

## Notes to Troilus and Cressida

1. The double sorrow: First his suffering before his love was successful; and then his grief after his lady had been separated from him, and had proved unfaithful.

2. Tisiphone: one of the Eumenides, or Furies, who avenged on men in the next world the crimes committed on earth. Chaucer makes this grim invocation most fitly, since the Trojans were under the curse of the Eumenides, for their part in the offence of Paris in carrying off Helen, the wife of his host Menelaus, and thus impiously sinning against the laws of hospitality.

3. See Chaucer's description of himself in "The House Of Fame," and note 11 to that poem.

4. The Palladium, or image of Pallas (daughter of Triton and foster-sister of Athena), was said to have fallen from heaven at Troy, where Ilus was just beginning to found the city; and Ilus erected a sanctuary, in which it was preserved with great honour and care, since on its safety was supposed to depend the safety of the city. In later times a Palladium was any statue of the goddess Athena kept for the safeguard of the city that possessed it.

5. "Oh, very god!": oh true divinity! -- addressing Cressida.

6. Ascaunce: as if to say -- as much as to say. The word represents "Quasi dicesse" in Boccaccio. See note 5 to the Sompnour's Tale.

7. Eft: another reading is "oft."

8. Arten: constrain -- Latin, "arceo."

9. The song is a translation of Petrarch's 88th Sonnet, which opens thus: "S'amor non e, che dunque e quel ch'i'sento."

10. If maugre me: If (I burn) in spite of myself. The usual reading is, "If harm agree me" = if my hurt contents me: but evidently the antithesis is lost which Petrarch intended when, after "s'a mia voglia ardo," he wrote "s'a mal mio grado" = if against my will; and Urry's Glossary points out the probability that in transcription the words "If that maugre me" may have gradually changed into "If harm agre me."

11. The Third of May seems either to have possessed peculiar favour or significance with Chaucer personally, or to have had a special importance in connection with those May observances of which the poet so often speaks. It is on the third night of May that Palamon, in *The Knight's Tale*, breaks out of prison, and at early morn encounters in the forest Arcita, who has gone forth to pluck a garland in honour of May; it is on the third night of May that the poet hears the debate of "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale"; and again in the present passage the favoured date recurs.

12. Went: turning; from Anglo-Saxon, "wendan;" German, "wenden." The turning and tossing of uneasy lovers in bed is, with Chaucer, a favourite symptom of their passion. See the fifth "statute," in *The Court of Love*.

13. Procne, daughter of Pandion, king of Attica, was given to wife to Tereus in reward for his aid against an enemy; but Tereus dishonoured Philomela, Procne's sister; and his wife, in revenge, served up to him the body of his own child by her. Tereus, infuriated, pursued the two sisters, who prayed the gods to change them into birds. The prayer was granted; Philomela became a nightingale, Procne a swallow, and Tereus a hawk.

14. Fished fair: a proverbial phrase which probably may be best represented by the phrase "done great execution."

15. The fair gem virtuelless: possessing none of the virtues which in the Middle Ages were universally believed to be inherent in precious stones.

16. The crop and root: the most perfect example. See note 29 to the *Knight's Tale*.

17. Eme: uncle; the mother's brother; still used in Lancashire. Anglo-Saxon, "eame;" German, "Oheim."

18. Dardanus: the mythical ancestor of the Trojans, after whom the gate is supposed to be called.

19. All the other gates were secured with chains, for better defence against the besiegers.

20. Happy day: good fortune; French, "bonheur;" both "happy day" and "happy hour" are borrowed from the astrological fiction about the influence of the time of birth.

21. Horn, and nerve, and rind: The various layers or materials of the shield - - called boagron in the Iliad -- which was made from the hide of the wild bull.

22. His brother: Hector.

23. Who gives me drink?: Who has given me a love-potion, to charm my heart thus away?

24. That plaited she full oft in many a fold: She deliberated carefully, with many arguments this way and that.

25. Through which I mighte stand in worse plight: in a worse position in the city; since she might through his anger lose the protection of his brother Hector.

26. I am not religious: I am not in holy vows. See the complaint of the nuns in "The Court of Love."

27. The line recalls Milton's "dark with excessive bright."

28. No weal is worth, that may no sorrow drien: the meaning is, that whosoever cannot endure sorrow deserves not happiness.

29. French, "verre;" glass.

30. From cast of stones ware him in the werre: let him beware of casting stones in battle. The proverb in its modern form warns those who live in glass houses of the folly of throwing stones.

31. Westren: to west or wester -- to decline towards the west; so Milton speaks of the morning star as sloping towards heaven's descent "his westeringwheel."

32. A pike with ass's feet etc.: this is merely another version of the well-known example of incongruity that opens the "Ars Poetica" of Horace.

33. Tristre: tryst; a preconcerted spot to which the beaters drove the game, and at which the sportsmen waited with their bows.

34. A kankerdort: a condition or fit of perplexed anxiety; probably connected with the word "kink" meaning in sea phrase a twist in an rope -- and, as a verb, to twist or entangle.

35. They feel in times, with vapour etern: they feel in their seasons, by the emission of an eternal breath or inspiration (that God loves, &c.)

36. The idea of this stanza is the same with that developed in the speech of Theseus at the close of *The Knight's Tale*; and it is probably derived from the lines of Boethius, quoted in note 91 to that Tale.

37. In this and the following lines reappears the noble doctrine of the exalting and purifying influence of true love, advanced in "*The Court of Love*," "*The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*," &c.

38. Weir: a trap or enclosed place in a stream, for catching fish. See note 10 to *The Assembly of Fowls*.

39. Nor might one word for shame to it say: nor could he answer one word for shame (at the stratagem that brought Cressida to implore his protection)

40. "All n'ere he malapert, nor made avow Nor was so bold to sing a foole's mass;" i.e. although he was not over-forward and made no confession (of his love), or was so bold as to be rash and ill-advised in his declarations of love and worship.

41. Pandarus wept as if he would turn to water; so, in *The Squire's Tale*, did Canace weep for the woes of the falcon.

42. If I breake your defence: if I transgress in whatever you may forbid; French, "defendre," to prohibit.

43. These lines and the succeeding stanza are addressed to Pandarus, who had interposed some words of incitement to Cressida.

44. In "*The Court of Love*," the poet says of Avaunter, that "his ancestry of kin was to Lier; and the stanza in which that line occurs expresses precisely the same idea as in the text. Vain boasters of ladies' favours are also satirised in "*The House of Fame*".

45. Nice: silly, stupid; French, "niais."

46. "Reheating" is read by preference for "richesse," which stands in the older printed editions; though "richesse" certainly better represents the word used in the original of Boccaccio -- "dovizia," meaning abundance or wealth.

47. "Depart it so, for widewhere is wist How that there is diversity requer'd Betwixte things like, as I have lear'd:" i.e. make this distinction, for it is universally known that there is a great difference between things that seem the same, as I have learned.

48. Frepe: the set, or company; French, "frappe," a stamp (on coins), a set (of moulds).

49. To be "in the wind" of noisy magpies, or other birds that might spoil sport by alarming the game, was not less desirable than to be on the "lee-side" of the game itself, that the hunter's presence might not be betrayed by the scent. "In the wind of," thus signifies not to windward of, but to leeward of -- that is, in the wind that comes from the object of pursuit.

50. Bothe fremd and tame: both foes and friends -- literally, both wild and tame, the sporting metaphor being sustained.

51. The lovers are supposed to say, that nothing is wanting but to know the time at which they should meet.

52. A tale of Wade: see note 5 to the Merchant's Tale.

53. Saturn, and Jove, in Cancer joined were: a conjunction that imported rain.

54. Smoky rain: An admirably graphic description of dense rain.

55. For the force of "cold," see note 22 to the Nun's Priest's Tale.

56. Goddes seven: The divinities who gave their names to the seven planets, which, in association with the seven metals, are mentioned in The Canon's Yeoman's Tale.

57. Assayed: experienced, tasted. See note 6 to the Squire's Tale.

58. Now is it better than both two were lorn: better this happy issue, than that both two should be lost (through the sorrow of fruitless love).

59. Made him such feast: French, "lui fit fete" -- made holiday for him.

60. The cock is called, in "The Assembly of Fowls," "the horologe of thorpes lite;" [the clock of little villages] and in The Nun's Priest's Tale Chanticleer knew by nature each ascension of the equinoctial, and, when the sun had

ascended fifteen degrees, "then crew he, that it might not be amended." Here he is termed the "common astrologer," as employing for the public advantage his knowledge of astronomy.

61. Fortuna Major: the planet Jupiter.

62. When Jupiter visited Alcmena in the form of her husband Amphitryon, he is said to have prolonged the night to the length of three natural nights. Hercules was the fruit of the union.

63. Chaucer seems to confound Titan, the title of the sun, with Tithonus (or Tithon, as contracted in poetry), whose couch Aurora was wont to share.

64. So, in "Locksley Hall," Tennyson says that "a sorrow's crown of sorrow is rememb'ring better things." The original is in Dante's words:-- "Nessun maggior dolore Che ricordarsi del tempo felice Nella miseria." -- "Inferno," v. 121. ("There is no greater sorrow than to remember happy times when in misery")

65. As great a craft is to keep weal as win: it needs as much skill to keep prosperity as to attain it.

66. To heap: together. See the reference to Boethius in note 91 to the Knight's Tale.

67. The smalle beastes let he go beside: a charming touch, indicative of the noble and generous inspiration of his love.

68. Mew: the cage or chamber in which hawks were kept and carefully tended during the moulting season.

69. Love of steel: love as true as steel.

70. Pandarus, as it repeatedly appears, was an unsuccessful lover.

71. "Each for his virtue holden is full dear, Both heroner, and falcon for rivere":-- That is, each is esteemed for a special virtue or faculty, as the large gerfalcon for the chase of heron, the smaller goshawk for the chase of river fowl.

72. Zausis: An author of whom no record survives.

73. And upon new case lieth new advice: new counsels must be adopted as

new circumstances arise.

74. Hid in mew: hidden in a place remote from the world -- of which Pandarus thus betrays ignorance.

75. The modern phrase "sixes and sevens," means "in confusion:" but here the idea of gaming perhaps suits the sense better -- "set the world upon a cast of the dice."

76. The controversy between those who maintained the doctrine of predestination and those who held that of free-will raged with no less animation at Chaucer's day, and before it, than it has done in the subsequent five centuries; the Dominicans upholding the sterner creed, the Franciscans taking the other side. Chaucer has more briefly, and with the same care not to commit himself, referred to the discussion in The Nun's Priest's Tale.

77. That have their top full high and smooth y-shore: that are eminent among the clergy, who wear the tonsure.

78. Athamante: Athamas, son of Aeolus; who, seized with madness, under the wrath of Juno for his neglect of his wife Nephele, slew his son Learchus.

79. Simois: one of the rivers of the Troad, flowing into the Xanthus.

80. Troilus was the son of Priam and Hecuba.

81. The son of Tydeus: Diomedes; far oftener called Tydides, after his father Tydeus, king of Argos.

82. Couthe more than the creed: knew more than the mere elements (of the science of Love).

83. Arache: wrench away, unroot (French, "arracher"); the opposite of "enrace," to root in, implant.

84. It will be remembered that, at the beginning of the first book, Cressida is introduced to us as a widow.

85. Diomede is called "sudden," for the unexpectedness of his assault on Cressida's heart -- or, perhaps, for the abrupt abandonment of his indifference to love.

86. Penscel: a pennon or pendant; French, "penoncel." It was the custom in chivalric times for a knight to wear, on days of tournament or in battle, some such token of his lady's favour, or badge of his service to her.

87. She has been told that Troilus is deceiving her.

88. The Roman kalends were the first day of the month, when a change of weather was usually expected.

89. Maker, and making, words used in the Middle Ages to signify the composer and the composition of poetry, correspond exactly with the Greek "poietes" and "poiema," from "poieo," I make.

90. My rather speech: my earlier, former subject; "rather" is the comparative of the old adjective "rath," early.

91. Up to the hollowness of the seventh sphere: passing up through the hollowness or concavity of the spheres, which all revolve round each other and are all contained by God (see note 5 to the Assembly of Fowls), the soul of Troilus, looking downward, beholds the converse or convex side of the spheres which it has traversed.

92. Sorted: allotted; from Latin, "sors," lot, fortune.

93. Rascaille: rabble; French, "racaille" -- a mob or multitude, the riff-raff; so Spencer speaks of the "rascal routs" of inferior combatants.

94. John Gower, the poet, a contemporary and friend of Chaucer's; author, among other works, of the "Confessio Amantis." See note 1 to the Man of Law's Tale.

95. Strode was an eminent scholar of Merton College, Oxford, and tutor to Chaucer's son Lewis.

96. Explicit Liber Troili et Cresseidis: "The end of the book of Troilus and Cressida."