

## THE FIFTHBOOK.

APPROACHE gan the fatal destiny That Jovis hath in disposition, And to  
you angry Parcae,\* Sisters three,                        \*The Fates Committeth to do  
execution; For which Cressida must out of the town, And Troilus shall  
dwelle forth in pine,\*                                        \*pain Till Lachesis his thread no  
longer twine.\*    \*twist

The golden-tressed Phoebus, high aloft, Thries\* had alle, with his beames  
clear,                                        \*thrice The snowes molt,\* and Zephyrus as oft  
\*melted Y-brought again the tender leaves green, Since that \*the son of  
Hecuba the queen\*                                        \*Troilus <80>\* Began to love her first, for  
whom his sorrow Was all, that she depart should on the morrow

In the morning, Diomedes was ready to escort Cressida to the Greek host;  
and Troilus, seeing him mount his horse, could with difficulty resist an  
impulse to slay him -- but restrained himself, lest his lady should be also  
slain in the tumult. When Cressida was ready to go,

This Troilus, in guise of courtesy, With hawk on hand, and with a huge  
rout\*                                        \*retinue, crowd Of knightes, rode, and did her company,  
Passing alle the valley far without; And farther would have ridden, out of  
doubt, Full fain,\* and woe was him to go so soon,                                        \*gladly But  
turn he must, and it was eke to do'n.

And right with that was Antenor y-come Out of the Greekes' host, and ev'ry  
wight Was of it glad, and said he was welcome; And Troilus, \*all n'ere his  
hearte light,\*                                        \*although his heart He pained him, with all his fulle  
might,                                        was not light\* Him to withhold from weeping at the least;  
And Antenor he kiss'd and made feast.

And therewithal he must his leave take, And cast his eye upon her piteously,  
And near he rode, his cause\* for to make                                        \*excuse, occasion To take  
her by the hand all soberly; And, Lord! so she gan weepe tenderly! And he  
full soft and slily gan her say, "Now hold your day, and \*do me not to deye."\*  
\*do not make me die\*

With that his courser turned he about, With face pale, and unto Diomedes No  
word he spake, nor none of all his rout; Of which the son of Tydeus <81>  
tooke heed, As he that couthe\* more than the creed <82>  
\*knew In such a craft, and by the rein her hent;\*                                        \*took And

Troilus to Troye homeward went.

This Diomede, that led her by the bridle, When that he saw the folk of Troy  
away, Thought, "All my labour shall not be \*on idle,\*                    \*in vain\* If  
that I may, for somewhat shall I say; For, at the worst, it may yet short our  
way; I have heard say eke, times twice twelve, He is a fool that will forget  
himselve."

But nathless, this thought he well enough, That "Certainly I am aboute  
naught, If that I speak of love, or \*make it tough;\*                    \*make any violent  
For, doubteless, if she have in her thought                    immediate effort\* Him  
that I guess, he may not be y-brought So soon away; but I shall find a mean,  
That she \*not wit as yet shall\* what I mean."                    \*shall not yet know\*

So he began a general conversation, assured her of not less friendship and  
honour among the Greeks than she had enjoyed in Troy, and requested of  
her earnestly to treat him as a brother and accept his service -- for, at last  
he said, "I am and shall be ay, while that my life may dure, your own,  
aboven ev'rycreature.

"Thus said I never e'er now to woman born; For, God mine heart as wisly\*  
gladden so!                    \*surely I loved never woman herebeforn, As  
paramours, nor ever shall no mo'; And for the love of God be not my foe, All\*  
can I not to you, my lady dear,                    \*although Complain aright,  
for I am yet to lear.\*                    \*teach

"And wonder not, mine owen lady bright, Though that I speak of love to you  
thus blive;\*                    \*soon For I have heard ere this of many a wight  
That loved thing he ne'er saw in his live; Eke I am not of power for to strive  
Against the god of Love, but him obey I will alway, and mercy I you pray."

Cressida answered his discourses as though she scarcely heard them; yet  
she thanked him for his trouble and courtesy, and accepted his offered  
friendship -- promising to trust him, as well she might. Then she alighted  
from her steed, and, with her heart nigh breaking, was welcomed to the  
embrace of her father. Meanwhile Troilus, back in Troy, was lamenting with  
tears the loss of his love, despairing of his or her ability to survive the ten  
days, and spending the night in wailing, sleepless tossing, and troublous  
dreams. In the morning he was visited by Pandarus, to whom he gave  
directions for his funeral; desiring that the powder into which his heart was  
burned should be kept in a golden urn, and given to Cressida. Pandarus  
renewed his old counsels and consolations, reminded his friend that ten  
days were a short time to wait, argued against his faith in evil dreams, and

urged him to take advantage of the truce, and beguile the time by a visit to King Sarpedon (a Lycian Prince who had come to aid the Trojans). Sarpedon entertained them splendidly; but no feasting, no pomp, no music of instruments, no singing of fair ladies, could make up for the absence of Cressida to the desolate Troilus, who was for ever poring upon her old letters, and recalling her loved form. Thus he "drove to an end" the fourth day, and would have then returned to Troy, but for the remonstrances of Pandarus, who asked if they had visited Sarpedon only to fetch fire? At last, at the end of a week, they returned to Troy; Troilus hoping to find Cressida again in the city, Pandarus entertaining a scepticism which he concealed from his friend. The morning after their return, Troilus was impatient till he had gone to the palace of Cressida; but when he found her doors all closed, "well nigh for sorrow adown he gan to fall."

Therewith, when he was ware, and gan behold  
How shut was ev'ry window of the place,  
As frost him thought his hearte \*gan to cold;\*      \*began to grow cold\*  
For which, with changed deadly pale face,  
Withoute word, he forth began to pace;  
And, as God would, he gan so faste ride,  
That no wight of his countenance espied.

Then said he thus: "O palace desolate! O house of houses, \*whilom beste hight!\*"      \*formerly called best\*  
O palace empty and disconsolate! O thou lantern,  
of which quench'd is the light! O palace, whilom day,  
that now art night! Well oughtest thou to fall,  
and I to die, Since she is gone that wont was us to guy!\*      \*guide, rule

"O palace, whilom crown of houses all, Illumined with sun of alle bliss! O ring, from which the ruby is out fall! O cause of woe, that cause hast been of bliss! Yet, since I may no bet, fain would I kiss Thy colde doores, durst I for this rout; And farewell shrine, of which the saint is out!"

. . . . .

From thence forth he rideth up and down, And ev'ry thing came him to remembrance,  
As he rode by the places of the town, In which he whilom had all his pleasance;  
"Lo! yonder saw I mine own lady dance; And in that temple, with her eyen clear,  
Me caughte first my righte lady dear.

"And yonder have I heard full lustily My deare hearte laugh; and yonder play:  
Saw I her ones eke full blissfully; And yonder ones to me gan she say,  
'Now, goode sweete! love me well, I pray;' And yond so gladly gan she me behold,  
That to the death my heart is to her hold.\*      \*holden, bound

"And at that corner, in the yonder house, Heard I mine allerlevest\* lady dear,                    \*dearest of all So womanly, with voice melodious, Singe so well, so goodly and so clear, That in my soule yet me thinks I hear The blissful sound; and in that yonder place My lady first me took unto her grace."

Then he went to the gates, and gazed along the way by which he had attended Cressida at her departure; then he fancied that all the passers-by pitied him; and thus he drove forth a day or two more, singing a song, of few words, which he had made to lighten his heart:

"O star, of which I lost have all the light, With hearte sore well ought I to bewail, That ever dark in torment, night by night, Toward my death, with wind I steer and sail; For which, the tenth night, if that I fail\*       \*miss; be left without The guiding of thy beames bright an hour, My ship and me Charybdis will devour."

By night he prayed the moon to run fast about her sphere; by day he reproached the tardy sun -- dreading that Phaethon had come to life again, and was driving the chariot of Apollo out of its straight course. Meanwhile Cressida, among the Greeks, was bewailing the refusal of her father to let her return, the certainty that her lover would think her false, and the hopelessness of any attempt to steal away by night. Her bright face waxed pale, her limbs lean, as she stood all day looking toward Troy; thinking on her love and all her past delights, regretting that she had not followed the counsel of Troilus to steal away with him, and finally vowing that she would at all hazards return to the city. But she was fated, ere two months, to be full far from any such intention; for Diomedes now brought all his skill into play, to entice Cressida into his net. On the tenth day, Diomedes, "as fresh as branch in May," came to the tent of Cressida, feigning business with Calchas.

Cressida, at shorte wordes for to tell, Welcomed him, and down by her him set, And he was \*eath enough to make dwell;\*       \*easily persuaded to stay\*  
And after this, withoute longe let,\*   \*delay The spices and  
the wine men forth him fet,\*   \*fetches And forth they speak of  
this and that y-fere,\*   \*together As friendes do, of which some shall  
ye hear.

He gan first fallen of the war in speech Between them and the folk of Troye town, And of the siege he gan eke her beseech To tell him what was her opinioun; From that demand he so descended down To aske her, if that her strange thought The Greekes' guise,\* and workes that they wrought.

\*fashion

And why her father tarried\* so long                         \*delayed To wedde her  
unto some worthy wight. Cressida, that was in her paines strong For love of  
Troilus, her owen knight, So farforth as she cunning\* had or might,  
\*ability Answer'd him then; but, as for his intent,\*                     \*purpose It  
seemed not she wiste\* what he meant.   \*knew

But nathless thisilke\* Diomedes   \*same Gan \*in  
himself assure,\* and thus he said;                                     \*grow confident\* "If I aright have  
\*taken on you heed,\*                                 \*observed you\* Me thinketh thus, O lady  
mine Cressida, That since I first hand on your bridle laid, When ye out came  
of Troye by the morrow, Ne might I never see you but in sorrow.

"I cannot say what may the cause be, But if for love of some Trojan it were;  
\*The which right sore would a-thinke me\*                         \*which it would much That  
ye for any wight that dwelleth there                         pain me to think\* Should [ever]  
spill\* a quarter of a tear,   \*shed Or piteously yourselfe so  
beguile;\*   \*deceive For dreadeless\* it is not worth the  
while.   \*undoubtedly

"The folk of Troy, as who saith, all and some In prison be, as ye yourselfe  
see; From thence shall not one alive come For all the gold betwixte sun and  
sea; Truste this well, and understande me; There shall not one to mercy go  
alive, All\* were he lord of worldes twice five.   \*although

. . . . .

"What will ye more, lovesome lady dear? Let Troy and Trojan from your  
hearte pace; Drive out that bitter hope, and make good cheer, And call again  
the beauty of your face, That ye with salte teares so deface; For Troy is  
brought into such jeopardy, That it to save is now no remedy.

"And thinke well, ye shall in Greekes find A love more perfect, ere that it be  
night, Than any Trojan is, and more kind, And better you to serve will do his  
might; And, if ye vouchesafe, my lady bright, I will be he, to serve you,  
myselfe, -- Yea, lever\* than be a lord of Greekes twelve!"                         \*rather

And with that word he gan to waxe red, And in his spech a little while he  
quake,\*                         \*quaked; trembled And cast aside a little with his head, And  
stint a while; and afterward he woke, And soberly on her he threw his look,  
And said, "I am, albeit to you no joy, As gentle\* man as any wight in Troy.  
\*high-born

"But, hearte mine! since that I am your man,\*            \*leigeman, subject And  
[you] be the first of whom I seeke grace,            (in love) To serveyou as  
heartily as I can, And ever shall, while I to live have space, So, ere that I  
depart out of this place, Ye will me grante that I may, to-morrow, At better  
leisure, telle you my sorrow."

Why should I tell his wordes that he said? He spake enough for one day at  
the mest;\*            \*most It proveth well he spake so, that Cresseide  
Granted upon the morrow, at his request, Farther to speake with him, at the  
least, So that he would not speak of such mattere; And thus she said to  
him, as ye may hear:

As she that had her heart on Troilus So faste set, that none might it arace;\*  
\*uproot <83> And strangely\* she spake, and saide thus;            \*distantly,  
unfriendlyly "O Diomed! I love that ilke place Where I was born; and Jovis,  
for his grace, Deliver it soon of all that doth it care!\*            \*afflict  
God, for thy might, so \*leave it\* well to fare!"            \*grant it\*

She knows that the Greeks would fain wreak their wrath on Troy, if they  
might; but that shall never befall: she knows that there are Greeks of high  
condition -- though as worthy men would be found in Troy: and she knows  
that Diomed could serve his lady well.

"But, as to speak of love, y-wis," she said, "I had a lord, to whom I wedded  
was, <84> He whose mine heart was all, until he died; And other love, as  
help me now Pallas, There in my heart nor is, nor ever was; And that ye be  
of noble and high kindred, I have well heard it tellen, out of dread.\*  
\*doubt

"And that doth\* me to have so great a wonder            \*causeth That ye  
will scornen any woman so; Eke, God wot, love and I be far asunder; I am  
disposed bet, so may I go,\*            \*fare or prosper Unto my death to  
plain and make woe; What I shall after do I cannot say, But truely as yet  
\*me list not play.\*            \*I am not disposed  
\*for sport "Mine heart is now in tribulatioun; And ye in armes busy be by  
day; Hereafter, when ye wonnen have the town, Parauntre\* then, so as it  
happen may,            \*peradventure That when I see that I never \*ere  
sey,\*            \*saw before\* Then will I work that I never ere wrought;  
This word to you enough sufficen ought.

"To-morrow eke will I speak with you fain,\*            \*willingly So that ye  
touche naught of this mattere; And when you list, ye may come here again,

And ere ye go, thus much I say you here: As help me Pallas, with her haire clear,  
If that I should of any Greek have ruth, It shoulde be yourselfe, by my truth!

"I say not therefore that I will you love; \*Nor say not nay;\* but, in  
conclusioun,                   \*nor say I that I meane well, by God that sits  
above!"                        I will not\* And therewithal she cast her eyen down,  
And gan to sigh, and said; "O Troye town! Yet bid\* I God, in quiet and in rest  
\*pray I may you see, or \*do my hearte brest!"\*       \*cause my heart to break\*

But in effect, and shortly for to say, This Diomede all freshly new again Gan  
pressen on, and fast her mercy pray; And after this, the soothe for to sayn,  
Her glove he took, of which he was full fain, And finally, when it was waxen  
eve, And all was well, he rose and took his leave.

Cressida retired to rest:

Returning in her soul ay up and down The wordes of this sudden  
Diomede, <85> His great estate,\* the peril of the town,                   \*rank  
And that she was alone, and hadde need Of friendes' help; and thus began  
to dread The causes why, the soothe for to tell, That she took fully the  
purpose for to dwell.\*       \*remain (with the  
Greeks) The morrow came, and, ghostly\* for to speak,                   \*plainly  
This Diomede is come unto Cresseide; And shortly, lest that ye my tale  
break, So well he for himselfe spake and said, That all her sighes sore  
adown he laid; And finally, the soothe for to sayn, He refte\* her the great\*\* of  
all her pain.       \*took away \*\*the greater  
part of And after this, the story telleth us That she him gave the faire baye  
steed The which she ones won of Troilus; And eke a brooch (and that was  
little need) That Troilus' was, she gave this Diomede; And eke, the bet from  
sorrow him to relieve, She made him wear a pensel\* of her sleeve.  
\*pendant <86>

I find eke in the story elleswhere, When through the body hurt was Diomede  
By Troilus, she wept many a tear, When that she saw his wide woundes  
bleed, And that she took to keepe\* him good heed,                   \*tend, care for  
And, for to heal him of his sorrow's smart, Men say, I n'ot,\* that she gave  
him her heart.                   \*know not

And yet, when pity had thus completed the triumph of inconstancy, she  
made bitter moan over her falseness to one of the noblest and worthiest men  
that ever was; but it was now too late to repent, and at all events she  
resolved that she would be true to Diomede -- all the while weeping for pity

of the absent Troilus, to whom she wished every happiness. The tenth day, meantime, had barely dawned, when Troilus, accompanied by Pandarus, took his stand on the walls, to watch for the return of Cressida. Till noon they stood, thinking that every corner from afar was she; then Troilus said that doubtless her old father bore the parting ill, and had detained her till after dinner; so they went to dine, and returned to their vain observation on the walls. Troilus invented all kinds of explanations for his mistress's delay; now, her father would not let her go till eve; now, she would ride quietly into the town after nightfall, not to be observed; now, he must have mistaken the day. For five or six days he watched, still in vain, and with decreasing hope. Gradually his strength decayed, until he could walk only with a staff; answering the wondering inquiries of his friends, by saying that he had a grievous malady about his heart. One day he dreamed that in a forest he saw Cressida in the embrace of a boar; and he had no longer doubt of her falsehood. Pandarus, however, explained away the dream to mean merely that Cressida was detained by her father, who might be at the point of death; and he counselled the disconsolate lover to write a letter, by which he might perhaps get at the truth. Troilus complied, entreating from his mistress, at the least, a "letter of hope;" and the lady answered, that she could not come now, but would so soon as she might; at the same time "making him great feast," and swearing that she loved him best -- "of which he found but bottomless behest [which he found but groundless promises]." Day by day increased the woe of Troilus; he laid himself in bed, neither eating, nor drinking, nor sleeping, nor speaking, almost distracted by the thought of Cressida's unkindness. He related his dream to his sister Cassandra, who told him that the boar betokened Diomedes, and that, wheresoever his lady was, Diomedes certainly had her heart, and she was his: "weep if thou wilt, or leave, for, out of doubt, this Diomedes is in, and thou art out." Troilus, enraged, refused to believe Cassandra's interpretation; as well, he cried, might such a story be credited of Alcestis, who devoted her life for her husband; and in his wrath he started from bed, "as though all whole had him y-made a leach [physician]," resolving to find out the truth at all hazards. The death of Hector meanwhile enhanced the sorrow which he endured; but he found time to write often to Cressida, beseeching her to come again and hold her truth; till one day his false mistress, out of pity, wrote him again, in these terms:

"Cupid's son, ensample of goodlihead,\*                      \*beauty, excellence O  
sword of knighthood, source of gentleness! How might a wight in torment  
and in dread, And healeless,\* you send as yet gladness?                      \*devoid of  
health I hearteless, I sick, I in distress? Since ye with me, nor I with you,  
may deal, You neither send I may nor heart nor heal.



"Your letters full, the paper all y-plainted,\*                   \*covered with Commoved  
have mine heart's pitt;   complainings I have eke seen with  
teares all depainted Your letter, and how ye require me To come again; the  
which yet may not be; But why, lest that this letter founden were, No  
mention I make now for fear.

"Grievous to me, God wot, is your unrest, Your haste,\* and that the goddes'  
ordinance   \*impatience It seemeth not ye take as for the best; Nor  
other thing is in your remembrance, As thinketh me, but only your  
pleasance; But be not wroth, and that I you beseech, For that I tarry is \*all  
for wicked speech.\*                   \*to avoid malicious  
gossip\* "For I have heard well more than I wend\*   \*weened, thought  
Touching us two, how thinges have stood, Which I shall with dissimuling  
amend; And, be not wroth, I have eke understood How ye ne do but holde  
me on hand; <87> But now \*no force,\* I cannot in you guess  
\*no matter\* But alle truth and alle gentleness.

"Comen I will, but yet in such disjoint\*   \*jeopardy, criticalI stande  
now, that what year or what day   position That this shall be,  
that can I not appoint; But in effect I pray you, as I may, For your good word  
and for your friendship ay; For truly, while that my life may dure, As for a  
friend, ye may \*in me assure.\*   \*depend on me\*

"Yet pray I you, \*on evil ye not take\*   \*do not take it ill\* That it is  
short, which that I to you write; I dare not, where I am, well letters make;  
Nor never yet ne could I well endite; Eke \*great effect men write in place  
lite;\*                   \*men write great matter Th' intent is all, and not the letter's space;  
in little space\* And fare now well, God have you in his grace!  
"La Vostre C."

Though he found this letter "all strange," and thought it like "a kalendes of  
change," <88> Troilus could not believe his lady so cruel as to forsake him;  
but he was put out of all doubt, one day that, as he stood in suspicion and  
melancholy, he saw a "coat- armour" borne along the street, in token of  
victory, before Deiphobus his brother. Deiphobus had won it from Diomedes  
in battle that day; and Troilus, examining it out of curiosity, found within  
the collar a brooch which he had given to Cressida on the morning she left  
Troy, and which she had pledged her faith to keep for ever in remembrance  
of his sorrow and of him. At this fatal discovery of his lady's untruth,

Great was the sorrow and plaint of Troilus; But forth her course Fortune ay  
gan to hold; Cressida lov'd the son of Tydeus, And Troilus must weep in  
cares cold. Such is the world, whoso it can behold! In each estate is little

hearte's rest; God lend\* us each to take it for the best!

\*grant

In many a cruel battle Troilus wrought havoc among the Greeks, and often he exchanged blows and bitter words with Diomedes, whom he always specially sought; but it was not their lot that either should fall by the other's hand. The poet's purpose, however, he tells us, is to relate, not the warlike deeds of Troilus, which Dares has fully told, but his love-fortunes:

Beseeching ev'ry lady bright of hue, And ev'ry gentle woman, \*what she be,\*  
\*whatsoever she be\* Albeit that Cressida was untrue, That for that guilt ye  
be not wroth with me; Ye may her guilt in other bookes see; And gladder I  
would writen, if you lest, Of Penelope's truth, and good Alceste.

Nor say I not this only all for men, But most for women that betrayed be  
Through false folk (God give them sorrow, Amen!) That with their greate wit  
and subtilty Betraye you; and this commoveth me To speak; and in effect  
you all I pray, Beware of men, and hearken what I say.

Go, little book, go, little tragedy! There God my maker, yet ere that I die, So  
send me might to make some comedy! But, little book, \*no making thou  
envy,\* \*be envious of no poetry\* <89> But subject be unto all poesy; And  
kiss the steps, where as thou seest space, Of Virgil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan,  
Stace.

And, for there is so great diversity In English, and in writing of our tongue,  
So pray I God, that none miswrite thee, Nor thee mismetre for default of  
tongue! And read whereso thou be, or elles sung, That thou be  
understanden, God I 'seech!\* \*beseech But yet to purpose of  
my \*rather speech.\* \*earlier subject\* <90>

The wrath, as I began you for to say, Of Troilus the Greekes boughte dear;  
For thousandes his handes \*made dey,\* \*made to die\* As he  
that was withouten any peer, Save in his time Hector, as I can hear; But,  
well-away! save only Godde's will, Dispiteously him slew the fierce Achill'.

And when that he was slain in this mannere, His lighte ghost\* full blissfully  
is went \*spirit Up to the hollowness of the seventh sphere  
<91> In converse leaving ev'ry element; And there he saw, with full  
advisement,\* \*observation, understanding Th' erratic starres heark'ning  
harmony, With soundes full of heav'nly melody.

And down from thennes fast he gan advise\* \*consider, look on This  
little spot of earth, that with the sea Embraced is; and fully gan despise This

wretched world, and held all vanity, \*To respect of the plain felicity\*  
\*in comparison with That is in heav'n above; and, at the last, the full  
felicity\* Where he was slain his looking down he cast.

And in himself he laugh'd right at the woe Of them that wepte for his death  
so fast; And damned\* all our works, that follow so \*condemned  
The blinde lust, the which that may not last, And shoulden\* all our heart on  
heaven cast; \*while we should And forth he wente, shortly for to tell,  
Where as Mercury sorted\* him to dwell. \*allotted <92>

Such fine\* hath, lo! this Troilus for love! \*end Such fine hath  
all his \*greate worthiness!\* \*exalted royal rank\* Such fine hath his  
estate royal above! Such fine his lust,\* such fine hath his nobless!  
\*pleasure Such fine hath false worlde's brittleness!\* \*fickleness, instability  
And thus began his loving of Cresside, As I have told; and in this wise he  
died.

O young and freshe folke, \*he or she,\* \*of either sex\* In which  
that love upgroweth with your age, Repaire home from worldly vanity, And  
\*of your heart upcaste the visage\* \*lift up the countenance To thilke  
God, that after his image of your heart."\* You made, and think  
that all is but a fair, This world that passeth soon, as flowers fair!

And love Him, the which that, right for love, Upon a cross, our soules for to  
bey,\* \*buy, redeem First starf,\* and rose, and sits in heav'n  
above; \*died For he will false\* no wight, dare I say,  
\*deceive, fail That will his heart all wholly on him lay; And since he best to  
love is, and most meek, What needeth feigned loves for to seek?

Lo! here of paynims\* cursed olde rites! \*pagans Lo! here  
what all their goddes may avail! Lo! here this wretched worlde's appetites!  
\*end and reward Lo! here the \*fine and guerdon for travail,\* of  
labour\* Of Jove, Apollo, Mars, and such rascaille\* \*rabble <93>  
Lo! here the form of olde clerkes' speech, In poetry, if ye their bookes seech!\*

\*seek, search