

Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*

The Franklin in the General Prologue

- 331 **A FRANKELEYN was in his compaignye.**
A FRANKLIN was in his company.
- 332 **Whit was his berd as is the dayesyge;**
His beard was white as a daisy;
- 333 **Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.**
As to his temperament, he was dominated by the humor blood.
- 334 **Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn;**
He well loved a bit of bread dipped in wine in the morning;
- 335 **To lyven in delit was evere his wone,**
His custom was always to live in delight,
- 336 **For he was Epicurus owene sone,**
For he was Epicurus' own son,
- 337 **That heeld opinioun that pleyn delit**
Who held the opinion that pure pleasure
- 338 **Was verray felicitee parfit.**
Was truly perfect happiness.
- 339 **An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;**
He was a householder, and a great one at that;
- 340 **Seint Julian he was in his contree.**
He was Saint Julian (patron of hospitality) in his country.
- 341 **His breed, his ale, was always after oon;**
His bread, his ale, was always of the same (good) quality;
- 342 **A bettre envyned man was nowher noon.**
Nowhere was there any man better stocked with wine.
- 343 **Withoute bake mete was nevere his hous,**
His house was never without baked pies
- 344 **Of fissh and flessch, and that so plentevous**
Of fish and meat, and that so plentiful
- 345 **It snewed in his hous of mete and drynke;**
That in his house it snowed with food and drink;
- 346 **Of alle deyntees that men koude thynke,**
Of all the dainties that men could imagine,
- 347 **After the sondry sesons of the yeer,**
In accord with the various seasons of the year,
- 348 **So chaunged he his mete and his soper.**
So he varied his midday meal and his supper.

- 349 **Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in muwe,**
He had very many fat partridges in pens,
- 350 **And many a breem and many a luce in stuwe.**
And many a bream and many a pike in his fish pond.
- 351 **Wo was his cook but if his sauce were**
Woe was his cook unless his sauce was
- 352 **Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his geere.**
Hotly spiced and sharp, and ready all his cooking equipment.
- 353 **His table dormant in his halle alway**
In his hall his dining table always
- 354 **Stood redy covered al the longe day.**
Stood covered (with table cloth) and ready all the long day.
- 355 **At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;**
He presided as lord and sire at court sessions;
- 356 **Ful ofte tyme he was knyght of the shire.**
He was a member of parliament many times.
- 357 **An anlaas and a gipser al of silk**
A dagger and a purse all of silk
- 358 **Heeng at his girdel, whit as morne milk.**
Hung at his belt, white as morning milk.
- 359 **A shirreve hadde he been, and a contour.**
He had been a sheriff, and an auditor of taxes.
- 360 **Was nowher swich a worthy vavasour.**
There was nowhere such a worthy landowner.

The Franklin's Prologue

The Prologe of the Frankeleyns Tale

- 709 Thise olde gentil Britouns in hir dayes
These old noble Bretons in their days
- 710 Of diverse adventures maden layes,
Of diverse adventures made lays,
- 711 Rymeyed in hir firste Briton tonge,
Rhymed in their first Breton tongue,
- 712 Whiche layes with hir instrumentz they songe
Which lays with their instruments they sang
- 713 Or elles reddden hem for hir plesaunce;
Or else read them for their pleasure;

714 And oon of hem have I in remembraunce,
 And one of them have I in remembrance,
 715 Which I shal seyn with good wyl as I kan.
 Which I shall say with as good will as I can.
 716 **But, sires, by cause I am a burel man,**
 But, sirs, because I am an unlearned man,
 717 **At my bigynnyng first I yow biseche,**
 At my beginning first I you beseech,
 718 **Have me excused of my rude speche.**
 Have me excused for my rude speech.
 719 **I lerned nevere rethorik, certeyn;**
 I learned never rhetoric, certainly;
 720 **Thyng that I speke, it moot be bare and pleyn.**
 Thing that I speak, it must be bare and plain.
 721 **I sleep nevere on the Mount of Pernaso,**
 I slept never on the Mount of Parnassus,
 722 **Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Scithero.**
 Nor learned Marcus Tullius Cicero.
 723 **Colours ne knowe I none, withouten drede,**
 Colors know I none, without doubt,
 724 **But swiche colours as growen in the mede,**
 But such colors as grow in the field,
 725 **Or elles swiche as men dye or peynte.**
 Or else such as men dye or paint.
 726 **Colours of rethoryk been to me queynte;**
 Colors of rhetoric (figures of speech) are strange to me;
 727 **My spirit feeleth noght of swich mateere.**
 My spirit feels nothing of such matter.
 728 **But if yow list, my tale shul ye heere.**
 But if you wish, you shall hear my tale.

The Franklin's Tale

Here bigynneth the Frankeleyns Tale

729 In Armorik, that called is Britayne,
 In Armorica, that is called Brittany,
 730 Ther was a knyght that loved and dide his payne
 There was a knight that loved and worked hard
 731 To serve a lady in his beste wise;
 To serve a lady in his best manner;

732 And many a labour, many a greet emprise,
 And many a labor, many a great chivalric exploit,
 733 He for his lady wroghte er she were wonne.
 He wrought for his lady before she was won.
 734 For she was oon the faireste under sonne,
 For she was the fairest of all under the sun,
 735 And eek therto comen of so heigh kynrede
 And also moreover come of such noble ancestry
 736 That wel unnethes dorste this knyght, for drede,
 That this knight hardly dared, for fear,
 737 Telle hire his wo, his peyne, and his distresse.
 Tell her his woe, his pain, and his distress.
 738 But atte laste she, for his worthynesse,

 But at the last she, for his worthiness,
 739 And namely for his meke obeysaunce,
 And namely for his meek submission,
 740 Hath swich a pitee caught of his penaunce
 Has taken such a pity on his suffering
 741 That pryvely she fil of his accord
 That privately she agreed with him
 742 To take hym for hir housbonde and hir lord,
 To take him for her husband and hir lord,
 743 Of swich lordshipe as men han over hir wyves.
 Of such lordship as men have over their wives.
 744 And for to lede the moore in blisse hir lyves,
 And to lead the more blissfully their lives,
 745 Of his free wyl he swoor hire as a knyght
 Of his free will he swore her as a knight
 746 That nevere in al his lyf he, day ne nyght,
 That never in all his life he, day or night,
 747 Ne sholde upon hym take no maistrie
 Should take upon himself any mastery
 748 Agayn hir wyl, ne kithe hire jalousie,
 Against her will, nor show her jealousy,
 749 But hire obeye, and folwe hir wyl in al,
 But obey her, and follow her will in everything,
 750 As any love to his lady shal,
 As any lover to his lady should,

- 751 Save that the name of soveraynetee,
Except for the appearance of sovereignty,
- 752 That wolde he have for shame of his degree.
**Which he would have to avoid bringing shame
on his status (of knighthood).**
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- 753 **She thanked hym, and with ful greet humblesse**
She thanked him, and with full great humbleness
- 754 **She seyde, "Sire, sith of youre gentillesse**
She said, "Sir, since of your nobility
- 755 **Ye profre me to have so large a reyne,**
You offer me to have such freedom from restraint,
- 756 **Ne wolde nevere God bitwixe us tweyne,**
And would God that never between us two,
- 757 **As in my gilt, were outhere werre or stryf.**
Through my fault, should be either war or strife.
- 758 **Sire, I wol be youre humble trewe wyf --**
Sir, I will be your humble true wife –
- 759 **Have heer my trouthe -- til that myn herte breste."**
Have here my pledge -- until my heart bursts (until I die)."
- 760 **Thus been they bothe in quiete and in reste.**
Thus are they both in quiet and in peace.
- 761 **For o thyng, sires, saufly dar I seye,**
For one thing, sirs, I dare say confidently,
- 762 **That freendes everych oother moot obeye,**
That friends must obey each other,
- 763 **If they wol longe holden compaignye.**
If they will long hold company.
- 764 **Love wol nat been constreyned by maistrye.**
Love will not be constrained by mastery.
- 765 **Whan maistrie comth, the God of Love anon**
When mastery comes, the God of Love immediately
- 766 **Beteth his wynges, and farewell, he is gon!**
Beats his wings, and farewell, he is gone!
- 767 **Love is a thyng as any spirit free.**
Love is a thing free as any spirit.
- 768 **Wommen, of kynde, desiren libertee,**
Women, by nature, desire liberty,
- 769 **And nat to been constreyned as a thral;**
And not to be constrained like a slave;
- 770 **And so doon men, if I sooth seyen shal.**
And so do men, if I shall say the truth.
- 771 **Looke who that is moost pacient in love,**
Look who is most patient in love,
- 772 **He is at his avantage al above.**
He is in the best position, superior to all.
- 773 **Pacience is an heigh vertu, certeyn,**
Patience is a noble virtue, certainly,
- 774 **For it venquysseth, as these clerkes seyn,**
For it vanquishes, as these clerks say,
- 775 **Thynges that rigour sholde nevere atteyne.**
Things that rigor should never attain.
- 776 **For every word men may nat chide or pleyne.**
One may not chide or complain for every word.
- 777 **Lerneth to suffre, or elles, so moot I goon,**
Learn to suffer, or else, as I may walk (I swear),
- 778 **Ye shul it lerne, wher so ye wole or noon;**
You shall learn it, whether you want to or not;
- 779 **For in this world, certein, ther no wight is**
For in this world, certainly, there is no person
- 780 **That he ne dooth or seith somtyme amys.**
Who does not sometime do or speak amiss.
- 781 **Ire, siknesse, or constellacioun,**
Ire, sickness, or the position of the stars,
- 782 **Wyn, wo, or chaungynge of complexioun**
Wine, woe, or changing of the balance of bodily humors
- 783 **Causeth ful ofte to doon amys or speken.**
Causes (one) very often to do or speak amiss.
- 784 **On every wrong a man may nat be wreken.**
On every wrong a man can not be avenged.
- 785 **After the tyme moste be temperaunce**
There must be moderation suitable to the occasion
- 786 **To every wight that kan on governaunce.**
By every person who knows about governance.
- 787 **And therefore hath this wise, worthy knyght,**
And therefore has this wise, worthy knight,
- 788 **To lyve in ese, suffrance hire bihight,**
To live in ease, promised her forbearance,

789 **And she to hym ful wisly gan to swere**
 And she to him full truly did swear

790 **That nevere sholde ther be defaute in here.**
 That never should there be fault in her.

791 **Heere may men seen an humble, wys accord;**
 Here may men see a humble, wise accord;

792 **Thus hath she take hir servant and hir lord --**
 Thus has she taken her servant and her lord --

793 **Servant in love, and lord in mariage.**
 Servant in love, and lord in marriage.

794 **Thanne was he bothe in lordshipe and servage.**
 Then was he both in lordship and servitude.

795 **Servage? Nay, but in lordshipe above,**
 Servitude? Nay, but in lordship above,

796 **Sith he hath bothe his lady and his love;**
 Since he has both his lady and his love;

797 **His lady, certes, and his wyf also,**
 His lady, certainly, and his wife also,

798 **The which that lawe of love acordeth to.**
 The which accords to the law of love.

799 **And whan he was in this prosperitee,**
 And when he was in this happy state,

800 **Hoom with his wyf he gooth to his contree,**
 Home with his wife he goes to his country,

801 **Nat fer fro Pedmark, ther his dwellyng was,**
 Not far from Pedmark, where his dwelling was,

802 **Where as he lyveth in blisse and in solas.**
 Where he lives in bliss and in pleasure.

803 **Who koude telle, but he hadde wedded be,**
 Who could tell, unless he had been wedded,

804 **The joye, the ese, and the prosperitee**
 The joy, the ease, and the happiness

805 **That is bitwixe an housbonde and his wyf?**
 That is between a husband and his wife?

806 **A yeer and moore lasted this blisful lyf,**
 A year and more lasted this blissful life,

807 **Til that the knyght of which I speke of thus,**
 Until the knight of whom I thus speak,

808 **That of Kayrrud was cleped Arveragus,**
 That was called Arveragus of Kayrrud,

809 **Shoop hym to goon and dwelle a yeer or tweyne**
 Prepared himself to go and dwell a year or two

810 **In Engelond, that cleped was eek Briteyne,**
 In England, which was also called Britain,

811 **To seke in armes worshipe and honour --**
 To seek in arms good reputation and honor --

812 **For al his lust he sette in swich labour --**
 For he set all his desire in such labor --

813 **And dwelled there two year; the book seith thus.**
 And dwelled there two years; the book says thus.

814 **Now wol I stynten of this Arveragus,**
 Now will I stop (speaking) of this Arveragus,

815 **And speken I wole of Dorigen his wyf,**
 And I will speak of Dorigen his wife,

816 **That loveth hire housbonde as hire hertes lyf.**
 Who loves her husband as her heart's life.

817 **For his absence wepeth she and siketh,**
 For his absence she weeps and sighs,

818 **As doon thise noble wyves whan hem liketh.**
 As do these noble wives when it pleases them.

819 **She moorneth, waketh, wayleth, fasteth, pleyneth;**
 She mourns, stays awake, wails, fasts, complains;

820 **Desir of his presence hire so destreyneth**
 Desire of his presence so presses upon her

821 **That al this wyde world she sette at noght.**
 That all this wide world she reckoned as worth nothing.

822 **Hire freendes, whiche that knewe hir hevly thocht,**
 Her friends, who knew her gloomy thought,

823 **Conforten hire in al that ever they may.**
 Comfort her in all that ever they can.

824 **They prechen hire, they telle hire nyght and day**
 They preach to her, they tell her night and day

825 **That causelees she sleeth herself, allas!**
 That she slays herself without cause, alas!

826 **And every confort possible in this cas**
 And every comfort possible in this case

827 **They doon to hire with al hire bisynesse,**
 They do to her with all their concern,

828 **Al for to make hire leve hire hevynesse.**
 All to make her leave her sadness.

829 **By proces, as ye knowen everichoon,**
 In the course of time, as every one of you knows,

830 **Men may so longe graven in a stoon**
 One may so long engrave on a stone

831 **Til som figure therinne emprented be.**
 Until some figure is imprinted upon it.

832 **So longe han they confortd hire til she**
 So long have they comforted her until she

833 **Receyved hath, by hope and by resoun,**
 Received has, by hope and by reason,

834 **The empretyng of hire consolacioun,**
 The imprint of their consolation,

835 **Thurgh which hir grete sorwe gan aswage;**
 Through which her great sorrow began to be relieved;

836 **She may nat alwey duren in swich rage.**
 She can not always continue in such passionate grief.

837 **And eek Arveragus, in al this care,**
 And also Arveragus, in (the midst of) all this care,

838 **Hath sent hire lettres hoom of his welfare,**
 Has sent her letters home (telling) of his welfare,

839 **And that he wol come hastily agayn;**
 And that he will come hastily again;

840 **Or elles hadde this sorwe hir herte slayn.**
 Or else this sorrow would have slain her heart.

841 **Hire freendes sawe hir sorwe gan to slake**
 Her friends saw her sorrow began to slacken

842 **And preyde hire on knees, for Goddes sake,**
 And prayed her on their knees, for God's sake,

843 **To come and romen hire in compaignye,**
 To come and walk about in company,

844 **Awey to dryve hire derke fantasye.**
 Away to drive her dark imagining.

845 **And finally she graunted that requeste,**
 And finally she granted that request,

846 **For wel she saugh that it was for the beste.**
 For well she saw that it was for the best.

847 **Now stood hire castel faste by the see,**
 Now her castle stood close by the sea,

848 **And often with hire freendes walketh shee**
 And often with her friends she walks

849 **Hire to disporte upon the bank an heigh,**
 To amuse herself upon the bank on high,

850 **Where as she many a ship and barge seigh**
 Where she saw many a ship and sailing vessel

851 **Seillynge hir cours, where as hem liste go.**
 Sailing their course, where it pleases them to go.

852 **But thanne was that a parcel of hire wo,**
 But then was that a portion of her woe,

853 **For to hirself ful ofte, "Allas!" seith she,**
 For to herself full often, she says "Alas!",

854 **"Is ther no ship, of so manye as I se,**
 "Is there no ship, of so many as I see,

855 **Wol bryngen hom my lord? Thanne were myn herte**
 Will bring home my lord? Then would my heart be

856 **Al warished of his bittre peynes smerte."**
 All cured of its bitter, sharp pains."

857 **Another tyme ther wolde she sitte and thynke,**
 Another time there would she sit and think,

858 **And caste hir eyen downward fro the brynke.**
 And cast her eyes downward from the brink.

859 **But whan she saugh the grisly rokkes blake,**
 But when she saw the grisly black rocks,

860 **For verray feere so wolde hir herte quake**
 For sheer fear her heart would so quake

861 **That on hire feet she myghte hire nocht sustene.**
 That on her feet she could not sustain herself.

862 **Thanne wolde she sitte adoun upon the grene,**
 Then would she sit down upon the green,

863 **And pitously into the see biholde,**
 And piteously stare into the sea,

864 **And seyn right thus, with sorweful sikes colde:**
 And say right thus, with sorrowful, cold sighs:

865 **"Eterne God, that thurgh thy purveiaunce**
 "Eternal God, who through thy foreknowledge

866 **Ledest the world by certein governaunce,**
 Leads the world by sure governance,

867 **In ydel, as men seyn, ye no thyng make.**
 Men say you make nothing in vain.

868 **But, Lord, thise grisly feendly rokkes blake,**
 But, Lord, these grisly fiendish black rocks,

869 **That semen rather a foul confusion**
That seem rather a foul confusion

870 **Of werk than any fair creacion**
Of work than any fair creation

871 **Of swich a parfit wys God and a stable,**
Of such a perfectly wise and stable God,

872 **Why han ye wroght this werk unresonable?**
Why have you created this unreasonable work?

873 **For by this werk, south, north, ne west, ne eest,**
For by this work, south, north, nor west, nor east,

874 **Ther nys yfostred man, ne bryd, ne beest;**
There is no benefit to man, nor bird, nor beast;

875 **It dooth no good, to my wit, but anyeth.**
It does no good, to my understanding, but does harm.

876 **Se ye nat, Lord, how mankynde it destroyeth?**
See you not, Lord, how it destroys mankind?

877 **An hundred thousand bodyes of mankynde**
A hundred thousand bodies of mankind

878 **Han rokkes slayn, al be they nat in mynde,**
Have rocks slain, although their names are forgotten,

879 **Which mankynde is so fair part of thy werk**
And this mankind is so fair a part of thy work

880 **That thou it madest lyk to thyn owene merk.**
That thou made it like to thine own image.

881 **Thanne semed it ye hadde a greet chiertee**
Then it seemed you had a great love

882 **Toward mankynde; but how thanne may it bee**
Toward mankind; but how then may it be

883 **That ye swiche meenes make it to destroyen,**
That you make such means to destroy it,

884 **Whiche meenes do no good, but evere anyen?**
Which means do no good, but always cause trouble?

885 **I woot wel clerkes wol seyn as hem leste,**
I know well clerks will say as they please,

886 **By argumentz, that al is for the beste,**
By logical reasoning, that all is for the best,

887 **Though I ne kan the causes nat yknowe.**
Though I can not know the causes.

888 **But thilke God that made wynd to blowe**
But that same God that made wind to blow

889 **As kepe my lord! This my conclusion.**
Keep my lord! This is my conclusion.

890 **To clerkes lete I al disputison.**
To clerks I leave all disputation.

891 **But wolde God that alle these rokkes blake**
But would God that all these black rocks

892 **Were sonken into helle for his sake!**
Were sunk into hell for his sake!

893 **These rokkes sleen myn herte for the feere."**
These rocks slay my heart for fear."

894 **Thus wolde she seyn, with many a pitous teere.**
Thus would she say, with many a piteous tear.

895 **Hire freendes sawe that it was no disport**
Her friends saw that it was no pleasure

896 **To romen by the see, but discomfort,**
To roam by the sea, but discomfort,

897 **And shopen for to pleyen somwher elles.**
And decide to amuse themselves somewhere else.

898 **They leden hire by ryveres and by welles,**
They lead her by rivers and by springs,

899 **And eek in othere places delitable;**
And also in other delightful places;

900 **They dauncen and they pleyen at ches and tables.**
They dance and they play at chess and backgammon.

901 **So on a day, right in the morwe-tyde,**
So on a day, early in the morning-tide,

902 **Unto a gardyn that was ther bisyde,**
Unto a garden that was there nearby,

903 **In which that they hadde maad hir ordinaunce**
In which they had made their arrangement

904 **Of vitaille and of oother purveiaunce,**
For victuals and for other provisions,

905 **They goon and pleye hem al the longe day.**
They go and amuse themselves all the long day.

906 **And this was on the sixte morwe of May,**
And this was on the sixth morning of May,

907 **Which May hadde peynted with his soft shoures**
Which May had painted with its soft showers

908 **This gardyn ful of leves and of floures;**
This garden full of leaves and of flowers;

909 **And craft of mannes hand so curiously**
And craft of man's hand so skillfully

910 **Arrayed hadde this gardyn, trewely,**
Had adorned this garden, truly,

911 **That nevere was ther gardyn of swich prys**
That never was there garden of such worth

912 **But if it were the verray paradys.**
Unless it were the true paradise.

913 **The odour of floures and the fresshe sighte**
The odor of flowers and the fresh sight

914 **Wolde han maked any herte lighte**
Would have made any heart light

915 **That evere was born, but if to greet siknesse**
That ever was born, unless too great sickness

916 **Or to greet sorwe helde it in distresse,**
Or too great sorrow held it in distress,

917 **So ful it was of beautee with plesaunce.**
It was so full of beauty with pleasure.

918 **At after-dyner gone they to daunce,**
After dinner they go to dance,

919 **And synge also, save Dorigen allone,**
And sing also, save Dorigen alone,

920 **Which made alwey hir compleint and hir moone,**
Who made always her complaint and her moan,

921 **For she ne saugh hym on the daunce go**
For she did not see him on the dance go

922 **That was hir housbonde and hir love also.**
Who was her husband and her love also.

923 **But nathelees she moste a tyme abyde**
But nonetheless she must a time abide

924 **And with good hope lete hir sorwe slyde.**
And with good hope let her sorrow slip away.

925 **Upon this daunce, amonges othere men,**
In this dance, among other men,

926 **Daunced a squier biforn Dorigen,**
Danced a squire before Dorigen,

927 **That fressher was and jolyer of array,**
Who was more lively and more gaily dressed,

928 **As to my doom, than is the month of May.**
As to my judgement, than is the month of May.

929 **He syngeth, daunceth, passynge any man**
He sings, dances, passing any man

930 **That is, or was, sith that the world bigan.**
That is, or was, since the world began.

931 **Therwith he was, if men sholde hym discryve,**
Therewith he was, if one should him describe,

932 **Oon of the beste farynge man on lyve;**
One of the most handsome men alive;

933 **Yong, strong, right vertuous, and riche, and wys,**
Young, strong, very valiant, and rich, and wise,

934 **And wel biloved, and holden in greet prys.**
And well beloved, and held in great esteem.

935 **And shortly, if the sothe I tellen shal,**
And shortly, if I shall tell the truth,

936 **Unwityng of this Dorigen at al,**
Unknown by this Dorigen at all,

937 **This lusty squier, servant to Venus,**
This lusty squire, servant to Venus,

938 **Which that ycleped was Aurelius,**
Who was called Aurelius,

939 **Hadde loved hire best of any creature**
Had loved her best of any creature

940 **Two yeer and moore, as was his aventure,**
Two years and more, as was his fate,

941 **But nevere dorste he tellen hire his grevaunce.**
But he never dared tell her his grievance.

942 **Withouten coppe he drank al his penaunce.**
Copiously he drank all his penance (suffered intensely).

943 **He was despeyred; no thyng dorste he seye,**
He was in despair; he dared say nothing,

944 **Save in his songes somewhat wolde he wreye**
Except in his songs somewhat he would reveal

945 **His wo, as in a general compleynyng;**
His woe, as in a general lament;

946 **He seyde he lovede and was biloved no thyng.**
He said he loved and was in no way loved in return

947 **Of swich matere made he manye layes,**
Of such subject matter made he many lays,

948 **Songes, compleintes, roundels, virelayes,**
Songs, complaints, roundels, virelays,

949 **How that he dorste nat his sorwe telle,**
 (Saying) how he dared not his sorrow tell,
 950 **But langwissheth as a furye dooth in helle;**
 But suffers as a fury does in hell;
 951 **And dye he moste, he seyde, as dide Ekko**
 And he must die, he said, as did Echo
 952 **For Narcisus, that dorste nat telle hir wo.**
 For Narcissus, she who dared not tell her woe.
 953 **In oother manere than ye heere me seye,**
 In other ways than you hear me say,
 954 **Ne dorste he nat to hire his wo biwreye,**
 He dared not reveal to her his woe,
 955 **Save that, paraventure, somtyme at daunces,**
 Except that, by chance, sometimes at dances,
 956 **Ther yonge folk kepen hir observaunces,**
 Where young folk observe their customs (of courtship),
 957 **It may wel be he looked on hir face**
 It may well be he looked on her face
 958 **In swich a wise as man that asketh grace;**
 In such a manner as a man that asks for grace;
 959 **But nothyng wiste she of his entente.**
 But she knew nothing of his intent.
 960 **Natheles it happed, er they thennes wente,**
 Nonetheless it happened, before they went away,
 961 **By cause that he was hire neighebour,**
 Because he was her neighbor,
 962 **And was a man of worshipe and honour,**
 And was a man of good reputation and honor,
 963 **And hadde yknowen hym of tyme yoore,**
 And (she) had known him for a long time,
 964 **They fille in speche; and forth, moore and moore,**
 They fell in speech; and forth, more and more,
 965 **Unto his purpos drough Aurelius,**
 Unto his purpose drew Aurelius,
 966 **And whan he saugh his tyme, he seyde thus:**
 And when he saw his time, he said thus:
 967 **"Madame," quod he, "by God that this world made,**
 "Madame," he said, "by God that this world made,
 968 **So that I wiste it myghte youre herte glade,**
 Providing that I knew it might gladden your heart,

969 **I wolde that day that youre Arveragus**
 I wish that day that your Arveragus
 970 **Wente over the see, that I, Aurelius,**
 Went over the sea, that I, Aurelius,
 971 **Hadde went ther nevere I sholde have come agayn.**
 Had went from where I should never have come back.
 972 **For wel I woot my servyce is in vayn;**
 For well I know my service is in vain;
 973 **My gerdon is but brestyng of myn herte.**
 My reward is but the breaking of my heart.
 974 **Madame, reweth upon my peynes smerte;**
 Madame, have pity upon my bitter pains;
 975 **For with a word ye may me sleen or save.**
 For with one word you may me slay or save.
 976 **Heere at youre feet God wolde that I were grave!**
 Here at your feet would God that I were buried!
 977 **I ne have as now no leyser moore to seye;**
 I have now no opportunity to say more;
 978 **Have mercy, sweete, or ye wol do me deye!"**
 Have mercy, sweet, or you will make me die!"
 979 **She gan to looke upon Aurelius;**
 She did look upon Aurelius;
 980 **"Is this youre wyl," quod she, "and sey ye thus?**
 "Is this your desire," said she, "and say you thus?
 981 **Nevere erst," quod she, "ne wiste I what ye mente.**
 Never before," she said, "Did I know what you meant.
 982 **But now, Aurelie, I knowe youre entente,**
 But now, Aurelius, I know your intention,
 983 **By thilke God that yaf me soule and lyf,**
 By that same God that gave me soul and life,
 984 **Ne shal I nevere been untrewre wyf**
 I shall never be an untrue wife
 985 **In word ne werk, as fer as I have wit;**
 In word nor deed, so long as I have my wits;
 986 **I wol been his to whom that I am knyht.**
 I will be his to whom that I am knit.
 987 **Taak this for fynal answer as of me."**
 Take this for my final answer."
 988 **But after that in pley thus seyde she:**
 But after that in play thus she said:

989 **"Aurelie," quod she, "by heighe God above,**
 "Aurelius," she said, "by high God above,
 990 **Yet wolde I graunte yow to been youre love,**
 Yet would I grant you to be your love,
 991 **Syn I yow se so pitously complayne.**
 Since I see you so piteously lament.
 992 **Looke what day that endelong Britayne**
 On whatever day that from end to end of Brittany
 993 **Ye remoeve alle the rokkes, stoon by stoon,**
 You remove all the rocks, stone by stone,
 994 **That they ne lette ship ne boot to goon --**
 So that they do not prevent ship nor boat to go --
 995 **I seye, whan ye han maad the coost so clene**
 I say, when you have made the coast so clean
 996 **Of rokkes that ther nys no stoon ysene,**
 Of rocks that there is no stone seen,
 997 **Thanne wol I love yow best of any man;**
 Then will I love you best of any man;
 998 **Have heer my trouthe, in al that evere I kan."**
 Have here my pledged word, in all that is in my power."
 999 **"Is ther noon oother grace in yow?" quod he.**
 "Is there no other grace in you?" he said.
 1000 **"No, by that Lord," quod she, "that maked me!**
 "No, by that Lord," she said, "that made me!
 1001 **For wel I woot that it shal never bityde.**
 For well I know that it shall never happen.
 1002 **Lat swiche folies out of youre herte slyde.**
 Let such follies pass out of your heart.
 1003 **What deyntee sholde a man han in his lyf**
 What pleasure should a man have in his life
 1004 **For to go love another mannes wyf,**
 To go love another man's wife,
 1005 **That hath hir body whan so that hym liketh?"**
 Who has her body whenever he pleases?"
 1006 **Aurelius ful ofte soore siketh;**
 Aurelius very often bitterly sighs;
 1007 **Wo was Aurelie whan that he this herde,**
 Woe was Aurelius when he heard this,
 1008 **And with a sorweful herte he thus answerde:**
 And with a sorrowful heart he thus answered:

1009 **"Madame," quod he, "this were an impossible!**
 "Madame," he said, "this would be an impossibility!
 1010 **Thanne moot I dye of sodeyn deth horrible."**
 Then I must die of sudden horrible death."
 1011 **And with that word he turned hym anon.**
 And with that word he turned away immediately.
 1012 **Tho coome hir othere freendes many oon,**
 Then came her other friends many a one,
 1013 **And in the aleyes romeden up and doun,**
 And in the garden paths roamed up and down,
 1014 **And nothyng wiste of this conclusioun,**
 And knew nothing of this business,
 1015 **But sodeynly bigonne revel newe**
 But suddenly began to revel anew
 1016 **Til that the brighte sonne loste his hewe;**
 Until the bright sun lost its hue;
 1017 **For th' orisonte hath reft the sonne his lyght --**
 For the horizon has bereft the sun of its light --
 1018 **This is as muche to seye as it was nyght --**
 This is as much to say that it was night --
 1019 **And hoom they goon in joye and in solas,**
 And home they go in joy and in pleasure,
 1020 **Save oonly wrecche Aurelius, allas!**
 Save only wretched Aurelius, alas!
 1021 **He to his hous is goon with sorweful herte.**
 He to his house is gone with sorrowful heart.
 1022 **He seeth he may nat fro his deeth asterte;**
 He sees he can not escape from his death;
 1023 **Hym semed that he felte his herte colde.**
 He thought that he felt his heart grow cold.
 1024 **Up to the hevene his handes he gan holde,**
 Up to the heaven his hands he did hold,
 1025 **And on his knowes bare he sette hym doun,**
 And on his bare knees he set himself down,
 1026 **And in his ravyng seyde his orisoun.**
 And in his delirium said his prayer.
 1027 **For verray wo out of his wit he breyde.**
 For utter woe out of his wits he suddenly went.
 1028 **He nyste what he spak, but thus he seyde;**
 He knew not what he spoke, but thus he said;

- 1029 **With pitous herte his pleynt hath he bigonne**
With piteous heart he has begun his complaint
- 1030 **Unto the goddes, and first unto the sonne:**
Unto the gods, and first unto the sun:
- 1031 **He seyde, "Appollo, god and governour**
He said, "Apollo, god and governor
- 1032 **Of every plaunte, herbe, tree, and flour,**
Of every plant, herb, tree, and flower,
- 1033 **That yevest, after thy declinacion,**
That gives, according to thy height (in the sky),
- 1034 **To ech of hem his tyme and his seson,**
To each of them its time and its season,
- 1035 **As thyn herberwe chaungeth lowe or heighe,**
As thy astronomical position changes low or high,
- 1036 **Lord Phebus, cast thy merciabe eigne**
Lord Phoebus, cast thy merciful eye
- 1037 **On wrecche Aurelie, which that am but lorn.**
On wretched Aurelius, who is as good as lost.
- 1038 **Lo, lord! My lady hath my deeth ysworn**
Lo, lord! My lady has sworn my death
- 1039 **Withoute gilt, but thy benignytee**
Without guilt, unless thy kindness
- 1040 **Upon my dedly herte have som pitee.**
Upon my dying heart have some pity.
- 1041 **For wel I woot, lord Phebus, if yow lest,**
For well I know, lord Phoebus, if you wish,
- 1042 **Ye may me helpen, save my lady, best.**
You can help me best (of anyone), except for my lady.
- 1043 **Now voucheth sauf that I may yow devyse**
Now grant that I may tell you
- 1044 **How that I may been holpen and in what wyse.**
How I may be helped and in what manner.
- 1045 **"Youre blisful suster, Lucina the sheene,**
"Your blissful sister, Lucina the bright,
- 1046 **That of the see is chief goddesse and queene**
Who of the sea is chief goddess and queen
- 1047 **(Though Neptunus have deitee in the see,**
(Though Neptune have godly dominion in the sea,
- 1048 **Yet emperisse aboven hym is she),**
Yet empress above him is she),
- 1049 **Ye knowen wel, lord, that right as hir desir**
You know well, lord, that just as her desire
- 1050 **Is to be quyked and lighted of youre fir,**
Is to be kindled and ignited by your fire,
- 1051 **For which she folweth yow ful bisily,**
For which she follows you very attentively,
- 1052 **Right so the see desireth naturelly**
Just so the sea desires naturally
- 1053 **To folwen hire, as she that is goddesse**
To follow her, as she that is goddess
- 1054 **Bothe in the see and ryveres moore and lesse.**
Both in the sea and rivers great and small.
- 1055 **Wherfore, lord Phebus, this is my requeste --**
Wherefore, lord Phoebus, this is my request --
- 1056 **Do this miracle, or do myn herte breste --**
Do this miracle, or make my heart break --
- 1057 **That now next at this opposicion**
That now at this next opposition (of the sun and moon)
- 1058 **Which in the signe shal be of the Leon,**
Which shall be in the sign of the Lion,
- 1059 **As preieth hire so greet a flood to brynge**
Pray her so great a high tide to bring
- 1060 **That fyve fadme at the leeste it oversprynge**
That five fathoms at the least it rise above
- 1061 **The hyeste rokke in Armorik Briteyne;**
The highest rock in Armorican Brittany;
- 1062 **And lat this flood endure yeres tweyne.**
And let this flood-tide endure for two years.
- 1063 **Thanne certes to my lady may I seye,**
Then certainly to my lady may I say,
- 1064 **'Holdeth youre heste, the rokkes been aweye.'**
'Keep your promise, the rocks are away.'
- 1065 **"Lord Phebus, dooth this miracle for me.**
"Lord Phoebus, do this miracle for me.
- 1066 **Preye hire she go no faster cours than ye;**
Pray her that she go at no faster speed as you;
- 1067 **I seye, preyeth your suster that she go**
I say, pray your sister that she go
- 1068 **No faster cours than ye thise yeres two.**
At no faster speed as you for these two years.

1069 **Thanne shal she been evene atte fulle alway,**
Then shall she be fully even with you always,
1070 **And spryng flood laste bothe nyght and day.**
And spring flood will last both night and day.
1071 **And but she vouche sauf in swich manere**
And unless she agree in such manner
1072 **To graunte me my sovereyn lady deere,**
To grant me my sovereign lady dear,
1073 **Prey hire to synken every rok adoun**
Pray her to sink every rock down
1074 **Into hir owene dirke regioun**
Into her own dark region
1075 **Under the ground, ther Pluto dwelleth inne,**
Under the ground, in which Pluto dwells,
1076 **Or nevere mo shal I my lady wynne.**
Or never more shall I win my lady.
1077 **Thy temple in Delphos wol I barefoot seke.**
Thy temple in Delphi I will barefoot seek.
1078 **Lord Phebus, se the teeris on my cheke,**
Lord Phoebus, see the tears on my cheek,
1079 **And of my peyne have som compassioun."**
And on my pain have some compassion."
1080 **And with that word in swowne he fil adoun,**
And with that word he fell down in a faint,
1081 **And longe tyme he lay forth in a traunce.**
And for a long time he lay in a trance.
1082 **His brother, which that knew of his penaunce,**
His brother, who knew of his suffering,
1083 **Up caughte hym and to bedde he hath hym broght.**
Caught him up and to bed he has him brought.
1084 **Dispeyred in this torment and this thoght**
Despaired in this torment and this thought
1085 **Lete I this woful creature lye;**
I leave this woeful creature lying;
1086 **Chese he, for me, wheither he wol lyve or dye.**
Let him choose, for all I care, whether he will live or die.
1087 **Arveragus, with heele and greet honour,**
Arveragus, with well-being and great honor,
1088 **As he that was of chivalrie the flour,**
As he that was of chivalry the flower,

1089 **Is comen hoom, and othere worthy men.**
Is come home, and other worthy men.
1090 **O blisful artow now, thou Dorigen,**
O blissful art thou now, thou Dorigen,
1091 **That hast thy lusty housbonde in thyne armes,**
That hast thy lusty husband in thine arms,
1092 **The fresshe knyght, the worthy man of armes,**
The vigorous knight, the worthy man of arms,
1093 **That loveth thee as his owene hertes lyf.**
That loves thee as his own heart's life.. O
1094 **No thyng list hym to been ymaginatyf,**
He not at all desired to be suspicious,
1095 **If any wight hadde spoke, whil he was oute,**
If any person had spoken, while he was away,
1096 **To hire of love; he hadde of it no doute.**
To her of love; he had of it no fear.
1097 **He nocht entendeth to no swich mateere,**
He pays no attention to any such matter,
1098 **But daunceth, justeth, maketh hire good cheere;**
But dances, jousts, makes her good cheer;
1099 **And thus in joye and blisse I lete hem dwelle,**
And thus in joy and bliss I let them dwell,
1100 **And of the sike Aurelius wol I telle.**
And of the sick Aurelius I will tell.
1101 **In langour and in torment furyus**
In suffering and in hellish torment
1102 **Two yeer and moore lay wrecche Aurelyus,**
Two years and more lay wretched Aurelius,
1103 **Er any foot he myghte on erthe gon;**
Before he could set a foot on the ground;
1104 **Ne confort in this tyme hadde he noon,**
Nor had he any comfort in this time,
1105 **Save of his brother, which that was a clerk.**
Except from his brother, who was a clerk.
1106 **He knew of al this wo and al this werk,**
He knew of all this woe and all this suffering,
1107 **For to noon oother creature, certeyn,**
For to no other creature, certainly,
1108 **Of this matere he dorste no word seyn.**
He dared say any word of this matter.

- 1109 **Under his brest he baar it moore secree**
Under his breast he bore it more secretly
- 1110 **Than evere dide Pamphilus for Galathee.**
Than ever did Pamphilus for Galathee.
- 1111 **His brest was hool, withoute for to sene,**
His breast was unhurt, in outward appearance,
- 1112 **But in his herte ay was the arwe kene.**
But in his heart ever was the sharp arrow.
- 1113 **And wel ye knowe that of a sursanure**
And well you know that for a wound healed only on the surface
- 1114 **In surgerye is perilous the cure,**
In surgery the treatment is perilous,
- 1115 **But men myghte touche the arwe or come therby.**
Unless one could touch the arrow or grasp it.
- 1116 **His brother weep and wayled pryvely,**
His brother wept and wailed secretly,
- 1117 **Til atte laste hym fil in remembrance,**
Until at the last he remembered,
- 1118 **That whiles he was at Orliens in Fraunce --**
That while he was at Orleans in France --
- 1119 **As yonge clerkes that been lykerous**
As young clerks that are eager
- 1120 **To reden artes that been curious**
To read arts that are arcane
- 1121 **Seken in every halke and every herne**
Seek in every nook and every cranny
- 1122 **Particuler sciences for to lerne --**
To learn specialized branches of learning --
- 1123 **He hym remembred that, upon a day,**
He remembered that, one day,
- 1124 **At Orliens in studie a book he say**
At Orleans in a study hall he saw a book
- 1125 **Of magyk natureel, which his felawe,**
Of natural science, which his fellow,
- 1126 **That was that tyme a bachelor of lawe,**
Who was at that time a bachelor of law,
- 1127 **Al were he ther to lerne another craft,**
Although he was there to learn another craft,
- 1128 **Hadde prively upon his desk ylaft;**
Had covertly left upon his desk;
- 1129 **Which book spak muchel of the operaciouns**
Which book spoke much of the operations
- 1130 **Touchynge the eighte and twenty mansiouns**
Concerning the eight and twenty stations
- 1131 **That longen to the moone, and swich folye**
That belong to the moon, and such folly
- 1132 **As in oure dayes is nat worth a flye --**
As in our days is not worth a fly --
- 1133 **For hooly chirches feith in oure bileve**
For holy church's faith in our belief
- 1134 **Ne suffreth noon illusioun us to greve.**
Does not allow any illusion to grieve us.
- 1135 **And whan this book was in his remembrance,**
And when this book was in his remembrance,
- 1136 **Anon for joye his herte gan to daunce,**
Straightway for joy his heart began to dance,
- 1137 **And to hymself he seyde pryvely:**
And to himself he said secretly,
- 1138 **"My brother shal be warissed hastily;**
"My brother shall be cured speedily;
- 1139 **For I am siker that ther be sciences**
For I am sure that there are sciences
- 1140 **By whiche men make diverse apparences,**
By which men make diverse illusions,
- 1141 **Swiche as thise subtile tregetoures pleye.**
Such as these subtle illusionists play.
- 1142 **For ofte at feestes have I wel herd seye**
For often at feasts have I well heard say
- 1143 **That tregetours withinne an halle large**
That illusionists within a large hall
- 1144 **Have maad come in a water and a barge,**
Have made come in a water and a barge,
- 1145 **And in the halle rowen up and down.**
And in the hall row up and down.
- 1146 **Somtyme hath semed come a grym leoun;**
Sometimes a grim lion has seemed to come;
- 1147 **And somtyme floures sprynge as in a mede;**
And sometimes flowers spring as in a field;
- 1148 **Somtyme a vyne, and grapes white and rede;**
Sometimes a vine, and grapes white and red;

1149 **Somtyme a castel, al of lym and stoon;**
Sometimes a castle, all of mortar and stone;

1150 **And whan hem lyked, voyded it anon.**
And when they pleased, they made it suddenly disappear.

1151 **Thus semed it to every mannes sighte.**
Thus it seemed to every man's sight.

1152 **"Now thanne conclude I thus: that if I myghte**
"Now then conclude I thus: that if I might

1153 **At Orliens som oold felawe yfynde**
At Orleans find some old fellow

1154 **That hadde these moones mansions in mynde,**
Who had these moon's stations in mind,

1155 **Or oother magyk natureel above,**
Or other natural science beyond that

1156 **He sholde wel make my brother han his love.**
He should well make my brother have his love.

1157 **For with an apparence a clerk may make,**
For with an apparition a clerk may make it seem,

1158 **To mannes sighte, that alle the rokkes blake**
To man's sight, that all the rocks black

1159 **Of Britaigne weren yvoyded everichon,**
Of Brittany were removed every one,

1160 **And shippes by the brynke comen and gon,**
And ships by the shore come and go,

1161 **And in swich forme enduren a wowke or two.**
And in such form endure a week or two.

1162 **Thanne were my brother warissed of his wo;**
Then my brother would be cured of his woe;

1163 **Thanne moste she nedes holden hire biheste,**
Then must she by necessity keep her promise,

1164 **Or elles he shal shame hire atte leeste."**
Or else he shall shame her at the least."

1165 **What sholde I make a lenger tale of this?**
Why should I make a longer tale of this?

1166 **Unto his brotheres bed he comen is,**
Unto his brother's bed he is come,

1167 **And swich confort he yaf hym for to gon**
And such encouragement he gave him to go

1168 **To Orliens that he up stirte anon,**
To Orleans that he leaped up immediately,

1169 **And on his way forthward thanne is he fare**
And on his way forth then is he gone

1170 **In hope for to been lissed of his care.**
In hope to be relieved of his care.

1171 **Whan they were come almost to that citee,**
When they had come almost to that city,

1172 **But if it were a two furlong or thre,**
Not more than two or three furlongs,

1173 **A yong clerk romynge by hymself they mette,**
A young clerk roaming by himself they met,

1174 **Which that in Latyn thriftily hem grette,**
Who in Latin politely greeted them,

1175 **And after that he seyde a wonder thyng:**
And after that he said a wonderful thing:

1176 **"I knowe," quod he, "the cause of youre comyng."**
"I know," he said, "the cause of your coming."

1177 **And er they ferther any foote wente,**
And before they went any foot farther,

1178 **He tolde hem al that was in hire entente.**
He told them all that was in their intention.

1179 **This Briton clerk hym asked of felawes**
This Breton clerk asked him about fellows

1180 **The whiche that he had knowe in olde dawes,**
Whom he had known in old days,

1181 **And he answerde hym that they dede were,**
And he answered him that they were dead,

1182 **For which he weep ful ofte many a teere.**
For which he wept very often many a tear.

1183 **Doun of his hors Aurelius lighte anon,**
Down off his horse Aurelius alighted straightway,

1184 **And with this magicien forth is he gon**
And with this magician forth he is gone

1185 **Hoom to his hous, and maden hem wel at ese.**
Home to his house, and put them well at ease.

1186 **Hem lakked no vitaille that myghte hem plese.**
They lacked no foods that might please them.

1187 **So wel arrayed hous as ther was oon**
So well appointed a house as this one was

1188 **Aurelius in his lyf saugh nevere noon.**
Aurelius in his life saw never a one.

1189 **He shewed hym, er he wente to sopeer,**
 He showed him, before he went to supper,
 1190 **Forestes, parkes ful of wilde deer;**
 Forests, parks full of wild deer;
 1191 **Ther saugh he hertes with hir hornes hye,**
 There he saw harts with their high horns,
 1192 **The gretteste that evere were seyn with ye.**
 The greatest that ever were seen with eye.
 1193 **He saugh of hem an hondred slayn with houndes,**
 He saw a hundred of them slain by hounds,
 1194 **And somme with arwes blede of bittre woundes.**
 And some bled because of bitter wounds from arrows.
 1195 **He saugh, whan voyded were thise wilde deer,**
 He saw, when these wild deer were removed,
 1196 **Thise fauconers upon a fair ryver,**
 These hunters with falcons upon a fair riverbank,
 1197 **That with hir haukes han the heron slayn.**
 That with their hawks have slain the heron.
 1198 **Tho saugh he knyghtes justyng in a playn;**
 Then he saw knights jousting in a plain;
 1199 **And after this he dide hym swich plesaunce**
 And after this he provided him such pleasure
 1200 **That he hym shewed his lady on a daunce,**
 That he showed him his lady in a dance,
 1201 **On which hymself he daunced, as hym thoughte.**
 In which he himself danced, as he thought.
 1202 **And whan this maister that this magyk wroughte**
 And when this master that wrought this magic
 1203 **Saugh it was tyme, he clapte his handes two,**
 Saw it was time, he clapped his two hands,
 1204 **And farewell! Al oure revel was ago.**
 And farewell! All our revel was gone.
 1205 **And yet remoeved they nevere out of the hous,**
 And yet moved they never out of the house,
 1206 **Whil they saugh al this sighte merveillous,**
 While they saw all this marvelous sight,
 1207 **But in his studie, ther as his bookes be,**
 But in his study, where his books are,
 1208 **They seten stille, and no wight but they thre.**
 They sat still, and no person (was there) but these three.

1209 **To hym this maister called his squier,**
 This master called his squire to him,
 1210 **And seyde hym thus: "Is redy oure soper?"**
 And said to him thus: "Is our supper ready?"
 1211 **Almoost an heure it is, I undertake,**
 Almost an hour it is, I declare,
 1212 **Sith I yow bad oure soper for to make,**
 Since I ordered you to make our supper,
 1213 **Whan that thise worthy men wenten with me**
 When these worthy men went with me
 1214 **Into my studie, ther as my bookes be."**
 Into my study, where my books are."
 1215 **"Sire," quod this squier, "whan it liketh yow,**
 "Sir," said this squire, "when it pleases you,
 1216 **It is al redy, though ye wol right now."**
 It is all ready, even if you want it right now."
 1217 **"Go we thanne soupe," quod he, "as for the beste.**
 "Go we then to sup," said he, "as is the best (to do).
 1218 **Thise amorous folk somtyme moote han hir reste."**
 These amorous folk sometime must have their rest."
 1219 **At after-soper fille they in treetee**
 At after-supper they began to discuss
 1220 **What somme sholde this maistres gerdon be**
 What sum this master's payment should be
 1221 **To remoeven alle the rokkes of Britayne,**
 To remove all the rocks of Brittany,
 1222 **And eek from Gerounde to the mouth of Sayne.**
 And also from Gironde to the mouth of Seine.
 1223 **He made it straunge, and swoor, so God hym save,**
 He raised difficulties, and swore, as God may him save,
 1224 **Lasse than a thousand pound he wolde nat have,**
 Less than a thousand pounds he would not have,
 1225 **Ne gladly for that somme he wolde nat goon.**
 Nor would he go gladly even for that sum.
 1226 **Aurelius, with blisful herte anoon,**
 Aurelius, with blissful heart, at once
 1227 **Answerde thus: "Fy on a thousand pound!**
 Answered thus: "Fie on a thousand pounds!
 1228 **This wyde world, which that men seye is round,**
 This wide world, which men say is round,

- 1229 **I wolde it yeve, if I were lord of it.**
I would give it, if I were lord of it.
- 1230 **This bargayn is ful dryve, for we been knyht.**
This bargain is fully concluded, for we are agreed.
- 1231 **Ye shal be payed trewely, by my trouthe!**
You shall be paid truly, by my pledged word!
- 1232 **But looketh now, for no necligence or slouthe**
But look now, for no negligence or laziness
- 1233 **Ye tarie us heere no lenger than to-morwe."**
You delay us here any longer than to-morrow."
- 1234 **"Nay," quod this clerk, "have heer my feith to borwe."**
"Nay," said this clerk, "have here my faith as a pledge."
- 1235 **To bedde is goon Aurelius whan hym leste,**
To bed is gone Aurelius when it pleased him,
- 1236 **And wel ny al that nyght he hadde his reste.**
And well nigh all that night he had his rest.
- 1237 **What for his labour and his hope of blisse,**
What for his labor and his hope of bliss,
- 1238 **His woful herte of penaunce hadde a lisse.**
His woeful heart of suffering had relief.
- 1239 **Upon the morwe, whan that it was day,**
Upon the morrow, when it was day,
- 1240 **To Britaigne tooke they the righte way,**
To Brittany took they the direct route,
- 1241 **Aurelius and this magicien bisyde,**
Aurelius and this magician beside him,
- 1242 **And been descended ther they wolde abyde.**
And are arrived where they would stay.
- 1243 **And this was, as thise bookes me remembre,**
And this was, as these books remind me,
- 1244 **The colde, frosty seson of Decembre.**
The cold, frosty season of December.
- 1245 **Phebus wax old, and hewed lyk laton,**
Phoebus grew old, and colored grayish silver,
- 1246 **That in his hoote declynacion**
That in his hot declination (in summer)
- 1247 **Shoon as the burned gold with stremes brighte;**
Shone like burnished gold with bright rays;
- 1248 **But now in Capricorn adoun he lighte,**
But now in Capricorn he alights down,
- 1249 **Where as he shoon ful pale, I dar wel seyn.**
Where he shone full pale, I dare well say.
- 1250 **The bittre frostes, with the sleet and reyn,**
The bitter frosts, with the sleet and rain,
- 1251 **Destroyed hath the grene in every yerd.**
Have destroyed the green in every garden.
- 1252 **Janus sit by the fyr, with double berd,**
Janus sits by the fire, with double beard,
- 1253 **And drynketh of his bugle horn the wyn;**
And drinks the wine from his buffalo horn;
- 1254 **Biforn hym stant brawen of the tusked swyn,**
Before him stands meat of the tusked boar,
- 1255 **And "Nowel" crieth every lusty man.**
And "Noel" cries every lusty man.
- 1256 **Aurelius in al that evere he kan**
Aurelius in all that ever he can
- 1257 **Dooth to this maister chiere and reverence,**
Provides for this master entertainment and reverence,
- 1258 **And preyeth hym to doon his diligence**
And prays him to work diligently
- 1259 **To bryngen hym out of his peynes smerte,**
To bring him out of his bitter pains,
- 1260 **Or with a swerd that he wolde slitte his herte.**
Or with a sword he would slit his heart.
- 1261 **This subtil clerk swich routhe had of this man**
This subtle clerk had such pity for this man
- 1262 **That nyght and day he spedde hym that he kan**
That night and day he worked as fast as he can
- 1263 **To wayten a tyme of his conclusioun;**
To seek a time for his astronomical operation;
- 1264 **This is to seye, to maken illusioun,**
This is to say, to make illusion,
- 1265 **By swich an apparence or jogelrye --**
By such an appearance or conjurer's trick --
- 1266 **I ne kan no termes of astrologye --**
I know no technical terms of astrology --
- 1267 **That she and every wight sholde wene and seye**
That she and every person should believe and say
- 1268 **That of Britaigne the rokkes were aweye,**
That the rocks of Brittany were away,

- 1269 **Or ellis they were sonken under grounde.**
Or else they were sunk under ground.
- 1270 **So atte laste he hath his tyme yfounde**
So at the last he has his time found
- 1271 **To maken his japes and his wrecchednesse**
To make his tricks and his wretched deeds
- 1272 **Of swich a supersticious cursednesse.**
Of such a superstitious cursedness.
- 1273 **His tables Tolletanes forth he brought,**
His astronomical tables of Toledo he brought forth,
- 1274 **Ful wel corrected, ne ther lakked nought,**
Accurately corrected, nor was there anything lacking,
- 1275 **Neither his collect ne his expans yeeris,**
Neither his tables of single years nor of twenty-year periods,
- 1276 **Ne his rootes, ne his othere geeris,**
Nor his dates for calculations, nor his other apparatus,
- 1277 **As been his centris and his argumentz**
Such as are his table of distances and his angles for calculation
- 1278 **And his proporcioneles convenientz**
And his table for computing motions (of the planets)
- 1279 **For his equacions in every thyng.**
For his divisions of the sphere in every detail.
- 1280 **And by his eighte speere in his wirkyng**
And by his eighth sphere in his working
- 1281 **He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was shove**
He knew full well how far the star Alnath was shoved
- 1282 **Fro the heed of thilke fixe Aries above,**
From the head of that fixed Aries above,
- 1283 **That in the ninthe speere considered is;**
That in the ninth sphere is observed;
- 1284 **Ful subtilly he kalkuled al this.**
Full subtly he calculated all this.
- 1285 **Whan he hadde founde his firste mansioun,**
When he had found his first position of the moon,
- 1286 **He knew the remenaunt by proporcoun,**
He knew the remnant by astronomical tables,
- 1287 **And knew the arisyng of his moone weel,**
And knew the arising of his moon well,
- 1288 **And in whos face, and terme, and everydeel;**
And in which planet's face and term (zodiacal divisions), and everything;
- 1289 **And knew ful weel the moones mansioun**
And knew full well the moon's position
- 1290 **Acordaunt to his operacioun,**
In accordance with his operation,
- 1291 **And knew also his othere observaunces**
And knew also his other observations
- 1292 **For swiche illusiouns and swiche meschaunces**
For such illusions and such evil practices
- 1293 **As hethen folk useden in thilke dayes.**
As heathen folk used in those days.
- 1294 **For which no lenger maked he delayes,**
For which no longer he made delay,
- 1295 **But thurgh his magik, for a wyke or tweye,**
But through his magic, for a week or two,
- 1296 **It semed that alle the rokkes were aweye.**
It seemed that all the rocks were away.
- 1297 **Aurelius, which that yet despeired is**
Aurelius, who is yet in despair
- 1298 **Wher he shal han his love or fare amys,**
Whether he shall have his love or fare badly,
- 1299 **Awaiteth nyght and day on this myracle;**
Waits night and day for this miracle;
- 1300 **And whan he knew that ther was noon obstacle,**
And when he knew that there was no obstacle,
- 1301 **That voyded were these rokkes everychon,**
That every one of these rocks were removed,
- 1302 **Doun to his maistres feet he fil anon,**
Down to his mistress' feet he fell at once,
- 1303 **And seyde, "I woful wrecche, Aurelius,**
And said, "I woeful wretched, Aurelius,
- 1304 **Thanke yow, lord, and lady myn Venus,**
Thank you, lord, and my lady Venus,
- 1305 **That me han holpen fro my cares colde."**
Who have helped me out of my deadly cares."
- 1306 **And to the temple his wey forth hath he holde,**
And to the temple he has held forth his way,

1307 **Where as he knew he sholde his lady see.**
Where he knew he should see his lady.

1308 **And whan he saugh his tyme, anon-right hee,**
And when he saw his time, immediately he,

1309 **With dredful herte and with ful humble cheere,**
With fearful heart and with full humble manner,

1310 **Salewed hath his sovereyn lady deere:**
Has saluted his sovereign lady dear:

1311 **"My righte lady," quod this woful man,**
"My true lady," said this woeful man,

1312 **"Whom I moost drede and love as I best kan,**
"Whom I most dread and love as I best know how,

1313 **And lothest were of al this world displese,**
And am of all this world most reluctant to displease,

1314 **Nere it that I for yow have swich disese**
Were it not that I for you have such distress

1315 **That I moste dyen heere at youre foot anon,**
That I must die here at your feet right now,

1316 **Noght wolde I telle how me is wo bigon.**
I would tell nothing of how I am beset by woe.

1317 **But certes outhere moste I dye or pleyne;**
But certainly either I must die or complain;

1318 **Ye sle me giltelees for verray peyne.**
You slay me guiltless for sheer pain.

1319 **But of my deeth thogh that ye have no routhe,**
But though you have no pity on my death,

1320 **Avyseth yow er that ye breke youre trouthe.**
Think carefully before you break your pledged word.

1321 **Repenteth yow, for thilke God above,**
Repent, for that God above,

1322 **Er ye me sleen by cause that I yow love.**
Before you slay me because I love you.

1323 **For, madame, wel ye woot what ye han hight --**
For, madam, you know well what you have promised --

1324 **Nat that I chalange any thyng of right**
Not that I claim any thing as a right

1325 **Of yow, my sovereyn lady, but youre grace --**
From you, my sovereign lady, except for your good favor --

1326 **But in a gardyn yond, at swich a place,**
But in a garden yonder, at a particular place,

1327 **Ye woot right wel what ye bihighten me;**
You know right well what you promised me;

1328 **And in myn hand youre trouthe plighen ye**
And in my hand you pledged your word

1329 **To love me best -- God woot, ye seyde so,**
To love me best -- God knows, you said so,

1330 **Al be that I unworthy am thereto.**
Although I am unworthy of it.

1331 **Madame, I speke it for the honour of yow**
Madam, I speak it for your honor

1332 **Moore than to save myn hertes lyf right now --**
More than to save my heart's life right now --

1333 **I have do so as ye comanded me;**
I have done as you commanded me;

1334 **And if ye vouche sauf, ye may go see.**
And if you agree, you may go see.

1335 **Dooth as yow list; have youre biheste in mynde,**
Do as you please; have your promise in mind,

1336 **For, quyk or deed, right there ye shal me fynde.**
For, living or dead, right there you shall find me.

1337 **In yow lith al to do me lyve or deye --**
In you lies the power to make me live or die --

1338 **But wel I woot the rokkes been aweye."**
But well I know the rocks are away."

1339 **He taketh his leve, and she astoned stood;**
He takes his leave, and she astounded stood;

1340 **In al hir face nas a drope of blood.**
In all her face was not a drop of blood.

1341 **She wende nevere han come in swich a trappe.**
She never expected to have come in such a trap.

1342 **"Allas," quod she, "that evere this sholde happe!**
"Alas," she said, "that ever this should happen!

1343 **For wende I nevere by possibilitee**
For I never supposed by possibility

1344 **That swich a monstre or merveille myghte be!**
That such a wonder or marvel could be!

1345 **It is agayns the proces of nature."**
It is against the laws of nature."

1346 **And hoom she goth a sorweful creature;**
And home she goes a sorrowful creature;

1347 **For verray feere unnethe may she go.**
For sheer fear she can hardly walk.

1348 **She wepeth, wailleth, al a day or two,**
She weeps, wails, all one day or two,

1349 **And swowneth, that it routhe was to see.**
And swoons, that it was pitiful to see.

1350 **But why it was to no wight tolde shee,**
But why it was she told to no person,

1351 **For out of towne was goon Arveragus.**
For Arveragus had gone out of town.

1352 **But to hirself she spak, and seyde thus,**
But to herself she spoke, and said thus,

1353 **With face pale and with ful sorweful cheere,**
With face pale and with full sorrowful manner,

1354 **In hire compleynt, as ye shal after heere:**
In her complaint, as you shall after hear:

1355 **"Allas," quod she, "on thee, Fortune, I pleyne,**
"Alas," said she, "on thee, Fortune, I complain,

1356 **That unwar wrapped hast me in thy cheyne,**
That without warning hast wrapped me in thy chain,

1357 **Fro which t' escape woot I no socour,**
From which to escape I know no help,

1358 **Save oonly death or elles dishonour;**
Save only death or else dishonor;

1359 **Oon of thise two bihoveth me to chese.**
One of these two I am compelled to choose.

1360 **But nathelees, yet have I levere to lese**
But neverthelees, yet I would rather lose

1361 **My lif than of my body to have a shame,**
My life than of my body to have a shame,

1362 **Or knowe myselfen fals, or lese my name;**
Or know myself false, or lose my good name;

1363 **And with my deth I may be quyt, ywis.**
And with my death I may be free from blame, indeed.

1364 **Hath ther nat many a noble wyf er this,**
Has there not many a noble wife before this,

1365 **And many a mayde, yslayn hirself, allas,**
And many a maid, slain herself, alas,

1366 **Rather than with hir body doon trespas?**
Rather than do sin with her body?

1367 **"Yis, certes, lo, thise stories beren witness:**
"Yes indeed, certainly, lo, these stories bear witness:

1368 **Whan thritty tirauntz, ful of cursednesse,**
When thirty tyrants, full of cursedness,

1369 **Hadde slayn Phidon in Atthenes atte feste,**
Had slain Phidon in Athens at the feast,

1370 **They comanded his doghtres for t' areste**
They commanded (the guards) to seize his daughters

1371 **And bryngen hem biforn hem in despit,**
And bring them before them as an insult,

1372 **Al naked, to fulfille hir foul delit,**
All naked, to fulfill their foul delight,

1373 **And in hir fadres blood they made hem daunce**
And in their father's blood they made them dance

1374 **Upon the pavement, God yeve hem meschaunce!**
Upon the pavement, God give them misfortune!

1375 **For which thise woful maydens, ful of drede,**
For which these woeful maidens, full of dread,

1376 **Rather than they wolde lese hir maydenhede,**
Rather than they would lose their maidenhood,

1377 **They prively been stirt into a welle**
They secretly have leaped into a well

1378 **And dreynte hemselven, as the bookes telle.**
And drowned themselves, as the books tell.

1379 **"They of Mecene leete enquere and seke**
"They of Messene had (people) search out and seek

1380 **Of Lacedomye fifty maydens eke,**
Fifty maidens of Sparta also,

1381 **On whiche they wolden doon hir lecherye.**
On whom they would do their lechery.

1382 **But was ther noon of al that compaignye**
But there was none of all that company

1383 **That she nas slayn, and with a good entente**
That she was not slain, and with a good intent

1384 **Chees rather for to dye than assente**
Chose rather to die than assent

1385 **To been oppressed of hir maydenhede.**
To be deprived of her maidenhood.

1386 **Why sholde I thanne to dye been in drede?**
Why should I then be afraid to die?

- 1387 **Lo, eek, the tiraunt Aristoclidēs,**
Lo, also, the tyrant Aristoclidēs,
- 1388 **That loved a mayden, heet Stymphalides,**
That loved a maiden, called Stymphalides,
- 1389 **Whan that hir fader slayn was on a nyght,**
When her father was slain on a night,
- 1390 **Unto Dianes temple goth she right,**
Unto Diana's temple she goes directly,
- 1391 **And hente the ymage in hir handes two,**
And seized the statue in her two hands,
- 1392 **Fro which ymage wolde she nevere go.**
From which statue she would never go.
- 1393 **No wight ne myghte hir handes of it arace**
No person could pull her hands away from it
- 1394 **Til she was slayn, right in the selve place.**
Until she was slain, right in the same place.
- 1395 **"Now sith that maydens hadden swich despit**
"Now since maidens had such disdain
- 1396 **To been defouled with mannes foul delit,**
To be defiled by man's foul delight,
- 1397 **Wel oghte a wyf rather hirselves slee**
Well ought a wife rather herself slay
- 1398 **Than be defouled, as it thynketh me.**
Than be defiled, as it seems to me.
- 1399 **What shal I seyn of Hasdrubales wyf,**
What shall I say of Hasdrubale's wife,
- 1400 **That at Cartage birafte herself hir lyf?**
That at Carthage deprived herself of her life?
- 1401 **For whan she saugh that Romayns wan the toun,**
For when she saw that Romans won the town,
- 1402 **She took hir children alle, and skipte adoun**
She took her children all, and leaped down
- 1403 **Into the fyr, and chees rather to dye**
Into the fire, and chose rather to die
- 1404 **Than any Romayn dide hire vileynye.**
Than any Roman did her a dishonor.
- 1405 **Hath nat Lucesse yslayn herself, allas,**
Has not Lucretia slain herself, alas,
- 1406 **At Rome, whan that she oppressed was**
At Rome, when she was raped
- 1407 **Of Tarquyn, for hire thoughte it was a shame**
By Tarquin, for she thought it was a shame
- 1408 **To lyven whan she hadde lost hir name?**
To live when she had lost her good name?
- 1409 **The sevene maydens of Milesie also**
The seven maidens of Miletus also
- 1410 **Han slayn hemself, for verrey drede and wo,**
Have slain themselves, for sheer dread and woe,
- 1411 **Rather than folk of Gawle hem sholde oppresse.**
Rather than folk of Galatia should rape them.
- 1412 **Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse,**
More than a thousand stories, as I guess,
- 1413 **Koude I now telle as touchynge this mateere.**
Could I now tell concerning this matter.
- 1414 **Whan Habradate was slayn, his wyf so deere**
When Habradate was slain, his wife so dear
- 1415 **Hirselves slow, and leet hir blood to glyde**
Herself slew, and let her blood pour
- 1416 **In Habradates woundes depe and wyde,**
In Habradate's wounds deep and wide,
- 1417 **And seyde, `My body, at the leeste way,**
And said, `My body, at the least,
- 1418 **Ther shal no wight defoulen, if I may."**
There shall no person defile, if I can (help it)."
-
- 1419 **"What sholde I mo ensamples heerof sayn,**
"Why should I tell more examples concerning this,
- 1420 **Sith that so manye han hemselves slayn**
Since so many have themselves slain
- 1421 **Wel rather than they wolde defouled be?**
Well rather than they would be defiled?
- 1422 **I wol conclude that it is bet for me**
I will conclude that it is better for me
- 1423 **To sleen myself than been defouled thus.**
To slay myself than be defiled thus.
- 1424 **I wol be trewe unto Arveragus,**
I will be true unto Arveragus,
- 1425 **Or rather sleen myself in som manere,**
Or rather slay myself in some manner,
- 1426 **As dide Demociones doghter deere**
As did Demotion's daughter dear

- 1427 **By cause that she wolde nat defouled be.**
Because she would not defiled be.
- 1428 **O Cedasus, it is ful greet pitee**
O Scedasmus, it is a very great pity
- 1429 **To reden how thy doghtren deyde, allas,**
To read how thy daughters died, alas,
- 1430 **That slowe hemself for swich manere cas.**
Who slew themselves for a similar sort of cause.
- 1431 **As greet a pitee was it, or wel moore,**
As great a pity was it, or well more,
- 1432 **The Theban mayden that for Nichanore**
The Theban maiden that for Nichanore
- 1433 **Hirselven slow, right for swich manere wo.**
Slew herself, exactly for such sort of woe.
- 1434 **Another Theban mayden dide right so;**
Another Theban maiden did exactly the same;
- 1435 **For oon of Macidonye hadde hire oppressed,**
Because one of Macedonia had raped her,
- 1436 **She with hire deeth hir maydenhede redressed.**
She with her death avenged her maidenhood.
- 1437 **What shal I seye of Nicerates wyf,**
What shall I say of Nicerates' wife,
- 1438 **That for swich cas birafte hirself hir lyf?**
That for a similar case deprived herself of her life?
- 1439 **How trewe eek was to Alcebiades**
How true also to Alcebiades was
- 1440 **His love, that rather for to dyen chees**
His lover, who chose rather to die
- 1441 **Than for to suffre his body unburyed be.**
Than to allow his body to be unburiad.
- 1442 **Lo, which a wyf was Alceste," quod she.**
Lo, what a wife was Alcestis," she said.
- 1443 **"What seith Omer of goode Penalopee?**
"What says Homer of good Penelope?
- 1444 **Al Grece knoweth of hire chastitee.**
All Greece knows of her chastity.
- 1445 **Pardee, of Laodomya is writen thus,**
By God, of Laodomya is written thus,
- 1446 **That whan at Troie was slayn Protheselaus,**
That when at Troy Protheselaus was slain,
- 1447 **Ne lenger wolde she lyve after his day.**
No longer would she live after his day (i.e., death).
- 1448 **The same of noble Porcia telle I may;**
The same of noble Portia I can tell;
- 1449 **Withoute Brutus koude she nat lyve,**
Without Brutus she could not live,
- 1450 **To whom she hadde al hool hir herte yive.**
To whom she had entirely given her heart.
- 1451 **The parfit wyfhod of Arthemesie**
The perfect wifehood of Arthemesie
- 1452 **Honored is thurgh al the Barbarie.**
Honored is through all heathendom.
- 1453 **O Teuta, queene, thy wyfly chastitee**
O Teuta, queen, thy wifely chastity
- 1454 **To alle wyves may a mirour bee.**
To all wives may be a mirror.
- 1455 **The same thyng I seye of Bilyea,**
The same thing I say of Bilia,
- 1456 **Of Rodogone, and eek Valeria."**
Of Rhodogone, and also Valeria."
- 1457 **Thus pleynd Dorigen a day or tweye,**
Thus Dorigen complained a day or two,
- 1458 **Purposynge evere that she wolde deye.**
Intending ever that she would die.
- 1459 **But nathelees, upon the thridde nyght,**
But neverthelees, upon the third night,
- 1460 **Hoom cam Arveragus, this worthy knyght,**
Home came Arveragus, this worthy knight,
- 1461 **And asked hire why that she weep so soore;**
And asked her why she wept so bitterly;
- 1462 **And she gan wepen ever lenger the moore.**
And she began to weep, ever the longer (she wept) the more.
- 1463 **"Allas," quod she, "that evere was I born!**
"Alas," said she, "that ever I was born!
- 1464 **Thus have I seyde," quod she, "thus have I sworn" --**
Thus have I said," said she, "thus have I sworn" --
- 1465 **And toold hym al as ye han herd bifore;**
And told him all as you have heard before;
- 1466 **It nedeth nat reherce it yow namoore.**
There is no need to repeat it to you any more.

- 1467 **This housbonde, with glad chiere, in freendly wyse**
This husband, with cheerful demeanor, in a friendly manner
- 1468 **Answerde and seyde as I shal yow devyse:**
Answered and said as I shall tell you:
- 1469 **"Is ther oght elles, Dorigen, but this?"**
"Is there anything else, Dorigen, but this?"
- 1470 **"Nay, nay," quod she, "God helpe me so as wys!**
"Nay, nay," she said, "So help me God!
- 1471 **This is to mucche, and it were Goddes wille."**
This is too much, even if it were God's will."
- 1472 **"Ye, wyf," quod he, "lat slepen that is stille.**
"Yes, wife," he said, "let sleep that which is still.
- 1473 **It may be wel, paraventure, yet to day.**
It may be well, perhaps, yet to day.
- 1474 **Ye shul youre trouthe holden, by my fay!**
You shall keep your pledged word, by my faith!
- 1475 **For God so wisly have mercy upon me,**
For as surely as God may have mercy upon me,
- 1476 **I hadde wel levere ystiked for to be**
I had well rather be stabbed
- 1477 **For verray love which that I to yow have,**
For sheer love which I to have for you,
- 1478 **But if ye sholde youre trouthe kepe and save.**
Than you should (do anything but) keep and save your pledged word.
- 1479 **Trouthe is the hyste thyng that man may kepe" --**
One's pldged word is the highest thing that one may keep" --
- 1480 **But with that word he brast anon to wepe,**
But with that word he immediately burst into tears,
- 1481 **And seyde, "I yow forbede, up peyne of deeth,**
And said, "I you forbid, upon pain of death,
- 1482 **That nevere, whil thee lasteth lyf ne breeth,**
That never, while thy life or breath lasts,
- 1483 **To no wight telle thou of this aventure --**
Thou tell any person about this adventure --
- 1484 **As I may best, I wol my wo endure --**
As I best can, I will my woe endure --
- 1485 **Ne make no contenance of hevynesse,**
Nor make any outward appearance of sadness,
- 1486 **That folk of yow may demen harm or gesse."**
That folk may believe or guess anything harmful concerning you."
- 1487 **And forth he cleped a squier and a mayde:**
And forth he called a squire and a maid:
- 1488 **"Gooth forth anon with Dorigen," he sayde,**
"Go forth right now with Dorigen," he said,
- 1489 **"And bryngeth hire to swich a place anon."**
"And bring her to such a place quickly."
- 1490 **They take hir leve, and on hir wey they gon,**
They take their leave, and on their way they go,
- 1491 **But they ne wiste why she thider wente.**
But they knew not why she thither went.
- 1492 **He nolde no wight tellen his entente.**
He would no person tell his intention.
- 1493 **Paraventure an heep of yow, ywis,**
Perhaps a heap of you, indeed,
- 1494 **Wol holden hym a lewed man in this**
Will consider him a foolish man in this
- 1495 **That he wol putte his wyf in jupartie.**
That he will put his wife in jeopardy.
- 1496 **Herkneth the tale er ye upon hire crie.**
Listen to the tale before you cry out about her.
- 1497 **She may have bettre fortune than yow semeth;**
She may have better fortune than it seems to you;
- 1498 **And whan that ye han herd the tale, demeth.**
And when you have heard the tale, judge.
- 1499 **This squier, which that highte Aurelius,**
This squire, who was called Aurelius,
- 1500 **On Dorigen that was so amorus,**
On Dorigen who was so amorous,
- 1501 **Of aventure happed hire to meete**
By chance happened to meet her
- 1502 **Amydde the toun, right in the quykest strete,**
Amidst the town, right in the busiest street,
- 1503 **As she was bown to goon the wey forth right**
As she was about to go the way directly
- 1504 **Toward the gardyn ther as she had hight.**
Toward the garden where she had promised (to go).

1505 **And he was to the gardyn-ward also;**
And he was going toward the garden also;

1506 **For wel he spyed whan she wolde go**
For well he spied when she would go

1507 **Out of hir hous to any maner place.**
Out of her house to any sort of place.

1508 **But thus they mette, of aventure or grace,**
But thus they met, by chance or luck,

1509 **And he saleweth hire with glad entente,**
And he salutes her cheerfully,

1510 **And asked of hire whiderward she wente;**
And asked her where she went;

1511 **And she answerde, half as she were mad,**
And she answered, as if she were half mad,

1512 **"Unto the gardyn, as myn housbonde bad,**
"Unto the garden, as my husband commanded,

1513 **My trouthe for to holde -- allas, allas!"**
My pledged word to keep -- alas, alas!"

1514 **Aurelius gan wondren on this cas,**
Aurelius began to wonder about this case,

1515 **And in his herte hadde greet compassioun**
And in his heart had great compassion

1516 **Of hire and of hire lamentacioun,**
Of her and of her lamentation,

1517 **And of Arveragus, the worthy knyght,**
And of Arveragus, the worthy knight,

1518 **That bad hire holden al that she had hight,**
Who commanded her to keep all that she had promised,

1519 **So looth hym was his wyf sholde breke hir trouthe;**
So hateful to him it was that his wife should break her word;

1520 **And in his herte he caughte of this greet routhe,**
And in his heart he took great pity on this,

1521 **Considerynge the beste on every syde,**
Considering what would be best in every respect,

1522 **That fro his lust yet were hym levere abyde**
That he would rather yet refrain from his desire

1523 **Than doon so heigh a cherlyssh wrecchednesse**
Than do so great a churlish despicable act

1524 **Agayns franchise and alle gentillesse;**
Against generosity and all nobility of character;

1525 **For which in fewe wordes seyde he thus:**
For which in few words he said thus:

1526 **"Madame, seyth to youre lord Arveragus**
"Madam, say to your lord Arveragus

1527 **That sith I se his grete gentillesse**
That since I see his great graciousness

1528 **To yow, and eek I se wel youre distresse,**
To you, and also I see well your distress,

1529 **That him were levere han shame (and that were routhe)**
That he would rather have shame (and that would be a pity)

1530 **Than ye to me sholde breke thus youre trouthe,**
Than you should thus break your pledged word to me,

1531 **I have wel levere evere to suffre wo**
I would well rather suffer woe always

1532 **Than I departe the love bitwix yow two.**
Than I should break apart the love between you two.

1533 **I yow relese, madame, into youre hond**
I release you, madam, into your hand I return

1534 **Quyrt every serement and every bond**
Freely every pledge and every bond

1535 **That ye han maad to me as heerbiforn,**
That you have made to me before now,

1536 **Sith thilke tyme which that ye were born.**
Since that time when you were born.

1537 **My trouthe I plighte, I shal yow never repreve**
I pledge my word, I shall never reprove you

1538 **Of no biheste, and heere I take my leve,**
For any promise, and here I take my leave,

1539 **As of the treweste and the beste wyf**
Of the truest and the best wife

1540 **That evere yet I knew in al my lyf.**
That ever yet I knew in all my life.

1541 **But every wyf be war of hire biheeste!**
But let every wife beware of her promise!

1542 **On Dorigen remembreth, atte leeste.**
Remember Dorigen, at the least.

1543 **Thus kan a squier doon a gentil dede**
Thus can a squire do a gentle deed

1544 **As wel as kan a knyght, withouten drede."**
As well as can a knight, without doubt."

- 1545 **She thonketh hym upon hir knees al bare,**
She thanks him upon her bare knees,
- 1546 **And hoom unto hir housbonde is she fare,**
And home unto her husband she is gone,
- 1547 **And tolde hym al, as ye han herd me sayd;**
And told him all, as you have heard me say;
- 1548 **And be ye siker, he was so weel apayd**
And be you sure, he was so well pleased
- 1549 **That it were impossible me to wryte.**
That it would be impossible for me to write.
- 1550 **What sholde I lenger of this cas endyte?**
Why should I write longer about this matter?
- 1551 **Arveragus and Dorigen his wyf**
Arveragus and Dorigen his wife
- 1552 **In sovereyn blisse leden forth hir lyf.**
In perfect bliss lead forth their life.
- 1553 **Nevere eft ne was ther angre hem bitwene.**
Never again was there any anger between them.
- 1554 **He cheriseth hire as though she were a queene,**
He cherishes her as though she were a queen,
- 1555 **And she was to hym trewe for everemoore.**
And she was to him true for evermore.
- 1556 **Of these two folk ye gete of me namoore.**
Of these two folk you get of me no more.
- 1557 **Aurelius, that his cost hath al forlorn,**
Aurelius, that all his expenditure has forfeited,
- 1558 **Curseth the tyme that evere he was born:**
Curses the time that ever he was born:
- 1559 **"Allas!" quod he. "Allas, that I bihighte**
"Alas!" said he. "Alas, that I promised
- 1560 **Of pured gold a thousand pound of wighte**
Of refined gold a thousand pounds of weight
- 1561 **Unto this philosophre! How shal I do?**
Unto this scientist! What shall I do?
- 1562 **I se namoore but that I am fordo.**
I see no more but that I am ruined.
- 1563 **Myn heritage moot I nedes selle,**
My heritage I must of necessity sell,
- 1564 **And been a beggere; heere may I nat dwelle**
And be a beggar; here I may not remain
- 1565 **And shamen al my kynrede in this place,**
And shame all my kin in this place,
- 1566 **But I of hym may gete bettre grace.**
Unless I can get a better grace (favor) from him.
- 1567 **But nathelees, I wole of hym assaye,**
But nonetheless, I will try him, (offering)
- 1568 **At certeyn dayes, yeer by yeer, to paye,**
At specific days, year by year, to pay,
- 1569 **And thanke hym of his grete curteisye.**
And thank him for his great courtesy.
- 1570 **My trouthe wol I kepe, I wol nat lye."**
My word I will keep, I will not lie."
- 1571 **With herte soor he gooth unto his cofre,**
With a sore heart he goes unto his money box,
- 1572 **And broghte gold unto this philosophre,**
And brought gold unto this scientist,
- 1573 **The value of fyve hundred pound, I gesse,**
The value of five hundred pounds, I guess,
- 1574 **And hym bisecheth, of his gentillesse,**
And him beseeches, of his nobleness,
- 1575 **To graunte hym dayes of the remenaunt;**
To grant him days (on which to pay) the remnant;
- 1576 **And seyde, "Maister, I dar wel make avaunt,**
And said, "Master, I dare well make boast,
- 1577 **I failed nevere of my trouthe as yit.**
I failed never of my pledged word as yet.
- 1578 **For sikerly my dette shal be quyt**
For surely my debt shall be repaid
- 1579 **Towardes yow, howevere that I fare**
To you, even though I have
- 1580 **To goon a-begged in my kirtle bare.**
To go a-begging in my bare tunic.
- 1581 **But wolde ye vouche sauf, upon seuretee,**
But if you would agree, upon my promise,
- 1582 **Two yeer or thre for to respiten me,**
To grant me a respite for two years or three,
- 1583 **Thanne were I wel; for elles moot I selle**
Then I would be well; for otherwise I must sell
- 1584 **Myn heritage; ther is namoore to telle."**
My heritage; there is no more to tell."

1585 **This philosophre sobrelly answerde,**
This scientist soberly answered,

1586 **And seyde thus, whan he thise wordes herde:**
And said thus, when he heard these words:

1587 **"Have I nat holden covenant unto thee?"**
"Have I not kept my agreement with thee?"

1588 **"Yes, certes, wel and trewely," quod he.**
"Yes, certainly, well and truly," said he.

1589 **"Hastow nat had thy lady as thee liketh?"**
"Hast thou not had thy lady as it pleases thee?"

1590 **"No, no," quod he, and sorwefully he siketh.**
"No, no," said he, and sorrowfully he sighs.

1591 **"What was the cause? Tel me if thou kan."**
"What was the cause? Tel me if thou know how."

1592 **Aurelius his tale anon bigan,**
Aurelius his tale immediately began,

1593 **And tolde hym al, as ye han herd bifoore;**
And told him all, as you have heard before;

1594 **It nedeth nat to yow reherce it moore.**
There is no need to repeat it to you again.

1595 **He seide, "Arveragus, of gentillesse,**
He said, "Arveragus, of his nobility,

1596 **Hadde levere dye in sorwe and in distresse**
Had rather die in sorrow and in distress

1597 **Than that his wyf were of hir trouthe fals."**
Than that his wife would be false of her pledged word."

1598 **The sorwe of Dorigen he tolde hym als;**
The sorrow of Dorigen he told him also;

1599 **How looth hire was to been a wikked wyf,**
How loathfull to her it was to be a wicked wife,

1600 **And that she levere had lost that day hir lyf,**
And that she would rather have lost her life that day,

1601 **And that hir trouthe she swoor thurgh innocence,**
And that her word she swore through ignorance,

1602 **She nevere erst hadde herde speke of apparence.**
She never before had heard tell of illusion.

1603 **"That made me han of hire so greet pitee;**
"That made me have for her such great pity;

1604 **And right as frely as he sente hire me,**
And right as freely as he sent her to me,

1605 **As frely sente I hire to hym ageyn.**
As freely I sent her to him again.

1606 **This al and som; ther is namoore to seyn."**
This is the entire matter; there is no more to say."

1607 **This philosophre answerde, "Leeve brother,**
This scientist answered, "Dear brother,

1608 **Everich of yow dide gentilly til oother.**
Every one of you did nobly to the other.

1609 **Thou art a squier, and he is a knyght;**
Thou art a squire, and he is a knight;

1610 **But God forbede, for his blisful myght,**
But God forbid, for his blissful might,

1611 **But if a clerk koude doon a gentil dede**
That a clerk could not do a gentle deed

1612 **As wel as any of yow, it is no drede!**
As well as any of you, it is no doubt!

1613 **Sire, I releesse thee thy thousand pound,**
Sir, I release thee from thy (debt of a) thousand pounds,

1614 **As thou right now were copen out of the ground,**
As if thou right now were crept out of the ground,

1615 **Ne nevere er now ne haddest knowen me.**
Nor never before now had known me.

1616 **For, sire, I wol nat taken a peny of thee**
For, sir, I will not take a penny from thee

1617 **For al my craft, ne noight for my travaille.**
For all my craft, nor anything for my labor.

1618 **Thou hast ypayed wel for my vitaille.**
Thou hast paid well for my living expenses.

1619 **It is ynogh, and farewel, have good day!"**
It is enough, and farewell, have good day!"

1620 **And took his hors, and forth he goth his way.**
And took his horse, and forth he goes his way.

1621 **Lordynges, this question, thanne, wol I aske now,**
Gentlemen, this question, then, will I ask now,

1622 **Which was the mooste fre, as thynketh yow?**
Which was the most free, as it seems to you?

1623 **Now telleth me, er that ye ferther wende.**
Now tell me, before you farther go.

1624 **I kan namoore; my tale is at an ende.**
I know no more; my tale is at an end.