

Guillaume de Machaut

**The Remedy for Fortune
(Le Remede de Fortune)**

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Introduction

Guillaume de Machaut (c1300-1377) is regarded as the last and greatest of the French 14th century poet-composers. A member of the *ars nova* movement in music, he further developed the motet, and various secular forms including the rondel and the ballade. Educated in Reims, he became a secretary to John I, the Count of Luxembourg and King of Bohemia, who died at Crécy in 1346. He was later employed by members of the family, including Jean, Duc de Berry. Guillaume also became a canon, ultimately of Reims (in 1337) where he spent the latter part of his life, writing and composing, and supervising the compilation of his manuscripts and scores. A prolific, disciplined and talented poet and composer, he also penned several prose works and narrative poems, including a treatise on poetry, the *Prologue*, and *Le Livre dou Voir Dit: The Book of the True Poem* the story of his real or fictional love for, and correspondence with, a young female poet, Péronne d'Armentières. His work influenced many other composers, and major poets including Christine de Pisan and Chaucer.

Le Remede de Fortune, given here in verse translation from the Old French, tells the tale of the young lover who is counselled by Hope as to how to achieve happiness through perseverance, despite the vagaries of Fortune. One notable feature is his mention of the wonders of the park at Hesdin, the castle, filled with marvellous mechanisms and devices, formerly located at Vieil-Hesdin in Artois, and built by Count Robert II of Artois (1250-1302) in 1288.

The Remedy for Fortune

(Here begins *Le Remede de Fortune*)

Lines 1-44: Advice to the young artist

HE who would master any art
Must take these twelve things to heart:
First, he must hold, as his own cause,
That to which his heart most draws,
That to which his nature doth bend,

For he'll ne'er bring to pleasing end
That which runs counter to his heart,
Since Nature then will shirk her part.
Let him love his craft, his master,
Above all else, for he's to honour
Both of them, and serve and obey,
And prove naught but theirs alway;
For if he loves, then love they'll show,
While if he hates, they'll hate also.
Naught else will profit him, truly.
Let him take instruction humbly,
And take good care to so aspire,
For knowledge is hard to acquire;
All is forgot, most readily,
Unless rehearsed continually.
Careful, thoughtful, eager to know,
True knowledge he may garner so.
And let him in early youth begin,
Before his heart has turned to sin,
Through an excess of experience,
Since the true state of innocence
Properly resembles in its state
A white, a blank, a virgin slate,
Offering no impediment
To the true artist's pure intent,
And is most like some waxen sheet,
Where one may write, and all complete,
A work whose image and imprint
Is stamped there, fresh as from the mint.
And we see the very same thing
Is true of human understanding,
Which has the power to receive
Whatever the mind may conceive
For it, in whatever task tis given,
Arts, letters, arms, or love even;
Naught is too hard for it to conquer,
If understanding would be master,

Provided a man doth persevere,
Toil, and labour, as I've said here.

Lines 45-86: His love for his lady

AND this I've said for when that I
Was at the age of innocence, why,
Youth at that time did govern me
Such that I but lingered idly,
The things I did scarce viable,
My heart fickle and unstable,
And all I saw was as one to me,
Save that my heart and thoughts solely
Were inclined towards my lady,
She, whom all men do claim to be,
Above all women, good and fair.
They grant that title everywhere.
So many of the virtues Nature
Can bestow on any creature
Has she, she is the sovereign flower
Of human creatures to this hour.
Thus, my heart inclined towards her,
And Nature too taught me of her,
Or so it seemed, for certainly,
I sought to view her, eagerly,
According to my youthful gaze;
For my course, all my pathways,
My pleasure, thoughts, my every turn,
Did always for her presence yearn,
Nor could I e'er find perfect joy
Unless she was my eyes' employ.
And Love, seeing to what a state
I was brought, did ne'er hesitate,
But rather worked in such a manner
That I came to know and love her,
Above all others God has made
As I in heart and deed displayed,

Obey, and serve, and honour her,
In every place and hour, and ever
Shall be hers, and hers completely,
By the laws of love, and loyalty.
And though this was my first love, yet
Twill be my last, for still am I set
To love my lady until the end,
Nor take another to be my 'friend'.
May Love grant she loves me alone,
For naught else in this world I'd own.

Lines 87-134: His unworthiness

AND Love that, sweetly, with his art,
Kindles many a noble heart,
Ensured when I first saw my lady
My heart was ravished by her beauty.
And yet, when seized by love of her
I was but young and foolish ever;
And much there was I ought to know
If such a course I sought to follow.
What say I? For I had chosen, well
Before I'd sought leave or counsel,
Except from my heart, and her eyes,
E'er smiling, that begged me to prize
My lady and to love her, so sweetly,
That I dared not, nor could I truly,
Scorn that request, nor could my heart
Wish for aught, for its own part,
But to be hers, and I, likewise,
Sought to do as they should advise.
Then, God keep me, there did advance
Sweet Laughter then, and Sweet Glance,
To capture me, and certainly,
If I'd possessed such capacity
As to be wise as Solomon,
With all the world as my kingdom,

And valiant as Alexander
Or the scarce less worthy Hector,
The peer of that king in valour,
And had possessed as much honour,
As did that Godfrey of Bouillon,
And all the beauty of Absalom,
Together with Job's great patience,
And the strength and perseverance
Of Judith and of Socrates,
Who held true, and without cease,
And never, to their loss or gain,
Would ever change their course again,
With Esther's deep humility,
And Abraham's true loyalty,
Then my worth, of a certainty,
Would not suffice for such a lady.
And yet Love led me to love her,
Told me to pay allegiance to her,
And that her service I should prize
The first time that she met my eyes.
So, my heart's hers, without recall,
Whate'er the fate that might befall,
And, while I live, shall be; never,
Will I love some other, ever.

Lines 135-166: How Love guided the lover

AND e'en as Love made me, ever,
Her captive and faithful lover,
He saw how young I was, clearly,
My innocence, naivete,
And because I was so young a thing,
He took me, thus, under his wing,
And the true way showed to me
By which I might love my lady,
And serve, obey and honour her,
And trust in her, and worship her.

And reverence and love her only,
As my earthly divinity,
And keep my eye, every day,
On what served her wishes always,
Guarding her peace and her honour,
And if, from such love, twere ever
My lot harsh pain or woe to suffer,
Or melancholy, or lasting dolour,
With humility must she be served
Though I might think it undeserved.
And, also, I should take good care
That it might endure, this affair,
And near or far, and week by week,
Desire, and ponder on, and seek
How to merit her love and grace,
Nor wish another in her place.
And then I must be secret and true,
These things Love held to my view
Explaining each and every thing
When he took me under his wing.
And of all the rules he did state
None did I later violate.

Lines 167-238: His lady proved his mirror and exemplar

FURTHERMORE, my most sweet lady,
Whom I desired and loved, truly,
Purely, from the heart, and then
More than e'er did Paris Helen,
Was a mirror, and exemplar too,
Of all that was both good and true,
And, for the goodness that I saw
In her, I loved true virtue more,
And, as far as I could, restrained
Myself, and from all ill refrained;
Her goodness gifted me that power,

The heart, and will, that very hour.
And her perfect humility
Like to a shield defended me
So that to Pride I'd ne'er surrender,
That doth many an ill engender,
And towards all I would, sweetly,
Maintain myself, and most humbly,
And I may say, and truthfully,
She's the source of all humility,
Never a turtledove or pigeon,
Never a little child or maiden,
Could ever be of pride as free,
Or graced by deeper humility,
Of which she is the fountain true,
(Tis accompanied by pity too,
At all times and in every state)
Than her; and tis appropriate,
It comes of that true lineage
She betrays not at any stage.
And then her assured manner,
Praised so by all who know her,
Her fair carriage, noble bearing,
Sans peer, to my way of thinking,
Instructed me, just as the master
Teaches a child good behaviour.
Merely to recall them gave me
In deeds, face, and manner, many
A time when far from her, a guide
Her qualities taught, and I applied.
And twas the same when I saw her,
Face to face, and did adore her,
And her bearing, style, and manner
More whole and unwavering ever,
Than any that had met my eyes,
And thus attained, tis no surprise,
To many a noble lesson there,
For I through memory did bear

Myself with greater virtue, simply
By Sweet Thought alone, most truly.
Nor did her gracious speech range
Over aught foolish now, or strange,
Or ill-ordered or injurious,
Or showing pride, but ever thus,
Tempered to the place and season,
And founded always upon reason,
So sweet and pleasant to the ear
It brought every man good cheer,
And to my tongue it put a rein
Silent as to what might appertain
To aught that might seem slanderous;
Yet aught worthy it might discuss.
None should say aught of others here,
That of themselves they'd hate to hear.
She stopped me speaking out of hand,
Keep to the point was her command,
Free of boasting, or vanity,
Flattery, or mendacity,
For tis most honourable always
To speak the truth in all one says;
Truth seeks not for winning angles,
Nor does aught that merely jangles.

Lines 239-280: He praises her, and her example

HER honour and great courtesy
Kept me from every villainy,
Made me honour others always,
And grant myself but little praise;
For he has honour who doth show
Honour, not he who's honoured so.
And, if the Gospel speaks no lie,
He is humbled that climbs on high,
Exalted those that make no claim,
And that is why my lady's name

Echoes through all the world around;
Humility doth in her abound;
As do honour and courtesy,
More than in any living lady.
And though all about do grant her
The prize and the crown of honour,
She thinks, her honour being such,
Of her own worth not overmuch.
She scorned all foolish largesse,
And all greed's simple-mindedness,
All avarice that brings distress,
In human hearts, pure wickedness,
And when she gave, gave thoughtfully,
Bestowing her gifts most wisely,
Revealing that she knew, thereby,
What, when, how, to whom, and why.
She gave swiftly, and willingly,
Rendering her gifts more worthy,
For who give swiftly gives twice;
In this, I followed her advice.
And then my mistress she schooled me,
In not using money foolishly,
By avarice, or but carelessly,
For both Largesse hates utterly,
That the point and shaft, above all,
Of Avarice strike not, with its gall,
For it destroys all other virtue,
Whene'er it pierces a man through;
For no man owns to such honour
That he can defend his treasure
From ruin, and loss of sense, if so,
Soul, honour, worth, and name also.

Lines 281-316: Her sweetness and her beauty

AND at no time did her sweetness
Leave my heart for there no less

It found its home and resting place,
Night and day, within that space.
And just as a sweet balm is fain
Of some wound to ease the pain,
And soothe it, so her great sweetness
Soothed the hurt that this excess
Of love and longing brought to me,
For its harsh assaults were many,
And yet I complained not in woe,
But humbly I received it so,
With good heart, in pleasantness,
For I felt nor pain nor distress.
And her most sweet glance drew my heart
In her direction, not through art
But through its power of sweet attraction,
As the lodestone iron, by its action.
And thus, joy filled my heart the more,
For as soon as Sweet Glance I saw
Naught at all that proved contrary
To joy could find a home in me.
And her surpassing beauty bound
And constrained me more, I found,
To her service, and love of her,
Every day but seeming greater,
And by its power brought me to know
Sweet Hope herself, by seeming so,
And to desire Love's sweet mercy,
For which I thank him, ceaselessly.
And truly I had not known, I say,
Hope or Desire till on the way
Of knowing them her rare beauty
Set me, that love and joy in me
Might grow, for Love doth employ
Desire, while Hope doth bring us joy.

Lines 317-352: The impact on him of her qualities and virtues

HER attire, both noble and fair,
Which is, as all folk do declare,
Simple, neat, attractive, plain,
Acquainted me, and shall again,
With the need for my own dress
To be refined yet plain, no less
Or more than needed, for excess
Enhances not, nor doth impress,
And he who take the middle way
Holds to the surest, night and day.
And so her sovereign quality
And her perfect humility
Her manner which is ever true,
Her noble bearing, wisdom too,
Her fair speech, her sense of honour,
Her courtesy, devoid of error,
Her endless generosity,
Her grace, all full of amity,
Her sweet glance, her pure beauty,
Her whole being revealed to me
True doctrine, goodness sans art,
Which I took very much to heart.
And though finding little in me
Of all I saw of such quality,
I would have fared ill indeed
Had virtue in me failed to breed.
And if to her virtues I could attain,
Little I'd say, for all maintain
That praise of oneself rings hollow,
Pride e'er meets a fall tomorrow.
Yet, nonetheless, this much I'll say,
While not misspeaking in any way,
Only to praise her, without boasting,
If my life amounts to anything
All is from her, entire and whole,
Whom I serve, heart, body, and soul.

Lines 353-386: How he kept his love a secret throughout his youth

THIS noble doctrine, so precious,
Fine, and noble, of one who thus
Embodied every pure virtue,
Instructed me in what was true.
And full long I served, each day,
From the heart, in a loving way,
Attending to naught else, within,
Except that love which drew me in.
Even so, she knew naught, truly
Of how she had thus captured me.
For naught, would I have e'er revealed
The love within my heart concealed;
Nor would I have sought to avow
That love had I wished, or known how;
Instead I bore it secretly
Keeping my love hid, utterly;
Supressing complaint or clamour
So smitten was I with love of her.
And even though I felt the fire
Of her glance, that sparked desire,
Her sweetness drained all my power,
With its pure force, that very hour,
And made me blush, and grow pale,
In turn, and tremble without fail,
Shudder, and shake, so one might see
How I loved her, quite readily,
Five hundred thousand times and more
Than myself, and yet know, for sure,
With a lover's heart, in Love's truth.
And that is how I spent my youth,
In Sweet Thought, in Remembrance,
In Hope of grace, thus to advance,
Of she to whom I so aspire
There is in me but one desire.

Lines 387-430: In this state of love, he composed various works

MANY a pain was my dower,
One hour sweet and another sour,
One pleasant, another noxious,
One sad, then another joyous,
For hearts that feel the barb of Love,
Never in but one state will prove,
Never in certain joy or pain,
Rather they must a path maintain
Laid out by the fortunes of Love.
So with hanging head I did move
Like a tame bear, to receive
All that my lady did conceive,
Whether pleasant or full of woe,
A perfect lover, in loving her so,
In word and deed, and as I found
Myself so troubled, I felt bound
To compose both chansons and lays,
Ballads, and rondeaux, and virelays,
And songs that spoke my sentiment;
Love and naught else was my intent.
For when feeling's absent from it,
The work, the song, is counterfeit.
Nor, could I show to my lady
Any sign of love's ills, clearly,
She who seemed, as I sang there,
A true enchantress, sweet and fair.
And all the songs I made were writ
In her praise, I'll freely admit,
Thinking that, if it should occur,
That my songs came before her,
She would see how much I loved her,
And, in her service, much did suffer.
And my heart found great delight
When thus some work I did write,
To her honour, and in her praise,

Inspired by love of her always.
For song's born from a joyful heart,
While woe makes melancholy art.
And because it was Sweet Thought
That in my heart's depths I sought,
And true Hope, and fair Memory,
And Loyalty, in whom, wholly,
I placed my trust both night and day;
I made this piece, that's called a lay.

Lines 431-680: His composition, the lay: 'Qui n'aroit autre deport'

'WHO in love finds scant delight,
Lacking aught
Except Sweet Thought
And Memory
With fond Hope of amity,
He'd not prove right
If the sight
Of fresh delight
He swiftly sought;
For, if by Love he is caught,
No more should he
Seek, truly,
If he would see
His heart aright.

In these lies solace ever,
Recalling,
Imagining,
In sweet pleasure,
Gazing at, listening, to her,
All her manner,
Sweet nature,
What comes from her
Virtue, her speech,
All that her sweet glance doth teach,

In its brightening,
Preserving
From death, saving,
Her sad lover.

And as for him who wishes more,
Let none dare resort
To the foolish thought
That he doth love her and adore,
And yet such things do not suffice;
He would deceive her, such is clear,
Though Love holds him dear,
Deigned, it doth appear,
To have her eyes sharp darts ensure,
He was acquainted with them twice.

One cannot o'er-value, ever,
All they may offer,
Granting, readily,
For every ill a remedy,
Rendering, through their great puissance,
The wounded heart sound, wholly,
Of every risk free,
Banishing, swiftly,
All ill, bringing pure joy, simply
By means of their remembrance.

In this way Sweet Thought arose
That I enclose
Within my heart, as she knows,
Such that I think, constantly,
Of one I desire,
Who doth joy inspire,
Doubling the hope, entire,
Borne from her to me.

To honour shall she be raised,

Served, and ever praised,
Feared, and loved always,
And so, it must ever be,
Driven by what she says
I'll know better days
Or Death's darkened ways;
For she holds the key.

But when I see
Her shape, her beauty,
Form and body,
Simplicity,
Elegance so fine,
When in my ear,
Her sweet speech I hear,
At her voice,
I rejoice,
For all joy is mine.

And so I must,
If I love and trust,
For joy grows
Whence it arose,
Since my heart, so true,
Now rests in her,
Good she doth render,
Ends all grief,
Brings relief,
To my heart anew.

If, through Desire, I receive
Suffering, yet I'll not grieve,
Her laughing eyes will relieve
Pain completely,
All woe that Desire may bring,
I'll rejoice in everything,
Find pleasure in enduring,

Right steadfastly,

Because of her pride-less beauty
Surpassing all whom I see,
And her fair-welcome to me,
The smiles I saw,
That do my poor heart nurture,
Enriching, bringing pleasure,
Such that this life I'd treasure,
And ask no more,

Except that, in no true manner,
Though I do love her,
Has she, who is the gatekeeper,
The true treasurer,
Of my heart, learnt that, forever,
First, last, I'll love her,
More than myself, or aught I own,
Not with a love that doth waver,
But stronger, deeper,
And let me lie upon my bier,
Ere I betray her,
Or harbour ill thought against her.
So be it ever,
Though to her my love's unknown.

For I'm not one who's merit's so
That my love I'd show,
Nor ask her love, should she bestow
Such rights also,
For I may find much pain and woe,
Who'd seek to know,
Whose heart is caught in her snare.
I give no sign thus, I believe,
So that I'll not receive
Refusal, nor command to leave,
For harshness now must make me grieve,

And, thus, Love relieve
Me of my life, death end my care.

Naught, I say,
Points the way
As to how I might, someday,
Love declare;
For in despair,
I would die,
Straight, were I
Refused, or live on and sigh,
Happiness
Turned to distress;

Fool for sure
To seek more,
Than devote to her my pure
Heart, honour,
Body, ever.
Naught but this
Would I wish
But to admire with relish
Her sweetness,
And worthiness.

How will that lady,
Thus, apprised be
That my viewing her
My whole heart did move
To a sweet new love,
And new life, thereof,
Within me, and, ever,
Good news did prove,

Love that set alight
My true heart outright
In my breast here so?

Now I shake with fright,
And, so none have sight,
Man nor maiden might
My sweet secret know,
Hide this, day and night.

Love, to whom I pray,
Who wished me, always,
To serve thus, each day,
My lady, since I saw her,
He could, certainly,
Say how I'm afire,
Burning with desire,
Yet, silently, aspire
To that which lifts me higher
Than I, else, could be,

Nor seek another;
Love tells me rather,
To conceal it ever,
And let sighs slay me ever,
These sighs that no one can cure.
Yet if my request
Love refuses, best
That I not invest
In tears, anger, or the rest,
Bitterly, endure.

Rather, silently,
I'll live happily,
Suffer joyfully,
Love my lady faithfully,
Thus, my time pass, still;
With sincerity,
Such that I, truly,
Though it torments me,
Shall endure it humbly,

All of this sweet ill.

For most secretly,
So, and most wisely,
Always patiently,
And ever purely,
Love is now, most lovingly,
Thus, nurtured in my heart.
For most fittingly,
Surely, most sweetly,
If Hope's not to be
Long deceiving me,
For my pains, Love, I shall see,
His sweet rewards impart.

For though Desire doth me assail
Which many a battle doth entail,
And pierces, with his amorous dart,
Which often doth, from side to side,
Transfix my heart, and there reside
His efforts little hurt provide,
For Sweet Glance heals with true art,

And nourishes my heart, I swear,
With Love's food, imprinting there
True beauty with such artfulness,
That nothing else occupies me,
And Sweet Glance delivers, truly,
All Love's gifts, such that none fail me,
And so, may God those eyes e'er bless.

And so tis my clear intent
To endure,
Hide the more
This fierce desire
Consuming joy, with its fire,
And discontent;

I'm content
To thus assent,
Suffer it so,
For if it shakes me, although
Pale, in hell,
I'll bear it well,
On this I'm bent.

Through such intent am I brought,
To honour,
To serve ever
And obey,
And cherish my lady always,
By sheer effort
Wisely taught,
When Death has sought
That I suffer,
That I but needs think of her,
Longed for, I say,
Loved night and day;
Who, in this way,
Brings true comfort.'

Lines 681-734: He read the lay he had composed to his lady

MY lady thus drove me to make
This lay, composed for her sake,
Even though not a thing she knew
Of inspiring me so to do.
But with what wit I could offer,
I wrought the work in praise of her,
And so, expressed my sentiment
In fair accord with my intent.
And, indeed, it chanced thereafter
That this same lay came before her
And at a time when I was there,
Which brought on me a weight of care.

To read the words was her command,
Nor dare I balk at her demand.
But spoke it, start to end, aloud,
Heart all atremble and head bowed,
Fearing this was a gross mistake,
Since I had made it for her sake.
And once I'd read my poetry,
To which she'd listened carefully,
She asked who owned to its making,
For she knew naught of this fair thing.
Yet I could not, once I had heard
Her question, speak a single word,
Not for Rome's empire could conceive
One thought; no heart could believe
How I lost both strength and manner,
For shame and love, beauty and fear,
And my intention to conceal
The lovesickness that I did feel,
So robbed me of all memory,
With my five senses, utterly,
That never a lover, I dare say,
Was e'er so mute, or felt this way.
Yet never could I have spoken
In such a straight as I was then,
My heart shaking so fearfully,
For it seemed to me that, surely,
If I had said: 'This I created,'
Twould have proven most ill-fated,
And I on the path, in a breath,
To cruel, harsh and bitter death,
For to all folk, now unconcealed,
My love for her had been revealed.
And had aught then seemed harsher,
In her gaze, or in her manner,
Or in her speech, I think, truly,
That, being undone completely,
I'd have died there, lost forever,

Through fear of losing her favour;
Not that she was mine, you see,
Only I hoped that such might be.
And that is why I dared not speak
At her command, nor utterance seek.

Lines 735-770: Tongue-tied before his lady he felt great distress

AND yet a far worse wrong had I
Done myself had I told a lie,
For none should lie to his lady,
At the cost of his soul and body,
Rather he should ever speak true,
As far as he is able to;
And surely my lady is so wise
She'd have known if twas otherwise,
For she'd have seen it in my face
Whate'er the mask I had in place,
And this upon my mind did play,
Such that I knew not what to say,
Whether of falsehood or of truth,
And so as if in dream, forsooth,
I was lost in thoughts profound,
And, without lingering, I found
Myself departing, as I believe
Without reply, or asking leave,
In such a state that I knew not
What was destined to prove my lot;
And, as I departed sighing,
I wept as if I were dying,
Such that my heart dissolved in tears
Confounded by its doubts and fears.
Nor for the whole world could I save
Myself, by holding back that wave
Of tears descending o'er my face,
Of their own accord, and apace.
Yet in one way I was happy too,

For none was present but we two,
To perceive what took place there,
Nor know aught of the whole affair,
For all the rest had moved away
To a far corner, there to play,
Enjoyably, with never a sigh,
A game: 'The King That Tells No Lie.'

Lines 771-840: Leaving his lady, he entered the wondrous park at Hesdin

THUS, I parted from my lady,
Leaving her presence, most humbly,
Woeful, pensive, sadly sighing,
Melancholy, so desiring
Naught but to find some secret place
Where I might dry my tear-stained face,
And regain some composure there.
I went swiftly, seeking somewhere
Quiet enough, so as not to meet
With folk whom I'd be forced to greet,
And so that none might bear witness
To my weeping and my sadness.
I walked a while, in great distress,
And, in this state of pensiveness,
To a garden, most fair, I came,
The Park of Hesdin is its name,
To that garden I made my way,
And without stopping, I may say,
Though a difficulty then arose
Due to the wall that did enclose
It all about, encircling it round,
Such that none might tread its ground,
Nor entrance for woman or man,
Nonetheless I marked out its plan,
Taking the paths, where'er they ran,
Despite the trouble all this posed,

And reached a gate, which was closed,
In a by-way, both sweet and fair,
Many a step from anywhere.
And there stood this wicket gate,
Whose little latch I lifted straight,
And, raising it, I entered in,
But not one soul saw I within,
All which delighted me, for I
Wished but to be alone and sigh.
And once I'd entered on my own,
As I wished, and was quite alone,
I closed the gate, the little latch
I dropped and saw that it did catch,
Then wandered midst the greenery,
For naught so fair I e'er did see,
So fine, and so agreeable,
So pleasant, so delectable,
Nor do I know how to describe
The wonders, the delights inside,
Artful devices, rare inventions,
Pipe-works, engineered diversions,
The novel things enclosed there,
Yet, nonetheless, I may declare
None might look about for pleasure
In air, on land, or on the water,
That they would not discover there,
On hand, to please them, everywhere.
As I wandered o'er hill and vale,
I chanced upon a little dale,
And found a little fountain where
The water ran both clear and fair,
Ringed about by trees and grass,
And all around it there did pass
A little hedge of eglantine,
And yet no pathway could I find
Beaten there, all was untrodden,
Dense, spiky grass filled the garden,

And I considered few must fare
This way, and so I entered there.
Passing thus, beyond the hedge,
I reached the clear fountain's edge
Where I bathed my eyes and face
And then was seated, for this place
Where I had come, so secretly,
Seemed to present true privacy.

**Lines 841-904: Musing on the vagaries of love and Fortune, he
composed a plaint**

NOW, indeed, I fell to musing,
Blaming myself for deserting
My lady in such a manner
For if, through the love I bore her,
My heart had failed in her presence,
Twere better, in that circumstance,
Than to perpetrate the error,
That I've recalled, of quitting her,
As I think, for twould have been
For her sake, as she'd have seen.
Nonetheless, naught could I do,
To change it, e'en if it were true
That I was lord of all God made.
Yet not so heavily it weighed,
For none can do more than he can,
The fault in this was not my plan,
For no wrong did I seek to do,
Twas Love that never doth pursue
Rule and order, reason, measure,
In loving hearts; tis his pleasure.
And now I saw this more clearly
Than I'd done, when saying loudly
That a lover in Love's employ
Must be forever filled with joy;
For, now, I'd felt the contrary

In myself, weeping, helplessly,
But I had not then understood
The ways of love, as I should,
I needed to know more of it,
And twixt my teeth to seize the bit,
If I'd spend life in Love's service,
No surer means was there than this,
For by experience I grew wise
And saw clearly, not otherwise,
That the heart of a fond lover
Now joy, now pain, doth discover,
Now laughs now weeps, with song or plaint,
Now takes delight in sad complaint,
Now trembles, sweats in a fever,
Now is chilled, now careless whether
Love assaults him without cease,
And pleases him or doth displeas,
Since, according as Love desires,
He feels joy or Love's sad fires.
Following too Fortune's dictate,
That doth decide each lover's fate,
Will good to one, ill to another,
According to her mood deliver.
For, without fail, whate'er she does,
She then, most suddenly, undoes,
For in her there's no stability,
Love, or steadfastness, or pity,
Rather tis her custom ever
To pluck bare all she does favour,
And reduce them to subjection,
And the last stage of destruction.
And thinking thus, I then chose
To muse on Fortune and compose
A poem that they do call a plaint,
Being with fair rhymes acquaint,
About her, and about my sorrow,
Born of my thoughts, and my woe,

Filled with melancholy matter;
And I began it in this manner:

**Lines 905-1480: His long plaint concerning Fortune: 'Tels rit au main
qui au soir pleure'**

'WHO laughs at morn he weeps at night,
And thinks that Love treats him aright
Though Love but strikes at him outright,
In vile manner;
He thinks that Joy will ease his days,
And help him, though she never stays,
For Fortune sorrow on him lays,
Turning ever,
Waits not for dawn light to reveal,
To turn her wheel, nor rest doth steal,
But turns, turns, turns, till she doth seal
This man's ascent
From out the gutter to the skies,
But engineers the swift demise
Of him on high, and those denies
On joy intent.

For she is neither firm nor stable,
Nor just, nor doth the true enable;
When she's thought most charitable
A miser she;
Harsh, and fickle, unreceptive,
Faithless, sharp-edged, and deceptive,
When you think her most receptive
Hard will she be;
Though she appears friendly ever,
Honey-sweet, kind as a mother,
The poisoned venom of the viper
That has no cure,
Compares not for a moment to her,
Who would betray her own father,

Hurling him from highest honour
To woe and more.

If Fortune loves, tis from afar,
In times of need a fickle star,
Aiding none whoe'er they are,
However true;
False witness too she will bear,
Right false is she, devoid of care,
Her truest friend leads to despair,
Or me, or you.
She scars far more than she shears,
All malice, thus, in her appears,
For whom she nourishes, she sears,
Nor gives a jot
For aught she chooses to destroy,
Seeking to rob her work of joy,
Unrivalled means she doth employ,
Ill name's she's got;

Dull and false, half-blind, and mean
Ne'er enough ill hath she e'er seen,
For the whole world cares not a bean,
For she rules all,
In the same manner as the moon,
Full clear and luminous, yet soon
Prepares to sing a different tune,
When night doth fall.
And yet nor month nor week she knows,
No steadfast day, no true hour shows,
Rather with sudden vengeance glows,
As all do see;
For when one has to fullness grown,
In wealth or honour, she alone
Brings them to ruin, flesh and bone,
Fortune is she.

Two pails in a well consider,
Such the comparison I offer,
One empty, right full the other;
The full doth rise,
As the empty falls, so we find
That Fortune ever had a mind
To raise him as his peer declined,
And never sighs
For king, duke, count; treats all the same,
Grants one honour, another shame;
This low, that high, such is her game,
And her delight.
All pride she undermines, brings low,
Boethius instructs us, though,
That scant attention should we show
Her day or night.

More swiftly the path she'll pick
Than any master of physic,
Or divinity or logic,
Or stray beggar,
In finding out some obscure way,
Flatters, wounds, and stings, I say,
Thumbing her nose at all each day,
And smiling ever;
She makes one small, another great,
Blocks this, advances that man's fate,
Laughs, weeps, and whom she loves, I state,
Knows not at all;
Her false appeal all men should scorn,
She holds to naught that she hath sworn,
In sum, she seeks, both eve and morn,
To make us fall.

Nebuchadnezzar tell how he
Saw a statue, in his reverie,
Huge and tall, whose face to see

Did terrify;
Purest gold its head all over
Arms and torso shining silver,
The stomach, thighs, it did feature
Of bronze, say I;
Cast-iron legs the thing did claim,
Its feet were partly of the same,
The rest was clay, and then it came
About by chance,
A stone, from ne'er a human hand,
Struck its feet, where it did stand,
And brought it low, you understand,
Through circumstance.

The statue he doth speak of there,
Can be it seems no other affair
Than Fortune, who no rest doth share,
By night or day.
Her head is gold, I admit it,
Enclosing all wealth within it,
Or so fools think who pursue it,
And live alway,
In error, mistaken ever,
For she has no strength, no power
To do aught but make men suffer,
So think on this:
Her joys will ever end in tears,
Ice in the fire her wealth appears;
And he is right who from her steers
His every wish.

For if you live in great richness
You'll ne'er find true happiness,
Only pain, and woe, and sadness,
And ever fear
The loss of all, some wound's distress,
Or the harshness and bitterness

Of avarice, who's the true mistress
Of sickness here.
While if you're mired in poverty,
Then you'll lack all ability
To suffer it, and soon may be
A thief indeed.
And so prize not that worthless power
That never grants a peaceful hour,
But tears of woe, and wealth turned sour,
Or pain, or need.

Silver are Fortune's arms and breast,
But tis mere show; tis oft confessed
That their bright shining ever blessed
Men with dull sight,
Blinded the eyes of full many
To whom, she promised largely,
Yet there within nursed, covertly,
Dark treason's night,
With one hand lifts men on her wheel,
More gently than pure balm doth feel,
Then grinds them down beneath her heel
Right brutally,
Down are they hurled into the mud,
She mocks them loud as any could,
And those she lifts, tis all the good
They'll ever see.

Body and thighs of bronze are made,
Such that, plainly is there displayed,
To all, that in her game have played,
How she doth change,
But for the worse, for thus tis clear,
That though, above, gold doth appear,
I tell no lie, silver gleaming sheer
Below doth range,
To bronze then her transformation,

Scarcely a worthwhile alteration,
Only a fool seeks there his station,
Holds out his hand.
Thus, swift revenge she doth conceive,
Robs those, she flatters to deceive,
Of gifts and honours they receive,
However grand.

On legs part-iron she stands, likewise,
They seem to show men, by their guise,
That storm, nor gale, nor tempest's sighs,
Her friends should fear,
Nor aught that men might do or say;
But all's deceit, all's false, I say,
For her two feet are made of clay,
Slippery and sheer,
And since, indeed, she doth not stand
On solid rock, but shifting sand,
He's but a fool that takes her hand,
And so doth prize
Her teachings, and in them believes,
For all her pupils she deceives,
And tales of those fools she weaves,
She doth despise.

I hold that man worth naught at all
Who on foundations builds a wall,
So shoddy that the thing must fall,
In but a day,
And when the work is almost done,
Those same foundations he has won
Collapse, and his bricks, every one,
Slide all away.
For savage Fortune does just so,
And seeing how well all doth go,
How far the ground is now, below,
She brings a gale,

Assaults the whole with wind and storm,
About the rising work, doth swarm,
Foundation, roof, sees its great form.
In one blow, fail.

Fortune knows a thousand schemes
To snare, deceive, and fuel our dreams,
Yet she possesses naught, it seems,
That ours may be.
Endless things Fortune can promise,
Yet you'd be foolish to think this
Means that aught is yours, for tis
Her way, to flee;
Her right side offers all that's sweet,
With flowers, leaves, and fruit replete,
The left an empty, bare conceit,
Bereft of good;
Her right shines with a brilliant light,
The other seems as dark as night,
In equal parts she doth delight
Of gold and mud.

Fortune is loving hatefulness,
Good luck that yields great distress,
She's but avaricious largesse,
She's desertion;
She is health, yet pain no less,
She's but a miserly excess,
She's poor and shameful noblesse,
A nest of treason;
She's a prideful humility,
She is envious charity
She's perilous security,
Faithless employ.
She's power, yet in poverty,
She's repose, yet adversity,
She's famine, yet satiety,

She's bitter joy.

She's hard-hearted misery,
She's covetous sufficiency,
She's peace, yet melancholy,
She's ever vain.

She is a fretful patience
She's an idle diligence,
She's a caring negligence,
Friendship mere bane.
She's the tree of humanity,
Deep-rooted in pure falsity,
Its trunk shows that her verity
Hides but a lie.

Those flowers are of disloyalty,
The leaves are of iniquity,
The fruit is of a poverty,
Hard, cruel, on high.

Her head it is half-bald of hair,
One eye smiling, one full of care,
One cheek has living colour there,
One deathly blent.
If one hand's a friend, you'll see,
The other proves your enemy,
She twists what's straight, crookedly,
One foot is bent.
Her strength is great, yet falling, naught,
In discomfort she finds comfort,
With a smile her woes are brought,
Sad tears away.
In comforting, she troubles sore,
Ill-treating those she doth adore,
Delights in all ill deeds, and more,
Whate'er men say.

Fortune is far above the law,

Her own decrees she finds are sure,
O'er pope, and king, and emperor,
None of those three
Can counter her, howe'er fiercely;
Howe'er regal, or proud, they be,
Fortune destroys them, readily
Claims victory.
Though true it is that she doth fight
To raise her followers to the light,
Honour and rank within their sight,
Many a day,
Yet everywhere, though altering fate,
Her games she loves to so dictate
That, winning, she may cry 'Checkmate!'
In her proud way.

Thus, has she done to me, I know,
For Fortune has treated me so,
Who every happiness did show,
And every joy.
Yet in a trice she laid me low,
My laughter turned to bitter woe,
The good that I had here below
She did destroy.
For, now, I dare to gaze no more
On beauty to which my heart swore
Allegiance, whom I love so sore,
Second to none.
Yet I so long that face to view,
My heart is maddened, now, anew,
For, knowing not what I can do,
I am undone.

Ah, Love, tis you, that did ever
Urge me on towards this error,
Robbing me of joy forever,
For, thus, I say,

You so struck my living heart,
That not one word could I impart,
Though all the empire, and its art,
Were mine that day.
Why did you make me long for
That lady, I sigh for, and adore,
Till of joy or anger I'm unsure,
And make me one
Whom you would slay for love of her,
Kindling my sad heart, ever,
To melt in this pain, I suffer?
Was this well done?

Alas! What is't you ask of me?
I love you deeply, utterly,
And yet you hate, and topple me,
Down from on high,
Beat me with your whip so fiercely,
In the prison where you hold me,
With lowered shield, I render me;
Vanquished am I.
You do great wrong to strike me so,
When I've surrendered, a captive go,
For having proved the victor, know,
In no manner
Should you strike your prisoner,
But seek his restitution rather.
Alas! Though, taken, I surrender,
You strike harder!

Your honour's harmed, it seems to me,
For, having served so loyally,
I'd face death, in all humility,
If that would please.
Since that lady I cannot see,
For I fear, a wonder to me,
Lest her noble heart might be

Angered sans cease.
So, I am but harshly treated,
Sad, disconsolate, defeated,
Since my riches you've depleted,
I know not why.
For now my face is pale and wan,
Tears, from my heart, flow, on and on,
I, through you, to grief am gone,
In pain I sigh.

And yet tis no wonder, say I,
When the glance from her sweet eye
Pierces me, her clear face nigh,
Pure white and red,
Its beauty bright as sunlit gold;
And her form, of peerless mould,
In all the sweetness it doth hold,
My sight has fed,
Tis no wonder, if vision slips,
If true words fail upon my lips,
And all my strength is in eclipse,
For twas your wish
That Nature did attack me so,
Till all my senses I forego,
My heart quivering to and fro,
In woe, like this.

This it was her perfect beauty
Like a summer flower's, sweetly,
And all the wondrous clarity
Of her fair face,
By which I saw myself so lit,
Who her eye's ray did there admit,
Dazed all my senses five by it,
All time and space.
Alas! From that I felt such woe,
That I know not which path to go,

No joy is mine, I suffer so,
No happiness.
Though I love true, and do no wrong,
You'll ruin me, and end my song,
Unless the one for whom I long
Ends my distress.

It is your work, and fittingly,
For I am yours, whate'er may be,
And yet remember this of me,
How I do bear
The loving sign, within my heart,
Lovesickness that will not depart,
That wounds me so, I, by no art,
Do comfort share.
And if my lady has a mind
To grieve me, then do you remind
Her of her error, so she'll find
How utterly
She owns me, and if she will
Seek to wound me, she will kill,
For she's my death, and my life still,
Whate'er may be.

I can no other counsel follow,
If I would not this love forego,
For such could not be, I know,
And, truly now,
If all those whom God created
Were such writers, as is rated
Seneca, and advocated
I broke my vow,
I would not do so, though I die,
For I do love her so, say I,
That all my pleasure's won thereby,
She's my right hand.
And she, above all, can heal me,

And, thus, restore my joy to me,
If with her glance she doth agree
To light love's brand.

I dare not hope she'll prove, alas,
So sweet and tender, at the last,
That on me she might deign to cast
Her sweet regard,
For you made me, I do believe,
Part from her sans asking leave,
No bold excuse could I conceive,
Thus, it goes hard,
Soon and late, that sad departure
Made me lament, and its nature
Reduced to less than one quarter
My hopes; my end
I shall see, I'll die, God help me,
If she doth not, imparting to me
Some part of her sweetness, truly,
My life defend.

Indeed, my heart feels such dismay
As my fond hope doth fade away,
That I do lack all joy this day,
Which torments me.
Many a mortal wound it deals,
That confounds me, and it feels
As if all sorrow upon me steals,
That lovers see.
For, in my youth, my love, I find,
Heart, body, soul, life and mind,
I gave to my lady sweet and kind;
Pleasant her ways;
Alas, in grief I languish now,
Sad painful thoughts I must allow,
Tis the reward for my fond vow
That Love now pays.

Love, it seems mere foolishness
To bestow this gift of sadness,
Rather than granting joyfulness,
Tis wrong, surely;
For I myself make no condition,
But place myself in subjection,
Yet you bring me to destruction,
And trample me.
You, who ought to be my friend,
Rolled the dice, my luck did end,
Who to exile, from joy, you send,
For no reason;
And I'm estranged from my lady,
But, since you treat me so harshly,
I see no cure for misery,
No salvation.

And, since Expectation's fled,
That now my heart, I find, instead,
To foolish Hope herself is wed,
Tis no wonder,
Because such wrong you have done
Through your malice, I am one
In his tight corner stuck, undone,
Though I'd wish other;
Here, naught that's good do I achieve,
Here, wet with tears, I sit and grieve,
Here, scant solace do I receive,
From anything,
Nor comfort for the ills you deal.
Here, pain, without compare, I feel
Here Pity sleeps; Desire my heel
And head doth sting.

Here, am I worse than in a fever,
Here, feel I agues attack me ever,

Here, my heart shakes, forever,
Am I now sure,
My expectations dashed completely,
Should this pain endure within me,
Now rooted in my heart so deeply,
That nevermore
Shall I know joy, and if I swear
To it, no perjury is there,
By it, of joy I'm stripped bare,
All now is lost,
In me who love with heart full pure,
As harsher grow those ills yet sore,
That for my lady I endure,
To my great cost.

Alas! Tis this that doth efface
In me all mark or hope of grace,
That will to death my body chase,
And make me feel
That just as, in the hunt, a hound
Doth after some wild creature bound,
And, sadly, brings it to the ground,
To make its kill,
So then, Desire, that he may sate
My eyes with gazing on my fate,
As that sweet face I contemplate,
That peerless sight,
Assaults, pursues me, ne'er takes breath,
But strives to drive me towards death.
Yet humbly, would I face that death,
If such were right.

And yet his power to seal my fate,
Or deal out pain, is not so great
As is my heart to bear this state;
Tis clear too,
Should I but little hope allow

Of seeing my sweet lady now,
If Love's indifferent to my vow,
What can he do?
Desire can slay me? He cannot!
For Loyalty, who's ne'er forgot,
Brings aid! Or shall it be his lot
To fail me now?
For, since Love doth now torment me,
While Fortune brings shame upon me,
Then Loyalty, indeed, must kill me,
I, here, avow.

For my poor heart it cannot feign
To love my lady, nor refrain,
From doing so; new love I gain,
Now, day by day;
Naught can extinguish it, tis plain,
My face its pallor doth maintain,
Maddened I moan, and complain,
Fast-snared this way.
I've often heard it said that when
One who's ill complains that then
It makes the pain grow less again,
Ease doth employ;
And yet, alas, this sears my heart,
This, grievously, doth play its part,
This, makes all happiness depart,
Past hope of joy.

Since the lady whom I desire,
She, above all creatures higher,
Knows naught of how I aspire,
Within my heart;
Nor of the bitter destiny,
Of loving her, revealed to me,
Or of the eternal love that she
Stirs, without art

In that heart, now hers, completely;
Nor how I weep and mourn, deeply,
Tremble at this love that, sweetly,
Burns inside me;
Then I must cry, 'Ah, woe is me!'
Will you your lover's slayer be,
All at the hands of his enemy,
Honoured lady?

It is Desire who wreathes with flame
My loving heart, and sears that same,
Such that no doctor worth the name
Can grant a cure,
Except my lady, she who burns
It so, that, set ablaze, it yearns,
And in Love's fire, writhes and turns,
At ease no more.
Fortune is my heart's harsh neighbour,
Assails it, and doth never waver,
To set it in death's hands her labour,
Its honour whole;
Yet, though my life be thus defined,
With my hands joined, my head inclined,
To her I love, with love refined,
I'll yield my soul.'

Lines 1481-1558: In a trance the vision of Hope came to him

AND after I had thus debated,
Argued within me, and created
My heart-felt plaint, with much labour,
Against cruel Fortune, and Amor,
For the great sorrow and mischief
They'd granted me, and no relief,
Wishing to visit upon me,
Wakefulness and fasting, truly,
Drowned in tears from my sad heart,

I felt from my body depart
Strength, and reason, and memory,
And every other faculty;
And so, I fell into a trance,
Like one in some grave circumstance,
Who feels but that his death is near.
I turned my head a little; I fear
I gave a sad and mournful cry,
Weak, languishing in pain, thereby,
And opened one eye a little way,
No more could I achieve, I say,
Seeking but to look about me,
And saw there, seated before me,
The loveliest lady that e'er I saw,
Upon my soul, her beauty more
Than all except my lady only;
For she was formed as perfectly,
As lovely, noble, and refined
As any that, from out His mind,
God has made with His own hand; there,
Sat she, pure, good, and debonair.
And, as I looked upon her face,
I thought that never was such grace
Owned by any human creature,
Nor was she of an earthly nature,
And much I marvelled at the sight,
For her face, its crimson and white,
Its proportions beyond compare,
Revealed no defect anywhere.
And so resplendently it shone
The shadows instantly were gone,
That darkness of misadventure,
My night, full of wretched venture;
And its rays pierced through the cloud,
Storm-filled, black, all that did shroud
My heart and visage, and ensured
That light, from them, was long obscured.

So that, though I felt such distress
I almost died of fear, no less
Was I most eager to regard her,
For I thus found, in viewing her,
Some small degree of solace for
The bitter suffering that I bore.
For as a skilful surgeon might,
With precious jewel, heal outright
The eye that bears a cataract,
And with subtle skill doth act
To remove the veil that sight
Impedes, as it obscures the light,
Restoring its lost clarity,
Upon my heart, and memory,
And my two eyes, she shed her light;
Her star dispelled the dark of night,
With its splendour, and its glow;
There came to me a fragrance, oh,
From her, so precious a sweetness,
A perfume, of a scent so gracious,
Never a sweeter, I'd suppose,
Did sky, or sea, or land enclose;
For no such scent was e'er as fine,
No sweetness e'er proved so divine,
For just as balm surpasses gall,
Her perfume would exceed them all.
Indeed, the place wherein I was,
Was filled by it, and so, because
Her fragrance proved so very sweet
My suffering seemed less complete,
Though I yet felt more pain I say,
Within my heart, than I can say.

Lines 1559-1584: Hope sought to diagnose his illness

THEN, like a man condemned to sigh,
From my heart's depths, groaning, I

Uttered such moans, matched I fear
By many a sigh, many a tear,
I was forced to turn toward her,
A face pale and stained, and offer,
A visage all discomforted,
Sad, weeping thus, to sorrow wed.
But never a word did I speak to her,
For not a sound my lips could utter,
Rather I gazed upon her face,
And, seeing my state of disgrace,
She smiled at me, and most sweetly,
Then approached me, courteously,
And with her hand, all smooth and white,
She, gracefully, raised up my right,
Better to gauge my malady,
Sought the pulse of life within me,
And with this, when once acquaint,
Found it weak, but feeble, and faint.
And yet her finger did ne'er depart
From off that vein, fed by my heart,
For, good and wise she thought, clearly,
That there, not elsewhere within me,
Lay the passion that maddened me,
And that pained me so grievously.

Lines 1585-1670: She counselled him to take heart

AND then, once she had, at leisure,
Examined me, as was her pleasure,
And had the whole truth discovered
Of my ills, with naught left covered,
All the sad state that thence arose
From love's pain, and all my woes,
Like one that knew all the theory,
And practice, of how to heal me,
And understood those signs of woe,
That from the heart to eyes do flow,

Those signs that, fundamentally,
Are caused by heart's loving truly,
And who knew far more of comfort
Than Fortune knows of discomfort,
And wished to solace, by her art,
The ills that so grieved my heart,
For no dish does so satisfy
As solace for the tearful eye,
Like a most subtle physician,
Wise to what in my position
Might console, her voice to suit
Soothing, sweet as any flute,
Having read my pulse, spoke clearly:
'Dear friend, what pains you, truly?
From whence comes this sad dolour
That so robs your face of colour?
Surely, I think, it grips your heart,
And that from true love it doth start.
You should not be troubled, though,
Nor should you torture yourself so,
For that is shameful, all in error;
Since you have ne'er proved false to her,
She whose love you seek to know,
No fault in you, for striving so.
And several times I've heard you say,
No other would you choose, today,
Nor could greater grace be sought,
Than that Memory and Sweet Thought
Of her sweet face you might retain
Within you, ne'er to depart again;
And that those two, they might cure you
Of all those ills that seek to gnaw you.
Whose fault is it you lack those two?
Tis your own fault if woes ensue,
Though your lady doth, day by day,
Increase in beauty, every way,
In sweetness, in every virtue,

One could conceive; I know tis true.
And since more than any lady
In this world, she is surely
Blessed with every virtue known,
You should not sit her and groan,
If you love her, nor moan, I say,
If she is ne'er obliged to pay
A thousand times what you deserve,
In that you choose to love and serve.
Tis but a little thing she'd need,
To pay you what you've earned, indeed,
Since even the smallest reward
She might grant, of her own accord,
And rewards she has in plenty,
Is worth a hundred times, truly,
What you could hope to deserve,
However long you love and serve,
Not even if twere your life through,
Or as long as the world we view,
This earthly kingdom may endure,
And I swear to you, what is more,
That every day, in every way
Most precious, and rich, and dear,
She will reward your service here;
For such great wealth she doth amass,
The more she gives the more she has,
Provided Love grant his consent.
And since it seems Love doth assent
To your hopes of winning grace,
Let not despair possess your face
Because of some slight past error
There's no sin or treason ever
In such a thing, in verity,
But foolishness, fear, shame, only,
And Love, who was involved in this,
When you were served from that dish,
Which fed your heart on bitterness,

And so turned to gall your sweetness.'

Lines 1671-1732: Hope reassured him as to his lady's sense of pity

'AND then recall, for tis no less
True, if you'd end your distress,
(Nay, more than recall, embrace
It, to find peace, and joy, and grace)
That she possesses utterly
All the virtues you might fitly
Seek in her, or might conceive,
And ever-increasing, I believe.
Since her the virtues do adorn,
And ne'er a vice in her is born,
It follows, of necessity,
That, in her, dwell Generosity,
Mercy, Humility, Charity,
And, for that reason, you should be
Free of your present misery.
Beyond Justice lies Mercy ever,
Mercy that would never suffer,
No never for a single breath,
That you be rendered up to Death,
For love's sake, tis a certainty,
And nor would Generosity,
Humility or Charity,
Her friends, and if you seem to be
Wounded by Love, you are like one
Who will accept counsel from none,
Torments himself, rages in Hell,
Though his affairs promise well.
And then you injure her, tis true,
In claiming that she's harsh to you,
Your sin that of ingratitude,
Your manners but ill and rude,
Have you not declared, I pray,
If memory serves, in your lay,

That Love, whom you petition,
 Could readily, in his position,
 Tell the lady how you suffer,
 Since not a word can you utter?
 And Love, who is true and noble,
 Listened and spoke, as he is able,
 To her, of the love you have hid,
 Made it known to her, as you bid,
 In so wise and subtle a way,
 With such true feeling, I may say,
 There never was, nor will be, ever,
 Any that in similar manner,
 So nicely, fittingly, and well,
 Could such to any woman tell,
 Of the amorous pangs you feel,
 Through her pure beauty, or reveal
 It silently, for Love did so
 Without a word, I'd have you know.
 And good of this precept many tell,
 "Say little, and you'll e'er do well."
 What should she do at your behest?
 For she has done all you request,
 And for more than you expected
 Of all that, of her, you requested;
 Thus, once ashore, a dog repays
 One with yelps for its swim, always,
 As, my fair sweet friend, do you;
 Less than a straw you think it, too,
 For there is naught so little prized
 As a good deed gone unrecognised.'

Lines 1733-1820: She counselled that eloquence is not of the essence

'THINK you that an honoured lady,
 Wise and true, her manner kindly,
 Prizes a man who seeks her love
 With polished words, that do but prove

Full of deceit, and language plies
So eloquently as to seem wise?
Or one who demands, and loudly,
Her true love, and seeks it rudely?
No, no! The thing can never be,
Such men she treats but casually,
Considers them as naught to her,
And yet they ne'er feel shame ever,
Or anger, though they are refused;
They are thick-skinned and, if abused
By any, they little fear what's said,
But simply turn elsewhere instead,
Ignoring their rejection, their plan
To go and seek some other woman.
Yet when a lady of true worth
Sees a lover bowed to the earth,
Who doth employ no false-seeming,
Whose heart and limbs are trembling,
Blushing full crimson, in his fear,
Seeking but mercy, in drawing near;
When she sees him, constrained so,
That Love's force makes the tears flow,
Their stream pouring forth non-stop
All down his visage, drop by drop,
And that his speech is but truncated,
Tongue-tied, his words punctuated
By sighs, from deep within his heart,
Rendering him silent, for his part,
Forced to be mute, devoid of sense,
Set to quit, in shame, her presence;
And when, in a few moments' space,
She sees Love discolour his face,
Altering its hue, three times over,
With all the emotions of a lover,
Which he so feels that his spirit
Doth Love's ruinous power admit,
Then she knows, by his manner,

That, without deceit, he loves her,
With a lover's true heart; in sum,
In this world there's never a one
So subtle or so cunning that they
Can imitate the true lover's way,
And not fail, and end in shame,
I could ne'er believe that same,
That he could so change in colour
And prove convincing as the lover,
Appearing with each diverse hue,
Yellow, or white, or red, or blue.
Love makes it so, as he doth wish,
And so, I must correct you in this,
By showing you that you do ill
Complaining of love-sickness still,
Or aught else that Love might do,
For he has shown more grace to you
That you could e'er seek to deserve,
Though half a million years you serve.
And I'll tell you why, moreover;
Love made you the faithful lover
Of the finest and the loveliest
In this world, and he has blessed
You with greater grace, a prize
You scarcely seem to recognise,
For his power, all acknowledge,
Has granted her certain knowledge
In a wise and subtle manner
Of the fervent way you love her,
Confirming, by his true decree,
That tis discreetly, and secretly,
In just the way I've spoken of it,
And tis this gains you most profit,
Which you should accept, and you
Should thank Love most humbly, too.
In such a case, whate'er men say
None speaks so well, in his own way,

Of his malady, or with such art,
As one Love touches to the heart,
Such that he cannot speak a word
Of what he suffers; yet is heard.
To you, that very same occurred,
And so, I say, you prove absurd,
When your affair progresses well,
And Love's your friend, as I can tell,
Who more fittingly should maintain
That you are wrong if you complain.'

Lines 1821-1862: Hope explained that he underestimated his lady

'NO worse means could you employ,
Certain to rob your heart of joy,
Nor containing greater error
Than to play the foolish lover
And take your lady for a fool.
Yet you're maddened, beyond rule,
As you conceive, though wrongly,
It seems, in dreams, pure fantasy,
That she neither sees nor knows
That love that in your heart arose.
For you think she sees naught of it,
And yet she does – oh, believe it!
For she's wise enough, on her part,
To recognise the lying heart
In deceptive words and manner,
And see the truth of the matter,
However great its eloquence;
Has more than sufficient sense
When she perceives a heart intent
On yielding, from true sentiment,
To love, and prove, in life and death,
Loyal, unto the very last breath,
As you are now, and have been so,
In heart, and thought, and deed also,

To grasp the facts of the matter
Hard though that may be for her
To do, for tis not easy to know
Just and true means for doing so,
Learning, that is, which is the loyal
Heart, and which the heart disloyal,
For it is a thing most hard to see.
But your lady, who's held to be
The best of women, and most wise,
All your heart holds doth recognise,
Because Love shows, tis his design,
The insignia, the certain sign,
That no false love can e'er display;
In faithless hearts it holds no sway,
While in the faithful heart, brightly
It doth shine, and joyfully.
And know you of it? You do not!
Whate'er you learnt you have forgot.
Yet I shall try to tell you, though,
And, thus, explain all that I know.'

Lines 1863-1880: She gave a description of true Love's coat of arms

'TIS a coat of arms whose matter
Is with humble face to suffer,
For the field is of bright azure,
And it is so unsullied and pure
There's no trace of any other
Hue to taint its perfect colour.
In its midst is a crimson heart,
Pierced quite through by a black dart;
None had ever a point so dire
As this one has, tis wreathed in fire,
With five tongues of pure silver;
The arms are fine and noble ever,
Bearing a scattering of tears,
And thus, the escutcheon appears,

Simple and whole, of the true lover;
The shield-straps of Hope, moreover,
Are fashioned; if this is not plain,
The meaning I shall here explain.'

Lines 1881-1934: Hope explained the significance of the coat of arms

'IT has oft occurred, as recorded,
That many have been rewarded,
By fulfilling their aim, simply
Through suffering, truly and humbly;
For humble suffering will often
Many a hardened heart soften,
And much the wisest of the saws
Is "He doth conquer who endures."
Now I'll teach the significance
Of the colours, in this instance.
You've not lived long enough to know
The marks of heraldry, and so
The meaning of a coat of arms,
Wherein lie heraldry's fair charms.
The colour blue is called "azure",
Red is "gules" and, what is more,
White is 'argent', black is "sable",
What I tell you here's no fable;
And I have further news in store,
Green's "sinople" and yellow "or".
Now I'll teach you of the colours
And they're meaning to true lovers.
Know that the blue doth signify
Loyalty, that doth e'er deny
Treachery; red, loving ardour,
Born of love that's truer, purer;
Black doth show, by its colour,
It signifies woe, and dolour;
White means joy; green novelty;
While yellow stands for falsity.

Now keep the first four in mind,
And leave the other two behind,
For if they grace a coat of arms
The scutcheon it surely harms.
The tip, now, of that fiery dart
That scorches and doth sear the heart,
With such a subtle art doth burn,
Know this, in certainty, and learn,
That though it pierces, burns and sears,
No trace of wound, or hurt appears.
Rather it clings there and smoulders
As charcoal does, neath the cinders,
Though to the heart tis sensible,
This flame, it is invisible,
As is he who inflicts this fire,
And licks and gnaws it, for Desire
It is, consumes blood and substance,
And, within the flame, doth penance.
Nonetheless, I must explain
The heart feels neither hurt nor pain,
That is virtuous by nature,
But rather it finds sweet nurture
And delight there, in the manner
That a fish doth in the river.'

Lines 1935-1984: Hope offered comfort and sang a song to him

'NOW I've described, and taught to you,
If understanding did ensue,
How your lady might know, and see,
That you love her without treachery.
For you bear those arms of a lover
In your face, and heart, and manner,
Except that the straps of the shield
Are severed, not simply concealed,
For Hope is lacking, which, indeed,
You believe is through your misdeed.

But if you place your trust in me,
I'm here to mend them, skilfully;
I shall render them good as new,
Finer than any known to you,
If but the strategy in love
That I've explained, you'll now approve,
Namely that you're not so foolish
As to think she's so unwise in this
That she has not perceived, clearly
How Love has captured you, wholly,
Admitting you to his religion,
There to complete your profession
Of faith, without one sorry breath
Of remorse, and, thus, unto death.
She will be pleased if you are hers.
I pray you, believe me, above others,
And remain under my control,
For I swear to you, I'll ease your soul,
I'll minister to your every need,
And aid and comfort you, indeed
Most willingly, and faithfully,
And ne'er desert you, wilfully,
In health or sickness, joy or woe,
No more than a wife her husband so.
Now take heart, and find true comfort,
My fine sweet friend, for I'll transport
You to the fair state you'd acquire,
For truly, such is my desire.
And, to delight you, momentarily,
Transform to joy your misery,
I'll sing a new song, for your ease,
For a new thing doth ever please.'
Then in a voice, clearly, sweetly
Soothing, easing, this melody,
She, by my side, began to sing
That in a while had me dozing,
Yet not slumbering so deeply

That I failed to hear, completely,
How prettily it tripped along,
Or how joyfully ran her song.

Lines 1985-2032: Hope's new song, a chant royal: 'Joie, plaisence, et douce nourriture'

'IN love, joy, pleasure, and sweetest nurture,
And a life of honour, many do see.
Yet some it would seem, they say, but suffer
Bitterness, tears, woe, pain, and misery;
They say; yet, I disagree,
For the pain Love doth advance
Can ne'er give rise to grievance;
All that comes of Love's sweet art,
Wins the lover's heart.

For true Love to the lover's heart doth show
Sweetest Hope, and then Sweet Thought ever,
And sweet Hope brings joy, with fair Luck also,
While Sweet Thought endows the heart with Pleasure.
He should ask nothing further
Whoe'er sweet Hope doth employ,
With Sweet Thought, Pleasure, and Joy,
For whoe'er seeks more, I say,
Love sends on his way.

So, he who grazes in such sweet pasture,
Can lead, and should lead, a life of honour,
For he owns earthly goods in full measure,
More than another could know of ever,
Nor should his heart seek other,
Nor desire aught else to see,
For he has Sufficiency;
Nor need I name, certainly,
One more such Mercy.

But those who are sad, yet filled with ardour,
Who weep, complain, in endless suffering,
Saying that Love is such that they endure
Harshness that must see them soon a-dying,
No imagining
That they do ought but deceive,
Or that desire doth them grieve,
For all with which they are served
All such they've deserved.

And Love, who is of so fine a nature
He knows who loves true, free of all pretence,
Grants his proper due to every lover;
To the faithful grants joy, in every sense,
And drives them not hence,
But grants sweets in abundance,
Yet e'er the false doth sentence
To banishment, as traitors,
From his court's favours.

Love, those, I know, you advance,
Two-hundredfold, moreover,
Who've served you, ever.'

Lines 2033-2093: Hope advised the lover to seize the day

WHEN her song was ended, wholly,
She inclined her head towards me,
As the sweet smile she displayed
Of one who seemed a virgin maid.
Upon my head she placed her hand
And this of me did straight demand:
'What think you, then? What say you now?
Have I stirred your thoughts enow?
What do you make of my fair song?
Did aught strike you there as wrong,
And displease you, or did it please?

Did my song set you more at ease?
What? Come tell me, if you will,
Whether I sang it well or ill?
Were my praise of it not too strong,
I might say this about my song,
Twas well spoken. Since you, dear man,
Say naught, I wonder if you can.
For I consider you're too slow
To speak, or you scorn to do so.
I pray you, my fair sweet friend,
Be not so remiss, your own end
You do seek thus, so take to heart
What I conveyed here through my art,
Understand all I said before
Rather than waste your time, and more,
In idleness, and mere foolery;
Leave behind all melancholy,
And all that causes it, but love,
For Fortune doth of none approve,
Unless they seize what she doth proffer.
Too foolish those who spurn her offer,
And, due to some foolish notion,
Bring upon themselves destruction,
When they've the power to avoid it.
Tis for that reason I see fit
To urge, enjoin you, and implore
That you make peace in this, the war,
Against yourself, that you pursue;
Foolish to think of, much less do.
And I promise my reassurance,
I'll swear to it, in this instance,
Concerning all you grieve about.
So, take comfort, and cease to doubt,
For, if you wish, the cure you'll see,
And if not, then shamed you must be.
Take the grain and leave the chaff,
Renounce your sadness, seek to laugh;

Who sees the good and takes the ill,
Shall of repentance have his fill.
My aid to you, here, I do lend,
As your most true and perfect friend.
Now lose yourself not so in thought
That you refuse, and end with naught.
They say who acts not when he may
Finds, when he would, that fate says 'nay';
When the iron is hot, one must strike.
I could urge it, strongly as you like,
Though simply wish you to be sure
That I'll help all you need, and more;
I love you, and must needs do so.'

Lines 2094-2147: She gifted him a ring, and his power of speech was restored

A ring fair, fine, precious also,
That on her finger shone alone,
She gently placed upon my own,
And I who was but dozing there,
(And not asleep, for the whole affair
I heard clearly, all her singing
Her music, and words, and rhyming)
I felt the coolness of the ring,
And then, though but a drowsy thing,
Turned, as best I could, towards her,
From that rest (in which I'd heard her
Fair voice pure, soothing, clearer
Than any Siren, and far sweeter;
For Sirens can enchant the strong
With the sweetness of their song)
Which she had furthered, as I said,
And faced her, as I turned my head,
With tears that in the heart did rise,
Bathing my face, from my two eyes,
Pouring down, as I sighed also,

Like one who's filled with pain and woe.
But, as the brightness, that did flow
From the lady, cleared, with its glow,
The cloud that my heart had smothered,
Which Love had marred and discoloured,
And as her sweetness now, gently,
Soothed the torment there within me,
Her sweet words, by that same token,
The moment I heard them spoken,
Restored my power of speech, promptly,
The which I'm using presently,
And which I'd thought lost for good.
And so, I spoke, since now I could,
And said these words, without delay:
'Lady, upon a happy day
Were you conceived, indeed and born,
And, now, our presence doth adorn;
For the goodness that you employ
Has brought me health, and life, and joy,
When naught but Death was before me,
And I would have died, most surely,
My lady, if you were not here,
Gazing with pity from those clear
Eyes, that speak the heart's wish, truly,
For you've restored my life to me.
So, this I beg you, as humbly,
As e'er I can, and devotedly,
My dear lady, might it please you
To tell me of yourself, your virtue,
Whence you come and, indeed, your name,
And why it was to me you came,
And how; for, by my soul, never,
Save for my lady's love, ever,
Have I wished aught so fervently.'

Lines 2148-2192: Hope described herself and her attributes

'FRIEND, I'll tell you willingly,
Nor make of it a tale too lengthy,
For what pleases you, pleases me.
I'm the comforter of lovers,
All those who obey Love's orders;
I aid them, and bring them counsel,
I advise them closely, and well.
I defend them. I give support.
I bring them help. I grant comfort
Against Desire who, without halt,
Pursues his dolorous assault.
I'm their castle and their fortress.
I'm their servant and their mistress.
I'm their lady, and chambermaid.
Their banner is by me displayed.
I bring them happiness and joy.
I lead, with honour, their employ.
I grant them courage, steadfastness,
To act bravely, and with boldness.
I advance them to high honour.
I render them loving ever.
I make them speak most wisely,
Laugh, dance, and sing happily.
I brighten their every sadness.
I bring sweet rest to the restless.
I succour them, I nourish them.
I am their mother, guardian, friend.
I'm their watchman, and physician.
I protect them, tis my mission.
I honour them, they worship me.
I take their part, if asked rightly.
I'm their recourse, and last resort,
By custom and agreement sought.
In every need they find me ready,
By thinking, they can summon me,
For I'm the servant of their thought
If they're not by confusion caught;

For they're so weak, and ill-taught,
That lacking me they come to naught.
Yet, when they find they've need of me,
I tell you (for good friends are we)
I need not travel from afar
To succour them, where'er they are;
And I'll tell you, if you'll draw near,
Why that is so, if you will hear.'

Lines 2193-2286: She explained her universal presence, and announced her name

'YES, I beg you; do so lady.'
'List then; I'll do as you ask me;
I'll tell you, and show you clearly:
Just as the sun doth shine brightly,
As with its rays it lights the earth,
And, pure and fine, to day gives birth,
As, in the pleasant time of spring,
The earth, laid waste of everything,
Stripped of greenery, through winter,
Beneath that chill and snowy cover,
Rejoices in its fresh adornment,
Green growth, full and luxuriant,
Now it feels the warmth that's sent
By the sun's rays, in their descent,
So that Nature, sweet and lovely,
Invests it with a robe of beauty,
In the leopard's dappled colours,
Painting all the world for lovers,
(For that fine creature, it is true,
Is dressed in every pleasant hue)
And ne'er is there a plant so strange
That does not in the spring arrange
To yield, according to its nature,
Flower, fruit, seed, leaf or verdure,
(Unless tis the sterile kind, indeed,

That offers neither fruit nor seed)
Such that the earth, grown elegant,
Seems noble, fair, in every plant,
Throwing off her robe of winter,
Stained and muddied by ill weather,
Made lovely for no other reason,
Than the beauty of the season,
So, I say, tis in like manner
As that in which the sun all summer
With its light doth grant the earth
All it encompasses, free of dearth,
Warmth and brightness, joy and pleasure,
By its rays, that with their power,
Fill all the world with mirth again,
So that it smiles, fair, free of stain,
That the radiance shines from me
And lights the world, resplendently,
Reaching everywhere, and ever
Enduring, and thus keeps, forever,
True love alive within the lover,
On this shore, or any other,
Bringing both its warmth and splendour,
Joy in love, and deeper pleasure.
For I who am their true mother,
Lend lovers a light far brighter
Than the sun, so high, so ordered
That the root that once is planted
In their hearts brings forth indeed
Flower, leaf, fruit, and fresh seed,
Makes them ten times a fairer thing
Or twenty than the earth in spring,
Such that, just as the sun doth send
Its brightness near, far, without end,
My queenly rays a glow will start
Within the faithful lover's heart.
And as subtle Nature labours
To clothe the earth in new favours,

(Since her tarnished winter dress
She's discarded, and taken fresh,
And is attired in what she's given)
So, I'm her true peer, since even
Sad lovers I, thus, render now
Pleasant and gracious? Know you how?
You will learn, without more ado;
Bear in mind all I've said to you.
If Nature prompts a plant that grows
To bear a flower, the briar the rose,
Likewise, I make the heart to flower,
In full joy; I possess the power
To kill the woe within, all pain,
Such that no ill may there remain.
And with the sweetness that you sense,
Far sweeter than any fair incense,
I soothe, anoint, and comfort here
As is deserved, or far or near.
And so, I say, since I well know
You're discomforted, full of woe,
And my task, when said and done,
Is to comfort lovers, I've come
In person, your sore wound to tend,
As both a good and faithful friend,
In such a way you failed to see
That I'd appeared, all secretly,
Because I was invisible;
Yet, when I wish, I'm visible.
As to your need to know my name,
Readily, you may learn that same;
I shall not hide it from your view,
Hope am I called, by such as you.'

Lines 2287-2352: He expressed his gratitude

ONCE I knew that Hope was there,
I was solaced, of hope aware,

Much more so than I was before,
And I took hope from what I saw,
Gathering myself together,
And thus, my senses did recover.
I spoke, in a livelier manner:
‘My dear lady, revered ever,
Worthy of praise, of honour too,
Excellent in all virtues true,
That the heart can know of here,
Sensed by the eye, or by the ear,
That hand can show, or lips can say,
Or subtle wisdom can display,
Taste can savour, or touch can feel,
Or will, desire, or heart reveal,
A friend of God, and of Nature,
And of every other creature,
Exemplar, true mirror of joy,
Bright star that doth pure light employ
To lead hearts to their true harbour,
That health doth give, pain counter,
Reprieve from death, ill’s remedy,
Flower, stem, root from which we see
All joy flow, and every sweetness,
Remembrance of whom doth bless;
If all those whom God granted birth,
And all those who shall grace the earth,
Were a hundred thousand times more
Skilled in numbers than those before,
Than Pythagoras in Arithmetic,
And the intricacies of Music,
Michaelis Psellos, or Miletus’
Thales, or the subtle Orpheus,
And sought to total all of those
True virtues and sweet qualities,
Lady, you own, beyond number,
They’d howl at their shadows ever,
For no more could all these do so

Than drain the ocean, here below.
And because, most worthy lady,
I lack the wit or science, truly,
To speak of virtue and sweetness,
Fittingly, in their completeness,
Though I would willingly do so,
Yet would strive in vain, I know,
Lady, rather my hands I'll raise
In gratitude, and in true praise,
A thousand times saluting you,
For, now I have set eyes on you
I am arrived in safe harbour,
To your protection surrender,
Body, heart, and soul, for nowhere
Shall I find a defence so fair,
If I wish to live on, happily.
And I promise you, faithfully,
In your sweet company I wish
To spend my days, and I say this,
Who loses you, himself is lost,
And dearly he must pay the cost.
So, I will cleave to you alway,
And yet I beg you, lady, pray
Let one more question not displease,
Its answer well might bring me ease,
Concerning my afflicted state.'
'Speak on! And do not hesitate!'

Lines 2353-2402: He then enquired about Fortune

'WILLINGLY, lady. You have told me,
From your knowledge, well and wisely,
How to behave, if I would wish
To restore my health and, with this,
How Love himself brought me succour,
And how you have hastened, further,
To assist me, and comfort me,

And of the arms that lovers carry,
And of the true significance
Of their colours, and their semblance,
For which true gratitude is yours;
And how you have espoused my cause,
With your ring, which is most pretty,
And song your song of love, sweetly,
Of how there's naught lovers can do,
If they should choose to part from you,
For all their comfort flows from you,
You are their strength, wall, castle, too;
And of how your brightness covers,
With its light, e'en distant lovers;
And how your sweetness, soothes all ill
More sweetly than all others will;
And how you came here, and your name,
Which has acquired most noble fame;
And what kind of thing is mercy;
For all this I thank you, profusely.
But naught have you said of Fortune,
Yet all things here dance to her tune,
Though she is not and ne'er was sure,
For e'en as her own she'll reassure,
She'll wound them grievously also,
Casting them down, from high to low,
And all of this matter I well know,
From mere memory I know tis so;
With her assaults, her cunning wiles,
Her false deeds, and her false smiles,
Whene'er my thoughts do turn to her
I tremble in my every member.
And so, my lady, I ask you now,
If it please you, to tell me how
I might defend myself from her.
To break a heart gives her pleasure,
E'en that of a loyal lover;
Diamond's hard but she is harder;

To others, as I, proves a curse,
Being, by nature, so perverse,
She'd have ruined me completely,
Had God not lead you here to me,
In time to save me from the death
She sought for me at every breath.'

Lines 2403-2458: Hope explained that Fortune has two faces

'MY fair sweet friend, what can I say
Of her, that adds in any way
To what you've said about her, here,
And in your plaint doth thus appear?
Only that once, in days gone by,
The ancients, with a clearer eye,
Showed her as two-faced, you'll find,
One face gazed forward, one behind.
And that should demonstrate further,
How Fortune's both sweet and bitter;
For she'll prove sweet, tis no fiction,
When she glances in your direction,
And with the face that looks at you
Promises, and generously too,
True sweetness, joy and happiness,
Concealing every wretchedness.
And that fact you must remember,
No matter who asserts aught other,
For whate'er the world may say,
It is pure truth that I convey;
For many a man has been deceived
By the promises he received,
Thinking Fortune was his friend,
Who yet destroyed him, in the end.
And if her other face looks at you,
On guard! For, lance held at the true,
She'll advance, right swift to attack,
And strip all honour from your back,

Without any prior warning,
So, trust her not, eve or morning,
More than any armed champion,
For her goods, in my opinion,
You should scorn, altogether,
In not one of them take pleasure.
Thus, you are faced in her figure
With both the sweet and the bitter,
This was the form the ancients made,
In truth, when Fortune they portrayed.
And as you're now one of my own,
And, most humbly, would have it shown
What defence you should seek to mount
When she doth hold you to account,
Glares from her backward-gazing eye,
Strikes without warning, and thereby
Wreaks what no man can e'er amend;
Then let me ask you this, my friend:
In your view, which is the better
Of two goods; would you consider
That best which you can never lose?
Or one you'll forfeit would you choose?'
'Lady, tis easy to make answer.'
'Then speak.' 'Surely, tis the former,
The good that one can never lose.'
'So ne'er the latter would you choose?'
'Lady, that's true, I must agree.'
'And, thus, you're in accord with me.'

Lines 2459-2484: She demonstrated the superiority of Nature and Reason

'NOW I wish to show you, clearly,
That you have judged most wisely.
Think you because prosperity
Is in her hands that, equally,

Fortune possesses happiness,
That felicity crowns success?
Think of the one with the other,
Those two cannot join together.
Here is the proof of it, you see,
For such assured felicity,
Along with sovereign happiness,
Are Nature's sovereign goods, no less,
And she is ruled by pure Reason,
At every hour, in every season,
And such goods no one can lose,
While those of Fortune I refuse
To compare to her goods at all,
For tis said, as you will recall,
"He's more to lose who more doth own"
And so, by this tis clearly shown
Fortune possesses naught secure,
Scant happiness, and what is more,
If you'd defend yourself from her,
Indeed, you may; advice I proffer,
By which you'll live in happiness:
Aught more precious do you possess
Than yourself?' 'No, naught, my lady!'

Lines 2485-2504: She counselled how to guard against Fortune's vagaries

'KNOW then her power so vile to be
That o'er yourself you've mastery.
Make sure Reason guides you wholly,
That you pursue things, patiently,
And aim for self-sufficiency,
For happiness, in the true sense,
Comes from suffering in patience.
There's no man would not consent
When he's at his most impatient,
Swiftly, to change his present state,

No matter what might prove his fate.
And this makes him wretched ever,
Living in a perilous manner.
In like fashion, for not an hour
Prize mutable Fortune's power,
But hate it, flee it, prize it not,
In your heart; let her be forgot.
So, wish not her goods to possess.
If my true counsel you'll address,
You'll win to good, without fail,
The good that no loss doth entail.'

Lines 2505-2576: She described Fortune's nature

'AND though you sought, in your distress,
To make complaint, and bear witness,
That Fortune has treated you ill,
Bitter, secretly hostile still
Towards you, and you have called her
Both false and a proven traitor,
And your enemy, at every turn,
As her advocate I'd have you learn,
And will prove to you, by reason,
That she has ne'er committed treason,
Nor was ever your enemy,
But rather your good friend, for she
Has shown the love she can express,
Sweet, to you, in her bitterness;
And, the better to prove it so,
Your answer to this I would know,
Can he who does his duty do ill?'
'In no way.' 'You speak truth still.
And thus, bear witness too, for I,
With reason, shall now testify
That if e'er Fortune stole from you
Joy that was yours, grieved you anew,
She performed no treasonous thing,

No more did wrong in anything,
For she does only what she must.
I'll tell you why my statement's just.
If she held but the one position,
And acted fairly, and with reason,
Favouring one and all the same,
Then Fortune would not be her name.
But since she ne'er remains at rest,
But alters, much as chance suggests,
Her actions, speech, for tis her game,
The name of Fortune she may claim.
For, though her sole stability
Is in her variability,
That is her state, and her nature,
Such is her right, such her manner.
And so, since she but does her duty,
I maintain you're wrong, completely,
To vilify her, and to scorn her,
And defame all she doth proffer.
If you fell into wretchedness,
Through her swift changeableness,
In some new turn, strange and savage,
That robbed your heart of its courage,
Be sure, my friend, you're not alone;
For she has done the same, I'll own,
To those who dwell in pagan lands,
And who have suffered at her hands,
Without trace of rhyme or reason;
Her wheel is of such a fashion,
Not made by you, nor yours to undo,
Known to laymen and clergy too.
Since all this is to you well-known
Why then take it for your throne.
If your face is full of pallor
The fault is yours, lies not with her;
For when you would a lover be,
Then you set forth upon the sea,

Among the perilous waves to sail,
That rise and swell, and fall and fail,
That swirl about, rush to and fro,
Leap on high, and break below,
The water foaming, here and there,
Till it seems troubled everywhere.
Thus, you entered Fortune's service,
Who proves so clever in all this,
That there is none within her court
Who is not swiftly forced, in short,
To exchange his freedom presently,
When once he's served, for slavery.'

Lines 2577-2600: She explained that to serve Fortune is mere servitude

'IF to the wind you spread your sail,
Good canvas wrought for every gale,
You know your vessel will be driven
Where'er tis blown, that's a given;
For the freedom of your ship is lost
To the wind, you must pay the cost.
And thus, if Fortune you now serve
You'll be treated as you deserve,
And cast into servitude, compelled
To work the sail, or oar tight-held,
According to her voyaging there;
Sailing or rowing, you must share
Her course, and to her ways conform,
With every act she doth perform,
Since you are of her household now,
Though such you seek to disavow.
Now answer me this, clear and plain,
Since more, there is, I would explain,
Concerning what you found before,
That she's proved bitter, evermore;
For this fact leads to my question
Tell me have you, by her action,

Had more of good from her, or ill?’
‘Lady I know well: much more ill.’

**Lines 2601-2684: Hope indicated that the lover had been well-treated
by Fortune**

‘SURELY, you know not what you say,
You’re ill-informed in every way,
At heart, you’ve felt the contrary,
A hundred times, it seems to me.’
‘Truly lady?’ Yes, I’ll show you.’
‘I pray you do so, if it be true,
For naught in me doth give me joy,
Save the kindness that you employ,
That flows to me from your presence.’
‘Tis the fault of your ignorance;
Were you sufficiently aware,
You would know in your heart there,
Fortune has ne’er been harsh to you,
Since your mother gave birth to you,
But has e’er proved amiable,
Courteous, sweet, charitable,
So, you should lay no blame on her,
For then you had naught to offer,
Yet she nurtured you, sweetly,
Nursing you, most diligently,
With her milk – her riches that is,
Distinction, honours – and in this
Was your guardian and mistress,
Administering to you no less
Than glory, showering you with all
The good on which Reason doth call,
All the good that she owns by right;
And you complain? Well, is that right?
What more would you demand of her?
Has she not shown grace and favour,
When she has, if you could but see,

Granted you use of her treasury,
For these things are not your own,
But hers by right, as I have shown;
And since nothing is yours, in truth,
You're a fool to complain, fair youth,
If she takes back into her hand
That of hers that you did command.
You are like the very brother
Of one indebted to another
Who when it comes time to repay,
Is angered, seeking to delay.
You do likewise, no more, no less,
But since tis Fortune's hands that bless
You with the goods that I describe,
This wisdom I'd have you imbibe:
Wherever she is, there are they,
And if she leaves, they will not stay.
Whoe'er she aids receives her aid,
Whoe'er she quits is there unmade,
So, I believe; for all must feel,
The daily turning of her wheel,
Yet, it seems, so I discover,
That you would seek to govern her,
And her actions would constrain
So fixed and stable she'll remain,
Or you'll complain of her indeed.
And yet, tis certain help you'll need,
Should you seek to change her nature,
Which has endured, and shall ever,
Nor shall be otherwise, my friend,
Until the world doth reach its end.
The sea appears calm and peaceful,
And then will turn wild and dreadful,
Tormented by some savage gale,
Because the wind doth now prevail,
Strikes it, sends waves high or low,
Swifter than any horse doth go,

Nor could earthly power arrest
The billows and bring them to rest.
Thus, doth Fortune alter ever,
And she can be restrained never,
By force, or by your eloquence,
When she doth seek to venture hence.
Riches and honours she takes with her,
And all the goods that are her treasure,
Which you share not, nor another,
If tis not by her grace and favour.
So, you have scant right to complain,
But rather should the truth maintain,
Regarding all she's done for you,
For she has ne'er mistreated you,
But brought you profit, I avow.'
'Lady, instruct me; tell me how?'

Lines 2685-2772: She explained how Fortune had saved him from a worse fate

'WILLINGLY! She has left to you
Your mind, untouched, and left you too
What you love most, your life; moreover,
Of that life you're still the master.
And if she turned her baneful face
Towards you, which oft proves base
In word and action, looked askance,
Does it justify this song and dance?
These tears, groans, as if in torment,
Because one glance at you she sent?
Her fickleness should grant, instead,
Courage; hope should fill your head,
Of doing better, if you're wise.
Does not the savage laud the skies,
Sing, and rejoice when he feels rain?
What moves him to sing, in that strain?
The hope that draws praise from the dumb,

That, after ill weather, good will come.
How can you know the sweet to savour,
If you've ne'er tasted of the bitter?
Likewise, I teach and demonstrate,
Fortune prepares a turn of fate
For the rich and contented, ever.
Take this to heart, and remember,
When you are raised to high degree,
The coming hour your fall may see.
Yet Love, who blinds many a heart,
So dims your eyes, who feel his dart,
That you now give nary a thought
To the fact that she's often taught
Lovers to lead a life quite other
Than this one, in which you suffer.
For, in all that you might propose,
You must consider things at the close,
Since for each time plans go awry
At a hundred other times they fly.
Every rule has some exception;
Of the proverb I'll make mention:
You should ever look, my friend,
To how things turn out in the end.
And had you kept all this in mind
You'd ne'er have complained and whined,
Concerning Fortune, nor true Love,
For all that they have wrought must prove
For the best, and all to your good.
So, I excuse them, as you should;
Their kindness doth ever bestow
One hundred joys for every woe.
Yet you maintain the contrary,
Which you should not, assuredly;
Pray let it not occur again,
But remember, as I'll explain,
You should care not a fig for all
Fortune's goods, spite rise or fall;

Seek them not as they come and go,
And if from out your hands they flow,
Be not displeased, nor deterred,
For she is flightier than a bird.
Who has much e'er seeks for more,
Thus, kings are needier than the poor,
As regards, gold, gems and silver.
For, unlike the man that's poorer,
They lack a sense of sufficiency,
Because a flame burns ever fiercely
In their heart; tis covetousness,
That scorches them with its caress,
Setting a fire in their entrails,
So, their every enterprise fails,
While that fire maintains its ardour.
I do not claim, by this, that Nature
Is satisfied by but little, only,
But were the earth piled high, truly,
To the sky from the ground below,
With all the riches that, I know,
Such hearts request, and e'er require,
Yet still those hearts, racked by desire,
Would find such wealth would not suffice.
It cannot, for, to be precise,
Full half a million worlds aglow,
Half a million times, loaded so,
Were ne'er enough for such as they.
And know you why? To you, I say,
My judgement in the matter's this,
Naught satisfies gross Avarice.
So now you see, and view it plain,
He loses all who all would gain.
Body and soul are lost that way,
Joy and honour; tis so alway.'

Lines 2773-2796: Hope described the fruits of Sufficiency and Patience

‘ALSO, I beg you, from the heart,
Let not from your thoughts depart
The most precious virtues, those two
That I have just recalled for you,
I speak of fair Sufficiency,
And Patience, her serving lady.
If they are there, pay no regard
To Fortune, who gazes backward
And forward too; their virtue’s such
That they reflect not overmuch,
That virtue precious and worthy,
On Fortune’s mutability;
Rather they lead men to address
The only path to Happiness.
And Happiness, it seems to me,
Grants these six things, with certainty,
Delight, true Respect, and Glory,
Power, Honour, and Sufficiency.
Happiness is the sovereign good,
From God above, tis understood;
He, the end and the beginning,
As three forms in one conjoining,
One in three, yet but one goodness,
In which naught fails, or e’er grows less.’

Lines 2797-2856: Hope stressed that Love is born of Virtue not Fortune

‘I would not wish my words to prove
That you should be debarred from love,
Instead, I beg you, most dearly,
To love, and love on faithfully.
A true lover, if seen clearly,
Is not of Fortune’s treasury,
But rather is of virtue’s good;
And so, I beg you, if you would,
To keep a true heart, all your days,

So, joy and glory's yours always.
And do not scorn true loyalty,
Though scant reward for it you see,
Here below, for tis not forgot;
If here on Earth such is your lot,
Twill be repaid a hundredfold,
There, in Heaven's glorious fold.
I've told you what to do; the proof,
Is that you'll find such is the truth;
Act so, and good will come your way,
If not, you'll find you go astray.
I'll quit you now, for we must part,
And yet I'll say, ere I depart,
That if you e'er have need of me
You'll find me, as ever, wholly,
Your true friend, both night and day.
Now tis not good that thus you stay,
Failing your lady to address.
Take care to counter sore distress,
For ne'er so proud will she e'er be
As to reproach you, or fiercely
Strike, unless tis with her sweet glance
That, smiling, pierces with its lance.
But I bear witness, you may know
Those eyes will strike no fatal blow.
The wound is sweet, as is her lip,
Agreeable that lance's tip.
And if you prove so taken there,
That you cannot endure those fair
Eyes of hers, nor stand against them,
If true love with sweet stratagem
Overpowers you, and shame, and fear,
And you grow pale, yet I am here;
Forget me not, whate'er may be;
Those eyes may not assault so fiercely,
That their attack may not be countered,
Wholly, while I am remembered,

For ne'er do I forget a friend,
And if you do so, in the end,
Be sure and certain, sans my power,
You'll be conquered, within the hour.
To God I commend you, as I go,
But first with my clear voice here, lo,
I'll sing a 'baladelle' for you,
Its words and music both are new,
The which to you shall now belong,
To sing, still, as you go along,
So that you yet may find delight
Whene'er some evil thought doth bite.'

Lines 2857-2892: Her baladelle 'En amer ha douce vie'

'HE'LL find, in love, the sweet life,
Without strife,
Who maintains true love entire.
Tis a sickness; pleasing though,
Nourished so,
By sweet amorous desire,
That the true heart doth aspire
To ensure
As true love shall ever grow.
Though sweet ill they must endure,
Joy, and more,
Lover and beloved know.

Love his mastery doth show,
Humbles so,
Loving hearts through suffering;
Rules through noble mastery,
Silently;
To the loving heart doth bring
Joy, the senses pleasuring,
Utterly;
Sates the loving heart, that so,

Gifts unmerited, all sweetly,
Perfectly,
Lover and beloved know.

So, Love should be held full dear,
And served here;
For He true aid will, ever, bring
To lovers who do beg and pray,
Every day,
Without his treasure lessening.
Death he prevents from striking,
Cures, we see,
Hearts, that with true health do glow;
Gifts the true sufficiency,
That, heart-free,
Lover and beloved know.'

Lines 2893-2918: He was overcome with joy at her song

WHEN her fair ballad was complete,
That I found so pleasing and sweet,
Both in my heart, and to my ear,
For ne'er a harmony did I hear
That e'er a song did thus employ,
Then I was overcome with joy.
And if the sweet notes pleased me so,
The words, more than one might know,
Did bring great pleasure to my heart.
And I took pains to learn the art,
So, in a short space, I believe,
At least ere she did take her leave,
I knew the lyrics and the tune,
So, I might sing it late and soon;
For I would that song remember,
And thus, recall her singing ever.
And as I learnt the song by heart,
My admiration for her art

Was so strong that each faculty,
All five senses God gifted me,
To the matter I now so brought,
That I had neither care nor thought
For aught else they might deliver,
Nor aught else did I consider
(Save that I recalled that same
Lady, from whom my blessings came).

Lines 2919-2964: She vanished, and he then mused on her counsel

THE lady had taken her leave,
Nor have I e'er seen, I believe,
Aught vanish away so swiftly.
I lost sight of her completely,
Knew not what had become of her.
Ten, twenty times, I searched for her,
I looked about the green hedgerow,
Yet all that place did merely show,
Trees in leaf, flowers and verdure,
For thereabouts was ne'er a creature,
Save me alone. And when I saw
That Hope, as she had nothing more
To say of what she'd wished to tell,
Unseen, had taken sudden flight,
Into profoundest thought, outright,
I fell, and in my musing sought
To learn the counsel she had brought,
Point by point, sure of her claim
That later I should need that same.
And, by means of my memory,
All about her, and her story,
As I've relayed here, by my art,
Was written true within my heart.
Understood more accurately,
Writ a hundred times more surely,
Than any clerk might pen the facts,

By hand, on parchment or in wax.
And the thing was necessary,
For I wished to follow nearly
She, whose true doctrine Reason taught
I should keep hence within my thought,
While often bringing it to mind;
For then, if ever I should find
That Love denied me, haughtily,
And Pure Beauty, disdainfully,
And Lady Shame, and Mistress Fear,
While Sweet Glance did harsh appear,
Such that she refused to see me,
Yet I would act, courageously
Enough, against their puissant power,
Nor would before such harshness cower,
But, steadfastly, all things suffer;
For tis brave and virtuous, ever,
To defeat an adversary
By thus enduring patiently.

Lines 2965-3012: Hope having cheered him, he composed a song

ONCE I'd committed everything
To memory, forgetting nothing,
Once the imprint of her sweet art
Had been engraved upon my heart,
Within myself I felt much surer,
Confident, mature and stronger.
I raised myself, in this new state,
And sought again the wicket-gate
Where I'd made entry to the park,
And not a sign there did I mark
Of other steps upon that way
As I along its length did stray,
For naught had marred the deep green grass,
And the dew I saw, as I did pass,
All clear and shining in the light,

Lay undisturbed, to left and right.
The birds that flew from glade to glade,
In thirty thousand places, made
Sweet song, vied with one another,
Opening their throats together,
Causing the whole parkland to ring
With the tunes they all did sing.
Ere Hope had come to me, indeed,
All in my time of greatest need,
My senses were yet so perverse
That I'd not heard the birds rehearse
Their tunes, nor joyed in the sound,
As they made merry, all around.
This should not be held against me,
For great joy and melancholy,
Dull the senses, lead to folly,
And deep sadness had oppressed me,
Such that my thoughts were all confused,
As there within the park I'd mused,
And naught then had I understood
Save for the pain, nor felt aught good.
Now their sweet song pleased me so,
That, ere the sunlight there did go,
I seemed myself again, wholly,
Sound in mind, heart and body,
As much through the sweet Memory
Of fair Hope, who'd come to me,
As thoughts of seeing my lady
Whom I believed I'd see, shortly.
And since I made towards her now,
To gaze upon her noble brow,
I composed, as I went along,
The words and music for this song:

Lines 3013-3036: His ballad 'Dame, de qui toute ma joie vient'

'LADY, from whom comes all my joy this day,

I cannot love you nor praise, too greatly,
Nor cherish you too finely, nor obey,
Serve, honour, nor respect you, fittingly.
For this sweet expectation
I hold, that your form will grace my vision,
Grants me a hundredfold more life and joy
Than brought me by a thousand years employ.

For this sweet hope my life doth now sustain,
Nourishes me in amorous desire,
Comforts me, rejoices my heart again,
Granting, within me, all that I require,
Joy to be lost not, day or night;
For, rather, it sees that I receive outright,
More of the sweet goods Love doth here enjoy,
Than brought me by a thousand years employ.

And since Hope, which in my heart doth reign,
Brings such great joy to my loving heart,
When I am far from you, if I might gain
Sight of your beauty, and from that ne'er part,
The joy, I would then receive,
None could imagine, dream of, nor conceive,
For more should I know then, without alloy,
Than brought me by a thousand years employ.

Lines 3037-3076: Hope returned to counsel him

THUS, I completed all my song,
As on the greenway I strode along,
Taking the path to the wicket gate,
Which was closed, in the very state
I had left it, so oped the latch,
And, passing through, replaced the catch,
And so, set out on my return.
Happy that none at all might learn
Anything of my adventure,

Not a single human creature.
So, I went on, blithely singing,
And in my song so delighting
That, in a little while, I saw
That I had reached my lady's door.
I halted when I saw the place,
And while taking a moment's grace,
I pondered as to what to do,
And how this matter to pursue.
For my poor heart trembled so
With such violence, that I know
It felt as it would break in two,
And thus, I knew not what to do,
For I was dumbfounded wholly,
At the sight, so troubled, truly,
I would have fled the place completely,
Had Hope not been there beside me.
But Hope who, ever, takes great care
To aid her good friends everywhere,
And who is never lost in sleep,
But comforts them, true watch did keep,
And spoke these words to me: 'Dear friend,
No wasted thought, now, did I spend
In coming here. What troubles you?
What is your need? Now, speak true.
What brings about your confusion?
You must tell me the true reason
For all this vain and foolish thought,
That, causelessly, sees you distraught.'

Lines 3077-3124: He explained his sad state of confusion to her

'I know not, by my faith, lady,
Save that I feel fear and, truly,
Doubt prevents me from advancing,
Now that I can see the dwelling
Where my heart lies, and my lady.

I pray God will to joy lead me,
For, if the sole guide I employ
Is to be Fear, the path to joy
I fail to see; so, ends my tale.’
‘What’s this, now? Think you that I’d fail
To aid you, and break the promise
I made, to succour you in this?’
‘No, my lady.’ ‘Indeed, you do.
So, I think when I list to you.
Tell me the reason for this fear,
That grips you, and holds you here.
Are you afraid of your shadow?
Tis that, I think, that scares you so.’
‘My lady, with all due respect,
Not my shadow; that I reject,
But I know not what ill fever
Has chilled my body, all over,
Surprised me here, and seized my heart,
So suddenly I lack the art
To tell you what’s amiss with me.
I’m assaulted mercilessly,
I feel hot and cold together,
At the same time sweat and shiver,
All my strength and vigour gone.
I fell silent, while in mid-song,
Struck as dumb as a wild creature,
Such that joy, and song and laughter
Desert me, and I can but sigh,
Reduced to silence, who knows why,
Unless it is for that same reason,
That I gaze upon her mansion,
Which is lovelier, doth entice
More, than the earthly paradise.
There my heart and my amour
Reside, behind that silent door.
For to naught else can it be due.
And so, I make request of you,

Grant your true counsel to me,
Or I am lost and ruined, lady.
For there is no greater pleasure
Than to view her at my leisure.
I can see no way to reach her,
Without you, and hence my pallor.'

Lines 3125-3180: Hope left him, having admonished him severely

'AND what advice then can I give?
In vain I toil for, as I live,
My every word is lost on you.
Not even a caged bird, on view,
Is so slow in understanding,
As you. I swore, kept on saying,
You'd ever find me, in sore need,
Ready to aid, am here indeed,
And yet you trust me not, sweet friend,
And so, your ills increase, sans end.
My help you'll have now no less,
Since I, your grievance to address,
Which brings but trouble and annoy,
And that my aid you might enjoy,
Came to your side, full swiftly,
Ere you'd thought to expect me.
And I enjoin you, for my part,
To clasp me tightly to your heart,
And so, remember me alway,
Near or far, where'er you stray.
You failed to do so, as I see,
And were reduced to misery;
While if you'd sought to remember,
You'd have stood as firm as ever.
Take heart; tread with certainty
Towards your lady, for truly,
I'll be your guide, guard, shield, fortress,
And shall, here, fulfil the promise

That I have made to you before;
And, I shall answer, what is more,
And be your guide when all is well,
When you're in heaven, not in hell.
So, thus, you should be reassured,
Since my help to you is ensured.
That high fever which turned to chill,
Is the burning passion still
Concealed, as ever, in your heart,
That now has spread to every part,
Making you tremble and shiver,
Since heat and cold it doth deliver.
Because you draw near to that same
Fire of Love, its searing flame,
You lose countenance and manner,
Sense and joy, power and vigour.
Keep this in mind, that, as you know'st:
"Who's nearest the fire is scorched most."
I have but little more to say.
Adieu, for I go on my way,
Though I will never part from you.
I divide myself, not in two
But in a hundred thousand parts
And more, shared among loving hearts,
And once you part from me you'll go
Straight to that mansion, gaining so
Clear sight of your noble lady,
For you tread the right path, truly.'

Lines 3181-3204: He offered up a prayer to Amor

SHE departed, and I remained.
Sweetness my loving heart contained,
Savouring all that she had told me.
The flavour of her words so pleased me
That I was reassured, completely,
As to the stirrings that so strongly

Had worked within my heart for I
Had gained much sorrow thereby.
And since I now was free of fear,
For naught to hurt me did appear,
I got down on my knees to pray
In the midst of that narrow way.
I joined my hands, and turned my face
Towards the fine and precious place,
That was for me the visible sign
Of my true hope that I would find
The lady whom I worshipped there,
She whom I think beyond compare.
Since twas not fitting, in that place,
That I advance a single pace,
Without seeking the protection
Of Love, and Hope my companion
Who guarded me with devout heart,
In humble reverence, I did start
My prayer, and thanked them kindly,
For all that they had done for me.

Lines 3205-3348: His prayer to Love and Hope ‘Amours, je te lo et graci’

‘LOVE, praise and thanks I must, again,
A hundred thousand times maintain,
For you have loved my heart in pain,
Troubled, dark, with many a stain,
And then to strengthen it did deign,
Through your great power;
With gentle love you’ve sought to show
Your loving sweetness here below,
Lit all my heart with your sweet glow,
And sweetened all its bitterness so
That I but seek that Hope may show
Mercy this hour.

Love, I seek but to worship you,
As a second god, adore you too,
Praise and obey you, with virtue
Honour and serve you, ever true,
With body, heart, and mind anew.
With childish sense,
I learnt to love you, faithfully,
And wish your blessings upon me,
Which you then made me hope to see,
And to savour them so sweetly
That now I'd render loyally
Obedience.

Love, I knew naught at the start,
Nor could tell good and bad apart,
Yet you granted my true heart,
The which is yours in every part,
And did so with most subtle art,
An understanding
Of love, and life within love's call,
And then presented heart and all,
Mind and body, as might befall,
To my lady, I well recall,
Till I, through her, once in her thrall,
Gave everything.

If I complained, most foolishly,
Wailing and lamenting, loudly,
Full of you and loving, wholly,
Overflowing, thus, completely,
With hands joined I pray, fervently,
Don't make me grieve
For that, but my fair state sustain,
For I am yours, and so remain.
Towards me prove the more humane,
For you can see, tis more than plain,
You are my lord; source, I maintain,

Of my belief.

Also, I must, if I'd not fail,
Praise Hope of whom I now avail
Myself, thankful she doth prevail
Within my heart. Should I not quail,
But in the name of right, travail,
She will prove, hence,
The reason why; for in dire strait,
Beneath the hammer lay my fate;
Not one sou would I give, of late,
For my poor life. Yet she did, straight,
Sustain me, friend, stout iron gate,
And towered defence.

Sweet Hope, she is my safe harbour,
For my cheer, my joy, and ardour.
She's the refuge for my treasure.
She's the one who grants me pleasure.
For all the pains of love, I suffer,
Yet yield delight,
For when they do their most, I see
Far greater comfort; since, truly,
The solace that she granted me
Saved me from harsh death, who, were she
Absent, had slain me, savagely,
Without a fight.

She's bestowed more loving kindness,
On me, more courtesy and sweetness,
More profit, honour, tenderness
Than any; day, and night no less,
She when fierce Desire doth press
Doth bring relief,
Counters my heart-piercing ardour.
She's the one who cures my dolour,
She's the one maintains my vigour,

She's my refuge; she's my tower;
In her, as my shield now and ever,
Lies my belief.

She's the one, at every hour,
Who acknowledged me, when dour,
Bereft of joy, I could but cower,
Brought me the sweet and not the sour,
With all the blessings in her power,
Ease she did bring.
All my pain she lessened greatly,
Made my joy the greater, sweetly,
Such sweet solace she did grant me;
Tribute nor pay did she e'er see,
Simply, with her gaze, did pity,
My suffering.

Love, since from you I, thus, receive
Such boundless joy, I do believe
More than ever I could conceive,
With humble heart, I now ask leave,
And lover's will, as one who'd cleave
To you the more,
To seek your aid, that I might come
To her threshold, where Sweet-Welcome
I may see; since, if there's no room
For succour in your heart, my doom
Is to die, where love holds me, dumb,
My love before.

And if my lady, God guard her,
Should deign to let her glance hover
O'er me, a moment or longer,
That I've the skill is my prayer,
To know from its brightness whether
Tis shed by love
Or springs forth by some other art.

For if from her sweet eye doth start
Through true love, an amorous dart,
My gaze from her shall ne'er depart.
If not, it must despair impart,
And torment prove.

For you know, indeed, how humbly
I love, desire, respect her, truly,
More than myself, or aught I see,
And serve her now so loyally
None other has a hold on me;
Tis ever so.
So, you should move, lovingly,
Her heart to grant, in its mercy,
Ease to my heart and, gently,
Help her to love me equally,
For otherwise deceived I'll be,
And sorrow know.

Let all prove as it pleases you,
Yet I cannot, alone, win through
To that fair joy, both sweet and true,
Though I'll obey, so strictly too,
That I would die for her, anew,
Most willingly,
Should you so wish; yet if you might
Reward me, without marring quite
My lady's honour, I'll take delight
In sharing, of her, sound and sight;
Peace, mercy, love, shall thus requite
And comfort me.'

Lines 3349-3450: He found his lady amidst a fair company

ONCE I had ended my fond prayer,
I could remain no longer there,
But raised myself, and did aspire,

As Love, and Sweet Hope, and Desire
Admonished me, most urgently,
To gain true sight of my lady,
And so, began to move away
Along the path, and make my way,
Full of hope, towards the tower
Where my lady must be, that hour,
But not a bowshot length did mark
Ere, near the tower, I found a park,
And, midst glades and fountains bright,
Saw many a lady, maid, and knight,
A fine and cheerful company,
Taking their pleasure, merrily;
Dancing was their entertainment.
There sounded ne'er an instrument,
Nor minstrel, but their own singing,
Pleasant, courtly, sweetly ringing.
Viewing this, I was filled with joy
At the notes that they did employ.
I made my way towards that part,
But Love, who from me doth depart
Never, and Hope, who stands my friend,
Fled not, for on them I depend,
But led me gently, by the rein.
And I, who did my path maintain,
Walked by that company, and so
I found myself, past a hedgerow,
Swiftly arrived at that fair place
Where God blessed me, of His sweet grace,
By showing me where stood my lady.
And yet my heart, and soul, and body
My very blood was so deeply stirred,
When I saw her, I spoke not a word
But trembled so, God grant me aid,
Of falling, straight, I was much afraid.
Yet my thoughts turned to Hope, indeed;
For, of her words, I felt most need,

If I would gain true victory,
My sole recourse the memory
That was imprinted on my heart
Discarding not, for my own part,
Her words of grace and command,
All her true teaching, out of hand.
And ere I'd heard the very last note
That issued from a maiden's throat,
I had recalled her true lesson
And felt much easier, within,
For Sweet Hope did thus reassure
Me that all would be well, and more.
So, I moved towards the dancing,
Like one on his true love thinking.
And that fair and virtuous lady,
Of whom Reason had mastery,
She who is worthy, able, wise,
And no way lacking otherwise,
Enriched me with her excellence,
For her glance, her sweet countenance,
Turned to me, so very sweetly,
That it seemed to me, God help me,
That with a true love she loved me,
And when she'd turned completely,
She approached me, with a smile,
Gracious and courteous the while,
And called to me, that lady fair:
'Now, my good sir, what do you there?
Come dance beside us, if you please!'
At once, I fell upon my knees,
And, most humbly, did salute her,
My complexion changing ever,
As I spoke to her, such that I
Blushed and paled, full moved thereby.
Truly it seemed, after a space,
She recognised, by my wan face,
The longing, the love, the ardour,

Within me, and that forever
I'd be her man, both night and day,
That I loved her in Love's own way.
And she returned, most courteously,
My greeting, and yet full swiftly,
So that none there did thus perceive
My amorous state, or such conceive.
She offered me her little finger,
And I, who was obliged and eager
To do her will, proved not remiss,
And joined her in the dance, at this.
But we'd been dancing but briefly
When she said to me, most sweetly,
That I must sing, and so should now
Show myself ready to allow
My turn to do so had arrived.
Sans hesitation, I replied,
'My lady, tis my wish to follow
Your command, yet little I know
About such songs, or how to sing,
And yet I will perform this thing,
To please you.' And, without delay,
I then commenced this virelai,
That some a ballad-song do name,
And so, it may be termed that same.

Lines 3451-3496: His virelai or ballad-song 'Dame, a vous sans retollir'

'LADY, unreservedly,
Love, passion, mind, heart, body,
I grant, alway,
To you, the finest, I say,
Of all that lived formerly
Or chosen of all might be
In this our day.

No man a fool should call me,

If I adore you, surely
I speak no lie.
Every virtue you exceed,
Every scented flower, indeed,
Beneath the sky.
Beside your beauty ever,
All else appears to wither,
While, moreover,
Your sweetness, and your colour
Outdo the rose,
As your glance, the wide world knows,
Cures all dolour.

Lady, unreservedly,
Love, passion, mind, heart, body,
I grant, alway,
To you, the finest, I say,
Of all that lived formerly,
Or chosen of all might be
In this our day.

Thus, I'm ready, lady, now,
To serve you, if you'll allow,
With true vigour;
While, humbly, I'll surrender,
My heart, life, honour, render
To your pleasure.
And if Pity doth consent,
If you'll hear my true intent,
Midst the clamour,
I'll seek not, in that labour,
To merit more;
For no greater joy, I'm sure,
Were mine ever.

Lady, unreservedly,
Love, passion, mind, heart, body,

I grant, alway,
To you, the finest, I say,
Of all that lived formerly,
Or chosen of all might be
In this our day.

Lady, ever my recourse,
Often, I'm but driven forth
To weep and moan.
While before you I grow pale,
All the pain love doth entail,
Is mine alone.
For you see not this desire
I scarce hide, this living fire.
If tenderness
You deny, mortal sadness
Shall prove my death;
Yet you win, till my last breath,
True faithfulness.'

Lines 3497-3536: His lady questioned him

AS, thus, my ballad I did air,
A lady who was dancing there,
Who seemed right full of joy to me,
For she was dancing prettily,
Began to sing, without delay:
'Lord, when shall it come, the day
When I'll see him whom I love so?'
And ended with that same, also.
When she had ended, my lady
Said: 'Twas well sung, and most sweetly,
Yet, tis time for us to retreat.'
So, the company stirred their feet,
And followed her to the manor,
For none dared contradict her,
Or venture opinion on this,

Or aught else that she might wish.
Thus, one and all ended their dance,
And, uncomplaining, did advance,
Singly, in pairs, or groups of three
Or four, to keep good company.
My lady did their going abide,
And then did lead me at her side,
Asking me of aught that was new,
As it was ever her custom to.
And she enquired whence I came,
And why I'd stayed away, the blame
Was mine if I had seen her not;
Also, why had it proved my lot
To quit her presence, formerly,
Since I'd departed suddenly,
Had vanished without taking leave;
Never before, she did believe,
Had I done so, for any reason;
And what was my explanation
For not answering (nor could I,
Her question then) and I must tell
The truth of where I'd been, as well,
Without deceit or hiding aught,
And why; as if I were in court.

Lines 3537-3566: He readied his apology and confession

AFTER she'd issued her request,
One reasonable, and full honest,
(A lady's right to take command
Of her lover, and truth demand)
In a most heartfelt way, did I
Let forth a groan, and then did sigh;
For I knew that I must answer,
As twas fitting, and homage render.
So, I turned, swiftly, to no less
Than Hope, the sovereign goddess,

Who yet might aid my lips to sound
All that which in my heart I found.
Thus, with trepidation, did I,
Yet simply enough, make reply:
'My lady, I may not refuse,
And indeed, I cannot choose,
Since it pleases you, but tell
You all, and truthfully as well,
Such that the facts will be plain
To yourself, to my loss or gain.
But I would willingly say naught
If I dared, and if such you sought.
And so, for God's sake, my lady,
I beg you to please forgive me,
If, at any time, aught I say
That may annoy you, and I pray
You'll excuse me, ne'er, willingly,
Would I say aught that, foolishly,
Brings you displeasure, I confess,
And God be my witness, or distress.'

Lines 3567-3714: He expressed his true situation

'MY lady, I will tell something
Of my state, from its beginning,
As regards its nature and source,
While speaking naught but truth, of course,
In answer to your just demand;
For I shall do as you command.
I was both young and immature,
Naïve, a fool, a child, no more,
Devoid of sense, an innocent,
With scant knowledge, and less intent,
Accustomed to idleness too,
My lady, when I first saw you.
(And even now, it seems to me,
More indolent than I should be),

Such that all my imagination
You aroused, my inclination
Towards true delight, my lady.
You are the exemplar to me,
Of everything that I should be.
Nor did it seem to me, tis true,
That I could live sans seeing you.
On you, now, my intent is set,
The heart, the youth that I have yet;
Find in each glance, word, and deed
Of yours, true paradise indeed.
And so, of profoundest feeling,
I determined on composing
A lay, for you, in praise of you,
Or some plaint, or song all new.
For I dared not, nor knew how
To, speak this otherwise, I vow.
And it seemed better to relay
My feelings in some song or lay,
And speak of what constrained my heart,
Rather than through some other art.
My lay expressed the sentiment
That I felt at its commencement;
The ballad was then brought to you,
Which could but trouble me anew,
Such that, as if with my last breath,
Sans remedy, I looked on death,
For, you summoned me, my lady,
And to read it did command me,
And so, I did, from start to end,
Most artlessly, without amend,
Like a man so seized by terror
All must note his every error.
And because none there could say
Who was the author of that lay
You demanded then, my lady,
To know who'd made it, and begged me,

To speak out straight, and tell no lie,
And I, who'd ne'er seek to deny
You aught, or to displease you, I,
Who would e'er seek to make reply,
Who would but speak of what is true,
For that which pleases I would do,
I dared not confess, my lady,
Twas of my making, entirely,
For I had writ the thing, and so
If I'd declared it, you would know
The love for you that I'd concealed,
But, rather, it had been revealed;
I could no longer keep from you
That love, exposed to public view.
In my heart I could not decide,
Whether to answer, or to hide
My love, not knowing what to do.
And so, I made my way from you,
Choosing the middle path in woe
And confusion; you watched me go,
My heart near broken, as I went
From your presence; such my intent.
Not for all the wealth or success
Any man could seek to possess,
Could I have uttered a reply,
With mind and speech, so troubled, I
Contrived, thus, but to steal away,
And live to fight another day,
Lamenting, weeping, and sighing,
Seeking death, swift death desiring,
Until I chanced, at a venture,
Upon a very fine enclosure.
I found a lonely spot and, there,
Made, of my sadness and despair,
Regarding Fortune, sad complaint,
Who'd changed my joy to constraint.
And truly, my death came closer;

I'd but scant hope of living longer.
But Sweet Hope hastened to me,
And, in my time of need, helped me;
She a thousand times lovelier
Than aught created by Nature,
More a spiritual being.
In short, it seemed I was viewing
A beauty and a radiance
Beyond compare. She did advance,
Pledging love, faith, loyalty,
Help, comfort, aid, and company,
If I would follow her, and there
Abandon my profound despair.
She comforted me, graciously,
Healed me, and so granted to me
Peace and joy, honour and wealth,
Exchanging pain and ill, for health.
And she taught me to recognise,
Clearly, in their every guise,
The emblems of the true lover,
And the virtues of each colour,
And how Fortune shows constancy
In her swift mutability,
By reasoning quelled my fear of her,
Showing the sweet in the bitter.
She, after that, proved my guide too,
My lady, leading me to you,
For, by my soul, I'd not come near
Without that she had led me here.
So, with devout heart, I now pray,
Dear lady, since she doth this day
Wish, and has wished, you alone
My body, heart, and life to own,
That you yourself will not say nay
To all that she wished me to say.
For lady, if you so allow,
I shall bide here, as I did vow,

And if not, then I must suffer
But heartbreak, and die a martyr;
And all for you, dolorously,
Since it is not fitting, lady,
That I should seek joy to savour,
By asking some mark of favour;
A lady's refusal doth slay
A lover's mind and heart, alway.
And, dear lady, if that should be,
Then it will prove the death of me.
I'd rather Hope be refused than I,
While if she finds favour, then I
Shall achieve my heart's desire,
And all to which I now aspire.
And if it please you, my dear lady,
To review with your eye, swiftly,
The song I sang, amidst the glade,
Whose words and music both I made,
Twill readily be clear to you
Whether I lie, or I speak true.
So, I beg you, consider me,
And upon me, now, take pity,
For I am yours, and will be ever,
Nor shall I ever love another.'

Lines 3715-3740: His lady expressed her astonishment

AFTER I'd given my response,
My lady, who doth ease at once
My ills, my woes, my misery,
Every last thing that troubles me
By means of her sweet glance alone,
Replied: 'God save me, for I own
This affair is most marvellous,
As much as it is most curious,
For the like of it I never heard,
Wondering at your every word.

About the lay you did recite,
Is't true that same work you did write?
'Most certainly, my lady, yes.'
'None helped you do so?' 'None, unless
Twas you yourself, to whom belong
The joyful theme of rhyme and song.'
'For whom did you make it, truly?'
'You, lady, who are all to me.'
'I am?' 'Yes.' 'Tis hard to credit,
'Yet, by my soul, tis every bit
As true as is the paternoster;
I am yours, and am its author,
My lady, God save your honour,
Which I love, respect, and care for,
And do so, tis my intention,
As much as my own salvation.'

Lines 3741-3772: He described his meeting with Hope

'AND is it true that Hope you saw,
In form and semblance, what is more,
As you have here described to me?'
'Why yes, indeed tis true, my lady.
Though I mused on her a century,
Not a hundredth part of her beauty
Could I describe, nor that loyalty
That she then promised to bear me,
Nor the kindness with which she led
Me to this place, despite my dread,
Promising a life full joyous,
For to me you would prove gracious.
You should reflect, at her behest,
Ere you refuse me my request,
For, and I wish not to deceive,
If I seek aught of you, believe
Tis for her sake, and in her name,
For she's noble, and of such fame,

That there's no realm, no land, I say,
Where she is not, and holds not sway,
And where all folk, who wish for joy,
Do not that which she brings enjoy.
And, regardless, you are so wise,
Lady, so kind of heart likewise,
You must see from my woeful plaint,
How sore need makes for sad complaint.
Yet I dare make request for naught,
Nor love nor favour have I sought,
Nor aught else that's unbecoming,
And they do say, tis unbecoming,
That request should come of baseness,
While true praise comes of courtliness.'

Lines 3773-3848: His lady endorsed his praise of Hope

'And you speak true. That they do say,
And he who does not get his way
Should feel ashamed, if he is wise,
High, low, valet or page likewise.
And he should think himself a fool,
To make request despite that rule.
And words will often cause offence,
When the best path's that of silence.
Too much speech works harm, they say.
That I believe, tis true alway.
He who covets what he should not
Mere self-deception is his lot.
To make request covetously
Shows lack of generosity.
None should seek to climb so high,
That, falling, he is shamed thereby.
He ought to choose the middle way,
For, many a time, I hear men say,
He who climbs higher than he should,
Ever falls lower than he would.

Tis good to speak appropriately,
With sense and thought, and cogently,
Sweetly, not in some rude manner,
And only ask what's fitting, ever,
Since he who asks for what is wrong
Has earned refusal, harsh and strong.
And fair Hope, my dear young sir,
Who shows power and virtue ever,
She who is wise and learned too,
Just and loyal, has counselled you,
Most considerately, and wisely,
Or so it seems to me. And, truly,
So worthy is she, with such power,
So helpful, with true worth her dower,
So necessary, I declare,
So courteous and debonair,
Good, and kind, and generous,
True, noble, honest, virtuous,
Granting joy and comfort, freely,
Providing consolation, sweetly,
Inclined to reason, fine and pure,
And to good deeds, what is more,
So clear in manner, free of faction,
She does good with every action.
So virtuous and true is she
That, in truth, so it seems to me,
No man should thwart, in any way,
What she doth choose to do, or say.
And thus, unworthy I'd be thought
If I should fail her now in aught,
Or should disavow her ever.
So, with all my heart, I render
Myself to her pleasure, and will,
For what she wishes I wish still;
Nor is my heart an enemy
To all that she promised of me,
But will avow it, graciously,

Without seeking terms, and wholly.
Thus, sweet, fair, and loyal lover,
I accept her speech; moreover,
Such I'll uphold, and ratify,
For not one word shall I deny.
Therefore, I trust, henceforth, you may
Be happy, and joyful, always,
Loyal, and modest, and discreet,
Since a faithful lover you greet.
For I was convinced, completely,
That you possessed true love for me,
Though of love you said not a word,
As if that very thought were absurd.
Since Hope has taken the trouble
To assist, I'll prove no rebel,
To her will, but rather bestow
My faithful love, and not cry 'no'.
For she said you'll love me, ever,
And would have you named a lover.'

Lines 3849-3890: He expressed his thanks that his lady acknowledged his love

THEN I went down on bended knee,
And gave her fair thanks, instantly.
But she, towards myself inclining,
Would not allow of my kneeling,
But exhorted me to rise, and talk
With her, awhile, as we did walk.
So, I rose at once, and thanked her
As was, indeed, right and proper,
Not as I ought to, I allow,
But yet as well as I knew how.
When my gratitude I'd shown her,
Thanked her a thousand times over,
For the honour she had done me,
By easing my heart, so graciously

(Though naught of me, did I retain;
I was hers, and would so remain
As I've declared, previously)
I renewed my thanks, fulsomely,
Granting her, my heart, my body,
My trust, my lover's loyalty,
From that day, and so forever,
Till death she and I must sever.
And she received all this entire,
Setting my joyful heart on fire.
And so that none there might believe,
In our love, or its signs perceive,
She called a lady-in-waiting,
Who, at her summons, came running,
And spoke to her on some matter,
While I returned towards the other
Ladies and maidens who enquired
As to events not long transpired,
Or sang me fair songs of lovers,
All the tales of their adventures.
Yet my response to what they sought
Was far indeed from my true thought.
For I made white seem black that day,
As to the manor we made our way,
Which was not far from where we were.
My lady led, we followed her;
She walked in front, and rightly so,
Since Reason, in truth, wished it so.

Lines 3891-3944: They prayed in church, and then went to dine

OUR arrival my heart did please.
We mounted the stairway by degrees,
To a chapel that was most fair,
For some master had laboured there,
Working in gold, and colours finer
Than I had seen in my life, ever.

There indeed, the Mass was spoken,
And was heard, with true devotion.
And there to God I made my prayer,
While I performed due penance there,
That He would preserve my lady,
In soul, and honour, and body;
Granting me sense, grace and vigour
To guard her peace, and that honour,
And to serve my lady alway,
As I wished, and in every way,
And that she'd find reasonable
My service, and agreeable.
That was the close of my prayer.
When the Mass was ended, there,
I heard a trumpet, loud and plain,
Twas sounded by a chamberlain.
How the servants filled the court!
Each their proper place now sought,
These hastened towards the pantry,
Those to the wine-cellar did flee,
While others to the kitchen did go,
Each to their station there below.
The men and boys from the stables
Carried benches, trestles, tables.
You should have seen them scurry,
With straw and carpets, in their hurry
Yelling, shouting, sweeping round,
While their loud chatter did resound,
In French, in Occitan, in German,
Lombard, and English, and Norman,
And many another, foreign, tongue,
Babbling away, both old and young.
Then carving-men, soon appearing,
Cleaning, laying out, polishing
The boards, readying the water,
Slicing the bread for serving after,
Called for tablecloths, and platters,

Stirred themselves to other matters.
One was seated, one came running,
Here at breadcrumbs swiftly brushing,
Cleansing their hands, some to excess,
This server more, and that one less,
Ere their masters should present be.
Twas a most wondrous sight to see!
And twas a mighty sound they made,
Shouting and yelling, as they bade
Them: 'Bring it on! For Mass is sung,
And the summons to dine long rung!'

Lines 3945-3988: The feast and the accompanying music described

NOW, once the Mass was complete,
The men had all made their retreat
Swiftly, an open surcoat to don,
To replace their corset; once on,
There repaired to the dining hall,
Which showed not vile or low at all,
Where each was served, I believe,
Right handsomely, and did receive
As much meat, with wine to hand,
As fleshly hunger might demand.
And there I took my sustenance,
While regarding the countenance,
Manner, bearing, carriage, sight
Of she in whom is my delight.
And after the meal, fair to see,
Minstrels came, most willingly,
Coiffured, and all in clean attire,
Playing many a tune entire,
For, in a circle, I viewed there
Viol, rebec, and gittern fair,
Lute, Moorish lute, and half-canon,
Citole, psaltery, the full canon,
Harp, trumpet, kettledrum, tabor,

Hand-organ, horns, ten pairs or more,
Bagpipes, flutes, small pipes as well,
Reed-pipes, cymbals, many a bell.
Bohemian flute and tambourine,
Grand German cornet, too, were seen,
And willow-flute, and fife, and pipe,
Small trumpet, Alsatian bagpipe,
Herald's trumpet, harp, monochord
Possessed of but the single cord,
With the pan-pipes, all together,
It seemed to me, indeed, that never
Had such a fulsome melody
Been heard by such a company,
For I heard each, all in accord
With its own pitch, and no discord,
Harp, and gittern, and citole,
Trumpet and flute, horn and viol,
Pipe, bagpipe, small-pipe, tabor,
Whate'er one might play with finger,
Or palm, or plectrum, or with bow;
O'er all that park the sound did flow.

Lines 3989-4014: The entertainments further described

ONCE they'd performed an 'estampie',
The ladies, and their company,
Departed, in their twos and threes,
For each another's hand did seize,
And entered a most fair chamber;
Each man, each woman was eager
For some further entertainment,
Dancing, singing, all that's pleasant,
Backgammon, chess, many a game,
And found partners for those same,
As they desired, without delay,
And so, did dance and sing and play.
Among them were true musicians,

All more skilful in such sessions,
Versed in styles both old and new,
Than were the ancient Muses who
Invented song, or Orpheus
Who charmed all those in Hades, thus,
With the sweetness of his singing,
Such enchantment comprehending.
They all played on, most happily,
Until a knight there, suddenly,
Called out for flagons of spiced wine;
It was his role, the thought is mine,
For, all as one, without delay,
The squires came running to obey.

Lines 4015-4057: The company dispersed and the lover sought leave to depart

AFTER they all had drunk their fill
Of spiced red wine, twas then their will,
Since it was well past noon, nigh three,
To take their leave and, graciously,
Bid farewell, each man and woman
According to the common custom.
But I remained until the last,
Like a lover whose time is passed
In thoughts of his noble lady,
For mine I saw there before me.
And when I saw the time was right,
I lingered not, but went outright
To commend my poor self to her,
And then request my leave of her.
Thus, to her, in a voice pitched low,
In a simple manner, I spoke so:
'I commend myself, my heart, to you,
And you to God above me, too,
My lady, as one who lives not
If loving you proves not his lot.

For my love of you sustains me,
And brings me joy, completely.’
She, as one most courteous,
Worthy, and wise and virtuous,
Answered, quietly: My dear friend,
Since Love guides you and, to that end,
Wishes our hearts joined together
To part from each other never,
And make one of two, as we see;
For the Lord’s sake, so let it be;
For our hearts with shame were blighted,
If so alike, and so united,
They felt not good and ill the same,
Never the mastery to claim,
But in all things to be as one,
Equal in their dominion,
For twixt love and lordship ever
There’s contention, hostile ever.
Each other’s honour and peace to guard
To that we should pay close regard.
And for my peace of mind I’d know
Whence comes that ring, gleaming so,
I ne’er saw you with one before.’

Lines 4058-4108: The lovers exchanged rings, and he composed a rondelet

I said ‘My lady, I am more
Than happy for you, if you wish,
To know the truth, regarding this.
Hope it was who gave it to me,
In granting it most, graciously,
With loyalty, and love hereafter,
Transferring it from her finger.’
‘She did?’ ‘Yes, my lady, truly.’
‘Then I desire that, lovingly,
We exchange our rings, yours and mine,

Of mutual love make that the sign.’
And I, delighted by this same,
Answered with joy, all aflame:
‘Dear Lady, may God gaze on you!’
She smiled then, most sweetly too,
And with her hand, all smooth and white,
Soft, shapely, pleasant to the sight,
She placed, as mark of our true bond,
A ring, set with a diamond,
On my finger, the stone most fine,
While she received Hope’s ring from mine.
But as she lifted up my finger
Sweet Hope, to join us together,
Appeared between us, suddenly,
And sealed our union, perfectly.
Granting us great delight and joy,
So we her counsel might employ;
Since, if word or deed of either
Should serve to displease the other,
She yet could remedy it still,
And judge according to our ill,
Along with Love and Loyalty,
Who, ever, hold true sovereignty,
And act as judges, over lovers;
For Hope, judging with the others,
Bears witness true that, loyally,
I love my lady, and she loves me.
So twas revealed, most visibly,
That, from that moment, we indeed
Were in accord, in word and deed.
And so, I parted from my lady,
And, as I did, she granted me
A look so true its sweet language
Made my heart, again, her hostage,
Granting me joy and true delight;
All Hope had promised me outright
She had fulfilled, most faithfully,

Granting all she had pledged to me.
So, from joy, as I went my way,
I then composed this roundelay.

Lines 4109-4116: His rondelet 'Dame, mon cuer en vous remaint'

'LADY, my heart with you remains
Though from your presence I depart.
Through the love that in me obtains,
Lady, my heart with you remains.
Now, I pray God your heart attains
Such love, and none else shares that heart.
Lady, my heart with you remains,
Though from your presence I depart.'

Lines 4117-4194: He felt uncertain and complained to his lady

WHEN I'd composed my roundelay
Down a narrow path I did stray
That led me to an open space,
Where many sported in that place;
Arms, or love, or talk enjoying,
Or jousting there and tourneying,
Leading the good life, merrily.
So, I joined with that company,
And did all in my humble power
To entertain myself that hour,
In accord with all I could see,
And share in their sport equally,
Whether I had the skill or not,
Since to learn must prove my lot.
For he who in his youth learns naught,
Repents of it when life is short,
If he might have done otherwise;
Learning's a noble enterprise.
My heart delighted in the show,
My lady had inspired me so,

And I remained there, at my leisure,
Filled with happiness, seeking pleasure.
Until the time came to return
To my lady for whom I yearn.
Then I set myself to repair,
Once more, to one noble and fair,
Fine and courtly, but when, at length,
I arrived there, God give me strength,
I thought my heart would break in two,
Her glance seemed to stray anew,
Here eyes seemed to leave me there,
While sending their sweet light elsewhere.
I knew not if twas so intended,
But nigh to death I hung, suspended.
She, in her seeming, her manner,
Heartfelt gaze, and demeanour,
All that she might show a lover,
Was as if changed for another.
And did, I thought, myself ignore
For some other that she loved more.
Then sadness weighed me all about,
I fell into a state of doubt,
So heavy, woeful, and unpleasant
No joy or easing balm was present
In my heart, which was so pained
Naught but oppressiveness remained.
I became most melancholy,
Like a man who in his folly
Doth brood, and ponder, and muse,
Whether tis true, or but some ruse,
Wondering if she sought, on her part,
To test me, wounding thus my heart.
If so twas done most skilfully,
Enacted with such subtlety,
That I could in no way perceive
Whether she sought thus to deceive.
So, I considered what to do,

And say, to find if it were true:
‘My dear lady, you surely see
How you possess my heart and me,
How I love you without reserve,
How you may kill one that doth serve
You thus, slaying me should you wish,
Denying me your glance like this.
My lady, if it is in your heart
To receive another, and so part,
Or keep me here in uncertainty,
Intending to prove false to me,
Or to treat me as a stranger
Though I’m your servant, forever,
By the Lord, lady, so cruelly
You treat me, death is all I see,
When you thus reveal, visibly,
That you care not a jot for me.
Better for me to die, tis clear,
At a single blow than languish here.’
This was how, in speech unconfined,
I showed her all my heart and mind.

Lines 4195-4218: His lady explained her concealment of their love

SHE listened most attentively,
And then, at once, replied to me:
‘Be at ease, fair, sweet friend, I pray,
Regarding all I do or say,
Tis for the best; such I pursue
That I may hide my love for you;
Lovers who know not how to feign
Indifference ne’er shall joy attain,
In lacking the power to conceal
All that they’d rather not reveal.
Folk are so fickle, they’ll rehearse
Every rumour, and so perverse
Full of deceit, on which they thrive,

That they seek, these days, to contrive
More tales than were e'er imagined.
Friend, for this reason, I determined
To show a single face to all,
Reveal the truth to none at all
Save you alone when that shall be;
Nor will your heart detect in me
Aught that might raise a doubt in you,
For my love is all yours, tis true,
In honour, and in faithfulness,
With ne'er a trace of fickleness.'

Lines 4219-4258: His lady reassured him of her love

THUS, my lady reassured me,
In pledging her love completely.
And though I have had to suffer
Many an assault, many a terror,
Many a sadness, with much dolour,
And many a sudden pang ever,
Many a sigh, deep anxiety,
Many a bout of melancholy,
All of which I must needs sustain,
Nonetheless, I'll ever maintain
A firm faith, shown every day,
In every word that she did say.
For who thinks ill of his lady
Runs counter to himself, surely,
Nor has he reason to feel joy
Who true joy has failed to enjoy.
Moreover, unstained Loyalty
Reason, and Generosity,
Wisdom, Honour, Nobility,
A sense of Shame, and Truthfulness
Do that lady so adorn and bless,
With all the virtues, here attested,
With which her form is invested,

They, at all times, accompany her,
Protect, instruct, and nourish her,
Nor would they e'er deign to assent
That she might deceive with intent.
Also, he who loves without blame,
Should trust in his lady's good name,
As he himself would be trusted.
And thus, my own lady I trusted,
And I believed that she'd told me
The pure truth, out of amity:
That her good graces I enjoyed.
God grant by me naught is employed
That might her fair favour remove,
That she's my lady and my love,
As I shall prove her true lover;
For I've devoted myself to her,
And hers in life or death shall be;
Who loves well, forgets tardily.

Lines 4259-4300: Guillaume's coda

NOW, at the end of this treatise,
That I've compiled, I'll say this,
That here I wish to set my name,
Every last letter of that same,
Each syllable; and who would know
My name may readily do so.
For the fourth line before the end
Holds the start, the middle, and end
Of my name, which is writ there, wholly,
Not two-thirds or three-quarters only.
But you must not, to prove exact,
Add there a letter or subtract
A single one, for who does so
My whole name shall never know,
Should they set there one less or more.
And since I'm in the hands, tis sure,

Of loyal Love whom I love so,
I pay homage, and say also:
'True Love I do you homage here,
With hands, lips, heart, I now appear
As your servant, true and faithful,
Discreet, and pure, and dutiful,
And my heart, soul, body, vigour,
Desire, thought, pleasure, honour,
All in all, with my life, say I,
As a man who would live and die
In your service, and sans retreat,
I devote to you, all complete,
As I should, for such hope you give
I hope the sweeter life to live,
And that my dear sweet lady,
With good heart, and cheerfully,
Will read this work I put in rhyme,
However ill made, in due time.
The hope I maintain within me,
That my lady she doth love me,
Makes my heart joy so sweetly
Its ills will turn to joy, wholly,
Once you can say, and I believe,
My words she did with thanks receive.
God grant the work to her is pleasing,
And that I've erred not in serving.'

(Translator's note: the letters of the fourth line from the end 'Li change mal u tu me dis' when rearranged yield the name Guillemin de Maschaut. Guillemin is a well-attested 14th century diminutive of Guillaume, Maschaut a known alternative spelling of Machaut, emphasising the correct pronunciation of his name.)

The End of 'Le Remede de Fortune'