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GEOFFREY CHAUCER

GOOD COUNSEL OF CHAUCER

FLEE from the press, and dwell with soothfastness;
Suffice thee thy good, though it be small;
For hoard hath hate, and climbing tickleness,* *instability
Press hath envy, and *weal is blent* o'er all, *prosperity is blinded*
Savour* no more than thee behove shall; *have a taste for
Read* well thyself, that other folk canst read; *counsel
And truth thee shall deliver, it is no dread.* *doubt
Paine thee not each crooked to redress,
In trust of her that turneth as a ball; <2>
Great rest standeth in little business:
Beware also to spurn against a nail; <3>
Strive not as doth a crocke* with a wall; *earthen pot
Deeme* thyself that deemest others' deed, *judge
And truth thee shall deliver, it is no dread.
What thee is sent, receive in buxomness;* *submission
The wrestling of this world asketh a fall;
Here is no home, here is but wilderness.
Forth, pilgrim! Forthe beast, out of thy stall!
Look up on high, and thank thy God of all!
Weive thy lust, and let thy ghost* thee lead, *forsake thy
And truth thee shall deliver, it is no dread. inclinations*
*spirit

Notes to Good Counsel of Chaucer

This poem is said to have been composed by Chaucer "upon his deathbed, lying in anguish."

2. Her that turneth as a ball: Fortune.

3. To spurn against a nail; "against the pricks."