The House Of Fame
by Geoffrey Chaucer

(Book I

Proem.

God turne us every drem to goode!
For hyt is wonder, be the roode,
To my wyt, what causeth swevenes
Eyther on morwes or on evenes;
And why th’effect folweth of somme,
And of somme hit shal never come;
Why that is an avisioun
And this a revelacioun,
Why this a drem, why that a sweven,
And noght to every man lyche even;
why this a fantome, why these oracles,
I not; but whoso of these miracles
The causes knoweth bet then I,
Devyne he; for I certeinly
Ne kan hem noght, ne never thinke
To besily my wyt to swinke,
To knowe of hir signifiaunce
The gendres, neyther the distaunce
Of tymes of hem, ne the causes,
Or why this more th'en that cause is;
As yf folkys complexions
Make hem dreme of reflexions;
Or ellys thus, as other sayn,
For to gret feblenesse of her brayn,
By abstinence, or by seknesse,
Prison, stewe, or gret distresse,
Or ellys by dysordynaunce
Of naturel acustumaunce,
That som man is to curious
In studye, or melancolyous,
Or thus, so inly ful of drede,
That no man may hym bote bede;
Or elles that devocion
Of somme, and contemplacion
Causeth suche dremes ofte;
Or that the cruel lyf unsofte
Which these ilke lovers leden
That hopen over-muche or dreden,
That purely her impressions
Causen hem to have visions;
Or yf that spirites have the myght
To make folk to dreme a-nyght;
Or yf the soule, of propre kynde,
Be so parfit, as men fynde,
That yt forwot that ys to come,
And that hyt warneth alle and some
Of everych of her aventures
Be avisions, or be figures,
But that oure flessh ne hath no myght
To understonde hyt aryght,
For hyt is warned to derkly;--
But why the cause is, noght wot I.
Wel worthe, of this thynge, grete clerkys,
That trete of this and other werkes;
For I of noon opinion
Nyl as now make mensyon,
But oonly that the holy roode
Turne us every drem to goode!
For never, sith that I was born,
Ne no man elles me beforn,
Mette, I trowe stedfastly,
So wonderful a drem as I
The tenthe day now of Decembre,
The which, as I kan now remembre,
I wol yow tellen everydel.

The Invocation.

But at my gynnynge, trusteth wel,
I wol make invocation,
With special devotion,
Unto the god of slep anoon,
That duelleth in a cave of stoon
Upon a strem that cometh fro Lete,
That is a flood of helle unswete,
Besyde a folk men clepeth Cymerie,--
There slepeth ay this god unmerie
With his slepy thousand sones, 75
That alwey for to slepe hir wone is.
And to this god, that I of rede,
Prey I that he wol me spede
My sweven for to telle aryght,
Yf every drem stonde in his myght.
And he that mover ys of al 80
That is and was and ever shal,
So yive hem joye that hyt here
Of alle that they dreme to-yere,
And for to stonden alle in grace
Of her loves, or in what place
That hem were levest for to stonde,
And shelde hem fro poverte and shonde,
And from unhap and ech diseese,
And sende hem al that may hem plese,
That take hit wel and skorne hyt noght, 90
Ne hyt mysdemen in her thought
Thorgh malicious entencion.
And whoso thorgh presumpcion,
Or hate, or skorn, or thorgh envye,
Dispit, or jape, or vilanye,
Myysdeme hyt, pray I Jesus God
That (dreme he barefot, dreme he shod),
That every harm that any man
Hath had, syth the world began,
Befalle hym that may hem deserve,
Lo, with such a conclusion 100
As had of his avision
Cresus, that was kyng of Lyde,
That high upon a gebet dyde!
This prayer shal he have of me;
I am no bet in charyte!
Now herdeth, as I have yow seyd,
What that I mette, or I abreyd.

Story.

Of gold, stondynge in sondry stages, 125
And moo ryche tabernacles,
And with perre moo pynacles,
And moo curiouse portreytures,
And queynte maner of figures
Of olde werk, then I saugh ever.
For certeynyly, I nyste never
Wher that I was, but wel wyste I,
Hyt was of Venus redely,
The temple; for in portreyture,
I sawgh anoon-ryght hir figure
Naked fletynge in a see.
And also on hir hed, pardee,
Hir rose garlond whit and red,
And hir comb to kembe hir hed,
Hir dowves, and daun Cupido,
Hir blynde sone, and Vulcano,
That in his face was ful broun.
But as I romed up and doun,
I fond that on a wall ther was 140
Thus writen on a table of bras:
"I wol now singen, yif I kan,
The armes, and also the man
That first cam, thurgh his destinee,
Fugityf of Troy contree,
In Itayle, with ful moche pyne
Unto the strondes of Lavyne."
And tho began the story anoon,
As I shal telle yow echon.
First sawgh I the destruction
Of Troye, thurgh the Grek Synon,
[That] with his false forswerynge,
And his chere and his lesynge,
Made the hors broght into Troye,
Horgh which Troyens loste al her joye.
And aftir this was grave, allas!
How Ilyon assayled was
And wonne, and kyng Priam yslayn
And Polytes, his sone, certayn,
Dispitously, of daun Pirrus.
And next that sawgh I how Venus,
Whan that she sawgh the castel brende,
Doun fro the heven gan descende,
And how he fledde, and how that he
Escaped was from al the pres,
And took his fader, Anchises,
And bar hym on hys bak away,
Cryinge, "Alas! and welaway!"
The whiche Anchises in hys hond
Bar the goddes of the lond,
Thilke that unbrende were.
And I saugh next, in al thys fere,
How Creusa, daun Eneas wif,
Which that he lovede as hys lyf,
And hir yonge sone Iulo,
And eke Askanius also,
Fledden eke with drery chere,
That hyt was pitee for to here;
And in a forest, as they wente,
At a turnynge of a wente,
How Creusa was ylost, allas!
That ded, not I how, she was;
How he hir soughte, and how hir gost
Bad hym to flee the Grekes host,
And seyde he moste unto Itayle,
As was hys destinee, sauns faille;
That hyt was pitee for to here,
Ther sawgh I graven eke how he,
Hys fader eke, and his meynee,
With hys shippes gan to saylle
To wardes the contree of Itaylle
As streight as that the myghte goo.
Ther saugh I thee, cruel Juno,
That art daun Jupiteres wif,
That hast yhated, al thy lyf,
Al the Trojanyshe blood,
Renne and crye, as thou were wood,
On Eolus, the god of wyndes,
To blowen oute, of alle kyndes,
So lowde that he shulde drenche
Lord and lady, grom and wenche,
Of al the Trojan nacion,
Withoute any savacion.
   Ther saugh I such tempeste arypse,
   That every herte myght agryse
   To see hyt peynted on the wal.
   Ther saugh I graven eke withal,
Venus, how ye, my lady dere,
Wepyng with ful woful chere,
Prayen Jupiter on hye
To save and kepe that navye
Of the Trojan Eneas,
Syth that he hir sone was.
   Ther saugh I Joves Venus kysse,
And graunted of the tempest lysse.
   Ther saugh I how the tempest stente,
   And how with alle pyne he wente,
   And prively tok arryvage
   In the contree of Cartage;
   And on the morwe, how that he
   And a knyght, highte Achate,
   Mette with Venus that day,
   Goynge in a queynt array,
   As she had ben an hunteresse,
   With wynd blowyng upon hir tresse;
   How Eneas gan hym to pleyne,
   When that he knew hir, of his peyne;
   And how his shippes dreynete were,
   Or elles lost, he nyste where;
   How she gan hym comforte thoo,
   And bad hym to Cartage goo,
   And ther he shulde his folk fynde,
   That in the see were left behynde.
   And, shortly of this thyng to pace,
She made Eneas so in grace
Of Dido, quene of that contree,
That, shortly for to tellen, she
Becam hys love, and let him doo
Al that weddyng longeth too.
What shulde I speke more queynte,
Or peyne me my word
To speke of love? Hyt wol not be;
I kan not of that faculte.
And eke to telle the manere
How they aqueynteden in fere,
Hyt were a long proces to telle,
And over-long for yow to dwelle.
   Ther sawgh I grave how Eneas
tolde Dido every caas
That hym was tyd upon the see.
And after grave was, how shee
Made of hym shortly at oo word
Hyr lyf, hir love, hir lust, hir lord,
And dide hym al the reverence,
And leyde on hym al the dispence,
That any woman myghte do,
Wenyng hyt had al be so
As he hir swor; and herby demed
That he was good, for he such semed.
Allas! what harm doth apparence,
When hit is fals in existence!
For he to hir a traytour was;
Wherfore she slow hirself, allas!
Loo, how a woman doth amys
To love him that unknowen ys!
For, be Cryste, lo, thus yt fareth:
"Hyt is not al gold that glareth."
For also browke I wel myn hed,
Ther may be under godlyhed
Kevered many a shrewed vice.
Therfore be no wyght so nyce,
To take a love oonly for chere,
Or speche, or for frendly manere,
For this shal every woman fynde,
That som man, of his pure kynde,
Wol shewen outward the fayreste,
Tyl he have caught that what him leste;
And thanne wol he causes fynde,
And swere how that she ys unkynde,
Or fals, or privy, or double was.

Al this seye I be Eneas
And Dido, and hir nyce lest,
That loved al to sone a gest;
Therfore I wol seye a proverbe,
That "he that fully knoweth th'erbe
May saufly leye hyt to his yë";
Withoute drede, this ys no lye.

But let us speke of Eneas,
How he betrayed hir, allas!
And lefte hir ful unkyndely.
So when she saw al utterly,
That he wolde hir of trouthe fayle,
And wende fro hir to Itayle,
She gan to wringe hir hondes two.
"Allas!" quod she, "my sweete herte,
Knowe n ful wel that never yit,
As ferforth as I hadde wyt,
Agylte [I] yow in thoght ne dede.
O, have ye men such godlyhede
In speche, and never a del of trouthe?
Allas, that ever hadde routhe
Any woman on any man!
Now see I wel, and telle kan,
We wreched wyommen konne noon art;
For certeyn, for the more part,
Thus we be served everychone.
How sore that ye men konne groone,
Anoon as we have yow receyved,
Certaynly we ben deceyvyd!
For, though your love laste a seson,
Wayte upon the conclusyon,
And eke how that ye determynen,
And for the more part diffynen.
"O, wel-awey that I was born!
For thorgh yow is my name lorn,
And alle myn actes red and songe
Over al thys lond, on every tonge.
O wikke Fame! for ther nys
Nothing so swift, lo, as she is!
O, soth ys, every thing ys wyst,
Though hit be kevered with the myst.
Eke, though I myghte duren ever,
That I have don, rekever I never,
That I shal not be seyd, allas,
That I shal thus juged be,
"Loo, ryght as she hath
Wol doo eft-sones, hardely;'Thus seyth the peple prively."
But that is don, is not to done;
Al hir compleynt ne al hir moone,
Certeyn, avayleth hir not a stre.
And when she wiste sothly he
Was forth unto his shippes goon,
She into hir chambr wente anoon,
And called on hir suster Anne,
And gan hir to compleyne thanne;
And seyde, that she cause was
That she first loved him, allass!
And thus counseyled hir thertoo.
But what! when this was seyd and doo,
She rof hir selve to the herte,
And deyde thorgh the wounde smerte.
And al the maner how she deyde,
And alle the wordes that she seyde,
Whoso to knowe hit hath purpos,
Rede Virgile in Eneydos
Or the Epistle of Ovyde,
What that she wrot or that she dyde;
And nere hyt to long to endyte,
Be God, I wolde hyt here write.
But wel-away! the harm, the routhe,
That hath betyd for such untrouthe,
As men may ofte in bokes rede,
And al day sen hyt yet in dede,
That for to thynken hyt, a tene is.
Loo, Demophon, duk of Athenys,
How he forswor hym ful falsly,
And trayzed Phillis wikkedly.
That kynges doghtre was of Trace,
And falsly gan hys terme pace;
And when she wiste that he was fals,
She heng hir selfe ryght be the hals,
For he had doon hir such untrouthe.
Loo! was not this a woo and routhe?
Eke lo! how fals and reccheles
Was to Breseyda Achilles,
And Paris to Oenone;
And Jason to Isiphile,
And eft Jason to Medea;
And Ercules to Dyanira,
For he left hir for Yole,
That made hym cache his deth, parde.
How fals eke was he Theseus,
That, as the story telleth us,
How he betrayed Adriane;
The devel be hys soules bane!
For had he lawghed, had he loured,
He moste have ben al devoured,
Yf Adriane ne had ybe.
And, for she had of hym pite,
She made hym fro the deth escape,
And he made hir a ful fals jape;
For aftir this, withyn a while,
At the prayer of Venus, --
The whiche I preye alwey save us,
And us ay of oure sorwes lyghte!

When I had seen al this syghte
In this noble temple thus,
"A, Lord!" thoughte I, "that madest us,
Yet sawgh I never such noblesse
Of ymages, ne such richesse,
As I saugh graven in this chirche;
But not wot I whoo did hem wirche,
Ne where I am, ne in what contree.
But now wol I goo out and see,
Ryght at the wiket, yf y kan
See owhere
That may me telle where I am."

When I out at the dores cam,
I faste aboute me beheld.
Then sawgh I but a large feld,
As fer as that I myghte see,
Withouten toun, or hous, or tree,
Or bush, or grass, or eryd lond;
For al the feld nas but of sond
As smal as man may se yet lye
In the desert of Lybye;
Ne no maner creature
That ys yformed be Nature
Ne sawgh I, me to rede or wisse.
"O Crist!" thoughte I, "that art in blysse,
Fro fantome and illusion
Me save!" and with devocion
Myn eyen to the hevene I caste.
Thoo was I war, lo! at the laste,
That faste be the sonne, as hye
As kenne myghte I with myn yé,
Me thoughte I sawgh an egle sore,
But that hit semed moche more
Then I had any egle seyn.
But this as sooth as deth, certeyn,
Hyt was of gold, and shon so bryghte
That never sawe men such a syghte,
But yf the heven had ywonne
Al newe of gold another sonne;
So shone the egles fethers bryghte,
And somwhat dounward gan hyt lyghte.

Explicit liber primus.

Book II

Incipit liber secundus.

Proem.
Now herkeneth, every maner man
That Englishh understonde kan,
And listeneth of my drem to lere.
For now at erste shul ye here
So sely an avisyon,
That Isaye, ne Scipion,
Ne kyng Nabugodonosor,
Pharoo, Turnus, ne Elcantor,
Ne mette such a drem as this!
Now faire blisfull, O Cipris,
So be my favour at this tyme!
And ye, me to endite and ryme
Helpeth, that on Parnaso duelle,
Be Elicon, the clere welle.
O Thought, that wrot al that I mette,
And in the tresorye hyt shette
Of my brayn, now shal men se
Yf any vertu in the be,
To tellen al my drem aryght.
Now kythe thyn engyn and myght!

The Dream.
This egle, of which I have yow told,
That shon with fethres as of gold,
Which that so hye gan to sore,
I gan beholde more and more,
To se the beaute and the wonder;
But never was ther dynt of thonder,
Ne that thyng that men calle fouder,
That smot somtyme a tour to powder,
And in his swifte comynge brende,
That so swithe gan descende
As this foul, when hyt beheld
That I a-roume w as in the feld;
And with hys grymme pawes stronge,
Withyn hys sharpe nayles longe,
Me, fleynge, in a swap he hente,
And with hys sours ayen up wente,
Me caryinge in his clawes starke
As lyghtly as I were a larke,
How high, I can not telle yow,
For I cam up, y nyste how.
For so astonyed and asweved
Was every vertu in my heved,
But er I bere the moche ferre,  600
I wol the telle what I am,  
And whider thou shalt, and why I cam  
To do thys, so that thou take  
Good herte, and not for fere quake."  
"Gladly," quod I. "Now wel," quod he,  
"First, I, that in my fet have the,  
Of which thou hast a fere and wonder,  
Am dwellynge with the god of thonder,  
Which that men callen Jupiter,  
That dooth me flee ful ofte fer  
To do al hys commaundement.  
And for this cause he hath me sent  
To the; now herke, be thy trouthe!  
Certeyn, he hath of the routhe,  
That thou so longe trewely  
Hast served so ententyfly  
Hys blynde nevew Cupido,  
And faire Venus also,  
Withoute guerdon ever yit,  
And never-the-lesse hast set thy wit --  
Although that in thy hed ful lyte is --  
To make bookys, songes, dytees,  
In ryme, or elles in cadence,  
As thou best canst, in reverence  
Of Love, and of hys servantes eke,  
That have hys servyse soght, and seke;  
And peynest the to preyse hys art,  
Although thou haddest never part;  
Wherfore, also God me blesse,  
Joves halt hyt gret humblesse,  
And vertu eke, that thou wolt make  
A-nighth ful ofte thyn hed to ake  
In thy studye, so thou writest,  
And ever mo of love enditest,  
In honour of hym and in preysynges,  
And in his folkes furtherynges,  
And in hir matere al devisest,  
Although thou maist goo in the daunce  
Of hem that hym lyst not avaunce.  
"Wherfore, as I seyde, ywys,  
Jupiter considereth this,  
And also, beau sir, other thynges;  
That is, that thou hast no tydynges  
Of Loves folk yf they be glade,  
Ne of noght elles that God made;  
And noght oonly fro fer contree  
That ther no tydynge cometh to thee,
But of thy verray neyghebores, 650
That duellen almost at thy dores, 
Thou herist neyther that ne this; 
For when thy labour doon al ys, 
And hast mad alle thy rekenynges, 
In stede of reste and newe thynges, 
Thou goost hom to thy hous anoon; 
And, also domb as any stoon, 
Thou sittest at another book 
Tyl fully daswed ys thy look, 
And lyvest thus as an heremyte, 
Although thyn abstynence ys lyte. 

"And therfore Joves, thorgh hys grace, 
Wol that I bere the to a place 
Which that hight the Hous o Fame, 
To do the som disport and game, 
In som recompensacion 
Of labour and devocion, 
That thou hast had, loo causeles, 
To Cupido, the rechcheles! 
And thus this god, thorgh his merite, 
Wol with som maner thing the quyte, 
So that thou wolt be of goo chere. 
For truste wel that thou shalt here, 
When we be come there I seye, 
Mo wonder thynges, dar I leye, 
And of Loves folk moo tydynges; 
Both sothe sawes and lesinges; 
And moo loves newe begonne, 
And longe yserved loves wonne, 
And moo loves casuelly 
That ben betyd, no man wot why, 
But as a blynd man stert an hare; 
And more jolytee and fare, 
While that they fynde love of stel, 
As thinketh hem, and over-al wel; 
Mo discordes, moo jelousies, 
Mo murmures, and moo novelries, 
And moo dissymulacions, 
And feyned reparacions; 
And moo berdys in two houres 
Withoute rasour or sisoures 
Ymad, then greynes be of sondes; 
And eke moo holdynge in hondes, 
And also moo renovelaunces 
Of olde forleten aqueyntaunces; 
Mo love-dayes and acordes 
Then on instrumentes be corde; 
And eke of loves moo eschaunges

Then ever cornes were in graunges, -- 
Unnethe maistow trowen this?" 
Quod he. "Noo, helpe me God so wys!" 
Quod I. "Noo? why?" quod he. "For hyt 
Were impossible, to my wit, 
Though that Fame had alle the pies 
In al a realme, and alle the spies, 
How that yet she shulde here al this, 
Or they espie hyt." "O yis, yis!" 
Quod he to me, "that kan I preve 
Be reson worthy for to leve, 
So that thou yeve thyn advertence 
To understonde my sentence. 
"First shalt thou here where she 
duelleth, 
And so thyne one bok hyt tellith; 
Hir paleys stant, as I shal seye, 
Ryght even in mddes of the weye 
Betwixen hevene, erthe, and see; 
That what so ever in al these three 
Is spoken, either privy or apert, 
The way therto ys so overt, 
And stant eke in so juste a place 
That every soun mot to hyt pace, 
Or what so cometh from any tonge, 
Be hyt rouned, red, or songe, 
Or spoke in suerte or in drede, 
Certeyn, hyt moste thider nede. 

"Now herkene wel, for-why I wille 
Tellen the a propre skille 
And a worthy demonstracion 
In myn ymagynacion. 
"Geffrey, thou wost ryght wel this, 
That every kyndely thyng that is 
Hath a kyndely stede ther he 
May best in hyt conserved be; 
Unto which place every thyng, 
Thorgh his kyndely enclynyng, 
Moveth for to come to, 
Whan that hyt is awey therfro; 
As thus: loo, thou maist alday se 
That any thing that hevy be, 
As stoon, or led, or thyng of wighte, 
And bere hyt never so hye on highte, 
Lat goo thy hand, hit falleth doun. 
Ryght so seye I be fyr or soun, 
Or smoke, or other thynges lyghte; 
Alwey they seke upward on highte. 
While ech of hem is at his large,
Lyght thing upward, and dounward charge.  
And for this cause mayst thou see  
That every ryver to the see  
Enclyned ys to goo by kynde;  
Hath fyssh duellynge in flood and see,  
And treës eke in erthe bee.  
Thus every thing, by thys reson,  
Hath his propre mansyon,  
To which hit seketh to repaire,  
Ther-as hit shulde not apaire.  
Loo, this sentence ys knowen kouth  
Of every philosophres mouth,  
As Aristotle and daun Platon,  
And other clerkys many oon;  
And to confirme my resoun,  
Thou wost wel this, that spech is soun,  
Or elles no man myghte hyt here;  
Now herke what y wol the lere.  
"Soun ys noght but eyr ybroke,  
And every speche that ys spoken,  
Lowl or pryvee, foul or fair,  
In his substaunce ys but air;  
For as flaumbe ys but lyghted smoke,  
Ryght soo soun ys air ybroke.  
But this may be in many wyse,  
Of which I wil the twoo devyse,  
As soun that cometh of pipe or harpe.  
For whan a pipe is blowen sharpe,  
The air ys twyst with violence  
And rent; loo, thys ys my sentence;  
Eke, whan men harpe-strynges Smyte,  
Whether hyt be moche or lyte,  
Loo, with the strok the ayr tobreketh;  
And ryght so breketh it when men speketh.  
Thus wost thou wel what thing is speche.  
"Now have I told, yf thou have mynde,  
How speche or soun, of pure kynde,  
Enclyned ys upward to meve;  
This, mayst thou fele, wel I preve.  
And that same place, ywys,  
That hyt gooth yet alway under,  
Although thou mowe hyt not ysee  
Above, hyt gooth yet alway under,  
Although thou thenke hyt a gret wonder.  
And whoso seyth of trouthe I varye,  
Bid hym proven the contrarye.  
And ryght thus every word, ywys,  
That lowd or pryvee spoken ys,  
Moveth first an ayr aboute,  
And of thys movynge, out of doute,  
Another ayr anoon ys meved,  
As I have of the watir preved,  
That every cercle causeth other.  
Ryght so of ayr, my leve brother;  
Everych ayr another stereth  
More and more, and speche up bereth,  
Or voys, or noyse, or word, or soun,  
Ay through multiplicacioun,  
Til hyt be atte Hous of Fame, --  
Take yt in ernest or in game.  
"Now have I told, yf thou have mynde,  
How speche or soun, of pure kynde,  
Enclyned ys upward to meve;  
This, mayst thou fele, wel I preve.  
And that same place, ywys,  
That every thyng enclynyng to ys,  
Hath his kyndelyche stede:  
That sheweth hyt, withouten drede  
Al up into his kyndely place.  
And this place of which I telle,
Ther as Fame lyst to duelle,
Ys set amyddys of these three,
Heven, erthe, and eke the see,
As most conservatyf the soun.
Than ys this the conclusyoun,
That every speche of every man,
As y the telle first began,
Moveth up on high to pace
Kydely to Fames place.
"Telle me this now feythfully,
Have y not preved thus symply,
Withoute any subtilite
Of speche, or gret prolxithe
Of termes of philosophie,
Or colours of rethoriike?
Pardee, hit oughte the to lyke!
For hard langage and hard materre
Ys encombrous for to here
Attones; wost thou not wel this?"
And y answered and seyde, "Yis."
"A ha!" quod he, "lo, so I can
Lewedly to a lewed man
Speake, and shewe hym swyche skiles
That he may shake hem be the biles,
So palpable they shulden be.
But telle me this, now praye y the,
How thinketh the my conclusyon?"
[Quod he]. "A good persuasion,"
Quod I, "hyt is; and lyk to be
Ryght so as thou hast preved me."
"Be God," quod he, "and as I leve,
Thou shalt have yet, or hit be eve,
Of every word of thys sentence
A preve by experience,
And with thyne eres heren wel
Top and tayl, and evereydyl,
That every word that spoken ys
Cometh into Fames Hous, ywys,
As I have seyd; what wilt thou more?"
And with this word upper to sore
He gan, and seyde, "Be seynt Jame,
Now wil we spoken al of game!"
"How farest thou?" quod he to me.
"Wel," quod I. "Now see," quod he,
"By thy trouthe, yond adoun,
Wher that thou knowest any toun,
Or hous, or any other thing.
And whan thou hast of ought knowyng,
Looke that thou warne me,
And y anoon shal telle the
How fer that thou art now theryo.
And y adoun gan loken tho, And beheldfeldes and playnes,
And now hilles, and now mountaynes,
Now valeyes, now forestes,
And now unnethes grete bestes;
Now ryveres, now citees,
Now tounes, and now grete trees,
Now shippes seylynge in the see.
But thus sone in a while he
Was flown fro the ground so hye
That al the world, as to myn yë,
No more semed than a prikke; Or elles was the air so thikke
That y ne myghte not discern.
With that he spak to me as yerne,
And seyde, "Seest thou any toun
Or ought thou knowest yonder doun?"
I sayde, "Nay." "No wonder nys,"
Quod he, "for half so high as this
Nas Alixandre Macedo; Ne the kyng, Daun Scipio,
That saw in drem, at poynt devys,
Helle and erthe and paradys; Ne eke the wrechche Dedalus,
That fleigh so highe that the hete Hys wynges malt, and he fel wete
In myd the see, and ther he dreynyte, For whom was maked moch compleynte.
"Now turn upward," quod he, "thy face, And behold this large space,
An and behold this large space,
This eyr; but loke thou ne be
Adrad of hem that thou shalt se; For in this region, certeyn,
Duelleth many a citezeyn, Of which that speketh Daun Plato.
These ben the eyryssh bestes, lo!
And so saw y all that meyne Boothe goon and also flee.
"Now," quod he thoo, "cast up thyn yë.
Se yonder, loo, the Galaxie, Which men clepeth the Milky Wey,
For hit ys whit (and somme, parfey, Kallen hyt Watlynge Strete)
That ones was ybrent with hete, Whan the sonnes sone, the rede,
That highte Pheton, wolde lede
Algate hys fader carte, and gye.
The carte-hors gone wel espye
That he koude no governaunce,
And gone for to lepe and launce,
And beren hym now up, now doun,
Til that he sey the Scorpionioun,
Which that in heven a sygne is yit.
And he, for ferde, loste hys wyt
Of that, and let the reynes gon
Of his hors; and they anoon
Gonne up to mounte and doun descende,
Til bothe the eyr and erthe brende;
Til Jupiter, loo, atte laste,
Hym slow, and fro the carte caste.
Loo, ys it not a gret myschaunce
To lete a fool haue governaunce
Of thing that he can not demeyne?"
And with this word, soth for to seyne,
He gan alway upper to sore,
And gladded me ay more and more,
So feythfully to me spak he.
Tho gan y loken under me
And beheld the ayerissh bestes,
Cloudes, mystes, and tempestes,
Snowes, hayles, reynes, wyndes,
And th’engendrynge in hir kyndes,
All the wey thrugh which I cam.
"O God!" quod y, "that made Adam,
Mochys thy myght and thy noblesse!"
And thoo thoughte y upon Boece,
That writ, "A thought may flee so hye,
Wyth fetheres of Philosophye,
To passen everych element;"
And whan he hath so fer yvent,
Than may be seen, behynde hys bak,
Cloude," -- and al that y of spak.
Tho gan y waxen in a were,
And seyde, "Y wat wel y am here;
But wher in body or in gost
I not, ywys; but God, thou wost!"
For more clere entendement
Nas me never yit ysent.
And than thoughte y on Marcian,
And eke on Anteclaudian,
That sooth was her descriptyon
Of alle the hevenes region,
As fer as that y sey the preve;
Therfore y kan hem now beleve.

With that this egle gan to crye,
"Lat be," quod he, "thy fantasye!
Wilt thou lere of sterres aught?"
"Nay, certeynly," quod y, "ryght naught."
"And why?" "For y am now to old."
"elles I wolde the have told,"
Quod he, "the sterres names, lo,
And al the hevenes sygnes therto,
And which they ben." "No fors," quod y.
"Yis, pardee!" quod he; "wostow why?
For when thou redest poetrie,
How goddes gone stellifiye
Bridd, fissh, best, or him or here,
As the Raven, or eyther Bere,
Or Arionis harpe fyn,
Castor, Pollux, or Delphyn,
Or Athalantes doughtres severn,
How alle these arn set in hevene;
For though thou have hem ofte on honde,
Yet nostow not wher that they stonde."
"No fors," quod y, "hyt is no nede.
I leve as wel, so God me spede,
Hem that write of this matere,
As though I knew her places here;
And eke they shynen here so bryghte,
Hyt shulde shenden al my syghte,
To loke on hem." "That may wel be,"
Quod he. And so forth bar he me
A whyle, and than he gan to crye,
That never herde I thing so hye,
"Now up the hed, for al ys wel;
Seynt Julyan, loo, bon hostel!
Se here the Hous of Fame, lo!
"What?" quod I. "The grete soun,"
Quod he, "that rumbleth up and doun
In Fames Hous, full of tydynges,
Bothe of feir speche and chidynges,
And of fals and soth compouned.
Herke wel; hyt is not rouned.
Herestow not the grete swogh?"
"Yis, parde!" quod y, "wel ynogh."
"And what soune is it lyk?" quod hee.
"Peter! lyk betynge of the see,"
Quod y, "ayen the roches holowe,
When tempest doth the shippes swalowe;
And lat a man stonde, out of doute,
A myle thens, and here hyt route;
Or elles lyk the last humblenge
After the clappe of a thundringe,
Whan Joves hath the air ybete.
But yt doth me for fere swete!"  
"Nay, dred the not therof," quod he;
"Hyt is nothing will byten the;
Thou shalt non harm have trewele."  
And with this word both he and y
As nygh the place arryved were
As men may casten with a spere.
Y nyste how, but in a strete
He sette me fair on my fete,
And seyde, "Walke forth a pas,
And tak thyn aventure or cas,
That thou shalt fynde in Fames place."
"Now," quod I, "while we han space
To speke, or that I goo fro the,
For the love of God, telle me --
In sooth, that wil I of the lere --
Yf thys noyse that I here
Be, as I have herd the tellen,
Of folk that doun in erthe duellen,
And cometh here in the same wyse
As I the herde or this devyse;
And that there lives body nys
In al that hous that yonder ys,
That maketh al this loude fare."
"Noo," quod he, "by Seynte Clare,
And also wis God rede me!
But o thing y will warne the
Of the whiche thou wolt have wonder.
Loo, to the Hous of Fame yonder,
Thou wost now how, cometh every speche;
Hyt nedeth noght eft the to teche.
But understond now ryght wel this,
Whan any speche ycomen ys
Up to the paleys, anon-ryght
Hyt wexeth lyk the same wight
Which that the word in erthe spak,
Be hyt clothed red or blak;
And hath so verray hys lyknesse
That spak the word, that thou wilt gesse
That it the same body be,
Man or woman, he or she.
And ys not this a wonder thyng?"
"Yis," quod I tho, "by heven kyngr!"
And with this word, "Farewel," quod he,
"And here I wol abyden the;
And God of heven sende the grace
Some good to lernen in this place."
Book III

Incipit liber tertius.

Invocation.
O God of science and of lyght,
Appollo, thurgh thy grete myght,
This lytel laste bok thou gye!
Nat that I wilne, for maistrye,
Here art poetical be shewed;
But for the rym ys lyght and lewed,
Yit make hyt sumwhat agreable,
Though som vers fayle in a sillable;
And that I do no diligence
To shewe craft, but o sentence.
And yif, devyne vertu, thow
Wilt helpe me to shewe now
That in myn hed ymarked ys --
Loo, that is for to menen this,
The Hous of Fame for to descryve --
Thou shalt se me go as blyve
Unto the nexte laure y see,
And kysse yt, for hyt is thy tree.
Now entre in my brest anoon!

The Dream.
Whan I was fro thys egle goon,
I gan beholde upon this place.
And certein, or I ferther pace,
I wol yow al the shap devyse
Of hous and site, and al the wyse
How I gan to thys place aproche
That stood upon so hygh a roche,
Hier stant ther non in Spayne.
But up I clomb with alle payne,
And though to clymbe it greved me,
Yit 1 ententyf was to see,
And for to powren wonder lowe,
Yf I koude any weyes knowe
What maner stroon this roche was.
For hyt was lyk alum de glas,
But that hyt shoon ful more clere;
But of what congeled matere
Hyt was, I nyste redely.
But at the laste aspied I,
And found that hit was every del
A roche of yse, and not of stel.
Thoughte I, "By seynt Thomas of Kent!
This were a feble fundament
To bilden on a place hye.
He ought him lytel glorifye
That hereon bilt, God so me save!"
Tho sawgh I al the half ygrave
With famous folkes names fele,
That had iben in mocel wele,
And her fames wide yblowe.
But wel unnethes koude I knowe
Any lettres for to rede
Hir names by; for, out of drede,
They were almost ofthowed so
That of the lettres oon or two
Was molte away of every name,
So unfamous was woxe hir fame.
But men seyn, "What may ever laste?"
Thoo gan I in myn herte caste
That they were molte awy with hete,
And not awy with stormes bete.
For on that other syde I say
Of this hil, that northward lay,
How hit was writen ful of names
Of folkes that hadden grete fames
Of olde tyme, and yet they were
As fressh as men had writen hem here
The selve day ryght, or that houre
That I upon hem gan to poure.
But wel I wiste what yt made;
Hyt was conserved with the shade
Of a castel t hat stood on high --
Al this wrytynge that I sigh --
And stood eke on so cold a place
That hete myghte hit not deface.
Thoo gan I up the hil to goon,
And fond upon the cop a woon,
That al the men that ben on lyve
Ne han the kunnynge to descrive
The beaute of that ylke place,
Ne coude casten no compace
Swich another for to make,
That myght of beaute ben hys make,
Ne so wonderlych ywrought;
That hit astonyeth yit my thought,
And maketh al my wyt to swynke,
On this castel to bethyne,
So that the grete craft, beaute,
The cast, the curiosite
Ne kan I not to yow devyse;
My wit ne may me not suffise.
But natheles al the substance
I have hit in my remembrance;
For whi me thoughte, be seynt Gyle!
Al was of ston of beryle,
Bothe the castel and the tour,
And eke the halle and every bour,
Wythouten peces or joynynge.
But many subtil compassinges,
Babewynnes and pynacles,
Ymageries and tabernacles,
I say; and ful eke of wyndowes,
As flakes falle in grete snowes.
And eke in ech of the pynacles
Weren sondry habitacles,
In which stoden, al withoute --
Ful the castel, al aboute --
Of alle maner of mynstralles,
And gestiours, that tellen tales
Both of wepinge and of game,
Of al that longeth unto Fame.

Ther herde I pleyen on an harpe
That sowned bothe wel and sharpe,
Orpheus ful craftely,
And on his syde, faste by,
Sat the harper Orion,
And Eacides Chiron,
And other harpers many oon,
And the Bret Glascurion;
And smale harpers with her gleës
Sate under hem in dyvers seës,
And gunne on hem upward to gape,
And countrefete hem as an ape,
Or as craft countrefeteth kynde.

Tho saugh I stonden hem behynde,
Afer fro hem, al be hemselfe,
Many thousand tymes twelve,
That maden lowde mynstralclies
In cornemuse and shalemeyes,
And many other maner pipe,
That craftely begunne to pipe,
Bothe in doucet and in rede,
That ben at festes with the brede;
And many flowte and liltyng horn,
And pipes made of grene corn,
As han thise lytel herde-gromes,
That kepen bestis in the bromes.
Ther saugh I than Atiteris,
And of Athenes daun Pseustis,
And Marcia that loste her skyn,
Bothe in face, body, and chyn,
For that she wolde envien, loo!
To pipen bet than Appololoo.
Ther saugh I famous, olde and yonge,
Pipers of the Duche tonge,
To lerne love-daunces, sprynges,
Reyes, and these strange thynges.
Tho saugh I in an other place
Stonden in a large space,
Of hem that maken blody soun
In trumpe, beme, and claryoun;
For in fight and blod-shedyng
Ys used gladly clarionynge.
Ther herde I trumpen Messenus,
Of whom that speketh Virgilious.
There herde I trumpe Joab also,
Theodemas, and other mo;
And alle that used clarion
In Cataloigne and Aragon,
That in her tyme famous were
To lerne, saugh I trumpe there.
There saugh I sitte in other seës,
Pleyinge upon sondry gleës,
Whiche that I kan not nevene,
Moo than sterres ben in hevene,
Of whiche I nyl as now not ryme,
For ese of yow, and los of tyme.
For tyme ylost, this knowen ye,
Be no way may recovered be.

Ther saugh I pleye jugelours,
Magiciens, and tregetours,
And Phitonesses, charmeresses,
Olde wicches, sorceresses,
That use exorsisacions,
And eke these fumygacions;
And clerkes eke, which konne wel
Al this magik naturel,
That craftely doon her ententes
To make, in certeyn ascendentes,
Ymages, lo, throug which magik
To make a man ben hool or syk.
Ther saugh I the, quene Medea,
And Circes eke, and Calipsa;
Ther saugh I Hermes Ballenus,
Limote, and eke Symon Magus.

Page 14
Y saugh him carien a wynd-melle
Under a walsh-note shale.

What shuld I make lenger tale
Of alle the pepil y ther say,
Fro hennes into domes day?

When I had al this folk beholde,
And fond me lous, and nought yholde,
And eft imused longe while
Upon these walles of berile,
That shoone ful lyghter than a glas
And made wel more than hit was

To semen every thing, ywis,
As kynd thyngh of Fames is,
I gan forth romen til I fond
The castel-yate on my ryght hond,
Which that so wel corven was
That never such another nas;
And yit it was be aventure
Iwrought, as often as be cure.

Hyt nedeth noght yow more to tellen,
To make yow to longe duellen,
Of this yates florisshinges,
Ne of compasses, ne of kervynges,
Ne how they hatte in masoneries,
As corbetz, ful of ymageries.
But, Lord! so fair yt was to shewe,
Fo r hit was al with gold behewe.

But in I wente, and that anoon.
Ther mette I cryinge many oon,
"A larges, larges, hold up wel!
God save the lady of thys pel,
Our oune gentil lady Fame,
And hem that wilnen to have name
Of us!" Thus herde y crien alle,
And faste commen out of halle
And shoken nobles and sterlynges.

Thoo atte last aspyed y
That pursevantes and heraudes,
That crien rych folkes laudes,
Hyt weren alle; and every man
Of hem, as y yow tellen can,
Had on him throun a vesture
Which that men clepe a cote-armure,
Enbrowed wonderliche ryche,
Although they nere nought ylyche.

But noght nyl I, so mote y thrive,
Ben aboute to dyscryve
Alle these armes that ther weren,
That they thus on her cotes beren,
For hyt to me were impossible;
Men myghte make of hem a bible
Twenty foot thykke, as y trowe.

For certeyn, whoso koude iknowe
Myghte ther alle the armes seen
Of famous folk that han ybeen
In Auffrike, Europe, and Asye,
Syth first began the chevalrie.

Loo! how shulde I now telle al thys?
Ne of the halle eke what nede is
To tellen yow that every wal
Of hit, and flor, and roof, and al
Was plated half a foote thikke
Of gold, and that nas nothyng wikke,
But, for to prove in alle wyse,
As syn as ducat in Venyse,
Of which to lite al in my pouche is?
And they were set as thik of nouchis
Ful of the finest stones faire,
That men rede in the Lapidaire,
As grasses growen in a mede.
But hit were al to longe to rede
The names; and therfore I pace.

But in this lusty and ryche place,
That Fames halle called was,
Ful moche prees of folk ther nas,
Ne crowdyng for to mochil prees.
But al on hye, above a dees,
Sitte in a see imperiall,
That mad was of a rubee all,
Which that a carbuncle ys ycalled,
Y saugh, perpetually ystalled,
A femynyne creature,
That never formed by Nature
Nas such another thing yseye.
For alther-first, soth for to seye,
Me thoughte that she was so lyte
That the lengthe of a cubite
Was lengere than she semed be.
But thus sone, in a whyle, she
Hir tho so wonderliche streighte
That with hir fet she erthe reighte,
And with hir hed she touched hevene,
Ther as shynen sterres sevene.
And therto eke, as to my wit,
I saugh a gretter wonder yit,  
Upon her eyen to beholde;  
But certeyn y hem never tolde.  

For as feele eyen hadde she  
As fetheres upon foules be,  
Or weren on the bestes foure  
That Goddis trone gunne honoure,  
As John writ in th’Apocalips.  

Hi' r heer, that oundy was and crips,  
As burned gold hyt shoon to see;  
And, soth to tellen, also she  
Had also fele upstondyng eres  
And tonges, as on bestes heres;  
And on hir fet woxen saugh y  
Partriches wynges redely.  

But, Lord! the perry and the richesse  
I saugh sittyng on this goddesse!  
And, Lord! the hevenyssh melodye  
Of songes, ful of armonye,  
I herde aboute her trone ysonge,  
That al the paleys-walles ronge!  
So song the myghty Muse, she  
That cleped ys Caliope,  
And hir eighte sustren eke,  
That in her face semen meke;  
And ever mo, eternally,  
They songe of Fame, as thoo herd y:  
"Heryed be thou and thy name,  
Goddesse of Renoun or of Fame!"  
Tho was I war, loo, atte laste,  
As I myne eyen gan up caste,  
That thys ylke noble quene  
On her shuldres gan sustene  
Bothe th’armes and the name  
Of thoo that hadde large fame:  
Alexander and Hercules,  
That with a sherte hys lyf les!  
Thus fond y syttynge this goddesse  
In nobley, honour, and rychesse;  
Of which I styte a while now,  
Other thing to tellen yow.  
Tho saugh I stonde on eyther syde,  
Straight doun to the dores wide,  
Fro the dees, many a peler  
Of metal that shoon not ful cler;  
But though they nere of no rychesse,  
Yet they were mad for gret noblesse,  
And in hem hy and gret sentence;  
And folk of digne reverence,
Betwex hem was a litil envye.  
Oon seyde that Omer made lyes,  
Feynynge in hys poetries,  
And was to Grekes favorable;  
Therfor held he hyt but fable.  

Tho saugh I stonde on a piler,  
That was of tynned yren cler,  
The Latyn poete, Virgile,  
That bore hath up a longe while  
The fame of Pius Eneas.  

And next hym on a piler was,  
Of coper, Venus clerk, Ovide,  
The grete god of Loves name.  
And ther he bar up wel hys fame  
Upon his piler, also hye  
As I myghte see hyt with myyn yë;  
For -why this halle, of which I rede,  
Was woxen on highte, length, and brede,  
Wel more, be a thousand del,  
Than hyt was erst, that saugh I wel.  
Thoo saugh I on a piler by,  
Of yren wroght ful sternely,  
The grete poete, daun Lucan,  
And by him stoden alle these clerkes  
That writen of Romes myghty werkes,  
Al to longe most I dwelle.  
And next him on a piler stood  
Of soulfre, lyk as he were wood,  
Daun Claudian, the sothe to telle,  
That bar up al the fame of helle,  
Of Pluto, and of Proserpyne,  
That quene ys of the derke pyne.  

What shulde y more telle of this?  
The halle was al ful, ywys,  
Of hem that writen olde gestes,  
As ben on treës rokes nestes;  
But hit a ful confus materë  
Were alle the gestes for to here,  
That they of write, or how they highte.  
But while that y beheld thys syghte,  
I herde a noyse aprochen blyve,  
That ferde as been don in an hive  
Ayen her tyme of out-fleynge;  
Ryght such a maner murmurynge,
That is ful dyvers of his soun,
And hyt is cleped Clere Laude,
With which he wont is to heraude
Hem that me list ypreised be.
And also bid him how that he
Brynge his other clarioun,
That highte Sklaundre in every toun,
With which he wont is to diffame
Hem that me liste, and do hem shame."

This messager gan faste goon,
And found where
In a contree that highte Trace,
This Eolus, with harde grace,
Held the wyndes in distresse,
And gan hem under him to presse,
That they gonne as beres rore,
He bond and pressed hem so sore.

This messager gan faste crie,
"Rys up," quod he, "and faste hye,
Til thou at my lady be;
And tak thy clariouns eke with the,
And sped the forth." And he anon
Tak to a man, that highte Triton,
Hys clarions to bere thoo,
And let a certeyn wynd to goo,
That blew so hydously and hye
That hyt ne lefte not a skye
In alle the welken long and brod.
This Eolus nowhere abod
Til he was come to Fames fet,
And eke the man that Triton het;
And ther he stod, as stille as stoon,
An
And her-whatl ther come anoon
Another huge companye
Of goode folk, and gunne crie,
"Lady, graunte us now good fame,
And lat oure werkes han that name
Now in honour of gentilesse,
And also God your soule blesse!
For we han wel deserved hyt,
Therfore is ryght that we ben quyt."
"As thryve I," quod she, "ye shal faylle!
Good werkes shal yow noght availle
To have of me good fame as now.
But wite ye what? Y graunte yow
That ye shal have a shrewed fame,
And wikkyd loos, and worse name,
Though ye good loos have wel deserved.
Now goo your wey, for ye be served.

And thou, dan Eolus, let see,
Tak forth thy trumpe anon," quod she,
"That is ycleped Sklaundre lyght,
And blow her loos, that every wight
Speke of hem harm and shrewednesse,
In stede of good and worthynesse.
For thou shalt trumpe alle the contrayre
Of that they han don wel or fayre."
"Allas!" thoughte I, "what aventures
Han these sory creatures!
For they, amongs al the pres,
Shul thus be shamed gilteles.
But what! hyt moste nedes be."
What dide this Eolus, but he
Tok out hys blake trumpe of bras,
That fouler than the devel was,
And gan this trumpe for to blowe,
As al the world shulde overthowe,
That througthout every regioun
Wente this foule trumpes soun,
As swift as pelet out of gonne,
Whan fyr is in the poudre ronne.
And such a smoke gan out wende
Out of his foule trumpes ende,
Blak, bloo, grenyssh, swartish red,
As doth where that men melte led,
Loo, al on high fro the tuel.
And ther to oo thing saugh I wel,
That the ferther that hit ran,
The gretter wexen hit began,
As dooth the ryver from a welle,
And hyt stank as the pit of helle.
Allas, thus was her shame yronge,
And gilteles, on every tonge!
Tho come the thridde companye,
And gunne up to the dees to hye,
And doun on knes they fille anon,
And seyde, "We ben everychon
Folk that han ful trewely
Deserved fame ryghtfully,
And praye yow, hit mote be knowe,
Ryght as hit is, and forth yblowe."
"I graunte," quod she, "for me list
That now your goode werkes be wist,
And yet ye shal han better loos,
Right in dispit of alle your foos,
Than worthy is, and that anoon.
Lat now," quod she, "thy trumpe goon,
Thou Eolus, that is so blak;
And out thyn other trumpe tak
That highte Laude, and blow yt soo
That throught the world her fame goo
Al esely, and not to faste,
That hyt be knowen atte laste."
"Ful gladly, lady myn," he seyde;
And out hys trumpe of gold he brayde
Anon, and sette hyt to his mouth,
And blew it est, and west, and south,
And north, as lowde as any thunder,
That every wight hath of hit wonder,
So brode hyt ran, or than hit stente.
And, certes, al the breth that wente
Out of his trumpes mouth it smelde
As men a pot of bawme helde
Among a basket ful of roses.
This favour dide he til her loses.
And ryght with this y gan aspye,
Ther come the ferthe companye--
But certeyn they were wonder fewe--
And gunne stonden in a rewe,
And seyden, "Certes, lady bryght,
We han don wel with al our myght,
But we ne kepen have no fame.
Hyde our werkes and our name,
For Goddys love; for certes we
Han certeyn doon hyt for bounte,
And for no maner other thing."
"I graunte yow alle your askyng,"
Quod she; "let your werkes be ded."
With that aboute y clew myn hed,
And saugh anoon the fifte route
That to this lady gunne loute,
And doun on knes anoon to falle;
And to hir thoos besoughten alle
To hide her goode werkes ek,
And seyden they yeven noght a lek
For fame ne for such renoun;
For they for contemplacioun
And Goddes love hadde ywrought,
Ne of fame wolde they nought.
"What?" quod she, "and be ye wood?
And wene ye for to doo good,
And for to have of that no fame?
Have ye dispit to have my name?
Nay, ye shul lyven everychon!
Blow thy trumpes, and that anon,"
Quod she, "thou Eolus, y hote,
And ryng this folkes werk be note,
That al the world may of hyt here."
And he gan blowe her loos so clere
In his golden clarion
That throught the world wente the soun
Also kenely and eke so softe;
But atte last hyt was on-lofte.
Thoo come the sexte companye,
And gunne faste on Fame crie.
Ryght verraily in this manere
They seyden: "Mercy, lady dere!
To tellyn certeyn as hyt is,
We han don neither that ne this,
But ydel al oure lyf ybe.
But, natheles, yet preye we
That we move han as good a fame,
And gret renoun and knowen name,
As they that han doon noble gestes,
And acheved alle her lestes,
As wel of love as other thyng.
Al was us never broche ne ryng,
Ne elles noght, from wymmen sent,
Ne ones in her herte yment
To make us onely frendly chere,
But myghten temen us upon bere;
Yet lat us to the peple seme
Suche as the world may of us deme
That wommen loven us for wod.
Hyt shal doon us as moche good,
And to oure herte as moche avaylle
To countrepese ese and travaylle,
As we had wonne hyt with labour;
For that is dere boght honour
At regard of oure grete ese.
And yet thou most us more plese:
Let us be holden eke thereto
Worthy, wise, and goode also,
And riche, and happy unto love.
For Goddes love, that sit above,
Though we may not the body have
Leet men gliwe on us the name!
Sufficeth that we han the fame."
"I graunte," quod she, "be my trouthe!
Now, Eolus, withouten slouthe,
Tak out thy trumpe of gold, let se
And blow as they han axed me,
That every man wene hem at ese,
Though they goon in ful badde lese."
That through the world hyt was yknowe.
Thoo come the seventh route anoon,
And fel on knees everychoon,
And seyde, "Lady, graunte us sone
The same thing, the same bone,
That [ye] this nexte folk han doon."
"Fy on yow," quod she, "everychon!
Ye masty swyn, ye ydel wrechches,
Ful of roten, slowe techches!
What? false theves! wher ye wolde
Be famous good, and nothing nolde
Deserve why, ne never ye roughte?
Men rather yow to hagen oughte!
For ye be lyke the swyne of Trace
That wolde have fissh; but wostow what?
He wolde nothing wete his clowes.
Yvel thrift come to your jowes,
And eke to myn, if I hit graunte,
Or do yow favour, yow to avaunte!
Thou Eolus, thou kyng of Trace,
Goo blowe this folk a so rayce,"
"Nay, wis," quod she, "hyt were a vice.
Al be ther in me no justice,
Me lyste not to doo hyt now,
Ne this nyl I not graunte yow."
Tho come ther lepynge in a route,
And gunne choppen al aboute
Every man upon the crowne,
That al the halle gan to sowne,
And seyden: "Lady, leef and dere,
We ben suche folk as ye mowe here.
To tellen al the tale aryght,
We ben shrewes, every wyght,
And han delyt in wikkednesse,
As goode folk han in godnesse;
And joye to be knowen shrewes,
And ful of vice and wikked thewes;
Wherefore we praye yow, a-rowe,
"Y graunte hyt yow," quod she, "ywis.
But what art thow that seyst this tale,
That werest on thy hose a pale,
And on thy tipet such a belle?"
"Madame," quod he, "soth to telle,
I am that ylke shrewe, ywis,
That brende the temple of Ysidis
In Athenes, loo, that citoe."
"And wherfor didest thou so?" quod she.
"By my thrift," quod he, "madame,
I wolde fayn han had a fame,
As other folk hadde in the toun,
Although they were of gret renoun
For her vertu and for her thewes.
Thoughte y, as gret a fame han shrewes,
Though hit be for shrewednesse,
As goode folk han for godnesse;
And sith y may not have that oon,
That other nyl y noght forgoon.
And for to gette of Fames hire,
The temple sette y al afire.
Now do our loos be blowen swithe,
As wisly be thou ever blythe!"
"Gladly," quod she; "thow Eolus,
Herestow not what they prayan us?"
"Madame, yis, ful wel," quod he,
And I wil trumpen it, parde!"
And tok his blake trumpe faste,
And gan to puffen and to blaste,
Til hyt was at the worldes ende.
With that gan aboute wende,
For oon that stood ryght at my bak,
Me thoughte, goodly to me spak,
And seyde, "Frend, what is thy name?
Artow come hider to han fame?"
"Nay, for sothe, frend," quod y;
"I cam noght hyder, graunt mercy,
That no wight have my name in honde.
I wot myself best how y stonde;
For what I drye, or what I thynke,
I wil myself best how y stonde;
"But what dost thou here than?" quod he.
"That wyl y tellen thow, the cause why y stonde here:
So mme newe tydynges for to lere,
Somme newe thinges, y not what,
Of love, or suche thynges glade.
"And the noyse which that I herde,
For al the world, ryght so hyt ferde,
As dooth the rowtyng of the ston
That from th'engyn ys leten gon.
And al thys hous of which y rede
Was mad of twigges, falwe, rede,
And grene eke, and somme weren white,
Or maken of these panyers,
Or elles hottes or dossers;
That, for the swough and for the twygges,
This hous was also ful of gygges,
And also ful eke of chirkynges,
And of many o other werkynges;
And eke this hous hath of entrees
As fele as of leves ben in trees
In somer, whan they grene been;
And on the roof men may yet seen
A thousand holes, and wel moo,
To leten wel the soun out goo.
And be day, in every tyde,
Been al the dores opened wide,
And by nyght, echon, unshette;
Ne porter ther is noon to lette
No maner tydynges in to pace.
Ne never rest is in that place
That hit nys fild ful of tydynges,
Other loude, or of wisprynges;
Of werres, of pes, of mariages,
Of reste, of labour, of viages,
Of abood, of deeth, of lyf,
Of love, of hate, acord, of stryf,
Of loos, of lore, and of wynnynges,
Of hele, of seknesse, of bildynges,  Of faire wyndes, and of tempestes,  Of qwalm of folk, and eke of bestes;  Of dyvers transmutacions  Of trust, of drede, of jelousye,  Of wit, of wynnynge, of folye;  Of plente, and of gret famyne,  Of good or mys governement,  Of fyr, and of dyvers accident.

And loo, thys hous, of which I write,  Syker be ye, hit nas not lyte,  For hyt was sixty myle of lengthe.  Al was the tymber of no strengthe,  Yet hit is founded to endure  While that hit lyst to Avent ure,  That is the moder of tydynges,  As the see of welles and of sprynges;  And hyt was shapen lyk a cage.

"Certys," quod y, "in al myn age,  Ne saugh y such an hous as this."  And as y wondred me, ywis,  Upon this hous, tho war was y  How that myn egle, faste by,  Was perched hye upon a stoon;  And I gan streghte to hym gon,  And seyde thus: "Y preye the  That thou a while abide me,  For Goddis love, and lete me seen  What wondres in this place been;  For yit, paraunter, y may lere  Som good thereon, or sumwhat here  That leef me were, or that y wente."

"Petre! that is myn entente,"  Quod he to me; "therfore y duelle.  But certeyn, oon thyng I the telle,  That but I bringe the therinne,  Ne shalt thou never kunne gynne  To come into hyt, out of doute,  So faste hit whirleth, lo, aboute.  But sith that Joves, of his grace,  As I have sayd, wol the solace  Fynally with these thinges,  Unkouthe syghtes and tydynges,  To passe with thyn hevynesse,  Such routhe hath he of thy distresse,  That thou suffrest debonairly  And wost thyselfen outitly

Disesperat of alle blys,  Syth that Fortune hath mad amys
The [fruit] of al thyn hertys reste  Languisshe and eke in poyn to breste --
That he, throug hys myghty merite,
Wol do the an ese, al be hyt lyte,
And yaf expres commaudement,
To which I am obedient,
To further the with al my myght,
And wisse and teche the aryght
Where thou maist most tydynges here,
Shaltow here anoon many oon lere."

With this word he ryght anoon  Hente me up bytweene hys toon,  And at a wyndowe yn me broghte,  That in this hous was, as me thoghte --
And therwithalle, me thoughte hit stente,  And nothing hyt aboute wente --
And me sette in the flor adoun.

But which a congregacioun  Of folk, as I saugh rome aboute,  Some wythin and some wythoute,  Na never seen, ne shal ben eft;  That, certys, in the world nys left
So many formed be Nature,
Ne ded so many a creature;  That wel unnethe in that place
Hadde y a fote-brede of space.
And every wight that I saugh there  Rouned everych in others ere
A newe tydynge prively,
Or elles tolde al openly
Ryght thus, and seyde: "Nost not thou  That ys betyd, lo, late or now?"
"No," quod he, "telle me what."  And than he tolde hym this and that,  And swor therto that hit was soth --
"Thus hath he sayd," and "Thus he doth,"
"Thus shall hit be," "Thus herde y seye,"
"That shall be founde," "That dar I leye" --
That al the folk that ys alyve
Ne han the kunnynge to discryve
The thinges that I herde there,
What aloude, and what in ere.
But al the wondermost was this:
Whan oon had herd a thing, ywis,
He com forth ryght to another wight,
And gan him tellen anon-ryght
The same that to him was told.

Page 22
Or hyt a forlong way was old,
But gan somewhat for to eche
to this tydynge in this speche
More than hit ever was.
And nat so sone departed nas
Tho fro him, that he ne mette
With the thridde; and or he lette
Any stounde, he told him als;
Were the tydynge soth or fals,
Yit wolde he telle hyt natheles,
And evermo with more encre
Than yt was erst. Thus north and south
Wente every tydnye fro mouth to mouth,
And that encretynge ever moo,
As fyr ys wont to quyke and goo
From a sparke spounge amys,
Til al a citee brenyt up ys.
And whan that was ful yspronge,
And woxen more on every tong
Than ever hit was, [hit] wente anoon
Up to a wyndowe out to goon;
Or, but hit myghte out thare pace,
Hyt gan out crepe at som crevace,
And flygh forth faste for the nones.

And somtyyme saugh I thoo at ones
A lesyng and a sad soth sawe,
That gonne of adventurye drawe
Out at a wyndowe byo to pase;
And, when they metten in that place,
They were acheked bothe two,
And neyther of hem moste out goo
For other, so they gonnye crowde,
Til ech of hem gan crien lowde,
"Lat me go first!" "Nay, but let me!
And here I wol ensuren the
Wyth the nones that thou wolt do so,
That I shal never fro the go,
But be thyn owne sworn brother!
We wil medle us ech with other,
That no man, be they never so wrothe,
Shal han on [of us] two, but bothe
At ones, al besyde his leve,
Come we a-morwe on or eve,
Be we cried or stille yrouned."
Thus saugh I fals and soth compounded
Togeder fle for oo tydynge.
Thus out at holes gunne wringe
every tydynge streght to Fame,
And she gan yeven ech hys name,