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THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

EDITED, FROM NUMEROUS MANUSCRIPTS

BY THE
REV. WALTER W. SKEAT, M.A.

LITT.D., LL.D., D.C.L., PH.D.
ELRINGTON AND BOSWORTH PROFESSOR OF ANGLO-SAXON
AND FELLOW OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

* * * *

THE CANTERBURY TALES: TEXT

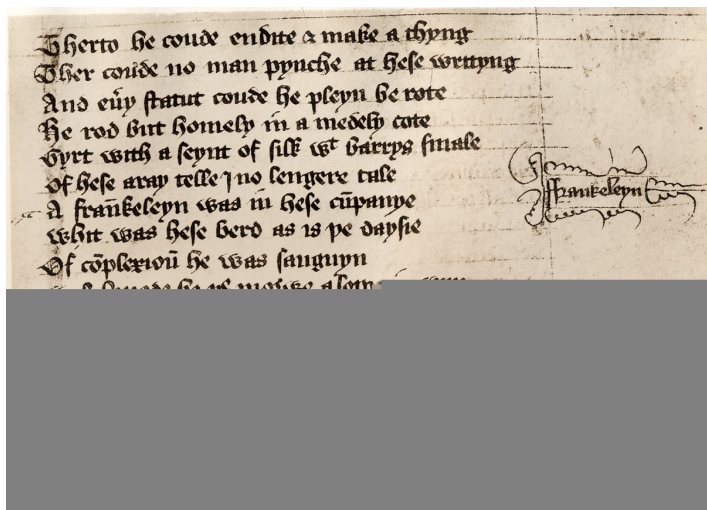
'Let every felawe telle his tale aboute,
And lat see now who shal the soper winne.'
The Knightes Tale; A890

SECOND EDITION

Oxford

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

M DCCCC



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

Oxford

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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 § 7.

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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. ^[ix] ^[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 **RI.**; 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 **SI.** 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. ^[x]

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. [xi]

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. [xii]

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

III. MSS. AT CAMBRIDGE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 prophesyes of antequite 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). [xiv]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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.

[xviii]

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. [xix]

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 *beginne*; 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 *couthē* (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 *Ioye* (= *joye*) where initial, and the small *i*, as in *eniainen*=*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. [xx]

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 *naciounnys*.

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.

[xxi]

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	[xxii]
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. [xxiii]

§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

(Squire) and 5 *b* (Franklin), and places 5 *a* before 3.

Order: 1,
2, 5 *a*, 3, 4, 5 *b*, 8, 6, 7, 9.

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

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

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

ERRATA

[xxiv]

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

P. 14. A 467. Perhaps the full stop at the end of the line should be a colon.

P. 15. Footnote to A 503. For 'Hl. *alone*' read 'Tyrwhitt.'

P. 85. A 3016. *For eye read yë*

*P. 110. A 3822. *For celle read selle*

*P. 131. B 59, 60. *For eek and seek read eke and seke*

P. 133. B 115. Insert marks of quotation at the beginning and end of the line.

P. 133. B 120, 121. Insert marks of quotation at the beginning of l. 120 and at the end of l. 121.

P. 134. In the headline; *for T. 4454 read T. 4554.*

P. 146. B 540, 541, 547. *For cristen read Cristen*

P. 146. B 544 *For cristianitee read Cristianitee*. So also at p. 525; G 535.

P. 194. B 2043. *Dele; after spicerye*

P. 202. B 2222. *For yevynge read yevinge*

P. 205. B 2253. *For owe read ow*

P. 207. B 2303. *For se read see*

P. 219, footnotes. *For 2251 and 2252 read 2551 and 2552*

*P. 222. B 2624. *For Iurisdiccioun read Iuridiccioun*

P. 232, ll. 9, 10. *Dele the quotation-mark after certeyne, and insert it after another.*

*P. 245. B 3230. *For my read ny*

*P. 253. B 3490. *For warre read werre*

P. 271. B 4011. *For stope a better reading is stape*

P. 285. B 4510. *For charitee perhaps read Charitee*

P. 285. B 4541. *For chide read chyde*

P. 299. C 291. *Either read advocas, or note that the t in advocats is silent.*

*P. 309. C 601. *For opinoun read opinioun*

P. 318. C 955. *For Thay read They*

P. 338. In the headline; *for 6225 read 6235.*

P. 339. In the headline; *for 6226 read 6236.*

- P. 344. D 846. *For But if read But-if*
- P. 345. D 859. *For All read Al*
- P. 354. Footnotes; last line. *For 1205 read 1204*
- P. 355. D 1219, 1227. *For Chese and chese read Chees and chees.*
- P. 363. D 1436. *For But if read But-if*
- P. 387. D 2242. *Perhaps insert a comma after himself*
- P. 419. E 994. *For gouernance read governance*
- P. 428. E 1304, 1306. Insert quotation-mark at the end of l. 1304, instead of the end of l. 1306.
- P. 438. E 1635. *For Saue read Save*
- P. 444. E 1866. *Insert Auctor opposite this line.*
- P. 449. E 2058. *For scorpion read scorioun; as the last syllable is accented.*
- P. 459. E 2418. *For bless read blesse*
- P. 461. F 20. After all, the right reading probably is that given by E. Cp. Pt. Ln. Hl., but with the form *pietous* for *pitous* as in *Troilus*, iii. 1444, and v. 451. Read—And piētous and Iust, alwey y-liche.
- P. 468. F 266. *For Cambynskan read Cambinskan*. So also at p. 480, first line.
- P. 474. F 462. *For sle read slee*
- P. 505, footnotes. *For 1527 read 1526*
- P. 527. G 558, footnote. *The real reading of E is—*
- And vndernethe he wered a surplys
- P. 543. G 1107. *For shall read shal*
- *P. 545. G 1171. *For torned read terved*. [*The reading in E is really terued=terved, i.e. stripped, flayed. The reading torned is a poor substitution.*]
- *P. 548. G 1274. *For torne, read terve,*
- *P. 560. H 144. *For hept read kept*
- P. 626. Footnotes; last line. *For E. Seld. Ln. beauteis; read E. Seld. Ln. beautees;*
- P. 634. I 955. *For Daniel, read David*. [N.B. MSS. E. Cm. Danyel; *the rest*, Daudid. Probably Chaucer wrote 'Daniel' at first, and afterwards corrected it (by the original) to 'David.' Nevertheless, 'Daniel' is a good reading.]

[xxv]

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.

Balade that Chaucier made.

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.

[xxvi]

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

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

And sith I [you] shal do this observaunce 10
Al my lyf, withouten displesaunce,
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 suffrith 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 gentilnesse
Of my gret wo list doon allegeaunce,
And with your pitè me som wyse avaunce,
In ful rebating of my hevinesse;
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.

[xxvii]

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 encrese day by day,
 Til that to me be come the dethes tyde.

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

1. holly; others parte. 2. I wisse. 3. By (*surely an error for My*); arte. 4. lernynge; desire; euer (*and u for v often*). 5. while; leue. 6. trought (*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 goddesse,
 Sith ye may best my sorowe lesse and eche;
 And I, your man, oppressed with distresse, 20
 Can not crye 'help!' but to your gentilnesse:
 So voucheth sauf, sith I, your man, wol dye,
 My ladies herte in pitè folde and presse,
 That of my peyne I finde remedye.

[xxviii]

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 youres, til deth my herte kerve,
 On me, your man, now mercy have and routhe.

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

XXVI. COMPLAINT TO MY LODE-STERRE.

[xxix]

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; (sounde *means* heal).

And that, shulde be my sorowes hertes leche,
 Is me ageins, and maketh me swich werre,
 That shortly, [in] al maner thought and speche, 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 darraine, 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.

[xxx]

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 besynesse;
 And I ne can do no maner servyse
 That may me torne out of my hevynesse; 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

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.

[1: T. 1-22.]

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;
 Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
 Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.
 In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce, 55
 No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.
 In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be
 Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
 At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,
 Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See [3: T. 59-92.]
 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,
 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 sleeves longe and wyde. [4: T. 93-127.]
 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;
 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, **Prioressse.**
 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.

[5: T. 128-161.]

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.
 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*.

[6: T. 162-195.]

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 thre. **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
 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.
 Therfore 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 sleeves 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.

[7: T. 196-231.]

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* receteles). 182. E. Hn. heeld; Cm. held. 188. E. his owene; *rest om.* owene. 190. Hl.
 swifte; *rest* swift. 193. Hl. Hn. purfild; Cm. purfilid; E. ypurfild. 196. Hl. a; *rest* a ful. 196, 218. Ln.
 had; *rest* hadde. 199. E. it; *rest* he. 203, 4. E. staat, 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
 Therefore, in stede of weping and preyerer,
 Men moot yeve silver to the povre freres. [8: T. 232-265.]
 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;
 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 scoler, 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, [9: T. 266-300.]
 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. muche; E. muchel. 213. Hl. owne; E. owene. 215. E. And; *rest* Ful. 217.
 Hl. Hn. eek; *rest omit.* 224. Hl. Cm. han; E. haue. 229. E. harde. 231. E. 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. Cloyster. 260. *So all the MSS. (but with -bare); cf. l. 290.* 262. *All worstede (badly).*
 266. Pt. Ln. had; *rest hadde.*

A MARCHANT was ther with a forked berd**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 gotten 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
 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)

[10: T. 301-336.]

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

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and wyMan 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.

A FRANKLEYN was in his companye; **Frankeleyne.**
 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 plenteuous,
 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

[11: T. 337-370.]

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. alweys. 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.

An HABERDASSHER and a CARPENTER **Habaerdassher.**
 A WEBBE, a DYERE, and a TAPICER, **Carpenter.**
 Were with us eek, clothed in o liverree, **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,

[12: T. 371-406.]

And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
 And elles certain were they to blame. 375
 It is ful fair to been y-clept "*ma dame*,"
 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 Dertemouthe.
 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

[13: T. 407-441.]

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.
 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,
 Lynced 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,
 Therefore he lovede gold in special.

[14: T. 442-478.]

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 BATHUR 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 Sondag were upon hir heed. 455
 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 stream;
 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 remedies 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, **Persoun.** [15: T. 479-513.]
 And was a povre PERSOUN of a toun; (480)
 But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
 He was also a lerned man, a clerk, 480
 That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
 His parisshe devoutly wolde he teche.
 Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
 And in adversitee ful pacient;
 And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes. 485
 Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes,
 But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
 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, [16: T. 514-547.]
 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
 Ne maked him a spycd 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. 3iue; 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 brot**Howman.**
 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)
 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 Ianglere 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.

[17: T. 548-582.]

550. Cp. Hl. nolde; Hn. noolde; E. ne wolde. 555. E. toft; Ln. tofte; *rest* tuft. E. herys. 556. Hn. bristles; E. brustles; Pt. brystles; 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 Engeland, 580
 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.

[18: T. 583-615.]

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 bettre than his lord purchace. (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;
 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,

[19: T. 616-652.]

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. schadowed. 611. Hl. owene; 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 cherubennes 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 Iay
 Can clepen 'Watte,' as well as can the pope.
 But who-so coude in other thing him grope,
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye; 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-punished 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)

[20: T. 653-687.]

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.
 This pardoner hadde heer as yelow 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 Iet;
 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 relikes, 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,
 To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;
 Therefore he song so meriely and loude.

[21: T. 688-722.]

669. E. was; *rest* rood, rode. 670. E. Cm. Pt. Rounciale. 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 pleyedly 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.
 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.

[22: T. 723-758.]

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 nette. 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)

[23: T. 759-793.]

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

Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow 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 mirth 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 noht 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. voidit.

'Lordinges,' quod he, 'now herkneth for the best (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)
 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.'

[24: T. 794-827.]

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 Iuge 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 taryinge.

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

A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,
 Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,
 And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,
 And forth we riden, a litel more than pas, 825
 Un-to the watering of seint Thomas. [25: T. 828-860.]
 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 beginne.
 Sire knight,' quod he, 'my maister and my lord,
 Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord. (840)
 Cometh neer,' quod he, 'my lady prioress;
 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 beginne 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*).

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
Knichtes 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*).

[26: T. 861-885.]

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 solempnitee, 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 arnes, 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;
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.

[27: T. 886-921.]

876. Hl. han told 3ow; 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 menciou, n

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,
 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 goddessse Clemence (70)
 We han ben waytinge al this fourtenight;
 Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy might. 930

[28: T. 922-957.]

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,
 Fulfild of ire and of iniquitee, 940
 He, for despyt, and for his tyrannye,

To do the dede bodyes vileinye,
 Of alle our lordes, whiche that ben slawe,
 Hath alle the bodyes on an heep y-drawe,
 And wol nat suffren hem, by noon assent, 945
 Neither to been y-buried nor y-brent,
 But maketh houndes ete hem in despyt.
 And with that word, with-uten 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-uten more abood, 965
 His baner he displayeth, 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.

[29: T. 958-995.]

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

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 pleyn 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.

[30: T. 996-1031.]

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,
 Thurgh-girt with many a grevous bloody wounde, 1010
 Two yonge knightes ligging by and by,
 Bothe in oon armes, wrought 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
 Perpetuelly, 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 Ioye 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.

[31: T. 1032-1066.]

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;
 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 doun, and as hir liste
 She gadereth floures, party whyte and rede,
 To make a sotil gerland for hir hede,
 And as an aungel hevenly she song. 1055
 The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
 Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun,
 (Ther-as the knightes weren in prisoun, (200)
 Of whiche I tolde yow, and tellen shal)
 Was evene Ioynant 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 doun.
 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 bleynthe, and cryde 'a!' (220)
 As though he stongen were un-to the herte.
 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 pleyn.'

[32: T. 1067-1103.]

1036. Hl. on hire. 1039. E. Hl. fyner; 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. subtile; 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. 1095
 This prison caused me nat for to crye.
 But I was hurt right now thurgh-out myn yē
 In-to myn herte, that wol my bane 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.' [33: T. 1104-1139.]
 And ther-with-al on kneës down 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,
 Of our linage have som compassioun, 1110
 That is so lowe y-brought 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 ernest or in pley?' 1125

1125 E. Wheither.

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

This Palamon gan knitte his browes tweye: (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) [34: T. 1140-1174.]
 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 Arcitë 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 affeccoun 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.
 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 therfore, at the kinges court, my brother,
 Ech man for him-self, ther is non other.
 Love if thee list; for I love and ay shal;
 And soothly, leve brother, this is al.
 Here in this prisoun mote we endure, 1185
 And everich of us take his aventure.'

[35: T. 1175-1210.]

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

Greet was the stryf and long bitwixe hem tweye,
 If that I hadde leyser for to seye; (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 down in helle; 1200
 But of that story list me nat to wryte.
 Duk Perotheus loved wel Arcite,
 And hadde him knowe at Thebes yeer by yere;
 And fynally, at requeste and preyere
 Of Perotheus, with-oute any raunsoun, 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, [36: T. 1211-1247.]
 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.
 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 despair, 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

[37: T. 1248-1283.]

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

Allas, why pleynen folk so in commune
 Of purveyaunce of God, or of fortune,
 That yeveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse
 Wel bettre than they can hem-self devyse?
 Som man desyreth for to han richesse, 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 meynne 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,
 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. mordre; 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,

[38: T. 1284-1317.]

For whom that I mot nedes lese my lyf. 1290
 For, as by wey of possibilittee,
 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-sterne
 With-inne his brest, and hente him by the herte 1300
 So woodly, that he lyk was to biholde
 The box-tree, or the asshen dede and colde.
 Tho seyde he; 'O cruel goddes, that governe
 This world with binding of your word eterne,
 And wryten in the table of athamaunt 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. yellinge. 1290. *All* moste, most, muste; *but*
read mot: *see* l. 1295. 1296. Hl. zyue; 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. gitlees.

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 answere 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,
 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.'

[39: T. 1318-1353.]

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.

[40: T. 1354-1386.]

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 fantastyk.
 And shortly, turned was al up-so-down
 Bothe habit and eek disposicioun (520)
 Of him, this woful lovere daun Arcite.

1359. Hl. Pt. Ln. had; *rest* hadde. 1362. E. Pt. wexeth. 1364. Hi. Cm. Cp. falwe; E. Hn. falow. 1369. E. spiritz. 1376. E. Biforn his owene; Cm. Be-forn 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,
 Him thoughte how that the winged god Mercurie 1385
 Biforn him stood, and bad him to be murie.
 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)

[41: T. 1387-1424.]

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 anon 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)
 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

[42: T. 1425-1461.]

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 spent, e,
 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,
 Forpynd, 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
 Perpetually, 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.

[43: T. 1462-1497.]

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

It fel that in the seventh 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 theeffect and his entente pleyn.

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 bryghte,
That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,
And with his stremes dryeth in the greves 1495
The silver dropes, hanging on the leues. [44: T. 1498-1532.]
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:
God wot he wolde have trowed it ful lyte. 1520
But sooth is seyde, 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, [45: T. 1533-1567.]

Now in the croppe, 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. croppe. 1536. E. Hn. Cm. kan; *rest gan.*
 1538. E. gereful; Cp. geerful; Hl. grisful; *rest gerful.* 1539. Hl. wyke; Hn. Cp. wike; Pt. Ln. weke; Cm.
 wouke; E. wowke.

Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan to syke, 1540
 And sette him down with-outen any more:
 'Alas!' quod he, 'that day that I was bore!
 How longe, Iuno, thurgh thy crueltee,
 Woltow werreyen Thebes the citee?
 Allas! y-broght is to confusioun 1545
 The blood royal of Cadme and Amphiou;
 Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man
 That Thebes bulte, or first the toun bigan, 690
 And of the citee first was crouned 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-sterter.

[46: T. 1568-1602.]

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. vterly; 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.
 And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,
 As he were wood, with face deed and pale, (720)
 He sterter 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-iaped 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 outhere 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. seyd.
 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 mucche thou art a worthy knight, (750)
 And wilnest to darreyne hir by batayle,
 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.

[47: T. 1603-1639.]

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

O Cupide, out of alle charitee!
 O regne, that wolt no felawe have with thee!
 Ful sooth is seyd, that love ne lordshipe 1625
 Wol noght, his thanks, 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) [48: T. 1640-1675.]
 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,
 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, huntarys; *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. anlee. 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,
 That for to honten is so desirous, [49: T. 1676-1712.]
 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 Ioye 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 Ioye 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
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?'

[50: T. 1713-1749.]

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 laped thee ful many a yeer,
 And thou has maked him thy chief squyer; 1730
 And this is he that loveth Emelye.
 For sith the day is come that I shal dye,
 I make pleylnly 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)
 Therfore 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) [51: T. 1750-1787.]
 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 deliver 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,
 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! [52: T. 1788-1823.]
 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-brought 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-payed
 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 muche thank as me; (950)
 She woot namore of al this hote fare,
 By God, than woot a cokkow or an hare! 1810
 But al mot been assayed, hoot and cold;
 A man mot been a fool, or yong or old;
 I woot it by my-self ful yore agoon:
 For in my tyme a servant was I oon.
 And therfore, sin I knowe of loves peyne, 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 trespas, (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 trespas 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)

[53: T. 1824-1859.]

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. trespas. 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:
 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) [54: T. 1860-1892.]
 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.'

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 tertia.

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. [55: T. 1893-1928.]

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

Est-ward ther stood a gate of marbel whyt,
West-ward, right swich another in the opposit.
And shortly to concluden, swich a place 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, goddesse of love,
Don make an auter and an oratorie; 1905
And west-ward, in the minde and in memorie
Of Mars, he maked 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 wroght in noble wyse.

1893. E. Hn. Hl. marbul. 1899. Hl. Hn. Cp. purtreyour; E. portreitur. 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)
Wroght 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,
 Charmes and force, lesinges, flaterye,
 Dispense, bisynesse, and Ielousye, (1070)
 That wered of yelwe golde 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 menciuon. 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.

[56: T. 1929-1963.]

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 doun all covered was
 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.

[57: T. 1964-1997.]

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
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 mording 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 disconfort 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-corve:
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;
The carter over-riden with his carte,

[58: T. 1998-2033.]

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; [59: T. 2034-2069.]
 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. utes. 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.*

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 vengeaunce 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) [60: T. 2070-2106.]
 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)

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.

[61: T. 2107-2143.]

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 yelow 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)
 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.

[62: T. 2144-2179.]

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 diapred 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 crispe 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) [63: T. 2180-2215.]
 An hundred lordes hadde he with him there,
 Al armed, sauf hir heddes, in al hir gere, 2180
 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. Brat-ful. 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 liggen 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 lest (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,
 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 [64: T. 2216-2251.]
 Un-to the blisful Citherea benigne, 2215
 I mene Venus, honourable and digne.

And in hir houre 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
 Theeffectes 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;
 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 theeffect and ende of my preyere,
 Yif me my love, thou blisful lady dere.' 2260

[65: T. 2252-2287.]

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,
 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 sacrifyce longen shal; (1420)
 The hornes fulle of meth, as was the gyse;
 Ther lakked noght to doon hir sacrifyse. 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.

[66: T. 2288-2324.]

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. kempt.

'O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,
 To whom bothe hevene and erthe and see is sené (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 aboughte cruelly.
 Chaste goddesse, wel wostow that I
 Desire to been a mayden al my lyf, 2305
 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, [67: T. 2325-2360.]
 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 whisteling,
 As doon thise wete brondes in hir brenninge, (1480)
 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.

[68: T. 2361-2398.]

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 sacrifyse,
 With alle the rytes of his payen wyse. 2370
 With pitous herte and heigh devocioun,
 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 sacrifyse. (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, allas! 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!
 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,

[69: T. 2399-2436.]

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 Ioye, and hope wel to fare, 2435
 Arcite anon un-to his inne is fare,
 As fayn as fowel is of the brighte sonne. [70: T. 2437-2473.]

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

And right anon swich stryf ther is bigonne (1580)
 For thilke graunting, in the hevene above,
 Bitwixe Venus, the goddesse 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 pleyn correccioun
 Whyl I dwelle in the signe of the leoun.
 Myn is the ruine of the hye halles,
 The falling of the toures and of the walles
 Up-on the mynour or the carpenter. 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.
 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)

[71: T. 2474-2506.]

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, goddesses 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 lusten 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 wrought 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 lacing;
 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 blownen 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;

[72: T. 2507-2543.]

Somme helden with him with the blake berd,
 Somme with the balled, somme with the thikke (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. nakers (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
 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

[73: T. 2544-2579.]

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,
 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 pryde,
 Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hye,
 Ipolita the quene and Emelye, (1720) [74: T. 2580-2617.]
 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 doun,
 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)

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

[75: T. 2618-2655.]

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

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 broght 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 loye of this, so loude and heigh with-alle,
 It semed that the listes sholde falle.

[76: T. 2656-2691.]

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

[77: T. 2692-2729.]

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. fure; *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 Iustes 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-uten 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,
 Ther may no man clepen it cowardye. 2730

[78: T. 2730-2767.]

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.

Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the sore
 Encreesseth at his herte more and more.
 The clothed 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,
 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. Corrupith. 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! alas, the peynes stronge,
That I for yow have suffred, and so longe!
Allas, the deeth! alas, myn Emelye!
Allas, departing of our companye!
Allas, myn hertes quene! alas, 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-outen 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.

[79: T. 2768-2803.]

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
Fredom, and al that longeth to that art,
So Iupiter have of my soule part,
As in this world right now ne knowe I non
So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,
That serveth yow, and wol don al his lyf. 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 faillen, when the herte felte deeth, 2805
Dusked his eyen two, and failed breeth.
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.

[80: T. 2804-2840.]

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.

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,
Savage 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.

[81: T. 2841-2876.]

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 enhort
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
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.

[82: T. 2877-2913.]

2854. Hn. Caste; E. Hl. Cast. now] Hl. busyly. 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
 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.

[83: T. 2914-2949.]

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
 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)
 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.

[84: T. 2950-2986.]

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.

[85: T. 2987-3020.]

'The firste moevere of the cause above,
 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 spesces of thinges and progressiouns
 Shullen enduren 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-outen any lye. 3016. at] E. it.

'Lo the ook, that hath so long a norisshinge
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

[86: T. 3021-3058.]

'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)
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 forgotten 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

[87: T. 3059-3095.]

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 loye, 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
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)

[88: T. 3096-3110.]

Here is ended the Knightes Tale.

THE MILLER'S PROLOGUE.

Here folwen the wordes bitwene the Host and the Millere.

Whan that the Knight had thus his tale y-told,
In al the route nas ther yong ne old 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; unbokeled 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.'

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

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

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

'By goddes soul,' quod he, 'that wol nat I;
For I wol speke, or elles go my wey.'
Our Hoste answerde: 'tel on, a devel wey!
Thou art a fool, thy wit is overcome.' 3135

[90: T. 3134-3166.]

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 maddest. 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
 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 [91: T. 3167-3186.]
 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 therfore, who-so list it nat y-here,
 Turne over the leef, and chese another tale;
 For he shal finde y-nowe, grete and smale, (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. euyt. 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.

[92: T. 3187-3214.]

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 certein houres, 3195
Whan that men sholde have droghte or elles shoure~~st~~
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-outen 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
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

[93: T. 3215-3250.]

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* xviii. 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)
 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 down,
 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

[94: T. 3251-3285.]

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, 3275
 As clerkes ben ful subtile and ful queynte; (90)
 And prively he caughte hir by the queynte,
 And seyde, 'y-wis, but if ich have my wille,
 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!"

[95: T. 3286-3322.]

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,
 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 surplys
 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 quible;

[96: T. 3323-3358.]

And as wel coude he pleye on his giterne.
 In al the toun nas brewhous ne taverne
 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,
 Gooth with a sencer on the haliday, 3340
 Sensinge the wyves of the parish faste;
 And many a lovely look on hem he caste,
 And namely on this carpenteres wyf.
 To loke on hir him thoughte a mery lyf,
 She was so propre and swete and likerous. 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.'

[97: T. 3359-3392.]

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

This passeth forth; what wol ye bet than wel? 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. kemed; 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 lape. 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)

[98: T. 3393-3429.]

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

Now bere thee wel, thou hende Nicholas!
 For Absolon may waille and singe 'allas.'
 And so bifel it on a 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 answere, 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 mervyle
 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

[99: T. 3430-3465.]

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

This knave gooth him up ful sturdily,
 And at the chambre-dore, whyl that he stood, 3435
 He cryde and knokked 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 pryde
 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.
 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.

[100: T. 3466-3498.]

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 threshfold of the dore with-oute:—
 'Iesu Crist, and seynt Benedight,
 Blesse this hous from every wikked wight,
 For nightes verye, the white *pater-noster*! 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 pou; Hl. wonestow; *after which* Cm. Hl. *ins.* now.

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

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

This carpenter answerde, 'what seystow? 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.' 3495

This carpenter goth doun, 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

[101: T. 3499-3534.]

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. oostee; Hl. host ful; E. Hn. hoost; Cm. ost. 3505. E. *om.* it. 3510. E. Hl. am; *rest* nam, ne am.

'Now John,' quod Nicholas, 'I wol nat lye;
 I have y-founde in myn astrologye,
 As I have loked in the mone bright, 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-uten 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)

[102: T. 3535-3570.]

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
 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-about.

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

But whan thou hast, for hir and thee and me,
 Y-geeten 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-leyde,
 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,
 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.

[103: T. 3571-3606.]

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

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

[104: T. 3607-3641.]

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 vitailled, bothe trogh and tubbe,
 With breed and chese, and good ale in a Iubbe,
 Suffysinge right y-nogh as for a day.
 But er that he had maad al this array, 3630
 He sente his knave, and eek his wenche also,
 Up-on his nede to London for to go.
 And on the Monday, whan it drow to night,
 He shette his dore with-oute candel-light,
 And dressed al thing as it sholde be. 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.

[105: T. 3642-3677.]

The dede sleep, for wery bisnesse,
 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-outen 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 bisnesse 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
 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)

[106: T. 3678-3712.]

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. koughep; Cm. coude; E. knokketh. 3701. Cp. Pt. thenken; *rest* thynken, thynke.

'Go fro the window, Iakke 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!'

[107: T. 3713-3745.]

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.'

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;
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

[108: T. 3746-3780.]

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. Vyritote; Ln. veritote; Cm. merytot; Hl. verytrot. 3771. Pt. Ln. seynt; *rest* seinte. Pt. Hl. Noet.

This Absolon ne roghte nat a bene
Of al his pley, no word agayn he yaf;

He hadde more tow on his distaf
 Than Gerveys knew, and seyde, 'freend so dere, 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 foo! what wol ye do ther-with?'

[109: T. 3781-3815.]

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 3790
 That knokketh so? I warante it a theef.'

'Why, nay,' quod he, 'god woot, my swete leef,
 I am thyn Absolon, my dereling!
 Of gold,' quod he, 'I have thee broght a ring;
 My moder yaf it me, so god me save, 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 thoughte 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 buttoke, 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—
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!' [110: T. 3816-3848.]
He sit him up with-uten 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
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; [111: T. 3849-3852.]
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.

THE REEVE'S PROLOGUE

The prologe of the Reves tale.

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.

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

'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.

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,
'I pray yow alle that ye nat yow greve, 3910
Thogh I answeere 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 anoon;
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. 3e; *rest eye.*

[114: T. 3919-3943.]

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,
 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.

[115: T. 3944-3976.]

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. deynezouse.
 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, eyzen. 3975. E. Cm. *om.* With.

The person of the toun, for she was feir,
 In purpos was to maken hir his heir
 Bothe of his catel and his messuage,
 And straunge he made it of hir mariage. 3980
 His purpos was for to bistowe hir hye (61)
 In-to som worthy blood of auncetrye;

[116: T. 3977-4012.]

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 theef 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;
 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 [117: T. 4013-4045.]

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.'

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.'

[118: T. 4046-4079.]

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, [119: T. 4080-4114.]
 And he that bettre sholde han knit the reyne.'

4082. E. Hn. boond.

'Allas,' quod Iohn, 'Aleyn, for Cristes peyne,
 Lay down 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 busschel 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 down 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; [120: T. 4115-4147.]
 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 seyde, 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

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 vernished his heed;
 Ful pale he was for-dronken, and nat reed. 4150 [121: T. 4148-4180.]

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.
 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!'

[122: T. 4181-4216.]

4170. Cp. Herdestow; Cm. Ln. Herdist thou; Hl. Herdistow; E. Herdtow; Hn. Herd thow. 4171. E. whilk;
 Hn. Cp. Ln. swilke; Cm. swich; Pt. scliffe; 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,
 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 Iape; (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 Iape is tald another day,
I sal been halde a daf, a cokenay!
I wil aryse, and auntre 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-sped:' 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.

[123: T. 4217-4252.]

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.

Aleyn up-rist, and thoughte, 'er that it dawwe,
 I wol go crepen in by my felawe; 4250
 And fond the cradel with his hand anon, (331)
 'By god,' thoghte he, 'al wrang I have misgon;
 Myn heed is toty of my swink to-night,
 That maketh me that I go nat aright.
 I woot wel by the cradel, I have misgo, 4255 [124: T. 4253-4288.]
 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 thou hast as a coward been agast.'

'Ye, false harlot,' quod the miller, 'hast?
 A! false traitour! false clerk!' quod he,
 'Thou shalt be deed, by goddes dignitee! 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)

[125: T. 4289-4322.]

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.

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 therfore 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.

[126: T. 4323-4347.]

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 therfore, 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 lakke 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 [127: T. 4348-4362.]
 That they han eten with thy stubbel-goos;
 For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos.
 Now telle on, gentil Roger, by thy name.
 But yet I pray thee, be nat wrooth for game, (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.

[128: T. 4363-4390.]

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 abyen,
 Al have he no part of the minstralcy; (30)
 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.

[129: T. 4391-4420.]

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 theef 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.

[*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.*

[130: T. 4421-4446.]

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 pligte 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. xviiithe; Cp. xviije; Pt. Ln. xvii; 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 streem, 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,

[131: T. 4447-4483.]

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, '*depardieux* 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
 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, Lodomëa;
 The crueltee of thee, queen Medëa,
 Thy litel children hanging by the hals
 For thy Iason, that was of love so fals!
 O Ypermestra, Penelopee, Alceste, 75
 Your wyfhod he comendeth with the beste!

[132: T. 4484-4518.]

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. Penelopee. 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
 Birafte 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 sermouns
 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.¹
 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.

[133: T. 4519-4553.]

The Prologe of the Mannes Tale of Lawe.

O hateful harm! condicion of poverte!
 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 riches 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 winningses,
 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.

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.

[134: T. 4554-4579.]

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.

[135: T. 4580-4616.]

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
The deeth of every man, withouten drede.

In sterres, many a winter ther-biforn, [136: T. 4617-4651.]
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 certein, '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 avantage,
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.

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? [137: T. 4652-4686.]
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 certain 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
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 dresen, alle and some;
Custance, that was with sorwe al overcome,
Ful pale arist, and dreseth 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.

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 Romyans 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 heaven 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 sacrifycles, 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 [140: T. 4757-4791.]
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
And everich, in the beste wyse he can,
To strengthen hir shal alle his freendes fonde;
And she hath this empyrse 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, [141: T. 4792-4824.]
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)

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 kneeling 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 Romainys 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.

[142: T. 4825-4859.]

402. E. or; *rest* ne. E. curius.

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, spreynd 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.

[143: T. 4860-4889.]

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, 445
And forth she sayleth in the salte see.
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 straye
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* placë; 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.

[144: T. 4890-4924.]

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 certain menes ofte, as knowen clerkes, 480
Doth thing for certain 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
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 Egipcien 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 fisses two to fede.
God sente his foison at hir grete nede.

She dryveth forth in-to our ocean 505 [145: T. 4925-4959.]
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
The lyf out of hir body for to twinne,
Hir to deliver 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 routhe,
She was so diligent, with-oute 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 [146: T. 4960-4994.]
 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.

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.

This constable was no-thing lord of this place 575 [147: T. 4995-5029.]
 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 aweye,
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 softely 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,
And in the bed the bloody knyf he fond
By dame Custance; alas! 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.

[148: T. 5030-5064.]

For as the lomb toward his deeth is broght,
So stant this innocent before 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 (mornyng); 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 enquere
 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
 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 giltlees 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.

[149: T. 5065-5099.]

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 down.
 '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 giltelees
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 hastify; (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,
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. *pe* mariage; *rest* mariage; 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.

[151: T. 5135-5169.]

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
 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-outen doute,
 To loye and blisse of al this regne aboute. 735

733. Cp. Hl. thanke; E. Hn. thanketh; Cm. thanked; 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, wrought 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
 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.'

[152: T. 5170-5204.]

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 wighte 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 Ianglest 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 [153: T. 5205-5239.]
 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!

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 [154: T. 5240-5274.]
 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, kneling 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
 Why! 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 kneling, pitously to him she seyde, 835
 'Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee non harm.'
 With that hir kerchef 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. kerchef; 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 bifor thyn yën, (750)
 And yet now liveth my litel child, parfar!
 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, allas! 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!'

[155: T. 5275-5302.]

861. E. Yet; *rest So.*

Ther-with she loketh bakward to the londe,
And seyde, 'far-wel, housbond routhlees!'
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. blissed.

Vitailled 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 purchace,
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 pleylnly 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)
Ymaged was by whom this harm gan springe.

[156: T. 5303-5337.]

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.

[157: T. 5338-5370.]

920. E. Hn. heelp; Hl. hilp; Cm. Cp. halp; Pt. halpe; Ln. helped.

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 endelee goodnesse, [158: T. 5371-5400.]
To make an ende of al hir hevinesse.

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, although 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

The senatoures wyf hir aunte was, [159: T. 5401-5435.]
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,
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, [160: T. 5436-5470.]
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 wikked;
 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
 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, hastily.

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.

[161: T. 5471-5505.]

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 encrease. (970)
 I prey yow al my labour to relese;

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.

[162: T. 5506-5540.]

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.

The morwe cam, and Alla gan him dresse, 1100
And eek his wyf, this emperour to mete;
And forth they ryde in Ioye and in gladnesse.
And whan she saugh hir fader in the strete,
She lighte doun, 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 Ioye 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 Ioye and blisse at mete I lete hem dwelle
 A thousand fold wel more than I can telle. 1120

This child Maurice was sithen emperour [163: T. 5541-5573.]
 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 Romain 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,
 To Engeland been they come the righte wey, 1130
 Wher-as they live in Ioye and in quiete.
 But litel whyl it lasteth, I yow hete,
 Ioye 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 Ioye 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 hevynesse. 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, [164: T. 5574-5582.]
 She herieth god an hundred thousand sythe. 1155

1150. Hl. And fynt hir frendes ther bothe hool and sound. *The rest omit* ther.

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
Ioye 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 misgovernance—
I preye to God, yeve him good chaunce!—
As ye han herd of thise 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.

[165: T. 12903-
12924.]

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,
 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

[166: T. 12925-
12930.]

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.

[167: T. 12931-
12957.]

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 Iolily.
 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,
 Sith that hir firste knoweliche bigan, 1220
 That in his hous as famulier was he (31)
 As it possible is any freend to be.

[168: T. 12958-
12994.]

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;
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.

[169: T. 12995-
13031.]

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.

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 eyleth 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 smal 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)

[170: T. 13032-13066.]

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
 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.

[171: T. 13067-
13103.]

1326. E. pieces; *rest* peces, peeces.

'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