

Notes to The Court of Love

1. So the Man of Law, in the prologue to his Tale, is made to say that Chaucer "can but lewedly (ignorantly or imperfectly) on metres and on rhyming craftily." But the humility of those apologies is not justified by the care and finish of his earlier poems.
2. Born: burnish, polish: the poet means, that his verses do not display the eloquence or brilliancy of Cicero in setting forth his subject-matter.
3. Galfrid: Geoffrey de Vinsauf to whose treatise on poetical composition a less flattering allusion is made in The Nun's Priest's Tale. See note 33 to that Tale.
4. Stirp: race, stock; Latin, "stirps."
5. Calliope is the epic muse -- "sister" to the other eight.
6. Melpomene was the tragic muse.
7. The same is said of Griselda, in The Clerk's Tale; though she was of tender years, "yet in the breast of her virginity there was inclos'd a sad and ripe corage"
8. The confusion which Chaucer makes between Cithaeron and Cythera, has already been remarked. See note 41 to the Knight's Tale.
9. Balais: Bastard rubies; said to be so called from Balassa, the Asian country where they were found. Turkeis: turquoise stones.
10. Spenser, in his description of the House of Busirane, speaks of the sad distress into which Phoebus was plunged by Cupid, in revenge for the betrayal of "his mother's wantonness, when she with Mars was meint [mingled] in joyfulness"
11. Alcestis, daughter of Pelias, was won to wife by Admetus, King of Pherae, who complied with her father's demand that he should come to claim her in a chariot drawn by lions and boars. By the aid of Apollo -- who tended the flocks of Admetus during his banishment from heaven -- the suitor fulfilled the condition; and Apollo further induced the Moirae or Fates to grant that Admetus should never die, if his father, mother, or wife would die for him.

Alcestis devoted herself in his stead; and, since each had made great efforts or sacrifices for love, the pair are fitly placed as king and queen in the Court of Love.

12. In the prologue to the "Legend of Good Women," Chaucer says that behind the God of Love, upon the green, he "saw coming in ladies nineteen;" but the stories of only nine good women are there told. In the prologue to The Man of Law's Tale, sixteen ladies are named as having their stories written in the "Saints' Legend of Cupid" -- now known as the "Legend of Good Women" -- (see note 5 to the Prologue to the Man of Law's Tale); and in the "Retractation," at the end of the Parson's Tale, the "Book of the Twenty-five Ladies" is enumerated among the works of which the poet repents -- but there "xxv" is supposed to have been by some copyist written for "xix."

13. fele: many; German, "viele."

14. Arras: tapestry of silk, made at Arras, in France.

15. Danger, in the Provençal Courts of Love, was the allegorical personification of the husband; and Disdain suitably represents the lover's corresponding difficulty from the side of the lady.

16. In The Knight's Tale, Emily's yellow hair is braided in a tress, or plait, that hung a yard long behind her back; so that, both as regards colour and fashion, a singular resemblance seems to have existed between the female taste of 1369 and that of 1869.

17. In an old monkish story -- reproduced by Boccaccio, and from him by La Fontaine in the Tale called "Les Oies de Frere Philippe" -- a young man is brought up without sight or knowledge of women, and, when he sees them on a visit to the city, he is told that they are geese.

18. Tabernacle: A shrine or canopy of stone, supported by pillars.

19. Mister folk: handicraftsmen, or tradesmen, who have learned "mysteries."

20. The loves "Of Queen Annelida and False Arcite" formed the subject of a short unfinished poem by Chaucer, which was afterwards worked up into The Knight's Tale.

21. Blue was the colour of truth. See note 36 to the Squire's Tale.

22. Blife: quickly, eagerly; for "blive" or "belive."
23. It will be seen afterwards that Philogenet does not relish it, and pleads for its relaxation.
24. Feat: dainty, neat, handsome; the same as "fetis," oftener used in Chaucer; the adverb "featly" is still used, as applied to dancing, &c.
25. Solomon was beguiled by his heathenish wives to forsake the worship of the true God; Samson fell a victim to the wiles of Delilah.
26. Compare the speech of Proserpine to Pluto, in *The Merchant's Tale*.
27. See note 91 to the *Knight's Tale* for a parallel.
28. Flaw: yellow; Latin, "flavus," French, "fauve."
29. Bass: kiss; French, "baiser;" and hence the more vulgar "buss."
30. Maximian: Cornelius Maximianus Gallus flourished in the time of the Emperor Anastasius; in one of his elegies, he professed a preference for flaming and somewhat swelling lips, which, when he tasted them, would give him fullkisses.
31. Dwale: sleeping potion, narcotic. See note 19 to the *Reeve's Tale*.
32. Environ: around; French, "a l'environ."
33. Cast off thine heart: i.e. from confidence in her.
34. Nesh: soft, delicate; Anglo-Saxon, "nese."
35. Perfection: Perfectly holy life, in the performance of vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and other modes of mortifying the flesh.
36. All the sin must on our friendes be: who made us take the vows before they knew our own dispositions, or ability, to keep them.
37. Cope: The large vestment worn in singing the service in the choir. In Chaucer's time it seems to have been a distinctively clerical piece of dress; so, in the prologue to *The Monk's Tale*, the Host, lamenting that so stalwart a man as the Monk should have gone into religion, exclaims, "Alas! why wearest thou so wide a cope?"

38. The three of fatal destiny: The three Fates.
39. Cythere: Cytherea -- Venus, so called from the name of the island, Cythera, into which her worship was first introduced from Phoenicia.
40. Avaunter: Boaster; Philobone calls him out.
41. The statute: i.e. the 16th.
42. "Metamorphoses" Lib. ii. 768 et seqq., where a general description of Envy is given.
43. Golden Love and Leaden Love represent successful and unsuccessful love; the first kindled by Cupid's golden darts, the second by his leaden arrows.
44. "Domine, labia mea aperies -- et os meum annunciabit laudem tuam" ("Lord, open my lips -- and my mouth will announce your praise") Psalms li. 15, was the verse with which Matins began. The stanzas which follow contain a paraphrase of the matins for Trinity Sunday, allegorically setting forth the doctrine that love is the all-controlling influence in the government of the universe.
45. "Venite, exultemus," ("Come, let us rejoice") are the first words of Psalm xcvi. called the "Invitatory."
46. "Domine Dominus noster:" The opening words of Psalm viii.; "O Lord our Lord."
47. "Coeli enarrant:" Psalm xix. 1; "The heavens declare (thy glory)."
48. "Domini est terra": Psalm xxiv. I; "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." The first "nocturn" is now over, and the lessons from Scripture follow.
49. "Jube, Domine:" "Command, O Lord;" from Matthew xiv. 28, where Peter, seeing Christ walking on the water, says "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water."
- 50: "Tu autem:" the formula recited by the reader at the end of each lesson; "Tu autem, Domine, miserere nobis." ("But do thou, O Lord, have pity on us!")

51. "Te Deum Amoris:" "Thee, God of Love (we praise)."
52. Not Tubal, who was the worker in metals; but Jubal, his brother, "who was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ" (Genesis iv. 21).
53. "Dominus regnavit:" Psalm xciii. 1, "The Lord reigneth." With this began the "Laudes," or morning service of praise.
54. "Jubilate:" Psalm c. 1, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord."
55. "Benedicite:" "Bless ye the Lord;" the opening of the Song of the Three Children
56. "Laudate:" Psalm cxlvii.; "Praise ye the Lord."
57. "O admirabile:" Psalm viii 1; "O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name."
58. "Benedictus": The first word of the Song of Zacharias (Luke i. 68); "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel"
59. In *The Knight's Tale* we have exemplifications of the custom of gathering and wearing flowers and branches on May Day; where Emily, "doing observance to May," goes into the garden at sunrise and gathers flowers, "party white and red, to make a sotel garland for her head"; and again, where Arcite rides to the fields "to make him a garland of the greves; were it of woodbine, or of hawthorn leaves"