

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Geoffrey Chaucer

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THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

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-

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

FRAGMENT A.

Many men seyn that in sweveninges
Ther nis but fables and lesinges;
But men may somme swevenes seen,
Which hardely ne false been,
But afterward ben apparaunte.
This may I drawe to waraunte
An authour, that hight Macrobes,
That halt not dremes false ne lees,
But undoth us the avisioun
That whylom mette king Cipioun.

And who—so sayth, or weneth it be
A Iape, or elles a nycetee
To wene that dremes after falle,
Let who—so liste a fool me calle.
For this trowe I, and say for me,
That dremes signifiounce be
Of good and harme to many wightes,
That dremen in her slepe a—nightes
Ful many thinges covertly,
That fallen after al openly.

Within my twenty yere of age,
Whan that Love taketh his corage
Of yonge folk, I wente sone
To bedde, as I was wont to done,
And fast I sleep; and in sleping,
Me mette swiche a swevening,
That lykede me wonders wel;
But in that sweven is never a del
That it nis afterward befallle,
Right as this dreem wol telle us alle.
Now this dreem wol I ryme aright,
To make your hertes gaye and light;
For Love it prayeth, and also
Commaundeth me that it be so.
And if ther any aske me,
Whether that it be he or she,
How that this book the which is here
Shal hote, that I rede you here;
It is the Romance of the Rose,
In which al the art of love I close.

The mater fair is of to make;
God graunte in gree that she it take
For whom that it begonnen is!

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And that is she that hath, y-wis,
So mochel prys; and ther-to she
So worthy is biloved be,
That she wel oughte of prys and right,
Be cleped Rose of every wight.

That it was May me thoughte tho,
It is fyve yere or more ago;
That it was May, thus dremed me,
In tyme of love and Iolitee,
That al thing ginneth waxen gay,
For ther is neither busk nor hay
In May, that it nil shrouded been,
And it with newe leves wreen.
These wodes eek recoveren grene,
That drye in winter been to sene;
And the erthe wexeth proud withalle,
For swote dewes that on it falle,
And al the pore estat forget
In which that winter hadde it set,
And than bicometh the ground so proud
That it wol have a newe shroud,
And maketh so queynt his robe and fayr
That it hath hewes an hundred payr
Of gras and floures, inde and pers,
And many hewes ful dyvers:
That is the robe I mene, y-wis,
Through which the ground to preisen is.

The briddes, that han left hir song,
Whyl they han suffred cold so strong
In wedres grille, and derk to sighte,
Ben in May, for the sonne brighte,
So glade, that they shewe in singing,
That in hir herte is swich lyking,
That they mote singen and be light.
Than doth the nightingale hir might
To make noyse, and singen blythe.
Than is blisful, many a sythe,
The chelaundre and the papingay.
Than yonge folk entenden ay
For to ben gay and amorous,
The tyme is than so savorous.
Hard is his herte that loveth nought
In May, whan al this mirth is wrought;
Whan he may on these braunches here
The smale briddes singen clere
Hir blisful swete song pitous;
And in this sesoun delytous,
Whan love affrayeth alle thing,
Me thoughte a-night, in my sleping,

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Right in my bed, ful redily,
That it was by the morowe erly,
And up I roos, and gan me clothe;
Anoon I wissh myn hondes bothe;
A sylvre nedle forth I drogh
Out of an aguiler queynt y-nogh,
And gan this nedle threde anon;
For out of toun me list to gon
The sowne of briddes for to here,
That on thise bussches singen clere.
And in the swete sesoun that leef is,
With a threde basting my slevis,
Aloon I wente in my playing,
The smale foules song harkning;
That peyned hem ful many a payre
To singe on bowes blosmed fayre.
Iolif and gay, ful of gladnesse,
Toward a river I gan me dresse,
That I herde renne faste by;
For fairer playing non saugh I
Than playen me by that riveer,
For from an hille that stood ther neer,
Cam doun the stream ful stif and bold.
Cleer was the water, and as cold
As any welle is, sooth to seyne;
And somdel lasse it was than Seine,
But it was straighter wel away.
And never saugh I, er that day,
The water that so wel lyked me;
And wonder glad was I to see
That lusty place, and that riveer;
And with that water that ran so cleer
My face I wissh. Tho saugh I wel
The botme paved everydel
With gravel, ful of stones shene.
The medewe softe, swote, and grene,
Beet right on the water-syde.
Ful cleer was than the morow-tyde,
And ful attempre, out of drede.
Tho gan I walke through the mede,
Dounward ay in my pleying,
The river-syde costeying.

And whan I had a whyle goon,
I saugh a Gardin right anoon,
Ful long and brood, and everydel
Enclos it was, and walled wel,
With hye walles enbatailled,
Portrayed without, and wel entailed
With many riche portraitures;
And bothe images and peyntures

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Gan I biholde bisily.
And I wol telle you, redily,
Of thilke images the semblaunce,
As fer as I have remembraunce.

A–midde saugh I Hate stonde,
That for hir wrathe, ire, and onde,
Semed to been a moveresse,
An angry wight, a chideresse;
And ful of gyle, and fel corage,
By semblaunt was that ilke image.
And she was no–thing wel arrayed,
But lyk a wood womman afrayed;
Y–frounced foule was hir visage,
And grenning for dispitous rage;
Hir nose snorted up for tene.
Ful hidous was she for to sene,
Ful foul and rusty was she, this.
Hir heed y–writhen was, y–wis,
Ful grimly with a greet towayle.

An image of another entayle,
A lift half, was hir faste by;
Hir name above hir heed saugh I,
And she was called Felonye.

Another image, that Vilanye
Y–cleped was, saugh I and fond
Upon the walle on hir right hond.
Vilanye was lyk somdel
That other image; and, trusteth wel,
She semed a wikked creature.
By countenaunce, in portrayture,
She semed be ful despitous,
And eek ful proud and outrageous.
Wel coude he peynte, I undertake,
That swiche image coude make.
Ful foul and cherlish semed she,
And eek vilaynous for to be,
And litel coude of norture,
To worshipe any creature.

And next was peynted Coveityse,
That eggeth folk, in many gyse,
To take and yeve right nought ageyn,
And grete tresours up to leyn.
And that is she that for usure
Leneth to many a creature
The lasse for the more winning,
So coveitous is her brenning.
And that is she, for penyes fele,

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That techeth for to robbe and stele
These theves, and these smale harlotes;
And that is routhe, for by hir throtes
Ful many oon hangeth at the laste.
She maketh folk compasse and caste
To taken other folkes thing,
Through robberie, or miscounting.
And that is she that maketh trechoures;
And she that maketh false pledoures,
That with hir termes and hir domes
Doon maydens, children, and eek gromes
Hir heritage to forgo.
Ful croked were hir hondes two;
For Coveityse is ever wood
To grypen other folkes good.
Coveityse, for hir winning,
Ful leef hath other mennes thing.

Another image set saugh I
Next Coveityse faste by,
And she was cleped Avarice.
Ful foul in peynting was that vice;
Ful sad and caytif was she eek,
And al-so grene as any leek.
So yvel hewed was hir colour,
Hir semed have lived in langour.
She was lyk thing for hungre deed,
That ladde hir lyf only by breed
Knedden with eisel strong and egre;
And therto she was lene and megre.
And she was clad ful povrely,
Al in an old torn courtepy,
As she were al with dogges torn;
And bothe bihinde and eek biforn
Clouted was she beggarly.
A mantel heng hir faste by,
Upon a perche, weyke and smalle;
A burnet cote heng therwithalle,
Furred with no menivere,
But with a furre rough of here,
Of lambe-skinnes hevy and blake;
It was ful old, I undertake.
For Avarice to clothe hir wel
Ne hasteth hir, never a del;
For certeynly it were hir loth
To weren ofte that ilke cloth;
And if it were forwered, she
Wolde have ful greet necessitee
Of clothing, er she boughte hir newe,
Al were it bad of wolle and hewe.
This Avarice held in hir hande

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A purs, that heng down by a bande;
And that she hidde and bond so stronge,
Men must abyde wonder longe
Out of that purs er ther come ought,
For that ne cometh not in hir thought;
It was not, certein, hir entente
That fro that purs a peny wente.

And by that image, nygh y-nough,
Was peynt Envye, that never lough,
Nor never wel in herte ferde
But-if she outhur saugh or herde
Som greet mischaunce, or greet disese.
No-thing may so moch hir plese
As mischef and misaventure;
Or whan she seeth discomfiture
Upon any worthy man falle,
Than lyketh hir ful wel withalle.
She is ful glad in hir corage,
If she see any greet linage
Be brought to nought in shamful wyse.
And if a man in honour ryse,
Or by his witte, or by prowesse,
Of that hath she gret hevinesse;
For, trusteth wel, she goth nigh wood
Whan any chaunce happeth good.
Envye is of swich crueltee,
That feith ne trouthe holdeth she
To freend ne felawe, bad or good.
Ne she hath kin noon of hir blood,
That she nis ful hir enemy;
She nolde, I dar seyn hardely,
Hir owne fader ferde wel.
And sore abyeth she everydel
Hir malice, and hir maltalent:
For she is in so greet turment
And hath such wo, whan folk doth good,
That nigh she melteth for pure wood;
Hir herte kerveth and to-breketh
That god the peple wel awreketh.
Envye, y-wis, shal never lette
Som blame upon the folk to sette.
I trowe that if Envye, y-wis,
Knewe the beste man that is
On this syde or biyond the see,
Yit somewhat lakken him wolde she.
And if he were so hende and wys,
That she ne mighte al abate his prys,
Yit wolde she blame his worthinesse,
Or by hir wordes make it lesse.
I saugh Envye, in that peynting,

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Hadde a wonderful loking;
For she ne loked but awry,
Or overthwart, al baggingly.
And she hadde eek a foul usage;
She mighte loke in no visage
Of man or womman forth-right pleyn,
But shette oon yë for disdeyn;
So for envye brenned she
Whan she mighte any man y-see,
That fair, or worthy were, or wys,
Or elles stood in folkes prys.

Sorowe was peynted next Envye
Upon that walle of masonrye.
But wel was seen in hir colour
That she hadde lived in langour;
Hir semed have the Iaunyce.
Nought half so pale was Avaryce,
Nor no-thing lyk, as of lenesse;
For sorowe, thought, and greet distresse,
That she hadde suffred day and night
Made hir ful yelwe, and no-thing bright,
Ful fade, pale, and megre also.
Was never wight yit half so wo
As that hir semed for to be,
Nor so fulfilled of ire as she.
I trowe that no wight mighte hir plese,
Nor do that thing that mighte hir ese;
Nor she ne wolde hir sorowe slake,
Nor comfort noon unto hir take;
So depe was hir wo bigonnen,
And eek hir herte in angre ronnen,
A sorowful thing wel semed she.
Nor she hadde no-thing slowe be
For to forcracchen al hir face,
And for to rende in many place
Hir clothes, and for to tere hir swire,
As she that was fulfilled of ire;
And al to-torn lay eek hir here
Aboute hir shuldres, here and there,
As she that hadde it al to-rent
For angre and for maltalent.
And eek I telle you certeynly
How that she weep ful tenderly.
In world nis wight so hard of herte
That hadde seen hir sorowes smerte,
That nolde have had of hir pitee,
So wo-bigoon a thing was she.
She al to-dasshte hir-self for wo,
And smoot togider her handes two.
To sorwe was she ful ententyf,

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That woful recchelees caityf;
Hir roughte litel of pleying,
Or of clipping or of kissing;
For who—so sorweful is in herte
Him liste not to pleye ne sterte,
Nor for to daunsen, ne to singe,
Ne may his herte in temper bringe
To make Ioye on even or morowe;
For Ioye is contraire unto sorowe.

Elde was peynted after this,
That shorter was a foot, ywis,
Than she was wont in her yonghede.
Unnethe hir—self she mighte fede;
So feble and eek so old was she
That faded was al hir beautee.
Ful salowe was waxen hir colour,
Hir heed for—hoor was, whyt as flour.
Y—wis, gret qualm ne were it noon,
Ne sinne, although hir lyf were gon.
Al woxen was hir body unwelde,
And drye, and dwyned al for elde.
A foul forwelked thing was she
That whylom round and softe had be.
Hir eres shoken fast withalle,
As from her heed they wolde falle.
Hir face frounced and forpyned,
And bothe hir hondes lorn, fordwyned.
So old she was that she ne wente
A foot, but it were by potente.

The Tyme, that passeth night and day,
And resteles travayleth ay,
And steleth from us so prively,
That to us seemeth sikerly
That it in oon point dwelleth ever,
And certes, it ne resteth never,
But goth so faste, and passeth ay,
That ther nis man that thinke may
What tyme that now present is:
Asketh at these clerkes this;
For er men thinke it redily,
Three tymes been y—passed by.
The tyme, that may not sojourne,
But goth, and never may retourne,
As water that doun renneth ay,
But never drope retourne may;
Ther may no—thing as tyme endure,
Metal, nor erthely creature;
For alle thing it fret and shal:
The tyme eek, that chaungeth al,

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And al doth waxe and festred be,
And alle thing distroyeth he:
The tyme, that eldeth our auncessours
And eldeth kinges and emperours,
And that us alle shal overcomen
Er that deeth us shal have nomen:
The tyme, that hath al in welde
To elden folk, had maad hir elde
So inly, that, to my witing,
She mighte helpe hir-self no-thing,
But turned ageyn unto childhede;
She had no-thing hir-self to lede,
Ne wit ne pith inwith hir holde
More than a child of two yeer olde.
But natheles, I trowe that she
Was fair sumtyme, and fresh to see,
Whan she was in hir rightful age:
But she was past al that passage
And was a doted thing bicomen.
A furred cope on had she nomen;
Wel had she clad hir-self and warm,
For cold mighte elles doon hir harm.
These olde folk have alwey colde,
Hir kinde is swiche, whan they ben olde.

Another thing was doon ther write,
That semede lyk an ipocrite,
And it was cleped Pope-holy.
That ilke is she that prively
Ne spareth never a wikked dede,
Whan men of hir taken non hede;
And maketh hir outward precious,
With pale visage and pitous,
And semeth a simple creature;
But ther nis no misaventure
That she ne thenketh in hir corage.
Ful lyk to hir was that image,
That maked was lyk hir semblaunce.
She was ful simple of countenance,
And she was clothed and eek shod,
As she were, for the love of god,
Yolden to religioun,
Swich semed hir devocioun.
A sauter held she faste in honde,
And bisily she gan to fonde
To make many a feynt prayere
To god, and to his seyntes dere.
Ne she was gay, fresh, ne Iolyf,
But semed be ful ententyf
To gode werkes, and to faire
And therto she had on an haire.

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Ne certes, she was fat no-thing,
But semed wery for fasting;
Of colour pale and deed was she.
From hir the gate shal werned be
Of paradys, that blisful place;
For swich folk maketh lene hir face,
As Crist seith in his evangyle,
To gete hem prys in toun a whyle;
And for a litel glorie veine
They lesen god and eek his reine.

And alderlast of everichoon,
Was peynted Povert al aloon,
That not a peny hadde in wolde,
Al-though that she hir clothes solde,
And though she shulde anhonged be;
For naked as a worm was she.
And if the weder stormy were,
For colde she shulde have deyed there.
She nadde on but a streit old sak,
And many a clout on it ther stak;
This was hir cote and hir mantel,
No more was there, never a del,
To clothe her with; I undertake,
Gret leyser hadde she to quake.
And she was put, that I of talke,
Fer fro these other, up in an halke;
There lurked and there coured she,
For povre thing, wher-so it be,
Is shamfast, and despysed ay.
Acursed may wel be that day,
That povre man conceyved is;
For god wot, al to selde, y-wis,
Is any povre man wel fed,
Or wel arayed or y-cled,
Or wel biloved, in swich wyse
In honour that he may aryse.

Alle these thinges, wel avysed,
As I have you er this devysed,
With gold and asure over alle
Depeynted were upon the walle.
Squar was the wal, and high somdel;
Enclosed, and y-barred wel,
In stede of hegge, was that gardin;
Com never shepherde therin.
Into that gardyn, wel y-wrought,
Who-so that me coude have brought,
By laddre, or elles by degree,
It wolde wel have lyked me.
For swich solace, swich Ioye, and play,

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I trowe that never man ne say,
As in that place delitous.
The gardin was not daungerous
To herberwe briddes many oon.
So riche a yerd was never noon
Of briddes songe, and braunches grene.
Therin were briddes mo, I wene,
Than been in alle the rewme of Fraunce.
Ful blisful was the accordaunce
Of swete and pitous songe they made,
For al this world it oughte glade.
And I my-self so mery ferde,
Whan I hir blisful songes herde,
That for an hundred pound nolde I,—
If that the passage openly
Hadde been unto me free—
That I nolde entren for to see
Thassemblee, god it kepe and were!—
Of briddes, whiche therinne were,
That songen, through hir mery throtes,
Daunces of love, and mery notes.

Whan I thus herde foules singe,
I fel faste in a weymentinge,
By which art, or by what engyn
I mighte come in that gardyn;
But way I couthe finde noon
Into that gardin for to goon.
Ne nought wiste I if that ther were
Eyther hole or place o-where,
By which I mighte have entree;
Ne ther was noon to teche me;
For I was al aloon, y-wis,
Ful wo and anguissous of this.
Til atte laste bithoughte I me,
That by no weye ne mighte it be;
That ther nas laddre or wey to passe,
Or hole, into so fair a place.

Tho gan I go a ful gret pas
Envyroning even in compas
The closing of the square wal,
Til that I fond a wiket smal
So shet, that I ne mighte in goon,
And other entree was ther noon.

Upon this dore I gan to smyte,
That was so fetys and so lyte;
For other wey coude I not seke.
Ful long I shoof, and knocked eke,
And stood ful long and oft herkning

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If that I herde a wight coming;
Til that the dore of thilke entree
A mayden curteys opened me.
Hir heer was as yelowe of hewe
As any basin scoured newe.
Hir flesh as tendre as is a chike,
With bente browes, smothe and slike;
And by mesure large were
The opening of hir yën clere.
Hir nose of good proporcioun,
Hir yën greye as a faucoun,
With swete breeth and wel savoured.
Hir face whyt and wel coloured,
With litel mouth, and round to see;
A clove chin eek hadde she.
Hir nekke was of good fasoun
In lengthe and gretnesse, by resoun,
Withoute bleyne, scabbe, or royne.
Fro Ierusalem unto Burgoyne
Ther nis a fairer nekke, y-wis,
To fele how smothe and softe it is.
Hir throte, al-so whyt of hewe
As snow on braunche snowed newe.
Of body ful wel wrought was she
Men neded not, in no cuntree,
A fairer body for to seke.
And of fyn orfrays had she eke
A chapelet: so semly oon
Ne wered never mayde upon;
And faire above that chapelet
A rose gerland had she set.
She hadde in honde a gay mirour,
And with a riche gold tressour
Hir heed was tressed queyntely;
Hir slevs sewed fetisly.
And for to kepe hir hondes faire
Of gloves whyte she hadde a paire.
And she hadde on a cote of grene
Of cloth of Gaunt; withouten wene,
Wel semed by hir apparayle
She was not wont to greet travayle.
For whan she kempt was fetisly,
And wel arayed and richely,
Thanne had she doon al hir Iournee;
For mery and wel bigoon was she.
She ladde a lusty lyf in May,
She hadde no thought, by night ne day,
Of no-thing, but it were oonly
To graythe hir wel and uncouthly.

Whan that this dore hadde opened me

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This mayden, semely for to see,
I thanked hir as I best mighte,
And axede hir how that she highte,
And what she was, I axede eke.
And she to me was nought unmeke,
Ne of hir answer daungerous,
But faire answerde, and seide thus:—
'Lo, sir, my name is Ydelnesse;
So clepe men me, more and lesse.
Ful mighty and ful riche am I,
And that of oon thing, namely;
For I entende to no-thing
But to my Ioye, and my pleying,
And for to kembe and tresse me.
Aqueynted am I, and privee
With Mirthe, lord of this gardyn,
That fro the lande of Alexandryn
Made the trees be hider fet,
That in this gardin been y-set.
And whan the trees were woxen on highte,
This wal, that stant here in thy sighte,
Dide Mirthe enclosen al aboute;
And these images, al withoute,
He dide hem bothe entaile and peynte,
That neither ben Iolyf ne queynte,
But they ben ful of sorowe and wo,
As thou hast seen a whyle ago.

'And ofte tyme, him to solace,
Sir Mirthe cometh into this place,
And eek with him cometh his meynee,
That liven in lust and Iolitee.
And now is Mirthe therin, to here
The briddes, how they singen clere,
The mavis and the nightingale,
And other Ioly briddes smale.
And thus he walketh to solace
Him and his folk; for swetter place
To pleyen in he may not finde,
Although he soughte oon in-til Inde.
The alther-fairest folk to see
That in this world may founde be
Hath Mirthe with him in his route,
That folowen him always aboute.'

When Ydelnesse had told al this,
And I hadde herkned wel, y-wis,
Than seide I to dame Ydelnesse,
'Now al-so wisly god me blesse,
Sith Mirthe, that is so fair and free,
Is in this yerde with his meynee,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Fro thilke assemblee, if I may,
Shal no man werne me to-day,
That I this night ne mote it see.
For, wel wene I, ther with him be
A fair and Ioly companye
Fulfilled of alle curtesye.'
And forth, withoute wordes mo,
In at the wicket wente I tho,
That Ydelnesse hadde opened me,
Into that gardin fair to see.

And whan I was therin, y-wis,
Myn herte was ful glad of this.
For wel wende I ful sikerly
Have been in paradys erthely;
So fair it was, that, trusteth wel,
It semed a place esprituel.
For certes, as at my devys,
Ther is no place in paradys
So good in for to dwelle or be
As in that Gardin, thoughte me;
For there was many a brid singing,
Throughout the yerde al thringing.
In many places were nightingales,
Alpes, finches, and wodewales,
That in her swete song delyten
In thilke place as they habytyn.
Ther mighte men see many flokkes
Of turtles and of laverokkes.
Chalaundres fele saw I there,
That wery, nigh forsongen were.
And thrustles, terins, and mavys,
That songen for to winne hem prys,
And eek to sormounte in hir song
These other briddes hem among.
By note made fair servyse
These briddes, that I you devyse;
They songe hir song as faire and wel
As angels doon esprituel.
And, trusteth wel, whan I hem herde,
Full lustily and wel I ferde;
For never yit swich melodye
Was herd of man that mighte dye.
Swich swete song was hem among,
That me thoughte it no briddes song,
But it was wonder lyk to be
Song of mermaidens of the see;
That, for her singing is so clere,
Though we mermaidens clepe hem here
In English, as in our usaunce,
Men clepen hem sereyns in Fraunce.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Ententif weren for to singe
These briddes, that nought unkuninge
Were of hir craft, and apprentys,
But of hir song sotyl and wys.
And certes, whan I herde hir song,
And saw the grene place among,
In herte I wex so wonder gay,
That I was never erst, er that day,
So Iolyf, nor so wel bigo,
Ne mery in herte, as I was tho.
And than wiste I, and saw ful wel,
That Ydelnesse me served wel,
That me putte in swich Iolitee.
Hir freend wel oughte I for to be,
Sith she the dore of that gardyn
Hadde opened, and me leten in.

From hennesforth how that I wroughte,
I shal you tellen, as me thoughte.
First, whereof Mirthe served there,
And eek what folk ther with him were,
Without fable I wol descryve.
And of that gardin eek as blyve
I wol you tellen after this.
The faire fasoun al, y-wis,
That wel y-wrought was for the nones,
I may not telle you al at ones:
But as I may and can, I shal
By ordre tellen you it al.

Ful fair servyse and eek ful swete
These briddes maden as they sete.
Layes of love, ful wel sowning
They songen in hir Iargoning;
Summe highe and summe eek lowe songe
Upon the braunches grene y-spronge.
The sweetnessse of hir melodye
Made al myn herte in reverdye.
And whan that I hadde herd, I trowe,
These briddes singing on a rowe,
Than mighte I not withholde me
That I ne wente in for to see
Sir Mirthe; for my desiring
Was him to seen, over alle thing,
His countenance and his manere:
That sighte was to me ful dere.

Tho wente I forth on my right hond
Doun by a litel path I fond
Of mentes ful, and fenel grene;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And faste by, withoute wene,
Sir Mirthe I fond; and right anoon
Unto sir Mirthe gan I goon,
Ther—as he was, him to solace.
And with him, in that lusty place,
So fair folk and so fresh hadde he,
That whan I saw, I wondred me
Fro whennes swich folk mighte come,
So faire they weren, alle and some;
For they were lyk, as to my sighte,
To angels, that ben fethered brighte.

This folk, of which I telle you so,
Upon a carole wenten tho.
A lady caroled hem, that highte
Gladnes, the blisful and the lighte;
Wel coude she singe and lustily,
Non half so wel and semely,
And make in song swich refreininge,
It sat hir wonder wel to singe.
Hir vois ful cleer was and ful swete.
She was nought rude ne unmete,
But couthe y—now of swich doing
As longeth unto caroling:
For she was wont in every place
To singen first, folk to solace;
For singing most she gaf hir to;
No craft had she so leef to do.

Tho mightest thou caroles seen,
And folk ther daunce and mery been,
And make many a fair tourning
Upon the grene gras springing.
Ther mightest thou see these floutours,
Minstrales, and eek Iogelours,
That wel to singe dide hir peyne.
Somme songe songes of Loreyne;
For in Loreyne hir notes be
Ful swetter than in this contree.
Ther was many a timbestere,
And saylours, that I dar wel swere
Couthe hir craft ful parfitly.
The timbres up ful sotilly
They caste, and henten hem ful ofte
Upon a finger faire and softe,
That they ne fayled never—mo.
Ful fetis damiselles two,
Right yonge, and fulle of semlihede,
In kirtles, and non other wede,
And faire tressed every tresse,
Hadde Mirthe doon, for his noblesse,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Amidde the carole for to daunce;
But her—of lyth no remembraunce,
How that they daunced queyntely.
That oon wolde come al prively
Agayn that other: and whan they were
Togidre almost, they threwe y—fere
Hir mouthes so, that through hir play
It semed as they kiste alway;
To dauncen wel coude they the gyse;
What shulde I more to you devyse?
Ne bede I never thennes go,
Whyles that I saw hem daunce so.

Upon the carole wonder faste,
I gan biholde; til atte laste
A lady gan me for to espye,
And she was cleped Curtesye,
The worshipful, the debonaire;
I pray god ever falle hir faire!
Ful curteisly she called me,
'What do ye there, beau sire?' quod she,
'Come neer, and if it lyke yow
To dauncen, daunceth with us now.'
And I, withoute taryng,
Wente into the caroling.
I was abashed never a del,
But it me lykede right wel,
That Curtesye me cleped so,
And bad me on the daunce go.
For if I hadde durst, certeyn
I wolde have caroled right fayn,
As man that was to daunce blythe.
Than gan I loken ofte sythe
The shap, the bodies, and the cheres,
The countenance and the maneres
Of alle the folk that daunced there,
And I shal telle what they were.

Ful fair was Mirthe, ful long and high;
A fairer man I never sigh.
As round as appel was his face,
Ful rody and whyt in every place.
Fetys he was and wel beseye,
With metely mouth and yën greye;
His nose by mesure wrought ful right;
Crisp was his heer, and eek ful bright.
His shuldres of a large brede,
And smalish in the girdilstede.
He semed lyk a portreiture,
So noble he was of his stature,
So fair, so Ioly, and so fetys,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

With limes wrought at poynt devys,
Deliver, smert, and of gret might;
Ne sawe thou never man so light.
Of berde unnethe hadde he no-thing,
For it was in the firste spring.
Ful yong he was, and mery of thought,
And in samyt, with briddes wrought,
And with gold beten fetisly,
His body was clad ful richely.
Wrought was his robe in straunge gyse,
And al to-sliterated for queyntyse
In many a place, lowe and hye.
And shod he was with greet maistrye,
With shoon decoped, and with laas.
By druerye, and by solas,
His leef a rosen chapelet
Had maad, and on his heed it set.

And wite ye who was his leef?
Dame Gladnes ther was him so leef,
That singeth so wel with glad corage,
That from she was twelve yeer of age,
She of hir love graunt him made.
Sir Mirthe hir by the finger hadde
In daunsing, and she him also;
Gret love was atwixe hem two.
Bothe were they faire and brighte of hewe;
She semede lyk a rose newe
Of colour, and hir flesh so tendre,
That with a brere smale and slendre
Men mighte it cleve, I dar wel sayn.
Hir forheed, frounceles al playn.
Bente were hir browes two,
Hir yën greye, and gladde also,
That laughede ay in hir semblaunt,
First or the mouth, by covenaut.
I not what of hir nose descryve;
So fair hath no womman alyve. . . .
Hir heer was yelowe, and cleer shyning,
I wot no lady so lyking.
Of orfrays fresh was hir gerland;
I, whiche seen have a thousand,
Saugh never, y-wis, no gerlond yit,
So wel y-wrought of silk as it.
And in an over-gilt samyt
Clad she was, by gret delyt,
Of which hir leef a robe werde,
The myrier she in herte ferde.

And next hir wente, on hir other syde,
The god of Love, that can devyde

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Love, as him lyketh it to be.
But he can cherles daunten, he,
And maken folkes pryde fallen.
And he can wel these lordes thrallen,
And ladies putte at lowe degree,
Whan he may hem to proude see.

This God of Love of his fasoun
Was lyk no knave, ne quistroun;
His beautee gretly was to pryse.
But of his robe to devyse
I drede encombred for to be.
For nought y-clad in silk was he,
But al in floures and flourettes,
Y-painted al with amorettes;
And with losenges and scochouns,
With briddes, libardes, and lyouns,
And other beestes wrought ful wel.
His garnement was everydel
Y-portreyd and y-wrought with floures,
By dyvers medling of coloures.
Floures ther were of many gyse
Y-set by compas in assyse;
Ther lakked no flour, to my dome,
Ne nought so muche as flour of brome,
Ne violete, ne eek pervenke,
Ne flour non, that man can on thenke,
And many a rose-leef ful long
Was entermedled ther-among:
And also on his heed was set
Of roses rede a chapelet.
But nightingales, a ful gret route,
That flyen over his heed aboute,
The leves felden as they flyen;
And he was al with briddes wryen,
With popiniay, with nightingale,
With chalaundre, and with wodewale,
With finch, with lark, and with archaungel.
He semede as he were an aungel
That doun were comen fro hevene clere.

Love hadde with him a bachelere,
That he made alweyes with him be;
Swete-Loking cleped was he.
This bachelere stood biholding
The daunce, and in his honde holding
Turke bowes two hadde he.
That oon of hem was of a tree
That bereth a fruyt of savour wikke;
Ful croked was that foule stikke,
And knotty here and there also,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And blak as bery, or any slo.
That other bowe was of a plante
Withoute wem, I dar warante,
Ful even, and by proporcioun
Tretys and long, of good fasoun.
And it was peynted wel and thwiten,
And over-al diapred and writen
With ladies and with bacheleres,
Ful lightsom and ful glad of cheres.
These bowes two held Swete-Loking,
That semed lyk no gadeling.
And ten brode arowes held he there,
Of which five in his right hond were.
But they were shaven wel and dight,
Nokked and fethered a-right;
And al they were with gold bigoon,
And stronge poynted everichoon,
And sharpe for to kerven weel.
But iren was ther noon ne steel;
For al was gold, men mighte it see,
Out-take the fetheres and the tree.

The swiftest of these arowes fyve
Out of a bowe for to dryve,
And best y-fethered for to flee,
And fairest eek, was cleped Beautee.
That other arowe, that hurteth lesse,
Was cleped, as I trowe, Simplesse.
The thridde cleped was Fraunchyse,
That fethered was, in noble wyse,
With valour and with curtesye.
The fourthe was cleped Companye,
That hevy for to sheten is;
But who-so sheteth right, y-wis,
May therwith doon gret harm and wo.
The fifte of these, and laste also,
Fair-Semblaunt men that arowe calle,
The leeste grevous of hem alle;
Yit can it make a ful gret wounde,
But he may hope his sores sounde,
That hurt is with that arowe, y-wis;
His wo the bet bistowed is.
For he may soner have gladnesse,
His langour oughte be the lesse.

Fyve arowes were of other gyse,
That been ful foule to devyse;
For shaft and ende, sooth to telle,
Were al-so blak as feend in helle.

The first of hem is called Pryde;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

That other arowe next him bisyde,
It was y-cleped Vilanye;
That arowe was as with felonye
Envenimed, and with spitous blame.
The thridde of hem was cleped Shame.
The fourthe, Wanhope cleped is,
The fifte, the Newe-Thought, y-wis.

These arowes that I speke of here,
Were alle fyve of oon manere,
And alle were they resemblable.
To hem was wel sitting and able
The foule croked bowe hidous,
That knotty was, and al roynous.
That bowe semede wel to shete
These arowes fyve, that been unmete,
Contrarie to that other fyve.
But though I telle not as blyve
Of hir power, ne of hir might,
Her-after shal I tellen right
The sothe, and eek signiffiaunce,
As fer as I have remembraunce:
Al shall be seid, I undertake,
Er of this boke an ende I make.

Now come I to my tale ageyn.
But alderfirst, I wol you seyn
The fasoun and the countenaunces
Of al the folk that on the daunce is.
The God of Love, Iolyf and light,
Ladde on his honde a lady bright,
Of high prys, and of greet degree.
This lady called was Beautee,
As was an arowe, of which I tolde.
Ful wel y-thewed was she holde;
Ne she was derk ne broun, but bright,
And cleer as is the mone-light,
Ageyn whom alle the sterres semen
But smale candels, as we demen.
Hir flesh was tendre as dewe of flour,
Hir chere was simple as byrde in bour;
As whyt as lilie or rose in rys,
Hir face gentil and tretys.
Fetys she was, and smal to see;
No windred browes hadde she,
Ne popped hir, for it neded nought
To windre hir, or to peynte hir ought.
Hir tresses yelowe, and longe straughten,
Unto hir heles doun they raughten:
Hir nose, hir mouth, and eye and cheke
Wel wrought, and al the remenaunt eke.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

A ful gret savour and a swote
Me thinketh in myn herte rote,
As helpe me god, whan I remembre
Of the fasoun of every membre!
In world is noon so fair a wight;
For yong she was, and hewed bright,
Wys, plesaunt, and fetys withalle,
Gente, and in hir middel smalle.

Bisyde Beaute yede Richesse,
An high lady of greet noblesse,
And greet of prys in every place.
But who—so durste to hir trespace,
Or til hir folk, in worde or dede,
He were ful hardy, out of drede;
For bothe she helpe and hindre may:
And that is nought of yisterday
That riche folk have ful gret might
To helpe, and eek to greve a wight.
The beste and grettest of valour
Diden Richesse ful gret honour,
And besy weren hir to serve;
For that they wolde hir love deserve,
They cleped hir 'Lady,' grete and smalle;
This wyde world hir dredeth alle;
This world is al in hir daungere.
Hir court hath many a losengere,
And many a traytour envious,
That been ful besy and curious
For to dispreisen, and to blame
That best deserven love and name.
Bifore the folk, hem to bigylen,
These losengeres hem preyse, and smylen,
And thus the world with word anoynten;
But afterward they prikke and poynten
The folk right to the bare boon,
Bihinde her bak whan they ben goon,
And foule abate the folkes prys.
Ful many a worthy man and wys,
An hundred, have they don to dye,
These losengeres, through flaterye;
And maketh folk ful straunge be,
Ther—as hem oughte be prive.
Wel yvel mote they thryve and thee,
And yvel aryved mote they be,
These losengeres, ful of envye!
No good man loveth hir companye.

Richesse a robe of purpre on hadde,
Ne trowe not that I lye or madde;
For in this world is noon it liche,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Ne by a thousand deel so riche,
Ne noon so fair; for it ful wel
With orfrays leyd was everydel,
And portrayed in the ribaninges
Of dukes stories, and of kinges.
And with a bend of gold tasseled,
And knoppes fyne of gold ameled.
Aboute hir nekke of gentil entaile
Was shet the riche chevesaile,
In which ther was ful gret plentee
Of stones clere and bright to see.

Rychesse a girdel hadde upon,
The bokel of it was of a stoon
Of vertu greet, and mochel of might;
For who—so bar the stoon so bright,
Of venim thurte him no—thing doute,
While he the stoon hadde him aboute.
That stoon was greetly for to love,
And til a riche mannes bihove
Worth al the gold in Rome and Fryse.
The mourdaunt, wrought in noble wyse,
Was of a stoon ful precious,
That was so fyn and vertuuous,
That hool a man it coude make
Of palasye, and of tooth—ake.
And yit the stoon hadde suche a grace,
That he was siker in every place,
Al thilke day, not blind to been,
That fasting mighte that stoon seen.
The barres were of gold ful fyne,
Upon a tissu of satyne,
Ful hevy, greet, and no—thing light,
In everich was a besaunt—wight.

Upon the tresses of Richesse
Was set a cercle, for noblesse,
Of brend gold, that ful lighte shoon;
So fair, trowe I, was never noon.
But he were cunning, for the nones,
That coude devysen alle the stones
That in that cercle shewen clere;
It is a wonder thing to here.
For no man coude preyse or gesse
Of hem the valewe or richesse.
Rubyes there were, saphyres, iagounces,
And emeraudes, more than two ounces.
But al bifore, ful sotilly,
A fyn carboucle set saugh I.
The stoon so cleer was and so bright,
That, al—so sone as it was night,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Men mighte seen to go, for nede,
A myle or two, in lengthe and brede.
Swich light tho sprang out of the stoon,
That Richesse wonder brighte shoon,
Bothe hir heed, and al hir face,
And eke aboute hir al the place.

Dame Richesse on hir hond gan lede
A yong man ful of semelihede,
That she best loved of any thing;
His lust was mucche in housholding.
In clothing was he ful fetys,
And lovede wel have hors of prys.
He wende to have reproved be
Of thefte or mordre, if that he
Hadde in his stable an hakeney.
And therefore he desyred ay
To been aqueynted with Richesse;
For al his purpos, as I gesse,
Was for to make greet dispense,
Withoute werning or defence.
And Richesse mighte it wel sustene,
And hir dispenses wel mayntene,
And him alwey swich plentee sende
Of gold and silver for to spende
Withoute lakking or daungere,
As it were poured in a garnere.

And after on the daunce wente
Largesse, that sette al hir entente
For to be honourable and free;
Of Alexandres kin was she;
Hir moste Ioye was, y-wis,
Whan that she yaf, and seide, 'have this.'
Not Avarice, the foule caytyf,
Was half to grype so ententyf,
As Largesse is to yeve and spende.
And god y-nough alwey hir sende,
So that the more she yaf away,
The more, y-wis, she hadde alwey.
Gret loos hath Largesse, and gret prys;
For bothe wys folk and unwys
Were hoolly to hir baundon brought,
So wel with yiftes hath she wrought.
And if she hadde an enemy,
I trowe, that she coude craftily
Make him ful sone hir freend to be,
So large of yift and free was she;
Therefore she stood in love and grace
Of riche and povre in every place.
A ful gret fool is he, y-wis,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

That bothe riche and nigard is.
A lord may have no maner vice
That greveth more than avarice.
For nigard never with strengthe of hond
May winne him greet lordship or lond.
For freendes al to fewe hath he
To doon his wil perfourmed be.
And who—so wol have freendes here,
He may not holde his tresour dere.
For by ensample I telle this,
Right as an adamaunt, y—wis,
Can drawen to him sotilly
The yren, that is leyd therby,
So draweth folkes hertes, y—wis,
Silver and gold that yeven is.

Largesse hadde on a robe fresshe
Of riche purpur Sarsinesshe.
Wel fourmed was hir face and clere,
And opened had she hir colere;
For she right there hadde in present
Unto a lady maad present
Of a gold broche, ful wel wrought.
And certes, it missat hir nought;
For through hir smokke, wrought with silk,
The flesh was seen, as whyt as milk.
Largesse, that worthy was and wys,
Held by the honde a knight of prys,
Was sib to Arthour of Bretaigne.
And that was he that bar the enseigne
Of worship, and the gonfanoun.
And yit he is of swich renoun,
That men of him seye faire thinges
Bifore barouns, erles, and kinges.
This knight was comen al newly
Fro tourneyinge faste by;
Ther hadde he doon gret chivalrye
Through his vertu and his maistrye;
And for the love of his lemman
Had cast doun many a doughty man.

And next him daunced dame Fraunchyse,
Arrayed in ful noble gyse.
She was not broun ne dun of hewe,
But whyt as snowe y—fallen newe.
Hir nose was wrought at poynt devys,
For it was gentil and tretys;
With eyen gladde, and browes bente;
Hir heer doun to hir heles wente.
And she was simple as dowve on tree,
Ful debonaire of herte was she.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

She durste never seyn ne do
But that thing that hir longed to.
And if a man were in distresse,
And for hir love in hevinesse,
Hir herte wolde have ful greet pitee,
She was so amiable and free.
For were a man for hir bistad,
She wolde ben right sore adrad
That she dide over greet outrage,
But she him holpe his harm to aswage;
Hir thoughte it elles a vilanye.
And she hadde on a sukkenye,
That not of hempen herdes was;
So fair was noon in alle Arras.
Lord, it was rideled fetysly!
Ther nas nat oo poynt, trewely,
That it nas in his right assyse.
Ful wel y-clothed was Fraunchyse;
For ther is no cloth sitteth bet
On damiselle, than doth roket.
A womman wel more fetys is
In roket than in cote, y-wis.
The whyte roket, rideled faire,
Bitokened, that ful debonaire
And swete was she that it bere.

By hir daunced a bachelere;
I can not telle you what he highte,
But fair he was, and of good highte,
Al hadde he be, I sey no more,
The lordes sone of Windesore.

And next that daunced Curtesye,
That preised was of lowe and hye,
For neither proud ne fool was she.
She for to daunce called me,
(I pray god yeve hir right good grace!)
Whan I com first into the place.
She was not nyce, ne outrageous,
But wys and war, and vertuous,
Of faire speche, and faire answere;
Was never wight misseid of here;
She bar no rancour to no wight.
Cler broun she was, and therto bright
Of face, of body avenaunt;
I wot no lady so plesaunt.
She were worthy for to bene
An emperesse or crowned quene.

And by hir wente a knight dauncing
That worthy was and wel speking,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And ful wel coude he doon honour.
The knight was fair and stif in stour,
And in armure a semely man,
And wel biloved of his lemman.

Fair Ydelnesse than saugh I,
That alwey was me faste by.
Of hir have I, withouten fayle,
Told yow the shap and apparayle;
For (as I seide) lo, that was she
That dide me so greet bountee,
That she the gate of the gardin
Undide, and leet me passen in.

And after daunced, as I gesse,
Youthe, fulfilled of lustinesse,
That nas not yit twelve yeer of age,
With herte wilde, and thought volage;
Nyce she was, but she ne mente
Noon harm ne slight in hir entente,
But only lust and Iolitee.
For yonge folk, wel witen ye,
Have litel thought but on hir play.
Hir lemman was bisyde alway,
In swich a gyse, that he hir kiste
At alle tymes that him liste,
That al the daunce mighte it see;
They make no force of privetee;
For who spak of hem yvel or wel,
They were ashamed never-a-del,
But men mighte seen hem kisse there,
As it two yonge doves were.
For yong was thilke bachelere,
Of beaute wot I noon his pere;
And he was right of swich an age
As Youthe his leef, and swich corage.

The lusty folk thus daunced there,
And also other that with hem were,
That weren alle of hir meynee;
Ful hende folk, and wys, and free,
And folk of fair port, trewely,
Ther weren alle comunly.

Whan I hadde seen the countenaunces
Of hem that ladden thus these daunces,
Than hadde I wil to goon and see
The gardin that so lyked me,
And loken on these faire loreres,
On pyn-trees, cedres, and oliveres.
The daunces than y-ended were;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

For many of hem that daunced there
Were with hir loves went away
Under the trees to have hir pley.

A, lord! they lived lustily!
A gret fool were he, sikerly,
That nolde, his thankes, swich lyf lede!
For this dar I seyn, out of drede,
That who—so mighte so wel fare,
For better lyf thurte him not care;
For ther nis so good paradys
As have a love at his devys.

Out of that place wente I tho,
And in that gardin gan I go,
Pleying along ful merily.
The God of Love ful hastely
Unto him Swete—Loking clepte,
No lenger wolde he that he kepte
His bowe of golde, that shoon so bright.
He bad him bende it anon—right;
And he ful sone it sette on ende,
And at a braid he gan it bende,
And took him of his arowes fyve,
Ful sharpe and redy for to dryve.
Now god that sit in magestee
Fro deedly woundes kepe me,
If so be that he wol me shete;
For if I with his arowe mete,
It wol me greven sore, y—wis!
But I, that no—thing wiste of this,
Wente up and doun ful many a wey,
And he me folwed faste alwey;
But no—wher wolde I reste me,
Til I hadde al the yerde in be.

The gardin was, by mesuring,
Right even and squar in compassing;
It was as long as it was large.
Of fruyt hadde every tree his charge,
But it were any hidous tree
Of which ther were two or three.
Ther were, and that wot I ful wel,
Of pomgarnettes a ful gret del;
That is a fruyt ful wel to lyke,
Namely to folk whan they ben syke.
And trees ther were, greet foisoun,
That baren notes in hir sesoun,
Such as men notemigges calle,
That swote of savour been withalle.
And alemandres greet plentee,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Figes, and many a date–tree
Ther weren, if men hadde nede,
Through the gardin in length and brede.
Ther was eek wexing many a spyce,
As clow–gelofre, and licoryce,
Gingere, and greyn de paradys,
Canelle, and setewale of prys,
And many a spyce delitable,
To eten whan men ryse fro table.
And many hoomly trees ther were,
That peches, coynes, and apples bere,
Medlers, ploumes, peres, chesteynes,
Cheryse, of whiche many on fayn is,
Notes, aleys, and bolas,
That for to seen it was solas;
With many high lorer and pyn
Was renged clene al that gardyn;
With cipres, and with oliveres,
Of which that nigh no plente here is.
Ther were elmes grete and stronge,
Maples, asshe, ook, asp, planes longe,
Fyn ew, popler, and lindes faire,
And other trees ful many a payre.

What sholde I telle you more of it?
Ther were so many treës yit,
That I sholde al encombred be
Er I had rekened every tree.

These trees were set, that I devyse,
Oon from another, in assyse,
Five fadome or sixe, I trowe so,
But they were hye and grete also:
And for to kepe out wel the sonne,
The croppes were so thikke y–ronne,
And every braunch in other knet,
And ful of grene leves set,
That sonne mighte noon descende,
Lest it the tendre grasses shende.
Ther mighte men does and roes y–see,
And of squirrels ful greet plentee,
From bough to bough alwey leping.
Conies ther were also playing,
That comen out of hir claperes
Of sondry colours and maneres,
And maden many a turneyng
Upon the fresshe gras springing.

In places saw I welles there,
In whiche ther no frogges were,
And fair in shadwe was every welle;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

But I ne can the nombre telle
Of stremes smale, that by devys
Mirthe had don come through condys,
Of which the water, in renning,
Gan make a noyse ful lyking.

About the brinkes of thise welles,
And by the stremes over-al elles
Sprang up the gras, as thikke y-set
And softe as any veluët,
On which men mighte his lemman leye,
As on a fetherbed, to pleye,
For therthe was ful softe and swete.
Through moisture of the welle wete
Sprang up the sote grene gras,
As fair, as thikke, as mister was.
But mucche amended it the place,
That therthe was of swich a grace
That it of floures had plente,
That both in somer and winter be.

Ther sprang the violete al newe,
And fresshe pervinke, riche of hewe,
And floures yelowe, whyte, and rede;
Swich plentee grew ther never in mede.
Ful gay was al the ground, and queynt,
And poudred, as men had it peynt,
With many a fresh and sondry flour,
That casten up ful good savour.

I wol not longe holde you in fable
Of al this gardin delitable.
I moot my tonge stinten nede,
For I ne may, withouten drede,
Naught tellen you the beautee al,
Ne half the bountee therewithal.

I wente on right honde and on left
Aboute the place; it was not left,
Til I hadde al the yerde in been,
In the estres that men mighte seen.
And thus whyle I wente in my pley,
The God of Love me folowed ay,
Right as an hunter can abyde
The beste, til he seeth his tyde
To shete, at good mes, to the dere,
Whan that him nedeth go no nere.

And so befil, I rested me
Besyde a welle, under a tree,
Which tree in Fraunce men calle a pyn.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

But, sith the tyme of king Pepyn,
Ne grew ther tree in mannes sighte
So fair, ne so wel woxe in highte;
In al that yerde so high was noon.
And springing in a marble–stoon
Had nature set, the sothe to telle,
Under that pyn–tree a welle.
And on the border, al withoute,
Was writen, in the stone aboute,
Lettres smale, that seyden thus,
'Here starf the faire Narcisus.'

Narcisus was a bachelere,
That Love had caught in his daungere,
And in his net gan him so streyne,
And dide him so to wepe and pleyne,
That nede him muste his lyf forgo.
For a fair lady, hight Echo,
Him loved over any creature,
And gan for him swich peyne endure,
That on a tyme she him tolde,
That, if he hir loven nolde,
That hir behoved nedes dye,
Ther lay non other remedye.
But natheles, for his beautee,
So fiers and daungerous was he,
That he nolde graunten hir asking,
For weping, ne for fair praying.
And whan she herde him werne hir so,
She hadde in herte so gret wo,
And took it in so gret dispyt,
That she, withoute more respyt,
Was deed anoon. But, er she deyde,
Ful pitously to god she preyde,
That proude–herted Narcisus,
That was in love so daungerous,
Mighte on a day ben hampred so
For love, and been so hoot for wo,
That never he mighte Ioye atteyne;
Than shulde he fele in every veyne
What sorowe trewe lovers maken,
That been so vilaynsly forsaken.

This prayer was but resonable,
Therefor god held it ferme and stable:
For Narcisus, shortly to telle,
By aventure com to that welle
To reste him in that shadowing
A day, whan he com fro hunting.
This Narcisus had suffred paynes
For renning alday in the playnes,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And was for thurst in greet distresse
Of hete, and of his werinesse
That hadde his breeth almost binomen.
Whan he was to that welle y-comen,
That shadwed was with braunches grene,
He thoughte of thilke water shene
To drinke and fresshe him wel withalle;
And doun on knees he gan to falle,
And forth his heed and nekke out-straughte
To drinken of that welle a draughte.
And in the water anoon was sene
His nose, his mouth, his yën shene,
And he ther-of was al abasshed;
His owne shadowe had him bitrashed.
For wel wende he the forme see
Of a child of greet beautee.
Wel couthe Love him wreke tho
Of daunger and of pryde also,
That Narcisus somtyme him bere.
He quitte him wel his guerdon there;
For he so musede in the welle,
That, shortly al the sothe to telle,
He lovede his owne shadowe so,
That atte laste he starf for wo.
For whan he saugh that he his wille
Mighte in no maner wey fulfillle,
And that he was so faste caught
That he him couthe comfort naught,
He loste his wit right in that place,
And deyde within a litel space.
And thus his warisoun he took
For the lady that he forsook.

Ladyes, I preye ensample taketh,
Ye that ayeins your love mistaketh:
For if hir deeth be yow to wyte,
God can ful wel your whyle quyte.

Whan that this lettre, of whiche I telle,
Had taught me that it was the welle
Of Narcisus in his beautee,
I gan anoon withdrawe me,
Whan it fel in my remembraunce,
That him bitidde swich mischaunce.
But at the laste than thoughte I,
That scatheles, ful sikerly,
I mighte unto The Welle go.
Wherof schulde I abasshen so?
Unto the welle than wente I me,
And doun I louted for to see
The clere water in the stoon,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And eek the gravel, which that shoon
Down in the botme, as silver fyn;
For of the welle, this is the fyn,
In world is noon so cleer of hewe.
The water is ever fresh and newe
That welmeth up with wawes brighte
The mountance of two finger highte.
Abouten it is gras springing,
For moiste so thikke and wel lyking,
That it ne may in winter dye,
No more than may the see be drye.

Down at the botme set saw I
Two cristal stones craftely
In thilke fresshe and faire welle.
But o thing soothly dar I telle,
That ye wol holde a greet mervayle
Whan it is told, withouten fayle.
For whan the sonne, cleer in sighte,
Cast in that welle his bemes brighte,
And that the heet descended is,
Than taketh the cristal stoon, y-wis,
Agayn the sonne an hundred hewes,
Blewe, yelowe, and rede, that fresh and newe is.
Yit hath the merveilous cristal
Swich strengthe, that the place overal,
Bothe fowl and tree, and leves grene,
And al the yerd in it is sene.
And for to doon you understonde,
To make ensample wol I fonde;
Right as a mirour openly
Sheweth al thing that stant therby,
As wel the colour as the figure,
Withouten any coverture;
Right so the cristal stoon, shyning,
Withouten any disceyving,
The estres of the yerde accuseth
To him that in the water museth;
For ever, in which half that he be,
He may wel half the gardin see;
And if he turne, he may right wel
Seen the remenaunt everydel.
For ther is noon so litel thing
So hid, ne closed with shitting,
That it ne is sene, as though it were
Peynted in the cristal there.

This is the mirour perilous,
In which the proude Narcisus
Saw al his face fair and bright,
That made him sith to lye upright.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

For who—so loke in that mirour,
Ther may no—thing ben his socour
That he ne shal ther seen som thing
That shal him lede into loving.
Ful many a worthy man hath it
Y—blent; for folk of grettest wit
Ben sone caught here and awayted;
Withouten respyt been they bayted.
Heer comth to folk of—newe rage,
Heer chaungeth many wight corage;
Heer lyth no reed ne wit therto;
For Venus sone, daun Cupido,
Hath sowen there of love the seed,
That help ne lyth ther noon, ne reed,
So cercleth it the welle aboute.
His ginnes hath he set withoute
Right for to cacche in his panteres
These damoysels and bacheleres.
Love wil noon other bridde cacche,
Though he sette either net or lacche.
And for the seed that heer was sowen,
This welle is cleped, as wel is knowen,
The Welle of Love, of verray right,
Of which ther hath ful many a wight
Spoke in bokes dyversely.
But they shulle never so verily
Descripcioun of the welle here,
Ne eek the sothe of this matere,
As ye shulle, whan I have undo
The craft that hir bilongeth to.

Alway me lyked for to dwelle,
To seen the cristal in the welle,
That shewed me ful openly
A thousand thinges faste by.
But I may saye, in sory houre
Stood I to loken or to poure;
For sithen have I sore syked,
That mirour hath me now entryked.
But hadde I first knowen in my wit
The vertue and the strengthe of it,
I nolde not have mused there;
Me hadde bet ben elles—where;
For in the snare I fel anoon,
That hath bitraissshed many oon.

In thilke mirour saw I tho,
Among a thousand thinges mo,
A roser charged ful of roses,
That with an hegge aboute enclos is.
Tho had I swich lust and envye,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

That, for Parys ne for Pavye,
Nolde I have left to goon and see
Ther grettest hepe of roses be.
Whan I was with this rage hent,
That caught hath many a man and shent,
Toward the roser gan I go.
And whan I was not fer therfro,
The savour of the roses swote
Me smoot right to the herte rote,
As I hadde al embawmed be.
And if I ne hadde endouted me
To have ben hated or assailed,
My thanks, wolde I not have failed
To pulle a rose of al that route
To beren in myn honde aboute,
And smellen to it wher I wente;
But ever I dredde me to repente,
And lest it greved or for-thoughte
The lord that thilke gardyn wroughte.
Of roses were ther gret woon,
So faire wexe never in roon.
Of knoppes clos, some saw I there,
And some wel beter woxen were;
And some ther been of other moysoun,
That drowe nigh to hir sesoun,
And spedde hem faste for to sprede;
I love wel swiche roses rede;
For brode roses, and open also,
Ben passed in a day or two;
But knoppes wilen fresshe be
Two dayes atte leest, or three.
The knoppes gretly lyked me,
For fairer may ther no man see.
Who-so mighte haven oon of alle,
It oughte him been ful leef withalle.
Mighte I a gerlond of hem geten,
For no richesse I wolde it leten.

Among the knoppes I chees oon
So fair, that of the remenaunt noon
Ne preyse I half so wel as it,
Whan I avyse it in my wit.
For it so wel was enlumyned
With colour reed, as wel y-fyned
As nature couthe it make faire.
And it had leves wel foure paire,
That Kinde had set through his knowing
Aboute the rede rose springing.
The stalke was as risshe right,
And theron stood the knoppe upright,
That it ne bowed upon no syde.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

The swote smelle sprong so wyde
That it dide al the place aboute—

FRAGMENT B.

Whan I had smelled the savour swote,
 No wille hadde I fro thens yit go,
 But somdel neer it wente I tho,
 To take it; but myn hond, for drede,
 Ne dorste I to the rose bede,
 For thistels sharpe, of many maneres,
 Netles, thornes, and hoked breres;
 Ful muche they distourbled me,
 For sore I dradde to harmed be.
 The God of Love, with bowe bent,
 That al day set hadde his talent
 To pursuen and to spyen me,
 Was standing by a fige-tree.
 And whan he sawe how that I
 Had chosen so ententifly
 The botoun, more unto my pay
 Than any other that I say,
 He took an arowe ful sharply whet,
 And in his bowe whan it was set,
 He streight up to his ere drough
 The stronge bowe, that was so tough,
 And shet at me so wonder smerte,
 That through myn eye unto myn herte
 The takel smoot, and depe it wente.
 And ther-with-al such cold me hente,
 That, under clothes warme and softe,
 Sith that day I have chevered ofte.
 Whan I was hurt thus in that stounde,
 I fel doun plat unto the grounde.
 Myn herte failed and feynted ay,
 And long tyme ther a-swone I lay.
 But whan I com out of swoning,
 And hadde wit, and my feling,
 I was al maat, and wende ful wel
 Of blood have loren a ful gret del.
 But certes, the arowe that in me stood
 Of me ne drew no drope of blood,
 For-why I found my wounde al dreye.
 Than took I with myn hondis tweye
 The arowe, and ful fast out it plight,
 And in the pulling sore I sight.
 So at the last the shaft of tree
 I drough out, with the fethers three.
 But yet the hoked heed, y-wis,
 The whiche Beautee callid is,
 Gan so depe in myn herte passe,
 That I it mighte nought arace;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

But in myn herte stille it stood,
Al bledde I not a drope of blood.
I was bothe anguissous and trouble
For the peril that I saw double;
I niste what to seye or do,
Ne gete a leche my woundis to;
For neithir thurgh gras ne rote,
Ne hadde I help of hope ne bote.
But to the botoun ever-mo
Myn herte drew; for al my wo,
My thought was in non other thing.
For hadde it been in my keping,
It wolde have brought my lyf agayn.
For certainly, I dar wel seyn,
The sight only, and the savour,
Alegged muche of my langour.
Than gan I for to drawe me
Toward the botoun fair to see;
And Love hadde gete him, in a throwe,
Another arowe into his bowe,
And for to shete gan him dresse;
The arowis name was Simplese.
And whan that Love gan nyghe me nere,
He drow it up, withouten were,
And shet at me with al his might,
So that this arowe anon-right
Thourghout myn eigh, as it was founde,
Into myn herte hath maad a wounde.
Thanne I anon dide al my craft
For to drawen out the shafte,
And ther-with-al I sighed eft.
But in myn herte the heed was left,
Which ay encresid my desyre,
Unto the botoun drawe nere;
And ever, mo that me was wo,
The more desyr hadde I to go
Unto the roser, where that grew
The fresshe botoun so bright of hewe.
Betir me were have leten be;
But it bihoved nedes me
To don right as myn herte bad.
For ever the body must be lad
Aftir the herte; in wele and wo,
Of force togidre they must go.
But never this archer wolde fyne
To shete at me with alle his pyne,
And for to make me to him mete.
The thridde arowe he gan to shete,
Whan best his tyme he mighte espye,
The which was named Curtesye;
Into myn herte it dide avale.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

A-swone I fel, bothe deed and pale;
Long tyme I lay, and stired nought,
Til I abraid out of my thought.
And faste than I avysed me
To drawn out the shafte of tree;
But ever the heed was left bihinde
For ought I couthe pulle or winde.
So sore it stikid whan I was hit,
That by no craft I might it flit;
But anguissous and ful of thought,
I felte such wo, my wounde ay wrought,
That somoned me alway to go
Toward the rose, that plesed me so;
But I ne durste in no manere,
Bicause the archer was so nere.
For evermore gladly, as I rede,
Brent child of fyr hath mucho drede.
And, certis yit, for al my peyne,
Though that I sigh yit arwis reyne,
And grounde quarels sharpe of stele,
Ne for no payne that I might fele,
Yit might I not my-silf withholde
The faire roser to biholde;
For Love me yaf sich hardement
For to fulfille his comaundement.
Upon my feet I roos up than
Feble, as a forwoundid man;
And forth to gon my might I sette,
And for the archer nolde I lette.
Toward the roser fast I drow;
But thornes sharpe mo than y-now
Ther were, and also thistels thikke,
And breres, brimme for to prikke,
That I ne mighte gete grace
The rowe thornes for to passe,
To sene the roses fresshe of hewe.
I must abide, though it me rewe,
The hegge aboute so thikke was,
That closid the roses in compas.
But o thing lyked me right wele;
I was so nygh, I mighte fele
Of the botoun the swote odour,
And also see the fresshe colour;
And that right gretly lyked me,
That I so neer it mighte see.
Sich loye anoon therof hadde I,
That I forgat my malady.
To sene it hadde I sich delyt,
Of sorwe and angre I was al quit,
And of my woundes that I had thar;
For no-thing lyken me might mar

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Than dwellen by the roser ay,
And thennes never to passe away.
But whan a whyle I had be thar,
The God of Love, which al to-shar
Myn herte with his arwis kene,
Caste him to yeve me woundis grene.
He shet at me ful hastily
An arwe named Company,
The whiche takel is ful able
To make these ladies merciabe.
Than I anoon gan chaungen hewe
For grevaunce of my wounde newe,
That I agayn fel in swoning,
And sighed sore in compleyning.
Sore I compleyned that my sore
On me gan greven more and more.
I had non hope of allegeaunce;
So nigh I drow to desperaunce,
I rought of dethe ne of lyf,
Whither that love wolde me dryf.
If me a martir wolde he make,
I might his power nought forsake.
And whyl for anger thus I wook,
The God of Love an arowe took;
Ful sharp it was and ful pugnaunt,
And it was callid Fair-Semblaunt,
The which in no wys wol consente,
That any lover him repente
To serve his love with herte and alle,
For any peril that may bifalle.
But though this arwe was kene grounde
As any rasour that is founde,
To cutte and kerve, at the poynt,
The God of Love it hadde anynt
With a precious oynement,
Somdel to yeve aleggement
Upon the woundes that he had
Through the body in my herte maad,
To helpe hir sores, and to cure,
And that they may the bet endure.
But yit this arwe, withoute more,
Made in myn herte a large sore,
That in ful gret peyne I abood.
But ay the oynement wente abrood;
Throughout my woundes large and wyde
It spredde aboute in every syde;
Through whos vertu and whos might
Myn herte Ioyful was and light.
I had ben deed and al to-shent
But for the precious oynement.
The shaft I drow out of the arwe,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Roking for wo right wondir narwe;
But the heed, which made me smerte,
Lefte bihinde in myn herte
With other foure, I dar wel say,
That never wol be take away;
But the oynement halp me wele.
And yit sich sorwe dide I fele,
That al-day I chaunged hewe,
Of my woundes fresshe and newe,
As men might see in my visage.
The arwis were so fulle of rage,
So variaunt of diversitee,
That men in everich mighte see
Bothe gret anoy and eek swetnesse,
And Ioye meynt with bittirnesse.
Now were they esy, now were they wood,
In hem I felte bothe harm and good;
Now sore without aleggement,
Now softening with oynement;
It softned here, and prikked there,
Thus ese and anger togider were.
The God of Love deliverly
Com lepard to me hastily,
And seide to me, in gret rape,
'Yeld thee, for thou may not escape!
May no defence availe thee here;
Therefore I rede mak no daungere.
If thou wolt yelde thee hastily,
Thou shalt the rather have mercy.
He is a fool in sikernesse,
That with daunger or stoutnesse
Rebellith ther that he shulde plese;
In such folye is litel ese.
Be meek, wher thou must nedis bowe;
To stryve ageyn is nought thy prowre.
Come at ones, and have y-do,
For I wol that it be so.
Than yeld thee here debonairly.'
And I answerid ful humbly,
'Gladly, sir; at your bidding,
I wol me yelde in alle thing.
To your servyse I wol me take;
For god defende that I shulde make
Ageyn your bidding resistence;
I wol not doon so gret offence;
For if I dide, it were no skile.
Ye may do with me what ye wile,
Save or spille, and also sloo;
Fro you in no wyse may I go.
My lyf, my deth, is in your honde,
I may not laste out of your bonde.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Pleyn at your list I yelde me,
Hoping in herte, that sumtyme ye
Comfort and ese shulle me sende;
Or ellis shortly, this is the ende,
Withouten helthe I moot ay dure,
But—if ye take me to your cure.
Comfort or helthe how shuld I have,
Sith ye me hurte, but ye me save?
The helthe of lovers moot be founde
Wher—as they token firste hir wounde.
And if ye list of me to make
Your prisoner, I wol it take
Of herte and wil, fully at gree.
Hoolly and pleyn I yelde me,
Withoute feyning or feyntyse,
To be governed by your emprise.
Of you I here so much prys,
I wol ben hool at your devys
For to fulfille your lyking
And repente for no—thing,
Hoping to have yit in som tyde
Mercy, of that that I abyde.'
And with that covenaut yeld I me,
Anoon doun kneling upon my knee,
Profering for to kisse his feet;
But for no—thing he wolde me lete,
And seide, 'I love thee bothe and preyse,
Sen that thyn answer doth me ese,
For thou answerid so curteisly.
For now I wot wel uttirly,
That thou art gentil, by thy speche.
For though a man fer wolde seche,
He shulde not finden, in certeyn,
No sich answer of no vileyn;
For sich a word ne mighte nought
Isse out of a vilayns thought.
Thou shalt not lesen of thy speche,
For to thy helping wol I eche,
And eek encresen that I may.
But first I wol that thou obay
Fully, for thyn avauntage,
Anon to do me here homage.
And sithen kisse thou shalt my mouth,
Which to no vilayn was never couth
For to aproche it, ne for to touche;
For sauf of cherlis I ne vouche
That they shulle never neigh it nere.
For curteys, and of fair manere,
Wel taught, and ful of gentilnesse
He muste ben, that shal me kisse,
And also of ful high fraunchyse,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

That shal atteyne to that emprise.
And first of o thing warne I thee,
That peyne and gret adversitee
He mot endure, and eek travaile,
That shal me serve, withoute faile.
But ther-ageyns, thee to comforte,
And with thy servise to desporte,
Thou mayst ful glad and Ioyful be
So good a maister to have as me,
And lord of so high renoun.
I bere of Love the gonfanoun,
Of Curtesye the banere;
For I am of the silf manere,
Gentil, curteys, meek and free;
That who so ever ententif be
Me to honoure, doute, and serve,
And also that he him observe
Fro trespas and fro vilanye,
And him governe in curtesye
With wil and with entencioun;
For whan he first in my prisoun
Is caught, than muste he uttirly,
Fro thennes-forth ful bisily,
Caste him gentil for to be,
If he desyre helpe of me.'
Anoon withouten more delay,
Withouten daunger or affray,
I bicom his man anoon,
And gave him thankes many a oon,
And kneled down with hondis Ioynt,
And made it in my port ful queynt;
The Ioye wente to myn herte rote.
Whan I had kissed his mouth so swote,
I had sich mirthe and sich lyking,
It cured me of languisshing.
He askid of me than hostages:—
'I have,' he seide, 'taken fele homages
Of oon and other, where I have been
Disceyved ofte, withouten wene.
These felouns, fulle of falsitee,
Have many sythes bigyled me,
And through falshede hir lust acheved,
Wherof I repente and am agreved.
And I hem gete in my daungere,
Hir falshed shulle they bye ful dere.
But for I love thee, I seye thee pleyn,
I wol of thee be more certeyn;
For thee so sore I wol now binde,
That thou away ne shalt not winde
For to denyen the covenaut,
Or doon that is not avenaut.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

That thou were fals it were gret reuthe,
Sith thou semest so ful of treuthe.'
'Sire, if thee list to undirstande,
I merveile thee asking this demande.
For—why or wherfore shulde ye
O stages or borwis aske of me,
Or any other sikirnesse,
Sith ye wote, in sothfastnesse,
That ye have me surprysed so,
And hool myn herte taken me fro,
That it wol do for me no—thing
But—if it be at your bidding?
Myn herte is yours, and myn right nought,
As it bihoveth, in dede and thought,
Redy in alle to worche your wille,
Whether so it turne to good or ille.
So sore it lustith you to plese,
No man therof may you disseise.
Ye have theron set sich Iustise,
That it is werreyd in many wise.
And if ye doute it nolde obeye,
Ye may therof do make a keye,
And holde it with you for ostage.'
'Now certis, this is noon outrage,'
Quoth Love, 'and fully I accord;
For of the body he is ful lord
That hath the herte in his tresor;
Outrage it were to asken more.'
Than of his aumener he drough
A litel keye, fetys y—nough,
Which was of gold polisshed clere,
And seide to me, 'With this keye here
Thyn herte to me now wol I shette;
For al my Iowellis loke and knette
I binde under this litel keye,
That no wight may carye aweye;
This keye is ful of gret poeste.'
With which anoon he touchid me
Undir the syde ful softely,
That he myn herte sodeynly
Without al anoy had spered,
That yit right nought it hath me dered.
Whan he had doon his wil al—out,
And I had put him out of dout,
'Sire,' I seide, 'I have right gret wille
Your lust and plesaunce to fulfille.
Loke ye my servise take at gree,
By thilke feith ye owe to me.
I seye nought for recreaundyse,
For I nought doute of your servyse.
But the servaunt traveileth in vayne,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

That for to serven doth his payne
Unto that lord, which in no wyse
Can him no thank for his servyse.'
Love seide, 'Dismaye thee nought,
Sin thou for sucour hast me sought,
In thank thy servise wol I take,
And high of degree I wol thee make,
If wikkidnesse ne hindre thee;
But, as I hope, it shal nought be.
To worship no wight by aventure
May come, but—if he peyne endure.
Abyde and suffre thy distresse;
That hurtith now, it shal be lesse;
I wot my—silf what may thee save,
What medicyne thou woldist have.
And if thy trouthe to me thou kepe,
I shal unto thyn helping eke,
To cure thy woundes and make hem clene,
Wher—so they be olde or grene;
Thou shalt be holpen, at wordis fewe.
For certeynly thou shalt wel shewe
Wher that thou servest with good wille,
For to complisshen and fulfille
My comaundementis, day and night,
Whiche I to lovers yeve of right.'
'Ah, sire, for goddis love,' seide I,
'Er ye passe hens, ententifly
Your comaundementis to me ye say,
And I shal kepe hem, if I may;
For hem to kepen is al my thought.
And if so be I wot hem nought,
Than may I sinne unwitingly.
Wherfore I pray you enterely,
With al myn herte, me to lere,
That I trespasse in no manere.'
The god of love than chargin me
Anoon, as ye shal here and see,
Word by word, by right emprise,
So as the Romance shal devyse.
The maister lesith his tyme to lere,
Whan the disciple wol not here.
It is but veyn on him to swinke,
That on his lerning wol not thinke.
Who—so lust love, let him entende,
For now the Romance ginneth amende.
Now is good to here, in fay,
If any be that can it say,
And poynte it as the resoun is
Set; for other—gate, y—wis,
It shal nought wel in alle thing
Be brought to good undirstonding:

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

For a reder that poyntith ille
A good sentence may ofte spille.
The book is good at the ending,
Maad of newe and lusty thing;
For who—so wol the ending here,
The crafte of love he shal now lere,
If that he wol so long abyde,
Til I this Romance may unhyde,
And undo the signifiaunce
Of this dreame into Romaunce.
The sothfastnesse that now is hid,
Without coverture shal be kid,
Whan I undon have this dreming,
Wherin no word is of lesing.
'Vilany, at the biginning,
I wol,' sayd Love, 'over alle thing,
Thou leve, if thou wolt not be
Fals, and trespasse ageynes me.
I curse and blame generally
Alle hem that loven vilany;
For vilany makith vilayn,
And by his dedis a cherle is seyn.
Thise vilayns arn without pitee,
Frendshipe, love, and al bounte.
I nil receyve to my servyse
Hem that ben vilayns of empryse.
'But undirstonde in thyn entent,
That this is not myn entendement,
To clepe no wight in no ages
Only gentil for his linages.
But who—so that is vertuous,
And in his port nought outrageous,
Whan sich oon thou seest thee biforn,
Though he be not gentil born,
Thou mayst wel seyn, this is a soth,
That he is gentil, bicause he doth
As longeth to a gentilman;
Of hem non other deme I can.
For certeynly, withouten drede,
A cherl is demed by his dede,
Of hye or lowe, as ye may see,
Or of what kinrede that he be.
Ne say nought, for noon yvel wille,
Thing that is to holden stille;
It is no worship to misseye.
Thou mayst ensample take of Keye,
That was somtyme, for misseying,
Hated bothe of olde and ying;
As fer as Gaweyn, the worthy,
Was preyed for his curtesy,
Keye was hated, for he was fel,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Of word dispitous and cruel.
Wherfore be wyse and aqueyntable,
Goodly of word, and resonable
Bothe to lesse and eek to mar.
And whan thou comest ther men ar,
Loke that thou have in custom ay
First to salue hem, if thou may:
And if it falle, that of hem som
Salue thee first, be not dom,
But quyte him curteisly anoon
Without abiding, er they goon.
'For no-thing eek thy tunge applye
To speke wordis of ribaudye.
To vilayn speche in no degree
Lat never thy lippe unbounden be.
For I nought holde him, in good feith,
Curteys, that foule wordis seith.
And alle wimmen serve and preyse,
And to thy power hir honour reyse.
And if that any missayere
Dispyse wimmen, that thou mayst here,
Blame him, and bidde him holde him stille.
And set thy might and al thy wille
Wimmen and ladies for to plese,
And to do thing that may hem ese,
That they ever speke good of thee,
For so thou mayst best preysed be.
'Loke fro pryde thou kepe thee wele;
For thou mayst bothe perceyve and fele,
That pryde is bothe foly and sinne;
And he that pryde hath, him withinne,
Ne may his herte, in no wyse,
Meken ne souplen to servyse.
For pryde is founde, in every part,
Contrarie unto Loves art.
And he that loveth trewely
Shulde him contene Iolily,
Withouten pryde in sondry wyse,
And him disgysen in queyntyse.
For queynt array, withouten drede,
Is no-thing proud, who takith hede;
For fresh array, as men may see,
Withouten pryde may ofte be.
'Mayntene thy-silf aftir thy rent,
Of robe and eek of garnement;
For many sythe fair clothing
A man amendith in mich thing.
And loke alwey that they be shape,
What garnement that thou shalt make,
Of him that can hem beste do,
With al that perteyneth therto.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Poyntis and sleves be wel sittand,
Right and streight upon the hand.
Of shoon and botes, newe and faire,
Loke at the leest thou have a paire;
And that they sitte so fetisly,
That these rude may uttirly
Merveyle, sith that they sitte so pleyn,
How they come on or of ageyn.
Were streite gloves, with aumenere
Of silk; and alwey with good chere
Thou yeve, if thou have richesse;
And if thou have nought, spend the lesse.
Alwey be mery, if thou may,
But waste not thy good alway.
Have hat of floures fresh as May,
Chapelet of roses of Whitsonday;
For sich array ne cost but lyte.
Thyn hondis wasshe, thy teeth make whyte,
And let no filthe upon thee be.
Thy nailes blak if thou mayst see,
Voide it away deliverly,
And kembe thyn heed right Iolily.
Fard not thy visage in no wyse,
For that of love is not thempryse;
For love doth haten, as I finde,
A beaute that cometh not of kinde.
Alwey in herte I rede thee
Glad and mery for to be,
And be as Ioyful as thou can;
Love hath no Ioye of sorowful man.
That yvel is ful of curtesye
That lauhwith in his maladye;
For ever of love the siknesse
Is meynd with swete and bitternesse.
The sore of love is merveilous;
For now the lover is Ioyous,
Now can he pleyne, now can he grone,
Now can he singen, now maken mone.
To-day he pleyne for hevinesse,
To-morowe he pleyeth for Iolynesse.
The lyf of love is ful contrarie,
Which stoundemele can ofte varie.
But if thou canst som mirthis make,
That men in gree wole gladly take,
Do it goodly, I comaunde thee;
For men sholde, wher-so-ever they be,
Do thing that hem best sitting is,
For therof cometh good loos and pris.
Wher-of that thou be vertuous,
Ne be not straunge ne daungerous.
For if that thou good rider be,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Prike gladly, that men may se.
In armes also if thou conne,
Pursue, til thou a name hast wonne.
And if thy voice be fair and clere,
Thou shalt maken no gret daungere
Whan to singe they goodly preye;
It is thy worship for to obeye.
Also to you it longith ay
To harpe and giterne, daunce and play;
For if he can wel foote and daunce,
It may him greetly do avaunce.
Among eek, for thy lady sake,
Songes and complayntes that thou make;
For that wol meve hem in hir herte,
Whan they reden of thy smerte.
Loke that no man for scarce thee holde,
For that may greve thee manyfolde.
Resoun wol that a lover be
In his yiftes more large and free
Than cherles that been not of loving.
For who ther-of can any thing,
He shal be leef ay for to yeve,
In Loves lore who so wolde leve;
For he that, through a sodeyn sight,
Or for a kissing, anon-right
Yaf hool his herte in wille and thought,
And to him-silf kepith right nought,
Aftir swich yift, is good resoun,
He yeve his good in abandoun.
'Now wol I shortly here reherce,
Of that that I have seid in verse,
Al the sentence by and by,
In wordis fewe compendiously,
That thou the bet mayst on hem thinke,
Whether-so it be thou wake or winke;
For that the wordis litel greve
A man to kepe, whanne it is breve.
'Who-so with Love wol goon or ryde
He mot be curteys, and void of pryde,
Mery and fulle of Iolite,
And of largesse alosed be.
'First I Ioyne thee, here in penaunce,
That ever, withoute repentaunce,
Thou set thy thought in thy loving,
To laste withoute repenting;
And thenke upon thy mirthis swete,
That shal folowe aftir whan ye mete.
'And for thou trewe to love shalt be,
I wol, and eek comaunde thee,
That in oo place thou sette, al hool,
Thyn herte, withouten halfen dool,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

For trecherie, in sikernesse;
For I lovede never doublenesse.
To many his herte that wol depart,
Everiche shal have but litel part.
But of him drede I me right nought,
That in oo place settith his thought.
Therefore in oo place it sette,
And lat it never thennes flette.
For if thou yevest it in lening,
I holde it but a wrecchid thing:
Therefore yeve it hool and quyte,
And thou shalt have the more merite.
If it be lent, than aftir soon,
The bountee and the thank is doon;
But, in love, free yeven thing
Requyrith a gret guerdoning.
Yeve it in yift al quit fully,
And make thy yift debonairly;
For men that yift wol holde more dere
That yeven is with gladsome chere.
That yift nought to preisen is
That man yeveth, maugre his.
Whan thou hast yeven thyn herte, as I
Have seid thee here al openly,
Than adventures shulle thee falle,
Which harde and hevye been withalle.
For ofte whan thou bithenkist thee
Of thy loving, wher-so thou be,
Fro folk thou must depart in hy,
That noon perceyve thy malady,
But hyde thyn harm thou must alone,
And go forth sole, and make thy mone.
Thou shalt no whyl be in oo stat,
But whylom cold and whylom hat;
Now reed as rose, now yelow and fade.
Such sorowe, I trowe, thou never hade;
Cotidien, ne yit quarteyne,
It is nat so ful of peyne.
For ofte tymes it shal falle
In love, among thy peynes alle,
That thou thy-self, al hoolly,
Foryeten shalt so utterly,
That many tymes thou shalt be
Stille as an image of tree,
Dom as a stoon, without stering
Of foot or hond, without speking.
Than, sone after al thy peyne,
To memorie shalt thou come ageyn,
As man abasshed wondre sore,
And after sighen more and more.
For wit thou wel, withouten wene,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

In swich astat ful oft have been
That have the yvel of love assayd,
Wher-through thou art so dismayd.
'After, a thought shal take thee so,
That thy love is to fer thee fro:
Thou shalt say, "God, what may this be,
That I ne may my lady see?
Myne herte aloon is to her go,
And I abyde al sole in wo,
Departed fro myn owne thought,
And with myne eyen see right nought.
"Alas, myn eyen sende I ne may,
My careful herte to convay!
Myn hertes gyde but they be,
I praise no-thing what ever they see.
Shul they abyde thanne? nay;
But goon visyte without delay
That myn herte desyreth so.
For certeynly, but-if they go,
A fool my-self I may wel holde,
Whan I ne see what myn herte wolde.
Wherfore I wol gon her to seen,
Or esed shal I never been,
But I have som tokening."
Then gost thou forth without dwelling;
But ofte thou faylest of thy desyre,
Er thou mayst come hir any nere,
And wastest in vayn thy passage.
Than fallest thou in a newe rage;
For want of sight thou ginnest morne,
And homward pensif dost retorne.
In greet mischeef than shalt thou be,
For than agayn shal come to thee
Sighes and pleyntes, with newe wo,
That no icching prikketh so.
Who wot it nought, he may go lere
Of hem that byen love so dere.
'No-thing thyn herte appesen may,
That oft thou wolt goon and assay,
If thou mayst seen, by aventure,
Thy lyves joy, thyn hertis cure;
So that, by grace if thou might
Atteyne of hir to have a sight,
Than shalt thou doon non other dede
But with that sight thyn eyen fede.
That faire fresh whan thou mayst see,
Thyn herte shal so ravished be,
That never thou woldest, thy thankis, lete,
Ne remove, for to see that swete.
The more thou seest in sothfastnesse,
The more thou coveytest of that swetnesse;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

The more thyn herte brenneth in fyr,
The more thyn herte is in desyr.
For who considreth every del,
It may be lykned wondir wel,
The peyne of love, unto a fere;
For ever the more thou neigest nere
Thought, or who—so that it be,
For verray sothe I telle it thee,
The hatter ever shal thou brenne,
As experience shal thee kenne.
Wher—so thou comest in any cost,
Who is next fyr, he brenneth most.
And yit forsothe, for al thyn hete,
Though thou for love swelte and swete,
Ne for no—thing thou felen may,
Thou shalt not willen to passe away.
And though thou go, yet must thee nede
Thenke al—day on hir fairhede,
Whom thou bihelde with so good wille;
And holde thysilf bigyled ille,
That thou ne haddest non hardement
To shewe hir ought of thyn entent.
Thyn herte ful sore thou wolt dispyse,
And eek repreve of cowardyse,
That thou, so dulle in every thing,
Were dom for drede, without speking.
Thou shalt eek thenke thou didest foly,
That thou were hir so faste by,
And durst not aunte thee to say
Som—thing, er thou cam away;
For thou haddist no more wonne,
To speke of hir whan thou bigonne:
But yif she wolde, for thy sake,
In armes goodly thee have take,
It shulde have be more worth to thee
Than of tresour greet plentee.
'Thus shalt thou morne and eek compleyn,
And gete enchesoun to goon ageyn
Unto thy walk, or to thy place,
Where thou biheld hir fleshly face.
And never, for fals suspeccioun,
Thou woldest finde occasioun
For to gon unto hir hous.
So art thou thanne desirous
A sight of hir for to have,
If thou thine honour mightest save,
Or any erand mightist make
Thider, for thy loves sake;
Ful fayn thou woldist, but for drede
Thou gost not, lest that men take hede.
Wherfore I rede, in thy going,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And also in thyn ageyn-coming,
Thou be wel war that men ne wit;
Feyne thee other cause than it
To go that weye, or faste by;
To hele wel is no folye.
And if so be it happe thee
That thou thy love ther mayst see,
In siker wyse thou hir salewe,
Wherwith thy colour wol transmewe,
And eke thy blood shal al to-quake,
Thyn hewe eek chaungen for hir sake.
But word and wit, with chere ful pale,
Shul wante for to telle thy tale.
And if thou mayst so fer-forth winne,
That thou thy resoun durst biginne,
And woldist seyn three thingis or mo,
Thou shalt ful scarsly seyn the two.
Though thou bithenke thee never so wel,
Thou shalt foryete yit somdel,
But-if thou dele with trecherye.
For fals lovers mowe al folye
Seyn, what hem lust, withouten drede,
They be so double in hir falshede;
For they in herte cunne thenke a thing
And seyn another, in hir speking.
And whan thy speche is endid al,
Right thus to thee it shal bifal;
If any word than come to minde,
That thou to seye hast left bihinde,
Than thou shalt brenne in greet martyr;
For thou shalt brenne as any fyr.
This is the stryf and eke the affray,
And the batail that lastith ay.
This bargeyn ende may never take,
But-if that she thy pees wil make.
'And whan the night is comen, anon
A thousand angres shal come upon.
To bedde as fast thou wolt thee dight,
Where thou shalt have but smal delyt;
For whan thou wenest for to slepe,
So ful of peyne shalt thou crepe,
Sterte in thy bedde aboute ful wyde,
And turne ful ofte on every syde;
Now downward groffe, and now upright,
And walowe in wo the longe night,
Thyne armis shalt thou sprede abrede,
As man in werre were forwerreyd.
Than shal thee come a remembraunce
Of hir shape and hir semblaunce,
Wherto non other may be pere.
And wite thou wel, withoute were,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

That thee shal seme, somtyme that night,
That thou hast hir, that is so bright,
Naked bitwene thyn armes there,
Al sothfastnesse as though it were.
Thou shalt make castels than in Spayne,
And dreme of Ioye, al but in vayne,
And thee delyten of right nought,
Whyl thou so slomrest in that thought,
That is so swete and delitable,
The which, in soth, nis but a fable,
For it ne shal no whyle laste.
Than shalt thou sighe and wepe faste,
And say, "Dere god, what thing is this?
My dreme is turned al amis,
Which was ful swete and apparent,
But now I wake, it is al shent!
Now yede this mery thought away!
Twenty tymes upon a day
I wolde this thought wolde come ageyn,
For it alleggith wel my peyn.
It makith me ful of Ioyful thought,
It sleeth me, that it lastith noght.
A, lord! why nil ye me socoure,
The Ioye, I trowe, that I langoure?
The deth I wolde me shulde slo
Whyl I lye in hir armes two.
Myn harm is hard, withouten wene,
My greet unese ful ofte I mene.
But wolde Love do so I might
Have fully Ioye of hir so bright,
My peyne were quit me richely.
Allas, to greet a thing aske I!
It is but foly, and wrong wening,
To aske so outrageous a thing.
And who—so askith folily,
He moot be warned hastily;
And I ne wot what I may say,
I am so fer out of the way;
For I wolde have ful gret lyking
And ful gret Ioye of lasse thing.
For wolde she, of hir gentilnesse,
Withouten more, me onis kesse,
It were to me a greet guerdoun,
Relees of al my passioun.
But it is hard to come therto;
Al is but foly that I do,
So high I have myn herte set,
Where I may no comfort get.
I noot wher I sey wel or nought;
But this I wot wel in my thought,
That it were bet of hir aloon,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

For to stinte my wo and moon,
A loke on me y-cast goodly,
Than for to have, al utterly,
Of another al hool the pley.
A! lord! wher I shal byde the day
That ever she shal my lady be?
He is ful cured that may hir see.
A! god! whan shal the dawning spring?
To ly thus is an angry thing;
I have no Ioye thus here to ly
Whan that my love is not me by.
A man to lyen hath gret disece,
Which may not slepe ne reste in ese.
I wolde it dawed, and were now day,
And that the night were went away;
For were it day, I wolde upryse.
A! slowe sonne, shew thyn enpryse!
Speed thee to sprede thy bemis bright,
And chace the derknesse of the night,
To putte away the stoundes stronge,
Which in me lasten al to longe."
"The night shalt thou contene so,
Withoute rest, in peyne and wo;
If ever thou knewe of love distresse,
Thou shalt mowe lerne in that siknesse.
And thus enduring shalt thou ly,
And ryse on morwe up erly
Out of thy bedde, and harneys thee
Er ever dawning thou mayst see.
Al privily than shalt thou goon,
What weder it be, thy-silf aloon,
For reyn, or hayl, for snow, for slete,
Thider she dwellith that is so swete,
The which may falle aslepe be,
And thenkith but litel upon thee.
Than shalt thou goon, ful foule aferd;
Loke if the gate be unsperd,
And waite without in wo and peyn,
Ful yvel a-cold in winde and reyn.
Than shal thou go the dore bifore,
If thou maist fynde any score,
Or hole, or reft, what ever it were;
Than shalt thou stoupe, and lay to ere,
If they within a-slepe be;
I mene, alle save thy lady free.
Whom waking if thou mayst aspye,
Go put thy-silf in Iupartye,
To aske grace, and thee bimene,
That she may wite, withouten wene,
That thou anight no rest hast had,
So sore for hir thou were bistad.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Wommen wel ought pite to take
Of hem that sorwen for hir sake.
And loke, for love of that relyke,
That thou thenke non other lyke,
For whom thou hast so greet annoy,
Shal kisse thee er thou go away,
And hold that in ful gret deyntee.
And, for that no man shal thee see
Bifore the hous, ne in the way,
Loke thou be goon ageyn er day.
Suche coming, and such going,
Such hevynesse, and such walking,
Makith lovers, withouten wene,
Under hir clothes pale and lene,
For Love leveth colour ne cleernesse;
Who loveth trewe hath no fatnesse.
Thou shalt wel by thy-selfe see
That thou must nedis assayed be.
For men that shape hem other wey
Falsly her ladies to bitray,
It is no wonder though they be fat;
With false othes hir loves they gat;
For oft I see suche losengeours
Fatter than abbatis or priours.
'Yet with o thing I thee charge,
That is to seye, that thou be large
Unto the mayd that hir doth serve,
So best hir thank thou shalt deserve.
Yeve hir yiftes, and get hir grace,
For so thou may hir thank purchase,
That she thee worthy holde and free,
Thy lady, and alle that may thee see.
Also hir servauntes worshipe ay,
And plese as mucche as thou may;
Gret good through hem may come to thee,
Bicause with hir they been prive.
They shal hir telle how they thee fand
Curteis and wys, and wel doand,
And she shal preyse thee wel the mare.
Loke out of londe thou be not fare;
And if such cause thou have, that thee
Bihoveth to gon out of contree,
Leve hool thyn herte in hostage,
Til thou ageyn make thy passage.
Thenk long to see the swete thing
That hath thyn herte in hir keping.
'Now have I told thee, in what wyse
A lover shal do me servyse.
Do it than, if thou wolt have
The mede that thou aftir crave.'
Whan Love al this had boden me,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

I seide him:—'Sire, how may it be
That lovers may in such manere
Endure the peyne ye have seid here?
I merveyle me wonder faste,
How any man may live or laste
In such peyne, and such brenning,
In sorwe and thought, and such sighing,
Ay unrelesed wo to make,
Whether so it be they slepe or wake.
In such annoy continually,
As helpe me god, this merveile I,
How man, but he were maad of stele,
Might live a month, such peynes to fele.'
The God of Love than seide me,
'Freend, by the feith I owe to thee,
May no man have good, but he it by.
A man loveth more tendirly
The thing that he hath bought most dere.
For wite thou wel, withouten were,
In thank that thing is taken more,
For which a man hath suffred sore.
Certis, no wo ne may atteyne
Unto the sore of loves peyne.
Non yvel therto ne may amounte,
No more than a man may counte
The dropes that of the water be.
For drye as wel the grete see
Thou mightist, as the harmes telle
Of hem that with Love dwelle
In servyse; for peyne hem sleeth,
And that ech man wolde flee the deeth,
And trowe they shulde never escape,
Nere that hope couthe hem make
Glad as man in prisoun set,
And may not geten for to et
But barly-breed, and watir pure,
And lyeth in vermin and in ordure;
With alle this, yit can he live,
Good hope such comfort hath him yive,
Which maketh wene that he shal be
Delivered and come to liberte;
In fortune is his fulle trust.
Though he lye in strawe or dust,
In hope is al his susteyning.
And so for lovers, in hir wening,
Whiche Love hath shit in his prisoun;
Good-Hope is hir salvacioun.
Good-Hope, how sore that they smerte,
Yeveth hem bothe wille and herte
To profre hir body to martyre;
For Hope so sore doth hem desyre

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

To suffre ech harm that men devyse,
For Ioye that aftir shal aryse.
Hope, in desire to cacche victorie;
In Hope, of love is al the glorie,
For Hope is al that love may yive;
Nere Hope, ther shulde no lover live.
Blessid be Hope, which with desyre
Avaunceth lovers in such manere.
Good–Hope is curteis for to plese,
To kepe lovers from al disese.
Hope kepith his lond, and wol abyde,
For any peril that may betyde;
For Hope to lovers, as most cheef,
Doth hem enduren al mischeef;
Hope is her help, whan mister is.
And I shal yeve thee eek, y–wis,
Three other thingis, that greet solas
Doth to hem that be in my las.
'The firste good that may be founde,
To hem that in my lace be bounde,
Is Swete–Thought, for to recorde
Thing wherwith thou canst accorde
Best in thyn herte, wher she be;
Thought in absence is good to thee.
Whan any lover doth compleyne,
And liveth in distresse and peyne,
Than Swete–Thought shal come, as blyve,
Awey his angre for to dryve.
It makith lovers have remembraunce
Of comfort, and of high plesaunce,
That Hope hath hight him for to winne.
For Thought anoon than shal biginne,
As fer, god wot, as he can finde,
To make a mirroure of his minde;
For to biholde he wol not lette.
Hir person he shal afore him sette,
Hir laughing eyen, persaunt and clere,
Hir shape, hir fourme, hir goodly chere,
Hir mouth that is so gracious,
So swete, and eek so saverous;
Of alle hir fetures he shal take heede,
His eyen with alle hir limes fede.
'Thus Swete–Thenking shal aswage
The peyne of lovers, and hir rage.
Thy Ioye shal double, withoute gesse,
Whan thou thenkist on hir semlinesse,
Or of hir laughing, or of hir chere,
That to thee made thy lady dere.
This comfort wol I that thou take;
And if the next thou wolt forsake
Which is not lesse saverous,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Thou shuldist been to daungerous.
"The secounde shal be Swete-Speche,
That hath to many oon be leche,
To bringe hem out of wo and were,
And helpe many a bachilere;
And many a lady sent socoure,
That have loved par-amour,
Through speking, whan they mighten here
Of hir lovers, to hem so dere.
To hem it voidith al hir smerte,
The which is closed in hir herte.
In herte it makith hem glad and light,
Speche, whan they mowe have sight.
And therefore now it cometh to minde,
In olde dawes, as I finde,
That clerkis writen that hir knewe,
Ther was a lady fresh of hewe,
Which of hir love made a song
On him for to remembre among,
In which she seide, "Whan that I here
Speken of him that is so dere,
To me it voidith al my smerte,
Y-wis, he sit so nere myn herte.
To speke of him, at eve or morwe,
It cureth me of al my sorwe.
To me is noon so high plesaunce
As of his persone daliaunce."
She wist ful wel that Swete-Speking
Comfortith in ful mucche thing.
Hir love she had ful wel assayed,
Of him she was ful wel apayed;
To speke of him hir Ioye was set.
Therefore I rede thee that thou get
A felowe that can wel concele
And kepe thy counsel, and wel hele,
To whom go shewe hoolly thyn herte,
Bothe wele and wo, Ioye and smerte:
To gete comfort to him thou go,
And privily, bitween yow two,
Ye shal speke of that goodly thing,
That hath thyn herte in hir keping;
Of hir beaute and hir semblaunce,
And of hir goodly countenaunce.
Of al thy state thou shalt him sey,
And aske him counseil how thou may
Do any thing that may hir plese;
For it to thee shal do gret ese,
That he may wite thou trust him so,
Bothe of thy wele and of thy wo.
And if his herte to love be set,
His companye is mucche the bet,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

For resoun wol, he shewe to thee
Al uttirly his privite;
And what she is he loveth so,
To thee pleyedly he shal undo,
Withoute drede of any shame,
Bothe telle hir renoun and hir name.
Than shal he forther, ferre and nere,
And namely to thy lady dere,
In siker wyse; ye, every other
Shal helpen as his owne brother,
In trouthe withoute doublenesse,
And kepen cloos in sikernesse.
For it is noble thing, in fay,
To have a man thou darst say
Thy prive counsel every del;
For that wol comfort thee right wel,
And thou shalt holde thee wel apayed,
Whan such a freend thou hast assayed.
The thridde good of greet comfort
That yeveth to lovers most disport,
Comith of sight and biholding,
That clepid is Swete-Loking,
The whiche may noon ese do,
Whan thou art fer thy lady fro;
Wherfore thou prese alwey to be
In place, where thou mayst hir se.
For it is thing most amerous,
Most delitable and saverous,
For to aswage a mannes sorowe,
To sene his lady by the morowe.
For it is a ful noble thing
Whan thyn eyen have meting
With that relyke precious,
Wherof they be so desirous.
But al day after, soth it is,
They have no drede to faren amis,
They dreden neither wind ne reyn,
Ne yit non other maner peyn.
For whan thyn eyen were thus in blis,
Yit of hir curtesye, y-wis,
Aloon they can not have hir Ioye,
But to the herte they it convoye;
Part of hir blis to him they sende,
Of al this harm to make an ende.
The eye is a good messangere,
Which can to the herte in such manere
Tidyngis sende, that he hath seen,
To voide him of his peynes cleen.
Wherof the herte reioyseth so
That a gret party of his wo
Is voided, and put away to flight.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Right as the derknesse of the night
Is chased with clerenesse of the mone,
Right so is al his wo ful sone
Devoided clene, whan that the sight
Biholden may that fresshe wight
That the herte desyreth so,
That al his derknesse is ago;
For than the herte is al at ese,
Whan they seen that that may hem plese.
'Now have I thee declared al-out,
Of that thou were in drede and dout;
For I have told thee feithfully
What thee may curen utterly,
And alle lovers that wole be
Feithful, and ful of stabilite.
Good-Hope alwey kepe by thy syde,
And Swete-Thought make eek abyde,
Swete-Loking and Swete-Speche;
Of alle thyn harmes they shal be leche.
Of every thou shalt have greet plesaunce;
If thou canst byde in sufferaunce,
And serve wel without feyntyse,
Thou shalt be quit of thyn empryse,
With more guerdoun, if that thou live;
But al this tyme this I thee yive.'
The God of Love whan al the day
Had taught me, as ye have herd say,
And enfourmed compendiously,
He vanished away al sodeynly,
And I alone lefte, al sole,
So ful of compleynt and of dole,
For I saw no man ther me by.
My woundes me greved wondirly;
Me for to curen no-thing I knew,
Save the botoun bright of hew,
Wheron was set hoolly my thought;
Of other comfort knew I nought,
But it were through the God of Love;
I knew nat elles to my bihove
That might me ese or comfort gete,
But-if he wolde him entermete.
The roser was, withoute doute,
Closed with an hegge withoute,
As ye to-form have herd me seyn;
And fast I bisied, and wolde fayn
Have passed the haye, if I might
Have geten in by any slight
Unto the botoun so fair to see.
But ever I dradde blamed to be,
If men wolde have suspeccioun
That I wolde of entencioun

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Have stole the roses that ther were;
Therefore to entre I was in fere.
But at the last, as I bithought
Whether I sholde passe or nought,
I saw come with a gladde chere
To me, a lusty bachelere,
Of good stature, and of good hight,
And Bialacoil forsothe he hight.
Sone he was to Curtesy,
And he me graunted ful gladly
The passage of the outer hay,
And seide:—'Sir, how that ye may
Passe, if it your wille be,
The fresshe roser for to see,
And ye the swete savour fele.
Your warrant may I be right wele;
So thou thee kepe fro folye,
Shal no man do thee vilanye.
If I may helpe you in ought,
I shal not feyne, dredeth nought;
For I am bounde to your servyse,
Fully devoide of feyntyse.'
Than unto Bialacoil saide I,
'I thank you, sir, ful hertely,
And your biheest I take at gree,
That ye so goodly profer me;
To you it cometh of greet fraunchyse,
That ye me profer your servyse.'
Than aftir, ful deliverly,
Through the breres anoon wente I,
Wherof encombred was the hay.
I was wel plesed, the soth to say,
To see the botoun fair and swote,
So fresshe spronge out of the rote.
And Bialacoil me served wel,
Whan I so nygh me mighte fele
Of the botoun the swete odour,
And so lusty hewed of colour.
But than a cherl (foule him bityde!)
Bisyde the roses gan him hyde,
To kepe the roses of that roser,
Of whom the name was Daunger.
This cherl was hid there in the greves,
Covered with grasse and with leves,
To spye and take whom that he fond
Unto that roser putte an hond.
He was not sole, for ther was mo;
For with him were other two
Of wikkid maners, and yvel fame.
That oon was clepid, by his name,
Wikked-Tonge, god yeve him sorwe!

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

For neither at eve, ne at morwe,
He can of no man no good speke;
On many a lust man doth he wreke.
Ther was a womman eek, that hight
Shame, that, who can reken right,
Trespas was hir fadir name,
Hir moder Resoun; and thus was Shame
On lyve brought of these ilk two.
And yit had Trespas never ado
With Resoun, ne never ley hir by,
He was so hidous and ugly,
I mene, this that Trespas hight;
But Resoun conceyveth, of a sight,
Shame, of that I spak afor.
And whan that Shame was thus born,
It was ordeyned, that Chastitee
Shulde of the roser lady be,
Which, of the botouns more and las,
With sondry folk assailed was,
That she ne wiste what to do.
For Venus hir assailith so,
That night and day from hir she stal
Botouns and roses over-al.
To Resoun than prayeth Chastitee,
Whom Venus flemed over the see,
That she hir doughter wolde hir lene,
To kepe the roser fresh and grene.
Anoon Resoun to Chastitee
Is fully assented that it be,
And grauntid hir, at hir request,
That Shame, bicause she is honest,
Shal keper of the roser be.
And thus to kepe it ther were three,
That noon shulde hardy be ne bold
(Were he yong, or were he old)
Ageyn hir wille away to bere
Botouns ne roses, that ther were.
I had wel sped, had I not been
Awayted with these three, and seen.
For Bialacoil, that was so fair,
So gracious and debonair,
Quitte him to me ful curteisly,
And, me to plese, bad that I
Shuld drawe me to the botoun nere;
Prese in, to touche the rosere
Which bar the roses, he yaf me leve;
This graunt ne might but litel greve.
And for he saw it lyked me,
Right nygh the botoun pullede he
A leef al grene, and yaf me that,
The which ful nygh the botoun sat;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

I made me of that leef ful queynt.
And whan I felte I was aqueynt
With Bialacoil, and so prive,
I wende al at my wille had be.
Than wex I hardy for to tel
To Bialacoil how me bifel
Of Love, that took and wounded me,
And seide: 'Sir, so mote I thee,
I may no Ioye have in no wyse,
Upon no syde, but it ryse;
For sithe (if I shal not feyne)
In herte I have had so gret peyne,
So gret annoy, and such affray,
That I ne wot what I shal say;
I drede your wrath to disserve.
Lever me were, that knyves kerve
My body shulde in pecis smalle,
Than in any wyse it shulde falle
That ye wratthed shulde been with me.'
'Sey boldely thy wille,' quod he,
'I nil be wroth, if that I may,
For nought that thou shalt to me say.'
Thanne seide I, 'Sir, not you displese
To knowen of my greet unese,
In which only love hath me brought;
For peynes greet, disese and thought,
Fro day to day he doth me drye;
Supposeth not, sir, that I lye.
In me fyve woundes dide he make,
The sore of whiche shal never slake
But ye the botoun graunte me,
Which is most passaunt of beautee,
My lyf, my deth, and my martyre,
And tresour that I most desyre.'
Than Bialacoil, affrayed all,
Seyde, 'Sir, it may not fall;
That ye desire, it may not ryse.
What? wolde ye shende me in this wyse?
A mochel foole than I were,
If I suffrid you away to bere
The fresh botoun, so fair of sight.
For it were neither skile ne right
Of the roser ye broke the rind,
Or take the rose afor his kind;
Ye ar not courteys to aske it.
Lat it stil on the roser sit,
And growe til it amended be,
And parfityly come to beaute.
I nolde not that it pulled wer
Fro the roser that it ber,
To me it is so leef and dere.'

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

With that sterte out anoon Daungere,
Out of the place where he was hid.
His malice in his chere was kid;
Ful greet he was, and blak of hewe,
Sturdy and hidous, who—so him knewe;
Like sharp urchouns his here was growe,
His eyes rede as the fire—glow;
His nose frounced ful kirked stood,
He com criand as he were wood,
And seide, 'Bialacoil, tel me why
Thou bringest hider so boldly
Him that so nygh is the roser?
Thou worchist in a wrong maner;
He thenkith to dishonour thee,
Thou art wel worthy to have maugree
To late him of the roser wit;
Who serveth a feloun is yvel quit.
Thou woldist have doon greet bountee,
And he with shame wolde quyte thee.
Flee hennes, felowe! I rede thee go!
It wanteth litel I wol thee slo;
For Bialacoil ne knew thee nought,
Whan thee to serve he sette his thought;
For thou wolt shame him, if thou might,
Bothe ageyn resoun and right.
I wol no more in thee affye,
That comest so slyghly for tespye;
For it preveth wonder wel,
Thy slight and tresoun every del.'
I durst no more ther make abode,
For the cherl, he was so wode;
So gan he threten and manace,
And thurgh the haye he did me chace.
For feer of him I tremblid and quook,
So cherlishly his heed he shook;
And seide, if eft he might me take,
I shulde not from his hondis scape.
Than Bialacoil is fled and mate,
And I al sole, disconsolate,
Was left aloon in peyne and thought;
For shame, to deth I was nygh brought.
Than thought I on myn high foly,
How that my body, utterly,
Was yeve to peyne and to martyre;
And therto hadde I so gret yre,
That I ne durst the hayes passe;
There was non hope, there was no grace.
I trowe never man wiste of peyne,
But he were laced in Loves cheyne;
Ne no man wot, and sooth it is,
But—if he love, what anger is.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Love holdith his heest to me right wele,
Whan peyne he seide I shulde fele.
Non herte may thenke, ne tunge seyne,
A quarter of my wo and peyne.
I might not with the anger laste;
Myn herte in poynt was for to braste,
Whan I thought on the rose, that so
Was through Daunger cast me froo.
A long whyl stood I in that state,
Til that me saugh so mad and mate
The lady of the highe ward,
Which from hir tour lokid thiderward.
Resoun men clepe that lady,
Which from hir tour deliverly
Come doun to me withouten more.
But she was neither yong, ne hore,
Ne high ne low, ne fat ne lene,
But best, as it were in a mene.
Hir eyen two were cleer and light
As any candel that brenneth bright;
And on hir heed she hadde a crown.
Hir semede wel an high persoun;
For rounde enviroon, hir crownet
Was ful of riche stonis fret.
Hir goodly semblaunt, by devys,
I trowe were maad in paradys;
Nature had never such a grace,
To forge a werk of such compace.
For certeyn, but the letter lye,
God him-silf, that is so high,
Made hir aftir his image,
And yaf hir sith sich avauntage,
That she hath might and seignorye
To kepe men from al folye;
Who-so wole trowe hir lore,
Ne may offenden nevermore.
And whyl I stood thus derk and pale,
Resoun bigan to me hir tale;
She seide: 'Al hayl, my swete frend!
Foly and childhood wol thee shend,
Which thee have put in greet affray;
Thou hast bought dere the tyme of May,
That made thyn herte mery to be.
In yvel tyme thou wentist to see
The gardin, wherof Ydilnesse
Bar the keye, and was maistresse
Whan thou yedest in the daunce
With hir, and haddest aqueyntaunce:
Hir aqueyntaunce is perilous,
First softe, and aftirward noyous;
She hath thee trashed, withoute ween;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

The God of Love had thee not seen,
Ne hadde Ydilnesse thee conveyed
In the verger where Mirthe him pleyed.
If Foly have supprised thee,
Do so that it recovered be;
And be wel war to take no more
Counsel, that greveth aftir sore;
He is wys that wol himsilf chastyse.
And though a young man in any wyse
Trespace among, and do foly,
Lat him not tarye, but hastily
Lat him amende what so be mis.
And eek I counseile thee, y-wis,
The God of Love hoolly for-yet,
That hath thee in sich peyne set,
And thee in herte tormented so.
I can nat seen how thou mayst go
Other weyes to garisoun;
For Daunger, that is so feloun,
Felly purposith thee to werrey,
Which is ful cruel, the soth to sey.
'And yit of Daunger cometh no blame,
In reward of my doughter Shame,
Which hath the roses in hir warde,
As she that may be no musarde.
And Wikked-Tunge is with these two,
That suffrith no man thider go;
For er a thing be do, he shal,
Where that he cometh, over-al,
In fourty places, if it be sought,
Seye thing that never was doon ne wrought;
So moche tresoun is in his male,
Of falsnesse for to feyne a tale.
Thou delest with angry folk, y-wis;
Wherfor to thee it bettir is
From these folk away to fare,
For they wol make thee live in care.
This is the yvel that Love they calle,
Wherin ther is but foly alle,
For love is foly everydel;
Who loveth, in no wyse may do wel,
Ne sette his thought on no good werk.
His scole he lesith, if he be clerk;
Of other craft eek if he be,
He shal not thryve therin; for he
In love shal have more passioun
Than monke, hermyte, or chanoun.
The peyne is hard, out of mesure,
The Ioye may eek no whyl endure;
And in the possessioun
Is muche tribulacioun;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

The Ioye it is so short-lasting,
And but in happe is the geting;
For I see ther many in travaille,
That atte laste foule fayle.
I was no-thing thy counseler,
Whan thou were maad the homager
Of God of Love to hastily;
Ther was no wisdom, but foly.
Thyn herte was Ioly, but not sage,
Whan thou were brought in sich a rage,
To yelde thee so redily,
And to Love, of his gret maistry.
'I rede thee Love away to dryve,
That makith thee recche not of thy lyve.
The foly more fro day to day
Shal growe, but thou it putte away.
Take with thy teeth the bridel faste,
To daunte thyn herte; and eek thee caste,
If that thou mayst, to gete defence
For to redresse thy first offence.
Who-so his herte alwey wol leve,
Shal finde among that shal him greve.'
Whan I hir herd thus me chastyse,
I answerd in ful angry wyse.
I prayed hir cessen of hir speche,
Outher to chastyse me or teche,
To bidde me my thought refreyne,
Which Love hath caught in his demeyne:—
'What? wene ye Love wol consent,
That me assailith with bowe bent,
To draw myn herte out of his honde,
Which is so quikly in his bonde?
That ye counsayle, may never be;
For whan he first arested me,
He took myn herte so hool him til,
That it is no-thing at my wil;
He taughte it so him for to obey,
That he it sparred with a key.
I pray yow lat me be al stille.
For ye may wel, if that ye wille,
Your wordis waste in idilnesse;
For utterly, withouten gesse,
Al that ye seyn is but in veyne.
Me were lever dye in the peyne,
Than Love to me-ward shulde arette
Falsheed, or tresoun on me sette.
I wol me gete prys or blame,
And love trewe, to save my name;
Who me chastysith, I him hate.'
With that word Resoun wente hir gate,
Whan she saugh for no sermoning

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

She might me fro my foly bring.
Than dismayed, I lefte al sool,
Forwery, forwardred as a fool,
For I ne knew no chevisaunce.
Than fel into my remembraunce,
How Love bade me to purveye
A felowe, to whom I mighte seye
My counsel and my privete,
For that shulde mucche availe me.
With that bithought I me, that I
Hadde a felowe faste by,
Trewe and siker, curteys, and hend,
And he was called by name a Freend;
A trewer felowe was no-wher noon.
In haste to him I wente anoon,
And to him al my wo I tolde,
Fro him right nought I wold withholde.
I tolde him al withoute were,
And made my compleynt on Daungere,
How for to see he was hidous,
And to-me-ward contrarious;
The whiche through his cruelte
Was in poynt to have meyned me;
With Bialacoil whan he me sey
Within the gardyn walke and pley,
Fro me he made him for to go,
And I bilefte aloon in wo;
I durst no lenger with him speke,
For Daunger seide he wolde be wreke,
Whan that he sawe how I wente
The fresshe botoun for to hente,
If I were hardy to come neer
Bitwene the hay and the roser.
This Freend, whan he wiste of my thought,
He discomforted me right nought,
But seide, 'Felowe, be not so mad,
Ne so abaysshed nor bistad.
My-silf I knowe ful wel Daungere,
And how he is feers of his chere,
At prime temps, Love to manace;
Ful ofte I have ben in his caas.
A feloun first though that he be,
Aftir thou shalt him souple see.
Of long passed I knew him wele;
Ungoodly first though men him fele,
He wol meek aftir, in his bering,
Been, for service and obeysshing.
I shal thee telle what thou shalt do:—
Mekely I rede thou go him to,
Of herte pray him specialy
Of thy trespase to have mercy,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And hote him wel, him here to plese,
That thou shalt nevermore him displese.
Who can best serve of flattery,
Shal plese Daunger most uttirly.'
My Freend hath seid to me so wel,
That he me esid hath somdel,
And eek allegged of my torment;
For through him had I hardement
Agayn to Daunger for to go,
To preve if I might meke him so.
To Daunger cam I, al ashamed,
The which afor me hadde blamed,
Desyring for to pese my wo;
But over hegge durst I not go,
For he forbad me the passage.
I fond him cruel in his rage,
And in his hond a gret burdoun.
To him I knelid lowe adoun,
Ful meke of port, and simple of chere,
And seide, 'Sir, I am comen here
Only to aske of you mercy.
That greveth me, sir, ful gretly
That ever my lyf I wratthed you,
But for to amende I am come now,
With al my might, bothe loude and stille,
To doon right at your owne wille;
For Love made me for to do
That I have trespassed hidirto;
Fro whom I ne may withdrawe myn herte;
Yit shal I never, for Ioy ne smerte,
What so bifalle, good or ille,
Offende more ageyn your wille.
Lever I have endure disese
Than do that shulde you displese.
'I you require and pray, that ye
Of me have mercy and pitee,
To stinte your yre that greveth so,
That I wol swere for evermo
To be redressid at your lyking,
If I trespasse in any thing;
Save that I pray thee graunte me
A thing that may nat warned be,
That I may love, al only;
Non other thing of you aske I.
I shal doon elles wel, y-wis,
If of your grace ye graunte me this.
And ye ne may not letten me,
For wel wot ye that love is free,
And I shal loven, sith that I wil,
Who-ever lyke it wel or il;
And yit ne wold I, for al Fraunce,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Do thing to do you displesaunce.'
Than Daunger fil in his entent
For to foryeve his maltalent;
But al his wratthe yit at laste
He hath relesed, I preyde so faste:
Shortly he seide, 'Thy request
Is not to mochel dishonest;
Ne I wol not werne it thee,
For yit no-thing engreveth me.
For though thou love thus evermore,
To me is neither softe ne sore.
Love wher thee list; what recchith me,
So thou fer fro my roses be?
Trust not on me, for noon assay,
In any tyme to passe the hay.'
Thus hath he graunted my prayere.
Than wente I forth, withouten were,
Unto my Freend, and tolde him al,
Which was right Ioyful of my tale.
He seide, 'Now goth wel thyn affaure,
He shal to thee be debonaire.
Though he aforne was dispitous,
He shal heeraftir be gracious.
If he were touchid on som good veyne,
He shuld yit rewen on thy peyne.
Suffre, I rede, and no boost make,
Til thou at good mes mayst him take.
By suffraunce, and by wordis softe,
A man may overcomen ofte
Him that aforne he hadde in drede,
In bookis sothly as I rede.'
Thus hath my Freend with gret comfort
Avaunced me with high disport,
Which wolde me good as mich as I.
And thanne anon ful sodeynly
I took my leve, and streight I went
Unto the hay; for gret talent
I had to seen the fresh botoun,
Wherin lay my salvacioun;
And Daunger took kepe, if that I
Kepe him covenant trewly.
So sore I dradde his manasing,
I durst not breken his bidding;
For, lest that I were of him shent,
I brak not his comaundement,
For to purchase his good wil.
It was hard for to come ther-til,
His mercy was to fer bihinde;
I wepte, for I ne might it finde.
I compleyned and sighed sore,
And languished evermore,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

For I durst not over go
Unto the rose I loved so.
Thurghout my deming outerly,
Than had he knowlege certainly,
That Love me ladde in sich a wyse,
That in me ther was no feyntyse,
Falsheed, ne no trecherye.
And yit he, ful of vilanye,
Of disdeyne, and cruelte,
On me ne wolde have pite,
His cruel wil for to refreyne,
Though I wepe alwey, and compleyne.
And while I was in this torment,
Were come of grace, by god sent,
Fraunchyse, and with hir Pite
Fulfilde the botoun of bountee.
They go to Daunger anon—right
To forther me with al hir might,
And helpe in worde and in dede,
For wel they saugh that it was nede.
First, of hir grace, dame Fraunchyse
Hath taken word of this empryse:
She seide, 'Daunger, gret wrong ye do
To worche this man so muche wo,
Or pynen him so angerly;
It is to you gret vilany.
I can not see why, ne how,
That he hath trespassed ageyn you,
Save that he loveth; wherfore ye shulde
The more in chere of him holde.
The force of love makith him do this;
Who wolde him blame he dide amis?
He leseth more than ye may do;
His peyne is hard, ye may see, lo!
And Love in no wyse wolde consente
That he have power to repente;
For though that quik ye wolde him sloo,
Fro Love his herte may not go.
Now, swete sir, is it your ese
Him for to angre or disese?
Allas, what may it you avaunce
To doon to him so greet grevaunce?
What worship is it agayn him take,
Or on your man a werre make,
Sith he so lowly every wyse
Is redy, as ye lust devyse?
If Love hath caught him in his lace,
You for tobeye in every caas,
And been your suget at your wille,
Shulde ye therfore willen him ille?
Ye shulde him spare more, al—out,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Than him that is bothe proud and stout.
Curtesye wol that ye socour
Hem that ben meke undir your cure.
His herte is hard, that wole not meke,
Whan men of mekenesse him biseke.'
'That is certeyn,' seide Pite;
'We see ofte that humilitee
Bothe ire, and also felonye
Venquisseth, and also melancolye;
To stonde forth in such duresse,
This crueltee and wikkednesse.
Wherfore I pray you, sir Daungere,
For to mayntene no lenger here
Such cruel werre agayn your man,
As hoolly youres as ever he can;
Nor that ye worchen no more wo
On this caytif that languisshith so,
Which wol no more to you trespasse,
But put him hoolly in your grace.
His offense ne was but lyte;
The God of Love it was to wyte,
That he your thral so gretly is,
And if ye harm him, ye doon amis;
For he hath had ful hard penaunce,
Sith that ye refte him thaqueyntaunce
Of Bialacoil, his moste Ioye,
Which alle his peynes might acoye.
He was biforn anoyed sore,
But than ye doubled him wel more;
For he of blis hath ben ful bare,
Sith Bialacoil was fro him fare.
Love hath to him do greet distresse,
He hath no nede of more duresse.
Voideth from him your ire, I rede;
Ye may not winnen in this dede.
Makith Bialacoil repeire ageyn,
And haveth pite upon his peyn;
For Fraunchise wol, and I, Pite,
That merciful to him ye be;
And sith that she and I accorde,
Have upon him misericorde;
For I you pray, and eek moneste,
Nought to refusen our requeste;
For he is hard and fel of thought,
That for us two wol do right nought.'
Daunger ne might no more endure,
He meked him unto mesure.
'I wol in no wyse,' seith Daungere,
'Denye that ye have asked here;
It were to greet uncurtesye.
I wol ye have the companye

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Of Bialacoil, as ye devyse;
I wol him letten in no wyse.'
To Bialacoil than wente in hy
Fraunchyse, and seide ful curteisly:—
'Ye have to longe be deignous
Unto this lover, and daungerous,
Fro him to withdrawe your presence,
Which hath do to him grete offence,
That ye not wolde upon him see;
Wherfore a sorowful man is he.
Shape ye to paye him, and to plese,
Of my love if ye wol have ese.
Fulfil his wil, sith that ye knowe
Daunger is daunted and brought lowe
Thurgh help of me and of Pite;
You thar no more afered be.'
'I shal do right as ye wil,'
Saith Bialacoil, 'for it is skil,
Sith Daunger wol that it so be.'
Than Fraunchise hath him sent to me.
Bialacoil at the biginning
Salued me in his coming.
No straungenes was in him seen,
No more than he ne had wrathed been.
As faire semblaunt than shewed he me,
And goodly, as afor did he;
And by the honde, withouten doute,
Within the haye, right al aboute
He ladde me, with right good chere,
Al environ the vergere,
That Daunger had me chased fro.
Now have I leve over-al to go;
Now am I raised, at my devys,
Fro helle unto paradys.
Thus Bialacoil, of gentilnesse,
With alle his peyne and besinesse,
Hath shewed me, only of grace,
The estres of the swote place.
I saw the rose, whan I was nigh,
Was gretter woxen, and more high,
Fresh, rody, and fair of hewe,
Of colour ever yliche newe.
And whan I had it longe seen,
I saugh that through the leves grene
The rose spredde to spanishing;
To sene it was a goodly thing.
But it ne was so spred on brede,
That men within might knowe the sede;
For it covert was and enclose
Bothe with the leves and with the rose.
The stalk was even and grene upright,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

It was theron a goodly sight;
And wel the better, withouten wene,
For the seed was not y-sene.
Ful faire it spradde, god it blesse!
For suche another, as I gesse,
Aforne ne was, ne more vermayle.
I was abawed for merveyle,
For ever, the fairer that it was,
The more I am bounden in Loves laas.
Longe I abood there, soth to saye,
Til Bialacoil I gan to praye,
Whan that I saw him in no wyse
To me warnen his servyse,
That he me wolde graunte a thing,
Which to remembre is wel sitting;
This is to sayne, that of his grace
He wolde me yeve leyser and space
To me that was so desirous
To have a kissing precious
Of the goodly freshe rose,
That swetely smelleth in my nose;
'For if it you displeasid nought,
I wolde gladly, as I have sought,
Have a cos therof freely
Of your yeft; for certainly
I wol non have but by your leve,
So loth me were you for to greve.'
He sayde, 'Frend, so god me spede,
Of Chastite I have suche drede,
Thou shuldest not warned be for me,
But I dar not, for Chastite.
Agayn hir dar I not misdo,
For alwey biddeth she me so
To yeve no lover leve to kisse;
For who therto may winnen, y-wis,
He of the surplus of the pray
May live in hope to get som day.
For who so kissing may attayne,
Of loves peyne hath, soth to sayne,
The beste and most avenaunt,
And ernest of the remenaunt.'
Of his answer I syghed sore;
I durst assaye him tho no more,
I had such drede to greve him ay.
A man shulde not to mucche assaye
To chafe his frend out of mesure,
Nor put his lyf in aventure;
For no man at the firste stroke
Ne may nat felle doun an oke;
Nor of the reisins have the wyne,
Til grapes rype and wel afyne

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Be sore empressid, I you ensure,
And drawn out of the pressure.
But I, forpeyned wonder stronge,
Thought that I abood right longe
Aftir the kis, in peyne and wo,
Sith I to kis desyred so:
Til that, rewing on my distresse,
Ther to me Venus the goddesse,
Which ay werreyeth Chastite,
Came of hir grace, to socoure me,
Whos might is knowe fer and wyde,
For she is modir of Cypyde,
The God of Love, blinde as stoon,
That helpith lovers many oon.
This lady brought in hir right hond
Of brenning fyr a blasing brond;
Wherof the flawme and hote fyr
Hath many a lady in desyr
Of love brought, and sore het,
And in hir servise hir hertes set.
This lady was of good entayle,
Right wondirful of apparayle;
By hir atyre so bright and shene,
Men might perceyve wel, and seen,
She was not of religioun.
Nor I nil make mencioun
Nor of hir robe, nor of tresour,
Of broche, nor of hir riche attour;
Ne of hir girdil aboute hir syde,
For that I nil not long abyde.
But knowith wel, that certeynly
She was arayed richely.
Devoyd of pryde certeyn she was;
To Bialacoil she wente a pas,
And to him shortly, in a clause,
She seide: 'Sir, what is the cause
Ye been of port so daungerous
Unto this lover, and deynous,
To graunte him no-thing but a kis?
To werne it him ye doon amis;
Sith wel ye wote, how that he
Is Loves servaunt, as ye may see,
And hath beaute, wher-through he is
Worthy of love to have the blis.
How he is semely, biholde and see,
How he is fair, how he is free,
How he is swote and debonair,
Of age yong, lusty, and fair.
Ther is no lady so hauteyne,
Duchesse, countesse, ne chasteleyne,
That I nolde holde hir ungoodly

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

For to refuse him outerly.
His breath is also good and swete,
And eke his lippis rody, and mete
Only to pleyen, and to kisse.
Graunte him a kis, of gentilnesse!
His teeth arn also whyte and clene;
Me thinkith wrong, withouten wene,
If ye now werne him, trustith me,
To graunte that a kis have he;
The lasse to helpe him that ye haste,
The more tyme shul ye waste.'
Whan the flawme of the verry brond,
That Venus brought in hir right hond,
Had Bialacoil with hete smete,
Anoon he bad, withouten lette,
Graunte to me the rose kisse.
Than of my peyne I gan to lisse,
And to the rose anoon wente I,
And kissid it ful feithfully.
Thar no man aske if I was blythe,
Whan the savour soft and lythe
Strook to myn herte withoute more,
And me alegged of my sore,
So was I ful of Ioye and blisse.
It is fair sich a flour to kisse,
It was so swote and saverous.
I might not be so anguisshous,
That I mote glad and Ioly be,
Whan that I remembre me.
Yit ever among, sothly to seyn,
I suffre noye and moche peyn.
The see may never be so stil,
That with a litel winde it nil
Overwhelme and turne also,
As it were wood, in wawis go.
Aftir the calm the trouble sone
Mot folowe, and chaunge as the mone.
Right so farith Love, that selde in oon
Holdith his anker; for right anoon
Whan they in ese wene best to live,
They been with tempest al fordrive.
Who serveth Love, can telle of wo;
The stoundemele Ioye mot overgo.
Now he hurteth, and now he cureth,
For selde in oo poynt Love endureth.
Now is it right me to procede,
How Shame gan medle and take hede,
Thurgh whom felle angres I have had;
And how the stronge wal was maad,
And the castell of brede and lengthe,
That God of Love wan with his strengthe.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Al this in romance wil I sette,
And for no-thing ne wil I lette,
So that it lyking to hir be,
That is the flour of beaute;
For she may best my labour quyte,
That I for hir love shal endyte.
Wikkid-Tunge, that the covyne
Of every lover can devyne
Worst, and addith more somdel,
(For Wikkid-Tunge seith never wel),
To me-ward bar he right gret hate,
Espying me erly and late,
Til he hath seen the grete chere
Of Bialacoil and me y-fere.
He mighte not his tunge withstonde
Worse to reporte than he fonde,
He was so ful of cursed rage;
It sat him wel of his linage,
For him an Irish womman bar.
His tunge was fyled sharp, and squar,
Poignaunt and right kerving,
And wonder bitter in speking.
For whan that he me gan espye,
He swoor, afferming sikirly,
Bitwene Bialacoil and me
Was yvel aquayntaunce and privee.
He spak therof so folily,
That he awakid Ielousy;
Which, al afrayed in his rysing,
Whan that he herde him Iangling,
He ran anoon, as he were wood,
To Bialacoil ther that he stood;
Which hadde lever in this caas
Have been at Reynes or Amyas;
For foot-hoot, in his felonye
To him thus seide Ielousye:—
'Why hast thou been so necligent,
To kepen, whan I was absent,
This verger here left in thy ward?
To me thou haddist no reward,
To truste (to thy confusioun)
Him thus, to whom suspeccioun
I have right greet, for it is nede;
It is wel shewed by the dede.
Greet faute in thee now have I founde;
By god, anoon thou shalt be bounde,
And faste loken in a tour,
Withoute refuyt or socour.
For Shame to long hath be thee fro;
Over sone she was agoo.
Whan thou hast lost bothe drede and fere,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

It semed wel she was not here.
She was not bisy, in no wyse,
To kepe thee and to chastyse,
And for to helpen Chastitee
To kepe the roser, as thinkith me.
For than this boy—knavé so boldely
Ne sholde not have be hardy,
Ne in this verger had such game,
Which now me turneth to gret shame.'
Bialacoil nist what to sey;
Ful fayn he wolde have fled away,
For fere han hid, nere that he
Al sodeynly took him with me.
And whan I saugh he hadde so,
This Ielousye, take us two,
I was astoned, and knew no rede,
But fledde away for verrey drede.
Than Shame cam forth ful simply;
She wende have trespaced ful gretly;
Humble of hir port, and made it simple,
Wering a vayle in stede of wimple,
As nonnis doon in hir abbey.
Bicause hir herte was in affray,
She gan to speke, within a throwe,
To Ielousye, right wonder lowe.
First of his grace she bisought,
And seide:—'Sire, ne leveth nought
Wikkid—Tunge, that fals espye,
Which is so glad to feyne and lye.
He hath you maad, thurgh flatering,
On Bialacoil a fals lesing.
His falsnesse is not now anew,
It is to long that he him knew.
This is not the firste day;
For Wikkid—Tunge hath custom ay
Yongé folkis to bewreye,
And false lesinges on hem leye.
'Yit nevertheles I see among,
That the loigne it is so longe
Of Bialacoil, hertis to lure,
In Loves servise for to endure,
Drawing suche folk him to,
That he had no—thing with to do;
But in sothnesse I trowe nought,
That Bialacoil hadde ever in thought
To do trespase or vilanye;
But, for his modir Curtesye
Hath taught him ever for to be
Good of aqueyntaunce and privee;
For he loveth non hevinesse,
But mirthe and pley, and al gladnesse;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

He hateth alle trecherous,
Soleyn folk and envious;
For wel ye witen how that he
Wol ever glad and Ioyful be
Honestly with folk to pley.
I have be negligent, in good fey,
To chastise him; therefore now I
Of herte crye you here mercy,
That I have been so recheles
To tamen him, withouten lees.
Of my foly I me repente;
Now wol I hool sette myn entente
To kepe, bothe loude and stille,
Bialacoil to do your wille.'
'Shame, Shame,' seyde Ielousy,
'To be bitrashed gret drede have I.
Lecherye hath clombe so hye,
That almost blered is myn ye;
No wonder is, if that drede have I.
Over-al regnith Lechery,
Whos might yit growth night and day.
Bothe in cloistre and in abbey
Chastite is werreyed over-al.
Therefore I wol with siker wal
Close bothe roses and roser.
I have to longe in this maner
Left hem unclosid wilfully;
Wherfore I am right inwardly
Sorowful and repente me.
But now they shal no lenger be
Unclosid; and yit I drede sore,
I shal repente ferthermore,
For the game goth al amis.
Counsel I mot take newe, y-wis.
I have to longe trusted thee,
But now it shal no lenger be;
For he may best, in every cost,
Disceyve, that men tristen most.
I see wel that I am nygh shent,
But-if I sette my ful entent
Remedye to purveye.
Therefore close I shal the weye
Fro hem that wol the rose espye,
And come to wayte me vilanye,
For, in good feith and in trouthe,
I wol not lette, for no slouthe,
To live the more in sikirnesse,
To make anoon a forteresse,
To enclose the roses of good savour.
In middis shal I make a tour
To putte Bialacoil in prisoun,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

For ever I drede me of tresoun.
I trowe I shal him kepe so,
That he shal have no might to go
Aboute to make companye
To hem that thenke of vilanye;
Ne to no such as hath ben here
Afor, and founde in him good chere,
Which han assailed him to shende,
And with hir trowandyse to blende.
A fool is eyth for to bigyle;
But may I lyve a litel while,
He shal forthenke his fair semblaunt.'
And with that word cam Drede avaunt,
Which was abasshed, and in gret fere,
Whan he wiste Ielousye was there.
He was for drede in such affray,
That not a word durste he say,
But quaking stood ful stille aloon,
Til Ielousye his wey was goon,
Save Shame, that him not forsook;
Bothe Drede and she ful sore quook;
Til that at laste Drede abreyde,
And to his cosin Shame seyde:
'Shame,' he seide, 'in sothfastnesse,
To me it is gret hevinesse,
That the noyse so fer is go,
And the sclandre of us two.
But sith that it is so bifalle,
We may it not ageyn do calle,
Whan onis sprongen is a fame.
For many a yeer withouten blame
We han been, and many a day;
For many an April and many a May
We han y-passed, not ashamed,
Til Ielousye hath us blamed
Of mistrust and suspecioun
Causeles, withouten enchesoun.
Go we to Daunger hastily,
And late us shewe him openly,
That he hath not aright y-wrought,
Whan that he sette nought his thought
To kepe better the purpryse;
In his doing he is not wyse.
He hath to us y-do gret wrong,
That hath suffred now so long
Bialacoil to have his wille,
Alle his lustes to fulfille.
He must amende it utterly,
Or ellis shal he vilaynsly
Exyled be out of this londe;
For he the werre may not withstonde

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Of Ielousye, nor the greef,
Sith Bialacoil is at mischeef.'
To Daunger, Shame and Drede anoon
The righte wey ben bothe a-goon.
The cherl they founden hem aforn
Ligging undir an hawethorn.
Undir his heed no pilowe was,
But in the stede a trusse of gras.
He slombred, and a nappe he took,
Til Shame pitously him shook,
And greet manace on him gan make.
'Why slepist thou whan thou shulde wake?'
Quod Shame; 'thou dost us vilanye!
Who tristith thee, he doth folye,
To kepe roses or botouns,
Whan they ben faire in hir sesouns.
Thou art woxe to familiere
Where thou shulde be straunge of chere,
Stout of thy port, redy to greve.
Thou dost gret foly for to leve
Bialacoil here-in, to calle
The yonder man to shenden us alle.
Though that thou slepe, we may here
Of Ielousie gret noyse here.
Art thou now late? ryse up in hy,
And stoppe sone and deliverly
Alle the gappis of the hay;
Do no favour, I thee pray.
It fallith no-thing to thy name
Make fair semblaunt, where thou maist blame.
'If Bialacoil be swete and free,
Dogged and fel thou shuldist be;
Froward and outrageous, y-wis;
A cherl chaungeth that curteis is.
This have I herd ofte in seying,
That man ne may, for no daunting,
Make a sperhauke of a bosarde.
Alle men wole holde thee for musarde,
That debonair have founden thee,
It sit thee nought curteis to be;
To do men plesaunce or servyse,
In thee it is recreaundyse.
Let thy werkis, fer and nere,
Be lyke thy name, which is Daungere.'
Than, al abawid in shewing,
Anoon spak Dreed, right thus seying,
And seide, 'Daunger, I drede me
That thou ne wolt not bisy be
To kepe that thou hast to kepe;
Whan thou shuldist wake, thou art aslepe.
Thou shalt be greved certeynly,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

If thee aspye Ielousy,
Or if he finde thee in blame.
He hath to-day assailed Shame,
And chased away, with gret manace,
Bialacoil out of this place,
And swereth shortly that he shal
Enclose him in a sturdy wal;
And al is for thy wikkednesse,
For that thee faileth straungenesse.
Thyn herte, I trowe, be failed al;
Thou shalt repente in special,
If Ielousye the sothe knewe;
Thou shalt forthenke, and sore rewte.
With that the cherl his clubbe gan shake,
Frouning his eyen gan to make,
And hidous chere; as man in rage,
For ire he brente in his visage.
Whan that he herde him blamed so,
He seide, 'Out of my wit I go;
To be discomfit I have gret wrong.
Certis, I have now lived to long,
Sith I may not this closer kepe;
Al quik I wolde be dolven depe,
If any man shal more repeire
Into this garden, for foule or faire.
Myn herte for ire goth a-fere,
That I lete any entre here.
I have do foly, now I see,
But now it shal amended bee.
Who settith foot here any more,
Truly, he shal repente it sore;
For no man mo into this place
Of me to entre shal have grace.
Lever I hadde, with swerdis tweyne
Thurgh-out myn herte, in every veyne
Perced to be, with many a wounde,
Than slouthe shulde in me be founde.
From hennesforth, by night or day,
I shal defende it, if I may,
Withouten any excepcioun
Of ech maner condicioun;
And if I any man it graunte,
Holdeth me for recreaunte.'
Than Daunger on his feet gan stonde,
And hente a burdoun in his honde.
Wroth in his ire, ne lefte he nought,
But thurgh the verger he hath sought.
If he might finde hole or trace,
Wher-thurgh that men mot forthby pace,
Or any gappe, he dide it close,
That no man mighte touche a rose

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Of the roser al aboute;
He shitteth every man withoute.
Thus day by day Daunger is wers,
More wondirful and more divers,
And feller eek than ever he was;
For him ful oft I singe 'allas!'
For I ne may nought, thurgh his ire,
Recover that I most desire.
Myn herte, allas, wol brest a–two,
For Bialacoil I wratthed so.
For certeynly, in every membre
I quake, whan I me remembre
Of the botoun, which that I wolde
Fulle ofte a day seen and biholde.
And whan I thenke upon the kisse,
And how mucche Ioye and blisse
I hadde thurgh the savour swete,
For wante of it I grone and grete.
Me thenkith I fele yit in my nose
The swete savour of the rose.
And now I woot that I mot go
So fer the fresshe floures fro,
To me ful welcome were the deeth;
Absens therof, allas, me sleeth!
For whylom with this rose, allas,
I touched nose, mouth, and face;
But now the deeth I must abyde.
But Love consente, another tyde,
That onis I touche may and kisse,
I trowe my peyne shal never lisse.
Theron is al my coveityse,
Which brent myn herte in many wyse.
Now shal repaire agayn sighinge,
Long wacche on nightis, and no slepinge;
Thought in wisshing, torment, and wo,
With many a turning to and fro,
That half my peyne I can not telle.
For I am fallen into helle
From paradys and welthe, the more
My turment greveth; more and more
Anoyeth now the bittirnesse,
That I toforn have felt swetnesse.
And Wikkid–Tunge, thurgh his falshede,
Causeth al my wo and drede.
On me he leyeth a pitous charge,
Bicause his tunge was to large.
Now it is tyme, shortly that I
Telle you som–thing of Ielousy,
That was in gret suspecioun.
Aboute him lefte he no masoun,
That stoon coude leye, ne querroure;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

He hired hem to make a tour.
And first, the roses for to kepe,
Aboute hem made he a diche depe,
Right wondir large, and also brood;
Upon the whiche also stood
Of squared stoon a sturdy wal,
Which on a cragge was founded al,
And right gret thikkenesse eek it bar.
Abouten, it was founded squar,
An hundred fadome on every syde,
It was al liche longe and wyde.
Lest any tyme it were assayled,
Ful wel aboute it was batayled;
And rounde envirooun eek were set
Ful many a riche and fair touret.
At every corner of this wal
Was set a tour ful principal;
And everich hadde, withoute fable,
A porte-colys defensable
To kepe of enemies, and to greve,
That there hir force wolde preve.
And eek amidde this purpryse
Was maad a tour of gret maistryse;
A fairer saugh no man with sight,
Large and wyde, and of gret might.
They ne dredde noon assaut
Of ginne, gunne, nor skaffaut.
For the temprure of the mortere
Was maad of licour wonder dere;
Of quikke lyme persant and egre,
The which was tempred with vinegre.
The stoon was hard as ademant,
Wherof they made the foundement.
The tour was rounde, maad in compas;
In al this world no richer was,
Ne better ordeigned therwithal.
Aboute the tour was maad a wal,
So that, bitwixt that and the tour,
Rosers were set of swete savour,
With many roses that they bere.
And eek within the castel were
Springoldes, gunnes, bows, archers;
And eek above, atte corners,
Men seyn over the walle stonde
Grete engynes, whiche were nigh honde;
And in the kernels, here and there,
Of arblasters gret plentee were.
Noon armure might hir stroke withstonde,
It were foly to prece to honde.
Without the diche were listes made,
With walles batayled large and brade,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

For men and hors shulde not atteyne
To neigh the dicke over the pleyne.
Thus Ielousye hath environ
Set aboute his garnisoun
With walles rounde, and dicke depe,
Only the roser for to kepe.
And Daunger eek, erly and late
The keyes kepte of the utter gate,
The which openeth toward the eest.
And he hadde with him atte leest
Thritty servauntes, echon by name.
That other gate kepte Shame,
Which openede, as it was couth,
Toward the parte of the south.
Sergeauntes assigned were hir to
Ful many, hir wille for to do.
Than Drede hadde in hir baillye
The keping of the conestablerye,
Toward the north, I undirstonde,
That opened upon the left honde,
The which for no-thing may be sure,
But-if she do hir bisy cure
Erly on morowe and also late,
Strongly to shette and barre the gate.
Of every thing that she may see
Drede is aferd, wher-so she be;
For with a puff of litel winde
Drede is astonied in hir minde.
Therefore, for steling of the rose,
I rede hir nought the yate unclose.
A foulis flight wol make hir flee,
And eek a shadowe, if she it see.
Thanne Wikked-Tunge, ful of envye,
With soudiours of Normandye,
As he that causeth al the bate,
Was keper of the fourthe gate,
And also to the tother three
He went ful ofte, for to see.
Whan his lot was to wake a-night,
His instrumentis wolde he dight,
For to blowe and make soun,
Ofter than he hath enchesoun;
And walken oft upon the wal,
Corners and wikettis over-al
Ful narwe serchen and espye;
Though he nought fond, yit wolde he lye.
Discordaunt ever fro armony,
And distoned from melodye,
Controve he wolde, and foule fayle,
With hornpypes of Cornewayle.
In floytes made he discordaunce,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And in his musik, with mischaunce,
He wolde seyn, with notes newe,
That he ne fond no womman trewe,
Ne that he saugh never, in his lyf,
Unto hir husbonde a trewe wyf;
Ne noon so ful of honestee,
That she nil laughe and mery be
Whan that she hereth, or may espye,
A man speken of lecherye.
Everich of hem hath somme vyce;
Oon is dishonest, another is nyce;
If oon be ful of vilanye,
Another hath a likerous ye;
If oon be ful of wantonesse,
Another is a chideresse.
Thus Wikked-Tunge (god yeve him shame!)
Can putte hem everichone in blame
Withoute desert and causeles;
He lyeth, though they been giltles.
I have pite to seen the sorwe,
That waketh bothe eve and morwe,
To innocents doth such grevaunce;
I pray god yeve him evel chaunce,
That he ever so bisy is
Of any womman to seyn amis!
Eek Ielousye god confounde,
That hath y-maad a tour so rounde,
And made aboute a garisoun
To sette Bialacoil in prisoun;
The which is shet there in the tour,
Ful longe to holde there soiour,
There for to liven in penaunce.
And for to do him more grevaunce,
Ther hath ordeyned Ielousye
An olde vekke, for to espye
The maner of his governaunce;
The whiche devel, in hir enfaunce,
Had lerned muche of Loves art,
And of his pleyes took hir part;
She was expert in his servyse.
She knew ech wrenche and every gyse
Of love, and every loveres wyle,
It was the harder hir to gyle.
Of Bialacoil she took ay hede,
That ever he liveth in wo and drede.
He kepte him coy and eek privee,
Lest in him she hadde see
Any foly countenaunce,
For she knew al the olde daunce.
And aftir this, whan Ielousye
Had Bialacoil in his baillye,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And shette him up that was so free,
For seure of him he wolde be,
He trusteth sore in his castel;
The stronge werk him lyketh wel.
He dradde nat that no glotouns
Shulde stele his roses or botouns.
The roses weren assured alle,
Defenced with the stronge walle.
Now Ielousye ful wel may be
Of drede devoid, in libertee,
Whether that he slepe or wake;
For of his roses may noon be take.
But I, allas, now morne shal;
Bicause I was without the wal,
Ful moche dole and mone I made.
Who hadde wist what wo I hadde,
I trowe he wolde have had pitee.
Love to deere had sold to me
The good that of his love hadde I.
I wende a bought it al queyntly;
But now, thurgh doubling of my peyn,
I see he wolde it selle ageyn,
And me a newe bargeyn lere,
The which al-out the more is dere,
For the solace that I have lorn,
Than I hadde it never afor.
Certayn I am ful lyk, indeed,
To him that cast in erthe his seed;
And hath Ioie of the newe spring,
Whan it greneth in the ginning,
And is also fair and fresh of flour,
Lusty to seen, swote of odour;
But er he it in sheves shere,
May falle a weder that shal it dere,
And maken it to fade and falle,
The stalk, the greyn, and floures alle;
That to the tilier is fordone
The hope that he hadde to sone.
I drede, certeyn, that so fare I;
For hope and travaile sikerly
Ben me biraft al with a storm;
The floure nil seden of my corn.
For Love hath so avaunced me,
Whan I bigan my privitee
To Bialacoil al for to telle,
Whom I ne fond froward ne felle,
But took a-gree al hool my play.
But Love is of so hard assay,
That al at onis he reved me,
Whan I wend best aboven have be.
It is of Love, as of Fortune,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

That chaungeth ofte, and nil contune;
Which whylom wol on folke smyle,
And gloumbe on hem another whyle;
Now freend, now foo, thou shalt hir fele,
For in a twinkling tourneth hir wheel.
She can wrythe hir heed away,
This is the concours of hir pley;
She can areyse that doth morne,
And whirle adown, and overturne
Who sittith hieghst, al as hir list;
A fool is he that wol hir trist.
For it am I that am com doun
Thurgh change and revolucioun!
Sith Bialacoil mot fro me twinne,
Shet in the prisoun yond withinne,
His absence at myn herte I fele;
For al my Ioye and al myn hele
Was in him and in the rose,
That but yon wal, which him doth close,
Open, that I may him see,
Love nil not that I cured be
Of the peynes that I endure,
Nor of my cruel aventure.
A, Bialacoil, myn owne dere!
Though thou be now a prisonere,
Kepe atte leste thyn herte to me,
And suffre not that it daunted be;
Ne lat not Ielousye, in his rage,
Putten thyn herte in no servage.
Although he chastice thee withoute,
And make thy body unto him loute,
Have herte as hard as dyamaunt,
Stedefast, and nought pliaunt;
In prisoun though thy body be,
At large kepe thyn herte free.
A trewe herte wol not plye
For no manace that it may drye.
If Ielousye doth thee payne,
Quyte him his whyle thus agayne,
To venge thee, atte leest in thought,
If other way thou mayest nought;
And in this wyse sotilly
Worche, and winne the maistry.
But yit I am in gret affray
Lest thou do not as I say;
I drede thou canst me greet maugree,
That thou emprisoned art for me;
But that is not for my trespas,
For thurgh me never discovered was
Yit thing that oughte be secree.
Wel more anoy ther is in me,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Than is in thee, of this mischaunce;
For I endure more hard penaunce
Than any man can seyn or thinke,
That for the sorwe almost I sinke.
Whan I remembre me of my wo,
Ful nygh out of my wit I go.
Inward myn herte I fele blede,
For comfortles the deeth I drede.
Ow I not wel to have distresse,
Whan false, thurgh hir wikkednesse,
And traitours, that arn envious,
To noyen me be so coragious?
A, Bialacoil! ful wel I see,
That they hem shape to disceyve thee,
To make thee buxom to hir lawe,
And with hir corde thee to drawe
Wher—so hem lust, right at hir wil;
I drede they have thee brought thertil.
Withoute comfort, thought me sleeth;
This game wol bringe me to my deeth.
For if your gode wille I lese,
I mote be deed; I may not chese.
And if that thou foryete me,
Myn herte shal never in lyking be;
Nor elles—where finde solace,
If I be put out of your grace,
As it shal never been, I hope;
Than shulde I fallen in wanhope.
Allas, in wanhope?—nay, pardee!
For I wol never dispeired be.
If Hope me faile, than am I
Ungracious and unworthy;
In Hope I wol comforted be,
For Love, whan he bitaught hir me,
Seide, that Hope, wher—so I go,
Shulde ay be relees to my wo.
But what and she my balis bete,
And be to me curteis and swete?
She is in no—thing ful certeyn.
Lovers she put in ful gret peyn,
And makith hem with wo to dele.
Hir fair biheest disceyveth fele,
For she wol bihote, sikirly,
And failen aftir outrely.
A! that is a ful noyous thing!
For many a lover, in loving,
Hangeth upon hir, and trusteth fast,
Whiche lese hir travel at the last.
Of thing to comen she woot right nought;
Therefore, if it be wysly sought,
Hir counseille, foly is to take.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

For many tymes, whan she wol make
A ful good silogisme, I drede
That aftirward ther shal in dede
Folwe an evel conclusioun;
This put me in confusioun.
For many tymes I have it seen,
That many have bigyled been,
For trust that they have set in Hope,
Which fel hem aftirward a-slope.
But natheles yit, gladly she wolde,
That he, that wol him with hir holde,
Hadde alle tymes his purpos clere,
Withoute deceyte, or any were.
That she desireth sikirly;
Whan I hir blamed, I did foly.
But what avayleth hir good wille,
Whan she ne may staunche my stounde ille?
That helpith litel, that she may do,
Outake biheest unto my wo.
And heeste certeyn, in no wyse,
Withoute yift, is not to pryse.
Whan heest and deed a-sundir varie,
They doon me have a gret contrarie.
Thus am I possed up and down
With dool, thought, and confusioun;
Of my disese ther is no noumbre.
Daunger and Shame me encumbre,
Drede also, and Ielousye,
And Wikked-Tunge, ful of envye,
Of whiche the sharpe and cruel ire
Ful oft me put in gret martire.
They han my Ioye fully let,
Sith Bialacoil they have bishet
Fro me in prisoun wikkidly,
Whom I love so entierly,
That it wol my bane be,
But I the soner may him see.
And yit moreover, wurst of alle,
Ther is set to kepe, foule hir bifalle!
A rimpled vekke, fer ronne in age,
Frowning and yelowe in hir visage,
Which in awayte lyth day and night,
That noon of hem may have a sight.
Now moot my sorwe enforced be;
Ful soth it is, that Love yaf me
Three wonder yiftes of his grace,
Which I have lorn now in this place,
Sith they ne may, withoute drede,
Helpen but litel, who taketh hede.
For here availeth no Swete-Thought,
And Swete-Speche helpith right nought.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

The thridde was called Swete-Loking,
That now is lorn, without lesing.
The yiftes were fair, but not forthy
They helpe me but simply,
But Bialacoil may loosed be,
To gon at large and to be free.
For him my lyf lyth al in dout,
But-if he come the rather out.
Allas! I trowe it wol not been!
For how shuld I evermore him seen?
He may not out, and that is wrong,
Bicause the tour is so strong.
How shulde he out? by whos prowesse,
Out of so strong a forteresse?
By me, certeyn, it nil be do;
God woot, I have no wit therto!
But wel I woot I was in rage,
Whan I to Love dide homage.
Who was in cause, in sothfastnesse,
But hir-silf, dame Idelnesse,
Which me conveyed, thurgh fair prayere,
To entre into that fair vergere?
She was to blame me to leve,
The which now doth me sore greve.
A foolis word is nought to trowe,
Ne worth an appel for to lowe;
Men shulde him snibbe bittirly,
At pryde temps of his foly.
I was a fool, and she me leved,
Thurgh whom I am right nought releved.
She accomplished al my wil,
That now me greveth wondir il.
Resoun me seide what shulde falle.
A fool my-silf I may wel calle,
That love asyde I had not leyde,
And trowed that dame Resoun seyde.
Resoun had bothe skile and right,
Whan she me blamed, with al hir might,
To medle of love, that hath me shent;
But certeyn now I wol repent.
'And shulde I repent? Nay parde!
A fals traitour than shulde I be.
The develles engins wolde me take,
If I my lorde wolde forsake,
Or Bialacoil falsly bitraye.
Shulde I at mischeef hate him? nay,
Sith he now, for his curtesye,
Is in prisoun of Ielousye.
Curtesye certeyn dide he me,
So muche, it may not yolden be,
Whan he the hay passen me lete,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

To kisse the rose, faire and swete;
Shulde I therfore cunne him maugree?
Nay, certeynly, it shal not be;
For Love shal never, if god wil,
Here of me, thurgh word or wil,
Offence or complaynt, more or lesse,
Neither of Hope nor Idilnesse;
For certis, it were wrong that I
Hated hem for hir curtesye.
Ther is not ellis, but suffre and thinke,
And waken whan I shulde winke;
Abyde in hope, til Love, thurgh chaunce,
Sende me socour or allegeaunce,
Expectant ay til I may mete
To geten mercy of that swete.
'Whylom I thinke how Love to me
Seyde he wolde taken atte gree
My servise, if unpacience
Caused me to doon offence.
He seyde, "In thank I shal it take,
And high maister eek thee make,
If wikkednesse ne reve it thee;
But sone, I trowe, that shal not be."
These were his wordis by and by;
It semed he loved me trewly.
Now is ther not but serve him wele,
If that I thinke his thank to fele.
My good, myn harm, lyth hool in me;
In Love may no defaute be;
For trewe Love ne failid never man.
Sothly, the faute mot nedis than
(As God forbede!) be founde in me,
And how it cometh, I can not see.
Now lat it goon as it may go;
Whether Love wol socoure me or slo,
He may do hool on me his wil.
I am so sore bounde him til,
From his servyse I may not fleen;
For lyf and deth, withouten wene,
Is in his hand; I may not chese;
He may me do bothe winne and lese.
And sith so sore he doth me greve,
Yit, if my lust he wolde acheve
To Bialacoil goodly to be,
I yeve no force what felle on me.
For though I dye, as I mot nede,
I praye Love, of his goodlihede,
To Bialacoil do gentilnesse,
For whom I live in such distresse,
That I mote deyen for penaunce.
But first, withoute repentaunce,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

I wol me confesse in good entent,
And make in haste my testament,
As lovers doon that felen smerte:—
To Bialacoil leve I myn herte
Al hool, withoute departing,
Or doublenesse of repenting.'

Coment Raisoun vient a L'amant.

Thus as I made my passage
 In compleynt, and in cruel rage,
 And I not wher to finde a leche
 That couthe unto myn helping eche,
 Sodeynly agayn comen doun
 Out of hir tour I saugh Resoun,
 Discrete and wys, and ful plesaunt,
 And of hir porte ful avenaunt.
 The righte wey she took to me,
 Which stood in greet perplexite,
 That was posshed in every side,
 That I nist where I might abyde,
 Til she, demurely sad of chere,
 Seide to me as she com nere:— 'Myn owne freend, art thou yit greved?
 How is this quarel yit acheved
 Of Loves syde? Anoon me telle;
 Hast thou not yit of love thy fille?
 Art thou not wery of thy servyse
 That thee hath pyned in sich wyse?
 What Ioye hast thou in thy loving?
 Is it swete or bitter thing?
 Canst thou yit chese, lat me see,
 What best thy socour mighte be? 'Thou servest a ful noble lord,
 That maketh thee thral for thy reward,
 Which ay renewith thy turment,
 With foly so he hath thee blent.
 Thou felle in mischeef thilke day,
 Whan thou didest, the sothe to say,
 Obeysaunce and eek homage;
 Thou wroughtest no-thing as the sage.
 Whan thou bicam his liege man,
 Thou didist a gret foly than;
 Thou wistest not what fel therto,
 With what lord thou haddist to do.
 If thou haddist him wel knowe,
 Thou haddist nought be brought so lowe;
 For if thou wistest what it were,
 Thou noldist serve him half a yeer,
 Not a weke, nor half a day,
 Ne yit an hour withoute delay,
 Ne never han loved paramours,
 His lordship is so ful of shoures.
 Knowest him ought?'

L'Amaunt.

'Ye, dame, parde!'

Raisoun.

'Nay, nay.'

L'Amaunt.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

'Yes, I.'

Raisoun.

'Wherof, lat see?'

L'Amaunt.

'Of that he seyde I shulde be
Glad to have sich lord as he,
And maister of sich seignory.'

Raisoun.

'Knowist him no more?'

L'Amaunt.

'Nay, certis, I,
Save that he yaf me rewles there,
And wente his wey, I niste where,
And I abood bounde in balaunce.'

Raisoun.

'Lo, there a noble conisaunce!
But I wil that thou knowe him now
Ginning and ende, sith that thou
Art so anguisshous and mate,
Disfigured out of astate;
Ther may no wrecche have more of wo,
Ne caitif noon enduren so.
It were to every man sitting
Of his lord have knowleching.
For if thou knewe him, out of dout,
Lightly thou shulde escapen out
Of the prisoun that marreth thee.'

L'Amaunt.

'Ye, dame! sith my lord is he,
And I his man, maad with myn honde,
I wolde right fayn undirstonde
To knowen of what kinde he be,
If any wolde enforme me.'

Raisoun. 'I wolde,' seid Resoun, 'thee lere,

Sith thou to lerne hast sich desire,
And shewe thee, withouten fable,
A thing that is not demonstrable.
Thou shalt here lerne without science,
And knowe, withoute experience,
The thing that may not knowen be,
Ne wist ne shewid in no degree.
Thou mayst the sothe of it not witen,
Though in thee it were writen.
Thou shalt not knowe therof more
Whyle thou art reuled by his lore;
But unto him that love wol flee,
The knotte may unclosed be,
Which hath to thee, as it is founde,
So long be knet and not unbounde.
Now sette wel thyn entencioun,
To here of love discripcioun. 'Love, it is an hateful pees,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

A free acquitaunce, without relees,
A trouthe, fret full of falshede,
A sikernesse, al set in drede;
In herte is a dispeiring hope,
And fulle of hope, it is wanhope;
Wyse woodnesse, and wood resoun,
A swete peril, in to droune,
An hevy birthen, light to bere,
A wikked wawe away to were.
It is Caribdis perilous,
Disagreable and gracious.
It is discordaunce that can accorde,
And accordaunce to discorde.
It is cunning withoute science,
Wisdom withoute sapience,
Wit withoute discrecioun,
Havoir, withoute possessioun.
It is sike hele and hool siknesse,
A thrust drowned in dronkenesse,
An helthe ful of maladye,
And charitee ful of envye,
An hunger ful of habundaunce,
And a gredy suffisaunce;
Delyt right ful of hevinesse,
And drierihed ful of gladnesse;
Bitter swetnesse and swete errour,
Right evel savoured good savour;
Sinne that pardoun hath withinne,
And pardoun spotted without with sinne;
A peyne also it is, Ioyous,
And felonye right pitous;
Also pley that selde is stable,
And stedefast stat, right mevable;
A strengthe, weyked to stonde upright,
And feblenesse, ful of might;
Wit unavysed, sage folye,
And Ioye ful of turmentrye;
A laughter it is, weping ay,
Rest, that traveyleth night and day;
Also a swete helle it is,
And a sorrowful Paradys;
A plesaunt gayl and esy prisoun,
And, ful of froste, somer sesoun;
Pryme temps, ful of frostes whyte,
And May, devoide of al delyte,
With seer braunches, blossoms ungrene;
And newe fruyt, fillid with winter tene.
It is a slowe, may not forbere
Raggess, ribaned with gold, to were;
For al—so wel wol love be set
Under raggess as riche rochet;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And eek as wel be amourettes
 In mourning blak, as bright burnettes.
 For noon is of so mochel prys,
 Ne no man founden is so wys,
 Ne noon so high is of parage,
 Ne no man founde of wit so sage,
 No man so hardy ne so wight,
 Ne no man of so mochel might,
 Noon so fulfilled of bounte,
 But he with love may daunted be.
 Al the world holdith this way;
 Love makith alle to goon miswey,
 But it be they of yvel lyf,
 Whom Genius cursith, man and wyf,
 That wrongly werke ageyn nature.
 Noon suche I love, ne have no cure
 Of suche as Loves servaunts been,
 And wol not by my counsel fleen.
 For I ne preyse that loving,
 Wher-thurgh man, at the laste ending,
 Shal calle hem wrecchis fulle of wo,
 Love greveth hem and shendith so.
 But if thou wolt wel Love eschewe,
 For to escape out of his mewe,
 And make al hool thy sorwe to slake,
 No bettir counsel mayst thou take,
 Than thinke to fleen wel, y-wis;
 May nought helpe elles; for wite thou this:—
 If thou flee it, it shal flee thee;
 Folowe it, and folowen shal it thee.'

L'Amaunt. Whan I hadde herd al Resoun seyn,
 Which hadde spilt hir speche in veyn:
 'Dame,' seyde I, 'I dar wel sey
 Of this avaunt me wel I may
 That from your scole so deviaunt
 I am, that never the more avaunt
 Right nought am I, thurgh your doctryne;
 I dulle under your disciplyne;
 I wot no more than I wist er,
 To me so contrarie and so fer
 Is every thing that ye me lere;
 And yit I can it al parcuere.
 Myn herte foryetith therof right nought,
 It is so writen in my thought;
 And depe graven it is so tendir
 That al by herte I can it rendre,
 And rede it over comunely;
 But to my-silf lewedist am I. 'But sith ye love discreven so,
 And lakke and preise it, bothe two,
 Defyneth it into this letter,
 That I may thenke on it the better;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

For I herde never diffyne it ere,
And wilfully I wolde it lere.'

Raisoun. 'If love be serched wel and sought,

It is a sykenesse of the thought
Annexed and knet bitwixe tweyne,
Which male and female, with oo cheyne,
So frely byndith, that they nil twinne,
Whether so therof they lese or winne.
The roote springith, thurgh hoot brenning,
Into disordinat desiring
For to kissen and enbrace,
And at her lust them to solace.
Of other thing love recchith nought,
But setteth hir herte and al hir thought
More for delectacioun
Than any procreacioun
Of other fruyt by engendring;
Which love to god is not plesing;
For of hir body fruyt to get
They yeve no force, they are so set
Upon delyt, to pley in-fere.
And somme have also this manere,
To feynen hem for love seke;
Sich love I preise not at a leke.
For paramours they do but feyne;
To love truly they disdeyne.
They falsen ladies traitoursly,
And sweren hem othes utterly,
With many a lesing, and many a fable,
And al they finden deceyvable.
And, whan they her lust han geten,
The hoothe ernes they al foryeten.
Wimmen, the harm they byen ful sore;
But men this thenken evermore,
That lasse harm is, so mote I thee,
Disceyve them, than disceyved be;
And namely, wher they ne may
Finde non other mene wey.
For I wot wel, in sothfastnesse,
That who doth now his bisynesse
With any womman for to dele,
For any lust that he may fele,
But-if it be for engendrure,
He doth trespasse, I you ensure.
For he shulde setten al his wil
To geten a likly thing him til,
And to sustenen, if he might,
And kepe forth, by kindes right,
His owne lyknesse and semblable,
For bicause al is corumpable,
And faile shulde successioun,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Ne were ther generacioun
Our sectis strenge for to save.
Whan fader or moder arn in grave,
Hir children shulde, whan they ben deede,
Ful diligent ben, in hir steede,
To use that werke on such a wyse,
That oon may thurgh another ryse.
Therefore set Kinde therin delyt,
For men therin shulde hem delyte,
And of that dede be not erke,
But ofte sythes haunt that werke.
For noon wolde drawe therof a draught
Ne were delyt, which hath him caught.
This hadde sotil dame Nature;
For noon goth right, I thee ensure,
Ne hath entent hool ne parfyte;
For hir desir is for delyt,
The which fortene crece and eke
The pley of love for-ofte seke,
And thralle hem-silf, they be so nyce,
Unto the prince of every vyce.
For of ech sinne it is the rote,
Unlefulle lust, though it be sote,
And of al yvel the racyne,
As Tullius can determyne,
Which in his tyme was ful sage,
In a boke he made of Age,
Wher that more he preyseth Elde,
Though he be croked and unwelde,
And more of commendacioun,
Than Youthe in his discripcioun.
For Youthe set bothe man and wyf
In al perel of soule and lyf;
And perel is, but men have grace,
The tyme of youthe for to pace,
Withoute any deth or distresse,
It is so ful of wildenesse;
So ofte it doth shame or damage
To him or to his linage.
It ledith man now up, now down,
In mochel dissolucioun,
And makith him love yvel company,
And lede his lyf disrewlily,
And halt him payed with noon estate.
Within him-silf is such debate,
He chaungith purpos and entent,
And yalt him into som covent,
To liven aftir her empyse,
And lesith fredom and fraunchyse,
That Nature in him hadde set,
The which ageyn he may not get,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

If he there make his mansioun
For to abyde professioun.
Though for a tyme his herte absente,
It may not fayle, he shal repente,
And eke abyde thilke day
To leve his abit, and goon his way,
And lesith his worship and his name,
And dar not come ageyn for shame;
But al his lyf he doth so mourne,
Bicause he dar not hoom retourne.
Freedom of kinde so lost hath he
That never may recured be,
But—if that god him graunte grace
That he may, er he hennes pace,
Conteyne undir obedience
Thurgh the vertu of pacience.
For Youthe set man in al folye,
In unthrift and in ribaudye,
In leccherye, and in outrage,
So ofte it chaungith of corage.
Youthe ginneth ofte sich bargeyn,
That may not ende withouten peyn.
In gret perel is set youth—hede,
Delyt so doth his bridil lede.
Delyt thus hangith, drede thee nought,
Bothe mannis body and his thought,
Only thurgh Youthe, his chamberere,
That to don yvel is customere,
And of nought elles taketh hede
But only folkes for to lede
Into disporte and wildenesse,
So is she froward from sadnesse. 'But Elde drawith hem therfro;
Who wot it nought, he may wel go
Demand of hem that now arn olde,
That whylom Youthe hadde in holde,
Which yit remembre of tendir age,
How it hem brought in many a rage,
And many a foly therin wrought.
But now that Elde hath hem thurgh—sought,
They repente hem of her folye,
That Youthe hem putte in Iupardye,
In perel and in muche wo,
And made hem ofte amis to do,
And suen yvel companye,
Riot and avouterye. 'But Elde can ageyn restreyne
From suche foly, and refreyne,
And set men, by hir ordinaunce,
In good reule and in governaunce.
But yvel she spendith hir servyse,
For no man wol hir love, ne pryse;
She is hated, this wot I wele.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Hir acqueyntaunce wolde no man fele,
Ne han of Elde companye,
Men hate to be of hir alye.
For no man wolde bicomem olde,
Ne dye, whan he is yong and bolde.
And Elde merveilith right gretly,
Whan they remembre hem inwardly
Of many a perelous emprise,
Whiche that they wrought in sondry wyse,
How ever they might, withoute blame,
Escape away withoute shame,
In youthe, withouten damage
Or reproof of her linage,
Losse of membre, shedding of blode,
Perel of deth, or losse of good. 'Wost thou nought where Youthe abit,
That men so preisen in her wit?
With Delyt she halt soiour,
For bothe they dwellen in oo tour.
As longe as Youthe is in sesoun,
They dwellen in oon mansioun.
Delyt of Youthe wol have servyse
To do what so he wol devyse;
And Youthe is redy evermore
For to obey, for smerte of sore,
Unto Delyt, and him to yive
Hir servise, whyl that she may live. 'Where Elde abit, I wol thee telle
Shortly, and no whyle dwelle,
For thider bihoveth thee to go.
If Deth in youthe thee not slo,
Of this journey thou maist not faile.
With hir Labour and Travaile
Logged been, with Sorwe and Wo,
That never out of hir courte go.
Peyne and Distresse, Syknesse and Ire,
And Malencoly, that angry sire,
Ben of hir paleys senatours;
Groning and Grucching, hir herbergeours,
The day and night, hir to turment,
With cruel Deth they hir present,
And tellen hir, erliche and late,
That Deth stant armed at hir gate.
Than bringe they to hir remembraunce
The foly dedis of hir infaunce,
Which causen hir to mourne in wo
That Youthe hath hir bigiled so,
Which sodeynly away is hasted.
She wepeth the tyme that she hath wasted,
Compleyning of the preterit,
And the present, that not abit,
And of hir olde vanitee,
That, but aforh hir she may see

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

In the future som socour,
To leggen hir of hir dolour,
To graunt hir tyme of repentaunce,
For hir sinnes to do penaunce,
And at the laste so hir governe
To winne the Ioy that is eterne,
Fro which go bakward Youthe hir made,
In vanitee to droune and wade.
For present tyme abidith nought,
It is more swift than any thought;
So litel whyle it doth endure
That ther nis compte ne mesure. 'But how that ever the game go,
Who list have Ioye and mirth also
Of love, be it he or she,
High or lowe, whoso it be,
In fruyt they shulde hem delyte;
Her part they may not elles quyte,
To save hem—silf in honestee.
And yit ful many oon I see
Of wimmen, sothly for to seyne,
That ay desire and wolde fayne
The pley of love, they be so wilde,
And not coveite to go with childe.
And if with child they be perchaunce,
They wole it holde a gret mischaunce;
But what—som—ever wo they fele,
They wol not pleyne, but concele;
But—if it be any fool or nyce,
In whom that shame hath no Iustyce.
For to delyt echon they drawe,
That haunte this werk, bothe high and lawe,
Save sich that aren worth right nought,
That for money wol be bought.
Such love I preise in no wyse,
Whan it is given for coveitise.
I preise no womman, though she be wood,
That yeveth hir—silf for any good.
For litel shulde a man telle
Of hir, that wol hir body selle,
Be she mayde, be she wyf,
That quik wol selle hir, by hir lyf.
How faire chere that ever she make,
He is a wrecche, I undirtake,
That loveth such one, for swete or sour,
Though she him calle hir paramour,
And laugheth on him, and makith him feeste.
For certeynly no suche a beeste
To be loved is not worthy,
Or bere the name of druery.
Noon shulde hir please, but he were wood,
That wol dispoile him of his good.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Yit nevertheles, I wol not sey
But she, for solace and for pley,
May a Jewel or other thing
Take of her loves free yeving;
But that she aske it in no wyse,
For drede of shame of coveityse.
And she of hirs may him, certeyn,
Withoute sclaudre, yeven ageyn,
And ioyne her hertes togidre so
In love, and take and yeve also.
Trowe not that I wolde hem twinne,
Whan in her love ther is no sinne;
I wol that they togedre go,
And doon al that they han ado,
As curteis shulde and debonaire,
And in her love beren hem faire,
Withoute vyce, bothe he and she;
So that alwey, in honestee,
Fro foly love they kepe hem clere
That brenneth hertis with his fere;
And that her love, in any wyse,
Be devoid of coveityse.
Good love shulde engendrid be
Of trewe herte, iust, and secree,
And not of such as sette her thought
To have her lust, and ellis nought,
So are they caught in Loves lace,
Truly, for bodily solace.
Fleshly delyt is so present
With thee, that sette al thyn entent,
Withoute more (what shulde I glose?)
For to gete and have the Rose;
Which makith thee so mate and wood
That thou desirest noon other good.
But thou art not an inche the nerre,
But ever abydest in sorwe and werre,
As in thy face it is sene;
It makith thee bothe pale and lene;
Thy might, thy vertu goth away.
A sory gest, in goode fay,
Thou herberedest than in thyn inne,
The God of Love whan thou let inne!
Wherfore I rede, thou shette him out,
Or he shal greve thee, out of doute;
For to thy profit it wol turne,
If he nomore with thee soiourne.
In gret mischeef and sorwe sonken
Ben hertis, that of love arn dronken,
As thou peraventure knowen shal,
Whan thou hast lost thy tyme al,
And spent thy youthe in ydilnesse,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

In waste, and woful lustinesse;
If thou maist live the tyme to see
Of love for to delivered be,
Thy tyme thou shalt biwepe sore
The whiche never thou maist restore.
(For tyme lost, as men may see,
For no-thing may recured be).
And if thou scape yit, atte laste,
Fro Love, that hath thee so faste
Knit and bounden in his lace,
Certeyn, I holde it but a grace.
For many oon, as it is seyn,
Have lost, and spent also in veyn,
In his servyse, withoute socour,
Body and soule, good, and tresour,
Wit, and strengthe, and eek richesse,
Of which they hadde never redresse.'
But Love spilte hir sermoun,
That was so impd in my thought,
That hir doctrine I sette at nought.
And yit ne seide she never a dele,
That I ne understode it wele,
Word by word, the mater al.
But unto Love I was so thral,
Which callith over-al his pray,
He chasith so my thought alway,
And holdith myn herte undir his sele,
As trust and trew as any stele;
So that no devocioun
Ne hadde I in the sermoun
Of dame Resoun, ne of hir rede;
It toke no soiour in myn hede.
For alle yede out at oon ere
That in that other she dide lere;
Fully on me she lost hir lore,
Hir speche me greved wondir sore.
For anger, as I dide abraide:
'Dame, and is it your wille algate,
That I not love, but that I hate
Alle men, as ye me teche?
For if I do aftir your speche,
Sith that ye seyn love is not good,
Than must I nedis say with mood,
If I it leve, in hatrede ay
Liven, and voide love away
From me, and been a sinful wrecche,
Hated of all that love that tecche.
I may not go noon other gate,
For either must I love or hate.
And if I hate men of-newe
More than love, it wol me rewe,

Thus taught and preched hath Resoun,

Than unto hir for ire I seide,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

As by your preching semeth me,
For Love no-thing ne preisith thee.
Ye yeve good counseil, sikirly,
That prechith me al-day, that I
Shulde not Loves lore alowe;
He were a fool, wolde you not trowe!
In speche also ye han me taught
Another love, that knowen is naught,
Which I have herd you not repreve,
To love ech other; by your leve,
If ye wolde diffyne it me,
I wolde gladly here, to see,
At the leest, if I may lere
Of sondry loves the manere.'

Raison.

'Certis, freend, a fool art thou
Whan that thou no-thing wolt allowe
That I thee for thy profit say.
Yit wol I sey thee more, in fay;
For I am redy, at the leste,
To accomplishe thy requeste,
But I not wher it wol awayle;
In veyne, perauntre, I shal travayle.
Love ther is in sondry wyse,
As I shal thee here devyse.
For som love leful is and good;
I mene not that which makith thee wood,
And bringith thee in many a fit,
And ravissith fro thee al thy wit,
It is so merveilous and queynt;
With such love be no more aqueynt.

Comment Raisoun diffinist Amistie.

'Love of Frenshipe also ther is,
 Which makith no man doon amis,
 Of wille knit bitwixe two,
 That wol not breke for wele ne wo;
 Which long is lykly to contune,
 Whan wille and goodis ben in comune;
 Grounded by goddis ordinaunce,
 Hool, withoute discordaunce;
 With hem holding comuntee
 Of al her goode in charitee,
 That ther be noon excepcioun
 Thurgh chaunging of entencioun;
 That ech helpe other at hir neede,
 And wysly hele bothe word and dede;
 Trewe of mening, devoid of slouthe,
 For wit is nought withoute trouthe;
 So that the ton dar al his thought
 Seyn to his freend, and spare nought,
 As to him—silf, without dreding
 To be discovered by wreying.
 For glad is that coniunccioun,
 Whan ther is noon suspecioun
 Ne lak in hem, whom they wolde prove
 That trew and parfit weren in love.
 For no man may be amiable,
 But—if he be so ferme and stable,
 That fortune chaunge him not, ne blinde,
 But that his freend alwey him finde,
 Bothe pore and riche, in oon estate.
 For if his freend, thurgh any gate,
 Wol compleyne of his poverttee,
 He shulde not byde so long, til he
 Of his helping him requere;
 For good deed, done but thurgh prayere,
 Is sold, and bought to dere, y—wis,
 To hert that of gret valour is.
 For hert fulfilled of gentilnesse
 Can yvel demene his distresse.
 And man that worthy is of name
 To asken often hath gret shame.
 A good man brenneth in his thought
 For shame, whan he axeth ought.
 He hath gret thought, and dredith ay
 For his disese, whan he shal pray
 His freend, lest that he warned be,
 Til that he preve his stabiltee.
 But whan that he hath founden oon
 That trusty is and trew as stone,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And hath assayed him at al,
And found him stedefast as a wal,
And of his freendship be certeyne,
He shal him shewe bothe Ioye and peyne,
And al that he dar thinke or sey,
Withoute shame, as he wel may.
For how shulde he ashamed be
Of sich oon as I tolde thee?
For whan he woot his secree thought,
The thridde shal knowe ther-of right nought;
For tweyn in nombre is bet than three
In every counsel and secree.
Repreve he dredeth never a del,
Who that biset his wordis wel;
For every wys man, out of drede,
Can kepe his tunge til he see nede;
And fooles can not holde hir tunge;
A fooles belle is sone runge.
Yit shal a trewe freend do more
To helpe his felowe of his sore,
And socoure him, whan he hath nede,
In al that he may doon in dede;
And gladder be that he him plesith
Than is his felowe that he esith.
And if he do not his requeste,
He shal as mochel him moleste
As his felow, for that he
May not fulfille his voluntee
As fully as he hath requered.
If bothe the hertis Love hath fered,
Joy and wo they shul depart,
And take evenly ech his part.
Half his anoy he shal have ay,
And comfort him what that he may;
And of his blisse parte shal he,
If love wol departed be. 'And whilom of this amitee
Spak Tullius in a ditee;
"A man shulde maken his request
Unto his freend, that is honest;
And he goodly shulde it fulfille,
But it the more were out of skile,
And otherwise not graunt therto,
Except only in cases two:
If men his freend to deth wolde dryve,
Lat him be bisy to save his lyve.
Also if men wolen him assayle,
Of his wurship to make him faile,
And hindren him of his renoun,
Lat him, with ful entencioun,
His dever doon in ech degree
That his freend ne shamed be,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

In this two cases with his might,
Taking no kepe to skile nor right,
As ferre as love may him excuse;
This oughte no man to refuse."
This love that I have told to thee
Is no-thing contrarie to me;
This wol I that thou folowe wel,
And leve the tother everydel.
This love to vertu al attendith,
The tothir fooles blent and shendith. 'Another love also there is,
That is contrarie unto this,
Which desyre is so constreyned
That it is but wille feyned;
Awey fro trouthe it doth so varie,
That to good love it is contrarie;
For it maymeth, in many wyse,
Syke hertis with coveityse;
Al in winning and in profyt
Sich love settith his delyt.
This love so hangeth in balaunce
That, if it lese his hope, perchaunce,
Of lucre, that he is set upon,
It wol faile, and quenche anon;
For no man may be amorous,
Ne in his living vertuous,
But-if he love more, in mood,
Men for hem-silf than for hir good.
For love that profit doth abyde
Is fals, and bit not in no tyde.
This love cometh of dame Fortune,
That litel whyle wol contune;
For it shal chaungen wonder sone,
And take eclips right as the mone,
Whan she is from us y-let
Thurgh erthe, that bitwixe is set
The sonne and hir, as it may falle,
Be it in party, or in alle;
The shadowe maketh her bemis merke,
And hir hornes to shewe derke,
That part where she hath lost hir lyght
Of Phebus fully, and the sight;
Til, whan the shadowe is overpast,
She is enlumined ageyn as faste,
Thurgh brightnesse of the sonne bemes
That yeveth to hir ageyn hir lemes.
That love is right of sich nature;
Now is it fair, and now obscure,
Now bright, now clipsy of manere,
And whylom dim, and whylom clere.
As sone as Poverte ginneth take,
With mantel and with wedis blake

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

It hidith of Love the light away,
 That into night it turneth day;
 It may not see Richesse shyne
 Til the blakke shadowes fyne.
 For, whan Richesse shyneth bright,
 Love recovereth ageyn his light;
 And whan it failith, he wol flit,
 And as she groweth, so groweth it.
 The riche men are loved ay,
 And namely tho that sparand bene,
 That wol not wasshe hir hertes clene
 Of the filthe, nor of the vyce
 Of gredy brenning avaryce.
 The riche man ful fond is, y-wis,
 That weneth that he loved is.
 If that his herte it undirstood,
 It is not he, it is his good;
 He may wel witen in his thought,
 His good is loved, and he right nought.
 For if he be a nigard eke,
 Men wole not sette by him a leke,
 But haten him; this is the soth.
 Lo, what profit his catel doth!
 Of every man that may him see,
 It geteth him nought but enmitee.
 But he amende him of that vyce,
 And knowe him-silf, he is not wys.
 To gete him love also ben free,
 Or ellis he is not wyse ne sage
 No more than is a gote ramage.
 That he not loveth, his dede proveth,
 Whan he his richesse so wel loveth,
 That he wol hyde it ay and spare,
 His pore freendis seen forfare;
 To kepe it ay is his purpose,
 Til for drede his eyen close,
 And til a wikked deth him take;
 Him hadde lever asondre shake,
 And late his limes asondre ryve,
 Than leve his richesse in his lyve.
 He thenkith parte it with no man;
 Certayn, no love is in him than.
 How shulde love within him be,
 Whan in his herte is no pite?
 That he trespasseth, wel I wat,
 For ech man knowith his estat;
 For wel him oughthe be reproved
 That loveth nought, ne is not loved.
 And han our sermoun of hir nomen,
 A wondir wil I telle thee now,
 Thou herdist never sich oon, I trow.

'Of this love, here what I sey:—

'Certis, he shulde ay freendly be,

'But sith we arn to Fortune comen,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

I not wher thou me leven shal,
Though sothfastnesse it be in al,
As it is writen, and is sooth,
That unto men more profit doth
The froward Fortune and contraire,
Than the swote and debonaire:
And if thee thinke it is doutable,
It is thurgh argument provable.
For the debonaire and softe
Falsith and bigylith ofte;
For liche a moder she can cherishe
And milken as doth a norys;
And of hir goode to hem deles,
And yeveth hem part of her Ioweles,
With grete richesse and dignitee;
And hem she hoteth stabilitee
In a state that is not stable,
But chaunging ay and variable;
And fedith hem with glorie veyne,
And worldly blisse noncerteyne.
Whan she hem settith on hir whele,
Than wene they to be right wele,
And in so stable state withalle,
That never they wene for to falle.
And whan they set so highe be,
They wene to have in certeintee
Of hertly frendis so gret noumbre,
That no-thing mighte her stat encombre;
They truste hem so on every syde,
Wening with hem they wolde abyde
In every perel and mischaunce,
Withoute chaunge or variaunce,
Bothe of catel and of good;
And also for to spende hir blood
And alle hir membris for to spille,
Only to fulfille hir wille.
They maken it hole in many wyse,
And hoten hem hir ful servyse,
How sore that it do hem smerte,
Into hir very naked sherte!
Herte and al, so hole they yeve,
For the tyme that they may live,
So that, with her flaterye,
They maken foolis glorifye
Of hir wordis greet speking,
And han there-of a reioysing,
And trowe hem as the Evangyle;
And it is al falsheed and gyle,
As they shal afterwarde see,
Whan they arn falle in poverttee,
And been of good and catel bare;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Than shulde they seen who freendis ware.
For of an hundred, certeynly,
Nor of a thousand ful scarsly,
Ne shal they fynde unnethis oon,
Whan poverttee is comen upon.
For this Fortune that I of telle,
With men whan hir lust to dwelle,
Makith hem to lese hir conisaunce,
And nourishith hem in ignoraunce. 'But froward Fortune and perverse,
Whan high estatis she doth reverse,
And maketh hem to tumble doun
Of hir whele, with sodeyn tourn,
And from hir richesse doth hem flee,
And plongeth hem in poverttee,
As a stepmoder envyous,
And leyeth a plastre dolorous
Unto her hertis, wounded egre,
Which is not tempred with vinegre,
But with povertte and indigence,
For to shewe, by experience,
That she is Fortune verely
In whom no man shulde affy,
Nor in hir yeftis have fiaunce,
She is so ful of variaunce.
Thus can she maken high and lowe,
Whan they from richesse aren throwe,
Fully to knowen, withouten were,
Freend of effect, and freend of chere;
And which in love weren trew and stable,
And whiche also weren variable,
After Fortune, hir goddessse,
In povertte, outhere in richesse;
For al she yeveth, out of drede,
Unhappe bereveth it in dede;
For Infortune lat not oon
Of freendis, whan Fortune is goon;
I mene tho freendis that wol flee
Anoon as entreth poverttee.
And yit they wol not leve hem so,
But in ech place where they go
They calle hem "wrecche," scorne and blame,
And of hir mishappe hem diffame,
And, namely, siche as in richesse
Pretendith most of stablenesse,
Whan that they sawe him set on-lofte,
And weren of him socoured ofte,
And most y-holpe in al hir nede:
But now they take no maner hede,
But seyn, in voice of flaterye,
That now apperith hir folye,
Over-al where-so they fare,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And singe, "Go, farewel feldefare."
Alle suche freendis I beshrewe,
For of the trewe ther be to fewe;
But sothfast freendis, what so bityde,
In every fortune wolen abyde;
They han hir hertis in suche noblesse
That they nil love for no richesse;
Nor, for that Fortune may hem sende,
They wolen hem socoure and defende;
And chaunge for softe ne for sore,
For who is freend, loveth evermore.
Though men drawe swerd his freend to slo,
He may not hewe hir love a-two.
But, in the case that I shal sey,
For pride and ire lese it he may,
And for reprove by nycetee,
And discovering of privitee,
With tonge wounding, as feloun,
Thurgh venemous detraccioun.
Frend in this case wol gon his way,
For no-thing greve him more ne may;
And for nought ellis wol he flee,
If that he love in stabilitee.
And certeyn, he is wel bigoon
Among a thousand that fyndith oon.
For ther may be no richesse,
Ageyns frendship, of worthinesse;
For it ne may so high atteigne
As may the valoure, sooth to seyne,
Of him that loveth trew and wel;
Frendship is more than is catel.
For freend in court ay better is
Than peny in his purs, certis;
And Fortune, mishapping,
Whan upon men she is falling,
Thurgh misturning of hir chaunce,
And casteth hem oute of balaunce,
She makith, thurgh hir adversitee,
Men ful cleerly for to see
Him that is freend in existence
From him that is by apparence.
For Infortune makith anoon
To knowe thy freendis fro thy foon,
By experience, right as it is;
The which is more to preyse, y-wis,
Than is miche richesse and tresour;
For more doth profit and valour
Poverté, and such adversitee,
Bifore than doth prosperitee;
For the toon yeveth conisaunce,
And the tother ignoraunce. 'And thus in poverté is in dede

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Trouthe declared fro falsehede;
For feynte frendis it wol declare,
And trewe also, what wey they fare.
For whan he was in his richesse,
These freendis, ful of doublenesse,
Offrid him in many wyse
Hert and body, and servyse.
What wolde he than ha yeve to ha bought
To knowen openly her thought,
That he now hath so clerly seen?
The lasse bigyled he sholde have been
And he hadde than perceyved it,
But richesse nold not late him wit.
Wel more avauntage doth him than,
Sith that it makith him a wys man,
The greet mischeef that he receyveth,
Than doth richesse that him deceyveth.
Richesse riche ne makith nought
Him that on tresour set his thought;
For richesse stont in suffisaunce
And no-thing in habundaunce;
For suffisaunce al-only
Makith men to live richely.
For he that hath but miches tweyne,
Ne more value in his demeigne,
Liveth more at ese, and more is riche,
Than doth he that is so chiche,
And in his bern hath, soth to seyn,
An hundred muwis of whete greyn,
Though he be chapman or marchaunt,
And have of golde many besaunt.
For in the geting he hath such wo,
And in the keping drede also,
And set evermore his bisynesse
For to encrese, and not to lesse,
For to augment and multiply.
And though on hepis it lye him by,
Yit never shal make his richesse
Asseth unto his gredinesse.
But the povre that recchith nought,
Save of his lyflode, in his thought,
Which that he getith with his travaile,
He dredith nought that it shal faile,
Though he have lytel worldis good,
Mete and drinke, and esy food,
Upon his travel and living,
And also suffisaunt clothing.
Or if in syknesse that he falle,
And lothe mete and drink withalle,
Though he have nought, his mete to by,
He shal bithinke him hastely,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

To putte him out of al daunger,
That he of mete hath no mister;
Or that he may with litel eke
Be founden, whyl that he is seke;
Or that men shul him bere in hast,
To live, til his syknesse be past,
To somme maysondewe bisyde;
He cast nought what shal him bityde.
He thenkith nought that ever he shal
Into any syknesse falle. 'And though it falle, as it may be,
That al betyme spare shal he
As mochel as shal to him suffyce,
Whyl he is syke in any wyse,
He doth it, for that he wol be
Content with his povertie
Withoute nede of any man.
So miche in litel have he can,
He is apayed with his fortune;
And for he nil be importune
Unto no wight, ne onerous,
Nor of hir goodes coveitous;
Therefore he spareth, it may wel been,
His pore estat for to sustene. 'Or if him lust not for to spare,
But suffrith forth, as nought ne ware,
Atte last it hapneth, as it may,
Right unto his laste day,
And taketh the world as it wolde be;
For ever in herte thenkith he,
The soner that the deeth him slo,
To paradys the soner go
He shal, there for to live in blisse,
Where that he shal no good misse.
Thider he hopith god shal him sende
Aftir his wrecchid lyves ende.
Pictagoras himsilf rehersed,
In a book that the Golden Verses
Is clepid, for the nobilitee
Of the honourable ditee:—
"Than, whan thou gost thy body fro,
Free in the air thou shalt up go,
And leven al humanitee,
And purely live in deitee."—
He is a fool, withouten were,
That trowith have his countre here.
"In erthe is not our countree,"
That may these clerkis seyn and see
In Boece of Consolacioun,
Where it is maked mencion
Of our countree pleyn at the eye,
By teching of philosophye,
Where lewid men might lere wit,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Who—so that wolde translaten it.
If he be sich that can wel live
Aftir his rente may him yive,
And not desyreth more to have,
That may fro povertie him save:
A wys man seide, as we may seen,
Is no man wrecched, but he it wene,
Be he king, knight, or ribaud.
And many a ribaud is mery and baud,
That swinkith, and berith, bothe day and night,
Many a burthen of gret might,
The whiche doth him lasse offense,
For he suffrith in pacience.
They laugh and daunce, trippe and singe,
And ley not up for her living,
But in the tavern al dispendith
The winning that god hem sendith.
Than goth he, fardels for to bere,
With as good chere as he dide ere;
To swinke and traveile he not feynith,
For for to robben he disdeynith;
But right anoon, aftir his swinke,
He goth to tavern for to drinke.
Alle these ar riche in abundaunce,
That can thus have suffisaunce
Wel more than can an usurere,
As god wel knowith, withoute were.
For an usurer, so god me see,
Shal never for richesse riche bee,
But evermore pore and indigent,
Scarce, and gredy in his entent. For soth it is, whom it displese,
Ther may no marchaunt live at ese,
His herte in sich a were is set,
That it quik brenneth more to get,
Ne never shal enough have geten;
Though he have gold in gerner yeten,
For to be nedey he dredith sore.
Wherfore to geten more and more
He set his herte and his desire;
So hote he brennith in the fire
Of coveitise, that makith him wood
To purchase other mennes good.
He undirfongith a gret peyne,
That undirtakith to drinke up Seyne;
For the more he drinkith, ay
The more he leveth, the soth to say.
This is the thirst of fals geting,
That last ever in coveiting,
And the anguisshe and distresse
With the fire of gredinesse.
She fighteth with him ay, and stryveth,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

That his herte asondre ryveth;
Such gredinesse him assaylith,
That whan he most hath, most he faylith. 'Phisiciens and advocates
Gon right by the same yates;
They selle hir science for winning,
And haunte hir crafte for greet geting.
Hir winning is of such swetnesse,
That if a man falle in sikenesse,
They are ful glad, for hir encrese;
For by hir wille, withoute lees,
Everiche man shulde be seke,
And though they dye, they set not a leke.
After, whan they the gold have take,
Ful litel care for hem they make.
They wolde that fourty were seke at onis,
Ye, two hundred, in flesh and bonis,
And yit two thousand, as I gesse,
For to encreesen her richesse.
They wol not worchen, in no wyse,
But for lucre and coveityse;
For fysyk ginneth first by *fy*,
The fysycien also sothely;
And sithen it goth fro *fy* to *sy*;
To truste on hem, it is foly;
For they nil, in no maner gree,
Do right nought for charitee. 'Eke in the same secte are set
Alle tho that prechen for to get
Worshipes, honour, and richesse.
Her hertis arn in greet distresse,
That folk ne live not holily.
But aboven al, specialy,
Sich as prechen for veynglorie,
And toward god have no memorie,
But forth as ypocrites trace,
And to her soules deth purchase,
And outward shewen holynesse,
Though they be fulle of cursidnesse.
Not liche to the apostles twelve,
They deceyve other and hem—selve;
Bigyled is the gyler than.
For preching of a cursed man,
Though it to other may profyte,
Himsilf availeth not a myte;
For oft good predicacioun
Cometh of evel entencioun.
To him not vailith his preching,
Al helpe he other with his teching;
For where they good ensauple take,
There is he with veynglorie shake. 'But lat us leven these prechoures,
And speke of hem that in her toures
Hepe up her gold, and faste shette,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And sore theron her herte sette.
They neither love god, ne drede;
They kepe more than it is nede,
And in her bagges sore it binde,
Out of the sonne, and of the winde;
They putte up more than nede ware,
Whan they seen pore folk forfare,
For hunger dye, and for cold quake;
God can wel vengeaunce therof take.
Thre gret mischeves hem assailith,
And thus in gadring ay travaylith;
With moche peyne they winne richesse;
And drede hem holdith in distresse,
To kepe that they gadre faste;
With sorwe they leve it at the laste;
With sorwe they bothe dye and live,
That to richesse her hertis yive,
And in defaute of love it is,
As it shewith ful wel, y-wis.
For if these gredy, the sothe to seyn,
Loveden, and were loved ageyn,
And good love regned over-alle,
Such wikkidnesse ne shulde falle;
But he shulde yeve that most good had
To hem that weren in nede bistad,
And live withoute fals usure,
For charitee ful clene and pure.
If they hem yeve to goodnesse,
Defending hem from ydelnesse,
In al this world than pore noon
We shulde finde, I trowe, not oon.
But chaunged is this world unstable;
For love is over-al vendable.
We see that no man loveth now
But for winning and for prow;
And love is thrallid in servage
Whan it is sold for avauntage;
Yit wommen wol hir bodies selle;
Suche soules goth to the devel of helle.'

FRAGMENT C.

Whan Love had told hem his entente,
 The baronage to counsel wente;
 In many sentences they fille,
 And dyversly they seide hir wille:
 But aftir discord they accorded,
 And hir accord to Love recorded.
 'Sir,' seiden they, 'we been at oon,
 By even accord of everichoon,
 Out-take Richesse al-only,
 That sworn hath ful hauteynly,
 That she the castel nil assaile,
 Ne smyte a stroke in this bataile,
 With dart, ne mace, spere, ne knyf,
 For man that speketh or bereth the lyf,
 And blameth your empryse, y-wis,
 And from our hoost departed is,
 (At leeste wey, as in this plyte,)
 So hath she this man in dispyte;
 For she seith he ne loved hir never,
 And therfor she wol hate him ever.
 For he wol gadre no tresore,
 He hath hir wrath for evermore.
 He agilde hir never in other caas,
 Lo, here al hoolly his trespas!
 She seith wel, that this other day
 He asked hir leve to goon the way
 That is clepid To-moche-Yeving,
 And spak ful faire in his praying;
 But whan he prayde hir, pore was he,
 Therefore she warned him the entree.
 Ne yit is he not thriven so
 That he hath geten a peny or two,
 That quitly is his owne in hold.
 Thus hath Richesse us alle told;
 And whan Richesse us this recorded,
 Withouten hir we been accorded.

'And we finde in our accordaunce,
 That False-Semblant and Abstinaunce,
 With alle the folk of hir bataile,
 Shulle at the hinder gate assaile,
 That Wikkid-Tunge hath in keping,
 With his Normans, fulle of Iangling.
 And with hem Curtesie and Largesse,
 That shulle shewe hir hardinesse
 To the olde wyf that kepeth so harde

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Fair–Welcoming within her warde.
 Than shal Delyte and Wel–Helinge
 Fonde Shame adoun to bringe;
 With al hir hoost, erly and late,
 They shulle assailen thilke gate.
 Agaynes Drede shal Hardinesse
 Assayle, and also Sikernesse,
 With al the folk of hir leding,
 That never wist what was fleing.

'Fraunchyse shal fighte, and eek Pitee,
 With Daunger ful of crueltee.
 Thus is your hoost ordeyned wel;
 Doun shal the castel every del,
 If everiche do his entente,
 So that Venus be presente,
 Your modir, ful of vassalage,
 That can y–nough of such usage;
 Withouten hir may no wight spede
 This werk, neither for word ne dede.
 Therfore is good ye for hir sende,
 For thurgh hir may this werk amende.'

Amour. 'Lordinges, my modir, the goddesse,

That is my lady, and my maistresse,
 Nis not at al at my willing,
 Ne doth not al my desyring.
 Yit can she som–tyme doon labour,
 Whan that hir lust, in my socour,
 Al my nedis for to acheve,
 But now I thenke hir not to greve.
 My modir is she, and of child–hede
 I bothe worshipe hir, and eek drede;
 For who that dredith sire ne dame
 Shal it aby in body or name.

And, natheles, yit cunne we
 Sende aftir hir, if nede be;
 And were she nigh, she comen wolde,
 I trowe that no–thing might hir holde.

'My modir is of greet prowesse;

She hath tan many a forteresse,
 That cost hath many a pound er this,
 Ther I nas not present, y–wis;
 And yit men seide it was my dede;
 But I come never in that stede;
 Ne me ne lykith, so mote I thee,
 Such toures take withoute me.

For–why me thenketh that, in no wyse,
 It may ben cleped but marchandise.
 And pay therfor; than art thou quyte.

'Go bye a courser, blak or whyte,

The marchaunt oweth thee right nought,
 Ne thou him, whan thou hast it bought.
 I wol not selling clepe yeving,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

For selling axeth no guerdoning;
 Here lyth no thank, ne no meryte,
 That oon goth from that other al quyte.
 But this selling is not semblable;
 For, whan his hors is in the stable,
 He may it selle ageyn, pardee,
 And winne on it, such hap may be;
 Al may the man not lese, y-wis,
 For at the leest the skin is his.
 Or elles, if it so bityde
 That he wol kepe his hors to ryde,
 Yit is he lord ay of his hors.
 But thilke chaffare is wel wors,
 There Venus entremeteth nought;
 For who-so such chaffare hath bought,
 He shal not worchen so wysly,
 That he ne shal lese al outerly
 Bothe his money and his chaffare;
 But the seller of the ware
 The prys and profit have shal.
 Certeyn, the byer shal lese al;
 For he ne can so dere it bye
 To have lordship and ful maistrye,
 Ne have power to make letting
 Neither for yift ne for preching,
 That of his chaffare, maugre his,
 Another shal have as moche, y-wis,
 If he wol yeve as moche as he,
 Of what contrey so that he be;
 Or for right nought, so happe may,
 If he can flater hir to hir pay.
 Ben than suche marchaunts wyse?
 No, but fooles in every wyse,
 Whan they bye such thing wilfully,
 Ther-as they lese her good fully.
 But natheles, this dar I saye,
 My modir is not wont to paye,
 For she is neither so fool ne nyce,
 To entremete hir of sich vyce.
 But truste wel, he shal paye al,
 That repente of his bargeyn shal,
 Whan Poverte put him in distresse,
 Al were he scoler to Richesse,
 That is for me in gret yerning,
 Whan she assenteth to my willing. 'But, by my modir seint Venus,
 And by hir fader Saturnus,
 That hir engendrid by his lyf,
 But not upon his weddid wyf!
 Yit wol I more unto you swere,
 To make this thing the seurere;
 Now by that feith, and that leautee

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

I owe to alle my brethren free,
Of which ther nis wight under heven
That can her fadris names neven,
So dyvers and so many ther be
That with my modir have be privee!
Yit wolde I swere, for sikirnesse,
The pole of helle to my witnesse,
Now drinke I not this yeer clarree,
If that I lye, or forsworn be!
(For of the goddes the usage is,
That who—so him forswereth amis,
Shal that yeer drinke no clarree).
Now have I sworn y—nough, pardee;
If I forswere me, than am I lorn,
But I wol never be forsworn.
Sith Richesse hath me failed here,
She shal abyte that trespas dere,
At leeste wey, but she hir arme
With swerd, or sparth, or gisarme.
For certes, sith she loveth not me,
Fro thilke tyme that she may see
The castel and the tour to—shake,
In sory tyme she shal awake.
If I may grype a riche man,
I shal so pulle him, if I can,
That he shal, in a fewe stoundes,
Lese alle his markes and his poundes.
I shal him make his pens outslinge,
But—if they in his gerner springe;
Our maydens shal eek plukke him so,
That him shal nedon fetheres mo,
And make him selle his lond to spende,
But he the bet cunne him defende. 'Pore men han maad hir lord of me;
Although they not so mighty be,
That they may fede me in delyt,
I wol not have hem in despyt.
No good man hateth hem, as I gesse,
For chinche and feloun is Richesse,
That so can chase hem and dispysse,
And hem defoule in sondry wyse.
They loven ful bet, so god me spede,
Than doth the riche, chinchy grede,
And been, in good feith, more stable
And trewer, and more serviabile;
And therefore it suffysith me
Hir goode herte, and hir leautee.
They han on me set al hir thought,
And therefore I forgete hem nought.
I wolde hem bringe in greet noblesse,
If that I were god of Richesse,
As I am god of Love, sothly,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Such routhe upon hir pleynt have I.
 Therefore I must his socour be,
 That peyneth him to serven me;
 For if he deyde for love of this,
 Than semeth in me no love ther is.' 'Sir,' seide they, 'sooth is, every del,
 That ye reherce, and we wot wel
 Thilk oth to holde is resonable;
 For it is good and covenable,
 That ye on riche men han sworn.
 For, sir, this wot we wel biforn;
 If riche men doon you homage,
 That is as fooles doon outrage;
 But ye shul not forsworen be,
 Ne let therfore to drinke clarree,
 Or piment maked fresh and newe.
 Ladyes shulle hem such pepir brewe,
 If that they falle into hir laas,
 That they for wo mowe seyn "Allas!"
 Ladyes shuln ever so curteis be,
 That they shal quyte your oth al free.
 Ne seketh never other vicaire,
 For they shal speke with hem so faire
 That ye shal holde you payed ful wel,
 Though ye you medle never a del.
 Lat ladies worche with hir thinges,
 They shal hem telle so fele tydinges,
 And moeve hem eke so many requestis
 By flatery, that not honest is,
 And therto yeve hem such thankinges,
 What with kissing, and with talkinges,
 That certes, if they trowed be,
 Shal never leve hem lond ne fee
 That it nil as the moeble fare,
 Of which they first delivered are.
 Now may ye telle us al your wille,
 And we your hestes shal fulfillle. 'But Fals-Semblant dar not, for drede
 Of you, sir, medle him of this dede,
 For he seith that ye been his fo;
 He not, if ye wol worche him wo.
 Wherfore we pray you alle, beausire,
 That ye forgive him now your ire,
 And that he may dwelle, as your man,
 With Abstinence, his dere lemman:
 This our accord and our wil now.' 'Parfay,' seide Love, 'I graunte it yow;
 I wol wel holde him for my man;
 Now lat him come:' and he forth ran.
 'Fals-Semblant,' quod Love, 'in this wyse
 I take thee here to my servyse,
 That thou our freendis helpe alway,
 And hindre hem neithir night ne day,
 But do thy might hem to releve,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And eek our enemies that thou greve.
 Thyn be this might, I graunt it thee,
 My king of harlotes shalt thou be;
 We wol that thou have such honour.
 Certeyn, thou art a fals traitour,
 And eek a theef; sith thou were born,
 A thousand tyme thou art forsworn.
 But, natheles, in our hering,
 To putte our folk out of douting,
 I bid thee teche hem, wostow how?
 By somme general signe now,
 In what place thou shalt founden be,
 If that men had mister of thee;
 And how men shal thee best espye,
 For thee to knowe is greet maistrye;
 Tel in what place is thyn haunting.'

F. Sem. 'Sir, I have fele dyvers woning,
 That I kepe not rehersed be,
 So that ye wolde respyten me.
 For if that I telle you the sothe,
 I may have harm and shame bothe.
 If that my felowes wisten it,
 My tales shulden me be quit;
 For certeyn, they wolde hate me,
 If ever I knewe hir cruelte;
 For they wolde over-al holde hem stille
 Of trouthe that is ageyn hir wille;
 Suche tales kepen they not here.
 I might eftsome bye it ful dere,
 If I seide of hem any thing,
 That ought displeseth to hir hering.
 For what word that hem prikke or byteth,
 In that word noon of hem delyteth,
 Al were it gospel, the evangyle,
 That wolde reprove hem of hir gyle,
 For they are cruel and hauteyn.
 And this thing wot I wel, certeyn,
 If I speke ought to peire hir loos,
 Your court shal not so wel be cloos,
 That they ne shal wite it atte last.
 Of good men am I nought agast,
 For they wol taken on hem nothing,
 Whan that they knowe al my mening;
 But he that wol it on him take,
 He wol himself suspecious make,
 That he his lyf let covertly,
 In Gyle and in Ipocrisy,
 That me engendred and yaf fostring.' 'They made a ful good engendring,'
 Quod Love, 'for who-so soothly telle,
 They engendred the devel of helle! 'But nedely, how-so-ever it be,'
 Quod Love, 'I wol and charge thee,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

To telle anon thy woning-places,
 Hering ech wight that in this place is;
 And what lyf that thou livest also,
 Hyde it no lenger now; wherto?
 Thou most discover al thy wurching,
 How thou servest, and of what thing,
 Though that thou schuldest for thy soth-sawe
 Ben al to-beten and to-drawe;
 And yit art thou not wont, pardee.
 But natheles, though thou beten be,
 Thou shalt not be the first, that so
 Hath for soth-sawe suffred wo.'

F. Sem. 'Sir, sith that it may lyken you,
 Though that I schulde be slayn right now,
 I shal don your comaundement,
 For therto have I gret talent.' Withouten wordes mo, right than,
 Fals-Semblant his sermon bigan,
 And seide hem thus in audience:—
 'Barouns, tak hede of my sentence!
 That wight that list to have knowing
 Of Fals-Semblant, ful of flatering,
 He must in worldly folk him seke,
 And, certes, in the cloistres eke;
 I wone no-where but in hem tweye;
 But not lyk even, sooth to seye;
 Shortly, I wol herberwe me
 There I hope best to hulstred be;
 And certeynly, sikerest hyding
 Is undirneht humblest clothing. 'Religious folk ben ful covert;
 Seculer folk ben more appert.
 But natheles, I wol not blame
 Religious folk, ne hem diffame,
 In what habit that ever they go:
 Religioun humble, and trewe also,
 Wol I not blame, ne dispuse,
 But I nil love it, in no wyse.
 I mene of fals religious,
 That stoute ben, and malicious;
 That wolen in an abit go,
 And setten not hir herte therto. 'Religious folk ben al pitous;
 Thou shalt not seen oon dispitous.
 They loven no pryde, ne no stryf,
 But humbly they wol lede hir lyf;
 With swich folk wol I never be.
 And if I dwelle, I feyne me
 I may wel in her abit go;
 But me were lever my nekke atwo,
 Than lete a purpose that I take,
 What covenant that ever I make.
 I dwelle with hem that proude be,
 And fulle of wyles and subtelte;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

That worship of this world coveyten,
 And grete nedes cunne espleyten;
 And goon and gadren greet pitaunces,
 And purchace hem the acqueyntaunces
 Of men that mighty lyf may leden;
 And feyne hem pore, and hem-self feden
 With gode morcels delicious,
 And drinken good wyn precious,
 And preche us povert and distresse,
 And fisshen hem-self greet richesse
 With wyly nettis that they caste:
 It wol come foul out at the laste.
 They ben fro clene religioun went;
 They make the world an argument
 That hath a foul conclusioun.
 "I have a robe of religioun,
 Than am I al religious:"
 This argument is al roignous;
 It is not worth a croked brere;
 Habit ne maketh monk ne frere,
 But clene lyf and devocioun
 Maketh gode men of religioun.
 Nathelesse, ther can noon answeere,
 How high that ever his heed he shere
 With rasour whetted never so kene,
 That Gyle in braunches cut thrittene;
 Ther can no wight distincte it so,
 That he dar sey a word therto. 'But what herberwe that ever I take,
 Or what semblant that ever I make,
 I mene but gyle, and folowe that;
 For right no mo than Gibbe our cat
 Fro myce and rattes went his wyle,
 Ne entende I not but to begyle;
 Ne no wight may, by my clothing,
 Wite with what folk is my dwelling;
 Ne by my wordis yet, pardee,
 So softe and so plesaunt they be.
 Bihold the dedis that I do;
 But thou be blind, thou oughtest so;
 For, varie hir wordis fro hir dede,
 They thenke on gyle, withouten drede,
 What maner clothing that they were,
 Or what estat that ever they bere,
 Lered or lewd, lord or lady,
 Knight, squier, burgeis, or bayly.' Right thus whyl Fals-Semblant sermoneth,
 Eftsones Love him aresoneth,
 And brak his tale in the speking
 As though he had him told lesing;
 And seide: 'What, devel, is that I here?
 What folk hast thou us nempned here?
 May men finde religioun

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

In worldly habitacioun?'
F. Sem. 'Ye, sir; it foloweth not that they
 Shulde lede a wikked lyf, parfey,
 Ne not therefore her soules lese,
 That hem to worldly clothes chese;
 For, certis, it were gret pitee.
 Men may in seculer clothes see
 Florisshen holy religioun.
 Ful many a seynt in feeld and toun,
 With many a virgin glorious,
 Devout, and ful religious,
 Had deyed, that comun clothe ay beren,
 Yit seyntes never—the—les they weren.
 I coude reken you many a ten;
 Ye, wel nigh alle these holy wimmen,
 That men in chirchis herie and seke,
 Bothe maydens, and these wyves eke,
 That baren many a fair child here,
 Wered alwey clothis seculere,
 And in the same dyden they,
 That seyntes weren, and been alwey.
 The eleven thousand maydens dere,
 That beren in heven hir ciergis clere,
 Of which men rede in chirche, and singe,
 Were take in seculer clothing,
 Whan they resseyved martirdom,
 And wonnen heven unto her hoom.
 Good herte makith the gode thought;
 The clothing yeveth ne reveth nought.
 The gode thought and the worching,
 That maketh religioun flowring,
 Ther lyth the good religioun
 Aftir the right entencioun. 'Who—so toke a wethers skin,
 And wrapped a greddy wolf therin,
 For he shulde go with lambis whyte,
 Wenest thou not he wolde hem byte?
 Yis! never—the—las, as he were wood,
 He wolde hem wery, and drinke the blood;
 And wel the rather hem disceyve,
 For, sith they coude not perceyve
 His treget and his crueltee,
 They wolde him folowe, al wolde he flee. 'If ther be wolves of sich hewe
 Amonges these apostlis newe,
 Thou, holy chirche, thou mayst be wayled!
 Sith that thy citee is assayled
 Thourgh knightis of thyn owne table,
 God wot thy lordship is doutable!
 If they enforce hem it to winne,
 That shulde defende it fro withinne,
 Who might defence ayens hem make?
 Withouten stroke it mot be take

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Of trepeget or mangonel;
Without displaying of pensel.
And if god nil don it socour,
But lat hem renne in this colour,
Thou moost thyn heestis laten be.
Than is ther nought, but yelde thee,
Or yeve hem tribute, doutelees,
And holde it of hem to have pees:
But gretter harm bityde thee,
That they al maister of it be.
Wel conne they scorne thee withal;
By day stuffen they the wal,
And al the night they mynen there.
Nay, thou most planten elleswhere
Thyn impes, if thou wolt fruyt have;
Abyd not there thy-self to save. 'But now pees! here I turne ageyn;
I wol no more of this thing seyn,
If I may passen me herby;
I mighte maken you wery.
But I wol heten you alway
To helpe your freendis what I may,
So they wollen my company;
For they be shent al-outerly
But-if so falle, that I be
Oft with hem, and they with me.
And eek my lemman mot they serve,
Or they shul not my love deserve.
Forsothe, I am a fals traitour;
God iugged me for a thief trichour;
Forsworn I am, but wel nygh non
Wot of my gyle, til it be don. 'Thourgh me hath many oon deth resseyved,
That my treget never aperceyved;
And yit resseyveth, and shal resseyve,
That my falsnesse never aperceyve:
But who-so doth, if he wys be,
Him is right good be war of me.
But so sligh is the deceyving
That to hard is the aperceyving.
For Protheus, that coude him change
In every shap, hoomly and straunge,
Coude never sich gyle ne tresoun
As I; for I com never in toun
Ther-as I mighte knowen be,
Though men me bothe might here and see.
Ful wel I can my clothis change,
Take oon, and make another straunge.
Now am I knight, now chasteleyn;
Now prelat, and now chapeleyn;
Now prest, now clerk, and now forstere;
Now am I maister, now scolere;
Now monk, now chanoun, now baily;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

What–ever mister man am I.
 Now am I prince, now am I page,
 And can by herte every langage.
 Som–tyme am I hoor and old;
 Now am I yong, and stout, and bold;
 Now am I Robert, now Robyn;
 Now frere Menour, now Iacobyne;
 And with me folweth my loteby,
 To don me solas and company,
 That hight dame Abstinence–Streyned,
 In many a queynt array y–feyned.
 Right as it cometh to hir lyking,
 I fulfille al hir desiring.
 Somtyme a wommans cloth take I;
 Now am I mayde, now lady.
 Somtyme I am religious;
 Now lyk an anker in an hous.
 Somtyme am I prioresse,
 And now a nonne, and now abbesse;
 And go thurgh alle regiouns,
 Seking alle religious.
 But to what ordre that I am sworn,
 I take the strawe, and lete the corn;
 To blynde folk ther I enhabite,
 I axe no–more but hir abite.
 What wol ye more? in every wyse,
 Right as me list, I me disgyse.
 Wel can I bere me under weed;
 Unlyk is my word to my deed.
 Thus make I in my trappis falle,
 Thurgh my pryvileges, alle
 That ben in Cristendom alyve.
 I may assoile, and I may shryve,
 That no prelat may lette me,
 Al folk, wher–ever they founde be:
 I noot no prelat may don so,
 But it the pope be, and no mo,
 That made thilk establisshing.
 Now is not this a propre thing?
 But, were my sleightis aperceyved,
 Ne shulde I more been receyved
 As I was wont; and wostow why?
 For I dide hem a tregetry;
 But therof yeve I litel tale,
 I have the silver and the male;
 So have I preched and eek shriven,
 So have I take, so have me yiven,
 Thurgh hir foly, husbond and wyf,
 That I lede right a Ioly lyf,
 Thurgh simplesse of the prelacye;
 They know not al my tregetrye. 'But for as moche as man and wyf

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Shuld shewe hir parоче—prest hir lyf
 Ones a yeer, as seith the book,
 Er any wight his housel took,
 Than have I pryvilegis large,
 That may of moche thing discharge;
 For he may seye right thus, pardee:—
 "Sir Preest, in shrift I telle it thee,
 That he, to whom that I am shriven,
 Hath me assoiled, and me yiven
 Penance soothly, for my sinne,
 Which that I fond me gilty inne;
 Ne I ne have never entencioun
 To make double confessioun,
 Ne reherce eft my shrift to thee;
 O shrift is right y—nough to me.
 This oughte thee suffyce wel,
 Ne be not rebel never—a—del;
 For certis, though thou haddest it sworn,
 I wot no prest ne prelat born
 That may to shrift eft me constreyne.
 And if they don, I wol me pleyne;
 For I wot where to pleyne wel.
 Thou shalt not streyne me a del,
 Ne enforce me, ne yit me trouble,
 To make my confessioun double.
 Ne I have none affeccioun
 To have double absolucioun.
 The firste is right y—nough to me;
 This latter assoiling quyte I thee.
 I am unbounde; what mayst thou finde
 More of my sinnes me to unbinde?
 For he, that might hath in his hond,
 Of alle my sinnes me unbond.
 And if thou wolt me thus constreyne,
 That me mot nedis on thee pleyne,
 There shal no Iugge imperial,
 Ne bisshop, ne official,
 Don Iugement on me; for I
 Shal gon and pleyne me openly
 Unto my shrift—fadir newe,
 (That hight not Frere Wolf untrewel!)
 And he shal chevisе him for me,
 For I trowe he can hampre thee.
 But, lord! he wolde be wrooth withalle,
 If men him wolde Frere Wolf calle!
 For he wolde have no pacience,
 But don al cruel vengeaunce!
 He wolde his might don at the leest,
 Ne no—thing spare for goddis heest.
 And, god so wis be my socour,
 But thou yeve me my Saviour

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

At Ester, whan it lyketh me,
 Withoute presing more on thee,
 I wol forth, and to him goon,
 And he shal housel me anoon,
 For I am out of thy grucching;
 I kepe not dele with thee nothing."
 Thus may he shryve him, that forsaketh
 His paroche—prest, and to me taketh.
 And if the prest wol him refuse,
 I am ful redy him to accuse,
 And him punisse and hampre so,
 That he his chirche shal forgo. 'But who—so hath in his feling
 The consequence of such shryving,
 Shal seen that prest may never have might
 To knowe the conscience aright
 Of him that is under his cure.
 And this ageyns holy scripture,
 That biddeth every herde honeste
 Have verry knowing of his beste.
 But pore folk that goon by strete,
 That have no gold, ne sommes grete,
 Hem wolde I lete to her prelates,
 Or lete hir prestis knowe hir states,
 For to me right nought yeve they.'

Amour.

'And why is it?'

F. Sem.

'For they ne may.

They ben so bare, I take no keep;
 But I wol have the fatte sheep;—
 Lat parish prestis have the lene,
 I yeve not of hir harm a bene!
 And if that prelats grucchen it,
 That oughten wroth be in hir wit,
 To lese her fatte bestes so,
 I shal yeve hem a stroke or two,
 That they shal lesen with the force,
 Ye, bothe hir mytre and hir croce.
 Thus Iape I hem, and have do longe,
 My priveleges been so stronge.' Fals—Semblant wolde have stinted here,
 But Love ne made him no such chere
 That he was wery of his sawe;
 But for to make him glad and fawe,
 He seide:—"Tel on more specialy,
 How that thou servest untrewly.
 Tel forth, and shame thee never a del;
 For as thyn abit shewith wel,
 Thou semest an holy heremyte.'

F. Sem.

'Soth is, but I am an ypocryte.'

Amour.

'Thou gost and prechest poverttee?'

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

F. Sem.

'Ye, sir; but richesse hath poustee.'

Amour.

'Thou prechest abstinence also?'

F. Sem. 'Sir, I wol fillen, so mote I go,

My paunche of gode mete and wyne,

As shulde a maister of divyne;

For how that I me pover feyne,

Yit alle pore folk I disdeyne. 'I love bet the acqueyntaunce

Ten tymes, of the king of Fraunce,

Than of pore man of mylde mode,

Though that his soule be also gode.

For whan I see beggers quaking,

Naked on mixens al stinking,

For hungre crye, and eek for care,

I entremete not of hir fare.

They been so pore, and ful of pyne,

They might not ones yeve me dyne,

For they have no-thing but hir lyf;

What shulde he yeve that likketh his knyf?

It is but foly to entremete,

To seke in houndes nest fat mete.

Let bere hem to the spitel anoon,

But, for me, comfort gete they noon.

But a riche sike usurere

Wolde I visyte and drawe nere;

Him wol I comforte and rehet,

For I hope of his gold to gete.

And if that wikked deth him have,

I wol go with him to his grave.

And if ther any reprove me,

Why that I lete the pore be,

Wostow how I mot ascape?

I sey, and swerë him ful rape,

That riche men han more tecches

Of sinne, than han pore wrecches,

And han of counseil more mister;

And therefore I wol drawe hem ner.

But as gret hurt, it may so be,

Hath soule in right gret povert,

As soul in gret richesse, forsothe,

Al-be-it that they hurten bothe.

For richesse and mendicitees

Ben cleped two extremitees;

The mene is cleped suffisaunce,

Ther lyth of vertu the aboundaunce.

For Salamon, ful wel I woot,

In his Parables us wroot,

As it is knowe of many a wight,

In his thrittethe chapitre right:

"God, thou me kepe, for thy poustee,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Fro richesse and mendicitee;
For if a riche man him dresse
To thenke to moche on his richesse,
His herte on that so fer is set,
That he his creatour foryet;
And him, that begging wol ay greve,
How shulde I by his word him leve?
Unnethe that he nis a micher,
Forsworn, or elles god is lyer."
Thus seith Salamones sawes;
Ne we finde writen in no lawes,
And namely in our Cristen lay—
(Who seith "ye," I dar sey "nay")—
That Crist, ne his apostlis dere,
Whyl that they walkede in erthe here,
Were never seen her bred begging,
For they nolde beggen for nothing.
And right thus were men wont to teche;
And in this wyse wolde it preche
The maistres of divinitee
Somtyme in Paris the citee. 'And if men wolde ther—geyn appose
The naked text, and lete the glose,
It mighte sone assoiled be;
For men may wel the sothe see,
That, parde, they mighte axe a thing
Pleyedly forth, without begging.
For they weren goddis herdis dere,
And cure of soules hadden here,
They nolde no—thing begge hir fode;
For aftir Crist was don on rode,
With hir propre hondis they wrought,
And with travel, and elles nought,
They wonnen al hir sustenaunce,
And liveden forth in hir penaunce,
And the remenaunt yeve away
To other pore folk alway.
They neither bilden tour ne halle,
But leye in houses smale withalle.
A mighty man, that can and may,
Shulde with his honde and body alway
Winne him his food in laboring,
If he ne have rent or sich a thing,
Although he be religious,
And god to serven curious.
Thus mote he don, or do trespas,
But—if it be in certeyn cas,
That I can reherce, if mister be,
Right wel, whan the tyme I see. 'Seke the book of Seynt Austin,
Be it in paper or perchemin,
There—as he writ of these worchinges,
Thou shalt seen that non excusinges

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

A parfit man ne shulde seke
By wordis, ne by dedis eke,
Although he be religious,
And god to serven curious,
That he ne shal, so mote I go,
With propre hondis and body also,
Gete his food in laboring,
If he ne have propretee of thing.
Yit shulde he selle al his substaunce,
And with his swink have sustenaunce,
If he be parfit in bountee.
Thus han tho bookes tolde me:
For he that wol gon ydilly,
And useth it ay besily
To haunten other mennes table,
He is a trechour, ful of fable;
Ne he ne may, by gode resoun,
Excuse him by his orisoun.
For men bihoveth, in som gyse,
Som-tyme leven goddes servyse
To gon and purchasen her nede.
Men mote eten, that is no drede,
And slepe, and eek do other thing;
So longe may they leve praying.
So may they eek hir prayer blinne,
While that they werke, hir mete to winne.
Seynt Austin wol therto accorde,
In thilke book that I recorde.
Justinian eek, that made lawes,
Hath thus forboden, by olde dawes,
"No man, up peyne to be deed,
Mighty of body, to begge his breed,
If he may swinke, it for to gete;
Men shulde him rather mayme or bete,
Or doon of him apert Iustice,
Than suffren him in such malice."
They don not wel, so mote I go,
That taken such almesse so,
But if they have som privelege,
That of the peyne hem wol allege.
But how that is, can I not see,
But-if the prince disseyved be;
Ne I ne wene not, sikerly,
That they may have it rightfully.
But I wol not determyne
Of princes power, ne defyne,
Ne by my word comprende, y-wis,
If it so fer may strecche in this.
I wol not entremete a del;
But I trowe that the book seith wel,
Who that taketh almesses, that be

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Dewe to folk that men may see
Lame, feble, wery, and bare,
Pore, or in such maner care,
(That conne winne hem nevermo,
For they have no power therto),
He eteth his owne dampning,
But—if he lye, that made al thing.
And if ye such a truaunt finde,
Chastise him wel, if ye be kinde.
But they wolde hate you, percas,
And, if ye fillen in hir laas,
They wolde eftsones do you scathe,
If that they mighte, late or rathe;
For they be not ful pacient,
That han the world thus foule blent.
And witeth wel, wher that god bad
The good man selle al that he had,
And folowe him, and to pore it yive,
He wolde not therfore that he live
To serven him in mendience,
For it was never his sentence;
But he bad wirken whan that nede is,
And folwe him in goode dedis.
Seynt Poule, that loved al holy chirche,
He bade thapostles for to wirche,
And winnen hir lyflode in that wyse,
And hem defended truaundyse,
And seide, "Wirketh with your honden;"
Thus shulde the thing be undirstonden.
He nolde, y-wis, bidde hem begging,
Ne sellen gospel, ne preching,
Lest they berafte, with hir asking,
Folk of hir catel or of hir thing.
For in this world is many a man
That yeveth his good, for he ne can
Werne it for shame, or elles he
Wolde of the asker delivered be;
And, for he him encombreth so,
He yeveth him good to late him go:
But it can him no-thing profyte,
They lese the yift and the meryte.
The goode folk, that Poule to preched,
Profred him ofte, whan he hem teched,
Som of hir good in charite;
But therof right no-thing took he;
But of his hondwerk wolde he gete
Clothes to wryen him, and his mete.'

Amour.

'Tel me than how a man may liven,
That al his good to pore hath yiven,
And wol but only bidde his bedis,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And never with honde laboure his nedis:
May he do so?'

F. Sem.

'Ye, sir.'

Amour.

'And how?'

F. Sem. 'Sir, I wol gladly telle yow:—

Seynt Austin seith, a man may be
In houses that han propretee,
As templers and hospitelers,
And as these chanouns regulers,
Or whyte monkes, or these blake—
(I wole no mo ensamplis make)—
And take therof his sustening,
For therinne lyth no begging;
But other—weyes not, y—wis,
If Austin gabbeth not of this.
And yit ful many a monk laboureth,
That god in holy chirche honoureth;
For whan hir swinking is agoon,
They rede and singe in chirche anoon.
As many a wight may bere record,
Upon the estate of mendience,
I wol shortly, in your presence,
Telle how a man may begge at nede,
That hath not wherwith him to fede,
Maugre his felones Iangelinges,
For sothfastnesse wol non hidinges;
And yit, percas, I may abey,
That I to yow sothly thus sey.
If a man be so bestial
That he of no craft hath science,
And nought desyreth ignorence,
Than may he go a—begging yerne,
Til he som maner craft can lerne,
Thurgh which, withoute truaunding,
He may in trouthe have his living.
Or if he may don no labour,
For elde, or syknesse, or langour,
Or for his tendre age also,
Than may he yit a—begging go.
Thurgh usage of his noriture,
Lived over deliciously,
Than oughten good folk comunly
Han of his mischeef som pitee,
And suffren him also, that he
May gon aboute and begge his breed,
That he be not for hungur deed.
Or if he have of craft cunning,
And strengthe also, and desiring
To wirken, as he hadde what,

'And for ther hath ben greet discord,

'Lo, here the caas especial:

'Or if he have, peraventure,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

But he finde neither this ne that,
 Than may he begge, til that he
 Have geten his necessitee. 'Or if his winning be so lyte,
 That his labour wol not acqyete
 Suffificantly al his living,
 Yit may he go his breed begging;
 Fro dore to dore he may go trace,
 Til he the remenaunt may purchase.
 Or if a man wolde undirtake
 Any emprise for to make,
 In the rescous of our lay,
 And it defenden as he may,
 Be it with armes or lettrure,
 Or other covenable cure,
 If it be so he pore be,
 Than may he begge, til that he
 May finde in trouthe for to swinke,
 And gete him clothes, mete, and drinke.
 Swinke he with hondis corporel,
 And not with hondis esprituel. 'In al this caas, and in semblables,
 If that ther ben mo resonables,
 He may begge, as I telle you here,
 And elles nought, in no manere;
 As William Seynt Amour wolde preche,
 And ofte wolde dispute and teche
 Of this matere alle openly
 At Paris ful solempnely.
 And al—so god my soule blesse,
 As he had, in this stedfastnesse,
 The accord of the universitee,
 And of the puple, as semeth me. 'No good man oughte it to refuse,
 Ne oughte him therof to excuse,
 Be wrooth or blythe who—so be;
 For I wol speke, and telle it thee,
 Al schulde I dye, and be put down,
 As was seynt Poul, in derk prisoun;
 Or be exiled in this caas
 With wrong, as maister William was,
 That my moder Ypocrisye
 Banished for hir greet envye. 'My moder flemed him, Seynt Amour:
 This noble dide such labour
 To susteyne ever the loyaltee,
 That he to moche agilte me.
 He made a book, and leet it wryte,
 Wherin his lyf he dide al wryte,
 And wolde ich reneyed begging,
 And lived by my traveyling,
 If I ne had rent ne other good.
 What? wened he that I were wood?
 For labour might me never plese,
 I have more wil to been at ese;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And have wel lever, sooth to sey,
Bifore the puple patre and prey,
And wrye me in my foxerye
Under a cope of papelardye.' Quod Love, 'What devel is this I here?
What wordis tellest thou me here?'

F. Sem.

'What, sir?'

Amour.

'Falsnesse, that apert is;

Than dredist thou not god?'

F. Sem.

'No, certis:

For selde in greet thing shal he spede
In this world, that god wol drede.
For folk that hem to vertu yiven,
And truly on her owne liven,
And hem in goodnesse ay contene,
On hem is litel thrift y-sene;
Such folk drinken gret misese;
That lyf ne may me never plese.
But see what gold han usurers,
And silver eek in hir garners,
Taylagiers, and these monyours,
Bailifs, bedels, provost, countours;
These liven wel nygh by ravyne;
The smale puple hem mote enclyne,
And they as wolves wol hem eten.
Upon the pore folk they geten
Ful moche of that they spende or kepe;
Nis none of hem that he nil strepe,
And wryen him-self wel atte fulle;
Withoute scalding they hem pulle.
The stronge the feble overgoth;
But I, that were my simple cloth,
Robbe bothe robbed and robbours,
And gyle gyled and gylours.
By my treget, I gadre and threste
The greet tresour into my cheste,
That lyth with me so faste bounde.
Myn highe paleys do I founde,
And my delytes I fulfille
With wyne at feestes at my wille,
And tables fulle of entremees;
I wol no lyf, but ese and pees,
And winne gold to spende also.
For whan the grete bagge is go,
It cometh right with my Iapes.
Make I not wel tumble myn apes?
To winne is alwey myn entent;
My purchas is better than my rent;
For though I shulde beten be,
Over-al I entremete me;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Withoute me may no wight dure.
 I walke soules for to cure.
 Of al the worlde cure have I
 In brede and lengthe; boldely
 I wol bothe preche and eek counceilen;
 With hondis wille I not traveilen,
 For of the pope I have the bulle;
 I ne holde not my wittes dulle.
 I wol not stinten, in my lyve,
 These emperouris for to shryve,
 Or kyngis, dukis, and lordis grete;
 But pore folk al quyte I lete.
 I love no such shryving, pardee,
 But it for other cause be.
 I rekke not of pore men,
 Hir astate is not worth an hen.
 Where fyndest thou a swinker of labour
 Have me unto his confessour?
 But emperesses, and duchesses,
 Thise quenes, and eek thise countesses,
 Thise abbesses, and eek Bigyns,
 These grete ladyes palasyns,
 These Ioly knightes, and baillyves,
 Thise nonnes, and thise burgeis wyves,
 That riche been, and eek plesing,
 And thise maidens welfaring,
 Wher—so they clad or naked be,
 Uncounceiled goth ther noon fro me.
 And, for her soules savetee,
 At lord and lady, and hir meynee,
 I axe, whan they hem to me shryve,
 The propretee of al hir lyve,
 And make hem trowe, bothe meest and leest,
 Hir paroch—prest nis but a beest
 Ayens me and my company,
 That shrewis been as greet as I;
 For whiche I wol not hyde in hold
 No privetee that me is told,
 That I by word or signe, y—wis,
 Nil make hem knowe what it is,
 And they wolen also tellen me;
 They hele fro me no privitee.
 And for to make yow hem perceyven,
 That usen folk thus to disceyven,
 I wol you seyn, withouten drede,
 What men may in the gospel rede
 Of Seynt Mathew, the gospelere,
 That seith, as I shal you sey here. 'Upon the chaire of Moyses—
 Thus is it glosed, douteles:
 That is the olde testament,
 For therby is the chaire ment—

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Sitte Scribes and Pharisen;—
 That is to seyn, the cursid men
 Whiche that we ypocritis calle—
 Doth that they preche, I rede you alle,
 But doth not as they don a del,
 That been not wery to seye wel,
 But to do wel, no wille have they;
 And they wolde binde on folk alwey,
 That ben to be begyled able,
 Burdens that ben importable;
 On folkes shuldres thinges they couchen
 That they nil with her fingres touchen.'

Amour.

'And why wol they not touche it?'

F. Sem.

'Why?'

For hem ne list not, sikirly;
 For sadde burdens that men taken
 Make folkes shuldres aken.
 And if they do ought that good be,
 That is for folk it shulde see:
 Her burdens larger maken they,
 And make hir hemmes wyde alwey,
 And loven setes at the table,
 The firste and most honourable;
 And for to han the first chaieris
 In synagoges, to hem ful dere is;
 And willen that folk hem loute and grete,
 Whan that they passen thurgh the strete,
 And wolen be cleped "Maister" also.
 But they ne shulde not willen so;
 The gospel is ther—ageyns, I gesse:
 That sheweth wel hir wikkidnesse. 'Another custom use we:—
 Of hem that wol ayens us be,
 We hate hem deedly everichoon,
 And we wol werrey hem, as oon.
 Him that oon hatith, hate we alle,
 And coniecte how to doon him falle.
 And if we seen him winne honour,
 Richesse or preys, thurgh his valour,
 Provende, rent, or dignitee,
 Ful fast, y-wis, compassen we
 By what ladder he is clomben so;
 And for to maken him doun to go,
 With traisoun we wole him defame,
 And doon him lese his gode name.
 Thus from his ladder we him take,
 And thus his freendis foes we make;
 But word ne wite shal he noon,
 Til alle his freendis been his foon.
 For if we dide it openly,
 We might have blame redily;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

For hadde he wist of our malyce,
 He hadde him kept, but he were nyce. 'Another is this, that, if so falle
 That ther be oon among us alle
 That doth a good turn, out of drede,
 We seyn it is our alder dede.
 Ye, sikerly, though he it feyned,
 Or that him list, or that him deynd
 A man thurgh him avaunced be;
 Therof alle parceners be we,
 And tellen folk, wher-so we go,
 That man thurgh us is sprongen so.
 And for to have of men preysing,
 We purchace, thurgh our flatering,
 Of riche men, of gret poustee,
 Lettres, to witnesse our bountee;
 So that man weneth, that may us see,
 That alle vertu in us be.
 And alwey pore we us feyne;
 But how so that we begge or pleyne,
 We ben the folk, without lesing,
 That al thing have without having.
 Thus be we dred of the puple, y-wis.
 And gladly my purpos is this:—
 I dele with no wight, but he
 Have gold and tresour gret plentee;
 Hir acqueyntaunce wel love I;
 This is moche my desyr, shortly.
 I entremete me of brocages,
 I make pees and mariages,
 I am gladly executour,
 And many tymes procuratour;
 I am somtyme messenger;
 That falleth not to my mister.
 And many tymes I make enquestes;
 For me that office not honest is;
 To dele with other mennes thing,
 That is to me a gret lyking.
 And if that ye have ought to do
 In place that I repeire to,
 I shal it speden thurgh my wit,
 As sone as ye have told me it.
 So that ye serve me to pay,
 My servyse shal be your alway.
 But who-so wol chastyse me,
 Anoon my love lost hath he;
 For I love no man in no gyse,
 That wol me repreve or chastyse;
 But I wolde al folk undirtake,
 And of no wight no teching take;
 For I, that other folk chastye,
 Wol not be taught fro my folye. 'I love noon hermitage more;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Alle desertes, and holtes hore,
 And grete wodes everichoon,
 I lete hem to the Baptist Iohan.
 I quethe him quyte, and him relese
 Of Egipt al the wildirnesse;
 To fer were alle my mansiouns
 Fro alle citees and goode tounes.
 My paleis and myn hous make I
 There men may renne in openly,
 And sey that I the world forsake.
 But al amidde I bilde and make
 My hous, and swimme and pley therinne
 Bet than a fish doth with his finne. 'Of Antecristes men am I,
 Of whiche that Crist seith openly,
 They have abit of holinesse,
 And liven in such wikkednesse.
 Outward, lambren semen we,
 Fulle of goodnesse and of pitee,
 And inward we, withouten fable,
 Ben gredy wolves ravisable.
 We enviroune bothe londe and see;
 With al the world werreyen we;
 We wol ordeyne of alle thing,
 Of folkes good, and her living. 'If ther be castel or citee
 Wherin that any bougerons be,
 Although that they of Milayne were,
 For ther—of ben they blamed there:
 Or if a wight, out of mesure,
 Wolde lene his gold, and take usure,
 For that he is so coveitous:
 Or if he be to leccherous,
 Or thefe, or haunte simonye;
 Or provost, ful of trecherye,
 Or prelat, living Iolily,
 Or prest that halt his quene him by;
 Or olde hores hostilers,
 Or other bawdes or bordillers,
 Or elles blamed of any vyce,
 Of whiche men shulden doon Iustyce:
 By alle the seyntes that we pray,
 But they defende hem with lamprey,
 With luce, with elis, with samons,
 With tendre gees, and with capons,
 With tartes, or with cheses fat,
 With deynte flawnes, brode and flat,
 With caleweys, or with pullaille,
 With coninges, or with fyn vitaille,
 That we, undir our clothes wyde,
 Maken thurgh our golet glyde:
 Or but he wol do come in haste
 Roo—venisoun, y—bake in paste:

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Whether so that he loure or groine,
He shal have of a corde a loigne,
With whiche men shal him binde and lede,
To brenne him for his sinful dede,
That men shulle here him crye and rore
A myle-wey aboute, and more.
Or elles he shal in prisoun dye,
But-if he wol our frendship bye,
Or smerten that that he hath do,
More than his gilt amounteth to.
But, and he couthe thurgh his sleight
Do maken up a tour of height,
Nought roughete I whether of stone or tree,
Or erthe, or turves though it be,
Though it were of no vounde stone,
Wrought with squyre and scantilone,
So that the tour were stuffed wel
With alle richesse temporel;
And thanne, that he wolde updresse
Engyns, bothe more and lesse,
To caste at us, by every syde—
To bere his goode name wyde—
Such sleightes as I shal yow nevene,
Barelles of wyne, by sixe or sevene,
Or gold in sakkis gret plente,
He shulde sone delivered be.
And if he have noon sich pitaunces,
Late him study in equipolences,
And lete lyes and fallaces,
If that he wolde deserve our graces;
Or we shal bere him such witnessse
Of sinne, and of his wrecchidnesse,
And doon his loos so wyde renne,
That al quik we shulde him brenne,
Or elles yeve him suche penaunce,
That is wel wors than the pitaunce. 'For thou shalt never, for nothing,
Con knowen aright by her clothing
The traitours fulle of echerye,
But thou her werkis can aspye.
And ne hadde the good keping be
Whylom of the universitee,
That kepeth the key of Cristendome,
They had been turmented, alle and some.
Suche been the stinking fals prophetis;
Nis non of hem, that good prophete is;
For they, thurgh wikked entencioun,
The yeer of the incarnacioun
A thousand and two hundred yeer,
Fyve and fifty, ferther ne ner,
Broughten a book, with sory grace,
To yeven ensample in comune place,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

That seide thus, though it were fable:—
 "This is the Gospel Perdurable,
 That fro the Holy Goost is sent."
 Wel were it worth to ben y-brent.
 Entitled was in such manere
 This book, of which I telle here.
 Ther nas no wight in al Parys,
 Biforn Our Lady, at parvys,
 That he ne mighte bye the book,
 To copy, if him talent took.
 Ther might he see, by greet tresoun,
 Ful many fals comparisoun:—
 "As moche as, thurgh his grete might,
 Be it of hete, or of light,
 The sunne sourmounteth the mone,
 That troubler is, and chaungeth sone,
 And the note-kernel the shelle—
 (I scorne nat that I yow telle)—
 Right so, withouten any gyle,
 Sourmounteth this noble Evangyle
 The word of any evangelist."
 And to her title they token Christ;
 And many such comparisoun,
 Of which I make no mencion,
 Might men in that boke finde,
 Who-so coude of hem have minde.

'The universitee, that tho was aslepe,

Gan for to braide, and taken kepe;
 And at the noys the heed up-caste,
 Ne never sithen slepte it faste,
 But up it sterte, and armes took
 Ayens this fals horrible book,
 Al redy bateil for to make,
 And to the Iuge the book to take.
 But they that broughten the book there
 Hente it anoon away, for fere;
 They nolde shewe it more a del,
 But thenne it kepte, and kepen wil,
 Til such a tyme that they may see
 That they so stronge woxen be,
 That no wight may hem wel withstonde;
 For by that book they durst not stonde.
 Away they gonne it for to bere,
 For they ne durste not answeere
 By expositioun ne glose
 To that that clerkis wole appose
 Ayens the cursednesse, y-wis,
 That in that boke writen is.
 Now wot I not, ne I can not see
 What maner ende that there shal be
 Of al this boke that they hyde;
 But yit algate they shal abyde

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Til that they may it bet defende;
 This trowe I best, wol be hir ende. 'Thus Antecrist abyden we,
 For we ben alle of his meynee;
 And what man that wol not be so,
 Right sone he shal his lyf forgo.
 We wol a puple on him areyse,
 And thurgh our gyle doon him seise,
 And him on sharpe speris ryve,
 Or other-weyes bringe him fro lyve,
 But—if that he wol folowe, y-wis,
 That in our boke writen is.
 Thus moche wol our book signifye,
 That whyl that Peter hath maistrye,
 May never Iohan shewe wel his might. 'Now have I you declared right
 The mening of the bark and rinde
 That makith the entenciouns blinde.
 But now at erst I wol biginne
 To expowne you the pith withinne:—
 And first, by Peter, as I wene,
 The Pope himself we wolden mene,
 And eek the seculers comprehende,
 That Cristes lawe wol defende,
 And shulde it kepen and mayntenen
 Ayeines hem that al sustenen,
 And falsly to the puple techen.
 And Iohan bitokeneth hem that prechen,
 That ther nis lawe covenable
 But thilke Gospel Perdurable,
 That fro the Holy Gost was sent
 To turne folk that been miswent.
 The strengthe of Iohan they undirstonde
 The grace in which, they seye, they stonde,
 That doth the sinful folk converte,
 And hem to Iesus Crist revert. 'Ful many another horriblete
 May men in that boke see,
 That ben comaunded, douteles,
 Ayens the lawe of Rome expres;
 And alle with Antecrist they holden,
 As men may in the book biholden.
 And than comaunden they to sleen
 Alle tho that with Peter been;
 But they shal nevere have that might,
 And, god toforn, for stryf to fight,
 That they ne shal y-nough men finde
 That Peters lawe shal have in minde,
 And ever holde, and so mayntene,
 That at the last it shal be sene
 That they shal alle come therto,
 For ought that they can speke or do.
 And thilke lawe shal not stonde,
 That they by Iohan have undirstonde;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

But, maugre hem, it shal adoun,
 And been brought to confusioun.
 But I wol stinte of this matere,
 For it is wonder long to here;
 But hadde that ilke book endured,
 Of better estate I were ensured;
 And freendis have I yit, pardee,
 That han me set in greet degree. 'Of all this world is emperour
 Gyle my fader, the trechour,
 And emperesse my moder is,
 Maugre the Holy Gost, y-wis.
 Our mighty linage and our route
 Regneth in every regne aboute;
 And wel is worth we maistres be,
 For al this world governe we,
 And can the folk so wel disceyve,
 That noon our gyle can perceyve;
 And though they doon, they dar not saye;
 The sothe dar no wight biwreye.
 But he in Cristis wrath him ledeth,
 That more than Crist my bretheren dredeth.
 He nis no ful good champioun,
 That dredith such similacioun;
 Nor that for peyne wole refusen
 Us to correcten and accusen.
 He wol not entremete by right,
 Ne have god in his eye-sight,
 And therefore god shal him punyce;
 But me ne rekketh of no vyce,
 Sithen men us loven comunably,
 And holden us for so worthy,
 That we may folk repreve echoon,
 And we nil have repref of noon.
 Whom shulden folk worshipen so
 But us, that stinten never mo
 To patren whyl that folk us see,
 Though it not so bihinde hem be? 'And where is more wood folye,
 Than to enhaunce chivalrye,
 And love noble men and gay,
 That Ioly clothis weren alway?
 If they be sich folk as they semen,
 So clene, as men her clothis demen,
 And that her wordis folowe her dede,
 It is gret pite, out of drede,
 For they wol be noon ypocritis!
 Of hem, me thinketh it gret spite is;
 I can not love hem on no syde.
 But Beggars with these hodes wyde,
 With sleighe and pale faces lene,
 And greye clothis not ful clene,
 But fretted ful of tatarwagges,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And highe shoes, knopped with dagges,
 That frouncen lyke a quaile-pype,
 Or botes riving as a gype;
 To such folk as I you devyse
 Shuld princes and these lordes wyse
 Take alle her londes and her thinges,
 Bothe werre and pees, in governinges;
 To such folk shulde a prince him yive,
 That wolde his lyf in honour live.
 And if they be not as they seme,
 That serven thus the world to queme,
 There wolde I dwelle, to disceyve
 The folk, for they shal not perceyve. 'But I ne speke in no such wyse,
 That men shulde humble abit dispuse,
 So that no pryde ther-under be.
 No man shulde hate, as thinketh me,
 The pore man in sich clothing.
 But god ne preiseth him no-thing,
 That seith he hath the world forsake,
 And hath to worldly glorie him take,
 And wol of siche delyces use;
 Who may that Begger wel excuse?
 That papelard, that him yeldeth so,
 And wol to worldly ese go,
 And seith that he the world hath left,
 And gredily it grypeth eft,
 He is the hound, shame is to seyn,
 That to his casting goth ageyn. 'But unto you dar I not lye:
 But mighte I felen or aspye,
 That ye perceyved it no-thing,
 Ye shulden have a stark lesing
 Right in your hond thus, to biginne,
 I nolde it lette for no sinne.' The god lough at the wonder tho,
 And every wight gan laughe also,
 And seide:—'Lo here a man aright
 For to be trusty to every wight!' 'Fals Semblant,' quod Love, 'sey to me,
 Sith I thus have avaunced thee,
 That in my court is thy dwelling,
 And of ribaudes shalt be my king,
 Wolt thou wel holden my forwardis?'

F. Sem.

'Ye, sir, from hennes forewardis;
 Hadde never your fader herebiforn
 Servaunt so trewe, sith he was born.'

Amour.

'That is ayeines al nature.'

F. Sem. 'Sir, put you in that aventure;

For though ye borowes take of me,
 The sikerer shal ye never be
 For ostages, ne sikirnesse,
 Or chartres, for to bere witnesse.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

I take your-self to record here,
 That men ne may, in no manere,
 Teren the wolf out of his hyde,
 Til he be flayn, bak and syde,
 Though men him bete and al defyle;
 What? wene ye that I wole bigyle?
 For I am clothed mekely,
 Ther-under is al my trechery;
 Myn herte chaungeth never the mo
 For noon abit, in which I go.
 Though I have chere of simplenesse,
 I am not weary of shrewednesse.
 My lemman, Streyned-Abstinence,
 Hath mister of my purveaunce;
 She hadde ful longe ago be deed,
 Nere my councel and my reed;
 Lete hir allone, and you and me.' And Love answerde, 'I truste thee
 Withoute borowe, for I wol noon.'
 And Fals-Semblant, the thief, anoon,
 Right in that ilke same place,
 That hadde of tresoun al his face
 Right blak withinne, and whyt withoute,
 Thanketh him, gan on his knees loute. Than was ther nought, but 'Every man
 Now to assaut, that sailen can,'
 Quod Love, 'and that ful hardily.'
 Than armed they hem communly
 Of sich armour as to hem fel.
 Whan they were armed, fers and fel,
 They wente hem forth, alle in a route,
 And set the castel al aboute;
 They wil nought away, for no drede,
 Til it so be that they ben dede,
 Or til they have the castel take.
 And foure batels they gan make,
 And parted hem in foure anoon,
 And toke her way, and forth they goon,
 The foure gates for to assaile,
 Of whiche the keepers wol not faile;
 For they ben neither syke ne dede,
 But hardy folk, and stronge in dede. Now wole I seyn the countenaunce
 Of Fals-Semblant, and Abstinaunce,
 That ben to Wikkid-Tonge went.
 But first they helde her parlement,
 Whether it to done were
 To maken hem be knowen there,
 Or elles walken forth disgysed.
 But at the laste they devysed,
 That they wold goon in tapinage,
 As it were in a pilgrimage,
 Lyk good and holy folk unfeyned.
 And Dame Abstinence-Streyned

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Took on a robe of camelyne,
 And gan hir graithe as a Begyne.
 A large coverchief of threde
 She wrapped al aboute hir hede,
 But she forgat not hir sautere;
 A peire of bedis eek she bere
 Upon a lace, al of whyt threde,
 On which that she hir bedes bede;
 But she ne boughte hem never a del,
 For they were geven her, I wot wel,
 God wot, of a ful holy frere,
 That seide he was hir fader dere,
 To whom she hadde ofter went
 Than any frere of his covent.
 And he visyted hir also,
 And many a sermoun seide hir to;
 He nolde lette, for man on lyve,
 That he ne wolde hir ofte shryve.
 And with so gret devocion
 They maden her confession,
 That they had ofte, for the nones,
 Two hedes in one hood at ones. Of fair shape I devyse her thee,
 But pale of face somtyme was she;
 That false traitouresse untrew
 Was lyk that salowe hors of hewe,
 That in the Apocalips is shewed,
 That signifyeth tho folk beshrewed,
 That been al ful of trecherye,
 And pale, thurgh hypocrisye;
 For on that hors no colour is,
 But only deed and pale, y-wis.
 Of suche a colour enlangoured
 Was Abstinence, y-wis, coloured;
 Of her estat she her repented,
 As her visage represented. She had a burdoun al of Thefte,
 That Gyle had yeve her of his yefte;
 And a scrippe of Fainte Distresse,
 That ful was of elengenesse,
 And forth she walked sobrelly:
 And False-Semblant saynt, ie vous die,
 Had, as it were for such mistere,
 Don on the cope of a frere,
 With chere simple, and ful pitous;
 His looking was not disdeinous,
 Ne proud, but meke and ful pesible.
 About his nekke he bar a bible,
 And squierly forth gan he gon;
 And, for to reste his limmes upon,
 He had of Treson a potente;
 As he were feble, his way he wente.
 But in his sleve he gan to thringe

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

A rasour sharp, and wel bytinge,
 That was forged in a forge,
 Which that men clepen Coupegorge. So longe forth hir way they comen,
 Til they to Wicked-Tonge comen,
 That at his gate was sitting,
 And saw folk in the way passing.
 The pilgrimes saw he faste by,
 That beren hem ful mekely,
 And humblely they with him mette.
 Dame Abstinence first him grette,
 And sith him False-Semblant salued,
 And he hem; but he not remued,
 For he ne dredde hem not a-del.
 For when he saw hir faces wel,
 Alway in herte him thoughte so,
 He shulde knowe hem bothe two;
 For wel he knew Dame Abstinaunce
 But he ne knew not Constreynaunce.
 He knew nat that she was constrayned,
 Ne of her theves lyfe feyned,
 But wende she com of wil al free;
 But she com in another degree;
 And if of good wil she began,
 That wil was failed her as than. And Fals-Semblant had he seyn als,
 But he knew nat that he was fals.
 Yet fals was he, but his falsnesse
 Ne coude he not espye, nor gesse;
 For semblant was so slye wrought,
 That falsnesse he ne espyed nought.
 But haddest thou knowen him befor,
 Thou woldest on a boke have sworn,
 Whan thou him saugh in thilke aray
 That he, that whylom was so gay,
 And of the daunce Ioly Robin,
 Was tho become a Iacobin.
 But sothely, what so men him calle,
 Freres Prechours been good men alle;
 Hir order wickedly they beren,
 Suche minstrelles if that they weren.
 So been Augustins and Cordileres,
 And Carmes, and eek Sakked Freres,
 And alle freres, shodde and bare,
 (Though some of hem ben grete and square)
 Ful holy men, as I hem deme;
 Everich of hem wolde good man seme.
 But shalt thou never of apparence
 Seen conclude good consequence
 In none argument, y-wis,
 If existence al failed is.
 For men may finde alway sophyme
 The consequence to envenyme,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Who—so that hath the subteltee
 The double sentence for to see. Whan the pilgrymes comen were
 To Wicked—Tonge, that dwelled there,
 Hir harneis nigh hem was algate;
 By Wicked—Tonge adoun they sate,
 That bad hem ner him for to come,
 And of tydinges telle him some,
 And sayde hem:—'What cas maketh yow
 To come into this place now?'
 'Sir,' seyde Strained—Abstinaunce,
 'We, for to drye our penaunce,
 With hertes pitous and devoute,
 Are comen, as pilgrimes gon aboute;
 Wel nigh on fote alway we go;
 Ful dusty been our heles two;
 And thus bothe we ben sent
 Thurghout this world that is miswent,
 To yeve ensample, and preche also.
 To fisshen sinful men we go,
 For other fisshing ne fische we.
 And, sir, for that charitee,
 As we be wont, herberwe we crave,
 Your lyf to amende; Crist it save!
 And, so it shulde you nat displese,
 We wolden, if it were your ese,
 A short sermoun unto you seyn.'
 And Wikked—Tonge answerde ageyn,
 'The hous,' quod he, 'such as ye see,
 Shal nat be warned you for me,
 Sey what you list, and I wol here.'
 'Graunt mercy, swete sire dere!
 Quod alderfirst Dame Abstinence,
 And thus began she hir sentence:
Const. Abstinence. 'Sir, the first vertue, certeyn,
 The gretest, and most sovereyn
 That may be founde in any man,
 For having, or for wit he can,
 That is, his tonge to refreyne;
 Therto ought every wight him peyne.
 For it is better stille be
 Than for to speken harm, pardee!
 And he that herkeneth it gladly,
 He is no good man, sikerly.
 And, sir, aboven al other sinne,
 In that art thou most gilty inne.
 Thou spake a Iape not long ago,
 (And, sir, that was right yvel do)
 Of a yong man that here repaired,
 And never yet this place apaired.
 Thou seydest he awaited nothing
 But to disceyve Fair—Welcoming.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Ye seyde nothing sooth of that;
But, sir, ye lye; I tell you plat;
He ne cometh no more, ne goth, pardee!
I trow ye shal him never see.
Fair–Welcoming in prison is,
That ofte hath pleyed with you, er this,
The fairest games that he coude,
Withoute filthe, stille or loude;
Now dar he nat himself solace.
Ye han also the man do chace,
That he dar neither come ne go.
What meveth you to hate him so
But properly your wikked thought,
That many a fals lesing hath thought?
That meveth your foole eloquence,
That iangleth ever in audience,
And on the folk areyseth blame,
And doth hem dishonour and shame,
For thing that may have no preving,
But lyklinesse, and contriving.
For I dar seyn, that Reson demeth,
It is not al sooth thing that semeth,
And it is sinne to controve
Thing that is for to reprove;
This wot ye wel; and, sir, therefore
Ye arn to blame wel the more.
And, nathelesse, he rekketh lyte;
He yeveth nat now thereof a myte;
For if he thoughte harm, parfay,
He wolde come and gon al day;
He coude him–selfe nat abstene.
Now cometh he nat, and that is sene,
For he ne taketh of it no cure,
But–if it be through aventure,
And lasse than other folk, algate.
And thou here watchest at the gate,
With spere in thyne arest alway;
There muse, musard, al the day.
Thou wakest night and day for thought;
Y–wis, thy traveyl is for nought.
And Ielousye, withouten faile,
Shal never quyte thee thy travaile.
And scathe is, that Fair–Welcoming,
Withouten any trespassing,
Shal wrongfully in prison be,
Ther wepeth and languissheth he.
And though thou never yet, y–wis,
Agiltest man no more but this,
(Take not a–grief) it were worthy
To putte thee out of this baily,
And afterward in prison lye,

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

And fettre thee til that thou dye;
 For thou shalt for this sinne dwelle
 Right in the devils ers of helle,
 But—if that thou repente thee.' 'Ma fay, thou lvest falsly!' quod he.
 'What? welcome with mischaunce now!
 Have I therfore herbered you
 To seye me shame, and eek reprove?
 With sory happe, to your bihove,
 Am I to—day your herbergere!
 Go, herber you elleswhere than here,
 That han a lyer called me!
 Two tregetours art thou and he,
 That in myn hous do me this shame,
 And for my soth—sawe ye me blame.
 Is this the sermoun that ye make?
 To alle the develles I me take,
 Or elles, god, thou me confounde!
 But er men diden this castel founde,
 It passeth not ten dayes or twelve,
 But it was told right to my—selve,
 And as they seide, right so tolde I,
 He kiste the Rose privily!
 Thus seide I now, and have seid yore;
 I not wher he dide any more.
 Why shulde men sey me such a thing,
 If it hadde been gabbing?
 Right so seide I, and wol seye yit;
 I trowe, I lyed not of it;
 And with my bemes I wol blowe
 To alle neighboris a—rowe,
 How he hath bothe comen and gon.' Tho spak Fals—Semblant right anon,
 'Al is not gospel, out of doute,
 That men seyn in the toune aboute;
 Ley no deaf ere to my speking;
 I swere yow, sir, it is gabbing!
 I trowe ye wot wel certeynly,
 That no man loveth him tenderly
 That seith him harm, if he wot it,
 Al be he never so pore of wit.
 And sooth is also sikerly,
 (This knowe ye, sir, as wel as I),
 That lovers gladly wol visyten
 The places ther hir loves habytten.
 This man you loveth and eek honoureth;
 This man to serve you laboureth;
 And clepeth you his freend so dere,
 And this man maketh you good chere,
 And every—wher that he you meteth,
 He you saleweth, and he you greteth.
 He preseth not so ofte, that ye
 Ought of his come encombred be;

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Ther presen other folk on yow
 Ful ofter than that he doth now.
 And if his herte him streyned so
 Unto the Rose for to go,
 Ye shulde him seen so ofte nede,
 That ye shulde take him with the dede.
 He coude his coming not forbere,
 Though ye him thrilled with a spere;
 It nere not thanne as it is now.
 But trusteth wel, I swere it yow,
 That it is clene out of his thought.
 Sir, certes, he ne thenketh it nought;
 No more ne doth Fair–Welcoming,
 That sore abyeth al this thing.
 And if they were of oon assent,
 Ful sone were the Rose hent;
 The maugre youres wolde be.
 And sir, of o thing herkeneth me:—
 Sith ye this man, that loveth yow,
 Han seid such harm and shame now,
 Witeth wel, if he gessed it,
 Ye may wel demen in your wit,
 He nolde no–thing love you so,
 Ne callen you his freend also,
 But night and day he wolde wake,
 The castel to destroye and take,
 If it were sooth as ye devyse;
 Or som man in som maner wyse
 Might it warne him everydel,
 Or by him–self perceyven wel;
 For sith he might not come and gon
 As he was whylom wont to don,
 He might it sone wite and see;
 But now al other–wyse doth he.
 Than have ye, sir, al–outerly
 Deserved helle, and Iolyly
 The deth of helle douteles,
 That thrallen folk so gilteles.' Fals–Semblant proveth so this thing
 That he can noon answering,
 And seeth alwey such apparaunce,
 That nygh he fel in repentaunce,
 And seide him:—'Sir, it may wel be.
 Semblant, a good man semen ye;
 And, Abstynence, ful wyse ye seme;
 Of o talent you bothe I deme.
 What counceil wole ye to me yeven?'

F. Sem.

'Right here anon thou shalt be shriven,
 And sey thy sinne withoute more;
 Of this shalt thou repente sore;
 For I am preest, and have poustee

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

To shryve folk of most dignitee
That been, as wyde as world may dure.
Of al this world I have the cure,
And that had never yit persoun,
No vicarie of no maner toun.
And, god wot, I have of thee
A thousand tymes more pitee
Than hath thy preest parochial,
Though he thy freend be special.
I have avauntage, in o wyse,
That your prelates ben not so wyse
Ne half so lettred as am I.
I am licenced boldely
In divinitee to rede,
And to confessen, out of drede.
If ye wol you now confesse,
And leve your sinnes more and lesse,
Without abood, knele doun anon,
And you shal have absolucion.' Explicit.
