

THE TALE. <1>

I will bewail, in manner of tragedy, The harm of them that stood in high degree, And felle so, that there was no remedy To bring them out of their adversity. For, certain, when that Fortune list to flee, There may no man the course of her wheel hold: Let no man trust in blind prosperity; Beware by these examples true and old.

At LUCIFER, though he an angel were, And not a man, at him I will begin. For though Fortune may no angel dere,* *hurt From high degree yet fell he for his sin Down into hell, where as he yet is in. O Lucifer! brightest of angels all, Now art thou Satanas, that may'st not twin* *depart Out of the misery in which thou art fall.

Lo ADAM, in the field of Damascene <2> With Godde's owen finger wrought was he, And not begotten of man's sperm unclean; And welt* all Paradise saving one tree: *commanded Had never worldly man so high degree As Adam, till he for misgovernance* *misbehaviour Was driven out of his prosperity To labour, and to hell, and to mischance.

Lo SAMPSON, which that was annunciate By the angel, long ere his nativity; <3> And was to God Almighty consecrate, And stood in nobless while that he might see; Was never such another as was he, To speak of strength, and thereto hardiness,* *courage But to his wives told he his secre, Through which he slew himself for wretchedness.

Sampson, this noble and mighty champion, Withoute weapon, save his handes tway, He slew and all to-rente* the lion, *tore to pieces Toward his wedding walking by the way. His false wife could him so please, and pray, Till she his counsel knew; and she, untrue, Unto his foes his counsel gan bewray, And him forsook, and took another new.

Three hundred foxes Sampson took for ire, And all their tailes he together band, And set the foxes' tailes all on fire, For he in every tail had knit a brand, And they burnt all the combs of that lend, And all their oliveres* and vines eke. *olive trees <4> A thousand men he slew eke with his hand, And had no weapon but an ass's cheek.

When they were slain, so thirsted him, that he Was *well-nigh lorn,* for which he gan to pray *near to perishing* That God would on his pain have some pity, And send him drink, or elles must he die; And of this ass's

check, that was so dry, Out of a wang-tooth* sprang anon a well,
*cheek-tooth Of which, he drank enough, shortly to say. Thus help'd him
God, as Judicum <5> can tell.

By very force, at Gaza, on a night, Maugre* the Philistines of that city,
in spite of The gates of the town he hath up plight, *plucked,
wrenched And on his back y-carried them hath he High on an hill, where as
men might them see. O noble mighty Sampson, lefe* and dear,
*loved Hadst thou not told to women thy secre, In all this world there had
not been thy peer.

This Sampson never cider drank nor wine, Nor on his head came razor none
nor shear, By precept of the messenger divine; For all his strengthes in his
haire were; And fully twenty winters, year by year, He had of Israel the
governance; But soone shall he weepe many a tear, For women shall him
bringe tomischance.

Unto his leman* Dalila he told, *mistress That in his
haire all his strengthe lay; And falsely to his foemen she him sold, And
sleeping in her barme* upon a day *lap She made to clip
or shear his hair away, And made his foemen all his craft espie. And when
they founde him in this array, They bound him fast, and put out both his
eyen.

But, ere his hair was clipped or y-shave, There was no bond with which men
might him bind; But now is he in prison in a cave, Where as they made him
at the querne* grind. *mill <6> O noble Sampson, strongest of
mankind! O whilom judge in glory and richness! Now may'st thou weepe with
thine eyen blind, Since thou from weal art fall'n to wretchedness.

Th'end of this caitiff* was as I shall say; *wretched man His
foemen made a feast upon a day, And made him as their fool before them
play; And this was in a temple of great array. But at the last he made a foul
affray, For he two pillars shook, and made them fall, And down fell temple
and all, and there it lay, And slew himself and eke his foemen all;

This is to say, the princes every one; And eke three thousand bodies were
there slain With falling of the great temple of stone. Of Sampson now will I
no more sayn; Beware by this example old and plain, That no man tell his
counsel to his wife Of such thing as he would *have secret fain,* *wish
to be secret* If that it touch his limbes or his life.

Of HERCULES the sov'reign conquerour Singe his workes' land and high

renown; For in his time of strength he bare the flow'r. He slew and reft the skin of the lion He of the Centaurs laid the boast adown; He Harpies <7> slew, the cruel birdes fell; He golden apples reft from the dragon He drew out Cerberus the hound of hell.

He slew the cruel tyrant Busirus. <8> And made his horse to fret* him flesh and bone; *devour He slew the fiery serpent venomous; Of Achelous' two hornes brake he one. And he slew Cacus in a cave of stone; He slew the giant Antaeus the strong; He slew the grisly boar, and that anon; And bare the heav'n upon his necke long. <9>

Was never wight, since that the world began, That slew so many monsters as did he; Throughout the wide world his name ran, What for his strength, and for his high bounte; And every realme went he for to see; He was so strong that no man might him let;* *withstand At both the worlde's ends, as saith Trophee, <10> Instead of boundes he a pillar set.

A leman had this noble champion, That highte Dejanira, fresh as May; And, as these clerkes make mention, She hath him sent a shirte fresh and gay; Alas! this shirt, alas and well-away! Envenomed was subtilly withal, That ere that he had worn it half a day, It made his flesh all from his bones fall.

But natheless some clerkes her excuse By one, that highte Nessus, that it maked; Be as he may, I will not her accuse; But on his back this shirt he wore all naked, Till that his flesh was for the venom blaked.* *blackened And when he saw none other remedy, In hote coals he hath himselfe raked, For with no venom deigned he to die.

Thus sterf* this worthy mighty Hercules. *died Lo, who may trust on Fortune *any throw? *for a moment* For him that followeth all this world of pres,* *near <11> Ere he be ware, is often laid full low; Full wise is he that can himselfe know. Beware, for when that Fortune list to glose Then waiteth she her man to overthrow, By such a way as he would least suppose.

The mighty throne, the precious treasure, The glorious sceptre, and royal majesty, That had the king NABUCHODONOSOR With tongue unnethes* may described be. *scarcely He twice won Jerusalem the city, The vessels of the temple he with him lad;* *took away At Babylone was his sov'reign see,* *seat In which his glory and delight he had.

The fairest children of the blood royal Of Israel he *did do geld* anon,

caused to be castrated And maked each of them to be his thrall.*
 *slave Amonges others Daniel was one, That was the wisest child of every
 one; For he the dreames of the king expounded, Where in Chaldaea clerkes
 was there none That wiste to what fine* his dreames sounded.
 *end

This proude king let make a statue of gold Sixty cubites long, and seven in
 bread', To which image hathe young and old Commanded he to lout,* and
 have in dread, *bow down to Or in a furnace, full of flames red,
 He should be burnt that woulde not obey: But never would assente to that
 deed Daniel, nor his younge fellows tway.

This king of kinges proud was and elate;* *lofty He ween'd*
 that God, that sits in majesty, *thought Mighte him not
 bereave of his estate; But suddenly he lost his dignity, And like a beast he
 seemed for to be, And ate hay as an ox, and lay thereout In rain, with wilde
 beastes walked he, Till certain time was y-come about.

And like an eagle's feathers wax'd his hairs, His nailes like a birde's clawes
 were, Till God released him at certain years, And gave him wit; and then
 with many a tear He thanked God, and ever his life in fear Was he to do
 amiss, or more trespace: And till that time he laid was on his bier, He knew
 that God was full of might and grace.

His sone, which that highte BALTHASAR, That *held the regne* after his
 father's day, *possessed the kingdom* He by his father coulde not beware,
 For proud he was of heart and of array; And eke an idolaster was he aye. His
 high estate assured* him in pride; *confirmed But Fortune
 cast him down, and there he lay, And suddenly his regne gan divide.

A feast he made unto his lordes all Upon a time, and made them blithe be,
 And then his officeres gan he call; "Go, bringe forth the vessels," saide he,
 "Which that my father in his prosperity Out of the temple of Jerusalem reft,
 And to our highe goddes thanks we Of honour, that our elders* with us left."
 *forefathers

His wife, his lordes, and his concubines Aye dranke, while their appetites
 did last, Out of these noble vessels sundry wines. And on a wall this king his
 eyen cast, And saw an hand, armless, that wrote full fast; For fear of which
 he quaked, and sighed sore. This hand, that Balthasar so sore aghast,*
 *dismayed Wrote Mane, tekem, phares, and no more.

In all that land magician was there none That could expounde what this

letter meant. But Daniel expounded it anon, And said, "O King, God to thy
father lent Glory and honour, regne, treasure, rent;* *revenue
And he was proud, and nothing God he drad;* *dreaded And
therefore God great wreche* upon him sent, *vengeance And him
beref't the regne that he had.

"He was cast out of manne's company; With asses was his habitation And
ate hay, as a beast, in wet and dry, Till that he knew by grace and by reason
That God of heaven hath domination O'er every regne, and every creature;
And then had God of him compassion, And him restor'd his regne and his
figure.

"Eke thou, that art his son, art proud also, And knowest all these thinges
verily; And art rebel to God, and art his foe. Thou drankest of his vessels
boldely; Thy wife eke, and thy wenches, sinfully Drank of the same vessels
sundry wines, And heried* false goddes cursedly;
*praised Therefore *to thee y-shapen full great pine is.* *great punishment
is prepared for thee* "This hand was sent
from God, that on the wall Wrote Mane, tekem, phares, truste me; Thy reign
is done; thou weighest naught at all; Divided is thy regne, and it shall be To
Medes and to Persians giv'n," quoth he. And thilke same night this king was
slaw* *slain And Darius occupied his degree, Though he
thereto had neither right nor law.

Lordings, example hereby may ye take, How that in lordship is no
sickerness;* *security For when that Fortune will a man
forsake, She bears away his regne and his richness, And eke his friendes
bothe more and less, For what man that hath friendes through fortune,
Mishap will make them enemies, I guess; This proverb is full sooth, and full
commune.

ZENOBIA, of Palmyrie the queen, <12> As write Persians of her nobless, So
worthy was in armes, and so keen, That no wight passed her in hardiness,
Nor in lineage, nor other gentleness.* *noble qualities Of the
king's blood of Perse* is she descended; *Persia I say not that she
hadde most fairness, But of her shape she might not be amended.

From her childhood I finde that she fled Office of woman, and to woods she
went, And many a wilde harte's blood she shed With arrows broad that she
against them sent; She was so swift, that she anon them hent.*
*caught And when that she was older, she would kill Lions, leopards, and
beares all to-rent,* *torn to pieces And in her armes wield them at
her will.

She durst the wilde beastes' dennes seek, And runnen in the mountains all
the night, And sleep under a bush; and she could eke Wrestle by very force
and very might With any young man, were he ne'er so wight;*

*active, nimble There mighte nothing in her armes stond. She kept her
maidenhood from every wight, To no man deigned she for to be bond.

But at the last her friendes have her married To Odenate, <13> a prince of
that country; All were it so, that she them longe tarried. And ye shall
understande how that he Hadde such fantasies as hadde she; But
nathless, when they were knit in fere,* *together They liv'd in
joy, and in felicity, For each of them had other lefe* and dear.

*loved

Save one thing, that she never would assent, By no way, that he shoulde by
her lie But ones, for it was her plain intent To have a child, the world to
multiply; And all so soon as that she might espy That she was not with
childe by that deed, Then would she suffer him do his fantasy Eftsoon,* and
not but ones, *out of dread.* *again *without doubt*

And if she were with child at thilke* cast, *that No more
should he playe thilke game Till fully forty dayes were past; Then would she
once suffer him do the same. All* were this Odenatus wild or tame,
*whether He got no more of her; for thus she said, It was to wives lechery
and shame In other case* if that men with them play'd. on other
terms

Two sones, by this Odenate had she, The which she kept in virtue and
letturure.* *learning But now unto our tale turne we; I say, so
worshipful a creature, And wise therewith, and large* with measure,**
*bountiful **moderation So penible* in the war, and courteous eke,
*laborious Nor more labour might in war endure, Was none, though all this
worlde men should seek.

Her rich array it mighte not be told, As well in vessel as in her clothing: She
was all clad in pierrie* and in gold, *jewellery And eke she *left
not,* for no hunting, *did not neglect* To have of sundry tongues
full knowing, When that she leisure had, and for t'intend*
*apply To learne bookes was all her liking, How she in virtue might her life
dispend.

And, shortly of this story for to treat, So doughty was her husband and eke
she, That they conquered many regnes great In th'Orient, with many a fair

city Appertinent unto the majesty Of Rome, and with strong hande held
them fast, Nor ever might their foemen do* them flee, *make
Aye while that Odenatus' dayes last'.

Her battles, whoso list them for to read, Against Sapor the king, <14> and
other mo', And how that all this process fell in deed, Why she conquer'd,
and what title thereto, And after of her mischief* and her woe,
*misfortune How that she was besieged and y-take, Let him unto my master
Petrarch go, That writes enough of this, I undertake.

When Odenate was dead, she mightily The regne held, and with her proper
hand Against her foes she fought so cruelly, That there n'as* king nor prince
in all that land, *was not That was not glad, if be that grace fand
That she would not upon his land warray;* *make war With
her they maden alliance by bond, To be in peace, and let her ride and play.

The emperor of Rome, Claudius, Nor, him before, the Roman Gallien, Durste
never be so courageous, Nor no Armenian, nor Egyptien, Nor Syrian, nor no
Arabien, Within the fielde durste with her fight, Lest that she would them
with her handes slen,* *slay Or with her meinie* putte them to
flight. *troops

In kinges' habit went her sones two, As heires of their father's regnes all;
And Heremanno and Timolao Their names were, as Persians them call But
aye Fortune hath in her honey gall; This mighty queene may no while
endure; Fortune out of her regne made her fall To wretchedness and to
misadventure.

Aurelian, when that the governance Of Rome came into his handes tway,
<15> He shope* upon this queen to do vengeance; *prepared
And with his legions he took his way Toward Zenobie, and, shortly for to
say, He made her flee, and at the last her hent,* *took And
fetter'd her, and eke her children tway, And won the land, and home to
Rome he went.

Amonges other thinges that he wan, Her car, that was with gold wrought
and pierrie,* *jewels This greate Roman, this Aurelian Hath with
him led, for that men should it see. Before in his triumphe walked she With
gilte chains upon her neck hanging; Crowned she was, as after* her degree,
*according to And full of pierrie her clothing.

Alas, Fortune! she that whilom was Dreadful to kinges and to emperours,
Now galeth* all the people on her, alas! *yelleth And she that

helmed was in starke stowres, *wore a helmet in
townes strong and tow'rs, obstinate battles* Shall on her head now
wear a vitremite; <16> And she that bare the sceptre full of flow'rs Shall
bear a distaff, *her cost for to quite.* * to make her living*

Although that NERO were so vicious As any fiend that lies full low adown,
Yet he, as telleth us Suetonius,<17> This wide world had in subjection,
Both East and West, South and Septentrioun. Of rubies, sapphires, and of
pearles white Were all his clothes embroider'd up and down, For he in
gemmes greatly gan delight.

More delicate, more pompous of array, More proud, was never emperor than
he; That *ilke cloth* that he had worn one day, *same robe* After
that time he would it never see; Nettles of gold thread had he great plenty, To
fish in Tiber, when him list to play; His lustes* were as law, in his degree,
*pleasures For Fortune as his friend would him obey.

He Rome burnt for his delicacy;* *pleasure The senators
he slew upon a day, To heare how that men would weep and cry; And slew
his brother, and by his sister lay. His mother made he in piteous array; For
he her wombe slitte, to behold Where he conceived was; so well-away! That
he so little of his mother told.* *valued

No tear out of his eyen for that sight Came; but he said, a fair woman was
she. Great wonder is, how that he could or might Be doomesman* of her
deade beauty: *judge The wine to bringe him
commanded he, And drank anon; none other woe he made, When might is
joined unto cruelty, Alas! too deepe will the venom wade.

In youth a master had this emperour, To teache him lettrure* and courtesy;
*literature, learning For of morality he was the flow'r, As in his time, *but if*
bookes lie. *unless And while this master had of him
mast'ry, He made him so conning and so souple,* *subtle
That longe time it was ere tyranny, Or any vice, durst in him uncouple.*
*be let loose

This Seneca, of which that I devise,* *tell Because Nero
had of him suche dread, For he from vices would him aye chastise
Discreetly, as by word, and not by deed; "Sir," he would say, "an emperor
must need Be virtuous, and hate tyranny." For which he made him in a bath
to bleed On both his armes, till he muste die.

This Nero had eke of a custumance* *habit Inyouth

against his master for to rise;* *stand in his presence Which afterward
he thought a great grievance; Therefore he made him dien in this wise. But
nathless this Seneca the wise Chose in a bath to die in this mannere,
Rather than have another tormentise;* *torture And thus
hath Nero slain his master dear.

Now fell it so, that Fortune list no longer The highe pride of Nero to cherice;*
*cherish For though he were strong, yet was she stronger. She thoughte
thus; "By God, I am too nice* *foolish To set a man, that is full
fill'd of vice, In high degree, and emperor him call! By God, out of his seat I
will him trice!* *thrust <18> When he least weeneth,* soonest
shall he fall." *expecteth

The people rose upon him on a night, For his default; and when he it
espied, Out of his doors anon he hath him dight* *betaken himself
Alone, and where he ween'd t'have been allied,* *regarded with He
knocked fast, and aye the more he cried friendship The faster
shutte they their doores all; Then wist he well he had himself misgied,*
*misled And went his way, no longer durst he call.

The people cried and rumbled up and down, That with his eares heard he
how they said; "Where is this false tyrant, this Neroun?" For fear almost out
of his wit he braid,* *went And to his goddes piteously he
pray'd For succour, but it mighte not betide For dread of this he thoughte
that died, And ran into a garden him to hide.

And in this garden found he churles tway, That satte by a fire great and red;
And to these churles two he gan to pray To slay him, and to giridon* off his
head, *strike That to his body, when that he were dead, Were
no despite done for his defame.* *infamy Himself he slew,
he could no better rede; *he knew no better Of which Fortune
laugh'd and hadde game. counsel*

Was never capitain under a king, That regnes more put in subjection, Nor
stronger was in field of alle thing As in his time, nor greater of renown, Nor
more pompous in high presumption, Than HOLOFERNES, whom Fortune
aye kiss'd So lik'rously, and led him up and down, Till that his head was off
ere that he wist. *before he knew it*

Not only that this world had of him awe, For losing of richness and liberty;
But he made every man *reny his law.* *renounce his religion <19>
Nabuchodonosor was God, said he; None other Godde should honoured be.
Against his hest* there dare no wight trespase, *command Save in

Bethulia, a strong city, Where Eliachim priest was of that place.

But take keep* of the death of Holofern; *notice Amid his
host he drunken lay at night Within his tente, large as is a bern;*
*barn And yet, for all his pomp and all his might, Judith, a woman, as he
lay upright Sleeping, his head off smote, and from his tent Full privily she
stole from every wight, And with his head unto her town she went.

What needeth it of king ANTIOCHUS <20> To tell his high and royal
majesty, His great pride, and his workes venomous? For such another was
there none as he; Reade what that he was in Maccabee. And read the proude
wordes that he said, And why he fell from his prosperity, And in an hill how
wretchedly he died.

Fortune him had enhanced so in pride, That verily he ween'd he might
attain Unto the starres upon every side, And in a balance weighen each
mountain, And all the floodes of the sea restrain. And Godde's people had he
most in hate Them would he slay in torment and in pain, Weening that God
might not his pride abate.

And for that Nicanor and Timothee With Jewes were vanquish'd mightily,
<21> Unto the Jewes such an hate had he, That he bade *graith his car* full
hastily, *prepare his chariot* And swore and saide full dispiteously,
Unto Jerusalem he would eftsoon,* *immediatly To wreak
his ire on it full cruelly But of his purpose was he let* full soon.
*prevented

God for his menace him so sore smote, With invisible wound incurable, That
in his guttes carf* it so and bote,** *cut **gnawed Till that his
paines were importable;* *unendurable And certainly the
wreche* was reasonable, *vengeance For many a manne's
guttes did he pain; But from his purpose, curs'd* and damnable,
*impious For all his smart he would him not restrain; But bade anon
apparaile* his host. *prepare

And suddenly, ere he was of it ware, God daunted all his pride, and all his
boast For he so sore fell out of his chare,* *chariot That it
his limbes and his skin to-tare, So that he neither mighte go nor ride But in
a chaire men about him bare, Alle forbruised bothe back and side.

The wreche* of God him smote so cruelly, *vengeance That
through his body wicked wormes crept, And therewithal he stank so horribly
That none of all his meinie* that him kept, *servants Whether

so that he woke or elles slept, Ne mighte not of him the stink endure. In this mischief he wailed and eke wept, And knew God Lord of every creature.

To all his host, and to himself also, Full wlatsem* was the stink of his carrain;** *loathsome **body No manne might him beare to and fro. And in this stink, and this horrible pain, He starf* full wretchedly in a mountain. *dies Thus hath this robber, and this homicide, That many a manne made to weep and plain, Such guerdon* as belongeth unto pride. *reward

The story of ALEXANDER is so commune, That ev'ry wight that hath discretion Hath heard somewhat or all of his fortune. This wide world, as in conclusion, He won by strength; or, for his high renown, They were glad for peace to him to send. The pride and boast of man he laid adown, Whereso he came, unto the worlde's end.

Comparison yet never might be maked Between him and another conqueror; For all this world for dread of him had quaked He was of knighthood and of freedom flow'r: Fortune him made the heir of her honour. Save wine and women, nothing might assuage His high intent in arms and labour, So was he full of leonine courage.

What praise were it to him, though I you told Of Darius, and a hundred thousand mo', Of kinges, princes, dukes, and earles bold, Which he conquer'd, and brought them into woe? I say, as far as man may ride or go, The world was his, why should I more devise?* *tell For, though I wrote or told you evermo', Of his knighthood it mighte not suffice.

Twelve years he reigned, as saith Maccabee Philippe's son of Macedon he was, That first was king in Greece the country. O worthy gentle* Alexander, alas *noble That ever should thee falle such a case! Empoison'd of thine owen folk thou were; Thy six <22> fortune hath turn'd into an ace, And yet for thee she wepte never a tear.

Who shall me give teares to complain The death of gentiless, and of franchise,* *generosity That all this worlde had in his demaine,* *dominion And yet he thought it mighte not suffice, So full was his corage* of high emprise? *spirit Alas! who shall me helpe to indite False Fortune, and poison to despise? The whiche two of all this woe I wite.* *blame

By wisdom, manhood, and by great labour, From humbleness to royal majesty Up rose he, JULIUS the Conquerour, That won all th' Occident,* by

him sore drad,* -- *dreaded Yet was he caught amidst all his
pride, And to be burnt men to the fire him lad; But such a rain down *from
the welkin shad,* *poured from the sky* That slew the fire, and made
him to escape: But to beware no grace yet he had, Till fortune on the gallows
made him gape.

When he escaped was, he could not stint* *refrain For to
begin a newe war again; He weened well, for that Fortune him sent Such
hap, that he escaped through the rain, That of his foes he mighte not be
slain. And eke a sweven* on a night he mette,** *dream **dreamed
Of which he was so proud, and eke so fain,* *glad That he in
vengeance all his hearte set.

Upon a tree he was set, as he thought, Where Jupiter him wash'd, both back
and side, And Phoebus eke a fair towel him brought To dry him with; and
therefore wax'd his pride. And to his daughter that stood him beside, Which
he knew in high science to abound, He bade her tell him what it signified;
And she his dream began right thus expound.

"The tree," quoth she, "the gallows is to mean, And Jupiter betokens snow
and rain, And Phoebus, with his towel clear and clean, These be the sunne's
streames* sooth to sayn; *rays Thou shalt y-hangeth be,
father, certain; Rain shall thee wash, and sunne shall thee dry." Thus
warned him full plat and eke full plain His daughter, which that called was
Phanie.

And hanged was Croesus the proude king; His royal throne might him not
avail. Tragedy is none other manner thing, Nor can in singing crie nor
bewail, But for that Fortune all day will assail With unware stroke the
regnes* that be proud:<27> *kingdoms For when men truste her,
then will she fail, And cover her bright face with a cloud.

O noble, O worthy PEDRO, <28> glory OF SPAIN, Whem Fortune held so
high in majesty, Well oughte men thy piteous death complain. Out of thy
land thy brother made thee flee, And after, at a siege, by subtlety, Thou wert
betray'd, and led unto his tent, Where as he with his owen hand slew thee,
Succeeding in thy regne* and in thy rent.** *kingdom *revenues

The field of snow, with th' eagle of black therein, Caught with the lion, red-
colour'd as the glede,* *burning coal He brew'd this cursedness,* and
all this sin; *wickedness, villainy The wicked nest was worker of this
deed; Not Charles' Oliver, <29> that took aye heed Of truth and honour, but
of Armorike Ganilien Oliver, corrupt for meed,* *reward, bribe

Broughte this worthy king in such a brike.*

*breach, ruin

O worthy PETRO, King of CYPRE <30> also, That Alexandre won by high mast'ry, Full many a heathnen wroughtest thou full woe, Of which thine owen lieges had envy; And, for no thing but for thy chivalry, They in thy bed have slain thee by the morrow; Thus can Fortune her wheel govern and gie,*
*guide And out of joy bringe men into sorrow.

Of Milan greate BARNABO VISCOUNT, <30> God of delight, and scourge of Lombardy, Why should I not thine clomben* wert so high?

*climbed Thy brother's son, that was thy double ally, For he thy nephew was and son-in-law, Within his prison made thee to die, But why, nor how, *n'ot I* that thou were slaw.* *I know not* *slain*

Of th' Earl HUGOLIN OF PISE the languour*

*agony There

may no tongue telle for pity. But little out of Pisa stands a tow'r, In whiche tow'r in prison put was he, Aud with him be his little children three; The eldest scarcely five years was of age; Alas! Fortune, it was great cruelty Such birdes for to put in such a cage.

Damned was he to die in that prison; For Roger, which that bishop was of Pise, Had on him made a false suggestion, Through which the people gan upon him rise, And put him in prison, in such a wise As ye have heard; and meat and drink he had So small, that well unneth* it might suffice,
*scarcely And therewithal it was full poor and bad.

And on a day befell, that in that hour When that his meate wont was to be brought, The jailor shut the doores of the tow'r; He heard it right well, but he spake nought. And in his heart anon there fell a thought, That they for hunger woulde *do him dien;* *cause him to die* "Alas!" quoth he, "alas that I was wrought!"* *made, born Therewith the teares fell from his eyen.

His youngest son, that three years was of age, Unto him said, "Father, why do ye weep? When will the jailor bringen our pottage? Is there no morsel bread that ye do keep? I am so hungry, that I may not sleep. Now woulde God that I might sleepen ever! Then should not hunger in my wombe* creep;
stomach There is no thing, save bread, that one were lever." *dearer

Thus day by day this child begun to cry, Till in his father's barme* adown he lay,
lap And saide, "Farewell, father, I must die;" And kiss'd his father, and died the same day. And when the woeful father did it sey,
*see For woe his armes two he gan to bite, And said,

"Alas! Fortune, and well-away! To thy false wheel my woe all may I wite."*
*blame

His children ween'd that it for hunger was That he his armes gnaw'd, and
not for woe, And saide, "Father, do not so, alas! But rather eat the flesh
upon us two. Our flesh thou gave us, our flesh take us fro', And eat
enough;" right thus they to him said. And after that, within a day or two,
They laid them in his lap adown, and died.

Himself, despaired, eke for hunger starf.* *died Thus ended
is this Earl of Pise; From high estate Fortune away him carf.*
*cut off Of this tragedy it ought enough suffice Whoso will hear it *in a
longer wise,* *at greater length* Reade the greate poet of Itale, That
Dante hight, for he can it devise <32> From point to point, not one word will
he fail.