GEOFFREY CHAUCER

CHAUCER'S DREAM

[This pretty allegory, or rather conceit, containing one or two passages that for vividness and for delicacy yield to nothing in the whole range of Chaucer's poetry, had never been printed before the year 1597, when it was included in the edition of Speght. Before that date, indeed, a Dream of Chaucer had been printed; but the poem so described was in reality "The Book of the Duchess; or the Death of Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster" — which is not included in the present edition. Speght says that "This Dream, devised by Chaucer, seemeth to be a covert report of the marriage of John of Gaunt, the King's son, with Blanche, the daughter of Henry, Duke of Lancaster; who after long love (during the time whereof the poet feigneth them to be dead) were in the end, by consent of friends, happily married; figured by a bird bringing in his bill an herb, which restored them to life again. Here also is showed Chaucer's match with a certain gentlewoman, who, although she was a stranger, was, notwithstanding, so well liked and loved of the Lady Blanche and her Lord, as Chaucer himself also was, that gladly they concluded a marriage between them." John of Gaunt, at the age of nineteen, and while yet Earl of Richmond, was married to the Lady Blanche at Reading in May 1359; Chaucer, then a prisoner in France, probably did not return to England till peace was concluded in the following year; so that his marriage to Philippa Roet, the sister of the Duchess Blanche's favourite attendant Katharine Roet, could not have taken place till some time after that of the Duke. In the poem, it is represented to have immediately followed; but no consequence need be attached to that statement. Enough that it followed at no great interval of time; and that the intimate relations which Chaucer had already begun to form with John of Gaunt, might well warrant him in writing this poem on the occasion of the Duke's marriage, and in weaving his own love-fortunes with those of the principal figures. In the necessary abridgement of the poem for the present edition, the subsidiary branch of the allegory, relating to the poet's own love affair, has been so far as possible separated from the main branch, which shadows forth the fortunes of John and Blanche. The poem, in full, contains, with an "Envoy" arbitrarily appended, 2233 lines; of which 510 are given here.] (Transcriber's note: modern scholars believe that Chaucer was not the author of this poem)

WHEN Flora, the queen of pleasance,
Had wholly *achiev'd the obeisance* *won the obedience*
Of the fresh and the new season,
Thorough ev'ry region;
And with her mantle *whole covert* *wholly covered*
What winter had *made discovert,* — *stripped*

On a May night, the poet lay alone, thinking of his lady, and all her beauty; and, falling asleep, he dreamed that he was in an island

Where wall, and gate, was all of glass,
And so was closed round about,
That leaveless* none came in nor out; *without permission
Uncouth and strange to behold;
For ev'ry gate, of fine gold,
A thousand fanes,* ay turning, *vanes, weathercocks
Entuned* had, and birds singing *contrived so as to emit
Diversely, on each fane a pair, a musical sound
With open mouth, against the air; <1>
And *of a suit* were all the tow'rs, *of the same plan*
Subtilly *carven aft* flow'rs *carved to represent*
Of uncouth colours, *during ay,* *lasting forever*
That never be none seen in May,
With many a small turret high;
But man alive I could not sigh,* *see
Nor creatures, save ladies play,* *disporting themselves
Which were such of their array,
That, as me thought, *of goodlihead* *for comeliness*
They passed all, and womanhead.
For to behold them dance and sing,
It seemed like none earthly thing;

And all were of the same age, save one; who was advanced in years, though no less gay in demeanour than the rest. While he stood admiring the richness and beauty of the place, and the fairness of the ladies, which had the notable gift of enduring unimpaired till death, the poet was accosted by the old lady, to whom he had to yield himself prisoner; because the ordinance of the isle was, that no man should dwell there; and the ladies' fear of breaking the law was enhanced by the temporary absence of their queen from the realm. Just at this moment the cry was raised that the queen came; all the ladies hastened to meet her; and soon the poet saw her approach — but in her company his mistress, wearing the same garb, and a seemly knight. All the ladies wondered greatly at this; and the queen explained:

"My sisters, how it hath befall,* *befallen
I trow ye know it one and all,
That of long time here have I been
Within this isle biding as queen,
Living at ease, that never wight
More perfect joye have not might;
And to you been of governance
Such as you found in whole pleasance, <2>
In every thing as ye know,
After our custom and our law;
Which how they firste founded were,
I trow ye wot all the mannere.
And who the queen is of this isle, —

As I have been this longe while, —
Each seven years must, of usage,
Visit the heav'nly hermitage,
Which on a rock so highe stands,
In a strange sea, out from all lands,
That for to make the pilgrimage
Is call'd a perilous voyage;
For if the wind be not good friend,
The journey dureth to the end
Of him which that it undertakes;
Of twenty thousand not one scapes.
Upon which rock groweth a tree,
That certain years bears apples three;
Which three apples whoso may have,
Is *from all displeasance y-save* *safe from all pain*
That in the seven years may fall;
This wot you well, both one and all.
For the first apple and the hext,* *highest <3>
Which groweth unto you the next,
Hath three virtues notable,
And keepeth youth ay durable,
Beauty, and looks, ever-in-one,* *continually
And is the best of ev'ry one.
The second apple, red and green,
Only with lookes of your eyne,
You nourishes in great pleasance,
Better than partridge or fesaunce,* *pheasant
And feedeth ev'ry living wight
Pleasantly, only with the sight.
And the third apple of the three,
Which groweth lowest on the tree,
Whoso it beareth may not fail* *miss, fail to obtain
That* to his pleasance may avail. *that which
So your pleasure and beauty rich,
Your during youth ever y-lich,* *alike
Your truth, your cunning,* and your weal, *knowledge
Hath flower'd ay, and your good heal,
Without sickness or displeasance,
Or thing that to you was noyance.* *offence, injury
So that you have as goddesses
Lived above all princesses.
Now is befall'n, as ye may see;
To gather these said apples three,
I have not fail'd, against the day,

Thitherward to take the way,
Weening to speed as I had oft. *expecting to succeed*
But when I came, I found aloft
My sister, which that hero stands,
Having those apples in her hands,
Advising* them, and nothing said, *regarding, gazing on
But look'd as she were *well apaid:* *satisfied*
And as I stood her to behold,
Thinking how my joys were cold,
Since I these apples *have not might,* *might not have*
Even with that so came this knight,
And in his arms, of me unware,
Me took, and to his ship me bare,
And said, though him I ne'er had seen,
Yet had I long his lady been;
Wherefore I shoulde with him wend,
And he would, to his life's end,
My servant be; and gan to sing,
As one that had won a rich thing.
Then were my spirits from me gone,
So suddenly every one,
That in me appear'd but death,
For I felt neither life nor breath,
Nor good nor harme none I knew,
The sudden pain me was so new,
That *had not the hasty grace be* *had it not been for the
Of this lady, that from the tree prompt kindness*
Of her gentleness so bled,* *hastened
Me to comforten, I had died;
And of her three apples she one
Into mine hand there put anon,
Which brought again my mind and breath,
And me recover'd from the death.
Wherefore to her so am I hold,* *beholden, obliged
That for her all things do I wo'ld,
For she was leach* of all my smart, *physician
And from great pain so quit* my heart. *delivered
And as God wot, right as ye hear,
Me to comfort with friendly cheer,
She did her prowess and her might.
And truly eke so did this knight,
In that he could; and often said,
That of my woe he was *ill paid,* *distressed, ill-pleased*
And curs'd the ship that him there brought,

The mast, the master that it wrought.
And, as each thing must have an end,
My sister here, our bother friend, <4>
Gan with her words so womanly
This knight entreat, and cunningly,
For mine honour and hers also,
And said that with her we should go
Both in her ship, where she was brought,
Which was so wonderfully wrought,
So clean, so rich, and so array'd,
That we were both content and paid;* *satisfied
And me to comfort and to please,
And my heart for to put at ease,
She took great pain in little while,
And thus hath brought us to this isle
As ye may see; wherefore each one
I pray you thank her one and one,
As heartily as ye can devise,
Or imagine in any wise."
At once there then men mighte see'n,
A world of ladies fall on kneen
Before my lady, —
Thanking her, and placing themselves at her commandment. Then the queen sent the aged lady to the knight, to learn of him why he had done her all this woe; and when the messenger had discharged her mission, telling the knight that in the general opinion he had done amiss, he fell down suddenly as if dead for sorrow and repentance. Only with great difficulty, by the queen herself, was he restored to consciousness and comfort; but though she spoke kind and hope-inspiring words, her heart was not in her speech,
For her intent was, to his barge
Him for to bring against the eve,
With certain ladies, and take leave,
And pray him, of his gentleness,
To *suffer her* thenceforth in peace, *let her dwell*
As other princes had before;
And from thenceforth, for evermore,
She would him worship in all wise
That gentlenesse might devise;
And *pain her* wholly to fulfil, *make her utmost efforts*
In honour, his pleasure and will.
And during thus this knighte's woe, —
Present* the queen and other mo', *(there being) present*
My lady and many another wight, —
Ten thousand shippes at a sight

I saw come o'er the wavy flood,
With sail and oar; that, as I stood
Them to behold, I gan marvail
From whom might come so many a sail;
For, since the time that I was born,
Such a navy therebeforn
Had I not seen, nor so array'd,
That for the sight my hearte play'd
Ay to and fro within my breast;
For joy long was ere it would rest.
For there were sailes *full of flow'rs;* *embroidered with flowers*
After, castles with huge tow'rs, <5>
Seeming full of armes bright,
That wond'rous lusty* was the sight; *pleasant
With large tops, and mastes long,
Richly depaint' and *rear'd among.* *raised among them*
At certain times gan repair
Smalle birdes down from the air,
And on the shippes' bounds* about *bulwarks
Sat and sang, with voice full out,
Ballads and lays right joyously,
As they could in their harmony.

The ladies were alarmed and sorrow-stricken at sight of the ships, thinking that the knight's companions were on board; and they went towards the walls of the isle, to shut the gates. But it was Cupid who came; and he had already landed, and marched straight to the place where the knight lay. Then he chid the queen for her unkindness to his servant; shot an arrow into her heart; and passed through the crowd, until he found the poet's lady, whom he saluted and complimented, urging her to have pity on him that loved her. While the poet, standing apart, was revolving all this in his mind, and resolving truly to serve his lady, he saw the queen advance to Cupid, with a petition in which she besought forgiveness of past offences, and promised continual and zealous service till her death. Cupid smiled, and said that he would be king within that island, his new conquest; then, after long conference with the queen, he called a council for the morrow, of all who chose to wear his colours. In the morning, such was the press of ladies, that scarcely could standing-room be found in all the plain. Cupid presided; and one of his counsellors addressed the mighty crowd, promising that ere his departure his lord should bring to an agreement all the parties there present. Then Cupid gave to the knight and the dreamer each his lady; promised his favour to all the others in that place who would truly and busily serve in love; and at evening took his departure. Next morning, having declined the proffered sovereignty of the island, the poet's mistress also embarked, leaving him behind; but he dashed through the waves, was drawn on board her ship from peril of death, and graciously received into his lady's lasting favour. Here the poet awakes, finding his cheeks and body all wet with tears; and, removing into another chamber, to rest more in peace, he falls asleep

anew, and continues the dream. Again he is within the island, where the knight and all the ladies are assembled on a green, and it is resolved by the assembly, not only that the knight shall be their king, but that every lady there shall be wedded also. It is determined that the knight shall depart that very day, and return, within ten days, with such a host of Benedicts, that none in the isle need lack husbands. The knight

Anon into a little barge
Brought was, late against an eve,
Where of all he took his leave.
Which barge was, as a man thought,
Aft* his pleasure to him brought; *according to*
The queen herself accustom'd ay
In the same barge to play.* *take her sport
It needed neither mast nor rother* *rudder
(I have not heard of such another),
Nor master for the governance;* *steering
It sailed by thought and pleasance,
Withoute labour, east and west;
All was one, calm or tempest. <6>
And I went with, at his request,
And was the first pray'd to the feast.* *the bridal feast
When he came unto his country,
And passed had the wavy sea,
In a haven deep and large
He left his rich and noble barge,
And to the court, shortly to tell,
He went, where he was wont to dwell, —

And was gladly received as king by the estates of the land; for during his absence his father, "old, and wise, and hoar," had died, commending to their fidelity his absent son. The prince related to the estates his journey, and his success in finding the princess in quest of whom he had gone seven years before; and said that he must have sixty thousand guests at his marriage feast. The lords gladly guaranteed the number within the set time; but afterwards they found that fifteen days must be spent in the necessary preparations. Between shame and sorrow, the prince, thus compelled to break his faith, took to his bed, and, in wailing and self-reproach,

— Endur'd the days fifteen,
Till that the lords, on an evene,* *evening
Him came and told they ready were,
And showed in few wordes there,
How and what wise they had *purvey'd *provided suitably
For his estate,* and to him said, to his rank*
That twenty thousand knights of name,
And forty thousand without blame,
Alle come of noble ligne* *line, lineage
Together in a company

Were lodged on a river's side,
Him and his pleasure there t'abide.
The prince then for joy uprose,
And, where they lodged were, he goes,
Withoute more, that same night,
And there his supper *made to dight;* *had prepared*
And with them bode* till it was day. *abode, waited*
And forthwith to take his journey,
Leaving the strait, holding the large,
Till he came to his noble barge:
And when the prince, this lusty knight,
With his people in armes bright,
Was come where he thought to pass,* *cross to the isle
And knew well none abiding was
Behind, but all were there present,
Forthwith anon all his intent
He told them there, and made his cries* *proclamation
Thorough his hoste that day twice,
Commanding ev'ry living wight
There being present in his sight,
To be the morrow on the rivage,* *shore
There he begin would his voyage.
The morrow come, the *cry was kept* *proclamation was obeyed*
But few were there that night that slept,
But *truss'd and purvey'd* for the morrow; *packed up and provided*
For fault* of ships was all their sorrow; *lack, shortage
For, save the barge, and other two,
Of shippes there I saw no mo'.
Thus in their doubtes as they stood,
Waxing the sea, coming the flood,
Was cried "To ship go ev'ry wight!"
Then was but *hie that hie him might,* *whoever could hasten, did*
And to the barge, me thought, each one
They went, without was left not one,
Horse, nor male*, truss, nor baggage, *trunk, wallet
Salad*, spear, gardebrace,** nor page, *helmet<7> **arm-shield<8>
But was lodged and room enough;
At which shipping me thought I lough,* *laughed
And gan to marvel in my thought,
How ever such a ship was wrought.* *constructed
For *what people that can increase,* *however the numbers increased*
Nor ne'er so thick might be the prease,* *press, crowd
But alle hadde room at will;
There was not one was lodged ill.

For, as I trow, myself the last
Was one, and lodged by the mast;
And where I look'd I saw such room
As all were lodged in a town.
Forth went the ship, said was the creed;<9>
And on their knees, *for their good speed,* *to pray for success*
Down kneeled ev'ry wight a while,
And prayed fast that to the isle
They mighte come in safety,
The prince and all the company.
With worship and withoute blame,
Or disclander* of his name, *reproach, slander
Of the promise he should return
Within the time he did sojourn
In his lande biding* his host; *waiting for
This was their prayer least and most:
To keep the day it might not be'n,
That he appointed with the queen.

Wherefore the prince slept neither day nor night, till he and his people landed on the glass-walled isle, "weening to be in heav'n that night." But ere they had gone a little way, they met a lady all in black, with piteous countenance, who reproached the prince for his untruth, and informed him that, unable to bear the reproach to their name, caused by the lightness of their trust in strangers, the queen and all the ladies of the isle had vowed neither to eat, nor drink, nor sleep, nor speak, nor cease weeping till all were dead. The queen had died the first; and half of the other ladies had already "under the earth ta'en lodging new." The woeful recorder of all these woes invites the prince to behold the queen's hearse:

"Come within, come see her hearse
Where ye shall see the piteous sight
That ever yet was shown to knight;
For ye shall see ladies stand,
Each with a greate rod in hand,
Clad in black, with visage white,
Ready each other for to smite,
If any be that will not weep;
Or who makes countenance to sleep.
They be so beat, that all so blue
They be as cloth that dy'd is new."

Scarcely has the lady ceased to speak, when the prince plucks forth a dagger, plunges it into his heart, and, drawing but one breath, expires.

For whiche cause the lusty host,
Which [stood] in battle on the coast,
At once for sorrow such a cry
Gan rear, thorough* the company, *throughout

That to the heav'n heard was the soun',
And under th'earth as far adown,
And wilde beastes for the fear
So suddenly affrayed* were, *afraid
That for the doubt, while they might dure,* *have a chance of safety
They ran as of their lives unsure,
From the woodes into the plain,
And from valleys the high mountain
They sought, and ran as beastes blind,
That clean forgotten had their kind.* *nature

The lords of the laggard host ask the woebegone lady what should be done; she answers that nothing can now avail, but that for remembrance they should build in their land, open to public view, "in some notable old city," a chapel engraved with some memorial of the queen. And straightway, with a sigh, she also "pass'd her breath."

Then said the lordes of the host,
And so concluded least and most,
That they would ay in houses of thack* *thatch
Their lives lead, <10> and wear but black,
And forsake all their pleasances,
And turn all joy to penances;
And bare the dead prince to the barge,
And named *them should* have the charge; *those who should*
And to the hearse where lay the queen
The remnant went, and down on kneen,
Holding their hands on high, gan cry,
"Mercy! mercy!" *evereach thry;* *each one thrice*
And curs'd the time that ever sloth
Should have such masterdom of troth.
And to the barge, a longe mile,
They bare her forth; and, in a while,
All the ladies, one and one,
By companies were brought each one.
And pass'd the sea, and took the land,
And in new hearses, on a sand,
Put and brought were all anon,
Unto a city clos'd with stone,
Where it had been used ay
The kinges of the land to lay,
After they reigned in honours;
And writ was which were conquerours;
In an abbey of nunnes black,
Which accustom'd were to wake,
And of usage rise each a-night,

To pray for ev'ry living wight.
And so befell, as is the guise,
Ordain'd and said was the service
Of the prince and eke of the queen,
So devoutly as mighte be'n;
And, after that, about the hearses,
Many orisons and verses,
Withoute note* <11> full softely *music
Said were, and that full heartily;
That all the night, till it was day,
The people in the church gan pray
Unto the Holy Trinity,
Of those soules to have pity.
And when the nighte past and run
Was, and the newe day begun, —
The young morrow with rayes red,
Which from the sun all o'er gan spread,
Attemper'd* cleare was and fair, *clement, calm
And made a time of wholesome air, —
Befell a wondrous case* and strange *chance, event
Among the people, and gan change
Soon the word, and ev'ry woe
Unto a joy, and some to two.
A bird, all feather'd blue and green,
With brighte rays like gold between,
As small thread over ev'ry joint,
All full of colour strange and coint,* *quaint
Uncouth* and wonderful to sight, *unfamiliar
Upon the queene's hearse gan light,
And sung full low and softely
Three songes in their harmony,
Unletted of every wight; *unhindered by*
Till at the last an aged knight,
Which seem'd a man in greate thought,
Like as he set all thing at nought,
With visage and eyes all forwept,* *steeped in tears
And pale, as a man long unslept,
By the hearses as he stood,
With hasty handling of his hood
Unto a prince that by him past,
Made the bird somewhat aghast.* *frightened
Wherefore he rose and left his song,
And departed from us among,
And spread his winges for to pass

By the place where he enter'd was.
And in his haste, shortly to tell,
Him hurt, that backward down he fell,
From a window richly paint,
With lives of many a divers saint,
And beat his winges and bled fast,
And of the hurt thus died and past;
And lay there well an hour and more
Till, at the last, of birds a score
Came and assembled at the place
Where the window broken was,
And made such waimentatioun,* *lamentation
That pity was to hear the soun',
And the warbles of their throats,
And the complaint of their notes,
Which from joy clean was reversed.
And of them one the glass soon pierced,
And in his beak, of colours nine,
An herb he brought, flow'rless, all green,
Full of smalle leaves, and plain,* *smooth
Swart,* and long, with many a vein. *black
And where his fellow lay thus dead,
This herb he down laid by his head,
And dressed* it full softely, *arranged
And hung his head, and stood thereby.
Which herb, in less than half an hour,
Gan over all knit,* and after flow'r *bud
Full out; and waxed ripe the seed;
And, right as one another feed
Would, in his beak he took the grain,
And in his fellow's beak certain
It put, and thus within the third* *i.e. third hour after it
Upstood and pruned him the bird, had died
Which dead had been in all our sight;
And both together forth their flight
Took, singing, from us, and their leave;
Was none disturb them would nor grieve.
And, when they parted were and gone,
Th' abbess the seedes soon each one
Gathered had, and in her hand
The herb she took, well avisand* *considering <12>
The leaf, the seed, the stalk, the flow'r,
And said it had a good savour,
And was no common herb to find,

And well approv'd of *uncouth kind,* *strange nature*
And more than other virtuous;
Whoso might it have for to use
In his need, flower, leaf, or grain,
Of his heal might be certain.
[She] laid it down upon the hearse
Where lay the queen; and gan rehearse
Each one to other what they had seen.
And, *taling thus,* the seed wax'd green, *as they gossiped*
And on the dry hearse gan to spring, —
Which me thought was a wondrous thing, —
And, after that, flow'r and new seed;
Of which the people all took heed,
And said it was some great miracle,
Or medicine fine more than treacle; <12>
And were well done there to assay
If it might ease, in any way,
The corpses, which with torchelight
They waked had there all that night.
Soon did the lordes there consent,
And all the people thereto content,
With easy words and little fare;* *ado, trouble
And made the queene's visage bare,
Which showed was to all about,
Wherefore in swoon fell all the rout,* *company, crowd
And were so sorry, most and least,
That long of weeping they not ceas'd;
For of their lord the remembrance
Unto them was such displeasance.* *cause of grief
That for to live they called pain,
So were they very true and plain.
And after this the good abbess
Of the grains gan choose and dress* *prepare
Three, with her fingers clean and smale,* *small
And in the queenes mouth, by tale,
One after other, full easily
She put, and eke full cunningly.* *skilfully
Which showed some such virtue.
That proved was the medicine true.
For with a smiling countenance
The queen uprose, and of usance* *custom
As she was wont, to ev'ry wight
She *made good cheer;* for whiche sight *showed a gracious
The people, kneeling on the stones, countenance*

Thought they in heav'n were, soul and bones;
And to the prince, where that he lay,
They went to make the same assay.* *trial, experiment
And when the queen it understood,
And how the medicine was good,
She pray'd that she might have the grains,
To relieve him from the pains
Which she and he had both endur'd.
And to him went, and so him cur'd,
That, within a little space,
Lusty and fresh alive he was,
And in good heal, and whole of speech,
And laugh'd, and said, *"Gramercy, leach!"* *"Great thanks,
For which the joy throughout the town my physician!"*
So great was, that the belles' soun'
Affray'd the people a journey* *to the distance of
About the city ev'ry way; a day's journey*
And came and ask'd the cause, and why
They rungen were so stately.* *proudly, solemnly
And after that the queen, th'abbess,
Made diligence, <14> ere they would cease,
Such, that of ladies soon a rout* *company, crowd
Suing* the queen was all about; *following
And, call'd by name each one and told,* *numbered
Was none forgotten, young nor old.
There mighte men see joyes new,
When the medicine, fine and true,
Thus restor'd had ev'ry wight,
So well the queen as the knight,
Unto perfect joy and heal,
That *floating they were in such weal* *swimming in such
As folk that woulden in no wise happiness*
Desire more perfect paradise.

On the morrow a general assembly was convoked, and it was resolved that the wedding feast should be celebrated within the island. Messengers were sent to strange realms, to invite kings, queens, duchesses, and princesses; and a special embassy was despatched, in the magic barge, to seek the poet's mistress — who was brought back after fourteen days, to the great joy of the queen. Next day took place the wedding of the prince and all the knights to the queen and all the ladies; and a three months' feast followed, on a large plain "under a wood, in a champaign, betwixt a river and a well, where never had abbey nor cell been, nor church, house, nor village, in time of any manne's age." On the day after the general wedding, all entreated the poet's lady to consent to crown his love with marriage; she yielded; the bridal was splendidly celebrated; and to the sound of marvellous music the poet

awoke, to find neither lady nor creature — but only old portraitures on the tapestry, of horsemen, hawks, and hounds, and hurt deer full of wounds. Great was his grief that he had lost all the bliss of his dream; and he concludes by praying his lady so to accept his love-service, that the dream may turn to reality.

Or elles, without more I pray,
That this night, ere it be day,
I may unto my dream return,
And sleeping so forth ay sojourn
Aboute the Isle of Pleasance,
Under my lady's obeisance, *subject to my lady*
In her service, and in such wise,
As it may please her to devise;
And grace once to be accept',
Like as I dreamed when I slept,
And dure a thousand year and ten
In her good will: Amen, amen!

Notes to Chaucer's Dream

1. The birds on the weathervanes were set up facing the wind, so that it entered their open mouths, and by some mechanism produced the musical sound.

2. "And to you been of governance Such as you found in whole pleasance" That is, "and have governed you in a manner which you have found wholly pleasant."

3. Hext: highest; from "high," as "next" from "nigh." Compare the sounds of the German, "hoechst," highest, and "naechst," next.

4. "Your brother friend," is the common reading; but the phrase has no apparent applicability; and perhaps the better reading is "our bother friend" — that is, the lady who has proved herself a friend both to me and to you. In the same way, Reason, in Troilus' soliloquy on the impending loss of his mistress, is made, addressing Troilus and Cressida, to speaks of "your bother," or "bothe," love.

5. The ships had high embattled poops and forecastles, as in mediaeval ships of war.

6. Compare Spenser's account of Phaedria's barque, in "The
Faerie Queen," canto vi. book ii.; and, mutatis mutandis,
Chaucer's description of the wondrous horse, in The Squire's
Tale.

7. Salad: a small helmet; french, "salade."

8. Gardebrace: French, "garde-bras," an arm-shield; probably resembling the "gay bracer" which the Yeoman, in the Prologue to The Canterbury Tales, wears on his arm.

9. Confession and prayer were the usual preliminaries of any enterprise in those superstitious days; and in these days of enlightenment the fashion yet lingers among the most superstitious class — the fisher-folk.

10. The knights resolved that they would quit their castles and houses of stone for humble huts.

11. The knight and lady were buried without music, although the office for the dead was generally sung.

12. Avisand: considering; present participle from "avise" or "advise."

13. Treacle; corrupted from Latin, "therisca," an antidote. The word is used for medicine in general.
14. The abbess made diligence: i.e. to administer the grain to the dead ladies.