

## THE TALE. <1>

A poor widow, \*somedea y-stept\* in age,                    \*somewhat advanced\* Was  
whilom dwelling in a poor cottage, Beside a grove, standing in a dale. This  
widow, of which I telle you my tale, Since thilke day that she was last a wife,  
In patience led a full simple life, For little was \*her chattel and her rent.\*  
\*her goods and her income\* By husbandry\* of such as God her sent,  
\*thrifty management She found\* herself, and eke her daughters two.  
\*maintained Three large sowes had she, and no mo'; Three kine, and eke a  
sheep that highte Mall. Full sooty was her bow'r,\* and eke her hall,  
\*chamber In which she ate full many a slender meal. Of poignant sauce  
knew she never a deal.\*                    \*whit No dainty morsel passed  
through her throat; Her diet was \*accordant to her cote.\*                    \*in keeping  
with her cottage\* Repletion her made never sick; Attemper\* diet was all her  
physic,                    \*moderate And exercise, and \*hearte's suffisance.\*  
\*contentment of heart\* The goute \*let her nothing for to dance,\*                    \*did  
not prevent her Nor apoplexy shente\* not her head.                    from dancing\*  
\*hurt No wine drank she, neither white nor red: Her board was served most  
with white and black, Milk and brown bread, in which she found no lack,  
Seind\* bacon, and sometimes an egg or tway;                    \*singed For she  
was as it were \*a manner dey.\*                    \*kind of day labourer\* <2> A yard she  
had, enclosed all about With stickes, and a drye ditch without, In which she  
had a cock, hight Chanticleer; In all the land of crowing \*n'as his peer.\*  
\*was not his equal\* His voice was merrier than the merry organ,\*  
\*organ <3> On masse days that in the churches gon. Well sickerer\* was his  
crowing in his lodge,                    \*more punctual\* Than is a clock, or an abbay  
horloge.\*                    \*clock <4> By nature he knew each ascension Of th'  
equinoctial in thilke town; For when degrees fiftene were ascended, Then  
crew he, that it might not be amended. His comb was redder than the fine  
coral, Embattell'd <5> as it were a castle wall. His bill was black, and as the  
jet it shone; Like azure were his legges and his tone;\*                    \*toes  
His nailes whiter than the lily flow'r, And like the burnish'd gold was his  
colour, This gentle cock had in his governance Sev'n hennes, for to do all his  
pleasance, Which were his sisters and his paramours, And wondrous like to  
him as of colours. Of which the fairest-hued in the throat Was called  
Damoselle Partelote, Courteous she was, discreet, and debonair, And  
companionable,\* and bare herself so fair,                    \*sociable Since the day  
that she sev'n night was old, That truely she had the heart in hold Of  
Chanticleer, locked in every lith;\*                    \*limb He lov'd her so,  
that well was him therewith, But such a joy it was to hear them sing, When  
that the brighte sunne gan to spring, In sweet accord, \*"My lefe is fare in

land."\* <6>            \*my love is For, at that time, as I have understand,  
gone abroad\* Beastes and birdes coulede speak and sing.

And so befell, that in a dawening, As Chanticleer among his wives all Sat on  
his perche, that was in the hall, And next him sat this faire Partelote, This  
Chanticleer gan groanen in his throat, As man that in his dream is  
dretched\* sore,                    \*oppressed And when that Partelote thus heard  
him roar, She was aghast,\* and saide, "Hearte dear,                    \*afraid  
What aileth you to groan in this mannere? Ye be a very sleeper, fy for  
shame!" And he answer'd and saide thus; "Madame, I pray you that ye take  
it not agrief;\*                    \*amiss, in umbrage By God, \*me mette\* I was in such  
mischief,\*\*            \*I dreamed\* \*\*trouble Right now, that yet mine heart is sore  
affright'. Now God," quoth he, "my sweven\* read aright                    \*dream,  
vision. And keep my body out of foul prisoun. \*Me mette,\* how that I roamed  
up and down                    \*I dreamed\* Within our yard, where as I saw a  
beast Was like an hound, and would have \*made arrest\*                    \*siezed\*  
Upon my body, and would have had me dead. His colour was betwixt yellow  
and red; And tipped was his tail, and both his ears, With black, unlike the  
remnant of his hairs. His snout was small, with glowing eyen tway; Yet of  
his look almost for fear I dey,\*                    \*died This caused me my  
groaning, doubtteless."

"Away," <7> quoth she, "fy on you, hearteless!\*                    \*coward Alas!"  
quoth she, "for, by that God above! Now have ye lost my heart and all my  
love; I cannot love a coward, by my faith. For certes, what so any woman  
saith, We all desiren, if it mighte be, To have husbandes hardy, wise, and  
free, And secret,\* and no niggard nor no fool,                    \*discreet Nor  
him that is aghast\* of every tool,\*\*                    \*afraid \*\*rag, trifle Nor no  
avantour,\* by that God above!                    \*braggart How durste ye for  
shame say to your love That anything might make you afear'd? Have ye no  
manne's heart, and have a beard? Alas! and can ye be aghast of swevenes?\*"braggart  
\*dreams Nothing but vanity, God wot, in sweven is, Swevens \*engender of  
repletions,\*                    \*are caused by over-eating\* And oft of fume,\* and of  
complexions,                    \*drunkenness When humours be too abundant  
in a wight. Certes this dream, which ye have mette tonight, Cometh of the  
great supefluity Of youre rede cholera,\* pardie,                    \*bile  
Which causeth folk to dreaden in their dreams Of arrows, and of fire with  
redde beams, Of redde beastes, that they will them bite, Of conteke,\* and of  
whelpes great and lite,\*\*                    \*contention \*\*little Right as the humour of  
melancholy Causeth full many a man in sleep to cry, For fear of bulles, or of  
beares blake, Or elles that black devils will them take, Of other humours  
could I tell also, That worke many a man in sleep much woe; That I will pass  
as lightly as I can. Lo, Cato, which that was so wise a man, Said he not

thus, \*'Ne do no force of\* dreams,' <8> \*attach no weight to\* Now, Sir,"  
 quoth she, "when we fly from these beams, For Godde's love, as take some  
 laxatife; On peril of my soul, and of my life, I counsel you the best, I will not  
 lie, That both of choler, and melancholy, Ye purge you; and, for ye shall not  
 tarry, Though in this town is no apothecary, I shall myself two herbes teache  
 you, That shall be for your health, and for your prow;\* \*profit And  
 in our yard the herbes shall I find, The which have of their property by kind\*  
 \*nature To purge you beneath, and eke above. Sire, forget not this for  
 Godde's love; Ye be full choleric of complexion; Ware that the sun, in his  
 ascension, You finde not replete of humours hot; And if it do, I dare well lay  
 a groat, That ye shall have a fever tertiane, Or else an ague, that may be  
 your bane, A day or two ye shall have digestives Of wormes, ere ye take your  
 laxatives, Of laurel, centaury, <9> and fumeterere, <10> Or else of elder-  
 berry, that groweth there, Of catapuce, <11> or of the gaitre-berries, <12>  
 Or herb ivy growing in our yard, that merry is: Pick them right as they grow,  
 and eat them in, Be merry, husband, for your father's kin; Dreade no dream;  
 I can say you no more."

"Madame," quoth he, "grand mercy of your lore, But natheless, as touching  
 \*Dan Catoun,\* \*Cato That hath of wisdom such a great  
 renown, Though that he bade no dreames for to dread, By God, men may in  
 olde bookes read Of many a man more of authority Than ever Cato was, so  
 may I the,\* \*thrive That all the reverse say of his  
 sentence,\* \*opinion And have well founden by experience That  
 dreames be significations As well of joy, as tribulations That folk endure in  
 this life present. There needeth make of this no argument; The very preve\*  
 sheweth it indeed. \*trial, experience One of the greatest authors  
 that men read <13> Saith thus, that whilom two fellowes went On  
 pilgrimage in a full good intent; And happen'd so, they came into a town  
 Where there was such a congregatioun Of people, and eke so \*strait of  
 herbergage,\* \*without lodging\* That they found not as much as one  
 cottage In which they bothe might y-lodged be: Wherefore they musten of  
 necessity, As for that night, departe company; And each of them went to his  
 hostelry,\* \*inn And took his lodging as it woulde fall. The  
 one of them was lodged in a stall, Far in a yard, with oxen of the plough;  
 That other man was lodged well enow, As was his aventure, or his fortune,  
 That us governeth all, as in commune. And so befell, that, long ere it were  
 day, This man mette\* in his bed, there: as he lay, \*dreamed How  
 that his fellow gan upon him call, And said, 'Alas! for in an ox's stall This  
 night shall I be murder'd, where I lie Now help me, deare brother, or I die; In  
 alle haste come to me,' he said. This man out of his sleep for fear abraid;\*  
 \*started But when that he was wak'd out of his sleep, He turned him, and  
 \*took of this no keep;\* \*paid this no attention\* He thought his dream was

but a vanity. Thus twies\* in his sleeping dreamed he, \*twice  
 And at the thirde time yet his fellow again Came, as he thought, and said, 'I  
 am now slaw;\* \*slain Behold my bloody woundes, deep and wide.  
 Arise up early, in the morning, tide, And at the west gate of the town,' quoth  
 he, 'A carte full of dung there shalt: thou see, In which my body is hid privily.  
 Do thilke cart arrote\* boldely. \*stop My gold  
 caused my murder, sooth to sayn.' And told him every point how he was  
 slain, With a full piteous face, and pale of hue.

"And, truste well, his dream he found full true; For on the morrow, as soon  
 as it was day, To his fellowes inn he took his way; And when that he came to  
 this ox's stall, After his fellow he began to call. The hostelere answered him  
 anon, And saide, 'Sir, your fellow is y-gone, As soon as day he went out of  
 the town.' This man gan fallen in suspicioun, Rememb'ring on his dreames  
 that he mette,\* \*dreamed And forth he went, no longer would  
 he let,\* \*delay Unto the west gate of the town, and fand\*  
 \*found A dung cart, as it went for to dung land, That was arrayed in the  
 same wise As ye have heard the deade man devise;\* \*describe  
 And with an hardy heart he gan to cry, 'Vengeance and justice of this felony:  
 My fellow murder'd in this same night And in this cart he lies, gaping  
 upright. I cry out on the ministers,' quoth he. 'That shoulde keep and rule  
 this city; Harow! alas! here lies my fellow slain.' What should I more unto  
 this tale sayn? The people out start, and cast the cart to ground And in the  
 middle of the dung they found The deade man, that murder'd was all new. O  
 blissful God! that art so good and true, Lo, how that thou bewray'st murder  
 alway. Murder will out, that see we day by day. Murder is so wlatson\* and  
 abominable \*loathsome To God, that is so just and  
 reasonable, That he will not suffer it heled\* be; \*concealed <14>  
 Though it abide a year, or two, or three, Murder will out, this is my  
 conclusioun, And right anon, the ministers of the town Have hent\* the  
 carter, and so sore him pined,\*\* \*seized \*\*tortured And eke the hostelere  
 so sore engined,\* \*racked That they beknew\* their  
 wickedness anon, \*confessed And were hanged by the necke  
 bone.

"Here may ye see that dreames be to dread. And certes in the same book I  
 read, Right in the nexte chapter after this (I gabbe\* not, so have I joy and  
 bliss), \*talk idly Two men that would, have passed over sea,  
 For certain cause, into a far country, If that the wind not hadde been  
 contrary, That made them in a city for to tarry, That stood full merry upon  
 an haven side; But on a day, against the even-tide, The wind gan change,  
 and blew right \*as them lest.\* \*as they wished Jolly and glad they wente  
 to their rest, And caste\* them full early for to sail. \*resolved

But to the one man fell a great marvail That one of them, in sleeping as he  
 lay, He mette\* a wondrous dream, against the day: \*dreamed He  
 thought a man stood by his bedde's side, And him commanded that he  
 should abide; And said him thus; 'If thou to-morrow wend, Thou shalt be  
 drown'd; my tale is at an end.' He woke, and told his follow what he mette,  
 And prayed him his voyage for to let;\* \*delay As for that  
 day, he pray'd him to abide. His fellow, that lay by his bedde's side, Gan for  
 to laugh, and scorned him full fast. 'No dream,' quoth he, 'may so my heart  
 aghast,\* \*frighten That I will lette\* for to do my things.\*  
 \*delay I sette not a straw by thy dreamings, For swevens\* be but vanities  
 and japes.\*\* \*dreams \*\*jokes,deceits Men dream all day of owles and of  
 apes, And eke of many a maze\* therewithal; \*wild imagining  
 Men dream of thing that never was, nor shall. But since I see, that thou wilt  
 here abide, And thus forslothe\* wilfully thy tide,\*\* \*idle away \*\*time  
 God wot, \*it rueth me;\* and have good day.' \*I am sorry for it\* And  
 thus he took his leave, and went his way. But, ere that he had half his  
 course sail'd, I know not why, nor what mischance it ail'd, But casually\* the  
 ship's bottom rent, \*by accident And ship and man under the  
 water went, In sight of other shippes there beside That with him sailed at  
 the same tide.

"And therefore, faire Partelote so dear, By such examples olde may'st thou  
 lear,\* \*learn That no man shoulde be too reckeless Of  
 dreames, for I say thee doubtless, That many a dream full sore is for to  
 dread. Lo, in the life of Saint Kenelm <15> I read, That was Kenulphus' son,  
 the noble king Of Mercenrike, <16> how Kenelm mette a thing. A little ere he  
 was murder'd on a day, His murder in his vision he say.\*  
 \*saw His norice\* him expounded every deal\*\* \*nurse \*\*part His  
 sweven, and bade him to keep\* him well \*guard For treason;  
 but he was but seven years old, And therefore \*little tale hath he told\*  
 \*he attached little Of any dream, so holy was his heart.  
 significance to\* By God, I hadde lever than my shirt That ye had read his  
 legend, as have I. Dame Partelote, I say you truely, Macrobius, that wrote  
 the vision In Afric' of the worthy Scipion, <17> Affirmeth dreames, and saith  
 that they be 'Warnings of thinges that men after see. And furthermore, I  
 pray you looke well In the Old Testament, of Daniel, If he held dreames any  
 vanity. Read eke of Joseph, and there shall ye see Whether dreams be  
 sometimes (I say not all) Warnings of thinges that shall after fall. Look of  
 Egypt the king, Dan Pharaoh, His baker and his buteler also, Whether they  
 felte none effect\* in dreams. \*significance Whoso will seek the acts  
 of sundry remes\* \*realms May read of dreames many a  
 wondrous thing. Lo Croesus, which that was of Lydia king, Mette he not that  
 he sat upon a tree, Which signified he shoulde hanged be? <18> Lo here,

Andromache, Hectore's wife, <19> That day that Hector shoulde lose his life,  
 She dreamed on the same night befor, How that the life of Hector should be  
 lorn,\*   \*lost If thilke day he went into battaile; She warned him,  
 but it might not avail; He wente forth to fighte natheless, And was y- slain  
 anon of Achilles. But thilke tale is all too long to tell; And eke it is nigh day, I  
 may not dwell. Shortly I say, as for conclusion, That I shall have of this  
 avision Adversity; and I say furthermore, That I ne \*tell of laxatives no  
 store,\*   \*hold laxatives For they be venomous, I wot it well;  
 of no value\* I them defy,\* I love them never a del.\*\*   \*distrust\*\*whit

"But let us speak of mirth, and stint\* all this;   \*cease Madame  
 Partelote, so have I bliss, Of one thing God hath sent me large\* grace;  
 liberal For when I see the beauty of your face, Ye be so scarlet-hued about  
 your eyen, I maketh all my dreade for to dien, For, all so sicker\* as In  
 principio,<20>   \*certain Mulier est hominis confusio.<21>  
 Madam, the sentence\* of of this Latin is,   \*meaning Woman is  
 manne's joy and manne's bliss. For when I feel at night your softe side, --  
 Albeit that I may not on you ride, For that our perch is made so narrow,  
 Alas! I am so full of joy and of solas,\*   \*delight That I defy  
 both sweven and eke dream." And with that word he flew down from the  
 beam, For it was day, and eke his hennes all; And with a chuck he gan them  
 for to call, For he had found a corn, lay in the yard. Royal he was, he was no  
 more afear'd; He feather'd Partelote twenty time, And as oft trode her, ere  
 that it was prime. He looked as it were a grim lion, And on his toes he  
 roamed up and down; He deigned not to set his feet to ground; He chucked,  
 when he had a corn y-found, And to him ranne then his wives all. Thus  
 royal, as a prince is in his hall, Leave I this Chanticleer in his pasture; And  
 after will I tell his aventure.

When that the month in which the world began, That highte March, when  
 God first maked man, Was complete, and y-passed were also, Since March  
 ended, thirty days and two, Befell that Chanticleer in all his pride, His seven  
 wives walking him beside, Cast up his eyen to the brighte sun, That in the  
 sign of Taurus had y-run Twenty degrees and one, and somewhat more; He  
 knew by kind,\* and by none other lore,\*\*   \*nature \*\*learning That it  
 was prime, and crew with blissful steven.\*   \*voice "The sun," he  
 said, "is clomben up in heaven Twenty degrees and one, and more y-wis.\*  
 \*assuredly Madame Partelote, my worlde's bliss, Hearken these blissful  
 birdes how they sing, And see the freshe flowers how they spring; Full is  
 mine heart of revel and solace." But suddenly him fell a sorrowful case;\*  
 \*casualty For ever the latter end of joy is woe: God wot that worldly joy is  
 soon y-go: And, if a rhetor\* coulde fair indite,   \*orator He in  
 a chronicle might it safely write, As for \*a sov'reign notability\*   \*a

thing supremely notable\* Now every wise man, let him hearken me; This story is all as true, I undertake, As is the book of Launcelot du Lake, That women hold in full great reverence. Now will I turn again to my sentence.

A col-fox, <22> full of sly iniquity, That in the grove had wonned\* yeares three,  
\*dwelt By high imagination forecast, The same night thorough the hedges brast\* \*burst Into the yard, where Chanticleer the fair Was wont, and eke his wives, to repair; And in a bed of wortes\* still he lay,  
\*cabbages Till it was passed undern <23> of the day, Waiting his time on Chanticleer to fall: As gladly do these homicides all, That in awaite lie to murder men. O false murd'rer! Rouking\* in thy den!  
\*crouching, lurking O new Iscariot, new Ganilion! <24> O false dissimuler, O Greek Sinon,<25> That broughtest Troy all utterly to sorrow! O Chanticleer! accursed be the morrow That thou into thy yard flew from the beams;\*  
\*rafters Thou wert full well y-warned by thy dreams That thilke day was perilous to thee. But what that God forewot\* must needes be,  
\*foreknows After th' opinion of certain clerkes. Witness on him that any perfect clerk is, That in school is great altercation In this matter, and great disputation, And hath been of an hundred thousand men. But I ne cannot \*boul't it to the bren,\* \*examine it thoroughly <26>\* As can the holy doctor Augustine, Or Boece, or the bishop Bradwardine,<27> Whether that Godde's worthy foreweeting\*  
\*foreknowledge \*Straineth me needly\* for to do a thing \*forces me\* (Needly call I simple necessity), Or elles if free choice be granted me To do that same thing, or do it not, Though God forewot\* it ere that it was wrought;  
\*knew in advance Or if \*his weeting straineth never a deal,\* \*his knowing constrains But by necessity conditionel.  
not at all\* I will not have to do of such mattere; My tale is of a cock, as ye may hear, That took his counsel of his wife, with sorrow, To walken in the yard upon the morrow That he had mette the dream, as I you told.  
Womane's counsels be full often cold;\* \*mischievous, unwise  
Womane's counsel brought us first to woe, And made Adam from Paradise to go, There as he was full merry and well at case. But, for I n'ot\* to whom I might displease  
\*know not If I counsel of women woulde blame, Pass over, for I said it in my game.\* \*jest Read authors, where they treat of such mattere And what they say of women ye may hear.  
These be the cocke's wordes, and not mine; I can no harm of no woman divine.\*  
\*conjecture, imagine Fair in the sand, to bathe\* her merrily,  
\*bask Lies Partelote, and all her sisters by, Against the sun, and Chanticleer so free Sang merrier than the mermaid in the sea; For Physiologus saith sickerly,\*  
\*certainly How that they singe well and merrily. <28> And so befell that, as he cast his eye Among the wortes,\* on a butterfly,  
\*cabbages He was ware of this fox

that lay full low. Nothing \*ne list him thenne\* for to crow, \*he had no inclination\* But cried anon "Cock! cock!" and up he start, As man that was affrayed in his heart. For naturally a beast desireth flee From his contrary,\* if be may it see, \*enemy Though he \*ne'er erst\* had soon it with his eye \*never before\* This Chanticleer, when he gan him espy, He would have fled, but that the fox anon Said, "Gentle Sir, alas! why will ye gon? Be ye afraid of me that am your friend? Now, certes, I were worse than any fiend, If I to you would harm or villainy. I am not come your counsel to espy. But truely the cause of my coming Was only for to hearken how ye sing; For truely ye have as merry a steven,\* \*voice As any angel hath that is in heaven; Therewith ye have of music more feeling, Than had Boece, or any that can sing. My lord your father (God his soule bless) And eke your mother of her gentleness, Have in mnine house been, to my great ease:\* \*satisfaction And certes, Sir, full fain would I you please. But, for men speak of singing, I will say, So may I brooke\* well mine eyen tway, \*enjoy, possess, or use Save you, I hearde never man so sing As did your father in the morrowning. Certes it was of heart all that he sung. And, for to make his voice the more strong, He would \*so pain him,\* that with both his eyen \*make such an exertion\* He muste wink, so loud he woulde cryen, And standen on his tiptoes therewithal, And stretche forth his necke long and small. And eke he was of such discretion, That there was no man, in no region, That him in song or wisdom mighte pass. I have well read in Dan Burnel the Ass, <29> Among his verse, how that there was a cock That, for\* a prieste's son gave him a knock \*because Upon his leg, while he was young and nice,\* \*foolish He made him for to lose his benefice. But certain there is no comparison Betwixt the wisdom and discretion Of youre father, and his subtilty. Now singe, Sir, for sainte charity, Let see, can ye your father counterfeit?"

This Chanticleer his wings began to beat, As man that could not his treason espy, So was he ravish'd with his flattery. Alas! ye lordes, many a false flattour\* \*flatterer <30> Is in your court, and many a losengeour, \* \*deceiver <31> That please you well more, by my faith, Than he that soothfastness\* unto you saith. \*truth Readin Ecclesiast' of flattery; Beware, ye lordes, of their treachery. This Chanticleer stood high upon his toes, Stretching his neck, and held his eyen close, And gan to crowe loude for the nonce And Dan Russel <32> the fox start up at once, And \*by the gorge hente\* Chanticleer, \*seized by the throat\* And on his back toward the wood him bare. For yet was there no man that him pursu'd. O destiny, that may'st not be eschew'd!\* \*escaped Alas, that Chanticleer flew from the beams! Alas, his wife raughte\* nought of dreams! \*regarded And on a Friday fell all this mischance. O Venus, that art goddess of pleasance, Since that thy servant was this



Chanticleer And in thy service did all his powere, More for delight, than the world to multiply, Why wilt thou suffer him on thy day to die? O Gaufrid, deare master sovereign, <33> That, when thy worthy king Richard was slain With shot, complainedest his death so sore, Why n'had I now thy sentence and thy lore, The Friday for to chiden, as did ye? (For on a Friday, soothly, slain was he), Then would I shew you how that I could plain\*  
 \*lament For Chanticleere's dread, and for his pain.

Certes such cry nor lamentation Was ne'er of ladies made, when Ilion Was won, and Pyrrhus with his straighte sword, When he had hent\* king Priam by the beard, \*seized And slain him (as saith us Eneidos\*),<34> \*The Aeneid As maden all the hennes in the close,\* \*yard When they had seen of Chanticleer the sight. But sov'reignly\* Dame Partelote shrigh, \*\* \*above all others Full louder than did Hasdrubale's wife, \*\*shrieked When that her husband hadde lost his life, And that the Romans had y-burnt Carthage; She was so full of torment and of rage, That wilfully into the fire she start, And burnt herselfe with a steadfast heart. O woeful hennes! right so cried ye, As, when that Nero burned the city Of Rome, cried the senatores' wives, For that their husbands losten all their lives; Withoute guilt this Nero hath them slain. Now will I turn unto my tale again;

The sely\* widow, and her daughters two, \*simple, honest Hearde these hennes cry and make woe, And at the doors out started they anon, And saw the fox toward the wood is gone, And bare upon his back the cock away: They cried, "Out! harow! and well-away! Aha! the fox!" and after him they ran, And eke with staves many another man Ran Coll our dog, and Talbot, and Garland; And Malkin, with her distaff in her hand Ran cow and calf, and eke the very hogges So fear'd they were for barking of the dogges, And shouting of the men and women eke. They ranne so, them thought their hearts would break. They yelled as the fiendes do in hell; The duckes cried as men would them quell;\* \*kill, destroy The geese for feare flewen o'er the trees, Out of the hive came the swarm of bees, So hideous was the noise, ben'dicite! Certes he, Jacke Straw,<35> and his meinie,\* \*followers Ne made never shoutes half so shrill When that they woulden any Fleming kill, As thilke day was made upon the fox. Of brass they broughte beames\* and of box, \*trumpets <36> Of horn and bone, in which they blew and pooped,\* \*\*tooted And therewithal they shrieked and they hooped; It seemed as the heaven shoulde fall

Now, goode men, I pray you hearken all; Lo, how Fortune turneth suddenly The hope and pride eke of her enemy. This cock, that lay upon the fox's back, In all his dread unto the fox he spake, And saide, "Sir, if that I were as

ye, Yet would I say (as wisly\* God help me), \*surely 'Turn ye  
 again, ye proude churles all; A very pestilence upon you fall. Now am I come  
 unto the woode's side, Maugre your head, the cock shall here abide; I will  
 him eat, in faith, and that anon.'" The fox answer'd, "In faith it shall be  
 done:" And, as he spake the word, all suddenly The cock brake from his  
 mouth deliverly,\* \*nimble And high upon a tree he flew anon.  
 And when the fox saw that the cock was gone, "Alas!" quoth he, "O  
 Chanticleer, alas! I have," quoth he, "y-done to you trespass,\*  
 \*offence Inasmuch as I maked you afear'd, When I you hent,\* and brought  
 out of your yard; \*took But, Sir, I did it in no wick' intent; Come  
 down, and I shall tell you what I meant. I shall say sooth to you, God help  
 me so." "Nay then," quoth he, "I shrew\* us both the two, \*curse  
 And first I shrew myself, both blood and bones, If thou beguile me oftener  
 than once. Thou shalt no more through thy flattery Do\* me to sing and  
 winke with mine eye; \*cause For he that winketh when he  
 shoulde see, All wilfully, God let him never the."\* \*thrive  
 "Nay," quoth the fox; "but God give him mischance That is so indiscreet of  
 governance, That jangleth\* when that he should hold his peace."  
 \*chatters

Lo, what it is for to be reckeless And negligent, and trust on flattery. But ye  
 that holde this tale a folly, As of a fox, or of a cock or hen, Take the morality  
 thereof, good men. For Saint Paul saith, That all that written is, \*To our  
 doctrine it written is y-wis.\* <37> \*is surely written for Take the fruit,  
 and let the chaff be still. our instruction\*

Now goode God, if that it be thy will, As saith my Lord, <38> so make us all  
 good men; And bring us all to thy high bliss. Amen.