

A BALLAD OF GENTLENESS.

THE firste stock-father of gentleness, <1> What man desireth gentle for to
be, Must follow his trace, and all his wittes dress,* *apply Virtue
to love, and vices for to flee; For unto virtue longeth dignity, And not the
reverse, safely dare I deem, *All wear he* mitre, crown, or diademe.
whether hewear

This firste stock was full of righteousness, True of his word, sober, pious,
and free, *Clean of his ghost,* and loved business, *pure of spirit*
Against the vice of sloth, in honesty; And, but his heir love virtue as did he,
He is not gentle, though he riche seem, All wear he mitre, crown, or
diademe.

Vice may well be heir to old richness, But there may no man, as men may
well see, Bequeath his heir his virtuous nobless; That is appropriated* to no
degree, *specially reserved But to the first Father in majesty,
Which makes his heire him that doth him queme,* *please All
wear he mitre, crown, or diademe.