

## Notes to the Flower and the Leaf

1. The Bull: the sign of Taurus, which the sun enters in May.
2. The young oak leaves are red or ashen coloured.
3. Chaucer here again refers to the superstition, noticed in "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale," that it was of good omen to hear the nightingale before the cuckoo upon the advent of both with spring.
4. The arbour was furnished with seats, which had been newly covered with turf.
5. "Yede" or "yead," is the old form of go.
6. Sote: fool -- French "sot."
7. See note 59 to The Court of Love
8. Agnus castus: the chaste-tree; a kind of willow.
9. Roundell: French, "rondeau;" a song that comes round again to the verse with which it opened, or that is taken up in turn by each of the singers.
10. In modern French form, "Sous la feuille, devers moi, son et mon joli coeur est endormi" -- "Under the foliage, towards me, his and my jolly heart is gone to sleep."
11. Prester John: The half-mythical Eastern potentate, who is now supposed to have been, not a Christian monarch of Abyssinia, but the head of the Indian empire before Zenghis Khan's conquest.
12. Oak cerial: of the species of oak which Pliny, in his "Natural History," calls "cerrus."
13. Tartarium: Cloth of Tars, or of Tortona.
14. Bargaret: bergerette, or pastoral song.
15. "Si douce est la margarete.": "So sweet is the daisy" ("la marguerite").

16. To make their joustes: the meaning is not very obvious; but in The Knight's Tale "jousts and array" are in some editions made part of the adornment of the Temple of Venus; and as the word "jousts" would there carry the general meaning of "preparations" to entertain or please a lover, in the present case it may have a similar force.

17. Gramercy: "grand merci," French; great thanks.

18. The Nine Worthies, who at our day survive in the Seven Champions of Christendom. The Worthies were favourite subjects for representation at popular festivals or in masquerades.

19. The famous Knights of King Arthur, who, being all esteemed equal in valour and noble qualities, sat at a round table, so that none should seem to have precedence over the rest.

20. The twelve peers of Charlemagne (les douze pairs), chief among whom were Roland and Oliver.

21. Chaucer speaks as if, at least for the purposes of his poetry, he believed that Edward III. did not establish a new, but only revived an old, chivalric institution, when he founded the Order of the Garter.

22. Laurer: laurel-tree; French, "laurier."

23. The meaning is: "Witness the practice of Rome, that was the founder of all knighthood and marvellous deeds; and I refer for corroboration to Titus Livius" -- who, in several passages, has mentioned the laurel crown as the highest military honour. For instance, in 1. vii. c. 13, Sextus Tullius, remonstrating for the army against the inaction in which it is kept, tells the Dictator Sulpicius, "Duce te vincere cupimus; tibi lauream insignem deferre; tecum triumphantes urbem inire." ("Commander, we want you to conquer; to bring you the laurel insignia; to enter the city with you in triumph")

24. Malebouche: Slander, personified under the title of Evil-mouth -- Italian, "Malbocca;" French, "Malebouche."

25. Under support of them that list it read: the phrase means -- trusting to the goodwill of my reader.

26. In press: into a crowd, into the press of competitors for favour; not, it need hardly be said, "into the press" in the modern sense -- printing was not invented for a century after this was written.

## THE HOUSE OF FAME

[Thanks partly to Pope's brief and elegant paraphrase, in his "Temple of Fame," and partly to the familiar force of the style and the satirical significance of the allegory, "The House of Fame" is among the best known and relished of Chaucer's minor poems. The octosyllabic measure in which it is written -- the same which the author of "Hudibras" used with such admirable effect -- is excellently adapted for the vivid descriptions, the lively sallies of humour and sarcasm, with which the poem abounds; and when the poet actually does get to his subject, he treats it with a zest, and a corresponding interest on the part of the reader, which are scarcely surpassed by the best of The Canterbury Tales. The poet, however, tarries long on the way to the House of Fame; as Pope says in his advertisement, the reader who would compare his with Chaucer's poem, "may begin with [Chaucer's] third Book of Fame, there being nothing in the two first books that answers to their title." The first book opens with a kind of prologue (actually so marked and called in earlier editions) in which the author speculates on the causes of dreams; avers that never any man had such a dream as he had on the tenth of December; and prays the God of Sleep to help him to interpret the dream, and the Mover of all things to reward or afflict those readers who take the dream well or ill. Then he relates that, having fallen asleep, he fancied himself within a temple of glass -- the abode of Venus -- the walls of which were painted with the story of Aeneas. The paintings are described at length; and then the poet tells us that, coming out of the temple, he found himself on a vast sandy plain, and saw high in heaven an eagle, that began to descend towards him. With the prologue, the first book numbers 508 lines; of which 192 only -- more than are actually concerned with or directly lead towards the real subject of the poem -- are given here. The second book, containing 582 lines, of which 176 will be found in this edition, is wholly devoted to the voyage from the Temple of Venus to the House of Fame, which the dreamer accomplishes in the eagle's claws. The bird has been sent by Jove to do the poet some "solace" in reward of his labours for the cause of Love; and during the transit through the air the messenger discourses obligingly and learnedly with his human burden on the theory of sound, by which all that is spoken must needs reach the House of Fame; and on other matters suggested by their errand and their observations by the way. The third book (of 1080 lines, only a score of which, just at the outset, have been omitted) brings us to the real pith of the poem. It finds the poet close to the House of Fame, built on a rock of ice engraved with names, many of which are half-melted away. Entering the gorgeous palace, he finds all manner of minstrels and historians; harpers, pipers, and trumpeters of fame; magicians, jugglers, sorcerers, and many

others. On a throne of ruby sits the goddess, seeming at one moment of but a cubit's stature, at the next touching heaven; and at either hand, on pillars, stand the great authors who "bear up the name" of ancient nations. Crowds of people enter the hall from all regions of earth, praying the goddess to give them good or evil fame, with and without their own deserts; and they receive answers favourable, negative, or contrary, according to the caprice of Fame. Pursuing his researches further, out of the region of reputation or fame proper into that of tidings or rumours, the poet is led, by a man who has entered into conversation with him, to a vast whirling house of twigs, ever open to the arrival of tidings, ever full of murmurings, whisperings, and clatterings, coming from the vast crowds that fill it -- for every rumour, every piece of news, every false report, appears there in the shape of the person who utters it, or passes it on, down in earth. Out at the windows innumerable, the tidings pass to Fame, who gives to each report its name and duration; and in the house travellers, pilgrims, pardoners, couriers, lovers, &c., make a huge clamour. But here the poet meets with a man "of great authority," and, half afraid, awakes; skilfully -- whether by intention, fatigue, or accident -- leaving the reader disappointed by the nonfulfilment of what seemed to be promises of further disclosures. The poem, not least in the passages the omission of which has been dictated by the exigencies of the present volume, is full of testimony to the vast acquaintance of Chaucer with learning ancient and modern; Ovid, Virgil, Statius, are equally at his command to illustrate his narrative or to furnish the ground-work of his descriptions; while architecture, the Arabic numeration, the theory of sound, and the effects of gunpowder, are only a few among the topics of his own time of which the poet treats with the ease of proficient knowledge. Not least interesting are the vivid touches in which Chaucer sketches the routine of his laborious and almost recluse daily life; while the strength, individuality, and humour that mark the didactic portion of the poem prove that "The House of Fame" was one of the poet's riper productions.]

GOD turn us ev'ry dream to good! For it is wonder thing, by the Rood,\*  
 \*Cross <1> To my witte, what causeth swevens,\* \*dreams  
 Either on morrows or on evens; And why th'effect followeth of some, And of  
 some it shall never come; Why this is an avision And this a revelation; Why  
 this a dream, why that a sweven, And not to ev'ry man \*like even; \*  
 \*alike\* Why this a phantom, why these oracles, I n'ot; but whoso of these  
 miracles The causes knoweth bet than I, Divine\* he; for I certainly  
 \*define \*Ne can them not,\* \*nor ever think \*do not know them\*  
 To busy my wit for to swink\* \*labour To know of  
 their significance The genders, neither the distance Of times of them, nor  
 the causes For why that this more than that cause is; Or if folke's  
 complexions Make them dream of reflections; Or elles thus, as others sayn,

For too great feebleness of the brain By abstinence, or by sickness, By  
 prison, strife, or great distress, Or elles by disordinance\*  
 \*derangement Of natural accustomance;\* \*mode of life  
 That some men be too curious In study, or melancholious, Or thus, so inly  
 full of dread, That no man may them \*boote bede;\* \*afford them  
 relief\* Or elles that devotion Of some, and contemplation, Causeth to them  
 such dreames oft; Or that the cruel life unsoft Of them that unkind loves  
 lead, That often hope much or dread, That purely their impressions Cause  
 them to have visions; Or if that spirits have the might To make folk to dream  
 a-night; Or if the soul, of \*proper kind,\* \*its own nature\* Be  
 so perfect as men find, That it forewot\* what is to come,  
 \*foreknows And that it warneth all and some Of ev'reach of their adventures,  
 By visions, or by figures, But that our fleshe hath no might To  
 understanden it aright, For it is warned too darkly; But why the cause is,  
 not wot I. Well worth of this thing greate clerks, <2> That treat of this and  
 other works; For I of none opinion Will as now make mention; But only that  
 the holy Rood Turn us every dream to good. For never since that I was born,  
 Nor no man elles me befor, Mette,\* as I trowe steadfastly,  
 \*dreamed So wonderful a dream as I, The tenthe day now of December; The  
 which, as I can it remember, I will you tellen ev'ry deal.\*  
 \*whit

But at my beginning, truste weel,\* \*well I will make  
 invocation, With special devotion, Unto the god of Sleep anon, That dwelleth  
 in a cave of stone, <3> Upon a stream that comes from Lete, That is a flood  
 of hell unsweet, Beside a folk men call Cimmerie; There sleepeth ay this god  
 unmerry, With his sleepy thousand sones, That alway for to sleep their won\*  
 is; \*wont, custom And to this god, that I \*of read,\*  
 \*tell of\* Pray I, that he will me speed My sweven for to tell aright, If ev'ry  
 dream stands in his might. And he that Mover is of all That is, and was, and  
 ever shall, So give them joye that it hear, Of alle that they dream to-year;\*  
 \*this year And for to standen all in grace\* \*favour Of  
 their loves, or in what place That them were liefest\* for to stand,  
 \*most desired And shield them from povert' and shand,\*  
 \*shame And from ev'ry unhap and disease, And send them all that may  
 them please, That take it well, and scorn it not, Nor it misdeemen\* in their  
 thought, \*misjudge Through malicious intention; And  
 whoso, through presumption. Or hate, or scorn, or through envy, Despite, or  
 jape,\* or villainy, \*jesting Misdemean it, pray I Jesus God,  
 That dream he barefoot, dream he shod, That ev'ry harm that any man Hath  
 had since that the world began, Befall him thereof, ere he sterve,\*  
 \*die And grant that he may it deserve,\* \*earn, obtain Lo!  
 with such a conclusion As had of his avision Croesus, that was the king of

Lyde, <4> That high upon a gibbet died; This prayer shall he have of me; I  
am \*no bet in charity.\* \*no more charitable\*

Now hearken, as I have you said, What that I mette ere I abraid,\*  
\*awoke Of December the tenth day; When it was night to sleep I lay, Right  
as I was wont for to do'n, And fell asleepe wonder soon, As he that \*weary  
was for go\* <5> \*was weary from going\* On pilgrimage miles two  
To the corsaint\* Leonard, \*relics of <6> To make lithe  
that erst was hard. But, as I slept, me mette I was Within a temple made of  
glass; In which there were more images Of gold, standing in sundry stages,  
And more riche tabernacles, And with pierrie\* more pinnacles,  
\*gems And more curious portraitures, And \*quainte manner\* of figures  
\*strange kinds\* Of golde work, than I saw ever. But, certainly, I wiste\* never  
\*knew Where that it was, but well wist I It was of Venus readily, This temple;  
for in portraiture I saw anon right her figure Naked floating in a sea, <7>  
And also on her head, pardie, Her rose garland white and red, And her comb  
to comb her head, Her doves, and Dan Cupido, Her blinde son, and  
Vulcano, <8> That in his face was full brown.

As he "roamed up and down," the dreamer saw on the wall a tablet of brass  
inscribed with the opening lines of the Aeneid; while the whole story of  
Aeneas was told in the "portraitures" and gold work. About three hundred  
and fifty lines are devoted to the description; but they merely embody Virgil's  
account of Aeneas' adventures from the destruction of Troy to his arrival in  
Italy; and the only characteristic passage is the following reflection,  
suggested by the death of Dido for her perfidious but fate-compelled guest:

Lo! how a woman doth amiss, To love him that unknowen is! For, by Christ,  
lo! thus it fareth, It is not all gold that glareth.\* \*glitters  
For, all so brook I well my head, There may be under goodlihead\*  
\*fair appearance Cover'd many a shrewed\* vice;  
\*cursed Therefore let no wight be so nice\* \*foolish To take  
a love only for cheer,\* \*looks Or speech, or for friendly  
mannere; For this shall ev'ry woman find, That some man, \*of his pure  
kind,\* \*by force of his nature Will shoven outward the fairest, Till  
he have caught that which him lest;\* \*pleases And then anon  
will causes find, And swear how she is unkind, Or false, or privy\* double  
was. \*secretly All this say I by\* Aeneas  
\*with reference to And Dido, and her \*nice lest,\* \*foolish  
pleasure\* That loved all too soon a guest; Therefore I will say a proverb, That  
he that fully knows the herb May safely lay it to his eye; Without dread,\*  
this is no lie. \*doubt

When the dreamer had seen all the sights in the temple, he became desirous to know who had worked all those wonders, and in what country he was; so he resolved to go out at the wicket, in search of somebody who might tell him.

When I out at the doores came, I fast aboute me beheld; Then saw I but a large feld,\*  
\*open country As far as that I mighte see,  
Withoute town, or house, or tree, Or bush, or grass, or ired\* land,  
\*ploughed <9> For all the field was but of sand, As small\* as men may see it lie  
\*fine In the desert of Libye; Nor no manner creature That is formed by Nature, There saw I, me to \*rede or wiss.\*  
\*advise or direct\* "O Christ!" thought I, "that art in bliss, From \*phantom and illusion\*  
\*vain fancy and deception\* Me save!" and with devotion Mine eyen to the heav'n I cast. Then was I ware at the last That, faste by the sun on high, \*As kennen might I\* with mine eye, \*as well as I might discern\*  
Me thought I saw an eagle soar, But that it seemed muche more\*  
\*larger Than I had any eagle seen; This is as sooth as death, certain, It was of gold, and shone so bright, That never saw men such a sight, But if\* the heaven had y-won,  
\*unless All new from God, another sun; So shone the eagle's feathers bright: And somewhat downward gan it light.\*  
\*descend, alight

The Second Book opens with a brief invocation of Venus and of Thought; then it proceeds:

This eagle, of which I have you told, That shone with feathers as of gold, Which that so high began to soar, I gan beholde more and more, To see her beauty and the wonder; But never was there dint of thunder, Nor that thing that men calle foudre,\*  
\*thunderbolt That smote sometimes a town to powder, And in his swifte coming brenn'd,\*  
\*burned That so swithe\* gan descend, \*rapidly As this fowl, when that it beheld That I a-roam was in the feld; And with his grim pawes strong, Within his sharpe nailes long, Me, flying, at a swap\* he hent,\*\*  
\*swoop \*seized And with his sours <10> again up went, Me carrying in his clawes stark\*  
\*strong As light as I had been a lark, How high, I cannot telle you, For I came up, I wist not how.

The poet faints through bewilderment and fear; but the eagle, speaking with the voice of a man, recalls him to himself, and comforts him by the assurance that what now befalls him is for his instruction and profit. Answering the poet's unspoken inquiry whether he is not to die otherwise, or whether Jove will him stellify, the eagle says that he has been sent by

Jupiter out of his "great ruth,"

"For that thou hast so truly So long served ententively\*  
\*with attentive zeal His blinde nephew\* Cupido,  
\*grandson And faire Venus also, Withoute guerdon ever yet, And natheless  
hast set thy wit (Although that in thy head full lite\* is) \*little  
To make bookes, songs, and ditties, In rhyme or elles in cadence, As thou  
best canst, in reverence Of Love, and of his servants eke, That have his  
service sought, and seek, And pained thee to praise his art, Although thou  
haddest never part; <11> Wherefore, all so God me bless, Jovis holds it great  
humbless, And virtue eke, that thou wilt make A-night full oft thy head to  
ache, In thy study so thou writest, And evermore of love enditest, In honour  
of him and praisings, And in his folke's furtherings, And in their matter all  
devisest,\* \*relates And not him nor his folk despisest,  
Although thou may'st go in the dance Of them that him list not advance.  
Wherefore, as I said now, y-wis, Jupiter well considers this; And also,  
beausire,\* other things; \*good sir That is, that thou hast  
no tidings Of Love's folk, if they be glad, Nor of naught elles that God made;  
And not only from far country That no tidings come to thee, But of thy very  
neighbourhood, That dwellen almost at thy doors, Thou hearest neither that  
nor this. For when thy labour all done is, And hast y-made thy reckonings,  
<12> Instead of rest and newe things, Thou go'st home to thy house anon,  
And, all so dumb as any stone, Thou sittest at another book, Till fully dazed\*  
is thy look; \*blinded And livest thus as a hermite  
Although thine abstinence is lite."\* <13> \*little

Therefore has Jove appointed the eagle to take the poet to the House of  
Fame, to do him some pleasure in recompense for his devotion to Cupid;  
and he will hear, says the bird,

"When we be come there as I say, More wondrous thinges, dare I lay,\*  
\*bet Of Love's folke more tidings, Both \*soothe sawes and leasings;\*,\*  
\*true sayings and lies\* And more loves new begun, And long y-served loves  
won, And more loves casually That be betid,\* no man knows why,  
\*happened by chance But as a blind man starts a hare; And more jollity and  
welfare, While that they finde \*love of steel,\* \*love true as steel\* As  
thinketh them, and over all weel; More discords, and more jealousies, More  
murmurs, and more novelties, And more dissimulations, And feigned  
reparations; And more beardes, in two hours, Withoute razor or scissours Y-  
made, <14> than graines be of sands; And eke more holding in hands,\*  
\*embracings And also more renovelances\* \*renewings  
Of old \*forleten acquaintances;\*,\* \*broken-off acquaintanceships\* More  
love-days,<15> and more accords,\* \*agreements Than on



instruments be chords; And eke of love more exchanges Than ever cornes  
were in granges."\* \*barns

The poet can scarcely believe that, though Fame had all the pies [magpies]  
and all the spies in a kingdom, she should hear so much; but the eagle  
proceeds to prove that she can.

First shalt thou heare where she dwelleth; And, so as thine own booke  
telleth, <16> Her palace stands, as I shall say, Right ev'n in middes of the  
way Betweene heav'n, and earth, and sea, That whatsoe'er in all these three  
Is spoken, \*privy or apert,\* \*secretly or openly\* The air  
thereto is so overt,\* \*clear And stands eke in so just\*  
a place, \*suitable That ev'ry sound must to it pace, Or  
whatso comes from any tongue, Be it rownd,\* read, or sung,  
\*whispered Or spoken in surety or dread,\* \*doubt  
Certain \*it must thither need."\* \*it must needs go thither\*

The eagle, in a long discourse, demonstrates that, as all natural things have  
a natural place towards which they move by natural inclination, and as  
sound is only broken air, so every sound must come to Fame's House,  
"though it were piped of a mouse" -- on the same principle by which every  
part of a mass of water is affected by the casting in of a stone. The poet is all  
the while borne upward, entertained with various information by the bird;  
which at last cries out --

"Hold up thy head, for all is well! Saint Julian, lo! bon hostel! <17> See here  
the House of Fame, lo May'st thou not heare that I do?" "What?" quoth I.  
"The greate soun'," Quoth he, "that rumbleth up and down In Fame's House,  
full of tidings, Both of fair speech and of chidings, And of false and sooth  
compounded;\* \*compounded, mingled Hearken well; it is not  
rownd.\* \*whispered Hearest thou not the greate  
swough?\*" \*confused sound "Yes, pardie!" quoth I, "well  
enough." And what sound is it like?" quoth he "Peter! the beating of the sea,"  
Quoth I, "against the rockes hollow, When tempests do the shippes swallow.  
And let a man stand, out of doubt, A mile thence, and hear it rout.\*  
\*roar Or elles like the last humbling\* \*dull low distant noise After  
the clap of a thund'ring, When Jovis hath the air y-beat; But it doth me for  
feare sweat." "Nay, dread thee not thereof," quoth he; "It is nothing will bite  
thee, Thou shalt no harme have, truly."

And with that word both he and I As nigh the place arrived were, As men  
might caste with a spear. I wist not how, but in a street He set me fair upon  
my feet, And saide: "Walke forth apace, And take \*thine adventure or case,\*

\*thy chance of what That thou shalt find in Fame's place."  
 may befall\* "Now," quoth I, "while we have space To speak, ere that I go from  
 thee, For the love of God, as telle me, In sooth, that I will of thee lear,\*  
 \*learn If this noise that I hear Be, as I have heard thee tell, Of folk that down  
 in earthe dwell, And cometh here in the same wise As I thee heard, ere this,  
 devise? And that there living body n'is\* \*is not In all  
 that house that yonder is, That maketh all this loude fare?"\*  
 \*hubbub, ado "No," answered he, "by Saint Clare, And all \*so wisly God rede  
 me;\* \*so surely god But one thing I will warne thee,  
 guide me\* Of the which thou wilt have wonder. Lo! to the House of Fame  
 yonder, Thou know'st how cometh ev'ry speech; It needeth not thee eft\* to  
 teach. \*again But understand now right well this; When  
 any speech y-comen is Up to the palace, anon right It waxeth\* like the same  
 wight\*\* \*becomes \*\*person Which that the word in earthe  
 spake, Be he cloth'd in red or black; And so weareth his likeness, And  
 speaks the word, that thou wilt guess\* \*fancy That it the  
 same body be, Whether man or woman, he or she. And is not this a  
 wondrous thing?" "Yes," quoth I then, "by Heaven's king!" And with this  
 word, "Farewell," quoth he, And here I will abide\* thee,  
 \*wait for And God of Heaven send thee grace Some good to learen\* in this  
 place." \*learn And I of him took leave anon, And gan forth  
 to the palace go'n.

At the opening of the Third Book, Chaucer briefly invokes Apollo's guidance,  
 and entreats him, because "the rhyme is light and lewd," to "make it  
 somewhat agreeable, though some verse fail in a syllable." If the god  
 answers the prayer, the poet promises to kiss the next laurel-tree <18> he  
 sees; and he proceeds:

When I was from this eagle gone, I gan behold upon this place; And certain,  
 ere I farther pace, I will you all the shape devise\*  
 \*describe Of house and city; and all the wise How I gan to this place  
 approach, That stood upon so high a roche,\* \*rock <19>  
 Higher standeth none in Spain; But up I climb'd with mucche pain, And  
 though to climbe \*grieved me,\* \*cost me painful effort\* Yet I  
 ententive\* was to see, \*attentive And for to pore\*  
 wondrous low, \*gaze closely If I could any wise know What  
 manner stone this rocke was, For it was like a thing of glass, But that it  
 shone full more clear But of what congealed mattere It was, I wist not  
 readily, But at the last espied I, And found that it was \*ev'ry deal\*  
 \*entirely\* A rock of ice, and not of steel. Thought I, "By Saint Thomas of  
 Kent, <20> This were a feeble fundament\* \*foundation  
 \*To builden\* a place so high; \*on which to build He ought

him lite\* to glorify  
save!"

\*little That hereon built, God so me

Then saw I all the half y-grave <21> With famous folke's names fele,\*  
\*many That hadde been in mucche weal,\* \*good fortune  
And their fames wide y-blow. But well unnethes\* might I know  
\*scarcely Any letters for to read Their names by; for out of dread\*  
\*doubt They were almost off thawed so, That of the letters one or two Were  
molt\* away of ev'ry name, \*melted Sounfamous was  
wox\* their fame; \*become But men say, "What may ever  
last?" Then gan I in my heart to cast\* \*conjecture That  
they were molt away for heat, And not away with stormes beat; For on the  
other side I sey\* \*saw Of this hill, that northward  
lay, How it was written full of names Of folke that had grete fames Of olde  
times, and yet they were As fresh as men had writ them there The selfe day,  
right ere that hour That I upon them gan to pore. But well I wiste what it  
made,\* \*meant It was conserved with the shade, All  
the writing which I sigh,\* \*saw Of a castle that stood  
on high; And stood eke on so cold a place, That heat might it not deface.\*  
\*injure, destroy

Then gan I on this hill to go'n, And found upon the cop\* a won,\*\*  
\*summit <22> \*\*house That all the men that be alive Have not the \*cunning  
to describe\* \*skill to describe\* The beauty of that like place, Nor  
coulede \*caste no compass\* \*find no contrivance\* Such another  
for to make, That might of beauty be its make,\* \*match,  
equal Nor one so wondrously y-wrought, That it astonieth yet my thought,  
And maketh all my wit to swink,\* \*labour Upon this  
castle for to think; So that the grete beauty, Cast,\* craft, and curiosity,  
\*ingenuity Ne can I not to you devise;\* \*describe My  
witte may me not suffice. But natheless all the substance I have yet in my  
remembrance; For why, me thoughte, by Saint Gile, Alle was of stone of  
beryle, Bothe the castle and the tow'r, And eke the hall, and ev'ry bow'r,\*  
\*chamber Withoute pieces or joinings, But many subtile compassings,\*  
\*contrivances As barbicans\* and pinnacles, \*watch-  
towers Imageries and tabernacles, I saw; and eke full of windows, As flakes  
fall in grete snows. And eke in each of the pinnacles Were sundry  
habitaclles,\* \*apartments or niches In which stoden, all  
without, Full the castle all about, Of all manner of minstrales And  
gestiours,<23> that telle tales Both of weeping and of game,\*  
\*mirth Of all that longeth unto Fame.

There heard I play upon a harp, That sounded bothe well and sharp, Him,

Orpheus, full craftily; And on this side faste by Satte the harper Arion, <24>  
 And eke Aeacides Chiron <25> And other harpers many a one, And the great  
 Glasgerion; <26> And smalle harpers, with their glees,\*  
 \*instruments Satten under them in sees,\* \*seats  
 And gan on them upward to gape, And counterfeit them as an ape, Or as  
 \*craft counterfeiteth kind.\* \*art counterfeits nature\* Then saw I  
 standing them behind, Afar from them, all by themselfe, Many thousand  
 times twelve, That made loude minstrelsies In cornmuse and eke in  
 shawmies, <27> And in many another pipe, That craftily began to pipe, Both  
 in dulcet <28> and in reed, That be at feastes with the bride. And many a  
 flute and liling horn, And pipes made of greene corn, As have these little  
 herde-grooms,\* \*shepherd-boys That keepe beastes in the  
 brooms. There saw I then Dan Citherus, And of Athens Dan Pronomus,  
 <29> And Marsyas <30> that lost his skin, Both in the face, body, and chin,  
 For that he would envyen, lo! To pipe better than Apollo. There saw I  
 famous, old and young, Pipers of alle Dutche tongue, <31> To learne love-  
 dances and springs, Reyes, <32> and these strange things. Then saw I in  
 another place, Standing in a large space, Of them that make bloody\* soun',  
 \*martial In trumpet, beam,\* and clarioun; \*horn <33> For  
 in fight and blood-sheddings Is used gladly clarionings. There heard I  
 trumpe Messenus. <34> Of whom speaketh Virgilius. There heard I Joab  
 trump also, <35> Theodamas, <36> and other mo', And all that used clarion  
 In Catalogne and Aragon, That in their times famous were To learne, saw I  
 trumpe there. There saw I sit in other sees, Playing upon sundry glees,  
 Whiche that I cannot neven,\* \*name More than  
 starres be in heaven; Of which I will not now rhyme, For ease of you, and  
 loss of time: For time lost, this knowe ye, By no way may recover'd be.

There saw I play jongelours,\* \*jugglers <37> Magicians,  
 and tregetours, <38> And Pythonesses, <39> charmeresses, And old  
 witches, and sorceresses, That use exorcisations, And eke subfumigations;  
 <40> And clerkes\* eke, which knowe well \*scholars All  
 this magic naturel, That craftily do their intents, To make, in certain  
 ascendents, <41> Images, lo! through which magic To make a man be whole  
 or sick. There saw I the queen Medea, <42> And Circes <43> eke, and  
 Calypsa. <44> There saw I Hermes Ballenus, <45> Limote, <46> and eke  
 Simon Magus. <47> There saw I, and knew by name, That by such art do  
 men have fame. There saw I Colle Tregetour <46> Upon a table of sycamore  
 Play an uncouth\* thing to tell; \*strange, rare I saw him  
 carry a windmell Under a walnut shell. Why should I make longer tale Of all  
 the people I there say,\* \*saw From hence even to  
 doomesday?

When I had all this folk behold, And found me \*loose, and not y-hold,\*  
 \*at liberty and unrestrained\* And I had mused longe while Upon these  
 walles of beryle, That shone lighter than any glass, And made \*well more\*  
 than it was \*much greater To seemen ev'rything, y-wis, As  
 kindly\* thing of Fame it is; <48> \*natural I gan forth roam  
 until I fand\* \*found The castle-gate on my right hand,  
 Which all so well y-carven was, That never such another n'as;\*  
 \*was not And yet it was by Adventure\* \*chance Y-  
 wrought, and not by \*subtile cure.\* \*careful art\* It needeth not  
 you more to tell, To make you too longe dwell, Of these gates' flourishings,  
 Nor of compasses,\* nor carvings, \*devices Nor how they  
 had in masonries, As corbets, <49> full of imageries. But, Lord! so fair it was  
 to shew, For it was all with gold behew.\* \*coloured But  
 in I went, and that anon; There met I crying many a one "A largess! largess!  
 <50> hold up well! God save the Lady of this pell,\*  
 \*palace Our owen gentle Lady Fame, And them that will to have name Of  
 us!" Thus heard I cryen all, And fast they came out of the hall, And shooke  
 \*nobles and sterlings,\* \*coins <51> And some y-crowned  
 were as kings, With crownes wrought fall of lozenges; And many ribands,  
 and many fringes, Were on their clothes truely Then at the last espied I That  
 pursuivantes and herauds,\* \*heralds That cry riche  
 folke's lauds,\* \*praises They weren all; and ev'ry man  
 Of them, as I you telle can, Had on him throwen a vesture Which that men  
 call a coat-armure, <52> Embroidered wondrously rich, As though there  
 were \*naught y-lich;\* \*nothing like it\* But naught will I, so may I  
 thrive, \*Be aboute to describe\* \*concern myself with describing\*  
 All these armes that there were, That they thus on their coates bare, For it  
 to me were impossible; Men might make of them a bible Twenty foote thick, I  
 trow. For, certain, whoso coulde know Might there all the armes see'n Of  
 famous folk that have been In Afric', Europe, and Asie, Since first began the  
 chivalry.

Lo! how should I now tell all this? Nor of the hall eke what need is To telle  
 you that ev'ry wall Of it, and floor, and roof, and all, Was plated half a foote  
 thick Of gold, and that was nothing wick',\* \*counterfeit But  
 for to prove in alle wise As fine as ducat of Venise, <53> Of which too little in  
 my pouch is? And they were set as thick of nouches\*  
 \*ornaments Fine, of the finest stones fair, That men read in the Lapidaire,  
 <54> As grasses growen in a mead. But it were all too long to read\*  
 \*declare The names; and therefore I pass. But in this rich and lusty place,  
 That Fame's Hall y-called was, Full muche press of folk there n'as,\*  
 \*was not Nor crowding for too muche press. But all on high, above a dais,  
 Set on a see\* imperial, <55> \*seat That made was of

ruby all, Which that carbuncle is y-call'd, I saw perpetually install'd A  
 feminine creature; That never formed by Nature Was such another thing y-  
 sey.\* \*seen For altherfirst,\* sooth to say,  
 \*first of all Me thoughte that she was so lite,\* \*little That  
 the length of a cubite Was longer than she seem'd to be; But thus soon in a  
 while she Herself then wonderfully stretch'd, That with her feet the earth she  
 reach'd, And with her head she touched heaven, Where as shine the starres  
 seven. <56> And thereto\* eke, as to my wit, \*moreover I  
 saw a greater wonder yet, Upon her eyen to behold; But certes I them never  
 told. For \*as fele eyen\* hadde she, \*as many eyes\* As  
 feathers upon fowles be, Or were on the beastes four That Godde's throne  
 gan honour, As John writ in th'Apocalypse. <57> Her hair, that \*oundy was  
 and crips,\* \*wavy <58> and crisp\* As burnish'd gold it shone to see;  
 And, sooth to tellen, also she Had all so fele\* upstanding ears,  
 \*many And tongues, as on beastes be hairs; And on her feet waxen saw I  
 Partridges' winges readily.<59> But, Lord! the pierrie\* and richness  
 \*gems, jewellery I saw sitting on this goddess, And the heavenly melody Of  
 songes full of harmony, I heard about her throne y-sung, That all the palace  
 walles rung! (So sung the mighty Muse, she That called is Calliope, And her  
 eight sisteren\* eke, \*sisters That in their faces seeme  
 meek); And evermore eternally They sang of Fame as then heard I: "Heried\*  
 be thou and thy name, \*praised Goddess of Renown  
 and Famel!" Then was I ware, lo! at the last, As I mine eyen gan upcast, That  
 this ilke noble queen On her shoulders gan sustene\*  
 \*sustain Both the armes, and the name Of those that hadde large fame;  
 Alexander, and Hercules, That with a shirt his life lese.\* <60>  
 \*lost Thus found I sitting this goddess, In noble honour and richness; Of  
 which I stint\* awhile now, \*refrain (from speaking) Of other  
 things to telle you.

Then saw I stand on either side, Straight down unto the doores wide, From  
 the dais, many a pillere Of metal, that shone not full clear; But though they  
 were of no richness, Yet were they made for great nobless, And in them greate  
 sentence.\* \*significance And folk of digne\* reverence,  
 \*worthy, lofty Of which \*I will you telle fand,\* \*I will try totell you\*  
 Upon the pillars saw I stand. Altherfirst, lo! there I sigh\*  
 \*saw Upon a pillar stand on high, That was of lead and iron fine, Him of the  
 secte Saturnine, <61> The Hebrew Josephus the old, That of Jewes' gestes\*  
 told; \*deeds of braver And he bare on his shoulders high  
 All the fame up of Jewry. And by him stoden other seven, Full wise and  
 worthy for to neven,\* \*name To help him bearen up the  
 charge,\* \*burden It was so heavy and so large. And, for  
 they writen of battailes, As well as other old marvailles, Therefore was, lo!

this pillere, Of which that I you telle here, Of lead and iron both, y-wis; For  
 iron Marte's metal is, <62> Which that god is of battaile; And eke the lead,  
 withoute fail, Is, lo! the metal of Saturn, That hath full large wheel\* to turn.  
 \*orbit Then stode forth, on either row, Of them which I coulde know,  
 Though I them not by order tell, To make you too longe dwell. These, of the  
 which I gin you read, There saw I standen, out of dread, Upon an iron pillar  
 strong, That painted was all endelong\* \*from top to bottom\*  
 With tiger's blood in ev'ry place, The Tholosan that highte Stace, <63> That  
 bare of Thebes up the name Upon his shoulders, and the fame Also of cruel  
 Achilles. And by him stood, withoute lease,\* \*falsehood  
 Full wondrous high on a pillere Of iron, he, the great Homere; And with him  
 Dares and Dytus, <64> Before, and eke he, Lollius, <65> And Guido eke de  
 Colempnis, <66> And English Gaufrid <67> eke, y-wis. And each of these, as  
 I have joy, Was busy for to bear up Troy; So heavy thereof was the fame,  
 That for to bear it was no game. But yet I gan full well espy, Betwixt them  
 was a little envy. One said that Homer made lies, Feigning in his poetries,  
 And was to the Greeks favourable; Therefore held he it but a fable. Then saw  
 I stand on a pillere That was of tinned iron clear, Him, the Latin poet Virgile,  
 That borne hath up a longe while The fame of pious Aeneas. And next him  
 on a pillar was Of copper, Venus' clerk Ovide, That hath y-sowen wondrous  
 wide The greate god of Love's fame. And there he bare up well his name  
 Upon this pillar all so high, As I might see it with mine eye; For why? this  
 hall whereof I read Was waxen in height, and length, and bread,\*  
 \*breadth Well more by a thousand deal\* \*times Than  
 it was erst, that saw I weel. Then saw I on a pillar by, Of iron wrought full  
 sternely, The greate poet, Dan Lucan, That on his shoulders bare up than,  
 As high as that I might it see, The fame of Julius and Pompey; <68> And by  
 him stood all those clerks That write of Rome's mighty works, That if I would  
 their names tell, All too longe must I dwell. And next him on a pillar stood Of  
 sulphur, like as he were wood,\* \*mad Dan Claudian,  
 <69> the sooth to tell, That bare up all the fame of hell, Of Pluto, and of  
 Proserpine, That queen is of \*the darke pine\* \*the dark realm of  
 pain\* Why should I telle more of this? The hall was alle fulle, y-wis, Of them  
 that written olde gests,\* \*histories of great deeds As be on trees  
 rookes' nests; But it a full confus'd mattere Were all these gestes for to hear,  
 That they of write, and how they hight.\* \*are called

But while that I beheld this sight, I heard a noise approche blive,\*  
 \*quickly That far'd\* as bees do in a hive, \*went Against  
 their time of outflying; Right such a manner murmuring, For all the world, it  
 seem'd to me. Then gan I look about, and see That there came entering the  
 hall A right great company withal, And that of sundry regions, Of all kinds  
 and conditions That dwell in earth under the moon, Both poor and rich; and

all so soon As they were come into the hall, They gan adown on knees to fall,  
 Before this ilke\* noble queen, \*same And saide,  
 "Grant us, Lady sheen,\* \*bright, lovely Each of us of thy grace  
 a boon."\* \*favour And some of them she granted soon,  
 And some she warned\* well and fair, \*refused And some  
 she granted the contrair\* \*contrary Of their asking utterly;  
 But this I say you truely, What that her cause was, I n'ist;\* \*wist  
 not, know not For of these folk full well I wist, They hadde good fame each  
 deserved, Although they were diversely served. Right as her sister, Dame  
 Fortune, Is wont to serven \*in commune.\* \*commonly,  
 usually\*

Now hearken how she gan to pay Them that gan of her grace to pray; And  
 right, lo! all this company Saide sooth,\* and not a lie.  
 \*truth "Madame," thus quoth they, "we be Folk that here beseeche thee That  
 thou grant us now good fame, And let our workes have good name In full  
 recompensatioun Of good work, give us good renown "I warn\* it you," quoth  
 she anon; \*refuse "Ye get of me good fame none, By God!  
 and therefore go your way." "Alas," quoth they, "and well-away! Tell us what  
 may your cause be." "For that it list\* me not," quoth she,  
 \*pleases No wight shall speak of you, y-wis, Good nor harm, nor that nor  
 this."

And with that word she gan to call Her messenger, that was in hall, And  
 bade that he should faste go'n, Upon pain to be blind anon, For Aeolus, the  
 god of wind; "In Thrace there ye shall him find, And bid him bring his  
 clarioun, That is full diverse of his soun', And it is called Cleare Laud, With  
 which he wont is to heraud\* \*proclaim Them that me list  
 y-praised be, And also bid him how that he Bring eke his other clarioun,  
 That hight\* Slander in ev'ry town, \*is called With which he  
 wont is to diffame\* \*defame, disparage Them that me list, and  
 do them shame." This messenger gan faste go'n, And found where, in a cave  
 of stone, In a country that highte Thrace, This Aeolus, \*with harde grace,\*  
 \*Evil favour attend him!\* Helde the windes in distress,\*  
 \*constraint And gan them under him to press, That they began as bears to  
 roar, He bound and pressed them so sore. This messenger gan fast to cry,  
 "Rise up," quoth he, "and fast thee hie, Until thou at my Lady be, And take  
 thy clarions eke with thee, And speed thee forth." And he anon Took to him  
 one that hight Triton, <70> His clarions to beare tho,\*  
 \*then And let a certain winde go, That blew so hideously and high, That it  
 lefte not a sky\* \*cloud <71> In all the welkin\* long  
 and broad. \*sky This Aeolus nowhere abode\*  
 \*delayed Till he was come to Fame's feet, And eke the man that Triton hete,\*



\*is called And there he stood as still as stone.

And therewithal there came anon Another huge company Of goode folk, and gan to cry, "Lady, grant us goode fame, And let our workes have that name, Now in honour of gentleness; And all so God your soule bless; For we have well deserved it, Therefore is right we be well quit."\*

\*requited "As thrive I," quoth she, "ye shall fail; Good workes shall you not avail To have of me good fame as now; But, wot ye what, I grante you. That ye shall have a shrewde\* fame, \*evil, cursed And wicked los,\* and worse name, \*reputation <72> Though ye good los have well deserv'd; Now go your way, for ye be serv'd. And now, Dan Aeolus,"

quoth she, "Take forth thy trump anon, let see, That is y-called Slander light, And blow their los, that ev'ry wight Speak of them harm and shrewedness,\* \*wickedness, malice Instead of good and

worthiness; For thou shalt trump all the contrair Of that they have done, well and fair." Alas! thought I, what adventures\* \*(evil)

fortunes Have these sorry creatures, That they, amonges all the press, Should thus be shamed guilteless? But what! it muste needes be. What did this Aeolus, but he Took out his blacke trump of brass, That fouler than the Devil was, And gan this trumpet for to blow, As all the world 't would overthrow. Throughout every regioun Went this foule trumpet's soun', As swift as pellet out of gun When fire is in the powder run. And such a smoke gan out wend,\* \*go Out of this foule trumpet's end,

Black, blue, greenish, swart,\* and red, \*black <73> As doth when that men melt lead, Lo! all on high from the tewell;\*

\*chimney <74> And thereto\* one thing saw I well, \*also That the farther that it ran, The greater waxen it began, As doth the river from a well,\* \*fountain And it stank as the pit of hell.

Alas! thus was their shame y-rung, And guilteless, on ev'ry tongue.

Then came the thirde company, And gan up to the dais to hie,\*

\*hasten And down on knees they fell anon, And saide, "We be ev'ry one Folk that have full truely Deserved fame right fully, And pray you that it may be know Right as it is, and forth y-blow." "I grante," quoth she, "for me list That now your goode works be wist;\*

\*known And yet ye shall have better los, In despite of all your foes, Than worthy\* is, and that anon.

\*merited Let now," quoth she, "thy trumpet go'n, Thou Aeolus, that is so black, And out thine other trumpet take, That highte Laud, and blow it so That through the world their fame may go, Easily and not too fast, That it be knowen at the last." "Full gladly, Lady mine," he said; And out his trump of gold he braid\* \*pulled forth Anon, and set it to his mouth,

And blew it east, and west, and south, And north, as loud as any thunder, That ev'ry wight had of it wonder, So broad it ran ere that it stent.\*

\*ceased And certes all the breath that went Out of his trumpet's mouthe  
smell'd As\* men a pot of balme held \*as if Among a  
basket full of roses; This favour did he to their loses.\*  
\*reputations

And right with this I gan espy Where came the fourthe company. But certain  
they were wondrous few; And gan to standen in a rew,\*  
\*row And saide, "Certes, Lady bright, We have done well with all our might,  
But we \*not keep\* to have fame; \*care not Hide our  
workes and our name, For Godde's love! for certes we Have surely done it for  
bounty,\* \*goodness, virtue And for no manner other thing." "I  
grante you all your asking," Quoth she; "let your workes be dead."

With that I turn'd about my head, And saw anon the fifthe rout,\*  
\*company That to this Lady gan to lout,\* \*bow down  
And down on knees anon to fall; And to her then besoughten all To hide  
their good workes eke, And said, they gave\* not a leek  
\*cared For no fame, nor such renown; For they for contemplatioun And  
Godde's love had y-wrought, Nor of fame would they have aught. "What!"  
quoth she, "and be ye wood? And \*weene ye\* for to do good,  
\*do ye imagine\* And for to have of that no fame? \*Have ye despite\* to have  
my name? \*do ye despise\* Nay, ye shall lie every one! Blow thy  
trump, and that anon," Quoth she, "thou Aeolus, I hote,\*  
\*command And ring these folkes works by note, That all the world may of it  
hear." And he gan blow their los\* so clear \*reputation  
Within his golden clarioun, That through the worlde went the soun', All so  
kindly, and so soft, That their fame was blown aloft.

And then came the sixth company, And gunnen\* fast on Fame to cry;  
\*began Right verily in this mannere They saide; "Mercy, Lady dear! To telle  
certain as it is, We have done neither that nor this, But idle all our life hath  
be;\* \*been But natheless yet praye we That we may  
have as good a fame, And great renown, and knowen\* name,  
\*well-known As they that have done noble gests,\* \*feats.  
And have achieved all their quests,\* \*enterprises; desires As well of  
Love, as other thing; All\* was us never brooch, nor ring,  
\*although Nor elles aught from women sent, Nor ones in their hearte meant  
To make us only friendly cheer, But mighte \*teem us upon bier;\*\*might lay us on our bier Yet let us to the people seem (by their  
adverse demeanour)\* Such as the world may of us deem,\*  
\*judge That women loven us for wood.\* \*madly It  
shall us do as muche good, And to our heart as much avail, The  
counterpoise,\* ease, and travail, \*compensation As we had

won it with labour; For that is deare bought honour, \*At the regard of\* our  
great ease.                                 \*in comparison with\* \*And yet\* ye must us more  
please;   \*in addition\* Let us be holden eke thereto Worthy,  
and wise, and good also, And rich, and happy unto love, For Godde's love,  
that sits above; Though we may not the body have Of women, yet, so God  
you save, Let men glue\* on us the name;   \*fasten  
Sufficeth that we have the fame." "I grante," quoth she, "by my troth; Now  
Aeolus, withoute sloth, Take out thy trump of gold," quoth she, "And blow as  
they have asked me, That ev'ry man ween\* them at ease,  
\*believe Although they go in full \*bad leas.\*"   \*sorry plight\* This  
Aeolus gan it so blow, That through the world it was y-know.

Then came the seventh rout anon, And fell on knees ev'ry one, And saide,  
"Lady, grant us soon The same thing, the same boon, Which \*this next folk\*  
you have done."                         \*the people just before us\* "Fy on you," quoth she, "ev'ry  
one! Ye nasty swine, ye idle wretches, Full fill'd of rotten slowe tetches!"  
\*blemishes <75> What? false thieves! ere ye would \*Be famous good,\* and  
nothing n'ould                                 \*have good fame\* Deserve why, nor never  
raught,\*   \*recked, cared (to do so) Men rather you to hangen ought.  
For ye be like the sleepy cat, That would have fish; but, know'st thou what?  
He woulde no thing wet his claws. Evil thrift come to your jaws, And eke to  
mine, if I it grant, Or do favour you to avaunt.\*   \*boast your  
deeds Thou Aeolus, thou King of Thrace, Go, blow this folk a \*sorry grace,"\*  
\*disgrace Quoth she, "anon; and know'st thou how? As I shall telle thee  
right now, Say, these be they that would honour Have, and do no kind of  
labour, Nor do no good, and yet have laud, And that men ween'd that Belle  
Isaude <76> \*Could them not of love wern;\*   \*could not refuse them  
her love\* And yet she that grinds at the quern\*   \*mill <77> Is  
all too good to ease their heart." This Aeolus anon upstart, And with his  
blacke clarioun He gan to blazen out a soun' As loud as bellows wind in hell;  
And eke therewith, the sooth to tell, This sounde was so full of japes,\*  
\*jests As ever were mows\* in apes;   \*grimaces And  
that went all the world about, That ev'ry wight gan on them shout, And for  
to laugh as they were wood;\*   \*mad \*Such game found  
they in their hood.\* <78>                         \*so were they ridiculed\*

Then came another company, That hadde done the treachery, The harm,  
and the great wickedness, That any hearte coulde guess; And prayed her to  
have good fame, And that she would do them no shame, But give them los  
and good renown, And \*do it blow\* in clarioun.   \*cause it to be  
blown\* "Nay, wis!" quoth she, "it were a vice; All be there in me no justice,  
Me liste not to do it now, Nor this will I grant to you."

Then came there leaping in a rout,\* \*crowd And gan to  
 clappen\* all about \*strike, knock Every man upon the  
 crown, That all the hall began to soun'; And saide; "Lady lefe\* and dear,  
 \*loved We be such folk as ye may hear. To tellen all the tale aright, We be  
 shrewes\* every wight, \*wicked, impious people And have  
 delight in wickedness, As goode folk have in goodness, And joy to be y-  
 knowen shrews, And full of vice and \*wicked thews;\* \*evil  
 qualities\* Wherefore we pray you \*on a row,\* \*all together\*  
 That our fame be such y-know In all things right as it is." "I grant it you,"  
 quoth she, "y-wis. But what art thou that say'st this tale, That wearest on  
 thy hose a pale,\* \*vertical stripe And on thy tippet such a  
 bell?" "Madame," quoth he, "sooth to tell, I am \*that ilke shrew,\* y-wis,  
 \*the same wretch\* That burnt the temple of Isidis, In Athenes, lo! that city."  
 <79> "And wherefore didst thou so?" quoth she. "By my thrift!" quoth he,  
 "Madame, I woulde fain have had a name As other folk had in the town;  
 Although they were of great renown For their virtue and their thews,\*  
 \*good qualities Thought I, as great fame have shrews (Though it be naught)  
 for shrewdeness, As good folk have for goodness; And since I may not have  
 the one, The other will I not forgo'n. So for to gette \*fame's hire,\*  
 \*the reward of fame\* The temple set I all afire. \*Now do our los be blowen  
 swithe, As wisly be thou ever blithe."\* \*see note <80>  
 "Gladly," quoth she; "thou Aeolus, Hear'st thou what these folk prayen us?"  
 "Madame, I hear full well," quoth he, "And I will trumpen it, pardie!" And  
 took his blacke trumpet fast, And gan to puffen and to blast, Till it was at  
 the worlde's end.

With that I gan \*aboute wend,\* \*turn\* For one that  
 stood right at my back Me thought full goodly\* to me spake,  
 \*courteously, fairly And saide, "Friend, what is thy name? Art thou come  
 hither to have fame?" "Nay, \*for soothe,\* friend!" quoth I;  
 \*surely\* "I came not hither, \*grand mercy,\* \*great thanks\*  
 For no such cause, by my head! Sufficeth me, as I were dead, That no wight  
 have my name in hand. I wot myself best how I stand, For what I dree,\* or  
 what I think, \*suffer I will myself it alle drink, Certain,  
 for the more part, As far forth as I know mine art." "What doest thou here,  
 then," quoth he. Quoth I, "That will I telle thee; The cause why I stande here,  
 Is some new tidings for to lear,\* \*learn Some newe  
 thing, I know not what, Tidings either this or that, Of love, or suche thinges  
 glad. For, certainly, he that me made To come hither, said to me I shoulde  
 bothe hear and see In this place wondrous things; But these be not such  
 tidings As I meant of." "No?" quoth he. And I answered, "No, pardie! For well  
 I wot ever yet, Since that first I hadde wit, That some folk have desired fame  
 Diversely, and los, and name; But certainly I knew not how Nor where that

Fame dwelled, ere now Nor eke of her description, Nor also her condition,  
 Nor \*the order of her doom,\*                    \*the principle of her judgments\* Knew I  
 not till I hither come." "Why, then, lo! be these tidings, That thou nowe  
 hither brings, That thou hast heard?" quoth he to me. "But now \*no force,\*  
 for well I see    \*no matter\* What thou desirest for to lear."  
 Come forth, and stand no longer here. And I will thee, withoute dread,\*  
 \*doubt Into another place lead, Where thou shalt hear many a one."

Then gan I forth with him to go'n Out of the castle, sooth to say. Then saw I  
 stand in a vally, Under the castle faste by, A house, that domus Daedali,  
 That Labyrinthus <81> called is, N'as\* made so wondrously, y-wis,  
 \*was not Nor half so quaintly\* was y-wrought.    \*strangely  
 And evermore, as swift as thought, This quainte\* house aboute went,  
 \*strange That nevermore it \*stille stent;\*    \*ceased to move\*  
 And thereout came so great a noise, That had it stooden upon Oise, <82>  
 Men might have heard it easily To Rome, I \*trowe sickerly.\*  
 \*confidently believe\* And the noise which I heard, For all the world right so  
 it far'd As doth the routing\* of the stone    \*rushing noise\* That  
 from the engine<83> is let go'n. And all this house of which I read\*  
 \*tell you Was made of twigges sallow,\* red,    \*willow And  
 green eke, and some were white, Such as men \*to the cages twight,\*  
 \*pull to make cages\* Or maken of these panniers, Or elles hutches or  
 dossers,\*    \*back-baskets That, for the swough\* and for the  
 twigs,    \*rushing noise This house was all so full of gigs,\*  
 \*sounds of wind And all so full eke of chirking,\*  
 \*creakings And of many other workings; And eke this house had of entries  
 As many as leaves be on trees, In summer when that they be green, And on  
 the roof men may yet see'n A thousand holes, and well mo', To let the  
 soundes oute go. And by day \*in ev'ry tide\*  
 \*continually\* Be all the doores open wide, And by night each one unshet,\*  
 \*unshut, open Nor porter there is none to let\*    \*hinder  
 No manner tidings in to pace; Nor ever rest is in that place, That it n'is\* fill'd  
 full of tidings,    \*is not Either loud, or of whisperings; And  
 ever all the house's angles Are full of \*rownings and of jangles,\*  
 \*whisperings and chatterings\* Of wars, of peace, of marriages, Of rests, of  
 labour, of voyages, Of abode, of death, of life, Of love, of hate, accord, of  
 strife, Of loss, of lore, and of winnings, Of health, of sickness, of buildings,  
 Of faire weather and tempests, Of qualm\* of folkes and of beasts;  
 \*sickness Of divers transmutations Of estates and of regions; Of trust, of  
 dread,\* of jealousy,    \*doubt Of wit, of cunning, of folly,  
 Of plenty, and of great famine, Of \*cheap, of dearth,\* and of ruin;  
 \*cheapness & dearness (of food)\* Of good or of mis-government, Of fire, and  
 diverse accident. And lo! this house of which I write, \*Sicker be ye,\* it was

not lite;\*                      \*be assured\* \*small For it was sixty mile of length, All\*  
 was the timber of no strength;                      \*although Yet it is founded  
 to endure, \*While that it list to Adventure,\*                      \*while fortune pleases\*  
 That is the mother of tidings, As is the sea of wells and springs; And it was  
 shapen like a cage. "Certes," quoth I, "in all mine age,\*  
 \*life Ne'er saw I such a house as this."

And as I wonder'd me, y-wis, Upon this house, then ware was I How that  
 mine eagle, faste by, Was perched high upon a stone; And I gan straighte to  
 him go'n, And saide thus; "I praye thee That thou a while abide\* me,  
 \*wait for For Godde's love, and let me see What wonders in this place be; For  
 yet parauntre\* I may lear\*\*                      \*peradventure \*\*learn Some good  
 thereon, or somewhat hear, That \*lefe me were,\* ere that I went."  
 \*were pleasing to me\* "Peter! that is mine intent," Quoth he to me; "therefore  
 I dwell;\*                      \*tarry But, certain, one thing I thee tell, That,  
 but\* I bringe thee therein,                      \*unless Thou shalt never  
 \*can begin\*                      \*be able\* To come into it, out of doubt, So  
 fast it whirleth, lo! about. But since that Jovis, of his grace, As I have said,  
 will thee solace Finally with these ilke\* things,                      \*same  
 These uncouth sightes and tidings, To pass away thy heaviness, Such ruth\*  
 hath he of thy distress                      \*compassion That thou suff'rest  
 debonairly,\*                      \*gently And know'st thyselven utterly  
 Desperate of alle bliss, Since that Fortune hath made amiss The fruit of all  
 thy hearte's rest Languish, and eke \*in point to brest;\*                      \*on the point of  
 breaking\* But he, through his mighty merite, Will do thee ease, all be it lite,\*  
 \*little And gave express commandement, To which I am obedient, To further  
 thee with all my might, And wiss\* and teache thee aright,  
 \*direct Where thou may'st moste tidings hear, Shalt thou anon many one  
 lear."

And with this word he right anon Hent\* me up betwixt his tone,\*\*  
 \*caught \*\*toes And at a window in me brought, That in this house was, as  
 me thought; And therewithal me thought it stent,\*                      \*stopped  
 And nothing it aboute went; And set me in the floore down. But such a  
 congregatioun Of folk, as I saw roam about, Some within and some without,  
 Was never seen, nor shall be eft,\*                      \*again, hereafter That, certes,  
 in the world n' is\* left                      \*is not So many formed by Nature,  
 Nor dead so many a creature, That well unnethes\* in that place  
 \*scarcely Had I a foote breadth of space; And ev'ry wight that I saw there  
 Rown'd\* evereach in other's ear                      \*whispered A newe  
 tiding privily, Or elles told all openly Right thus, and saide, "Know'st not  
 thou What is betid,\* lo! righte now?"                      \*happened "No,"  
 quoth he; "telle me what." And then he told him this and that, And swore

thereto, that it was sooth; "Thus hath he said," and "Thus he do'th," And  
"Thus shall 't be," and "Thus heard I say "That shall be found, that dare I  
lay;"\*                                 \*wager That all the folk that is alive Have not the  
cunning to describe\*                                 \*describe The things that I hearde  
there, What aloud, and what in th'ear. But all the wonder most was this;  
When one had heard a thing, y-wis, He came straight to another wight, And  
gan him tellen anon right The same tale that to him was told, Or it a furlong  
way was old, <84> And gan somewhat for to eche\*  
\*eke, add To this tiding in his speech, More than it ever spoken was. And  
not so soon departed n'as\*                                 \*was He from him, than  
that he met With the third; and \*ere he let Any stound,\* he told him als';  
\*without delaying a momen\* Were the tidings true or false, Yet would he tell  
it natheless, And evermore with more increase Than it was erst.\* Thus north  
and south                                 \*at first Went ev'ry tiding from mouth to mouth,  
And that increasing evermo', As fire is wont to \*quick and go\*  
\*become alive, and spread\* From a spark y-sprung amiss, Till all a city  
burnt up is. And when that it was full up-sprung, And waxen\* more on ev'ry  
tongue                                 \*increased Than e'er it was, it went anon Up to a  
window out to go'n; Or, but it mighte thereout pass, It gan creep out at some  
crevass,\*                                 \*crevice, chink And fly forth faste for the nonce. And  
sometimes saw I there at once \*A leasing, and a sad sooth saw,\*                                 \*a  
falsehood and an earnest That gan \*of adventure\* draw                                 true  
saying\* \*by chance Out at a window for to pace; And when they metten in  
that place, They were checked both the two, And neither of them might out  
go; For other so they gan \*to crowd,\*                                 \*push, squeeze, each other\* Till  
each of them gan cryen loud, "Let me go first!" -- "Nay, but let me! And here I  
will ensure thee, With vowes, if thou wilt do so, That I shall never from thee  
go, But be thine owen sworn brother! We will us medle\* each with other,  
\*mingle That no man, be he ne'er so wroth, Shall have one of us two, but  
both At ones, as \*beside his leave,\*                                 \*despite his desire\* Come  
we at morning or at eve, Be we cried or \*still y-rownd."\*  
\*quietly whispered\* Thus saw I false and sooth, compounded,\*  
\*compounded Together fly for one tiding. Then out at holes gan to wring\*  
\*squeeze, struggle Every tiding straight to Fame; And she gan give to each  
his name After her disposition, And gave them eke duration, Some to wax  
and wane soon, As doth the faire white moon; And let them go. There might  
I see Winged wonders full fast flee, Twenty thousand in a rout,\*  
\*company As Aeolus them blew about. And, Lord! this House in alle times  
Was full of shipmen and pilgrimes, <85> With \*scrippes Bretfull of leasings,\*  
\*wallets brimful of falsehoods\* Entremedled with tidings\*  
\*true stories And eke alone by themselfe. And many thousand times twelve  
Saw I eke of these pardoners,<86> Couriers, and eke messengers, With  
boistes\* crammed full of lies                                 \*boxes As ever vessel was

with lyes.\*                       \*lees of wine And as I altherfaste\* went  
 \*with all speed About, and did all mine intent Me \*for to play and for to  
 lear,\*           \*to amuse and instruct myself\* And eke a tiding for to hear That  
 I had heard of some country, That shall not now be told for me; -- For it no  
 need is, readily; Folk can sing it better than I. For all must out, or late or  
 rath,\*                               \*soon All the sheaves in the lath;\*

\*barn <87> I heard a greate noise withal In a corner of the hall, Where men  
 of love tidings told; And I gan thitherward behold, For I saw running ev'ry  
 wight As fast as that they hadde might, And ev'reach cried, "What thing is  
 that?" And some said, "I know never what." And when they were all on a  
 heap, Those behinde gan up leap, And clomb\* upon each other fast, <88>  
 \*climbed And up the noise on high they cast, And trodden fast on others'  
 heels, And stamp'd, as men do after eels.

But at the last I saw a man, Which that I not describe can; But that he  
 seemed for to be A man of great authority. And therewith I anon abraid\*  
 \*awoke Out of my sleepe, half afraid; Rememb'ring well what I had seen,  
 And how high and far I had been In my ghost; and had great wonder Of  
 what the mighty god of thunder Had let me know; and gan to write Like as  
 ye have me heard endite. Wherefore to study and read alway I purpose to do  
 day by day. And thus, in dreaming and in game, Endeth this little book of  
 Fame.

Here endeth the Book of Fame