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A LITERARY
MIDDLE ENGLISH READER

EDITED BY

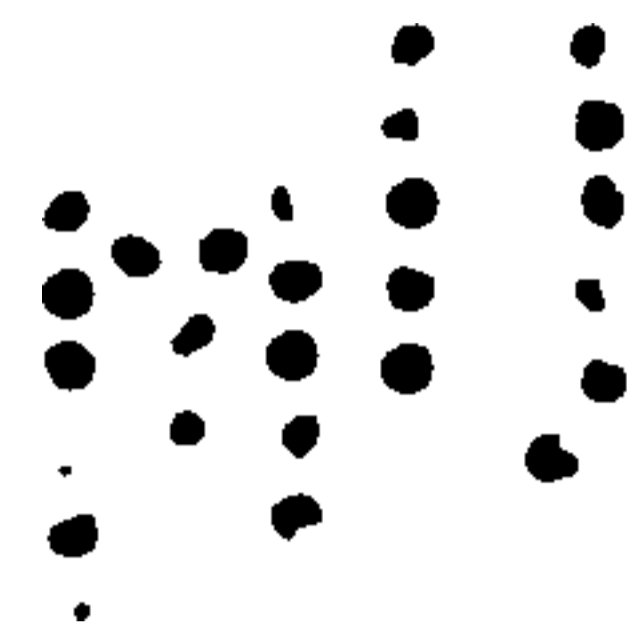
ALBERT STANBURROUGH COOK
PROFESSOR OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
IN YALE UNIVERSITY



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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 *i* and *j*, *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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✓ *handwritten*

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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 wits 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 naïvely 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, un instructive, 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 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

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II. THE LANGUAGE

LETTERS

The letters are the same as in modern English (but see below), with the addition of \mathfrak{z} (\mathfrak{Z}), $\mathfrak{þ}$ (\mathfrak{P}), and $\mathfrak{ð}$ (\mathfrak{D}). \mathfrak{Z} (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). \mathfrak{P} (*thorn*) and \mathfrak{D} (*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. \mathfrak{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. *cit *), *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:

a as in *father*

e (*ee*) close as in *they*

e (*ee*) open as in *there*

i as in *pique*

o close as in *blow*

o open as in *broad*

u as in *rule*

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 $\bar{o} + u$ (nearly as \bar{o}), 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*
 - þ**, **ð** 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 **hors**. 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.	<i>N.</i>	h(e)o; s(c)ho, s(c)he
	<i>G.</i>	} hir(e), hur(e), her(e)
	<i>D.</i>	
	<i>A.</i>	hi(e), hir(e), hur(e), her(e)
PLUR.	<i>N.</i>	h(i)e; thoi, thai
	<i>G.</i>	her(e), h(e)or(e); their(e)
	<i>D.</i>	} he(o)m, hi(o)m; the(i)m, tha(i)m
	<i>A.</i>	

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, bi
	2. be(e)st; Northern es, is, bese; art, ort; with pers. pron. artu, artow; neg. nart	
	3. both, 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
PRET. SING.	1. (h)abbe, have 2. hafest, ha(ve)st; Northern havis, has(o), 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(o)	have(n)
PRET. SING.	1. 3. hafede, haved(e), hædde, had(d)e 2. hevedest, haddist; Northern hade	1. 2. 3. [Like Ind. 1 and 3]
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(ɣ), 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 personal 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**.

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III. SOME USEFUL BOOKS FOR THE STUDY OF MIDDLE ENGLISH

LITERARY HISTORY

- BALDWIN, *Introduction to English Medieval Literature*. New York and London, 1914.
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- JUSSERAND, *Literary History of the English People (from the Origins to the Renaissance)*. New York and London, 1895.
- KER, *English Literature: Medieval*. London and New York, 1912.
- MORLEY, *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.
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- PANCOAST and SPAETH, *Early English Poems*. New York, 1911.
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- , *The Chief Middle English Poets: Selected Poems*. Boston, 1914.

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- HAMMOND, *Chaucer: a Bibliographical Manual*. New York, 1908.
- KITTREDGE, *Chaucer and his Poetry*. Cambridge, 1915.

BOOKS FOR THE STUDY OF MIDDLE ENGLISH xxvii

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GAYLEY, *Plays of our Forefathers*. New York, 1907.

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EINENKEL, *Streifzüge durch die Mittelenglische Syntax*. Münster i. W., 1887.

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

See also Ten Brink, under Chaucer.

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

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BRADLEY-STRATMANN, *Old English [Middle English] Dictionary*. London, 1891.

MÄTZNER, *Altenglische Sprachproben: Wörterbuch: A—Misbilenen*. Berlin, 1878–1900.

MURRAY, *New English Dictionary: A—Squoye, Su—Subterraneous, T—Turn-down*. Oxford, 1888–1915.

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.

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JEANROY, *Les Origines de la Poésie Lyrique en France au Moyen Age*.
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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.)

GROSS, *Sources and Literature of English History, from the Earliest Times to about 1485*. London and New York, 1900.

Jahresbericht für Germanische Philologie. Berlin, Leipzig, 1879 ff. (Each annual volume contains a section on English.)

KÖRTING, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Englischen Literatur*. 5th ed. Münster 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 *lacrymæ 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, 250; for the text of the OF. 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 brouȝt 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 curtois 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,' sayd Elayne. 'Fair damoyssel, I thanke yow,' sayd Syr Launcelot, 'but truly,' sayd 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,' sayd 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 maryed and⁶ I had wolde,⁷ but I never applyed me to be
 . maryed 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 shyrly,³ and felle doune in a swoune; 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 maade grete joye of hym, and soo dyd Sir Gawayn, 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, ete, 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 thys world, thenne she shryved⁹ her clene, and receyved her Creatoure.¹⁰ And ever she complayned styll upon Sire Launcelot. Thenne her ghoostly¹¹ 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 sufferance² 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 allygeance³ 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 wher-
 for⁵ 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 Temse⁷ 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 spek-
 ynge 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

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✓ Arthur, wete ye wel I am ryghte hev¹ of the dethe of this fair
 damoyzel. 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,' sayd Sir Launcelot, 'I love
 not to be constra^uyned to love; for love muste aryse of the herte, and
 ✓ 15 not by no constra^uynte.' 'That is trouth,' sayd the kyng, and many
 knyghtes; 'love is free in hymselfe, and never wille be bounden, for
 where he is bounden he looseth hymself.' Thenne sayd the kyng
 unto Sire Launcelot: 'Hit wyl be your worshyp⁶ that ye oversee⁷
 that she be entered⁸ worshypfully.' 'Sire,' sayd Sire Launcelot, 'that
 20 shalle be done as I can best devyse.' And soo many knyghtes yede⁹
 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,' sayd 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 sorrowful

2 refer (by way of appeal)

3 or

4 that she might

5 of knight (for an explanation see *NED*. s.v. *kin*, 6.b)

6 to your credit

7 provide

8 interred

9 went

10 besought his pardon

11 because

12 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 Kynge Anguysse and Syre Tristram toke their leve, and sailed into Irland with grete noblesse¹ and joye. Soo whanne they were in Irland, the kynge 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 hym⁵ 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, Kynge Anguysse asked Syr Tristram why he asked not his boon,⁴ for whosomever he had promysed hym he¹⁰ 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 Kynge Marke, that shalle have her to wyf, for soo have I promysed hym.' 'Allas,' said the kynge, 'I had lever⁵ than alle the land that I have¹⁵ 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 Kynge Marke, myn unkel.'²⁰ 'As for that,' sayd Kynge Anguysse, '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 Kynge Marke, youre unkel, that is in youre choyse.'

Soo to make short conclusion, La Beale Isoud was made redy to²⁵ 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 gentilwoman,

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

and unto Governaille, 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 Governaille. 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 justyng.

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 to¹⁰ 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 and¹⁵ 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 prowesse.' 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,¹⁸ forsothe,' said the quene, 'for he is of alle partyes¹⁴ come of the best knyghtes of the world, and of the hyhest lygnage¹⁶; 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 saye²⁵ 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

¹⁸ yea

¹⁴ in all respects

¹⁶ 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 knyght sette in his owne place as they were toforehand. Thenne anone they herd crakyng 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 semyng fayrer than ever they sawe afore. Not for thenne 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.³ 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 fulfilled⁴ with good odoures, and every knyght had suche metes and drynkes as he
 15 best loved in this world. And whan the Holy Grayle had be⁵ borne thurgh the halle, thenne the holy vessel departed sodenly, that they wyste not where hit becam.⁶ Thenne had they alle brethe to speke. And thenne the kyng yelded⁷ thankynges 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 hyhe 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 avowe⁸ that
 25 to-morne,⁹ withoute lenger¹⁰ abydyng,¹¹ 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,¹² 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,¹³ and maade suche avowes as Sire Gawayne had made.

1 ranks, degrees

2 burst asunder

3 dumb

4 filled

5 been

6 went

7 gave

8 vow

9 to-morrow

10 longer

11 delay

12 succeed

13 most part, greater number

Anone as Kynge Arthur herd this, he was gretely dyspleasyd, for he wyste wel they myghte not ageynesaye¹ theyre avowes. 'Allas!' said Kynge Arthur unto Sir Gawayn, 'ye have nyghe slayne me with the avowe and promesse that ye have made. For thurgh yow ye have berafte² me the fayrest felauship and the truest of knyghthode that 5 ever 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 forthynketh³ me a lytel, for I have loved them as wel as my lyf.'

KING HORN

Handwritten note: Nat. - 5. 11.

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 Damnonii, 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 swozning.¹
 'Horn,' quap² heo,³ 'wel⁴ sone⁵
 þat schal beon⁶ idone⁷:
 þu schalt beo⁸ dubbed knigt
 Are⁹ come seve¹⁰ nigst.
 Have her¹¹ þis cuppe,
 And þis ryng þeruppe¹²
 To Aylbrus þe¹³ stuard,
 And se¹⁴ he holde foreward.¹⁵

10

1 swoon

2 quoth, said

3 she

4 very: MS. vel

5 soon

6 be

7 done (OE. *gedōn*)

8 be

9 before

10 seven

11 here

12 thereupon, in addition

13 MS. &

14 see (that)

15 keep his promise

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

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þine armes for to welde¹;
 God² kniȝt he schal ȝelde.³

þe king seðe sone:

'þat is wel idone —

Horn me wel iquemep⁴;

God kniȝt him bisemep.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 bigan to springe;

Horn com⁹ bivore þe kinge

Mid his twelf yfere¹⁰ —

Sume hi¹¹ were lufere.¹²

Horn he dubbede to kniȝte,

20 Wiþ swerd and spures briȝte.

He sette him on a stede¹³ whit;

þer nas no kniȝt hym ilik.¹⁴

He smot him a litel wiȝt,¹⁵

And bed¹⁶ him beon a god kniȝt.

25 Apulf fel a¹⁷ knes þar¹⁸

Bivore þe king Aylmar.

'King,' he seðe, 'so kene,¹⁹

Grante me a bene²⁰:

'Nu²¹ is kniȝt Sire Horn

30 þat in Suddenne²² was iboren²³;

1 wield

2 good, valorous

3 turn out, become

4 pleases

5 he seems

6 companions (OE. *gefēran*)

7 them

8 it seemed to Ailmar

9 came

10 See l. 9

11 some of them (some they)

12 wicked

13 steed

14 like (OE. *gelīc*)

15 a little bit, gently

16 bade

17 on

18 there

19 brave

20 boon, request

21 now

22 See Intr., p. 11

23 born (OE. *geboren*)

Lord he is of londe
 Over us þat bi him stonde ¹;
 Þin armes he haþ and scheld, ²
 To figte wiþ upon þe feld;
 Let him us alle knizte,
 For þat is ure ³ rizte.
 Aylmar sede sone ywis ⁴:
 'Do nu þat þi wille is.'
 Horn adun ligte, ⁵
 And makede ⁶ hem alle kniztes. 10
 Murie ⁷ was þe feste,
 Al of faire gestes;
 Ac Rymenhild nas nozt þer,
 And þat hire þuzte ⁸ seve ⁹ zer. ¹⁰
 After Horn heo ¹¹ sente, 15
 And he to bure ¹² wente.
 Nolde he nozt go one ¹³ —
 Apulf was his mone. ¹⁴
 Rymenhild on flore stod
 (Hornes come ¹⁵ hire þuzte god), 20
 And sede: 'Welcome, Sire Horn,
 And Apulf knizt þe biforn.
 Knizt, nu is þi time
 For to sitte bi me;
 Do nu þat þu er ¹⁶ of spake: 25
 To þi wif þu me take;
 Ef ¹⁷ þu art trewe of dedes,
 Do nu ase þu sedes ¹⁸;
 Nu þu hast wille þine,
 Unbind ¹⁹ me of my pine.' ²⁰ 30

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 saidest¹⁹ 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,

And mi knizthod prove,

Ar ⁶ Ihc þe ginne ⁷ to woze. ⁸

We beþ ⁹ kniztes zonge,

Of o ¹⁰ dai al isprunge, ¹¹

And of ure mestere ¹²

10

So ¹³ is þe manere ¹⁴ :

Wip sume opere knizte

Wel for his lemman ¹⁵ fizte,

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 lue in þe felde,

Mid spere and mid schelde ;

If Ihc come to lyve, ²²

20

Ihc schal þe take to wyve.' ²³

' Knizt,' 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 ginge (?)
29 under
30 may be able

For my luve þu hit were,
 And on þi finger þu hit ¹ bere.
 Þe stones beop ² of suche grace ³
 þat þu ne schalt in none place
 Of none dundes ⁴ beon ofdrad, 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 anoper. 10
 Horn, Ihc þe biseche
 Wip loveliche speche,
 Crist ȝeve ⁹ god endinge, ¹⁰
 þe aȝen ¹¹ to bringe.'
 þe knigt hire gan ¹² kesse, 15
 And heo him to blesse.
 Leve at ¹³ hire he nam, ¹⁴
 And into halle cam.

of 5 dunt

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, 1902).

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.

'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. *gemādd*)
 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. liv-lvi), from which the following extract is taken: 'On the right hand of Gryme stands his *protégé* Haveloc ("Habloc"), 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 Elsineur. 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 fastinde⁷ he yede,

þat non⁸ for his werk wolde⁹ him fede;

þe þridde¹⁰ day he herde calle:

'Bermen,¹¹ bermen, hider¹² forth alle!'

[Povre¹³ þat on fote yede]¹⁴

Sprongen¹⁵ forth so¹⁶ sparke of¹⁷ glede.¹⁸

Havelok shof¹⁹ dun²⁰ [wel]²¹ nyne or ten

Riht²² amideward²³ þe fen,²⁴

And stirte²⁵ forth to þe kok,²⁶

[þer²⁷ the erles mete he tok]²⁸

þat he bouhte²⁹ at þe brigge;

þe bermen let he alle ligge,³⁰

And bar³¹ þe mete to þe castel,

And gat³² him þere a ferþing³³ wastel.³⁴

10

15

1 went (OE. *ēode*)
 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

Handwritten note:
 ...
 ...
 ...

Handwritten notes:
 ...
 ...

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 second

2 kept watch for; MS. kepte he

3 also

4 very eagerly

5 MS. say

6 lying (to lie)

7 MS. herles

8 MS. cornwalie

9 called

10 quickly

11 them

12 way

13 went

14 stood

15 as

16 leaped

17 unto

18 heap

19 leaped

20 fish-basket

21 take up quickly

22 cuttlefish

23 salmon

24 plaice

25 broad

26 lampreys

27 eels

28 burden

29 took

30 had

31 helped

32 crown, head

33 laughed

34 enough

35 wilt thou

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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,
 5 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 ;
 10 Wolde he nevere haven rest,
 More þan he were ¹¹ a best. ¹²
 Of alle men was he mest ¹³ meke,
 Lauhwinde ¹⁴ ay, and bliþe of speke ¹⁵ ;
 Evere he was glad and bliþe,
 15 His sorwe ¹⁶ he coupe ¹⁷ ful wel miþe. 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
 20 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
 25 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 haveþe maked, ³²

1 opposite
 2 MS. but bitwen
 3 alone
 4 nor
 5 turf, peat
 6 a kind of sedge or reed
 7 MS. shulden
 8 require for use
 9 drew
 10 cut ; MS. citte
 11 if he were (subj.)

12 beast
 13 most
 14 laughing
 15 speech
 16 sorrow
 17 could
 18 conceal
 19 there was
 20 lad, boy
 21 frolic
 22 sport

23 play
 24 they
 25 did
 26 their
 27 MS. holde
 28 saw
 29 high
 30 how ; MS. hw
 31 tall
 32 made

But-on þat ¹ he was alмест 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.
 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 cloped, [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 yemedede ¹⁵
 In kineriche,¹⁶ þat so wel semede ¹⁷ 15
 King or cayser for to be ;
 þan ¹⁸ he was shrid,¹⁹ so semede ²⁰ he ;
 For þanne ¹⁸ he ²¹ weren alle samen ²²
 At Lincolne, at þe gamen,²³
 And þe erles men woren 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 hisc 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 was

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 tallest
 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
 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 stric.⁸

10 In þat time al Engelond⁹
 þerl¹⁰ Godrich havede 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 champioun,¹⁴
 Mani hwit¹⁵ 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;
 Chaumpiouns,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. Hengelond¹⁰ the earl¹¹ made, had¹² town¹³ alive¹⁴ MS. chambion¹⁵ MS. with¹⁶ 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[ur]þe¹⁰ man he sholde¹¹ be
 þat mouhte¹² liften it to his kne ; 10
 Was þer neyþer clerc ne prest¹³
 þat mihte¹² liften it to his brest :
 þerwit[h]¹⁴ putten the chaumpiouns¹⁵
 þat þider comen with þe barouns.
 Hwoso mihte putten þore 15
 Biforn anoper an inch or more,
 Wore¹⁶ he yung, wore he old,¹⁷
 He was for a kempe¹⁸ told.¹⁹
 Also²⁰ þe[i] stoden, an[d] ofte stareden,²¹
 þe chaumpiouns,¹⁵ and ek the ladden²² ; 20
 And he²³ maden mikel strout²⁴
 Abouten þe alþerbeste²⁵ b[o]ut,²⁶
 Havelok stod, and lokede þertil²⁷ ;
 And of puttingge he was ful wil,²⁸
 For nevere yete ne saw he or²⁹ 25
 Putten the stone, or²⁹ þanne þor.
 Hise mayster bad him gon þerto,

1 there

2 groom

3 MS. þo

4 Though 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

5. **ston** : for the history of the game, see note in Skeat's edition.

Als he coupe¹ þerwith do.
 Þo hise mayster it him bad,
 He was of him sore adrad ;
 Þerto he stirte² sone anon,
 And kipte³ up þat hevi ston,
 Þat he sholde put[t]en wibe ;
 He putte, at þe firste siþe,⁴
 Over⁵ alle þat þer wore,
 Twel[ve] fote,⁶ and sumdel⁷ more.
 10 Þe champions⁸ 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 ;
 Hu¹⁸ he was fayr, hu¹⁹ he was long,
 Hu²⁰ he was wiht,¹⁸ hu²¹ he was strong ;
 20 Þorhut²⁰ England yede þe speke,²⁰
 Hu²¹ 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[i] speken of Havelok, everi del,²¹
 Hu²² he was strong man and hey,
 Hu²³ he was strong, and ek [ful] sley²² ;
 And þouhte²³ Godrich : ' Þoru²⁴ þis knave
 Shal Ich Engelond al have,
 30 And mi sone after me ;

1 could

2 leaped

3 snatched

4 time

5 beyond

6 feet

7 somewhat

8 MS. chaunpiouns

9 saw

10 one another

11 laughed

12 too

13 wonder

14 made known

15 MS. hw

16 threw

17 every one

18 courageous

19 throughout ; MS. þoruth

20 speech ; MS. speche

21 on every side (?)

22 skilful ; MS. fri

23 MS. þouthte

24 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,
 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 þouhte [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 boþe was god and swiþe fair.
 He wende þat Havelok wer a þral,¹⁶
 þerþoru¹⁷ he wende haven al
 In Engelond, 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 boþe fayr and hende,²¹
 And dide hire to Lincolne bringe²² ; 30

1 MS. the king

2 caused

3 utensils of the mass

4 MS. yeve

5 highest, tallest

6 strongest

7 made

8 hence

9 India

10 very

11 supposed

12 was

13 a single

14 furrow

15 heir

16 slave

17 for this reason, by this means

18 MS. was werse

19 shaped, created

20 may he be

21 gentle, courteous

22 and had her brought to Lincoln

Belles dede he ageyn hire ¹ ringen,
 And joie he made hire swiþe mikel,
 But neþeles ² he was ful swikel.³

He seyde þat he sholde hire yive ⁴
 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,

15 And seyde: ' Hweþer ⁹ þou wilt be
 Quen and levedi ¹⁰ 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 approach

² nevertheless

³ deceitful

⁴ MS. yeve

⁵ MS. Iohan

⁶ MS. to hire

⁷ unless

⁸ such

⁹ MS. hwor

¹⁰ lady

¹¹ vagabond, low fellow

¹² marry

¹³ MS. ne shalt

¹⁴ lord

¹⁵ a curse upon him who

¹⁶ another

¹⁷ shall

¹⁸ MS. ye sholen

¹⁹ in spite of thee

²⁰ wept

²¹ it was ill for her

²² morning-bell

²³ church

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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,
 [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 picke tolde,¹¹
 Mikel plente upon þe bok:
 He¹² ys.¹³ 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.

Hwan he²² togydere in Godes lawe
 20 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 burn
 2 she
 3 threatened
 4 dared
 5 marriage
 6 hinder
 7 though
 8 it pleased her
 9 caused; MS. don him
 10 pennies
 11 counted in great number

12 Godrich
 13 them
 14 them; MS. as
 15 they
 16 performed; MS. deden
 17 everything
 18 pertained
 19 MS. and
 20 clergyman
 21 out of, from
 22 they

23 Transposed from preceding
 line (weren togydere)
 24 MS. þat þe
 25 people
 26 knew
 27 could do
 28 availed them
 29 thence
 30 MS. þat Godrich
 31 own, possess; MS. hawe
 32 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
 þat þei sholden þenne fle⁶
 Til⁷ Grim, and til⁷ hise sones þre ;
 þer wenden⁸ he⁴ alþerbeste⁹ to spede,¹⁰
 Hem¹¹ for to cloþe, and for to fede.
 þe lond he⁴ token under fote,¹²
 Ne wisten he⁴ non oper bote,¹³
 And helden ay the rihte sti¹⁴
 Til he⁴ komen to Grimesby.

10

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 ;
 Ne weren he⁴ nevere ayen hem fikel.²¹
 On knes ful fayre he⁴ hem setten,
 And Havelok swiþe fayre gretten,²²
 And seyden : ' Welkome, loverd²³ dere,
 And welkome be þi fayre fere²⁴ !

20

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
 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 bope 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
 Gold, and silver, and michel auhte,⁷
 þat Grim ure fader us bitauhte⁸;
 Gold, and silver, and oþer 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 ;
 He¹⁵ sholen bedden¹⁸ hire and þe,
 For levedi wile we þat she be.¹⁹
 Hwan he¹⁵ þis joie haveden maked,
 20 Sithen¹⁹ stikes broken and kraked,
 And þe fir brouht on brenne,²⁰
 Ne was þer spared gos²¹ ne henne,
 Ne þe ende,²² ne þe drake,
 Mete he¹⁵ deden plente make ;²³
 25 Ne wantede þere no god mete ;
 Wyn and ale deden he¹⁵ fete,²⁴
 And maden²⁵ hem glade and bliþe,
 Wesseyl ledden²⁶ he fele siþe.²⁷

1 MS. yeve

2 provided that

3 property, goods

4 horses

5 cattle

6 sea

7 possessions ; MS. auchte

8 delivered, committed ; MS. bitawchte

9 property

10 deliver, commit

11 remain

12 seignior, master

13 our ; MS. hure

14 she

15 they

16 MS. cloþen

17 for

18 put to bed

19 afterwards

20 to burning

21 goose

22 duck ; MS. hende

23 they had plenty of meats
prepared

24 they caused to be brought

25 MS. made

26 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 ² yeven ³ unkyndelike.⁴
 O niht ⁵ saw she þerinne a liht,⁶
 A swiþe fayr, a swiþe bryht,
 Al so briht, al so shir ⁷
 So⁸ it were a blase ⁹ of 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 ¹⁰ þou[h] she were adred !
 Þouhte she : ' [H]wat may this bimene ¹¹ ?
 He beth ¹² heyman ¹³ yet, als Y wene ¹⁴ ;
 He beth heyman er he be ¹⁵ ded.' 15
 On hise shuldre, of gold red
 She saw a swiþe noble croiz,¹⁵
 Of an angel she herde a voyz ¹⁶ :
 ' Goldeborw, lat þi sorwe be,¹⁷
 For Havelok, þat haveþ spuset þe, 20
 Is ¹⁸ kinges sone and kinges eyr ¹⁹ ;
 þat bikenneth ²⁰ þat croiz so fayr.
 It bikenneth more — þat he shal
 Denemark haven, and Englonð al ;
 He shal ben king, strong and stark, 25
 Of Engelonð and Denemark ;
 þat shal[t] þu wit[h] þin eyne sen,
 And þo[u] shalt quen and levedi ben.'
 þanne ²¹ she havede herd the stevene ²²
 Of þe angel ut of hevене, 30

¹ cheated, deceived² MS. shere (*for she were*)³ given⁴ as did not befit her⁵ in the night⁶ light⁷ shining⁸ as if⁹ blaze¹⁰ wonder¹¹ mean¹² is¹³ nobleman¹⁴ think¹⁵ cross¹⁶ voice¹⁷ put aside thy sorrow¹⁸ MS. he¹⁹ heir²⁰ betokens²¹ when²² voice

She was so fele siþes ¹ blithe
 þat she ne mihte hire ioie mythe ² —
 But Havelok sone anon she kiste ;
 And he slep, and nouht ne wiste ³
 Hwat þat aungel havede seyd.

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'Homme* (*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'Homme* 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, Mediæval*, 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 very

² conceal

³ 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

A. A. 11

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,
 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 nocht availe; 20
 The mast tobrak,²⁰ the seil todrof²¹;
 The schip upon the wawes 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

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Unto the gamen ¹ alle and some ²
 Of hem that ben deliverē ³ and wyhte, ⁴
 To do such maistrie ⁵ as thei myhte.
 Thei made hem naked as thei scholde,
 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 evenē 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 bere a pris. ¹⁴

Appolinus, 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 clothe ¹ ;
 At souper-time, natheles,
 The king amidde al the pres ²
 Let ³ clepe ⁴ him up among hem alle,
 And bad his mareschall ⁵ of halle
 To setten him in such degre ⁶
 That he upon him myhte se.
 The king was sone set and served,
 And he, which hath his pris deserved
 After the kinges oghne ⁷ word, 10
 Was mad beginne ⁸ 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 wax ¹² in debat, 15
 Thenkende ¹³ what he hadde lore ¹⁴ ;
 And such a sorwe he tok therfore,
 That he sat evere stille and thoghte,
 As he which of no mete ¹⁵ roghte. ¹⁶
 The king behield his hevynesse, ¹⁷ 20
 And, of his grete gentillesse,
 His doghter, which was fair and good,
 And ate ¹⁸ bord before him stod,
 As it was thilke ¹⁹ time usage, ²⁰
 He bad to gon on his message, 25
 And fonde ²¹ for to make him glad.
 And sche dede as hire fader bad,
 And goth to him the softe pas, ²²
 And axeth whenne ²³ and what he was,
 And preith he scholde his thoghtes leve. ²⁴ 30

1 wear
2 press, crowd

3 bade

4 to call

5 marshal

6 station

7 own

8 to begin, sit at the head of

9 table

10 might see

11 state

12 grew

13 thinking

14 lost

15 food

16 took account, recked

17 sadness

18 at the

19 that

20 custom

21 attempt

22 pace

23 whence

24 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.
 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 liere,²⁰
 It were a glad thing for to hiere.'

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
 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 witesse, 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,
 Awey goth dissh, away goth cuppe,
 Doun goth the bord, the cloth was uppe,
 Thei risen and gon out of halle.
 The king his chamberlein let calle, 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,
 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 wise
 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 be
 2 done
 3 make mention
 4 those
 5 knows

6 teaching
 7 instruction
 8 damsel
 9 in the morning
 10 spend

11 fairly
 12 dulcimer
 13 violin
 14 tune
 15 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,
 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 befalle,
 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 hield¹⁹ 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
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.

10 The king, which wolde his honour save,
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 ayein.
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 for to make an ende
And wryte ayein 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 ayein, and thus sche saide:
'The schame which is in a maide
With speche dar nocht ben unloke,¹²

1 sick

2 then

3 cause to make, have made

4 memorandum

5 property

6 their

7 looked over

8 delivered

9 just

10 put aside, rejected

11 father's

12 unlocked

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Thus it befell upon a nyht,
 Whan ther was nocht bot sterreliht,
 Sche was vanysst riht as hir liste,¹
 That no wyht bot hirself it wiste,
 And that was ate² mydnyht-tyde.
 The world was stille on every side ;
 With open hed and fot al bare,
 Hir her³ tosprad,⁴ sche gan to fare ;
 Upon hir clothes gert⁵ sche was.
 10 Al specheles,⁶ and on the gras,
 Sche glod⁷ forth as an addre doth —
 Non otherwise sche ne goth —
 Til sche cam to the freisshe flod ;
 And there a while sche with⁸ 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 drecching⁹ onde,¹⁰
 20 And tho sche tok hir speche on honde.
 Ferst sche began to clepe¹¹ 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 Echates¹² — and gan to crie —
 Whiche is goddesse of sorcerie.
 Sche seide : ' Helpeth¹³ at this nede,
 And, as ye maden me to spede¹⁴
 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 drowe ¹ ;
 And tho sche gan hir hed doun bowe,
 And up sche styh, ² and faire and wel
 Sche drof ³ forth bothe char and whel ⁴
 Above in th' air among the skyes.

The lond of Crete and tho ⁵ parties ⁶
 Sche soughte, and faste gan hire hye, ⁷
 And there, upon the hulles ⁸ hyhe
 Of Othrin and Olimpe also,
 And ek of othre hulles mo, ⁹ 10
 Sche fond ¹⁰ and gadreth herbes suote ¹¹ ;
 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 nought ¹³ —
 Eridian and Amphrisos,
 Peneie and ek Spercheidos ;
 To hem sche wente, and ther sche nom ¹⁴
 Bothe of the water and the fom, 20
 The sond, and ek the smale stones —
 Whiche as sche ches ¹⁵ out for the nones ¹⁶ ;
 And of the Rede See a part
 That was behovelich ¹⁷ 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 greves ¹ ;
 And ek a part sche tok of leves ;
 Bot thing which mihte hire most availe
 Sche fond in Crete ² and in Thessaile.
 In daies and in nyhtes nyne,
 With gret travaile and with gret pyne ³
 Sche was pourveid ⁴ 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 hirsclven 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 heled ⁵ 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 hole ⁷ entente.
 Tho tok sche fieldwode ⁸ and verveyne —
 Of herbes ben noght betre tueine —
 Of which anon, withoute let, ⁹
 30 These alters ben aboute set.
 Tuo sondri puttes ¹⁰ faste ¹¹ by
 Sche made, and with that hastely

¹ groves² See note on l. 6, p. 47³ MS. peyne⁴ provided⁵ covered⁶ Youth (Hebe)⁷ whole⁸ woodland-growth ; Lat. *silva agrestis*, literally translated⁹ hindrance : we still say without 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
 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 grante 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 fyr doun 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

20. The next fifty lines are for the most part original (Macaulay).

Bot whan Medea sawh it brenne,
 Anon sche gan to sterte and renne ¹
 The fyri aulters al aboute.
 Ther was no beste ² which goth oute
 More wylde than sche semeth ther:
 Aboute hir schuldres hyng ³ 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 eft ⁵
 Sche made hem in the pettes wete,⁶
 And put hem in the fyri hete,
 And tok the brond with al the blase,
 And thries sche began to rase ⁷
 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 doun,
 Sche made many a wonder ⁹ soun,¹⁰
 Somtime lich ¹¹ unto the cock,
 Somtime unto the laverock,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 goddessse;
 And what hir liste, more or lesse,

¹ run² beast³ hung⁴ turned to another nature⁵ again⁶ wet⁷ race⁸ place⁹ wonderful¹⁰ sound¹¹ like¹² lark¹³ grows strange¹⁴ fay, fairy¹⁵ as one might say

Sche dede,¹ in bokes as we finde,
 That passeth over mannes kinde.²
 Bot who that wole³ of wondres hier —
 What thing sche wroghte in this matiere,
 To make an ende of that sche gan —
 Such merveile herde nevere man.

Apointed in the newe mone,
 Whan it was time for to done,
 Sche sette a caldron on the fyr,
 In which was al the hole atir⁴ 10
 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 15
 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 ; 20
 Chelidre hire yaf his adres skin,
 And sche to builen caste hem in ;
 A part ek of the horned oule,
 The which men hier on nyhtes houle ;
 And of a raven, which was told¹² 25
 Of nyne hundred wynter old,
 Sche tok the hed with al the bile¹³ ;
 And as the medicine it wile,

1 did

2 surpasses human nature

3 will

4 preparation

5 juice

6 boil

7 manner

8 foam

9 rind and root

10 flower

11 remedy

12 reckoned

13 bill

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

Sche tok therafter the bouele
 Of the seewolf,¹ and for the hele²
 Of Eson, with a thousand mo
 Of thinges that sche hadde tho,
 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 doun 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).

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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, 2212-2478. The final *z* (for *s*) at the end of words is frequently represented in the MS. by *z*; here it is uniformly printed as *z*.

Now wyl I of hor¹ servise say yow no more,
 For uch² wyze⁸ may wel wite⁴ no wont⁵ þat þer were;
 Anoper noyse ful newe nezed⁶ bilive,⁷
 þat þe lude⁸ myzt haf leve liflode⁹ to cach.¹⁰
 5 For unepe¹¹ watz¹² þe noyce¹⁸ not a whyle¹⁴ sesed,¹⁵
 And þe fyrst cource in þe court kyndely¹⁶ served,

1 their

2 each

8 man

4 know

5 want

6 drew nigh

7 on a sudden

8 people

9 food

10 take

11 scarcely

12 was

18 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 þik,
 And his lyndes¹⁰ and his lymes so longe and so grete,
 Half etayn¹¹ in erde¹² I hope¹³ þat he were.
 Bot mon most I algate¹⁴ mynn¹⁵ hym to bene,
 And þat þe myriest¹⁶ in his muckel¹⁷ þat myzt 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 folzande,²³ in forme þat he hade,
 Ful clene²⁴ ;

10

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 þis gome³⁵ and his wedes,³⁶
 A strayt³⁷ cote³⁸ ful strezt,³⁹ þat stek on⁴⁰ his sides,
 A mere⁴¹ mantile abof, mensked⁴² withinne,
 With pelure⁴³ pured⁴⁴ apert⁴⁵ þe pane⁴⁶ ful clene,⁴⁷
 With blyþe⁴⁸ blaunner⁴⁹ ful bryzt, and his hod⁵⁰ boþe,
 þat watz lazt⁵¹ fro his lokkez, and layde on his schulderes ;
 Heme⁵² wel haled,⁵³ hose of þat same grene,

20

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. *māre*)

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 spenet ¹ on his sparlyr, ² and clene spures under,
 Of bryzt golde upon silk bordes ³ barred ful ryche, ⁴
 And scholes ⁵ under schankes, ⁶ þere þe schalk ⁷ rides ;
 And alle his vesture verayly watz clene verdure, ⁸
 5 Boþe þe barres of his belt and oþer blyþe stones,
 þat were richely rayled ⁹ in his aray clene,
 Aboutte hymself and his sadel, upon silk werkez. ¹⁰
 þat were to tor ¹¹ for to telle of tryfles þe halue, ¹²
 þat were enbrauded ¹³ abof wyth bryddes and flyzges, ¹⁴
 10 With gay gaudi ¹⁵ grene, ¹⁶ þe golde ay in myddes.
 þe pendauntes of his payttrure, ¹⁷ þe proude cropure, ¹⁸
 His molaynes, ¹⁹ and alle þe metal anamayld ²⁰ was þenne ;
 þe steropes þat he stod on stayned of þe same,
 And his arsounz ²¹ al after, and his apel ²² sturtes, ²³
 15 þat ever glemered ²⁴ and glent ²⁵ al of grene stones. .
 þe fole ²⁶ þat he ferkkes ²⁷ on, fyn ²⁸ of þat ilke, ²⁹
 Sertayn ³⁰ ;

A grene hors gret and þikke,
 A stede ful stif to strayne, ³¹
 20 In brawden ³² brydel quik, ³³
 To þe gome he watz ful gayn. ³⁴

Wel gay watz þis gome gered ³⁵ in grene,
 And þe here of his hed of his hors swete ³⁶ ;
 Fayre fannand ³⁷ fax ³⁸ umbefoldes ³⁹ his schulderes ;
 25 A much ⁴⁰ berd as a busk ⁴¹ 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 poitrel, 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 hizlich 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,
 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 boþe wyth a bande of a bryzt grene, 10
 Dubbed ¹⁶ wyth ful dere stonez, as þe dok lasted, ¹⁷
 Syþen ¹⁸ þrawen ¹⁹ wyth a þwong ²⁰ a þwarle ²¹ knot alofte,
 þer mony bellez ful bryzt of brende ²² golde rungen.
 Such a fole upon folde, ²³ ne freke þat hym rydes,
 Watz never sene in þat sale ²⁴ wyth syzt er þat tyme, 15
 With yze ²⁵ ;

He loked as layt ²⁶ so lyzt, ²⁷
 So sayd al þat hym syze, ²⁸
 Hit semed as no mon myzt
 Under his dynttez ²⁹ dryze. 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 splendid
 2 clipped
 3 around
 4 enlaced (with the hair)
 5 hood
 6 encloses
 7 great
 8 crisped
 9 combed
 10 gold thread
 11 one
 12 filament, hair
 13 crest (mane)
 14 matched

15 kind
 16 adorned
 17 as far as the dock (fleshy
 part) extended
 18 beyond that point
 19 twisted
 20 thong
 21 tight (?)
 22 burnished
 23 earth
 24 hall
 25 eye
 26 lightning
 27 bright

28 saw
 29 strokes
 30 endure
 31 (?)
 32 neither
 33 gorget
 34 pertained
 35 spear
 36 protect; MS. schwne
 37 one
 38 holly-branch
 39 most pronounced
 40 groves

And an ax in his oþer, a hoge ¹ and unmete, ²
 A spetos ³ sparþe ⁴ to expoun in spelle quoso myzt ⁵;
 þe hede of an elnzerde, ⁶ þe large lenkþe ⁷ hade,
 þe grayn ⁸ al of grene stele and of golde hewen,
 þe bit ⁹ burnyst bryzt, with a brod egge, ¹⁰
 As wel schapen to schere ¹¹ as scharp rasores ;
 þe stele ¹² of a stif staf þe sturne ¹³ hit ¹⁴ bigrypte, ¹⁵
 þat watz wounden ¹⁶ wyth ym to þe wandez ¹⁷ ende,
 And al bigraven ¹⁸ with grene, in gracious ¹⁹ werkes ²⁰ ;
 10 A lace ²¹ lapped aboute, þat louked ²² at þe hede,
 And so after ²³ þe halme ²⁴ halched ²⁵ ful ofte,
 Wyth tryed ²⁶ tasselez þerto ²⁷ tacched ²⁸ innoghe ²⁹
 On ³⁰ botounz ³¹ of þe bryzt grene brayden ³² ful ryche.
 þis hapel ³³ heldez hym in, ³⁴ and þe halle entres,
 15 Drivande to þe heze dece, ³⁵ dut ³⁶ he no woþe, ³⁷
 Haylsed ³⁸ he never one, bot heze he overloked. ³⁹
 þe fyrst word þat he warp ⁴⁰ : ' Wher is,' he sayd,
 ' þe governour of þis gyng ⁴¹ ? Gladly I wolde
 Se þat segg ⁴² in syzt, and with hymself speke
 20 Raysoun.'

To knyztz he kest ⁴³ his yze,
 And reled ⁴⁴ hym up and down,
 He stemmed, ⁴⁵ and con ⁴⁶ studie
 Quo ⁴⁷ walt ⁴⁸ þer most renoun.

1 huge
 2 immense
 3 cruel
 4 sparth, 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 (loftily)
 40 flung
 41 company
 42 man
 43 cast
 44 strode
 45 halted
 46 began
 47 who
 48 bore

Ther watz lokyng on lenpe,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 grene aumayl⁶ on golde lowande⁷ bryzter.
 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 fayryge¹⁵ þe folk þer hit demed;
 þerfore to answare watz arge¹⁶ mony apel¹⁷ freke,¹⁸
 And al stoumed¹⁹ at his steven,²⁰ and ston-stil seten²¹
 In a swoghe²² sylence þurz þe sale²³ riche,
 As al were slypped upon²⁴ slepe — so slaked²⁵ hor²⁶ lotez²⁷ —
In hyge²⁸;
10
15
 I deme hit not²⁹ al for doute,³⁰
 Bot sum³¹ for cortaysye —
 Bot let³² hym³³ þat al schulde loute³⁴
 Cast³⁵ unto þat wyge.³⁶

*1 3rd no final
 - kend
 5 v. d. b.
 v. p. 1*

✓

✓

✓

✓

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 time | 14 wherefore | 26 their |
| 2 man | 15 enchantment | 27 features (or looks; possibly voices) |
| 3 obtain | 16 timid | 28 haste |
| 4 as to grow as green | 17 noble | 29 was not |
| 5 than | 18 knight | 30 fear |
| 6 enamel | 19 were astonished | 31 but that some were silent |
| 7 shining | 20 voice | 32 but that they let |
| 8 nearer | 21 sat | 33 Arthur |
| 9 in | 22 impotent, dead | 34 reverence |
| 10 do | 23 hall | 35 make advances (?) |
| 11 many | 24 as if all had slipped (slid) into sleep | 36 champion |
| 12 wonders | | |
| 13 before | 25 relaxed (or subdued) | |

Thenne þe knyȝt con calle ful hyȝe ¹ :
 ' Who ſtitzlez ² in þis ſted, ³ me ſteven ⁴ to holde ?
 For now is gode Gawayn goande ⁵ ryȝt here ;
 If any wyȝe ⁶ oȝt ⁷ wyl, wynne ⁸ hider faſt,
 5 Oþer ⁹ now oþer ¹⁰ never, his nedez ¹¹ to ſpede. ¹² '
 ' Abyde, ' quoth on on þe bonke, aboven over his hede,
 ' And þou ſchal haf al in haſt þat I þe hyȝt ¹³ ones. ¹⁴ '
 Ȝet he ¹⁵ ruſched on ¹⁶ þat rurde ¹⁷ rapely ¹⁸ a þrowe, ¹⁹
 And wyth ²⁰ quettyng ²¹ awharf, ²² er ²³ he wolde lyȝt ²⁴ ;
 10 And ſyþen ²⁵ he ķeverez ²⁶ bi a cragge, and comez of ²⁷ a hole,
 Whyrlande out of a wro, ²⁸ wyth a felle ²⁹ weppen,
 A Denez ³⁰ ax nwe ³¹ dyȝt, ³² þe dynt with [t]o ȝelde ³³
 With a borelych ³⁴ bytte, ³⁵ bende ³⁶ by þe halme,
 Fyled in a fylor, ³⁷ fowre fote large ³⁸ —
 15 Hit watz no laſſe — bi þat lace þat lemed ³⁹ ful bryȝt.
 And þe gome in þe grene, gered as fyrſt —
 Boþe þe lyre ⁴⁰ and þe leggez, lokkez and berde —
 Save þat fayre on his fote ⁴¹ he foundez ⁴² on þe erþe,
 Sette þe ſtele ⁴³ to the ſtone, ⁴⁴ and ſtalked byſyde.
 20 When he wan to ⁴⁵ þe watter, þer he wade nolde,
 He hypped ⁴⁶ over on hys ax, and orpedly ⁴⁷ ſtrydez,
 Bremly ⁴⁸ broþe, ⁴⁹ on a bent, ⁵⁰ þat brode watz aboute,
 On ſnawe. ⁵¹

1 high
 2 dwells
 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

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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 maȝtyly as⁵ marre hym he wolde;
 5 Hade hit dryven adoun as drez⁶ 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 oper 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 flage,²⁴ freke, quen þou myntest,²⁵
 Ne kest²⁶ no kavelacoun²⁷ in kynges hous Arthor,²⁸
 My hede flag²⁹ to my fote, and ȝet flag I never;
 And þou, er any harme hent,³⁰ arȝez 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 stonz,
 25 I con not hit restore.'³⁴

1 tool, weapon

2 force

3 aloft

4 threatened

5 as if

6 straight

7 aimed

8 would have

9 he who

10 axe

11 looked

12 its passage (?)

13 destroy

14 man

15 slant

16 bright (blade)

17 brave

18 trembled

19 host

20 fear

21 before thou art much hurt

22 could

23 flinched

24 fled

25 didst aim

26 raised

27 objection

28 genitive case

29 flew

30 seized

31 I ought to

32 dodged

33 though

34 (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 oþer, and heves hit alofte,
 And waytez⁴ as wropely as he wode were;
 He myntez⁵ at hym magtyly,⁶ bot not þe mon ryvez,⁷
 Withhelde heterly⁸ h[i]s honde, er hit hurt myzt.
 Gawayn grayþely⁹ hit bydez, and glent¹⁰ with no membre,
 Bot stode styлле as þe ston, oþer¹¹ 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 hyze¹⁸ hode¹⁹ þat Arþur þe razt,²⁰
 And kepe²¹ þy kanel²² at þis kest,²³ gif hit²⁴ kever²⁵ may.' 15
 Gawayn ful gryndelly²⁶ with greme²⁷ þenne sayde,
 'Wy þresch on, þou þro²⁸ mon, þou þretez to longe,
 I hope²⁹ þat þi hert arge³⁰ wyth þyn awen selven.'
 'Forsoþe,' quoth þat oþer freke,³¹ 'so felly³² þou spekez,
 I wyl no lenger on lyte³³ lette³⁴ þin ernde³⁵ 20
 Rizte nowe.'
 þenne tas³⁶ he hym stryþe³⁷ to stryke,
 And frounses³⁸ boþe lyppe and browe.
 No mervayle þaz 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 lyztly his lome,¹ and let hit doun fayre,²
 With þe barbe of þe bitte³ bi þe bare nek ;
 Þaz 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 þurz 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 heterly⁶ his helme, and on his hed cast,
 10 Schot¹⁶ with his schulderes his fayre schelde under,
 Braydez¹⁷ out a bryzt sworde, and bremely¹⁸ he spekez ;
 Never syn þat he watz burne borne of his moder,
 Watz he never in þis worlde wyze¹⁹ 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 zelde zederly²⁷ azayn, and þerto ze tryst,²⁸
 And foo²⁹ ;

Bot on stroke here me fallez,³⁰
 20 þe covenant schap³¹ ryzt soo,
 [Sikered]³² in Arþurez hallez,
 And þefore 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 zede,
 How þat dozty dredles dervely³⁹ þer stondez,

1 weapon
 2 full
 3 blade
 4 smote
 5 swiftly
 6 wounded (?)
 7 axe
 8 pierced
 9 bright
 10 grease (fleshy part of the neck)
 11 bright
 12 shine
 13 started

14 swift-foot (?)
 15 grasped
 16 slipped
 17 draws
 18 boldly
 19 man
 20 glad
 21 stop
 22 onslaught
 23 attempt
 24 accepted
 25 dealest (handest me out)
 26 requite, retaliate

27 promptly
 28 make up your mind
 29 (?)
 30 is due
 31 directed
 32 ratified
 33 stop
 34 knight
 35 turned away
 36 earth
 37 man
 38 plain
 39 bravely

Armed ful azlez¹; 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 hadde,
 Ne kyd,¹⁰ bot as covenaunde,¹¹ at kynges kort¹² schaped¹³;
 I hygt¹⁴ 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 coupe wroþeloker¹⁶ haf waret,¹⁷ [and] to þe haf wrogt anger. 10
 Fyrst I manded¹⁸ þe muryly, with a mynt¹⁹ one,²⁰
 And rove²¹ þe wyth no rof,²² sore²³ with rykt I þe profered,
 For þe forwarde þat we fest²⁴ in þe fyrst nygt,
 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 raztez,²⁹
 For boþe two here³⁰ I þe bede bot two bare myntes,
 Boute scape³¹;

Trwe mon³² trwe restore, 20
 Þenne þar mon³³ drede no wape³⁴;
 At þe þrid þou fayled þore,³⁵
 And þerfor þat tappe³⁶ ta þe.³⁷

For hit is my wede³⁸ 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 costes³⁹ als,⁴⁰

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 sende ¹ hir to asay ² þe, and, sothly me þynkkez,
 On ³ þe fautlest ⁴ freke þat ever on fote zede ⁵;
 As perle bi ⁶ þe quite ⁷ pese ⁸ is of prys more,
 5 So is Gawayn, in god fayth, bi oþer gay knyghtez.
 Bot here yow lakked a lyttel, syr, and lewte ⁹ yow wonted,¹⁰
 Bot þat watz for no wylyde ¹¹ werke, ne wowyng nauþer,
 Bot for ze lufud your lyf, — þe lasse I yow blame.
 þat oþer stif ¹² mon in study stod a gret whyle;
 10 So agreved for greme ¹³ he gryed ¹⁴ withinne,
 Alle þe blode of his brest blende ¹⁵ in his face,
 þat al he schrank for schome, þat ¹⁶ þe schalk talked.
 þe forme ¹⁷ worde upon folde ¹⁸ þat þe freke meled:
 'Corsed worth ¹⁹ cowarddyse and covetyse boþe!
 15 In yow is vylany and vyse, þat vertue disstryez.'
 þenne he kagt to ²⁰ þe knot, and þe kest ²¹ lawsez,²²
 Brayde ²³ broþely ²⁴ þe belt to þe burne selven:
 'Lo! þer þe falssyng,²⁵ foule mot hit falle!²⁶
 For care ²⁷ of þy knobbe, cowarddyse me tazt
 20 To acorde me with covetyse, my kynde ²⁸ to forsake,
 þat is larges ²⁹ and lewte, þat longez to ³⁰ knyghtez.
 Now am I fawty,³¹ and falce, and ferde ³² haf been ever;
 Of trecherye and untrawþe boþe bityde ³³ sorze ³⁴
 And care!
 25 I biknowe yow,³⁵ knyght, here styll,
 Al fawty is my fare ³⁶;

1 sent
 2 try, tempt
 3 one
 4 the most faultless
 5 went (OE. *ēode*)
 6 compared with
 7 white
 8 peas
 9 loyalty
 10 lacked
 11 wily, intriguing
 12 brave

13 vexation, anger
 14 was agitated
 15 blent, mingled
 16 while
 17 first
 18 earth
 19 be
 20 seized hold of
 21 twist
 22 looses
 23 threw
 24 angrily

25 falsity
 26 may foul befall it
 27 fear
 28 nature
 29 generosity
 30 befits
 31 faulty
 32 afear'd
 33 come
 34 sorrow
 35 confess to you
 36 conduct

Letez me overtake ¹ your wylle,
And efte ² I schal beware.'

Thenn loze ³ þat oper leude, and luflyly ⁴ sayde,
' I halde hit hardily ⁵ hole, ⁶ þe harme þat I hade ;
þou art confessed so clene, beknowen of þy mysses, ⁷
And hatz þe penaunce apert, ⁸ of ⁹ þe poynt of myn egge, ¹⁰
I halde þe polysed ¹¹ of þat plyȝt, ¹² and pured ¹³ as clene,
As ¹⁴ þou hadez never forfeted ¹⁵ 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, ze maye 10
þenk upon þis ilke þrepe, ¹⁶ þer ¹⁷ þou forth þryngez ¹⁸
Among prynces of prys, and ¹⁹ þis a pure token
Of þe chaunce ²⁰ of þe grene chapel, at ²¹ chevalrous knyȝtez ;
And ze schal in þis nwe ȝer azayn ²² to my wonez, ²³
And we schyn ²⁴ revel þe remnaunt of þis ryche fest, 15
Ful bene.' ²⁵

þer laped ²⁶ hym fast ²⁷ 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 sesed ³⁰ hys helme,
And hatz hit of ³¹ hendely, ³² and þe hapel ³³ þonkkez :
' I haf sojorned sadly, sele ³⁴ yow bytyde,
And He ȝelde ³⁵ hit ȝow ȝare, ³⁶ þat ȝarkkez ³⁷ al menskes ³⁸ !

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 understand | 14 as if | 27 urgently |
| 2 afterwards | 15 sinned | 28 bring into friendly relations |
| 3 laughed | 16 reproof, rebuke | 29 knight |
| 4 courteously | 17 when | 30 seized |
| 5 assuredly | 18 dost crowd, press | 31 off |
| 6 cured | 19 and keep | 32 courteously |
| 7 with avowal made of thy sins | 20 adventure | 33 warrior |
| 8 openly, manifestly | 21 on the part of | 34 blessing, prosperity |
| 9 from | 22 come again | 35 may he reward you for it |
| 10 (edge of) axe | 23 dwelling | 36 soon |
| 11 absolved | 24 shall | 37 bestows |
| 12 offense | 25 genially | 38 honors |
| 13 purged | 26 invited | |

And comaundez ¹ me to þat cortays, your comlych ² fere, ³
 Boþe þat on and þat oþer, myn honoured ladyez,
 þat þus hor knygt wyth hor kest ⁴ han koyntly ⁵ bigyled.
 Bot hit is no ferly, ⁶ þaȝ a fole madde, ⁷
 5 And þurȝ wyles of wymmen be wonen to sorȝe ;
 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 luf hom wel, and leve ²⁰ hem not — a leude þat coupe ²¹ —
 For þes wer forne ²² þe freest ²³ þat folȝed alle þe sele,
 Exellently of alle þyse oþer ²⁴ under hevenryche
 þat mused ²⁵ ;
 15 And alle þay were biwyled, ²⁶
 With wymmen þat þay used ²⁷ ;
 þaȝ I be now bigyled,
 Me þink me burde ²⁸ be excused.'

' Bot your gordel,' quoth Gawayn — ' God yow forȝelde ²⁹ ! —
 20 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, remorde ³⁸ to myselven
 25 þe faut and þe fayntyse ³⁹ of þe flesche crabbed, ⁴⁰

1 commend

2 comely

3 mate

4 stratagem

5 cunningly

6 wonder

7 grew mad

8 on earth

9 many different ones

10 moreover, likewise

11 Delilah

12 dealt

13 fate, doom

14 mingled, wedded

15 Bathsheba

16 grief

17 suffered

18 vexed

19 joy

20 believe

21 were a man but able

22 of old

23 noblest

24 beyond (excelling) all others

25 indulged their fancies (?)

26 beguiled

27 dealt with

28 it is fitting for me

29 requite

30 keep in possession

31 goodly (?)

32 samite

33 long

34 pendants

35 good fortune

36 beautiful

37 fault, sin

38 I shall blame

39 faintness, weakness

40 perverse (?)

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þat is ho þat is at home, þe auncian ¹ lady ;
 Ho is even þyn aunt, Arþurez half suster,
 þe duches doȝter of Tyntagelle, ² þat dere ³ Uter ⁴ after
 Hade Arþur upon, ⁵ þat apel ⁶ is nowþe. ⁷
 5 þerfore I eþe ⁸ þe, hapel, to com to þyn aunt,
 Make myry in my hous, my meny þe lovies,
 And I wol ⁹ þe as wel, wyȝe, bi my faythe,
 As any gome under God, for þy grete traupe.
 And he nikked hym naye, ¹⁰ he nolde bi no wayes.
 10 þay acolen ¹¹ and kyssen, [bikennen] ayþer oþer ¹²
 To þe Prynce of Paradise, and parten ryȝt þere,
 On coolde ¹³ ;
 Gawayn on blonk ¹⁴ ful bene,
 To þe kynges burȝ ¹⁵ buskez ¹⁶ bolde,
 15 And þe knyȝt in þe enker ¹⁷ 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 riding oer the fernie brae.

¹ ancient

² the daughter of the Duchess of Tintagel

³ noble

⁴ Uther

⁵ by

⁶ noble

⁷ now

⁸ ask, bid

⁹ wish

¹⁰ refused him

¹¹ embrace

¹² commend each the other

¹³ in the open (?)

¹⁴ steed (*lit.* white steed)

¹⁵ fortress

¹⁶ hastens

¹⁷ bright

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, li 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 Earlston, 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 'underneath 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 bankis" 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 mornyng of May,
 By Huntlee bankes myself allone,
 I herd þe jay and þe þrostell³;
 The mavys⁴ menyde hir in hir⁵ song;
 Þe wodewale⁶ beryde⁷ als⁸ a bell,
 That all þe wode abowt me rong.

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

10

¹ by myself
² other
³ throstle
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

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Scho led thre grewehundis¹ in a lesse,²
 And seven raches³ by hir ron ;
 Scho bare an horn about hir halse,⁴
 And undir hir belt full many a flon.⁵

Thomas lay and saw þat syght,
 Undirnethe ane semely tree.
 He sayd : ' Ȝon⁶ es Mary, most of myght,
 þat bare þat Child þat dyede for mee.

10 ' Bot-if⁷ I speke with ȝon lady bryght,
 I hope⁸ myn herte will bryst⁹ in three ;
 Now sall I go with all my myght,
 Hir for to mete at Eldoun tree.'

15 Thomas rathely¹⁰ up he rase,
 And ran over þat mountayn hye ;
 Gyff¹¹ it be als þe story says,
 He hir mette at Eldon tree.

20 He knelyde down appon his knee,
 Undirnethe þat grenwode spray :
 ' Lufly lady, rewe¹² on me,
 Qwene of heven, als¹³ þou wcl may !'

Than spake þat lady milde of thoght :
 ' Thomas, late swylke wordes be !
 Qwene of heven ne am I nocht,
 For I tuke¹⁴ never so hegh degre ;

25 Bote I am of anoper countree,
 If¹⁵ I be payreld¹⁶ most of pryse.¹⁷
 I ryde aftyr this wylde fee¹⁸ ;
 My raches rynnys at my devyse.¹⁹'

1 greyhounds

2 leash

3 hunting-dogs (hounds that follow by
the scent, as the greyhound does
by sight ; so Murray)

4 neck

5 arrow

6 yon

7 unless

8 believe

9 burst

10 quickly

11 if

12 have pity

13 as

14 took

15 even though

16 appareled

17 price

18 game, animals

19 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 !'

Scho sayde : ' þou man, þat ware foly.
 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 trouth I plyght to the,
 Whethir þou will in heven or helle.'

' Man of molde, þou will me merre,⁴
 Bot git 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 boure⁹ may dele¹⁰ with the ?
 Thou merrys me all þis longe day ;
 I pray the, Thomas, late me bee !'

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 cloþyng was away,
 þat he byfore saw in þat stede;
 Hir a¹ schanke² blake, hir oþer gray,
 And all hir body lyke þe lede.³

þan said Thomas: 'Allas, allas!
 In fayth, þis es a dullfull⁴ syght!
 How art þou fadyd in þe face,
 þat schan byfore als þe sonne so bryght!'

10 Sche sayd: 'Thomas, take leve at sonne and mone,
 And als⁵ at lefe þat grewes on tree;
 This twelmonth sall þou with me gone,⁶
 And medill-erthe⁷ sall þou not see.'

15 'Allas,' he sayd, 'and wa es mee!
 I trowe my dedis wyll wirk me care.
 My saule, Jesu, byteche⁸ I the,
 Whedirsomever my banes sall fare.'

20 Scho ledde hym in at Eldone Hill,
 Undimethe a derne⁹ lee,
 Whare it was dirk als mydnyght myrk,¹⁰
 And ever þe water till his knee.

The montenans¹¹ of dayes three,
 He herd bot swoghyng¹² of þe flode;
 At þe laste he sayd: 'Full wa¹³ es mee!
 Almast I dye for fawte¹⁴ of fode.'

1 one

2 leg

3 lead

4 doleful

5 also

6 go

7 middle earth

8 commit

9 secret

10 murk, murky

11 amount, period

12 roaring

13 woe

14 lack

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

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

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

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

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

20 Forsothe, Thomas, ȝone es myn awen
 And þe kynges⁶ of this countree;
 Bot me ware lever⁷ be hanged and drawen,
 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 ylk⁹ 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 als ¹ faire and gude,
 And also ¹ ryche on hir palfray ;

Hir grewehundis fillide ² with dere blode,
 Hir raches couplede, by my fay ³ ;
 Scho blew hir horn with mayn ⁴ 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 fethill ⁷ both þay fand,
 þe getern, ⁸ and also þe sawtrye, ⁹
 Lute and rybybe ¹⁰ 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-knyfe ¹² ;
 Thay bryttened ¹³ þe dere als ¹⁴ þey were wode ¹⁵ ;
 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.

¹ as
² (were) filled
³ faith
⁴ might
⁵ spirit

⁶ well bred
⁷ fiddle
⁸ gittern (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
 More¹ þan I ȝow saye, parde,²
 Till on a day — so hafe I grace! —
 My lufly lady sayd to mee :

' Buske³ the, Thomas, þe buse⁴ agayn,
 For here þou may no lengar be ;
 Hye⁵ the faste with myght and mayn ;
 I sall the bryng till Eldone tree.'

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

15 ' Forsothe, Thomas, als I þe tell,
 þou hase bene here thre ȝere and more,
 And langer here þou may noght duell ;
 The skylle⁶ I sall þe tell wharefore :

20 To-morne of helle þe foule fende
 Amang this folk will feche his fee ;
 And þou art mekill⁷ man and hende⁸ —
 I trow full wele he wil chese⁹ the.

For all þe gold þat ever may bee
 Fro hethyn¹⁰ unto þe worldis ende,
 þou bese¹¹ never betrayed for mee ;
 þerefore with me I rede¹² thou wende.'

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

¹ longer
² in truth (Fr. *par Dieu*)
³ prepare
⁴ behooves (to return)

⁵ haste
⁶ reason
⁷ large, robust
⁸ courtly

⁹ choose
¹⁰ hence
¹¹ shalt be
¹² advise

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þan ¹ 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
 þat non bileft ⁴ in chaumber are,⁵
 As þai wald ⁶ ben his frende ⁷ ;
 And seyð he wald himselve þat niȝt
 Kepe ⁸ his broþer, þat gentil kniȝt,
 þat was so god and kende.⁹

10 þan was þer non þat durst say nay :
 To chirche þai went in her ¹⁰ way,
 At hom bileft þe ¹¹ hende.¹²

þe douke wel ¹³ fast gan asprie ¹⁴
 þe kays of þe noricerie,¹⁵
 15 Erþan ¹⁶ þai schuld gon ;
 And priveliche ¹⁷ he cast his eige,¹⁸
 And aparceived ful witterlye ¹⁹
 Where þat þai hadde hem don.²⁰
 And when þai were to chirche went,²¹
 20 þan Sir Amis, verrament,²²
 Was bileft al on.²³
 He tok a candel fair and briȝt,
 And to þe kays he went ful riȝt,
 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 when

2 go

3 greater

4 left

5 should be ; MS. þare

6 would

7 friends

8 watch over

9 kind

10 their

11 MS. þo

12 they left the noble one

13 very

14 began to look for

15 nursery

16 before

17 secretly

18 eye

19 clearly

20 put them

21 gone

22 truly

23 alone

24 each one

25 more, others

And biheld hem boþe to,¹
 Hou fair þai lay togider þo,
 And slepe boþe yfere²;
 þan seyde himselve: ' Bi Seyn Jon,
 It were gret reweþe³ ȝou to slon,
 þat God hap bouȝt so dere!⁴
 His kniif he had drawen þat tide⁴;
 For sorwe he sleynt⁵ oway biside,
 And wepe wiþ reweful⁶ chere.⁷

þan he hadde wopen⁸ þer he stode, 10
 Anon he turned oȝain his mode,⁹
 And sayde 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 Y þan mi childer spare,
 To bring mi broþer out of care?
 O, certes,¹² ' he sayde, ' 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 kniif wiþ drieri mode,
 And tok his children þo;
 For he nold nouȝt spille her¹⁹ blode, 25
 Over a bazine²⁰ fair and gode
 Her¹⁹ protes he schar²¹ atuo.²²

1 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 ceased

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 ogain,
 — No wonder þei¹ him wer² wo! —
 And hilde³ hem, þat no wigt⁴ schuld se;
 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 seyde 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 seyde biforn.'

'Broþer,' Sir Amiloun gan to say,
 20 'Hastow¹² slayn þine children tuay¹³?
 Allas, whi de[de]stow¹⁴ so?'
 He wepe and seyde: 'Waileway!
 Ich had lever¹⁵ til Domesday¹⁶
 Have lived in care and wo!'
 25 þan seyde Sir Amis: 'Be now stille;
 Jesu, when it is his wille,
 May sende me childer mo.¹⁷
 For me¹⁸ of blis þou art al bare¹⁹;
 Ywis, mi liif 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

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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
 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 wive.⁷

10 Anon he tok his levedi þan,
 And seyð to hir : ' Leve leman,
 Be blipe 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, purch her blode¹²
 20 Mi broþer schuld passe out of his wo ;
 þerfore Y slouȝ hem boþe to,
 To hele þat frely fode.¹³'

þan was þe levedi ferly wo,¹⁴
 And seize¹⁵ hir lord was al so ;
 Sche comfort¹⁶ him ful ȝare.¹⁷
 25 ' O lef¹⁸ liif,' sche seyð þo,
 ' God may sende ous¹⁹ childer mo,
 Of hem have þou no care ;
 Ȝif it ware at min hert rote,²⁰
 For to bring þi broþer bote²¹
 30 My lyf Y wold not spare.

1 where

2 woeful, indeed, were they in life

3 peace

4 cease

5 effort

6 taken

7 wife

8 won

9 slain

10 gentle

11 dream

12 by means of their blood

13 noble man

14 exceedingly sorrowful

15 saw

16 comforted

17 readily, soon

18 dear

19 us

20 my heart's root

21 remedy

For no man shal oure children see,
 To-morow shal þey beryed be
 Riȝt as þey faire ¹ ded ware.' .

Al þus þe lady faire and bryȝt
 Comfort hur lord with al hur myȝt,
 As ȝe mow ² understonde ;
 And seth ³ þey went boþ ful ryȝt
 To Sir Amylion, þat gentyl knyȝt,
 þat ere ⁴ was free ⁵ to fonde. ⁶
 And whan Sir Amylion wakyd þoo, 10
 Al his fowlehed ⁷ was agoo, ⁸
 þurch grace of Goddes sonde ⁹ ;
 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 :
 Her ¹¹ joy coup 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 wemme ¹⁵ and wound,
 Al hool ¹⁶ 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 þing.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,
 And sum þer ben of þe feyre.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

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Þis king sojurnd in Traciens,¹
 Þat was a cite of noble defens ;
 He hadde wiþ him a quen of priis,²
 Þat was ycleped Dame Heurodis —
 Þe fairest levedi, for þe nones,³
 Þat miȝt gōn on bodi and bones,
 Ful of love and of godenisse,
 Ac⁴ no man may telle hir fairnise.

10 Bifel so in þe comessing⁵ of May,
 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 renown

³ at that time

⁴ but

⁵ beginning

⁶ bright

⁷ everywhere

⁸ grow

⁹ enough

¹⁰ same

¹¹ two

¹² morning

¹³ birds

¹⁴ grafted tree

¹⁵ asleep

¹⁶ lie

¹⁷ displeasing behavior

¹⁸ rubbed, wrung

And crached¹ hir visage, it bled wete ;
 Hir riche robe sche² al torett,³
 And was ravysed⁴ out of hir witt.
 Þe two⁵ maidens hir biside
 No durst wip hir no leng⁶ abide,
 Bot ourn⁷ to þe palays ful rízt,
 And told boþe squier and knízt
 Þat her quen awede⁸ wold,
 And bad hem go and hir athold.⁹
 Kníztes urn,⁷ and levedis also, 10
 Damisels sexti and mo ;
 In þe orchard to þe quen hye¹⁰ come,
 And her up in her¹¹ armes nome,¹²
 And brouzt hir to bed atte¹³ last,
 And held hir þere fine¹⁴ fast. 15
 Ac ever sche held¹⁵ in o¹⁶ cri,
 And wold up and owy.¹⁷

When Orfeo herd þat tiding,
 Never him nas¹⁸ wers for¹⁹ noþing ;
 He come up wip kníztes tene²⁰ 20
 To chaumber rízt bifor þe quene,
 And biheld, and seyð wip grete pite :
 ' O lef liif, what is te,²¹
 Þat ever zete hast ben so stille,
 And now gredest²² wonder schille²³ ? 25
 Þi bodi, þat was so white ycore,²⁴
 Wip þine nailes is al totore.²⁵
 Alas ! þi rode,²⁶ þat was so red,
 Is as wan as þou were ded,

1 scratched
 2 MS. hye
 3 rent apart
 4 ravished ; MS. reneyd
 5 MS. too
 6 longer
 7 ran
 8 go mad
 9 restrain

10 they
 11 their
 12 took
 13 at the
 14 very
 15 continued
 16 one
 17 away
 18 it was not

19 because of
 20 ten
 21 what is ill with thee
 22 dost cry
 23 wondrous shrill(y)
 24 choicely
 25 rent
 26 complexion

And also þine fingres smale
 Beþ al blodi and al pale !
 Allas, þi lovesum eyzen to ¹
 Lokeþ so ² man doþ on his fo !
 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 !
 Seþþen we first togider were,
 Ones ⁵ wroþ ⁶ never we nere ⁷ ;
 15 Bot ever Ich have yloved þe
 As mi liif, 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 nouzt 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 kniztes,
 Wele y-armed ¹² al to riztes,
 And bad me comen on ¹³ heizing, 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

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And totore þine limes al,
 þat noþing help þe no schal;
 And þei¹ þou best² so totorn,
 Ȝete þou worst³ wiþ ous yborn.⁴'''

When king Orfeo herd þis cas,⁵
 'Owe⁶!' quap he, 'allas, allas!
 Lever me were to lete⁷ mi liif,
 þan þus to lese⁸ þe quen mi wiif!'
 He asked conseyl at⁹ ich man,
 10 Ac no man him help no can.

Amorwe¹⁰ þe undertide is come,
 And Orfeo hap his armes ynome,¹¹
 And wele ten hundred kniztes wiþ him,
 Ich y-armed stout and grim;

15 And wiþ þe quen wenten he¹²
 Rigt unto þat ympe-tre.
 þai made scheltrom¹³ in icha 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 rigt¹⁵
 þe quen was oway ytwigt,¹⁶
 Wiþ fairi¹⁷ forþ ynome;
 Men wist never wher sche was bicomē.¹⁸

25 þo was þer criing, wepe, and wo;
 þe king into his chaumber is go,¹⁹
 And oft swoned opon þe ston,
 And made swiche diol²⁰ and swiche mon
 þat neize 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. ytvight
 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 zou here
 Ich ordainy min heize-steward
 To wite ² mi kingdom afterward ;
 In mi stede ben he schal,
 To kepe mi londes over al.
 For, now Ichave mi 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 ze understond þat Y be spent, ⁸
 Make zou þan a parlement, 15
 And chese zou a newe king ;
 Now doþ your best wiþ al mi þing. ⁹ '
 þo was þer wepeing in þe halle,
 And grete cri among hem alle ;
 Unneþe ¹⁰ mizt old or zong 20
 For wepeing speke a word wiþ tong.
 þai kneled adoun al yfere,
 And praid him, gif 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
 Into þe wildernes he geþ;
 Noþing he fint þat him is ays,¹
 Bot ever he liveþ in gret malais.²
 He þat hadde ywed³ þe fowe⁴ and griis,⁵
 And on bed þe purper biis,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, þei⁸ it comenci to snewe⁹ and frese,
 15 Þis king mote make his bed in mese¹⁰;
 He þat had yhad kniztes of priis
 Bifor him kneland, and levedis,
 Now seþ he noþing þat him likeþ,¹¹
 Bot wilde wormes bi him strikeþ¹²;
 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 bi¹⁵ wild frut
 25 And berren¹⁶ bot gode lut¹⁷;
 In winter may he noþing finde
 Bot rote, grases, and þe rinde.¹⁸
 Al his bodi was oway dwine¹⁹
 For missays,²⁰ and al tochine.²¹
 30 Lord! who may telle þe sore²²

1 ease

2 distress, discomfort

3 worn

4 variegated fur

5 gray fur

6 fine linen (Lat. *byssus*)

7 covers

8 though

9 snow

10 moss

11 pleaseth

12 slip, crawl

13 grub

14 roots

15 on

16 berries

17 very few (good little); MS. lite

18 bark

19 shrunk; MS. dvine

20 discomfort

21 chapped

22 pain

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

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

10 And on a day he seize him biside
Sexti levedis on hors ride,
Gentil and jolif⁵ as brid on ris⁶ —
Nouzt o man amonges hem þer nis;
And ich a faucoun on hond bere,⁷
And riden on haukin[g] bi o rivere.
15 Of game þai founde wel gode haunt⁸ —
Maulardes,⁹ hayroun,¹⁰ and cormeraunt.
þe foules of þe water ariseþ,
þe faucouns hem wele deviseþ¹¹:
Ich faucoun his pray slouȝ.
20 þat seize 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 noiþer to oper a word no speke.
For messais þat sche on him seize,

¹ held
² handsomely
³ dainty
⁴ drums and trumpets; MS.
trimpes
⁵ merry

⁶ spray, twig
⁷ inf. after *seize*, line 9
⁸ resort
⁹ mallards (wild ducks)
¹⁰ heron
¹¹ make their plans well

¹² laughed
¹³ by (my) faith
¹⁴ wont, accustomed
¹⁵ perceived
¹⁶ eagerly, gladly

þat had ben so riche and so heize,¹
 þe teres fel out of her eize.
 þe oþer levedis þis yseize,
 And maked hir oway to ride —
 Sche most wiþ him no lenger abide.
 'Allas,' quap he, 'now me is wo!
 Whi nil² dep 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 wiþ 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 dep 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]ize, 30
 Riche and real¹⁶ and wonder heize.

¹ high, lofty² will not³ miserable that I am⁴ too⁵ nor she⁶ happen what may happen⁷ these⁸ same⁹ go¹⁰ I care not¹¹ put¹² MS. al so¹³ 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;
 Þe butras com out of þe dicke,³
 Of rede gold y-arched ⁴ riche;
 Þe bonsour ⁵ was anoured ⁶ al
 Of ich maner divers animal;
 Wipin 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 lizt:
 For when it schuld be þerk ⁹ and nizt,
 15 Þe riche stones lizt gone,¹⁰
 As brigte as doþ at none þe sonne.
 No man may telle, no þenche in þougt,
 Þe riche werk þat þer was wrougt;
 Bi al þing him þink ¹¹ þat it is
 20 Þe proude court of Paradis.
 In þis castel þe levedis alizt;
 He wold in after, gif he miht:
 Orfeo knobbeþ 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 wip mi gle,
 30 3if his suete wille be.'
 Þe porter undede þe gate anon,
 And lete him into þe castel gon.
 Þan he gan bihold about al,
 And seize ful ¹² liggeand ¹³ wipin þe wal

1 bright, beautiful

2 elaborately ornamented

3 moat

4 arched

5 arch

6 adorned; MS. avowed

7 apartments

8 to look on; in appearance

9 dark

10 began to shine

11 it would seem to him

12 full many

13 lying

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'O lord,' he seyð, 'ȝif it þi wille were,
Mi menstraci þou schust¹ yhere.'

þe king answerd: 'What man artow,
þat art hider ycomen now?

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, 'trowe³ ful wel,

Y nam bot⁴ a pover menstrel;

And, sir, it is þe maner of ous

To seche⁵ mani a lordes hous;

15 þei we nouzt welcom no be,

Ȝete we mot⁶ proferi forþ our gle.⁷'

Bifore þe king he sat adoun,

And tok his harp so miri of soun,

And temprep⁸ his harp, as he wele can,

20 And blisseful notes he þer gan,

þat al þat in þe palays were

Com to him for to here,

And liggeþ⁹ adoun to¹⁰ his fete —

Hem þenkeþ¹¹ his melody so swete.

25 þe king herkneþ and sitt ful stille,

To here his gle he hap gode wille;

Gode bourde¹² he hadde of his gle,

þe riche quen also hadde he.¹³

When he hadde stint¹⁴ 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 times

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 give me
 þat ich ⁴ levedi, briȝt on ble,⁵
 þat slepeþ under þe ympe-tre.'
 ' Nay,' quap þe king, ' þat nouȝt nere ⁶!
 A sori couple of zou it were,
 For þou art lene, rowe,⁷ and blac,
 And sche is lovesum, witpouten lac ⁸; 10
 A loplich 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 wiif 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;
 Ac no man knewe þat it was he. 30
 No forþer þan þe tounes ende

1 generously

2 I will

3 if thou canst make trial

4 same

5 of hue

6 were not possible

7 rough

8 lack, fault

9 loathsome, dreadful

10 therefore

11 lie

12 from

13 now

14 keep

15 that thou

16 went

17 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
 As a minstrel of pover liif,
 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 her ⁹ king in exile ȝede,
 Bot no ¹⁰ man nist in wiche þede ;
 And hou þe steward þe lond gan hold ;
 15 And oper mani þinges him told.
 Amorwe ozain none tide, ¹¹
 He maked 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 crie :
 ' Sir steward, ' he seyð, ' merci !
 Ich am an harpour 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. borved¹³ back¹⁴ burgesses, citizens¹⁵ shrunk, withered¹⁶ from heathendom

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· þat him was so hard grace¹ yzarked,²
 And so vile deþ ymarked³ |'
 Adoun he fel aswon to grounde.
 His barouns him toke up in þat stounde,⁴
 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 augt to do,
 10 And stont up and seyð⁶ þus : ' Lo,
 Steward, herkne now þis þing :
 3if Ich were Orfeo þe king,
 And hadde ysuffred ful zore⁷
 In wildernisse miche sore ;
 15 And hadde ywon mi quen owy
 Out of þe lond of fairy ;
 And hadde ybrougt þe levedi hende⁸
 Rigt 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.
 3if¹² 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 underzete,¹⁶
 And þe steward him wele knewe.

1 such misfortune
 2 appointed
 3 decreed
 4 time
 5 help
 6 MS. seyt

7 for a long time past
 8 gentle, gracious
 9 repent
 10 truly
 11 or fear
 12 MS. and gif

13 shouldst have been put out
 14 in all haste
 15 then all those
 16 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 criing :

'Ze beþ our lord, sir, and our king !'
 Glad þai were of his live.²

To chaumber þai ladde him also³ blive,⁴
 And baped him, and schaved his berd,
 And tired⁵ him as a king apert⁶ ;
 And seþpen⁷ wiþ gret processioun
 þai brougt þe quen into þat toun,
 Wiþ al maner menstraci.

10

Lord, þer was grete melody !
 For joie þai wepe wiþ her eize,
 þat hem so sounde⁸ ycomen seize.
 Now king Orfeo newe coround is,
 And his quen Dame Heurodis,
 And lived long afterward ;
 And seþpen was king þe steward.

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..

20

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); Kölbing'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, 1906), 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 will
² verily

³ diversion
⁴ refined, noble

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

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 care.⁹

Ther 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 in¹ love-longinge
 Al whan he herde the thrustel singe,
 And priked as he were wood²;
 His faire stede in his prikinge
 So swatte³ that men mighte him wringe;
 His sydes were al blood.

Sir Thopas eek so wery was,
 For prikinge on the softe gras —
 So fiers⁴ was his corage —
 That doun he leyde him in that plas,
 To make his stede som solas,
 And yaf him good forage.

' O Seinte Marie, *ben'cite*⁵ !
 What eyleth this love at me,⁶
 To binde⁷ me so sore? 15
 Me dremed⁸ 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 toun¹³ ;
 Alle othere wommen I forsake,
 And to an elf-queen I me take,
 By dale and eek by doune¹⁴ !' 25

Into his sadel he clamb anoon,
 And priketh over style¹⁵ 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 *F. 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 Fairye

So wilde ;

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 : ' Child,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 fay*,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 retreat

² This line is supplied from
an inferior MS.

³ giant

⁴ Elephant

⁵ title of a young squire or
knight

⁶ a Saracen idol

⁷ unless

⁸ will slay

⁹ a kind of tabor

¹⁰ as I may thrive

¹¹ by my faith

¹² pay for it bitterly

¹³ maw, stomach

¹⁴ prime = 6-9 A.M. ; fully
prime = 9 A.M.

¹⁵ slain

¹⁶ drew back

¹⁷ deadly

¹⁸ sling fastened to a stick

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He dide ¹ next his whyte lere ²
 Of clooth of lake ³ fyn and clere
 A breech ⁴ and eek a sherte ;
 And next his sherte an aketoun, ⁵
 And over that an habergeoun, ⁶
 For ⁷ percinge of his herte ;

And over that a fyn hauberk ⁸
 Was al ywroght of Jewes werk,
 Ful strong it was of plate ⁹ ;
 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 charbocle ¹² bisyde ;
 And there he swoor, on ale and breed,
 How that ' The geaunt shal be deed,
 Bityde what bityde ¹³ ! '

His jambeux ¹⁴ were of quirboilly, ¹⁵
 20 His swerdes shethe of yvory,
 His helm of laton ¹⁶ bright ;
 His sadel was of rewel-boon ¹⁷ ;
 His brydel as the sonne shoon,
 Or as the mone light.

25 His spere was of fyn ciprees, ¹⁸
 That bodeth werre, and nothing ¹⁹ 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 softely and rounde²
 In londe.

Lo, lordes myne, heer is a fit³ !
 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 pace

² with an easy motion

³ a division of a song or poem

⁴ endeavor

⁵ for charity

⁶ story

⁷ courtship

⁸ 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 Ypotis* has not much in common with the others mentioned here ; in it the Emperor Adrian interrogates the child Ypotis 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 glood ¹
 As sparkle out of the bronde ²;
 Upon his crest he bar a tour,³
 And therin stiked ⁴ a lily-flour;
 God shilde his cors ⁵ fro shonde ⁶!

And for he was a knight auntrous,⁷
 He nolde ⁸ slepen in non hous,
 But liggen ⁹ in his hode ¹⁰;
 10 His brighte helm was his wonger,¹¹
 And by him baiteth ¹² his dextrer ¹³
 Of ¹⁴ 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*.

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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
 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,
 Gydeh 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 yere
 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 these 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.

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone ytaught
 Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere,
 To worshipe ay and he forgat it naught, 10
 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.

This litel child, his litel book lerninge, 15
 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 20
 Til he the firste vers coude ¹¹ al by rote.

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, 25
 Or telle him why this song was in usage ;

1 choir-boy

2 custom

3 where

4 good

5 always

6 learn ; the line is a proverb

7 small prayer-book, from which
children were taught to read

8 anthem-book

9 nearer

10 tune

11 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 knowes ¹ bare.

His felaw, which that elder was than he,
Answerde him thus: ' This song, I have herd seye,
Was maked of our blisful lady free,
Hir to salue,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 can ³ 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 conne ⁴ it al, er Cristemasse is went;
Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,⁵
15 And shal be beten thryës 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, acording with the note;
Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte —
To scoleward ⁶ 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 merily 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 stinte ⁹ 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

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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,
 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 lyklihede 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 tarying,
 And herieth² Crist that is of heven King,
 And eek his moder, honour of mankinde ;
 And, after that, the Jewes leet he binde.³

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 magistrate

² praises

³ he caused to be bound

⁴ nearest

⁵ Cf. Matt. 2. 18

⁶ each one

⁷ causes

⁸ die

⁹ wickedness

¹⁰ favor

¹¹ horses

¹² had them drawn

¹³ them

¹⁴ lies

¹⁵ altar

¹⁶ monks of the convent

¹⁷ sprinkled

This yonge child to conjure he bigan,
And seyde: ' O dere child, I halse ¹ thee,
In vertu of the holy Trinitee,
Tel me what is thy cause for to singe,
Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge ²?'

10 ' 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,
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.

15 This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
I lovede alwey, as after my conninge ⁴ ;
And whan that I my lyf sholde ⁵ forlete,
To me she cam, and bad me for to singe
This antem ⁶ verrailly in my deyinge,
As ye han herd ; and, whan that I had songe,
Me thoughte she leyde a greyn upon my tonge.

20 Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot ⁷ 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 softely.

¹ implore

² as it appears to me

³ nature

⁴ within the limits of my knowledge

⁵ ought to have

⁶ anthem

⁷ must

⁸ afraid

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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,
þat he lufed a lady bryght,
Bot he ne wist in what contre
þat þe lady myght funden be.
Him thoght he knew hir wele bi kinde,
And wele he hopid he sold hir finde.
10 þat same time dremyd þat ladi bright,
And thoght 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 bright
þat him dremyd of þat nyght.
20 þat jornay 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 traveld monethes thre,
 And no signe of hyr kowth he se ;
 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 forþi⁴ ;
 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 merily sang he of amowre.⁹

1 drooped
 2 owned, possessed
 3 bolted, locked

4 for that reason, therefore
 5 squire
 6 war

7 as
 8 lie
 9 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.
 He sat biside under a tre,
 At þe ches, ² a knyght and he.
 þis knyght percayved þe erl þare.
 Unto þe lady he menced 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

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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.
 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 wroght 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 caused
 2 also
 3 what sort of

4 speedily
 5 were
 6 saluted

7 purposed
 8 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.'
 Hastily he takes hys tole,¹
 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 thoght 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 dremeing, 25
 And sho him talde of þe same thing;
 And when þai wist it was sertayn,
 Ayther of oþer was ful fayn.
 Sho lete him wirk þare al his will;
 And seþen he said þe lady untyll: 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 tool
2 repaid

3 cunning, skill
4 fear

5 at once
6 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.'
 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 menze⁴ 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 ani 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

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

þe erl had mervail of þis thing,
 þat it was [so] like, by syght,
 þe ring þat he saw of his knight ;
 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 hirself oft smyled,
 15 And thocht þat he was wele bigild.
 Opon þe morn þe knyght up rase,
 And to þe kirk graythly he gase,
 Goddes 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 tipand⁶
 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 tipandes am I fayn.
 And, sir, þir² tipandes es me broght
 Bi my leman, þat has me soght
 Heder out of myne awin cuntre.
 þarfore, sir, if ȝowre wil be,
 þis day I pray ȝow with me ete,
 And se my leman at þe mete,
 And for to make cumforth hir till.'

þe erl said : ' Gladly I will
 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,
 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
 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 thoght
 þat ilk day sho and hir lord
 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 ;
 Bot hir garmentes war al new,
 þat no man in þat cuntre knew.
 Opon hir fingers gert he done

¹ these

² MS. þis

³ quickly ; MS. smeretly

⁴ ordered

⁵ quantity

⁶ fitted out

⁷ eat

⁸ familiarly

Gold ringes ful many one ;
 Hir hed was gayly dubed ¹ and dyght
 With gerlands al of gold ful bright ;
 So out of kenyng ² he hir broght
 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.

15 þe knight said : ' þis es my leman ;
 Makes hir comforth if ze can.'

þe erl bad sho sold be blith,
 And he biheld hir mony a syth ⁵ ;
 And wonder in his hert had he

20 How þat it so myght be
 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.

25 þe erl bad hir also be glad,
 And loked on hir als he war mad ;
 Bot he thoght þe towre was so strang
 þat þare myght no man do him wrang,
 Ne þat his whif might noght cum doun ;
 þarfore trowed he no tresowne.

30 He thoght : ' Oft sythes bifalles slike, ⁶
 þat mani wemen er oþer 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

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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;
 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 git² 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 wrought what þaire 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 oþer gere.

On þe morn þe erl 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 garmentes gay
 þat sho had on þat oþer day ;
 With gerlandes and with gleterand ² thing
 Was sho made out of knawyng.

When al was done als it sold be,
 Unto þe erl, his lord, went he.
 ' Sir,' he sayd, ' I wald þe pray 10
 Of a ded þis ilk day :
 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 20
 And als þou sais, syr, do I will.'

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 ; 25
 To kirk þai led þat faire lady.
 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 30
 And gaf þe knyght until his wive ;
 þe prest þam weddes swith sone.
 And als tite als þe mes was done,

¹ off
² glittering

³ ere
⁴ reason

⁵ hurried thither
⁶ 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.
 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,
 Evermare to be his make.

þare þe knyght toke þe lady,
 And said to þe erl : ' Sir, gramercy
 Of ¹ þis and of ¹ al oþer grace.'

þus of þe erl hys leve he tase ;
 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,
 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 cunvayd ² ;
 He trowed noght how he was bitraid.

Until his toure þus wendes he right,
 For to speke with his lady bright.
 Into þe chamber ³ gan he ga,
 And loked about, bath to and fra ;
 He saw no syght of his lady ;
 þarfore sone he wex sary.

Of hir cowth he nothing here ;
 þan he wepid with sari chere.
 Unto himself he gan him mene ⁴
 þat al was soth als he had sene.

1 for

2 accompanied

3 MS. chameber

4 lament

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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 *Siris* (147 25, 148 4, 157 6, 8) and sometimes as *Sirib* (150 7, 151 28, 153 1), but the rhymes show that the latter is undoubtedly correct (151 28; cf. 148 4); *wib* is similarly written *wiz* (148 5).

Ci comence le fabel et la cointise de Dame Siris

As I com bi an waie,
 Hof¹ on ich herde saie,
 Ful modi² mon and proud;
 Wis he wes of lore,
 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 zerne⁹ he him bipoute¹⁰
 Hou he hire gete moute,¹¹
 15 In ani cunnes¹² wise.¹³
 þat befel on an day
 þe loverd wend away
 Hon his marchaundise.¹⁴

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 wiþ palle,²
 And þus he bigon :

[*Wilekin*] ' God almigtten be herinne ! '

[*Margerī*] ' Welcome, so ich ever bide winne³ ! '

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 migtt finden me ful fre ;
 Fol bleþeli will I don for þe,
 Wiþhouten gref.' 15

[*Wilekin*] ' Dame, God þe forzelde⁶ !
 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.'

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

¹ clothed

² rich cloth

³ expect (eternal) happiness ;
 MS. wenne

⁴ if it is

⁵ repay

⁶ on condition that

⁷ betray

⁸ errand

⁹ make known

¹⁰ anger

¹¹ in any way

¹² though

¹³ desire

¹⁴ discourteous

¹⁵ know

¹⁶ of

¹⁷ churlishness

þou mai[ɜ]t saien al þine wille,
 And I shal herknen and sitten stille,
 þat¹ þou have told.
 And if þat þou me tellest skil,²
 I shal don after þi wil —
 þat be þou bold.³

And þau þou saie me ani same,⁴
 Ne shal I þe nouigt blame
 For þi sawe.⁵

10 [*Wilekin*] ' Nou Ich have wonne leve,⁶
 Ȝif þat I þe⁷ shulde greve,
 Hit were hounlawe.⁸

15 Certes, dame, þou seist as hende,⁹
 And I shal setten spel¹⁰ on ende,
 And tellen þe al —
 Wat Ich wolde, and wi Ich com ;
 Ne con Ich saien non falsdom,
 Ne non I ne shal.

20 Ich habbe iloved þe moni ȝer,
 þau Ich nabbe nout ben her
 Mi love to schowe.
 Wile þi loverd is in toune,
 Ne mai no mon wip þe holden roune¹¹
 Wip no þewe.¹²

25 Ȝurstendai¹³ Ich herde saie,
 As Ich wende bi þe waie,
 Of oure sire¹⁴ ;

1 till
 2 what is reasonable
 3 confident, certain
 4 shame
 5 speech

6 gained permission
 7 MS. me
 8 wrong
 9 a courteous one
 10 discourse

11 secret talk
 12 propriety
 13 yesterday
 14 lord, good man

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

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

[*Margeri*] ' 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 Trewer womon mai¹⁰ no mon cnowe
 þen Ich am.
 þilke time shal¹¹ never bitide
 þat mon, for wouing ne þoru prude,¹²
 Shal do me scham.'

25 [*Wilekin*] ' Swete levmon,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. lenmon, or leumon (?)

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

[*Margeri*] ' 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'

[*Wilekin*] ' Certes, dame, þat me forþinkeþ⁴; 10
An[d] wo is þe mon þa[t] muchel swinkeþ.
And at þe laste leseþ his sped!
To maken menis⁵ his⁶ him ned;
Bi⁷ me I saie [hit] ful iwis,
þat love þe — love þat I shal mis. 15
An[d], dame, have nou godne dai!
And þilke Loverd þat al welde⁸ mai
Leve⁹ þat þi þout so tourne
þat Ich¹⁰ for þe no leng¹¹ ne mourne.'

Drerimod¹² he wente awai, 20
And þoute boþe niȝt and dai
Hire al for to wende.
A frend him radde¹³ for to fare —
And leven al his muchele kare —
'To Dame Sirip¹⁴ þe hende. 25

þider he wente him anon,
So suiþe¹⁵ so he miȝtte gon,
No mon he ni mette.

¹ joy
² toil
³ hesitate, fear
⁴ I am sorry for that
⁵ moans

⁶ is
⁷ about
⁸ wield
⁹ grant
¹⁰ MS. Ihc

¹¹ longer
¹² sad in heart
¹³ counseled
¹⁴ MS. Siriz
¹⁵ quickly

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

[*Wilekin*] ' God þe iblessi, Dame Sirip⁴ !
 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,
 Ful 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 wip tene and kare ;
 Wip muchel hounsele¹⁰ ich lede mi lif,
 And þat is for on suete wif
 20 þat heiztte M̄argerī.
 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 quelle.¹⁵
 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

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And leve me to ben iwreken ¹
 On him þis shome me haveþ speken.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Leve nelde, bilef ² al þis;
 Me þinkeþ þa[t] þou art onwis.
 Þe mon þat me to þe taute,³
 He weste þat þou hous ⁴ coupest saute.⁵
 Help, Dame Sirip, if þou maust,⁶
 To make me wiþ þe sueting saut,
 And Ich wille geve þe gift ful stark ⁷:
 10 Moni a pound and moni a marke,
 Warne pilche ⁸ and warne shon,
 Wiþ þat min hernde be wel don.
 Of muchel godlec ⁹ 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 herness ¹² þou tekest ¹³ me?
 Lovest þou wel Dame Margeri?'

[*Wilekin*] 'Ȝe, nelde, witerli,¹⁴
 Ich hire love! Hit mot me spille ¹⁵
 20 Bote ich gete hire to mi wille.'

[*Sirith*] 'Wat, god Wilekin, me reweþ þi scape ¹⁶;
 Houre Loverd sende þe help rape ¹⁷!

Weste Hic hit miȝtte ben forholen,¹⁸
 Me wolde þunche wel solen ¹⁹
 25 þi wille for to fellen.²⁰
 Make me siker wiþ word on honde

1 avenged

2 leave

3 directed

4 us

5 reconcile, bring to terms

6 canst

7 strong, large

8 fur garments

9 goodness, benefit

10 boast

11 loyalty

12 earnest

13 teachest

14 truly, certainly

15 destroy, ruin

16 harm

17 soon (early)

18 concealed

19 proper (solemn)

20 MS. fullen

þat þou wolt helen,¹ and I wile fonde²
If Ich mai hire tellen.

For al þe world ne wold I nout
þat Ich were to chapitre³ ibrouit
For none selke⁴ werkes.
Mi jugement were sone igiven —
To ben wip shome somer-driven⁵
Wip⁶ prestes and with clarkes.'

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

[*Sirith*] 'Welcome, Wilekin, hiderward ! 15
Her havest imaked a foreward⁸
þat þe mai ful wel like.
þou maizt⁹ blesse pilke sip,¹⁰
For þou maizt make þe ful blip ;
Dar¹¹ þou namore sike.¹² 20

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

[*Wilekin*] 'Al so hav I Godes grip,¹⁵
Wel havest þou said, Dame Sirip,
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 zeve þe to meding,¹
 To buggen² þe sep³ and swin.'

[*Sirith*] ' So Ich evere brouke⁴ hous oþer flet,⁵
 Neren never penes⁶ beter biset
 þen þes shulen ben.
 For I shal don a juperti,⁷
 And a ferli⁸ 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.
 Zevest þo þe welpe¹⁴ mustard ? '

20 [*Sirith*] ' Be stille, boinard¹⁵ !
 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*] ' Zus,¹⁹ bi þe somer blome,²⁰
 Heþen²¹ 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

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[*Margerit*] ' Have her fles ¹ and eke bred,
 And make þe glad, hit is mi red ²;
 And have her þe coppe wip þe drinke;
 Goed do þe mede for þi swinke.'

þenne spac þat holde wif —
 Crist awarie ³ hire lif! —

[*Sirith*] ' Alas! alas! þat ever I live!
 Al þe sunne Ich wolde forgive
 þe mon þat smite of ⁴ min heved!
 Ich wolde mi lif me were bireved!'

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

[*Sirith*] ' Bote eþe ⁵ mai I sori be:
 Ich hevede a douter feir and fre,⁶
 Feiror ne miȝtte no mon se.
 Hoe hevede a curteis hossebonde,
 Freour ⁷ mon miȝtte no mon fonde.⁸
 Mi douter lovede him al to wel;
 Forþi ⁹ mak I sori del.¹⁰
 Oppon a dai he was out wend,
 And þarþoru ¹¹ wes mi douter shend.
 He hede on ernde out of toune;
 And com a modi ¹² clarc wip croune,¹³
 To mi douter his love beed,
 And hoe nolde nout folewe his red.
 He ne miȝtte his wille have,
 For no þing he miȝtte crave;
 þenne bigon þe clerc to wiche,¹⁴
 And shop ¹⁵ 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 meten.²
 Forþi, dame, were hit no wonder,
 þau min herte burste assunder.
 A[nd] wose ever is zong houssewif,
 Ha³ loveþ ful luitel hire lif,
 And⁴ eni clerc of love hire bede,
 Bote⁵ hoe grante, and lete him spedc.'

[*Margerī*] 'A, Loverd Crist! wat mai [I] þenne do? 10
 þis enderdai⁶ com a clarc me to,
 And bed⁷ me love on his manere,
 And Ich him nolde nout ihere.
 Ich trouue he wolle me forsape.⁸
 Hou troustu,⁹ nelde, Ich moue ascape?' 15

[*Sirith*] 'God almiȝtten be þin help
 þat þou ne be nouper bicche ne welp!
 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 ounderfost.¹¹'

[*Margerī*] '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 efftsones¹⁵ bigunne.

1 shed tears
 2 meet
 3 she
 4 if
 5 unless

6 the other day
 7 offered
 8 transform
 9 thinkest thou, believest thou
 10 request (boon)

11 receivest, takest
 12 went
 13 property
 14 once
 15 again

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

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

[*Sirith*] ' Sopliche, mi swete dame,
 And if I mai wiphoute blame,
 Fain Ich wille ffonde ;
 10 And if Ich mai wip him mete
 Bi eni wei oper 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 zet to-dai,
 Bi mine miztte.'
 Hoe wente hire to hire inne,
 Her hoe founde Wilekinne,
 Bi houre Drihtte ⁵ !

[*Sirith*] ' Swete Wilekin, be þou nout dred,
 25 For of þin her[n]de Ich have wel sped.
 Swipe com for[þ] þider wip 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.'

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[*Sirith*] ' And wose is onwis,
 And for non pris
 Ne con geten his levemon,
 I shal, for mi mede,
 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 (3. 94-101); 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
 To here þe foulis 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.

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

¹ thickets, groves

² beautiful

³ did

' This is a mery mornyng,' 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,
 Litull John can sey,
 ' And thynk hit is a full fayre tyme
 In a mornyng of May.'

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

10

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

15

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

20

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

25

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 lyne.²'

' I wil not shete a peny,' seyde Robyn Hode,
 ' In feith, Litull John, with the,
 But ever for on as ³ þou shetis,' seide Robyn,
 ' In feith I holde þe thre.'

Thus shet þei forth, þese zemen too,
 10 Bothe at buske⁴ and brome,⁵
 Til Litull John wan of his maister
 Five shillings to ⁶ 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 schortly, ' Nay.'

With þat Robyn Hode lyed ⁸ 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 by ⁹ hit ful sore ;
 Get þe a man wher þou w[ilt],
 For þou getis me no more.'

þen Robyn goes to Notyngham,
 25 Hymselfe mornynge¹⁰ allone,
 And Litull John to mery Scherwode —
 The pathes he knew ilkone.

1 shoot for a penny

2 lime, linden

3 that

4 bush

5 broom

6 for

7 fierce

8 gave the lie to

9 pay for

10 mourning

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Up þen rose þis prowde shereff,
 And radly¹ made hym gare²;
 Many was þe moder son
 To þe kyrk with hym can fare.

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

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

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

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

Ffor now am I weppynlesse,' seid Robyn,
 'Alasse! agayn my wylle;
 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 mornyng,
 And lokid forþ at a stage ;
 He was war wher þe munke came ridyng,
 And with hym a litul page.

' Be my feith,' seid Litul John to Moch,
 ' I can þe tel tithyngus ¹ gode ;
 I se wher þe munke cumys rydyng,
 I know hym be his wyde hode.'

They went into the way, þese zemen boþe,
 As curtes men and hende ; 10
 þei spyrrred ² tithyngus at þe munke,
 As they hade bene his frende.

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

He robbyt me and my felowes boþe
 Of twenti marke in sertayn ³ ;
 If þat false owtlay be takyn,
 Fforsoþe we wolde be fayn. 20

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

' 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.

¹ tidings² asked³ MS. serten

Ffor Robyn Hode hase many a wilde felow,
 I tell you in certayn ¹ ;
 If þei wist ȝe rode þis way,
 In feith ȝe shulde be slayn.'

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

John ² toke þe munkis horse be þe hed,
 10 Fforsoþe, as I yow say ;
 So did Much, þe litull page,
 Ffor ³ he shulde not scape away.

Be þe golett ⁴ 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 hye ⁵ ;
 This munke saw he shulde be ded,
 20 Lowd 'mercy !' can ⁶ he crye.

'He was my maister,' seid Litull John,
 'þat þou hase browȝt in bale ⁷ ;
 Shalle þou never cum at our kyng,
 Ffor to telle hym tale.'

John smote of þe munkis hed,
 25 No longer wolde he dwell ⁸ ;
 So did Moch þe litull page,
 Ffor ferd ⁹ lest he wolde tell. . . .

¹ MS. certen
² MS. Johne
³ that

⁴ throat
⁵ haste
⁶ did

⁷ trouble
⁸ delay
⁹ fear

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

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.

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

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

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

' I have done þe a gode turne,' seid Litull John,
 ' Fforsothe, as I yow say ;
 I have brouȝt þe under grenewode lyne ;
 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 fellow,¹' seid Litull John,
 'No noder kepe I be.'²

Thus John gate Robyn Hod[e] out of prison,
 Sertan withoutyn layn ;
 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,
 And zete³ pastes of venyson,
 þat gode was with ale.

10

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 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-gate he stod,
 And het þe porter gadelyng,¹
 And bad him come in hizyng,²
 Anon þe gates up³ to do.
 þe porter seide : ‘ Ho⁴ clepeþ⁵ so ? ’
 He answered rízt anon :
 ‘ þou schalt witen,⁶ ar I gon :
 10 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.
 15 Opene þe gates, gadelyng ! ’
 þe porter seide : ‘ So mot⁹ I þe,¹⁰
 þe kyng is mid his meyne¹¹ ;
 Wel I wot, wiþoute doute,
 þe kyng nis nouzt¹² now wiþoute.’

1 knave
 2 haste
 3 open
 4 who

5 calleth
 6 know
 7 lie
 8 drawn

9 may
 10 thrive, prosper
 11 court
 12 not

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þe angel seide to Kyng Roberd :
 ' þou art a fol, þat art nouzt ferd ¹
 Mi men to do such vileynye ;
 þi gult þou most nede abyē.²
 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,
 And þe Emperour min oþer ;
 þei wil me wreke,⁴ forsop to telle,
 I wot þei nille nouzt longe dwelle.⁵ '
 ' þou art mi fol,' seide þe angel ;
 ' þou schalt be schore ⁶ everichdel ⁷
 Lich a fol, a fol to be —
 Wher is now þi dignite ?
 þi counseyler schal ben an ape,
 And o ⁸ cloþyng ȝou ⁹ worþ ¹⁰ yschape ¹¹
 I schal him cloþen as þi broþer,
 Of o cloþyng — hit nis non oþer ;
 He schal be þin owne fere ¹² —
 Sum wit of him þou miȝt lere.
 Houndes, howso hit falle,¹³
 Schulen ete wiþ þe in halle ;
 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,
 þat as a fol he schulde be schore
 Al around lich a frere,¹⁵
 An hondebrede bove eiper 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 aby
 þat him dude such vileynye,
 And ever he seide he was lord ;
 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 almizti couþe devise 10
 Him to bringe to lower stat ;
 Wiþ o drauȝt¹ he was chekmat.
 Wiþ houndes everich niȝt 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 miȝte him knowe :
 He was defigured in a þrowe.³ 20
 So lowe er þat was never kyng ;
 Allas, her was a delful⁴ þing —
 þat him⁵ scholde, for his pride,
 Such hap among his men bitide !
 Hunger and þurst he hadde grete,⁶ 25
 For he ne moste⁷ 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.
 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 oper 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 hevене Kyng,
 20 þerfore þou art an underlyng.
 God hap forgive 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 hevене among mi feren⁵ alle
 In an oure of a day
 þan in erþe, I þe say,
 In an hundred þousend zer,
 30 þeiz al þe world fer and ner

 ¹ falsehood
² hold

³ remained
⁴ placed

⁵ companions

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' 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
 To worshipe 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,
 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

But for to speke of vertuouse beautee,
 Than was she oon the faireste under sonne ;
 For povreliche yfostred up was she,
 No likerous¹ lust was thurgh hir herte yronne ;
 Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne²
 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 corage³ ; 10
 And in greet reverence and charitee
 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
 Wortes⁴ or othere herbes, tymes ofte,
 The whiche she shredde and seeth⁵ for hir livinge,
 And made hir bed ful harde, and nothing softe ;
 And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf onlofte⁶
 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 yë,
 As he on hunting rood paraventure⁷ ;
 And whan it fil that he mighte hir espye, 25
 He noght with wantoun loking of folye
 His yën caste on hir, but in sad wyse
 Upon hir chere⁸ 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 wanton² tun, cask³ serious disposition⁴ herbs⁵ boiled⁶ aloft (kept aloft = sustained)⁷ by chance⁸ face, countenance⁹ 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.

The day of wedding cam, but no wight can
 Telle what womman that it sholde be ;
 For which merveille wondred many a man,
 And seyden, whan they were in privetee :
 ' Wol nat our lord yet leve his vanitee ?
 10 Wol he nat wedde ? alas, alas 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 deyntevous 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

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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 ;
 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 lige man ybore ;
 10 And al that lyketh ² 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 ?'

15 This sodeyn cas ³ this man astoned so
 That reed he wex, abayst,⁴ 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 governeth ⁵ this matere.'

' Yet wol I,' quod this markis softly,
 ' That in thy chambre I and thou and she
 Have a collacion,⁶ and wostow why ?
 25 For I wol axe 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.'

30 And in the chambre whyl they were aboute
 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 honest ¹ manere
 And tentifly ² she kepte hir fader dere.
 But outerly ³ Grisildis wondre mighte,
 For never erst ne saugh she swich a sighte.

No wonder is thogh that she were astoned
 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 avyse ⁵ ?

I seye this, be ye redy with good herte
 To al my lust, and that I frely may, 20
 As me best thinketh, do yow ⁶ laughe or smerte,
 And never ye to grucche it, night ne day ?
 And cek whan I sey " ye," ne ⁷ 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, undigne ⁸ 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, decent
² attentively, carefully
³ utterly

⁴ accustomed
⁵ consider the matter (= refuse)
⁶ cause you to

⁷ So MS. *read*; ye (?)
⁸ undeserving
⁹ 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
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 these ladyes were nat right glad
To handle hir clothes wherin she was clad.
15 But natheles this mayde, bright of hewe,
Fro foot to heed they clothed han al newe.

Hir heres han they kembd, that lay untressed
Ful rudely, and with hir ³ 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

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A maner¹ sergeant² was this privee man,
 The which that feithful ofte he founden hadde
 In thinges grete, and eek swich folk wel can³
 Don execucioun on thinges badde.
 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 suffren and consente ;
 20 And as a lamb she sitteth meke and stille,
 And leet this cruel sergeant doon his wille.

Suspecious 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 hir to that the markis lyked.

30 But atte laste speken she bigan,
 And mekely she to the sergeant preyde,
 So as he was a worthy gentil man,

¹ sort of
² officer
³ know how to

⁴ evaded
⁵ their
⁶ seized

⁷ behavior
⁸ ill report
⁹ 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 :
 ' 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 l
 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 l '
 But nathelees so sad stedfast was she, 15
 That she endured all adversitee,
 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
 Maken comparison ; it is no nay.
 I heeld¹ 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 glade³ —
 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.

15 That ye so longe of your benignitee
 Han holden me in honour and nobleye,
 Whereas I was noght worthy for to be,
 That thonke I God and yow, to whom I preye
 Foryelde⁴ 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 shilde⁵ 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

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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 abreyde.³
 '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 seyde 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 doun 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 tendrely 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,
 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, abaysed, 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 dexterity⁸ 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.

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
 This feste was, and gretter of costage,²
 Than was the revel of hir mariage.

10

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 (I. 152): '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 — *vox* 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
 Afingret erour⁴ half so swipe.⁵
 He ne hoeld⁶ nouþer wey ne strete,

15

¹ welkin, heaven
² expense

³ ahungred
⁴ before

⁵ much
⁶ held, kept to

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Go hom, Crist þe ȝeve kare l
 Houre ¹ hennen þou dest ofte shome.²'
 ' Be stille, Ich hote,³ a Godes nome l'

Quap þe wox: ' Sire Chauntecler,
 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 ⁶
 Bote ⁶ here heddre ⁷ were itake ⁸;
 þat I do for almes sake.

Ich have hem letten eddre ⁷ blod,
 And þe, Chauntecler, hit wolde don goed.
 þou havest þat ilke ounder þe splen,⁹
 þou nestes ¹⁰ nevere daies ten;
 For þine lif-dayes beþ al ago,
 Bote þou bi mine rede ¹¹ do;
 I do þe lete blod ounder þe brest,
 Oþer sone axe after þe prest.'

' 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,
 Ich miȝte ben siker of oþre shome.
 Ac weste ¹⁶ hit houre cellerer ¹⁷
 þat þou were icomen her,
 He wolde sone after þe ȝonge,
 Mid pikes, and stones, and staves stronge;
 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

He ¹ wes stille, ne spak namore,
 Ac he werp ² apurst wel sore ;
 þe þurst him dede more wo
 þen hevede rap³er ³ his hounger do.
 Overal he ede ⁴ and souhte ; ⁵
 On aventure his witt ⁶ him brouhte ⁷
 To one putte ⁸ — wes water inne —
 þat wes imaked mid grete ginne.⁹
 Tuo boketes þer he founde :

þat oper ¹⁰ wende to þe grounde, 10
 þat wen ¹¹ me shulde þat on opwinde,
 þat oper wolde adoun winde.

He ne hounderstod nout of þe ginne ;
 He nom ¹² þat boket, and lep þerinne,
 For he hopede inou to drinke. 15

þis boket beginnep to sinke ;
 To late þe vox wes biþout,¹³
 þo he wes in þe ginne ibrout.

Inou he gon him bipenche,
 Ac hit ne halp mid none wrenche ¹⁴ ; 20
 Adoun he moste, he wes þerinne ;
 Ikaut he wes mid swikele ¹⁵ ginne.

Hit migte han iben wel his wille
 To lete þat boket hongi stille.

Wat ¹⁶ mid serewe ¹⁷ and mid drede 25
 Al his þurst him overhede.¹⁸

Al þus he com to þe grounde,
 And water inou þer he founde.

þo he fond water, ȝerne he dronk ;
 Him þoute þat water þere stonk, 30
 For hit wes toȝeines his wille.

1 the fox
 2 became
 3 earlier, before
 4 went (OE. *ēode*)
 5 MS. *sohute*
 6 MS. *wiit*

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. *oferþode*)

'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,

Nedde lust iben of mine moupe.

Him is wo in euche londe,

þat is þef mid his honde.

Ich am ikaut mid swikele ginne,

Oþer soum devel me broute herinne.

10 I was woned ⁴ to ben wiis,

Ac nou of me idon hit hiis. 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 a fingret swiþe.

Noþing he ne founde in al þe nizte,

Wermide ⁸ his hunger aquenche miȝtte.

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, oþer mi fere ¹²?

Say me soþ, ne gabbe ¹³ þou me nout,

Wo ¹⁴ haveþ þe in þe putte ibroun?'

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 knows

² moderation

³ should not have had

⁴ accustomed, wont

⁵ is (and now it is all up with me)

⁶ sadly

⁷ quickly

⁸ wherewith

⁹ speech

¹⁰ from the time they were

¹¹ art thou

¹² companion

¹³ jest, lie

¹⁴ who

¹⁵ to bring up

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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,
 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'

10 þe wolf haveþ hounger swiþe gret,
 For he nedde ȝare⁷ i-ete;
 And þo he herde speken of mete,
 He wolde bleþeliche⁸ ben þare.
 'Al' 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 forȝeve.'

'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 srift¹³ ihere,
 And al mi liif I shal þe telle?'

'Nay,' quod þe vox, 'I nelle.'
 30 'Neltou¹⁴?' quod þe wolf; 'þin ore¹⁵!
 Ich am afingret swiþe sorè;
 Ich wot to-niȝt ich worþe ded

1 knows not
 2 why (what)
 3 where
 4 filth, foulness
 5 many kinds

6 goats
 7 for a long time
 8 gladly
 9 friend, companion (OE. *gefēra*)
 10 taken away from

11 shriven
 12 confess
 13 shrift, confession
 14 wilt thou not
 15 (grant) thy grace, favor (OE. *ðr*)

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,³
 Tel þine sunnen on and on,⁴
 Þat þer bileve⁵ never on.'
 'Sone,' quod þe wolf, 'wel ifaie⁶;
 Ich hadde ben qued⁷ al mi lifdaie;
 Ich hadde widewene⁸ kors,⁹ 10
 Þerfore ich fare þe wors.
 A þousent shep ich hadde abiten,
 And mo, ꝛcf hy weren iwriten,
 Ac hit me ofþinkeþ¹⁰ sore. .
 Maister, shal I tellen more?' 15
 'Ȝe,' quod þe vox, 'al þou most sugge,¹¹
 Oþer elleswer þou most abugge.¹²'
 'Gossip,' quod þe wolf, 'forȝef hit me,
 Ich hadde ofte schid qued bi¹³ þe.
 Men seide þat þou on þine live 20
 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 25
 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, 30
 'Al þat þou havest her bifore ido,

1 bowed

2 groan

3 receive

4 one by one

5 remain

6 gladly, fain; MS. I fare

7 evil

8 of widows

9 curse

10 repents (it repents me = I repent)

11 say

12 make atonement

13 said evil of

14 went astray, sinned

15 you

16 saw; MS. ley

17 what

18 MS. nohut

In þouht,¹ in speche, and in dede,
 In euche operes kunnes² quede,
 Ich þe forgeve at þisse nede.'

'Crist þe forgelde!' 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

10 Isiist þou a boket hongri þere?
 þere is a bruche of hevne blisse.⁶
 Lep þerinne, mid iwisse,
 And þou shalt comen to me sone.'

Quod the wolf, 'þat is ligt to done.'

15 He lep in, and way⁶ sumdel⁷ —

þat weste⁸ þe vox ful wel.
 þe wolf gon sinke, þe vox arise;
 þo gon þe wolf sore agrise.⁹

þo he com amidde þe putte,
 20 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!

25 And nou go doun wiþ þi meel,¹²

þi bizete¹³ worþ wel smal;

Ac Ich am þerof glad and bliþe,

þat þou art nomen¹⁴ in clene live.

þi soule-cnul¹⁵ Ich wille do ringe,

30 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

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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
 Mid grete houndes, and to bete.
 Wel and wroþe he wes iswonge⁴;
 Mid staves and speres he wes istounge.⁵
 þe wox bicharde⁶ him, mid iwisse,
 For he ne fond nones kunnes blisse,
 Ne hof⁷ dundes⁸ forȝevenesse.

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, stonding in a dale.
 This widwe, of which I telle yow my tale,
 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 housbondrye¹³ of such as God hir sente,
 She found¹⁴ herself, and eek hir doghtren two.
 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 poynaunt 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 ;
 Attempree ³ dyete was al hir phisyk,
 And exercyse, and hertes suffisaunce.⁴
 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 bredd, 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 stikkes, 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 with

² gown

³ moderate, temperate

⁴ a contented heart (heart's satisfaction)

⁵ prevented

⁶ not at all

⁷ injured

⁸ table

⁹ singed, broiled

¹⁰ egg

¹¹ kind of

¹² dairywoman

¹³ called

¹⁴ there was not

¹⁵ more trustworthy

¹⁶ lodge

¹⁷ clock

¹⁸ the equinoctial circle

¹⁹ when one hour was past

²⁰ indented like a battlement

²¹ bill

²² jet

²³ 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,
 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 herself 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 daweninge,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

17. *My . . . londe*: this is the first line of an old song, printed by Skeat in the *Athenaeum* for October 24, 1896.

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Whan humours been to habundant in a wight.
 Certes this dreem, which ye han met¹ to-night,
 Cometh of the grete superfluitee
 Of youre rede *colera*,² pardee,
 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 contek,⁵ and of whelpes⁶ 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 boles⁸ 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 of¹⁰ dremes?
 Now, sire,' quod she, 'whan we flee fro the bemes,
 For Goddes love, as tak¹¹ som laxatyf;
 20 Up¹² 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, for¹³ ye shul nat tarie,
 Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
 25 I shal myself to herbes techen¹⁴ yow,
 That shul ben for your hele¹⁵ and for your prow¹⁶;
 And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,
 The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,¹⁷
 To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.
 30 Forget not this, for Goddes owene love!
 Ye been ful colerik of compleccioun;

1 dreamed

2 one of the four so-called humors

3 arrows

4 flames

5 strife, contest

6 dogs

7 small

8 bulls

9 *Dionysii Catonis Disticha
de Moribus ad Filium*

10 pay no heed to

11 pray take

12 on

13 in order that

14 direct

15 healing

16 profit

17 nature

Ware ¹ 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.
 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 lest
 2 goat
 3 tertian
 4 spurge-laurel
 5 centaury
 6 fumitory
 7 hellebore

8 lesser spurge (caper spurge)
 9 dogwood berries (some-
 times those of other
 similar shrubs)
 10 herb ivy (ground pine ?)
 11 father's
 12 great thanks (gramercy)

13 lord, sir (Lat. *dominus*)
 14 so may I prosper
 15 opposite
 16 opinion
 17 proof
 18 Cicero, in his *De Divina-
 tione*

And happed so, thay come into a toun
 Wheras ther was swich congregacioun ¹
 Of peple, and ² eek so streit ³ of herbergage, ⁴
 That they ne founde as mucche as o ⁵ cotage
 In which they bothe mighte ylogged ⁶ be.
 Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,
 As for that night, departen ⁷ 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 commune. ¹⁰
 15 And so bifel that, longe er it were day,
 This man mette in his bed, ther as ¹¹ 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 abrayde ¹² ;
 But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,
 He turned him, and took of this no keep ¹³ ;
 25 Him thoughte ¹⁴ his dreem nas but a vanitee. ¹⁵
 Thus twyës in his sleping dremed he ;
 And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
 Cam, as him thoughte, and seide : " I am now slawe ¹⁶ ;
 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

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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.
 Mordre is so wlatson³ 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 anhanged by the nekke-boon.
 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 tarie,
 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 leste.¹¹
 Jolif¹² and glad they wente unto hir 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 dreem, agayn¹⁰ the day :
 Him thoughte¹⁶ a man stood by his beddes syde,

¹ recently² dost make manifest, bring to
light³ 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 dreynt¹; my tale is at an ende."
 He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,
 And preyde him his viage² for to lette³;
 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 japes⁵:
 Men dreme alday⁶ of owles or of apes,
 And eke of many a mase⁷ therwithal;
 Men dreme of thing that never was ne shal.⁸ 15
 But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde,
 And thus forsleuthen⁹ wilfully thy tyde,¹⁰
 God wot it reweth me¹¹; 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 I¹² nat why, ne what mischaunce it eyed,¹³
 But casuelly¹⁴ the shippes botme¹⁵ 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 recchelees¹⁸
 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 drowned

2 journey

3 abandon, give up

4 business affairs

5 jests, tricks

6 continually

7 bewildering situation

8 shall be

9 waste in sloth

10 time

11 I am sorry

12 I know not

13 (there) ailed

14 by accident

15 bottom

16 split

17 mayst thou learn

18 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
 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 therefore 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 Cipioun,
 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 vanitee.
 20 Reed 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 Mercia

3 little

4 vision

5 saw

6 nurse

7 explained

8 bit

9 guard

10 against

11 account hath he made

12 afterwards

13 as to

14 whether

15 reality

16 realms

17 Lydia

13. avisioun: the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero, with a commentary by Macrobius.

29. For this dream, cf. the *Monk's Tale*.

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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
 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 yfounde,
 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 maked 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 hevne
 25 Fourty degrees and oon, and more, ywis.
 Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
 Herkneith 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.M.¹⁰ voice, sound¹¹ these¹² misfortune14. *maked*: this was a mediæval idea.

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 saufly⁵ mighte it wryte,
 As for a sovereyn notabilittee.⁶
 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 torne agayn to my sentence.⁷

10

A colfox,⁸ ful of sly iniquitee,
 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
 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 gladly doon thise¹⁶ homicydes alle,
 That in awayt¹⁷ liggen¹⁸ to mordre men.
 O false morderer, lurking in thy den!
 O newe Scariot,¹⁹ newe Genilon²⁰!
 False dissimilour,²¹ O Greek Sinon,
 That broghtest Troye al outrely²² to sorwe!
 O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,
 That thou into that yerd flogh²³ fro the bemes!
 Thou were ful wel ywarned by thy dremes
 That thilke day was perilous to thee,

15

20

25

1 past

2 skilled writer

3 compose

4 chronicle

5 safely

6 supremely notable fact

7 subject

8 brant fox (having a large inter-
mixture of black in its fur)

9 dwelt

10 as a result of

11 premeditated

12 hedges

13 burst

14 herbs

15 about 11 A.M.

16 these

17 waiting

18 lie

19 Iscariot

20 Ganelon, who betrayed
Roland

21 dissembler

22 utterly

23 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
 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 Boëce,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 that it was wroght ;
 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 counseils 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 trete of swich matere,

¹ that which

² foreknows

³ according to

⁴ bolt it to the bran, sift
 it thoroughly

⁵ Boethius

⁶ Archbishop of Canterbury in the four-
 teenth century, and a divinity pro-
 fessor and chancellor of Oxford

⁷ foreknowledge

⁸ compels, constrains

⁹ necessarily

¹⁰ dreamed

¹¹ disastrous

¹² where

¹³ since

¹⁴ know not

¹⁵ fun, sport

17. Conditional necessity, according to Boethius, implies knowledge: if one knows that a man is walking, then he is, necessarily, walking.

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My lord your fader — God his soule blesse ! —
 And eek your moder, of hir gentillesse,
 Han in myn hous ybeen, to my gret ese ¹ ;
 And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
 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 peyne him ³ that with bothe his yën
 He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,
 And stonden on his tipton 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 knok
 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 hyc upon his toos,

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

10

For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed. ¹¹

O destinee, 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 multiplie,

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.

Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun

Was never of ladies maad whan Ilioun

30

1 truth

2 Ecclesiasticus 12. 10, 11, 16

3 on

4 beware

5 their

6 closed

7 for the occasion

8 throat

9 seized

10 bore

11 pursued

12 escaped

13 recked

14 happened

15 since

16 Geoffrey de Vinsauf

17 didst lament

18 judgment

19 blame

20 lament

Was wonne, and Pirrus¹ with his streite² sword,
 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
 Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte.
 But sovereynly⁴ Dame Pertelote shrighthe,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 hirselves with a stedfast herte.
 O 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 anoon,
 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 Pyrrhus
 2 drawn
 3 enclosure
 4 most of all
 5 shrieked

6 King of Carthage when it was
 burned by the Romans
 7 burned
 8 their
 9 good

10 alas
 11 help
 12 frightened

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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.'

'Nay than,' quod he, 'I shrewe¹ 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 yë.

10 For he that winketh whan he sholde see,
 Al wilfully, God lat him never thee² !'

'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 recchelees³

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 moralitee, good men ;

20 For Seint Paul seith⁴ 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 bringe us to his heighe blisse ! Amen.

¹ curse

² prosper

³ heedless

⁴ 2 Tim. 3. 16

⁵ the Archbishop of Canterbury, as
 a manuscript note explains

LAYAMON, BRUT

Our chief information concerning Layamon is derived from the first extract printed below. In the later manuscript, 'Lagamon' is 'Laweman'; and indeed the word means 'lawman,' a kind of magistrate. 'Ernleze' 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 *Histories 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 *Dict. Nat. Biog.*; *Camb. 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 Lagamon wes ihoten³;
He wes Leovenades sone — liðe⁴ him beo Drihten⁵!
He wonede⁶ at Ernleze, at æðelen⁷ are⁸ chirechen,⁹
Uppen Sevarne stape¹⁰ — sel¹¹ þar him puhte¹² —
On fest¹³ Radestone; þer he bock radde.¹⁴

¹ priest

² among the people

³ 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 nom¹ Ignogen, and into scipe lædde.
 Heo² rihten³ heora rapes, heo rærden⁴ heora mastes,
 Heo wunden up seiles; wind stod⁵ an willen.⁶
 Sixtene siðe⁷ tuenti scipen tuhten⁸ from havene,
 5 And feower scipen greate þe weren grundladene⁹
 Mid þat beste wepnen þa Brutus havede.
 Heo fusden¹⁰ from stronde ut of Griclonde¹¹;
 Heo wenden ut i wide sæ; þa wilde¹² wurðen itemedede.¹³
 Tweize dawes and tua niht inne sæ weren;
 10 þen oðer¹⁴ dai heo comen liðen¹⁵ on æven to londe.
 Logice¹⁶ hatte¹⁷ þat eitlond¹⁸; leode¹⁹ nere þar nane —
 Ne wapmen²⁰ ne wifmen — buten²¹ westize²² pæðes.²³
 Utlagen²⁴ hefden iræved²⁵ þat lond, and alle þa leoden ofslagen²⁶;
 And swa hit wes al west,²⁷ and wnnen²⁸ biræved,
 15 Ah²⁹ swa monie þar waren wilde deor³⁰ þat wnder³¹ heom þuhte³²;
 And þa Troinisce men tuhten to þon deoren,
 And duden of þan wilden al heora iwilla.³³
 To þan scipen wælden.³⁴
 Heo funden i þon eitlonde ane burh³⁵ swiðe stronge;
 20 Tohælde³⁶ weoren þe walles, weste weren hallen.
 Temple heo funden þar ane, imaked of marmestæne,
 Muchel and mære³⁷; þe wrse³⁸ hit hafde to welden.³⁹

1 took
 2 they
 3 put in order
 4 raised
 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 Leogecia; position unknown
 17 hight
 18 eyotland (island)
 19 people
 20 men
 21 only
 22 desert
 23 MS. pædes
 24 outlaws
 25 devastated
 26 slain

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

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Mid milden his worden he ġirnde¹ hire mihten.
 Ofte he custe² þat weofed mid wnsume lates³ ;
 He halde⁴ þa milc in þat fur mid milden his worden :
 ‘ Leafdi Diana, leove Diana, heġe Diana, help me to neode.
 5 Wise⁵ mi and witere,⁶ þurh þine witful⁷ craft,
 Whuder Ich mæi liðan,⁸ and ledan mine leoden
 To ane wnsume londe, þer⁹ ich mihte wunien.¹⁰
 And ġif Ich þat lond mai biġeten,¹¹ and mi folc hit þurhgengen,¹²
 Makian Ich wlle on þinc nome mæren¹³ ane stowe,
 10 And Ich þe wulle huren¹⁴ mid wrhscipe hæġan.¹⁵ ’
 Þus speç Brutus.
 Seoððen¹⁶ he nam þe hude¹⁷ þa wæs of þare hinde ;
 Biforen þan wefede he heo spradde, swlc¹⁸ he leie on bedde ;
 He cnelede þar ufenan,¹⁹ and seoððen 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 leofliche²¹ biheolde
 Mid wnsume leahrtren²² ; wel heo him bihihte,²³
 And hendiliche²⁴ hire hond on his heved leide,
 20 And þus him to seide, þer he on slepe lai :
 ‘ Biġende²⁵ France, i þet west, þu scalt finden a wunsum lond ;
 Þat lond is biurnan²⁶ mid þære sæ ; þaron þu scalt wrþan²⁷ sæl.²⁸
 Þar is fuzel, þar is fisc ; þer wuniað feire deor ;
 Þar is wode, þar is water ; þar is wilderne²⁹ muchel.
 25 Þet lond is swiþe wunsum ; weallen³⁰ þer beoð feire ;
 Wuniað in þon londe eotanes³¹ swiðe stronge.
 Albion hatte þat lond, ah leode ne beoð þar nane.
 Þerto þu scalt teman,³² and ane neowe Troye þar makian ;

1 besought
 2 kissed
 3 looks
 4 poured
 5 guide
 6 instruct
 7 MS. wihtful
 8 journey
 9 where
 10 dwell
 11 obtain

12 overrun
 13 noble
 14 adore
 15 high
 16 afterward
 17 hide
 18 as if
 19 upon
 20 drowse
 21 lovingly
 22 laughter

23 promised
 24 courteously
 25 beyond
 26 surrounded
 27 become
 28 prosperous
 29 wilderness
 30 wells, springs
 31 giants ; MS. cotantes
 32 repair

þer scal of þine cunne¹ kinebearn² arisen,
 And scal þin mære³ kun wælden⁴ þas⁵ londes,
 Ʒeond⁶ þa weorld beon ihæged⁷; and þu beo hæl 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: 'Amœno 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,
 Hii wende aboute wide inou, þe contreies vor to fonde;
 Gret plente hii founde of fiis, as hii 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 plaignes,
 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 cryed feld.

Brutaine 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.

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

Weox ¹ þæt folk and wel ipaih, ² for ælc hefde his iwillen ³ ;
 Inne lut ⁴ Ʒeren firste ⁵ wes þat folc swa muchel
 þat þer nas nan ende of folke swiþe hende.
 Brutus hine biþohte, ⁶ and þis folc biheold ;
 5 Biheold he þa muntres, feire and muchele ;
 Biheold he þa medcwan þat weoren swiþe mære ;
 Biheold he þa wateres and þa wilde deor ;
 Biheold he þa fisches ; biheold he þa fuþeles ;
 Biheold he þa leswa ⁷ and þene leofliche ⁸ wode ;
 10 Biheold he þene wode hu he bleou ⁹ ; biheold he þat corn hu hit greu ;
 Al he iseih on leoden þat him leof was on heorten.
 þa biþohte he on TroyƷen, ¹⁰ þer his cun teone ¹¹ þoleden, ¹²
 And he liðde ¹³ Ʒeond þis lond, and scæwede ¹⁴ þa ¹⁵ leoden.
 He funde wunsum ane stude ¹⁶ uppen ane watere ;
 15 þær he gon aræren ¹⁷ riche ane burhe, ¹⁸
 Mid bouren and mid hallen, mid hæƷe stanwalle[n].
 þa þe burh wes imaked, þa wes he swiþe mære. ¹⁹
 þa burh wes swiþe wel idon, and he hire sette name on ;
 He Ʒef hire ²⁰ tirlfulne ²¹ name — Troye þe Newe,
 20 To munien ²² his ikunde ²³ whone ²⁴ he icomen weore.
 Seoððen ²⁵ þa leodene longe þerafter
 Leiden adun þene ²⁶ noma, and Trinovant heo ²⁷ nemnedn.
 Binnen ²⁸ feola ²⁹ wintre hit iwerð ³⁰ seoððen ³¹
 þat aræs of Brutus kunne — þat wes an heh king —
 25 Lud wes ihaten. ³² þas burh he luvede swiþe ;
 þe king i þere burh wonede swiþe feola wintre.
 He lette heo Lude clepian Ʒond his leodfolke, ³³
 Hehte ³³ heo nemnen Kaerlud, æfter þone kinge.

1 grew

2 thrive

3 will (what he desired)

4 a few

5 time

6 bethought

7 pastures

8 lovely

9 blew

10 Troy

11 evil

12 suffered

13 journeyed ; MS. liððe

14 viewed

15 MS. þea

16 spot

17 erect

18 city

19 glorious ; MS. mare

20 MS. hire to hire

21 glorious

22 commemorate

23 lineage

24 from which

25 subsequently ; MS. seoððen

26 that

27 it

28 within

29 many

30 befell

31 MS. seodðen

32 named

33 commanded

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And he hine biþohte wet he don mahte
 Of ¹ his kineriche ² æfter his deie.
 He seide to himsulven þat þat uvel ⁸ wes :
 ' Ic wlle mine riche todon ⁴ allen ⁵ minen dohtren,
 5 And zeven 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 Gornaille, his ¹¹ godfulle ¹² dohter,
 10 Ut of hire bure to hire fader deore ;
 And þus ¹⁸ spac þe alde king, þer he on æðelen ¹⁴ seat :
 ' Sei me, Gornaille, soðere ¹⁶ worden :
 Swiðe dure ¹⁶ þeo eart me ; hu leof æm Ich þe ?
 Hu mochel worþ ¹⁷ levest ¹⁸ þu me to walden kineriche ?'
 15 Gornaille 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 arc 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 clane ²⁸ ;
 20 And zet ²⁹ Ic þe wlle speken wit ³⁰ : þeou ært leovere þene mi lif ;
 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 gef — þat wæs þe olde king :
 ' Ich þe, Gornaille, sugce, ³⁶ leove dohter dure,
 25 God ³⁷ scal beon þi meda ³⁸ for þira gretinge.
 Ic eam, for mire ældde, ³⁹ sw[i]þe unbaldeð, ⁴⁰

1 with
 2 kingdom
 8 evil
 4 divide
 5 MS. & allen
 6 kingdom
 7 apportion
 8 children
 9 test
 10 MS. whulchere
 11 MS. hes
 12 goodly ; MS. guð-
 18 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. soðe
 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 lovest ¹ sw[i]þe mare þan is on live.
 Ich wille mi drihliche ² lond a þreo ³ al todalen ⁴ ;
 þin is þat beste deal ; þu ært mi dohter deore,
 And scalt habben to laverd min alre beste þein ⁵
 þeo Ich mai vinden in mine kinnelonde. ⁶’

Æfter spac þe olde kinge wit his [oþer] ⁷ dohter :
 ‘ Leove dohter Regau, wæt seist tu ⁸ me to ræide ⁹ ?
 Seie þu bifore mire dugden ¹⁰ heo ¹¹ dure Ich am þe an herten.’
 þa answærde [Regau] mid rætfulle ¹² worden :

‘ Al þat is on live nis nig ¹³ swa dure 10
 Swa me is þin an lime, ¹⁴ forðe ¹⁵ min ahzene ¹⁶ lif.’
 Ah heo ne seide naþing soð, ¹⁷ no more þenne hire suste[r] ;
 Alle hire lesinge hire vader ilefede.

þa answarede þe king — his ¹⁸ doxter him icwemde ¹⁹ :
 ‘ þea þridde del of mine londe Ich bitake ²⁰ þe an honde ; 15
 þu scalt nime ²¹ loverd ²² þer þe is alre leowost.’ ✓ 7 11

þa zet nolde ²³ þe leodking ²⁴ his sotscipe ²⁵ bilæven ²⁶ ;
 He hehte ²⁷ cumen him biforen his dohter Gordoille.

Heo was alre zungest, of soðe zærwitelest, ²⁸
 And þe king heo lovede more þanne ba tueie ²⁹ þe oðre. 20

Cordoille iherde þa lasinge þe hire sustren seiden þon kinge ;
 Nom ³⁰ hire leaffulne ³¹ huic ³² þat heo lizen ³³ nolden —
 Hire fader heo wolde suges soð, ³⁴ were him lef, ³⁵ were him lað. ³⁶
 þeo queð þe alde king — unræd ³⁷ him fulede ³⁸ :

‘ Iheren Ich wille of þe, Cordoille — 25
 Swa þe helpe Appolin — hu deore þe beo lif min.’
 þa answarede Cordoille, lude ³⁹ and no wiht stille,

1 MS. levoste
 2 MS. dirh-
 3 in three; MS. þroe
 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. hiis
 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 unwisdom; MS. unræð
 38 followed
 39 loudly

Mid gomene¹ and mid lehtre to hire fader leve :
 ' þeo art me leof al so² mi fæder, and Ich þe al so þi dohter ;
 Ich habbe to þe soþfaste³ 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 wleþ⁹ luvien,
 For sone he¹⁰ bið ilaged,¹¹ þe mon þe lutel ah.¹² '
 þus seide þe mæiden Cordoille, and seoððen set sw[i]þe stille.
 þa iwarðe¹³ þe king wræð¹⁴ for he nes noht¹⁵ iquemed,¹⁶
 10 And wende on [h]is þonke¹⁷ þat¹⁸ hit weren for unðeawe¹⁹
 þat he hire weore swa unwourð þat heo hine nolde iwurði²⁰
 Swa hire twa sustren, þe ba somed²¹ læsinge speken.
 þe king Leir iwerðe²² swa blac swlch²³ hit a blac cloð weoren,
 Iwærð his hude²⁴ and his heowe,²⁵ for he was suþe²⁶ ihærmed²⁷ ;
 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 Cordoille, Ich þe telle wle³⁵ mine wille :
 Of mine dohtren þu were me durest ; nu þu eært me alre³⁶ læðes[t].³⁷
 20 Ne scalt þu næver halden dale of mine lande,
 Ah mine[n] dohtren Ich wille delen mine riche,³⁸
 And þu scalt worðen wræchen,³⁹ and wonien in wansiðe,⁴⁰
 For navere Ich ne wende⁴¹ þat þu me woldes þus scanden⁴² ;
 þarfore þu scalt beon dæd,⁴³ Ich wene ; fliz⁴⁴ ut of min eæhsene.⁴⁵
 25 þine sustren sculen habben mi kinelond ; 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. wllt

10 MS. heo

11 brought low ; MS. ilageð

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

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And beicne ¹ þa eorles buzen ² heom togaderes,
 Mid swiðe muchele folke ; togæderen stoden faste.
 Isezen ³ heo Julius Cesar fæhten al swa a wilde bar,
 And heo him to fusden ⁴ mid ladliche ⁵ fehte,
 5 And monie of heore feonden heo fælden to þon grunde.
 Þa iseh Nennius wær ⁶ fæht Cesar Julius,
 And he him to rasde ⁷ mid ræhæm ⁸ his sweorde ;
 Uppen þene helm he hine smat þat þet sweord in bat.
 Selkuð ⁹ hit þuhte ¹⁰ moni cnihte
 10 þat he durste cumen him næh, for þan þa þe keisere ¹¹ wes swa hæh. ¹²
 Julius Cesar ne queð nan word, ah he bræid ¹³ ut his sweord,
 And Nennium he smat þa uppen þene helm swa
 þat þe helm tohældc, ¹⁴ and þat hæfde ¹⁵ bledde ;
 Ah he ne blakede ¹⁶ no, for he wes cniht wel idon. ¹⁷
 15 And Julius noht ne na bræð, ¹⁸ ah his brond ¹⁹ he up ahæf, ²⁰
 And Nennius hæf up his sceld, scilde ²¹ hine sulve.
 Julius adun smat, ²² and þat sweord a ²³ ðene scelde bat ²⁴ ;
 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 bituzen, ²⁷ ne mihte he þat sweord ut drazen. ²⁸
 þat isæh Androgeus hu verden ²⁹ Cesar and Nennius,
 And he ³⁰ hem to fusde, Nennius ³¹ to fulste. ³²
 Þa isæh Cesar tiðcnd ³³ þat him wes sær ;
 He forlette ³⁴ þene brand — þa nefde he noht on his hond —
 25 And he þa feondliche ³⁵ turnde to flæme. ³⁶
 Nennius wende i þane felde, and he turnde his scelde,
 Droh ut þene brande. Þa wes þe eorl swiþe bald :

1 both
 2 turned
 3 saw
 4 hurried
 5 hostile
 6 where
 7 rushed
 8 fierce
 9 strange
 10 MS. þuðte
 11 emperor
 12 awe-inspiring
 13 drew

14 gave way
 15 head
 16 paled
 17 trained
 18 paused for breath (?) ; but the text is probably corrupt. (The later MS. has : mid þe seolve breþ.)
 19 sword
 20 lifted
 21 shielded
 22 smote
 23 in
 24 bit

25 wrenched
 26 stuck
 27 tugged at
 28 draw
 29 fared
 30 MS. heo
 31 MS. monie
 32 assistance
 33 occurrence
 34 let go
 35 as a foeman
 36 flight

Monie Romanisce men mid þon sweorde he leide adun ;
 He wes moni ¹ monnes bone,² and moni anne ³ he dude scome.
 Al þat he mid þan sweorde smat, þerriht ⁴ hit ⁵ iwat ⁶ ;
 Al þat he þermid ⁷ atran,⁸ weore hit flæs,⁹ weore hit ban,
 Þurh þeos sweordes wunde heo fullen to þon grunde.
 Alle dæi wes þat fiht,¹⁰ a ¹¹ þet com þe þestere ¹² niht.

Julius þe kaisere mid alle þan Romanisce here
 Dalden ¹³ from þan fihte al bi þustere nihte ;
 To hærbærge ¹⁴ heo wenden uppen þare sæ stronde ;
 Heo bilefden ¹⁵ biæften ¹⁶ twenti hundred cnihten 10
 Þeo leien under scelden, islægen geond þon felden.
 Cesar iwende to his bedde ; his men weoren ofdredde.¹⁷
 Hine ¹⁸ biwakeden ¹⁹ in þere nihte þritti hundred cnihten,
 Mid helmen and mid burnen,²⁰ and mid stelene sweorden.
 Julius Cesar he wes gep ²¹ and swuðe iwær ²² ; 15
 He isæh his muchele lure,²³ and of mare ²⁴ he hæfde kare ;
 He aras to þan midnihte, and bannede ²⁵ his cnihtes,
 And seide heom þat heo wolden faren and fleon of þissen londe,
 Faren into Flandre, and beo[n] þer wuniende
 A ²⁶ þat he isege ²⁷ his time þat heo ²⁸ mihten æft cumen liðen.²⁹ 20
 Heo ferden forþ ³⁰ rihte to scipe al bi nihte ;
 Heo hæfden swiðe fair weder, and wenden into Flandre.
 A marzen, þa hit dæi wes, þe king mid his duzeðe ³¹
 Zarekede ³² his ferde, and wende to þan fihte.
 Þo ³³ was Romanisce folc ivaren ³⁴ from here londe,³⁵ 25
 þat ³⁶ ne funden heo naver enne ³⁷ 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 wakened

20 cuirasses

21 astute

22 wary

23 loss

24 more, further ; MS. mære

25 summoned

26 until

27 should see ; MS. isegen

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 bliðe ¹ an heore mode ;
 Muchel wes þa blisse þat heo makeden mid iwisse, ²
 And ³ sone þeræfter særi heo wurden. ⁴
 And Cassibellaune þe king iwarð særi þurh alle þing, ⁵
 5 For Nennius his broðer ne mihte finden bote ⁶
 Of his hæfved-wunde þe Julius smat mid honde,
 Ne þurh nenne læchecræfte ⁷ ne mihte he lif habben.
 Nes þer nan oðer ræd ⁸ buten Nennius iwarð dæd, ⁹
 And Nennius was ilæid ¹⁰ at þon norðgæte i Lundene.
 10 Þe king næm enne marmestan, and lette hine mid golde bigon, ¹¹
 Mid golde and mid gimme ¹² ; his broðer he leide þerinne ;
 Mid richedome ¹³ þa Bruttes Nennium biburden. ¹⁴
 Nu þu miht ¹⁵ iheren selkuð ¹⁶ word : þe king nom þat ilke ¹⁷ sweorde
 þat Nennius his broðer biwan of Julius Cesare,
 15 And læide hit bi his broðer, þah ¹⁸ hit his bone ¹⁹ weore.
 Wæs þe stelene brond swiðe brad and swiðe long ;
 Þeron weoren igraven feole cunne ²⁰ bocstaven ²¹ ;
 A ²² ðere hilde wes igraven
 þat þa sweord wes icleoped ²³ inne Rome *Crocia Mors* ²⁴ —
 20 Swa þat sweord hæhte, for hit havede muchele mahte. ²⁵
 Þermide þe keisere þrætede ²⁶ ælches londes here ²⁷ ;
 For nas nævere þe ilke bern ²⁸ þe avere iboren weore,
 þat of þen ilke sweorde enne ²⁹ swipe ³⁰ hefde,
 þat ³¹ he of his likame ³² lette æenne drope blod,
 25 þat he nes sone dæd, neore he noht ³³ swa dohti.
 Julius mid his ferde læi inne Flandre ;
 þa word com to France hou ³⁴ he ivaren hæfde,

1 joyful
 2 with certainty, in truth
 3 but
 4 MS. wurðen
 5 in every way
 6 cure
 7 medical skill
 8 remedy
 9 MS. dæð
 10 laid
 11 adorn
 12 precious stone(s)

13 splendor
 14 buried
 15 mayst
 16 strange
 17 very
 18 though ; MS. þat
 19 slayer
 20 kinds
 21 letters (cf. Ger. *Buchstaben*)
 22 on ; MS. æ
 23 called
 24 Saffron Death

25 might
 26 menaced
 27 army
 28 man
 29 a
 30 blow
 31 so that
 32 body
 33 never
 34 MS. heou

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And heo hine bro[h]ten sone biforen þen folkekinge.

Anan swa ¹ þe king hine imette, fæire he hine igrette :

' Swa me helpen min hefde and mi chin, wulcume ært þu, Teilesin,

And leovere me is þine isunden ² þenne a þusend punden.'

5 þa andswerede Teilesin, and þus seide to Kinbelin :

' Swa ich mote gode iþeon, ³ al ⁴ þu hit ⁵ sælt ⁶ wel biteon. ⁷ '

þa wes glad Kinbelin, and þus seide to Teilesin :

' Her beoð to þisse londe icumen scolcuðe leodronen, ⁸

And fromward ⁹ þeon ¹⁰ londe of Jerusalem; iwurden ¹¹ heo beoð in

Beðleem.

10 þer is iboren an luttel child inne þere leoden. ¹²

Muchele is and stor ¹³ þe eige ¹⁴; tacnen ¹⁵ þer beoð on sterren,

An monen, and on seonnen ¹⁶; eie ¹⁷ is on moncunnen.

þis is widen ¹⁸ icuð ¹⁹ and þa writen ²⁰ me beoð to icume,

And Ic wolde iwiten æt ²¹ þe — þu ært mi wine ²² deore —

15 To whan ²³ þis tocne wule ten, ²⁴ to wulche þinge temen, ²⁵

For herfore ²⁶ is alches londes folc lædliche ²⁷ afered.'

þa answerede Teilesin, and þus seide to Kinbelin :

' Hit wes ȝare ²⁸ iqueðen ²⁹ — þa quides ³⁰ beoð nu soðe —

þat scoldeh beon a child iboren, of alle folke icoren, ³¹

20 And þat scolde beon ihaten Hælend, ³² and helpen his freondes,

Alesen ³³ his leofve wines of læðe ³⁴ heore bendes, ³⁵

Of ³⁶ helle bringen Adam, Noe, 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 enne ³⁷ oðer,

1 the moment that

2 health, welfare

3 well thrive

4 everything

5 refers to *al*

6 shalt

7 accomplish

8 secret tidings

9 from; MS. -ward

10 the

11 come to pass; MS. iwurðen

12 country

13 mighty, overwhelming

14 alarm, misgiving

15 signs

16 sun

17 fear

18 widely

19 known

20 writings

21 know from

22 friend

23 which

24 tend

25 lead

26 on account of this

27 sore

28 long ago

29 announced

30 assertions

31 choicest

32 Saviour, Jesus

33 deliver

34 hateful

35 bonds

36 from

37 a one

Moni hundred þusend þe ipud¹ beoð to hellen ;
 And for swulchere² neode he is icumen to þere þeoden.³
 þeos word seide Teilesin, and alle heo weoren soðe.
 þa þan⁴ kinge weoren⁵ icudde þas quides þa weoren soðe,
 þa weoren þa tiðinde cuðe Ʒeond his kineriche ;
 Bruttes herof Ʒemden,⁶ and noht hit ne forȷeten.

Kinbelin wes god king, and griðful⁷ 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 lið.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 Englalande 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 iafen³⁰ 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. miðte
 14 withhold
 15 tribute
 16 from here
 17 fetched
 18 MS. mære
 19 during
 20 submissively, loyally
 21 after
 22 lived

23 depart
 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 jus-
 tise 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 for-
 sworn and here treothes forloren, for ævric ⁵ rice man his castles
 5 makede and agænes him heolden, and fylðen þe land ful of castles.
 Hi swuncten ⁶ suyðe þe wrecce men of þe land mid castelweorces.⁷
 Þa þe castles wæren maked, þa fylðen hi [hi] mid dcovles and yvele men.
 Þa namen hi þa men þe hi wenden ðat ani god ⁸ hefden, bathe be
 nihtes and be dæics, 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 also hi wæron; me ¹³ hinged
 up bi the fet and smoked heom mid ful ¹⁴ smoke; me hinged bi the
 þumbes 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 hærnas.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 mani of þe castles wæron
 20 lof ²⁷ and grin,²⁸ ðat wæron rachenteges ²⁹ ðat twa oþer thre men had-
 den 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 nowiderwardes,³⁴ ne sitten ne lien ne slepen,
 oc bæron al ðat iren. Mani 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, perceived

2 homage

3 but

4 MS. he

5 every

6 oppressed

7 the making of castles

8 property

9 men

10 in pursuit of

11 tortured

12 unspeakable

13 they

14 foul

15 head

16 coats of mail

17 twisted

18 till it went

19 brain

20 prison

21 adders

22 toads

23 killed

24 torture-box

25 chest

26 pressed, jammed

27 device (?)

28 contrivance

29 chains, fetters

30 one

31 beam, rafter

32 MS. þa

33 neck

34 (go) in no direction

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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 *s* 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;
 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
 Wys, curtais, and deboner;
 Larg⁹ and luffand als wes he,
 And our¹⁰ all thing luffyt lawte.¹¹
 Leaute to luff¹² is gretumly¹³:
 Throuch leaute liffis men rychtwisly;

1 haste
 2 where
 3 made
 4 knives, daggers
 5 before

6 carve at table
 7 very (well)
 8 behavior
 9 generous
 10 over, above

11 loyalty
 12 to be loved
 13 greatly

With a wertu ¹ of leaute
 A man may zeit sufficyand be ;
 And but ² leawte may nane haiff price,³
 Quhethir he be wycht ⁴ or he be wys ;
 For quhar it failzeys, na wertu
 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 dedeynzeit 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 lufly,
 And meyk and sweyt in cumpany ;
 Bot quha in battaill mycht him se, 25
 All othir contenance had he.
 And in spek ¹³ wlispyt 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 stark ¹ lymmys, and rycht weill maid ;
 And wlispyt alsua as did he,
 And wes fullillyt ² of leawte,
 And wes curtais, and wys, and wycht.³
 Bot off manheid and mekill mycht,
 Till Ector dar I nane comper
 Off all that evir in warldys wer.
 The quhethyr ⁴ 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
 N. 3 Assegit,⁵ as the lettir ⁶ 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 —
 A 1. 5 Of hempyn rapis ⁸ ledderis ma,⁹
 With treyn ¹⁰ steppis bundin swa,
 20 That vald ¹¹ brek apon na kyn wis.¹²
 A cruk ¹³ thai maid, at thair deuis,¹⁴
 Of irn,¹⁵ that wes styth ¹⁶ and square ;
 That, fra ¹⁷ it ane kyrnaill ¹⁸ ware,
 And the leddir tharfra stratly ¹⁹
 25 Strekit,²⁰ it suld stand sekirly.²¹

This lord of Douglas than, alsoyn ²²
 As this devisit wes and done,

¹ strong
² filled full
³ brave
⁴ nevertheless
⁵ besieged
⁶ written account
⁷ devise, contrive
⁸ ropes

⁹ make
¹⁰ wooden
¹¹ would
¹² in no way
¹³ large hook
¹⁴ according to their plan
¹⁵ iron
¹⁶ strong

¹⁷ from the time that, when
¹⁸ against a battlement
¹⁹ tightly
²⁰ stretched
²¹ securely
²² as soon

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And till the wall thai sped thame swith ¹ ;
 And soyn has up thair ledderis set,
 That maid a clap,² quhen the cleket ³
 Wes festnyt fast in the kyrnell.
 That herd ane of the vachis ⁴ wele,
 And buskit ⁵ thiddirward but baid ⁶ ;
 Bot Ledous, that the leddy maid,
 Sped ⁷ hym to clym first to the wall ;
 Bot, or he wes up gottin all,
 10 He at ⁸ that vard ⁹ had in keping,
 Met him rycht at the upcummyng ;
 And, for ¹⁰ he thocht to dyng ¹¹ hym doune,
 He maid na noys, na cry, na sowne,
 Bot schot ¹² till him deliverly.¹³
 15 And he that wes in juperdy
 Till de,¹⁴ a lans ¹⁵ till him he maid,
 And gat him be the nek but baid,
 And stekit ¹⁶ 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 gangis ¹⁸ as we will ;
 Speid ¹⁹ zow upward deliverly.'
 25 And thai did swa in full gret hy.
 Bot, or thai wan ²⁰ up, thar com ane,
 And saw Ledows stand him allane,
 And knew he wes nocht of thar men.
 In hy he ruschit till hym then,
 30 And hym assalzeit sturdely ;
 Bot he hym slew deliverly ;

1 quickly

2 noise

3 clicket, holdfast

4 watches, guards

5 hastened

6 without delay

7 hastened

8 that

9 watch

10 because

11 throw

12 shot, dashed

13 nimbly

14 to die

15 leap, dash

16 stabbed

17 life

18 goes

19 hasten

20 succeeded in getting

For he wes armyt and wes vycht.
 The tothir nakyt¹ wes, I hicht,²
 And had nocht for till stynt no strak.³
 Sic m⁴elle⁴ tharup⁵ can he mak,
 Quhill Douglas and his menzhe⁶ all
 War wonnyn up upon the wall.
 Than in the tour thai vent in hy.
 The folk that tym wes halcly⁷
 Into⁸ the hall at thair dansyng,
 Synging, and othir wayis playing, 10
 As upon fastryng evyn is
 The custom, to mak joy and blis,
 To folk that ar into savite⁹;
 Swa trowit thai that tym to be.
 Bot, or thai wist, ryght in the hall 15
 Douglas and his men cummyn var all,
 And cryit on hicht¹⁰: 'Douglas! Douglas!'
 And thai, that ma¹¹ war than he was,
 Herd 'Dowglas!' cryit ryght hydwisly,¹²
 Thai war abasit¹³ for the cry, 20
 And schupe¹⁴ richt na defens to ma.¹⁵
 And thai but¹⁶ pite can thame sla,
 Till thai had gottyn the ovir¹⁷ hand.

1 unarmed
 2 assure you
 3 to oppose a blow (stop a stroke)
 4 such combat
 5 up there
 6 host

7 all of them
 8 in
 9 in safety
 10 aloud
 11 more
 12 horribly

13 dismayed
 14 attempted
 15 make
 16 without
 17 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 Mediæval Warfare* (Glasgow, 1913).

The battale thair so felloune ¹ was,
 And sua richt gret spilling of blud,
 That on the erd the flus ² it stud.
 The Scottis men so weill thame bar,
 And sua gret slauchtir maid thai thar,
 And fra so feill ³ the livis revit,⁴
 That all the feild wes bludy levit.⁵
 That tym thir thre battalis ⁶ wer
 All syde be syde fechtand ⁷ weill neir,
 10 Thar mycht man her ⁸ richt mony dynt,
 And vapnys ⁹ apon armour stynt,¹⁰
 And se tummyll ¹¹ knychtis and stedis,
 With mony rich and ryoll ¹² wedis ¹³
 Defoulit roydy ¹⁴ under feit.
 15 Sum held on loft,¹⁵ sum tynt ¹⁶ the suet.¹⁷
 A long quhill thus fechtand thai wer,
 That men no noyis na cry mycht her ;
 Men herd nocht ellis bot granys ¹⁸ and dyntis,
 That slew ¹⁹ fire, as men dois ²⁰ on flyntis ;
 20 Sa ²¹ faucht thai ilkane egirly
 That thai maid nouthir noyis no cry,
 Bot dang ²² 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

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That it wes hydwiss for till her
 All four the battelis,¹ wicht that wer,
 Fechtand intill a front haly.²
 Almychty God! full douchtely
 Schir Edward the Brys and his men
 Amang thair fais³ contenyt thame⁴ then. . . .

For all the Scottis men that war thar,
 Quhen thai saw thame⁵ eschew the ficht,
 Dang on thame swa with all thar mycht
 10 That thai scalit⁶ in tropellis⁷ ser,⁸
 And till discumfitur war ner;
 And sum of thame fled all planly.⁹
 Bot thai that wicht war and hardy,
 That schame letit¹⁰ till ta¹¹ the ficht,
 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 thai 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 weill 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 renze² led away the king,
 Agane his will, fra the fichting.
 And quhen Schir Gelis de Argente³
 Saw the king thus, and his menze,
 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 day! for agane⁸ will I; 10
 Ȝheit fled I nevir sekirly;
 And I cheis heir to byde and de,
 Than till 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 dreid of na kyn thing¹¹ had he,
 He prikit,¹² cryand 'Argente!'
 And thai 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 journe.¹⁴

¹ vanquished

² rein

³ Giles de Argentine

⁴ prepare themselves

⁵ thus

⁶ way

⁷ have

⁸ (turn) back again

⁹ without more delay

¹⁰ Bruce's

¹¹ no sort of thing

¹² rode hard

¹³ pressed hard

¹⁴ 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. MCCCLXXII, 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 PHOENIX

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 preistres de ceo temple ad

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of a pacok. His nekke es zalow, and his back es ynde¹ colour; his wenges er reed, and his taile es barred overthwert² with grene and zalowe and reed. And in þe sonne he semes wonder faire, for þir³ er þe colours þat er fairest schewand.⁴

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 ricchess. 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 wyly. And he had a faire castell and a strang, standand apon 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 treez berand diverse fruytz. He gert plant þerin also all maner of erbez of gude smell, and þat bare faire floures. Þare ware also in þat
15 gardyne many faire welles, and besyde þaim ware many faire halles and chaumbres, paynted with gold and azure wele and curiously with diverse storys, and with diverse maners of briddes, þe whilk semed, as þai sang and turned by engyne,⁷ as þai had bene all quikke.⁸ 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 dis-
porte. 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 zere, þe fairest þat he myzt fynd, and knafe² childe 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
 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 nozt 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 zow land flowande mylke and hony.' 15
 And þan þis ryche man gafe to þise men a maner of drinke, of whilke
 þai ware drunken alssone⁶; 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 þaim 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
 dwell with þam, and have lyking⁸ and dalyaunce of þam, and ever-
 mare be maydens, and after a certayne tyme he schuld putte þam
 in a fairer Paradys, whare 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 drede, for, if þai ware 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 30
 hight¹¹ þam. And þus he venged him on his enmys thurgh þis des-
 sayte.¹² 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. Lev. 20. 24⁶ at once⁷ death⁸ pleasure⁹ to¹⁰ slay¹¹ promised¹² deceit

assailed 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 Olimpi, 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 Paradyso, 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 *Jour. 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 reflaire,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 (Yule, *Cathay* 12. 71).

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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 pilgrimage 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 noxt luke aboute þam,
for þai schuld see nathing þat schuld lette þaire devocioun. Þare
commez sum also þider in pilgrimage 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 saise þat he es full blissed þat will dye for þe
lufe of his mawmet. And sum of þam bringez with þam þaire childer,
and slaiez þaim 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 knelis doune apon þe erthe with grete de-
vocioun. And þai bring with þam incense and oþer thinges swete
smelland, for to turify⁶ 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, instead of offerand. And forþi þe mynis-
ters þat kepez þat ilk mawmet, when þai hafe mister⁹ of any monee
for reparailynge 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 nedez. And ze 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 arraid with clathez of gold
30 and of silke, and ledez him with grete sollempnitee aboute þe citee.
And before þe chariot gase first in processiou all þe maydens of þe
cuntree, twa and twa togyder; 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 toþer 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 sowdan⁸ has three wyfes, of þe whilke ~~one~~ ^{one} sall be a Cristen
 womman, and þe oþer twa Sarezenes. And aȝe of þir wyfes sall dwell 10
 in Jerusalem, anoþer at Damasc, and þe thridd at Ascalon.⁴ And, ay
 when him list, he gase to visit þam, and umqwhyle⁵ ledes þam aboute
 with him. Noght forþi⁶ he has lemmanes, als many as him list have;
 for, when he comes till any citee or toune, he gers bring 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 þaim 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 be 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 elleswhare,
 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 doune, if þai speke

¹ scarcely, with difficulty² tenth⁸ 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 nozt agayne þaire lawe. And riȝt 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 nozt see þe sterne¹ þat es called *Polus Articus*,
whilk standes even north and stirrez never, by whilk schippemen er
10 ledd, for it es nozt sene in þe south. Bot þer es an oþer ste
es called antartic, and þat es even agayne² þe toþer sterne;
þat sterne er schippemen ledd þare, as schippemen er ledd here by
Polus Articus. And, riȝt as þat sterne may nozt be sene here, on þe
same wyse þis sterne may nozt be sene þare. And þareby may men
15 see wele þat þe werld es all rounde; for partics³ of þe firmament
whilk may be sene in sum cuntree may nozt 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
werld, he myght ga all aboute þe werld, 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 liii de-
grecz hegh, and in Almayne⁸ towardes Boem⁹ it has lviii 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 ynentes¹¹ 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 star

² exactly opposite to

³ parts

⁴ health

⁵ according to

⁶ Brabant

⁷ astrolabe

⁸ Germany

⁹ Bohemia

¹⁰ further

¹¹ exactly opposite

¹² wheel

¹³ separates

¹⁴ much alike

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*rex noster ante secula operatus est salutem in medio terre,*¹ þat es to say :
 'Godd oure kyng before þe begynnyng of þe werld wroght 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 envircound all þe roundness of þe erthe and of þe see, till he
 com even under us. And þerfore I hafe oftymes thocht on a tale þat
 I herd, when I was zung, how a worthy man of oure cuntree went
 10 on a tyme for to see þe werld; and he passed Inde³ and many iles
 byzonde Inde, whare er ma þan v^m⁴ iles, and he went so lang by land
 and by see, envircound þe werld, þat he fand ane ile whare 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
 nozt how it myght be. Bot I suppose he had so lang went⁶ on land
 and on see, envircound 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 cunnyng
 trowe nozt 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 þaim
 þat we er under þaim.

¹ Ps. 74. 12

² day's journeys

³ India

⁴ five thousand

⁵ one, a man

⁶ traveled

⁷ borders

⁸ even though

⁹ unless

¹⁰ 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 beyond the lond and the yles and the desertes of Prestre Johnes lordschipe, in goynge streyght toward the est, men fynde nothing but mountaynes and roches fulle 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 Adam, oure foremost fader, and Eve weren putt, that dwelleden there but lytylle while; and that is towards the est, at the begynnyng of the erthe.'

For the subject in general, see Coli, *Il Paradiso Terrestre Dantesco*, Florence, 1897.

Bezond þir ilez þat I hafe talde ȝow off, and þe desertez of þe lord-
schepe of Prestre John, to ga even¹ est, es na land inhabited, as I said
before, bot wastez and wildernesses, and grete rochez and moun-
taynes, and a myrk² 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 rigt to Paradyse terrestre, wharein Adam and Eve ware putte;
bot þai ware þare bot a lytill while. And þat place es toward þe este, at
þe begynnyng 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 mid-
nyght 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 firma-
ment. 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 habade³ still, and
þare er now hilles. 15

Off Paradyse can I noȝt speke properly, for I hafe noȝt bene þare;
and þat forthinkez⁴ me. Bot als mykill as I hafe herd of wyse men,
and men of credence, of þase cuntreez, I will tell ȝow. Paradyse ter-
restre, 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
Noe⁵ flode myght noȝt com þerto, whilk flude coverd 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-begrowen¹, 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 landcz. Þir³ flodez sinkez doune into þe erthe within Paradyse, and rynnez so under þe erthe many a
 10 myle, and afterwardes comme þai up agayne oute of þe erthe in ferre cuntreez.

SIR JOHN'S MODESTY

Text, pp. 155-6

Þare er many oþer cuntreez and oþer mervailes whilk I hafe noȝt sene, and þerfore I can noȝt speke properly of þam; and also in cuntreez 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 wendcz 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 cuntreez, so þat
 20 þase þat covetez to visit þase cuntreez may fynd new thinges ynewe to tell off, for solace and recreacioun of þaim þat lykez to here þam.

And I, JOHN MAWNDEVILL, 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, cuntreez, 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 constraynez 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 battle⁶ even if

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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.

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 upstyen,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, vere the shete ! ' —
 Cooke, make redy anoon 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 ascend¹¹ dispose¹² 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. ' —
 ' 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 speketh 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.

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;
 A man were as good to be dede
 As smell therof the stynk.

10

¹ slightly built² lie³ MS. was

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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 languo. þir¹ 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 thyhk on þat þat þai lufe, namely⁵ if þair lover be trew and lufand.
 5 And þis es þe Inglisch 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 þat⁷ haldes⁷ his comawndementes.' Soth it es. Bot all men þat kepes hys byddyngs kepes noght also hys cown-
 10 sayle. And all þat⁸ dos his cownsell er noght also fulfyld of⁸ þe swetnes of his lufe, ne feles noght þe fyre of byrmand luf of hert. Forþi þe diversite of lufe makes þe diversite of halynes and of mede.⁹ In heven, þe awngels þat er byrmandest in lufe er nerrest God. Also men and women þat¹⁰ maste¹⁰ has of Goddes lufe, whether þai do penance or
 15 nane, þat 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 comforth and streng[t]h nyght and day. If þi lufe be not byrmand 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 praier 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 thought 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. 5

² are

³ much, greatly

⁴ he desires

⁵ especially

⁶ diverse

⁷ keeps

⁸ filled with

⁹ reward

¹⁰ most

¹¹ unless

¹² to this condition, thereto

¹³ 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 5
 es payde of,⁶ and als þou ert ordaynde for. When þou prayes, loke
 noght how mykel þou says, bot how wele, þat þe lofe of þi hert be ay
 upwarde, and thy thoght on þat þou sayes, als mykel als þow may. If
 þou be in prayers and meditacions al þe day, I wate⁷ wele þat þou mon
 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 gastely.¹⁰ Actife lyfe es mykel owteward, and in
 mare travel¹¹ and in mare peryle, for þe temptacions þat er in þe worlde. 15
 Contemplatyfe lyfe es mykel inwarde, and forþi¹² it es lastandar,¹³ and
 sykerar,¹⁴ restfuller, delitabiler,¹⁵ luflyer, and mare medeful.¹⁶ 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 other 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 quiete for Cristes luf. 25

Til men or wymen þat takes²⁰ þam til actife lyfe, twa thynges
 falles.²¹ 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 necessaries, 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
 5 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 qwyt⁵ 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
 10 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, abowt
 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 zernyng 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 sawles.¹⁷ 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 lyvand.²⁰

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 þair²³ 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 do ng

2 bury

3 MS. hase and mai (em. H.)

4 money sufficient

5 quit, released

6 blessing

7 Day of Judgment

8 to

9 malediction

10 must

11 goods

12 parts, phases

13 hymns

14 for

15 even

16 fairness, beauty

17 souls

18 which

19 agree

20 living

21 afterwards

22 by themselves, alone

23 MS. ȝar

24 to suck

25 makes them desire

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and a refined and gentle spirit' (Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.* 1. 200). Ten Brink also refers (*ibid.* 2¹. 16) to 'that aroma, that tinge of poetry, which breathes throughout the language of the *Ancren Riwele*,' to which, as well as to the author's deep spirituality, the work owes its unusual appeal.

Judging from its language, the *Ancren Riwele* 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 Riwele*, 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

Vorþui,¹ mine leove² sustren,³ þe leste þæt ȝe ever muwen luvieð
our þurles⁴; al beon heo lute,⁵ þe parluris⁶ lest⁷ and nerewest. Þe
cloð in ham beo⁸ twovold: blac cloð; þe creoz⁹ 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, unseau-
liche imaked ou¹⁴ þurh gleames¹⁵ of his grace. Þet hwite creoz
limpeð¹⁶ to ou; vor þreo manere¹⁷ creozes beoð — reade and blake
and hwite. Þe reade limpeð to þeo þæt beoð, vor Godes lue, mid
10 hore¹⁸ blodshedunge irudded¹⁹ and ireaded,¹⁹ ase þe martirs weren. Þe
blake creoz limpeð to þeo²⁰ þæt makieð i ðe²¹ worlde hore penitence vor
lodliche²² sunnen.²³ Þe hwite creoz limpeð to hwit meidenhod and
to clenness,²⁴ þæt is muchel pine²⁵ wel vor to holden.²⁶ Pine is overal²⁷
þurh creoz idon to understonden.²⁸ Þus bitockneð hwit croiz 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 exter-
nally 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 witene.¹ Þe blake cloð also tekeðe² bitocnunge,³ deð⁴ lesse eile⁵ to þen eien, and is þiccure agein 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 5 our¹⁵ eien, leste þe heorte etfleo¹⁶ and wende ut, ase of David,¹⁷ and oure soule secli¹⁸ so sone heo is ute. Ich write muchel vor oðre, þæt noðing ne etrineð ou,¹⁹ mine leove sustren, vor nabbe ge²⁰ 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 10 weilawei! unkundeliche²⁷ makieð; vor agein kunde²⁸ hit is, and unmeð²⁹ sullic³⁰ wunder, þæt te deade totie,³¹ and mid cwike worldes men³² wede,³³ wið sunne.

'Me³⁴ leove sire,' seið sum inouh reaðe,³⁵ 'and is hit nu so overuvel³⁶ vor te³⁷ toten utward?' Ze hit, leove suster, vor uvel þæt ter³⁸ kumeð 15 of hit, is uvel over uvel³⁹ to everich ancre, and nomeliche⁴⁰ to þe zunge, and to þen old vorðui⁴¹ þæt heo to þe zunge giveð uvel vorbisne,⁴² and scheld⁴³ to werien ham mide.⁴⁴ Vor, gif ei⁴⁵ etwit⁴⁶ ham, þeonne siggeð heo anon riht⁴⁷: 'Me sire, þeo deð also þeo⁴⁸ is betere þen Ich am, and wot betere þen Ich wot hwat heo haveð to donne.' O leove 20 zunge ancren, ofte a ful hawur⁴⁹ smið smeoðið⁵⁰ a ful woc⁵¹ knif, and te wise ouh⁵² to volewen wisdom, and nout folie, and an olde ancre mei don wel þæt tu⁵³ dest uvele. Auh⁵⁴ toten ut wiðuten uvel ne mei

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 guard | 19 for nothing [of this] applies to you | 37 to |
| 2 teaches | 20 ye have not | 38 there |
| 3 symbol, emblem | 21 the name | 39 evil beyond evil |
| 4 does | 22 peering | 40 especially |
| 5 ill | 23 anchoresses | 41 because |
| 6 see through | 24 enticing looks | 42 example |
| 7 holds, keeps | 25 manners, gestures | 43 a shield |
| 8 hue, color | 26 at times | 44 defend themselves with |
| 9 anything else | 27 inconsistently | 45 any one |
| 10 the | 28 against nature | 46 reprove, chide |
| 11 fast | 29 exceedingly | 47 straightway |
| 12 side | 30 strange; MS. swuc | 48 she does it also who |
| 13 shut | 31 should look out | 49 clever, skilful |
| 14 guard | 32 living men of the world | 50 forges |
| 15 your | 33 wed | 51 weak, poor |
| 16 fly out, escape | 34 my | 52 ought |
| 17 like David's | 35 quickly enough | 53 thou |
| 18 become sick | 36 very evil | 54 but |

nouðer of ou; and nim nu ȝeme¹ hwat uvel beo icumen of totinge: nout on uvel ne two, auh al þe uvel and al þe wo þæt nu is, and ever ȝete was, and ever schal iwurðen²—al com of a sihðe. Þet hit beo soð, lo her þe preove³: Lucifer, þurh þet he iseih and biheold on himsulf
 5 his owene veirness, leop⁴ into prude,⁵ and bicom of⁶ engel atelich⁷ deovel; and of Eve, ure alre⁸ moder, is iwriten on alre crest,⁹ in hire neowe¹⁰ inȝong¹¹ 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 deliten i þe biholdunge, and turnde hire lust þer toward, and nom¹⁶ and et þerof, and ȝef hire loverd.' Lo hu Holi 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 iveleð.²¹
 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 pauciloquos.*²⁴ Þæt is þe ende of þe tale, seið Seneke the wise: 'Ichulle²⁵
 20 þæt ȝe 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 seoveniht.³¹ Auh þeo³² [heo] hefden alles bigunne vor to spekene, þeone kuðen heo nevere astunten³³ hore cleppe.³⁴ Greg.:

1 take thou heed

2 come to pass

3 proof

4 leaped

5 pride

6 instead of

7 hateful, foul

8 of us all

9 first of all

10 fresh

11 beginning

12 Gen. 3. 6

13 looked upon

14 it

15 began

16 took

17 showing the inward causes

18 sinning

19 went

20 for

21 feeleth

22 inclines

23 in Eve's case

24 Not found

25 I will, desire

26 shut in, restrain

27 at the mill-dam

28 friends

29 comfort

30 they sat

31 for a full week

32 when

33 they never knew how
to stop

34 talking

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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 beo ikeiht⁵ þuruh summe of þe deofles gronen,⁶ oðer ihurt summes weis, þe hwule þæt heo sit so lowe.

THE KINGLY WOOER

A lefdi was⁷ þet was mid hire voan⁸ biset al abuten, and hire lond al destrued, and heo al poure, wiðinnen one eorðene castle. On⁹ mihti kinges lue was, þauh,¹⁰ biturnd upon hire, so unimete¹¹ swuðe
10 þet he vor wouhleccunge¹² sende hire his sonden,¹³ on efter oðer, and ofte somed monie,¹⁴ and sende hire beaubelet¹⁵ boðe veole¹⁶ and feire, and sukurs¹⁷ of liveneð,¹⁸ and help of his heie hird¹⁹ to holden hire castel. Heo underveng²⁰ al ase on unrecheleas þing,²¹ þet was so herd iheorted þet hire lue 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 arearen²⁷ vrom deaðe to live, and wrouhte veole wundres, and dude veole meistries²⁸ bivoren hire eihsihðe, and scheawede hire his mihten ;
20 tolde hire of his kinedome, and bead²⁹ for to makien hire cwene of al þet he ouhte.³⁰ Al þis ne help nout. Nes³¹ þis wunderlich hoker³²? Vor heo nes never wurðe vor te beon his schelchine.³³ Auh so, þuruh his debonerté,³⁴ lue 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, etfleon² hore honden, þet heo ne don þe to scheomefule deað. Ich chulle,³ vor þe lueve 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 lueve þet Ich kuðe þe,⁹ þet tu luvie me, hure and hure¹⁰ efter þen ilke deaðe,¹¹ hwon þu noldes lives.¹² Þes king dude al þus — aredde hire of alle hire von, and was himsulf to wundre¹³ ituked,¹⁴ and isleien on ende.¹⁵ Þuruh miracle, þauh, he aros from deaðe to live. Nere¹⁶ þeos ilke lefdi of 10 uvele kunnes kunde,¹⁷ gif heo over alle þing¹⁸ ne lueve him herefter?

Þes king is Jesu Crist, Godes Sune, þet al o þisse wise¹⁹ wowude²⁰ ure soule, þet þe deoflen heveden biset. And he, ase noble woware, efter monie messagers and feole²¹ god deden, com vor to preoven his lueve, and scheawede þuruh knihtschipe²² þet he was lueve-wurðe,²³ ase 15 weren sumewhule²⁴ knihtes iwuned²⁵ for to donne. He dude him ine²⁶ turnement, and hefde, vor his leofmonnes²⁷ lueve, his schelde ine vihte,²⁸ ase kene kniht, on everiche half ipurled.²⁹

THE ANCHORESS' CAT, HER CLOTHING AND OCCUPATIONS

Ʒe, 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 way
2 escape from
3 will
4 deliver
5 seek; MS. schecheð
6 amongst
7 receive
8 deserve, win
9 show thee
10 at least
11 MS. dead deaðe
12 in life
13 wonderfully, grievously

14 maltreated, injured
15 finally
16 were not
17 of a perverse sort of nature
18 above all things
19 in this manner
20 wooed
21 many
22 knightly prowess
23 worthy of love; MS. -wurde
24 sometimes
25 wont
26 entered into

27 sweetheart, lady
28 in the fight
29 pierced in all parts
30 beast, animal
31 except only a cat
32 cattle
33 seems
34 better
35 Mary
36 peace
37 must
38 cow's

heordemonne hire,¹ oluhnen² þene heiward,³ warien⁴ hwon me punt
 hire,⁵ and zelden, þauh, þe hermes.⁶ Wat Crist,⁷ þis is lodlich þing
 hwon me makeð mone⁸ in tune of ancre eihte. Þauh, zif eni mot
 nede hebben ku, loke þet heo none monne ne eilie,⁹ ne ne hermie,¹⁰
 5 ne þet hire þouht ne beo nout þeron iverstned.¹¹ Ancre ne ouh¹²
 nout to hebben no þing þet drawe utward hire heorte. None cheffare¹³
 ne drive¹⁴ ze. Ancre þet is cheapild,¹⁵ heo cheapeð¹⁶ hire soule þe
 chepmon¹⁷ of helle. Ne wite¹⁸ ze nout in oure¹⁹ huse of oðer monnes
 þinges, ne eihte, ne cloðes; ne nout ne undervo²⁰ ze þe chirche vesti-
 10 menz, ne þene caliz,²¹ bute-zif²² strençde hit makie,²³ oðer muchel eie,²⁴
 vor of swuche witunge²⁵ is ikumen muchel svel oftесиðen.²⁶ Wiðinnen
 ower woanes²⁷ ne lete ze nenne mon slepen. Zif muchel neode mid
 alle²⁸ makeð breken²⁹ ower hus, þe hwule þet hit ever is ibroken, loke
 þet ze hebben þerinne mid ou one wummon of clene live deies and
 15 nihtes.³⁰

Vorði³¹ þet no mon ne isihð ou, ne ze iseoð 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 habbeð ase monie ase ou toneodeð,³⁶ to bedde and eke to rugge.³⁷

20 Next fleshe ne schal mon werien no linene cloð, bute-zif hit beo
 of herde³⁸ and of greate heorden.³⁹ Stamin⁴⁰ habbe hwose wule, and
 hwose wule mei beon buten.⁴¹ Ze schulen liggen in on heater,⁴² and
 igurd.⁴³ Ne bere⁴⁴ ze non iren,⁴⁵ ne here,⁴⁶ ne irspiles⁴⁷ felles; ne ne

1 herdsman's hire

2 flatter

3 hayward (keeper of the hedges, who prevented cattle from injuring private property)

4 defend herself

5 they shut it up

6 pay the damages, moreover

7 Christ knows

8 they make complaint

9 annoy

10 harm

11 fixed

12 ought

13 traffic, business

14 carry on

15 trafficker

16 sells

17 to the bargainer

18 take charge

19 your

20 receive

21 chalice

22 unless

23 make necessary

24 fear

25 guarding, care-taking

26 oft-times

27 dwelling

28 after all

29 to be used

30 by day and night

31 because

32 do with, be content with

33 plain

34 skins

35 tawed, dressed

36 you need

37 also for your back

38 hards, tow

39 coarse canvas

40 harsh rough cloth, used for penitential shirts (cf. F. *étamine*)

41 without

42 a garment

43 girt

44 wear

45 iron

46 haircloth

47 porcupines'

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togederes. **Ȝ**e muwen don so ofte hwon ou puncheð hevie,¹ oðer beoð vor sume worldliche þinge sorie oðer seke. So wisliche witeð ou² in our³ blodletunge, and holdeð ou ine swuche reste þet ȝe longe þer-
 5 ȝe iveleð eni secnesse; vor muchel sotschipe⁴ hit is vor to vorleosen,⁵
 vor one deie, tene oðer tweolve.

A TREATISE AGAINST MIRACLE-PLAYS

This tract, in the form of a sermon, was first printed by Halliwell (in *Reliquia 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 Mätzner 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 miraclis-pleyinge.' The outline which follows may help to make the argument clear. Detailed notes can be found in Mätzner'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. Elisha (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, trewþ, and lif.¹ as seiþ þe gospel of Jon (weye to þe erryng, trewþe to þe unknowyng and doutyng, lif to þe styng² to hevene and weryng³), so Crist dyde⁴ noþyng to us but ef[f]ectuely in weye of mercy, in treuþe of ri[ç]twesnes, and in lif of gildyng⁵ everlastyng⁶ joye for oure continually⁶ mo[u]rnyng and sorwyng in þis valey of teeres.⁷ þe⁸ myraclis, þerfore, þat Crist dyde⁴ heere in erþe, ouþer in⁹ hymself ouþer in hise seyntis, weren so ef[f]ectuel and in earnest don,¹⁰ þat to synful men þat erren þei brouzten forzyvenesse of synne, settinge hem in þe weye of riçt bileve; to doutouse¹¹ men not stede- 10 fast þei brouzten in kunnyng¹² 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. continuiely

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 brouzten in love of brynnynge⁴ charite, to þe whiche alle þing is ligt,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 puttþ away alle werinesse heere in þe weye of God. Þanne, syþen¹⁰ myraclis 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 myraclis and werkis þat Crist so earnestfully¹⁴ wrouzte to oure helpe¹⁵; for whoevere so do[i]þ, he erriþ in þe byleve, reversiþ¹⁶ Crist, and scorniþ¹⁷ God. He erriþ in þe bileve, for in þat he takiþ þe most precious werkis of God in pley and bourde, he¹⁸ takiþ 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 takiþ in earnest, myche more we shulden not maken oure pley¹³ and bourde of þo myraclis and werkis þat God so earnestfully wrouzt[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 leesþ²⁶ his drede to 20 offenden²⁷ hym, namely, whanne he bourdiþ wiþ his mayster in þat þat²⁸ his mayster takiþ in earnest. . . .

Þanne, syþen þes myraclis-pleyeris taken in bourde þe earnestful werkis of God, no doute þat þei ne²⁹ scornen God, as dyden³⁰ þe Jewis þat bobben³¹ Crist; for þei lowen³² at his passioun, as þese lawzen³³ 25 and japen at³⁴ þe myraclis of God. Þerfore, as þei scorniden³⁵ Crist, so þese³⁶ scorne[n] God; and rigt³⁷ as Pharao, wroop³⁸ 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

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it is tyme and skilful¹ to assayen to converten² þe puple by pley and gamen — as by myraclis-pleyinge, and oþer maner myrþis. Also, [5] summe recreac[i]oun men moten³ han; and bettere it is, or lesse yvele, þat þei han þeyre recreac[i]oun⁴ by pleyinge of myraclis þan by pleyinge 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 pleyid,⁶ syþen men mowen bettere reden þe wille of God, and his mervelous werkis, in þe pleyinge of hem þan in þe peyntyng, and betere þei ben holden in men[n]us mynde, and oftere
10 rehersid, by þe pleyinge of hem þan by þe peyntyng, for þis is a deed bok, þe toþer a qu[i]ck⁷?

To þe first reson we answeren,⁸ seying [1] þat siche myraclis-pleyinge 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 ensaumplide 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; þerfore, as þe wickidnesse of þe misbileve of heþene men lyiþ to hemsilf¹² whanne þei seyn þat þe wors[c]hipyng of þeire maumetrie¹³ is to þe worschipe
20 of God, so mennus¹⁴ lec[c]herye now on dayes, to han þer owne lustus. liiþ¹⁵ to hemsilf whanne þei seyn þat siche¹⁶ miraclis¹⁷-pleying[e] is to þe worschip of God. . . .

[2] þe same wise,¹⁸ myraclis-pleyinge, 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 makijþ al a puple to ben ocupied in veyn azenus þis heeste²² of þe Psauter Book, þat seiþ to alle men, and namely to pristis, þat eche day reden it in þer servyse: 'Turne away myn eyen þat þei se[n] not vanytees²³'; and efte²⁴:

1 reasonable

2 MS. -yn

3 must

4 em. M.

5 permissible

6 MS. -ed

7 living

8 MS. -yng (em. M.)

9 MS. -yn

10 taught their use by example

11 degradation

12 deceive themselves; MS. þemsilf

13 idols

14 men's

15 MS. lieþ

16 MS. suche

17 MS. -es

18 in the same manner

19 sometimes

20 single

21 community

22 command

23 Ps. 119. 37

24 again

' Lord, þou hatist¹ alle waytyng vanytees.²' How þanne may a prist pleyn in entirludies,³ or gyve hymself to þe sigt of hem? . . .

Myraclis-pleyinge, syþen it is aȝenus þe heest of God, þat biddiþ þat þou shalt not take[n] Goddis name in ydil, it is aȝenus oure bileve, and so it may not gyven occasioun⁴ of turnyng men to þe bileve, 5 but of pervertynge; and þerfore many men wenen⁵ þat þer is no helle of everelastyng peyne, but þat God do[i]þ but⁶ þreten⁷ us, and not to do[n] it in dede — as is⁸ pleyinge of myraclis⁹ 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] chastite, 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, awȝte¹⁴ to abstene[n] hym fro al ydil pleying[e], boþe of myraclis and ellis.¹⁵ . . . 15

þes men þat seyen, ' Pley[e] 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, reversyng þe Aposteyl, seyden: ' Do we yvel þingis, þat þer comen¹⁶ gode þingis ' — ' of whom,' as seiþ þe Aposteyl,¹⁷ ' dampnyng is riȝtwise.¹⁸ ' 20

By þis we answeren to þe þridde¹⁹ resoun, seyinge [3] þat siche myraclis-pleyinge gyviþ²⁰ noon occasioun of verrey²¹ wepyng and medeful²²; but þe wepyng þat falliþ²³ to men and wymmen by þe sigte of siche myraclis-pleyinge, as it is²⁴ not principaly for þeire owne²⁵ synnes, ne of þeire gode feiþ wiþinneforþ,²⁶ but more of þeire 25 sigt wiþouteforþ, is not allowable byfore God, but more reprovab²⁷; for²⁸ syþen Crist hymself reprovyde þe wymmen þat wepten upon hym in his passioun, myche more þei ben reprovab²⁸ þat wepen for

¹ MS. hatistde; M. hatid-
est

² Ps. 31. 6 (Vulg.)

³ interludes, plays; MS.
entirlodies

⁴ MS. -cioun

⁵ believe

⁶ merely

⁷ MS þretip

⁸ MS. ben

⁹ MS. mir-

¹⁰ symbolic

¹¹ nor

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. -ep

²¹ true, sincere; MS. werrey

²² profitable

²³ befalls

²⁴ MS. þei ben

²⁵ MS. oune

²⁶ inwardly; MS. -forþe

²⁷ MS. reprovab^{le}

²⁸ MS. ffor

þe pley of Cristis passioun, leevynge to wepen¹ for þe synnes of hemsilf and of þeire chyldren, 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 worchip not, ne his sacramentis, how shulde pleyinge worchen, þat is of no vertue, but ful of defaute? . . . Þe wepyng þat men wepen ofte
in siche 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 siche myraclis-pleyinge, ne
þe sigte of hem,¹² is no verrey recreacion,¹³ but fals and worldly, as
proven¹⁴ þe dedis of þe fautours¹⁵ of siche pleyis. . . . And gif men
axen what recreac[i]oun men shulden han¹⁶ on þe haliday, after þeire
holy contemplacioun in þe chirche, we seyn 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; anoþere, we seyn þat his recreacioun shulde ben in þe werkis
of mercy to his neyebore, and in delityng²⁰ hym in alle good comu-
nicacion wiþ his ney[e]bore, as biforn he delitid²¹ hym in God, and
25 in alle oþere nedeful werkis þat reson and kynde²² axen.

And to þe last reson we seyn [6] þat peinture,²³ gif it²⁴ be verry,
wiþoute mengyng²⁵ 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 treuþe; but so

1 omitting to weep

2 Luke 23. 28

3 MS. doyinge

4 which

5 MS. falf wittnessenge

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.)

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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 gyven bi God — for þei weren fleyshly, 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 beðen⁸ of God, shulde not ben don wip þe marvelouse 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 fleyshly
 lyvyng of þe Olde Testament. . . .

15 Þis myraclis-pleyinge is verre witesse¹⁸ of mennus averice and
 covetyse byfore, þat is maumetrie, as seiþ þe Apostele¹⁴; for þat þat¹⁶
 þei shulden spenden¹⁶ upon þe nedis of þer nezeboris, 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
 pleyen 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 nez[e]bors in byinge and in sellyng; and so þis
 pleyinge of myraclis now on dayes is verre²³ witesse of hidous²⁴
 covetyse, þat is maumetrie.

1 MS. felowe

2 MS. werry

3 MS. -un

4 MS. sery-

5 MS. þei shulden

6 ranked

7 of the spirit

8 bidden; MS. -yn

9 Gen. 21. 9 (*ludentem*, Vul-
gate; see the Authorized
Version)

10 might have

11 taken from; MS. -yn

12 MS. so in þe

13 MS. witt-

14 Col. 3. 5

15 which

16 MS. -yn

17 grudge

18 twice as much

19 MS. gideren

20 buy their food the dearer

21 boasting

22 MS. sicsse

23 MS. werre

24 MS. hidoous

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,
And grete oþes thow moste enchewe²;
In worde and dede þou moste be mylde,
Bothe to mon and to chylde.
Dronkelec⁸ and glotonye,
Pruyde and slouþe and envye, 10
Alle þow moste putten away,
Ȝef þow wolt serve God to pay.⁴
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 (*lit.* accord together)

² eschew

⁸ drunkenness

⁴ please

⁵ slay, crush

⁶ shooting

⁷ sports of such sort

Thow mygte not use¹ wythowte blame ;
 Hawkyng, huntynge, and dawnsynge,
 Thow moste forgo for any thyng ;
 Cuttede² clothes and pykede³ schone,
 Thye gode fame þey wole fordone.⁴
 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 ageynes¹⁴ evele,
 Or elles thow mygte not lyve wele.

BEHAVIOR IN CHURCH

No non in chyrche stonde schal,
 Ny¹⁵ lene to pylor ny to wal,
 20 But fayre¹⁶ on kneus þey schule hem sette —
 Knelynge doun upon the flette¹⁷ —
 And pray to God wyth herte meke
 To geve 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).

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Hys only Sone, and no mo,
 þat was conceyvede of þe Holy Spyryt,
 And of a mayde ibore quyt¹;
 And afterward under Pounce Pylate
 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 þryde day,
 And stegh⁶ to hevene þe xl day.
 3et 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 spelle.⁹
 In Goddes body I beleve nowe,
 Amonge hys seyntes to ʒeve me rowe,¹⁰
 And of my synnes þat I have done
 To have plener¹¹ 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

25 Hast þou ben prowde and glad in thoght
 Of any mysdede þat þou hast wroʒt?
 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 quite
 2 seized
 3 envy
 4 done to death
 5 despoil

6 ascended
 7 judge
 8 believe
 9 teaching
 10 rest

11 full, complete
 12 his
 13 appearance, look
 14 party-colored
 15 slashed

Of londes rentes, of gay howsynge,¹
 Of mony servauntes to þy byddyngē,
 Or of hors fat and rownde,
 Or for þy godes² were hole and sownde,
 Or for þow art gret and ryche
 þat no neȝbore 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 chyrchezorde,⁷
 And for þe dede iprayed no worde?
 Hast þow ay cast up⁸ lydezate⁹
 þere bestus have go in ate?
 Hast þow istruded¹⁰ corn or gras, 15
 Or oþer þynge þat sowen was?
 Hast þou icome in any sty,¹¹
 And cropped ȝerus¹² of come þe by?
 Art þou iwont over corn to ryde,
 When þou myȝtest 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 þinge 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 Myzhellfeste ¹ ;
 Myd-Lenton ² Sonday schal be neste ³ ;
 þe Trenite feste is þe þridde, os ⁴ I þe say ;
 þe ferthe is þe Sononday aftur Candulmes day.
 Spelle ⁵ hit reddely, ⁶ for nozte þou wonde, ⁷
 þat ⁸ alle men þe undurstonde.

FORM OF EXCOMMUNICATION (I)

By auctorite of God almigti, 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 Chirch or sturben hit ; . . . all þat falsen or use false
 10 measures, busshelles, galones, and potelles, ¹² quartes, [cuppes], or false
 wightes, poundes or poundrelles, ¹³ or false ellenyerdes, ¹⁴ wetyngly oþer
 þan þe lawe of þe lond woll ; . . . also all þat distroubleth þe pes of
 Englond, 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 herkeneth
 by nyktes 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 Fadir, 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. ffader¹⁰ MS. ffirst¹¹ 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

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—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.

✓ v.
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 (E.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 zere.
Fro Pas¹ right unto Witsunnday,
At þe sext our² ete sal þai,
þe whilk es midday for to mene,
And sine³ sal þai soupe⁴ bedene.⁵
In somer, fro⁶ Witsunday be past,
Wedinsday and Friday sal þai fast,
Bot-if⁷ þai oper⁸ swink⁹ or swete
In hay or corn with travel grete.
And if þai non slike¹⁰ travel done,¹¹
On þos days sal þai fast to none.¹²
And on oper days, als I air¹³ saide,
At mydday sal þer mete be graide.¹⁴
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.
20 Fro time þat December begin
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

study for
deal.
N.B. Some of the
... ..

10

15

20

As ...

At hi¹ none sal þai ete ;
 þer lesons² sal þai not forgete.
 In Lentyn sal non to mete gang
 Efter³ þe our of evynsang ;
 And al servys⁴ þan sal þai sai
 Efter mete, bi light of day,
 So þat al be rewlid right
 At wend⁵ to bede bi dais lyght.

? ?

DAILY OCCUPATIONS

All þat wons in religioun⁶ r. N. 13
 Aw⁷ to have sum ocupacioun, 10
 Ouper⁸ in kirk of⁹ hali bedes¹⁰
 Or stodying 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 times 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 high

2 readings

3 MS. or efter

4 the whole service

5 to go

6 dwell in religion, lead
a religious life

7 ought

8 either

9 with

10 prayers

11 other places

12 ordained

13 first

14 church-service celebrated
about 5 or 6 A.M.

15 each one

16 hours of service

17 mass

And efter mete, þen sal þai slepe,
 And silence al samen ¹ sal þai kepe,
 So þat none do oþer disese,²
 Bot ilkon paid ³ oþer to plese.
 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 oþer dede,
 For unto travel wor we born,
 And al our elders us befor.
 Bot travel aw meþurd to be
 Til ilkon efter þer degre,
 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 together

² discomfort, disturbance

³ content

⁴ cut, reap

⁵ make ditches

⁶ before

⁷ provided for

⁸ tenth hour

⁹ noon

¹⁰ see to it

¹¹ taught

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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,
Or rede to þam, or ger be rede,
How hali men þer lives lede. . . .
Scho sal gif water unto þer hend,
And wesch þeir fete, als Crist hase kend.³

10 When þai so do, þai sal reherce,
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.' . . .

15 þe gestes kechin⁴ sal be set
Allone, þat it no noþer⁵ let,

So þat þai be servyd at ese,
And ilk man redy þam to plese.

20 And luk þer bedes⁶ ordand bene
With litter larch⁷ and clothes clene,
And swilk servandes assigned þam til
þat wil þam serve with gude wil.

25 None aw þam do for to greve,
Ne speke with þam withoutyn leve,
Bot loutand⁸ hals⁹ þam wher þai go,
And with blissing pase furth þam fro.

THE NUN'S CLOTHING

Thay sal be cledde ful wele, we wate,
Efter þer place es cald or hate.

30 For in cald stedes¹⁰ who so er sted,¹¹
þam nedes for to be better cled ;
And¹² who er in hate cuntre,

¹ prioress

² cause guests to be entertained

³ taught

⁴ kitchen

⁵ other

⁶ beds

⁷ large straw-bed

⁸ bowing

⁹ salute

¹⁰ places

¹¹ situated

¹² 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 ;
 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 farest 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 noþer 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 tresure 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. K.⁹ receive¹⁰ distributed to¹¹ go¹² finer¹³ such as¹⁴ (enough) to¹⁵ be useful¹⁶ wherefore¹⁷ offer, give them

THE PORTER

Ane old man sal þe ȝates ȝeme¹
 þat witti es, and wele wil seme²
 For to welcum with wordes fre
 Evyrilk man in þer degre.
 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 knock 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 þeir 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 Pechiez* 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

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✓
 To se whych þat feyrer were,
 Þys ys azens þe commaundement,
 And þe halyday for þe ys shent¹;
 Hyt ys a gaderyng for lecherye,
 5 ✓
 And ful grete pryde, and herte hye.²
 3yf þou ever janglyst³ at messe,
 Yn þe cherche with more or lesse,
 And lettyst⁴ men of⁵ here preyers,
 For hem perel soþely 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 ougt þan with ful mynde
 15 ✓
 To preye God us of synne unbynde,⁷
 And yn gode lyfe us wysse and rede,⁸
 And forzeve us al oure mysdede.
 3yf 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 doun.
 Taverne ys þe devylys knyfe;
 Hyt sleþ¹⁴ þe, oþer soule or lyfe;
 One of þys shal hyt do,
 3yf 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, ruined

2 high heart

3 dost engage in altercation

4 dost hinder

5 from

6 petition

7 set us free from sin

8 direct and counsel

9 art accustomed

10 many a one

11 harassing, temptation

12 forbid

13 noon

14 slayeth

15 resort

And gadryp¹ 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,
 Swyche men grevusly werche
 Agens þe state of Holy Chyrche ;
 For holy preyere, and for þe pees,
 þe halyday God hyt chees.

Ȝyf þou ever with jogeloure,³
 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 owyp to be doun,
 Hyt ys agens þe comaundment
 And Holy Cherches asent.⁸

Ȝyf þou be *infra sacros*,⁹
 And art a clerk, and hast þe los¹⁰
 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 mysdo.¹³

THE EVIL OF TOURNAMENTS

Of tournamentys þat are forbede
 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 olypraunce.³
 Wete þou wel þer ys envye
 Whan one seeþ anoþer do maystrye⁴;
 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,
 15 þey dyspende more gode þer aboute⁹ —
 þat ys ȝeve alle to folye —
 þan to any dede of mercy.
 And ȝyt may nat, on no wyse,
 Be forgete¹⁰ 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 lye.¹⁴
 Glotonye also ys hem among,
 Delycyus metes¹⁵ to make hem strong,
 25 And drynke þe wyne þat he were lyght,
 Wyþ glotonye to make hym wyght.¹⁶
 Ȝyt ys þere Dame Lecherye;
 Of here¹⁷ cumþ alle here¹⁸ maystrye.
 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

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þe harpe þerof me ofte mones ¹
 Of þe joye and of þe blys
 Where God hymself wonys and ys.
 þarefor, gode men, ze shul lere, ²
 Whan ze any glemen here,
 To wurschep God at ³ zoure powere,
 As Davyd seyþ yn þe Sautere ⁴:
 " Yn harpe, yn thabour, and symphan gle, ⁵
 Wurschepe God ; yn troumpes, ⁶ and sautre, ⁷
 10 Yn cordys, ⁸ an organes, and bellys ryngyng,
 Yn al þese, wurschepe ze hevene Kyng. ⁹ " "

✓ QUIET IN CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD DURING THE
TIME OF SERVICE

Karolles, wrastlynges, or somour-games, ¹⁰
 Whoso ever haunteþ any swyche ¹¹ shames ¹²
 Yn cherche oþer yn cherchezerd,
 15 Of sacrylage he may be aferd ;
 Or entyrludes, or syngyng,
 Or tabure bete, ¹³ or oþer pypyng,
 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 syng, and rede rymys,
 Noght yn none holy stedes, ¹⁴
 þat mygt dysturble þe prestes bedes, ¹⁵

¹ reminds

² learn

³ according to

⁴ psalter

⁵ music of the symphony (instrument like the tabor)

⁶ trumpets

⁷ psaltery

⁸ chords (strings of a musical instrument)

⁹ Ps. 150. 3-5

¹⁰ summer-games

¹¹ such

¹² disgraceful doings

¹³ beating

¹⁴ places

¹⁵ devotions

Or ȝyf he were yn orysun,¹
 Or any ouȝer devocyun,
 Sacrylage ys alle hyt tolde.²

THE TALE OF THE MINER

þyr was a man bezunde þe see
 A mynour, woned³ 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 of⁵ sylver and golde;
 He wroȝt on a day, and holed⁶ yn þe hyl; 10
 A perylous chaunce to hym fyl,⁷
 For a grete party⁸ of þat yche⁹ myne
 Fyl dowun yn þe hole, and closed hym ynne.
 Hys felaus alle, þat were hym hende,¹⁰
 þat he were dede weyl soȝely wende; 15
 þey ȝede¹¹ and toke hem alle to rede,¹²
 And tolde hys wyfe þat he was dede.
 þys womman pleynd¹³ 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 stably,¹⁶
 But o¹⁷ day þat passed forby.
 Fewe swyche wymmen now we fynde,

1 prayer, supplication
 2 counted, considered
 3 who dwelt
 4 earth
 5 from which are made
 6 dug

7 befel
 8 part
 9 same
 10 kindly disposed
 11 went
 12 took counsel all together

13 lamented, bewailed
 14 pitcher
 15 ?
 16 regularly
 17 one

þat to here husbondes are so kynde.
 But þys wyfe, at ¹ alle here myzt,
 Ded for hym boþe day and nyzt.
 Fyl hyt at þe twelvemoneþ ende,
 Hys felaws to þe mounteyne gun wende,
 And come to þe same stede efte
 þere þey last here werk ilefte,
 Ryzt 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 zere.
 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 ete Y nozt,
 For no mete ⁶ was to me brozt.’
 þey led þys man unto þe tounne,
 25 And tolde þys miracle 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 myzt be weyl.

¹ with² harm, injury³ wonder, astonishment⁴ doubt, uncertainty⁵ as a⁶ food⁷ afterwards⁸ bit

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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 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 doughters, of the whiche I was joyfull, and had grete desire that thei shuld turne to good and worshippe 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 doughters with good ensaumples yevinge, as dede the Quene Proues of Hongrie, that faire and goodly chastised⁷ and taught her doughters, 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 Ingland, 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 neighboures 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 worshipe 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 ensauple for to flee evell, and withholde the good. 5 For it shall not be posible but sumtyme thei shall have mynde on sum good ensauple, 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 husband was oute, saide to her maide: 'Late us ete the gret ele, and Y will saie to my husband that the otour⁴ hath eten 15 hym;' and so it was done. 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 hath told me.' And so ther was gret noyse⁷ betwene the man and hys wiff for etinge 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 ensauple that no woman shulde ete no lycorous¹⁰ morcelles in the absens and withoute weting¹¹ of her husband, but yef it so were that it be with folk of worshippe, to make hem chere¹²; 30 for this woman was afterward mocked for the pye and the ele.

¹ successively

² magpie

³ caused to be kept

⁴ otter

⁵ went

⁶ what had become of the eel

⁷ disturbance

⁸ betrayed

⁹ with hair removed

¹⁰ dainty

¹¹ knowledge

¹² 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 thinge 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 obeieth best to her husbonde.' Thanne he that beganne furst to speke saide: 'Lete² 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 weting⁵ 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 ansuered 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 nothings 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 tobete¹¹ 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 went
2 let us
3 dinner
4 assay, try
5 knowledge

6 see to it
7 for what purpose
8 desire
9 know
10 fist

11 beat severely
12 whispered
13 their

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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 disgised, 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 soule. Wene ye not that ye displesse 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, refreshed, 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 worldely 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 Swan'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

Deoclician 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 therefore 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 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 standing a charbuncle ston, the which gaf ligt over all the hous; and aȝenst hit stod a man, with a bowe in his hond, redy for to schete. This clerke perceivid well this sight, and þou[ɹ]te, þoȝ I tell þis sigt³ 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, and put it up; and anoon the man with þe bowe sheet to the charbuncle ston so soore that it zede⁶ onsundre, and þo was all the ligt 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.

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 pletouris,⁹ þe which by sotilte 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. sigth

⁴ gone

⁵ believe

⁶ parted

⁷ painted

⁸ world

⁹ pleaders

to sey, dilectabill þingis of þe wordle, in þe which þei have gret dilectacion. The charbuncle ston þat ȝevith lizt is þe yowth of man, þe which ȝevith to man hardinesse to have dilectacion and liking of ¹ wordly ² þingis. 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 strenght⁴ and his myzte; and þenne lieth the yowth in
 10 derkenesse of synne, in the which derkenesse many men oftyn tyme deyeth. And þefore lat us fle all lustys and all likingys, and þenne we schull not faile of everlasting lizt, *ad quam nos perducat*, 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 forthcoming edition, in the *Belles Lettres Series*, of the *Phanix*, *Elene*, and the *Physiologus*, where a much fuller account is given, with references to the bibliography of the subject).

Our text is derived from Mätzner, *Altenglische Sprachproben* (1. 55–75), which in turn reproduces Wright and Halliwell, *Reliquiæ Antiquæ* 1. 208–27. Emendations are by Mätzner, and (of the *Whale*) by Emerson (*Middle English Reader*); others are mine.

THE WHALE (TURTLE)

Cethegrande⁵ is a fis,⁶
 De moste⁷ ðat in water is;
 Ðat tu wuldes seien⁸ get,
 Gef ðu it soge⁹ 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

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Derof he aren swiðe fagen,
 And mid here migt ðarto he dragen
 Sipes on festen,¹
 And alle up gangen,
 Of ston mid stel in ðe tunder²
 Wel to brennen³ on⁴ ðis wunder,
 Warmen hem wel, and eten⁵ and drinken.
 Ðe fir he feleð, and doð⁶ hem sinken,
 For sone he diveð dun to grunde;
 10 He drepeð⁷ hem alle wiðuten wunde.

Significacio. Ðis devel is mikel wið wil and magt
 (So⁸ wicches⁹ haven in here craft);
 He doð men hungren, and haven ðrist,¹⁰
 And mani oðer sinful list,¹¹
 15 Tolleð¹² men to him wið his onde,
 Woso him folegeð,¹³ he findeð sonde.¹⁴
 Ðo arn ðe little in¹⁵ leve¹⁶ lage¹⁷;
 Ðe mikle ne maig he to him dragen —
 Ðe mikle, I mene ðe stedefast
 20 In rigte leve mid fles¹⁸ and gast.
 Woso listneð develes lore,
 On lengðe it sal him rewen¹⁹ sore;
 Woso festeð²⁰ 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 enchanters; 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 sopen ⁴ al,
 Wit, and trendled ⁵ als a wel, ⁶
 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.
 In his hole siðen ¹⁰ stille
 Dre 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 drie, be it wete. 20
 For ðe swetnesse off his onde,
 Worso ¹⁵ he walkeð o londe,
 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 ramedð ogt, ²¹

1 bone ; MS. bro
 2 whale
 3 MS. mið
 4 fashioned
 5 round
 6 wheel
 7 MS. itt (em. M.)

8 choice, best
 9 himself
 10 afterwards
 11 roars
 12 loud as
 13 balsam
 14 to you

15 wheresoever
 16 MS. walked
 17 dwells
 18 MS. upone
 19 alone
 20 while
 21 anything, at all

Oc daren¹ stille in here pit,
 Als so² he weren of deðe³ offrigt.⁴

Significacio. Crist is tokned ðurg ðis der,
 Wos kinde⁵ we haven told gu her;
 For he is faier over alle men,
 So evensterre over erðe fen⁶;

10 Ful wel he taunede⁷ his lue to man
 Wan he ðurg holi spel him wan;
 And longe he lai her in an hole —
 Wel him ðat⁸ he it wulde ðolen⁹:
 Dre daies slep he al onon,¹⁰

15 ðanne he ded was in blod and bon.
 Up he ros, and remede iwis¹¹ —
 Of helle pine, of hevene blis —
 And steg¹² to hevene uvemest¹³;
 Der wuned wið Fader and Holi Gast.

20 Amonges men a swete smel¹⁴
 He let herof — his holi spel,¹⁵
 Worðurg we mugen folgen him
 Into his godcundnesse¹⁶ fin.¹⁷
 And ðat wirm,¹⁸ ure widerwine¹⁹ —
 Worso²⁰ of Godes word is dine²¹
 Ne dar he stiren, ne no man deren,²²
 De²³ while he²⁴ lage²⁵ and lue 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 (*lit. din*); MS. ðine

22 injure

23 MS. ðer (em. M.)

24 they

25 law

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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 niztingale.
 þat plait ⁸ was stif and starc ⁹ and strong,
 Sum wile ¹⁰ softe and lud ¹¹ among ¹²;
 An ¹³ aiper azen oper sval,¹⁴
 And let þat wole ¹⁵ mod ¹⁶ ut al.
 And eiper seide of operes custe ¹⁷
 10 þat alreworste ¹⁸ þat hi wuste;
 And hure and hure ¹⁹ of opere[s] songe,
 Hi holde plaiding ²⁰ supe stronge.
 þe niztingale bigon þe speche
 In one hurne ²¹ of one beche,²²
 15 And sat up[on] one vaire boze,²³
 þar were abute blosme inoze,
 In ore ²⁴ waste ²⁵ picke hegge,
 Imeind ²⁶ mid spire ²⁷ and grene segge.
 Ho ²⁸ was þe gladur vor þe rise,²⁹
 20 And song a vele ³⁰ cunne wise ³¹ :
 Bet ³² þuzte þe dreim ³³ þat he were
 Of harpe and pipe þan he nere,
 Bet þuzte þat he were ishote ³⁴
 Of harpe and pipe þan of þrote.
 25 þo stod on old stoc ³⁵ þar biside,
 þar þo ule song hire tide,³⁶

1 a certain
 2 very
 3 secluded
 4 out of the way spot
 5 dispute
 6 owl
 7 a
 8 debate
 9 severe, sharp
 10 sometimes
 11 loud
 12 at intervals

13 and
 14 grew swollen with wrath
 15 evil
 16 mood
 17 character
 18 very worst
 19 at all events
 20 debate
 21 corner, nook
 22 valley; MS. breche
 23 a fair bough
 24 a

25 solitary
 26 mingled
 27 tall grass
 28 she
 29 twig, branch
 30 in many
 31 kinds of ways
 32 rather (better); MS. het (em.W.)
 33 seemed the music
 34 shot, poured forth
 35 stump
 36 at her time, when her time came

And was mid ivi al bigrowe :
 Hit was þare hule earding-stowe.¹
 Þe niztingale hi iseȝ,²
 And hi bihold and overseȝ,³
 And þuȝte wel wl⁴ of þare hule,
 For me hi halt⁵ lodlich and fule.⁶
 'Unwigt,⁷' ho sede, 'awei þu flo⁸ !
 Me is þe wrs⁹ þat Ich þe so.¹⁰
 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 iþrunge.¹⁶
 Me luste bet speten¹⁷ þane singe,
 Of¹⁸ þine fule ȝogelinge.¹⁹ '
 Þos²⁰ hule abod fort²¹ hit was eve, 41 15
 Ho ne migte no leng²² bileve,²³
 Vor hire horte was so gret
 Þat wel nez hire fnast²⁴ atschet,²⁵
 And warp²⁶ a word²⁷ þarafter longe :
 'Hu þinc[þ] þe²⁸ nu bi mine songe ? 20
 We[n]st þu²⁹ þat Ich ne cunne singe,
 Þeȝ Ich ne cunne of writelinge³⁰ ?
 [Oft and] ilome³¹ þu dest me grame,³²
 And seist me boþe tone³³ and schame.
 Ȝif Ich þe holde on mine vote³⁴ — 25
 So hit bitide³⁵ þat Ich mote ! —

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 the owl's dwelling-place | 13 abandon, stop | 25 shot away, burst forth |
| 2 saw her | 14 flees away | 26 poured out (<i>lit.</i> threw) |
| 3 looked at with scorn | 15 falters | 27 speech |
| 4 evilly | 16 pressed close, drawn close | 28 seems it to you |
| 5 men consider her | 17 I would rather spit | 29 do you suppose |
| 6 loathsome and foul | 18 because of | 30 trilling |
| 7 monster | 19 guggling | 31 often |
| 8 flee (imp.) | 20 this | 32 harm, injury |
| 9 worse | 21 until | 33 reproach |
| 10 see | 22 longer | 34 foot |
| 11 evil | 23 remain silent | 35 would that it might happen |
| 12 behavior, noise | 24 breath | |

And þu were ut of þine rise,
 þu sholdest singe an oþer w[i]se.¹
 þe niztingale gaf answare :
 ' Zif Ich me loki² wit þe bare,³
 And me schilde wit þe blete,⁴
 Ne reche Ich noȝt of þine þrete :
 Zif Ich me holde in mine hegge,
 Ne recche Ich never what þu segge.⁵
 Ich wot þat þu art unmilde⁶
 10 62 Wip hom⁷ þat ne muȝe from þe⁸ schilde ;
 And þu tukest⁹ wrope¹⁰ and uuele
 Whar þu miȝt over smale fuȝele.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 :
 þi bodi is short, þi swore²⁶ is smal,
 Grettere is þin heved þan þu al ;
 þin eȝene 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 stif and scharp and hoked,
 Riȝt so an owel³³ þat is croked,

1 in another fashion
 2 may protect myself
 3 against the open
 4 exposure
 5 say
 6 harsh
 7 those
 8 MS. se
 9 domineer
 10 angrily
 11 birds

12 therefore
 13 hateful
 14 bird-kind
 15 they all
 16 hence
 17 screech at
 18 cry out at
 19 closely
 20 pursue
 21 because of that
 22 the very titmouse

23 willingly
 24 pull to pieces
 25 in manifold ways
 26 neck
 27 painted
 28 wood, charcoal
 29 as if
 30 bite to pieces
 31 might ; MS. mist
 32 claws
 33 just like an awl

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Hit was idon ow a loþ custe.¹
 Segge me gif ze hit wiste."
 þo quap þat on and quad þat oþer :
 " Iwis it was ure oþer² broþer,
 þe zond³ 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 ilefde⁶ his bridde,
 10 And nom⁷ þat fule brid amidde,⁸
 And warp hit of⁹ þan wilde bowe,¹⁰
 þar¹¹ pie¹² and crowe hit todrowe.
 Herbi men segget a bispel,¹³
 þez hit ne bo fuliche spel¹⁴ :
 15 Al so¹⁵ hit is bi þan un gode¹⁶
 þat is icumen of fule brode,
 And is meind wit fro monne¹⁷ ;
 Ever he cup þat he com þonne,¹⁸
 þat he com of þan adel eye,¹⁹
 20 þez he a fro nest²⁰ leie.
 þez appel trendli²¹ from²² þon trowe,²³
 þar he and oþer mid growe,
 þez he bo²⁴ þarfrom bicume,²⁵
 He cup wel whonene he is icume.'
 25 ' 15 } þos word azaf²⁶ þe niȝtingale,
 And after þare longe tale
 He song so lude and so scharpe,
 Riȝt so me grulde²⁷ schille²⁸ harpe.

1 in a disagreeable manner ;
 custe for MS. wiste

2 MS. oþer

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 eze ² noþerwa[r]d,³
 And sat tosvolle ⁴ and ibolwe,⁵
 Also ho hadde one frogge isuolze,⁶
 For ho wel wiste and was iwar
 þat ho song hire a bisemar,⁷
 And nopeles ho gaf 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 suþe 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 liȝte,
 And hud ²⁵ þat woȝe ²⁶ amon[g] þe riȝte.
 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 MS. gaf (*f* penciled in margin)⁹ will you not¹⁰ the open¹¹ show¹² MS. þare¹³ 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 MS. 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 noȝt þat þu bo to [þ]riste³ ;
 Ich wolde viȝte bet mid liste⁴
 þan þu mid al þine strengþe.
 Ich habbe on brede⁵ and ech on lengþe
 Castel god on mine rise ;
 " Wel fiȝt þat wel fiȝt,"⁶ seiþ þe wise.
 Ac lete we awei þos cheste,⁷
 Vor suiche wordes boþ unwreste⁸ ;
 10 And fo we on⁹ mid riȝte 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 fiȝte,
 15 Plaidi¹² mid foȝe¹³ and mid riȝte,
 And mai hure¹⁴ eiþer wat hi wilc
 Mid riȝte segge and mid sckile.'
 þo quap þe hule : ' Wu¹⁵ schal us seme,¹⁶
 þat kunne and wille riȝt us deme¹⁷ ? '
 20 ' Ich wot wel,' quap þe niȝtingale,
 ' Ne þaref¹⁸ þarof bo no tale.¹⁹
 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 unþeu.²²
 He wot insiȝt in²³ eche songe —
 Wo singet wel, wo singet wronge ;
 And he can schede²⁴ vrom þe riȝte
 þat woȝe,²⁵ þat þuster²⁶ from þe liȝte.'

1 wary, cautious

2 avoid by shrinking

3 bold

4 cunning

5 breadth

6 cf. *Proverbs of Hendyng*,
st. 10 (Harl. MS.)

7 let us be done with this strife

8 unavailing ; MS. unwerste

9 let us begin

10 judgment

11 peaceable

12 debate

13 propriety

14 of us

15 who ; MS. þu

16 reconcile

17 judge

18 need

19 dispute

20 Nicholas of Guildford, spoken
of in lines 1752-3 of the
poem as living at Port-
esham, in Dorset

21 wise, prudent

22 vice, bad habit

23 has intelligence in, knows

24 separate, distinguish

25 wrong

26 darkness

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þarof Ich wndri,¹ and wel mai,
 Vor evrich þing þat schuniet² riht,
 Hit luveþ þuster and hatiet³ liht;
 And evrich þing þat is lof misdede,⁴
 Hit luveþ þuster to⁵ his dede.
 A wis word, þeꝛ 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 flizst nihtes evermo.
 Anoper þing me is awene¹⁰ —
 þu havest aniht wel brihte sene¹¹;
 Bi daie þu art stareblind,¹²
 15 þat þu ne sichst ne bo[u] ne rind.¹³
 Adai þu art blind oper bisne,¹⁴
 þarbi men segget a uorbisne:
 " Riht so hit farþ bi þan un gode,
 þat noht ne suþ 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 brihte lat awai.²¹ "
 So doþ þat boþ²² of þine cunde,
 25 Of lihte nabbep hi none imunde.²³ '
 þos hule luste suþe longe,
 And was oftoned²⁴ suþ[e] stronge.
 Ho quap: ' þu [h]attest²⁵ nihtingale;
 þu mihtest bet hoten²⁶ galegale,²⁷

1 wonder

2 shuns

3 hates

4 to which evil-doing is dear

5 for

6 of many men

7 in the mouths

8 commonly

9 that which knows him to
be foul

10 is in my thoughts

11 power of vision

12 purblind

13 see neither bough nor bark

14 of dim sight

15 looks toward

16 guile, trickery

17 evade, elude; MS. -prenche

18 knows

19 the

20 dark; MS. þurste

21 abandons the bright one

22 those that are

23 thought

24 irritated

25 are called

26 better be called

27 chatterbox

Vor þu havest to monie tale.¹
 Lat þine tunge hadde spale² !
 þu wenest þat þes dai bo þin oge³ ;
 Lat me nu hadde mine þroze⁴ ;
 Bo nu stille and lat me speke,
 Ich wille bon of þe awreke.⁵
 And lust⁶ hu Ich con me bitelle,⁷
 Mid rihte 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 hadde bile stif and stronge,
 And gode clivers scharp and longe,
 So hit bicumep¹⁰ to havekes cunne ; 15
 Hit is min hihte,¹¹ hit is mi wune,¹²
 þat Ich me draze¹³ to mine cunde,
 Ne mai [me] no man þarevore schende¹⁴ ;
 On me hit is wel isene,
 Vor rihte cunde¹⁵ Ich am so kene. 20
 Vorþi Ich am loþ smale fozle¹⁶
 þat floþ bi¹⁷ grunde an bi þuvele¹⁸ :
 Hi me bichermet¹⁹ and bigredeþ,²⁰
 And hore²¹ flockes to me ledeþ.
 Me is lof to hadde 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 wende ¹ from hom wide. ²
 Hit is a wise monne dome, ³
 And hi hit segget wel ilome, ⁴
 þat me ne ⁵ chide wit þe gidie, ⁶
 Ne wit þan ofne ⁷ me ne zonie. ⁸
 At sume siþe herde I telle
 Hu Alvred sede on his spelle ⁹ :
 " Loke þat þu ne bo þare
 þar ¹⁰ chavling boþ and cheste zare ;
 10 Lat sottes ¹¹ chide, and vorþ þu go " ;
 And Ich am wis, and do also.
 And zet Alvred seide, an oþer side, ¹²
 A word þat is isprunge ¹³ wide :
 " þat wit þe fule haveþ imene, ¹⁴
 15 Ne cumeþ he never from him cleine. "

{ Wenestu þat haveck bo þe worse
 þoz crowe bigrede ¹⁵ him bi þe mershe,
 And goþ to him mid hore chirme ¹⁶
 Rigt so hi wille wit him schirme ¹⁷ ?
 20 þe havec folzeþ gode rede, ¹⁸
 And fligt his wei, and lat him ¹⁹ grede. ²⁰
 Zet þu me seist of oþer þinge,
 And telst þat Ich ne can nozt singe,
 Ac al mi rorde ²¹ is woning, ²²
 25 And to ihire grislich ²³ þing.
 þat nis nozt soþ, Ich singe efne, ²⁴
 Mid fulle dreame ²⁵ and lude stefne. ²⁶
 þu wenist ²⁷ þat ech song bo grislich

1 turn
 2 far
 3 in the judgment of wise men
 4 often
 5 they do not
 6 foolish
 7 oven, furnace
 8 yawn
 9 instruction
 10 where

11 fools
 12 on the other hand
 13 spread
 14 he who has companionship
 with the foul
 15 cry out upon
 16 uproar
 17 fight
 18 counsel
 19 MS. hem

20 cry out
 21 speech
 22 lamenting
 23 horrible
 24 evenly
 25 melody
 26 voice
 27 thinkest

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þat he ne shal þinche¹ wel unmurie²
 Ȝef he ilestep³ over wille⁴;
 So þu miȝt þine song aspille.⁵

PIERS THE PLOWMAN

Until 1906, the work called *The Vision* (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 seem

² unpleasing

³ lasts

⁴ beyond (the point of) pleasure; MS. unwille

⁵ 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 Prol. 1-122; 3. 1-129, 133-68; 5. 304-46, 352-9, 364-71; 5. 392-478; 6. 107-53.

L

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
 Me byfel a ferly⁵ — of fairy, me thouȝte;
 I was wery, forwandred,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 asketh.¹³
 Some putten hem¹⁴ to þe plow, pleyed ful selde¹⁵; 20
 In setting¹⁶ and in sowyng swonken¹⁷ ful harde,
 And wonnen that¹⁸ wastours¹⁹ with glotonye destruyeth.

1 robed

2 rough garments

3 shepherd

4 hills; the Malvern hills are
in Worcestershire, on the
border of Herefordshire

5 marvel

6 worn out with wandering

7 burn's, brook's

8 rippled

9 dream

10 on high

11 hilltop

12 excellently

13 requires, demands

14 set themselves

15 seldom

16 planting

17 labored

18 gained what

19 spendthrifts

And some putten hem to pruyde — apparailed 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 heveneriche⁴ blisse ;
As ances⁵ and heremites that holden hem in here selles,
And coveiten nought in contre to kairen aboute⁶
For no likerous liflode,⁷ her lykam⁸ to plese.

10 And somme chosen chaffare⁹ ; they cheven¹⁰ the bettere —
As it semeth to owre sygt 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, gif þei sholde ;
That Poule precheth of hem I nel nought preve it here :
Qui turpiloquium loquitur is Luciferes hyne.¹⁵

Bidders¹⁶ and beggeres fast aboute zede,¹⁷
With her belies and her bagges of bred ful ycrammed ;
20 Fayteden¹⁸ for here fode, fouzten 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 plixted hem togidere
25 To seke Seynt James,²² and seyntes in Rome.
Thei went forth in here wey, with many wise tales,

¹ accordingly

² outward appearance

³ strictly

⁴ of the kingdom of heaven

⁵ anchorites

⁶ go about

⁷ dainty living

⁸ body

⁹ a merchant's life

¹⁰ achieved, prospered

¹¹ know how to do

¹² believe

¹³ jesters

¹⁴ jongleurs

¹⁵ servant

¹⁶ beggars

¹⁷ went

¹⁸ begged deceitfully

¹⁹ ribaldry, sin

²⁰ sloth

²¹ pursue

²² 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).

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And leveth¹ such loseles² 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 naugt by⁵ þe bischop þat þe boy precheth,
 For the parisch prest and þe pardonere parten þe silver
 That þe poraille⁶ of þe parisch sholde have, gif þei nere.⁷

Persones⁸ and parisch prestes pleynd hem to þe bischop
 þat here parishes were pore, sith þe pestilence-tyme,
 To have a lycence and a leve at London to dwelle,
 And syngen þere for symonye — for silver is swete.

Bischopes and bachelers,⁹ bothe maistres and doctours,
 þat han cure¹⁰ under Criste, and crounyng¹¹ in tokne
 And signe þat þei sholden shryven here paroschienes,
 Prechen and prey for hem, and þe pore fede,
 Liggen in London — in Lenten, an elles.¹²

Somme serven þe kyng, and his silver tellen¹³;
 In Cheker¹⁴ and in Chancerye chalengen¹⁵ his dettes
 Of wardes¹⁶ and wardmotes,¹⁷ weyves and streyves.¹⁸
 And some serven as servantz lordes and ladyes,
 And in stede of stuardes 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 consistorie²¹ acorse ful manye.

I parceyved of þe power þat Peter had to kepe,
 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 gatis²⁴ —

1 believe
 2 wretches (vagabonds)
 3 practise
 4 a holy (blessed) man
 5 concerning
 6 poor people
 7 if it were not for them
 8 parsons
 9 young men
 10 a charge
 11 the tonsure

12 and at other times
 13 count
 14 the court of the Exchequer
 15 claim
 16 wardships
 17 ward-courts
 18 waifs and strays — abandoned property or that for which there were no heirs
 19 judge

20 canonical hours
 21 court, tribunal; here, Last Judgment
 22 Matt. 16. 19
 23 bade
 24 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 courte ¹ þat cauzt of ² þat name,
 And power presumed in hem a Pope to make,
 To han þat power þat Peter hadde, inpugnen I nelle,³
 For in love and letterure ⁴ þe eleccioun bilongeth ;
 Forþi I can and can nauzte ⁵ of courte speke more.

þanne come þere a kyng — knyȝthod hym ladde ;
 Migt of þe comunnes made hym to regne ;
 And þanne cam Kynde Wytte,⁶ and clerkes he made, 10
 For to conseille þe kyng, and þe comune save.

The kyng and knyȝthode, and clergye bothe,
 Casten ⁷ þat þe comune shulde hemself fynde.⁸
 þe comune contreved ⁹ of Kynde Witte craftes,
 And for profit of alle þe poeple, plowmen ordeygned, 15
 To tilie ¹⁰ and travaile, as Trewe Lyf askep.
 þe kyng and þe comune, and Kynde Witte þe thridde,
 Shope ¹¹ lawe and lewte — eche man to knowe his owne.

↳

MEEID THE MAIDEN

Now is Mede ¹² þe mayde, and na mo of hem alle,
 With bedellus ¹³ and wip bayllyves brouȝt bifor 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 appose ¹⁴
 What man of þis molde þat hire were leveste ¹⁵ ;
 And if she worche bi my witte, and my wille folwe, 25
 I wil forgyve hir þis gilte, so me God help ! ’
 Curteysliche þe clerke þanne, as þe kyng hight,

¹ at the court of Rome

² received

³ I will not raise question

⁴ learning

⁵ can because of what he
 knows, but cannot be-
 cause of his reverence

⁶ common sense

⁷ contrived

⁸ provide food for themselves

⁹ devised

¹⁰ till, cultivate

¹¹ created

¹² bribery, ‘ graft ’

¹³ beadles, summoners

¹⁴ inquire

¹⁵ dearest

Toke Mede bi þe middel,¹ and brouzte hir into chaumbre,
And þere was myrthe and mynstralcye, Mede to plesse.

They þat wonyeth in Westmynstre worschiped 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!'

Mildeliche 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 ricchesses manye;

15 The leste man of here meyne¹³ a motoun¹⁴ of golde.
Thanne lauzte¹⁵ 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 myzte laste.'

20 Hendeliche¹⁷ heo þanne bihight¹⁸ hem þe same,
To 'love zow lelli,¹⁹ and lordes to make,
And in þe consistorie atte courte do calle²⁰ zowre names;
Shal no lewdnesse lette²¹ þe leode²² þat I lovy, e
That he ne worth first avanced — for I am biknowen²³ —
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

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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 coveitise, and who þe catel ouzte.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 hevене als ;
 *Nesciat sinistra quid faciat dextra :*⁸
 Lat nouzte þi left half, late ne rathe,⁹
 10 Wyte what þow worchest with þi rigt 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 pynynge-stoles¹⁴
 15 Brewesteres¹⁵ and bakesteres,¹⁶ bocheres and cokes ;
 For þise aren men on þis molde þat moste harme worcheth
 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 nouzt²⁴ so heize,
 Ne bouzte non burgages,²⁵ be ȝe ful certeyne.
 Ac Mede þe mayde þe maire hath bisouzte,
 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 perchance
 2 natural disposition
 3 expenses
 4 who really owned the property
 5 teach
 6 cry after, send for
 7 Matt. 6. 2
 8 Matt. 6. 3
 9 early
 10 bids

11 mayors, magistrates
 12 mace-bearers (officers of
 the courts)
 13 intermediaries
 14 stools of punishment
 15 brewers
 16 bakers
 17 in small quantities
 18 buy
 19 secretly

20 grow rich
 21 selling retail
 22 stomach
 23 if they took in money
 24 would not build
 25 town-dwellings
 26 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
 That fyre shal falle, and brenne al to blo askes⁴
 The houses and þe homes of hem þat desireth
 Ziftes or zeres-zyves⁵ bicause of here offices.

The kynge fro conseilie cam, and called after Mede,
 And ofsent⁶ hir alswythe⁷ with serjauntes manye, 10
 That brouzten hir to bowre with blisse and with joye.
 Curteisliche þe kynge þanne comsed⁸ to telle —
 To Mede þe mayde melleth⁹ þise wordes :

' Unwittily, womman, wrouzte hastow oft,
 Ac worse wrouztestow 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 more.

I have a knyzte, Conscience, cam late fro bigunde¹² ;
 Zif he wilneth þe to wyf, wyltow hym have ?'
 ' Ze, lorde,' quod þat lady, ' Lorde forbede elles ! 20
 But¹³ I be holely at zowre heste, lat hange¹⁴ me sone !'

And þanne was Conscience calde to come and appiere
 Bifor þe kynge and his conseilie, as clerkes and othere.
 Knelynge, Conscience to þe kynge louted,¹⁵
 To wite what his wille were, and what he do shulde. 25

' Woltow wedde þis womman,' quod þe kynge, ' zif I wil assente —
 For she is fayne of þi felawship — for to be þi make¹⁶ ?'

Quod Conscience to þe kynge : ' Cryst it me forbede !
 Ar¹⁷ I wedde suche a wyf, wo me bityde !
 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 treieth ¹ ful manye.
 Wyves and widewes wantounes she techeth, ²
 And lereth ³ hem leccherye that loveth hire giftes.
 5 **Ȝowre fadre** she felled þow fals biheste,
 And hath apoysounde Popis, ⁴ and peired ⁵ Holi Cherche.
 Is nauzt a better baude, bi hym þat me made,
 Bitwene hevene and helle — in erthe though men souzte. . . .
 Sisoures ⁶ and sompnoures ⁷ — suche men hir preiseth ;
 10 Shireves of shires were shent gif 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 nouzte a russhe ;
 For she copeth ¹¹ þe comissarie, and coteth ¹² his clerkis ;
 She is assoilled ¹³ as sone as hirsself liketh,
 20 And may neize 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 selet ¹⁷ hire bulles.

She blesseth þise bisshopes, þeize þey be lewed,
 25 Provendreth persones, ¹⁸ and prestes meynteneth
 To have lemmannes and lotebies ¹⁹ alle here lifdayes,
 And bringen forth barnes aȝcin forbode ²⁰ lawes.
 There she is wel with þe kyng wo is þe rewme,

1 betrays

2 teaches to be

3 teaches

4 poisoned Popes

5 injured

6 jurymen

7 summoners

8 would be lost if it were not
for her

9 groats

10 top, head

11 provides a cope for

12 provides coats for

13 absolved

14 by herself

15 intimate

16 provisors (persons named
by the Pope for a living
not vacant)

17 seal

18 supports parsons

19 concubines

20 prohibitive

5. **Ȝowre fadre**: probably Edward II, father of Edward III (king at the time the first version was written).

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þanne goth Glotoun in, and grete othes after ;
 Cesse ¹ þe souteresse ² sat on þe benche,
 Watte þe warner ³ and hys wyf bothe,
 Tymme þe tynkere, and tweyne of his prentis,⁴
 5 Hikke þe hakeneyman,⁵ and Hughe þe nedeler,⁶
 Clarice of Cokkeslanc,⁷ and þe clerke of þe cherche,
 Dawe þe dykere,⁸ and a dozeinc other ;
 Sire Piers of Pridie, and Peronelle ⁹ of Flaundres,
 A ribibour,¹⁰ a ratonere,¹¹ a rakyer of Chepe,¹²
 10 A ropere,¹³ a redyngkyng,¹⁴ and Rose þe dissheres,¹⁵
 Godfrey of Garlekehithe,¹⁶ and Gryfin þe Walshe,¹⁷
 And upholderes ¹⁸ an hepe erly bi þe morwe
 Geven Glotoun with glad chere good ale to hansel.¹⁹
 Clement þe cobelere cast of ²⁰ his cloke,
 15 And atte new faire ²¹ he nempned ²² it to selle ;
 Hikke þe hakeneyman hitte ²³ his hood after,
 And badde Bette ²⁴ þe bochere ben on his side.
 þere were chapmen ychose þis chaffare to preise ²⁵ ;
 Whoso haveth þe hood shuld have amendes of þe cloke.
 20 Two risen up in rape,²⁶ and rouned ²⁷ togideres,
 And preised þese penyworthes apart bi hemselve ;
 þei couth nouzte bi her conscience acorden ²⁸ in treuthe,
 Tyl Robyn þe ropere arose bi þe southe,
 And nempned hym for a noumpere ²⁹ — þat no debate nere —

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 short for Cicely, or Cecilia | 11 rat-catcher | 20 off |
| 2 woman shoemaker | 12 street-sweeper of Cheap- | 21 at the new fair (to chaffer |
| 3 gamekeeper | side | at the new fair = to |
| 4 apprentices | 13 rope-maker | exchange) |
| 5 man who keeps horses for | 14 retainer | 22 named |
| hire | 15 dish-seller | 23 threw down |
| 6 needle-seller | 16 a region on the bank of | 24 Bartholomew |
| 7 a region occupied by women | the Thames where gar- | 25 appraise, value |
| of ill repute | lic was sold | 26 haste |
| 8 ditcher | 17 Welshman | 27 whispered |
| 9 a proverbial name for a gaily | 18 furniture-brokers | 28 agree |
| dressed, bold-faced woman | 19 as an earnest or pledge | 29 an umpire |
| 10 player on the rebeck | (to propitiate him) | |

1. 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 covenante þat Clement shulde þe cuppe fille,
 And have Hikkes hode hostellere,² and holde hym yserved³;
 And whoso repented rathest⁴ shulde arise after,
 And grete Sire Glotoun with a galoun ale.

þere was laughyng and louryng,⁵ and 'Let go þe cuppe!'
 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 foules.¹¹
 And whan he drowgh to þe dore, þanne dymmed his eighen;
 He stumbled on þe thresshewolde, an threwe¹² to þe erthe. 15
 Clement þe cobelere cauȝte hym bi þe myddel,
 For to lifte hym alofte, and leyde him on his knowes.¹³ . . .

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 accidie,¹⁴ 20
 þat he slepe Saterdag and Sondag til sonne ȝede¹⁵ to reste.
 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 5, 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

þanne come Sleuthe¹ al bislabered,² with two slymy eigen,
 ' I most sitte,' seyde þe segge,³ ' or elles shulde I nappe ;
 I may nouzte stonde ne stoupe, ne withoute a stole⁴ knele.
 Were I brouzte 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 roxed⁶ and rored, and rutte⁷ atte laste.
 ' What ! awake, renke⁸ ! ' quod Repentance, ' and rape⁹ þe to shrifte.'
 ' If I shulde deye bi¹⁰ þis day, me liste¹¹ nouzte to loke ;
 10 I can nouzte perfityly my Pater Noster, as þe prest it syngeth,
 But I can rymes of Robyn Hood, and Randolf Erle of Chestre,¹²
 Ac neither of owre Lorde ne of owre Lady, þe leste þat evere was made.

I have made vowes fourty, and forzete hem on þe morne ;
 I parfourned¹³ nevere penaunce, as þe prest me hizte,
 15 Ne ryzte sori for my synnes zet was I nevere ;
 And gif 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 þereon.

I visited nevere fieble men, ne fettered folke in puttes¹⁵ ;
 I have levere here an harlotrie,¹⁶ or a somer-game of souteres,¹⁷
 Or lesynges¹⁸ to laughe at, and belye my neighbore,
 þan al þat evere Marke made, Mathew, John, and Lucas ;
 25 And vigilies 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 þanne go to þe freres ;

1 sloth

2 bedabbled

3 creature

4 stool

5 belch

6 stretched himself

7 snored

8 man

9 hasten

10 within

11 would please

12 1181-1231

13 performed

14 offer any petitions

15 dungeons

16 a tale of harlotry

17 summer-game played by
shoemakers, consisting of
athletic sports, etc.

18 lying tales

19 I let pass, pay no heed to

11. Robyn Hood : the earliest mention of him.

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Heu michi, quod sterilem vitam duxi juvenilem !

' Repentestow þe nauȝte ? ' quod Repentance, and riȝte with þat he
swowned,

Til *Vigilate*,¹ þe veille,² fette³ water at his eyȝen,
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 rode.¹⁵
And ȝete wil I ȝelde aȝein¹⁶ — if I so moche have —
Al þat I wikkedly wan sithen I wytte hadde.
And þough my liflode 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 !'

PIERS THE PLOWMAN

Now is Perkyn²⁰ and his pilgrymes to þe plowe faren²¹ ;
To erie²² þis halve-acre holpyn hym manye.
Dikeres and delveres digged up þe balkes²³ ;
25 þerewith was Perkyn apayed,²⁴ and preysed hem faste.
Other werkemen þere were þat wrouȝten ful ȝerne,²⁵

¹ Cf. 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 plese Perkyn, piked up þe wedes.
 At heighe pryme¹ Peres lete þe plowe stonde,
 To oversen hem hymself ; and whoso best wrougte,
 He shulde be huyred þerafter, whan hervest-tyme come.

And þanne seten somme, and songen atte nale,²
 And hulpen erie his half acre with 'How! trolli-lolli!'
 'Now, bi þe peril of my soule!' quod Pieres al in pure tene³:
 'But ze arise þe rather,⁴ and rape⁵ zow to worche,
 Shal no greyne þat groweth glade zow at nede; 10
 And þough ze deye for dole, þe devel have þat reccheth⁶!'

Tho were faitoures⁷ aferde, and feyned hem blynde,
 Somme leyde here legges aliri,⁸ as suche loseles conneth,⁹
 And made her mone to Pieres, and preyde hym of grace:
 'For we have no lymes to laboure with, lorde, ygraced be ze! 15

Ac we preye for zow, Pieres, and for zowre plow bothe,
 þat God of his grace zowre grayne multiplie,
 And zelde zow of¹⁰ zowre almesse þat ze give us here;
 For we may nougte swynke ne swete, suche sikenesse us eyleth.'

'If it be soth,' quod Pieres, 'þat ze seyne, I shal it sone asspye! 20
 Ze ben wastoures,¹¹ I wote wel, and Treuthe wote þe sothe!
 And I am his olde hyne,¹² and higte hym to warne
 Which þei were in þis worlde his werkemen appeyred.¹³

Ze wasten þat men wynnen with travaille and with tene,
 Ac Treuthe shal teche zow his teme to dryve, 25
 Or ze 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 ze myzte 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 ze lyven, and in sleuthe —
 And al is þorw suffrance þat venjaunce zow ne taketh.
 5 Ac ances 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 bissch
 10 They shal have payne¹⁰ and potage, and make hemself at ese,
 For it is an unresonable religioun þat hath riȝte nouȝte of certeyne

PIERS THE PLOWMAN'S CREED

Among the poems which owe their origin to *Piers Plowman* is *Piers Plowman's Creed*, written by an unknown author soon after 1393. It runs through the mouth of an unlearned man who has got by heart the Paternoster and Ave Maria, and wishes also to know the Creed, and seeks a teacher. He applies in turn to the 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 will contribute to the expenses of the monastery. The man leaves them in great 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 the edition of 1553, but from Skeat's edition (E.E.T.S. 30) of MS. Camb. Trin. (R. 3. 15 (adopting Skeat's emendations without comment), which, though printed after 1553, he concludes to be based on a much earlier manuscript. The present selections embrace lines 98-137, 153-242, 420-42, 546-64, 719-61, and 77

' Alas! frere,' quap I þo,¹² ' my purpos is ifailed ;
 Now is my counfort acast.¹³ 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 thresh

² sheaves

³ lying, flattering

⁴ noon

⁵ till the next morning

⁶ substance

⁷ apostles

⁸ unless

⁹ license

¹⁰ bread, food

¹¹ has no established order

¹² then

¹³ cast away, lost

¹⁴ do you know no remedy?

¹⁵ teach

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I schal asoilen 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 ;
 And þeir Y parted him fro, wiþouten any peine ;
 In covenant þat Y come azen, Crist he me betauzte.³ . . .
 Þanne þouzt Y to frayne ⁴ þe first ⁵ of þis foure ordirs,
 And presede ⁶ to þe prechoures to proven ⁷ here wille.
 Ich hizede ⁸ to her house to herken of more,
 10 And whan Y cam to þat court, Y gaped aboute.
 Swich a bild ⁹ bold, ybuld opon erþe heizte,¹⁰
 Say ¹¹ I nouzt in certeine siþþe a longe tyme.
 Y zemedede ¹² upon þat house, and zerne ¹³ þeron loked,
 Whouz ¹⁴ þe pileres weren ypeynt and pulched ful clene,
 15 And queynteli icorven wiþ curiouse knottes,¹⁵
 Wiþ wyndowes well ywrouzt, wide up olofte.
 And þanne Y entrid in and evenforþ ¹⁶ went,
 And all was walled þat wone,¹⁷ þouz it wid were,
 Wiþ posternes in pryvytie ¹⁸ to pasen ¹⁹ when hem liste,
 20 Orchezardes and erberes ²⁰ evesed ²¹ well clene,
 And a curious cros craftly entayled,²²
 Wiþ tabernacles ²³ ytizt ²⁴ to toten ²⁵ all abouten.
 Þe pris ²⁶ of a plouzlond, of ²⁷ penyes so rounde,
 To aparaile ²⁸ þat pyler were pure ²⁹ lytel.
 25 Þanne Y munte ³⁰ me forþ þe mynstre to knowen,
 And awaytede a woon ³¹ wonderlie well ybeld,³²

1 absolve

2 no otherwise

3 he commended me to Christ

4 question

5 the Dominicans

6 pressed forward, hastened

7 make trial of

8 hied me

9 building

10 a height of earth, an elevation

11 saw

12 gazed attentively

13 eagerly

14 how

15 bosses

16 straight ahead

17 dwelling-place

18 private posterns

19 go out

20 gardens

21 bordered

22 carved

23 cells

24 fixed, arranged

25 spy

26 price

27 in

28 furnish forth, provide for

29 very

30 ventured

31 perceived a building

32 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 pikke,⁴
 Schynen wip schapen scheldes⁵ to schewen aboute,
 Wip merkes⁶ of marchauntes ymedled⁷ bytwene,
 Mo þan twenty and two twyes ynoubred.

þer is none heraud⁸ þat haþ half swich a rolle —
 Rigȝt as a rageman⁹ hadde¹⁰ rekned hem newe.

Tombes opon tabernacles tyld opon lofte,¹¹

Housed in hirnes¹² 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 goldbeten.¹⁵

þouȝ þe tax of ten ŷer 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 pilered and peynt and portred well clene,

20

All yhyled wip leed¹⁶ lowe to þe stones,

And ypaved wip peynt til¹⁷ iche poynte¹⁸ after oþer ;

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 aparaile þat place oo poynt til other ende.²⁵

þanne was þe chaptire-hous wrougt as a greet chirche,

Corven and covered, and queyntliche entayled,²⁶

1 side

2 beautifully

3 crockets

4 with many inscriptions

5 coats of arms wrought

6 symbols, badges

7 interspersed

8 herald

9 catalogue

10 MS. haþ

11 set up on high

12 enclosed in corners

13 cognizances

14 sanctified, consecrated

15 adorned with beaten gold

16 covered with lead

17 painted tiles

18 piece, bit

19 conduits

20 tin

21 lavers

22 latoun, a kind of brass

23 prepared

24 produce

25 would not fit out that place

one bit towards the other

end

26 sculptured

Wip semlich selure¹ yset on lofte,
As a Parlement Hous ypeynted aboute.

þanne ferd² Y into fraytour,³ and fond pere anoper,
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.

þanne walkede Y ferrer, and went all abouten,
And seȝ halles ful hyȝe, and houses full noble,
Chambers wip chymneyes, and chapells gaie,
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 gaie garites¹¹ and grete, and iche hole yglased,
15 And opere houses ynowe to herberwe þe queene;
And ȝet þise bilderes wilne beggen a baggful of wheate
Of a pure pore¹² man þat maie oneȝe¹³ paie
Half his rente in a ȝer, and half ben behynde.

þanne turned Y aȝen, whan Y hadde all ytoted,¹⁴
20 And fond in a freitour a frere 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 bopen his chekes, and his chyn wip a chol¹⁸ lollede,¹⁹
25 As greet as a gos-eye,²⁰ growen all of grece;
þat²¹ all wagged his fleche²² as a quyk myre.²³
His cope þat biclypped²⁴ him, wel clene²⁵ was it folden,
Of double worstede²⁶ ydyȝt,²⁷ doun to þe hele;

1 ceiling

2 went

3 the refectory

4 tables

5 furnished with benches

6 dormitory

7 provided

8 infirmary

9 MS. all

10 stern on a height

11 garrets

12 very poor

13 with difficulty

14 observed

15 as large as a tun

16 brimful

17 it hung

18 jowl

19 wagged about

20 goose-egg

21 so that

22 flesh

23 like a quagmire

24 covered

25 neatly

26 Cf. Chaucer, *Prolog.* 262

27 made

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Men myzte reken ich a ryb,¹ so reuffull² þey weren.
 His wiif walked him wiþ, wiþ a longe gode,³
 In a cutted⁴ cote⁵ cutted full heyze,
 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 zercs 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 sizede sore, and seide: 'Children, beþ stille.' . . .
 Loke nowe, leve¹² man, beþ nougt þise ilyke
 Fully to þe Farisens¹³ in fele¹⁴ of þise poyntes?
 Al her brod beldyng¹⁵ ben belded withe synne,
 15 And in worchipe of þe werlde her wynnynge þei holden.
 þei schapen her chapolories,¹⁶ and streccheþ hem brode,¹⁷
 And launceþ¹⁸ heize her hemmes wiþ babelyng¹⁹ in stretes;
 þei ben ysewed wiþ whigt silk, and semes full queynte,
 Ystongen²⁰ wiþ stiches þat stareþ as silver.
 20 And but²¹ freres ben first yset at sopers and at festes,
 þei wiln ben wonderly wroþ, ywis, as Y trowe;
 But þey ben at þe lordes borde, louren²² þey willeþ,
 He mot bygynne þat borde,²³ a beggere²⁴ — wiþ sorwe²⁵ | —
 And first sitten in se²⁶ in her synagoges,²⁷
 25 þat beþ here heyze hellehous of Kaymes²⁸ kynde;
 For þoug a man in her mynster a masse wolde heren,
 His sizt schal so be set on sundrye werkes,

1 count each rib

2 miserable, sorry-looking

3 goad

4 cut short

5 skirt, petticoat

6 a sheet used in winnowing corn

7 protect

8 storms

9 strip's

10 crumb-bowl

11 full of misery

12 dear

13 Pharisees

14 many

15 building

16 scapulars

17 Matt. 23. 5-7

18 fling

19 babbling

20 pricked through

21 unless

22 look sourly

23 sit at the head of the table

24 beggar that he is (perhaps with allusion to the begging friars)

25 bad luck to him

26 seat

27 churches

28 Cain's (CAIM = 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 lymgerde⁵ to drawen men to hell. . . .

þei usen russet⁶ also, somme of þis freres,
 þat bitokneþ travaile and trewþe opon erþe.
 Bote loke whou þis lorels⁷ labouren þe erþe,
 But freten⁸ þe frute þat þe folk full lellich biswynkeþ⁹;
 Wip travail of trewe 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 rygt as dranes¹⁴ doþ nougt but drynkeþ up þe huny,
 Whan been¹⁵ wiþe her bysynesse han brougt it to hepe,
 Rigt so fareþ freres wiþ folke opon erþe:
 þey freten up þe fu[r]ste froyt,¹⁶ and falsliche lybbeþ.
 But alle freres eten nougt ylich good mete, 15
 But after þat his wynnyng is, is his wellfare;
 And after þat he bringeþ home, his bed schal ben grayped¹⁷;
 And after þat his rychesse is raugt,¹⁸ he schal ben redy served.
 But see þiself in þi sigt whou somme of hem walkeþ
 Wip cloutede¹⁹ schon, and cloþes ful feble, 20
 Wel neig forwerd,²⁰ and þe wlon²¹ offe;
 And his felawe in a froke worþ swiche fiftene,²²
 Arayd in rede sc[h]on — and elles were reuþe²³ —
 And sexe copes or seven in his celle hongep.
 þouȝ for fayling of good his fellawe schulde sterve,²⁴ 25
 He wolde nougt lenen²⁵ him a peny his liif for to holden.
 Y migt tymen þo troiflarden²⁶ to toilen wiþ þe erþe,
 Tylyen,²⁷ and trewliche lyven, and her flech tempren!

1 pennons

2 pommels, bosses

3 divisions

4 darken, cloud

5 a limed twig

6 The Franciscans wore gray
habits originally, but later
russet-brown

7 good-for-nothings

8 devour

9 faithfully obtain by labor

10 build

11 MS. þe curious

12 fashion (?); buy (?)

13 according as

14 drones

15 bees

16 first-fruits

17 prepared

18 reached, obtained

19 patched

20 worn out

21 borders, hems

22 fifteen of such

23 a pity

24 die

25 lend, give

26 compel the triflers

27 till the ground

Now mot ich soutere ¹ his sone setten to schole,
 And ich a beggers brot ² on þe booke lerne,
 And worp to ³ 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 prese ⁴ to sitten,
 And lordes sones lowly to þo losells aloute ⁵;
 Knyztes croukep ⁶ hem to, and cruchep ⁷ full lowe;
 And his syre a soutere, ysuled ⁸ in grees,
 10 His teep wip toylinge of ⁹ leþer tatered as a sawe!
 Alaas! þat lordes of þe londe leveþ ¹⁰ swiche wrechen,
 And lenep ¹¹ swiche lorels for her lowe wordes!
 þey schulden maken bichopes her owen breþren childre,
 Oper of some gentil blod, and ¹² so it best semed,
 15 And foster none faytours, ¹³ ne swiche false freres,
 To maken fatt and full, and her fleche combren ¹⁴!
 For her kynde were more to yclense diches
 þan ben to sopers yset first, and served wip silver! . . .
 For Fraunces ¹⁵ founded hem nougt to faren ¹⁶ on þat wise,
 20 Ne Domynik ¹⁷ dued ¹⁸ hem never swiche drynkers to worþe,
 Ne Helye ¹⁹ ne Austen ²⁰ swiche liif 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

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Meteles,¹ so megre are thai made,
 And penaunce so puttes ham doun,
 That ichone is an hors-lade,²
 When he shal trusse of toun.³

Allas, that ever it shuld be so,
 Suche clerkes as thai about shuld go,
 Fro toun to toun by two and two,
 To seke thair sustynaunce!
 By God that al this world wan,
 10 He that that ordre first bygan
 Me thynk certes it was a man
 Of simple ordynaunce.⁴
 For thai have noght to lyve by,
 Thai wandren here and there,
 15 And dele with dyvers marcerye,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 tille.⁶
 For when the gode man is fro hame,
 And the frere 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 brewe ful thynne.

30 Somme frers beren pelure⁷ aboute,
 For grete ladys and wenches stoute,

¹ without meat
² horse load
³ pack out of town

⁴ regulation, rule of life
⁵ mercery (textile goods and
 small wares)

⁶ where they are accustomed
 to go
⁷ 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,
 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 half 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 cr he go.

Iche man that here shal lede his life,
 That has a faire doghter or a wyfe,
 Be war that no frer ham shryfe, 25
 Nauther loude ne stille.
 Thof women seme of hert ful stable,
 With faire byhest and with fable
 Thai can make thair hertes chaungeable,
 And thair likynges fulfillle. 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 soap

¹¹ mantle

¹² MS. then

Be war¹ ay with the lymytour,²
 And with his felawe bathe,
 And³ thai make maystries⁴ in thi bour,
 It shal turne the to scathe.⁵

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* (1. 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 leute.¹²
 15 With an O and an I men wenen that thai wede,¹³
 To carpe so of clergy that¹⁴ can not thair Crede.

Thai have done him on a croys fer up in the skye,
 And festned on hym wyenges, as he shuld fie ;
 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 (?)

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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.

Forthermore¹ thou spekest
 Of oure costli houses ;
 Thou seist it were more almes
 To helpen the nedy
 Than to make siche housynge
 To men that ben deede,
 To whiche longith² but graves
 And mornynge-housis.

10 Jak, is not a man betcr
 Than a rude best ?
 3it 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 :
 And⁵ thou answeere to my question,
 Answer to thin owne.

Thou carpist⁶ also of oure coveitise,
 And sparist the sothe ;
 25 Thou seist we ben more ryal⁷
 Than ony lordis.
 Coventis have wee noon, Jack,
 But cloistrers we ben callid,
 Foundid¹ afor⁸ with charite,

¹ MS. ff-
² belong, are fitting
³ sheep-cote

⁴ shelter
⁵ if
⁶ talkest

⁷ royal, regal
⁸ aforetime

Or that he were flemyd ¹ ;
 But sith ² entride envie,
 And revyd ³ hath oure houses,
 That unnethes ⁴ the hillinge ⁵
 Hangith on the sparres ⁶ ;
 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 rebukyng
 Lye 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 Rabelaisian 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.

An Old French poem similar in character is found in Barbazan and Méon's *Fabliaux et Contes* 4. 175–81, entitled *Li Fabliaus 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 tornant
 Tout par eles [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

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 years!

Our text is reproduced (120 lines out of 190) from Mätzner's *Altenglische Sprachproben* (i. 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;
 þoz Paradis be miri and brigte,
 Cokaygn is of fairir sigt.
 What is þer in Paradis
 Bot grasse, and flure, and grene ris⁶?
 þoz þer be joi and grete dute,⁷
 10 þer nis mete⁸ bote frute;
 þer nis halle, bure,⁹ no benche,
 Bot watir, manis þurst to quenche.
 Beþ þer no man but two —
 Hely¹⁰ and Enok¹¹ also;
 15 Elinglich¹² may hi go
 Whar þer wonip¹³ men no mo.
 In Cokaygne is met and drink
 Wipute care, how,¹⁴ and swink.¹⁵
 þe met is trie,¹⁶ þe drink is clere,
 20 To none, russin,¹⁷ and sopper.
 I sigge¹⁸ forsop, bote were,¹⁹
 þer nis lond on erthe is pere²⁰;
 Under heven nis lond, iwisse,²¹
 Of so mochil joi and blisse.
 25 þer is mani swete sigte:
 Al is dai, nis þer no nigte;

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

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Of cherche, cloister, boure, and halle ;
 þe pinnes ¹ beþ fat podinges —
 Rich met to princez and [to] kinges ;
 Man mai þerof et inoz
 Al wiþ riȝt, and noȝt wiþ woȝ ² :
 Al is commune to zung and old,
 To stoute and sterne, mek and bold.

10 þer is a cloister, fair and liȝt,
 Brod and lang, of sembli ³ siȝt.
 þe pilers of þat cloistre alle
 Beþ iturned of cristale,
 With har bas ⁴ and capitale
 Of grene jasper and rede corale.

15 In þe praer ⁵ is a tre,
 Swiþe likful ⁶ for to se :
 þe rote is gingevir and galingale ⁷ ;
 þe siouns ⁸ beþ al sedwale ⁹ ;
 Trie maces beþ þe flure ;
 þe rind, canel ¹⁰ of swet odor ;
 20 þe frute, gilofre ¹¹ of gode smakke ¹² ;
 Of cucubes ¹³ þer nis no lakke.

þer beþ rosis of rede ble, ¹⁴
 And lilie likful for to se —
 þai faloweþ ¹⁵ never day no niȝt ;
 25 þis aȝt be ¹⁶ a swete siȝt.
 þer beþ iiii willis ¹⁷ in þe abbei
 Of triacle ¹⁸ and halwei, ¹⁹
 Of baum ²⁰ and ek piement, ²¹
 Ever ernend ²² to riȝt rent ²³ ;
 30 Of þam ²⁴ stremis al þe molde. ²⁵

1 pinnacles

2 wrong

3 seemly

4 their base

5 meadow

6 very attractive

7 ginger and galingale (sweet
cyperus)

8 scions, shoots

9 zedoary

10 cinnamon

11 gillyflower

12 taste

13 cubeb (a pungent spice)

14 hue

15 fade

16 ought to be

17 wells

18 treacle (a medicine)

19 healing water

20 balm

21 spiced wine sweetened
with honey

22 running

23 profit

24 these ; MS. þai

25 earth, nom.

Stonis preciuse, and golde :
 þer is saphir and uniune,¹
 Carbuncle and astiune,²
 Smaragde,³ lugre,⁴ and prassiune,⁵
 Beril, onix, topasiune,⁶
 Ametist and crisolite,
 Calcedun and epetite.⁷

þer beþ briddes mani and fale⁸ —

þrostit, þruisse,⁹ and niȝtingale,
 Chalandre¹⁰ and wodwale,¹¹

10

And oþer briddes wiþout tale,¹²
 þat stinteþ¹³ never by har miȝt¹⁴
 Miri to sing dai and niȝt.

Ȝite I do ȝow mo to witte¹⁵ :

þe gees irostid on þe spitte
 Fleez¹⁶ to þat abbai, God hit wot,

15

And grediþ¹⁷ : 'Gees al hote, al hot !'

Hi bringeþ garlek gret plente,

þe best idiȝt¹⁸ þat man mai se.

þe leverokes¹⁹ — þat beþ cuþ²⁰ —

20

Liztiþ adun to manis muþ,

Idiȝt in stu²¹ ful swiþe wel,

Pudrid²² wiþ gilofre 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 briȝt,

To ȝive [þe] monkes more lizt.

When þe masses beþ iseiid,

30

1 pearl

2 astrion (*perhaps* asteriated sapphire)

3 emerald

4 ligure

5 chrysoprase

6 topaz

7 hepatitis

8 numerous

9 thrush

10 a Mediterranean species of lark ; see *Romance of the Rose* (81, 663), 914

11 woodpecker

12 number

13 cease

14 according to their ability

15 give you to know further

16 fly ; MS. fleeȝ

17 cry out

18 dressed

19 larks

20 well known

21 made into a stew

22 sprinkled

23 MS. geeþ

24 windows

And þe bokes up ileiid,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.E.T.S. Ex. 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.

*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 gossipis myn, [a!]

But I dare not, for þer dissplesans,⁶
 Tell of þes maters half the substance;
 But zet sumwhat of þer governance,⁷

15

As ferre as I dare,

I will declare,

Good gossipis 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

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' 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
 Till God more send,
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

Eche of them browght forth þer disshe ;
 Sum browght flesshe, and sum [browght] fische.
 Quod Margret meke now, with a wisshe :

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 jonkets¹ amonge
 Shall make us leve² long.
 Good gossippis [myn, a] !'

Anne bade me fill a pot of Muscadell,
 20 ' For of all wyne I love it well ;
 Swet wyne kepe my body in hele³ ;
 Yf I had it nowght,
 I shuld tak thowght,
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

25 ' 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. jonchettes

² live

³ health, well-being

' Wold God I had don after your counsell,
 For my husbond is so fell ¹
 He betith me lyke þe devill of hell ;
 And þe more I crye,
 þe lesse mercy,
 Good gossippis myn, a l '

Alis with a lowde voys spak than :
 ' Ywis, ²' she said, ' litill good he can,
 þat betith or striketh any womán,
 And specially his wyff ; 10
 God geve hym short lyff,
 Good gossippis myn, a l '

Margret meke said : ' So mot I thryve,
 I know no man þat is alyve
 þat gevith me ii strokis, but he [shall] ³ have v ; 15
 I am not afferd,
 Thowgh he have a berde,
 Good gossippis myn, a l '

On ⁴ cast down her shot, ⁵ and went away.
 ' Gossip,' quod Elynore, ' what dide she pay ?' 20
 ' Not but a peny ; loo, þerfor I say,
 She shall no more
 Be of owr lore, ⁶
 Good gossippis myn, a l

Suche gestis ⁷ we may have ynow, 25
 þat will not for þer shot alowe. ⁸
 With whom com she, gossip ?' ' With you !'
 ' Nay,' quod Johan,
 ' I com aloon,
 Good gossippis myn, a l' 30

¹ cruel² W ; MS. evis³ W.⁴ one⁵ contribution, share⁶ school, sort⁷ guests⁸ provide

' Now rekyn owr shot, and go we hens ;
 What cummeth to eche of us ? ' ' But iii pens.¹ '

' Parde, pis is but a small expens
 For suche a sorte,
 And all but sporte,
 Good gossipis myn, a ! '

' Torn down þe stret, whan ye cum owt,
 And we will cumpas rownd abowt. '

10 ' Gossip, ' quod Anne, ' what nedith þat dowt ? ²
 Your husbond is pleased,
 Whan ye be eased,
 Good gossippis myn, a !

15 Whatsoever any man thynk,
 We com for nowght but for good drynk ;
 Now let us go home and wynke,
 For it may be seen
 Wher we have ben,
 Good gossippis myn, a ! '

20 This is þe thought þat gossippis take :
 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 !

25 Sum be at þe tavern þrise ³ in þe weke,
 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^o

⁴ for things one is accustomed
 to cannot be done without

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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 ;
 Wype clene thi sponne, 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 sponne, 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.

20 And wharesoever that thou dyne or soupe,
 Of gentillesse 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 out
² jaws
³ fitting
⁴ sops
⁵ soiled

⁶ defile ; MS. enbrewe (em.
 from Lambeth MS.)
⁷ table-linen
⁸ em. from Lamb.
⁹ MS. stryfe

¹⁰ should spill over
¹¹ MS. the to (em. from Lamb.)
¹² begin
¹³ according to
¹⁴ em. from Lamb.

CHARM FOR THE TOOTHACHE

From MS. Linc. Cath. Thornton A. 1. 17, printed in Horstman's edition of Richard Rolle, 1. 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
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 10
With oure Lady and hir x maydenys,
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 15
Bot awaye mote þou wende
To þe crde⁹ 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.T.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 preciouise medycinis, þorw Goddis grace

1 till
2 charming
3 loathsome
4 by

5 Longus, or Longinus, the Roman soldier
who pierced the side of Christ
6 apostles
7 God forbid

8 delay (resting)
9 earth
10 stone
11 medicine

380 ILLUSTRATIONS OF LIFE AND MANNERS

To save mens¹ lyves in diverse place.
 Cryst, þat made bothe Est and West,
 Geve grace her sowles have² god rest,
 Evere more in hevene for to be,
 In hevene wyt þe Trinite!

Herinne be medycinis, wythoutyn fable,
 To hele alle sores þat ben curable,
 Of swerd, of knyf, and of arwe³ —
 Be þe wounde wyde or narwe —
 10 Of sper,⁴ of quarel,⁵ of dagger, of dart,
 To make him hool in ilka⁶ part,
 So þe seek⁷ wol do wysely,
 And kepe himself fro surfety.
 Be þe wounde nevere so deep,
 15 þerof thar⁸ him take no kep,
 So þat he drynke save⁹ or anteoche,¹⁰
 Him thar⁸ not drede of þat outrage:
 Be¹¹ þat on and twenti days be goon,
 He schal be hol, both flesch and bon,
 20 To ride and go in ilka¹² 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 countree:
 In þis werld¹⁵ were non her¹⁶ pere,
 As fer as any man coude here.

¹ MS. men

² may have

³ arrow

⁴ spear

⁵ a short, square-headed arrow

⁶ every; MS. ylke, S. ilka

⁷ if the sick man

⁸ he need; MS. dar, S. thar

⁹ sage

¹⁰ a medicinal potion of herbs
 boiled in white wine and
 honey

¹¹ by the time

¹² MS. ylka, S. ilka

¹³ Hippocrates

¹⁴ Galen

¹⁵ MS. weld

¹⁶ their

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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 furryd 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 debtours or elles,³ I beqweth it to Jonet, my wyfe, to governe and susteyne with, hir and Elianore my dough-
tre, 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, nouȝt amenysynge⁴ gretely here lyflode 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,⁵ with myn owen honde, in witnesse of my laste wille, and ensealede with my seal.

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 Englund,

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 ; *ff* 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 Southe, 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 prince 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 (?)

⁵ the admiralty

⁶ the Straits of Dover

⁷ In 1416

⁸ MS. V¹⁰

⁹ MS. founde

¹⁰ war

¹¹ MS. kept

And to the kyng thus he seyde : ' My brothere ' —
 Whan he perceyved too townes, Calys ¹ and Dovere —
 ' Of alle youre townes to chese of one and othere,
 To kepe the see, and sone to come overe
 To werre oughtwardes, ² and youre regne to recovere,
 Kepe these too townes, sire, to ³ youre mageste
 As youre tweyne eyne, ⁴ to kepe the narowe see.'

For if this see be kepte in tyme of werre,
 Who cane here passe withought daungere and woo ?
 10 · Who may eschape, who may myschef dyfferre ⁵ ?
 What marchaundye ⁶ may forby be agoo ⁷ ?
 For nedes hem muste take truse ⁸ every foo —
 Flaundres, 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 eye ⁹ thys conclusionne,
 For concyens, and for myne acquytyng
 Ayenst God, and ageyne abusyon
 And cowardyse, and to oure enmyes confusionne ;
 20 For iii thynges our noble ¹⁰ sheueth to me —
 Kyng, shype, and swerde, and pouer of the see.

Where bene oure shippes, where bene oure swerdes, become ¹¹ ?
 Owre enmyes bid for the shippe sette a shepe.
 Allas ! oure reule halteth, hit is benome ¹² ;
 25 Who dare weel say that lordeshyppe shulde take kepe ¹³ ?
 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 see. ¹⁵

¹ Calais² outwards, in foreign lands³ MS. and⁴ eyes⁵ postpone⁶ merchandise⁷ be carried past⁸ make terms (with Eng-
land)⁹ to the eye¹⁰ the gold coin called the
noble¹¹ what has become of¹² taken away¹³ heed¹⁴ prosper¹⁵ guard the circuit of the
Channel

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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 lynen cloothe.

But ye Flemmyngis, yf ye be not wrothe,
The grete substaunce of youre cloothe, at the fulle,
Ye wot ye make hit of oure³ Englissh wolle. . . .

The Janueys⁴ comyne in sondre wyses
Into this londe, wyth dyverse marchaundyses,
In grete karrekis,⁵ arrayde wythouten lake
10 Wyth clothes of golde, silke, and pepir blake
They bringe wyth hem, and of wood⁶ grete plente,
Woole-oyle, wood-aschen,⁷ by vessels⁸ 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 Flaundes wyth suche thynges as they bye,
That is here¹¹ cheffe staple sykerlye¹²;
And if they wolde be oure fulle ennemyse,
20 They shulde not passe our stremez with merchaundyse. . . .

The grete galees¹³ of Venees and Florence
Be wel ladene wyth thynges of complacence,¹⁴
Alle spicerye and¹⁵ grocers ware,
Wyth swete wynes, alle manere of chaffare,
25 Apes, and japes,¹⁶ and marmusettes taylede,¹⁷
Nifles,¹⁸ trifles, that litelle have auailede,
And thynges wyth whiche they fetely¹⁹ blere²⁰ oure eye,
Wyth thynges not enduryng that we bye —
For moche of thys chaffare that is wastable
30 Mighte be forborne, for²¹ 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 Gilds* (E.E.T.S. 40. 49-50).

In honore Sancti Leonardi confessoris. In þe worchep of God allemyghti, 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 Seynt Jame of Lenn, in þe worchep of God and of Seynt Leonard, on candelle of i li.³ 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 Leonard,⁵ ob.,⁶ in þe worchep of God and Seynt Leonard. Alleso it is ordeyned, be on assent of þe brethren, to have foure morspeches⁷ in þe zere. Þe firste shal bene þe Moneday neste aftir þe forseide 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 worchep of God; and also foure men for to reseyyven and kepyn þe katel⁹ of þe gilde; and also on certayne oficere to warnyn alle þe brethren to comyn to chirche; and also on clerke, to wryten þe katel of þe gilde. Þe secunde morspeche shal bene aftir þe Purificacioun of our Levedy.¹⁰ Þe thred, aftir þe feste of Phelip and Jacob.¹¹ Þe fourte, aftir þe feste of Seynt Petre *Ad Vincula*.¹² Alleso it is ordeyned, be on assent of þe brethren, be als mechil as¹³ þe lyght fornseide 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 oficere to warnyn alle þe bretheryn and sisteryn 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

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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. **Ȝ**e fe 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 com-
 5 pany shal ben gadered togedir and helpyn hym. **Ȝ**e fe 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 costages.⁵ And if any broþir dye within þe iiii 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 our lord þe kinges wille.

1 at sea
 2 MS. goodes
 3 dispensation

4 bury him
 5 at their own expense
 6 bury

7 but that
 8 lose

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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,
 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[e]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 wole 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
 25 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 bush
 2 hedge
 3 clothed
 4 cover

5 sweet
 6 MS. had (em. Skeat)
 7 dark blue (indigo)
 8 sky-blue

9 From Thynne's edition,
 and so the next lines
 10 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,
 The tyme is than so faverous.³
 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 teü
 Tant com il ont le froit eü,
 Et le tens divers et frarin,
 Sunt en Mai, por le tens serin,
 Si lié qu'il monstrent en chantant
 Qu'en lor cuer a de joie tant,
 Qu'il lor estuet chanter par force.
 Li rossignos lores 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
 Por le tens bel et doucereus.
 Moult a dur cuer qui en Mai n'aime, 15
 Quant il ot chanter sus la raime
 As oisiaus les dous chans piteus.

¹ a kind of lark (a Mediterranean species)

² parrot, popinjay

³ favorable

THE RIVER AND THE GARDEN

Toward a ryver gan I me dresse ¹
That I herd renne fast[e] by ;
For fairer plaiyng non saugh I
Than playen me by that ryvere,
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 morowtyde,⁹
And ful attempre,¹⁰ out of drede.
Tho gan I walk thorough the mede,
Dounward ay in my pleiyng,
25 The ryversyde costeiying.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 direct

² From Thynne, and so next lines

³ smaller

⁴ pleased

⁵ washed

⁶ glistening

⁷ sweet

⁸ adjoined (*lit.* beat upon)

⁹ morning

¹⁰ mild

¹¹ coasting, skirting

¹² carved

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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. li. 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 distroyede nor deceivede nat hemself with outrage.⁴ They weren wont lightly to slaken hir hunger at even with acornes of okes. [6-10] They
 5 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 brighte fleeses of the contree of Seriens⁸ with the venim⁹ of Tyrie¹⁰; *this is to seyn, they coude nat deyen whyte fleeses of Serien
 10 contree with the blode of a maner shelfisshe that men finden in Tyrie, with whiche blood men deyen 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 clariouns ful hust¹² and ful stille, ne blood yshad by egre¹³ hate ne hadde nat deyed

¹ contented, satisfied

² kinds of food

³ faithful

⁴ excess

⁵ mingle, mix; MS. medly

⁶ wine mixed with honey (*usually spiced wine*)

⁷ wine mixed with honey, and then clarified

⁸ Chinese

⁹ dye

¹⁰ Tyre

¹¹ cut

¹² silent, hushed

¹³ 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 bren-
 neth in folk more cruely than the fyr of the mountaigne Ethna, *that ay* 5
brenneth. [27-30] Allas! what was he that first dalf⁶ up the gobetes⁷
 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; forwhy⁸
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 hevene? The whiche dignitees and
 powers, yif they comen to any wikked man, they don as grete
 damages and destrucciouns 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 inertī 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
 Vellet prior arma 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 inscii cælo exæquatis? Quæ si in improbissimum quemque ceciderunt quæ flammis Ætnæ eructuantibus, quod diluvium tantas strages dederint?

20 Trēowa wæstmas hī ton and wyrta; nalleæs scīr wīn hī ne druncan,
 nē nanne wætan hī ne cūpon wið hunige mēngan, nē seolocēnra hrægla
 mid mistlicum blēowum hī ne gīndon. 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 nānne sciphere.

25 And hī æne on dæge æton symle
 On æfentīd eorþan wæstmas,
 Wudes and wyrta; nalles wīn druncon
 Scīr of stēape. Næs þā scealca nān
 þe mete oððe drinc mængan cūðe,
 30 Wæter wið hunige, nē heora wæda þon mā
 Sioloce siowian, nē hī siarocræftum
 Godweb giredon, nē hī gimreced
 Setton searolice, ac hī simle him
 Eallum tidum ūte slēpon

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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.

What sholde it han avayled 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 grobbe 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 bynde with a roop his tunge? Whethir 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 bynde 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
 disseyve hym ; and in the sixt of alle men he schal be cast doun. . . .

¹ MS. batails trompes

² fight

³ MS. dirkenesse

⁴ basket

Who schal schewe the face of his clothing, and who schal entre into
 the myddis of his mouth? Who schal opene the gatis of his cheer¹?
 ferdfulnesse² is bi the cumpas of hise teeth. His bodi is as gotun³
 scheldys of bras, and joyned togidere with scalis overleiynge hemsilf.⁴
 Oon is joyned to another, and sotheli brething goith not thoroug 5
 tho.⁵ Oon schal cleve to anothir, and tho holdynge hemsilf schulen
 not be departid.⁶ His fnesynge⁷ is as schynyng of fier, and hise
 igen⁸ ben as igelidis of the morewtid.⁹ 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 boilynge. His breeth 10
 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 clevyng togidere to hemsilf; God schal
 sende floodis¹² azens hym, and tho schulen not be borun to another
 place. His herte schal be maad hard as a stoon; and it schal be 15
 streyned¹³ togidere as the anefeld¹⁴ of a smith. Whanne he schal be
 takun awei, aungels schulen drede; and thei, aferd, schulen be purgid.¹⁵
 Whanne swerd takith hym, it may not stonde, nethir spere, nether
 haburjoun.¹⁶ For he schal arette irun as chaffis, and bras as rotun tre.
 A man archere schal not dryve hym awei; stoonys of a slyngge ben 20
 turned into stobil to hym. He schal arette¹⁷ an hamer as stobil,¹⁸ and
 he schal scorne a florischnge¹⁹ spere. The beemys of the sunne
 schulen be undur hym; and he schal strewe to hymself gold as cley.
 He schal make the depe se to buyle as a pot; and he schal putte²⁰
 as whanne oynementis buylen. A path schal schyne aftir hym; he 25
 schal gesse²¹ the greet occian as wexynge eld. No power is on erthe
 that schal be comparisound to hym, which is maad that he schulde
 drede noon. He seeth al hig thing; he is kyng over alle the sones
 of pride.

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 *flumina*

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 govun to hym power on ech fleisch, that al thing that thou hast govun to hym, he gyve to hem
5 everlastynge liif. And this is everlastynge liif, 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 govun 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 govun to me of the world; thei weren thine, and thou hast govun hem to me, and thei han kept thi word.

REVELATION 14

And Y sai, and lo! a Lomb stood on the mount of Sion, and with hym an hundrid thousynde and foure and fourti thousynde, havynge
15 his name, and the name of his Fadir, writun in her forhedis. And Y herde 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 senyouris;
20 and no man mihte seie the song but thei, an hundrid thousynde and

¹ glorify

² with; Lat. *apud*

³ glory

⁴ throne

1. **thingis**: cf. the Old English of verses 1-3:

Ðæs þing se Hælend spræc, and āhōf ūpp his ēagan tō heofenum, and cwæð: 'Fæder, tīd ys cumen; geswutela þinne Sunu, þæt þīn Sunu geswutelige þē; and swā þū him sealdest anweald ælces mannes, þæt he sylle ēce lif eallum þām þe þū him sealdest. Ðis ys sōþlice ēce lif, þæt hī oncnāwon þæt þū eart ān sōþ God, and se þe þū sendest, Hælynde Crīst.'

Tyndale has:

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 geven hym power over all fleshe, that he shulde geve eternall life to as many as thou hast geven him. This is life eternall, that they myght knowe the, that only very God, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ.'

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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 vyngerd
 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 vyngerd of the erthe, and sente into the greet lake of Goddis wraththe. 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 Miserere 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 ðese michele unrihtwisnesse.

A.D. 1300-1350

Bülbring, *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.

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 iuel bidene,
 And of mi sinne þou klens me klene.
 For mi wicke[d]nes I knaw þat I am inne,
 And ai ogain me es mi sinne.

ABOUT 1388

Wycliffe

God, have thou merci on me, bi thi greet merci; and bi the mychil-
 nes of thi merciful doynge do thou awei my wickidnesse. More 10
 waische thou me fro my wickidnesse, and clense thou me fro my
 synne. For Y knouleche my wickidnesse, and my synne is evere
 ageyns me.

ABOUT 1460

Political, Religious, and Love Songs (reprint of E.E.T.S. 15), pp. 279–80

Mercy, God, of my mysdede,
 For þi mercy þat mychel ys; 15
 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, 20
 And never after do² more amys.
 And after þi mercies þat ben fele,³
 Lord, fordo my wickydnese;

¹ cry

MS. to do

³ many

Ȝyve me grace to hyde and hele
 The blame of my bruchelnesse.
 Ȝif any sterynge¹ on me stele
 Out of þe clos of þi clennesses,
 Wysse me, Lord, in wo and weele,
 And kepe me fram unkyndnesse.

Moreover, wasche me of my synne,
 And of my gultes clense þow me ;
 And serche my soule without and inne,
 10 That I no more defowlid be.
 And as þyn hert aclef atwynne²
 With doleful deth on þe rode-tre,
 Late me never no werke bigynne,
 Lord, but-ȝif³ it lyke þee.

15 For al my wickidnesse I knowe,
 And my synne is ever me aȝeyn ;
 Therefore late þi grace growe,
 Jesu, þat was with Jewis sleyn.
 Ryches 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 greates 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

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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 Fornsete, 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 !
Growep³ sed, and blowep⁴ med,⁴
And springp⁵ pe wde⁵ nu.
Sing, cuccu !
Awe⁶ bletep⁶ after lomb,
Lhoup⁷ after calve cu ;
Bulluc stertep,⁸ bucke vertep⁹ ;
Murie¹⁰ sing, cuccu !
Cuccu ! cuccu !
Wel singes þu, cuccu ;
Ne swik¹¹ þu naver¹² nu.

10

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 *pedit* (Lat.)
10 merrily
11 cease
12 never

SPRING

About 1310. From Böddeker, *Altenglische Dichtungen des MS. Harl. 2253*, pp. 164-5.

Lenten ys come wiþ love to toune,¹
 Wiþ blosmen and wiþ briddes roune,²
 þat al þis blisse bryngeþ ;
 Dayesezes³ in þis⁴ dales,
 Notes suete of nyhtegales ;
 Uch foul song singeþ.
 The prestelcoc him þreteþ⁵ oo⁶ ;
 Away is huere⁷ wynter woo,
 When woderove⁸ springeþ.
 þis foules singeþ ferly fele,⁹
 Ant wlyteþ¹⁰ on huere wynter wele,¹¹
 þat al þe wode ryngেþ.

þe rose rayleþ¹² hire rode¹³ ;
 The leves on þe lyhte¹⁴ wode
 Waxen al wiþ wille.¹⁵

þe mone mandeþ¹⁶ hire bleo¹⁷ ;
 þe lilie is lossom¹⁸ to seo,
 þe fenyl¹⁹ and þe fille.²⁰
 Wowes²¹ þis wilde drakes ;
 Miles²² murgeþ²³ huere makes,²⁴
 Ase strem þat strikeþ²⁵ stille.
 Mody²⁶ meneþ,²⁷ so doþ²⁸ mo²⁹ ;
 Ichot Ycham³⁰ on of þo,
 For love þat likes ille.³¹

10

15

20

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 'leves')
 15 eagerly
 16 sends forth
 17 color
 18 lovely
 19 fennel
 20 chervil
 21 woo

22 animals (so Mätzner)
 23 delight
 24 mates
 25 flows
 26 disconsolate ones? (cf. Shakespeare, *King John* 4. 1. 15-16)
 27 lament
 28 MS. 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 ;
 Deores ⁴ w[r]ip 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 3ef 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 Böddeker, p. 174

15 When þe nyhtegale singes,
 þe wodes waxen grene,
 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 goodly

2 gaily

3 wet

4 animals

5 divulge ; cf. Chaucer,
Compl. Mars 91 ; *T.*
and C. 2. 537

6 their secret communings

7 sentiments to express

8 clod

9 bescem, become

10 if I shall fail to have
my will of one

11 MS. wunne

12 weal

13 forego

14 bold (?)

15 forest

16 fugitive

17 a

18 Wright (*Spec. Lyr. Poetry*,
p. 92), me

19 distress, anguish

20 sighed

21 sweetheart

22 indulgence

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ALISON

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 147-8. Translation in Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp. 308-9.

*An hendy hap Ichabbe yhent*¹ ;
*Ichot*² *from hevene it is me sent ;*
*From alle wymmen mi love is lent,*³
*And lyht*⁴ *on Alysoun.*

Bytuene Mersh and Averil,
 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 ynöh,
 Hire browe broune, hire ege blake ;
 15 Wip lossun chere¹¹ he on me loh¹² ;
 Wip middel¹³ smal and wel ymake.¹⁴
 Bote¹⁵ he me wolle 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 waxeþ 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 checks

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
 Wery so⁶ water in wore.⁷
 Lest eny reve⁸ me my make,
 Ychabbe yzerned⁹ zore.¹⁰
 Betere is þolien whyle sore¹¹
 þen mournen evermore. 10
 Geynest¹² under gore,¹³
 Herkne to my roun.¹⁴

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 wise
 2 neck
 3 maid
 4 yearning
 5 overwatched
 6 as

7 weir (?)
 8 rob
 9 yearned
 10 long
 11 to suffer sorely for a time
 12 loveliest

13 in body (*lit.* under gore, i.e.
 under garment)
 14 lay, song
 15 storms
 16 dispelled
 17 aloft

BLOW, NORTHERN WIND

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 168-71

*Blow, northerne wynd,
Send¹ þou me my suetyng!
Blow, norþerne wynd,
Blou! blou! blou!*

Ichot² a burde³ in boure bryht,
þat fully semly is on syht,⁴
Mensful⁵ maiden of myht,
Feir ant fre⁶ to fonde⁷;
In al þis wurhliche won,⁸
10 A burde of blod and of bon
Never gete Y nuste⁹ non
Lussomore¹⁰ in londe.

Wip lokkes lefliche¹¹ and longe,
Wip frount¹² and face feir to fonde,
15 Wip murþes 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.

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Heo is coral of godnesse,
 Heo is rubie of ryhtfulnesse,¹
 Heo is cristal of clannesse,²
 Ant baner of bealte³ ;
 Heo is lilie of largesse,⁴
 Heo is paruenke⁵ of prouesse,
 Heo is selsecle⁶ of suetnesse,
 Ant ledy of lealte.⁷ . . .

10 .
 For hire love Y carke ant care,
 For hire love Y droupne⁸ ant dare,⁹
 For hire love my blisse is 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 Bøddeker, pp. 149-50

Wip 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 rouþe¹⁶ 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
 Sone, er þou me slo⁵ —
 My reste is wiþ þe ro.⁶
 þah men to me han onde,⁷
 To love nul y noht wonde,⁸
 Ne lete⁹ for non of þo.¹⁰ 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 dege 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

Lylie-whyht 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 loose

2 relief, assuagement

3 MS. sent

4 message

5 slay

6 roe (a type of restlessness ;
cf. Virgil, *Æn.* 4. 69 ff.)

7 jealousy

8 will I not cease

9 leave off

10 them

11 alighted

12 honor

13 guide

14 appointed

15 believe (imp.)

16 promised

17 she

18 complexion

19 spray

20 deprives

21 prudent

22 splendor

Brihtest under bys¹;
 Hevene Y tolde² al his
 þat o³ nyht were hire gest.⁴

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 *Reliquiæ Antiquæ* 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
 All oneli for my ladys sake,
 When I hir se⁵;
 But now I am so ferre from hir,
 Hit will nat be.

10 Thogh I be long out of hir⁶ sight,
 I am hir⁶ man both day and night,
 And so will be;
 Wherfor wold God as I love hir
 That she lovid me!

15 When she is mery, then am I glad;
 When she is sory, then⁷ am I sad;
 And cause whi—
 For he livith nat that lovith hir
 So⁸ well as I.

20 She sayth that she hath seen hit wreten
 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

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DEBATE OF THE CLERIC AND THE MAIDEN

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 172-3. Cf. below, p. 476

' My deþ Y love, my lyf Ich hate,
 For a levedy shene¹;
 Heo is briht² so³ daies liht,
 þat is on me wel sene.
 Al Y falewe⁴ so doþ þe lef,
 In somer when hit is grene;
 Ʒef⁵ mi þoht⁶ helpeþ me noht,
 To wham shal Y me mene⁷?

10 Sorewe and syke⁸ and drery mod⁹
 Byndeþ me so faste
 þat Y wene to walke wod,¹⁰
 Ʒef hit me lengore laste;
 My serewe, my care, al wip a word
 He¹¹ myhte away caste;
 15 Whet helpeþ þe, my suete lemmon,
 My lyf þus forte gaste¹²?'

20 ' Do wey, þou clerc, þou art a fol,
 Wip þe bydde¹³ Y noht chyde;
 Shalt þou never lyve þat day
 Mi love þat þou shalt byde.¹⁴
 Ʒef þou in my boure art take,
 Shame þe may bityde;
 þe is bettere on fote gon
 þen wycked hors to ryde.'

1 fair

2 MS. brith (em. B.)

3 as

4 wither, fade

5 if

6 pondering

7 bemoan myself

8 sighing

9 temper, state of mind

10 insane

11 she

12 ruin

13 must

14 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 dege for þi love,
 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
 Wip 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 dep 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 blype — 20
 In a wyndou þer ¹⁴ we stod,
 We custe us ¹⁵ fyfty sype. ¹⁶
 Feir biheste ¹⁷ makeþ mony mon
 Al is ¹⁸ serewes mythe. ¹⁹ '

' Weylawey ! 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 stop

³ watched, spied upon

⁴ by

⁵ they will fail not

⁶ because of any sin involved

⁷ slay

⁸ mayst

⁹ change

¹⁰ show, inflict upon

¹¹ just as

¹² unhappy

¹³ formerly

¹⁴ where

¹⁵ kissed each other

¹⁶ times

¹⁷ promise

¹⁸ his

¹⁹ lose

²⁰ passionately

He nes nout blype never a day
 Bote¹ he me sone² seze³;
 Ich lovede him betere þen my lyf—
 Whet bote⁴ is hit to leze⁵?’

‘ Whil Y wes a clerç 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 clerç,
 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;
 Penalopee, and Marcia¹⁸ Catoun,
 25 Mak of your wyfhod no comparisoun;

1 unless
 2 soon
 3 saw
 4 good
 5 lie
 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

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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,
 Ordanis he still for to dwell,
 To ¹ time he think to fight.

Now God, þat es of mightes maste,
 Grant him grace of þe Haly Gaste
 His heritage to win !
 10 And Mari moder, of mercy fre,
 Save oure king and his menze ²
 Fro sorow, and schame, and syn !

þus in Braband has he bene —
 Whare he bifore was seldom sene —
 15 For to prove ³ þaire japes ;
 Now no langer wil he spare,
 Bot unto Fraunce fast will he fare,
 To confort him with grapes.⁴

Furth ⁵ he ferd into France ;
 20 God save him for mischance,
 And all his cumpany !
 þe nobill duc of Braband
 With him went into þat land,
 Redy to lif 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 ferde.⁴
 þe right aire⁵ of þat cuntre
 Es cumen, with all his knightes fre,
 To schac him by þe berd.

Sir Philip þe Valayse,⁶
 Wit his men in þo dayes,
 To batale had he thoght :
 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 morni[n]g 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
 Stalwortly, with spere and schelde,
 And thoght to win his right,
 With lordes, and with knightes kene,
 And oþer doghty men bydene,¹¹
 þat war ful frek¹² to fight. 30

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
 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 pavilyoune ;
 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 bigin.

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. R.⁸ 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

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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.

Whil schip and rothur togeder was knit,
 Thei dredde nother tempest, druyze,² nor wete,
 Nou be thei bothe in synder flit,³
 That selden seize is sone forzete.

Scharpe wawes⁴ that schip has sayled,
 10 And sayed⁵ alle sees⁶ at aventur ;
 For wynt⁷ ne wederes⁸ never hit fayled,
 Wil⁹ the roothur miht enduir.¹⁰

Thoug the see were rouz, or elles dimuuir,¹¹
 Gode havenes that schip wold geete.¹²
 15 Nou is that schip, I am wel suir,¹³
 Selde iseye and sone forzete.

This good schip I may remene¹⁴
 To the chivalrye of this londe ;
 Sum tyme thei counted nougt a bene¹⁵
 20 Be¹⁶ al Fraunce, Ich understonde.
 Thei toke and sloug hem with her wonde¹⁷ —
 The power of Fraunce, bothe¹⁸ smale and grete ;
 And brougt the kyng hider to byde her bonde¹⁹ ;
 And nou riht sone hit is forzete.

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 charge.²¹
 And to that schip ther longed²² a barge,

1 rudder
 2 drought
 3 removed asunder
 4 waves
 5 braved
 6 seas
 7 wind
 8 storms

9 while
 10 endure
 11 calm
 12 attain
 13 sure
 14 compare
 15 bean
 16 by ; MS. beo

17 rod, sceptre
 18 MS. bethe
 19 fetters
 20 secure
 21 moment
 22 belonged

Of al Fraunce gaf¹ nougt a cleete.²

To us hit was a siker targe³ ;
And now riht clene hit is forȝete.

The rother was nouth^{er} ok ne elm,
Hit was Edward the Thridde, the noble kniht ;
The prince his sone bar up his helm,
That never scoumfited⁴ was in fiht.
The kyng him rod and rouwed⁵ ariht,
The prince dredde nouth^{er} stok nor streete.⁶
Nou of hem we lete ful liht⁷ ; 10
That selden is seize 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 lete.¹²
Nou is that lord ful lowe ileyd ;
That selde is seize is sone forȝete.

This gode comun^{es},¹³ bi the rode, 20
I likne hem to the schipes mast ;
That with heore catel¹⁴ and with heore goode¹⁵
Mayntened the werre¹⁶ both furst and last.
The wynd that bleuz the schip with blast,
Hit was gode preȝeres, I sey hit atrete¹⁷ ; 25
Nou is devoutnes out icast,
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 sorry, now that ye be light,
That certes, but ² ye make me hevy chere,
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 ⁵ 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 !

15 Now purs, that be ¹⁰ to me my lyves ¹¹ light,
And saveour, ¹² as doun in this worlde here,
Out of this toune help me through your might,
Sin ¹³ that ye wole nat been my tresorere ;
For I am shave ¹⁴ as nye ¹⁵ 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
15 close

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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 life
 Than is a zong man withoutyn a wyfe;
 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 lyzt² be husbondmen,³
 Whan thei at the balle ren⁴;
 They cast hyr love to zong[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
² 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
 And trouthe the shal delyvere — it is no drede.¹³

Tempest¹⁴ the¹⁵ noight 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 crowd

2 truth

3 subj.

4 hoarding

5 instability

6 the throng of courtiers

7 prosperity

8 blinds

9 everywhere

10 relish, care for

11 suit, fit

12 direct

13 there is no fear

14 torment

15 thyself

16 Fortune

17 fuss, worry (cf. Isa. 30. 15)

18 awl (cf. Acts 9. 5)

19 crock, earthen pot

20 conquer

21 submission

22 to obtain

23 calls for, invites

24 Cf. Heb. 11. 9, 10; 13. 14

25 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); cf. the somewhat different version in Bøddeker, *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 Thaïs,
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 Payne as follows:

Tell me, where, in what land of shade,
Hides fair Flora of Rome? and where
Are Thaïs and Archiapade,
Cousins german in beauty rare?
And Echo, more than mortal fair,
That when one calls by river flow,
Or marish, 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.

Were bep þey [þat]¹ biforen us weren,
Houndes ladden and havekes beren,
And hadden feld and wode?

¹ Cf. B.

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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?
 Ector, wiþ his scharpe meyne,⁴
 And Cesar, riche of wor[l]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 reupe¹¹ 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 brae, 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 *Cursor 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
 Ich teche þe enne⁷ treowe King.

A l 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 muþ;
 Alle heo beoþ to¹⁶ his honde,
 Est and west, norþ and suþ.
 Henri, King of Engelonde,
 Of hym he halt,¹⁷ and to hym buþþ.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 weli²⁵ man.

1 peer; cf. 420 n
 2 pride
 3 vanished
 4 herring
 5 longest
 6 lover
 7 a
 8 knew
 9 qualities

10 countenance
 11 delight
 12 (?)
 13 thou wouldst need; MS. þurhte
 14 put
 15 grace
 16 in
 17 holds
 18 bows

19 message; MS. schonde
 20 asks
 21 people
 22 particolored fur
 23 gray fur
 24 a kind of cloth
 25 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.

Hwat⁵ spekestu of eny bolde⁶
 þat wrouhte þe wise Salomon?
 Of jaspe, of saphir, of merede⁷ golde,
 And of mony onoper ston?
 Hit is feyrure of feole volde⁸
 10 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 haþ gete¹⁰ a dignyte of nougt,
 15 Erþe upon erþe haþ sett al his þougt,
 How þat erþe upon erþe may be hig¹¹ brougt.

Erþe upon erþe wold he be a king;
 But how erþe schal to erþe þenkiþ he noþing;
 Whanne þat erþe biddiþ erþe hise rentis hom bring,
 20 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

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Lo I 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 hertili þinke,
 And how þe erþe out of þe erþe schal have his azenrisyng,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 wrougt,
 While þat þou, erþe, art upon erþe, turne aȝen þi þougt,
 And praie to þat God upon erþe þat al þe erþe haþ wrougt,
 þat þou, erþe upon erþe, to blis may be brougt.

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 hig 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 rewlid my rechelees⁷ mynde,
 Bi wiede⁸ waies as Y hadde went,
 A solempne citee me fortunèd to fynde;
 'To turne þerto was myne entent.
 A maiden Y mette, a modir hynde,⁹
 Sobbinge and sizynge, sche was neer schent¹⁰;

¹ resurrection; MS. -risynge

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 :
Filius Regis mortuus est.

' The Kingis Sone,' sche seide, ' is deed,
 þe joie, þe substaunce of my liif² ;
 þe modir to se hir Sone so blede,
 It kittip⁸ myn herte as with a knyf. 10
 My Sone þat Y was woont to fede,
 To lulle, to lappe, with songis riif⁴ —
 Out of his herte his blood to schede
 Makip me, his modir, in myche striif.⁵
 I am boþe maiden, modir, and wiif, 15
 Sones⁶ have Y no mo to souke my brest ;
 I may make sorewe without reliif,
 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 fynd.
 Upon an hyll than toke I hede ;
 A voise I herd — and nere⁷ I yede⁸ —
 In gret dolour complaynyng tho :
 ' See, dere soule, my sydes blede, 25
Quia amore languet.'

¹ tore
² MS. liife
⁸ cuts

⁴ rife
⁵ MS. striife
⁶ MS. and sones

⁷ nearer
⁸ approached

Upon thys mownt I fand a tree ;
 Undir thys tree a man sitting ;
 From hede to fote wowndyd was he,
 Hys hert-blode I saw bledyng ;
 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 languet.*

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 precieuse ;
 She flytt,³ I folowyd ; I luffed her soo
 15 That I suffred thes paynes piteuouse,
Quia amore languet.

HE BARE HIM UP

About 1500 (or earlier). From MS. Oxford Balliol 354, as printed by Flügel in *Anglia* 26. 175-6 (slightly different in his *Neuenglisches Lesebuch* 1. 142), with *b* for MS. *y*. The knight is of course Jesus Christ.

*Lully, lulley, lully,⁴ lulley,
 þe fawcon hath born my make⁵ away.*

20 He bare hym up, he bare hym down,
 He bare hym into an orchard browne.

In þat orchard þere was an halle
 þat was hangid with purpill and pall.

And in þat hall þere was a bede⁶ ;
 Hit was hangid with gold so rede.

¹ distress
² provided

³ fled
⁴ MS. lulley (em. F.)

⁵ mate
⁶ bed

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In Augoste, in a hyȝ¹ seysoun,
 Quen corne is corven² wyth crokez³ kene.
 On huyle⁴ þer perle hit trendeled⁵ doun
 Schadowed⁶ þis wortez⁷ ful schyre⁸ and schene⁹ —
 Gilofre,¹⁰ gyngure,¹¹ and gromylyoun,¹²
 And pyonys¹³ powdered¹⁴ ay bytwene.
 Ȝif hit watz semly on to sene,
 A fayr reffayr¹⁵ 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 saȝt.²⁴
 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 wylle in wo ay wraȝte.³¹
 I felle upon þat floury flaȝt,³²
 20 Suche odour to my hernez³³ schot ;
 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 balke³⁷ þer bod³⁸ in sweven³⁹ ;

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 fragrance

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 imparted

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 þer¹ mervaylez² meven.³
 I ne wyste in þis worlde quere þat hit wace,⁴
 Bot I knew me keste⁵ þer klyfez⁶ cleven⁷;
 'Towarde a foreste I bere⁸ þe face,
 Where rych rokkez wer to dyscreven.⁹
 Þe lyzt of hem myzt no mon leven,¹⁰
 Þe glemande¹¹ glory þat of hem glent¹²;
 For wern never webbez þat wygez weven¹³
 Of half so dere adub[be]mente.¹⁴

10

Dubbed¹⁵ wern alle þo downez sydez¹⁶
 Wyth crystal klyffez so cler of kynde.¹⁷
 Holte-wodez¹⁸ bryzt aboute hem bydez¹⁹
 Of bollez²⁰ as blwe²¹ as ble of ynde²²;
 As bornyst sylver þe lef onslydez,²³
 Þat þike con trylle²⁴ on uch a tynde²⁵
 Quen²⁶ glem of glodez²⁷ agaynz hem glydez;
 Wyth schymeryng schene²⁸ ful schrylle²⁹ þay schynde.
 Þe gravayl þat on grounde con grynde³⁰
 Wern precious perlez of Oryente;
 Þe sunnebemez bot blo and blynde³¹
 In respecte of³² þat adubbement.

15

20

The adubbemente of þo downez dere
 Garten³³ my goste³⁴ al greffe forzete;
 So frech flavorz³⁵ of frytez³⁶ were
 As fode hit con me fayre refete.³⁷

25

1 where
 2 marvels
 3 move
 4 was
 5 myself to be set down
 6 cliffs
 7 stand fast
 8 turn
 9 to be descried
 10 believe
 11 resplendent
 12 gleamed
 13 people weave

14 splendid array
 15 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

Fowlez ¹ þer flowen ² in fryth ³ in fere,⁴
 Of flaumbande hwez,⁵ boþe smale and grete ;
 Bot sytole-stryng ⁶ and gyternere ⁷
 Her reken ⁸ myrþe mozt not retrete ⁹ ;
 For, quen þose bryddez her wynggez bete,
 þay songen wyth a swete asent ¹⁰ ;
 So grac[i]os gle ¹¹ coupe no mon gete
 As here and se her adubbement.¹²

10 So al watz dubbet on dere asyse ¹³ ;
 þat fryth þer ¹⁴ fortwne forth me ferez ¹⁵ ;
 þe derþe ¹⁶ þerof for to devyse
 Nis no wyg ¹⁷ worþe ¹⁸ þat tonge berez.
 I welke ¹⁹ ay forth in wely ²⁰ wyse ;
 No bonk ²¹ so byg ²² þat did me derez.²³
 15 þe fyrre ²⁴ in þe fryth, þe fei[r]er con ryse
 þe playn, þe plonttez,²⁵ þe spyse,²⁶ þe perez,²⁷
 And rawez ²⁸ and randez ²⁹ and rych reverez ³⁰
 As fyldor ³¹ fyn her bonkes brent.³²
 I wan ³³ to a water by schore þat scherez ³⁴ ;
 20 Lorde, dere watz hit ³⁵ adubbement !

The dubbemente of þo derworth ³⁶ depe ³⁷
 Wern bonkez ³⁸ bene ³⁹ of beryl bryzt ;
 Swangeande ⁴⁰ swete þe water con swepe,
 Wyth a rownande ⁴¹ rourde ⁴² raykande ⁴³ aryzt ;

1 birds
 2 flew
 3 woodland
 4 together
 5 flaming colors
 6 citole-string
 7 player on the cithern
 8 lively
 9 reproduce
 10 harmony
 11 joy
 12 beauty
 13 manner
 14 where
 15 transports

16 glory
 17 person
 18 worthy
 19 walk
 20 happy
 21 hill
 22 difficult
 23 as to cause me annoyances
 24 further
 25 plants
 26 spicy shrubs
 27 pear-trees
 28 hedges
 29 borders of streams
 30 rivers

31 thread of gold (Fr. *fil d'or*)
 32 steep
 33 made my way
 34 runs swiftly by
 35 its
 36 rare
 37 deep stream
 38 banks
 39 pleasing
 40 rushingly (?)
 41 murmuring
 42 voice
 43 moving forward

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Forþy¹ I þoȝt þat paradyse
 Watz þer over gayn² þo bonkez brade³;
 I hoped⁴ þe water were a devyse⁵
 Bytwene myrþez⁶ by merez⁷ made;
 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 fayr 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 rere.²⁹
 25 At þe fote þerof þer sete a faunt,³⁰
 A mayden of menske³¹ ful debonere;

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 wherefore | 11 city (referring to the New Jerusalem) | 21 a new matter |
| 2 over against; MS. oþer gayn | 12 placed | 22 stirred |
| 3 broad | 13 I yearned | 23 mind |
| 4 supposed | 14 lovelier | 24 overcome |
| 5 division | 15 stumble | 25 saw |
| 6 pleasure-gardens | 16 ford | 26 lovely |
| 7 boundary-lines | 17 seek | 27 reflecting much light |
| 8 stream | 18 dangers | 28 royal |
| 9 slope | 19 hesitate | 29 leap |
| 10 dale | 20 fair | 30 young person (OF. <i>enfant</i>) |
| | | 31 decorous bearing |

Blysnande ¹ whyt watz hyr bleaunt ² —
 I knew hyr wel, I hade sen hyr ere ³ —
 As glysnande ⁴ golde þat man con schere,⁵
 So schon þat schene ⁶ anunder schore.⁷
 On lenghe ⁸ I loked to hyr þere,
 þe lenger I knew hyr more and more.

The more I frayste ⁹ hyr fayre face,
 Her fygure fyn, quen I had fonte,¹⁰
 Suche gladande ¹¹ glory con to me glace ¹²
 As lyttel byfore þerto watz wonte. 10
 To calle hyr lyste ¹³ con me enchace,¹⁴
 Bot baysment ¹⁵ gef myn hert a brunt ¹⁶ ;
 I sez hyr in so strange a place,
 Such a burre ¹⁷ mygt make myn herte blunt.¹⁸
 þenne verrez ¹⁹ ho up her fayre frount,²⁰ 15
 Hyr vysayge whyt as playn yvore,
 þat stonge myn hert ful stray ²¹ atount,²²
 And ever þe lenger, þe more and more.

More þen me lyste my drede aros ;
 I stod ful styлле and dorste not calle, 20
 Wyth ygen open and mouth ful clos ;
 I stod as hende ²³ as hawk in halle.
 I hope ²⁴ þat gostly ²⁵ watz þat porpose ²⁶ ;
 I dred onende ²⁷ quat schulde byfalle —
 Lest ho me eschaped þat I þer chos,²⁸ 25
 Er I at steven ²⁹ hir mozt stalle.³⁰

¹ gleaming
² tunic (OF. *bliaut*)

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 smope, so smal, so seme² slygt,³
 Rysez up in hir araye ryalle,
 A prec[i]os pyece⁴ in perlez pygt.⁵

Perlez pygte of ryal prys⁶
 þere mozt 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 Upon¹¹ at sydez, and bounden bene¹²
 Wyth þe myryeste margarys,¹³ at my devyse,¹⁴
 þat ever I sez zet with myn yzen;
 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 zet²² wer²³ þat gyrlle,
 Of marjorys²⁴ and non oþer ston,
 Hize pynakled of cler quyt perle,
 20 Wyth flurtd²⁵ flowrez perfet²⁶ upon.
 To hed²⁷ hade ho non oþer herle²⁸;
 Her here-leke²⁹ al hyr umbegon.³⁰
 Her semblaunt³¹ sade for doc oþer erle,³²
 Her ble³³ more blagt³⁴ þen whallez bon³⁵;

1 radiant one

2 modest

3 slight

4 creature, thing

5 arrayed

6 excellence

7 sweet one

8 did betake herself

9 forthwith

10 fine linen; MS. hir beauniys (?)
(em. Osgood)

11 open

12 pleasingly

13 pearls

14 in my opinion

15 loose folds

16 adorned

17 kirtle

18 of the very same fashion

19 bordered

20 set with jewels

21 crown

22 besides

23 wore

24 figured

25 perfectly wrought

26 on her head

27 fillet; MS. werle

28 locks of hair (?); MS.
lere leke

29 encircled

30 countenance

31 demure enough to suit
duke or earl

32 complexion

33 white (bleached)

34 Ivory is called whale's
bone in ME.

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Wel watz me þat ever I watz bore,
To sware ¹ þat swete in perlez pyzte!

'O perle,' quod I, 'in perlez pyzt,
Art þou my perle þat I haf playned,²
Regretted ³ by myn one,⁴ on nyzte?
Much longeyng haf I for þe layned,⁵
Syþen into gresse ⁶ þou me aglyzte ⁷;
Pensyf, payred,⁸ I am forpayned,⁹
And þou in a lyf of lykyng ¹⁰ lyzte,¹¹
10 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 yzen graye,
Set on hyr coroun of perle orient,
And soberly after þenne ²⁵ con ho say:
'Sir, ze 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 lenge ²⁹ for ever and play,
þer mys nee mornyng ³⁰ com never nere ³¹;
25 Her were a forser ³² for þe, in faye,³³
If þou were a gentyl jueler.

1 answer
2 lamented
3 grieved for
4 by myself
5 kept silent about
6 the sod (grass)
7 slipped away
8 worn
9 overcome with pain
10 pleasure
11 arrived

12 the country of paradise
13 unmolested
14 fate
15 jewel
16 brought; MS. vayned
17 sorrow; MS. þys del
18 since
19 in twain
20 drawn
21 torn apart
22 precious

23 turned
24 face
25 straightway
26 heeded ill
27 enclosed so beautifully
28 delightful
29 tarry
30 where sin nor mourning
31 MS. here
32 treasure-chest
33 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 busyез þe³ aboute a raysoun bref⁴;
 For þat þou lestez⁵ watz bot a rose
 þat flowred and fayled⁶ as kynde hyt gef⁷;
 Now, þurȝ kynde of þe kyste⁸ þat hyt con close,⁹
 To a perle of prys hit is put in pref.¹⁰
 And þou hatz called þy wyrde a þef,¹¹
 þat oȝt of noȝt¹² hatz mad þe cler,¹³ 10
 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 15
 My grete dystresse þou al todrawez.²¹
 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 20
 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 25
 ' Wy borde³¹ ȝe men, so madde 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.
 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 rygt here;
 þe þrydde, to passe þys water fre —
 10 þat may no joyfol jueler. . . .’

‘ In blysse I se þe blypely blent,⁷
 And I a man al mornyf⁸ mate⁹;
 Ze take þeron ful lyttel tente,¹⁰
 þax I hente¹¹ ofte harmez hate.¹²
 15 Bot now I am here in your presente,¹³
 I wolde bysech wythouten debate
 Ze wolde me say in sobre asente¹⁴
 What lyf ze lede erly and late;
 For I am ful fayn¹⁵ þat your astate¹⁶
 20 Is worþen¹⁷ to worschyp and wele, iwysse;
 Of alle my joy þe hyze gate,¹⁸
 Hit is in grounde¹⁹ of alle my blysse.’

‘ Now blysse, burne,²⁰ mot þe bytyde,²¹
 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 hyze pryde,
 I hete²³ þe, arn heterly²⁴ hated here.

1 one time

2 ill considered

3 knowest not

4 at all

5 a single one means (*lit.*
does mean)

6 valley

7 joyously mingled

8 mournful

9 dejected

10 heed

11 experience

12 burning

13 presence

14 compliance

15 glad

16 condition

17 is turned

18 road

19 at the basis

20 sir

21 that one, lovely of limb
and face

22 temper

23 assure

24 bitterly

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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 þin ³ Godric,
 Onfang,¹ bring hehlic ⁴ wið þe in Godes ric.⁵

Sainte Marie, Cristes bur,⁶
 Maidenenes clenhad,⁷ moderes flur,⁸
 Dilie ⁹ mine sinne, rixe ¹⁰ in min mod,
 Bring me to winne ¹¹ 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 fote 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.

Sainte Nicholæs, Godes druð,
 Tymbre⁵ us faire scone⁶ hus —
 At þi burth, at þi bare —
 Sainte Nicholæs, bring us wel þare.⁷

I SIGH WHEN I SING

About 1310. From Bøddeker, pp. 210-2

I syke⁸ when Y singe,
 For sorewe þat Y se,
 When Y wiþ wypinge⁹
 Biholde upon þe tre, 10
 Ant se Jesu, þe suete,
 Is¹⁰ herte-blod forlete¹¹
 For þe love of me.
 Ys¹⁰ woundes waxen wete;
 þei wepen stille and mete¹²; 15
 Marie rewep þe.

1 so
 2 led
 3 should
 4 tread

5 build
 6 beautiful
 7 there
 8 sigh

9 weeping
 10 his
 11 lose
 12 gently

Heze upon a doune,¹
 þer al folk hit se may,
 A mile from þe² toune,
 Aboute þe midday,
 þe rode is up arered ;
 His frendes aren afered,
 Ant clyngeþ⁸ so⁴ þe clay.
 þe rode stont⁵ in stone ;
 Marie stont hire one,⁶
 10 Ant seiþ ' Weylaway ! '

When Y þe biholde
 Wiþ eyzen bryhte bo,⁷
 Ant þi bodi colde,
 15 þi ble⁸ waxeþ blo⁹ ;
 þou hengest al of blode
 So heze upon þe rode,
 Bituene þeves tuo.
 Who may syke more ?
 Marie wepeþ sore,
 20 Ant siþ¹⁰ al þis wo.

þe naylles beþ to stronge,
 þe smyþes are to sleye¹¹ ;
 þou bledest al to longe,
 þe tre is al to heyze.
 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 hill
 2 MS. uch (em. B.)
 8 shrink up
 4 like

5 stands ; MS. stond
 6 by herself
 7 both
 8 color

9 livid
 10 MS. siht (em. B.)
 11 sly

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þat Ic mote¹ come to þe,
Maria.

Of kare² conseil³ þou ert best,
Felix, fecundata ;

Of alle wery⁴ þou ert rest,
Mater honorata.

Bisek him wip⁵ 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 peccatrice,

15 Tyl our Lord was ybore
De te genitrice ;

With *Ave*⁶ it went away —
þuster⁷ nyht — and comet[h] þe day
Salutis ;

20 þe welle springeth ut of þe
Virtutis.

Levedi, flour⁸ of alle þing,⁹
Rosa sine spina,

þu bere¹⁰ Jesu, hevne King,
Gratia divina ;

25 Of alle þu berst þe pris,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 wot ¹ he is þi Sone,
Ventre quem portasti;
 He wyl nout werne ² þe þi bone,³
Parvum quem lactasti;
 So hende ⁴ and so god he is,⁵
 He havet[h] brou[h]t ous to blis
Superni
 þat havez hidut ⁶ þe foule put ⁷
Inferni.

STAND WELL, MOTHER, UNDER ROOD

About 1310. From Bøddeker, pp. 206–8

' Stond wel, moder, under rode, 10
 Byhold ⁸ þy Sone wiþ glade mode;
 Blyþe, moder, myht ⁹ þou be!'
 ' Sone, hou shulde Y blyþe stonde?
 Y se þin fet, Y se þin honde,
 Nayled to þe harde tre.' 15

' Moder, do wey ¹⁰ þy wepinge;
 Y þole ¹¹ deþ for monkynde,
 For my gult þole Y non.'
 ' Sone, Y fele þe dede-stounde ¹²;
 þe suert is at myn herte grounde ¹³ 20
 þat me byhet ¹⁴ Symeon.'

' Moder, merci, let me deye,
 For Adam out of helle [to] beye,
 Ant his kun, þat is fcllore.'

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.'

' 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,
Ȝef Y ne dege, þou gost to helle;
Y þole ded for þine sake.'

20 ' Sone, þou art so meke and mynde,¹³
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

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AS I RODE

About 1310. From Böddeker, 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;
 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 bysechyngc;
 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-longyngc;
 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 counseileþ and helpeþ best
 Boþe elde and gyngc⁷;
 Nou Y may, gef Y wole,
 þe fif joyes myngc.⁸

þe furst joie of þat wymman⁹ —
 25 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 bicomme man,
 Ant of hire be bore,
 And bringe up of helle pyn
 Monkyn ¹ þat wes forlore.

þat oþer ² joie of þat may
 Wes o ³ Cristesmasse day,
 When God wes bore, on þorwe ⁴ lay,
 Ant brohte us lyhtnesse ⁵ ;
 þestri ⁶ wes seie ⁷ byfore day,
 þis hirdes ⁸ bereþ wytnesse. 10

þe þridde joie of þat levedy —
 þat men clepeþ þe Epyphany,
 When þe kynges come, wery,
 To presente hyre Sone
 Wip myrre, gold, and encenz, 15
 þat ⁹ wes Mon bicomme.

þe furþe joie we telle mawen —
 On Estermorewe, w[h]en ¹⁰ hit gon dawen,¹¹
 Hyre sone, þat wes slawen,
 Aros in fleysh 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, leve ¹⁴ us alle wip 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
 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 canticam,
 [*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 bryzt,
 To hem apperyd wyth gret lyzt,
 And seyde: 'Goddys Sone is born this nyzt;
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 Eng-
 lish Lyrics*)

⁷ MS. as yn Scripturas (em.
 C. and S.)

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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
He cam also⁴ styll
þere⁵ his moder was
As dew⁶ in Aprylle
þat fallyt on þe gras;
He cam also styll
10 To his moderes bowr
As dew in Aprille
þat fallyt on þe flour;
He cam also styll
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. e. 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 nyxt I saw a syxt 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,
 I am so wo begone ;
 Slep I [w]old, butt I am colde,
 And clothys have I none.'

Me thouȝt 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
 Thyrti 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 ȝeffe my fleshe to bote.⁹

Here shall I be hanged on a tre, 25
 And dye, as it is skyl ¹⁰ ;
 That I have bouȝt leese ¹¹ wyll I nouȝt ;
 It is my Faders will.

¹ other
² MS. syȝth
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 ?

Withouten pety² her shall aby,³
 And mak my fleshe all blo.⁴
 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 Flügel in *Angl.* 26. 243-5 (cf. *Neueng. Lesebuch*, pp. 117-9), with *b* for MS. *y*. See 554 24 ff.

10 *Can I not syng but 'Hoy!'*
 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.

20 The shepard upon a hill was layd ;
 Hys doge to hys gyrdyll was tayd.⁷
 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

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' 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.

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 hope⁶ and syng,

For⁶ 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 *b* and *-st(e)* for *-st(e)*; it is otherwise carelessly written (*wid* for *wib*, *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.'

Hit wes upon a Scere þorsday þat ure Loverd aros ;

20 Ful milde were þe wordes he spec to Judas :

1 (?) ; MS. scrype (em. Flügel)

2 scrip ; MS. skyrte (em. Flügel)

3 MS. ffor

4 am called

5 hop

6 birth

7 rush

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 azeynes 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 ;
Þritti 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 meizt imete.⁵'

Imette wid is soster,⁶ þe swikele⁷ wimon.

' 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,
Þritti 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 heizte²³ Pilatus.

' Wolte sulle²⁴ þi Loverd, þat hette²⁵ Jesus?'

' I nul²⁶ sulle my Loverd for nones cunnes eigte,²⁷
Bote hit be for þe þritti platen þat he me bitaizte.²⁸' 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 golde? '
 ' Nay, bote hit be for þe platen þat he hebben wolde.'

In him ¹ com ur Lord gon, as [h]is postles seten at mete.
 ' Wou ² sitte ye, postles, ant wi nule ye ete?'

5 [Wou sitte ye, postles, ant wi nule ye ete?]
 Ic am ibougt ant isold to-day for oure ³ mete.'

Up stod him Judas: ' Lord, am I þat?
 I nas never o þe stude ⁴ þer me ⁵ þe evel spec. ⁶'

Up him stod Peter, ant spec wid al is mihte:
 10 ' þau ⁷ Pilatus him come wid ten hundred cnigtes,

[þau Pilatus him com wid ten hundred cnigtes,]
 Yet Ic wolde, Loverd, for þi love fihte.'

' Still þou be, Peter! wel I þe icnowe ⁸;
 þou wolt fursake me þrien ⁹ 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 servyd him of bred and cloþ,¹⁰ as every kyng befalle.

Stevyn out of kechone cam, wyth boris hed on honde;
 He saw a sterre was fayr and brygt 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: Mätzner (*Altengl. Sprachproben* 1. 114) suggests *wrech* after this word; but would the *c* of *spec* be palatal?

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CHAUCER, INVOCATION TO VENUS

Troilus and Criseyde 3. 1-14, which is translated from Boccaccio's *Filostrato*
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 uccei, le fiere, i pesci con eterno
Vapor ti senton 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
In gentil hertes ay redy to repaire ;
O verray cause of hele³ and of gladnesse,
Yheried⁴ be thy might and thy goodnesse !

In hevene and helle, in erthe and salte see
Is felt thy might, if that I wel descerne ;
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 lyves⁷ creature,
Withouten love, is worth, or may endure.

10

¹ that of Venus
² gracious
³ well-being

⁴ praised, exalted
⁵ inspiration

⁶ forbid
⁷ living

CHAUCER, INVOCATION TO THE TRINITY 475

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 circoscritto, e tutto circoscrive.

Thou oon, and two, and three, eterne onlyve,¹
That regnest ay in three and two and oon,
Uncircumscrip, and al mayst circumscrive,
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!

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 450, 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 Dinis, signify nothing; (b) Mome Elwis 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 OE. *eald*, old. Elwis, or Helwys, points to the eastern part of England, where there occur such family-names as Helwys and Elwes.

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

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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 better¹ be!
 For þe Hy sory² nicht and day;
 Y may say, 'Hay,³ wayleuay!'
 Y luf þe mar⁴ þan mi lif;
 þu hates me mar þan gayt⁵ dos cnif⁶ —
 þat es nou⁷tt for mysgilt.⁸
 10 Certes,⁹ for þi luf ham Hi spilt.¹⁰
 A, suyte¹¹ 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 *Maid.* By Crist of hevene, and Sant Jon¹⁷!
 Clerc of scole ne kep¹⁸ I non,
 For many god wymman haf þai don scam[e] —
 By Crist, þu michtis haf be¹⁹ at hame²⁰!
 20 *Cler.* Syn²¹ it n[on] opir²² gat²³ may be,
 Jesu Crist²⁴ bytech²⁵ Y þe,
 And send[e]²⁶ neulic²⁷ bot²⁸ tharinne,
 þat Y²⁹ be lesit³⁰ of al my pine.³¹
Maid. Go nu, truan,³² go nu, go,
 For mikel þu canst³³ of sory and wo!

1 MS. bether

2 sorrow

3 alas

4 more

5 goat; MS. yajt (gajt?)

6 knife; MS. chuief (em. Heuser)

7 not

8 misdeed

9 MS. certhes

10 undone

11 sweet; MS. suythe

12 Cf. 146 12

13 MS. y mod (em. H.)

14 MS. efne

15 Cf. 146 11

16 cry

17 MS. Jone

18 care for

19 been

20 Cf. 147 6

21 MS. synt

22 MS. nopir; cf. 480 10

23 way

24 dat.

25 commend; MS. bytethy (em. H.)

26 may he send

27 soon; MS. neulit (em. H.)

28 amendment, help

29 MS. yi

30 freed

31 woe

32 vagabond

33 MS. canstu

SCENE II

l.

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 hautes⁸ scole;

Y led⁹ my lif wyt mikel dole¹⁰;

Me wor lever to be ded¹¹

þan led the lif þat Hyc led,¹²

For an¹³ mayden wit¹⁴ and schen¹⁵ —

Fayrer ho¹⁶ lond hav¹⁷ Y non sen.¹⁸

10

Ȝo¹⁹ 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,

15

Neuly Crist my ded me send[e]²³!

Men send²⁴ me hyder, wytuten²⁵ fayle,

To haf þi help an[d] ty cunsayle.²⁶

þarfor am Y cummen here,

þat þu salt be my herandbere,²⁷

20

To mac me and þat mayden sayct,²⁸

And Hi sal gef þe of myn ayct,²⁹

So þat hever, al þi lyf,

Saltu be þe better³⁰ wyf;

¹ bless; cf. 148 4

² aunt; MS. mome (see note 5)

³ Cf. 148 10

⁴ come

⁵ MS. mome (mone rhymes with sone, 'soon,' in Gower, *Conf. Am.* 1. 97)

⁶ conceal

⁷ nothing; MS. noth

⁸ frequent

⁹ lead; MS. lydy

¹⁰ Cf. 148 17-18

¹¹ MS. dedh

¹² MS. ledh

¹³ MS. ay

¹⁴ white; MS. with

¹⁵ beautiful

¹⁶ on, in

¹⁷ MS. haw

¹⁸ MS. syen

¹⁹ she: MS. yo

²⁰ is named

²¹ whom

²² gracious

²³ opt.

²⁴ they (one) sent

²⁵ MS. vyt-

²⁶ Cf. 149 1-2

²⁷ messenger

²⁸ at one; cf. 150 8

²⁹ property

³⁰ richer

So help me Crist — and ¹ Hy may spede,
 Riche ² saltu haf þi mede! ³
Mone ⁴ *Ellwis*. A, son, wat ⁵ saystu? Benedicite ⁶!
 Lift hup þi hand, and blis þe!
 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 5⁴ MS. mome⁵ MS. vat⁶ *Pross.* bencitee; cf. 149 7⁷ both⁸ old⁹ quean¹⁰ Cf. 149 10-13¹¹ anger; MS. love (em. suggested by H.; cf. *grome*, 149 11)¹² distaff¹³ Cf. 149 21-23¹⁴ MS. scynnes¹⁵ MS. þink¹⁶ MS. kync¹⁷ grant¹⁸ lie have lied¹⁹ MS. onne me²⁰ holy; cf. 149 19²¹ one

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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 herself 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, *Noë*, 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 Kölbing 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

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 blynne.⁶

Manne that I made I will destroy,
Beast, worme, and fowle to flie,
For on earthe 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 hartfullie ¹ —
 The malyce that now ² can ³ multeply —
 That sore it greveth me inwardlie
 That ever I made mon.⁴

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. anoynte⁸ MS. all thy⁹ Gen. 6. 14¹⁰ MS. breadeth¹¹ MS. 50¹² measure¹³ take¹⁴ Gen. 6. 16¹⁵ slay¹⁶ Gen. 6. 16-18

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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;
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,⁸
And for to dight[e]⁴ your dynner,
Against [that] yow come in.⁶

10

*Then NOYE begineth 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.

20

Of this tree will I make the mast,
Tyde with cables¹¹ that will last,
With a sayleyarde for each blast,
And each thinge in ther kinde;

25

With topcastle and bowspreet,¹²
With coardes and ropes, I have all meete
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

⁸ all (*lit.* in company)

⁴ make ready

⁵ MS. adds: Tunc faciunt
signa quasi laborarent
cum diversis instru-
mentis

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. OE. *sprēot*

¹³ wet, rain

¹⁴ MS. adds: Tunc Noe iterum,
cum tota familia, faciunt
signa laborandi cum di-
versis instrumentis

[*God.*] Of beastes uncleane two and two,
 Male and female, without moe¹;
 Of cleane fowles seaven alsoe,
 The hee and shee togeder²;
 Of fowles uncleane two,³ and no more, 5
 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
 Into the ship loke there be gotten, 10
 For that no way may be forgeten⁵;
 And doe all this bydeene,⁶
 To sustayne man and beast therein
 Aye till the water cease and blyn⁷;
 This world is filled full of synne, 15
 And that is now well sene.

Seaven dayes be yet coming —
 You shall have space them in to bringe;
 After that is my lyking⁸
 Mankinde for to n[o]ye; 20
 40 dayes and 40 nightes
 Rayne shall fall for ther unrightes,⁹
 And that I have made through my mightes
 Now think I to destroye.¹⁰

Noah. Lord, to thy¹¹ byddinge I am bayne¹²; 25
 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.

10 Of cleane beastes seaven shal be,
 Of uncleane two — this God bade me;
 This floode is nye, well may we see,
 Therfore tary you noughte.

*Then NOYE shall goe into the arke with all his
 family, his wief except, and the arke must
 be borded rounde about, and one the bordes
 all the beastes and fowles hereafter receaved
 must be painted, that thes wordes may agree
 with the pictures.²*

15 *Shem.* Syr, here are lyons, libardes in,
 Horses, mares, oxen, and swyne,
 Geates, calves, sheepe, and kine,
 Here sitten thou may see;
 Camels, asses, men may finde,
 Bucke [and] doe, harte and hynde;
 And beastes of all manner kinde
 20 Here bene, as thinkes mee.

Japheth. Take here cattes, dogges³ to,
 Otter, fox, fulmart⁴ also;

¹ (hasten) that

² 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 archam, uxore Noe excepta, et animalia depicta cum verbis concor-

dare debent; et sic incipiet primus filius

³ MS. cattes and doggs;
 W. cattes, dogges

⁴ polecat

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I will not doe after thy red[e].¹

Noah. Good wife, doe now as I the bede²!

Noah's Wife. By Christ, not or³ I see more neede,
Though thou stand all day⁴ and stare!

Noah. Lord, that women be crabbed aye,
And never are meke, that dare I saye!

This is wel sene by me to-daye,
In witnes of yow each one.

Good wife, let be all this beere⁵

10 That thou makes in this place here;
For all they wene thou art master —
So art thou,⁶ by St. John!

*Then NOYE 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 NOYE, sayinge⁷:*

God. Noe, [now] take thou thy meanye,⁸

And in the shippe hye⁹ that thow¹⁰ be,

15 For none so righteous man to me
Is now on earth lyvinge.

Of cleane beastes with thee thou take

Seaven and seaven or thou slake¹¹;

Hee and shee, make¹² to make,

20 Belyve¹³ in that¹⁴ thou bringe.¹⁵

Noah. Wife, come in! Why standes thou here?

Thou art ever froward — that dare I sweare!

Come in, on God's half¹⁶! Tyme yt were,

For feare lest that we drowne.

¹ counsel

² MS. bydd; cf. OE. *bēodan*

³ before, till

⁴ MS. the day; W. day

⁵ clamor

⁶ MS. and so thou art

⁷ From W.; cf. note 2 on
p. 488

⁸ company

⁹ hasten

¹⁰ MS. yow

¹¹ stop

¹² mate

¹³ at once

¹⁴ see that

¹⁵ Gen. 7. 1

¹⁶ 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,
 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 chist,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 doubtte.¹⁰

¹ success; II. heale

² em. from W.

³ unless

⁴ if

⁵ ark

⁶ MS. els rowe

⁷ whither

⁸ angry: MS. wraw (em.
 from W.)

⁹ hied

¹⁰ MS. am in doubtte

[*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,
 And let us drinke or we depart,
 For oftentimes we have done soe;
 At³ a draught thou drinkest a quarte,
 And so will I doe or I goe.⁴

10 *Japheth.* Mother, we praye you altogeder⁵ —
 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 not.⁸ [*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]

20 *Noah.* A, ha! Mary,¹¹ this is hote!
 It is good to be still!
 A, children, me thinkes my boate remeves,¹²
 Our tarying here hugelie 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
 Hohlfeld as a later addi-
 tion (*Anglia* 11. 270)

² MS. fare (em. K.)

³ MS. for at (em. K.)

⁴ B., W. add:

Here is a pottell of Malmesey
 good and stronge;

It will rejoy[c]e both hart and
 tong;
 Though Noy thinke us never
 so long,
 Yet wee will drinke alyke.

⁵ MS. -gether

⁶ redeemed

⁷ unless

⁸ H. adds: Tunc ibit

⁹ pains (*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

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*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;
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

10 Ah, Lord, honoured most thou be!
All earthe dryes, now I see,
But yet tyll thou comaunde me
 Hence will I not hye.
All this water is awaye;
Therefore, as sone as I maye,
15 Sacryfice I shall doe, in faye,⁵
 To thee devoutlye.⁶

20 *God.* Noe, take thy wife anone,
And thy children every one;
Out of the shippe thou shalt gone,
 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 be.⁷

25 *Noah.* Lord, I thanke the through thy mighte;
Thy bidding shall be done in height,⁸

¹ Translated from H.: Tunc
emittet columbam, et erit
in nave alia columba, fe-
rens olivam in ore, quæ
demittetur [MS. quam de-
mittet] ex malo per funem

in manus Noe; et postea
dicat Noe

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 ;
 Therefore comes,² in all wise,
 For of these beastes that bene hise
 Offer I will this stower.³ 5

*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 ;
 Therefore 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 sone.⁸

God. 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 afraid 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

10 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
Of⁸ wrong-dead carren⁹ that is here;
Eates not of that in no manere,
For that aye you shall let[e].¹⁰

15 Manslaughter also you shall flee,
For that is not pleasant to me;
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 synne.¹³

A forwarde¹⁴ 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 spill.¹⁸

1 float, swim; MS. flytte

2 promise; MS. -hite

3 refrain, forbear; MS. lett

4 that you may know to be clean;

Gen. 9. 1-3; cf. 7. 2; 8. 20

5 whereas

6 save

7 together; Gen. 9. 4

8 Miswritten for 'or'?

9 carrion; see Lev. 22. 8

10 leave

11 whoever

12 MS. -kinde; em. suggested by Pollard

13 Gen. 9. 5, 6

14 covenant

15 MS. thie

16 promise

17 em. K.

18 destroy; Gen. 9. 9-11

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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*, *Vsaac* to *Isaac*.

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.

Fyrst off ⁴ the erth þou 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 þou hast grantyd me thys,
That thys zowng chyld with me shall wone ⁸ ;
I love nothyng so myche, iwysse,
Except þi 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 given

² income

³ MS. heyly euermore

⁴ of

⁵ two

⁶ granted

⁷ MS. Abraham

⁸ dwell

⁹ MS. thin owyne ; see

next line

¹⁰ well ; pronounced wail

¹¹ MS. scherys

¹² discomfort

¹³ feel

¹⁴ 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.

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.

Abraham. Cume on, swete chyld, I love the best
 10 Of all the chydryn that I⁴ begat. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

Heaven. Enter GOD and an ANGEL

God. Myn angell, fast hey⁵ the thy wey,
 And to⁶ medyll erth anon þou 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 þat he love[s] so wyll,
 And with hys blood sacryfyce he make,
 Ony⁸ off my freynchepe [yf] he wyll fell.⁹

Schow hym the wey onto¹⁰ the hylle
 20 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. nygth

² fright, terror

³ ready; MS. glad (em. H.)

⁴ MS. ever I

⁵ haste

⁶ unto; MS. on to

⁷ MS. zowng sonne; cf.

501 24

⁸ MS. yffe ony

⁹ MS. fell

¹⁰ unto

¹¹ MS. lovyd (em. M.)

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I had lever, yf God had be plesyd,
 For to a¹ forbore² 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, Lord⁵! my conseons ys stron[g]ly sterd,⁶
 And zyt, my dere Lord, I am sore⁷ aferd
 'To groche⁸ ony thyng⁹ azens thy wyll.

10 I love my chyld as [I love] my lyffe,
 But zyt I love my God myche more,
 For thou my hart woold make ony stryffe,
 Zyt wyll I not spare for chyld nor wyffe,
 But don after my Lordes lore.¹⁰

15 'Thow I love my sonne never so wyll,
 Zyt smythe of¹¹ 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 obay¹²;
 But in thy hart be nothyng dysmayd.¹³

Abraham. Nay, nay. I¹⁴ hold me wyll apayd¹⁵
 'To plesse¹⁶ my God to the best I¹⁷ may,¹⁸

¹ have

² done without

³ disturbed, put to discomfort, molested

⁴ MS. erthe (em. M., following S.'s suggestion)

⁵ MS. Lord God

⁶ stirred; MS. steryd

⁷ MS. scre (em. H.)

⁸ MS. zowr

⁹ make any complaint

¹⁰ instruction

¹¹ smite off

¹² MS. loke þat þou kepe (em. suggested by M.)

¹³ MS. dismasyd; em. M.

¹⁴ MS. forsoth I

¹⁵ MS. plesyd (M. suggests em.)

¹⁶ MS. pelsse

¹⁷ MS. þat I

¹⁸ MS. haue (M. suggests em.)

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 reddy, 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 zon mownte, with all owr mayn.

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 pi 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 sore of thys,
Wy pat ze make thys hevy chere;

And also evermore⁷ dred I
Wer ys zowr best⁸ pat ze schuld kyll?
20 Both fyer and wood we have redy,
But queke⁹ best have we non on pis hyll;

A qwyke best, I wot wyll, must be ded,
Zowr sacryfycce for to make.¹⁰

¹ wound

² MS. tewyn (em. S.)

³ MS. bere (em. M., following
Kittredge's suggestion)

⁴ prepared

⁵ MS. schuld

⁶ cheer

⁷ MS. fader euermore

⁸ MS. queke best

⁹ living

¹⁰ MS. transposes this line
and the next (em. S.)

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Abraham. A, Ysaac, Ysaac, I must kyll the!

Isaac. Kyll me, fader? alasse, wat have I done?

Yff I have trespassyd agens zow owt,
 Ze may make me with a zard¹ full myld,
 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

10 *Isaac.* Now I wold⁵ my moder were on⁶ pis⁷ hyll!
 Sche woold knele for me on both hyr kneys

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.

15 *Abraham.* Forsothe, son, but-zyf I the kyll,
 I schuld greve God ryght¹⁰ sore, I drede;
 Yt ys hys commawment and also hys wyll
 That I schuld do thys same dede.

20 He commawdyd me, son, for serteyn,
 To make my sacryfye 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. sybyn þat

⁹ change; MS. schonge

¹⁰ MS. rygth

Isaac. Now, fader, aȝens my Lordes decre ¹
 I wyll never groche, lowd nor styll ;
 He myght ² a ³ sent me a better destyne ⁴
 Yf yt had a be hys wyll.⁵

Abraham. Forsothe, son, but-yf I do ⁶ þis dede,
 Grevosly dysplessyd owr Lord wyll be.

Isaac. Nay, nay, fader, God forbede
 That ever ȝe schuld greve hym for me.

Ȝe have other chyldryn, on or too,
 The wyche ȝe schuld love wyll be kynd.⁷ 10
 I prey ȝow, fader, make ȝe no woo,
 For, be I onys ded and fro ȝow goo,
 I schall be sone owt of ȝowr mynd.

Therfor doo owr Lordes byddyng,
 And wan I am ded, than prey for me ; 15
 But, good fader, tell ȝe my moder nothyng,
 Say þat I am dwellyng ⁸ in another cuntre.⁹

Abraham. A, Ysaac,¹⁰ blessyd mot thow be !

My hart begynnyth ¹¹ 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, or ¹³ I goo onto my deth,
 I prey ȝow blysse me with ȝowr 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,
 Thy fayer swete mowthe þat I may kys.

Isaac. Now farwyll,¹ my owyne fader so fyn,
 And grete wyll my moder in erde.²
 But I prey zow, fader, to hyd my eyne,
 That I se not þe stroke of zowr 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 zow I prey,
 Smythe but fewe⁶ strokes at my hed,
 And make an end as sone as ze may,
 And tery not to longe.

20 *Abraham.* Thy meke wordes, chyld, make me afray⁷ ;
 So ' Welawey ! ' may be my songe,

Excepe al only Godes wyll.

 A, Ysaac, my owyn swete chyld,
 Ȝyt kysse me agen upon thys hyll !
 25 In all thys war[l]d⁸ ys non soo myld.

Isaac. Now truly, fader, all thys teryyng
 Yt doth my hart but harme ;
 I prey zow, fader, make an enddyng.

¹ farewell ; MS. for-

² MS. erthe (em. M., following
 S.'s suggestion)

³ MS. sword (em. M.)

⁴ while, short time

⁵ needs ; MS. nedysse

⁶ MS. feve (em. M.)

⁷ afraid ; MS. afrayed
 (em. M.)

⁸ em. S.

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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.
 But iwysse, ³ thow I morne never so fast,
 Zyt must I nedes here at the last
 In thys place sched ⁴ thy blood.

Therfor, my son, ⁵ here schall pou 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.

Isaa. A, mercy, fader, morne ze no more,
 Zowr wepyng make[th] ⁸ my hart [as] sore
 15 As my owyn deth that I schall suffer.

Zowr kerche[f] ⁹ abowt my eyn ze wynd.

Abraham. So I schall, my swettest chyld in erde. ¹⁰

Isaac. Now zyt, good fader, have thys in mynd,
 And smyth me not ofty n with zowr scharp swerd, ¹¹
 20 But hastely that yt be sped. ¹²

*Here ABRAHAM leyd a cloth on YSAACES face,
 thus seyng:*

Abraham. Now farewyll, ¹³ my chyld, so full of grace.

Isaac. A, fader, fader, tome downward ¹⁴ my face,
 For of zowr 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. H.

⁹ MS. kerche fader

¹⁰ MS. erthe (em. M., following
 S.'s suggestion)

¹¹ MS. sword (em. M.)

¹² done quickly

¹³ MS. fore-

¹⁴ MS. downgward

¹⁵ MS. zowr 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, reseyyve me into thy hond.¹

Abraham. Loo, now ys cum the tyme² certeyn
That my swerd³ in hys necke schall bite.⁴
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 deth.¹²

Abraham. Now, hart, wy wilt thow not¹³ breke on thre?
Ȝyt schall þ[o]u not make me to God¹⁴ onmyld.¹⁵ 20
I wyll no lenger let¹⁶ for the,
For that my God agrevyd wold be;
Now hoold¹⁷ the¹⁸ stroke, my owyn dere chyld.

*Her ABRAHAM drew hys stroke, and þe ANGELI. toke
the swerd³ in hys hond soddenly.*

Angel. I am an angell, thow mayist se¹⁹ blythe,
That fro hevyn to the ys sent.²⁰ 25

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. degth

¹³ MS. wolddyst 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;
And sum of thy hevynes for to departe,²
A fayr ram ȝynder³ I gan brynge;

He standyth teyed, loo, among þe breres.

Now, Abraham, amend thy mood,
For Ysaac, thy ȝowng son þat her ys,
10 Thys day [thow] schall not sched hys blood;

Goo, make thy sacryfece with ȝon 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 ȝe nowt¹⁰?
A, smygth on, fader, onys with ȝowr 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 dey.¹²

25 *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. H.

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. dey þis day sunne truly

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Lord¹ God, I thanke þe with all my hart,
For I am glad that I schall leve,²

And kys onys my dere moder.

Abraham. Now be ryght³ myry, my [owyne] swete chyld,
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 woold þat swerd⁸ wer in a gled,¹²
For¹³ yt make[th]¹⁴ me full yll agast.

*Here ABRAHAM mad hys offryng, knelyng, and
seyng 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, reseve 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. spyd

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 iwys 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,
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] end.⁴
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 wroght⁷ ?
Full glad and blythe we may be, 15
Azens Gods wyll⁸ þat we grucched nott
Upon thys fayer heth.⁹

Isaac. A, fader, I thanke owr Lord every dell
That my wyt servyd me so wyll
For to drede God more than my deth.¹⁰ 20

Abraham. Why! dereworpy¹¹ son, wer thow adred ?
Hardely,¹² chyld, tell me thy lore.¹³

Isaac. Za, be my feyth, fader, now have¹⁴ I red,¹⁵
I was never soo afrayd before
As I have byn at zyn hyll. 25
But, be my feyth, fader, I swere
I wyll nevermore cume there
But yt be azens my wyll.

¹ of you both; MS. zowres botheres

² MS. so thyke

³ plenty; em. M.

⁴ MS. fynd

⁵ MS. everych

⁶ MS. goo (em. H.)

⁷ MS. wroght

⁸ MS. þe wyll of God

⁹ MS. hetth

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
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 zowunge sonn so fre,
The gentylllest chyld above all other⁵ —
10 Thys may I wyll avo[w to th]ee.⁶

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 zeffe us grace evermo,
And all tho⁸ that we be holdyng⁹ to.

[*Excunt.*]

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 lewyd¹³
20 And þe wysest of us all,

Wythowtyn ony berryng.¹⁴
For thys story schewyt[h]¹⁵ zowe [her]¹⁶

1 MS. ꝥa cum

2 by

3 consent; MS. grant

4 MS. to gon hom

5 MS. erthe (em. S.)

6 MS. avoee

7 (?)

8 those; MS. thow

9 beholding

10 sirs

11 MS. schowyd

12 MS. story hath schowyd (em. H.)

13 ignorant

14 outcry, clamorous protest
(see *NED.* under *bere*, sb.)

15 showeth; MS. schoyt

16 em. M.

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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; Kölbing (K.), in *Engl. Stud.* 20. 187. The stage-directions are modern. The form of the seven-line stanza should be noted: abab⁴c²b⁴c².

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
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 bestes.⁸

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 þou 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,
 Wisse ² us þe best !

Mar. God will us wisse, full wele witt ge,
 þerfore, Joseph, be of gud chere,
 For in þis place borne will he be 10
 þat sall us save fro sorowes sere,³
 Bothe even and morne.
 Sir, witte ge wele þe tyme is nere
 Hee ⁴ will be borne.

Jos. þan behoves us bide here stille, 15
 Here in þis same place all þis nyght.

Mar. *Ȝ*a, sir, forsuth it is Goddis will.

Jos. þan wolde I fayne we had sum light,
 Whatso befall ;
 It waxes myrke ⁵ unto my sight, 20
 And colde withall.

I will go gete us light forthy,⁶
 And fewell fande ⁷ with me to bryng. [*Exit.*

Mar. Allweldand God yow governe and gy,⁸
 As he is Sufferayne ⁹ of all thyng, 25
 Fo[r] his grete myght !
 And lende me grace to his lovyng
 þat I me dight ¹⁰ !

Nowe in my sawle grete joie have I,
 I am all cladde in comfote clere ; 30

iced
 ide, direct
 vers, various
 ten 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,
 Now borne is he! — [M^{ARY} *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 light.

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[s] 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 seat, throne

³ cease

⁴ dwell

⁵ subject; MS. am sympill
 sugett (K. omits sympill)

⁶ MS. þe armys of myne

⁷ MS. to araie

⁸ how

⁹ cruelest

¹⁰ frost

¹¹ MS. alde

¹² especially

¹³ weak

¹⁴ shelter; MS. brilde
 (em. S.)

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A Sone¹ þat sall oure saffyng² be
 Fro caris kene.
 Forsuth it is my Sone so free
 Whame he gan mene.³

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 wynne,
 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
 Betweenc 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!
 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
 Betwene bestis lye;

10

And nowe I see þe same in sight.
Mar. *Ȝ*a, sir, forsuth þe same is he.
Jos. Honnoure and worshippe both day and nyght,
 Aylastand Lorde, be done to þe,
 As⁶ is worthy!
 And to⁷ thy service I oblissh⁸ me
 With herte⁹ holy.

15

Mar. þou mercyfull Maker most myghty,
 My God, my Lorde, my Sone so free,
 Thy handemayden forsoth am I,
 And to thi service I oblissh me,
 With herte⁹ entere.¹⁰
 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 naïve 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 $aaaa^4b^1ccc^2b^1$, 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. xxii): $abababab^2c^1ddd^2c^1$. 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

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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

15 Thus thay refe¹¹ us oure rest — oure Lady theym wary¹² !
 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[i]nte to¹⁵ myscary
 On lyfe.

20 Thus hold thay us hunder,
 Thus thay bryng us in blonder¹⁶ ;
 It were greatte wonder
 And¹⁷ ever shuld we thryfe.

25 Ther¹⁸ shall com a swa[y]ne¹⁹ as prowde as a po²⁰ ;
 He must borow my wa[y]ne,²¹ my ploghe also ;
 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, miserable

² husbandmen (see l. 13) ;
 MS. shepardes (em. sug-
 gested by M.)

³ nearly homeless

⁴ surface (?) (there is arable
 land among the moors)

⁵ MS. hamyd (em. H.)

⁶ overtaxed

⁷ oppressed

⁸ reduced to submission

⁹ by

¹⁰ gentry

¹¹ take from

¹² curse

¹³ bound to a lord

¹⁴ what

¹⁵ in peril of ; em. E.

¹⁶ confusion, trouble

¹⁷ if

¹⁸ MS. transposes this stanza and
 the next (em. K.)

¹⁹ swain

²⁰ peacock

²¹ wagon

²² MS. swane, wane, fane (em. K.)

²³ ere

... with matter ...
 ... in ...
 ...

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 maintenance¹²
 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 fails to see COLL

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 winds¹ ar spytus,² and the weders³ full kene,
And the frostys so hydus⁴ thay water myn eeyne —

No ly.⁵

Now in dry, now in wete,

5 Now in snaw, now in slete;

When my shone⁶ freys to my fete,

It is not all esy.

Bot as far as I ken, or yit as I go,

We sely wedmen⁷ dre⁸ 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 hym¹¹ oure cok,

Ffor he is in the shakyls¹²!

These men that ar wed have not all thare wyll;

When they ar full hard sted,¹³ thay sygh full.styll;

God wayte¹⁴ thay ar led full hard and full yll;

20 In bower nor in bed thay say nocht 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 think my hart ryfys¹⁸ 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

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Stand styl.

Gib. Qwhy?

Coll. Ffor he commys, hope I.

Gib. He wyll make us both a ly¹
Bot-if we be war.²

Enter DAW, the Third Shepherd. At first he thinks himself alone

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 warld pas,
It is ever in drede, and brekyll³ as glas,
And slythys.⁴

10 This warld fowre⁵ never so,
With mervels mo and mo —
Now in weyll,⁶ now in wo,
And all thyng wrythys.⁷

15 Was never syn Noe⁸ floode sich floodys seyn,
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:

20 These floodys so thay drowne,
Both in feyldys and in towne,
And berys all downe,

And that is a wonder! [*Catches sight of the others.*]

25 We that walk on the nyghtys, oure catell to kepe,
We se sodan syghtys, when othere men slepe.
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 lie

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 COLL, 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

Etys oure brede full dry, and that me forthynkys.⁹

15

We ar oft weytt and wery when master-men wynkys,¹⁰

Yit commys full lately¹¹ both dyners and drynkys.

Bot nately¹²

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 ; MS. 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

... epe,
And men say, ' Lyght chepe ²
Letherly ³ foryeldys. ⁴'

5 *Coll.* Thou were an yll lad to ryde on ⁵ 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 gawdys ⁷ !
10 Wher ar oure shepe, boy, we skorne ⁸ ?
Sir, this same day at morne
I thaim left in the corne,
When thay rang lawdys ⁹ ;

They 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 meyne ¹² fallys to me ;
Lett se how you chauntt. [*They sing.*

Enter MAK, with a cloak thrown over his tunic ¹⁸

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 tharnys ¹⁵ ;
25 I am all uneven ¹⁶ — that moves oft my harnes ¹⁷ ;
Now wold God I were in heaven, for the[re] ¹⁸ wepe no barnes ¹⁹
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

18 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

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Ye ar a fare compane.

Coll. Can ye now mene you ¹?

Gib. Shrew, jape ²!

Thus late as thou goys,

What wyll men suppos?

And thou has an yll noys ³

Of stelyng of shepe.

Mak. And I am trew as steyll, all men waytt ⁴;

Bot a sekenes I feyll that haldys ⁵ me full haytt ⁶:

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 nedyll ⁷

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 brude ⁹; she drynkys well, to.

Yll spede othere good that she wyll do!

20 Bot s[h]o ¹⁰

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 rychere be ¹³ far,

I were ¹⁴ eten outt of howse and of harbar ¹⁵;

Yit is she a fowll dowse, ¹⁶ if ye com nar;

Ther is none that trowse nor knowys a war ¹⁷

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 (*lit.* 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 next ¹ to offer

Hyr hed-maspenny.²

Coll. I am cold and nakyd, and wold have a fyere.

Gib. I wote so forwakyd ³ is none in this shyre !

I wold slepe if ⁴ I takyd les to my hyere.⁵

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 lett ⁸ you bedenc ⁹ of that ye wold rowne.¹⁰ 15

No drede.

[*He says his prayers.*

' Ffro my top to my too,

¹ at length (?)

² funeral dues (see 6 22)

³ weary with waking

⁴ even if

⁵ hire

⁶ worn out with walking

⁷ Two lines are apparently
lost here

⁸ hinder

⁹ completely

¹⁰ whisper

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.

Jesus 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 yit 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 yit 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

⁷ 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.)

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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 wold 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 bright

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, Loge-
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. Bot ¹ I com ² 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.

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. Al 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 hapt now, namely ¹ within.

*Daw.*² When we had long napt, me thocht with a gyn³

A fatt shepe he trapt, bot he mayde no dyn.

*Gib.*⁴ Be styll,

Thi dreme 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 knock 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 brains

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. 1. 29).

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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 shepherds
2 suspect
3 pleased
4 sport
5 they will suspect me

6 promised
7 swaddle
8 trick
9 straightway
10 wrap, cover

11 companion = Gib (cf. Wordsworth's 'winsome marrow,' *Yarrow Unvisited*)
12 alone, by thyself
13 pain

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 seke woman's hcede, that is at mayllesse¹¹;
I had lever be dede or she had any dyseasse.¹²

Gill. Go to anothere stede,¹³ I may not well qweasse.¹⁴
20 Ich¹⁵ fote that ye trede goys thorow my nese¹⁶
So hee.¹⁷

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 (*lit. wheeze*)
15 each
16 nose
17 loud
18 farmstead

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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.'

Gill. I swelt⁴!

Outt, thefys, fro my wonys⁵!

Ye com to rob us, for the nonys.

Mak. Here ye not how she gronys?

 Youre 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 spyllys¹² 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 chylde!

Coll. We have merkyd¹ amys; I hold us begyld.

Gib. Syr, don²! —

Syr — oure Lady hym save! —

Is youre chyld a knave³?

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 gossyppys,⁸ so sone rede⁹? 10

Mak. So fare fall thare lyppys¹⁰!

Coll. Hark now, a le¹¹! [*Aside.*

Mak. So God thaym thank —

Parkyn, and Gybon Waller, I say,

And gentill John Home, 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 yerc.

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

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.

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 'Kynde⁷ will crepe⁸

Where it may not go.⁹'

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 medyll?

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

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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.⁸

Gib. As a shepe of vii skore⁴ he weyd in my fyst.
Ffor to slepe aywhore⁵ me thynk that I lyst.

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,

Betwyx two bestys.

[*Exit.*

Coll. This was a qwant stevyn¹⁶ as¹⁷ ever yit I hard.
20 It is a mervell to nevyn¹⁸ thus to be skard.¹⁹

Gib. Of Godys Son of hevyn he spak upward.²⁰
All the wod on a levyn²¹ me thoght that he gard²²

Appere.

1 em. M.

2 burst

8 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 brefes³ 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,⁵
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 fard⁶ 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
Withoutt 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 afeard

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 :

*Ecce*² *virgo*

*Concipiet*³ a chylde that is nakyd.

Daw. Ffull glad may we be, and abyde that day,

That Lufly 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 tokyn.⁷

When I se hym and fele,

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 Bright.¹⁰

¹ race

² MS. cite (em. E.)

³ Isa. 7. 14 (Vulgate)

⁴ has power over all mightis

⁵ MS. mener (em. K.)

⁶ Matt. 13. 17

⁷ as a sign

⁸ prepared

⁹ together

¹⁰ bright one

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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!
 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 thugh 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

*Explicit Pagina Pastorum.*¹⁵

1 fist, hand

2 refl.

3 tennis (well known in England by the end of the fourteenth century)

4 created all things in seven days (?)

5 did

6 God the Father

7 name

8 alighted, descended (on me)

9 Christ

10 think

11 found

12 rescued, saved

13 bound

14 let us sing aloud

15 Here ends The Shepherds' Pageant