

The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, Part I

Geoffrey Chaucer

Edited by Walter W. Skeat



THE COMPLETE WORKS
OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER
EDITED, FROM NUMEROUS MANUSCRIPTS
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THE CANTERBURY TALES: TEXT

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

The Knightes Tale; A890

Therto he coude endite a make a thyng
Oher coude no man pynche at hese writyng
And euy statut coude he pleyne be rote
He rod but homely in a medel cotte
Gyrt with a seynt of silk wth barrys finale
Of hese away telle I no lengere tale
A frankeleyn was in hese cūpanye
Whit was hese berd as is pe dayse
Of cōplexion he was sanguyn
Wel couede be pe moise a sope in wyne
Bo leyn in delit was euere hese isone
For he was epicure owene sone
Tha held oppymou p^r pleyne delit
Was uery felicitate parfit
An housholdere a p^r a gret was he
Seint Iekon he was in that cuntre
Hese bled hese ale was alwey astyr on
A betere enuynde man was nother non

John
Frankleyn

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Man of Law's Prologue

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De Hugelino Comite de Pize; Nero; De Oloferno;
De Rege Anthiocho; De Alexandro; De Iulio Cesare; Cresus
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The Nonne Prestes Tale
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INTRODUCTION

1. The Present Text.

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

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

2. The Manuscripts.

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

I. MSS. in the British Museum.

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

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

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

The 'various readings' of this MS. are often peculiar, and it is difficult to appraise them. I take them to be of two kinds: (i) readings which are better than those of the Six-text, and should certainly be preferred, such as *halfe* in A 8, *cloysterlees*

in A 179, *a* (not *a ful*) in A 196, and the like; and (2) readings due to a terrible blundering on the part of the scribe, such as *fleyng* for *flikeringe* in A 1962, *greene* for *kene* in A 1966, and the like. It is, in fact, a most dangerous MS. to trust to, unless constantly corrected by others, and is not at all fitted to be taken as the *basis* of a text. For further remarks, see the description of Wright's printed edition at p. xvi.

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

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

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

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

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

6. Royal 18 C II; denoted by RL; in Tyrwhitt, 'B.' In Urry, vii. Of the D-type, but containing Gamelyn. Used to fill up gaps in the Six-text;

e.g. in B 1163-1190 (Shipman's Prologue, called in this MS. the Squire's Prologue), 2109-73, 3961-80, E 65, 73, 81, 143, G 1337-40, I 472-511. The whole of 'Gamelyn' is also printed from this MS. in the Six-text.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

II. MSS. in Oxford.

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

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

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

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

18. Arch. Selden B 14; no. 3360 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B δ.' Perhaps the best and earliest of the Bodleian MSS., but not very good. Sometimes here quoted as Seld. Apparently of the A-type, having no copy of Gamelyn; but it practically represents a transition-state between the A and B types, and has one correction of prime importance, as it is the only MS. which links together all the Tales in Group B, making the Shipman follow the Man of Law. Frequent extracts from it occur in the Six-text; e.g. A 1-72, B 1163-1190, &c. In particular, a large portion of the Parson's Tale, I 290-1086, is printed from this MS. in the same.

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

20. Hatton, Donat. 1 (not the same MS. as Hatton 1); no. 4138 in Bernard's list; in Tyrwhitt, 'B ε.' The Tales are in great disorder, the Man of Law being thrust in between the Reeve and the Cook, as in

no other MS. It contains Gamelyn. Lines F 679, 680 are quoted from it in the Six-text; and a few lines are again quoted from it at the end of the Parson's Tale.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

III. MSS. at Cambridge.

28. University Library, Gg. 4. 27, not noticed by Tyrwhitt; here denoted by Cm. Also denoted, in vol. iii., by C.; and in vol. i., by Gg. A highly valuable and important MS. of the A-type, printed as the

third text in the Six-text edition. The best copy in any public library. See the description of 'Gg.' in vol. i.; and the full description in the Library Catalogue.

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

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

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

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

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

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

IV. In other Public Libraries.

34. Sion College, London. A mere fragment, containing only the Clerk's Tale and Group D.

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

V. MSS. in Private Hands.

These include some of the very best.

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

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

41. The 'Hengwrt' MS., no. 154, belonging to Mr. Wm. W. E. Wynne, of Peniarth; denoted by Hn. A valuable MS.; it is really of the A-type, though the Tales are strangely misplaced, and the Canon's Yeoman's

Tale is missing. The readings frequently agree so closely with those of E. (no. 40) that it is, to some extent, almost a duplicate of it. Printed as the second MS. in the Six-text. It also contains Chaucer's Boethius (imperfect).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. The Printed Editions.

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

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

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

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

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

founded on MS. Harl. 7334, a very unsafe MS. in some respects; see p. viii

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

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

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

Of course it will be understood that I am saying no more than I can fully substantiate.

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

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

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

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

4. Plan of the Present Edition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

These minute variations are, I trust, legitimate, and I have not recorded them. They cause trouble to the editor, but afford ease to the reader, which seems a sufficient justification for adopting them. But the scrupulous critic need not fear that the MS. has been departed from in any case, where it could make any phonetic difference, without due notice. Thus, in l. 9, where I have changed

foweles into *fowles* as being a more usual form, the fact that *foweles* is the Ellesmere spelling is duly recorded in the footnotes. And so in other cases.

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

The following methods for shortening the footnotes have been adopted.

1. Sometimes only the readings of *some* of the MSS. are given. Thus at l. 9 (p. 1), I omit the readings of Cp. and of Cm. As a fact, neither of these MSS. contain the line; but it was not worth while to take up space by saying so. At l. 10 (p. 1), I again omit the readings of Cp. and of Cm., for the same reason; also of Ln., which is a poor MS., though here it agrees with Hl. (having *yhe*); also of Pt., which has *eyghe*, a spelling not here to be thought of. At l. 12, I just note that E. has *pilgrimage* (by mistake); of course this means that it should have had *pilgrimages* in the plural, as in other MSS., and as required by the rime.

2. At l. 23 (p. 2), the remark '*rest* was' implies that all the rest of the seven MSS. specially collated have '*was*.' The word '*rest*' is a convenient abbreviation.

3. When, as at l. 53, I give *nacions* as a rejected reading of E. in the footnote, it will be understood that *naciouns* is a better spelling, justified by other MSS., and by other lines in E. itself. E.g., *naciouns* occurs in Hl. and Pt., and Cm. has *naciounmys*.

4. I often use '*om.*' for '*omit*,' or '*omits*' as in the footnote to l. 188 (p. 6).

5. At l. 335 (p. 11), I give the footnote:—'*ever*] Hl. al.' This means that MS. Hl. has *al* instead of the word *ever* of the other MSS. It seemed worth noting; but *ever* is probably right.

6. At l. 520 (p. 16), the note is:—'*All but* Hl. *this was*.' That is, Hl. has *was*, as in the text; the rest have *this was*, where the addition of *this* sadly clogs the line.

With these hints, the footnotes present no difficulty.

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

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

5. Table of Symbols denoting MSS.

- Cm.—Cambridge Univ. Lib. Gg. 4. 27 (Ellesmere type). No. 28 in list.
Cp.—Carpus Chr. Coll., Oxford, no. 198. No. 24.
Dd.—Cambridge Univ. Lib. Dd. 4. 24 (Ellesmere type). No. 29.
E.—Ellesmere MS. (basis of the text). No. 40.
Harl.—Harl. 1758; Brit. Mus.; see p. 645. No. 4.
Hl.—Harl. 7334; British Museum. No. 1.
Hn.—Hengwrt MS. no. 154. No. 41.
Li. *or* Lich.—Lichfield MS.; see pp. 533-553. No. 35.
Ln.—Lansdowne 851; Brit. Mus. (Corpus type). No. 10.
Pt.—Petworth MS. No. 42.
Rl. *or* Roy.—Royal 18 C. II; Brit. Mus.; see p. 645. No. 6.
Seld.—Arch. Selden, B. 14; Bodleian Library. No. 18.
Sl. *or* Slo.—Sloane 1685; Brit. Mus.; see p. 645. No. 8.

6. Table shewing the various ways of numbering the lines.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. The four Leading Types of the MSS.

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

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

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

C.—Not only places 8 before 6 (as B), but splits 5 into 5 *a* (Squire) and 5 *b* (Franklin), and places 5 *a* before 3. Order: 1, 2, 5 *a*, 3, 4, 5 *b*, 8, 6, 7, 9.

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

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

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

ADDITIONS
TO
'THE MINOR POEMS' IN VOL. I.

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

XXIV. WOMANLY NOBLESSE.

So hath my herte caught in rémembraunce
Your beauté hool, and stedfast governaunce,
Your vertues allè, and your hy noblesse,
That you to serve is set al my plesaunce;
So wel me lykth your womanly contenaunce, 5
Your fresshe fetures and your comlinesse,
That, whyl I live, my herte to his maistresse,
You hath ful chose, in trew perséveraunce,
Never to chaunge, for no maner distresse.

From MS. Addit. 34360, fol. 21, back (with ascription by Shirley); hitherto unprinted. Rejected readings of the MS. are here given.

1. hert. 2. Yowre (*throughout*); hoole; stidefast. 3. al; hie. 4. yow; sette.
5. likith; *for womanly perhaps read wyfly*. 6. comlynnesse. 7: whiles;
myn hert; maystresse. 8: triev.

And sith I [you] shal do this observaunce 10
 Al my lyf, withouten displeaunce,
 You for to serve with al my besinesse,
 [Taketh me, lady, in your obeisaunce,]
 And have me somewhat in your souvenaunce.
 My woful herte suffreth greet duresse; 15
 And [loke] how humbl[el]y, with al simplesse,

My wil I cónforme to your ordenaunce,
As you best list, my peynes to redresse.

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

Considring eek how I hange in balaunce
In your servysè; swich, lo! is my chaunce, 20
Abyding grace, whan that your gentillesse
Of my gret wo list doon allegeaunce,
And with your pitè me som wyse avaunce,
In ful rebating of my hevynesse;
And thinkth, by reson, wommanly noblesse 25
Shuld nat desyre for to doon outrance
Ther-as she findeth noon unbuxumnesse.

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

Lenvoye.

Auctour of norture, lady of plesaunce,
Soveraine of beauté, flour of wommanhede,
Take ye non hede unto myn ignoraunce, 30
But this receyveth of your goodlihede,
Thinking that I have caught in remembraunce
Your beauté hool, your stedfast governaunce.

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

XXV. COMPLAINT TO MY MORTAL FOE.

Al hoolly youres, withouten otheres part!
Wherefore? y-wis, that I ne can ne may
My service chaungen; thus of al suche art
The lerninge I desyre for ever and ay.
And evermore, whyl that I live may, 5
In trouthe I wol your servant stille abyde,
Although my wo encesè day by day,
Til that to me be come the dethes tyde.

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

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

Seint Valentyne! to you I rénovele
My woful lyf, as I can, compleyninge; 10
But, as me thinketh, to you a quarele
Right greet I have, whan I, rememberinge
Bitwene, how kinde, ayeins the yeres springe,
Upon your day, doth ech foul chese his make;
And you list not in swich comfórt me bringe, 15
That to her grace my lady shulde me take.

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

Wherfor unto you, Cupide, I beseche,
Furth with Venús, noble lusty goddesses,
Sith ye may best my sorowe lesse and eche;

And I, your man, oppressed with distresse, 20
Can not crye 'help!' but to your gentillesse:
So voucheth sauf, sith I, your man, wol dye,
My ladies herte in pitè folde and presse,
That of my payne I finde remedye.

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

To your conning, my hertes right princesse, 25
My mortal fo, whiche I best love and serve,
I recommaunde my boistous lewednesse.
And, for I can not altherbest deserve
Your grace, I preye, as he that wol nat swerve,
That I may fare the better for my trouthe; 30
Sith I am youre, til deth my herte kerve,
On me, your man, now mercy have and routhe.

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

XXVI. COMPLAINT TO MY LODE-STERRE.

Of gretter cause may no wight him compleyne
Than I; for love hath set me in swich caas
That lasse Ioye and more encrees of peyne
Ne hath no man; wherfore I crye 'allas!'
A thousand tyme, whan I have tyme and space. 5
For she, that is my verray sorowes grounde,
Wol with her grace no wyse my sorowes sounde.

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

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

And that, shulde be my sorowes hertes leche,
Is me ageins, and maketh me swich werre,
That shortly, [in] al maner thought and speche, 10
Whether it be that I be nigh or ferre,
I misse the grace of you, my lode-sterre,
Which causeth me on you thus for to crye;
And al is it for lakke of remedye.

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

My soverain Ioye thus is my mortal fo; 15
She that shulde causen al my lustynesse
List in no wyse of my sorowes saye 'ho!'
But let me thus darraigne, in hevynesse,
With woful thoughtes and my grete distresse,
The which she might right wele, [at] every tyde, 20
If that her liste, out of my herte gyde.

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

But it is so, that her list, in no wyse,
 Have pitè on my woful besinesse;
 And I ne can do no maner servyse
 That may me torne out of my hevinesse; 25
 So woldè god, that she now wolde impresse
 Right in her herte my trouthe and eek good wille;
 And let me not, for lakke of mercy, spille.

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

Now wele I woot why thus I smerte sore;
 For couthe I wele, as othere folkes, feyne, 30
 Than neded me to live in peyne no more,
 But, whan I were from you, unteye my reyne,
 And, for the tyme, drawe in another cheyne.
 But woldè god that alle swich were y-knowe,
 And duely punisshed of hye and lowe. 35

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

Swich lyf defye I, bothe in thoughte and worde,
 For yet me were wel lever for to sterve
 Than in my herte for to make an horde
 Of any falshood; for, til deth to-kerve
 My herte and body, shal I never swerve 40
 From you, that best may be my fynal cure,
 But, at your liste, abyde myn aventure;

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

And preye to you, noble seint Valentyne,
 My ladies herte that ye wolde embrace,

And make her pitè to me more enclyne 45
That I may stonden in her noble grace
In hasty tyme, whyl I have lyves space:
For yit wiste I never noon, of my lyve,
So litel hony in so fayre hyve.

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

NOTES TO THE PRECEDING POEMS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10. Cf. 'as *in* his speche;' T. ii. 1069.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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THE CANTERBURY TALES.

GROUP A.

THE PROLOGUE.

HERE BIGINNETH THE BOOK OF THE TALES OF CAUNTERBURY.

Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth 5
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open yë, 10
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages):
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
(And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)
To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende 15
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.

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

Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay 20
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At night was come in-to that hostelrye

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Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle 25
In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste, 30
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse,
To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.

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

But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space, 35
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree; 40
And eek in what array that they were inne:
And at a knight than wol I first biginne.

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

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man, KNIGHT.
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye, 45
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre)
As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse. 50

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

At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne;

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Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
 Aboven alle naciouns in Puce.
 In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
 No Cristen man so ofte of his degree. 55
 In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be
 Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
 At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,
 Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See
 At many a noble aryve hadde he be. 60
 At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
 And foughten for our feith at Tramissene
 In listes thryes, and ay slayn his foo.
 This ilke worthy knight had been also
 Somtyme with the lord of Palatye, 65
 Ageyn another hethen in Turkye:
 And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
 And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
 And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
 He never yet no vileinye ne sayde 70
 In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.
 He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
 But for to tellen yow of his array,
 His hors were gode, but he was nat gay.
 Of fustian he wered a gipoun 75
 Al bismotered with his habergeoun;
 For he was late y-come from his viage,
 And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

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

With him ther was his sone, a yong SQUYER, SQUYER.
 A lovyere, and a lusty bachelor, 80
 With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.
 Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
 Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,

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And wonderly deliver, and greet of strengthe.
 And he had been somtyme in chivachye, 85
 In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,
 And born him wel, as of so litel space,
 In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
 Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
 Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede. 90
 Singinge he was, or floytinge, al the day;
 He was as fresh as is the month of May.
 Short was his goune, with sleves longe and wyde.
 Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.
 He coude songes make and wel endyte, 95
 Iuste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryte,
 So hote he lovede, that by nightertale
 He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale.
 Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,
 And carf biforn his fader at the table. 100

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

A YEMAN hadde he, and servaunts namo YEMAN.
 At that tyme, for him liste ryde so;
 And he was clad in cote and hood of grene;
 A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene
 Under his belt he bar ful thriftily; 105
 (Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:
 His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),
 And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.
 A not-heed hadde he, with a broun visage.
 Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage. 110
 Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,
 And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
 And on that other syde a gay daggere,
 Harneised wel, and sharp as point of spere;

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A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene. 115
An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene;
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

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

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,	PRIORESSE.
That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy;	
Hir gretteste ooth was but by sēynt Loy;	120
And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.	
Ful wel she song the service divyne,	
Entuned in hir nose ful semely;	
And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,	
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,	125
For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.	
At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;	
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,	
Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.	
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,	130
That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.	
In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.	
Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,	
That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene	
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.	135
Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,	
And sikerly she was of greet disport,	
And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port,	
And peyned hir to countrefete chere	
Of court, and been estatlich of manere,	140
And to ben holden digne of reverence.	
But, for to speken of hir conscience,	
She was so charitable and so pitous,	
She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous	
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.	145
Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde	
With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-breed.	

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But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,
 Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte:
 And al was conscience and tendre herte. 150
 Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was;
 Hir nose tretys; hir eyen greye as glas;
 Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed;
 But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
 It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe; 155
 For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
 Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war.
 Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
 A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene;
 And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene, 160
 On which ther was first write a crowned A,
 And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.

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

Another NONNE with hir hadde she, NONNE.
 That was hir chapeleyne, and PREESTES three. 3 PREESTES.

A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrye, MONK.
 An out-rydere, that lovede venerye; 166
 A manly man, to been an abbot able.
 Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable:
 And, whan he rood, men mighte his brydel here
 Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere, 170
 And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-belle,
 Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.
 The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,
 By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,
 This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace, 175

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And held after the newe world the space.
 He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,
 That seith, that hunters been nat holy men;
 Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,
 Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees; 180
 This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre.
 But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre;
 And I seyde, his opinioun was good.
 What sholde he studie, and make him-selven wood,
 Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure, 185
 Or swinken with his handes, and laboure,
 As Austin bit? How shal the world be served?
 Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.
 Therefore he was a pricasour aright;
 Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in flight; 190
 Of priking and of hunting for the hare
 Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
 I seigh his sleves purfild at the hond
 With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;
 And, for to festne his hood under his chin, 195
 He hadde of gold y-wroght a curious pin:
 A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
 His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,
 And eek his face, as he had been anoint.
 He was a lord ful fat and in good point; 200
 His eyen stepe, and rollinge in his heed,
 That stemed as a forneys of a leed;
 His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.
 Now certainly he was a fair prelat;
 He was nat pale as a for-pyned goost. 205
 A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
 His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

170. Hl. Cp. whistlyng; E. whistlynge. E. Cm. als; Ln. al-so; Hl. so; *rest* as. 176. E. Hn. heeld; Cm. held. 178. Hn. Hl. been; E. beth. 179. Hl. cloysterles; E. Hn. recchelees; Cp. Pt. Ln. recheles; Cm. rekeles (Ten Brink *proposes* recetlees). 182. E. Hn. heeld; Cm. held. 188. E. his owene; *rest om.* owene. 190. Hl. swifte; *rest* swift. 193. Hl. Hn.

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purfiled; Cm. purfilid; E. ypurfiled. 196. Hl. a; *rest* a ful. 196, 218. Ln. had; *rest* hadde. 199. E. it; *rest* he. 203, 4. E. estaat, prelaat.

A FRERE ther was, a wantown and a merye, FRERE.
A limitour, a ful solempne man.
In alle the ordres foure is noon that can 210
So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen, at his owne cost.
Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he 215
With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,
And eek with worthy wommen of the toun:
For he had power of confessioun,
As seyde him-self, more than a curat,
For of his ordre he was licentiat. 220
Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun;
He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
Ther as he wiste to han a good pitaunce;
For unto a povre ordre for to yive 225
Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive.
For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.
For many a man so hard is of his herte,
He may nat wepe al-thogh him sore smerte. 230
Therfore, in stede of weping and preyeres,
Men moot yeve silver to the povre freres.
His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves
And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.
And certainly he hadde a mery note; 235
Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a rote.
Of yeddinges he bar utterly the prys.
His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;
Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.
He knew the tavernes wel in every toun, 240
And everich hostiler and tappestere
Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;

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For un-to swich a worthy man as he
 Acorded nat, as by his facultee,
 To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce. 245
 It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce
 For to delen with no swich poraille,
 But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.
 And over-al, ther as profit sholde aryse,
 Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse. 250
 Ther nas no man no-wher so vertuous.
 He was the beste beggere in his hous;
 [And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt; 252 b
 Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his haunt;] 252 c
 For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,
 So plesaunt was his "*In principio*,"
 Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente. 255
 His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.
 And rage he coude, as it were right a whelpe.
 In love-dayes ther coude he muchel helpe. (260)
 For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,
 With a thredbar cope, as is a povre scolere, 260
 But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
 Of double worsted was his semi-cope,
 That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
 Somwhat he lipped, for his wantownesse,
 To make his English swete up-on his tonge; 265
 And in his harping, whan that he had songe,
 His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,
 As doon the sterres in the frosty night. (270)
 This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

208. E. wantowne. 211. Hn. multe; E. muchel. 213. Hl. owne; E. owene. 215. E. And; *rest* Ful. 217. Hl. Hn. eek; *rest omit*. 224. Hl. Cm. han; E. haue. 229. E. harde. 231. E. wepyng. 232. E. Hn. moote; *see note*. 234. E. yonge; *rest* faire. 235. Hl. mery; E. murye. 237. E. baar. Pt. vtirly; Hl. vturly; E. Hn. outrely. 240. E. al the; *rest* euery. 245. E. Hn. Cm. sike; Pt. Ln. seke; *see* l. 18. 246. Cm. honest; E. honeste. 248. E. selleres. 250. E. lowely. *After* l. 252, Hn. *alone* inserts ll. 252 b and 252 c. 259. Hl. Cm. cloysterer; E. Hn. Cloystre. 260. *So all the MSS.*

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(*but with* -bare); cf. l. 290. 262. *All worstede* (*badly*). 266. Pt. Ln. had;
rest hadde.

A MARCHANT was ther with a forked berd,	MARCHANT.
In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat,	271
Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat;	
His botes clasped faire and fetisly.	
His resons he spak ful solempnely,	
Souninge alway thencrees of his winning.	275
He wolde the see were kept for any thing	
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.	
Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.	(280)
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;	
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,	280
So estatly was he of his governaunce,	
With his bargaynes, and with his chevisaunce.	
For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,	
But sooth to seyn, I noot how men him calle.	

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

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,	CLERK.
That un-to logik hadde longe y-go.	286
As lene was his hors as is a rake,	
And he nas nat right fat, I undertake;	(290)
But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.	
Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy;	290
For he had geten him yet no benefyce,	
Ne was so worldly for to have offyce.	
For him was lever have at his beddes heed	
Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,	
Of Aristotle and his philosophye,	295
Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrye.	
But al be that he was a philosophre,	
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;	(300)
But al that he mighte of his freendes hente,	
On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,	300

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And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye.
Of studie took he most cure and most hede.
Noght o word spak he more than was nede,
And that was seyde in forme and reverence, 305
And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.
Souninge in moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche. (310)

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

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and wys, MAN OF LAWE.
That often hadde been at the parvys, 310
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:
He semed swich, his wordes weren so wyse.
Iustyce he was ful often in assyse,
By patente, and by pleyn commissioun; 315
For his science, and for his heigh renoun
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
So greet a purchasour was no-wher noon. (320)
Al was fee simple to him in effect,
His purchasing mighte nat been infect. 320
No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,
That from the tyme of king William were falle.
Therto he coude endyte, and make a thing, 325
Ther coude no wight pinche at his wryting;
And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
He rood but hoonly in a medlee cote (330)
Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;
Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

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

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A FRANKELEYN was in his companye;	FRANKELEYN.
Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesye.	
Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.	
Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn.	
To liven in delyt was ever his wone,	335
For he was Epicurus owne sone,	
That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt	
Was verrailly felicitee parfyt.	
An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;	(340)
Seint Iulian he was in his contree.	
His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon;	
A bettre envyned man was no-wher noon.	
With-oute bake mete was never his hous,	
Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous,	
It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke,	345
Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.	
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,	
So chaunged he his mete and his soper.	(350)
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,	
And many a breem and many a luce in stewe.	350
Wo was his cook, but-if his sauce were	
Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.	
His table dormant in his halle alway	
Stood redy covered al the longe day.	
At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;	355
Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.	
An anlas and a gipser al of silk	
Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk.	(360)
A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour;	
Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour.	360

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

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An HABERDASSHER and a CARPENTER,	HABAERDASSHER.
A WEBBE, a DYERE, and a TAPICER,	CARPENTER.
Were with us eek, clothed in o liveree,	WEBBE. DYERE.
Of a solempne and greet fraternitee.	TAPICER.
Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked was;	365
Hir knyves were y-chaped noght with bras,	
But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel,	
Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel.	(370)
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,	
To sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys.	370
Everich, for the wisdom that he can,	
Was shaply for to been an alderman.	
For catel hadde they y-nogh and rente,	
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;	
And elles certain were they to blame.	375
It is ful fair to been y-clept " <i>ma dame</i> ,"	
And goon to vigilyës al bifore,	
And have a mantel royalliche y-bore.	(380)

363. *So* Hl.; *rest* And they were clothed alle. 364. *All but* Hl. and a. 366. Hl. I-chapud; Cm. chapid; *rest* chaped. 370. E. yeldehalle. 376. E. Hn. ycleped; Hl. clept; *rest* cleped, clepid. 380. Hl. *om.* 1st the.

A COOK they hadde with hem for the nones,	COOK.
To boille the chiknes with the mary-bones,	380
And poudre-marchant tart, and galingale.	
Wel coude he knowe a draughte of London ale.	
He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,	
Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.	
But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,	385
That on his shine a mormal hadde he;	
For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.	(389)

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

A SHIPMAN was ther, woning fer by weste:	SHIPMAN.
For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouth.	

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He rood up-on a rouncy, as he couthe, 390
 In a gowne of falding to the knee.
 A daggere hanging on a laas hadde he
 Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
 The hote somer had maad his hewe al broun;
 And, certainly, he was a good felawe. 395
 Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawe
 From Burdeux-ward, whyl that the chapman sleep.
 Of nyce conscience took he no keep. (400)
 If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
 By water he sente hem hoom to every lond. 400
 But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
 His stremes and his daungers him bisydes,
 His herberwe and his mone, his lodemenage,
 Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.
 Hardy he was, and wys to undertake; 405
 With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.
 He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,
 From Gootlond to the cape of Finistere, (410)
 And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne;
 His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne. 410

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

With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF PHISYK, DOCTOUR.
 In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk
 To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
 For he was grounded in astronomye.
 He kepte his pacient a ful greet del 415
 In houres, by his magik naturel.
 Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
 Of his images for his pacient. (420)
 He knew the cause of everich maladye,
 Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or drye, 420
 And where engendred, and of what humour;
 He was a verrey parfit practisour.
 The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the rote,
 Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.

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Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries, 425
 To sende him drogges and his letuaries,
 For ech of hem made other for to winne;
 Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne. (430)
 Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,
 And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus, 430
 Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;
 Serapion, Razis, and Avicen;
 Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn;
 Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
 Of his diete mesurable was he, 435
 For it was of no superfluitee,
 But of greet norissing and digestible.
 His studie was but litel on the Bible. (440)
 In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,
 Lyned with taffata and with sendal; 440
 And yet he was but esy of dispence;
 He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
 For gold in phisik is a cordial,
 Therfore he lovede gold in special.

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

A good WYF was ther of bisyde BATHE, WYF OF BATHE.
 But she was som-del deaf, and that was scathe. 446
 Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,
 She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt. (450)
 In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
 That to the offring bfore hir sholde goon; 450
 And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she,
 That she was out of alle charitee.
 Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground;
 I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
 That on a Sonday were upon hir heed. 455

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Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
 Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and newe.
 Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe. (460)
 She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
 Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve, 460
 Withouten other companye in youthe;
 But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.
 And thryes hadde she been at Ierusalem;
 She hadde passed many a straunge strem;
 At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne, 465
 In Galice at seint Iame, and at Coloigne.
 She coude muche of wandring by the weye.
 Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye. (470)
 Up-on an amblere esily she sat,
 Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat 470
 As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
 A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,
 And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
 In felawschip wel coude she laughe and carpe.
 Of remedyes of love she knew per-chaunce, 475
 For she coude of that art the olde daunce.

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

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre PERSON of a toun;
But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
His parissheis devoutly wolde he teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient;
And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.
Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes,
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,

PERSOUN.
(480)

480

485

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Un-to his povre parisshe aboute (490)
 Of his offring, and eek of his substaunce.
 He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce. 490
 Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder,
 But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
 In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte
 The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte,
 Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf. 495
 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
 That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte;
 Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte; (500)
 And this figure he added eek ther-to,
 That if gold ruste, what shal iren do? 500
 For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
 No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
 And shame it is, if a preest take keep,
 A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
 Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive, 505
 By his clenness, how that his sheep shold live.
 He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
 And leet his sheep encombred in the myre, (510)
 And ran to London, un-to sēynt Poules,
 To seken him a chaunterie for soules, 510
 Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;
 But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,
 So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie;
 He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
 And though he holy were, and vertuous, 515
 He was to sinful man nat despitous,
 Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
 But in his teching discreet and benigne. (520)
 To drawen folk to heven by fairnesse
 By good ensample, was his bisnesse: 520
 But it were any persone obstinat,
 What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
 Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.
 A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher noon is.
 He wayted after no pompe and reverence, 525

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Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taughte, and first he folwed it him-selve. (530)

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

With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother, PLOWMAN.
That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother, 530
A trewe swinker and a good was he,
Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.
God loved he best with al his hole herte
At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,
And thanne his neighebour right as him-selve. 535
He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and delve,
For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might. (540)
His tythes payed he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propre swink and his catel. 540
In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

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

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

The MILLER was a stout carl, for the nones, MILLER.
Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones; 546
That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,
At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram. (550)

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He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,
 Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre, 550
 Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.
 His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
 And ther-to brood, as though it were a spade.
 Up-on the cop right of his nose he hade
 A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres, 555
 Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres;
 His nose-thirles blake were and wyde.
 A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde; (560)
 His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
 He was a langlere and a goliardeys, 560
 And that was most of sinne and harlotryes.
 Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen thryes;
 And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
 A whyt cote and a blew hood wered he.
 A baggepype wel coude he blowe and sowne, 565
 And ther-with-al he broghte us out of towne.

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

A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple, MAUNCIPLE.
 Of which achatours mighte take exemple (570)
 For to be wyse in bying of vitaille.
 For whether that he payde, or took by taille, 570
 Algate he wayted so in his achat,
 That he was ay biforn and in good stat.
 Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
 That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
 The wisdom of an heep of lerned men? 575
 Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten,
 That were of lawe expert and curious;
 Of which ther were a doseyn in that hous, (580)
 Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and lond
 Of any lord that is in Engelond, 580

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To make him live by his propre good,
 In honour dettelees, but he were wood,
 Or live as scarsly as him list desire;
 And able for to helpen al a shire
 In any cas that mighte falle or happe; 585
 And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe.

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

The REVE was a sclendre colerik man,	REVE.
His berd was shave as ny as ever he can.	(590)
His heer was by his eres round y-shorn.	
His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.	590
Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,	
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.	
Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne;	
Ther was noon auditour coude on him winne.	
Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the reyn,	595
The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.	
His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,	
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye,	(600)
Was hoolly in this reves governing,	
And by his covenaut yaf the rekening,	600
Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age;	
Ther coude no man bringe him in arrerage.	
Ther nas baillif, ne herde, ne other hyne,	
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;	
They were adrad of him, as of the deeth.	605
His woning was ful fair up-on an heeth,	
With grene treës shadwed was his place.	
He coude better than his lord purchase.	(610)
Ful riche he was astored prively,	
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly,	610
To yeve and lene him of his owne good,	
And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.	
In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister;	

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He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
 This reve sat up-on a ful good stot, 615
 That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.
 A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,
 And by his syde he bar a rusty blade. (620)
 Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,
 Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle. 620
 Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,
 And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.

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

A SOMNOUR was ther with us in that place, SOMNOUR.
 That hadde a fyr-reed cherubinnes face,
 For sawcefleem he was, with eyen narwe. 625
 As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe;
 With scalled browes blake, and piled berd;
 Of his visage children were aferd. (630)
 Ther nas quik-silver, litarge, ne brimstoon,
 Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon, 630
 Ne oynement that wolde dense and byte,
 That him mighte helpen of his whelkes whyte,
 Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.
 Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
 And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as blood. 635
 Thanne wolde he speke, and crye as he were wood.
 And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
 Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn. (640)
 A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,
 That he had lerned out of som decree; 640
 No wonder is, he herde it al the day;
 And eek ye knowen wel, how that a lay
 Can clepen 'Watte,' as well as can the pope.

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But who-so coude in other thing him grope,
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye; 645
 Ay '*Questio quid iuris*' wolde he crye.
 He was a gentil harlot and a kinde;
 A bettre felawe sholde men noght finde. (650)
 He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,
 A good felawe to have his concubyn 650
 A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle:
 Ful prively a finch eek coude he pulle.
 And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,
 He wolde techen him to have non awe,
 In swich cas, of the erchedeknes curs, 655
 But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;
 For in his purs he sholde y-punissshed be.
 'Purs is the erchedeknes helle,' seyde he. (660)
 But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;
 Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede— 660
 For curs wol slee, right as assoilling saveth—
 And also war him of a *significavit*.
 In daunger hadde he at his owne gyse
 The yonge girles of the diocyse,
 And knew hir counseil, and was al hir reed. 665
 A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,
 As greet as it were for an ale-stake;
 A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake. (670)

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

With him ther rood a gentil PARDONER PARDONER.
 Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer, 670
 That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
 Ful loude he song, 'Com hider, love, to me.'
 This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,
 Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.

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This pardoner hadde heer as yellow as wex, 675
But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike of flex;
By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
And ther-with he his shuldres overspradde; (680)
But thinne it lay, by colpons oon and oon;
But hood, for Iolitee, ne wered he noon, 680
For it was trussed up in his walet.
Him thoughte, he rood al of the newe let;
Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.
A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe. 685
His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,
Bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.
A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot. (690)
No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,
As smothe it was as it were late y-shave; 690
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.
But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,
Ne was ther swich another pardoner.
For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,
Which that, he seyde, was our lady veyl: 695
He seyde, he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That sēynt Peter hadde, whan that he wente
Up-on the see, til Iesu Crist him hente. (700)
He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones. 700
But with thise reliques, whan that he fond
A povre person dwelling up-on lond,
Up-on a day he gat him more moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.
And thus, with feyned flaterye and lapes, 705
He made the person and the peple his apes.
But trewely to tellen, atte laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste. (710)
Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest he song an offertorie; 710
For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
He moste preche, and wel affyle his tonge,

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To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;
Therefore he song so meriely and loude.

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

Now have I told you shortly, in a clause, 715
 Thestat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the cause
 Why that assembled was this companye
 In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye, (720)
 That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
 But now is tyme to yow for to telle 720
 How that we baren us that ilke night,
 Whan we were in that hostelrye alight.
 And after wol I telle of our viage,
 And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.
 But first I pray yow, of your curteisye, 725
 That ye narette it nat my vileinye,
 Thogh that I pleyntyly speke in this matere,
 To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere; (730)
 Ne thogh I speke hir wordes properly.
 For this ye knowen al-so wel as I, 730
 Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,
 He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,
 Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
 Al speke he never so rudeliche and large;
 Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe, 735
 Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe.
 He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his brother;
 He moot as wel seye o word as another. (740)
 Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,
 And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it. 740
 Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him rede,
 The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.

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Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Here in this tale, as that they sholde stonde; 745
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.

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

Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,
And to the soper sette he us anon; (750)
And served us with vitaille at the beste.
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us leste. 750
A semely man our hoste was with-alle
For to han been a marshal in an halle;
A large man he was with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:
Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught, 755
And of manhod him lakkede right naught.
Eek therto he was right a mery man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan, (760)
And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,
Whan that we hadde maad our rekeninges; 760
And seyde thus: 'Now, lordinges, trewely,
Ye been to me right welcome hertely:
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye
At ones in this herberwe as is now. 765
Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.
And of a mirthe I am right now bithoght,
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght. (770)

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

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Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow spede,
The blisful martir quyte yow your mede. 770
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;
For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon
To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon;
And therfore wol I maken yow disport, 775
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.
And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,
Now for to stonden at my Iugement, (780)
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye, 780
Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,
But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed.
Hold up your hond, withouten more speche.'

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

Our counseil was nat longe for to seche;
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys, 785
And graunted him withouten more avys,
And bad him seye his verdit, as him leste.

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

'Lordinges,' quod he, 'now herkneth for the beste; (790)
But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn, 790
That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye,
In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,
Of adventures that whylom han bifalle. 795
And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,
That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of best sentence and most solas, (800)

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Shal have a soper at our aller cost
Here in this place, sitting by this post, 800
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
And for to make yow the more mery,
I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,
Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde.
And who-so wol my Iugement withseye 805
Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo, (810)
And I wol erly shape me therfore.'

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

This thing was graunted, and our othes swore 810
With ful glad herte, and preyden him also
That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,
And that he wolde been our governour,
And of our tales luge and reportour,
And sette a soper at a certeyn prys; 815
And we wold reuled been at his devys,
In heigh and lowe; and thus, by oon assent,
We been acorded to his Iugement. (820)
And ther-up-on the wyn was fet anon;
We dronken, and to reste wente echon, 820
With-outen any lenger tarynge.

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

A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,
Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,
And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,
And forth we riden, a litel more than pas, 825
Un-to the watering of saint Thomas.

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And there our host bigan his hors areste,
And seyde; 'Lordinges, herkneth, if yow leste. (830)
Ye woot your forward, and I it yow recorde.
If even-song and morwe-song acorde, 830
Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.
As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,
Who-so be rebel to my Iugement
Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent.
Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twinne; 835
He which that hath the shortest shal biginne.
Sire knight,' quod he, 'my maister and my lord,
Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord. (840)
Cometh neer,' quod he, 'my lady prioresse;
And ye, sir clerk, lat be your shamfastnesse, 840
Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man.'

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

Anon to drawen every wight bigan,
And shortly for to tellen, as it was,
Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,
The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knight, 845
Of which ful blythe and glad was every wight;
And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,
By forward and by composicioun, (850)
As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?
And whan this gode man saugh it was so, 850
As he that wys was and obedient
To kepe his forward by his free assent,
He seyde: 'Sin I shal biginne the game,
What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!
Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye.' 855

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

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And with that word we riden forth our weye;
And he bigan with right a mery chere
His tale anon, and seyde in this manere. (860)

HERE ENDETH THE PROLOG OF THIS BOOK; AND HERE
BIGINNETH THE FIRST TALE, WHICH IS THE KNIGHTES TALE.

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

THE KNIGHTES TALE.

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

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

Whylom, as olde stories tellen us,
Ther was a duk that highte Theseus; 860
Of Athenes he was lord and governour,
And in his tyme swich a conquerour,
That gretter was ther noon under the sonne.
Ful many a riche contree hadde he wonne;
What with his wisdom and his chivalrye, 865
He conquered al the regne of Femenye,
That whylom was y-cleped Scithia;
And weddede the quene Ipolita, (10)
And broghte hir hoom with him in his contree
With muchel glorie and greet solemprnitee, 870
And eek hir yonge suster Emelye.
And thus with victorie and with melodye
Lete I this noble duk to Athenes ryde,
And al his hoost, in armes, him bisyde.

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

And certes, if it nere to long to here, 875
I wolde han told yow fully the manere,
How wonnen was the regne of Femenye
By Theseus, and by his chivalrye; (20)
And of the grete bataille for the nones
Bitwixen Athenës and Amazones; 880
And how asseged was Ipolita,
The faire hardy quene of Scithia;
And of the feste that was at hir weddinge,
And of the tempest at hir hoom-cominge;

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But al that thing I moot as now forbere. 885
I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere,
And wayke been the oxen in my plough.
The remenant of the tale is long y-nough. (30)
I wol nat letten eek noon of this route;
Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute, 890
And lat see now who shal the soper winne;
And ther I lefte, I wol ageyn biginne.

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

This duk, of whom I make mencion,
When he was come almost unto the toun,
In al his wele and in his moste pryde, 895
He was war, as he caste his eye asyde,
Wher that ther kneled in the hye weye
A companye of ladies, tweye and tweye, (40)
Ech after other, clad in clothes blake;
But swich a cry and swich a wo they make, 900
That in this world nis creature livinge,
That herde swich another weymentinge;
And of this cry they nolde never stenten,
Til they the reynes of his brydel henten.

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

‘What folk ben ye, that at myn hoom-cominge 905
Perturben so my feste with cryinge?’
Quod Theseus, ‘have ye so greet envye
Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and crye? (50)
Or who hath yow misboden, or offended?
And telleth me if it may been amended; 910
And why that ye ben clothed thus in blak?’

The eldest lady of hem alle spak,

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When she hadde swowned with a deedly chere,
 That it was routhe for to seen and here,
 And seyde: 'Lord, to whom Fortune hath yiven 915
 Victorie, and as a conquerour to liven,
 Noght greveth us your glorie and your honour;
 But we biseken mercy and socour. (60)
 Have mercy on our wo and our distresse.
 Som drope of pitee, thurgh thy gentillesse, 920
 Up-on us wrecched wommen lat thou falle.
 For certes, lord, ther nis noon of us alle,
 That she nath been a duchesse or a quene;
 Now be we caitifs, as it is wel sene:
 Thanked be Fortune, and hir false wheel, 925
 That noon estat assureth to be weel.
 And certes, lord, to abyden your presence,
 Here in the temple of the goddesse Clemence (70)
 We han ben waytinge al this fourtenight;
 Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy might. 930

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

I wrecche, which that wepe and waille thus,
 Was whylom wyf to king Capaneus,
 That starf at Thebes, cursed be that day!
 And alle we, that been in this array,
 And maken al this lamentacioun, 935
 We losten alle our housbondes at that toun,
 Whyl that the sege ther-about lay.
 And yet now the olde Creon, weylaway! (80)
 That lord is now of Thebes the citee,
 Fulfil of ire and of iniquitee, 940
 He, for despyt, and for his tirannye,
 To do the dede bodyes vileinye,
 Of alle our lordes, whiche that ben slawe,

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Hath alle the bodyes on an heep y-drawe,
And wol nat suffren hem, by noon assent, 945
Neither to been y-buried nor y-brent,
But maketh houndes ete hem in despyt.
And with that word, with-oute more respyt, (90)
They fillen gruf, and cryden pitously,
'Have on us wrecched wommen som mercy, 950
And lat our sorwe sinken in thyn herte.'

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

This gentil duk down from his courser sterte
With herte pitous, whan he herde hem speke.
Him thoughte that his herte wolde breke,
Whan he saugh hem so pitous and so mat, 955
That whylom weren of so greet estat.
And in his armes he hem alle up hente,
And hem conforteth in ful good entente; (100)
And swoor his ooth, as he was trewe knight,
He wolde doon so ferforthly his might 960
Up-on the tyraunt Creon hem to wreke,
That al the peple of Grece sholde speke
How Creon was of Theseus y-served,
As he that hadde his deeth ful wel deserved.
And right anoon, with-oute more abood, 965
His baner he desplayeth, and forth rood
To Thebes-ward, and al his host bisyde;
No neer Athenës wolde he go ne ryde, (110)
Ne take his ese fully half a day,
But onward on his wey that night he lay; 970
And sente anoon Ipolita the quene,
And Emelye hir yonge suster shene,
Un-to the toun of Athenës to dwelle;
And forth he rit; ther nis namore to telle.

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

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The rede statue of Mars, with spere and targe, 975
So shyneth in his whyte baner large,
That alle the feeldes gliteren up and doun;
And by his baner born is his penoun (120)
Of gold ful riche, in which ther was y-bete
The Minotaur, which that he slough in Crete. 980
Thus rit this duk, thus rit this conquerour,
And in his host of chivalrye the flour,
Til that he cam to Thebes, and alighte
Faire in a feeld, ther as he thoghte fighte.
But shortly for to speken of this thing, 985
With Creon, which that was of Thebes king,
He faught, and slough him manly as a knight
In pleyen bataille, and putte the folk to flight; (130)
And by assaut he wan the citee after,
And rente adoun bothe wal, and sparre, and rafter; 990
And to the ladyes he restored agayn
The bones of hir housbondes that were slayn,
To doon obsequies, as was tho the gyse.
But it were al to long for to devyse
The grete clamour and the waymentinge 995
That the ladyes made at the brenninge
Of the bodyes, and the grete honour
That Theseus, the noble conquerour, (140)
Doth to the ladyes, whan they from him wente;
But shortly for to telle is myn entente. 1000
Whan that this worthy duk, this Theseus,
Hath Creon slayn, and wonne Thebes thus,
Stille in that feeld he took al night his reste,
And dide with al the contree as him leste.

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

To ransake in the tas of bodyes dede, 1005
Hem for to strepe of harneys and of wede,
The pilours didnen businesse and cure,
After the bataille and disconfiture. (150)
And so bifel, that in the tas they founde,

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Thurgh-girt with many a grevous bloody wounde, 1010
 Two yonge knightes ligging by and by,
 Bothe in oon armes, wroght ful richely,
 Of whiche two, Arcita hight that oon,
 And that other knight hight Palamon.
 Nat fully quike, ne fully dede they were, 1015
 But by hir cote-armures, and by hir gere,
 The heraudes knewe hem best in special,
 As they that weren of the blood royal (160)
 Of Thebes, and of sustren two y-born.
 Out of the tas the pilours han hem torn, 1020
 And han hem caried softe un-to the tente
 Of Theseus, and he ful sone hem sente
 To Athenës, to dwellen in prisoun
 Perpetuely, he nolde no raunsoun.
 And whan this worthy duk hath thus y-don, 1025
 He took his host, and hoom he rood anon
 With laurer crowned as a conquerour;
 And there he liveth, in loye and in honour, (170)
 Terme of his lyf; what nedeth wordes mo?
 And in a tour, in angwish and in wo, 1030
 Dwellen this Palamoun and eek Arcite,
 For evermore, ther may no gold hem quyte.

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

This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by day,
 Til it fil ones, in a morwe of May,
 That Emelye, that fairer was to sene 1035
 Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene,
 And fressher than the May with floures newe—
 For with the rose colour stroof hir hewe, (180)
 I noot which was the fairer of hem two—
 Er it were day, as was hir wone to do, 1040
 She was arisen, and al redy dight;

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For May wol have no slogardye a-night.
The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,
And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,
And seith, 'Arys, and do thyn observaunce.' 1045
This maked Emelye have remembraunce
To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.
Y-clothed was she fresh, for to devyse; (190)
Hir yelow heer was broyded in a tresse,
Bihinde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse. 1050
And in the gardin, at the sonne up-riste,
She walketh up and down, and as hir liste
She gadereth floures, party whyte and rede,
To make a sotil gerland for hir hede,
And as an aungel heavenly she song. 1055
The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun,
(Ther-as the knyghtes weren in prisoun, (200)
Of whiche I tolde yow, and tellen shal)
Was evene loynant to the gardin-wal, 1060
Ther as this Emelye hadde hir pleyinge.
Bright was the sonne, and cleer that morweninge,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,
Was risen, and romed in a chambre on heigh, 1065
In which he al the noble citee seigh,
And eek the gardin, ful of braunches grene,
Ther-as this fresshe Emelye the shene (210)
Was in hir walk, and romed up and down.
This sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun, 1070
Goth in the chambre, roming to and fro,
And to him-self compleyning of his wo;
That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, 'alas!'
And so bifel, by aventure or cas,
That thurgh a window, thikke of many a barre 1075
Of yren greet, and square as any sparre,
He caste his eye upon Emelya,
And ther-with-al he bleynte, and cryde 'a!' (220)
As though he stongen were un-to the herte.

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And with that cry Arcite anon up-sterste, 1080
 And seyde, 'Cosin myn, what eyleth thee,
 That art so pale and deedly on to see?
 Why crydestow? who hath thee doon offence?
 For Goddes love, tak al in pacience
 Our prisoun, for it may non other be; 1085
 Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.
 Som wikke aspect or disposicioun
 Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun, (230)
 Hath yeven us this, al-though we hadde it sworn;
 So stood the heven whan that we were born; 1090
 We moste endure it: this is the short and pleyн.'

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

This Palamon answerde, and seyde ageyn,
 'Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinioun
 Thou hast a veyn imaginacioun.
 This prison caused me nat for to crye. 1095
 But I was hurt right now thurgh-out myн yë
 In-to myн herte, that wol my бane be.
 The fairnesse of that lady that I see (240)
 Yond in the gardin romen to and fro,
 Is cause of al my crying and my wo. 1100
 I noot wher she be womman or goddesse;
 But Venus is it, soothly, as I gesse.'
 And ther-with-al on kneës doun he fil,
 And seyde: 'Venus, if it be thy wil
 Yow in this gardin thus to transfigure 1105
 Bifore me, sorweful wrecche creature,
 Out of this prisoun help that we may scapen.
 And if so be my destinee be shapen (250)
 By eterne word to dyen in prisoun,

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Of our linage have som compassioun, 1110
That is so lowe y-broght by tirannye.
And with that word Arcite gan espye
Wher-as this lady romed to and fro.
And with that sighte hir beautee hurte him so,
That, if that Palamon was wounded sore, 1115
Arcite is hurt as muche as he, or more.
And with a sigh he seyde pitously:
'The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly (260)
Of hir that rometh in the yonder place;
And, but I have hir mercy and hir grace, 1120
That I may seen hir atte leeste weye,
I nam but deed; ther nis namore to seye.'

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

This Palamon, whan he tho wordes herde,
Dispitously he loked, and answerde:
'Whether seistow this in earnest or in pley?' 1125

1125 E. Wheither.

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

This Palamon gan knitte his browes tweye: (270)
'It nere,' quod he, 'to thee no greet honour
For to be fals, ne for to be traytour 1130
To me, that am thy cosin and thy brother
Y-sworn ful depe, and ech of us til other,
That never, for to dyen in the peyne,
Til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne,
Neither of us in love to hindren other, 1135
Ne in non other cas, my leve brother;
But that thou sholdest trewely forthren me
In every cas, and I shal forthren thee. (280)

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This was thyn ooth, and myn also, certeyn;
 I wot right wel, thou darst it nat withseyn. 1140
 Thus artow of my counseil, out of doute.
 And now thou woldest falsly been aboute
 To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
 And ever shal, til that myn herte sterve.
 Now certes, fals Arcite, thou shalt nat so. 1145
 I loved hir first, and tolde thee my wo
 As to my counseil, and my brother sworn
 To forthre me, as I have told biforn. (290)
 For which thou art y-bounden as a knight
 To helpen me, if it lay in thy might, 1150
 Or elles artow fals, I dar wel seyn.'

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

This Arcitè ful proudly spak ageyn,
 'Thou shalt,' quod he, 'be rather fals than I;
 But thou art fals, I telle thee utterly;
 For *par amour* I loved hir first er thow. 1155
 What wiltow seyn? thou wistest nat yet now
 Whether she be a womman or goddesse!
 Thyn is affecciou of holinesse, (300)
 And myn is love, as to a creature;
 For which I tolde thee myn aventure 1160
 As to my cosin, and my brother sworn.
 I pose, that thou lovedest hir biforn;
 Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,
 That 'who shal yeve a lover any lawe?'
 Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan, 1165
 Than may be yeve to any erthly man.
 And therefore positif lawe and swich decree
 Is broke al-day for love, in ech degree. (310)
 A man moot nedes love, maugree his heed.
 He may nat fleen it, thogh he sholde be deed, 1170
 Al be she mayde, or widwe, or elles wyf.

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And eek it is nat lykly, al thy lyf,
 To stonden in hir grace; namore shal I;
 For wel thou woost thy-selven, verrailly,
 That thou and I be dampned to prisoun 1175
 Perpetuelly; us gayneth no raunsoun.
 We stryve as dide the houndes for the boon,
 They foughte al day, and yet hir part was noon; (320)
 Ther cam a kyte, whyl that they were wrothe,
 And bar away the boon bitwixe hem bothe. 1180
 And therefore, at the kinges court, my brother,
 Ech man for him-self, ther is non other.
 Love if thee list; for I love and ay shal;
 And soothly, leve brother, this is al.
 Here in this prisoun mote we endure, 1185
 And everich of us take his aventure.'

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

Greet was the stryf and long bitwixe hem tweye,
 If that I hadde leyser for to seye; (330)
 But to theeffect. It happed on a day,
 (To telle it yow as shortly as I may) 1190
 A worthy duk that highte Perotheus,
 That felawe was un-to duk Theseus
 Sin thilke day that they were children lyte,
 Was come to Athenes, his felawe to visyte,
 And for to pleye, as he was wont to do, 1195
 For in this world he loved no man so:
 And he loved him as tendrely ageyn.
 So wel they loved, as olde bokes seyn, (340)
 That whan that oon was deed, sothly to telle,
 His felawe wente and soghte him doun in helle; 1200
 But of that story list me nat to wryte.

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Duk Perotheus loved wel Arcite,
 And hadde him knowe at Thebes yeer by yeer;
 And fynally, at requeste and preyere
 Of Perotheus, with-oute any raunsoun, 1205
 Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoun,
 Freely to goon, wher that him liste over-al,
 In swich a gyse, as I you tellen shal. (350)
 This was the forward, pleyedly for tendyte,
 Bitwixen Theseus and him Arcite: 1210
 That if so were, that Arcite were y-founde
 Ever in his lyf, by day or night or stounde
 In any contree of this Theseus,
 And he were caught, it was acorded thus,
 That with a swerd he sholde lese his heed; 1215
 Ther nas non other remedye ne reed,
 But taketh his leve, and homward he him spedde;
 Let him be war, his nekke lyth to wedde! (360)

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

How greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite!
 The deeth he feleth thurgh his herte smyte; 1220
 He wepeth, wayleth, cryeth pitously;
 To sleen him-self he wayteth prively.
 He seyde, 'Allas that day that I was born!
 Now is my prison worse than biforn;
 Now is me shape eternally to dwelle 1225
 Noght in purgatorie, but in helle.
 Allas! that ever knew I Perotheus!
 For elles hadde I dwelled with Theseus (370)
 Y-fetered in his prisoun ever-mo.
 Than hadde I been in blisse, and nat in wo. 1230
 Only the sighte of hir, whom that I serve,
 Though that I never hir grace may deserve,
 Wolde han suffised right y-nough for me.

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O dere cosin Palamon,' quod he,
 'Thyn is the victorie of this aventure, 1235
 Ful blisfully in prison maistow dure;
 In prison? certes nay, but in paradys!
 Wel hath fortune y-turned thee the dys, (380)
 That hast the sighte of hir, and I thabsence.
 For possible is, sin thou hast hir presence, 1240
 And art a knight, a worthy and an able,
 That by som cas, sin fortune is chaungeable,
 Thou mayst to thy desyr som-tyme atteyne.
 But I, that am exyled, and bareyne
 Of alle grace, and in so greet despeir, 1245
 That ther nis erthe, water, fyr, ne eir,
 Ne creature, that of hem maked is,
 That may me helpe or doon confort in this. (390)
 Wel oughte I sterve in wanhope and distresse;
 Farwel my lyf, my lust, and my gladnesse! 1250

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

Allas, why pleynten folk so in commune
 Of purveyaunce of God, or of fortune,
 That yeveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse
 Wel bettre than they can hem-self devyse?
 Som man desyreth for to han richesse, 1255
 That cause is of his mordre or greet siknesse.
 And som man wolde out of his prison fayn,
 That in his hous is of his meynee slayn. (400)
 Infinite harmes been in this matere;
 We witen nat what thing we preyen here. 1260
 We faren as he that dronke is as a mous;
 A dronke man wot wel he hath an hous,
 But he noot which the righte wey is thider;
 And to a dronke man the wey is slider.
 And certes, in this world so faren we; 1265
 We seken faste after felicitee,

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But we goon wrong ful often, trewely.
Thus may we seyen alle, and namely I, (410)
That wende and hadde a greet opinioun,
That, if I mighte escapen from prisoun, 1270
Than hadde I been in Ioye and perfit hele,
Ther now I am exyled fro my wele.
Sin that I may nat seen yow, Emelye,
I nam but deed; ther nis no remedye.'

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

Up-on that other syde Palamon, 1275
Whan that he wiste Arcite was agon,
Swich sorwe he maketh, that the grete tour
Resouneth of his youling and clamour. (420)
The pure fettres on his shines grete
Weren of his bittre salte teres wete. 1280
'Allas!' quod he, 'Arcita, cosin myn,
Of al our stryf, God woot, the fruyt is thyn.
Thow walkest now in Thebes at thy large,
And of my wo thou yevest litel charge.
Thou mayst, sin thou hast wisdom and manhede, 1285
Assemblen alle the folk of our kinrede,
And make a werre so sharp on this citee,
That by som aventure, or som tretee, (430)
Thou mayst have hir to lady and to wyf,
For whom that I mot nedes lese my lyf. 1290
For, as by wey of possibilitee,
Sith thou art at thy large, of prison free,
And art a lord, greet is thyn avauntage,
More than is myn, that sterve here in a cage.
For I mot wepe and wayle, whyl I live, 1295
With al the wo that prison may me yive,
And eek with peyne that love me yiveth also,
That doubleth al my torment and my wo.' (440)
Ther-with the fyr of Ielousye up-sterste

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With-inne his brest, and hente him by the herte 1300
 So woodly, that he lyk was to biholde
 The box-tree, or the asshe dede and colde.
 Tho seyde he; 'O cruel goddes, that governe
 This world with binding of your word eterne,
 And wryten in the table of athamaunt 1305
 Your parlement, and your eterne graunt,
 What is mankinde more un-to yow holde
 Than is the sheep, that rouketh in the folde? (450)
 For slayn is man right as another beste,
 And dwelleth eek in prison and areste, 1310
 And hath siknesse, and greet adversitee,
 And ofte tymes giltelees, pardee!

1278. E. Resouned; *rest* Resouneth. Cp. Hl. yollyng; Pt. Ln. yelling.
 1290. *All* moste, most, muste; *but read* mot: *see* l. 1295. 1296. Hl. ȝyue;
 E. yeue. 1297. E. yeueth. 1299. Hl. Ielousye; E. Ialousie. 1303. Hl. Tho;
 E. Thanne. E. crueel gooddes(!). 1305. Hl. Cm. athamaunte; E.
 Atthamaunt. 1309. Cm. Hl. beste; E. beest. 1310. Cm. areste; Hl.
 arreste; E. arreest. 1312, 1314. Cm. Cp. Hl. gilteles; E. giltlees.

What governaunce is in this prescience,
 That giltelees tormenteth innocence?
 And yet encreseth this al my penaunce, 1315
 That man is bounden to his observaunce,
 For Goddes sake, to letten of his wille,
 Ther as a beest may al his lust fulfille. (460)
 And whan a beest is deed, he hath no peyne;
 But man after his deeth moot wepe and pleyne, 1320
 Though in this world he have care and wo:
 With-uten doute it may stonden so.
 The answeere of this I lete to divynis,
 But wel I woot, that in this world gret pyne is.
 Allas! I see a serpent or a theef, 1325
 That many a trewe man hath doon mescheef,
 Goon at his large, and wher him list may turne.
 But I mot been in prison thurgh Saturne, (470)
 And eek thurgh Iuno, Ialous and eek wood,

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That hath destroyed wel ny al the blood 1330
Of Thebes, with his waste walles wyde.
And Venus sleeth me on that other syde
For Ielousye, and fere of him Arcite.'

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

Now wol I stinte of Palamon a lyte,
And lete him in his prison stille dwelle, 1335
And of Arcita forth I wol yow telle.

The somer passeth, and the nightes longe
Encresen double wyse the peynes stronge (480)
Bothe of the lovere and the prisoner.
I noot which hath the wofullere mester. 1340
For shortly for to seyn, this Palamoun
Perpetuelly is dampned to prisoun,
In cheynes and in fettres to ben deed;
And Arcite is exyled upon his heed
For ever-mo as out of that contree, 1345
Ne never-mo he shal his lady see.

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

Yow loveres axe I now this questioun,
Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamoun? (490)
That oon may seen his lady day by day,
But in prison he moot dwelle alway. 1350
That other wher him list may ryde or go,
But seen his lady shal he never-mo.
Now demeth as yow liste, ye that can,
For I wol telle forth as I bigan.

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

EXPLICIT PRIMA PARS. SEQUITUR PARS SECUNDA.

Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen was, 1355
 Ful ofte a day he swelte and seyde 'allas,'
 For seen his lady shal he never-mo.
 And shortly to concluden al his wo, (500)
 So muche sorwe had never creature
 That is, or shal, whyl that the world may dure. 1360
 His sleep, his mete, his drink is him biraft,
 That lene he wex, and drye as is a shaft.
 His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde;
 His hewe falwe, and pale as asshen colde,
 And solitarie he was, and ever allone, 1365
 And wailling al the night, making his mone.
 And if he herde song or instrument,
 Then wolde he wepe, he mighte nat be stent; (510)
 So feble eek were his spirits, and so lowe,
 And chaunged so, that no man coude knowe 1370
 His speche nor his vois, though men it herde.
 And in his gere, for al the world he ferde
 Nat oonly lyk the loveres maladye
 Of Hereos, but rather lyk manye
 Engendred of humour malencolyk, 1375
 Biforen, in his celle fantasyk.
 And shortly, turned was al up-so-doun
 Bothe habit and eek disposicioun (520)
 Of him, this woful love-re daun Arcite.

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

What sholde I al-day of his wo endyte? 1380
 Whan he endured hadde a yeer or two
 This cruel torment, and this peyne and wo,
 At Thebes, in his contree, as I seyde,
 Up-on a night, in sleep as he him leyde,

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Him thoughte how that the winged god Mercurie 1385
Biforn him stood, and bad him to be murye.
His slepy yerde in hond he bar uprighte;
An hat he werede up-on his heres brighte. (530)
Arrayed was this god (as he took keep)
As he was whan that Argus took his sleep; 1390
And seyde him thus: 'To Athenes shaltou wende;
Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende.'
And with that word Arcite wook and sterte.
'Now trewely, how sore that me smerte,'
Quod he, 'to Athenes right now wol I fare; 1395
Ne for the drede of deeth shal I nat spare
To see my lady, that I love and serve;
In hir presence I recche nat to sterve.' (540)

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

And with that word he caughte a greet mirour,
And saugh that chaunged was al his colour, 1400
And saugh his visage al in another kinde.
And right anoon it ran him in his minde,
That, sith his face was so disfigured
Of maladye, the which he hadde endured,
He mighte wel, if that he bar him lowe, 1405
Live in Athenes ever-more unknowe,
And seen his lady wel ny day by day.
And right anon he chaunged his array, (550)
And cladde him as a povre laborer,
And al allone, save oonly a squyer, 1410
That knew his privetee and al his cas,
Which was disgysed povrely, as he was,
To Athenes is he goon the nexte way.
And to the court he wente up-on a day,
And at the gate he profreth his servyse, 1415
To drugge and drawe, what so men wol devyse.
And shortly of this matere for to seyn,
He fil in office with a chamberleyn, (560)

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The which that dwelling was with Emelye.
 For he was wys, and coude soon aspye 1420
 Of every servaunt, which that serveth here.
 Wel coude he hewen wode, and water bere,
 For he was yong and mighty for the nones,
 And ther-to be was strong and big of bones
 To doon that any wight can him devyse. 1425
 A yeer or two he was in this servyse,
 Page of the chambre of Emelye the brighte;
 And 'Philostrate' he seide that he highte. (570)
 But half so wel biloved a man as he
 Ne was ther never in court, of his degree; 1430
 He was so gentil of condicioun,
 That thurghout al the court was his renoun.
 They seyden, that it were a charitee
 That Theseus wolde enhauncen his degree,
 And putten him in worshipful servyse, 1435
 Ther as he mighte his vertu excercyse.
 And thus, with-inne a whyle, his name is spronge
 Bothe of his dedes, and his goode tonge, (580)
 That Theseus hath taken him so neer
 That of his chambre he made him a squyer, 1440
 And yaf him gold to mayntene his degree;
 And eek men broghte him out of his contree
 From yeer to yeer, ful prively, his rente;
 But honestly and slyly he it spente,
 That no man wondred how that he it hadde. 1445
 And three yeer in this wyse his lyf he ladde,
 And bar him so in pees and eek in werre,
 Ther nas no man that Theseus hath derre. (590)
 And in this blisse lete I now Arcite,
 And speke I wol of Palamon a lyte. 1450

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

In derknesse and horrible and strong prisoun
 This seven yeer hath seten Palamoun,

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Forpyned, what for wo and for distresse;
Who feleth double soor and hevynesse
But Palamon? that love destreyneth so, 1455
That wood out of his wit he gooth for wo;
And eek therto he is a prisoner
Perpetuelly, noght oonly for a yeer. (600)
Who coude ryme in English proprely
His martirdom? for sothe, it am nat I; 1460
Therefore I passe as lightly as I may.

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

It fel that in the seventhe yeer, in May,
The thridde night, (as olde bokes seyn,
That al this storie tellen more pleyn,)
Were it by aventure or destinee, 1465
(As, whan a thing is shapen, it shal be,)
That, sone after the midnight, Palamoun,
By helping of a freend, brak his prisoun, (610)
And fleeth the citee, faste as he may go;
For he had yive his gayler drinke so 1470
Of a clarree, maad of a certeyn wyn,
With nercotikes and opie of Thebes fyn,
That al that night, thogh that men wolde him shake,
The gayler sleep, he mighte nat awake;
And thus he fleeth as faste as ever he may. 1475
The night was short, and faste by the day,
That nedes-cost he moste him-selven hyde,
And til a grove, faste ther besyde, (620)
With dredful foot than stalketh Palamoun.
For shortly, this was his opinioun, 1480
That in that grove he wolde him hyde al day,
And in the night than wolde he take his way
To Thebes-ward, his freendes for to preye
On Theseus to helpe him to werreye;
And shortly, outhur he wolde lese his lyf, 1485
Or winnen Emelye un-to his wyf;
This is theffect and his entente pleyn.

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

Now wol I torne un-to Arcite ageyn, (630)
That litel wiste how ny that was his care,
Til that fortune had broght him in the snare. 1490

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

The bisy larke, messenger of day,
Saluëth in hir song the morwe gray;
And fyry Phebus ryseth up so brighte,
That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,
And with his stremes dryeth in the greves 1495
The silver dropes, hanging on the leues.
And Arcite, that is in the court royal
With Theseus, his squyer principal, (640)
Is risen, and loketh on the myrie day.
And, for to doon his observaunce to May, 1500
Remembring on the poynt of his desyr,
He on a courser, sterling as the fyr,
Is riden in-to the feeldes, him to pleye,
Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye;
And to the grove, of which that I yow tolde, 1505
By aventure, his wey he gan to holde,
To maken him a gerland of the greves,
Were it of wodebinde or hawethorn-leves, (650)
And loude he song ageyn the sonne shene:
'May, with alle thy floures and thy grene, 1510
Wel-come be thou, faire fresshe May,
I hope that I som grene gete may.'
And from his courser, with a lusty herte,
In-to the grove ful hastily he sterte,
And in a path he rometh up and down, 1515
Ther-as, by aventure, this Palamoun
Was in a bush, that no man mighte him see,
For sore afered of his deeth was he. (660)
No-thing ne knew he that it was Arcite:

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God wot he wolde have trowed it ful lyte. 1520
 But sooth is seyð, gon sithen many yeres,
 That 'feeld hath eyen, and the wode hath eres.'
 It is ful fair a man to bere him evene,
 For al-day meteth men at unset stevene.
 Ful litel woot Arcite of his felawe, 1525
 That was so ny to herkennen al his sawe,
 For in the bush he sitteth now ful stille.

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

Whan that Arcite had romed al his fille, (670)
 And songen al the roundel lustily,
 In-to a studie he fil sodeynly, 1530
 As doon thise loveres in hir queynte geres,
 Now in the crope, now down in the breres,
 Now up, now down, as boket in a welle.
 Right as the Friday, soothly for to telle,
 Now it shyneth, now it reyneth faste, 1535
 Right so can gery Venus overcaste
 The hertes of hir folk; right as hir day
 Is gerful, right so chaungeth she array. (680)
 Selde is the Friday al the wyke y-lyke.

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

Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan to syke, 1540
 And sette him down with-uten any more:
 'Alas!' quod he, 'that day that I was bore!
 How longe, Iuno, thurgh thy crueltee,

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Woltow werreyen Thebes the citee?
 Allas! y-brought is to confusioun 1545
 The blood royal of Cadme and Amphioun;
 Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man
 That Thebes bulte, or first the toun bigan, 690
 And of the citee first was crowned king,
 Of his linage am I, and his of-spring 1550
 By verray ligne, as of the stok royal:
 And now I am so caitif and so thral,
 That he, that is my mortal enemy,
 I serve him as his squyer povrely.
 And yet doth Iuno me wel more shame, 1555
 For I dar noght biknowe myn owne name;
 But ther-as I was wont to highte Arcite,
 Now highte I Philostrate, noght worth a myte. 700
 Allas! thou felle Mars, allas! Iuno,
 Thus hath your ire our kinrede al fordo, 1560
 Save only me, and wrecched Palamoun,
 That Theseus martyreth in prisoun.
 And over al this, to sleen me utterly,
 Love hath his fyry dart so brenningly
 Y-stiked thurgh my trewe careful herte, 1565
 That shapen was my deeth erst than my sherte.
 Ye sleen me with your eyen, Emelye;
 Ye been the cause wherfor that I dye. (710)
 Of al the remenant of myn other care
 Ne sette I nat the mountaunce of a tare, 1570
 So that I coude don aught to your plesaunce!
 And with that word he fil down in a traunce
 A longe tyme; and after he up-sterete.

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

This Palamoun, that thoughte that thurgh his herte
 He felte a cold swerd sodeynliche glyde, 1575
 For ire he quook, no lenger wolde he byde.

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And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,
 As he were wood, with face deed and pale, (720)
 He sterte him up out of the buskes thikke,
 And seyde: 'Arcite, false traitour wikke, 1580
 Now artow hent, that lovest my lady so,
 For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,
 And art my blood, and to my counseil sworn,
 As I ful ofte have told thee heer-biforn,
 And hast by-iaiped here duk Theseus, 1585
 And falsly chaunged hast thy name thus;
 I wol be deed, or elles thou shalt dye.
 Thou shalt nat love my lady Emelye, (730)
 But I wol love hir only, and namo;
 For I am Palamoun, thy mortal fo. 1590
 And though that I no wepne have in this place,
 But out of prison am astert by grace,
 I drede noght that outhur thou shalt dye,
 Or thou ne shalt nat loven Emelye.
 Chees which thou wilt, for thou shalt nat asterte.' 1595

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

This Arcitë, with ful despitous herte,
 Whan he him knew, and hadde his tale herd,
 As fiers as leoun, pulled out a swerd, (740)
 And seyde thus: 'by God that sit above,
 Nere it that thou art sik, and wood for love, 1600
 And eek that thou no wepne hast in this place,
 Thou sholdest never out of this grove pace,
 That thou ne sholdest dyen of myn hond.
 For I defye the seurtee and the bond
 Which that thou seyst that I have maad to thee. 1605
 What, verray fool, think wel that love is free,
 And I wol love hir, maugre al thy might!
 But, for as muche thou art a worthy knight, (750)
 And wilnest to darreyne hir by batayle,

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Have heer my trouthe, to-morwe I wol nat fayle, 1610
With-uten witing of any other wight,
That here I wol be founden as a knight,
And bringen harneys right y-nough for thee;
And chees the beste, and leve the worste for me.
And mete and drinke this night wol I bringe 1615
Y-nough for thee, and clothes for thy beddinge.
And, if so be that thou my lady winne,
And slee me in this wode ther I am inne, (760)
Thou mayst wel have thy lady, as for me.'
This Palamon answerde: 'I graunte it thee.' 1620
And thus they been departed til a-morwe,
When ech of hem had leyd his feith to borwe.

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

O Cupide, out of alle charitee!
O regne, that wolt no felawe have with thee!
Ful sooth is seyde, that love ne lordshipe 1625
Wol noght, his thankes, have no felaweshipe;
Wel finden that Arcite and Palamoun.
Arcite is riden anon un-to the toun, (770)
And on the morwe, er it were dayes light,
Ful prively two harneys hath he dight, 1630
Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne
The bataille in the feeld bitwix hem tweyne.
And on his hors, allone as he was born,
He carieth al this harneys him biforn;
And in the grove, at tyme and place y-set, 1635
This Arcite and this Palamon ben met.
Tho chaungen gan the colour in hir face;
Right as the hunter in the regne of Trace, (780)
That stondeth at the gappe with a spere,
Whan hunted is the leoun or the bere, 1640
And hereth him come russhing in the greves,
And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,

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And thinketh, 'heer cometh my mortel enemy,
 With-oute faile, he moot be deed, or I;
 For outhur I mot sleen him at the gappe, 1645
 Or he mot sleen me, if that me mishappe:'
 So ferden they, in chaunging of hir hewe,
 As fer as everich of hem other knewe. (790)
 Ther nas no good day, ne no saluing;
 But streight, with-uten word or rehersing, 1650
 Everich of hem halp for to armen other,
 As freendly as he were his owne brother;
 And after that, with sharpe speres stronge
 They foynen ech at other wonder longe.
 Thou mightest wene that this Palamoun 1655
 In his fighting were a wood leoun,
 And as a cruel tygre was Arcite:
 As wilde bores gonne they to smyte, (800)
 That frothen whyte as foom for ire wood.
 Up to the ancle foghte they in hir blood. 1660
 And in this wyse I lete hem fighting dwelle;
 And forth I wol of Theseus yow telle.

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

The destinee, ministre general,
 That executeth in the world over-al
 The purveyaunce, that God hath seyn biforn, 1665
 So strong it is, that, though the world had sworn
 The contrarie of a thing, by ye or nay,
 Yet somtyme it shal fallen on a day (810)
 That falleth nat eft with-inne a thousand yere.
 For certainly, our appetytes here, 1670
 Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,
 Al is this reuled by the sighte above.
 This mene I now by mighty Theseus,

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That for to honten is so desirous,
And namely at the grete hert in May, 1675
That in his bed ther daweth him no day,
That he nis clad, and redy for to ryde
With hunte and horn, and houndes him bisyde. (820)
For in his hunting hath he swich delyt,
That it is al his loye and appetyt 1680
To been him-self the grete hertes bane;
For after Mars he serveth now Diane.

1672. this] Hl. it.

Cleer was the day, as I have told er this,
And Theseus, with alle loye and blis,
With his Ipolita, the fayre quene, 1685
And Emelye, clothed al in grene,
On hunting be they riden royally.
And to the grove, that stood ful faste by, (830)
In which ther was an hert, as men him tolde,
Duk Theseus the streighte wey hath holde. 1690
And to the launde he rydeth him ful right,
For thider was the hert wont have his flight,
And over a brook, and so forth on his weye.
This duk wol han a cours at him, or tweye,
With houndes, swiche as that him list comaunde. 1695

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

And whan this duk was come un-to the launde,
Under the sonne he loketh, and anon
He was war of Arcite and Palamon, (840)
That foughten breme, as it were bores two;
The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro 1700
So hidously, that with the leeste strook
It seemed as it wolde felle an ook;
But what they were, no-thing he ne woot.
This duk his courser with his spores smoot,
And at a stert he was bitwix hem two, 1705

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And pulled out a swerd and cryed, 'ho!
Namore, up peyne of lesing of your heed.
By mighty Mars, he shal anon be deed, (850)
That smyteth any strook, that I may seen!
But telleth me what mister men ye been, 1710
That been so hardy for to fighten here
With-uten Iuge or other officere,
As it were in a listes royally?'

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

This Palamon answerde hastily,
And seyde: 'sire, what nedeth wordes mo? 1715
We have the deeth deserved bothe two.
Two woful wrecches been we, two caytyves,
That been encombred of our owne lyves; (860)
And as thou art a rightful lord and Iuge,
Ne yeve us neither mercy ne refuge, 1720
But slee me first, for seynte charitee;
But slee my felawe eek as wel as me.
Or slee him first; for, though thou knowe it lyte,
This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,
That fro thy lond is banished on his heed, 1725
For which he hath deserved to be deed.
For this is he that cam un-to thy gate,
And seyde, that he highte Philostrate. (870)
Thus hath he Iaped thee ful many a yeer,
And thou has makid him thy chief squyer; 1730
And this is he that loveth Emelye.
For sith the day is come that I shal dye,
I make pleyntly my confessioun,
That I am thilke woful Palamoun,
That hath thy prison broken wikkedly. 1735
I am thy mortal fo, and it am I
That loveth so hote Emelye the brighte,
That I wol dye present in hir sighte. (880)

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Therefore I axe deeth and my Iuwyse;
But slee my felawe in the same wyse, 1740
For bothe han we deserved to be slayn.'

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

This worthy duk answerde anon agayn,
And seyde, 'This is a short conclusioun:
Youre owne mouth, by your confessioun,
Hath dampned you, and I wol it recorde, 1745
It nedeth noght to pyne yow with the corde.
Ye shul be deed, by mighty Mars the rede!
The quene anon, for verray wommanhede, (890)
Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye,
And alle the ladies in the companye. 1750
Gret pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,
That ever swich a chaunce sholde falle;
For gentil men they were, of greet estat,
And no-thing but for love was this debat;
And sawe hir bloody woundes wyde and sore; 1755
And alle cryden, bothe lasse and more,
'Have mercy, lord, up-on us wommen alle!'
And on hir bare knees adoun they falle, (900)
And wolde have kist his feet ther-as he stood,
Til at the laste aslaked was his mood; 1760
For pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.
And though he first for ire quook and sterte,
He hath considered shortly, in a clause,
The trespas of hem bothe, and eek the cause:
And al-though that his ire hir gilt accused, 1765
Yet in his reson he hem bothe excused;
As thus: he thoghte wel, that every man
Wol helpe him-self in love, if that he can, (910)
And eek delivere him-self out of prisoun;
And eek his herte had compassioun 1770
Of wommen, for they wepen ever in oon;
And in his gentil herte he thoghte anoon,

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And softe un-to himself he seyde: 'fy
Up-on a lord that wol have no mercy,
But been a leoun, bothe in word and dede, 1775
To hem that been in repentaunce and drede
As wel as to a proud despitous man
That wol maynteyne that he first bigan! (920)
That lord hath litel of discrecioun,
That in swich cas can no divisioun, 1780
But weyeth pryde and humblesse after oon.'
And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,
He gan to loken up with eyen lighte,
And spak thise same wordes al on highte:—
The god of love, a! *benedicite*, 1785
How mighty and how greet a lord is he!
Ayeins his might ther gayneth none obstacles,
He may be cleped a god for his miracles; (930)
For he can maken at his owne gyse
Of everich herte, as that him list devyse. 1790
Lo heer, this Arcite and this Palamoun,
That quitly weren out of my prisoun,
And mighte han lived in Thebes royally,
And witen I am hir mortal enemy,
And that hir deeth lyth in my might also, 1795
And yet hath love, maugree hir eyen two,
Y-broght hem hider bothe for to dye!
Now loketh, is nat that an heigh folye? (940)
Who may been a fool, but-if he love?
Bihold, for Goddes sake that sit above, 1800
Se how they blede! be they noght wel arrayed?
Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, y-paid
Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse!
And yet they wenen for to been ful wyse
That serven love, for aught that may bifalle! 1805
But this is yet the beste game of alle,
That she, for whom they han this Iolitee,
Can hem ther-for as mucche thank as me; (950)
She woot namore of al this hote fare,
By God, than woot a cokkow or an hare! 1810

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But al mot been assayed, hoot and cold;
 A man mot been a fool, or yong or old;
 I woot it by my-self ful yore agoon:
 For in my tyme a servant was I oon.
 And therefore, sin I knowe of loves peyne, 1815
 And woot how sore it can a man distreyne,
 As he that hath ben caught ofte in his las,
 I yow foryeve al hoolly this trespass, (960)
 At requeste of the quene that kneleth here,
 And eek of Emelye, my suster dere. 1820
 And ye shul bothe anon un-to me swere,
 That never-mo ye shul my contree dere,
 Ne make werre up-on me night ne day,
 But been my freendes in al that ye may;
 I yow foryeve this trespass every del.' 1825
 And they him swore his axing fayre and wel,
 And him of lordshipe and of mercy preyde,
 And he hem graunteth grace, and thus he seyde: (970)

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

'To speke of royal linage and richesse,
 Though that she were a quene or a princesse, 1830
 Ech of yow bothe is worthy, doutelees,
 To wedden whan tyme is, but nathelees
 I speke as for my suster Emelye,
 For whom ye have this stryf and Ielousye;
 Ye woot your-self, she may not wedden two 1835
 At ones, though ye fighten ever-mo:

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That oon of yow, al be him looth or leef,
He moot go pypen in an ivy-leef; (980)
This is to seyn, she may nat now han bothe,
Al be ye never so Ielous, ne so wrothe. 1840
And for-thy I yow putte in this degree,
That ech of yow shal have his destinee
As him is shape; and herkneth in what wyse;
Lo, heer your ende of that I shal devyse.

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

My wil is this, for plat conclusioun, 1845
With-uten any replicacioun,
If that yow lyketh, tak it for the beste,
That everich of yow shal gon wher him leste (990)
Frely, with-uten raunson or daunger;
And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner, 1850
Everich of yow shal bringe an hundred knightes,
Armed for listes up at alle rightes,
Al redy to darreyne hir by bataille.
And this bihote I yow, with-uten faille,
Up-on my trouthe, and as I am a knight, 1855
That whether of yow bothe that hath might,
This is to seyn, that whether he or thou
May with his hundred, as I spak of now, (1000)
Sleen his contrarie, or out of listes dryve,
Him shal I yeve Emelya to wyve, 1860
To whom that fortune yeveth so fair a grace.
The listes shal I maken in this place,
And God so wisly on my soule rewe,
As I shal even Iuge been and trewe.
Ye shul non other ende with me maken, 1865
That oon of yow ne shal be deed or taken.
And if yow thinketh this is wel y-sayd,
Seyeth your avys, and holdeth yow apayd. (1010)
This is your ende and your conclusioun.'

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

Who loketh lightly now but Palamoun? 1870
Who springeth up for Ioye but Arcite?
Who couthe telle, or who couthe it endyte,
The Ioye that is maked in the place
Whan Theseus hath doon so fair a grace?
But doun on knees wente every maner wight, 1875
And thanked him with al her herte and might,
And namely the Thebans ofte sythe.
And thus with good hope and with herte blythe (1020)
They take hir leve, and hom-ward gonne they ryde
To Thebes, with his olde walles wyde. 1880

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

EXPLICIT SECUNDA PARS. SEQUITUR PARS TERCIA.

I trowe men wolde deme it necligence,
If I foryete to tellen the dispence
Of Theseus, that goth so bisily
To maken up the listes royally;
That swich a noble theatre as it was, 1885
I dar wel seyn that in this world ther nas.
The circuit a myle was aboute,
Walled of stoon, and diked al with-oute. (1030)
Round was the shap, in maner of compas,
Ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty pas, 1890
That, whan a man was set on o degree,
He letted nat his felawe for to see.

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

Est-ward ther stood a gate of marbel whyt,
West-ward, right swich another in the opposit.

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And shortly to concluden, swich a place 1895
 Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space;
 For in the lond ther nas no crafty man,
 That geometrie or ars-metrik can, (1040)
 Ne purtreyour, ne kerver of images,
 That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages 1900
 The theatre for to maken and devyse.
 And for to doon his ryte and sacrifyse,
 He est-ward hath, up-on the gate above,
 In worship of Venus, goddessse of love,
 Don make an auter and an oratorie; 1905
 And west-ward, in the minde and in memorie
 Of Mars, he maketh hath right swich another,
 That coste largely of gold a fother. (1050)
 And north-ward, in a touret on the wal,
 Of alabastre whyt and reed coral 1910
 An oratorie riche for to see,
 In worship of Dyane of chastitee,
 Hath Theseus don wrought in noble wyse.

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

But yet hadde I foryeten to devyse
 The noble kerving, and the portreitures, 1915
 The shap, the countenaunce, and the figures,
 That weren in thise oratories three.

First in the temple of Venus maystow see (1060)
 Wrought on the wal, ful pitous to biholde,
 The broken slepes, and the sykes colde; 1920
 The sacred teres, and the waymenting;
 The fyry strokes of the desiring,
 That loves servaunts in this lyf endure;
 The othes, that hir covenants assuren;
 Plesaunce and hope, desyr, fool-hardinesse, 1925
 Beautee and youthe, bauderie, richesse,

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Charmes and force, lesinges, flaterye,
 Dispense, bisynesse, and Ielousye, (1070)
 That wered of yelwe goldes a gerland,
 And a cokkow sitting on hir hand; 1930
 Festes, instruments, caroles, daunces,
 Lust and array, and alle the circumstaunces
 Of love, whiche that I rekne and rekne shal,
 By ordre weren peynted on the wal,
 And mo than I can make of mencioun. 1935
 For soothly, al the mount of Citheroun,
 Ther Venus hath hir principal dwelling,
 Was shewed on the wal in portreying, (1080)
 With al the gardin, and the lustinesse.
 Nat was foryeten the porter Ydelnesse, 1940
 Ne Narcisus the faire of yore agon,
 Ne yet the folye of king Salamon,
 Ne yet the grete strengthe of Hercules—
 Thenchautements of Medea and Circes—
 Ne of Turnus, with the hardy fiers corage, 1945
 The riche Cresus, caytif in servage.
 Thus may ye seen that wisdom ne richesse,
 Beautee ne sleighte, strengthe, ne hardinesse, (1090)
 Ne may with Venus holde champartye;
 For as hir list the world than may she gye. 1950
 Lo, alle thise folk so caught were in hir las,
 Til they for wo ful ofte seyde 'allas!'
 Suffyceth heer ensamples oon or two,
 And though I coude rekne a thousand mo.

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

The statue of Venus, glorious for to see, 1955
 Was naked fleting in the large see,
 And fro the navele down all covered was

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With wawes grene, and brighte as any glas. (1100)
A citole in hir right hand hadde she,
And on hir heed, ful semely for to see, 1960
A rose gerland, fresh and wel smellinge;
Above hir heed hir dowves flikeringe.
Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido,
Up-on his shuldres winges hadde he two;
And blind he was, as it is ofte sene; 1965
A bowe he bar and arwes brighte and kene.

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

Why sholde I noght as wel eek telle yow al
The portreiture, that was up-on the wal (1110)
With-inne the temple of mighty Mars the rede?
Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and brede, 1970
Lyk to the estres of the grisly place,
That highte the grete temple of Mars in Trace,
In thilke colde frosty regioun,
Ther-as Mars hath his sovereyn mansioun.

First on the wal was peynted a foreste, 1975
In which ther dwelleth neither man ne beste,
With knotty knarry bareyn treës olde
Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to biholde; (1120)
In which ther ran a rumbel and a swough,
As though a storm sholde bresten every bough: 1980
And downward from an hille, under a bente,
Ther stood the temple of Mars armipotente,
Wroght al of burned steel, of which thentree
Was long and streit, and gastly for to see.
And ther-out cam a rage and such a vese, 1985
That it made al the gates for to rese.
The northren light in at the dores shoon,
For windowe on the wal ne was ther noon, (1130)
Thurgh which men mighten any light discerne.
The dores were alle of adamant eterne, 1990
Y-clenched overthwart and endelong

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With iren tough; and, for to make it strong,
Every piler, the temple to sustene,
Was tonne-greet, of iren bright and shene.

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

Ther saugh I first the derke imagining	1995
Of felonye, and al the compassing;	
The cruel ire, reed as any glede;	
The pykepurs, and eek the pale drede;	(1140)
The smyler with the knyf under the cloke;	
The shepne brenning with the blake smoke;	2000
The treson of the mordring in the bedde;	
The open werre, with woundes al bi-bledde;	
Contek, with bloody knyf and sharp manace;	
Al ful of chirking was that sory place.	
The sleere of him-self yet saugh I ther,	2005
His herte-blood hath bathed al his heer;	
The nayl y-driven in the shode a-night;	
The colde deeth, with mouth gaping up-right.	(1150)
Amiddes of the temple sat meschaunce,	
With discomfort and sory contenaunce.	2010
Yet saugh I woodnesse laughing in his rage;	
Armed compleint, out-hees, and fiers outrage.	
The careyne in the bush, with throte y-curve:	
A thousand slayn, and nat of qualm y-storve;	
The tiraunt, with the prey by force y-raft;	2015
The toun destroyed, ther was no-thing laft.	
Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres;	
The hunte strangled with the wilde beres:	(1160)
The sowe freten the child right in the cradel;	
The cook y-scalded, for al his longe ladel.	2020
Noght was foryeten by the infortune of Marte;	

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The carter over-riden with his carte,
Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun.
Ther were also, of Martes divisioun,
The barbour, and the bocher, and the smith 2025
That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his stith.
And al above, depeynted in a tour,
Saw I conquest sittinge in greet honour, (1170)
With the sharpe swerde over his heed
Hanginge by a sotil twynes threed. 2030
Depeynted was the slaughtre of Iulius,
Of grete Nero, and of Antonius;
Al be that thilke tyme they were unborn,
Yet was hir deeth depeynted ther-biforn,
By manasinge of Mars, right by figure; 2035
So was it shewed in that portreiture
As is depeynted in the sterres above,
Who shal be slayn or elles deed for love. (1180)
Suffyceth oon ensample in stories olde,
I may not rekne hem alle, thogh I wolde. 2040

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

The statue of Mars up-on a carte stood,
Armed, and loked grim as he were wood;
And over his he'ed ther shynen two figures
Of sterres, that been cleped in scriptures,
That oon Puella, that other Rubeus. 2045
This god of armes was arrayed thus:—
A wolf ther stood biforn him at his feet
With eyen rede, and of a man he eet; (1190)
With sotil pencil was depeynt this storie,
In redoutinge of Mars and of his glorie. 2050

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

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Now to the temple of Diane the chaste
As shortly as I can I wol me haste,
To telle yow al the descripcioun.
Depeynted been the walles up and doun
Of hunting and of shamfast chastitee. 2055
Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee,
Whan that Diane agreved was with here,
Was turned from a womman til a bere, (1200)
And after was she maad the lode-sterre;
Thus was it peynt, I can say yow no ferre; 2060
Hir sone is eek a sterre, as men may see.
Ther saugh I Dane, y-turned til a tree,
I mene nat the goddesse Diane,
But Penneus doughter, which that highte Dane.
Ther saugh I Attheon an hert y-maked, 2065
For vengeance that he saugh Diane al naked;
I saugh how that his houndes have him caught,
And freten him, for that they knewe him naught. (1210)
Yet peynted was a litel forther-moor,
How Atthalante hunted the wilde boor, 2070
And Meleagre, and many another mo,
For which Diane wroghte him care and wo.
Ther saugh I many another wonder storie,
The whiche me list nat drawn to memorie.
This goddesse on an hert ful hye seet, 2075
With smale houndes al aboute hir feet;
And undernethe hir feet she hadde a mone,
Wexing it was, and sholde wanie sone. (1220)
In gaude grene hir statue clothed was,
With bowe in honde, and arwes in a cas. 2080
Hir eyen caste she ful lowe adoun,
Ther Pluto hath his derke regioun.
A womman travailinge was hir biforn,
But, for hir child so longe was unborn,
Ful pitously Lucyna gan she calle, 2085
And seyde, 'help, for thou mayst best of alle.'
Wel couthe he peynten lyfly that it wroghte,
With many a florin he the hewes boghte. (1230)

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

Now been thise listes maad, and Theseus,
That at his grete cost arrayed thus 2090
The temples and the theatre every del,
Whan it was doon, him lyked wonder wel.
But stinte I wol of Theseus a lyte,
And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

2089. thise] E. the.

The day approacheth of hir retourninge, 2095
That everich sholde an hundred knightes bringe,
The bataille to darreyne, as I yow tolde;
And til Athenes, hir covenant for to holde, (1240)
Hath everich of hem broght an hundred knightes
Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes. 2100
And sikerly, ther trowed many a man
That never, sithen that the world bigan,
As for to speke of knighthod of hir hond,
As fer as God hath maked see or lond,
Nas, of so fewe, so noble a companye. 2105
For every wight that lovede chivalrye,
And wolde, his thanks, han a passant name,
Hath preyed that he mighte ben of that game; (1250)
And wel was him, that ther-to chosen was.
For if ther fille to-morwe swich a cas, 2110
Ye knowen wel, that every lusty knight,
That loveth paramours, and hath his might,
Were it in Engelond, or elles-where,
They wolde, hir thanks, wilnen to be there.
To fighte for a lady, *benedicite!* 2115
It were a lusty sighte for to see.

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

And right so ferdn they with Palamon.
With him ther wenten knightes many oon; (1260)
Som wol ben armed in an habergeoun,
In a brest-plat and in a light gipoun; 2120
And somme woln have a peyre plates large;
And somme woln have a Puce sheld, or a targe;
Somme woln ben armed on hir legges weel,
And have an ax, and somme a mace of steel.
Ther nis no newe gyse, that it nas old. 2125
Armed were they, as I have you told,
Everich after his opinioun.

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

Ther maistow seen coming with Palamoun (1270)
Ligurge him-self, the grete king of Trace;
Blak was his berd, and manly was his face. 2130
The cercles of his eyen in his heed,
They gloweden bitwixe yellow and reed;
And lyk a griffon loked he aboute,
With kempe heres on his browes stoute;
His limes grete, his braunes harde and stronge, 2135
His shuldres brode, his armes rounde and longe.
And as the gyse was in his contree,
Ful hye up-on a char of gold stood he, (1280)
With foure whyte boles in the trays.
In-stede of cote-armure over his harnays, 2140
With nayles yelwe and brighte as any gold,
He hadde a beres skin, col-blak, for-old.
His longe heer was kembd bihinde his bak,
As any ravenes fether it shoon for-blak:
A wrethe of gold arm-greet, of huge wighte, 2145
Upon his heed, set ful of stones brighte,
Of fyne rubies and of dyamaunts.
Aboute his char ther wenten whyte alaunts, (1290)

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Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,
 To hunten at the leoun or the deer, 2150
 And folwed him, with mosel faste y-bounde,
 Colers of gold, and torets fyled rounde.
 An hundred lordes hadde he in his route
 Armed ful wel, with hertes sterne and stoute.

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

With Arcita, in stories as men finde, 2155
 The grete Emetreus, the king of Inde,
 Up-on a stede bay, trapped in steel,
 Covered in cloth of gold diaped weel, (1300)
 Cam ryding lyk the god of armes, Mars.
 His cote-armure was of cloth of Tars, 2160
 Couched with perles whyte and rounde and grete.
 His sadel was of brend gold newe y-bete;
 A mantelet upon his shuldre hanginge
 Bret-ful of rubies rede, as fyr sparklinge.
 His crise heer lyk ringes was y-ronne, 2165
 And that was yelow, and glitered as the sonne.
 His nose was heigh, his eyen bright citryn,
 His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwyn, (1310)
 A fewe fraknes in his face y-spreynd,
 Betwixen yelow and somdel blak y-meynd, 2170
 And as a leoun he his loking caste.
 Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.
 His berd was wel bigonne for to springe;
 His voys was as a trompe thunderinge.
 Up-on his heed he wered of laurer grene 2175
 A gerland fresh and lusty for to sene.
 Up-on his hand he bar, for his deduyt,
 An egle tame, as eny lilie whyt. (1320)
 An hundred lordes hadde he with him there,
 Al armed, sauf hir heddes, in al hir gere, 2180

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Ful richely in alle maner thinges.
For trusteth wel, that dukes, erles, kinges,
Were gadered in this noble companye,
For love and for encrees of chivalrye.
Aboute this king ther ran on every part 2185
Ful many a tame leoun and lepart.
And in this wyse thise lordes, alle and some,
Ben on the Sonday to the citee come (1330)
Aboute pryme, and in the toun alight.

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

This Theseus, this duk, this worthy knight, 2190
Whan he had broght hem in-to his citee,
And inned hem, everich in his degree,
He festeth hem, and dooth so greet labour
To esen hem, and doon hem al honour,
That yet men weneth that no mannes wit 2195
Of noon estat ne coude amenden it.
The minstralcy, the service at the feste,
The grete yiftes to the moste and leste, (1340)
The riche array of Theseus paleys,
Ne who sat first ne last up-on the deys, 2200
What ladies fairest been or best daunsinge,
Or which of hem can dauncen best and singe,
Ne who most felingly speketh of love:
What haukes sitten on the perche above,
What houndes liggyn on the floor adoun: 2205
Of al this make I now no mencion;
But al theeffect, that thinketh me the beste;
Now comth the poynt, and herkneth if yow leste. (1350)

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

The Sonday night, er day bigan to springe,

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When Palamon the larke herde singe, 2210
Although it nere nat day by houres two,
Yet song the larke, and Palamon also.
With holy herte, and with an heigh corage
He roos, to wenden on his pilgrimage
Un-to the blisful Citherea benigne, 2215
I mene Venus, honorable and digne.
And in hir heure he walketh forth a pas
Un-to the listes, ther hir temple was, (1360)
And doun he kneleth, and with humble chere
And herte soor, he seyde as ye shul here. 2220

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

‘Faireste of faire, o lady myn, Venus,
Doughter to Iove and spouse of Vulcanus,
Thou glader of the mount of Citheroun,
For thilke love thou haddest to Adoun,
Have pitee of my bittre teres smerte, 2225
And tak myn humble preyer at thyn herte.
Allas! I ne have no langage to telle
Theffectes ne the torments of myn helle; (1370)
Myn herte may myne harmes nat biwreye;
I am so confus, that I can noght seye. 2230
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest weel
My thought, and seest what harmes that I feel,
Considere al this, and rewe up-on my sore,
As wisly as I shal for evermore,
Emforth my might, thy trewe servant be, 2235
And holden werre alwey with chastitee;
That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe.
I kepe noght of armes for to yelpe, (1380)
Ne I ne axe nat to-morwe to have victorie,
Ne renoun in this cas, ne veyne glorie 2240
Of pris of armes blowen up and doun,
But I wolde have fully possessioun
Of Emelye, and dye in thy servyse;

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Find thou the maner how, and in what wyse.
I recche nat, but it may bettre be, 2245
To have victorie of hem, or they of me,
So that I have my lady in myne armes.
For though so be that Mars is god of armes, (1390)
Your vertu is so greet in hevene above,
That, if yow list, I shal wel have my love, 2250
Thy temple wol I worshipe evermo,
And on thyn auter, wher I ryde or go,
I wol don sacrifice, and fyres bete.
And if ye wol nat so, my lady swete,
Than preye I thee, to-morwe with a spere 2255
That Arcita me thurgh the herte bere.
Thanne rekke I noght, whan I have lost my lyf,
Though that Arcita winne hir to his wyf. (1400)
This is theffect and ende of my preyere,
Yif me my love, thou blisful lady dere.' 2260

2222. to] Hn. Hl. of. of] *all but* E. Cm. to. 2226. E. Cm. preyere; Hn. prayere. at] Hl. to. 2227. to] Hl. for to. 2231, 2. Cm. Hl. wel, fel; *rest* wele, fele. 2239. Hl. aske. Hl. Ln. to morn.

Whan thorisoun was doon of Palamon,
His sacrifice he dide, and that anon
Ful pitously, with alle circumstaunces,
Al telle I noght as now his observaunces.
But atte laste the statue of Venus shook, 2265
And made a signe, wher-by that he took
That his preyere accepted was that day.
For thogh the signe shewed a delay, (1410)
Yet wiste he wel that graunted was his bone;
And with glad herte he wente him hoom ful sone. 2270

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

The thridde houre inequal that Palamon
Bigan to Venus temple for to goon,

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Up roos the sonne, and up roos Emelye,
 And to the temple of Diane gan hye.
 Hir maydens, that she thider with hir ladde, 2275
 Ful redily with hem the fyr they hadde,
 Thencens, the clothes, and the remenant al
 That to the sacrifice longen shal; (1420)
 The hornes fulle of meth, as was the gyse;
 Ther lakked noght to doon hir sacrifice. 2280
 Smoking the temple, ful of clothes faire,
 This Emelye, with herte debonaire,
 Hir body wessh with water of a welle;
 But how she dide hir ryte I dar nat telle,
 But it be any thing in general; 2285
 And yet it were a game to heren al;
 To him that meneth wel, it were no charge:
 But it is good a man ben at his large. (1430)
 Hir brighte heer was kempt, untressed al;
 A coroune of a grene ook cerial 2290
 Up-on hir heed was set ful fair and mete.
 Two fyres on the auter gan she bete,
 And dide hir thinges, as men may biholde
 In Stace of Thebes, and thise bokes olde.
 Whan kindled was the fyr, with pitous chere 2295
 Un-to Diane she spak, as ye may here.

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

‘O chaste goddess of the wodes grene,
 To whom bothe hevene and erthe and see is sene, (1440)
 Quene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe,
 Goddess of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe 2300
 Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire,
 As keep me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire,
 That Attheon abouthte cruelly.
 Chaste goddess, wel wostow that I
 Desire to been a mayden al my lyf, 2305

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Ne never wol I be no love ne wyf.
 I am, thou woost, yet of thy companye,
 A mayde, and love hunting and venerye, (1450)
 And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
 And noght to been a wyf, and be with childe. 2310
 Noght wol I knowe companye of man.
 Now help me, lady, sith ye may and can,
 For tho thre formes that thou hast in thee.
 And Palamon, that hath swich love to me,
 And eek Arcite, that loveth me so sore, 2315
 This grace I preye thee with-oute more,
 As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two;
 And fro me turne away hir hertes so, (1460)
 That al hir hote love, and hir desyr,
 And al hir bisy torment, and hir fyr 2320
 Be queynt, or turned in another place;
 And if so be thou wolt not do me grace,
 Or if my destinee be shapen so,
 That I shal nedes have oon of hem two,
 As sende me him that most desireth me. 2325
 Bihold, goddesse of clene chastitee,
 The bittre teres that on my chekes falle.
 Sin thou are mayde, and keper of us alle, (1470)
 My maydenhede thou kepe and wel conserve,
 And whyl I live a mayde, I wol thee serve.' 2330

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

The fyres brenne up-on the auter clere,
 Whyl Emelye was thus in hir preyere;
 But sodeinly she saugh a sighte queynte,
 For right anon oon of the fyres queynte,
 And quiked agayn, and after that anon 2335
 That other fyr was queynt, and al agon;
 And as it queynte, it made a whistelinge,
 As doon thise wete brondes in hir brenninge, (1480)

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And at the brondes ende out-ran anoon
 As it were bloody dropes many oon; 2340
 For which so sore agast was Emelye,
 That she was wel ny mad, and gan to crye,
 For she ne wiste what it signified;
 But only for the fere thus hath she cryed,
 And weep, that it was pitee for to here. 2345
 And ther-with-al Diane gan appere,
 With bowe in hond, right as an hunteresse,
 And seyde: 'Doghter, stint thyn hevinesse. (1490)
 Among the goddes hye it is affermed,
 And by eterne word write and confermed, 2350
 Thou shalt ben wedded un-to oon of tho
 That han for thee so muchel care and wo;
 But un-to which of hem I may nat telle.
 Farwel, for I ne may no lenger dwelle.
 The fyres which that on myn auter brenne 2355
 Shul thee declaren, er that thou go henne,
 Thyn aventure of love, as in this cas.'
 And with that word, the arwes in the cas (1500)
 Of the goddesse clateren faste and ringe,
 And forth she wente, and made a vanisshinge; 2360
 For which this Emelye astoned was,
 And seyde, 'What amounteth this, allas!
 I putte me in thy proteccioun,
 Diane, and in thy disposicioun.'
 And hoom she gooth anon the nexte weye. 2365
 This is theeffect, ther is namore to seye.

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

The nexte houre of Mars folwinge this,
 Arcite un-to the temple walked is (1510)
 Of fierse Mars, to doon his sacrificyse,
 With alle the rytes of his payen wyse. 2370
 With pitous herte and heigh devocioun,

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Right thus to Mars he seyde his orisoun:

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

‘O stronge god, that in the regnes colde
Of Trace honoured art, and lord y-holde,
And hast in every regne and every lond 2375
Of armes al the brydel in thyn hond,
And hem fortunest as thee list devyse,
Accept of me my pitous sacrificyse. (1520)
If so be that my youthe may deserve,
And that my might be worthy for to serve 2380
Thy godhede, that I may been oon of thyne,
Than preye I thee to rewe up-on my pyne.
For thilke peyne, and thilke hote fyr,
In which thou whylom brendest for desyr,
Whan that thou usedest the grete beautee 2385
Of fayre yonge fresshe Venus free,
And haddest hir in armes at thy wille,
Al-though thee ones on a tyme misfille (1530)
Whan Vulcanus had caught thee in his las,
And fond thee ligging by his wyf, alas! 2390
For thilke sorwe that was in thyn herte,
Have routhe as wel up-on my peynes smerte.
I am yong and unkonning, as thou wost,
And, as I trowe, with love offended most,
That ever was any lyves creature; 2395
For she, that dooth me al this wo endure,
Ne reccheth never wher I sinke or flete.
And wel I woot, er she me mercy hete, (1540)
I moot with strengthe winne hir in the place;
And wel I woot, withouten help or grace 2400
Of thee, ne may my strengthe noght availle.
Than help me, lord, to-morwe in my bataille,
For thilke fyr that whylom brente thee,
As wel as thilke fyr now brenneth me;
And do that I to-morwe have victorie. 2405
Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the glorie!

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Thy sovereign temple wol I most honouren
 Of any place, and alwey most labouren (1550)
 In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes stronge,
 And in thy temple I wol my baner honge, 2410
 And alle the armes of my companye;
 And evere-mo, un-to that day I dye,
 Eterne fyr I wol biforn thee finde.
 And eek to this avow I wol me binde:
 My berd, myn heer that hongeth long adoun, 2415
 That never yet ne felte offensioun
 Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yive,
 And ben thy trewe servant whyl I live. (1560)
 Now lord, have routhe up-on my sorwes sore,
 Yif me victorie, I aske thee namore.' 2420

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

The preyere stinte of Arcita the stronge,
 The ringes on the temple-dore that honge,
 And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste,
 Of which Arcita som-what him agaste.
 The fyres brende up-on the auter brighte, 2425
 That it gan al the temple for to lighte;
 And swete smel the ground anon up-yaf,
 And Arcita anon his hand up-haf, (1570)
 And more encens in-to the fyr he caste,
 With othere rytes mo; and atte laste 2430
 The statue of Mars bigan his hauberk ringe.
 And with that soun he herde a murmuringe
 Ful lowe and dim, that sayde thus, 'Victorie.'
 For which he yaf to Mars honour and glorie.
 And thus with loye, and hope wel to fare, 2435
 Arcite anon un-to his inne is fare,
 As fayn as fowel is of the brighte sonne.

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

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And right anon swich stryf ther is bigonne (1580)
For thilke graunting, in the hevene above,
Bitwixe Venus, the goddessse of love, 2440
And Mars, the sterne god armipotente,
That Iupiter was bisy it to stente;
Til that the pale Saturnus the colde,
That knew so manye of adventures olde,
Fond in his olde experience an art, 2445
That he ful sone hath plesed every part.
As sooth is sayd, elde hath greet advantage;
In elde is bothe wisdom and usage; (1590)
Men may the olde at-renne, and noght at-rede.
Saturne anon, to stinten stryf and drede, 2450
Al be it that it is agayn his kynde,
Of al this stryf he gan remedie fynde.

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

‘My dere doghter Venus,’ quod Saturne,
‘My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,
Hath more power than wot any man. 2455
Myn is the drenching in the see so wan;
Myn is the prison in the derke cote;
Myn is the strangling and hanging by the throte; (1600)
The murmure, and the cherles rebelling,
The groyning, and the pryvee empoysoning: 2460
I do vengeance and pleyne correccioun
Whyl I dwelle in the signe of the leoun.
Myn is the ruine of the hye halles,
The falling of the toures and of the walles
Up-on the mynour or the carpenter. 2465
I slow Sampson in shaking the piler;
And myne be the maladyes colde,
The derke tresons, and the castes olde; (1610)
My loking is the fader of pestilence.
Now weep namore, I shal doon diligence 2470
That Palamon, that is thyn owne knight,
Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight.

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Though Mars shal helpe his knight, yet nathelees
Bitwixe yow ther moot be som tyme pees,
Al be ye noght of o complexioun, 2475
That causeth al day swich divisioun.
I am thin ayel, redy at thy wille;
Weep thou namore, I wol thy lust fulfille.' (1620)

2462. E. *om.* 1st the. 2466. Hl. in; *rest om.* 2468. Hl. tresoun.

Now wol I stinten of the goddes above,
Of Mars, and of Venus, goddessse of love, 2480
And telle yow, as pleyntly as I can,
The grete effect, for which that I bigan.

EXPLICIT TERCIA PARS. SEQUITUR PARS QUARTA.

Greet was the feste in Athenes that day,
And eek the lusty seson of that May
Made every wight to been in swich plesaunce, 2485
That al that Monday Iusten they and daunce,
And spenden it in Venus heigh servyse.
But by the cause that they sholde ryse (1630)
Erly, for to seen the grete fight,
Unto hir reste wente they at night. 2490
And on the morwe, whan that day gan springe,
Of hors and harneys, noyse and clateringe
Ther was in hostelryes al aboute;
And to the paleys rood ther many a route
Of lordes, up-on stedes and palfreys. 2495
Ther maystow seen devysing of herneys
So uncouth and so riche, and wroght so weel
Of goldsmithrie, of browding, and of steel; (1640)
The sheeldes brighte, testers, and trappures;
Gold-hewen helmes, hauberks, cote-armures; 2500
Lordes in paraments on hir courseres,
Knightes of retenue, and eek squyeres
Nailinge the speres, and helmes bokelinge,
Gigginge of sheeldes, with layneres lacinge;

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Ther as need is, they weren no-thing ydel; 2505
The fomy stedes on the golden brydel
Gnawinge, and faste the armurers also
With fyle and hamer prikinge to and fro; (1650)
Yemen on fote, and communes many oon
With shorte staves, thikke as they may goon; 2510
Pypes, trompes, nakers, clariounes,
That in the bataille blowen bloody sounes;
The paleys ful of peples up and down,
Heer three, ther ten, holding hir questioun,
Divyninge of thise Thebane knightes two. 2515
Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal be so;
Somme helden with him with the blake berd,
Somme with the balled, somme with the thikke-herd; (1660)
Somme sayde, he loked grim and he wolde fighte;
He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte. 2520
Thus was the halle ful of divyninge,
Longe after that the sonne gan to springe.

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

The grete Theseus, that of his sleep awaked
With minstralcy and noyse that was maked,
Held yet the chambre of his paleys riche, 2525
Til that the Thebane knightes, bothe y-liche
Honoured, were into the paleys fet.
Duk Theseus was at a window set, (1670)
Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.
The peple preesseth thider-ward ful sone 2530
Him for to seen, and doon heigh reverence,
And eek to herkne his hest and his sentence.

An heraud on a scaffold made an ho,
Til al the noyse of the peple was y-do;
And whan he saugh the peple of noyse al stille, 2535

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Tho showed he the mighty dukes wille.

2533. E. Hn. Pt. oo. 2534. E. *om.* 2nd the. 2535. E. Cm. the noyse of peple.

‘The lord hath of his heigh discrecioun
Considered, that it were destruccioun (1680)
To gentil blood, to fighten in the gyse
Of mortal bataille now in this empyre; 2540
Wherefore, to shapen that they shul not dye,
He wol his firste purpos modifye.
No man therfor, up peyne of los of lyf,
No maner shot, ne pollax, ne short knyf
Into the listes sende, or thider bringe; 2545
Ne short swerd for to stoke, with poynt bytinge,
No man ne drawe, ne bere it by his syde.
Ne no man shal un-to his felawe ryde (1690)
But o cours, with a sharp y-grounde spere;
Foyne, if him list, on fote, him-self to were. 2550
And he that is at meschief, shal be take,
And noght slayn, but be broght un-to the stake
That shal ben ordeyned on either syde;
But thider he shal by force, and ther abyde.
And if so falle, the chieftayn be take 2555
On either syde, or elles slee his make,
No lenger shal the turneyinge laste.
God spede yow; goth forth, and ley on faste. (1700)
With long swerd and with maces fight your fille.
Goth now your wey; this is the lordes wille.’ 2560

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

The voys of peple touchede the hevene,
So loude cryden they with mery stevene:
‘God save swich a lord, that is so good,

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He wilneth no destruccioun of blood!
Up goon the trompes and the melodye. 2565
And to the listes rit the companye
By ordinaunce, thurgh-out the citee large,
Hanged with cloth of gold, and nat with sarge. (1710)
Ful lyk a lord this noble duk gan ryde,
Thise two Thebanes up-on either syde; 2570
And after rood the quene, and Emelye,
And after that another companye
Of oon and other, after hir degree.
And thus they passen thurgh-out the citee,
And to the listes come they by tyme. 2575
It nas not of the day yet fully pryme,
Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hye,
Ipolita the quene and Emelye, (1720)
And other ladies in degrees aboute.
Un-to the seetes preesseth al the route. 2580
And west-ward, thurgh the gates under Marte,
Arcite, and eek the hundred of his parte,
With baner reed is entred right anon;
And in that selve moment Palamon
Is under Venus, est-ward in the place, 2585
With baner whyt, and hardy chere and face.
In al the world, to seken up and down,
So even with-outen variacioun, (1730)
Ther nere swiche companyes tweye.
For ther nas noon so wys that coude seye, 2590
That any hadde of other avauntage
Of worthinesse, ne of estaat, ne age,
So even were they chosen, for to gesse.
And in two renges faire they hem dresse.
Whan that hir names rad were everichoon, 2595
That in hir nombre gyle were ther noon,
Tho were the gates shet, and cryed was loude:
'Do now your devoir, yonge knightes proude!' (1740)

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

The heraudes lefte hir priking up and doun;
 Now ringen trompes loude and clarioun; 2600
 Ther is namore to seyn, but west and est
 In goon the speres ful sadly in arest;
 In goth the sharpe spore in-to the syde.
 Ther seen men who can Iuste, and who can ryde;
 Ther shiveren shaftes up-on sheeldes thikke; 2605
 He feleth thurgh the herte-spoon the prikke.
 Up springen speres twenty foot on highte;
 Out goon the swerdes as the silver brighte. (1750)
 The helmes they to-hewen and to-shrede;
 Out brest the blood, with sterne stremes rede. 2610
 With mighty maces the bones they to-breste.
 He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan threste.
 Ther stomblen stedes stronge, and doun goth al.
 He rolleth under foot as dooth a bal.
 He foyneth on his feet with his tronchoun, 2615
 And he him hurtleth with his hors adoun.
 He thurgh the body is hurt, and sithen y-take,
 Maugree his heed, and broght un-to the stake, (1760)
 As forward was, right ther he moste abyde;
 Another lad is on that other syde. 2620
 And som tyme dooth hem Theseus to reste,
 Hem to refresshe, and drinken if hem leste.
 Ful ofte a-day han thise Thebanes two
 Togidre y-met, and wroght his felawe wo;
 Unhorsed hath ech other of hem tweye. 2625
 Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgopheye,
 Whan that hir whelp is stole, whan it is lyte,
 So cruel on the hunte, as is Arcite (1770)
 For Ielous herte upon this Palamoun:
 Ne in Belmarye ther nis so fel leoun, 2630
 That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
 Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,

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As Palamon to sleen his fo Arcite.
The Ielous strokes on hir helmes byte;
Out renneth blood on bothe hir sydes rede. 2635

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

Som tyme an ende ther is of every dede;
For er the sonne un-to the reste wente,
The stronge king Emetreus gan hente (1780)
This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,
And made his swerd depe in his flesh to byte; 2640
And by the force of twenty is he take
Unyolden, and y-drawe unto the stake.
And in the rescous of this Palamoun
The stronge king Ligurge is born adoun;
And king Emetreus, for al his strengthe, 2645
Is born out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe,
So hitte him Palamon er he were take;
But al for noght, he was brought to the stake. (1790)
His hardy herte mighte him helpe naught;
He moste abyde, whan that he was caught 2650
By force, and eek by composicioun.

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

Who sorweth now but woful Palamoun,
That moot namore goon agayn to fighte?
And whan that Theseus had seyn this sighte,
Un-to the folk that foghten thus echoon 2655
He cryde, 'Ho! namore, for it is doon!
I wol be trewe Iuge, and no partye.
Arcite of Thebes shal have Emelye, (1800)
That by his fortune hath hir faire y-wonne.'
Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne 2660
For Ioye of this, so loude and heigh with-alle,
It semed that the listes sholde falle.

What can now faire Venus doon above?
What seith she now? what dooth this quene of love?
But wepeth so, for wanting of hir wille, 2665
Til that hir teres in the listes fille;
She seyde: 'I am ashamed, doutelees.'
Saturnus seyde: 'Doghter, hold thy pees. (1810)
Mars hath his wille, his knight hath al his bone,
And, by myn heed, thou shalt ben esed sone.' 2670

The trompes, with the loude minstralcy,
The heraudes, that ful loude yolle and crye,
Been in hir wele for Ioye of daun Arcite.
But herkneth me, and stinteth now a lyte,
Which a miracle ther bifel anon. 2675

2671. Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. trompours.

This fierse Arcite hath of his helm y-don,
And on a courser, for to shewe his face,
He priketh endelong the large place, (1820)
Loking upward up-on this Emelye;
And she agayn him caste a freendlich yë, 2680
(For wommen, as to speken in comune,
They folwen al the favour of fortune),
And she was al his chere, as in his herte.
Out of the ground a furie infernal sterte,
From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne, 2685
For which his hors for fere gan to turne,
And leep asyde, and foundred as he leep;
And, er that Arcite may taken keep, (1830)
He pighte him on the pomel of his heed,
That in the place he lay as he were deed, 2690
His brest to-brosten with his sadel-bowe.
As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,
So was the blood y-ronnen in his face.
Anon he was y-born out of the place
With herte soor, to Theseus paleys. 2695
Tho was he corven out of his harneys,

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And in a bed y-brought ful faire and blyve,
 For he was yet in memorie and alyve, (1840)
 And alway crying after Emelye.

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

Duk Theseus, with al his companye, 2700
 Is comen hoom to Athenes his citee,
 With alle blisse and greet solempnitee.
 Al be it that this aventure was falle,
 He nolde noght disconforten hem alle.
 Men seyde eek, that Arcite shal nat dye; 2705
 He shal ben heled of his maladye.
 And of another thing they were as fayn,
 That of hem alle was ther noon y-slayn, (1850)
 Al were they sore y-hurt, and namely oon,
 That with a spere was thirled his brest-boon. 2710
 To othere woundes, and to broken armes,
 Some hadden salves, and some hadden charmes;
 Fermacies of herbes, and eek save
 They dronken, for they wolde hir limes have.
 For which this noble duk, as he wel can, 2715
 Conforteth and honoureth every man,
 And made revel al the longe night,
 Un-to the straunge lordes, as was right. (1860)
 Ne ther was holden no disconfitinge,
 But as a lustes or a tourneyinge; 2720
 For soothly ther was no disconfiture,
 For falling nis nat but an aventure;
 Ne to be lad with fors un-to the stake
 Unyolden, and with twenty knightes take,
 O persone allone, with-outen mo, 2725
 And haried forth by arme, foot, and to,
 And eek his stede driven forth with staves,
 With footmen, bothe yemen and eek knaves, (1870)
 It nas aretted him no vileinye,

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Ther may no man clepen it cowardye. 2730

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

For which anon duk Theseus leet crye,
To stinten alle rancour and envye,
The gree as wel of o syde as of other,
And either syde y-lyk, as otheres brother;
And yaf hem yiftes after hir degree, 2735
And fully heeld a feste dayes three;
And conveyed the kinges worthily
Out of his toun a Iournee largely. (1880)
And hoom wente every man the righte way.
Ther was namore, but 'far wel, have good day!' 2740
Of this bataille I wol namore endyte,
But speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

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

Swellethe the brest of Arcite, and the sore
Encreesseth at his herte more and more.
The clothered blood, for any lechecraft, 2745
Corrupteth, and is in his bouk y-laft,
That neither veyne-blood, ne ventusinge,
Ne drinke of herbes may ben his helpinge. (1890)
The vertu expulsif, or animal,
Fro thilke vertu cleped natural 2750
Ne may the venim voyden, ne expelle.
The pypes of his longes gonne to swelle,
And every lacerte in his brest adoun
Is shent with venim and corrupcioun.
Him gayneth neither, for to gete his lyf, 2755
Vomyt upward, ne downward laxatif;
Al is to-brosten thilke regioun,
Nature hath now no dominacioun. (1900)
And certainly, ther nature wol nat wirche,
Far-wel, phisyk! go ber the man to chirche! 2760
This al and som, that Arcita mot dye,

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For which he sendeth after Emelye,
And Palamon, that was his cosin dere;
Than seyde he thus, as ye shul after here.

2746. Hl. Pt. Corruptith. 2760. E. fare; Cm. Hl. far.

‘Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte 2765
Declare o poynt of alle my sorwes smerte
To yow, my lady, that I love most;
But I biquethe the service of my gost (1910)
To yow aboven every creature,
Sin that my lyf may no lenger dure. 2770
Allas, the wo! allas, the peynes stronge,
That I for yow have suffred, and so longe!
Allas, the deeth! allas, myn Emelye!
Allas, departing of our companye!
Allas, myn hertes quene! allas, my wyf! 2775
Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!
What is this world? what asketh men to have?
Now with his love, now in his colde grave (1920)
Allone, with-uten any companye.
Far-wel, my swete fo! myn Emelye! 2780
And softe tak me in your armes tweye,
For love of God, and herkneth what I seye.

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

I have heer with my cosin Palamon
Had stryf and rancour, many a day a-gon,
For love of yow, and for my Ielousye. 2785
And Iupiter so wis my soule gye,
To speken of a servant proprely,
With alle circumstaunces trewely, (1930)
That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and knighthede,
Wisdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh kinrede, 2790
Freedom, and al that longeth to that art,
So Iupiter have of my soule part,
As in this world right now ne knowe I non

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So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,
 That serveth yow, and wol don al his lyf. 2795
 And if that ever ye shul been a wyf,
 Foryet nat Palamon, the gentil man.'
 And with that word his speche faille gan, (1940)
 For from his feet up to his brest was come
 The cold of deeth, that hadde him overcome. 2800
 And yet more-over, in his armes two
 The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago.
 Only the intellect, with-outen more,
 That dwelled in his herte syk and sore,
 Gan failen, when the herte felte deeth, 2805
 Dusked his eyen two, and failed breath.
 But on his lady yet caste he his yë;
 His laste word was, 'mercy, Emelye!' (1950)
 His spirit chaunged hous, and wente ther,
 As I cam never, I can nat tellen wher. 2810
 Therfor I stinte, I nam no divinistre;
 Of soules finde I nat in this registre,
 Ne me ne list thilke opiniouns to telle
 Of hem, though that they wryten wher they dwelle.
 Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gye; 2815
 Now wol I speken forth of Emelye.

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

Shrighte Emelye, and howleth Palamon,
 And Theseus his suster took anon (1960)
 Swowninge, and bar hir fro the corps away.
 What helpeth it to tarien forth the day, 2820
 To tellen how she weep, bothe eve and morwe?
 For in swich cas wommen have swich sorwe,
 Whan that hir housbonds been from hem ago,
 That for the more part they sorwen so,
 Or elles fallen in swich maladye, 2825
 That at the laste certainly they dye.

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

Infinite been the sorwes and the teres
Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeres, (1970)
In al the toun, for deeth of this Theban;
For him ther wepeth bothe child and man; 2830
So greet a weping was ther noon, certayn,
Whan Ector was y-brought, al fresh y-slayn,
To Troye; alas! the pitee that was ther,
Cracching of chekes, rending eek of heer.
'Why woldestow be deed,' thise wommen crye, 2835
'And haddest gold y-nough, and Emelye?'
No man mighte gladen Theseus,
Savinge his olde fader Egeus, (1980)
That knew this worldes transmutacioun,
As he had seyn it chaungen up and down, 2840
Ioye after wo, and wo after gladnesse:
And shewed hem ensamples and lyknesse.

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

'Right as ther deyed never man,' quod he,
'That he ne livede in erthe in som degree,
Right so ther livede never man,' he seyde, 2845
'In al this world, that som tyme he ne deyde.
This world nis but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we ben pilgrimes, passinge to and fro; (1990)
Deeth is an ende of every worldly sore.'
And over al this yet seyde he muchel more 2850
To this effect, ful wysly to enhorte
The peple, that they sholde hem reconforte.

2843. Hn. deyed; E. dyed. 2849. E. worldes.

Duk Theseus, with al his bisy cure,
Caste now wher that the sepulture

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Of good Arcite may best y-maked be, 2855
 And eek most honorable in his degree.
 And at the laste he took conclusioun,
 That ther as first Arcite and Palamoun (2000)
 Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,
 That in that selve grove, swote and grene, 2860
 Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,
 His compleynt, and for love his hote fires,
 He wolde make a fyr, in which thoffice
 Funeral he mighte al accomplice;
 And leet comaunde anon to hakke and hewe 2865
 The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe
 In colpons wel arrayed for to brenne;
 His officers with swifte feet they renne (2010)
 And ryde anon at his comaundement.
 And after this, Theseus hath y-sent 2870
 After a bere, and it al over-spradde
 With cloth of gold, the richest that he hadde.
 And of the same suyte he cladde Arcite;
 Upon his hondes hadde he gloves whyte;
 Eek on his heed a croune of laurer grene, 2875
 And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.
 He leyde him bare the visage on the bere,
 Therwith he weep that pitee was to here. (2020)
 And for the peple sholde seen him alle,
 Whan it was day, he broghte him to the halle, 2880
 That roreth of the crying and the soun.

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

Tho cam this woful Theban Palamoun,
 With flotery berd, and ruggy asschy heres,
 In clothes blake, y-dropped al with teres;
 And, passing othere of weping, Emelye, 2885
 The rewfulleste of al the companye.
 In as muche as the service sholde be

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The more noble and riche in his degree, (2030)
Duk Theseus leet forth three stedes bringe,
That trapped were in steel al gliteringe, 2890
And covered with the armes of daun Arcite.
Up-on thise stedes, that weren grete and whyte,
Ther seten folk, of which oon bar his sheeld,
Another his spere up in his hondes heeld;
The thridde bar with him his bowe Turkeys, 2895
Of brend gold was the cas, and eek the harneys;
And riden forth a pas with sorweful chere
Toward the grove, as ye shul after here. (2040)
The nobleste of the Grekes that ther were
Upon hir shuldres carieden the bere, 2900
With slakke pas, and eyen rede and wete,
Thurgh-out the citee, by the maister-strete,
That sprad was al with blak, and wonder hye
Right of the same is al the strete y-wrye.
Up-on the right hond wente old Egeus, 2905
And on that other syde duk Theseus,
With vessels in hir hand of gold ful fyn,
Al ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wyn; (2050)
Eek Palamon, with ful greet companye;
And after that cam woful Emelye, 2910
With fyr in honde, as was that tyme the gyse,
To do thoffice of funeral servyse.

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

Heigh labour, and ful greet apparailinge
Was at the service and the fyr-makinge,
That with his grene top the heven raughte, 2915
And twenty fadme of brede the armes straughte;
This is to seyn, the bowes were so brode.
Of stree first ther was leyd ful many a lode. (2060)
But how the fyr was maked up on highte,
And eek the names how the treës highte, 2920

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As ook, firre, birch, asp, alder, holm, popler,
Wilow, elm, plane, ash, box, chasteyn, lind, laurer,
Mapul, thorn, beech, hasel, ew, whippeltree,
How they weren feld, shal nat be told for me;
Ne how the goddes ronnen up and down, 2925
Disherited of hir habitacioun,
In which they woneden in reste and pees,
Nymphes, Faunes, and Amadrides; (2070)
Ne how the bestes and the briddes alle
Fledden for fere, whan the wode was falle; 2930
Ne how the ground agast was of the light,
That was nat wont to seen the sonne bright;
Ne how the fyr was couched first with stree,
And than with drye stokkes cloven a three,
And than with grene wode and spycerye, 2935
And than with cloth of gold and with perrye,
And gerlandes hanging with ful many a flour,
The mirre, thencens, with al so greet odour; (2080)
Ne how Arcite lay among al this,
Ne what richesse aboute his body is; 2940
Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,
Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse;
Ne how she swowned whan men made the fyr,
Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desyr;
Ne what Ieweles men in the fyr tho caste, 2945
Whan that the fyr was greet and brente faste;
Ne how som caste hir sheeld, and som hir spere,
And of hir vestiments, whiche that they were, (2090)
And cuppes ful of wyn, and milk, and blood,
Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood; 2950
Ne how the Grekes with an huge route
Thryës riden al the fyr aboute
Up-on the left hand, with a loud shoutinge,
And thryës with hir speres clateringe;
And thryës how the ladies gonne crye; 2955
Ne how that lad was hom-ward Emelye;
Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde;
Ne how that liche-wake was y-holde (2100)

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Al thilke night, ne how the Grekes pleye
The wake-pleyes, ne kepe I nat to seye; 2960
Who wrastleth best naked, with oille enoynt,
Ne who that bar him best, in no disioynt.
I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon
Hoom til Athenes, whan the pley is doon;
But shortly to the poynt than wol I wende, 2965
And maken of my longe tale an ende.

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

By processe and by lengthe of certeyn yeres
Al stinted is the moorning and the teres (2110)
Of Grekes, by oon general assent.
Than semed me ther was a parlement 2970
At Athenes, up-on certeyn poynts and cas;
Among the whiche poynts y-spoken was
To have with certeyn contrees alliaunce,
And have fully of Thebans obeisaunce.
For which this noble Theseus anon 2975
Leet senden after gentil Palamon,
Unwist of him what was the cause and why;
But in his blake clothes sorwefully (2120)
He cam at his comaundement in hye.
Tho sente Theseus for Emelye. 2980
Whan they were set, and hust was al the place,
And Theseus abiden hadde a space
Er any word cam from his wyse brest,
His eyen sette he ther as was his lest,
And with a sad visage he syked stille, 2985
And after that right thus he seyde his wille.

‘The firste moevere of the cause above,

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Whan he first made the faire cheyne of love, (2130)
 Greet was theeffect, and heigh was his entente;
 Wel wiste he why, and what ther-of he mente; 2990
 For with that faire cheyne of love he bond
 The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond
 In certeyn boundes, that they may nat flee;
 That same prince and that moevere, ' quod he,
 'Hath stablissed, in this wrecched world adoun, 2995
 Certeyne dayes and duracioun
 To al that is engendred in this place,
 Over the whiche day they may nat pace, (2140)
 Al mowe they yet tho dayes wel abregge;
 Ther needeth non auctoritee allegge, 3000
 For it is preved by experience,
 But that me list declaren my sentence.
 Than may men by this ordre wel discerne,
 That thilke moevere stable is and eterne.
 Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool, 3005
 That every part deryveth from his hool.
 For nature hath nat take his beginning
 Of no partye ne cantel of a thing, (2150)
 But of a thing that parfit is and stable,
 Descending so, til it be corrupable. 3010
 And therefore, of his wyse purveyaunce,
 He hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,
 That speses of thinges and progressiouns
 Shullen endure by successiouns,
 And nat eterne be, with-oute lye: 3015
 This maistow understonde and seen at eye.

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

'Lo the ook, that hath so long a norisshinge

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From tyme that it first biginneth springe, (2160)
And hath so long a lyf, as we may see,
Yet at the laste wasted is the tree. 3020

‘Considereth eek, how that the harde stoon
Under our feet, on which we trede and goon,
Yit wasteth it, as it lyth by the weye.
The brode river somtyme wexeth dreye.
The grete tounes see we wane and wende. 3025
Than may ye see that al this thing hath ende.

3025. E. toures.

‘Of man and womman seen we wel also,
That nedeth, in oon of thise termes two, (2170)
This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age,
He moot ben deed, the king as shal a page; 3030
Som in his bed, som in the depe see,
Som in the large feeld, as men may se;
Ther helpeth noght, al goth that ilke weye.
Thanne may I seyn that al this thing moot deye.
What maketh this but Iupiter the king? 3035
The which is prince and cause of alle thing,
Converting al un-to his propre welle,
From which it is deryved, sooth to telle. (2180)
And here-agayns no creature on lyve
Of no degree availleth for to stryve. 3040

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

‘Thanne is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,
To maken vertu of necessitee,
And take it wel, that we may nat eschue,
And namely that to us alle is due.
And who-so gruccheth ought, he dooth folye, 3045
And rebel is to him that al may gye.
And certainly a man hath most honour
To dyen in his excellence and flour, (2190)

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Whan he is siker of his gode name;
Than hath he doon his freend, ne him, no shame. 3050
And gladder oghte his freend ben of his deeth,
Whan with honour up-yolden is his breeth,
Than whan his name apalled is for age;
For al forgeten is his vasselage.
Than is it best, as for a worthy fame, 3055
To dyen whan that he is best of name.
The contrarie of al this is wilfulnesse.
Why grucchen we? why have we hevinesse, (2200)
That good Arcite, of chivalrye flour
Departed is, with duetee and honour, 3060
Out of this foule prison of this lyf?
Why grucchen heer his cosin and his wyf
Of his wel-fare that loved hem so weel?
Can he hem thank? nay, God wot, never a deel,
That bothe his soule and eek hem-self offende, 3065
And yet they mowe hir lustes nat amende.

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

‘What may I conclude of this longe serie,
But, after wo, I rede us to be merie, (2210)
And thanken Iupiter of al his grace?
And, er that we departen from this place, 3070
I rede that we make, of sorwes two,
O parfyt Ioye, lasting ever-mo;
And loketh now, wher most sorwe is her-inne,
Ther wol we first amenden and biginne.

3071. Hl. that; *rest om.*

‘Suster,’ quod he, ‘this is my fulle assent, 3075
With al thavys heer of my parlement,
That gentil Palamon, your owne knight,
That serveth yow with wille, herte, and might, (2220)
And ever hath doon, sin that ye first him knewe,
That ye shul, of your grace, up-on him rewe, 3080

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And taken him for housbonde and for lord:
Leen me your hond, for this is our acord.
Lat see now of your wommanly pitee.
He is a kinges brother sone, pardee;
And, though he were a povre bachelor, 3085
Sin he hath served yow so many a yeer,
And had for yow so greet adversitee,
It moste been considered, leveth me; (2230)
For gentil mercy oghte to passen right.'

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

Than seyde he thus to Palamon ful right; 3090
'I trowe ther nedeth litel sermoning
To make yow assente to this thing.
Com neer, and tak your lady by the hond.'
Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond,
That highte matrimoine or mariage, 3095
By al the counseil and the baronage.
And thus with alle blisse and melodye
Hath Palamon y-wedded Emelye. (2240)
And God, that al this wyde world hath wrought,
Sende him his love, that hath it dere a-boght. 3100
For now is Palamon in alle wele,
Living in blisse, in richesse, and in hele;
And Emelye him loveth so tendrely,
And he hir serveth al-so gentilly,
That never was ther no word hem bitwene 3105
Of Ielousye, or any other tene.
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye;
And God save al this faire companye! — Amen. (2250)

HERE IS ENDED THE KNIGHTES TALE.

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

When that the Knight had thus his tale y-told,
 In al the route nas ther yong ne old 3110
 That he ne seyde it was a noble storie,
 And worthy for to drawen to memorie;
 And namely the gentils everichoon.
 Our Hoste lough and swoor, 'so moot I goon,
 This gooth aright; nobokeyed is the male; 3115
 Lat see now who shal telle another tale:
 For trewely, the game is wel bigonne.
 Now telleth ye, sir Monk, if that ye conne, (10)
 Sumwhat, to quyte with the Knightes tale.'
 The Miller, that for-dronken was al pale, 3120
 So that unnethe up-on his hors he sat,
 He nolde avalen neither hood ne hat,
 Ne abyde no man for his curteisye,
 But in Pilates vois he gan to crye,
 And swoor by armes and by blood and bones, 3125
 'I can a noble tale for the nones,
 With which I wol now quyte the Knightes tale.'

Our Hoste saugh that he was dronke of ale, (20)
And seyde: 'abyd, Robin, my leve brother,
Som better man shal telle us first another: 3130
Abyd, and lat us werken thriftily.'

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

Thou art a fool, thy wit is overcome.' 3135

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

'Now herkneth,' quod the Miller, 'alle and some!
But first I make a protestacioun
That I am dronke, I knowe it by my soun; (30)
And therfore, if that I misspeke or seye,
Wyte it the ale of Southwerk, I yow preye; 3140
For I wol telle a legende and a lyf
Bothe of a Carpenter, and of his wyf,
How that a clerk hath set the wrightes cappe.'

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

The Reve answerde and seyde, 'stint thy clappe,
Lat be thy lewed dronken harlotrye. 3145
It is a sinne and eek a greet folye
To apeiren any man, or him diffame,
And eek to bringen wyves in swich fame. (40)
Thou mayst y-nogh of othere thinges seyn.'

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

This dronken Miller spak ful sone ageyn, 3150
And seyde, 'leve brother Osewold,
Who hath no wyf, he is no cokewold.
But I sey nat therfore that thou art oon;
Ther been ful gode wyves many oon, 3154
And ever a thousand gode ayeyns oon badde, [T. *om.*
That knowestow wel thy-self, but-if thou madde. [T. *om.*
Why artow angry with my tale now?
I have a wyf, pardee, as well as thou, (50)
Yet nolde I, for the oxen in my plogh,
Taken up-on me more than y-nogh, 3160
As demen of my-self that I were oon;
I wol beleve wel that I am noon.
An housbond shal nat been inquisitif

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Of goddes privetee, nor of his wyf.
So he may finde goddes foyson there, 3165
Of the remenant nedeth nat enquire.'

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

What sholde I more seyn, but this Millere
He nolde his wordes for no man forbere, (60)
But tolde his cherles tale in his manere;
Me thinketh that I shal reherce it here. 3170
And ther-fore every gentil wight I preye,
For goddes love, demeth nat that I seye
Of evel entente, but that I moot reherce
Hir tales alle, be they bettre or werse,
Or elles falsen som of my matere. 3175
And therefore, who-so list it nat y-here,
Turne over the leef, and chese another tale;
For he shal finde y-nowe, grete and smale, (70)
Of storial thing that toucheth gentillesse,
And eek moralitee and holinesse; 3180
Blameth nat me if that ye chese amis.
The Miller is a cherl, ye knowe wel this;
So was the Reve, and othere many mo,
And harlotrye they tolden bothe two.
Avyseth yow and putte me out of blame; 3185
And eek men shal nat make ernest of game.

HERE ENDETH THE PROLOGE.

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

THE MILLERES TALE.

HERE BIGINNETH THE MILLERE HIS TALE.

Whylom ther was dwellinge at Oxenford
A riche gnof, that gestes heeld to bord,
And of his craft he was a Carpenter.
With him ther was dwellinge a povre scoler, 3190
Had lerned art, but al his fantasye
Was turned for to lerne astrologye,
And coude a certeyn of conclusiouns
To demen by interrogaciouns,
If that men axed him in certain houres, 3195
Whan that men sholde have droghte or elles shoures, (10)
Or if men axed him what sholde bifalle
Of every thing, I may nat rekene hem alle.

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

This clerk was cleped hende Nicholas;
Of derne love he coude and of solas; 3200
And ther-to be was sleigh and ful privee,
And lyk a mayden meke for to see.
A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye
Allone, with-uten any companye,
Ful fetisly y-dight with herbes swote; 3205
And he him-self as swete as is the rote (20)
Of licorys, or any cetewale.
His Almageste and bokes grete and smale,
His astrelabie, longinge for his art,
His augrim-stones layen faire a-part 3210
On shelves couched at his beddes heed:
His presse y-covered with a falding reed.
And al above ther lay a gay sautrye,
On which he made a nightes melodye
So swetely, that al the chambre rong; 3215

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And *Angelus ad virginem* he song; (30)
And after that he song the kinges note;
Ful often blessed was his mery throte.
And thus this swete clerk his tyme spent
After his freendes finding and his rente. 3220

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

This Carpenter had wedded newe a wyf
Which that he lovede more than his lyf;
Of eightetene yeer she was of age.
Ialous he was, and heeld hir narwe in cage,
For she was wilde and yong, and he was old 3225
And demed him-self ben lyk a cokewold. (40)
He knew nat Catoun, for his wit was rude,
That bad man sholde wedde his similitude.
Men sholde wedden after hir estaat,
For youthe and elde is often at debaat. 3230
But sith that he was fallen in the snare,
He moste endure, as other folk, his care.

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

Fair was this yonge wyf, and ther-with-al
As any wesele hir body gent and smal.
A ceynt she werede barred al of silk, 3235
A barmclooth eek as whyt as morne milk (50)
Up-on hir lendes, ful of many a gore.
Whyt was hir smok, and brouded al bifore
And eek bihinde, on hir coler aboute,
Of col-blak silk, with-inne and eek with-oute. 3240
The tapes of hir whyte voluper
Were of the same suyte of hir coler;
Hir filet brood of silk, and set ful hye:
And sikerly she hadde a likerous yë.
Ful smale y-pulled were hir browes two, 3245
And tho were bent, and blake as any sloo. (60)

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She was ful more blisful on to see
Than is the newe pere-ionette tree;
And softer than the wolfe is of a wether.
And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether 3250
Tasseld with silk, and perled with latoun.
In al this world, to seken up and doun,
There nis no man so wys, that coude thenche
So gay a popelote, or swich a wenche.
Ful brighter was the shyning of hir hewe 3255
Than in the tour the noble y-forged newe. (70)
But of hir song, it was as loude and yerne
As any swalwe sittinge on a berne.
Ther-to she coude skippe and make game,
As any kide or calf folwinge his dame. 3260
Hir mouth was swete as bragot or the meeth,
Or hord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.
Winsinge she was, as is a Ioly colt,
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.
A brooch she baar up-on hir lowe coler, 3265
As brood as is the bos of a bocler. (80)
Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hye;
She was a prymerole, a pigges-nye
For any lord to leggen in his bedde,
Or yet for any good yeman to wedde. 3270

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

Now sire, and eft sire, so bifel the cas,
That on a day this hende Nicholas
Fil with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye,
Whyl that hir housbond was at Oseneye,
As clerkes ben ful subtile and ful queynte; 3275
And prively he caughte hir by the queynte, (90)
And seyde, 'y-wis, but if ich have my wille,

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For derne love of thee, lemman, I spille.’
And heeld hir harde by the haunche-bones,
And seyde, ‘lemman, love me al at-ones, 3280
Or I wol dyen, also god me save!’
And she sprong as a colt doth in the trave,
And with hir heed she wryed faste away,
And seyde, ‘I wol nat kisse thee, by my fey,
Why, lat be,’ quod she, ‘lat be, Nicholas, 3285
Or I wol crye out “harrow” and “allas.” (100)
Do wey your handes for your curteisye!’

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

This Nicholas gan mercy for to crye,
And spak so faire, and profred hir so faste,
That she hir love him graunted atte laste, 3290
And swoor hir ooth, by seint Thomas of Kent,
That she wol been at his comandement,
Whan that she may hir leyser wel espye.
‘Myn housbond is so ful of Ialousye,
That but ye wayte wel and been privee, 3295
I woot right wel I nam but deed,’ quod she. (110)
‘Ye moste been ful derne, as in this cas.’

‘Nay ther-of care thee noght,’ quod Nicholas,
‘A clerk had litherly biset his whyle,
But-if he coude a Carpenter bigyle.’ 3300
And thus they been acorded and y-sworn
To wayte a tyme, as I have told biforn.
Whan Nicholas had doon thus everydeel,
And thakked hir aboute the lendes weel,
He kist hir swete, and taketh his sautrye, 3305
And pleyeth faste, and maketh melodye. (120)

3289. E. hir; *rest* him.

Than fil it thus, that to the parish-chirche,
Cristes owne werkes for to wirche,

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This gode wyf wente on an haliday;
Hir forheed shoon as bright as any day, 3310
So was it wasshen whan she leet hir werk.

Now was ther of that chirche a parish-clerk,
The which that was y-cleped Absolon.
Crul was his heer, and as the gold it shoon,
And strouted as a fanne large and brode; 3315
Ful streight and even lay his Ioly shode. (130)
His rode was reed, his eyen greye as goos;
With Powles window corven on his shoos,
In hoses rede he wente fetisly.
Y-clad he was ful smal and proprely, 3320
Al in a kirtel of a light wachet;
Ful faire and thikke been the poyntes set.
And ther-up-on he hadde a gay surpys
As whyt as is the blosme up-on the rys.
A mery child he was, so god me save, 3325
Wel coude he laten blood and clippe and shave, (140)
And make a chartre of lond or acquitaunce.
In twenty manere coude he trippe and daunce
After the scole of Oxenforde tho,
And with his legges casten to and fro, 3330
And pleyen songes on a small rubible;
Ther-to he song som-tyme a loud quynible;
And as wel coude he pleye on his giterne.
In al the toun nas brewhous ne tavern
That he ne visited with his solas, 3335
Ther any gaylard tappestere was. (150)
But sooth to seyn, he was somdel squaymous
Of farting, and of speche daungerous.

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

This Absolon, that Iolif was and gay,

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Gooth with a sencer on the haliday, 3340
Sensing the wyves of the parish faste;
And many a lovely look on hem he caste,
And namely on this carpenteres wyf.
To loke on hir him thoughte a mery lyf,
She was so propre and swete and likerous. 3345
I dar wel seyn, if she had been a mous, (160)
And he a cat, he wolde hir hente anon.

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

This parish-clerk, this Ioly Absolon,
Hath in his herte swich a love-longinge,
That of no wyf ne took he noon offringe; 3350
For curteisye, he seyde, he wolde noon.
The mone, whan it was night, ful brighte shoon,
And Absolon his giterne hath y-take,
For paramours, he thoghte for to wake.
And forth he gooth, Iolif and amorous, 3353
Til he cam to the carpenteres hous (170)
A litel after cokkes hadde y-crowe;
And dressed him up by a shot-windowe
That was up-on the carpenteres wal.
He singeth in his vois gentil and smal, 3360
'Now, dere lady, if thy wille be,
I preye yow that ye wol rewe on me,'
Ful wel acordaunt to his giterninge.
This carpenter awook, and herde him singe,
And spak un-to his wyf, and seyde anon, 3365
'What! Alison! herestow nat Absolon (180)
That chaunteth thus under our boures wal?'
And she answerde hir housbond ther-with-al,
'Yis, god wot, Iohn, I here it every-del.'

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

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This passeth forth; what wol ye bet than wel? 3370
Fro day to day this Ioly Absolon
So woweth hir, that him is wo bigon.
He waketh al the night and al the day;
He kempte hise lokkes brode, and made him gay;
He woweth hir by menes and brocage, 3375
And swoor he wolde been hir owne page; (190)
He singeth, brokkinge as a nightingale;
He sente hir piment, meeth, and spyced ale,
And wafres, pyping hote out of the glede;
And for she was of toune, he profred mede. 3380
For som folk wol ben wonnen for richesse,
And som for strokes, and som for gentillesse.

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

Somtyme, to shewe his lightnesse and maistrye,
He pleyeth Herodes on a scaffold hye.
But what availleth him as in this cas? 3385
She loveth so this hende Nicholas, (200)
That Absolon may blowe the bukkes horn;
He ne hadde for his labour but a scorn;
And thus she maketh Absolon hir ape,
And al his earnest turneth til a Iape. 3390
Ful sooth is this proverbe, it is no lye,
Men seyn right thus, 'alwey the nye slye
Maketh the ferre leve to be looth.'
For though that Absolon be wood or wrooth,
By-cause that he fer was from hir sighte, 3395
This nye Nicholas stood in his lighte. (210)

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

Now bere thee wel, thou hende Nicholas!
For Absolon may waille and singe 'allas.'

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And so bifel it on a Saterdag,
This carpenter was goon til Osenay; 3400
And hende Nicholas and Alisoun
Acorded been to this conclusioun,
That Nicholas shal shapen him a wyle
This sely Ialous housbond to bigyle;
And if so be the game wente aright, 3405
She sholde slepen in his arm al night, (220)
For this was his desyr and hir also.
And right anon, with-uten wordes mo,
This Nicholas no lenger wolde tarie,
But doth ful softe un-to his chambre carie 3410
Bothe mete and drinke for a day or tweye,
And to hir housbonde bad hir for to seye,
If that he axed after Nicholas,
She sholde seye she niste where he was,
Of al that day she saugh him nat with yë; 3415
She trowed that he was in maladye, (230)
For, for no cry, hir mayde coude him calle;
He nolde answer, for no-thing that mighte falle.

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

This passeth forth al thilke Saterdag,
That Nicholas stille in his chambre lay, 3420
And eet and sleep, or dide what him leste,
Til Sonday, that the sonne gooth to reste.

This sely carpenter hath greet merveye
Of Nicholas, or what thing mighte him eyle,
And seyde, 'I am adrad, by seint Thomas, 3425
It stondeth nat aright with Nicholas. (240)
God shilde that he deyde sodeynly!
This world is now ful tikel, sikerly;
I saugh to-day a cors y-born to chirche
That now, on Monday last, I saugh him wirche. 3430

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

This knave gooth him up ful sturdily,
 And at the chambre-dore, whyl that he stood, 3435
 He cryde and knocked as that he were wood:— (250)
 'What! how! what do ye, maister Nicholay?
 How may ye slepen al the longe day?'

But al for noght, he herde nat a word;
 An hole he fond, ful lowe up-on a bord, 3440
 Ther as the cat was wont in for to crepe;
 And at that hole he looked in ful depe,
 And at the laste he hadde of him a sighte.
 This Nicholas sat gaping ever up-righte,
 As he had kyked on the newe mone. 3445
 Adoun he gooth, and tolde his maister sone (260)
 In what array he saugh this ilke man.

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

This carpenter to blessen him bigan,
 And seyde, 'help us, seinte Frideswyde!
 A man woot litel what him shal bityde. 3450
 This man is falle, with his astromye,
 In som woodnesse or in som agonye;
 I thoghte ay wel how that it sholde be!
 Men sholde nat knowe of goddes privetee.
 Ye, blessed be alwey a lewed man, 3455
 That noght but oonly his bileve can! (270)
 So ferde another clerk with astromye;
 He walked in the feeldes for to pry
 Up-on the sterres, what ther sholde bifalle,
 Til he was in a marle-pit y-falle; 3460
 He saugh nat that. But yet, by seint Thomas,
 Me reweth sore of hende Nicholas.

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He shal be rated of his studying,
If that I may, by Iesus, hevene king!

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

Get me a staf, that I may underspore,	3465
Whyl that thou, Robin, hevest up the dore.	(280)
He shal out of his studying, as I gesse' —	
And to the chambre-dore he gan him dresse.	
His knave was a strong carl for the nones,	
And by the haspe he haf it up atones;	3470
In-to the floor the dore fil anon.	
This Nicholas sat ay as stille as stoon,	
And ever gaped upward in-to the eir.	
This carpenter wende he were in despeir,	
And hente him by the sholdres mightily,	3475
And shook him harde, and cryde spitously,	(290)
'What! Nicholay! what, how! what! loke adoun!	
Awake, and thenk on Cristes passioun;	
I crouche thee from elves and fro wightes!	
Ther-with the night-spel seyde he anon-rightes	3480
On foure halves of the hous aboute,	
And on the threshold of the dore with-oute:—	
'Tesu Crist, and seynt Benedight,	
Blesse this hous from every wikked wight,	
For nightes verye, the white <i>pater-noster</i> !	3485
Where wentestow, seynt Petres soster?	(300)

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

And atte laste this hende Nicholas

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Gan for to syke sore, and seyde, ‘allas!
Shal al the world be lost eftsones now?’

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

This carpenter answerde, 'what seystow? 3490
What! thenk on god, as we don, men that swinke.'

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

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

This carpenter goth down, and comth ageyn, (310)
And broghte of mighty ale a large quart;
And whan that ech of hem had dronke his part,
This Nicholas his dore faste shette,
And doun the carpenter by him he sette. 3500

He seyde, 'Iohn, myn hoste lief and dere,
 Thou shall up-on thy trouthe swere me here,
 That to no wight thou shalt this conseil wreye;
 For it is Cristes conseil that I seye,
 And if thou telle it man, thou are forlore; 3505
 For this vengauce thou shalt han therfore, (320)
 That if thou wreye me, thou shalt be wood!' 'Nay,
 Crist forbede it, for his holy blood!' Quod tho
 this sely man, 'I nam no labbe, Ne, though I seye,
 I nam nat lief to gabbe. 3510
 Sey what thou wolt, I shal it never telle
 To child ne wyf, by him that harwed helle!'

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

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‘Now John,’ quod Nicholas, ‘I wol nat lye;
I have y-founde in myn astrologye,
As I have loked in the mone bright, 3515
That now, a Monday next, at quarter-night, (330)
Shal falle a reyn and that so wilde and wood,
That half so greet was never Noës flood.
This world,’ he seyde, ‘in lasse than in an hour
Shal al be dreynt, so hidous is the shour; 3520
Thus shal mankynde drenche and lese hir lyf.’

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

This carpenter answerde, ‘allas, my wyf!
And shal she drenche? allas! myn Alisoun!’
For sorwe of this he fil almost adoun,
And seyde, ‘is ther no remedie in this cas?’ 3525

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

‘Why, yis, for gode,’ quod hende Nicholas, (340)
‘If thou wolt werken after lore and reed;
Thou mayst nat werken after thyn owene heed.
For thus seith Salomon, that was ful trewe,
“Werk al by conseil, and thou shalt nat rewe.” 3530
And if thou werken wolt by good conseil,
I undertake, with-outen mast and seyl,
Yet shal I saven hir and thee and me
Hastow nat herd how saved was Noë,
Whan that our lord had warned him biforn 3535
That al the world with water sholde be lorn?’ (350)

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

‘Yis,’ quod this carpenter, ‘ful yore ago.’

‘Hastow nat herd,’ quod Nicholas, ‘also
The sorwe of Noë with his felawshipe,
Er that he mighte gete his wyf to shipe? 3540

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Him had be lever, I dar wel undertake,
At thilke tyme, than alle hise wetheres blake,
That she hadde had a ship hir-self allone.
And ther-fore, wostou what is best to done?
This asketh haste, and of an hastif thing 3545
Men may nat preche or maken taryng. (360)

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

Anon go gete us faste in-to this in
A kneding-trogh, or elles a kimelin,
For ech of us, but loke that they be large,
In whiche we mowe swimme as in a barge, 3550
And han ther-inne vitaille suffisant
But for a day; fy on the remenant!
The water shal aslake and goon away
Aboute pryme up-on the nexte day.
But Robin may nat wite of this, thy knave, 3555
Ne eek thy mayde Gille I may nat save; (370)
Axe nat why, for though thou aske me,
I wol nat tellen goddes privetee.
Suffiseth thee, but if thy wittes madde,
To han as greet a grace as Noë hadde. 3560
Thy wyf shal I wel saven, out of doute,
Go now thy wey, and speed thee heer-aboute.

3548. E. ellis. E. kymelyn; Hl. kemelyn.

But whan thou hast, for hir and thee and me,
Y-geten us thise kneding-tubbes three,
Than shaltow hange hem in the roof ful hye, 3565
That no man of our purveyaunce spy. (380)
And whan thou thus hast doon as I have seyde,
And hast our vitaille faire in hem y-leyd,
And eek an ax, to smyte the corde atwo
When that the water comth, that we may go, 3570
And broke an hole an heigh, up-on the gable,

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Unto the gardin-ward, over the stable,
That we may frely passen forth our way
Whan that the grete shour is goon away—
Than shaltow swimme as myrie, I undertake, 3575
As doth the whyte doke after hir drake. (390)
Than wol I clepe, “how! Alison! how! John!
Be myrie, for the flood wol passe anon.”
And thou wolt seyn, “hayl, maister Nicholay!
Good morwe, I se thee wel, for it is day.” 3580
And than shul we be lordes al our lyf
Of al the world, as Noë and his wyf.

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

But of o thyng I warne thee ful right,
Be wel avysed, on that ilke night
That we ben entred in-to shippes bord, 3585
That noon of us ne speke nat a word, (400)
Ne clepe, ne crye, but been in his preyere;
For it is goddes owne heste dere.

3588. E. heeste.

Thy wyf and thou mote hange fer a-twinne,
For that bitwixe yow shal be no sinne 3590
No more in looking than ther shal in dede;
This ordinance is seyde, go, god thee spede!
Tomorwe at night, whan men ben alle aslepe,
In-to our kneding-tubbes wol we crepe,
And sitten ther, abyding goddes grace. 3595
Go now thy wey, I have no lenger space (410)
To make of this no lenger sermoning.
Men seyn thus, “send the wyse, and sey no-thing;”
Thou art so wys, it nedeth thee nat teche;
Go, save our lyf, and that I thee biseche.’ 3600

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

This sely carpenter goth forth his wey.
Ful ofte he seith 'allas' and 'weylawey,'
And to his wyf he tolde his privetee;
And she was war, and knew it bet than he,
What al this queynte cast was for to seye. 3605
But nathelees she ferde as she wolde deye, (420)
And seyde, 'allas! go forth thy wey anon,
Help us to scape, or we ben lost echon;
I am thy trewe verray wedded wyf;
Go, dere spouse, and help to save our lyf.' 3610

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

Lo! which a greet thyng is affeccioun!
Men may dye of imaginacioun,
So depe may impressioun be take.
This sely carpenter biginneth quake;
Him thinketh verrailly that he may see 3615
Noës flood come walwing as the see (430)
To drenchen Alisoun, his hony dere.
He wepeth, weyleth, maketh sory chere,
He syketh with ful many a sory swogh.
He gooth and geteth him a kneding-trogh, 3620
And after that a tubbe and a kimelin,
And prively he sente hem to his in,
And heng hem in the roof in privetee.
His owne hand he made laddres three,
To climben by the ronges and the stalkes 3625
Un-to the tubbes hanginge in the balkes, (440)
And hem vitailed, bothe trogh and tubbe,
With breed and chese, and good ale in a Iubbe,
Suffysinge right y-nogh as for a day.
But er that he had maad al this array, 3630
He sente his knave, and eek his wenche also,

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Up-on his nede to London for to go.
And on the Monday, whan it drow to night,
He shette his dore with-oute candel-light,
And dressed al thing as it sholde be. 3635
And shortly, up they clomben alle three; (450)
They sitten stille wel a furlong-way.

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

‘Now, *Pater-noster*, clom!’ seyde Nicholay,
And ‘clom,’ quod John, and ‘clom,’ seyde Alisoun.
This carpenter seyde his devocioun, 3640
And stille he sit, and biddeth his preyere,
Awaytinge on the reyn, if he it here.

The dede sleep, for wery businesse,
Fil on this carpenter right, as I gesse,
Aboute corfew-tyme, or litel more; 3645
For travail of his goost he groneth sore, (460)
And eft he routeth, for his heed mislay.
Doun of the laddre stalketh Nicholay,
And Alisoun, ful softe adoun she spedde;
With-uten wordes mo, they goon to bedde 3650
Ther-as the carpenter is wont to lye.
Ther was the revel and the melodye;
And thus lyth Alison and Nicholas,
In businesse of mirthe and of solas,
Til that the belle of laudes gan to ringe, 3655
And freres in the chauncel gonne singe. (470)

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

This parish-clerk, this amorous Absolon,
That is for love alwey so wo bigon,
Up-on the Monday was at Oseneye

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With companye, him to disporte and pleye, 3660
And axed up-on cas a cloisterer
Ful prively after Iohn the carpenter;
And he drough him a-part out of the chirche,
And seyde, 'I noot, I saugh him here nat wirche
Sin Saterdag; I trow that he be went 3665
For timber, ther our abbot hath him sent; (480)
For he is wont for timber for to go,
And dwellen at the grange a day or two;
Or elles he is at his hous, certeyn;
Wher that he be, I can nat sothly seyn.' 3670

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

This Absolon ful Ioly was and light,
And thoghte, 'now is tyme wake al night;
For sikirly I saugh him nat stiringe
Aboute his dore sin day bigan to springe.
So moot I thryve, I shal, at cokkes crowe, 3675
Ful prively knokken at his windowe (490)
That stant ful lowe up-on his boures wal.
To Alison now wol I tellen al
My love-longing, for yet I shal nat misse
That at the leste wey I shal hir kisse. 3680
Som maner confort shal I have, parfay,
My mouth hath icched al this longe day;
That is a signe of kissing atte leste.
Al night me mette eek, I was at a feste.
Therfor I wol gon slepe an houre or tweye, 3685
And al the night than wol I wake and pleye.' (500)

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

Whan that the firste cok hath crowe, anon
Up rist this Ioly lover Absolon,
And him arrayeth gay, at point-devys.
But first he cheweth greyn and lycorys, 3690

To smellen swete, er he had kembd his heer.
 Under his tonge a trewe love he beer,
 For ther-by wende he to ben gracious.
 He rometh to the carpenteres hous,
 And stille he stant under the shot-windowe; 3695
 Un-to his brest it raughte, it was so lowe; (510)
 And softe he cogheth with a semi-soun—
 ‘What do ye, hony-comb, swete Alisoun?
 My faire brid, my swete cinamome,
 Awaketh, lemman myn, and speketh to me! 3700
 Wel litel thenken ye up-on my wo,
 That for your love I swete ther I go.
 No wonder is thogh that I swelte and swete;
 I moorne as doth a lamb after the tete.
 Y-wis, lemman, I have swich love-longinge, 3705
 That lyk a turtel trewe is my moorninge; (520)
 I may nat ete na more than a mayde.’

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

‘Go fro the window, lakke fool,’ she sayde,
 ‘As help me god, it wol nat be “com ba me,”
 I love another, and elles I were to blame, 3710
 Wel bet than thee, by Iesu, Absolon!
 Go forth thy wey, or I wol caste a ston,
 And lat me slepe, a twenty devel wey!’

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

‘Allas,’ quod Absolon, ‘and weylawey!
 That trewe love was ever so yvel biset! 3715
 Than kisse me, sin it may be no bet, (530)
 For Iesus love and for the love of me.’

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

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

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

‘Ye, certes, lemman,’ quod this Absolon.

‘Thanne make thee redy,’ quod she, ‘I come anon;’ 3720
And un-to Nicholas she seyde stille, [T. *om.*
‘Now hust, and thou shall laughen al thy fille.’ [T. *om.*

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

This Absolon doun sette him on his knees,
And seyde, ‘I am a lord at alle degrees;
For after this I hope ther cometh more! 3725
Lemman, thy grace, and swete brid, thyn ore!’ (540)

3724. E. *om.* a.

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

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

This Absolon gan wype his mouth ful drye; 3730
Derk was the night as pich, or as the cole,
And at the window out she putte hir hole,
And Absolon, him fil no bet ne wers,
But with his mouth he kiste hir naked ers
Ful savourly, er he was war of this. 3735

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

Abak he sterte, and thoghte it was amis, (550)
For wel he wiste a womman hath no berd;

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He felte a thing al rough and long y-herd,
And seyde, 'fy! allas! what have I do?'

3736. E. Cm. stirte.

'Tehee!' quod she, and clapte the window to; 3740
And Absolon goth forth a sory pas.

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

This sely Absolon herde every deel,
And on his lippe he gan for anger byte; 3745
And to him-self he seyde, 'I shal thee quyte!' (560)

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

Who rubbeth now, who froteth now his lippes
With dust, with sond, with straw, with clooth, with chippes,
But Absolon, that seith ful ofte, 'allas!
My soule bitake I un-to Sathanas, 3750
But me wer lever than al this toun,' quod he,
'Of this despyt awroken for to be!
Allas!' quod he, 'allas! I ne hadde y-bleynt!
His hote love was cold and al y-queynt;
For fro that tyme that he had kiste hir ers, 3755
Of paramours he sette nat a kers, (570)
For he was heled of his maladye;
Ful ofte paramours he gan deffye,
And weep as dooth a child that is y-bete.
A softe paas he wente over the strete 3760
Un-til a smith men cleped daun Gerveys,
That in his forge smithed plough-harneys;
He sharpeth shaar and culter bisily.
This Absolon knokketh al esily,
And seyde, 'undo, Gerveys, and that anon.' 3765

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

‘What, who artow?’ ‘It am I, Absolon.’ (580)
‘What, Absolon! for Cristes swete tree,
Why ryse ye so rathe, ey, *benedicite!*
What eyleth yow? som gay gerl, god it woot,
Hath broght yow thus up-on the viritoot; 3770
By sēynt Note, ye woot wel what I mene.’

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

This Absolon ne roghte nat a bene
Of al his pley, no word agayn he yaf;
He hadde more tow on his distaf
Than Gerveys knew, and seyde, ‘freend so dere, 3775
That hote culter in the chimenee here, (590)
As lene it me, I have ther-with to done,
And I wol bringe it thee agayn ful sone.’

3776. E. kultour.

Gerveys answerde, ‘certes, were it gold,
Or in a poke nobles alle untold, 3780
Thou sholdest have, as I am trewe smith;
Ey, Cristes fool! what wol ye do ther-with?’

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

‘Ther-of,’ quod Absolon, ‘be as be may;
I shal wel telle it thee to-morwe day’ —
And caughte the culter by the colde stele. 3785
Ful softe out at the dore he gan to stele, (600)
And wente un-to the carpenteres wal.
He cogheth first, and knokketh ther-with-al
Upon the windowe, right as he dide er.

3785. E. kultour.

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

'Why, nay,' quod he, 'god woot, my swete leef,
I am thyn Absolon, my dereling!
Of gold,' quod he, 'I have thee broght a ring;
My moder yaf it me, so god me save, 3795
Ful fyn it is, and ther-to wel y-grave; (610)
This wol I yeve thee, if thou me kisse!'

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

This Nicholas was risen for to pisse,
And thoghte he wolde amenden al the Iape,
He sholde kisse his ers er that he scape. 3800
And up the windowe dide he hastily,
And out his ers he putteth prively
Over the buttok, to the haunche-bon;
And ther-with spak this clerk, this Absolon,
'Spek, swete brid, I noot nat wher thou art.' 3805

3800. E. *om.* ers.

This Nicholas anon leet flee a fart, (620)
As greet as it had been a thonder-dent,
That with the strook he was almost y-blent;
And he was redy with his iren hoot,
And Nicholas amidde the ers he smoot. 3810

3810. E. *om.* the.

Of gooth the skin an hande-brede aboute,
The hole culter brende so his toute,
And for the smert he wende for to dye.
As he were wood, for wo he gan to crye—

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Help! water! water! help, for goddes herte!' 3815

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

This carpenter out of his slomber sterte, (630)
And herde oon cryen 'water' as he were wood,
And thoghte, 'Allas! now comth Nowelis flood!'
He sit him up with-outen wordes mo,
And with his ax he smoot the corde a-two, 3820
And doun goth al; he fond neither to selle,
Ne breed ne ale, til he cam to the celle
Up-on the floor; and ther aswowne he lay.

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

Up sterte hir Alison, and Nicholay,
And cryden 'out' and 'harrow' in the strete. 3835
The neighebores, bothe smale and grete, (640)
In ronnen, for to gauren on this man,
That yet aswowne he lay, bothe pale and wan;
For with the fal he brosten hadde his arm;
But stonde he moste un-to his owne harm. 3830
For whan he spak, he was anon bore doun
With hende Nicholas and Alisoun.
They tolden every man that he was wood,
He was agast so of 'Nowelis flood'
Thurgh fantasye, that of his vanitee 3835
He hadde y-boght him kneding-tubbes three, (650)
And hadde hem hanged in the roof above;
And that he preyed hem, for goddes love,
To sitten in the roof, *par companye*.

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

The folk gan laughen at his fantasye; 3840

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In-to the roof they kyken and they gape,
And turned al his harm un-to a lape.
For what so that this carpenter answerde,
It was for noght, no man his reson herde;
With othes grete he was so sworn adoun, 3845
That he was holden wood in al the toun; (660)
For every clerk anon-right heeld with other.
They seyde, 'the man is wood, my leve brother;'
And every wight gan laughen of this stryf.

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

Thus swyved was the carpenteres wyf, 3850
For al his keping and his Ialousye;
And Absolon hath kist hir nether yë;
And Nicholas is scalded in the toute. (667)
This tale is doon, and god save al the route! 3854

HERE ENDETH THE MILLERE HIS TALE.

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

Whan folk had laughen at this nyce cas 3855
Of Absolon and hende Nicholas,
Diverse folk diversely they seyde;
But, for the more part, they loughe and pleyde,
Ne at this tale I saugh no man him greve,
But it were only Osewold the Reve, 3860
By-cause he was of carpenteres craft.
A litel ire is in his herte y-laft,
He gan to grucche and blamed it a lyte.

'So theek,' quod he, 'ful wel coude I yow quyte (10)
 With blering of a proud milleres yë, 3865
 If that me liste speke of ribaudye.
 But ik am old, me list not pley for age;
 Gras-tyme is doon, my fodder is now forage,
 This whyte top wryteth myne olde yeres,
 Myn herte is al-so mowled as myne heres, 3870
 But-if I fare as dooth an open-ers;
 That ilke fruit is ever leng the wers,
 Til it be roten in mullok or in stree.
 We olde men, I drede, so fare we; (20)
 Til we be roten, can we nat be rype; 3875
 We hoppen ay, whyl that the world wol pype.
 For in oure wil ther stiketh ever a nayl,
 To have an hoor heed and a grene tayl,
 As hath a leek; for thogh our might be goon,
 Our wil desireth folie ever in oon. 3880
 For whan we may nat doon, than wol we speke;
 Yet in our asschen olde is fyr y-reke.

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

Foure gledes han we, whiche I shal devyse,
Avaunting, lying, anger, coveityse; (30)
Thise foure sparkles longen un-to elde. 3885
Our olde lemes mowe wel been unwelde,
But wil ne shal nat failen, that is sooth.
And yet ik have alwey a coltes tooth,
As many a yeer as it is passed henne
Sin that my tappe of lyf bigan to renne. 3890
For sikerly, whan I was bore, anon
Deeth drogh the tappe of lyf and leet it gon;
And ever sith hath so the tappe y-ronne,
Til that almost al empty is the tonne. (40)
The stream of lyf now droppeth on the chimbe; 3895
The sely tonge may wel ringe and chimbe
Of wrecchednesse that passed is ful yore;
With olde folk, save dotage, is namore.'

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

Whan that our host hadde herd this sermoning,
He gan to speke as lordly as a king; 3900
He seide, 'what amounteth al this wit?
What shul we speke alday of holy writ?
The devel made a reve for to preche,
And of a souter a shipman or a leche. (50)
Sey forth thy tale, and tarie nat the tyme, 3905
Lo, Depeford! and it is half-way pryme.
Lo, Grenewich, ther many a shrewe is inne;
It were al tyme thy tale to biginne.'

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

'Now, sires,' quod this Osewold the Reve,

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'I pray yow alle that ye nat yow greve, 3910
Thogh I answeze and somdel sette his howve;
For leveful is with force force of-showve.

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

This dronke millere hath y-told us heer,
How that bigyled was a carpenteer, (60)
Peraventure in scorn, for I am oon. 3915
And, by your leve, I shal him quyte anon;
Right in his cherles termes wol I speke.
I pray to god his nekke mote breke;
He can wel in myn yë seen a stalke,
But in his owne he can nat seen a balke. 3920

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

THE REVES TALE.

HERE BIGINNETH THE REVES TALE.

At Trumpington, nat fer fro Cantebrigge,
Ther goth a brook and over that a brigge,
Up-on the whiche brook ther stant a melle;
And this is verray soth that I yow telle.
A Miller was ther dwelling many a day; 3925
As eny pecok he was proud and gay.
Pypen he coude and fisshe, and nettes bete,
And turne coppes, and wel wrastle and shete;
And by his belt he baar a long panade,
And of a swerd ful trenchant was the blade. 3930
A Ioly popper baar he in his pouche; (11)
Ther was no man for peril dorste him touche.
A Sheffield thwitel baar he in his hose;
Round was his face, and camuse was his nose.
As piled as an ape was his skulle. 3935
He was a market-beter atte fulle.
Ther dorste no wight hand up-on him legge,
That he ne swoor he sholde anon abegge.
A theef he was for sothe of corn and mele,
And that a sly, and usaunt for to stele. 3940
His name was hoten dëynous Simkin. (21)
A wyf he hadde, y-comen of noble kin;
The person of the toun hir fader was.
With hir he yaf ful many a panne of bras,
For that Simkin sholde in his blood allye. 3945
She was y-fostred in a nonnerye;
For Simkin wolde no wyf, as he sayde,
But she were wel y-norissed and a mayde,
To saven his estaat of yomanrye.
And she was proud, and pert as is a pye. 3950
A ful fair sighte was it on hem two; (31)
On haly-dayes biforn hir wolde he go
With his tipet bounden about his heed,

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And she cam after in a gyte of reed;
And Simkin hadde hosen of the same. 3955
Ther dorste no wight clepen hir but 'dame.'
Was noon so hardy that wente by the weye
That with hir dorste rage or ones pleye,
But-if he wolde be slayn of Simkin
With panade, or with knyf, or boydekin. 3960
For Ialous folk ben perilous evermo, (41)
Algate they wolde hir wyves wenden so.
And eek, for she was somdel smoterlich,
She was as digne as water in a dich;
And ful of hoker and of bisemare. 3965
Hir thoughte that a lady sholde hir spare,
What for hir kinrede and hir nortelrye
That she had lerned in the nonnerye.

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

A doghter hadde they bitwixe hem two
Of twenty yeer, with-outen any mo, 3970
Savinge a child that was of half-yeer age; (51)
In cradel it lay and was a propre page.
This wenche thikke and wel y-growen was,
With camuse nose and yën greye as glas;
With buttokes brode and brestes rounde and hye, 3975
But right fair was hir heer, I wol nat lye.

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

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The person of the toun, for she was feir,
In purpos was to maken hir his heir
Bothe of his catel and his messuage,
And straunge he made it of hir mariage. 3980
His purpos was for to bistowe hir hye (61)
In-to som worthy blood of auncetrye;
For holy chirches good moot been despended
On holy chirches blood, that is descended.
Therefore he wolde his holy blood honoure, 3985
Though that he holy chirche sholde devoure.

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

Gret soken hath this miller, out of doute,
With whete and malt of al the land aboute;
And nameliche ther was a greet collegge,
Men clepen the Soler-halle at Cantebregge, 3990
Ther was hir whete and eek hir malt y-grounde. (71)
And on a day it happed, in a stounde,
Sik lay the maunciple on a maladye;
Men wenden wisly that he sholde dye.
For which this miller stal bothe mele and corn 3995
An hundred tyme more than biforn;
For ther-biforn he stal but curteisly,
But now he was a thief outrageously,
For which the wardeyn chidde and made fare.
But ther-of sette the miller nat a tare; 4000
He craketh boost, and swoor it was nat so. (81)

3987. E. Cm. sokene.

Than were ther yonge povre clerkes two,
That dwelten in this halle, of which I seye.
Testif they were, and lusty for to pleye,
And, only for hir mirthe and revelrye, 4005
Up-on the wardeyn bisily they crye,
To yeve hem leve but a litel stounde
To goon to mille and seen hir corn y-grounde;

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And hardily, they dorste leye hir nekke,
The miller shold nat stele hem half a pekke 4010
Of corn by sleighte, ne by force hem reve; (91)
And at the laste the wardeyn yaf hem leve.
Iohn hight that oon, and Aleyn hight that other;
Of o toun were they born, that highte Strother,
Fer in the north, I can nat telle where. 4015

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

This Aleyn maketh redy al his gere,
And on an hors the sak he caste anon.
Forth goth Aleyn the clerk, and also Iohn,
With good swerd and with bokeler by hir syde.
Iohn knew the wey, hem nedede no gyde, 4020
And at the mille the sak adoun he layth. (101)
Aleyn spak first, 'al hayl, Symond, y-fayth;
How fares thy faire doghter and thy wyf?'

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

'Aleyn! welcome,' quod Simkin, 'by my lyf,
And Iohn also, how now, what do ye heer?' 4025

'Symond,' quod Iohn, 'by god, nede has na peer;
Him boës serve him-selve that has na swayn,
Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes sayn.
Our manciple, I hope he wil be deed,
Swa werkes ay the wanges in his heed. 4030
And forthy is I come, and eek Alayn, (111)
To grinde our corn and carie it ham agayn;
I pray yow spede us hethen that ye may.'

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

'It shal be doon,' quod Simkin, 'by my fay;
What wol ye doon whyl that it is in hande?' 4035

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

4036. E. hopur.

Aleyn answerde, 'Iohn, and wiltow swa, 4040
Than wil I be bynethe, by my croun, (121)
And se how that the mele falles down
In-to the trough; that sal be my disport.
For Iohn, in faith, I may been of your sort;
I is as ille a miller as are ye.' 4045

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

This miller smyled of hir nycetee,
And thoghte, 'al this nis doon but for a wyle;
They wene that no man may hem bigyle;
But, by my thrift, yet shal I blere hir yë
For al the sleighte in hir philosophye. 4050
The more queynte crekes that they make, (131)
The more wol I stele whan I take.
In stede of flour, yet wol I yeve hem bren.
"The gretteste clerkes been noght the wysest men,"
As whylom to the wolf thus spak the mare; 4055
Of al hir art I counte noght a tare.'

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

Out at the dore he gooth ful prively,
Whan that he saugh his tyme, softly;
He loketh up and down til he hath founde
The clerkes hors, ther as it stood y-bounde 4060
Bihinde the mille, under a levesel; (141)
And to the hors he gooth him faire and wel;
He strepeth of the brydel right anon.
And whan the hors was loos, he ginneth gon
Toward the fen, ther wilde mares renne, 4065
Forth with wehee, thurgh thikke and thurgh thenne.

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

This miller gooth agayn, no word he seyde,
But dooth his note, and with the clerkes pleyde,
Til that hir corn was faire and wel y-grounde.
And whan the mele is sakked and y-bounde, 4070
This Iohn goth out and fynt his hors away, (151)
And gan to crye 'harrow' and 'weylaway!
Our hors is lorn! Alayn, for goddes banes,
Step on thy feet, com out, man, al at anes!
Allas, our wardeyn has his palfrey lorn.' 4075
This Aleyn al forgat, bothe mele and corn,
Al was out of his mynde his housbondrye.
'What? whilk way is he geen?' he gan to crye.

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

The wyf cam leping inward with a ren,
She seyde, 'allas! your hors goth to the fen 4080
With wilde mares, as faste as he may go. (161)
Unthank come on his hand that bond him so,

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And he that bettre sholde han knit the reyne.'

4082. E. Hn. boond.

'Allas,' quod Iohn, 'Aleyn, for Cristes peyne,
Lay doun thy swerd, and I wil myn als wa; 4085
I is ful wight, god waat, as is a raa;
By goddes herte he sal nat scape us bathe.
Why nadstow pit the capul in the lathe?
Il-hayl, by god, Aleyn, thou is a fonne!'

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

This sely clerkes han ful faste y-ronne 4090
To-ward the fen, bothe Aleyn and eek Iohn. (171)

And whan the miller saugh that they were gon,
He half a busshel of hir flour hath take,
And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake.
He seyde, 'I trowe the clerkes were aferd; 4095
Yet can a miller make a clerkes berd
For al his art; now lat hem goon hir weye.
Lo wher they goon, ye, lat the children pleye;
They gete him nat so lightly, by my croun!'

4094. E. *om.* a.

Thise sely clerkes rennen up and doun 4100
With 'keep, keep, stand, stand, Iossa, warderere, (181)
Ga whistle thou, and I shal kepe him here!'
But shortly, til that it was verray night,
They coude nat, though they do al hir might,
Hir capul cacche, he ran alwey so faste, 4105
Til in a dich they caughte him atte laste.

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

Wery and weet, as beste is in the reyn,
Comth sely Iohn, and with him comth Aleyn.
'Allas,' quod Iohn, 'the day that I was born!
Now are we drive til hething and til scorn. 4110
Our corn is stole, men wil us foles calle, (191)
Bathe the wardeyn and our felawes alle,
And namely the miller; weylaway!'

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

Thus pleyneth Iohn as he goth by the way
Toward the mille, and Bayard in his hond. 4115
The miller sitting by the fyr he fond,
For it was night, and forther mighte they noght;
But, for the love of god, they him bisoght
Of herberwe and of ese, as for hir peny.

The miller seyde agayn, 'if ther be eny, 4120
Swich as it is, yet shal ye have your part. (201)
Myn hous is streit, but ye han lerned art;
Ye conne by argumentes make a place
A myle brood of twenty foot of space.
Lat see now if this place may suffyse, 4125
Or make it roum with speche, as is youre gyse.'

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

'Now, Symond,' seyde Iohn, 'by seint Cutberd,
Ay is thou mery, and this is faire answerd.
I have herd seyd, man sal taa of twa thinges
Slyk as he fyndes, or taa slyk as he bringes. 4130
But specially, I pray thee, hoste dere, (211)
Get us som mete and drinke, and make us chere,
And we wil payen trewely atte fulle.
With empty hand men may na haukes tulle;
Lo here our silver, redy for to spende.' 4135

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

This miller in-to toun his doghter sende
For ale and breed, and rosted hem a goos,
And bond hir hors, it sholde nat gon loos;
And in his owne chambre hem made a bed
With shetes and with chalons faire y-spred, 4140
Noght from his owne bed ten foot or twelve. (221)
His doghter hadde a bed, al by hir-selve,
Right in the same chambre, by and by;
It mighte be no bet, and cause why,
Ther was no roumer herberwe in the place. 4145
They soupen and they speke, hem to solace,
And drinken ever strong ale atte beste.
Aboute midnight wente they to reste.

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

Wel hath this miller vernisshed his heed;
Ful pale he was for-dronken, and nat reed. 4150
He yexeth, and he speketh thurgh the nose (231)
As he were on the quakke, or on the pose.
To bedde he gooth, and with him goth his wyf.
As any Iay she light was and Iolyf,
So was hir Ioly whistle wel y-wet. 4155
The cradel at hir beddes feet is set,
To rokken, and to yeve the child to souke.
And whan that dronken al was in the crouke,
To bedde went the doghter right anon;
To bedde gooth Aleyn and also Iohn; 4160
Ther nas na more, hem nedede no dwale. (241)
This miller hath so wisly bibbed ale,
That as an hors he snorteth in his sleep,
Ne of his tayl bihinde he took no keep.

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His wyf bar him a burdon, a ful strong, 4165
Men mighte hir routing here two furlong;
The wenche routeth eek *par companye*.

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

Aleyn the clerk, that herd this melodye,
He poked Iohn, and seyde, 'slepestow?
Herdestow ever slyk a sang er now? 4170
Lo, whilk a compline is y-mel hem alle! (251)
A wilde fyr up-on thair bodyes falle!
Wha herkned ever slyk a ferly thing?
Ye, they sal have the flour of il ending.
This lange night ther tydes me na reste; 4175
But yet, na fors; al sal be for the beste.
For Iohn,' seyde he, 'als ever moot I thryve,
If that I may, yon wenche wil I swyve.
Som esement has lawe y-shapen us;
For Iohn, ther is a lawe that says thus, 4180
That gif a man in a point be y-greved, (261)
That in another he sal be releved.
Our corn is stoln, shortly, it is na nay,
And we han had an il fit al this day.
And sin I sal have neen amendement, 4185
Agayn my los I wil have esement.
By goddes saule, it sal neen other be!'

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

This Iohn answerde, 'Alayn, avyse thee,

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The miller is a perilous man,' he seyde,
'And gif that he out of his sleep abreyde, 4190
He mighte doon us bathe a vileinye.' (271)

Aleyn answerde, 'I count him nat a flye;'
And up he rist, and by the wenche he crepte.
This wenche lay upright, and faste slepte,
Til he so ny was, er she mighte espye, 4195
That it had been to late for to crye,
And shortly for to seyn, they were at on;
Now pley, Aleyn! for I wol speke of Iohn.

This Iohn lyth stille a furlong-wey or two,
And to him-self he maketh routhe and wo: 4200
'Allas!' quod he, 'this is a wikked lape; (281)
Now may I seyn that I is but an ape.
Yet has my felawe som-what for his harm;
He has the milleris doghter in his arm.
He auntred him, and has his nedes sped, 4205
And I lye as a draf-sek in my bed;
And when this lape is tald another day,
I sal been halde a daf, a cokenay!
I wil aryse, and aunte it, by my fayth!
"Unhardy is unsely," thus men sayth.' 4210
And up he roos and softly he wente (291)
Un-to the cradel, and in his hand it hente,
And baar it softe un-to his beddes feet.

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

Sone after this the wyf hir routing leet,
And gan awake, and wente hir out to pisse, 4215
And cam agayn, and gan hir cradel misse,
And groped heer and ther, but she fond noon.
'Allas!' quod she, 'I hadde almost misgoon;
I hadde almost gon to the clerkes bed.
By, *benedicite!* thanne hadde I foule y-spel:' 4220
And forth she gooth til she the cradel fond. (301)

She gropeth alwey forther with hir hond,
And fond the bed, and thoghte noght but good,
By-cause that the cradel by it stood,
And niste wher she was, for it was derk; 4225,
But faire and wel she creep in to the clerk,
And lyth ful stille, and wolde han caught a sleep.
With-inne a whyl this Iohn the clerk up leep,
And on this gode wyf he leyth on sore.
So mery a fit ne hadde she nat ful yore; 4230
He priketh harde and depe as he were mad. (311)
This Ioly lyf han thise two clerkes lad
Til that the thridde cok bigan to singe.

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

Aleyn wex wery in the daweninge,
For he had swonken al the longe night; 4235
And seyde, 'far wel, Malin, swete wight!
The day is come, I may no lenger byde;
But evermo, wher so I go or ryde,
I is thyn awen clerk, swa have I seel!'

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

'Now dere lemman,' quod she, 'go, far weel! 4240
But er thou go, o thing I wol thee telle, (321)
Whan that thou wendest homward by the melle,
Right at the entree of the dore bihinde,
Thou shalt a cake of half a busshel finde
That was y-maked of thyn owne mele, 4245
Which that I heelp my fader for to stele.
And, gode lemman, god thee save and kepe!'
And with that word almost she gan to wepe.

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

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Aleyn up-rist, and thoughte, 'er that it dawe,
I wol go crepen in by my felawe; 4250
And fond the cradel with his hand anon, (331)
'By god,' thoughte he, 'al wrang I have misgon;
Myn heed is toty of my swink to-night,
That maketh me that I go nat aright.
I woot wel by the cradel, I have misgo, 4255
Heer lyth the miller and his wyf also.'
And forth he goth, a twenty devel way,
Un-to the bed ther-as the miller lay.
He wende have copen by his felawe Iohn;
And by the miller in he creep anon, 4260
And caughte hym by the nekke, and softe he spak: (341)
He seyde, 'thou, Iohn, thou swynes-heed, awak
For Cristes saule, and heer a noble game.
For by that lord that called is seint Iame,
As I have thryes, in this shorte night, 4265
Swyved the milleres doghter bolt-upright,
Whyl thow hast as a coward been agast.'

'Ye, false harlot,' quod the miller, 'hast?
A! false traitour! false clerk!' quod he,
'Thou shalt be deed, by goddes dignitee! 4270
Who dorste be so bold to disparage (351)
My doghter, that is come of swich linage?'
And by the throte-bolle he caughte Alayn.
And he hente hym despitously agayn,
And on the nose he smoot him with his fest. 4275
Doun ran the bloody streem up-on his brest;
And in the floor, with nose and mouth to-broke,
They walwe as doon two pigges in a poke.
And up they goon, and doun agayn anon,
Til that the miller sporned at a stoon, 4280
And doun he fil bakward up-on his wyf, (361)
That wiste no-thing of this nyce stryf;
For she was falle aslepe a lyte wight
With Iohn the clerk, that waked hadde al night.
And with the fal, out of hir sleep she breyde— 4285

'Help, holy croys of Bromeholm,' she seyde,
In manus tuas! lord, to thee I calle!
 Awak, Symond! the feend is on us falle,
 Myn herte is broken, help, I nam but deed;
 There lyth oon up my wombe and up myn heed; 4290
 Help, Simkin, for the false clerkes fighte.' (371)

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

This Iohn sterte up as faste as ever he mighte,
 And graspeth by the walles to and fro,
 To finde a staf; and she sterte up also,
 And knew the estres bet than dide this Iohn, 4295
 And by the wal a staf she fond, anon,
 And saugh a litel shimering of a light,
 For at an hole in shoon the mone bright;
 And by that light she saugh hem bothe two,
 But sikerly she niste who was who, 4300
 But as she saugh a whyt thing in hir yë. (381)
 And whan she gan the whyte thing espye,
 She wende the clerk hadde wered a volupeer.
 And with the staf she drough ay neer and neer,
 And wende han hit this Aleyn at the fulle, 4305
 And smoot the miller on the pyled skulle,
 That doun he gooth and cryde, 'harrow! I dye!'
 Thise clerkes bete him weel and lete him lye;
 And greythen hem, and toke hir hors anon,
 And eek hir mele, and on hir wey they gon. 4310
 And at the mille yet they toke hir cake (391)
 Of half a busshel flour, ful wel y-bake.

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

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Thus is the proude miller wel y-bete,
And hath y-lost the grinding of the whete,
And payed for the soper every-deel 4315
Of Aleyn and of Iohn, that bette him weel.
His wyf is swyved, and his doghter als;
Lo, swich it is a miller to be fals!
And therefore this proverbe is seyde ful sooth,
'Him thar nat wene wel that yvel dooth; 4320
A gylour shal him-self bigyled be.' (401)
And God, that sitteth heighe in magestee,
Save al this companye grete and smale!
Thus have I quit the miller in my tale.

HERE IS ENDED THE REVES TALE.

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

THE COOK'S PROLOGUE.

THE PROLOGE OF THE COKES TALE.

The Cook of London, whyl the Reve spak, 4325
For Ioye, him thoughte, he clawed him on the bak,
'Ha! ha!' quod he, 'for Cristes passioun,
This miller hadde a sharp conclusioun
Upon his argument of herbergage!
Wel seyde Salomon in his langage, 4330
"Ne bringe nat every man in-to thyn hous;"
For herberwing by nighte is perilous.
Wel oghte a man avysed for to be
Whom that he broghte in-to his privetee. (10)
I pray to god, so yeve me sorwe and care, 4335
If ever, sith I highte Hogge of Ware,
Herde I a miller bettre y-set a-werk.
He hadde a Iape of malice in the derk.
But god forbede that we stinten here;
And therefore, if ye vouche-sauf to here 4340
A tale of me, that am a povre man,
I wol yow telle as wel as ever I can
A litel Iape that fil in our citee.'

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

Our host answerde, and seide, 'I graunte it thee; (20)
Now telle on, Roger, loke that it be good; 4345
For many a pastee hastow laten blood,
And many a Iakke of Dover hastow sold
That hath been twyes hoot and twyes cold.
Of many a pilgrim hastow Cristes curs,
For of thy persly yet they fare the wors, 4350
That they han eten with thy stubbel-goos;
For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos.

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Now telle on, gentil Roger, by thy name.
But yet I pray thee, be nat wrooth for game, (30)
A man may seye ful sooth in game and pley.' 4355

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

'Thou seist ful sooth,' quod Roger, 'by my fey,
But "sooth pley, quaad pley," as the Fleming seith;
And ther-fore, Herry Bailly, by thy feith,
Be thou nat wrooth, er we departen heer,
Though that my tale be of an hostileer. 4360
But nathelees I wol nat telle it yit,
But er we parte, y-wis, thou shalt be quit.'
And ther-with-al he lough and made chere,
And seyde his tale, as ye shul after here. (40)

THUS ENDETH THE PROLOGE OF THE COKES TALE.

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

THE COKES TALE.

HEER BIGYNNETH THE COKES TALE.

A prentis whylom dwelled in our citee, 4365
And of a craft of vitaillers was he;
Gaillard he was as goldfinch in the shawe,
Broun as a berie, a propre short felawe,
With lokkes blake, y-kempt ful fetisly.
Dauncen he coude so wel and Iolily, 4370
That he was cleped Perkin Revelour.
He was as ful of love and paramour
As is the hyve ful of hony swete;
Wel was the wenche with him mighte mete. (10)
At every brydale wolde he singe and hoppe, 4375
He loved bet the taverne than the shoppe.

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

For whan ther any ryding was in Chepe,
Out of the shoppe thider wolde he lepe.
Til that he hadde al the sighte y-seyn,
And daunced wel, he wolde nat come ageyn. 4380
And gadered him a meinee of his sort
To hoppe and singe, and maken swich disport.
And ther they setten Steven for to mete
To pleyen at the dys in swich a strete. (20)
For in the toune nas ther no prentys, 4385
That fairer coude caste a paire of dys
Than Perkin coude, and ther-to he was free
Of his dispense, in place of privetee.
That fond his maister wel in his chaffare;
For often tyme he fond his box ful bare. 4390
For sikerly a prentis revelour,
That haunteth dys, riot, or paramour,
His maister shal it in his shoppe abyge,
Al have he no part of the minstralcy; (30)

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For thefte and riot, they ben convertible, 4395
Al conne he pleye on giterne or ribible.
Revel and trouthe, as in a low degree,
They been ful wrothe al day, as men may see.

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

This Ioly prentis with his maister bood,
Til he were ny out of his prentishood, 4400
Al were he snibbed bothe erly and late,
And somtyme lad with revel to Newgate;
But atte laste his maister him bithoghte,
Up-on a day, whan he his paper soghte, (40)
Of a proverbe that seith this same word, 4405
'Wel bet is roten appel out of hord
Than that it rotie al the remenaunt.'
So fareth it by a riotous servaunt;
It is wel lasse harm to lete him pace,
Than he shende alle the servants in the place. 4410
Therefore his maister yaf him acquittance,
And bad him go with sorwe and with meschance;
And thus this Ioly prentis hadde his leve.
Now lat him riote al the night or leve. (50)

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

And for ther is no thief with-oute a louke, 4415
That helpeth him to wasten and to souke
Of that he brybe can or borwe may,
Anon he sente his bed and his array
Un-to a compeer of his owne sort,
That lovede dys and revel and disport, 4420
And hadde a wyf that heeld for countenance
A shoppe, and swyved for hir sustenance. 4422

OF THIS COKES TALE MAKED CHAUCER NA MORE.

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

4415-22. Hl. *omits.* 4415. E. Hn. Cp. Ln. lowke; Pt. louke; Cm. loke.
4416. Pt. souke; *rest* sowke. 4419. E. compier; Hn. compeer; Cp. Pt.
Ln. conpere. Colophon. *In Hn. only. Blank space in E.*

GROUP B.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MAN OF LAW'S PROLOGUE.

THE WORDES OF THE HOOST TO THE COMPANYE.

Our Hoste sey wel that the brighte sonne
The ark of his artificial day had ronne
The fourthe part, and half an houre, and more;
And though he were not depe expert in lore,
He wiste it was the eightetethe day 5
Of April, that is messenger to May;
And sey wel that the shadwe of every tree
Was as in lengthe the same quantitee
That was the body erect that caused it.
And therfor by the shadwe he took his wit 10
That Phebus, which that shoon so clere and brighte,
Degrees was fyve and fourty clombe on highte;
And for that day, as in that latitude,
It was ten of the klokke, he gan conclude,
And sodeynly he plighte his hors aboute. 15

1. Hl. Hoste; Ln. oste; *rest* hoost (oost). *On* sey, see note. 2. E. Hn. Hl. hath; *rest* had. 4. Cm. *wanting*; Cp. Pt. Ln. expert; E. Hn. ystert; Hl. *om.* 5. Hn. xvijthe; Cp. xviije; Pt. Ln. xvij; E. eighte and twentithe; Hl. threttenthe. 14. Cm. Pt. Hl. of the; E. Hn. at the; Cp. atte; Ln. att.

'Lordinges,' quod he, 'I warne yow, al this route,
The fourthe party of this day is goon;
Now, for the love of god and of seint Iohn,
Leseth no tyme, as ferforth as ye may;
Lordinges, the tyme wasteth night and day, 20
And steleth from us, what prively slepinge,
And what thurgh necligence in our wakinge,
As dooth the stream, that turneth never agayn,
Descending fro the montaigne in-to playn.
Wel can Senek, and many a philosophre 25

Biwailen tyme, more than gold in cofre.
 "For los of catel may recovered be,
 But los of tyme shendeth us," quod he.
 It wol nat come agayn, with-outen drede,
 Na more than wol Malkins maydenhede, 30
 Whan she hath lost it in hir wantownesse;
 Lat us nat moulen thus in ydelnesse.
 Sir man of lawe,' quod he, 'so have ye blis,
 Tel us a tale anon, as forward is;
 Ye been submitted thurgh your free assent 35
 To stonde in this cas at my Iugement.
 Acquiteth yow, and holdeth your biheste,
 Than have ye doon your devoir atte leste.'

37. Hl. and holdeth; *rest* now of (*badly*). 38. E. do.

'Hoste,' quod he, '*departieux* ich assente,
 To breke forward is not myn entente. 40
 Biheste is dette, and I wol holde fayn
 Al my biheste; I can no better seyn.
 For swich lawe as man yeveth another wight,
 He sholde him-selven usen it by right;
 Thus wol our text; but natheles certeyn 45
 I can right now no thrifty tale seyn,
 But Chaucer, though he can but lewedly
 On metres and on ryming craftily,
 Hath seyde hem in swich English as he can
 Of olde tyme, as knoweth many a man. 50
 And if he have not seyde hem, leve brother,
 In o book, he hath seyde hem in another.
 For he hath told of loveres up and doun
 Mo than Ovyde made of mencioun
 In his Epistelles, that been ful olde. 55
 What sholde I tellen hem, sin they ben tolde?
 In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcion,
 And sithen hath he spoke of everichon,
 Thise noble wyves and thise loveres eek.
 Who-so that wol his large volume seek 60

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Cleped the Seintes Legende of Cupyde,
Ther may he seen the large woundes wyde
Of Lucesse, and of Babilan Tisbee;
The swerd of Dido for the false Enee;
The tree of Phillis for hir Demophon; 65
The pleinte of Dianire and Hermion,
Of Adriane and of Isiphilee;
The bareyne yle standing in the see;
The dreynte Leander for his Erro;
The teres of Eleyne, and eek the wo 70
Of Brixseyde, and of thee, Lodomäa;
The crueltee of thee, queen Medëa,
Thy litel children hanging by the hals
For thy Iason, that was of love so fals!
O Ypermistra, Penelopee, Alceste, 75
Your wyfhod he comendeth with the beste!

43. Cm. man; *rest* a man. 45. E. wole; Hn. wol. 47. MS. Camb. Dd. 4.
24 *has* But; *rest* That; *see note*. 55. Hl. Cm. Epistelles; E. Hn. Cp.
Epistles. 56. E. Hn. telle; *rest* tellen. 64. Hl. sorwe; *rest* swerd. 66. E.
Cm. Hl. Diane; Hn. Cp. Pt. Ln. Dianire, *or* Dyanyre. 69. E. Hn. Ln.
Leandre. 70. E. *omits* eek. 71. E. *omits* of. 72. Cp. Hl. queen; *rest* quene.
74. E. Cm. in; *rest* of. 75. E. Hn. Cm. Penolopee. 76. E. wifhede.

But certainly no word ne wryteth he
Of thilke wikke ensample of Canacee,
That lovede hir owne brother sinfully;
Of swiche cursed stories I sey 'fy'; 80
Or elles of Tyro Apollonius,
How that the cursed king Antiochus
Birafted his doghter of hir maydenhede,
That is so horrible a tale for to rede,
Whan he hir threw up-on the pavement. 85
And therfor he, of ful avysement,
Nolde never wryte in none of his sermons
Of swiche unkinde abhominaciouns,
Ne I wol noon reherse, if that I may.

But of my tale how shal I doon this day? 90
Me were looth be lykned, doutelees,
To Muses that men clepe Pierides—
Metamorphoseos wot what I mene:—
But nathelees, I recche noght a bene
Though I come after him with hawe-bake; 95
I speke in prose, and lat him rymes make.
And with that word he, with a sobre chere,
Bigan his tale, as ye shal after here.

95. Hn. Cp. Pt. Hl. hawe bake; E. hawebake; Cm. aw bake; Ln. halve
bake.

THE PROLOGE OF THE MANNES TALE OF LAWE.

O hateful harm! condicion of poverté!
 With thurst, with cold, with hunger so confounded! 100
 To asken help thee shameth in thyn herte;
 If thou noon aske, with nede artow so wounded,
 That verray nede unwrappeth al thy wounde hid!
 Maugree thyn heed, thou most for indigence
 Or stele, or begge, or borwe thy despence! 105
 Thou blamest Crist, and seyst ful bitterly,
 He misdeparteth richesse temporal;
 Thy neighebour thou wytest sinfully, (10)
 And seyst thou hast to lyte, and he hath al.
 'Parfay,' seistow, 'somtyme he rekne shal, 110
 Whan that his tayl shal brennen in the glede,
 For he noght helpeth needfulle in hir nede.'
 Herkne what is the sentence of the wyse:—
 'Bet is to dyën than have indigence;'
 Thy selve neighebour wol thee despyse; 115
 If thou be povre, farwel thy reverence!
 Yet of the wyse man tak this sentence:—
 'Alle the dayes of povre men ben wikke;' (20)
 Be war therfor, er thou come in that prikke!
 If thou be povre, thy brother hateth thee, 120
 And alle thy freendes fleen fro thee, alas!
 O riche marchaunts, ful of wele ben ye,
 O noble, o prudent folk, as in this cas!
 Your bagges been nat filled with *ambes as*,
 But with *sis cink*, than renneth for your chaunce; 125
 At Cristemasse merie may ye daunce!
 Ye seken lond and see for your winninges,
 As wyse folk ye knowen al thestaat (30)
 Of regnes; ye ben fadres of tydinges
 And tales, bothe of pees and of debat. 130
 I were right now of tales desolat,
 Nere that a marchaunt, goon is many a yere,
 Me taughte a tale, which that ye shal here.

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102. *So* Hn.; Cp. Pt. art þou so; Ln. þou art so; Hl. so art thou; *but* E.
so soore artow ywoundid. 109. E. Hn. lite; *rest* litel. 118. E. *om.* the.
119. E. Hn. Hl. to; Cp. Pt. Ln. in. 124. E. fild.

THE TALE OF THE MAN OF LAWE.

HERE BEGINNETH THE MAN OF LAWE HIS TALE.

In Surrie whylom dwelte a companye
Of chapmen riche, and therto sadde and trewe, 135
That wyde-wher senten her spycerye,
Clothes of gold, and satins riche of hewe;
Her chaffar was so thrifty and so newe, (40)
That every wight hath deyntee to chaffare
With hem, and eek to sellen hem hir ware. 140

Now fel it, that the maistres of that sort
Han shapen hem to Rome for to wende;
Were it for chapmanhode or for disport,
Nan other message wolde they thider sende,
But comen hem-self to Rome, this is the ende; 145
And in swich place, as thoughte hem advantage
For her entente, they take her herbergage.

Soiourned han thise marchants in that toun (50)
A certain tyme, as fel to hir plesance.
And so bifel, that the excellent renoun 150
Of themperoures doghter, dame Custance,
Reported was, with every circumstance,
Un-to thise Surrien marchants in swich wyse,
Fro day to day, as I shal yow devyse.

150. E. And; *rest* But. 153. E. swich a wyse; *the rest omit a.*

This was the commune vois of every man — 155
'Our Emperour of Rome, god him see,
A doghter hath that, sin the world bigan,
To rekne as wel hir goodnesse as beautee, (60)
Nas never swich another as is she;
I prey to god in honour hir sustene, 160
And wolde she were of al Europe the quene.

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In hir is heigh beautee, with-oute pryde,
Yowthe, with-oute grenehede or folye;
To alle hir werkes vertu is hir gyde,
Humblesse hath slayn in hir al tyrannye. 165

She is mirour of alle curteisye;
Hir herte is verray chambre of holinesse,
Hir hand, ministre of fredom for almesse.' (70)

And al this vois was soth, as god is trewe,
But now to purpos lat us turne agayn; 170
Thise marchants han doon fraught hir shippes newe,
And, whan they han this blisful mayden seyn,
Hoom to Surrye been they went ful fayn,
And doon her nedes as they han don yore,
And liven in wele; I can sey yow no more. 175

Now fel it, that thise marchants stode in grace
Of him, that was the sowdan of Surrye;
For whan they came from any strange place, (80)
He wolde, of his benigne curteisye,
Make hem good chere, and bisily espye 180
Tydings of sondry regnes, for to lere
The wondres that they mighte seen or here.

Amonges othere thinges, specially
Thise marchants han him told of dame Custance,
So gret noblesse in earnest, ceriously, 185
That this sowdan hath caught so gret plesance
To han hir figure in his remembrance,
That al his lust and al his bisy cure (90)
Was for to love hir whyl his lyf may dure.

Paraventure in thilke large book 190
Which that men clepe the heven, y-writen was
With sterres, whan that he his birthe took,
That he for love shulde han his deeth, allas!
For in the sterres, clerer than is glas,
Is writen, god wot, who-so coude it rede, 195

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The deeth of every man, withouten drede.

In sterres, many a winter ther-biforn,
Was writen the deeth of Ector, Achilles, (100)
Of Pompey, Iulius, er they were born;
The stryf of Thebes; and of Ercules, 200
Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates
The deeth; but mennes wittes been so dulle,
That no wight can wel rede it atte fulle.

This sowdan for his privee conseil sente,
And, shortly of this mater for to pace, 205
He hath to hem declared his entente,
And seyde hem certain, 'but he mighte have grace
To han Custance with-inne a litel space, (110)
He nas but deed;' and charged hem, in hye,
To shapen for his lyf som remedye. 210

Diverse men diverse thinges seyden;
They argumenten, casten up and down;
Many a subtil resoun forth they leyden,
They speken of magik and abusioun;
But finally, as in conclusioun, 215
They can not seen in that non advantage,
Ne in non other wey, save mariage.

212. Hl. Cp. argumentes.

Than sawe they ther-in swich difficultee (120)
By wey of resoun, for to speke al playn,
By-cause that ther was swich diversitee 220
Bitwene hir bothe lawes, that they sayn,
They trowe 'that no cristen prince wolde fayn
Wedden his child under oure lawes swete
That us were taught by Mahoun our prophete.'

220. Cm. *om.* that.

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And he answerde, ‘rather than I lese 225
Custance, I wol be cristned doutelees;
I mot ben hires, I may non other chese.
I prey yow holde your arguments in pees; (130)
Saveth my lyf, and beeth noght recchelees
To geten hir that hath my lyf in cure; 230
For in this wo I may not longe endure.’

What nedeth gretter dilatacioun?
I seye, by tretis and embassadrye,
And by the popes mediacioun,
And al the chirche, and al the chivalrye, 235
That, in destruccioun of Maumetrye,
And in encrees of Cristes lawe dere,
They ben acorded, so as ye shal here; (140)

How that the sowdan and his baronage
And alle his liges shulde y-cristned be, 240
And he shal han Custance in mariage,
And certein gold, I noot what quantitee,
And her-to founden suffisant seurtee;
This same acord was sworn on eyther syde;
Now, faire Custance, almighty god thee gyde! 245

Now wolde som men waiten, as I gesse,
That I shulde tellen al the purveyance
That themperour, of his grete noblesse, (150)
Hath shapen for his doghter dame Custance.
Wel may men knowe that so gret ordinance 250
May no man tellen in a litel clause
As was arrayed for so heigh a cause.

255. E. ynough; Hn. Cp. Hl. ynowe; Cm. Ln. Inowe.

Bisshopes ben shapen with hir for to wende,
 Lordes, ladyes, knightes of renoun,
 And other folk y-nowe, this is the ende; 255
 And notified is thurgh-out the toun

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That every wight, with gret devocioun,
Shulde preyen Crist that he this mariage (160)
Receyve in gree, and spede this viage.

The day is comen of hir departinge, 260
I sey, the woful day fatal is come,
That ther may be no lenger taryinge,
But forthward they hem dressen, alle and some;
Custance, that was with sorwe al overcome,
Ful pale arist, and dresseth hir to wende; 265
For wel she seeth ther is non other ende.

Allas! what wonder is it though she wepte,
That shal be sent to strange nacioun (170)
Fro freendes, that so tendrely hir kepte,
And to be bounden under subieccioun 270
Of oon, she knoweth not his condicioun.
Housbondes been alle gode, and han ben yore,
That knowen wyves, I dar say yow no more.

'Fader,' she sayde, 'thy wrecched child Custance,
Thy yonge doghter, fostred up so softe, 275
And ye, my moder, my soverayn plesance
Over alle thing, out-taken Crist on-lofte,
Custance, your child, hir recomandeth ofte (180)
Un-to your grace, for I shal to Surryë,
Ne shal I never seen yow more with yë. 280

Allas! un-to the Barbre nacioun
I moste anon, sin that it is your wille;
But Crist, that starf for our redempcioun,
So yeve me grace, his hestes to fulfille;
I, wrecche womman, no fors though I spille. 285
Wommen are born to thraldom and penance,
And to ben under mannes governance.'

282. E. goon; *rest* anon. 283. E. sauacioun; *rest* redempcioun.

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I trowe, at Troye, whan Pirrus brak the wal (190)
Or Ylion brende, at Thebes the citee,
Nat Rome, for the harm thurgh Hanibal 290
That Romayns hath venquissed tymes thre,
Nas herd swich tendre weping for pitee
As in the chambre was for hir departinge;
Bot forth she moot, wher-so she wepe or singe.

289. Cm. at; *rest om.* (Or *means* ere, and brende is *intransitive.*) 290. E.
Hn. Cm. Nat (*for* Ne at); Hl. Ne at.

O firste moevyng cruel firmament, 295
With thy diurnal sweigh that crowdest ay
And hurlest al from Est til Occident,
That naturelly wolde holde another way, (200)
Thy crowding set the heven in swich array
At the beginning of this fiers viage, 300
That cruel Mars hath slayn this mariage.

Infortunat ascendent tortuous,
Of which the lord is helples falle, alas!
Out of his angle in-to the derkest hous.
O Mars, O Atazir, as in this cas! 305
O feble mone, unhappy been thy pas!
Thou knittest thee ther thou art nat receyved,
Ther thou were weel, fro thennes artow weyved. (210)

306. E. Hn. Cp. fieble.

Imprudent emperour of Rome, alas!
Was ther no philosophre in al thy toun? 310
Is no tyme bet than other in swich cas?
Of viage is ther noon eleccioun,
Namely to folk of heigh condicioun,
Nat whan a rote is of a birthe y-knowe?
Allas! we ben to lewed or to slowe. 315

To shippe is brought this woful faire mayde

Solempnely, with every circumstance.
'Now Iesu Crist be with yow alle,' she sayde; (220)
Ther nis namore but 'farewel! faire Custance!'
She peyneth hir to make good countenance, 320
And forth I lete hir sayle in this manere,
And turne I wol agayn to my matere.

316. E. come; *rest* brought.

The moder of the sowdan, welle of vyces,
Espyëd hath hir sones pleyn entente,
How he wol lete his olde sacrificyes, 325
And right anon she for hir conseil sente;
And they ben come, to knowe what she mente.
And when assembled was this folk in-fere, (230)
She sette hir down, and sayde as ye shal here.

'Lordes,' quod she, 'ye knowen everichon, 330
How that my sone in point is for to lete
The holy lawes of our Alkaron,
Yeven by goddes message Makomete.
But oon avow to grete god I hete,
The lyf shal rather out of my body sterte 335
Than Makometes lawe out of myn herte!

330. E. she seyde; *rest* quod she. 333. Cp. Pt. Ln. messenger; Hl. messenger; *see note*.

What shulde us tyden of this newe lawe
But thraldom to our bodies and penance? (240)
And afterward in helle to be drawe
For we reneyed Mahoun our creance? 340
But, lordes, wol ye maken assurance,
As I shal seyn, assenting to my lore,
And I shall make us sauf for evermore?'

They sworn and assenten, every man,
To live with hir and dye, and by hir stonde; 345

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And everich, in the beste wyse he can,
To strengthen hir shal alle his freendes fonde;
And she hath this emprise y-take on honde, (250)
Which ye shal heren that I shal devyse,
And to hem alle she spak right in this wyse. 350

‘We shul first feyne us cristendom to take,
Cold water shal not greve us but a lyte;
And I shal swich a feste and revel make,
That, as I trowe, I shal the sowdan quyte.
For though his wyf be cristned never so whyte, 355
She shal have nede to wasshe away the rede,
Thogh she a font-ful water with hir lede.’

O sowdanesse, rote of iniquitee, (260)
Virago, thou Semyram the secounde,
O serpent under femininitee, 360
Lyk to the serpent depe in helle y-bounde,
O feyned womman, al that may confounde
Vertu and innocence, thurgh thy malyce,
Is bred in thee, as nest of every vyce!

O Satan, envious sin thilke day 365
That thou were chased from our heritage,
Wel knowestow to wommen the olde way!
Thou madest Eva bringe us in servage. (270)
Thou wolt fordoon this cristen mariage.
Thyn instrument so, weylawey the whyle! 370
Makestow of wommen, whan thou wolt begyle.

This sowdanesse, whom I thus blame and warie,
Leet prively hir conseil goon hir way.
What sholde I in this tale lenger tarie?
She rydeth to the sowdan on a day, 375
And seyde him, that she wolde reneye hir lay,
And cristendom of preestes handes fonge,
Repenting hir she hethen was so longe, (280)

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Biseching him to doon hir that honour,
That she moste han the cristen men to feste; 380
‘To plesen hem I wol do my labour.’
The sowdan seith, ‘I wol don at your heste,’
And kneling thanketh hir of that requeste.
So glad he was, he niste what to seye;
She kiste hir sone, and hoom she gooth hir weye. 385

385. E. hoome; Hn. Cm. hom.

EXPLICIT PRIMA PARS. SEQUITUR PARS SECUNDA.

Arryved ben this cristen folk to londe,
In Surrie, with a greet solempne route,
And hastily this sowdan sente his sonde, (290)
First to his moder, and al the regne aboute,
And seyde, his wyf was comen, out of doute, 390
And preyde hir for to ryde agayn the quene,
The honour of his regne to sustene.

Gret was the prees, and riche was tharray
Of Surriens and Romayns met y-fere;
The moder of the sowdan, riche and gay, 395
Receyveth hir with al-so glad a chere
As any moder mighte hir doghter dere,
And to the nexte citee ther bisyde (300)
A softe pas solempnely they ryde.

Noght trowe I the triumphe of Iulius, 400
Of which that Lucan maketh swich a bost,
Was royaller, ne more curious
Than was thassemblee of this blisful host.
But this scorpioun, this wikked gost,
The sowdanesse, for al hir flateringe, 405
Caste under this ful mortally to stinge.

402. E. or; *rest* ne. E. curius.

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The sowdan comth him-self sone after this
So royally, that wonder is to telle, (310)
And welcometh hir with alle Ioye and blis.
And thus in merthe and Ioye I lete hem dwelle. 410
The fruyt of this matere is that I telle.
Whan tyme cam, men thoughte it for the beste
That revel stinte, and men goon to hir reste.

411. E. Cm. Cp. matiere; Hn. Pt. matere. 413. E. The; *rest* That.

The tyme cam, this olde sowdanesse
Ordeyned hath this feste of which I tolde, 415
And to the feste cristen folk hem dresse
In general, ye! bothe yonge and olde.
Here may men feste and royaltee biholde, (320)
And deyntees mo than I can yow devyse,
But al to dere they boughte it er they ryse. 420

418. E. bihold.

O sodeyn wo! that ever art successour
To worldly blisse, spreyned with bitternesse;
Thende of the Ioye of our worldly labour;
Wo occupieth the fyn of our gladnesse.
Herke this conseil for thy sikernes, 425
Up-on thy glade day have in thy minde
The unwar wo or harm that comth bihinde.

423. *So* Cm.; *rest* The ende.

For shortly for to tellen at o word, (330)
The sowdan and the cristen everichone
Ben al to-hewe and stiked at the bord, 430
But it were only dame Custance allone.
This olde sowdanesse, cursed crone,
Hath with hir frendes doon this cursed dede,
For she hir-self wolde al the contree lede.

428. E. soothly; *rest* shortly. 432. Pt. Hl. this cursed; *rest omit* this.

Ne ther was Surrien noon that was converted 435
That of the conseil of the sowdan woot,
That he nas al to-hewe er he asterted.
And Custance han they take anon, foot-hoot, (340)
And in a shippe al sterelees, god woot,
They han hir set, and bidde hir lerne sayle 440
Out of Surrye agaynward to Itayle.

435. E. *omits* ther. 440. Hn. Cm. bidde; Cp. Pt. bidden; Ln. beden; E. biddeth; Hl. bad.

A certain tresor that she thider ladde,
And, sooth to sayn, vitaille gret plentee
They han hir yeven, and clothes eek she hadde,
And forth she sayleth in the salte see. 445
O my Custance, ful of benignitee,
O emperoures yonge doghter dere,
He that is lord of fortune be thy stere! (350)

442. E. with hire; *rest* thider.

She blesseth hir, and with ful pitous voys
Un-to the croys of Crist thus seyde she, 450
'O clere, o welful auter, holy croys,
Reed of the lambes blood full of pitee,
That wesh the world fro the olde iniquitee,
Me fro the feend, and fro his clawes kepe,
That day that I shal drenchen in the depe. 455

451. E. woful; *rest* welful, wilful, weleful. 453. E. wesshe; Cm. wesch; Pt. wessh.

Victorious tree, proteccioun of trewe,
That only worthy were for to bere
The king of heven with his woundes newe, (360)
The whyte lamb, that hurt was with the spere,

Flemer of feendes out of him and here 460
On which thy limes feithfully extenden,
Me keep, and yif me might my lyf tamenden.'

462. Cm. Ln. kep; Hn. Pt. Hl. kepe; Cp. keepe; E. helpe.

Yeres and dayes fleet this creature
Thurghout the see of Grece un-to the strayte
Of Marrok, as it was hir aventure; 465
On many a sory meel now may she bayte;
After her deeth ful often may she wayte,
Er that the wilde wawes wole hir dryve (370)
Un-to the place, ther she shal arryve.

463. E. fleteth; but Hn. Cp. Pt. fleet. 469. *Read* placē; Hl. *alone inserts*
as after ther.

Men mighten asken why she was not slayn? 470
Eek at the feste who mighte hir body save?
And I answeere to that demaunde agayn,
Who saved Daniel in the horrible cave,
Ther every wight save he, maister and knave,
Was with the leoun frete er he asterte? 475
No wight but god, that he bar in his herte.

473. Hl. horrible.

God liste to shewe his wonderful miracle
In hir, for we sholde seen his mighty werkes; (380)
Crist, which that is to every harm triacle,
By certein menes ofte, as knowen clerkes, 480
Doth thing for certein ende that ful derk is
To mannes wit, that for our ignorance
Ne conne not knowe his prudent purveyance.

Now, sith she was not at the feste y-slawe,
Who kepte hir fro the drenching in the see? 485
Who kepte Ionas in the fisshes mawe

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Til he was spouted up at Ninivee?
Wel may men knowe it was no wight but he (390)
That kepte peple Ebraik fro hir drenchinge,
With drye feet thurgh-out the see passinge. 490

489. Pt. Ln. *om.* hir.

Who bad the foure spirits of tempest,
That power han tanoyen land and see,
'Bothe north and south, and also west and est,
Anoyeth neither see, ne land, ne tree?'
Sothly, the comaundour of that was he, 495
That fro the tempest ay this womman kepte
As wel whan [that] she wook as whan she slepte.

497. *I insert that*; Hl. awok.

Wher mighte this womman mete and drinke have? (400)
Three yeer and more how lasteth hir vitaille?
Who fedde the Egipzien Marie in the cave, 500
Or in desert? no wight but Crist, sans faille.
Fyve thousand folk it was as gret merveille
With loves fyve and fisshes two to fede.
God sente his foison at hir grete nede.

She dryveth forth in-to our ocean 505
Thurgh-out our wilde see, til, atte laste,
Under an hold that nempnen I ne can,
Fer in Northumberlond the wawe hir caste, (410)
And in the sond hir ship stiked so faste,
That thennes wolde it noght of al a tyde, 510
The wille of Crist was that she shulde abyde.

The constable of the castel doun is fare
To seen this wrak, and al the ship he soghte,
And fond this wery womman ful of care;
He fond also the tresor that she broghte. 515
In hir langage mercy she bisoghte

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The lyf out of hir body for to twinne,
Hir to delivere of wo that she was inne. (420)

A maner Latin corrupt was hir speche,
But algates ther-by was she understonde; 520
The constable, whan him list no lenger seche,
This woful womman broghte he to the londe;
She kneleth doun, and thanketh goddes sonde.
But what she was, she wolde no man seye,
For foul ne fair, thogh that she shulde deye. 525

She seyde, she was so mased in the see
That she forgat hir minde, by hir trouthe;
The constable hath of hir so greet pitee, (430)
And eek his wyf, that they wepen for routh,
She was so diligent, with-outen slouthe, 530
To serve and plesen everich in that place,
That alle hir loven that loken on hir face.

531. MSS. plese. 532. E. Cm. in; *rest* on.

This constable and dame Hermengild his wyf
Were payens, and that contree every-where;
But Hermengild lovede hir right as hir lyf, 535
And Custance hath so longe sojourned there,
In orisons, with many a bitter tere,
Til Iesu hath converted thurgh his grace (440)
Dame Hermengild, constablesse of that place.

536. sojourned] Hl. herberwed.

In al that lond no cristen durste route, 540
Alle cristen folk ben fled fro that contree
Thurgh payens, that conquereden al aboute
The plages of the North, by land and see;
To Walis fled the cristianitee
Of olde Britons, dwellinge in this yle; 545
Ther was hir refut for the mene whyle.

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But yet nere cristen Britons so exyled
That ther nere somme that in hir privetee (450)
Honoured Crist, and hethen folk bigyled;
And ny the castel swiche ther dwelten three. 550
That oon of hem was blind, and mighte nat see
But it were with thilke yën of his minde,
With whiche men seen, after that they ben blinde.

553. E. whan; *rest* after.

Bright was the sonne as in that someres day,
For which the constable and his wyf also 555
And Custance han y-take the righte way
Toward the see, a furlong wey or two,
To pleyen and to romen to and fro; (460)
And in hir walk this blinde man they mette
Croked and old, with yën faste y-shette. 560

561. E. olde; HL. old; *rest* blynde, blynd.

'In name of Crist,' cryde this blinde Britoun,
'Dame Hermengild, yif me my sighte agayn.'
This lady wex affrayed of the soun,
Lest that hir housbond, shortly for to sayn,
Wolde hir for Iesu Cristes love han slayn, 565
Til Custance made hir bold, and bad hir werche
The wil of Crist, as doghter of his chirche.

The constable wex abasshed of that sight, (470)
And seyde, 'what amounteth al this fare?'
Custance answerde, 'sire, it is Cristes might, 570
That helpeth folk out of the feendes snare.'
And so ferforth she gan our lay declare,
That she the constable, er that it were eve,
Converted, and on Crist made him bileve.

574. HL. Cm. Conuerted; *rest* Conuerteth. E. maketh; Ln. maad; *rest* made.

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This constable was no-thing lord of this place 575
Of which I speke, ther he Custance fond,
But kepte it strongly, many wintres space,
Under Alla, king of al Northumberlond, (480)
That was ful wys, and worthy of his hond
Agayn the Scottes, as men may wel here, 580
But turne I wol agayn to my matere.

Sathan, that ever us waiteth to bigyle,
Saugh of Custance al hir perfeccioun,
And caste anon how he mighte quyte hir whyle,
And made a yong knight, that dwelte in that toun 585
Love hir so hote, of foul affeccioun,
That verrailly him thoughte he shulde spille
But he of hir mighte ones have his wille. (490)

He woweth hir, but it availleth noght,
She wolde do no sinne, by no weye; 590
And, for despyt, he compassed in his thocht
To maken hir on shamful deth to deye.
He wayteth whan the constable was awaye,
And prively, up-on a night, he crepte
In Hermengildes chambre whyl she slepte. 595

Wery, for-waked in her orisouns,
Slepeth Custance, and Hermengild also.
This knight, thurgh Sathanas temptaciouns, (500)
Al softly is to the bed y-go,
And kitte the throte of Hermengild a-two, 600
And leyde the bloody knyf by dame Custance,
And wente his wey, ther god yeve him meschance!

598. E. Hn. Sathans; Hl. Satanas; *but* Sathanas in Cp. Pt. Ln.

Sone after comth this constable hoom agayn,
And eek Alla, that king was of that lond,
And saugh his wyf despitously y-slayn, 605
For which ful ofte he weep and wrong his hond,

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And in the bed the bloody knyf he fond
By dame Custance; allas! what mighte she seye? (510)
For verray wo hir wit was al aweye.

606. E. Hn. weep; Cm. Cp. Pt. wepte; Hl. wept. E. wroong.

To king Alla was told al this meschance, 610
And eek the tyme, and where, and in what wyse
That in a ship was founden dame Custance,
As heer-biforn that ye han herd devyse.
The kinges herte of pitee gan agryse,
Whan he saugh so benigne a creature 615
Falle in disese and in misaventure.

For as the lomb toward his deeth is broght,
So stant this innocent bfore the king; (520)
This false knight that hath this tresoun wroght
Berth hir on hond that she hath doon this thing. 620
But nathelees, ther was greet moorning
Among the peple, and seyn, 'they can not gesse
That she hath doon so greet a wikkednesse.

620. *So in E.; rest Bereth.* 621. *All moorning (mornynge); Tyrwhitt has murmuring; see note.*

For they han seyn hir ever so vertuous,
And loving Hermengild right as her lyf. 625
Of this bar witnesse everich in that hous
Save he that Hermengild slow with his knyf.
This gentil king hath caught a gret motyf (530)
Of this witnesse, and thoghte he wolde enquire
Depper in this, a trouthe for to lere. 630

626. E. baar.

Allas! Custance! thou hast no champioun,
Ne fighte canstow nought, so weylawey!
But he, that starf for our redempcioun

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And bond Sathan (and yit lyth ther he lay)
 So be thy stronge champioun this day! 635
 For, but-if Crist open miracle kythe,
 Withouten gilt thou shalt be slayn as swythe.

She sette her doun on knees, and thus she sayde, (540)
 'Immortal god, that savedest Susanne
 Fro false blame, and thou, merciful mayde, 640
 Mary I mene, doghter to Seint Anne,
 Bifore whos child aungeles singe Osanne,
 If I be giltles of this felonye,
 My socour be, for elles I shal dye!'

638. E. sit; Hn. Cm. Pt. sette; Hl. set. 644. E. or; *rest* for.

Have ye nat seyn som tyme a pale face, 645
 Among a prees, of him that hath be lad
 Toward his deeth, wher-as him gat no grace,
 And swich a colour in his face hath had, (550)
 Men mighte knowe his face, that was bistad,
 Amonges alle the faces in that route: 650
 So stant Custance, and loketh hir aboute.

647. gat] Cp. get; Pt. gete; Hl. geyneth.

O quenes, livinge in prosperitee,
 Duchesses, and ye ladies everichone,
 Haveth som routhe on hir adversitee;
 An emperoures doghter stant allone; 655
 She hath no wight to whom to make hir mone.
 O blood royal, that stondest in this drede,
 Fer ben thy freendes at thy grete nede! (560)

654. E. Ln. *om.* ye.

This Alla king hath swich compassioun,
 As gentil herte is fulfild of pitee, 660
 That from his yën ran the water doun.

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'Now hastily do fecche a book,' quod he,
'And if this knight wol sweren how that she
This womman slow, yet wole we us avyse
Whom that we wole that shal ben our Iustyse.' 665

A Briton book, writen with Evangyles,
Was fet, and on this book he swoor anoon
She gilty was, and in the mene whyles (570)
A hand him smoot upon the nekke-boon,
That doun he fil atones as a stoon, 670
And bothe his yën broste out of his face
In sight of every body in that place.

A vois was herd in general audience,
And seyde, 'thou hast desclaundred gilteles
The doghter of holy chirche in hey presence; 675
Thus hastou doon, and yet holde I my pees.'
Of this mervaille agast was al the prees;
As mased folk they stoden everichone, (580)
For drede of wreche, save Custance allone.

Greet was the drede and eek the repentance 680
Of hem that hadden wrong suspeccioun
Upon this sely innocent Custance;
And, for this miracle, in conclusioun,
And by Custances mediacioun,
The king, and many another in that place, 685
Converted was, thanked be Cristes grace!

This false knight was slayn for his untrouthe
By Iugement of Alla hastily; (590)
And yet Custance hadde of his deeth gret routhe.
And after this Iesus, of his mercy, 690
Made Alla wedden ful solempnely
This holy mayden, that is so bright and shene,
And thus hath Crist y-maad Custance a quene.

But who was woful, if I shal nat lye,

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Of this wedding but Donegild, and na mo, 695
The kinges moder, ful of tirannye?
Hir thoughte hir cursed herte brast a-two;
She wolde noght hir sone had do so; (600)
Hir thoughte a despit, that he sholde take
So strange a creature un-to his make. 700

Me list nat of the chaf nor of the stree
Maken so long a tale, as of the corn.
What sholde I tellen of the royaltee
At mariage, or which cours gooth biforn,
Who bloweth in a trompe or in an horn? 705
The fruit of every tale is for to seye;
They ete, and drinke, and daunce, and singe, and pleye.

701. Cm. nor; E. or; *rest* ne. 704. E. Hn. mariages; Ln. þe mariage; *rest* marriage; Hl. Of mariage. 705. a] E. the; Hn. Pt. *omit*.

They goon to bedde, as it was skile and right; (610)
For, thogh that wyves been ful holy thinges,
They moste take in pacience at night 710
Swich maner necessities as been plesinges
To folk that han y-wedded hem with ringes,
And leye a lyte hir holinesse asyde
As for the tyme; it may no bet bityde.

On hir he gat a knave-child anoon, 715
And to a bishop and his constable eke
He took his wyf to kepe, whan he is goon
To Scotland-ward, his fo-men for to seke; (620)
Now faire Custance, that is so humble and meke,
So longe is goon with childe, til that stille 720
She halt hir chambre, abyding Cristes wille.

The tyme is come, a knave-child she ber;
Mauricius at the font-stoon they him calle;
This Constable dooth forth come a messenger,
And wroot un-to his king, that cleped was Alle, 725

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How that this blisful tyding is bifalle,
And othere tydings speedful for to seye;
He takth the lettre, and forth he gooth his weye. (630)

728. Hn. tath; Cm. taath; *rest* taketh.

This messenger, to doon his advantage,
Un-to the kinges moder rydeth swythe, 730
And salueth hir ful faire in his langage,
'Madame,' quod he, 'ye may be glad and blythe,
And thanke god an hundred thousand sythe;
My lady quene hath child, with-oute doute,
To loye and blisse of al this regne aboute. 735

733. Cp. Hl. thanke; E. Hn. thanketh; Cm. thankede; Pt. Ln. thonketh.

735. E. Cm. to; *rest* of.

Lo, heer the lettres seled of this thing,
That I mot bere with al the haste I may;
If ye wol aught un-to your sone the king, (640)
I am your servant, bothe night and day.'
Donegild answerde, 'as now at this tyme, nay; 740
But heer al night I wol thou take thy reste,
Tomorwe wol I seye thee what me leste.'

740. Hl. *om.* at.

This messenger drank sadly ale and wyn,
And stolen were his lettres prively
Out of his box, whyl he sleep as a swyn; 745
And countrefeted was ful subtilly
Another lettre, wroght ful sinfully,
Un-to the king direct of this matere (650)
Fro his constable, as ye shul after here.

The lettre spak, 'the queen delivered was 750
Of so horrible a feendly creature,
That in the castel noon so hardy was

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That any whyle dorste ther endure.
The moder was an elf, by aventure
Y-come, by charmes or by sorcerye, 755
And every wight hateth hir companye.'

750. MSS. queene, queen. 755. E. Hn. Cm. Y-comen. 756. E. Hn. *om.*
wight; Hl. man.

Wo was this king whan he this lettre had seyn,
But to no wichte he tolde his sorwes sore, (660)
But of his owene honde he wroot ageyn,
'Welcome the sonde of Crist for evermore 760
To me, that am now lerned in his lore;
Lord, welcome be thy lust and thy plesaunce,
My lust I putte al in thyn ordinaunce!

Kepeth this child, al be it foul or fair,
And eek my wyf, un-to myn hoom-cominge; 765
Crist, whan him list, may sende me an heir
More agreable than this to my lykinge.'
This lettre he seleth, prively wepinge, (670)
Which to the messenger was take sone,
And forth he gooth; ther is na more to done. 770

O messenger, fulfild of dronkenesse,
Strong is thy breeth, thy limes faltren ay,
And thou biwreyest alle secreenesse.
Thy mind is lorn, thou langlest as a Iay,
Thy face is turned in a newe array! 775
Ther dronkenesse regneth in any route,
Ther is no conseil hid, with-outen doute.

O Donegild, I ne have noon English digne (680)
Un-to thy malice and thy tirannye!
And therfor to the feend I thee resigne, 780
Let him endyten of thy traitorye!
Fy, mannish, fy! o nay, by god, I lye,
Fy, *feendly* spirit, for I dar wel telle,

Though thou heer walke, thy spirit is in helle!

This messenger comth fro the king agayn, 785
And at the kinges modres court he lighte,
And she was of this messenger ful fayn,
And plesed him in al that ever she mighte. (690)
He drank, and wel his girdel underpighte.
He slepeth, and he snoreth in his gyse 790
Al night, un-til the sonne gan aryse.

791. Hl. vn-to; Pt. to; *rest til; but vn-til (as in Tyrwhitt) seems better.*

Eft were his lettres stolen everichon
And countrefeted lettres in this wyse;
'The king comandeth his constable anon,
Up peyne of hanging, and on heigh Iuÿse, 795
That he ne sholde suffren in no wyse
Custance in-with his regne for tabyde
Thre dayes and a quarter of a tyde; (700)

795. *So E. Hn.; Cm. and heigh; Cp. on a heih; Pt. on an high; Hl. of an heigh; Ln. or an hihe.* 797. *regne] E. Reawme.*

But in the same ship as he hir fond,
Hir and hir yonge sone, and al hir gere, 800
He sholde putte, and croude hir fro the lond,
And charge hir that she never eft come there.'
O my Custance, wel may thy goost have fere
And sleping in thy dreem been in penance,
When Donegild caste al this ordinance! 805

This messenger on morwe, whan he wook,
Un-to the castel halt the nexte wey,
And to the constable he the lettre took; (710)
And whan that he this pitous lettre sey,
Ful ofte he seyde 'allas!' and 'weylawey!' 810
'Lord Crist,' quod he, 'how may this world endure?
So ful of sinne is many a creature!

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O mighty god, if that it be thy wille,
Sith thou art rightful Iuge, how may it be
That thou wolt suffren innocents to spille, 815
And wikked folk regne in prosperitee?
O good Custance, alas! so wo is me
That I mot be thy tormentour, or deye (720)
On shames deeth; ther is noon other weye!'

819. shames] Hl. schamful.

Wepen bothe yonge and olde in al that place, 820
Whan that the king this cursed lettre sente,
And Custance, with a deedly pale face,
The ferthe day toward hir ship she wente.
But natheles she taketh in good entente
The wille of Crist, and, kneeling on the stronde, 825
She seyde, 'lord! ay wel-com be thy sonde!

823. E. Ln. the; *rest* hir.

He that me kepte fro the false blame
Whyl I was on the londe amonges yow, (730)
He can me kepe from harme and eek fro shame
In salte see, al-thogh I se nat how. 830
As strong as ever he was, he is yet now.
In him triste I, and in his moder dere,
That is to me my seyl and eek my stere.'

Hir litel child lay weping in hir arm,
And kneeling, pitously to him she seyde, 835
'Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee non harm.'
With that hir kerchief of hir heed she breyde,
And over his litel yën she it leyde; (740)
And in hir arm she lulleth it ful faste,
And in-to heven hir yën up she caste. 840

837. Ln. Hl. kerchief; Pt. keercchef; E. Hn. couerchief; Cm. couerchif;
Cp. couerchef. E. Hn. Cm. ouer (*wrongly*); *rest* of.

'Moder,' quod she, 'and mayde bright, Marye,
 Sooth is that thurgh wommannes eggement
 Mankind was lorn and damned ay to dye,
 For which thy child was on a croys y-rent;
 Thy blisful yën sawe al his torment; 845
 Than is ther no comparisoun bitwene
 Thy wo and any wo man may sustene.

Thou sawe thy child y-slayn bifer thyn yën, (750)
 And yet now liveth my litel child, parfay!
 Now, lady bright, to whom alle woful cryën, 850
 Thou glorie of wommanhede, thou faire may,
 Thou haven of refut, brighte sterre of day,
 Rewe on my child, that of thy gentillesse
 Rewest on every rewful in distresse!

849. E. Ln. *om.* litel; *rest have it.*

O litel child, alas! what is thy gilt, 855
 That never wroughtest sinne as yet, pardee,
 Why wil thyn harde fader han thee spilt?
 O mercy, dere Constable!' quod she; (760)
 'As lat my litel child dwelle heer with thee;
 And if thou darst not saven him, for blame, 860
 So kis him ones in his fadres name!'

861. E. Yet; *rest So.*

Ther-with she loketh bakward to the londe,
 And seyde, 'far-wel, housbond routhelees!'
 And up she rist, and walketh down the stronde
 Toward the ship; hir folweth al the prees, 865
 And ever she preyeth hir child to holde his pees;
 And taketh hir leve, and with an holy entente
 She blesseth hir; and in-to ship she wente. (770)

862. E. Ln. Hl. looked; *rest looketh, loketh.* 868. Hn. Pt. Hl. blesseth;
 Cm. Cp. Ln. blisseth; E. blisshed.

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Vitailed was the ship, it is no drede,
Habundantly for hir, ful longe space, 870
And other necessities that sholde nede
She hadde y-nogh, heried be goddes grace!
For wind and weder almighty god purchase,
And bringe hir hoom! I can no bettre seye;
But in the see she dryveth forth hir weye. 875

EXPLICIT SECUNDA PARS. SEQUITUR PARS TERCIA.

Alla the king comth hoom, sone after this,
Unto his castel of the which I tolde,
And axeth wher his wyf and his child is. (780)
The constable gan aboute his herte colde,
And pleylny al the maner he him tolde 880
As ye han herd, I can telle it no bettre,
And sheweth the king his seel and [eek] his lettre,

882. The word eek seems wanted; but is not in the MSS.

And seyde, 'lord, as ye comaunded me
Up peyne of deeth, so have I doon, certein.'
This messenger tormented was til he 885
Moste biknowe and tellen, plat and plein,
Fro night to night, in what place he had leyn.
And thus, by wit and subtil enqueringe, (790)
Ymagined was by whom this harm gan springe.

The hand was knowe that the lettre wroot, 890
And al the venim of this cursed dede,
But in what wyse, certainly I noot.
Theffect is this, that Alla, out of drede,
His moder slow, that men may plainly rede,
For that she traitour was to hir ligeaunce. 895
Thus endeth olde Donegild with meschaunce.

The sorwe that this Alla, night and day,
Maketh for his wyf and for his child also, (800)

Ther is no tonge that it telle may.
But now wol I un-to Custance go, 900
That fleteth in the see, in peyne and wo,
Fyve yeer and more, as lyked Cristes sonde,
Er that hir ship approched un-to londe.

903. So Hn. Cp. Pt. Hl.; E. Ln. vn-to the; Cm. to the.

Under an hethen castel, atte laste,
Of which the name in my text noght I finde, 905
Custance and eek hir child the see up-caste.
Almighty god, that saveth al mankinde,
Have on Custance and on hir child som minde, (810)
That fallen is in hethen land eft-sone,
In point to spille, as I shal telle yow sone. 910

907. E. saued; *rest* saueth.

Doun from the castel comth ther many a wight
To gauren on this ship and on Custance.
But shortly, from the castel, on a night,
The lordes styward—god yeve him meschaunce!—
A theef, that had reneyed our creaunce, 915
Com in-to ship allone, and seyde he sholde
Hir lemman be, wher-so she wolde or nolde.

916. E. Cm. in-to the; *rest omit* the.

Wo was this wrecched womman tho bigon, (820)
Hir child cryde, and she cryde pitously;
But blisful Marie heelp hir right anon; 920
For with hir strugling wel and mightily
The theef fil over bord al sodeinly,
And in the see he dreynte for vengeance;
And thus hath Crist unwemmed kept Custance.

920. E. Hn. heelp; Hl. hilp; Cm. halp; Pt. halpe; Ln. helped.

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O foule lust of luxurie! lo, thyn ende! AUCTOR. 925
Nat only that thou feyntest mannes minde,
But verrailly thou wolt his body shende;
Thende of thy werk or of thy lustes blinde (830)
Is compleyning, how many-oon may men finde
That noght for werk som-tyme, but for thentente 930
To doon this sinne, ben outhur sleyn or shente!

How may this wayke womman han this strengthe
Hir to defende agayn this renegat?
O Golias, unmesurable of lengthe,
How mighte David make thee so mat, 935
So yong and of armure so desolat?
How dorste he loke up-on thy dredful face?
Wel may men seen, it nas but goddes grace! (840)

938. E. Hl. nas; Ln. is; *the rest* was.

Who yaf Iudith corage or hardinesse
To sleen him, Olofernus, in his tente, 940
And to deliveren out of wrecchednesse
The peple of god? I seye, for this entente,
That, right as god spirit of vigour sente
To hem, and saved hem out of meschance,
So sente he might and vigour to Custance. 945

940. E. Oloferne; Hl. Olefernes; *the rest* Olofernus, Olefernus, or Olesphernus; *see note*.

Forth goth hir ship thurgh-out the narwe mouth
Of Iubaltar and Septe, dryving ay,
Som-tyme West, som-tyme North and South, (850)
And som-tyme Est, ful many a wery day,
Til Cristes moder (blessed be she ay!) 950
Hath shapen, thurgh hir endelees goodnesse,
To make an ende of al hir hevinesse.

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947. E. alway; rest ay. (The latter is better, but recurs in l. 950.) 948.
All but Hl. ins. and after West.

Now lat us stinte of Custance but a throwe,
And speke we of the Romain Emperour,
That out of Surrie hath by lettres knowe 955
The slaughtre of cristen folk, and dishonour
Don to his doghter by a fals traitour,
I mene the cursed wikked sowdanesse, (860)
That at the feste leet sleen both more and lesse.

For which this emperour hath sent anoon 960
His senatour, with royal ordinance,
And othere lordes, got wot, many oon,
On Surriens to taken heigh vengeance.
They brennen, sleen, and bringe hem to meschance
Ful many a day; but shortly, this is thende, 965
Homward to Rome they shapen hem to wende.

This senatour repaireth with victorie
To Rome-ward, sayling ful royally, (870)
And mette the ship dryving, as seith the storie,
In which Custance sit ful pitously. 970
No-thing ne knew he what she was, ne why
She was in swich array; ne she nil seye
Of hir estaat, althogh she sholde deye.

971. E. Cm. *om.* ne *before* knew; *the rest have it.* 973. Hl. although; Pt.
though that; *rest* thogh, though, thow.

He bringeth hir to Rome, and to his wyf
He yaf hir, and hir yonge sone also; 975
And with the senatour she ladde her lyf.
Thus can our lady bringen out of wo
Woful Custance, and many another mo. (880)
And longe tyme dwelled she in that place,
In holy werkes ever, as was hir grace. 980

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The senatoures wyf hir aunte was,
But for al that she knew hir never the more;
I wol no lenger tarien in this cas,
But to king Alla, which I spak of yore,
That for his wyf wepeth and syketh sore, 985
I wol retourne, and lete I wol Custance
Under the senatoures governance.

985. E. *puts* wepeth *after* That.

King Alla, which that hadde his moder slayn, (890)
Upon a day fil in swich repentance,
That, if I shortly tellen shal and plain, 990
To Rome he comth, to receyven his penance;
And putte him in the popes ordinance
In heigh and low, and Iesu Crist bisoghte
Foryeve his wikked werkes that he wroghte.

The fame anon thurgh Rome toun is born, 995
How Alla king shal come in pilgrimage,
By herbergeours that wenten him biforn;
For which the senatour, as was usage, (900)
Rood him ageyn, and many of his linage,
As wel to shewen his heighe magnificence 1000
As to don any king a reverence.

995. E. thurgh out the toun; *rest* thurgh Rome toun. 996. E. Hn. Cp.
Pt. comen. 999. E. Hn. agayns.

Greet chere dooth this noble senatour
To king Alla, and he to him also;
Everich of hem doth other greet honour;
And so bifel that, in a day or two, 1005
This senatour is to king Alla go
To feste, and shortly, if I shal nat lye,
Custances sone wente in his companye. (910)

Som men wolde seyn, at requeste of Custance,

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This senatour hath lad this child to feste; 1010
I may nat tellen every circumstance,
Be as be may, ther was he at the leste.
But soth is this, that, at his modres heste,
Biforn Alla, during the metes space,
The child stood, loking in the kinges face. 1015

This Alla king hath of this child greet wonder,
And to the senatour he seyde anon,
'Whos is that faire child that stondeth yonder?' (920)
'I noot,' quod he, 'by god, and by seint Iohn!
A moder he hath, but fader hath he non 1020
That I of woot' —but shortly, in a stounde,
He tolde Alla how that this child was founde.

'But god wot,' quod this senatour also,
'So vertuous a livere in my lyf,
Ne saugh I never as she, ne herde of mo 1025
Of worldly wommen, mayden, nor of wyf;
I dar wel seyn hir hadde lever a knyf
Thurgh-out her breste, than been a womman wikke; (930)
Ther is no man coude bringe hir to that prikke.'

1026. Hl. Cm. Ln. mayden; *rest* mayde. Cm. nor; Hl. Ln. or; *rest* ne.

Now was this child as lyk un-to Custance 1030
As possible is a creature to be.
This Alla hath the face in remembrance
Of dame Custance, and ther-on mused he
If that the childes moder were aught she
That was his wyf, and prively he sighte, 1035
And spedde him fro the table that he mighte.

'Parfay,' thoghte he, 'fantome is in myn heed!
I oghte deme, of skilful Iugement, (940)
That in the salte see my wyf is deed.'
And afterward he made his argument— 1040
'What woot I, if that Crist have hider y-sent

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My wyf by see, as wel as he hir sente
To my contree fro thennes that she wente?'

1041. E. haue; *rest* hath. E. ysent; Cm. I-sent; *rest* sent.

And, after noon, hoom with the senatour
Goth Alla, for to seen this wonder chaunce. 1045
This senatour dooth Alla greet honour,
And hastifly he sente after Custaunce.
But trusteth weel, hir liste nat to daunce (950)
Whan that she wiste wherefor was that sonde.
Unnethe up-on hir feet she mighte stonde. 1050

1047. E. Pt. hastifly; *rest* hastily, hastely.

When Alla saugh his wyf, faire he hir grette,
And weep, that it was routhe for to see.
For at the firste look he on hir sette
He knew wel verrailly that it was she.
And she for sorwe as domb stant as a tree; 1055
So was hir herte shet in hir distresse
Whan she remembred his unkindenesse.

Twyës she swowned in his owne sighte; (960)
He weep, and him excuseth pitously:—
'Now god,' quod he, 'and alle his halwes brighte 1060
So wisly on my soule as have mercy,
That of your harm as giltelees am I
As is Maurice my sone so lyk your face;
Elles the feend me fecche out of this place!'

1060. Hl. alle; which the rest omit.

Long was the sobbing and the bitter peyne 1065
Er that hir woful hertes mighte cesse;
Greet was the pitee for to here hem pleyne,
Thurgh whiche pleintes gan hir wo encresse. (970)
I prey yow al my labour to relese;

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I may nat telle hir wo un-til tomorwe, 1070
I am so wery for to speke of sorwe.

But fynally, when that the sooth is wist
That Alla giltelees was of hir wo,
I trowe an hundred tymes been they kist,
And swich a blisse is ther bitwix hem two 1075
That, save the Ioye that lasteth evermo,
Ther is non lyk, that any creature
Hath seyn or shal, whyl that the world may dure. (980)

1074. Hl. they ben.

Tho preyde she hir housbond mekely,
In relief of hir longe pitous pyne, 1080
That he wold preye hir fader specially
That, of his magestee, he wolde enclyne
To vouche-sauf som day with him to dyne;
She preyde him eek, he sholde by no weye
Un-to hir fader no word of hir seye. 1085

1084. E. wolde; *rest* sholde.

Som men wold seyn, how that the child Maurice
Doth this message un-to this emperour;
But, as I gesse, Alla was nat so nyce (990)
To him, that was of so sovereyn honour
As he that is of cristen folk the flour, 1090
Sente any child, but it is bet to deme
He wente him-self, and so it may wel seme.

This emperour hath graunted gentilly
To come to diner, as he him bisoghte;
And wel rede I, he loked bisily 1095
Up-on this child, and on his doghter thoghte.
Alla goth to his in, and, as him oghte,
Arrayed for this feste in every wyse (1000)
As ferforth as his conning may suffyse.

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The morwe cam, and Alla gan him dresse, 1100
And eek his wyf, this emperour to mete;
And forth they ryde in loye and in gladnesse.
And whan she saugh hir fader in the strete,
She lighte down, and falleth him to fete.
'Fader,' quod she, 'your yonge child Custance 1105
Is now ful clene out of your remembrance.

I am your doghter Custance,' quod she,
'That whylom ye han sent un-to Surrye. (1010)
It am I, fader, that in the salte see
Was put allone and dampned for to dye. 1110
Now, gode fader, mercy I yow crye,
Send me namore un-to non hethenesse,
But thonketh my lord heer of his kindenesse.'

1107. So in all the MSS.; to be read as Cústancë (three syllables).

Who can the pitous loye tellen al
Bitwix hem three, sin they ben thus y-mette? 1115
But of my tale make an ende I shal;
The day goth faste, I wol no lenger lette.
This glade folk to diner they hem sette; (1020)
In loye and blisse at mete I lete hem dwelle
A thousand fold wel more than I can telle. 1120

This child Maurice was sithen emperour
Maad by the pope, and lived cristenly.
To Cristes chirche he dide greet honour;
But I lete al his storie passen by,
Of Custance is my tale specially. 1125
In olde Romayn gestes may men finde
Maurices lyf; I bere it noght in minde.

1126. E. Hn. Cm. In the; *rest om.* the.

This king Alla, whan he his tyme sey, (1030)
With his Custance, his holy wyf so swete,

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To Engelond been they come the righte wey, 1130
Wher-as they live in loye and in quiete.
But litel whyl it lasteth, I yow hete,
Loye of this world, for tyme wol nat abyde;
Fro day to night it changeth as the tyde.

Who lived ever in swich delyt o day 1135
That him ne moeved outhur conscience,
Or ire, or talent, or som kin affray,
Envye, or pryde, or passion, or offence? (1040)
I ne seye but for this ende this sentence,
That litel whyl in loye or in plesance 1140
Lasteth the blisse of Alla with Custance.

1137. E. som kynnes; Cm. *sumkenys*; Hl. som maner; Hn. Cp. Pt. som kyn; Ln. *sumkin*.

For deeth, that taketh of heigh and low his rente,
When passed was a yeer, even as I gesse,
Out of this world this king Alla he hente,
For whom Custance hath ful gret hevinesse. 1145
Now lat us preyen god his soule blesse!
And dame Custance; fynally to seye,
Towards the toun of Rome gooth hir weye. (1050)

1146. E. praye to; Hl. pray that; *rest* preyen, prayen, preien, *or* preyne.

To Rome is come this holy creature,
And fyndeth ther hir frendes hole and sounde: 1150
Now is she scaped al hir aventure;
And whan that she hir fader hath y-founde,
Doun on hir kneës falleth she to grounde;
Weping for tendrenesse in herte blythe,
She herieth god an hundred thousand sythe. 1155

1150. Hl. And fynt hir freendes ther bothe hool and sound. *The rest omit* ther.

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In vertu and in holy almes-dede
They liven alle, and never a-sonder wende;
Til deeth departed hem, this lyf they lede. (1060)
And fareth now weel, my tale is at an ende.
Now Iesu Crist, that of his might may sende 1160
Loye after wo, governe us in his grace,
And kepe us alle that ben in this place! Amen.

HERE ENDETH THE TALE OF THE MAN OF LAWE; AND NEXT
FOLWETH THE SHIPMANNES PROLOG.

*** For l. 5583 in Tyrwhitt's Text, see Group D, l. 1.

Colophon. *The latter part is from MS. Arch. Selden B. 14. Many MSS. have The prolog of the squyers tale, or the prolog of the Squier. The Petworth MS. and some others have here an ill-written and spurious Prologue to the Shipman's Tale, which is here subjoined:*

'Now freendes,' seide our Hoost so dere,
'How lyketh you by Iohn the Pardonere?
For he hath unboked wel the male;
He hath us told right a thrifty tale
As touching of misgovernaunce—
I preye to God, yeve him good chaunce!—
As ye han herd of these riotoures three.
Now, gentil Mariner, hertely I preye thee,
Telle us a good tale, and that right anon.'
'It shall be doon, by god and by seint Iohn,'
Seyde this Mariner, 'as wel as ever I can,'
And right anon his tale he bigan.

THE SHIPMAN'S PROLOGUE.

HERE BIGINNETH THE SHIPMANNES PROLOG.

Our hoste up-on his stiropes stood anon,
And seyde, 'good men, herkneth everich on;
This was a thrifty tale for the nones! 1165
Sir parish prest,' quod he, 'for goddes bones,
Tel us a tale, as was thy forward yore.
I see wel that ye lerned men in lore
Can moche good, by goddes dignitee!'

1163-1190. *From Cp., collated with* Hl. Pt. Ln. Seld. Royal, *and* Sloane;
E. Hn. Cm. *omit.* 1164. Cp. herkeneth; Hl. herkneth.

The Persone him answerde, '*benedicite!* 1170
What eyleth the man, so sinfully to swere?'

Our hoste answerde, 'O Iankin, be ye there? (10)
I smelle a loller in the wind,' quod he.
'How! good men,' quod our hoste, 'herkneth me;
Abydeth, for goddes digne passioun, 1175
For we shal han a predicacioun;
This loller heer wil prechen us som-what.'

1174. Cp. herkeneth; Hl. herkneth. 1174. Hl. Now; *rest* How (Howe).
1175. Hl. *omits.*

'Nay, by my fader soule! that shal be nat,'
Seyde the Shipman; 'heer he shal nat preche,
He shal no gospel glosen heer ne teche. 1180
We leve alle in the grete god,' quod he,
'He wolde sowen som difficultee, (20)
Or springen cokkel in our clene corn;
And therfor, hoste, I warne thee biforn,
My Ioly body shal a tale telle, 1185
And I shal clinken yow so mery a belle,

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That I shal waken al this companye;
But it shal nat ben of philosophye,
Ne *physices*, ne termes queinte of lawe; (27)
Ther is but litel Latin in my mawe.' 1190

HERE ENDETH THE SHIPMAN HIS PROLOG.

1179. Seld. *has* Shipman; Roy. Slo. Cp. Pt. Ln. squier; Hl. sompnour.
1181. Seld. Hl. We leuen; Roy. Cp. Pt. Ln. He leueth. 1182. Seld. Hl.
quod, *which* Cp. Pt. Ln. Roy. Slo. *omit*. 1186-90. Hl. omits. 1189.
Tyrwhitt *has* of physike; the MSS. *have the unmeaning word* phislyas
(Sloane phillyas; Ln. fisleas); *read* physices; see note. Colophon. *From*
Seld.

THE SHIPMANNES TALE.

HERE BIGINNETH THE SHIPMANNES TALE.

A marchant whylom dwelled at Seint Denys,
That riche was, for which men helde him wys;
A wyf he hadde of excellent beautee,
And compaignable and revelous was she,
Which is a thing that causeth more dispence 1195
Than worth is al the chere and reverence
That men hem doon at festes and at daunces;
Swiche salutaciouns and contenaunces
Passen as dooth a shadwe up-on the wal.
But wo is him that payen moot for al; 1200
The sely housbond, algate he mot paye; (11)
He moot us clothe, and he moot us arraye,
Al for his owene worship richely,
In which array we daunce lolily.
And if that he noght may, par-aventure, 1205
Or elles, list no swich dispence endure,
But thinketh it is wasted and y-lost,
Than moot another payen for our cost,
Or lene us gold, and that is perilous.

1191. Hl. hild. 1196. E. chiere. 1201. E. honsbonde. Hn. moot; Pt. mot;
rest moste. 1205. Pt. Hl. may not. 1206. E. ellis. 1208. E. Thanne.

This noble Marchant heeld a worthy hous, 1210
For which he hadde alday so greet repair (21)
For his largesse, and for his wyf was fair,
That wonder is; but herkneth to my tale.
Amonges alle his gestes, grete and smale,
Ther was a monk, a fair man and a bold, 1215
I trowe of thritty winter he was old,
That ever in oon was drawing to that place.
This yonge monk, that was so fair of face,
Aqueinted was so with the gode man,

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Sith that hir firste knoweliche bigan, 1220
That in his hous as famulier was he (31)
As it possible is any freend to be.

1214. E. Hn. hise; Hl. these; *rest* his. 1216. E. of; Hn. Cp. Ln. a; *rest om.*
1217. E. comynge; *rest* drawyng. 1220-3. Pt. *omits.*

And for as muchel as this gode man
And eek this monk, of which that I bigan,
Were bothe two y-born in o village, 1225
The monk him claimeth as for cosinage;
And he again, he seith nat ones nay,
But was as glad ther-of as fowel of day;
For to his herte it was a greet plesaunce.
Thus been they knit with eterne alliaunce, 1230
And ech of hem gan other for tassure (41)
Of bretherhede, whyl that hir lyf may dure.

1222. E. *om.* is; Hl. possibil is; *rest* is possible. 1231. E. Hn. Pt. ech; Hl.
ilk; *rest* ilke. Cp. for to assure; Hl. Ln. to assure (*om.* for).

Free was daun Iohn, and namely of dispence,
As in that hous; and ful of diligence
To doon plesaunce, and also greet costage. 1235
He noght forgat to yeve the leeste page
In al that hous; but, after hir degree,
He yaf the lord, and sitthe al his meynee,
When that he cam, som maner honest thing;
For which they were as glad of his coming 1240
As fowel is fayn, whan that the sonne up-ryseth. (51)
Na more of this as now, for it suffyseth.

1237. E. the; *rest* that.

But so bifel, this marchant on a day
Shoop him to make redy his array
Toward the toun of Brugges for to fare, 1245
To byën ther a porcioun of ware;

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For which he hath to Paris sent anon
A messenger, and preyed hath daun Iohn
That he sholde come to Seint Denys to pleye
With him and with his wyf a day or tweye, 1250
Er he to Brugges wente, in alle wyse. (61)

This noble monk, of which I yow devyse,
Hath of his abbot, as him list, licence,
By-cause he was a man of heigh prudence,
And eek an officer, out for to ryde, 1255
To seen hir graunges and hir bernys wyde;
And un-to Seint Denys he comth anon.
Who was so welcome as my lord daun Iohn,
Our dere cosin, ful of curteisye?
With him broghte he a Iubbe of Malvesye, 1260
And eek another, ful of fyn Vernage, (71)
And volatyl, as ay was his usage.
And thus I lete hem ete and drinke and pleye,
This marchant and this monk, a day or tweye.

1261. Cp. Ln. good (*for* fyn); Hl. wyn. 1262. Hl. volantyn (!) 1263. E. *om.* ete and.

The thridde day, this marchant up aryseth, 1265
And on his nedes sadly him avyseth,
And up in-to his countour-hous goth he
To rekene with him-self, as wel may be,
Of thilke yeer, how that it with him stood,
And how that he despended hadde his good; 1270
And if that he encrested were or noon. (81)
His bokes and his bagges many oon
He leith biforn him on his counting-bord;
Ful riche was his tresor and his hord,
For which ful faste his countour-dore he shette; 1275
And eek he nolde that no man sholde him lette
Of his accountes, for the mene tyme;
And thus he sit til it was passed pryme.

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1266, 1272, 1277. E. hise. 1268. Pt. Hl. as; *rest om.*

Daun Iohn was risen in the morwe also,
And in the gardin walketh to and fro, 1280
And hath his thinges seyde ful curteisly. (91)

This gode wyf cam walking prively
In-to the gardin, ther he walketh softe,
And him saleweth, as she hath don ofte.
A mayde child cam in hir companye, 1285
Which as hir list she may governe and gye,
For yet under the yerde was the mayde.
'O dere cosin myn, daun Iohn,' she sayde,
'What eyeth yow so rathe for to ryse?'
'Nece,' quod he, 'it oghte y-nough suffyse 1290
Fyve houres for to slepe up-on a night, (101)
But it were for an old appalled wight,
As been thise wedded men, that lye and dare
As in a forme sit a very hare,
Were al for-straught with houndes grete and smale. 1295
But dere nece, why be ye so pale?
I trowe certes that our gode man
Hath yow laboured sith the night bigan,
That yow were nede to resten hastily?'
And with that word he lough ful merily, 1300
And of his owene thought he wex al reed. (111)

1294. E. fourme; *rest forme.* 1300. E. murily. 1301. E. Cp. wax.

This faire wyf gan for to shake hir heed,
And seyde thus, 'ye, god wot al,' quod she;
'Nay, cosin myn, it stant nat so with me.
For, by that god that yaf me soule and lyf, 1305
In al the reme of France is ther no wyf
That lasse lust hath to that sory pley.
For I may singe "allas" and "weylawey,
That I was born," but to no wight,' quod she,
'Dar I nat telle how that it stant with me. 1310

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Wherefore I thinke out of this land to wende, (121)
Or elles of my-self to make an ende,
So ful am I of drede and eek of care.'

1304. E. *repeats* nay. 1306. Cp. Pt. rewme; Hl. Ln. reme; E. Hn. Reawme; *see* B. 4326.

This monk bigan up-on this wyf to stare,
And seyde, 'allas, my nece, god forbede 1315
That ye, for any sorwe or any drede,
Fordo your-self; but telleth me your grief;
Paraventure I may, in your meschief,
Conseille or helpe, and therfore telleth me
Al your anoy, for it shal been secree; 1320
For on my porthors here I make an ooth, (131)
That never in my lyf, for lief ne looth,
Ne shal I of no conseil yow biwreye.'

1317. Hn. Cm. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. telleth; E. tel. E. me of; Cp. Ln. forth;
rest me. 1318. E. I yow may; *rest om.* yow. 1321. Cm. here; *rest om.*

'The same agayn to yow,' quod she, 'I seye;
By god and by this porthors, I yow swere, 1325
Though men me wolde al in-to peces tere,
Ne shal I never, for to goon to helle,
Biwreye a word of thing that ye me telle,
Nat for no cosinage ne alliance,
But verrailly, for love and affiance.' 1330
Thus been they sworn, and heer-upon they kiste, (141)
And ech of hem tolde other what hem liste.

1326. E. pieces; *rest* peces, peeeces.

'Cosin,' quod she, 'if that I hadde a space,
As I have noon, and namely in this place,
Than wolde I telle a legende of my lyf, 1335
What I have suffred sith I was a wyf
With myn housbonde, al be he your cosyn.'

1335. E. Thanne. 1337. your cosyn] E. of youre kyn.

‘Nay,’ quod this monk, ‘by god and seint Martyn,
 He is na more cosin un-to me
 Than is this leef that hangeth on the tree! 1340
 I clepe him so, by Seint Denys of Fraunce, (151)
 To have the more cause of aqueintaunce
 Of yow, which I have loved specially
 Aboven alle wommen sikerly;
 This swere I yow on my professioun. 1345
 Telleth your grief, lest that he come adoun,
 And hasteth yow, and gooth your wey anon.’

1338. and] E. Cp. Pt. Ln. and by. 1340. E. lief.

‘My dere love,’ quod she, ‘o my daun Iohn,
 Ful lief were me this conseil for to hyde,
 But out it moot, I may namore abyde. 1350
 Myn housbond is to me the worste man (161)
 That ever was, sith that the world bigan.
 But sith I am a wyf, it sit nat me
 To tellen no wight of our privetee,
 Neither a bedde, ne in non other place; 1355
 God shilde I sholde it tellen, for his grace!
 A wyf ne shal nat seyn of hir housbonde
 But al honour, as I can understonde;
 Save un-to yow thus muche I tellen shal;
 As help me god, he is noght worth at al 1360
 In no degree the value of a flye. (171)
 But yet me greveth most his nigardye;
 And wel ye woot that wommen naturelly
 Desyren thinges sixe, as wel as I.
 They wolde that hir housbondes sholde be 1365
 Hardy, and wyse, and riche, and ther-to free,
 And buxom to his wyf, and fresh a-bedde.
 But, by that ilke lord that for us bledde,
 For his honour, my-self for to arraye,
 A Sonday next, I moste nedes paye 1370

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An hundred frankes, or elles am I lorn. (181)
 Yet were me lever that I were unborn
 Than me were doon a slaundre or vileinye;
 And if myn housbond eek it mighte espye,
 I nere but lost, and therfore I yow preye 1375
 Lene me this somme, or elles moot I deye.
 Daun Iohn, I seye, lene me thise hundred frankes;
 Pardee, I wol nat faille yow my thanks,
 If that yow list to doon that I yow praye.
 For at a certein day I wol yow paye, 1380
 And doon to yow what plesance and servyce (191)
 That I may doon, right as yow list devyse.
 And but I do, god take on me vengeance
 As foul as ever had Geniloun of France!

1351. E. housbonde. 1355. Hl. *om.* 1367. to] E. Hn. Cm. unto. 1371,
 1376. E. ellis. 1371. E. Ln. Hl. I am; *rest* am I. 1374. E. housbonde.
 1376-9. Hl. *omits.* 1384. E. hadde.

This gentil monk answerde in this manere; 1385
 'Now, trewely, myn owene lady dere,
 I have,' quod he, 'on yow so greet a routhe,
 That I yow swere and plichte yow my trouthe,
 That whan your housbond is to Flaundres fare,
 I wol deliver yow out of this care; 1390
 For I wol bringe yow an hundred frankes.' (201)
 And with that word he caughte hir by the flanks,
 And hir embraceth harde, and kiste hir ofte.
 'Goth now your wey,' quod he, 'al stille and softe,
 And lat us dyne as sone as that ye may; 1395
 For by my chilindre it is pryme of day.
 Goth now, and beeth as trewe as I shal be.'

1389. E. housbonde.

'Now, elles god forbede, sire,' quod she,
 And forth she gooth, as Iolif as a pye,
 And bad the cokes that they sholde hem hye, 1400

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So that men mighte dyne, and that anon. (211)
Up to hir housbonde is this wyf y-gon,
And knokketh at his countour boldely.

'*Qui la?*' quod he. 'Peter! it am I,'
Quod she, 'what, sire, how longe wol ye faste? 1405
How longe tyme wol ye rekene and caste
Your sommes, and your bokes, and your thinges?
The devel have part of alle swiche rekeninges!
Ye have y-nough, pardee, of goddes sonde;
Come down to-day, and lat your bagges stonde. 1410
Ne be ye nat ashamed that daun Iohn (221)
Shal fasting al this day elenge goon?
What! lat us here a messe, and go we dyne.'

1404. E. Hn. Who ther (*with Qi la in margin*); Hl. Qy la; Cp. Pt. Quy la;
Ln. Que la. 1408. Hl. Cm. of; *rest* on. 1412. E. Cm. alenge; *rest* elenge.
1413. E. *om.* What.

'Wyf,' quod this man, 'litel canstow devyne
The curious bisnesse that we have. 1415
For of us chapmen, al-so god me save,
And by that lord that cleped is Seint Yve,
Scarsly amonges twelve ten shul thryve,
Continuelly, lastinge un-to our age.
We may wel make chere and good visage, 1420
And dryve forth the world as it may be, (231)
And kepen our estaat in privetee,
Til we be deed, or elles that we pleye
A pilgrimage, or goon out of the weye.
And therfor have I greet necessitee 1425
Up-on this queinte world tavyse me;
For evermore we mote stonde in drede
Of hap and fortune in our chapmanhede.

1417. E. clepid. 1418. E. xij. 1420. E. chiere. 1426. E. Hn. Cm. tauyse;
rest to auyse.

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To Flaundres wol I go to-morwe at day,
And come agayn, as sone as ever I may. 1430
For which, my dere wyf, I thee biseke, (241)
As be to every wight buxom and meke,
And for to kepe our good be curious,
And honestly governe wel our hous.
Thou hast y-nough, in every maner wyse, 1435
That to a thrifty household may suffyse.
Thee lakketh noon array ne no vitaille,
Of silver in thy purs shaltow nat faille.
And with that word his countour-dore he shette,
And doun he gooth, no lenger wolde he lette, 1440
But hastily a messe was ther seyde, (251)
And spedily the tables were y-leyd,
And to the diner faste they hem spedde;
And richely this monk the chapman fedde.

1441. E. Hn. But; *rest* And.

At-after diner daun Iohn sobrelly 1445
This chapman took a-part, and prively
He seyde him thus, 'cosyn, it standeth so,
That wel I see to Brugges wol ye go.
God and seint Austin spede yow and gyde!
I prey yow, cosin, wysly that ye ryde; 1450
Governeth yow also of your diete (261)
Atemprely, and namely in this hete.
Bitwix us two nedeth no strange fare;
Fare-wel, cosyn; god shilde yow fro care.
If any thing ther be by day or night, 1455
If it lye in my power and my might,
That ye me wol comande in any wyse,
It shal be doon, right as ye wol devyse.

1445. E. Hn. Cm. At; *rest* And. 1455. E. Hn. And if that any thyng by
day or night.

O thing, er that ye goon, if it may be,

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I wolde prey yow; for to lene me 1460
An hundred frankes, for a wyke or tweye, (271)
For certein beestes that I moste beye,
To store with a place that is oures.
God help me so, I wolde it were youre!
I shal nat faille surely of my day, 1465
Nat for a thousand frankes, a myle-way.
But lat this thing be secree, I yow preye,
For yet to-night thise beestes moot I beye;
And fare-now wel, myn owene cosin dere,
Graunt mercy of your cost and of your chere.' 1470

1465. E. at; *rest of*.

This noble marchant gentilly anon (281)
Answerde, and seyde, 'o cosin myn, daun Iohn,
Now sikerly this is a smal requeste;
My gold is youre, whan that it yow leste.
And nat only my gold, but my chaffare; 1475
Take what yow list, god shilde that ye spare.

But o thing is, ye knowe it wel y-nogh,
Of chapmen, that hir moneye is hir plogh.
We may creaunce whyl we have a name,
But goldlees for to be, it is no game. 1480
Paye it agayn whan it lyth in your ese; (291)
After my might ful fayn wolde I yow plese.'

1479. Cm. encrece (*for* creaunce).

Thise hundred frankes he fette forth anon,
And prively he took hem to daun Iohn.
No wight in al this world wiste of this lone, 1485
Savinge this marchant and daun Iohn allone.
They drinke, and speke, and rome a whyle and pleye,
Til that daun Iohn rydeth to his abbeye.

1483. E. fette hyrn forth; *rest om.* hym.

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The morwe cam, and forth this marchant rydeth
To Flaundres-ward; his prentis wel him gydeth, 1490
Til he cam in-to Brugges merily. (301)
Now gooth this marchant faste and bisily
Aboute his nede, and byeth and creaunceth.
He neither pleyeth at the dees ne daunceth;
But as a marchant, shortly for to telle, 1495
He let his lyf, and there I lete him dwelle.

1491. E. Hn. murily. 1494. E. Cm. *om.* the. 1496. E. Hn. let; Cm. lat; Hl. Pt. lad; Cp. leet; Ln. leteþ (let = ledeth).

The Sonday next this Marchant was agon,
To Seint Denys y-comen is daun Iohn,
With crowne and berd all fresh and newe y-shave.
In al the hous ther nas so litel a knave, 1500
Ne no wight elles, that he nas ful fayn, (311)
For that my lord daun Iohn was come agayn.
And shortly to the point right for to gon,
This faire wyf accorded with daun Iohn,
That for thise hundred frankes he sholde al night 1505
Have hir in his armes bolt-upright;
And this acord parfourned was in dede.
In mirthe al night a bisy lyf they lede
Til it was day, that daun Iohn wente his way,
And bad the meynee 'fare-wel, have good day!' 1510
For noon of hem, ne no wight in the toun, (321)
Hath of daun Iohn right no suspeciouun.
And forth he rydeth hoom to his abbeye,
Or where him list; namore of him I seye.

1502. E. Hn. Cm. *om.* For. 1503. E. right to the point. 1506. E. hise.

This marchant, whan that ended was the faire, 1515
To Seint Denys he gan for to repaire,
And with his wyf he maketh feste and chere,
And telleth hir that chaffare is so dere,
That nedes moste he make a chevisaunce.

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For he was bounde in a reconisaunce 1520
 To paye twenty thousand sheeld anon. (331)
 For which this marchant is to Paris gon,
 To borwe of certain frendes that he hadde
 A certain frankes; and somme with him he ladde.
 And whan that he was come in-to the toun, 1525
 For greet chertee and greet affeccoun,
 Un-to daun Iohn he gooth him first, to pleye;
 Nat for to axe or borwe of him moneye,
 But for to wite and seen of his welfare,
 And for to tellen him of his chaffare, 1530
 As freendes doon whan they ben met y-fere. (341)
 Daun Iohn him maketh feste and mery chere;
 And he him tolde agayn ful specially,
 How he hadde wel y-boght and graciously,
 Thanked be god, al hool his marchandyse. 1535
 Save that he moste, in alle maner wyse,
 Maken a chevisaunce, as for his beste,
 And thanne he sholde been in Ioye and reste.

1517, 1532. E. feeste. 1519, 1537. E. cheuyssaunce. 1520. Hl. bounde;
rest bounden. 1526. Pt. cheertee; Ln. chere; *rest* chiertee. 1532. E.
 murye.

Daun Iohn answerde, 'certes, I am fayn
 That ye in hele ar comen hoom agayn. 1540
 And if that I were riche, as have I blisse, (351)
 Of twenty thousand sheeld shold ye nat misse,
 For ye so kindly this other day
 Lente me gold; and as I can and may,
 I thanke yow, by god and by seint Iame! 1545
 But natheles I took un-to our dame,
 Your wyf at hoom, the same gold ageyn
 Upon your bench; she woot it wel, certeyn,
 By certain tokenes that I can hir telle.
 Now, by your leve, I may no lenger dwelle, 1550
 Our abbot wol out of this toun anon; (361)
 And in his companye moot I gon.

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Grete wel our dame, myn owene nece swete,
And fare-wel, dere cosin, til we mete!’

1540. ar] Cp. Pt. Ln. be. 1549. E. Hn. Cm. yow; *rest* hir.

This Marchant, which that was ful war and wys, 1555
Creaunced hath, and payd eek in Parys,
To certeyn Lumbardes, redy in hir hond,
The somme of gold, and gat of hem his bond;
And hoom he gooth, mery as a papeiay.
For wel he knew he stood in swich array, 1560
That nedes moste he winne in that viage (371)
A thousand frankes above al his costage.

1558. E. hadde; Hl. took; *rest* gat. *Over bond is the gloss—*
obligacionem. 1559. E. murie. E. papeiay; *rest* papyniay, popiniay.
1562. E. Hn. Cm. Cp. abouen; *rest* aboue.

His wyf ful redy mette him atte gate,
As she was wont of old usage algate,
And al that night in mirthe they bisette; 1565
For he was riche and cleerly out of dette.
Whan it was day, this marchant gan embrace
His wyf al newe, and kiste hir on hir face,
And up he gooth and maketh it ful tough.

‘Namore,’ quod she, ‘by god, ye have y-nough!’ 1570
And wantounly agayn with him she pleyde; (381)
Til, atte laste, that this Marchant seyde,
‘By god,’ quod he, ‘I am a litel wrooth
With yow, my wyf, al-thogh it be me looth.
And woot ye why? by god, as that I gesse, 1575
That ye han maad a maner straungenesse
Bitwixen me and my cosyn daun Iohn.
Ye sholde han warned me, er I had gon,
That he yow hadde an hundred frankes payed
By redy tokene; and heeld him yvel apayed, 1580
For that I to him spak of chevisaunce, (391)

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Me semed so, as by his contenaunce.
But nathelees, by god our hevene king,
I thoghte nat to axe of him no-thing.
I prey thee, wyf, ne do namore so; 1585
Tel me alwey, er that I fro thee go,
If any dettour hath in myn absence
Y-payëd thee; lest, thurgh thy negligence,
I mighte him axe a thing that he hath payed.'

1571. E. wantownely. 1572. Cp. Pt. þat; Hl. þus; *rest om.* 1574. E. were;
rest be. 1584. E. axen; *rest axe.* E. Hl. *om.* of. 1585. E. as; Hl. *om.*; *rest*
ne. 1586. Hn. Hl. Tel; Ln. Til; *rest Telle.*

This wyf was nat afered nor affrayed, 1590
But boldely she seyde, and that anon: (401)
'Marie, I defye the false monk, daun Iohn!
I kepe nat of hise tokenes never a deel;
He took me certein gold, that woot I weel!
What! yvel thedom on his monkes snoute! 1595
For, god it woot, I wende, withouten doute,
That he had yeve it me bycause of yow,
To doon ther-with myn honour and my prow,
For cosinage, and eek for bele chere
That he hath had ful ofte tymes here. 1600
But sith I see I stonde in this disioint, (411)
I wol answeye yow shortly, to the point.
Ye han mo slakker dettours than am I!
For I wol paye yow wel and redily
Fro day to day; and, if so be I faille, 1605
I am your wyf; score it up-on my taille,
And I shal paye, as sone as ever I may.
For, by my trouthe, I have on myn array,
And nat on wast, bistowed every deel.
And for I have bistowed it so weel 1610
For your honour, for goddes sake, I seye, (421)
As be nat wrooth, but lat us laughe and pleye.
Ye shal my Ioly body have to wedde;
By god, I wol nat paye yow but a-bedde.

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Forgive it me, myn owene spouse dere; 1615
Turne hiderward and maketh bettre chere.'

1592. Cm. defye; *rest* deffie. 1595. E. Hn. Cp. thedam. 1597. E. hadde.
1599. E. beele; Cm. beel; *rest* bele. 1601. E. Hn. Hl. this; *rest* suche,
such. 1611. E. Hn. For; *rest* To.

This marchant saugh ther was no remedye,
And, for to chyde, it nere but greet folye,
Sith that the thing may nat amended be.
'Now, wyf,' he seyde, 'and I foryeve it thee; 1620
But, by thy lyf, ne be namore so large; (431)
Keep bet our good, this yeve I thee in charge.'
Thus endeth now my tale, and god us sende
Taling y-nough un-to our lyves ende. Amen.

HERE ENDETH THE SHIPMANNES TALE.

1622. E. that; *rest* this. 1623. E. Hn. *om.* now. 1624. Cm. Talyng; Hl. Talyng; E. Hn. Pt. Taillynge; Cp. Ln. Toylyng(!). Colophon. *So* E. Hn. Cp. Pt.

THE PRIORESSE'S PROLOGUE

BIHOLD THE MERY WORDES OF THE HOST TO THE SHIPMAN
AND TO THE LADY PRIORESSE.

'Wel seyde, by *corpus dominus*,' quod our hoste, 1625
'Now longe moot thou sayle by the coste,
Sir gentil maister, gentil marineer!
God yeve this monk a thousand last quad yeer!
A ha! felawes! beth ware of swiche a lape!
The monk putte in the mannes hood an ape, 1630
And in his wyves eek, by seint Austin!
Draweth no monkes more un-to your in.

Heading. So E. (*with* Bihoold, murie, Hoost); Hn. Herke the myrie
Wordes of the Worthy Hoost; Pt. And here bygynneth the prologe of
the prioress; Ln. Incipit prologus Priorisse. 1625. E. Hn. Hoost. 1626.
E. Hn. moote; Ln. Hl. mot; *rest* mote. E. saille; cost. 1628. E. this; *rest*
the. Hn. quaad; *rest* quade.

But now passe over, and lat us seke aboute,
Who shal now telle first, of al this route, (10)
Another tale;' and with that word he sayde, 1635
As curteisly as it had been a mayde,
'My lady Prioress, by your leve,
So that I wiste I sholde yow nat greve,
I wolde demen that ye tellen sholde
A tale next, if so were that ye wolde. 1640
Now wol ye vouche-sauf, my lady dere?'

'Gladly,' quod she, and seyde as ye shal here. (18)

Explicit.

1642. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. sayde in this manere.

THE PRIORESSES TALE.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE PRIORESSES TALE.

Domine, dominus noster.

O Lord our lord, thy name how merveillous
Is in this large worlde y-sprad—quod she:—
For noght only thy laude precious 1645
Parfourned is by men of dignitee,
But by the mouth of children thy bountee
Parfourned is, for on the brest soukinge
Som tyme shewen they thyn heryinge.

Heading. *From E. Hn. (Hn. proheme, for prologue). Cp. has—*Here
begynneth the tale of Alma redemptoris, the prioresses Tale. Prolog.
Domine Dominus noster.

Wherfor in laude, as I best can or may, 1650
Of thee, and of the whyte lily flour
Which that thee bar, and is a mayde alway, (10)
To telle a storie I wol do my labour;
Not that I may encresen hir honour;
For she hir-self is honour, and the rote 1655
Of bountee, next hir sone, and soules bote.—

1651. E. *om.* whyte.

O moder mayde! o mayde moder free!
O bush unbrent, brenninge in Moyses sighte,
That ravisedest down fro the deitee,
Thurgh thyn humblesse, the goost that in thalighte, 1660
Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte,
Conceived was the fadres sapience, (20)
Help me to telle it in thy reverence!

1660. Hl. Cp. the alight.

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Lady! thy bountee, thy magnificence,
Thy vertu, and thy grete humilitee 1665
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science;
For som-tyme, lady, er men praye to thee,
Thou goost biforn of thy benigneitee,
And getest us the light, thurgh thy preyere,
To gyden us un-to thy sone so dere. 1670

1669. Hn. Slo. Ln. Hl. the] E. thurgh; Cp. Pt. to. E. Hn. of; *but the rest*
thurgh.

My conning is so wayk, o blisful quene,
For to declare thy grete worthinesse, (30)
That I ne may the weighte nat sustene,
But as a child of twelf monthe old, or lesse,
That can unnethes any word expresse, 1675
Right so fare I, and therfor I yow preye,
Gydeth my song that I shal of yow seye.

Explicit.

1675. Cp. Pt. Hl. vnnethes. E. Hn. vnnethe.

HERE BIGINNETH THE PRIORESSES TALE.

Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,
Amonges cristen folk, a Iewerye,
Sustened by a lord of that contree 1680
For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,
Hateful to Crist and to his companye; (40)
And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde or wende,
For it was free, and open at either ende.

Heading. *From* E. Hn. *has*—Here biggynneth the Prioress tale of
Alma redemptoris mater.

A litel scole of cristen folk ther stood 1685
Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were

Children an heep, y-comen of cristen blood,
That lerned in that scole yeer by yere
Swich maner doctrine as men used there,
This is to seyn, to singen and to rede, 1690
As smale children doon in hir childhede.

Among thise children was a widwes sone, (50)
A litel clergeon, seven yeer of age,
That day by day to scole was his wone,
And eek also, wher-as he saugh thimage 1695
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.

1695. Cp. Pt. Ln. the ymage. 1696. E. he hadde.

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone y-taught
Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere, 1700
To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught,
For sely child wol alday sone lere; (60)
But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,
Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
For he so yong to Crist did reverence. 1705

1701. E. Pt. forgate. 1702. Hn. Hl. alwey.

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,
As he sat in the scole at his prymer,
He *Alma redemptoris* herde singe,
As children lerned hir antiphoner;
And, as he dorste, he drough him ner and ner, 1710
And herkned ay the wordes and the note,
Til he the firste vers coude al by rote. (70)

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 1715
Texpounden him this song in his langage,

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Or telle him why this song was in usage;
This preyde he him to construe and declare
Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes bare.

1719. E. Hl. often.

His felaw, which that elder was than he, 1720
Answerde him thus: 'this song, I have herd seye,
Was maked of our blisful lady free, (80)
Hir to salue, and eek hir for to preye
To been our help and socour whan we deye.
I can no more expounde in this matere; 1725
I lerne song, I can but smal grammere.'

1725. E. Hn. na.

'And is this song maked in reverence
Of Cristes moder?' seyde this innocent;
'Now certes, I wol do my diligence
To conne it al, er Cristemasse is went; 1730
Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,
And shal be beten thryës in an houre, (90)
I wol it conne, our lady for to honoure.'

1733. Cp. Pt. Hl. *omit* for.

His felaw taughte him homward prively,
Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote, 1735
And than he song it wel and boldely
Fro word to word, acording with the note;
Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte,
To scoleward and homward whan he wente;
On Cristes moder set was his entente. 1740

As I have seyde, thurgh-out the Iewerye
This litel child, as he cam to and fro, (100)
Ful merily than wolde he singe, and crye
O Alma redemptoris ever-mo.

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The swetnes hath his herte perced so 1745
Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,
He can nat stinte of singing by the weye.

1741. E. Iuerie. 1743. Slo. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. than; E. Hn. *omit.* 1745. Slo. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. hath; E. Hn. *omit.*

Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Iewes herte his waspes nest,
Up swal, and seide, 'o Hebraik peple, allas! 1750
Is this to yow a thing that is honest,
That swich a boy shal walken as him lest (110)
In your despyt, and singe of swich sentence,
Which is agayn your lawes reverence?

1754. Hl. your; Pt. Ln. 3oure; E. Hn. Cm. Cp. oure.

Fro thennes forth the Iewes han conspyred 1755
This innocent out of this world to chace;
An homicyde ther-to han they hyred,
That in an alej hadde a privee place;
And as the child gan for-by for to pace,
This cursed Iew him hente and heeld him faste, 1760
And kitte his throthe, and in a pit him caste.

I seye that in a wardrobe they him threwe (120)
Wher-as these Iewes purgen hir entraille.
O cursed folk of Herodes al newe,
What may your yvel entente yow availle? 1765
Mordre wol out, certein, it wol nat faille,
And namely ther thonour of god shal sprede,
The blood out cryeth on your cursed dede.

1767. thonour] Cp. Pt. Ln. honour.

'O martir, soulded to virginitee,
Now maystou singen, folwing ever in oon 1770
The whyte lamb celestial,' quod she,

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'Of which the grete evangelist, seint Iohn, (130)
In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they that goon
Biforn this lamb, and singe a song al newe,
That never, fleshly, wommen they ne knewe.' 1775

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 drede and bisy thoght,
She hath at scole and elles-wher him soght, 1780
Til finally she gan so fer espye
That he last seyn was in the Jewerye. (140)

With modres pitee in hir brest enclosed,
She gooth, as she were half out of hir minde,
To every place wher she hath supposed 1785
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 Iewes she him soghte.

She frayneth and she preyeth pitously 1790
To every Iew that dwelte in thilke place,
To telle hir, if hir child wente oght for-by. (150)
They seyde, 'nay'; but Iesu, of his grace,
Yaf in hir thought, inwith a litel space,
That in that place after hir sone she cryde, 1795
Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.

1794. inwith] Cm. Cp. Hl. withinne.

O grete god, that parfournest thy laude
By mouth of innocents, lo heer thy might!
This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
And eek of martirdom the ruby bright, 1800
Ther he with throte y-corven lay upright,
He '*Alma redemptoris*' gan to singe (160)
So loude, that al the place gan to ringe.

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The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete wente,
In coomen, for to wondre up-on this thing, 1805
And hastily they for the provost sente;
He cam anon with-uten taryng,
And herieth Crist that is of heven king,
And eek his moder, honour of mankinde,
And after that, the Iewes leet he binde, 1810

1805. Cp. Pt. wondren on; Ln. wonderne of; E. Hn. wondre vpon; Hl. wonder vpon; Cm. wonderyn vp-on.

This child with pitous lamentacioun
Up-taken was, singing his song alway; (170)
And with honour of greet processioun
They carien him un-to the nexte abbay.
His moder swowning by the bere lay; 1815
Unnethe might the peple that was there
This newe Rachel bringe fro his bere.

1815. E. Hn. his; *rest* the; see l. 1817. 1817. Cm. Hl. the; *rest* his.

With torment and with shamful deth echon
This provost dooth thise Iewes for to sterve
That of this mordre wiste, and that anon; 1820
He nolde no swich cursednesse observe.
Yvel shal have, that yvel wol deserve. (180)
Therfor with wilde hors he dide hem drawe,
And after that he heng hem by the lawe.

1819. E. the; *rest* thise, these. 1822. E. Cm. shal he; Pt. he shal; *rest omit* he.

Up-on his here ay lyth this innocent 1825
Biforn the chief auter, whyl masse laste,
And after that, the abbot with his covent
Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste;
And whan they holy water on him caste,
Yet spak this child, whan spreynd was holy water, 1830

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And song—'O *Alma redemptoris mater*!'

1825. Hn. Hl. his; *the rest* this. 1826. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. the masse; Cp. Pt. Ln. *omit* the. 1827. Hl. thabbot.

This abbot, which that was an holy man (190)
As monkes been, or elles oghten be,
This yonge child to coniure he bigan,
And seyde, 'o dere child, I halse thee, 1835
In vertu of the holy Trinitee,
Tel me what is thy cause for to singe,
Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge?'

'My throte is cut un-to my nekke-boon,'
Seyde this child, 'and, as by wey of kinde, 1840
I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon,
But Iesu Crist, as ye in bokes finde, (200)
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. 1845

This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
I lovede alwey, as after my conninge;
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,
To me she cam, and bad me for to singe
This antem verraily in my deyinge, 1850
As ye han herd, and, whan that I had songe,
Me thoughte, she leyde a greyn up-on my tonge. (210)

1850. Cm. Cp. Pt. anteme; Ln. antime; Hl. antym; Hn. antheme; E. Anthephen.

Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot certeyn
In honour of that blisful mayden free,
Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn; 1855
And afterward thus seyde she to me,
"My litel child, now wol I fecche thee
Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge y-take;

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Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake.”

This holy monk, this abbot, him mene I, 1860
His tonge out-caughte, and took a-vey the greyn,
And he yaf up the goost ful softly. (220)
And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn,
His salte teres trikked down as reyn,
And gruf he fil al plat up-on the grounde, 1865
And stille he lay as he had been y-bounde.

1864. E. Hn. Cm. trikked; Cp. Pt. stryked; Ln. strikked; Hl. stricken.
1866. Cp. Hl. ben; Pt. Ln. bene; E. Hn. Cm. Ieyn.

The covent eek lay on the pavement
Weping, and herien Cristes moder dere,
And after that they ryse, and forth ben went,
And toke away this martir fro his bere, 1870
And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere
Enclosen they his litel body swete; (230)
Ther he is now, god leve us for to mete.

1869. Hl. thay went; *rest* been, ben, bene went. 1870. E. tooken; Hl. took; *rest* toke. 1871. E. temple; *rest* tombe, toumbe. 1873. E. alle for; *rest omit* alle.

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln, slayn also
With cursed Iewes, as it is notable, 1875
For it nis but a litel whyle ago;
Preye eek for us, we sinful folk unstable,
That, of his mercy, god so merciable
On us his grete mercy multiplye, (237)
For reverence of his moder Marye. Amen. 1880

HERE IS ENDED THE PRIORESSES TALE.

1876. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. nys; E. Hn. Cm. is. Colophon. *From* E.

PROLOGUE TO SIR THOPAS.

BIHOLD THE MURYE WORDES OF THE HOST TO CHAUCER.

Whan seyde was al this miracle, every man
As sobre was, that wonder was to se,
Til that our hoste lapen tho bigan,
And than at erst he lokod up-on me,
And seyde thus, 'what man artow?' quod he; 1885
'Thou lokest as thou woldest finde an hare,
For ever up-on the ground I see thee stare.

Heading. *From* E. E. Bihoold; Hoost. 1883. *Only* Hl. *inserts* to *before* lapen. Cm. Cp. tho; E. to; Hn. he; Pt. Ln. Hl. *omit*.

Approche neer, and loke up merily.
Now war yow, sirs, and lat this man have place;
He in the waast is shape as wel as I; 1890
This were a popet in an arm tenbrace (11)
For any womman, smal and fair of face.
He semeth elvish by his contenaunce,
For un-to no wight dooth he daliaunce.

1888. E. murily; Hl. merily.

Sey now somewhat, sin other folk han sayd; 1895
Tel us a tale of mirthe, and that anoon; —
'Hoste,' quod I, 'ne beth nat yvel apayd,
For other tale certes can I noon,
But of a ryme I lerned longe agoon.'
'Ye, that is good,' quod he; 'now shul we here 1900
Som deyntee thing, me thinketh by his chere.' (21)

Explicit.

1897. Cp. Ln. Oste; E. Hn. Cm. Hoost. 1900. E. ye; *rest* we.

SIR THOPAS.

HERE BIGINNETH CHAUCERS TALE OF THOPAS.

Listeth, lordes, in good entent,
And I wol telle verrayment
Of mirthe and of solas;
Al of a knyght was fair and gent 1905
In bataille and in tourneyment,
His name was sir Thopas.

Heading. *From E.* (E. Heere).

Y-born he was in fer contree,
In Flaundres, al biyonde the see,
At Popering, in the place; 1910
His fader was a man ful free, (10)
And lord he was of that contree,
As it was goddes grace.

Sir Thopas wex a doghty swayn,
 Whyt was his face as payndemayn, 1915
 His lippes rede as rose;
 His rode is lyk scarlet in grayn,
 And I yow telle in good certayn,
 He hadde a semely nose.

His heer, his berd was lyk saffroun, 1920
That to his girdel raughte adoun; (20)
His shoou of Cordewane.
Of Brugges were his hosen broun,
His robe was of ciclatoun,
That coste many a lane. 1925

1922. E. shoos; Hn. Pt. shoon; *rest* schoon, schon, schone.

He coude hunte at wilde deer,

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And ryde an hauking for riveer,
With grey goshawk on honde;
Ther-to be was a good archeer,
Of wrastling was ther noon his peer, 1930
Ther any ram shal stonde. (30)

1927. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. for; Cp. by þe; Pt. Ln. for þe. 1931. E. Hn. Cm.
Hl. shal; Cp. schulde; Pt. shulde; Ln. scholde.

Ful many a mayde, bright in bour,
They moorne for him, paramour,
Whan hem were bet to slepe;
But he was chast and no lechour, 1935
And sweet as is the bremble-flour
That bereth the rede hepe.

And so bifel up-on a day,
For sothe, as I yow telle may,
Sir Thopas wolde out ryde; 1940
He worth upon his stede gray, (40)
And in his honde a launcegay,
A long swerd by his syde.

1938. Hn. Hl. it fel; Cm. it fil.

He priketh thurgh a fair forest,
Ther-inne is many a wilde best, 1945
Ye, bothe bukke and hare;
And, as he priketh north and est,
I telle it yow, him hadde almost
Bitid a sory care.

1949. Cm. Hl. Bytid; *rest* Bitidde, Betydde (!).

Ther springen herbes grete and smale, 1950
The lycorys and cetewale, (50)
And many a clowe-gilofre;
And notemuge to putte in ale,

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Whether it be moyste or stale,
Or for to leye in cofre. 1955

The briddes singe, it is no nay,
The sparhawk and the papeiay,
That loye it was to here;
The thrustelcok made eek his lay,
The wodedowve upon the spray 1960
She sang ful loude and clere. (60)

1959. E. hir; *rest* his. 1960. E. a; *rest* the.

Sir Thopas fil in love-longinge
Al whan he herde the thrustel singe,
And priked as he were wood:
His faire stede in his prikinge 1965
So swatte that men mighte him wringe,
His sydes were al blood.

Sir Thopas eek so wery was
For prikinge on the softe gras,
So fiers was his corage, 1970
That doun he leyde him in that plas (70)
To make his stede som solas,
And yaf him good forage.

'O seinte Marie, *benedicite*!
What eyleth this love at me 1975
To binde me so sore?
Me dremed al this night, pardee,
An elf-queen shal my lemman be,
And slepe under my gore.

An elf-queen wol I love, y-wis, 1980
For in this world no womman is (80)
Worthy to be my make [T. 13722
In toune; [T. 13722
Alle othere wommen I forsake, [T. 13723

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And to an elf-queen I me take 1985
By dale and eek by doune!

1980. Hn. Cm. Hl. haue; *rest* loue.

In-to his sadel he clamb anoon,
And priketh over style and stoon
An elf-queen for tespye,
Til he so longe had riden and goon 1990
That he fond, in a privee woon, (90)
The contree of Fairye [T. 13731
So wilde; [T. 13734
For in that contree was ther noon
That to him dorste ryde or goon, 1995
Neither wyf ne childe.

1989. *So* E. Hn. Cm.; Cp. Pt. Ln. to asprie; Hl. to spye. 1995. *Not in the best MSS.; supplied from MS. Reg. 17 D. 15 (Tyrwhitt).*

Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,
His name was sir Olifaunt,
A perilous man of dede;
He seyde, 'child, by Termagaunt, 2000
But-if thou prike out of myn haunt, (100)
Anon I slee thy stede [T. 13743
With mace. [T. 13743
Heer is the queen of Fayërye,
With harpe and pype and simphonye 2005
Dwelling in this place.'

2000. Hl. swar; *rest* seyde. 2004. Cp. Hl. fayerye; E. Hn. Cm. Fairye.
2005. Hl. lute; *rest* pype or pipe.

The child seyde, 'al-so mote I thee,
Tomorwe wol I mete thee
Whan I have myn armoure;
And yet I hope, *par ma fay*, 2010
That thou shalt with this launcegay (110)

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Abyen it ful soure; [T. 13752
Thy mawe [T. 13752
Shal I percen, if I may,
Er it be fully pryme of day, 2015
For heer thou shalt be slawe.'

2008. E. Hl. meete with; *rest omit* with. 2012. E. Hn. sowre; Cm. soure;
rest sore. 2014. E. Cm. Thyn hauberk shal I percen, if I may; *but the*
rest rightly omit Thyn hauberk.

Sir Thopas drow abak ful faste;
This geaunt at him stones caste
Out of a fel staf-slinge;
But faire escapeth child Thopas, 2020
And al it was thurgh goddes gras, (120)
And thurgh his fair beringe.

2020. E. Cm. sire; *rest* child.

Yet listeth, lordes, to my tale
Merier than the nightingale,
For now I wol yow rounne 2025
How sir Thopas with sydes smale,
Priking over hil and dale,
Is come agayn to toune.

2025. Cp. Pt. Ln. *insert* For now, *which the rest omit*. 2027. hil] Hl. hul;
Cp. Pt. Ln. downe. 2028. E. Cm. comen.

His merie men comanded he
To make him bothe game and glee, 2030
For nedes moste he fighte (130)
With a geaunt with hevedes three,
For paramour and Iolitee
Of oon that shoon ful brighte.

2032. E. Hn. heuedes; Hl. heedes; Cm. hedis; Cp. Pt. Ln. hedes.

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'Do come,' he seyde, 'my minstrales,
 2035 And gestours, for to tellen tales
 Anon in myn arminge;
 Of romances that been royales,
 Of popes and of cardinales,
 2040 And eek of love-lykinge.'

2038. Hn. Pt. Hl. reales.

They fette him first the swete wyn, (140)
And mede eek in a maselyn,
And royal spicerye;
Of gingebreed that was ful fyn,
And lycorys, and eek comyn, 2045
With sugre that is so trye.

2041. E. sette; *rest fette or fet.* E. Hn. Cm. *omit the.* 2044. E. And; Hn. Cm. Hl. Of. Cp. Pt. Ln. *omit ll.* 2042-4. 2046. E. *alone retains so.*

He dide next his whyte lere
Of clooth of lake fyn and clere
A breech and eek a sherte;
And next his sherte an aketoun, 2050
And over that an habergeoun (150)
For percinge of his herte;

And over that a fyn hauberk,
Was al y-wroght of Iewes werk,
Ful strong it was of plate; 2055
And over that his cote-armour
As whyt as is a lily-flour,
In which he wol debate.

2058. Cm. wolde; Hl. wold; *rest* wol, wole, wil.

His sheeld was al of gold so reed,
And ther-in was a bores heed, 2060
A charbocle bisyde; (160)

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And there he swoor, on ale and breed,
How that 'the geaunt shal be deed,
Bityde what bityde!'

2061. Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. by his syde; Cp. him besyde. 2063. Cm. Cp. Ln.
schulde.

His lambeux were of quirboilly, 2065
His swerdes shethe of yvory,
His helm of laton bright;
His sadel was of rewel-boon,
His brydel as the sonne shoon,
Or as the mone light. 2070

2068. Pt. Hl. rowel; Cp. Ln. ruel.

His spere was of fyn ciprees, (170)
That bodeth werre, and no-thing pees,
The heed ful sharpe y-grounde;
His stede was al dappel-gray,
It gooth an ambel in the way 2075
Ful softly and rounde [T. 13815
In londe. [T. 13815
Lo, lordes myne, heer is a fit!
If ye wol any more of it,
To telle it wol I fonde. 2080

2071. E. it was; *rest omit* it.

[*The Second Fit.*]

Now hold your mouth, *par charitee*, (180)
Bothe knight and lady free,
And herkneth to my spelle;
Of bataille and of chivalry,
And of ladyes love-drury 2085
Anon I wol yow telle.

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2084. E. batailles; Hn. bataille; *rest* bataile, batail, batell.

Men speke of romances of prys,
Of Horn child and of Ypotys,
Of Bevis and sir Gy,
Of sir Libeux and Pleyndamour; 2090
But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour (190)
Of royal chivalry.

2089. E. Pt. and of; *rest omit* of.

His gode stede al he bistrood,
And forth upon his wey he glood
As sparkle out of the bronde; 2095
Up-on his crest he bar a tour,
And ther-in stiked a lily-flour,
God shilde his cors fro shonde!

2094. E. rood; *rest* glood, glod, glode. 2095. Hl. Pt. spark; Cp. Ln. sparles.

And for he was a knight auntrous,
He nolde slepen in non hous, 2100
But liggen in his hode; (200)
His brighte helm was his wonger,
And by him baiteth his dextrer
Of herbes fyne and gode.

Him-self drank water of the wel, 2105
As did the knight sir Percivel,
So worthy under wede,
Til on a day — (207)

HERE THE HOST STINTETH CHAUCER OF HIS TALE OF THOPAS.

2107. Hl. worthy; E. Hn. worly; Pt. worthely; Cm. Cp. Ln. *omit* ll.
2105-8. Colophon. *From* E. (E. Heere; Hoost).

PROLOGUE TO MELIBEUS.

'No more of this, for goddes dignitee,'
Quod oure hoste, 'for thou makest me 2110
So wery of thy verray lewednesse
That, also wisly god my soule blesse,
Myn eres aken of thy drasty speche;
Now swiche a rym the devel I biteche!
This may wel be rym dogerel,' quod he. 2115

'Why so?' quod I, 'why wiltow lette me
More of my tale than another man,
Sin that it is the beste rym I can?' (10)

2118. E. tale; *rest* rym, ryme.

'By god,' quod he, 'for pleynly, at a word,
Thy drasty ryming is nat worth a tord; 2120
Thou doost nought elles but despendest tyme,
Sir, at o word, thou shall no lenger ryme.
Lat see wher thou canst tellen aught in geste,
Or telle in prose somewhat at the leste
In which ther be som mirthe or som doctryne.' 2125

'Gladly,' quod I, 'by goddes swete pyne,
I wol yow telle a litel thing in prose,
That oghte lyken yow, as I suppose, (20)
Or elles, certes, ye been to daungerous.
It is a moral tale vertuous, 2130
Al be it told som-tyme in sondry wyse
Of sondry folk, as I shal yow devyse.
As thus; ye woot that every evangelist,
That telleth us the peyne of Iesu Crist,
Ne saith nat al thing as his felaw dooth, 2135
But natheles, hir sentence is al sooth,
And alle acorden as in hir sentence,
Al be ther in hir telling difference. (30)

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For somme of hem seyn more, and somme lesse,
Whan they his pitous passioun expresse; 2140
I mene of Marke, Mathew, Luk and Iohn;
But doutelees hir sentence is al oon.
Therfor, lordinges alle, I yow biseche,
If that ye thinke I varie as in my speche,
As thus, thogh that I telle som-what more 2145
Of proverbes, than ye han herd bifore,
Comprehended in this litel tretis here,
To enforce with the theffect of my matere, (40)
And thogh I nat the same wordes seye
As ye han herd, yet to yow alle I preye, 2150
Blameth me nat; for, as in my sentence,
Ye shul not fynden moche difference
Fro the sentence of this tretis lyte
After the which this mery tale I wryte.
And therfor herkneth what that I shal seye, 2155
And lat me tellen al my tale, I preye.' (48)

Explicit.

2131. E. take; *rest* told, tolde, toold. 2139. E. Hn. Ln. somme seyn; *but* Cp. Pt. Hl. *omit* 2nd seyn. 2141. Ed. 1561, Marke; E. Cp. Pt. Hl. Marke (?); Hn. Ln. Mark. 2144. E. Hl. yow; *rest* ye. Cp. Ln. *om.* as. 2146. Cp. prouerbis. 2152. Cm. Cp. Ln. Ye schal not fynden moche; E. Hn. Pt. Hl. Shul ye nowher fynden. 2154. E. murye; Hn. myry; Hl. litil; *rest* mery.

THE TALE OF MELIBEUS.

HERE BIGINNETH CHAUCERS TALE OF MELIBEE.

1. A yong man called Melibeus, mighty and riche, bigat up-on his wyf that called was Prudence, a doghter which that called was Sophie. /

Heading. *From E.*

2. Upon a day bifel, that he for his desport is went in-to the feeldes him to pleye. / His wyf and eek his doghter hath he left inwith his hous, of which the dores weren fast y-shette. / Thre of his olde foos han it espyed, and setten laddres to the walles of his hous, and by the windowes been entred, /2160 and betten his wyf, and wounded his doghter with fyve mortal woundes in fyve sondry places; / this is to seyn, in hir feet, in hir handes, in hir eres, in hir nose, and in hir mouth; and leften hir for deed, and wenten away. /

2159. inwith] Ln. Cp. within. 2160. Thre] Cp. Ln. Foure. E. hise. E. foes; Hn. Cp. Ln. Hl. foos. by the] E. Hn. *om.* the. 2162. E. erys.

3. Whan Melibeus retourned was in-to his hous, and saugh al this meschief, he, lyk a mad man, rendinge his clothes, gan to wepe and crye. /

2163. E. Hn. Ln. rentynge; *rest* rendyng.

4. Prudence his wyf, as ferforth as she dorste, bisoghte him of his weping for to stinte; / but nat for-thy he gan to crye and wepen ever lenger the more. /2165

5. This noble wyf Prudence remembered hir upon the sentence of Ovide, in his book that cleped is The Remedie of Love, wher-as he seith; / 'he is a fool that destourbeth the moder to wepen in the deeth of hir child, til she have wept hir fille, as for a certain tyme; / and thanne shal man doon his diligence with amiable wordes hir to reconforte, and preyen hir of hir weping for to stinte.' / For which resoun this noble wyf Prudence suffred hir housbond for to wepe and crye as for a certein space; / and whan she saugh hir tyme, she

seyde him in this wyse. 'Allas, my lord,' quod she,' why make ye your-self for to be lyk a fool? /2170 For sothe, it aperteneth nat to a wys man, to maken swiche a sorwe. / Your doghter, with the grace of god, shal warisshe and escape. / And al were it so that she right now were deed, ye ne oghte nat as for hir deeth your-self to destroye. / Senek seith: "the wise man shal nat take to greet discomfort for the deeth of his children, / but certes he sholde suffren it in pacience, as wel as he abyde the deeth of his owene propre persone.'" /2175

2172. Cp. Ln. be warissshed; Hl. warischt be. 2173. *Only* E. Cp. Ln. *insert to before* destroye.

6. This Melibeus answerde anon and seyde, 'What man,' quod he, 'sholde of his weping stinte, that hath so greet a cause for to wepe? / Iesu Crist, our lord, him-self wepte for the deeth of Lazarus his freend.' / Prudence answerde, 'Certes, wel I woot, attempre weping is no-thing defended to him that sorweful is, amonges folk in sorwe, but it is rather graunted him to wepe. / The Apostle Paul un-to the Romainys wryteth, "man shal reioyse with hem that maken loye, and wepen with swich folk as wepen." / But thogh attempre weping be y-graunted, outrageous weping certes is defended. /2180 Measure of weping sholde be considered, after the lore that techeth us Senek. / "Whan that thy freend is deed," quod he, "lat nat thyne eyen to moyste been of teres, ne to muche drye; althogh the teres come to thyne eyen, lat hem nat falle." / And whan thou hast for-goon thy freend, do diligence to gete another freend; and this is more wysdom than for to wepe for thy freend which that thou hast lorn; for therinne is no bote. / And therfore, if ye governe yow by sapience, put away sorwe out of your herte. / Remembre yow that Iesus Syrak seith: "a man that is loyous and glad in herte, it him conserveth florissing in his age; but soothly sorweful herte maketh his bones drye." /2185 He seith eek thus: "that sorwe in herte sleeth ful many a man." / Salomon seith: "that, right as motthes in the shepes flees anoyeth to the clothes, and the smale wormes to the tree, right so anoyeth sorwe to the herte." / Wherefore us oghte, as wel in the deeth of our children as in the losse of our goodes temporels, have pacience. /

2176. E. Pt. stente. 2178, 2180. E. deffended. 2182. E. teeris. 2185. E. florissynge. 2187. E. Hl. Motthes; Pt. Cm. mothes; Hn.

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moththes; Cp. moughtes. 2188. E. othere (*for our before* goodes); *rest* oure, our.

7. Remembre yow up-on the pacient Iob, whan he hadde lost his children and his temporel substance, and in his body endured and receyved ful many a grevous tribulacioun; yet seyde he thus: / "our lord hath yeven it me, our lord hath biraft it me; right as our lord hath wold, right so it is doon; blessed be the name of our lord."" /2190 To thise foreseide thinges answerde Melibeus un-to his wyf Prudence: 'Alle thy wordes,' quod he, 'been sothe, and ther-to profitable; but trewely myn herte is troubled with this sorwe so grevously, that I noot what to done.' / 'Lat calle,' quod Prudence, 'thy trewe freendes alle, and thy linage whiche that been wyse; telleth your cas, and herkneth what they seye in conseiling, and yow governe after hir sentence. / Salomon seith: "werk alle thy thinges by conseil, and thou shalt never repente."" /

2189. E. temporeel. 2190. Cp. hap 3oue [*read* yeuen] it me; Ln. yaue it me; Hl. it sent vnto me; *rest omit*; *only* Cp. Ln. Hl. *repeat* our lord. 2191. E. therwith; *rest* ther-to.

8. Thanne, by the conseil of his wyf Prudence, this Melibeus leet callen a greet congregacioun of folk; / as surgiens, phisiciens, olde folk and yonge, and somme of hise olde enemys reconciled as by hir semblaunt to his love and in-to his grace; /2195 and ther-with-al ther comen somme of hise neighbores that diden him reverence more for drede than for love, as it happeth ofte. / Ther comen also ful many subtile flatereres, and wyse advocats lerned in the lawe. /

2196, 7. E. coomen.

9. And whan this folk togidre assembled weren, this Melibeus in sorweful wyse shewed hem his cas; / and by the manere of his speche it semed that in herte he bar a cruel ire, redy to doon vengeance up-on hise foos, and sodeynly desired that the werre sholde biginne; / but natheles yet axed he hir conseil upon this matere. /2200 A surgien, by licence and assent of swiche as weren wyse, up roos and un-to Melibeus seyde as ye may here. /

2199. E. *only ins.* wel *after* semed. E. baar a crueel; foes. 2200. E. Cm. matiere; Hl. matier. 2201. E. Hl. to (*for* un-to).

10. 'Sir,' quod he, 'as to us surgiens aperteneth, that we do to every wight the beste that we can, wher-as we been with-holde, and to our pacients that we do no damage; / wherfore it happeth, many tyme and ofte, that whan twey men han everich wounded other, oon same surgien heleth hem bothe; / wherefore un-to our art it is nat pertinent to norice werre, ne parties to supporte. / But certes, as to the warisshinge of your doghter, al-be-it so that she perilously be wounded, we shullen do so ententif bisnesse fro day to night, that with the grace of god she shal be hool and sound as sone as is possible.' /2205 Almost right in the same wyse the phisiciens answerden, save that they seyden a fewe wordes more: / 'That, right as maladyes been cured by hir contraries, right so shul men warisshe werre by vengeance.' / His neighebores, ful of envye, his feyned freendes that semeden reconsiled, and his flatereres, / maden semblant of weping, and empeireden and agreggeden muchel of this matere, in preising greetly Melibee of might, of power, of richesse, and of freendes, despyyinge the power of his adversaries, / and seiden outrely that he anon sholde wreken him on his foos and biginne werre. /2210

2209. E. matiere. 2210. E. foes.

11. Up roos thanne an advocat that was wys, by leve and by conseil of othere that were wyse, and seyde: / 'Lordinges, the nede for which we been assembled in this place is a ful hevy thing and an heigh matere, / by-cause of the wrong and of the wikkednesse that hath be doon, and eek by resoun of the grete damages that in tyme cominge been possible to fallen for this same cause; / and eek by resoun of the grete richesse and power of the parties bothe; / for the whiche resouns it were a ful greet peril to erren in this matere. /2215 Wherfore, Melibeus, this is our sentence: we conseilte yow aboven alle thing, that right anon thou do thy diligence in kepinge of thy propre persone, in swich a wyse that thou ne wante noon espye ne wache, thy body for to save. / And after that we conseilte, that in thyn hous thou sette suffisant garnisoun, so that they may as wel thy body as thyn hous defende. / But certes, for to moeve werre, or sodeynly for to doon vengeance, we may nat demen in so litel tyme that it were profitable. / Wherfore we axen leyser and espace to have deliberacioun in this cas to deme. / For the commune proverbe seith

thus: "he that sone demeth, sone shal repente." /2220 And eek men seyn that thilke Iuge is wys, that sone understondeth a matere and Iuggeth by leyser. / For al-be-it so that alle taryng be anoyful, algates it is nat to repreve in yevynge of Iugement, ne in vengeance-taking, whan it is suffisant and resonable. / And that shewed our lord Iesu Crist by ensample; for whan that the womman that was taken in avoutrie was broght in his presence, to knowen what sholde be doon with hir persone, al-be-it so that he wiste wel him-self what that he wolde answere, yet ne wolde he nat answere sodeynly, but he wolde have deliberacioun, and in the ground he wroot twyes. / And by thise causes we axen deliberacioun, and we shal thanne, by the grace of god, conseilte thee thing that shal be profitable.' /

2212, 2215. E. matiere. 2216. E. *om.* 1st. ne. E. persone (*for* body). 2217. E. sufficeant; Cp. suffisaunt; Hn. Pt. suffisant. 2218. or] *so* E. Pt; *rest* ne. 2221. E. matiere. 2222. E. sufficeant; Cp. Pt. suffisaunt; Hn. Ln. suffisant. 2223. Cm. Pt. Hl. of (*for* with).

12. Up stirten thanne the yonge folk at-ones, and the moste partie of that companye han scorned the olde wyse men, and bigonnen to make noyse, and seyden: that, /2225 right so as whyl that iren is hoot, men sholden smyte, right so, men sholde wreken hir wronges whyle that they been fresshe and newe; and with loud voys they cryden, 'werre! werre!' /

2225. E. *om.* han.

Up roos tho oon of thise olde wyse, and with his hand made contenaunce that men sholde holden hem stille and yeven him audience. / 'Lordinges,' quod he, 'ther is ful many a man that cryeth "werre! werre!" that woot ful litel what werre amounteth. / Werre at his biginning hath so greet an entree and so large, that every wight may entre whan him lyketh, and lightly finde werre. / But, certes, what ende that shal ther-of bifalle, it is nat light to knowe. /2230 For sothly, whan that werre is ones bigonne, ther is ful many a child unborn of his moder, that shal sterve yong by-cause of that ilke werre, or elles live in sorwe and dye in wrecchednesse. / And therefore, er that any werre biginne, men moste have greet conseil and greet deliberacioun.' / And whan this olde man wende to enforcen his tale by resons, wel ny alle at-ones bigonne they to ryse for to

breken his tale, and beden him ful ofte his wordes for to abregge. / For soothly, he that precheth to hem that listen nat heren his wordes, his sermon hem anoyeth. / For Iesus Syrak seith: that "musik in wepinge is anoyous thing;" this is to seyn: as muche availleth to speken bifore folk to whiche his speche anoyeth, as dooth to singe biforn him that wepeth. /2235 And whan this wyse man saugh that him wanted audience, al shamefast he sette him doun agayn. / For Salomon seith: "ther-as thou ne mayst have noon audience, enforce thee nat to speke." / 'I see wel,' quod this wyse man, 'that the commune proverbe is sooth; that "good conseil wanteth whan it is most nede."' /

2229. Hn. entree; Cm. Pt. Hl. entre; E. Cp. Ln. entryng. 2235.

Hn. Cm. Hl. a noyous; E. anoyous; Cp. annoyous; Pt. noyous.

Cm. doth; *rest* it is (*badly*). 2236. E. *om.* whan. E. and al (*for al*).

2238. E. *om.* nede.

13. Yet hadde this Melibeus in his conseil many folk, that prively in his ere conseilled him certeyn thing, and conseilled him the contrarie in general audience. /

Whan Melibeus hadde herd that the gretteste partie of his conseil weren accorded that he sholde maken werre, anoon he consented to hir conseilling, and fully affermed hir sentence. /2240 Thanne dame Prudence, whan that she saugh how that hir housbonde shoop him for to wreken him on his foos, and to biginne werre, she in ful humble wyse, when she saugh hir tyme, seide him thise wordes: / 'My lord,' quod she, 'I yow biseche as hertely as I dar and can, ne haste yow nat to faste, and for alle guerdons as yeveth me audience. / For Piers Alfonse seith: "who-so that dooth to that other good or harm, haste thee nat to quyten it; for in this wyse thy freend wol abyde, and thyn enemy shal the lenger live in drede." / The proverbe seith: "he hasteth wel that wysely can abyde;" and in wikked haste is no profit.' /

2241. E. foes; to him (*rest om.* to). 2242. Pt. guerdons; Cp. Ln.

Hl. guerdouns; E. Hn. gerdons.

14. This Melibee answerde un-to his wyf Prudence: 'I purpose nat,' quod he, 'to werke by thy conseil, for many causes and resouns. For certes every wight wolde holde me thanne a fool; /2245 this is to

seyne, if I, for thy conseil, wolde chaungen thinges that been ordeyned and affermed by so manye wyse. / Secoundly I seye, that alle wommen been wikke and noon good of hem alle. For "of a thousand men," seith Salomon, "I fond a good man: but certes, of alle wommen, good womman fond I never." / And also certes, if I governed me by thy conseil, it sholde seme that I hadde yeve to thee over me the maistrie; and god forbode that it so were. / For Iesus Syrak seith; "that if the wyf have maistrie, she is contrarious to hir housbonde." / And Salomon seith: "never in thy lyf, to thy wyf, ne to thy child, ne to thy freend, ne yeve no power over thy-self. For bettre it were that thy children aske of thy persone thinges that hem nedeth, than thou see thy-self in the handes of thy children." /2250 And also, if I wolde werke by thy conseil, certes my conseil moste som tyme be secree, til it were tyme that it moste be knowe; and this ne may noght be. / [For it is writen, that "the Ianglerie of wommen can hyden thinges that they witen noght." / Furthermore, the philosophe seith, "in wikked conseil wommen venquisshe men;" and for thise resouns I ne owe nat usen thy conseil.']/

2247. E. Hn. foond; Cm. fond. 2248. E. weere. 2250. see] E. be; Pt. sese. 2251. E. *om.* also. 2252, 3. *Not in the MSS., but necessary; see ll. 2274, 2280, and see Note.*

15. Whanne dame Prudence, ful debonairly and with greet pacience, hadde herd al that hir housbonde lyked for to seye, thanne axed she of him licence for to speke, and seyde in this wyse. / 'My lord,' quod she, 'as to your firste resoun, certes it may lightly been answered. For I seye, that it is no folie to chaunge conseil whan the thing is chaunged; or elles whan the thing semeth otherweyes than it was biforn. /2255 And more-over I seye, that though ye han sworn and bihight to perfourne your emprise, and nathelees ye weyve to perfourne thilke same emprise by luste cause, men sholde nat seyn therefore that ye were a lyer ne forsworn. / For the book seith, that "the wyse man maketh no lesing whan he turneth his corage to the bettre." / And al-be-it so that your emprise be establissed and ordeyned by greet multitude of folk, yet thar ye nat accomplice thilke same ordinaunce but yow lyke. / For the trouthe of thinges and the profit been rather founden in fewe folk that been wyse and ful of resoun, than by greet multitude of folk, ther every man cryeth

and clatereth what that him lyketh. Soothly swich multitude is nat honeste. / As to the seconde resoun, where-as ye seyn that "alle wommen been wikke," save your grace, certes ye despysen alle wommen in this wyse; and "he that alle despyseth alle displeseth," as seith the book. /2260 And Senek seith that "who-so wole have sapience, shal no man dispreise; but he shal gladly techen the science that he can, with-outen presumpcioun or pryde. / And swiche thinges as he nought ne can, he shal nat been ashamed to lerne hem and enquire of lasse folk than him-self." / And sir, that ther hath been many a good womman, may lightly be preved. / For certes, sir, our lord Iesu Crist wolde never have descended to be born of a womman, if alle wommen hadden ben wikke. / And after that, for the grete bountee that is in wommen, our lord Iesu Crist, whan he was risen fro deeth to lyve, appeered rather to a womman than to his apostles. /2265 And though that Salomon seith, that "he ne fond never womman good," it folweth nat therfore that alle wommen ben wikke. / For though that he ne fond no good womman, certes, ful many another man hath founden many a womman ful good and trewe. / Or elles per-aventure the entente of Salomon was this; that, as in sovereyn bountee, he fond no womman; / this is to seyn, that ther is no wight that hath sovereyn bountee save god allone; as he him-self recordeth in his Evaungelie. / For ther nis no creature so good that him ne wanteth somewhat of the perfeccioun of god, that is his maker. /2270 Your thridde resoun is this: ye seyn that "if ye governe yow by my conseil, it sholde seme that ye hadde yeve me the maistrie and the lordshipe over your persone." / Sir, save your grace, it is nat so. For if it were so, that no man sholde be conseilled but only of hem that hadden lordshipe and maistrie of his persone, men wolden nat be conseilled so ofte. / For soothly, thilke man that asketh conseil of a purpos, yet hath he free chois, wheither he wole werke by that conseil or noon. / And as to your fourthe resoun, ther ye seyn that "the Ianglerie of wommen hath hid thinges that they woot noght," as who seith, that "a womman can nat hyde that she woot;" / sir, thise wordes been understonde of wommen that been Iangleresses and wikked; /2275 of whiche wommen, men seyn that "three thinges dryven a man out of his hous; that is to seyn, smoke, dropping of reyn, and wikked wyves;" / and of swiche wommen seith Salomon, that "it were bettre dwelle in desert, than with a

womman that is riotous." / And sir, by your leve, that am nat I; / for
ye han ful ofte assayed my grete silence and my gret pacience; and
eek how wel that I can hyde and hele thinges that men oghte
secreely to hyde. / And soothly, as to your fifthe resoun, wher-as ye
seyn, that "in wikked conseil wommen venquisshe men;" god woot,
thilke resoun stant here in no stede. /2280 For understand now, ye
asken conseil to do wikkednesse; / and if ye wole werken
wikkednesse, and your wyf restreyneth thilke wikked purpos, and
overcometh yow by resoun and by good conseil; / certes, your wyf
oghte rather to be preised than y-blamed. / Thus sholde ye
understonde the philosophre that seith, "in wikked conseil wommen
venquisschen hir housbondes." / And ther-as ye blamen alle wommen
and hir resouns, I shal shewe yow by manye ensamples that many a
womman hath ben ful good, and yet been; and hir conseils ful
hoolsome and profitable. /2285 Eek som men han seyde, that "the
conseillinge of wommen is outhere to dere, or elles to litel of prys." /
But al-be-it so, that ful many a womman is badde, and hir conseil
vile and noght worth, yet han men founde ful many a good
womman, and ful discrete and wise in conseillinge. / Lo, Iacob, by
good conseil of his moder Rebekka, wan the benisoun of Ysaak his
fader, and the lordshipe over alle his bretheren. / Iudith, by hir good
conseil, delivered the citee of Bethulie, in which she dwelled, out of
the handes of Olofernus, that hadde it biseged and wolde have al
destroyed it. / Abigail delivered Nabal hir housbonde fro David the
king, that wolde have slayn him, and apaysed the ire of the king by
hir wit and by hir good conseilling. /2290 Hester by hir good conseil
enhanced greetly the peple of god in the regne of Assuerus the
king. / And the same bountee in good conseilling of many a good
womman may men telle. / And moreover, whan our lord hadde creat
Adam our forme-fader, he seyde in this wyse: / "it is nat good to
been a man allone; make we to him an help semblable to himself." /
Here may ye se that, if that wommen were nat goode, and hir
conseils goode and profitable, /2295 our lord god of hevene wolde
never han wrought hem, ne called hem help of man, but rather
confusioun of man. / And ther seyde ones a clerk in two vers: "what
is bettre than gold? Iaspre. What is bettre than Iaspre? Wisdom. /
And what is bettre than wisdom? Womman. And what is bettre than
a good womman? No-thing." / And sir, by manye of othre resons

may ye seen, that manye wommen been goode, and hir conseil
goode and profitable. / And therfore sir, if ye wol triste to my
conseil, I shal restore yow your doghter hool and sound. /2300 And
eek I wol do to yow so muche, that ye shul have honour in this
cause.’ /

2258. E. Cp. Ln. *om.* same. 2260. E. (*only*) *om.* and he that to
book. 2261. E. Ln. despise; *rest* dispreise. 2266, 7. E. Hn. foond;
Cm. fond. 2271. E. *om.* that. 2274. E. wiste noght. 2277. E. Cp.
Pt. *om.* of. 2291. E. (*only*) *puts* by ... conseil after greetly. 2297, 8.
E. wisdom.

16. Whan Melibee hadde herd the wordes of his wyf Prudence, he
seyde thus: / ‘I se wel that the word of Salomon is sooth; he seith,
that “wordes that been spoken discreetly by ordinaunce, been
honycombes; for they yeven swetnesse to the soule, and
hoolsomnesse to the body.” / And wyf, by-cause of thy swete
wordes, and eek for I have assayed and preved thy grete sapience
and thy grete trouthe, I wol governe me by thy conseil in alle thing.’ /

17. ‘Now sir,’ quod dame Prudence, ‘and sin ye vouche-sauf to been
governed by my conseil, I wol enforme yow how ye shul governe
your-self in chesinge of your conseilours. /2305 Ye shul first, in alle
your werkes, mekely biseken to the heighe god that he wol be your
conseillour; / and shapeth yow to swich entente, that he yeve yow
conseil and confort, as taughte Thobie his sone. / “At alle tymes thou
shalt blesse god, and praye him to dresse thy weyes”; and looke that
alle thy conseil be in him for evermore. / Seint Iame eek seith: “if
any of yow have nede of sapience, axe it of god.” / And afterward
thanne shul ye taken conseil in your-self, and examine wel your
thoghtes, of swich thing as yow thinketh that is best for your profit.
/2310 And thanne shul ye dryve fro your herte three thinges that
been contrarie to good conseil, / that is to seyn, ire, coveitise, and
hastifnesse. /

2310. in] E. of. E. *om.* self.

18. First, he that axeth conseil of him-self, certes he moste been with-
outen ire, for manye causes. / The firste is this: he that hath greet ire
and wratthe in him-self, he weneth alwey that he may do thing that
he may nat do. / And secoundely, he that is irous and wroth, he ne

may nat wel deme; /2315 and he that may nat wel deme, may nat wel
conseille. / The thridde is this; that "he that is irous and wrooth," as
seith Senek, "ne may nat speke but he blame thinges;" / and with his
viciouse wordes he stireth other folk to angre and to ire. / And eek
sir, ye moste dryve coveitise out of your herte. / For the apostle seith,
that "coveitise is rote of alle harmes." /2320 And trust wel that a
coveitous man ne can noght deme ne thinke, but only to fulfille the
ende of his coveitise; / and certes, that ne may never been
accompliced; for ever the more habundaunce that he hath of
richesse, the more he desyreth. / And sir, ye moste also dryve out of
your herte hastifnesse; for certes, / ye ne may nat deme for the beste
a sodeyn thought that falleth in youre herte, but ye moste avyse yow
on it ful ofte. / For as ye herde biforn, the commune proverbe is this,
that "he that sone demeth, sone repenteth." /2325

19. Sir, ye ne be nat alwey in lyke disposicioun; / for certes, som
thing that somtyme semeth to yow that it is good for to do, another
tyme it semeth to yow the contrarie. /

20. Whan ye han taken conseil in your-self, and han demed by good
deliberacion swich thing as you semeth best, / thanne rede I yow,
that ye kepe it secree. / Biwrey nat your conseil to no persone, but-if
so be that ye wenen sikerly that, thurgh your biwreying, your
condicioun shal be to yow the more profitable. /2330 For Iesus Syrak
seith: "neither to thy foo ne to thy freend discovere nat thy secree ne
thy folie; / for they wol yeve yow audience and loking and
supportacioun in thy presence, and scorne thee in thyn absence." /
Another clerk seith, that "scarsly shaltou finden any persone that
may kepe conseil secreely." / The book seith: "whyl that thou kepest
thy conseil in thyn herte, thou kepest it in thy prisoun: / and whan
thou biwreyst thy conseil to any wight, he holdeth thee in his
snare." /2335 And therefore yow is bettre to hyde your conseil in
your herte, than praye him, to whom ye han biwreied your conseil,
that he wole kepen it cloos and stille. / For Seneca seith: "if so be that
thou ne mayst nat thyn owene conseil hyde, how darstou prayen any
other wight thy conseil secreely to kepe?" / But natheles, if thou
wene sikerly that the biwreying of thy conseil to a persone wol make
thy condicioun to stonden in the bettre plyt, thanne shaltou tellen
him thy conseil in this wyse. / First, thou shalt make no semblant

whether thee were lever pees or werre, or this or that, ne shewe him nat thy wille and thyn entente; / for trust wel, that comunly thise conseilours been flatereres, /2340 namely the conseilours of grete lordes; / for they enforcen hem alwey rather to speken plesante wordes, enclyninge to the lordes lust, than wordes that been trewe or profitable. / And therefore men seyn, that "the riche man hath sold good conseil but-if he have it of him-self." / And after that, thou shalt considere thy freendes and thyne enemys. / And as touchinge thy freendes, thou shalt considere whiche of hem been most faithful and most wyse, and eldest and most approved in conseilling. /2345 And of hem shalt thou aske thy conseil, as the caas requirith. /

2328. in] E. of; Ln. vnto. semeth] E. list. 2332. E. to (*after* loking); *rest* and. 2333, 7. E. sikerly; *rest* secreely. 2336. E. hem; *rest* him. 2339. E. wheither. 2340. E. comenli. 2343. E. seeld. 2345. E. wiche. been] E. Hn. that been.

21. I seye that first ye shul clepe to your conseil your freendes that been trewe. / For Salomon seith: that "right as the herte of a man delyteth in savour that is sote, right so the conseil of trewe freendes yeveth swetenesse to the soule." / He seith also: "ther may no-thing be lykned to the trewe freend." / For certes, gold ne silver beth nat so muche worth as the gode wil of a trewe freend. /2350 And eek he seith, that "a trewe freend is a strong deffense; who-so that it findeth, certes he findeth a greet tresour." / Thanne shul ye eek considere, if that your trewe freendes been discrete and wyse. For the book seith: "axe alwey thy conseil of hem that been wyse." / And by this same resoun shul ye clepen to your conseil, of your freendes that been of age, swiche as han seyn and been expert in manye thinges, and been approved in conseillings. / For the book seith, that "in olde men is the sapience and in longe tyme the prudence." / And Tullius seith: that "grete thinges ne been nat ay accompliced by strengthe, ne by delivernesse of body, but by good conseil, by auctoritee of persones, and by science; the whiche three thinges ne been nat feble by age, but certes they enforcen and encreesen day by day." /2355 And thanne shul ye kepe this for a general reule. First shul ye clepen to your conseil a fewe of your freendes that been especiale; / for Salomon seith: "manye freendes have thou; but among a thousand chese thee oon to be thy conseilour." / For al-be-it so that thou first

ne telle thy conseil but to a fewe, thou mayst afterward telle it to mo folk, if it be nede. / But loke alwey that thy conseilours have thilke three condiciouns that I have seyde bifore; that is to seyn, that they be trewe, wyse, and of old experience. / And werke nat alwey in every nede by oon counsellour allone; for somtyme bihoveth it to been counselled by manye. /2360 For Salomon seith: "salvacoun of thinges is wher-as ther been manye conseilours." /

2355. E. Hn. fieble; Cp. Pt. Hl. feble; Cm. feblid; Ln. fiebled. E. encreescen.

22. Now sith that I have told yow of which folk ye sholde been counselled, now wol I teche yow which conseil ye oghte to eschewe. / First ye shul eschewe the conseil of foles; for Salomon seith: "taak no conseil of a fool, for he ne can noght conseil but after his owene lust and his affeccoun." / The book seith: that "the propretee of a fool is this; he troweth lightly harm of every wight, and lightly troweth alle bountee in him-self." / Thou shalt eek eschewe the conseil of alle flatereres, swiche as enforcen hem rather to preise your persone by flaterye than for to telle yow the sothfastnesse of thinges. /2365

2362. Hn. Cm. Hl. that; Pt. what; *rest om.* 2365. E. *om.* alle.

23. 'Wherefore Tullius seith: "amonges alle the pestilences that been in freendshipe, the gretteste is flaterye." And therefore is it more nede that thou eschewe and drede flatereres than any other peple. / The book seith: "thou shalt rather drede and flee fro the swete wordes of flateringe preiseres, than fro the egre wordes of thy freend that seith thee thy sothes." / Salomon seith, that "the wordes of a flaterere is a snare to cacche with innocents." / He seith also, that "he that speketh to his freend wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce, setteth a net biforn his feet to cacche him." / And therefore seith Tullius: "encline nat thyne eres to flatereres, ne taketh no conseil of wordes of flaterye." /2370 And Caton seith: "avyse thee wel, and eschewe the wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce." / And eek thou shalt eschewe the conseil of thyne olde enemys that been reconciled. / The book seith: that "no wight retourneth sauflly in-to the grace of his olde enemy." / And Isope seith: "ne trust nat to hem to whiche thou hast had som-tyme werre or enmitee, ne telle hem nat thy conseil." / And Seneca telleth the cause why. "It may nat be," seith he, "that,

where greet fyr hath longe tyme endured, that ther ne dwelleth som vapour of warmnesse." /2375 And therfore seith Salomon: "in thyn olde foo trust never." / For sikerly, though thyn enemy be reconsiled and maketh thee chere of humilitee, and louteth to thee with his heed, ne trust him never. / For certes, he maketh thilke feyned humilitee more for his profit than for any love of thy persone; by-cause that he demeth to have victorie over thy persone by swich feyned contenance, the which victorie he mighte nat have by stryf or werre. / And Peter Alfonce seith: "make no felawshipe with thyne olde enemys; for if thou do hem bountee, they wol perverten it in-to wikkednesse." / And eek thou most eschewe the conseilling of hem that been thy servants, and beren thee greet reverence; for peraventure they seyn it more for drede than for love. /2380 And therfore seith a philosophre in this wyse: "ther is no wight parfitly trewe to him that he to sore dredeth." / And Tullius seith: "ther nis no might so greet of any emperour, that longe may endure, but-if he have more love of the peple than drede." / Thou shalt also eschewe the conseiling of folk that been dronkelewe; for they ne can no conseil hyde. / For Salomon seith: "ther is no privetee ther-as regneth dronkenesse." / Ye shul also han in suspect the conseilling of swich folk as conseilte yow a thing prively, and conseilte yow the contrarie openly. /2385 For Cassidorie seith: that "it is a maner sleighte to hindre, whan he sheweth to doon a thing openly and werketh prively the contrarie." / Thou shalt also have in suspect the conseilling of wikked folk. For the book seith: "the conseilling of wikked folk is alwey ful of fraude:" / And David seith: "blisful is that man that hath nat folwed the conseilling of shrewes." / Thou shalt also eschewe the conseilling of yong folk; for hir conseil is nat rype. /

2368. E. chacche (*for cacche*). Pt. to cacchen innocentes withe; *rest* (*except E.*) *om.* with. 2370. E. Cp. Ln. the wordes; *rest om.* the. 2374. E. Hn. enemytee. 2377. E. chiere. 2378. E. nat winne; *rest* nat haue. 2380. E. doon; *rest* seyn. 2382. E. for drede; *rest om.* for. 2383. E. *om.* ne. 2388. E. sherewes.

24. Now sir, sith I have shewed yow of which folk ye shul take your conseil, and of which folk ye shul folwe the conseil, /2390 now wol I teche yow how ye shal examine your conseil, after the doctrine of Tullius. / In the examininge thanne of your conseilour, ye shul

considere manye thinges. / Alderfirst thou shalt considere, that in
thilke thing that thou purposest, and upon what thing thou wolt
have conseil, that verray trouthe be seyde and conserved; this is to
seyn, telle trewely thy tale. / For he that seith fals may nat wel be
conseilled, in that cas of which he lyeth. / And after this, thou shalt
considere the thinges that acorden to that thou purposest for to do
by thy conseilours, if resoun accorde therto; /2395 and eek, if thy
might may atteine ther-to; and if the more part and the bettre part of
thy conseilours acorde ther-to, or no. / Thanne shaltou considere
what thing shal folwe of that conseil; as hate, pees, werre, grace,
profit, or damage; and manye othere thinges. / And in alle these
thinges thou shalt chese the beste, and weyve alle othere thinges. /
Thanne shaltow considere of what rote is engendred the matere of
thy conseil, and what fruit it may conceyve and engendre. / Thou
shalt eek considere alle these causes, fro whennes they been
sprongen. /2400 And whan ye han examined your conseil as I have
seyd, and which partie is the bettre and more profitable, and hast
approved it by manye wyse folk and olde; / thanne shaltou
considere, if thou mayst parfourne it and maken of it a good ende. /
For certes, resoun wol nat that any man sholde biginne a thing, but-if
he mighte parfourne it as him oghte. / Ne no wight sholde take up-
on hym so hevy a charge that he mighte nat bere it. / For the
proverbe seith: "he that to muche embraceth, distreyneth litel." /2405
And Catoun seith: "assay to do swich thing as thou hast power to
doon, lest that the charge oppresse thee so sore, that thee bihoveth to
weyve thing that thou hast bigonne." / And if so be that thou be in
doute, whether thou mayst parfourne a thing or noon, chese rather
to suffre than biginne. / And Piers Alphonse seith: "if thou hast
might to doon a thing of which thou most repente thee, it is bettre
'nay' than 'ye';" / this is to seyn, that thee is bettre holde thy tonge
stille, than for to speke. / Thanne may ye understonde by strengre
resons, that if thou hast power to parfourne a werk of which thou
shalt repente, thanne is it bettre that thou suffre than biginne. /2410
Wel seyn they, that defenden every wight to assaye any thing of
which he is in doute, whether he may parfourne it or no. / And after,
whan ye han examined your conseil as I have seyde bifore, and
known wel that ye may parfourne youre emprise, conferme it
thanne sadly til it be at an ende. /

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2396. or no] E. or noon; Pt. anoon. 2397. of that] E. after hir.
2398. E. Thanne of; *rest* And in. 2399. E. matiere. conceyve] E.
Hl. conserue. 2407, 2411. E. wheither. 2411. Hn. Cm. no; *rest*
noon (non).

25. Now is it resoun and tyme that I shewe yow, whanne, and
wherfore, that ye may chaunge your conseil with-outen your
repreve. / Soothly, a man may chaungen his purpos and his conseil if
the cause cesseth, or whan a newe caas bitydeth. / For the lawe seith:
that "upon thinges that newly bityden bihoveth newe conseil."
/2415 And Senek seith: "if thy conseil is comen to the eres of thyn
enemy, chaunge thy conseil." / Thou mayst also chaunge thy conseil
if so be that thou finde that, by errour or by other cause, harm or
damage may bityde. / Also, if thy conseil be dishonest, or elles
cometh of dishoneste cause, chaunge thy conseil. / For the lawes
seyen: that "alle bihestes that been dishoneste been of no value." /
And eek, if it so be that it be impossible, or may nat goodly be
parfourned or kept. /2420

2413. Hl. conseil; *rest* conseillors. 2416. E. eeris. 2417. finde] E.
mayst finde. 2420. E. Cp. if; *rest* if it.

26. And take this for a general reule, that every conseil that is
affirmed so strongly that it may nat be chaunged, for no condicioun
that may bityde, I seye that thilke conseil is wikked.' /

27. This Melibeus, whanne he hadde herd the doctrine of his wyf
dame Prudence, answerde in this wyse. / 'Dame,' quod he, 'as yet in-
to this tyme ye han wel and covenantly taught me as in general, how
I shal governe me in the chesinge and in the withholdinge of my
conseillours. / But now wolde I fayn that ye wolde condescende in
especial, / and telle me how lyketh yow, or what semeth yow, by our
conseillours that we han chosen in our present nede.' /2425

2423. in-to] Cp. Ln. vnto. E. couenablye.

28. 'My lord,' quod she, 'I biseke yow in al humblesse, that ye wol
nat wilfully replye agayn my resouns, ne distempere your herte thogh
I speke thing that yow displese. / For god wot that, as in myn
entente, I speke it for your beste, for your honour and for your
profite eke. / And soothly, I hope that your benigneite wol taken it in
pacienc. / Trusteth me wel,' quod she, 'that your conseil as in this

caas ne sholde nat, as to speke properly, be called a conseilling, but a mocioun or a moevyng of folye; / in which conseil ye han erred in many a sondry wyse. /2430

2428. E. benyngnytee.

29. First and forward, ye han erred in thassemblinge of your conseillours. / For ye sholde first have cleped a fewe folk to your conseil, and after ye mighte han shewed it to mo folk, if it hadde been nede. / But certes, ye han sodeynly cleped to your conseil a greet multitude of peple, ful chargeant and ful anoyous for to here. / Also ye han erred, for there-as ye sholden only have cleped to your conseil your trewe freendes olde and wyse, / ye han y-cleped straunge folk, and yong folk, false flatereres, and enemys reconsiled, and folk that doon yow reverence withouten love. /2435 And eek also ye have erred, for ye han broght with yow to your conseil ire, covetise, and hastifnesse; / the whiche three thinges been contrariouse to every conseil honeste and profitable; / the whiche three thinges ye han nat anientissed or destroyed hem, neither in your-self ne in your conseillours, as yow oghte. / Ye han erred also, for ye han shewed to your conseillours your talent, and your affeccoun to make werre anon and for to do vengeance; / they han espyed by your wordes to what thing ye been enclyned. /2440 And therefore han they rather conseilled yow to your talent than to your profit. / Ye han erred also, for it semeth that yow suffyseth to han been conseilled by thise conseillours only, and with litel avys; / wher-as, in so greet and so heigh a nede, it hadde been necessarie mo conseillours, and more deliberacioun to parfourne your emprise. / Ye han erred also, for ye han nat examined your conseil in the forseyde manere, ne in due manere as the caas requireth. / Ye han erred also, for ye han maked no divisioun bitwixe your conseillours; this is to seyn, bitwixen your trewe freendes and your feyned conseillours; /2445 ne ye han nat knowe the wil of your trewe freendes olde and wyse; / but ye han cast alle hir wordes in an hochepot, and enclyned your herte to the more part and to the gretter nombre; and ther been ye condescended. / And sith ye wot wel that men shal alwey finde a gretter nombre of foles than of wyse men, / and therefore the conseils that been at congregaciouns and multitudes of folk, ther-as men take more reward to the nombre than to the sapience of persones, / ye see

wel that in swiche conseillinges foles han the maistrie.' /2450
 Melibeus answerde agayn, and seyde: 'I graunte wel that I have
 erred; / but ther-as thou hast told me heer-biforn, that he nis nat to
 blame that chaungeth hise conseilours in certain caas, and for
 certeine iuste causes, / I am al redy to chaunge my conseilours, right
 as thow wolt devyse. / The proverbe seith: that "for to do sinne is
 mannish, but certes for to persevere longe in sinne is werk of the
 devel."" /

2438. E. *om.* thinges. Hl. *om.* hem. 2442. Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. yow; E.
 it. 2445. E. nat maked; *rest om.* nat. 2447. E. partie; *rest part.*

30. To this sentence answerde anon dame Prudence, and seyde: /2455
 'Examineth,' quod she, 'your conseil, and lat us see the whiche of
 hem han spoken most resonably, and taught yow best conseil. / And
 for-as-muche as that the examinacioun is necessarie, lat us biginne at
 the surgiens and at the phisiciens, that first speken in this matere. / I
 sey yow, that the surgiens and phisiciens han seyde yow in your
 conseil discreetly, as hem oughte; / and in hir speche seyden ful
 wysly, that to the office of hem aperteneth to doon to every wight
 honour and profit, and no wight for to anoye; / and, after hir craft, to
 doon greet diligence un-to the cure of hem whiche that they han in
 hir governaunce. /2460 And sir, right as they han answered wysly
 and discreetly, / right so rede I that they been heighly and
 sovereynly guerdoned for hir noble speche; / and eek for they sholde
 do the more ententif businesse in the curacioun of your doghter dere.
 / For al-be-it so that they been your freendes, therfore shal ye nat
 suffren that they serve yow for noght; / but ye oghte the rather
 guerdone hem and shewe hem your largesse. /2465 And as
 touchinge the proposicioun which that the phisiciens entreteden in
 this caas, this is to seyn, / that, in maladyes, that oon contrarie is
 warissed by another contrarie, / I wolde fayn knowe how ye
 understonde thilke text, and what is your sentence.' / 'Certes,' quod
 Melibeus, 'I understonde it in this wyse: / that, right as they han
 doon me a contrarie, right so sholde I doon hem another. /2470 For
 right as they han venged hem on me and doon me wrong, right so
 shal I venge me upon hem and doon hem wrong; / and thanne have I
 cured oon contrarie by another.' /

2455. E. answereth; *rest* answerde (answered). 2456. E. resonablely. 2457. E. matiere. 2459. E. seyd; Hn. Cm. Hl. seyden. 2460. E. in; *rest* after. 2462. E. Hn. gerdoned; *rest* guerdoned. 2465. E. Hn. Pt. gerdone. 2466. E. encreesceden; Hn. Ln. encresceden; Cp. Cm. encresceden; Pt. encrecscen; Hl. han schewed; ed. 1561, entreteden. 2468. thilke] E. this.

31. 'Lo, lo!' quod dame Prudence, 'how lightly is every man enclyned to his owene desyr and to his owene plesaunce! / Certes,' quod she, 'the wordes of the phisiciens ne sholde nat han been understonden in this wyse. / For certes, wikkednesse is nat contrarie to wikkednesse, ne vengeaunce to vengeaunce, ne wrong to wrong; but they been semblable. /2475 And therfore, o vengeaunce is nat warissed by another vengeaunce, ne o wrong by another wrong; / but everich of hem encreesceth and aggreggeth other. / But certes, the wordes of the phisiciens sholde been understonden in this wyse: / for good and wikkednesse been two contraries, and pees and werre, vengeaunce and suffraunce, discord and accord, and manye othere thinges. / But certes, wikkednesse shal be warissed by goodnesse, discord by accord, werre by pees, and so forth of othere thinges. /2480 And heer-to accordeth Seint Paul the apostle in manye places. / He seith: "ne yeldeth nat harm for harm, ne wikked speche for wikked speche; / but do wel to him that dooth thee harm, and blesse him that seith to thee harm." / And in manye othere places he amonesteth pees and accord. / But now wol I speke to yow of the conseil which that was yeven to yow by the men of lawe and the wyse folk, /2485 that seyden alle by oon accord as ye han herd bifore; / that, over alle thynges, ye sholde doon your diligence to kepen your persone and to warnestore your hous. / And seyden also, that in this caas ye oghten for to werken ful avysely and with greet deliberacioun. / And sir, as to the firste point, that toucheth to the keping of your persone; / ye shul understonde that he that hath werre shal evermore mekely and devoutly preyen biforn alle thinges, /2490 that Iesus Crist of his grete mercy wol han him in his proteccioun, and been his sovereyn helping at his nede. / For certes, in this world ther is no wight that may be conseilled ne kept suffisantly withouten the keping of our lord Iesu Crist. / To this sentence accordeth the prophete David, that seith: / "if god ne kepe the citee, in ydel waketh he that it kepeth." / Now sir, thanne shul ye

committe the keping of your persone to your trewe freendes that been approved and y-knowe; /2495 and of hem shul ye axen help your persone for to kepe. For Catoun seith: "if thou hast nede of help, axe it of thy freendes; / for ther nis noon so good a phisicien as thy trewe freend." / And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow fro alle straunge folk, and fro lyeres, and have alwey in suspect hir companye. / For Piers Alfonse seith: "ne tak no companye by the weye of a straunge man, but-if so be that thou have knowe him of a lenger tyme. / And if so be that he falle in-to thy companye paraventure withouten thyn assent, /2500 enquire thanne, as subtilly as thou mayst, of his conversacioun and of his lyf bifore, and feyne thy wey; seye that thou goost thider as thou wolt nat go; / and if he bereth a spere, hold thee on the right syde, and if he bere a swerd, hold thee on the lift syde." / And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow wysely from alle swich manere peple as I have seyde bifore, and hem and hir conseil eschewe. / And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow in swich manere, / that for any presumpcioun of your strengthe, that ye ne dispyse nat ne acounte nat the might of your adversarie so litel, that ye lete the keping of your persone for your presumpcioun; /2505 for every wys man dredeth his enemy. / And Salomon seith: "weleful is he that of alle hath drede; / for certes, he that thurgh the hardinesse of his herte and thurgh the hardinesse of him-self hath to greet presumpcioun, him shal yvel bityde." / Thanne shul ye evermore countrewayte embusshements and alle espiaille. / For Senek seith: that "the wyse man that dredeth harmes escheweth harmes; /2510 ne he ne falleth in-to perils, that perils escheweth." / And al-be-it so that it seme that thou art in siker place, yet shaltow alwey do thy diligence in kepinge of thy persone; / this is to seyn, ne be nat negligent to kepe thy persone, nat only fro thy gretteste enemys but fro thy leeste enemy. / Senek seith: "a man that is wel avysed, he dredeth his leste enemy." / Ovide seith: that "the litel wesele wol slee the grete bole and the wilde hert." /2515 And the book seith: "a litel thorn may prikke a greet king ful sore; and an hound wol holde the wilde boor." / But nathelees, I sey nat thou shall be so coward that thou doute ther wher-as is no drede. / The book seith: that "somme folk han greet lust to deceyve, but yet they dreden hem to be deceyved." / Yet shaltou drede to been poisoned, and kepe yow from the companye of scorneres. / For

the book seith: "with scornere make no compaignye, but flee hir wordes as venim." /2520

2488. E. Ln. Hl. yow; *rest* ye. 2491. E grete; *rest om.* 2492. E. sufficeantly; Hn. suffisantly. 2495. y-knowe] E. knowe. 2499. E. taak; compaignye. E. straunge men; Cp. straunge man; *rest* a straunge man. 2500. he] E. he be. 2502. E. his lift; *rest* the lift. 2510. E. he dredeth; *rest* that dredeth. Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. escheweth harmes; *rest om.* 2513. fro] E. Hl. for. 2514. E. *omits* Senek ... enemy; *the rest have it.* 2517. E. *om.* so.

32. Now as to the seconde point, wher-as your wyse conseilours conseyllid yow to warnestore your hous with gret diligence, / I wolde fayn knowe, how that ye understonde thilke wordes, and what is your sentence.' /

33. Melibeus answerde and seyde, 'Certes I understande it in this wise; that I shal warnestore myn hous with toures, swiche as han castelles and othere manere edifices, and armure and artelleries, / by whiche thinges I may my persone and myn hous so kepen and defenden, that myne enemys shul been in drede myn hous for to approche.' /

2523. Cm. artelleries; E. Hn. artelries; Hl. artilleries; Cp. Ln. archers.

34. To this sentence answerde anon Prudence; 'warnestoring,' quod she, 'of heighe toures and of grete edifices apperteneth som-tyme to pryde; /2525 and eek men make heighe toures and grete edifices with grete costages and with greet travaille; and whan that they been accompliced, yet be they nat worth a stree, but-if they be defended by trewe freendes that been olde and wyse. / And understond wel, that the gretteste and strongeste garnison that a riche man may have, as wel to kepen his persone as hise goodes, is / that he be biloved amonges his subgets and with hise neighebores. / For thus seith Tullius: that "ther is a maner garnison that no man may venquisse ne disconfite, and that is, / a lord to be biloved of hise citezeins and of his peple." /2530

2525, 6. E. Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. *omit* apperteneth ... edifices; Cp. Ln. *have it; see note.*

35. Now sir, as to the thridde point; wher-as your olde and wise conseilours seyden, that yow ne oghte nat sodeynly ne hastily proceden in this nede, / but that yow oghte purveyen and apparailen yow in this caas with greet diligence and greet deliberacioun; / trewely, I trowe that they seyden right wysly and right sooth. / For Tullius seith, "in every nede, er thou biginne it, apparaille thee with greet diligence." / Thanne seye I, that in vengeance-taking, in werre, in bataille, and in warnestoring, /2535 er thou biginne, I rede that thou apparaille thee ther-to, and do it with greet deliberacioun. / For Tullius seith: that "long apparailing biforn the bataille maketh short victorie." / And Cassidorus seith: "the garnison is stronger whan it is longe tyme avysed." /

2537. E. Ln. The longe; *rest* that long.

36. But now lat us speken of the conseil that was accorded by your neighbores, swiche as doon yow reverence withouten love, / your olde enemys reconsiled, your flatereres, /2540 that conseilled yow certeyne thinges prively, and openly conseilleden yow the contrarie; / the yonge folk also, that conseilleden yow to venge yow and make werre anon. / And certes, sir, as I have seyde biforn, ye han greetly erred to han cleped swich maner folk to your conseil; / which conseilours been y-nogh repreved by the resouns afore-seyd. / But nathelees, lat us now descende to the special. Ye shuln first procede after the doctrine of Tullius. /2545 Certes, the trouthe of this matere or of this conseil nedeth nat diligently enquire; / for it is wel wist whiche they been that han doon to yow this trespass and vileinye, / and how manye trespassours, and in what manere they han to yow doon al this wrong and al this vileinye. / And after this, thanne shul ye examine the seconde condicioun, which that the same Tullius addeth in this matere. / For Tullius put a thing, which that he clepeth "consenting," this is to seyn; /2550 who been they and how manye, and whiche been they, that consenteden to thy conseil, in thy wilfulnesse to doon hastif vengeance. / And lat us considere also who been they, and how manye been they, and whiche been they, that consenteden to your adversaries. / And certes, as to the firste poynt, it is wel knowen whiche folk been they that consenteden to your hastif wilfulnesse; / for trewely, alle tho that conseilleden yow to maken sodeyn werre ne been nat your freendes. / Lat us now

considere whiche been they, that ye holde so greetly your freendes
as to your persone. /2555 For al-be-it so that ye be mighty and riche,
certes ye ne been nat but allone. / For certes, ye ne han no child but a
doghter; / ne ye ne han bretheren ne cosins germayns, ne noon other
neigh kinrede, / wherefore that your enemys, for drede, sholde stinte
to plede with yow or to destroye your persone. / Ye knowen also,
that your riches moten been dispended in diverse parties; /2560
and whan that every wight hath his part, they ne wollen taken but
littel reward to venge thy deeth. / But thyne enemys been three, and
they han manie children, bretheren, cosins, and other ny kinrede; /
and, though so were that thou haddest slayn of hem two or three, yet
dwellen ther y-nowe to wreken hir deeth and to slee thy persone. /
And though so be that your kinrede be more siker and stedefast than
the kin of your adversarie, / yet nathelees your kinrede nis but a fer
kinrede; they been but littel sib to yow, /2565 and the kin of your
enemys been ny sib to hem. And certes, as in that, hir condicioun is
bet than youre. / Thanne lat us considere also if the conseilling of
hem that conseilleden yow to taken sodeyn vengeance, whether it
accorde to resoun? / And certes, ye knowe wel "nay." / For as by
right and resoun, ther may no man taken vengeance on no wight,
but the Iuge that hath the Iurisdiccioun of it, / whan it is graunted
him to take thilke vengeance, hastily or attemprely, as the lawe
requireth. /2570 And yet more-over, of thilke word that Tullius
clepeth "consenting," / thou shalt considere if thy might and thy
power may consenten and suffyse to thy wilfulnesse and to thy
conseillours. / And certes, thou mayst wel seyn that "nay." / For
sikerly, as for to speke proprely, we may do no-thing but only swich
thing as we may doon rightfully. / And certes, rightfully ne mowe ye
take no vengeance as of your propre auctoritee. /2575 Thanne mowe
ye seen, that your power ne consenteth nat ne accordeth nat with
your wilfulnesse. / Lat us now examine the thridde point that Tullius
clepeth "consequent." / Thou shalt understonde that the vengeance
that thou purposest for to take is the consequent. / And ther-of
folweth another vengeance, peril, and werre; and othere damages
with-out nombre, of whiche we be nat war as at this tyme. / And as
touchinge the fourthe point, that Tullius clepeth "engendringe,"
/2580 thou shalt considere, that this wrong which that is doon to thee
is engendred of the hate of thyne enemys; / and of the vengeance-

takinge upon that wolde engendre another vengeance, and muchel sorwe and wastinge of riches, as I seyde. /

2551. E. *om.* and whiche been they; *see* 2552. Hk. consentid; *rest* consenten (*for* consenteden); *see* 2552.

37. Now sir, as to the point that Tullius clepeth “causes,” which that is the laste point, / thou shall understonde that the wrong that thou hast receyved hath certeine causes, / whiche that clerkes clepen *Oriens* and *Efficiens*, and *Causa longinqua* and *Causa propinqua*; this is to seyn, the fer cause and the ny cause. /2585 The fer cause is almighty god, that is cause of alle thinges. / The neer cause is thy three enemys. / The cause accidental was hate. / The cause material been the fyve woundes of thy doghter. / The cause formal is the manere of hir werkinge, that broghten laddres and cloumben in at thy windowes. /2590 The cause final was for to slee thy doghter; it letted nat in as muche as in hem was. / But for to speken of the fer cause, as to what ende they shul come, or what shal finally bityde of hem in this caas, ne can I nat deme but by coniectinge and by supposinge. / For we shul suppose that they shul come to a wikked ende, / by-cause that the Book of Decrees seith: “selden or with greet payne been causes y-brought to good ende whanne they been baddely bigonne.” /

2594. E. seelden.

38. Now sir, if men wolde axe me, why that god suffred men to do yow this vileinye, certes, I can nat wel answeere as for no sothfastnesse. /2595 For thapostle seith, that “the sciences and the luggementz of our lord god almighty been ful depe; / ther may no man comprehende ne serchen hem suffisantly.” / Nathelees, by certeyne presumpcions and coniectinges, I holde and bileve / that god, which that is ful of Iustice and of rightwisnesse, hath suffred this bityde by Iuste cause resonable. /

39. Thy name is Melibee, this is to seyn, “a man that drinketh hony.” /2600 Thou hast y-dronke so muchel hony of swete temporel riches and delices and honours of this world, / that thou art drunken; and hast forgeten Iesu Crist thy creatour; / thou ne hast nat doon to him swich honour and reverence as thee oughte. / Ne thou ne hast nat wel y-taken kepe to the wordes of Ovide, that seith: /

"under the hony of the godes of the body is hid the venim that sleeth the soule." /2605 And Salomon seith, "if thou hast founden hony, ete of it that suffyseth; / for if thou ete of it out of mesure, thou shalt spewe," and be nedý and povre. / And peraventure Crist hath thee in despit, and hath turned away fro thee his face and hise eres of misericorde; / and also he hath suffred that thou hast been punisshed in the manere that thou hast y-trespased. / Thou hast doon sinne agayn our lord Crist; /2610 for certes, the three enemys of mankinde, that is to seyn, the flessch, the feend, and the world, / thou hast suffred hem entre in-to thyn herte wilfully by the windowes of thy body, / and hast nat defended thy-self suffisantly agayns hir assautes and hir temptaciouns, so that they han wounded thy soule in fyve places; / this is to seyn, the deedly sinnes that been entred in-to thyn herte by thy fyve wittes. / And in the same manere our lord Crist hath wold and suffred, that thy three enemys been entred in-to thyn hous by the windowes, /2615 and han y-wounded thy doghter in the fore-seyde manere.' /

2601. E. sweete temporeel. 2608. E. eeris.

40. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I see wel that ye enforce yow muchel by wordes to overcome me in swich manere, that I shal nat venge me of myne enemys; / shewinge me the perils and the yveles that mighten falle of this vengeance. / But who-so wolde considere in alle vengeancees the perils and yveles that mighte sewe of vengeance-takinge, / a man wolde never take vengeance, and that were harm; /2620 for by the vengeance-takinge been the wikked men dissevered fro the gode men. / And they that han wil to do wikkednesse restreyne hir wikked purpos, whan they seen the punissinge and chastysinge of the trespassours.' / [And to this answerde dame Prudence: 'Certes,' seyde she, 'I graunte wel that of vengeance cometh muchel yvel and muchel good; / but vengeance-taking aperteneth nat unto everichoon, but only unto Iuges and unto hem that han Iurisdiccioun upon the trespassours.] / And yet seye I more, that right as a singuler persone sinneth in takinge vengeance of another man, /2625 right so sinneth the Iuge if he do no vengeance of hem that it han deserved. / For Senek seith thus: "that maister," he seith, "is good that proveth shrewes." / And as Cassidore seith: "A man dredeth to do outrages, whan he woot and knoweth that it

displeseth to the Iuges and sovereyns." / And another seith: "the Iuge that dredeth to do right, maketh men shrewes." / And Seint Paule the apostle seith in his epistle, whan he wryteth un-to the Romayns: that "the Iuges beren nat the spere with-outen cause;" /2630 but they beren it to punisse the shrewes and misdoeres, and for to defende the gode men. / If ye wol thanne take vengeance of your enemys, ye shul retourne or have your recours to the Iuge that hath the Iurisdiccion up-on hem; / and he shal punisse hem as the lawe axeth and requyreth.' /

2623, 2624. *Not in the MSS. Supplied by translating the French text.* 2626. E. Hn. disserued. 2629. E. *om.* And. 2631. E. Ln. *om.* for.

41. 'A!' quod Melibee, 'this vengeance lyketh me no-thing. / I bithenke me now and take hede, how fortune hath norissed me fro my childhede, and hath holpen me to passe many a strong pas. /2635 Now wol I assayen hir, trowinge, with goddes help, that she shal helpe me my shame for to venge.' /

42. 'Certes,' quod Prudence, 'if ye wol werke by my conseil, ye shul nat assaye fortune by no wey; / ne ye shul nat lene or bowe unto hir, after the word of Senek: / for "thinges that been folily doon, and that been in hope of fortune, shullen never come to good ende." / And as the same Senek seith: "the more cleer and the more shyning that fortune is, the more brotil and the sonner broken she is." /2640 Trusteth nat in hir, for she nis nat stidefast ne stable; / for whan thow trowest to be most seur or siker of hir help, she wol faille thee and deceyve thee. / And wher-as ye seyn that fortune hath norissed yow fro your childhede, / I seye, that in so muchel shul ye the lasse truste in hir and in hir wit. / For Senek seith: "what man that is norissed by fortune, she maketh him a greet fool." /2645 Now thanne, sin ye desyre and axe vengeance, and the vengeance that is doon after the lawe and bfore the Iuge ne lyketh yow nat, / and the vengeance that is doon in hope of fortune is perilous and uncertein, / thanne have ye noon other remedie but for to have your recours unto the sovereyn Iuge that vengeth alle vileinyes and wronges; / and he shal venge yow after that him-self witnesseth, wher-as he seith: / "leveth the vengeance to me, and I shal do it."" /2650

2642. E. and (*before siker*); *rest or*; Hl. *om.* or siker.

43. Melibee answerde, 'if I ne venge me nat of the vileinye that men han doon to me, / I sompne or warne hem that han doon to me that vileinye and alle othere, to do me another vileinye. / For it is writen: "if thou take no vengeance of an old vileinye, thou sompnest thyne adversaries to do thee a newe vileinye." / And also, for my suffrance, men wolden do to me so muchel vileinye, that I mighte neither here it ne sustene; / and so sholde I been put and holden over lowe. /2655 For men seyn: "in muchel suffringe shul manye thinges falle un-to thee whiche thou shalt nat mowe suffre.'" /

44. 'Certes,' quod Prudence, 'I graunte yow that over muchel suffraunce nis nat good; / but yet ne folweth it nat ther-of, that every persone to whom men doon vileinye take of it vengeance; / for that aperteneth and longeth al only to the Iuges, for they shul venge the vileinyes and iniuries. / And ther-fore tho two auctoritees that ye han seyde above, been only understonden in the Iuges; /2660 for whan they suffren over muchel the wronges and the vileinyes to be doon withouten punisshinge, / they sompne nat a man al only for to do newe wronges, but they comanden it. / Also a wys man seith: that "the Iuge that correcteth nat the sinnere comandeth and biddeth him do sinne." / And the Iuges and sovereyns mighten in hir land so muchel suffre of the shrewes and misdoeres, / that they sholden by swich suffrance, by proces of tyme, wexen of swich power and might, that they sholden putte out the Iuges and the sovereyns from hir places, /2665 and atte laste maken hem lesen hir lordshipes. /

45. But lat us now putte, that ye have leve to venge yow. / I seye ye been nat of might and power as now to venge yow. / For if ye wole maken comparisoun un-to the might of your adversaries, ye shul finde in manye thinges, that I have shewed yow er this, that hir condicioun is bettre than youre. / And therfore seye I, that it is good as now that ye suffre and be pacient. /2670

46. Forther-more, ye knowen wel that, after the comune sawe, "it is a woodnesse a man to stryve with a strengier or a more mighty man than he is him-self; / and for to stryve with a man of evene strengthe, that is to seyn, with as strong a man as he, it is peril; / and for to stryve with a weyker man, it is folie." / And therfore sholde a man flee stryvinge as muchel as he mighte. / For Salomon seith: "it is a greet worship to a man to kepen him fro noyse and stryf." /2675 And

if it so bifalle or happe that a man of gretter might and strengthe than thou art do thee grevaunce, / studie and bisie thee rather to stille the same grevaunce, than for to venge thee. / For Senek seith: that "he putteth him in greet peril that stryveth with a gretter man than he is him-self." / And Catoun seith: "if a man of hyer estaat or degree, or more mighty than thou, do thee any or grevaunce, suffre him; / for he that ones hath greved thee may another tyme releve thee and helpe." /2680 Yet sette I caas, ye have bothe might and licence for to venge yow. / I seye, that ther be ful manye thinges that shul restreyne yow of vengeance-takinge, / and make yow for to enclyne to suffre, and for to han pacience in the thinges that han been doon to yow. / First and foreward, if ye wole considere the defautes that been in your owene persone, / for whiche defautes god hath suffred yow have this tribulacioun, as I have seyde yow heer-biforn. /2685 For the poete seith, that "we oghte patiently taken the tribulacions that comen to us, whan we thinken and consideren that we han deserved to have hem." / And Seint Gregorie seith: that "whan a man considereth wel the nombre of hise defautes and of his sinnes, / the peynes and the tribulaciouns that he suffreth semen the lesse un-to hym; / and in-as-muche as him thinketh hise sinnes more hevy and grevous, / in-so-muche semeth his payne the lighter and the esier un-to him." /2690 Also ye owen to enclyne and bowe your herte to take the pacience of our lord Iesu Crist, as seith seint Peter in hise epistles: / "Iesu Crist," he seith, "hath suffred for us, and yeven ensample to every man to folwe and sewe him; / for he dide never sinne, ne never cam ther a vileinous word out of his mouth: / whan men cursed him, he cursed hem noght; and whan men betten him, he manaced hem noght." / Also the grete pacience, which the seintes that been in paradys han had in tribulaciouns that they han y-suffred, with-outen hir desert or gilt, /2695 oghte muchel stiren yow to pacience. / Forthermore, ye sholde enforce yow to have pacience, / consideringe that the tribulaciouns of this world but litel whyle endure, and sone passed been and goon. / And the Ioye that a man seketh to have by pacience in tribulaciouns is perdurable, after that the apostle seith in his epistle: / "the Ioye of god," he seith, "is perdurable," that is to seyn, everlastinge. /2700 Also troweth and bileveth stedefastly, that he nis nat wel y-norissed ne wel y-taught, that can nat have pacience or wol nat receyve pacience. / For

Salomon seith: that "the doctrine and the wit of a man is knowen by pacience." / And in another place he seith: that "he that is pacient governeth him by greet prudence." / And the same Salomon seith: "the angry and wrathful man maketh noyses, and the pacient man atempreth hem and stilleth." / He seith also: "it is more worth to be pacient than for to be right strong; /2705 and he that may have the lordshipe of his owene herte is more to preyse, than he that by his force or strengthe taketh grete citees." / And therfore seith seint Iame in his epistle: that "pacience is a greet vertu of perfeccioun."" /

2680. E. (*only*) puts may after tyme. 2686. E. Hn. Cp. disserued.

2698. E. Cm. goone.

47. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I graunte yow, dame Prudence, that pacience is a greet vertu of perfeccioun; / but every man may nat have the perfeccioun that ye seken; / ne I nam nat of the nombre of right parfite men, /2710 for myn herte may never been in pees un-to the tyme it be venged. / And al-be-it so that it was greet peril to myne enemys, to do me a vileinye in takinge vengeance up-on me, / yet token they noon hede of the peril, but fulfilleden hir wikked wil and hir corage. / And therfore, me thinketh men oghten nat reprove me, though I putte me in a litel peril for to venge me, / and though I do a greet excesse, that is to seyn, that I venge oon outrage by another.' /2715

48. 'A!' quod dame Prudence, 'ye seyn your wil and as yow lyketh; / but in no caas of the world a man sholde nat doon outrage ne excesse for to vengen him. / For Cassidore seith: that "as yvel doth he that vengeth him by outrage, as he that doth the outrage." / And therfore ye shul venge yow after the ordre of right, that is to seyn by the lawe, and noght by excesse ne by outrage. / And also, if ye wol venge yow of the outrage of your adversaries in other maner than right comandeth, ye sinnen; /2720 and therfore seith Senek: that "a man shal never vengen shrewednesse by shrewednesse." / And if ye seye, that right axeth a man to defenden violence by violence, and fighting by fighting, / certes ye seye sooth, whan the defense is doon anon with-outen intervalle or with-outen tarying or delay, / for to defenden him and nat for to vengen him. / And it bihoveth that a man putte swich attemperance in his defence, /2725 that men have no cause ne matere to reprove him that defendeth him of excesse

and outrage; for elles were it agayn resoun. / Pardee, ye knowen wel, that ye maken no defence as now for to defende yow, but for to venge yow; / and so seweth it that ye han no wil to do your dede attemprely. / And therfore, me thinketh that pacience is good. For Salomon seith: that "he that is nat pacient shal have greet harm."" /

2724-7. E. deffenden, deffense. 2728. E. sheweth; Hl. semeth;
rest seweth.

49. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I graunte yow, that whan a man is inpacient and wroth, of that that toucheth him noght and that aperteneth nat un-to him, though it harme him, it is no wonder. /2730 For the lawe seith: that "he is coupable that entremetteth or medleth with swich thyng as aperteneth nat un-to him." / And Salomon seith: that "he that entremetteth him of the noyse or stryf of another man, is lyk to him that taketh an hound by the eres." / For right as he that taketh a straunge hound by the eres is outhurwhyte biten with the hound, / right in the same wyse is it resoun that he have harm, that by his inpacience medleth him of the noyse of another man, wher-as it aperteneth nat un-to him. / But ye knowen wel that this dede, that is to seyn, my grief and my disese, toucheth me right ny. /2735 And therefore, though I be wroth and inpacient, it is no merveille. / And savinge your grace, I can nat seen that it mighte greetly harme me though I toke vengeance; / for I am richer and more mighty than myne enemys been. / And wel knowen ye, that by moneye and by haveinge grete possessions been all the thinges of this world governed. / And Salomon seith: that "alle thinges obeyen to moneye."" /2740

50. Whan Prudence hadde herd hir housbonde avanten him of his richesse and of his moneye, dispreisinge the power of hise adversaries, she spak, and seyde in this wyse: / 'certes, dere sir, I graunte yow that ye been rich and mighty, / and that the richesces been goode to hem that han wel y-geten hem and wel conne usen hem. / For right as the body of a man may nat liven with-oute the soule, namore may it live with-uten temporel goodes. / And by richesces may a man gete him grete freendes. /2745 And therfore seith Pamphilles: "if a net-herdes doghter," seith he, "be riche, she may chesen of a thousand men which she wol take to hir housbonde; / for, of a thousand men, oon wol nat forsaken hir ne refusen hir." /

And this Pamphilles seith also: "if thou be right happy, that is to seyn, if thou be right riche, thou shalt find a greet nombre of felawes and freendes. / And if thy fortune change that thou wexe povre, farewell freendshipe and felaweshipe; / for thou shalt be allone withouten any companye, but-if it be the companye of povre folk." /2750 And yet seith this Pamphilles moreover: that "they that been thralle and bonde of linage shullen been maad worthy and noble by the richesses." / And right so as by richesses ther comen manye goodes, right so by poverté come ther manye harmes and yveles. / For greet poverté constreyneth a man to do manye yveles. / And therfore clepeth Cassidore poverté "the moder of ruine," / that is to seyn, the moder of overthrowinge or fallinge down. /2755 And therfore seith Piers Alfonc: "oon of the gretteste adversitees of this world is / whan a free man, by kinde or by burthe, is constreyned by poverté to eten the almesse of his enemy." / And the same seith Innocent in oon of hise bokes; he seith: that "sorweful and mishappy is the condicioun of a povre begger; / for if he axe nat his mete, he dyeth for hunger; / and if he axe, he dyeth for shame; and algates necessitee constreyneth him to axe." /2760 And therfore seith Salomon: that "bet it is to dye than for to have swich poverté." / And as the same Salomon seith: "bette it is to dye of bitter deeth than for to liven in swich wyse." / By thise resons that I have seid un-to yow, and by manye othere resons that I coude seye, / I graunte yow that richesses been goode to hem that geten hem wel, and to hem that wel usen tho richesses. / And therfore wol I shewe yow how ye shul have yow, and how ye shul here yow in gaderinge of richesses, and in what manere ye shul usen hem. /2765

2744. E. tempered. 2745. by] E. for. 2746. *All* Pamphilles. Hn. Hl. which she ... housbonde; *rest om.* 2750. E. Hn. al alloone; *rest omit al.*

51. First, ye shul geten hem with-outen greet desyr, by good leyser sokingly, and nat over hastily. / For a man that is to desyringe to gete richesses abaundoneth him first to thefte and to alle other yveles. / And therfore seith Salomon: "he that hasteth him to bisily to wexe riche shal be noon innocent." / He seith also: that "the richesse that hastily cometh to a man, sone and lightly gooth and passeth fro a man; / but that richesse that cometh litel and litel wexeth alwey and

multiplyeth." /2770 And sir, ye shul geten riches by your wit and by your travaille un-to your profit; / and that with-outen wrong or harm-doinge to any other persone. / For the lawe seith: that "ther maketh no man himselven riche, if he do harm to another wight;" / this is to seyn, that nature defendeth and forbedeth by right, that no man make him-self riche un-to the harm of another persone. / And Tullius seith: that "no sorwe ne no drede of deeth, ne no-thing that may falle un-to a man /2775 is so muchel agayns nature, as a man to encressen his owene profit to the harm of another man. / And though the grete men and the mighty men geten riches more lightly than thou, / yet shaltou nat been ydel ne slow to do thy profit; for thou shalt in alle wyse flee ydelnesse." / For Salomon seith: that "ydelnesse techeth a man to do manye yveles." / And the same Salomon seith: that "he that travailleth and bisieth him to tilien his land, shal eten breed; /2780 but he that is ydel and casteth him to no bisnesse ne occupacioun, shal falle in-to poverte, and dye for hunger." / And he that is ydel and slow can never finde covenable tyme for to doon his profit. / For ther is a versifiour seith: that "the ydel man excuseth hym in winter, by cause of the grete cold; and in somer, by enchesoun of the hete." / For thise causes seith Caton: "waketh and enclyneth nat yow over muchel for to slepe; for over muchel reste norisseth and causeth manye vices." / And therfore seith seint Ierome: "doth somme gode dedes, that the devel which is our enemy ne finde yow nat unoccupied." /2785 For the devel ne taketh nat lightly un-to his werkinge swiche as he findeth occupied in gode werkes. /

2766. E. Hn. sekyngly; *rest* sokyngly. 2785. E. goodes; *rest* goode dedes.

52. Thanne thus, in getinge riches, ye mosten flee ydelnesse. / And afterward, ye shul use the riches, whiche ye have geten by your wit and by your travaille, / in swich a manere, that men holde nat yow to scars, ne to sparinge, ne to fool-large, that is to seyn, over-large a spender. / For right as men blamen an avaricious man by-cause of his scarsetee and chincherye, /2790 in the same wyse is he to blame that spendeth over largely. / And therfore seith Caton: "use," he seith, "thy riches that thou hast geten / in swich a manere, that men have no matere ne cause to calle thee neither wrecche ne

chinche; / for it is a greet shame to a man to have a povere herte and a riche purs." / He seith also: "the goodes that thou hast y-geten, use hem by mesure," that is to seyn, spende hem mesurably; /2795 for they that folily wasten and despenden the goodes that they han, / whan they han namore propre of hir owene, they shapen hem to take the goodes of another man. / I seye thanne, that ye shul flee avarice; / usinge your riches in swich manere, that men seye nat that your riches been y-buried, / but that ye have hem in your might and in your weeldinge. /2800 For a wys man repreveth the avaricious man, and seith thus, in two vers: / "wherto and why burieth a man hise goodes by his grete avarice, and knoweth wel that nedes moste he dye; / for deeth is the ende of every man as in this present lyf." / And for what cause or enchesoun loyneth he him or knitteth he him so faste un-to hise goodes, / that alle his wittes mowen nat disseveren him or departen him from hise goodes; /2805 and knoweth wel, or oghte knowe, that whan he is deed, he shal no-thing bere with him out of this world. / And ther-fore seith seint Augustin: that "the avaricious man is likned un-to helle; / that the more it swelweth, the more desyr it hath to swelwe and devoure." / And as wel as ye wolde eschewe to be called an avaricious man or chinche, / as wel sholde ye kepe yow and governe yow in swich a wyse that men calle yow nat fool-large. /2810 Therefore seith Tullius: "the goodes," he seith, "of thyn hous ne sholde nat been hid, ne kept so cloos but that they mighte been opened by pitee and debonairetee;" / that is to seyn, to yeven part to hem that han greet nede; / "ne thy goodes shullen nat been so opene, to been every mannes goodes." / Afterward, in getinge of your riches and in usinge hem, ye shul alwey have three thinges in your herte; / that is to seyn, our lord god, conscience, and good name. /2815 First, ye shul have god in your herte; / and for no riches ye shullen do nothing, which may in any manere displese god, that is your creatour and maker. / For after the word of Salomon: "it is bettre to have a litel good with the love of god, / than to have muchel good and tresour, and lese the love of his lord god." / And the prophete seith: that "bettre it is to been a good man and have litel good and tresour, /2820 than to been holden a shrewe and have grete riches." / And yet seye I ferthermore, that ye sholde alwey doon your bisnesse to gete yow riches, / so that ye gete hem with good conscience. / And thapostle seith: that "ther

nis thing in this world, of which we sholden have so greet loye as whan our conscience bereth us good witnesse." / And the wyse man seith: "the substance of a man is ful good, whan sinne is nat in mannes conscience." /2825 Afterward, in getinge of your riches, and in usinge of hem, / yow moste have greet businesse and greet diligence, that your goode name be alwey kept and conserved. / For Salomon seith: that "bette it is and more it availleth a man to have a good name, than for to have grete riches." / And therfore he seith in another place: "do greet diligence," seith Salomon, "in keping of thy freend and of thy gode name; / for it shal lenger abide with thee than any tresour, be it never so precious." /2830 And certes he sholde nat be called a gentil man, that after god and good conscience, alle thinges left, ne dooth his diligence and businesse to kepen his good name. / And Cassidore seith: that "it is signe of a gentil herte, whan a man loveth and desyreth to han a good name." / And therfore seith seint Augustin: that "ther been two thinges that arn necessarie and nedefulle, / and that is good conscience and good loos; / that is to seyn, good conscience to thyn owene persone inward, and good loos for thy neighbere outward." /2835 And he that trusteth him so muchel in his gode conscience, / that he displeseth and setteth at noght his gode name or loos, and rekketh noght though he kepe nat his gode name, nis but a cruel cherl. /

2790. E. chyngerie; Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. chyncherye. 2837. E. crueel.

53. Sire, now have I shewed yow how ye shul do in getinge riches, and how ye shullen usen hem; / and I se wel, that for the trust that ye han in youre riches, ye wole moeve werre and bataille. / I conseilte yow, that ye biginne no werre in trust of your riches; for they ne suffysen noght werres to mayntene. /2840 And therfore seith a philosophre: "that man that desyreth and wole algates han werre, shal never have suffisaunce; / for the richer that he is, the gretter despenses moste he make, if he wole have worship and victorie." / And Salomon seith: that "the gretter riches that a man hath, the mo despendours he hath." / And dere sire, al-be-it so that for your riches ye mowe have muchel folk, / yet bihoveth it nat, ne it is nat good, to biginne werre, where-as ye mowe in other manere have pees, un-to your worship and profit. /2845 For the victories of batailles that been in this world, lyen nat in greet nombre or

multitude of the peple ne in the vertu of man; / but it lyth in the wil
and in the hand of our lord god almighty. / And therfore Iudas
Machabeus, which was goddes knight, / whan he sholde fighte
agayn his adversarie that hadde a greet nombre, and a gretter
multitude of folk and strengier than was this peple of Machabee, / yet
he reconforted his litel companye, and seyde right in this wyse: /2850
“als lightly,” quod he, “may our lord god almighty yeve victorie to a
fewe folk as to many folk; / for the victorie of bataile cometh nat by
the grete nombre of peple, / but it cometh from our lord god of
hevene.” / And dere sir, for as muchel as there is no man certein, if
he be worthy that god yeve him victorie, [namore than he is certein
whether he be worthy of the love of god] or naught, after that
Salomon seith, / therfore every man sholde greetly drede werres to
biginne. /2855 And by-cause that in batailles fallen manye perils, /
and happeth outhir-while, that as sone is the grete man sleyn as the
litel man; / and, as it is written in the seconde book of Kinges, “the
dedes of batailles been aventureuse and nothing certeyne;” / for as
lightly is oon hurt with a spere as another. / And for ther is gret peril
in werre, therfore sholde a man flee and eschewe werre, in as muchel
as a man may goodly. /2860 For Salomon seith: “he that loveth peril
shal falle in peril.”’ /

2852. E. Hn. a bataile; *rest om.* a. E. comth. 2853. E. come; *rest*
cometh. 2854. E. he be; *rest* it be. *I supply from namore to god;*
see Note.

54. After that Dame Prudence hadde spoken in this manere, Melibee
answerde and seyde, / ‘I see wel, dame Prudence, that by your faire
wordes and by your resons that ye han shewed me, that the werre
lyketh yow no-thing; / but I have nat yet herd your conseil, how I
shal do in this nede.’ /

55. ‘Certes,’ quod she, ‘I conseilte yow that ye accorde with youre
adversaries, and that ye haue pees with hem. /2865 For seint Iame
seith in hise epistles: that “by concord and pees the smale riches
wexen grete, / and by debaat and discord the grete riches fallen
doun.” / And ye knowen wel that oon of the gretteste and most
sovereyn thing, that is in this world, is unitee and pees. / And
therfore seyde oure lord Iesu Crist to hise apostles in this wyse: /
“wel happy and blessed been they that loven and purchacen pees;

for they been called children of god."" /2870 'A!' quod Melibee, 'now se I wel that ye loven nat myn honour ne my worshipe. / Ye knowen wel that myne adversaries han bigonnen this debaat and brige by hir outrage; / and ye see wel that they ne requeren ne preyen me nat of pees, ne they asken nat to be reconsiled. / Wol ye thanne that I go and meke me and obeye me to hem, and crye hem mercy? / For sothe, that were nat my worship. /2875 For right as men seyn, that "over-greet homlinesse engendreth dispreysinge," so fareth it by to greet humylitee or mekenesse.' /

2866. seint Iame] F. text, Seneques. 2872. E. bryge; Hn. Cm. Hl. brige; Cp. Pt. brigge (F. text, *brigue*).

56. Thanne bigan dame Prudence to maken semblant of wratthe, and seyde, / 'certes, sir, sauf your grace, I love your honour and your profit as I do myn owene, and ever have doon; / ne ye ne noon other syen never the contrarie. / And yit, if I hadde seyde that ye sholde han purchaced the pees and the reconsiliacioun, I ne hadde nat muchel mistaken me, ne seyde amis. /2880 For the wyse man seith: "the dissensioun biginneth by another man, and the reconsiling biginneth by thy-self." / And the prophete seith: "flee shrewednesse and do goodnesse; / seke pees and folwe it, as muchel as in thee is." / Yet seye I nat that ye shul rather pursue to your adversaries for pees than they shuln to yow; / for I knowe wel that ye been so hard-herted, that ye wol do no-thing for me. /2885 And Salomon seith: "he that hath over-hard an herte, atte laste he shal mishappe and mistyde."" /

57. Whanne Melibee hadde herd dame Prudence maken semblant of wratthe, he seyde in this wyse, / 'dame, I prey yow that ye be nat displesed of thinges that I seye; / for ye knowe wel that I am angry and wrooth, and that is no wonder; / and they that been wrothe witen nat wel what they doon, ne what they seyn. /2890 Therfore the prophete seith: that "troubled eyen han no cleer sighte." / But seyeth and conseileth me as yow lyketh; for I am redy to do right as ye wol desyre; / and if ye repreve me of my folye, I am the more holden to love yow and to preyse yow. / For Salomon seith: that "he that repreveth him that doth folye, / he shal finde gretter grace than he that deceyveth him by swete wordes."" /2895

2893. to preyse] E. *om.* to.

58. Thanne seide dame Prudence, 'I make no semblant of wratthe ne anger but for your grete profit. / For Salomon seith: "he is more worth, that repreveth or chydeth a fool for his folye, shewing him semblant of wratthe, / than he that supporteth him and preyseth him in his misdoinge, and laugheth at his folye." / And this same Salomon seith afterward: that "by the sorweful visage of a man," that is to seyn, by the sory and hevy countenaunce of a man, / "the fool correcteth and amendeth him-self.'" /2900

2898. E. peyseth (*for* preyseth).

59. Thanne seyde Melibee, 'I shal nat conne answere to so manye faire resouns as ye putten to me and shewen. / Seyeth shortly your wil and your conseil, and I am al ready to fulfille and parfourne it.' /

60. Thanne dame Prudence discovered al hir wil to him, and seyde, / 'I conseilte yow,' quod she, 'aboven alle thinges, that ye make pees bitwene god and yow; / and beth reconciled un-to him and to his grace. /2905 For as I have seyde yow heer-biforn, god hath suffred yow to have this tribulacioun and disese for your sinnes. / And if ye do as I sey yow, god wol sende your adversaries un-to yow, / and maken hem fallen at your feet, redy to do your wil and your comandements. / For Salomon seith: "whan the condicioun of man is plesaunt and likinge to god, / he chaungeth the hertes of the mannes adversaries, and constreyneth hem to biseken him of pees and of grace." /2910 And I prey yow, lat me speke with your adversaries in privee place; / for they shul nat knowe that it be of your wil or your assent. / And thanne, whan I knowe hir wil and hir entente, I may conseilte yow the more seurly.' /

2913. E. seurely; Hn. Cp. Hl. seurly.

61. 'Dame,' quod Melibee, 'dooth your wil and your lykinge, / for I putte me hoolly in your disposicioun and ordinaunce.' /2915

62. Thanne Dame Prudence, whan she saugh the gode wil of her housbonde, delibered and took avys in hir-self, / thinkinge how she mighte bringe this nede un-to a good conclusioun and to a good ende. / And whan she saugh hir tyme, she sente for thise adversaries to come un-to hir in-to a privee place, / and shewed wysly un-to hem the grete goodes that comen of pees, / and the grete harmes and perils that been in werre; /2920 and seyde to hem in a goodly

manere, how that hem oughte have greet repentaunce / of the iniurie
and wrong that they hadden doon to Melibee hir lord, and to hir,
and to hir doghter. /

2921. Cm. oughte; Cp. Hl. aughte; *rest* oughten.

63. And whan they herden the goodliche wordes of dame Prudence,
/ they weren so surprised and ravissed, and hadden so greet loye of
hir, that wonder was to telle. / 'A! lady!' quod they, 'ye han shewed
un-to us "the blessinge of swetnesse," after the sawe of David the
prophete; /2925 for the reconsilinge which we been nat worthy to
have in no manere, / but we oghte requeren it with greet contricioun
and humilitee, / ye of your grete goodnesse have presented unto us. /
Now see we wel that the science and the conninge of Salomon is ful
trewe; / for he seith: that "swete wordes multiplen and encresen
freendes, and maken shrewes to be debonaire and meke." /2930

2924. Hl. surprised; Cm. suppreysed; *rest* suprised.

64. 'Certes,' quod they, 'we putten our dede and al our matere and
cause al hoolly in your goode wil; / and been redy to obeye to the
speche and comandement of my lord Melibee. / And therfore, dere
and benigne lady, we preyen yow and biseke yow as mekely as we
conne and mowen, / that it lyke un-to your grete goodnesse to
fulfillen in dede your goodliche wordes; / for we consideren and
knowlichen that we han offended and greved my lord Melibee out of
mesure; /2935 so ferforth, that we be nat of power to maken hise
amendes. / And therfore we oblige and binden us and our freendes
to doon al his wil and hise comandements. / But peraventure he hath
swich hevynesse and swich wratthe to us-ward, by-cause of our
offence, / that he wole enioyne us swich a peyne as we mowe nat
here ne sustene. / And therfore, noble lady, we biseke to your
wommanly pitee, /2940 to taken swich avysement in this nede, that
we, ne our freendes, be nat desherited ne destroyed thurgh our
folye.' /

65. 'Certes,' quod Prudence, 'it is an hard thing and right perilous, /
that a man putte him al outrely in the arbitracioun and luggement,
and in the might and power of hise enemys. / For Salomon seith:
"leveth me, and yeveth credence to that I shal seyn; I seye," quod he,
"ye peple, folk, and governours of holy chirche, / to thy sone, to thy

wyf, to thy freend, ne to thy brother /2945 ne yeve thou never might
ne maistrie of thy body, whyl thou livest." / Now sithen he
defendeth, that man shal nat yeven to his brother ne to his freend the
might of his body, / by a strengre resoun he defendeth and forbedeth
a man to yeven him-self to his enemy. / And natheles I conseil
you, that ye mistruste nat my lord. / For I wol wel and knowe
verraily, that he is debonaire and meke, large, curteys, /2950 and
nothing desyrous ne coveitous of good ne richesse. / For ther nis no-
thing in this world that he desyreth, save only worship and honour. /
Forther-more I knowe wel, and am right seur, that he shal no-thing
doon in this nede with-uten my conseil. / And I shal so werken in
this cause, that, by grace of our lord god, ye shul been reconciled un-
to us.' /

66. Thanne seyden they with o vois, 'worshipful lady, we putten us
and our goodes al fully in your wil and disposicioun; /2955 and been
redy to comen, what day that it lyke un-to your noblesse to limite us
or assigne us, / for to maken our obligacioun and bond as strong as it
lyketh un-to your goodnesse; / that we mowe fulfille the wille of yow
and of my lord Melibee.' /

67. Whan dame Prudence hadde herd the answeres of thise men, she
bad hem goon agayn prively; / and she retourned to hir lord
Melibee, and tolde him how she fond hise adversaries ful repentant,
/2960 knowlechinge ful lowely hir sinnes and trespas, and how they
were redy to suffren al peyne, / requiringe and preyinge him of
mercy and pitee. /

68. Thanne seyde Melibee, 'he is wel worthy to have pardoun and
foryifnesse of his sinne, that excuseth nat his sinne, / but
knowlecheth it and repenteth him, axinge indulgence. / For Senek
seith: "ther is the remissioun and foryifnesse, where-as confessioun
is;" /2965 for confession is neighebore to innocence. / And he seith in
another place: "he that hath shame for his sinne and knowlecheth it,
is worthy remissioun." And therfore I assente and conferme me to
have pees; / but it is good that we do it nat with-uten the assent and
wil of our freendes.' /

2967. E. Cm. *omit from* And he to remissioun; Hn. Cp. Hl. *om.*
only is worthy remissioun, *which occurs in* Pt., *where* Ln. *has* is
worthi haue mercy. E. corforme (*sic*); *rest* conferme.

69. Thanne was Prudence right glad and loyeful, and seyde, / 'Certes, sir,' quod she, 'ye han wel and goodly answered. /2970 For right as by the conseil, assent, and help of your freendes, ye han been stired to venge yow and maken werre, / right so with-outen hir conseil shul ye nat accorden yow, ne have pees with your adversaries. / For the lawe seith: "ther nis no-thing so good by wey of kinde, as a thing to been unbounde by him that it was y-bounde."" /

70. And thanne dame Prudence, with-outen delay or tarynge, sente anon hir messages for hir kin, and for hir olde freendes whiche that were trewe and wyse, / and tolde hem by ordre, in the presence of Melibee, al this matere as it is aboven expressed and declared; /2975 and preyden hem that they wolde yeven hir avys and conseil, what best were to doon in this nede. / And whan Melibees freendes hadde taken hir avys and deliberacioun of the forseide matere, / and hadden examined it by greet businesse and greet diligence, / they yave ful conseil for to have pees and reste; / and that Melibee sholde receyve with good herte hise adversaries to foryifnesse and mercy. /2980

2976. E. *om.* hem.

71. And whan dame Prudence hadde herd the assent of hir lord Melibee, and the conseil of hise freendes, / accorde with hir wille and hir entencioun, / she was wonderly glad in hir herte, and seyde: / 'ther is an old proverbe,' quod she, 'seith: that "the goodnesse that thou mayst do this day, do it; / and abyde nat ne delaye it nat til to-morwe." /2985 And therfore I conseilte that ye sende your messages, swiche as been discrete and wyse, / un-to your adversaries; tellinge hem, on your bihalve, / that if they wole trete of pees and of accord, / that they shape hem, with-outen delay or taryng, to comen un-to us.' / Which thing parfourned was in dede. /2990 And whanne thise trespassours and repentinge folk of hir folies, that is to seyn, the adversaries of Melibee, / hadden herd what thise messagers seyden un-to hem, / they weren right glad and loyeful, and answereden ful mekely and benignely, / yeldinge graces and thankinges to hir lord Melibee and to al his companye; / and shopen hem, with-outen delay, to go with the messagers, and obeye to the comandement of hir lord Melibee. /2995

72. And right anon they token hir wey to the court of Melibee, / and token with hem somme of hir trewe freendes, to maken feith for hem

and for to been hir borwes. / And whan they were comen to the
presence of Melibee, he seyde hem thise wordes: / 'it standeth thus,'
quod Melibee, 'and sooth it is, that ye, / causeless, and with-outen
skile and resoun, /3000 han doon grete iniuries and wronges to me
and to my wyf Prudence, and to my doghter also. / For ye han entred
in-to myn hous by violence, / and have doon swich outrage, that alle
men knowen wel that ye have deserved the deeth; / and therfore wol
I knowe and wite of yow, / whether ye wol putte the punisment
and the chastysinge and the vengeance of this outrage in the wil of
me and of my wyf Prudence; or ye wol nat?' /3005

3003. E. disserued.

73. Thanne the wyseste of hem three answerde for hem alle, and
seyde: / 'sire,' quod he, 'we knowen wel, that we been unworthy to
comen un-to the court of so greet a lord and so worthy as ye been. /
For we han so greetly mistaken us, and han offended and agilt in
swich a wyse agayn your heigh lordshipe, / that trewely we han
deserved the deeth. / But yet, for the grete goodnesse and
debonairetee that all the world witnesseth of your persone, /3010 we
submitten us to the excellence and benignitee of your gracious
lordshipe, / and been redy to obeie to alle your comandements; /
bisekinge yow, that of your merciable pitee ye wol considere our
grete repentaunce and lowe submissioun, / and graunten us
foryevenesse of our outrageous trespas and offence. / For wel we
knowe, that your liberal grace and mercy strecchen hem ferther in-to
goodnesse, than doon our outrageouse giltes and trespas in-to
wikkednesse; /3015 al-be-it that cursedly and dampnably we han
agilt agayn your heigh lordshipe.' /

3005. E. wheither. 3009. E. disserued. 3010. of] E. in. 3013. E.
lough; *rest* lowe. 3016. E. Hn. dampnably.

74. Thanne Melibee took hem up fro the ground ful benignely, / and
receyved hir obligaciouns and hir bondes by hir othes up-on hir
plegges and borwes, / and assigned hem a certeyn day to retourne
un-to his court, / for to accepte and receyve the sentence and
lugement that Melibee wolde comande to be doon on hem by the
causes afore-seyd; /3020 whiche thinges ordeyned, every man
retourned to his hous. /

75. And whan that dame Prudence saugh hir tyme, she freyned and axed hir lord Melibee, / what vengeance he thoughte to taken of hise adversaries? /

76. To which Melibee answerde and seyde, 'certes,' quod he, 'I thinke and purpose me fully / to desherite hem of al that ever they han, and for to putte hem in exil for ever.' /3025

77. 'Certes,' quod dame Prudence, 'this were a cruel sentence, and muchel agayn resoun. / For ye been riche y-nough, and han no nede of other mennes good; / and ye mighte lightly in this wyse gete yow a coveitous name, / which is a vicious thing, and oghte been eschewed of every good man. / For after the sawe of the word of the apostle: "coveitise is rote of alle harmes." /3030 And therfore, it were bettre for yow to lese so muchel good of your owene, than for to taken of hir good in this manere. / For bettre it is to lesen good with worshipe, than it is to winne good with vileinye and shame. / And every man oghte to doon his diligence and his businesse to geten him a good name. / And yet shal he nat only bisie him in kepinge of his good name, / but he shal also enforchen him alwey to do som-thing by which he may renouvelle his good name; /3035 for it is writen, that "the olde good loos or good name of a man is sone goon and passed, whan it is nat newed ne renouvelled." / And as touchinge that ye seyn, ye wole exile your adversaries, / that thinketh me muchel agayn resoun and out of mesure, / considered the power that they han yeve yow up-on hem-self. / And it is writen, that "he is worthy to lesen his privilege that misuseth the might and the power that is yeven him." /3040 And I sette cas ye mighte enioyne hem that peyne by right and by lawe, / which I trowe ye mowe nat do, / I seye, ye mighte nat putten it to execucioun per-aventure, / and thanne were it lykly to retourne to the werre as it was biforn. / And therfore, if ye wole that men do yow obeisance, ye moste demen more curteisly; /3045 this is to seyn, ye moste yeven more esy sentences and Iugements. / For it is writen, that "he that most curteisly comandeth, to him men most obeyen." / And therfore, I prey yow that in this necessitee and in this nede, ye caste yow to overcome your herte. / For Senek seith: that "he that overcometh his herte, overcometh twyes." / And Tullius seith: "ther is nothing so comendable in a greet lord /3050 as whan he is debonaire and meke, and appeseth him

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lightly." / And I prey yow that ye wole forbere now to do vengeance,
/ in swich a manere, that your goode name may be kept and
conserved; / and that men mowe have cause and matere to preys
yow of pitee and of mercy; / and that ye have no cause to repente
yow of thing that ye doon. /3055 For Senek seith: "he overcometh in
an yvel manere, that repenteth him of his victorie." / Wherefore I pray
yow, lat mercy been in your minde and in your herte, / to theffect
and entente that god almighty have mercy on yow in his laste
Iugement. / For seint Iame seith in his epistle: "Iugement withouten
mercy shal be doon to him, that hath no mercy of another wight."" /

3026. E. crueel. 3032. E. *om.* good (*twice*). 3036. or] E. and. 3051.

E. *om.* him. 3057. E. in youre mynde and; *rest om.*

78. Whanne Melibee hadde herd the grete skiles and resouns of
dame Prudence, and hir wise informaciouns and techinges, /3060 his
herte gan encline to the wil of his wyf, consideringe hir trewe
entente; / and conformed him anon, and assented fully to werken
after hir conseil; / and thonked god, of whom procedeth al vertu and
alle goodnesse, that him sente a wyf of so greet discrecioun. / And
whan the day cam that hise adversaries sholde apperen in his
presence, / he spak unto hem ful goodly, and seyde in this wyse:
/3065 'al-be-it so that of your pryde and presumpcioun and folie, and
of your negligence and unconninge, / ye have misborn yow and
trespassed un-to me; / yet, for as much as I see and biholde your
grete humilitee, / and that ye been sory and repentant of your giltes,
/ it constreyneth me to doon yow grace and mercy. /3070 Therfore I
receyve yow to my grace, / and foryeve yow outrely alle the offences,
iniuries, and wronges, that ye have doon agayn me and myne; / to
this effect and to this ende, that god of his endeles mercy / wole at
the tyme of our dyinge foryeven us our giltes that we han trespassed
to him in this wretched world. / For douteles, if we be sory and
repentant of the sinnes and giltes whiche we han trespassed in the
sight of our lord god, /3075 he is so free and so merciable, / that he
wole foryeven us our giltes, / and bringen us to his blisse that never
hath ende. Amen.' /3078

HERE IS ENDED CHAUCERS TALE OF MELIBEE AND OF DAME
PRUDENCE

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3064 E. Hn., appieren. 3078. E. his; Hn. Pt. Hl. the; Cp. Ln. thilke. *After ende*, Cp. Ln. *have this spurious couplet*:—

To whiche blisse he us bringe

That blood on crosse for us gan springe,

followed by—*Qui cum patre*, &c.

Colophon. *From E.*; Hn. *has*—Here is endid Chaucers tale of Melibe; Hl. *has*—Here endith Chaucer his tale of Melibe.

THE MONK'S PROLOGUE.

THE MERY WORDES OF THE HOST TO THE MONK.

Whan ended was my tale of Melibee,
And of Prudence and hir benignitee, 3080
Our hoste seyde, 'as I am faithful man,
And by the precious *corpus Madrian*,
I hadde lever than a barel ale
That goode lief my wyf hadde herd this tale!
For she nis no-thing of swich pacience 3085
As was this Melibeus wyf Prudence.
By goddes bones! whan I bete my knaves,
She bringth me forth the grete clobbed staves, (10)
And cryeth, "slee the dogges everichoon,
And brek hem, bothe bak and every boon." 3090
And if that any neighebor of myne
Wol nat in chirche to my wyf enclyne,
Or be so hardy to hir to trespace,
Whan she comth hoom, she rampeth in my face,
And cryeth, "false coward, wreak thy wyf, 3095
By *corpus* bones! I wol have thy knyf,
And thou shalt have my distaf and go spinne!"
Fro day to night right thus she wol biginne;— (20)
"Allas!" she seith, "that ever I was shape
To wedde a milksop or a coward ape, 3100
That wol be overlad with every wight!
Thou darst nat stonden by thy wyves right!"
This is my lyf, but-if that I wol fighte;
And out at dore anon I moot me dighte,
Or elles I am but lost, but-if that I 3105
Be lyk a wilde leoun fool-hardy.
I woot wel she wol do me slee som day
Som neighebor, and thanne go my wey. (30)
For I am perilous with knyf in honde,
Al be it that I dar nat hir withstonde, 3110
For she is big in armes, by my feith,

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That shal he finde, that hir misdooth or seith.
But lat us passe away fro this matere.

Heading. *From E.*; Hn. Here bigynneth The Prologe of the Monkes tale. E. murye. 3082. the] E. Hn. that. 3085. E. Hn. *omit* For. 3094. Pt. hoom; Hl. hom; Cp. Ln. home; E. Hn. *omit*. 3099. E. Hn. euere that I. 3110. E. Cp. Ln. hire nat; Hn. Cm. Pt. Hl. nat hire.

My lord the Monk,' quod he, 'be mery of chere;
For ye shul telle a tale trewely. 3115
Lo! Rouchestre stant heer faste by!
Ryd forth, myn owene lord, brek nat our game,
But, by my trouthe, I knowe nat your name, (40)
Wher shal I calle yow my lord dan Iohn,
Or dan Thomas, or elles dan Albon? 3120
Of what hous be ye, by your fader kin?
I vow to god, thou, hast a ful fair skin,
It is a gentil pasture ther thou goost;
Thou art nat lyk a penaunt or a goost.
Upon my feith, thou art som officer, 3125
Som worthy sexteyn, or som celerer,
For by my fader soule, as to my doom,
Thou art a maister whan thou art at hoom; (50)
No povre cloisterer, ne no novys,
But a governour, wyly and wys. 3130
And therwithal of brawnes and of bones
A wel-faring persone for the nones.
I pray to god, yeve him confusioun
That first thee broghte un-to religioun;
Thou woldest han been a trede-foul aright. 3135
Haddestow as greet a leve, as thou hast might
To parfourne al thy lust in engendrure,
Thou haddest bigeten many a creature. (60)
Alas! why werestow so wyd a cope?
God yeve me sorwe! but, and I were a pope, 3140
Not only thou, but every mighty man,
Thogh he were shorn ful hye upon his pan,
Sholde have a wyf; for al the world is lorn!

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Religioun hath take up al the corn
Of treading, and we borel men ben shrimpes! 3145
Of feble trees ther comen wrecched impes.
This maketh that our heires been so sclendre
And feble, that they may nat wel engendre. (70)
This maketh that our wyves wol assaye
Religious folk, for ye may bettre paye 3150
Of Venus payements than mowe we;
God woot, no lussheburghes payen ye!
But be nat wrooth, my lord, for that I pleye;
Ful ofte in game a sooth I have herd seye.'

3114. E. Hn. myrie. 3119, 20. E. daun. 3129. E. Hn. Pt. Ln. cloistrer.
3138. E. Hn. ful many. 3147, 8. E. *om. these lines; from Hn.*; Hn. Cm.
sklendre; Cp. Pt. sclendre (*sclendir*). 3151. E. paiementz. 3152. E.
Hn. lussheburgh; Cp. lussheburghes; Hl. lusscheburghes.

This worthy monk took al in pacience, 3155
And seyde, 'I wol doon al my diligence,
As fer as souneth in-to honestee,
To telle yow a tale, or two, or three. (80)
And if yow list to herkne hiderward,
I wol yow seyn the lyf of seint Edward; 3160
Or elles first Tragedies wol I telle
Of whiche I have an hundred in my celle.
Tragedie is to seyn a certeyn storie,
As olde bokes maken us memorie,
Of him that stood in greet prosperitee 3165
And is y-fallen out of heigh degree
Into miserie, and endeth wrecchedly.
And they ben versified comunly (90)
Of six feet, which men clepe *exametron*.
In prose eek been endyted many oon, 3170
And eek in metre, in many a sondry wyse.
Lo! this declaring oughthe y-nough suffise.

3160. E. *omits* yow. 3163. Cp. Pt. Ln. for to; *rest omit* for. 3168. E.
communely; Cm. comounly; Hn. Hl. comunly.

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Now herkneth, if yow lyketh for to here;
But first I yow biseke in this matere,
Though I by ordre telle nat thise thinges, 3175
Be it of popes, emperours, or kinges,
After hir ages, as men writen finde,
But telle hem som bifore and som bihinde, (100)
As it now comth un-to my remembraunce;
Have me excused of myn ignoraunce.' 3180

Explicit.

THE MONKES TALE.

HERE BIGINNETH THE MONKES TALE, DE CASIBUS
VIRORUM ILLUSTRUM.

I wol biwayle in maner of Tragedie
The harm of hem that stode in heigh degree,
And fillen so that ther nas no remedie
To bringe hem out of hir adversitee;
For certein, whan that fortune list to flee, 3185
Ther may no man the cours of hir withholde;
Lat no man truste on blind prosperitee;
Be war by thise ensamples trewe and olde.

Heading. *From E. (E. Heere). 3188. E. Pt. of; rest by.*

LUCIFER.

At Lucifer, though he an angel were,
And nat a man, at him I wol biginne; 3190
For, thogh fortune may non angel dere, (11)
From heigh degree yet fel he for his sinne
Doun in-to helle, wher he yet is inne.
O Lucifer! brightest of angels alle,
Now artow Sathanas, that maist nat twinne 3195
Out of miserie, in which that thou art falle.

3191. E. though; Hn. thogh.

ADAM.

Lo Adam, in the feld of Damassene,
With goddes owene finger wroght was he,
And nat bigeten of mannes sperme unclene,
And welte al Paradys, saving o tree. 3200
Had never worldly man so heigh degree (21)
As Adam, til he for misgovernaunce

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Was drive out of his hye prosperitee
To labour, and to helle, and to meschaunce.

3197. Cm. Hl. Damassene; E. Hn. Damyssene.

SAMPSON.

Lo Sampson, which that was annunciat 3205
By thangel, longe er his nativitee,
And was to god almighty consecrat,
And stood in noblesse, whyl he mighte see.
Was never swich another as was he,
To speke of strengthe, and therwith hardinesse; 3210
But to his wyves tolde he his secree, (31)
Through which he slow him-self, for wrecchednesse.

3206. Hl. Cp. thangel; Hn. Pt. Ln. the aungel; E. Cm. angel.

Sampson, this noble almighty champioun,
Withouten wepen save his hondes tweye,
He slow and al to-rente the leoun, 3215
Toward his wedding walking by the weye.
His false wyf coude him so plese and preye
Til she his conseil knew, and she untrew
Un-to his foos his conseil gan biwreye,
And him forsook, and took another newe. 3220

Three hundred foxes took Sampson for ire, (41)
And alle hir tayles he togider bond,
And sette the foxes tayles alle on fire,
For he on every tayl had knit a brond;
And they brende alle the cornes in that lond, 3225
And alle hir oliveres and vynes eek.
A thousand men he slow eek with his hond,
And had no wepen but an asses cheek.

Whan they were slayn, so thursted him that he
Was wel my lorn, for which he gan to preye 3230

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That god wolde on his peyne han som pitee, (51)
And sende him drinke, or elles moste he deye;
And of this asses cheke, that was dreye,
Out of a wang-tooth sprang anon a welle,
Of which he drank y-nogh, shortly to seye, 3235
Thus heelp him god, as *Iudicum* can telle.

3235. E. anon; *rest* ynogh, ynough, ynouhe, &c.

By verray force, at Gazan, on a night,
Maugree Philistiens of that citee,
The gates of the toun he hath up-plight,
And on his bak y-caried hem hath he 3240
Hye on an hille, that men mighte hem see. (61)
O noble almighty Sampson, leef and dere,
Had thou nat told to wommen thy secree,
In al this worlde ne hadde been thy pere!

This Sampson never sicer drank ne wyn, 3245
Ne on his heed cam rasour noon ne shere,
By precept of the messenger divyn,
For alle his strengthes in his heres were;
And fully twenty winter, yeer by yere,
He hadde of Israel the governaunce. 3250
But sone shal he wepen many a tere, (71)
For wommen shal him bringen to meschaunce!

3245. E. Hn. ciser (*for* sicer); Hl. siser; Cm. Pt. Ln. sythir; Cp. cyder.

Un-to his lemman Dalida he tolde
That in his heres al his strengthe lay,
And falsly to his fo-men she him solde. 3255
And sleping in hir barme up-on a day
She made to clippe or shere his heer away,
And made his fo-men al his craft espyen;
And whan that they him fonde in this array,
They bounde him faste, and putten out his yën. 3260

3257. E. Hl. heres; *rest* heer, here. 3258. E. Hn. this craft; *rest* his craft.

But er his heer were clipped or y-shave, (81)
Ther was no bond with which men might him binde;
But now is he in prisoun in a cave,
Wher-as they made him at the querne grinde.
O noble Sampson, strongest of mankinde, 3265
O whylom Iuge in glorie and in richesse,
Now maystow wepen with thyn yën blinde,
Sith thou fro wele art falle in wrecchednesse.

3261. E. were; *rest* was; *see l.* 3328.

Thende of this caytif was as I shal seye;
His fo-men made a feste upon a day, 3270
And made him as hir fool bifore hem pleye, (91)
And this was in a temple of greet array.
But atte laste he made a foul affray;
For he two pilers shook, and made hem falle,
And doun fil temple and al, and ther it lay, 3275
And slow him-self, and eek his fo-men alle.

3271. E. Cm. a; *rest* hire, here. 3274. E. the; *rest* two.

This is to seyn, the princes everichoon,
And eek three thousand bodies wer ther slayn
With falling of the grete temple of stoon.
Of Sampson now wol I na-more seyn. 3280
Beth war by this ensample old and playn (101)
That no men telle hir conseil til hir wyves
Of swich thing as they wolde han secree fayn,
If that it touche hir limmes or hir lyves.

HERCULES.

Of Hercules the sovereyn conquerour 3285
Singen his workes laude and heigh renoun;
For in his tyme of strengthe he was the flour.

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He slow, and rafte the skin of the leoun;
He of Centauros leyde the boost adoun;
He Arpies slow, the cruel briddes felle; 3290
He golden apples rafte of the dragoun; (111)
He drow out Cerberus, the hound of helle:

He slow the cruel tyrant Busirus,
And made his hors to frete him, flesh and boon;
He slow the firy serpent venimous; 3295
Of Achelois two hornes, he brak oon;
And he slow Cacus in a cave of stoon;
He slow the geaunt Antheus the stronge;
He slow the grisly boor, and that anoon,
And bar the heven on his nekke longe. 3300

3294. E. flessch. 3296. E. Cm. hornes two; *rest* two hornes.

Was never wight, sith that the world bigan, (121)
That slow so many monstres as dide he.
Thurgh-out this wyde world his name ran,
What for his strengthe, and for his heigh bountee,
And every reaume wente he for to see. 3305
He was so strong that no man mighte him lette;
At bothe the worldes endes, seith Trophee,
In stede of boundes, he a piler sette.

3308. E. stide; pileer.

A lemman hadde this noble champioun,
That highte Dianira, fresh as May; 3310
And, as thise clerkes maken mencion, (131)
She hath him sent a sherte fresh and gay.
Allas! this sherte, alas and weylaway!
Envenimed was so subtilly with-alle,
That, er that he had wered it half a day, 3315
It made his flesh al from his bones falle.

3310, 2. E. fressh. 3316. E. flessch.

But nathelees somme clerkes hir excusen
By oon that highte Nessus, that it maked;
Be as be may, I wol hir noght accusen;
But on his bak this sherte he wered al naked, 3320
Til that his flesh was for the venim blaked. (141)
And whan he sey noon other remedye,
In hote coles he hath him-selven raked,
For with no venim deynd him to dye.

Thus starf this worthy mighty Hercules; 3325
Lo, who may truste on fortune any throwe?
For him that folweth al this world of prees,
Er he be war, is ofte y-leyd ful lowe.
Ful wys is he that can him-selven knowe.
Beth war, for whan that fortune list to glose, 3330
Than wayteth she hir man to overthrowe (151)
By swich a wey as he wolde leest suppose.

NABUGODONOSOR (NEBUCHADNEZZAR).

The mighty trone, the precious tresor,
The glorious ceptre and royal magestee
That hadde the king Nabugodonosor, 3335
With tonge unnethe may discryved be.
He twyes wan Ierusalem the citee;
The vessel of the temple he with him ladde.
At Babiloyne was his sovereyn see,
In which his glorie and his delyt he hadde. 3340

3336. Hl. vnnethes.

The fairest children of the blood royal (161)
Of Israel he leet do gelde anoon,
And maked ech of hem to been his thral.
Amonges othere Daniel was oon,
That was the wysest child of everichoon; 3345
For he the dremes of the king expounded,
Wher-as in Chaldey clerk ne was ther noon

That wiste to what fyn his dremes souned.

This proude king leet make a statue of golde,
 Sixty cubytes long, and seven in brede, 3350
 To which image bothe yonge and olde (171)
 Comaunded he to loute, and have in drede;
 Or in a fourneys ful of flambes rede
 He shal be brent, that wolde noght obeye.
 But never wolde assente to that dede 3355
 Daniel, ne his yonge felawes tweye.

3351. E. *The*; *rest* To. E. Hn. Cm. he bothe; *rest omit* he. 3352. E. Hn. Cm. *omit* he.

This king of kinges proud was and elaat,
 He wende that god, that sit in magestee,
 Ne mighte him nat bireve of his estaat:
 But sodeynly he loste his dignitee, 3360
 And lyk a beste him semed for to be, (181)
 And eet hay as an oxe, and lay ther-oute;
 In reyn with wilde bestes walked he,
 Til certain tyme was y-come aboute.

And lyk an egles fetheres wexe his heres, 3365
 His nayles lyk a briddes clawes were;
 Til god releessed him a certain yeres,
 And yaf him wit; and than with many a tere
 He thanked god, and ever his lyf in fere
 Was he to doon amis, or more trespace; 3370
 And, til that tyme he leyd was on his bere, (191)
 He knew that god was ful of might and grace.

3365. *Wexe is the right reading, whence* Cm. *wexsyn, and* Hl. Cp. *were* (*for wexe*); E. Hn. *wax*; Pt. Ln. *was (for wax)*.

BALTHASAR (BELSHAZZAR).

His sone, which that highte Balthasar,

That heeld the regne after his fader day,
 He by his fader coude nought be war, 3375
 For proud he was of herte and of array;
 And eek an ydolastre was he ay.
 His hye estaat assured him in pryde.
 But fortune caste him doun, and ther he lay,
 And sodeynly his regne gan divyde. 3380

3377. E. he was; *rest* was he.

A feste he made un-to his lordes alle (201)
 Up-on a tyme, and bad hem blythe be,
 And than his officeres gan he calle—
 ‘Goth, bringeth forth the vessels,’ [tho] quod he,
 ‘Which that my fader, in his prosperitee, 3385
 Out of the temple of Ierusalem birafte,
 And to our hye goddes thanke we
 Of honour, that our eldres with us lafte.’

3384. *I supply* tho. *For* vessels, *see* 3391, 3416, 3418.

His wyf, his lordes, and his concubynes
 Ay dronken, whyl hir appetytes laste, 3390
 Out of this noble vessels sundry wynes; (211)
 And on a wal this king his yën caste,
 And sey an hond armlees, that wroot ful faste,
 For fere of which he quook and syked sore.
 This hond, that Balthasar so sore agaste, 3395
 Wroot *Mane, techel, phares*, and na-more.

In al that lond magicien was noon
 That coude expounne what this lettre mente;
 But Daniel expounded it anoon,
 And seyde, ‘king, god to thy fader lente 3400
 Glorie and honour, regne, tresour, rente: (221)
 And he was proud, and no-thing god ne dradde,
 And therfor god gret wreche up-on him sente,
 And him birafte the regne that he hadde.

3400. Hn. lente; *rest* sente (*but see* l. 3403).

He was out cast of mannes companye, 3405
 With asses was his habitacioun,
 And eet hey as a beste in weet and drye,
 Til that he knew, by grace and by resoun,
 That god of heven hath dominacioun
 Over every regne and every creature; 3410
 And thanne had god of him compassioun, (231)
 And him restored his regne and his figure.

Eek thou, that art his sone, art proud also,
 And knowest alle thise thinges verraily,
 And art rebel to god, and art his fo. 3415
 Thou drank eek of his vessels boldely;
 Thy wyf eek and thy wenches sinfully
 Dronke of the same vessels sondry wyne,
 And heriest false goddes cursedly;
 Therfor to thee y-shapen ful gret pyne is. 3420

This hand was sent from god, that on the walle (241)
 Wroot *mane*, *techel*, *phares*, truste me;
 Thy regne is doon, thou weyest noght at alle;
 Divyded is thy regne, and it shal be
 To Medes and to Perses yeven, quod he. 3425
 And thilke same night this king was slawe,
 And Darius occupyeth his degree,
 Thogh he therto had neither right ne lawe.

3422. E. Hn. Cp. Hl. truste; Pt. trest; Ln. trust; Cm. trust to. See B.
 4214. 3425. E. *om.* yeven.

Lordinges, ensample heer-by may ye take
 How that in lordshipe is no sikernesse; 3430
 For whan fortune wol a man forsake, (251)
 She bereth away his regne and his richesse,
 And eek his freendes, bothe more and lesse;
 For what man that hath freendes thurgh fortune,

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Mishap wol make hem enemys, I gesse: 3435
This proverbe is ful sooth and ful commune.

3435. E. as I; *the rest omit* as.

CENOBIA (ZENOBIA).

Cenobia, of Palimerie quene,
As writen Persiens of hir noblesse,
So worthy was in armes and so kene,
That no wight passed hir in hardinesse, 3440
Ne in linage, ne in other gentillesse. (261)
Of kinges blode of Perse is she descended;
I seye nat that she hadde most fairnesse,
But of hir shape she mighte nat been amended.

3437. *So* E. Hn. Cm.; *and* Cp. *has the heading*—De Cenobia Palymerie regina. 3441. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. ne in; E. nor in; Hn. ne; Cm. nor; (ne in = n'in).

From hir childhede I finde that she fledde 3445
Office of wommen, and to wode she wente;
And many a wilde hertes blood she shedde
With arwes brode that she to hem sente.
She was so swift that she anon hem hente,
And whan that she was elder, she wolde kille 3450
Leouns, lepardes, and beres al to-rente, (271)
And in hir armes welde hem at hir wille.

She dorste wilde beestes dennes seke,
And rennen in the montaignes al the night,
And slepen under a bush, and she coude eke 3455
Wrastlen by verray force and verray might
With any yong man, were he never so wight;
Ther mighte no-thing in hir armes stonde.
She kepte hir maydenhod from every wight,
To no man deigned hir for to be bonde. 3460

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3455. E. Hn. Cm. the; *rest* a. E. bussh.

But atte laste hir frendes han hir maried (281)
To Odenake, a prince of that contree,
Al were it so that she hem longe taried;
And ye shul understonde how that he
Hadde swiche fantasyes as hadde she. 3465
But nathelees, whan they were knit in-fere,
They lived in Ioye and in felicittee;
For ech of hem hadde other leef and dere.

3462. E. Hn. Cm. Onedake; Cp. Ln. Hl. Odenake; Pt. Odonak. 3468. E.
oother lief.

Save o thing, that she never wolde assente
By no wey, that he sholde by hir lye 3470
But ones, for it was hir pleyn entente (291)
To have a child, the world to multiplye;
And al-so sone as that she mighte espye
That she was nat with childe with that dede,
Than wolde she suffre him doon his fantasye 3475
Eft-sone, and nat but ones, out of drede.

And if she were with childe at thilke cast,
Na-more sholde he pleyen thilke game
Til fully fourty dayes weren past;
Than wolde she ones suffre him do the same. 3480
Al were this Odenake wilde or tame, (301)
He gat na-more of hir, for thus she seyde,
'It was to wyves lecherye and shame
In other cas, if that men with hem pleyde.'

3481. E. Hn. Cm. Onedake; *rest* Odenake.

Two sones by this Odenake hadde she, 3485
The whiche she kepte in vertu and lettrure;
But now un-to our tale turne we.
I seye, so worshipful a creature,

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And wys therwith, and large with mesure,
So penible in the warre, and curteis eke, 3490
Ne more labour mighte in werre endure, (311)
Was noon, thogh al this world men sholde seke.

3485. E. *om.* this. E. Hn. Cm. Onedake; *rest* Odenake. 3492. E. though;
Hn. thogh. E. wolde; *rest* sholde (schulde).

Hir riche array ne mighte nat be told
As wel in vessel as in hir clothing;
She was al clad in perree and in gold, 3495
And eek she lafte noght, for noon hunting,
To have of sondry tonges ful knowing,
Whan that she leyser hadde, and for to entende
To lernen bokes was al hir lyking,
How she in vertu mighte hir lyf dispende. 3500

And, shortly of this storie for to trete, (321)
So doughty was hir housbonde and eek she,
That they conquered many regnes grete
In the orient, with many a fair citee,
Apertenaunt un-to the magestee 3505
Of Rome, and with strong hond helde hem ful faste;
Ne never mighte hir fo-men doon hem flee,
Ay whyl that Odenakes dayes laste.

3501. E. proces; *rest* storie. 3508. Hl. Odenakes; *rest* Onedakes,
Odenake.

Hir batailes, who-so list hem for to rede,
Agayn Sapor the king and othere mo, 3510
And how that al this proces fil in dede, (331)
Why she conquered and what title had therto,
And after of hir meschief and hir wo,
How that she was biseged and y-take,
Let him un-to my maister Petrark go, 3515
That writ y-nough of this, I undertake.

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3511. E. *omits* that. 3512. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. had; *which* E. Hn. Cm. *omit*.

When Odenake was deed, she mightily
The regnes heeld, and with hir propre honde
Agayn hir foos she faught so cruelly,
That ther nas king ne prince in al that londe 3520
That he nas glad, if that he grace fonde, (341)
That she ne wolde up-on his lond werreye;
With hir they made alliaunce by bonde
To been in pees, and lete hir ryde and pleye.

3517. *So* Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl.; E. Hn. Cm. Onedake. 3518. E. honde; Pt. honde; Ln. hande; *rest* hond. 3523. *MSS.* made; *read* maden?

The emperour of Rome, Claudius, 3525
Ne him bifore, the Romayn Galien,
Ne dorste never been so corageous,
Ne noon Ermyn, ne noon Egipcien,
Ne Surrien, ne noon Arabien,
Within the feld that dorste with hir fighte 3530
Lest that she wolde hem with hir hondes slen, (351)
Or with hir meynnee putten hem to flighte.

3530. Cp. feeld; Hl. feld; Ln. felde; Pt. feelde; E. Hn. Cm. feeldes.

In kinges habit wente hir sones two,
As heires of hir fadres regnes alle,
And Hermanno, and Thymalaö 3535
Her names were, as Persiens hem calle.
But ay fortune hath in hir hony galle;
This mighty quene may no whyl endure.
Fortune out of hir regne made hir falle
To wrecchednesse and to misaventure. 3540

Aurelian, whan that the governaunce (361)
Of Rome cam in-to his hondes tweye,
He shoop up-on this queen to do vengeaunce,
And with his legiouns he took his weye

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Toward Cenobie, and, shortly for to seye, 3545
He made hir flee, and atte laste hir hente,
And fettred hir, and eek hir children tweye,
And wan the lond, and hoom to Rome he wente.

Amonges othere thinges that he wan,
Hir char, that was with gold wrought and perree, 3550
This grete Romayn, this Aurelian, (371)
Hath with him lad, for that men sholde it see.
Biforen his triumphe walketh she
With gilte cheynes on hir nekke hanging;
Corouned was she, as after hir degree, 3555
And ful of perree charged hir clothing.

3553. MSS. Biforn, Bifore (Hl. Bifore this). 3555. E. *omits* as.

Allas, fortune! she that whylom was
Dredful to kinges and to emperoures,
Now gaureth al the peple on hir, alas!
And she that helmed was in starke stoures, 3560
And wan by force tounes stronge and toures, (381)
Shal on hir heed now were a vitremyte;
And she that bar the ceptre ful of floures
Shal bere a distaf, hir cost for to quyte. [T. 14380.

3560. E. shoures. 3562. Hl. wyntermyte. 3564. Hn. Cm. Ln. cost; Pt. coste; E. Cp. costes; Hl. self.

(NERO *follows in T.*; *see p. 259.*)

DE PETRO REGE ISPANNIE.

O noble, o worthy Petro, glorie of Spayne, [T. 14685.
Whom fortune heeld so hy in magestee, 3566
Wel oughten men thy pitous deeth complayne!
Out of thy lond thy brother made thee flee;
And after, at a sege, by subtiltee,
Thou were bitrayed, and lad un-to his tente, 3570

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Wher-as he with his owene hond slow thee, (391)
Succeding in thy regne and in thy rente.

3570. E. Hn. Cm. bitraysed.

The feeld of snow, with thegle of blak ther-inne, [T. 14693.
Caught with the lymrod, coloured as the glede,
He brew this cursednes and al this sinne. 3575
The 'wikked nest' was werker of this nede;
Noght Charles Oliver, that ay took hede
Of trouthe and honour, but of Armorike
Genilon Oliver, corrupt for mede,
Broghte this worthy king in swich a brike. 3580

3577. E. Hn. Cm. took ay; *rest* ay took.

DE PETRO REGE DE CIPRO.

O worthy Petro, king of Cypre, also, (401)
That Alisaundre wan by heigh maistrye,
Ful many a hethen wroghtestow ful wo,
Of which thyn owene liges hadde envye,
And, for no thing but for thy chivalrye, 3585
They in thy bedde han slayn thee by the morwe.
Thus can fortune hir wheel governe and gye,
And out of Ioye bringe men to sorwe. [T. 14708.

DE BARNABO DE LUMBARDIA.

Of Melan grete Barnabo Viscounte,
God of delyt, and scourge of Lumbardye, 3590
Why sholde I nat thyn infortune acounte, (411)
Sith in estaat thou clombe were so hye?
Thy brother sone, that was thy double allye,
For he thy nevew was, and sone-in-lawe,
With-inne his prisoun made thee to dye; 3595
But why, ne how, noot I that thou were slawe.

DE HUGELINO, COMITE DE PIZE.

Of the erl Hugelyn of Pyse the langour
Ther may no tonge telle for pitee;
But litel out of Pyse stant a tour,
In whiche tour in prisoun put was he, 3600
And with him been his litel children three. (421)
The eldeste scarsly fyf yeer was of age.
Allas, fortune! it was greet crueltee
Swiche briddes for to putte in swiche a cage!

3597. E. Pyze; Hn. Pize; Cp. Pyse; Pt. Ln. Hl. Pise. 3599. E. Hn. Cm.
Pize; Cp. Pyse; Pt. Ln. Hl. Pise.

Dampned was he to deye in that prisoun, 3605
For Roger, which that bisshop was of Pyse,
Hadde on him maad a fals suggestioun,
Thurgh which the peple gan upon him ryse,
And putten him to prisoun in swich wyse
As ye han herd, and mete and drink he hadde 3610
So smal, that wel unnethe it may suffyse, (431)
And therwith-al it was ful povre and badde.

3606. E. Hn. Pize; Cm. Pyze; Cp. Pyse; Pt. Ln. Hl. Pise. 3611. E. Pt.
omit wel.

And on a day bifil that, in that hour,
Whan that his mete wont was to be broght,
The gayler shette the dores of the tour. 3615
He herde it wel,—but he spak right noght,
And in his herte anon ther fil a thocht,
That they for hunger wolde doon him dyen.
'Allas!' quod he, 'allas! that I was wroght!'
Therwith the teres fillen from his yën. 3620

3616. E. Hn. spak right; Cp. Hl. saugh it; Pt. seegh it; Ln. sawe it.

His yonge sone, that three yeer was of age, (441)

Un-to him seyde, 'fader, why do ye wepe?
Whan wol the gayler bringen our potage,
Is ther no morsel breed that ye do kepe?
I am so hungry that I may nat slepe, 3625
Now wolde god that I mighte slepen ever!
Than sholde nat hunger in my wombe crepe;
Ther is no thing, save breed, that me were lever.'

3622. E. Hn. *repeat* fader. 3628. Ln. Hl. saue; Cp. Pt. sauf; E. Hn. but.

Thus day by day this child bigan to crye,
Til in his fadres barme adoun it lay, 3630
And seyde, 'far-wel, fader, I moot dye,' (451)
And kiste his fader, and deyde the same day.
And whan the woful fader deed it sey,
For wo his armes two he gan to byte,
And seyde, 'allas, fortune! and weylaway! 3635
Thy false wheel my wo al may I wyte!'

3632. E. Hl. dyde; Hn. Cp. deyde; *see* l. 3644.

His children wende that it for hunger was
That he his armes gnow, and nat for wo,
And seyde, 'fader, do nat so, alas!
But rather eet the flesh upon us two; 3640
Our flesh thou yaf us, tak our flesh us fro (461)
And eet y-nough:' right thus they to him seyde,
And after that, with-in a day or two,
They leyde hem in his lappe adoun, and deyde.

3640. E. flessch. 3641. E. flessch. E. Hn. *omit* vs *after* yaf.

Him-self, despeired, eek for hunger starf; 3645
Thus ended is this mighty Erl of Pyse;
From heigh estaat fortune away him carf.
Of this Tragedie it oghte y-nough suffyse.
Who-so wol here it in a lenger wyse,
Redeth the grete poete of Itaille, 3650

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That highte Dant, for he can al devyse (471)
Fro point to point, nat o word wol he faille. [T. 14772.]

3646. *See note to l. 3597.*

(*For T. 14773, see p. 269; for T. 14380, see p. 256.*)

NERO.

Al-though that Nero were as vicious [T. 14381.
As any feend that lyth ful lowe adoun,
Yet he, as telleth us Swetonius, 3655
This wyde world hadde in subieccioun,
Both Est and West, South and Septemtrioun;
Of rubies, saphires, and of perles whyte
Were alle his clothes brouded up and doun;
For he in gemmes greetly gan delyte. 3660

3653. E. Hn. Cm. *omit* as. 3654. E. in helle; *rest* full lowe. 3657. E. Hn.
Cm. North (*but read* South); Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl *omit*!

More delicat, more pompous of array, (481)
More proud was never emperour than he;
That ilke cloth, that he had wered o day,
After that tyme he nolde it never see.
Nettes of gold-thred hadde he gret plentee 3665
To fische in Tybre, whan him liste pleye.
His lustes were al lawe in his decree,
For fortune as his freend him wolde obeye.

He Rome brende for his delicacye;
The senatours he slow up-on a day. 3670
To here how men wolde wepe and crye; (491)
And slow his brother, and by his sister lay.
His moder made he in pitous array;
For he hir wombe slitte, to biholde
Wher he conceyved was; so weilawey! 3675
That he so litel of his moder tolde!

3673, 6. E. mooder.

No tere out of his yën for that sighte
Ne cam, but seyde, 'a fair womman was she.'
Gret wonder is, how that he coude or mighte
Be domesman of hir dede beautee. 3680
The wyn to bringen him comaunded he, (501)
And drank anon; non other wo he made.
Whan might is loyned un-to crueltee,
Allas! to depe wol the venim wade!

3682. E. noon oother.

In youthe a maister hadde this emperour, 3685
To teche him letterure and curteisye,
For of moralitee he was the flour,
As in his tyme, but-if bokes lye;
And whyl this maister hadde of him maistrye,
He maketh him so conning and so souple 3690
That longe tyme it was er tirannye (511)
Or any vyce dorste on him uncouple.

This Seneca, of which that I devyse,
By-cause Nero hadde of him swich drede,
For he fro vyces wolde him ay chastyse 3695
Discreetly as by worde and nat by dede;—
'Sir,' wolde he seyn, 'an emperour moot nede
Be vertuous, and hate tirannye'—
For which he in a bath made him to blede
On bothe his armes, til he moste dye. 3700

3694. Cm. Bycause that. 3695. Hn. Cm. ay; *rest omit.* [3699.
Misnumbered 520 in the Aldine Edition; but corrected further on.]

This Nero hadde eek of acostumaunce (521)
In youthe ageyn his maister for to ryse,
Which afterward him thoughte a greet grevaunce;
Therfor he made him deyen in this wyse.

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But natheles this Seneca the wyse 3705
Chees in a bath to deye in this manere
Rather than han another tormentyse;
And thus hath Nero slayn his maister dere.

3703. E. (*only*) *omits* a. 3707. E. any oother.

Now fil it so that fortune list no lenger
The hye pryde of Nero to cheryce; 3710
For though that he were strong, yet was she strengere; (531)
She thoughte thus, 'by god, I am to nyce
To sette a man that is fulfild of vyce
In heigh degree, and emperour him calle.
By god, out of his sete I wol him tryce; 3715
When he leest weneth, sonest shal he falle.'

3711. E. Hn. was; *the rest* were.

The peple roos up-on him on a night
For his defaute, and whan he it espyed,
Out of his dores anon he hath him dight
Alone, and, ther he wende han ben allyed, 3720
He knocked faste, and ay, the more he cryed, (541)
The faster shette they the dores alle;
Tho wiste he wel he hadde him-self misgyed,
And wente his wey, no lenger dorste he calle.

3723. E. Hn. *wrongly repeat* l. 3731 *here*.

The peple cryde and rombled up and down, 3725
That with his eres herde he how they seyde,
'Wher is this false tyraunt, this Neroun?'
For fere almost out of his wit he breyde,
And to his goddes pitously he preyde
For socour, but it mighte nat bityde. 3730
For drede of this, him thoughte that he deyde, (551)
And ran in-to a gardin, him to hyde.

And in this gardin fond he cherles tweye
 That seten by a fyr ful greet and reed,
 And to thise cherles two he gan to preye 3735
 To sleen him, and to girden of his heed,
 That to his body, whan that he were deed,
 Were no despyt y-doon, for his defame.
 Him-self he slow, he coude no better reed,
 Of which fortune lough, and hadde a game. 3740

3733. E. Hn. foond. 3734. E. Hn. Cm. *omit* ful.

DE OLOFERNO (HOLOFERNES).

Was never capitayn under a king (561)
 That regnes mo putte in subieccioun,
 Ne strengre was in feeld of alle thing,
 As in his tyme, ne gretter of renoun,
 Ne more pompous in heigh presumpcioun 3745
 Than Oloferne, which fortune ay kiste
 So likerously, and ladde him up and down
 Til that his heed was of, er that he wiste.

Nat only that this world hadde him in awe
 For lesinge of richesse or libertee, 3750
 But he made every man reneye his lawe. (571)
 'Nabugodonosor was god,' seyde he,
 'Noon other god sholde adoured be.'
 Ageyns his heste no wight dar trespase
 Save in Bethulia, a strong citee, 3755
 Wher Eliachim a prest was of that place.

3751. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. *omit* he. 3753. E. Hn. Cm. adoured; Cp. Pt. Ln.
 Hl. honoured. 3754. E. Hn. dorste; *rest* dar.

But tak kepe of the deeth of Olofern;
 Amide his host he dronke lay a night,
 With-inne his tente, large as is a bern,
 And yit, for al his pompe and al his might, 3760

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Iudith, a womman, as he lay upright, (581)
Sleping, his heed of smoot, and from his tente
Ful prively she stal from every wight,
And with his heed unto hir toun she wente.

DE REGE ANTHIOCHO ILLUSTRİ.

What nedeth it of King Anthiochus 3765
To telle his hye royal magestee,
His hye pryde, his werkes venimous?
For swich another was ther noon as he.
Rede which that he was in Machabee,
And rede the proude wordes that he seyde, 3770
And why he fil fro heigh prosperitee, (591)
And in an hil how wretchedly he deyde.

Fortune him hadde enhaunced so in pryde
That verrailly he wende he mighte attayne
Unto the sterres, upon every syde, 3775
And in balance weyen ech montayne,
And alle the flodes of the see restrayne.
And goddes peple hadde he most in hate,
Hem wolde he sleen in torment and in payne,
Wening that god ne mighte his pryde abate. 3780

3777. Cm. flodys; *rest* floodes. 3778. E. Hn. moost.

And for that Nichanor and Thimothee (601)
Of Iewes weren venquissed mightily,
Unto the Iewes swich an hate hadde he
That he bad greithe his char ful hastily,
And swoor, and seyde, ful despitously, 3785
Unto Ierusalem he wolde eft-sone,
To wreken his ire on it ful cruelly;
But of his purpos he was let ful sone.

3784. E. greithen; Hn. greithe; Cm. ordeyne. E. Hn. chaar; Cm. char.

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God for his manace him so sore smoot
With invisible wounde, ay incurable, 3790
That in his guttes carf it so and boot (611)
That his peynes weren importable.
And certainly, the wreche was resonable,
For many a mannes guttes dide he peyne;
But from his purpos cursed and dampnable 3795
For al his smert he wolde him nat restreyne;

But bad anon apparailen his host,
And sodeynly, er he of it was war,
God daunted al his pryde and al his bost.
For he so sore fil out of his char, 3800
That it his limes and his skin to-tar, (621)
So that he neither mighte go ne ryde,
But in a chayer men aboute him bar,
Al for-brused, bothe bak and syde.

3797, 9. E. hoost, boost. 3801. E. lemes; Hn. Cp. Hl. lymes; Cm. lymys; Ln. limes.

The wreche of god him smoot so cruelly 3805
That thurgh his body wikked wormes crepte;
And ther-with-al he stank so horribly,
That noon of al his meynee that him kepte,
Whether so he wook or elles slepte,
Ne mighte noght for stink of him endure. 3810
In this meschief he wayled and eek wepte, (631)
And knew god lord of every creature.

3807. E. *om.* so; E. horribly. 3809. E. Hn. Cm. so; Pt. Hl. that; Cp. Ln. so that. 3810. E. Hn. for; *rest* the.

To al his host and to him-self also
Ful wlatsum was the stink of his careyne;
No man ne mighte him bere to ne fro. 3815
And in this stink and this horrible peyne
He starf ful wrecchedly in a monteyne.

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Thus hath this robbour and this homicyde,
That many a man made to wepe and pleyne,
Swich guerdon as bilongeth unto pryde. 3820

DE ALEXANDRO.

The storie of Alisaundre is so comune, (641)
That every wight that hath discrecioun
Hath herd somewhat or al of his fortune.
This wyde world, as in conclusioun,
He wan by strengthe, or for his hye renoun 3825
They weren glad for pees un-to him sende.
The pryde of man and beste he leyde adoun,
Wher-so he cam, un-to the worldes ende.

3827. beste] Hl. bost.

Comparisoun might never yit be maked
Bitwixe him and another conquerour; 3830
For al this world for drede of him hath quaked, (651)
He was of knighthode and of fredom flour;
Fortune him made the heir of hir honour;
Save wyn and wommen, no-thing mighte aswage
His hye entente in armes and labour; 3835
So was he ful of leonyn corage.

3830. E. Hn. Bitwixen. 3832. E. Hn. Cm. *omit* was. 3834. E. man: *rest* thing.

What preys were it to him, though I yow tolde
Of Darius, and an hundred thousand mo,
Of kinges, princes, erles, dukes bolde,
Whiche he conquered, and broghte hem in-to wo? 3840
I seye, as fer as man may ryde or go, (661)
The world was his, what sholde I more devyse?
For though I write or tolde you evermo
Of his knighthode, it mighte nat suffyse.

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3837. Cm. preys; E. Hn. pris: Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl. pite. 3843. Hl. *omits*.

Twelf yeer he regned, as seith Machabee; 3845
Philippes sone of Macedoyne he was,
That first was king in Grece the contree.
O worthy gentil Alisaundre, allas!
That ever sholde fallen swich a cas!
Empoisoned of thyn owene folk thou were; 3850
Thy *sys* fortune hath turned into *as*; (671)
And yit for thee ne weep she never a tere!

3851. E. Hn. Cm. aas; Cp. Pt. Hl. an aas; Ln. an as. 3852. E. Hn. Cm.
omit yit; Hl. *has* right.

Who shal me yeven teres to compleyne
The deeth of gentillesse and of fraunchyse,
That al the world welded in his demeyne, 3855
And yit him thoughte it mighte nat suffyse?
So ful was his corage of heigh empryse.
Allas! who shal me helpe to endyte
False fortune, and poison to despyse,
The whiche two of al this wo I wyte? 3860

DE IULIO CESARE.

By wisdom, manhede, and by greet labour (681)
Fro humble bed to royal magestee,
Up roos he, Iulius the conquerour,
That wan al thoccident by lond and see,
By strengthe of hond, or elles by trettee, 3865
And un-to Rome made hem tributarie;
And sitthe of Rome the emperour was he,
Til that fortune wex his adversarie.

3861. E. Cp. Pt. Ln. *omit* greet. 3862. E. Hn. Cm. Hl. humble bed; Pt.
Cp. Ln. humblehede.

O mighty Cesar, that in Thessalye

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Ageyn Pompeius, fader thyn in lawe, 3870
That of thorient hadde al the chivalrye (691)
As fer as that the day biginneth dawe,
Thou thurgh thy knighthode hast hem take and slawe,
Save fewe folk that with Pompeius fledde,
Thurgh which thou putttest al thorient in awe. 3875
Thanke fortune, that so wel thee spedde!

3870. MSS. Pompeus, Pompilus.

But now a litel whyl I wol biwaille
This Pompeius, this noble governour
Of Rome, which that fleigh at this bataille;
I seye, oon of his men, a fals traitour, 3880
His heed of smoot, to winnen him favour (701)
Of Iulius, and him the heed he broghte.
Allas, Pompey, of thorient conquerour,
That fortune unto swich a fyn thee broghte!

[3881. *Misnumbered 700 in the Aldine edition.*]

To Rome ageyn repaireth Iulius 3885
With his triumphe, laureat ful hye,
But on a tyme Brutus Cassius,
That ever hadde of his hye estaat envye,
Ful prively hath maad conspiracye
Ageins this Iulius, in subtil wyse, 3890
And cast the place, in whiche he sholde dye (711)
With boydekins, as I shal yow devyse.

3887. So in the MSS.; observe hath in l. 3889.

This Iulius to the Capitolie wente
Upon a day, as he was wont to goon,
And in the Capitolie anon him hente 3895
This false Brutus, and his othere foon,
And stikede him with boydekins anoon
With many a wounde, and thus they lete him lye;

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But never gronte he at no strook but oon,
Or elles at two, but-if his storie lye. 3900

So manly was this Iulius at herte (721)
And so wel lovede estaatly honestee,
That, though his deedly woundes sore smerte,
His mantel over his hippes casteth he,
For no man sholde seen his privitee. 3905
And, as he lay on deyng in a traunce,
And wiste verrailly that deed was he,
Of honestee yit hadde he remembraunce.

3904. Cm. castyth; *rest* caste, cast. 3906. Cm. on deyng; Pt. on
dyinge; Ln. in deyng; E. Hn. of dyng.

Lucan, to thee this storie I recomende,
And to Sweton, and to Valerie also, 3910
That of this storie wryten word and ende, (731)
How that to thise grete conqueroures two
Fortune was first freend, and sithen fo.
No man ne truste up-on hir favour longe,
But have hir in awayt for ever-mo. 3915
Witnesse on alle thise conqueroures stronge.

3910. Hl. Valirien; *rest* Valerius; ed. 1561, Valerie. 3911. *The MSS. have*
word (for ord); see the note. 3913. E. sitthe; Hl. siththen; Hn. Cm.
siththe a.

CRESUS.

This riche Cresus, whylom king of Lyde,
Of whiche Cresus Cyrus sore him dradde,
Yit was he caught amidde al his pryde,
And to be brent men to the fyr him ladde. 3920
But swich a reyn down fro the welkne shadde (741)
That slow the fyr, and made him to escape;
But to be war no grace yet he hadde,
Til fortune on the galwes made him gape.

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Whan he escaped was, he can nat stente 3925
 For to biginne a newe werre agayn.
 He wende wel, for that fortune him sente
 Swich hap, that he escaped thurgh the rayn,
 That of his foos he mighte nat be slayn;
 And eek a sweven up-on a night he mette, 3930
 Of which he was so proud and eek so fayn, (751)
 That in vengeaunce he al his herte sette.

Up-on a tree he was, as that him thoughte,
 Ther Iuppiter him wesh, bothe bak and syde,
 And Phebus eek a fair towaille him broughte 3935
 To drye him with, and ther-for wex his pryde;
 And to his doghter, that stood him bisyde,
 Which that he knew in heigh science habounde,
 He bad hir telle him what it signifyde,
 And she his dreem bigan right thus expounde. 3940

3936. Cm. Pt. Ln. *wex; rest wax.*

'The tree,' quod she, 'the galwes is to mene, (761)
 And Iuppiter bitokneth snow and reyn,
 And Phebus, with his towaille so clene,
 Tho ben the sonne stremes for to seyn;
 Thou shalt anhangd be, fader, certeyn; 3945
 Reyn shal thee wasshe, and sonne shal thee drye;
 Thus warned she him ful plat and ful pleyn,
 His doghter, which that called was Phanye.

3944. E. *bemes; rest stremes.* 3947. Pt. Ln. Hl. *she; rest omit.*

Anhangd was Cresus, the proude king,
 His royal trone mighte him nat availle. — 3950
 Tragedie is noon other maner thing, (771)
 Ne can in singing crye ne biwaille,
 But for that fortune alwey wol assaille
 With unwar strook the regnes that ben proude;
 For when men trusteth hir, than wol she faille, 3955

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And covere hir brighte face with a cloude. [See p. 256.

Explicit Tragedia.

HERE STINTETH THE KNIGHT THE MONK OF HIS TALE.

3951. Cm. Tragedy is; so Cp. Pt.; Ln. Tregedrye in; E. Hn. Tragedies; Hl. Tegredis(!). 3953. Cm. Hl. for; *rest omit.* [3956. *Reckoned as 775 in the Aldine edition; but really 776.*] After l. 3956, E. Hn. Cm. have ll. 3565-3652. Colophon. From E. Hn. Here is ended the Monkes tale.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE NONNE PRESTES TALE.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

'Ho!' quod the knight, 'good sir, na-more of this,
That ye han seyde is right y-nough, y-wis,
And moche more; for litel hevynesse
Is right y-nough to moche folk, I gesse. 3960
I seye for me, it is a greet disese
Wher-as men han ben in greet welthe and ese,
To heren of hir sodeyn fal, alas!
And the contrarie is Ioie and greet solas,
As whan a man hath been in povre estaat, 3965
And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat, (10)
And ther abydeþ in prosperitee,
Swich thing is gladsom, as it thinketh me,
And of swich thing were goodly for to telle.'
'Ye,' quod our hoste, 'by seint Poules belle, 3970
Ye seye right sooth; this monk, he clappeth loude,
He spak how "fortune covered with a cloude"
I noot never what, and als of a "Tragedie"
Right now ye herde, and parde! no remedie
It is for to biwaille, ne compleyne 3975
That that is doon, and als it is a peyne, (20)
As ye han seyde, to here of hevynesse.
Sir monk, na-more of this, so god yow blesse!
Your tale anoyeth al this companye;
Swich talking is nat worth a boterflye; 3980
For ther-in is ther no desport ne game.
Wherfor, sir Monk, or dan Piers by your name,
I preye yow hertely, telle us somewhat elles,
For sikerly, nere clinking of your belles,
That on your brydel hange on every syde, 3985
By heven king, that for us alle dyde, (30)
I sholde er this han fallen down for slepe,
Although the slough had never been so depe;
Than had your tale al be told in vayn.

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For certainly, as that thise clerkes seyn, 3990
“Wher-as a man may have noon audience,
Noght helpeth it to tellen his sentence.”
And wel I woot the substance is in me,
If any thing shal wel reported be.
Sir, sey somewhat of hunting, I yow preye.’ 3995
‘Nay,’ quod this monk, ‘I have no lust to pleye; (40)
Now let another telle, as I have told.’
Than spak our host, with rude speche and bold,
And seyde un-to the Nonnes Preest anon,
‘Com neer, thou preest, com hider, thou sir Iohn, 4000
Tel us swich thing as may our hertes glade,
Be blythe, though thou ryde up-on a lade.
What though thyn hors be bothe foule and lene,
If he wol serve thee, rekke nat a bene;
Look that thyn herte be mery evermo.’ 4005
‘Yis, sir,’ quod he, ‘yis, host, so mote I go, (50)
But I be mery, y-wis, I wol be blamed:’ —
And right anon his tale he hath attamed,
And thus he seyde un-to us everichon,
This swete preest, this goodly man, sir Iohn. 4010

Explicit.

3982. Pt. or; Hn. o; *rest omit.* 4002. though] Hl. al-though. 4004. Pt. Hl. rek. 4005. E. Hn. murie; *rest mery.* 4006. Cp. Ln. Yis, ost, quod he, so mote I ryde or go.

THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

HERE BIGINNETH THE NONNE PREESTES TALE OF THE COK
AND HEN, CHAUNTECLEER AND PERTELOTE.

A povre widwe, somdel stope in age,
Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cotage,
Bisyde a grove, standing in a dale.
This widwe, of which I telle yow my tale,
Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf, 4015
In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,
For litel was hir catel and hir rente;
By housbondrye, of such as God hir sente,
She fond hir-self, and eek hir doghtren two.
Three large sowes hadde she, and namo, 4020
Three kyn, and eek a sheep that highte Malle. (11)
Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,
In which she eet ful many a sclendre meel.
Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.
No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte; 4025
Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.
Repleccioun ne made hir never syk;
Attempree dyete was al hir phisyk,
And exerceye, and hertes suffisaunce.
The goute lette hir no-thing for to daunce, 4030
Napoplexye shente nat hir heed; (21)
No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed;
Hir bord was served most with whyt and blak,
Milk and broun breed, in which she fond no lak,
Seynd bacoun, and somtyme an ey or tweye, 4035
For she was as it were a maner deye.

4011. E. Hn. stape; Ln. stoupe; *rest* stope. 4013. E. grene. 4021. E.
keen; Hn. Hl. Cp. kyn. 4031. E. Hn. Napoplexie; *rest* Ne poplexie.

A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dich with-oute,

In which she hadde a cok, hight Chauntecleer,
 In al the land of crowing nas his peer. 4040
 His vois was merier than the mery orgon (31)
 On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon;
 Wel sikerer was his crowing in his logge,
 Than is a klokke, or an abbey orlogge.
 By nature knew he ech ascencioun 4045
 Of equinoxial in thilke toun;
 For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,
 Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben amended.
 His comb was redder than the fyn coral,
 And batailed, as it were a castel-wal. 4050
 His bile was blak, and as the leet it shoon; (41)
 Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon;
 His nayles whytter than the lilie flour,
 And lyk the burned gold was his colour.
 This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce 4055
 Sevene hennes, for to doon al his plesaunce,
 Whiche were his sustres and his paramours,
 And wonder lyk to him, as of colours.
 Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
 Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote. 4060
 Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire, (51)
 And compaignable, and bar hir-self so faire,
 Sin thilke day that she was seven night old,
 That trewely she hath the herte in hold
 Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith; 4065
 He loved hir so, that wel was him therwith.
 But such a loye 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, 4070
 Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe. (61)

4039. E. Hn. heet; Cp. that highte; *rest* that hight. 4041. E. Hn. Cm.
 murier. E. Cm. murie. 4045. Hl. knew he; E. Pt. he crew; *rest* he knew.
 4046. E. Ln. *ins.* the *after* Of. 4051. Hl. geet; Pt. Ln. gete. 4054. Hl. Cp.
 Pt. Ln. burnischt. 4062. Hl. ful (*for* so). 4068. E. Cm. Ln. bigan.

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And so bifel, that in a daweninge,
 As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
 Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
 And next him sat this faire Pertelote, 4075
 This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte,
 As man that in his dreem is drecched 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? 4080
 Ye been a verray sleper, fy for shame!' (71)
 And he answerde and seyde thus, 'madame,
 I pray yow, that ye take it nat a-grief:
 By god, me mette I was in swich meschief
 Right now, that yet myn herte is sore afright. 4085
 Now god,' quod he, 'my swevene recche aright,
 And keep my body out of foul prisoun!
 Me mette, how that I romed up and down
 Withinne our yerde, wher-as I saugh a beste,
 Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areste 4090
 Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed. (81)
 His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;
 And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eres,
 With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heres;
 His snowte smal, with glowinge eyen tweye. 4095
 Yet of his look for fere almost I deye;
 This caused me my groning, doutelees.'

4072. a] E. Pt. the. 4079. E. o; *rest om.* 4084. mette] E. thoughte. 4086.
 E. Hn. recche; Cm. reche; *rest rede, reed.* 4091. E. Hn. Cm. *om.* wolde.

'Avoy!' quod she, 'fy on yow, hertelees!
 Allas!' quod she, 'for, by that god above,
 Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love; 4100
 I can nat love a coward, by my feith. (91)
 For certes, what so any womman seith,
 We alle desyren, if it mighte be,
 To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,
 And secree, and no nigard, ne no fool, 4105

Ne him that is agast of every tool,
 Ne noon avauntour, by that god above!
 How dorste ye seyn for shame unto your love,
 That any thing mighte make yow aferd?
 Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd? 4110
 Allas! and conne ye been agast of swevenis? (101)
 No-thing, god wot, but vanitee, in sweven is.
 Swevenes engendren of replecciouns,
 And ofte of fume, and of complecciouns,
 Whan humours been to habundant in a wight. 4115
 Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-night,
 Cometh of the grete superfluitee
 Of youre rede *colera*, pardee,
 Which causeth folk to dreden in here dremes
 Of arwes, and of fyr with rede lemes, 4120
 Of grete bestes, that they wol hem byte, (111)
 Of kontek, and of whelpes grete and lyte;
 Right as the humour of malencolye
 Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,
 For fere of blake beres, or boles blake, 4125
 Or elles, blake develes wole hem take.
 Of othere humours coude I telle also,
 That werken many a man in sleep ful wo;
 But I wol passe as lightly as I can.

4117. E. *om.* the, and has greet. 4119. E. Hn. Cm. dreden; *rest* dremen;
 see 4159. 4121. E. grete; *rest* rede. 4125. So E. Hn. Cm.; Cp. of beres
 and of boles; Ln. Pt. of beres and boles; Hl. of beres or of boles.

Lo Catoun, which that was so wys a man, 4130
 Seyde he nat thus, ne do no fors of dremes? (121)
 Now, sire,' quod she, 'whan we flee fro the bemes,
 For Goddes love, as tak som laxatyf;
 Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
 I counseille yow the beste, I wol nat lye, 4135
 That bothe of colere and of malencolye
 Ye purge yow; and for ye shul nat tarie,
 Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,

I shal my-self to herbes techen yow,
 That shul ben for your hele, and for your prow; 4140
 And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde, (131)
 The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,
 To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.
 Forget not this, for goddes owene love!
 Ye been ful colerik of compleccioun. 4145
 Ware the sonne in his ascencioun
 Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hote;
 And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,
 That ye shul have a fevere terciane,
 Or an agu, that may be youre bane. 4150
 A day or two ye shul have digestyves (141)
 Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,
 Of lauriol, centaure, and fumetere,
 Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,
 Of catapuce, or of gaytres beryis, 4155
 Of erbe yve, growing in our yerd, that mery is;
 Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem in.
 Be mery, housbond, for your fader kin!
 Dredeth no dreem; I can say yow na-more.'

4132. E. ye; *rest* we. 4136, 7. Hl. *om.* 4155. Cp. Ln. gaytres; E. gaitrys;
 Hn. gaytrys; Hl. gaytre; Cm. gattris; Pt. gatys. 4156. Ln. that; Hn.
 they; *rest* ther.

'Madame,' quod he, '*graunt mercy* of your lore. 4160
 But nathelees, as touching daun Catoun, (151)
 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 4165
 Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,
 Than al the revers seyn of his sentence,
 And han wel founden by experience,
 That dremes ben significaciouns,
 As wel of loye as tribulaciouns 4170
 That folk enduren in this lyf present. (161)

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Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;
The verray preve sheweth it in dede.

4166. Hn. Cm. Cp. mote; E. moot. 4167. his] E. Pt. this. 4170. E. Cm.
Cp. Ln. Hl. *ins.* of *after* as.

Oon of the gretteste auctours that men rede
Seith thus, that whylom two felawes wente 4175
On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente;
And happed so, thay come into a toun,
Wher-as ther was swich congregacioun
Of peple, and eek so streit of herbergage,
That they ne founde as muche as o cotage, 4180
In which they bothe mighte y-logged be. (171)
Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,
As for that night, departen compaignye;
And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
And took his logging as it wolde falle. 4185
That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;
That other man was logged wel y-nough,
As was his aventure, or his fortune,
That us governeth alle as in commune. 4190

4174. Cm. autourys; Hl. auctorite; *rest* auctour (*sic*). 4177. E. Hn.
coomen in; Cm. comyn in. 4181. E. logged.

And so bifel, that, longe er it were day, (181)
This man mette in his bed, ther-as he lay,
How that his felawe gan up-on him calle,
And seyde, 'allas! for in an oxes stalle
This night I shal be mordred ther I lye. 4195
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;
But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,
He turned him, and took of this no keep; 4200
Him thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee. (191)

Thus twyës in his sleping dremed he.
 And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
 Cam, as him thoughte, and seide, 'I am now slawe;
 Bihold my bloody woundes, depe and wyde! 4205
 Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,
 And at the west gate of the toun,' quod he,
 'A carte ful of donge ther shaltow see,
 In which my body is hid ful prively;
 Do thilke carte aresten boldely. 4210
 My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn;' (201)
 And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn,
 With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
 And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe;
 For on the morwe, as sone as it was day, 4215
 To his felawes in he took the way;
 And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
 After his felawe he bigan to calle.

4194. Hl. Cp. Ln. oxe. 4196. er] Ln. ar; E. Hn. Hl. or. 4200. E. it; *rest*
 this. 4210. E. arresten. 4217. Hl. Cp. Ln. oxe.

The hostiler answered him anon,
 And seyde, 'sire, your felawe is agon, 4220
 As sone as day he wente out of the toun.' (211)
 This man gan fallen in suspecioun,
 Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
 And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he lette,
 Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond 4225
 A dong-carte, as it were to donge lond,
 That was arrayed in the same wyse
 As ye han herd the dede man devyse;
 And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
 Vengeaunce and Iustice of this felonye:— 4230
 'My felawe mordred is this same night, (221)
 And in this carte he lyth gapinge upright.
 I crye out on the ministres,' quod he,
 'That sholden kepe and reulen this citee;
 Harrow! allas! her lyth my felawe slayn!' 4235

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What sholde I more un-to this tale sayn?
The peple out-sterre, and caste the cart to ground,
And in the middel of the dong they founde
The dede man, that mordred was al newe.

4219. Cp. Hl. answered; E. Hn. answerde. 4222. Hl. *ins.* a *after* in; Cp. Pt. Ln. *ins.* gret (grete). 4226. Hn. Cm. Hl. wente as it were; Cp. Pt. Ln. as he wente. 4232. E. Hn. Cm. *ins.* heere *after* carte.

O blisful god, that art so Iust and trewe! 4240
Lo, how that thou biwreyst mordre alway! (231)
Mordre wol out, that see we day by day.
Mordre is so wlatson and abhominable
To god, that is so Iust and resonable,
That he ne wol nat suffre it heled be; 4245
Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.
And right anoon, ministres of that toun
Han hent the carter, and so sore him pyned,
And eek the hostiler so sore engyned, 4250
That thay biknewe hir wikkednesse anoon, (241)
And were an-hanged by the nekke-boon.

4247. E. Hn. Cm. this (this is *being pronounced* this); *rest* this is. 4248. Hl. *ins.* the *after* anoon.

Here may men seen that dremes been to drede.
And certes, in the same book I rede,
Right in the nexte chapitre after this, 4255
(I gabbe nat, so have I loye or blis,)
Two men that wolde han passed over see,
For certeyn cause, in-to a fer contree,
If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,
That made hem in a citee for to tarie, 4260
That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde. (251)
But on a day, agayn the even-tyde,
The wind gan chaunge, and blew right as hem leste.
Iolif and glad they wente un-to hir reste,

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And casten hem ful erly for to saille; 4265
 But to that oo man fil a greet mervaille.
 That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,
 Him mette a wonder dreem, agayn the day;
 Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes syde,
 And him comaunded, that he sholde abyde, 4270
 And seyde him thus, 'if thou to-morwe wende, (261)
 Thou shalt be dreynt; my tale is at an ende.'
 He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,
 And preyde him his viage for to lette;
 As for that day, he preyde him to abyde. 4275
 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.
 I sette not a straw by thy dreminges, 4280
 For swevenes been but vanitees and Iapes. (271)
 Men dreme al-day of owles or of apes,
 And eke of many a mase therwithal;
 Men dreme of thing that nevere was ne shal.
 But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde, 4285
 And thus for-sleuthen wilfully thy tyde,
 God wot it reweth me; and have good day.'
 And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.
 But er that he hadde halfe his cours y-seyled,
 Noot I nat why, ne what mischaunce it eyled, 4290
 But casuelly the shippes botme rente, (281)
 And ship and man under the water wente
 In sighte of othere shippes it byside,
 That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
 And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere, 4295
 By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,
 That no man sholde been to recchelees
 Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,
 That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede.

4256. Cp. Ln. and (*for or*). 4266. *All ins.* herkneth (herken) *after* But.
 4274. E. Hn. Hl. *om.* for; *cf.* l. 4265. 4275. E. Hn. byde. 4282. E. Hn. or;

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rest and. 4283. Hl. eke; *rest om.* 4293. it] Cp. Pt. him; Ln. hem; Hl. ther.
4296. E. *ins.* yet *after* olde.

Lo, in the lyf of seint Kenelm, I rede, 4300
That was Kenulphus sone, the noble king (291)
Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a thing;
A lyte er he was mordred, on a day,
His mordre in his avisioun he say.
His norice him expounded every del 4305
His sweven, and bad him for to kepe him wel
For traisoun; but he nas but seven yeer old,
And therfore litel tale hath he told
Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.
By god, I hadde lever than my sherte 4310
That ye had rad his legende, as have I. (301)
Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
Macrobeus, that writ the avisioun
In Affrike of the worthy Cipioun,
Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been 4315
Warning of thinges that men after seen.

4309. E. *is*; *rest* was. 4313. Cm. thauysioun.

And forther-more, I pray yow loketh wel
In the olde testament, of Daniel,
If he held dremes any vanitee.
Reed eek of Ioseph, and ther shul ye see 4320
Wher dremes ben somtyme (I sey nat alle) (311)
Warning of thinges that shul after falle.
Loke of Egipt the king, daun Pharao,
His bakere and his boteler also,
Wher they ne felte noon effect in dremes. 4325
Who-so wol seken actes of sondry remes,
May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.

4319. E. Hn. Cp. heeld. 4324. Cm. Ln. boteler: Pt. botelere; E. Hn.
butiller.

Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde king,
 Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,
 Which signified he sholde anhangen be? 4330
 Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores wyf, (321)
 That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
 She dremed on the same night biforn,
 How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn,
 If thilke day he wente in-to bataille; 4335
 She warned him, but it mighte nat availle;
 He wente for to fighte nathelees,
 But he was slayn anoon of Achilles.
 But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
 And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle. 4340
 Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun, (331)
 That I shal han of this avisioun
 Adversitee; and I seye forther-more,
 That I ne telle of laxatyves no store,
 For they ben venimous, I woot it wel; 4345
 I hem defye, I love hem never a del.

4331. E. Cp. Pt. Ln. Adromacha. 4338. Hn. And (*for* But). 4345. Hn.
 Cm. venymes. it] Cp. Pt. Ln. right. 4346. E. Cp. diffye.

Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte al this;
 Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
 Of o thing god hath sent me large grace;
 For whan I see the beautee of your face, 4350
 Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yën, (341)
 It maketh al my drede for to dyen;
 For, also siker as *In principio*,
Mulier est hominis confusio;
 Madame, the sentence of this Latin is— 4355
 Womman is mannes Ioye and al his blis.
 For whan I fele a-night your softe syde,
 Al-be-it that I may nat on you ryde,
 For that our perche is maad so narwe, alas!
 I am so ful of Ioye and of solas 4360
 That I defye bothe sweven and dreem.' (351)

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And with that word he fley doun fro the beem,
For it was day, and eek his hennes alle;
And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
For he had founde a corn, lay in the yerd. 4365
Royal he was, he was namore aferd;
He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,
And trad as ofte, er that it was pryme.
He loketh as it were a grim leoun;
And on his toos he rometh up and doun, 4370
Him deynd not to sette his foot to grounde. (361)
He chukketh, whan he hath a corn y-founde,
And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.
Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture; 4375
And after wol I telle his aventure.

4361. E. Cp. diffye. 4362. Hn. Cm. fley; E. fly; Hl. Cp. fleigh. 4365. E. Hn. Cm. hadde. 4366. Cm. Ln. Royal; *rest* Real; *but see* l. 4374. 4367. He] E. And. 4368. Hl. that; *rest om.* Cp. Pt. Ln. were. Hl. er that it was prime. 4370. Hl. toon. 4371. Cm. deynyth. 4374. his] E. Cm. an.

Whan that the month in which the world bigan,
That highte March, whan god first maked man,
Was complet, and [y]-passed were also,
Sin March bigan, thritty dayes and two, 4380
Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde, (371)
His seven wyves walking by his syde,
Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus hadde y-ronne
Twenty degrees and oon, and somewhat more; 4385
And knew by kynde, and by noon other lore,
That it was pryme, and crew with blisful stevene.
'The sonne,' he sayde, 'is clomben up on hevene
Fourty degrees and oon, and more, y-wis.
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis, 4390
Herkneth thise blisful briddes how they singe, (381)
And see the fresshe floures how they springe;
Ful is myn herte of revel and solas.'

But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas;
 For ever the latter ende of Ioye is wo. 4395
 God woot that worldly Ioye is sone ago;
 And if a rethor coude faire endyte,
 He in a cronique saufly mighte it wryte,
 As for a sovereyn notabilitee.
 Now every wys man, lat him herkne me; 4400
 This storie is al-so trewe, I undertake, (391)
 As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
 That wommen holde in ful gret reverence.
 Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.

4379. *All* passed. 4380. *HL*. tway monthes and dayes tuo. 4386. And]
 Cp. Pt. Ln. He. 4398. *HL*. Cp. cronique; *rest* cronicle. 4404. torne] E.
 come.

A col-fox, ful of sly iniquitee, 4405
 That in the grove hadde woned yeres three,
 By heigh imaginacioun forn-cast,
 The same night thurgh-out the hegges brast
 Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
 Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire; 4410
 And in a bed of wortes stille he lay, (401)
 Til it was passed undern of the day,
 Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,
 As gladly doon thise homicydes alle,
 That in awayt liggen to mordre men. 4415
 O false mordrer, lurking in thy den!
 O newe Scariot, newe Genilon!
 False dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,
 That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe!
 O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe, 4420
 That thou into that yerd flough fro the bemes! (411)
 Thou were ful wel y-warned by thy dremes,
 That thilke day was perilous to thee.
 But what that god forwoot mot nedes be,
 After the opinioun of certeyn clerkis. 4425
 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, 4430
 As can the holy doctour Augustyn, (421)
 Or Boece, or the bishop Bradwardyn,
 Whether that goddes worthy forwiting
 Streyneth me nedely for to doon a thing,
 (Nedely clepe I simple necessitee); 4435
 Or elles, if free choys be graunted me
 To do that same thing, or do it noght,
 Though god forwoot it, er that it was wrought;
 Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del
 But by necessitee condicionel. 4440
 I wol not han to do of swich matere; (431)
 My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,
 That took his counseil of his wyf, with sorwe,
 To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
 That he had met the dreem, that I yow tolde. 4445
 Wommennes counseils been ful ofte colde;
 Wommannes counseil broghte us first to wo,
 And made Adam fro paradys to go,
 Ther-as he was ful mery, and wel at ese.
 But for I noot, to whom it mighte displese, 4450
 If I counseil of wommen wolde blame, (441)
 Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.
 Rede auctours, wher they trete of swich matere,
 And what thay seyn of wommen ye may here.
 Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat myne; 4455
 I can noon harm of no womman divyne.

4412. E. Hn. Pt. vndren. 4421. E. Hn. flaugh; Cm. flaw; Cp. fleyȝe; Hl. flough. 4433. E. Wheither. 4434. E. nedefully to doon. 4442. may] Hl. Cp. Pt. schal (schuln). 4445. yow] E. of. 4448. E. out of (*for* fro). 4452. seyde] E. seye.

Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,
 Lyth Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by,

Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free
 Song merier than the mermayde in the see; 4460
 For Phisiologus seith sikerly, (451)
 How that they singen wel and merily.
 And so bifel that, as he caste his yë,
 Among the wortes, on a boterflye,
 He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe. 4465
 No-thing ne liste him thanne for to crowe,
 But cryde anon, 'cok, cok,' and up he sterte,
 As man that was affrayed in his herte.
 For naturelly a beest desyreth flee
 Fro his contrarie, if he may it see, 4470
 Though he never erst had seyn it with his yë. (461)

4460. E murier. 4462. E. myrily.

This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him espye,
 He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
 Seyde, 'Gentil sire, allas! wher wol ye gon?
 Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend? 4475
 Now certes, I were worse than a feend,
 If I to yow wolde harm or vileinye.
 I am nat come your counseil for tespye;
 But trewely, the cause of my cominge
 Was only for to herkne how that ye singe. 4480
 For trewely ye have as mery a stevene (471)
 As eny aungel hath, that is in hevene;
 Therwith ye han in musik more felinge
 Than hadde Boece, or any that can singe.
 My lord your fader (god his soule blesse!) 4485
 And eek your moder, of hir gentillesse,
 Han in myn hous y-been, to my gret ese;
 And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
 But for men speke of singing, I wol saye,
 So mote I brouke wel myn eyen tweye, 4490
 Save yow, I herde never man so singe, (481)
 As dide your fader in the morweninge;
 Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.

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And for to make his voys the more strong,
He wolde so peyne him, that with bothe his yën 4495
He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,
And stonden on his tiptoon ther-with-al,
And strecche forth his nekke long and smal.
And eek he was of swich discrecioun,
That ther nas no man in no regioun 4500
That him in song or wisdom mighte passe. (491)
I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Asse,
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
For that a preestes sone yaf him a knok
Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce, 4505
He made him for to lese his benefyce.
But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun
Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun
Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
Now singeth, sire, for seinte charitee, 4510
Let see, conne ye your fader countrefete?' (501)
This Chauntecleer his winges gan to bete,
As man that coude his tresoun nat espye,
So was he ravished with his flaterye.

4482. E. *om.* hath. 4484. Hl. Pt. had. 4489. E. *ins.* yow *after* wol. 4491.
E. herde I; yet (*for so*). 4508. E. Cm. Cp. Bitwixe.

Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour 4515
Is in your courtes, and many a losengeour,
That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,
Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow seith.
Redeth Ecclesiaste of flaterye;
Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye. 4520

This Chauntecleer stood hye up-on his toos, (511)
Strecching his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos,
And gan to crowe loude for the nones;
And daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,
And by the gargat hente Chauntecleer, 4525
And on his bak toward the wode him beer,

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For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed.
O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed!
Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!
Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes! 4530
And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce. (521)
O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
Sin that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
And in thy service dide al his poweer,
More for delyt, than world to multiplye, 4535
Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to dye?
O Gaufred, dere mayster soverayn,
That, whan thy worthy king Richard was slayn
With shot, compleynedest his deth so sore,
Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy lore, 4540
The Friday for to chide, as diden ye? (531)
(For on a Friday soothly slayn was he.)
Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude pleyne
For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.

4524. E. Hn. Cm. stirte. 4525. E. Hn. gargat; Cm. Hl. garget; Ln.
gorge. 4531. E. Hn. Cm. fil; *rest* fel.

Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun 4545
Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun
Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite swerd,
Whan he hadde hent king Priam by the berd,
And slayn him (as saith us *Eneydos*),
As maden alle the hennes in the clos, 4550
Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte. (541)
But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighthe,
Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf,
Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his lyf,
And that the Romainys hadde brend Cartage; 4555
She was so ful of torment and of rage,
That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
And brende hir-selven with a stedfast herte.
O woful hennes, right so cryden ye,
As, whan that Nero brende the citee 4560

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Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves, (551)
For that hir housbondes losten alle hir lyves;
Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
Now wol I torne to my tale agayn:—

4552. E. sodeynly (*for* sovereynly). 4554. Hn. Cm. y-lost. 4564. E. Now
turne I wole.

This sely widwe, and eek hir doghtres two, 4565
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, 'Out! harrow! and weylaway! 4570
Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him they ran, (561)
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 4575
So were they fered for berking of the dogges
And shouting of the men and wimmen eke,
They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte breke.
They yelleden as feendes doon in helle;
The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle; 4580
The gees for fere flowen over the trees; (571)
Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;
So hidous was the noyse, a! *benedicite*!
Certes, he Iakke Straw, and his meynee,
Ne made never shoutes half so shrille, 4585
Whan that they wolden any Fleming kille,
As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
Of bras thay broghten bemes, and of box,
Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and pouped,
And therwithal thay shryked and they houped; 4590
It semed as that heven sholde falle. (581)
Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle!

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4567. E. Hn. Cm. stirten. 4570. Pt. They. 4575. E. Hl. *om.* eek. 4576. Hl. were they; *rest om.* 4579. E. yolleden. 4585. E. Ln. shille. 4590. E. Hn. skriked.

Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly
The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!
This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak, 4595
In al his drede, un-to the fox he spak,
And seyde, 'sire, if that I were as ye,
Yet sholde I seyn (as wis god helpe me),
Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!
A verray pestilence up-on yow falle! 4600
Now am I come un-to this wodes syde, (591)
Maugree your heed, the cok shal heer abyde;
I wol him ete in feith, and that anon.' —
The fox answerde, 'in feith, it shal be don,' —
And as he spak that word, al sodeinly 4605
This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,
And heighe up-on a tree he fleigh anon.
And whan the fox saugh that he was y-gon,
'Allas!' quod he, 'O Chauntecleer, alas!
I have to yow,' quod he, 'y-doon trespass, 4610
In-as-muche as I maked yow aferd, (601)
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.' 4615
'Nay than,' quod he, 'I shrewe us bothe two,
And first I shrewe my-self, bothe blood and bones,
If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.
Thou shalt na-more, thurgh thy flaterye,
Do me to singe and winke with myn yë. 4620
For he that winketh, whan he sholde see, (611)
Al wilfully, god lat him never thee!
'Nay,' quod the fox, 'but god yeve him meschaunce,
That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
That langleth whan he sholde holde his pees.' 4625

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4594. E. *om.* eek. 4598. E. wolde (*for* sholde). 4601. E. the (*for* this).
4608. Hl. i-goon; *rest* gon, goon. 4612. E. Hn. into this (*for* out of the).
4613. E. of (*for* in). 4618. E. Hn. Hl. *ins.* any *before* ofter.

Lo, swich it is for to be reccheles,
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. 4630
For seint Paul seith, that al that writen is, (621)
To our doctryne it is y-write, y-wis.
Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille.

4630. Pt. good; *rest* goode.

Now, gode god, if that it be thy wille,
As seith my lord, so make us alle good men; 4635
And bringe us to his heighe blisse. Amen.

HERE IS ENDED THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

4635. Hl. Pt. Ln. good; *rest* goode. Colophon. Cp. Nonne; E. Hn.
Nonnes. Hl. Here endeth the tale of Chaunteclere and pertelote.

EPILOGUE TO THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

'Sir Nonnes Preest,' our hoste seyde anoon,
'Y-blessed be thy breche, and every stoon!
This was a mery tale of Chauntecleer.
But, by my trouthe, if thou were secular, 4640
Thou woldest been a trede-foul a-right.
For, if thou have corage as thou hast might,
Thee were nede of hennes, as I wene,
Ya, mo than seven tymes seventene.
See, whiche braunes hath this gentil Preest, 4645
So greet a nekke, and swich a large breest! (10)
He loketh as a sperhauk with his yën;
Him nedeth nat his colour for to dyen
With brasil, ne with greyn of Portingale.
Now sire, faire falle yow for youre tale!' 4650

And after that he, with ful mery chere,
Seide to another, as ye shullen here.

These genuine lines only occur in Dd., in MS. Reg. 17 D. xv, and in MS. Addit. 5140 (B. M.). The text is founded on Dd.

4637. Dd. oure hoost. 4639. Dd. murie; Reg. Add. mery. 4641. Dd. ben. Dd. tredfoul; Reg. Add. trede foule. 4645. Dd. which; Reg. whiche; Add. suche. 4646. Dd. gret. 4647. Dd. sperhauke; eyen. 4648. Dd. dyghen; Reg. Add. dyen. 4650-2. *I suspect these three lines to be spurious.* 4650. Reg. youre mery tale. 4652. to] *all* un-to. another] Add. the Nonne.

Note. Three varieties of a Doctour's Prologue are given, respectively, by Tyrwhitt, Wright, and Morris; but are all spurious. Perhaps the best is the very short one in Tyrwhitt, as follows:—

'Ye, let that passen,' quod our Hoste, 'as now.
Sire Doctour of Phisyk, I prey yow,
Telle us a tale of som honest matere.'

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'It shal be doon, if that ye wol it here,'
Seyde this Doctour, and his tale bigan anon.
'Now, good men,' quod he, 'herkneth everichon.'

GROUP C.

THE PHISICIENS TALE.

*** *For a spurious Prologue, see p. 289.*

HERE FOLWETH THE PHISICIENS TALE.

Ther was, as telleth Titus Livius,
A knight that called was Virginius,
Fulfilde of honour and of worthinesse,
And strong of freendes and of greet richesse.

2. Hn. called was; E. was called; *rest* cleped was.

This knight a doghter hadde by his wyf,	5
No children hadde he mo in al his lyf.	
Fair was this mayde in excellent beautee	
Aboven every wight that man may see;	
For nature hath with sovereyn diligence	
Y-formed hir in so greet excellence,	10
As though she wolde seyn, 'lo! I, Nature,	
Thus can I forme and peynte a creature,	
Whan that me list; who can me countrefete?	
Pigmalion noght, though he ay forge and bete,	
Or grave, or peynte; for I dar wel seyn,	15
Apelles, Zanzis, sholde werche in veyn,	
Outher to grave or peynte or forge or bete,	
If they presumed me to countrefete.	
For he that is the former principal	
Hath maked me his vicaire general,	20
To forme and peynten erthely creaturis	
Right as me list, and ech thing in my cure is	
Under the mone, that may wane and waxe,	
And for my werk right no-thing wol I axe;	
My lord and I ben ful of oon accord;	25
I made hir to the worship of my lord.	

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So do I alle myne othere creatures,
What colour that they han, or what figures.' —
Thus semeth me that Nature wolde seye.

16. E. Hn. Apelles; Hl. Appollus; rest Apollus. E. Hn. Zanzis; rest zephirus (!). 25. E. Hn. ful of oon; *rest* fully at.

This mayde of age twelf yeer was and tweye,	30
In which that Nature hadde swich delyt.	
For right as she can peynte a lilie whyt	
And reed a rose, right with swich peynture	
She peynted hath this noble creature	
Er she were born, up-on hir limes free,	35
Wher-as by right swiche colours sholde be;	
And Phebus dyed hath hir tresses grete	
Lyk to the stremes of his burned hete.	
And if that excellent was hir beautee,	
A thousand-fold more vertuous was she.	40
In hir ne lakked no condicioun,	
That is to preyse, as by discrecioun.	
As wel in goost as body chast was she;	
For which she floured in virginitee	
With alle humilitee and abstinence,	45
With alle attemperaunce and pacience,	
With mesure eek of bering and array.	
Discreet she was in answering alway;	
Though she were wys as Pallas, dar I seyn,	
Hir facound eek ful wommanly and pleyn,	50
No countrefeted termes hadde she	
To seme wys; but after hir degree	
She spak, and alle hir wordes more and lesse	
Souninge in vertu and in gentillesse.	
Shamfast she was in maydens shamfastnesse,	55
Constant in herte, and ever in bisnesse	
To dryve hir out of ydel slogardye.	
Bacus hadde of hir mouth right no maistrye;	
For wyn and youthe doon Venus encrece,	
As men in fyr wol casten oile or grece.	60

And of hir owene vertu, unconstreyned,
 She hath ful ofte tyme syk hir feyned,
 For that she wolde fleen the companye
 Wher lykly was to treten of folye,
 As is at festes, revels, and at daunces, 65
 That been occasions of daliaunces.
 Swich thinges maken children for to be
 To sone rype and bold, as men may see,
 Which is ful perilous, and hath ben yore.
 For al to sone may she lerne lore 70
 Of boldnesse, whan she woxen is a wyf.

49. Cp. Pt. Ln. as; *rest om.* 50. E. a (*for and*). 55. E. Shamefast. E. *om.* in.
 59. E. Hn. dooth; *rest doon.* E. Hn. encresse. 60. E. man; *rest men.* E.
 wasten; *rest casten.* E. oille; gresse. 67. E. Hn. thyng; *rest thinges.* 70.
 E. Hn. they; *rest she.*

And ye maistresses in your olde lyf,
 That lordes doghtres han in governaunce,
 Ne taketh of my wordes no displesaunce;
 Thenketh that ye ben set in governinges 75
 Of lordes doghtres, only for two thinges;
 Outher for ye han kept your honestee,
 Or elles ye han falle in freletee,
 And knowen wel y-nough the olde daunce,
 And han forsaken fully swich meschaunce 80
 For evermo; therfore, for Cristes sake,
 To teche hem vertu loke that ye ne slake.
 A thief of venisoun, that hath forlaft
 His likerousnesse, and al his olde craft,
 Can kepe a forest best of any man. 85
 Now kepeth hem wel, for if ye wol, ye can;
 Loke wel that ye un-to no vice assente,
 Lest ye be dampned for your wikke entente;
 For who-so doth, a traitour is certeyn.
 And taketh kepe of that that I shal seyn; 90
 Of alle tresons sovereyn pestilence
 Is whan a wight bitrayseth innocence.

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80. E. Hn. han; *rest* conne. 82. *So* E. Hn.; *rest* Kepeth wel tho that ye undertake. 84. E. Hn. olde; *rest* theves. 86. *Read* kep'th; E. Hn. *om.* hem; Hl. hir(!). E. wolde; *rest* wole (wil). 92. E. Hn. bitrayseth; *rest* betrayeth.

Ye fadres and ye modres eek also,
Though ye han children, be it oon or two,
Your is the charge of al hir surveyaunce, 95
Whyl that they been under your governaunce.
Beth war that by ensample of your livinge,
Or by your negligence in chastisinge,
That they ne perisse; for I dar wel seye,
If that they doon, ye shul it dere abeye. 100
Under a shepherde softe and negligent
The wolf hath many a sheep and lamb to-rent.
Suffyseth oon ensample now as here,
For I mot turne agayn to my matere.

95. E. Hn. surveiaunce; *rest* sufferaunce (suffraunce). 97. E. Hn. if; *rest* that. 99. E. Hn. *om.* ne. 103, 4. E. *om.* both lines; I follow Hn. and the rest.

This mayde, of which I wol this tale expresse, 105
So kepte hir-self, hir neded no maistresse;
For in hir living maydens mighten rede,
As in a book, every good word or dede,
That longeth to a mayden vertuous;
She was so prudent and so bountevous. 110
For which the fame out-sprong on every syde
Bothe of hir beautee and hir bountee wyde;
That thurgh that land they preysed hir echone,
That loved vertu, save envye allone,
That sory is of other mennes wele, 115
And glad is of his sorwe and his unhele;
(The doctour maketh this descripcioun).
This mayde up-on a day wente in the toun
Toward a temple, with hir moder dere,
As is of yonge maydens the manere. 120

105. E. Hn. I wol this; *rest* I telle my. 119. E. Hn. a; *rest* the.

Now was ther thanne a Iustice in that toun,
That governour was of that regioun.
And so bifel, this Iuge his eyen caste
Up-on this mayde, avysinge him ful faste,
As she cam forby ther this Iuge stood. 125
Anon his herte chaunged and his mood,
So was he caught with beautee of this mayde;
And to him-self ful prively he sayde,
'This mayde shal be myn, for any man.'

125. E. Hn. ther as; *rest om.* as.

Anon the feend in-to his herte ran, 130
And taughte him sodeynly, that he by sighte
The mayden to his purpos winne mighte.
For certes, by no force, ne by no mede,
Him thoughte, he was nat able for to spede;
For she was strong of freendes, and eek she 135
Confermed was in swich soverayn bountee,
That wel he wiste he mighte hir never winne
As for to make hir with hir body sinne.
For which, by greet deliberacioun,
He sente after a cherl, was in the toun, 140
Which that he knew for subtil and for bold.
This Iuge un-to this cherl his tale hath told
In secree wyse, and made him to ensure,
He sholde telle it to no creature,
And if he dide, he sholde lese his heed. 145
Whan that assented was this cursed reed,
Glad was this Iuge and maked him greet chere,
And yaf hym yiftes preciouise and dere.

138. E. maken; *rest* make. 140, 142. E. Hn. cherl; *rest* clerk. 147. E. Hn. this; *rest* the.

Whan shapen was al hir conspiracye

Fro point to point, how that his lecherye 150
 Parfourned sholde been ful subtilly,
 As ye shul here it after openly,
 Hoom gooth the cherl, that highte Claudius.
 This false Iuge that highte Apius,
 So was his name, (for this is no fable, 155
 But knownen for historial thing notable,
 The sentence of it sooth is, out of doute),
 This false Iuge gooth now faste aboute
 To hasten his delyt al that he may.
 And so bifel sone after, on a day, 160
 This false Iuge, as telleth us the storie,
 As he was wont, sat in his consistorie,
 And yaf his domes up-on sondry cas.
 This false cherl cam forth a ful greet pas,
 And seyde, 'lord, if that it be your wille, 165
 As dooth me right up-on this pitous bille,
 In which I pleyne up-on Virginus.
 And if that he wol seyn it is nat thus,
 I wol it preve, and finde good witnesse,
 That sooth is that my bille wol expresse.' 170

149. E. Hn. hir; *rest* this. 153, 164. E. Hn. cherl; *rest* clerk. 155. E. Hn. this; *rest* it.

The Iuge answerde, 'of this, in his absence,
 I may nat yeve diffinitif sentence.
 Lat do him calle, and I wol gladly here;
 Thou shall have al right, and no wrong here.'

172. E. diffynyue; *rest* diffinitif. 173, 174. E. heere, glossed audire;
 and heere, glossed hie.

Virginus cam, to wite the Iuges wille, 175
 And right anon was rad this cursed bille;
 The sentence of it was as ye shul here.

'To yow, my lord, sire Apius so dere,

Sheweth your povre servant Claudius,
 How that a knight, called Virginus, 180
 Agayns the lawe, agayn al equitee,
 Holdeth, expres agayn the wil of me,
 My servant, which that is my thral by right,
 Which fro myn hous was stole up-on a night,
 Whyl that she was ful yong; this wol I preve 185
 By witnesse, lord, so that it nat yow greve.
 She nis his doghter nat, what so he seye;
 Wherefore to yow, my lord the Iuge, I preye,
 Yeld me my thral, if that it be your wille.'
 Lo! this was al the sentence of his bille. 190

Virginus gan up-on the cherl biholde,
 But hastily, er he his tale tolde,
 And wolde have preved it, as sholde a knight,
 And eek by witnessing of many a wight,
 That it was fals that seyde his adversarie, 195
 This cursed Iuge wolde no-thing tarie,
 Ne here a word more of Virginus,
 But yaf his Iugement, and seyde thus:—

191. E. Hn. Cm. cherl; rest clerk.

'I deme anon this cherl his servant have;
 Thou shalt no lenger in thyn hous hir save. 200
 Go bring hir forth, and put hir in our warde,
 The cherl shal have his thral, this I awarde.'

199, 202. E. Hn. Cm. cherl; rest clerk.

And whan this worthy knight Virginus,
 Thurgh sentence of this Iustice Apius,
 Moste by force his dere doghter yiven 205
 Un-to the Iuge, in lecherye to liven,
 He gooth him hoom, and sette him in his halle,
 And leet anon his dere doghter calle,
 And, with a face deed as asshen colde,

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Upon hir humble face he gan biholde, 210
With fadres pitee stiking thurgh his herte,
Al wolde he from his purpos nat conuerte.

202. E. Hn. Cm. this; rest thus. 205. Hl. Cp. yiuen; rest yeuen.

'Doghter,' quod he, 'Virginia, by thy name,
Ther been two weyes, outhur deeth or shame,
That thou most suffre; allas! that I was bore! 215
For never thou deservedest wherfore
To dyen with a swerd or with a knyf.
O dere doghter, ender of my lyf,
Which I have fostred up with swich plesaunce,
That thou were never out of my remembraunce! 220
O doghter, which that art my laste wo,
And in my lyf my laste Ioye also,
O gemme of chastitee, in pacience
Take thou thy deeth, for this is my sentence.
For love and nat for hate, thou most be deed; 225
My pitous hand mot smyten of thyn heed.
Allas! that ever Apius thee say!
Thus hath he falsly Iuged thee to-day' —
And tolde hir al the cas, as ye bifore
Han herd; nat nedeth for to telle it more. 230

223. E. o; rest of.

'O mercy, dere fader,' quod this mayde,
And with that word she both hir armes layde
About his nekke, as she was wont to do:
The teres broste out of hir eyen two,
And seyde, 'gode fader, shal I dye? 235
Is ther no grace? is ther no remedye?'

234. E. Hn. teeris. E. bruste; Cm. broste; Pt. brosten; Hn. borste; Cp. Ln. barsten; Hl. brast.

'No, certes, dere doghter myn,' quod he.

'Thanne yif me leyser, fader myn,' quod she,
 'My deeth for to compleyne a litel space;
 For pardee, Iepte yaf his doghter grace 240
 For to compleyne, er he hir slow, allas!
 And god it woot, no-thing was hir trespas,
 But for she ran hir fader first to see,
 To welcome him with greet solempnitee.'
 And with that word she fil aswowne anon, 245
 And after, whan hir swowning is agon,
 She ryseth up, and to hir fader sayde,
 'Blessed be god, that I shal dye a mayde.
 Yif me my deeth, er that I have a shame;
 Doth with your child your wil, a goddes name!' 250

243. E. Hn. for; *rest* first. 248. E. Ln. Blissed; *rest* Blessed.

And with that word she preyed him ful ofte,
 That with his swerd he wolde smyte softe,
 And with that word aswowne doun she fil.
 Hir fader, with ful sorweful herte and wil,
 Hir heed of smoot, and by the top it hente, 255
 And to the Iuge he gan it to presente,
 As he sat yet in doom in consistorie.
 And whan the Iuge it saugh, as seith the storie,
 He bad to take him and anhange him faste.
 But right anon a thousand peple in thraste, 260
 To save the knight, for routhe and for pitee,
 For knowen was the false iniquitee.
 The peple anon hath suspect of this thing,
 By manere of the cherles chalanging,
 That it was by the assent of Apius; 265
 They wisten wel that he was lecherous.
 For which un-to this Apius they gon,
 And caste him in a prison right anon,
 Wher-as he slow him-self; and Claudius,
 That servant was un-to this Apius, 270
 Was demed for to hange upon a tree;
 But that Virginius, of his pitee,

So preyde for him that he was exyled;
And elles, certes, he had been bigyled.
The remenant were anhangyd, more and lesse, 275
That were consentant of this cursednesse.—

252. *All but* E. Hn. *ins.* hir *before* softe. 259. E. Hn. anchange; *rest* honge. 260. E. Hn. a thousand; *rest* al the. 263. E. of; *rest* in. 264. E. Hn. the cherles; *rest* this clerkes. 269. E. Hn. Ther; *rest* Wher. 271. E. And; *rest* Was. 275. E. Hn. Hl. anhangyd; *rest* honged.

Heer men may seen how sinne hath his meryte!
Beth war, for no man woot whom god wol smyte
In no degree, ne in which maner wyse
The worm of conscience may agryse 280
Of wikked lyf, though it so privee be,
That no man woot ther-of but god and he.
For be he lewed man, or elles lered,
He noot how sone that he shal been afered.
Therfore I rede yow this conseil take, 285
Forsaketh sinne, er sinne yow forsake.

HERE ENDETH THE PHISICIENS TALE.

278. E. Hn. whom; *rest* how. 280. E. Hn. may agryse; *rest* wol (wil) arise. 283. E. ellis. Cp. Ln. Whether he be lewed man or lered; *so* Pt. (*with* Where *for* Whether); *so* Hl. (*with* Wher that *for* Whether). Colophon. *So* E. Hn.; Sloane *has* Here endethe the tale of the Mayster of phisyk; Hl. Here endeth the Doctor of phisique his tale.

WORDS OF THE HOST.

THE WORDES OF THE HOST TO THE PHISICIEN AND THE
PARDONER.

Our Hoste gan to swere as he were wood,
'Harrow!' quod he, 'by nayles and by blood!.
This was a fals cherl and a fals lustyse!
As shamful deeth as herte may devyse 290
Come to thise Iuges and hir advocats!
Algate this sely mayde is slayn, alas!
Allas! to dere boghte she beautee!
Wherefore I seye al day, as men may see,
That yiftes of fortune or of nature 295
Ben cause of deeth to many a creature. (10)
Hir beautee was hir deeth, I dar wel sayn;
Allas! so pitously as she was slayn!
Of bothe yiftes that I speke of now
Men han ful ofte more harm than prow. 300
But trewely, myn owene mayster dere,
This is a pitous tale for to here.
But natheles, passe over, is no fors;
I prey to god, so save thy gentil cors,
And eek thyne urinals and thy Iordanes, 305
Thyn Ypocras, and eek thy Galianes, (20)
And every boist ful of thy letuarie;
God blesse hem, and our lady seinte Marie!
So mot I then, thou art a propre man,
And lyk a prelat, by saint Ronyan! 310
Seyde I nat wel? I can nat speke in terme;
But wel I woot, thou doost my herte to erme,
That I almost have caught a cardiale.
By corpus bones! but I have triacle,
Or elles a draught of moyste and corny ale, 315
Or but I here anon a mery tale, (30)
Myn herte is lost for pitee of this mayde.
Thou bel amy, thou Pardoner,' he seyde,

'Tel us som mirthe or Iapes right anon.'
 'It shall be doon,' quod he, 'by seint Ronyon! 320
 But first,' quod he, 'heer at this ale-stake
 I wol both drinke, and eten of a cake.'

Heading. So E. E. Hoost. 287. Ln. oste; *rest* hoost, ost. 290. E. shameful. 291, 292. So E. Hn. Pt.; *but* Cp. *has*—So falle vpon his body and his bones The deuyll I bekenne him al at ones; *so also* Ln. Hl. 291. E. (*alone*) *ins.* false *before* Iuges. E. Hn. Aduocat; Pt. aduocas. 295. E. Hn. and; *rest* or. 296. E. Hn. to; *rest* of. 297, 298. So Cp. Ln. Hl.; *rest omit these lines.* 300. E. Hn. for harm; *rest om.* for. 303. Hl. this is; *the rest omit* this. 305. Ln. Iordanes; Cp. Iurdanes; E. Hn. Iurdones. 306. Cp. Galianes; E. Hn. Galiones. 307. Hl. boist; E. Hn. boyste; Cp. Pt. Ln. box. 313. E. Hn. cardynacle(!). 322. eten of] Hl. byt on.

But right anon thise gentils gonne to crye,
 'Nay! lat him telle us of no ribaudye;
 Tel us som moral thing, that we may lere 325
 Som wit, and thanne wol we gladly here.' (40)
 'I graunte, y-wis,' quod he, 'but I mot thinke
 Up-on som honest thing, whyl that I drinke.

323. E. Hn. And; *the rest* But. 324. E. Hn. Cp. Hl. ribaudye; Ln. rebaudie; Pt. rybaudrye. 327. *For ll.* 326, 327, Hl. *has*—Gladly, quod he, and sayde as ye schal heere: But in the cuppe wil I me bethinke.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE PARDONERS TALE.

HERE FOLWETH THE PROLOGE OF THE PARDONERS TALE.

Radix malorum est Cupiditas: Ad Thimotheum, sexto.

‘Lordings,’ quod he, ‘in chirches whan I preche,
I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche, 330
And ringe it out as round as gooth a belle,
For I can al by rote that I telle.
My theme is alwey oon, and ever was —
“*Radix malorum est Cupiditas.*”

First I pronounce whennes that I come, 335
And than my bulles shewe I, alle and somme.
Our lige lordes seel on my patente,
That shewe I first, my body to warente, (10)
That no man be so bold, ne preest ne clerk,
Me to destourbe of Cristes holy werk; 340
And after that than telle I forth my tales,
Bulles of popes and of cardinales,
Of patriarkes, and bishoppes I shewe;
And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,
To saffron with my predicacioun, 345
And for to stire men to devocioun.
Than shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,
Y-crammed ful of cloutes and of bones; (20)
Reliks been they, as wenen they echoon.
Than have I in latoun a sholder-boon 350
Which that was of an holy Iewes shepe.
“Good men,” seye I, “tak of my wordes kepe;
If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,
If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle
That any worm hath ete, or worm y-stonge, 355
Tak water of that welle, and wash his tonge,
And it is hool anon; and forthermore,
Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every sore (30)

Shal every sheep be hool, that of this welle
 Drinketh a draughte; tak kepe eek what I telle. 360
 If that the good-man, that the bestes oweth,
 Wol every wike, er that the cok him croweth,
 Fastinge, drinken of this welle a draughte,
 As thilke holy Iewe our eldres taughte,
 His bestes and his stoor shal multiplie. 565
 And, sirs, also it heleth Ialousye;
 For, though a man be falle in Ialous rage,
 Let maken with this water his potage, (40)
 And never shal he more his wyf mistriste,
 Though he the sooth of hir defaute wiste; 370
 Al had she taken preestes two or three.

346. E. Hn. Hl. hem; *rest* men. 350. E. *omits I by accident*. 352. E. Hl. Pt. Ln. Good; E. Hn. Cp. Goode. Hn. I seye; *rest* say I, saie I. 366. E. Hn. sire; *rest* sires, sirs.

Heer is a miteyn eek, that ye may see.
 He that his hond wol putte in this miteyn,
 He shal have multiplying of his greyn,
 Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes, 375
 So that he offre pens, or elles grotes.

Good men and wommen, o thing warne I yow,
 If any wight be in this chirche now, (50)
 That hath doon sinne horrible, that he
 Dar nat, for shame, of it y-shriven be, 380
 Or any womman, be she yong or old,
 That hath y-maad hir housbond cokewold,
 Swich folk shul have no power ne no grace
 To offren to my reliks in this place.
 And who-so findeth him out of swich blame, 385
 He wol com up and offre in goddes name,
 And I assoille him by the auctoritee
 Which that by bulle y-graunted was to me." (60)

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377. E. Hn. Goode; *rest* And. 382. Cp. Ln. Hl. ymaad; Pt. made; E. Hn. ymaked. 385. E. fame; *rest* blame. 386. Hn. He; *rest* They. E. on; Hn. a; *rest* in. 387. E. Hl. hem; *rest* him or hym.

By this gaude have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
 An hundred mark sith I was Pardoner. 390
 I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
 And whan the lewed peple is doun y-set,
 I preche, so as ye han herd bifore,
 And telle an hundred false lapes more.
 Than peyne I me to strecche forth the nekke, 395
 And est and west upon the peple I bekke,
 As doth a dowve sitting on a berne.
 Myn hondes and my tonge goon so yerne, (70)
 That it is loye to see my bisnesse.
 Of avaryce and of swich cursednesse 400
 Is al my preching, for to make hem free
 To yeve her pens, and namely un-to me.
 For my entente is nat but for to winne,
 And no-thing for correccioun of sinne.
 I rekke never, whan that they ben beried, 405
 Though that her soules goon a-blakeberied!
 For certes, many a predicacioun
 Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun; (80)
 Som for plesaunce of folk and flaterye,
 To been avaunced by ipocrisye, 410
 And som for veyne glorie, and som for hate.
 For, whan I dar non other weyes debate,
 Than wol I stinge him with my tonge smerte
 In preching, so that he shal nat asterte
 To been defamed falsly, if that he 415
 Hath trespassed to my brethren or to me.
 For, though I telle noght his propre name,
 Men shal wel knowe that it is the same (90)
 By signes and by othere circumstances.
 Thus quyte I folk that doon us displesances; 420
 Thus spitte I out my venim under hewe
 Of holynesse, to seme holy and trewe.

395. the] Cm. myn; Cp. Ln. Hl. my. 405. E. Hl. *omit* that.

But shortly myn entente I wol devyse;
 I preche of no-thing but for coveityse.
 Therfor my theme is yet, and ever was— 425
"Radix malorum est cupiditas."
 Thus can I preche agayn that same vyce
 Which that I use, and that is avaryce. (100)
 But, though my-self be guilty in that sinne,
 Yet can I maken other folk to twinne 430
 From avaryce, and sore to repente.
 But that is nat my principal entente.
 I preche no-thing but for coveityse;
 Of this matere it oughte y-nogh suffyse.

425. E. Hn. theme; *rest* teme (teem).

Than telle I hem ensamples many oon 435
 Of olde stories, longe tyme agoon:
 For lewed peple loven tales olde;
 Swich thinges can they wel reporte and holde. (110)
 What? trowe ye, the whyles I may preche,
 And winne gold and silver for I teche, 440
 That I wol live in povert wilfully?
 Nay, nay, I thoghte it never trewely!
 For I wol preche and begge in sondry londes;
 I wol not do no labour with myn hondes,
 Ne make baskettes, and live therby, 445
 Because I wol nat beggen ydelly.
 I wol non of the apostles counterfete;
 I wol have money, wolle, chese, and whete, (120)
 Al were it yeven of the povrest page,
 Or of the povrest widwe in a village, 450
 Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.
 Nay! I wol drinke licour of the vyne,
 And have a Ioly wenche in every toun.
 But herkneth, lordings, in conclusioun;
 Your lyking is that I shal telle a tale. 455

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Now, have I dronke a draughte of corny ale,
By god, I hope I shal yow telle a thing
That shal, by resoun, been at your lyking. (130)
For, though myself be a ful vicious man,
A moral tale yet I yow telle can, 460
Which I am wont to preche, for to winne.
Now holde your pees, my tale I wol beginne.

439. E. Pt. the whiles; Cm. that whilis that; Cp. Ln. whiles that; Hl. whiles; Hn. that whiles. 449. Hl. prestes (*for* povrest).

THE PARDONERS TALE.

(*Numbered in continuation of the preceding.*)

HERE BIGINNETH THE PARDONERS TALE.

In Flaundres whylom was a companye
Of yonge folk, that haunteden folye,
As ryot, hasard, stewes, and tavernes, 465
Wher-as, with harpes, lutes, and giternes,
They daunce and pleye at dees bothe day and night,
And ete also and drinken over hir might, (140)
Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrificyse
With-in that develes temple, in cursed wyse, 470
By superfluitee abhominable;
Hir othes been so grete and so dampnable,
That it is grisly for to here hem swere;
Our blissed lordes body they to-tere;
Hem thoughte Iewes rente him nought y-nough; 475
And ech of hem at otheres sinne lough.
And right anon than comen tombesteres
Fetys and smale, and yonge fruytesteres, (150)
Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,
Whiche been the verray develes officeres 480
To kindle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
That is annexed un-to glotonye;
The holy writ take I to my witnesse,
That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.

Heading: *from* E. Hn. 465. E. Hl. stywes. 475. *So* Cp. Ln. Hl.; E. Hn. Cm. that Iewes; Pt. þe Iwes. 478, 479. Hl. *omits*.

Lo, how that dronken Loth, unkindely, 485
Lay by his doghtres two, unwitingly;
So dronke he was, he niste what he wroghte.

Herodes, (who-so wel the stories soghte), (160)

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Whan he of wyn was replet at his feste,
Right at his owene table he yaf his heste 490
To sleen the Baptist Iohn ful gileteles.

488. E. Hn. Cm. P. Hl. agree here; Cp. Ln. have two additional (spurious) lines; see note.

Senek seith eek a good word doutelees;
He seith, he can no difference finde
Bitwix a man that is out of his minde
And a man which that is dronkelewe, 495
But that woodnesse, y-fallen in a shrewe,
Persevereth lenger than doth dronkenesse.
O glotonye, ful of cursednesse, (170)
O cause first of our confusioun,
O original of our dampnacioun, 500
Til Crist had boght us with his blood agayn!
Lo, how dere, shortly for to sayn,
Aboght was thilke cursed vileinye;
Corrupt was al this world for glotonye!

492. Hl. Seneca (*for* Senek). Cp. Ln. eek; *rest omit.* 495. which that] Hl. the which; Cp. Pt. Ln. *om.* which. 496. E. Hl. fallen; Hn. Cm. y-fallen.

Adam our fader, and his wyf also, 505
Fro Paradys to labour and to wo
Were driven for that vyce, it is no drede;
For whyl that Adam fasted, as I rede, (180)
He was in Paradys; and whan that he
Eet of the fruyt defended on the tree, 510
Anon he was out-cast to wo and peyne.
O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne!
O, wiste a man how many maladyes
Folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,
He wolde been the more mesurable 515
Of his diete, sittinge at his table.
Allas! the shorte throte, the tendre mouth,
Maketh that, Est and West, and North and South, (190)

In erthe, in eir, in water men to-swinke
 To gete a glotoun deyntee mete and drinke! 520
 Of this matere, o Paul, wel canstow trete,
 'Mete un-to wombe, and wombe eek un-to mete,
 Shal god destroyen bothe,' as Paulus seith.
 Allas! a foul thing is it, by my feith,
 To seye this word, and fouler is the dede, 525
 Whan man so drinketh of the whyte and rede,
 That of his throte he maketh his privee,
 Thurgh thilke cursed superfluitee. (200)

519. E. Hl. man; *rest* men.

The apostel weping seith ful pitously,
 'Ther walken many of whiche yow told have I, 530
 I seye it now weping with pitous voys,
 That they been enemys of Cristes croys,
 Of whiche the ende is deeth, wombe is her god.'
 O wombe! O bely! O stinking cod,
 Fulfild of donge and of corrupcioun! 535
 At either ende of thee foul is the soun.
 How greet labour and cost is thee to finde!
 Thise cokes, how they stampe, and streyne, and grinde, (210)
 And turnen substaunce in-to accident,
 To fulfille al thy likerous talent! 540
 Out of the harde bones knocke they
 The mary, for they caste noght a-wey
 That may go thurgh the golet softe and swote;
 Of spicerye, of leef, and bark, and rote
 Shal been his sauce y-maked by delyt, 545
 To make him yet a newer appetyt.
 But certes, he that haunteth swich delyces
 Is deed, whyl that he liveth in tho vyces. (220)

532. That they is Tyrwhitt's *reading*; Hl. Thay; *but the rest have* Ther,
probably repeated by mistake from l. 530. 534. Hl. o stynking is thi cod.

A lecherous thing is wyn, and dronkenesse

Is ful of stryving and of wrecchednesse. 550
 O dronke man, disfigured is thy face,
 Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace,
 And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the soun
 As though thou seydest ay 'Sampsoun, Sampsoun';
 And yet, god wot, Sampsoun drank never no wyn. 555
 Thou fallest, as it were a stiked swyn;
 Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honest cure;
 For dronkenesse is verray sepulture (230)
 Of mannes wit and his discrecioun.
 In whom that drinke hath dominacioun, 560
 He can no conseil kepe, it is no drede.
 Now kepe yow fro the whyte and fro the rede,
 And namely fro the whyte wyn of Lepe,
 That is to selle in Fish-strete or in Chepe.
 This wyn of Spayne crepeth subtilly 565
 In othere wynes, growing faste by,
 Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee,
 That whan a man hath dronken draughtes three, (240)
 And weneth that he be at hoom in Chepe,
 He is in Spayne, right at the toune of Lepe, 570
 Nat at the Rochel, ne at Burdeux toun;
 And thanne wol he seye, 'Sampsoun, Sampsoun.'

But herkneth, lordings, o word, I yow preye,
 That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,
 Of victories in the olde testament, 575
 Thurgh verray god, that is omnipotent,
 Were doon in abstinence and in preyere;
 Loketh the Bible, and ther ye may it lere. (250)

573. E. lordes; *rest* lordinges, lordynges, lordyngs.

Loke, Attila, the grete conquerour,
 Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dishonour, 580
 Bledinge ay at his nose in dronkenesse;
 A capitayn shoulde live in sobrenesse.
 And over al this, avyseth yow right wel

What was comaunded un-to Lamuel—
 Nat Samuel, but Lamuel, seye I—- 585
 Redeth the Bible, and finde it expresly
 Of wyn-yeving to hem that han Iustyse.
 Na-more of this, for it may wel suffyse. (260)

And now that I have spoke of glotonye,
 Now wol I yow defenden hasardrye. 590
 Hasard is verray moder of lesinges,
 And of deceite, and cursed forsweringes,
 Blaspheme of Crist, manslaughtre, and wast also
 Of catel and of tyme; and forthermo,
 It is repreve and contrarie of honour 595
 For to ben holde a commune hasardour.
 And ever the hyër he is of estaat,
 The more is he holden desolaat. (270)
 If that a prince useth hasardrye,
 In alle governaunce and policye 600
 He is, as by commune opinoun,
 Y-holde the lasse in reputacioun.

589. E. Hl. *omit* that. 593. E. Blasphemying; *rest* Blaspheme.

Stilbon, that was a wys embassadour,
 Was sent to Corinthe, in ful greet honour,
 Fro Lacidomie, to make hir alliaunce. 605
 And whan he cam, him happede, par chaunce,
 That alle the grettest that were of that lond,
 Pleyinge atte hasard he hem fond. (280)
 For which, as sone as it mighte be,
 He stal him hoom agayn to his contree, 610
 And seyde, 'ther wol I nat lese my name;
 Ne I wol nat take on me so greet defame,
 Yow for to allye un-to none hasardours.
 Sendeth othere wyse embassadours;
 For, by my trouthe, me were lever dye, 615
 Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye.
 For ye that been so glorious in honours

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Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours (290)
 As by my wil, ne as by my tretee.'
 This wyse philosophre thus seyde he. 620

606. Cm. Cp. Hl. happede; *rest* happed. 612. Hn. Ny; Cm. Nay (*both put for Ne I*) *which shews the scansion*. Hl. I nyl not. 614. *So all*.

Loke eek that, to the king Demetrius
 The king of Parthes, as the book seith us,
 Sente him a paire of dees of gold in scorn,
 For he hadde used hasard ther-biforn;
 For which he heeld his glorie or his renoun 625
 At no value or reputacioun.
 Lordes may finden other maner pley
 Honeste y-nough to dryve the day away. (300)

621. E. Ln. Hl. *omit* to.

Now wol I speke of othes false and grete
 A word or two, as olde bokes trete. 630
 Gret swering is a thing abhominable,
 And false swering is yet more reprevable.
 The heighe god forbad swering at al,
 Witnesse on Mathew; but in special
 Of swering seith the holy Ieremye, 635
 'Thou shalt seye sooth thyn othes, and nat lye,
 And swere in dome, and eek in rightwisnesse;'
 But ydel swering is a cursednesse. (310)
 Bihold and see, that in the firste table
 Of heighe goddes hestes honorable, 640
 How that the seconde heste of him is this—
 'Tak nat my name in ydel or amis.'
 Lo, rather he forbedeth swich swering
 Than homicyde or many a cursed thing;
 I seye that, as by ordre, thus it stondeth; 645
 This knowen, that his hestes understondeth,
 How that the second heste of god is that.
 And forther over, I wol thee telle al plat, (320)

That vengeance shal nat parten from his hous,
 That of his othes is to outrageous. 650
 'By goddes precious herte, and by his nayles,
 And by the blode of Crist, that it is in Hayles,
 Seven is my chaunce, and thyn is cink and treye;
 By goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,
 This dagger shal thurgh-out thyn herte go' — 655
 This fruyt cometh of the bicched bones two,
 Forswering, ire, falsnesse, homicyde.
 Now, for the love of Crist that for us dyde, (330)
 Leveth your othes, bothe grete and smale;
 But, sirs, now wol I telle forth my tale. 660

632. Cp. Ln. Hl. *om.* yet. 644. Hn. Cm. Hl. many a.; E. any; Cp. Pt. Ln.
 eny other. 656. Hl. bicchid; Ln. becched; Hn. Cm. bicche; Pt. thilk.
 659. E. Hn. Lete; *rest* Leueth.

Thise ryotoures three, of whiche I telle,
 Longe erst er pryme rong of any belle,
 Were set hem in a taverne for to drinke;
 And as they satte, they herde a belle clinke
 Biforn a cors, was caried to his grave; 665
 That oon of hem gan callen to his knave,
 'Go bet,' quod he, 'and axe redily,
 What cors is this that passeth heer forby; (340)
 And look that thou reporte his name wel.'

661. E. Hn. Pt. Hl. riotours. 663. Cp. Pt. Hl. for; *rest om.*

'Sir,' quod this boy, 'it nedeth never-a-del. 670
 It was me told, er ye cam heer, two houres;
 He was, pardee, an old felawe of youre;
 And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-night,
 For-dronke, as he sat on his bench upright;
 Ther cam a privee theef, men clepeth Deeth, 675
 That in this contree al the peple sleeth,
 And with his spere he smoot his herte a-two,
 And wente his wey with-uten wordes mo. (350)

He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence:
 And, maister, er ye come in his presence, 680
 Me thinketh that it were necessarie
 For to be war of swich an adversarie:
 Beth redy for to mete him evermore.
 Thus taughte me my dame, I sey na-more.'
 'By seinte Marie,' seyde this taverner, 685
 'The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this yeer,
 Henne over a myle, with-in a greet village,
 Both man and womman, child and hyne, and page. (360)
 I trowe his habitacioun be there;
 To been avysed greet wisdom it were, 690
 Er that he dide a man a dishonour.'
 'Ye, goddes armes,' quod this ryotour,
 'Is it swich peril with him for to mete?
 I shal him seke by wey and eek by strete,
 I make avow to goddes digne bones! 695
 Herkneth, felawes, we three been al ones;
 Lat ech of us holde up his hond til other, (370)
 And ech of us bicomen otheres brother,
 And we wol sleen this false traytour Deeth;
 He shal be slayn, which that so many sleeth, 700
 By goddes dignitee, er it be night.'

Togidres han thise three her trouthes plight,
 To live and dyen ech of hem for other,
 As though he were his owene y-boren brother.
 And up they sterte al dronken, in this rage, 705
 And forth they goon towardses that village,
 Of which the taverner had spoke biforn,
 And many a grisly ooth than han they sworn, (380)
 And Cristes blessed body they to-rente—
 'Deeth shal be deed, if that they may him hente.' 710

704. E. yborn; Hn. ybore; Cm. bore; Pt. born; Cp. Ln. Hl. sworne. 705.
 E. Hn. stirte. Hn. Cp. Ln. Hl. al; E. Cm. Pt. and. 710. they] Cp. Pt. Ln.
 we.

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Whan they han goon nat fully half a myle,
Right as they wolde han troden over a style,
An old man and a povre with hem mette.
This olde man ful mekely hem grette,
And seyde thus, 'now, lordes, god yow see!' 715

The proudest of thise ryotoures three
Answerde agayn, 'what? carl, with sory grace,
Why artow al forwrapped save thy face? (390)
Why livestow so longe in so greet age?'

This olde man gan loken in his visage, 720
And seyde thus, 'for I ne can nat finde
A man, though that I walked in-to Inde,
Neither in citee nor in no village,
That wolde chaunge his youthe for myn age;
And therefore moot I han myn age stille, 725
As longe time as it is goddes wille.

Ne deeth, allas! ne wol nat han my lyf;
Thus walke I, lyk a resteleees caityf, (400)
And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and late, 730
And seye, "leve moder, leet me in!
Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin!
Allas! whan shul my bones been at reste?
Moder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste,
That in my chambre longe tyme hath be, 735
Ye! for an heyre clout to wrappe me!"
But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,
For which ful pale and welked is my face. (410)

But, sirs, to yow it is no curteisye
To speken to an old man vileinye, 740
But he trespasse in worde, or elles in dede.
In holy writ ye may your-self wel rede,
"Agayns an old man, hoor upon his heed,
Ye sholde aryse;" wherfor I yeve yow reed,

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Ne dooth un-to an old man noon harm now, 745
 Na-more than ye wolde men dide to yow
 In age, if that ye so longe abyde;
 And god be with yow, wher ye go or ryde. (420)
 I moot go thider as I have to go.'

746. E. Hn. than that; *rest omit* that.

'Nay, olde cherl, by god, thou shall nat so,' 750
 Seyde this other hasardour anon;
 'Thou partest nat so lightly, by seint Iohn!
 Thou spak right now of thilke traitour Deeth,
 That in this contree alle our frendes sleeth.
 Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his aspye, 755
 Tel wher he is, or thou shalt it abyde,
 By god, and by the holy sacrament!
 For soothly thou art oon of his assent, (430)
 To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theef!'

'Now, sirs,' quod he, 'if that yow be so leef 760
 To finde Deeth, turne up this croked wey,
 For in that grove I lafte him, by my fey,
 Under a tree, and ther he wol abyde;
 Nat for your boost he wol him no-thing hyde.
 See ye that ook? right ther ye shul him finde. 765
 God save yow, that boghte agayn mankinde,
 And yow amende!' — thus seyde this olde man.
 And everich of thise ryotoures ran, (440)
 Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde
 Of florins fyne of golde y-coyned rounde 770
 Wel ny an eighte busshels, as hem thoughte.
 No lenger thanne after Deeth they soughte,
 But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
 For that the florins been so faire and brighte,
 That doun they sette hem by this precious hord. 775
 The worste of hem he spake the firste word.

760. E. Cm. ye; Hn. Hl. yow.

'Brethren,' quod he, 'tak kepe what I seye;
 My wit is greet, though that I bourde and pleye. (450)
 This tresor hath fortune un-to us yiven,
 In mirthe and Iolitee our lyf to liven, 780
 And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende.
 Ey! goddes precious dignitee! who wende
 To-day, that we sholde han so fair a grace?
 But mighte this gold be caried fro this place
 Hoom to myn hous, or elles un-to youres— 785
 For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures—
 Than were we in heigh felicitee.
 But trewely, by daye it may nat be; (460)
 Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge,
 And for our owene tresor doon us honge. 790
 This tresor moste y-caried be by nighte
 As wysly and as slyly as it mighte.
 Wherefore I rede that cut among us alle
 Be drawe, and lat se wher the cut wol falle;
 And he that hath the cut with herte blythe 795
 Shal renne to the toune, and that ful swythe,
 And bringe us breed and wyn ful prively.
 And two of us shul kepen subtilly (470)
 This tresor wel; and, if he wol nat tarie,
 Whan it is night, we wol this tresor carie 800
 By oon assent, wher-as us thinketh best.'
 That oon of hem the cut broughte in his fest,
 And bad hem drawe, and loke wher it wol falle;
 And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle;
 And forth toward the toun he wente anon. 805
 And al-so sone as that he was gon,
 That oon of hem spak thus un-to that other,
 'Thou knowest wel thou art my sworne brother, (480)
 Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
 Thou woost wel that our felawe is agon; 810
 And heer is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
 That shal departed been among us three.
 But natheles, if I can shape it so
 That it departed were among us two,

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Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to thee?' 815

779. E. Hn. Pt. Ln. yeuen. 780. E. Ioliftee. 796. Hl. Ln. the; *rest omit*.
803. E. hym; *rest* hem. E. Hn. Cp. wol; Hl. wil; Cm. Pt. Ln. wolde. 807.
E. *omits* of hem. 808. E. Hn. Pt. sworn; Cm. swore: Cp. Ln. Hl.
sworne.

That other answerde, 'I noot how that may be;
He woot how that the gold is with us tweye,
What shal we doon, what shal we to him seye?' (490)

'Shal it be conseil?' seyde the firste shrewe,
'And I shal tellen thee, in wordes fewe, 820
What we shal doon, and bringe it wel aboute.'

820. Hl. the (=thee); *rest omit*. E. Hn. Cm. in a; *rest omit* a.

'I graunte,' quod that other, 'out of doute,
That, by my trouthe, I wol thee nat biwreye.'

823. E. shal; *rest* wol (wil, wyl).

'Now,' quod the firste, 'thou woost wel we be tweye,
And two of us shul strengre be than oon. 825
Look whan that he is set, and right anon
Arys, as though thou woldest with him pleye;
And I shal ryve him thurgh the sydes tweye (500)
Whyl that thou strogelest with him as in game,
And with thy dagger look thou do the same; 830
And than shal al this gold departed be,
My dere freend, bitwixen me and thee;
Than may we bothe our lustes al fulfille,
And pleye at dees right at our owene wille.'
And thus acorded been thise shrewes tweye 835
To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.

826. E. Hn. Cm. that right; Cp. and thanne; Pt. Ln. Hl. and that. *I take*
and *from* Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl., and right *from* E. Hn. Cm.

This yongest, which that wente un-to the toun,
 Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and doun (510)
 The beautee of thise florins newe and brighte.
 'O lord!' quod he, 'if so were that I mighte 840
 Have al this tresor to my-self allone,
 Ther is no man that liveth under the trone
 Of god, that sholde live so mery as I!
 And atte laste the feend, our enemy,
 Putte in his thought that he shold poyson beye, 845
 With which he mighte sleen his felawes tweye;
 For-why the feend fond him in swich lyvinge,
 That he had leve him to sorwe bringe, (520)
 For this was outrely his fulle entente
 To sleen hem bothe, and never to repente. 850
 And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,
 Into the toun, un-to a pothecarie,
 And preyed him, that he him wolde selle
 Som poyson, that he mighte his rattes quelle;
 And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe, 855
 That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde y-slawe,
 And fayn he wolde wreke him, if he mighte,
 On vermin, that destroyed him by nighte. (530)

847. E. Hn. foond. 848. E. Cm. hem; *rest* hym or him. 853. Hn. preyed;
 Cm. preyede; *rest* preyde.

The pothecarie answerde, 'and thou shalt have
 A thing that, al-so god my soule save, 860
 In al this world ther nis no creature,
 That ete or dronke hath of this confiture
 Noght but the mountance of a corn of whete,
 That he ne shal his lyf anon forlete;
 Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lasse whyle 865
 Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a myle;
 This poyson is so strong and violent.'

861. E. Hn. Cm. is; *rest* nys or nis.

This cursed man hath in his hond y-hent (540)
This poyson in a box, and sith he ran
In-to the nexte strete, un-to a man, 870
And borwed [of] him large botels three;
And in the two his poyson poured he;
The thridde he kepte clene for his drinke.
For al the night he shoop him for to swinke
In carynge of the gold out of that place. 875
And whan this ryotour, with sory grace,
Had filled with wyn his grete botels three,
To his felawes agayn repaireth he. (550)

871. *All omit of.* 873. *E. his owene; rest omit owene.*

What nedeth it to sermone of it more?
For right as they had cast his deeth bifore, 880
Right so they han him slayn, and that anon.
And whan that this was doon, thus spak that oon,
'Now lat us sitte and drinke, and make us merie,
And afterward we wol his body berie.'
And with that word it happed him, par cas, 885
To take the botel ther the poyson was,
And drank, and yaf his felawe drinke also,
For which anon they storven bothe two. (560)

880. *E. so as; rest omit so.*

But, certes, I suppose that Avicen
Wroot never in no canon, ne in no fen, 890
Mo wonder signes of empoisoning
Than hadde these wrecches two, er hir ending.
Thus ended been these homicydes two,
And eek the false empoysoner also.

891. *E. Hn. Cm. signes; Cp. Ln. Hl. sorwes; Pt. sorowes.*

O cursed sinne, ful of cursednesse! 895
O traytours homicyde, o wikkednesse!

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O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye!
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileinye (570)
And othes grete, of usage and of pryde!
Allas! mankinde, how may it bityde, 900
That to thy creatour which that thee wroghte,
And with his precious herte-blood thee boghte,
Thou art so fals and so unkinde, alas!

895. E. Hn. Cm. of alle; Cp. Ln. Hl. ful of; Pt. ful of al.

Now, goode men, god forgeve yow your trespas,
And ware yow fro the sinne of avaryce. 905
Myn holy pardoun may yow alle waryce,
So that ye offre nobles or sterlinges,
Or elles silver broches, spones, ringes. (580)
Boweth your heed under this holy bulle!
Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of your wolles! 910
Your name I entre heer in my rolle anon;
In-to the blisse of hevene shul ye gon;
I yow assoile, by myn heigh power,
Yow that wol offre, as clene and eek as cleer
As ye were born; and, lo, sirs, thus I preche. 915
And Iesu Crist, that is our soules leche,
So graunte yow his pardon to receyve;
For that is best; I wol yow nat deceyve. (590)

910. E. Com; *rest* Cometh, Comyth. 911. E. Hl. names; *rest* name.

But sirs, o word forgat I in my tale,
I have relikes and pardon in my male, 920
As faire as any man in Engelond,
Whiche were me yeven by the popes hond.
If any of yow wol, of devocioun,
Offren, and han myn absolucioun,
Cometh forth anon, and kneleth heer adoun, 925
And mekely receyveth my pardoun:
Or elles, taketh pardon as ye wende,
Al newe and fresh, at every tounes ende, (600)

So that ye offren alwey newe and newe
 Nobles and pens, which that be gode and trewe. 930
 It is an honour to everich that is heer,
 That ye mowe have a suffisant pardoneer
 Tassoille yow, in contree as ye ryde,
 For aventures which that may bityde.
 Peraventure ther may falle oon or two 935
 Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke atwo.
 Look which a seuretee is it to yow alle
 That I am in your felaweship y-falle, (610)
 That may assoille yow, bothe more and lasse,
 Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe, 940
 I rede that our hoste heer shal biginne,
 For he is most envoluped in sinne.
 Com forth, sir hoste, and offre first anon,
 And thou shalt kisse the reliks everichon,
 Ye, for a grote! unbokel anon thy purs.' 945

925. E. Hn. Com; *rest* Cometh, Comyth. 928. E. Hn. Cm. myles; *rest* tounes. 930. E. Hn. or; *rest* and. 935. E. fallen. 941. E. Cm. heere; *rest* om. 944. E. my; Cm. myne; *rest* the.

'Nay, nay,' quod he, 'than have I Cristes curs!
 Lat be,' quod he, 'it shal nat be, so theeche!
 Thou woldest make me kisse thyn old breech, (620)
 And swere it were a relik of a seint,
 Thogh it were with thy fundement depeint! 950
 But by the croys which that seint Eleyne fond,
 I wolde I hadde thy coillons in myn hond
 In stede of relikes or of seintuarie;
 Lat cutte hem of, I wol thee helpe hem carie;
 Thay shul be shryned in an hogges tord.' 955

947. Hn. thee ich; *rest* theeche. 954. Cp. Ln. the helpe; Pt. Hl. helpe; E. with thee; Cm. from the; Hn. thee.

This pardoner answerde nat a word;
 So wrooth he was, no word ne wolde he seye.

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'Now,' quod our host, 'I wol no lenger pleye (630)
With thee, ne with noon other angry man.'
But right anon the worthy knight bigan, 960
Whan that he saugh that al the peple lough,
'Na-more of this, for it is right y-nough;
Sir pardoner, be glad and mery of chere;
And ye, sir host, that been to me so dere,
I prey yow that ye kisse the pardoner. 965
And pardoner, I prey thee, drawe thee neer,
And, as we diden, lat us laughe and pleye.' (639)
Anon they kiste, and riden forth hir weye. [T. 12902.

HERE IS ENDED THE PARDONERS TALE.

(For T. 12903, see p. 165).

Colophon. *From* E. Hn.; Hl. Here endeth the pardoneres tale.

APPENDIX TO GROUP A.

THE TALE OF GAMELYN.

Litheth, and lesteneth · and herkeneth aright,
And ye schulle heere a talking · of a doughty knight;
Sire Iohan of Boundys · was his righte name,
He cowde of norture y-nough · and mochil of game.
Thre sones the knight hadde · that with his body he wan; 5
The eldest was a moche schrewe · and sone he bigan.
His bretheren loved wel here fader · and of him were agast,
The eldest deserved his fadres curs · and had it at the last.
The goode knight his fader · livede so yore,
That deth was comen him to · and handled him ful sore. 10
The goode knight cared sore · syk ther he lay,
How his children scholde · liven after his day.
He hadde ben wyde-wher · but non housbond he was,
Al the lond that he hadde · it was verrey purchas.
Fayn he wolde it were · dressed among hem alle, 15
That ech of hem hadde his part · as it mighte falle.
Tho sente he in-to cuntre · after wyse knightes,
To helpe delen his londes · and dresen hem to-rightes.
He sente hem word by lettres · they schulden hye blyve,
If they wolde speke with him · whyl he was on lyve. 20

N.B.—Hl.=Harleian MS. no. 7334 (*taken as the foundation of the text*); Harl.=Harleian MS. no. 1758; Cp.=MS. Corp. Chr. Coll. Oxford; Ln.=Lansdowne MS. no. 851; Pt.=Petworth MS.; Rl.=MS. Royal 18 c.ii; Sl.=MS. Sloane, no. 1685. *Note that Cp. and Ln. are next in value to Hl., and often agree with it as against the rest.*

1. Cp. lesteneth; Sl. Ln. listeneth; Hl. lestneth. Cp. herkeneth; Rl. Sl. herkenyth; Hl. herkneth. 2. Cp. schulle; Ln. schullen; Hl. schul. Hl. a talkyng; *rest om.* 3. Hl. right; *rest om.*; *read* righte. 4. Hl. ynough; *rest om.* 5. Cp. hadde; Rl. Sl. Pt. Ln. had; Hl. *om.* 14. Cp. Rl. hadde; Hl. had (*and in l. 16*). 15. Cp. Ln. wolde; Hl. wold. Hl. amonges; *rest among*;

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see l. 36. 16. Hl. might. 17. Cp. Sl. Rl. Pt. Ln. sente; Hl. sent. *So in l. 19, where the MSS. wrongly have sent.*

Tho the knightes herden · syk that he lay,
Hadde they no reste · nother night ne day,
Til they comen to him · ther he lay stille
On his deth-bedde · to abyde goddes wille.
Than seyde the goode knight · syk ther he lay, 25
'Lordes, I you warne · for soth, withoute nay,
I may no lenger liven · heer in this stounde;
For thurgh goddes wille · deth draweth me to grounde.'
Ther nas non of hem alle · that herde him aright,
That they ne hadden reuthe · of that ilke knight, 30
And seyde, 'sir, for goddes love · ne dismay you nought;
God may do bote of bale · that is now y-wrought.'

21. Hl. ther; *rest* that. 27. Hl. Cp. lengere; Ln, longer; *rest* lenger. 29. Sl. Cp. Ln. herde; Hl. herd. 30. Harl. Pt. ne; *rest om.*

Than spak the goode knight · syk ther he lay,
'Boote of bale god may sende · I wot it is no nay;
But I byseke you, knightes · for the love of me, 35
Goth and dresseth my lond · among my sones three.
And sires, for the love of god · deleth hem nat amis,
And forgetith nat Gamelyn · my yonge sone that is.
Taketh heed to that on · as wel as to that other;
Selde ye see ony eyr · helpen his brother.' 40

36. Hl. thre. 37. Hl. And sires; *rest om.* sires.

Tho leete they the knight lyen · that was nought in hele,
And wenten in-to counsel · his londes for to dele;
For to delen hem alle · to oon, that was her thought,
And for Gamelyn was yongest · he schulde have nought.
Al the lond that ther was · they dalten it in two, 45
And leeten Gamelyn the yonge · withoute londe go,
And ech of hem seyde · to other ful lowde,
His bretheren mighte yeve him lond · whan he good cowde.

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Whan they hadde deled · the lond at here wille,
They comen ayein to the knight · ther he lay ful stille, 50
And tolden him anon-right · how they hadden wrought;
And the knight ther he lay · lyked it right nought.
Than seyde the knight · ‘by seynt Martyn,
For al that ye have y-doon · yit is the lond myn;
For goddes love, neyhebour · stondeth alle stille, 55
And I wil dele my lond · right after my wille.
Iohan, myn eldeste sone · schal have plowes fyve,
That was my fadres heritage · whyl he was on lyve;
And my middeleste sone · fyve plowes of lond,
That I halp for to gete · with my righte hond; 60
And al myn other purchas · of londes and leedes,
That I biquethe Gamelyn · and alle my goode steedes.
And I biseke yow, goode men · that lawe conne of londe,
For Gamelynes love · that my queste stonde.’
Thus dalte the knight · his lond by his day, 65
Right on his deth-bedde · syk ther he lay;
And sone aftirward · he lay stoon-stille,
And deyde whan tyme com · as it was Cristes wille.
And anon as he was deed · and under gras y-grave,
Sone the elder brother · gyled the yonge knave; 70
He took into his hond · his lond and his leede,
And Gamelyn himselfe · to clothen and to feede.
He clothed him and fedde him · yvel and eek wrothe,
And leet his londes for-fare · and his houses bothe,
His parkes and his woodes · and dede nothing wel; 75
And seththen he it abouthte · on his faire fel.
So longe was Gamelyn · in his brotheres halle,
For the strengest, of good wil · they doutiden him alle;
Ther was non ther-inne · nowther yong ne old,
That wolde wraththe Gamelyn · were he never so bold. 80
Gamelyn stood on a day · in his brotheres yerde,
And bigan with his hond · to handlen his berde;
He thoughte on his londes · that layen unsawe,
And his faire okes · that down were y-drawe;
His parkes were y-broken · and his deer bireved; 85
Of alle his goode steedes · noon was him bileved;

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His howses were unhiled · and ful yvel dight;
Tho thoughte Gamelyn · it wente nought aright.
Afterward cam his brother · walkinge thare,
And seyde to Gamelyn · ‘is our mete yare?’ 90
Tho wraththed him Gamelyn · and swor by goddes book,
‘Thou schalt go bake thy-self · I wil nought be thy cook!’
‘How? brother Gamelyn · how answerest thou now?
Thou spake never such a word · as thou dost now.’
‘By my faith,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘now me thinketh neede, 95
Of alle the harmes that I have · I tok never ar heede.
My parkes ben to-broken · and my deer bireved,
Of myn armure and my steedes · nought is me bileved;
Al that my fader me biquath · al goth to schame,
And therfor have thou goddes curs · brother by thy name!’ 100
Than bispak his brother · that rape was of rees,
‘Stond stille, gadeling · and hold right thy pees;
Thou schalt be fayn for to have · thy mete and thy wede;
What spekest thou, Gamelyn · of lond other of leede?’
Thanne seyde Gamelyn · the child that was ying, 105
‘Cristes curs mot he have · that clepeth me gadeling!
I am no worse gadeling · ne no worse wight,
But born of a lady · and geten of a knight.’
Ne durste he nat to Gamelyn · ner a-foote go,
But clepide to him his men · and seyde to hem tho, 110
‘Goth and beteth this boy · and reveth him his wit,
And lat him lerne another tyme · to answeere me bet.’
Thanne seyde the child · yonge Gamelyn,
‘Cristes curs mot thou have · brother art thou myn!
And if I schal algate · be beten anon, 115
Cristes curs mot thou have · but thou be that oon!’
And anon his brother · in that grete hete
Made his men to fette staves · Gamelyn to bete.
Whan that everich of hem · a staf hadde y-nome,
Gamelyn was war anon · tho he seigh hem come; 120
Tho Gamelyn seigh hem come · he lokod over-al,
And was war of a pestel · stood under a wal;
Gamelyn was light of foot · and thider gan he lepe,
And drof alle his brotheres men · right on an hepe.

He loked as a wilde lyoun · and leyde on good woon; 125
 Tho his brother say that · he bigan to goon;
 He fley up in-til a loft · and schette the dore fast;
 Thus Gamelyn with the pestel · made hem alle agast.
 Some for Gamelynes love · and some for his eye,
 Alle they drowe by halves · tho he gan to pleye. 130
 ‘What! how now?’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘evel mot ye thee!
 Wil ye biginne contek · and so sone flee?’
 Gamelyn soughte his brother · whider he was flowe,
 And saugh wher he loked · out at a windowe.
 ‘Brother,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘com a litel ner, 135
 And I wil teche thee a play · atte bokeler.’
 His brother him answerde · and swor by seynt Richer,
 ‘Why! the pestel is in thin hond · I wil come no neer:
 Brother, I wil make thy pees · I swere by Cristes ore;
 Cast away the pestel · and wraththe thee no-more.’ 140
 ‘I mot neede,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘wraththe me at oones,
 For thou wolde make thy men · to breke myne boones,
 Ne hadde I had mayn · and might in myn armes,
 To have y-put hem fro me · they wolde have do me harmes.’
 ‘Gamelyn,’ sayde his brother · ‘be thou nought wroth, 145
 For to seen thee have harm · it were me right loth;
 I ne dide it nought, brother · but for a fondering,
 For to loken if thou were strong · and art so ying.’
 ‘Com a-doun than to me · and graunte me my bone
 Of thing I wil thee aske · and we schul saughte sone.’ 150
 Doun than cam his brother · that fikil was and fel,
 And was swithe sore · agast of the pestel.
 He seyde, ‘brother Gamelyn · aske me thy boone,
 And loke thou me blame · but I graunte sone.’
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · ‘brother, y-wis, 155
 And we schulle ben at oon · thou most me graunte this:
 Al that my fader me biquath · why! he was on lyve,
 Thou most do me it have · yif we schul nat stryve.’
 ‘That schalt thou have, Gamelyn · I swere by Cristes ore!
 Al that thy fader thee biquath · though thou woldest have more; 160
 Thy lond, that lyth laye · ful wel it schal be sowe,
 And thyn howses reysed up · that ben leyd so lowe.’

Thus seyde the knight · to Gamelyn with mowthe,
 And thoughte eek of falsnes · as he wel couthe.
 The knight thoughte on tresoun · and Gamelyn on noon, 165
 And wente and kiste his brother · and, whan they were at oon,
 Allas! yonge Gamelyn · nothing he ne wiste
 With which a false tresoun · his brother him kiste!

44. Hl. schuld; Cp. scholde. 46. Pt. londe; Ln. lande; *rest* lond. 48. Hl. might; *read* mighte. 50. Hl. come aȝein; *rest omit* aȝein, and *read* comen, camen, commen. 51. Hl. anon right; *rest* anon, anoon. 56. Hl. Pt. *om.* right. 59. Hl. fyf; *rest* fyue; *see l.* 57. 60. *Read* righte; MSS. right. 61. Ln. and of ledes. 64. Cp. bequeste. 66. Hl. bed; Cp. bedde; *see l.* 24. 69. Hl. And anon; *rest om.* And. 71. Hl. as his (*for* and his). 73. Hl. fed; *rest* fedde. 76. Cp. aboughte; Ln. abouhte; *rest* abought, abowght. 79, 80. Rl. Sl. old, bold; *rest* olde, bolde. 83. Ln. pouhte; *rest om.* the *final e*; *see l.* 88. 85. Hl. byreeued; *rest om.* by-. 103. Rl. Sl. Pt. Harl. *om.* for. 109. Hl. durst; Cp. durste; Ln. dorste. 112. Cp. lere; Hl. Ln. leren; *rest* lerne. 119. Hl. a staf had; *rest* hadde (had) a staf. 120. Hl. anon; *rest om.* 121. Hl. seyh. 123. Hl. of foot; *rest om.* 124. Hl. Ln. on; *rest* sone on. 128. Hl. the; *rest* his. 129, 130. Hl. eyȝe, pleyȝe; *rest* eye, pleye. 131. Hl. how; *rest om.* 133. MSS. *omit final e in* soughte. 137. Hl. Rycher. 138. Hl. Whil. 140, 146, 150, &c. Hl. the. 143. Cp. hadde I had; Hl. had I hadde. 144. Hl. he; *rest* thei. 148. Harl. Ln. if; Pt. wher; *rest* or. 150. Hl. Cp. Ln. Of; Harl. Of oo; Rl. Of a; Sl. Of o; Pt. Of oon. 151, 152. Ln. fel, pestel; *rest* felle, pestelle. 154. Hl. I; *rest* I it. 157. Hl. whil. 161. Hl. Cp. laye; Rl. leie; Sl. leye; Pt. Ln. ley. 164. Cp. pouhte; *rest om.* *final e*. Hl. eek; *rest om.* Hl. Cp. Ln. of; *rest* on. 165. *For* knight, Hl. *wrongly* has king. MSS. *omit e in* thoughte. 166. Pt. Harl. wente; *rest* went. Hl. kist; *rest* kissed; *see l.* 168.

Litheth, and lesteneth · and holdeth your tonge,
 And ye schul heere talking · of Gamelyn the yonge. 170
 Ther was ther bisyden · cryed a wrastling,
 And therfor ther was set up · a ram and a ring;
 And Gamelyn was in good wil · to wende therto,
 For to preven his might · what he cowthe do.
 'Brother,' seyde Gamelyn · 'by seynt Richer, 175
 Thou most lene me to-night · a litel courser

That is freisch to the spore · on for to ryde;
 I most on an erande · a litel her bisyde.
 'By god!' seyde his brother · 'of steedes in my stalle
 Go and chese thee the best · and spare non of alle 180
 Of steedes or of coursers · that stonden hem bisyde;
 And tel me, goode brother · whider thou wolt ryde.'

169. Rl. lysteneth; Cp. lesteneth; Pt. listeneth; Hl. lestneth. 171. Hl. wrastlyng; Cp. wrasteling; Rl. wrastelynge; Pt. wrastelinge. 172. Hl. sette (*wrongly*); *see l.* 184. 173. Hl. good wil; Ln. wil; *rest wille*. 177. Hl. Pt. spore; *rest spores*. 178. Hl. byside; *so in* 183. 179. Hl. seyde; *rest have final e*. 180. Hl. the the. 181. *For* coursers, Hl. *wrongly has* course.

'Her bisyde, brother · is cryed a wrastling,
 And therfor schal be set up · a ram and a ring;
 Moche worschip it were · brother, to us alle, 185
 Might I the ram and the ring · bring home to this halle.'
 A steede ther was sadeled · smertely and skeet;
 Gamelyn did a paire spores · fast on his feet.
 He sette his foot in the styrop · the steede he bistrood,
 And toward the wrasteling · the yonge child rood. 190
 Tho Gamelyn the yonge · was ride out at the gat,
 The false knight his brother · lokked it after that,
 And bisoughte Iesu Crist · that is heven king,
 He mighte breke his nekke · in that wrasteling.
 As sone as Gamelyn com · ther the place was, 195
 He lighte doun of his steede · and stood on the gras,
 And ther he herd a frankeleyn · wayloway singe,
 And bigan bitterly · his hondes for to wringe.
 'Goode man,' seyde Gamelyn · 'why makestow this fare?
 Is ther no man that may · you helpe out of this care?' 200
 'Allas!' seyde this frankeleyn · 'that ever was I bore!
 For tweye stalworthe sones · I wene that I have lore;
 A champioun is in the place · that hath y-wrought me sorwe,
 For he hath slayn my two sones · but-if god hem borwe.
 I wold yeve ten pound · by Iesu Crist! and more, 205
 With the nones I fand a man · to handelen him sore.'
 'Goode man,' sayde Gamelyn · 'wilt thou wel doon,

Hold myn hors, whyl my man · draweth of my schoon,
 And help my man to kepe · my clothes and my steede,
 And I wil into place go · to loke if I may speede.' 210
 'By god!' sayde the frankeleyn · 'anon it schal be doon;
 I wil my-self be thy man · and drawen of thy schoon,
 And wende thou into the place · Iesu Crist thee speede,
 And drede not of thy clothes · nor of thy goode steede.'

183. Pt. wrasteling; Ln. warsteling; *rest* wrastlyng, wrastlynge. 184. Hl. vp; *rest om.* 189. Hl. set; Ln. sete; *rest* sette. Hl. *om.* 1st the. 191. Hl. ride; *rest* riden, reden. Hl. Ln. at the; Cp. Pt. atte; *rest* at. *All* gate (*wrongly*); and thate (*for that*) in next line. 192. Cp. Ln. false: *rest* fals. 194. Pt. wrestelinge; *rest* wrastlyng, wrastlinge, wrestlinge. 197, 198. Hl. syng, wryng. 206. Cp. handelen; Hl. handil. 211. Hl. anon; *rest om.* 213. Hl. Cp. Ln. the place; *rest om.* the. Hl. the.

Barfoot and ungert · Gamelyn in cam, 215
 Alle that weren in the place · heede of him they nam,
 How he durste aunte him · of him to doon his might
 That was so doughty champioun · in wrastling and in fight.
 Up sterte the champioun · rapely and anoon,
 Toward yonge Gamelyn · he bigan to goon, 220
 And sayde, 'who is thy fader · and who is thy sire?
 For sothe thou art a gret fool · that thou come hire!
 Gamelyn answerde · the champioun tho,
 'Thou knewe wel my fader · whyl he couthe go,
 Whyles he was on lyve · by seint Martyn! 225
 Sir Iohan of Boundys was his name · and I Gamelyn.'
 'Felaw,' seyde the champioun · 'al-so mot I thryve,
 I knew wel thy fader · whyl he was on lyve;
 And thyself, Gamelyn · I wil that thou it heere,
 Whyl thou were a yong boy · a moche schrewe thou were.' 230
 Than seyde Gamelyn · and swor by Cristes ore,
 'Now I am older woxe · thou schalt me finde a more!
 'By god!' sayde the champioun · 'welcome mote thou be!
 Come thou ones in myn hond · schalt thou never thee.'
 It was wel withinne the night · and the moone schon, 235
 Whan Gamelyn and the champioun · togider gonne goon.

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The champion caste tornes · to Gamelyn that was prest,
And Gamelyn stood stille · and bad him doon his best.
Thanne seyde Gamelyn · to the champion,
'Thou art faste aboute · to bringe me adoun; 240
Now I have y-proved · many tornes of thyne,
Thow most,' he seyde, 'proven · on or two of myne.'
Gamelyn to the champion · yede smertely anon,
Of all the tornes that he cowthe · he schewed him but oon,
And caste him on the lefte syde · that three ribbes to-brak, 245
And ther-to his oon arm · that yaf a gret crak.
Thanne seyde Gamelyn · smertely anoon,
'Schal it be holde for a cast · or elles for noon?'
'By god!' seyde the champion · 'whether that it be,
He that cometh ones in thin hand · schal he never thee!' 250
Than seyde the frankeleyn · that had his sones there,
'Blessed be thou, Gamelyn · that ever thou bore were!'
The frankeleyn seyde to the champion · of him stood him noon eye,
'This is yonge Gamelyn · that taughte thee this pleye.'
Agein answerd the champion · that lyked nothing wel, 255
'He is a lither mayster · and his pley is right fel;
Sith I wrastled first · it is y-go ful yore,
But I was nevere in my lyf · handeled so sore.'
Gamelyn stood in the place · allone withoute serk,
And seyde, 'if ther be eny mo · lat hem come to werk; 260
The champion that peyned him · to werke so sore,
It semeth by his continuaunce · that he wil no-more.'
Gamelyn in the place · stood as stille as stoon,
For to abyde wrasteling · but ther com noon;
Ther was noon with Gamelyn · wolde wrastle more, 265
For he handled the champion · so wonderly sore.
Two gentil-men ther were · that yemed the place,
Comen to Gamelyn · (god yeve him goode grace!)
And sayde to him, 'do on · thyn hosen and thy schoon,
For sothe at this tyme · this feire is y-doon.' 270
And than seyde Gamelyn · 'so mot I wel fare,
I have nought yet halven-del · sold up my ware.'
Tho seyde the champion · 'so brouke I my sweere,
He is a fool that ther-of byeth · thou sellest it so deere.'

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Tho sayde the frankeleyn · that was in moche care, 275
 ‘Felaw,’ he seyde · ‘why lakkest thou his ware?
 By seynt Iame in Galys · that many man hath sought,
 Yet it is to good cheep · that thou hast y-bought.’
 Tho that wardeynes were · of that wrasteling
 Come and broughte Gamelyn · the ram and the ring, 280
 And seyden, ‘have, Gamelyn · the ring and the ram,
 For the beste wrasteler · that ever here cam.’
 Thus wan Gamelyn · the ram and the ring,
 And wente with moche Ioye · home in the morning.
 His brother seiþ wher he cam · with the grete rowte, 285
 And bad schitte the gate · and holde him withoute.
 The porter of his lord · was ful sore agast,
 And sterte anon to the gate · and lokked it fast.

217. Hl. Pt. durst; *rest* durste, dorste. 218. *All but* Hl. *ins.* a bef. champioun. 219. Hl. raply and; *rest* rapely (*omitting* and). 222. Rl. Harl. Sl. here. 224, 225. Hl. whil, Whiles. 227. Hl. al; *rest om.* 232. Hl. fynd; *rest* fynde, finde. 234. Hl. the. 236. Hl. gon to; Cp. Ln. gonne; *rest* gon. 242. Hl. tuo. 243. Hl. Ln. smartly; Rl. Pt. smertely; *see l.* 187. 245. *All* kast or kest. *All* left, lift; *read* lefte. Hl. thre. 247. Hl. smertly; *see l.* 243. 249, 253, 260. Hl. seyde; *rest* have final e. 250. Hl. Ln. comes; *rest* cometh; *read it as* comth. 254. Hl. the. 255. Hl. welle. 256. Hl. a lither; Cp. oure alther; *rest* alther. *For fel, all have felle or felle.* 258. Hl. Cp. Ln. my; *rest* in my. Rl. Pt. Ln. handeled; Hl. Sl. Cp. handled. 260. Hl. eny; *rest om.* 267. ther were that] Pt. that; *rest om.* 273. H. brouk; Cp. Ln. brouke; Pt. broke. 274. Hl. beyeth; *rest* byeth, bieth. 279. Pt. wrasteling; Ln. warsteling; Rl. wrastlinge; *rest* wrastlyng. 282. Cp. beste; Hl. Ln. best; *rest om. ll.* 281, 282. 287. Hl. ful; *rest om.* 288. Rl. Harl. sterte; *rest* stert.

Now litheth, and lesteneth · bothe yonge and olde,
 And ye schul heere gamen · of Gamelyn the bolde. 290
 Gamelyn come ther-to · for to have comen in,
 And thanne was it y-schet · faste with a pin;
 Than seyde Gamelyn · ‘porter, undo the yat,
 For many good mannes sone · stondeth ther-at.’
 Than answerd the porter · and swor by goddes berde, 295

'Thow ne schalt, Gamelyn · come into this yerde.'
'Thow lixt,' sayde Gamelyn · 'so browke I my chin!'
He smot the wicket with his foot · and brak away the pin.
The porter seyh tho · it might no better be,
He sette foot on erthe · and bigan to flee. 300
'By my faith,' seyde Gamelyn · 'that travail is y-lore,
For I am of foot as light as thou · though thou haddest swore.'
Gamelyn overtook the porter · and his teene wrak,
And gerte him in the nekke · that the bon to-brak,
And took him by that oon arm · and threw him in a welle, 305
Seven fadmen it was deep · as I have herd telle.
Whan Gamelyn the yonge · thus hadde pleyd his play,
Alle that in the yerde were · drewen hem away;
They dredden him ful sore · for werkes that he wroughte,
And for the faire company · that he thider broughte. 310
Gamelyn yede to the gate · and leet it up wyde;
He leet in alle maner men · that gon in wolde or ryde,
And seyde, 'ye be welcome · withouten eny greeve,
For we wiln be maistres heer · and aske no man leve.
Yestirday I lefte' · seyde yonge Gamelyn, 315
'In my brother seller · fyve tonne of wyn;
I wil not that this compaignye · parten a-twinne,
And ye wil doon after me · whyl eny sope is thrinne,
And if my brother grucche · or make foul cheere,
Other for spense of mete or drink · that we spenden heere, 320
I am oure catour · and bere oure aller purs,
He schal have for his grucching · seint Maries curs.
My brother is a niggoun · I swer by Cristes ore,
And we wil spende largely · that he hath spared yore;
And who that maketh grucching · that we here dwelle, 325
He schal to the porter · into the draw-welle.'
Seven dayes and seven night · Gamelyn held his feste,
With moche mirth and solas · that was ther, and no cheste;
In a little toret · his brother lay y-steke,
And sey hem wasten his good · but durste he not speke. 330
Erly on a morning · on the eighte day,
The gestes come to Gamelyn · and wolde gon here way.
'Lordes,' seyde Gamelyn · 'wil ye so hyë?

Al the wyn is not yet dronke · so brouke I myn yë.
 Gamelyn in his herte · was he ful wo, 335
 Whan his gestes took her leve · from him for to go;
 He wolde they had lenger abide · and they seyde ‘nay,’
 But bitaughte Gamelyn · god, and good day.
 Thus made Gamelyn his feest · and broughte it wel to ende,
 And after his gestes · toke leve to wende. 340

289. Hl. lestneth; Pt. listnep; *rest* lesteneth, listenythe, listeneth, lysteneyth. Pt. Ln. ȝonge; *rest* yong, ȝong. 293. *All* yate, gate; *and in the next line* ther-ate. 295. Hl. berd. 300. and] Hl. Cp. he. 304. Hl. Cp. gert; *rest* girt. 306. Hl. Cp. fadmen; Pt. fadme; Rl. Sl. fadame; Ln. faþem; Harl. fadome. 312. Hl. maner men; *rest om.* Hl. *has 2nd in; rest om.* Hl. Rl. Pt. wold; Cp. Ln. wolde. 317. Hl. that; *rest om.* 318. Hl. while. Hl. thrynne; Cp. thrinne; Sl. Pt. þer-inne; Ln. þere-inne. 323. Hl. nyggoun; Rl. Sl. nygon; Pt. nigon; Cp. Ln. negon. 328. Hl. myrth and; *rest om.* Hl. that was; *rest om.* that (*as being understood*). 330. Hl. Cp. durst; *rest* dorst. 334. Hl. y-dronke; *rest omit* y-. Pt. Ln. brouke; Rl. browke; Hl. brouk. 335. Hl. he; *rest om.* 337. Hl. wold. Hl. lenger abide; *rest* dwelled lenger. 339. Pt. feest; Hl. fest. MSS. brought, broght. 340. Hl. gestys; *see l.* 336. Hl. took; Ln. had take; Cp. toke; Sl. to (*sic*); *rest* toke.

Litheth, and lesteneth · and holdeth youre tonge,
 And ye schul heere gamen · of Gamelyn the yonge;
 Herkeneth, lordinges · and lesteneth aright,
 Whan alle gestes were goon · how Gamelyn was dight.
 Al the whyl that Gamelyn · heeld his mangerye, 345
 His brother thoughte on him be wreke · with his treccherye.
 Tho Gamelyns gestes · were riden and y-goon,
 Gamelyn stood allone · frendes had he noon;
 Tho after ful soone · withinne a litel stounde,
 Gamelyn was y-taken · and ful harde y-bounde. 350
 Forth com the false knight · out of the soleer,
 To Gamelyn his brother · he yede ful neer,
 And sayde to Gamelyn · ‘who made thee so bold
 For to stroye my stoor · of myn houshold?’
 ‘Brother,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘wraththe thee right nought, 355

For it is many day y-gon · siththen it was bought;
 For, brother, thou hast y-had · by seynt Richer,
 Of fiftene plowes of lond · this sixtene yer,
 And of alle the beestes · thou hast forth bred,
 That my fader me biquath · on his deth-bed; 360
 Of al this sixtene yeer · I yeve thee the prow,
 For the mete and the drink · that we have spendend now.
 Thanne seyde the false knight · (evel mot he thee!)
 'Herkne, brother Gamelyn · what I wol yeve thee;
 For of my body, brother · heir geten have I noon, 365
 I wil make thee myn heir · I swere by seint Iohan.
 'Par ma foy!' sayde Gamelyn · 'and if it so be,
 And thou thenke as thou seyst · god yelde it thee!
 Nothing wiste Gamelyn · of his brotheres gyle;
 Therefore he him bigyled · in a litel whyle. 370
 'Gamelyn,' seyde he · 'o thing I thee telle;
 Tho thou threwe my porter · in the draw-welle,
 I swor in that wraththe · and in that grete moot,
 That thou schuldest be bounde · bothe hand and foot;
 Therefore I thee biseche · brother Gamelyn, 375
 Lat me nought be forsworen · brother art thou myn;
 Lat me binde thee now · bothe hand and feet,
 For to holde myn avow · as I thee biheet.
 'Brother,' sayde Gamelyn · 'al-so mot I thee!
 Thou schalt not be forsworen · for the love of me.' 380
 Tho made they Gamelyn to sitte · mighte he nat stonde,
 Til they hadde him bounde · bothe foot and honde.
 The false knight his brother · of Gamelyn was agast,
 And sente aftir feteres · to feteren him fast.
 His brother made lesinges · on him ther he stood, 385
 And tolde hem that comen in · that Gamelyn was wood.
 Gamelyn stood to a post · bounden in the halle,
 Tho that comen in ther · lokede on him alle.
 Ever stood Gamelyn · even upright;
 But mete ne drink had he non · neither day ne night. 390
 Than seyde Gamelyn · 'brother, by myn hals,
 Now I have aspyed · thou art a party fals;
 Had I wist that tresoun · that thou haddest y-founde,

I wolde have yeve thee strokes · or I had be bounde!
 Gamelyn stood bounden · stille as eny stoon; 395
 Two dayes and two nightes · mete had he noon.
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · that stood y-bounde stronge,
 ‘Adam spenser · me thinkth I faste to longe;
 Adam spenser · now I byseche thee,
 For the mochel love · my fader loved thee, 400
 If thou may come to the keyes · lese me out of bond,
 And I wil parte with thee · of my free lond.’
 Thanne seyde Adam · that was the spencer,
 ‘I have served thy brother · this sixtene yeer,
 If I leete thee goon · out of his bour, 405
 He wolde say afterward · I were a traytour.’
 ‘Adam,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘so brouke I myn hals!
 Thou schalt finde my brother · atte laste fals;
 Therfor, brother Adam · louse me out of bond,
 And I wil parte with thee · of my free lond.’ 410
 ‘Up swich a forward’ · seyde Adam, ‘y-wis,
 I wil do therto · al that in me is.’
 ‘Adam,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘al-so mot I thee,
 I wol holde thee covenant · and thou wil me.’
 Anon as Adames lord · to bedde was y-goon, 415
 Adam took the keyes, and leet · Gamelyn out anoon;
 He unlokked Gamelyn · bothe handes and feet,
 In hope of avauncement · that he him biheet.
 Than seyde Gamelyn · ‘thanked be goddes sonde!
 Now I am loosed · bothe foot and honde; 420
 Had I now eten · and dronken aright,
 Ther is noon in this hous · schulde binde me this night.’
 Adam took Gamelyn · as stille as ony stoon,
 And ladde him in-to spence · rapely and anon,
 And sette him to soper · right in a privee stede, 425
 He bad him do gladly · and Gamelyn so dede.
 Anon as Gamelyn hadde · eten wel and fyn,
 And therto y-dronke wel · of the rede wyn,
 ‘Adam,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘what is now thy reed?
 Wher I go to my brother · and girde of his heed?’ 430
 ‘Gamelyn,’ seyde Adam · ‘it schal not be so.

I can teche thee a reed · that is worth the two.
 I wot wel for sothe · that this is no nay,
 We schul have a mangery · right on Soneday;
 Abbotes and priours · many heer schal be, 435
 And other men of holy chirche · as I telle thee;
 Thow schalt stonde up by the post · as thou were hond-fast,
 And I schal leve hem unloke · away thou may hem cast.
 Whan that they have eten · and wasschen here hondes,
 Thou schalt biseke hem alle · to bring thee out of bondes; 440
 And if they wille borwe thee · that were good game,
 Then were thou out of prisoun · and I out of blame;
 And if everich of hem · say unto us ‘nay,’
 I schal do an other · I swere by this day!
 Thou schalt have a good staf · and I wil have another, 445
 And Cristes curs have that oon · that faileth that other!’
 ‘Ye, for gode!’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘I say it for me,
 If I fayle on my syde · yvel mot I thee!
 If we schul algate · assoile hem of here sinne,
 Warne me, brother Adam · whan I schal biginne.’ 450
 ‘Gamelyn,’ seyde Adam · ‘by seynte Charite,
 I wil warne thee biforn · whan that it schal be;
 Whan I twinke on thee · loke for to goon,
 And cast away the feteres · and com to me anoon.’
 ‘Adam,’ seide Gamelyn · ‘blessed be thy bones! 455
 That is a good counseil · yeven for the nones;
 If they werne me thanne · to bringe me out of bendes,
 I wol sette goode strokes · right on here lendes.’

341. Hl. lestneth; Pt. listen; *rest* lesteneth, listenyth. 343. Hl. herkneth;
rest Herkeneth, Herkenyth, Harkeneth. 346. MSS. thought. 350. Hl. I-
 take; *rest* taken. Cp. Ln. harde; *rest* hard. 351. Cp. Rl. Ln. false; *rest*
 fals. Hl. selleer; Cp. sellere; Ln. selere; *rest* solere (*rightly*; cf. toret in l.
 329). 360. Pt. dethes; *rest* deth; see l. 24. 363. Rl. Sl. Cp. Ln. false; *rest*
 fals. 365. Hl. Cp. Ln. geten heir (heer, here); *rest* heir (heire, here)
 geten. 367. Hl. sayd; *rest* have final e. 376. Hl. forsworn; but see l. 380.
 381. Hl. might; *read* mighte; *rest* vary. 382. Sl. Ln. hadde; Cp. hadden;
rest had, hadd. 383. Cp. Ln. false; *rest* fals. 384. Cp. sente; Sl. sende;
rest sent. 386. Hl. Rl. told; Ln. tolden; *rest* tolde. 388. Hl. ther; *rest* om.

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Cp. lokeden; *rest* loked; *read* lokede. 394. Hl. the; *rest om.* 400, 405, 432. *All the (for thee).* 407. Hl. brouk; Cp. Pt. Ln. brouke. 414. Hl. Sl. hold; *rest* holde, halde. *After wil* Cp. *ins.* lose, *and* Harl. helpe. 417. Hl. hand; Cp. handes; *rest* hondes. 424. Hl. Cp. rapely and; *rest om.* and. 430. Hl. Wher; Ln. Where; Cp. For; *rest* Or. 434. Ln. sonondaye; Hl. *and rest* sonday; *read* sonnenday or soneday. 437. Pt. Ln. Harl. bound fast; *rest* hond-fast (*rightly*). 438. *All but* Hl. *ins.* that *bef.* away. 439. Hl. waisschen; *rest* wasschen, wasshen. 443. Hl. vnto; *rest* to. 450. Hl. I; *rest* we. 453. Ln. twynke; Hl. Cp. twynk; *rest* wynke, winke, wynk. 456. Hl. ȝeuyng; Cp. yeuyng; *rest* yeuen, ȝeuen, or ȝiuen. 457. Hl. thanne; *rest om.*

Tho the Sonday was y-come · and folk to the feste;
 Faire they were welcomed · both leste and meste; 460
 And ever atte halle-dore · as they comen in,
 They caste their eye · on yonge Gamelyn.
 The false knight his brother · ful of trechery,
 Alle the gestes that ther were · atte mangery,
 Of Gamelyn his brother · he tolde hem with mouth 465
 Al the harm and the schame · that he telle couthe.
 Tho they were served · of messes two or three,
 Than seyde Gamelyn · ‘how serve ye me?
 It is nought wel served · by god that al made!
 That I sitte fasting · and other men make glade.’ 470
 The false knight his brother · ther that he stood,
 Tolde alle his gestes · that Gamelyn was wood;
 And Gamelyn stood stille · and answerde nought,
 But Adames wordes · he held in his thought.
 Tho Gamelyn gan speke · dolfully with-alle 475
 To the grete lordes · that saten in the halle:
 ‘Lordes,’ he seyde · ‘for Cristes passioun,
 Helpeth bringe Gamelyn · out of prisoun.’
 Than seyde an abbot · sorwe on his cheeke!
 ‘He schal have Cristes curs · and seynte Maries eeke, 480
 That thee out of prisoun · beggeth other borwe,
 But ever worthe hem wel · that doth thee moche sorwe.’
 After that abbot · than spak another,
 ‘I wold thin heed were of · though thou were my brother!

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Alle that thee borwe · foule mot hem falle!' 485
Thus they seyden alle · that weren in the halle.
Than seyde a priour · yvel mot he thryve!
'It is moche scathe, boy · that thou art on lyve.'
'Ow!' seyde Gamelyn · 'so brouke I my bon!
Now I have aspyed · that freendes have I non. 490
Cursed mot he worthe · bothe fleisch and blood,
That ever do priour · or abbot ony good!'
Adam the spencer · took up the cloth,
And loked on Gamelyn · and say that he was wroth;
Adam on the pantrye · litel he thoughte, 495
But two goode staves · to halle-dore he broughte,
Adam loked on Gamelyn · and he was war anoon,
And caste away the feteres · and he bigan to goon:
Tho he com to Adam · he took that oo staf,
And bigan to worche · and goode strokes yaf. 500
Gamelyn cam in-to the halle · and the spencer bothe,
And loked hem aboute · as they had be wrothe;
Gamelyn sprengeth holy-water · with an oken spire,
That some that stoode upright · fellen in the fire.
There was no lewed man · that in the halle stood, 505
That wolde do Gamelyn · eny thing but good,
But stood bisyden · and leet hem bothe werche,
For they hadde no rewthe · of men of holy cherche;
Abbot or priour · monk or chanoun,
That Gamelyn overtok · anon they yeeden down. 510
Ther was non of hem alle · that with his staf mette,
That he ne made him overthrowe · and quitte him his dette.
'Gamelyn,' seyde Adam · 'for seynte Charite,
Pay large liverey · for the love of me,
And I wil kepe the dore · so ever here I masse! 515
Er they ben assoyled · there shal noon passe.'
'Dowt thee nought,' seyde Gamelyn · 'whyl we ben in-feere,
Kep thou wel the dore · and I wol werche heere;
Stere thee, good Adam · and lat ther noon flee,
And we schul telle largely · how many that ther be.' 520
'Gamelyn,' seyde Adam · 'do hem but good;
They ben men of holy chirche · draw of hem no blood,

Save wel the croune · and do hem non harmes,
 But brek bothe her legges · and siththen here armes.[’]
 Thus Gamelyn and Adam · wroughte right fast, 525
 And pleyden with the monkes · and made hem agast.
 Thider they come ryding · Iolily with swaynes,
 And hom ayen they were y-lad · in cartes and in waynes.
 Tho they hadden al y-don · than seyde a gray frere,
 ‘Allas! sire abbot · what dide we now heere? 530
 Tho that we comen hider · it was a cold reed,
 Us hadde ben better at home · with water and with breed.[’]
 Why! Gamelyn made ordres · of monkes and frere,
 Ever stood his brother · and made foul chere;
 Gamelyn up with his staf · that he wel knew, 535
 And gerte him in the nekke · that he overthrew;
 A litel above the girdel · the rigge-bon to-barst;
 And sette him in the feteres · ther he sat arst.
 ‘Sitte ther, brother[’] · sayde Gamelyn,
 ‘For to colen thy blood · as I dide myn.’ 540
 As swithe as they hadde · y-wroken hem on here foon,
 They askeden watir · and wisschen anoon,
 What some for here love · and some for here awe,
 Alle the servants served hem · of the beste lawe.
 The scherreve was thennes · but a fyve myle, 545
 And al was y-told him · in a litel whyle,
 How Gamelyn and Adam · had doon a sory rees,
 Bounden and y-wounded men · ayein the kinges pees;
 Tho bigan sone · stryf for to wake,
 And the scherref was aboute · Gamelyn for to take. 550

460. Hl. lest; Cp. leste. 461. *This is Zupitza’s emendation*; MSS. as they
 atte halle dore comen in. 463. Cp. Ln. false; *rest* fals. 464. Hl. wer; *rest*
 were. 467. or] Hl. other. 471. Ln. false; *rest* fals. 478. *All but* Hl. *ins.* to
bef. bringe. 486. Hl. seyde; Pt. Ln. Harl. seiden. Hl. were; Cp. Ln.
 weren. 488. *All but* Hl. *ins.* sorwe and *bef.* scathe. 489. Hl. brouk; *rest*
 brouke, browke, broke. 495, 496. MSS. thought, brought; *against*
grammar. 498. Ln. keste; *rest* cast. 504. Ln. fellen; *rest* felle, fell. 505.
 Hl. lewede; Pt. Ln. lewe; *rest* lewed, lewid. 507. Hl. besyde; Rl. by-
 siden; Sl. bisiden; Cp. besyden. 512. Pt. Ln. ne; *rest* om. Hl. him; *rest*

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hem (*twice*). Sl. Cp. quitte; Hl. quyt. 516. Hl. schan; *rest* shal, schal. 520. Hl. Cp. Ln. *om.* that. 531. Hl. *om.* we. 532. Hl. Pt. Ln. *omit second* with. 536. Cp. gerte; *rest* gert, girt, gerd. 540. Hl. colyn; Cp. coole; Ln. coly; *rest* colen 543. Rl. Sl. Pt. Harl. *insert* her (here) *before* awe; Hl. Cp. Ln. *omit*. 545. Hl. a; *rest om.* 550. *I supply* was; *the two* Cambridge MSS. *have* come; *which the rest omit*; *see ll.* 240, 785.

Now lytheth and lesteneth · so god yif you good fyn!
 And ye schul heere good game · of yonge Gamelyn.
 Four and twenty yonge men · that heelden hem ful bolde,
 Come to the schirref · and seyde that they wolde
 Gamelyn and Adam · fetten, by her fay; 555
 The scherref yaf hem leve · soth as I you say;
 They hyeden faste · wold they nought bilinne,
 Til they come to the gate · ther Gamelyn was inne.
 They knocked on the gate · the porter was ny,
 And loked out at an hol · as man that was sly. 560
 The porter hadde biholde · hem a litel whyle,
 He loved wel Gamelyn · and was adrad of gyle,
 And leet the wicket stonden · y-steke ful stille,
 And asked hem withoute · what was here wille.
 For al the grete company · thanne spak but oon, 565
 ‘Undo the gate, porter · and lat us in goon.’
 Than seyde the porter · ‘so brouke I my chin,
 Ye schul sey your erand · er ye comen in.’
 ‘Sey to Gamelyn and Adam · if here wille be,
 We wil speke with hem · wordes two or thre.’ 570
 ‘Felaw,’ seyde the porter · ‘stond there stille,
 And I wil wende to Gamelyn · to witen his wille.’
 In wente the porter · to Gamelyn anoon,
 And seyde, ‘Sir, I warne you · her ben come your foon;
 The scherreves meyne · ben atte gate, 575
 For to take you bothe · schulle ye nat scape.’
 ‘Porter,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘so moot I wel thee!
 I wil allowe thee thy wordes · whan I my tyme see;
 Go agayn to the yate · and dwel with hem a whyle,
 And thou schalt see right sone · porter, a gyle. 580
 Adam,’ sayde Gamelyn · ‘looke thee to goon;

We have foo-men atte gate · and frendes never oon;
 It ben the schirrefes men · that hider ben y-come,
 They ben swore to-gidere · that we schul be nome.'
 'Gamelyn,' seyde Adam · 'hye thee right blyve, 585
 And if I faile thee this day · evel mot I thryve!
 And we schul so welcome · the scherrefes men,
 That some of hem schul make · here beddes in the fen.'
 Atte posterne-gate · Gamelyn out wente,
 And a good cart-staf · in his hand he hente; 590
 Adam hente sone · another gret staf
 For to helpe Gamelyn · and goode strokes yaf.
 Adam felde tweyne · and Gamelyn felde three,
 The other setten feet on erthe · and bigonne flee.
 'What?' seyde Adam · 'so ever here I masse! 595
 I have a draught of good wyn! · drink er ye passe!
 'Nay, by god!' sayde thay · 'thy drink is not good,
 It wolde make mannes brayn · to lyen in his hood.'
 Gamelyn stood stille · and loked him aboute,
 And seiþ the scherreve come · with a gret route. 600
 'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'what be now thy reedes?
 Here cometh the scherreve · and wil have cure heedes.'
 Adam sayde, 'Gamelyn · my reed is now this,
 Abyde we no lenger · lest we fare amis:
 I rede that we to wode goon · ar that we be founde, 605
 Better is us ther loos · than in town y-bounde.'
 Adam took by the hond · yonge Gamelyn;
 And everich of hem two · drank a draught of wyn,
 And after took her cours · and wenten her way;
 Tho fond the scherreve · nest, but non ay. 610
 The scherreve lighte adoun · and went in-to the halle,
 And fond the lord y-fetered · faste with-alle.
 The scherreve unfetered him · sone, and that anoon,
 And sente after a leche · to hele his rigge-boon.

551. Hl. lestneth; Cp. lesteneth. Hl. goode. 555. Rl. Sl. Pt. Harl. by her
 (here) fay; Cp. be way; Hl. Ln. away. 563. Hl. y-steke; *rest om.* 573.
 Cp. Ln. Harl. wente; *rest went.* 576. Cp. schulle; Hl. schul. Hl. na (*for*
nat); *rest not, nouht.* 588. Hl. den; Pt. fenne; *rest fen.* 589. Cp. Ln.

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wente; *rest* went. 594. Hl. fle; *rest* to fle (flee). 602. Hl. comth; *rest* cometh. 603. *So* Hl.; *rest* sayde to. 606. Hl. vs; *rest* om. 608. Hl. tuo; *rest* om. 609. Hl. coursers; *but see l.* 617. 611. Hl. adoun; *rest* down. 614. Hl. sent; Cp. Sl. sente.

Lete we now this false knight · lyen in his care, 615
And talke we of Gamelyn · and loke how he fare.
Gamelyn in-to the woode · stalkede stille,
And Adam the spenser · lykede ful ille;
Adam swor to Gamelyn · by seynt Richer,
'Now I see it is mery · to be a spencer, 620
That lever me were · keyes for to bere,
Than walken in this wilde woode · my clothes to tere.'
'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'dismaye thee right nought;
Many good mannes child · in care is y-brought.'
And as they stode talking · bothen in-feere, 625
Adam herd talking of men · and neyh, him thought, they were.
Tho Gamelyn under the woode · lokede aright,
Sevene score of yonge men · he saugh wel a-dight;
Alle satte atte mete · in compas aboute.
'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'now have we no doute, 630
After bale cometh boote · thurgh grace of god almight;
Me thinketh of mete and drink · that I have a sight.'
Adam lokede tho · under woode-bowgh,
And whan he seyde mete · he was glad y-nough;
For he hoped to god · for to have his deel, 635
And he was sore alonged · after a good meel.
As he seyde that word · the mayster outlawe
Saugh Gamelyn and Adam · under woode-schawe.
'Yonge men,' seyde the maister · 'by the goode roode,
I am war of gestic · god sende us non but goode; 640
Yonder ben two yonge men · wonder wel a-dight,
And paraventure ther ben mo · who-so lokede aright.
Ariseth up, ye yonge men · and fetteth hem to me;
It is good that we witen · what men they be.'
Up ther sterten sevene · fro the diner, 645
And metten with Gamelyn · and Adam spenser.
Whan they were neyh hem · than seyde that oon,

'Yeldeth up, yonge men · your bowes and your floon.'
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn · that yong was of elde,
 'Moche sorwe mot he have · that to you hem yelde! 650
 I curse non other · but right my-selve;
 They ye fette to yow fyve · thanne ye be twelve!
 Tho they herde by his word · that might was in his arm,
 Ther was non of hem alle · that wolde do him harm,
 But sayde unto Gamelyn · mildely and stille, 655
 'Com afore our maister · and sey to him thy wille.'
 'Yonge men,' sayde Gamelyn · 'by your lewte,
 What man is your maister · that ye with be?'
 Alle they answerde · withoute lesing,
 'Oure maister is y-crowned · of outlawes king.' 660
 'Adam,' seyde Gamelyn · 'go-we in Cristes name;
 He may neyther mete nor drink · werne us, for schame.
 If that he be hende · and come of gentil blood,
 He wol yeve us mete and drink · and doon us som good.'
 'By seynt Iame!' seyde Adam · 'what harm that I gete, 665
 I wil aunte to the dore · that I hadde mete.'
 Gamelyn and Adam · wente forth in-feere,
 And they grette the maister · that they founde there.
 Than seide the maister · king of outlawes,
 'What seeke ye, yonge men · under woode-schawes?' 670
 Gamelyn answerde · the king with his croune,
 'He moste needes walke in woode · that may not walke in towne.
 Sire, we walke not heer · noon harm for to do,
 But-if we meete with a deer · to scheete ther-to,
 As men that ben hungry · and mow no mete finde, 675
 And ben harde bistad · under woode-linde.'
 Of Gamelynes wordes · the maister hadde routhe,
 And seyde, 'ye schal have y-nough · have god my trouthe!'
 He bad hem sitte ther adoun · for to take reste;
 And bad hem ete and drinke · and that of the beste. 680
 As they sete and eeten · and dronke wel and fyn,
 Than seyde that oon to that other · 'this is Gamelyn.'
 Tho was the maister outlawe · in-to counseil nome,
 And told how it was Gamelyn · that thider was y-come.
 Anon as he herde · how it was bifalle, 685

He made him maister under him · over hem alle.
 Within the thridde wyke · him com tyding,
 To the maister outlawe · that tho was her king,
 That he schulde come hom · his pees was y-mad;
 And of that goode tyding · he was tho ful glad. 690
 Tho seyde he to his yonge men · ‘soth for to telle,
 Me ben comen tydinges · I may no lenger dwelle.’
 Tho was Gamelyn anon · withoute taryng,
 Maad maister outlawe · and crowned here king.

615. Cp. Ln. false; *rest* fals. 618. Cp. likede; Ln. loked; *rest* liked. 621. Hl. for; *rest om.* 625. Hl. And; *rest om.* 627, 642. Hl. loked. 627. Hl. the; *rest om.* 640. Cp. Pt. Harl. sende; *rest* send. Hl. non but; *rest om.* 643. Hl. ȝe; *rest om.* 652. Hl. Cp. They; Rl. Thei; Sl. Ln. Though. 654. Hl. alle; *rest om.* 655. Hl. sayd; *rest add e.* Hl. vnto; *rest to.* 663. Hl. heende; Cp. kynde; *rest* hende. 664. Hl. an (*for 1st and*). 665. Hl. seyde; Ln. seid; *rest add e.* 666. Hl. auntre; *rest* audenture me. Hl. Cp. Ln. to the dore; *rest om.* 673. Hl. for; *rest om.* 674. Hl. with; *rest om.* 679. Hl. ther; *rest om.* Hl. adoun; *rest* doun. 681. Hl. sete and; *rest om.* 682. Hl. seyde; *rest add e.* Hl. Pt. Ln. that oon ... other; *rest on to an other.* 688, 690. Hl. tho; *rest om.* 689. Hl. I-made; Cp. Sl. maad; *rest* made. 694. Cp. Maad; *rest* Made (*badly*). Cp. Ln. here; *rest* her.

Tho was Gamelyn crowned · king of outlawes, 695
 And walked a whyle · under woode-schawes.
 The false knight his brother · was scherreve and sire,
 And leet his brother endite · for hate and for ire.
 Tho were his bonde-men · sory and nothing glad,
 When Gamelyn her lord · ‘wolves-heed’ was cryed and maad;
 And sente out of his men · wher they might him finde, 701
 For to seke Gamelyn · under woode-linde,
 To telle him tydinges · how the wind was went,
 And al his good reved · and his men schent.

697. Cp. Ln. false; *rest* fals. 699. Rl. Sl. glad; *rest* glade, gladde. 700. Sl. Cp. maad; *rest* made, maade. 703. Hl. how; *rest om.* 704. So Hl. Cp. Ln.; *rest* and alle his.

Whan they had him founde · on knees they hem sette, 705
 And a-doun with here hood · and here lord grette;
 'Sire, wraththe you nought · for the goode roode,
 For we have brought you tydinges · but they be nat goode.
 Now is thy brother scherreve · and hath the baillye,
 And he hath endited thee · and 'wolves-heed' doth thee crye.' 710

'Allas!' seyde Gamelyn · 'that ever I was so slak
 That I ne hadde broke his nekke · tho I his rigge brak!
 Goth, greteth hem wel · myn housbondes and wyf,
 I wol ben atte nexte schire · have god my lyf!
 Gamelyn com wel redy · to the nexte schire, 715
 And ther was his brother · bothe lord and sire.
 Gamelyn com boldelich · in-to the moot-halle,
 And putte a-doun his hood · among the lordes alle;
 'God save you alle, lordinges · that now here be!
 But broke-bak scherreve · evel mot thou thee! 720
 Why hast thou do me · that schame and vilonye,
 For to late endite me · and 'wolves-heed' me crye?'
 Tho thoughte the false knight · for to ben awreke,
 And leet take Gamelyn · moste he no more speke;
 Might ther be no more grace · but Gamelyn atte laste 725
 Was cast in-to prisoun · and fetered ful faste.

712. Hl. *om.* 2nd I. 713. Hl. hem; rest *om.* Harl. bope housbonde; rest myn housbondes. 715. Hl. came; see l. 717. 718. Rl. Sl. Cp. putte; rest put. 719. Hl. alle; rest *om.* 722. Hl. me; rest do me. 723. Cp. thoughte the false; rest thought the fals. 724. MSS. most, the e being elided. 725, 726. Rl. Sl. Cp. laste, faste; rest last, fast.

Gamelyn hath a brother · that highte sir Ote,
 As good a knight and hende · as mighte gon on foote.
 Anon ther yede a messenger · to that goode knight,
 And tolde him al-togidere · how Gamelyn was dight. 730
 Anon as sire Ote herde · how Gamelyn was a-dight,
 He was wonder sory · was he no-thing light,
 And leet saddle a steede · and the way he nam,
 And to his tweyne bretheren · anon-right he cam.

'Sire,' seyde sire Ote · to the scherreve tho, 735
 'We ben but thre bretheren · schul we never be mo;
 And thou hast y-prisoned · the beste of us alle;
 Swich another brother · yvel mot him bifalle!
 'Sire Ote,' seide the false knight · 'lat be thy curs;
 By god, for thy wordes · he schal fare the wurs; 740
 To the kinges prisoun · anon he is y-nome,
 And ther he schal abyde · til the Iustice come.'
 'Parde!' seyde sir Ote · 'better it schal be;
 I bidde him to maynpris · that thou graunte him me
 Til the nexte sitting · of deliveraunce, 745
 And thanne lat Gamelyn · stande to his chaunce.'
 'Brother, in swich a forward · I take him to thee;
 And by thy fader soule · that thee bigat and me,
 But-if he be redy · whan the Iustice sitte,
 Thou schalt bere the Iuggement · for al thy grete witte.' 750
 'I graunte wel,' seide sir Ote · 'that it so be.
 Let deliver him anon · and tak him to me.'
 Tho was Gamelyn delivered · to sire Ote his brother,
 And that night dwellede · that on with that other.
 On the morn seyde Gamelyn · to sire Ote the hende, 755
 'Brother,' he seide, 'I moot · for sothe, from thee wende,
 To loke how my yonge men · leden here lyf,
 Whether they liven in Ioye · or elles in stryf.'
 'By god!' seyde sire Ote · 'that is a cold reed,
 Now I see that al the cark · schal fallen on myn heed; 760
 For when the Iustice sitte · and thou be nought y-founde,
 I schal anon be take · and in thy stede y-bounde.'
 'Brother,' sayde Gamelyn · 'dismaye thee nought,
 For by seint Iame in Gales · that many man hath sought,
 If that god almighty · holde my lyf and wit, 765
 I wil be ther redy · whan the Iustice sit.'
 Than seide sir Ote to Gamelyn · 'god schilde thee fro schame;
 Com whan thou seest tyme · and bring us out of blame.'

728. Hl. Cp. heende; *rest* hende. 729. Hl. ther; *rest om.* 730. Hl. Cp.
 told; *rest* tolde. 734. Hl. anon right; Ln. ful sone; *rest* right sone. 737.
 Rl. Cp. beste; *rest* best. 739. Pt. Ln. false; *rest* fals. 741. Hl. anon; *rest*

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om. 744. Hl. Cp. maympris. Hl. Sl. Ln. graunt; *rest* graunte. Hl. him; Cp. Ln. to; *rest on.* 747. Hl. forthward; *rest* forward. 749. Hl. if; *rest om.* 754. Hl. Cp. dwelleden; Ln. dwelden; *rest* dwellide, dwellid, dwelled. 755. Hl. Cp. heende: Rl. hynde; *rest* hende. 761, 766. MSS. sitte, *except* Hl. sitt *in l.* 766. *Here sitte is subj.; but in l.* 766 sit = sitteth. 765. Hl. hold; Rl. hold me; *rest* holde me. 765, 766. Hl. witt, sitt.

Litheth, and lesteneth · and holdeth you stille,
 And ye schul here how Gamelyn · hadde al his wille. 770
 Gamelyn wente ayein · under woode-rys,
 And fond there pleying · yonge men of prys.
 Tho was yong Gamelyn · glad and blithe y-nough,
 Whan he fond his mery men · under woode-bough.
 Gamelyn and his men · talkeden in-feere, 775
 And they hadde good game · here maister to heere;
 They tolden him of adventures · that they hadde founde,
 And Gamelyn hem tolde ayein · how he was fast y-bounde.
 Whyl Gamelyn was outlawed · hadde he no cors;
 There was no man that for him · ferde the wors, 780
 But abbotes and priours · monk and chanoun;
 On hem left he no-thing · whan he mighte hem nom.
 Whyl Gamelyn and his men · made merthes ryve,
 The false knight his brother · yvel mot he thryve!
 For he was fast aboute · bothe day and other, 785
 For to hyre the quest · to hangen his brother.
 Gamelyn stood on a day · and, as he biheeld
 The woodes and the schawes · in the wilde feeld,
 He thoughte on his brother · how he him beheet
 That he wolde be redy · whan the Iustice seet; 790
 He thoughte wel that he wolde · withoute delay,
 Come afore the Iustice · to kepen his day,
 And seide to his yonge men · ‘dighteth you yare,
 For whan the Iustice sitte · we moote be thare,
 For I am under borwe · til that I come, 795
 And my brother for me · to prisoun schal be nome.’
 ‘By seint Iame!’ seyde his yonge men · ‘and thou rede therto,
 Ordeyne how it schal be · and it schal be do.’
 Whyl Gamelyn was coming · ther the Iustice sat,

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The false knight his brother · foryat he nat that, 800
To huyre the men on his quest · to hangen his brother;
Though he hadde nought that oon · he wolde have that other.
Tho cam Gamelyn · fro under woode-rys,
And broughte with him · his yonge men of prys.

769. Hl. lestneth; Cp. lesteneth; Rl. Pt. listeneth. 770. Rl. Sl. Cp. hadde; *rest* had. Hl. Pt. al; *rest om.* 771. Hl. aȝein; *rest om.* 773. Hl. Cp. Ln. ȝonge; *rest* ȝong. 774. Hl. mery; *rest om.* 775. Hl. talked; Rl. Pt. talkeden; Sl. talkiden. 779. Sl. Cp. Ln. hadde; Rl. hade; *rest* had. 782. MSS. might; *the e being elided.* 784. Cp. false; *rest* fals. 789. Hl. thought; *see l.* 791. 794. Hl. sitt. 800. Cp. Ln. false; *rest* fals. 804. Hl. his; *rest om.*

‘I see wel,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘the Iustice is set; 805
Go aforȝ, Adam · and loke how it spet.’
Adam wente into the halle · and loked al aboute,
He seyȝ there stonde · lordes grete and stoute,
And sir Ote his brother · fetered wel fast;
Tho went Adam out of halle · as he were agast. 810
Adam said to Gamelyn · and to his felawes alle,
‘Sir Ote stant y-fetered · in the moot-halle.’
‘Yonge men,’ seide Gamelyn · ‘this ye heeren alle;
Sire Ote stant y-fetered · in the moot-halle.
If god yif us grace · wel for to doo, 815
He schal it abegge · that broughte him ther-too.’
Thanne sayde Adam · that lokkes hadde hore,
‘Cristes curs mote he have · that him bond so sore!
And thou wilt, Gamelyn · do after my reed,
Ther is noon in the halle · schal bere away his heed.’ 820
‘Adam,’ seyde Gamelyn · ‘we wilȝ nought don so,
We wil slee the giltif · and lat the other go.
I wil into the halle · and with the Iustice speke;
On hem that ben gultif · I wil ben awreke.
Lat non scape at the dore · take, yonge men, yeme; 825
For I wil be Iustice this day · domes for to deme.
God spede me this day · at my newe werk!
Adam, com on with me · for thou schalt be my clerk.’

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His men answereden him · and bade him doon his best,
'And if thou to us have neede · thou schalt finde us prest; 830
We wiln stande with thee · whyl that we may dure,
And but we werke manly · pay us non hure.'
'Yonge men,' seyde Gamelyn · 'so mot I wel thee!
As trusty a maister · ye schal finde of me.'
Right there the Iustice · sat in the halle, 835
In wente Gamelyn · amonges hem alle.

805, 806. MSS. sette, spette (*wrongly*). 807. Cp. wente; *rest* went. 808. Hl. gret; *rest* grete. 811. Hl. felaws; *rest* felawes, felowes. 816. Ln brouht it; Hl. *om.* it; *rest* it broughte; but read broughte him. 818. Rl. Sl, Pt. mote; Ln. mot; Hl. Cp. most. 819. Cp. reed; Hl. red; *rest* rede. 822. Hl. Pt. lat; *rest* late 826. for to *in* MS. Camb. Mm. 2. 5; *rest om.* for. 828. Hl. on; *rest om.* 829. Rl. bade; *rest* bad.

Gamelyn leet unfetere · his brother out of bende.
Thanne seyde sire Ote · his brother that was hende,
'Thou haddest almost, Gamelyn · dwelled to longe,
For the quest is oute on me · that I schulde honge.' 840
'Brother,' seyde Gamelyn · 'so god yif me good rest!
This day they schuln ben hanged · that ben on thy quest;
And the Iustice bothe · that is the Iugge-man,
And the scherreve bothe · thurgh him it bigan.'
Thanne seyde Gamelyn · to the Iustise, 845
Now is thy power y-don · thou most nedes arise;
Thow hast yeven domes · that ben yvel dight,
I wil sitten in thy sete · and dressen hem aright.'
The Iustice sat stille · and roos nought anoon;
And Gamelyn clevede · [a-two] his cheeke-boon; 850
Gamelyn took him in his arm · and no more spak,
But threw him over the barre · and his arm to-brak.
Durst non to Gamelyn · seye but good,
For ferd of the company · that withoute stood.
Gamelyn sette him down · in the Iustices seet, 855
And sire Ote his brother by him · and Adam at his feet.
Whan Gamelyn was y-set · in the Iustices stede,
Herkneth of a bourde · that Gamelyn dede.

He leet fetre the Iustice · and his false brother,
 And dede hem come to the barre · that oon with that other. 860
 Tho Gamelyn hadde thus y-doon · hadde he no reste,
 Til he had enquired · who was on the queste
 For to deme his brother · sir Ote, for to honge;
 Er he wiste which they were · him thoughte ful longe.
 But as sone as Gamelyn · wiste wher they were, 865
 He dede hem everichone · feteren in-feere,
 And bringen hem to the barre · and sette hem in rewe;
 'By my faith!' seyde the Iustice · 'the scherreve is a schrewe!'
 Than seyde Gamelyn · to the Iustise,
 'Thou hast y-yeve domes · of the wors assise; 870
 And the twelve sisours · that weren of the queste,
 They schul ben hanged this day · so have I good reste!'
 Thanne seide the scherreve · to yonge Gamelyn,
 'Lord, I crye the mercy · brother art thou myn.'
 'Therefore,' seyde Gamelyn · 'have thou Cristes curs, 875
 For, and thou were maister · yit I schulde have wors.'
 For to make short tale · and nought to tarie longe,
 He ordeyned him a queste · of his men so stronge;
 The Iustice and the scherreve · bothe honged hye,
 To weyven with the ropes · and with the winde drye; 880
 And the twelve sisours · (sorwe have that rekke!)
 Alle they were hanged · faste by the nekke.
 Thus ended the false knight · with his treccherye,
 That ever hadde y-lad his lyf · in falsnes and folye.
 He was hanged by the nekke · and nought by the purs; 885
 That was the meede that he hadde · for his fadres curs.

837. Hl. beende; Cp. Pt. Ln. bende. 838. Hl. Cp. heende; *rest* hende.
 843. Hl. *om.* the. Hl. Iugges; *rest* Iugge, Iuge. 845. Cp. Thanne; *rest*
 Than. 850. *I supply* a-two. 851. Hl. arm; *rest* armes. 854. Rl. Harl. ferd;
 Pt. feerd; Hl. Cp. fered; Ln. ferde. 855. MSS. sete. 857. stede] Hl. Rl.
 Cp. sete (*wrongly*). 859. Cp. Ln. false; *rest* fals. 861. Cp. hadde; Rl.
 hade; Hl. had (2nd time). 861, 862. Hl. rest, quest; *see ll.* 871, 872. 864.
 Hl. Cp. Ln. he; Rl. Pt. him; Harl. (1758) hym. 866. Cp. feteren; Hl.
 fetere. 872. Hl. *om.* good. 877. Hl. tarie; *rest om.* 878. Rl. Pt. Harl.
 quest; *rest* queste. 879. Cp. bep; *rest* bothe, both. 880. Hl. *om.* the *before*

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ropes. Hl. Rl. Cp. wynd; *rest* wynde, winde. 883. Cp. Ln. false; *rest* fals. 884. Cp. hadde; Ln. hade; *rest* had. 885. Hl. Pt. nek; *rest* necke, nekke. 886. Rl. Cp. hadde; *rest* had.

Sire Ote was eldest · and Gamelyn was ying,
They wenten with here frendes · even to the king;
They made pees with the king · of the best assise.
The king loved wel sir Ote · and made him Iustise. 890
And after, the king made Gamelyn · bothe in est and west,
Chief Iustice · of al his free forest;
Alle his wighte yonge men · the king foryaf here gilt,
And sitthen in good office · the king hem hath y-pilt.
Thus wan Gamelyn · his lond and his leede, 895
And wrak him of his enemys · and quitte hem here meede;
And sire Ote his brother · made him his heir,
And siththen wedded Gamelyn · a wyf bothe good and feyr;
They liveden to-gidere · whyl that Crist wolde,
And sithen was Gamelyn · graven under molde. 900
And so schal we alle · may ther no man flee:
God bringe us to the Ioye · that ever schal be!

888. Hl. They; *rest om.* Hl. freendes. Hl. euen to; Rl. Harl. and passeden to; Pt. and passed to; Cp. and passed with; Ln. and pesed with. 892. Hl. al; *rest om.* 896. Cp. Pt. quitte; Hl. quyt. 902. Ln. bringe; *rest* bryng, bring.

NOTES

[1] Not the same MS. as that called 'Harl.' in the foot-notes to Gamelyn.

[2] It only contains the clerk's Tale; see *Reliquiae*, ii. 68. The Longleat MS. no. 25, belonging to the Marquis of Bath, contains both the Knight's Tale and the Clerk's Tale.

[3] i.e. the gen. case of *physice*; 'Magister Artium et Physices' occurs in Longfellow's Golden Legend, p. vi.

[4] Tyrwhitt counts 252*b* and 252*c* as 253 and 254; but omits 3155, 3156; hence, in 3157-3720, the numbering is alike in the Six-text and T. He then omits 3721, 3722, making a difference of *two* lines. Wright follows Tyrwhitt's numbering in Group A, and in B 1-1162.

[5] T. counts B 1982, 1983 as one line; so also B 2002, 2003, and B 2012, 2013, and B 2076, 2077, making a difference of *four* lines; but, on the other hand, he expands B 1993 into *three* lines; hence, on the whole, a difference of *two* lines in this portion. See pp. 192, 193, and note to B 1993 in vol. v.

[6] Wright counts the lines as I do, but his numbering is in one place incorrect; after the line which he calls 15260, he counts the next thirteen lines as ten.

[7] As in the Six-text, I call each clause of Melibeus between the sloping marks *a line*, and so number it. So also in the Parson's Tale.

[8] T. cuts up the Tale into paragraphs. So also in the Parson's Tale (Group I). I have *numbered* these, for convenience; see head-lines, pp. 199-240.

[9] Sixteen lines short in Wright, because the Epilogue to the Nonne Prestes Tale (see p. 289) is relegated to a footnote.

[10] Twelve lines short; T. omits E 1305-6, F 671-2, 1455-6, 1493-8. Wright keeps E 1305-6, but does not count them, and omits the other ten.

[11] The dash (—) shews where the Groups end or are interrupted.

[12] The order of the divisions of this tale is different. The 'modern instances,' viz. Peter of Spain, Peter of Cyrus, Barnabo of Lombardy, and Ugolino of Pisa are placed at the end instead of coming in the middle.