GEOFFREY CHAUCER

THE COURT OF LOVE

"The Court Of Love" was probably Chaucer's first poem of any consequence. It is believed to have been written at the age, and under the circumstances, of which it contains express mention; that is, when the poet was eighteen years old, and resided as a student at Cambridge, — about the year 1346. The composition is marked by an elegance, care, and finish very different from the bold freedom which in so great measure distinguishes the Canterbury Tales; and the fact is easily explained when we remember that, in the earlier poem, Chaucer followed a beaten path, in which he had many predecessors and competitors, all seeking to sound the praises of love with the grace, the ingenuity, and studious devotion, appropriate to the theme. The story of the poem is exceedingly simple. Under the name of Philogenet, a clerk or scholar of Cambridge, the poet relates that, summoned by Mercury to the Court of Love, he journeys to the splendid castle where the King and Queen of Love, Admetus and Alcestis, keep their state. Discovering among the courtiers a friend named Philobone, a chamberwoman to the Queen, Philogenet is led by her into a circular temple, where, in a tabernacle, sits Venus, with Cupid by her side. While he is surveying the motley crowd of suitors to the goddess, Philogenet is summoned back into the King's presence, chidden for his tardiness in coming to Court, and commanded to swear observance to the twenty Statutes of Love — which are recited at length. Philogenet then makes his prayers and vows to Venus, desiring that he may have for his love a lady whom he has seen in a dream; and Philobone introduces him to the lady herself, named Rosial, to whom he does suit and service of love. At first the lady is obdurate to his entreaties; but, Philogenet having proved the sincerity of his passion by a fainting fit, Rosial relents, promises her favour, and orders Philobone to conduct him round the Court. The courtiers are then minutely described; but the description is broken off abruptly, and we are introduced to Rosial in the midst of a confession of her love. Finally she commands Philogenet to abide with her until the First of May, when the King of Love will hold high festival; he obeys; and the poem closes with the May Day festival service, celebrated by a choir of birds, who sing an ingenious, but what must have seemed in those days a more than slightly profane, paraphrase or parody of the matins for Trinity Sunday, to the praise of Cupid. From this outline, it will be seen at once that Chaucer's "Court of Love" is in important particulars different from the institutions which, in the two centuries preceding his own, had so much occupied the attention of poets and gallants, and so powerfully controlled the social life of the noble and refined classes. It is a regal, not a legal, Court which the poet pictures to us; we are not introduced to a regularly constituted and authoritative tribunal in which nice questions of conduct in the relations of lovers are discussed and decided — but to the central and sovereign seat of Love's authority, where the statutes are moulded, and the decrees are issued, upon which the inferior and special tribunals we have

mentioned frame their proceedings. The "Courts of Love," in Chaucer's time, had lost none of the prestige and influence which had been conferred upon them by the patronage and participation of Kings, Queens, Emperors, and Popes. But the institution, in its legal or judicial character, was peculiar to France; and although the whole spirit of Chaucer's poem, especially as regards the esteem and reverence in which women were held, is that which animated the French Courts, his treatment of the subject is broader and more general, consequently more fitted to enlist the interest of English readers. (Transcriber's note: Modern scholars believe that Chaucer was not the author of this poem)

The poem consists of 206 stanzas of seven lines each; of which, in this edition, eighty-three are represented by a prose abridgement.

With timorous heart, and trembling hand of dread,
Of cunning* naked, bare of eloquence, *skill
Unto the *flow'r of port in womanhead* *one who is the perfection
I write, as he that none intelligence of womanly behaviour*
Of metres hath, <1> nor flowers of sentence,
Save that me list my writing to convey,
In that I can, to please her high nobley.* *nobleness
The blossoms fresh of Tullius'* garden swoot** *Cicero **sweet
Present they not, my matter for to born:* <2> *burnish, polish
Poems of Virgil take here no root,
Nor craft of Galfrid <3> may not here sojourn;
Why *n'am I* cunning? O well may I mourn, *am I not*
For lack of science, that I cannot write
Unto the princess of my life aright!
No terms are dign* unto her excellence, *worthy
So is she sprung of noble stirp* and high; *stock <4>
A world of honour and of reverence
There is in her, this will I testify.
Calliope, <5> thou sister wise and sly,* *skilful
And thou, Minerva, guide me with thy grace,
That language rude my matter not deface!
Thy sugar droppes sweet of Helicon
Distil in me, thou gentle Muse, I pray;
And thee, Melpomene, <6> I call anon
Of ignorance the mist to chase away;
And give me grace so for to write and say,
That she, my lady, of her worthiness,
Accept *in gree* this little short treatess,* *with favour* *treatise
That is entitled thus, The Court of Love.
And ye that be metricians,* me excuse, *skilled versifiers
I you beseech, for Venus' sake above;
For what I mean in this ye need not muse:
And if so be my lady it refuse

For lack of ornate speech, I would be woe
That I presume to her to write so.
But my intent, and all my busy cure,* *care
Is for to write this treatise, as I can,
Unto my lady, stable, true, and sure,
Faithful and kind, since first that she began
Me to accept in service as her man;
To her be all the pleasure of this book,
That, when *her like,* she may it read and look. *it pleases her*
When [he] was young, at eighteen year of age,
Lusty and light, desirous of pleasance,
Approaching* full sad and ripe corage,<7> *gradually attaining

Then — says the poet — did Love urge him to do him obeisance, and to go "the Court of Love to see, a lite [little] beside the Mount of Citharee." <8> Mercury bade him, on pain of death, to appear; and he went by strange and far countries in search of the Court. Seeing at last a crowd of people, "as bees," making their way thither, the poet asked whither they went; and "one that answer'd like a maid" said that they were bound to the Court of Love, at Citheron, where "the King of Love, and all his noble rout [company],

"Dwelleth within a castle royally."

So them apace I journey'd forth among,
And as he said, so found I there truly;
For I beheld the town — so high and strong,
And high pinnacles, large of height and long,
With plate of gold bespread on ev'ry side,
And precious stones, the stone work for to hide.
No sapphire of Ind, no ruby rich of price,
There lacked then, nor emerald so green,
Balais, Turkeis, <9> nor thing, *to my devise,* *in my judgement*
That may the castle make for to sheen;* *be beautiful
All was as bright as stars in winter be'n;
And Phoebus shone, to make his peace again,
For trespass* done to high estates twain, — *offence

When he had found Venus in the arms of Mars, and hastened to tell Vulcan of his wife's infidelity <10>. Now he was shining brightly on the castle, "in sign he looked after Love's grace;" for there is no god in Heaven or in Hell "but he hath been right subject unto Love." Continuing his description of the castle, Philogenet says that he saw never any so large and high; within and without, it was painted "with many a thousand daisies, red as rose," and white also, in signification of whom, he knew not; unless it was the flower of Alcestis <11>, who, under Venus, was queen of the place, as Admetus was king;

To whom obey'd the ladies good nineteen <12>,
With many a thousand other, bright of face.
And young men fele* came forth with lusty pace, *many <13>

And aged eke, their homage to dispose;
But what they were, I could not well disclose.
Yet nere* and nere* forth in I gan me dress, *nearer
Into a hall of noble apparail,* *furnishings
With arras <14> spread, and cloth of gold, I guess,
And other silk *of easier avail;* *less difficult, costly, to attain*
Under the *cloth of their estate,* sans fail, *state canopy*
The King and Queen there sat, as I beheld;
It passed joy of *Elysee the feld.* *The Elysian Fields*
There saintes* have their coming and resort, *martyrs for love
To see the King so royally beseen,* *adorned
In purple clad, and eke the Queen *in sort;* *suitably*
And on their heades saw I crownes twain,
With stones frett,* so that it was no pain, *adorned
Withoute meat or drink, to stand and see
The Kinge's honour and the royalty.

To treat of state affairs, Danger <15> stood by the King, and Disdain by the Queen; who cast her eyes haughtily about, sending forth beams that seemed "shapen like a dart, sharp and piercing, and small and straight of line;" while her hair shone as gold so fine, "dishevel, crisp, down hanging at her back a yard in length." <16> Amazed and dazzled by her beauty, Philogenet stood perplexed, till he spied a Maid, Philobone — a chamberwoman of the Queen's — who asked how and on what errand he came thither. Learning that he had been summoned by Mercury, she told him that he ought to have come of his free will, and that he "will be shent [rebuked, disgraced]" because he did not.

"For ye that reign in youth and lustiness,
Pamper'd with ease, and jealous in your age,
Your duty is, as far as I can guess,
To Love's Court to dresse* your voyage, *direct, address
As soon as Nature maketh you so sage
That ye may know a woman from a swan, <17>
Or when your foot is growen half a span.
"But since that ye, by wilful negligence,
This eighteen year have kept yourself at large,
The greater is your trespass and offence,
And in your neck you must bear all the charge:
For better were ye be withoute barge* *boat
Amid the sea in tempest and in rain,
Than bide here, receiving woe and pain
"That ordained is for such as them absent
From Love's Court by yeares long and fele.* many
I lay* my life ye shall full soon repent; *wager
For Love will rive your colour, lust, and heal:* *health
Eke ye must bait* on many a heavy meal: *feed

No force, y-wis; I stirr'd you long agone *no matter*
To draw to Court," quoth little Philobone.
"Ye shall well see how rough and angry face
The King of Love will show, when ye him see;
By mine advice kneel down and ask him grace,
Eschewing* peril and adversity; *avoiding
For well I wot it will none other be;
Comfort is none, nor counsel to your ease;
Why will ye then the King of Love displease?"

Thereupon Philogenet professed humble repentance, and willingness to bear all hardship and chastisement for his past offence.

These wordes said, she caught me by the lap,* *edge of the garment
And led me forth into a temple round,
Both large and wide; and, as my blessed hap
And good. adventure was, right soon I found
A tabernacle <18> raised from the ground,
Where Venus sat, and Cupid by her side;
Yet half for dread I gan my visage hide.
And eft* again I looked and beheld, *afterwards
Seeing *full sundry people* in the place, *people of many sorts*
And *mister folk,* and some that might not weld *craftsmen <19>*
Their limbes well, — me thought a wonder case. *use
The temple shone with windows all of glass,
Bright as the day, with many a fair image;
And there I saw the fresh queen of Carthage,
Dido, that brent* her beauty for the love *burnt
Of false Aeneas; and the waimenting* *lamenting
Of her, Annelide, true as turtle dove
To Arcite false; <20> and there was in painting
Of many a Prince, and many a doughty King,
Whose martyrdom was show'd about the walls;
And how that fele* for love had suffer'd falls.** *many **calamities

Philogenet was astonished at the crowd of people that he saw, doing sacrifice to the god and goddess. Philobone informed him that they came from other courts; those who knelt in blue wore the colour in sign of their changeless truth <21>; those in black, who uttered cries of grief, were the sick and dying of love. The priests, nuns, hermits, and friars, and all that sat in white, in russet and in green, "wailed of their woe;" and for all people, of every degree, the Court was open and free. While he walked about with Philobone, a messenger from the King entered, and summoned all the new-come folk to the royal presence. Trembling and pale, Philogenet approached the throne of Admetus, and was sternly asked why he came so late to Court. He pleaded that a hundred times he had been at the gate, but had been prevented from entering by failure to see any of his acquaintances, and by shamefacedness. The King pardoned him, on condition that thenceforth he should serve Love; and the poet took oath to do

so, "though Death therefor me thirle [pierce] with his spear." When the King had seen all the new-comers, he commanded an officer to take their oaths of allegiance, and show them the Statutes of the Court, which must be observed till death.

And, for that I was letter'd, there I read
The statutes whole of Love's Court and hail:
The first statute that on the book was spread,
Was, To be true in thought and deedes all
Unto the King of Love, the lord royal;
And, to the Queen, as faithful and as kind
As I could think with hearte, will, and mind.
The second statute, Secretly to keep
Counsel* of love, not blowing** ev'rywhere *secrets **talking
All that I know, and let it sink and fleet;* *float
It may not sound in ev'ry wighte's ear:
Exiling slander ay for dread and fear,
And to my lady, which I love and serve,
Be true and kind, her grace for to deserve.
The third statute was clearly writ also,
Withoute change to live and die the same,
None other love to take, for weal nor woe,
For blind delight, for earnest nor for game:
Without repent, for laughing or for grame,* *vexation, sorrow
To bide still in full perseverance:
All this was whole the Kinge's ordinance.
The fourth statute, To *purchase ever to her,* *promote her cause*
And stirre folk to love, and bete* fire *kindle
On Venus' altar, here about and there,
And preach to them of love and hot desire,
And tell how love will quite* well their hire: *reward
This must be kept; and loth me to displease:
If love be wroth, pass; for thereby is ease.
The fifth statute, Not to be dangerous,* *fastidious, angry
If that a thought would reave* me of my sleep: *deprive
Nor of a sight to be over squaimous;* *desirous
And so verily this statute was to keep,
To turn and wallow in my bed and weep,
When that my lady, of her cruelty,
Would from her heart exilen all pity.
The sixth statute, It was for me to use
Alone to wander, void of company,
And on my lady's beauty for to muse,
And thinken it *no force* to live or die; *matter of indifference*
And eft again to think* the remedy, *think upon
How to her grace I might anon attain,

And tell my woe unto my sovereign.
The sev'nth statute was, To be patient,
Whether my lady joyful were or wroth;
For wordes glad or heavy, diligent,
Whether that she me helde *lefe or loth:* *in love or loathing*
And hereupon I put was to mine oath,
Her for to serve, and lowly to obey,
And show my cheer,* yea, twenty times a day. *countenance
The eighth statute, to my rememberance,
Was, For to speak and pray my lady dear,
With hourly labour and great entendance,* *attention
Me for to love with all her heart entere,* *entire
And me desire and make me joyful cheer,
Right as she is, surmounting every fair;
Of beauty well,* and gentle debonair. *the fountain
The ninth statute, with letters writ of gold,
This was the sentence, How that I and all
Should ever dread to be too overbold
Her to displease; and truly so I shall;
But be content for all thing that may fall,
And meekly take her chastisement and yerd,* *rod, rule
And to offend her ever be afear'd.
The tenth statute was, Equally* to discern *justly
Between the lady and thine ability,
And think thyself art never like to earn,
By right, her mercy nor her equity,
But of her grace and womanly pity:
For, though thyself be noble in thy strene,* *strain, descent
A thousand fold more noble is thy Queen.
Thy life's lady and thy sovereign,
That hath thine heart all whole in governance,
Thou may'st no wise it take to disdain,
To put thee humbly at her ordinance,
And give her free the rein of her pleasance;
For liberty is thing that women look,* *look for, desire
And truly else *the matter is a crook.* *things go wrong*
Th' eleventh statute, Thy signes for to know
With eye and finger, and with smiles soft,
And low to couch, and alway for to show,
For dread of spies, for to winken oft:
And secretly to bring a sigh aloft,
But still beware of over much resort;
For that peradventure spoileth all thy sport.
The twelfth statute remember to observe:

For all the pain thou hast for love and woe,
All is too lite* her mercy to deserve, *little
Thou muste think, where'er thou ride or go;
And mortal woundes suffer thou also,
All for her sake, and think it well beset* *spent
Upon thy love, for it may not be bet.* *better (spent)
The thirteenth statute, Whilom is to think
What thing may best thy lady like and please,
And in thine hearte's bottom let it sink:
Some thing devise, and take for it thine ease,
And send it her, that may her heart appease:
Some heart, or ring, or letter, or device,
Or precious stone; but spare not for no price.
The fourteenth statute eke thou shalt assay
Firmly to keep, the most part of thy life:
Wish that thy lady in thine armes lay,
And nightly dream, thou hast thy nighte's wife
Sweetly in armes, straining her as blife:* *eagerly <22>
And, when thou seest it is but fantasy,
See that thou sing not over merrily;
For too much joy hath oft a woeful end.
It *longeth eke this statute for to hold,* *it belongs to the proper
To deem thy lady evermore thy friend, observance of this statute*
And think thyself in no wise a cuckold.
In ev'ry thing she doth but as she sho'ld:
Construe the best, believe no tales new,
For many a lie is told, that seems full true.
But think that she, so bounteous and fair,
Could not be false: imagine this algate;* *at all events
And think that wicked tongues would her apair,* *defame
Sland'ring her name and *worshipful estate,* *honourable fame*
And lovers true to setten at debate:
And though thou seest a fault right at thine eye,
Excuse it blife, and glose* it prettily. *gloss it over
The fifteenth statute, Use to swear and stare,
And counterfeit a leasing* hardily,** *falsehood **boldly
To save thy lady's honour ev'rywhere,
And put thyself for her to fight boldly;
Say she is good, virtuous, and ghostly,* *spiritual, pure
Clear of intent, and heart, and thought, and will;
And argue not for reason nor for skill
Against thy lady's pleasure nor intent,
For love will not be counterpled* indeed: *met with counterpleas
Say as she saith, then shalt thou not be shent;* *disgraced

"The crow is white;" "Yea truly, so I rede:"* *judge
And aye what thing that she will thee forbid,
Eschew all that, and give her sov'reignty,
Her appetite to follow in all degree.
The sixteenth statute, keep it if thou may: <23>
Sev'n times at night thy lady for to please,
And sev'n at midnight, sev'n at morrow day,
And drink a caudle early for thine ease.
Do this, and keep thine head from all disease,
And win the garland here of lovers all,
That ever came in Court, or ever shall.
Full few, think I, this statute hold and keep;
But truly this my reason *gives me feel,* *enables me to perceive*
That some lovers should rather fall asleep,
Than take on hand to please so oft and weel.* *well
There lay none oath to this statute adele,* *annexed
But keep who might *as gave him his corage:* *as his heart
Now get this garland, folk of lusty age! inspired him*
Now win who may, ye lusty folk of youth,
This garland fresh, of flowers red and white,
Purple and blue, and colours full uncouth,* *strange
And I shall crown him king of all delight!
In all the Court there was not, to my sight,
A lover true, that he was not adread,
When he express* had heard the statute read. *plainly
The sev'nteenth statute, When age approacheth on,
And lust is laid, and all the fire is queint,* *quenched
As freshly then thou shalt begin to fon,* *behave fondly
And doat in love, and all her image paint
In thy remembrance, till thou gin to faint,
As in the first season thine heart began:
And her desire, though thou nor may nor can
Perform thy living actual and lust;
Register this in thine rememberance:
Eke when thou may'st not keep thy thing from rust,
Yet speak and talk of pleasant dalliance;
For that shall make thine heart rejoice and dance;
And when thou may'st no more the game assay,
The statute bids thee pray for them that may.
The eighteenth statute, wholly to commend,
To please thy lady, is, That thou eschew
With sluttishness thyself for to offend;
Be jolly, fresh, and feat,* with thinges new, *dainty <24>
Courtly with manner, this is all thy due,

Gentle of port, and loving cleanliness;
This is the thing that liketh thy mistress.
And not to wander like a dulled ass,
Ragged and torn, disguised in array,
Ribald in speech, or out of measure pass,
Thy bound exceeding; think on this alway:
For women be of tender heartes ay,
And lightly set their pleasure in a place;
When they misthink,* they lightly let it pace. *think wrongly
The nineteenth statute, Meat and drink forget:
Each other day see that thou fast for love,
For in the Court they live withoute meat,
Save such as comes from Venus all above;
They take no heed, *in pain of great reprove,* *on pain of great
Of meat and drink, for that is all in vain, reproach*
Only they live by sight of their sov'reign.
The twentieth statute, last of ev'ry one,
Enrol it in thy hearte's privity;
To wring and wail, to turn, and sigh, and groan,
When that thy lady absent is from thee;
And eke renew the wordes all that she
Between you twain hath said, and all the cheer
That thee hath made thy life's lady dear.
And see thy heart in quiet nor in rest
Sojourn, till time thou see thy lady eft,* *again
But whe'er* she won** by south, or east, or west, *whether **dwell
With all thy force now see it be not left
Be diligent, *till time* thy life be reft, *until the time that*
In that thou may'st, thy lady for to see;
This statute was of old antiquity.

The officer, called Rigour — who is incorruptible by partiality, favour, prayer, or gold — made them swear to keep the statutes; and, after taking the oath, Philogenet turned over other leaves of the book, containing the statutes of women. But Rigour sternly bade him forbear; for no man might know the statutes that belong to women.

"In secret wise they kepte be full close;
They sound* each one to liberty, my friend; *tend, accord
Pleasant they be, and to their own purpose;
There wot* no wight of them, but God and fiend, *knows
Nor aught shall wit, unto the worlde's end.
The queen hath giv'n me charge, in pain to die,
Never to read nor see them with mine eye.
"For men shall not so near of counsel be'n
With womanhead, nor knowen of their guise,
Nor what they think, nor of their wit th'engine;* *craft

I me report to Solomon the wise, <25> *I refer for proof to*
And mighty Samson, which beguiled thrice
With Delilah was; he wot that, in a throw,
There may no man statute of women know.
"For it peradventure may right so befall,
That they be bound by nature to deceive,
And spin, and weep, and sugar strew on gall, <26>
The heart of man to ravish and to reave,
And whet their tongue as sharp as sword or gleve:* *glaive, sword
It may betide this is their ordinance,
So must they lowly do their observance,
"And keep the statute given them *of kind,* *by nature*
Of such as Love hath giv'n them in their life.
Men may not wit why turneth every wind,
Nor waxe wise, nor be inquisitife
To know secret of maid, widow, or wife;
For they their statutes have to them reserved,
And never man to know them hath deserved."

Rigour then sent them forth to pay court to Venus, and pray her to teach them how they might serve and please their dames, or to provide with ladies those whose hearts were yet vacant. Before Venus knelt a thousand sad petitioners, entreating her to punish "the false untrue," that had broken their vows, "barren of ruth, untrue of what they said, now that their lust and pleasure is allay'd." But the mourners were in a minority;

Yet eft again, a thousand million,
Rejoicing, love, leading their life in bliss:
They said: "Venus, redress* of all division, *healer
Goddess eternal, thy name heried* is! *glorified
By love's bond is knit all thing, y-wis,* *assuredly
Beast unto beast, the earth to water wan,* *pale
Bird unto bird, and woman unto man; <27>
"This is the life of joy that we be in,
Resembling life of heav'nly paradise;
Love is exiler ay of vice and sin;
Love maketh heartes lusty to devise;
Honour and grace have they in ev'ry wise,
That be to love's law obedient;
Love maketh folk benign and diligent;
"Aye stirring them to dreade vice and shame:
In their degree it makes them honourable;
And sweet it is of love to bear the name,
So that his love be faithful, true, and stable:
Love pruneth him to seemen amiable;
Love hath no fault where it is exercis'd,

But sole* with them that have all love despis'd:" *only
And they conclude with grateful honours to the goddess — rejoicing hat they are hers in heart, and all inflamed with her grace and heavenly fear. Philogenet now entreats the goddess to remove his grief; for he also loves, and hotly, only he does not know where —
"Save only this, by God and by my troth;
Troubled I was with slumber, sleep, and sloth
This other night, and in a vision
I saw a woman roamen up and down,
"Of *mean stature,* and seemly to behold, *middling height*
Lusty and fresh, demure of countenance,
Young and well shap'd, with haire sheen* as gold, *shining
With eyne as crystal, farced* with pleasance; *crammed
And she gan stir mine heart a lite* to dance; *little
But suddenly she vanish gan right there:
Thus I may say, I love, and wot* not where." *know
If he could only know this lady, he would serve and obey her with all benignity; but if his destiny were otherwise, he would gladly love and serve his lady, whosoever she might be. He called on Venus for help to possess his queen and heart's life, and vowed daily war with Diana: "that goddess chaste I keepen [care] in no wise to serve; a fig for all her chastity!" Then he rose and went his way, passing by a rich and beautiful shrine, which, Philobone informed him, was the sepulchre of Pity. "A tender creature," she said,
"Is shrined there, and Pity is her name.
She saw an eagle wreak* him on a fly, *avenge
And pluck his wing, and eke him, *in his game;* *for sport*
And tender heart of that hath made her die:
Eke she would weep, and mourn right piteously,
To see a lover suffer great distress.
In all the Court was none, as I do guess,
"That could a lover half so well avail,* *help
Nor of his woe the torment or the rage
Aslake;* for he was sure, withoute fail, *assuage
That of his grief she could the heat assuage.
Instead of Pity, speedeth hot Courage
The matters all of Court, now she is dead;
I me report in this to womanhead. *for evidence I refer to the behaviour of women themselves.*
"For wail, and weep, and cry, and speak, and pray, —
Women would not have pity on thy plaint;
Nor by that means to ease thine heart convey,
But thee receive for their own talent:* *inclination
And say that Pity caus'd thee, in consent
Of ruth,* to take thy service and thy pain, *compassion

In that thou may'st, to please thy sovereign."
Philobone now promised to lead Philogenet to "the fairest lady under sun that is," the "mirror of joy and bliss," whose name is Rosial, and "whose heart as yet is given to no wight;" suggesting that, as he also was "with love but light advanc'd," he might set this lady in the place of her of whom he had dreamed. Entering a chamber gay, "there was Rosial, womanly to see;" and the subtle-piercing beams of her eyes wounded Philogenet to the heart. When he could speak, he threw himself on his knees, beseeching her to cool his fervent woe:

For there I took full purpose in my mind,
Unto her grace my painful heart to bind.
For, if I shall all fully her descrive,* *describe
Her head was round, by compass of nature;
Her hair as gold, she passed all alive,
And lily forehead had this creature,
With lively *browes flaw,* of colour pure, *yellow eyebrows <28>
Between the which was mean disseverance
From ev'ry brow, to show a due distance.
Her nose directed straight, even as line,
With form and shape thereto convenient,
In which the *goddes' milk-white path* doth shine; *the galaxy*
And eke her eyne be bright and orient
As is the smaragd,* unto my judgment, *emerald
Or yet these starres heav'nly, small, and bright;
Her visage is of lovely red and white.
Her mouth is short, and shut in little space,
Flaming somedeal,* not over red I mean, *somewhat
With pregnant lips, and thick to kiss, percase* *as it chanced
(For lippes thin, not fat, but ever lean,
They serve of naught, they be not worth a bean;
For if the bass* be full, there is delight; *kiss <29>
Maximian <30> truly thus doth he write).
But to my purpose: I say, white as snow
Be all her teeth, and in order they stand
Of one stature; and eke her breath, I trow,
Surmounteth all odours that e'er I fand* *found
In sweetness; and her body, face, and hand
Be sharply slender, so that, from the head
Unto the foot, all is but womanhead.* *womanly perfection
I hold my peace of other thinges hid:
Here shall my soul, and not my tongue, bewray;
But how she was array'd, if ye me bid,
That shall I well discover you and say:
A bend* of gold and silk, full fresh and gay, *band
With hair *in tress, y-broidered* full well, *plaited in tresses*

Right smoothly kempt,* and shining every deal. *combed
About her neck a flow'r of fresh device
With rubies set, that lusty were to see'n;
And she in gown was, light and summer-wise,
Shapen full well, the colour was of green,
With *aureate seint* about her sides clean, *golden cincture*
With divers stones, precious and rich:
Thus was she ray'd,* yet saw I ne'er her lich,** *arrayed **like

If Jove had but seen this lady, Calisto and Alcmena had never lain in his arms, nor had he loved the fair Europa, nor Danae, nor Antiope; "for all their beauty stood in Rosial; she seemed like a thing celestial." By and by, Philogenet presented to her his petition for love, which she heard with some haughtiness; she was not, she said, well acquainted with him, she did not know where he dwelt, nor his name and condition. He informed her that "in art of love he writes," and makes songs that may be sung in honour of the King and Queen of Love. As for his name —

"My name? alas, my heart, why mak'st thou strange?* *why so cold
Philogenet I call'd am far and near, or distant?*
Of Cambridge clerk, that never think to change
From you, that with your heav'nly streames* clear *beams, glances
Ravish my heart; and ghost, and all in fere:* *all together
Since at the first I writ my bill* for grace, *petition
Me thinks I see some mercy in your face;"

And again he humbly pressed his suit. But the lady disdained the idea that, "for a word of sugar'd eloquence," she should have compassion in so little space; "there come but few who speede here so soon." If, as he says, the beams of her eyes pierce and fret him, then let him withdraw from her presence:

"Hurt not yourself, through folly, with a look;
I would be sorry so to make you sick!
A woman should beware eke whom she took:
Ye be a clerk: go searche well my book,
If any women be so light* to win: *easy
Nay, bide a while, though ye were *all my kin."* *my only kindred*

He might sue and serve, and wax pale, and green, and dead, without murmuring in any wise; but whereas he desired her hastily to lean to love, he was unwise, and must cease that language. For some had been at Court for twenty years, and might not obtain their mistresses' favour; therefore she marvelled that he was so bold as to treat of love with her. Philogenet, on this, broke into pitiful lamentation; bewailing the hour in which he was born, and assuring the unyielding lady that the frosty grave and cold must be his bed, unless she relented.

With that I fell in swoon, and dead as stone,
With colour slain,* and wan as ashes pale; *deathlike
And by the hand she caught me up anon:
"Arise," quoth she; "what? have ye drunken dwale?* *sleeping potion <31>
Why sleepe ye? It is no nightertale."* *night-time

"Now mercy! sweet," quoth I, y-wis afraid;
"What thing," quoth she, "hath made you so dismay'd?"

She said that by his hue she knew well that he was a lover; and if he were secret, courteous, and kind, he might know how all this could be allayed. She would amend all that she had missaid, and set his heart at ease; but he must faithfully keep the statutes, "and break them not for sloth nor ignorance." The lover requests, however, that the sixteenth may be released or modified, for it "doth him great grievance;" and she complies.

And softly then her colour gan appear,
As rose so red, throughout her visage all;
Wherefore methinks it is according* her *appropriate to
That she of right be called Rosial.
Thus have I won, with wordes great and small,
Some goodly word of her that I love best,
And trust she shall yet set mine heart in rest.

Rosial now told Philobone to conduct Philogenet all over the Court, and show him what lovers and what officers dwelt there; for he was yet a stranger.

And, stalking soft with easy pace, I saw
About the king standen all environ,* *around <32>
Attendance, Diligence, and their fellaw
Furtherer, Esperance,* and many one; *Hope
Dread-to-offend there stood, and not alone;
For there was eke the cruel adversair,
The lover's foe, that called is Despair;
Which unto me spake angrily and fell,* *cruelly
And said, my lady me deceive shall:
"Trow'st thou," quoth she, "that all that she did tell
Is true? Nay, nay, but under honey gall.
Thy birth and hers they be no thing egal:* *equal
Cast off thine heart, <33> for all her wordes white,
For in good faith she loves thee but a lite.* *little
"And eke remember, thine ability
May not compare with her, this well thou wot."
Yea, then came Hope and said, "My friend, let be!
Believe him not: Despair he gins to doat."
"Alas," quoth I, "here is both cold and hot:
The one me biddeth love, the other nay;
Thus wot I not what me is best to say.
"But well wot I, my lady granted me
Truly to be my wounde's remedy;
Her gentleness* may not infected be *noble nature
With doubleness,* this trust I till I die." *duplicity
So cast I t' avoid Despair's company,
And take Hope to counsel and to friend.

"Yea, keep that well," quoth Philobone, "in mind."
And there beside, within a bay window,
Stood one in green, full large of breadth and length,
His beard as black as feathers of the crow;
His name was Lust, of wondrous might and strength;
And with Delight to argue there he think'th,
For this was alway his opinion,
That love was sin: and so he hath begun
To reason fast, and *ledge authority:* *allege authorities
"Nay," quoth Delight, "love is a virtue clear,
And from the soul his progress holdeth he:
Blind appetite of lust doth often steer,* *stir (the heart)
And that is sin; for reason lacketh there:
For thou dost think thy neighbour's wife to win;
Yet think it well that love may not be sin;
"For God, and saint, they love right verily,
Void of all sin and vice: this know I weel,* *well
Affection of flesh is sin truly;
But very* love is virtue, as I feel; *true
For very love may frail desire akele:* *cool
For very love is love withoute sin."
"Now stint,"* quoth Lust, "thou speak'st not worth a pin." *cease
And there I left them in their arguing,
Roaming farther into the castle wide,
And in a corner Liar stood talking
Of leasings* fast, with Flattery there beside; *falsehoods
He said that women *ware attire of pride, *wore
And men were found of nature variant,
And could be false and *showe beau semblant.* *put on plausible appearances to deceive*
Then Flattery bespake and said, y-wis:
"See, so she goes on pattens fair and feat;* *pretty, neat
It doth right well: what pretty man is this
That roameth here? now truly drink nor meat
Need I not have, my heart for joy doth beat
Him to behold, so is he goodly fresh:
It seems for love his heart is tender and nesh."* *soft <34>
This is the Court of lusty folk and glad,
And well becomes their habit and array:
O why be some so sorry and so sad,
Complaining thus in black and white and gray?
Friars they be, and monkes, in good fay:
Alas, for ruth! great dole* it is to see, *sorrow
To see them thus bewail and sorry be.

See how they cry and ring their handes white,
For they so soon* went to religion!, *young
And eke the nuns with veil and wimple plight,* *plaited
Their thought is, they be in confusion:
"Alas," they say, "we feign perfection, <35>
In clothes wide, and lack our liberty;
But all the sin must on our friendes be. <36>
"For, Venus wot, we would as fain* as ye, *gladly
That be attired here and *well beseen,* *gaily clothed*
Desire man, and love in our degree,'
Firm and faithful, right as would the Queen:
Our friendes wick', in tender youth and green,
Against our will made us religious;
That is the cause we mourn and waile thus."
Then said the monks and friars *in the tide,* *at the same time*
"Well may we curse our abbeys and our place,
Our statutes sharp to sing in copes wide, <37>
Chastely to keep us out of love's grace,
And never to feel comfort nor solace;* *delight
Yet suffer we the heat of love's fire,
And after some other haply we desire.
"O Fortune cursed, why now and wherefore
Hast thou," they said, "bereft us liberty,
Since Nature gave us instrument in store,
And appetite to love and lovers be?
Why must we suffer such adversity,
Dian' to serve, and Venus to refuse?
Full *often sithe* these matters do us muse. *many a time*
"We serve and honour, sore against our will,
Of chastity the goddess and the queen;
Us liefer were with Venus bide still, *we would rather*
And have regard for love, and subject be'n
Unto these women courtly, fresh, and sheen.* *bright, beautiful
Fortune, we curse thy wheel of variance!
Where we were well, thou reavest* our pleasance." *takest away
Thus leave I them, with voice of plaint and care,
In raging woe crying full piteously;
And as I went, full naked and full bare
Some I beheld, looking dispiteously,
On Poverty that deadly cast their eye;
And "Well-away!" they cried, and were not fain,
For they might not their glad desire attain.
For lack of riches worldly and of good,
They ban and curse, and weep, and say, "Alas!

That povert' hath us hent,* that whilom stood *seized
At hearte's ease, and free and in good case!
But now we dare not show ourselves in place,
Nor us embold* to dwell in company, *make bold, venture
Where as our heart would love right faithfully."
And yet againward shrieked ev'ry nun,
The pang of love so strained them to cry:
"Now woe the time," quoth they, "that we be boun'!* *bound
This hateful order nice* will do us die! *into which we foolishly
We sigh and sob, and bleeden inwardly, entered
Fretting ourselves with thought and hard complaint,
That nigh for love we waxe wood* and faint." *mad
And as I stood beholding here and there,
I was ware of a sort* full languishing, *a class of people
Savage and wild of looking and of cheer,
Their mantles and their clothes aye tearing;
And oft they were of Nature complaining,
For they their members lacked, foot and hand,
With visage wry, and blind, I understand.
They lacked shape and beauty to prefer
Themselves in love: and said that God and Kind* *Nature
Had forged* them to worshippe the sterre,** *fashioned **star
Venus the bright, and leften all behind
His other workes clean and out of mind:
"For other have their full shape and beauty,
And we," quoth they, "be in deformity."
And nigh to them there was a company,
That have the Sisters warray'd and missaid,
I mean the three of fatal destiny, <38>
That be our workers: suddenly abraid,* *aroused
Out gan they cry as they had been afraid;
"We curse," quoth they, "that ever hath Nature
Y-formed us this woeful life t'endure."
And there eke was Contrite, and gan repent,
Confessing whole the wound that Cythere <39>
Had with the dart of hot desire him sent,
And how that he to love must subject be:
Then held he all his scornes vanity,
And said that lovers held a blissful life,
Young men and old, and widow, maid, and wife.
"Bereave me, Goddess!" quoth he, "of thy might,
My scornes all and scoffes, that I have
No power for to mocken any wight
That in thy service dwell: for I did rave;

This know I well right now, so God me save,
And I shall be the chief post* of thy faith, *prop, pillar
And love uphold, the reverse whoso saith."
Dissemble stood not far from him in truth,
With party* mantle, party hood and hose; *parti-coloured
And said he had upon his lady ruth,* *pity
And thus he wound him in, and gan to glose,
Of his intent full double, I suppose:
In all the world he said he lov'd her weel;
But ay me thought he lov'd her *ne'er a deal.* *never a jot*
Eke Shamefastness was there, as I took heed,
That blushed red, and durst not be y-know
She lover was, for thereof had she dread;
She stood and hung her visage down alow;
But such a sight it was to see, I trow,
As of these roses ruddy on their stalk:
There could no wight her spy to speak or talk
In love's art, so gan she to abash,
Nor durst not utter all her privity:
Many a stripe and many a grievous lash
She gave to them that woulde lovers be,
And hinder'd sore the simple commonalty,
That in no wise durst grace and mercy crave,
For *were not she,* they need but ask and have; *but for her*
Where if they now approache for to speak,
Then Shamefastness *returneth them* again: *turns them back*
They think, "If we our secret counsel break,
Our ladies will have scorn us certain,
And peradventure thinke great disdain:"
Thus Shamefastness may bringen in Despair;
When she is dead the other will be heir.
"Come forth Avaunter! now I ring thy bell!" <40>
I spied him soon; to God I make avow,* *confession
He looked black as fiendes do in Hell:
"The first," quoth he, "that ever I did wow,* *woo
Within a word she came, I wot not how, *she was won with
So that in armes was my lady free, a single word*
And so have been a thousand more than she.
"In England, Britain,* Spain, and Picardy, *Brittany
Artois, and France, and up in high Holland,
In Burgoyne,* Naples, and in Italy, *Burgundy
Navarre, and Greece, and up in heathen land,
Was never woman yet that would withstand
To be at my commandment when I wo'ld:

I lacked neither silver coin nor gold.
"And there I met with this estate and that;
And her I broach'd, and her, and her, I trow:
Lo! there goes one of mine; and, wot ye what?
Yon fresh attired have I laid full low;
And such one yonder eke right well I know;
I kept the statute <41> when we lay y-fere:* *together
And yet* yon same hath made me right good cheer." *also
Thus hath Avaunter blowen ev'rywhere
All that he knows, and more a thousand fold;
His ancestry of kin was to Lier,* *Liar
For first he maketh promise for to hold
His lady's counsel, and it not unfold; —
Wherefore, the secret when he doth unshit,* *disclose
Then lieth he, that all the world may wit.* *know
For falsing so his promise and behest,* *trust
I wonder sore he hath such fantasy;
He lacketh wit, I trow, or is a beast,
That can no bet* himself with reason guy** *better **guide
By mine advice, Love shall be contrary
To his avail,* and him eke dishonour, *advantage
So that in Court he shall no more sojour.* *sojourn, remain
"Take heed," quoth she, this little Philobone,
"Where Envy rocketh in the corner yond,* *yonder
And sitteth dark; and ye shall see anon
His lean body, fading both face and hand;
Himself he fretteth,* as I understand devoureth
(Witness of Ovid Metamorphoseos); <42>
The lover's foe he is, I will not glose.* *gloss over
"For where a lover thinketh *him promote,* *to promote himself*
Envy will grudge, repining at his weal;
It swelleth sore about his hearte's root,
That in no wise he cannot live in heal;* *health
And if the faithful to his lady steal,
Envy will noise and ring it round about,
And say much worse than done is, out of doubt."
And Privy Thought, rejoicing of himself, —
Stood not far thence in habit marvellous;
"Yon is," thought I, "some spirit or some elf,
His subtile image is so curious:
How is," quoth I, "that he is shaded thus
With yonder cloth, I n'ot* of what color?" *know not
And near I went and gan *to lear and pore,* *to ascertain and gaze curiously*

And frained* him a question full hard. *asked
"What is," quoth I, "the thing thou lovest best?
Or what is boot* unto thy paines hard? *remedy
Me thinks thou livest here in great unrest,
Thou wand'rest aye from south to east and west,
And east to north; as far as I can see,
There is no place in Court may holde thee.
"Whom followest thou? where is thy heart y-set?
But *my demand assoil,* I thee require." *answer my question*
"Me thought," quoth he, "no creature may let* *hinder
Me to be here, and where as I desire;
For where as absence hath out the fire,
My merry thought it kindleth yet again,
That bodily, me thinks, with *my sov'reign* *my lady*
"I stand, and speak, and laugh, and kiss, and halse;* *embrace
So that my thought comforteth me full oft:
I think, God wot, though all the world be false,
I will be true; I think also how soft
My lady is in speech, and this on loft
Bringeth my heart with joy and great gladness;
This privy thought allays my heaviness.
"And what I think, or where, to be, no man
In all this Earth can tell, y-wis, but I:
And eke there is no swallow swift, nor swan
So wight* of wing, nor half so yern** can fly; *nimble **eagerly
For I can be, and that right suddenly,
In Heav'n, in Hell, in Paradise, and here,
And with my lady, when I will desire.
"I am of counsel far and wide, I wot,
With lord and lady, and their privity
I wot it all; but, be it cold or hot,
They shall not speak without licence of me.
I mean, in such as seasonable* be, *prudent
Tho* first the thing is thought within the heart, *when
Ere any word out from the mouth astart."* *escape
And with the word Thought bade farewell and yede:* *went away
Eke forth went I to see the Courte's guise,
And at the door came in, so God me speed,
Two courtiers of age and of assise* *size
Like high, and broad, and, as I me advise,
The Golden Love and Leaden Love <43> they hight:* *were called
The one was sad, the other glad and light.

At this point there is a hiatus in the poem, which abruptly ceases to narrate the tour of Philogenet and Philobone round the Court, and introduces us again to Rosial, who is

speaking thus to her lover, apparently in continuation of a confession of love:

"Yes! draw your heart, with all your force and might,
To lustiness, and be as ye have said."

She admits that she would have given him no drop of favour, but that she saw him "wax so dead of countenance;" then Pity "out of her shrine arose from death to life," whisperingly entreating that she would do him some pleasance. Philogenet protests his gratitude to Pity, his faithfulness to Rosial; and the lady, thanking him heartily, bids him abide with her till the season of May, when the King of Love and all his company will hold his feast fully royally and well. "And there I bode till that the season fell."

On May Day, when the lark began to rise,
To matins went the lusty nightingale,
Within a temple shapen hawthorn-wise;
He might not sleep in all the nightertale,* *night-time
But "Domine" <44> gan he cry and gale,* *call out
"My lippes open, Lord of Love, I cry,
And let my mouth thy praising now bewry."* *show forth
The eagle sang "Venite," <45> bodies all,
And let us joy to love that is our health."
And to the desk anon they gan to fall,
And who came late he pressed in by stealth
Then said the falcon, "Our own heartes' wealth,
'Domine Dominus noster,' <46> I wot,
Ye be the God that do* us burn thus hot." *make
"Coeli enarrant," <47> said the popinjay,* *parrot
"Your might is told in Heav'n and firmament."
And then came in the goldfinch fresh and gay,
And said this psalm with heartly glad intent,
"Domini est terra;" <48> this Latin intent,* *means
The God of Love hath earth in governance:
And then the wren began to skip and dance.
"Jube Domine; <49> O Lord of Love, I pray
Command me well this lesson for to read;
This legend is of all that woulde dey* *die
Martyrs for love; God yet their soules speed!
And to thee, Venus, sing we, *out of dread,* *without doubt*
By influence of all thy virtue great,
Beseeching thee to keep us in our heat."
The second lesson robin redbreast sang,
"Hail to the God and Goddess of our lay!"* *law, religion
And to the lectern amorously he sprang:
"Hail now," quoth be, "O fresh season of May,
Our moneth glad that singen on the spray! *glad month for us that
Hail to the flowers, red, and white, and blue, sing upon the bough*

Which by their virtue maken our lust new!"
The third lesson the turtle-dove took up,
And thereat laugh'd the mavis* in a scorn: *blackbird
He said, "O God, as might I dine or sup,
This foolish dove will give us all a horn!
There be right here a thousand better born,
To read this lesson, which as well as he,
And eke as hot, can love in all degree."
The turtle-dove said, "Welcome, welcome May,
Gladsome and light to lovers that be true!
I thank thee, Lord of Love, that doth purvey
For me to read this lesson all *of due;* *in due form*
For, in good sooth, *of corage* I pursue *with all my heart*
To serve my make* till death us must depart:" *mate
And then "Tu autem" <50> sang he all apart.
"Te Deum amoris" <51> sang the throstel* cock: *thrush
Tubal <52> himself, the first musician,
With key of harmony could not unlock
So sweet a tune as that the throstel can:
"The Lord of Love we praise," quoth he than,* *then
And so do all the fowles great and lite;* *little
"Honour we May, in false lovers' despite."
"Dominus regnavit," <53> said the peacock there,
"The Lord of Love, that mighty prince, y-wis,
He is received here and ev'rywhere:
Now Jubilate <54> sing:" "What meaneth this?"
Said then the linnet; "welcome, Lord of bliss!"
Out start the owl with "Benedicite," <55>
"What meaneth all this merry fare?"* quoth he. *doing, fuss
"Laudate," <56> sang the lark with voice full shrill;
And eke the kite "O admirabile;" <57>
This quire* will through mine eares pierce and thrill; *choir
But what? welcome this May season," quoth he;
"And honour to the Lord of Love must be,
That hath this feast so solemn and so high:"
"Amen," said all; and so said eke the pie.* *magpie
And forth the cuckoo gan proceed anon,
With "Benedictus" <58> thanking God in haste,
That in this May would visit them each one,
And gladden them all while the feast shall last:
And therewithal a-laughter* out he brast;"** *in laughter **burst
"I thanke God that I should end the song,
And all the service which hath been so long."
Thus sang they all the service of the feast,

And that was done right early, to my doom;* *judgment
And forth went all the Court, both *most and least,* *great and small
To fetch the flowers fresh, and branch and bloom;
And namely* hawthorn brought both page and groom, *especially
With freshe garlands party* blue and white, <59> *parti-coloured
And then rejoiced in their great delight.
Eke each at other threw the flowers bright,
The primerose, the violet, and the gold;
So then, as I beheld the royal sight,
My lady gan me suddenly behold,
And with a true love, plighted many a fold,
She smote me through the very heart *as blive;* *straightway*
And Venus yet I thank I am alive.
Explicit* *The End

Notes to The Court of Love

1. So the Man of Law, in the prologue to his Tale, is made to say that Chaucer "can but lewedly (ignorantly or imperfectly) on metres and on rhyming craftily." But the humility of those apologies is not justified by the care and finish of his earlier poems.

2. Born: burnish, polish: the poet means, that his verses do not display the eloquence or brilliancy of Cicero in setting forth his subject-matter.

3. Galfrid: Geoffrey de Vinsauf to whose treatise on poetical composition a less flattering allusion is made in The Nun's Priest's Tale. See note 33 to that Tale.

4. Stirp: race, stock; Latin, "stirps."

5. Calliope is the epic muse — "sister" to the other eight.

6. Melpomene was the tragic muse.

7. The same is said of Griselda, in The Clerk's Tale; though she was of tender years, "yet in the breast of her virginity there was inclos'd a sad and ripe corage"

8. The confusion which Chaucer makes between Cithaeron and Cythera, has already been remarked. See note 41 to the Knight's Tale.

9. Balais: Bastard rubies; said to be so called from Balassa, the Asian country where they were found. Turkeis: turquoise stones.

10. Spenser, in his description of the House of Busirane, speaks of the sad distress into which Phoebus was plunged by Cupid, in revenge for the betrayal of "his mother's wantonness, when she with Mars was meint [mingled] in joyfulness"

11. Alcestis, daughter of Pelias, was won to wife by Admetus, King of Pherae, who complied with her father's demand that he should come to claim her in a chariot drawn by lions and boars. By the aid of Apollo — who tended the flocks of Admetus during his banishment from heaven — the suitor fulfilled the condition; and Apollo further induced the Moirae or Fates to grant that Admetus should never die, if his father, mother, or wife would die for him. Alcestis devoted herself in his stead; and, since each had made great efforts or sacrifices for love, the pair are fitly placed as king and queen in the Court of Love.

12. In the prologue to the "Legend of Good Women," Chaucer says that behind the God of Love, upon the green, he "saw coming in ladies nineteen;" but the stories of only

nine good women are there told. In the prologue to The Man of Law's Tale, sixteen ladies are named as having their stories written in the "Saints' Legend of Cupid" — now known as the "Legend of Good Women" — (see note 5 to the Prologue to the Man of Law's Tale); and in the "Retractation," at the end of the Parson's Tale, the "Book of the Twenty-five Ladies" is enumerated among the works of which the poet repents — but there "xxv" is supposed to have been by some copyist written for "xix."

13. fele: many; German, "viele."

14. Arras: tapestry of silk, made at Arras, in France.

15. Danger, in the Provencal Courts of Love, was the allegorical personification of the husband; and Disdain suitably represents the lover's corresponding difficulty from the side of the lady.

16. In The Knight's Tale, Emily's yellow hair is braided in a tress, or plait, that hung a yard long behind her back; so that, both as regards colour and fashion, a singular resemblance seems to have existed between the female taste of 1369 and that of 1869.

17. In an old monkish story — reproduced by Boccaccio, and from him by La Fontaine in the Tale called "Les Oies de Frere Philippe" — a young man is brought up without sight or knowledge of women, and, when he sees them on a visit to the city, he is told that they are geese.

18. Tabernacle: A shrine or canopy of stone, supported by pillars.

19. Mister folk: handicraftsmen, or tradesmen, who have learned "mysteries."

20. The loves "Of Queen Annelida and False Arcite" formed the subject of a short unfinished poem by Chaucer, which was afterwards worked up into The Knight's Tale.

21. Blue was the colour of truth. See note 36 to the Squire's Tale.

22. Blife: quickly, eagerly; for "blive" or "belive."

23. It will be seen afterwards that Philogenet does not relish it, and pleads for its relaxation.

24. Feat: dainty, neat, handsome; the same as "fetis," oftener used in Chaucer; the adverb "featly" is still used, as applied to dancing, &c.

25. Solomon was beguiled by his heathenish wives to forsake the worship of the true God; Samson fell a victim to the wiles of Delilah.

26. Compare the speech of Proserpine to Pluto, in The Merchant's Tale.

27. See note 91 to the Knight's Tale for a parallel.

28. Flaw: yellow; Latin, "flavus," French, "fauve."

29. Bass: kiss; French, "baiser;" and hence the more vulgar "buss."

30. Maximian: Cornelius Maximianus Gallus flourished in the time of the Emperor Anastasius; in one of his elegies, he professed a preference for flaming and somewhat swelling lips, which, when he tasted them, would give him full kisses.

31. Dwale: sleeping potion, narcotic. See note 19 to the Reeve's Tale.

32. Environ: around; French, "a l'environ."

33. Cast off thine heart: i.e. from confidence in her.

34. Nesh: soft, delicate; Anglo-Saxon, "nese."

35. Perfection: Perfectly holy life, in the performance of vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and other modes of mortifying the flesh.

36. All the sin must on our friendes be: who made us take the vows before they knew

our own dispositions, or ability, to keep them.
37. Cope: The large vestment worn in singing the service in the choir. In Chaucer's time it seems to have been a distinctively clerical piece of dress; so, in the prologue to The Monk's Tale, the Host, lamenting that so stalwart a man as the Monk should have gone into religion, exclaims, "Alas! why wearest thou so wide a cope?"
38. The three of fatal destiny: The three Fates.
39. Cythere: Cytherea — Venus, so called from the name of the island, Cythera, into which her worship was first introduced from Phoenicia.
40. Avaunter: Boaster; Philobone calls him out.
41. The statute: i.e. the 16th.
42. "Metamorphoses" Lib. ii. 768 et seqq., where a general description of Envy is given.
43. Golden Love and Leaden Love represent successful and unsuccessful love; the first kindled by Cupid's golden darts, the second by his leaden arrows.
44. "Domine, labia mea aperies — et os meam annunciabit laudem tuam" ("Lord, open my lips — and my mouth will announce your praise") Psalms li. 15, was the verse with which Matins began. The stanzas which follow contain a paraphrase of the matins for Trinity Sunday, allegorically setting forth the doctrine that love is the all-controlling influence in the government of the universe.
45. "Venite, exultemus," ("Come, let us rejoice") are the first words of Psalm xcv. called the "Invitatory."
46. "Domine Dominus noster:" The opening words of Psalm viii.; "O Lord our Lord."
47. "Coeli enarrant:" Psalm xix. 1; "The heavens declare (thy glory)."
48. "Domini est terra": Psalm xxiv. I; "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." The first "nocturn" is now over, and the lessons from Scripture follow.
49. "Jube, Domine:" "Command, O Lord;" from Matthew xiv. 28, where Peter, seeing Christ walking on the water, says "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water."
50: "Tu autem:" the formula recited by the reader at the end of each lesson; "Tu autem, Domine, miserere nobis." ("But do thou, O Lord, have pity on us!")
51. "Te Deum Amoris:" "Thee, God of Love (we praise)."
52. Not Tubal, who was the worker in metals; but Jubal, his brother, "who was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ" (Genesis iv. 21).
53. "Dominus regnavit:" Psalm xciii. 1, "The Lord reigneth." With this began the "Laudes," or morning service of praise.
54. "Jubilate:" Psalm c. 1, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord."
55. "Benedicite:" "Bless ye the Lord;" the opening of the Song of the Three Children
56. "Laudate:" Psalm cxlvii.; "Praise ye the Lord."
57. "O admirabile:" Psalm viii 1; "O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name."
58. "Benedictus": The first word of the Song of Zacharias (Luke i. 68); "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel"
59. In The Knight's Tale we have exemplifications of the custom of gathering and wearing flowers and branches on May Day; where Emily, "doing observance to May," goes into the garden at sunrise and gathers flowers, "party white and red, to make a

sotel garland for her head"; and again, where Arcite rides to the fields "to make him a garland of the greves; were it of woodbine, or of hawthorn leaves"