

# The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Wright's Chaste Wife, by of Cobsam Adam and Frederick James Furnivall

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Editor: Frederick James Furnivall

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
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
## Transcriber's note:


This e-text uses a number of characters that depend on utf-8 encoding, particularly small and capital yogh (ȝ, ȝ), small and capital thorn (þ, þ), double l with a tilde through (𐞀), u with a macron (ū), h with a line through the top (ḥ), r with a upwards hook attached to the horizontal stem (ꝛ) and ae ligature with an acute accent (æ̇). If they do not display properly, you may have an incompatible browser or unavailable fonts. As a first resort, try changing your browser's default font.

This e-text also uses some characters that are not in unicode. I have rendered them following:

{m~} for a m with a loop back over the character, which looks like 

{n)} for a n with a ) attached to the right side, which looks like 

{d+} for the d with a little crook attached to the top right of the d, which looks like 

There is also one instance of (on line 391 of the poem) a m with a ) attached to the right side (rendered as {m}) and looks like , but this is probably a typo for {m~}. I have left this as is.

Text and letters in brackets [ ] is original.

Obvious typos are corrected in this e-text and are shown with popups underlined in red.

## The Wright's Chaste Wife.

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# The Wright's Chaste Wife,

OR

"A Fable of a wryght that was maryde to a pore  
wydows dowtre / the whiche wydow havynge  
noo good to geve *wi*th her / gave as for  
a *prec*yous Johe~~ll~~ to *hym* a Rose  
garlond / the whyche sche affermyd  
wold never fade while sche  
kept truly her wedlok."

# A Merry Tale, by Adam of Cobsam.

*From a MS. in the Library of the Archbishop of Canterbury, at Lambeth, about 1462 A.D.*

COPIED AND EDITED BY  
FREDERICK J. FURNIVALL.

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[Pg v]

## PREFACE.

Good wine needs no bush, and this tale needs no Preface. I shall not tell the story of it—let readers go to the verse itself for that; nor shall I repeat to those who begin it the exhortation of the englisser of *Sir Gengerides*,

"for goddes sake, or ye hens wende,  
Here this tale unto the ende."—(ll. 3769-70.)

If any one having taken it up is absurd enough to lay it down without finishing it, let him lose the fun, and let all true men pity him. Though the state of morals disclosed by the story is not altogether satisfactory, yet it is a decided improvement on that existing in Roberd of Brunne's time in 1303, for he had to complain of the lords of his day:

Also do þese lordynges,  
Þe[y] trespas moche yn twey þynges;  
Þey rauys a mayden aʒens here wyl,  
And mennys wyuys þey lede away þertyl.  
A grete vylanye þarte he dous  
ʒyf he make therof hys rouse [boste]:  
Þe dede ys confusyun,  
And more ys þe dyffamacyun.

[Pg vi]

The volume containing the poem was shown to me by Mr Stubbs, the Librarian at Lambeth, in order that I might see the version of Sir Gyngelayne, son of Sir Gawain, which Mr Morris is some day, I trust, to edit for the Society in one of his Gawain volumes.<sup>[1]</sup> Finding the present poem also on the paper leaves, I copied it out the same afternoon, and here it is for a half-hour's amusement to any reader who chooses to take it up.

The handwriting of the MS. must be of a date soon after 1460, and this agrees well with the allusion to Edward the Fourth's accession, and the triumph of the White Rose o'er the Red alluded to in the last lines of the poem. The Garland,

It was made ...  
Of flourys most of honoure,  
Of roses whyte þat wyth nott fade,  
Whych floure at ynglond doth glade....  
Vn-to the whych floure I-wys  
The loue of God and of the comonys  
Subdued bene of rygght.

For, that the Commons of England were glad of their Yorkist king, and loved Duke Richard's son, let Holinshed's record prove. He testifies:

"Wherevpon it was againe demanded of the commons, if they would admit and take the said erle as their prince and souereigne lord; which all with one voice cried: Yea, yea...."

"Out of the ded stocke sprang a branch more mightie than the stem; this Edward the Fourth, a prince so highlie faouered of the peple, for his great liberalite, clemencie, vpright dealing, and courage, that aboute all other, he with them stood in grace alone; by reason whereof, men of all ages and degrees to him dailie repaired, some offering themselues and their men to ioepard their liues with him, and other plentiouslie gaue monie to support his charges, and to mainteine his right."

Would that we knew as much of Adam of Cobsam as of our White-Rose king. He must have been one of the Chaucer breed,<sup>[2]</sup> but more than this poem tells of him I cannot learn.

3, *St George's Square, N.W.*,  
23 November, 1865.

P.S.—There are other Poems about Edward IV. in the volume, which will be printed separately.<sup>[3]</sup> One on Women is given at the end of the present text.

PP.S. 1869.—Mr C.H. Pearson, the historian of the Early and Middle Ages of England, has supplied me with the immediate original of this story. He says:

"The Wright's Chaste Wife is a reproduction of one of the *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. 69, de Castitate, ed. Keller. The Latin story begins 'Gallus regnavit prudens valde.' The Carpenter gets a shirt with his wife, which is never to want washing unless one of them is unfaithful. The lovers are three Knights (*milites*), and they are merely kept on bread and water, not made to work; nor is any wife introduced to see her lord's discomfiture. The English version, therefore, is much quaint and fuller of incident than its original. But the 'morality' of the Latin story is rich beyond description. 'The wife is holy Mother Church,' 'the Carpenter is the good Christian,' 'the shirt is our Faith, because, as the apostle says, it is impossible to please God without faith.' The Wright's work typifies 'the building up the pure heart by the works of mercy.' The three Knights are 'the pride of life, the lust of the eyes, and the lust of the flesh.' 'These you must shut up in the chamber of penance till you get an eternal reward from the eternal King.' 'Let us therefore pray God,' &c."

With the Wright's Chaste Wife may also be compared the stories mentioned in the Notes, p. 20, and the Ballad "The Fryer well fitted; or

A Pretty jest that once befel,  
How a maid put a Fryer to cool in the well"

printed "in the Bagford Collection; in the Roxburghe (ii. 172); the Pepys (iii. 145); the Douce (p. 85); and in *Wit and Mirth, an Antidote to Melancholy*, 8vo. 1682; also, in an altered form, in Pills to purge Melancholy, 1707, i. 340; or 1719, iii. 325"; and the tune of which, with an abstract of the story, is given in Chappell's *Popular Music*, i. 273-5. The Friar makes love to the Maid; she refuses him for fear of hell-fire.

Tush, quoth the Friar, thou needst not doubt;  
If thou wert in Hell, I could sing thee out.

So she consents if he'll bring her an angel of money. He goes home to fetch it, and she covers the well over with a cloth. When he comes back, and has given her the money, she pretends that her father is coming, tells the Friar to run behind the cloth, and down he flops into the well. She won't help him at first, because if he could sing her out of hell, he can clearly sing himself out of the well: but at last she does help him out, keeps his money because he's dirtied the water, and sends him home dripping along the street like a new-washed sheep.

- [1] The since printing of the Romance in the Percy Folio MS. Ballads and Romances, (*Lybius Disconius*, ii. 404,) will probably render this unnecessary. (1869.)
- [2] Chaucer brings off his Carpenter, though, triumphant, and not with the swived wife and broken arm that he gives his befooled Oxford craftsman in *The Miller's Tale*. (1869.)
- [3] In *Political, Religious, and Love Poems*, E.E. Text Soc., 1867.

## THE WRIGHT'S CHASTE WIFE.

[*MS. Lambeth 306, leaves 178-187.*]

Almyghty god, maker of alle, Saue you my souereyns in towre & halle, And send you good grace!	3	My sovereigns,
If ye wyll a stounde blynne, Of a story I wyll begynne, And telle you all the cas,	6	I will tell you a tale
Meny farleyes þat I haue herde, Ye would haue wondyr how yt ferde; Lystyn, and ye schall here;	9	of a wright of this land,
Of a wryght I wyll you telle, That some tyme in thys land gan dwelle, And lyued by hys myster.	12	who, at work, was afraid of no earthly man.
Whether that he were yn or owte, Of erthely man hadde he no dowte, To werke hows, harowe, nor plowgh,	15	
Or other werkes, what so they were, Thous wrought he hem farre and nere, And dyd tham wele I-nough.	18	

	Thys wryght would wedde no wyfe, Butt yn yougeth to lede hys lyfe In myrthe and oþer melody;		At first he would wed no wife,
	Ouer <b>aH</b> where he gan wende, <b>AH</b> they seyde "welcome, frende, Sytt downe, and do gla[d]ly."	21	<b>[leaf 178, back]</b> for wherever he went he was welcome;
[Pg 2]	THE WRIGHT FALLS IN LOVE, AND PROPOSES.		
	<b>TyH</b> on a tyme he was wylyng, As tyme comyth of alle thyng, (So seyth the profesye.)	24	but at last he wished
	A wyfe for to wedde & haue That myght hys goodes kepe and saue, And for to leue <b>aH</b> foly.	27	to have a spouse to look after his goods.
	Ther dwellyd a wydowe in þat contre That hadde a doughter feyre & fre; Of her, word sprang wyde,	30	A widow near had a fair daughter
	For sche was bothe stabyH & trewe, Meke of maners, and feyr of hewe; So seyde men in that tyde.	33	true and meek.
	The wryght seyde, "so god me saue, Such a wyfe would I haue To lye nyghtly by my syde."	36	
	He þought to speke wyth þat may, And rose erly on a daye And þyder gan he to ryde.	39	Her the wright would like to lie by him,
	The wryght was welcome to þe wyfe, And her saluyd <b>aH</b> so blyve, And so he dyd her doughter fre:	42	and therefore went to her mother
	For the erand that he for ca{m~} Tho he spake, þat good yema{n}; Than to hym seyde sche:	45	and proposed for the maiden.
	The wydowe seyde, "by heuen kyng, I may geue wyth her no þing, (And þat forthynketh me;)	48	The mother says she can only give him as a :
	Saue a garlond I wyH the geue, Ye sch <del>a</del> neu <del>e</del> r see, whyle ye lyve, None such in thys contre:	51	a garland
	Haue here thys garlond of roses ryche, In <b>aH</b> thys lond ys none yt lyche, For ytt wyH eu <del>e</del> r be newe,	54	of roses
	Wete þou wele w <del>i</del> thowtyn fable, <b>AH</b> the whyle thy wyfe ys stable The chaplett wolle hold hewe;	57	that will keep its colour <b>[leaf 179]</b> while his wife is true,
[Pg 3]	HE RECEIVES A ROSE GARLAND WITH HIS WIFE.	60	but change when she is faithless.
	And yf thy wyfe vse putry, Or tolle eny man to lye her by, Than wolle yt change hewe, And by the garlond þou may see, FekyH or fals yf þat sche be, Or ellys yf sche be trewe."	63	
	Of thys chaplett hym was f <del>u</del> ll fayne, And of hys wyfe, was nott to layne; He weddyd her f <del>u</del> ll sone, And ladde her home wyth solempnite, And hylde her bryda <b>aH</b> dayes thre.	66	The wright is delighted with his garland and
	Whan they home come, Thys wryght in hys hart cast, If that he walkyd est or west As he was wonte to done, "My wyfe þat ys so bryght of ble, Men wolle desyre her fro me, And þat hastily and sone;"	69	marries her and takes her home;
	Butt sone he hym byþought That a chambyr schuld be wrought Bothe of lyme and stone, Wyth wallys strong as eny stele, And dorres sotylly made and wele, He owte framyd yt sone;	72	and then begins to think that when he is out
	The chambyr he lett make fast, Wyth plaster of parys þat wyH last, Such ous know I neu <del>e</del> r none; Ther ys [ne] kyng ne emperoure, And he were lockyn in þat towre, That cowde gete owte of þat wonne.	75	men will try to corrupt his wife.
	Nowe hath he done as he þought, And in the myddes of the flore wrought A wondyr strange gyle, A trapdoure rounde abowte That no man myght come yn nor owte; It was made wyth a wyle,	78	So he plans a crafty room and tower,
	That who-so touchyd yt eny thyng, In to þe pytt he schuld flyng Wythyn a lytyH whyle.	81	
		84	and builds it soon with plaster of Paris,
		87	which no one could ever get out of if he onc
		90	
		93	for there was a trapdoor in the middle, <b>[leaf 179, back]</b>
[Pg 4]	THE WRIGHT GOES TO WORK, AND	96	and if any one only touched it, down he'd go
		99	

	LEAVES HIS WIFE AT HOME.	For hys wyfe he made that place, That no man schuld beseke her of grace, Nor her to begyle.	102	This was to stop any tricks with his wife.
		By þat tyme þe lord of the towne Hadde ordeynyd tymbyr redy bowne, An halle to make of tre.	105	Just then the town Lord
		After the wryght the lord lett sende, For þat he schuld wyth hym lende Monythys two or thre.	108	sends for him to build a Hall, (a job for two or three months,)
		The lord seyde, "wouldest þou haue þi wyfe? I wyl send after her blyve That sche may com to the."	111	and offers to fetch his wife too.
		The wryght hys garlond hadde take wyth hy{m~}, That was bryght and no þing dymme, Yt wes feyre on to see.	114	He sees the wright's garland, and asks what
		The lord axyd hym as he satt, "Felowe, where hadyst þou þis hatte That ys so feyre and newe?"	117	
		The wryght answerd all so blyue, And seyde, "syr, I hadde yt wyth my wyfe, And þat dare me neuer rewe;	120	"Sir, it will
		Syr, by my garlond I may see Fekyd or fals yf þat sche be, Or <sup>[1]</sup> yf þat sche be trewe;	123	tell me whether my wife is false or true;  and will change its colour if she go wrong."
		And yf my wyfe loue a paramoure, Than wyl my garlond vade coloure, And change wyl yt the hewe."	126	
		The lord þought "by godys myght, That wyl I wete thys same nyght Whether thys tale be trewe."	129	"I'll try that," thinks the Lord, and goes to the wright's wife.
[Pg 5]	THE LORD BRIBES THE WRIGHT'S WIFE TO LIE WITH HIM.	To the wryghtys howse anon he went, He fonde the wyfe ther-in presente That was so bryght and schene;	132	<b>[leaf 180]</b>
		Sone he hayled her trewly, And so dyd sche the lord curtesly: Sche seyde, "welcome ye be;"	135	
		Thus seyde the wyfe of the hows, "Syr, howe faryth my swete spouse That hewyth vpon your tre?"	138	She asks after her husband but the Lord
		"Sertes, dame," he seyde, "wele, And I am come, so haue I hele, To wete the wylle of the;	141	declares his own love for her,
		My loue ys so vpon the cast That me thynketh my hert wolle brest, It wolle none otherwyse be;	144	and prays her to grant him his will.
		Good dame, graunt me thy grace To pley with the in some preuy place For gold and eke for fee."	147	She entreats him to let that be,
		"Good syr, lett be youre fare, And of such wordes speke no mare For hys loue þat dyed on tre;	150	
		Hadde we onys begonned þat gle, My husband by his garlond myght see; For sorowe he woulde wexe woode."	153	but he presses her,
		"Certes, dame," he seyde, "naye; Loue me, I pray you, in þat ye maye: For godys loue change thy mode,	156	and offers her 40 marks.
		Forty marke schall be youre mede Of syluer and of gold[e] rede, And that schall do the good."	159	On this she consents if he'll put down the m
		"Syr, that deede schall be done; Take me that mony here anone." "I swere by the holy rode	162	
		I thought when I cam hydder For to bryng <sup>[2]</sup> yt all to-gydder, As I mott broke my heele."	165	The 40 marks she takes
		Ther sche toke xl marke Of syluer and gold styff and sterke: Sche toke yt feyre and welle;	168	and tells him to go
[Pg 6]	THE LORD IS DROPPED THROUGH A TRAPDOOR,	Sche seyde, "in to the chambyr wyl we, Ther no man schall vs see; No lenger wyl we spare."	171	<b>[leaf 180, back]</b> into the secret chamber. Upstairs he goes,
		Vp the steyer they gan <sup>[3]</sup> hye: The stepes were made so queyntly That farther myght he nott fare.	174	stumbles, and pops down 40 feet through the wright's
		The lord stumbyllyd as he went in hast, He fell doune in to þat chaste Forty fote and somedele more.	177	
		The lord began to crye;		

	The wyfe seyde to hym in hye, "Syr, what do ye there?"	180	
	"Dame, I can nott seye howe That I am come hydder nowe To thys hows þat ys so newe;	183	He prays the
	I am so depe in thys sure flore That I ne can come owte att no dore; Good dame, on me þou rewel!"	186	good dame to have pity on him. "Nay," says she, "not till my husband sees y
	"Nay," sche seyde, "so mut y the, Thy myne husbond come and se, I schrewe hym þat yt þought." The lord arose and lokyd abowte If he myght eny where gete owte,	189	The Lord tries to get out, but can't,
	Butt yt holpe hy{m~} ryght noght, The wallys were so thycke wyt{hy{n}}, That he no where myght owte wynne But helpe to hy{m~} were brought;	192	
	And euer the lord made euy chere, And seyde, "dame, þou schalt by thys dere." Sche seyde that sche ne rought;	195	and then threatens the wife,
	Sche seyde "I recke nere Whyle I am here and þou art there, I schrewe herre þat þe doth drede." The lord was sone owte of her þought, The wyfe went in to her lofte,	198	but she doesn't care for that,
	Sche satte and dyde her dede. Than yt fell on þat ober daye, Of mete and drynke he gan her pray, There of he hadde gret nede.	201	and goes away to her work.
[Pg 7]	AND HAS TO BEAT FLAX TO EARN HIS DINNER.	204	Next day the Lord begs for food.
	He seyde, "dame, for seynt charyte, Wyth some mete þou comfort me." Sche seyde, "nay, so god me spede, For I swere by swete seynt Iohne, Mete ne drynke ne getyst þou none Butt þou wylt swete or swynke; For I haue both hempe and lyne, And a betyngstocke full fyne, And a swyngy good and grete; If þou wylt worke, tell me sone." "Dame, bryng yt forthe, yt schal be done, Full gladly would I ete." Sche toke the stocke in her honde, And in to the pytt sche yt slang With a grete hete:	207	
	Sche brought the lyne and hempe on her backe, "Syr lord," sche seyde, "haue þou þat, And lerne for to swete." Ther sche toke hym a bonde For to occupy hys honde, And bade hym fast on to bete.	210	<b>[leaf 181]</b> "You'll get none from me
	He leyde yt downe on the <sup>[4]</sup> stone, And leyde on strockes weh good wone, And sparyde nott on to leyne. Whan þat he hadde wrought a thraue, Mete and drynke he gan to craue, And would haue hadde yt fayne; "That I hadde somewhat for to ete Now after my gret swete; Me thynketh yt were ryght, For I haue labouryd nyght and daye The for to plese, dame, I saye, And therto putt my myght."	213	unless you sweat for it," says she; "spin me some flax."
	The wyfe seyde "so mutt I haue hele, And yf þi worke be wrought wele Thou schalt haue to dyne." Mete and drynke sche hym bare, Wyth a thraue of flex mare Of full long boundyn lyne. So feyre the wyfe the lord gan praye That he schuld be werkyng aye, And nought þat he schuld blynne;	216	He says he will:
	The lord was fayne to werke tho, Butt hys men knewe nott of hys woo Nor of þer lordes pyne.	219	she throws him the tools,
	The stuard to þe wryght gan saye, "Sawe þou owte of my lord to-daye, Whether that he ys wende?" The wryght answerde and seyde "naye; I sawe hym nott syth yesterdaye; I trowe þat he be schent."	222	the flax and hemp, and says, "Work away."
		225	
		228	
		231	
		234	and then asks for his food,
		237	
		240	for he's toiled night and day.
[Pg 8]	THE STEWARD RESOLVES TO TEMPT THE WRIGHT'S WIFE.	240	The wife
		243	gives him meat and drink <b>[leaf 181, back]</b>
		246	and more flax,
		249	and keeps him up to his work.
		252	
		255	
		258	The Steward asks the wright after his Lord,

	The stuard stode þe wryght by, And of hys garlond hadde ferly What þat yt be-mente.	261	then notices the garland,  and asks who gave it him.
	The stuard seyð, "so god me saue, Of thy garlond wondyr I haue, And who yt hath the sent."	264	"Sir, it will tell me whether my wife goes ba
	"Syr," he seyð, "be the same hatte I can knowe yf my wyfe be badde To me by eny other ma{n}); If my floures ouþer fade or falle, Then doth my wyfe me wrong wyth-alle, As many a woman ca{n})."	267 270	"I'll prove that this very night," says the stev
	The stuard þought "by godes myght, That schall I preue thys same nyght Whether þou blys or banne,"	273	gets plenty of money, and goes off
[Pg 9]	AND THINKS HE HAS SUCCEEDED SO WELL. And in to hys chambyr he gan gone, And toke tresure full good wone, And forþ he spedde hem tha{n}). Butt he ne stynt att no stone Tyll he vn-to þe wryghtes hows come That ylke same nyght. He mett the wyfe amydde the gate, Abowte þe necke he gan her take, And seyð "my dere wyght, All the good þat ys myne I wyll the geue to be thyne To lye by the all nyght." Sche seyð, "syr, lett be thy fare, My husbond wolle wete wyth-owty{n}) mare And I hym dyd that vnryght; I would nott he myght yt wete For all the good that I myght gete, So Ihesus <sup>[5]</sup> mutt me spede For, and eny man lay me by, My husbond would yt wete truly, It ys wythowtyn eny drede." The stuard seyð "for hym þat ys wrought, There-of, dame, drede the noght Wyth me to do that dede; Haue here of me xx marke Of gold and syluer styf and starke, Thys tresoure schall be thy mede." "Syr, and I graunt þat to you, Lett no man wete butt we two nowe." He seyð, "nay, wythowtyn drede." The stuard þought, 'sykerly Women beth both queynte & slye.' The mony he gan her bedde; He þought wele to haue be spedde, And of his erand he was onredde Or he were fro he{m~} I-gone. Vp the sterys sche hym leyde Tyll he saw the wryghtes bedde: Of tresoure þought he none; He went and stumblyd att a stone; In to þe seller he fylle sone, Downe to the bare flore. The lord seyð "what deuyll art þou? And þou hadest falle on me nowe, Thowe hadest hurt me full sore." The stuard stert and staryd abowte If he myght ower gete owte Att hole lesse or mare. The lord seyð, "welcome, and sytt be tyme, For þou schalt helpe to dyght thys lyne For all thy fers[e] fare." The stuard lokyd on the knyght, He seyð, "syr, for godes myght, My lord, what do you here?" He seyð "felowe, wyth-owtyn oth, For o erand we come bothe, The sothe wolle I nott lete." Tho cam the wyfe them vn-to, And seyð, "syres, what do you to, Wyll ye nott lerne to swete?" Than seyð þe lord her vn-to, 'Dame, your lyne ys I-doo, Nowe would I fayne ete: And I haue made yt all I-lyke, Full clere, and no þing thycke,	276 279 282 285 288 291 294 297 300 303 306 309 312 315 318 321 324 327 330 333 336	to the wright's house,  takes her round the neck, and offers her all <b>[leaf 182]</b> he has, to lie by her that night.  She refuses,  as her husband would be sure to know of it.  The steward urges her again,  and offers her 20 marks.  She says, "Then don't tell any one,"  takes his money,  sends him up the quaint stairs,  and lets him tumble through the trapdoor.  "What the devil are you?" says the Lord.  <b>[leaf 182, back]</b> The steward finds he can't get out;  and wonders why his Lord is there.  "We both came on one errand, man."  The wife asks what they're doing;  the Lord says, "Your flax is done, and I want my dinner."
[Pg 10]	THE STEWARD IS SHOT THROUGH THE TRAPDOOR, The lord seyð, "welcome, and sytt be tyme, For þou schalt helpe to dyght thys lyne For all thy fers[e] fare." The stuard lokyd on the knyght, He seyð, "syr, for godes myght, My lord, what do you here?" He seyð "felowe, wyth-owtyn oth, For o erand we come bothe, The sothe wolle I nott lete." Tho cam the wyfe them vn-to, And seyð, "syres, what do you to, Wyll ye nott lerne to swete?" Than seyð þe lord her vn-to, 'Dame, your lyne ys I-doo, Nowe would I fayne ete: And I haue made yt all I-lyke, Full clere, and no þing thycke,		

	Me thynketh yt gret payne."	339	The steward says if he ever gets out he'll cry
	The stuard seyð "wyth-owtyn dowte, And euer I may wynne owte, I wyll breke her brayne."	342	But the wife chaffs him,
	"Felowe, lett be, and sey nott so, For þou schalt worke or euer þou goo, Thy wordes þou torne agayne, Fayne þou schalt be so to doo, And thy good wylle put þerto;	345	says he'll soon be glad to eat his words,
[Pg 11]	BUT IS PROUD, AND WILL NOT WORK FOR HIS DINNER. As a man buxome and bayne Thowe schalt rubbe, rele, and spynne, And þou wolt eny mete wynne, That I geue to god a gyfte."	348	and unless he rubs and reels, he'll get no me
	The stuard seyð, "then haue I wondyr; Rather would I dy for hungyr Wyth-owte hosyll or shryfte."	351	"I'll die for hunger first, unhouseled," answe
	The lord seyð, "so haue I hele, Thowe wylt worke, yf þou hungyr welle, What worke þat the be brought."	354	
	The lord satt and dyd hys werke, The stuard drewe in to the derke, Gret sorowe was in hys þought.	357	<b>[leaf 183]</b> The Lord works away,
	The lord seyð, "dame, here ys youre lyne, Haue yt in godes blessing and myne, I hold yt welle I-wrought." Mete and drynke sche gaue hym y{n}), "The stuard," sche seyð, "wolle he nott spynne, Wyll he do ryght noght?"	360	
	The lord seyð, "by swete sen Ione, Of thys mete schall he haue none That ye haue me hydder brought."	363	and gets his food and drink.
	The lord ete and dranke fast, The stuard hungeryd att þe last, For he gaue hym nought.	366	None of it will he give to the steward, but eats it all up,
	The stuard satt all in a stody, Hys lord hadde forgote curtesy: Tho <sup>[6]</sup> seyð þe stuard, "geue me some." The lord seyð, "sorowe haue þe morse <del>ll</del> or sope That schall come in thy throte! Nott so much as o crome!	369	
	Butt þou wylt helpe to dyght þis lyne, Much hungyr yt schall be thyne Though þou make much mone." Vp he rose, and went therto, "Better ys me þus to doo Whyle yt must nedys be do."	372	and won't give him one crumb:
	The stuard began fast to knocke, The wyfe þrew hym a swyngelyng stocke, Hys mete þerwyth to wy{n}); Sche brought a swyngyll att þe last, "Good syres," sche seyð, "swyngylle on fast; For no þing that ye blynne." Sche gaue hy{m}) a stocke to sytt vppo{n}), And seyð "syres, þis werke must nedys be done, All that that ys here y{n})."	375	let him work and earn some for himself.
	The stuard toke vp a stycke to saye, "Sey, seye, swyngyll bett eryf ye may, Hytt wyll be the better to spynne." Were þe lord neuer so gret, Yet was he fayne to werke for hys mete Though he were neuer so sadde;	378	The steward gives in,
[Pg 12]	THE STEWARD IS OBLIGED TO WORK AFTER ALL. Butt þe stuard þat was so stowde, Was fayne to swyngelle þe scales owte, Ther-of he was nott glad. The lordys meyne þat were att home Wyst nott where he was bycome, They were full sore adrad.	381	asks for work; the wife throws it him,
	The proctoure of þe parysche chyrche ryght Came and lokyd on þe wryght, He lokyd as he ware madde; Fast þe proctoure gan hym frayne, "Where hadest þou þis garlond gayne? It ys euer lyke newe." The wryght gan say "felowe, Wyth my wyfe, yf þou wylt knowe; That dare me nott rewe; For all the whyle my wyfe trew ys, My garlond wolle hold hewe I-wys, And neuer falle nor fade; And yf my wyfe take a paramoure,	384	
		387	<b>[leaf 183, back]</b> and steward and Lord are both spinning aw
		390	to earn their dinner,
		393	while the Lord's people cannot make out wh become of him.
		396	Then the Proctor sees the wright
		399	and asks where he got his garland from.
		402	"With my wife;
		405	and while she is true it will never fade,
		408	but if she's false it will."
		411	
		414	
		417	



	Than wolle my garlond vade þe floure, That dare I ley myne hede."	420		
[Pg 13]	THE PROCTOR TEMPTS THE WIFE, AND IS TRAPDOORED.	The proctoure þought, "in good faye That schall I wete thys same daye Whether yt may so be." To the wryghtes hows he went, He grete þe wyfe wyth feyre entente, Sche seyð "syr, welcome be ye." "A! dame, my loue ys on you fast Syth the tyme I sawe you last; I pray you yt may so be That ye would graunt me of your grace To play wyth you in some pryuy place, Or ellys to deth mutt me." Fast þe proctoure gan to pray, And euer to hy{m~} sche seyð "naye, That wolle I nott doo. Hadest þou done þat dede wyth me, My spouse by hys garlond myght see, That schuld torne me to woo." The proctoure seyð, "by heuen kyng, If he sey to the any þing He schall haue sorowe vn-sowte; Twenty marke I wolle þe geue, It wolle þe helpe welle to lyue, The mony here haue I brought." Nowe hath sche the tresure tane, And vp þe steyre be they gane, (What helpyth yt to lye?) The wyfe went the steyre be-syde, The proctoure went a lytyll to wyde He fell downe by and by. Whan he in to þe seller felle, He wente to haue sonke in to helle, He was in hart full sory. The stuard lokyd on the knyght, And seyð "proctoure, for godes myght, Come and sytt vs by." The proctoure began to stare, For he was he wyst neuer whare, Butt wele he knewe þe knyght And the stuard þat swyngelyd þe lyne. He seyð "syres, for godes pyne, What do ye here thys nyght?" The stuard seyð, "god geue the care, Thowe camyst to loke howe we fare, Nowe helpe þis lyne were dyght." He stode styll in a gret þought, What to answer he wyst noght: "By mary full of myght," The proctoure seyð, "what do ye in þis yne For to bete thys wyfees lyne? For Ihesus loue, full of myght," The proctoure seyð ryght as he þought, "For me yt schall be euyl wrought And I may see aryght, For I lernyd neuer in lon{d+} For to haue a swyngell in hond By day nor be nyght." The stuard seyð, "as good as þou. We hold vs that be here nowe, And lett preue yt be syght; Yet must vs worke for owre mete, Or ellys schall we none gete, Mete nor drynke to owre honde." The lord seyð, "why flyte ye two? I trowe ye wyll werke or ye goo, Yf yt be as I vndyrstond." Abowte he goys twyes or thryes; They ete & drunke in such wyse That þey geue hym ryght noght. The proctoure seyð, "thynke ye no schame, Yheue me some mete, (ye be to blame,) Of that the wyfe ye brought." The stuard seyð "euyl spede the soppe If eny morcell come in thy throte Butt þou wyth vs hadest wrought." The proctoure stode in a stody Whether he myght worke hem by; And so to torne hys þought, To the lord he drewe nere,	423 426 429 432 435 438 441 444 447 450 453 456 459 462 465 468 471 474 477 480 483 486 489 492 495 498	The proctor thinks he'll test this,  goes to the wright's wife  and declares his love for her;  he must have her or die. <b>[leaf 184]</b>  She says nay,  as her husband will know of it by his garland  The proctor  offers her 20 marks.  These she takes; they go upstairs,  and the proctor tumbles into the cellar,  and thinks he is going to hell.  The steward asks him to sit down;  he doesn't know where he is,  but asks what the Lord and steward are after  working the wife's flax; <b>[leaf 184, back]</b>  he, the proctor, will never do the like,  it's not his trade.  The steward says, "We're as good as you, and  have to work for our food."  The Lord says, "And you'll have to work ere  They eat and drink, and give the proctor not  to his great disgust,  till at last
[Pg 14]	THE PROCTOR CAN'T MAKE OUT WHERE HE HAS GOT TO.			
[Pg 15]	HE HAS TO WIND AND SPIN FOR HIS DINNER.			

	And to hym seyð wyth myld[e] chere, "That mary mott the spede!"	501	
	The proctoure began to knocke, The good wyfe rawte hym a rocke, For therto hadde sche nede;	504	he too knocks for work,
	Sche seyð "whan I was mayde att home, Other werke cowde I do none My lyfe ther-wyth to lede."	507	gets a distaff and some winding to do,
	Sche gaue hym in hande a rocke hynde, And bade hem fast for to wynde Or ellys to lett be hys dede.	510	<b>[leaf 185]</b>
	"Yes, dame," he seyð, "so haue I hele, I schalt yt worke both feyre & welle As ye haue taute me."	513	
	He wauyd vp a strycke of lyne, And he span wele and fyne By-fore the swyngel tre.	516	and spins away well.
	The lord seyð "þou spynnest to grete, Therfor þou schalt haue no mete, That þou schalt well see."	519	
	Thus þey satt and wrought fast Tyll þe wekedayes were past; Then the wryght, home came he, And as he cam by hys hows syde	522	As he approaches he hears a noise.
	He herd <sup>[7]</sup> noyse that was nott ryde Of persons two or thre; One of hem knockyd lyne, A-nothyr swyngelyd good and fyne	525	
	By-fore the swyngel tre, The thyrde did rele and spynne, Mete and drynke ther-wyth to wynne, Gret nede ther-of hadde he.	531	
[Pg 16]	THE WRIGHT COMES HOME AND FINDS THE THREE CULPRITS.		
	Thus þe wryght stode herkenyng; Hys wyfe was ware of hys comyng, And ageynst hym went sche.	534	his wife comes to meet him,
	"Dame," he seyð, "what ys þis dynne? I here gret noyse here wythynne; Tell me, so god the spede."	537	and he asks what all that noise is about.
	"Syr," sche seyð, "workemen thre Be come to helpe you and me, Ther-of we haue gret nede; Fayne would I wete what they were."	540	"Why, three workmen have come to help us, Who are they?"
	Butt when he sawe hys lord there, Hys hert bygan to drede: To see hys lord in þat place, He þought yt was a strange cas,	543	The wright sees his Lord in the pit,
	And seyð, "so god hym spede, What do ye here, my lord and knyght? Tell me nowe for godes myght Howe cam thys vn-to?"	546	and asks how
	The knyght seyð "What ys best rede? Mercy I aske for my mysdede, My hert ys wondyr wo." "So ys myne, verament,	549	<b>[leaf 185, back]</b> he came there.
	To se you among thys flex and hempe, Full sore yt ruyth me; To se you in such hevynes, Full sore myne hert yt doth oppresse, By god in trinite."	552	The Lord asks mercy: he is very sorry.
	The wryght bade hys wyfe lett hy{m~} owte, "Nay, þen sorowe come on my snowte If they passe hens to-daye Tyll that my lady come and see Howe þey would haue done wyth me, Butt nowe late me saye."	555	"So am I," says the wright, "to see you amon and hemp,"
	Anon sche sent after the lady bryght For to fett home her lord and knyght, Therto sche seyð noght; Sche told her what they hadde ment, And of ther purpos & ther intente That they would haue wrought.	558	and orders his wife to let the Lord out. "No, bother my snout if I do," says the wife,
	Glad was þat lady of that tydyng; When sche wyst her lord was lyuyng, Ther-of sche was full fayne: Whan sche came vn-to þe steyre aboue{n}), Sche lokyd vn-to þe seller downe, And seyð,—þis ys nott to leyne,— "Good syres, what doo you here?"	561	"before his lady sees what he wanted to do v
	"Dame, we by owre mete full dere, Wyth gret trauayle and payne;	564	So she sends for the dame to fetch her lord i
[Pg 17]	THE LORD'S WIFE SEES HIM IN THE CELLAR.		
	"Earning our meat full dear: help us out, and I'll never come here again."	567	and tells her what he and his companions ca for. The lady
		570	
		573	
		576	looks down into the cellar, and says, "Good sirs, what are you doing?"
		579	

	I pray you helpe þat we were owte, And I wyll swere wyth-owtyn dowte Neuer to come here agayne."	582	The lady asks the wife why
	The lady spake the wyfe vn-tylle, And seyde "dame, yf yt be youre wylle, What doo thes meyny here?"	585	<b>[leaf 186]</b> the men are there The wife says they wanted to lie with her, at her gold and silver;
	The carpentarys wyfe her answerd sykerly, "All they would haue leyne me by; Euerych, in ther manere, Gold and syluer they me brought, And forsoke yt, and would yt noght, The ryche gyftes so clere.	588 591	
	Wyllyng þey were to do me schame, I toke ther gyftes wyth-owtyn blame, And ther they be all thre."	594	she took their gifts, and there they are.
	The lady answerd her ano{n)}, "I haue thynges to do att home Mo than two or thre;	597	The lady says she really wants her lord for h
	I wust my lord neuer do ryght noght Of no þing þat schuld be wrought, Such as fallyth to me."	600	
	The lady lawghed and made good game Whan they came owte all in-same From the swyngyall tre.	603	and laughs heartily when the three culprits
	The knyght seyde "felowys in fere, I am glad þat we be here, By godes dere pyte;	606	The Lord says,
[Pg 18]	THE WRIGHT'S WIFE SETS THE CULPRITS FREE.		
	Dame, and ye hadde bene wyth vs, Ye would haue wrought, by swete Ihesus, As welle as dyd we."	609	"Ah, you'd have worked too if you'd been wit
	And when they cam vp aboue{n)} They turnyd abowte and lokyd downe, The lord seyde, "so god saue me, Yet hadde I neuer such a fyttē As I haue hadde in þat lowe pytte; So mary so mutt me spede."	612 615	I never had such a turn in my life before, I c
	The knyght and thys lady bryght, Howe they would home that nyght, For no thyng they would abyde;	618	Then the Lord and lady go home,
	And so they went home; Thys seyde Adam of Cobsa {m~}. <sup>[8]</sup> By the weye as they rode Throwe a wode in ther playeng, For to here the fowlys syng They hovyde styllē and bode.	621 624	as ADAM of COBSAM says. <b>[leaf 186, back]</b> On their way home
	The stuard sware by godes ore, And so dyde the proctoure much more, That neuer in ther lyfe Would they no more come in þat wonne Whan they were onys thens come, Thys forty yere and fyve.	627 630	they halt, and the steward and proctor swear they'll no for five and forty years.
	Of the tresure that they brought, The lady would geue hem ryght noght, Butt gaue yt to the wryghtes wyfe.	633	The lady gives all their money to the wright'
	Thus the wryghtes garlond was feyre of hewe, And hys wyfe bothe good and trewe: There-of was he full blythe;	636	The garland is fresh as ever.
	I take wytnes att gret and small, Thus trewe bene good women all That nowe bene on lyve, So come thyrste on ther hedys Whan they mombyll on ther bedys Ther pater noster ryue.	639 642	Thus true are all good women now alive!
[Pg 19]	MAY ALL GOOD WIVES GO TO HEAVEN!		
	Here ys wretyn a geste of the wryght That hadde a garlond weill I-dyght, The coloure wyll neuer fade.	645	Here then is written a tale of the Wright and Garland.
	Now god, þat ys heuyn kyng, Graunt vs all hys dere blessyng Owre hertes for to glade;	648	God grant us all his blessing,
	And all tho that doo her husbondys ryght, Pray we to Ihesu full of myght, That feyre mott hem byfalle,	651	and may all true faithful wives
	And that they may come to heuen blys, For thy dere moderys loue ther-of nott to mys, Alle good wyues alle.	654	come to heaven's bliss,
	Now alle tho that thys tretys hath hard, Ihesu graunt hem, for her reward, As trew louers to be	657	and be such true lovers as the
	As was the wryght vn-to hys wyfe And sche to hym duryng her lyfe.		<b>[leaf 187]</b> wright and his wife were.

Amen, for charyte.	660	Amen!
Here endyth the wryghtes <i>pr</i> ocesse trewe Wyth hys garlond feyre of hewe		Here ends our tale of the Garland
That neuer dyd fade the coloure.	663	
It was made, by the avyse Of hys wywes moder wytty and wyse, Of flourys most of honoure,	666	
Of roses whyte þat wyth nott fade, Whych floure <del>all</del> ynglond doth glade, Wyth trewloues medelyd in syght;	669	which was made of White Roses, the flowers that gladden all England,
Vn-to the whych floure I-wys The loue of god and of the comenys Subdued <sup>[9]</sup> bene of ryght.		and receive the love of God, and of the Com

Explicit.

- [1] MS. *of*  
 [2] *or hyng. ? MS.*  
 [3] MS. *gar*  
 [4] ? MS. *this.*  
 [5] MS. *Ihc*  
 [6] MS. *The*  
 [7] ? MS. *hard*  
 [8] The letter between the *b* and *a* has had the lower part marked over. But it must mean a long *s*.  
 [9] May be *subdied*; the word has been corrected.

## NOTES.

The two first of the three operations of flax-dressing described in lines 526-529, p. 15,

One of hem knocked lyne,  
A-nothyr swyngelyd good and fyne  
By-fore the swyngy~~ll~~-tre,  
The thyrde did rele and spynne,

must correspond to the preliminary breaking of the plant, and then the scutching or beating to separate the coarse tow or hards from the tare or fine hemp. Except so far as the *swingle* served as a heckle, the further *heckling* of the flax, to render the fibre finer and cleaner, was dispensed with, though heckles (iron combs) must have been in use when the poem was written—inasmuch as *hekele*, *hekelare*, *hekelyn*, and *hekelynge*, are in the Promptorium, ab. 1440 A.D. Under *Hatchell*, Randle Holme gives a drawing of a heckle.

The lines through the *h*'s in the MS. are not, I believe, marks of contraction. There are no insettings of the third lines, or spaces on changes of subject, in the MS.

For reference to two analogous stories to that of the Poem, I am indebted to Mr Thomas Wright. The first is that of *Constant Duhamel* in the third volume of Barbazan, and the second that of the Prioress and her three Suitors in the Minor Poems of Dan John Lydgate, published by the Percy Society, ed. Halliwell.

In the Barbazan tale "the wife is violently solicited by three suitors, the priest, the provost, and the forester, who on her refusal persecute her husband. To stop their attacks she gives them appointments at her house immediately after one another, so that when one is there and stripped for the bath, another comes, and, pretending it is her husband, she conceals them one after another in a large tub full of feathers, out of which they can see all that is going on in the room. She then sends successively for their three wives to come and bathe with her, the bath being still in the same room, and as each is stripped naked in the bath, she introduces her own husband, who dishonours them one after another, one *à l'enverse*, with rather aggravating circumstances, and all in view of their three husbands. Finally the latter are turned out of the house naked, or rather well feathered, then hunted by the whole town and their dogs, well bitten and beaten."

(If any one wants to see a justification of the former half of the proverb quoted by Roberd of Brunne,

Frenche men synne yn lecherye  
And Englys men yn enuye,

let him read the astounding revelation made of the state of the early French mind by the tales in the 3rd and 4th vols. of Barbazan's *Fabliaux*, ed. 1808.)

The second story, told by Lydgate, is as follows:—A prioress is wooed by "a yonng knyght, a parson of a paryche, and a burges of a borrow." She promises herself to the first if he will lie for a night in a chapel sewn up in a sheet like a corpse; to the second, if he will perform the funeral service over the knight, and bury him; to the third, if he will dress up like a devil, and frighten both parson and knight. This the burges Sir John does well, but is himself terrified at the corpse getting up: all three run away from one another: the knight falls on a stake, and into a snare set for bucks, and breaks his fore top in falling from the tree; the merchant gets tossed by a bull; the parson breaks his head and jumps into a bramble bush; and the prioress gets rid of them all, but not before she has made the "burges" or "marchaunt" pay her

## GLOSSARY.

- And, 89, 292, if.  
Bayne, 348, ready.  
Blynne, 4, cease, stop; AS. *blinnan*.  
Blyue, 44, 110, 118, speedily.  
Bonde, 226, a bund-le; Du. *bondt*, a bavin, a bush of thornes.  
Brayne, 342, scull.  
Broke, 165, enjoy. AS. *brúcan*, Germ. *brauchen*. H. Coleridge.  
Brydalle, 71, AS. *brýd-ál*, bride ale, marriage feast.  
By, 197, buy.  
Chaste, 176, chest, box, pit.  
Dowte, 14, fear.  
Dyght, 323, 379, prepare, dress.  
Fare, 148, 324, going on, wish, project.  
Fere, 604, company.  
Flyte, 484, wrangle, quarrel; AS. *flit*, strife, wrangling.  
Forthynketh, 51, repents, makes sorry; AS. *forþencan*, to despair.  
Frayne, 409, ask; AS. *fregnan*, Goth. *fraihnan*.  
Gan, 22, did.  
Geue to God a gyfte, 351, I make a vow, I promise you, I'll take my oath.  
Hele, 140, salvation.  
Hovyd, 624, halted, stopt.  
Hynde, 508? natty; *hende*, gentle.  
I-doo, 335, done, finished.  
I-dyght, 644, prepared.  
In-same, 602, together.  
Layne, 68, hide, conceal.  
Lende, 107, stay; ? AS. *landian*, to land, or *lengian*, to prolong.  
Leyne, 231, lay, beat.  
Lyne, 214, AS. *lín*, flax; ? rope, 246.  
Meyne, 403, household.  
Myster, 12, trade; Fr. *mestier*.  
O, 329, one.  
Onredde, 308; AS. *unrét*, *unrót*, uncheerful, sorrowful, or *unráed*, imprudent.  
Opre, 205, second.  
Putry, 61, adultery; O. Fr. *puterie*, whoring.  
Rawte, 503, reached, gave.  
Rewe, 186, have pity.  
Rocke, 503, 508; Du. *een Rocke*, *Spinrock*, A Distaffe, or a Spin-rock; *Rocken*, To Winde Flaxe or Wool upon a Rock (Hexham). Dan. *rok*, O.N. *rokkr*, G. *rocken*: "a distaff held in the hand from which the thread was spun by twirling a ball below. 'What, shall a woman with a *rokke* drive thee away?'" Digby Mysteries, p. 11 (Halliwell). "An Instrument us'd in some Parts for the spinning of Flax and Hemp." Phillips; for reeling and spinning (l. 529).  
Rought, 198, AS. *róhte*, p. of *récan*, to reck, care for.  
Ryde, 524, light, small, AS. *geryd*, levis, æquus, Lye.  
Ryue, 642, Du. *rjff*, rife, or abundant.  
Scales, 401; ? husks, bark, or rind, see *shoves\**, in *Swyngylle*, below.  
Schent, 258, destroyed; AS. *scendan*.  
Stounde, 4, short time.  
Strycke, 514, "*Strike of Flax*, is as much as is heckled at one Handful." Phillips.  
Swyngylle, 216, "Swingle-Staff, a Stick to beat Flax with," Phil.; AS. *swingele*, a whip, lash. "To *swingle*, to beat; a Term among Flax-dressers." Phillips. Though Randle Holme, Bk. III., ch. viii. No. xxxiii., gives the *Swingle-Tree* of a Coach-Pole (these are made of wood, and are fastened by Iron hooks, stables (*sic*) chains and pins to the Coach-pole, to the which Horses are fastened by their Harnish when there is more then two to draw the Coach), yet at Chap, vi., § iv., p. 285, col. 1, he says, "He beareth Sable, a *Swingle* Hand erected, Surmounting of a *Swingle* Foot, Or. This is a Wooden Instrument made like a Fauchion, with an hole cut in the top of it, to hold it by: It is used for the clearing of Hemp and Flax from the large broken Stalks or \*Shoves, by the help of the said *Swingle* Foot, which it is hung upon, which said Stalks being first broken, bruised, and cut into shivers by a Brake.  
S. 3, such erected in Fesse O. born by *Flaxlowe*.  
S. 3, such in Pale A., born by *Swingler*."  
(A drawing is given by Holme, No. 4, on the plate opposite p. 285.)  
"*Swingowing* is the beating off the bruised inward stalk of the Hemp or Flax, from the outward pill, which as (*sic*) the Hemp or Flax, p. 106, col. 2.  
*Spinning* is to twist the Flax hairs into Yarn or Thrid. *Reeling* is to wind the Yarn of the Wheel Spool on a Reel," p. 107, Col. 2.  
Take, 161, deliver.  
The, 187, thrive.  
Tolle, 62, entice (H.H. Gibbs).  
Tre, 105, wood, timber.  
Trewloves, 669, either figures like true-lovers' knots, or the imitations of the berb or flower *Truelove*, which is given by Coles as *Herb Paris* (a quatrefoil whose leaves bear a sort of likeness to a true-lovers' knot), and in Halliwell as *one-berry*: but I cannot find that Edward IV. had any such

plants on his arms or badge. Knots were often worn as badges, see Edmonston's Heraldry, Appendix, Knots. On the other hand, Willement (Regal Heraldry) notices that the angels attending Richard II. in the picture at Wilton, had collars worked with white roses and broom-buds; and trueloves, if a plant be meant by it, may have been Edward's substitute for the broom (*planta genisla*). The Trewloves bear, one, Ar. on a chev. sa., three cinquefoils, or; the other, Ar. on a chev. sa., a quatrefoil of the field.

Vade,<sup>[1]</sup> 125, 419, fade; Du. *vadden* (Hexham).

Wone, 275, store, quantity.

Wonne, 90, 628, dwelling.

Woode, 153, wild, mad.

Yheue, 491, give.

Yougeth, 20, youth, bachelor's freedom.

[1] The use of the flat vade (l. 419, p. 12) within 2 lines of the sharp fade (l. 417), corresponds with the flat 'stowde,' l. 400, p. 12, riming with 'owte,' l. 401, *badde* with *hatte*, l. 265-6. *Cost*, *brst*, l. 142-3, are careless rimes too.

[Pg 23]

## WOMEN.

### [*Lambeth MS. 306, leaf 135.*]

Wome{n}}, wome{n}}, loue of wome{n}}, make bare purs <i>with</i> some me{n}}, Some be nyse as a nonne hene, <sup>[1]</sup>		
3it al thei be nat soo.	4	
some be lewde, some all be schrewde; Go schrewes wher thei goo.		
Su{m~} be nyse, and some be fonde, And some be tame, y vndirstonde, And some cane take brede of a manes hande, <sup>[2]</sup>	8	
Yit all thei be nat soo. [Some be lewde, &c.]	12	
Some cane part with-outen hire, And some make bate in eueri chire, And some cheke mate with oure Sire, Yit all they be nat so.		[leaf 135, back]
Some be lewde, and sume be schreuede, go wher they goo.	16	
Som be browne, and some be whit, And some be tender as a ttripe, And some of theym be chiry ripe, Yit all thei be not soo.	20	
Sume be lewde, and some be schrewede, go wher they goo.	24	
Some of the{m~} be treue of love Beneth þe gerdeþ, but nat above, And in a hode aboue cane chove, Yit all thei do nat soo.	28	
Some be lewde, and some be schreuede, go where they goo.	32	
Some cane whister, & some cane crie, Some cane flater, and some can lye, And some cane sette þe moke awrie, Yit all thei do nat soo.	36	
Sume be lewde, and sume be schreuede, go where thei goo.	40	
He that made this songe full good, Came of þe north and of þe sother{n}} blode, And some-what kyne to Roby{n}} Hode, Yit all we be nat soo.	44	
Some be lewde, and some be schrewede, go where they goo.		
Some be lewde, some be [s]chrwde, Go where they goo.	48	

[Pg 24]

Explicit.

P.S.—This Poem was printed by Mr Halliwell in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, vol. i., p. 248, and reprinted by Mr Thomas Wright, at p. 103 of his edition of *Songs and Carols* for the Percy Society, 1847. As, besides minor differences, the reprint has *manne*, and the original *nanne*, for what I read as *nonne*, l. 3, while both have *withowte* for *with oure*, l. 15, and *accripe* for *a ttripe*, l. 21 (see Halliwell's Dictionary, "accripe, a herb?"), I have not cancelled this impression. The other version of the song, from Mr Wright's MS. in his text, pp. 89-91, differs a good deal from that given above.

- [1] The Rev. J.R. Lumby first told me of the proverb 'As white as a nun's hen,' the nuns being famous, no doubt, for delicate poultry. John Heywood has in his *Proverbs*, 1562 (first printed, 1546), p. 43 of the Spencer Society's reprint, 1867,

She tooke thentertainment of the yong men  
All in daliaunce, *as nice as a Nun's hen*.

The proverb is quoted by Wilson in his *Arte of Rhetorique*, 1553 (Hazlitt's *Proverbs*, p. 69).

- [2] For *honde*.

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