

The Author to His Book.

O LEWD book! with thy foul rudeness, Since thou hast neither beauty nor eloquence, Who hath thee caus'd or giv'n the hardiness For to appear in my lady's presence? I am full sicker* thou know'st her benevolence,
certain Full agreeable to all her abying, *merit For of
all good she is the best living.

Alas! that thou ne haddest worthiness, To show to her some pleasant sentence, Since that she hath, thorough her gentleness, Accepted thee servant to her dign reverence! O! me repenteth that I n'had science, And leisure als', t'make thee more flourishing, For of all good she is the best living.

Beseech her meekly with all lowliness, Though I be ferre* from her in absence,
*far To think on my truth to her and
steadfastness, And to abridge of my sorrows the violence, Which caused is whereof knoweth your sapience;* *wisdom She like among to
notify me her liking, For of all good she is the best living.

Explicit.

L'Envoy; To the Author's Lady.

Aurore of gladness, day of lustiness, Lucern* at night with heav'nly influence
lamp Illumin'd, root of beauty and goodness, Suspires which I effund** in
silence! *sighs **pour forth Of grace I beseech, allege* let your
writing *declare Now of all good, since ye be best living.

Explicit.

Notes to the Cuckoo and the Nightingale

1. These two lines occur also in *The Knight's Tale*; they commence the speech of Theseus on the love follies of Palamon and Arcite, whom the Duke has just found fighting in the forest.

2. A stronger reading is "all."

3. "Ocy, ocy," is supposed to come from the Latin "occidere," to kill; or rather the old French, "occire," "occis," denoting the doom which the nightingale

imprecates or supplicates on all who do offence to Love.

4. Grede: cry; Italian, "grido."

5. "But if he be away therewith, y-wis, He may full soon of age have his hair": Unless he be always fortunate in love pursuits, he may full soon have gray hair, through his anxieties.

6. It was of evil omen to hear the cuckoo before the nightingale or any other bird.

7. The Queen: Philippa of Hainault, wife of Edward III.