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GEOFFREY CHAUCER

A GOODLY BALLAD OF CHAUCER

MOTHER of nurture, best belov'd of all,
And freshe flow'r, to whom good thrift God send
Your child, if it lust* you me so to call, *please
All be I unable myself so to pretend, *although I be
To your discretion I recommend
My heart and all, with ev'ry circumstance,
All wholly to be under your governance.
Most desire I, and have and ever shall,
Thinge which might your hearte's ease amend
Have me excus'd, my power is but small;
Nathless, of right, ye oughte to commend
My goode will, which fame would entend* *attend, strive
To do you service; for my suffisance* *contentment
Is wholly to be under your governance.
Mieux un in heart which never shall apall, <2>
Ay fresh and new, and right glad to dispend
My time in your service, what so befall,
Beseeching your excellence to defend
My simpleness, if ignorance offend
In any wise; since that mine affiance
Is wholly to be under your governance.
Daisy of light, very ground of comfort,
The sunne's daughter ye light, as I read;
For when he west'reth, farewell your disport!
By your nature alone, right for pure dread
Of the rude night, that with his *boistous weed* *rude garment*
Of darkness shadoweth our hemisphere,
Then close ye, my life's lady dear!
Dawneth the day unto his kind resort,
And Phoebus your father, with his streames red,
Adorns the morrow, consuming the sort* *crowd
Of misty cloudes, that would overlade
True humble heartes with their mistihead.* *dimness, mistiness
New comfort adaws,* when your eyen clear *dawns, awakens
Disclose and spread, my life's lady dear.
Je voudrais* — but the greate God disposeth, *I would wish
And maketh casual, by his Providence,
Such thing as manne's fraile wit purposeth,

All for the best, if that your conscience
Not grudge it, but in humble patience
It receive; for God saith, withoute fable,
A faithful heart ever is acceptable.
Cauteles* whoso useth gladly, gloseth;** *cautious speeches
To eschew such it is right high prudence; **deceiveth
What ye said ones mine heart opposeth,
That my writing japes* in your absence *jests, coarse stories
Pleased you much better than my presence:
Yet can I more; ye be not excusable;
A faithful heart is ever acceptable.
Quaketh my pen; my spirit supposeth
That in my writing ye will find offence;
Mine hearte welketh* thus; anon it riseth; *withers, faints
Now hot, now cold, and after in fervence;
That is amiss, is caus'd of negligence,
And not of malice; therefore be merciable;
A faithful heart is ever acceptable.
L'Envoy.
Forthe, complaint! forth, lacking eloquence;
Forth little letter, of enditing lame!
I have besought my lady's sapience
On thy behalfe, to accept in game
Thine inability; do thou the same.
Abide! have more yet! *Je serve Joyesse!* *I serve Joy*
Now forth, I close thee in holy Venus' name!
Thee shall unclose my hearte's governess.
Notes To a Goodly Ballad Of Chaucer
This elegant little poem is believed to have been addressed to Margaret, Countess of Pembroke, in whose name Chaucer found one of those opportunities of praising the daisy he never lost. (Transcriber's note: Modern scholars believe that Chaucer was not the author of this poem)
2. Mieux un in heart which never shall apall: better one who in heart shall never pall — whose love will never weary.