

The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Wright's Chaste Wife, by Adam of Cobsam

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Title: The Wright's Chaste Wife
A Merry Tale (about 1462)

Author: Adam of Cobsam

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*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE WRIGHT'S CHASTE WIFE ***


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
This e-text uses a number of characters that depend on utf-8 encoding, particularly small and capital yogh (ȝ, Ȟ), small and capital thorn (þ, Þ), double l with a tilde through (𐝚), u with a macron (ū), h with a line through the top (ḥ), r with a upwards hook attached to the horizontal stem (ṛ) and æ ligature with an acute accent (ǽ). If they do not display properly, you may have an incompatible browser or unavailable fonts. As a first resort, try changing your browser's default font.

This e-text also uses some characters that are not in unicode. I have rendered them following:

{m~} for a m with a loop back over the character, which looks like 

{n)} for a n with a) attached to the right side, which looks like 

{d+} for the d with a little crook attached to the top right of the d, which looks like 

There is also one instance of (on line 391 of the poem) a m with a) attached to the right side (rendered as {m)} and looks like , but this is probably a typo for {m~}. I have left this as is.

Text and letters in brackets [] is original.

Obvious typos are corrected in this e-text and are shown with popups underlined in red.

The Wright's Chaste Wife.

Early English Text Society

Original Series, No. 12

1865

Reprinted 1891, 1905, 1965

Price 7s. 6d.

**The
Wright's Chaste Wife,
OR**

"A Fable of a wryght that was maryde to a pore
wydows dowtre / the whiche wydow havynge
noo good to geve *with* her / gave as for
a *precyous* Johell to hym a Rose
garlond / the whyche sche affermyd
wold *never* fade while sche
kept truly her wedlok."

A Merry Tale, by Adam of Cobsam.

From a MS. in the Library of the Archbishop of Canterbury, at Lambeth, about 1462 A.D.

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FREDERICK J. FURNIVALL.**

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PREFACE.

Good wine needs no bush, and this tale needs no Preface. I shall not tell the story of it—let readers go to the verse itself for that; nor shall I repeat to those who begin it the exhortation of the englisher of *Sir Generides*,

"for goddes sake, or ye hens wende,
Here this tale unto the ende." — (ll. 3769-70.)

If any one having taken it up is absurd enough to lay it down without finishing it, let him lose the fun, and let all true men pity him. Though the state of morals disclosed by the story is not altogether satisfactory, yet it is a decided improvement on that existing in Roberd of Brunne's time in 1303, for he had to complain of the lords of his day:

Also do þese lordynges,
Pe[y] trespass moche yn twey þynges;
Pey rauys a mayden aʒens here wyl,
And mennys wyuys þey lede away þertyl.
A grete vylanye þarte he dous
ʒyf he make therof hys rouse [boste]:
Pe dede ys confusyun,
And more ys þe dyffamacyun.

The volume containing the poem was shown to me by Mr Stubbs, the Librarian at Lambeth, in order that I might see the version of Sir Gygelayne, son of Sir Gawain, which Mr Morris is some day, I trust, to edit for the Society in one of his Gawain volumes.^[1] Finding the present poem also on the paper leaves, I copied it out the same afternoon, and here it is for a half-hour's amusement to any reader who chooses to take it up.

The handwriting of the MS. must be of a date soon after 1460, and this agrees well with the allusion to Edward the Fourth's accession, and the triumph of the White Rose o'er the Red alluded to in the last lines of the poem. The Garlond,

It was made ...
Of flourys most of honoure,
Of roses whyte þat wyth nott fade,
Whych floure at ynglond doth glade....
Vn-to the whych floure I-wys
The loue of God and of the comonys
Subdued bene of ryght.

For, that the Commons of England were glad of their Yorkist king, and loved Duke Richard's son, let Holinshed's record prove. He testifies:

"Wherevpon it was againe demanded of the commons, if they would admit and take the said erle as their prince and souereigne lord; which all with one voice cried: Yea, yea....

"Out of the ded stocke sprang a branch more mightie than the stem; this Edward the Fourth, a prince so highlie faouered of the peple, for his great liberalite, clemencie, vpright dealing, and courage, that aboue all other, he with them stood in grace alone: by reason whereof, men of all ages and degrees to him dailie repaired, some offering

themselves and their men to ioepard their liues with him, and other plentiouslie gaue monie to support his charges, and to mainteine his right."

[Pg vii]

Would that we knew as much of Adam of Cobsam as of our White-Rose king. He must have been one of the Chaucer breed,^[2] but more than this poem tells of him I cannot learn.

3, *St George's Square, N.W.*,
23 November, 1865.

P.S.—There are other Poems about Edward IV. in the volume, which will be printed separately.^[3] One on Women is given at the end of the present text.

P.P.S. 1869.—Mr C.H. Pearson, the historian of the Early and Middle Ages of England, has supplied me with the immediate original of this story. He says:

"The Wright's Chaste Wife is a reproduction of one of the *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. 69, de Castitate, ed. Keller. The Latin story begins 'Gallus regnavit prudens valde.' The Carpenter gets a shirt with his wife, which is never to want washing unless one of them is unfaithful. The lovers are three Knights (*milites*), and they are merely kept on bread and water, not made to work; nor is any wife introduced to see her lord's discomfiture. The English version, therefore, is much quainter and fuller of incident than its original. But the 'morality' of the Latin story is rich beyond description. 'The wife is holy Mother Church,' 'the Carpenter is the good Christian,' 'the shirt is our Faith, because, as the apostle says, it is impossible to please God without faith.' The Wright's work typifies 'the building up the pure heart by the works of mercy.' The three Knights are 'the pride of life, the lust of the eyes, and the lust of the flesh.' 'These you must shut up in the chamber of penance till you get an eternal reward from the eternal King.' 'Let us therefore pray God,' &c."

[Pg viii]

With the Wright's Chaste Wife may also be compared the stories mentioned in the Notes, p. 20, and the Ballad "The Fryer well fitted; or

A Pretty jest that once befel,
How a maid put a Fryer to cool in the well"

printed "in the Bagford Collection; in the Roxburghe (ii. 172); the Pepys (iii. 145); the Douce (p. 85); and in *Wit and Mirth, an Antidote to Melancholy*, 8vo. 1682; also, in an altered form, in *Pills to purge Melancholy*, 1707, i. 340; or 1719, iii. 325"; and the tune of which, with an abstract of the story, is given in Chappell's *Popular Music*, i. 273-5. The Friar makes love to the Maid; she refuses him for fear of hell-fire.

Tush, quoth the Friar, thou needst not doubt;
If thou wert in Hell, I could sing thee out.

So she consents if he'll bring her an angel of money. He goes home to fetch it, and she covers the well over with a cloth. When he comes back, and has given her the money, she pretends that her father is coming, tells the Friar to run behind the cloth, and down he flops into the well. She won't help him at first, because if he could sing her out of hell, he can clearly sing himself out of the well: but at last she does help him out, keeps his money because he's dirtied the water, and sends him home dripping along the street like a new-washed sheep.

[1] The since printing of the Romance in the Percy Folio MS. Ballads and Romances, (*Lybius Disconius*, ii. 404.) will probably render this unnecessary. (1869.)

[2] Chaucer brings off his Carpenter, though, triumphant, and not with the swived wife and broken arm that he gives his befooled Oxford craftsman in *The Miller's Tale*. (1869.)

[3] In *Political, Religious, and Love Poems*, E.E. Text Soc., 1867.

THE WRIGHT'S CHASTE WIFE.

[MS. Lambeth 306, leaves 178-187.]

[Pg 2] THE
WRIGHT
FALLS IN
LOVE, AND
PROPOSES.

Almyghty god, maker of alle, Saue you my souereyns in towre & halle, And send you good grace!	3	My sovereigns,
If ye wyth a stounde blynne, Of a story I wyth begynne, And telle you all the cas, Meny farleyes þat I haue herde, Ye would haue wondyr how yt ferde; Lystyn, and ye schall here;	6	I will tell you a tale
Of a wryght I wyth you telle, That some tyme in thys land gan dwelle, And lyued by hys myster.	9	of a wright of this land,
Whether that he were yn or owte, Of erthely man hadde he no dowte, To werke hows, harowe, nor plowgh, Or other werkes, what so they were, Thous wrought he hem farre and nere, And dyd tham wele I-nough.	12	who, at work, was afraid of no earthly m
Thys wryght would wedde no wyfe, Butt yn yougeth to lede hys lyfe In myrthe and oper melody;	15	
Ouer all where he gan wende, All they seyde "welcome, frende, Sytt downe, and do gla[d]ly."	18	At first he would wed no wife,
Tyth on a tyme he was wylling, As tyme comyth of alle thyng, (So seyth the profesye.)	21	[leaf 178, back] for wherever he went he was welcome;
A wyfe for to wedde & haue That myght hys goodes kepe and saue, And for to leue all foly.	24	but at last he wished
Ther dwellyd a wydowe in þat contre That hadde a doughter feyre & fre; Of her, word sprang wyde, For sche was bothe stabyll & trewe, Meke of maners, and feyr of hewe; So seyde men in that tyde.	27	to have a spouse to look after his goods.
The wryght seyde, "so god me saue, Such a wyfe would I haue To lye nyghtly by my syde."	30	A widow near had a fair daughter
He þought to speke wyth þat may, And rose erly on a daye And þyder gan he to ryde.	33	true and meek.
The wryght was welcome to þe wyfe, And her saluyd all so blyve, And so he dyd her doughter fre;	36	
For the erand that he for ca{m~} Tho he spake, þat good yema{n}; Than to hym seyde sche:	39	Her the wright would like to lie by him,
The wydowe seyde, "by heuen kyng, I may geue wyth her no þing, (And þat forthynketh me;)	42	and therefore went to her mother
	45	
	48	and proposed for the maiden.
	51	The mother says she can only give him a

[Pg 3]	HE RECEIVES A ROSE GARLAND WITH HIS WIFE.	Saue a garlond I wyll the geue,		a garland
		Ye schall neuer see, whyle ye lyve,		
		None such in thys contre:	54	
		Haue here thys garlond of roses ryche,		of roses
		In all thys lond ys none yt lyche,		
		For ytt wyll neuer be newe,	57	that will keep its colour
		Wete þou wele withowtyn fable,		[leaf 179]
		All the whyle thy wyfe ys stable		while his wife is true,
		The chaplett wolde hold hewe;	60	
		And yf thy wyfe vse putry,		but change when she is faithless.
[Pg 4]	THE WRIGHT GOES TO WORK, AND LEAVES HIS WIFE AT HOME.	Or tolle eny man to lye her by,		
		Than wolde yt change hewe,	63	
		And by the garlond þou may see,		
		Fekyll or fals yf þat sche be,		
		Or ellys yf sche be trewe."	66	
		Of thys chaplett hym was full fayne,		The wright is delighted with his garland
		And of hys wyfe, was nott to layne;		
		He weddyd her full sone,	69	marries her and takes her home;
		And ladde her home wyth solempnite,		
		And hyld her brydall dayes thre.		
		Whan they home come,	72	
		Thys wryght in hys hart cast,		and then begins to think that when he is
		If that he walkyd est or west		
		As he was wonte to done,	75	
		"My wyfe þat ys so bryght of ble,		men will try to corrupt his wife.
		Men wolde desyre her fro me,		
		And þat hastily and sone;"	78	
		Butt sone he hym bypought		So he plans a crafty room and tower,
		That a chambyr schuld be wrought		
		Bothe of lyme and stone,	81	
		Wyth wallys strong as eny stele,		
		And dorres sotylylly made and wele,		
		He owte framyd yt sone;	84	
		The chambyr he lett make fast,		and builds it soon with plaster of Paris,
		Wyth plaster of parys þat wyll last,		
		Such ous know I neuer none;	87	
		Ther ys [ne] kyng ne emperoure,		which no one could ever get out of if he
		And he were lockyn in þat towre,		into it,
		That cowde gete owte of þat wonne.	90	
		Nowe hath he done as he þought,		
		And in the myddes of the flore wrought		
		A wondyr strange gyle,	93	
		A trapdoure rounde abowte		for there was a trapdoor in the middle,
		That no man myght come yn nor owte;		[leaf 179, back]
		It was made wyth a wyle,	96	
		That who-so touchyd yt eny thyng,		and if any one only touched it, down he'd
		In to þe pytt he schuld flyng		pit.
		Wythyn a lyttel whyle.	99	
		For hys wyfe he made that place,		This was to stop any tricks with his wife
		That no man schuld beseke her of grace,		
		Nor her to begyle.	102	
		By þat tyme þe lord of the towne		Just then the town Lord
		Hadde ordeynyd tymbyr redy bowne,		
		An halle to make of tre.	105	
		After the wryght the lord lett sende,		sends for him to build a Hall,
		For þat he schuld wyth hym lende		
		Monythys two or thre.	108	(a job for two or three months.)

The lord seyð, "woulst þou haue þi wyfe?		
I wyth send after her blyve		and offers to fetch his wife too.
That sche may com to the."	111	
The wryght hys garlond hadde take wyth hy{m~},		
That was bryght and no þing dymme,		
Yt wes feyre on to see.	114	
The lord axyd hym as he satt,		He sees the wright's garland, and asks w
"Felowe, where hadyst þou þis hatte		means.
That ys so feyre and newe?"	117	
The wryght answerd aH so blyue,		"Sir, it will
And seyð, "syr, I hadde yt wyth my wyfe,		
And þat dare me neuer rewe;	120	tell me whether my wife is false or true;
Syr, by my garlond I may see		
FekyH or fals yf þat sche be,		
Or ^[1] yf þat sche be trewe;	123	and will change its colour if she go wron
And yf my wyfe loue a paramoure,		
Than wyth my garlond vade coloure,		
And change wyth yt the hewe."	126	
The lord þought "by godys myght,		"I'll try that," thinks the Lord,
That wyth I wete thys same nyght		
Whether thys tale be trewe."	129	and goes to the wright's wife.
To the wryghtys howse anon he went,		
He fonde the wyfe ther-in presente		
That was so bryght and schene;	132	[leaf 180]
Sone he hayled her trewly,		
And so dyd sche the lord curtesly:		
Sche seyð, "welcome ye be;"	135	
Thus seyð the wyfe of the hows,		She asks after her husband
"Syr, howe faryth my swete spouse		
That hewyth vpon your tre?"	138	but the Lord
"Sertes, dame," he seyð, "wele,		
And I am come, so haue I hele,		
To wete the wylle of the;	141	declares his own love for her,
My loue ys so vpon the cast		
That me thynketh my hert wolle brest,		
It wolle none otherwyse be;	144	and prays her to grant him his will.
Good dame, graunt me thy grace		
To pley with the in some preuy place		
For gold and eke for fee."	147	She entreats him to let that be,
"Good syr, lett be youre fare,		
And of such wordes speke no mare		
For hys loue þat dyed on tre;	150	
Hadde we onys begonne þat gle,		
My husbond by his garlond myght see;		
For sorowe he would wexe woode."	153	but he presses her,
"Certes, dame," he seyð, "naye;		
Loue me, I pray you, in þat ye maye:		
For godys loue change thy mode,	156	and offers her 40 marks.
Forty marke schall be youre mede		
Of syluer and of gold[e] rede,		
And that schall do the good."	159	On this she consents if he'll put down the
"Syr, that deede schall be done;		
Take me that mony here anone."		
"I swere by the holy rode	162	
I thought when I cam hydder		
For to bryng ^[2] yt aH to-gydder,		
As I mott broke my heele."	165	The 40 marks she takes

[Pg 6]	THE LORD IS DROPPED THROUGH A TRAPDOOR,	Ther sche toke xl marke Of syluer and gold styff and sterke:		
		Sche toke yt feyre and welle;	168	and tells him to go
		Sche seyde, "in to the chambyr wyth we, Ther no man schalt vs see;		[leaf 180, back]
		No lenger wyth we spare."	171	into the secret chamber.
		Vp the steyer they gan ^[3] hye:		Upstairs he goes,
		The stepes were made so queyntly That farther myght he nott fare.	174	
		The lord stumbyllyd as he went in hast, He fell doune in to þat chaste		stumbles,
		Forty fote and somedeke more.	177	and pops down 40 feet through the wright trapdoor.
		The lord began to crye; The wyfe seyde to hym in hye, "Syr, what do ye there?"	180	
		"Dame, I can nott seye howe That I am come hydder nowe		He prays the
		To thys hows þat ys so newe;	183	
		I am so depe in thys sure flore That I ne can come owte att no dore;		
		Good dame, on me þou rewe!"	186	good dame to have pity on him.
		"Nay," sche seyde, "so mut y the, Tyth myne husbond come and se,		"Nay," says she, "not till my husband see
		I schrewe hym þat yt þought."	189	
		The lord arose and lokyd abowte If he myght eny where gete owte,		The Lord tries to get out, but can't,
		Butt yt holpe hy{m~} ryght noght, The wallys were so thycke wyth{y{n}},	192	
		That he no where myght owte wynne But helpe to hy{m~} were brought;	195	
		And euer the lord made euyth chere, And seyde, "dame, þou schalt by thys dere."		and then threatens the wife,
		Sche seyde that sche ne rought;	198	
		Sche seyde "I recke nere Whyle I am here and þou art there,		but she doesn't care for that,
		I schrewe herre þat þe doth drede."	201	
		The lord was sone owte of her þought, The wyfe went in to her lofte,		and goes away to her work.
[Pg 7]	AND HAS TO BEAT FLAX TO EARN HIS DINNER.	Sche satte and dyde her dede.	204	
		Than yt fell on þat oþer daye, Of mete and drynke he gan her pray,		Next day the Lord begs for food.
		There of he hadde gret nede.	207	
		He seyde, "dame, for seynt charyte, Wyth some mete þou comfort me."		[leaf 181]
		Sche seyde, "nay, so god me spede, For I swere by swete seynt Iohne,	210	"You'll get none from me
		Mete ne drynke ne getyst þou none Butt þou wylt swete or swynke;	213	unless you sweat for it," says she; "spin me some flax."
		For I haue both hempe and lyne, And a betyngstocke full fyne,		
		And a swyngyng good and grete; If þou wylt worke, tell me sone."	216	
		"Dame, bryng yt forthe, yt schalt be done, Full gladly would I etc."	219	He says he will:
		Sche toke the stocke in her honde, And in to the pytt sche yt sclang		she throws him the tools,
		With a grete hete:	222	
		Sche brought the lyne and hempe on her backe,		the flax and hemp,

[Pg 8] THE
STEWARD
RESOLVES
TO TEMPT
THE
WRIGHT'S
WIFE.

[Pg 9] AND
THINKS HE
HAS
SUCCEEDED
SO WELL.

"Syr lord," sche seyde, "haue þou þat, And lerne for to swete."	225	and says, "Work away."
Ther sche toke hym a bonde For to occupy hys honde, And bade hym fast on to bete.	228	
He leyde yt downe on the ^[4] stone, And leyde on strookes wel ^{ll} good wone, And sparyde nott on to leyne.	231	He does, lays on well,
Whan þat he hadde wrought a thraue, Mete and drynke he gan to craue, And would haue hadde yt fayne;	234	and then asks for his food,
"That I hadde somewhat for to ete Now after my gret swete; Me thynketh yt were ryght, For I haue labouryd nyght and daye The for to plesse, dame, I saye, And therto putt my myght."	237	for he's toiled night and day.
The wyfe seyde "so mutt I haue hele, And yf þi worke be wrought wele Thou schalt haue to dyne."	240	The wife
Mete and drynke sche hym bare, Wyth a thraue of flex mare Of full ^{ll} long boundyn lyne.	243	gives him meat and drink
So feyre the wyfe the lord gan praye That he schuld be werkyng aye, And nought þat he schuld blynne;	246	[leaf 181, back] and more flax,
The lord was fayne to werke tho, Butt hys men knewe nott of hys woo Nor of þer lordes pyne.	249	and keeps him up to his work.
	252	
The stuard to þe wryght gan saye, "Sawe þou owte of my lord to-daye, Whether that he ys wende?"	255	The Steward asks the wright after his Lo
The wryght answerde and seyde "naye; I sawe hym nott syth yesterdaye; I trowe þat he be schent."	258	
The stuard stode þe wryght by, And of hys garlond hadde ferly What þat yt be-mente.	261	then notices the garland,
The stuard seyde, "so god me saue, Of thy garlond wondyr I haue, And who yt hath the sent."	264	and asks who gave it him.
"Syr," he seyde, "be the same hatte I can knowe yf my wyfe be badde To me by eny other ma{n}";	267	"Sir, it will tell me whether my wife goe:
If my floures ouþer fade or falle, Then doth my wyfe me wrong wyth-alle, As many a woman ca{n}."	270	
The stuard þought "by godes myght, That schall ^{ll} I preue thys same nyght Whether þou blys or banne,"	273	"I'll prove that this very night," says the :
And in to hys chambyr he gan gone, And toke tresure full ^{ll} good wone, And forth he spedde hem tha{n}.	276	gets plenty of money, and goes off
Butt he ne stynt att no stone Tyll ^{ll} he vn-to þe wryghtes hows come That ylke same nyght.	279	to the wright's house,
He mett the wyfe amydd the gate,		

Abowte þe necke he gan her take, And seyð "my dere wyght, Aþ the good þat ys myne I wyth the geue to be thyne To lye by the aþ nyght." Sche seyð, "syr, lett be thy fare, My husbond wolle wete wyth-owty{n}} mare And I hym dyd that vnryght; I would nott he myght yt wete For aþ the good that I myght gete, So Ihesus ^[5] mutt me spede For, and eny man lay me by, My husbond would yt wete truly, It ys wythowtyn eny drede." The stuard seyð "for hym þat ys wrought, There-of, dame, drede the noght Wyth me to do that dede; Haue here of me xx marke Of gold and syluer styf and starke, Thys tresoure schat be thy mede." "Syr, and I graunt þat to yō, Lett no man wete butt we two nowe." He seyð, "nay, wythowtyn drede." The stuard þought, 'sykerly Women beth both queynte & slye.' The mony he gan her bede; He þought wele to haue be spedde, And of his erand he was onredde Or he were fro he{m~} I-gone. Vp the sterys sche hym leyde Tyth he saw the wryghtes bedde: Of tresoure þought he none; He went and stumblyd att a stone; In to þe seller he fylle sone, Downe to the bare flore. The lord seyð "what deuyth art þou? And þou hadest falle on me nowe, Thowe hadest hurt me furth sore." The stuard stert and staryd abowte If he myght ower gete owte Att hole lesse or mare. The lord seyð, "welcome, and sytt be tyme, For þou schalt helpe to dyght thys lyne For aþ thy fers[e] fare." The stuard lokyd on the knyght, He seyð, "syr, for godes myght, My lord, what do you here?" He seyð "felowe, wyth-owtyn oth, For o erand we come bothe, The sothe wolle I nott lete." Tho cam the wyfe them vn-to, And seyð, "syres, what do you to, Wyth ye nott lerne to swete?" Than seyð þe lord her vn-to, 'Dame, your lyne ys I-doo, Nowe would I fayne ete: And I haue made yt aþ I-lyke,	282 285 288 291 294 297 300 303 306 309 312 315 318 321 324 327 330 333 336	takes her round the neck, and offers her all [leaf 182] he has, to lie by her that night. She refuses, as her husband would be sure to know of The steward urges her again, and offers her 20 marks. She says, "Then don't tell any one," takes his money, sends him up the quaint stairs, and lets him tumble through the trapdoor "What the devil are you?" says the Lord. [leaf 182, back] The steward finds he can't get out; and wonders why his Lord is there. "We both came on one errand, man." The wife asks what they're doing; the Lord says, "Your flax is done, and I want my dinner
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[Pg 11] BUT IS PROUD, AND WILL NOT WORK FOR HIS DINNER.	Fulclere, and no þing thycke, Me thynketh yt gret payne."	339	The steward says if he ever gets out he'll skull.
	The stuard seyð "wyth-owtyn dowte, And euer I may wynne owte, I wyth breke her brayne."	342	But the wife chaffs him,
	"Felowe, lett be, and sey nott so, For þou schalt worke or euer þou goo, Thy wordes þou torne agayne,	345	says he'll soon be glad to eat his words,
	Fayne þou schalt be so to doo, And thy good wyll put þerto; As a man buxome and bayne	348	and unless he rubs and reels, he'll get no
	Thowe schalt rubbe, rele, and spynne, And þou wolt eny mete wynne, That I geue to god a gyfte."	351	"I'll die for hunger first, unhouseled," an:
	The stuard seyð, "then haue I wondyr; Rather would I dy for hungyr Wyth-owte hosy or shryfte."	354	
	The lord seyð, "so haue I hele, Thowe wylt worke, yf þou hungyr welle, What worke þat the be brought."	357	[leaf 183] The Lord works away,
	The lord satt and dyd hys werke, The stuard drewe in to the derke, Gret sorowe was in hys þought.	360	
	The lord seyð, "dame, here ys youre lyne, Haue yt in godes blessing and myne, I hold yt welle I-wrought."	363	and gets his food and drink.
	Mete and drynke sche gaue hym y{n}, "The stuard," sche seyð, "wolle he nott spynne, Wyth he do ryght noght?"	366	
[Pg 12] THE STEWARD IS OBLIGED TO WORK AFTER ALL.	The lord seyð, "by swete sen Ione, Of thys mete schalt he haue none That ye haue me hydder brought."	369	None of it will he give to the steward, but eats it all up,
	The lord ete and dranke fast, The stuard hungeryd att þe last, For he gaue hym nought.	372	
	The stuard satt att in a stody, Hys lord hadde forgote curtesy: Tho ^[6] seyð þe stuard, "geue me some."	375	and won't give him one crumb:
	The lord seyð, "sorowe haue þe morse or sope That schalt come in thy throte! Nott so much as o crome!"	378	let him work and earn some for himself.
	Butt þou wylt helpe to dyght þis lyne, Much hungyr yt schalt be thyne Though þou make much mone."	381	The steward gives in,
	Vp he rose, and went therto, "Better ys me þus to doo Whyle yt must nedys be do."	384	asks for work; the wife throws it him,
	The stuard began fast to knocke, The wyfe þrew hym a swyngelyng stocke, Hys mete þerwyth to wy{n};	387	
	Sche brought a swyngyatt att þe last, "Good syres," sche seyð, "swyngylle on fast; For no þing that ye blynne."	390	
	Sche gaue hy{m} a stocke to sytt vppo{n}, And seyð "syres, þis werke must nedys be done, Att that that ys here y{n}."	393	
	The stuard toke vp a stycke to saye,		[leaf 183, back] and steward and Lord are both spinning :

[Pg 13] THE
PROCTOR
TEMPTS
THE WIFE,
AND IS
TRAPDOORED

"Sey, seye, swyngy ^{ll} better yf ye may, Hytt wy ^{ll} be the better to spynne." Were þe lord neuer so gret, Yet was he fayne to werke for hys mete Though he were neuer so sadde; Butt þe stuard þat was so stowde, Was fayne to swyngelle þe scales owte, Ther-of he was nott glad. The lordys meyne þat were att home Wyst nott where he was bycome, They were fur ^{ll} sore adrad.	396 399 402 405	 to earn their dinner, while the Lord's people cannot make out become of him.
The proctoure of þe parysche chyrche ryght Came and lokyd on þe wryght, He lokyd as he ware madde; Fast þe proctoure gan hym frayne, "Where hadest þou þis garlond gayne? It ys euer lyke newe." The wryght gan say "felowe, Wyth my wyfe, yf þou wylt knowe; That dare me nott rewe; For a ^{ll} the whyle my wyfe trew ys, My garlond wolde hold hewe I-wys, And neuer falle nor fade; And yf my wyfe take a paramoure, Than wolde my garlond vade þe floure, That dare I ley myne hede."	 408 411 414 417 420	Then the Proctor sees the wright and asks where he got his garland from. "With my wife; and while she is true it will never fade, but if she's false it will."
The proctoure þought, "in good faye That schat ^{ll} I wete thys same daye Whether yt may so be." To the wryghtes hows he went, He grete þe wyfe wyth feyre entente, Sche seyde "syr, welcome be ye." "A! dame, my loue ys on you fast Syth the tyme I sawe you last; I pray you yt may so be That ye would graunt me of your grace To play wyth you in some priuy place, Or ellys to deth mutt me." Fast þe proctoure gan to pray, And euer to hy ^m sche seyde "naye, That wolde I nott doo. Hadest þou done þat dede wyth me, My spouse by hys garlond myght see, That schuld torne me to wooo." The proctoure seyde, "by heuen kyng, If he sey to the any þing He schat ^{ll} haue sorowe vn-sowte; Twenty marke I wolde þe geue, It wolde þe helpe welle to lyue, The mony here haue I brought." Nowe hath sche the tresure tane, And vp þe steyre be they gane, (What helpyth yt to lye?) The wyfe went the steyre be-syde, The proctoure went a lyty ^{ll} to wyde He fel ^{ll} downe by and by. Whan he in to þe seller felle,	 423 426 429 432 435 438 441 444 447 450	The proctor thinks he'll test this, goes to the wright's wife and declares his love for her; he must have her or die. [leaf 184] She says nay, as her husband will know of it by his gar The proctor offers her 20 marks. These she takes; they go upstairs, and the proctor tumbles into the cellar,

[Pg 14] THE PROCTOR CAN'T MAKE OUT WHERE HE HAS GOT TO.	He wente to haue sonke in to helle,		and thinks he is going to hell.
	He was in hart full sory.	453	
	The stuard lokyd on the knyght,		
	And seyde "proctoure, for godes myght,		The steward asks him to sit down;
	Come and sytt vs by."	456	
	The proctoure began to stare,		
	For he was he wist neuer whare,		he doesn't know where he is,
	Butt wele he knewe þe knyght	459	
	And the stuard þat swyngelyd þe lyne.		
	He seyde "syres, for godes pyne,		but asks what the Lord and steward are a
	What do ye here thys nyght?"	462	
	The stuard seyde, "god geue the care,		
	Thowe camyst to loke howe we fare,		
	Nowe helpe þis lyne were dyght."	465	
	He stode styll in a gret þought,		
	What to answer he wist noght:		
	"By mary full of myght,"	468	
	The proctoure seyde, "what do ye in þis yne		working the wife's flax;
	For to bete thys wyfes lyne?		
	For Ihesus loue, full of myght,"	471	[leaf 184, back]
	The proctoure seyde ryght as he þought,		
	"For me yt schall be euyl wrought		he, the proctor, will never do the like,
	And I may see aryght,	474	
	For I lernyd neuer in lon{d+}		it's not his trade.
	For to haue a swyngel in hond		
	By day nor be nyght."	477	
	The stuard seyde, "as good as þou.		The steward says, "We're as good as you
	We hold vs that be here nowe,		
	And lett preue yt be syght;	480	
	Yet must vs worke for owre mete,		have to work for our food."
	Or ellys schall we none gete,		
	Mete nor drynke to owre honde."	483	
	The lord seyde, "why flyte ye two?		The Lord says, "And you'll have to work
	I trowe ye wyll werke or ye goo,		go."
	Yf yt be as I vnderstonde."	486	
	Abowte he goys twyes or thryes;		
	They ete & drunke in such wyse		They eat and drink, and give the proctor
	That þey geue hym ryght noght.	489	
	The proctoure seyde, "thynke ye no schame,		
	Yheue me some mete, (ye be to blame.)		to his great disgust,
[Pg 15] HE HAS TO WIND AND SPIN FOR HIS DINNER.	Of that the wyfe ye brought."	492	
	The stuard seyde "euyl spede the soppe		
	If eny morcel come in thy throte		
	Butt þou wyll vs hadest wrought."	495	
	The proctoure stode in a stody		till at last
	Whether he myght werke hem by;		
	And so to torne hys þought,	498	
	To the lord he drewe nere,		
	And to hym seyde wyll myld[e] chere,		
	"That mary mott the spede!"	501	he too knocks for work,
	The proctoure began to knocke,		
	The good wyfe rawte hym a rocke,		
	For therto hadde sche nede;	504	
	Sche seyde "whan I was mayde att home,		
	Other werke cowde I do none		
	My lyfe ther-wyll to lede."	507	
	Sche gaue hym in hande a rocke hynde,		gets a distaff and some winding to do,
	And bade hem fast for to wynde		

[Pg 16] THE
WRIGHT
COMES
HOME AND
FINDS THE
THREE
CULPRITS.

Or ellys to lett be hys dede.	510	[leaf 185]
"Yes, dame," he seyde, "so haue I hele, I schalt yt worke both feyre & welle		
As ye haue taute me."	513	
He wauyd vp a strycke of lyne, And he span wele and fyne		and spins away well.
By-fore the swyngel tre.	516	
The lord seyde "þou spynnest to grete, Therfor þou schalt haue no mete,		
That þou schalt wel see."	519	
Thus þey satt and wrought fast Tyll þe wekedayes were past;		Thus they all sit and work till the wright home.
Then the wryght, home came he, And as he cam by hys hows syde	522	
He herd ^[7] noyse that was nott ryde Of persons two or thre;	525	As he approaches he hears a noise.
One of hem knockyd lyne, A-nothyr swyngelyd good and fyne		
By-fore the swyngel tre,	528	
The thyrde did rele and spynne, Mete and drynke ther-wyth to wynne,		
Gret nede ther-of hadde he.	531	
Thus þe wryght stode herkenyng; Hys wyfe was ware of hys comyng,		his wife comes to meet him,
And ageynst hym went sche.	534	
"Dame," he seyde, "what ys þis dynne? I here gret noyse here wythynne;		and he asks what all that noise is about.
Tell me, so god the spede."	537	
"Syr," sche seyde, "workemen thre Be come to helpe you and me,		"Why, three workmen have come to help
Ther-of we haue gret nede; Fayne would I wete what they were."	540	Who are they?"
Butt when he sawe hys lord there, Hys hert bygan to drede:	543	The wright sees his Lord in the pit,
To see hys lord in þat place, He þought yt was a strange cas,		
And seyde, "so god hym spede, What do ye here, my lord and knyght?	546	and asks how
Tell me nowe for godes myght Howe cam thys vn-to?"	549	[leaf 185, back] he came there.
The knyght seyde "What ys best rede? Mercy I aske for my mysdede,		The Lord asks mercy: he is very sorry.
My hert ys wondyr wo."	552	
"So ys myne, verament, To se you among thys flex and hempe,		"So am I," says the wright, "to see you a flax and hemp,"
Ful sore yt ruyth me; To se you in such hevynes,	555	
Ful sore myne hert yt doth oppresse, By god in trinite."	558	
The wryght bade hys wyfe lett hy{m~} owte, "Nay, þen sorowe come on my snowte		and orders his wife to let the Lord out. "No, bother my snout if I do," says the w
If they passe hens to-daye Tyll that my lady come and see	561	"before his lady sees what he wanted to c me."
Howe þey would haue done wyth me, Butt nowe late me saye."	564	
Anon sche sent after the lady bryght For to fett home her lord and knyght,		So she sends for the dame to fetch her lo
Therto sche seyde noght;	567	

Sche told her what they hadde ment,
And of ther purpos & ther intente
That they would haue wrought.
Glad was þat lady of that tydyng;
When sche wyst her lord was lyuyng,
Ther-of sche was full fayne:
Whan sche came vn-to þe steyre aboue{n)},
Sche lokyd vn-to þe seller downe,
And seyde,—þis ys nott to leyne,—
"Good syres, what doo you here?"
"Dame, we by owre mete full dere,
Wyth gret trauayle and peyne;
I pray you helpe þat we were owte,
And I wyth swere wyth-owtyn dowte
Neuer to come here agayne."
The lady spake the wyfe vn-tylle,
And seyde "dame, yf yt be youre wylle,
What doo thes meyny here?"
The carpentarys wyfe her answerd sykerly,
"Aþ they would haue leyne me by;
Euerych, in ther manere,
Gold and syluer they me brought,
And forsoke yt, and would yt noght,
The ryche gyftes so clere.
Wyllyng þey were to do me schame,
I toke ther gyftes wyth-owtyn blame,
And ther they be aþ thre."
The lady answerd her ano{n)},
"I haue thynges to do att home
Mo than two or thre;
I wyst my lord neuer do ryght noght
Of no þing þat schuld be wrought,
Such as fallyth to me."
The lady lawghed and made good game
Whan they came owte aþ in-same
From the swyngyþ tre.
The knyght seyde "felowys in fere,
I am glad þat we be here,
By godes dere pyte;
Dame, and ye hadde bene wyth vs,
Ye would haue wrought, by swete Ihesus,
As welle as dyd we."
And when they cam vp aboue{n)}
They turnyd abowte and lokyd downe,
The lord seyde, "so god saue me,
Yet hadde I neuer such a fyte
As I haue hadde in þat lowe pytte;
So mary so mutt me spede."
The knyght and thys lady bryght,
Howe they would home that nyght,
For no thyng they would abyde;
And so they went home;
Thys seyde Adam of Cobsa{m~}.^[8]
By the weye as they rode
Throue a wode in ther playeng,
For to here the fowlys syng
They hovyde styll and bode.
The stuard sware by godes ore,

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and tells her what he and his companion:
there for.

The lady

looks down into the cellar,
and says, "Good sirs, what are you doing

"Earning our meat full dear:

help us out, and I'll never come here aga

The lady asks the wife why

[leaf 186]

the men are there

The wife says they wanted to lie with he
offered her gold and silver;

she took their gifts, and there they are.

The lady says she really wants her lord f

and laughs heartily when the three culpri
out.

The Lord says,

"Ah, you'd have worked too if you'd bee

I never had such a turn in my life before.
you."

Then the Lord and lady go home,

as ADAM of COBSAM says.

[leaf 186, back]

On their way home

they halt,
and the steward and proctor swear they'll

[Pg 19] MAY ALL
GOOD
WIVES GO
TO HEAVEN!

And so dyd the proctoure much more, That neuer in ther lyfe	627	back for five and forty years.
Would they no more come in þat wonne Whan they were onys thens come, Thys forty yere and fyve.	630	The lady gives all their money to the wri
Of the tresure that they brought, The lady would geue hem ryght noght, Butt gaue yt to the wryghtes wyfe.	633	The garland is fresh as ever.
Thus the wryghtes garlond was feyre of hewe, And hys wyfe bothe good and trewe: There-of was he full blythe;	636	
I take wytnes att gret and smaþ, Thus trewe bene good women aþ	639	Thus true are all good women now alive
That nowe bene on lyve, So come thryste on ther hedys Whan they mombyþ on ther bedys Ther pater noster ryue.	642	
Here ys wretyn a geste of the wryght That hadde a garlond weþ I-dyght, The coloure wyþ neuer fade.	645	Here then is written a tale of the Wright : Garland.
Now god, þat ys heuyn kyng, Graunt vs aþ hys dere blessyng Owre hertes for to glade;	648	God grant us all his blessing, and may all true faithful wives
And aþ tho that doo her husbondys ryght, Pray we to Ihesu full of myght, That feyre mott hem byfalle,	651	come to heaven's bliss,
And that they may come to heuen blys, For thy dere moderys loue ther-of nott to mys, Alle good wyues alle.	654	and be such
Now alle tho that thys tretys hath hard, Ihesu graunt hem, for her reward, As trew louers to be	657	true lovers as the
As was the wryght vn-to hys wyfe And sche to hym duryng her lyfe. Amen, for charyte.	660	[leaf 187] wright and his wife were. Amen!
Here endyth the wryghtes processe trewe Wyth hys garlond feyre of hewe That neuer dyd fade the coloure.	663	Here ends our tale of the Garland
It was made, by the avyse Of hys wywes moder wytty and wyse, Of flourys most of honoure,	666	which was made of White Roses, the flowers that gladden all England,
Of roses whyte þat wyþ nott fade, Whych floure aþ ynglond doth glade, Wyth trewloues medelyd in syght;	669	
Vn-to the whych floure I-wys The loue of god and of the comenys Subdued ^[9] bene of ryght.		and receive the love of God, and of the C too.

Explicit.

[1] MS. *of*

[2] *or hyng.* ? MS.

[3] MS. *gar*

[4] ? MS. *this.*

- [5] MS. *lhc*
- [6] MS. *The*
- [7] ? MS. *hard*
- [8] The letter between the *b* and *a* has had the lower part marked over. But it must mean a long *s*.
- [9] May be *subdied*; the word has been corrected.

[Pg 20]

NOTES.

The two first of the three operations of flax-dressing described in lines 526-529, p. 15,

One of hem knocked lyne,
A-nothyr swyngelyd good and fyne
By-fore the swyngy~~ll~~-tre,
The thyrd did rele and spynne,

must correspond to the preliminary breaking of the plant, and then the scutching or beating to separate the coarse tow or hards from the tare or fine hemp. Except so far as the *swingle* served as a heckle, the further *heckling* of the flax, to render the fibre finer and cleaner, was dispensed with, though heckles (iron combs) must have been in use when the poem was written—inasmuch as *hekele*, *hekelare*, *hekelyn*, and *hekelynge*, are in the Promptorium, ab. 1440 A.D. Under *Hatchell*, Randle Holme gives a drawing of a heckle.

The lines through the *h*'s in the MS. are not, I believe, marks of contraction. There are no insettings of the third lines, or spaces on changes of subject, in the MS.

For reference to two analogous stories to that of the Poem, I am indebted to Mr Thomas Wright. The first is that of *Constant Duhamel* in the third volume of Barbazan, and the second that of the Prioress and her three Suitors in the Minor Poems of Dan John Lydgate, published by the Percy Society, ed. Halliwell.

In the Barbazan tale "the wife is violently solicited by three suitors, the priest, the provost, and the forester, who on her refusal persecute her husband. To stop their attacks she gives them appointments at her house immediately after one another, so that when one is there and stripped for the bath, another comes, and, pretending it is her husband, she conceals them one after another in a large tub full of feathers, out of which they can see all that is going on in the room. She then sends successively for their three wives to come and bathe with her, the bath being still in the same room, and as each is stripped naked in the bath, she introduces her own husband, who dishonours them one after another, one *à l'enverse*, with rather aggravating circumstances, and all in view of their three husbands. Finally the latter are turned out of the house naked, or rather well feathered, then hunted by the whole town and their dogs, well bitten and beaten."

(If any one wants to see a justification of the former half of the proverb quoted by Roberd of Brunne,

Frenche men synne yn lecherye
And Englys men yn enuye,

let him read the astounding revelation made of the state of the early French mind by the tales in the 3rd and 4th vols. of Barbazan's *Fabliaux*, ed. 1808.)

The second story, told by Lydgate, is as follows:—A prioress is wooed by "a yonng knyght, a parson of a paryche, and a burges of a borrow." She promises herself to the first if he will lie for a night in a chapel sewn up in a sheet like a corpse; to the second, if he will perform the funeral service over the knight, and bury him; to the third, if he will dress up like a devil, and frighten both

parson and knight. This the burges Sir John does well, but is himself terrified at the corpse getting up: all three run away from one another: the knight falls on a stake, and into a snare set for bucks, and breaks his fore top in falling from the tree; the merchant gets tossed by a bull; the parson breaks his head and jumps into a bramble bush; and the prioress gets rid of them all, but not before she has made the "burges" or "marchaunt" pay her twenty marks not to tell his wife and the country generally of his tricks.—*Minor Poems*, p. 107-117, ed. 1840.

[Pg 21]

GLOSSARY.

And, 89, 292, if.
 Bayne, 348, ready.
 Blynne, 4, cease, stop; AS. *blinnan*.
 Blyue, 44, 110, 118, speedily.
 Bonde, 226, a bund-le; Du. *bondt*, a bavin, a bush of thornes.
 Brayne, 342, scull.
 Broke, 165, enjoy. AS. *brúcan*, Germ. *brauchen*. H. Coleridge.
 Brydalle, 71, AS. *brýd-ál*, bride ale, marriage feast.
 By, 197, buy.
 Chaste, 176, chest, box, pit.
 Dowte, 14, fear.
 Dyght, 323, 379, prepare, dress.
 Fare, 148, 324, going on, wish, project.
 Fere, 604, company.
 Flyte, 484, wrangle, quarrel; AS. *flít*, strife, wrangling.
 Forthynketh, 51, repents, makes sorry; AS. *forþencan*, to despair.
 Frayne, 409, ask; AS. *fregnan*, Goth. *fraihnan*.
 Gan, 22, did.
 Geue to God a gyfte, 351, I make a vow, I promise you, I'll take my oath.
 Hele, 140, salvation.
 Hovyde, 624, halted, stopt.
 Hynde, 508? natty; *hende*, gentle.
 I-doo, 335, done, finished.
 I-dyght, 644, prepared.
 In-same, 602, together.
 Layne, 68, hide, conceal.
 Lende, 107, stay; ? AS. *landian*, to land, or *lengian*, to prolong.
 Leyne, 231, lay, beat.
 Lyne, 214, AS. *lín*, flax; ? rope, 246.
 Meyne, 403, household.
 Myster, 12, trade; Fr. *mestier*.
 O, 329, one.
 Onredde, 308; AS. *unrét*, *unrót*, uncheerful, sorrowful, or *unréd*, imprudent.
 Opre, 205, second.
 Putry, 61, adultery; O. Fr. *puterie*, whoring.
 Rawte, 503, reached, gave.
 Rewe, 186, have pity.
 Rocke, 503, 508; Du. *een Rocke*, *Spinrock*, A Distaffe, or a Spin-rock; *Rocken*, To Winde Flaxe or Wool upon a Rock (Hexham). Dan. *rok*, O.N. *rokk*, G. *rocken*: "a distaff held in the hand from which the thread was spun by twirling a ball below. 'What, shall a woman with a *rokke* drive thee away?'" Digby Mysteries, p. 11 (Halliwell). "An Instrument us'd in some Parts for the spinning of Flax and Hemp." Phillips; for reeling and spinning (l. 529).
 Rought, 198, AS. *róhte*, p. of *récan*, to reck, care for.
 Ryde, 524, light, small, AS. *geryd*, levis, æquus, Lye.
 Ryue, 642, Du. *rijf*, rife, or abundant.
 Scales, 401; ? husks, bark, or rind, see *shoves**, in *Swyngylle*, below.

[Pg 22]

Schent, 258, destroyed; AS. *scendan*.

Stounde, 4, short time.

Strycke, 514, "*Strike of Flax*, is as much as is heckled at one Handful." Phillips.

Swyngylle, 216, "Swingle-Staff, a Stick to beat Flax with," Phil.; AS. *swingele*, a whip, lash.

"To *swingle*, to beat; a Term among Flax-dressers." Phillips. Though Randle Holme, Bk. III., ch. viii. No. xxxiii., gives the *Swingle-Tree* of a Coach-Pole (these are made of wood, and are fastened by Iron hooks, stables (*sic*) chains and pinns to the Coach-pole, to the which Horses are fastened by their Harnish when there is more then two to draw the Coach), yet at Chap, vi., § iv., p. 285, col. 1, he says, "He beareth Sable, a *Swingle* Hand erected, Surmounting of a *Swingle* Foot, Or. This is a Wooden Instrument made like a Fauchion, with an hole cut in the top of it, to hold it by: It is used for the clearing of Hemp and Flax from the large broken Stalks or *Shoves, by the help of the said *Swingle* Foot, which it is hung upon, which said Stalks being first broken, bruised, and cut into shivers by a Brake.

S. 3, such erected in Fesse O. born by *Flaxlowe*.

S. 3, such in Pale A., born by *Swingler*."

(A drawing is given by Holme, No. 4, on the plate opposite p. 285.)

"*Swingowing* is the beating off the bruised inward stalk of the Hemp or Flax, from the outward pill, which as (*sic*) the Hemp or Flax, p. 106, col. 2.

Spinning is to twist the Flax hairs into Yarn or Thrid. *Reeling* is to wind the Yarn of the Wheel Spool on a Reel," p. 107, Col. 2.

Take, 161, deliver.

The, 187, thrive.

Tolle, 62, entice (H.H. Gibbs).

Tre, 105, wood, timber.

Trewloves, 669, either figures like true-lovers' knots, or the imitations of the berb or flower *Truelove*, which is given by Coles as *Herb Paris* (a quatrefoil whose leaves bear a sort of likeness to a true-lovers' knot), and in Halliwell as *one-berry*: but I cannot find that Edward IV. had any such plants on his arms or badge. Knots were often worn as badges, see Edmonston's Heraldry, Appendix, Knots. On the other hand, Willement (Regal Heraldry) notices that the angels attending Richard II. in the picture at Wilton, had collars worked with white roses and broom-buds; and trueloves, if a plant be meant by it, may have been Edward's substitute for the broom (*planta genisla*). The Trewloves bear, one, Ar. on a chev. sa., three cinquefoils, or; the other, Ar. on a chev. sa., a quatrefoil of the field.

Vade,^[1] 125, 419, fade; Du. *vadden* (Hexham).

Wone, 275, store, quantity.

Wonne, 90, 628, dwelling.

Woode, 153, wild, mad.

Yheue, 491, give.

Yougeth, 20, youth, bachelor's freedom.

[1] The use of the flat vade (l. 419, p. 12) within 2 lines of the sharp fade (l. 417), corresponds with the flat 'stowde,' l. 400, p. 12, riming with 'owte,' l. 401, *badde* with *hatte*, l. 265-6. *Cost*, *brest*, l. 142-3, are careless rimes too.

WOMEN.

[*Lambeth MS. 306, leaf 135.*]

Wome{n}, wome{n}, loue of wome{n},

make bare purs *with* some me{n},

Some be nyse as a nonne here,^[1]

3it al thei be nat soo.

some be lewde,

some all be schrewde;

Go schrewes wher thei goo.

Su{m~} be nyse, and some be fonde,	8
And some be tame, y vndirstonde,	
And some cane take brede of a manes hande, ^[2]	
Yit all thei be nat soo.	
[Some be lewde, &c.]	12
Some cane part with-uten hire,	
And some make bate in eueri chire,	
And some cheke mate with oure Sire,	
Yit all they be nat so.	16
Some be lewde,	
and sume be schreuede,	
go wher they goo.	
Som be browne, and some be whit,	20
And some be tender as a ttriipe,	
And some of theym be chiry ripe,	
Yit all thei be not soo.	
Sume be lewde,	24
and some be schrewede,	
go wher they goo.	
Some of the{m~} be treue of love	
Beneth þe gerdeH, but nat above,	28
And in a hode aboue cane chove,	
Yit all thei do nat soo.	
Some be lewde,	
and some be schreude,	32
go where they goo.	
Some cane whister, & some cane crie,	
Some cane flater, and some can lye,	
And some cane sette þe moke awrie,	36
Yit all thei do nat soo.	
Sume be lewde,	
and sume be schreuede,	
go where thei goo.	40
He that made this songe full good,	
Came of þe north and of þe sother{n}} blode,	
And some-what kyne to Roby{n}} Hode,	
Yit all we be nat soo.	44
Some be lewde,	
and some be schrewede,	
go where they goo.	
Some be lewde, some be [s]chrwde,	48
Go where they goo.	

Explicit.

P.S.—This Poem was printed by Mr Halliwell in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, vol. i., p. 248, and reprinted by Mr Thomas Wright, at p. 103 of his edition of *Songs and Carols* for the Percy Society, 1847. As, besides minor differences, the reprint has *manne*, and the original *nanne*, for what I read as *nonne*, l. 3, while both have *withowte* for *with oure*, l. 15, and *accripe* for *a ttriipe*, l. 21 (see Halliwell's Dictionary, "*accripe*, a herb?"), I have not cancelled this impression. The other version of the song, from Mr Wright's MS. in his text, pp. 89-91, differs a good deal from that given above.

- [1] The Rev. J.R. Lumby first told me of the proverb 'As white as a nun's hen,' the nuns being famous, no doubt, for delicate poultry. John Heywood has in his *Proverbes*, 1562 (first printed, 1546), p. 43 of the Spencer Society's reprint, 1867,

She tooke the ntertainment of the yong men
All in daliaunce, *as nice as a Nun's hen*.

The proverb is quoted by Wilson in his *Arte of Rhetorique*, 1553 (Hazlitt's *Proverbs*, p. 69).

- [2] For *honde*.

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