

The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Example of Vertu

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Title: The Example of Vertu

Author: Stephen Hawes

Release date: August 26, 2007 [eBook #22415]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Louise Hope, David Starner and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE EXAMPLE OF VERTU ***

The printed book did not number the pages in sequence; instead it numbered the recto (odd, right) pages of the first few leaves in each signature. Folio numbers in smaller print were added by the transcriber; all verso (even, left) pages are shown as |]. Two sets of pages were apparently printed out of sequence. Details are given at the [end of the text](#), along with notes on a few other problems.

A few words such as "with" or "the" were printed as abbreviations: initial "y" (for þ, thorn) or "w" with small "t" or "e" above it. These are shown as ordinary superscripts: y^e, w^t. Typographical errors are shown with mouse-hover popups. Numerals such as ".x." were printed without adjoining spaces; spacing has been silently added.

The table of contents was part of the original text.

¶ Here begynneth the boke called the example of vertu.

aa .i.



Tabula libri

aa .ii.

¶ Fyrste a prologue.

¶ How youth mette with discrecyon in a medowe in his dreame & was reformed by her prouerbes
ca.i.

¶ How youth with discrecyon sayled ouer the daungerous passage of vayne glorye and arryued in a fayre llonde longynge to foure ladyes named Hardynes / Sapyence / fortune / & nature. ca.ii

¶ Of the meruaylous palays of fortune ca.iii.

¶ Of the triumphaunt estate of hardynes. ca.iiii.

¶ Of the gloryfyed towre of sapyence. ca.v.

¶ Of the stronge operacyons of nature ca.vi

¶ How these foure ladyes pleaded at the barre
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proufytable vnto mankynde & of the Iugement of
Iustyce. ca.vii.

¶ How after the Iugement of Iustyce / Sapyence
cōmaunded Discrecōn^A to lede youth to marye
with clenness the kynge of loues daughter.
ca.viii.

¶ How youth by the waye mette w^t lechery
rydyng on a gote and pryde maned with
couetyse on an olyphaūtes backe in a fayre
castell / & how by the ayde of dyscrecyon he
dyde withstande theyr temptacōn^A and how he
mette with sapyence in the mase of wordely
besynes. capitulo.ix.

¶ How Sapyence & dyscrecyon ledde youth ouer
the narowe brydge of vanyte of the worlde to the
palays of y^e kynge of loue & of his meruaylous
appareyl. ca.x

¶ How sapyence presented youth to the kynge of
loue for to mary Clennes his daughter & how he
before y^e maryage dyde fyght and discomfyte the
dragon with thre hedys. capitulo.xi.

¶ How after the discomfyture of the sayd dragon
he well growen in age was receyued with a farye
company of ladyes and was named vertu & with
all loye brought to the palays of the kynge of
loue. ca.xii.

¶ Of the maryage of vertu & clenness & of y^e
celestyal feste how after the maryage an aungell
shewed vnto them hell / & of the dyuysyons of
hell. ca.xiii.

¶ How vertu cleymed the enherytaunce longynge
to Clennes his wyfe / & how many aungelles &
sayntes brought them to heuen / & how heuen
is enteyled to Vertu and to Clennes & to all
theym that loue them & folowe & procede in
theyr steppes. capitulo.xiiii.

¶ This boke called the example of vertue was
made and compyled by Stephyn hawys one of
the gromes of the moost honorable chaumber of
oure souerayne lorde kynge Henry the .vii. the
.xix. yere of his moost noble reygne / and by hym
presented to our sayd souerayne lorde chapytred
& marked after this table here before sette.

The prologe.

WHan I aduert in my remembraunce
The famous draughtes of poetes eloquent
Whiche theyr myndes dyd well enhance
Bokes to contryue that were expedyent
To be remembred without Impedyment
For the profyte of humanyte
This was the custume of antyquyte.

I now symple and moost rude
And naked in depured eloquence
For dulnes rethoryke doth exclude
Wherfore in makynge I lake intellygence
Also consyderynge my grete neglygence
It fereth me sore for to endyte
But at auenture I wyll now wryte.

||

aa iii.

As very blynde in the poetys art
For I therof can no thyng skyl
Wherfore I lay it all a part
But somewhat accordynge to my wyll
I wyll now wryte for to fulfyll
Saynt Powles wordes and true sentement
All that is wryten is to oure document

||

O prudent Gower in langage pure
Without corrupcyon moost facundyous
O noble Chauser euer moost sure
Of frutfull sentence ryght delycyous
O vertuous Lydgat moche sentencyous
Vnto you all I do me excuse
Though I your connyng do now vse

Explicit prologus.

aa .iiii.

Capitulum primū



N Septembre in fallynge of the lefe
Whan phebus made his declynacyon
And all the whete gadred was in the
shefe

By radyaunt hete and operacyon
Whan the vyrgyn had full domynacyon
And Dyane entred was one degre
Into the sygne of Gemyne

Whan the golden sterres clere were splendent
In the firmament purifyed clere as crystall
By imperyall course without incombement
As Iuppyter and Mars that be celestyall
With Saturne and Mercury that wer supernall
Myxt with venus that was not retrograte
That caused me to be well fortunate

||

In a slombryng slepe with slouth opprest
As I in my naked bedde was leyd
Thynkyng all nyght to take my rest
Morpleus to me than made abreyd
And in my dreame me thought he sayd
Come walke with me in a medowe amerous
Depeynted with floures that be delycyous

I walked with hym into a place
Where that there grue many a fayre floure
With Ioye replete and full of solace
And the trees dystyllyng redolent lycoure
More sweter fer than the Aprell shour
And tary I dyd there by longe space
Tyll that I saw before my face

A ryght fayre lady of myddell stature
And also enduyd with grete vertue
Her apparell was set with perlys pure
Whose beaute alway dyd renue
To me she sayd and ye wyll extue
All wyldnes I wyll be your guyde
That ye to fraylte shall not slyde.

aa .vi.

Vnto her I answerde o lady glorious
I pray you tell me what is your name
For ye seeme to be ryght precyous
And I am yonge and sore to blame
Of vyces full and in vertue lame
But I wyll be ruled now by your pleasure
So that your order be made by mesure

Eclepyd I am she sayd dyscrecyon
And yf ye wyll be ruled by me
Ye shall haue Ioye without reprehencyon
And neuer fall in to fragylyte
Youth lackynge me it is grete pyte
For in what place I am exyled
They be with synne ryght oft defyled

It longeth euer vnto my properte
Youth to gyue courage for to lerne
I wyll not medle with no duplycyte
But faythfulnes I wyll dyscerne
And brynge thy soule to blesse eterne
By wyse example and morall doctryne
For youth hauynge to me is a good syne

Forsake also all euyl company
And be founde true in worde and dede
Remembre that this worlde is transytory
After thy desert shall be thy mede
Loue god alway and eke hym drede
And for no mannes pleasure be thyn owne foo
Gyue theym fayre wordes and lete them goo

aa .v.

Be to thy kynge euer true subgete
As thou sholdest be by ryght and reason
Lete thy herte lowely on hym be sete
Without ony spot of euyl treason
And be obedyent at euery season
Vnto his grace without rebellyon
That thou with trouthe may be companyon

Loue neuer vnloued for that is payne
Whyle that thou luyest of that beware
Loue as thou seest the loued agayne
Or elles it wyll torne the to care
Be neuer taken in that fast snare
Proue or thou loue that is moost sure
And than thou in doubte shalt not endure.

Beware byleue no flaterynge tonge
For flaterers be moost disseyuable
Though that they company with the longe
Yet at the ende they wyll be varyable
For they by reason are not fauorable
But euermore fals and double
And with theyr tonges cause of grete trouble

This brytell worlde ay full of bytternes
Alway turnynge lyke to a ball
No man in it can haue no sykernes
For whan he clymmeth he hath a fall
O wauerynge shadowe bytter as gall
O fatall welth full soone at ende
Though thou ryght hy do oft assende

Whan she to me had made relacyon
Of all these prouerbes by good conclusyon
She gaue to me an Informacyon
For to depryue all yll abusyon
And to consydre the grete derysyon
Whiche is in youth that may not se

||

No thyng appropred to his prosperyte

Forth than we went to an hauen syde
Wher was a shyp lyenge at rode
Taryenge after the wynde and tyde
And with moche spyces ryght well lode
Vpon it lokyng we longe abode
Tyll eolus with blastes began to rore
Than we her aborded with payne ryght sore

This water eclyped was vayneglory
Euer with yeopardy and tempestyous
And the shyp called was ryght truly
The vessell of the passage daungerous
The wawys were hyghe and gretly troublous
The captayn called was good comfort
And the sterysman fayre pasport

¶ Capitulum .ii.

I Onge were we dryuen with wynde &
weder

Tyll we arryued in a fayre llonde
Wher was a boote tyed with a teeder
Of merueylous wood as I vnderstode
Precyous stones ley vpon the sond
And poynted dyamondes grewe on the rockes
And corall also by ryght hyghe stockes

Amased I was for to beholde
The precyous stones vnder my fete
And the erth glysterynge of golde
With floures fayre of odour swete
Dame dyscrecyon I dyd than grete
Praynge her to me to make relacyon
Who of this llonde hath domynacyon

She sayd foure ladyes in vertue excellent
Of whiche the eldest is dame nature
That dayly fourmeth after her entent
Euery beest and lyuyng creature
Both foule and fayre and also pure
All that dependyng in her ordynaunce
Where that she fauoureth there is grete
pleasaunce

The seconde is called dame fortune
Ayenst whome can be no resystance
For she doth sette the strynges in tune
Of euery persone by her magnyfycence
Whan they sound best by good experyence
She wyll theym loose and let theym slyp
Causynge theym fall by her turnyng tryp

The thyrde called is dame hardynes
That often rulyth by her cheualry
She is ryght stowt and of grete prowes
And the captayn of a lusty company
And ruleth theym euer full hardely
And to gete honour and worldely tresure
She putteth her oft in auenture

¶ The fourth is wysedome a lady bryght
Whiche is my syster as ye shall se
Whom I do loue with all my myght
For she enclyneth euer to benygnyte
And medeleth not with fraude nor subtylyte
But maketh many noble clerkes
And ruleth theym in all theyr werkes

¶ They dwell all in a fayre castell
Besyde a ryuer moche depe and clere
And be expert in feytys manuell
That vnto theym can be no peere
Of erthely persone that lyueth here
For they be so fayre and wouderous
That theym to se it is solacyous.

¶ Longe haue they trauerst gretly in the lawe
 Whiche of theym sholde haue the preemynence
 And none of them theyr case wyl withdrawe
 Tyll of dame Iustyce they knowe the sentence
 They argue often and make defence
 Eche vnto other withouten remedy
 I wyl no lenger of them specefy

Capitulum tercium.



Come on fayre youth and go with me
 Vnto that place that is delectable
 Bylded with towres of curyosyte
 And yet though that ye be lamentable
 Whan thou art there you wylt be comfortable
 To se the merueyles that there be wrought
 No man can prynt it in his thought

A path we founde ryght gretely vsed
 Where in we went tyll at the last
 A castell I sawe wherof I mused
 Not fully from me a stones cast
 To se the towres I was agast
 Set in a valey so strongely fortifyed
 So gentyll compassed and well edifyed

The towres were hyghe of adiamond stones
 With fanes wauerynge in the wynde
 Of ryght fyne golde made for the noonys
 And roobuckes ran vnder the lynde
 And hunters came theym fer behynde
 A loye it was suche sawe I neuer
 Abyde quod she ye shall se a better.

Forth she me ledde to the castell warde
 Where we were let in by humylyte
 And so after she lede me forwarde
 Tyll that I sawe a royall tre
 With buddys blossomed of grete beaute
 And than we wente in to the hall
 That glased was truely with crystall

And hanged was with clothes of Aras
 Made of fyne golde with a noble story
 How that there some tyme reynynge was
 In the regyon of hyghe Italy
 A valyaunt emperour and a myghty
 That had to name forsothe Tyberius
 Whiche dyde enquere of prudent Iosethus

¶ Why he his offycers so longe kepte
 Vnto hym he answered a good cause why
 Somtyme I sawe a man that slepte
 That wounded was full pyteously

And on his woundes suckynge many a fly
I than for pyte moued them away
By whiche he woke and to me dyde say

¶ Wher that thou trowed to me comfort
Thou now hast done me double greuaunce
Puttynge away the flyes that dyde resorte
To me beyng full of bloody sustynaunce
By this thou mayst haue good perseueraunce
That now wyll come the flyes moost hungry
That wyll me byte .x. tymes more greuously

¶ The roof was wrought by merueylous gemetry
Colered with asure gold and gowlys
With knottes coruen full ryght craftely
And set also with wanton fowlys
As popyniays / pyes / lays / and owlys
And as I loked on my ryght syde
A lady I sawe of meruellous pryde

¶ Syttyng in a chayer at the vpper ende
Of all the hall as a lady and prynces
Amonge many kynges that dyde entende
To be obeyent to her hyghe noblenes
Her apparell was made of moche fayre ryches
Set with rubyes moost pure and rubicound
Embrawd with perles and many a dyamound

Besydes her sate the worthyes nyne
And she amonge them a whele turnyng
Full lowe to her they dyd than enclyne
She somtyme laughyng and somtyme lowryng
Her condycyon was to be dyssymelyng
And many exalten vpon her whele
Gyuyng them grete falles that they dyd fele

Than sayd dyscrecyon beholde and see
That in dame fortune is no stablenes
This worlde also is but a vanyte
A dreame a pompe nothyng in stedfastnes
For fortune is fals and full of doblenes
Whan she moost flatereth she is not sure
As thou mayst se dayly in vre

bb .i.

Capitulum .iiii.



HOrth than we went vnto the habytacle
Of dame hardynes moost pure and fayre
About all places a ryght fayre spectacle
Strowyd with floures that gaue good eyer
Of vertuous turkeys there was a cheyr
Wherin she sate in her cote armure
Beryng a shelde the felde of asure
Wherin was sette a rampyng lyon

||

Of fyne golde ryght large and grete
 A swerd she had of merueylous fassyon
 As though a thousand she sholde bete
 No man the vyctory of her myght gete
 A noble vyrgyn there dyde her serue
 That fyrst made harnes called Mynerue

The chaumbre where she held her consystory
 The dewe aromatyke dyde oft degoute
 Of fragraunt floures full of delycasy
 That all yll heyres dyde ensence oute
 A carbuncle there was that all aboute
 Enlumyned the chaumbre both day and nyght
 My thought it was an heuenly syght

Nyne quenes I sawe that satte her by
 Beynge all armed of grete fortytude
 In many a stower they wanne the vyctory
 And were endued with facounde pulcrytude
 For to haunte armes was theyr consuetude
 Many a regyon they often wanne
 And also vaynquysshed many a noble man

Nexste vnto her sate the hyghe quene Azia^B
 That was a conqueres so puyssaunt
 And besyde her the quene of Saba
 Whiche in grete ryches was tryumphaunt
 And also Ipolyte in armes valyaunt
 Sate with her besyde quene Hecuba
 And yet also the quene Europa

Present ther was the wiche quene Iuno
 And quene Pantasyll wyth fayre quene Elyn
 And yet I sawe by her than also
 The noble vyrgyn yonge Polyxyn
 That was destroyed at the last ruyn
 Of Troye the grete by cruell Pyrrus
 The sone of Achylles that was so cheualrus

||

As I dyd loke I had commaundement
 Of dame dyscrecyon for to remembre
 These noble ladyes so pure and excellent
 Hardy in corage of age ryght tendre
 Yet not withstandynge deth dyde surrendre
 And all theyr strength and lusty corage
 For he spareth nother youth ne age

Capitulum .v.



HOrth we walked to the dwellynge place
 Of dame sapyence so full of blys
 Replete with Ioye vertu and grace
 No thynge there lacked that possyble is
 Man for to comfort withouten mys
 Though he were derke in wordely foly

He sholde there be enlumyned shortely

Her towre was made of werkes curyous
I can no thyngge extende the goodlynes
Of her palays so good and gloryous
Bylded in the place soth of fastnes
With owten tast of wordely bytternes
No persone can extoll the souerente
Of her worthy and royall dygnyte

She eche estate sholde haue in gouernaunce
As theym to rule or that they repent
For better it is to haue good puruyaunce
At the begynnyng as is expedyent
Than for to wyssh for thynges myspent
That myght be saued longe afore
And with a for wytte kepte in store

Her chaumbre was glased with byrall clarefyed
Depeynted with colours of delectacyon
A place of pleasure so heuenly gloryfyed
In vertue heale lyfe and saluacyon
Without ony stormy trybulacyon
That myght annoy the heuenly helth
But alway comfort to the sowlys welth

There sate dame prudence in vertue magnifyed
Impossyble it is to shewe her goodelyhed
She was so fayre and clerely purifyed
And so dyscrete and full of womanhede
That and I trowe vertue were deed
It sholde reuyue yet in her agayne
She was so gentyll and without dysdeyn

It was grete comfort vnto my hert
For to beholde that heuenly syght
Dyscrecyon sayd I sholde not depert
Tyll I had spoken with her syster bryght
Forth she me ledde with all her myght
Vnto that prynces and royall souerayn
Ergo my labour was not in vayn

Than spake dame prudence with meke
 contenaũce

Welcome dyscrecyon my syster dere
Where haue ye ben by longe contynuaunce
Wyth youth she sayd that ye se here
And for my sake I you requere
Hym to receyue in to your seruyse
And he shall serue you in goodely wyse

Welcome she sayd for my systers sake
And yet also now for your owne
In to my seruyce I wyll you take
Sythens that your wyldnes is ouerblowen
The sede of vertu on you shall be sowen
Vyce to depyue by his good auctoryte
As for to subdue all yll iniquyte

Of other mennes wordes be thou not bolde
And of theyr promys make no behest
And yf thou here an yll tale tolde
Gyue no iugement but say the best
So shall thou lyue euermore in rest
Who lytell medeleth is best at ease
For well were he that all myght please

Beware kepe the from grete offence
That thou condempned be not by ryghtwysnes
Whan she doth gyue her mortall sentence
Without pease or mercy cause her releas
Her iugement of mortall heuynes
That the best frende to the wyll be
The for to socour in grete necessyte

But yet in theym haue none affyaunce
As fyrst to synne thynkyng that they
At the ende to the wyll be delyueraunce

Nay ryghtwysnes wyll dryue theym away
For of all synnes without delay
Suche synne in hope it is the moost
For it is the synne of the holy ghoost

Now I amyttē you into your rome
In the whiche ye shall your selfe apply
Of myn owne chaumbre ye shall be grome
Loke ye be dilygent and do not vary
From my cōmaundementes neuer specyally
For and ye wyll theym well obserue
A moche better rome ye do deserue

The fyrst cōmaundement that I gyue the
Thynke on the ende or thou begynne
For thou by ryght may knowe the certente
That deth is fyne of euery synne
Be neuer taken in dyabolycall engyne
But that repentaunce may loose the sone
Of that grete synne that thou hast done

Trust not to moche in fortunes grace
Though that she laugh on the a whyle
For she can sodenly turne her face
Whan that she lyst the to begyle
She welth and loye can sone defyle
And plonge the in the pyte of pouerte
Wherfore in her haue thou no suertye

Presume no ferther than the behoueth
For it wyll turne the to grete shame
For who that from his rome remoueth
He is often full gretely to blame
And medeleth with other in theym lame
As no thyngē connynge nor expert
They may hym say syr malapert

Or that thou speke call to remembraunce
Vnto what mater thy worde shall sygnifye
Loke that it torne no man to greuaunce
Though that it be spoken merely
Yet many a one wyll take it greuously
Whiche that myght cause wroth and debate
Whyle that thou lyues beware of that

For a thyngē lost without recouer
Loke that thou neuer be to pensyfe
Thanke god of it thynke to haue an other
Lete wysedome than be to the comfortyfe
That to thy brayn is best preseruatyfe
For euermore ryght wyse is he
That can be pacyent in aduersyte

Proue thy frende in a mater fayned
Or thou haue nede than shalt thou se
Whyther he be iustly with the reteyned
The for to socour in thy necessitye
By profe thou mayst knowe the veryte
For profe afore that nede requere
Defeteth dowte euer in fere

Be thou neuer so blynde in wylle
Yet loke thou be reformed by reason
Than shalt thou my mynde fulfyll
And thou therto thy selfe abandon
Stryue not with reason for none encheson
For wher she lacketh ther is grete outrage
And without her may not aswage

Eschew also the synne of pryde
The moder and the feruent rote
Of all the synnes at euery tyde
Wherfore trede thou her vnder fote
With helpe of vertue so swete and sote
Whiche is best salue to hele thy sore
And to thy helth the to restore

Wo worth synne without repentaunce

||

cc .i.

||

Wo worth bondage without releas
Wo worth man without good gouernaunce
Wo worth infynall payne and dystresse
Wo worth vyce put fer in presse
Wo worth soueraynte hauynge dysdeyn
And wo worth pyte that doth refrayn

Wo worth ryght that may not be herd
Wo worth frendshyp without stabyltye
Wo worth true sentence that is deferd
Wo worth the man full of duplycyte
Wo worth hym without benygnyte
Wo worth lybertye withouten pease
And wo worth crueltye that may not cease

Wo worth connyng that is abused
Wo worth promys withouten payment
Wo worth vertue that is refused
Wo worth trouble without extynguysment
Wo worth foly on message sent
Wo worth reason that is exyled
And wo worth trowth that is defyled

Wo worth the trust without assuraunce
Wo worth grace not sette by
Wo worth Iustyce kepte in dystaunce
Wo worth welth replete with enuy
Wo worth the batayll without vycory
Wo worth begynnynge without good ende
And wo worth wronge that doth defende

These commaundementes I put in memory
Theym for to kepe doynge my dyligence
With dame Sapyence I dyd longe tary
Whiche dyd me teche with partyng influence
Of her delycate and doulcete complacence
Than spake dyscrecyon anone to me
In the presens of her systers mageste

Thou art beholdynge to my syster reuerent
That the reteyned hath vnto her seruauant
Wherfore be thou to her obeydent
And at every houre to her attendaunt
And ryotous company do thou not haunt
For that wyll payre and yll thy name
Wherfore of vertuous myrth let be thy game

cc .ii.

Capitulum.vi.



||

Discrecyon ferther forth me lede
Vnto the solempne and royall mancyon
Of dame nature in humayne stede
Ryght pleasaunt was her habytacyon
Of merueylous werke and sytuacyon

And she her selfe helde her estate
In a glorious chaumbre without chekmate

cc .iii.

Her towre was gylted full of sonne bemys
And within hanged with cloth of aras
The roof was paynted with golden stremys
And lyke crystall depured was
Euery wyndowe aboute of glas
Where that she sat as a fayre goddes
All thynges creatynge by her besynes

Me thought she was of merueylous beaute
Tyll that Dyscrecyon lede me behynde
Where that I sawe all the pryuyte
Of her werke and humayne kynde
And at her backe I dyd than fynde
Of cruell deth a dolfull ymage
That all her beaute dyd perswage

Full wonderous was her operacyon
In euery kynde eke and ryght degre
Withouten rest or recreacyon
I wyll not medle with her secrete
For it no thyng longeth to my faculte
But somewhat after I wyll expres
Of her grete power and worthynes

But in my boke well for to procede
Dame dyscrecyon ferther me brought
Into a fayre chambre as ye may rede
Of fyne gemetry ryght well wrought
To comfort man there lacked nought
But that me thought there was no company
Saue onely dame dyscrecyon and I

We had ben but a lytell whyle there
But that we sawe a lady clere
Ryght well appareled in sad gere
Mylde in her hauour discrete of chere
That came vs by and very nere
Ascendynge vp in to her hyghe sete
Garnysshed with perle and with gold bete

Than sayd dyscrecyon this is dame Iustyce
Clene of consyence without corrupcyon
And neuer be spotted with the synne of couetyse
But true as stele in the entencyon
Of ryght euermore without destruccyon
Geuyng alway a ryghtfull iugement
Obey thou youth this lady reuerent

A iuge fulfilled with the synne of auaryce
Or with fauour of kynne made blynd
Must nedys do wronge by grete p^{re}iudyce
For fauour shold not consyence bynd
Ryght to dyssymyll as I now fynd
In problemys wryten of antiquyte
Made by phylosophers of auctoryte

As we stode talkynge thus to gydere
Vp came dame fortune so gayly gloryfyed
Impossyble it is for me to dyscouere
How gorges she was & gretly magnifyed
Full lyke a goddes that had ben deyfyd
Clothed with gold sette full of rubyes
And tynst w^t emeraudys & many a turkes

cc .iiii.

And next to her there dyd ensue
Dame Hardynes that noble lady
After whome anone dyd pursue
Dame Sapyence whiche dyd not tary
Than came dame nature appareled royally
And all the other cladde in gold
Set with dyamondes many a fold

They lowted all vnto the ground
Afore dame Iustyce for obeysaunce
That sate there both hole and sound

Withouten ony dyscontynuaunce
 Gyuyngē god ere vnto the vterauce
 Of these foure ladyes pledyngē at barre
 With all theyr cases dyd well avarre

Capitulum.vii.



HYrst dame hardynes began to plede
 Sayngē she was to man moost profytable
 For she the hertes hath often fede
 Of conquerous as it was couenable
 And by my corage haue made theym able
 Regyons to wynne theyr ennemyes to subdue
 And yf I were not they had it rue

And yf a man be neuer so wyse
 Withouten me he getyth none vterauce
 Wherfore his wysedome may not suffyse
 All onely without myn allegeauce
 For I by ryght must nedys enhaunce
 A lowe born man to an hyghe degre
 Yf that he wyll be ruled by me

Haue I not caused many a noble warreour
 To wynne the batell by my grete myght
 Without me was made neuer conquerour
 Nor yet man coragious whan he dyd fyght
 No man without me may defende his ryght
 I may be worst from hym forborne
 For and I were not he were forlorne

Dyd I not cause the noble hercules
 By my power to wynne the vycory
 Of the sturdy and stronge Philotes
 As is recorded in bokes of memory
 For without me can be no cheualry
 And vnder the wyngē of my proteccyon
 All rebels brought be to subieccyon

A realme is vpholden by thynges thre
 The fyrst and the chyef it is the swerd
 Whiche causeth it to be in good suerte
 And other realmes of it to be aferd
 By whiche the vsurpers be dyfferd
 From theyr wyll with treason knyte
 And by me slayn for theyr fals fyte

The seconde is lawe that euer serueth
 But within the realme onely
 For other nacyons our lawe ne dredeth
 But our swerd they do in specyally
 For and they roose ayenst vs proudly
 As they haue done often in tymes past
 Yet w^t our swerd they shold be ouercast

The thyrd be marchautes that do multiply
In this realme welth and prosperyte
For of euery thyng they often occupy
Euery man lyke vnto his faculte
For without marchautes can not be
No realme vpholden in welth & pleasure
For it to vs is a specyall tresure

Also yet hercules the puyssaunt geaunt
Dyd slee the monstre afore Troy the grete
And with his strokes he dyd hym daunt
They were so peysantly on hym sette
That he the vycetry on hym dyd gette
Had I not be comfort vnto his harte
Suche vycetry had ben leyd aparte

Dyd he not vaynquyssh in y^e forest of Neme
The thre mortall lyons by his grete hardynes
And ryued theyr lawes as was to se
By twene his handes by chyualrus prowes
And yet by armes and knyghtly exces
In egypt he slewe the tyraunt Busyre
And brent hym after in a grete fyre

Also he slewe the tyraunt Cacus
For his tyranny and grete myschefe
By cause his dedys were so odyous
For he dyd murdre and was a thefe
Wherfore his deth to many was leef
Who more of his actes wyll haue report
To the Troyans story lette hym resort

Also the worthy and the noble hectour
That eclyped was the troyans champyon
And of all cheualry called the flour
In his tyme reynynge and of renowne
Of whose noble dedes the brute and sowne
Was spred by euery straunge habytacyon
That they of his faytys dyde make relacyon

By his power and hardy corage
He put the grekes full often to flyght
And bete theym downe by a grete outrage
That well was he that hym saue myght
Full often he brought theym to the plyght
His dedes were pure without magycyon
And without nygromancy or suche corrupcyon

Dyd I not cause also kynge dauith
A lyon lawbones to rent and tere
That dyd deuour his shepe in the fryth
As he sat kepyng of theym there
The lyons crueltye myght not hym fere
And he in his youth so hardy was
That he dyd sle the gyaunt Golias

Dyd I not cause the noble Iulius
Emperour of rome for to be electe
By cause he was so stronge and cheualrus
Whan in armes he knewe the affecte
He all his ennemyes dyd abiecte
And by the support of my chyef socour
He gouerned hymselfe lyke a noble emperour

And also Arthur kynge of Bretayne
With all the knyghtes of the rounde table
Neuer auentures had sought certayne
And I therto had not ben greable
They for to fyght had not ben able
Who that me lacketh is but a coward
And shame is euer his rewarde

Also kynge Charlemayne kynge of Fraunce
With his dysypers Rowland and Olyuer
With all the resydue of his alyaunce
That in all armes so noble were
On goddys ennemyes brake many a spere
Causynge them to flee to theyr grete vylony

Hardynes was cause that they had vycory

O worthy hardynes the shynynge sterre
Alway to mannys herte the comfort
Whan that it is the tyme of werre
Vnto what partye that thou resort
They wynne the batall by thy support
And wher that thou lettest thy bemys dyssende
They often hye to honoure assende

cc .vii.

Than sayd dame hardynes vnto the Iuge
I pray you that ryght I may haue
Sythens I to man am chyef refuge
Whan that he lysteth of me to craue
I make hym coragyous and his worshyp saue
Wherfore I owte to haue the preemynence
By ryght reason and good experyence

That I deny you sayd dame Sapyence
Of whom haue you your ordre of pledynge
For ye neuer can haue none intellygence
But by the meane of myn informynge
For I am alway your mynde techynge
And without me your tale were but a fable
For ye without wytte sholde alway bable

This wyll I proue by myn opynyon
That I am grounde of the artes seuen
And of all good werkes in cōmunyon
For no man without me can go to heuen
My dedys be merueylous for man to neuen
Whan they beu wrought in to theyr degre
Who that wyll lerne theym he hath the lyberte

Of my dedes bokes do make recorde
The whiche clerkes put into remembraunce
For an example without dyscorde
Of heuenly way by vertuous gouernaunce
Without me man can haue no pleasaunce
Nor yet hym rule in no maner wyse
A man without wytte is to dyspysse

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Hardynes without prudence may not auayle
Though that a man be neuer so sturdy
For a wyseman feble may wynne the batayle
Of hym that is ryght stronge and myghty
For better it is for to be ryght wytty
In the defence of his good saue garde
Than often to stryke and to renne forwarde

That thynge that hardynes may not wynne
May be goten by my hyghe souerente
And with the helpe of subtyle engynne
It may be brought to the extremyte
Wher that it myght not by possybylyte
Of hardynes longe afore be wonne
Yet by grete wysedome it may be donne

Vnto dyuers cases I take excepcyon
Of dame Hardynes whiche are no lawe
Vnto the fyrst vndre your correccyon
She sayd and she her power dyd wythdrawe
No rebell than shold stand in awe
And she is the chyef as I knowe well
That causeth hym for to be rebell

By her foly and folysshe hardynes
She causeth men to ryse ayenst theyr lorde
She is the cause of mortall heuynes
Whan she doth breke the good concorde
Wherfore me thynke by one accorde
For to exyle her it is now the best
Than man sholde lyue in peas and rest

And where she sayd that she exalted
Iulius cesar by her grete exylence
In that case she ryght clerely varied
For it was I by my grete dylygence

cc .viii.

That neuer was out of his presence
But ruled hym and made hym worthy
To be chosen emperour of all Italy

Chosen he was by the comyn assent
For the grete wysedome that in hym shone
With a grete voyce and a hole entente
For lyke vnto hym was there none
That was so abell as he alone
For to occupye an Emperours dygnyte
Of his promocyon he myght thanke me

I Sapyence am endewed with grace
And the lode sterre of heuenly doctryne
The sprynge of comfort Ioye and solace
Who that lyst to me for to enclyne
He shall knowe thynges that be dyuynne
And at his ende beholde the deyte
That is one god and persones thre

It pleased the fader that is omnipotent
His sone to send to be incarnat
Of the vrygyn Mary the sterre moost excellent
Mayden and moder yet not vyolate
Lyke a vessell chosen and made ornat
All onely for to be goddys moder
And he hym selfe vnto man broder

But a stryfe there was bytwene god and man
Whan man consented to synne dedely
By that the dyscorde fyrst began
Whan he the sone of god on hy
That is his brother agayn wyll crucefy
Yf he had power by whiche is offended
The fader of heuen as is entended

Therefore lete vs to our brother go
Named Ihesu Cryst and axe hym mercy
With a good entent and hert also
There is for vs none other remedy
That ony tonge truely can specyfy
And he wyll take it for a correccyon
And of all vengeaunce sease the affeccyon

That we may of hym haue forgyuenes
Of our grete synne with reformacyon
Of peas bytwene the faders hyghenes
Of heuen and vs in suspyracyon
Therefore yf thou drede the amocyon
Of his ryghtwysnes loke that thou flee
Ryght fast vnto his mercyfull pyte

For his mercy is more than all our mysery
And eke aboue his werkes all
As Dauyd sheweth in his prophecy
Saynge his mercy is ouer all
To whom I pray euer in especyall
To gyue me grace well my penne to lede
That quaketh aye for drede

Dame Sapyence sayd I do procede
Of the strength of the holy ghoost
That is and shall be mater in dede
God and lorde of myghtys moost
Whose infynall power was neuer lost
And yet neuer had no begynnyng
But alway lyke stronge without endyng

Where that dame hardynes in her pledyng
Made her selfe to knyghtes moost necessary
By the meanes of her power shewyng
That I by ryght do now well deny
For in that case she dyd moche vary
For syxe there are that more profyte be
Of whiche the lest is better than she

The fyrst is prudence that is the chefe
That hym doth rule and is his gyde

And kepeth hym from grete reprefe
And causeth his worshyp for to abyde
So euery crysten man shold prouyde
By his wit to withstand the deuyll
That he consent not to do euyll

The seconde is that he sholde be true
To his souerayn lorde that on hym reyneth
And all treason for euer to eschewe
In whiche grete shame often remayneth
And by whiche he hiz ^B kyng dysteyneth
So a crysten man sholde be true euer
To Ihesu Cryst that was his redemer

The thyrde is that he sholde be lyberall
Amonge his cōmons withouten lette
That is the cause euer in generall
That he the loue of theym doth gette
For it causeth theyr hertes on hym be sette
So euery true crysten man sholde be
To god intended with lyberalyte

The fourth is that he sholde be stronge
His ryght euer for to defende
And neuer to no man for to do wronge
But wronges for to dyrecte and amende
As ferre as his power wyll extende
So a true crysten man sholde exclude
All maner of vyces by his fortytude

The fyfth is y^t he sholde be mercyable
In all his dedes withouten furoure
For that to hym is gretly conuenable
And eke to kepe hym out of erroure
For he of mercy sholde be a myrroure
So vnto them it is ryght necessary
Who that wyll be saued for to haue mercy

The syxte is a knyght ought for to kepe
The poore folke in theyr grete nede
That often for hungre and thyrst do wepe
He ought with almes theym for to fede
And the better he shall than spede
So euery true crysten man sholde do
As ferre as his power cometh vnto

I Sapyence am of the kynges counsayll
Whiche is clothed with purple that sygnyfyeth
The grace and the pulcrynute without fayll
Of grete vertues that in hym shyneth
For to no vyces he neuer enclyneth
Hauynge in his hede a fayre crowne royall
That sheweth his dygnyte to be regall

Whiche to his people is the chefe glory
Thruh whome his subgetes be dyrecte
And made obedyent to hym certaynly
At euery houre by ryght true effecte
But forthermore by good aspecte
He bereth a ball in his lefte hande
The whiche betokeneth as I vnderstande

A kynge to be a good admynstratour
Vnto his subgetes in euery place
And to be for theym a good prouysour
As reason requyreth in euery case
I Sapyence do rule his noble grace
In his ryght hand he hath a septure
That doth sygnyfye by ryght his rygoure

Yll men to punysse for theyr offence
By his ryghtwysnes whome the loue
Of vertue shynynge in experyence
Doth not extoll nor yet now remoue
A lampe doth hange his heed aboue
Alway lyght and clerely brennyng
Whiche sygnyfyeth the mercy of a kynge

The olde philosophers by theyr prudence
Fonde the seuen scyences lyberall
And by theyr exercyse & grete dylygence
They made theyr dedes to be memoryall
And also poetes that were fatall
Craftely colored with cloudy fygures
The true sentence of all theyr scryptures

O Iustyce lady and souerayne goddessse
Gyue you true sentence now vpon me
As ye be surmountynge in vertue & noblesse
Lete me dame Sapyence haue the soueraynte
As is accordynge to my royall dygnyte
For I am moost profytable vnto man
And euer had ben syns the world began

Than sayd dame Fortune ye are imperfyte
Without that I therto be accordaunt
For all your hardynes & prudence perfyte
I vnto you must be well exuberaunt
And with your werkes euer concordant
Where that I fauer they haue good cōfort
In all theyr dedes by my swete resort

I Fortune am the rule and steere
Of euery persone lyke to my wyll
That in this worlde now lyueth here
Whan that I lyst for to fulfyll
My mynde ryght sone I can dystyll
The dewe of comfort welth and rychesse
To man exaltynge hym to noblenesse

Though that a man were neuer so hardy
Without me he myght not attayne
And though that a man were neuer so wytty
And I dyd my power from hym refrayne
All his labour were lost in vayne
So hardynesse and prudence in no wyse
Without good fortune may well suffyse

Though that a man were but a fole
Yf I consent that he be fortunate
He nedyth not to make no grete dole
For I shall mayntene so his estate
That he in rychesse shall be so eleuate
Fulfylled with welth & worldely tresure
That he shall lacke no maner of pleasure

Where that dame hardynes wold afferme
By her cases that are so vnsure
That she by her power doth conferme
The knyghtes of vyctory for to be sure
Whan she doth take theyr hertes in cure
Yf fortune be awaye she may not auayle
For they by reason must lose the batayle

Yet forthermore as I do well consyder
How dame hardynes dyd expresse
Sythens the tyme that I came hyder
That she promoted had to worthynes
Hector dauid and the noble hercules
With many other wherof she fayleth
For it was fortune as she well knoweth

For in olde tyme the noble warryours
For to eschewe euer my grete daungere
In whiche tyme they were ydolestours
Than they to put hym oute of fere
To ydols went that theyr goddes were
For to haue answer yf they sholde wyne
The batayll or they dyd begynne

What nede I plead by longe contynuaunce
As dame Sapyence dyd in maters hy
It were of tyme but dyscontynuaunce
But o dame Iustyce the gentyll lady
Loke that ye Iuge my mater ryght wysely
That I of hardynes may be the pryncypall

And of dame prudence & nature with all

Than sayd dame nature that may not be
As I can proue by ryght and reason
For I am moost confort to humanyte
As man well knoweth at euery encheason
And can not be forborne for none season
For where I lacke without ony delay
Man is but dede and turned to clay

That nature gyueth by her power
Wysedome nor hardynes may not defete
For I to man am the chefe doer
Durynge his lyfe without retrete
Also dame fortune may not well lete
Me of my course though she it thought
In sondery wyse my dedes are so wrought

Though that a man were infortunate
And though that he were neuer so folysshe
And a grete coward to fyght not able
Yet shulde he lyue and neuer perysshe
Tyll that my power of hym doth fynysse
Whiche fayle must ones it is my proprete
And that was gyuen me by the deyte

I am the orygynall of mannes creacyon
And by me alway the world doth multiply
In welth pleasure and delectacyon
As I wyll shewe now in this party
My dedes be subtyll & wrought craftely
What were the worlde yf I were note
It were sone done as I well wote

The lawe of nature doth man bynde
Both beste foule and fysshe also
In theyr degre to do theyr kynde
Blame theym not yf they do so
For harde it is euer to ouer go
The kynde of nature in her degre
For euery thyng must shewe his proprete

Who of theyr propretes lyst to rede
Lete hym loke in the boke of barthelmewe
And to his scripture take good hede
That ryght nobly of theym do shewe
With all theyr actes beyng not a fewe
But wouderous many by alteracyon
For lyke hath lyke his operacyon

I nature norysshe by myn afflyccyon
Mannes humayne partyes superfyxcyall
And am the sprynge of his complexion
The fonteine of his vaynes inferyall
To hym conserue moost dere and specyall
Though he were hardy & wyse he myzt^B not me
forbere
Nor fortune without me auayleth not hym a pere

Wherfore dame Iustyce be you now indyfferent
Consydre that I am moost dere and lefe
Vnto euery man that is eliquylent
And aboue all medycyns to hym moost chefe
And by my strongh vnto hym relefe
In his dysease wherfore as thynke me
I ought of reason to haue the soueraynte

Than spake dame Iustyce with meke contenaũce
I wyll all your contrauersy now redresse
For I of your reasons haue good perseueraunce
And after your cases both more and lesse
Wherfore I Iustyce by good ryghtwysnesse
Gyue now vpon you a fynall Iugement
That ye foure agree by a hole assent

Man for to please at euery houre
Without dysgrement or contradiccyon
And in his nede to do hym socoure

dd .iiii.

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With louynge herte and true affeccyon
He shall be in your good iurysdyccyon
And you of hym shall be copertyners
Both of his lyfe and of his maners

ee .i.

Than sayd dame hardynes I agre therto
And so do I than sayd dame Sapyence
Than sayd dame Fortune I also do
Agre vnto dame Iustyce sentence
And I dame Nature wyll do my dylygence
Lyke as ye do man for to please
And hym to strength in his dysease

With that dame Iustyce vp arose
Vnto the ladyes byddyng fare well
And went into her chaumbre close
I cleped consyence wher she dyd dwell
As dame Dyscrecyon dyd me tell
Than hardynes & fortune went downe the stayre
And after theym Nature so clere and fayre

Capitulum .viii.

DAme Sapyence taryed a lytell whyle
Behynd the other saynge to Dyscrecyon
And began on her to laugh and smyle
Axyng her how I stode in condycyon
Well she sayd in good perfeccyon
But best it is that he maryed be
For to eschewe all yll censualyte

I knowe a lady of meruelous beaute
Spronge out of hyghe and noble lynage
Replete with vertue and full of bounte
Whiche vnto youth were a good maryage
For she is comen of royall apparage
But herde it wyll be to gete her loue
Without youth frayltye do sore reprove

I kneled downe than vpon my kne
Afore dame Sapyence with humble chere
Besechyng her of me to haue pyte
And also Dyscrecyon her syster dere
Than dame Sapyence came me nere
Saynge youth wyll ye haue a wyfe
And her to loue duryng her lyfe

Ye madame that wolde I fayne
Yf that she be both fayre and bryght
I wyll her loue euer more certayne
And pleas her alway with all my myght
Of suche a persone wolde I haue a syght
With all my herte now at this houre
Wolde to god I had so fayre a floure

Than sayd dyscrecyon there is a kynge
Dwellyng fer hens in a fayre castell
Of whome I oft haue herd grete talkyng
Whiche hath a doughter as I you tell
I trowe that youth wyll lyke her well
She is both good eke fayre and pure
As I report me vnto dame Nature

But yf that youth sholde her go seke
Ye must syster than hym well indue
With your grete power so good and meke
That he all frayltye may eschue
For by the way it wyll oft pursue
On hym by flatery and grete temptacyon
That shall bryng hym in tribulacyon

As for that sayd she he shall not care
For he shall theym sone ouercome
And of theyr flatery ryght well beware
For I to hym shall gyue grete wysedome
Theyr dedes to withstande & make theym dōme
Wherfore dere syster as I you pray
Vnto her lede hym now on the way

ee .ii.

Loke that ye send me in his necessaryte
 By dame swyftnes full sone a letter
 By whiche that I may knowe the certaynte
 That I may come to ayde hym beter
 So that fraylte to hym be no freter
 And though I be not alway vusyble
 With hym my power he hath inuyncyble

Than sayd dame Sapyence to dyscrecyon
 Fare well dere syster I may not tary
 Loke ye of youth haue the tucyon
 That he fall not into vaynglory
 And that ye puruey for hym shortly
 That he may wedde the fayre dame clenness
 Whiche for her loue haue ben in duresse

With that dame Sapyence downe went
 In to her place that was the doctrynell
 Of famous clerkes in connyng splendent
 A myrrour of lernyng that was dyuynall
 With all the craftes artyfycyall
 Byfore her dame Fortune went to her mancyon
 And eke dame hardynes to her habytacyon

Capitulum nonum



HOrth than went dyscrecyon and I
 Out of the castell into a grene
 Where byrdys sange by grete melody
 There daunst also the fayre quene
 Besyde a ryuer named Ephesene
 Ouer whiche we wente to the other syde
 That was a medowe both longe and wyde

Longe there we wandred tyll at the last
 We came vnto a ryght grete wyldernes
 By that tyme Phebus was ouer past
 Wherfore we walked in grete derkenes
 The whiche to me was a grete heuynes
 For Lucyna eke dyd her shrowde
 Vnder a blacke and mysty clowde

For she was horned and no thyng cleere
 And entred into the sygne of caprycorne
 Ryght ferre from phebus fulgent speere
 And not ayenst hym the crowne had worne
 I went vp and downe tyll on the morne
 That phebus his golden reyes dyd sprede
 Than dyscrecyon ferther forth me lede

Amonge thornes sharpe & bestes wyld
 There was the lyon the wolf & the bere
 But I coude mete nother man ne chylde
 But many serpentes that dyde me fere

And by a swete smelle I knewe a pantere
So forth I went by longe contynuaunce
Tyll that I sawe an herber of pleasaunce

To whiche I toke anone my waye
Where that I sawe a lady excellent
Rydyng on a goote in fresshe arraye
Ryght yonge of age & lusty of entent
Prayenge me to her for to assent
As to fulfyll the fleshly pleasure
Whiche she desyred me out of mesure

Nay sayd dyscrecyon that may not be
No sayd I in no maner of wyse
To her request I wyll now agree
But euermore here foule lust despysse
For I my selfe do now aduyse
To kepe me chast that I may mary
Fayre dame Clennes that noble lady



SO forth I went walkyng my iournay
Metyng a lady olde and amyable
Syttynge in a castell both fressh and gay
On an olyphauntes backe in strength so stable
Whiche it to bere was good and able
Hauynge in her hande a cup of golde
Sette with perles ryght many afolde

She sayd she was the lady of rychesse
The quene of welth and worldely glory
Praynge me to company with her noblenesse
And she than wolde promote me shortly
To innumerable ryches and make me worthy
Where I am poore and sette by nought
By her to worshyp I sholde be brought

Vnto her I answered I wolde not so
As for to hunt in the parke of pryde
The whiche to Clennes is mortall fo
But with Dyscrecyon I wyll abyde
Whiche doth a wyfe for me prouyde
By whome I shall haue the possessyowne
Of heuenly kyngdome & grete renowne

So forth I went and had grete trauayle
Without the comfort of ony persone
Saue of dyscrecyon whiche dyd me counsaile
As she went walkyng with me alone
Vnto her I made full grete mone
And lykened the wyldernes by morall scence
Vnto worldely trouble by good experyence

She sayd the fyrst lady that I dyd mete
Iclyped was dame Sensualyte
Whiche can well flater with wordes swete

Causynge a man to fall into fragylyte
And for to haunt the carnall freylte
Whiche vnto clennes is abhomynable
For they in werke be gretely varyable

The seconde was pryde enduyd with couetyse
A lady of ryght fruytles medytacyon
Delytynge gretly in the synne of auaryce
The whiche is cause of her dampnacyon
For she by her fals supportacyon
Blyndeth many a mannes conscyence
And dryueth ryght oft fer in absence

So ferther I went tyll at the last
I was in a mase goynge in and oute
Ther was none other way I was agast
But forth I walked in grete doute
Now here now there and so rounde aboute
Than sayd vnto me dame Dyscrecyon
Ye are in the besynes of worldely fastyon

Therein I trauayled by longe space
Tyll that I mette a lady gloryous
Indued with vertue and grete grace
To whom I sayd o lady precyous
As ye seme to be good and vertuouus
I you beseche now without delaye
Vnto dame Clennes to teche me the waye

I Sapyence now wyll shewe to the
The ryght waye vnto fayre clennes
And yf thou wylt be ruled by me
Thou shalt mary that noble prynces
Yes that wyll I sayd than douteles
Dyscrecyon sayd she wolde be my suerte
Sapyence sayd none better myght be

Than sayd dyscrecyon to dame sapyence
Welcome to vs my syster dere
And I to her dyd humble reuerence
Saynge who had went to fynde you here
Yes she sayd I haue ben neere
You often tymes syth my departynge
And haue ben cause of your goode gydyng

Capitulum .x.

Come on your waye walke on a pace
For ye longe for to haue a syght
Of dame Clennes so clere a face
So goodely of body in beauty bryght
That there can not be so fayre a wyght
So forth we walked to a ryuer syde
That ebbed and flowed at euery tyde

Than I saw a castell a pales royall
Bylded with marble blacke as the gette
With glasse wyndowes as clere as crystall
Whiche on the other syde was sette
No man to the castell myght gette
But ouer the water on a lytell brydge
Not halfe so brode as a hous rydge

But as I cast myn eye than asyde
I saw a lady wondrous fayre
Demure of contenaunce without pryde
That went her selfe for to repayre
By the water syde to take the ayre
Beholde and se than sayd dame sapyence
Yonder is dame Clennes the sterre of excellence

Full glad was I than in my mynde
For to se that flour of complacence
The syght of her dyd my herte bynde
Euer her to loue with Percyng influence
Vnto her I sayd o well of contynence
Vnto your grace fayne wolde I go
Ner lettyng of this water blo

To me she answered than agayne
Saynge this worlde withouten mys
Is but a vanyte no thynge certayne
In the lyke wyse as this water is
Ye can not come to me now ywys
But by that brydge that goth ouer
This stormy troublous & wawy water

Therof sayd sapyence he shall not lette
Well sayd Clennes be you his gyde
And dyscrecyon also for to be sette
For to vpholde hym vnto the other syde
That he do not in the water slyde
So to the brydge they dyde me lede
I quacked than for fere and drede

I sawe there wryten this lytterall sence
No man this brydge may ouer go
But he be pure without neglygence
And stedfast in goddes byleue also
Yf he be ignoraunt and do not so
He must nedys into this water fall
Ouer the heed and be drowned with all

They led me ouer this brydge so peryllous
Tyll that I came to a preuy place
Where were wryten with letters gloryous
This is the kyngdome of grete grace
No man by yonde this marke may trace
But yf he be brought in by dame wysedome
If he so be he is moche welcome

So forthermore yet forth we went
Into a hall that was solacyous
Made of precyous stones splendent
That theym to se it was ryght wounderous
They were there so gretly plenteuous
That the hall paued was for the nones
With none other grauell but precyous stones



There was dame Clennes that lady gent
And eke her fader the kyng of loue
He satte in a chayre ryght clere and excellent
At the vpper ende of the hall aboue
He satte styll and dyd not remoue
Gyrde with wylowes and myght not se
No maner a thynge in his degre

He had two wynges ryght large and grete
And his body also was naked
And a dart in his ryght hand was sette
And a torche in his left hand brenned
A botell aboute his necke was hanged
His one leg armed and naked the other

ee .vi.

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cc .vii.

Hym for to se it was a wonder

Sapyence bad me meruayll no thyng
For she wold shewe me the sygnifycacyon
Why he so sate by shorte rekenyng
Accordyng to a morylyzacyon^B
Now of the fyrste to make relacyon
Loue sholde be gyrde faste with stabylte
Without whiche loue can haue no suerte

Loue may not se but is alway blynde
And wenyth no man can haue perseueraũce
Where that he loueth by naturall kynde
But he do shewe hym by wordes of vteraũce
Trught he bewreyeth hym by contenaunce
For hard it wyll be loue so to couere
But that som man shall it perceuere

Also his nakednes doth sygnyfy
That true loue no thyng ellys desyreth
But the very persone and eke body
That he so well and feruentely loueth
His wynges also well betokenyth
That his mynde fleeth vnto the persone
That he doth loue so well alone

And also loue is stryken with a sharpe darte
That maketh a man for to complayn
Whan that it hath wounded sore his herte
It brenneth hote lyke fyre certeyn
Than loue his purpose wolde fayne atteyn
And is euermore both hoot and drye
Tyll his lady gyue hym drynke of mercy

His one legge is armed to defende
The ryght that longeth vnto amyte
And wronge loue for to amende
His naked legge betokeneth charyte
That is the Ioye of grete felycyte
So charyte ryght loue and good concorde
With stablynes reyneth in this myghty lorde

Capitulum .xi.

A Han forth me led good dame Sapyence
Afore that myghty lordes mageste
Come on she sayd put the in presence
That thou mayst se dame clenles beaute
Ponder in thy mynde by veryte
That so fayre as she was not quene helyn
Quene Ipolyte or yonge Polyxyn

This lady is clene without corrupcyon
And wereth thre crownes for her vyrgynyte
One is for people of perfyt relygyon
An other for maydens kepyng chastyte
The therde for true wedowes as y^u mayst se
I wyll the now to her fader present
Her for to mary yf she wyll consent

Than sayd dame sapyence o noble emperour
O souerayne lorde and royall potestate
O vycorious prynce & famous conquerour
O kynge of loue and seaser of debate
To the no creature may say chekmate
I present the now this vertuous knyght
For to mary clenles your doughter bryght

I thanke you he sayd for your good wyll
But he that to Clennes maryed must be
He must my commaundement fyrste fulfyll
As to scomfyte the dragon with heedes thre
That is a serpent of grete subtylte
Whiche well betokeneth as we do fynde
The worlde the flesshe & the deuyll by kynde

Sapyence sayd I sholde not fayle
To do his commaũdement for Clennes sake

As for to sle the dragon in batayle
 That lay in a marys in a grete lake
 Whiche was moche stynkyng foule & blake
 Wysedome bade me be not aferde
 For she wolde gyue me a shelde and swerde

And arme me also with fayre armure
 To vaynquyssh that dragon so ferse & grete
 She sayd it sholde be so good and sure
 That I no harme of hym sholde gete
 Though he his teth on me had sete
 Yet sholde I slee hym for all his myght
 By my grete strokes whan I dyd fyght

Fyrst she my legge harneys sette on
 And after my plackerd of grete ryches
 She armed me her selfe alone
 And laced my helmet of her gentylnes
 I thanked her for her grete goodnes
 And gaued me my swerde and sheld also
 Saynge lete vs to the dragon go

This is the armure for the soule
 That in his epystole wrote saynt Poule
 Good hope thy legge harneys shall be
 The habergyn of ryghtwysnes gyrde w^t chastyte
 Thy plackarde of besynes w^t braūches of almes
 dede

Thy shelde of beleue and mekenes for the hede
 Thy swerde shall be the to defend
 The worde of god the deuyll to bl[ey]nde^C



Dame sapyence & I dyd take our lycence
 Of the kynge of loue in vertue depured
 And of his daughter shynynge in excellence
 Whiche to me sayd with wordes assured
 O vertuous knyght you for me haue dured
In grete wo & payne but thynke you verely
 To scomfyt that dragon by wysedome shortly

Than went we forth to that serpent
 In merueylous trauayle of sorowe and bale
 By that tyme the daye ryght fayre was spent
 And phebus his course began to auale
 But at the last we came into a dale
 Wher we felt the sauer of a dungeon
 Of the foule and stynkyng dragon

Nere to that dragon there was a way
 That men vsed vpon a fayre hyll
 Vnto hyghe heuen so fressh and gay
 But that dragon lette them theyr wyll
 And by the way he dyd them kyll
 Bryngynge them vnto the dungeon
 Iclyped the place of grete oblyuyon

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ff .i.

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I had not be there halfe an houre
But that this dragon me approached
As though that he wolde me deuoure
He so fersly than on me marched
The batayle bytwene vs longe contynued
But he had me ryght sone ouercome
If I had not helpe of dame wysedome

I strake at hym fast with my swerde
And with my shelde dyd me defende
Wysedome bad me not be aferde
But my stroke that for to amende
As fer as my myght weld extende
So by her wordes I plucked vp myn herte
And dyd than vnto the dragon sterte

But he caught me than in his clawes
And so we wrasteled longe to gyder
But he hyld me sharpely in his pawes
Tyll wysedom my feblenesse dyd consyder
Beholde she sayd dame clenness yonder
Than as a syde I cast all my syght
I sawe that lady so pure and bryght

My strength than dobeled an hundred folde
And I from hym brake by vertuous prowes
My herte was warme that afore was colde
With the cōfortable syght of fayre dame clenness
Than I to hym gaue strokes of exces
And with my sharpe swerde cut of anone
Two of his heedes leuyng hym but one

These two heedes by good morall sens
The worlde and the flesshe do sygnyfy
As I in scrypture haue intellygence
The fyrste the worlde that is transytory
Lyeth bytwene man and heuenly glory
Lettyng hym often of his passage
If it of hym can gete auauntage

The seconde is the fleshly desyre
That troubleth a man ryght sore within
Settyng his courage vpon a fyre
Causyng hym to encline to dedely syn
His flesshe the batayll of hym doth wyn
Often bryngyng hym into dampnacyon
If repentaunce were not his saluacyon

Repentaunce alway requyreth mercy
And penaunce to god is a satisfaccyon
For god desyreth euermore truely
An humble herte full of contrycon
And the worlde desyreth restytucyon
Of goodes that haue be gotten wrongfully
To be restored vnto the ryghtfull party

Whan I by wysedom had won the vycory
Of these two heedes I was ryght glad
His thyrde heed marched ayenst me sharpely
But I my swerd in my hand had
Strykyng at hym with strokes sad
And blode of hym coude I drawe none
For he had nother flesshe ne bone

But at the last I dyd hym vaynquyssh
Dryuyng hym home to his derke regyon
Of infernall payne that shall not fynysshe
For hell is called his propre mancyon
And of all other of his opnyon
That do the preceptes of god forsake
And to deuelyche werkes theym do be take

God by his ryghtwysnes made a lawe
By whiche man for dedely synne is condēpned
If god his vengeaunce do not withdrawe
In euerlastyng payne he sholde be prysoned
But and man mercy of hym requyred
With penytent hert he sholde it haue

And with his mercy he wyll man saue

¶ Capitulum .xii.



Han I had scomfyte this serpent
venymous

Sapyence to me ryght gentely sayd
Blessyd be god ye are so gracyous
That ye shall mary Clennes the mayd
But yet erwyles ye were afrayd
Ye I sayd and swet full ryght sore
Tyll ye newe strength dyd me restore

This batayll was grete & longe endured
Whiche caused me to be ryght wery
But sapyence with her wordes me mured
With walles of comfort makynge me mery
Come on she sayd and walke on lyghtly
Vnto the castell that we come fro
I answered to her I wolde do so

Than forth we went a grete pace
Tyll that we came to the castell syde
There mette vs ladyes with grete solace
And welcomed vs at the same tyde
So fayre a sort in the worlde so wyde
May not be founde by no maner of reason
As I sawe there at the same season

The fyrste lady that dyd vs mete
Iclyped was dame perseueraunce
Whiche to me sayd with wordes swete
Blessyd be god of your good gouernaunce
That hath kept you from the incomberaunce
Of the serpent with the heedes thre
And caused you vycor of hym to be

Than came dame fayth that lady glorious
Welcome she sayd with wordes amyable
I am ryght glad ye ar so vycoryous
Of that foule dragon so abhomynable
She sayd that I was euermore stable
In her in dede eke worde and thought
Or elles my labour had ben to nought

Than spake the lady fayre dame charyte
Welcome vertue the noble veteran
Sythens that ye alway haue loued me
From the fyrst season that ye began
Bothe in your youth & syth ye were man
Ye haue had me in humble reuerence
And haue ben ruled by my preemynence

Than sayd dame prayer in my presence
Ye neuer cast me in oblyuyaunce
By no slouth nor wordely neglygence
But haue had me in grete remembraunce
Whiche hath ben to me very grete pleasaunce
Wherfore welcome vertue my dere
Vnto this castell that ye se here

Than came fast to me dame lowelynes
Clyppynge me harde with louely chere
Byddyng me welcome with grete gladnes
As by her contenaūce it dyd well appere
Come on she sayd and walke on nere
So than amonge these fayre ladyes all
I went in to the grete castell hall

And there met me dame clennes blyue
And dame grace bare vp her trayne
Whiche euer to her was affyrmatyue
From whome dame clennes myght not refrayne
Than sayd she to me I am ryght fayne
That ye ar comen in to this place
Where ye shall wedde me in short space

Vpon my kne I kneled than downe

Saynge o sterre of the blysse eterne
O well of vertue and of grete renowne
O dyuyne comfort moost sempyterne
Whan I your beautye do so well decerne
Ye set myn hert vpon a brennyng fyre
With feruent loue to come to my desyre

To me she answered in this wyse
O my dere herte my spouse so pure
Why do ye not on your fete aryse
You of my true loue shall be sure
For ye my hert haue now in cure
Lete vs go now to our fader reuerente
So forthe vnto hym than we wente

Whan that we came afore his fayre face
Dame clenness made curtesye vnto the grounde
Saynge o fader kynge of grete grace
This knyght to loue ye are now bounde
And so am I for I haue often founde
Grete kyndnes on hym both nyght and day
For he hath loued me ryght well alway

Welcome he sayd ryght noble knyght
How haue ye done sythens your departyng
Haue ye scomfyted with your myght
The merueylous dragon so gretly slynkyng^D
Ye I sayd with the power shynyng
Of my maystresse good dame sapyence
I dyd hym vaynquysshe by her experyence

Wher is dame Sapyence than sayd he
And eke her syster dame dyscrecyon
Syr I sayd they are comen with me
And they haue had me in iurisdycyon
Syns my departyng without destruccyon
Than spake dame sapyence by her faculte
Vnto that myghty lordes mageste

Saynge this knyght than cleped vertue
Hath loued your doughter by longe contynuaũce
With stable loue so faythfull and true
And for her sake hath put to vterauce
The thre heeded dragon by wyse puryaunce
Wherfore me thynke he ought to mary
Your doughter Clennes that noble lady

The kynge sayd me thynke the same
If that my doughter wyll agre
And she do not she moche is to blame
Consyderyng his wysedome & grete beaute
Come hyder he sayd my doughter fre
To be wyfe to vertue wyll ye consent
Ye fader she sayd with hole entent

Than he called vnto his presence
Perseueraunce charyte and fydelyte
With lowlynes prayer and intellygence
Shewyng vnto theym the certeynte
How clenness his doughter wedded shall be
Vnto me now vertu in all godely hast
By fore that thre dayes be ryght fully past

He called me than to his magnyfycence
Byddyng me go to bed and to rest
In the chaumbre of clene conscyence
Than so to do I thought it the best
For phebus was tourned into the west
So sapyence and I went forthe to bed
For lake of rest oppressed was my hed

A lytyll welp within this chaumbre was
That lay wakyng and barked alway
That no man in to it sholde passe
That wolde with conscyence make a fray
I dyd slepe there tyll that it was day
Than vp I rose and made me redy
Callyng vnto me dame sapyence shortely

Saynge vnto her o lady and maystres
O comfortable salue vnto euery sore
O fontayne of welth and carbuncle of clernes
Without ye helpe me I am forlore
Wherfore I shewe you as now before
Without I mary fayre dame clenens
I shall endure in mortall heuynes

Therof sayd she be no thyng adred
For ye shall mary here ryght soone
By me your mater shall be well sped
And the same daye it shall be doone
Aboute the houre truely of noone
And there shall be at your good dyner
Charyte fayth penaunce and prayer

Dame sapyence led me into a gardeyn
Where Clennes was amonge floures swete
Her to repayre without dysdeyn
As I to her wente she dyd me mete
Bryngynge me a floure called the margarete
Whiche is a floure ryght swete and precyous
Indued with beaute and moche vertuous

This floure I kyst often ryght swetely
Settyng it nere vnto my hert
Dame Clennes loked vpon me louely
Saynge that I sholde not depert
Tyll she had shewed me a grete couert
So with her I wente without delay
Where byrdes sate on many a spray

By this tyme phebus had begon
His ascencyall cours in grete bryghtnes
In to the sygne of the fierous lyon
Exylynge the fenerous frosty coldnes
And depryuyng the noxyall derkenes
And also setherus his fragraunt breth
Dystylled had vpon euery heth

Than to her I sayd my lady dere
Beholde this weder so clere and fayre
How royall walkynge that it is here
Lyke a place of pleasure you to repayre
Amonge the floures so swete of ayre
An other she had as she me tolde
Bryghter than phebus a thousande folde

This is a place of recreacyon
My mynde to comfort after study
In welth pleasure and delectacyon
For yf I sholde my selfe applye
Euer to pray to god an hye
Without this place I may not be sure
In other tyme in prayer to endure

But the other gardyn is celestyall
That longeth to vs by enherytaunce
And is entayled to vs in generall
For our clene lyfe & vertuous gouernaũce
Who that vs loueth without doubtaũce^E
With vs shall go to eternall glory
In short space or elles to purgatory

Than forth we went to her fader royall
Whiche welcomed vs by grete humylyte
Saynge my doughter dere and specyall
Ye shall this daye by grete solempnyte
Be wedded to vertue with benygnyte
We kneled downe and thanked his grace
And than forth we went to an other place



IN to a chapell gayly gloryfyed
 And also hanged with cloth of tyssue
 A place it was ryght gretly deyfied
 The roof was set with stones of vertue
 As with rubyes and emeraudes bryght of hue
 The rood loft was yuery garnysshed with gold
 Set with dyamoundes ryght many a fold

Ther I dyd se the arke of god
 With many sayntes that suffred martyrdom
 And also I sawe there Moyses rod
 And saynt Austyn that brought crystendom
 Into englonde by his grete wysedom
 And the xii. apostles that fast gan wryte
 Of our byleue and eke dyd endyte

There was saynt peter the noble pope
 That dyd stande on the ryght syde
 Of the hyghe auter in a ryche cope
 Dame clenens and I dyd there abyde
 And vp there came than at that tyde
 Dame prayer with her syster charyte
 And eke dame penytence with humylyte

Than came dame fayth anone to vs
 With ryghtwysenes peas and dame mercy
 With dame contrycyon gay and glorious
 Whiche after theym dyd not longe tary
 And than came bede and eke saynt gregory
 With saynt ambrose the noble doctour
 Whiche of our fayth was good protectour

Than came the kynge of feruent loue
 Led with argos in goodely wyse
 Without whome he myght not remoue
 From his sete by ryght prudent gyse
 Who loueth argos wyll not deuyse
 Nor yet begynne no maner of thyng
 Without in his mynde he se good endynge

Also saynt Ierome the noble cardynall
 Came vp to vs by humble reuerence
 Whiche euermore was a good doctrynnall
 Prechynge to vs by vertuous influence
 With exhortacyon of dyuine complacence
 And than foure bysshoppes in grete dygnyte
 Ryght connyng cernynge vnto the deyte

On hym wayted by grete dylygence
 And neuer dyd forsake his company
 But hym obeyed by good experyence
 And from his cōmaundement dyd not vary
 But in the chapell they dyd there tary
 And than saynt Ierome wente to the kynge

Of feruent loue vnto hym saynge
O amyable kynge seasour of debate
O ioyner of vertue and well of vnyte
O royall emperour o souerayne estate
O messenger of feruent amyte
O feruent dart of cordyall pryuyte
Here is your doughter fayre dame clennes
That must be maryed with good ryghtwysenes

Vnto vertue the louely knyght
Whiche the batayle now hath won
By dame sapyence helpe and myght
Of the foule thre heeded dragon
This maryage by me shall be don
Go ye now streyght into your tabernacle
Whiche is to you moost propre habytacle

Than the souerayne kynge to hym dyd call
Dame fayth dyscrecyon and dame sapyence
With dame contrycyon & charyte withall
And eke dame mercy and dame penytence
Vnto theym saynge ye haue intellygence
That this daye clennes my doughter dere
Shall be maryed to vertue that ye se here

Than they dyde all come vnto me
With dame peas and dame grace
And after theym came dame virgynyte
Whiche in her armes dyd me embrace
Saynge that I was to her grete solace
Gyuynge me vnto my good maryage
A gowne of syluer for grete aparage

She gafe an other of the same
Vnto dame clennes puttynge it one
Vpon her back withouten blame
After whiche Clennes wente anone
Vnto her fader her selfe alone
And I with saynt Ierome dyd there tary
To wed dame Clennes that noble lady

And all the ladyes with meke contenance
Stode on a rewe besyde the closette
Of Clennes fader without resystence
Whiche hanged was gayly with blue veluet
And with perles & rubyes rychely set
Than forth came Clennes with two aūgels led
Whiche theyr golden wynges abrode dyd spred

Dame grace after her bare vp her trayn
And .xv. ladyes her dyd ensue
Fyrst went dame humylyte certayn
And after her than dyd pursue
Dame fayth in stablenes so true
Ledyng with her the fayre dame pease
That welth and ryches doth well encrease

Than went dame reason with perseueraūce
And than dame mercy with contrycyon
And than exersyce with remembraunce
After whome went dame restytucyon
With dame prayer and dame confessyon
And dame charyte with obedyence
And after theym came fayre dame abstynence

Saynt Ierome dyd make there coniunccyon
Of dame Clennes and me in matrimonye
With heuenly wordes and vertuou fastyon
And aungels came downe from heuen hye
As saynt Mychell with gabryell & the gerachye
To helpe saynt peter the masse to synge
The organs went and the bellys dyd ryng

My penne for feblenes may not now wryte
Nor my tonge for domnes may not expresse
Nor my mynde for neglygence may not endyte
Of the aungelycall Ioye and swete gladnesse

That I sawe there without heuynesse
And whan this weddyng holy was fynysshed
The aungels than to heuen vanysshed

gg .v.

Than downe I went in to the hall
Where ordeyned was by grete solempnyte
A dyner of vertue moost celestyall
To whiche came my wyf full of benygnyte
On the one syde led by good auctoryte
With saynt Edmond the noble kynge
And martyr whiche dyd her downe brynge

And she was led on the other syde
With saynt Edward the kynge and confessour
And so bytwene theym wente this bryde
To whom all the ladyes made grete honour
As alway seruyng her without errour
And a lytell whyle anone after her
Ergos brought downe her noble fader

The kynge of loue than sat hym downe
At the table for that tyme to ette
Causynge dame Clennes for her renoune
On his one syde than for to be sette
And I on the other without ony lette
And besyde me sapyence and dyscrecyon
And than by theym sat dame contrycyon

Than sate saynt Edwarde with vyrgynyte
And afore hym sate dame obedyence
Saynt Edmond and dame charyte
And than dame prayer with dame abstynence
And than dame fayth shynynge in excellence
With saynt Ierome and saynt Austeyn
And than saynt gregory without dysdeyn

There was two aungels holdynge fast
The table cloth at euery ende
Knelyng downe humbly and stedfast
Whose seruyce no man coude amende
Other there were that dyd entende
Vs for to serue with theyr grete dylygence
That in theym founde coude be no neglygence

||

There dyd saynt Peter by grete holynes
Serue vs of our swete lordes body
Fyrst he serued the fader of clennes
And after that he serued her shortly
With charyte fayth and dame mercy
And I with dyscrecyon and dame sapyence
Of saynt Peter was serued with grete indulgence

So dame obedyence with contrycyon
With saynt Edwarde and virgynyte
In lyke wyse were serued without corrupcyon
And saynt Edmond with dame charyte
And saynt Ierome with dame humylyte
With saynt austyn and saynt gregory
What nede I lenger of theym specyfy

This was a fest moost swete and precyous
To fede the soule with dyuyne comfort
This was a mete moost dere and gloryous
That causeth all man for to resorte
To sempyternall lyfe and comforte
Than saynt ambrose beyng dyuyne
After our mete gafe vs good wyne

By this tyme was I .lx. yere olde
And desyred for to lyue in peace
For I began to growe two folde
And my feblenes dyde sore encrease
For nature her strength than dyd seace
Wherfore after this ghoostly fest
I thought with my wyfe to abyde in rest

gg .vi.

And I to her sayd with louynge chere
O my swete spouse moost fayre and beauteous

To me euer ryght leyfe and dere
Where is your lande that is solacious
Ye shewyd me of your gardeyn glorious
Vnto whiche now fayne wolde I go
There for to dwell and you also

Syr she sayd the aungell raphaell
Shall with these martyrs & noble confessours
Brynge you thyder with theym to dwell
Where ye shall see all your progenytours
With many sayntes and glorious auctours
This lande is heuen that to vs longeth
As our euydence the gospell telleth

Than came my fader in lawe to vs
Saynge by ryght I dyd combynd
Clennes my doughter with vertue precyous
And you must I loue by naturell kynde
For on you now is all my mynde
Afore hym I kyst my wyfe moost swetely
For we loued to gyder hote and truely

Than came my good aungell to me
Causynge me with hym for to go
With clennes my wyfe wher I dyd se
The paynes of hell full of grete wo
There was the dragon that I dyd slo
Bounde with chaynes in fyer infynall
With the seuen dedely synnes in generall

Than my good aungell to me sayd
If ye had loued dame sensualityte
The whiche with you dyd make a brayde
Ye had ben dampned by ryght and equitye
In to this pytte full of all iniquyte
Wherfore thanke god that sent you wysedome
Suche deedly perylles for to ouercome

Also the lady with the cup of golde
Is here condempned for her grete pryde
In endeles payne both hote and colde
Where in for synne she shall abyde
This is a dongeon longe and wyde
Made for theym that do synne dedely
And of cryst Ihesu wyll axe no mercy

This is a place full of all derkenes
Wherin be serpentes foull and odyous
This is a place of mortall heynes
Where I sawe deuyles blacke and tedyous
Dampned soules turmented with hokes rygorous
This is the vppermost parte of hell
In whiche paynymys dampned do dwell

For as moche as they lacked instruccyon
For to beleue in god omnyopotent
They haue deserued the lesse correccyon
Yet theyr payne haue none extinguysshement
For they are dampned by true sentymment
For theyr byleue and fals idolatry
That made theyr goddes of mars & mercury

Than went we doune to an other vaute
Where Iewes lay in grete paynes stronge
Whome deuylls tourmented by grete assaute
Drawynge theym with hokes a longe
For theyr opynyon so fals and wronge
Whiche byleued not in the natyuyte
Of Ihesu cryst and the vrygyn Mare

Nor yet that he dyd suffre passyon
Bothe for theym and all mankynde
Nother yet of his resurreccyon
In theyr byleue they are so blynde
Yet as in bokes wryten we do fynde
That they haue ben taught many a tyme
For to forsake theyr owne fals cryme


Than went we downe to a depper vale
Where crysten soules dyd weppe & crye
In grete sorowe payne and bale
Brennyng in fyer moost hote and drye
And some in Ice ryght depe dyd lye
For to expresse it is impossyble
The paynes there they are so horryble

These crysten men knowe goddes lawe
And euery daye had informacyon
From deuelysshe werkes theym to withdrawe
That they sholde not fall in dampnacyon
Yet wyll they not make sequestracyon
Of goddes cōmaundement but syn deedly
Therefore here are they dampned ryght wysey

And thou haddest set thy delectacyon
In flesshely pleasure and vayne glory
Thou haddest ben here without saluacyon
Without thou of god had axed mercy
Who that it axeth shall haue it truely
Yf he be contryt and do repent
That he his lyfe in yll hath spent

This place sythens it is moost heuy
Moost derke and moost ferre from lyghtnes
As philosophers afferme by astronomy
Is in the myddes of the erthe doutles
That is a place of dyssolate derkenes
Wherfore by reason it must nedes be sette
In the myddes of the erthe both longe & grette

Capitulum .xiii

 Y good aungell by his grete vertue
Shewed me all this in a shorte space
And after hym I dyd than pursue
With my wyfe vnto the fayre place
That we came fro full of all solace
Where was my fader in the company
Of many sayntes that dyd there tary

My wyfe and me than for to brynge
To the place of eternall glory
With heuenly tewnes swetely syngyng
That theym to here it was grete melody
More than ony tonge can specyfy
This was theyr songe so swete and glorious
That they dyd synge with voyce so vertuous

O celestyall kynge one two and thre
All people prayse the god and lorde
Whiche art in heuen o noble trynyte
Whose royall power and miserycorde
Confermed is by thyn hye accorde
On vs with trouth for to endure
Withouten ende as we are sure

Glory be to the fader almyghty
And to the sone and to the holy ghoost
Thre persones and one god truely
Whose power neuer can be loost
For he is lorde of myghtes moost
And so hath ben without begynnyng
And euer shall be without endyng

Whan we were in the ayre of asure
There dyd vs mete the noble Ierarchy
As Cherubyn and Seraphyn so pure
With other aungels in theyr company
That dyd proclayme & synge on hye
With voyce insacyat moost melodyous
To god aboue Sanctus sanctus sanctus

There dyd I se the planettes seuen
Moue in ordre by alteracyon
To merueylous for me to neuen
For they seassed not theyr operacyon

Some assended some made declynacyon
Entrynge theyr houses of the .xii. synes
Some indyrectly and some by dyrecte lynes

To heuen we styed a place moost gloryous
Where that we dyd beholde the deyte
With insaciabie contenaunce moost desyrous
And truely than the more that we
Dyd loke vpon his souerayne beaute
The more our desyre dyd encrease
This is a Ioye that shall not seace

This is a regyon moost full of swetnes
This is a realme of delectacyon
This is a lande of infenyte gladnes
Without ony stormy tribulacyon
This place is of eterne saluacyon
Where aungels and sayntes for theyr solace
Euermore do loke on goddes face

What sholde I wryte thynges of dyuynyte
Or endyght of suche maters hye
Sythen it no thyng longeth to my faculte
Therefore of it I wyll not lenger tarye
For fere that I in it sholde varye
And by cause that trouth shall be my mede
I wyll now leue and take me to my crede

So vertue and clenness by good ryght
Truely in maryage ioyned must be
For they loue to gyder with all theyr myght
Without dyscencyon or duplycyte
And they both are alway in vnyte
To whome heuen by tayll generall
Entayled is by a dede memoryall

Now are they to gyder to heuen gone
There for to dwell in Ioye eternall
Where that there is the heuenly trone
Of our sauour Ihesu deere & specyall
Who that hym loueth truely ouer all
Ledyng his lyfe with vertue and clenness
Shall come vnto the glory endeles

But in the fynysshyng of my mater
To god the maker of all thynges
Deuoutely now I make my prayer
To saufe kynge Henry our ryghtfull kynge
From all treason and dolefull mornynge
And for to maynteyn the grete honour
Of this swete rede rose so fayre a colour

This floure was kepte ryght longe in close
Amonge the leuys holsom and sote
And regally sprange and arose
Out of the noble stoke and rote
Of the rede rose tre to be our bote
After our bale sente by grete grace
On vs to reygne by ryght longe space

O lorde god what Ioye was this
Vnto his moder so good and gracyous
Whan that she sawe her sone I wys
Of his ennemys to be so vycoryous
It caused her to be moost Ioyous
And yet there of no wonder why
For he was ryght longe from her truely

A ioyfull metynge than bytwene
The moder and the sone so dere
A daye of gladnes bryght and shene
Fressher than phebus myddaye spere
Whan her sone to vs dyd appere
He dyd vs lyght with his pure bemys
Quenchynge of mars the fyrous lemys

O heuenly kynge o eternall emperoure
O thre persons and one god equall

hh .iii.

||

I praye the to kepe from all doloure
This moder with her sone in specyall
With all theyr noble buddes in generall
And laude be to the that dyd enhance
Hym to his ryght and propre herytaunce

The whyte rose that w^t tempestes troublous
Aualed was and eke blowen asyde
The reed rose fortyfyed and made delycyous
It pleased god for hym so to prouyde
That his redolent buddes shall not slyde
But euer encrease and be vycoryous
Of fatall brerys whiche be contraryous

Thus god by grace dyd well combyne
The rede rose and the whyte in maryage
Beynge oned ryght clere doth shyne
In all clenens and vertuous courage
Of whose ryght and royall lynage
Prynce Henry is spronge our kynge to be
After his fader by ryght good equyte

O noble prynce Henry our seconde treasure
Surmontyng in vertue & myroure of beaute
O geme of gentylnes & lanterne of plasure
O rubycound blossome and sterre of humylyte
O famous bud full of benygnyte
I pray to god well for to encrease
Your hyghe estate in rest and pease

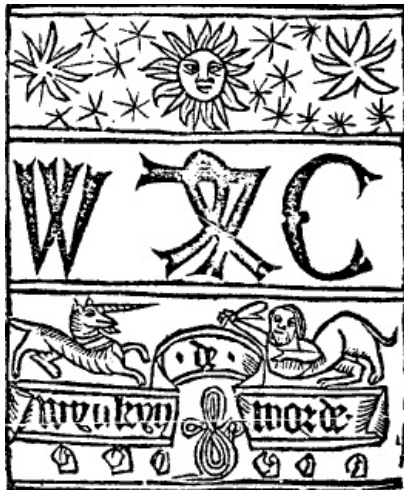
O thoughtfull hert for lack of connyng
Now layde to slepe this longe wynters nyght
Ryse vp agayne loke on the shynnyng
Of fayre lucyna clere and bryght
Beholde eke mercury with his fayre lyght
Castyng a doune his stremys mery
It may well glad thyn emyspery

O gower fountayne moost aromatyke
I the now lake for to depure
My rudnes with thy lusty retoryke
And also I mys as I am sure
My mayster Chaucers to take the cure
Of my penne for he was expert
In eloquent termes subtyll and couert

Where is now lydgate flouryng in sentence
That shold my mynde forge to endyte
After the termes of famous eloquence
And strength my penne well for to wryte
With maters fresshe of pure delyte
They can not helpe me there is no remedy
But for to praye to god almyghty

For to dystyll the dewe of influence
Vpon my brayn so dull and rude
And to enlumyn me with his sapyence
That I my rudnes may exclude
And in my mater well to conclude
Vnto thy pleasure and to the reders all
To whome I excuse me now in generall

Explicit exemplum virtutis



Transcriber's Notes

Mixed Pages

Two sets of three pages appear to have been printed out of order:

Page **aa.vi.** (11, beginning *Vnto her I answerde o lady glorious*) appears before pages **aa.v.** and **aa.v. verso** (9 and 10, beginning *Be to thy kyng euer true subgete*).

Pages **ff.iii.** (69, beginning *Whan I had scomfyte this serpent venymous*) and **ff.iii.** (71, beginning *And there met me dame clennes blyue*) are transposed, with **ff.iii. verso** (70, beginning *Than came dame fayth that lady glorious*) between them.

Each involves pages from the later part of a signature, so page numbering is absent. It is not known whether the error is from the original printing or from the facsimile reprint.

Printed folio numbers show an unusual pattern:

aa, cc, ee: 16 pages each

gg: 12 pages

bb, dd, ff, hh: 8 pages

Duplicate Chapter Heads

Chapter headings for .vi. and .vii. were printed near the bottom of the page—as main text, not catchwords—and again at the top of the following page. This pattern was not consistently followed for all chapters that began at the top of a page.

Unusual Errors

A. **Discrecōn, temptacōn**

Both words occur in full-length lines of prose. When the typesetter saw that he needed an abbreviation to make the line fit, he may have removed the wrong letter from the word to be abbreviated.

maunded Discrecōn to lede youth to marye with clen

and

dyscrecyon he dyde withstande theyr temptacōn and

B. In four places the printed text has an unusual letter. It has been transcribed as “z” or “ʒ” (yogh) according to context, though it is the same letterform every time:

the hyghe quene **ʒ**ia text

he hiʒ kyne dysterneth text

There is no apparent reason for abbreviating “kyngne” in this line.

he myʒt not me foʒbere text

moʒlyʒacyon text

C. **bl[ey]nde**

A small “e”, required by the rhyme, is printed above “y”, required by the sense.

D. **so gretly slynkyng**

The printed text is very slightly defective. The reading “stynkyng” fits the sense better, but the letterforms are closer to “sl-”.

E. **doubtauūce**

Text reads “doubtauūce”, possibly through confusion with the preceding line, where the “gouvernaūce” abbreviation was required by line length:

foʒ our clene lyfe ʒbertuous gouvernaūce
Who that vs loueth without doubtauūce

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