deus autem*

¹ Libya² before³ hemispheres⁴ nether⁵ just, exactly⁶ lowest⁷ direction

rex noster ante secula operatus est salutem in medio terre,¹ þat es to say:
 'Godd oure kyng before þe begynnnyng of þe werld wrought hele in
 myddes of þe erthe' And þerfore þai þat gase oute of oure cuntreez
 of þe west toward Jerusalem, als many journez² as þai make to ga
 5 þider upward, als many journez sall þai make to ga in to þe land of
 Prestre John downward fra Jerusalem And so he may ga into þase
 iles envirounand all þe roundness of þe erthe and of þe see, till he
 com even under us And þerfore I hafe ofttymes thoght on a tale þat
 I herd, when I was ȝung, how a worthy man of oure cuntree went
 10 on a tyme for to see þe werld, and he passed Inde³ and many iles
 byȝonde Inde, where er ma þan v^m⁴ iles, and he went so lang by land
 and by see, envirounand þe werld, þat he fand ane ile where he herd
 men speke his awen langage. For he herd ane⁵ dryfe bestez, sayand
 to þam swilke wordes as he herd men say til oxen in his awen cun-
 15 tree gangand at þe plugh, of whilk he had grete mervaile, for he wist
 noȝt how it myght be Bot I suppose he had so lang went⁶ on land
 and on see, envirounand þe werld, þat he was comen in to his awen
 marchez⁷, and, if he had passed forþermare, he schuld hafe comen
 even to his awen cuntree Bot for he herd þat mervaile, and myght
 20 get schipping na ferrere, he turned agayne as he come, and so he
 had a grete travaile And it befell efterward þat he went into Nor-
 way, and a tempest of wynd in þe see drafe him, so þat he arryved
 in ane ile. And, when he was þare, he wist wele it was þe ile in whilk
 he had bene before and herd his awen speche, as men drafe bestez.
 25 And þat myght wele be, þof all⁸ it be þat symple men of cunning
 trowe noȝt þat men may ga under þe erthe bot-if⁹ þai fall unto þe
 firmament For as us think¹⁰ þat þase men er under us, so think þam
 þat we er under þam

¹ Ps 74 12² day's journeys³ India⁴ five thousand⁵ one, a man⁶ traveled⁷ borders⁸ even though⁹ unless¹⁰ it seems to us

THE TERRESTRIAL PARADISE

Text, pp 149-50 To afford an opportunity of comparison with the current Southern text, the beginning of this section is here transcribed from Halliwell's reprint (London, 1839, p 303), with changes in capitalization 'And begonde the lond and the yles and the desertes of Prestre Johnes lordschipe, in govng streyght toward the est, men fynde nothing but mountaynes and roches tulle grete and there is the derke regyoun, where no man may see, nouthur be day ne be nyght, as thei of the contree seyn And that desert and that place of derknesse duren fro this cost unto Paradys Terrestre, where that Aaam, oure foremost fader, and Eve weren putt, that dwelleden there but lytylle while; and that is towards the est, at the begynnynge of the erthe'

For the subject in general, see Coli, *Il Paradiso Terrestre* Dantesco, Florence, 1897

Begond pir ilez þat I hafe talde ȝow off, and þe desertez of þe lordschep of Prestre John, to ga even ¹ est, es na land inhabited, as I said before, bot wastez and wildernessez, and grete rochez and mountaynes, and a myrk ² land, whare na man may see, nyght ne day, as men of þas cuntreez talde us And þat mirk land and þase desertez ⁵ laste riȝt to Paradyse terrestre, wharein Adam and Eue ware putte, bot þai ware þare bot a lytill while And þat place es toward þe este, at þe begynnynge of þe erthe Bot þat es noȝt oure este, whare þe sonne risez till us, for when þe sonne risez in þase cuntreez, þan es it midnyght in our cuntree, because of þe roundness of þe erthe For, as I ¹⁰ said before, Godd made þe erthe all rounde, in myddez of þe firmament Bot þe hillez and þe valays þat er now on þe erthe er noȝt bot of Noe flude, thurgh þe whilk þe tendre erthe was remowed fra his place, and þare become a valay, and þe hard erthe habade ³ still, and þare er now hilles. 15

Off Paradyse can I noȝt speke properly, for I hafe noȝt bene þare; and þat forthinker ⁴ me Bot als mykill as I hafe herd of wyse men, and men of credence, of þase cuntreez, I will tell ȝow Paradyse terrestre, as men saise, es þe hiest land of þe world and it es so hye þat it touchez nere to þe cercle of þe moone For it es so hye þat ²⁰ Noe ⁵ flode myght noȝt com þerto, whilk flude covered all þe erthe bot it. Paradyse es closed all aboute with a wall, bot whareoff þe wall es

¹ directly

² dark, gloomy

³ abode

⁴ that I regret

⁵ Noah's

made, can na man tell. It es all mosse-begrowen, and coverd so with mosse and with bruschez þat men may see na stane, ne noȝt elles wharoff a wall schuld be made þe walle of Paradys strechez fra þe south toward þe north and þer es nane entree open into it, because
 5 of fire evermare brynnand, þe whilk es called þe flawmand swerde¹ þat Godd ordaynd þare before þe entree, for na man schuld entre

In þe middes of Paradys es a well, out of þe whilke þer commez foure flodez,² þat rynnez thurgh diverse landez. Þir³ flodez sinkez dounc into þe erthe within Paradyse, and rynnez so under þe erthe many a
 10 myle, and afterwarde comme þai up agayne oute of þe erthe in ferre cuntreuz

SIR JOHN'S MODESTY

Text, pp 155-6

Þare er many oþer cuntreuz and oþer mervailes whilk I hafe noȝt sene, and þerfore I can noȝt speke properly of þam, and also in cuntreuz whare I hafe bene er many mervailes of whilk I speke noȝt, for it
 15 ware owere⁴ lang to tell And also I will tell na mare of mervailes þat er þare, so þat oþer men þat wendeþ þider may fynd many new thingez to speke off, whilk I hafe noȝt spoken off For many men hase grete lykyng and desyre for to here new thinges, and þerfore will I now ceesse of tellyng of diverse thingez þat I sawe in þase cuntreuz, so þat
 20 þase þat covetez to visit þase cuntreuz may fynd new thinges ynewe to tell off, for solace and recreacioun of þaim þat lykez to here þam

And I, JOHN MAWNEVILL, knyght, þat went oute of my cuntree, and passed þe see, þe ȝere of oure Lord Jesu Criste MCCCXXXII, and hase passed thurgh many landes, cuntreuz, and iles, and hase bene
 25 at many wirschipfull journeez⁵ and dedez of armez with worthy men — if all⁶ I be unworþi — and now am comen to rest, as man discomfitt for age and travaile and febilness of body, þat constrayneþ me þarto, and for oþer certayne causez, I hafe compiled þis buke and writen it, as it coome to my mynde, in þe ȝere of oure Lord Jesu
 30 Criste MCCCLXVI, þat es for to say, in þe foure and thrittyde ȝere efter þat I departed oute of þis land, and tuke my way þiderward.

¹ Gen 3 24² Gen 2 10 ff.³ these⁴ too⁵ days of battie⁶ even if

And for als mykill as many men trowez noȝt bot þat at¹ þai see
 with þaire eghen, or þat þai may consayve with þaire awen kyndely²
 wittes, perfore I made my way in my commyng hamward unto Rome,
 to schew my buke till oure Haly Fader þe Pape And I tald him þe
 mervailes whilk I had sene in diverse cuntreez, so þat he, with his 5
 wyse counsaile, wald examyne it with diverse folke þat er in Rome—
 for þare er evermare dwelland men of all naciouns of þe world And
 a lytill after, when he and his wyse counsaile had examynde it all
 thurgh, he said to me for certayne þat all was soth þat was þerin.
 For he said þat he had a buke of Latyn þat conteyned all þat and 10
 mykill mare, after whilk buke the *Mappa Mundi* es made, and þat
 buke he schewed me. And perfore oure Haly Fader þe Pape hase
 ratified and confermed my buke in all poyntes.

Qwherfore I pray til all þase þat redez þis buke, or heres it redd, þat
 þai will pray for me, and I schall pray for þam And all þase þat saise 15
 for me devoutly a Pater Noster and ane Ave, þat Godd forgife me my
 synnez, he graunt þam parte of all my pilgrimage, and all oþer gude
 dedis þat I hafe done, or may do in tyme commyng unto my lyfz end.
 And I, in þat in me es, makez þam parcereres³ of me,⁴ prayand to
 Godd, of wham all grace commez, þat he fulfill with his grace all þase 20
 þat þis buke redez or heres, and save þam and kepe þam in body and
 saule, and after þis lyf bring þam to þe cuntree whare joy es, and
 endles rest, and peesse withouten end Amen

A PILGRIMAGE BY SEA TO COMPOSTELLA

The manuscript containing this poem has been ascribed to the time of
 Henry VI (1422–1471) It is here printed from Furnivall's edition of *The*
Stacions of Rome (F E T S No 25)

Men may leve alle gamys⁵
 That saylen to Seynt Jamys,⁶ 25
 Ffor many a man hit gramys,⁷
 When they begyn to sayle,

¹ that
² natural, native
³ sharers, partners

⁴ MS þam
⁵ put aside all mirth

⁶ Santiago de Compostella, in the province
 of Galicia, in northwestern Spain
⁷ distresses

Ffor when they have take the see
 At Sandwyche¹ or at Wynchylsee,²
 At Brystow,³ or where that hit bee,
 Theyr hertes begyn to fayle

5 Anone the mastyr commaundeth fast
 To hys shypmen, in alle the hast,⁴
 To dresse⁵ hem sone about the mast,
 Theyr takelyng to make,
 With 'Howe! hissa!' then they cry,
 10 'What, howe! mate, thow stondyst to⁶ ny,
 Thy felow may nat hale⁷ the⁸ by';
 Thus they begyn to crake.⁹

A boy or tweyn anone upstycn,¹⁰
 And overthwart the sayle-yerde lyen
 15 'Y how! taylia!' the remenaunt cryen,
 And pulle with alle theyr myght
 'Bestowe¹¹ the boote,¹² boteswayne, anon,
 That our pylgryms may pley theron,
 For som ar lyke to cowgh and grone
 20 Or¹³ hit be full mydnyght.'

'Hale the bowelyne¹⁴! now vete the shete! —
 Cooke, make redy anon our mete!'
 'Our pylgryms have no lust to ete,
 I pray God yeve hem rest.'
 25 'Go to the helm! what, howe! no nere¹⁵!' —
 'Steward, felow, a pot of bere!'
 'Ye shalle have, sir, with good chere,
 Anon alle of the best.'

¹ north of Dover² southwest of Dover, in Sussex³ Bristol⁴ all haste⁵ make ready⁶ too⁷ haul⁸ thee⁹ call aloud¹⁰ climb¹¹ stow¹² boat¹³ ere¹⁴ a rope made fast to the middle part of the outside of a sail¹⁵ nearer (no closer to the wind?)

'Y howe ! trussa ! hale in the brayles ¹ !
 Thow halyst nat, be God, thow fayles !' —
 'O se howe welle owre good shyp sayles !'
 And thus they say among
 'Hale in the wartake ² !' 'Hit shal be done' — 5
 'Steward, cover the boorde anone,
 And set bred and salt therone,
 And tary nat to long !'

Then cometh oone and seyth 'Be mery,
 Ye shall have a storme or a pery ³' 10
 'Holde thow thy pese ! thow canst no whery, ⁴
 'Thow medlyst wondyr sore.'
 'Thys menewhyle ⁵ the pylgryms ly,
 And have theyr bowlys fast theym by,
 And cry aftyr hote malvesy ⁶ 15
 'Thow helpe for to restore'

And som wold have a saltyd tost, ⁷
 Ffor they myght ete neyther sode ⁸ ne rost,
 A man myght sone pay for theyr cost,
 As for oo day or twayne 20
 Som layde theyr bookys on theyr kne,
 And rad ⁹ so long they myght nat se.
 'Allas, myne hede wolle cleve on thre !'
 Thus seyth another certayne

Then commeth owre owner, lyke a lorde, 25
 And sprketh many a royall worde,
 And dresseth hym to the hygh borde,
 'To see alle thyng be welle.
 Anone he calleth a carpentere,
 And byddyth hym bryng with hym hys gere, ¹⁰ 30

¹ small ropes fastened to the
 edges of sails

² (?)

³ squall

⁴ (?)

⁵ in the meantime

⁶ malmsey

⁷ toast

⁸ anything boiled

⁹ read

¹⁰ tools

To make the cabans here and there,
 With many a febylle¹ celle.

5 A sak of strawe were there ryght good,
 Ffor som must lyg² theym in theyr hood
 I had as lefe be in the wood,
 Without[e] mete or drynk
 For when that we shall go to bedde,
 The pumpe is³ nygh oure beddes hede;
 10 A man were as good be⁴ dede
 As smell therof the stynk.

¹ slightly built² lie³ MS was⁴ MS to be

RELIGIOUS AND DIDACTIC PIECES

ROLLE, THE FORM OF PERFECT LIVING

Richard Rolle, who was born near the end of the thirteenth century (the year is not known) at Thornton Dale, near Pickering in northern Yorkshire, was a hermit and mystic who wrote the first *original* [since the *Ancren Riwle* is translated] English prose after the Conquest (Jusserand, *Lit Hist Eng People* 1 218). In his early youth he was sent as a student to Oxford, but was repelled by the scholastic philosophy there dominant, and made up his mind to turn to a life of contemplation. For the next four years he lived in a solitary cell on the estate of friends who provided him with the necessities of life, and there he passed through three stages of the contemplative life — *purificatio*, *illuminatio*, and *contemplatio* proper (cf H O Taylor, *The Mediaeval Mind* 2. 362 ff.), in the last of which he had the mystic sense of the direct vision of God. After traveling about for some time, in the hope of teaching his faith, as to which he met with little encouragement and considerable opposition, he settled near the recluse Margaret Kirkby at Ainderby, near Northallerton (famous for the Battle of the Standard), also in the North Riding, where he gave assistance and instruction to her and other recluses. Later he lived and wrote at Hampole, five miles northwest of Doncaster, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where he died in 1349, and whence he has come to be known as Richard Rolle of Hampole.

Rolle was a figure apparently but little heeded by the authorities of his own time, yet one of real significance. In his emphasis on the direct relation between the individual soul and God, rather than on mere obedience to the Church, he was a forerunner of Wycliffe and Luther, and through the fervor of his mystical outpourings, he still makes a strong emotional appeal.

His works, which it is hard in some cases to distinguish from those of his imitators and translators, were sometimes written in Latin and sometimes in English, one of the best known of those in English being a long poem, *The Prick of Conscience*. His editor Horstman says of him 'His chief characteristic as a writer is originality — he is essentially a genius, everywhere he cuts out new ways, lays new foundations. Next, he is preeminently a lyric, whether he writes in prose or verse, he writes from feeling, from momentary inspiration. Besides, he is of a remarkable versatility and facility, he writes with equal ease in Latin and English, in verse and prose, and in all kinds of verse, frequently mixing prose and verse in the same work, he writes postils, commentaries, epistles, satires, polemic treatises, prayers and devotions, lyric and didactic poetry, epigrams' (2 xxxv). Our selections are from his epistle known

as *The Form of Perfect Living*, as it appears in MS Cambr Dd. V 64, where it is dedicated to the recluse Margaret For this text, and for an extended account of Richard Rolle and his place in the history of mysticism, see *Richard Rolle of Hampole*, ed C Horstman, London, 1895, in *Yorkshire Writers (Library of Early English Writers)* Our selections are from Vol 1, pp 29-30, 46-9

THE LOVE OF GOD

Amore languet þi¹ twa wordes er² wryten in þe boke of lufe,
 þat es kalled þe Sang of Lufe, or þe Sang of Sanges For he þat mykel³
 lufes, hym lyst⁴ oft syng of his luf, for joy þat he or scho hase when
 þai thynk on þat þat þai lufe, namely⁵ if þai lover be trew and lufand.
 5 And þis es þe Inglish of thies twa wordes 'I languysch for lufe.'
 Sere⁶ men in erth has sere gyftes and graces of God, bot þe special
 gift of þas þat ledes solitary lyf es for to lufe Jesu Criste þow says
 me. 'All men lufes hym þat haldes⁷ his comawndementes' Soth it
 es Bot all men þat kepes hys byddyngs kepes noght also hys cown-
 10 sayle And all þat dos his cownsell er noght also fulfylde of⁸ þe swet-
 nes of his lufe, ne feles noght þe fyre of byrnand luf of hert Forþi þe
 diversite of lufe makes þe diversite of halynes and of mede⁹ In heven,
 þe awngels þat er byrnandest in lufe er nerrest God Also men and
 women þat maste¹⁰ has of Goddes lufe, whether þai do penance or
 15 nane, þai sall be in þe heghest degre in heven, þai þat lufes hym lesse,
 in þe lawer order. If þou lufe hym mykel, mykel joy and swetnes
 and byrnyng þou feles in his lufe, þat es þi comfort and streng[t]h nyght
 and day If þi lufe be not byrnand in hym, litel es þi delyte For hym
 may na man fele in joy and swetnes, bot-if¹¹ þai be clene, and fylled
 20 with his lufe, and þartill¹² sal þou com with grete travayle in prair
 and thynkyng, havand swilk meditacions þat er al in þe lufe and in
 þe lovyng of God And when þou ert at þi mete, love ay God in þi
 thoght at ilk a¹³ morsel, and say þus in þi hert 'Loved be þou, Keyng,
 and thanked be þou, Keyng, and blyssed be þou, Keyng, Jesu all my
 25 joyng, of all þi giftes gude, þat for me spylt þi blude, and died on þe

¹ these, cf Cant 2 5² are³ much, greatly⁴ he desires⁵ especially⁶ diverse⁷ keeps⁸ filled with⁹ reward¹⁰ most¹¹ unless¹² to this condition, thereto¹³ every

rude; þou gyf me grace to syng þe sang of þi lovyng.' And thynk it
 noght anely¹ whils þou etes, bot bath before and after, ay bot when²
 þou prayes or spekes. Or if þou have other thoghtes þat þou has³
 mare swetnes in and devocion þan in þase þat I lere⁴ þe, þou may thynk
 [þam] For I hope þat God will do swilk⁵ thoghtes in þi hert als he
 es payde of,⁶ and als þou ert ordayne for. When þou prayes, loke
 noght how mykel þou says, bot how wele, þat þe lofe of þi hert be ay
 upwarde, and thy thought on þat þou sayes, als mykel als þow may. If
 þou be in prayers and meditacions al þe dav, I wate⁷ wele þat þou mor
 wax⁸ gretely in þe lufe of Jesu Cryste, and mikel fele of delyte, and 10
 within schort tyme.

THE ACTIVE AND THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

Twa lyves þar er þat Cristen men lyfes. Ane es called actyve lyfe,
 for it es in mare⁹ bodili warke. Another, contemplatyve lyfe, for it
 es in mare swetnes gastely¹⁰. Actyve lyfe es mykel owteward, and in
 mare travel¹¹ and in mare peryle, for þe temptacions þat er in þe worlde 15
 Contemplatyve lyfe es mykel inwarde, and forþi¹² it es lastandar,¹³ and
 sykerar,¹⁴ restfuller, delitable, luffyer, and mare medeful¹⁵. For it
 hase joy in Goddes lufe, and savowre in þe lyf þat lastes ay, in þis
 present tyme, if it be right ledde. And þat felyng of joy in þe lufe of
 Jesu passes al other merites in erth. For it es swa harde to com to 20
 for þe freelte of oure flesch, and þe many temptacions þat we er um-
 sett¹⁷ with, þat lettes¹⁸ us nyght and day. Al oþer thynges er lyght
 at¹⁹ com to, in regarde þarof, for þat may na man deserve, bot anely
 it es gifen of Goddes godenes, til þam þat verrayli gifes þam to
 contemplacion and til quite for Cristes luf. 25

Til men or wymen þat takes²⁰ þam til actyve lyfe, twa thynges
 falles²¹. Ane, for to ordayne þair meyne²² in drede and in þe lufe of

¹ only

² always except when

³ findest

⁴ teach

⁵ put such

⁶ satisfied with

⁷ know

⁸ must increase

⁹ more

¹⁰ spiritually

¹¹ labor, toil

¹² therefore

¹³ more lasting

¹⁴ more full of security

¹⁵ more delightful

¹⁶ full of reward

¹⁷ set about, surrounded

¹⁸ hinder

¹⁹ easy to

²⁰ betake

²¹ are appointed

²² household

God, and fynd þam þaire necessities, and þamself kepe enterely þe comandementes of God, doand¹ til þar neghbur als þai wil þat þai do til þam. Another es · þat þai do at þar power þe seven werkes of mercy, þe whilk es to fede þe hungry, to gyf þe thristi a drynk, to cleth þe naked, to herbar hym þat hase na howsyng, to viset þe seke, to comforth þam þat er in prysoun, and to grave² dede men. Al þat mai, and hase³ cost,⁴ þai may noght be qwyte⁵ with ane or twa of þir, bot þam behoves do þam al, if þai wil have þe benyson⁶ on Domesday⁷ þat Jesu sal til⁸ al gyf þat dose þam. Or els may þai drede þe malysoun⁹ þat al mon¹⁰ have þat will noght do þam, when þai had godes¹¹ to do þam wyth.

Contemplatife lyf hase twa partyes,¹² a lower and a heer. Þe lower party es meditacion of haly wrytyng, þat es Goddes wordes, and in other gude thoghtes and swete þat men hase, of þe grace of God, about
 15 þe lufe of Jesu Criste, and also in lovyng of God in psalmes and ympnes,¹³ or in prayers. Þe hegher party of contemplacion es behaldyng and ȝernyng of¹⁴ þe thynges of heven, and joy in þe Haly Gaste. Þat men hase oft, and¹⁵ if it be swa þat þai be noght prayand with þe mowth, bot anely thynkand of God, and of þe fairehede¹⁶ of aungels
 20 and haly sawles¹⁷. Þan may I say þat contemplacion es a wonderful joy of Goddes luf, þe whilk¹⁸ joy es lovyng of God, þat may noght be talde, and þat wonderful lovyng es in þe saule, and for abundance of joy and swettenes it ascendes in til þe mouth, swa þat þe hert and þe tonge acordes in ane,¹⁹ and body and sawle joyes in God lyvand²⁰.
 25 A man or woman þat es ordaynd til contemplatife lyfe, first God enspires þam to forsake þis worlde, and al þe vanite and þe covayties and þe vile luste þarof. Sythen²¹ he ledes þam by þar ane,²² and spekes til þar²³ hert, and, als þe prophete says, he gifes þam at sowke²⁴ þe swetnes of þe begynnyng of lufe, and þan he settes þam in will²⁵.

¹ doing² bury³ MS hase and mai (em H)⁴ money sufficient⁵ quit, released⁶ blessing⁷ Day of judgment⁸ to⁹ malediction¹⁰ must¹¹ goods¹² parts, phases¹³ hymns¹⁴ for¹⁵ even¹⁶ fairness, beauty¹⁷ souls¹⁸ which¹⁹ agree²⁰ living²¹ afterwards²² by themselves, alone²³ MS ȝar²⁴ to suck²⁵ makes them desire

to gyf þam haly¹ to prayers and meditacions and teres. Sithen, when þai have sufferd many temptacions, and [þe]² foule noyes³ of thoghtes þat er ydel, and of vanitees þe whilk wil comber þam þat can noght destroy þam, er passand away, he gars þam⁴ geder⁵ til þam pair hert, and fest⁶ anely in hym, and opens til þe egh⁷ of pair sawls 5 þe gates of heven, swa þat þe ilk⁸ egh lokes in til heven, and þan þe fire of lufe verrali ligges⁹ in pair hert, and byrnes þarin, and makes [it] clenc of al erthly filth; and sithen forward¹⁰ þai er contemplatife men, and ravyst¹¹ in lufe. For contemplacion es a syght, and þai se in til heven with þar gastly egh. Bot þou sal witt¹² þat na man hase 10 perfite syght of heven whils þai er lifand bodili here; bot als sone als þai dye þai er broght before God, and sese hym tace til face, and egh til egh, and wones¹³ with hym withouten ende. For hym þai soght, and hym þai covayted, and hym þai lufed, in al þar myght

Loo, Margarete, I have schortly sayde þe¹⁴ þe forme of lyvyng, and 15 how þou may com til perfection, and to lufe hym þat þou hase taken þe til. If it do þe gude, and profit til þe, thank God, and pray for me. þe grace of Jesu Criste be with þe, and kepe þe. Amen.

THE ANCREN RIWLE

The *Ancren Riwle* (*Regula Inclusarum*) was written for the guidance of three sisters of gentle blood who had given themselves up to a religious life, without having at that time become nuns. It exists in three languages—French, English, and Latin—the English having been translated from French, and the Latin from English (G. C. Macaulay, in *Mod. Lang. Rev.* 9, 63 ff.)

The author has been thus characterized: 'His doctrine may be summed up in a word—he teaches self-renunciation. But he does it in so kindly and affectionate a tone that the life he wishes his penitents to submit to does not seem too bitter; his voice is so sweet that the existence he describes seems almost sweet' (Jusserand, *Lit. Hist. Eng. People* 1, 212). His 'work betokens much learning, great knowledge of the human heart, as well as deep piet/,

¹ wholly² em II³ annoyances, troubles⁴ causes them⁵ gather, collect⁶ fix⁷ eyes⁸ same⁹ lies¹⁰ from that time on¹¹ ravished, rapt¹² know¹³ dwell¹⁴ to thee

15. **Margarete** probably Dame Margaret Kyrkby, an anchoress for whom he felt a holy affection

and a refined and gentle spirit' (Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.* i 200) Ten Brink also refers (*ibid* 2¹ 16) to 'that aroma, that tinge of poetry, which breathes throughout the language of the *Ancren Riwle*,' to which, as well as to the author's deep spirituality, the work owes its unusual appeal

Judging from its language, the *Ancren Riwle* was written in the early thirteenth century The best text is contained in a Cambridge manuscript designated by Macaulay as B (*Mod Lang Rev* 9 145) Our selections are taken from Morton's text (*The Ancren Riwle*, London, 1853), in which MS Brit Mus Cotton Nero A XIV is reproduced, the pages are 50-2, 72, 132-4, 388-90, 416-22, 422-4. The dialect is southwestern Morton's translation is published in *The King's Classics* as *The Nun's Rule*

ANCHORESSES NOT TO LOOK OUT UPON THE WORLD

Vorþu,¹ mine leove² sustren,³ þe leste þæt ȝe ever muwen luvieð
our þurles⁴; al beon heo lutle,⁵ þe parlurs⁶ lest⁷ and nerewest. Þe
cloð in ham beo⁸ twovold blac cloð; þe creoiȝ⁹ hwit, wiðinnen and
wiðuten. Þe blake cloð bitockneð þæt ȝe beoð blake and unwurðe¹⁰
5 toward¹¹ þe worlde wiðuten, þæt te soðe sunne, þæt is Jesu Crist,
haveð¹² wiðuten vorkuled¹³ ou; and so wiðuten, ase ȝe beoð, unseauliche
imaked ou¹⁴ purh gleames¹⁵ of his grace Þet hwite creoiȝ
limpeð¹⁶ to ou, vor þreo manere¹⁷ creoiȝes beoð—reade and blake
and hwite Þe reade limpeð to þeo þæt beoð, vor Godes luve, mid
10 hore¹⁸ blodshedunge irudded¹⁹ and ireaded,¹⁹ ase þe martirs weren Þe
blake creoiȝ limpeð to þeo²⁰ þæt makieð i ðe²¹ worlde hore penitence vor
lodliche²² sunnen.²³ Þe hwite creoiȝ limpeð to hwit meidenhod and
to clennessen,²⁴ þæt is muchel pine²⁵ wel vor to holden²⁶ Pine is overal²⁷
purh creoiȝ idon to understonden²⁸ Þus bitockneð hwit croiȝ þe ward²⁹

¹ wherefore

² dear

³ sisters

⁴ love your windows the
least that ye ever may

⁵ and let them all be small

⁶ those of the parlor

⁷ smallest

⁸ let it be

⁹ cross

¹⁰ of no value

¹¹ in the sight of

¹² has

¹³ discolored

¹⁴ and so has made you externally as you are, uncomely

¹⁵ rays

¹⁶ belongs, appertains

¹⁷ three kinds

¹⁸ their

¹⁹ reddened

²⁰ those

²¹ in the

²² foul, loathsome

²³ sins

²⁴ purity

²⁵ difficulty, pains

²⁶ preserve

²⁷ everywhere

²⁸ given to understand =
to be understood

²⁹ keeping

1. leste . . . luvieð properly, according to the French (*Mod Lang Rev* 9 65), 'the best that you ever can guard,' etc

of hwit chastite, þæt is muchel pine wel vor to witene¹ þe blake
 cloð also tekeðe² bitocnunge,³ deð⁴ lesse eile⁵ to þen eien, and is
 þiccuere aȝein þe wind, and wurse to þurhseon,⁶ and halt⁷ his heou⁸
 betere vor winde and for oðer hwat.⁹ Lokeð þæt te¹⁰ parlurs beon
 ever veste¹¹ on everiche halve,¹² and eke wel istekene¹³, and witeð¹⁴ þer
 our¹⁵ eien, leste þe heorte eftleo¹⁶ and wende ut, ase of David,¹⁷ and
 oure soule secl¹⁸ so sone heo is ute. Ich write muchel vor oðre, þæt
 noðing ne ctriðeð ou,¹⁹ mine leove sustren, vor nabbe ȝe²⁰ nout þene
 nome,²¹ ne ne schulen habben, þurh þe grace of Gode, of totinde²²
 ancres,²³ ne of tollinde lokunges²⁴ ne lates,²⁵ þæt summe, oðer hwules,²⁶ 12
 weilawe²⁷ unkundeliche²⁸ makieð, vor aȝein kunde²⁹ hit is, and un-
 med³⁰ sullic³¹ wunder, þæt te deade totie,³² and mid cwike worldes
 men³³ wede,³⁴ wið sunne.

'Me³⁵ leove sire,' seið sum inouh reaðe,³⁶ 'and is hit nu so overuvel³⁷
 vor te³⁸ toten utward?' Ȝe hit, leove suster, vor uvel þæt ter³⁹ kumeð 15
 of hit, is uvel over uvel⁴⁰ to everich ancre, and nomeliche⁴¹ to þe ȝunge,
 and to þen old vorður⁴² þæt heo to þe ȝunge givedeð uvel vorbisne,⁴³ and
 scheld⁴⁴ to wenien ham mide⁴⁵ Vor, ȝif ei⁴⁶ etwit⁴⁷ ham, þeonne sig-
 geð heo anon riht⁴⁸ 'Me sire, þeo deð also þeo⁴⁹ is betere þen Ich
 am, and wot betere þen Ich wot hwat heo havede to donne.' () leove 20
 ȝunge ancien, ofte a ful hawur⁵⁰ smið smeoðeð⁵¹ a ful woc⁵² knif, and
 te wise ouh⁵³ to volewen wisdom, and nout folie, and an olde ancre
 mei don wel þæt tu⁵⁴ dest uvele Auh⁵⁵ toten ut wiðuten uvel ne mei

1 guard

2 teaches

3 symbol, emblem

4 does

5 ill

6 see through

7 holds, keeps

8 hue, color

9 anything else

10 the

11 fast

12 side

13 shut

14 guard

15 your

16 fly out, escape

17 like David's

18 become sick

19 for nothing [of this] applies to you

20 ye have not

21 the name

22 peering

23 anchoresses

24 enticing looks

25 manners, gestures

26 at times

27 inconsistently

28 against nature

29 exceedingly

30 strange, MS swuc

31 should look out

32 living men of the world

33 wed

34 my

35 quickly enough

36 very evil

37 to

38 there

39 evil beyond evil

40 especially

41 because

42 example

43 a shield

44 defend themselves with

45 any one

46 reprove, chide

47 straightway

48 she does it also who

49 clever, skilful

50 forges

51 weak, poor

52 ought

53 thou

54 but

nouðer of ou; and nim nu zeme¹ hwat uvel beo icumen of totinge:
 nout on uvel ne two, auh al þe uvel and al þe wo þæt nu is, and ever
 zete was, and ever schal iwurðen²—al com of a sihðe. Þæt hit beo soð,
 lo her þe preove³ Lucifer, þurh þæt he iseih and biheold on himsulf
 5 his owene veirness, leap⁴ into prude,⁵ and bicom of⁶ engel atelich⁷
 deovel, and of Eve, ure alre⁸ moder, is iwruten on alre erest,⁹ in hire
 neowe¹⁰ inƷong¹¹ of hire eiesihðe *Vidit igitur mulier quod bonum*
esset lignum ad vescendum, et pulchrum oculis, aspectuque delectabile, et
*tulit de fructu ejus et comedit, deditque viro,*¹² þæt is 'Eve biheold o¹³
 10 þen vorbodene eppel, and iseih hine¹⁴ veir, and veng¹⁵ to dehten i þe
 biholdunge, and turnde hire lust þer toward, and nom¹⁶ and et þerof,
 and Ʒef hire loverd' Lo hu Hol Writ spekeð, and hu inwardliche¹⁷
 hit telleð hu sunegunge¹⁸ bigon þus eode¹⁹ sihðe bivoren, and makede
 wei to²⁰ uvel lust, and com þe deað þerefter, þæt al monkun iveleð²¹
 15 þes eppel, leove sustren, bitocneð alle þe þing þæt lust falleð²² to, and
 delit of sunne. Hwon þu biholdest te mon, þu ert in Eve point²³.
 þu lokest o þen eppel.

THE BEAUTY OF SILENCE

Seneca seide. *Ad summam [volo] vos esse rariloquos, tuncque pauci-*
*loquos*²⁴ Þæt is þe ende of þe tale, seið Seneke the wise 'Ichulle²⁵
 20 þæt Ʒe speken selde, and þeonne buten lutel.' Auh moni punt²⁶ hire
 word vor te leten mo ut, as me deð water et ter mulne cluse²⁷, and
 so duden Jobes freond²⁸ þæt weren icumen to vrovren²⁹ him seten³⁰
 stille alle seoveniht³¹ Auh þeo³² [heo] hefden alles bigunne vor to
 spekene, þeone kuðen heo nevere astunten³³ hore cleppe³⁴ Greg.

¹ take thou heed² come to pass³ proof⁴ leaped⁵ pride⁶ instead of⁷ hateful, foul⁸ of us all⁹ first of all¹⁰ fresh¹¹ beginning¹² Gen 3 6¹³ looked upon¹⁴ it¹⁵ began¹⁶ took¹⁷ showing the inward causes¹⁸ sinning¹⁹ went²⁰ for²¹ feeleth²² inclines²³ in Eve's case²⁴ Not found²⁵ I will, desire²⁶ shut in, restrain²⁷ at the mill-dam²⁸ friends²⁹ comfort³⁰ they sat³¹ for a full week³² when³³ they never knew how

to stop

³⁴ talking

Censura silencie nutritura est verbi, so hit is ine monie, ase Seint Gregorie seið: ' Silence is wordes fostrild.¹ ' *Juge silencium cogit celestia meditari* . ' Long silence, and wel iwust,² nedeð³ þe þouhtes up touward þer heovene.' Also ase ȝe muwen iseon þe water, hwon me punt hit, and stoppeð⁴ bivoren wel,⁵ so þet hit ne muwe⁶ aduneward, þeonne 5 is hit ined⁷ aȝein vor to climben upward And ȝe al þisses weis⁸ pundeð⁹ ower wordes, and forstoppeð¹⁰ ouwer þouhtes, ase ȝe wulleð þæt heo climben and hien touward heovene, and nout ne vallen aduneward, and to vleoten¹¹ ȝeond¹² te world, ase deð muchel cheafle¹³ Auh hwon ȝe nede moten¹⁴ speken a lutewiht,¹⁵ leseð up¹⁶ ower muðes 10 floodȝeten,¹⁷ ase me deð et ter¹⁸ mulne, and leted¹⁹ adun sone

THE HAPPINESS OF ANCHORESSES IS LIKE THAT OF THE BIRDS OF HEAVEN

Auh God cleopeð²⁰ þe gode ancren briddes of heovene, ase Ich er²¹ seiðe *Vulpes foveas habent, et volucres celi nidos*²² ' Voxes habbeð hore holes, and briddes of heovene hore nestes ' 'Treowe ancren beoð ariht²³ briddes of heovene þet fleoð an heih, ant sitteð singinde 15 muric²⁴ o ðe²⁵ grene bowes, þet is, þencheð²⁶ upp, and of þe blisse of heovene, þet never ne valeweð,²⁷ auh is ever grene, and sitteð o þisse grene, singinde swuðe²⁸ muric, þet is, resteð ham inne swuche pouhte, and habbeð muruhðe of heorte, ase þeo þet singeð. Brid pauh,²⁹ oðer hwule,³⁰ vor te sechen³¹ his mete³² vor þe vlesches neode, lihteð adun 20 to þer eorðe, auh þeo hwule þet³³ hit sit o þer eorðe, nis hit never siker, auh biwent³⁴ him ofte, and bilokeð³⁵ him ever ȝeorneliche³⁶ al abuten Alriht³⁷ so, þe gode ancre, ne vleo heo³⁸ never so heie, heo

¹ foster-mother, nurse

² kept

³ compels

⁴ stop, check (it)

⁵ spring

⁶ cannot (flow)

⁷ forced, compelled

⁸ in this way

⁹ do ye check (imperative)

¹⁰ restrain

¹¹ float

¹² through

¹³ idle talk

¹⁴ needs must

¹⁵ little

¹⁶ open up

¹⁷ the floodgates of your mouth

¹⁸ at the

¹⁹ let them

²⁰ calleth

²¹ before

²² Matt 8 20

²³ indeed

²⁴ merrily

²⁵ on the

²⁶ meditate

²⁷ fadeth

²⁸ very

²⁹ a bird, however

³⁰ sometimes

³¹ seek

³² food

³³ the while that, while

³⁴ turns

³⁵ looks

³⁶ carefully, cautiously

³⁷ just

³⁸ although she fly

mot lihten oðer hwules adun to þer eorðe of hire bodie, eten, drinken,
 slepen wurchen, speken, iheren (of þet neodeð to),¹ of eorðliche
 þinges. Auh þeonne, as þe brid deð, heo mot wel biseon hire,² and
 biholden hire on ilchere half,³ þet heo nouhwar ne misnime,⁴ leste
 5 heo heo ikeiht⁵ þuruh summe of þe deofles gronen,⁶ oðer ihurt
 summes weis, þe hwule þæt heo sit so lowe.

THE KINGLY WOOFER

A lefdi was⁷ þet was mid hire voan⁸ biwet al abuten, and hire lond
 al destrued, and heo al poure, wiðinnen one eorðene castle On⁹
 miht kinges lufe was, þauh,¹⁰ biturnd upon hire, so unimete¹¹ swuðe
 10 þet he wor wouhleccunge¹² sende hire his sonden,¹³ on efter oðer, and
 ofte somed monic,¹⁴ and sende hire beaubelet¹⁵ boðe veole¹⁶ and feire,
 and sukurs¹⁷ of livened,¹⁸ and help of his here hird¹⁹ to holden hire
 castel Heo underveng²⁰ al ase on unrechelcas þing,²¹ þet was so
 heid theorted þet hire lufe ne mihte he never beon þe neorre Hwat
 15 wult tu more? He com himsulf a²² last, and scheawede hire his
 feire neb,²³ ase þe²⁴ þet was of alle men veirest to biholden, and spec²⁵
 swuðe sweteliche and so murie wordes þet heo²⁶ muhten þe deade
 alicen²⁷ vrom deaðe to live, and wrouhte veole wundres, and dude
 veole meistrics²⁸ bivoren hire eihsiðe, and scheawede hire his mihten,
 20 tolde hire of his kinedome, and bead²⁹ for to makien hire cwene of
 al þet he ouhte³⁰ Al þis ne help nout Nes³¹ þis wunderlich hoker³²?
 Vor heo nes never wurðe vor te beon his schelchine.³³ Auh so, þuruh
 his debonette,³⁴ lufe hefde overkumen hine þet he seide on ende³⁵
 'Dame, þu ert iweorred,³⁶ and þine von³⁷ beoð so stronge þet tu ne

1 so far as is necessary

2 look about her

3 on every side

4 make a mistake

5 caught

6 snares

7 there was

8 foes

9 a

10 however

11 boundlessly

12 for wooing, to woo her

13 messengers

14 many together

15 jewels (baubles)

16 many

17 help, aid

18 food

19 army

20 received

21 a heedless creature

22 at

23 face, countenance

24 he

25 spoke

26 they

27 arouse

28 brave deeds

29 offered

30 owned, possessed

31 is not

32 contempt, disdain

33 slave, scullion

34 graciousness, kindness

35 finally

36 attacked, warred against

37 foes

meiht nones weis,¹ wiðuten sukurs of me, eftleorn² hore honden, þet heo ne don þe to scheomefule deað. Ich chulle,³ vor þe luve of þe, nimen þis fiht upon me, and aredden⁴ þe of ham þet secheð⁵ þine deað. Ich wot, þauh, forsoðe, þet Ich schal bitweonen⁶ ham under-
vongen⁷ deaðes wunde, and Ich hit wulle heorteliche vor to ofgon⁸ 5
þine heorte. Nu, þeonne, biseche Ich þe, vor þe luve þet Ich kuðe þe,⁹ þet tu luvie me, hure and hure¹⁰ efter þen ilke deaðe,¹¹ hwon þu noldes lives¹². Þes king dude al þus — aredde hire of alle hire von, and was himself to wundre¹³ ituked,¹⁴ and isleien on ende.¹⁵ Þuruh miracle, þauh, he aros from deaðe to live. Nere¹⁶ þeos ilke lefdi of 10
uwele kunnes kunde,¹⁷ gif heo over alle þing¹⁸ ne luve him herefter?

Þes king is Jesu Crist, Godes Sune, þet al o þisse wise¹⁹ wowude²⁰ ure soule, þet þe dcoffen heveden biþet. And he, ase noble woware, efter monie messagers and feole²¹ god deden, com vor to preoven his luve, and scheawede þuruh knihtschipe²² þet he was luve-wurde,²³ ase 15
weren sumewhule²⁴ knihtes iwuned²⁵ for to donne. He dude him me²⁶ turnement, and hefde, vor his leofmonnes²⁷ luve, his schelde me vihte,²⁸ ase kene kniht, on everiche half ipurled²⁹.

THE ANCHORESS' CAT, HER CLOTHING AND OCCUPATIONS

Ȝe, mine leove sustren, ne schulen habben no best³⁰ bute kat one.³¹ Ancre þet haveð eihte³² puncheð³³ bet³⁴ husewif, ase Marthe was, þen 20
ancre, ne none wise ne mei heo beon Marie,³⁵ mid griðfulnesse³⁶ of heorte. Vor þeonne mot³⁷ heo þenchen of þe kues³⁸ foddre, and of

¹ in no way² escape from³ will⁴ deliver⁵ seek, MS. schecheð⁶ amongst⁷ receive⁸ deserve, win⁹ show thee¹⁰ at least¹¹ MS. dead deaðe¹² in life¹³ wonderfully, grievously¹⁴ maltreated, injured¹⁵ finally¹⁶ were not¹⁷ of a perverse sort of nature¹⁸ above all things¹⁹ in this manner²⁰ wooed²¹ many²² knightly prowess²³ worthy of love, MS. -wurde²⁴ sometimes²⁵ wont²⁶ entered into²⁷ sweetheart, lady²⁸ in the fight²⁹ pierced in all parts³⁰ beast, animal³¹ except only a cat³² cattle³³ seems³⁴ better³⁵ Mary³⁶ peace³⁷ must³⁸ cow's

neordemonne huires,¹ oluhnen² þene heiward,³ warien⁴ hwon me punt hire,⁵ and gelden, þauh, þe hermes.⁶ Wat Crist,⁷ þis is lodlich þing hwon me makeð mone⁸ in tune of ancre eihte. Þauh, gif eni mot nede habben ku, loke þet heo none monne ne eile,⁹ ne ne hermie,¹⁰ 5 ne þet hire þouht ne beo nout þeron ivestned¹¹ Ancre ne ouh¹² nout to habben no þing þet drawe utward hire heorte None cheffare¹³ ne drive¹⁴ ge Ancre þet is cheapild,¹⁵ heo cheaped¹⁶ hire soule þe chepmon¹⁷ of helle Ne wite¹⁸ ge nout in oure¹⁹ huse of oðer monnes þinges, ne eihte, ne cloðes, ne nout ne undervo²⁰ ge þe chirche vesti 10 menz, ne þene caliz,²¹ bute-ȝif²² strence hit makie,²³ oðer muchel eie,²⁴ vor of swuche witunge²⁵ is ikumen muchel uel oftestiden²⁶ Wiðinnen ower woones²⁷ ne lete ge nenne mon slepen. Ȝif muchel neode mid alle²⁸ makeð breken²⁹ ower hus, þe hwule þet hit ever is ibroken, loke þet ge habben þerinne mid ou one wummon of clene live deies and 15 nihtes³⁰

Vordr³¹ þet no mon ne isihð ou, ne ge izeoð nenne mon, wel mei don of³² ower cloðes, beon heo hwite, beon heo blake; bute þet heo beon unorne³³ and warme, and wel iwrouhte — velles³⁴ wel itauwed,³⁵ and habbed ase monie ase ou toneodeð,³⁶ to bedde and eke to rugge³⁷ 20 Next fleshe ne schal mon wrien no linene cloð, bute-ȝif hit beo of herde³⁸ and of greate heorden.³⁹ Stamin⁴⁰ habbe hwose wule, and hwose wule mei beon buten.⁴¹ Ȝe schulen liggen in on heater,⁴² and igurd⁴³ Ne bere⁴⁴ ge non iren,⁴⁵ ne here,⁴⁶ ne irspiles⁴⁷ felles, ne ne

¹ herdsman's hire² flatter³ hayward (keeper of the hedges, who prevented cattle from injuring private property)⁴ defend herself⁵ they shut it up⁶ pay the damages, more-over⁷ Christ knows⁸ they make complaint⁹ annoy¹⁰ harm¹¹ fixed¹² ought¹³ traffic, business¹⁴ carry on¹⁵ trafficker¹⁶ sells¹⁷ to the bargainer¹⁸ take charge¹⁹ your²⁰ receive²¹ chalice²² unless²³ make necessary²⁴ fear²⁵ guarding, care-taking²⁶ oftentimes²⁷ dwelling²⁸ after all²⁹ to be used³⁰ by day and night³¹ because³² do with, be content with³³ plain³⁴ skins³⁵ tawed, dressed³⁶ you need³⁷ also for your back³⁸ hards, tow³⁹ coarse canvas⁴⁰ harsh rough cloth, used for penitential shirts (cf F *étamine*)⁴¹ without⁴² a garment⁴³ girt⁴⁴ wear⁴⁵ iron⁴⁶ haircloth⁴⁷ porcupines'

beate ou þermide,¹ ne mid schurge² ileðered³ ne ileaded,⁴ ne mid holic,⁵ ne mid breres⁶; ne ne biblodg hiresulf⁷ wiðuten schriftes⁸ leave, ne ne nime, et enes, to veole⁹ disciplines¹⁰ Ower schone beon¹¹ greate and warme. Ine sumer ȝe habbeð leave vor to gon and sitten barvot, and¹² hosen wiðuten vaumpez,¹³ and higge me ham 5 hwoso likeð.¹⁴ . . . Ȝif ȝe muwen beon wimpelleas,¹⁵ beoð bi¹⁶ warme keppen¹⁷ and þeruppon blake veiles. Hwose wule beon iseten, þauh heo atiffe¹⁸ hire nis nout muchel wonder, auh to Godes eien heo is lufsumere, þet is, vor þe lufe of him, untiffed wiðuten Ring ne broche nabbe ȝe, ne gurdel imenbred,¹⁹ ne gloven, ne no swuch þing þet ou 10 ne deið²⁰ for to habben.

Ever me is leovere so²¹ ȝe don gretture werkes. Ne makie none purses, vor te vreonden ou mide,²² ne blodbendes²³ of scolke, auh schepieð,²⁴ and seouweð,²⁵ and amendeð²⁶ chirche cloðes, and þoure monne cloðes. No þing ne schule ȝe ȝiven wiðuten schriftes leave 15 Helpeð mid ower owune swinke,²⁷ so vorð so²⁸ ȝe muwen, to schruden²⁹ ou sulven and þeo þet ou serveð, ase Seint Jerome lereð.³⁰

THE ANCHORESS' HEALTH

Ȝe ne schulen senden lettres, ne undervon lettres, ne writen uten leave. Ȝe schulen beon idodded³¹ four siðen i ðe ȝere, vor to lihten ower heaved³²; and ase ofte ileten blod,³³ and oftere ȝif neod is, and 20 hwoso mei beon þer wiðuten,³⁴ Ich hit mei wel iðolien³⁵ Hwon ȝe beoð ileten blod, ȝe ne schulen don no þing, þeo þreo dawes, þet ou greve,³⁶ auh talkeð mid ouer meidenes and mid þeaufule³⁷ talen schurteð³⁸ ou

¹ therewith² scourge³ made of leather⁴ leaded⁵ holly⁶ briars⁷ let her not cause herself to bleed⁸ of the confessor⁹ too many¹⁰ flagellations¹¹ let your shoes be¹² and (to wear)¹³ vamps¹⁴ whoever likes may lie in them¹⁵ without wimples¹⁶ be provided with¹⁷ capes¹⁸ adorn¹⁹ linked²⁰ you ought not²¹ I am always more pleased if²² gain you friends with²³ bandages to stop bleeding²⁴ fashion²⁵ sew²⁶ mend²⁷ labor²⁸ so far as²⁹ clothe³⁰ teacheth³¹ have your hair clipped³² your head³³ have blood let³⁴ be able to be without this³⁵ suffer, permit³⁶ that may grieve you, be disagreeable to you³⁷ edifying³⁸ divert

togederes. Ze muwen don so ofte hwon ou puncheð hevie,¹ oðer beoð
 vor sume worldliche þinge some oðer seke. So wisliche witeð ou² in
 our³ blodletunge, and holdeð ou ine swuche reste þet ze longe þer-
 efter muwen ine Godes servise þe monluker⁴ swinken, and also hwon
 5 ze iveleð eni secnesse, vor muchel sotschipe⁵ hit is vor to vorleosen,⁶
 vor one deie, tene oðer twelve.

A TREATISE AGAINST MIRACLE-PLAYS

This tract, in the form of a sermon, was first printed by Halliwell (in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ* 2 42 ff.) from a manuscript volume of sermons in the library of St Martin's-in-the-Fields, London. This is now British Museum MS Add 24,202, which is designated in the catalogue as 'Wycliffite Tracts in English'. The manuscript is described as a small folio, vellum, of the end of the fourteenth century. Unless otherwise stated, the readings given below repose upon my collation of this manuscript. As there is considerable variation in the orthography, I have sought to render it more consistent, especially in the endings. Emendations marked 'M' are those of Matzner in his *Altenglische Sprachproben*, the others are mine.

The following selections give the main argument of the tract, which is headed 'Here bigynnis a tretise of mirakis-pleyinge'. The outline which follows may help to make the argument clear. Detailed notes can be found in Matzner's edition.

- I Introduction. Christ's miracles were performed in earnest, and therefore ought not to be represented in play.
 1. Such representation takes away our fear of God, and, as a result, the strength of our faith.
 2. It contradicts the teaching of Christ.
 3. It leads to scorn of God: the players make sport of his passion.
- II There are six arguments in favor of miracle-plays. Men say:
 1. They are given for the sake of worship.
 2. By them many are converted to a good life, seeing, as they do, the manifest work of the devil.
 3. Often the sight of Christ's passion moves men to tears.
 4. Some men may be drawn to religion through play, who would never be moved by seriousness.
 5. Men must have some recreation, why not that of a good sort?
 6. We do not object to paintings of miracles, why, then, to dramatic portrayals of them?
- III. But there are answers to all these arguments.
 1. The giving of such plays springs from heathenism, and is not worship. Worship consists in doing the will of God.

¹ you are in low spirits
² guard yourselves

³ your
⁴ more vigorously

⁵ folly
⁶ lose

2. Though good may sometimes come of evil, this is not the rule. Miracle-plays most often pervert those who see them
3. If the spectators weep, it is purely from external causes, not from consciousness of their own sin
4. If men are ever converted by miracle-plays, it is only to show the grace of God. But men are seldom converted by such means, conversion comes from the earnest working of God, not from playing
5. Plays do not afford true recreation
6. Good paintings merely exhibit truth, but plays are mainly to delight men's bodily senses

IV A friend declares

1. That he will not abandon his interest in miracle-plays unless their sinfulness can be proved directly from Holy Writ.

Answer. Such plays are against the spirit of the commandment, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain' (Illustration. One would not represent in a play the death of one's own father.)

2. That if the giving of such plays is sin, it is but a small sin

Answer. Any sin, however small, is deadly sin

Moreover, the danger in such playing is shown by the analogy of the following stories, with their mediæval allegorical interpretations

a. Ishmael and Isaac (Gen 21 8-10)

b. The children of Abner and those of Joab (2 Sam 2 12-32)

c. Moses and the children of Israel (Exod 32).

d. Ishba (2 Kings 2 23-4)

e. Noah (as referred to in Matt 24 38-9)

- V. If we are to play, let us do so in the spirit of David (2 Sam 6 15-6, 20-2), (1) realizing how God's grace to us surpasses that to our neighbors, (2) being always devout before God, though disliked by the world, (3) being lowly in our own eyes

Knowe þee, Cristen men, þat as Crist, God and man, is boþe weye, treweþ, and lif,¹ as seiþ þe gospel of Jon (weye to þe erryng, treweþ to þe unknowyng and doutyng, lif to þe styng² to hevene and weyng³), so Crist dyde⁴ noþinge to us but eff[e]ctuely in weye of mercy, in treuþe of ri[gh]twesnes, and in lif of gyltyng⁵ everlastyng⁶ joye for oure continually⁷ mo[u]rnyng and sorwyng⁸ in þis valey of teneis⁹. Þe¹⁰ myracle, þerfore, þat Crist dyde¹¹ heere in erþe, ouþer in¹² hymself ouþer in hise seyntis, weren so eff[e]ctuel and in earnest don,¹³ þat to synful men þat erren þei brouȝten forȝyvenesse of synne, se¹⁴tyng¹⁵ hem in þe weye of riȝt bileve, to doutouse¹⁶ men not stede- last þei brouȝten in kunnyng¹⁷ to betere plesen God, and verry hope

¹ John 14 6

² those climbing upward

³ growing weary

⁴ MS dude

⁵ yielding

⁶ MS continually

⁷ Ps 84 6 (in the Latin)

⁸ MS in (em. M)

⁹ through

¹⁰ MS done

¹¹ doubting

¹² ability

in God to ben¹ stedefast in hym; and to þe wery of þe weye of God, for þe grette penaunce and suffraunce of þe trybulac[i]oun þat men moten² han³ þerinne, þei brougten in love of brynnynge⁴ charite, to þe whiche alle þing is lȝt,⁵ and⁶ were⁷ he to suffren⁸ 5 deþe, þe whiche men most dreden, for þe everlastynge lyf and joye þat men most loven and desiren⁹ of þe whiche þing verry hope puttȝ away alle werinesse heere in þe weye of God. Þanne, syþen¹⁰ myrachis of Crist and of hyse seyntis weren þus effectuel, as by oure bileve we ben in certeyn,¹¹ no man shulde usen in bourde¹² and 10 pley¹³ þe myrachis and werkis þat Crist so earnestfully¹⁴ wrouȝte to oure helpe¹⁵, for whoeuer so do[1]þ, he erriþ in þe byleve, reversiþ¹⁶ Crist, and scorniþ¹⁷ God. He erriþ in þe bileve, for in þat he takȝ þe most precious werkis of God in pley and bourde, he¹⁸ takȝ his name in idil,¹⁹ and so mysusiþ oure byleve. A, Lord! syþen an erþely servaunt 15 dar not taken²⁰ in pley and in bourde þat þat his²¹ erþely lord takȝ in earnest, myche more we shulden not maken oure pley¹⁸ and bourde of þo myrachis and werkis þat God so earnestfully wrouȝt[e] to us, for,²² soþely whan we so don,²³ drede to synne²⁴ is taken²⁰ away, as a servaunt whan he bourdiþ²⁵ wiþ his mayster leesȝþ²⁶ his drede to 20 offenden²⁷ hym, namely, whanne he bourdiþ wiþ his mayster in þat þat²⁸ his mayster takȝ in earnest. . . .

Þanne, syþen þes myrachis-pleyeris taken in bourde þe earnestful werkis of God, no doute þat þei ne²⁹ scornen God, as dyden³⁰ þe Jewis þat bobbiden³¹ Crist, for þei lowen³² at his passioun, as þese lawȝen³³ 25 and japen at³⁴ þe myrachis of God. Þerfore, as þei scorniden³⁵ Crist, so þese³⁶ scorne[n] God, and riȝt³⁷ as Pharao, wrooþ³⁸ to do[n] þat

1 MS been

2 must needs

3 MS have

4 burning

5 easy

6 if

7 MS omits were, M he were

8 MS suffere

9 MS di-

10 since

11 assured

12 game, sport

13 MS pleye

14 MS ernyst-

15 salvation

16 contradicts

17 MS -yþ

18 MS and so

19 vain

20 MS -un

21 MS her (em M)

22 MS ffor

23 MS done

24 of sinning

25 jests, makes merry

26 loses

27 MS. -yn

28 MS in þat in þat

29 MS ne þei

30 MS diden

31 mocked, made sport of

32 laughed

33 MS lowyn

34 MS of

35 MS -eden

36 MS þese

37 just

38 hating

þat God bad hym, dispyside God,¹ so þese myracis-pleyeris and -mayntenours,² leevynge plesingly³ to do[n] þat God biddiþ hem, scornen God. He, forsoþe, haþ beden us alle to halowen⁴ his name, xyvynge drede and reverence in alle mynde⁵ of his werkis, wipoute ony pleying[e] or japyng, as al holynesse is in ful earnest men, þanne, 5 pleyinge þe name of Goddis myracis,⁶ as plesyngly þei leeve[n] to do[n] þat God biddiþ hem, so þei scornen his name, and so scornen⁷ hym

But hereagenus⁸ þei seyen [1] þat þei pleyen þese myracis in þe worschip of God, and so dyden not þese Jewis þat bobbiden Crist. Also, [2] ofte sipis⁹ by siche myracis-pleyinge ben¹⁰ men convertid 10 to gode lyvynge, as men and wymmen, seyng in myracis-pleyinge þat þe devul by þer aray, by þe whiche þei moven eche on opere¹¹ to lecherie and to pride, makip hem his servauntis to bryngen hemself and many opere to helle, and to han¹² fer more vylenye hereafter, by¹³ þer proude aray heere, þan þei han worschipe heere, and seyng,¹⁴ 15 ferþermore, þat al þis worldly beyng heere is but vanite for a while -- as is myracis-pleyng[e] — þei¹⁵ leeven þer pride, and taken to hem afterward þe meke conversac[i]oun of Crist and of hise seyntis, and so myracis-pleyinge turnip¹⁶ men to þe bileve, and not pervertip¹⁷ 20 Also, [3] ofte syþis by siche myracis-pleyinge men and wymmen, seynge þe passioun of Crist and of hise seyntis, ben moyyd to compassion and devocion, wepyng, bitere teris, þanne þei ben not scornynge of God, but worschipyng. Also, [4] profitable¹⁸ to men and to þe worschipe of God it is to fulfillen¹⁹ and sechen alle þe menes by þe whiche men mowen²⁰ fleen²¹ synne, and drawen hem to vertues. 25 And syþen as²² þer ben men þat on[e]ly by earnestful doynge wylen be[n] convertid to God, so þer ben²³ opere men þat wylen not be[n] convertid to God but by gamen and pley, and now on dayes²⁴ men ben not convertid by þe earnestful doynge of God ne of men, þanne²⁵ now

¹ Exod 7 13ff

² those who defend and support them

³ omitting for the sake of pleasure

⁴ MS -yn

⁵ remembrance

⁶ MS miraclis

⁷ MS. -yn

⁸ in opposition to this

⁹ oftentimes

¹⁰ are

¹¹ each one the other

¹² have

¹³ because of

¹⁴ MS seeynge

¹⁵ MS wherþoru þie

¹⁶ MS. -eþ

¹⁷ does not pervert them

¹⁸ MS proph-

¹⁹ MS -un

²⁰ may

²¹ MS seene, M fle

²² whereas

²³ MS been

²⁴ nowadays

²⁵ therefore

it is tyme and skilful¹ to assayen to converten² þe puple by pley and gamen — as by myraclis-pleyng, and oþer maner myrþis. Also, [5] summe recreac[i]oun men moten³ han, and bettere it is, or lesse yuele, þat þei han þeyre recreac[i]oun⁴ by pleyng of myraclis þan
 5 by pleyng of oþer[e] japis. Also, [6] siþen it is leueful⁵ to han þe myraclis of God peyntid, why is [it] not as wel leueful to han þe myraclis of God pleyd,⁶ syþen men mowen bettere reden þe wille of God, and his mervelous werkis, in þe pleyng of hem þan in þe peyntynge, and betere þei ben holden in men[n]us mynde, and oftere
 10 rehersid, by þe pleyng of hem þan by þe peyntynge, for þis is a deed bok, þe toþer a qu[i]ck⁷?

To þe first reson we answeren,⁸ seying [1] þat siþe myraclis-pleyng is not to þe worschipe of God, for þei ben don more to ben seen of þe worlde, and to plesen⁹ to þe world, þanne to ben seen of
 15 God, or to plesen⁹ to hym. As Crist never ensaumplde hem,¹⁰ but onely heþene men, þat everemore dishonouren God, seyinge þat to þe worschipe of God þat is to þe most veleynye¹¹ of hym, þe fore, as þe wickidnesse of þe misbileve of heþene men lyp to hemself¹² whanne þei seyn þat þe wors[c]hipyng of þene maumetrie¹³ is to þe worschipe
 20 of God, so mennus¹⁴ lec[c]herye now on dayes, to han þer owne lustus lip¹⁵ to hemself whanne þei seyn þat siþe¹⁶ miraclis¹⁷-pleyng[e] is to þe worschipe of God.

[2] Þe same wise,¹⁸ myraclis-pleyng, albeit þat it be synne, is oþerewhile¹⁹ occasion of convertyng of men, but as it is synne, it is
 25 fer more occasion of pervertyng of men, not onely of oon synguler²⁰ persone, but of al an hool comynte,²¹ as it makþ al a puple to ben occupied in vevn aȝenus þis heeste²² of þe Psauter Book, þat scip to alle men, and namely to pristin, þat eche day reden it in þei scrivyse
 'Turne away myn eyen þat þei se[n] not vanytees²³', and eft²⁴

¹ reasonable² MS -yn³ must⁴ em M⁵ permissible⁶ MS ed

living

^{*} MS -yng (em M)⁸ MS -yn¹⁰ taught their use by example¹¹ degradation¹² deceive themselves, MS þemself¹³ idols¹⁴ men's¹⁵ MS heþ¹⁶ MS suche¹⁷ MS -es¹⁸ in the same maner¹⁹ some times²⁰ single²¹ community²² command²³ Ps 119 37²⁴ again

'Lord, þou hatist¹ alle waytynge vanytees.²' How þanne may a prist pleyn in entirludes,³ or gyve hymself to þe sȳt of hem⁴ .

Myraclys-pleyinge, syþen it is ægenus þe heest of God, þat biddiþ þat þou shalt not take[n] Goddis name in ydil, it is ægenus oure bileve, and so it may not gyven occasioun⁴ of turnyng men to þe bileve, 5 but of pervertyng, and þerfore many men wenen⁵ þat þer is no helle of everelastyng peyne, but þat God do[1]þ but⁶ pieten⁷ us, and not to do[n] it in dede — as is⁸ pleyinge of myraclys⁹ in sygne,¹⁰ and not in dede . . .

A prist of þe Newe Testament, þat is passid þe tyme of childehod, 10 and þat not onely shulde kepe[n] chashte, but alle oþere vertues, ne¹¹ onely mynystren þe sacrament of matrimonye, but alle oþere sacramentis, and, namely,¹² syþen hym owiþ¹³ to mynystre[n] to alle þe puple þe precious body of Crist, awȳte¹⁴ to abstene[n] hym fro al ydil pleying[c], boþe of myraclys and ellis¹⁵ .

Þes men þat seyen, 'Pley[c] we a pley of Anticrist and of þe Day of Dome, þat sum man may be convertid þerby,' fallen into þe herisie of hem þat, 15 1eversyng þe Aposteyl, seyden. 'Do we yvel þingis, þat þer comen¹⁶ gode þingis' — 'of whom,' as seiþ þe Aposteyl,¹⁷ 'dampnyng is riȳtwise¹⁸'

By þis we answeren to þe þridde¹⁹ resoun, seyinge [3] þat siȳhe myraclys-pleyinge gyviþ²⁰ noon occasioun of verrey²¹ wepyng and medeful²², but þe wepyng þat falliþ²³ to men and wymmen by þe sȳte of siȳhe myraclys-pleyinge, as it is²⁴ not principally for þeire own²⁵ synnes, ne of þeire gode feiþ wiþinneforþ,²⁶ but more of þeire 25 sȳt wiþoutforþ, is not alowable byfore God, but more reprovable²⁷, for²⁸ syþen Crist hymself reprovyde þe wymmen þat wepten upon hym in his passioun, myȳhe more þei ben reprovable þat wepen for

¹ MS hitiste M hitid-
est

² Ps 31 6 (Vulg)

³ intirludes, plays, MS
entirlodes

⁴ MS -cioun

⁵ believe

⁶ merclȳ

⁷ MS þretþ

⁸ MS ben

⁹ MS mir-

¹⁰ symbolic

¹¹ not

¹² especially

¹³ he ought

¹⁴ ought

¹⁵ other things

¹⁶ MS -yn

¹⁷ MS gospel (blurred) aposteyl

¹⁸ Rom 3 8

¹⁹ third

²⁰ MS -eþ

²¹ true, sincere, MS werrey

²² profitable

²³ befalls

²⁴ MS þei be n

²⁵ MS oune

²⁶ inwardly, MS -forþe

²⁷ MS reprovable

²⁸ MS ffor

þe pley of Cristis passiou, leevynge to wepen ¹ for þe synnes of hemsilf and of þeire chyl dren, as Crist bad þe wymmen þat wepten on hym.²

And by þis we answeren to þe furþe resoun, seyinge [4] þat no man may be convertid to God but onely by þe earnestful doinge³ of
 5 God, and by noon veyn pleying[e]; for þat þat⁴ þe word of God worchþ not, ne his sacramentis, how shulde pleyinge worchen, þat is of no vertue, but ful of defaute? . . . Þe wepyng þat men wepen ofte in sicke pley, comunely is fals, witnessinge⁵ þat þei loven⁶ more þe lykyng⁷ of þeire body, and of prosperite of þe world, þan lykyng
 10 of⁸ God, and prosperite of vertu[e] in þe soule, and, þerfore, hav- yng more compassion of peyne þan of synne, þei falsly wepen⁹ for lakkyng of bodily prosperite, more þan for lakkyng of gostly . . .

And herby we answeren to þe fifte resoun, seyinge [5] þat verry recreacion is leeveful ocupiynge in lasse¹⁰ werkis, to more ardently
 15 worchen¹¹ grettere werkis, and þerfore sicke myrachis-pleyinge, ne þe sixte of hem,¹² is no verrey recreacion,¹³ but fals and worldly, as proven¹⁴ þe dedis of þe fautours¹⁵ of sicke pleyis . . . And gif men axen what recreac[i]oun men shulden han¹⁶ on þe haliday, after þeire holy contemplacioun in þe chirche, we seyen to hem two þingis. oon,
 20 þat gif he hadde ver[r]yly ocupied¹⁷ hym in contemplac[i]oun byforn, neyþer he wolde aske[n] þat question, ne han wille¹⁸ to se[n]¹⁹ vanyte, anopere, we seyn þat his recreacioun shulde ben in þe werkis of mercy to his neyebore, and in delityng²⁰ hym in alle good comun- icacion wip his ney[e]bore, as biforn he delitid²¹ hym in God, and
 25 in alle opere nedeful werkis þat reson and kynde²² axen.

And to þe last reson we seyn [6] þat peinture,²³ gif it²⁴ be verry, wipoute mengvng²⁵ of lesyngis,²⁶ and not to curious to²⁷ myche fedyng mennus wittis, and not occasion of maumetrie²⁸ to þe puple, þei ben but as nakyd lettris to a clerk to reden²⁹ þe treupe, but so

¹ omitting to weep

² 1 uke 23 28

³ MS doynge

⁴ which

⁵ MS fals witnessenge

⁶ MS yn

⁷ pleasure, enjoyment

⁸ MS in

⁹ MS -yn

¹⁰ smaller

¹¹ MS worschen

¹² (miracle-plays)

¹³ MS -sion

¹⁴ MS -yn

¹⁵ patrons

¹⁶ MS have

¹⁷ MS -ede

¹⁸ desire

¹⁹ see

²⁰ MS di-

²¹ MS di-

²² nature

²³ painting

²⁴ MS gif it it

²⁵ mingling

²⁶ falsehoods

²⁷ intent upon

²⁸ idolatry

²⁹ MS riden (em. M)

ben not myracles-pleyngis,¹ þat ben made more to deliten men bodily þan to ben bokis to lewid² men, and þerfore ȝif þei ben quike³ bookis, þei ben quike bookis to schrewidnesse,⁴ more þan to godnesse.⁵ Gode men, þerfore, seinge þer tyme to⁶ schort to occupyen hem in gode ernest werkis, and seinge þe day of þer rekenyng 5 neyȝen⁷ faste, and unknowyng whan þei schulen⁸ go[n] hennys, fleen alle sicke ydilnessis, hyinge⁹ þat þei weren¹⁰ wip þer¹¹ spouse, Crist, in þe blisse of hevene. . . .

[3]if þou haddist had¹² a fadir þat hadde suffrid¹³ a dispitous¹⁴ deþ to geten þee þyn heritage, and þou þerafter woldest so lightly ber[c]n¹⁵ 10 it, to make[n] þerof a pley to þe¹⁶ and to alle þe puple, no doute¹⁷ but þat alle gode men wolden demen¹⁸ þe unkynde Miche more, God and alle his seyntis¹⁹ demen¹⁸ alle þo²⁰ Cristen men unkynde þat pleyen or favouren þe pley of þe deþ or of þe myracles²¹ of þer most kynde Fadir, Crist, þat dyede and wrouȝte myracles to bryngen men to þe evere- 15 lastande heretage of hevene.

But peraventure heere þou seist þat, [x]if²² pleyinge of myracles be synne, never þe latere²³ it is but litil synne But heifore,²⁴ dere frend, knowe ȝee þat eche synne, be it never so litil, [x]if it be mayntenyd and prechid as gode and profitable, is deadly²⁵ synne, 20 and þerfore seiþ þe prophete²⁶ 'Wo to hem þat seien good²⁷ yvel, and yvel good²⁸ ' and þerfore þe wyse man dampniþ²⁹ hem þat gladen³⁰ whan þei don yvel, and þerfore alle seyntis seyen þat mannysch³¹ it is to fallen, but develiche it is to abyden stille þerinne Þerfore, siþen þis³² myracles-pleyinge is synne, as þou knowl- 25 echist,³³ and is stedefastly meyntenyd, and also men deliten hem þerinne, no doute¹⁷ but þat it is deadly synne, dampnable — develiche, not mannysch . . .

¹ MS -inge

² ignorant, unlearned

³ living

⁴ wickedness, MS -ide-

⁵ MS gode-

⁶ too

⁷ draw near

⁸ MS schal

⁹ hastening

¹⁰ might be

¹¹ MS. her

¹² MS hadde

¹³ MS -ed

¹⁴ cruel, MS -ouse

¹⁵ so disregard

¹⁶ for thyself

¹⁷ MS dowte

¹⁸ MS denyen

¹⁹ MS -es

²⁰ those

²¹ MS -es

²² MS of

²³ nevertheless

²⁴ in consideration of this

²⁵ MS deadly

²⁶ MS. -te

²⁷ MS gode

²⁸ Isa 5 20

²⁹ condemneth, MS -ep

³⁰ rejoice

³¹ human, MS -ysche

³² MS þes

³³ dost acknowledge

As þis is a verre lesyng to seyen þat for þe love of God he wil
ben a good felawe¹ wip þe devul, so it is a verry² lesyng to seyen
þat for þe love of God he wil pleyen his myraclis — for in neyþer is
þe love of God schewid, but his hestis tobroken.³ And syþen þe cere-
5 monyes⁴ of þe olde lawe — albeit þat þei weren ȝyven bi God — for
þei weren fleishly, shulden⁵ not be[n] holde[n]⁶ wip þe Newe Testa-
ment, for it is gostly⁷, myche more pleyinge, for it is fleys[h]ly,
never beden⁸ of God, shulde not ben don wip þe mervelouse werkis
of God, for þei ben gostly, for as þe pleyinge⁹ of Ismael wip Isaac
10 shulde han¹⁰ bynomen¹¹ Isaac his heretage, so¹² þe kepyng of þe cere-
monyes⁴ of þe olde lawe in þe Newe Testament shulde han bynomen
men þer bileve in Crist, and han made men to gon backward — þat is
to seie[n], fro þe gostly lyvyng of þe Newe Testament to þe fleishly
lyvyng of þe Olde Testament. . . .

15 Þis myraclis-pleyinge is verre witnesse¹³ of mennus averice and
coveytise byfore, þat is maumetrie, as seiþ þe Apostele¹⁴, for þat þat¹⁵
þei shulden spenden¹⁶ upon þe nedis of þer neȝeboris, þei spenden upon
þe pleyis, and to peyen þer rente and þer dette þei wolen grucche[n]¹⁷,
and to spende[n] two so myche¹⁸ upon þer pley þei wolen noþinge
20 grucchen. Also, to gaderen¹⁹ men togidere to bien þe derre þere
vetailis,²⁰ and to stiren men to glotonye, and to pride and boost,²¹ þei
pleyn þes myraclis; and, also, to han wherof to spenden on þese
myraclis, and to holde[n] felawschipe of glotonye and lec[c]herie in
siche²² dayes of myraclis-pleyinge, þei bisien hem befor to more
25 gredily bygilen þer neȝ[e]bors in byinge and in sellyng, and so þis
pleyinge of myraclis now on dayes is verre²³ witnesse of hidous²⁴
coveytise, þat is maumetrie.

¹ MS felowe² MS werry³ MS -un⁴ MS sery-⁵ MS þei shulden⁶ ranked⁷ of the spirit⁸ bidden, MS -yn⁹ Gen. 21 9 (*hudentem*, Vulgate, see the Authorized Version)¹⁰ might have¹¹ taken from, MS. -yn¹² MS so in þe¹³ MS witt-¹⁴ Col 3 5¹⁵ which¹⁶ MS -yn¹⁷ grudge¹⁸ twice as much¹⁹ MS gideren²⁰ buy their food the dearer²¹ boasting²² MS sicse²³ MS werre²⁴ MS hidous

MIRK, INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARISH PRIESTS

The *Instructions for Parish Priests* is a versified translation of the *Pupilla Oculi* of William de Pagula (*Dict Nat Biog* s v Mirk). Its author, who was prior of Lilleshall in Shropshire, wrote also, besides a Latin *Manuale Sacerdotum*, the *Liber Festialis*, an English book of sermons which was decidedly popular, being printed eighteen times between 1483 and 1532 (Schofield, *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*, p 395). Nothing more is known of Mirk's life, the date 1403 as the time at which he flourished is conjectural.

The following selections are from Peacock's print (E.E.T.S. 31, London, 1868, revised, 1902) of MS Brit Mus Cotton Claud A 2, which he supposes to be not later than 1450, and to represent the language of an earlier time. The pages are respectively, with the exception of the third from the end, 2, 9-10, 14, 32, 43, 66-7, and 60, of the edition of 1902; the antepenultimate, 21-3 of the edition of 1868.

THE CHARACTER OF A PRIEST

Preste, þyself thow moste be chast,
 And say þy serves wyþowten hast,
 That mowthe and herte acorden ifere,¹
 Ȝef thow wole that God þe here.
 Of honde and mowþe þou moste be trewe, 5
 And grete opes thow moste enchewe²,
 In worde and dede þou moste be mylde,
 Bothe to mon and to chylde
 Dronkelec³ and glotonye,
 Pruyde and slouþe and envye, 10
 Alle þow moste putten away,
 Ȝef þow wolt serve God to pay⁴
 That þe nedeth, ete and drynke,
 But sle⁵ þy lust for any thyng
 Tavernes also thow moste forsake, 15
 And marchaundyse þow schalt not make,
 Wrastelynge, and schotyng,⁶ and suche maner game,⁷

¹ agree (*hit* accord together)² eschew³ drunkenness⁴ please⁵ slay, crush⁶ shooting⁷ sports of such sort

Thow myȝte not use¹ wythowte blame;
 Hawkyng, huntynge, and dawnsynge,
 Thow moste forgo for any thyng;
 Cuttede² clothes and pykede³ schone,
 5 Thye gode fame þey wole fordone⁴
 Marketes and feyres I the forbede,
 But⁵ hyt be for the more⁶ nede.
 In honeste⁷ clothes thow moste gon
 Baselarde⁸ ny bawdryke⁹ were þow non
 10 Berde and crowne thow moste be schave,
 Ȝef thow wole thy ordere save.
 Of mete and drynke þow moste be fre¹⁰
 To pore and ryche, by¹¹ thy degre
 Ȝerne¹² thow moste thy Sawtere¹³ rede,
 15 And of the Day of Dome have drede,
 And evere do gode aȝeynes¹⁴ evele,
 Or elles thow myȝte not lyve wele.

BEHAVIOR IN CHURCH

No non in chyrche stonde schal,
 Ny¹⁵ lene to pyler ny to wal,
 20 But fayre¹⁶ on kneus þey schule hem sette —
 Knelynge down upon the flette¹⁷ —
 And pray to God wyth herte mcke
 To ȝeve hem grace, and mercy eke
 Soffere hem to make no bere,¹⁸
 25 But ay to be in here¹⁹ prayere,

¹ practise² cut short (?)³ long-toed⁴ make way with⁵ unless⁶ greater⁷ decent, simple⁸ short sword, dagger⁹ sword-belt¹⁰ generous¹¹ according to¹² earnestly, zealously¹³ Psalter¹⁴ in return for¹⁵ nor¹⁶ properly¹⁷ floor¹⁸ noise¹⁹ their

4. **pykede** 'The pikes were sometimes made like the tails of scorpions, at others twisted into the form of a ram's horn' (Peacock's note, ed 1902, p 73).

And whenne þe gospelle ired ¹ be schalle,
 Teche hem þenne to stonde up alle,
 And blesse ² feyre as þey conne
 Whenne 'Gloria tibi' ³ ys bygonne.
 And whenne þe Gospel ys idone, 5
 Teche hem eft to knele downe sone,
 And whenne they here the belle ryng
 To that holy sakerynge,⁴
 Teche hem knele downe, boþe zonge and olde,
 And boþe here hondes up to holde, 10
 And say þenne in þys manere,
 Feyre and softely, wythowte bere
 'Jesu, Lord, welcome þow be,
 In forme of bred as I þe se
 Jesu, for thy holy name, 15
 Schelde me to-day fro synne and schame
 Schryfte ⁵ and howsele,⁶ Lord, þou graunte me bo,⁷
 Er that I schale hennes go,
 And verre ⁸ contrycyone of my synne,
 That I, Lord, never dye thereinne, 20
 And, as þow were of a may ⁹ ibore,¹⁰
 Sofere ¹¹ me never to be forlore,¹²
 But wher.ne þat I schale hennes wende,
 Grawnte me þe blysse wythowten ende'

THE CREED

I beleve in oure holy Dryxt,¹³ 25
 Fader of hevene, God almyxt,
 þat alle thyng has wroxt —
 Hevene and erþe, and alle of noxt
 On Jesu Cryst I beleve also,

¹ read² make the sign of the cross
³ 'Glory be to thee, O God,'
 sung between the Epistle
 and the Gospel
⁴ consecration of the elements⁵ confession and absolution⁶ receiving of the Eucharist⁷ both⁸ true⁹ maiden¹⁰ born¹¹ suffer¹² lost¹³ Lord

Hys only Sone, and no mo,
 þat was conceyvede of þe Holy Spyrte,
 And of a mayde ibore quyt¹,
 And afterward under Pounce Pylate
 5 Was itake² for vye³ and hate,
 And soffrede peyne and passyone,
 And on þe croys was idone⁴,
 Ded and buryed he was also,
 And wente to helle to spoyle⁵ oure fo,
 10 And ros to lyve the pryde day,
 And stegh⁶ to hevne þe xl day
 Ȝet he schale come wyþ woundes rede,
 To deme⁷ þe quyke and þe dede.
 In þe Holy Gost I leve⁸ welle,
 15 In Holy Chyrche and hyre spelle⁹
 In Goddes body I beleve nowe,
 Amonge hys seyntes to ȝeve me rowe,¹⁰
 And of my synnes þat I have done
 To have plenere¹¹ remyssyone,
 20 And when my body from deth schal ryse,
 I leve to be wyth God and hyse,¹²
 And have the joye þat lasteþ ay,
 God graunte hymself þat I so may!

THE VANITIES OF THE FLESH

Hast þou ben prowde and glad in thoght
 25 Of any mysdede þat þou hast wroȝt?
 Hast þou ben prowde of any gyse¹³
 Of any þynge þat þou dedust use,
 Of party¹⁴ hosen, of pykede schone,
 Of fytered¹⁵ clopes (as foles done)

¹ quite² seized³ envy⁴ done to death⁵ despoil⁶ ascended⁷ judge⁸ believe⁹ teaching¹⁰ rest¹¹ full, complete¹² his¹³ appearance, look¹⁴ party-colored¹⁵ slashed

Of londes rentes, of gay howsynge,¹
 Of mony servauntes to þy byddyngre,
 Or of hors fat and rownde,
 Or for þy godes² were hole and sownde,
 Or for þow art gret and ryche 5
 þat no nexbore ys þe ilyche,³
 Or for þow art a vertues mon,
 And const⁴ more þen anoþer con ?
 Ȝef þou have be⁵ on þys maner prowde,
 Schryf⁶ þe, sone, and telle hyt out. 10

SINS OF CARELESSNESS

Hast þow icome by chyrchegorde,⁷
 And for þe dede iprayed no worde ?
 Hast þow ay cast up⁸ lydegate⁹
 þere bestus have go in ate ?
 Hast þow istryed¹⁰ corn or gras, 15
 Or oþer þyngre þat sowen was ?
 Hast þou icome in any sty,¹¹
 And cropped ȝerus¹² of corne þe by ?
 Art þou iwont over corn to ryde,
 When þou mygtest have go bysyde ? 20

THE PRONOUNCING OF EXCOMMUNICATION

þe grete sentens I wryte þe here,
 þat foure tymes in þe ȝere
 þou schalte pronownce withowtyn lette,¹³
 Whan þe parich is togydur mette
 þou schalte pronownce þis hydowse þyngre 25
 Wit cros, and candul, and belle-knyllynge,¹⁴

¹ trappings² goods, possessions³ like⁴ knowest⁵ been⁶ shrive, confess⁷ past a churchyard⁸ fastened up (so as to prevent the entrance of cattle)⁹ gate between pasture-land and ploughed land¹⁰ destroyed¹¹ path¹² ears¹³ hindrance¹⁴ tolling

þe furste Sononday affter Myxhellfeste ¹,
 Myd-Lenton ² Sonday schal be neste ³,
 þe 'Irenite feste is þe þridde, os ⁴ I þe say,
 þe ferthe is þe Sononday aftur Candulmes day.
 5 Spelle ⁵ hit reddely, ⁶ for noȝte þou wonde, ⁷
 þat ⁸ alle men þe undurstonde

FORM OF EXCOMMUNICATION (I)

By auctorite of God almyȝti, Fader ⁹ and Son and Holy Gost, and of
 al þe seyntes of heven First, ¹⁰ we accursen al them that broken ¹¹ the
 pece of Holy (h)irch or sturben hit, . . . all þat falsen or use false
 10 measures, busshelles, galones, and potelles, ¹² quartes, [cuppes], or false
 wightes, poundes or poundrelles, ¹⁴ or false elleneydes, ¹⁴ wetyngly oper
 þan þe lawe of þe lond woll, . . . also all þat distroubleth þe pes of
 Englonde, and traitors that ben false or isenting ¹⁵ to falsenes, agen þe
 king or the reame ¹⁶, . . . also all that helpen with strength, or with vit-
 15 ayles, or soccouren Jewes or Sarzons ¹⁷ agen Cristendom, also all þat
 sleen childeren, or distroyen boren or unborn, with drynkes or with
 wichcraft, and all her consentes ¹⁸, also all þat stondesth or heikeneth
 by nyȝtes under wolles, dores, or wyndowes, for to spy touching evil,
 and all house-brekeres and man-quellers ¹⁹

FORM OF EXCOMMUNICATION (II)

20 By þe auctorite of oure Fadur, of þe Sone, of þe Holy Goste, and off
 ou[r]e lady Seynte Mary, Goddus modur of heven, and alle oþur vir-
 gynes, and Seynte Myhel, ²⁰ and alle oþur angellus and archangellus, and
 Petur and Poule, and oþur apostolus, and Seynte Stewne, ²¹ and alle oþur
 martyres, and Seynte Nicholas, and alle oþur confessoures, ²² and alle

¹ Michaelmas² Mid-Lenten³ next⁴ as⁵ speak, say, MS sepelle⁶ promptly, willingly⁷ shrink, fear⁸ so that⁹ MS. fader¹⁰ MS first¹¹ break¹² a measure for liquids, equal
to half a gallon¹³ scales, balances¹⁴ ell-measures¹⁵ consenting¹⁶ realm¹⁷ Saracens¹⁸ accomplices¹⁹ murderers²⁰ Michael²¹ Stephen²² those who suffered perse-
cution, but not martyr-
dom, for the sake of their
religion

þe holy halowes ¹ of hewen, we acurson and waryon ² and departon ³
 from alle gode dedus and prayeres of Holy Chyrche, and dampnon ⁴
 into þe peyne of helle, alle þoo ⁵ þat have done þeis articoles þat we
 have sayde before, tyl ⁶ þei comen to amendemente. We acurson hem
 be þe auctorite off þe courete off Rome, witinne- and witoute for ⁷ þe, ⁵
 sclepyng and wakyng, goyng, syttyng and standinge, lyggynge,
 of bowne ⁸ þe erthe and undur þe erthe, . . . in wode, in watur, in felde,
 and in towne. We acurson be þe Fadur and Sone and Holy Goste.
 Acursyn hem angelus and archangelus, and alle þe nyne ordorus of
 heven. Acursyn hem patriarchus, prophetus, and apostolus, and alle ¹⁰
 Goddus disciplus, and alle holy innocentus, martyres, confessoures, and
 virgynes, monkus, cannonus, cremytus, ⁹ and prestus and clerkus, þat
 þei have no parte off masses ne mateynus ¹⁰ ne evensonge, ne of none
 oþur gode prayeres þat bene done in Holy Chyrche, no in none oþur
 holy place, bot þe peynus of helle for to be here mede, ¹¹ wit Judas þat ¹⁵
 betrayed oure Lord Jesu Cryste, and þe lyf of hem be putte oute of þe
 bokus of lyfe, tyl þay comen to amendemente, and satisfaccion made.
 Fiat, fiat! Amen!

þan þou þi candul kaste to grownde,
 Ande spyte ¹² þerto þe same stownde, ¹³
 And lette also þe belle knylle,
 To make hertus þe more grylle ¹⁴

20

THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

'Perhaps it is hardly too much to say that no literary production since the time of the apostles has contributed so much to Western civilization as the Benedictine Rule, and yet its author probably never regarded it as a literary production at all' (Cook and Tinker, *Sel Trans from Old Eng Prose*, p. 278).

Benedict was born at the end of the fifth century, by the end of the sixth his Rule was chosen by Pope Gregory the Great for a monastery Gregory had founded at Rome. By the end of the eighth century — the age of Charlemagne

¹ saints² execrate³ separate, shut off⁴ condemn⁵ those⁶ M's tul⁷ at home and abroad⁸ above⁹ hermits, recluses¹⁰ matins¹¹ reward¹² spit¹³ at the same time¹⁴ (to) shudder, tremble

— the Rule was almost universally followed in European monasteries. Throughout the Middle Ages the Benedictine monks were famous for their learning, and, by their zeal in copying classical manuscripts, preserved most of those that have come down to us. For a general account of them, see Montalembert's *Monks of the West*, Book 4.

The early English manuscripts of the Rule are many of them based on a version written for nuns. That from which our selections are taken is MS Brit Mus Cotton Vespasian A 25, in the Northern dialect of the earlier fifteenth century, as printed by Kock (L E.T S. 120), the respective pages being 95-6, 99-100, 102-5, 115-6.

THE HOURS FOR MEALS

Of time of mete now es to lere,
 In times and sesons of þe ȝere.
 Fro Pas¹ right unto Witsunnday,
 At þe sext our² ete sal þai,
 5 þe whilk es midday for to mene,
 And sine³ sal þai soupe⁴ bedene⁵
 In somer, fro⁶ Witsunday be past,
 Wedinsday and Friday sal þai fast,
 Bot-if⁷ þai oþer⁸ swink⁹ or swete
 10 In hay or corn with travel grete
 And if þai non slike¹⁰ travel done,¹¹
 On þos days sal þai fast to none¹²
 And on oþer days, als I air¹³ saide,
 At mydday sal þer mete be graide¹⁴
 15 Bot al þis sal be purued¹⁵ playn,
 At þe ordinance of þer soverayn¹⁶,
 What seson so¹⁷ scho¹⁸ putes þam to,
 Withoutin groching¹⁹ sal þai do
 Fro time þat December begin
 20 Until clene Lentyn cum in,

¹ Easter

² sixth hour

³ afterwards

⁴ sup

⁵ together

⁶ from the time that

⁷ unless

⁸ either

⁹ labor

¹⁰ such

¹¹ do, engage in

¹² noon

¹³ before

¹⁴ ready, prepared

¹⁵ provided

¹⁶ prioress, superior

¹⁷ whatsoever manner of life
 according to the season

¹⁸ she

¹⁹ grumbling

At hi¹ none sal þai etc ;
 þer lesons² sal þai not forþete.
 In Lentyn sal non to mete gang
 Efter³ þe our of evynsang ,
 And al servys⁴ þan sal þai sai 5
 Efter mete, bi lght of day,
 So þat al be rewld right
 At wend⁵ to bede bi dais lyght.

DAILY OCCUPATIONS

All þat wons in religioun⁶
 Aw⁷ to have sum ocupacioun, 10
 Ouþer⁸ in kirk of⁹ hali bedes¹⁰
 Or stodyng in oder stedes.¹¹
 For ydilnes, os sais Sant Paul,
 Es grete enmy unto þe saul ,
 And þerfor es ordand¹² þat þai 15
 Sum gude warkes sal wirk alway,
 And sum certane tims of þe ȝer
 To wirk with hand, os men may her.
 Fro Pase, thurgh al Cristyndome,
 Til þe kalandes¹³ of October cum, 20
 Unto prime¹⁴ sone sal þai rise,
 And sine ilkon¹⁵ wirk on þer wise
 What so es most nedeful labore,
 Until þe tyme of þe third oure.
 And lessons sal þai rede þan next 25
 Fro þe third our unto þe sext
 And efterward thurgh wirchep
 Fro oures¹⁶ and mes¹⁷ wend unto mete.

¹ high² readings³ MS or efter⁴ the whole service⁵ to go⁶ dwell in religion, lead
a religious life⁷ ought⁸ either⁹ with¹⁰ prayers¹¹ other places¹² ordained¹³ first¹⁴ church-service celebrated
about 5 or 6 A M¹⁵ each one¹⁶ hours of service¹⁷ mass

And efter mete, þen sal þai slepe,
 And silence al samen ¹ sal þai kepe,
 So þat none do oper diseze,²
 Bot ilkon paid ³ oper to plese
 5 Sone efterward, when þis es done,
 And þai haf said þe our of none,
 Until þeir werk þen sal þai gang,
 Unto þe tyme of evynsang,
 To scher ⁴ or bind, if it be nede,
 10 Or dike,⁵ or els do oper dede,
 For unto travel wor we born,
 And al our elders us beforne
 Bot travel aw mesurd to be
 Til ilkon efter þer degie,
 15 To men or women, old or ȝing,
 Ilkon to do divers þing.
 Fro October, os I are ⁶ sayd,
 Unto Lentyn es þus purvayd ⁷
 In orisons, and in þer oures
 20 And lessons, sal be þer laboures.

LENTEN OBSERVANCE

In Lentyn tyme þen sal þai rise
 Arly, and say þer servyse
 And orisons til Godes honoure,
 Until it be past þe third oure.
 25 þan to þe tent our ⁸ sal þai wirk,
 And sine til non ⁹ serve in þe kirk.
 And in Lentyn aw þam to luke ¹⁰
 þat ilkon have ordand a buke,
 Whilk sal be red right to þe end,
 30 Als þe cours of þe rewl hase kend ¹¹

¹ together² discomfort, disturbance³ content⁴ cut, reap⁵ make ditches⁶ before⁷ provided for⁸ tenth hour⁹ noon¹⁰ see to it¹¹ taught

And who so groches oght here ogayn¹
 Sal be punest with grevus payne.
 Who tentes to trofils,² and wil not rede,
 And þai overtayn³ with þat dede,
 With payn þai sal amendes make,
 So þat oþer ensaumpil take

5

THE ENTERTAINMENT OF GUESTS

A priores aw to be prest⁴
 For to resave ilka gude gest,
 And at hir myght þam mere⁵ make
 Soveraynly for Godes sake,
 Namely⁶ þam þat er⁷ pilgrams knawn,
 And pouer⁸ þat hase⁹ not of þer awn.
 For God until [us] þus sal say
 In dome,¹⁰ apon þe dredful day.
Hospes eram, et colligistis me —
 'I was a gest in my degre,
 And in þour hous ȝe herberd me'
 þan aw us¹¹ gastes and gud pilgrims
 For to releve in al þere lms,
 And for to refresch in al nyght,
 Als it es det¹² be day and nyght,
 And oblis¹³ þam kysink¹⁴ of pese,
 Percfite luf for to encres
 And when þai cum, bi day or nyght,
 And also when þai wend to flight,
 Loute¹⁵ unto þam aw¹⁶ grete and small,
 Or els unto þer fete at¹⁷ fall,
 Witand¹⁸ wele in þat sesoun
 þai honour Crist in þer persoun;

10

15

20

25

¹ against this² attends to trifles³ if they are found out⁴ ready, eager⁵ merry⁶ especially⁷ are⁸ poor people⁹ have¹⁰ judgment¹¹ it befits us, we ought¹² due¹³ courteously give¹⁴ kiss¹⁵ to bow¹⁶ ought¹⁷ to¹⁸ knowing

- For who so resaves þe pure man
 In Crist name, resaves Crist þan.
 A soveraryn¹ sal ger gestes kepe²
 With honour and with gret wirchepe,
 5 Or rede to þam, or ger he rede,
 How hali men þer livers lede. .
 Scho sal gif water unto þer hend,
 And wesch þeir fete, als Crist hase kend³
 When þai so do, þai sal reherce,
 10 Word bi word, and say þis verce
Suscepimus, Deus, misericordiam tuam in medio —
 ' We have resavyd, Lord, þi mercy,
 In þe mydes of þe hows haly' . . .
 þe gestes kechin⁴ sal be set
 15 Allone, þat it no noþer⁵ let,
 So þat þai be servyd at ese,
 And ilk man redy þam to plese
 And luk þer bedes⁶ ordand bene
 With litter larch⁷ and clothes clene,
 20 And swilk servandes assigned þam til
 þat wil þam scrve with gudc wil.
 None aw þam do for to greve,
 Ne speke with þam withoutyn leve,
 Bot loutand⁸ hals⁹ þam wher þai go,
 25 And with blissing pasc furth þam fro

THE NUN'S CLOTHING

- Thay sal be cledde ful wele, we wate,
 Efter þer place es cald or hate.
 For in cald stedes¹⁰ who so er sted,¹¹
 þam nedes for to be better cled,
 30 And¹² who er in hate cuntre,

¹ prioress² cause guests to be entertained³ taught⁴ kitchen⁵ other⁶ beds⁷ large straw-bed⁸ bowing⁹ salute¹⁰ places¹¹ situated¹² MS in

Sich clething to þam may be ;
 And al it sal be purvayd playne
 At þe ordinance of þeir soverayne.
 In comun places for alkins note ¹
 Sufficis a kirtil ² and a cote ³ , 5
 And mantels sal þai have certayne,
 In winter dubil, in somer playne ;
 And changing kirtils sal þai have
 In nyghtes þer oþer for to save.
 Schos þai sall have, whor þai dwel, 10
 Swilk os þai may find for to sel ⁴
 Of þe fairest ⁵ þai sal not by,
 Bot þe vilist ful bowsumly. ⁶
 And þeir soverayn aw for to se
 Þat þair gere ⁷ evynly o[r]dand ⁸ be, 15
 Mete for þam þat sal it fang, ⁹
 And noper to schort ne to lang
 When þai tak new, þe old sal þen
 Be partid til ¹⁰ pouer women
 And when þai sal went ¹¹ in cuntre, 20
 Þair clething sal mor honest ¹² be ;
 And home agayn when þai cum eft,
 Þen sal þai were slik os ¹³ þai left
 Until þeir beddyng sal þai have
 At ¹⁴ suffise þam fro cauld to save 25
 And oftsithes sall þer bed be sene,
 Þat no trespere be þam betwene,
 Ne no gude þat to þam may gayne ¹⁵ ,
 Who so it hase, sall soffer payne
 For whi ¹⁶ þer soverayn sal þam bede ¹⁷ 30
 All unto þam þat es nede

¹ all kinds of work² gown³ skirt, petticoat⁴ for sale⁵ fairest⁶ meekly⁷ apparel⁸ fitly ordered, em K⁹ receive¹⁰ distributed to¹¹ go¹² finer¹³ such as¹⁴ (enough) to¹⁵ be useful¹⁶ wherefore¹⁷ offer, give them

THE PORTER

Ane old man sal þe gates ȝeme¹
 Þat witti es, and wele wil seme²
 For to welcum with wordes fre
 Evyrilk man in þer degre.
 5 His dwelling sal be dyght³ algayte⁴
 In a cel beside þe ȝate,
 So þat he be redy ay
 Til al⁵ þat cums be nyght or day.
 And when so ony knok or call,
 10 Softli answer þam he sall,
 To her þer wordes sal he be bayn,⁶
 And bryng þam grath⁷ answer ogayn.
 And baynly sal he bryng and take
 Al þat men sendes for Godes sake.
 15 And ever him aw to ȝeme þe ȝate
 For al aventurs,⁸ arely and layte.
 In abbais aw to be al thing
 Þat nedeful es to þer lifing,
 Als watter for to do al þer dedis,
 20 Miln,⁹ kiln,¹⁰ and oven, and al þat nedis, . . .
 So þat þai sal not outward gang
 To say, for dred, or wirk, oght wrang.

ROBERT MANNYNG OF BRUNNE, HANDLING SIN

Robert Mannyng of Brunne (now Bourne), in Lincolnshire, wrote his poem, the *Handlyng Synne*, in 1303, when he had for fifteen years belonged to the priory of Gilbertine canons at Sempringham (six miles from Bourne). The work is a poetical adaptation of the *Manuel des Pechies* of William of Wadington, who wrote some time in the reign of Edward I (1272-1307). While characterizing the seven deadly sins, etc., it pictures in a lively way the life and vices of the age, and inserts tales here and there to point a moral. The poem

¹ keep
² be suitable
³ prepared
⁴ always

⁵ for all
⁶ ready
⁷ direct
⁸ with reference to all contingencies

⁹ mill
¹⁰ bakery

has been spoken of as 'the work which more than any former one foreshadowed the path that English literature was to tread from that time forward' (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* s.v. Mannyng), and, in general, it has been more popular than the writer's other chief work, a chronicle-history of England. Of Mannyng's language Ten Brink says (*Early English Literature* i. 302) 'Robert of Brunne is without doubt one of the writers who served most to spread the East-Midland dialect toward the south. And through him many new Romanic words were probably either introduced into the English literary language, or at least established there.'

With the caution in 303 10 ff. may be compared the following (reprint of E.E.T.S. 15 59)

A man that intendyth to mynstrels shall soone be weddyd to povert
 Iff mynstrels plecthe the, feyne as thow herde them, but thyne uppone another
 He that lawith [laughs] at a mynstrels worde gevith to hym a wedde [forfeit, pledge].

Our selections are from E.E.T.S. 119 and 123, which print the version of this poem (12,630 lines long) in MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 1701, and, in parallel columns, the corresponding parts of Wadington's Old French. The selections are, respectively, lines 985-1054, 4571-4614, 4739-4774, 8987-9006, 10,729-10,798.

THE PROPER WAY OF KEEPING HOLY DAYS

Ȝyf þou make karol¹ or play,
 þou halewyst nat þyn halyday
 Ȝyf þou come overgladly partyl,²
 And ȝyvest þarto mochyl³ þy wyl.
 Yn þat hast þou mochyl plyxt,⁴ 5
 For synne wyl come þurgh swyche syxt
 Ȝyf þou ever settvst swerde eyþer ryng
 For to gadyr a wrastlyng,
 þe halyday þou holdest noght,
 Whan swyche bobaunce⁵ for þe ys wroxt 10
 Cuntek⁶ þere comyþ, or ouþer bobaunce,
 And sum man slayn, or lost þurxe chaunce
 Ȝyf þou ever yn felde, eyþer⁷ in loune,
 Dedyst⁸ floure-gerland or coroune⁹
 To make wommen to gadyr þere, 15

¹ dancing in a ring, accompanied by singing

² thereto, to it

³ greatly

⁴ danger

⁵ pomp

⁶ quarreling, discord

⁷ or

⁸ madest

⁹ coronal, wreath

- To se whych þat feyrer were,
 Þys ys aȝens þe commaundement,
 And þe halyday for þe ys shent¹,
 Hyt ys a gaderyng for lecherye,
 5 And ful grete pryde, and herte hye.²
 Ȝyf þou ever janglyst³ at messe,
 Yn þe cherche with more or lesse,
 And lettyst⁴ men of⁵ here preyers,
 For hem perel sopely þou berys,
 10 þe halyday þou holdest nat rygt,
 And lettyst to wurschyp God almygt.
 Halyday was made for preyere,
 To God oure herende⁶ for to bere.
 Certys we ouȝt þan with ful mynde
 15 To preye God us of synne unbynde,⁷
 And yn gode lyfe us wysse and rede,⁸
 And forȝeue us al oure mysdede
 Ȝyf þou hauntyst⁹ to make þy play
 At þe taverne on þe halyday,
 20 To many on¹⁰ comyþ þarfore evyl
 þurgh cumberaunce¹¹ of þe devyl
 Holy Chyrche wyl þe werne¹²
 þe halyday to go to þe taverne,
 And namly byfore þe noun,¹³
 25 Whan Goddys servyse owyþ to be down
 Taverne ys þe devyls knyfe,
 Hyt sleþ¹⁴ þe, oþer soule or lyfe,
 One of þys shal hyt do,
 Ȝyf þou haunte¹⁵ comunly þarto
 30 Hyt shortyþ þy lyfe, over moche drynkynge.
 And sleþ þy soule with bakbytyngge,
 Hyt wastyþ þy body, and makeþ þe drye.

¹ spoiled, ruined² high heart³ dost engage in altercation⁴ dost hinder⁵ from⁶ petition⁷ set us free from sin⁸ direct and counsel⁹ art accustomed¹⁰ many a one¹¹ harassing, temptation¹² forbid¹³ noon¹⁴ slayeth¹⁵ resort

And gadryþ¹ lecherye to glotonye;
 And þe comaundment ys brokun,
 And þe halyday, byfore of spokun.

Ȝyf þou do any man o dawē²

On þe halyday for any lawe, 5
 Swyche men grevusly werche
 Aȝens þe state of Holy Chyrche,
 For holy preyere, and for þe pees,
 Þe halyday God hyt chees.

Ȝyf þou ever with jogeloure,³ 10

With hasa[r]doure,⁴ or with rotoure,⁵

Hauntyst taverne, or were to any pere⁶

To pley at þe ches or at þe tablere,⁷

Specyaly before þe noun,

Whan Goddys servyse owyþ to be down, 15

Hyt ys aȝens þe comaundment

And Holy Cherches asent.⁸

Ȝyf þou be *infra sacros*,⁹

And art a clerk, and hast þe los¹⁰ 20

Of subdekene, or dekene by name,

So moche art þou þe more to blame

þys¹¹ lerned men ȝyven ensample so

þat þe lewd¹² men þe more mysdo¹³

THE EVIL OF TOURNAMENTS

Of tournamentys þat are forbede 25
 Yn Holy Cherche, as men rede,

Of tournamentys Y preve¹⁴ þerynne,

Sevene poyntes of dedly synne.

Fyrst ys pryde, as þou wel wost,¹⁵

Avauntement,¹⁶ bobaunce, and bost;

¹ adds, MS gadryd

² kill any man

³ juggler (one who entertained with songs, stories, or tricks)

⁴ player at dice

⁵ player on the rote

⁶ a companion to any one

⁷ backgammon

⁸ sanction

⁹ of the lower clergy

¹⁰ praise, honor

¹¹ these

¹² ignorant

¹³ do evil

¹⁴ prove

¹⁵ knowest

¹⁶ self-glorification

- Of ryche atyre ys here avaunce,¹
 Prykyng² here hors with olyprauce.³
 Wete þou wel þer ys envye
 Whan one seeþ anoþer do maystrye⁴;
 5 Oþer yn wurdys oþer yn dedys,
 Envye moste of alle hem ledys.
 Yre⁵ and wrapþe may þey nat late⁶;
 Ofte are tournamentys made for hate.
 10 Ȝyf every knyȝt lovede oþer weyl,
 Tournamentes shulde be never a deyl⁷;
 And certys þey falle yn sloghnes,⁸
 Þey love hyt more þan God oþer messe;
 And, þerof ys hyt no doute,
 Þey dyspende more gode þer aboute⁹ —
 15 þat ys ȝeue alle to folye —
 þan to any dede of mercy
 And ȝyt may nat, on no wyse,
 Be forȝete¹⁰ Dame Coveytyse,
 For she shal fonde,¹¹ on alle wyse,¹²
 20 To wynne hors and harnyse
 And ȝyt shal he make sum robbery,
 Or bygyle hys hoste þer¹³ he shal lye¹⁴
 Glotonye also ys hem among,
 Delycyus metes¹⁵ to make hem strong,
 25 And drynke þe wync þat he were lyght
 Wyp glotonye to make hym wyght¹⁶
 Ȝyt ys þere Dame Lecherye,
 Of here¹⁷ cump alle here¹⁸ maystye.
 Many tymes, for wymmen sake,
 30 Knyghteys tournamentys make,
 And whan he wendyþ to þe tournament

¹ boast vaunt² urging on³ vanity, ostentation⁴ wonderful deeds⁵ anger⁶ forsake, desist from⁷ bit⁸ sloth⁹ in this pursuit¹⁰ forgotten¹¹ try¹² by every means¹³ where¹⁴ spend the night¹⁵ viands¹⁶ courageous¹⁷ her¹⁸ their

She sendyþ hym sum pryvy¹ present,
 And byt² hym do for hys lemman
 Yn vasshelage³ alle þat he kan,
 So ys he bete⁴ þere, for here love,
 þat he ne may sytte hys hors above,
 þat peraventure, yn alle hys lyve,
 Shal he never aftyr þryve.

5

BISHOP GROSSETESTE OF LINCOLN

Y shall ȝow telle, as Y have herd,
 Of þe bysshope Seynt Roberd⁵,
 Hys toname⁶ ys Grostest
 Of Lynkolne, so scyþ þe gest⁷
 He loved moche to here þe harpe,
 For mannys wytte hyt makyþ sharpe
 Next hys chaumbre, besyde hys stody,
 Hys harpers chaumbre was fast þerby,
 Many tymes, he nyxtys and dayys,
 He had solace of notes⁸ and layys
 One asked hym onys⁹ resun why
 He had delyte yn mynstralsy,
 He answerede hym on þys manere,
 Why he helde þe harper so dere
 'þe vertu of þe harpe, þurgh skylle and ryxt,
 Wyl destroye þe fendes myxt,
 And to þe croys by gode skylle
 Ys þe harpe lykened weyle
 Anoþer poynt cumforteth me.
 þat God hap sent unto a tre
 So moche joye to here with eere;
 Moche þan more joye ys þere
 With God hymselfe, þere he wonys.¹⁰

10

15

20

25

30

¹ secret² bids³ prowess⁴ beaten, smitten⁵ Robert⁶ surname, nickname⁷ romance, tale⁸ melodies, songs⁹ once¹⁰ where he dwells

- þe harpe þerof me ofte mones¹
 Of þe joye and of þe blys
 Where God hymself wonys and ys.
 þarefor, gode men, ȝe shul lere,²
 5 Whan ȝe any glemen here,
 To wurschep God at³ ȝoure powere,
 As Davyd seyþ yn þe Sautere⁴
 "Yn harpe, yn thabour, and symphan gle,⁵
 Wurschepe God, yn troumpes,⁶ and saute,⁷
 10 Yn cordys,⁸ an organes, and bellys ryngyng,
 Yn al þese, wurschepe ȝe hevene Kyng⁹ "'

QUIET IN CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD DURING THE
TIME OF SERVICE

- Karolles, wrastlynges, or somour-games,¹⁰
 Whoso ever haunteþ any swyche¹¹ shames¹²
 Yn cherche oþer yn chercheȝerd,
 15 Of sacrylage he may be aferd,
 Or entyrludes, or syngyngne,
 Or tabure bcte,¹³ or oþer pypyngne,
 Alle swyche þyng forbodyn es
 Whyle þe prest stondeþ at messe.
 20 Alle swyche to every gode preste ys lothe,
 And sunner wyl he make hym wroth
 þan he wyl þat haþ no wyt,
 Ne undyrstondeþ nat Holy Wryt,
 And specyaly, at hyghe tymes,
 25 Karolles to synge, and rede rymys,
 Noght yn none holy stedes,¹⁴
 þat myxt dysturble þe prestes bedes,¹⁵

¹ reminds² learn³ according to⁴ psalter⁵ music of the symphony (instrument like the tabor)⁶ trumpets⁷ psaltory⁸ chords (strings of a musical instrument)⁹ Ps 150 3-5¹⁰ summer-games¹¹ such¹² disgraceful doings¹³ beating¹⁴ places¹⁵ devotions

Or ȝyf he were yn orysun,¹
 Or any ouper devocyun,
 Sacrylage ys alle hyt tolde.²

THE TALE OF THE MINER

Þyr was a man begunde þe see
 A mynour, woned ³ yn a cyte. 5
 (Mynurs, þey make yn hyllys holes,
 As yn þe West Cuntre men seke coles)
 Þys mynur soȝte stones undyr þe molde,⁴
 Þat men make of ⁵ sylver and golde ,
 He wrogt on a day, and holed ⁶ yn þe hyl ; 10
 A perylous chaunce to hym fyl,⁷
 For a grete party ⁸ of þat yche ⁹ myne
 Hyl dowun yn þe hole, and closed hym ynne.
 Hys felaus alle, þat were hym hende,¹⁰
 Þat he were dede weyl soþely wende , 15
 Þey ȝede ¹¹ and toke hem alle to rede,¹²
 And tolde hys wyfe þat he was dede.
 Þys womman pleynd ¹³ here husbonde sore —
 Wolde God þat many swyche wommen wore ! —
 She hylpe hys soule yn alle þyng, 20
 In almesdede, and yn offryng ,
 She offred for hym to þe auter,
 Ful of wyne, a pecher,¹⁴
 And a feyre lofe withalle,
 Every day as for a pryncypalle,¹⁵ 25
 Alle þat twelvemoneȝ stabely,¹⁶
 But o ¹⁷ day þat passed forby.
 Fewe swyche wymmen now we fynde,

¹ prayer, supplication² counted, considered³ who dwelt⁴ earth⁵ from which are made⁶ dug⁷ befel⁸ part⁹ same¹⁰ kindly disposed¹¹ went¹² took counsel all together¹³ lamented, bewailed¹⁴ pitcher¹⁵ ?¹⁶ regularly¹⁷ one

- þat to here husbondes are so kynde.
 But þys wyfe, at ¹ alle here myȝt,
 Ded for hym boþe day and nyȝt.
 Fyl hyt at þe twelvemoneþ ende,
 5 Hys felaws to þe mounteyne gun wende,
 And come to þe same stede eft
 Þere þey last here werk ilefte,
 Kyȝt þere þey fyrst bygan,
 And perced þurgh unto þys man.
 10 Þe man yn gode state þey fonde,
 Lyvyng withoute wem ² or wounde.
 Everych one þey hadde grete ferly,³
 And þat was grete resun why
 Alle þo men were yn grete were ⁴
 15 How he had lyved alle þat ȝere.
 But he tolde hem everych one
 How he hadde lyved þere alone :
 ' Y have lyved gracyous lyfe
 Þurgh þe curtesye of my wyfe,
 20 For every day she haþ me sent
 Brede and wyne to ⁵ present ;
 But o day certys etc Y noȝt,
 For no mete ⁶ was to me broȝt '
- Þey led þys man unto þe tounne,
 25 And tolde þys myracle up and dounne,
 Fyrst þurogh þe cyte,
 And seþþe ⁷ þurogh þe cuntre.
 Þey asked hym, at þe laste,
 Þat day þat he dyde faste ;
 30 He tolde hem þe dayes name,
 And hys wyfe seyde þe same ,
 Þat day she offred never a deyl ⁸ —
 Þe Gode Fryday he myȝt be weyl

¹ with² harm, injury³ wonder, astonishment⁴ doubt, uncertainty⁵ as a⁶ food⁷ afterwards⁸ bit

Now mow¹ ȝe here þat almesdede
 Gostely² a man wyl fede,
 And so mow ȝe weyl undyrstande
 þat God ys payd of³ gode offrande.

But for alle þys tale, yn ȝoure lyves,
 Truste ȝe nat moche on ȝoure wyves,
 Ne on ȝoure chyldryn, for no þyng,
 But makeþ ȝeself⁴ ȝoure offiying,
 For so kynde a womman as Y of tolde
 Lyveþ nat now, be þou bolde⁵,
 Ne no clerk, þat þys ryme redys,
 Shal fynde a womman of so kynde dedes.

5

10

THE BOOK OF THE KNIGHT OF LA TOUR-LANDRY

Among the numerous instruction-books of the Middle Ages was one known as *Le Livre du Chevalier de la Tour-Landry pour l'enseignement de ses filles*, a series of tales written (collected, rather) in 1371-1372 for his motherless daughters by Geoffroy de la Tour-Landry, a nobleman of Anjou. A similar book written for his sons has disappeared entirely, but this for the daughters was frequently copied—about a dozen manuscript copies being still in existence. A German translation of the work was printed toward the end of the fifteenth century, and an English translation by Caxton in 1484.

Our selections are taken from the Early English Text Society's print (No 33, ed Wright, 1868, revised ed., 1906) of MS Brit Mus Harl 1764, assigned to the reign of Henry VI (1422-1461). This translation, by an unknown hand, is much less literal than Caxton's (cf. Wright's introduction). The selections are from pages 1-4, 22, 26-8, and 39-40 of the edition of 1906. The words in brackets are supplied from Caxton's edition.

PROLOGUE

In the yere of the incarnation of oure Lord MCCCCLXXI, as Y was in a gardin, al hevi and full of thought, in the shadow, about the ende of the monthe of Aprill, but a litell Y rejoysed me of the melodie and 15 song of the wilde briddes. Thei sang there in her⁶ langages, as the thrustill, the thrusshe, the nytinggale, and other briddes, the whiche

¹ may² spiritually³ pleased with⁴ yourself⁵ assured⁶ their

were full of mirthe and joye; and thaire suete songe made my herte to lighten, and made me to thinke of the tyme that is passed of my youthe, how love in gret distresse had holde me, and how Y was in her service mani tyme^z full of sorugh and gladnesse, as mani lovers
 5 ben. But my sorw was heled, and my service wel ysette¹ and quitte, for he gave [me a fayr] wyff, and . . .² that was bothe faire and good, [whiche had knowleche of alle honoure, alle good, and fayre mayntenynge,³] and of all good she was bell⁴ and the floure; and Y delited me so moche in her that Y made for her love-songges, balades,
 10 rondelles, viralles,⁵ and diverse nwe thinges in the best wise that Y couthe. . . And as Y was in the saide gardein, thinkynge of these thoughtz, Y sawe come towardes me my iii daughters, of the whiche I was joyfull, and had grete desire that thei shuld turne to good and worshipe above all ertheli thinges, for thei were yonge, and had but
 15 tendir witte; and so atte the begynnyng a man aught to lerne⁶ his daughters with good ensaumples yevinge, as dede the Quene Proues of Hongrie, that faire and goodly chastised⁷ and taught her daughters, as it [is] contened in her boke. . . . And Y said to hem that Y wolde make a boke of ensaumples, for to teche my doughtres, that thei
 20 might understond how thei shulde governe hem, and knowe good from evell. And so Y made hem extraie⁸ me ensaumples of the Bible and other bokes that Y had, as the gestis⁹ of kingges, the croniclez of Fraunce, Grece, of Inglond, and of mani other straunge londes. And Y made hem rede me everi boke; and ther that Y fonde a good
 25 ensauple, Y made extraie it oute. And thanne Y made this boke. But Y wolde not sette it in ryme, but in prose, for to abregge¹⁰ it, and that it might be beter and more plainly to be understond. And Y made this boke for the gret love that Y had to my said doughtres, the whiche Y loved as fader aught to love his child, having hertely
 30 joye to finde wayes to stere and turne hem to goodnesse and worshippe, and to love and serve her¹¹ Creatoure, and to have love of her neighbours and of the world. And therfor all faders and moders, after good nature,¹² aught to teche her children to leve all wrong and

¹ bestowed² MS illegible³ deportment⁴ bore the bell⁵ virelays⁶ teach⁷ corrected⁸ extract⁹ tales¹⁰ abridge, shorten¹¹ their¹² in the kindness of their hearts

evell waies, and shew hem the true right weye, as wele for the salvacion of the soule as for the worshiþe of the worldely bodi. And therfor Y have made ii bokes, one for my sones, another for my doughtres, for to lerne hem to rede. And in reding, it may not be but that thei shall kepe with hem som good ensaumple for to flee evell, and withholde the good. 5 For it shall not be posible but sumtyme thei shall have mynde on sum good ensaumple, sum good doctrine of this boke, whanne thei knowe or here speke hereafter, as thei fall in the rewe¹ upon sum spekers of suche matiers.

THE STORY OF THE MAGPIE

Ther was a woman that had a pie² in a cage, that spake and wolde 10 tell talys that she saw do. And so it happed that her husbonde made kepe³ a gret ele in a litell ponde in his gardin, to that entent to yeve it sum of his frendes that wolde come to see hym; but the wyff, whanne her husbond was oute, saide to her maide. 'Late us ete the gret ele, and Y will saie to my husbond that the otour⁴ hathe eten 15 hym,' and so it was donc. And whan the good man was come, the pye began to tell hym how her maistresse had eten the ele. And he yode⁵ to the ponde, and fonde not the ele. And he asked his wiff wher the ele was become.⁶ And she wende to have excused her, but he saide her. 'Excuse you not, for Y wote well ye have eten yt, for 20 the pye hathe told me.' And so ther was gret noyse⁷ betwene the man and hys wiff for etunge of the ele. But whanne the good man was gone, the maistresse and the maide come to the pie, and plucked of all the fedres on the pyes hede, saieng 'Thou hast discovered⁸ us of the ele'; and thus was the pore pye plucked. But ever after, 25 whanne the pie sawe a balled or a pilled⁹ man, or a woman with an high forhede, the pie saide to hem. 'Ye spake of the ele.' And therfor here is an ensaumple that no woman shulde ete no lycorous¹⁰ morcelles in the absens and withoute weting¹¹ of her husbond, but yef it so were that it be with folk of worshiþe, to make hem chere¹²; 30 for this woman was afterward mocked for the pye and the ele

¹ successively² magpie³ caused to be kept⁴ otter⁵ went⁶ what had become of the eel⁷ disturbance⁸ betrayed⁹ with hair removed¹⁰ dainty¹¹ knowledge¹² entertainment

THE STORY OF THE OBEDIENT WIFE

Hit happed onis there were iii marchauntes that yede¹ homwarde
 from a faiere, and as thei fell in talkinge, ridyng on the waye, one
 of hem saide. 'It is a noble thunge a man to have a good wiff that
 obeiethe and dothe his biddinge atte all tymes.' 'Be my trouthe,'
 5 saide that other, 'my wiff obeiethe me truly.' 'Be God,' saide that
 other, 'Y trowe myn obeiethe best to her husbonde.' Thanne he that
 beganne furst to speke saide 'Iete² leye a wager of a dener,³ and
 whos wiff that obeiethe worst, lete her husbonde paie for the dener';
 and thus the wager was leyde. And thei ordeined amonges hem how
 10 thei shulde saie⁴ her wyfes, for thei ordeined that everi man shulde
 bidde his wyff lepe into a basin that thei shulde sette afore her, and
 they were suoren that none shulde late his wiff have wetynge⁵ of her
 wager, save only thei shulde saye 'Lokithe,⁶ wiff, that Y comaunde
 be done' However it be, after one of hem bade his wiff lepe into the
 15 basin that he had sette afore her on the grounde, and she ansucred
 and axed wherto,⁷ and he saide 'For it is myn luste,⁸ and Y will ye
 do it' 'Be God,' quod she, 'Y will furst wete⁹ wherto ye will have
 me lepe into the basin' And for nothunge her husbond coude do she
 wolde not do it So her husbonde up with his fust,¹⁰ and gave her ii
 20 or iii gret strokes, and thanne yede thei to the secounde marchauntys
 hous, and he comaunded that whatever he bade do it shulde be do,
 but it was not longe after but he bade his wiff lepe into the basin that
 was afore her on the flore, and she asked wherto, and she saide she
 wolde not for hym And thanne he toke a staffe, and al to bete¹¹ her.
 25 And thanne thei yode to the thridde marchauntes hous, and there thei
 fonde the mete on the borde, and he rowned¹² in one of his felawes
 heres, and saide 'After dyner Y will assaie my wiff, and bidde her
 lepe into the basin' And so thei sette hem to her¹³ dyner And whan
 thei were sette, the good man saide to his wiff: 'Whatever Y bidde,
 30 loke it be done, however it be' And she that loved hym, and dredde

¹ went² let us³ dinner⁴ assay, try⁵ knowledge⁶ see to it⁷ for what purpose⁸ desire⁹ know¹⁰ fist¹¹ beat severely¹² whispered¹³ their

hym, herde what he saide, and toke hede to that worde, but she wost¹ not what he ment. But it happed that thei had atte her dyner rere² eggis, and there lacked salt on the borde, and the good man saide: 'Wiff, sele sus table,' and the wiff understode that her husbonde had saide 'Seyle sus table,' the whiche is in Frenshe. 'Lepe on the borde.' 5 And she, that was aferde to disobeie, lepte upon the borde, and threw down mete and drinke, and brake the verres,³ and spilt all that there was on the borde. 'What,' saide the good man, 'thanne canne⁴ ye none other plaie, wiff?' 'Be ye wode,⁵ sir,' she saide, 'Y have do youre biddinge, as ye bade me to my power, notwithstandinge it is 10 youre harme and myn; but Y had lever ye had harme and Y bothe, thanne Y disobeyed youre biddinge, for ye saide. "Seyle sus table"' 'Nay,' quod he, 'Y saide. "Sele sus table," that is to saie, "Salt on the borde"' 'Bi my trouthe,' she saide, 'Y understode that ye bade me lepe on the borde,' and there was moche mirthe and laughinge. And 15 the other two marchauntes saide it was no nede to bidde her lepe into the basin, for she obeyed ynough; wherthorough⁶ thei consented that her husbond had wonne the wager, and thei had lost bothe. And after⁷ she was gretly preised for her obeisaunce to her husbonde, and she was not bete as were that other ii wyves that wolde not do her 20 husbondes comaundement.

HOW ST BERNARD'S SISTER WAS LED AWAY FROM VANITIES

Hit befell that Seint Bernarde, that was an holy man and of gret richesse and birth, lefte all his possessiones and good, and yede to serve God in an abbey, and for his holy lyving, and weynge⁸ of the heyre, and doinge gret abstinence and almesdedes, made⁹ that 25 he was chose to be abbot of that place. And he hadd a gret ladi to his suster, that come to see hym withe gret meyni,¹⁰ well arraied with riche clothinge, and riche atyred of perles and precious stones. And in this array she come afore her brother, Seint Bernard. And whanne

¹ knew² underdone³ glasses⁴ know⁵ mad⁶ wherefore⁷ afterwards⁸ MS of weynge⁹ brought it about¹⁰ retinue

he sawe her in that array, he turned to her his backe and blessed¹ hym, and the lady was ashamed, and asked whi he ne wolde with her speke. And he saide that he had gret pitee to see her so disguised. and in that pride that she was inne. And she dede of² her riche
 5 atyre and gay clothes, and toke other symple arraye. And he saide: 'Suster, yef Y love youre bodi, by reson Y shuld beter love youre sowle. Wene ye not that ye displese God and his aungells to see in you suche pompe and pride, to aorne³ suche a carion as is youre body, whiche withinne vii dayes that⁴ the soule ys parted from the body, he
 10 saverithe⁵ in suche wise that no creatoure may suffre to be nigh it or see it, with[out] gret abhominacion? Faire suster, whi thenke ye not of⁶ the pore peple that deyen for hungir and colde, that for the sixte part of youre gay arraye xl persones might be clothed, refresshed, and kepte from the colde?' And thus Bernarde declared the foly and the
 15 pompe of the worlde to his suster, and also the savement of her soule. And thanne the ladi wepte, and solde away her clothes, and levid after an holy lyff, and had love of God, aungeles, and holy seintez, the whiche is beter thanne of the worldly pepill.

GESTA ROMANORUM · THE MAGIC IMAGE

The *Gesta Romanorum* is a series of mediæval tales and their morals, originally written in Latin, and widely used for further artistic development or for illustrative material by the writers and preachers of the later Middle Ages. In the collection are versions of the tale of Constance which Chaucer tells in his *Man of Law's Tale*, of Shakespeare's bond- and casket-incidents in *The Merchant of Venice*, and of the Lear story, and many less-known tales appear in later poems and ballads. The date, authorship, and origin of the series are doubtful, for discussions of them see the Latin version, ed Oesterley 1872, revised 1877, and the Early English Text Society's reprint of the Middle English versions (ed Herrtage, 1879, Ex Ser 33). Cf also Swin's translation of the Latin *Gesta Romanorum* in the Bohn Library.

The following selection is from Herrtage's reprint of MS Brit Mus Harl 7333, and is No 3 of the series of tales (pp 7-8). The Middle English versions (3 manuscripts) are all dated in the reign of Henry VI (1422-1461).

Our story has been versified by William Morris as *The Writing on the Image*, in *The Earthly Paradise*.

¹ made the sign of the cross
² took off

³ adorn
⁴ from the time when

⁵ it has an odor
⁶ MS. that

Deodician was emperour in þe cite of Rome, in þe empire of whom was a philosophre, callid Lenoppus, þe which had bi his crafte sette up an ymage, þe which put out an hond with a fynger, and upon the finger was wretyn wordis, *Percute hic*, that is to say, 'Smite here.' This ymage stode þer long, and many a day after þe deth of þe philosophre, and many come to þis finger, and radde the superscripcion, but þey undirstode it not, and therfore þei hadde moch marvaile what it shuld mene. So in a certeyne tyme þer com a clerke of ferr contreys, and ofte tymis he sawe þis ymage, and þis finger with þe scripture.¹ And in a certeyne day he toke a shovill, and dyggyd in the 10 erth, undir þe superscripcion. And anon he fond a hous of marbill undir þe erth; and thanne he went down, and enterid into the hall, and þer he fond so many riche jewelis and marvelous þingys, that no tunge cowde tell. Aftir þis he sawe a bord or a table, isprad with rich metys ynowe þeruppon. Thenne he lokid afer,² and sawe stonding a 15 charbuncle ston, the which gaf lȳt over all the hous; and agenst hit stod a man, with a bowe in his hond, redy for to schete. This clerke perceivid well this sight, and þou[ȝ]te, þog I tell þis sȳt³ whenne I am ago⁴ hens, no man woll trowe⁵ me, and þerfore I woll take som of þis goode in tokne. He stirte to þe bord, and tooke a faire gilt cowpe, 20 and put it up, and anoon the man with þe bowe sheet to the charbuncle ston so soore that it gedde⁶ onsundre, and þo was all the lȳt agon, and þe hous was full of dorknesse. And whenne þe clerke sawe þis, he wepte soore, for he wiste not how to passe out, for dorknesse. And þerfore he dwelte þer still, and þer he endyd his lif, etc. 25

Moralite Goode men, þis ymage that is thus ypaynt⁷ is the devell, þe which seith evermore *Percute hic*, 'Smyte here,' that is to sey, he puttith in our hertes erthely thingis, and biddith us take hem, but he woll never speke of hevinly thingis. The clerke þat smytith with the shovill bitokenyth þe wise men of þis wordle,⁸ and ben advocatis and 30 pletouris,⁹ þe which by sotulte and wickidnesse getith þe goode of þis wordle, and þe vanyteys of þis wordle. And whenne thei have geten hem with such worching, they fyndith many marveilous þingis, þat is

¹ inscription, writing

² afar

³ MS. sȳgh

⁴ gone

⁵ believe

⁶ parted

⁷ painted

⁸ world

⁹ pleaders

to sey, dilectabill pingis of þe wordle, in þe which þei have gret dilectacion. The charbuncle ston þat ȝevith lȝt is þe yowth of man, þe which ȝevith to man hardnesse to have dilectacion and liking of¹ wordly² pingis. The archer þat shetith is deth, þe which stondith evermore
 5 redy in awaite,³ for to shete his dart. Now the clerke þanne takith a knyfe — what is that? The wordly man, trowing to have all thingis at his owne will. But in that trust the archer shetith att þe charbuncle ston, that is to sey, deth shetith his schotys to þe ȝowth of man, and smytith his strength⁴ and his mygte; and þenne lieth the yowth in
 10 derkenesse of synne, in the which derkenesse many men oftyn tyme deyeþ. And þefore lat us fle all lustys and all likingys, and þenne we schull not faile of everlasting lȝt, *ad quam nos perducatur*, etc.

THE BESTIARY

The *Bestiary*, or *Physiologus*, had a history of something like a thousand years before it entered Middle English, which it did as a translation from the Latin of a certain Theobaldus, his work had been already rendered into French by Philippe de Thaon, who dedicated his version to Adela, second wife (1121) of Henry I of England. The Middle English version belongs to ca 1220.

The two subjects dealt with below — the Whale (Turtle) and the Panther — are also treated in Old English poetry (see my edition of the Old English *Isenci*, *Phoenix*, and *Physiologus* (New Haven, 1919), where a much fuller account is given, with references to the bibliography of the subject).

Our text is derived from Matzner, *Allenglische Sprachproben* (155-75), which in turn reproduces Wright and Halliwell, *Reliquiæ Antiquæ* 1: 208-27. Emendations are by Matzner, and (of the *Whale*) by Emerson (*Middle English Reader*), others are mine.

THE WHALE (TURTLE)

Cethegrande⁵ is a fis,⁶
 De moste⁷ ðæt in water is,
 Ðat tu wuldes seien⁸ get,
 Gef ðu it soȝe⁹ wan it flet,¹⁰

¹ MS the

² worldly

³ waiting

⁴ MS strenght

⁵ whale (*properly*, turtle)

⁶ fish

⁷ largest

⁸ say

⁹ saw

¹⁰ floated

Ðat it were an eilond ¹
 Ðat sete ² on ³ ðe se-sonð ⁴
 Ðis fis ðat is unríde, ⁵
 Ðanne him hungreð, he gapeð wide;
 Ut of his ðrote it smit ⁶ an onde, ⁷ 5
 Ðe swetteste ðing ðat is o londe.
 Ðerfore oðre fisses to him dragen ⁸;
 Wan he it felen he aren fagen ⁹;
 He cumen and hoven ¹⁰ in his muð;
 Of his swike ¹¹ he arn uncuð ¹² 10
 Ðis cete ¹³ ðanne hise chaveles ¹⁴ lukeð, ¹⁵
 Ðise fisses alle in sukeð,
 Ðe smale he wile þus biðwiken, ¹⁶
 Ðe grete maig he nogt bigripen ¹⁷
 Ðis fis wuneð wið ðe se-grund, ¹⁸ 15
 And liveð ðer evre heil and sund, ¹⁹
 Til it cumeð ðe time
 Ðat storm stireð al ðe se,
 Ðanne sumer and winter winnen. ²⁰
 Ne mai it wunen ðerinne[n], 20
 So drovi ²¹ is te sees grund,
 Ne mai he wunen ðer ðat stund, ²²
 Oc stireð up ²³ and hoveð stille.
 Wiles ²⁴ ðat ²⁵ weder is so ille,
 Ðe sipes ²⁶ ðat arn on se fordriven ²⁷ — 25
 Loð hem is deð, ²⁸ and lef ²⁹ to liven —
 Biloken ³⁰ hem, and sen ðis fis,
 An eilond he wenen ³¹ it is.

¹ island² sat³ MS one (em E)⁴ sea-sand (nom)⁵ unwieldy, bulky⁶ emits⁷ breath⁸ draw near⁹ glad¹⁰ abide¹¹ trickery¹² ignorant¹³ sea-monster¹⁴ jaws¹⁵ shuts¹⁶ deceive¹⁷ seize, get hold of¹⁸ dwells near the bottom of
the sea¹⁹ well and sound²⁰ contend²¹ turbid²² at that time²³ rises²⁴ while²⁵ MS ðar (em E)²⁶ ships²⁷ driven about²⁸ MS ded (em E.)²⁹ dear, pleasant³⁰ look about³¹ they suppose

- Derof he aren swiðe fagen,
 And mid here migt ðarto he dragen
 Sipes on festen,¹
 And alle up gangen,
 5 Of ston mid stel in ðe tunder ²
 Wel to brennen ³ on ⁴ ðis wunder,
 Warmen hem wel, and eten ⁵ and drinken.
 Ðe fir he feleð, and doð ⁶ hem sinken,
 For sone he dived dun to grunde,
 10 He drepeð ⁷ hem alle wiðuten wunde
Significacio. Ðis devel is mikel wið wil and magt
 (So ⁸ wicches ⁹ haven in here craft),
 He doð men hungren, and haven ðrist,¹⁰
 And mani oðer sinful list,¹¹
 15 Tolleð ¹² men to him wið his onde,
 Woso him folegeð,¹³ he findeð sonde.¹⁴
 Ðo arn ðe litte in ¹⁵ leve ¹⁶ lage ¹⁷;
 Ðe mikle ne maig he to him dragen —
 Ðe mikle, I mene ðe stedefast
 20 In rigte leve mid fles ¹⁸ and gast.
 Woso listneð develes lore,
 On lengðe it sal him rewen ¹⁹ sore,
 Woso festeð ²⁰ hope on him,
 He sal him folgen to helle dim.

¹ with reference to fasten-
 ing for the purpose of
 anchoring

² tinder

³ make a fire

⁴ MS one (em E)

⁵ MS heten (em E)

⁶ causes

⁷ slays

⁸ such as

⁹ enchanter, MS witches
 (em E)

¹⁰ thirst

¹¹ pleasure

¹² draw, MS colleð (em E)

¹³ follows, MS folgeð (em
 E)

¹⁴ shame

¹⁵ (who are) in

¹⁶ faith

¹⁷ low

¹⁸ body

¹⁹ rue MS rewen (em.
 E)

²⁰ fasteneth (alluding to
 the anchorage and
 landing)

THE PANTHER

Panter is an wilde der,
 Is non fairere on werlde her;
 He is blac so bon ¹ of qual,²
 Mid ³ wite spottes sapen ⁴ al,
 Wit, and trendled ⁵ als a wel,⁶ 5
 And it ⁷ bicumeð him swiðe wel.
 Worso he wuneð, ðis panter,
 He fedeð him al mid oðer der,
 Of ðo ðe he wile he nimeð ðe cul,⁸
 And fet him ⁹ wei til he is ful. 10
 In his hole siðen ¹⁰ stille
 ðre dages he slepen wille,
 Ðan after ðe ðridde dai
 He riseð and remeð ¹¹ lude so ¹² he mai.
 Ut of his ðrote cumeð a smel 15
 Mid his rem forð over al,
 Ðat overcumeth haliweie ¹³
 Wið swetnesse, Ic gu ¹⁴ seie,
 And al ðat evre smelleð swete,
 Be it dñc, be it wete 20
 For ðe swetnesse off his onde,
 Worso ¹⁵ he walkeð o londc,
 Worso he walkeð,¹⁶ er worso he wuneð,¹⁷
 Ilk der ðe him hereð to him cumeð,
 And folegeð him upon ¹⁸ ðe wold, 25
 For ðe swetnesse ðe Ic gu have told
 Ðe dragunes one ¹⁹ ne stiren nout
 Wiles ²⁰ te panter rameð ogt,²¹

¹ bone, MS bro² whale³ MS mifð⁴ fashioned⁵ round⁶ wheel⁷ MS itt (em. M)⁸ choice, best⁹ himself¹⁰ afterwards¹¹ roars¹² loud as¹³ balsam¹⁴ to you¹⁵ wheresoever¹⁶ MS walked¹⁷ dwells¹⁸ MS upone¹⁹ alone²⁰ while²¹ anything, at all

Oc daren ¹ stille in here pit,
 Als so ² he weren of dede ³ offrigt.⁴

Significacio. Crist is tokned þurg ðis der,

Wos kinde ⁵ we haven told gu her,
 For he is fairer over alle men,
 So evensterre over erðe fen ⁶;
 Ful wel he taunede ⁷ his luve to man
 Wan he þurg holi spel him wan,
 And longe he lai her in an hole —
 Wel him ðat ⁸ he it wulde ðolen ⁹:
 Þre daies slep he al onon,¹⁰
 Þanne he ded was in blod and bon.
 Up he ros, and remede iwis ¹¹ —
 Of helle pine, of hevene blis —
 And steg ¹² to hevene uvenest ¹³;
 15 Þer wuneð wið Fader and Holi Gast.

Amonges men a swete smel ¹⁴
 He let herof — his holi spel,¹⁵
 Worþurg we mugen folgen him
 20 Into his godcundnesse ¹⁶ fin ¹⁷
 And ðat wirm,¹⁸ ure widerwine ¹⁹ —
 Worso ²⁰ of Godes word is dinc ²¹
 . Ne dar he sturen, ne no man deren,²²
 Þe ²³ while he ²⁴ lage ²⁵ and luve beren.

¹ crouch, cower

² if

³ death, MS dede

⁴ frightened

⁵ nature

⁶ mire

⁷ manifested

⁸ MS dat

⁹ endure

¹⁰ uninterruptedly

¹¹ MS in wis (em M)

¹² ascended

¹³ on high, MS uvenest (em M)

¹⁴ MS mel (em M)

¹⁵ teaching

¹⁶ divinity's

¹⁷ utmost reach

¹⁸ serpent

¹⁹ adversary

²⁰ whereso

²¹ mention (*hit din*), MS ðine

²² injure

²³ MS ðer (em M)

²⁴ they

²⁵ law

THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

The Owl and the Nightingale is the earliest specimen in English of the true contention-poem — a verbal contest for supremacy — analogous to the Latin, French, and Provençal *partimen, tenson, plait, jeu-parti*, etc. Its main subject, after the opening personalities, is joy and æstheticism, represented by the nightingale, as opposed to practicality and seriousness, represented by the owl. In Fritz Reuter's *Hanne Nute* (Part 9), the sparrow and the nightingale contrast their modes of life

'Gu'n Abend, Jochen,' seggt sei, 'na?
Ik bun taurugg ut Afrika' —
'Ja,' segg ik, 'sullst di brav wat schamen,
So in de Welt herum tau striken,
Bliw hir bi uns, bi dinesglikan!
An Lotten kannst en Bispill nemen,
De brott nu all den tweiten Satz' —
Dunn lacht s' un seggt 'Mein lieber Spatz,
Dein Lotting ist ein braves Weib,
Un Essen kochen, 'trumpfe knutten,
Un Junge aus die Eier sitten
Ist sicher auch ein Zeitvertreib,
Doch wir, die in der Poesie
Die Aufgab' unsres Lebens finnen,
Wir Kunstler und wir Sangerinnen,
Wir knutten, Jochen, un bruten nie'

'In a group of poets that were active in the South of England at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the author of *The Owl and the Nightingale* stands preeminent. Of striking vigor and originality of mind, possessing a sane critical judgment founded on a considerable culture, and endowed with astonishing poetical gifts for his time and environment, he produced a composition that seems the earliest, and from many points of view the best, original long poem of a wholly imaginative character written in English before the time of Chaucer' (Wells' ed., p. xxxvii). Elsewhere Wells says 'Theme and treatment grew out of the poet's own immediate experience. The poem is notable in its period for its embodiment of the distinctly national tone and spirit that were beginning to grow out of the amalgamation of the French and the English, the learned and the popular, in the island.' This author's identity is unknown; it would seem probable that he is *not* the Nicholas of Guildford chosen by the disputants as judge.

The poem is found in two manuscripts. Our selection (made with the kind permission of the publishers, Messrs. D. C. Heath & Co.) is from John Edwin Wells' reproduction of MS. Brit. Mus. Cotton Caligula A. 9, which belongs to the first half of the thirteenth century, with his emendations, and a few of my own. The selection includes lines 1-94, 101-285, 287-348.

- Ich was in one sumere ¹ dale,
 In one supe ² digele ³ hale,⁴
 Iherde Ich holde grete tale ⁵
 An hule ⁶ and one ⁷ nixtingale.
 5 þat plait ⁸ was stif and starc ⁹ and strong,
 Sum wile ¹⁰ softe and lud ¹¹ among ¹²;
 An ¹³ aþer aȝen oþer sval,¹⁴
 And let þat wole ¹⁵ mod ¹⁶ ut al
 And eiþer seide of operes custe ¹⁷
 10 þat alreworste ¹⁸ þat hi wuste,
 And hure and hure ¹⁹ of oþere[s] songe,
 Hi holde plaiding ²⁰ supe stronge.
 Þe nixtingale bigon þe speche
 In one hurne ²¹ of one beche,²²
 15 And sat up[on] one vaire boȝe,²³
 þar were abute blosme inoȝe,
 In ore ²⁴ waste ²⁵ picke hegge,
 Imeind ²⁶ mid spire ²⁷ and grene segge.
 Ho ²⁸ was þe gladur voi þe rise,²⁹
 20 And song a vele ³⁰ cunne wise ³¹
 Bet ³² þuȝte þe dreim ³³ þat he were
 Of harpe and pipe þan he nere,
 Bet þuȝte þat he were ishote ³⁴
 Of harpe and pipe þan of prote.
 25 þo stod on old stoc ³⁵ þar biȝide,
 þar þo ule song hire tide.³⁶

¹ a certain² very³ secluded⁴ out of the way spot⁵ dispute⁶ owl⁷ a⁸ debate⁹ severe, sharp¹⁰ sometimes¹¹ loud¹² at intervals¹³ and¹⁴ grew swollen with wrath¹⁵ evil¹⁶ mood¹⁷ character¹⁸ very worst¹⁹ at all events²⁰ debate²¹ corner, nook²² valley, M^s breche²³ a fair bough²⁴ a²⁵ solitary²⁶ mingled²⁷ tall grass²⁸ she²⁹ twig, branch³⁰ in many³¹ kinds of ways³² rather (better), M^s het (em W)³³ seemed the music³⁴ shot, poured forth³⁵ stump³⁶ at her time, when her time came

And was mid iwi al bigrowe ·
 Hit was þare hule earding-stowe.¹
 Þe nixtingale hi 1seʒ,²
 And hi bihold and overseʒ,³
 And þuxte wel wi⁴ of þare hule, 5
 For me hi halt⁵ lodlich and fule.⁶
 'Unwixt,⁷' ho sedc, 'awei þu flo⁸!
 Me is þe wrs⁹ þat Ich þe so¹⁰
 Iwis for þine wle¹¹ lete¹²
 Wel oft Ich mine song forlete¹³, 10
 Min horte atflip,¹⁴ and falt¹⁵ mi tonge,
 Wonne þu art to me 1þrunge¹⁶ -
 Me luste bet speten¹⁷ þane singe,
 Of¹⁸ þine fule ʒoxelinge¹⁹ ·
 þos²⁰ hule abod fort²¹ hit was eve, 15
 Ho ne mixel no leng²² bileve,²³
 Vor hie horte was so gret
 þat wel nex hire fnast²⁴ atschet,²⁵
 And warp²⁶ a word²⁷ þa after longe:
 'Hu þinc[þ] þe²⁸ nu bi mine songe? 20
 We[n]st þu²⁹ þat Ich ne cunne singe,
 þex Ich ne cunne of writelinge³⁰?
 [Oft and] dome³¹ þu dest me grame,³²
 And seist me boþe tone³³ and schame.
 ʒif Ich þe holde on mine vote³⁴ — 25
 So hit bitide³⁵ þat Ich mote! —

¹ the owl's dwelling-place² saw her³ looked at with scorn⁴ evilly⁵ men consider her⁶ loathsome and foul⁷ monster⁸ flee (imp)⁹ worse¹⁰ see¹¹ evil¹² behavior, noise¹³ abandon, stop¹⁴ flees away¹⁵ falters¹⁶ pressed close, drawn close¹⁷ I would rather spit¹⁸ because of¹⁹ guggling²⁰ this²¹ until²² longer²³ remain silent²⁴ breath²⁵ shot away, burst forth²⁶ poured out (*hit* threw)²⁷ speech²⁸ seem it to you²⁹ do you suppose³⁰ trilling³¹ often³² harm, injury³³ reproach³⁴ foot³⁵ would that it might happen

- And þu were ut of þine rise,
 þu sholdest singe an oþer w[i]se.¹
 þe nixtingale gaf answare :
 ' Ȝif Ich me lokī² wit þe bare,³
 5 And me schilde wit þe blete,⁴
 Ne reche Ich noȝt of þine þrete :
 Ȝif Ich me holde in mine hegge,
 Ne recche Ich never what þu segge.⁵
 Ich wot þat þu art unmilde⁶
 10 Wiþ hom⁷ þat ne muȝe from þe⁸ schilde;
 And þu tukest⁹ wroþe¹⁰ and uuele
 Whar þu miȝt over smale fugele.¹¹
 Vorþi¹² þu art loþ¹³ al fuel-kunne,¹⁴
 And alle ho¹⁵ þe driveþ honne,¹⁶
 15 And þe bischricheþ¹⁷ and bigredet,¹⁸
 And wel narewe¹⁹ þe biledet²⁰,
 And ek forþe²¹ þe sulve mose,²²
 Hire þonkes,²³ wolde þe totose.²⁴
 þu art lodlich to biholde,
 20 And þu art loþ in monie volde²⁵ : ✕ 13.7.
 þi bodi is short, þi swore²⁶ is smal,
 Grettere is þin heved þan þu al ;
 þin exene boþ col-blake and brode,
 Riȝt swo ho weren ipeint²⁷ mid wode²⁸ ;
 25 þu starest so²⁹ þu wille abiten³⁰
 Al þat þu miȝt³¹ mid clivre³² smiten ;
 þi bile is stuf and scharp and hoked,
 Riȝt so an owel³³ þat is coked,

¹ in another fashion² may protect myself³ against the open⁴ exposure⁵ say⁶ harsh⁷ those⁸ M^s ac⁹ domineer¹⁰ angrily¹¹ birds¹² therefore¹³ hateful¹⁴ bird-kind¹⁵ they all¹⁶ hence¹⁷ screech at¹⁸ cry out at¹⁹ closely²⁰ pursue²¹ because of that²² the very titmouse²³ willingly²⁴ pull to pieces²⁵ in manifold ways²⁶ neck²⁷ painted²⁸ woad²⁹ as if³⁰ bite to pieces³¹ might, M^s mist³² claws³³ just like an awl

þarmid þu clackes[ɛ] oft and longe,
 And þat is on ¹ of þine songe.
 Ac þu þretest to ² mine fleshe,
 Mid þine clivres woldest me meshe.³
 þe were icundur to one frogge ⁴: 5
 þat sit at mulne ⁵ under cogge ⁶;
 Snales, mus,⁷ and fule wixte,⁸
 Boþ þine cunde and þine rigte.⁹
 þu sittest adai,¹⁰ and flix[s]t anigt,
 þu cupest ¹¹ þat þu art on unwixt. 10
 þu art lodlich and unclene,
 Bi ¹² þine neste Ich hit mene,
 And ek bi þine fule brode ¹³ —
 þu fedest on hom a wel ful fode.¹⁴ ✕ —
 þat oþer xcr ¹⁵ a faukun bredde ¹⁶; 15
 His nest noxt wel he ne bihedde ¹⁷:
 ✕parto þu stele in o¹⁸ day,
 And ledest þaron þi fole ey.¹⁹
 þo hit bicom ²⁰ þat he hæte,²¹
 And of his eyre ²² briddes wrahte, 20
 Ho brohte his briddes mete,
 Bihold his nest, iseð hi ²³ ete:
 He iseð bi one halve ²⁴
 His nest ifuled uthalve.²⁵
 þe faucun was wroþ wit his bridde, 25
 And lude ȝal ²⁶ and sterne chidde:
 "Segget me, wo ²⁷ havet þis ido?
 Ou nas never icunde ²⁸ parto;

¹ one² make threats against³ crush to a pulp
⁴ it would be more suitable
 for you to have a frog
 (for food)
⁵ the mill
⁶ cog, this line is supplied
 from J — lacking in C
⁷ mice⁸ creatures
⁹ are for thy kind and fit for
 thy deserts
¹⁰ by day¹¹ knowest¹² concerning¹³ brood
¹⁴ thou feedest in them a very
 foul lot (*lit* offspring)
¹⁵ year¹⁶ breed¹⁷ guarder¹⁸ one¹⁹ foul egg²⁰ when it happened²¹ it (the falcon) hatched²² its eggs²³ watched them²⁴ on one side²⁵ on the outer part²⁶ cried out aloud²⁷ who²⁸ innate, natural

- Hit was idon ow a lop custe.¹
 Segge me gif ge hit wiste."
 Þo quap þat on and quad þat oþer :
 " Iwis it was ure oẁer² broþer,
 5 þe ẁond³ þat haved þat grete heved :
 Wai þat hi[t] nis þarof bireved⁴ !
 Worp hit⁵ ut mid þe alre-wrste,
 þat his necke him toberste !"
 þe faucun ilcfde⁶ his bridde,
 10 And nom⁷ þat fule bñd amidde,⁸
 And warp hit of⁹ þan wilde bowe,¹⁰
 þar¹¹ pie¹² and crowe hit todrowe.
 Herbi men segget a bispel,¹³
 þeẁ hit ne bo fuliche spel¹⁴
 15 Al so¹⁵ hit is bi þan ungoðe¹⁶
 þat is icumen of fule brode,
 And is meind wit fro monne¹⁷ ,
 Ever he cup þat he com þonnc,¹⁸
 þat he com of þan adel eye,¹⁹
 20 þeẁ he a fro nest²⁰ leie
 þeẁ appel trendli²¹ from²² þon trowe,²³
 þar he and oþer mid growe,
 þeẁ he bo²⁴ þarfrom bicume,²⁵
 25 ↗ He cup wel whonene he is icume.'
 þos word aẁaf²⁶ þe niẁtingale,
 And after þare longe tale
 He song so lude and so scharpe,
 Riẁt so me grulde²⁷ schille²⁸ harpe.

1 in a disagreeable manner,
custe *for* MS wiste

2 own

3 the one yonder

4 alas that he is not bereft of it

5 throw him

6 believed

7 took, seized

8 by the middle

9 cast it from

10 bough

11 where

12 magpies

13 in fable, parable

14 long story

15 just so

16 with the evil person

17 mingled with noble

(well-born) men

18 thence

19 addled egg

20 in a noble nest

21 roll (trundle)

22 MS. fron

23 tree

24 be

25 gone

26 uttered

27 as if some one were twanging

28 shrill

þos hule luste ¹ þiderward,
 And hold hire ege ² noperwa[r]d,³
 And sat tosvolle ⁴ and ibolwe,⁵
 Also ho hadde one frogge isuolze,⁶
 For ho wel wiste and was iwar 5
 þat ho song hire a bisemar,⁷
 And nopeles ho ʒaf ⁸ andsuare.
 'Whi neltu ⁹ flon into þe bare,¹⁰
 And sewi ¹¹ ware ¹² unker ¹³ bo ¹⁴
 Of briȝter howe,¹⁵ of vairur blo ¹⁶?' 10
 'No, þu havest wel scharpe clawe,
 Ne kep ¹⁷ Ich noȝt þat þu me clawe,
 þu havest clivers suȝe stronge,
 þu tuengst ¹⁸ þarmid so doþ a tonge.
 þu þoȝtest, so doþ þine ilike,¹⁹ 15
 Mid faire worde me biswike ²⁰,
 Ich nolde don þat þu me rad[d]est,²¹
 Ich wiste wel þat þu me misraddest
 Schamie þe for þin unrede ²²!
 Unwroȝen ²³ is þi svikelhede ²⁴!
 Schild þine svikeldom vram þe hȝte,
 And hud ²⁵ þat woȝe ²⁶ amon[g] þe rigte.
 Wane ²⁷ þu wilt þin unriȝt ²⁸ spene,²⁹
 Loke þat hit ne bo isene,
 Vor svike[l]dom haved schome and hete,³⁰ 25
 Ȝif hit is ope ³¹ and underȝete ³²
 Ne speddestu ³³ noȝt mid þine unwrenche,³⁴

¹ listened² eyes³ cast down⁴ swollen with anger⁵ puffed with wrath⁶ swallowed⁷ in scorn of her⁸ M^s ʒas (/penciled in margin)⁹ will you not¹⁰ the open¹¹ show¹² M^s bare¹³ which (whether) of us two¹⁴ is¹⁵ hue¹⁶ complexion, appearance (bloom)¹⁷ care, wish¹⁸ press tightly, nip¹⁹ as do those of thy sort²⁰ to deceive, betray²¹ counseled²² ill advice²³ revealed²⁴ treachery²⁵ hide²⁶ wrong²⁷ M^s þane²⁸ injustice, wrong²⁹ spend, show forth³⁰ hate³¹ open, apparent³² perceived³³ you did not succeed³⁴ trick

- For Ich am war,¹ and can wel blenche.²
 Ne helpþ nogt þat þu bo to [þ]riste³ :
 Ich wolde rihte bet mid hste⁴
 þan þu mid al þine strengþe.
 5 Ich habbe on brede⁵ and ech on lengþe
 Castel god on mine rise ,
 " Wel fiht þat wel fiht,"⁶ seiþ þe wise.
 Ac lete we awei þos cheste,⁷
 Vor suiche wordes boþ unwreste⁸ ;
 10 And fo we on⁹ mid rihte dome,¹⁰
 Mid faire worde and mid ysome.¹¹
 þeȝ we ne bo at one acorde,
 We muȝe bet mid fayre worde,
 Witute cheste, and bute fihte,
 15 Plaidi¹² mid foȝe¹³ and mid rihte,
 And mai hure¹⁴ eiþer wat hi wile
 Mid rihte segge and mid sckile.
 þo quap þe hule ' Wu¹⁵ schal us seme,¹⁶
 þat kunne and wille riht us deme¹⁷ ? '
 20 ' Ich wot wel,' quap þe niȝtingale,
 ' Ne þaref¹⁸ þarof bo no tale¹⁹
 Maister Nichole of Guldeforde,²⁰
 He is wis an war of worde ,
 He is of dome suþe gleu,²¹
 25 And him is loþ evrich unþeu²²
 He wot insiȝt in²³ eche songe —
 Wo singet wel, wo singet wronge ;
 And he can schede²⁴ vrom þe rihte
 þat woȝe,²⁵ þat þuster²⁶ from þe lihte '

¹ wary, cautious² avoid by shrinking³ bold⁴ cunning⁵ breadth⁶ cf *Proverbs of Hendyng*,
at 10 (Harl. MS.)⁷ let us be done with this strife⁸ unavailing, MS unwerste⁹ let us begin¹⁰ judgment¹¹ peaceable¹² debate¹³ propriety¹⁴ of us¹⁵ who, MS þu¹⁶ reconcile¹⁷ judge¹⁸ need¹⁹ dispute²⁰ Nicholas of Guildford, spoken
of in lines 1752-3 of the
poem as living at Port-
esham, in Dorset²¹ wise, prudent²² vice, bad habit²³ has intelligence in, knows²⁴ separate, distinguish²⁵ wrong²⁶ darkness

þo hule one wile hi biþogte,¹
 And after þan þis word upbrogte .
 'Ich granti wel þat he us deme,
 Vor þeḡ he were wile² breme,³
 And lof⁴ him were niḡtingale, 5
 And oþer wiḡte⁵ gentc and smale,
 Ich wot he is nu suþe acoled⁶
 Nis he vor þe noḡt afoled,⁷
 Þat he, for þine olde lue,
 Me adun⁸ legge⁹ and þe buve, 10
 Ne schaltu nevre so him queme¹⁰
 Þat he for þe fals dom deme
 He is ~~him~~ ripe¹¹ and fastrede,¹²
 Ne lust¹³ him nu to none unrede¹⁴;
 Nu him ne lust na more pleie, 15
 He wile gon a¹⁵ riḡte weie.'
 Þe niḡtingale was al zare,¹⁶
 Ho haddc ilorned¹⁷ wel aiware¹⁸,
 'Hule,' ho sede, 'seie me soþ,
 Wi dostu þat unwiḡtis¹⁹ doþ? 20
 Þu singist aniḡt and noḡt adai,
 And al þi song is "Wailawai!"
 Þu miḡt mid þine songe afere²⁰
 Alle þat ihereþ þine ibere²¹,
 Þu schrichest²² and ḡollest²³ to þine fere,²⁴ 25
 Þat hit is grislch²⁵ to ihere,
 Hit þincheþ²⁶ boþc wise and snepe,²⁷
 Noḡt þat þu singe, ac þat þu wepe.
 Þu flḡst aniḡt and noḡt adai,

¹ bethought herself for
a time

² at one time

³ spirited, passionate

⁴ dear

⁵ creatures

⁶ much cooled

⁷ befooled

⁸ below

⁹ would place (lay)

¹⁰ please

¹¹ mature

¹² of firm purpose

¹³ pleasures

¹⁴ unwise action

¹⁵ in

¹⁶ ready

¹⁷ learned

¹⁸ nearly everywhere (OE.

æghwæð)

¹⁹ monsters

²⁰ terrify

²¹ noise, clamor

²² screechest, MS *schirchest*

²³ call out

²⁴ companion

²⁵ horrible

²⁶ MS *þinchest*

²⁷ to wise and to foolish

- þarof Ich wndri,¹ and wel mai,
 Vor evrich þing þat schunet² nîgt,
 Hit luveþ þuster and hatiet³ lîgt,
 And evrich þing þat is lof misdede,⁴
 5 Hit luveþ þuster to⁵ his dede.
 ↪ A wis word, þeḡ hit bo unclene,
 Is fele manne⁶ a muþe⁷ imene,⁸
 For Alvred King hit seide and wrot:
 " He schunet þat hine wl wot.⁹ "
 10 Ich wene þat þu dost also,
 Vor þu flîxt nîktes evermo
 Anoper þing me is awene¹⁰ —
 þu havest anîxt wel brîgte sene¹¹;
 Bî daie þu art stareblind,¹²
 15 þat þu ne sichst ne bo[u] ne rind.¹³
 X Adai þu art blind oper bîsne,¹⁴
 þarbi men segget a uorbisne
 " Rîxt so hit farþ bî þan ungode,
 þat noxt ne sup to¹⁵ none gode,
 20 And is so ful of uvele wrenche¹⁶
 þat him ne mai no man atwrenche,¹⁷
 And can¹⁸ wel þane¹⁹ þustre²⁰ wai,
 And þane brîgte lat awai²¹ "
 So doþ þat boþ²² of þine cunde,
 25 ↵ Of lîgte nabbeþ hi none imunde.²³ "
 þos hule luste supe longe,
 And was oftoneþ²⁴ sup[e] stronge.
 Ho quap: " þu [h]attest²⁵ nîxtîngale;
 þu mîxtest bet hoten²⁶ galegale,²⁷

¹ wonder² shuns³ hates⁴ to which evil-doing is dear⁵ for⁶ of many men⁷ in the mouths⁸ commonly⁹ that which knows him to be foul¹⁰ is in my thoughts¹¹ power of vision¹² purblind¹³ see neither bough nor bark¹⁴ of dim sight¹⁵ looks toward¹⁶ guile, trickery¹⁷ evade, elude; MS -prenche¹⁸ knows¹⁹ the²⁰ dark, MS þurste²¹ abandons the bright one²² those that are²³ thought²⁴ irritated²⁵ are called²⁶ better be called²⁷ chatterbox

Vor þu havest to monie tale.¹
 Lat þine tunge habbe spale² !
 Þu wenest þat þes dai bo þin oȝe³ ;
 Lat me nu habbe mine proȝe⁴ ,
 Bo nu stille and lat me speke, 5
 Ich wille bon of þe awreke.⁵
 And lust⁶ hu Ich con me bitelle,⁷
 Mid riȝte soþe, witute spelle.⁸
 Þu seist þat Ich me hude adai,
 Þarto ne segge Ich nich ne nai⁹ ; 10
 And lust, Ich telle þe warevore,
 Al wi hit is and warevore.
 Ich habbe bile stif and stronge,
 And gode clivers scharp and longe,
 So hit bicumep¹⁰ to havekes cunne ; 15
 Hit is min hiȝte,¹¹ hit is mi wune,¹²
 Þat Ich me draȝe¹³ to mine cunde,
 Ne mai [me] no man þarevore schende¹⁴ ;
 On me hit is wel isene,
 Vor riȝte cunde¹⁵ Ich am so kene. 20
 Vorþi Ich am loþ smale foȝle¹⁶
 Þat floþ bi¹⁷ grunde an bi þuuele¹⁸ :
 Hi me bichermet¹⁹ and bigredeþ,²⁰
 And hore²¹ flockes to me ledeþ.
 Me is lof to habbe reste, 25
 And sitte stille in mine neste ,
 ↙ Vor nere Ich never no þe betere,
 Ȝif²² Ich mid chavling²³ and mid chatere
 Hom schende, and mid fule worde .
 Ne lust me²⁴ wit þe screwen²⁵ chide,²⁶ 30

1 tales
 2 respite, rest
 3 own
 4 turn
 5 avenged
 6 listen
 7 justify
 8 a long story
 9 no nor nay

10 is fitting
 11 joy
 12 delight
 13 turn me
 14 blame, revile
 15 from very nature
 16 to small birds
 17 near
 18 bushes

19 scream at
 20 cry out upon
 21 their
 22 MS. þif
 23 scolding
 24 it does not please me
 25 evil persons
 26 to contend

- Forþi Ich wende¹ from hom wide.²
 Hit is a wise monne dome,³
 And hi hit segget wel ilome,⁴
 Þat me ne⁵ chide wit þe gidie,⁶
 5 Ne wit þan ofne⁷ me ne ȝonie.⁸
 At sume siþe herde I telle
 Hu Alvred sede on his spelle⁹ :
 " Loke þat þu ne bo þare
 Þar¹⁰ chavling boþ and cheste ȝare ;
 10 Lat sottes¹¹ chide, and vorþ þu go ",
 And Ich am wis, and do also.
 And ȝet Alvred seide, an oþer side,¹²
 A word þat is isprunge¹³ wide
 " Þat wit þe fule haveþ imene,¹⁴
 15 ¶ Ne cumeþ he never from him cleine." 5/10
 Wenestu þat haveck bo þe worse
 Þoȝ crowe bigrede¹⁵ him bi þe mershe,
 And goþ to him mid hore chirme¹⁶
 Riȝt so hi wille wit him schirme¹⁷ ⁊
 20 þe havec folȝeþ gode rede,¹⁸
 And fliȝt his wei, and lat him¹⁹ grede.²⁰
 Ȝet þu me seist of oþer þinge,
 And telst þat Ich ne can noȝt singe,
 Ac al mi rorde²¹ is woning,²²
 25 And to ihire grislich²³ þing
 Þat nis noȝt soþ, Ich singe efne,²⁴
 Mid fulle dreme²⁵ and lude stefne.²⁶
 Þu wenist²⁷ þat ech song bo grislich

¹ turn² far³ in the judgment of wise men⁴ often⁵ they do not⁶ foolish⁷ oven, furnace⁸ yawn⁹ instruction¹⁰ where¹¹ fools¹² on the other hand¹³ spread¹⁴ he who has companionship
with the foul¹⁵ cry out upon¹⁶ uproar¹⁷ fight¹⁸ counsel¹⁹ MS. hem²⁰ cry out²¹ speech²² lamenting²³ horrible²⁴ evenly²⁵ melody²⁶ voice²⁷ thinkest

þat þine pipinge nis ilich,¹
 Mi stefne is bold² and nogt unorne,³
 Ho is ilich one grete horne,
 And þin is ilich one pipe
 Of one smale wode⁴ unripe. 5
 Ich singe bet þan þu dest,
 þu chaterest so doþ on Irish prost.
 Ich singe an eve, a nȝte tyme,⁵
 And soppe won hit is bedtime,
 þe þridde siþe at⁶ middelnȝte, 10
 And so Ich mine song adȝte⁷
 Wone Ich iso⁸ anse vorre⁹
 Oþer dairim¹⁰ oþer daisterre.
 Ich do god mid mine þrote,
 And warni men to hore note.¹¹ 15
 Ac þu singest alle longe nȝt,
 From eve fort¹² hit is dailȝt,
 And evre scist þin o song
 So longe so þe nȝt is long,
 And evre croweþ þi wrecche crei,¹³ 20
 þat he ne swikeþ¹⁴ nȝt ne dai
 Mid þine pipinge þu adunest¹⁵
 þas monnes earen þar þu wunest,
 And makest þine song so unwrþ¹⁶
 þa[t] me ne telþ of þar noȝ[t] wrþ¹⁷ 25
 Evrich murȝþe¹⁸ mai so longe ileste,
 þat ho shal liki¹⁹ wel unwreste,²⁰
 Vor harpe, and pipe, and fugeles songe
 Mishikeþ, ȝif hit is to long.
 Ne bo þe song never so murie, 30

¹ is not like² MS. blod³ feeble⁴ weed⁵ in the evening, at the proper time⁶ MS. ad⁷ arrange, prepare⁸ see⁹ afar¹⁰ daybreak¹¹ profit, advantage¹² until¹³ crying¹⁴ ceases¹⁵ dinnest¹⁶ unworthy¹⁷ that men set no store by it¹⁸ joy¹⁹ please²⁰ ill

þat he ne shal pinche¹ wel unmurie²
 3ef he ilestep³ over wille⁴;
 So þu migt pine song aspille.⁵

PIERS THE PLOWMAN

Until 1906, the work called *The Visson* (rather, *Book*) of William concerning *Piers the Plowman* had been for a generation attributed, on the faith of two fifteenth-century memoranda, to William Langland, or Langley, whom Skeat believed to have been born about 1332, and to have died about 1400. Three texts of the poem have been printed, of which the second and third (known as B and C) are revisions and extensions of the first (A). The dates assigned to these are A, 1362; B, 1377; C, after 1390 (probably about 1398). The A-text has 2567 lines, the B-text 7242, and the C-text 7357. All have been edited by Skeat in two volumes (Oxford, 1886).

Professor John M. Manly presents his view, which differs in many respects from that hitherto received, in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. 2. According to him, the twelve cantos, or passus, contained in A, were the work of two different authors, of whom the second wrote Passus 9-12, while B and C represent two revisions, so that there would have been four authors, but since he finds 61 lines at the end of the A-text (12. 57-105, and 12 lines not given in Skeat's large edition, 1. 331) to have been written by a certain John But (or Butt), the whole number of authors would be five.

On the theory of the single authorship, Jusserand has an illuminating chapter in Vol. 1 of his *Literary History of the English People*. For a general bibliography, see *Camb Hist Eng Lit* 2. 490-7.

The passages given below are all from the B-text. They differ so considerably from the A-text that Manly's characterization of the style of the latter sufficiently holds concerning them (*op cit* p. 13). 'As to the style, no summary or paraphrase can reproduce its picturesqueness and verve. It is always simple, direct, evocative of a constant series of clear and sharply-defined images of individuals and groups. Little or no attempt is made at elaborate, or even ordinarily full, description, and color-words are singularly few, but it would be difficult to find a piece of writing from which the reader derives a clearer vision of individuals or groups of moving figures in their habit as they lived. That the author was endowed in the highest degree with the faculty of visualization is proved, not merely by his ability to stimulate the reader to form mental images, but even more by the fact that all the movements of individuals and groups can be followed with ease and certainty. Composition, in the larger sense of structural excellence, that quality common in French literature,

¹ seem² displeasing³ lasts⁴ beyond (the point of) pleasure, MS. unwill⁵ spoil

but all too rare in English, and supposed to be notably lacking in *Piers the Plowman*, is one of the most striking features.'

Our text is from Skeat's smaller edition, based on MS. Laud 581, with certain omitted lines supplied from the large edition; with the omission of the dots which mark the middle of lines; and with changes in punctuation, capitalization, and the joining of words. The lines quoted are *Prolog* 1-122; 3 1-129, 133-68, 5 304-46, 352-9, 364-71, 5 392-478; 6 107-53

PROLOGUE

In a somer seson, whan soft was the sonne,
 I shope¹ me in shroudes,² as I a shepe³ were;
 In habite as an heremite, unholy of workes,
 Went wyde in þis world, wondres to here.
 Ac on a May mornynge, on Malverne hilles,⁴ 5
 Me byfel a ferly⁵ — of fairy, me thougte,
 I was wery, forwardred,⁶ and went me to reste
 Under a brode banke, bi a bornes⁷ side;
 And as I lay and lened, and loked in þe wateres,
 I slombred in a slepyng — it sweyved⁸ so merye. 10
 'Thanne gan I to meten⁹ a merveilouse swevene,
 'That I was in a wilderness — wist I never where;
 As I bihelde into þe est, an hiegh¹⁰ to þe sonne,
 I seigh a toure on a toft,¹¹ trielich¹² ymaked,
 A depe dale binethe, a dongeon þereinne, 15
 With depe dyches and derke, and dredful of sight.
 A faire felde ful of folke fonde I there bytwene,
 (Of alle maner of men — þe mene and þe riche —
 Worchyng and wandryng, as þe worlde asketh¹³
 Some putten hem¹⁴ to þe plow, played ful selde¹⁵; 20
 In setting¹⁶ and in sowyng swonken¹⁷ ful harde,
 And wonnen that¹⁸ wastours¹⁹ with glotonye destruyeth.

¹ robed² rough garments³ shepherd⁴ hills, the Malvern hills are
in Worcestershire, on the
border of Herefordshire⁵ marvel⁶ worn out with wandering⁷ burn's, brook's⁸ rippled⁹ dream¹⁰ on high¹¹ hilltop¹² excellently¹³ requires, demands¹⁴ set themselves¹⁵ seldom¹⁶ planting¹⁷ labored¹⁸ gained what¹⁹ spendthrifts

- And some putten hem to pruyde — apparaild hem þereafter¹,
 In contenance² of clothyng comen disgised.
 In prayers and in penance putten hem manye,
 Al for love of owre Lorde lyveden ful streyte,³
 5 In hope for to have hevenliche⁴ blisse,
 As ancre⁵ and heremites that holden hem in here selles,
 And coveiten nought in contre to kairen aboute⁶
 For no likerous liflode,⁷ her lykam⁸ to plesse.
 And somme chosen chaffare⁹, they cheven¹⁰ the bettere —
 10 As it semeth to owre syxt that suche men thryveth,
 And somme murthes to make, as mynstralles conneth,¹¹
 And geten gold with here glee — giltles, I leve.¹²
 Ac japers¹³ and jangelers,¹⁴ Judas chylderen,
 Feynen hem fantasies, and foles hem maketh,
 15 And han here witte at wille, to worche, ȝif þei sholde;
 'That Poule precheth of hem I nel nought preve it here:
Qui turpiloquium loquitur is Luciferes hyne¹⁵
 Bidders¹⁶ and beggeres fast aboute zede,¹⁷
 With her belies and her bagges of bred ful ycrammed;
 20 Fayteden¹⁸ for here fode, fougten atte ale,
 In glotonye, God it wote, gon hii to bedde,
 And risen with ribaudye,¹⁹ tho Roberdes knaves;
 Slepe and sori sleuthe²⁰ seweth²¹ hem evre.
 Pilgrymes and palmers plighted hem togidere
 25 To seke Seynt James,²² and seyntes in Rome.
 'Thei went forth in here wey, with many wise tales,

¹ accordingly² outward appearance³ strictly⁴ of the kingdom of heaven⁵ anchorites⁶ go about⁷ dainty living⁸ body⁹ a merchant's life¹⁰ achieved, prospered¹¹ know how to do¹² believe¹³ jesters¹⁴ jongleurs¹⁵ servant¹⁶ beggars¹⁷ went¹⁸ begged decentfully¹⁹ ribaldry, sin²⁰ sloth²¹ pursue²² St James of Compostella

17. *Qui . . . loquitur*: this is not from St Paul, but it bears some resemblance to Eph 5 4 and Col 3 8

22. *Roberdes knaves*: the so-called Roberts men were robbers and vagabonds (perhaps originally Robin Hood's men)

And hadden leve to lye al here lyf after.

I seigh somme that seiden þei had ysougt seyntes ;
To eche a tale þat þei tolde here tonge was tempred to lye
More þan to sey soth, it semed bi here speche.

Heremites on an heep,¹ with hoked staves, 5
Wenten to Walsyngham,² and here wenches after ;
Grete lobyces³ and longe, that loth were to swynke,
Clothedden hem in copis,⁴ to ben known fram othere,
And shopen⁵ hem heremites, here ese to have.

I fonde þere freris — alle þe foure ordres 10
Preched þe peple for profit of hemselven ;
Glosed⁶ þe gospel as hem good lyked,⁷
For covetise of copis construed it as þei wolde.
Many of þis maistres freris mowe clothen hem at lykyng,
For here money and marchandise marchen togideres , 15
For sith Charite haþ be chapman,⁸ and chief to shryve lordes,
Many ferlis han fallen in a fewe ȝeris.

But⁹ Holy Chirche and hui holde better togideres,
The most myschief on molde¹⁰ is mountyng wel faste.

Þere preched a pardonere, as he a prest were , 20
Brouȝte forth a bulle¹¹ with bishopes seles,
And seide þat hymself myȝte assoilen¹² hem alle
Of falsched of fastyng, of vowes ybroken.
Lewed men leved hym wel, and lyked his wordes ;
Comen up knelyng, to kissen his bulles ; 25
He bonched¹³ hem with his brevet,¹⁴ and blered here eyes,
And rauȝte¹⁵ with his ragman¹⁶ rynges and broches ;
Thus þey geven here golde, glotones to kepe,

¹ in great numbers

² to the shrine of Our Lady
of Walsingham—a popu-
lar pilgrimage

³ lubbers

⁴ friars' capes or cloaks

⁵ made

⁶ glossed, commented on

⁷ pleased them well

⁸ love has become a trades-
man

⁹ unless

¹⁰ on the earth

¹¹ a papal bull

¹² absolve

¹³ banged, beat

¹⁴ letter of indulgence

¹⁵ obtained

¹⁶ bull

10. four ordres · the four orders of friars were the Carmelites (white friars), Augustines (Austin friars), Dominicans (black friars), and Minorites (gray friars)

- And leveth ¹ such loseles ² þat lecherye haunten.³
 Were þe bischop yblissed,⁴ and worth bothe his eres,
 His seel shulde nougt be sent to deceyve þe peple,
 Ac it is nauht by ⁵ þe bischop þat þe boy precheth,
 5 For the parisch prest and þe pardonere parten þe silver
 That þe poraille ⁶ of þe parisch sholde have, ȝif þei nere.⁷
 Persones ⁸ and parisch prestes pleynd hem to þe bischop
 Þat here parissches were pore, sith þe pestilence-tyme,
 To have a lycence and a leve at London to dwelle,
 10 And syngen þere for symonye — for silver is swete.
 Bischopes and bachelers,⁹ bothe maistres and doctours,
 Þat han cure ¹⁰ under Criste, and crounyng ¹¹ in tokne
 And signe þat þei sholden shryven here paroschienes,
 Prechen and prey for hem, and þe pore fede,
 15 Liggen in London — in Lenten, an elles ¹²
 Somme serven þe kyng, and his silver tellen ¹³,
 In Cheker ¹⁴ and in Chancerye chalengen ¹⁵ his dettes
 Of wardes ¹⁶ and wardmotes,¹⁷ weyves and streyves ¹⁸
 And some serven as servantz lordes and ladyes,
 20 And in stede of stuwardes sytten and demen.¹⁹
 Here messe and here matynes, and many of here oures,²⁰
 Arn don undevoutlych, drede is at þe laste
 Lest Crist in consistorie ²¹ acorse ful manye.
 I parceyved of þe power þat Peter had to kepe,
 25 To bynde and to unbynde, as þe boke telleth,²²
 How he it left wiþ love, as owre Lorde hight,²³
 Amonges foure vertues — þe best of all vertues,
 Þat cardinales ben called, and closyng ȝatis ²⁴ —

¹ believe² wretches (vagabonds)³ practise⁴ a holy (blessed) man⁵ concerning⁶ poor people⁷ if it were not for them⁸ parsons⁹ young men¹⁰ a charge¹¹ the tonsure¹² and at other times¹³ count¹⁴ the court of the Exchequer¹⁵ claim¹⁶ wardships¹⁷ ward-courts¹⁸ waifs and strays — abandoned property or that for which there were no heirs¹⁹ judge²⁰ canonical hours²¹ court tribunal, here, Last Judgment²² Matt 16 19²³ bade²⁴ with power to close gates, because 'cardinal' is derived from *cardo*, a hinge

þere Crist is in kyngdome to close and to shutte,
 And to opne it to hem, and hevene blisse shewe.
 Ac of þe cardinales atte courte¹ þat caught of² þat name,
 And power presumed in hem a Pope to make,
 To han þat power þat Peter hadde, inpugnen I nelle,³ 5
 For in love and letterure⁴ þe eleccioun bilongeth;
 Forþi I can and can nauhte⁵ of courte speke more.
 þanne come þere a kyng — knyȝthod hym ladde;
 Miȝt of þe comunes made hym to regne;
 And þanne cam Kynde Wytte,⁶ and clerkes he made, 10
 For to conseilke þe kyng, and þe comune save.
 The kyng and knyȝthode, and clergie bothe,
 Casten⁷ þat þe comune shulde hemself fynde⁸
 þe comune contrevēd⁹ of Kynde Witte craftes,
 And for profit of alle þe poeple, plowmen ordeygned, 15
 To tile¹⁰ and travaile, as Trewe Lyf askep
 þe kyng and þe comune, and Kynde Witte þe thridde,
 Shope¹¹ lawe and lewte — eche man to knowe his owne.

MEED THE MAIDEN

Now is Mede¹² þe mayde, and na mo of hem alle,
 With bedellus¹³ and wiþ bayllyves brouȝt biȝor þe kyng. 20
 The kyng called a clerke — can I nouȝt his name —
 To take Mede þe mayde, and make hire at ese.
 'I shal assaye hir myself, and sothelich appose¹⁴
 What man of þis molde þat hire were leveste¹⁵,
 And if she worche bi my witte, and my wille folwe, 25
 I wil forgyve hir þis gylte, so me God help!'

Curteysliche þe clerke þanne, as þe kyng hight,

¹ at the court of Rome² received³ I will not raise question⁴ learning

⁵ can because of what he
knows, but cannot be-
cause of his reverence

⁶ common sense⁷ contrived⁸ provide food for themselves⁹ devised¹⁰ till, cultivate¹¹ created¹² bribery, 'graft'¹³ beadles, summoners¹⁴ inquire¹⁵ dearest

Toke Mede bi þe middel,¹ and brougte hir into chaumbre,
And þere was myrthe and mynstralcy, Mede to plesse.

They þat wonyeth in Westmynstre worschipe hir alle,
Gentelliche, wiþ joye, þe justices somme²

- 5 Busked³ hem to þe boure⁴ þere þe birde⁵ dwelled,
'To conforte hire kyndely, by clergise⁶ leve,
And seiden · 'Mourne nought, Mede, ne make þow no sorwe
For we wil wisse⁷ þe kyng, and þi wey shape
'To be wedded at þi wille, and where þe leve liketh,⁸
10 For al Conscience caste⁹ or craft, as I trowe !'

Middeliche Mede þanne mercyed¹⁰ hem alle
Of þeire gret goodnesse, and gaf hem uchone
Coupes¹¹ of clene golde, and coppis¹² of silver,
Rynges with rubies, and riches manye,
15 'The leste man of here meyne¹³ a motoun¹⁴ of golde.
'Thanne laugte¹⁵ þei leve, þis lordes, at¹⁶ Mede

With that comen clerkis to conforte hir þe same,
And beden hire be blithe — 'for we beth þine owne,
For to worche þi wille þe while þow mygte laste'
20 Hendeliche¹⁷ heo þanne bihight¹⁸ hem þe same,
'To 'love þow lell,¹⁹ and lordes to make,
And in þe consistorie atte courte do calle²⁰ þowre names;
Shal no lewdnesse lette²¹ þe leode²² þat I lovy, e,
'That he ne worth first avanced — for I am biknownen²³ —

- 25 þere konnyng²⁴ clerkes shul klokke²⁵ bihynde.'

þanne come þere a confessoure, coped as a frere,
To Mede þe mayde he mellud²⁶ þis wordes,
And seide ful softly — in shrifte²⁷ as it were :

¹ waist

² some of them

³ hastened

⁴ bower, lady's chamber

⁵ lady

⁶ learning's

⁷ guide

⁸ you please

⁹ conscience's contrivance

¹⁰ thanked

¹¹ bowls

¹² cups

¹³ household

¹⁴ a French gold coin worth
about five shillings,
stamped with the impres-
sion of the Lamb of God

¹⁵ took

¹⁶ of

¹⁷ courteously

¹⁸ promised

¹⁹ loyally

²⁰ cause to be called

²¹ ignorance hinder

²² man

²³ well known

²⁴ wise, learned

²⁵ limp, hobble

²⁶ spoke

²⁷ confession

'þeig lewed men and lered ¹ men had leyne by þe bothe,
 And Falsenesse haved yfolwed þe al þis fyfty wyntre,
 I shal assoille þe myselve for a seme ² of whete,
 And also be þi bedeman, ³ and bere wel þi message
 Amonges knyghtes and clerkis, Conscience to torne. ⁴ 5
 Thanne Mede for here mysdedes to þat man kneled,
 And shrove hire of hire shrewednesse ⁵ — shamelees, I trowe ;
 Tolde hym a tale, and toke ⁶ hym a noble, ⁷
 For to ben hire bedeman, and hire brokour als ⁸
 Thanne he assoilled hir sone, and sithen he seyde . 10
 ' We han a wyndowe a wirchyng ⁹ wil sitten us ful heigh ¹⁰ ,
 Woldestow glase ¹¹ þat gable, and grave þeicinne þi name,
 Siker ¹² sholde þi soule be hevene to have '
 ' Wist I that, ' quod þat womman, ' I wolde nougt spare
 For to be ȝowre frende, frere, and faille ȝow nevre, 15
 Whil ȝe love lordes þat lechery haunteth,
 And lakketh nougt ladis þat loveth wel the same.
 It is frelete of flesh — ȝe fynde it in bokes —
 And a course of kynde ¹³ wherof we komen alle ;
 Who may scape þe sklaundre, ¹⁴ þe skathe ¹⁵ is sone amended ; 20
 It is synne of þe sevene sonnest ¹⁶ relessed. ¹⁷
 Have mercy, ' quod Mede, ' of men þat it haunte,
 And I shal kevre ¹⁸ ȝowre kirke, ȝowre cloystre do maken,
 Woves ¹⁹ do whiten, and wyndowes glasen,
 Do peynten and purtraye, and paye for þe makynge, 25
 ' That evry segge ²⁰ shal seyn I am sustre of ȝowre hous '
 Ac God to alle good folke suche gravynge defendeth. ²¹
 To writen in wyndowes of here wel ²² dedes,

¹ learned² load³ beadsman⁴ defeat⁵ sin⁶ gave⁷ a third of a pound sterling⁸ broker also⁹ in process of being made¹⁰ cost us full dear¹¹ provide the glass for¹² certain¹³ nature¹⁴ disgrace¹⁵ harm¹⁶ soonest¹⁷ forgiven¹⁸ cover¹⁹ walls²⁰ person²¹ forbids²² good

26. *sustre*: any wealthy person could belong to a religious order of friars through a 'letter of fraternity'

- On aventure¹ pruyde be peynted þere, and pompe of þe worlde;
 For Crist knoweþ þi conscience and þi kynde wille,²
 And þi coste,³ and þi coventise, and who þe catel ougte.⁴
 Forþi I lere⁵ ȝow, lordes, leveþ suche werkes —
- 5 To writen in wyndowes of ȝowre wel dedes,
 Or to greden⁶ after Goddis men whan ȝe delen doles;
 An aventure ȝe han ȝowre hire here,⁷ and ȝoure hevene als,
*Nesciat sinistra quid faciat dextra*⁸
 Lat nouȝte þi left half, late ne rathe,⁹
- 10 Wyte what þow worchest with þi riȝt syde;
 For þus, bit¹⁰ þe gospel, gode men do here almesse.
 Meires¹¹ and maceres,¹² that menes¹³ ben bitwene
 Þe kyng and þe comune to kepe þe lawes,
 To punyschen on pillories and pynnyng-stoles¹⁴
- 15 Brewesteres¹⁵ and bakeres,¹⁶ bocheres and cokes;
 For þise aren men on þis molde þat moste harme worceth
 To þe pore peple þat parcelmele¹⁷ buggen,¹⁸
 For they poysoun þe peple priveliche¹⁹ and oft,
 Thei rychen²⁰ þorw regraterye,²¹ and rentes hem buggen
- 20 With þat þe pore people shulde put in here wombe²²,
 For toke þei on²³ trewly, þei tymbred nouȝt²⁴ so heige,
 Ne bouȝte non burgages,²⁵ be ȝe ful certeyne.
 Ac Mede þe mayde þe maire hath bisouȝte,
 Of alle suche sellers sylver to take,
- 25 Or presentz withoute pens, as peces of silver,
 Ringes, or other ricchesse, þe regrateres to maynetene:
 'For my love,' quod that lady, 'love hem uch one,
 And soffre hem to selle somdele²⁶ ageins resoun.'

¹ lest perchance² natural disposition³ expenses⁴ who really owned the property⁵ teach⁶ cry after, send for⁷ Matt. 6. 2⁸ Matt. 6. 3⁹ early¹⁰ bids¹¹ mayors, magistrates¹² mace-bearers (officers of the courts)¹³ intermediaries¹⁴ stools of punishment¹⁵ brewers¹⁶ bakers¹⁷ in small quantities¹⁸ buy¹⁹ secretly²⁰ grow rich²¹ selling retail²² stomach²³ if they took in money²⁴ would not build²⁵ town-dwellings²⁶ somewhat

Salamon þe sage a sarmoun he made,
 For to amende maires, and men þat kepen lawes,
 And tolde hem þis teme,¹ þat I telle thynke :

*Ignis devorabit tabernacula eorum qui libenter accipiunt munera, etc.*²

Amonge þis lettered ledes,³ þis Latyn is to mene 5
 That fyre shal falle, and brenne al to blo askes⁴
 The houses and þe homes of hem þat desireth
 Ȝiftes or xeres-ȝyves⁵ bicause of here offices.

The kynge fro conseil le cam, and called after Mede,
 And ofsent⁶ hir als wythe⁷ with serjauntes manye, 10
 That brouȝten hir to bowre with blisse and with joye.
 Curteisliche þe kynge þanne comsed⁸ to telle —
 To Mede þe mayde melleth⁹ þise wordes ·
 ' Unwittily, womman, wrouȝte hastow oft,
 Ac worse wrouȝtestow nevre þan þo¹⁰ þow fals toke¹¹; 15
 But I forgyve þe þat gilte, and graunte þe my grace ;
 Hennes to þi deth-day do so na moie.

I have a knyȝte, Conscience, cam late fro biȝunde¹²;
 Ȝif he wilneth þe to wyf, wyltow hym have¹³ ·
 ' Ȝe, lorde,' quod þat lady, ' Lorde forbede elles ! 20
 But¹⁴ I be holely at ȝowre heste, lat hange¹⁵ me sone !¹⁶

And þanne was Conscience calde to come and appiere
 Bifor þe kynge and his conseil le, as clerkes and othere.
 Knelynge, Conscience to þe kynge louted,¹⁷
 To wite what his wille were, and what he do shulde 25
 ' Woltow wedde þis womman,' quod þe kynge, ' ȝif I wil assente —
 For she is fayne of þi felawship — for to be þi make¹⁸ ? '

Quod Conscience to þe kynge ' Cryst it me forbede !
 Ar¹⁷ I wedde suche a wyf, wo me byȝde !
 For she is frele¹⁸ of hir feith, fykel of here speche, 30

¹ text, theme

² Job 15 34

³ persons

⁴ livid ashes

⁵ New Year's gifts (extorted
as bribes)

⁶ sent after

⁷ as quickly as possible

⁸ began

⁹ speaks

¹⁰ when

¹¹ took to thee Falsehood

¹² across the sea

¹³ except

¹⁴ have me hanged

¹⁵ made obeisance

¹⁶ mate

¹⁷ before

¹⁸ frail

- And maketh men mysdo many score tymes ;
 Truste of hire tresore treith ¹ ful manye.
 Wyves and widewes wantounes she techeth,²
 And lereth ³ hem leccherye that loveth hire *ȝiftes*.
 5 *Ȝowre* fadre she felled þorw fals biheste,
 And hath apoyssounde Popis,⁴ and peired ⁵ Hoh Cherche.
 Is nauȝt a better baude, bi hym þat me made,
 Bitwene hevenc and helle — in erthe though men sougte. . . .
 Sisours ⁶ and sompnoures ⁷ — suche men hir preiseth ,
 10 Shireves of shires were shent *ȝif* she nere,⁸
 For she doþ men lese here londe and here lyf bothe.
 She leteth passe prisoneres, and payeth for hem ofte,
 And gyveth þe gailers golde and grotes ⁹ togideres,
 To unfettre þe fals — fle where hym lyketh !
 15 And takeþ þe trewe bi þe toppe,¹⁰ and tieth hym faste,
 And hangeth hym for hatred þat harme dede nevre
 To be cursed in consistorie she counteth nouȝt a russhe ,
 For she copeth ¹¹ þe comissarie, and coteth ¹² his clerkis ,
 She is assoilled ¹³ as sone as hirself liketh,
 20 And may neȝe as moche do in a moneth one ¹⁴
 As *ȝowre* secret seel in syx score dayes.
 For she is prive ¹⁵ with þe Pope — provisoures ¹⁶ it knoweth —
 For Sire Symonye and hirselve seleth ¹⁷ hire bulles
 She blesseth þise bisshopes, þeiȝe þey be lewed,
 25 Provendreth persones,¹⁸ and prestes meynnteneth
 To have lemmannes and lotebies ¹⁹ alle here lifdayes,
 And bringen forth barnes aȝein forbode ²⁰ lawes.
 There she is wel with þe kynge wo is þe rewme,

¹ betrays² teaches to be³ teaches⁴ poisoned Popes⁵ injured⁶ jurymen⁷ summoners⁸ would be lost if it were not
for her⁹ groats¹⁰ top, head¹¹ provides a cope for¹² provides coats for¹³ absolved¹⁴ by herself¹⁵ intimate¹⁶ provisors (persons named
by the Pope for a living
not vacant)¹⁷ seal¹⁸ supports parsons¹⁹ concubines²⁰ prohibitive

5. *Ȝowre fadre*: probably Edward II, father of Edward III (king at the time the first version was written)

For she is favorable to Fals,¹ and fouleth Trewthe ofte.
 Bi Jesus, with here jeweles zowre justices she shendeth,²
 And lith³ agein þe lawe, and letteth hym þe gate⁴
 That Feith may nougte have his forth,⁵ here⁶ florenes go so pikke.
 She ledeth þe lawe as hire list, and love-dayes⁷ maketh, 5
 And doth men lese þorw hire love þat lawe myȝie wynne —
 þe mase⁸ for a mene man, þouȝ he mote⁹ evre.¹⁰
 Lawe is so lordeliche, and loth to make ende,
 Withoute presentz or pens she pleseth wel fewe.
 Barounes and burgeys she bryngeth in sorwe, 10
 And alle þe comune in kare þat coveyten lyve¹¹ in trewthe,
 For Clergye¹² and Coveitise¹³ she coupleth togideres
 þis is þe lyf of that lady — now Lorde ȝif hir sorwe,
 And alle that meynteneth here men, meschaunce hem bityde!
 For pore men mowe have no powere to pleyne¹⁴ hem, þouȝ þei smerte, 15
 Suche a maistre is Mede amonge men of gode¹⁵

GLUTTONY

Now bigynneth Gloutoun¹⁶ for to go to schrifte,
 And kares hym¹⁶ to kirkeward,¹⁷ his coupe¹⁸ to schewe,
 Ac Beton þe brewestere bad hym good morwe,
 And axed of hym with þat whiderward he wolde 20
 'To Hoh ('herche,' quod he, 'for to here masse,
 And sithen¹⁹ I wil be shryven, and synne na more'
 'I have gode ale, gossib,' quod she, 'Gloutoun, wiltow assaye?'
 'Hastow auxte in þi purs²⁰?' — any hote spices?'
 'I have peper and piones,²¹' quod she, 'and a pounce of garlike. 25
 A ferthyngworth of fenel-seed for fastyng-dayes'

¹ MS the fals² destroys³ lies⁴ hinders him the way⁵ egress⁶ her⁷ days for holding court, and settling differences⁸ disappointment⁹ plead, argue¹⁰ MS hir evre¹¹ desire to live¹² Learning¹³ Avarice¹⁴ make complaint¹⁵ Glutton¹⁶ repairs him¹⁷ to church, cf (A V) 2 Cor
1 12, 1 Thess 1 8¹⁸ guilt, sin¹⁹ afterwards²⁰ pouch, wallet²¹ peony-seeds

- panne goth Glotoun in, and grete othes after ;
 Cesse¹ þe souteresse² sat on þe benche,
 Watte þe warner³ and hys wyf bothe,
 Tymme þe tynkere, and tweyne of his prentis,⁴
 5 Hikke þe hakeneyman,⁵ and Hughe þe nedeler,⁶
 Clarence of Cokkeslane,⁷ and þe clerke of þe cherche,
 Dawe þe dykere,⁸ and a dozeine other,
 Sire Piers of Pridie, and Peronelle⁹ of Flaundes,
 A ribibour,¹⁰ a ratonere,¹¹ a raker of Chepe,¹²
 10 A ropere,¹³ a redyngkyng,¹⁴ and Rose þe dissheres,¹⁵
 Godfrey of Garlekehith,¹⁶ and Gryfin þe Walshe,¹⁷
 And upholderes¹⁸ an lepe erly bi þe morwe
 Geven Glotoun with glad chere good ale to hansel.¹⁹
 Clement þe cobelere cast of²⁰ his cloke,
 15 And atte new faire²¹ he nempned²² it to selle,
 Hikke þe hakeneyman hitte²³ his hood after,
 And badde Bette²⁴ þe bochere ben on his side
 Þere were chapmen ychose þis chaffare to preise²⁵ ;
 Whoso haveth þe hood shuld have amendes of þe cloke.
 20 Two risen up in rape,²⁶ and rouned²⁷ togideres,
 And preised þese penyworthes apart bi hemselve,
 Þei couth nouȝte bi her conscience acorden²⁸ in treuthe,
 Tyl Robyn þe ropere arose bi þe southe,
 And nempned hym for a noumpere²⁹ — þat no debate nere —

¹ short for Cecily, or Cecilia² woman shoemaker³ gamekeeper⁴ apprentice⁵ man who keeps horses for hire⁶ neck-kneller⁷ a region occupied by women of ill repute⁸ ditcher⁹ a proverbial name for a gaily dressed, bold faced woman¹⁰ player on the rebeck¹¹ rat-catcher¹² street sweeper of Cheap-side¹³ rope-maker¹⁴ retainer¹⁵ dish-seller¹⁶ a region on the bank of the Thames where garlick was sold¹⁷ Welshman¹⁸ furniture-brokers¹⁹ as an earnest or pledge (to propitiate him)²⁰ off²¹ at the new fair (to chaffer at the new fair - to exchange)²² named²³ threw down²⁴ Bartholomew²⁵ appraise, value²⁶ haste²⁷ whispered²⁸ agree²⁹ an umpire

x in Skeat suggests that the scene may be the Boar's Head, in Eastcheap (cf. *King Henry IV*)

For to trye þis chaffare bitwixen hem þre.
 Hikke þe hostellere¹ hadde þe cloke,
 In covenauhte þat Clement shulde þe cuppe fille,
 And have Hikkes hode hostellere,² and holde hym yserued³;
 And whoso repented rathest⁴ shulde arise after, 5
 And grete Sire Glotoun with a galoun ale.

þere was laughyng and louryng,⁵ and 'Let go þe cuppe'⁶
 And seten so til evensonge, and songen umwhile,⁶
 Tyl Glotoun had yglobbed⁷ a galoun an a jille.⁸ . .

He myȝte neither steppe ne stonde er he his staffe hadde, 10
 And þanne gan he go liche a glewmannes bicche,⁹
 Somme tyme aside, and somme tyme arrere,¹⁰
 As whoso leyth lynes for to lacche foules¹¹
 And whan he drowgh to þe dore, þanne dymmed his eighen,
 He stumbled on þe thressshewolde, an threwe¹² to þe erthe 15
 Clement þe cobelere cauȝte hym bi þe myddel,
 For to lifte hym alofte, and leyde him on his knowes¹³

With al þe wo of þis worlde, his wyf and his wenche
 Baren hym home to his bedde, and brouȝte hym þerinne,
 And after al þis excesse, he had an accide,¹⁴ 20
 þat he slepe Saterdag and Sondag til sonne ȝede¹⁵ to resten
 þanne waked he of his wynkyng,¹⁶ and wiped his eyghen,
 þe fyrste worde þat he warpe¹⁷ was 'Where is þe bolle¹⁸?'
 His wif gan edwite¹⁹ hym þo how wikkedlich he lyved,
 And Repentance riȝte so rebuked hym þat tyme. 25

¹ an innkeeper (who also let horses for hire, cf 346
 v, 16)

² the hood of Hikke the innkeeper

³ contented

⁴ soonest

⁵ scowling

⁶ at intervals

⁷ gulped down

⁸ gill

⁹ a (blind) minstrel's dog

¹⁰ backwards

¹¹ catch birds

¹² fell

¹³ knees

¹⁴ fit of sloth

¹⁵ went

¹⁶ slumber

¹⁷ uttered

¹⁸ cup, bowl

¹⁹ reproach

SLOTH THE PARSON

panne come Sleuthe ¹ al bislabeled, ² with two slymy eigen,
 'I most sitte,' seyde þe segge, ³ 'or elles shulde I nappe;
 I may nouȝte stonde ne stoupe, ne withoute a stole ⁴ knele.
 Were I brouȝte abedde, . . .

- 5 Sholde no ryngyng do me ryse ar I were rype to dyne.'
 He bygan 'Benedicite' with a bolke, ⁵ and his brest knocked,
 And roxed ⁶ and rored, and rutte ⁷ atte laste.
 'What! awake, renke ⁸!' quod Repentance, 'and rape ⁹ þe to shrifte.'
 'If I shulde deye bi ¹⁰ þis day, me liste ¹¹ nouȝte to loke,
 10 I can nouȝte perfytly my Pater Noster, as þe prest it syngeth,
 But I can rymes of Robyn Hood, and Randolf Erle of Chestre, ¹²
 Ac neithur of owre Lorde ne of owre Lady, þe leste þat evere was made.

I have made vowes fourty, and forȝete hem on þe morne,
 I parfourned ¹³ nevere penaunce, as þe prest me higte,

- 15 Ne ryȝte sori for my synnes ȝet was I nevere,
 And ȝif I bidde any bedes, ¹⁴ but-if it be in wrath,
 þat I telle with my tonge is two myle fro myne herte.
 I am occupied eche day — haliday and other —
 With ydel tales atte ale, and otherwhile in cherches;
 20 Goddes peyne and his passioun — ful selde þynke I percon.

I visited nevere fieble men, ne fettered folke in puttes ¹⁵,
 I have levere here an harlotrie, ¹⁶ or a somer-game of souteres, ¹⁷
 Or lesynges ¹⁸ to laughe at, and belye my neighbore,
 þan al þat evere Marke made, Mathew, John, and Lucas,
 25 And vigiles and fastyng-dayes — alle þise late I passe, ¹⁹
 And ligge abedde in Lenten, an[d] my lemman in myn armes,
 'Tyl matynes and masse be do, and panne go to þe freres,

¹ sloth² beddibled³ creature⁴ stool⁵ bulk⁶ stretched himself⁷ snored⁸ man⁹ hasten¹⁰ within¹¹ would please¹² 1181-1231¹³ performed¹⁴ offer any petitions¹⁵ dungeons¹⁶ a tale of harlotry¹⁷ summer-game played by shoemakers, consisting of athletic sports, etc¹⁸ lying tales¹⁹ I let pass, pay no heed to

Come I to 'Ite, missa est,'¹ I holde me yserved.²

I nam nouȝte shryven some tyme — but-if sekenesse it make³ —

Nouȝt tweies in two ȝere, and þanne up gesse⁴ I schryve me.

I have be⁵ prest and persoun passynge thretti wynter,

Ȝete can I neither solfe⁶ ne synge, ne seyntes lyves rede, 5

But I can fynde in a felde or in a fourlonge⁷ an hare,

Better þan in *Beatus vir*⁸ or in *Beati omnes*⁹

Construe oon clause wel, and kenne¹⁰ it to my parochienes.

I can holde love-dayes, and here a revs rekenynge,

Ac in canoun¹¹ ne in þe decretales¹² I can nouȝte rede a lyne 10

Ȝif I bigge¹³ and borwe¹⁴ it — but-ȝif it be ytailed¹⁵ —

I forȝete it as ȝerne¹⁶, and ȝif men me it axe

Sixe sithes or sevene, I forsake¹⁷ it with othes,

And þus tene¹⁸ I trewe men ten hundreth tymes.

And my seivauntz — some tyme her salarye is bihynde; 15

Reuthe¹⁹ is to here þe rekenynge whan we shal rede acomptes,

So with wikked wille and wraththe my werkmen I paye.

Ȝif any man doth me a benfait, or helpeth me at nede,

I am unkynde aȝein²⁰ his curteisye, and can nouȝte understonde it,

For I have and have hadde somedeले²¹ haukes maneres 20

I nam nouȝte lured with love, but þere ligge²² aȝte²³ under þe thombe

The kyndenesse þat myne evene-Cristene²⁴ kidde me fernyere,²⁵

Sixty sythes I, Sleuthe, have forȝete it sith,

In speche and in sparynge of speche yspilte²⁶ many a tyme

Bothe flesche and fische, and many other vitailles, 25

Bothe bred and ale, butter, melke, and chese —

Forsleuthed²⁷ in my servyse, til it myȝte serve no man.

I ran aboute in ȝouth, and ȝaf me nouȝte to lerne,

And evere sith have be beggere, for my foule sleuthe,

¹ the closing words of the mass

² satisfied

³ unless sickness bring it about

⁴ by guesswork

⁵ been

⁶ sol-fa, i.e. sing by note

⁷ lot (of land)

⁸ Ps. 1 or 112

⁹ Ps. 128

¹⁰ explain

¹¹ canon law

¹² decretals — a collection
of Popes' edicts

¹³ buy anything

¹⁴ give a pledge for it

¹⁵ marked on a tally

¹⁶ quickly (as may be)

¹⁷ deny

¹⁸ injure

¹⁹ pity

²⁰ in response to

²¹ to some extent

²² lie

²³ I he lure was often baited
with meat

²⁴ fellow-Christian

²⁵ showed me formerly

²⁶ wasted

²⁷ wasted by carelessness

Heu michi, quod sterilem vitam duxi juvenilem ¹

'Repentestow þe naughte?' quod Repentance, and riȝte with þat he
swowned,

- 'Til *Vigilate*,¹ þe veille,² fette³ water at his eygen,
And flatte⁴ it on his face, and faste on hym criede,
5 And seide 'Ware þe fram Wanhope,⁵ wolde⁶ þe bitraye!
"I am sori for my synnes" — sey so to þiselve,
And bete þiselve on þe breste, and bidde hym⁷ of grace,
For is no gult⁸ here so grete þat his goodnesse nys more'
þanne sat Sleuthe up, and seyned⁹ hym swithe,¹⁰
10 And made avowe tofore¹¹ God for his foule sleuthe
'Shal no Sondaye be þis sevene ȝere — but sykenesse it lette¹² —
þat I ne shal do¹³ me er day to þe dere cherche,
And heren matines and masse, as I a monke were,
Shal none ale¹⁴ after mete holde me þennes
15 Tyl I have evensonge herde, I behote to þe rode¹⁵
And ȝete wil I ȝelde aȝein¹⁶ — if I so moche have —
Al þat I wikkedly wan sithen I wytte hadde
And þough my lifode lakke,¹⁷ leten I nelle¹⁸
þat eche man ne shal have his, ar I hennes wende,
20 And with þe residue and þe remenaunt, bi þe Rode of Chestre!
I shal seke treuthe arst,¹⁹ ar I se Rome!²⁰

PIERS THE PLOWMAN

- Now is Perkyn²⁰ and his pilgrymes to þe plowe faren²¹,
To erie²² þis halve-acre holpyn hym manye.
Dikeris and deliveris digged up þe balkes²³,
25 þerewith was Perkyn apayed,²⁴ and preysed hem faste
(Other werkemen þere were þat wrouȝten ful ȝerne,²⁵

¹ (f Mk 13 37

² watcher

³ fetched

⁴ dashed

⁵ despair

⁶ who would

⁷ God

⁸ guilt, sin

⁹ signed (crossed)

¹⁰ quickly

¹¹ before

¹² prevent

¹³ betake

¹⁴ alehouse

¹⁵ vow to the cross

¹⁶ repay

¹⁷ means of living fail

¹⁸ cease I will not

¹⁹ first

²⁰ little Piers (Peterkin)

²¹ gone

²² plow

²³ ridges of land left unplowed

²⁴ pleased

²⁵ zealously

Eche man in his manere made hymself to done,
 And some, to plesse Perkyn, piked up þe wedes.
 At heighe pryme¹ Peres lete þe plowe stonde,
 To oversen hem hymself, and whoso best wrouȝte,
 He shulde be huyred þerafter, whan hervest-tyme come. 5

And þanne seten somme, and songen atte nale,²
 And hulpen eric his half acre with 'How! trolli-lolli!'
 'Now, bi þe peril of my soule!' quod Pieres al in pure tene³:
 'But ȝe arise þe rather,⁴ and rape⁵ ȝow to worche,
 Shal no greyne þat groweth glade ȝow at nede, 10
 And þough ȝe deye for dolc, þe devel have þat reccheth⁶!'

'Tho were faitoures⁷ aferde, and feyned hem blynde,
 Somme leyde here legges aliri,⁸ as suche loscles conneth,⁹
 And made her mone to Pieres, and preyde hym of grace.
 'For we have no lymes to laboure with, lorde, ygraced be ȝe! 15

Ac we preye for ȝow, Pieres, and for ȝowre plow bothe,
 þat God of his grace ȝowre grayne multiplye,
 And ȝelde ȝow of¹⁰ ȝowre almesse þat ȝe ȝive us here,
 For we may nouȝte swynke ne swete, suche sikencesse us eyleth'
 'If it be soth,' quod Pieres, 'þat ȝe seyne, I shal it sone asspye! 20
 Ȝe ben wastoures,¹¹ I wote wel, and Treuthe wote þe sothe!

And I am his olde hyne,¹² and hȝte hym to warne
 Which þei were in þis worlde his werkemen appeyed¹³
 Ȝe wasten þat men wynnen with travaille and with tene,
 Ac Treuthe shal teche ȝow his teme to dryve, 25

Or ȝe shal ete barly bred, and of þe broke drynke,
 But if he be blynde or broke-legged, or bolted with yrnes,¹⁴
 He shal ete whete bred, and drynke with myselve,
 Tyl God of his goodnesse amendement hym sende
 Ac ȝe myȝte travaille as Treuthe wolde, and take mete and huyre 30
 To kepe kyne¹⁵ in þe felde, þe corne fro þe bestes,

¹ Probably about 9 A.M.

² at their ale

³ vexation, grief

⁴ more quickly

⁵ haste

⁶ take him who cares

⁷ vagabonds

⁸ crosswise

⁹ wretched idlers know how
to do

¹⁰ requite you for

¹¹ spendthrifts

¹² servant

¹³ those who in this world de-
moralized his workmen

¹⁴ supported with iron supports

¹⁵ cattle

- Diken or delven, or dyngen¹ uppon sheves,²
 Or helpe make mortar, or bere mukke afelde.
 In lecherye and, in losengerye³ ȝe lyven, and in sleuthe —
 And al is þow suffrance þat venjaunce ȝow ne taketh.
 5 Ac ancrs and heremytes, þat eten noȝt but at nones,⁴
 And na more er morwe,⁵ myne almesse shul þei have,
 And of my catel⁶ to cope hem with þat han cloistres and cherches
 Ac Robert Renneaboute shal nowȝte have of myne,
 Ne posteles,⁷ but⁸ þey preche conne, and have powere⁹ of þe bisschop,
 10 They shal have payne¹⁰ and potage, and make himself at ese,
 For it is an unresonable religioun þat hath riȝte nouȝte of certeyne.¹¹

PIERS THE PLOWMAN'S CREED

Among the poems which owe their origin to *Piers Plowman* is *Piers the Plowman's Creed* written by an unknown author soon after 1393. It runs thus: An unlearned man who has got by heart the Paternoster and Ave Maria, wishes also to know the Creed, and seeks a teacher. He applies in turn to friars of each of the four orders. Each rails at the other orders, and promises that the questioner shall be saved without knowledge of the Creed, if he contribute to the expenses of the monastery. The man leaves them with indignation at their magnificent buildings and luxurious lives, and finally comes upon a poor plowman, who joins him in invective against friars of all orders. Skeat suggests that the keynote of the poem is to be found at the beginning of Passus 9 (A), 8 (B), 11 (C) of *Piers Plowman*.

This poem was first printed in 1553. Our text, however, is taken, not from that of 1553, but from Skeat's edition (F.E.T.S. 30) of MS Camb Trin C.11. R. 3. 15 (adopting Skeat's emendations without comment), which, though later than 1553, he concludes to be based on a much earlier manuscript. Our selections embrace lines 98-137, 153-242, 420-42, 546-64, 719-61, and 775-8.

- 'Alas! frere,' quap I þo,¹² 'my purpos is ifailed,
 Now is my counfort acast¹³ Canstou no bote¹⁴ —
 Where Y myȝte meten wip a man þat myȝte me wissen¹⁵
 15 For to conne my crede, Crist for to folwen ?'

¹ thresh² sheaves³ lying, flattering⁴ noon⁵ till the next morning⁶ substance⁷ apostles⁸ unless⁹ license¹⁰ bread, food¹¹ has no established order¹² then¹³ cast away, lost¹⁴ do you know no remedy¹⁵ teach

'Certeine, felawe,' quap þe frere, 'wipouten any failē:
 Of all men opon mold, we Menures¹ most schewep
 Þe pure apostelles life, wip penaunce on erþe,
 And suen² hem in sanctite, and suffren well harde
 We haunten none taverne, ne hobelen³ abouten, 5
 At marketts and myracles⁴ we medlep us nevere,
 We hondlen no money, but menelich⁵ faren,
 And haven hunger at the meate — at ich a mel ones.
 We haven forsaken the worlde, and in wo lybbeþ,⁶
 In penaunce and poverte, and precheþ þe puple, 10
 By ensample of oure life, soules to helpen,
 And in povertie praien for all oure parteners⁷
 Þat ȝyveþ us any good, God to honouren —
 Oþer bell, oþer booke, or breed to our fode,
 Other catell,⁸ oþer cloth to coveren wip our bones,⁹ 15
 Money, or money-worthe — here mede¹⁰ is in heven
 For we buldeþ a burwz,¹¹ a brod and a large
 A chirche and a chapaile, with chambres alofte,
 Wip wide windowes ywrougt, and walles wel heye,
 Þat mote bene portreid and paynt, and pulched¹² ful clene 20
 With gae glittering glas, glowing as þe sonne,
 And, myȝtestou amenden us wip money of þyn owne,
 Þou chuldest cnely¹³ bifore Crist in compas¹⁴ of gold,
 In þe wide windowe westwarde — wel niȝe in the myddell
 And Seynt Fraunces himself schall folden the in his cope 25
 And presente the to the Trynity, and prae for thy synnes,
 Þi name schall noblich ben wryten and wrougt, for the nonis¹⁵
 And, in remembrance of þe, yrade¹⁶ þer for ever
 And, broþer, be þou nouȝt aferd, bythenk in thyn herte
 Þouȝ þou conne nouȝt þi crede, kare þou no more, 30

¹ Minorites² follow³ loaf⁴ miracle-plays⁵ meanly⁶ live⁷ those who share with us⁸ property, goods⁹ our bones with¹⁰ their reward¹¹ large convent (*lit* borough)¹² polished¹³ kneel¹⁴ circle, ring with this whole
passage compare *Piers
Plowman*, 341 25-26¹⁵ for the occasion¹⁶ read

- I schal asolen ¹ þe, syre, and setten it on my soule,
 And þou maie maken þis good, þenk þou non oper.²
 'Sire,' Y saide, 'in certaine Y schal gon and asaye'
 And he sette on me his honde, and asoilede me clene:
 5 And þeir Y parted him fro, wipouten any peine,
 In covenant þat Y come agen, Crist he me betauhte³.
 Þanne þougt Y to frayne⁴ þe first⁵ of þis foure ordirs,
 And presede⁶ to þe prechoures to proven⁷ here wille.
 Ich hixede⁸ to her house to herken of more,
 10 And whan Y cam to þat court, Y gaped aboute.
 Swich a bild⁹ bold, ybuld opon erþe heigte,¹⁰
 Say¹¹ I nougt in certcine siþþe a longe tyme.
 Y xemede¹² upon þat house, and xerne¹³ þeron loked,
 Whouȝ¹⁴ þe pileres weren ypeynt and pulched ful clene
 15 And queynteli icorven wip curiouse knottes,¹⁵
 Wip wyndowes well ywrougt, wide up olofte.
 And þanne Y entrid in and evenforþ¹⁶ went,
 And all was walled þat wone,¹⁷ þouȝ it wid were,
 Wip posternes in pryvytie¹⁸ to pasen¹⁹ when hem liste,
 20 Oichegades and erberes²⁰ evesed²¹ well clene,
 And a curious cros craftly entayled,²²
 Wip tabernacles²³ ytigt²⁴ to toten²⁵ all abouten
 Þe pris²⁶ of a plouglond, of²⁷ penyes so rounde,
 To aparaile²⁸ þat pyler were pure²⁹ lytel.
 25 Þanne Y munte³⁰ me forþ þe mynstre to knowen,
 And awaytede a woon³¹ wonderlie well ybeld,³²

¹ absolve² no otherwise³ he commended me to Christ⁴ question⁵ the Dominicans⁶ pressed forward, hastened⁷ make trial of⁸ hied me⁹ building¹⁰ a height of earth, an elevation¹¹ saw¹² gazed attentively¹³ eagerly¹⁴ how¹⁵ bosses¹⁶ straight ahead¹⁷ dwelling-place¹⁸ private posterns¹⁹ go out²⁰ gardens²¹ bordered²² carved²³ cells²⁴ fixed, arranged²⁵ spy²⁶ price²⁷ in²⁸ furnish forth, provide for²⁹ very³⁰ ventured³¹ perceived a building³² built

8. *prechoures*: the Dominicans were called Preachers.

Wip arches on everiche half,¹ and belliche² ycorven,
 Wip crochetes³ on corners wip knottes of golde,
 Wyde wyndowes ywrougt, ywritten full þikke,⁴
 Schynen wip schapen scheldes⁵ to schewen aboute,
 Wip merkes⁶ of marchauntes ymedled⁷ bytwene, 5
 Mo þan twenty and two twyces ynoumbred
 þer is none heraud⁸ þat haþ half swich a rolle —
 Riȝt as a rageman⁹ hadde¹⁰ rekned hem newe
 Tombes opon tabernacles tyld opon lofte,¹¹
 Housed in hircnes¹² harde set abouten, 10
 Of armede alabaustre clad for þe nones,
 Made upon marbel in many maner wyse,
 Knyghtes in her conisantes¹³ clad for þe nones
 All it semed seyntes, ysacred¹⁴ opon erþe,
 And lovely ladies ywrougt leyen by her sydes, 15
 In many gay garmentes, þat weren goldbeten¹⁵
 þouȝ þe tax of ten ȝer were trewly ygadered,
 Nolde it nouȝt maken þat hous half, as Y trowe
 þanne kam I to þat cloister and gaped abouten,
 Whouȝ it was pilcred and peynt and portred well clene, 20
 All yhyled wip leed¹⁶ lowe to þe stones,
 And ypaved wip peynt til¹⁷ iche poynte¹⁸ after oper;
 Wip kundites¹⁹ of clene tyn²⁰ closed all aboute,
 Wip lavoures²¹ of latun²² lovelyche ygreithed.²³
 I trowe þe gaynage²⁴ of þe ground in a gret schire 25
 Nolde aparaille þat place oo poynt til other ende²⁵
 þanne was þe chapture-hous wrougt as a greet chirche,
 Corven and covered, and queyntliche entayled,²⁶

¹ side² beautifully³ crockets⁴ with many inscriptions⁵ coats of arms wrought⁶ symbols, badges⁷ interspersed⁸ herald⁹ catalogue¹⁰ MS haþ¹¹ set up on high¹² enclosed in corners¹³ cognizances¹⁴ sanctified, consecrated¹⁵ adorned with beaten gold¹⁶ covered with lead¹⁷ painted tiles¹⁸ piece, bit¹⁹ conduits²⁰ tin²¹ lavers²² latoun, a kind of brass²³ prepared²⁴ produce²⁵ would not fit out that place
one bit towards the other
end²⁶ sculptured

Wip semlich selure¹ yset on lofte,
As a Parlement Hous ypeynted aboute.

Panne ferd² Y into fraytour,³ and fond þere anoþe.
An halle for an heyȝ kinge an housholde to holden,
5 Wip brode bordes⁴ aboute ybenched⁵ wel clene,
Wip windowes of glas wrouȝt as a chirche.

Panne walkede Y ferrer, and went all abouten,
And seȝ halles ful hyȝe, and houses full noble,
Chambers wip chymneyes, and chapells gaic,
10 And kychens for an hyȝe kinge in castells to holden,
And her dortour⁶ ydyȝte⁷ wip dores ful stronge,
Fermery⁸ and fraitur, with fele mo houses,
And a⁹ strong ston wall, sterne opon heiȝe,¹⁰
Wip gaic garites¹¹ and grete, and iche hole yglased,
15 And oþere houses ynowe to herberwe þe queene,
And ȝet þise bileres wilne beggen a baggful of wheate
Of a pure pore¹² man þat maie oneȝe¹³ paic
Half his tente in a ȝer, and half ben behynde.

Panne turned Y aȝen, whan Y hadde all ytoted,¹⁴
20 And fond in a freitour a freic on a benche,
A greet cherl and a grym, growen as a tonne,¹⁵
Wip a face as fat as a full bledder
Blowen bretfull¹⁶ of breȝ, and as a bagge honged¹⁷
On boȝen his chekes, and his chyn wip a choi¹⁸ lollede,¹⁹
25 As greet as a gos-eve,²⁰ growen all of grece,
Þat²¹ all wagged his fleche²² as a quyk myre²³
His cope þat biclypped²⁴ him, wel clene²⁵ was it folden,
Of double worstede²⁶ ydyȝt,²⁷ down to þe hele,

¹ ceiling² went³ the refectory⁴ tables⁵ furnished with benches⁶ dormitory⁷ provided⁸ infirmary⁹ MS all¹⁰ stern on a height¹¹ garrets¹² very poor¹³ with difficulty¹⁴ observed¹⁵ as large as a tun¹⁶ brimful¹⁷ it hung¹⁸ jowl¹⁹ wagged about²⁰ goose-egg²¹ so that²² flesh²³ like a quagmire²⁴ covered²⁵ neatly²⁶ Cf Chaucer, *Prol* 262²⁷ made

His kyrtel of clene whiit, clenlyche¹ ysewed ;

Hyt was good ynow of ground² greyn³ for to beren.

I haylsede⁴ þat herdeman,⁵ and hendliche⁶ Y saide :

' Gode syre, for Godes love canstou me graip⁷ tellen⁸

To any worpely wiȝt⁹ þat wissen¹⁰ me coupe

5

Whou¹¹ Y schulde conne my crede, Crist for to folowe,

þat levede lelliche¹² himself, and lyvede þerafter ,

þat feynede non falshede, but fully Crist suwede¹³ ?

For sich a certeyn man syker wold Y trosten¹⁴

þat he wolde telle me þe trewþe, and turne to none oper.

10

And an Austyn þis ender¹⁵ daie egged¹⁶ me faste ,

þat he wolde techen me wel he plyȝt me his treuþe,

And seyde me · " Serteyne, syþen Crist died,

Oure ordir was evelles¹⁷ and crst¹⁸ yfounde ". ' "

And as Y wente be þe waie, wepyng for sorowe,

15

I seiȝ a sely¹⁹ man me by opon þe plow hongen.

His cote was of a cloute²⁰ þat cary²¹ was ycalled ,

His hod²² was full of holes, and his heer oute ,

Wiþ his knopped schon,²³ clouted full pykke,²⁴

His ton todeden out²⁵ as he þe londe treddede ,

20

His hosen overhongen his hokschyne²⁶ on everiche a side,

Al beslobbred²⁷ in fen,²⁸ as he þe plow folwede ,

Twey myteynes²⁹ as mete,³⁰ maad all of cloutes —

þe fyngers weren forwerd,³¹ and ful of fen honged

þis whit³² wascelede³³ in þe fen almost to þe ancle ,

25

Foure roperen³⁴ hym byforn þat feble were worpen³⁵ —

¹ neatly

² texture

³ color, dye

⁴ saluted

⁵ shepherd, pastor

⁶ courteously

⁷ readily

⁸ direct

⁹ worthy person

¹⁰ teach

¹¹ how

¹² believed faithfully

¹³ followed

¹⁴ trust

¹⁵ other

¹⁶ urged

¹⁷ evil-less

¹⁸ first

¹⁹ simple

²⁰ a ragged cloth

²¹ name of a coarse material

²² hood

²³ shoes full of knobs or

roughnesses

²⁴ in tatters

²⁵ toes peeped out

²⁶ the underside of the thighs

²⁷ be daubed, M> beslumbered

²⁸ mud

²⁹ mittens

³⁰ suitable

³¹ worn out

³² fellow (wight)

³³ bemired himself

³⁴ heifers

³⁵ become

- Men mygte reken ich a ryb,¹ so reufull² þey weren.
 His wiif walked him wiþ, wiþ a longe gode,³
 In a cutted⁴ cote⁵ cutted full heyȝe,
 Wrapped in a wynwe-schete⁶ to weren⁷ hire fro weders,⁸
 5 Barfote on þe bare iis, þat þe blod folwede.
 And at þe londes⁹ ende laye a litell crombolle,¹⁰
 And þeron lay a litell childe, lapped in cloutes,
 And tweyne of tweie ȝeres olde, opon anoper syde,
 And alle þey songen o songe, þat sorwe was to heren,
 10 Þey crieden alle o cry — a carefull¹¹ note
 Þe sely man sigede sore, and seide 'Children, beþ stille.' . . .
 Loke nowe, leve¹² man, beþ nouȝt þise ilyke
 Fully to þe Farisens¹³ in fele¹⁴ of þise poyntes¹⁵
 Al her brod beldyng¹⁶ ben belded withe synne,
 15 And in worchipe of þe werlde her wynnyng þei holden
 Þei schapen her chapolories,¹⁷ and streccheþ hem brode¹⁸
 And launceþ¹⁹ heȝe her hemmes wiþ bablyng²⁰ in strates,
 Þei ben ysewed wiþ whȝt silk, and semes full qucynte,
 Ystongen²¹ wiþ stiches þat stareþ as silver
 20 And but²² freres ben first yset at sopers and at festes,
 Þei wiln ben wonderly wroþ, ywis, as Y tiowe,
 But þey ben at þe lordes borde, louen²³ þey willeþ,
 He mot bygynne þat borde,²⁴ a beggere²⁵ — wiþ sorwe²⁶ ! —
 And first sitten in se²⁷ in hei synagoges,²⁸
 5 Þat beþ here heyȝe hellchous of Kaymes²⁹ kynde,
 For þoug a man in her mynster a masse wolde heren,
 His sigt schal so be set on sundrye werkes,

¹ count each rib² miserable, sorry-looking³ goad⁴ cut short⁵ skirt, petticoat⁶ a sheet used in winnowing corn⁷ protect⁸ storms⁹ strip's¹⁰ crumb-bowl¹¹ full of misery¹² dear¹³ Pharisees¹⁴ many¹⁵ building¹⁶ scapulars¹⁷ Matt 23 5-7¹⁸ fling¹⁹ babbling²⁰ pricked through²¹ unless²² look sourly²³ sit at the head of the table²⁴ beggar that he is (perhaps with allusion to the begging friars)²⁵ bad luck to him²⁶ se it²⁷ churches²⁸ Cam's (CVM) — Carmelites Augustinians, Jacobins, Minorites — the four orders of friars)

þe penounes,¹ and þe pomels,² and poyntes³ of scheldes
 Wipdrawen his devocion, and dusken⁴ his herte;
 I likne it to a lymxerde⁵ to drawen men to hell . . .

þei usen russet⁶ also, somme of þis freres,
 þat bitokneþ traivale and trewþe oþon erþe 5
 Bote loke whou þis lorels⁷ labouren þe erþe,
 But freten⁸ þe frute þat þe folk full lellich biswynkeþ⁹;
 Wip travail of tiewe men þei tymbren¹⁰ her houses,
 And of curious¹¹ cloþe her copes þei biggen¹²;
 And als¹³ his getyng is greet he schal ben good holden , 10
 And ryȝt as dranes¹⁴ doþ nouȝt but drynkeþ up þe huny,
 Whan been¹⁵ wip her bysynesse han brouȝt it to hepe,
 Ryȝt so fareþ freres wip folke oþon erþe
 þey fieten up þe fu[r]ste froyt,¹⁶ and falsliche lybbeþ.
 But alle freres eten nouȝt ylich good mete, 15
 But after þat his wyunyng is, is his wellfare ,
 And after þat he bingep home, his bed schal ben grayped¹⁷ ,
 And after þat his rychesse is rauȝt,¹⁸ he schal ben redy served
 But see þiself in þi sȝt whou somme of hem walkeþ
 Wip cloutede¹⁹ schon, and cloþes ful feble, 20
 Wel neȝ forwerd,²⁰ and þe wlon²¹ offe ,
 And his felawe in a froke worp swiche fiftene,²²
 Arayd in rede sc[h]on — and elles were reuþe²³ —
 And sexe copes or seven in his celle hongep
 þouȝt for fayling of good his fellawe schulde sterve,²⁴ 25
 He wolde nouȝt lenen²⁵ him a peny his lif for to holden.
 Y myȝt tymen þo trowlards²⁶ to toilen wip þe erþe,
 T'ylyen,²⁷ and trewliche lyven, and her flech tempren !

¹ pennons² pomells, bosses³ divisions⁴ darken, cloud⁵ a limed twig⁶ The Franciscans wore gray
habits originally, but later
russet brown⁷ good-for-nothings⁸ devour⁹ faithfully obtain by labor¹⁰ build¹¹ M^S. þe curious¹² fashion (?), buy (?)¹³ according as¹⁴ drones¹⁵ bees¹⁶ first-fruits¹⁷ prepared¹⁸ reached, obtained¹⁹ patched²⁰ worn out²¹ borders, hems²² fifteen of such²³ a pity²⁴ die²⁵ lend, give²⁶ compel the triflers²⁷ till the ground

- Now mot ich souter¹ his sone setten to schole,
 And ich a beggers brot² on þe booke lerne,
 And worp to³ a writere, and wip a lorde dwell,
 Oper falsly to a frere, þe fend for to serven.
 5 So of þat beggers brot a bychop schal worþen,
 Among þe peres of þe lond prese⁴ to sitten,
 And lordes soncs lowly to þo losells aloute⁵;
 Knyȝtes croukep⁶ hem to, and cruchep⁷ full lowe;
 And his syre a souter, ysuled⁸ in grees,
 10 His teep wip toylinge of⁹ leper tatered as a sawe!
 Alaas! þat lordes of þe londe levep¹⁰ swiche wrechen,
 And lenep¹¹ swiche lorels for her lowe wordes!
 Þey schulden maken bichopes her owen breþren childre,
 Oper of some gentil blod, and¹² so it best semed,
 15 And foster none faytours,¹³ ne swiche false freres,
 To maken fatt and full, and her fleche combren¹⁴!
 For her kynde were more to yclense diche
 Þan ben to sopers yset first, and served wip silvr! . . .
 For Fraunces¹⁵ founded hem nouȝt to faren¹⁶ on þat wise,
 20 Ne Domynik¹⁷ dued¹⁸ hem never swiche drynkers to worþe,
 Ne Helye¹⁹ ne Austen²⁰ swiche luf never used,
 But in poverte of spirit spended her tyme.

¹ cobbler² brat³ become⁴ press forward⁵ bow down to the wretches⁶ bend down⁷ crouch⁸ soiled⁹ tugging at¹⁰ believe¹¹ enrich¹² if¹³ traitors, deceivers¹⁴ cumber, gorge¹⁵ St Francis of Assisi, founder
of the Franciscan order¹⁶ do¹⁷ Dominic, founder of
the Dominicans¹⁸ endowed¹⁹ Elijah²⁰ St Augustine

ILLUSTRATIONS OF LIFE AND MANNERS

SONG AGAINST THE FRIARS

The following selection (lines 1-84 of the poem) is reprinted from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* (London, 1859) i 263-5. It is from MS. Brit Mus. Cotton Cleopatra B 2, which Wright assigns to the year 1382.

Preste, ne monke, ne ȝlt chanoun,
Ne no man of religioun,
Gyfen hem so to devocioun
 As done thes holy frers.
For summe gyven ham to chyvalry, 5
Somme to riote and ribaudery,
Bot frers gyven ham to grete study,
 And to grete prayers
Who so kepes thair reule al,
 Bothe in worde and dede, 10
I am ful siker that he shal
 Have heven blis to mede ¹

Men may se by thair contynauce
That thai are men of grete penaunce,
And also that thair sustynauce 15
 Simple is and wayke.
I have lyved now fourty ȝers,
And fatter men about the neres ²
Ȝit sawe I never then are these frers,
 In contreys ther thai rayke. ³ 20

¹ as reward

² kidneys, cf Isa. 34. 6

³ wander about

Meteles,¹ so megre are thai made,
 And penaunce so puttes ham down,
 That ichone is an hors-lade,²
 When he shal trusse of toun³

5 Allas, that ever it shuld be so,
 Suche clerkes as thai about shuld go,
 Fro toun to toun by two and two,
 To seke than sustynaunce !
 By God that al this world wan,
 10 He that that ordre first bygan
 Me thynk certes it was a man
 Of simple ordynaunce⁴
 For thai have noght to lyve by,
 Thai wandren here and there,
 15 And dele with dyvers maicerye,⁵
 Right as thai pedlers were

Thai dele with purses, pynnes, and knyves,
 With gyrdles, gloves, for wenches and wyves,
 Bot ever backward the husband thryves
 20 Ther thai are haunted tille⁶
 For when the gode man is fro hame,
 And the fiere comes to oure dame,
 He spares nauther for synne ne shame
 That he ne dos his wille
 25 Ȝif thai no helpe of houswyves had,
 When husbandes are not inne,
 The freres welfare were ful bad,
 For thai shuld biewe ful thynne.

Somme frers beren pelure⁷ aboute,
 30 For grete ladys and wenches stoute,

¹ without meat² horse load³ pack out of town⁴ regulation, rule of life⁵ mercery (textile goods and
small wares)⁶ where they are accustomed
to go⁷ fur

To reverce¹ with thair clothes withoute,
 Al after that thai ere² —
 For somme vaire,³ and somme gryse,⁴
 For somme bugee,⁵ and for somme byse⁶,
 And also many a dyvers spyse, 3
 In bagges about thai bere
 Al that for women is plesand
 Ful redy certes have thai;
 Bot lytel gyfe thai the husband,
 That for al shal pay 10

Trantes⁷ thai can,⁸ and many a jape⁹,
 For somme can with a pound of sape¹⁰
 Gete him a kyrtelle¹¹ and a cape,
 And somewhat els therto
 Wherto shuld I othes swere? 15
 Ther is no pedler that pak can bere
 That halt so dere can selle his gere
 As¹² a frer can do
 For if he gife a wyfe a knyfe
 That cost bot penys two, 20
 Worthe ten knyves, so mot I thryfe,
 He wyl have er he go.

Iche man that here shal lede his life,
 That has a faire doghter or a wyfe,
 Be war that no fier ham shryfe, 25
 Nauther loudc ne stille
 Thof women seme of hert ful stable,
 With faire byhest and with fable
 Thai can make thair hertes chaungeable,
 And thair likynges fulfille 30

¹ to turn back, so as to show
 the lining

² plow (·)

³ fur made from the skin of a
 kind of squirrel

⁴ gray fur

⁵ lambskin fur

⁶ a (brown?) fur used for trimming

⁷ tricks

⁸ know

⁹ jest

¹⁰ so up

¹¹ mantle

¹² MS then

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Be war¹ ay with the lymytour,²
 And with his felawe bathe,
 And³ thai make maystries⁴ in thi bour,
 It shal turne the to scathe⁵

ON THE MINORITE FRIARS

This poem, found in the same manuscript as the preceding one, is also reprinted from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* (i 268-70). The writer seems to be describing pictorial representations

5 Of thes frer mynours me thenkes moch wonder,
 That waxen are thus hauteyn,⁶ that som tyme weren under;
 Among men of holy chirch thai maken mochel blonder⁷;
 Nou he that sytes⁸ us above make ham sone to sonder⁹!
 With an O and an I, thai praysen not Seynt Poule;
 10 Thai lyen on Seyn[t] Fraunceys, by my fader soule.

First thai gabben on¹⁰ God, that alle men may se,
 When thai hangen him on hegh on a grene tre,
 With leves and with blossemes that bright are of ble,¹¹
 That was never Goddes Son, by my leute¹²
 15 With an O and an I, men wenen that thai wede,¹³
 To carpe so of clergy that¹⁴ can not thair ('rede.

Thai have done him on a croys fer up in the skye,
 And festned on hym wyenges, as he shuld fle,
 This fals feyned byleve¹⁵ shal thai soure bye,¹⁶
 20 On that lovelych Lord so for to lye.
 With an O and an I, one sayd ful stille:
 'Armachan¹⁷ distroy ham, if it is Goddes wille!'

¹ cautious

² friar licensed to beg within certain limits, cf Chaucer, *Wife of Bath's Tale* 9-25

³ if

⁴ play tricks

⁵ to your harm

⁶ haughty

⁷ confusion

⁸ sits

⁹ disperse them soon

¹⁰ make sport of

¹¹ hue

¹² loyalty, faith

¹³ go mad

¹⁴ MS thai

¹⁵ belief

¹⁶ Cf 112 23

¹⁷ Richard Fitzralph (d. 1360)

Ther comes one out of the skye in a grey gown,
 As it were an hoghyerd¹ hyand² to toun;
 Thai have mo³ goddes then we, I say by Mahoun,⁴
 Alle men under ham that ever beres croun⁵

With an O and an I, why shuld thai not be shent⁶? 5

Ther wantes noght bot a fyre that thai nere alle brent⁷

Went I forther on my way in that same tyde⁸,
 Ther I sawe a frere blede in myddes of his syde;
 Bothe in hondes and in fete had he woundes wyde.
 To serve to that same frer the pope mot abyde⁹

10

With an O and an I, I wonder of thes dedes,
 To se a pope holde a dische whyl the frer bledes.

A cart was made al of fyre, as it shuld be,
 A gray frer I sawe therinne, that best lyked me.
 Wele I wote thai shal be brent, by my leaute,
 God graunt me that grace that I may it se

15

With an O and an I, brent be thai alle,
 And alle that helps therto faire mot byfalle¹⁰!

Thai preche alle of povert, bot that love thai noght,
 For gode mete to thair mouthe the toun is thurgh soght¹¹
 Wyde are thair wonnynges,¹² and wonderfully wrought,
 Murdre and horedome¹³ ful dere has it boght

20

With an O and an I, for sixe pens er thai fayle,
 Sle thi fadre, and jape¹⁴ thi modre, and thai wyl the assoile

¹ swineherd² hastening³ more⁴ Mahomet⁵ tonsure⁶ destroyed⁷ burned⁸ time⁹ must wait¹⁰ may fair (good) befall¹¹ searched through¹² dwellings¹³ whoredom¹⁴ lie with

THE REPLY OF FRIAR DAW TOPIAS

About 1401 This selection, from MS Oxford Digby 41, is here reprinted from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* 2 76-8

Forthermore ¹ thou spekest
 Of oure costh houses,
 Thou seist it were more almes
 To helpen the nedy
 5 Than to make siche housynge
 To men that ben deede,
 To whiche longith ² but graves
 And mornyng-housis
 Jak, is not a man beter
 10 Than a rude best ?
 ¶ It makist thou to thi sheep a shepen,³
 And to thi hors a stable,
 And many a pore man ther is
 That hath noon hillyng,⁴
 15 But oonly heven is his hous
 The bestes stond kevered,
 Whi houses thou not pore men
 As wele as thi beestis ?
 Take hede to sumwhat
 20 That is seid biforen
 And ⁵ thou answer to my question,
 Answer to thin owne
 Thou carpst ⁶ also of oure covetise,
 And sparist the sothe,
 25 Thou seist we ben more ryal⁷
 Than ony lordis
 Coventis have wee noon, Jak,
 But cloistrers we ben callid,
 Foundid ¹ afor ⁸ with charite,

¹ MS ff-² belong, are fitting³ sheep cote⁴ shelter⁵ if⁶ talkest⁷ royal, regal⁸ aforetime

Or that he were flemyd ¹,
 But sith ² entride envie,
 And revyd ³ hath oure houses,
 That unnethes ⁴ the hillinge °
 Hangith on the sparres ⁵, 5
 And ȝit thou thinkist hem over-good —
 Yvel fare thou therfore!
 Jak, where saw thou ever frere-houses
 Thourȝout the rewme ⁷
 Liche in ony rialte ⁸ 10
 To the Toure of Londoun,
 To Wyndesore, to Wodestoke,
 To Wallingforde, to Shene,
 To Herforde, to Eltham,
 To Westmynster, to Dover ⁹ 15
 How maist thou for rebukying
 I, ye so lowde,
 To saye that oure covetise
 Passith the lordes'?

THE LAND OF COKAYGNE

The Land of Cokaygne, which has been called the earliest extant English fabliau, is not a fabliau at all, but rather a piece of Rabelusian satire. With the satire, which is directed against monks and nuns, and possibly includes some local and specific references, are, however, mingled touches of the purely comic spirit. Cf. Pherecrates, in Athenæus 6.97.

An Old French poem similar in character is found in Barbaban and Meon's *Fabliaux et Contes* 4. 175-81, entitled *Le Fabliaux de Coquaigne* (though, again, not a fabliau). Here the details are somewhat different, and the satiric intent, and reference to the religious orders, much less marked, but the general picture is of the same sort. One of the most amusing details is similar

Par les rues vont rostissant
 Les crasses oes, et toman^t
 Tout par els [lines 37-9]

¹ before it was banished

² afterward

³ robbed, MS. renyd

⁴ so that scarcely

⁵ roof

⁶ rafters, beams

⁷ realm

⁸ royalty

⁹ Royal castles or palaces were
in all these places

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Here there are two rivers of wine, of which he who will may drink; four Easters, Christmases, and All-Saints Days every year, but a Lent only once in twenty years¹

Our text is reproduced (120 lines out of 190) from Matzner's *Altenglische Sprachproben* (1 148 ff.), which follows MS Brit Mus Harl 913. It has been dated ca. 1305.

- Fur¹ in see bi west Spaygne²
 Is a lond ihote³ Cokaygne
 Þer nis lond under hevenriche⁴
 Of wel,⁵ of godnis, hit iliche,
 5 Þoʒ Paradis be miri and briȝt,
 Cokaygn is of fairr siȝt.
 What is þer in Paradis
 Bot grasse, and flure, and grene ris⁶?
 Þoʒ þer be joi and grete dute,⁷
 10 Þer nis mete⁸ bote frute,
 Þer nis halle, bure,⁹ no benche,
 Bot watu, manis þurst to quenche.
 Beþ þer no man but two -
 Hely¹⁰ and Enoch¹¹ also,
 15 Elinglich¹² may hi go
 Whar þer woniþ¹³ men no mo
 In Cokaygne is met and drink
 Wipute care, how,¹⁴ and swink¹⁵
 Þe met is tre,¹⁶ þe drink is clere,
 20 To none, russin,¹⁷ and sopper
 I sigge¹⁸ forsoþ, bouthe were,¹⁹
 Þer nis lond on erthe is pere²⁰,
 Under heven nis lond, twisse,²¹
 Of so mochil joi and blisse
 25 Þer is mani swete siȝte
 Al is dai, nis þer no niȝte,

¹ far

² MS Spayngne

³ called

⁴ heaven's domain

⁵ prosperity

⁶ branches

⁷ delight

⁸ is no food

⁹ chamber

¹⁰ Elijah, cf. 2 Kings 2 11

¹¹ Enoch, cf. Gen. 5 24

¹² sorrowfully

¹³ dwell

¹⁴ trouble

¹⁵ labor

¹⁶ select

¹⁷ (?)

¹⁸ say

¹⁹ without doubt

²⁰ its equal

²¹ indeed

þer nis baret¹ noþer strif ;
 Nis þer no deþ, ac² ever lif ;
 þer nis lac of met no cloþ ;
 þer nis man no womman wroþ ;
 þer nis serpent, wolf, no fox, 3
 Hors no capil,³ kowe no ox ,
 þer nis schepe, no swine, no gote,
 Ne non horwæ,⁴ la," God it wot,
 Nother harace,⁶ nother stode⁷ ,
 þe londe is ful of oþer gode 10
 Nis þer flei,⁸ fle,⁹ no lowse,
 In cloþ, in tounc, bed, no house ,
 þer nis dunnir,¹⁰ slete, no haile,¹¹
 No non vile worme, no snaile,¹²
 No non storme, rein, no winde , 15
 þer is man no womman blinde ,
 Ok¹³ al is game,¹⁴ joi, and gle
 Wel is him þat þer mai be¹
 þer beþ rivers gret and fine,
 Of oile, melk, homi, and wine , 20
 Watir servip þer to noþing
 Bot to siȝt and to waussing¹⁶
 þer is [mani]¹⁶ maner frute ,
 Al is solas and dedute¹⁷
 þer is a wel fair abbei 25
 Of white monkes and of grei
 þer beþ bowris and halles ,
 Al of pastens¹⁸ beþ þe walles,
 Of fleis, of fisse, and rich met,
 þe hikfullist¹⁹ þat man mai et, 30
 Fluren²⁰ cakes beþ þe scingles²¹ alle

¹ quarrel² but³ nag⁴ defilement⁵ truly⁶ place for breeding horses⁷ stud⁸ fly⁹ flea¹⁰ thunder¹¹ hail, MS hawle¹² MS snawile¹³ but¹⁴ mirth¹⁵ washing¹⁶ em M¹⁷ delight¹⁸ pasties, pies¹⁹ most delicious²⁰ flour²¹ shingles

- Of cherche, cloister, bourc, and halle;
 þe pinnes¹ bep fat podinges —
 Rich met to princez and [to] kinges;
 Man mai þerof et moȝ
 5 Al wiþ riȝt, and noȝt wiþ woȝ²
 Al is commune to ȝung and old,
 To stoute and sterne, mek and bold.
 Þer is a cloister, fair and liȝt,
 Brod and lang, of sembli³ siȝt.
 10 Þe pilers of þat cloistre alle
 Bep iturned of cristale,
 With har bas⁴ and capitale
 Of grene jaspé and rede corale.
 In þe praer⁵ is a tre,
 15 Swiþe likful⁶ for to se
 Þe rote is gingevir and galingale⁷;
 Þe siouns⁸ bep al sedwale⁹,
 Trie macés bep þe flure,
 Þe rind, cancel¹⁰ of swet odor,
 20 Þe frute, gilofre¹¹ of gode smakke¹²;
 Of cucubres¹³ þer nis no lakke
 Þer bep rosis of rede ble,¹⁴
 And lihe likful for to se —
 Þai faloweþ¹⁵ never day no niȝt;
 25 Þis aȝt be¹⁶ a swete siȝt
 Þer bep iii wills¹⁷ in þe abbei
 Of triacle¹⁸ and halwei,¹⁹
 Of baum²⁰ and ek picment,²¹
 Ever enend²² to riȝt rent²³,
 30 Of þam²⁴ stremis al þe molde.²⁵

¹ pinnacles² wrong³ seemly⁴ their base⁵ an adow

very attractive

⁷ ginger and galingale (sweet
experts)⁸ scions shoots⁹ zedoary¹⁰ cinnamon¹¹ gillyflower¹² taste¹³ cucubrs (a pungent spice)¹⁴ hue¹⁵ fide¹⁶ ought to be¹⁷ wells¹⁸ treacle (a medicine)¹⁹ healing water²⁰ balm²¹ spiced wine sweetened
with honey²² running²³ profit²⁴ these, M⁶ þai²⁵ earth, nom

Stonis preciuse, and golde :
 Þer is saphir and uniune,¹
 Carbuncle and astiune,²
 Smaragde,³ lugie,⁴ and prassiune,⁵
 Beril, onix, topasiune,⁶ 5
 Ametist and crisolite,
 Calcedun and epetite⁷
 Þer beþ briddes mani and fale⁸ —
 Þrostil, þruisse,⁹ and nigtingale,
 Chalandre¹⁰ and wodwale,¹¹ 10
 And oþer briddes wiþout tale¹²
 Þat stinteþ¹³ never by hai miȝt¹⁴
 Min to sing dai and niȝt
 Ȝite I do ȝow mo to witte¹⁵
 Þe gees irosted on þe spitte 15
 Fleez¹⁶ to þat abbaï, God hit wot,
 And giedip¹⁷ ' Gees al hote, al hot !'
 Ii bringeþ garlek gret plente,
 Þe best idigt¹⁸ þat man mai se
 Þe leuerokes¹⁹ — þat beþ cup²⁰ — 20
 Ligtip adun to manis muþ,
 Idigt in stu²¹ ful swiþe wel,
 Pudrid²² wiþ gilofie and canel.
 Nis no spech of no drink ,
 Ak take inoȝ wiþute swink 25
 Whan þe monkes gooþ²³ to masse,
 All þe fenestres²⁴ þat beþ of glasse
 Turneþ into cristal bryȝt,
 To ȝive [þe] monkes more lȝt
 When þe masses beþ iscuð, 30

¹ pearl² astrion (*perhaps* asteriated sapphire)³ emerald⁴ ligure⁵ chrysopraxe⁶ topaz⁷ hepatite⁸ numerous⁹ thrush¹⁰ a Mediterranean species of lark, see *Romanic of the Rose* (81, 663), 914¹¹ woodpecker¹² number¹³ cease¹⁴ according to their ability¹⁵ give you to know further¹⁶ fly, MS fleeȝ¹⁷ cry out¹⁸ dressed¹⁹ larks²⁰ well known²¹ made into a stew²² sprinkled²³ MS geeþ²⁴ windows

And þe bokes up ilend,¹
 þe cristal turnip into glasse —
 In state þat hit raper² wasse.

THE GOSSIPS' FEAST

The following poem is reprinted from Dyboski's *Songs, Carols, etc* (E.F.T.S. 1 v Ser 101), an edition of Richard Hill's *Commonplace-Book* (MS Oxford Balliol 354). The manuscript contains records as late as 1536, but our text differs only slightly from that of Wright in *Percy Society* 23 91-5, which is dated by the editor 1461-85, and from which two or three readings are here adopted (marked W). Our text is on pages 106-8 of Dyboski.

5 *Hoow, gossip myne, gossip myn,*
 Whan will we go to þe wyne,
 Good gossip[is myn] ?

 I shall you tell a full good sport,
 How gossippis gader them on a sort,³
 Ther seke⁴ bodyes to comforte,
 10 Whan they mete
 In lane or stret,
 God⁵ gossippis myn, [a !]

 But I dare not, for þer disspleasans,⁶
 Tell of þes maters half the substance ;
 15 But yet sumwhat of þer governance,⁷
 As ferre as I dare,
 I will declare,
 Good gossippis myn, [a !]

 ' Good gossip myn, wher have ye be ?
 20 Hit is so long sith I you see ,
 Wher is þe best wyne, tell you me !
 Can ye owght tell ? '
 ' Ye, full well,
 Good gossippis myn, [a !]

¹ laid
² formerly
³ in a company

⁴ sick
⁵ good
⁶ lest I displease them

⁷ proceedings

I know a drawght of mery-go-down,¹
 The beste it is in all this town,
 But yet I wolde not, for my gown,
 My husbond wyste '
 ' Ye may me triste,²
 Good gossippis myn, [a !']

5

' Call forth owr gossippis by and by,
 Elynore, Johan, and Margery,
 Margret, Alis, and Cecely,
 For þei will cum,
 Both all and som,
 Good gossippis myn, a !

10

And eche of them will sumwhat bryng,
 Gose, or pigge, or capons wyng,
 Pastes³ of pygynnes, or sum oþer thyng ;
 For we muste ete
 Sum maner mett,
 Good gossippis myn, a !

15

Go beffore by tweyn and tweyn,
 Wisely, þat ye be not secn,
 For I muste home and cum agayn,
 To witt, ywis,
 Wher my husbond is,
 Good gossippis myn, a !

20

A strype or two God myght send me,
 Yf my husbond myght here see me.'
 ' She þat is aferde, lett her flee,'
 Quod Alis than ,
 ' I dred no man,
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

25

30

¹ strong ale² trust³ pasties, pies

' Now be we in þe tavern sett,
 A drawght of þe best lett hym fett,
 To bryng owr husbondis owt of dett,
 For we will spend
 5 Till God more send,
 Good gossippis myn, a ! '

Eche of them browght forth þer disshe ,
 Sum browght flesshe, and sum [browght] fissue
 Quod Margret meke now, with a wisse
 10 ' I wold Anne were here,
 She wold mak us chere,
 Good gossippis myn, a ! '

' How say ye, gossippis ? Is þis wyn good ? '
 ' þat is it,' quod Elynore, ' by þe rode !
 15 It chereth þe hart and comforteth þe blod.
 Such jonkets ¹ amonge
 Shall make us leve ² long.
 Good gossippis [myn, a] ! '

Anne bade me fill a pot of Muscadell,
 20 ' For of all wynes I love it well,
 Swet wynes kepe my body in hele ³ ;
 Yf I had it nowght,
 I shuld tak thowght,
 Good gossippis myn, a ! '

' How loke ye, gossip, at þe bordis end ?
 Not mery, gossip ? God it amend !
 All shall be well, els God defend ;
 Be mery and glad,
 And sit not so sade,
 30 Good gossip myn, a ! '

¹ delicacies (drinks); MS. jonkers, W. jonchettes² live³ health, well-being

'Wold God I had don after your counsell,
 For my husbond is so fell¹
 He betuth me lyke þe devill of hell,
 And þe more I crye,
 Þe lesse meicy,
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

5

Alis with a lowde voys spak than ·
 'Ywis,²' she said, 'litill good he can,
 þat betuth or striketh any woman,
 And specially his wyff,
 God geve hym short lyff,
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

10

Margret meke said . 'So mot I thryve,
 I know no man þat is alyve
 þat gevith me n strokis, but he [shall]³ have v ,
 I am not afferd,
 Thowgh he have a berde,
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

15

On⁴ cast down her shot,⁵ and went away.
 'Gossip,' quod Elynore, 'what dide she pay ?'
 'Not but a peny , loo, þerfor I say,
 She shall no more
 Be of ovr lore,⁶
 Good gossippis myn, a !

20

Suche gestis⁷ we may have ynow,
 þat will not for þer shot alowe⁸
 With whom com she, gossip ?' 'With you !'
 'Nay,' quod Johan,
 'I com aloon,
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

25

30

¹ cruel
² W, MS evis
³ W

⁴ one
⁵ contribution, share
⁶ school sort

⁷ guests
⁸ provide

' Now rekyn owr shot, and go we hens ;
 What cummeth to eche of us ? ' ' But iii pens.¹ '

' Parde, þis is but a small expens
 For suche a sorte,
 5 And all but sporte,
 Good gossippis myn, a ! '

' Torn down þe stret, whan ye cum owt,
 And we will cumpas rownd about '
 ' Gossip, ' quod Anne, ' what nedith þat dowt ? ²
 10 Your husbond is pleased,
 Whan ye be cased,
 Good gossippis myn, a !

Whatsoever any man thynk,
 We com for nowght but for good drynk ;
 15 Now let us go home and wynke,
 For it may be seen
 Wher we have ben,
 Good gossippis myn, a ! '

This is þe thowght þat gossippis take :
 20 Ons in þe wek, mery will they make,
 And all small drynkis þei will forsake ;
 But wyne of þe best
 Shall have no rest,
 Good gossippis myn, a !

Sum be at þe tavern þrise ³ in þe weke,
 25 And so be sum every day eke,
 Or ellis þei will gron and mak them sek,
 For thyngis used
 Will not be refused ⁴ ,
 30 Good gossippis myn, a !

¹ MS d
² fear

³ MS. III^m

⁴ for things one is accustomed
 to cannot be done without

STANS PUER AD MENSAM

The following poem, by John Lydgate (1370?-1451?), the follower and imitator of Chaucer, is taken from the print of MS Harl 2251 (about 1460) in *The Babees Book*, ed. Furnivall (EETS 32). With its precepts one may compare Chaucer's characterization of the Prioress (*Prologue* 127-36)

At mete wel ytaught was she withalle,
 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 upon 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

Our extract comprises lines 15-42, 57-70. Two or three emendations are from the Lambeth MS

Who spekithe to the in any maner place,
 Rudely cast nat thyn ye¹ adowne,
 But with a sadde chiere² loke hym in the face
 Walke demurely by strete in the towne,
 Advertise the withe³ wisdom and reasoun 5
 Withe dissolute laughteis do thow non offence
 Tofore⁴ thy soverayn,⁵ whiles he is in presence

 Pare clene thy nailes, thyn handes wasshe also
 Tofore mete, and whan thow doost arise,
 Sitte in that place thow art assigned to, 10
 Prease⁶ nat to⁷ hye in no maner wise,
 And til thow se afore the thy service,⁸
 Be nat to hasty on brede for to byte,
 Of gredynesse lest men wolde the edwyte⁹

 Grennyng and mowes¹⁰ at the table eschewe¹¹, 15
 Cry nat to loude, kepe honestly¹² silence,

¹ eye² sober expression³ turn your attention to⁴ before⁵ master⁶ press⁷ too⁸ plate of food⁹ reproach, twist, MS end¹⁰ grinning and grimaces¹¹ MS eschewe¹² politely

To enboce¹ thy jowis² withe mete [it] is nat diewe³
 With ful mowthe speke nat, lest thou do offence,
 Drynk nat bretheles for hast ne negligence,
 Kepe clene thy lippes from fat of flesshe or fysshe;
 5 Wype clene thi spone, leve it nat in thy disshe.

Of brede ibyten no soppis⁴ that thou make,
 In ale nor wyne withe hande leve no fattenes;
 With mowthe enbrewed⁵ thi cuppe thou nat take;
 Defoule⁶ no napery⁷ for no rekelesnes,
 10 [Loude]⁸ for to souppe is agenst gentiles
 [N]evyr at mete begynne thou nat stryf⁹,
 Thi teth also thou pike nat with no knyf . .

Droppe nat thi brest withe sawce ne with potage;
 Brynge no knyves unskoured to the table,
 15 Fil nat thy spone, lest in the cariage
 It went beside,¹⁰ whiche were nat comendable.
 Be quyke and redy, meke and servisable,
 Wele awaityng to fulfyll anone
 What that thy soverayne comau[n]dithe to¹¹ be done.

And wharesoever that thou dyne or soupe,
 20 Of gentilesse take salt withe thy knyf,
 And be wele ware thou blowe nat in the cuppe
 Reverence thy felawe, gynne¹² withe hym no stryf,
 Be¹³ thy powere, kepe pees all thy lyf
 25 Interrupt nat, whereso [that]¹⁴ thou wende,
 None other mans tale, til he have made an ende

¹ stuff out² jaws³ fitting⁴ sops⁵ soiled⁶ defile. M^s enbrewed (em
from Lambeth MS)⁷ table-linen⁸ em from Lamb.⁹ M^s. stryfe¹⁰ should spill over¹¹ MS the to (em from Lamb)¹² begin¹³ according to¹⁴ em from Lamb

CHARM FOR THE TOOTHACHE

From MS Linc Cath Thornton A 1 17, printed in Horstman's edition of Richard Rolle, I 375

*Say þe charme thris to¹ it be sayd ix tymes, and ay
thris at a charemynge.²*

I conjoure the, laythely³ beste, with⁴ þat ilke spere
þat Longyous⁵ in his hande gane bere,
And also with ane hatte of thorne 5
þat one my Lordis hede was borne,
With alle þe wordis, mare and lesse,
With þe office of þe messe,
With my Lorde and his xii postills,⁶
With oure Lady and hir x maydenys, 10
Saynt Margrete, þe haly quene,
Saynt Katerin, þe haly virgyne —
Ix tymes Goddis forbott,⁷ þou wikkyde worme,
þat ever þou make any rystynge,⁸
Bot away mote þou wende 15
To þe erde⁹ and þe stane.¹⁰

PREFACE TO A TREATISE ON MEDICINE

From the Payne manuscript, of the first half of the fifteenth century, printed in Furnivall's *Political, Religious, and Love Poems* (E E I S 15) Readings supplied from Sloane MS 1314 are marked S

The man þat wol of lechecraft¹¹ lere,
Red ovyr this book, and he may here
Many medycinis both good and trewe,
To hele sores both oolde and newe, 20
And precieuse medycinis, þow Goddis grace

¹ till
² charming
³ loathsome
⁴ by

⁵ Longus, or I onginus, the Roman soldier
who pierced the side of Chrst
⁶ apostles
⁷ God forbid

⁸ delay (resting)
⁹ earth
¹⁰ stone
¹¹ medicine

- To save mens ¹ lyves in diverse place.
 Cryst, þat made bothe Est and West,
 Geve grace her sowles have ² god rest,
 Evere more in hevene for to be,
 5 In hevene wyt þe Trinite !
 Herinne be medycinis, wythoutyn fable,
 To hele alle sores þat ben curable,
 Of sword, of knyf, and of arwe ³ —
 Be þe wounde wyde or narwe —
 10 Of sper,⁴ of quarel,⁵ of dagger, of dart,
 To make him hool in ilka ⁶ part,
 So þe seek ⁷ wol do wysely,
 And kepe himself fro surfety.
 Be þe wounde nevere so deep,
 15 þerof thar ⁸ him take no kep,
 So þat he drynke save ⁹ or anteoche,¹⁰
 Him thar ⁸ not drede of þat outrage :
 Be ¹¹ þat on and twenti days be goon,
 He schal be hol, both flesch and bon,
 20 To ride and go in ilka ¹² place,
 Thorw þe verteu of Goddys grace.
 Thus seyth Ypocras,¹³ þe good surgien,
 And Socrates and Galyen,¹⁴
 þat weren philisophres alle thre,
 25 þat tyme þe best in any coundree :
 In þis werld ¹⁵ were non her ¹⁶ pere,
 As fer as any man coude here.

¹ MS men² may have³ arrow⁴ spear⁵ a short, square-headed arrow⁶ every, MS ylike, S ilka⁷ if the sick man⁸ he need, MS dar, S thar⁹ sage¹⁰ a medicinal potion of herbs
boiled in white wine and
honey¹¹ by the time¹² MS ylike, S ilka¹³ Hippocrates¹⁴ Galen¹⁵ MS weld¹⁶ their

A MEDIÆVAL WILL

This will (from MS Oxford Univ (oll 97), which the testator dates in the year 1399, is here reprinted from Horstman's edition of Richard Rolle, 2 448-9)

In þe name of Almyghty Jesu, I, Robart l[olkyngham], beyng in
hool and cleere mynde, þe vi day of Juylle,¹ þe ȝeere of our Lorde a
thousand þre hundreth foure score and nyntene, make my testament
and my laste wyll in þis manere First, I bytake² my soule into þe
hondes of Almyghty God, bysechyng to oure lady, Seynte Marye, and
to alle þe hool compaygnye of heven, to preye for mercy and grace for
me. Also I byqwethe my wrecchyd synfulle body to been heere in
erthe, abydyng þe dredful doom of God, in suche place and manere as
yt lyketh to his wyse endeles purveaunce³ Also I wyll þat at myn
enterement pere be abowte my body bot twev⁴ tapies of wex, and
foure torches of wex, þe whiche torches I wille be ȝeven to bienn
atte þe levacioun⁵ of þe sacrament whil þei wil dure,⁶ in þe same
chirche þat I schalle be beryed inne Also I wille þat, in alle þe haste
þat yt may be doo after my deth, pere be sayde a thousande massez
for my soule, and for alle Cristen soules Also I bequethe, to be doon
in almesse after⁷ dyscrecioun of myn executours, in alle þe hast for
my soule, for þe soules of my fadre, modre, and of alle hem þat I am
endebtete to by way of kynde,⁸ by way of ffrendshipe, or by way of
restitucioun, for þe gode I have hade of heres⁹ by any way, fourty
pounde of golde, and, over þat, þat þei have part of alle þe preysours,
goode dedes, and almesse þat I have do or ordeyned to be doo, as
wel in þis testament as tofore¹⁰ in alle my lyf Sythene,¹¹ I ȝeve to
William Flete, my cosyn, fourty marke of golde and alle myn horses,
a blew bed of Arras werke, twey payre schetes, my best haberjoun,¹² my
pyсан,¹³ my ketylle-hat,¹⁴ and myn armyng swoorde of Burdeux Also
I bequeth to Johan of Brugge an haberjoun, a basynet,¹⁵ a longe dagger
of Burdeux harneyside¹⁶ with sylver in manere of a sword

¹ July² commit³ providence⁴ two⁵ lifting up⁶ last⁷ at the⁸ kindred⁹ theirs, them¹⁰ before¹¹ next¹² habergeon, coat of mail¹³ pisane (armor to protect
chest and neck)¹⁴ kind of helmet¹⁵ basinet (steel headpiece)¹⁶ mounted

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Also, I geve to Thomas Salman an haberjoun and a basynet

Also, I byqueth to William Flete, my cosyn, alle þe remanant of myne armeure.

Also, I byqweth to Sir William Countour a longe sangwyn¹ gowne
5 furred with Calabir.²

Also, I byqueth to Thomas Heighelme a gowne of blak worstede, furred with bevere.

Also, I wylle þat alle þe debtez þat any man cane resonably axe, þat þei been payed And þe remanant of alle my goode, whereso
10 it be in þe handes of my debtoours or elles,³ I beqweth it to Jonet, my wyfe, to governe and susteyne with, hir and Elianore my doughtre, ande eke to doon in almesse for me, and for here, and for alle hem þat we been endebted to doon for by any way, as sche may resonably, nouzt amenysynge⁴ gretely here lyfode ne here povre
15 stat. 'The execucioun of whiche thynges abovesayd after my laste wille to be doon and fulfillide, I make myn executours Jonet my wyfe, William Wenloke, Squiere, Sire William Countour, Preste, Thomas Heighelme, Thomas Salman, William Flete, my cosyn, preyinge to hem for Goddes sake, for charitable dede of almesse,
20 and for þe sovereyn trust I have in hem, þat þei wille take þis charge on hem, and refuse it by no maner way Writen þe day and ȝere tofore nempned,' with myn owen honde, in witnesse of my laste wille, and enscaled with my scal

THE LIBEL OF ENGLISH POLICY

The Libel (or Little Book) of English Policy, a plea for a strong navy, was written, according to internal evidence, after the siege of Calais by the Duke of Burgundy, in 1436, and before the death of the Emperor Sigismund in 1437. The siege of Calais, though unsuccessful, had roused England to a sense of the importance of controlling the straits, and the author of this poem, who is unknown, cleverly shows how all the commerce of Europe (generally directed toward the Low Countries) must needs pass through 'the narrow sea' (control of the sea, therefore, would make England powerful. He reviews the exports and imports of the chief countries of Europe, showing intimate

¹ blood-red

² a kind of squirrel-fur

³ elsewhere

⁴ diminishing

⁵ named

acquaintance with the commercial life of his age. He may in some respects be compared with Chaucer's merchant, who

wolde the see were kept for any thing
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle ,
and his line
Kepe thou the see, that is the walle of England,

recalls Shakespeare (*Rich II* 2. 1 48-50, 63)

This precious stone, set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house
England bound in with the triumphant sea

His spirit, we are told (Traill, *Social England* 2 347, cf 340, 344 ff, 406) 'is exactly the spirit which animated the sea-captains and merchant adventurers of the golden age of Elizabeth'

Our selections are from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* 2 157-9, 160-1, 172-3, this text being printed from MS Oxford Bodl Laud 704 Other editions are by Hertzberg (1878) and in Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, Glasgow, 1903, 2 114-47 Emendations in the following pages are from the two other editions noted, *f* has been changed to *f*

The trewe processe of Englysh polycye --
Of utterwarde ¹ to kepe thys regne ² in rest
Of oure England, that no man may denye,
Nere ³ say of soth but it is one the best --
Is thys, that who seith ⁴ Southc, Northe, Est, and West, 5
Cheryshe marchandyse, kepe th' amyralte, ⁵
That we bee maysteres of the narowe see ⁶

For Sigesmonde, the grete emperoure
Whyche yet regneth, whan ⁷ he was in this londe
Wyth Kynge Herry the Fifte, ⁸ pryncce of honoure, 10
Here moche glorye, as hym thought, he fonde ⁹,
A myghty londe, whyche hadde take on honde
To werre ¹⁰ in Fraunce and make mortalite,
And evere welle kepe ¹¹ rounde aboute the see.

¹ from (foes) without
² kingdom
³ nor
⁴ professes to be of (i)

⁵ the admiralty
⁶ the Straits of Dover
⁷ In 1416
⁸ MS. V¹⁰

⁹ MS. founde
¹⁰ war
¹¹ MS kept

384 ILLUSTRATIONS OF LIFE AND MANNERS

- And to the kyng thus he seyde ' My brothere ' —
 Whan he perceyved too townes, Calys¹ and Dover —
 ' Of alle youre townes to chese of one and othere,
 To kepe the see, and sone to come overe
 5 To werre oughtwardes,² and youre regne to recovere,
 Kepe these too townes, sire, to³ youre mageste
 As youre tweyne cyne,⁴ to kepe the narowe see.'
- For if this see be kepte in tyme of werre,
 Who cane here passe withoutht daungeire and woo?
 10 Who may eschape, who may myschef dyfferre⁵?
 What marchaundye⁶ may forby be agoo⁷?
 For nedes hem muste take truse⁸ every foo —
 Flaundes, and Spayne, and othere, trust to me —
 Or ellis hyndered alle for thys narowe see.
- 15 Therefore I caste me, by a lytele wrytinge,
 'To shewe att eye⁹ thys conclusionne,
 For concyens, and for myne acquytyng
 Ayenst God, and ageyne abusyon
 And cowardyse, and to oure enmyes confusione,
 20 For nu thynges our noble¹⁰ sheueth to me —
 Kyng, shype, and swerde, and pouer of the see
- Where bene oure shippes, where bene oure swerdes, become¹¹?
 Owre enmyes bid for the shippe sette a shepe
 Allas¹² oure reule halteth, hit is benome¹³,
 25 Who dare weel say that lordeshyppe shulde take kepe¹⁴?
 I wolle asaye, thoughe myne herte gynne to wepe,
 To do thys werke, yf we wole ever the,¹⁴
 For verry shame, to kepe aboute the see¹⁵

¹ Calais

² outwards, in foreign lands

³ Me and

⁴ eyes

⁵ postpone

⁶ merchandise

⁷ be carried past

⁸ make terms (with Eng-
land)

⁹ to the eye

¹⁰ the gold coin called the
noble

¹¹ what has become of

¹² taken away

¹³ heed

¹⁴ prosper

¹⁵ guard the circuit of the
Channel

Shalle any prynce, what so be hys name,

Wheche hathe nobles moche lyche oures,

Be lorde of see, and Flemmyngis to oure blame

Stoppe us, take us, and so make fade the floures

Of Englysshe state, and disteyne¹ oure honnoures ?

5

For cowardyse, allas ! hit shulde so be ,

Therefore I gynne to wryte now of the see.

Knowe welle alle men that profites in certayne,²

Commoditytes called, commynge out of Spayne,

And marchandy,³ who so wylle wete what that is,

10

Bene fygues, raysyns, wyne bastarde,⁴ and dates ;

And lycorys, Syvyle⁵ oyle, and grayne,⁶

Whyte Castelle⁷ sope, and wax, is not in vayne ,

Iren, wolle, wadmole,⁸ gotefel,⁹ kydefel¹⁰ also —

For poynt-makers¹¹ fulle nedefulle be the two —

15

Saffron, quiksilver, wheche arne Spaynes marchandy,

Is into Flaundres shynped fulle craftylye,

Unto Bruges, as to here staple¹² fayre ,

The haven of Sluse¹³ they have¹⁴ for here repayre,¹⁵

Wheche is cleped Swyn, thaire shynpes gydyng,

20

Where many vessells¹⁶ and fayre arne abydyng

But these merchandes, wyth there shynpes greet,

And suche chaffare¹⁷ as they bye and gette

By the weyes, most nede take one honde

By the costes to passe of oure Englonde . . .

25

And whenne these seyde marchauntz discharged be

Of marchaundy in Flaundres neere the see,

Than they be charged agayn wyth marchaundy

That to Flaundres longeth¹⁸ full rychelye ,

¹ sully

² certain things

³ merchandise

⁴ a sweet wine, like muscadell

⁵ Seville

⁶ kermes

⁷ Castile

⁸ a coarse, hairy, woollen cloth

⁹ goatskin

¹⁰ kidskin

¹¹ those who made leather lacing-strings

¹² market

¹³ Sluys

¹⁴ MS here haven

¹⁵ for them to resort to

¹⁶ vessels, MS vessell

¹⁷ merchandise

¹⁸ belongs, MS bougeth
(em Hertzberg)

19. Sluse. Edward III's naval victory at Sluys in 1340 gave England the mastery of the Channel for centuries.

Fyne clothe of Ipre,¹ that named is better than oure is,
 Cloothe of Curtryke,² fyne cloothe of alle coloures,
 Moche fustyane, and also linnen cloothe.

But ye Flemmyngis, yf ye be not wrothe,
 5 The grete substaunce of youre cloothe, at the fulle,
 Ye wot ye make hit of oure ³ Englissh wolle. . . .

The Janueys ⁴ comyne in sondre wyses
 Into this londe, wyth dyverse marchaundyse,
 In grete karrekis,⁵ arrayde wythouten lake
 10 Wyth clothes of golde, silke, and pepir blake
 They bringe wyth hem, and of wood ⁶ grete plente,
 Woole-oyle, wood-aschen,⁷ by vessels ⁸ in the see,
 Coton, roche-alum,⁹ and gode golde of Jene ¹⁰
 And they be charged wyth wolle ageyne, I wene,
 15 And wollene clothe of owres, of colours alle
 And they aventure, as ofte it dothe byfalle,
 Into Flaundres wyth suche thynges as they bye,
 That is here ¹¹ chelfe staple sykerlye ¹²,
 And if they wolde be oure fulle enemyse,
 20 They shulde not passe our stremez with merchaundyse. . . .

The grete galees ¹³ of Venees and Florence
 Be wel ladene wyth thynges of complacence,¹⁴
 Alle spicerie and ¹⁵ grocers ware,
 Wyth swete wyne, alle manere of chaffare,
 25 Apes, and japes,¹⁶ and marmusettes taylede,¹⁷
 Niffes,¹⁸ trifles, that litelle have availede,
 And thynges wyth whiche they fetely ¹⁹ blere ²⁰ oure eye,
 Wyth thynges not endurynge that we bye —
 For moche of thys chaffare that is wastable
 30 Mighte be forborne, for ²¹ dere and dyssevable ²²

¹ Ypres, in Belgium

² Courtrai, in Belgium

³ MS. youre

⁴ Genoese

⁵ caracks, galleons

⁶ woad (blue dyestuff)

⁷ wood-ashes, MS. woad-

⁸ MS. wesshelle

⁹ rock alum

¹⁰ Genoa

¹¹ their

¹² in truth

¹³ galleys

¹⁴ things that give pleasure,

articles of luxury

¹⁵ MS. and of

¹⁶ trinkets

¹⁷ marmosets with tails

¹⁸ baubles, 'notions'

¹⁹ cleverly

²⁰ dim

²¹ as

²² deceptive

THE GUILD OF ST. LEONARD

The following account of the guild of St Leonard was returned to the 'King in Council, by order of Parliament,' in 1389. Our text of it is taken from Toulmin Smith's *English Guilds* (h. E. T. S. 40 49-50)

In honore Sancti Leonardi confessoris. In þe worchep of God alle-
myghti, and of his modir Seynt Mary, and of alle þe holy company of
heven, and specially of þe holy confessour Seynt Leonard, þis gilde
was begonne in Damgate in þe toun of Lenne,¹ þorow þe devocion
of men and women, to fyndyn² befor on ymage in þe Chirche of 5
Seynt Jame of Lenn, in þe worchep of God and of Seynt Leonard, on
candle of 1 li³ waxe, to brenne every⁴ festivale day in þe zere, aforn
þe ymage of Seynt Leonard. Alleso it is ordeyned, be on assent of
alle þe bretheryn, þat everiche brothir and sistir shal offren at þe
chirche of Seynt Jame, on þe Soneday nexte aftir þe fest of Seynt 10
Leonard,⁵ ob,⁶ in þe worchep of God and Seynt Leonard. Alleso it
is ordeyned, be on assent of þe brethien, to have foure morspeches⁷
in þe zere. Þe firste shal bene þe Moneday neste aftir þe forscade
Soneday. And at þat mornspeche, þorow on assent of alle þe brethen,
to chesen⁸ an aldirman, wise and able to reule þe company to þe 15
worchep of God, and also foure men for to reseyyen and kepyn
þe katel⁹ of þe gilde, and also on certayne officers to warnyn alle þe
brethren to comyn to chirche, and also on clerke, to wyten þe katel
of þe gilde. Þe secunde morspeche shal bene aftir þe Purificacoun
of our Levedy¹⁰ þe thred, aftir þe feste of Philip and Jacob¹¹ þe 20
fourte, aftir þe feste of Seynt Petre .*ad Vincula*¹² Alleso it is ordeyned,
be on assent of þe brethren, be als mecht as¹³ þe lyght forside ne
may nout be meyntened in þe tyme for to come, every man þat wille
with good devocion comyn into þis ffraternite shal pay iii s. Alleso,
if any brothir or sistir deye, þe aldirman shal comand þe officers to 25
warnyn alle þe bretheryn and systeryn to bryng þe cors to þe chirche.

¹ Lynn (King's Lynn, of
Norfolk)

² provide

³ one pound

⁴ MS overy

⁵ St. Leonard's day is Nov 6

⁶ a half-penny (obolus)

⁷ periodical assemblies held
on the morrow after the
guild feast

⁸ choose

⁹ property

¹⁰ Feb 2

¹¹ Philip and James,
May 1

¹² Aug 1

¹³ inasmuch as

with waxe brennend, and þe waxe for to brenne in þe tyme of service. And every broþir and sistir shal offren at þe messe for þe body ob. Ȝefe any broþir or sistir of þis company be in any mischefe, þorow losse of þe se,¹ or any other myshappes, þorow Godes² sond,³ þe company shal ben gadered togedir and helpyn hym Ȝefe any broþer or sistir of þis gild dye within a mile abouten, and have nout whereof to bryng hym to þe erthe,⁴ þe aldirman and þe gilde-brethren shuln wend, and bryng hym to þe erthe on þeire owe costages⁵ And if any broþir dye within þe iii mile aboutyn, þe aldirman shal gon and beryne⁶ hym, 10 or ellis hyren a man of here costages to bryng hym to þe erthe Þere shal no broþir ne sistir sene oþir in prison, þat⁷ he shal comyn and vesyten hym, and comfordyn hym in his powere. Also, if any broþir or sistir of þis gild dye, he shal have xv messes songyn for his soule Also, what man or woman of þis gilde be rebel ageyne þe lawe of 15 Holy Chirche, he shal lese⁸ þe fraternite of þis gilde tille he come to amendment.

Be it open to ȝow, be þes presentes, þat we, fulliche undirstondend ȝour lettres sent to us, seyend on þis manere, þat we shuld send ȝow a kopy of our statuz, and also þe summe of our katel, we do ȝow 20 openliche to wetyn þat þe summe of our katel is xxi s. viii d, redy to out lord þe kinges wille

¹ at sea² M^s. goodes³ dispensation⁴ bury him⁵ at their own expense⁶ bury⁷ but that⁸ lose

TRANSLATIONS

CHAUCER, THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

The *Roman de la Rose*, one of the most celebrated and influential poems of the Middle Ages, is the work of two poets, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, the former writing about 1237, and the latter about 1277. Of the 22,817 lines in Michel's edition (the most accessible), Guillaume wrote 4660, and Jean the remainder. Gaston Paris has characterized Guillaume's part by its use of the dream as a frame, of allegory (the maiden as a rose), of a garden as the scene of the poem, and of personification. Jean de Meun's part is more formless, and makes much parade of learning.

The translation into Middle English consists of 7698 lines. Until about 1868 Chaucer's authorship of the whole of this version was not doubted, especially as Cupid is represented as saying to Chaucer, in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* (B)

For in pleyn text, withouten nede of glose,
Thou hast translated the Romaunce of the Rose

At present three divisions are recognized: 1-1705 (A), 1706-5810 (B), 5811-7698 (C), corresponding respectively to 1-1678, 1679-5875, and 11,444-13,299 of the French (Michel's edition). Nearly all scholars agree that A is by Chaucer, and that B is not. Kaluza believes that C is also by Chaucer, but this view has not been generally accepted.

Through Guillaume de Digulleville, or Guileville (d. about 1360), the French *Roman* may have had an influence on the *Pilgrim's Progress* (see Hammond, Chaucer, pp. 76-7).

For the French original, see Gaston Paris, *Litt. fr. au Moyen Âge*, chap. 5, Petit de Julleville, *Hist. de la Langue et de la Litt. fr.* 2: 105-61 (Langlois), Hammond, Chaucer, pp. 78-9, where bibliographies may be found. The *Roman* has been translated into English by F. S. Ellis (Temple Classics, 3 vols.). For a bibliography of the English translation, see Hammond, Chaucer, pp. 450-4.

The subjoined text is based upon the reprint of the unique manuscript (Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, V. 3. 7) by Kaluza, issued by the Chaucer Society in 1891. Omissions in the manuscript have been supplied from Thynne's edition, and a few emendations have been admitted. The extracts below are, respectively, lines 49-89, 110-43, 349-68. To lines 71-89 of the version I subjoin 67-83 of the French (Michel), for the purpose of comparison.

THE JOYS OF SPRING

That it was May me thought[e] tho,
 It is v yere or more ago ,
 That it was May, thus dremed me,
 In tyme of love and jolite,
 5 That al thing gynneth waxen gay,
 For ther is neither busk ¹ nor hay ²
 In May, that it nyl shrouded ³ bene,
 And it with newe leves wrene.⁴
 These wodes eek recoveren gr[c]ne,
 10 That drie in wynter ben to sene ,
 And the erth wexith proude withall,
 For swote ⁵ dewes that on it fall,
 And the pore estat forgette
 In which that winter had it sette ,
 15 And than bycometh the ground so proude
 That it wolc have a newe shroude,
 And makith so queynt his robe and faire
 That it hath ⁶ hewes an hundred payre
 Of gras and flouris, ynde ⁷ and pers,⁸
 20 And many hewes ful dyvers ,
 [That is the robe I] ⁹ mene, iwis,
 [Through whiche the] ground to preisen ¹⁰ is.
 [The byrdes, that ha]ven lefte her song,
 While thei [han suffr]ide cold so strong
 45 In wedres gryl,¹¹ and derk to sight,
 Ben in May, for the sonne bright,
 So glade, that they shewe in syngyng
 That in her hertis is sich lykyng
 That they mote syngen and be light
 30 Than doth the nyghtyngale hir myght

¹ bush² hedge³ clothed⁴ cover⁵ sweet⁶ MS had (em Skeat)⁷ dark blue (indigo)⁸ sky-blue⁹ From Thynne's edition,
and so the next lines¹⁰ to be praised, admired
¹¹ disagreeable

To make noyse, and syngen blythe ;
 Than is blisful, many sithe,
 The chela[un]dre¹ and [the] papyngay.²
 Than yong[e] folk entenden ay
 For to ben gay and amorous, 5
 The tyme is than so faverous³
 Hard is the hert that loveth nought
 In May, whan al this mirth is wrought,
 Whan he may on these braunches here
 The smale briddes syngen clere 10
 Her blesful swete song pitous.

Li oisel, qui se sunt teu
 Tant com il ont le froit eu,
 Et le tens divers et frain,
 Sunt en Mai, por le tens serin,
 Si hé qu'il monstrent en chantant 5
 Qu'en lor cuer a de joie tant,
 Qu'il lor estuet chanter par force.
 Li rossignos lors s'esforce
 De chanter et de faire noise ,
 Lors s'esvertue, et lors s'envoise 10
 Li papegaus et la kalandre
 Lors estuet jones gens entendre
 A estre gais et amoreus
 Poi le tens bel et doucereus
 Moult a dur cuer qui en Mai n'aime, 15
 Quant il ot chanter sus la raine
 As oisiaus les dous chans piteus

¹ a kind of lark (a Mediterranean species)² parrot, popinjay³ favorable

THE RIVER AND THE GARDEN

- Toward a ryver gan I me dresse ¹
 That I herd renne fast[e] by ,
 For fairer playng non saugh I
 Than playen me by that ryvere,
 5 For from an hill that stood ther nere
 Cam doun the streme ful stif and bold.
 Cleer was the water, and as cold
 [As any welle is, sot]²h to seyn ,
 [And somdele lasse ³] it was than Seyn,
 10 [But it was stray]ghter wel away.
 [And never sau]gh I, er that day,
 The watir that so wel lyked ⁴ me ,
 And wondir glad was I to se
 That lusty place, and that ryvere ,
 15 And with that watir that ran so clere
 My face I wysshe. ⁵ Tho saugh I well
 The botme paved everydell
 With gravel, ful of stones shene ⁶
 The medewe softe, swote,⁷ and grene,
 20 Beet ⁸ right on the watirsyde
 Ful clere was than the morowyde,⁹
 And ful attempre,¹⁰ out of drede
 Tho gan I walk thorough the mede,
 Dounward ay in my playng,
 25 The ryversyde costeyng ¹¹
 And whan I had a while goon,
 I saugh a gardyn right anoon,
 Ful long and brood, and everydell
 Enclosed was, and walled well,
 30 With high[e] walles enbatailled,
 Portraied without, and wel entailed ¹²

¹ direct² From Thynne, and so next lines³ smaller⁴ pleased⁵ washed⁶ glistening⁷ sweet⁸ adjoined (*hit* beat upon)⁹ morning¹⁰ mild¹¹ coasting skirting¹² carved

With many riche portraitures,
 And bothe the ymages and the peyntures
 Gan I biholde bysyly.

THE PICTURE OF OLD AGE

Elde¹ was [1]paynted after this,
 That shorter was a foote, iwys, 5
 Than she was wont in her yonghede.²
 Unneth³ herselfe she might[e] fede;
 So feble and eke so olde was she
 That faded was al her beaute
 Ful salowe was waxen hir coloure, 10
 Hir heed for hore⁴ was whyte as floure;
 Iwys, great qualme⁵ ne were it none,
 Ne synne, *although her lyfe were gone.*
 Al woxen was her body unwelde,⁶
 And drie and dwyned⁷ al for elde, 15
 A foule forwelked⁸ thyng was she
 That whylom rounde and soft had be
 Hir eeres shoken faste withall,
 As from her heed they wolde fall
 Her face frounced⁹ and forpyned,¹⁰ 20
 And bothe hir hondes lome,¹¹ fordwyned.¹²
 So olde she was that she ne went
 A foote, but it were by potent¹³

¹ old age² youth³ with difficulty⁴ hoariness⁵ evil⁶ unwieldy, impotent⁷ dwindled⁸ withered⁹ wrinkled¹⁰ wasted away¹¹ forlorn¹² shrunken¹³ crutch

CHAUCER'S TRANSLATION OF BOETHIUS

Boethius (ca 475-524) was a Roman patrician and consul in the reign of Theodoric. His *Consolation of Philosophy*, said to have been written during his imprisonment by Theodoric, is preserved in hundreds of manuscripts, and was regarded as the standard handbook of philosophy until the Renaissance. This book, which is partly in verse and partly in prose, was translated into prose by Chaucer, while allusions to it, and versions or paraphrases of many passages, are scattered through his works. See Cook and Tinker, *Sel Trans from Old Eng Prose*, p. 116, and the works mentioned there.

The passages here printed are from Book 2 (Metre 5, and a bit of Prose 6), and comprise (1) Chaucer's prose, (2) the original Latin, (3) a few lines of the Old English translations, prose and verse, due to King Alfred, (4) a portion of Chaucer's *The Former Age* (following MS Camb Univ 11.3.21), which is partly a paraphrase of the same passage. It will be noted that various glosses rendered by Chaucer in the prose version are printed in italics. The Latin lines corresponding to a given part of the first version are indicated in square brackets.

[1-5] Blisful was the first age of men! They helden hem apayed¹ with the metes² that the trewe³ feldes broughten forth. They ne destroyede nor deceivede nat hemself with outrage⁴. They weren wont lightly to slaken hir hunger at even with acornes of okes. [6-10] They ne coude nat medle⁵ the yifte of Bachus to the cleer hony, *that is to seyn, they coude make no piment⁶ nor clarree⁷*, ne they coude nat medle the bryghte fleeses of the contree of Seriens⁸ with the venom⁹ of Tyrie¹⁰, *this is to seyn, they coude nat deyene whyte fleeces of Serien contree with the blode of a maner shelfisshe that men finden in Tyrie,*
10 *with whiche blood men deyene purpur*. They slepen hoolsom slepes upon the gras, [11-15] and dronken of the renninge wateres, and layen under the shadwes of the heye pyn-trees. Ne no gest ne straungere ne carf¹¹ yit the heye see with ores or with shippes, ne they ne hadde seyn yit none newe strondes, to leden marchaundyse into dy-
15 verse contrees. [16-20] Tho weren the cruel clarouns ful hust¹² and ful stille, ne blood yshad by egre¹³ hate ne hadde nat deyed

¹ contented, satisfied² kinds of food³ faithful⁴ excess⁵ mingle, mix; MS medly⁶ wine mixed with honey (*usually spiced wine*)⁷ wine mixed with honey, and then clarified⁸ Chinese⁹ dye¹⁰ Tyre¹¹ cut¹² silent, hushed¹³ fierce, bitter

yit armures.¹ For wherto or which woodnesse² of enemys wolde first
 moeven³ armes, [21-26] whan they seyen cruel woundes, ne none
 medes⁴ be of blood yshad? I wolde that oure tymes sholde torne
 ayein to the olde maneres | But the anguissous⁵ love of havinge bien-
 neth in folk more cruelly than the fyr of the mountaigne Ethna, *that a* 5
brenneth. [27-30] Allas⁶ what was he that first dalf⁷ up the gobetes⁸
 or the weightes of gold covered under erthe, and the precious stones
 that wolden han ben hid? He dalf up precious perils *That is to seyn,*
that he that hem first up dalf, he dalf up a precious peril. forwhy⁹
for the preciousnesse of swiche thinge hath many man ben in peril 10

[*Prose*] But what shal I seye of dignitees and of powers, the whiche
 ye men, that neither knowen verray⁹ dignitee ne verray power,
 areysen¹⁰ hem as heye as the hevenc? The whiche dignitees and
 powers, yif they comen to any wikked man, they don as grete
 damages and destruccions as doth the flaumbe¹¹ of the mountaigne 15
 Ethna, whan the flaumbe walweth¹² up, ne no deluge ne doth so
 cruel harmes.

Felix nimium prior ætas,
 Contenta fidelibus arvis
 Nec inerti perdita luxu, 20
 Facili quæ sera solebat
 Jejunia solvere glande
 Non Bacchica munera norant
 Liquido confundere melle,
 Nec lucida vellera Serum 25
 Tyrio miscere veneno
 Somnos dabat herba salubres,
 Potum quoque lubricus amnis,
 Umbras altissima pinus.
 Nondum maris alta secabat, 30
 Nec mercibus undique lectis
 Nova litora viderat hospes.

¹ armor
² madness, rage
³ stir up
⁴ rewards

⁵ tormenting
⁶ dug
⁷ lumps
⁸ wherefore

⁹ true
¹⁰ exalt
¹¹ flame
¹² rolls, tosses

- Tunc classica sæva tacebant,
 Odiis neque fusus acerbis
 Cruor horrida tinxerat arva.
 Quid enim furor hosticus ulla
 5 Vellet prior anima movere,
 Cum vulnera sæva viderent,
 Nec præmia sanguinis ulla ?
 Utinam modo nostra redirent
 In mores tempora priscos !
 10 Sed, sævior ignibus Ætnæ,
 Fervens amor ardet habendi.
 Heu ! primus quis fuit ille
 Auri qui pondera tecti,
 Gemmasque latere volentes,
 15 Pretiosa pericula, fodit ?

Quid autem de dignitatibus potentiaque disseram qua vos veræ dignitatis ac potestatis inscui cælo exæquatis ? Quæ si in improbissimum quemque ceciderunt quæ flammis Ætnæ eructantibus, quod diluvium tantas strages dederint ?

- 20 Trēowa wæstmas hī æton and wyrta ; nalles scir win hī ne druncan,
 nē nanne wætan hī ne cūpon wið hunige menga, nē seolocenra hrægla
 mid mistlicum blēowum hī ne gīmdon Ealne weg hī slēpon ūte on
 triowa sceadum, hlūterra wella wæter hī druncon Ne geseah nān
 cēpa ēaland ne weroð, nē gehērde nōn mon þā gēt nāne sciphere.
 25 And hī æne on dæge æton symle
 On æfentid eorþan wæstmas,
 Wudes and wyrta, nalles win druncon
 Scir of stēape. Næs þa scealca nān
 þe mete oððe drinc mængan cūðe,
 30 Wæter wið hunige, nē heora wæda þon mā
 Sioloe siowian, nē hī siarocræftum
 Godweb gredon, nē hī gımreced
 Setton searolice, ac hī simle him
 Eallum tidum ūte slēpon

Under bēamsceade, druncon burnan wæter,
 Calde wellan. Nænig cēpa ne seah
 Ofer ēargeblond ellendne wearod,
 Nē hūru ymbe scīphergas sǣtilcas ne hērdon.

THE FORMER AGE

A blysfyl lyf, a paysyble and a swete, 5
 Ledden the poeples in the former age;
 They helde hem paied¹ of fructes² þat þey ete,
 Whiche þat the feldes yave hem by usage³,
 They ne weere nat forpampred⁴ with owtrage⁵
 Onknowyn was þe quyerne⁶ and ek the melle⁷, 10
 They eten mast, hawes, and swych pownage,⁸
 And dronken water of the colde wellc

Yit nas the grownd nat wounded with þe plowh,
 But corn upsprong, unsowe of mannes hond,
 Þe which they gnodded,⁹ and cete nat half inowh. 15
 No man yit knewe the forwes¹⁰ of his lond,
 No man the fyr owt of the flynt yit fonde,
 Unkorven¹¹ and ungrobbed¹² lay the vyne,
 No man yit in the mortar spices grond,
 To¹³ clarre ne to sawse of galentyne¹⁴ 20

No madyr,¹⁵ welde,¹⁶ or wod¹⁷ no litestere¹⁸
 Ne knewh, the fles¹⁹ was of [h]is former hewe;
 No flessch ne wyste offence of egge²⁰ or spere,
 No coyn ne knewh man which was²¹ fals or trewe,

¹ satisfied² MS. the fructes³ customarily, regularly⁴ pampered⁵ excess⁶ hand-mill⁷ mill⁸ swine's food⁹ rubbed, bruised, cf *Rom.**R̄re* 9124 (the whole

passage seems imitated

from Boethius) *Et des**espis des blés frotoient*¹¹⁰ furrows¹¹ unharmed¹² not digged round¹³ for¹⁴ a mixture of ginger, grated

bread, vinegar, etc

¹⁵ madder¹⁶ dyeweed, yellowweed¹⁷ woad¹⁸ dyer¹⁹ fleece²⁰ edge²¹ MS. is

No ship yit karf the wawes grene and blewe ;
 No marchaunt yit ne fette owtlandissh ware ;
 No trompes¹ for the werres folk ne knewe,
 Ne towres heye, and walles rownde or square.

- 5 What sholde it han awayled to werreye² ?
 Ther lay no profyt, ther was no rychesse,
 But corsed was the tyme, I dar wel seye,
 þat men fyrst dede hir swety bysynesse
 To gjobbe up metal, lurkyng in derknesse,³
 10 And in þe ryverys fyrst[e] gemmys sowhte.
 Allas ! than sprong up al the cursydnesse
 Of coveytyse, þat fyrst owr sorwe browhte.

WYCLIFFITE TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

The extracts here given are from the second Wycliffite version of the Vulgate (ca 1388), which is not so awkwardly literal as the earlier (ca 1380). An interesting study of the Wycliffite Epistle to the Romans, compared with the Latin and another (fragmentary) Middle English rendering, has been published by Dr Emma C. Tucker (*Yale Studies in English*, No. 49).

JOB 41 20-28, 42 4-25

- Whether thou schalt mowe drawe out levyathan with an hook, and
 schalt hynde with a roop his tunge ? Whethu thou schalt putte a
 15 ryng in hise nosethirlis, ethir schalt perse hyse cheke with an hook ?
 Whether he schal multiplie preieris to thee, ether schal speke softe
 thingis to thee ? Whether he schal make covenant with thee, and
 thou schalt take him a servaunt everlastinge ? Whether thou schalt
 scorne hym as a brid, ethir schalt hynde hym to thin handmaidis ?
 20 Schulen frendis kerve hym ? schulen marchauntis departe hym ?
 Whether thou schalt fille nettis with his skyn, and a leep⁴ of fischis
 with his heed ? Schalt thou putte thin hond on hym ? have thou
 mynde of the batel, and adde no more to speke. Lo, his hope schal
 disserve hym, and in the sixt of alle men he schal be cast down .

¹ MS. batails trompes

² fight

³ MS. dirknesse

⁴ basket

Who schal schewe the face of his clothing, and who schal entre into the myddis of his mouth? Who schal opene the *zatis* of his cheer¹? ferdfulnesse² is bi the cumpas of hise teeth His bodi is as *rotun*³ scheldys of bras, and joyned togidere with scalis overleynghe hemself⁴ Oon is joyned to another, and sotheli brething goith not thorow⁵ tho⁶ Oon schal cleve to another, and tho holdynghe hemself schulen not be departid⁶ His *inesynghe*⁷ is as schynynghe of fier, and hise *ixen*⁸ ben as *ixelidis* of the morewid⁹ Laumpis comen forth of his mouth, as trees¹⁰ of fier that ben kyndlid. Smoke cometh forth of hise nosethirlis, as of a pot set on the fier and boilynghe His breeth¹⁰ maketh colis to brenne, and flawme goith out of his mouth Strengthe schal dwelle in his necke, and nedynesse¹¹ schal go bifor his face The membris of hise fleischis ben clevynghe togidere to hemself, God schal sende floodis¹² agens hym, and tho schulen not be borun to another place His herte schal be maad hard as a stoon, and it schal be¹⁵ streyned¹³ togidere as the anefeld¹⁴ of a smith Whanne he schal be takun awei, aungels schulen drede, and thei, aferd, schulen be purgid¹⁵ Whanne sweid takith hym, it may not stonde, nethir spere, nether haburjoun¹⁶ For he schal arette irun as chaffis, and bras as rotun tre A man archere schal not dryve hym awei stoonys of a slynghe ben¹⁷ turned into stobil to hym He schal arette¹⁷ an hamer as stobil,¹⁸ and he schal scorpe a florischynghe¹⁹ spere The beemys of the sunne schulen be undur hym, and he schal strew to hymself gold as clay He schal make the depe se to buyle as a pot, and he schal putte²⁰ as whanne oymmentis buylen A path schal schyne afur hym he²¹ schal gesse²¹ the gret ocean as wesynge eld No power is on erthe that schal be comparisoun to hym, which is maad that he schuld drede noon He seeth al hit thing, he is kyng over alle the sonis of prude

¹ face

² terror

³ molten

⁴ one another

⁵ them

⁶ separated

⁷ sneezing

⁸ eyes

⁹ morning

¹⁰ torches

¹¹ want, poverty

¹² Lat. *fulmina*, read as *flamma*
¹³ compacted

¹⁴ anvil

¹⁵ purified

¹⁶ breastplate

¹⁷ esteem

¹⁸ stubble

¹⁹ brandishing, waving

²⁰ regard (it)

²¹ esteem

JOHN 17.1-6

These thingis Jesus spak, and whanne he hadde cast up hise igen into hevene, he seide. 'Fadir, the our cometh, clarifie¹ thi sone, that thi sone clarifie thee, as thou hast ȝovun to hym power on ech fleisch, that al thing that thou hast ȝovun to hym, he ȝyve to hem
 5 everlastynge luf And this is everlastynge luf, that thei knowe thee very God aloone, and whom thou hast sent, Jesu Crist. Y have clarified thee on the erthe, Y have endid the werk that thou hast ȝovun to me to do And now, Fadir, clarifie thou me at² thisilf, with the clerenesse³ that Y hadde at thee bifor the world was maad Y
 10 have schewid thi name to tho men whiche thou hast ȝovun to me of the world, thei weren thine, and thou hast ȝovun hem to me, and thei han kept thi word.

REVELATION 14

And Y sai, and lo¹ a Lomb stood on the mount of Sion, and with hym an hundrid thousynde and foure and fourti thousynde, havyng
 15 his name, and the name of his Fadir, writun in her forhedis And Y heide a vois fro hevene, as the vois of many watris, and as the vois of a greet thundur, and the vois which is herd was as of many harperis harpinge in her harpis, and thei sungun as a newe song bifor the seete⁴ of God, and bifore the foure beestis and senyours,
 20 and no man myȝte seie the song but thei, an hundrid thousynde and

¹ glorify² with, Lat *apud*³ glory⁴ throne

1. thingis of the Old English of verses 1-3

Ðas þing se Hæfend spræc, and ahhof upp his eagan to heofenum, and cwæð 'Fæder, tid ys cumen, geswutela þinne Sunu, þæt þin Sunu geswutelige þe and swa þu him sealdest anweald ælces mannes, þæt he sylle ece lif eallum þam þe þu him sealdest Ðis ys soþlice ece lif, þæt hi oncnawon þæt þu eart an soþ God, and se þe þu sendest, Hælynde Crist'

'Lyndale has

I these wordes spake Jesus, and lifte uppe his eyes to heven, and sayde 'Father, the houre is come, glorify thy Sonne, that thy Sonne maye glorify the, as thou hast given hym power over all fleshe, that he shulde geve eternall life to as many as thou hast given him I his is life eternall, that they myght knowe the, that only very God, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ'

foure and fourti thousynde, that ben bougt fro the erthe. These it
 ben that ben not defoulde with wymmen, for thei ben virgyns. Thesc
 suen the Lomb whidir ever he schal go. These ben 'bougt of alle men,
 the firste fruytis to God and to the Lomb, and in the mouth of hem
 lesyng¹ is not foundun, for thei ben without wen² bifor the trone 5
 of God. And Y say another aungel, flynge bi the myddil of hevene,
 havynge an everlastinge gospel that he schulde preche to men sittynge
 on erthe, and on ech folk, and lynage, and langage, and puple, and
 seide with a greet vois 'Drede ȝe the Lord, and ȝve ȝe to hym
 onour, for the our of his dom cometh, and worschipe ȝe hym that 10
 made hevene and erthe, the see, and alle thingis that ben in hem, and
 the wellis of watris.' And another aungel suede,³ seynge 'Thilke
 greet Babiloyne fel doun, fel doun, which ȝaf drinke to alle folkis of
 the wyn of wraththe of her fornyacioun' And the thurde aungel
 suede hem, and seide with a greet vois 'If ony man worschipe the 15
 beeste and the ymage of it, and takith the carecter⁴ in his forheed,
 ether in his hoond, this schal drynke of the wyn of Goddis wiaththe,
 that is meynd⁵ with clere wyn in the cuppe of his wiaththe, and schal
 be turmentid with fier and brymston, in the sixt of hooch aungels, and
 bifore the sixt of the Lomb, and the smoke of her turmentis schal 20
 stie⁶ up into the worldis of worldis, nether thei han reste dai and
 nixt, whiche worschypiden the beeste and his ymage, and yf ony man
 take the carect of his name Here is the pacience of seyntis, whiche
 kepen the maundementis of God, and the feith of Jesu' And Y herde
 a vois fro hevene seynge to me 'Write thou, Blessid ben deed men 25
 that dien in the Lord, fro hennus forth now the Spuit seith that thei
 reste of her travcelis; for the werkis of hem suen hem.' And Y sav,⁷
 and lo a white cloude, and above the cloude a sittere, lik the Sone of
 man, havynge in his heed a goldun coroun, and in his hond a sharp
 sikil And another aungel wente out of the temple, and criede with 30
 greet vois to hym that sat on the cloude 'Sende thi sikil, and repe,
 for the our cometh that it be ropun, for the corn of the erthe is ripe'
 And he that sat on the cloude sente his sikil into the erthe, and rap
 the erthe. And another aungel wente out of the temple that is in

¹ falsehood
² blemish

³ followed
⁴ mark

⁵ mingled
⁶ rise

⁷ looked

hevene, and he also hadde a scharp sikile. And another aungel wente out fro the auter, that hadde power on fier and water, and he criede with a greet vois to hym that hadde the scharp sikil, and seide 'Sende thi scharp sikil, and kitte awei the clustris of the vyngeid
 5 of the erthe, for the grapis of it ben ripe' And the aungel sente his sikil into the erthe, and gaderide grapis of the vyngeid of the erthe, and sente into the greet lake of Goddis wiaththe And the lake was troddun without the citee, and the bloode wente out of the lake til to the bridels of horsis, bi furlongis a thousynd and six hundrid

VERSIONS OF PSALM 51. 1-3

LATIN

- 10 Misereere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam, et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum dele iniquitatem meam. Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea, et a peccato meo munda me. Quoniam iniquitatem meam cognosco, et peccatum meum contra me est semper

ABOUT 1200

Vices and Virtues, in Smyth, *Biblical Quotations in Middle English Literature* (Yale Studies in English, No. 41), p. 42

- 15 Hlaverd, . after-ðat-ðe ðin mildce ys michel, have ore of mine michele senne, and after ðine manifealde mildces ðe ðu hafst ihafd to mankenne, Hlaverd, do awei fram me ðesc michele unrihtwisnesse

A D 1300-1350

Bulbring, *Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter*, p. 60

- Ha mercy on me, God, efter þy mychel mercy, and efter þe mychelnes of þy pites do way my wickednes Whasshe me more
 20 of my wickednes, and clense me of myn synne For ich knowe my wickednes, and my synne ys evermore ogains me

A D. 1350-1400

Horstmann, *Richard Rolle*, pp. 182-3

God, þou have mercy of me,
 After mikel mercy of þe,
 And after of þi reuþes þe mikelnes
 Þou do awai mi wickednes
 Nou mare me wasche of min iverl bidene,
 And of mi synne þou klenes me klene
 For mi wicke[d]nes I know þat I am inne,
 And ai ogain me es mi synne

5

ABOUT 1388

Wycliffe

God, have thou merci on me, bi thi greet merci, and bi the mychil-
 nes of thi merciful doyngis do thou awai my wickidnesse. More 10
 wasche thou me fro my wickidnesse, and clense thou me fro my
 synne. For Y kouleche my wickidnesse, and my synne is evere
 aȝeyns me

ABOUT 1460

Political, Religious, and Love Songs (reprint of F E T S 15), pp. 279-80

Mercy, God, of my mysdede,
 For þi mercy þat mychel ys,
 Lat þi pite sprynge and sprede.
 Off þi mercy þat I ne mys
 After gostly grace I grede¹,
 Good God, þou graunt me þis,
 þat I may lyve in love and drede,
 And never after do² more amys.

15

20

And after þi mercies þat ben fele,³
 Lord, fordo my wickydnese,

¹ cry

MS to do

² many

3yve me grace to hyde and hele
 The blame of my bruchelnesse.
 3if any sterynge ¹ on me stele
 Out of þe clos of þi clenness,
 5 Wysse me, Lord, in wo and weele,
 And kepe me fram unkyndnesse

Moreover, wasche me of my synne,
 And of my gultes clanse þow me ;
 And serche my soule without and inne,
 10 That I no more defowld be
 And as þyn hert aclef atwynne ²
 With doleful deth on þe rode-tre,
 Late me never no werke bigynne,
 Lord, but-ȝif ³ it lyke þee

15 For al my wickidnesse I knowe,
 And my synne is ever me aȝeyn ,
 Therfore late þi grace growe,
 Jesu, þat was with Jewis sleyn.
 Ryche and pore, hye and lowe,
 20 Smale and gret[e], in certeyn,
 Atte Domesdaie, when þou schalt blowe,
 Of þi mercy schul be ful feyn.

A.D. 1535

Coverdale

Have mercy upon me (O God), after thy goodnes , and acordinge
 unto thy greate mercies do awaye myne offences Wash me well fro
 25 my wickednesse, and clense me fro my synne. For I knowlege my
 fautes, and my synne is ever before me

¹ guidance (?), stirring (?)

² burst in twain

³ unless

A.D. 1560

Geneva Version

Have mercie upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindenes ,
according to the multitude of thy compassions put awaie mine iniqui-
ties. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquitie, and clense me from my
sinne. For I knowe mine iniquities, and my sinne is ever before me

A.D. 1611

Authorized Version

Have mercie upon mee, O God, according to thy loving kindnesse ; 5
according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my trans-
gressions. Wash mee thoroughly from mine iniquitie, and clense me
from my sinne. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sinne
is ever before mee.

LYRICS

CUCKOO SONG

About 1240 (*New Eng Dict*) From MS. Brit Mus Harl 978, where it is accompanied by the music. The author of this rondel, rota, or round, may perhaps have been John of Fornssete, a monk of the abbey of Reading. The melody is of considerable importance in the history of English music. Sober musical critics have spoken of 'this amazing production,' of its 'ingenuity and beauty,' of 'the airy and pastoral correspondence between the words and the music.' See Grove's *Dict Music*, 2d ed., 4 745-54 (cf 3 750-1, 765), *Oxford Hist Music* 1 326-38 (Wooldridge), *Trans Phil Soc* for 1868, p 103, E. E. T. S. 7 419-28. There are facsimiles in Grove (4 748), Chappell, *Pop Music of the Olden Time*, and the facsimiles of the Palæographical Society, Part 8, Pl 125.

Sing, cuccu, nu¹! Sing, cuccu!
Sing, cuccu! Sing, cuccu, nu!

Sumer is icumen in,
 Lhude² sing, cuccu!
 5 Growep³ sed, and blowep⁴ med,⁴
 And springp⁵ pe wde⁶ nu.
 Sing, cuccu!
 Awe⁶ bletep⁷ after lomb,
 Lhoup⁷ after calve cu;
 10 Bulluc stertep⁸,⁸ bucke vertep⁹;
 Murie¹⁰ sing, cuccu!
 Cuccu! cuccu!
 Wel singes pu, cuccu;
 Ne swik¹¹ pu naver¹² nu.

¹ now
² loudly
³ blooms
⁴ mead, meadow
⁵ wood

⁶ ewe
⁷ lows
⁸ bounds, frisks (cf. Chaucer, *K T* 644
 'a courser, *sterting* as the fyr')

⁹ *pedis* (Lat.)
¹⁰ merrily
¹¹ cease
¹² never

SPRING

About 1310. From Boddeker, *Altenglische Dichtungen des MS Harl 2253*, pp. 164-5

Lenten ys come wiþ love to tounc,¹
 Wiþ blosmen and wiþ briddes rounē,²
 þat al þis blisse bryngeþ,
 Dayeseȝes³ in þis⁴ dales,
 Notes suete of nyhtegales,
 Uch foul song singeþ
 The prestelcoc him þreteþ⁶ oo⁵,
 Away is huere⁷ wynter woo,
 When woderove⁸ springeþ.
 Þis foules singeþ ferly felc,⁹
 Ant wlyteþ¹⁰ on huere wynter wele,¹¹
 þat al þe wode ryngelþ
 þe rose rayleþ¹² hire rode¹³,
 The leues on þe lyhte¹⁴ wode
 Waxen al wiþ wille¹⁵
 þe mone mandeþ¹⁶ hire bleo¹⁷,
 þe lilie is lossom¹⁸ to sco,
 þe fenyl¹⁹ and þe fille.²⁰
 Woves²¹ þis wilde drakes,
 Miles²² murgeþ²³ huere makes,²⁴
 Ase strem þat strikeþ²⁵ stille.
 Mody²⁶ meneþ,²⁷ so dop²⁸ mo²⁹;
 Ichot Ycham³⁰ on of þo,
 I'or love þat likes ille.³¹

¹ spring has made its appearance, with love

² song

³ daisies

⁴ these

⁵ disputes with himself (?)

⁶ ever

⁷ their

⁸ woodruff

⁹ wonderfully much

¹⁰ look back

¹¹ winter's well-being (ironical?)

¹² puts on (as a garment)

¹³ ruddiness

¹⁴ fluttering, trembling (transferred epithet, belonging properly to 'leues')

¹⁵ eagerly

¹⁶ sends forth

¹⁷ color

¹⁸ lovely

¹⁹ fennel

²⁰ chervil

²¹ woo

²² animals (so Matzner)

²³ delight

²⁴ mates

²⁵ flows

²⁶ disconsolate ones? (cf.

Shakespeare, *King John* 4.1.15-16)

²⁷ lament

²⁸ M's doh

²⁹ others

³⁰ I know I am

³¹ annoys, vexes

- þe mone mandeþ hire lyht;
 So doþ þe semly ¹ sonne bryht,
 When briddes singeþ breme.²
 Deawes donkeþ ³ þe dounes;
 5 Deores ⁴ w[r]iþ ⁵ huere derne rounes,⁶
 Domes for te deme ⁷;
 Wormes woweþ under cloude ⁸;
 Wymmen waxeþ wounder proude,
 So wel hit wol hem seme.⁹
 10 Ȝef me shal wonte wille of on,¹⁰
 þis worldes ¹¹ weole ¹² Y wole forgon,¹³
 Ant wyht ¹⁴ in wode ¹⁵ be fleme.¹⁶

WHEN THE NIGHTINGALE SINGS

About 1310 From Boddeker, p 174

- When þe nyhtegale singes,
 þe wodes waxen grene,
 15 Lef ant gras ant blosme springes
 In Averyl, Y wene,
 Ant love is to myn herte gon
 Wip one ¹⁷ spere so kene,
 Nyht ant day my blod hit drynkes,
 20 Myn herte deþ to ¹⁸ tene.¹⁹

Ich have loved al þis ȝer,
 þat Y may love na more;
 Ich have siked ²⁰ moni syk,
 Lemmon,²¹ for þin ore ²²,

¹ goodly² gaily³ wet⁴ animals
⁵ divulge, cf Chaucer,
Compl. Mars 91; *T.*
and C. 2 537
⁶ their secret communings⁷ sentiments to express⁸ clod⁹ beseech, become
¹⁰ if I shall fail to have
 my will of one
¹¹ MS wunne¹² weal¹³ forego¹⁴ bold (?)¹⁵ forest¹⁶ fugitive¹⁷ a
¹⁸ Wright (*Spec. Lyr. Poetry*
 p 92), me
¹⁹ distress, anguish²⁰ sighed²¹ sweetheart²² favor, grace

Me nis love never þe ner,¹
 Ant þat me rewep sore ;
 Suede lemmon, þench on me,
 Ich have loved þe gore.²

Suede lemmon, Y preye þee 5
 Of love one speche ;
 Whil Y lyve in world so wyde
 Oþer nulle ³ Y seche.
 Wiþ þy love, my suede leof,⁴
 My blis þou mihtes eche ⁵ ; 10
 A suede cos ⁶ of þy mouth
 Mihte be my leche.⁷

Suede lemmon, Y prege þee
 Of a love-bene ⁸ ;
 3ef þou me lovest, ase men says, 15
 Lemmon, as I wene,
 Ant gef hit þi wille be,
 þou loke þat hit be sene ;
 So muchel Y þenke upon þe
 þat al Y waxe grene.⁹ 20

Bituene Lyncolne ant Lyndeseye,¹⁰
 Norhamptoun ant Lounde,¹¹
 Ne wot I non so fayr a may,
 As I go fore ybounde ¹²
 Suede lemmon, Y prege þe 25
 þou lovie me a stounde ¹³ ,
 Y wole mone my song
 On wham hit ys ylong ¹⁴

¹ nearer² long³ will not⁴ dear⁵ augment⁶ kiss⁷ healing⁸ love-boon⁹ pale¹⁰ Lindsey in Suffolk, about
100 miles from Lincoln¹¹ London, about 57 miles from
Northampton¹² as I go in bondage for¹³ for a time¹⁴ to whom it belongs, MS. on
wham þat hit ys on ylong

ALISON

About 1310 From Boddeker, pp 147-8. Translation in Ten Brink, *Early Eng Lit*, pp 308-9

*An hendy hap Ichabbe yhent*¹;
*Ichot*² *from hevenc it is me sent*,
From alle wymmen mi love is lent,³
*And lyht*⁴ *on Alysoun.*

5 Bytuene Mersh and Averl,
 When spray biginneþ to springe,
 þe lutel foul hap hire wyl
 On hyre lud⁵ to synge.
 Ich libbe in love-longinge
 10 For semlokest⁶ of alle þinge;
 He⁷ may me blisse bringe —
 Icham in hire baundoun.⁸

On⁹ heu hire her¹⁰ is fayr ynoh,
 Hire browe broune, hire eye blake;
 15 Wip lossum chere¹¹ he on me loh¹²,
 Wip middel¹³ smal and wel ynnake¹⁴
 Bote¹⁵ he me wolde to hire take,
 For te buen¹⁶ hire owen make,¹⁷
 Longe to lyven Ichulle¹⁸ forsake,
 20 And feye¹⁹ fallen adoun

Nihtes when Y wende²⁰ and wake,
 Forþi²¹ myn wonges²² waxep won;
 Levedi, al for þine sake
 Longinge is ylent me on.²³

¹ I have won a fair fate

² I know

³ turned

⁴ has lighted

⁵ language

⁶ comeliest, goodliest

⁷ she

⁸ power

⁹ in

¹⁰ hair

¹¹ loving mien

¹² laughed

¹³ waist

¹⁴ made

¹⁵ unless

¹⁶ be

¹⁷ mate

¹⁸ I shall

¹⁹ death-stricken

²⁰ wander

²¹ on this account

²² cheeks

²³ appointed to me

In world nis non so wyter¹ mon
 þat al hire bounte telle con.
 Hire swyre² is whittore þen þe swon,
 And feyrest may³ in toune.

Icham for wowyng⁴ al forwake,⁵ 5
 Wcry so⁶ water in wore⁷
 Lest eny reve⁸ me my make,
 Ychabbe yxernd⁹ xore¹⁰
 Betere is þolien whyle sore¹¹
 þen mournen evermore. 10
 Geynest¹² under gore,¹³
 Herkne to my roun¹⁴

CHAUCER, BIRD-SONG

Roundel, from the *Parliament of Birds* (about 1382?)

*Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,
 That hast this wintres weders¹⁵ overshake,¹⁶
 And driven away the longe nightes blake!* 15

Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy onlofte,¹⁷
 Thus singen smale foules for thy sake
*Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,
 That hast this wintres weders overshake*

Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte, 20
 Sith ech of hem recovered hath his make,
 Ful blisful may they singen whan they wake:
*Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,
 That hast this wintres weders overshake,
 And driven away the longe nightes blake!* 25

¹ wise² neck³ maid⁴ yearning⁵ overwatched⁶ as⁷ weir (?)⁸ rob⁹ yearned¹⁰ long¹¹ to suffer sorely for a time¹² lovehest¹³ in body (*lit* under gore, i.e. under garment)¹⁴ lay, song¹⁵ storms¹⁶ dispelled¹⁷ aloft

BLOW, NORTHERN WIND

About 1310. From Boddeker, pp 168-71

*Blow, northerne wynd,
Send¹ þou me my suetyng!
Blow, norþerne wynd,
Blou! blou! blou!*

- 5 Ichot² a burde³ in boure bryht,
þat fully semly is on syht,⁴
Menskful⁵ maiden of myht,
Feir ant fre⁶ to fonde⁷;
In al þis wurhliche won,⁸
10 A burde of blod and of bon
Never ȝete Y nuste⁹ non
Lussomore¹⁰ in londe.
- Wip lokkes lefliche¹¹ and longe,
Wip frount¹² and face feir to fonde,
15 Wip murpes monie mote heo monge,¹³
þat brid¹⁴ so breme¹⁵ in boure,
Wip lossom eye, grete ant gode,
Wip browen blysfol under hode¹⁶,
He þat reste him on þe rode¹⁷
20 þat leflich lyf honoure!

¹ MS sent
² I know
³ lady
⁴ to behold
⁵ worshipful
⁶ charming

⁷ test, make proof of
⁸ noble dwelling (the world?)
⁹ knew
¹⁰ more enchanting
¹¹ lovely
¹² forehead

¹³ bargain, traffic (?)
¹⁴ maiden
¹⁵ blithe, gay
¹⁶ hood
¹⁷ Christ

1-4 refrain to each stanza

14. fonde. assonance, not rhyme.

Hire lure ¹ lumes ² liht
 Ase a launterne a ³ nyht,
 Hire bleo ⁴ blykyep ⁵ so bryht ;
 So feyr heo is ant fyn !
 A suetly ⁶ suyre ⁷ heo hæp to holde,
 Wip armes, snuldre, ase mon wolde,
 Ant fyngres feyre forte folde ⁸ ,
 God wolde hue were myn !

Middel heo hæp menskful⁹ smal;
 Hire loveliche chere¹⁰ as cristal, 10
 Þeȝes,¹¹ legges, fet, ant al,
 Ywraht¹² is¹³ of þe beste
 A lussum ledy lasteles¹⁴
 Þat sweting is, and ever wes,
 A betere burde never nes 15
 Vheryed¹⁶ wiþ þe heste¹⁰

Heo is dereworþe ¹⁷ in day,
Graciously, stout,¹⁸ and gay,
Gentil, jolyf ¹⁹ so ²⁰ þe jay,
Worhliche ²¹ when heo wakeþ. 20
Maiden murgest ²² of moup,
Bi est, bi west by norþ and souþ,
þer nis fi[þ]ele ²³ ne crouþ ²⁴
þat ²⁵ such murpes makeþ.

1 face
2 shines
3 at
4 hue
5 gleams
6 sweet
7 neck
8 clasp
9 delightfully

10 countenance
11 thighs
12 fashioned
13 MS wes
14 faultless, perfect
15 praised
16 highest
17 precious

18 stately
19 lively
20 as
21 noble
22 merriest
23 fiddle, em B
24 crowd, rote
25 MS sat (em B)

- Heo is coral of godnesse,
 Heo is rubie of ryhtfulnesse,¹
 Heo is cristal of clannesse,²
 Ant baner of bealte³,
 5 Heo is lile of largesse,⁴
 Heo is paruenke⁵ of prouesse,
 Heo is selsecle⁶ of suetnesse,
 Ant ledy of lealte.⁷ . . .
- For hire love Y carke ant care,
 10 For hire love Y droupne⁸ ant dare,⁹
 For hire love my blisse as bare,
 Ant al Ich waxe won¹⁰,
 For hire love in slep Y slake,¹¹
 For hire love al nyht Ich wake,
 15 For hire love mournyng Y make
 More þen eny mon.

LONGING

About 1310 From Boddeker, pp. 149-50

- Wiþ longyng Y am lad,¹²
 On molde¹³ Y waxe mad,
 A maide marreþ me;
 20 Y grede,¹⁴ Y grone, unglad,
 For selden Y am sad¹⁵
 þat semly forte se.
 Levedi, þou rewe me!
 To roupe¹⁶ þou havest me rad¹⁷;
 25 Be bote¹⁸ of þat Y bad,¹⁹
 My lyf is long²⁰ on þe.

¹ righteousness

² purity

³ beauty

⁴ generosity

⁵ periwinkle

⁶ heliotrope

⁷ loyalty

⁸ droop

⁹ falter

¹⁰ turn pale

¹¹ grow weak

¹² led

¹³ earth

¹⁴ cry

¹⁵ satiated

¹⁶ sorrow

¹⁷ guided, brought

¹⁸ recompense

¹⁹ (have) endured

²⁰ depends

Levedy of alle londe,
 Les¹ me out of bonde;
 Broht Ich am in wo;
 Have resting² on honde,
 And send³ þou me þi sonde⁴ 5
 Sone, er þou me slo⁵ —
 My reste is wiþ þe ro⁶
 þah men to me han onde,⁷
 To love nul y noht wonde,⁸
 Ne lete⁹ for non of þo¹⁰ 10

Levedi, wiþ al my miht,
 My love is on þe liht,¹¹
 To menske¹² þe when Y may,
 þou rew and red¹³ me ryht,
 To deþe þou havest me diht,¹⁴ 15
 Y deþe longe er my day,
 þou leve¹⁵ upon mi lay.
 Treuþe Ichave þe plyht,
 To don þat Ich have hyht¹⁶
 Whil mi lif leste may. 20

Lyhe-whyte hue¹⁷ is,
 Hire rode¹⁸ so rose on rys¹⁹;
 þat reveþ²⁰ me mi rest.
 Wymmon war²¹ and wys,
 Of prude²² hue bereþ þe pris, 25
 Burde on of þe best.
 þis wommon woneþ by west,

¹ loose² relief, assuagement³ MS sent⁴ message⁵ slay⁶ roe (a type of restlessness;
cf Virgil, *Æn* 4 69 ff.)⁷ jealousy⁸ will I not cease⁹ leave off¹⁰ them¹¹ alighted¹² honor¹³ guide¹⁴ appointed¹⁵ believe (imp)¹⁶ promised¹⁷ she¹⁸ complexion¹⁹ spray²⁰ deprives²¹ prudent²² splendor

Brihtest under bys¹,
 Hevene Y tolde² al his
 þat o³ nyht were hire gest⁴

NOW WOULD I FAIN

About 1445 Our text is on the basis of MS Camb Univ Lib Ff 1 6, 'written about the time of Hen VI,' with emendations from MS Bodl Ashm 191, but with spellings conformed to the Cambridge manuscript. The latter is reproduced from Halliwell's print in *Reliquiae Antiquae* 1 25, 'Ashmole 191 is printed in Stainer and Nicholson, *Early Bodleian Music* 2 66 (facsimile in Vol 1, Pl XXX)

- Now wold I fayne some myrthis make
 5 All oneli for my ladys sake,
 When I hir se⁵,
 But now I am so ferre from hir,
 Hit will nat be
- Thogh I be long out of hir⁶ sight,
 10 I am hir⁶ man both day and night,
 And so will be,
 Wherfor wold God as I love hir
 That she lovid me!
- When she is mery, then am I glad;
 15 When she is sory, then⁷ am I sad;
 And cause whi—
 For he livith nat that lovith hir
 So⁸ well as I
- She sayth that she hath seen hit wreten
 20 That 'seldyn seen is soon foryeten⁹',
 Hit is nat so,
 For, in good feith, save oneli hir,
 I love no moo.

¹ byssus, fine linen
² should consider
³ one

⁴ guest
⁵ MS and hit wold be (Ashm)
⁶ MS your (Ashm)

⁷ MS than
⁸ MS as (Ashm)
⁹ forgot 425 23

Wherfor I pray, both night and day,
 That she may cast [all]¹ care away,
 And leve² in rest,
 And evermore, wherever³ she be,
 To love me⁴ best,

5

And I to hir for to be trew,
 And never chaung[e] her for no⁵ new
 Unto myne end,
 And that I may in hir servise
 For evyr amend.⁶

10

CHAUCER, MERCILESS BEAUTY

The first of a sequence of three roundels. From MS Camb Magd Coll
 Pepys 2006. See Skeat, *Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* 1: 80-1, 387, Hammond,
Chaucer, pp 436-7

*Youre yen two⁷ woole sle me sodenly,
 I may the beaute of them not sustene,
 So wondeth⁸ it thorowout my herte kene*

And but your word wille helen hastily
 Mi hertis wound[e],⁹ while that it is grene,
*Youre yen two wolfe sle me sodenly,
 I may the beaute of them not sustene*

15

Upon my trouth I sey yow feithfully
 That ye ben of my liffe and deth the quene,
 For with my deth the trouth shal be [v]sene¹⁰
*Youre yen two wolfe sle me sodenly,
 I may the beaute of them not sustene,
 So wondeth it thorowout my herte kene*

20

¹ (Ashm)² live³ MS whersoever (Ashm)⁴ MS. hir (Ashm)⁵ MS noon (Ashm)⁶ improve⁷ MS two yen (em s)⁸ wounds⁹ em s¹⁰ Morris (*Udine Chaucer*),
isene

DEBATE OF THE CLERIC AND THE MAIDEN

About 1310 From Boddeker, pp 172-3 Cf. below, p. 476

' My deþ Y love, my lyf Ich hate,
 For a levedy shene ¹,
 Heo is briht ² so ³ daes liht,
 þat is on me wel sene.
 5 Al Y falewe ⁴ so dop þe lef,
 In somer when hit is grene;
 3ef ⁵ mi poht ⁶ helpeþ me noht,
 To wham shal Y me mene ⁷?

Sorewe and syke ⁸ and drery mod ⁹
 10 Byndeþ me so faste
 þat Y wene to walke wod,¹⁰
 3ef hit me lengore laste,
 My serewe, my care, al wiþ a word
 He ¹¹ myhte away caste,
 15 Whet helpeþ þe, my suete lemmon,
 My lyf þus forte gaste ¹²?

' Do wey, þou clerc, þou art a fol,
 Wiþ þe bydde ¹³ Y noht chyde;
 Shalt þou never lyve þat day
 20 Mi love þat þou shalt byde.¹⁴
 3ef þou in my boure art take,
 Shame þe may bityde;
 þe is bettere on fote gon
 þen wycked hors to ryde.'

¹ fair² MS brith (em. B)³ as⁴ wither, fade⁵ if⁶ pondering⁷ bemoan myself⁸ sighing⁹ temper, state of mind¹⁰ insane¹¹ ahe¹² ruin¹³ must¹⁴ experience

- ' Weylawei ! whi seist þou so ?
 þou rewe on me, þy man ;
 þou art ever in my þoht
 In londe wher Ich am.
 3ef Y deȝe for þi love, 5
 Hit is þe mykel sham ,
 þou lete me lyve, and be þi luef,
 And þou my suete lemman.'
- ' Be stille, þou fol — Y calle þe riht ¹ !
 Co[n]st þou never blynne ² ? 10
 þou art wayted ³ day and nyht
 Wiþ ⁴ fader and al my kynne ,
 Be þou in mi bour ytake,
 Lete þey ⁵ for no synne ⁶
 Me to holde, and þe to slou ⁷ , 15
 þe deþ so þou maht ⁸ wynne !'
- ' Suete lady, þou wend ⁹ þi mod ,
 Sorewe þou wolt me kype ¹⁰ ,
 Ich am al so ¹¹ sory ¹² mon,
 So Ich was whylen ¹³ blyþe — 20
 In a wyndou þer ¹⁴ we stod,
 We custe us ¹⁵ fyfty syþe ¹⁶
 Feir biheste ¹⁷ makeþ mony mon
 Al is ¹⁸ serewes mythe ¹⁹ ,
- ' Weylawei ! whi seist þou so ? 25
 Mi serewe þou makest newe ,
 Y lovede a clerk al paramours ²⁰ —
 Of love he wes ful trewe ,

¹ MS riht (em B)² stop³ watched, spied upon⁴ by⁵ they will fail not⁶ because of any sin involved⁷ slay⁸ mayst⁹ change¹⁰ show, inflict upon¹¹ just as¹² unhappy¹³ formerly¹⁴ where¹⁵ kissed each other¹⁶ times¹⁷ promise¹⁸ his¹⁹ lose²⁰ passionately

He nes nout blyþe never a day
 Bote¹ he me sone² seȝe³;
 Ich lovede him betere þen my lyf —
 Whet bote⁴ is hit to leȝe⁵''

5 ' Whil Y wes a clerc in scole,
 Wel muchel Y coupe⁶ of lore⁷;
 Ych have þoled⁸ for þy love
 Woundes fele⁹ sore,
 Fer from [hom],¹⁰ and eke from men,
 10 Under þe wode hore¹¹,
 Suete ledy, þou rewe of me,
 Nou may¹² Y no more.'

 ' Þou semest wel to ben a clerc,
 For þou spekest so stille¹³,
 15 Shalt þou never for mi love
 Woundes þole grylle¹⁴,
 Fader, moder, and al my kun
 Ne shal me holde so stille
 Þat Y nam¹⁵ þyn, and þou art myn,
 20 To don al þi wille.'

CHAUCER, BALLADE

From the *Legend of Good Women*, Prologue B. lines 249-69

Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte¹⁶ tresses clere,
 Ester, ley thou thy meknesse al adoun,
 Hyd, Jonathas,¹⁷ al thy frendly manere,
 Penelopee, and Marcia¹⁸ Catoun,
 25 Mak of your wyfhod no comparisoun,

¹ unless
² soon
³ saw
⁴ good
⁵ he
⁶ knew
⁷ learning

⁸ suffered
⁹ very
¹⁰ em Wright (*Spec. Lyr. Poetry*, p. 91)
¹¹ hoary, MS gore
¹² can
¹³ gently

¹⁴ cruel
¹⁵ am not
¹⁶ golden
¹⁷ Cf 1 Sam 19 2
¹⁸ daughter of Cato of Utica

Hyde ye your beautes, Isoude and Eleyne,
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.¹

Thy faire body, lat hit nat appere,
Lavyne², and thou, Lucesse of Rome toun,
And Polixene,³ that boghten love so dere,
And Cleopatre, with al thy passioun,
Hyde ye your trouthe of love and your renoun;
And thou, Tisbe,⁴ that hast of love swich peyne;
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

Herro,⁵ Dido, Laudomia,⁶ alle yfere,⁷
And Phyllis,⁸ hanging for thy Demophoun,
And Canace,⁹ espyed by thy chere,¹⁰
Ysiphile,¹¹ betrayesd with¹² Jasoun,
Maketh of your trouthe neyther boost ne soun,
Nor Ypermistre¹³ or Adriane,¹⁴ ye tweyne,
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne

MINOT, EDWARD THE THIRD'S FIRST INVASION OF FRANCE

Laurence Minot (fl. 1333-1352) is a writer of whom virtually nothing is known except that he produced a series of eleven poems, of which this is No. 4. Herford has thus characterized him (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* 38-47): 'While Minot has no great literary value, and gives almost no new information, he embodies in a most vivid way the militant England of his day. He has but one subject, the triumph of England and the English king over French and Scots. The class-divisions among Englishmen are for him wholly merged in the unity of England, himself probably of Norman origin, his habitual language is the strongest and homeliest Saxon. His verse is throughout inspired by savage triumph in the national successes. He has no elegiac or tender note.' Cf. Hall's edition, pp. xii-xiii, Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp. 322-4.

¹ overshadow, eclipse

² I avinia, cf. Virgil, *Æn.* 6. 764 ff., etc.

³ daughter of Priam, cf. Ovid, *Met.* 13. 439 ff.

⁴ Thisbe, cf. Ovid, *Met.* 4. 55-166

⁵ Hero, cf. Ovid, *Her.* 18, 19

⁶ I adamia, cf. Ovid, *Her.* 13

⁷ together

⁸ Cf. Ovid, *Her.* 2

⁹ Cf. Ovid, *Her.* 11

¹⁰ countenance

¹¹ Hypsipyle, first wife of Jason,

see her legend in Chaucer, *Leg. Good Women*

¹² betrayed by

¹³ Hypermnestra, cf. Ovid, *Her.* 14

¹⁴ Ariadne, see Chaucer, *Leg. Good Women*

Our poem celebrates the fact that, Edward III and Philip of France having offered each other battle, Edward drew up his troops near La Flamengerie in northern France, on Saturday, Oct 23, 1339, and waited for Philip to arrive, who, however, retreated from his position, five or six miles away, leaving behind him a thousand horses in a marsh (Hall, p 54, cf *Dict Nat Biog* 17 55)

The poem here printed is from Joseph Hall's edition (Oxford, 1887)

- Edward, oure cumly king,
 In Braband has his woning,
 With mani cumly knight,
 And in þat land, trewly to tell,
 5 Ordanis he still for to dwell,
 To¹ time he think to fight.
- Now God, þat es of mightes maste,
 Grant him grace of þe Haly Gaste
 His heritage to win!¹
 10 And Mari moder, of mercy fre,
 Save oure king and his menze²
 Fro sorow, and schame, and syn!
- þus in Braband has he bene —
 Whare he bifore was seldom sene —
 15 For to prove³ þaire japes;
 Now no langer wil he spare,
 Bot unto Fraunce fast will he fare,
 To confort him with grapes⁴
- Furth⁵ he ferd into France,
 20 God save him for mischance,
 And all his cumpany!¹
 þe nobill duc of Braband
 With him went into þat land,
 Redy to hf or dy

¹ until the
² retainers

³ make trial of
⁴ Cf Cant 2. 5

⁵ MS. ff

þan þe riche floure de lice¹
 Wan þare ful litill prise²; —
 Fast he³ fled for ferde⁴
 þe right aire⁵ of þat cuntre
 Es cumen, with all his knightes fre, 5
 To schac him by þe berd.

Sir Philip þe Valayse,⁶
 Wit his men in þo dayes,
 To batale had he thought:
 He bad his men þam purvay⁷ 10
 Withowten lenger delay,
 Bot he ne held it noght.

He broght folk ful grete wone,⁸
 Ay sevyn oganis one,
 þat ful wele wapnid were, 15
 Bot sone, whe[n] he herd ascry⁹
 þat King Edward was nere þarby,
 þan durst he noght cum nere

In þat morn[ing] fell a myst,
 And when oure I[n]gliss men it wist, 20
 It changed all þaire chere,
 Oure king unto God made his bone,¹⁰
 And God sent him gude confort sone —
 þe weder wex ful clere.

Oure king and his men held þe felde 25
 Stalworthly, with spere and schelde,
 And thought to win his right,
 With lordes, and with knightes kene,
 And oper doghty men bydene,¹¹
 þat war ful frek¹² to fight. 3

¹ *fleur de lis*

² glory

³ Philip VI of France

⁴ fear

⁵ heir (i.e. Edward)

⁶ de Valois (the king)

⁷ make ready

⁸ plenty

⁹ report (by spies)

¹⁰ prayer

¹¹ together

¹² eager

When Sir Philip of France herd tell
 þat King Edward in feld walld dwell,
 þan gayned ¹ him no gle,
 He traisted of ² no better bote,³
 5 Bot both on hors and on fote
 He hasted him to fle.

It semid he was ferd for strokes
 When he did fell his grete okes
 About his pavilyoun,
 10 Abated was þan all his pride,
 For langer þare durst he noght bide,
 His bost was broght all doune.

þe king of Beme ⁴ had cares colde,
 þat was ful ⁵ hardy and bolde
 15 A stede to amstride ⁶
 [He and] ⁷ þe king als ⁸ of Naverne ⁹
 War fain for ferd ¹⁰ in þe ferne ¹¹
 þaire heviddes ¹² for to hide.

And leves ¹³ wele — it es no lye —
 20 þe felde hat ¹⁴ Flemangrye ¹⁵
 þat King Edward was in,
 With princes þat war stif ande bolde,
 And dukes þat war doghty tolde,¹⁶
 In batayle to bigyn

þe princes þat war riche ¹⁷ on raw,¹⁸
 25 Gert ¹⁹ nakers ²⁰ strike, and trumpes blaw,
 And made mirth at þaire might;

¹ availed² expected³ resource⁴ Bohemia⁵ MS fur (em. Ritson)⁶ bestride⁷ em R⁸ also⁹ Navarre (father-in-law of Philip)¹⁰ MS faire feld (em Hall, with fered for ferd)¹¹ were glad, for fear, in the fern¹² heads¹³ believe (imp.)¹⁴ was called¹⁵ MS ff.¹⁶ considered¹⁷ splendid¹⁸ row (line of battle?), order¹⁹ caused²⁰ kettle-drums

Both alblast¹ and many a bow
 War redy railed² opon a row,
 And ful frek for to fight.

Gladly þai gaf mete and drink,
 So þat þai suld þe better swink³ —
 Þe wight⁴ men þat þar ware
 Sir Philip of Fraunce fled for dout,⁵
 And hied⁶ him hame with all his rout;
 Coward, God giff him care⁷!

5

For þare þan had þe lely flowre⁸
 Lorn all halely⁹ his honowre,
 Þat sogat¹⁰ fled for ferd,
 Bot oure King Edward come ful still,
 When þat he trowed¹¹ no harm him till,¹²
 And keped¹³ him in þe berde¹⁴

10

15

THE DEATH OF EDWARD III

From a poem (written in 1377) in MS Brit Mus Addit 22,283. Our extract is from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* (Rolls Series) 1: 216-7, and comprises lines 17-80.

Sum tyme an Englis schip we had,
 Nobel hit was, and heih of tour¹⁵,
 Thorw al Christendā hit was drad,¹⁶
 And stif wold stonde in uch a stour,¹⁷
 And best dorst byde a scharp schour,¹⁸
 And other stormes smale and grete,
 Nou is that schip, that bar the flour,
 Selden seige¹⁹ and sone forȝete

20

¹ arblast, crossbow
² set in order
³ toil
⁴ stout
⁵ fear
⁶ hastened
⁷ distress

⁸ See 423.1
⁹ wholly
¹⁰ thus
¹¹ looked for
¹² to himself
¹³ seized
¹⁴ beard

¹⁵ tower
¹⁶ feared
¹⁷ every battle
¹⁸ tempest
¹⁹ seen

- Into that schip ther longeth a roothur,¹
 That steered the schip, and governed hit ;
 In al this world nis such anothur,
 As me thenketh in my wit
 5 Whil schip and rothur togeder was knit,
 Thei dredde nother tempest, druyxc,² nor wete,
 Nou be thei bothe in synder flit,³
 That selden seixe is sone forȝete.

 Scharpe wawes⁴ that schip has sayled,
 10 And sayed⁵ alle sees⁶ at aventur ,
 For wynt⁷ ne wederes⁸ never hit fayled,
 Wil⁹ the roothur miht enduir¹⁰
 Thouȝ the see were rouȝ, or elles dimuuir,¹¹
 Gode havenes that schip wold geete¹²
 15 Nou is that schip, I am wel suir,¹³
 Selde iseye and sone forȝete

 This good schip I may remene¹⁴
 To the chivalrye of this londe ,
 Sum tyme thei counted nouȝt a bene¹⁵
 20 Be¹⁶ al Fraunce, Ich understonde
 Thei toke and slouȝ hem with her wonde¹⁷ —
 The power of Fraunce, bothe¹⁸ smale and grete ,
 And brouȝt the kyng hider to hyde her bonde¹⁹ ,
 And nou riht sone hit is forȝete

 25 That schip hadde a ful siker²⁰ mast,
 And a sayl strong and large,
 That made the gode schip never agast
 To undertake a thinge of charge²¹
 And to that schip ther longed²² a barge,
¹ rudder	⁹ while	¹⁷ rod, sceptre
² drought	¹⁰ endure	¹⁸ MS bethe
³ removed asunder	¹¹ calm	¹⁹ fetters
⁴ waves	¹² attain	²⁰ secure
⁵ braved	¹³ sure	²¹ moment
⁶ seas	¹⁴ compare	²² belonged
⁷ wind	¹⁵ bean	
⁸ stormy	¹⁶ by. MS beo	

Of al Fraunce gaf ¹ nouȝt a cleete.²

To us hit was a siker targe³,
And now riht clene hit is forȝete

The rother was nouthur ok ne elm,

Hit was Edward the Thridde, the noble kniht, 5

The prince his sone bar up his helm,

'That never scoumfit⁴ was in fiht

'The kyng him rod and rowed⁵ aȝht,

The prince dredde nouthur stok nor streete.⁶

Nou of hem we lete ful liht⁷, 10

'That selden is seȝe is sone forȝete.

The swifte barge was Duk Henri,⁸

'That noble kniht and wel assayed,

And in his leggaunce⁹ worthily

He abod mony a bitter brayd¹⁰, 15

Ȝif that his enemys ouȝt outrayed,¹¹

To chasteis hem wolde he not lete¹²

Nou is that lord ful lowe ileyd,

That selde is seȝe is sone forȝete

This gode comunis,¹³ bi the rode, 20

I likne hem to the schipes mast,

That with heore catel¹⁴ and with heore goode¹⁵

Mayntened the weire¹⁶ both furst and last.

The wynd that bleuȝ the schip with blast,

Hit was gode preȝeres, I sey hit strete¹⁷, 25

Nou is devoutnes out kast,

And mony gode dedes ben clene forȝete. . .

¹ cared

² cleat

³ shield

⁴ discomfited

⁵ rode and rowed

⁶ street (for rhyme, instead
of 'stok nor ston')

⁷ make little account

⁸ Henry of Lancaster (d 1361)

⁹ allegiance

¹⁰ stroke

¹¹ inflicted any injuries

¹² refrain

¹³ commons

¹⁴ property

¹⁵ goods

¹⁶ war

¹⁷ distinctly

CHAUCER, COMPLAINT TO HIS EMPTY PURSE

- To you, my purse, and to non other wight ¹
 Compleyne I, for ye be my lady dere ;
 I am so sory, now that ye be hight,
 That certes, but ² ye make me hevy chere,
 5 Me were as leef be leyd upon my bere ;
 For whiche unto your mercy thus I crye .
 Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot ³ I dye !
- Now voucheth sauf ⁴ this day, or ⁶ hit be night,
 That I of you the blisful soun ⁶ may here,
 10 Or see your colour lyk the sonne bright,
 That of yelownesse ⁷ hadde never pere.⁸
 Ye be my lyf, ye be myn hertes stere,⁹
 Quene of comfort and of good companye
 Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye ¹
- 15 Now purs, that be ¹⁰ to me my lyves ¹¹ hight,
 And saveour,¹² as down in this worlde here,
 Out of this tounne help me through your might,
 Sin ¹³ that ye wole nat been my tresorere ,
 For I am shave ¹⁴ as nye ¹⁶ as any frere.
 20 But yit I pray unto your curtesye,
 Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye !

¹ creature
² unless
³ must
⁴ vouchsafe
⁵ ere

⁶ sound
⁷ referring to gold
⁸ equal
⁹ guide
¹⁰ are

¹¹ life's
¹² saviour
¹³ since
¹⁴ shaved
¹⁶ close

I HAVE A GENTLE COCK

About 1450 From MS Brit Mus Sloane 2593, as printed by Wright in
Songs and Carols (Pickering, London, 1836) See 199 *as ff*

I have a gentil cok ¹
 Crowyt[h] me day ²,
 He doth ³ me rysyn erly,
 My matynis for to say.

I have a gentil cok ¹, 5
 Comyn he is of gret ⁴,
 His comb is of reed corel,
 His tayl ⁵ is of get. ⁶

I have a gentil cok ¹,
 Comyn he is of kynde ⁷, 10
 His comb is of reed corel, ⁸
 His tayl is of inde ⁹

His leggs ben of asour,
 So gentil and so smale,
 His spors arn of sylver quyt ¹⁰ 15
 Into the wortewale ¹¹

His cynyn arn of cristal,
 Lokyn ¹² al in aumbyr,
 And every nyxt he perchut[h] hym
 In myn ladyis chaumbyr 20

¹ MS cook

² announces day to me by his
 crowing

³ makes

⁴ great (lineage)

⁵ MS tayl

⁶ jct

⁷ he is true to his breed

⁸ MS scorel

⁹ indigo

¹⁰ white

¹¹ quick (*hit* root)

¹² enclosed

BACHELOR'S SONG

About 1460-1490 From MS Bodl. Eng. Poet e 1, printed by Wright in
Songs and Carols (Percy Soc 23), p 27.

A, a, a, o,¹

Yet I love wherso I go.

In all this world [n]is a meryar hfe
 Than is a xong man withoutyn a wyfe,
 5 For he may lyven withouten stryfe,
 In every place wherso he go.

In every place he is loved over all
 Among maydyns gret and small,
 In dauncing, in pypyng, and rennyng at the ball,
 10 In every place wherso he go

Thei lat lyxt² be husbondmen,³
 Whan thei at the balle ren⁴,
 They cast hyr love to xong[e] men
 In every place wherso he go.

15 Than sey maydens 'Farwell, Jack⁵!
 Thi love is pressyd al in thi pa[c]k⁶,
 Thou beryst thi love behynd thi back,
 In every place wherso he go.

¹ MS a
⁴ easily

³ married men
⁴ MS rene

⁵ MS Jacke
⁶ MS pake

CHAUCER, TRUTH

Fle fro the pres,¹ and dwelle with sothfastnesse²;
 Suffise³ thin owene thing, thogh it be smal;
 For hord⁴ hath hate, and clymyng tykelnesse,⁵
 Prees⁶ hath envye, and wele⁷ blent⁸ overal⁹;
 Savoure¹⁰ no more thanne the byhove¹¹ shal;
 Reule weel thiself, that other folk canst reede,¹² 5
 And trouthe the shal delyvere — it is no drede.¹³

Tempest¹⁴ the¹⁵ noght al croked to redresse,
 In trust of hire¹⁶ that turneth as a bal,
 Greet reste stant in litel besynesse,¹⁷ 10
 Bywar therefore to spurne agayn an al¹⁸,
 Stryve not as doth the crokke¹⁹ with the wal.
 Daunte²⁰ thiself, that dauntest otheres dede,
 And trouthe the shal delyvere — it is no drede

That the is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,²¹ 15
 The wrastlyng for²² this worlde axeth²³ a fal,
 Her is non hom,²⁴ her nys but wyldernesse.
 Forth, pylgrym, forth! Forth, beste, out of thi stal!
 Know thi contre, loke up, thank God of al!
 Hold the hye weye, and lat thi gost²⁵ the lede, 20
 And trouthe the shal delyvere — it is no drede

¹ crowd² truth³ subj⁴ hoarding⁵ instability⁶ the throng of courtiers⁷ prosperity⁸ blinds⁹ everywhere¹⁰ relish, care for¹¹ suit, fit¹² direct¹³ there is no fear¹⁴ torment¹⁵ thyself¹⁶ fortune¹⁷ fuss, worry (cf Isa 30 15)¹⁸ awl (cf Acts 9 5)¹⁹ crock, earthen pot²⁰ conquer²¹ submission²² to obtain²³ calls for, invites²⁴ Cf Heb 11 9, 10, 13, 14²⁵ spirit

UBI SUNT QUI ANTE NOS FUERUNT?

About 1275 From MS Bodl Digby 86, as printed by Furnivall, *Minor Poems of the Vernon MS, Part II* (E E T S 117), pp 761 ff (ten stanzas in all), of the somewhat different version in Boddeker, *Altengl Dicht*, pp 229-30, which has suggested two or three emendations

The keynote is struck by Boethius (Book 2, Metre 7)

Ubi nunc fidelis ossa Fabricii manent,
Quid Brutus aut rigidus Cato?

These lines are expanded in translation by King Alfred 'Where now are the bones of the famous and wise goldsmith, Weland?' etc One of the most famous variations on the theme is by Villon (1461), the first of whose stanzas runs

Dictes moy où, n'en quel pays,
Est Flora, la belle Rommaine
Archipiada, ne Thais,
Qui fut sa cousine germaine,
Echo, parlant quant bruyt on maine
Dessus riviere ou sus estan,
Qui beaulté ot trop plus qu'humaine?
— Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!

This is translated by Payen as follows

Tell me, where, in what land of shade,
Hides fair Flora of Rome? and where
Are Thais and Archipiada,
Cousins german in beauty rare?
And Echo, more than mortal fair,
That when one calls by river flow,
Or marsh answers out of the air?
— But what has become of last year's snow?

The last four lines are thus translated in Rossetti's version

Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
Only heard on river and mere,
She whose beauty was more than human?
— But where are the snows of yester year?

See also below, p 434, Wells, *Manual*, p 824 (30)

Were bep pey [pat]¹ biforen us weren,
Houndes ladden and havekes beren,
And hadden feld and wode?

¹ Cf. B.

þe riche levedies in hoere bour,
 þat wereden gold in hoere tressour,¹
 Wip hoere brixte rode²?

[þey]³ eten and drounken, and maden hem glad;
 Hoere lif was al wip gamen ilad⁴, 5
 Men kneleden⁵ hem biforen,
 þey beren hem wel swiþe heye⁶,
 And, in a twincing of an eye,
 Hoere soules weren forloren

Were is þat lawing⁷ and that song, 10
 þat trayling and that proude zong,⁸
 þo havekes and þo houndes?
 Al þat joye is went away,
 þat welc is comen to 'Weylaway!'—
 To manie harde stoundes⁹ 15

Hoere paradis þey¹⁰ nomen¹¹ here,
 And nou þey lien in helle ifere¹²,
 þe fuir hit brennes hevere
 Long is ay,¹³ and long is o,¹⁴
 Long is wy,¹⁵ and long is wo¹⁶, 20
 þennes ne comeþ þey nevere

THOMAS OF HALES, LOVE-SONG

Thomas of Hales was a Franciscan friar, who wrote this 'luve-ron' of 210 lines at the request of a young nun, in the reign of Henry III (probably before 1240, according to *Camb Hist Eng Lit* 1 258, soon after 1244, according to Morris, *Old Eng Hist*, p. xi, about 1272, *A & D*). The extract below is from the MS of Jesus College, Oxford (lines 65-120), as reproduced in *Old English Miscellany* (L. E. T. S. 49), pp. 93-9. A translation of thirteen stanzas,

¹ braids, tresses² complexion³ Cf. B⁴ led⁵ MS. keneleden⁶ very exceedingly high⁷ laughing⁸ gait, carriage⁹ experiences¹⁰ MS. by¹¹ took¹² side by side¹³ ever¹⁴ always, MS. ho¹⁵ alas¹⁶ woe

including the first five printed here, may be found in Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp 208-11. He says: 'We have here an art-poetry not quite developed in form, of the simplest, noblest mould, a contemplative lyric, which, springing from warm feeling, moves calmly and quietly, without subtlety of reflection or trifling with forms, in euphonious, richly figurative speech'. Another version is in Miss Weston's *Chief Middle English Poets*, pp 343-5

- Hwer is Paris and Heleyne,
 þat weren so bryht and feyre on bleo¹?
 Amadas and Ideyne,²
 Tristram, Yseude, and alle þeo³?
 5 Ector, wiþ his scharpe meyne,⁴
 And Cesar, riche of wor[ld]des feo⁵?
 Heo beoþ iglyden ut of þe reyne,
 So⁶ þe schef⁷ is of þe cleo.⁸
- Hit is of heom al so⁹ hit nere
 10 Of heom me haveþ¹⁰ wunder itold —
 Nere hit reuþe¹¹ for to here¹² —
 Hw hi were wiþ pyne¹³ aquold,¹⁴
 And hwat hi þoleden¹⁵ alyve¹⁶ here,
 Al is heore hot iturnd to cold
 15 þus is þes world of false fere¹⁷,
 Fol he is þe on hire is bold
- þeyh he were so riche mon
 As Henry,¹⁸ ure [noble] kyng,

¹ hue
² MS Dideyne
³ those
⁴ power
⁵ wealth
⁶ as

⁷ sheaf
⁸ brac, steep hillside
⁹ as if
¹⁰ one has, they have
¹¹ were it not pity
¹² MS heren

¹³ pain
¹⁴ destroyed
¹⁵ endured
¹⁶ in life
¹⁷ appearance, show
¹⁸ Henry III (1216-1272)

3 Amadas · see Schofield, pp 322, 479 — Ideyne · there is a thirteenth-century OF romance of Breton origin, *Amadas et Idoine* (ed Hippeau, Paris, 1863), and allusion is made to the story by Gower (*Conf Am* 6 879) and the *Cuvier Mundi* (v 20), etc., cf Gaston Paris, *Litt Fr au Moyen Age*, § 66, and *English Miscellany presented to Dr Furnivall*, pp 386 ff (where there are other references), Schofield, pp 117, 375

And al so veyr as Absalon,
 þat nevede on eorþe non evenyng,¹
 Al were sone his prute² agon,³
 Hit nere on ende wrþ on heryng.⁴
 Mayde, if þu wilnest⁵ after leofmon,⁶ 5
 Ich teche þe enne⁷ treowe King.

Al swete, if þu ikn[e]owe⁸
 þe gode þewes⁹ of þisse Childe!
 He is feyr, and bryht on heowe,
 Of glede chere,¹⁰ of mode mylde, 10
 Of lufsum lost,¹¹ of truste treowe,
 Freo of heorte, of wisdom wilde¹²;
 Ne þurfte¹³ þe never re[o]we,
 Myhtestu do¹⁴ þe in his [h]ylde.¹⁵

He is ricchest Mon of londe, 15
 So wide so mon speketh wip mup;
 Alle heo beop to¹⁶ his honde,
 Est and west, norþ and sup.
 Henri, King of Engelonde,
 Of hym he halt,¹⁷ and to hym buhp.¹⁸ 20
 Mayde, to þe he send his sonde,¹⁹
 And wilneþ for to beo þe cup.

Ne byt²⁰ he wip þe lond ne leode,²¹
 Vouh,²² ne gray,²³ ne rencyen.²⁴
 Naveþ he þerto none neode, 25
 He is riche and wel²⁵ man

¹ peer, cf 420 21² pride³ vanished⁴ herring⁵ longest⁶ lover⁷ a⁸ knew⁹ qualities¹⁰ countenance¹¹ delight¹² (?)¹³ thou wouldst need; MS þurhte¹⁴ put¹⁵ grace¹⁶ in¹⁷ holds¹⁸ bows¹⁹ message, MS schonde²⁰ asks²¹ people²² particolored fur²³ gray fur²⁴ a kind of cloth²⁵ wealthy

If þu him woldest lue beode,¹
 And bycumen his leovemon,
 He brouhte² þe to suche wede,³
 þat⁴ naveþ king ne kayser non.

5 Hwat⁵ spekestu of eny bolde⁶
 þat wrouhte þe wise Salomon?
 Of jaspe, of saphir, of merede⁷ golde,
 And of mony onoper ston?
 10 Hit is feyrure of feole volde⁸
 More þan Ich eu telle con,
 þis bold, mayde, þe is bihote,⁹
 If þat þu bist his leovemon.

EARTH UPON EARTH

Of this poem there are three versions (A, B, C) A is represented by two poems, B by twenty, and C by one — not to mention a rather anomalous example, difficult to classify. The earliest texts date from about 1310, that printed here is from 1430–1450 (MS Lambeth 853), and is No. 10 of B. All the known texts have been printed by Miss Hilda Murray, with the necessary apparatus, in *Erthe upon Erthe* (E E T S 141). The Stratford-on-Avon version was printed by Longfellow in *Outre-Mer*.

The theme is 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return' (Gen. 3. 19).

Erþe out of erþe is wondirly wrougt,
 Erþe of erþe hæp gete¹⁰ a dignyte of nougt,
 15 Erþe upon erþe hæp sett al his þought,
 How þat erþe upon erþe may be hig¹¹ brougt.

Erþe upon erþe wold he be a king;
 But how erþe schal to erþe þenkþ he noþing;
 Whanne þat erþe biddþ erþe huse rentis hom bring,
 þan schal erþe out of erþe have a piteuous parting.

¹ offer
² would bring
³ apparel
⁴ as

⁵ why
⁶ building
⁷ purified
⁸ many times

⁹ promised
¹⁰ got
¹¹ high

Erþe upon erþe wyneþ castels and touris,
 þan seiþ erþe to erþe 'Now is þis al houris.'
 Whanne erþe upon erþe haþ biggid ¹ up hise boures,
 þanne schal erþe upon erþe suffir scharpe schouris.²

Erþe gooth upon erþe as molde upon molde, 5
 So gooth erþe upon erþe al gliteringe in golde,
 Like as erþe unto erþe nevere go scholde,³
 And ȝit schal erþe unto erthe raþer ⁴ þan he wolde.

O þou wrecchid erþe, þat on erþe travelist ⁵ nyȝt and day,
 To florische ⁶ þe erþe, to peynte þe erþe with wantowne aray, 10
 Ȝit schal þou, erþe, for al þi erþe, make þou it nevere so queynte
 and gay,
 Out of þis erþe into þe erþe, þere to clinge ⁷ as a clot ⁸ of clay.

O wrecchid man, whi art þou proud, þat art of þe erþe makid ⁹
 Hider brouȝtist þou no schroud,⁹ but poore come þou and nakid 15
 Whanne þi soule is went ¹⁰ out, and þi bodi in erþe rakid,
 þan þi bodi þat was rank ¹¹ and undevout, of alle men is bihatid.

Out of þis erþe cam to þis erþe þis wrecchid garnement ¹²,
 To hide þis erþe, to happe ¹³ þis erþe, to him was cloþinge lente;
 Now goop erþe upon erþe, ruli ¹⁴ raggid and rent, 20
 þefore schal erþe undir þe erþe have hidiose turnement

Whi þat erþe to myche loveþ erþe wondir me þink,
 Or whi þat erþe for superflue erþe to sore sweete ¹⁵ wole or swynk ¹⁶,
 Ffor whanne þat erþe upon erþe is brouȝt withinne þe brink,¹⁷
 þan schal erþe of þe erþe have a rewful styngk ¹⁸ 25

¹ built
² trials
³ MS schulde
⁴ sooner
⁵ laborest
⁶ adorn

⁷ dry, shrivel up
⁸ clod
⁹ garment
¹⁰ gone
¹¹ proud
¹² garment (of flesh)

¹³ cover
¹⁴ ruefully
¹⁵ sweat
¹⁶ toil
¹⁷ of the grave
¹⁸ MS swynk

Lo ! erþe upon erþe considere þou may,
 How erþe comeþ into erþe nakid alway,
 Whi schulde erþe upon erþe go now so stoute or gay,
 Whanne erþe schal passe out of erþe in so poore aray ?

5 Wolde God þerfore þis erþe, while þat he is upon this erþe,
 Upon þis wolde hertli þinke,
 And how þe erþe out of þe erþe schal have his aȝenrisyng,¹
 And þis erþe for þis erþe schal ȝeelde² streite³ rekenyng,
 Schulde nevere þan þis erþe for þis erþe mysplese hevene King.

10 Þerfore, þou erþe upon erþe, þat so wickidli hast wrought,
 While þat þou, erþe, art upon erþe, turne aȝen þi þought,
 And praie to þat God upon erþe þat al þe erþe haþ wrought,
 Þat þou, erþe upon erþe, to blis may be brouȝt.

O þou Lord þat madist þis erþe for þis erþe, and suffridist heere
 15 peynes ille,
 Lete nevere þis erþe, for þis erþe, myscheve⁴ ne spille,⁵
 But þat þis erþe on þis erþe be evere worchinge þi wille,
 So þat þis erþe from þis erþe may stie⁶ up to þin hiȝ hille. Amen.

FILIUS REGIS MORTUUS EST

About 1430 From MS Lambeth 853, printed by Furnivall in *Political, Religious, and Love Poems* (reprint of E E T S 15), p 233 Thirteen stanzas in all

20 As resoun rewldid my rechelees⁷ mynde,
 Bi wielde⁸ waies as Y hadde went,
 A solempne citee me fortunied to fynde;
 To turne þerto was myne entent
 A maiden Y mette, a modir hynde,⁹
 Sobbinge and sȝyng, sche was neer schent¹⁰;

¹ resurrection, MS -risyng

² yield

³ strict

⁴ come to grief

⁵ perish

⁶ ascend

⁷ reckless, MS. riche-

⁸ wild

⁹ gracious

¹⁰ prostrated

Sche wepte, sche wailid, so sore sche pined,
 Hir heer, hir face, sche tuggid and rent ·
 Sche tuggid, sche taar with greet turment,
 Sche racide¹ hir skyn, bothe body and brest,
 Sche seide þeise wordis evere as sche went. 5
Filius Regis mortuus est

'The Kingis Sone,' sche seide, 'is deed,
 þe joie, þe substaunce of my lif²,
 þe modir to se hir Sone so blede,
 It kittip³ myn herte as with a knyf. 10
 My Sone þat Y was woont to fede,
 To lulle, to lappe, with songis rif⁴ —
 Out of his herte his blood to schede
 Makip me, his modir, in myche strif⁵
 I am hope maiden, modir, and wif, 15
 Sones⁶ have Y no mo to souke my brest,
 I may make sotewe without relif,
 For *Filius Regis mortuus est*'

QUIA AMORE LANGUEO

About 1450-1500 From MS Camb Univ Lib Hh 4 12, printed by Furnivall, *op cit*, p 181 Sixteen stanzas in all Translation in Weston, *op cit* pp 349-50

In the vaile of restles mynd,
 I sowght in mownteyn and in mede, 20
 Trustyng a treu lofe for to tynd
 Upon an hyll than toke I hede,
 A voise I heid — and nere⁷ I yede⁸ —
 In gret dolour complaynyng tho
 'Sec, dere soule, my sydes blede, 25
Qua amore langueo'

¹ tore
² MS life
³ cuts

⁴ rife
⁵ MS strife
⁶ MS and sones

⁷ nearer
⁸ approached

- Upon thys mownt I fand a tree ;
 Undir thys tree a man sittynge ;
 From hede to fote wowndyd was he,
 Hys hert-blode I saw bledynge ,
 5 A semely man to be a kyng,
 A graciose face to loke unto.
 I askyd hym how he had paynyng,¹
 He said '*Quia amore langueo.*'

 I am treu love that fals was never
 10 My sistur, mannys soule, I loved hyr thus ;
 Bycause I wold on no wyse dissevere,
 I left my kyngdome gloriouse ,
 I purveyd² hyr a place full preciose ,
 She flytt,³ I folowyd , I luffed her soo
 15 That I suffred thes paynes piteuouse,
Quia amore langueo.'

HE BARE HIM UP

About 1500 (or earlier) From MS Oxford Balliol 354, as printed by Flugel in *Anglia* 26 175-6 (slightly different in his *Neuenglisches Lesebuch* 1 142), with *þ* for MS *y* The knight is of course Jesus Christ

- Lully, lulley, lully,⁴ lulley,*
þe fawcon hath born my make⁵ away.

 He bare hym up, he bare hym down,
 20 He bare hym into an orchard browne.

 In þat orchard pere was an halle
 þat was hangid with purpill and pall.

 And in þat hall pere was a bede⁶ ;
 Hit was hangid with gold so rede.

¹ distress
² provided

³ fled
⁴ MS lulley (em F)

⁵ mate
⁶ hed

And yn þat bed þere lythe a knyght.
His wowndis bledyng day and nyght.

By þat bedeside kneleth a may,¹
And she wepeth both nyght and day.

And by þat beddeside þere stondith a ston,
'Corpus Christi' wretyn þeron

5

THE PEARL

The Pearl is an elegiac poem with allegorical elements, embodying a vision by the author of a maiden closely related to him, who had died at an early age. Disregarding stanza 72 (for which see Osgood's edition, p. xlvii, note 1), the poem falls into 20 sections, each consisting of 5 twelve-line stanzas, concatenated by the recurrence of the last word of a stanza in the first line following. The rhyme-scheme is ababababbcbc. The date is about 1370, the author wrote also *Gawain and the Green Knight* (see above, p. 53), besides two other poems, *Purity* and *Patience*. There is only a single manuscript, Brit. Mus. Cott. Nero A. X. 4 (facsimile in Yale University Library). The best edition is by Osgood (Belles Lettres Series, 1906), to this the student is referred for further information. There are translations by Gollancz (1891), Mitchell (1906), Coulton (1906), Osgood (1907), Jewett (1908), and Weston (in *Romance, Vision, and Satire*, 1912), of these the best is Osgood's, in prose.

Tennyson thus apostrophized the poem in Gollancz's edition

We lost you — for how long a time! —
True pearl of our poetic prime,
We found you, and you gleam reset
In Britain's lyric coronet

With reference to the emphasis upon the jeweler's art, we know that from the death of St. Louis (1270) this had surpassed all other industrial arts in France (Labarte, *Inventaire du Mobilier de Charles I.*, p. 1).

Our text is taken from Osgood's edition (by the kind permission of the publishers, Messrs. D. C. Heath & Co.), with the substitution, when etymologically indicated, of *æ* for the character *ȝ*, which usually denotes palatal *ȝ* of *and* for *ȝ*, and with the normalization of *u* and *ȝ*, the emendations are those of Osgood's text. Our extracts comprise lines 37-300, 385-420.

To þat spot þat I in speche expoun²
I entred, in þat erber³ grene,

¹ maid² tell of³ lawn

In Augoste, in a hyȝ¹ seysoun,
 Quen corne is corven² wyth crokez³ kene.
 On huyle⁴ þer perle hit trendeled⁵ doun
 Schadowed⁶ þis worteȝ⁷ ful schyre⁸ and schene⁹ —
 5 Gilofre,¹⁰ gyngure,¹¹ and gromylyoun,¹²
 And pyonys¹³ powdered¹⁴ ay bytwene.
 Ȝif hit watz semly on to sene,
 A fayr reſflayr¹⁵ ȝet fro hit flot,¹⁶
 Þer wonys¹⁷ þat worþyly,¹⁸ I wot and wene,¹⁹
 10 My precious perle wythouten spot.

Bifore þat spot my honde I spenn[e]d,²⁰
 For care ful colde þat to me caȝt²¹,
 A de[r]vely dele²² in my hert denned,²³
 Þaȝ resoun sette myselven saȝt²⁴
 15 I playned²⁵ my perle þat þer watz spenned²⁶
 Wyth fyrte skyllez²⁷ þat faſte faȝt²⁸,
 Þaȝ kynde²⁹ of Kryſt me comfort kenned,³⁰
 My wreched wyllē in wo ay wraȝte,³¹
 I felle upon þat floury flaȝt,³²
 20 Suche odour to my herne³³ ſchoſt,
 I ſlode³⁴ upon a ſlepyng-ſlaȝte³⁵ —
 On þat prec[i]os perle wythouten spot

Fro ſpot³⁶ my ſpyryt þer ſprang in ſpace,
 My body on balke⁴ þer bod³⁷ in ſweven³⁸,

¹ high (in a liturgical sense, probably the Assumption of the Virgin, August 15)

² mowed

³ sickles

⁴ mound

⁵ rolled

⁶ shaded

⁷ plants

⁸ bright

⁹ fair

¹⁰ gillyflower

¹¹ ginger

¹² gromwell

¹³ peonies

¹⁴ scattered thickly

¹⁵ fragrant

¹⁶ flowed

¹⁷ dwells

¹⁸ worshipful one

¹⁹ suppose

²⁰ clasped

²¹ seized on me

²² sudden sorrow

²³ made tumult

²⁴ though reason reconciled me

²⁵ bemoaned

²⁶ enclosed

²⁷ frightened reasonings

²⁸ contended

²⁹ the nature

³⁰ unparted

³¹ wrought

³² turf

³³ brain

³⁴ sank

³⁵ visitation of sleep

³⁶ forth

³⁷ remained

³⁸ dream

My goste is gon in Godez grace,
 In aventure þer ¹ mervaylez ² meven.³
 I ne wyste in þis worlde quere þat hit wace,⁴
 Bot I knew me keste ⁵ þer klyfez ⁶ cleven ⁷,
 Towarde a foreste I bere ⁸ þe facc, 5
 Where rych rokkez wer to dyscreven ⁹
 Þe lyxt of hem myxt no mon leven,¹⁰
 Þe glemande ¹¹ glory þat of hem glent ¹²,
 For wern never webbez þat wygez weven ¹³
 Of half so dere adub[be]mente ¹⁴ 10
 Dubbed ¹⁵ wern alle þo downez sydez ¹⁶
 Wyth crystal klyffez so cler of kynde ¹⁷
 Holte-wodez ¹⁸ brygt aboute hem bydez ¹⁹
 Of bollez ²⁰ as blwe ²¹ as ble of ynde ²²;
 As bornyst sylver þe lef onsydez,²³ 15
 Þat þike con trylle ²⁴ on uch a tynde ²⁵
 Quen ²⁶ glem of glodez ²⁷ agaynz hem glydez,
 Wyth schymeryng schene ²⁸ ful schrylle ²⁹ pay schynde
 Þe gravayl þat on grounde con grynde ³⁰
 Wern precious perlez of Oryente, 20
 Þe sunnbemez bot blo and blynde ³¹
 In respecte of ³² þat adubement.
 The adubbemente of þo downez dere
 Garten ³³ my goste ³⁴ al greffe forȝete,
 So frech flavorez ³⁵ of frytez ³⁶ were 25
 As fode hit con me fayrc refete ³⁷

1 where
 2 marvels
 3 move
 4 was
 6 myself to be set down
 7 cliff
 7 stand fast
 8 turn
 10 to be desced
 10 believe
 11 resplendent
 12 gleamed
 13 people weave

14 splendid array
 16 arrayed
 16 hillsides
 17 by nature
 18 woods
 19 are
 20 trunks of trees
 21 blue
 22 indigo color
 23 unfolds
 24 did quiver
 25 on each branch
 26 when

27 flashes of light (?)
 28 beautiful shimmering
 29 intensely
 30 did crunch
 31 are but dark and dim
 32 compared to
 33 caused
 34 soul
 35 fresh fragrances
 36 fruits
 37 satisfy, refresh

- Fowlez¹ þer flowen² in fryth³ in fere,⁴
 Of flaumbande hwez,⁵ boþe smale and grete;
 Bot sytole-stryng⁶ and gyternere⁷
 Her reken⁸ myrþe moxt not retrete⁹;
 5 For, quen þose bryddez her wynggez bete,
 Þay songen wyth a swete asent¹⁰,
 So grac[i]os gle¹¹ coupe no mon gete
 As here and se her adubbement.¹²
- So al watz dubbet on dere asyse¹³;
 10 Þat fryth þer¹⁴ fortwne forth me ferez¹⁵;
 Þe derþe¹⁶ þerof for to devyse
 Nis no wyx¹⁷ worþe¹⁸ þat tonge berez.
 I welke¹⁹ ay forth in wely²⁰ wyse,
 No bonk²¹ so hyg²² þat did me derez.²³
 15 Þe fyrre²⁴ in þe fryth, þe fei[r]er con ryse
 Þe playn, þe plonttez,²⁵ þe spyse,²⁶ þe perez,²⁷
 And rawez²⁸ and randez²⁹ and rych revere³⁰
 As fyldor³¹ fyn her bonkes brent³²
 I wan³³ to a water by schore þat scherez³⁴,
 20 I orde, dere watz hit³⁵ adubbement!
- The dubbemente of þo derworth³⁶ depe³⁷
 Wern bonkez³⁸ bene³⁹ of beryl bryxt,
 Swangeande⁴⁰ swete þe water con swepe,
 Wyth a rownande⁴¹ rourde⁴² raykande⁴³ aryxt,

¹ birds² flew³ woodland⁴ together⁵ flaming colors⁶ citole-string⁷ player on the cithern⁸ lively⁹ reproduce¹⁰ harmony¹¹ joy¹² beauty¹³ manner¹⁴ where¹⁵ transports¹⁶ glory¹⁷ person¹⁸ worthy¹⁹ walk²⁰ happy²¹ hill²² difficult²³ as to cause me annoyances²⁴ further²⁵ plants²⁶ spicy shrubs²⁷ pear-trees²⁸ hedges²⁹ borders of streams³⁰ rivers³¹ thread of gold (*Fr fil d'or*)³² steep³³ made my way³⁴ runs swiftly by³⁵ its³⁶ rare³⁷ deep stream³⁸ banks³⁹ pleasing⁴⁰ rushingly (?)⁴¹ murmuring⁴² voice⁴³ moving forward

In þe founce¹ þer stonden stonz stepe,²
 As glente³ þurȝ glas þat glowed and glyȝt⁴
 A[s] stremande sterneȝ,⁵ quen stroȝe⁶ men slepe,
 Staren⁷ in welkyn in wynter nyȝt,
 For uche a pobbel⁸ in pole⁹ þer pyȝt¹⁰ 5
 Watz emerald, saffer,¹¹ oȝer gemme gente,¹²
 Þat alle þe loȝe¹³ lemed of¹⁴ lyȝt,
 So dere watz hit adubbement

The dubbement dere of doun¹⁵ and dalez,
 Of wod and water and wlonk¹⁶ playnez, 10
 Bylde¹⁷ in me blys, abated my baleȝ,¹⁸
 Forbidden¹⁹ my stresse,²⁰ dystried²¹ my paynez.
 Doun after a strem þat dryȝly²² haleȝ²³
 I bowed in blys. Bredful²⁴ my biaynez,
 Þe fyrre I folȝed²⁵ þose floty²⁶ valeȝ, 15
 Þe more strengþe of joye myn herte strayneȝ.
 As fortune fares þer as ho fraynez,²⁷
 Wheȝer solace ho sende oȝer elleȝ sore,²⁸
 Þe wyȝ to wham her wylle ho waynez²⁹
 Hytteȝ³⁰ to have ay more and more 20

More of weel³¹ watz in þat wyse
 Þen I cowȝe telle þaȝ I tom³² hade,
 For urȝely³³ herte myȝt not suftyȝe
 'To þe tenȝe dole³⁴ of þo gladnez glade³⁵

1 bottom of the stream

2 glittering

3 gleam

4 shimmered

5 stars streaming with light

6 secure (?)

7 glitter

8 pebble

9 pool

10 set

11 sapphire

12 precious

13 water

14 gleamed with

15 hill

16 fair

17 caused to spring up

18 sorrows

19 did away with

20 anguish

21 destroyed

22 mightily

23 flows

24 brimful

25 followed

26 watery

27 where she desires

28 sorrow

29 bestows

30 strives

31 joy

32 leisure

33 earthly

34 part

35 happy

Forþy¹ I þoȝt þat paradyse
 Watz þer over gayn² þo bonkez brade³;
 I hoped⁴ þe water were a devyse⁵
 Bytwene myrþez⁶ by merez⁷ made;
 5 Byȝonde þe broke,⁸ by slente⁹ oþer slade,¹⁰
 I hope þat mote¹¹ merked¹² wore.
 Bot þe water watz depe, I dorst not wade,
 And ever me longed a[y] more and more.

More and more, and ȝet wel mare,
 10 Me lyste¹³ to se þe broke byȝonde;
 For if hit watz sayr þer I con fare,
 Wel loveloker¹⁴ watz þe fyrre londe.
 Abowte me con I stote¹⁵ and stare,
 To fynde a forþe¹⁶ faste con I fonde¹⁷;
 15 Bot woþez¹⁸ mo iwysse þer ware,
 Þe fyrre I stalked by þe stronde,
 And ever me þoȝt I schulde not wonde¹⁹
 For wo þer welez so wynne²⁰ wore
 Þenne nwe note²¹ me com on honde,
 20 þat meved²² my mynde ay more and more.

More mervayle con my dom²³ adaunt²⁴;
 I seȝ²⁵ byȝonde þat myry²⁶ mere
 A crystal clyffe ful relusaunt²⁷,
 Mony ryal²⁸ ray con fro hit rere²⁹
 25 At þe fote þerof þer sete a faunt,³⁰
 A mayden of menske³¹ ful debonere;

1 wherefore

2 over against, MS oþer

3 gayn

4 broad

5 supposed

6 division

7 pleasure-gardens

8 boundary-lines

9 stream

10 slope

11 dale

11 city (referring to the New Jerusalem)

12 placed

13 I yearned

14 lovelier

15 stumble

16 ford

17 seek

18 dangers

19 hesitate

20 fair

21 a new matter

22 stirred

23 mind

24 overcome

25 saw

26 lovely

27 reflecting much light

28 royal

29 leap

30 young person (OF *enfant*)

31 decorous bearing

Blysnande¹ whyt watz hyr bleaunt² —
 I knew hyr wel, I hade sen hyr ere³ —
 As glysande⁴ golde þat man con schere,⁵
 So schon þat schene⁶ anunder schore.⁷
 On lenghe⁸ I loked to hyr þere,
 þe lenger I knew hyr more and more.

5

The more I frayste⁹ hyr fayre face,
 Her fygure fyn, quen I had fonte,¹⁰
 Suche gladande¹¹ glory con to me glace¹²
 As lyttel byfore þerto watz wonte.
 To calle hyr lyste¹³ con me enchace,¹⁴
 Bot baysment¹⁵ gef myn hert a brunt¹⁶,
 I seþ hyr in so strange a place,
 Such a burre¹⁷ myxt make myn heite blunt.¹⁸
 Þenne verrez¹⁹ ho up hei fayre frount,²⁰
 Hyr vysayge whyt as playn yvore,
 Þat stonge myn hert ful stray²¹ atount,²²
 And ever þe lenger, þe more and more

10

15

More þen me lyste my drede aros,
 I stod ful styлле and dorste not calle,
 Wyth ygen open and mouth ful clos,
 I stod as hende²³ as hawk in halle
 I hope²⁴ þat gostly²⁵ watz þat porpose²⁶;
 I dred onende²⁷ quat schulde byfalle —
 Lest ho me eschaped þat I þer chos,²⁸
 Er I at steven²⁹ hir moxt stalle.³⁰

20

25

¹ gleaming
² tunic (OF *blaut*)

³ erstwhile

⁴ glittering

⁵ cut

⁶ fair one

⁷ at the foot of the bank

⁸ at a distance

⁹ scanned

¹⁰ perceived it

¹¹ causing me to rejoice

¹² glide

¹³ the desire

¹⁴ pursue

¹⁵ confusion

¹⁶ blow

¹⁷ shock

¹⁸ stunned

¹⁹ lifts

²⁰ brow

²¹ out of the right course

²² confounded

²³ quiet

²⁴ suppose

²⁵ spectral

²⁶ intent, thing intended

²⁷ concerning

²⁸ discerned

²⁹ with my voice

³⁰ stop

þat gracios gay¹ wythouten galle,
 So smole, so smal, so seme² slygt,³
 Rysez up in hir araye ryalle,
 A prec[is]os pyece⁴ in perlez pygt.⁵

- 5 Perlez pygte of ryal prys⁶
 þere moxt mon by grace haf sene,
 Quen þat frech⁷ as flor-de-lys
 Doun þe bonke con boze⁸ bydene.⁹
 Al blysnande whyt watz hir bleaunt of biys,¹⁰
 10 Uþon¹¹ at sydez, and bounden bene¹²
 Wyth þe myrystec margarys,¹³ at my devyse,¹⁴
 þat ever I seȝ ȝet with myn yȝen,
 Wyth lappez¹⁵ large, I wot and I wene,
 Dubbed with double perle and dygte,¹⁶
 15 Her cortel¹⁷ of self sute¹⁸ schene,
 Wyth precios perlez al umbepygte.¹⁹

- A pygt²⁰ coroune²¹ ȝet²² wer²³ þat gyrl,
 Of marjorys²⁴ and non oper ston,
 Hize pynakled of cler quyt perle,
 20 Wyth flurtd²⁵ flowiez perfet²⁶ upon.
 To hed²⁷ hade ho non oper herle²⁸,
 Her here-leke²⁹ al hyr umbegon³⁰
 Her semblaunt³¹ sade for doc oper erle,³²
 Her ble³³ more blagt³⁴ þen whallez bon³⁵,

¹ radiant one² modest³ slight⁴ creature, thing⁵ arrayed⁶ excellence⁷ sweet one⁸ did betake herself⁹ forthwith¹⁰ fine linen MS hir beaunys (?)
(em Osgood)¹¹ open¹² pleasingly¹³ pearls¹⁴ in my opinion¹⁵ loose folds¹⁶ adorned¹⁷ kirtle¹⁸ of the very same fashion¹⁹ bordered²⁰ set with jewels²¹ crown²² besides²³ wore²⁴ figured²⁵ perfectly wrought²⁶ on her head²⁷ fillet, MS werle²⁸ locks of hair (?), MS.

here leke

²⁹ encircled³⁰ countenance³¹ demure enough to suit
duke or earl³² complexion³³ white (bleached)³⁴ Ivory is called whale's
bone in ME

As schorne golde schyr ¹ her fax ² þenne schon,
 On schylderez ³ þat leghe ⁴ unlapped ⁵ lyȝte.⁶
 Her depe colour ȝet wanted ⁷ non
 Of precios perle in porfyl ⁸ pyȝte.

Pyȝt and poyned ⁹ watz uche a hemme, 5
 At honde, at sydez, at overture,¹⁰
 Wyth whyte perle and non oper gemme,
 And bornyste quyte watz hyr vesture.
 Bot a wonder perle wythouten wemme ¹¹
 In myddez hyr breste watz sette so sure. 10
 A mannez dom ¹² moȝt dryȝly ¹³ demme ¹⁴
 Er mynde moȝt malte in hit mesure ¹⁵,
 I hope no tong moȝt endure ¹⁶
 No saverly ¹⁷ saghe ¹⁸ say of þat syȝt,
 So watz hit clene and cler and pure, 15
 þat precios perle þer hit watz pyȝt

Pyȝt in perle, þat precios py[ec]e
 On wyþer half ¹⁹ water com doun þe schore;
 No gladder gome ²⁰ heþen ²¹ into Grece
 þen I quen ho on brymme wore ²², 20
 Ho watz me nerre ²³ þen aunte or nece,
 My joy forþy watz much þe more
 Ho p[ro]fered me speche, þat speccial spece,²⁴
 Enclynande lowe in wommon lore,²⁵
 Caȝte of ²⁶ her coroun of grete tresore, 25
 And haylsed ²⁷ me wyth a lote lyȝte ²⁸

¹ bright² hair³ shoulders⁴ lay⁵ unbound⁶ lightly⁷ lacked⁸ embroidered border⁹ pierced (with open-work design)¹⁰ opening¹¹ blemish¹² judgment¹³ seriously¹⁴ be baffled¹⁵ enter into its measure of excellence¹⁶ be equal to the task¹⁷ sweet¹⁸ recital¹⁹ on the opposite side of²⁰ man²¹ hence²² was on the brink²³ closer (*perhaps* dearer)²⁴ rare being, MS spyre²⁵ according to women's etiquette²⁶ caught off²⁷ greeted²⁸ manner blithe

Wel watz me þat ever I watz bore,
To sware ¹ þat swete in perlez pyȝte l

5 'O perle,' quod I, 'in perlez pyȝt,
Art þou my perle þat I haf playned,²
Regretted ³ by myn one,⁴ on nyȝte?
Much longeyng haf I for þe layned,⁵
Syþen into gresse ⁶ þou me aglyȝte⁷;
Pensyf, payred,⁸ I am forpayned,⁹
10 And þou in a lyf of lykyng ¹⁰ lyȝte,¹¹
In paradys erde,¹² of stryf unstrayned.¹³
What wyrde ¹⁴ hatz hyder my juel ¹⁵ wayned,¹⁶
And don me in del ¹⁷ and gret daunger?
Fro ¹⁸ we in twynne ¹⁹ wern towen ²⁰ and twayned,²¹
I haf ben a joylez juelere '

15 That juel þenne in gemmez gente ²²
Vered ²³ up her vyse ²⁴ wyth yȝen graye,
Set on hyr coroun of perle orient,
And soberly after þenne ²⁵ con ho say.
'Sir, ȝe haf your tale mysetente,²⁶
20 To say your perle is al awaye,
þat is in cofer so comly clente,²⁷
As in þis gardyn gracios ²⁸ gaye,
Hereinne to lengt ²⁹ for ever and play,
þer mys nee mornynȝ ³⁰ com never nere ³¹;
25 Her were a forser ³² for þe, in faye,³³
If þou were a gentyl jueler

¹ answer² lamented³ grieved for⁴ by myself⁵ kept silent about⁶ the sod (grass)⁷ slipped away⁸ worn⁹ overcome with pain¹⁰ pleasure¹¹ arrived¹² the country of paradise¹³ unmolested¹⁴ fate¹⁵ jewel¹⁶ brought, MS wayned¹⁷ sorrow, MS þys del¹⁸ since¹⁹ in twain²⁰ drawn²¹ torn apart²² precious²³ turned²⁴ face²⁵ straightway²⁶ heeded ill²⁷ enclosed so beautifully²⁸ delightful²⁹ tarry³⁰ where sin nor mourning³¹ MS here³² treasure-chest³³ indeed

' Bot, jueler gente, if þou schal lose
 þy joy for a gemme þat þe watz lef,¹
 Me þynk þe put in a mad porpose,²
 And busyez þe³ aboute a raysoun bref⁴;
 For þat þou lestez⁵ watz bot a rose
 þat flowred and fayled⁶ as kynde hyt get⁷;
 Now, þurȝ kynde of þe kyste⁸ þat hyt con close,⁹
 To a perle of prys hit is put in pref¹⁰
 And þou hatz called þy wyrde a pef,¹¹
 þat oȝt of noȝt¹² hatz mad þe cler,¹³
 þou blamez¹⁴ þe bote¹⁵ of þy meschef¹⁶;
 þou art no kynde¹⁷ jueler '

A juel to me þen watz þys geste,¹⁸
 And juelez wern hyr gentyl sawez.¹⁹
 ' Iwyse,' quod I, ' my blysfol beste,²⁰
 My grete dystresse þou al todrawez²¹
 To be excused I make requeste ,
 I trawed²² my perle don out of dawez²³ ,
 Now haf I fonde hyt, I schal ma feste,²⁴
 And wony²⁵ wyth hyt in schyr²⁶ wod-schawez,²⁷
 And love my Lorde and al his lawez,
 þat hatz me broȝ[t] þys blys ner ;
 Now were I at²⁸ yow byȝonde þise wawez,²⁹
 I were a joyfol jueler.'

' Jueler,' sayde þat gemme clene,³⁰
 ' Wy borde³¹ ȝe men, so maddre ȝe be ?

1 dear
 2 given over to mad intent
 3 thou troublest thyself
 4 matter of short duration
 5 lost
 6 withered
 7 nature permitted it
 8 chest
 9 enclose
 10 it is proved to be
 11 thief

12 something from nothing
 13 manifestly
 14 dost reproach
 15 remedy
 16 injury
 17 grateful
 18 guest
 19 words
 20 best one
 21 puttest an end to
 22 believed

23 perished
 24 make merry
 25 dwell
 26 bright
 27 groves
 28 beside
 29 waves
 30 pure
 31 jest

þre wordez hatz þou spoken at ene¹ ;
 Unavysed,² forsoþe, wern alle þre ,
 þou ne woste³ in worlde⁴ quat on dotz mene,⁵
 þy worde byfore þy wytte con fle.
 5 þou says þou trawez me in þis dene,⁶
 Bycawse þou may wyth ygen me se ,
 Anoper þou says, in þys countre
 þyself schal won wyth me ryȝt here ,
 þe þrydde, to passe þys water fre —
 10 þat may no joyfol jueler. . . .'

' In blysse I se þe blyþely blent,⁷
 And I a man al mornyf⁸ mate⁹ ,
 3e take þeron ful lyttel tente,¹⁰
 þaȝ I hente¹¹ ofte harmez hate.¹²
 15 Bot now I am here in your presente,¹³
 I wolde bysech wythouten debate
 3e wolde me say in sobre asente¹⁴
 What lyf ȝe lede erly and late ,
 For I am ful fayn¹⁵ þat your astate¹⁶
 20 Is worþen¹⁷ to worschyp and wele, i wysse ;
 Of alle my joy þe hyȝe gate,¹⁸
 Hit is in grounde¹⁹ of alle my blysse '

' Now blysse, burne,²⁰ mot þe bytyde,'
 þen sayde þat lufsoum of lyth and lere²¹ ,
 25 'And welcum here to walk and byde,
 For now þy speche is to me dere ,
 Maysterful mod²² and hyȝe pryde,
 I hete²³ þe, arn heterly²⁴ hated here

¹ one time² ill considered³ knowest not⁴ at all⁵ a single one means (*hit*,
does mean)⁶ valley⁷ joyously mingled⁸ mournful⁹ dejected¹⁰ heed¹¹ experience¹² burning¹³ presence¹⁴ compliance¹⁵ glad¹⁶ condition¹⁷ is turned¹⁸ road¹⁹ at the basis²⁰ sir²¹ that one, lovely of limb
and face²² temper²³ assure²⁴ bitterly

My Lorde ne lovez not for to chyde,
 For meke arn alle þat wonez hym nere;
 And when in hys place þou schal apere,
 Be dep devote¹ in hol² mekenesse,
 My Lorde þe Lamb lovez ay such chere³ — 5
 þat is þe grounde of alle my blysse.

'A blysful lyf þou says I lede,
 þou woldez know þerof þe stage⁴
 þow wost wel when þy perle con schede⁵
 I watz ful gong and tender of age, 10
 Bot my Lorde þe Lombe, þurȝ hys Godhede,
 He toke myself to hys maryage,
 Corounde me quene in blysse to brede⁶
 In lenghe of dayez þat ever schal wage⁷;
 And sesed in⁸ alle hys herytage 15
 Hys lef⁹ is, I am holy hyse,
 Hys prese,¹⁰ hys prys,¹¹ and hys parage,¹²
 Is rote and grounde of alle my blysse.'

GODRIC'S HYMNS

It is not for beauty of phrasing or loveliness of movement that these verses are remarkable. They are here printed because they are early (Godric died in 1170), because their author was illiterate, and because he had such a singular career. He was successively peddler, pirate, and palmer, before, at the age of forty or over, he turned to the hermit's life. He is described as broad-shouldered, with well-set, sinewy frame, and flowing beard, and his hair in earlier life was black. Of him, as of Chaucer's shipman, it might be said

With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake

During his wandering life, he was for several years the master of a vessel plying between England, Scotland, Denmark, and Flanders, journeyed twice to Jerusalem, and on May 29, 1102, carried Baldwin I, King of Jerusalem, to Jaffa in his ship, and visited Rome, St. Giles in Provence, and Compostella. The

¹ deeply devout

² all

³ demeanor

⁴ degree of advancement

⁵ did fall

⁶ dwell

⁷ endure

⁸ put in possession of

⁹ precious one

¹⁰ worth

¹¹ excellence

¹² noble lineage

last sixty years of his life he spent at Finchale, near Durham. He knew a little French, and could read at least the Psalter in Latin. He 'had unique influence over animals. His heifer, the hare that was nibbling at his garden herbs, the frozen birds, the stag pursued by huntsmen, all found a friend in him' (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*). In extreme old age he became clairvoyant, and 'would interrupt his conversation to utter prayers for the storm-tossed vessels of his dreams'. See Kingsley, *Hermits*, Alban Butler's and Baring-Gould's *Lives of the Saints*; and especially the *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

The music of all three hymns, found in MS Brit. Mus. Royal S. F. 7, is reproduced as the frontispiece of Saintsbury's *History of English Prosody*, with a somewhat imperfect text.

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN

This hymn was taught, as he believed, to Godric, by the Virgin Mary herself. The text is from Zupitza's edition (*Eng. Stud.* 11, 423). The music to which it was sung is printed in Stevenson's edition of Reginald's life of the saint (Surtees Soc., Vol. 20), p. 288.

Sainte Marie, Virgine,
 Moder Jesu Cristes Nazarene,
 Onfo,¹ scild,² help þin³ Godric,
 Onfang,¹ bring hehlic⁴ wið þe in Godes ric.⁵

5 Sainte Marie, Cristes bur,⁶
 Madenes clenhad,⁷ moderes flur,⁸
 Dile⁹ mine sinne, riwe¹⁰ in min mod,
 Bring me to winne¹¹ wið self God

HYMN OF BURGwine, GODRIC'S SISTER

Godric's sister had led a hermit's life in a cell near him at Finchale. After her death he was concerned about the state of her soul. One night he had a vision of the Virgin Mary followed by two men in white garments, and between them the spirit of his sister. They floated down upon the altar of his oratory, and his sister, standing upon the altar, sang the following lines (Zupitza, p. 429).

¹ receive
² protect
³ thy
⁴ gloriously

⁵ kingdom
⁶ bower, chamber (alluding to Ps. 19, 5, understood of Christ as the bridegroom)
⁷ purity

⁸ flower
⁹ blot out
¹⁰ reign
¹¹ bliss

The 'scamel,' or footstool, here refers to the altar, with allusion to 1 Chron 28 3; Ps 99 5; 132 7; Isa 60 13, for the footstool may be identified with the mercy-seat of the old dispensation (Exod 25 16-22), and hence with the altar in the Christian church

Crist and Seinte Marie swa¹ on scamel me iledde²
 þat Ic on þis erðe ne silde³ wið mine bare tote itredie.⁴

HYMN TO ST NICHOLAS

St Nicholas is reported by his biographer, Reginald (ed Stevenson, p 202), to have once visited Godric in a dream at Eastertide, in company with angels descending to Christ's sepulchre, to have sung with them, and to have urged Godric to sing also, which he did. Our hymn, however, has no direct allusion to this occurrence.

The third line should, according to Zupitza (p 430), be brought into direct relation with the end of the first ('God's darling at thy birth, at thy bier') — which indicates that Godric's literary technique left something to be desired.

Sante Nicholes, Godes diuð,
 Tymbre⁵ us faire scone⁶ hus —
 At þi burth, at þi bare —
 Sante Nicholas, bring us wel þare.⁷

5

I SIGH WHEN I SING

About 1310 From Boddeker, pp 210-2

I syke⁸ when I singe,
 For sorewe þat I se,
 When I wiþ wyþinge⁹
 Biholde upon þe tre,
 Ant se Jesu, þe suete,
 Is¹⁰ herte-blod forlete¹¹
 For þe love of me.
 Ys¹⁰ woundes waxen wete;
 Þei wepen stille and mete¹²;
 Marie rewep þe

10

15

¹ so
² led
³ should
⁴ tread

⁵ build
⁶ beautiful
⁷ there
⁸ sigh

⁹ weeping
¹⁰ his
¹¹ lose
¹² gently

Heȝe upon a doune,¹
 þer al folk hit se may,
 A mile from þe² tounne,
 Aboute þe midday,
 5 þe rode is up arered,
 His frendes aren afered,
 Ant clyngeþ³ so⁴ þe clay.
 þe rode stont⁵ in stone,
 Marie stont hire one,⁶
 10 Ant scrīp ' Weylaway ! '

When Y þe biholde
 Wiþ eyȝen bryhte bo,⁷
 Ant þi bodi colde,
 þi ble⁸ waxeþ blo⁹;
 15 þou hengest al of blode
 So heȝe upon þe rode,
 Bituene þeues tuo
 Who may syke more?
 Marie wepeþ sore,
 20 Ant sīp¹⁰ al þis wo.

þe naylles beþ to stronge,
 þe smyþes are to sleȝe¹¹,
 þou bledest al to longe,
 þe tre is al to heȝe
 25 þe stones beoþ al wete,
 Alas, Jesu, þe suete!
 For nou frend hast þou non
 Bote Seint Johan mournynde,
 Ant Marie wepynde
 30 For pyne þat þe ys on.

¹ hill² MS uch (em B)³ shrink up⁴ like⁵ stands, MS stond⁶ by herself⁷ both⁸ color⁹ livid¹⁰ MS sīht (em B)¹¹ skilful

Ofte when Y sike
 And makie my mon,
 Wel ille þah me like ¹
 Wonder is hit non;
 When Y se honge hege, 5
 Ant bittre pyne drexe,²
 Jesu, my lemmon.³
 His wondes sore smerte;
 Þe spere al to [h]is herte
 Ant þourh [h]is syde [i]s⁴ gon. 10

Ofte when Y syke,
 Wiþ care Y am þourhsot ⁵,
 When Y wake, Y wyke,⁶
 Of serewe is al mi þoht.
 Alas! men beþ wode ⁷ 15
 Þat sucreþ by þe rode,
 And selleþ him for noht
 Þat bohte us out of synne.
 He bring ⁸ us to wyne⁹
 Þat haþ us duere ¹⁰ boht! 20

A SONG TO THE VIRGIN

Thirteenth century From MS. Brit Mus Egerton 613, printed by Morris,
Old English Miscellany (E.E.T.S. 49), pp 194-5

Of on þat is so fayr and brixt
*Velut*¹¹ *maris stella*,
 Brixtre þan þe dayis lȝt,
Parens et puella
 Ic crie to þe, þou se ¹² to me, 25
 Levedy, preye þi Sone for me,
Tam pia,

¹ if I like it full ill² suffer³ darling⁴ MS sydes⁵ pierced⁶ grow weak⁷ demented⁸ subj.⁹ bliss¹⁰ dearly¹¹ MS velud¹² look

þat Ic mote¹ come to þe,
Maria

Of kare² conseil³ þou ert best,
Felix, fecundata,
 5 Of alle wery⁴ þou ert rest,
Mater honorata
 Biþek him wiþ⁵ milde mod
 þat for ous alle s[h]ad [h]is blod
In cruce,
 10 þat we moten komen til him
In luce

Al þis world was forlore,
Eva pueratruce,
 Tyl our Lord was ybore
 15 *De te genitrice,*
 With *Ave*⁶ it went away —
 þuster⁷ nyht — and comet[h] þe day
Salutis,
 þe welle springeth ut of þe
 20 *Virtutis.*

Levedi, flour⁸ of alle þing,⁹
Rosa sine spina,
 þu bere¹⁰ Jesu, hevene King,
Gratia divina,
 25 Of alle þu berst þe þis,¹¹
 Levedi, quene of Parays
Electa,
 Mayde milde, moder *es*
Effecta

¹ may
² anxiety
³ counsel
⁴ who are weary

⁵ MS wiz
⁶ hail (anagram of Eva)
⁷ dark
⁸ flower

⁹ things
¹⁰ barest
¹¹ prize

Wel he wot¹ he is þi Sone,
Ventre quem portasti,
 He wyl nout werne² þe þi bone,³
Parvum quem lactasti,
 So hende⁴ and so god he is,⁵
 He havet[h] brou[h]t ous to blis
Superni
 þat havez hidut⁶ þe foule put⁷
Inferni.

STAND WELL, MOTHER, UNDER ROOD

About 1310 From Boddeker, pp 206-8

' Stond wel, moder, under rode, 10
 Byhold⁸ þy Sone wiþ glade mode ;
 Blyþe, moder, myht⁹ þou be ! '
 ' Sone, hou shulde Y blyþe stonde ?
 Y se þin fet, Y se þin honde,
 Nayled to þe harde tre ' 15

' Moder, do wey¹⁰ þy wepinge,
 Y þole¹¹ deþ for monkynde,
 For my gult þole Y non '
 ' Sone, Y fele þe dede-stounde¹²,
 þe suert is at myn herte grounde¹³ 20
 þat me byhet¹⁴ Symeon.'

' Moder, merci, let me deye,
 For Adam out of helle [to] beye,
 Ant his kun, þat is forlore.'

¹ knows
² deny
³ prayer, boon
⁴ gracious
⁵ MS. his

⁶ covered
⁷ pit
⁸ MS -holt
⁹ mayst
¹⁰ away

¹¹ suffer
¹² death-pang
¹³ core
¹⁴ foretold

' Sone, what shal me to rede ¹?
 My peyne pyneþ me to dede ²;
 Lat me dege þe byfore.'

5 ' Moder, þou rewe al of þi Bern ³;
 Þou wosshe awai þe bloody tern,⁴
 Hit dop ⁵ me worse þen my ded.'
 ' Sone, hou may Y teres werne ⁶?
 Y se þe bloody stremes erne ⁷
 From þin herte to my fet'

10 ' Moder, nou Y may þe seye,
 Betere is þat Ich one ⁸ deye
 Þen ⁹ al monkunde to helle go'
 ' Sone, Y se þi bodi bysw[o]ngen,¹⁰
 Fet and honde þourhout stongen ¹¹;
 15 No wonder þah ¹² me be wo'

' Moder, nou Y shal þe telle,
 3ef Y ne dege, þou gost to helle;
 Y þole ded for þine sake.'
 ' Sone, þou art so meke and mynde,¹³
 20 Ne wyt ¹⁴ me naht — hit is my kynde ¹⁵ —
 þat Y for þe þis sorewe make'

' Moder, nou þou miht wel leren ¹⁶
 Whet sorewe haveþ ¹⁷ þat children beren,
 Whet sorewe hit is wiþ childe gon.'
 25 ' Sorewe? ywis,¹⁸ Y con þe telle!
 Bote ¹⁹ hit be þe pyne ²⁰ of helle,
 More serewe wot Y non.'

¹ as advice
² death
³ son
⁴ tears
⁵ affects
⁶ forbid
⁷ run

⁸ alone
⁹ than
¹⁰ em B
¹¹ pierced
¹² if
¹³ considerate
¹⁴ blame

¹⁵ nature
¹⁶ canst easily explain
¹⁷ they have
¹⁸ indeed
¹⁹ unless
²⁰ pain

' Moder, rew of moder-kare,
 For nou þou wost of moder-fare,¹
 þah² þou be clene mayden on.³
 ' Sone, help at alle nede
 Alle þo þat to me grede,⁴
 Maiden, wif, ant fol⁵ wymmon.'

5

' Moder, may Y no lengore duelle,⁶
 þe time is come, Y shal⁷ to helle;
 þe þridde day Y ryse upon.'
 ' Sone, Y wil wip þe [be] founden,
 Y deye, ywis, for þine wounden —
 So soreweful ded nes never non.'

10

When he ros, þo⁸ fcl hire sorewe,
 Hire blisse sprong þe þridde morewe;
 Blyþe, moder, were þou þo l
 Levedy, for þat ilke blisse,
 Bysech þi Sone of sunnes lisse⁹;
 þou be oure sheld aȝeyn¹⁰ oure fo.

15

Blessed be þou, ful of blysse!
 Let us never hevene misse,
 þourh þi¹¹ suete Sones myht.
 Loverd, for þat ilke¹² blod
 þat þou sheddest on þe rod,
 þou bryng us into hevene-lyht.

20

¹ mother-doings² though, MS þou³ one, a, MS. mon⁴ cry⁵ foolish, loose⁶ stay⁷ must⁸ then⁹ sin's remission¹⁰ against¹¹ MS þourh biȝh (em B)¹² same

AS I RODE

About 1310 From Boddeker, pp 218-9

- Ase Y me rod, þis ender¹ day,
 By grene wode to seche play,
 Mid herte Y þohte al on a may,²
 Suetest of alle þinge,
 5 Lype,³ and Ich ou telle may
 Al of þat suete þinge.
- Þis maiden is suete ant fre of blod,⁴
 Briht and feyr, of milde mod,
 Alle heo mai don us god
 10 Þurh hire bysechyng,
 Of hire he tok fleysh and blod,
 Jesu Crist, hevene Kynge.
- Wip al mi lif Y love þat may,
 He is mi solas nyht and day,
 15 My joie, and eke my beste play,⁵
 Ant eke my love-longyng;
 Al þe betere me is þat day
 Þat Ich of hire synge.
- Of alle þinge Y love hir mest,⁶
 20 My dayes blis, my nyhtes rest,
 Heo counseleþ and helpeþ best
 Boþe elde and ȝyng⁷;
 Nou Y may, ȝef Y wole,
 Þe fif joyes mynge.⁸
- 25 Þe furst joie of þat wymman⁹ —
 When Gabriel from hevene cam,

¹ other
² maid
³ listen

⁴ descent, parentage
⁵ delight
⁶ most

⁷ old and young
⁸ mention
⁹ MS wyn-

Ant seide God shulde bicomē man,
 Ant of hire be bore,
 And bringe up of helle pyn
 Monkyn¹ þat wes forlore.

þat oper² joie of þat may 5
 Wes o³ Cristesmasse day,
 When God wes bore, on þorwe⁴ lay,
 Ant brohte us lyhtnesse⁵;
 þestri⁶ wes seie⁷ byfore day,
 þis hirdes⁸ bereþ wytnesse. 10

þe þridde joie of þat levedy —
 þat men clepeþ þe Epyphany,
 When þe kynges come, wery,
 To presente hyre Sone
 Wiþ myrre, gold, and encenz, 15
 þat⁹ wes Mon bicomē.

þe furþe joie we telle mawen —
 On Estermorewe, w[h]en¹⁰ hit gon dawen.¹¹
 Hyre sone, þat wes slawen,
 Aros in fleish and bon , 20
 More joie ne mai me haven
 Wyf ne mayden non

þe fifte joie of þat wymman —
 When hire body to hevene cam,
 þe soule to þe body nam,¹² 25
 Ase hit wes woned to bene.¹³
 Crist, leve¹⁴ us alle wiþ þat wymman
 þat joie al for te sene.

¹ mankind
² second
³ on
⁴ manger
⁵ light

⁶ darkness
⁷ seen
⁸ shepherds
⁹ who
¹⁰ em. B.

¹¹ dawn
¹² joined
¹³ be
¹⁴ grant

Preye we alle to oure levedy,
 Ant to þe sontes¹ þat woneþ² hire by,
 þat heo³ of us haven merci,
 Ant þat we ne misse
 5 In þis world to ben holy,
 Ant wyne hevene blysse.

WHEN CHRIST WAS BORN OF MARY FREE

About 1456 From MS Brit Mus Harl 5396, printed by Wright, *Specimens of Old Christmas Carols* (Percy Soc 4), p 32.

Christo paremus cantuam,
[In] excelsis gloria.

10 When Cryst was born of Mary fre,⁴
 In Bedlem in that fayre cyte,
 Angellis song ther with myrth and gle:
In excelsis gloria.

15 Herdmen⁵ beheld thes angellis brygt,
 'To hem apperyd wyth gret lygt,
 And seyð 'Goddys Sone is born this nygt;
In excelsis gloria'

20 'Thys king⁶ ys comyn to save [man]kynde,
 In the Scriptur⁷ as we fynde,
 Therefore this song have we in mynde:
In excelsis gloria

Then, Lord, for thy gret[e] grace,
 Graunt us the blys to se thy face,
 Where we may syng to thy solas:
In excelsis gloria.

¹ saints
² dwell
³ they
⁴ noble

⁵ shepherds
⁶ MS keng (em Chambers
 and Sidgwick, *Early English Lyrics*)

⁷ MS as yn Scripturas (em.
 C and S)

AT CHRISTMAS, MAID MARY

About 1425. Sections 6 and 7 (lines 59–84) of *Festivals of the Church*, from MS Brit Mus Royal 18 A 10, printed by Morris, *Legends of the Holy Rood* (E.E.T.S. 46), pp 212–3

At Cristemasse, mayde Mary,
 þorowe helpe of þe Holy Goostis heste,¹
 þi Brid² was born, and lay þe by,
 Aboute boþe bynne³ and beeste.
 þe aungels maden melody 5
 For joye of Cristis feeste;
 A clere note þei sang in þe sky
 Whan Kyngis Sone bare fleissshly creste.⁴
 Scheperdes, meest and leest,
 'Joye to God full of love!' 10
 Herden þei aungels synge above,
 'Pes to man! þe devyll is drove⁵
 Fro Goddis trone in þe eest.'

þan myȝt þe mylde may⁶ synge,
 Ysaye, þe woord of þee. 15
 'þou seydest⁷ a ȝerd schulde sprynge
 Oute of þe rote of jentill Jesse,
 And schulde floure with florisschyng,
 With primeroses greet plente,
 Into þe croppe⁸ schulde come a Kyng 20
 þat is a Lord of power and pyte—
 My swete Sone I see!
 I am þe ȝerde,⁹ þou art þe Flour!
 My Brid¹⁰ is borne by¹¹ beest in boure,
 My Primerose, my Paramour,¹² 25
 With love I lulle þee.'

¹ bidding
² son (*lit* bird)
³ manger
⁴ crest, insignia

⁵ driven
⁶ maiden
⁷ Isa 11 1
⁸ topmost branch

⁹ shoot
¹⁰ child (*lit* b rd)
¹¹ near
¹² sweetheart

I SING OF A MAIDEN

About 1450. From MS Brit Mus. Sloane 2593, as printed by Fehr in *Herrig's Archiv* 109 50.

I syng of a mayden
 þat is makeles¹;
 Kyng of alle kynges
 To here Sone [s]che² ches.³
 5 He cam also⁴ styлле
 þere⁵ his moder was
 As dew⁶ in Aprylle
 þat fallyt on þe gras,
 He cam also styлле
 10 To his moderes bowr
 As dew in Aprille
 þat fallyt on þe flour,
 He cam also styлле
 þere his moder lay
 15 As dew in Aprille
 þat fallyt on þe spray,
 Moder and maydyn
 Was never non but [s]che²;
 Wel may swych a lady
 20 Godes moder be.

LULLAY, MY CHILD

About 1460-1490. From MS Bodl Eng Poet c 1, printed by Wright in *Songs and Carols* (Percy Soc 73), p. 19

*Lullay, my Child, and wepe no more;
 Slepe, and be now styll,
 The King of blys thy Fader ys,
 As it was hys wyll.*

¹ matchless

² MS che (em Chambers and Sidgwick)

³ chose

⁴ as

⁵ where

⁶ Cf. Ps 72 6

This endrys ¹ nygt I saw a sygt ² —
 A mayd a cradyll kepe —
 And ever she song, and seyde among :
 ' Lullay, my child, and slepe.'

' I may not slepe, but I may wepe, 5
 I am so wo begone ,
 Slep I [w]old, butt I am colde,
 And clothys have I none.'

Me thougt I hard ³ the Chyld answard,
 And to hys moder he sayd : 10
 ' My moder der, what do I her,
 In cribbe why am I layd ?

I was borne, and layd beforne
 Bestys, both ox and asse ;
 My moder mild, I am thy Child, 15
 But he my Fader was.

Adam's gylt this man had spylt ⁴ ;
 That sin grevet[h] me sore.
 Man, for the her shall I be
 Thyrtty wynter and mor. 20

Dole ⁵ is to se, her shall I be
 Hang[ed] upon the rode ;
 With baleis ⁶ tobete, ⁷ my woundes towete, ⁸
 And zeffe my fleshe to bote ⁹

Here shall I be hanged on a tre, 25
 And dye, as it is skyll ¹⁰ ;
 That I have bougt leese ¹¹ wyll I nougt ,
 It is my Faders will

¹ other
² MS sygth
³ heard
⁴ ruined

⁵ MS dole it
⁶ scourge
⁷ smitten
⁸ dripping

⁹ atonement
¹⁰ proper, right
¹¹ lose, MS lesse

A spere so scharp shall perse my herte
 For dedys that I have done ;
 Fader of grace, wher¹ thou hase
 Forgetyn thy lytyll Sonne ?

5 Withouten pety² her shall aby,³
 And mak my fleshe all blo⁴
 Adam, iwys, this deth it ys
 For the and many mo.'

THE SHEPHERD UPON A HILL HE SAT

About 1500 (or earlier) From MS Oxford Balliol 354, as printed by Flugel
 in *Angl* 26 243-5 (cf *Neueng Iesebuch*, pp 117-9), with *h* for MS *y* See
 554 24 ff

Can I not syng but ' Hoy ''
 10 *Whan the joly shepard made so mych joy.*

The shepard upon a hill he satt ,
 He had on hym his tabard⁵ and his hat,
 Hys tarbox, his pype, and hys flagat⁶ ,
 Hys name was called Joly, Joly Wat,
 15 For he was a gud herdesboy
 Ut hoy !
 For in hys pype he made so mych joy.

The shepard upon a hill was layd ;
 Hys doge to hys gyrdyll was tayd.⁷
 20 He had not slept but a lytill brayd⁸
 But⁹ *Gloria in excelsis* was to hym sayd.
 Ut hoy !
 For in his pipe he mad so myche joy.

¹ whether
² pity
³ expiate
⁴ livid

⁵ loose upper garment with-
 out sleeves
⁶ flask, bottle
⁷ tied

⁸ while, MS broyd (em. F)
⁹ when

The shepard [up]on a hill he stode,
 Rownd about hym his shepe they yode.¹
 He put hys hond under hys hode,²
 He saw a star as rede as blod

Ut hoy!

5

For in his pipe he mad so myche joy

' Now farwell, Mall, and also Will,
 For my love go ye all styll
 Unto³ I cum agayn you till⁴,
 And evermore, [W]ill,⁵ 1yng well thy bell.

10

Ut hoy!

For in his pipe he mad so mych joy.

' Now must I go per⁶ Cryst was borne,
 Farewell, I cum agayn to morn⁷,
 Dog, kepe well my shep fro þe corn,
 And warn well waroke⁸ when I blow my horn

15

Ut hoy!

For in hys pipe he made so mych joy

Whan Wat to Bedlem cum[en] was,
 He swet — he had gon faster than a pace⁹,
 He fownd Jesu in a sympyll place,
 Betwen an ox and an asse

20

Ut hoy!

For in his pipe he mad so mych joy.

The shepard sayd anon ryght
 ' I will go se yon farly¹⁰ syght,
 Whereas þe angell syngith on hight,¹¹
 And the star þat shynyth so bryght.

25

Ut hoy!

For in [his]¹² pipe he made so mych joy.

30

¹ went

² hood (to lift it up)

³ until

⁴ to

⁵ em f

⁶ where

⁷ to morrow

⁸ (?)

⁹ walk

¹⁰ wondrous

¹¹ high

¹² em f

'Jesu, I offer to the here my pype,
My skyrte,¹ my tarbox, and my scrype²;
Home to my felowes now will I skype,
And also loke unto my shepe.

5

Ut hoy !'

For³ in his pipe he mad so myche joy.

'Now farewell, myne owne herdesman, Wat !'

'Ye, for God, lady, even so I hat⁴,

Lull well Jesu in thy lape,

10

And farewell, Joseph, wyth thy rownd cape.

Ut hoy !'

For in hys pipe he mad so myche joy.

Now may I well both hope⁵ and syng,

For⁸ I have bene a[t] Crystes beryng⁶;

15

Home to my felowes now wyll I flyng.⁷

Cryst of hevyn to his blis us bryng !

Ut hoy !'

For in his pipe he mad so myche joy.

JUDAS

About 1300 (*New Eng Dict s v plate*) From MS Camb Trin. Coll B 14-39 (photograph in my possession), cf Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, No 23 The manuscript has *y* for *h* and *-st(e)* for *-st(e)*, it is otherwise carelessly written (*wid* for *wih*, *wou* for *hou* (?)), etc, but I have made very few emendations, though one is tempted to change *aros* to *aras*, for instance

Mirk (about 1400 ?) says (*Festial*, E E T S, Ex Ser 96, p 79). 'Judas had befor slayne his owne fadyr, and bylayn hys owne modyr'

20 Hit wes upon a Scere þorsday þat ure Loverd aros,
Ful milde were þe wordes he spec to Judas

¹ (?) , MS scrype (em Flugel)

⁴ am called

⁶ birth

² scrip, MS skyrte (em Flugel)

⁵ hop

⁷ rush

³ MS ffor

19. *Scere þorsday*: Maundy Thursday, Mirk explains (*Festial*, p 125) 'In old fadyrs dayes, men wold þat day make scher hom honest, and dodde hor heddys, and clyp hor berdys, and so make hom onest a3eynes Astyr-day. For, on the morow, þay wold do hor body non ese, but suffyr penance yn mynd of hym þat suffred so hard for hom', cf. p 169.

'Judas, þou most to Jurselem, oure mete for to bugge¹;
þrittu platen² of selver þou bere upo þi rugge.³

þou comest fer i⁴ þe brode stret, fer i þe brode strete;
Summe of þine tunesmen þer þou meigt imete⁵ '

Imette wid is soster,⁶ þe swikele⁷ wimon 5
'Judas, þou were wrþe⁸ me⁹ stende¹⁰ þe wid ston,

[Judas, þou were wrþe me stende þe wid ston.]
For þe false prophete þat tou bilevest upon.'

'Be stille, leve soster, þin herte þe tobreke¹¹!
Wiste¹² min Loverd,¹³ Crist, ful wel he wolde be wreke.¹⁴' 10

'Judas, go þou on þe roc, heie upon þe ston,
Lei þin heved i my barm,¹⁵ slep þou þe anon.'

Sone so¹⁶ Judas of slepe was awake,
þrittu platen of selver from hym weren itake.

He drou¹⁷ hymselfe bi þe cop,¹⁸ þat al [h]it lavede¹⁹ a²⁰ blode, 15
þe Jewes out of Jurselem awenden²¹ he were wode

Foret²² hym com þe riche Jeu þat heigte²³ Pilatus.
'Wolte sulle²⁴ þi Loverd, þat hette²⁵ Jesus?'

'I nul²⁶ sulle my Loverd for nones cunnes eigte,²⁷
Bote hit be for þe þrittu platen þat he me btaigte²⁸' 20

¹ buy

² Wyclif has "plates," Matt.
26 15, etc.

³ back

⁴ in

⁵ meet

⁶ sister

⁷ treacherous

⁸ deserving

⁹ (that) one

¹⁰ stoned

¹¹ break, subj.

¹² if . . . knew (it)

¹³ lord

¹⁴ avenged

¹⁵ lap

¹⁶ as soon as

¹⁷ drew

¹⁸ head

¹⁹ was bathed

²⁰ in

²¹ thought

²² forth

²³ was called

²⁴ wilt thou sell

²⁵ is called

²⁶ will not

²⁷ no kind of property

²⁸ entrusted

' Wolte sulle þi Lord, Crist, for enes cunnes goldc ' '
 ' Nay, bote hit be for þe platen þat he habben wolde.'

In him¹ com ur Lord gon, as [h]is postles seten at mete.
 ' Wou² sitte ye, postles, ant wi nule ye etc³ '

5 [Wou sitte ye, postles, ant wi nule ye etc³]
 Ic am ibouxt ant isold to day for oure⁴ mete.'

Up stod him Judas ' Lord, am I þat ?
 I nas never o þe stude⁴ þei me ' þe evel spec.⁶ '

Up him stod Peter, ant spec wid al is mihte
 10 ' Þau⁷ Pilatus him come wid ten hundred cnixtes,

[Þau Pilatus him com wid ten hundred cnixtes,]
 Yet Ic wolde, Loverd, for þi love figte.'

' Still þou be, Peter! wel I þe icnowe⁸,
 Þou wolt fursake me þien⁹ ar þe coc him crowe.'

ST STEPHEN AND HEROD

About 1450 From MS Brit Mus Sloane 2593, as printed by Child,
Ballads, No 22

15 Seynt Stevene was a clerk in Kyng Herowdes halle,
 And seyyd him of bred and clop,¹⁰ as every kyng befall.

Stevyn out of kechone cam, wyth boris hed on honde,
 He saw a sterre was fayr and bryxt over Bedlem stonde.

¹ refl

² how (is it that), or read wi?

³ your

⁴ place

⁵ any one

⁶ spake

⁷ though

⁸ know

⁹ thrice

¹⁰ tablecloth

7 þat Matzner (*Altengl Sprachproben* I 114) suggests *wreck* after this word, but would the *c* of *spec* be palatal?

He kyst¹ adoun þe boris hed, and went into þe halle.
 ' I forsak þe, Kyng Herowdes, and þi werkes alle.

' I forsak þe, Kyng Herowdes, and þi werkes alle,
 þer is a chyld in Bedlem born is beter þan we alle.'

' Quat eylyt² þe, Stevene? quat³ is þe befallē?
 Lakkyt⁴ þe eyþer mete or drynk in Kyng Herowdes halle?' 5

' Lakit me neyþer mete ne drynk in Kyng Herowdes halle,
 þer is a chyld in Bedlem born is beter þan we alle'

' Quat eylyt þe, Stevyn? art þu wod,⁵ or þu gynnyst to brede⁶?
 Lakkyt þe eyþer gold or fe, or ony ryche wede⁷? ' 10

' Lakyt me neyþer gold ne fe, ne non ryche wede;
 þer is a chyld in Bedlem born xal⁸ helpyn us at our nede'

' þat is al so soþ, Stevyn, al so soþ, iwys,
 As þis capoun crowe xal þat hþ here in myn dysh'

þat word was not so sone scyd, þat word in þat halle, 15
 þe capoun crew *Crustus natus est* ' among þe lordes alle

' Rysyt⁹ up, myn turmentowres, be to¹⁰ and al[s]¹¹ be on,
 And ledyt Stevyn out of þis town, and stonyt hym wyth ston¹²'

Tokyn he¹² Stevene, and stonyd hym in the way,
 And perfore is his evyn¹³ on Crystes owyn day. 20

¹ cast² ails³ what⁴ fails⁵ mad⁶ be pregnant (?)⁷ garment⁸ shall⁹ rise (imp)¹⁰ by two¹¹ also¹² they took¹³ eve, vigil

CHAUCER, INVOCATION TO VENUS

Troilus and Criseyde 3 1-14, which is translated from Boccaccio's *Filosostrato*
3 585-600

O luce eterna, il cui lieto splendore
Fa bello il terzo ciel, dal qual ne piove
Piacer, vaghezza, pietade ed amore,
Del sole amica, e figliuola di Giove,
Benigna donna d' ogni gentil core,
Certa cagion del valor che mi muove
A' sospir dolci della mia salute,
Sempre lodata sia la tua virtute.

Il ciel, la terra, lo mare e l' inferno
Ciascuno in sè la tua potenza sente,
O chiara luce, e s' io il ver discerno,
Le piante, i semi, e l' erbe puramente,
Gli uccel, le fiere, i pesci con eterno
Vapor ti scanton nel tempo piacente,
E gli uomini e gli dei, nè creatura
Senza di te nel mondo vale o dura

For an extended comment, see my article, *Herrig's Archiv* 119 (1907) 40-54

O blisful light, of whiche the bemes clere
Adorneth al the thridde hevene¹ faire,
O sonnes leef, O Joves doughter dere,
Plesaunce of love, O goodly, debonaire,²
5 In gentil hertes ay redy to repaire,
O verray cause of hele³ and of gladnesse,
Yhered⁴ be thy might and thy goodnesse!

In hevene and helle, in erthe and salte see
Is felt thy might, if that I wel descerne,
10 As man, brid, best, fish, herbe, and grene tree
Thee fele in tymes with vapour⁵ eterne.
God loveth, and to love wol nought werne⁶;
And in this world no lyses⁷ creature,
Withouten love, is worth, or may endure.

¹ that of Venus

² gracious

³ well-being

⁴ praised, exalted

⁵ inspiration

⁶ forbid

⁷ living

CHAUCER, INVOCATION TO THE TRINITY

Troilus and Criseyde 5 1863-1869 The first three lines are from Dante
Paradiso 14 28-30

Quell' uno e due e tre che sempre vive,
E regna sempre in tre e due ed uno,
Non circonscritto, e tutto circonscrive

Thou oon, and two, and three, eterne onlyve,¹
That regnest ay in three and two and oon,
Uncircumscrip't, and al mayst circumscrieve,
Us from visible and invisible foon
Defende; and to thy mercy, everychoon,
So make us, Jesus, for thy grace digne,²
For love of mayde and moder thyn benigne!

5

¹ in life, living

² worthy

PLAYS

THE CLERIC AND THE MAIDEN

This fragmentary 'interlude,' belonging to 'the thirteenth century, is the first English comedy, and the only one extant from the Middle Ages. It was printed by Wright from a manuscript then in private hands, but now MS. Brit. Mus. Add. 23,986, written about 1300 by a French scribe. A more critical edition is by Heuser (*Anglia* 30 306-19). According to the latter, the dialect indicates south Yorkshire or north Lincolnshire, as there is mention in *Dame Sirith* (see above, p. 145) of Boston, in Lincolnshire, the two works belong to the same region, though the manuscript of *Dame Sirith* hails from Worcester. Heuser assumes that both works rest upon a lost interlude. He concludes

- 1 *Dame Sirith* was originally written in rhyming couplets.
- 2 *Dame Sirith* has only 47 narrative lines (24 of these at the beginning) out of 150, and these occur almost exclusively when a new character enters, everything indicates that it was an interlude before it was a fabliau.
- 3 *Dame Sirith* and our interlude are akin in subject, dramatic character, verse, dialect, and occasionally in phraseology, hence both repose upon a thirteenth century interlude.
- 4 Various changes of the original appear in *Dame Sirith* (narrative additions, verse, dialect), so that our interlude does not spring from the fabliau. In the interlude the deceived woman is a girl, not, as in every other version, a wife, hence the fabliau does not spring from the present interlude. It is likely that each author worked, not from a manuscript, but from his own recollection of the acted interlude.
- 5 The names throw no light upon a possible French origin. For (a) as the scribe was French (Heuser, p. 310), the saints, Michel and Denis, signify nothing, (b) Mome, Flwis and Malkyn are English names, the Margeri of *Dame Sirith* is French, but must have been used in England, the Willekin of *Dame Sirith* is English, Sirith is Scandinavian (= Sigrith), the Nelde of *Dame Sirith* is hardly a proper name, but possibly from Old *lald*, old Flwis, or Helwys, points to the eastern part of England, where there occur such family-names as Helwys and Flwes.

With respect to Heuser's (5), the indications are that behind the *Clericus et Puella* there was a French original. Malkyn has a termination borrowed from Dutch or Low German, but the first syllable is from the French Matilda (note that the wife of Henry I changed her original name of Eadgyth, Edith, to Matilda). Mome (MS. Mome) is borrowed from Scandinavian or Dutch. The other names point clearly to France to the saints, Michael and Denis, add

Leonard (cf. above, p 387), who is associated with the vicinity of Limoges, and Elwis is surely the French Heluis (Helois, Heluiz, Helui, Heloi, Eluys), which is frequently found in the French feudal epic before 1180 — thirteen times in *Garin le Lorrain*, for instance (Langlois, *Table des Noms Propres dans les Chansons de Geste*, pp. 329-30), compare Chaucer's 'Helowys' in *Wife of Bath's Prologue* 677, referring to the mistress of Abelard. Then *fayllard*, 477 8 (following its noun), is French, like the *boinaid* of *Dame Sirith* (152 19). As to *Dame Sirith*, the name Margeri is French, as we have seen, Willekin has the same ending as Malkyn; and Nelde (rather, nelde) represents a variant spelling of 'needle' (the one crone may have ostensibly supported herself with her needle, as the other with her distaff).

Compare the *Debate of the Cleric and the Maiden*, pp 418-20, above.

The interlude begins *Hu incipit Interludium de Clerico et Puella*, and these names are retained throughout the stage-directions, I have substituted *Cler* and *Maid*. I have also supplied the headings for the scenes, and made several emendations.

The manuscript commonly represents initial *b* (and occasionally *ɣ*) by *y*. I have restored the original forms. It also confounds *w* and *v*, supplies and omits *h* at random, etc.

SCENE I

MAIDEN's home. *Enter CLERIC and MAIDEN*

Cler Damisel,¹ reste wel!

Maid. Sir, welcum, by Saynt Michel!

Cler Wer es ty² sire? Wer es ty dame?

Maid. By Gode, es noþer³ her at hame.

Cler Wel wor suile a man to life,

þat suile a may mihte⁴ have to wyfe⁵!

Maid. Do way, by Crist and Leonard!

No wil Y lufe na clerik fayllard⁶,

Na kep⁷ I herbherg⁸ clerik in huse no⁹ y¹⁰ flore.¹¹

Bot¹² his hers¹³ ly wituten¹⁴ dore.

Go forth þi way, god sire,

For¹⁵ her hastu losyt¹⁶ al þi hire.¹⁷

¹ MS damishel

² thy (*t* for *th*, as elsewhere)

³ neither

⁴ MS mithe

⁵ Cf 145 7-8

⁶ decentful

⁷ care

⁸ to harbor

⁹ nor

¹⁰ on

¹¹ Cf 145 27

¹² unless

¹³ rump

¹⁴ outside the

¹⁵ MS ff, and always below as initial

¹⁶ MS losye, cf. 147 5

¹⁷ MS wile, cf *Childhood of Jesus* 1384 (ca. 1300) in Horstmann, *Allenghsche Legenden*, 1875 'Elles we leosez bope ore ɣwile and huire.'

- Cler.* Nu, nu, by Crist and by Sant Jhon,
 In al þis land ne wist I none,
 Mayden, þat Hi luf mor þan þe;
 Hif me micht ever þe better ¹ be!
 5 For þe Hy sory ² nicht and day,
 Y may say, 'Hay, ³ wayleuay!'
 Y luf þe mar ⁴ þan mi lif,
 þu hates me mar þan gayt ⁵ dos cnif ⁶ —
 þat es nouwt ⁷ for mysgilt, ⁸
 10 Certes, ⁹ for þi luf ham Hi spilt. ¹⁰
 A, suyte ¹¹ mayden, reu of me, ¹²
 þat es ty luf, hand ay sal be!
 For þe luf of þ[e] mod[er] ¹³ of hevene, ¹⁴
 þu mend þi mode, ¹⁵ and her my stevene. ¹⁶
 15 *Maud.* By Crist of hevene, and Sant Jon ¹⁷!
 Clerc of scole ne kep ¹⁸ I non,
 For many god wymman haf þai don scam[e] —
 By Crist, þu michtis haf be ¹⁹ at hame ²⁰!
 20 *Cler.* Syn ²¹ it n[on] opir ²² gat ²³ may be,
 Jesu Crist ²⁴ bytech ²⁵ Y þe,
 And send[e] ²⁶ neulic ²⁷ bot ²⁸ tharinne,
 þat Y ²⁹ be lesit ³⁰ of al my pine. ³¹
Maud. Go nu, truan, ³² go nu, go,
 For mikel þu canst ³³ of sory and wo!

¹ MS bether² sorrow³ alas⁴ more⁵ goat, MS yayt (çayt?)⁶ knife, MS chuief (em Heuser)⁷ not⁸ misdeed⁹ MS certhes¹⁰ undone¹¹ sweet, MS. suythe¹² Cf. 146 12¹³ MS y mod (em H)¹⁴ MS efne¹⁵ Cf. 146 11¹⁶ cry¹⁷ MS jone¹⁸ care for¹⁹ been²⁰ Cf 147 6²¹ MS. synt²² MS noþur; cf. 480 10²³ way²⁴ dat.²⁵ commend, MS bytethy (em. H)²⁶ may he send²⁷ soon, MS neulit (em. H.)²⁸ amendment, help²⁹ MS yi³⁰ freed³¹ woe³² vagabond³³ MS. canstu

SCENE II

*ELWIS' home. Enter CLERIC and ELWIS**Cler.* God te blis,¹ mone² Helwis.*Mone² Elwis.* Son, welcum, by San Dinis³!*Cler.* Hic am comin⁴ to þe, mone⁵;þu hel⁶ me noht,⁷ þu say me sone.Hic am a clerc þat hauntes⁸ scole;Y led⁹ my lif wyt mikel dole¹⁰,Me wor lever to be ded¹¹þan led the lif þat Hyc led,¹²For an¹³ mayden wit¹⁴ and schen¹⁵ —Fayrer ho¹⁶ lond hav¹⁷ Y non sen¹⁸Ȝo¹⁹ hat²⁰ mayden Malkyn, Y wene —Nu þu wost quam²¹ Y mene,

Ȝo wonys at the tounes ende,

þat suyt lif, so fayr and hende²²,

Bot-if ȝo wil hir mod amende,

Neuly Crist my ded me send[e]²³!Men send²⁴ me hyder, wytuten²⁵ fayle,To haf þi help an[d] ty cunsayle²⁶

þarfor am Y cummen here,

þat þu salt be my herandbere,²⁷To mac me and þat mayden sayct,²⁸And Hi sal gef þe of myn ayct,²⁹

So þat hever, al þi lyf,

Saltu be þe better³⁰ wyf,¹ bless, cf 1484² aunt, MS. mome (see note 5)³ Cf 14810⁴ come⁵ MS mome (mone rhymes with sone, 'soon,' in Gower, *Conf. Am.* 1 97)⁶ conceal⁷ nothing, MS noth⁸ frequent⁹ lead, MS lydy¹⁰ Cf 14817-18¹¹ MS dedh¹² MS ledh¹³ MS ay¹⁴ white, MS. with¹⁵ beautiful¹⁶ on, in¹⁷ MS haw¹⁸ MS syen¹⁹ she, MS. yo²⁰ is named²¹ whom²² gracious²³ opt²⁴ they (one) sent²⁵ MS vyt-²⁶ Cf 1491-2²⁷ messenger²⁸ at one cf 1508²⁹ property³⁰ richer

- So help me Crist — and ¹ Hy may spede,
 Riche ² saltu haf þi mede! ³
Mome ⁴ *Ellwis*. A, son, wat ⁵ saystu? Benedicite ⁶!
 Lift hup þi hand, and blis þe!
 5 For it es boyt ⁷ syn and scam[e]
 Þat þu on me hafs layt thys blam[e],
 For Hic am an ald ⁸ quyne ⁹ and a lam[e], ¹⁰
 Y led my lyf wit Godis gram[e] ¹¹,
 Wit my roc ¹² Y me fede,
 10 Can I do non othir dede
 Bot my Pater Noster and my Crede ¹³
 (To say Crist for missedede),
 And myn Avy Mary
 (For my synnes ¹⁴ Hic am sory),
 15 And my *De Profundis*
 (For al that yn sin lys),
 For can I me non oþir þing, ¹⁵
 Þat wot Crist, of hevene Kyng. ¹⁶
 Jesu Crist, of hevene hey,
 20 Gef ¹⁷ that þay may heng hey,
 And gef þat Hy may se
 Þat þay be heng on a tre
 Þat þis ley as leyit ¹⁸ me onne, ¹⁹
 For aly ²⁰ wyman am I on ²¹ . . .

¹ if² richly³ Cf 149 v⁴ MS mome⁵ MS vat⁶ *Pron* bencitee, cf 149 v⁷ both⁸ old⁹ quean¹⁰ Cf 149 10-13¹¹ anger, MS love (em suggested by ll, cf. *grome*, 149 11)¹² distaff¹³ Cf 149 21-23¹⁴ MS scynnes¹⁵ MS þink¹⁶ MS kync¹⁷ grant¹⁸ he have lied¹⁹ MS onne me²⁰ holy cf 149 w²¹ one

.

THE CHESTER NOAH'S FLOOD

Even as early as the fourth century, Greek Christian preachers introduced dramatic dialogue into their sermons, no doubt under the influence of the dramatic tradition which had been perpetuated from the classic age, and they were imitated by certain of the Latin Fathers. Such dialogue is found, again, in the *Christ* of the Old English poet, Cynewulf. Thus, before the ritual of the Church developed into the beginnings of the miracle play, the dramatic element in Scriptural narrative had been accentuated in both the East and the West (Cook, 'A Remote Analogue to the Miracle Play,' in *Four Eng and Germ Phil* 4 (1903) 421-51, cf 5 62-4)

In the tenth century, the *Concordia Regularis* of St. Athelwold (A.D. 965-975), in the ceremony for the third nocturn at matins on Easter morning, directs three brethren to represent the women who go to the sepulchre, and one the angel seated at the door of the tomb. As they approach, the angel says *Quem queritis in sepulchro, O Christicole*. To which the three reply *Iesum Nazarenum crucifixum*. And he answers *Non est hic, surrexit, sicut prodixerat. Ite, annuntiate quia surrexit a mortuis*, etc. (Chambers, *Medieval Stage* 2 308, cf Jayley, *Plays of Our Forefathers*, pp 17-8)

The rise and progress of the miracle-play are well sketched by Jusserand (*Lit. Hist. Eng. People* 1 456 ff.)

'The imitation of any action is a step towards drama. Conventional, liturgical, ritualistic as the imitation was, still there was an imitation in the ceremony of mass, and mass led to the religious drama, which was therefore, at starting, as conventional, liturgical, and ritualistic as could be. Its early beginning is to be sought for in the antiphoned parts of the service, and then it makes one with the service itself. A great step was made when, at the principal feasts of the year, Easter and Christmas, the chanters, instead of giving their responses from their stalls, moved in the Church to recall the action commemorated on that day, additions were introduced into the received text of the service, religious drama begins then to have an existence of its own. "Tell us, shepherds, whom do you seek in this stable?"—They will answer "Christ the Saviour, our Lord." Such is the starting point, it dates from the tenth century, from this is derived the play of Shepherds, of which many versions have come down to us.

'Verse replaced prose, the vulgar idiom replaced Latin, open air and the public square replaced the church nave and its subdued light. It was no longer necessary to have recourse to priests wearing a dalmatic in order to represent midwives, the feminine parts were performed by young boys dressed as women.

'The religious drama was on the way to lose its purely liturgical character when the conquest of England had taken place. Under the reign of the Norman and Angevin kings, the taste for dramatic performances increased considerably, within the first century after Hastings we find them numerous

and largely attended. The oldest representation the memory of which has come down to us took place at the beginning of the twelfth century . . . A little later in the same century, Fitzstephen, who wrote under Henry II, mentions as a common occurrence the "representations of miracles" held in London. In the following century, under Henry III, some were written in the English language. During the fourteenth century, in the time of Chaucer, mysteries were at the height of their popularity.

'In a more or less complete state, the collections of the Mysteries performed at Chester, Coventry, Woodkirk, and York have been preserved, without speaking of fragments of other series. Most of those texts belong to the fourteenth century, but have been retouched at a later date. Old Mysteries did not escape the hand of the improvers, any more than old churches, where any one who pleased added paintings, porches, and tracery, according to the fashion of the day . .

'Once emerged from the Church, the drama had the whole town in which to display itself, and it filled the whole town. On these days the city belonged to dramatic art, each company had its cars or scaffolds, *pageants* (placed on wheels in some towns), each car being meant to represent one of the places where the events in the play happened. The complete series of scenes was exhibited at the main crossings, or on the principal squares or open spaces in the town.

'While in the theatre of Bacchus the tragedies of Sophocles were played once and no more, the Christian drama, remodeled from century to century, was represented for four hundred years before immense multitudes, and this is a unique phenomenon in the history of literature.'

According to Gayley (*op. cit.*, pp 132-3; cf pp 128-31) the Chester cycle, at least in part, was in existence in the first third of the fourteenth century, and its present form probably represents a revision made not far from 1400 (see also Ten Brink, *English Literature* 2 1274, Hemingway, *English Nativity Plays*, pp xix-xxi, Pollard, *English Miracle Plays*, p xxxvi, Cook, in *Nation* of May 27, 1915, p 599). The manuscripts, five in number, are, however, much later (1591-1604).

Pollard thus characterizes these plays (p xxxvii): 'There is less in the Chester plays to jar on modern feelings than in any other of the cycles. The humor is kept more within bounds, the religious tone is far higher.' Of the *Noah's Flood*, Gayley says (p 151): 'The characters are distinct and consistently developed. The comic episodes are natural and justifiable, for they serve to display, not to distort, character, and they grow out of the dramatic action. They are, moreover, varied, and, to some extent, cumulative.' Chaucer thus alludes to the stubbornness of Noah's wife (*Miller's Tale* 352-7):

'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 hirself allone

Our text is based upon MS. Harl. 2124 (H.), as printed by Deimling (E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. 62 48-63), with certain stage-directions and variants from MS Bodley 175 (B.), as contained in Deimling's edition, and from MS Brit Mus Add. 10,305 (W.), as printed by Thomas Wright in 1843. For the Latin names of the characters, *Noe*, etc., I have substituted the corresponding English ones.

There is a duplication of the dumb show of making the ark, of the command to take the beasts by sevens, and of the comic episode of Noah's wife, this looks as though two drafts had been rather clumsily patched together.

There are emendations by Kolbing in *Engl. Stud.* 16 280, 21. 163.

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

GOD

NOAH	NOAH'S WIFE
SHEM	SHEM'S WIFE
HAM	HAM'S WIFE
JAPHETH	JAPHETH'S WIFE

*First, in some heigh place or in the cloudes, yf it
may be, GOD speaketh unto NOE., standing
without the arke, with all his family*¹

9.
==

God. I, God, that all the world have wrought,
Heaven and earth, and all of nought,
I see my people, in deede and thought,
Are sett[e] fowle in sinne
My Ghost shall not lenge² in mon³ —
That through fleshlie liking is my fone⁴ —
But⁵ till vi skore yeares be gone,
To loke if they will blynne⁶

5

Manne that I made I will destroy,
Beast, worme, and fowle to fle,
For on earth they doe me n[o]ye⁷ —
The folke that are theron;

10

¹ From B, the corresponding Latin is in H
² remain (Vulg. *permanebit*)

³ MS man, W mone
⁴ foes (plural, because *man* is used collectively)

⁵ except
⁶ cease, see Gen 6. 3, 5
⁷ cause me annoyance

Hit harmes me so hartfulle ¹ —
 The malyce that now ² can ³ multely —
 That sore it greveth me inwardlie
 That ever I made mon ⁴

5 Therefore, Noe, my servant free,
 That righteous man art, as I see,
 A shipp sone thou shalt make the,
 Of trees drye and lighte,
 Little chambers therein thou make,
 10 And bynding slich ⁵ also thou take,
 Within and out thou ne slake ⁶
 To noynte ⁷ it through thy ⁸ mighte.⁹

300 cubytes it shall be long,
 And 50 of breadth,¹⁰ to mak it stronge,
 15 Of heichte 30 ¹¹, the mete ¹² thou fonge,¹³
 Thus measure it about
 One wyndow worch, through thy wytte,
 One cubyte of length and breadth ¹⁰ make it.
 Upon the side a dore shall sit,
 20 For to come in and out ¹⁴

Eating-places thou make also,
 Three-roofed chambers one or two;
 For with water I thinke to slowe ¹⁵
 Man that I can make,
 25 Destroyed all the world shal be
 Save thou, thy wife, thy sonnes three,
 And all there wives also with thee
 Shall saved be for thy sake.¹⁶

¹ at the heart² MS now that³ doth⁴ MS manne, see Gen 6 6⁵ pitch⁶ fail⁷ MS anovnte⁸ MS all thy⁹ Gen 6 14¹⁰ MS breadeth¹¹ MS 50¹² measure¹³ take¹⁴ Gen 6 16¹⁵ slay¹⁶ Gen 6 16-18

Noah. Ah Lord, I thanke the lowd and still,
That to me art in such will,
And spares me and my house to spill,¹

As now I sothlie fynde.
Thy bydding, Lord, I shall fulfill, 5
And never more the greeve ne grill,²
That suche grace has sent me till ³
Among all mankinde.

Have done, yow men and women all,
Helpe, for ought that may befall, 10
To worke this shipp, chamber and hall,
As God hath bydden us doe
Shem Fader,⁴ I am already bowne ⁵;
Anne axc I have, by my crowne ⁶ I
As sharpe as any in all this towne, 15
For to goe thereto

Ham I have a hatchet wonder kene,
To byte well, as may be seene,
A better grownden, as I weene,
Is not in all this towne 20
Japheth And I can well make a pyn,
And with this hammer knock yt in;
Goe and worche without more dynne,
And I am ready bowne

Noah's Wife And we shall bring tymber to, 25
For wee nothing els mon ⁷ doe,
Women be weake to underfoe
Any great travayle

Shem's Wife Here is a good hackstock ⁸,
On this yow maye hew and knock, 30

¹ destroy
² offend
³ to me

⁴ MS father
⁵ prepared
⁶ head

⁷ may, MS mon nothing els
⁸ chopping block

Shall non be idle in this flock,
Ne now may no man fayle.

Ham's Wife And I will goe to gather sliche,
The ship for to caulke¹ and piche,
5 Anoynt² yt must be every stich —
Board, tree, and pyn
Japheth's Wife. And I will gather chippes here,
To make a fire for yow in feere,³
And for to dight[e]⁴ your dynner,
10 Against [that] yow come in⁵

*Then NOYE beginneth to builde the arcke, and
speaketh NOYE:*⁶

Noah. Now, in Gods name,⁷ I will begin
To make the shippe that we shall in,⁸
That we be ready for to swym
At the cominge of the flood
15 These bordes I joyne here togeder,⁹
To kepe us safe from the wedder,
That we may row both hider¹⁰ and thider,
And safe be from this floode

Of this tree will I make the mast,
20 Tyde with cables¹¹ that will last,
With a sayleyarde for each blast,
And each thinge in ther kinde,
With topcastle and bowspreet,¹²
With coardes and ropes, I have all meete
25 To sayle forth at the next weete¹³,
This shipp is at an ende.¹⁴

¹ MS cleane (em W)

² MS anoynted, em suggested by Deimling

³ all (*lit.* in company)

⁴ make ready

⁵ MS adds Tunc faciunt
signa quasi laborarent
cum diversis instrumentis

⁶ From W

⁷ MS the name of God

⁸ inhabit

⁹ MS -gether

¹⁰ MS hither

¹¹ MS gables, W cabbelles

¹² MS bewsprytt, cf OF *sp̄r̄zot*

¹³ wet, rain

¹⁴ MS adds Tunc Noe iterum,
cum tota familia, faciunt
signa laborandi cum diversis instrumentis

Wife, in this castle we shall be kepte¹;

My childer and thou I wold² in lepte.³

Noah's Wife. In faith, I⁴ had as lief thou slepte,⁵

For all thy Frankish⁶ fare⁷,

I will not doe after thy red[c].⁸

5

Noah. Good wife, doe now as I the bede⁹!

Noah's Wife. By Christ, not or¹⁰ I see more neede,

Though thou stand all day¹¹ and stare!

Noah. Lord, that women be crabbed aye,

And never are meke, that dare I saye!

10

This is wel sene by me to-daye,

In witnes of yow each one

Good wife, let be all this beere¹²

That thou makes in this place here;

For all they wene thou art master —

15

So art thou,¹³ by St John!

*Then NOVE with all his familie shall make a signe
as though the[y] wroughte upon the shippe with
diveres instrumentes, and after that GOD shall
speake to NOVE, sayinge¹⁴*

God Noe, [now] take thou thy meanye,¹⁵

And in the shippe hye¹⁶ that thou¹⁷ be,

For none so righteous man to me

Is now on earth lyvinge.

20

Of cleane beastes with thee thou take

Seaven and seaven or thou slake¹⁸,

Hee and shee, make¹⁹ to make,

Belyve²⁰ in that²¹ thou bringe.²²

¹ MS keped, W. kepte

² would (I would that my children, etc.)

³ MS leaped, W. lepte

⁴ MS Noe I, em suggested by Deimling

⁵ MS sleppit, W. slepte

⁶ French

⁷ behavior (?)

⁸ counsel

⁹ MS bydd, cf OE *bēodan*

¹⁰ before, till

¹¹ MS. the day, W. day

¹² clamor

¹³ MS and so thou art

¹⁴ From W., cf note 2 on p. 489

¹⁵ company

¹⁶ hasten

¹⁷ MS yow

¹⁸ stop

¹⁹ mate

²⁰ at once

²¹ see that

²² Gen 7.1

- Of beastes uncleane two and two,
 Male and female, without moe¹;
 Of cleane fowles scaven alsoc,
 The hee and shee togeder²;
 5 Of fowles uncleane two,³ and no more,
 As I of beastes said before,
 That shal be saved throughe my lore,
 Against I send the weder.⁴
- Of all meates that must be eaten
 10 Into the ship loke there be gotten,
 For that no way may be forgeten⁵,
 And doc all this bydeene,⁶
 To sustayne man and beast therein
 Aye till the water cease and blyn⁷,
 15 This world is filled full of synne,
 And that is now well sene.
- Seaven dayes be yet coming —
 You shall have space them in to bringe,
 After that is my lyking⁸
 20 Mankinde for to n[o]ye,
 40 dayes and 40 nightes
 Rayne shall fall for ther unrightes,⁹
 And that I have made through my mightes
 Now think I to destroye¹⁰
- 25 *Noah* Lord, to thy¹¹ byddingc I am bayne¹²;
 Seinge¹³ non other grace will gayne,
 Hit will I fulfill fayne,
 For gracious I thee fynde.

¹ more² MS -gether³ But cf. Gen 7 3⁴ MS wedder⁵ MS -yeten, W. -getten⁶ straightway⁷ stop see Gen 6 21⁸ purpose⁹ iniquities¹⁰ Gen 7 4¹¹ MS at your (em W)¹² willing¹³ MS sith (em W.)

A 100 wynters and 20
This shipp making taried have I,
If through amendment any mercye
Wolde fall unto mankinde.

Have done you men and women all ;
Hye you lest this water fall —
That¹ each beast were in his stall,
And into the ship broughte.
Of cleane beastes seaven shal be,
Of uncleane two — this God bade me ,
This floode is nye, well may we see,
Therefore tary you noughte

Then Noah shall goe into the arke with all his family, his wife except, and the arke must be boarded rounde about, and on the bordes all the beastes and fowles hereafter recaved must be painted, that this wordes may agree with the pictures ²

Shem. Syr, here are lyons, libardes in,
Horses, mares, oxen, and swyne,
Geates, calves, sheepe, and kine,
Here sitten thou may see

Ham Camels, asses, men may finde,
Bucke [and] doe, harte and hynde,
 And beastes of all manner kinde
 Here bene, as thinkes mee

Japheth. Take here cattles, dogges³ to,
Otter, fox, fulmart⁴ also,

1 (hasten) that

From B., the Latin (from H) runs Tunc Noe introibit archam, et familia sua dabit et recitabit omnia animalia depicta in cartis,

et, postquam unus quisque suam locutus est partem, ibit in arcam, uxore Noe excepta, et animalia depicta cum verbis concor-

dare debent, et sic incipiet primus filius

8 MS cattes and doggs,
W cattes, dogges

4 polecat

Hares, hopping, gaylie can goe —
Have cowle¹ here for to eate.

Noah's Wife. And here are beares, wolves, sett,
Apes, owles, marmoset,²

5 Weesells, squirrels, and firret³;
Here they eaten their meate.

Shem's Wife. Yet more beastes are in this howse:
Here cattis maken it full crowse⁴,
Here a ratten,⁵ here a mowse,

10 They stand nye togeder⁶
Ham's Wife. And here are fowles les and more:
Hearnes,⁷ cranes, and byttour,⁸
Swans, peacockes, and them before
Meate for this wedder

15 *Japheth's Wife.* Here are cockes, kites, crows,
Rookes, ravens — many rowes⁹ —
Cuckoes, curlewes — whoever knowes —
Eache one in his kinde,
And here are doves, diggs,¹⁰ drakes,
20 Redshankes runninge through the lakes;
And each fowle that ledden¹¹ makes
In this shipp men may finde.

Noah. Wife, come in! Why standes thou here?
Thou art ever froward — that darc I sweare!
25 Come in, on God's half¹²! Tyme yt were,
For feare lest that we drowne.

¹ cabbage

² monkey

³ ferret

⁴ lively

⁵ rat (cf. *Fr. raton*), MS rotten

⁶ MS -gether

⁷ herons

⁸ bittern

⁹ rows

¹⁰ ducks

¹¹ language (cf. Chaucer,
Squire's Tale 435,
478)

¹² for God's sake

Noah's Wife. Yea, sir, set up your sayle,
 And rowe forth with evill hayle,¹
 For, without[en]² any fayle,
 I will not out of this towne.

But³ I have my gossips everichon, 5
 One foote further I will not gone;
 They shall not drowne, by St. John,
 And⁴ I may save their lyfe!
 They loved me full well, by Christ!
 But³ thou wilt let them in thy chust,⁵ 10
 Rowe⁶ forth, Noe, whether⁷ thou list,
 And get thee a new wife

Noah. Sem, sonne, loe thy mother is wrow⁸;
 Forsooth such another I do not know.
Shem. Father, I shall fett her in, I trow, 15
 Without[en] any fayle. —
 Mother, my father after thee send,
 And bydds the into yonder ship wend;
 Loke up, and se the wynde,
 For we be readye to sayle. 20

Noah's Wife. Sonne, goe again to him, and say
 I will not come therein to-daye.
Noah Come in, wife, in 20 devills waye!
 Or els stand there without
Ham [Father], shall wee all fet her in? 25
Noah Yea, sonnes, in Christ's blessinge and myne!
 I would yow hyde⁹ yow betyme,
 For of this flood I doubte¹⁰

¹ success, H heale² em from W.³ unless⁴ if⁵ ark⁶ MS els rowe⁷ whither⁸ angry, MS. wraw (em.
from W)⁹ hied¹⁰ MS. am in doubt

[*Noah's Wife.*] The flood comes in full fleetinge fast,¹

On every side it spredeth full ferre²,

For feare of drowning I am agast,

Good gossip, let us draw neare,

5 And let us drinke or we depart,

For oftentymes we have done soe;

At³ a draught thou drinkes a quarte,

And so will I doe or I goe⁴

Japheth Mother, we praye you altogeder⁵ —

10 For we are here your owne childer —

Come into the ship, for feare of the wedder,

For his love that you boughte⁶!

Noah's Wife That will I not, for all your call,

But⁷ I have my gossopes all

15 *Shem* In feith, mother, yet you shall,

Whether you will or not⁸ [*She enters*]

Noah Welcome, wife, into this boate!

Noah's Wife And have thou that for thy note⁹!

[*Gives him a box on the ear*¹⁰

Noah. A, ha! Mary,¹¹ this is hote!

20 It is good to be still!

A, children, me thinkes my boate remeves,¹²

Our taryng here hugele me greves,

Over the lande the water spredes,

God doe as he will!

25 Ah, great God that art so good,

That¹³ worchis not thie will is wood!

Now all this world is on a flood,

As I see well in sighte

¹ This stanza is noted by Hohlfield as a later addition (*Lugha* 11 270)

² MS fare (em K)

³ MS for at (em K)

⁴ B, W add

Here is a pottell of Malmesy good and stronge,

It will rejoyce both hart and tong

Though Now thinke us never so long

Yet wee will drinke alyke

⁵ MS -gether

⁶ redeemed

⁷ unless

⁸ H adds Tunc abit

⁹ pams (*lit* benefit), MS mote, em from W

¹⁰ For the Latin (H) Et dat alapam vita

¹¹ marry

¹² moves

¹³ that which, he who

This window I will shut anon,
 And into my chamber will I gone,
 Till this water, so greate one,
 Be slaked¹ through thy mighte.

*Then shall NOVE shutte the wyndowe of they
 arcke, and for a littill space be silent, and
 afterwarde lokinge rounde aboute shall saye²*

Now 40 dayes are fullie gone, 5
 Send a raven I will anone,
 If oughtwhere³ earth, tree, or stone,
 Be drye in any place,
 And if this foule come not againe,
 It is a signe, soth to sayne, 10
 That drye it is on hill or playne,⁴
 And God hath done some grace.

*Then he shall send forth the raven, and, taking
 a dove in his hand, shall say⁵*

Ah, Lord! wherever this raven be,
 Somewhere is drye, well I see,
 But yet a dove — by my lewtye⁶! — 15
 After I will sende
 Thou wilt turne againe to me,
 For of all fowles that may flye,⁷
 'Thou art most meke and hend⁸

*Then he shall send forth the dove, and there shall
 be in the ark another dove, which shall be let*

¹ abated

² From W the Latin (H) runs *Tunc Noe claudet fenestram archæ, et per modicum spatium infra lectum cantent psalmum* 'Save mee, O God' [prob-

ably 1's 69], et aperiens fenestram et respiciens anywhere, perhaps for oughwhere, variant of owhere

⁴ Gen 8 6, 7

⁵ I translated from H *Tunc*

dimittet corvum, et, capiens columbam in manibus, dicat

⁶ loyalty, faith

⁷ Here a line seems to have dropped out

⁸ gentle, cf Gen 8. 8

*down from the mast by a cord into the hands
of NOAH; and afterward NOAH shall say*¹:

Ah, Lord! blessed be thou aye,

That hast me comfort² thus to-day

By this sight; I may well saye,

This flood beginnes to cease,

5 My sweete dove to me brought hase

A branch of olyve from some place,

This betokeneth God has done us grace,³

And is a signe of peace.⁴

Ah, Lord, honoured most thou be!

10 All earthe dryes, now I see,

But yet tyll thou comaunde me

Hence will I not hye.

All this water is awaye,

Therfore, as sone as I maye,

15 Sacryfice I shall doe, in faye,⁵

To thee devoutlye⁶

God. Noe, take thy wife anone,

And thy children every one,

Out of the shippe thou shalt gone,

20 And they all with thee,

Beastes, and all that can flie,

Out anone they shall hye,

On earth to grow and multeplye,

I will that yt soe be⁷

25 *Noah.* Lord, I thanke the through thy mighte;

Thy bidding shall be done in height,⁸

¹ Translated from H Tunc in manus Noe, et postea
emittet columbam, et erit dicat Noe
in nave alia columba, fe-
rens olivam in ore, quæ
demittetur [MS quam de-
mittet] ex malo per funem

² comforted
³ MS some grace

⁴ Gen 8 11

⁵ faith

⁶ Gen 8 20

⁷ MS be soe (em K),
cf. Gen 8. 16, 17

⁸ with speed

And, as fast as I may dighte,¹

I will doe the honoure,

And to thee offer sacrifice ;

Therfore comes,² in all wise,

For of these beastes that bene hise

5

Offer I will this stower.³

*Then, going out from the ark with his whole
family, he shall take with him his animals
and birds, and shall offer them and slay.⁴*

Lord God in majesty,

Thou⁵ such grace hast graunted me,

Where all was lorne, save⁶ to be ,

Therfore now I am bowne,

10

My wife, my childer, my meanye,⁷

With sacrifice to honoure thee ,

With beastes, fowles, as thou may see,

I offer here right sone⁸

God⁹ Noe, to me thou arte full able,⁹

15

And thy sacrifice acceptable ,

For I have fownd thee trew and stable,

On the now must I myn¹⁰

Warry¹¹ earth will I no more

For mans synne that greves me sore,

20

For, of¹² youth, man full yore

Has byn enclyned to syn[n]e.¹³

You shall now grow and multeply,

And earth, againe, you edefie¹⁴ ,

Each beast, and fowle that may flie,

25

Shall be afrayd of you ,

¹ make ready

² imp plur

³ store

⁴ Translated from H Tunc
egrediens archam cum
tota familia sua, accipiet

animalia sua et volucres,
et offeret ea et mactabit

⁵ MS that

⁶ safe

⁷ nom

⁸ Cf Gen 8 20

⁹ pleasing, compliant

¹⁰ be mindful

¹¹ curse

¹² from

¹³ Gen 8 21

¹⁴ build up

And fishe in sea, that may flete,¹
 Shall susteyne yow, I yow behete²;
 To eate of them yow ne lete³
 That cleane bene you may knowe.⁴

5 Thereas⁵ you have eaten before
 Grasse and rootes sith you were bore,
 Of cleane beastes now, les and more,
 I geve you leave to eate,
 Safe⁶ bloode and flesh, bothe in feare,⁷
 10 Of⁸ wrong-dead carren⁹ that is here,
 Eates not of that in no manere,
 For that aye you shall let[e].¹⁰

Manslaughter also you shall flee,
 For that is not pleasant to me,
 15 That¹¹ shedes bloode, he or shee,
 Oughtwhere amongst mankinne,¹²
 That blood foule sheede shal be,
 And venge[a]nce have, that men shall se;
 Therefore beware now all[e] yee,
 20 You fall not in that synne¹³

A forward¹⁴ now with thee¹⁵ I make,
 And all thy seede for thy sake,
 Of suche vengeance for to slake,
 For now I have my will
 25 Here I behet the a heaste¹⁶ ---
 That man [ne] woman, fowle ne beaste,
 With water, while the world shall l[e]ast[e],¹⁷
 I will [them] no more spill¹⁸

¹ float, swim, MS flytte² promise, MS -hite³ refrain, forbear, MS lett⁴ that you may know to be clean,

Gen. 9. 1-3, cf. 7. 2, 8. 20

⁵ whereas⁶ save⁷ together, Gen 9 4⁸ Miswritten for 'or'?⁹ carrion, see Lev 22 8¹⁰ leave¹¹ whoever¹² MS -kinde, em suggested by Pollard¹³ Gen 9 5, 6¹⁴ covenant¹⁵ MS thie¹⁶ promise¹⁷ em K¹⁸ destroy, Gen. 9 9-11

My bowe betwene you and me
 In the firmament shall bee,
 By verey token, that you may see
 That such vengeance shall cease,
 That man ne woman shall never moie 5
 Be wasted by water, as was ¹ before ²;
 But for syn, that greveth me sore,
 Therefore this vengeance wes.³

Where cloudes in the welkin bene,
 That ilke bowe shall be sene, 10
 In tokeninge that my wrath and tene
 Shall never thus ⁴ wroken be,
 The stringe is turned toward you,
 And toward me is bent the bowe,
 That such wedder shall never showe; 15
 And this behett I thee ⁵

My blessing now I geve the here,
 To thee, Noe, my servant dere,
 For vengeance shall no more appeare,
 And now farewell, my darling deere.⁶ 20

THE BROME PLAY OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

Lucy Toulmin Smith, the first editor (in 1884) thus characterizes the play, in comparison with the five others on the same subject (*Anglia* 7 332) 'On the whole, the Brome version now printed is superior to those above described in the touches of child-nature, and in the play of feeling skilfully shown — the dear coquetting between the love of his child and the committal of the deed by the obedient but agonized father — The child begging his father not to kill him, and his fear of the sword even after all danger is over, — are touched in with a life not found elsewhere — The thought of the mother — breaks out in the most natural and affecting manner, — and the joyful rebound of emotion after the painful strain between duty and affection, expressing itself in the kisses of Abraham and the apostrophes of Isaac to the "gentle sheep,"

¹ MS is⁴ MS this⁵ W. adds² Gen 9 12-15⁵ Gen. 9. 16*Finis. Deo gracias! per me, George Ballin, 1592.
Come, Lords Jesu, come quicklye*³ MS. was (em. K.)

must have warmly appealed to the hearts of the audience. Finally, the lesson of faith for "learned and lewed" and "the wisest of us all" is taught by the "Doctor" in the simplest manner.'

Gayley thinks this the third miracle-play in order of time, the first being *The Harrowing of Hell* (ca. 1250), and the second, *Jacob and Esau* (ca. 1280). He says (*Plays of our Forefathers*, p. 126): 'The Brome play of *Abraham and Isaac*, which comes next in order of production, is undoubtedly the basis of *The Sacrifice of Isaac* in the Chester cycle, and probably in an earlier version dates from the beginning of the fourteenth century' A particularly close parallel is that between 506 3-6 and the Chester play 289-92 (ed. Deimling, p. 76):

If I have trespassed in any degree,
With a yard you maye beate me,
Put up your sword, if your will be,
For I am but a childe.

The play has been three times printed — by Miss Smith as above (A), by Lady Kerrison and Miss Smith in 1886 (B), and by Manly in 1897 (M). Pollard has reproduced lines 316-435 (*English Miracle Plays*, Appendix IV), following Miss Smith

The unique manuscript (1470-1480) takes its name from the village of Brome, in Suffolk, two miles north of Eye. Brome was from the fourteenth century the seat of the Cornwallis family, to which belonged the Lord Cornwallis who was conspicuous in the American Revolution

The two editions directly from the manuscript differ here and there in their readings, of the readings I have rejected I have taken no account. Important emendations have been made by Miss Smith, Holthausen (*Anglia* 13 (1891), 361-2), and Manly (*Spec. Pre-Shak. Drama* 1 41-57). I have been tempted to further efforts at restoration by the remark of Miss Smith (*Anglia* 7 322-3) 'Judging by the analogy of other plays of the kind, it is probable that this also was originally composed with much care for its poetical form, but has become partially corrupt through oral repetition and the errors of copyists' All the emendations not attributed to S, H, or M are by myself, some are perhaps rather daring, but it is easy to revert to the manuscript-readings. Stage-directions (following a bracket) have been supplied partly from S and M; two or three are found in the manuscript, in Latin

Miss Smith remarks (*Anglia* 7 322) 'With regard to the versification, the reader will observe that it is irregular in several places the lines run in clear stanzas of five lines, riming abaab, in others it appears to be in stanzas of eight lines, riming alternately, with a frequent short line or tag following. There are also many lines which seem to be formless as regards metre, rime, or stanza.' Accordingly the indications of stanzaic form are often somewhat obscured in this play

I have modernized in the stage-directions the names of certain characters, for the sake of consistency — *Deus* to *God*, *The Angell* to *Angel*, *Ysaac* to *Isaac*.

SCENE I

*A field near ABRAHAM'S home in Beersheba**Enter ABRAHAM and ISAAC**Abraham.* Fader of hevyn omnipotent,

With all my hart to the I call ;

Thow hast goffe ¹ me both lond and rent,²

And my lyvelod thow hast me sent ,

I thanke the evermore ³ of all.

5

Fyrst off ⁴ the erth pou madyst Adam,

And Eve also to be hys wyffe ,

All other creatures of them too ⁵ cam ;And now thow hast grant ⁶ to me, Abram,⁷

Her in thys lond to lede my lyffe

10

In my age pou hast grantyd me thys,

'That thys xowng chyld with me shall wone ⁸ ;

I love nothyng so myche, iwyse,

Except pi ⁹ selffe, der Fader of blysse,

As Ysaac her, my owyne swete sone.

15

I have dyverse chyldryn moo,

The wych I love not halffe so wyll ¹⁰ ,Thys fayer swet chyld he chereys ¹¹ me soo

In every place wer that I goo,

That noo dessece ¹² her may I fell ¹³

20

And therfor, Fadyr of hevyn, I prey ¹⁴

For hys helth, and also for hys grace ;

¹ given² income³ MS. heyly euermore⁴ of⁵ two⁶ granted⁷ MS Abraham⁸ dwell⁹ MS thin owyne , see
next line¹⁰ well ; pronounced wail¹¹ MS scherys¹² discomfort¹³ feel¹⁴ MS the prey

Now, Lord, kepe hym both nyght¹ and day,
That never dessese nor noo [af]fray²
Cume to my chyld in noo place

5 Now cum on, Ysaac, my owyne swet chyld;
Goo we hom, and take owr rest

Isaac. Abraham, myne owyne fader so myld
To folowe zow I am full prest,³
Bothe erly and late

10 *Abraham* Cume on, swete chyld, I love the best
Of all the chydryn that I⁴ begat. [*Exe. ent.*]

SCENE II

Heaven. Enter GOD and an ANGEL

God Myn angell, fast hey⁵ the thy wey,
And to⁶ medyll eith anon pou goo,
Abra[ha]ms hart now wyll I asay,
Wether that he be stedfast or noo.

15 Sey I commaw[n]dyd hym for to take
Ysaac, hys sonne,⁷ pat he love[s] so wyh,
And with hys blood sacryfyce he make,
Ony⁸ off my freynchepe [yf] he wyll fell⁹

20 Schow hym the wey onto¹⁰ the hylle
Wer that hys sacryffyce schall be.
I schall asay now hys good wyll,
Whether he lovyth¹¹ better hys chyld or me

All men schall take exampyll be hym
My commawmentes how they schall kepe [*Exeunt.*]

¹ MS. nygth² fright, terror³ ready, MS glad (em. H)⁴ MS ever I⁵ haste⁶ unto, MS on to⁷ MS gowng sonne, cf.

501 24

⁸ MS yffe ony⁹ MS fell¹⁰ unto¹¹ MS. lovyd (em M)

SCENE III

A field near ABRAHAM'S home. Enter ABRAHAM

Abraham Now, Fader of hevyn, þat formyd all thyng,
 My preyeris I make to the aȝeyn,
 For thys day my tender offiying
 Here must I ȝeve to the, certeyn

A! Lord God, allmyty kyng, 5
 Wat maner best¹ woll make þe most fayn?
 Yff I had therof very knyng,²
 Yt schuld be don with all my mayne³
 Full sone by me⁴
 To don thy plesyng on an hyll, 10
 Verely yt ys my wyll,
 Dere fader, God in Trinite.

Enter ANGEL

Angel Abraham, Abraham, wyll þou rest!
 Owr Lord comandyth þe for to take
 Ysaac, thy ȝowng sone, that thou lovyst best, 15
 And with hys blod sacryfyce þat thou make
 Into the lond of v[i]syon⁵ thow goo,
 And offer thy chyld onto thy Lord,
 I schall the lede and schow allsoo
 Unto Goddes hest, Abraham, acord, 20
 And folow me upon thys grene

Abraham Wollecom⁶ to me be my Lordes sond,⁷
 And hys hest I wyll not withstond,
 Ȝyt Ysaac, my ȝowng sonne in lond,
 A full dere chyld to me hase⁸ bene⁹ 25

¹ beast² knowing, knowledge³ might, strength (cf 'might
and main')⁴ MS anone (em H)⁵ Moriah (Gen 22 2), em. H.⁶ welcome⁷ messenger⁸ MS hauc⁹ MS byn

I had lever, yf God had be plesyd,
 For to a ¹ forbore ² all þe good þat I have,
 Than Ysaac my sone schuld a be desessyd,³
 So God in hevyn my sowll mot save!

5 I lovyd never thyng soo mych in erde,⁴
 And now I must the chyld goo kyll.
 A, Lord ⁵! my conseons ys stron[g]ly sterd,⁶
 And gyt, my dere Lord, I am sore ⁷ aferd
 To groche ⁸ ony thyng ⁹ agens thy wyll.

10 I love my chyld as [I love] my lyffe,
 But gyt I love my God myche more,
 For thow my hart woold make ony stryffe,
 Ȝyt wyll I not spare for chyld nor wyffe,
 But don after my Lordes lore.¹⁰

15 Thow I love my sonne never so wyll,
 Ȝyt smythe of ¹¹ hys hed sone I schall.
 A, Fader of hevyn! to the I knell,
 An hard dethe my son schall fell,
 For to honor the, [my] Lord, withall.

20 *Angel.* Abraham! Abraham! thys ys wyll seyde,
 And all thys comamentes loke þou obay ¹²;
 But in thy hart be nothyng dysmayd.¹³

Abraham. Nay, nay, I ¹⁴ hold me wyll apayd ¹⁵
 To plesse ¹⁶ my God to the best I ¹⁷ may,¹⁸

¹ have² done without³ disturbed, put to discomfort, molested⁴ MS. erthe (em M, following S's suggestion)⁵ MS Lord God⁶ sturred, MS steryd⁷ MS. sere (em H)⁸ MS gowr⁹ make any complaint¹⁰ instruction¹¹ smite off¹² MS loke þat þou kepe
(em suggested by M.)¹³ MS. dismasyd, em. M.¹⁴ MS forsoth I¹⁵ MS plesyd (M. suggests em)¹⁶ MS pelsse¹⁷ MS þat I¹⁸ MS haue (M. suggests em.)

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For thow my hart be hevely sett
 To see the blood of my owyn dere sone,
 Ȝyt for all thys I wyll not lett,¹ [Exit ANGEL.
 But Ysaac, my son, I wyll goo fett,
 And cum asse fast as ever we conne.² [Exit. 5

SCENE IV

ABRAHAM'S home. Enter ABRAHAM and ISAAC

[Abraham.] Now, Ysaac, my owyne son [so] dere,
 Wer art thow, chyld? Speke to me.

Isaac. My fayer swet fader, I am here,
 And make my preyrys to þe Trenyte

Abraham. Rysse up, my chyld, and fast cum heder, 10
 My gentyll barn³ þat art so wysse,
 For we to,⁴ chyld, must goo togeder,
 And onto my Lord make sacryffyce.

Isaac. I am full redy, my fader, loo!
 Evyn⁵ at ȝowr handes I stand ryght⁶ here, 15
 And watsoever ȝe byd me doo,
 Yt schall be don with glad cher,
 Full wyll and fyne.

Abraham. A! Ysaac, my owyn son soo dere,
 Godes blyssyng I ȝyffe the, and myn. 20

Hold thys fagot upon þi bake,
 And her myselffe fyer schall bryng.

Isaac. Fader, all thys her wyll I packe;
 I am full fayn to do ȝowr bedyng.

¹ desist
² MS. can

³ child
⁴ two

⁵ MS. ȝevyn
⁶ MS. rygth

Abraham. A, Lord of hevyn! my handes I wryng,
Thys chyldes wordes all towond¹ my harte.

Now, Ysaac son, goo we owr wey
Onto gon mownte, with all owr mayn.

5 *Isaac* Go we, my dere fader, as fast as I may;
To folow zow I am full fayn,
Allthow I be slendyr.

Abraham A, Lord! my hart brekyth on tweyn,²
Thys chyldes wordes, they be so tender.

SCENE V

Mount Moriah Enter ABRAHAM and ISAAC

10 A, Ysaac, son! anon ley yt down,
No lenger upon þi backe yt hold,³
For I must make redy bo[u]n⁴
To honowr my Lord God as I schold.⁵

15 *Isaac* Loo, my dere fader, wer yt ys!
To cher⁶ zow allwey I draw me ner:
But, fader, I mervell soie of thys,
Wy þat ze make thys hevvy chere;

And also evermore⁷ dred I
Wer ys zowr best⁸ þat ze schuld kyll,⁹
20 Both fyer and wood we have redy,
But queke⁹ best have we non on þis hyll;

A qwyke best, I wot wyll, must be ded,
Zowr sacryfyce for to make¹⁰

¹ wound² MS. tewyn (em S.)³ MS. bere (em M, following
Kittredge's suggestion)⁴ prepared⁵ MS. schuld⁶ cheer⁷ MS. fader euermore⁸ MS. queke best⁹ living¹⁰ MS. transposes this line
and the next (em. S.)

Abraham Dred the nowyht,¹ my chyld, I the red²,
Owr Lord wyll send me onto thys sted³
Summ maner a best for to take,
Throw hys swet sond.

Isaac Ȝa, fader, but my hart begynnyth to quake 5
To se þat scharpe sword in ȝowr hond.

Wy bere ȝe ȝowr sword drawyn soo?
Off ȝowre contaunauns⁴ I have mych wonder.

Abraham A, Fader of hevyn, so⁵ I am woo!
Thys chyld her brekys my harte onsonder⁶ 10

Isaac Tell me, my dere fader, or that ȝe ses,⁷
Ber ȝe ȝowr sword draw[yn]⁸ for me?

Abraham A, Ysaac, swet son, pes!⁹ [a.] pes!
For iwys thow breke[s] my hute on thre

Isaac Now trewly, sumwat, fader, ȝe thynke,⁹ 15
That ȝe morne¹⁰ thus [a.] more and more.

Abraham A! Lord of hevyn, thy grace let synke,
For my hart was never halfte so sore

Isaac I preye ȝow, fader, let¹¹ me þat wyt,¹²
Wyther schall I have ony harme or noo 20

Abraham Iwys, swet son, I may not tell the ȝyt,
My hart ys now soo full of woo

Isaac Dere fader, I prey,¹³ hyd yt¹⁴ not fro me,
But sum of ȝowr thowt ȝe¹⁵ tell me [anone].

¹ not at all, MS -wyth

² counsel

³ place

⁴ countenance, MS conwnauns

⁵ MS. os (em. S.)

⁶ MS on too (em. H)

⁷ case

⁸ em. M

⁹ ponder upon

¹⁰ mourn

¹¹ MS þat ȝe wyll let

¹² know

¹³ MS preye ȝow

¹⁴ MS hydygth (em. M.)

¹⁵ MS þat ȝe

Abraham. A, Ysaac, Ysaac, I must kyll the!

Isaac. Kyll me, fader? alassee, wat have I done?

Yff I have trespassyd agens zow owt,
 Ze may make me with a zard¹ full myld,
 5 And with zowr scharp sword kyll me nowt,²
 For iwys, fader, I am but a chyld.

Abraham. I am full sory³ thy blood for to spyll,
 But truly, my chyld, I may not chese.⁴

Isaac. Now I wold⁵ my moder were on⁶ pis⁷ hyll!
 10 Sche woold knele for me on both hyr knees

To save my lyffe.
 And sythyn⁸ my moder ys not here,
 I prey zow, fader, chonge⁹ zowr chere,
 And kyll me not with zowyr knyffe.

Abraham Forsothe, son, but-zyf I the kyll,
 15 I schuld greve God ryght¹⁰ sore, I drede;
 Yt ys hys commawment and also hys wyll
 That I schuld do thys same dede.

He commawdyd me, son, for serteyn,
 20 To make my sacryfyce with thy blood.

Isaac. And ys yt Goddes wyll þat I schuld be slayn?

Abraham. Ja, truly, Ysaac, my son soo good,
 And therfor my handes I wryng.

¹ rod, MS with a zard ze
 may make me

² MS nogth

³ MS. sory son

⁴ choose

⁵ MS wold to God

⁶ MS. her on

⁷ A ys, B yis (em M.)

⁸ MS syþyn þat

⁹ change, MS schonge

¹⁰ MS. rygth

Isaac. Now, fader, agens my Lordes decre¹

I wyll never groche, lowd nor styll ;
He myght² a³ sent me a better destyne⁴
Yf yt had a be hys wyll.⁵

Abraham. Forsothe, son, but-yf I do⁶ pis dede, 5
Grevosly dysplessyd owr Lord wyll be.

Isaac. Nay, nay, fader, God forbede
That ever ge schuld greve hym for me.

Ge have other chyldryn, on or too,
The wyche ge schuld love wyll be kynd.⁷ 10
I prey zow, fader, make ge no woo,
For, be I onys ded and fro zow goo,
I schall be sone owt of zowr mynd.

Therfor doo owr Lordes byddying,
And wan I am ded, than prey for me ; 15
But, good fader, tell ge my moder nothyng,
Say pat I am dwellyng⁸ in another cuntre⁹

Abraham. A, Ysaac,¹⁰ blessyd mot thow be !

My hart begynnyth¹¹ stron[g]ly to rysse,
To see the blood off thy blyssyd body. 20

Isaac. Fadyr, syn yt may be noo other wysse,¹²
Let yt passe over as wyll as I ,

But, or¹³ I goo onto my deth,
I prey zow blysse me with zowr hond.¹⁴

¹ MS. wyll (em. suggested by M.)

² MS mygth

³ have

⁴ MS desteny

⁵ MS plecer (em. suggested by M)

⁶ MS ded

⁷ by nature, naturally

⁸ MS dewllyng (em S)

⁹ MS in another cuntre

dewylling

¹⁰ MS Ysaac, Ysaac

¹¹ MS begynnyd (em M)

¹² wise

¹³ before. MS fader or

¹⁴ MS. hand

Abraham. Now, Ysaac, [sone,] with all my breth,
 My blyssyng I geve þe upon thys lond,
 And Godes also therto, iwys
 Ysaac, Ysaac, sone, up thow stond,
 5 Thy fayer swete mowthe þat I may kys.

Isaac Now farwyll,¹ my owyne fader so fyn,
 And grete wyll my moder in erde²
 But I prey ȝow, fader, to hyd my eyne,
 That I se not þe stroke of ȝowr scharpe swerd,³

10 That my fleysse schall defyle

Abraham. Sone, thy wordes make me to wepe full sore
 Now, my dere son Ysaac, speke no more

Isaac A, my owyne dere fader, werefore?
 We schall speke togedyr her but a wylle,⁴

15 And sythyn that I must nedys⁵ be ded,
 Ȝyt, my dere fader, to ȝow I prey,
 Smythe but fewe⁶ strokes at my hed,
 And make an end as sone as ȝe may,
 And tery not to longe

20 *Abraham.* Thy meke wordes, chyld, make me afraȝ⁷,
 So 'Welawey!' may be my songe,

Excepe al only Godes wyll
 A, Ysaac, my owyn swete chyld,
 Ȝyt kysse me aȝen upon thys hyll⁸

25 In all thys war[ld]⁸ ys non soo myld

Isaac. Now truly, fader, all thys teryng
 Yt doth my hart but harme,
 I prey ȝow, fader, make an enddyng

¹ farewell MS for-

² MS erthe (em following
 S suggestion)

³ MS sword (em M)

⁴ while, short time

⁵ needs, MS nedesse

⁶ MS fewe (em M)

⁷ afraid MS afrayed
 (em M)

⁸ em S

Abraham. Cume up, swet son, onto my arme;

I must bynd thy handes too,
Althow thou be never soo myld.

Isaac. A, mercy, fader! wy schuld ze do soo?

Abraham That thou schuldyst not let,¹ my chyld. 5

Isaac. Nay, wysse, fader, I wyll not let zow,
Do on for me zowr wyll,
And on the purpos that ze have set zow
For Godes love kepe yt forthe styll.

I am full sory thys day to dey,² 10
But zyt I kepe³ not my God to greve;
Do on zowr lyst⁴ for me hard[e]ly,
My fayer swete fader, I zeffe zow leve.

But, fader, I prey zow evermore,
Tell ze my moder never a⁵ dell⁶, 15
Yffe sche wist⁷ yt, sche wold wepe full sore,
For wysse, fader, sche lovyt[h] me wyll⁸;

Goddess blyssyng have mot sche⁹!
Now forwyll, my moder so swete,
We too be lcke¹⁰ no mor to mete 20

Abraham. A, Ysaac, son¹¹! pou makyst me gret,¹²
And with thy wordes¹³ dystempurst¹⁴ me.

Isaac. Swete¹⁵ fader, I am sory zow to greve¹⁶,
I cry zow mercy of that I have donne,
And of all trespasse þat ever I ded meve¹⁷, 25
Now, fader,¹⁸ forzyffe me þat I have donne
God of hevyn be with me!

¹ hinder

² dyc

³ wish, desire

⁴ pleasure

⁵ MS. no

⁶ part of it

⁷ knew MS. wost

⁸ MS. full wyll

⁹ MS. mot sche have (em. II)

¹⁰ are hickly

¹¹ MS. Ysaac, Ysaac

¹² lament, weep, MS. to gret

¹³ MS. wordes thou

¹⁴ troublest

¹⁵ MS. wysse swete

¹⁶ MS. to greve zow

¹⁷ cause, MS. meve zow

¹⁸ MS. dere fader

Abraham. A, dere chyld, lefe of ¹ thy monys!
In all thy lyffe thow grevyd me never onys;
Now blyssyd be thow, body and bonys ²!

Thow hast be to me chyld full good.
5 But iwysse, ³ thow I morne never so fast,
Ȝyt must I nedes here at the last
In thys place sched ⁴ thy blood.

Therfor, my son, ⁵ here schall þou lye.
Onto my warke I must me stede ⁶;
10 I ⁷ had as leve myselffe to dey,
Yff God wyll be plecyd wyth my dede,

And myn owyn body for to offer.

Isaac. A, mercy, fader, morne ȝe no more,
Ȝowr wepyng make[th] ⁸ my hart [as] sore
15 As my owyn deth that I schall suffer.

Ȝowr kerche[f] ⁹ abowt my eyn ȝe wynd.

Abraham So I schall, my swettest chyld in erde. ¹⁰

Isaac Now ȝyt, good fader, have thys in mynd,
And smyth me not oftyn with ȝowr scharp swerd, ¹¹
20 But hastely that yt be sped ¹²

*Here ABRAHAM leyd a cloth on YSAACES face
thus seying*

Abraham Now farewyll, ¹³ my chyld, so full of grace.

Isaac A, fader, fader, torne downward ¹⁴ my face,
For of ȝowr ¹⁵ swerd ¹⁶ I am ever adred.

¹ leave off, cease

² MS. bonys, That ever thow
were bred and born

³ MS. iwysse child

⁴ MS. sched all

⁵ MS. dere son

⁶ set myself

⁷ MS. iwysse I

⁸ em. I

⁹ MS. kerche fader

¹⁰ MS. crihe (em. M, following
S's suggestion)

¹¹ MS. sword (em. M.)

¹² done quickly

¹³ MS. fore-

¹⁴ MS. downward

¹⁵ MS. ȝowr scharpe

¹⁶ MS. sword

Abraham. To don thys dede I am full sory,
But, Lord, thyn hest I wyll not withstond.

Isaac. A, Fader of hevyn, to the I crye,
Lord, reseve me into thy hond.¹

Abraham. Loo, now ys cum the tyme² certeyn 5
That my swerd³ in hys necke schall bite⁴

A, Lord, my hart reysyth therageyn,⁵
I may not fynd⁶ in my harte to smygth —

My hart wyll not now thertoo.

Ȝyt fayn I woold warke my Lordes wyll, 10
But thys ȝowng innosent lygth so styll,
I may not fynd⁶ in my hart hym to kyll.
O, Fader of hevyn, what schall I doo?

Isaac. A, mercy, fader, wy⁷ tery ȝe so,
And let me ley thus longe on þis hethe? 15
Now I wold to God þe stroke were doo⁸!
I prey ȝow,⁹ schorte me of¹⁰ my woo,
And let me not loke thus after¹¹ my deth¹²

Abraham. Now, hart, wy wilt thow not¹³ breke on thre?
Ȝyt schall þ[o]u not make me to God¹⁴ onmyld¹⁵ 20
I wyll no lenger let¹⁶ for the,
For that my God agrevyd wold be,
Now hood¹⁷ the¹⁸ stroke. my owyn dere chylde

*Her ABRAHAM drew hys stroke and þe ANGELL toke
the swerd³ in hys hond soddenly*

Angel. I am an angell, thow mayist se¹⁹ blythe, 25
That fro hevyn to the ys sent²⁰

¹ MS hand

² MS. the tyme cum

³ MS. sword

⁴ MS synke (em H.)

⁵ against this

⁶ MS fyndygh, M. fynd yt

⁷ why

⁸ done

⁹ MS fader I prey ȝow hartely

¹⁰ shorten

¹¹ wait thus for

¹² MS degh

¹³ MS woldyst not thou

¹⁴ MS my God

¹⁵ ungracious (*lit* unmild)

¹⁶ tarry

¹⁷ receive

¹⁸ MS tha

¹⁹ see

²⁰ MS. senth

Owr Lord thanke[th] the an c sythe¹
 For the kepyng of hys commaw[nde]ment.

He knowyt[h] þi wyll and also thy harte,
 That thou dredyst hym above all thyng;
 5 And sum of thy hevynes for to departe,²
 A fayr ram gynder³ I gan brynge;

He standyth teyed, loo, among þe breres.
 Now, Abraham, amend thy mood,
 For Ysaac, thy zowng son þat her ys,
 10 Thys day [thow] schall not sched hys blood;

Goo, make thy sacryfece with zon rame.
 Now farwyll,⁴ blyssyd Abraham,
 For onto hevyn I goo now hom,

The way ys full gayn⁵ [to pace⁶],
 15 Take up thy son soo free. [Exit

Abraham. A, Lord, I thanke the of thy gret grace!
 Now am I teyed⁷ on dyvers wysse,
 Arysse up, Ysaac, my sunne,⁸ arysse,
 Arysse,⁹ swete chyld, and cum to me

20 *Isaac.* A, mercy, fader! wy smygth ze nowt¹⁰ ?
 A, smygth on, fader, onys with zowr knyffe.

Abraham. Pesse, my swet son,¹¹ and take no thowt,
 For owr Lord of hevyn hath grant þi lyffe

Be hys angell now, that þou schalt not dey¹²

15 *Isaac.* A, fader, full glad than wer I,

¹ a hundred times

² banish

³ yonder

⁴ MS. for

⁵ near, straight

⁶ pass, em ll.

⁷ bound (to God), MS yeyed

⁸ MS dere sunne

⁹ MS arysse up

¹⁰ MS not yyt (em H)

¹¹ MS sir (em M)

¹² MS dev bis day sunne truly

Iwys, fader, I sey, iwys,
Yf thys tale wer trew !

Abraham. An hundryd tymys, my son fayer of hew,
For joy þi mowth now wyll I kys.

Isaac. A, my dere fader, Abraham, 5
Wyll not God be wroth þat we do thus ?

Abraham. Noo, noo ! swet ¹ son, for gyn ² same rame
He hath sent hether down to us.³

Gyn best schall dey here in þi sted,
In the worpschup ⁴ of owr Lord alon, 10
Goo, fet ⁵ hym hethyr, my chyld, inded

Isaac I ⁶ wyll goo hent ⁷ hym be the hed,
And bryng gyn best with me anon

[*Isaac catches the ram*

A, scheppe, scheppe, blyssyd mot þou be
That ever thou were sent down heder ! 15
Thow schall thys day dey for me,
In the worchup of the holy Trynyte.
Now cum fast, and goo we togeder

To my fader in hy ⁸,
Thow þou be never so jentyll and good, 20
Gyt had I lever thow schedyst þi blood,
Iwysse, scheppe, than I

Loo ! fader, I have browt here full smerte ⁹
Thys jentyll scheppe, and to ¹⁰ xow I gyffe,

¹ MS swyt

² yon

³ MS

Noo, noo ! harly my swyt son,
For gyn same rame he hath us sent

Hether down to us,

em suggested by M

⁴ MS worpschup (em S.)

⁵ fetch

⁶ MS Fader I

⁷ seize

⁸ inhaste, MS on heven

(em sugz by M)

⁹ promptly

¹⁰ MS hvm to

Lord¹ God, I thanke þe with all my hart,
For I am glad that I schall leve,²

And kys onys my dere moder.

5 *Abraham.* Now be ryght³ myry, my [owyne] swete chylde,
For thys qwyke best þat ys so myld
Here I present⁴ before all other.

Isaac. And I wyll fast begynne to blowe;
Thys fyer schall brene⁵ a full good sped.⁶
But, fader, wyll⁷ I stowppe downe lowe,
10 *Ȝe* wyll not kyll me with ȝowr swerd,⁸ I trowe?

Abraham. Noo, har[de]ly,⁹ swet son, have no dred,
My mornyng¹⁰ ys past.

Isaac. I¹¹ wouold þat swerd⁸ wer in a gled,¹²
For¹³ yt make[th]¹⁴ me full yll agast.

*Here ABRAHAM mad hys offryng, knelyng, and
seyyng thus:*

15 *Abraham.* Now, Lord God of heven in Trynyte,
Allmyty God omnipotent,
My offeryng I make in the worchope of the,
And with thys qweke best I the present,
Lord, reseveye thow myn intent,
20 As [thow]¹⁵ art God, and grownd¹⁶ of owr grace.

[God speaks from heaven.]

God. Abraham, Abraham, wyll¹⁷ mot thow sped,¹⁸
And Ysaac, þi ȝowng son the by!

¹ MS but Lord

² live

³ MS. rygth

⁴ MS schall present

⁵ burn

⁶ speed, MS sped

⁷ while

⁸ MS sword

⁹ certainly, em M.

¹⁰ mourning

¹¹ MS ȝa but I

¹² fire (?) MS glad (em. M.)

¹³ MS for wys fader

¹⁴ em suggested by H.

¹⁵ em M.

¹⁶ foundation, source

¹⁷ well

¹⁸ prosper

Truly, Abraham, for thys dede
I schall multiplye zowr bother¹ sede
As thyke as sterres be in the skye,

Bothe more and lesse ;
And as thyke as gravell in the see, 5
So² multiplyed zowr sede schall be ;
Thys grant I zow for zowr goodnesse.

Off zow schall cume frowte gret [won],³
And ever be in blysse withowt[en] end⁴
For ze drede me as God alon, 10
And kepe my commawmentes everych⁵ on,
My blyssyng I zeffe, wersoever ze wend.⁶

Abraham. Loo, Ysaac, my son, how thynke ze
Be thys warke that we have wrought⁷ ?
Full glad and blythe we may be, 15
Agens Gods wyll⁸ þat we grucched nott
Upon thys fayer heth⁹

Isaac. A, fader, I thanke owr Lord every dell
That my wyt servyd me so wyll
For to drede God more than my deth¹⁰ 20

Abraham Why! dereworþy¹¹ son, wer thou adred¹² ?
Hardely,¹³ chyld, tell me thy lore¹⁴

Isaac. Za, be my feyth, fader, now have¹⁴ I red,¹⁶
I wos never soo afrayd before

As I have byn at gyn hyll. 25
But, be my feyth, fader, I swere
I wyll nevermore cume there
But yt be agens my wyll.

¹ of you both, MS. zowres botheres
² MS so thyke
³ plenty, em. M.
⁴ MS. Synd
⁵ MS. everych
⁶ MS goo (em H)
⁷ MS wrogt
⁸ MS. þe wyll of God
⁹ MS. heth
¹⁰ MS. detth

¹¹ precious, MS. -wordy
¹² boldly, unhesitatingly
¹³ story, what is in thy mind
¹⁴ MS hath (em M)
¹⁵ my senses

Abraham. Cum¹ on with me, my owyn swet sonn,
And homward fast now let us goon.

Isaac. Be² my feyth, fader, therto I on,³
I had never so good wyll hom to gon,⁴
5 And to speke with my dere moder.

Abraham. A! Lord of hevyn, I thanke the,
For now may I led hom with me
Ysaac, my gownge sonn so fre,
10 The gentyllest chyld above all other⁵ —
Thys may I wyll avo[w to th]ee⁶

Now goo we forthe, my blyssyd sonn.

Isaac. I grant, fader, and let us gon,
For, be my trowthe, wer I at home,
I wold never gon owt under that forme.⁷

15 I pray God geffe us grace evermo,
And all tho⁸ that we be holdyng⁹ to. [Exeunt

EPILOGUE

Enter DOCTOR

Doctor. Lo, sovereyns and sorys,¹⁰ now have we schewyd¹¹
Thys solom story¹² to grete and smale,
It ys good lernyng to lernd and lewyd¹⁸
20 And þe wysest of us all,

Wythowtyn ony berryng¹⁴
For thys story schewyt[h]¹⁵ gowe [her]¹⁶

¹ MS. ga cum² by³ consent, MS. grant⁴ MS. to gon hom⁵ MS. erthe (em S)⁶ MS. avoece⁷ (?)⁸ those, MS. thow⁹ beholding¹⁰ sirs¹¹ MS. schowyd¹² MS. story hath schowyd (em. H)¹³ ignorant¹⁴ outcry, clamorous protest
(see *NED* under *bere*, sb)¹⁵ showeth, MS. schoyt¹⁶ em. M

How we schuld kepe, to owr po[we]re,¹
 Goddes commawments without grochyng.

Trowe ge, sores, and ² God sent an angell [to gow],
 And commawndyd gow gowr chyld to slayn,³
 Be gowr trowthe, ys ther any of gow 5
 That eyther wold groche or stryve therageyn ⁴?

How thyngke ge now, sorys, therby?
 I trow ther be ij, or iij, or moo.
 And thys ⁵ women that wepe sorowfully
 Whan that hyr chyldryn dey them froo ⁶ — 10

As nater woll ⁷ and kynd —
 Yt ys but folly, I may well avow,⁸
 To groche aȝens God or to greve gow,
 For ge schall never se hym myschevyd,⁹ I ¹⁰ know,
 Be lond nor watyr, have thys in mynd, 15

And groche not aȝens owr Lord God
 In welth or woo, wether ¹¹ that he gow send,
 Thow ge be never so hard bestad,
 For when he wyll, he may yt amend,

Hys comawmentes yf ¹² ge kepe with good hart, 20
 As thys story hath now schewyd ¹³ gow befor[n]e,¹⁴
 And feytheffully serve hym qwyll ¹⁵ ge be quart,¹⁶
 That ge may plece God bothe evyn and morne.

Now Jesu, that weryd ¹⁷ the crown of thorne,
 Bryng us all to hevyn blysse! 25
 Finis.

¹ em M

² if

³ MS to smyth of gowr
 childe hed (em H)

⁴ against this

⁵ these

⁶ die and leave them

⁷ MS woll woll (em S)

⁸ MS awooe

⁹ afflicted

¹⁰ MS wyll I

¹¹ whichever

¹² MS treuly yf

¹³ MS, schowyd

¹⁴ em H

¹⁵ while

¹⁶ healthy, sound

¹⁷ MS, weryt

THE YORK NATIVITY PLAY

The Earl of Ashburnham's manuscript (1430-1440), now MS. Brit. Mus. Add 35,290, was edited by Lucy Toulmin Smith as *York Plays* (Oxford, 1885). Emendations are by Miss Smith (S); Holthausen (H), in Herrig's *Archiv* 85 413, Kolbing (K), in *Engl Stud.* 20. 187. The stage-directions are modern. The form of the seven-line stanza should be noted. abab⁴c⁵b⁴c⁵.

SCENE I

Bethlehem. A stable. Enter JOSEPH and MARY

- Jos.* Allweldand¹ God in Trinite,
 I praye þe, Lord, for thy grete myght,
 Unto thy symple servand see,
 Here in þis place wher we are pight,²
 5 Oureself allone;
 Lord, graunte us gode herberow³ þis nyght,
 Within þis wone.⁴
- For we haue sought both uppe and doune,
 Thurgh diverse stretis in þis cite,
 10 So mekill pepull is comen to towne,
 þat we can nowhare herbered be,
 Slike prees⁵ it is⁶,
 Forsuthe I can no socoure see,
 But belde⁷ with bestes⁸
- 15 And yf we here all nyght abide,
 We shall be stormed in þis steede⁹;
 þe walles are doune on ilke a side,
 þe ruffe is rayned¹⁰ aboven oure hede,
 Als have I roo.¹¹
- 20 Say, Marie, doughtir, what is thy rede¹²?
 How sall we doo?

¹ almighty
² pitched, settled
³ harbor, shelter
⁴ place, dwelling
⁵ such a crowd

⁶ MS þer is slike prees
⁷ lodge
⁸ MS belde us with þere
 bestes (em. H., K)
⁹ place

¹⁰ wet with rain
¹¹ rest, peace
¹² counsel

For in grete nede nowe are we stedde,¹
 As pou thyselffe the soth may see,
 For here is nowthir cloth ne bedde,
 And we are weyke and all werie,
 And fayne wolde rest.
 Now, gracious God, for thy mercie,
 Wisse² us þe best !

5

Mar. God will us wisse, full wele witt ȝe,
 þerfore, Joseph, be of gud chere,
 For in þis place borne will he be
 þat sall us save fro sorowes sere,³
 Bothe even and morne.
 Sir, witte ȝe wele þe tyme is nere
 Hee⁴ will be borne

10

Jos þan behoves us hide here stille,

15

Here in þis same place all þis nyght

Mar. Ȝa, sir, forsuth it is Goddis will.

Jos. þan wolde I fayne we had sum light,
 Whatso befall ;

It waxes myrke⁵ unto my sight,
 And colde withall.

20

I will go gete us lght forthy,⁶

And fewell fande⁷ with me to bryng.

[*Exit*

Mar Allweldand God yow governe and gy,⁸

As he is Sufferayne⁹ of all thyng,
 Fo[r] his grete myght !

25

And lende me grace to his lovyng
 þat I me dight¹⁰ !

Nowe in my sawle grete joie have I,
 I am all cladde in comforte clere ;

30

¹ placed
² guide, direct
³ divers, various
⁴ when he

⁵ dark, MS right myrke
⁶ therefore
⁷ seek
⁸ guide

⁹ sovereign
¹⁰ prepare

- Now will be borne of my body
 Both God and Man togedir in feere,¹
 Bliste mott he be!
 Jesu, my Son þat is so dere,
 5 Now borne is he! — [*MARY worships the child.*]
- Hayle, my Lord God! hayle, Prince of pees!
 Hayle, my Fadir! and hayle, my Sone!
 Hayle sovereyne Sege,² all synnes to sesse³!
 Hayle, God and Man in erth to wonne⁴!
 10 Hayle! thurgh whos myht
 All þis worlde was first begonne,
 Merknes and lght.
- Sone, as I sugett⁵ am of thyne,
 Vowchesaffe, swete Sone, [for so] I pray þe,
 15 That I myght þe take in armys myne,⁶
 And in þis povre wede arraie⁷ þe.
 Graunte me þi blisse,
 As I am thy modir chosen to be
 In sothfastnesse

SCENE II

Outside the stable. Enter JOSEPH

- 20 *Jos* A, Lorde! what⁸ the wedir is colde!
 þe fellest⁹ freese¹⁰ þat evere I felyd.
 I pray God helpe þam þat is olde,¹¹
 And namely¹² þam þat is vnwelde,¹³
 So may I saie
 25 Now, gud God, þou be my belde,¹⁴
 As þou best may. [*A sudden light shines.*]

¹ together (redundant)² hero³ cease⁴ dwell⁵ subject, M^s am sympill
sugett (K omits sympill)⁶ MS þe armys of myne⁷ MS to araie⁸ how⁹ cruelest¹⁰ frost¹¹ MS alde¹² especially¹³ weak¹⁴ shelter, MS. brilde
(em. S)

A, Lord God ! what light is þis
 þat comes shynyng þus sodenly ?
 I can not saie, als have I blisse.
 When I come home unto Marie,
 þan sall I spirre.¹

[*Exit.* 5]

SCENE III

Within the stable Enter JOSEPH to MARY[*Jos.*] A ! here[d]² be God, for nowe come I.*Mar.* Ze ar welcum, sirre*Jos.* Say, Marie doghtir, what chere with þe ?*Mar.* Right goode, Joseph, as has been ay.*Jos.* What³ swete thyng is þat on thy kne ?

10

Mar. It is my Sone, þe soth to saye,
 þat is so gud.*Jos.* Wele is me I bade⁴ þis dayTo se þis Foode⁵ !

Me merveles mekill of þis light,

15

þat þusgates⁶ shynes in þis place,Forsuth it is a selcouth⁷ sight !*Mar.* þis hase he ordand⁸ of his grace,

My Sone so zung,

A starne⁹ to be shynyng a space

20

At his bering.¹⁰

For Balam tolde ful longe beforne

How þat a sterne shulde rise full hye,¹¹And of a maiden shulde be borne¹²¹ ask, inquire² em K.³ MS O Marie what (em. H)⁴ awaited⁵ child (*ht*, one fed)⁶ thus⁷ strange, unusual⁸ ordained⁹ star¹⁰ birth¹¹ Num 24. 17¹² Isa 7. 14

A Sone¹ þat sall oure saffyng² be
 Fro caris kene.
 Forsuth it is my Sone so free
 Whame he gan mene.³

5 *Jos.* Nowe welcome, Floure fairest of hewe!
 I shall þe menske⁴ with mayne and myght.
 Hayle, my Maker! hayle, Crist Jesu!
 Hayle, riall⁵ Kyng, Roote of all right!
 Hayle, Saveour!
 10 Hayle, my Lorde, Lemer⁶ of light!
 Hayle, blessid Floure!

Mar. Nowe, Lord, þat all þis worlde schall wyne,
 To þe, my Sone, is þat I saye,
 Here is no bedde to laye the inne,
 15 þerfore, my dere Sone, I þe praye,
 Sen it is so,
 Here in þis cribbe I myght þe lay
 Betweene bestis⁷ two.

And I sall happe⁸ þe, myn owne dere Childe,
 20 With such clothes as we have here.
Jos. Marie,⁹ beholde þes beestis mylde,
 They make lovyng in ther manere
 As þei wer men,
 Forsothe it semes wele be ther chere¹⁰
 25 þare Lord þei ken.¹¹

Mar. Ther Lorde þai kenne, þat wate I wele—
 They worshippe hym with myght and mayne.
 The wedir is colde, as ye may fele;

¹ MS sonne² salvation³ mean, MS be whame Balam
gon mene (em. H)⁴ worship⁵ royal⁶ flasher forth⁷ MS þer bestis (em. H, K.)⁸ wrap⁹ MS O Marie (em. K.)¹⁰ look¹¹ know, recognize

To halde¹ hym warme þei are full fayne
 With þare warme breth,
 And oondis² on hym. Is noght to layne³
 To warme hym with?

Nowe⁴ slepis my Sone, blist mot he be! 5
 And lyes full warme þer bestis bytwene.
Jos. Nowe⁴ is fulfilled, forsuth I see,
 þat Abacuc in mynde gon mene,
 By⁵ prophicie.
 He saide oure Savyoure shall be sene 10
 Betwene bestis lye;

And nowe I see þe same in sight
Mar. Ja, sir, forsuth þe same is he.
Jos. Honnoure and worshippe both day and nyght,
 Aylastand Lorde, be done to þe, 15
 As⁶ is worthy!
 And to⁷ thy service I obliss⁸ me
 With herte⁹ holy.

Mar. þou mercyfull Maker most myghty,
 My God, my Lorde, my Sone so free, 20
 Thy handemayden forsoth am I,
 And to thi service I obliss⁸ me,
 With herte⁹ entere¹⁰
 Thy blissing, [now], beseke I thee,
 Graunte¹¹ us in¹² feere. 25

¹ keep² breathe³ borrow⁴ MS O nowe (em. K)⁵ MS and preched by (em. K.)⁶ MS all way as (em. K.)⁷ MS lord to (em. K)⁸ oblige me, bind myself⁹ MS all myn herte (em. K.)¹⁰ entire, whole¹¹ MS þou graunte (em. K)¹² MS all in (em. K)

8. *Abacuc*: the allusion is to the apocryphal Pseudo-Matthew, chap 14, which reads 'Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Habakkuk the prophet, who said, Between two animals thou art made known' The reference here is to Hab 3 2, where the Septuagint version reads: 'Thou shalt be known between the two living creatures.'

THE SECOND TOWNELEY SHEPHERDS' PLAY (SECUNDA PASTORUM)

Gayley thus characterizes this piece (*Plays of our Forefathers*, p. 182). 'The Wakefield *Secunda* . . . is plot within plot, developed through eight closely consecutive scenes, and crowded with action. The comic adventure is indeed but an episode — this "sheep stealing of Mak" — but it has its beginning, middle, and end, the motive, the devices, and the progress of a comedietta in itself. It grows out of and belongs to the conditions with which the enveloping action opens, and its party of the second part are also dramatic persons in the main action . . . As a work of dramatic genius this little play, with its home-made philosophy, home-made figures, and home-made humor, with its comic business, its sometimes boisterous spirits, its quiet and shrewd irony, its ludicrous diction, its revelation of rural manners, its simple and healthful creed, its radiant and naive devoutness, its dramatic anticipations, postponements, and surprises, stands out English and alone, and a masterpiece.' The three shepherds he thus describes (pp. 182-3). 'Coll, the first shepherd, who soliloquizes concerning political philosophy, a kind of later fourteenth-century populist whom it refreshes to grumble, Gyb, the second shepherd, whose vein is of matrimonial philosophy, and Daw, the hind, whose philosophy is eclectic, who swears by the unborn Christ and Saint Nicholas, and "lets the world pass." He it is who sees "sudden sights in the darkness", who warns of the midnight-stalking Mak, who makes that "Yoman" of the king lie safely down between them, it is he, too, who dreams of the stolen sheep, and conducts the vain search therefor, and who, fortunately flinging back to Mak's home to give the hypothetical babe, "that little day starne," a "saxpence," lifts up the clout and diagnoses the fraud that has been practised upon them.' According to Pollard (*English Miracle Plays*, p. 189), Mak is probably adapted from the favorite comic character, the conjurer and buffoon Maugis, of the romance of the *Four Sons of Aymon*. Pollard's general estimate is (England's edition, p. xxx). 'The *Secunda Pastorum* is really perfect as a work of art.'

The play is written, like four others in the Towneley series — *Noah*, *Prima Pastorum*, *Herod*, and the *Buffeting* — and parts of others (cf. Pollard's remarks in England's edition, pp. xxi ff., Gayley, *op. cit.*, pp. 163 ff.) in a nine-line stanza, rhyming *aaaab¹ccc²b¹*, where the superior numbers denote the number of feet in the line (the *a*-lines have each four feet, for instance). In reality, however, there are four rhymes to the stanza, instead of three, since each of the *a*-lines has a rhyme in the middle, the scheme may therefore be represented thus (cf. Pollard, p. xxi). *ababab²c¹ddd²c¹*. All the stanzas save one (535-14 ff.) are constructed on this model, and that has lost two of the four opening lines.

Not to mention earlier editions, the play was printed in 1897 by England (*The Towneley Plays*, E. E. T. S. Ex. Ser., No. 71, pp. 116-40), and by Manly

(*Spec. Pre-Shak Drama* 1 94-119, with a few emendations by Kittredge), in 1909 by Hemingway (*English Nativity Plays*, pp. 188-214), and in part by Pollard (*English Miracle Plays*, pp. 31-43). Emendations by Kolbing are in *Engl. Stud.* 21 165-6. Modernizations are to be found in Everyman's Library (*Everyman, with Other Interludes*, ed. by Ernst Rhys) and (better) in the Riverside Literature Series (*The Second Shepherds' Play, etc.*, ed. by C. G. Child), the latter has a good bibliographical introduction, pp. 27-8.

The manuscript may be dated about 1460, and the composition of the plays may extend approximately from 1360-1410 (Pollard, in England's edition, pp. xxvii-xxviii). Miss Hope Traver (*Mod. Lang. Notes* 20 (1905), 5) concludes from the use of the word 'crochett' (551 7), introduced into the language before 1400, that the *Secunda Pastorum* was written 'perhaps about 1400 or a little later' (for other references to music see 532 16 ff., 542 25 ff., 544 9, 554 24).

The stage-directions are modern. For *Primus Pastor*, *Uxor*, etc., I have substituted the proper names in the text, thus *Coll* for *Primus Pastor*, *Gib* for *Secundus (nus) Pastor*, *Daw* for *Tertius (nus) Pastor*, *Gill* for *Uxor (em)*, etc.

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

COLL, *the First Shepherd*

GIB, *the Second Shepherd*

DAW, *the Third Shepherd, or rather Gib's servant*

MAK, *the Thief*

GILL, *MAK's Wife*

THE VIRGIN MARY, *with the Child Jesus*

AN ANGEL

SCENE I

The moors near Horbury, in the West Riding of Yorkshire

Enter COLL, the First Shepherd

Coll Lord, what these weders¹ ar cold² and I am yll happyd³,
I am nerehand⁴ dold,⁴ so long have I nappyd,
My legys thay fold, my fynghers ar chappyd,
It is not as I wold, for I am al lappyd⁵

In sorow,

¹ weathers, storms

² wrapped, clothed

³ nearly

⁴ numb

⁵ lapped enveloped

In stormes and tempest —
 Now in the eest, now in the west.
 Wo is hym has never rest
 Mydday nor morow !

5 Bot we sely¹ husbandys² that walkys on the moore,
 In fayth we are nerehandys outt of the doore.³
 No wonder, as it standys, if we be poore,
 Ffor the tylthe⁴ of oure landys lyys falow as the floore,
 As ye ken.

10 We ar so lamyd,⁵
 Ffortaxed⁶ and ramyd,⁷
 We ar mayde handtamyd⁸
 With⁹ thyse gentlery-men.¹⁰

Thus thay refe¹¹ us oure rest — oure Lady theym wary¹² !
 15 'These men that ar lord-fest,¹³ thay cause the ploghe tary.
 'That¹⁴ men say is for the best, we fynde it contrary ;
 'Thus ar husbandys opprest, in po[1]nte to¹⁵ myschary
 On lyfe
 Thus hold thay us hunder,
 20 'Thus thay bryng us in blonder¹⁶ ;
 It were greatte wonder
 And¹⁷ ever shuld we thryfe.

Ther¹⁸ shall com a swa[y]ne¹⁹ as prowde as a po²⁰ ;
 He must borow my wa[y]ne,²¹ my ploghe also ,
 25 Then I am full fa[y]ne²² to graunt or²³ he go.
 'Thus lyf we in payne, anger, and wo,
 By nyght and day ,

¹ helpless, miserable⁷ oppressed¹⁶ confusion, trouble² husbandmen (see l 17),⁸ reduced to submission¹⁷ ifM^s shepardes (em sug-⁹ by¹⁸ MS transposes this stanza and
the next (em K)

gested by M)

¹⁰ gentry¹⁹ swain³ nearly homeless¹¹ take from²⁰ peacock⁴ surface (?) (there is arable¹² curse²¹ wagon

land among the moors)

¹³ bound to a lord²² M^s swane, wane, fane (em. K)⁶ M^s hamyd (em H)¹⁴ what²³ ere⁵ overtaxed¹⁵ in peril of, em. E.

He must have if he langyd,¹
 If I shuld forgang² it,
 I were better be hangyd
 Then oones³ say hym nay.

Ffor may he gett a paynt slefe,⁴ or a broche, now-on-dayes, 5
 Wo is hym that hym grefe, or onys aganesays⁵ !
 Dar no man hym reprefe,⁶ what mastery⁷ he mays,⁸
 And yit may no man lefe⁹ oone word that he says —
 No letter.

He can make purveance¹⁰ 10
 With boste and bragance,¹¹
 And all is thugh mantenance¹²
 Of men that are gretter.

It dos me good, as I walk thus by myn oone,¹³
 Of this warld for to talk in maner of mone.¹⁴ 15
 To my shepe wyll I stalk, and herkyn anone,
 Ther abyde on a balk,¹⁵ or sytt on a stone,
 Fful soyne¹⁶ ;
 Ffor I trowe, perde,¹⁷
 Trew men if thay be, 20
 We gett more compane¹⁸
 Or it be noyne.¹⁹

Enter GIB, the Second Shepherd. He fauls to see COLI.

Gib. Benste²⁰ and Dominus ! What may this bemeyne²¹ ?
 Why fares this warld thus ? Oft have we not sene ?

¹ desired
² do without

³ once

⁴ sleeve embroidered in colors

⁵ contradicts

⁶ reprove

⁷ masterful behavior

⁸ makes, shows

⁹ believe

¹⁰ provision for himself

¹¹ bragging

¹² countenance, backing

¹³ myself

¹⁴ lamentation

¹⁵ ridge

¹⁶ soon

¹⁷ *par Dieu*

¹⁸ company

¹⁹ noon

²⁰ benedicite

²¹ mean, signify

Lord, thyse winds ¹ ar spytus,² and the weders ³ full kene,
And the frostys so hydus ⁴ thay water myn eeyne —

No ly.⁵

Now in dry, now in wete,
5 Now in snaw, now in slete,
When my shone ⁶ freys to my fete,
It is not all esy.

Bot as far as I ken, or yit as I go,
We sely wedmen ⁷ dre ⁸ mekyll wo,
10 We have sorow then and then, it fallys oft so.
Sely Capyle, oure hen, both to and fro

She kakyls,

Bot begyn she to crok,
To groyne,⁹ or [to clo]k,¹⁰
15 Wo is hym ¹¹ oure cok,
Ffor he is in the shakyls ¹²!

These men that ar wed have not all thare wyll;
When they ar full hard sted,¹³ thay sygh full styll;
God wayte ¹⁴ thay ar led full hard and full yll,
20 In bower nor in bed thay say noght thertyll
This tyde

My parte have I fun,¹⁵
I know my lesson:
Wo is hym that is bun,¹⁶
25 Ffor he must abyde.¹⁷

Bot now late in oure lyfys (a mervell to me,
That I thynk my hart ryfys ¹⁸ sich wonders to see —
What that destany dryfys it shuld so be !)
Som men wyll have two wyfys, and som men thre
30 In store !

¹ MS weders (em suggested by M.)

² spiteful

³ storms

⁴ hideous

⁵ lie

⁶ shoes

⁷ See line 17, below

⁸ endure, suffer

⁹ grumble

¹⁰ em E.

¹¹ MS hym is of (em suggested by M)

¹² shackles, bonds of wedlock, MS. shekyls

¹³ beset

¹⁴ knows

¹⁵ found

¹⁶ bound

¹⁷ stay as he is

¹⁸ is riven asunder

Som ar wo that has any,
 Bot so far [as] can¹ I,
 Wo is hym that has many,
 Ffor he felys sore.

Bot, yong men, of² wowyng, for God that you boght, 5
 Be well war³ of wedyng, and thynk in youre thocht :
 ' Had I wyst⁴ ' is a thyng it servys of noght.
 Mekyll styll mowrnyng has wedyng home broght,
 And grefys,
 With many a sharp showre, 10
 Ffor thou may cach in an owre
 That shall [savour]⁵ fulle sowre
 As long as thou lyffys.

Ffor — as ever red I pystyll⁶! — I have oone to my fere⁷
 As sharp as a thystyll, as rugh as a brere, 15
 She is browyd⁸ lyke a brystyll, with a sowre-loten⁹ chere¹⁰,
 Had she oones wett hyr whystyll, she couth syng full clere
 Hyr Pater Noster.
 She is as greatt as a whall¹¹,
 She has a galon of gall; 20
 By hym that dyed for us all,
 I wald I had ryn¹² to¹³ I had lost hir¹⁴!

Coll. ' God looke over the raw¹⁶! ' Ffull defly¹⁶ ye stand!
Gib. Yee, the dewill in thi maw so tariand¹⁷!
 Sagh thou awre¹⁸ of Daw² 25
Coll. Yee, on a ley¹⁹ land
 Hard I hym blaw He commys here at hand,
 Not far,

¹ know² as to³ beware well⁴ known⁵ em E⁶ epistle⁷ for my mate⁸ has brows⁹ sour-looking¹⁰ expression¹¹ whale¹² run¹³ till¹⁴ ' I wald I had lost hir ' would

be more metrical

¹⁵ row¹⁶ deaf¹⁷ tarrying¹⁸ anywhere, MS awro (see
 NFD s v *ouwhere*)¹⁹ fallow, unplowed

Stand styll.

Gib. Qwhy?

Coll. Ffor he commys, hope I.

Gib. He wyll make us both a ly¹

Bot-if we be war²

Enter DAW, the Third Shepherd. At first he thinks himself alone

5 *Daw.* Crystys crosse me spede and Sant Nycholas!
Therof had I nede, it is wars then it was
Whoso couthe take hede and lett the world pas,
It is ever in drede. and brekyll³ as glas,
And slythys.⁴

10 This world fowre⁵ never so,
With mervels mo and mo —
Now in weyll,⁶ now in wo,
And all thyng wrythys.⁷

Was never syn Noe⁸ floode sich floodys seyn,
15 Wyndys and ranys so rude, and stormes so keyn —
Som stamerd, som stod in dowte, as I weyn.
Now God turne all to good! I say as I mene,
Ffor ponder.

These floodys so thay drowne,
20 Both in feyldys and in towne,
And berys all downe,

And that is a wonder! [*Catches sight of the others.*]

We that walk on the nyghtys, oure catell to kepe,
We sc sodan syghtys, when othere men slepe.
25 Yit me thynk my hart lyghtys,⁹ I se shrewys¹⁰ pepe.

[*Still soliloquizing.*]

Ye ar two [t]all¹¹ wyghtys — I wyll gyff my shepe
A turne.

¹ he
² wary
³ brittle
⁴ slides

⁵ fared
⁶ weal
⁷ turns, changes
⁸ Noah's

⁹ grows light
¹⁰ rascals
¹¹ em Kittredge

— Bot full yll have I ment¹;

As I walk on this bent,²

I may lyghtly repent,

My toes if I spurne.³

[*He first addresses COLI, then his master, GIB.*

A, sir, God you save, and master myne!

5

— A drynk fayn wold I have, and somewhat to dyne.

Coll. Crystys curs, my knave, thou art a ledyr⁴ hyne⁵!

Gib. What, the boy lyst rave! Abyde unto syne⁶;

We have made⁷ it.

Yll thryft on thy pate!

10

Though the shrew cam late,

Yit is he in state

To dyne, if he had it.

Daw. Sich servandys as I, that swettys and swynkys,⁸

Etyys oure brede full dry, and that me forthynkys⁹

15

We ar oft weytt and wery when master-men wynkys,¹⁰

Yit commys full lately¹¹ both dyners and drynkys.

Bot natelly¹²

Both oure dame and oure syre,

When we have ryn in the myre,

20

Thay can nyp¹³ at oure hyre,

And pay us full lately.

Bot here my trouth, master, for the fayr¹⁴ that ye make,

I shall do thereafter¹⁵ — wyrk as I take;

I shall do a lytyll, sir, and emang¹⁶ ever lake,¹⁷

25

Ffor yit lay my soper never on my stomake

In feyldys.

¹ planned (to visit the sheep,
since he may stumble in
the dark)

² heath, open field

³ stub

⁴ worthless

⁵ hind

⁶ wait till later

⁷ finished, M's mayde

⁸ toil

⁹ grieves

¹⁰ sleep

¹¹ reluctantly, after the
proper time

¹² to some purpose, thoroughly

¹³ take away bits

¹⁴ wages

¹⁵ in proportion

¹⁶ the whole time

¹⁷ be lacking

Wherto shuld I threpe¹?
 With my staf can I lepe,
 And men say, 'Lyght chepe'²
 Letherly³ foryeldys.⁴

5 *Coll.* Thou were an yll lad to ryde on⁵ wowyng
 With a man that had bot lytyll of spendyng.
Gib. Peasse, boy, I bad! — no more jangling,
 Or I shall make the full rad,⁶ by the hevens Kyng,
 With thy gawdys⁷!

10 Wher ar oure shepe, boy, we skorne⁸?
Daw. Sir, this same day at morne
 I thaym left in the corne,
 When thay rang lawdys⁹,

'Thay have pasture good, thay can not go wrong

15 *Coll.* That is right, by the roode! thyse nyghtys ar long;
 Yit I wold, or we yode,¹⁰ oone gaf us a song
Gib. So I thocht as I stode — to myrth us emong.¹¹

Daw I grauntt.

Coll. Lett me syng the tenory

20 *Gib.* And I the tryble so hye.

Daw 'Then the meyne¹² fallys to me;
 Lett se how you chauntt.

[*They sing.*]

*Enter MAK, with a cloak thrown over his tunic*¹³

Mak Now, Lord, for thy naymes vii, that made both moyn and starnes,
 Well mo then I can neven,¹⁴ thi will, Lorde, of me tharnys¹⁵,

25 I am all uneven¹⁶ — that moves oft my harnes¹⁷,

Now wold God I were in heven, for the[re]¹⁸ wepe no barnes¹⁹
 So styll!

¹ complain

² easy bargain

³ badly

⁴ repays

⁵ a-

⁶ frightened

⁷ tricks

⁸ (?)

⁹ lauds (before daybreak)

¹⁰ before we went

¹¹ to gladden us the while

¹² middle part

¹³ MS Tunc intrat Mak, in clamide
 se super togam vestitus

¹⁴ name

¹⁵ lacks

¹⁶ at odds, at sixes and sevens

¹⁷ brains

¹⁸ em E.

¹⁹ children

Coll. Who is that pypys so poore?

Mak. Wold God ye wyst how I foore¹!

[*Coll.*²] Lo, a man that walkys on the moore,
And has not all his wyll!

Gib. Mak, where has thou gon³? Tell us thythyng⁴ 5

Daw. Is he commen? Then ylk on take hede to his thyng.⁵
[*Snatches his own cloak from MAK.*⁶

Mak. What! Ich be a yoman, I tell you, of the king,
[*Pretending not to know them*

The self and the same, sond⁷ from a greatt lordyng,
And sich.⁸

Ffy on you! Goyth hence 10

Out of my presence!

I must have reverence —

Why, who be Ich?

Coll. Why make ye it so qwaynt,⁹ Mak? Ye do wrang

Gib. Bot, Mak, lyst ye saynt¹⁰? I trow that ye lang¹¹ 15

Daw. I trow the shrew¹² can paynt,¹³ the dewyll myght hym hang!

Mak. Ich shall make complaynt, and make you all to thwang,¹⁴

At a worde,

And tell evyn¹⁵ how ye doth.

Coll. Bot, Mak, is that sothe? 20

Now take outt that sothren¹⁶ tothe,

And sett in a torde¹⁷!

Gib. Mak, the dewill in youre ee! A stroke wold I leyne¹⁸ you

Daw. Mak, know ye not me? By God, I couthe teyn¹⁹ you.

Mak. God looke²⁰ you all thre! Me thocht I had sene you, 25

[*As if recognizing them*

¹ fared

² em Child

³ M^v gom (em. E.)

⁴ news

⁵ property

⁶ M^v & accipit clamidem
ab ipso

⁷ messenger

⁸ so forth

⁹ do you behave so strangely

¹⁰ play the saint

¹¹ are restless (love change?)

¹² rascal

¹³ deceive

¹⁴ to be whipped

¹⁵ exactly

¹⁶ southern (Child under-
stands 'decentful')

¹⁷ piece of dung

¹⁸ lend

¹⁹ trouble

²⁰ bless

Ye ar a fare compane.

Coll. Can ye now mene you¹?

Gib. Shrew, jape²!

Thus late as thou goys,

What wyll men suppos?

5 And thou has an yll noys³

Of stelyng of shepe.

Mak. And I am trew as steyll, all men waytt⁴,
Bot a sekenes I feyll that haldys⁵ me full haytt⁶:
My belly farys not weyll, it is out of astate.

10 *Daw.* 'Seldom lyys the dewyll dede by the gate.'

Mak. Therfor

Full sore am I and yll,

If I stande stone-styll.

I ete not an nedyll⁷

15 Thys moneth and more.

Coll. How farys thi wyff? By my hoode, how farys sho?

Mak. Lyys walteryng,⁸ by the roode, by the fyere, lo!

And a howse full of brude⁹, she drynkys well, to.

Yll spede othere good that she wyll do!

20 Bot s[h]o¹⁰

Etys as fast as she can,

And ilk yere that commys to man

She bryngys furth a lakan,¹¹

And, som yeres, two.

25 Bot were I not more gracy[o]us,¹² and rythere be¹³ far,

I were¹⁴ eten outt of howse and of harbar¹⁵,

Yit is she a fowll dowse,¹⁶ if ye com nar;

Ther is none that trowse nor knowys a war¹⁷

Then ken I.

¹ remember

² make jokes

³ reputation

⁴ know

⁵ keeps

⁶ hot

⁷ particle, bit

⁸ rolling about

⁹ brood, children

¹⁰ em H

¹¹ baby (*kt. toy*)

¹² prosperous

¹³ by

¹⁴ should be

¹⁵ shelter

¹⁶ doxy

¹⁷ worse

Now wyll ye se what I profer :

To gyf all in my cofer

To-morne at next¹ to offer

Hyr hed-maspenny.²

Coll. I am cold and nakyd, and wold have a fyere.

5

Gib. I wote so forwakyd³ is none in this shyre !

I wold slepe if⁴ I takyd les to my hyere⁵

Daw. I am wery, forrakyd,⁶ and run in the myre —

Wake thou !

Gib. Nay, I wyll lyg downe by,

10

Ffor I must slepe truly.

Daw. As good a mans son was I

As any of you.⁷

Bot, Mak, com heder ! betwene shall thou lyg downe.

Mak. 'Then myght I lett⁸ you bedene⁹ of that ye wold rowne¹⁰ 15

No drede

[*He says his prayers.*

' Ffro my top to my too,

¹ at length (?)

⁵ hire

⁸ hinder

² funeral dues (see 6 22)

⁶ worn out with walking

⁹ completely

³ weary with waking

⁷ Two lines are apparently

¹⁰ whisper

⁴ even if

lost here

5. *Coll.* : MS gives this line to Daw, and makes it follow *Gib*'s next speech ; but *Gib*'s speech requires *Daw*'s next as an immediate answer

8. *Daw* : MS assigns this to *Coll*, but *Daw* and his master, *Gib*, are having a dispute as to who shall keep awake

17. In the *Prima Pastorum* (290-5), one of the shepherds says, as they prepare to lie down

Ffor ferde we be fryht, a crosse let us kest

' Cryst-crosse, benedyght eest and west,

Ffor drede.

Jesu onazorus,

Crucyefixus,

Morcus, Andreus,

God be oure spede !'

Cf. the blessing in Chaucer's *Miller's Tale* 292-300 :

Therwith the nightspel seyde he anonrightes

On foure halves of the hous aboute,

And on the threshfold of the dore withoute :

' Jesu Crist, and seynt Benedight,

Blesse this hous from every wikked wight,

For nightes verye, the white *Pater Noster* !

Where wentestow, seynt Petres soster ?'

*Manus tuas commendo,*¹

Poncio Pilato;

Cryst-crosse me spede !'

[*While the Shepherds sleep on, he rises.*²

Now were tyme for a man that lakkys what he wold

- 5 'To stalk prevely than unto a fold,
And neemly³ to wyrk than, and be not to bold,
Ffor he might aby⁴ the bargan, if it were told

At the endyng

Now were tyme for to reyll⁵;

- 10 Bot he nedys good counsell

That fayn wold fare weyll,

And has bot lytyll spendyng.⁶ [*He works a spell.*

Bot abowte you a serkyll,⁷ as rownde as a moyn,⁸

Kest⁹ now¹⁰ I wyll, tyll that it be noyn,

- 15 That ye lyg stone-styll to that I have doyne,
And I shall say thertyll of good wordys a foyne¹¹;

' On hight,

Over youre heydys, my hand I lyft.

Outt go youre een ! fordo¹² your syght !' —

- 20 Bot yt I must make better shyft,

And¹³ it be right

Lord, what¹⁴ thay slepe hard ! — that may ye all here.

Was I never a shepard, bot now wyll I lere¹⁵;

If the flok be skard,¹⁶ yt shall I nyp¹⁷ nere.

- 25 How ! drawes hederward ! Now mendys oure chere

Ffrom¹⁸ sorow,

¹ Cf Luke 23 46

² MS Tunc surgit, pastoribus dormi-
entibus, & dicit

³ nimbly

⁴ atone for

⁵ ramble

⁶ money to spend

circle (a magician's imaginary circle)

⁸ oy phonetically = o in this
text

⁹ cast (see note on 535 17)

¹⁰ MS to I have done that,
but this seems to have
been anticipated from
next line by some scribe

¹¹ few

¹² destroy

¹³ if

¹⁴ how

¹⁵ learn

¹⁶ frightened

¹⁷ steal up

¹⁸ MS. (ffron em E.)

A fatt shepe, I dar say!
A good flese, dar I lay¹!
Eftwhyte² when I may,

Bot this will I borow. [*Exit with the sheep.*]

SCENE II

MAK'S cottage Enter MAK

[*Mak.*] How, Gyll, art thou in? Gett us som lyght. 8

Gill. Who makys sich dyn this tyme of the nyght?

I am sett for to spyn, I hope not I myght

Ryse a penny to wyn,³ I shrew⁴ them on hight⁵!

So farys

A huswyff that has bene — 10

To be rasyd⁶ thus betwene,⁷

Here may no note⁸ be sene,

Ffor⁹ sich small charys.¹⁰

Mak. Good wyff, open the hek¹¹! Scys thou not what I bryng?

Gill. I may thole¹² the dray¹³ the snek¹⁴ A, com in, my swetyng! 15

Mak. Yee, thou thar¹⁵ not rek of¹⁶ my long standyng

[*Reproachfully.*]

Gill. By the nakyd nek art thou lyke for to hyng

Mak. Do way¹⁷!

I am worthy my mete,

Ffor, in a strate,¹⁸ can I gett 20

More then thay that swynke and swette

All the long day [*Shows GILL the sheep.*]

Thus it fell to my lott, Gyll, I had sich grace¹⁹

Gill. It were a fowll blott to be hanged for the case.

¹ wager

² return, repay

³ I do not expect that I could
gain a penny by rising

⁴ curse

⁵ aloud, openly

⁶ rushed

⁷ ever and anon

⁸ work (i.e. completed task)

⁹ because of

¹⁰ jobs

¹¹ inner door

¹² suffer

¹³ to draw

¹⁴ latch

¹⁵ need

¹⁶ care about

¹⁷ get along

¹⁸ at a pinch

¹⁹ luck

Mak. I have skapyd, Jelott,¹ oft as hard a glase.²

Gill. 'Bot so long goys the pott to the water,' men says,

'At last

Comys it home broken.'

5 *Mak.* Well knowe I the token,

Bot let it never be spoken! —

Bot com and help fast.

I wou I he were slayn, I lyst well ete³;

This twelmo[n]the⁴ was I not so fayn of oone shepe-mete.⁵

10 *Gill.* Com thay or⁶ he be slayn, and here the shepe blete —

Mak. Then myght I be tane. That were a cold swette!

Go spar⁷

The gaytt⁸ doore.

Gill. Yis, Mak.

15 Ffor and thay com at thy bak —

Mak. Then myght I far, by⁹ all the pak,

The dewill of the war.¹⁰

Gill. A good bowrde¹¹ have I spied, syn thou can¹² none:

Here shall we hym hyde, to¹³ thay be gone,

20 In my credyll.¹⁴ — Abyde¹⁵! Lett me alone! —

And I shall lyg besyde in chyl[d]bed, and grone.

Mak. Thou red,¹⁶

And I shall say thou was lyght¹⁷

Of a knave¹⁸ childe this nyght.

25 *Gill.* Now well is me day¹⁹ bryght

That ever was I bred!

This is a good gyse,²⁰ and a far[e] cast,²¹

Yit a woman[s] avyse helpys at the last.

¹ French form of 'Gill' (?)

² rub, swipe, plight (*hit* blow)

³ greatly desire to eat

⁴ em K

⁵ meal of mutton

⁶ ere

⁷ fasten

⁸ outer

⁹ fare, at the hands of, MS

by for (em Skeat, I oge-
man)

¹⁰ the devil the worse, a devil-
ish deal worse

¹¹ jest

¹² knowest

¹³ until

¹⁴ cradle

¹⁵ wait

¹⁶ make ready

¹⁷ delivered

¹⁸ boy

¹⁹ the day

²⁰ way

²¹ clever contrivance

I wote never who spyse; agane go thou fast.
Mak. Bot¹ I com² or thay ryse, els blowes a cold blast!
 I wyll go slepe.
 Yit slepys all this meneye,³
 And I shall go stalk prevely,
 As it had never bene I
 That caryed thare shepe. 5

SCENE III

The moors near Horbury

Enter COLL, GIB, DAW, and MAK

Coll. *Resurrex a mortuis!* have hald my hand!
Judas carnas dominus! I may not well stand.
 My foytt slepys, by Jesus! and I water-fastand.⁴ 10
 I thoght that we layd us full nere Yngland.
Gib. A! ye!
 Lord, what I have slept weyll!
 As fresh as an eyll⁵,
 As lyght I me feyll⁶ 15
 As leyfe on a tre!

Daw. Benste⁷ be herein! So my body⁸ qwakys
 My hart is outt of skyn, what so it makys.
 Who makys all this dyn? So my browes blakys,⁹
 To the dowore¹⁰ wyll I wyn. Harke, felows, wakys! 20
 We were fowre;
 Se ye awre¹¹ of Mak now?
Coll. We were up or thou.
Gib. Man, I gyf God avowe
 Yit yede¹² he na owre.¹³ 25

¹ unless
² reach there
³ company
⁴ fasting on water
⁵ eel

⁶ feel myself
⁷ a blessing
⁸ MS illegible; E., H. hart,
 Kittredge, M. body
⁹ grow black

¹⁰ door
¹¹ anywhere
¹² went
¹³ nowhere, MS nawre

Daw. Me thocht he was lapt in a wolfe-skyn.

Coll. So are many now hapt, namely¹ within.

*Daw.*² When we had long napt, me thocht with a gyn³
A fatt shepe he trapt, bot he mayde no dyn.

5 *Gib.*⁴ Be styll,
Thi dreame makys the woode⁵;
It is bot fantom, by the roode!

Coll. Now God turne all to good,
If it be his wyll.

10 *Gib.* Ryse, Mak, for shame! Thou lygys right lang.
Mak Now, Crystys holy name be us emang!
What is this? For Sant Jame, I may not well gang!
I trow I be the same. A, my nek has lygen wrang
Enoghe!

15 Mekill thank! Syn yistereven,
Now, by Sant Stevyn,⁶
I was flayd⁷ with a swevyn,⁸
My hart out ofsloghe.⁹

I thocht Gyll began to crok, and travell¹⁰ full sad,
20 Wel ner¹¹ at the fyrst cok, of a yong lad
Ffor to mend oure flok, then be I never glad—
I have tow on my rok more then ever I had.
A, my heede!

A house full of yong tharmes!
25 The dewill knok outt thare harnes¹²!
Wo is hym has many barnes,
And therto lytyll brede!

¹ especially

² MS ii pastor (em. M)

³ snare, trap

⁴ MS iii pastor (em. M)

⁵ mad

⁶ MS. strevyn (em. H)

⁷ tormented

⁸ dream

⁹ which smote my heart out (?)

¹⁰ travail

¹¹ well nigh

¹² brans

22. rok· distaff, the phrase means 'business to attend to' (cf Chaucer, *Miller's Tale* 588 (A 3774), and Skeat's note)

24. tharmes· children (*lit* bowels, Lat. *viscera*, cf. Ovid, *Met* 8. 478; Shakespeare, *M. for M* 3 i 29)

I must go home, by youre lefe, to Gyll, as I thoght,
I pray you looke¹ my slefe,² that I steyll nocht;
I am loth you to grefe, or from you take oght. [Exit MAK.

Daw. Go furth, yll myght thou chefe⁸! Now wold I we sought

This morne

That we had all oure store.

Coll. Bot I will go before.

Let us mete.

Gib. Whore?

Daw. At the crokyd thorne.

SCENE IV

MAK'S cottage. MAK enters

Mak. Undo this doore ! Who is here ? How long shall I stand ?

Gill. Who makys sich a bere ⁴? Now walk in the wenyand.

Mak. A, Gyll, what chere? It is I, Mak, youre husbände.

Gill. Then may we se^b here the dewill in a bande,^b

Syr Gyle⁷!

Lo, he commys with a lote ⁸

As he were holden in the throte.

I may not syt at my note⁹

A handlang-while ¹⁰ !

Mak. Wyll ye here what fare she makys to gett hir a glose¹¹? 20

And dos noght bot lakys,¹² and clowse¹⁸ hir toose.

Gull Why, who wanders? Who wakys? Who commys? Who gose?

Who brewys? Who bakys? What makys me thus hose¹⁴?

And than

1 look in

2 sleeve

§ prosper

⁴ noise, clamor

⁵ MS be (em Kittredge)

6 bond, chain

⁷ Cf. p. 529, note 9.

8 voice

9 work

10 an instant

11 pretext

12 amuse herself

18 strokes, caresses

14 hoarse

10. **crokyd thorne**: perhaps the Shepherds' Thorn of Mapplewell, three miles northwest of Barnsley, and distant about eight miles from Horbury (see England's ed., p. xiv)

13. wenyand· waning of the moon, i.e. unlucky time (cf *wanion*, e.g. Shakespeare, *Per* 2.1.17)

It is rewthe to beholde;
 Now in hote, now in colde,
 Ffull wofull is the householde
 That wantys a woman.

- 5 Bot what ende has thou mayde with the hyrdys,¹ Mak?
Mak. The last worde that thay sayde when I turnyd my bak,
 Thay wold looke that thay hade thare shepe all the pak.
 I hope² thay wyll nott be well payde³ when thay thare shepe lak,
 Perde!
 10 Bot howso the gam⁴ gose,
 To me thay wyll suppose,⁵
 And make a fowll noyse,
 And cry outt apon me.

- Bot thou must do as thou hyght.⁶
 15 *Gill.* I accorde me thertyll.
 I shall swedyll⁷ hym right in my credyll;
 If it were a gretter slyght,⁸ yit couthe I help tyll.
 I wyll lyg downe stright,⁹ com hap¹⁰ me
Mak. I wyll.
Gill Behynde!
 20 Com Coll and his maroo,¹¹
 Thay wyll nyp us full naroo
Mak. Bot I may cry out 'Haroo!'
 The shepe if thay fynde.

- Gill* Harken ay when thay call — thay will com onone.
 25 Com and make redy all, and syng by thyn oone¹²,
 Syng 'lullay' thou shall, for I must grone,
 And cry outt by the wall on Mary and John,
 Ffor sore.¹³

¹ shepherds² suspect³ pleased⁴ sport⁵ they will suspect me⁶ promised⁷ swaddle⁸ trick⁹ straightway¹⁰ wrap, cover¹¹ companion = Gib (cf. Wordsworth's 'winsome marrow, Yarrow Unvisited')¹² alone, by thyself¹³ pain

Syng 'lullay' on fast
 When thou heris at the last;
 And, bot I play a fals cast,¹
 Trust me no more.

SCENE V

The moors near Horbury. Enter COLL, GIB, and DAW

Daw. A, Coll, goode morne, why slepys thou nott? 5

Coll. Alas, that ever was I borne! We have a fowll blott —
 A fat wedir² have we lorne.

Daw. Mary, Godys forbott³!

Gib. Who shuld do us that skorne? That were a fowll spott.

Coll. Som shrewe.

I have soght with my dogys 10

All Horbery⁴ shrogys,⁵

And, of xv hogys,⁶

Ffond I bot oone ewe

Daw. Now trow me, if ye will — by Sant Thomas of Kent,⁷
 Ayther Mak or Gyll was at that assent⁸ 15

Coll. Peasse, man, be still! I sagh when he went

Thou sklanders hym yll, thou aght to repent

Goode spede.

Gib. Now as ever myght I the,⁹

If I shuld evyn here de,¹⁰ 20

I wold say it were he

That dyd that same dede!

Daw. Go we theder, I rede,¹¹ and ryn¹² on oure feete.

Shall I never ete brede the sothe to¹³ I wee¹⁴

¹ shrewd trick (on the shepherds)

² wether

³ God forbid (*lit.* God's prohibition)

⁴ Horbury, four miles

southwest of Wakefield, in Yorkshire

⁵ thickets

⁶ young sheep

⁷ Thomas à Becket

⁸ agreement, concerted action

⁹ prosper

¹⁰ die

¹¹ counsel

¹² Daw is always 'rynnng'

¹³ till

¹⁴ know, MS wytt (H. weete)

Coll. Nor drynk in my heede, with hym tyll I mete.

Gib. I wyll rest in no stede tyll that I hym grete,
My brothere.¹

Oone² I will hight:

5 Tyll I se hym in sight,
Shall I never slepe one nyght
Ther³ I do anothere.

SCENE VI

MAK's cottage. MAK singing within, and GILL groaning

Daw Will ye here how thay hak⁴ Oure syre lyst croyne.⁵

Coll. Hard⁶ I never none crak⁷ so clere out of toyne.⁸

10 Call on hym.

Gib. Mak! Undo youre doore soyne!

Mak. Who is that spak, as it were noyne,⁹

On loft¹⁰?

Who is that, I say?

Daw Goode felowse, were it day —

15 *Mak.* As far as ye may,
Good, spekys soft

Over a scke woman's heede, that is at maylleasse¹¹,

I had lever be dede or she had any dyseasse¹²

Gill. Go to anothere stede,¹³ I may not well qweasse.¹⁴

20 Ich¹⁵ fote that ye trede goys thorow my nese¹⁶

So hee¹⁷

Coll. Tell us, Mak, if ye may,

How fare ye, I say?

Mak. Bot ar ye in this towne¹⁸ to-day? —

25 Now how fare ye?

¹ = Coll

² one thing

³ where

⁴ jangle

⁵ croon

⁶ heard

⁷ bray, bawl

⁸ tune

⁹ noon

¹⁰ up there

¹¹ distress (OF. *malaise*)

¹² suffering

¹³ place

¹⁴ breathe (*ht* wheeze)

¹⁵ each

¹⁶ nose

¹⁷ loud

¹⁸ farmstead

Ye have ryn in the myre, and ar weytt yit;
 I shall make you a fyre, if ye will syt.
 A nores¹ wold I hyre — thynk ye on² yit?
 Well qwytt³ is my hyre — my dreame this is itt —

A seson.⁴

I have barnes, if ye knew,
 Well mo then enewe —
 Bot we must drynk as we brew,
 And that is bot reson.

I wold ye dynyd or ye yode.⁵ Me thynk that ye swette. 10

Gib. Nay, nawther mendys oure mode⁶ drynke nor mette.

Mak. Why, sir, alys⁷ you oght bot goode⁸

Daw. Yee, oure shepe that we gett

Ar stollyn as thay yode, oure los is grette.

Mak. Syrs, drynkys!

Had I bene thore 15

Som shuld have boght it full sore

Coll. Mary, som men trowes that ye wore,⁹

And that us forthynkys.¹⁰

Gib. Mak, som men trowys that it shuld be ye.

Daw. Ayther ye or youre spouse, so say we. 20

Mak. Now if ye have suspowse¹¹ to Gill or to me,

Com and rype¹² oure howse, and then may ye se

Who had hir¹³ —

If I any shepe fott,¹⁴

Aythor cow or stott¹⁵, 25

And Gyll, my wyfe, rose nott

Here syn she lade hir.

¹ nurse

² one

³ requited, earned

⁴ for a while

⁵ before you went

⁶ temper

⁷ ails

⁸ were

⁹ troubles

¹⁰ suspicion

¹¹ search

¹² the ewe

¹³ fetched

¹⁴ steer

As I am true and lele,¹ to God here I pray
That this be the fyrst mele that I shall ete this day.

Coll. Mak, as have I ceyll,² avyse the, I say —
'He lernyd tymely³ to steyll that couth not say nay.'

- 5 *Gill.* I swelt⁴!
Outt, thefys, fro my wonys⁵!
Ye com to rob us, for the nonys.
Mak. Here ye not how she gronys?
Your hartys shuld melt.

- 10 *Gill.* Outt, thefys, fro my barne! Negh⁶ hym not thor⁷!
Mak. Wyst ye how she had farne,⁸ youre hartys wold be sore.
Ye do wrang, I you warne, that thus commys before
To a woman that has farne — bot I say no more.
Gill. A, my medyll⁹! —
15 I pray to God so mylde,
If ever I you begyld,
That I ete¹⁰ this chylde
That lygs in this credyll.

- Mak.* Peasse, woman, for Godys payn,¹¹ and cry not so!
20 Thou spylls¹² thy bra[y]ne, and makys me full wo.
Gib I trowe oure shepe be slayn. What finde ye two?
Daw. All wyrk we in vayn, as well may we go.
Bot hatters,¹³

- I can fynde no flesh,
25 Hard nor nesh,¹⁴
Salt nor fresh,
Bot two tome¹⁵ platers;

Whik¹⁶ catell bot this, tame nor wylde,
None, as have I blys, as lowde as he smylde.¹⁷

¹ leal
² bliss
³ early
⁴ die
⁵ dwelling
⁶ approach

⁷ there
⁸ fared
⁹ middle, inwards
¹⁰ may eat
¹¹ i.e. on the cross
¹² dost injure

¹³ except clothes (I can find nothing)
¹⁴ soft
¹⁵ empty
¹⁶ quick, live
¹⁷ smelled as strongly as he (the sheep) (?)

Gill. No, so God me blys, and gyf me joy of my chyld!

Coll. We have merkyd¹ amys; I hold us begyld.

Gib. Syr, don²! —

Syr — oure Lady hym save! —

Is youre chyld a knave³?

5

Mak. Any lord myght hym have,

This chyld, to his son.

When he wakyns he kyppys⁴ that joy is to se.

Daw. In good tyme to hys hyppys,⁵ and in cele.⁶

Bot who were⁷ his gossypys,⁸ so sone rede⁹?

10

Mak. So fare fall thare lypys¹⁰!

Coll. Hark now, a le¹¹!

[*Aside.*

Mak. So God thaym thank —

Parkyn, and Gybon Waller, I say,

And gentill John Horne, in good fay;

He made all the garray¹² —

15

With the greatt shank.

Gib. Mak, freyndys will we be, ffor we ar all oone.

Mak. We? Now I hald for me,¹³ for mendys¹⁴ gett I none!

Ffare well all thre, all¹⁵ glad were ye gone.

[*The shepherds leave the house*

Daw. 'Ffare wordys may ther be, bot luf is ther none'

20

This yere.

Coll. Gaf ye the chyld anythyng?

Gib. I trow not oone farthyng¹⁶!

Daw. Ffast agane will I flyng,

Abyde ye me here.¹⁷

[*Goes back to the house* 25

Mak, take it to no grefe if I com to thi barne.

Mak. Nay thou dos me greatt reprefe,¹⁸ and fowll has thou farne.

¹ aimed

² completely

³ boy

⁴ grabs, clutches

⁵ hips, see Gen 49. 25, Prov. 11. 26

⁶ happiness

⁷ MS. was

⁸ sponsors

⁹ ready

¹⁰ lips

¹¹ lie

¹² commotion

¹³ myself

¹⁴ amends

¹⁵ very

¹⁶ rush, thing

¹⁷ MS there

¹⁸ reproach

Daw. The child will it not grefe, that lytyll day-starne.¹

Mak, with youre leyfe, let me gyf youre barne

Bot vi pence. [*He approaches the cradle.*]

Mak. Nay, do way, he slepys.

5 *Daw.* Me thynk he pepys.²

Mak. When he wakyns, he wepys.

I pray you go hence. [*COLL and GIB return.*]

Daw. Gyf me lefe hym to kys, and lyft up the clowtt.³

[*He sees the sheep.*]

What the dewill is this? He has a long snowte.

10 *Coll.* He is merkyd⁴ amys, we wate ill⁵ abowte.

Gib. 'Ill-spon weft,' iwys, 'ay commys foull owte.'

Ay, so!

He is lyke to oure shepe!

Daw. How, Gyb, may I pepe⁶?

15 *Coll.* I trow 'Kynde'⁷ will crepe⁸

Where it may not go⁹,

Gib. This was a qwantt gawde,¹⁰ and a far[e]¹¹ cast;

It was a hee¹² frawde

Daw. Yee, syrs, wast.¹³

Lett bren¹⁴ this bawde, and bynd hir fast.

20 'A fals skawde¹⁵ hang[s] at the last.'

So shall thou

Wyll ye se how thay swedyll¹⁶

His foure feytt in the medyll¹⁷

Sagh I never in a credyll

25 A hornyd lad or¹⁷ now.

Mak. Peasse byd I! What, lett be youre fare!

I am he that hym gatt,¹⁸ and yond woman hym bare.

¹ See 553 22

² whimpers

³ cloth

⁴ fashioned (marked?)

⁵ wait to no purpose

⁶ have a look

⁷ nature

⁸ A proverb, also found in *Everyman*, l 316

⁹ walk

¹⁰ trick

¹¹ See 538 27

¹² high, deep

¹³ was it

¹⁴ burn

¹⁵ scold

¹⁶ swathe, swaddle

¹⁷ before

¹⁸ begot

Coll. What dewill shall he hatt,¹ Mak? Lo, God, Makys² ayre³!

Gib. Lett be all that, now God gyf hym care,

I sagh.⁴

Gill. A pratty child is he

As sytlys on a womans⁵ kne,

A dyllydowne,⁶ perde,

To gar⁷ a man laghe.

5

Daw. I know hym by the eeremarke — that is a good tokyn.

Mak. I tell you, syrs, hark! Hys noyse⁸ was brokyn,

Sythen⁹ told me a clark¹⁰ that he was forspokyn.¹¹

10

Coll. This is a fals wark. I wold fayn be wrokyn¹²,

Gett wepyn.

Gill. He was takyn with¹³ an elfe,

I saw it myself,

When the klok stroke twelf

Was he forshapyn.¹⁴

15

Gib. Ye two ar well feft¹⁵ sam¹⁶ in a¹⁷ stede.

*Coll.*¹⁸ Syn thay manteyn thare theft, let do thaym to dede¹⁹

Mak. If I trespas eft, gyrd of²⁰ my heede,

With you will I be left.²¹

*Daw.*²²

Syrs, do my reede:

20

Ffor this trespas

We will nawther ban²³ ne flyte,²⁴

Ffyght nor chyte,²⁵

Bot have done as tyte,²⁶

And cast hym in canvas.

25

[*They go outside, and toss MAK in a sheet.*

¹ be called, named

² Mak's

³ heir

⁴ say

⁵ MS wamans (em M)

⁶ darling

⁷ make

⁸ nose

⁹ since

¹⁰ MS clerk

¹¹ bewitched

¹² avenged

¹³ enchanted by

¹⁴ transformed

¹⁵ endowed

¹⁶ together

¹⁷ one

¹⁸ MS. mus pastor (em. M.)

¹⁹ death

²⁰ strike off

²¹ you shall judge

²² MS primus pastor (em M)

²³ curse

²⁴ scold

²⁵ chide

²⁶ as quickly as possible

SCENE VII

The fields near Bethlehem of Judea. Enter the Three Shepherds

[*Coll.*¹] Lord, what I am sore, in poynt for to bryst²!
In fayth I may no more, therfor wyll I ryst.³

Gib. As a shepe of vii skore⁴ he weyd in my fyst.
Ffor to slepe aywhore⁵ me thynk that I lyst.

5 *Daw.* Now, I pray you,
Lyg downe on this grene.

Coll. On these thefys yit I mene.⁶

Daw. Wherto shuld ye tene⁷?
Do⁸ as I say you

An ANGEL appears, and sings Gloria in excelsis.

*Then the ANGEL addresses the shepherds.*⁹

10 *Angel.* Ryse, hyrdmen heynd¹⁰! for now is he borne
That shall take fro the feynd that Adam had lorne¹¹;
That warloo¹² to sheynd,¹³ this nyght is he borne.
God is made youre freynd now at this morne,
He behestys.¹⁴

15 At Bedlem go se;
Ther lygys that fre¹⁵
In a cryb full poorely,
Betwix two bestys.

[*Exit.*

Coll. This was a qwant stevyn¹⁶ as¹⁷ ever yit I hard.
20 It is a mervell to nevyn¹⁸ thus to be skard¹⁹
Gib. Of Godys Son of hevyn he spak upward²⁰
All the wod on a levyn²¹ me thoght that he gard²²
Appere

¹ em M.

² burst

³ rest

⁴ seven score pounds

⁵ anywhere

⁶ think

⁷ trouble

⁸ MS so (em M.)

⁹ MS Angelus cantat 'Gloria
in excelsis,' postea dicat

¹⁰ gentle

¹¹ lost

¹² wizard

¹³ destroy

¹⁴ promises

¹⁵ noble one

¹⁶ voice

¹⁷ MS that (em suggested
by M.)

¹⁸ name, speak

¹⁹ frightened

²⁰ from above

²¹ lightning

²² made

Daw. He spake of a Barne

In Bedlem, I you warne.

Coll. That betokyns yond starne¹; [Pointing to the sky.
Let us seke hym there.

Gib. Say, what was his song? Hard ye not how he crakt² it, 5
Thre breves³ to a long?

Daw. Yee, Mary, he hakt⁴ it.
Was no crochett wrong, nor no thyng that lakt it.

Coll. Ffor to syng us emong, right as he knakt it,⁴
I can.

Gib. Let se how ye croyne! 10
'Can ye bark at the mone?

Daw. Hold youre tonges! Have done!

Coll. Hark after, than! [They sing

Gib. To Bedlem he bad that we shuld gang;
I am full fard⁵ that we tary to lang. 15

Daw. Be mery and not sad — of myrth is oure sang!
Everlastyng glad⁷ to mede⁸ may we fang,⁹

Withouthe noyse.

Coll. Hy¹⁰ we theder forthy,¹¹
If¹² we be wete and wery, 20
To that Chyld and that lady,
We have it not to lose.

Gib. We fynde by the prophecy — let be youre dyn! —
Of David and Isay, and mo then I myn,¹³
'Thay prophecyed by clergy¹⁴ that in a vyrgyn 25
Shuld he lyght and ly, to slokyn¹⁵ oure syn
And slake¹⁶ it,

¹ nom

² trilled (?), MS crakyd

³ breves (three breves were accounted
equal to one long in the music of
that period)

⁴ warbled (')

⁵ threw it off

⁶ afear'd

⁷ gladness

⁸ for reward

⁹ receive

¹⁰ hie

¹¹ therefore

¹² even if

¹³ remember

¹⁴ learning

¹⁵ quench

¹⁶ slacken, abate

[Save] oure kynde¹ from wo,

Ffor Isay sayd so :

*Ecc*² *virgo*

*Concipiet*³ a chylde that is nakyd.

5 *Daw* Ffull glad may we be, and abyde that day,
 That Luffy to se, that all myghtys may.⁴
 Lord, well were me, for ones and for ay,
 Myght I knele on my kne, som word for to say
 To that Chylde.

10 Bot the angell sayd
 In a cryb wos he layde,
 He was poorly arayd,
 Both meke⁵ and mylde.

Coll. Patryarkes that has bene, and prophetys beforne,
 15 Thay desyryd to have sene⁶ this Chylde that is borne.
 Thay ar gone full clene, that have thay lorne.
 We shall se hym, I weyn, or it be morne,
 To tokyn⁷

 When I se hym and felc,
 20 Then wot I full weyll
 It is true as steyll
 That prophetys have spokyn :

 To so poore as we ar[e] that he wold appere,
 Ffyrst fynd, and declare by his messyngere.
 25 *Gib.* Go we now, let us fare, the place is us nere.
 Daw. I am redy and yare,⁸ go we in fere⁹
 To that Bright¹⁰

¹ race

² MS cite (em E)

³ Isa 7 14 (Vulgate)

⁴ has power over all mights

⁵ MS. mener (em. K.)

⁶ Matt 13. 17

⁷ as a sign

⁸ prepared

⁹ together

¹⁰ bright one

Lord, if thi wyll¹ be —
 We ar lewde² all thre —
 Thou grauntt us somkyns³ gle
 To comforth thi Wight.⁴

SCENE VIII

Bethlehem. A stable. Enter the Shepherds, and kneel

Coll. Hayll, comly and clene! Hayll, yong Child! ;
 Hayll, Maker, as I meyne, of⁵ a madyn so mylde!
 Thou has waryd,⁶ I weyne, the warlo so wylde,
 The fals gyler⁷ of teyn,⁸ now goys he begylde. —

Lo, he merys,⁹

Lo, he laghys, my Swetyng! — 10
 A wel fare¹⁰ metyng,
 I have holden my hetyng¹¹ —
 Have a bob¹² of cherys.

Gib Hayll, sufferan¹³ Savyoure! Ffor thou has us soght,
 Hayll, frely Foyde¹⁴ and Floure, that all thyng has wrought! 15
 Hayll, full of favoure, that made all of noght!
 Hayll! I kneyll and I cowre. A byrd have I broght

To my Barne.

Hayll, lytyll tyne¹⁶ Mop¹⁶!
 Of oure crede thou art Crop.¹⁷ 20
 I wold drynk on thy cop,¹⁸
 Lytyll Daystarne.¹⁹

Daw. Hayll, Derlyng dere, full of godhede!
 I pray the be nere when that I have nede.

¹ MS wylles
² simple, ignorant
³ of some kind
⁴ creature
⁵ from
⁶ cursed
⁷ beguiler (Satan)

⁸ of sorrow, sorrowful
⁹ grows merry
¹⁰ very fair
¹¹ promise
¹² bunch, cluster
¹³ sovereign
¹⁴ noble child

¹⁵ any
¹⁶ baby, young creature
¹⁷ See Heb 12. 2
¹⁸ from thy cup
¹⁹ See 2 Pet. 1. 19, Rev 22 16

Hayll, swete is thy chere ! My hart wold blede
 To se the sytt here in so poore wede,
 With no pennys.

Hayll ! Put furth thy dall¹ !
 5 I bryng the bot a ball,
 Have and play the² withall,
 And go to the tenys.³

Mary. The Fader of heven, God omnypotent,
 That sett all on seven,⁴ his Son has he sent.
 10 My name couth⁵ he⁶ neven,⁷ and lyght⁸ or he went.
 I conceyvyd hym⁹ full even thurgh myght, as he ment,
 And now is he borne.
 He kepe you fro wo !
 I shall pray hym so ,
 15 Tell furth as ye go,
 And myn¹⁰ on this morne.

Coll. Ffarewell, lady, so fare to beholde,
 With thy Chylde on thi kne !
Gib Bot he lygys full cold.

Lord, well is me , now we go, thou behold.
 20 *Daw.* Fforsothe, allredy it semys to be told
 Full oft.

Coll. What grace we have fun¹¹ !
Gib. Com furth, now ar we won¹² !

Daw To syng ar we bun,¹³
 25 Let take on loft.¹⁴ [They sing.
*Explicit Pagina Pastorum.*¹⁵

¹ fist, hand² refl³ tennis (well known in England by the end of the fourteenth century)⁴ created all things in seven days (?)⁵ did⁶ God the Father⁷ name⁸ alighted, descended (on me)⁹ Christ¹⁰ think¹¹ found¹² rescued, saved¹³ bound¹⁴ let us sing aloud¹⁵ Here ends The Shepherd's Pageant

