THE FIRSTBOOK.

THE double sorrow <1> of Troilus to tell, That was the King Priamus' son of Troy, In loving how his adventures* fell *fortunes From woe to weal, and after* out of joy, *afterwards Mypurpose is, ere I you parte froy.* *from Tisiphone,<2> thou help me to indite These woeful words, that weep as I do write.

To thee I call, thou goddess of torment! Thou cruel wight, that sorrowest ever in pain; Help me, that am the sorry instrument That helpeth lovers, as I can, to plain.* *complain For well it sits,* the soothe for to sayn, *befits Unto a woeful wight a dreary fere,* *companion And to a sorry tale a sorry cheer.* *countenance

For I, that God of Love's servants serve, Nor dare to love for mine unlikeliness,* <3> *unsuitableness Praye for speed,* although I shoulde sterve,** *success **die So far I am from his help in darkness; But natheless, might I do yet gladness To any lover, or any love avail,* *advance Have thou the thank, and mine be the travail.

But ye lovers that bathen in gladness, If any drop of pity in you be, Remember you for old past heaviness, For Godde's love, and on adversity That others suffer; think how sometime ye Founde how Love durste you displease; Or elles ye have won it with great ease.

And pray for them that been in the case Of Troilus, as ye may after hear,
That Love them bring in heaven to solace;*

*delight, comfortAnd for
me pray also, that God so dear May give me might to show, in some
mannere, Such pain or woe as Love's folk endure, In Troilus' *unseely
adventure*

unhappy fortune

And pray for them that eke be despair'd In love, that never will recover'd be; And eke for them that falsely be appair'd* *slandered Through wicked tongues, be it he or she: Or thus bid* God, for his benignity, *pray To grant them soon out of this world to pace,* *pass, go That be despaired of their love's grace.

And bid also for them that be at ease In love, that God them grant perseverance, And send them might their loves so to please, That it to them be *worship and pleasance;* *honour and pleasure* For so hope I my

soul best to advance, To pray for them that Love's servants be, And write their woe, and live in charity;

And for to have of them compassion, As though I were their owen brother dear. Now listen all with good entention,* *attention For I will now go straight to my mattere, In which ye shall the double sorrow hear Of Troilus, in loving of Cresside, And how that she forsook him ere she died.

In Troy, during the siege, dwelt "a lord of great authority, a great divine," named Calchas; who, through the oracle of Apollo, knew that Troy should be destroyed. He stole away secretly to the Greek camp, where he was gladly received, and honoured for his skill in divining, of which the besiegers hoped to make use. Within the city there was great anger at the treason of Calchas; and the people declared that he and all his kin were worthy to be burnt. His daughter, whom he had left in the city, a widow and alone, was in great fear for her life.

Cressida was this lady's name aright; *As to my doom,* in alle Troy city *in my judgment* So fair was none, for over ev'ry wight So angelic was her native beauty, That like a thing immortal seemed she, As sooth a perfect heav'nly creature, That down seem'd sent in scorning of Nature.

In her distress, "well nigh out of her wit for pure fear," she appealed for protection to Hector; who, "piteous of nature," and touched by her sorrow and her beauty, assured her of safety, so long as she pleased to dwell in Troy. The siege went on; but they of Troy did not neglect the honour and worship of their deities; most of all of "the relic hight Palladion, <4> that was their trust aboven ev'ry one." In April, "when clothed is the mead with newe green, of jolly Ver [Spring] the prime," the Trojans went to hold the festival of Palladion -- crowding to the temple, "in all their beste guise," lusty knights, fresh ladies, and maidens bright.

Among the which was this Cresseida, In widow's habit black; but natheless, Right as our firste letter is now A, In beauty first so stood she makeless;*

matchless Her goodly looking gladded all the press;

crowd Was never seen thing to be praised derre,

dearer, more worthy Nor under blacke cloud so bright a sterre,

*star

As she was, as they saiden, ev'ry one That her behelden in her blacke weed;*

*garment And yet she stood, full low and still, alone, Behind all other folk,

in little brede, *inconspicuously* And night he door, ay *under

shame's drede;* *for dread of shame* Simple of bearing, debonair* of

cheer, *gracious With a full sure* looking and mannere.

*assured

"I have heard told, pardie, of your living, Ye lovers, and your lewed* observance, *ignorant, foolish And what a labour folk have in winning Of love, and in it keeping with doubtance;* *doubt And when your prey is lost, woe and penance;* *suffering Oh, very fooles! may ye no thing see? Can none of you aware by other be?"

But the God of Love vowed vengeance on Troilus for that despite, and, showing that his bow was not broken, "hit him at the full."

Within the temple went he forth playing, This Troilus, with ev'ry wight about, On this lady and now on that looking, Whether she were of town, or *of without;* *from beyond the walls* And *upon cas* befell, that through the rout* *by chance* *crowd His eye pierced, and so deep it went, Till on Cresside it smote, and there it stent;* *stayed

And suddenly wax'd wonder sore astoned,*
her bet* behold in busy wise:
thought he; "where hast thou woned*
goodly to devise?*
*describe Therewith his heart began to
spread and rise; And soft he sighed, lest men might him hear, And caught
again his former *playing cheer.*
jesting demeanour

She was not with the least of her stature, *she was tall*But all her limbes so well answering Were to womanhood, that creature Was never lesse mannish in seeming. And eke *the pure wise of her moving* *by very the way She showed well, that men might in her guess she moved* Honour, estate,* and womanly nobless. *dignity

Then Troilus right wonder well withal Began to like her moving and her cheer,*

countenance Which somedeal dainous was, for she let

fall *disdainful Her look a little aside, in such mannere Ascaunce*
"What! may I not stande here?" *as if to say <6> And after that *her looking gan she light,* *her expression became That never thought him see so good a sight. more pleasant*

And of her look in him there gan to quicken So great desire, and strong affection, That in his hearte's bottom gan to sticken Of her the fix'd and deep impression; And though he erst* had pored** up and down, *previously **looked Then was he glad his hornes in to shrink; Unnethes* wist he how to look or wink. *scarcely

Lo! he that held himselfe so cunning, And scorned them that Love's paines drien,* *suffer Was full unware that love had his dwelling Within the subtile streames* of her eyen; *rays, glances That suddenly he thought he felte dien, Right with her look, the spirit in his heart; Blessed be Love, that thus can folk convert!

She thus, in black, looking to Troilus, Over all things he stoode to behold; But his desire, nor wherefore he stood thus, He neither *cheere made,* nor worde told; *showed by his countenance* But from afar, *his manner for to hold,* *to observe due courtesy* On other things sometimes his look he cast, And eft* <7> on her, while that the service last.** *again **lasted

And after this, not fully all awhaped,* *daunted Out of the temple all easily be went, Repenting him that ever he had japed* *jested Of Love's folk, lest fully the descent Of scorn fell on himself; but what he meant, Lest it were wist on any manner side, His woe he gan dissemble and eke hide.

Returning to his palace, he begins hypocritically to smile and jest at Love's servants and their pains; but by and by he has to dismiss his attendants, feigning "other busy needs." Then, alone in his chamber, he begins to groan and sigh, and call up again Cressida's form as he saw her in the temple -- "making a mirror of his mind, in which he saw all wholly her figure." He thinks no travail or sorrow too high a price for the love of such a goodly woman; and, "full unadvised of his woe coming,"

Thus took he purpose Love's craft to sue,* *follow And thought that he would work all privily, First for to hide his desire all *in mew* *in a cage, secretly From every wight y-born, all utterly, *But he might aught recover'd be thereby;* *unless he gained by it* Rememb'ring him, that love *too wide y-blow* *too much spoken of* Yields bitter fruit, although sweet seed be sow.

And, over all this, muche more he thought What thing to speak, and what to holden in; And what to arten* her to love, he sought; *constrain <8> And on a song anon right to begin, And gan loud on his sorrow for to win;* *overcome For with good hope he gan thus to assent* *resolve Cressida for to love, and not repent.

The Song of Troilus. <9>

"If no love is, O God! why feel I so? And if love is, what thing and which is he? If love be good, from whence cometh my woe? If it be wick', a wonder thinketh me Whence ev'ry torment and adversity That comes of love *may to me savoury think:* *seem acceptable to me* For more I thirst the more that I drink.

"And if I *at mine owen luste bren* *burn by my own will* From whence cometh my wailing and my plaint? If maugre me,<10> *whereto plain I* then? *to what avail do I complain?* I wot ner* why, unweary, that I faint. *neither O quicke death! O sweete harm so quaint!* *strange How may I see in me such quantity, But if that I consent that so it be?

"And if that I consent, I wrongfully Complain y-wis: thus pushed to and fro, All starreless within a boat am I, Middes the sea, betwixte windes two, That in contrary standen evermo'. Alas! what wonder is this malady! -- For heat of cold, for cold of heat, I die!"

Devoting himself wholly to the thought of Cressida -- though he yet knew not whether she was woman or goddess -- Troilus, in spite of his royal blood, became the very slave of love. He set at naught every other charge, but to gaze on her as often as he could; thinking so to appease his hot fire, which thereby only burned the hotter. He wrought marvellous feats of arms against the Greeks, that she might like him the better for his renown; then love deprived him of sleep, and made his food his foe; till he had to "borrow a title of other sickness," that men might not know he was consumed with love. Meantime, Cressida gave no sign that she heeded his devotion, or even knew of it; and he was now consumed with a new fear -- lest she loved some other man. Bewailing his sad lot -- ensnared, exposed to the scorn of those whose love he had ridiculed, wishing himself arrived at the port of death, and praying ever that his lady might glad him with some kind look -- Troilus is surprised in his chamber by his friend Pandarus, the uncle of Cressida. Pandarus, seeking to divert his sorrow by making him angry, jeeringly asks whether remorse of conscience, or devotion, or fear of the Greeks, has

caused all this ado. Troilus pitifully beseeches his friend to leave him to die alone, for die he must, from a cause which he must keep hidden; but Pandarus argues against Troilus' cruelty in hiding from a friend such a sorrow, and Troilus at last confesses that his malady is love. Pandarus suggests that the beloved object may be such that his counsel might advance his friend's desires; but Troilus scouts the suggestion, saying that Pandarus could never govern himself in love.

"Yea, Troilus, hearken to me," quoth Pandare, "Though I be nice;* it happens often so,

foolish That one that access doth full evil fare,
*in an access of fever By good counsel can keep his friend therefro'. I have my selfe seen a blind man go Where as he fell that looke could full wide; A fool may eke a wise man often guide.

"A whetstone is no carving instrument, But yet it maketh sharpe carving tooles; And, if thou know'st that I have aught miswent,* *erred, failed Eschew thou that, for such thing to thee school* is. *schooling, lesson Thus oughte wise men to beware by fooles; If so thou do, thy wit is well bewared; By its contrary is everything declared.

"For how might ever sweetness have been know To him that never tasted bitterness? And no man knows what gladness is, I trow, That never was in sorrow or distress: Eke white by black, by shame eke worthiness, Each set by other, *more for other seemeth,* *its quality is made As men may see; and so the wise man deemeth." more obvious by the contrast* Troilus, however, still begs his friend to leave him to mourn in peace, for all his proverbs can avail nothing. But Pandarus insists on plying the lover with wise saws, arguments, reproaches; hints that, if he should die of love, his lady may impute his death to fear of the Greeks; and finally induces Troilus to admit that the well of all his woe, his sweetest foe, is called Cressida. Pandarus breaks into praises of the lady, and congratulations of his friend for so well fixing his heart; he makes Troilus utter a formal confession of his sin in jesting at lovers and bids him think well that she of whom rises all his woe, hereafter may his comfort be also.

"For thilke* ground, that bears the weedes wick' *that same Bears eke the wholesome herbes, and full oft Next to the foule nettle, rough and thick, The lily waxeth,* white, and smooth, and soft; *grows And next the valley is the hill aloft, And next the darke night is the glad morrow, And also joy is next the fine* of sorrow." *end, border

Pandarus holds out to Troilus good hope of achieving his desire; and tells him that, since he has been converted from his wicked rebellion against Love, he shall be made the best post of all Love's law, and most grieve Love's enemies. Troilus gives utterance to a hint of fear; but he is silenced by Pandarus with another proverb -- "Thou hast full great care, lest that the carl should fall out of the moon." Then the lovesick youth breaks into a joyous boast that some of the Greeks shall smart; he mounts his horse, and plays the lion in the field; while Pandarus retires to consider how he may best recommend to his niece the suit of Troilus.