

BOOK III. Incipit prohemium tercii libri.

O blisful light of whiche the bemes clere 1
Adorneth al the thridde hevene faire!
O sonnes lief, O Ioves doughter dere,
Plesaunce of love, O goodly debonaire,
In gentil hertes ay redy to repaire! 5
O verray cause of hele and of gladnesse,
Y-heried be thy might and thy goodnesse!

In hevene and helle, in erthe and salte see
Is felt thy might, if that I wel descerne;
As man, brid, best, fish, herbe and grene tree 10
Thee fele in tymes with vapour eterne.
God loveth, and to love wol nought werne;
And in this world no lyves creature,
With-outen love, is worth, or may endure.

Ye Ioves first to thilke effectes glade, 15
Thorugh which that thinges liven alle and be,
Comeveden, and amorous him made
On mortal thing, and as yow list, ay ye
Yeve him in love ese or adversitee;
And in a thousand formes doun him sente 20
For love in erthe, and whom yow liste, he hente.

Ye fierse Mars apeysen of his ire,
And, as yow list, ye maken hertes digne;
Algates, hem that ye wol sette a-fyre,
They dreden shame, and vices they resigne; 25
Ye do hem corteys be, fresshe and benigne,
And hye or lowe, after a wight entendeth;
The loyes that he hath, your might him sendeth.

Ye holden regne and hous in unitee;
Ye soothfast cause of frendship been also; 30
Ye knowe al thilke covered qualitee
Of thinges which that folk on wondren so,
Whan they can not construe how it may io,
She loveth him, or why he loveth here;
As why this fish, and nought that, comth to were. 35

Ye folk a lawe han set in universe,
And this knowe I by hem that loveres be,
That who-so stryveth with yow hath the werse:
Now, lady bright, for thy benignitee,
At reverence of hem that serven thee, 40
Whos clerk I am, so techeth me devyse
Som loye of that is felt in thy servyse.

Ye in my naked herte sentement

Inhelde, and do me shewe of thy swetnesse. --

Caliope, thy vois be now present, 45

For now is nede; sestow not my destresse,

How I mot telle anon-right the gladnesse

Of Troilus, to Venus heryinge?

To which gladnes, who nede hath, god him bringe!

Explicit prohemium Tercii Libri.

Incipit Liber Tercius.

Lay al this mene whyle Troilus, 50

Recordinge his lessoun in this manere,

'Ma fey!' thought he, 'Thus wole I seye and thus;

Thus wole I pleyne unto my lady dere;

That word is good, and this shal be my chere;

This nil I not foryeten in no wyse.' 55

God leve him werken as he can devyse!

And, lord, so that his herte gan to quappe,

Heringe hir come, and shorte for to syke!

And Pandarus, that ledde hir by the lappe,

Com ner, and gan in at the curtin pyke, 60

And seyde, 'God do bote on alle syke!

See, who is here yow comen to visyte;

Lo, here is she that is your deeth to wyte.'

Ther-with it semed as he wepte almost;

'A ha,' quod Troilus so rewfully, 65

'Wher me be wo, O mighty god, thow wost!

Who is al there? I se nought trewely.'

'Sire,' quod Criseyde, 'it is Pandare and I.'

'Ye, swete herte? Allas, I may nought ryse

To knele, and do yow honour in som wyse.' 70

And dressede him upward, and she right tho

Gan bothe here hondes softe upon him leye,

'O, for the love of god, do ye not so

To me,' quod she, 'Ey! What is this to seye?

Sire, come am I to yow for causes tweye; 75

First, yow to thonke, and of your lordshipe eke

Continuance I wolde yow biseke.'

This Troilus, that herde his lady preye

Of lordship him, wex neither quik ne deed,

Ne mighte a word for shame to it seye, 80

Al-though men sholde smyten of his heed.

But lord, so he wex sodeinliche reed,

And sire, his lesson, that he wende conne,

To preyen hir, is thurgh his wit y-ronne.

Cryseyde al this aspyede wel y-nough, 85
For she was wys, and lovede him never-the-lasse,
Al nere he malapert, or made it tough,
Or was to bold, to singe a fool a masse.
But whan his shame gan somewhat to passe,
His resons, as I may my rymes holde, 90
I yow wole telle, as techen bokes olde.

In chaunged vois, right for his verray drede,
Which vois eek quook, and ther-to his manere
Goodly abayst, and now his hewes rede,
Now pale, un-to Criseyde, his lady dere, 95
With look doun cast and humble yolden chere,
Lo, the alderfirste word that him asterte
Was, twyes, `Mercy, mercy, swete herte!

And stinte a whyl, and whan he mighte out-bringe,
The nexte word was, `God wot, for I have, 100
As feyfully as I have had konninge,
Ben youres, also god so my sowle save;
And shal til that I, woful wight, be grave.
And though I dar ne can un-to yow pleyne,
Y-wis, I suffre nought the lasse peyne. 105

`Thus muche as now, O wommanliche wyf,
I may out-bringe, and if this yow displese,

That shal I wreke upon myn owne lyf
Right sone, I trowe, and doon your herte an ese,
If with my deeth your herte I may apese. 110
But sin that ye han herd me som-what seye,
Now recche I never how sone that I deye.'

Ther-with his manly sorwe to biholde,
It mighte han maad an herte of stoon to rewe;
And Pandare weep as he to watre wolde, 115
And poked ever his nece newe and newe,
And seyde, `Wo bigon ben hertes trewe!
For love of god, make of this thing an ende,
Or slee us bothe at ones, er that ye wende.'

`I? What?' quod she, `By god and by my trouthe, 120
I noot nought what ye wilne that I seye.'
`I? What?' quod he, `That ye han on him routhe,
For goddes love, and doth him nought to deye.'
`Now thanne thus,' quod she, `I wolde him preye
To telle me the fyn of his entente; 125
Yet wist I never wel what that he mente.'

`What that I mene, O swete herte dere?'
Quod Troilus, `O goodly, fresshe free!
That, with the stremes of your eyen clere,
Ye wolde som-tyme freendly on me see, 130

And thanne agreen that I may ben he,
With-oute braunche of vyce on any wyse,
In trouthe alwey to doon yow my servyse,

As to my lady right and chief resort,
With al my wit and al my diligence, 135
And I to han, right as yow list, comfort,
Under your yerde, egal to myn offence,
As deeth, if that I breke your defence;
And that ye deigne me so mucche honoure,
Me to comaunden ought in any houre. 140

And I to ben your verray humble trewe,
Secret, and in my paynes pacient,
And ever-mo desire freshly newe,
To serven, and been y-lyke ay diligent,
And, with good herte, al holly your talent 145
Receyven wel, how sore that me smerte,
Lo, this mene I, myn owene swete herte.'

Quod Pandarus, Lo, here an hard request,
And resonable, a lady for to werne!
Now, nece myn, by natal Loves fest, 150
Were I a god, ye sholde sterve as yerne,
That heren wel, this man wol no-thing yerne
But your honour, and seen him almost sterve,

And been so looth to suffren him yow serve.'

With that she gan hir eyen on him caste 155
Ful esily, and ful debonairly,
Avysing hir, and hyed not to faste
With never a word, but seyde him softly,
`Myn honour sauf, I wol wel trewely,
And in swich forme as he can now devyse, 160
Receyven him fully to my servyse,

`Biseching him, for goddes love, that he
Wolde, in honour of trouthe and gentillesse,
As I wel mene, eek mene wel to me,
And myn honour, with wit and besinesse 165
Ay kepe; and if I may don him gladnesse,
From hennes-forth, y-wis, I nil not feyne:
Now beeth al hool; no lenger ye ne pleyne.

`But nathelees, this warne I yow,' quod she,
`A kinges sone al-though ye be, y-wis, 170
Ye shal na-more have soverainetee
Of me in love, than right in that cas is;
Ne I nil forbere, if that ye doon a-mis,
To wrathen yow; and whyl that ye me serve,
Cherycen yow right after ye deserve. 175

ˆAnd shortly, dere herte and al my knight,
Beth glad, and draweth yow to lustinesse,
And I shal trewely, with al my might,
Your bittre tornen al in-to swetenesse.
If I be she that may yow do gladnesse, 180
For every wo ye shal recovere a blisse';
And him in armes took, and gan him kisse.

Fil Pandarus on knees, and up his eyen
To hevne threw, and held his hondes hye,
ˆImmortal god!' quod he, ˆThat mayst nought dyen, 185
Cupide I mene, of this mayst glorifye;
And Venus, thou mayst maken melodye;
With-outen hond, me semeth that in the towne,
For this merveyle, I here ech belle sowne.

ˆBut ho! No more as now of this matere, 190
For-why this folk wol comen up anoon,
That han the lettre red; lo, I hem here.
But I coniure thee, Criseyde, and oon,
And two, thou Troilus, whan thow mayst goon,
That at myn hous ye been at my warninge, 195
For I ful wel shal shape youre cominge;

ˆAnd eseth ther your hertes right y-nough;
And lat see which of yow shal bere the belle

To speke of love a-right!' ther-with he lough,
`For ther have ye a layser for to telle.' 200
Quod Troilus, `How longe shal I dwelle
Er this be doon?' Quod he, `Whan thou mayst ryse,
This thing shal be right as I yow devyse.'

With that Eleyne and also Deiphebus
Tho comen upward, right at the steyses ende; 205
And Lord, so than gan grone Troilus,
His brother and his suster for to blende.
Quod Pandarus, `It tyme is that we wende;
Tak, nece myn, your leve at alle three,
And lat hem speke, and cometh forth with me.' 210

She took hir leve at hem ful thriftily,
As she wel coude, and they hir reverence
Un-to the fulle diden hardely,
And speken wonder wel, in hir absence,
Of hir, in preysing of hir excellence, 215
Hir governaunce, hir wit; and hir manere
Commendeden, it loye was to here.

Now lat hir wende un-to hir owne place,
And torne we to Troilus a-yein,
That gan ful lightly of the lettre passe 220
That Deiphebus hadde in the gardin seyn.

And of Eleyne and him he wolde fayn
Delivered been, and seyde that him leste
To slepe, and after tales have reste.

Eleyne him kiste, and took hir leve blyve, 225
Deiphebus eek, and hoom wente every wight;
And Pandarus, as faste as he may dryve,
To Troilus tho com, as lyne right;
And on a paillet, al that glade night,
By Troilus he lay, with mery chere, 230
To tale; and wel was hem they were y-fere.

Whan every wight was voided but they two,
And alle the dores were faste y-shette,
To telle in short, with-oute wordes mo,
This Pandarus, with-outen any lette, 235
Up roos, and on his beddes syde him sette,
And gan to speken in a sobre wyse
To Troilus, as I shal yow devyse:

ˆMyn alderlevest lord, and brother dere,
God woot, and thou, that it sat me so sore, 240
When I thee saw so languisshing to-yere,
For love, of which thy wo wex alwey more;
That I, with al my might and al my lore,

Have ever sithen doon my businesse

To bringe thee to loye out of distresse, 245

And have it brought to swich plyt as thou wost,
So that, thorough me, thou stondest now in weye
To fare wel, I seye it for no bost,
And wostow which? For shame it is to seye,
For thee have I bigonne a gamen pleye 250
Which that I never doon shal eft for other,
Al-though he were a thousand fold my brother.

That is to seye, for thee am I bicomen,
Bitwixen game and earnest, swich a mene
As maken wommen un-to men to comen; 255
Al sey I nought, thou wost wel what I mene.
For thee have I my nece, of vyces clene,
So fully maad thy gentillesse triste,
That al shal been right as thy-selve liste.

But god, that al wot, take I to witesse, 260
That never I this for coveityse wroughte,
But only for to abregge that distresse,
For which wel nygh thou deydest, as me thoughte.
But, gode brother, do now as thee oughte,
For goddes love, and kep hir out of blame, 265
Sin thou art wys, and save alwey hir name.

For wel thou wost, the name as yet of here
Among the peple, as who seyth, halwed is;
For that man is unbore, I dar wel swere,
That ever wiste that she dide amis. 270

But wo is me, that I, that cause al this,
May thenken that she is my nece dere,
And I hir eem, and trattor eek y-ferel!

And were it wist that I, through myn engyn,
Hadde in my nece y-put this fantasye, 275
To do thy lust, and hoolly to be thyn,
Why, al the world up-on it wolde crye,
And seye, that I the worste trecherye
Dide in this cas, that ever was bigonne,
And she for-lost, and thou right nought y-wonne. 280

Wher-fore, er I wol ferther goon a pas,
Yet eft I thee biseche and fully seye,
That privetee go with us in this cas;
That is to seye, that thou us never wreye;
And be nought wrooth, though I thee ofte preye 285
To holden secree swich an heigh matere;
For skilful is, thow wost wel, my preyere.

And thenk what wo ther hath bitid er this,
For makinge of avantes, as men rede;

And what mischaunce in this world yet ther is, 290
Fro day to day, right for that wikked dede;
For which these wyse clerkes that ben dede
Han ever yet proverbed to us yonge,
That "Firste vertu is to kepe tonge."

ˆAnd, nere it that I wilne as now tabregge 295
Diffusioun of speche, I coude almost
A thousand olde stories thee alegge
Of wommen lost, thorough fals and foles bost;
Proverbes canst thy-self y-nowe, and wost,
Ayeins that vyce, for to been a labbe, 300
Al seyde men sooth as often as they gabbe.

ˆO tonge, allas! So often here-biforn
Hastow made many a lady bright of hewe
Seyd, "Welawey! The day that I was born!"
And many a maydes sorwes for to newe; 305
And, for the more part, al is untrewe
That men of yelpe, and it were brought to preve;
Of kinde non avauntour is to leve.

ˆAvauntour and a lyere, al is on;
As thus: I pose, a womman graunte me 310
Hir love, and seyth that other wol she non,
And I am sworn to holden it secree,

And after I go telle it two or three;
Y-wis, I am avauntour at the leste,
And lyere, for I breke my biheste. 315

Now loke thanne, if they be nought to blame,
Swich maner folk; what shal I clepe hem, what,
That hem avaunte of wommen, and by name,
That never yet bihighte hem this ne that,
Ne knewe hem more than myn olde hat? 320
No wonder is, so god me sende hele,
Though wommen drede with us men to dele.

I sey not this for no mistrust of yow,
Ne for no wys man, but for foles nyce,
And for the harm that in the world is now, 325
As wel for foly ofte as for malyce;
For wel wot I, in wyse folk, that vyce
No womman drat, if she be wel avysed;
For wyse ben by foles harm chastysed.

But now to purpos; leve brother dere, 330
Have al this thing that I have seyde in minde,
And keep thee clos, and be now of good chere,
For at thy day thou shalt me trewe finde.
I shal thy proces sette in swich a kinde,
And god to-forn, that it shall thee suffyse, 335

For it shal been right as thou wolt devyse.

For wel I woot, thou menest wel, parde;

Therefore I dar this fully undertake.

Thou wost eek what thy lady graunted thee,

And day is set, the chartres up to make. 340

Have now good night, I may no lenger wake;

And bid for me, sin thou art now in blisse,

That god me sende deeth or sone lisse.'

Who mighte telle half the Ioye or feste

Which that the sowle of Troilus tho felte, 345

Heringe theeffect of Pandarus biheste?

His olde wo, that made his herte swelte,

Gan tho for Ioye wasten and to-melte,

And al the richesse of his sykes sore

At ones fledde, he felte of hem no more. 350

But right so as these holtes and these hayes,

That han in winter dede been and dreye,

Revesten hem in grene, whan that May is,

Whan every lusty lyketh best to pleye;

Right in that selve wyse, sooth to seye, 355

Wax sodeynliche his herte ful of Ioye,

That gladder was ther never man in Troye.

And gan his look on Pandarus up caste
Ful sobrelly, and frendly for to see,
And seyde, `Freend, in Aprille the laste, 360
As wel thou wost, if it remembre thee,
How neigh the deeth for wo thou founde me;
And how thou didest al thy businesse
To knowe of me the cause of my distresse.

`Thou wost how longe I it for-bar to seye 365
To thee, that art the man that I best triste;
And peril was it noon to thee by-wreye,
That wiste I wel; but tel me, if thee liste,
Sith I so looth was that thy-self it wiste,
How dorst I mo tellen of this matere, 370
That quake now, and no wight may us here?

`But natheles, by that god I thee swere,
That, as him list, may al this world governe,
And, if I lye, Achilles with his spere
Myn herte cleve, al were my lyf eterne, 375
As I am mortal, if I late or yerne
Wolde it biwreye, or dorste, or sholde conne,
For al the good that god made under sonne;

`That rather deye I wolde, and determyne,
As thinketh me, now stokked in presoun, 380

In wrecchednesse, in filthe, and in vermyne,
Caytif to cruel king Agamenoun;
And this, in alle the temples of this toun
Upon the goddes alle, I wol thee swere,
To-morwe day, if that thee lyketh here. 385

And that thou hast so mucche y-doon for me,
That I ne may it never-more deserve,
This knowe I wel, al mighte I now for thee
A thousand tymes on a morwen sterve.
I can no more, but that I wol thee serve 390
Right as thy sclave, whider-so thou wende,
For ever-more, un-to my lyves ende!

But here, with al myn herte, I thee biseche,
That never in me thou deme swich folye
As I shal seyn; me thoughte, by thy speche, 395
That this, which thou me dost for companye,
I sholde wene it were a bauderye;
I am nought wood, al-if I lewed be;
It is not so, that woot I wel, pardee.

But he that goth, for gold or for richesse, 400
On swich message, calle him what thee list;
And this that thou dost, calle it gentillesse,
Compassioun, and felawship, and trist;

Depart it so, for wyde-where is wist
How that there is dyversitee requered 405
Bitwixen thinges lyke, as I have lered.

And, that thou knowe I thenke nought ne wene
That this servyse a shame be or lape,
I have my faire suster Polixene,
Cassandre, Eleyne, or any of the frape; 410
Be she never so faire or wel y-shape,
Tel me, which thou wilt of everichone,
To han for thyn, and lat me thanne allone.

But, sith that thou hast don me this servyse
My lyf to save, and for noon hope of mede, 415
So, for the love of god, this grete empryse
Performe it out; for now is moste nede.
For high and low, with-outen any drede,
I wol alwey thyne hestes alle kepe;
Have now good night, and lat us bothe slepe.' 420

Thus held him ech of other wel apayed,
That al the world ne mighte it bet amende;
And, on the morwe, whan they were arayed,
Ech to his owene nedes gan entende.
But Troilus, though as the fyr he brende 425
For sharp desyr of hope and of plesaunce,

He not for-gat his gode governaunce.

But in him-self with manhod gan restreyne
Ech rakel dede and ech unbrydled chere,
That alle tho that liven, sooth to seyne, 430
Ne sholde han wist, by word or by manere,
What that he mente, as touching this matere.
From every wight as fer as is the cloude
He was, so wel dissimulen he coude.

And al the whyl which that I yow devyse, 435
This was his lyf; with al his fulle might,
By day he was in Martes high servyse,
This is to seyn, in armes as a knight;
And for the more part, the longe night
He lay, and thoughte how that he mighte serve 440
His lady best, hir thank for to deserve.

Nil I nought swere, al-though he lay softe,
That in his thought he nas sumwhat disesed,
Ne that he tornede on his pilwes ofte,
And wolde of that him missed han ben sesed; 445
But in swich cas men is nought alwey plesed,
For ought I wot, no more than was he;
That can I deme of possibilitee.

But certeyn is, to purpos for to go,
That in this whyle, as writen is in geste, 450
He say his lady som-tyme; and also
She with him spak, whan that she dorste or leste,
And by hir bothe avys, as was the beste,
Apoynteden ful warly in this nede,
So as they dorste, how they wolde procede. 455

But it was spoken in so short a wyse,
In swich awayt alwey, and in swich fere,
Lest any wyght devynen or devyse
Wolde of hem two, or to it leye an ere,
That al this world so leef to hem ne were 460
As that Cupido wolde hem grace sende
To maken of hir speche aright an ende.

But thilke litel that they spake or wroughte,
His wyse goost took ay of al swich hede,
It semed hir, he wiste what she thoughte 465
With-outen word, so that it was no nede
To bidde him ought to done, or ought for-bede;
For which she thought that love, al come it late,
Of alle Ioye hadde opned hir the yate.

And shortly of this proces for to pace, 470
So wel his werk and wordes he bisette,

That he so ful stood in his lady grace,
That twenty thousand tymes, or she lette,
She thonked god she ever with him mette;
So coude he him governe in swich servyse, 475
That al the world ne might it bet devyse.

For-why she fond him so discret in al,
So secret, and of swich obeisaunce,
That wel she felte he was to hir a wal
Of steel, and sheld from every displesaunce; 480
That, to ben in his gode governaunce,
So wys he was, she was no more afered,
I mene, as fer as oughte ben requered.

And Pandarus, to quike alwey the fyr,
Was evere y-lyke prest and diligent; 485
To ese his frend was set al his desyr.
He shof ay on, he to and fro was sent;
He lettres bar whan Troilus was absent.
That never man, as in his freendes nede,
Ne bar him bet than he, with-ouen drede. 490

But now, paraunter, som man wayten wolde
That every word, or sonde, or look, or chere
Of Troilus that I rehersen sholde,
In al this whyle un-to his lady dere;

I trowe it were a long thing for to here; 495
Or of what wight that stant in swich disioynte,
His wordes alle, or every look, to poynte.

For sothe, I have not herd it doon er this,
In storye noon, ne no man here, I wene;
And though I wolde I coude not, y-wis; 500
For ther was som epistel hem bitwene,
That wolde, as seyth myn auctor, wel contene
Neigh half this book, of which him list not wryte;
How sholde I thanne a lyne of it endyte?

But to the grete effect: than sey I thus, 505
That standing in concord and in quiete,
Thise ilke two, Criseyde and Troilus,
As I have told, and in this tyme swete,
Save only often mighte they not mete,
Ne layser have hir speches to fulfelle, 510
That it befel right as I shal yow telle.

That Pandarus, that ever dide his might
Right for the fyn that I shal speke of here,
As for to bringe to his hous som night
His faire nece, and Troilus y-fere, 515
Wher-as at leyser al this heigh matere,
Touching hir love, were at the fulle up-bounde,

Hadde out of doute a tyme to it founde.

For he with greet deliberacioun

Hadde every thing that her-to mighte avayle 520

Forn-cast, and put in execucioun.

And neither laft, for cost ne for travayle;

Come if hem list, hem sholde no-thing fayle;

And for to been in ought espyed there,

That, wiste he wel, an impossible were. 525

Dredelees, it cleer was in the wind

Of every pye and every lette-game;

Now al is wel, for al the world is blind

In this matere, bothe fremed and tame.

This timbur is al redy up to frame; 530

Us lakketh nought but that we witen wolde

A certain houre, in which she comen sholde.

And Troilus, that al this purveyaunce

Knew at the fulle, and waytede on it ay,

Hadde here-up-on eek made gret ordenaunce, 535

And founde his cause, and ther-to his aray,

If that he were missed, night or day,

Ther-whyle he was aboute this servyse,

That he was goon to doon his sacrificyse,

And moste at swich a temple alone wake, 540
Answered of Appollo for to be;
And first to seen the holy laurer quake,
Er that Appollo spak out of the tree,
To telle him next whan Grekes sholden flee,
And forthy lette him no man, god forbede, 545
But preye Appollo helpen in this nede.

Now is ther litel more for to doone,
But Pandare up, and shortly for to seyne,
Right sone upon the chaunging of the mone,
Whan lightles is the world a night or tweyne, 550
And that the welken shoop him for to reyne,
He streight a-morwe un-to his nece wente;
Ye han wel herd the fyn of his entente.

Whan he was come, he gan anoon to pleye
As he was wont, and of him-self to Iape; 555
And fynally, he swor and gan hir seye,
By this and that, she sholde him not escape,
Ne lengere doon him after hir to gape;
But certeynly she moste, by hir leve,
Come soupen in his hous with him at eve. 560

At whiche she lough, and gan hir faste excuse,
And seyde, `It rayneth; lo, how sholde I goon?'

'Lat be,' quod he, `ne stond not thus to muse;
This moot be doon, ye shal be ther anoon.'

So at the laste her-of they felle at oon, 565
Or elles, softe he swor hir in hir ere,
He nolde never come ther she were.

Sone after this, to him she gan to rowne,
And asked him if Troilus were there?
He swor hir, `Nay, for he was out of towne,' 570
And seyde, `Nece, I pose that he were,
Yow thurfte never have the more fere.
For rather than men mighte him ther aspye,
Me were lever a thousand-fold to dye.'

Nought list myn auctor fully to declare 575
What that she thoughte whan he seyde so,
That Troilus was out of town y-fare,
As if he seyde ther-of sooth or no;
But that, with-outen awayt, with him to go,
She graunted him, sith he hir that bisoughte 580
And, as his nece, obeyed as hir oughte.

But nathelees, yet gan she him biseche,
Al-though with him to goon it was no fere,
For to be war of goosish peples speche,
That dremen thinges whiche that never were, 585

And wel avyse him whom he broughte there;
And seyde him, `Eem, sin I mot on yow triste,
Loke al be wel, and do now as yow liste.'

He swor hire, `Yis, by stokkes and by stones,
And by the goddes that in hevene dwelle, 590
Or elles were him levere, soule and bones,
With Pluto king as depe been in helle
As Tantalus!' What sholde I more telle?
Whan al was wel, he roos and took his leve,
And she to souper com, whan it was eve, 595

With a certayn of hir owene men,
And with hir faire nece Antigone,
And othere of hir wommen nyne or ten;
But who was glad now, who, as trowe ye,
But Troilus, that stood and mighte it see 600
Thurgh-out a litel windowe in a stewe,
Ther he bishet, sin midnight, was in mewe,

Unwist of every wight but of Pandare?
But to the poynt; now whan that she was y-come
With alle Ioye, and alle frendes fare, 605
Hir em anoon in armes hath hir nome,
And after to the souper, alle and some,
Whan tyme was, ful softe they hem sette;

God wot, ther was no deyntee for to fette.

And after souper gonnen they to ryse, 610

At ese wel, with hertes fresshe and glade,

And wel was him that coude best devyse

To lyken hir, or that hir laughen made.

He song; she pleyde; he tolde tale of Wade.

But at the laste, as every thing hath ende, 615

She took hir leve, and nedes wolde wende.

But O, Fortune, executrice of wierdes,

O influences of this hevenes hye!

Soth is, that, under god, ye ben our hierdes,

Though to us bestes been the causes wrye. 620

This mene I now, for she gan hoomward hye,

But execut was al bisyde hir leve,

At the goddes wil, for which she moste bleve.

The bente mone with hir hornes pale,

Saturne, and love, in Cancro ioyned were, 625

That swich a rayn from hevene gan avale

That every maner womman that was there

Hadde of that smoky reyn a verray fere;

At which Pandare tho lough, and seyde thenne,

Now were it tyme a lady to go henne! 630

‘But goode nece, if I mighte ever plese
Yow any-thing, than prey I yow,’ quod he,
‘To doon myn herte as now so greet an ese
As for to dwelle here al this night with me,
For-why this is your owene hous, pardee. 635
For, by my trouthe, I sey it nought a-game,
To wende as now, it were to me a shame.’

Criseyde, which that coude as mucche good
As half a world, tok hede of his preyere;
And sin it ron, and al was on a flood, 640
She thoughte, as good chep may I dwellen here,
And graunte it gladly with a freendes chere,
And have a thank, as grucche and thanne abyde;
For hoom to goon, it may nought wel bityde.’

‘I wol,’ quod she, ‘myn uncle leef and dere, 645
Sin that yow list, it skile is to be so;
I am right glad with yow to dwellen here;
I seyde but a-game, I wolde go.’
‘Y-wis, graunt mercy, nece!’ quod he tho;
‘Were it a game or no, soth for to telle, 650
Now am I glad, sin that yow list to dwelle.’

Thus al is wel; but tho bigan aright
The newe Ioye, and al the feste agayn;

But Pandarus, if goodly hadde he might,
He wolde han hyed hir to bedde fayn, 655
And seyde, `Lord, this is an huge rayn!
This were a weder for to slepen inne;
And that I rede us sonE to biginne.

`And nece, woot ye wher I wol yow leye,
For that we shul not liggien fer asonder, 660
And for ye neither shullen, dar I seye,
Heren noise of reynes nor of thondre?
By god, right in my lyte closet yonder.
And I wol in that outer hous allone
Be wardeyn of your wommen everichone. 665

`And in this middel chaumbre that ye see
Shal youre wommen slepen wel and softe;
And ther I seyde shal your-selve be;
And if ye liggien wel to-night, com ofte,
And careth not what weder is on-lofte. 670
The wyn anon, and whan so that yow leste,
So go we slepe, I trowe it be the beste.'

Ther nis no more, but here-after sone,
The voyde dronke, and travers drawe anon,
Gan every wight, that hadde nought to done 675
More in the place, out of the chaumber gon.

And ever-mo so sternelich it ron,
And blew ther-with so wonderliche loude,
That wel neigh no man heren other coude.

Tho Pandarus, hir eem, right as him oughte, 680
With women swiche as were hir most aboute,
Ful glad un-to hir beddes syde hir broughte,
And toke his leve, and gan ful lowe loute,
And seyde, `Here at this closet-dore with-oute,
Right over-thwart, your wommen liggen alle, 685
That, whom yow list of hem, ye may here calle.'

So whan that she was in the closet leyde,
And alle hir wommen forth by ordenaunce
A-bedde weren, ther as I have seyde,
There was no more to skippen nor to traunce, 690
But boden go to bedde, with mischaunce,
If any wight was steringe any-where,
And late hem slepe that a-bedde were.

But Pandarus, that wel coude eche a del
The olde daunce, and every poynt ther-inne, 695
Whan that he sey that alle thing was wel,
He thoughte he wolde up-on his werk biginne,
And gan the stewe-dore al softe un-pinne;
And stille as stoon, with-outen lenger lette,

By Troilus a-doun right he him sette. 700

And, shortly to the poynt right for to gon,
Of al this werk he tolde him word and ende,
And seyde, `Make thee redy right anon,
For thou shalt in-to hevene blisse wende.'

`Now blisful Venus, thou me grace sende,' 705

Quod Troilus, `for never yet no nede
Hadde I er now, ne halvendel the drede.'

Quod Pandarus, `Ne drede thee never a del,
For it shal been right as thou wilt desyre;

So thryve I, this night shal I make it wel, 710

Or casten al the gruwel in the fyre.'

`Yit blisful Venus, this night thou me enspyre,'

Quod Troilus, `as wis as I thee serve,

And ever bet and bet shal, til I sterve.

`And if I hadde, O Venus ful of murthe, 715

Aspectes badde of Mars or of Saturne,

Or thou combust or let were in my birthe,

Thy fader prey al thilke harm disturne

Of grace, and that I glad ayein may turne,

For love of him thou lovedest in the shawe, 720

I mene Adoon, that with the boor was slawe.

ˆO love eek, for the love of faire Europe,
The whiche in forme of bole away thou fette;
Now help, O Mars, thou with thy bloody cope,
For love of Cipris, thou me nought ne lette; 725
O Phebus, thenk whan Dane hir-selven shette
Under the bark, and laurer wex for drede,
Yet for hir love, O help now at this nede!

ˆMercurie, for the love of Hierse eke,
For which Pallas was with Aglauros wrooth, 730
Now help, and eek Diane, I thee biseke
That this viage be not to thee looth.
O fatal sustren, which, er any clooth
Me shapen was, my destene me sponne,
So helpeth to this werk that is bi-gonne! 735

Quod Pandarus, ˆThou wrecched mouses herte,
Art thou agast so that she wol thee byte?
Why, don this furred cloke up-on thy sherte,
And folowe me, for I wol have the wyte;
But byd, and lat me go bifore a lyte.' 740
And with that word he gan un-do a trappe,
And Troilus he broughte in by the lappe.

The sterne wind so loude gan to route
That no wight other noyse mighte here;

And they that layen at the dore with-oute, 745
Ful sykerly they slepten alle y-fere;
And Pandarus, with a ful sobre chere,
Goth to the dore anon with-outen lette,
Ther-as they laye, and softely it shette.

And as he com ayeinward prively, 750
His nece awook, and asked, `Who goth there?'
`My dere nece,' quod he, `it am I;
Ne wondreth not, ne have of it no fere;'
And ner he com, and seyde hir in hir ere,
`No word, for love of god I yow biseche; 755
Lat no wight ryse and heren of oure speche.'

`What! Which wey be ye comen, benedicite?'
Quod she; `And how thus unwist of hem alle?'
`Here at this secre trappe-dore,' quod he.
Quod tho Criseyde, `Lat me som wight calle.' 760
`Ey! God forbede that it sholde falle,'
Quod Pandarus, `that ye swich folly wroughte!
They mighte deme thing they never er thoughte!

`It is nought good a sleping hound to wake,
Ne yeve a wight a cause to devyne; 765
Your wommen slepen alle, I under-take,
So that, for hem, the hous men mighte myne;

And slepen wolen til the sonne shyne.
And whan my tale al brought is to an ende,
Unwist, right as I com, so wol I wende. 770

‘Now, nece myn, ye shul wel understonde,’
Quod he, ‘so as ye wommen demen alle,
That for to holde in love a man in honde,
And him hir "leef" and "dere herte" calle,
And maken him an howve above a calle, 775
I mene, as love an other in this whyle,
She doth hir-self a shame, and him a gyle.

‘Now wherby that I telle yow al this?
Ye woot your-self, as wel as any wight,
How that your love al fully graunted is 780
To Troilus, the worthieste knight,
Oon of this world, and ther-to trouthe plyght,
That, but it were on him along, ye nolde
Him never falsen, whyle ye liven sholde.

‘Now stant it thus, that sith I fro yow wente, 785
This Troilus, right platly for to seyn,
Is thurgh a goter, by a prive wente,
In-to my chaumbre come in al this reyn,
Unwist of every maner wight, certeyn,
Save of my-self, as wisly have I Ioye, 790

And by that feith I shal Pryam of Troye!

ˆAnd he is come in swich peyne and distresse
That, but he be al fully wood by this,
He sodeynly mot falle in-to wodnesse,
But-if god helpe; and cause why this is, 795
He seyth him told is, of a freend of his,
How that ye sholde love oon that hatte Horaste,
For sorwe of which this night shalt been his laste.'

Criseyde, which that al this wonder herde,
Gan sodeynly aboute hir herte colde, 800
And with a syk she sorwfully answerde,
ˆAllas! I wende, who-so tales tolde,
My dere herte wolde me not holde
So lightly fals! Allas! Conceytes wronge,
What harm they doon, for now live I to longe! 805

ˆHoraste! Allas! And falsen Troilus?
I knowe him not, god helpe me so,' quod she;
ˆAllas! What wikked spirit tolde him thus?
Now certes, eem, to-morwe, and I him see,
I shal ther-of as ful excusen me 810
As ever dide womman, if him lyke';
And with that word she gan ful sore syke.

‘O god!’ quod she, ‘So worldly selinesse,
Which clerkes callen fals felicitee,
Y-medled is with many a bitternesse! 815

Ful anguisschous than is, god woot,’ quod she,
‘Condicioun of veyn prosperitee;
For either loyes comen nought y-fere,
Or elles no wight hath hem alwey here.

‘O brotel wele of mannes loye unstable! 820
With what wight so thou be, or how thou pleye,
Either he woot that thou, loye, art muable,
Or woot it not, it moot ben oon of tweye;
Now if he woot it not, how may he seye
That he hath verray loye and selinesse, 825
That is of ignoraunce ay in derknesse?

‘Now if he woot that loye is transitorie,
As every loye of worldly thing mot flee,
Than every tyme he that hath in memorie,
The drede of lesing maketh him that he 830
May in no perfit selinesse be.
And if to lese his loye he set a myte,
Than semeth it that loye is worth ful lyte.

‘Wherefore I wol deffyne in this matere,
That trewely, for ought I can espye, 835

Ther is no verray wele in this world here.
But O, thou wikked serpent, Ialousye,
Thou misbeleved and envious folye,
Why hastow Troilus me mad untriste,
That never yet agilte him, that I wiste?' 840

Quod Pandarus, `Thus fallen is this cas.'
`Why, uncle myn,' quod she, `who tolde him this?
Why doth my dere herte thus, allas?'
`Ye woot, ye nece myn,' quod he, `what is;
I hope al shal be wel that is amis, 845
For ye may quenche al this, if that yow leste,
And doth right so, for I holde it the beste.'

`So shal I do to-morwe, y-wis,' quod she,
`And god to-forn, so that it shal suffyse.'
`To-morwe? Allas, that were a fair!' quod he, 850
`Nay, nay, it may not stonden in this wyse;
For, nece myn, thus wryten clerkes wyse,
That peril is with drecching in y-drawe;
Nay, swich abodes been nought worth an hawe.

`Nece, al thing hath tyme, I dar avowe; 855
For whan a chaumber a-fyr is, or an halle,
Wel more nede is, it sodeynly rescowe
Than to dispute, and axe amonges alle

How is this candele in the straw y-falle?
 A! Benedicite! For al among that fare 860
 The harm is doon, and fare-wel feldefare!

 `And, nece myn, ne take it not a-greef,
 If that ye suffre him al night in this wo,
 God help me so, ye hadde him never leef,
 That dar I seyn, now there is but we two; 865
 But wel I woot, that ye wol not do so;
 Ye been to wys to do so gret folye,
 To putte his lyf al night in Iupertye.

 `Hadde I him never leef? By god, I wene
 Ye hadde never thing so leef,' quod she. 870
 `Now by my thrift,' quod he, `that shal be sene;
 For, sin ye make this ensample of me,
 If I al night wolde him in sorwe see
 For al the tresour in the toun of Troye,
 I bidde god, I never mote have Ioye! 875

 `Now loke thanne, if ye, that been his love,
 Shul putte al night his lyf in Iupartye
 For thing of nought! Now, by that god above,
 Nought only this delay comth of folye,
 But of malyce, if that I shal nought lye. 880
 What, platly, and ye suffre him in distresse,

Ye neither bountee doon ne gentillesse!

Quod tho Criseyde, `Wole ye doon o thing,

And ye therwith shal stinte al his disese?

Have here, and bereth him this blewe ringe, 885

For ther is no-thing mighte him bettre plese,

Save I my-self, ne more his herte apese;

And sey my dere herte, that his sorwe

Is causeles, that shal be seen to-morwe.'

`A ring?' quod he, `Ye, hasel-wodes shaken! 890

Ye nece myn, that ring moste han a stoon

That mighte dede men alyve maken;

And swich a ring trowe I that ye have noon.

Discrecioun out of your heed is goon;

That fele I now,' quod he, `and that is routhe; 895

O tyme y-lost, wel maystow cursen slouthe!

`Wot ye not wel that noble and heigh corage

Ne sorweth not, ne stinteth eek for lyte?

But if a fool were in a lalous rage,

I nolde setten at his sorwe a myte, 900

But feffe him with a fewe wordes whyte

Another day, whan that I mighte him finde;

But this thing stant al in another kinde.

ˆThis is so gentil and so tendre of herte,
That with his deeth he wol his sorwes wreke; 905
For trusteth wel, how sore that him smerte,
He wol to yow no lalouse wordes speke.
And for-thy, nece, er that his herte breke,
So spek your-self to him of this matere;
For with o word ye may his herte stere. 910

ˆNow have I told what peril he is inne,
And his coming unwist is to every wight;
Ne, pardee, harm may ther be noon, ne sinne;
I wol my-self be with yow al this night.
Ye knowe eek how it is your owne knight, 915
And that, by right, ye moste upon him triste,
And I al prest to fecche him whan yow liste.'

This accident so pitous was to here,
And eek so lyk a sooth, at pryme face,
And Troilus hir knight to hir so dere, 920
His prive coming, and the siker place,
That, though that she dide him as thanne a grace,
Considered alle thinges as they stode,
No wonder is, sin she dide al for gode.

Cryseyde answerde, ˆAs wisly god at reste 925
My sowle bringe, as me is for him wo!

And eem, y-wis, fayn wolde I doon the beste,
If that I hadde grace to do so.
But whether that ye dwelle or for him go,
I am, til god me bettre minde sende, 930
At dulcarnon, right at my wittes ende.'

Quod Pandarus, `Ye, nece, wol ye here?
Dulcarnon called is "fleminge of wrecches";
It semeth hard, for wrecches wol not lere
For verray slouthe or othere wilful tecches; 935
This seyde by hem that be not worth two fecches.
But ye ben wys, and that we han on honde
Nis neither hard, ne skilful to withstonde.'

`Thanne, eem,' quod she, `doth her-of as yow list;
But er he come, I wil up first aryse; 940
And, for the love of god, sin al my trist
Is on yow two, and ye ben bothe wyse,
So wircheth now in so discreet a wyse,
That I honour may have, and he plesaunce;
For I am here al in your governaunce.' 945

`That is wel seyde,' quod he, `my nece dere'
Ther good thrift on that wyse gentil herte!
But liggeth stille, and taketh him right here,
It nedeth not no ferther for him sterte;

And ech of yow ese otheres sorwes smerte, 950
For love of god; and, Venus, I the herie;
For sone hope I we shulle ben alle merie.'

This Troilus ful sone on knees him sette
Ful sobrelly, right be hir beddes heed,
And in his beste wyse his lady grette; 955
But lord, so she wex sodeynliche reed!
Ne, though men sholden smyten of hir heed,
She coude nought a word a-right out-bringe
So sodeynly, for his sodeyn cominge.

But Pandarus, that so wel coude fele 960
In every thing, to pleye anoon bigan,
And seyde, `Nece, see how this lord can knele!
Now, for your trouthe, seeth this gentil man!
And with that word he for a quisschen ran,
And seyde, `Kneleth now, whyl that yow leste, 965
Ther god your hertes bringe sone at reste!'

Can I not seyn, for she bad him not ryse,
If sorwe it putte out of hir remembraunce,
Or elles that she toke it in the wyse
Of duetee, as for his observaunce; 970
But wel finde I she dide him this plesaunce,
That she him kiste, al-though she syked sore;

And bad him sitte a-doun with-outen more.

Quod Pandarus, `Now wol ye wel biginne;

Now doth him sitte, gode nece dere, 975

Upon your beddes syde al there with-inne,

That ech of yow the bet may other here.'

And with that word he drow him to the fere,

And took a light, and fond his contenance,

As for to loke up-on an old romaunce. 980

Criseyde, that was Troilus lady right,

And cleer stood on a ground of sikernesse,

Al thoughte she, hir servaunt and hir knight

Ne sholde of right non untrouthe in hir gesse,

Yet nathelees, considered his distresse, 985

And that love is in cause of swich folye,

Thus to him spak she of his lalousye:

`Lo, herte myn, as wolde the excellence

Of love, ayeins the which that no man may,

Ne oughte eek goodly maken resistence 990

And eek bycause I felte wel and say

Youre grete trouthe, and servyse every day;

And that your herte al myn was, sooth to seyne,

This droof me for to rewe up-on your peyne.

And your goodnesse have I founde alwey yit, 995
Of whiche, my dere herte and al my knight,
I thonke it yow, as fer as I have wit,
Al can I nought as muche as it were right;
And I, emforth my conninge and my might,
Have and ay shal, how sore that me smerte, 1000
Ben to yow trewe and hool, with a myn herte;

And dredeles, that shal be founde at preve. --
But, herte myn, what al this is to seyne
Shal wel be told, so that ye noght yow greve,
Though I to yow right on your-self compleyne. 1005
For ther-with mene I fynally the peyne,
That halt your herte and myn in hevinesse,
Fully to sleen, and every wrong redresse.

My goode, myn, not I for-why ne how
That Ialouslye, allas! That wikked wivere, 1010
Thus causelees is copen in-to yow;
The harm of which I wolde fayn deliver!
Allas! That he, al hool, or of him slivere,
Shuld have his refut in so digne a place,
Ther love him sone out of your herte arace! 1015

But O, thou love, O auctor of nature,
Is this an honour to thy deitee,

That folk ungiltif suffren here iniure,
And who that giltif is, al quit goth he?
O were it leful for to pleyne on thee, 1020
That undeserved suffrest Ialousye,
Of that I wolde up-on thee pleyne and crye!

ˆEek al my wo is this, that folk now usen
To seyn right thus, "Ye, Ialousye is love!"
And wolde a busshel venim al excusen, 1025
For that o greyn of love is on it shove!
But that wot heighe god that sit above,
If it be lyker love, or hate, or grame;
And after that, it oughte bere his name.

ˆBut certeyn is, som maner Ialousye 1030
Is excusable more than som, y-wis.
As whan cause is, and som swich fantasye
With pietee so wel repressed is,
That it unnethe dooth or seyth amis,
But goodly drinketh up al his distresse; 1035
And that excuse I, for the gentillesse.

ˆAnd som so ful of furie is and despyt
That it sourmounteth his repressioun;
But herte myn, ye be not in that plyt,
That thanke I god, for whiche your passioun 1040

I wol not calle it but illusioun,
Of habundaunce of love and bisy cure,
That dooth your herte this disese endure.

Of which I am right sory but not wrooth;
But, for my devoir and your hertes reste, 1045
Wher-so yow list, by ordal or by ooth,
By sort, or in what wyse so yow leste,
For love of god, lat preve it for the beste!
And if that I be giltif, do me deye,
Allas! What mighte I more doon or seye?' 1050

With that a fewe brighte teres newe
Owt of hir eyen fille, and thus she seyde,
Now god, thou wost, in thought ne dede untrew
To Troilus was never yet Criseyde.'
With that hir heed doun in the bed she leyde, 1055
And with the shete it wreigh, and syghed sore,
And held hir pees; not o word spak she more.

But now help god to quenchen al this sorwe,
So hope I that he shal, for he best may;
For I have seyn, of a ful misty morwe 1060
Folwen ful ofte a mery someres day;
And after winter folweth grene May.
Men seen alday, and reden eek in stories,

That after sharpe shoures been victories.

This Troilus, whan he hir wordes herde, 1065
Have ye no care, him liste not to slepe;
For it thoughte him no strokes of a yerde
To here or seen Criseyde, his lady wepe;
But wel he felte aboute his herte crepe,
For every teer which that Criseyde asterte, 1070
The crampe of deeth, to streyne him by the herte.

And in his minde he gan the tyme acurse
That he cam there, and that that he was born;
For now is wikke y-turned in-to worse,
And al that labour he hath doon biforn, 1075
He wende it lost, he thoughte he nas but lorn.
'O Pandarus,' thoughte he, 'allas! Thy wyle
Serveth of nought, so weylaway the whyle!'

And therwithal he heng a-doun the heed,
And fil on knees, and sorwfully he sighte; 1080
What mighte he seyn? He felte he nas but deed,
For wrooth was she that shulde his sorwes lighte.
But nathelees, whan that he speken mighte,
Than seyde he thus, 'God woot, that of this game,
Whan al is wist, than am I not to blame!' 1085

Ther-with the sorwe so his herte shette,
That from his eyen fil there not a tere,
And every spirit his vigour in-knette,
So they astoned or oppressed were.
The feling of his sorwe, or of his fere, 1090
Or of ought elles, fled was out of towne;
And doun he fel al sodeynly a-swowne.

This was no litel sorwe for to see;
But al was hust, and Pandare up as faste,
'O nece, pees, or we be lost,' quod he, 1095
'Beth nought agast;' But certeyn, at the laste,
For this or that, he in-to bedde him caste,
And seyde, 'O theef, is this a mannes herte?'
And of he rente al to his bare sherte;

And seyde, 'Nece, but ye helpe us now, 1100
Allas, your owne Troilus is lorn!'
'Y-wis, so wolde I, and I wiste how,
Ful fayn,' quod she; 'Allas! That I was born!'
'Ye, nece, wole ye pullen out the thorn
That stiketh in his herte?' quod Pandare; 1105
'Sey "Al foryeve," and stint is al this fare!'

'Ye, that to me,' quod she, 'ful lever were
Than al the good the sonne aboute gooth';

And therwith-al she swoor him in his ere,
`Y-wis, my dere herte, I am nought wrooth, 1110
Have here my trouthe and many another ooth;
Now speak to me, for it am I, Cryseyde!
But al for nought; yet mighte he not a-breyde.

Therwith his pous and pawmes of his hondes
They gan to frote, and wete his temples tweyne, 1115
And, to deliveren him from bittre bondes,
She ofte him kiste; and, shortly for to seyne,
Him to revoken she dide al hir peyne.
And at the laste, he gan his breeth to drawe,
And of his swough sone after that adawe, 1120

And gan bet minde and reson to him take,
But wonder sore he was abayst, y-wis.
And with a syk, whan he gan bet a-wake,
He seyde, `O mercy, god, what thing is this?'
`Why do ye with your-selven thus amis?' 1125
Quod tho Criseyde, `Is this a mannes game?
What, Troilus! Wol ye do thus, for shame?'

And therwith-al hir arm over him she leyde,
And al foryaf, and ofte tyme him keste.
He thonked hir, and to hir spak, and seyde 1130
As fil to purpos for his herte reste.

And she to that answerde him as hir leste;
And with hir goodly wordes him disporte
She gan, and ofte his sorwes to comforte.

Quod Pandarus, `For ought I can espyen, 1135
This light, nor I ne serven here of nought;
Light is not good for syke folkes yen.
But for the love of god, sin ye be brought
In thus good plyt, lat now non hevvy thought
Ben hanginge in the hertes of yow tweye:' 1140
And bar the candele to the chimeneye.

Sone after this, though it no nede were,
Whan she swich othes as hir list devyse
Hadde of him take, hir thoughte tho no fere,
Ne cause eek non, to bidde him thennes ryse. 1145
Yet lesse thing than othes may suffyse
In many a cas; for every wight, I gesse,
That loveth wel meneth but gentillesse.

But in effect she wolde wite anoon
Of what man, and eek where, and also why 1150
He Ielous was, sin ther was cause noon;
And eek the signe, that he took it by,
She bad him that to telle hir bisily,
Or elles, certeyn, she bar him on honde,

That this was doon of malis, hir to fonde. 1155

With-outen more, shortly for to seyne,
He moste obeye un-to his lady heste;
And for the lasse harm, he moste feyne.
He seyde hir, whan she was at swiche a feste,
She mighte on him han loked at the leste; 1160
Not I not what, al dere y-nough a risshe,
As he that nedes moste a cause fissue.

And she answerde, `Swete, al were it so,
What harm was that, sin I non yvel mene?
For, by that god that boughte us bothe two, 1165
In alle thinge is myn entente clene.
Swich arguments ne been not worth a bene;
Wol ye the childish Ialous contrefete?
Now were it worthy that ye were y-bete.'

Tho Troilus gan sorwfully to syke, 1170
Lest she be wrooth, him thoughte his herte deyde;
And seyde, `Allas! Up-on my sorwes syke
Have mercy, swete herte myn, Cryseyde!
And if that, in tho wordes that I seyde,
Be any wrong, I wol no more trespance; 1175
Do what yow list, I am al in your grace.'

And she answerde, `Of gilt misericorde!
That is to seyn, that I foryeve al this;
And ever-more on this night yow recorde,
And beth wel war ye do no more amis.' 1180

`Nay, dere herte myn,' quod he, `y-wis.'
`And now,' quod she, `that I have do yow smerte,
Foryeve it me, myn owene swete herte.'

This Troilus, with blisse of that supprysed,
Put al in goddes hond, as he that mente 1185
No-thing but wel; and, sodeynly avysed,
He hir in armes faste to him hente.

And Pandarus, with a ful good entente,
Leyde him to slepe, and seyde, `If ye ben wyse,
Swowneth not now, lest more folk aryse.' 1190

What mighte or may the sely larke seye,
Whan that the sperhauk hath it in his foot?
I can no more, but of thise ilke tweye,
To whom this tale sucre be or soot,
Though that I tarie a yeer, som-tyme I moot, 1195
After myn auctor, tellen hir gladnesse,
As wel as I have told hir hevinesse.

Criseyde, which that felte hir thus y-take,
As writen clerkes in hir bokes olde,

Right as an aspes leef she gan to quake, 1200
Whan she him felte hir in his armes folde.
But Troilus, al hool of cares colde,
Gan thanken tho the blisful goddes sevene;
Thus sondry peynes bringen folk in hevene.

This Troilus in armes gan hir streyne, 1205
And seyde, `O swete, as ever mote I goon,
Now be ye caught, now is ther but we tweyne;
Now yeldeth yow, for other boot is noon.'
To that Criseyde answerde thus anoon,
`Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte dere, 1210
Ben yolde, y-wis, I were now not here!'

O! Sooth is seyde, that heled for to be
As of a fevre or othere greet syknesse,
Men moste drinke, as men may often see,
Ful bittre drink; and for to han gladnesse, 1215
Men drinken often peyne and greet distresse;
I mene it here, as for this aventure,
That thourgh a peyne hath founden al his cure.

And now swetnesse semeth more sweet,
That bitternesse assayed was biforn; 1220
For out of wo in blisse now they flete;
Non swich they felten, sith they were born;

Now is this bet, than bothe two be lorn!
For love of god, take every womman hede
To werken thus, if it comth to the nede. 1225

Criseyde, al quit from every drede and tene,
As she that iuste cause hadde him to triste,
Made him swich feste, it loye was to sene,
Whan she his trouthe and clene entente wiste.
And as aboute a tree, with many a twiste, 1230
Bitrent and wryth the sote wode-binde,
Gan eche of hem in armes other winde.

And as the neue abaysshed nightingale,
That stinteth first whan she biginneth to singe,
Whan that she hereth any herde tale, 1235
Or in the hegges any wight steringe,
And after siker dooth hir voys out-ringe;
Right so Criseyde, whan hir drede stente,
Opned hir herte and tolde him hir entente.

And right as he that seeth his deeth y-shapen, 1240
And deye moot, in ought that he may gesse,
And sodeynly rescous doth him escapen,
And from his deeth is brought in sikernesse,
For al this world, in swich present gladnesse
Was Troilus, and hath his lady swete; 1245

With worse hap god lat us never mete!

Hir armes smale, hir streyghte bak and softe,
Hir sydes longe, fleshly, smothe, and whyte
He gan to stroke, and good thrift bad ful ofte
Hir snowish throte, hir brestes rounde and lyte; 1250
Thus in this hevne he gan him to delyte,
And ther-with-al a thousand tyme hir kiste;
That, what to done, for loye unnethe he wiste.

Than seyde he thus, `O, Love, O, Charitee,
Thy moder eek, Citherea the swete, 1255
After thy-self next heried be she,
Venus mene I, the wel-willy planete;
And next that, Imeneus, I thee grete;
For never man was to yow goddes holde
As I, which ye han brought fro cares colde. 1260

`Benigne Love, thou holy bond of thinges,
Who-so wol grace, and list thee nought honouren,
Lo, his desyr wol flee with-outen winges.
For, noldestow of bountee hem socouren
That serven best and most alwey labouren, 1265
Yet were al lost, that dar I wel seyn, certes,
But-if thy grace passed our desertes.

And for thou me, that coude leest deserve
Of hem that nombred been un-to thy grace,
Hast holpen, ther I lykly was to sterve, 1270
And me bistowed in so heygh a place
That thilke boundes may no blisse pace,
I can no more, but laude and reverence
Be to thy bounte and thyn excellence!

And therwith-al Criseyde anoon he kiste, 1275
Of which, certeyn, she felte no disese,
And thus seyde he, `Now wolde god I wiste,
Myn herte swete, how I yow mighte plese!
What man,' quod he, `was ever thus at ese
As I, on whiche the faireste and the beste 1280
That ever I say, deyneth hir herte reste.

Here may men seen that mercy passeth right;
The experience of that is felt in me,
That am unworthy to so swete a wight.
But herte myn, of your benignitee, 1285
So thenketh, though that I unworthy be,
Yet mot I nede amenden in som wyse,
Right thourgh the vertu of your heyghe servyse.

And for the love of god, my lady dere,
Sin god hath wrought me for I shal yow serve, 1290

As thus I mene, that ye wol be my stere,
To do me live, if that yow liste, or sterve,
So techeth me how that I may deserve
Your thank, so that I, thurgh myn ignoraunce,
Ne do no-thing that yow be displesaunce. 1295

`For certes, fresshe wommanliche wyf,
This dar I seye, that trouthe and diligence,
That shal ye finden in me al my lyf,
Ne wol not, certeyn, breken your defence;
And if I do, present or in absence, 1300
For love of god, lat slee me with the dede,
If that it lyke un-to your womanhede.'

`Y-wis,' quod she, `myn owne hertes list,
My ground of ese, and al myn herte dere,
Graunt mercy, for on that is al my trist; 1305
But late us falle away fro this matere;
For it suffyseth, this that seyde is here.
And at o word, with-ouen repentaunce,
Wel-come, my knight, my pees, my suffisaunce!'

Of hir delyt, or loyes oon the leste 1310
Were impossible to my wit to seye;
But iuggeth, ye that han ben at the feste,
Of swich gladnesse, if that hem liste pleye!

I can no more, but thus thise ilke tweye
That night, be-twixen dreed and sikernesse, 1315
Felten in love the grete worthinesse.

O blisful night, of hem so longe y-sought,
How blithe un-to hem bothe two thou were!
Why ne hadde I swich on with my soule y-bought,
Ye, or the leeste Ioye that was there? 1320
A-wey, thou foule daunger and thou fere,
And lat hem in this hevene blisse dwelle,
That is so heygh, that al ne can I telle!

But sooth is, though I can not tellen al,
As can myn auctor, of his excellence, 1325
Yet have I seyde, and, god to-forn, I shal
In every thing al hoolly his sentence.
And if that I, at loves reverence,
Have any word in eched for the beste,
Doth therwith-al right as your-selven leste. 1330

For myne wordes, here and every part,
I speke hem alle under correccioun
Of yow, that feling han in loves art,
And putte it al in your discrecioun
To encrease or maken diminucioun 1335
Of my langage, and that I yow bi-seche;

But now to purpos of my rather speche.

Thise ilke two, that ben in armes laft,
So looth to hem a-sonder goon it were,
That ech from other wende been biraft, 1340
Or elles, lo, this was hir moste fere,
That al this thing but nyce dremes were;
For which ful ofte ech of hem seyde, `O swete,
Clippe ich yow thus, or elles I it mete?'

And, lord! So he gan goodly on hir see, 1345
That never his look ne bleynte from hir face,
And seyde, `O dere herte, may it be
That it be sooth, that ye ben in this place?'
`Ye, herte myn, god thank I of his grace!'
Quod tho Criseyde, and therwith-al him kiste, 1350
That where his spirit was, for Ioye he niste.

This Troilus ful ofte hir eyen two
Gan for to kisse, and seyde, `O eyen clere,
It were ye that wroughte me swich wo,
Ye humble nettes of my lady dere! 1355
Though ther be mercy writen in your chere,
God wot, the text ful hard is, sooth, to finde,
How coude ye with-outen bond me binde?'

Therwith he gan hir faste in armes take,
And wel an hundred tymes gan he syke, 1360
Nought swiche sorwfull sykes as men make
For wo, or elles whan that folk ben syke,
But esy sykes, swiche as been to lyke,
That shewed his affeccioun with-inne;
Of swiche sykes coude he nought bilinne. 1365

Sone after this they speke of sondry thinges,
As fil to purpos of this aventure,
And pleyinge entrechaungeden hir ringes,
Of which I can nought tellen no scripture;
But wel I woot, a broche, gold and asure, 1370
In whiche a ruby set was lyk an herte,
Criseyde him yaf, and stak it on his sherte.

Lord! trowe ye, a coveitous, a wreccebe,
That blameth love and holt of it despyt,
That, of tho pens that he can mokre and kecche, 1375
Was ever yet y-yeve him swich delyt,
As is in love, in oo poynt, in som plyt?
Nay, doutelees, for also god me save,
So parfit loye may no nigard have!

They wol sey `Yis,' but lord! So that they lye, 1380
Tho bisy wrecches, ful of wo and drede!

They callen love a woodnesse or folye,
But it shal falle hem as I shal yow rede;
They shul forgo the whyte and eke the rede,
And live in wo, ther god yeve hem mischaunce, 1385
And every lover in his trouthe avaunce!

As wolde god, tho wrecches, that dispuse
Servyse of love, hadde eres al-so longe
As hadde Myda, ful of coveityse,
And ther-to dronken hadde as hoot and stronge 1390
As Crassus dide for his affectis wronge,
To techen hem that they ben in the vyce,
And loveres nought, al-though they holde hem nyce!

These ilke two, of whom that I yow seye,
Whan that hir hertes wel assured were, 1395
Tho gonne they to speken and to pleye,
And eek rehercen how, and whanne, and where,
They knewe hem first, and every wo and fere
That passed was; but al swich hevynesse,
I thanke it god, was tourned to gladnesse. 1400

And ever-mo, whan that hem fel to speke
Of any thing of swich a tyme agoon,
With kissing al that tale sholde breke,
And fallen in a newe loye anon,

And diden al hir might, sin they were oon, 1405
For to recoveren blisse and been at ese,
And passed wo with Ioye countrepeyse.

Reson wil not that I speke of sleep,
For it accordeth nought to my matere;
God woot, they toke of that ful litel keep, 1410
But lest this night, that was to hem so dere,
Ne sholde in veyn escape in no manere,
It was biset in Ioye and businesse
Of al that souneth in-to gentilnesse.

But whan the cok, comune astrologer, 1415
Gan on his brest to bete, and after crowe,
And Lucifer, the dayes messenger,
Gan for to ryse, and out hir bemes throwe;
And estward roos, to him that coude it knowe,
Fortuna maior, than anoon Criseyde, 1420
With herte sore, to Troilus thus seyde: --

ˆMyn hertes lyf, my trist and my plesaunce,
That I was born, allas! What me is wo,
That day of us mot make desseveraunce!
For tyme it is to ryse, and hennes go, 1425
Or elles I am lost for evermo!
O night, allas! Why niltow over us hove,

As longe as whanne Almena lay by Iove?

ˆO blake night, as folk in bokes rede,
That shapen art by god this world to hyde 1430
At certeyn tymes with thy derke wede,
That under that men mighte in reste abyde,
Wel oughte bestes pleyne, and folk thee chyde,
That there-as day with labour wolde us breste,
That thou thus fleest, and deynest us nought reste! 1435

ˆThou dost, allas! To shortly thyn offyce,
Thou rakel night, ther god, makere of kinde,
Thee, for thyn hast and thyn unkinde vyce,
So faste ay to our hemi-spere binde.
That never-more under the ground thou winde! 1440
For now, for thou so hyst out of Troye,
Have I forgon thus hastily my Ioye!

This Troilus, that with tho wordes felte,
As thoughte him tho, for pietous distresse,
The bloody teres from his herte melte, 1445
As he that never yet swich hevynesse
Assayed hadde, out of so greet gladnesse,
Gan therwith-al Criseyde his lady dere
In armes streyne, and seyde in this manere: --

`O cruel day, accusour of the loye 1450
That night and love han stole and faste y-wryen,
A-cursed be thy coming in-to Troye,
For every bore hath oon of thy bright yen!
Envyous day, what list thee so to spyen?
What hastow lost, why sekestow this place, 1455
Ther god thy lyght so quenche, for his grace?

`Allas! What han thise loveres thee agilt,
Dispitous day? Thyn be the pyne of helle!
For many a loveere hastow shent, and wilt;
Thy pouring in wol no-wher lete hem dwelle. 1460
What proferestow thy light here for to selle?
Go selle it hem that smale seles graven,
We wol thee nought, us nedeth no day haven.'

And eek the sonne Tytan gan he chyde,
And seyde, `O fool, wel may men thee dispuse, 1465
That hast the Dawing al night by thy syde,
And suffrest hir so sone up fro thee ryse,
For to disesen loveres in this wyse.
What! Holde your bed ther, thou, and eek thy Morwe!
I bidde god, so yeve yow bothe sorwe! 1470

Therwith ful sore he sighte, and thus he seyde,

`My lady right, and of my wele or wo

The welle and rote, O goodly myn, Criseyde,
And shal I ryse, allas! And shal I go?
Now fele I that myn herte moot a-two! 1475
For how sholde I my lyf an houre save,
Sin that with yow is al the lyf I have?

What shal I doon, for certes, I not how,
Ne whanne, allas! I shal the tyme see,
That in this plyt I may be eft with yow; 1480
And of my lyf, god woot, how that shal be,
Sin that desyr right now so byteth me,
That I am deed anoon, but I retourne.
How sholde I longe, allas! Fro yow soiourne?

But nathelees, myn owene lady bright, 1485
Yit were it so that I wiste outrely,
That I, your humble servaunt and your knight,
Were in your herte set so fermely
As ye in myn, the which thing, trewely,
Me lever were than thise worldes tweyne, 1490
Yet sholde I bet enduren al my peyne.'

To that Cryseyde answerde right anoon,
And with a syk she seyde, `O herte dere,
The game, y-wis, so ferforth now is goon,
That first shal Phebus falle fro his spere, 1495

And every egle been the dowves fere,
And every roche out of his place sterte,
Er Troilus out of Criseydes herte!

Ye he so depe in-with myn herte grave,
That, though I wolde it turne out of my thought, 1500
As wisly verray god my soule save,
To dyen in the peyne, I coude nought!
And, for the love of god that us bath wrought,
Lat in your brayn non other fantasye
So crepe, that it cause me to dye! 1505

And that ye me wolde han as faste in minde
As I have yow, that wolde I yow bi-seche;
And, if I wiste soothly that to finde,
God mighte not a poynt my loyes eche!
But, herte myn, with-oute more speche, 1510
Beth to me trewe, or elles were it routhe;
For I am thyn, by god and by my trouthe!

Beth glad for-thy, and live in sikernesse;
Thus seyde I never er this, ne shal to mo;
And if to yow it were a gret gladnesse 1515
To turne ayein, soone after that ye go,
As fayn wolde I as ye, it were so,
As wisly god myn herte bringe at reste!

And him in armes took, and ofte keste.

Agayns his wil, sin it mot nedes be, 1520
This Troilus up roos, and faste him cledde,
And in his armes took his lady free
An hundred tyme, and on his wey him spedde,
And with swich wordes as his herte bledde,
He seyde, `Farewel, mr dere herte swete, 1525
Ther god us graunte sounde and sone to metel'

To which no word for sorwe she answerde,
So sore gan his parting hir destreyne;
And Troilus un-to his palays ferde,
As woo bigon as she was, sooth to seyne; 1530
So hard him wrong of sharp desyr the peyne
For to ben eft there he was in plesaunce,
That it may never out of his remembraunce.

Retorned to his real palais, sone
He softe in-to his bed gan for to slinke, 1535
To slepe longe, as he was wont to done,
But al for nought; he may wel ligge and winke,
But sleep ne may ther in his herte sinke;
Thenkinge how she, for whom desyr him brende,
A thousand-fold was worth more than he wende. 1540

And in his thought gan up and doun to winde
Hir wordes alle, and every countenance,
And fermely impressen in his minde
The leste poynt that to him was plesaunce;
And verrayliche, of thilke remembraunce, 1545
Desyr al newe him brende, and lust to brede
Gan more than erst, and yet took he non hede.

Criseyde also, right in the same wyse,
Of Troilus gan in hir herte shette
His worthinesse, his lust, his dedes wyse, 1550
His gentillesse, and how she with him mette,
Thonkinge love he so wel hir bisette;
Desyring eft to have hir herte dere
In swich a plyt, she dorste make him chere.

Pandare, a-morwe which that comen was 1555
Un-to his nece, and gan hir fayre grete,
Seyde, `Al this night so reyned it, allas!
That al my drede is that ye, nece swete,
Han litel layser had to slepe and mete;
Al night,' quod he, `hath reyn so do me wake, 1560
That som of us, I trowe, hir hedes ake.'

And ner he com, and seyde, `How stont it now
This mery morwe, nece, how can ye fare?'

Criseyde answerde, `Never the bet for yow,
Fox that ye been, god yeve youre herte care! 1565
God help me so, ye caused al this fare,
Trow I,' quod she, `for alle your wordes whyte;
O! Who-so seeth yow knoweth yow ful lyte!

With that she gan hir face for to wrye
With the shete, and wex for shame al reed; 1570
And Pandarus gan under for to pryde,
And seyde, `Nece, if that I shal be deed,
Have here a swerd, and smyteth of myn heed.'
With that his arm al sodeynly he thriste
Under hir nekke, and at the laste hir kiste. 1575

I passe al that which chargeth nought to seye,
What! God foryaf his deeth, and she al-so
Foryaf, and with hir uncle gan to pleye,
For other cause was ther noon than so.
But of this thing right to the effect to go, 1580
Whan tyme was, hom til hir hous she wente,
And Pandarus hath fully his entente.

Now torne we ayein to Troilus,
That resteles ful longe a-bedde lay,
And prevely sente after Pandarus, 1585
To him to come in al the haste he may.

He com anon, nought ones seyde he `nay,'
And Troilus ful sobrelly he grette,
And down upon his beddes syde him sette.

This Troilus, with al the affeccioun 1590
Of frendes love that herte may devyse,
To Pandarus on knees fil adoun,
And er that he wolde of the place aryse,
He gan him thonken in his beste wyse;
An hondred sythe he gan the tyme blesse, 1595
That he was born, to bringe him fro distresse.

He seyde, `O frend of frendes the alderbeste
That ever was, the sothe for to telle,
Thou hast in hevne y-brought my soule at reste
Fro Flegitoun, the fery flood of helle; 1600
That, though I mighte a thousand tymes selle,
Upon a day, my lyf in thy servyse,
It mighte nought a mote in that suffyse.

`The sonne, which that al the world may see,
Saw never yet, my lyf, that dar I leye, 1605
So inly fayr and goodly as is she,
Whos I am al, and shal, til that I deye;
And, that I thus am hires, dar I seye,
That thanked be the heighe worthinesse

Of love, and eek thy kinde businesse. 1610

Thus hastow me no litel thing y-yive,
Fo which to thee obliged be for ay
My lyf, and why? For thorough thyn help I live;
For elles deed hadde I be many a day.'
And with that word doun in his bed he lay, 1615
And Pandarus ful sobrelly him herde
Til al was seyde, and than he thus answerde:

My dere frend, if I have doon for thee
In any cas, god wot, it is me leef;
And am as glad as man may of it be, 1620
God help me so; but tak now a-greef
That I shal seyn, be war of this myscheef,
That, there-as thou now brought art in-to blisse,
That thou thy-self ne cause it nought to misse.

For of fortunes sharpe adversitee 1625
The worst kinde of infortune is this,
A man to have ben in prosperitee,
And it remembren, whan it passed is.
Thou art wys y-nough, for-thy do nought amis;
Be not to rakel, though thou sitte warme,
For if thou be, certeyn, it wol thee harme. 1631

Thou art at ese, and holde the wel ther-inne.
For also seur as reed is every fyr,
As greet a craft is kepe wel as winne;
Brydle alwey wel thy speche and thy desyr, 1635
For worldly loye halt not but by a wyr;
That preveth wel, it brest alday so ofte;
For-thy nede is to werke with it softe.'

Quod Troilus, `I hope, and god to-forn,
My dere frend, that I shal so me bere, 1640
That in my gilt ther shal no thing be lorn,
Ne I nil not racle as for to greven here;
It nedeth not this matere ofte tere;
For wistestow myn herte wel, Pandare,
God woot, of this thou woldest litel care.' 1645

Tho gan he telle him of his glade night,
And wher-of first his herte dredde, and how,
And seyde, `Freend, as I am trewe knight,
And by that feyth I shal to god and yow,
I hadde it never half so hote as now; 1650
And ay the more that desyr me byteth
To love hir best, the more it me delyteth.

`I noot my-self not wisly what it is;
But now I fele a newe qualitee,

Ye, al another than I dide er this.' 1655

Pandare answerde, and seyde thus, that he
That ones may in hevene blisse be,
He feleth other weyes, dar I leye,
Than thilke tyme he first herde of it seye.

This is o word for al: this Troilus 1660

Was never ful to speke of this matere,
And for to preysen un-to Pandarus
The bountee of his righte lady dere,
And Pandarus to thanke and maken chere.

This tale ay was span-newe to biginne, 1665
Til that the night departed hem a-twinne.

Sone after this, for that fortune it wolde,
I-comen was the blisful tyme swete,
That Troilus was warned that he sholde,
Ther he was erst, Criseyde his lady mete; 1670
For which he felte his herte in loye flete;
And feythfully gan alle the goddes herie;
And lat see now if that he can be merie.

And holden was the forme and al the wyse,
Of hir cominge, and eek of his also, 1675
As it was erst, which nedeth nought devyse.

But playnly to the effect right for to go,

In loye and suerte Pandarus hem two
A-bedde broughte, whan that hem bothe leste,
And thus they ben in quiete and in reste. 1680

Nought nedeth it to yow, sin they ben met,
To aske at me if that they blythe were;
For if it erst was wel, tho was it bet
A thousand-fold, this nedeth not enquire.
A-gon was every sorwe and every fere; 1685
And bothe, y-wis, they hadde, and so they wende,
As mucche loye as herte may comprende.

This is no litel thing of for to seye,
This passeth every wit for to devyse;
For eche of hem gan otheres lust obeye; 1690
Felicitee, which that thise clerkes wyse
Commenden so, ne may not here suffyse.
This loye may not writen been with inke,
This passeth al that herte may bithinke.

But cruel day, so wel-away the stounde! 1695
Gan for to aproche, as they by signes knewe,
For whiche hem thoughte felen dethes wounde;
So wo was hem, that changen gan hir hewe,
And day they goonnen to dispyse al newe,
Calling it traytour, envyous, and worse, 1700

And bitterly the dayes light they curse.

Quod Troilus, `Allas! Now am I war
That Pirous and tho swifte stedes three,
Whiche that drawen forth the sonnes char,
Han goon som by-path in despyt of me; 1705
That maketh it so sone day to be;
And, for the sonne him hasteth thus to ryse,
Ne shal I never doon him sacrificyse!

But nedes day departe moste hem sone,
And whanne hir speche doon was and hir chere, 1710
They twinne anoon as they were wont to done,
And setten tyme of meting eft y-fere;
And many a night they wroughte in this manere.
And thus Fortune a tyme ladde in loye
Criseyde, and eek this kinges sone of Troye. 1715

In suffisaunce, in blisse, and in singinges,
This Troilus gan al his lyf to lede;
He spendeth, lusteth, maketh festeynges;
He yeveth frely ofte, and chaungeth wede,
And held aboute him alwey, out of drede, 1720
A world of folk, as cam him wel of kinde,
The fressheste and the beste he coude fynde;

That swich a voys was of hym and a stevene
Thorough-out the world, of honour and largesse,
That it up rong un-to the yate of hevene. 1725
And, as in love, he was in swich gladnesse,
That in his herte he demede, as I gesse,
That there nis lovere in this world at ese
So wel as he, and thus gan love him plese.

The godlihede or beautee which that kinde 1730
In any other lady hadde y-set
Can not the mountaunce of a knot unbinde,
A-boute his herte, of al Criseydes net.
He was so narwe y-masked and y-knet,
That it undon on any manere syde, 1735
That nil not been, for ought that may betyde.

And by the hond ful ofte he wolde take
This Pandarus, and in-to gardin lede,
And swich a feste and swich a proces make
Him of Criseyde, and of hir womanhede, 1740
And of hir beautee, that, with-outen drede,
It was an hevene his wordes for to here;
And thanne he wolde singe in this manere.

Love, that of erthe and see hath governaunce,
Love, that his hestes hath in hevene hye, 1745

Love, that with an holsom alliaunce
Halt peples ioyned, as him list hem gye,
Love, that knetteth lawe of companye,
And couples doth in vertu for to dwelle,
Bind this acord, that I have told and telle; 1750

That that the world with feyth, which that is stable,
Dyverseth so his stoundes concordinge,
That elements that been so discordable
Holden a bond perpetuely duringe,
That Phebus mote his rosy day forth bringe, 1755
And that the mone hath lordship over the nightes,
Al this doth Love; ay heried be his mightes!

That, that the see, that gredy is to flowen,
Constreyneth to a certeyn ende so
His flodes, that so fersly they ne growen 1760
To drenchen erthe and al for ever-mo;
And if that Love ought lete his brydel go,
Al that now loveth a-sonder sholde lepe,
And lost were al, that Love halt now to-hepe.

So wolde god, that auctor is of kinde, 1765
That, with his bond, Love of his vertu liste
To cerclen hertes alle, and faste binde,
That from his bond no wight the wey out wiste.

And hertes colde, hem wolde I that he twiste
To make hem love, and that hem leste ay rewe 1770
On hertes sore, and kepe hem that ben trewe.'

In alle nedes, for the tounes werre,
He was, and ay the firste in armes dight;
And certeynly, but-if that bokes erre,
Save Ector, most y-drad of any wight; 1775
And this encrees of hardinesse and might
Cam him of love, his ladies thank to winne,
That altered his spirit so with-inne.

In tyme of trewe, on haukinge wolde he ryde,
Or elles hunten boor, bere, or lyoun; 1780
The smale bestes leet he gon bi-syde.
And whan that he com rydinge in-to toun,
Ful ofte his lady, from hir window down,
As fresh as faucon comen out of muwe,
Ful redy was, him goodly to saluwe. 1785

And most of love and vertu was his speche,
And in despyt hadde alle wrecchednesse;
And doutelees, no nede was him biseche
To honouren hem that hadde worthinesse,
And esen hem that weren in distresse. 1790
And glad was he if any wight wel ferde,

That lover was, whan he it wiste or herde.

For sooth to seyn, he lost held every wight

But-if he were in loves heigh servyse,

I mene folk that oughte it been of right. 1795

And over al this, so wel coude he devyse

Of sentement, and in so unkouth wyse

Al his array, that every lover thoughte,

That al was wel, what-so he seyde or wroughte.

And though that he be come of blood royal, 1800

Him liste of pryde at no wight for to chase;

Benigne he was to ech in general,

For which he gat him thank in every place.

Thus wolde love, y-heried be his grace,

That Pryde, Envye, Ire, and Avaryce 1805

He gan to flee, and every other vyce.

Thou lady bright, the doughter to Dione,

Thy blinde and winged sone eek, daun Cupyde;

Ye sustren nyne eek, that by Elicone

In hil Parnaso listen for to abyde, 1810

That ye thus fer han deynd me to gyde,

I can no more, but sin that ye wol wende,

Ye heried been for ay, with-outen ende!